

CSR TODAY

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FAO launches Action Plan for ambitious climate strategy



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The Action Plan is based on three pillars:
1) advocacy at global and regional levels;
2) policy support at country level;
3) the scaling-up of climate action on the ground with local actors and vulnerable populations.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has launched an Action Plan designed to support the implementation of its ambitious Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031. The Strategy, which was endorsed in June 2022 by FAO's executive body, the Council, envisages agrifood systems as sustainable, inclusive, resilient and adaptive to climate change.

Global agrifood systems, which encompass the production of food and non-food agricultural products, as well as their storage, transportation, processing, distribution, marketing, disposal and consumption, are currently responsible for about a third of total greenhouse gas emissions. They are also one of the major victims of the climate crisis. But agrifood systems also offer many solutions for confronting the climate crisis, from building resilience and adaptation to mitigation and sequestration.

The Strategy aims to scale up the visibility, uptake and investment in these solutions by contributing to adaptive, resilient low-emission economies "while providing sufficient, safe and nutritious foods for healthy diets, as well as other agricultural products and services, for present and future generations, leaving no one behind.

Crucially, it recognizes that the time to act is now.

To guarantee the successful and timely implementation of the Strategy, FAO has developed an Action Plan based on discussions with its FAO Members, so as to ensure that it reflects their needs and priorities as closely as possible.

"FAO's Strategy on Climate Change is our response to the worldwide challenge of tackling the impacts of the climate crisis, while aiming to address a broad range of interlinked challenges, including biodiversity loss, desertification, land and environmental degradation, the need for accessible,


affordable renewable energy, and food and water security," said FAO Director-General QU Dongyu. "This Action Plan will help implement agrifood system solutions to climate change from across all FAO areas of work, ensuring we are working as one FAO."

Three pillars

The Action Plan is based on three pillars: 1) advocacy at global and regional levels; 2) policy support at country level; 3) the scaling-up of climate action on the ground with local actors and vulnerable populations.

As far as the first pillar is concerned, FAO is already stepping up its advocacy efforts in global fora. For example, FAO was recognized as a strategic partner of the COP27 Presidency, supported the agricultural track of the climate negotiations and hosted a Food and Agriculture pavilion for the first time at the Climate Change Conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2022. This momentum and collaboration is set to continue with the Presidency of the United Arab Emirates.

In terms of policy support to FAO Members, the Plan aims to intensify support in the elaboration and implementation of climate commitments, in particular the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and nationally determined contributions (NDCs). FAO is active in this area with its Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture through nationally determined contributions and National Adaptation Plans (SCALA) programme, which is currently active in 12 countries spread across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

For instance, in Nepal, a country with limited institutional capacity for addressing issues associated with climate change, the SCALA Programme is bringing added value and technical expertise in achieving the country's goals for more resilient agriculture systems and sustainable agriculture and land use practices. 

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CSR NEWS



Vipin Rana (ExxonMobil, India Market Manager – Lubes) hands over the symbolic key while inaugurating the sanitation unit of Swami Vivekananda High School

Habitat for Humanity India and ExxonMobil build anganwadi centres and sanitation facilities in government schools

Four government schools in Bengaluru and Chikkaballapur now have access to new and upgraded sanitation units and clean drinking water facilities thanks to Habitat for Humanity India, a leading housing non-profit organisation, and ExxonMobil Services & Technology Private Limited (ExxonMobil). The new infrastructure offers improved access to safe and hygienic sanitation facilities and clean drinking water to more than 1,200 school students.

Additionally, two anganwadi centres in Chikkaballapur have gone through a complete makeover, with one being newly constructed and another renovated. Pregnant women, mothers and children

up to 5 years of age who visit the anganwadi centres to avail the integrated child development services will benefit from the newly built infrastructure.

The facilities were handed over to the schools and anganwadi authorities in a handover ceremony held on 1st June, 2023. The ceremony was attended by Vipin Rana (ExxonMobil, India Market Manager – Lubes), Chinedu C Agbalaka (ExxonMobil Technology Center Subsurface Manager), Kirti N Parmar (ExxonMobil, Technology Center IT Manager), Sartaj S Ghai (ExxonMobil - Technical Advisor), Habitat India's team and dignitaries from the schools and anganwadis. Under the project, sanitation units

and hand-washing facilities have been built in Swami Vivekananda High School in Hoskote; Siddhartha Educational Society in Lingarajpuram, Bengaluru; Model Primary School and Government Higher Primary school in Avathi, Chikkaballapur district. The anganwadis are located in Mandikal village in Chikkaballapur district. The development of the school sanitation infrastructure and anganwadis is part of Habitat for Humanity India's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and community infrastructure development initiative.

Commenting on the initiative, Habitat for Humanity India's spokesperson said, "We are thankful to ExxonMobil for their generous support. Through our partnership with government schools and anganwadi centers, we are proud to have constructed sanitation units, built a new anganwadi center, and renovated another anganwadi centre. These efforts not only enhance the learning environment but also empower children with dignity and the opportunity to thrive. Habitat for Humanity India remains committed to creating sustainable and inclusive spaces that nurture the dreams and aspirations of our future generations."

ExxonMobil said, "No child should be held back due to a lack of basic sanitation services. But this problem disproportionately impacts girls. In fact, it's viewed as one of the primary reasons they are denied a real chance at education. That's why, at ExxonMobil, we back impactful initiatives such as this one that create more "pull factors" for children to complete their schooling and build themselves a promising future."

FUJIFILM India's Impactful CSR Initiative revitalises two Government Schools in Gurugram and Faridabad

With immense pride, FUJIFILM India, a trailblazer in the field of diagnostics and imaging innovations, is announcing the successful completion of its latest CSR initiative aimed at transforming educational infrastructure in India. Under this noble endeavor, FUJIFILM India has completed the renovation of two schools. To accomplish it, FUJIFILM India refurbished and remodeled the Government Primary School located in the heart of Sushant Lok, Gurugram, Haryana into the FUJIFILM India Model School, making it a modern and inspiring space where students can thrive. Not only this, but FUJIFILM India has also fully revamped the Government Middle School of the village Jajru in Faridabad, Haryana and reimagined it as the FUJIFILM India Model Village by providing students with access to enhanced educational resources.

The objective was to enhance the capacity and amenities of primary schools in Sushant Lok A-1, Gurugram, and Government Middle School in Jajru, Faridabad which involved infrastructure development, addressing cleanliness, hygiene, beautifying the schools with swings and wall art, ensuring safe drinking water, and creating and maintaining play areas for recreational activities within the schools. Besides this, FUJIFILM India is actively engaged in organizing Prevention of Sexual Harassment training programs for children in these schools through 'Aao Baat Karein' Awareness Workshops. The workshops address myths



By investing in education, FUJIFILM India aims to empower students and pave the way for a prosperous tomorrow.

FUJIFILM India is also conducting impactful POSH training programs at government schools to sensitize children.

FUJIFILM India is also organizing healthcare camps at Jajru, benefitting both the students and people living in Jajru Village, Faridabad.

and misconceptions, and provide the right information on sexual abuse, building gender sensitivity, addressing sexual health, menstruation, reproductive organs,

hygiene, and early adolescent issues. The goal is to empower children to raise their voices, fight against sexual abuse, and protect themselves.

In addition to this, FUJIFILM India will also be organizing healthcare camps at Jajru, which will not only benefit the students but also the people living in Jajru village. FUJIFILM India will hold six health screening & awareness camps in the village for around 2400 people residing in it. These camps will include multiple health camps such as Swasthya Mela, Mahila Swasthya Shivir, Bal Swasthya Mela, Dant Suraksha Shivir, Naitra Jaanch Shivir and Mahavari Swachta Abhiyaan Shivir. From providing general healthcare to women-focused healthcare services, oral care to eye care, FUJIFILM India is ensuring the holistic well-being of the villagers.

Speaking about the visionary measures taken by the company,

Koji Wada, Managing Director, FUJIFILM India, said, “It is a true honour for me to witness the transformation of these schools and the positive impact they will have on the lives of students in receiving an education there. This CSR activity has been very close to me as I always believed that education is the cornerstone of progress and by investing in the future of young minds, we are sowing the seeds of a prosperous society. And, through the renovation of these schools, we are aiding a solid foundation for education to flourish. By investing in infrastructure and resources, we are empowering the young minds of today to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow. Along with the infrastructural development, we are also organizing POSH Sessions for the kids in these schools to make them aware of the modern-day challenges which will empower and equip them to fight adversities and issues related to Child Sexual Abuse. Being a forerunner healthcare technology company, we are also organizing healthcare camps at Jajru Village in Faridabad. We are certainly very proud to be at the forefront of this metamorphic journey. FUJIFILM India will always remain steadfast in its dedication to making a meaningful difference in the lives of the communities around.”

Abhi Shekhar Singh, Vertical Head, Corporate Communications and CSR said, “The Sustainable Value Plan 2023 is at the core of our Planning whenever we strategize to do a CSR Activity. These activities were based on deep research so that we reach the regions which need maximum attention. By spending most of our budgets on Infrastructure development of both the schools, we are sure that this will have a long-term impact in bringing children back to schools by making the infrastructure hygienic and attractive.”

Kotak Mahindra Prime Associates with Impact Guru Foundation to Launch ‘Care on Wheels’ Initiative

Under its Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd. has associated with Impact Guru Foundation (IGF) to launch a year-long healthcare programme ‘Care on Wheels’ in around 40 localities in the Pune district. With the help of four Mobile Medical Units (MMUs), the programme will provide free doorstep healthcare services to around 1 lakh underserved patients, who have limited access to affordable primary healthcare facilities.

The initiative was inaugurated, on 29th May 2023, at an event at Nyati Unitree, Yerawada, Pune, at the hands of Dr. Kalpana Baliwant, Dy. Health Officer, Pune Municipal Corporation, Pune; Dr. Patil P.R., Medical Administrative Officer, PMC; and Dr. Sachin Yedke, Block Health Officer, Haweli Block. Other dignitaries present at the event were Mr. Sundeep Talwar, CEO, Impact Guru Foundation and Mr. Kiran Tangudu, VP, Kotak Mahindra Prime Limited.

The Care on Wheels programme will benefit individuals who are unable to visit a healthcare facility due to their health condition or limited mobility such as underserved communities, the elderly and government school children living in remote areas, etc. These Mobile Medical Units (MMU) are equipped with medical supplies for basic medical examinations, diagnostics, and treatments, along with qualified paramedical professionals, including MBBS doctors, Healthcare Workers, a pharmacist, and support staff, who will travel to various locations across Pune district.

A free doorstep healthcare service for around 1 lakh underserved people across 40 locations in Pune

Mr. Vyomesh Kapasi, MD & CEO, Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd. said, “We are pleased to associate with Impact Guru Foundation to launch the ‘Care on Wheels’ programme that will provide critical last-mile healthcare connectivity to underserved communities. This initiative will play a pivotal role in perpetuating healthcare services to those in dire need of medical assistance and improving lives of as many lives as possible.”

Sundeep Talwar, CEO, Impact Guru Foundation said, “Almost 4,300 people die every day due to a lack of access to basic healthcare needs. We are delighted to associate with Kotak Mahindra Prime to launch the ‘Care on Wheels’ programme that will bring primary healthcare directly at people’s doorsteps. Together, we will strive to provide early health interventions to promote overall well-being and disease prevention among community members.”

Mystery behind the discovery of giant 'search', 'unlock', and 'download' buttons across India solved

As the mystery surrounding the surfacing of giant buttons labelled as 'unlock', 'download' and 'search' in garbage bins across the country deepens, a video posted on social media channels by smart lock screen platform Glance, has finally lifted the lid on the suspense. In this video posted across social media channels on Wednesday, Glance has shown photographs and videos of people dumping these giant symbolic buttons for its smart lock screen, which doesn't require users to unlock their phones, download and search to access different content on the internet.

"Get everything you love from the latest trends to sports updates, from 500+ games to shopping for fashion on your Glance smart lock screen. No need to 'unlock', 'search' or 'download'. #JustGlance. Isn't that Simply Smart?", the Bengaluru-based unicorn start-up company said in a Twitter post along with the video.

Last week, giant buttons labelled 'search', 'unlock', and 'download' were discovered abandoned in various trash bins throughout Bangalore. Surprisingly, these buttons were not limited to Bangalore alone but later appeared in multiple cities across the country, including Delhi, Indore, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Jaipur. This unexpected find ignited widespread curiosity nationwide, prompting people to express their thoughts and engage in discussions on social media. Thousands of people took to Twitter and posted these photos along with discussions on topics such as digital detoxification and pioneering digital advancements



with hashtags #mysterybuttons and #buttonsdiscovered.

"So guys Glance you know na.. that smart lock screen. Ta-da! They only did the whole giant buttons around #Ahmedabad last week - smart way to say no need to unlock download or search" Khushi Ambedkar said in a tweet.

"My friend gifted me a phone two years ago, which has Glance smart lock screen, and since then, I have been actively using it. Best part - no downloading games to play! So

when @glancescreen revealed it was behind the giant 'download' 'search' and unlock buttons being found across the city last week, I had to go 🤔" Sandeep Kishore said in a tweet.

Glance is a Bengaluru-based unicorn (start-up with a valuation of more than USD\$1 billion) technology company known for its smart lock screen platform which is available in most of the leading Android smartphone brands in the country. The Glance lock screen today has an installed user base of over 450

million across India and Southeast Asia. The company also aims to enter multiple other geographies including the USA.

The human spirit is indomitable, always thirsting to do more. Our smartphones were meant to be our companion on this epic quest for more - to help us keep up, get things done and spark new ideas. But in this fast-paced world, there is a firehose of information that keeps coming at us. Searching for info, downloading apps, switching between apps, and scrolling through feeds is leaving us drained. With Glance

Smart Lock Screen less is more. Everything we seek comes to us on our lock screen, instead of us seeking it. We don't need to spend any time searching for info, downloading multiple or even unlocking our smartphone. All we need is to just glance. #SimplySmart said Bikash Chowdhury, Chief Marketing Officer of Glance, on a LinkedIn post

Glance is not a downloadable app, but a feature that comes pre-integrated in the operating system (OS) of leading smartphone brands. It serves as a single gateway to a world of tailored content based on

users' interests and preferences in several regional languages including English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Kannada, and Bengali. Glance can be activated only with the user's consent.

Users can stay updated and discover trending content, play over 400 games, livestream exciting game tournaments, shop for products, tune in to over 500 creators' live shows, and more, all without unlocking their phones. It's like having a personalized content feed at the user's fingertips, ready to entertain and inform whenever one needs it.

Leading Entrepreneurs giving back to the society

Philanthropy is a virtuous act that has contributed to the upliftment of human society since time Immemorial. It is not only a symbol of benevolence by entrepreneurs but is also a way of giving back to society from where they have emerged.

Bigshot billionaires like N.R. Narayan Murthy, Founder of Infosys and Ratan Tata, former chairman of Tata Group, have contributed, revived, and created many philanthropic causes and trusts, which have played a significant role in the emancipation of downtrodden sections of society, women, and children. In warring times, these entrepreneurs have instilled communitarian faith in the philosophy that 'small acts of kindness can go so far'.

One among them is Sachin Manchanda, a successful entrepreneur who has also taken the reins of philanthropic work through charitable organisation, Sachin Manchanda Foundation, which was founded with a vision for the alleviation of the less fortunate and underprivileged rungs of society. Sachin Manchanda has dedicated his life to bringing positive



social change, focusing on helping the underprivileged, promoting education and empowerment, and protecting the environment.

The primary objective of the Sachin Manchanda Foundation is to promote education, good health, and economic empowerment of the 'have-nots'. The Foundation will ideate and run various programs, including distributing sewing machines for underprivileged women, encouraging women to form self-help groups, and providing blankets

and warm clothes to the homeless. Sachin Manchanda has also championed initiatives like ration distribution, student scholarship programs, COVID-19 pandemic health support care, organising sports events, winter/summer carnivals, and other events to raise funds and create awareness.

