



Enviro News Monitor October 2014

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Trending topics

New tool launched to create awareness about quality of air

Amid concerns over rising pollution in Indian cities, a new tool was launched that aims to create awareness among people about the quality of air they breathe as well as its likely health impact. The [National Air Quality Index](#) (AQI) proposes six AQI categories, namely good, satisfactory, moderately polluted, poor, very poor and severe and is likely to be operational initially in the country's million plus cities by mid-December. The objective of an AQI is to quickly disseminate air quality information almost in real-time that entails the system to account for pollutants which have short-term impacts, the Central Pollution Control Board said. The proposed AQI will consider eight pollutants (PM10, PM2.5, NO2, SO2, CO, O3, NH3 and Pb) for which short term (up to 24-hourly averaging period) National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed. While the tool has value for public dissemination, the continuous and online measuring of pollutants, that the index entails, will help administrators to assess priorities and

allow for better assessment of impact of alternative air pollution strategies. Table 1 gives the health statements for AQI categories.

Table1. Health statements for AQI categories.

Air Quality Index (AQI)	Associated Health Impacts
Good (0–50)	Minimal Impact
Satisfactory (51–100)	May cause minor breathing discomfort to sensitive people.
Moderately polluted (101–200)	May cause breathing discomfort to people with lung disease such as asthma, and discomfort to people with heart disease, children and older adults.
Poor (201–300)	May cause breathing discomfort to people on prolonged exposure, and discomfort to people with heart disease
Very Poor (301–400)	May cause respiratory illness to the people on prolonged exposure. Effect may be more pronounced in people with lung and heart diseases.
Severe (401-500)	May cause respiratory impact even on healthy people, and serious health impacts on people with lung/heart disease. The health impacts may be experienced even during light physical activity.

Source. CPCB. 2014

Air quality in metros. The air quality has deteriorated this Diwali in major cities, with Delhi topping the list of poor air quality. As per the air quality index, Delhi recorded the highest level of pollution (RSPM 531 mg per cubic metre) post-Diwali, followed closely by Chennai (320 mg per cubic metre), and Bangalore (239 mg per cubic metre). The US Embassy has termed as "very unhealthy" the air quality level in the national capital, which could result in significant aggravation of heart or lung diseases. The embassy, which has recently established an air quality monitoring programme with on-site measuring instruments, said the Air Quality Index value 260 falls in the category of "very unhealthy".

Also read: [Rice cultivation in Punjab and Haryana is triggering an economic and ecological crisis, write Dr Prodipto Ghosh, Distinguished Fellow, Earth Science and Climate Change division and Ms Shailly Kedia, Fellow, Green Growth and Resource Efficiency division, TERI.](#)

[Press Information Bureau, [The Financial Express](#), [The Economic Times](#), 17 October 2014 | [The Health Site](#), 24 October 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 21 October 2014 | [The Financial Express](#), 29 October 2014 | [CPCB](#). 2014]

Five Indian companies in global A list of green firms

At the time when the government is exploring various options to move on to a low-carbon growth path, five Indian companies have made it to the global list of firms that have shown leadership in adopting measures to cut their climate-damaging emissions. The list has 187 companies from across the globe that illustrate that a low-carbon future does not mean low profit. The Indian companies that made it to [The A List: CDP Climate Performance Leadership Index 2014](#) are: Essar Oil, Larsen & Toubro, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro. The global index has been prepared by the CDP, an international not-for-profit organization, at the behest of 767 investors who represent more than a third of the world's invested capital. The CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project) is the system for companies and cities to measure, disclose, manage and share vital environmental information. The [India 200 Climate Change Report 2014](#) analyzes responses from the top 200 Indian companies by market capitalization. There has been an increase in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission this year by top Indian companies. The top 59 Indian companies emitted 231 million metric tonnes of CO₂ this year, as opposed to 178.4 million metric tonnes of CO₂ that was emitted by 55 companies last year, revealed the report. Over 60 per cent of surveyed companies are introducing process energy efficiency initiatives, consequently, 24 per cent have reduced their absolute emissions and an additional 26 per cent have reduced their emissions intensity while driving business growth and profitability. The summary of responses is given below.

SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES

Innovation

- Process energy efficiency initiatives are driving innovation
- Focus shifts beyond the low hanging fruits
- 71% of new investments with reported data have financial pay-back of 4 to 15 years

Decoupled growth from emissions

- 24% of the companies have reduced their absolute emissions while driving business growth and profitability
- An additional 26% have reduced their emissions intensity while driving business growth and profitability

Increased awareness

- 59 companies responded in 2014 versus 55 in 2013
- Number of companies with disclosure score above 90 increased to 12 in 2014 from 5 in 2013
- 355% increase in reported Scope 3 emissions

Regulatory environment

- Over 90% of the companies state that climate change opportunities are driven by change in regulation
- PAT Scheme has had a catalyzing effect on the companies

[[The Times of India](#), 16 October 2014 | [The Hindu](#), 18 October 2014 | [The Hindustan Times](#), 23 October 2014 | [CDP](#). 2014]

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan launched

The rural development ministry will provide Rs 20 lakh to each village per year for the next five years under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, taking the total annual allocation under the scheme to 6.5 lakh villages to Rs 13,000 crore per annum. This will be part of the Rs 1,34,000 crore earmarked by the government under Prime Minister's pet project that aims to construct 11.11 crore toilets in rural India by 2019. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan will replace the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan of the previous UPA government that had targeted sanitation for all by 2022.

Corporate support. Corporates such as Dabur, Unitech, L&T, Bharti Enterprises, Tata Consultancy Services and PSUs such as Indian Oil Corporation, GAIL and NTPC have already started drawing up plans to clean up their surroundings, build toilets and support the mission. Jubilant Bhartia Foundation, the not-for-profit organisation of the Jubilant Bhartia Group, will build, renovate and maintain toilets in 65 schools across the country, in line with the campaign.

Contributions made by corporates towards Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Clean Ganga Fund will be considered as social welfare spending under the new companies law, according to the government notification issued on 24 October 2014.

Delhi government. Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board has prepared a database of toilet blocks available in JJ clusters as well as identified the deficit. The board has also set up a centralised control room at its headquarters to monitor the cleanliness drive, which has spanned various offices of the board as well as night shelters and slum clusters.

Two blocks of public toilets was inaugurated under the Swachh Bharat Mission. Comprising a total of 17 toilets, these two blocks have been built by the New Delhi Municipal Council at a total cost of Rs 12.50 lakh for residents of two JJ Clusters in New Delhi.

Sobering facts. Urban India generates about 47 million tons of solid waste (garbage) every year or about 1.3 lakh tons every day, according to a study by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). And this is only in cities and towns. According to a calculation done by TERI in 1998, the garbage generated till 2011 would cover 2,20,000 football fields piled 9 meters (27 feet) high with garbage. What this gigantic mess needs is a plan for collection, segregation, proper dumping and treatment across the country. An estimate of the urban development ministry in 2009 had put the cost for doing this at about Rs 48,582 crore. The other dimension of sanitation is sewage or wastewater disposal. CPCB estimates that in 2009, 38 billion liters of sewage was generated per day from 498 tier I cities. Installed capacity to treat this giant river of wastewater is 12 billion litres or less than one-third of the requirement. This means the remaining 26 billion litres is getting dumped into our streams and rivers daily, making many of them terminally sick.

[[Hindustan Times](#), 2 October 2014 | [The Economic Times](#) ... 3 October 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 3 October 2014 | [Hindustan Times](#), 5 October 2014 | [The Asian Age](#), 25 October 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 28 October 2014 | [The Hindu Business Line](#), 28 October 2014]

Ganga continues to be polluted

The latest data of Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board indicates that the level of dissolved oxygen (DO) has decreased drastically, thereby threatening the aquatic life. When the river enters Kanpur city at Bithoor, the DO is 11.4 which get reduced to 7.8 while leaving the city at Jajmau. Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) increases to 4.4 while leaving the city, against 2.3 recorded while entering the city. The PCB compiled these results in its report of October by taking three water samples of Ganga, one each at Bithoor (the river's entry), Koyla Ghat (at centre) and Jajmau (leaving point). The report states that the pollution in the river has not gone down as both DO and BOD are not meeting the standards.

