

CSR TODAY

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SIGNIFICANT SHIFT AWAY FROM COAL AS MOST NEW STEELMAKING IS NOW ELECTRIC

THE BULK OF STEELMAKING AROUND
THE WORLD STILL RELIES ON COAL-BASED
BLAST FURNACES

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Drone Reforestation Project to
Revitalize Nashik's Lands

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threaten India's wheat
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Forests face increasing climate-related stress amid growing demand for their products, FAO report warns



Rajesh Tiwari
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State of the World's Forests 2024 report emphasizes innovation as key to new management approaches

Climate change is increasing the susceptibility of the world's forests to stressors such as wildfires and pests, according to a new flagship publication by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that emphasizes the role of innovation in achieving a sustainable future for the forestry sector.

The report, titled *"The State of the World's Forests 2024: Forest-sector innovations towards a more sustainable future,"* at the 27th session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), which was held at FAO's headquarters in Rome. COFO is FAO's top forestry governing body, tasked with identifying emerging policy and technical issues, seeking solutions, and advising FAO on appropriate action. This year's meeting is themed *"Accelerating forest solutions through innovation."*

The State of the World's Forests 2024 (SOFO 2024) report says there's evidence to suggest that climate change is making forests more vulnerable to stressors such as wildfires and pests.

Wildfire intensity and frequency are increasing, including in areas not previously affected, with fires in 2023 releasing an estimated 6,687 megatonnes of carbon dioxide globally. Boreal fire was previously responsible for about 10 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. In 2021, such fires reached a new high, mainly driven by extended drought causing an increase in fire severity and fuel consumption, and accounted for nearly one-quarter of total wildfire emissions.

Climate change also makes forests more vulnerable to invasive species, with insects, pests and disease pathogens threatening tree growth and survival. Pine wood nematode has already caused significant damage to native pine forests in some countries in Asia, and areas of North America are projected to experience devastating damage due to insects and disease by 2027.

Global wood production, meanwhile, remains at record levels. After a brief dip during the COVID-19 pandemic, production is back at about 4 billion cubic meters yearly.

Nearly 6 billion people use non-timber forest products, and 70 percent of the world's poor rely on wild species for food, medicine, energy, income, and other purposes. Projections indicate that global roundwood demand could increase by as much as 49 percent between 2020 and 2050.

Faced with such challenges, the report argues that forest-sector innovation is a crucial enabler of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

"FAO recognizes that science and innovation are crucial ingredients for achieving forest-based solutions," FAO Director-General QU Dongyu wrote in the report's Forward. "This edition of SOFO will inform FAO's work to scale up evidence-based innovation in forestry. I believe it will also support FAO Members and other stakeholders in enabling responsible, inclusive, and essential innovation in the forest sector to strengthen sustainability and the resilience of agrifood systems for a better world and a better future for all."

The report identifies five innovation types that enhance forests' potential to address global challenges: technological, social, policy, institutional, and financial. Examples include the potential for AI to facilitate the automated analysis of a vast volume of existing and future optical, radar, and lidar data collected daily by drones, satellites and space stations; the adoption of mass timber and other wood-based innovations that can replace fossil-based products in the building sector; policies aimed at engaging women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in developing locally led solutions; and innovations in public - and private - sector finance to enhance the value of standing forests. □

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Ambuja Cements revolutionises rural education by revamping 4 schools in Nagpur District

Ambuja Cements, the cement and building material company of the diversified Adani Portfolio, is committed to empowering students with high quality education. Through CSR efforts, it has successfully revamped four schools of Kalameshwar & Nagpur Gramin block of Nagpur district. Transforming Zilla Parishad (ZP) schools by integrating various subjects with visual arts, it fosters a holistic development environment for students, which has inspired six more schools in the region to request for the initiative at their campuses.

The project by the CSR arm of Ambuja Cements recognises the

transformative power of art in education. Starting with the Tondakhairi ZP school of Kalameshwar block it has integrated art into the curriculum, making learning more engaging and comprehensive for students. In classrooms, Building as Learning



Aid (BaLA) murals bring subjects including mathematics, science, and geography to life, while environment-themed exhibitions and soil painting activities deepen students' understanding of these subjects.

The project also establishes school arts councils, giving students a platform to explore their artistic interests. Workshops led by successful alumni from the community further inspire students to pursue their passions. This initiative doesn't just stop at the classroom door either. It expands into the community by transforming blank walls into vibrant artworks, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among students and residents alike.

This initiative has opened new pathways for students, encouraging them to discover and nurture their artistic talents, and motivating them to consider further education and careers in the arts. The project's success has attracted steady funding from local businesses and former students, enabling it to expand into digital arts, sculpture, and other visual mediums.

Inspired by the success at Tondakhairi ZP school, other village schools have followed suit, contributing to the initiative and adopting similar techniques. Currently, four schools have implemented the initiative, benefiting 212 students, with six more schools already eager to join.

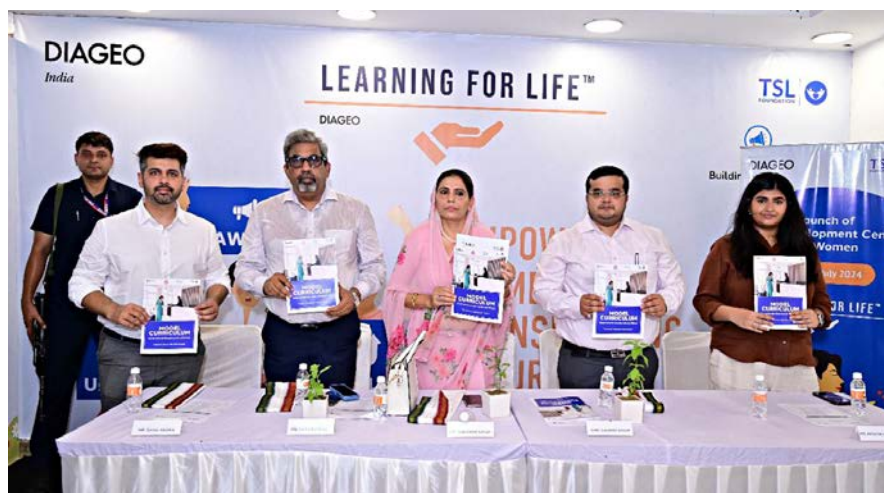
Ambuja Cements remains steadfast in enabling high quality education for all by nurturing a culture of creativity, cooperation, and pride. This success story demonstrates how such initiatives can uplift entire communities and cater to the evolving educational needs of future generations.

Diageo India partners with TSL Foundation to train 200 young women for the hospitality industry under its 'Learning for Life' programme

Diageo India (United Spirits Ltd.) among the country's leading alco-bev companies, partners with TSL Foundation to train 200 young women under its 'Learning for Life' programme. The training center in Bhondsi, Gurgaon was inaugurated in the presence of Shri Gaurav Singh, Additional CEO, Haryana State CSR Trust, Government of Haryana along with members from Diageo India and TSL Foundation team. The employability linked training programme will be conducted in collaboration with the Government of Haryana to build awareness to upskill and empower young women. This initiative is aligned to Diageo India's commitment to championing Inclusion and Diversity, a key pillar of Diageo's Society 2030: Spirit of Progress goals.

The two-month long training programme will include theory classes, on-job training and simulations in front office set up at the training center, activity-based learning, projects and periodic assessments, guest faculty lectures and interview preparation sessions for successful placements. Students will receive National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) or equivalent government certification post completion of the programme and meeting the assessment criteria.

Shri Gaurav Singh, Additional CEO, Haryana State CSR Trust, Government of Haryana said, "This Skill Development Center will be a blessing for our young women, offering essential skills to thrive in major institutions. Many aspiring professionals lack access to foundational training, and this initiative by Diageo India and TSL Foundation bridges



L to R - Sahil Arora (TSL), Sanjeev Vijh (Diageo India), Mrs Vandana Singh, Mr Gaurav Singh, Additional CEO, Haryana State CSR Trust, Government of Haryana



Mr Sanjeev Vijh, VP-Corporate Affairs, Diageo India

that gap. We plan to expand this center, providing invaluable training and placement support from industry leaders like Ramada and Radisson, helping candidates secure positions in top-tier organizations.

In the spirit of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao,' we extend the message to 'Beti ko Samridh Banao.' Your commitment to this journey will unlock immense career opportunities. Thank you to Diageo India and

TSL Foundation for launching this vital skill development center for the youth of Haryana."

Navdeep Singh Mehram, VP- CSR & Sustainability, Diageo India said, "Our partnership with TSL Foundation, is driven by a common goal to create a diverse workforce in the hospitality sector. Together, we aim to empower 200 young women with the skills to become self-reliant, thereby contributing to the economic development



Mr Sanjeev Vijh, VP-Corporate Affairs, Diageo India

of the country. This initiative underscores our commitment to expanding the reach of our 'Learning for Life' programme and bolstering livelihood capabilities for individuals from under-represented communities."

Apoorva Sharma, Director- TSL Foundation, said, "We are thrilled to collaborate with Diageo India whose dedication towards inclusive development is exemplary. In collaboration with the Government of Haryana we will educate and raise awareness on upskilling young women and supporting a thriving hospitality sector. Post completion of the programme, we will offer support for internships and employment opportunities."

Kotak Education Foundation receives approval to run the FLN program in all 516 PM Shri schools in Maharashtra

Launching Foundational Literacy and Numeracy program to enhance student learning outcomes

Kotak Education Foundation (KEF) - the CSR implementing agency of Kotak Mahindra Group, received approval to run its FLN program in all 516 PM Shri schools in Maharashtra. The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy program at Kotak Education Foundation has successfully completed its first year of implementation in 65 Mumbai private aided and BMC schools.

The vision of the FLN program is to ensure the universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy, enabling every child to achieve desired learning competencies in reading, writing, numeracy, and 21st-century skills. The project



supports teachers in their professional development and enhances their capacity to effectively teach FLN skills. It runs workshops,

provides hands-on support and continuous mentoring. It employs innovative and interactive teaching methods, worksheets and educational games, to address diverse learning needs and achieve desired learning competencies.

Dr. Ganesh Raja, CEO, Kotak Education Foundation said, "we are extremely thrilled to start our FLN program at 516 PM SHRI Schools across Maharashtra. Kotak Education Foundation's FLN program will not only focus on enhancing cognitive development but also creating holistic and well-rounded individuals

equipped with key 21st-century skills. Assessment at all levels will be based on conceptual understanding and application of knowledge".

UNFPA Celebrates 50 Years in India: Youth at the Forefront of Change

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, commemorates its golden jubilee in India, marking 50 years of dedicated efforts and partnership with the Government of India. Since its inception in 1974, UNFPA has been integral to the country's development story. It has supported national and state government policies and programmes aimed at the empowerment of women, girls and youth. In collaboration with the civil society, donors, academia and communities, UNFPA is striving to enhance the access to reproductive health services and information, promote gender equality especially addressing child marriage and harmful practices, and invest and empower young people so that their potential is fulfilled.

The event themed 'Youth Power Unleashed', showcased powerful stories of change, resilience and inclusivity from youth changemakers belonging to states such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Odisha. Ms. Huma Qureshi, popular actress and a body positivity champion joined them virtually. Discussions explored critical issues such as gender equality, reproductive health and rights, tech empowers women



and redefining masculinity. Her presence and insights added depth to the conversation, as she shared her personal experiences and emphasized the importance of self-acceptance, confidence, and standing up against cyberbullying.

Meera Srivasatava, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, congratulated UNFPA on its 50 years of impactful service in India. She further said, “through advancing adolescent and youth reproductive health, promoting life skills education, and empowering young people, UNFPA has supported the Government of India in expanding its flagship programmes such as Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram and the School Health and Wellness Programme.

Nitesh Kumar Mishra, Joint Secretary & Chief Vigilance Officer, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, in his special address emphasized the critical role of youth in shaping the future. He stated, “The youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow but the problem solvers of today. UNFPA India’s efforts at the grassroots have been instrumental in unleashing and unlocking the vast potential of our young people. “

Andrea M. Wojnar, UNFPA India Representative, reflected, UNFPA’s journey in India, marked by milestones in sexual and reproductive health, women’s and girl’s empowerment, and rights for all, has been fueled by a shared vision with the Government, donors, private sector, the civil society and young people. As we look ahead, we commit to strengthening these partnerships towards a sustainable future.”

Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India, added, “Tonight, we draw inspiration from the remarkable stories of Kavita, Munna, Priyajit, and Shivani. These young changemakers exemplify the resilience, innovation, and leadership needed to propel India’s growth and achieve the SDGs.”

JK Group Companies Conduct Extensive Blood Donation Drive Across India



JK Organisation, a renowned industrial group with a 138-year heritage, held "Blood Donation Camps" across its Group Companies to commemorate the 91st birth anniversary of late Hari Shankar Singhania, the former President and one of the key architects of the \$4 billion group.



The blood donation camps were organized at various plants and sales offices of the group’s companies, with over 7,500 employees participating. JK Organisation, known for its active engagement in social services, organizes the blood donation camps by Group Companies annually to pay special tribute to Late Shri Hari Shankar Singhania. A recipient of the ‘Padma Bhushan’, Shri Hari Shankar Singhania played a pivotal role in the growth and consolidation of the JK Organisation, establishing numerous new ventures and integrating multiple companies into the group.

Speaking about the initiative, Bharat Hari Singhania, Chairman of JK Organisation, said, “At JK Organisation, societal contribution is deeply embedded in our values. Through this annual initiative we aim to honor the legacy of Shri Hari Shankar Singhania and improve the lives and welfare of the underserved. We are immensely proud of our employees’ overwhelming participation in this blood donation drive, which reflects our collective commitment to making a positive impact.”

The blood donation drive saw enthusiastic participation from several JK group companies, including JK Tyre, JK Paper, JK Lakshmi Cement, JK Agri Genetics, JK Fenner, JK Foods, JK Insurance, PSRI Hospital, and JK Lakshmi Pat University.

Ashok Leyland extends its 'Road to School' program in Erode, Salem and Dharmapuri Districts of Tamil Nadu

Ashok Leyland, the Indian flagship of the Hinduja Group and the country's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer, in partnership with Hinduja Leyland Finance extended the corporate social responsibility program, 'Road to School', to 352 schools in Erode, Salem and Dharmapuri Districts of Tamil Nadu. Ashok Leyland will aim to help improve the primary and middle school education in government schools in these three districts. The purpose of the program is to bring about social equality among the school students in the remote villages. Overall, this program reaches over 1,700 schools and benefits 2,00,000 students in more than six states across the country.

The 'Road to School' Project in Ammapettai, Erode district was inaugurated by Thiru Raja Gopal Sunkara I.A.S., District Collector, Erode in the presence of Mr. N V Balachandar, Consultant CSR & Corporate Affairs, Ashok Leyland; Mr. T Sasikumar, Head – CSR & Corporate Affairs, Ashok Leyland; and Thiru T. Sambathu, Chief Educational Officer, Erode; and Teachers and students.

The RTS Project in Konganapuram and Magudanchavadi blocks of Salem district was inaugurated by Dr. Brinda I.A.S., District Collector, Salem in the presence of Mrs. Srividhya Ramasamy, Company Secretary, Hinduja Leyland Finance Ltd; and Mr. Srinivasa Rangarajan, Company Secretary Hinduja Housing Finance Ltd; Mr. N V Balachandar, Consultant CSR & Corporate Affairs, Ashok Leyland; Mr. T Sasikumar, Head – CSR & Corporate Affairs, Ashok Leyland and Thiru M. Kabeer,



Chief Educational Officer, Erode. The launch of expansion of Road to School Program in Palacode, Dharmapuri district was inaugurated by Tmt. Santhi, I.A.S., District Collector, Dharmapuri in the presence of Mr. T Sasikumar, Head – CSR & Corporate Affairs, Ashok Leyland and Mr. Vijaykumar, District Educational Officer, Dharmapuri. N V. Balachandar, Consultant CSR

& Corporate Affairs, Ashok Leyland said, "Ashok Leyland has proudly nurtured this initiative, witnessing its remarkable growth over time. For us, 'Road to School' is far more than just a CSR program; it represents a company-wide commitment to driving real, meaningful change in the lives of students. We firmly believe in the transformative power of education and its lasting



impact on individuals. With the inclusion of schools in Erode, Salem, and Dharmapuri into our 'Road to School' family, we are thrilled to expand our impact and contribute to building our country's future.

The Road to School Program over the years has created a huge impact in the remote rural schools which has enabled children to improve not only in learning levels but important aspects such as Life Skills development, Sports, Art and thereby improving their ability to be competitive. The program's uniqueness is the Social Development initiatives that we do in these villages align with the Sustainable Development

Goals. The 'Road to School' is therefore a program beyond education and, in the true sense, focusses on holistic Development.”

Road to School (RTS), Ashok Leyland's leading CSR initiative in collaboration with Learning Links Foundation, strives to bridge educational disparities among students in rural and underserved areas attending government schools across India. The Road to School Program envisions fostering holistic development and promoting inclusive education as a means of social empowerment. It supports both academic and co-curricular growth, encompassing health, hygiene, physical and

emotional well-being, and sports. RTS program is aligned with the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals on improving the quality of education, scholastic and co-scholastic development including sports, and art education, and promoting good health and well-being amongst underserved children from government schools.

The Road to School program has made significant strides in improving educational infrastructure across Tamil Nadu. With this, Ashok Leyland Limited and Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited have extended their support to 352 primary and middle government schools across Dharmapuri, Erode, and Salem districts of Tamil Nadu. These schools are located in blocks identified by the State government as educationally disadvantaged or in need of targeted interventions. This initiative aims to enhance the educational quality and holistic development of over 20,000 children enrolled in these institutions.

Since its inception in 2015 in Krishnagiri district, Tamil Nadu, the program has expanded remarkably. Today, it reaches over 1,700 schools and benefits 2,00,000 students in more than six states across the country.

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Onlygood Highlights AI-Driven Decarbonization and Automated Reporting at GreenCo Summit 2024

Onlygood, a leading B2B carbon intelligence platform, proudly participated in the 13th edition of the GreenCo Summit, held at the ITC Grand Chola, Chennai, on June 26-27. This prestigious event, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), brought together industry leaders to promote sustainable business practices and green initiatives within the Indian industry.

The GreenCo Summit 2024 featured a comprehensive agenda, including master speaker sessions, technical discussions on green marketing and sustainable supply chain management, and the distribution of the GreenCo Rating Awards. The event also celebrated the winners of the CII National Award for Environmental Best Practices 2024, highlighting exemplary efforts in environmental conservation and pollution prevention. Attendees spanned diverse sectors such as automobile, cement, chemicals, FMCG, pharmaceuticals, and more, all united in their commitment to sustainability.

Onlygood played a significant role at the summit, showcasing its innovative solutions at a dedicated stall. The company offered free business and risk assessments on sustainability, emphasizing its expertise in Scope 3 emission measurement, AI-driven decarbonization, and comprehensive automated reporting aligned with BRSR, ESG, and GRI standards. Onlygood's unique workflow-based internal working and emission recording system, featuring maker-checker functionality, demonstrated how data automation can drive effective sustainability strategies. The engagement at the



stall underscored Onlygood's commitment to helping organizations achieve their sustainability goals through advanced technology and data-driven insights.

"Participating in the GreenCo Summit 2024 was an incredible opportunity for Onlygood to connect with industry leaders and showcase its innovative sustainability solutions," said Mr. Rajeev Sinha, CEO and Co-Founder of Onlygood. "Our focus on Scope 3 emissions, AI-driven decarbonization, and automated reporting aligns perfectly with the goals of the summit. We are excited to continue driving sustainability in the industry with our cutting-edge technology."

In addition to its participation in the GreenCo Summit, Onlygood is honored to have been recognized as the best sustainability innovation company at Maruti's innovation challenge. Furthermore, its collaboration with Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV) and selection as their sustainability

partner, in conjunction with the IIT Madras Incubation Cell (IITMIC), underscore its commitment to leading the way in sustainable innovation.

About Onlygood:

Onlygood is a one-of-its-kind novelty that empowers enterprises with growth centric insight and integration of sustainability. Driven by transformational technology and accelerated by system innovation, it is a unified sustainability monitoring & management platform for real-time product traceability across supply chain touchpoints for manufacturers & enterprise owners, across the country. Founded by Mr. Rajeev Sinha and Mr. Vivek Mehra, Onlygood serves as an ecosystem that develops, maintains and sustains an organizational sustainability roadmap and a conscious culture. In other words, this new-age platform helps businesses to reduce their carbon footprints through technology, in an attempt to build a conscious world worth living for generations to come.

SIDBI and BluSmart: Flag-off ceremony of 140+ electric cars for ride hailing service

As part of the EV4ECO scheme for electric mobility ecosystem, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), the country's apex financial institution for MSMEs, and BluSmart, India's largest EV ride hailing service, flagged off 140+ electric cars in presence of representatives from the Indian government and multilaterals. The ABCD (Aaओ बनाए Cलीन Dिल्ली) tagline of SIDBI is for increasing the EVs on Delhi Roads. SIDBI brings expertise of channelising financial and developmental support in green areas and also supports other lenders by reducing their perceived risks (through risk sharing facility) so that more lending can happen for EVs. Delhi EV Policy has been most progressive EV policy in India. The ABCD initiative will compliment EV policy and it is a responsive step to reduce the air pollution from country's capital and make Delhi clean capital.

Prakash Kumar, DMD, SIDBI said "SIDBI, being development financial institution (DFI), has taken proactive steps to green the enterprise ecosystem with its developmental and financial engagements. It has always remained at the forefront when it comes to promoting new technologies among the MSMEs through its innovative approach. SIDBI is engaged in several activities and expanding its horizon in the space of Greening the Ecosystem at all fronts be it startup, MSMEs, rural/unserved/underserved segments/pockets/artisan clusters and so on. We have commenced our journey to become "Green Bank". SIDBI has understood the key challenges in the electric vehicle financing and henceforth, created unique schemes for EV ecosystem to support the adoption and streamline the finance for EV startups as well. SIDBI is



pleased to support the BluSmart in their journey of zero emission ride hailing service."

Dr. R.K.Singh, CGM, SIDBI said "India has set ambitious climate change mitigation targets and has committed to low-carbon growth in the transport sector. To support India's commitment to EV30@30, it was strategized to conduct country-wide consultations across the EV value chain. SIDBI has launched the EV4ECO & EV-RSF schemes to enable the affordable financing of electric vehicles. These initiatives will also contribute to the reduction in vehicular emissions and reduce the operating cost in the logistics sector."

SIDBI is committed to complement EV30@30 and is supporting

the MSMEs in adoption of green technology in their operations. We have formulated other initiatives to encourage other lenders to enable the financing through Risk Sharing Facility and is proactive to support the women entrepreneurs in rural areas by enabling affordable finance for transitioning to electric vehicles used by them.

Anmol Jaggi, Co-founder, BluSmart said "At BluSmart, our mission is to 'Decarbonize Mobility at scale' and SIDBI with its unique ABCD initiative supporting EVs is fuelling our growth in Delhi NCR and helping in accelerating the adoption of EVs contributing to the reduction of carbon emissions from the transportation sector."

Yamaha Motor celebrates 69 years of fostering innovation and excellence

India Yamaha Motor associates with SMILE Foundation to support over 500 underprivileged children in 12 cities

Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd. (YMC) celebrated its 69th Foundation Day along with its subsidiaries across the globe. The Japanese 2-wheeler manufacturing giant has been offering pure motorcycling joy for the last 69 years, at the back of a rich racing heritage, numerous innovations, and a dedication to producing exciting, stylish, and sporty products. The celebration underscores Yamaha Motor's unwavering commitment to develop exhilarating products that not only meet the market requirements but also enriches the lives of millions of people globally.

On this special occasion, India Yamaha Motor with its Blue Streaks riding community collaborated with the NGO - SMILE Foundation for a heartening initiative to support the underprivileged children. On 7th July, the Blue Streaks riders will visit the schools operated by the NGO in 12 cities, interact with the students and provide essential educational materials like notebooks, pens, and pencils. Furthermore, these riders will take exclusive sessions to educate the children on basic road safety measures, emphasizing the importance of wearing helmets, understanding traffic signals, and following pedestrian rules. This endeavour is aimed to instil a sense of road safety awareness, contributing



to the overall growth of the children and nurturing a future generation that is aware and more responsible towards traffic obligations.