The idea of SMF is to remove inequalities entrenched in the iniquitous society and evoke feelings of compassion and empathy among men and women for each other. Sachin Manchanda Foundation has future plans to support environmental preservation projects, including education, livelihoods and skill development, upskilling youth and middle-aged people, rural development, water and sanitation, child welfare, women's empowerment, healthcare, and strengthening services. The epithet of the organisation is to bind humanity through the thread of humanitarian and moral values and keep them united.

Sachin Manchanda is an entrepreneur who joined his family business and made a solid name in the real estate sector.

India Climate Collaborative launches Earth Exponential platform to supplement climate funding in India

India Climate Collaborative (ICC), a collective dedicated to accelerating climate action, is determined to expedite efforts in addressing climate change in India by tackling critical funding gaps for the country's home-grown climate solutions. To bolster corporate grant funding (CSR) for climate action and supplement India's ambitious climate goals, the India Climate Collaborative has launched Earth Exponential, a platform that brings together funders and non-profit organisations to scale up high-impact climate change programmes and improve climate funding efficiency.

Over the past 7 years (2015-2021), out of the total CSR funding of 67,193.41 crores rupees a mere INR 6,183.04 crore has been allocated to environment-related issues. This number is still broader than climate funding – which is focused on the sources of greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change, and is not clearly tracked. With climate change emerging as a global priority for this decade, there is a pressing need to bring more funding into the sector. Some of India's most climate vulnerable regions like Northeast India are also chronically underfunded, receiving only 1.78% (that is, only INR 110.6 crore in the last 7 years) of the CSR funds allocated to environment-related issues.

However, ICC's engagement with more than 40 mid-size corporates in India reveals a promising trend. More than 80% of these corporates have expressed interest in funding climate projects. Despite this enthusiasm, the actual allocation towards the environment sector



Regenerative agriculture and afforestation in the rural Northeast



Habitat restoration in the Northeast



Solar-powered NTFP value chain for tribal women

stands at a meagre 9.2%. This substantial disparity underscores the urgent need to bridge the gap between the aspiration to fund climate action and the tangible funding of projects with a climate lens in India.

Extensive interactions within the climate ecosystem led the India Climate Collaborative to recognise that non-profit organisations across the country are pioneering community-focused, cost-effective climate solutions that address socio-economic priorities. However, for these solutions to make a significant impact, they require increased visibility and

funding support. Earth Exponential, supported by JSW Foundation, aims to reshape climate funding in India by curating, evaluating and displaying home-grown climate projects, and enabling them to scale by matching them to funders. With a strong commitment to equity and addressing the climate crisis for India's most vulnerable, the platform empowers CSR funders to drive impactful climate initiatives and explore new possibilities for funding climate action.

"India's home-grown climate solutions offer immense potential to solve address climate change

without leaving anyone behind. These solutions can change how the developing world addresses the climate crisis - and we believe philanthropy plays a crucial role in unleashing this potential for the benefit of both India and the Global South. We also need philanthropy to build capabilities and capacity of non-profits so they can address both climate and development challenges. By connecting funders and non-profits, Earth Exponential aims to build a climate ecosystem and increase the efficiency of climate funding," said Shloka Nath, CEO of the India Climate Collaborative.

Talking about the potential of Earth Exponential platform to create a significant impact, Mrs Sangita Jindal, Chairperson of JSW

Foundation, said, "Collaboration is key for innovation and development. There is an urgent need to address the critical gaps that could pose challenges on our roadmap to achieve the target of net zero by 2070. Earth Exponential aims to address some of these challenges by bringing together funders and non-profit organisations to address and plug these critical gaps through innovative, homegrown solutions."

While the platform is open to all funders, at present it addresses key challenges that CSR funders face – given how India's corporate sector is rapidly setting sustainability commitments, which have a ripple effect on their CSR. This includes having measurable outcomes for all projects featured on the platform, ensuring

that all featured organisations meet compliance requirements, and span across a wide geographic range.

The platform builds knowledge around five solution areas where climate projects are housed, namely: Farms, Cities, Nature, Resilience, and Jobs. These areas are relevant to climate change both from the perspective of reducing emissions and building resilience to mounting climate stresses. Additionally, they align with the existing priorities of development funders, including CSR initiatives, ensuring a strategic match and maximising impact. Through Earth Exponential, funders can explore the climate solutions landscape and engage with credible organisations implementing best-in-class projects in the country.

Sid's Farm Launches "Pick my Plastic" Initiative to Promote Sustainability and Carbon Neutrality

Sid's Farm, a premium direct-to-consumer (D2C) dairy brand based in Telangana, announced the launch of its new sustainability initiative, "Pick my Plastic." With a strong commitment to environmental responsibility and maintaining product quality, Sid's Farm aims to collect and recycle plastic waste generated by its packaging materials from its customer premises and process it as per the best industry practices.

Plastic pouches have been a popular choice for packaging Sid's Farm's wide range of milk and milk products, including curd, ghee, lassi, buttermilk, and more. Understanding the importance of addressing plastic waste and striving towards a carbon-neutral future, Sid's Farm has introduced the "Pick my Plastic" initiative to actively contribute to a cleaner and greener environment.

According to Dr. Kishore Indukuri, Founder, Sid's Farm, "We are delighted

to introduce our 'Pick my Plastic' initiative, which reflects our deep-rooted commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. This initiative allows us to collect plastic waste generated by our packaging materials and take a step towards carbon neutrality. By encouraging our customers to actively participate in this program, we aim to create a sustainable ecosystem while continuing to deliver the highest quality milk and milk products."

As part of the "Pick my Plastic" initiative, customers will be charged a nominal fee of Rs 12 per pick-up, which will be realized from their in-app prepaid wallet. To ensure a smooth collection process, customers are required to keep the plastic pouches clean and bundled together for the delivery personnel to accept them. Sid's Farm's dedicated supply chain team will conduct plastic waste pickups every Sunday, ensuring a convenient and streamlined process for customers. The collected plastic

waste will then be sent for recycling, reducing the environmental impact, and promoting circular economy practices.

Sid's Farm has always placed a strong emphasis on delivering premium-quality milk and milk products, prioritizing the health and satisfaction of its customers. This new initiative further demonstrates the company's commitment to social and environmental responsibility, reinforcing its position as a trusted provider of wholesome dairy products.

Founded in 2016 by Dr. Kishore Indukuri, an esteemed alumnus of IIT Kharagpur and the University of Massachusetts, Sid's Farm has gained a reputation for its commitment to providing pure, healthy dairy products. With a focus on delivering products free from antibiotics, synthetic hormones, and adulteration, Sid's Farm has seen consistent year-on-year growth and currently serves over 20,000 customers daily through its subscription-based model.



Mahindra Logistics orchestrates a nationwide campaign for collecting plastic waste

Mahindra Logistics Ltd. (MLL), a leading integrated logistics solutions provider in India, successfully organized a large-scale plastic collection drive across India, demonstrating their commitment to environmental sustainability. The campaign, which spanned 38 locations across 12 states throughout the country, mobilized 878 dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly to collect a staggering 940 kilograms of plastic waste.

The drive focused on the theme of "Beat Plastic Pollution", with the participation of MLL's dedicated volunteers across the country. During this drive, the MLL team emphasized the adverse impacts of plastic on both nature and humankind. Citizens were encouraged to remain vigilant regarding garbage accumulation and

to utilize local municipal corporation's garbage collection vehicles for responsible waste disposal. Such collective efforts would contribute to and ensure the cleanliness of these locations. MLL is responsibly managing the plastic collected from various locations to prevent pollution and avoid landfill disposal. In addition to this, the plastic collected and sent from the head office is directed by the company to plastic recyclers who specialise in transforming it into small pellets. As soon as the recycling process is completed, these pellets will be utilized by the recyclers to manufacture a range of plastic products through molding techniques.

Mahindra Logistics is committed to drive a positive change by ensuring sustainable practices, both within and beyond the logistics industry.

The plastic collection drive across the country is a testament to this unwavering dedication of preserving our planet. By raising awareness and encouraging responsible waste management practices, MLL inspires a collective effort towards a cleaner and greener future.

The program successfully accomplished a series of objectives, including raising awareness among citizens through the Plogathon rally, promoting cleanliness practices, and alerting individuals about the ban on plastic bags while advocating for the use of eco-friendly alternatives like cloth bags. This drive served as a powerful message to the citizens of these 38 locations, inspiring them to avoid plastic usage and actively contribute to maintaining a clean and green environment.

HMD Foundation donates iLAB (mobile testing laboratory) Unit to Amrita Hospital Faridabad for Rural Health program

HMD Foundation, a CSR wing of Hindustan Syringes & Medical Devices Ltd under its CSR initiative has donated iLAB (mobile testing laboratory) to Amrita Hospital Faridabad to support them in extending quality medical care to the people in Faridabad and the surrounding region.

HMD Foundation and AMRITA Hospital has entered into an MoU for the project 'Rural & Societal Outreach Health Program' to provide healthcare facilities for free or at a very reasonable cost to the people in need.

The initiative aims at addressing existing health challenges in the society by providing general health check-ups, routine OPD testing, and blood sample collection to the people, especially in remote and rural areas, bringing advanced diagnostics directly to the community especially the trail elderly.

The iLAB unit, which was manufactured by Andhra Med Tech Zone (AMTZ) at Vishakhapatnam, staffed with a doctor and lab technician, is equipped with state-of-the-art Made in India equipment and computers that seamlessly connect with the hospital's Cloud server. Patients can register and book appointments at the indigenous iLAB Unit, just as they would at the hospital. The initiative aims to reach and provide medical services to over a million people in the region.

Financial Assistance of over One Crore Rupees is provided by HMD for the procurement of the said iLAB unit.

iLAB unit, first of its kind in the region flagged off in Faridabad today

With close to 30-40 basic screening tests available, the unit encompasses all the essential parameters typically covered in annual health check-ups

Mr. Rajiv Nath from Hindustan Syringes & Medical Devices Ltd., Faridabad said "HMD has always aimed to be systemically impactful when it comes to taking Corporate Social Responsibilities to make our Nation a better place to live. We are always working towards making quality healthcare affordable & accessible to the common masses as a Corporate Vision by our Medical Products and our CSR Programs. We are delighted to donate this advanced vehicle to Amrita Hospital to conveniently reach people and provide diagnostic services for enabling Preventive Public Healthcare. By donating this iLAB unit, we once again reaffirm our commitment to serve the people of the region within our limited humble abilities. In past we have helped set up clinical access

facilities at Bharat Vikas Parishad at Sector 8, Faridabad and also for Manufacturing & Development Centre to make Medical Devices at AMTZ so that long lasting Public Healthcare impact is achieved.

Swami Nijamritananda Puri, Administrative Director, Amrita Hospital, Faridabad, said, "We are delighted to introduce the iLAB Unit for Faridabad and the neighbouring districts, reaffirming our commitment to expand healthcare access to all sections of the society and make a positive impact on their lives. We recognize that healthcare facilities in rural and remote areas leave much to be desired, and through initiatives, we intend to aggressively address this gap."

Dr. Sanjeev K. Singh, Medical Director, Amrita Hospital, Faridabad, added: "The introduction of the iLAB Unit marks a significant milestone in extending healthcare services to everyone in Faridabad and surrounding districts. It offers a comprehensive healthcare solution, with a wide range of services including sample testing for biochemistry and hematology parameters. With close to 30-40 basic screening tests available, the unit encompasses all the essential parameters typically covered in annual health check-ups. In addition, we have the capability to handle molecular biology testing in case of disease outbreaks like COVID-19 or TB. The unit would act as a collection center and facilitate transportation of samples and referral testing, bringing advanced diagnostics directly to the community."

Pidilite's Fevcreate Joins Forces with Gujarat Government to Spark Creativity and Enhance Education through Arts & Crafts

Pidilite Industries Ltd., a leading manufacturer of construction and specialty chemicals, as well as art and craft products, has signed a year-long Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Gujarat, represented by the Gujarat Council of School Education (GCSE). The objective of this collaboration is to promote and enhance learning through arts and crafts across the state of Gujarat.

Sudhanshu Vats, Deputy Managing Director, Pidilite Industries said, "We are thrilled to announce our partnership with the Gujarat state government that aligns with our vision of advancing education and fostering holistic development of children. At Pidilite Industries Limited, we have been actively engaging with schools nationwide through our 'Fevcreate' programme for several years. The initiative has played a crucial role in supporting teachers with art and craft content, enabling them to create an engaging curriculum that enhances students' creative and cognitive abilities. We look forward to contributing our expertise and resources to support the comprehensive education development in the state. Together, we aim to empower teachers, nurture creativity among students, and ultimately elevate the overall quality and experience of education."

Gujarat Council of School Education (GCSE), Government of Gujarat is pleased to announce the collaboration with Pidilite Industries Limited through the signing of the MOU. The Gujarat government has



been actively working towards a comprehensive strategic plan for the holistic development of school education in the state. The Government's focus is on improving systems-level performance and enhancing schooling outcomes to elevate the overall quality of education. Through this partnership, the Government aims to leverage Pidilite's expertise and resources to further advance the quality of art and craft education in Gujarat.

Pidilite Industries Limited has initiated a pilot programme in Mahuva

Taluka of Gujarat's Bhavnagar District. The initiative will provide comprehensive training and resources to teachers and enable them to implement engaging art & crafts activities tailored for children from Class 1 to Class 8. Through www.fevcreate.com platform teachers and students can access over 500 exciting arts and craft activities centered around Math, Science, and English. Feedback gathered during the pilot phase will be carefully analyzed to refine and chart the next phase of implementation.

OPPO India teams up with the Atal Innovation Mission to set up the first PPP-model Atal Tinkering Lab

OPPO India has established an Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) in Kerala in collaboration with NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) as Knowledge Partners. This programme motivates students to explore, experiment, and undertake projects involving DIY kits in robotics, electronics, and rapid prototyping.

The lab at St Paul's CEHSS in Kuriachira, Thrissur, was inaugurated on 10th July 2023 by Shri Rajeev Chandrashekar, the Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Information Technology. The primary objective of this initiative is to create an empowered future-ready workforce and nurture entrepreneurship and technological skills among the youth.

Till 2022, 10,000 ATLs were established across 35 States and UTs in India via government grants. This collaboration marks the establishment of the first-ever Atal Tinkering Lab, based on the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) model.

Dr. Chintan Vaishnav, MD, Atal Innovation Mission, said, "On behalf of the Atal Innovation Mission team, I welcome OPPO to the ATL Community. The establishment of the first PPP Atal Tinkering Lab in collaboration with OPPO India is a significant milestone in India's School Innovation journey. Through this new modality of partner-established ATLs, we hope

to democratise tinkering and make it available to many more students across the country. I invite more partners to this new and exciting initiative to establish many more ATLs in India, thus empowering more young innovators."

The ATL has been set up to empower school children in classes 6th to 12th to develop innovative solutions. The students can harness cutting-edge technology tools such as 3D printing, the Internet of



Things (IoT), robotics, miniaturised electronics, space technology, drone technology, and technology-inspired textiles.

Vivek Vasishtha, Vice-President, Public Affairs, OPPO India, said, "OPPO India is committed to social upliftment by investing in youth and providing holistic learning opportunities. We are delighted to inaugurate our first-ever Atal Tinkering Lab to offer a modern learning ecosystem to nurture future innovators and entrepreneurs. This collaboration is part of our endeavour to promote 'out of the box' thinking and teach community-oriented

problem-solving capabilities to young students. We are proud to be able to contribute to the Government of India's mission of empowering the citizens of tomorrow with future-ready skills."

This collaboration between the AIM and OPPO—with Learning Links Foundation as the implementation partner—adapts the 'Hub n Spoke' strategy to create an innovative learning environment through practical experiences and regular training sessions. The ATL in the nodal school will act as a 'Hub' for the students from neighbouring government schools to come and conduct experiments in the lab. This approach will also extend its assistance to three community schools.

"We take immense pride in collaborating with OPPO India and Niti Aayog to establish the Atal Tinkering Labs. We will work together to nurture a generation of individuals who will contribute to the development and advancement of our society," said Dr Anjeev Prakash, Chairperson, Learning Links Foundation.