No sewage to drain into Ganga. The government has decided to clean in situ 144 open drains carrying sewage along with industrial effluents into the river Ganga as part of its plan to clean up the river system and allow eco-flows. At the same time it has been decided not to allow immersion of ashes (from cremation) at the shallow end along the banks of the river. From now on, no sewage drainage system will be allowed to have an outlet into the river at any point along its flow, States have been told. A Ganga Vahini comprising ex-servicemen and NGOs will be constituted on the lines of the Red Cross at select locations along the river to keep vigil. River front management for development and beautification of ghats will be undertaken for seven towns, including Kedarnath, Haridwar, Kanpur, Varanasi, Allahabad, Patna and Delhi. More towns will be identified later. These crucial decisions were taken in the fourth meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority.

Industrial pollution. The Supreme Court has referred to National Green Tribunal the responsibility to monitor and inspect industrial units along river Ganga and even cut off their water and power connections if they are found to be polluting the river.

Sagar Islands under Clean Ganga project. The Bengal government's request to include the Sagar Islands and Ganga river stretch, flowing through the state, in the Clean Ganga project has been approved at a meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority.

Environmental clearances of hydel projects. A committee comprising officials of the environment and water resources ministry had been asked to review the reports of three committees dealing with hydropower projects on the two key tributaries of the Ganga -- Alakananda and Bhagirathi rivers -- in Uttarakhand.

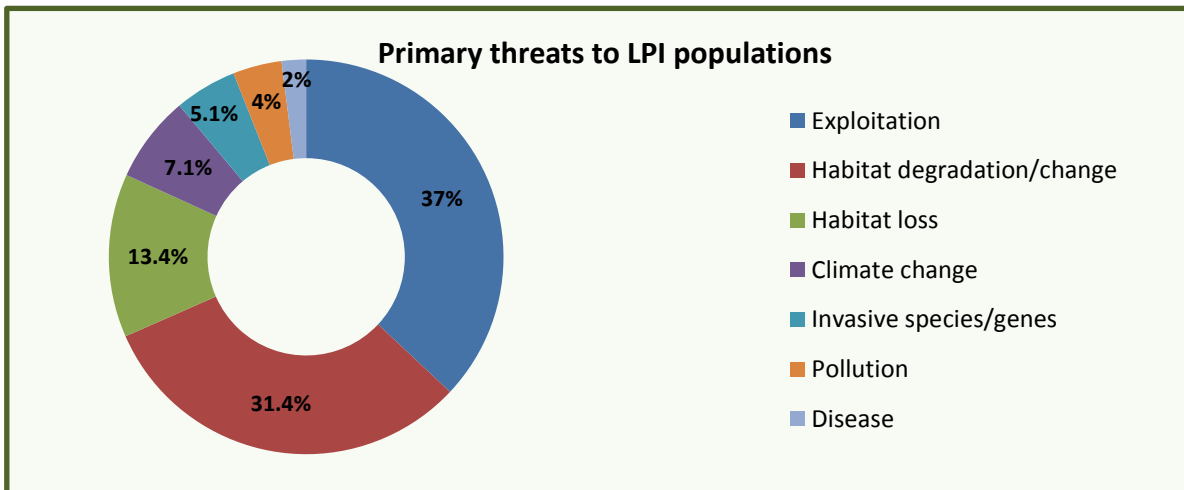
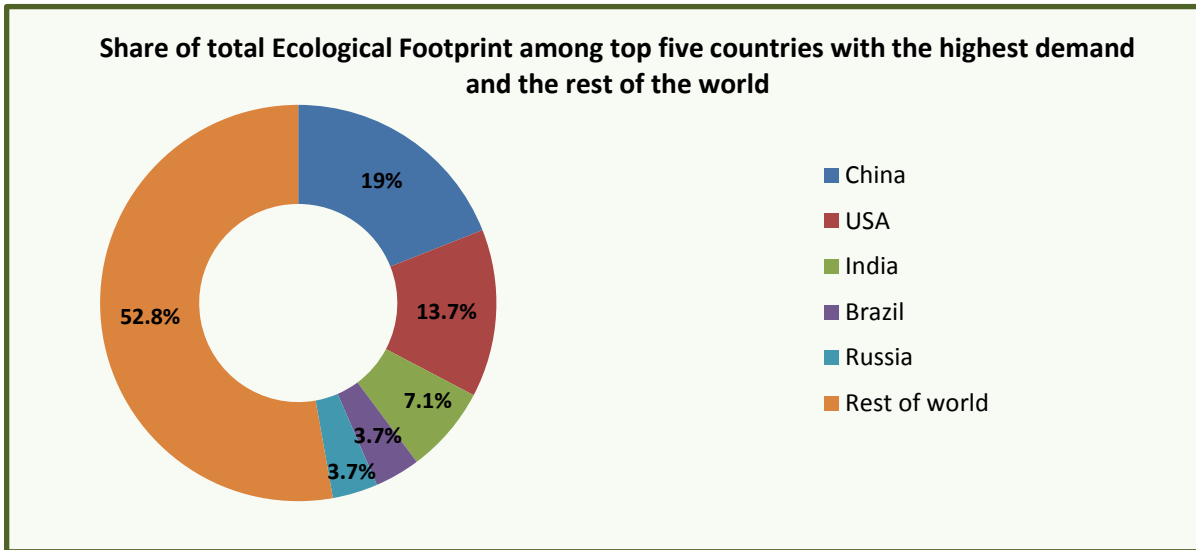
The Centre plans to link hydroelectric projects with its ambitious Ganga rejuvenation plan, for which it has proposed a new set of norms that all the project proponents will have to comply with before procuring environmental clearances. In its affidavit to the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Environment and Forests stated that it wanted to make sure that clearances to hydroelectric projects do not obstruct or hamper the Ganga clean-up plan in any manner.