Alongside, the company's dealer network, on behalf of the India Yamaha Motor, extended the celebrations of Yamaha Day 2024 to customers by inviting them to the showrooms and hosting a cake-cutting ceremony for them, thanking them for their trust in the brand. The dealer partners also apprised the customers about the company's rich legacy and the iconic products

introduced by the brand in the last 69 years. Yamaha India celebrated the day with a series of engaging activities for its employees and their families as well.

Speaking on the occasion, Eishin Chihana, Chairman, Yamaha Motor India Group of Companies said, "The completion of 69 years of Yamaha is indeed a significant milestone for a company that has stayed at the forefront to bring out the joy of pure motorcycling for more than 6 decades now. During this spectacular journey, Yamaha has earned the trust

and admiration of millions, which forms the cornerstone of our continuous growth and innovation. As we look back on our journey with pride, we also look forward with renewed commitment in line with the theme for this year, to deliver unmatched

customer experience, at the back of inventive products that are performance packed, raising adrenaline levels. Our commitment goes beyond just meeting expectations; it's about creating experiences that resonate deeply with our customers."

The foundation day, known as "Yamaha Day," is celebrated globally to develop a deeper understanding and affection for the brand, ultimately expressing "The unique style of Yamaha" through its products and services.

World Bank Approves Additional \$1.5 Billion in Financing to Support India's Low-Carbon Transition

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors have approved \$1.5 billion in financing for a second operation to help India accelerate the development of low-carbon energy. The operation will seek to promote the development of a vibrant market for green hydrogen, continue to scale up renewable energy, and stimulate finance for low-carbon energy investments.

India is the fastest-growing large economy in the world, and the economy is expected to continue to expand at a rapid pace. Decoupling economic growth from emissions growth will require scaling up renewable energy, especially in hard-to-abate industrial sectors. This, in turn, will require an expansion of green hydrogen production and consumption as well as a faster development of climate finance to boost the mobilization of finance for low-carbon investments.

The Second Low-Carbon Energy Programmatic Development Policy Operation – the second in a series of two operations similar in size – will support reforms to boost the production of green hydrogen and electrolyzers, critical technology needed for green hydrogen production. The operation also supports reforms to

boost renewable energy penetration, for instance, by incentivizing battery energy storage solutions and amending the Indian Electricity Grid Code to improve renewable energy integration into the grid. In June 2023, the World Bank approved the \$1.5 billion First Low-Carbon Energy Programmatic Development Policy Operation which supported the waiver of transmission charges for renewable energy in green hydrogen projects, the issuance of a clear path to launch 50 GW of renewable energy tenders annually and creating a legal framework for a national carbon credit market.

"The World Bank is pleased to continue supporting India's low-carbon development strategy which will help achieve the country's net-zero target while creating clean energy jobs in the private sector," said Auguste Tano Kouame, World Bank Country Director for India. "Indeed, both the first and second operations have a strong focus on boosting private investment in green hydrogen and renewable energy."

The reforms supported by the operation are expected to result in the production of at least 450,000 metric tons of green hydrogen and 1,500 MW of electrolyzers per year from FY25/26 onwards. In addition,

it will also significantly help to increase renewable energy capacity and support reductions in emissions by 50 million tons per year. The operation will also support steps to further develop a national carbon credit market.

"India has taken bold action to develop a domestic market for green hydrogen, underpinned by rapidly expanding renewable energy capacity. The first tenders under the National Green Hydrogen Mission's incentive scheme have demonstrated significant private sector interest," said Aurélien Kruse, Xiaodong Wang, and Surbhi Goyal, Team Leaders for the operation. "The operation is helping in scaling up investments in green hydrogen and in renewable energy infrastructure. This will contribute towards India's journey for achieving its Nationally Determined Contributions targets."

This operation is aligned with the Government of India's energy security and with the Bank's Hydrogen for Development (H4D) Partnership.

The financing for the operation includes a \$1.46 billion loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and a \$31.5 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA).

Conscient Sports partners with Real Madrid Foundation to ignite a new era in Indian Football

In a significant step set to transform the future of football in India, the Real Madrid Foundation — branch of the renowned Real Madrid Club managing its football programs worldwide—has established a pioneering partnership with Conscient Sports. This collaboration is dedicated to fostering young football at the grassroots level, combining Real Madrid Foundation and Real Madrid's legendary football philosophy with Conscient Sports' extensive expertise and dedication to Indian football. Conscient Sports is the exclusive partner of Real Madrid Foundation in India to develop the football program for all the country.

The training methodology of Real Madrid Foundation and Real Madrid blends the traditional football ethos with modern coaching philosophies. It offers unique experiences tailored for the young footballers and families, complementing mainstream education. This approach aims to enhance developmental goals, including leadership skills. The platform not only advances sporting abilities but also fosters high-performance individuals, inspired by Real Madrid's. The programme's curated experiences create an enriching environment for student growth in positive life values.

Conscient Sports stands as the beacon of football development in India. Since 2010, Conscient Sports has built a robust training infrastructure, now spanning four major cities—Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Pune, and Bengaluru—with over 30 state-of-the-art training centres and more than 4,000 active young footballers. Creating an environment where talent thrives by blending global best practices with a deep understanding

of local football dynamics, Conscient Sports' football wing, Conscient Football, has grown into India's largest football academy over the past 14 years, coaching more than 50,000 players across over 40 locations. This journey includes conducting over 50 nationwide camps and selecting more than 25 teams for international football tournaments. Beyond football skills, Conscient Sports fosters a youth movement, emphasizing health & wellness, focus & discipline, teamwork & leadership, and character-building through the sport. Partnering with Real Madrid Foundation, Conscient Sports continues its commitment and legacy towards the sport.

“Real Madrid's legacy of excellence finds a perfect partner in Conscient Sports, whose unparalleled expertise and dedication to grassroots development in India are second to none,” said Emilio Butragueno, Legend, Director - Real Madrid Institutional Relations and Official Spokesperson. He further

added, “Conscient Sports' extensive knowledge of the Indian football landscape and their relentless pursuit of excellence make them the ideal ally for our mission. There is no better partner in India to help us realize our vision of nurturing young football talent.”

Kriti Jain Gupta, Director of Conscient Sports, expressed her enthusiasm for the partnership: “Over the last 14 years, football has evolved dramatically, with new emphasis on physicality, speed, tactical flexibility, and high-intensity pressing. Our young athletes need training that aligns with these advancements and prepares them for the future. Conscient Sports has continually adapted coaching philosophies to meet the evolving needs of players and their families. And this is in sync with the philosophy of the club. Our goal is to stay ahead of the curve, ensuring our athletes are not only prepared for global challenges but also inspired to excel. We are dedicated to driving the growth of football in India, aspiring to host championships and tournaments that will shine a spotlight on our hometown talent.”

The exclusive partnership with Real Madrid Foundation is more than just a new badge; it is about leveraging thought leadership to impact sustainability & community development, to promote inclusive practices and the vision emphasises the role of sports in fostering education, health, sustainable development and social integration, leveraging influence to create positive, lasting impacts on society that go beyond sports, embracing the true essence of football, and celebrating the diverse styles, techniques, and approaches that make the sport so aspirational.

Over the last 14 years, football has evolved dramatically, with new emphasis on physicality, speed, tactical flexibility, and high-intensity pressing.

Hyundai Motor India Foundation's CSR projects launched

The initiatives bolster support across Art, Health, and Sanitation sectors

Hyundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF), the CSR arm of Hyundai Motor India Ltd. (HMIL), announces the launch of multiple Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes across the Art, Health, and Sanitation sectors in Maharashtra. The initiatives were inaugurated under the esteemed presence of Girish Mahajan, Minister for Rural Development & Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of Maharashtra, at the Bombay Art Society in Mumbai.

The inaugurated projects include a 2-day cultural extravaganza under the third season of HMIF's flagship 'Art for Hope' initiative, celebrating 10 differently-abled grantees from across India. Additionally, 5 telemedicine clinics were unveiled by Shri Girish Mahajan, along with 2 mobile medical vans that were flagged off under the Sparsh Sanjeevani project. Furthermore, 100 water RO systems were virtually unveiled at 100 schools in Gadchiroli as part of project H2OPE, which aims to make water accessible for all.

Speaking at the inauguration event of the CSR initiatives, Mahajan said, "I commend HMIF for their commitment to improving the lives of our citizens through these valuable CSR initiatives. The telemedicine clinics, mobile medical vans, and the water RO systems will greatly enhance accessibility to proper healthcare and sanitation across Maharashtra. We laud such collaborative efforts, which are indeed essential to achieve



Hyundai Motor India Foundation's CSR projects in Maharashtra launched by Shri Girish Mahajan, Minister for Rural Development & Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of Maharashtra



Hyundai Motor India Foundation's CSR projects in Maharashtra launched by Shri Girish Mahajan, Minister for Rural Development & Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of Maharashtra

the sustainable development goals." Commenting on the launch of the CSR initiatives, Unsoo Kim, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India Ltd. said, "At Hyundai, we believe in Creating Shared Value and driving positive change in the communities we serve. Aligned with Hyundai's global vision of 'Progress for Humanity,' Hyundai Motor India Foundation has been at

the forefront of numerous impactful CSR initiatives aimed at driving positive change in society. Our latest CSR initiatives in Maharashtra underscore HMIF's commitment to inclusive growth and community development. We are dedicated to supporting the differently-abled, enhancing healthcare access, and improving the overall well-being of society."



BPCL and UPSRTC Sign MoU to Install Water Coolers at UPSRTC Bus Stands across Uttar Pradesh

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), a 'Maharatna' and a Fortune Global 500 Company, and Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to install water coolers at UPSRTC bus stands, providing clean and cold drinking water for bus passengers and the general public.

The signing ceremony took place today in Lucknow, with top officials from both organizations.

This initiative, part of BPCL's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, aims to enhance public amenities and ensure the well-being of travelers and the community. The installation of water coolers at 100 UPSRTC bus stands in 87 cities will significantly improve the comfort and convenience of

the 2 million passengers who use UPSRTC's services daily. The implementation of this project will be completed within 90 days.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, BPCL's I&C Business Head Rahul Tandon stated, "We are proud to collaborate with UPSRTC in this meaningful initiative. Providing clean drinking water at bus stands is a vital public service, and through our efforts, we are committed to contributing to the health and welfare of the public. BPCL is fortunate to have associated with UPSRTC for this CSR project and we express our desire to partner with UPSRTC for other similar initiatives which touch the lives of people."

UPSRTC's Managing Director Masoom Ali Sarwar added, "Philanthropy is one of the key pillars of society. This CSR project will

provide relief to 2 million passengers and will have a profound positive impact on society at large. The MoU with BPCL reflects our shared commitment to enhancing passenger amenities and public services. The installation of water coolers at our bus stands will greatly benefit travelers, especially during the hot summer months."

Senior executives from both BPCL and UPSRTC attended the ceremony, highlighting the significance of this partnership in enhancing public infrastructure and services.

As a leading organization, BPCL is committed to social responsibility and community betterment. This collaboration with UPSRTC highlights BPCL's dedication to maximizing positive impacts and promoting inclusive growth for the sustainability of its business.

CSR INDIA UNITED

Ambuja Cements transforms lives of over 700 rural women in Marwar Mundwa with successful self-help groups



Ambuja Cements, the cement and building material company of the diversified Adani Portfolio, is committed to empowering rural women through the setting up of 70 self-help groups (SHGs) near its Marwar Mundwa plant. Through CSR efforts, 787 women from this rural region have begun their journeys towards self-reliance and financial independence.

Ambuja Cements' CSR teams have been fostering women-run SHGs in the remotest areas around Marwar Mundwa, by encouraging them to save money, both collectively and

individually, as well as engaging in income-generating activities.

These women members began with a modest monthly saving of Rs 20 each and have now reached a substantial corpus of Rs 84.82 lakh,



which they utilise for funding various micro-enterprises. Each SHG has an average credit availability of ₹1.21 lakh, supported by a revolving fund of ₹6.05 lakh and an internal lending rate of 74.13% of the corpus.

Despite societal norms and financial constraints, these rural women were resolute in their pursuit of economic improvement and better futures for their children. CSR teams organised monthly meetings and trainings for the members on various business aspects, enabling them to start and manage businesses effectively. Many women engaged in diverse income-generating activities, including agriculture, animal husbandry, vegetable and provision stores, beauty parlours, tailoring, handicrafts, oil mills, flour mills, goat rearing, and rural startups.

