

# Enviro Monitor

October 2016

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### Air quality



- TERI for pan-India clean air plan
- AIIMS study links spike in arthritis symptoms to rising pollution levels
- Delhi smothered by smog
- Punjab, Haryana told to implement action plan on stubble burning
- Bengaluru air quality takes a beating, sees 24% dip in over five years

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- India Inc increases focus on reducing carbon emission
- Maharashtra government sets up panel on climate resilient farming
- PetroFed and TERI sign MoU to study climate change risks in India

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- Punjab warned about groundwater level
- Bengaluru water bodies, rajakaluve lands worth Rs 1.77 lakh crore encroached
- Kerala stares at severe drought

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- Uttarakhand biodiversity board selects 13 sacred groves for eco-tourism
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- Haryana issues diktat on solid waste plants
- Solid waste management plants to be set up in Delhi
- Waste disposal goes digital as Jamshedpur gets smart dustbins
- New waste-to-energy plant at Bhalswa.

## Air quality

**TERI for pan-India clean air plan.** Keeping in view the deteriorating air quality in Delhi and other metros, TERI has come out with a report, listing solutions to address this pressing issue. It suggests, among others, starting a nationwide clean air mission (CAM-INDIA), which should have the mandate to implement government policies for air pollution mitigation across several ministries. Titled [Ten scalable solutions for Indian cities](#), the report is a joint effort by TERI, United Nations Environment Programme and University of California at San

Diego. The suggestions focus on a variety of sectors, including transport, agriculture and power, which directly and indirectly impact pollution levels.

**AIIMS study links spike in arthritis symptoms to rising pollution levels.** A three-year study conducted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has found that increasing particulate matter levels in Delhi's air has "significant correlation" with a spike in arthritis symptoms. The study also found that a significant percentage of healthy persons who were monitored since 2014 tested positive for autoantibodies, which indirectly suggests a condition referred to as autoimmunity, when the body's immune system turns against itself and attacks healthy cells.

The AIIMS study was carried out in two parts:

➔ Retrospective study, where 500 cases of rheumatoid arthritis between 2008 and 2013 were compared with pollution level data and their correlation by use of biostatistics

➔ Prospective study between 2014 and 2016, where 500 cases from the first leg were followed up and 500 more people were chosen across the city and examined to identify vulnerability to autoimmune disease.

**Delhi smothered by smog.** The hazardous smog, worst in 17 years, which has kept the national capital shrouded since Diwali (30 October 2016) has lingered on, as the overall air quality oscillated between 'severe' and 'very poor' categories. The 24-hour-average (rolling) of PM 2.5 and PM 10 were 225 and 389 micrograms per cubic metre respectively as per SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research) at 6 PM. Six out of eight stations of SAFAR had air quality in the very poor category while two had an AQI of severe. However, the peak levels of pollution continued to violate the safe limits by over 10 times, even in densely populated areas like RK Puram and border areas like Anand Vihar.

**Punjab, Haryana told to implement action plan on stubble burning.** The Environment Protection Control Authority, set up by the Supreme Court to save the environment in the country, has directed Punjab and Haryana to implement the action plan drafted for checking the burning the paddy straw. Addressing officers of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh, the Chairman of the authority, Mr Bhure Lal, said effective steps must be taken to check the menace that was causing a substantial damage to the environment.

**Bengaluru air quality takes a beating, sees 24% dip in over five years.** The quality of air in Bengaluru has taken a severe beating over the past five years. From a satisfactory level in 2011, the quality has been downgraded to a moderate level in 2015. These are findings collated by Karnataka State Pollution Control Board on Air Quality Index (AQI) using data collected over the last five years through its air quality monitoring stations at various parts of Bengaluru. The AQI stood at 90.6 in 2011 and rose by 24 per cent to 112.3 in 2015. As per national quality standards, the air quality is considered 'good' if it is less than 50 and is rated 'satisfactory' if it is below 100. However, barring 2011, the Index value has been above 100, which pushes it into the 'moderate' category.