Through the ATL, children with exceptional potential will be identified and nurtured through the Student Innovator Programme and the ATL Marathon to provide them with mentorship opportunities from eminent entrepreneurs and prepare them to compete in national/regional contests, fostering lifelong learning.

OPPO India has taken proactive steps to offer advanced educational opportunities to children and motivate them to build a better future through various initiatives. These initiatives encompass setting up a computer lab at the Roundtable School in Varanasi and collaborating with MENSA to equip underprivileged children with digital literacy tools. Most recently, OPPO India has partnered with CSC Academy to train 10,000 women in semi-urban and rural areas as Cyber Security Ambassadors.

NCBS Launches Rohini Nilekani Centre for Brain and Mind for Research on Severe Mental Illnesses

An outcome of the Rs 100 crores grant given to NCBS and NIMHANS to further long-term research and build capacity for both research and practice in the mental health field.

The National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) announced the launch of the 'Rohini Nilekani Centre for Brain and Mind', a centre dedicated to advancing Indian research and practice pertaining to neurodevelopmental disorders and mental health. The centre will focus on the long-term examination of environmental and genetic factors involved in brain development which underlie severe mental illnesses.

Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson - Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, unveiled the plaque to mark the inauguration of 'the Center for Brain and Mind' today in the NCBS campus in Bengaluru. The guests present included Prof. K. VijayRaghavan - DAE Homi Bhabha Chair, NCBS-TIFR, Prof. Sanjeev Jain - Emeritus Professor, NIMHANS, Prof. Mahendra Rao - Former Collaborative Science Chair, inStem & CEO, Implant Therapeutics, and Prof. Maneesha Inamdar - Director inStem.

The centre will support research through its partnership with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) and NCBS' therapeutic practices pertaining to five mental disorders: schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, addiction,



obsessive-compulsive disorder, and dementia – conditions considered neurodevelopmental in origin. The research work of the centre will combine the molecular biological research capabilities and technologies at NCBS with the stem cell capabilities established at the Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (inStem-DBT), an autonomous institution under the Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India. inStem has been and will continue to partner with NCBS on research activities, including that of the Accelerator program for Discovery in Brain disorders using Stem cells (ADBS).

Speaking about the centre, Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson of Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, said, "India has a significant number of people, around 193 million, dealing with mental illness. The proportional contribution of mental disorders to the total disease burden in India had almost doubled since 1990, and

this calls for urgent attention. 'The Centre for Brain and Mind' will attempt to address this challenge by driving interdisciplinary research to understand the complexities of brain and mind conditions. More Research originating from India is critical at this juncture. The collaboration between NCBS and NIMHANS will provide globally relevant insights, evidence and pathways for better treatment for millions of people in India and the world. I hope medical practitioners, decision-makers and researchers will join the community and co-create success for this endeavour."

Talking about the centre, Prof L. S. Shashidhara, Director, NCBS, said: "Improvements in human health and well-being have often been possible through the development of new technologies and their application to finding solutions for medical problems. We are at an opportune moment where recent advances in genomics, cell biology and stem

cell technology offer an exciting opportunity for discovery science that can be applied to the problems of human mental illness. With the generous support of Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies (RNP), NCBS looks forward to working with NIMHANS and other partners at 'the Center for Brain and Mind' to develop new solutions for the early diagnosis and better clinical management of mental illness. "Commenting on the Centre, Dr Pratima Murthy, Director,

NIMHANS, said: "It is a greater challenge to get research support for mental health as compared to physical disorders like cancer. NIMHANS, along with NCBS, has been carrying out research looking at shared and unique markers in severe mental illness. The generous funding provided by the Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies to NIMHANS and NCBS in order to establish 'the Centre for Brain and Mind' at both institutions is a great opportunity to

further this research. This will enable us to look further into the common as well as distinctive biological (including genetic) and psychosocial underpinnings of disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar mood disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, addictive disorders and dementia. We hope that with the help of the RNP, we will be able to help lakhs of people with severe mental diseases to eventually receive more effective interventions."

HCLTech wins National Water Award 2022 for its water stewardship in India

HCLTech, a leading global technology company, won the National Water Award 2022 for its water conservation and management initiatives in India through community action and innovative technologies.

The National Water Awards have been instituted by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India and HCLTech won the honor in the Best Industry for CSR Activities category.

Through HCL Foundation, which delivers HCLTech's corporate social responsibility agenda in India, and other water conservation initiatives, the company has harvested 57.9 billion liters of water and rejuvenated over 200 water structures till date.

HCLTech's interventions in water conservation align with the Government of India's Jal Shakti Abhiyan Program, which focuses on replenishing water sources, conserving water bodies and increasing green cover for enhancing groundwater recharge. These interventions address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and SDG 15 (life on land).



HCLTech is implementing a unique initiative to boost biodiversity along river Ganga's catchment by planting Rudraksha and other native species in Uttarakhand. Other projects include rejuvenating the Periyar Canal in Kerala, removing invasive species growing on the riverbed of Vaigai in Madurai, installing rooftop rainwater harvesting structures in corporation schools in Madurai and Noida, and helping poor farmers convert their wastelands into cultivable land through small-scale rainwater harvesting

techniques in the Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh.

"HCLTech is committed to water stewardship and supports sustainable, scalable, and innovative solutions in the use and treatment of water. This award reinforces our efforts to ensure equitable and viable water stewardship with a range of long-term programs, prioritizing water sustainability and community involvement in rural and urban areas in India," said Dr. Nidhi Pundhir, Vice President, Global CSR, HCL Foundation.

PNB Housing Finance Joins Hands with Wockhardt Foundation to Deliver Essential Healthcare Services to Underprivileged Communities

PNB Housing Finance, one of the leading housing finance companies in India, through its CSR arm Pehel Foundation, launched a new social wellbeing initiative 'Mobile Medical Units' implemented by the Wockhardt Foundation. The medical vans will provide free-of-cost primary healthcare services to construction labourers and their families at construction sites and urban slums in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata.

PNB Housing Finance and Pehel Foundation are dedicated to uplifting the society through several initiatives in healthcare, education, women empowerment and environment. The mobile medical units will cater to construction workers who form the backbone of the real estate ecosystem, yet face challenges in accessing essential medical facilities.

Commenting on the initiative, Girish Kousgi, MD & CEO, PNB Housing Finance said, "Provision of healthcare services to underserved communities is a major challenge in our country, primarily due to limited access and insufficient economic resources. We are delighted to join hands with Wockhardt Foundation to address this gap through our Mobile Medical Units, which will help construction workers and their families residing in underdeveloped localities, to avail primary healthcare services free of cost. As an organization that goes beyond the realm of financial inclusion, we believe that this project will foster healthy individuals who contribute to the progressive growth of the country."

Ajhay R Somvanshi, Chief Operating Officer, Wockhardt Foundation, said, "We are grateful to PNB Housing Finance for their support and collaboration on the new initiative to launch Mobile Medical Units. Through this partnership, we will be able to extend our reach to urban slums, ensuring that those in need have access to free primary healthcare at their doorsteps. We look forward to working together and making a positive difference in the lives of millions of people."

Each Mobile Medical Unit is fully equipped with necessary medical equipment and staffed with a dedicated team of registered doctor, trained pharmacist and licensed van driver to ensure top-notch healthcare to the beneficiaries. Patients with illnesses like common cold, skin infection, malaria, jaundice, hypertension, diabetes, and other communicable diseases will be treated on the van and provided with free medicines. Patients needing specialized treatment like cataract, heart ailments, gynaecological issues, etc. will be provided with referrals to hospitals aiding them in advance detection and treatment. Additionally, they will also be sensitized and educated on the various important aspects of health, hygiene and sanitation.

Coca-Cola's impact 1M people bags National Water Award

Coca-Cola India, the leading global beverage company, has been awarded National Water Award 2022 in the "Best Industry for CSR activities in the field of Water Conservation" category. The company is the first beverages company in India to receive the National Award for water stewardship. Conferred by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, the award acknowledges Coca-Cola India's remarkable Jaldhara project being executed in the districts of Kolar, Karnataka and Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh through Anandana – Coca-Cola India Foundation and implementation partner – SM Sehgal Foundation.



The project is aimed at transforming lives by significantly improving groundwater levels, enhancing overall crop productivity, and improving the livelihood of farmers through effective water resource management.

The National Water Awards, introduced in 2018, have been established to honor and recognize companies that demonstrate outstanding achievements in promoting sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and social impact.

The Jaldhara Water Project, in partnership with SM Sehgal Foundation was conceived to replenish groundwater levels in water-stressed regions in India. Coca-Cola India has made commendable headway under the project, by conducting water tank desiltation in Kolar (Karnataka), and by building check dams in Anantapur (Andhra Pradesh).

CSR INDIA UNITED



HCL Foundation and Abhinav Bindra Foundation Trust announce partnership to unlock potential of young sports talent from grassroots

The HCL Foundation, which delivers the corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda for HCLTech in India, and the Abhinav Bindra Foundation Trust (ABFT) have joined forces to identify young sports talent from underserved communities across India and provide them advanced training to help them compete in national and international sports championships.

Under the partnership, HCL Foundation and ABFT have selected 45 sportspersons in the 10-16 years age group. These athletes represent diverse sports that include football, athletics, basketball, kabaddi, cricket, rugby, boxing and volleyball. Of these, 10 athletes with significant potential will be part of ABFT's one-year STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Analytics, Medicine) program, which provides high-performance training and development in coordination with their coaches at

the ABFT centers in Bengaluru and Delhi. The program encompasses physiotherapy, mental health, injury management, rehabilitation, strength and conditioning. The remaining 35 athletes will be part of ABFT's Scientific Assessment Program, which provides customized training plans for athletes and coaches. The ABFT team will also conduct regular capacity-building sessions for coaches on the importance of assessments, the use of data for talent identification, injury management and nutrition for athletes.

The partnership with ABFT is part of HCL Foundation's Sports for Change initiative which focuses on balanced participation, excellence and holistic development for children and youth from disadvantaged communities. To date, 27,000+ children and young sportspersons have benefited from the program. While 13 sportspersons supported through this initiative

have represented India at international championships, another 42 participated in national-level competitions. HCL Foundation Sports Scholar, Jerlin Anika, became India's first woman Deaflympian to receive the Arjuna Award in 2022 for her achievements in badminton. Jerlin won three gold medals at the 2022 Deaflympics in Brazil while representing India. She also won six gold medals at the Asia Pacific Youth Badminton Championships and Asia Pacific Deaf Badminton Championships in Thailand.

"We are excited to join hands with the HCL Foundation on this groundbreaking initiative towards empowering the sports ecosystem in India. Our goal is to establish an enduring ecosystem that fosters the growth and empowerment of athletes, enabling them to achieve the highest levels of sporting success. With an inclusive approach, the program focuses on athletes from disadvantaged communities and provides a scientifically structured and holistic training and development program that is affordable and accessible to all," said Abhinav Bindra, Olympic Champion & Founder, Abhinav Bindra Foundation Trust. Bindra is the first Indian to win an individual Olympic gold medal. "Our partnership with the Abhinav Bindra Foundation Trust will empower young athletes with the necessary resources and mentoring to unlock their full potential. Through the integration of high-performance training and technology-oriented scientific assessments within the framework of global best practices, we aim to establish an Olympics Development Program geared towards producing top-class international athletes. The collaboration underscores our unwavering dedication to sports development and belief in harnessing the transformative potential of sports," said Dr. Nidhi Pundhir, Vice President, Global CSR, HCL Foundation.

Eye-Q collaborates with Pinnacle School of Optometry to Empower Youth with Upskilling and Guaranteed Employment Opportunities

Eye-Q, the leading hospital eye care chain, is proud to announce the collaboration with Pinnacle School of Optometry, a pioneering platform aimed at upskilling and providing employment opportunities to youth through its short-term paramedical courses. Affiliated with Centurion University of Technology and Management, Odisha, the school offers courses in Ophthalmic Assistant, Ophthalmic Surgical Assistant, and Optical Sales Executive, each consisting of 1-year academic training plus 6 months of practical training.

Eye-Q will provide 100% guaranteed employment to the students who successfully complete the program

Each course requirement of 10+2 with 55% in PCB/PCM. The courses have limited availability, with only 35 seats available per course. More than 105 students per year are set to benefit from these courses, with a special focus on empowering youth, accounting for over 90% of the total beneficiaries. In this collaboration, the faculty will comprise. Eye-Q's esteemed doctors from AIIMS and Sankara Nethralaya and will operate under the efficient stewardship of Deepti Jaiswal, Principal of Pinnacle School of Optometry.

Commenting on the launch, Dr. Ajay Sharma, founder and CMD of Eye-Q, expressed his profound enthusiasm stating, "At Eye-Q, we believe in transforming lives through education and skill development, and our collaboration with Pinnacle School of Optometry is a testament to that vision.

This is aligned to our Prime Minister Mr. Modi's Vision of Skill India. Our commitment to providing

More than 105 people per year are set to benefit from these courses, with a special focus on empowering youth, accounting for over 90% of the total beneficiaries.

quality education, coupled with practical training and job placement, ensures that our students have a solid foundation for a successful career. By focusing on empowering youth and offering scholarships, we strive to create a more inclusive and diverse workforce in the eye care industry. Moreover, this momentous launch reflects our unwavering pursuit of excellence and determination to set new standards in creating transformative opportunities for individuals seeking to make a difference in the field of optometry."

The launch of the Pinnacle School of Optometry comes at a crucial time, with the growing prevalence of eye-related conditions in India. By providing specialized training and employment opportunities, we are not only addressing the growing demand for skilled professionals but also ensuring that individuals are well-equipped to contribute effectively to the eye care sector. These courses

serve as a catalyst in building a competent workforce, dedicated to improving the vision and overall eye health of our communities." said Mr. Sumit Bhasin, Vice President- Human Resources at Eye-Q

Pinnacle School of Optometry offers a comprehensive training program that combines both physical and online training modes, ensuring a well-rounded learning experience for the trainees. The advantages of enrolling in the courses at Pinnacle School of Optometry are manifold. Trainees have the unique opportunity to learn from highly qualified doctors and optometrists, benefiting from their extensive expertise in the field. The practical training will be facilitated through state-of-the-art equipment, ensuring that trainees gain hands-on experience with the latest tools and technologies. Upon successful completion of the 18-month training program, Eye-Q guarantees 100% job placement for all trained individuals with immediate onboarding into their designated roles. Additionally, trainees also have the advantage of availing a 10% scholarship on the course fee.

Eye-Q remains committed to expanding its Skill Development Campaign and touching more lives with the knowledge and skills required to excel in the eye care industry. The launch of the Pinnacle School of Optometry is just one of the many initiatives undertaken by Eye-Q to create meaningful employment opportunities. Building on its previous successes, Eye-Q has successfully trained hundreds of individuals through its multiple upskilling initiatives, demonstrating its competence and expertise in providing industry-ready courses.



Toyota Kirloskar Motor and Government Tool Room & Training Centre Collaborate to Enhance Safety Culture and Skill Development in Karnataka

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) was identified by Government Tool Room & Training Centre (GTTC) as an Industrial Training Provider (ITP) for developing skilled human resources for the manufacturing units and first-time entrepreneurs, as a result a MOU was signed in January 2021 to impart Industry specific skill development training in GTTC locations.

Starting with four GTTC institutes in 2021-22, TKM has developed eleven GTTC institutes till date, and in FY 23-24, TKM has planned to develop five more institutes to foster auto industry culture and skill development. In the future the company plans to cover all 30 GTTC institutes in Karnataka in a phased manner.

As a part of the training program, TKM will provide an opportunity for the trainees who has enrolled in the three-year training in automobile welding and automobile assembly trades to acquire skills relevant to the manufacturing industry and improve their employment potential through a 'Learn and Earn' approach consisting of a mix of theoretical and On-the-Job Development. The students will be

trained by Toyota professionals with extensive hands-on experience in the Toyota Production System. The participants on successful completion of the training, will have to take up an exam for certification, which will be conducted by the Automotive Skill Development Council, Delhi with the support of 3rd party assessor. Further, TKM has deployed their trainers in these institutes to develop trainers from the institute to conduct training.