Also read: [The Centre must involve states and weave other development plans into the Clean Ganga project, writes Dr S K Sarkar, Distinguished Fellow, TERI.](#)

[[Indian Express](#), 9 October 2014 | [The Financial Express](#), 24 October 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 27 October 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 28 October 2014 | [The Hindu](#), 28 October 2014 | [The Economic Times](#), 28 October 2014 | [The Hindu](#), 29 October 2014]

India has the third largest ecological footprint: Report

After China and USA, India has the third largest ecological footprint in the world. China's share of ecological footprint, which is a measure of humanity's demand on the planet, is a massive 19 per cent, followed by USA's 13.7 per cent and India at 7.1 per cent, [The Living Planet Report 2014](#) said. The top five countries, which include Brazil and Russia, make up about half the global total. The report highlights the dire situation of local populations due to increasing water scarcity and the alarming situation of depleting ground water resources and aquifers in countries like India, Australia and the United States. These three countries with the highest water footprint also contain eight of the top ten most populous river basins experiencing almost year-round scarcity, a problem that is likely only to get compounded by climate change, population growth and developmental imperatives.



Source. WWF. 2014

[[Deccan Herald](#), [The Hindu](#), 1 October 2014 | [WWF](#). 2014]

Hudhud strips Visakhapatnam of its green cover

Cyclone Hudhud pounded the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha with heavy rain and winds of almost 200 kmph on 26 October 2014 leaving a trail of devastation with Visakhapatnam where the very severe storm made landfall bearing the brunt. The maddening velocity of Hudhud, apart from destroying the properties of thousands of residents, almost entirely stripped Visakhapatnam of its green cover, sucked it dry of its rich wealth of birds and eroded its picturesque beaches. Such was the cyclone's intensity that about 75-80% of the city's trees were found to have been flattened, their bare stumps standing testimony to nature's fury. Even the hills dotting the city have become shorn of trees. The most saddening sights were visible in places such as Kailasagiri, Waltair, Ukkunagaram and the Andhra University campus that were earlier the most prominent lung spaces of Vizag.

PPP model. After the Hudhud cyclone left a trail of devastation around Vizag, the Andhra Pradesh government is readying to rope in private enterprises through public-private partnership model to rebuild villages on India's east coast. The state government has urged the private sector to adopt parts of Vizag as well as surrounding coastal towns and villages, promising to pitch in with matching grant funds.

