

# Enviro Monitor

February 2017

## Trending topics

### Air quality



- Air pollution in China, India accounted for 2.2 million deaths in 2015
- Badarpur power plant to reopen from March 15 till next winter
- Patna, Delhi among most polluted cities

### Water quality



- Contaminated groundwater in 22 of Karnataka's 30 districts poses health risks
- Bellandur a warning bell for Bengaluru
- Residents of West Bengal struggle to access safe drinking water
- Mumbai's posh Malabar Hill, Nariman Point surrounded by toxic water
- SC deadline for factories that pollute

### Waste management



- Location norms soon for waste treatment plants
- E-waste concentration in Indian soil is twice the global average
- DMRC unveils park made of waste collected from its construction sites

### CSR



- India Inc spent more on CSR in 2016
- Companies need to look beyond the definition of CSR



**Air pollution in China, India accounted for 2.2 million deaths in 2015.**

According to the US-based [Health Effects Institute](#), air pollution caused more than 4.2 million early deaths worldwide in 2015, making it the fifth highest cause of death, with about 2.2 million deaths in China and India. The institute's study was based on the Global Burden of Disease project, a database backed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that tracks the

role that behavioural, dietary and environmental factors play in deaths across 195 countries.

Terming recent, international reports linking air pollution and deaths in India “extrapolations without due scientific validation,” the Environment Ministry said that it was working with the Health Ministry to prepare a comprehensive report on the health impact of pollution. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, international studies linking air quality in India to disease and death are flawed because “...the ethologic, personnel immunity (sic) and demography of India are incomparable with international practices.”

**Badarpur power plant to reopen from March 15 till next winter.** A decision to reopen Badarpur power plant from March 15 till start of next winter was taken in a meeting of the Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority. It has, however, also proposed closing down Badarpur as a thermal power plant for good by July 2018. During that period, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee will appoint NEERI (National Environmental Engineering Research Institute) to monitor the flyash pit and the air quality in and around the station.

**Patna, Delhi among most polluted cities.** According to the study, some of the worst polluted cities of the world are in India. The study, released recently but based on 2010 data, estimates that, globally, 2.7-3.4 million preterm births may be associated with exposure to PM 2.5. South Asia, with 1.6 million preterm births, is the worst hit. The review by 48 scientists and experts from 16 international institutions has warned that air pollution has adverse health effects on people even when the concentration of pollutants meets WHO standards.

---

Patna and Delhi figure among the most polluted cities, both having an annual PM 2.5 concentration of more than 120 micrograms per cubic metres — about 12 times the WHO guideline.

---

At the same time, it said reducing air pollution will lead to massive health benefits. The study, [The Lancet Countdown:](#)

[Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change](#), a review of significant scientific studies — refers to the recent International Energy Agency (IEA) report which had collated PM 2.5 exposure in lower, middle and upper income countries.



**Contaminated groundwater in 22 of Karnataka’s 30 districts poses health**

**risks.** The plummeting water levels in reservoirs across of Karnataka - a consequence of consecutive droughts – may lead to the district administrative bodies to resort to digging up more borewells to slake the thirst of the populace. However, information contained in reports prepared by the Central Ground Water Board and Ground Water Directorate, Karnataka pertaining to chemical concentration in groundwater in the state,

could well render the plan of digging borewells defunct. The reports indicate that concentration of harmful chemicals such as nitrate, fluoride, arsenic is beyond permissible limits in 22 of Karnataka's 30 districts, including Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural. Concentration of nitrate, fluoride and iron was found to be above permissible limits in as many as 16 districts.

**Bellandur a warning bell for Bengaluru.** Frothing and fire at Bellandur and Varthur lakes is a sign of a deeper malaise. The pollution poses a threat to non-locals too, as fish and crops from here with high concentration of toxic metals are consumed in and around the city. According to reports, the high concentration of heavy metals in the lake water translates into very high concentrations of heavy metals in the fish from the lake and also in the crops cultivated downstream and consumed in and around Bengaluru.

**Residents of West Bengal struggle to access safe drinking water.** Around one out of every five persons in rural India, who do not have access to clean drinking water, is from West Bengal. According to estimates available with the Union ministry of drinking water and sanitation, around 411 lakh villagers in India, which is around 4.5% of the country’s rural population, do not have access to safe and clean drinking water.