Safety has always been a paramount priority for TKM, and the company has implemented a "safety first" approach in all its processes. As part of the company's commitment to cultivate a safe mindset among students before they join the industry, safe work training is being provided to GTTC students. To promote safe practices, TKM has extended safety training, wherein trainers were deployed to promote a safe culture with special focus on visualizing the safety aspect in the areas of Industry, Road, and Fire.

H. Raghvendra, Managing Director, GTTC, said "TKM is taking a proactive initiative towards the development of industry-specific

skills, knowledge, and culture in institutes. Through these collaborative efforts, we aim to bridge the gap between academia and the industry, providing crucial support to various industries by producing a highly employable skilled and disciplined workforce. The knowledge imbibed during training, help the students understand their pivotal role in promoting safety and environmental consciousness in their workplace and which will further motivate them to excel in their future professional endeavours."

Speaking on the initiative, K. Srinivas, Director of Factories, Boilers, Industrial Safety & Health, Government of Karnataka, expressed, "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to TKM for their invaluable support in furthering the objectives of the Skill India Mission and promoting a culture of safety among students to work with a safe mindset in the industry. We are fully committed to providing all necessary assistance to enhance the GTTCs to achieve a greater level of excellence. With collective effort and collaboration, we are resolutely working hand in hand to develop the students and meet the industry requirements and inculcate safe industry culture."

G. Shankara, Senior Vice President & Chief Human Resource Officer, TKM & TKAP, stated, "At the core of delivering exceptional quality products and services, lies our unwavering commitment to nurturing world-class individuals. Toyota's unique philosophy revolves around cultivating quality people, who in turn will drive the establishment of robust processes, leading to the creation of ever-better products and services that delight our customers. The collaboration with GTTC and activities initiated mark a significant step in shaping a skilled and safety-conscious workforce that will drive the growth of the Indian Auto industry "

Reckitt expands 'Dettol Diarrhoea Net Zero' to cover 25 districts of Uttar Pradesh, aims to save 100,000 lives by engaging communities

Reckitt, world's leading consumer health and hygiene company, launched the phase 2 of 'Dettol Diarrhoea Net Zero', with the aim to save 100,000 lives. This one-of-a-kind program has been working towards achieving Net Zero Diarrhoeal preventable deaths among under-5 children in Uttar Pradesh. Based on the WHO 7-point plan, the program focuses on raising community awareness and education on prevention, promotion and treatment of diarrhoea in the 25 districts of the state.

6,000 lifesaving Dettol Diarrhoea Net Zero kits, comprising of sanitizers, zinc, ORS and educational material, have been distributed so far to patients under-5 years in Uttar Pradesh to promote healthy hygiene practices, such as hand washing and safe sanitation, along with use of ORS and Zinc and importance of vaccinations for viruses like rotavirus. Culturally adaptable educational music tracks and 'nukkad natak' in local language have also been developed and showcased on-ground to increase access to diarrhoea management knowledge in remote and underserved areas.

In its second year, the program adds districts of Gonda, Balrampur, Sidharth Nagar, Ayodhya, Ambedkar Nagar, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Hamirpur, Jalaun, and Mahoba in Uttar Pradesh, working on ground with communities. Aligned to the government's Intensive Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDFC) program and 'Dastak' campaign, Dettol Diarrhoea Net Zero enhances the



Amitabh Bachchan with Dettol Diarrhoea Net Kit

capacity of caregivers to provide effective prevention, treatment, and management of diarrhoea. The program will train 10,000 additional Gulabi didis to fight against maternal and infant mortality in its second phase. The mission is to address delays in timely identification, treatment, and referral of diarrhoea cases through a model that combines digital, on-ground and blended interventions.

Gaurav Jain, Executive Vice President, Reckitt – South Asia said, "Uttar Pradesh's consistent

commitment to strengthen its economy by boosting its healthcare inspires us to accomplish more in the state every day. Reckitt has worked with students, teachers, parents, and communities to improve their overall health and well-being over the last eight years, impacting the lives of nearly ten million children. The success of the Diarrhoea Net Zero program in 13 districts has encouraged us to extend our resources and we are thrilled to take the program to 25 districts of the state, ensuring zero diarrhoeal deaths among children under the age of five. With support from the Government of Uttar Pradesh, we will gain momentum and work diligently to create a healthier and brighter future for the children."

Ravi Bhatnagar, Director, External Affairs and Partnerships, SOA, Reckitt, said, "Reckitt has been a long – term partner for the state of Uttar Pradesh, championing hygiene, health, and sanitation. Aligned to



Diarrhoea Net Zero kit for under-5 children

the government's Intensive Diarrhea Control Fortnight (IDFC) program and 'Dastak' campaign, we are consistently engaging with the most remote communities on-ground through art, culture and various educational activities. With the expansion of 'Diarrhoea Net Zero', we will empower communities with knowledge and resources to effectively combat everyday challenges that can become long-term health concerns for vulnerable children. We are committed to innovate and implement effective solutions to push towards achieving a net zero future for Diarrhoea."

Continued persistence of the disease has implications on the overall growth and well-being of children, hence, need for a program like 'Dettol Diarrhoea Net Zero' that becomes a demonstrable model for the state and country is crucial to reduce diarrhoeal deaths in under-5 children. Since its inception, 'Dettol Diarrhoea Net Zero' has focussed on caregivers, with commitment to promoting the WHO 7-point plan for effective diarrhoea management in the communities where it's needed most. In the past year, 10,000 gulabi didis have been trained and

equipped with the right knowledge and tools for effective diarrhoea management. Nutritional rehabilitation centres for children at district hospitals' pediatric wards, community health centers, primary health centers, sub-centers and nand ghars have also been organized to ensure regular health checkups and follow ups on treatment programs. To keep a check on the quality of water 12,000 households have received water testing kits and 1,18,545 received household visits by healthcare workers to ensure WHO 7 points plan is followed and implemented.

Tata Motors provides hands on automotive skills to secondary and senior secondary students in partnership with Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs)

Tata Motors, India's leading automobile company, has joined hands with Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya to provide knowledge, hands-on automotive skills and industrial exposure to the students of secondary and senior secondary students of JNV as a part of the vocational courses envisioned in the 'National Education Policy 2020'. Launched in 2022, the programme is on offer at 25 JNVs across Gujarat, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. So far, 2500 students have been imparted training under the programme and the training is expected to cover 5000 students this year.

Under this unique initiative, Tata Motors is utilizing its extensive expertise in the automobile domain to provide Automotive Courses (404 & 804) for vocational skilling to the students of JNVs. The course is offered to students in 9th to 12th grade and the curriculum and lab setup has been designed as per the CBSE guidelines and with inputs from the Tata Motors team. The program

aims to equip students with hands-on automotive skills and industry exposure right within the school premises.

Tata Motors has created the required 'Automotive Skill Lab' infrastructure at 25 JNVs schools and also conducted a training programme for the instructors teaching these vocational subjects. The training was conducted at the Tata Motors plant in Jamshedpur. After finishing their schooling with vocational automotive skills, students can opt for Diploma in Mechatronics that will be fully funded by Tata Motors. The students get an exposure to the on-the-job training in the TML manufacturing facility while earning stipend from the company. Post this, the students can either seek opportunity within the automotive industry or pursue B. Tech in engineering and follow the career progression thereafter.

Vinod Kulkarni, CSR Head at Tata Motors said, "We are committed towards enriching the lives of the youth of the country and upskilling is one of the means to achieve this goal. We are delighted to work with Jawahar Navodaya

Vidyalayas to make students from underserved communities employable thus fuelling their career ambitions as well. The progression of the course into professional education helps students to envisage their future in this field. Further, this project reiterates our commitment to nurturing talent, empowering youth, and bridging the skills gap in the automotive industry under the 'Skill India Mission'. We are happy to enable cultivation of an engaged and skilled workforce and creating a future-ready workforce in partnership with JNVs."

Vinayak Garg, Commissioner, Navodaya Vidyalaya Sangathan said, "We are delighted to partner with Tata Motors in this first of its kind of initiative wherein we are providing our students access to holistic education that includes both academic as well as vocational streams as per the NEP 2020. This partnership will enable the students get necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in a particular career or trade and align themselves with the current trends in the automotive industry."

Students of Samsung Innovation Campus in Bhubaneswar Graduate with Certificates in AI, IoT and Coding & Programming

Samsung India's flagship CSR program Samsung Innovation Campus concluded the AI, IoT and Coding & Programming courses for its second batch of 168 students in Bhubaneswar, reiterating Samsung's commitment to being India's strong partnerships and working alongside the Government in its mission to empower the country's youth and #PoweringDigitalIndia.

The students who were mentored and trained at Center Tool Room and Training Center (CTTC), Bhubaneswar were granted certificates of course completion at a felicitation ceremony at CTTC, Chandaka Avenue, Infocity Bhubaneswar. The students were felicitated by officials from Samsung and ESSCI, which is executing the program through its nationwide network of approved training and education partners.

The first batch of students, who graduated in the month of March this year, set a remarkable precedent, showcasing the program's effectiveness in transforming young minds into competent tech professionals. This time around, a batch of 168 students, of which 42 have been trained in AI, 106 in IoT, and 20 in Coding and Programming participated in a hackathon and developed codes based on the problem statements presented to them.

The problem statements included topics such as diseases that affect the flora, healthcare data storage for scientists to improve macro level health issues, complex e-commerce platforms. The teams presented their prototypes to a jury of 5 Members from CTTC, Bhubaneswar – Mananjay Nayak, Hrushikesh Mohanty, Mrutunjay



Mishra, Monalisa Das and Ritu Maity. "At Samsung, we believe in giving back by creating a pool of skilled workforce to better India's digital future. Through this initiative, we want to empower the youth and create opportunities for them in future tech domains, further boosting India's growth story and strengthening our commitment to Powering Digital India," said Hyun Kim, Corporate Vice President, Samsung Southwest Asia.

Samsung India launched its Samsung Innovation Campus program at eight campuses across the country with the aim of upskilling 3,000 less-privileged youth in future tech domains such as AI, IoT, Big Data, and Coding & Programming and helping them get relevant job placements.

Samsung Innovation Campus aims to upskill youth aged 18-25 years in future technologies and enhance their employability. These are key technology skills for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. During

the program, participants receive instructor-led classroom training through approved training and education partners of ESSCI across the country.

Youth enrolled in the program are undergoing classroom training and will complete their hands-on capstone project work in their selected technology areas from Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, Big Data, and Coding & Programming. They will also be imparted soft skills training to enhance their employability and provided job placements in relevant organizations.

Those opting for the AI course will undergo 270 hours of theory training and complete 80 hours of project work while those doing the IoT or the Big Data course will undergo 160 hours of training and complete 80 hours of project work. Participants opting for the Coding & Programming course will do 80 hours of training and be part of a Hackathon.

ACT Fellowship Program invites applications for 2023-24 cohort; seeks young professionals aspiring to be social change-makers

ACT, a non-profit venture philanthropy platform, has launched applications for the second cohort of the ACT Fellowship Program - an opportunity for young professionals to gain real-world experience in leveraging venture philanthropy for creating social impact at scale while honing their leadership and entrepreneurial skills. The program is a great fit for those who are looking to build their career in social impact, pivot their professional journey toward impact investing, or hope to become a social entrepreneur.

The nine-month, full-time program will commence in September 2023 and enable Fellows to learn how venture capital principles are applied to philanthropy, from leading investors, founders, and social impact leaders. Each Fellow will be matched with one of ACT's four focus areas - ed-tech, public healthcare, climate action, and gender inclusivity - and will work with the ACT team on a wide array of live projects including sector research, deal-flow sourcing, due diligence, investment pitches, portfolio management, impact assessment, collaborative programs, industry

The nine-month, full-time program is designed to help Fellows learn how venture capital principles are applied to philanthropy to catalyse social impact at scale

Fellows will be matched with one of ACT's four focus areas of ed-tech, public healthcare, climate action, and gender inclusivity


The Fellowship is fully-funded and each Fellow will receive a monthly stipend of Rs. 60,000 in addition to a letter of experience on successfully completing the program

events and partnerships, etc. "Our first cohort of Fellows has recently graduated and their positive learning experience has fuelled us to refine the program further. The

Fellowship is our way of bringing in the best and brightest of young minds into the social impact space and we're looking for ambitious go-getters who are genuinely interested in creating social change, passionate about the role of technology and innovation, and deeply curious about venture philanthropy," said Alankrita Khera, Director at ACT.

The 2023-24 cohort will accept five Fellows into the program and the minimum eligibility criteria are for applicants to be a resident Indian citizen, a graduate in any discipline from an accredited university in or outside India, and have a minimum of two years of startup/investing/consulting/social sector work experience.

Interested candidates will need to complete and submit an online application form - those shortlisted will be invited for an in-person/virtual interview with a member of ACT's leadership team. Such interviews will be conducted on a rolling basis and since the program has limited spots, applicants are recommended to submit their application as soon as possible.

Application Deadline: 11.59 PM on 7th August 2023 

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L-R - Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser, Government of India, Chetan Krishnaswamy, Vice President – Public Policy at Amazon India, Alia Bhatt, Aparna Purohit, Head of India Originals, Prime Video and Sushant Sreeram, Country Director, Prime Video, India

Prime Video Joins Hands with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser

Mission Start Ab will feature 10 early-stage grassroots entrepreneurs, with a focus on made-for-India innovations that have the potential to impact socio-economic change. Founders will be put through a series of intense challenges in their efforts to secure funding from 3 of India's most prolific investors, as they compete to become India's next Unicorn.

Prime Video, India's entertainment destination, has joined forces with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA), Government of India, to create Mission Start Ab, a first-of-its-kind series, that will showcase India's

grassroots innovators as they turbo-charge their business growth.

The seven-episode series will show these promising entrepreneurs, focussed on scaling made-for-India innovations with the potential to impact socio-economic change,

undertake a series of challenges in pursuit of scaling their business and securing funding for their ventures. With India as one of the world's largest and most vibrant start-up ecosystems, this wholly Made-In-India series also brings together three renowned investors who will search for India's next Unicorn, by putting these 10 early-stage founders through a series of intense exercises and simulations that will test their entrepreneurial, management, communication and crises management skills. Mission Start Ab is a new series that will engage audiences with the power of human stories behind

every promising Indian start-up. It will celebrate the ingenuous and audacious entrepreneurs who have the potential to build and scale their businesses, and give 3 of the most prolific investors the opportunity to invest in them.

The series promises to captivate viewers with stories of these unique Indian start-ups and founders, their humble beginnings, never-say-die spirit, and the sacrifices they have made along the way to turn their dreams into reality. Far from being a show about raising funding alone, where entrepreneurs seek investments, and investors seek profits; in this series, investors will also act as mentors, challenging and empowering some of the brightest minds in the country. The audience will get to witness these amazing early-stage entrepreneurs compete with each other to become India's next Unicorn. Currently in production, this upcoming reality show is slated to premiere soon on Prime Video.

to grassroot innovators in India, providing valuable insights into sustainable start-up practices and attracting the right investors. Furthermore, the series promises to entertain viewers while promoting the growth of our nation's grass-roots innovation ecosystem."

"Our mission at Prime Video has always been to be a force for good, and an enabler of India's economy – directly and indirectly. We are incredibly proud to partner with the Office of the PSA, Government of India and bring to life Mission Start Ab, a path-breaking series," said Sushant Sreeram, Country Director, Prime Video, India. "This collaboration between the Office of the PSA, Government of India and Prime Video is another milestone on the journey that started earlier this year with Amazon India signing the Letter of Engagement (LoE) with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) with an objective of contributing to the growth of

also help fuel the dreams of many young Indians."