Data portal. Aiming to leverage the power of technology, the Andhra Pradesh government has launched a web portal to collate and analyse data on the damages caused by the devastating cyclone Hudhud in coastal Andhra. The portal www.hudhud.ap.gov.in will facilitate collation and analysis of damages, and used by all government departments.

Adoption of disaster management system. The Andhra Pradesh government is planning to adopt a disaster management system like the one prevailing in Odisha, which frequently faces floods and cyclones. The state is also mulling a fire disaster response call centre and fire and disaster response academy for training personnel

[The Times of India, 14 October 2014 | IBN Live, 15 October 2014 | The Economic Times, 21 October 2014 | The Times of India, 22 October 2014]

Forest Rights Act diluted for projects

The central government is reportedly set to dilute the rights of tribals and other forest-dwelling communities, doing away with the present legal need for their consent while handing over their forest land to industry in large parts of the country. The government has brought in a key change diminishing the applicability of watershed Forest Rights Act (FRA) for seeking statutory forest clearance for projects. The environment ministry has exempted plantations, notified as forests within 75 years coming into force on 13 December 2005 — and not having tribal population as per 2001 and 2011 census — from the environment ministry's 2009 circular that made implementation of the act mandatory for green approval of the projects.

MoEF order. The MoEF order of 28 October 2014 basically exempts proposals seeking diversion “of plantations which were notified as forest” from the requirement of “initiation and completion of process for recognition and vesting of forest rights of scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers”. It

then goes on to say that in such case certifying letters from district collectors would be enough for diversion of land. The change notified by the ministry through the circular gives powers to the district collectors to notify whether FRA is applicable to the project site or not. In its latest rebuttal to MoEF, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs' letter on 21 October to MoEF, stated that, "no government agency has been vested with powers to exempt application of the (FRA) Act in part or full". The ministry also said: "It is further advised that any action or process inconsistent with the due process laid under the (FRA) Act would be legally untenable and is likely to be struck down by the court of law. Orissa Mining Corporation vs MoEF of 2013 is a case in point."

A group of over 300 social environmental and tribal activists and organisation are now planning to approach the Prime Minister highlighting the illegality of the environment ministry's order.

[[Hindustan Times](#), 29 October 2014 | [DNA](#), 31 October 2014 | [Business Standard](#), 31 October 2014]

News briefs

Biodiversity

Experts' panel to frame guidelines on Western Ghats report

The Karnataka government has set up an expert committee to frame guidelines for field level verification of 20,668 sq kms spread across 11 districts in the Western Ghats range that has been earmarked as Ecologically Sensitive Areas in a draft notification issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). The MoEF draft notification was issued on the basis of a report submitted by a High Level Working Group headed by Planning Commission member K Kasturirangan which identified approximately 37 per cent of the Western Ghats as Ecologically Sensitive Areas covering about 60,000 sq kms across six states.

[[Deccan Herald](#), 8 October 2014]

Certain areas around Okhla Sanctuary proposed to be declared eco-sensitive

Certain areas around the Okhla Bird Sanctuary on the Delhi-Noida border are proposed to be demarcated as eco-sensitive zone, prohibiting any construction activity except for the domestic needs of bona fide local residents. Under the proposal, an area up to 100 meter from the eastern, western and southern boundary of the sanctuary and an area up to 1.27 km from the northern boundary will be treated as the Eco-sensitive Zone. The environment ministry put the draft notification in this regard in public domain to invite comments from public. The proposal marks a considerable reduction in the demarcated area from 10-km radius which was proposed by the National Green Tribunal some time ago.

[[The Times of India](#), 16 October 2014]

Plant diversity in coastal areas under threat: study

Conservation of coastal plant species is critical to the very survival of the coastal ecosystem in Kerala. As many as 225 plant species traditionally used by coastal communities in southern Kerala for food, medicine, fodder, artefacts and other purposes could soon be struggling for survival unless conservation

measures are initiated on a war footing, a survey conducted by the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute has revealed. The ethnobotanical survey of the coastal belt in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Alappuzha points out that pollution, deforestation, indiscriminate development of coastal tourism infrastructure and unscientific coastal protection are posing a serious threat to the biodiversity in the coastal areas.

