

# Enviro Monitor

April 2017

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### Air quality



- Significant traces of lead in ambient air samples
- Hyderabad gasps on pollution: 40% rise in sinusitis cases
- Air pollution cutting off good cholesterol in body

### Water stress



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- Heavy water demand leaves Telangana depleted
- Severe water shortage hits coir industry
- Ken-Betwa link gets forest panel's nod
- Centre releases Rs 23,000 crore for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
- Niti Aayog plans index to rate states on water conservation
- Maharashtra to evolve integrated water plan for balanced regional development

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- Green body starts database of waste managers in Mumbai
- Now post offices, Bangalore One centres to accept e-waste in the city
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## Water quality



- Pollutants in Ganga destroying river purifying algae colonies
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## CSR



- HCL to announce corporate social responsibility grants
- India Inc spent more on CSR in 2016
- Companies need to look beyond the definition of CSR

## Air quality

**Significant traces of lead in ambient air samples.** Significant traces of lead was found in ambient air samples near a kerbside monitoring site set up on Mathura Road by researchers from the IIT Delhi. Though leaded petrol has been phased out in the capital for nearly a decade now, lead concentration was observed to be quite high in samples taken over two phases in 2014 and 2015. The study was conducted by IIT Delhi, University of Birmingham and Desert Research Institute, USA, and was funded by UKIERI, British Council. The site was set up to monitor PM2.5 levels and characterise the components to determine concentrations of elements.

**Hyderabad gasps on pollution: 40% rise in sinusitis cases.** Driving through traffic snarls can lead to chronic sinusitis, warn doctors. The consequences of the condition range from severe headaches, fever, continuous cold, fatigue, a lack of sense of smell, sore throat, pain in the ear as well as facial pain. Doctors say that the cases of acute sinusitis cases have shot drastically owing to the increasing levels of pollution coupled with the changing climatic conditions. Estimates show that numbers have grown by 30 to 40 per cent in the last five years.

**Air pollution cutting off good cholesterol in body.** Air pollution, especially from vehicular exhausts, reduces the good cholesterol in the body, according to a recent study published in the April edition of the journal *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology*. The [study](#) highlights the increasing risk of heart disease as good cholesterol decreases. Air pollution is well known for causing respiratory ailments, but it is less well known that it increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

[Indian Express](#), 10 April 2017 | [The Times of India](#), 16 April 2017 | [Deccan Chronicle](#), 19 April 2017



**Centre warns of water shortage.** The ministry of water resource has asked some states to promote water conservation projects ahead of the monsoon season as they could be vulnerable to drought conditions. Maharashtra, Telangana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh are identified as vulnerable states as some of them are in arid and semi-arid zones, receive spatial rains, and have low water storage in reservoirs, or are seeing a decline in the water tables. In

2016-17, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry suffered agricultural drought.

**Heavy demand leaves Telangana with depleted water table.** The drinking water crisis has worsened across the state with the onset of summer. Out of 67 municipalities in Telangana, 60 municipalities are facing acute water shortage. Only seven municipalities get water supply every day. Elsewhere, water is supplied once every two, three or even four days. With ground water levels falling, the water supplied to each household has been decreased to 40 LPCD (litres per capita per day) from 100 LPCD in municipalities where water is supplied every day.

The water stressed districts are Asifabad, Adilabad, Bhupalpally, Jagtial, Kamareddy, Mahbubnagar, Medak, Nirmal, Nalgonda, Nagarkurnool, Ranga Reddy, Surya-pet, Siddipet, Wanaparthy, Vikarabad and Mancherial.

**Severe water shortage hits coir industry.** A severe shortage of water, affecting coconut farms in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, is forcing the coir industry to look at sourcing husks from Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. Kerala and Tamil Nadu together produced over 9000 million nuts in 2014-2015. However, the yield has dropped this year

**Ken-Betwa link gets forest panel's nod but with reservations.** The forest advisory committee, an expert body that advises the government on approval or rejection of major projects involving diversion of forest land has recently recommended the Ken-Betwa river link project (phase 1) in Madhya Pradesh for forest clearance. The committee has recommended that the loss of forest land has to be compensated by purchasing revenue or other non-forest land. The project proponents and the government should compensate the loss of forestland and tiger habitat through purchase and transfer to Panna Tiger Reserve equivalent revenue and private land.

The committee has agreed in principle to give a green signal to this much awaited project without insisting for reducing height of its proposed dam.