The collective efforts of the SHG members led to the formation of the 'Maru Shree Vikas Samiti' a federation that markets traditional spices and other products produced by rural women. It serves as a market linkage platform, creating business opportunities and supporting women in their specific areas. The CSR teams have also helped women members avail various State and Central Government benefit schemes.

The SHGs also promote education, particularly for girls, and address health issues like malnutrition and infant mortality. The SHG women's encouragement to their daughters to pursue higher education has significantly improved education levels in the region.

These comprehensive CSR interventions from Ambuja Cements have transformed the lives of rural women in Marwar Mundwa, setting a benchmark for sustainable and inclusive community development. Ambuja Cements is committed to enhancing the economic and social status of rural women, ensuring a brighter and more equitable future for all.



Aranyakaa Farms Unveils Groundbreaking Self-Sufficient Farmland Model to Achieve Total Water Independence in Ten Years

In the face of Bangalore's growing water crisis, Aranyakaa Farms announces its most ambitious project yet: "Code Name #H2o Handle with Care." This innovative self-sufficient farmland aims to achieve complete independence from external water sources within ten years, utilizing a network of lakes, advanced rainwater collection systems, and a diverse range of plant and animal life. Building on their successful use of artificial lakes, Aranyakaa Farms demonstrates its unwavering commitment to sustainable farming, biodiversity, and future generations.

Their innovative practices are already making a significant impact. The Vrindavan project features a massive 45 lakh litre artificial lake, while the 61-acre Berigai, Sarjapur "Code Name #H2o Handle with Care" project includes nearly 100 rainwater harvesting pits and a sprawling 3-acre man-made lake. These projects showcase the significant impact of their work: increased agricultural yields contribute to a

more sustainable food system, thriving ecosystems promote a healthier environment, and a culture of water conservation is instilled in residents, ensuring a sustainable future for all.

"At Aranyakaa Farms, we believe that responsible water management is not just a practice but a core value," says Mr. Amit Porwal, Director of Aranyakaa Farms. "Our innovative water solutions ensure the long-term viability of our projects and contribute to a healthier environment for future generations."



Mr. Amit Porwal, Director at Aranyakaa Farms

Having established itself as a leader in sustainable real estate, Aranyakaa Farms boasts a proven track record. In just three years, they have completed nine successful projects and acquired over 600 acres of land. Their success is rooted in a deep commitment to sustainable water management and conservation, crucial for a city in dire need of water solutions.

Aranyakaa Farms implements a multifaceted approach that addresses both water conservation and agricultural diversity, yielding tangible benefits. Rainwater harvesting reduces reliance on costly municipal water, while real-time water monitoring powered by IoT devices enables residents to make informed decisions about water use. Their stunning man-made lakes not only enhance the landscape's aesthetics but also act as natural reservoirs, promoting biodiversity and replenishing groundwater levels. Aranyakaa Farms is setting a new standard for responsible development in a water-stressed city.

Aranyakaa Farms is revolutionizing Bangalore's real estate sector with a pioneering approach to sustainable development centered on managed farmlands and cutting-edge water management practices. This dual focus drives remarkable growth and positions them as a company to watch.

The benefits of Aranyakaa Farms' approach extend well beyond conservation. Their commitment to responsible water use not only translates to long-term value for investors through increased land value and reduced operational costs but also fosters a strong sense of community built around shared environmental responsibility. This makes Aranyakaa Farms a leader in sustainable real estate development. They offer a future-oriented lifestyle that seamlessly blends nature, profit, and community, making them a standout company in the evolving landscape of real estate development.

The 'Magical Mangroves Campaign' empowers over 34,000 lives across seven coastal states in India

Godrej & Boyce, part of the Godrej Enterprises Group, which has a diverse presence in consumer and industrial businesses ranging from aerospace and consumer durables to energy and sustainable construction solutions, announced Phase 5 of its Magical Mangroves campaign in association with WWF India on The International Day for the Conservation of the Mangroves Ecosystem.

Launched in 2020, the initiative has onboarded 190 volunteers and empowered 34,630 people across 7 states through over 460 webinars, on-ground initiatives, and social media campaigns. This effort highlights Godrej & Boyce's commitment to environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation. The organization has been conserving hundreds of acres of mangroves along the Vikhroli and Thane creek coastline in Mumbai for over 30 years.

The Magical Mangroves campaign has been instrumental in raising awareness about the critical importance of mangrove ecosystems. Through a series of educational workshops, interactive quizzes, and nature trails, the initiative has engaged local communities and empowered them with knowledge about mangroves' role in coastal protection and biodiversity support.

Looking ahead, the partnership aims to empower a cumulative total of 51,000 people by FY25 through continued educational outreach and conservation initiatives. With a shared vision of promoting sustainable practices and protecting biodiversity, Godrej & Boyce and WWF-India remain dedicated to driving

positive change in coastal communities across India.

Those interested to participate can visit the WWF-India Volunteer website and register for their respective State: https://people4planet.wwf-india.org/available_projects.php

Commenting on this initiative Tejashree Joshi, Head of Environmental Sustainability, Godrej & Boyce said, "Mangrove ecosystems are crucial for coastal protection, supporting diverse wildlife, and acting as significant carbon sinks. Their role in coastal communities' life is incomparable. We are ecstatic to continue with our Magical Mangroves initiative in partnership with WWF India. In the 5th phase, we aim to strengthen our outreach by empowering 95 volunteers across 07 states - with more educational workshops and community engagement programmes. With WWF-India, we have reached broader audiences and implemented impactful

conservation initiatives. The community awareness and engagement have always resulted in successful nature conservation"

Godrej & Boyce has been conserving the Vikhroli mangroves in Mumbai since generations. Being the champions of sustainability, the company has taken numerous initiatives to create awareness about mangrove conservation through protection, restoration, biodiversity management, and community engagement initiatives. They also support research and implement sustainable practices to ensure the ecosystem's health.

Farmeen Mistry, State Coordinator at WWF-India, highlighted the campaign's impact, stating, "The fifth phase of our campaign focuses on enhancing community engagement and empowering local volunteers as Mangrove Ambassadors. These efforts are crucial in building a sustainable future where mangroves play a pivotal role in mitigating climate change impacts."

The partnership with WWF-India has been instrumental in providing the scientific expertise and on-ground volunteer support necessary for the success of this campaign. Godrej & Boyce has taken various initiatives in mangroves conservation including developing Asia's first mangrove-focused mobile app, available in 11 languages, and creating a children's book titled 'Many Secrets of Mangroves' in English and Marathi, in collaboration with author Katie Bagli. Additionally, they have set up a bilingual website and organized poster exhibitions at educational institutions to raise awareness about the importance of mangrove conservation.

Godrej & Boyce and WWF-India's partnership aims to expand community engagement and conservation efforts in the coastal states

Educational initiatives including workshops, nature trails, and innovative tools enhance awareness about mangrove ecosystems among local communities

Aims to empower 51,000 people by 2025

5 Influential Women paving the path for CSR in India

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is vital as it allows companies to go beyond mere profit-making and contribute positively to society and the environment. When influential women lead CSR initiatives within their companies, they bring a unique perspective and commitment to social impact. These leaders prioritize initiatives that address community needs, promote sustainable practices, and uphold ethical standards. By integrating CSR into their business strategy, these influential women have not only enhanced the company's reputation and brand loyalty but have also fostered a culture of social responsibility among employees. Their leadership inspires innovation in CSR practices, encourages collaboration with stakeholders, and drives meaningful change that benefits both the company and the broader community.



Anju Kanodia, Executive Director of Lumina Datamatics: With the thoughtful leadership of Anju Kanodia Lumina

Datamatics, a leading global provider of content and technology solutions announced its collaboration Pad-woman of India, renowned for her pioneering efforts in producing and creating awareness about reusable sanitary pads. Recognizing the importance of menstrual hygiene and its impact on women's lives, the collaboration involved a series of awareness workshops conducted across various colleges and institutes in Maharashtra. The goal was to promote sustainable menstrual hygiene practices and foster a more

informed and empowered generation. In the first phase, awareness workshops are being conducted in tribal Palghar and Mumbai colleges. The latter are supported by the Government of Maharashtra's Higher and Technical Education Department.



Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Executive Chairperson of Biocon: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's commitment to leveraging technology

for healthcare improvement is exemplified in this the mHealth program. The Biocon Foundation has developed and implemented a mobile phone-based management platform for cancer screening and surveillance, enabling the creation of electronic health records and facilitating targeted screening for oral cancer. The mHealth program has been successfully implemented in various resource-constrained settings in partnership with the Governments of Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Nagaland. Designed to identify high-risk populations in both community and workplace settings, the program has screened approximately 60,000 individuals and identified 13% with oral potentially malignant disorders (OPMDs) for follow-up by the end of 2019.



Vinita Bali, Managing Director of Britannia Industry: In 2009 Vinita created the Britannia Nutrition

Foundation and since then has pioneered the cause of addressing malnutrition in India. Britannia's work in this area was recognized at the closing plenary of the Clinton Global Initiative meeting in New York, in 2009. In 2012 Vinita was selected to the Lead Group of the "Scaling Up Nutrition" (SUN) initiative of the United Nations to help improve maternal and child health and continues to serve in that capacity. It's mission was to Contribute to every child's right to Nutrition and Growth by implementing sustainable, replicable programs, pursuing product innovation and research, addressing core and allied causes for malnutrition and assuming responsibility for the nourishment and vitality of the community.



Roshni Nadar, Chairperson of HCLTech: Roshni Nadar Malhotra is the CEO of the HCL Corporation and is responsible for providing

strategic guidance to the organization. She is also the Chairperson of HCLTech, a leading global technology organization and the Chairperson of its CSR Board Committee. Passionate about wildlife and conservation, Roshni established The Habitats Trust in 2018. It has a special focus on the conservation of lesser-known species and habitats that are threatened, but often neglected and are in urgent need of conservation attention. From working on the conservation of the Indian Pangolin – the world's most trafficked mammal, saving the Great Indian Bustard with fewer than 150 individuals surviving

in the wild, or restoring coral reef ecosystems of which approximately 75% are threatened by human activity today, The Habitats Trust has been at the forefront of generating conservation action for these seldom highlighted causes.



Upasana Kamineni Konidela Vice-Chairperson of Apollo Hospitals: has been appointed the National Ranger

Ambassador for World Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF-India) for four years. With this collaboration between WWF-India and Apollo Hospitals Charitable Trust (AHCT), Upasana, who is the Vice Chairperson CSR - Apollo Hospitals, will provide specialised medical treatment at Apollo Hospitals for forest staff injured in and around protected areas, forest divisions, and tiger reserves. The partnership will entail the Chennai-based hospital chain providing treatment and recovery support for frontline staff in case of a severe medical

emergency, while on field. This support will be provided in 10 priority landscapes. A partnership announcement by the two organizations covers superior quality medical treatment of patients on a first-come-first-serve basis. The services made available to the forest staff would also include air ambulance and other emergency medical rescue services. For other cases, WWF-India and the state forest departments involved will admit the sick/injured staff to the nearest Apollo Hospital or its franchisee at their own expense.

Banjara Kasuti Partners with Amazon India to Empower Karnataka's Banjara Community

Banjara Kasuti, a non-profit organisation based in Vijayapura, Karnataka, has partnered with Amazon India's Karigar program to support Lambani women by enabling them to sell their handcrafted products online. This partnership aims to bring the rich heritage and craftsmanship of the Lambani community in North Karnataka to a global audience through Amazon, one of the largest online marketplaces globally. The initiative will help to create employment opportunities for the Lambani ladies and community.

Founded in 2017, Banjara Kasuti seeks to preserve traditional Lambani art and economically empower Lambani women, promoting self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship. This partnership aims to provide economic opportunities, preserve cultural heritage, and support community development for Banjara artisans. The Amazon Karigar initiative provides a marketplace for India's local artisans, offering an

► **Founded in 2017, the organization seeks to preserve traditional Lambani art, empower Lambani women economically, and promote self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship.**

► **Amazon India aims to empower Lambani women, showcase India's handicrafts heritage, foster financial independence, and instill entrepreneurship among artisans.**

opportunity to not only empower artisans and sellers to gain financial independence and instil a sense of entrepreneurship but also exhibit the country's rich handicrafts heritage. Asha Patil, Founder of Banjara

Kasuti, stated, "Our collaboration with Amazon India will provide dignity, social security, and financial independence to Lambani women while preserving the Lambani art form. This partnership will allow them to showcase their craftsmanship to a wider audience, enhancing their living standards."