[The Times of India](#), 11 October 2016 | [The Tribune](#), 12 October 2016 | [The New Indian Express](#), 13 October 2016 | [The Hindu](#), 19 October 2016 | [Hindustan Times](#), 31 October 2016 | [The Indian Express](#), 1 November 2016



**India takes a significant step to control emission from climate-damaging**

**refrigerants**, makes producers fall in line. Stepping up its climate action voluntarily, India on Thursday made it mandatory for manufacturing companies to control emission of the climate-damaging refrigerant through technological intervention and incineration. The move was announced on the day when ongoing negotiations to fix a time-line for global phase down of the hydro-fluorocarbons (HFCs) entered a crucial round in Kigali, Rwanda where representatives of nearly 200 countries are assembled to take a call on

amendment to the Montreal Protocol to deal with the issue of refrigerants. The decision will, however, pinch the consumers as these companies may pass the cost of maintaining incinerators to them until there is a system in place to earn them carbon credit for destroying HFCs through capture and incineration.

**India Inc increases focus on reducing carbon emission: CDP.** Corporates are increasing focus on setting emission reduction and renewable energy targets besides

putting up an internal price on carbon as part of risk mitigation. According to CDP's latest report, [Out of the starting blocks: Tracking progress on corporate climate action](#), as many as 47 firms on the BSE 200 index have disclosed information related to climate change as against 34 companies in 2010. CDP, through a study of these 47 companies, has found that there is an increasing focus on

setting emission reduction and renewable energy targets with 38 companies reporting current targets for cut in emission. About 15 of the 38 companies have short term emission target (till year 2020).

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Two companies -- Infosys and Tata Motors -- have committed to a 100 per cent renewable energy consumptions target by 2018 and 2030 respectively.

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**Maharashtra government sets up panel on climate resilient farming.** The State government has decided to set up a committee under the chairmanship of a top bureaucrat for the implementation of a Rs 4000-crore project on climate resilient agriculture. The programme aims to reduce farmers' dependence on unpredictable weather cycles and enhance resilience of agriculture to climate change and vulnerability through research and use of technology. The seven-member panel, headed by the Principal Secretary (Agriculture), has been set up with a target of selecting 4000 drought-prone villages for the implementation of the project, according to a Government Resolution issued recently.

**PetroFed and TERI sign MoU to study climate change risks in India.** PetroFed has signed MoU with TERI to undertake a detailed study on 'Climate Change Risks: Preparedness for Oil and Gas Sector'. The study will provide important inputs for future strategy on oil and gas infrastructure development. It will also provide a comprehensive analysis of threats posed by climate change to oil and gas sector and shall provide a way forward to tackle the challenges posed by climate change. The study will suggest suitable measures for the oil and gas sector to achieve India's INDC target of reducing the emission intensity of GDP by 33% to 35% below the levels in 2005 by 2030.

[The Times of India](#), 13 October 2016 | [Hydrocarbon Technology](#), 17 October 2016 | [The Times of India](#), 26 October 2016 | [The Hindu](#), 31 October 2016



**Government draft bill for 'equitable' river water sharing.** Seeking to resolve several inter-state disputes over the sharing of river waters through model legislation, the Centre has come out with the [draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016](#), to provide a mechanism to develop and manage river basins in an integrated manner so that every state gets an "equitable" share of a river's water without violating the rights of

others. The draft bill also pitches for establishing a river basin authority for each inter-state basin to ensure "optimum and sustainable" development of rivers and valleys and devises an integrated approach to conserve water and manage groundwater in a sustainable manner. Since water is a state subject, the proposed legislation will not be binding on the states for adoption even if it becomes a law through Parliament in due course. It will work as a model bill for the states, giving them a framework to make local laws to use and conserve water. The bill stresses managing water at basin-level and "right measurement" of State's contribution to river system to resolve conflicts.

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**Punjab warned about groundwater level.** Groundwater irrigates almost three-quarters of Punjab's agricultural land, but groundwater levels are dropping by 40 to 50 cm (16 to 20 inches) a year, according to Dr Rajan Aggarwal, head of the soil and water engineering department at Punjab Agricultural University.

**Bengaluru: Water bodies, rajakaluve lands worth Rs 1.77 lakh crore encroached.** 1547 lakes in Bengaluru urban and rural districts, whose total extent is 57,932 acres. Of this, an area of 10,787 acres has been

encroached upon. The land value of this is estimated to be 1.5 lakh crore. Likewise, 1,256 acres of pond area (worth Rs 16,500 crore) and 501 acres of rajakaluve area (worth Rs 11,000 crore) too have been encroached upon. The Legislative Assembly Speaker said that 1,14,988 properties had encroached upon the lake buffer zone in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike limit.