**Mumbai’s posh Malabar Hill, Nariman Point surrounded by toxic water.** Mumbai’s most expensive real estate areas are surrounded by high levels of water pollution, a study by the Maharashtra pollution control board has said. A pollutant-measuring indicator – water quality index (WQI) – of sea surface water at Malabar Hill, Nariman Point, Gateway of India, Worli sea face, Juhu and towards the Bandra end of the Mithi River showed high pollution as a result of a surge in domestic waste being deposited in these areas. Between March and August 2016, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board carried out water quality monitoring, under the National Water Monitoring Programme of the Union environment ministry, at 188 locations in the state. There were four parameters – pH, dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand and fecal coliform – to calculate WQI for surface water. WQI is represented in colour bands.

**80% of the pollution source for Mumbai, Pune, Thane and Raigad was untreated domestic waste.**

**SC deadline for factories that pollute.** The Supreme Court gave polluting industrial units three months to install effluent treatment plants to remove contaminants from the wastes before they are released into

water bodies. It has directed the State Pollution Control Boards across the country to cut power supply to non-compliant companies.

[Hindustan Times](#), 13 February 2017 | [Bangalore Mirror](#), 20 February 2017 | [Hindustan Times](#), 20 February 2017 | [The Hindu](#), 23 February 2017 | [The Times of India](#), 28 February 2017



**Location norms soon for waste treatment plants.** Soon, waste-to-energy plants will be allowed to come up within 20-100 metres of residential areas, according to a draft law proposed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The guidelines will apply to prospective treatment plants across the country and existing plants will have to incorporate measures such as planting trees, odour-free technology and proper waste transport measures within the

buffer zone. The new CPCB guidelines say that future plants ought to follow a model of ‘decentralisation,’ meaning that rather than a city’s waste being carted to a few large landfills or waste-conversion plants, there should be more units disaggregated and employing optimal technology to convert the waste into fuel or electricity.

**E-waste concentration in Indian soil is twice the global average.** Analysis of soil samples from seven cities, including New Delhi and Mumbai, by SRM University, Chennai, and UK and Chinese institutes discovered that the average concentration of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in Indian soil was almost twice the amount found in global background soil — at 12 ng/g (nanogram per gram) dry weight as against 6ng/g — but as much as that recorded in Pakistan and urban areas of China. The [study](#) found Chennai to be most contaminated in terms PCB concentration in soil, with an informal e-waste shredding site recording maximum concentration. Located at close proximity from the port, Chennai imports e-waste in addition to its domestic generation of nearly 47,000 tonnes of e-waste annually.

**DMRC unveils park made of waste collected from its construction sites.** The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Monday unveiled a one of a kind park, designed using waste materials generated from the Delhi Metro’s construction sites. Located in east Delhi’s Shastri Park, the Prakriti Metro Park will use top soil dug out from various underground station sites to plant medicinal and pollution absorbing plants. Treated water will be used for irrigation and the organic waste generated will be treated.

[Hindustan Times](#), 19 February 2017 | [The Hindu](#), 21 February 2017 | [The Hindu](#), 23 February 2017



**India Inc spent more on CSR in 2016.** India's top tier companies' allocation of Rs 7300 crore in fiscal 2016 to corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives exceeded regulatory requirements, a [study](#) by professional services firm KPMG showed. The study of annual reports of Nifty companies by ET Intelligence Group showed 48 companies spent a combined Rs 4252 crore in FY15. This is 1.6% of the standalone net profit earned by Nifty companies for the year. Two companies are yet to publish their annual reports. Majority of

spends were in the areas of health, sanitation and education while rural development attracted increasing spends in 2016, as per the study.

**Companies need to look beyond the definition of CSR.** To gauge the extent of engagement that Indian companies have with the communities around them, non-profit organizations Oxfam India, Corporate Responsibility Watch, Praxis and Partners in Change collaborated on an index—the India Responsible Business Index (IRBI), now in its second edition. The collaborative effort is aimed at promoting discussions and debates around the non-financial processes of businesses to encourage responsible business practices. The index shows the number of companies looking at backward regions and communities to conduct CSR activities has risen from 25 in 2015 to 32 in 2016 and that of companies identifying vulnerable communities to work with has increased from 71 in 2015 to 85 in 2016.

[Mint](#), 13 February 2017 | [The Economic Times](#), 14 February 2017