Gaurav Bhatnagar, Director, Sales, Amazon India said, "Amazon India is proud to partner with Banjara Kasuti through our Amazon Karigar program. This collaboration is a significant step towards empowering Lambani women by bringing their exquisite, handcrafted products to a global audience. Through the Amazon Karigar initiative, we are committed to showcasing India's rich handicrafts heritage, fostering financial independence, and instilling a sense of entrepreneurship among local artisans. Together, we strive to create meaningful employment opportunities and celebrate the craftsmanship of the Lambani community in North Karnataka."

Bal Raksha Bharat and Zee Entertainment Provide Drone to Himachal SDMA for Critical Medical Deliveries

Bal Raksha Bharat and Zee Entertainment have successfully handed over a state-of-the-art drone to the Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) to enhance disaster response capabilities in the region. This drone, designed to deliver essential medical supplies to remote and flood-affected areas, marks a significant step forward in ensuring timely aid during emergencies.

The official handover ceremony in Chamba was chaired by Shri. Mukesh Repaswal, IAS, Deputy Commissioner Chamba, and Shri. D.C. RANA, IAS, Director cum Special Secretary, State Disaster Management Authorities. Representatives from Zee Entertainment, Bal Raksha Bharat, and various district and state officials participated, symbolizing their commitment to enhancing disaster preparedness and healthcare delivery in Himachal Pradesh.

While speaking on the occasion Mukesh Repaswal, Deputy Commissioner, Chamba shared, “We are grateful to all three organizations, Bal Raksha Bharat, Zee Entertainment & Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) for handing over the state-of-the-art drone to enhance disaster response capabilities in the region. This drone carrying a weight of around 20 kg, will help us concentrate on our disaster management systems and help strengthen our system efficiently in the region of Chamba”.

Speaking on the occasion, Sudarshan Suchi, CEO, Bal Raksha Bharat added, “We are immensely proud to contribute this cutting-edge technology to Himachal Pradesh SDMA. The drone will not only



enhance disaster response but also ensure that essential medical supplies reach the most remote and vulnerable communities in times of need. This collaboration exemplifies our commitment to leveraging technology for humanitarian aid and strengthening the resilience of health infrastructure in disaster-prone areas.”

The project, titled “Strengthening and Enabling Primary Health Facilities to Deal with Impairments Caused by Flood-like Disaster

Situations,” was initiated in response to the devastating flash floods and cloudbursts that hit the Mandi and Solan districts in July and August 2023. These disasters affected approximately 125,000 people, including over 36,000 children, and resulted in over 400 fatalities. The financial impact was estimated at ₹10,000 crore, with extensive damage to infrastructure, including the destruction of 232 houses and partial damage to 1,127 others. The project aimed to ensure that primary health

facilities in flood-affected areas remain operational and capable of providing necessary healthcare services during and immediately after disasters. Running from October 11, 2023, to March 31, 2024, the project focused on upgrading health facility infrastructure, enhancing disaster preparedness, and employing technology to facilitate the delivery of essential medical supplies to remote and isolated areas.

In light of these challenges, Zee Entertainment and Bal Raksha Bharat launched this project to ensure that primary health facilities in the affected areas could remain operational and capable of providing essential healthcare services during and immediately after such disasters. Running from October 11, 2023, to March 31, 2024, the project focused on upgrading health facility infrastructure, enhancing disaster preparedness, and employing technology to facilitate the delivery of essential medical supplies to remote and isolated areas.

One of the major accomplishments of this initiative was the enhancement of health infrastructure. A thorough needs assessment of 15 health facilities in Mandi and Solan districts led to significant repair and restoration efforts at 10 key locations. These improvements included the retrofitting of toilets, electrical repairs, structural enhancements and the implementation of Building Learning Environment (BLE) initiatives with public health awareness artwork. These upgradations were crucial in strengthening the structural resilience and operational capability of the health facilities thereby ensuring provision for uninterrupted healthcare services.

Disaster preparedness was another critical area of focus. Facility-level preparedness plans were developed for all 15 health centres and 15 nearby communities, incorporating inputs from various stakeholders including Community Health Officers, Medical



Officers and community representatives. Mock drills were conducted at these facilities, engaging a total of 1,075 community members and involving the participation of local disaster management authorities, company commandants, home guards, and fire services. Sensitization workshops and capacity-building sessions were held, reaching over 180 health officials and frontline workers. These activities equipped them with essential skills for managing health and nutrition during emergencies, significantly enhancing the community's overall readiness for future disasters.

The integration of this innovative technology into the disaster response framework will significantly improve the region's capacity to deliver

critical supplies to remote areas during emergencies, ensuring that even the most isolated communities receive timely aid.

Bal Raksha Bharat will continue to support the government in the use of the drone independently. Drone training will be facilitated by a Director General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) approved agency, ensuring that government staff are well-equipped to operate the drone. The integration of this innovative technology into the disaster response framework will significantly improve the region's capacity to deliver critical supplies to remote areas during emergencies, ensuring that even the most isolated communities receive timely aid.

Indian Immunologicals hosts Free Vaccination Drive for over a lakh canine on Zoonosis Day



Dr. Praveen Kumar, Narayanguda hospital with Dr. Uday Shankar

Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL) has conducted free anti-rabies vaccination to over a lakh canines across the country on the eve of the Zoonosis Day. Diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans and vice-versa are known as Zoonotic diseases. This is a large drive to create social awareness about “One Health”, which means healthy co-existence of animals, human beings and ecosystems.

IIL is a leading vaccine manufacturer and a “One Health” company producing world class human and animal health vaccines including vaccines for various zoonotic diseases. Every year on 6th of July, which is also observed as “World

Zoonosis Day”, IIL engages many Veterinary dispensaries, NGOs and Veterinarians across the country conduct Rabies awareness camps. IIL conducted free vaccination camps to administer more than one lakh doses of RAKSHARAB (anti-rabies vaccine produced by IIL) in as many as 100 centres across 21 states in the country through veterinary dispensaries, NGOs etc.

Seventy percent of all emerging diseases such as Rabies, Swine Flu, Brucellosis, Leptospirosis, Porcine Cysticercosis, Nipah, Zika etc that affect humans are zoonotic in nature. In India, occurrence of Rabies is prevalent and accounts for more than 90% of all zoonotic

cases reported in the country. India accounts for significant number of rabies deaths reported worldwide. The economic cost of dog mediated rabies has been estimated at \$ 8.6 billion (as per WHO). The high incidence of rabies in India is due to large stray dog population in India, which is estimated at about 60 million and significantly lower rate of vaccination. Prophylaxis through vaccination is the most cost-effective intervention to reduce incidence of disease. Several countries have been able to reduce the number of rabies related human deaths through vaccination of dogs.

Over the years, IIL has emerged as a frontrunner in vaccine production, consistently contributing to disease prevention and control through relentless dedication to research and innovation. IIL has developed and manufactured vaccines for various zoonotic diseases such as rabies, brucellosis etc. IIL continues to be a leading manufacturer of animal rabies vaccine (Raksharab) and human rabies vaccine (Abhayrab) in the country. IIL's CYSVAX is the world's first vaccine for Porcine Cysticercosis in Pigs. Cysticercosis is a very important zoonotic disease, and it is understood that it is a prime cause of epilepsy in humans. Vaccinating Pigs against Porcine Cysticercosis can help significantly reduce the incidence of epilepsy in humans.

Speaking on the occasion of Zoonosis Day, Dr K. Anand Kumar, MD, Indian Immunologicals Ltd said, “IIL is the single largest contributor for self-sufficiency to our nation in the field of vaccines. IIL has developed many vaccines that addresses the Zoonotic diseases including the world's first vaccine against Porcine Cysticercosis. IIL is also committed to eradication of Zoonotic diseases and actively working with Government of Kerala, Municipal Corporation of Thiruvanthapuram to make Kerala Rabies Free.”

Revamped Schools, Empowered Students: Bhumi's Ignite+ Program Transforming Education Landscape in India

"Education is the foundation upon which our nation's future is built, and providing adequate infrastructure is essential for nurturing young minds," said Dr. Prahalathan K.K, Co-Founder, of Bhumi. "The Ignite+ School Improvement Program is our commitment to empowering students and communities by creating safe, modern, and inspiring spaces for learning."

Bhumi, a leading non-profit organization dedicated to social development, has launched its flagship Ignite+ School Improvement Program, an ambitious initiative aimed at enhancing the infrastructure of government, government-aided, and low-income private schools throughout India.

The Ignite+ program focuses on improving infrastructure to elevate school learning outcomes. By addressing the existing critical issues of broken classrooms, dysfunctional toilets, inadequate furniture, and barren playgrounds through addition of new infrastructure including classrooms, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities, digital infrastructure, sports facilities, learning spaces, furniture, and kitchen gardens. This program implements a holistic approach to create optimal learning environments.

The program follows a structured process, beginning with identifying and assessing the needs of schools, seeking corporate partners to support the fulfillment of those needs, executing quality projects, and continuously monitoring progress while collecting feedback from beneficiaries.



The Impact of Ignite+

The impact of Ignite+ extends beyond physical renovations. Our efforts lead to reduced dropout rates, improved social well-being among students, increased admissions, better teaching facilities, and the attraction of quality educators.

- 70 + Renovation Projects
 - 34 + New Classrooms Constructed
 - 189 + New Toilet Units Constructed
 - 293 + Other Facilities (Playground setup, Dining Hall, RO units, Furniture, etc.)
 - 44000 + Total Beneficiaries
- Corporate Partners: Lotte India, Oracle, Qualcomm, Kotak, Symbio,

Musashi Paint, Worley, Keller, KONE, Gainwell Technologies, AECOM, Ben Line Agencies, Saipem, Computacenter, KWE, CMA CGM and Lumen

Partnering with corporations committed to social responsibility, Bhumi invites organisations to join the Ignite+ movement and contribute to creating safe and conducive learning environments and empowering students and communities for a brighter future.

For more information about Bhumi's Ignite+ School Improvement Program and partnership opportunities, please visit <https://bhumi.ngo/>

About Bhumi:

Bhumi is a leading Indian non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to promoting education, community welfare, and environmental conservation. Founded in 2006, Bhumi has grown to engage over 30,000 volunteers across 12 cities in India, focusing on causes such as education, the environment, animals, and community welfare. The organisation's mission is to drive social change by fostering an environment where young adults and children learn, lead, and thrive. Bhumi's values of ownership, collaboration, and nurturing care guide its work, which includes the Ignite program aimed at providing holistic education and sustainable livelihoods for 5,000 children and the Catalyze program focused on making volunteering a national habit and driving sustainable development goals.

IIT Madras partners with leading industry players to offer employability-focused programs on 'SWAYAM Plus'



Prof. V. Kamakoti (C), Director, IIT Madras, with the industry partners at the MoU Signing Event in the campus

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) is partnering with multiple industries to offer employability-focused programs on 'SWAYAM Plus', a landmark initiative of the Ministry of Education.

As many as 24 MoUs with leading industry partners across multiple sectors were signed to offer skill and employability-focused online programs and internships, accessible to learners across the nation. This takes SWAYAM Plus' total Industry partners to 36.

SWAYAM Plus, a landmark initiative by the Ministry of Education and IIT Madras, was launched by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Education Minister, Government of India, on 27th February 2024.

Since its launch, more than 75,000 learners have benefited from more than 165 courses,



Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras, addressing a MoU Signing Event in the campus

of which 33 were aligned to the National Credit Framework across multiple sectors such as IT, Healthcare, BFSI, and Indian Knowledge Systems, among others.

The MoUs were signed on campus recently in the presence of Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras, Prof. R. Sarathi, Dean (Planning), IIT Madras, and Professor In-Charge, SWAYAM Plus, IIT Madras and the leadership teams of the industry partners.

The MoUs cover a diverse range of fields, including Information Technology, Social Sciences, Banking and Finance, Soft Skills, Music, Management, Food Science, and Indian Knowledge Systems and internships ensuring comprehensive coverage of skill development across areas crucial for future employability. Welcoming the industry participation in this

skilling initiative, Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras, said, “These partnerships mark a significant step towards our mission of democratizing access to education and empowering learners in India in the years to come. SWAYAM Plus will have a key role to play in increasing the adoption of industry content among Universities. SWAYAM Plus will also be integrated with Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) for a smooth credit transfer and accumulation experience for all learners.”