**Centre releases Rs 23,000 crore for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.** The Centre has released Rs 23,443 crore to the states under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) as part of the its early spending push. Funds released would be used to undertake priority work under water conservation measures. The Centre has also declared drought in eight states, allowing them to offer 50 days of extra manual work under MGNREGS in 2017-18. These states have been asked to take up water conservation and drought proofing projects under MGNREGS.

**Niti Aayog plans index to rate states on water conservation.** Niti Aayog plans to come out with an index to rate states on initiatives taken by them to conserve water resources. NITI Aayog has developed a [Composite Water Management Index](#) as a useful tool to assess and further improve the performance in efficient management of water resources. The index would provide useful information for the states and also for the concerned central ministries/departments enabling them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for better management of water resources. The Index has 28 key Performance Indicators (KPIs) covering irrigation status, drinking water and other water-related sectors. It is targeted to prepare the index for States/Union Territories from the current financial year (2017-18).

**Maharashtra to evolve integrated water plan for balanced regional development.** Maharashtra will be the first state to evolve an integrated water plan which will include inter-river basin water transfer for balanced regional development through equitable water allocation to drought-prone districts of Vidarbha and Marathwada. The state's chief minister has set 31 December 2017 deadline for Integrated State Water Plan across five river basins of Godavari, Tapi, Krishna, Narmada and western flowing rivers. The plan is also aimed at minimising the regional conflict over water share and ensuring equitable allocation of water for multiple use, with the highest priority for drinking and agriculture. The inter-basin water transfer, wherever it is geographically and economically viable, is also part of the sustainable water resource management.

[Money Control](#), 6 April 2017 | [Press Information Bureau](#), 6 April 2017 | [The Times of India](#), 9 April 2017 | [The Economic Times](#), 11 April 2017 | [Indian Express](#), 13 April 2017 | [The Economic Times](#), 15 April 2017 | [Deccan Chronicle](#), 18 April 2017 | [The Times of India](#), 26 April 2017 | [The Hindu](#), 29 April 2017



**Bengaluru to get climate change lab.** In order to study the actual impact of climate change and equip the state to tackle the vagaries of nature better, a dedicated Climate Change Laboratory will soon be set up in Bengaluru. The Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI), located near JP Nagar, will be housing the centre under the National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change with help from the Department of Science and Technology. The setting up of the lab will not only boost research but is also expected to help train officials on the impact of climate change in their respective fields.

**Bangalore Airport slashes carbon emissions by 57%, gets green award.** The Airports Council International has accredited Kempegowda International Airport with a certificate of Level 3 Plus Neutrality under the Airport Carbon Accreditation. With this certificate, the Bangalore International Airport becomes the fourth such environment-friendly green airport in the Asia Pacific. The airport has managed to reduce its carbon emissions by 57% since 2008.

**Bloomberg adds site section covering climate change.** Called [Climate Changed](#), the new hub focuses on the future of energy and climate science, aimed at Bloomberg's business and finance-focused audience. It will house Bloomberg's existing trove of climate change related stories, as well. Climate Changed now houses Bloomberg's Carbon Clock, a project it started in December 2015, that tracks the amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, shown over satellite images of the Earth.

[The Times of India](#), 11 April 2017 | [Media Post](#), 20 April 2017 | [The Financial Express](#), 25 April 2017



**Swachh Bharat: Funds for treating solid waste cut 46 per cent.** The Centre has decided to halve the expenditure on solid waste management, the biggest head of the cleanliness drive. The government has scaled down expenditure on solid waste management 46 per cent to Rs 20,153 crore from Rs 38,000 crore approved by the Cabinet in September 2014, when it gave its assent to the Rs 62,009 crore mission.

**Green body starts database of waste managers in Mumbai.** With Mumbai struggling to effectively manage 9000 metric tonnes of garbage that it generates daily, Ekconnect Knowledge Foundation, an environmental organization, has initiated a project under which it will assess, map and create a database of all those Mumbaikars who have been using various ways of composting garbage.

**Now post offices, Bangalore One centres to accept e-waste in the city.** Bengaluru is the third-largest producer of e-waste in India, preceded by Mumbai and Delhi. However, Bengaluru's official recycling units are woefully under-utilised as around 70 per cent of e-waste is handled by the unorganised sector and the rest by organisations registered with the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board. Two city-based non-profits, Saahas and Environmental Synergies in Development (Ensyde), are collaborating with post offices and Bangalore One centres to set up e-waste collection units in their premises.

