

Enviro Monitor

September 2018

Air quality



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- Government constitutes committee to identify air polluting industries for protection of Taj
- 87% Indians would buy electric vehicles if that reduced pollution
- India bears 32% global burden of respiratory diseases

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- In managing water, Surat takes the lead
- Greater Chennai Corporation, Credai sign a MoU to restore 10 water bodies
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Water pollution



- More river stretches critically polluted
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Climate change



- Carbon dioxide emissions costing India up to \$210 billion every year
- Government plans Rs 65,000-crore project to reduce greenhouse gases from agriculture
- Half-degree rise in temperature in upper Himalayas may be affecting 40 sensitive species adversely
- Climate change spikes sea levels
- Kerala floods cited at UN to urge faster action on climate change



States told to gear up against crop burning. The Union Environment Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan has directed the NCR states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to complete the distribution of agricultural equipment among farmers in the next 10 days to ensure incidences of stubble burning are minimal this time around. In the latest data released by the ministry, the number of ‘good’, ‘satisfactory’ and ‘moderate’ days increased from 144 in 2017 to 149 in 2018, while the number of ‘poor’, ‘very poor’ and ‘severe’ days decreased from 125 in 2017 to 120 in 2018 till date for Delhi.

Seven farmer organizations in Punjab have decided to oppose legal action taken against “erring” farmers. The unions alleged that the government had failed to give a viable alternative to dispose of stubble.

Government constitutes committee to identify air polluting industries for protection of Taj. For protection of the Taj Mahal, a six-member high-level committee has been constituted by ministry of environment for identifying air and non-air polluting industries in Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) area. The committee will submit its report by October 31. TTZ is an area of about 10,400 sq km spread over the districts of Agra, Firozabad, Mathura, Hathras and Etah in Uttar Pradesh and Bharatpur district of Rajasthan. According to the order issued by the ministry of environment and forests, the committee will examine the list of industries falling within the TTZ and categories them into air-polluting and non air-polluting industries. They would also assess secondary data to find out if any other types of units operate under TTZ and whether they contribute to air pollution.

87% Indians would buy electric vehicles if that reduced pollution: survey. About 87 per cent of Indian drivers and vehicle owners would buy an electric vehicle (EV), if that helped reduce air pollution, according to a new survey. Only 12 per cent would switch to EVs to avoid using petrol and diesel, according to the survey commissioned by Climate Trends, a Bengaluru -based non-profit organization, which polled more than 2,000 Indian drivers, owners and those who planned to buy a car.

India bears 32 per cent global burden of respiratory diseases. India has 18% of the world’s population but 32% of the global burden of respiratory diseases.

Respiratory disease burden in India is second only to that of ischemic heart disease, found a state-level analysis of the Global Burden of Disease data. Chronic respiratory diseases were responsible for 10.9% of the total deaths and 6.4% of the total DALYs (a globally recognized disease burden estimate calculated on the basis of the number of productive life years cut short by disease) in India in 2016.

The corresponding figures for 1990 were 9.6% and 4.5%, respectively. Pollution is the biggest contributor to the respiratory disease burden.

About 33.6% of COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) could be attributed to ambient air pollution, 25.8% to household air pollution and 21% to smoking.

[Indian Express](#), 13 September 2018 | [Business Standard](#), 17 September 2018 | [The Tribune](#), 27 September 2018 | [The Times of India](#), ... 28 September 2018



In managing water, Surat takes the lead. Surat's civic body is setting up state-of-the-art sewage treatment plants (STPs) to ensure every drop of waste water is treated and reused for purposes other than drinking. From March 2019, the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) will be supplying 115 MLD (million litres per day) treated water to industries located within the city, in order to meet the entire industrial requirement of water through treated or recycled water. The entire quantum of water will be treated from domestic sewerage water in tertiary treatment plants at the Bamroli and Dindoli areas for supplying to mainly textile factories in the Pandesara and Sachin industrial clusters housing over 400 dyeing and printing units.

Greater Chennai Corporation, Credai sign a MoU to restore 10 water bodies. The Greater Chennai Corporation and CREDAI Chennai have signed a memorandum of understanding for the restoration of 10 water bodies. CREDAI Chennai has engaged Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI) to carry out the restoration work and stated that the restoration process will be completed within six months. The water bodies taken up include Arraa Kulam, Ayyankulam and Vairavan Kulam in Ambattur, Mayttukuppam Ganga Nagar pond and Appadurai Pillai Street pond in Valasarvakkam, Aalavancherry Kulam in Alandur, Mandapam Kuttai and Amara pond in Perungudi and Thallikulam and Sarayakulam in Sholinganallur.

World Bank's new global fund PROBLUE to support health, productive oceans. The World Bank has announced the creation of [PROBLUE](#), a new multi-donor trust fund that will support healthy and productive oceans by tackling marine pollution, managing fisheries and fostering the sustainable growth of coastal economies. PROBLUE is part of the World Bank's overall Blue Economy program, which takes a multi-pronged approach to ensure the protection and sustainable use of marine resources. The World Bank's active Blue Economy portfolio is around \$3.7 billion, with a further \$1.5 billion in the pipeline.