SWAYAM Plus will have programmes in sectors such as Manufacturing, Energy, Computer Science and Engineering/IT/ITES, Management Studies, Teacher Education, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Social Science, Indian Knowledge Systems, Media and Communications, among other fields. The industry partnerships of SWAYAM Plus signify a commitment to enhancing educational outcomes and preparing learners for the evolving job market.

Emphasizing IIT Madras’ dedication to providing high-quality educational opportunities that meet the present and future demands of the industries, Prof. R. Sarathi, Dean (Planning), IIT Madras, “We are thrilled to forge these strategic alliances with these esteemed industry leaders, and this is just the beginning. SWAYAM Plus aims to reach learners across the nation with diverse and high-quality multilingual content, internships and potentially even job opportunities in the future, made available to all at an affordable cost.”

SWAYAM Plus remains committed to expanding its reach and impact through innovative educational solutions to add 500 courses, 50,000 internships, 100 partners and a million learners in its first year. Further information about SWAYAM Plus and its initiatives can be obtained from the following website - <https://swayam-plus.swayam2.ac.in>



LiveLoveLaugh Unveils 'Lecture Series Unplugged': A New Platform for Mental Health Conversations

LiveLoveLaugh (LLL) has announced the launch of 'Lecture Series Unplugged', a quarterly event designed to build awareness and sustain open conversations about mental health. This series will spotlight prominent figures sharing their lived experience, and their insights on success, failures, triumphs and learnings.

Deepika Padukone, Founder, LiveLoveLaugh said: “Over the last decade, LLL has managed to successfully create a safe space for crucial mental health conversations. With 'Lecture Series Unplugged', LLL aims to reach a broader audience by offering relatable stories that can further strengthen our impact on individuals, communities and society at large.”

“This series is a significant step towards making mental health conversations as normal and necessary as discussions on physical health. Sharing our stories can break down stigma and encourage more people to seek help. By featuring personal stories, we’d like to foster a sense of connection and hope, and an understanding that mental health challenges are a common part of the human experience,” said Dr. Shyam Bhat, Psychiatrist and Chairperson,

LiveLoveLaugh. 'Lecture Series Unplugged' is co-hosted by Anisha Padukone, CEO of LiveLoveLaugh, and Dr. Shyam Bhat, who provides expert insights. In the inaugural episode, actor, influencer and content-creator Danish Sait shares his mental health strategies and experiences in an engaging discussion with Anisha and Dr. Bhat.

“Self-awareness is key. Earlier, I used to let triggers lead me to the bottom, but now I can recognize when I’m slipping and bounce back faster. Seeing a psychiatrist really healed me because the medication aided me to calm my mind,” notes Sait, during the 'Lecture Series Unplugged' episode, while advocating for individuals using a self-compassionate approach to deal with life’s challenges.

Each episode of 'Lecture Series Unplugged' will be available on the foundation’s website and social media channels. The series promises to be an inspiring and educational resource for anyone interested in learning more about mental health and how guest speakers deal with life’s challenges, providing the audience with real-life examples of resilience and coping strategies.

SIGNIFICANT SHIFT AWAY FROM COAL AS MOST NEW STEELMAKING IS NOW ELECTRIC

THE BULK OF STEELMAKING
AROUND THE WORLD STILL RELIES
ON COAL-BASED BLAST FURNACES,
WRITES MOLLY LEMPRIERE

With steel critical to the building out of decarbonised energy infrastructure, production is expected to continue to rise over the coming years, meaning the potential for decarbonisation is “enormous”, according to not-for-profit data organisation Global Energy Monitor (GEM). Image: Kin Li, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Unsplash.



As a result, the steel and iron industry is responsible for 7 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions and 11 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions globally, according to the consultancy firm Global Efficiency Intelligence.

This is more than the total emissions from all the world's cars and vans.

With steel critical to the building out of decarbonised energy infrastructure, production is expected to continue to rise over the coming years, meaning the potential for decarbonisation is “enormous”, according to not-for-profit data organisation Global Energy Monitor (GEM).

GEM's annual “Pedal to the Metal” report reveals that 93 per cent of new steelmaking capacity announced thus far in 2024 promises to use lower emission electric arc furnaces (EAFs).

It also shows that 49 per cent of the world's steelmaking capacity under development now uses EAFs, up from just 43 per cent in 2023 and 33 per cent in 2022.

Of this, nearly all of the capacity announced since the beginning of 2024 operates using EAFs, the non-governmental organisation's Global Steel Plant Tracker (GSPT) shows.

The tracker covers 2,207m tonnes per year (mtpa) of operating steelmaking capacity and an additional 774mtpa of steelmaking capacity under development globally, across

1,163 individual plants in 89 different countries, analysis of which is captured in its annual report.

However, while the report suggests a positive progression towards lower emission technologies in the sector, the increase in the announced projects is not yet leading

to a construction of EAF overtaking coal-based production methods.

Coal-based blast furnace-basic oxygen furnaces (BF-BOFs) – where blast furnaces are used to produce iron from ore and oxygen converters then turn this, with some additional elements, into steel – continue to dominate the projects under construction, meaning “pressure must be maintained all the way through to project completion if real progress is to be seen”, the report finds.



China's steel demand reaches its peak and more scrap becomes available, a major opportunity arises to reduce emissions in the next 10 years.

– CAITLIN SWALEC

Program Director for Heavy Industry,
Global Energy Monitor

GROWTH OF EAFs

Incoming steelmaking capacity is more heavily EAF-based than ever before, according to GEM's new report.

There is currently 774mtpa of steelmaking capacity under development, of which 223mtpa is in the advanced development stage.

Based on data from April 2024, the GSPT shows that nearly half of the capacity under development (337mtpa) is EAFs.

Just 36 per cent of steelmaking capacity announced in 2020 with a known production route used EAFs,

while in 2023 that number had increased to 92 per cent according to GEM. This grows to 93 per cent of capacity when looking at steelmaking capacity under development announced in 2024.

This “indicates a significant shift toward electric arc furnace steelmaking in the years to come”, the report notes.

Meanwhile, of the 212mtpa of steelmaking capacity slated for retirement, 88 per cent if BOF-based.

However, a net increase in BOF-based capacity is expected over the coming years. If all planned developments and retirements take effect, an additional 171mtpa of BOFs is expected to be added to the global fleet, along with 310mtpa of EAF and 80mtpa of unknown technologies.

Despite this growth in BOFs, the surge of EAF means the steel sector

is getting increasingly close to meeting the International Energy Agency’s (IEA) suggested 2030 target.

In its net-zero by 2050 roadmap, the IEA suggests that the share of steel produced by EAF should grow from 24 per cent in 2020, to 37 per cent by 2030 and then 52 per cent by 2050.

Considering all planned capacity and retirements, GEM now estimates that the global steel fleet is expected to reach 36 per cent EAF by 2030, noting: “This is still not sufficient to meet the IEA [net-zero] climate target, but with heightened momentum the goal is increasingly attainable.”

CONTINUING TO CONSTRUCTION

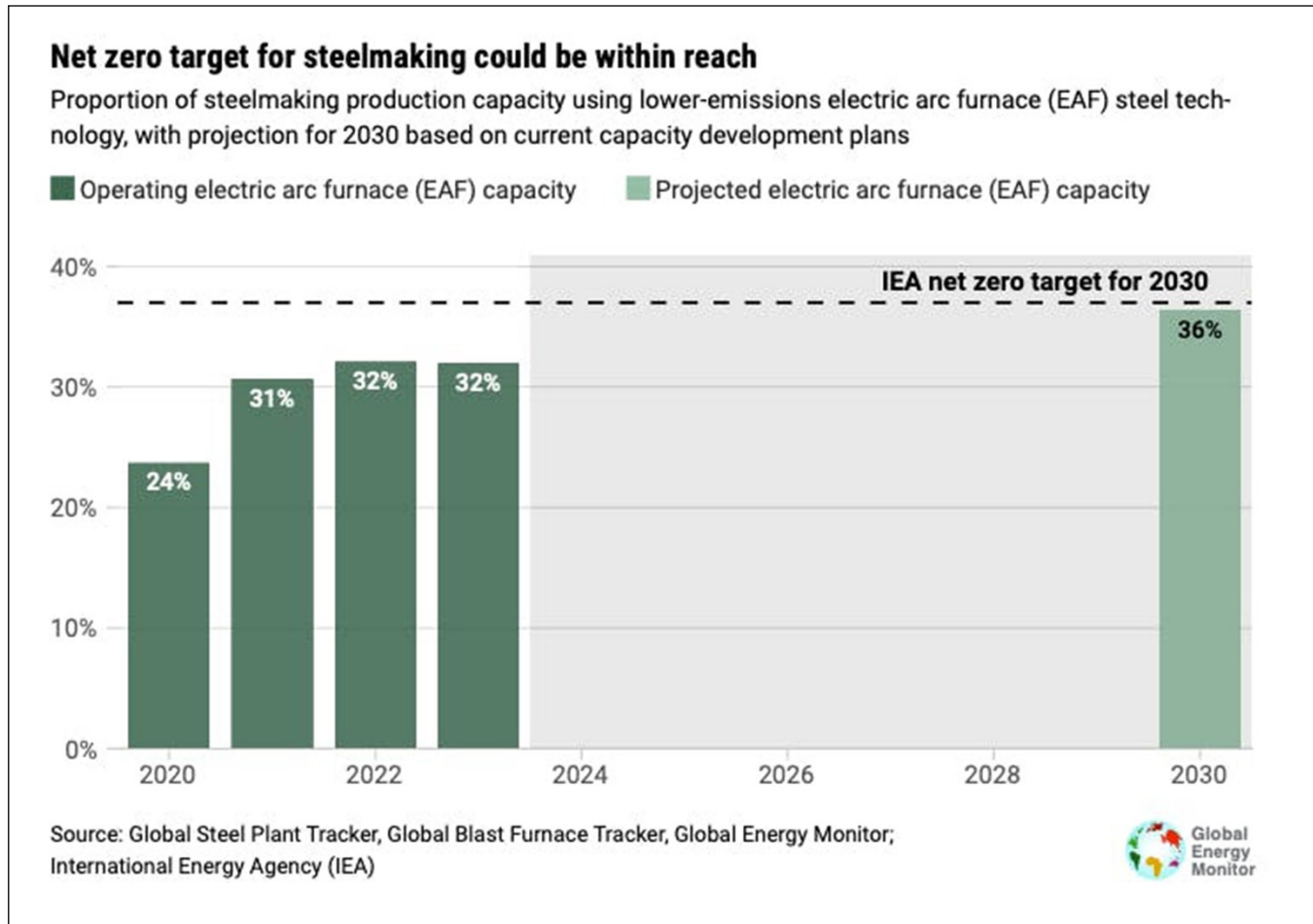
While EAF-steelmaking is being announced at “record rate”, GEM finds that less than 14 per cent of

this potential capacity has moved into construction.

Of those that have moved into construction, around 46 per cent are still BOF-based. As such, “while we may be within reach of net-zero targets based on proposed electric arc furnace capacity, actually achieving these goals requires follow-through”, the report notes.

Caitlin Swalec, program director for heavy industry at GEM, said in a statement:

“The progress is promising for a green steel transition. Never before has this much lower-emissions steelmaking been in the pipeline. At the same time, the buildout of coal-based capacity is concerning. What the industry needs now is to make these clean development plans a reality, while backing away from coal-based developments.”



The IEA has set a target of 37% EAF globally by 2030. New additions to the steelmaking capacity pipeline could bring EAF capacity to 36%. Source: GEM.

Country/area	Carbon commitment	BOF steel under development in integrated process development	Stranded asset risk (US\$ billion)	
			Low range	High range
India	Net Zero 2070	124,364	124	187
China	Net Zero 2060	80,803	81	121
Vietnam	Net Zero 2050	22,900	23	34
Indonesia	Net Zero 2060	17,000	17	26
Malaysia	Net Zero 2050	11,600	12	17
Cambodia	Net Zero 2050	4,100	4	6
Myanmar	Net Zero 2050	4,000	4	6
Nigeria	Net Zero 2060	1,300	1	2
Kazakhstan	Net Zero 2060	665	1	1
Total		266,732	267	400

Potential stranded-asset risk across key countries for coal-based steelmaking globally. Source: GEM.