[[The Hindu](#), 25 October 2014]

Tech maps to help create data bank of bioresources in Himalayas

To create an accurate data bank of various plants growing in the Himalayas, the Institute of Himalayan Bioresources Technology has now come out with specie-specific distribution maps of floral resources. Unlike conventional maps, these contain the geographical coordinates of the locations of the occurrences of the species that have been recorded using GPS. Using geospatial tools and techniques, the maps catalogue the distribution pattern and availability of bioresources in the western Himalayas for environmental, industrial and societal purposes.

[[The Tribune](#), 26 October 2014]

Climate Change

Warming of Indian Ocean may weaken monsoon: Study

A recently published [study published in *Journal of Climate*](#) says the Indian Ocean has been warming consistently for over a century and at a faster rate than any other region of tropical oceans — and this may weaken the monsoon. The study by scientists from Pune's Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Sorbonne University in Paris and Pune's Fergusson College found the warming of the Indian Ocean has been a major contributor to the total global sea surface warming, which may have long-term effects on the climate such as weakening the southwest monsoon and being detrimental to marine biodiversity. Global ocean surface warming has long-term effects on the climate since it persists for a longer time compared with land temperatures.

[[The Times of India](#), 3 October 2014]

Uttarakhand floods result of climate change: Report

The 2013 Uttarakhand floods were most probably a consequence of “human-induced” climate change, a new report by the American Meteorological Society has suggested. The extraordinary rainfall in Uttarakhand in June last year has found a place in a list of 16 extreme weather events that the report says were most likely a direct result of climate change. The Special Supplement [Explaining Extreme Events of 2013: From a Climate Perspective](#) to the *Bulletin of American Meteorological Society*, Volume 95 (9), September 2014 comprises 22 studies of 16 events that occurred in 2013 all over the world.

[[Indian Express](#), 13 October 2014]

Corporate Social Responsibility

Mahindra to bring its CSR activities under single branding umbrella of 'Rise for Good'

The Mahindra Group is set to bring its corporate social responsibility, sustainability and corporate governance initiatives under a new branding umbrella 'Rise for Good'. The group's CSR and sustainability initiatives focus on four broad areas — education (with a focus on education of the girl child), health, environment and disaster relief.

[[The Economic Times](#), 2 October 2014]

Green Buildings

Delhi to get new building bye-laws soon

Delhi is rapidly moving towards having its own set of unified building bye-laws that would not only spell out the dos and don'ts in respect of constructions but also streamline the entire process doing away with many of the grey areas. The proposed laws seek to simplify the procedure for obtaining sanctions for construction of buildings besides making them user-friendly and incentivising green and energy-efficient construction. After taking views of all stakeholders in development work in the national capital, the Urban Development Minister has desired that the new simplified building bye-laws be notified by the end of December.

[[The Tribune](#), 22 October 2014 | [The Hindu](#), 8 October 2014 | [The Tribune](#), 7 October 2014]

DDA to promote green buildings

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is drafting a policy on financial and non-financial initiatives to promote green buildings in the national Capital. This was stated by Mr Sanjiv Kumar, Secretary Environment and Forest, Delhi government said while addressing the Delhi Environment Summit.

[[The Pioneer](#), 31 October 2014]

Natural Resources

ASI revives three water bodies near Qutub Minar

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has revived three water bodies — Rajon ki Baoli, Gandhak ki Baoli, and Hauz-i-Shamsi or Shamsi talab — inside the Qutub premises. All these baolis, except Shamsi talab, were nearly dry till recently. But for the last couple of months, the water level in these baolis has increased despite negligible rain this season.

[[The Hindu](#), 5 October 2014]

NCR eco zones shrinking: Survey

An assessment of the extent of damage or diversions from satellite images and maps prepared by the National Remote Sensing Centre has revealed an "alarming" shrinkage of the natural conservation zones, the National Capital Region (NCR) Planning Board, in its affidavit to the National Green Tribunal, has said. The NCR planning board has claimed it has written to state governments several times seeking reasons for such shrinkage. Replies haven't been forthcoming, it said.