[The Hindu](#), 17 September 2018 | [Devdiscourse](#), 26 September 2018 | [The Times of India](#), 27 September 2018



More river stretches critically polluted. The number of polluted stretches in India's rivers has increased to 351 from 302 two years ago, and the number of critically polluted stretches has gone up to 45 from 34, according to an assessment by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). While the Rs 20,000 crore clean-up of the Ganga may be the most visible of the government's efforts to tackle pollution, the CPCB says several of the river's stretches — in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh — are actually far less polluted than many rivers in Maharashtra, Assam and Gujarat. These three states account for 117 of the 351 polluted river stretches.

Most Significant Stretches of River Pollution

- Mithi river — from Powai to Dharavi ♦ with a BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand) of 250 mg/l
- Godavari river — from Someshwar to Rahed ♦ with a BOD of 5.0-80 mg/l
- Sabarmati river — Kheroj to Vautha ♦ with a BOD of 4.0-147 mg/l
- Hindon river — Saharanpur to Ghaziabad ♦ with a BOD of 48-120 mg/l

Many Odisha schoolchildren hit by fluoride contamination. In Odisha's Nuapada district, potable water sources in as many as 54 schools and anganwadi premises testing for fluoride presence beyond permissible limits. Prolonged consumption of fluoride contaminated water leads to dental and skeletal fluorosis. Commonly, mottled teeth and crippled backbone and limbs are manifestation of the disease. Laboratory tests certified by the National Rural Drinking Water Programme under the Union Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry found 5.25 mg per litre fluoride content in water sourced from a tube well in the school.

Consumption of water having fluoride content above 1.5 mg per litre is considered dangerous to health.

Notice to Gujarat Pollution Control Board over industrial pollution in Vapi. A division bench of the Gujarat High Court has issued notices to the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) and others over pollution caused by an industry engaged in making paper from waste. The PIL was filed after the company sought permission to expand its capacity. The petition filed by Rakesh Rai said that NR Agarwal Industries in Sarigam Vapi had already ended up polluting the water sources so much so that the villagers residing in the vicinity were forced to buy drinking water.

[DNA](#), 13 September 2018 | [The Hindu](#), 17 September 2018 | [The Hindu](#), 18 September 2018



Carbon dioxide emissions costing India up to \$210 billion every year.

Researchers from the University of California San Diego in the US found that the top three countries with the most to lose from climate change are US, India and Saudi Arabia. In a recent [study](#) published in *Nature Climate Change*, researchers estimated country-level contributions to the social cost of carbon (SCC) using recent climate model projections, empirical climate-driven economic damage estimations and socioeconomic forecasts. The country-level SCC for India alone is estimated to be about \$86 per tonne of CO₂.

Government plans Rs 65,000-crore project to reduce greenhouse gases from agriculture. India is set to roll out its most integrated programme yet to cut greenhouse gases from agriculture. The project is primarily aimed at protecting the country's five biggest vulnerable ecological landscapes, according to a two officials familiar with the matter. The programme will cover Madhya Pradesh's Chambal region, Dampa in Mizoram, Odisha's Similipal, Jaisalmer and Barmer in Rajasthan besides a national wildlife corridor through Uttarakhand. The programme, involving the agriculture and environment ministries, is part of a global initiative of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a partnership 183 countries, including India.

Half-degree rise in temperature in upper Himalayas may be affecting 40 sensitive species adversely. A study by scientists of the Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in the Bhagirathi basin near Gaumukh has revealed that in the last two years, there has been a rise of at least 0.5 degree temperature accompanied by an almost 10% variation in humidity levels in upper Himalayas in Uttarakhand at an altitude between 3500-4500 meters. This alteration in temperature, the scientists say, will have direct impact on 40 species of animals and birds having their habitats in the region like Snow leopard, Musk deer, Himalayan snowcock and Snow partridge which are "under stress due to the escalated temperature."

Climate change spikes sea levels. India's coastal population has been steadily rising in the last decade. In the last decade it has exploded in numbers to around 600 million and also a relatively very high density per square km. The six most vulnerable states are West Bengal, Odisha, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Vulnerability is found to be higher not just due to the climate change-related projections on sea level rise and high density of population but more due to lack of professional preparedness as a routine task of governance in these states. India has vital reasons to focus on preparedness in disaster management due to its extremely high coastal vulnerability. Out of the 10 most vulnerable cities in the world, India's Mumbai and Kolkata occupy the second and third ranks after China's Guangzhao. The subsistence living on the one hand and ostentatious display of wealth and careless tourism on the other generate a social deficit which should also find a role in preparedness measures by state governments.

Of the world's top 20 cities to be flooded most dangerously, three are Indian cities — Chennai, Kochi and Surat.

Kerala floods cited at UN to urge faster action on climate change. UN General Assembly President Maria Fernanda Espinosa cited the recent devastating floods in Kerala, among other natural disasters wrecking havoc across the world, to make a call to the world leaders to achieve progress on agreements aimed at slowing climate change.

[The Asian Age](#), 17 September 2018 | [Hindustan Times](#), 24 September 2018 | [The Times of India](#), 24 September 2018 | [Business Standard](#), 26 September 2018 | [NDTV](#), 26 September 2018