As well as the buildout of new coal-based capacity being out of alignment with a net-zero future, it poses a threat of carbon lock-in and stranded assets, GEM notes.

Blast furnaces are becoming riskier investments given the limited options to mitigate emissions from both the furnaces themselves and the upstream emissions from the metallurgical coal mining, it adds.

Estimating an investment of US\$1-1.5 billion per mtpa capacity at an integrated BF-BOF site, GEM found that the future stranded-asset risk could be as high as US\$554 billion in 2023, falling to US\$400 billion in 2024 due to the continued fall in BOF capacity under development.

Astrid Grigsby-Schulte, project manager for steel at GEM tells Carbon Brief:

“As we grow closer to key decarbonisation milestones, coal-based developments get further out of alignment with the direction the industry is moving and present a greater risk of stranded assets to steelmakers. Coal-based, emissions-intensive blast furnaces represent significant investments that often require decades to recoup. This makes them extremely risky for developers, particularly in countries with stated net zero commitments.”

The limited options for mitigating the climate impact of BOF-steel-

making was also highlighted within a recent report from the thinktank Sandbag.

While carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) is often touted as a “catch all” solution, its effectiveness varies widely across applications, Sandbag’s “Steel & CCS/U” report finds.

For steel production, BF-BOFs with carbon capture are unlikely to be cost-competitive with EAFs, the report finds. Although given the slow pace of technological and market development, Sandbag anticipates capturing carbon will play a limited role in the steel industry.

CHINA TRANSITIONS TO EAFS

India has now replaced China as the top steel developer globally, with a pipeline of 258mtpa of capacity, of which 177mtpa is BOFs, according to GEM.

China has a pipeline of 150mtpa meaning, collectively, China and India are responsible for 53 per cent of all developments globally.

Asia operates 68 per cent of all steelmaking capacity (1,508mtpa), the majority of which is in China (1,075mtpa), India (123mtpa) and Japan (109mtpa).

When looking specifically at emissions-intensive BOF production, Asia’s share of total operating capacity increases to 80 per cent

(1,181mtpa), of which 918mtpa is in China.

Currently, China has 157mtpa of operating EAFs (22 per cent of the global capacity), followed by the US, Turkey, Iran and then India.

According to a new report from the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), China did not issue any new permits for coal-based steelmaking in the first half of 2024. This is the first time this has happened since the nation’s “dual carbon goals” were announced in September 2020.

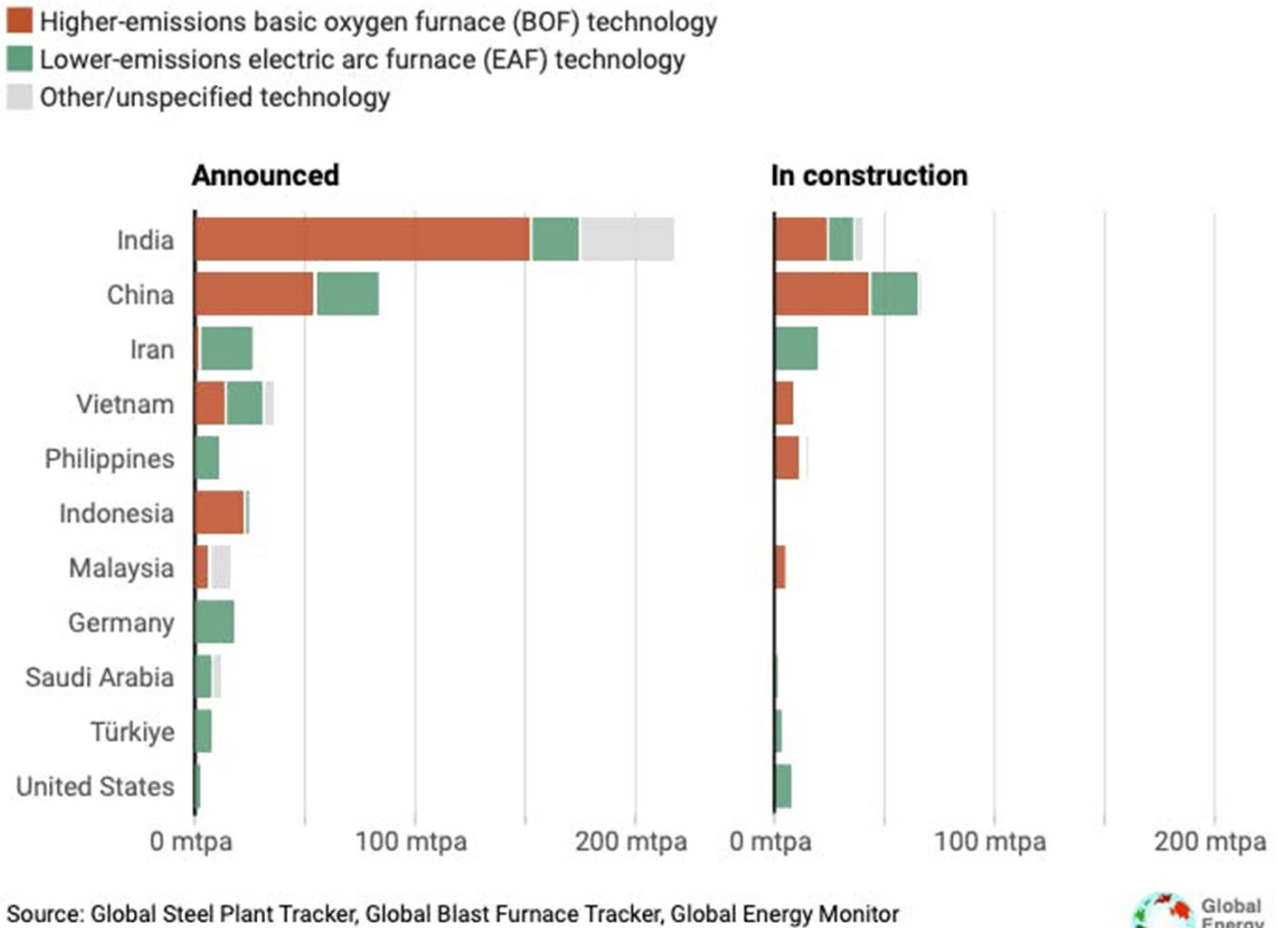
During the first six months of 2024, Chinese provincial governments permitted 7.1mtpa of steel-making capacity, all of which were EAFs marking a “turning point” for the country’s steel industry, CREA notes.

Xinyi Shen, researcher at CREA and the report’s lead author, tells Carbon Brief:

“China’s EAF steelmaking has been developing rather slowly in the past few decades, mainly due to the constraint of scrap supply. However, as China’s steel demand reaches its peak and more scrap becomes available, a major opportunity arises to reduce emissions in the next 10 years. The government has accelerated plans to expand the national ETS to include the steel sector by the second half of 2024.

India has more steel capacity in development, but China currently building more

Steel capacity in development by technology type and status, million tonnes per year (mtpa)



Source: Global Steel Plant Tracker, Global Blast Furnace Tracker, Global Energy Monitor



Announced and in construction steel capacity, including BOF capacity (red), EAF (green) and other or unspecified technologies (grey). Source: GEM.

By implementing carbon pricing on carbon-intensive products, EAF steelmaking would become more economically competitive and continue the growth.”

Despite India now overtaking China in terms of announced steel-making capacity, China remains the biggest developer of EAF capacity overall, GEM’s report states. And while India has the most steel in development, 84 per cent has not moved into construction.

As such, there is still an opportunity for India’s plans to change, with the percentage of BOFs to EAFs less set.

Chris Bataille, adjunct research fellow at the Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy and lead author at the global Net Zero Steel project tells Carbon Brief:

“India’s core demand for steel is set to increase from 125mtpa to ~450mtpa by 2050, especially to meet key building and infrastructure needs. Our modelling suggests EAFs consistently rise from ~35 to 150mtpa by 2050. So the +250mtpa BF-BOFs is just barely feasible, but only over ~25 years and with some exports of BF-BOF steel.

“The difference will be between a world where strong climate policy

succeeds and fails. If it fails and coal-based BF-BOFs are built, then the +258mtpa looks barely feasible. If it succeeds, India is short on the necessary gas and especially clean electricity to power this amount of steel production. While the country does build a lot of EAFs, it builds up to 250mtpa of clean iron making over time, making the short-term shortfall with clean HBI iron imports.”

This story was published with permission from Carbon Brief.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/significant-shift-away-from-coal-as-most-new-steelmaking-is-now-electric/>)

BPCL Launches Innovative Drone Reforestation Project to Revitalize Nashik's Lands



The Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), a leading Maharatna PSU, proudly announces a transformative reforestation initiative in the Nashik District of Maharashtra.

This project, conducted in collaboration with the Forest Department - Nashik, aims to restore degraded lands using advanced drone technology and seedball deployment.

BPCL's reforestation project will utilize 200,000 seedballs distributed by drones, targeting remote and inaccessible areas. This innovative approach addresses the critical issues of rapid deforestation and land degradation, which have significantly impacted the region's biodiversity, climate resilience, and community well-being.

"At BPCL, we believe in the power of innovation and community. Our drone-based reforestation project in Nashik is a transformative step towards restoring nature and empowering local communities. By leveraging advanced technology and involving local residents, we aim to create a sustainable environment that benefits both the ecosystem and


the people. Together, we can build a greener and healthier future." said Shri Biju Gopinath, Executive Director Pipelines, BPCL.

The project encompasses comprehensive planning, including site selection using GIS mapping, community engagement, seedball production, and drone deployment. The target areas cover 100 hectares across three forest ranges in Nashik District: Sinnar Nashik Range, Hivre Billage, and Ganga Mahalungi Village.

The main objectives are to restore the environment by planting 200,000 seedballs to rejuvenate deforested land, enhance local biodiversity, and promote ecosystem health. Tree species to be planted include *Millettia Pinnata* (Karanja), *Azadirachta indica* (Neem), *Tectona grandis* (Sagwan), *Dalbergia Sissoo* (Indian Rosewood), *Acacia Catechu* (Khair), *Syzygium Cumini* (Black Plum), and *Mangifera Indica* (Mango). Additionally, the project aims to involve local communities in seedball production and land management, fostering environmental awareness, and creating economic opportunities. It will also utilize seedcopter drones for efficient seedball deployment and

employ advanced monitoring systems to track reforestation progress.

This initiative not only aims to restore the environment but also to empower local communities by providing training and employment opportunities in sustainable practices. By integrating scientific research, technological innovation, and community participation, BPCL aims to create a scalable and replicable reforestation model that can be implemented in other regions facing similar challenges. This pioneering reforestation initiative marks a significant step towards creating a greener and more sustainable environment in Nashik, enhancing both the ecosystem and the livelihoods of its residents.

BPCL through their CSR initiatives, have consistently contributed to various social causes, including education, environmental sustainability, health and sanitation, skill development, and community development. This reforestation project aligns with their core CSR focus on environmental sustainability, demonstrating the company's dedication to creating a positive and lasting impact on society. 



This marks the third straight year that India has grappled with severe heatwaves and scientists say global warming is making such heatwaves more intense, frequent and widespread.

Image: Andrea Kirkby, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

INDIAN HEATWAVE EXPOSES A COOLING CHALLENGE FOR FRESH FOOD

India's heatwave hits small vendors hardest as they cannot keep produce fresh and customers stay off the streets.

The withering heatwave hitting northern India has dealt a double blow to market fruit and vegetable sellers - more of their produce is spoilt, while buyers stay at home and ordering online.

Sahil, in his mid-30s, migrated to Delhi a decade ago and runs a roadside stall selling vegetables. This summer has "broken my back", he said.

Sahil buys vegetables every day from a nearby wholesale market, but

much of the produce is already in a bad shape. "The air is so hot, that the vegetables are drying up and changing their natural colour in just a couple of hours after being on display," he said. "And you can see for yourself, there are no customers."

Daytime temperatures have hovered above 40 degrees Celsius (104°F) since mid-May and officials say the heatwave has killed more than 100 people and 40,000 people have suffered heatstroke.

Sahil said his income had nearly halved in the past two months from around 15,000 Indian rupees (US\$180) a month to 8,000.

Mohammed Akhlaq, trying to keep his coconuts out of the sun at a market near Delhi, said business had never been so bad.