"Supporting and nurturing entrepreneurs has been one of Amazon's focus areas in India. Over the years we have taken a number of initiatives to propel India's start-up ecosystem. Today, we are excited to announce this Amazon Original show on Prime Video, in association with the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser, Government of India," said Chetan Krishnaswamy, Vice President – Public Policy at Amazon India. "We believe this show will inspire many individuals to choose the path of entrepreneurship and contribute in advancing the government's 'Start-up India' initiative."

Alia Bhatt, who dons multiple hats – that of a popular actor, a successful entrepreneur, and an investor too, was also present at the event to talk about her journey as an entrepreneur. She said, "While there are many great ideas and ambitious young founders around us, it takes a

The series promises to captivate viewers with stories of these unique Indian start-ups and founders, their humble beginnings, never-say-die spirit, and the sacrifices they have made along the way to turn their dreams into reality. Far from being a show about raising funding alone, where entrepreneurs seek investments, and investors seek profits; in this series, investors will also act as mentors, challenging and empowering some of the brightest minds in the country.

"Lauding the remarkable spirit of India's grassroot innovators, I am delighted to announce Prime Video's reality series Mission Start Ab. This captivating series will serve as a powerful platform, showcasing the inspiring stories of those driving social change through innovation," said Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser, Government of India. "I am optimistic that it will offer immense learning opportunities

India's creative economy. This marquee collaboration exemplifies our commitment to the country and our viewers, as we create new formats that empower entrepreneurs, innovators and creators in expanding their horizons through our service. By tracing the journey of some of the most innovative minds in India, our aim with Mission Start Ab is not only to highlight grassroots innovations taking place across the country but

special kind of determination to turn that idea into reality, build the right team, find the right mentors, raise funding, and create something out of nothing. I applaud both, the Office of the PSA, Government of India, and Prime Video India for taking the initiative to enable and empower entrepreneurs through Mission Start Ab, which I believe can have a far-reaching impact on the country's growing start-up ecosystem."



EU'S CARBON BORDER TAX: THE START OF A NEW TRADE WAR?

Developing countries question whether such measures by rich nations are designed equitably and if they violate global anti-protectionist trade rules, writes **Bhasker Tripathi**, CarbonCopy

While the incomes of developed countries are estimated to rise by US\$2.48 billion through the implementation of the carbon border tax, developing countries' incomes fall by US\$5.86 billion.

Image: James Brooks, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

In April this year, the Indian government spoke to its industries about how it is strategising to tackle an impending 'carbon border tax' on its exports to the EU, including iron ore and steel.

After two years of negotiating, the EU member states approved the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

The world's first carbon border tax, that aims to equalise the price of carbon paid for EU products operating under its compliance-based carbon market, the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and the one for imported goods.

Importers in the EU will have to purchase so-called CBAM certificates to pay the difference between the carbon price paid in the country of production and the price of carbon allowances in the EU ETS. In the absence of a carbon price in the production country, the cost of certificates is likely to be decided by the carbon emitted beyond a threshold set by the EU. The country-group believes that the law will incentivise non-EU countries to increase their climate ambition and ensure that EU and global climate efforts are not undermined by production being relocated from the EU to countries with less ambitious policies.

In the beginning, the EU carbon border tax will only apply to imports of a few goods with a high-carbon impact, including cement, iron, fertilisers and steel. The tax will be gradually expanded to cover lower-carbon goods. Although the carbon border tax will begin in 2026, businesses, however, will need to produce an annual report detailing the goods imported in the previ-

ous year from October 1 2023. This means all manufacturers across all countries exporting their products to the EU will be expected to assess their production emissions.

The EU's carbon border tax is not an isolated case. A flurry of announcements by developed countries has come to light in the recent past using climate change as a pretext to weaponise trade as an emission reduction tool. The US, Japan and China are also considering similar border taxes on trade. The latest, and perhaps clearest, indication that developed economies are closing ranks around a cross-border carbon taxation strategy came in the recently concluded G7 ministers meeting in Japan. The communique issued at the end of the meeting signals broad agreement in group around the legitimacy of trade policy instruments such as carbon taxes to facilitate emission reductions.

Beyond border taxes, the EU and US find themselves in competition with each other—the US through its Inflation Reduction Act is offer-

ing billions of dollars of subsidies to industries to lure them into doing business within the US. The EU fears that this could lead to industries shifting their base from the EU to the US. In response, the EU came up with their own green subsidies. While the two developed nations locked horns on the green subsidies, both the US and EU are also considering the imposition of new import tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminium on climate grounds, reigniting the talks of a global carbon club, a "carbon-based sectoral arrangement on steel and aluminium trade". Target at China at the moment this tariff is likely to be imposed on all major steel producers.

States increasingly using climate change as a pretext for imposing new trade measures, have developing countries worried about their economies. While their potential positive impacts on the climate may be thin, developing countries are questioning whether these measures are legitimate and will achieve the stated goal of cutting global emis-

sions, are designed equitably and whether they violate global anti-protectionist trade rules.

For instance, in the case of the EU carbon border tax, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) report states that the principle of the EU carbon border tax is "to impose on developing countries the environmental standards that developed countries are choosing".

Not only does this go against the principle of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) enshrined in the Paris Agreement, the report says, "should the revenues from these mechanisms be used in developed countries, rather than be invested in climate adaption in developing countries, they would turn basic principles of climate finance on their head."

One thing is clear, the impacts of these trade measures will be multi-pronged, which countries are in the process to assess. CarbonCopy looked at some of the larger debates around the scheme:

IMPACT ON INDIA AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

All countries are in the process of assessing how much of their exports would face carbon border tax and how much that tariff could be since the EU has proposed different mechanisms for taxation. For example, in steel, different furnace technologies used to produce it might attract different levels of taxation.

India's total annual export to the EU in 2022 was about US\$8.2 billion for the products categorised for the carbon tax, mostly steel, aluminium and iron. Largely, this is the quantum of export that might be hit by the EU's carbon tax.

While the Indian government is trying to figure out specific numbers, it believes the carbon tax, for now, will impact 2 per cent of India's total exports and the tariff could

be between 25-35 per cent, trade experts told CarbonCopy.

The carbon border tax on Indian imports could significantly impact the prices of Indian-made goods in the EU markets, thereby upsetting demand, two senior trade lawyers wrote in an Economic Times op-ed.

"It could heavily bear up the supply chain portion of industrial sectors such as automotive, construction, cement, packaging, and consumer appliances as costs for key inputs such as steel and aluminium may rise by 15-30 per cent leading to a change in purchasing behaviour of end customers," they wrote, forcing companies to take actions to maintain competitiveness.

The direct implications of EU's proposed CBAM, however, marks

trade policy instruments that reflect the price of carbon in global supply chains (read: cross-border taxes), in effect highlighting the possibility of legislation similar to EU's CBAM in other developed economies. Under this eventuality, one can expect the portion of India's exports affected to skyrocket. Further, the implications are likely to disproportionately burden India's export-oriented MSME sector. Meanwhile, any positive prospects from such interventions are likely to be concentrated among the fat cats of Indian industry. Those with requisite capital or the ability to raise capital to undertake emission reductions will implicitly enjoy better access to markets overseas.

At the time of writing, the Indian government is engaged in talks with

"It could heavily bear up the supply chain portion of industrial sectors such as automotive, construction, cement, packaging, and consumer appliances as costs for key inputs such as steel and aluminium may rise by 15-30 per cent leading to a change in purchasing behaviour of end customers."

only the beginning of a challenging trade regime for India's government and export-oriented industry. Much more significant is the precedent it sets. More evidence of broad alignment among developed economies on the issue of cross-border carbon taxation came in the G7 Clean Energy Economy Action Plan, released relatively quietly as a sort of unofficial addendum to the G7 communique. The action plan expounds on the broad agreement among developed economies to work together on

the EU counterpart to eke out a resolution. Both parties discussed the issue in ministerial-level meetings in Brussels in May.

In the same month, the Indian government held a consultation with the affected industries to signal them to be ready for the carbon tax. The government told the industries that it will use bilateral channels to make the transition smooth as well as figure out if a waiver is possible for a section of the industries, likely small and medium enterprises

which have little capacity to adopt newer technologies of production.

The Indian government's stand is that the carbon tax is largely a trade issue and not an environmental one. It has openly talked about these measures being protectionist in nature.

In February this year, the Indian government in a written statement to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) raised an issue against nations using carbon border taxes to hamper export, the Business Standard reported. Calling these initiatives discriminatory and protectionist, India pointed to the concerns over the selective application of carbon border rules to "trade-exposed industries" like steel, aluminium, chemicals, plastics, polymers, chemicals and fertilisers. Which, the country said in its statement, reflects the underlying competitiveness concerns driving such measures.

India said that "carbon border measures that are being considered (by the European Union and the United States) for imposition on imported products, effectively amount to prioritising a singular policy of the importing country over those of exporting countries and will amount to imposing a unilateral vision of how to combat climate change."

According to the WTO rules, it is mandatory that there is non-discriminatory treatment for the same products, irrespective of their production methods and such border measures can lead to "behind-the-border" protectionist practices, India said.

"Any measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade," India's submission to WTO said.

Not only India, but most developing and least developed nations that export their products to the EU are threatened by the carbon border tax. They believe that a blanket imposi-

tion of tax could mean that weaker nations have to share the mitigation burden of industrialised nations.

Ministers of Brazil, South Africa, India and China, representing the "BASIC" group, released a joint statement on November 15, 2022, and retaliated against the proposed carbon border tax. "Unilateral measures and discriminatory practices, such as carbon border taxes, that could result in market distortion and aggravate the trust deficit amongst parties must be avoided," the statement said. BASIC countries, in the statement, called for a united solidarity response by developing countries to any unfair shifting of responsibility..from developed to developing countries.

"While all the BASIC countries have put in place their strategies to reduce carbon emissions in a phased manner, developing nations require predictable and appropriate support, including climate finance and access to technology and markets from developed nations to ensure and enable their sustainable development," said the statement.

Trade offers an interesting and important avenue to pursue a climate agenda, and potentially it could be effective if measures are fairly and meaningfully designed to address the true drivers of climate change and not guised as protectionism, Olivia Rumble and Andrew Gilder, both trade policy experts, said about the EU and the US news of carbon border taxes, focusing on

"Any measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade."

its impact on African nations. The process of designing these measures needs to take into account the needs of developing countries, not impose unfair procedural burdens and associated costs on exporting states, follow a meaningful engagement process where developing country inputs are taken into account in the design, and where revenues and financial benefits are not used in a way that provides an unfair benefit to importing states at the expense of developing countries, they said.

However, little consultation or engagement has preceded these planned measures, and the initial designs suggest that they predominantly stand to benefit the EU and US.

Least Developed Countries (LDCs), especially African nations, are of the view that a blanket tax on carbon-intensive industries will most likely affect weaker economies and reduce their profit margins associated with goods from such industries. They suggest that the EU grant a delay in implementation for African countries given the unlikelihood of carbon leakage to Africa, and that CBAM proceeds should be used to foster low-carbon growth in LDCs.

The European Union, however, says that the carbon tax is designed in a way that it promotes cleaner and more efficient production in countries outside its boundaries. And that its tax is in full compliance with the WTO rules. "...We were of course very careful to ensure WTO

compatibility of the initiative. And a keyword for this is ‘non-discrimination’. So we apply the same price of carbon to imported goods that we are going to apply also on our domestic producers,” Valdis Dombrovskis, the EU trade commissioner said after the ministerial meeting with the Indian counterpart.

Claiming WTO Rules, they have argued that it will not be possible to give an exemption to LDCs. In October this year, the EU Parliament pushed for all the revenue generated from certificate sales to be used to support LDC efforts to decarbonise, however, the latest EU Council and Parliament announcement makes no mention of the position on the use of revenues.

NEGLIGIBLE EMISSION CUTS BUT A FALL IN REAL INCOMES OF POORER COUNTRIES

The larger reason why developing countries are unsure of the EU’s carbon border tax making a dent in global warming causing emissions is

border tax reduces global emissions further by only 0.1 per cent. The EU’s own emissions reduce by only 0.9 per cent. While achieving these meagre cuts, the carbon border tax forces the global real income to fall by US\$3.4 billion.

The benefits of the carbon border tax are also skewed in rich countries’ favour. Through the implementation of the tax, developed countries’ incomes rise by US\$2.48 billion while developing countries’ incomes fall by US\$5.86 billion.

EU’S FREEBIES TO ITS INDUSTRIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE US’S GREEN SUBSIDIES


The passage of the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has had an impact on the final contours of the EU ETS and CBAM, especially on the slow phasing out of the free allocation of pollution permits. Together with the energy price crunch caused by the Russian war in Ukraine, it was frequently cited as a reason by the EU as to why these two specific pieces

steel, under its ETS continuing till late this decade and slow introduction of CBAM could hurt global fight of slashing emissions rapidly for staying within 1.5°C limit.

For example, under the reformed Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) agreed at the end of 2022, heavy industries are required to slash their emissions more than in the past decade but remain nevertheless shielded from the price signal. These energy-intensive sectors—which have received about €200 billion in free pollution permits since the ETS was established—will continue to receive large amounts of their emission allowances for free until at least 2030 to the tune of over €400 billion, according to Carbon Market Watch (CMW), a global non-profit.

This is not it. The EU Innovation Fund is endowed with more than €38 billion financed from the auctioning of EU ETS allowances, and to be used to help companies decarbonise and transition to the green economy. In addition, a significant share of the EU’s €800-billion Covid-19 recovery package and the €300-billion RePowerEU package has gone or will go to EU-heavy industry. “Then, there is the protection against the bogeyman of carbon leakage afforded by the CBAM,” CMW said.

The EU sees the slow phase-out of free allocation together with the slow phase-in of CBAM, as a “breathing space for industry”.

What is in the making now with the industrial policy package will rather be an additional supply of oxygen to industry, as per the CMW. However, whether the industry will soon after that be able to breathe naturally and exhale something that is good for the climate is doubtful, the non-profit added. 

This story was originally published on CarbonCopy.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/eus-carbon-border-tax-the-start-of-a-new-trade-war/>)

The benefits of the carbon border tax are also skewed in rich countries’ favour. Through the implementation of the tax, developed countries’ incomes rise by US\$2.48 billion while developing countries’ incomes fall by US\$5.86 billion.

the underlying numbers of its benefits and the underlying cost that the world, especially weaker nations, will have to pay.

A UNCTAD report that analysed the EU’s carbon border tax and its gains for the world at large said at US\$44 per tonne of CO₂, the carbon

of legislation could not go ahead as originally envisaged.

Experts who have been studying the EU’s policies for decades worry that in the face of the US Inflation Reduction Act, the EU’s moves regarding the free emission allocations to its large industries, especially



Women-led businesses face an unmet credit gap of more than US\$11.4 billion and female entrepreneurs received only 5.2 per cent of the outstanding credit granted to enterprises by Indian public sector banks, according to the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank. Image: risingthermals, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

HOW CAN INDIA'S WOMEN-LED STARTUPS BEAT GENDER FUNDING GAP?

Women-led companies get a tiny share of venture capital and bank funding in India, but a clutch of initiatives aim to change that.

When Indian businesswoman Aditi Bhutia Madan recalls her childhood in Darjeeling, she remembers pine forests, Himalayan sunrises and her grandmother's momos – the savoury dumplings that years later inspired her to launch her own company.

A former MasterChef India contestant, Madan was confident of her cooking skills but she did not know how to access formal financing to grow her Yangkiez By MomoMami brand - a major hurdle for many female entrepreneurs in India.

For years, Madan ran the gauntlet of loan sharks demanding exorbitant interest rates or demanding a stake in her business.

"There were a lot of challenges ... First, because you're a woman," she told Context.

That changed when Madan, who is in her mid-40s, joined thousands of women entrepreneurs in the Women StartUp Programme (WSP) at NSRCEL, a business incubator at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, which gives participants training in business skills including the art of pitching for financing.

After presenting her first pitch on the reality show Shark Tank India, she secured 7.5 million Indian rupees (US\$91,000) from investors for capacity building and infrastructure development at her company's production units.

"I didn't know anything about pitching before going to WSP," she said.