**Kerala stares at severe drought.** A severe drought is looming large over Kerala as the state has received deficient rainfall during the southwest monsoon. The Kerala government has declared all the 14 districts drought-hit, as it is expecting one of the worst droughts the state has faced during the past 10 years, in 2016. There has been a sharp decrease of rainfall to the tune of 34% during the south-west monsoon, according to figures released by the Indian Meteorological Department.

[The Times of India](#), 13 October 2016 | [The Hindu](#), 13 October 2016 | [Deccan Herald](#), 27 October 2016 | [The Times of India](#), 31 October 2016 | [Business Standard](#), 1 November 2016



**Government sets up panel to revamp forest law.** The Union environment, forests and climate change ministry has constituted an 11-member committee to revamp the Indian Forest Act, 1927. The committee is likely to submit a report in three or four months though neither a deadline nor specific terms of reference has been set for it.

**Uttarakhand biodiversity board selects 13 sacred groves for eco-tourism.**

Local residents have dedicated around 400 sacred groves to their deities and hence have shunned tree felling or any other exploitation of natural resources which help in conservation of biodiversity. The Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board has selected 13 sacred groves for eco-tourism, out of which four are underway for approval from the state's forest department. The villagers will be trained to start eco-tourism activity. These four forests include Tadkeshwar in Pauri Garhwal, Saim Mukhim in Tehri, Dhurka Devi in Almora and Thal Kedar in Pithoragarh.

**FAO launches guidelines on urban forests.** Urban forests can make cities healthier, safer and wealthier, but their potential is not fully realized, according to the [Guidelines on Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry](#) launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO). The publication explains how cities can maximize the contribution of urban forests to addressing local and global sustainable development challenges, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, food and nutrition security, and human health and well-being, in the face of increasing urbanization.

[The Times of India](#), 1 October 2016 | [Business Standard](#), 11 October 2016 | [IISD SDG Knowledge Hub](#), 27 October 2016



**Haryana issues diktat on solid waste plants.** The Haryana government has made installation of decentralised solid waste management plant mandatory in group housing societies, hostels and hotels under the [Haryana Building Code](#). These solid waste treatment plants are expected to help in efficient management of solid waste within municipal limits.

**Solid waste management plants to be set up in Delhi.** The North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) and the South Delhi Municipal Corporation have planned an extensive mechanism to manage the solid waste generated in the national capital by setting up solid waste management plants at four locations. The move is part of the Swachh Bharat mission. The NDMC, which generates about 3500 metric tonnes of waste daily, has already started a waste management plant on a trial basis at Bawana and the plant is likely to be inaugurated later this month, while another project of the NDMC is likely to come up on the already overused G T Karnal bypass landfill. The Bawana solid waste management plant that is currently being run on a trial basis is capable of converting 85% of the solid waste generated daily into fuel and compost, which can be reused. The rest 15% of the waste remains non-convertible, which can then be used to make brick chunks for non-sturdy constructions.

**Waste disposal goes digital as Jamshedpur gets smart dustbins.** Municipal waste management has now become smart, with garbage collection and disposal going digital in Jamshedpur, the first city in the country to do so. Jamshedpur Utility Services and Company (Jusco), a Tata Steel subsidiary, launched e-dustbins in the city. These dustbins are fitted with sensors which send alerts to a central command room when 75% full.

**New waste-to-energy plant at Bhalswa.** A waste-to-energy plant will be set up at the Bhalswa landfill that has been overflowing with garbage for years, the North Delhi Municipal Corporation has announced. The landfill, which is spread over 40 acres of land in north-west Delhi, gets about 2800 metric tonnes of municipal solid waste every day. Due to lack of alternate sites, the civic body has been dumping garbage at the Bhalswa landfill despite it crossing its intended capacity years ago. As a result, methane gas that is emitted from the waste catches fire leading to plumes of smoke rising from the mountain of trash.

[Hindustan Times](#), 3 October 2016 | [Sunday Guardian](#), 8 October 2016 | [The Hindu](#), 16 October 2016 | [The Hindu](#), 18 October 2016