**50% of Bengaluru waste segregated at source.** Over 50% of waste generated in Bengaluru is being segregated, says the latest daily report of the BBMP's solid waste management wing. Of the total waste of 4039.76 tonnes generated on 4 April 2017, 2057.03 tonnes were segregated at source. In all, 1677.65 tonnes of wet waste and 362.65 tonnes of dry waste were segregated at source.

[The Times of India](#), 9 April 2017 | [The Economic Times](#), 11 April 2017 | [DNA](#), 13 April 2017 | [The Economic Times](#), 20 April 2017



**Pollutants in Ganga destroying river purifying algae colonies.** Colonies of a major group of algae (diatoms), which grow inside the river Ganga and act as its purifier, have fallen considerably due to change in river chemistry following human generated pollutants and sewage falling indiscriminately in the river. Growing pollution has made a drastic change in nitrogen-phosphorous ratio essential for the growth of these algae colonies in the river, revealed a scientific study carried out by a group of four scientists headed by Prof Jeetendra Pandey of Banaras Hindu University. Detergent is a major killer of these purifiers since phosphorous coming out of it flows with sewage into the river. It deposits at river bottom and affects the life cycle of purifiers. While stress resilient micro algae purifiers survive, many of these vanish.

**NGT orders closure of industries near Bellandur Lake, Karnataka.** Banning the dumping of any kind of municipal solid waste around Bellandur Lake, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed immediate and complete shut-down of all industries around the water body. The green panel ordered the State Pollution Control Board to seal industries violating its directions. It also announced an environment compensation of Rs 5 lakh on anyone found dumping waste in and around the lake.

**Arsenic-polluted water linked to cancer in India.** Millions of people in Bihar, India, are showing symptoms of arsenic poisoning, which can be linked to cancer, due to consumption of contaminated drinking water. The symptoms arise after many years of exposure, say experts. The state of Bihar, in eastern India, is one of the country's most impoverished states. More than 10 million people in the state are estimated to be threatened with arsenic poisoning or arsenicosis from contaminated groundwater. Dr Ashok Ghosh, a professor at the Mahavir Cancer Institute and Research Center in Patna, Bihar, has been studying groundwater pollution in the state since 2004 and says arsenic concentration has shot up in the groundwater supply of some Bihar districts since he began looking into it. Dr Ghosh believes the signs of cancer and other ailments now showing among the populations at risk are due to their continued exposure to this toxin.

17 of Bihar's 38 districts have groundwater with arsenic concentrations above the permissible limit, according to the study.

[Hindustan Times](#), 16 April 2017 | [The Hindu](#), 20 April 2017 | [CNN](#), 1 May 2017



**HCL to announce corporate social responsibility grants.** The HCL Foundation will announce grants of Rs 5 crore each in the fields of education, health and environment through pan-India symposia on "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for Nation Building: The HCL Grant". The HCL Foundation symposia are being conducted by the CSR arm of IT giant HCL Technologies, targeting 10 cities across the country -- Chandigarh, Kolkata, Vijaywada, Mumbai, Bhubneshwar, Guwahati, Imphal, Gandhinagar, Patna and Jaipur.

**CSR spending on environment, women empowerment declined in 2015-16.** The CSR expenditure of corporate India continues to see a bias towards health, poverty, sanitation and education related activities, which take up almost 63 per cent of the Rs 9822 crore total CSR spend in the country. The government data put out in Parliament shows decline in funding related to environment, women empowerment and slum development. The total spend on these accounted for only 11 per cent of the total CSR expenditure in 2015-16, as compared to almost 19 per cent in 2014-15.

**Companies report better CSR compliance in FY16.** CSR compliance improved in India in 2015-16 with companies managing to effectively spend almost 92% of their budgeted CSR expenditure, according to the CII's Annual CSR Tracker survey. According to the report, the main reasons for under-spending or lack of CSR spend were planning and implementation, with almost 44% of the companies falling in that category. This is significantly less than 62% in FY15, where 35% companies "required more time to plan". "Finding the right project" continued to be a challenge for 14% of the companies. The report

Health and sanitation, education and skill development, and rural development were the top three developmental areas for spends. Out of the 32 industry categories, absolute spends decreased in just two industries—commercial services & supplies and oil & gas.

further observed that the number of companies spending CSR budgets exclusively through corporate foundations increased to 72 from 60 last year, reflecting an increasing trend towards companies building their own capacities for implementation.

[The Economic Times, 12 April 2017](#) | [The Economic Times, 17 April 2017](#) | [Business Standard, 2 May 2017](#)