India ranks 57 out of 65 on the MasterCard Index of Women Entrepreneurs, which gauges how women in business are progressing globally, and only one in five of the country's businesses are led by women, according to government data. Unequal access to capital is a key barrier. When women entrepreneurs do approach potential investors for financing, they are more likely to be rejected.

"We are still finding it difficult to project (women) as investment-

International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank.

Many small Indian enterprises are either self-financed or financed with family support - both of which are more difficult for women entrepreneurs. In a Bain & Company and Google survey, 43 per cent women said their families and spouses did not support their businesses.

"This is the first hurdle many women face, their families are

India ranks 57 out of 65 on the MasterCard Index of Women Entrepreneurs, which gauges how women in business are progressing globally, and only one in five of the country's businesses are led by women, according to government data. Unequal access to capital is a key barrier. When women entrepreneurs do approach potential investors for financing, they are more likely to be rejected.

ready," said Ankita Pegu from the WSP, which has helped more than 400 women-led startups.

Women-led businesses face an unmet credit gap of more than US\$11.4 billion and female entrepreneurs received only 5.2 per cent of the outstanding credit granted to enterprises by Indian public sector banks, according to the

not willing to back them with finance," says Bengaluru-based Sucharita Eashwar, founder of the nonprofit Catalyst for Women Entrepreneurship.

Gender discrimination

Much of the financing gap stems from widespread gender discrimination and persistent

conservative thinking about women's role in the country of 1.3 billion people.

Preksha Kaparwan, 33, taught herself design, coding and website development, going on to co-found artificial intelligence data analytics startups, Delhi-based AlphaAI in 2019 and San Francisco-based Super AI in 2022. Even then, she said investors treated her differently to her male counterparts during pitching meetings. Some did not ask her any questions at all while others switched to talking about the weather.

"As an investor, you have to be neutral to the gender that's in front of you," she said.

Potential investors are more likely to consider a woman's age and marital status before making a decision on financing, said Jibin Mathew, assistant manager at the WSP.

"(They think) maybe another two years from now she gets married, and the investors feel that it may hurt their investment. And if she's married, then there are questions about family," Mathew said.

"Male entrepreneurs are never asked these questions."

Research in the United States has shown investors are more likely to ask men "promotion" questions related to their ambitions and achievements, which tend to yield positive responses - and more funding.

Women are more often asked "prevention" questions focused on safety, losses and potential risks, hindering "the entrepreneur's ability to raise capital", a 2018 study published in the Academy of Management Journal found.

Funding imbalance

Just 0.3 per cent of India's venture capital funding went to women-led startups in 2021.

Anxious to address the imbalance, entrepreneur-turned-investor



(They think) maybe another two years from now she gets married, and the investors feel that it may hurt their investment. And if she's married, then there are questions about family. Male entrepreneurs are never asked these questions.

- JIBIN MATHEW

Assistant Manager, Women StartUp Programme

Anisha Singh set up the She Capital fund to help women business founders five years ago.

Listing her fund's success stories, she said she did not expect to find that "making a case for females, and female founders would be so tough".

Studies have found that startups founded and co-founded by women generate more revenue and create more jobs.

Despite that, banks too are hesitant to fund female entrepreneurs and have concerns about their success, says Nidhi Gupta, executive director of Dhriiti, a Delhi-based nonprofit working with entrepreneurs.

Sometimes women participating in her programmes have been asked by bank staff to provide the signature of a male relative when making a loan application.

Over 85 per cent women entrepreneurs faced challenges in availing loan services from public sector banks, as per a 2022 survey by nonprofit Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST), an initiative mentoring entrepreneurs from underprivileged communities.

And while the Indian government has financial support schemes for female-led enterprises, only 3.4 per cent of all women entrepreneurs have benefited from them, according to a study by the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWAAGE), a nonprofit.

Faced by such practical problems, it can be "a lonely journey" for female business founders, said Pegu, adding that programmes such as the WSP can provide a women-focused sense of community to counter the male-dominated world of business.

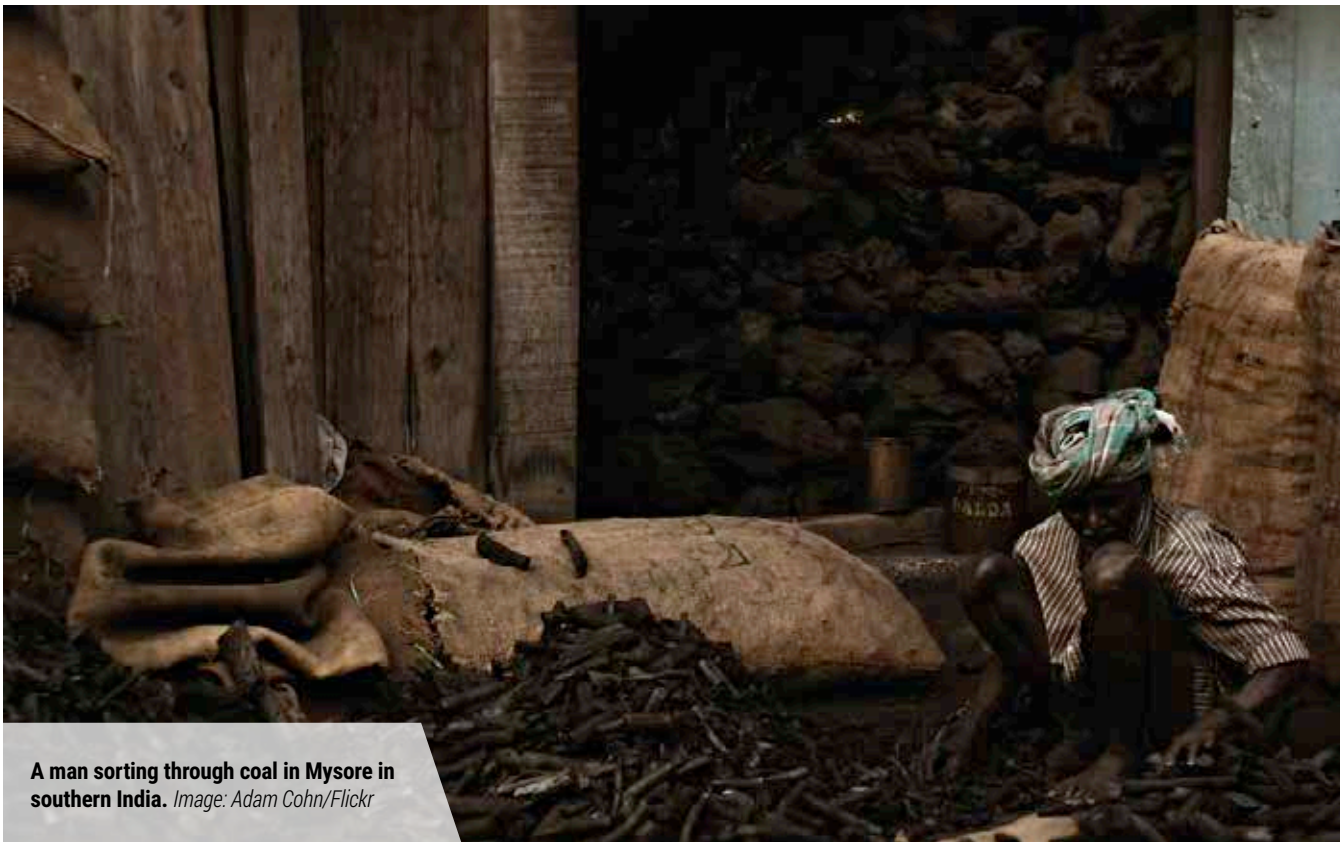
Poor access to professional communities and networks results in gaps in information about sources of funding and market information, experts say.

Training - for example on the art of a good pitch to investors - is also key to helping women realise their full potential, said Singh. "I know you know your business," she said. "(So) why do you hand that over to somebody else to speak about it?"

This story is part of a series supported by the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative. The reporting was also supported by the International Women's Media Foundation's Kim Wall Memorial Fund.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/how-can-indias-women-led-startups-beat-gender-funding-gap/>)



A man sorting through coal in Mysore in southern India. Image: Adam Cohn/Flickr

COAL MINING IN INDIA HAS A HUMAN COST

Communities living close to coal mines in India face the constant threat of coal fires and land subsidence forcing them to flee their homes, writes **Shatabdi Das**

The richest coal fields in India are also the most precarious for workers and those who live on them.

The threat of homes collapsing or burning down due to ground subsidence and coal fires — some

of which have burned for a century — is a clear and present danger to thousands of people in Jharkand and Raniganj regions, around 300 kilometres northwest of Kolkata.

The risks of sudden death and injury frequently force people, in particular vulnerable migrant

workers, into having to suddenly abandon everything and flee.

This sudden exodus results in the loss of jobs and sources of income. It also leads to social disintegration and exposes the migrants to further poverty as they struggle to find work and settle in new places.

In the Jharia coalfields, where underground fires have been burning for over 100 years, sudden land subsidence results in houses catching fire, people being killed and families being forced to abandon

their properties and flee. These are common occurrences in Jharia, but its mines also produce the finest quality coal in India, which in 2020 accounted for 44 per cent of India's primary energy demand.

Despite the ever-present danger, many of those working the mines find it difficult to migrate and settle elsewhere, because local people fear losing their daily source of income from coal picking.

In the absence of alternate means of income, gathering burnt high-grade coal to sell in the market helps them make a living. Even if they want to move to escape the hazards of living next to a coal mine, without any resettlement and rehabilitation schemes, most do not find an appropriate place to resettle.

The Jharia Rehabilitation and Development Authority has been created to provide people with alternative job options and help their resettlement in safer environments.

However, relocation to stable land away from coal mines often becomes a hurdle to earning a livelihood in the absence of higher wages and dearth of work opportunities in manufacturing industries, and other sectors without formal education, and results in people choosing to return to live in their dilapidated homes and engage in informal mining despite the constant dangers.

The proportion of homeless people engaged in illegal coal extraction is also quite high. This makes planning for people to live sustainably elsewhere ineffective, as many choose not to settle there.

India's Central Mine Planning and Design Institute has identified more than eight mine areas in the Raniganj Coalfield as high-risk and unstable, with more than 100,000 people in danger of being forced to flee due to buildings collapsing, ground subsidence, mine fires or other accidents. The Ratibati colliery of Raniganj Community Development Block is highly susceptible

to land subsidence because of the vacant labyrinth beneath the crust, and a population of above 30,000 threatened with either an imminent cave-in or becoming a victim of shock mobility.

Houses have suddenly collapsed in the towns of Parashkol, Jambad, Majhipara and others near coal mines in Ondal Block as the ground beneath them gave way.

In 2020, an exodus of people followed because of ground subsidence in the Madhabpur open-cast mine of Raniganj Coalfield.

More than 400 people fled to find shelter elsewhere, as their houses developed cracks or collapsed.

Normally, those fleeing due to such shocks are offered compensation at a safer site for the land and houses they have lost, and one member of the displaced family is offered a government job.

However, the rehabilitation agencies allege that many residents encroach on land owned by Coal India Limited and then claim rehabilitation benefits.

The local inhabitants blame the lack of coordination between the Asansol Durgapur Development Authority and officials of the mining company, Eastern Coalfields Limited, and the housing department of West Bengal, for the lack of implementation of rehabilitation packages.

In cases of land subsidence and mine fire outbreaks, residents living in land adjoining the collieries are sometimes swiftly shifted to abandoned Eastern Coalfields Limited quarters that only have piped water connections. At times potable water is unavailable due to pipes being broken by land subsidence and people have to struggle with daily life amidst these uncertainties.

The monsoon also brings more risks for inhabitants with excessive rainfall causing flooding.

The September 2021 deluge in the Raniganj coalfield flooded the open-cast mines and stranded people

without water, food and medical supplies in submerged areas near the collieries for almost a week, with coal seams remaining inaccessible to workers for about three months.


They had to be rescued and shifted away from their waterlogged homes by the disaster response forces of the Disaster Management and Civil Defence Department of West Bengal.

In many ways the sudden, mass movement of people in coal mining regions is inevitable.

Coal mining draws poor and marginalised people to eke out a living from the burning seams, foraging through scraps of half-burnt coal, despite the risks to their lives.

The expansion, operations and production of coal in India makes land unstable, prone to subsidence and fire. In this era of global pledges for the reduction of carbon footprints and greenhouse gas emissions, this brings into question whether expanding coal mining operations should continue.

Perhaps now is the time when planning for the transition to sustainable energy should also include devising alternative livelihoods for residents dependent on coal scavenging and informal coal mining.

Dr Shatabdi Das is a researcher with the Calcutta Research Group. Her research interests include human migration, displacement, borderlands, issues of urban development and climate, and environmental and ecological studies. 

This article is part of a Special Report on 'Shock mobility', produced in collaboration with the Calcutta Research Group. If this article has raised issues for you, or if you're concerned about someone you know, visit <https://findahelpline.com/i/iasp>.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/coal-mining-in-india-has-a-human-cost/>)



Data from the the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development shows that costs of housing have risen faster than earnings and inflation in many member states in recent years. Image: Lawrence OP, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

World's slum populations set to surge as housing crisis bites

The UN says 3 billion people will live in slums by 2050 unless the world tackles poverty and inequality.

Beatrice Oriyo laughed out loud when asked if there was a playground where her three children could play near her home in Kibera, Nairobi's biggest informal settlement. "There's nothing like

that here," the 34-year-old Oriyo told Context by phone from the one-roomed corrugated iron home that she rents for 6,000 Kenyan Shillings (US\$43.18) a month.

"We don't even have our own toilet - we have to pay each time to

use the public toilets. We bathe in the same room that is our kitchen, living room and bedroom. The idea of a playground here is like a joke," she said.

More than one billion people globally reside in overcrowded urban slums such as Kibera, where they live a precarious existence, struggling to access basic amenities such as adequate housing, water, sanitation, power and waste collection, said the United Nations' agency for urban development, UN-Habitat.

This figure is projected to reach three billion people by 2050 - as populations grow and more people migrate to cities in search of better opportunities - presenting a major challenge for many governments across the world.

UN-Habitat forecasts that 50 per cent of this growth in slum populations will be concentrated in eight countries: Nigeria, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Tanzania, India,

the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt and Pakistan.

“Our future is urban,” UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif told reporters on the sidelines of the UN-Habitat Assembly, a five-day conference bringing together ministers, senior officials and civil society groups to strengthen commitments to develop more sustainable cities. “More than half of the world’s population lives in cities and towns. That population is going to increase to 70 per cent by 2050.

So, tackling urban poverty and inequality is more urgent than ever before,” she said.

No privacy, so safety

More than half of Kenya’s urban population lives in unplanned overcrowded settlements like Kibera, the World Bank says. The warren of narrow dirt-paved alleys is home to at least 250,000 people - most living cheek-by-jowl in windowless one-room shacks.

Most residents are migrants from rural areas and earn less than US\$2 a day in low-income jobs as motorbike taxi drivers, security guards, domestic workers or casual labourers. They are unable to afford decent housing in Nairobi.

Toilets are shared pit latrines which often overflow during the rainy season, there is little piped water so residents rely on expensive and irregular private water tankers to fill their buckets and containers daily. Poor drainage and garbage collection mean floods are common - not only destroying homes and possessions, but also contaminating drinking water and even causing deaths through building collapses, electrocution and drowning.

With high levels of poverty and youth unemployment, crimes such as mugging, robbery and sexual violence against women are rife.

Residents in informal settlements are also at risk of forced evictions by authorities, and instances of

bulldozers moving in to demolish people’s homes are common.

“It’s not easy to live here,” Mercy Achieng, a 41-year-old single mother, who earns 500 shillings weekly washing laundry, said by phone from Kibera, only a 30-minute drive from the scenic 140-acre manicured grounds of UN conference in a green, upmarket part of the capital.

“It is a good community and we all know and help one another, but there is no privacy, no safety and no security. The landlord can kick us out, or the bulldozers can come.”

Slum-upgrading

UN-Habitat officials said that while lack of housing was previously seen as a problem faced by developing countries, it had become a global crisis with many rich countries such as the United States, Britain and Germany all facing shortages.