[[The Times of India](#), 21 October 2014]

Salt invasion in Indo-Gangetic basin has led to 40% increase in human health problems: UN

Large areas of rich irrigated and fertile land in the Indo-Gangetic basin is being lost daily to salt damage. According to a [study published in *Natural Resources Forum*](#) conducted by the UN Institute for Water, Environment and Health, it was found that for more than 20 years now, every day an average of 2, 000 hectares of land is getting degraded by salt. The degraded land includes arid and semi-arid areas across 75 countries including, Aral Sea Basin in Central Asia, Indo-Gangetic Basin, Indus Basin of Pakistan, Chinese Yellow River Basin, Euphrates Basin, Australian Murray-Darling Basin and San Joaquin Valley in the United States.

[[The Times of India](#), [NDTV](#), 29 October 2014]

Pollution

AIIMS study links air pollution, arthritis

A preliminary analysis of an ongoing study at AIIMS since April 2013 on 300 rheumatoid arthritis patients has found their symptoms worsen when suspended particulate matter (SPM) 2.5 increases in the atmosphere. Particulate matters are essentially pollutants in the air, microscopic solid or liquid particles suspended in the atmosphere. Depending on their size, the pollutants are classified into many subtypes, one of them being SPM 2.5. It includes particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter. The study, funded by the Department of Science and Technology as part of a project on climate change, is being jointly conducted by Rheumatology department at AIIMS and Indian Meteorological Department.

[[Indian Express](#), 13 October 2014]

Jal Board kicks off Yamuna clean-up with sewer lines project

As part of its efforts to reduce pollution in the Yamuna, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) implemented the Interceptor Sewer Project, launching its first package in Dwarka. The project will lay 59 kilometre-long interceptor sewer lines to ensure that only treated sewage is discharged in major drains. The first package includes increasing the capacity of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in Dwarka from 20 million gallons daily to 40 million gallons daily. Interceptor sewers will be laid along three major drains in the capital — Najafgarh, Supplementary and Shahdara — to check sewage flowing from 180 subsidiary drains. Moreover, the sewage will be directed to the nearest STPs so that only treated waste is discharged in the drains.

[[The Indian Express](#), 28 October 2014 | [The Pioneer](#), 28 October 2014]

Waste Management

IIT team reuses waste paper to help school kids

The abysmal state of schools in the hinterland has inspired a unique project by IIT-Delhi students. A team of 17 BTech students collect waste paper and cartons from resident welfare associations and houses in south Delhi as well as companies in Gurgaon and Noida to get them recycled into notebooks for village schools near Delhi and in various parts of Uttar Pradesh. So far, they have distributed more than 800 recycled paper notebooks.

[[The Times of India](#), 20 October 2014]

General Environment

Bowing to states' demands, government relaxes environmental rules around sanctuaries

The Centre has relaxed environment norms for industry in and around wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. To entertain states' proposals to have no eco-sensitive zones around national parks and sanctuaries, the environment ministry has made it possible for project developers to begin work in these areas without a central nod. In the case of industrial projects in wildlife areas, the ministry has said project proponents can carry out preliminary surveys after securing the approval of the forest officer (chief wildlife warden), instead of approaching the Centre, and, subsequently, seeking the nod of the National Board for Wildlife.

[[Business Standard](#), 8 October 2014]

Gujarat says no to trials of GM crops

Gujarat has become the 11th state in the country to discourage field trials of the genetically modified (GM) food crops though it will continue to allow production of BT cotton. This has been revealed in the state government's reply to an application under the Right to Information Act by an anti-GM foods activist toeing the line of the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, farmers' wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

[[The Tribune](#), 27 October 2014]

Cabinet nod to Rs 1050-crore polar research vessel

In what can be a major boost to India's polar research, the government gave its go-ahead to the proposal of the Ministry of Earth Sciences for purchasing of the Polar Research Vessel (ice-breaker, research-cum-supply vessel) at a cost of over Rs 1050 crore. The Ministry of Earth Sciences felt it necessary to have the country's own polar research vessel considering the need to sustain two Indian research bases in Antarctica (Maitri and Bharti); dovetailing research initiatives in the Southern Ocean domain with those in the proximal regions of the Antarctic continent; widen the thrust on Arctic research disciplines undertaken through Indian Station Himadri, and to provide a suitable research platform for other tropical sea programmes.

[[The Tribune](#); [Hindustan Times](#), 30 October 2014]