“The global housing crisis is present in all world regions today,” said Edlam Yemeru, head of the Knowledge and Innovation Branch of UN-Habitat

“Although the manifestations differ, almost all countries are grappling with the urgency to ensure that their citizens have access to adequate housing.”

Data from the the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development shows that costs of housing have risen faster than earnings and inflation in many member states in recent years.

Kenyan President William Ruto, who came to power last year, has made affordable housing a centrepiece of his government’s development agenda and announced plans to construct 250,000 houses annually for low income-earners, including those in informal settlements like Kibera.

“Realising that more than half of Kenya’s population will live in urban areas by 2050, we have integrated universal housing as a critical pillar of the national bottom-up economic


transformation agenda,” Ruto told delegates at the UN-Habitat Assembly on Monday.

He said this would include green buildings, green spaces, adoption of low carbon energy, including low carbon transport solutions, as well as urban agriculture and effective waste management. But the financing of the affordable housing programme - which would impose a 3 per cent levy on employee salaries with employers contributing the same amount - has been heavily criticised by the opposition and sparked protests by labour unions.

Joseph Muturi, chair of Slum Dwellers International - a network of the urban poor from more than 18 countries - said governments needed to focus on upgrading slums, rather than relocating slum dwellers to housing projects outside cities.

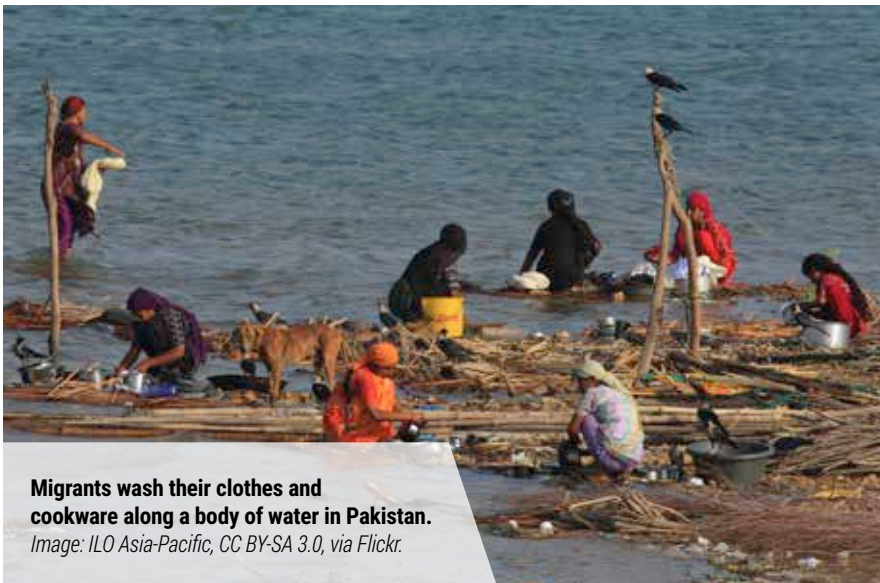
Previous examples of moving families from slums to poorly serviced new housing schemes on the fringes of cities had left them isolated with few job options and forcing them to eventually move back to the slums, he said.

“You can’t relocate slum dwellers far from the cities. They have the right to participate as citizens of these cities just like everyone else,” said Muturi.

“When you relocate people, you are also killing the social fabric that these communities have woven over decades - the best solution is in-situ upgrading of slums. You have to engage with slum dwellers, provide secure tenure and the amenities they need.” 

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/worlds-slum-populations-set-to-surge-as-housing-crisis-bites/>)



Migrants wash their clothes and cookware along a body of water in Pakistan.
Image: ILO Asia-Pacific, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

How droughts can leave people with nowhere to go

Those most affected by climate-induced droughts risk being trapped due to a lack of resources and networks to migrate, according to **Sohini Sengupta**

By 2050, around 145 million people in the Global South could be forced to relocate within their own countries due to the gradual impacts of worsening droughts brought on by climate change.

The 2018 World Bank report, imaginatively titled 'Ground-

swell', predicted that such internal migrants would range from 86 million in sub-Saharan Africa to 40 million in South Asia and 17 million in Latin America.

As areas become uninhabitable due to violent storms, scarcity of water and the collapse of agriculture, people will seek more hospitable places to live.

The biggest dislocation will be from areas where communities are dependent on rain-fed crops. As these populations move, pressure on urban centres and zones of sustainable agriculture will mount and eventually, population pressure will degrade the finite resources of these host areas.

A destabilised, perpetually mobile mass of people consuming increasingly scarce resources is now a normal part of the climate change policy conversation.

Droughts are non-dramatic climate hazards associated with inadequate rainfall, drying up of rivers, crop loss, arid soil and collapsed rural economies.

Communities in drought-prone areas have, over time, managed to adapt to the phenomenon but more frequent and severe droughts, worsened by climate change, may prove to be too much, resulting in sudden mass displacement.

Such a process may in turn reveal new dimensions of seasonal scarcity tied to monsoonal variations experienced by rainfed agriculturists in tropical countries.

As people migrate more frequently at short notice and outside existing routes, shock mobility may become routine. Depleted resources at home reduces the ability to negotiate a fair contract with employers, making labour in migrant destinations more precarious. Migrants travelling within national borders may be identified as a security concern as their movements become unregulated and unpredictable in response to the new risks posed by

climate disruptions. Recognising people who are compelled to move due to the unprecedented effects of climate change as 'environment migrants' may influence the development of protective policies. Predicting future events based on mathematical models raises many questions due to the current limitations of climate science and social sciences that make it difficult to fully understand the impact of climate change on human societies.

Drought-induced migration tends to be internal but the people most affected by climate-induced droughts are also at the risk of being trapped in their depleted environments as many lack the resources and networks to migrate.

Based on a review of case studies, demographers believe that climate change is unlikely to generate mass migration from African drylands to Europe or other continents. Instead, future droughts are likely to cause dislocation through immobility and entrapment. Important disagreements exist around attribution and complex causal paths leading from droughts to migration.

Engaging with these different explanations enables the understanding of the multiple risks associated with drought migrations in terms of how they interact, how harm is distributed and whether adaptations are able to contain these effects. Hydrologists argue that frequent hot and dry years lead to water-stressed river basins that adversely affect communities dependent on subsistence farming, especially if they live in conflict areas such as the upper Nile basin.

In Australia and California, competing demand on water resources, growing cities and agriculture would require balanced policy measures, which in turn may affect patterns of population mobility and settlements.

In India, private irrigation wells that initially boosted the rural economy have over time resulted

in groundwater over-extraction, exacerbating the effects of droughts for arid zone farmers through agrarian distress, indebtedness and forced migrations. Climate historians argue that the impact of climate change and extreme climate events on human society can be found in a variety of evidence preserved in natural and human 'archives', including ice caps, pollen, tree rings, stalactite caves and historical weather observation data - genealogies that describe famines and travels, and art that depicts natural hazards.

But they warn about adhering to narrow climate determinism whereby all historical evidence of past calamity is explained as being caused by climate change, diminishing the relevance of other causal factors and processes such as war, imperialism, governments, economy, social and political institutions and religious and cultural mores.

To avoid this problem, such evidence must be viewed alongside the adaptive and survival strategies of human societies.

Development economists advocate entitlement protection of the most vulnerable people, so that there is not widespread starvation in times of crisis.

Social scientists worry about the echoes of colonial legacies in making simplified connections between climate and populations.

Anthropologists believe that the connections between rural and urban spaces are defined by the ecologies that exist in these locations. However human aspirations create the possibilities and provide meanings around mobilities, hence the contextual field to understand the effects of adverse climate.

Weather information meant to help prepare communities for adversity have fuelled perceptions that link impending calamities with xenophobic sentiments.

In 2021, an infographic by a bagpipe-playing private weather

forecaster that painted north-western India and Pakistan blazing red went viral on Twitter. Followers responded with posts that expressed deep anxiety that rising populations in such countries would increase immigration to Europe.

As future host populations become anxious about climate migrants, anti-migrant sentiments grow. Public opinion about mobile people as threatening collective wellbeing has increased in recent years with perception of diminishing social security derived from multiple processes such as climate change, reduction in public expenditure and the economic crisis.

A historical and contextual understanding of climate mobilities in the Global South (and North) is required to understand how survival and adaptation trajectories form as food, energy and infrastructure systems become more climate resilient.

A failure to understand what droughts bring to the surface in societies boiling with inequality and social polarisation would make it impossible to support communities that are being pushed into streams of futile and dangerous movement.

A deeper understanding of migration flows and investing in adaptation works better than building fences to keep people out. ■

Sohini Sengupta is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She has worked with grassroots organisations, drought response programmes and public policy making. The author's research referred to in this article was supported by the Calcutta Research Group.

This article is part of a Special Report on 'Shock mobility', produced in collaboration with the Calcutta Research Group.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/how-droughts-can-leave-people-with-nowhere-to-go/>)



A farmer checks his crops in Navua Resettlement Area. Navua District is part of Serua Province, Fiji.
Image: Asian Development Bank, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

CAN PARAMETRIC INSURANCE CHANGE THE GAME IN CLIMATE DISASTERS?

Insurance that pays out pre-set sums instead of indemnifying losses is becoming more common as floods and hurricanes intensify.

As climate-fueled disasters become more frequent and intense, companies, countries and aid workers are experimenting with new models of insurance and financial help to manage growing risks and losses - among them, parametric insurance. Parametric policies pay out a pre-agreed amount of money if certain criteria - such as an amount of rainfall or wind speed - are met, the assumption being that damage will have occurred under those conditions.

That can cut out the need for a claims expert visit to assess damage before the insurer pays, as with traditional insurance, and allow for quicker payouts.

Here's how it works - and where it might catch on:

What are the benefits compared to traditional insurance?

In more traditional indemnity insurance models, people affected by disasters put in a claim when they suffer a loss and then wait for it to be assessed and paid - a process that can drag on and slow recovery efforts. Because parametric insurance payouts are triggered automatically by pre-set markers, help arrives faster and without the red tape and cost of visits by claims assessors.

"You're not sending out claims adjusters because you're not concerned, for purposes of the payout, with the magnitude of the damage," said Jeff Dunsavage with the Insurance Information Institute, an industry research group.

By avoiding the claims assessment process, parametric insurance might also reduce the number of challenges by clients over payouts.

What are the downsides?

While people with parametric insurance can receive faster payouts,

“There isn't yet this global fund whereby (if) an event occurs anywhere in the world, money gets (paid). I'd like to see that happen.”

-TOBY BEHRMANN

Head of Partnerships,
Global Parametrics

they can miss out on compensation if losses occur when the predetermined criteria are not reached.

A homeowner who took out hurricane parametric insurance triggered at a certain wind speed, for instance, might get no payout if they were hit instead by a less windy storm but one that dumped a lot of rain as it moved slowly by, said Jonathan Charak of Zurich North America.

"That's a horrible situation to be in," he said.

The pre-agreed payment might also not be enough to cover the total losses.

How widely is parametric insurance used?

Parametric insurance has been used around the world for years, from protecting crops in Africa to property in the hurricane-prone Carib-

bean. Since 2007, the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, now known as CCRIF SPC, has paid out more than US\$240 million to help countries recover from disasters caused by earthquakes, tropical storms and heavy rainfall.

Parametric insurance is not as common in the United States, though experiments are growing.


The state of Utah, for instance, benefited from a parametric earthquake policy that swiftly paid out after a 5.7-magnitude quake in March 2020.

"It was incredibly prompt. We had a payout within (several) weeks," said Darin Dennis with the Utah Division of Risk Management.

Are parametric models more sustainable as insurance claims rise?

Parametric insurance may not be suited to replacing traditional indemnity insurance, but it can act as a valuable supplement in certain cases or provide at least some compensation in poorer places with little insurance coverage, experts say.

Backers would also like to see more regional and global parametric risk pools created, to help spread the rising costs of insurance and keep coverage affordable.

"There isn't yet this global fund whereby (if) an event occurs anywhere in the world, money gets (paid). I'd like to see that happen," said Toby Behrmann of Global Parametrics, a London-based group that works on parametric models. 

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/can-parametric-insurance-change-the-game-in-climate-disasters/>)



Globally, wildlife populations decreased by an average of 69 per cent between 1970 and 2016, according to a 2022 WWF report. Climate change is among the key drivers of biodiversity loss.

Image: Mathias Appel, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

AIR-POLLUTION MONITORS MAY HOLD ‘UNNOTICED’ WEALTH OF BIODIVERSITY DATA

Environmental DNA – sometimes called ‘forensics for wildlife’ – can be collected from the atmosphere using existing air-pollution monitors, according to a new study - writes Orla Dwyer, **Carbon Brief**

Plants, animals and other organisms shed DNA into soils, water and the air that can be collected and analysed.

Over the past 20 years, researchers have figured out ways to use this data to track a wide range of biodiversity around the world.

But there is currently no global infrastructure network to monitor biodiversity in this way.

The new research, published in *Current Biology*, finds that air-quality-monitoring systems, thousands of which are already in place in more than 100 countries, potentially already capture and store environmental DNA, or eDNA.

There is an “urgency” to further analyse this possibility on a global scale and better preserve existing data, the study says.

One expert, who was not involved in the study, tells Carbon Brief that the findings are “extremely important and timely”. But another expert warns that the study may create an “over-expectation” for the possibilities of eDNA analysis.

Biodiversity CSI

Biodiversity is currently declining at the fastest rate in human history.

Globally, wildlife populations decreased by an average of 69 per cent between 1970 and 2016, according to a 2022 WWF report. Climate change is among the key drivers of biodiversity loss.

In December 2022, almost 200 countries signed up in Montreal to a set of goals and targets to “halt and reverse” biodiversity loss by 2030. But achieving these goals requires putting monitoring systems in place to understand how populations are changing.

One tool at scientists’ disposal is the use of environmental DNA.

Environmental DNA can be thought of as “forensics for wildlife”, says Dr David Duffy, an assistant professor of wildlife-disease

“

This is an incredible potential resource for trying to understand not just the presence and absence of species, but the movement of populations.

—PROF ELIZABETH CLARE

Researcher, York University

genomics at the University of Florida. He tells Carbon Brief:

“Essentially every species is continually shedding trace amounts of DNA into the environment.

“[eDNA] is the recovery and analysis of DNA that has been shed from organisms into the environment. It’s been shown that we can recover it from things like air samples, soil samples [and] water samples.” This DNA is shed in many forms, including skin cells, hair, faeces and scales. It is a useful tool for measuring changes in species range, among other observations, Duffy says.

The technique was first used to analyse past and present biodiversity found in soils and water. It has advanced in recent decades and over the past few years, scientists discovered that eDNA can also be gathered from the air.

Some of the researchers who pioneered the collection of eDNA from air, including Prof Elizabeth Clare from York University, then looked at different ways of gathering this data.

The new study assesses whether airborne eDNA could be captured as a by-product of the regular air-quality-monitoring operations that already exist in many countries – and whether the genetic material on those samples could be retrieved days or weeks later.

Some of these monitors use similar filtration methods to assess levels of air pollution as researchers use to collect eDNA. The researchers looked at 17 filter samples from two air quality monitoring stations in the UK: one in suburban London and one outside of Edinburgh. These stations use filters to collect particulate matter. The filters are then analysed to determine the level of pollution in the air – a common technique to test air quality. The samples ranged in time-scale. The London data was gathered from filters over the course of one hour, one day and one week. The Edinburgh samples were gathered over a longer period of time and then stored for eight months before analysis.

When the researchers looked at the samples, they found evidence of 180 plants, fungi, insects, mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and other organisms spread across the two locations. The findings line up with previous data on the types of organisms found in these areas.

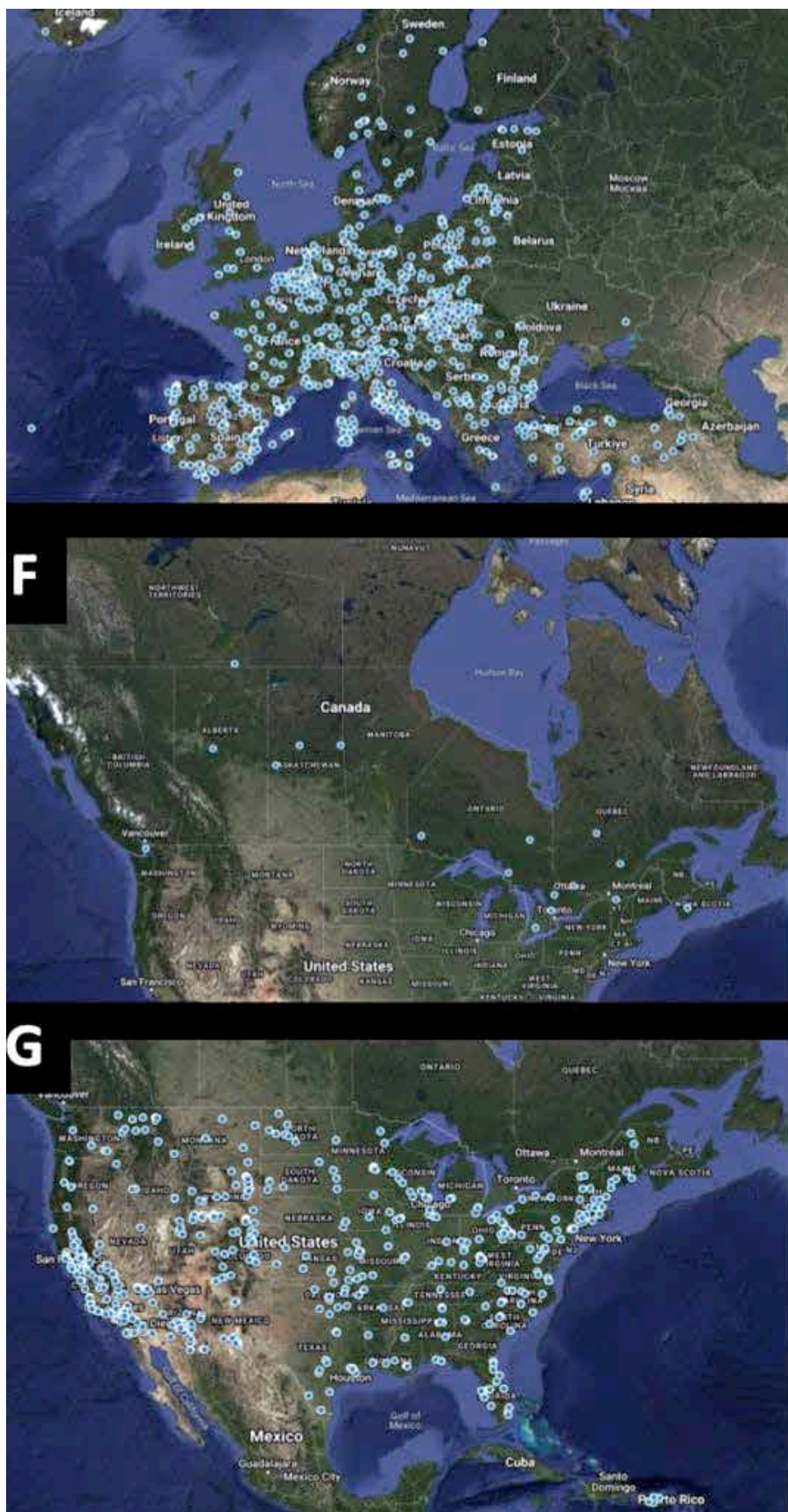
‘Ecological significance’

The study findings are “game-changing for our approach to biodiversity-monitoring on land”, the authors write. The World Air Quality Index project maintains a database of 15,000 air-quality-monitoring stations in 2,000 major cities across 132 countries. But, the study notes, the database does not contain the information necessary to determine which of these stations are compatible with the methods used to gather eDNA.

This map shows the location of air-quality-monitoring stations specifically sampling particulate matter in Europe, Canada and the US.

Clare says that air-pollution monitors have the potential to gather data on “all kinds of different types of life, all at once”. She tells Carbon Brief:

“In our case, everything from fungi and plants, to insects and



Air-quality-monitoring stations sampling particulate matter in Europe (top), Canada (middle) and the US (bottom). Source: Littlefair et al. (2023)

birds and mammals, and even a newt, were appearing as DNA on these filters. “Biodiversity is usually studied very specifically for different taxonomic groups and on relatively small scales. The problem is that what we need for everything from modelling biodiversity loss, to our response to international agreements on the preservation of biodiversity, is very, very large-scale measurements.

“We don’t have any large-scale infrastructure in the world that’s really designed for the measurement of biodiversity.”

The study authors contend that air-pollution monitors already gather biodiversity data, with the “ecological significance” of the samples going “unnoticed”.

‘Overselling’

Dr Matthias Obst, an associate professor at the University of Gothenburg and a member of the Swedish eDNA lab, believes there is promise in the findings, but says the study is making “quite a substantial claim” based on small sample sizes. He tells Carbon Brief:

“I like the study, it’s great. I am not so sure I like the way it is presented. I think it’s overselling a lot.

“The conclusion that this would lead to a global – what they claim – biodiversity monitoring programme, I don’t buy that. It’s over the top.”

He says the study may create “hype and an over-expectation” for the method’s potential, which may be difficult to deliver on.

Clare says she and the other researchers are “hoping to sell the enthusiasm that this is a totally new resource – we don’t know what is in these”. She tells Carbon Brief that the team discussed whether to publish the study now, with limited data, or wait to analyse further samples. But they felt a need to “quickly alert people” to the presence of this possible data, she says, adding:

“In most countries, they literally throw these [filters] away every day, as soon as they’ve taken the measurement. “One of our reasons for doing this now is to give people a compelling reason to stop doing that. Nobody but us at this point understands the potential ecological value. Some countries archive these, but most don’t, as far as we know.

“What we’re trying to do, putting this out as a small pilot study is to say...until we understand [the filters’] full ecological value, just stop throwing them away, because you may be throwing away something that has a value you haven’t seen.”

Clare adds that there are steps that could easily be taken to better preserve eDNA on these samples, such as storing them dry, instead of wet, or storing them in a freezer, rather than at room temperature.

Location, location

Dr Melanie Kolb, a researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, says the study adds more evidence to the “great versatility” of eDNA. She tells Carbon Brief:

“In this sense, the proposal of the paper offers to be hugely efficient, as no further resources for sampling and monitoring are required to obtain a completely new and different kind of information.” But Kolb, and other experts who spoke to Carbon Brief about this study, also raised concerns about the location of existing air-pollution monitors.

Populated areas, which monitor air quality for their citizens, are “not necessarily the areas where biodiversity needs to be monitored” the most, Kolb says.

So while the findings may advance methods in biodiversity monitoring in certain capacities, Kolb believes they may “not contribute to diminish existing biases among the global south – but [instead] deepen them”. She adds:

“For certain contexts, it is a significant advancement, but not for the

areas, regions or countries where most biodiversity is harboured and biodiversity loss is rampant.”

Obst notes a similar concern: questioning who will pay for monitors to be located in less-populated areas for studying biodiversity.

Clare points out that air-quality monitors already exist in both urban and rural areas. Many are located in national parks, she says, and “places that you would consider quite biologically valuable”. She adds:

“As far as we can tell from what is public data, they are not all clustered around urban areas. They’re actually interestingly distributed in ways that make them quite potentially ecologically valuable.

“Some of them may be more or less easy for us to access the material, but they’re all sampling very set particle sizes. As long as they’re sampling at that size range, it’s almost certain that they’re capturing [eDNA]. It just becomes an issue of how to actually access the material that’s on them.”

She adds that the research team spoke to experts in biodiverse countries in the global south about the possibilities of the findings before publishing the study.

Future possibilities

Duffy says the “inventive” study “opens up a whole range of possibilities” for gathering eDNA through the air. He tells Carbon Brief:

“You don’t need a given specialist in every group of animals or plants to understand what’s present and how it’s changing over time...By assessing the DNA of those species, you can identify what’s there with a single assay.”

Duffy was involved in a recent study looking at the benefits and ethical concerns behind the gathering of human genetic information alongside environmental DNA. He says:

“That is definitely linked to this study, where these monitors may

well be picking up human DNA as bycatch.”


Dr Deborah Dawson, the manager of a genetics research facility at the University of Sheffield, says the findings are “exciting” and demonstrate an eDNA collection method with “huge potential”. She tells Carbon Brief:

“The recognition and proof that air-pollution monitors can be used to study biodiversity is an extremely important and timely finding.” Dawson highlights the importance of building on these findings to “set standard protocols to regularly and systematically record and compare biodiversity in different regions across our planet, and monitor the changes expected in the UK and around the world due to climate change”.

Questions remain about exactly how far eDNA is able to travel through the air before being collected by air-pollution monitors, according to the study and experts who spoke to Carbon Brief about its findings. This range depends on particle and filter size.

The study also notes that more research is needed on how eDNA degrades over time on filters before they are collected and properly stored. Clare adds that this method of monitoring eDNA could open a “whole new scale of what we can measure” around biodiversity.

This could range from tracking populations migrating due to climate change, the arrival of new species and detecting rare species that may be missed through a single measurement. She tells Carbon Brief:

“This is an incredible potential resource for trying to understand not just the presence and absence of species, but the movement of populations.” 

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/air-pollution-monitors-may-hold-unnoticed-wealth-of-biodiversity-data/>)



The lesson is simple: when fossil fuel demand declines only in some parts of the world, resource-owning countries do not extract less, because other parts of the world will absorb the supply at lower prices, said economics professor Hans-Werner Sinn. *Image: Zachary Theodore/ Unsplash*

COVID AS A NATURAL EXPERIMENT FOR CLIMATE POLICY

The Covid-19 pandemic showed that industrialized countries can help reduce atmospheric carbon emissions only insofar as they can keep fossil fuel in the ground. Focusing only on reducing their demand will not even put a dent in the problem, states **Hans-Werner Sinn**

The world is divided over how – and how aggressively – to respond to climate change. While only a small minority of countries have committed to implementing rigorous fossil-fuel bans and reducing their carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, most others are doing little or nothing. The big question, then, is whether unilateral measures implemented by the minority can contribute to mitigating climate change or whether a global climate club with truly binding constraints is needed.

The COVID-19 crisis points to the likely answer. The pandemic, it turns out, served as a real-world experiment for assessing the mechanics of multilateral and unilateral climate policies.

In theory, the 2015 Paris climate agreement adopted a multilateral approach. But only 60 of the 195 signatory countries, representing 35 per cent of global CO₂ emissions, committed to quantitative emissions constraints. China and India, the world's most populous countries, did not accept measurable constraints, and while the United States committed to constraints, the US Senate has not yet ratified the agreement.

The standard view in those countries that did commit to quantitative constraints is that they can reduce global CO₂ emissions by curtailing fossil-fuel demand if they switch to green energy or nuclear power. The effect on curbing world-wide emissions will be small, as their consumption is small. But a small con-

tribution is better than nothing, the argument goes, similar to making a charitable donation.

A closer look reveals a severe problem with this view: it neglects the role of markets for internationally traded fuels such as oil, gas, and hard coal. Consider the oil market. When demand for oil in green industrialised countries declines, so will the world price, enabling consumers in other countries to buy and burn more than they would have otherwise. The reduction in oil demand by green countries thus may be at least partly offset by others' purchases. This problem is particularly relevant for the European Union, which recently decided to phase out the use of fossil fuels in passenger cars by 2035, and for Germany, which is preparing legislation to ban the implementation of oil heating in private dwellings as early as 2024.

Whether unilateral demand restrictions for oil will curb global use of fossil fuels and slow the pace of climate change ultimately will depend on how global suppliers react. Only if they extract less would

less be consumed, because every bit of fossil fuel extracted will be burned somewhere. What has not been extracted cannot be used. This is the fundamental truth of climate policy. Abstracting from sequestration and reforestation, which have negligible effects, the power to mitigate global warming rests entirely with the owners of fossil-fuel resources, including the governments that control the territory where they are found.

It is unclear, however, how resource suppliers such as OPEC will react to unilateral demand-reducing measures by the green countries. Suppliers might sell less because marginal storage sites become unprofitable. They might sell the same amount as before because royalties or user costs of marginal sites would fall with the market price of the fuel. Or they might even sell more because they want to anticipate further reductions in demand (the so-called green paradox), or simply because they are living hand to mouth and must offset the price reductions by selling more.

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In the two latter cases, restricting demand for fossil fuels in some countries could have the unintended consequence of accelerating extraction and climate change. The non-abiding countries would be able to consume what the green countries do not, as well as whatever additional quantities the source countries extract. Unfortunately, economic research offers no clear guidance as to which scenario is most likely, so we must rely on empirical analysis.

Here, the results are surprisingly clear-cut, at least with respect to crude oil. From the end of the second oil crisis in 1982 to the beginning of the COVID crisis in 2020, world oil extraction followed a linear, slightly upward trend with minimal fluctuations in volumes extracted. Prices, on the other hand, were extremely volatile, ranging from around US\$10 to US\$130 per barrel. Whenever an economic downturn somewhere in the world reduced demand, consumers elsewhere responded to the fall in prices by increasing their purchases correspondingly. Likewise, when an economic boom somewhere boosted demand, consumers elsewhere reduced their purchases sufficiently to offset the price increase. Either way, oil suppliers in the aggregate did not respond to these patterns. Instead, they pursued a rigid supply strategy, not allowing themselves to be distracted by price fluctuations.

This changed only with the pandemic's arrival. During the initial global reaction to the crisis, oil prices fell, as lockdowns and quarantine measures sent industrial production plummeting. To prevent prices from going into freefall, OPEC reduced output, which quickly produced the desired effect: prices bounced back immediately and even exceeded their initial levels. Then, when the end of the crisis came into view, prices and supply gradually normalised, eventually reverting to their usual trend.



When fossil fuel demand declines only in some parts of the world, resource-owning countries do not extract less, because other parts of the world will absorb the supply at lower prices.

– HANS-WERNER SINN

Professor Emeritus of Economics at
the University of Munich

The lesson is simple: when fossil fuel demand declines only in some parts of the world, resource-owning countries do not extract less, because other parts of the world will absorb the supply at lower prices. The demand restrictions promised by some of the world's industrialised countries in the Paris agreement do not even have the slightest effect on climate change. Only if all, or nearly all, oil-consuming countries unite to reduce demand, can they gain leverage over OPEC and other resource owners, forcing them to leave more oil in the ground, slowing down global warming.

These empirical findings about the natural Covid experiment, which were published last year, turn many longstanding tenets of global climate policy on their head. For example, in the absence of a global climate club, the EU's forthcoming ban on cars with internal combustion engines

will be useless from a climate perspective, because the fuel no longer consumed will be burned elsewhere in the world. In fact, it could actually increase global CO2 emissions by forcing drivers to buy electric cars that will rely on power generated by burning more domestic lignite, which could otherwise have been kept in the ground.

Similarly, Germany's planned ban on oil heating will force homeowners to use electric heat pumps, thus inducing more burning of lignite without reducing the quantity of oil extracted and burned worldwide.

As frustrating as these findings may be, they at least imply that consumer countries are not entirely powerless. If enough buyers come together, they can force resource owners to leave oil in the ground, thus mitigating climate change.

The difficulties of achieving effective coordination through global agreements should not be overlooked, of course, particularly in view of rising geopolitical tensions. For example, there is no hope that China, merely out of a sense of climate solidarity, will offer measurable demand restrictions for fossil fuel, as long as the Taiwan crisis remains unsolved. Internalising the greatest negative externality in human history will be impossible in the absence of a peaceful and stable global order. ■

*Hans-Werner Sinn, Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of Munich, is a former president of the Ifo Institute for Economic Research and serves on the German economy ministry's Advisory Council. He is the author of *Casino Capitalism: How the Financial Crisis Came About and What Needs to be Done Now* (Oxford University Press, 2010).*

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