“In 40 years of life, I have never seen such a harsh summer,” said Akhlaq. He said he had lost between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of his produce to the heat in the last two months. Coupled with customers staying indoors and ordering online, Akhlaq also said his income had halved.

It is the third straight year that India has grappled with severe heatwaves and scientists say global warming is making such heatwaves more intense, frequent and widespread. The challenge for India is to ensure its food security and protect the livelihoods of people in the agricultural sector.

Lack of cold storage hits small farmers, vendors

While Indian fruit and vegetable production has reached record highs, a government study said supply chain cold storage infrastructure was at a “nascent stage” and as much as a quarter of fruit and vegetables were spoiled.



One by reducing crop output itself, as most crops don't do well in such extreme heat, and second, for perishable products like fruits, vegetables and dairy products, a lack of cold chains.

-ADITI MUKHERJI

Director, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Impact Action Platform

Extreme heat compounds the problem in two ways, said Aditi Mukherji, director of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Impact Action Platform of CGIAR, a global partnership of international organisations researching food security.

“One by reducing crop output itself, as most crops don't do well in such extreme heat, and second, for perishable products like fruits, vegetables and dairy products, a lack of cold chains,” Mukherji said.

The shortage of cold storage throughout the supply chain increases pressure to get produce to consumers quickly.

The impact is felt particularly by the roughly 5 million small vendors and hawkers in India who are mostly

unable to keep produce cool and have to work in the extreme heat.

About 80 per cent of Delhi street vendors said they had seen fewer customers, and half said their income had declined due to the heat, according to a survey published this month by Greenpeace India and the National Hawkers Federation.

Cool solutions needed

The government is providing some US\$100 billion to build integrated cold storage infrastructure from farm to retail, but the scheme is focused on building big storage capacity.

In a country where most of the supply is met by small vendors and hawkers, experts say there is a lack of small-scale cold chain solutions focused on helping them.

“Unfortunately, no ready-made solution exists for protecting small farmers or vendors,” Mukherji said.

However, there are some promising small-scale refrigeration innovations on the market.

Vikash Jha, a graduate of the Indian Institute of Technology in Mumbai, has invented a low-cost small cooler that works without electricity or gas, but uses water and ventilation to keep the contents between 10°C and 21°C, increasing the shelf life of foods. Jha said he had sold 1,500 units across India.

“Government policies are promoting large scale cold storage that are capital and energy intensive, increasing the burden on India's already high climate heating emissions,” Jha said, adding solutions were needed to help small farmers and vendors.

Fruit-seller Akhlaq said he did not know what he could do to protect his business. “If this is how it is going to be, then I fear for the future of my children,” he said. “Someone should help us.” 🌱

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/indian-heatwave-exposes-a-cooling-challenge-for-fresh-food/>)

It is the third straight year that India has grappled with severe heatwaves and scientists say global warming is making such heatwaves more intense, frequent and widespread. The challenge for India is to ensure its food security and protect the livelihoods of people in the agricultural sector.



Developed countries failed to hit the US\$100 billion goal by 2020, raising just US\$83.3 billion that year. This was poorly received by developing country governments, who view this money as essential to meet their climate targets under the Paris Agreement.
Image: Mídia NINJA, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

RICH COUNTRIES MET US\$100 BILLION CLIMATE-FINANCE GOAL BY 'RELABELLING EXISTING AID'

Billions of dollars of foreign aid have been reclassified as 'climate finance', thereby helping rich countries to meet a long-overdue target, according to new analysis by **Josh Gabbatiss**, Carbon Brief

Newly released figures suggest that developed nations achieved their goal of raising US\$100 billion in climate aid for developing countries in 2022 – two years after the deadline.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) says these countries raised US\$115.9 billion for climate-related projects, following a record surge in spending. However, analysis conducted by the Center for Global Development (CGD) and shared with Carbon Brief suggests that around US\$27 billion of the US\$94.2 billion annual increase in public climate funds in 2022, compared to figures two decades ago, came from existing development aid.

Specifically, the CGD identified at least US\$6.5 billion of climate aid within the record 2022 increase that was diverted from other bilateral development aid programmes. This is despite the widespread expectation that wealthy countries should provide climate finance that is “new and additional”. Such accounting changes could allow some developed countries to reach their climate targets, even while slashing their wider aid budgets.

Meanwhile, wealthy nations are under pressure to rapidly increase climate spending in the global south. At COP29 this year, all parties must agree on a new climate target that will help raise the trillions of dollars these nations say they need to address climate change.

‘Largest increase’

The US\$100 billion target was set in 2009 at COP15 in Copenhagen to help developing countries cut their emissions and protect themselves from climate change.

A group of “developed” countries, including many European nations, the US, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, agreed to “mobilise” this amount by 2020 and then each

year through to 2025. This money largely comes from countries’ foreign-aid budgets, which finance climate-related development projects. A smaller proportion is also raised from the private sector.

Crucially, countries have determined during UN climate negotiations that climate finance should be “new and additional”. This is widely interpreted as meaning the US\$100 billion objective should all be supplied on top of existing aid, although such an interpretation has sometimes been contested by developed countries.

Developed countries failed to hit the US\$100 billion goal by 2020, raising just US\$83.3 billion that year. This was poorly received by developing country governments, who view this money as essential to meet their climate targets under the Paris Agreement.

Last year, the OECD, which tracks international climate finance, announced that developed countries had “likely” met the target in 2022 –



The intention was to provide ‘new and additional’ finance and I think the very lowest bar for that is that the face value of [total] finance would have gone up US\$100 billion.

– IAN MITCHELL

Center for Global Development,
Senior Policy Fellow

two years late. It did not release the data underpinning this estimate at the time.

The OECD has now published a report confirming that the US\$100 billion goal was met. In fact, the organisation says climate finance underwent its “largest year-on-year increase observed to date” in 2022 – reaching US\$115.9 billion. This US\$26.3 billion increase can be seen in the chart below.

This uptick in climate finance was driven by record increases in spending both bilaterally – directly from country-to-country – and via multilateral development banks and funds.

There was also an unprecedented US\$7.5 billion increase in private finance, which was mobilised by developed country investment. This comes after years of private investment remaining essentially unchanged each year.

The OECD notes that the “lion’s share” of public climate finance was provided as loans – around 69 per cent of the total. This has raised concerns, given the number of global south countries that are already struggling with debt.

‘New and additional’

Countries are set to decide on a new climate-finance goal – known as the “new collective quantified goal” – at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, later this year. This target is expected to go beyond the US\$100 billion goal and be based on an assessment of countries’ real-world needs.

Meanwhile, some wealthy countries have announced major cuts to their foreign-aid budgets. Many nations have also decided to channel large amounts of aid to Ukraine, following Russia’s invasion in 2022, while also diverting funds to accommodate refugees on their own soil.

All of this could squeeze the wider development-aid budget and, in theory, make achieving climate finance goals more challenging.

Some countries, including the UK, have opted to meet their climate finance targets by “re-directing” or “relabeling” existing funds as “climate finance”, while failing to commit new money in sufficient volumes.

According to analysis by the CGD – released one week ahead of the OECD’s assessment – this is largely what enabled developed countries to meet the US\$100 billion target in 2022.

It concluded that, when considering public climate finance, the goal was “partly achieved by adding climate objectives to existing development finance flows”. (The CGD analysis did not attempt to estimate the increase in private finance, assuming it would remain stable as it had in previous years.) Applying the CGD analysis to the public por-

tion of the OECD’s US\$115.9 billion climate finance figure – which amounted to US\$94.2 billion – shows that around US\$27 billion comes from existing development aid.

This is based on overall aid only increasing US\$67.2 billion between 2009 and 2022, meaning the remaining increase in climate aid must have come from existing sources.

Ian Mitchell, the CGD senior policy fellow who led the analysis, tells Carbon Brief:

“The intention was to provide ‘new and additional’ finance and I think the very lowest bar for that is that the face value of [total] finance would have gone up US\$100 billion.”

As the chart below shows, while the overall aid budget grew in 2022, due partly to new aid for Ukraine and more spending on housing refu-

gees, existing bilateral development aid fell in 2022.

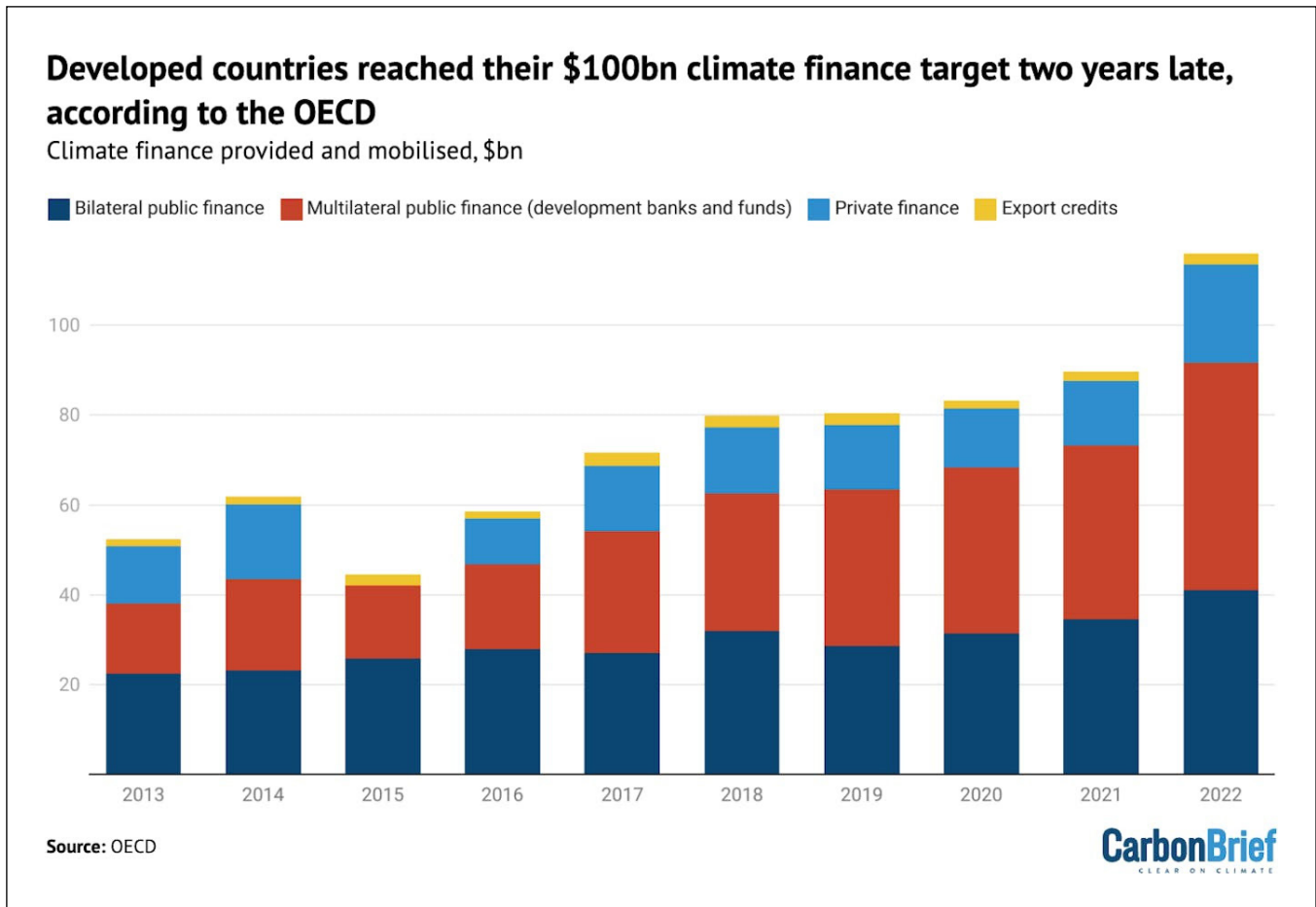
Given this, the CGD says the US\$6.5 billion increase in climate finance that year can definitely be attributed to countries’ existing foreign-aid budgets, rather than an increase in spending.

Diverting funds

Mitchell highlights the key issue with hitting climate finance targets without committing enough new resources:

“The problem with meeting that US\$100 billion from existing resources is that it’s either rebadging it, which is not providing climate finance, or it’s diverting it from other development objectives...reducing spend on health or education.”

However, Joe Thwaites, senior international climate finance

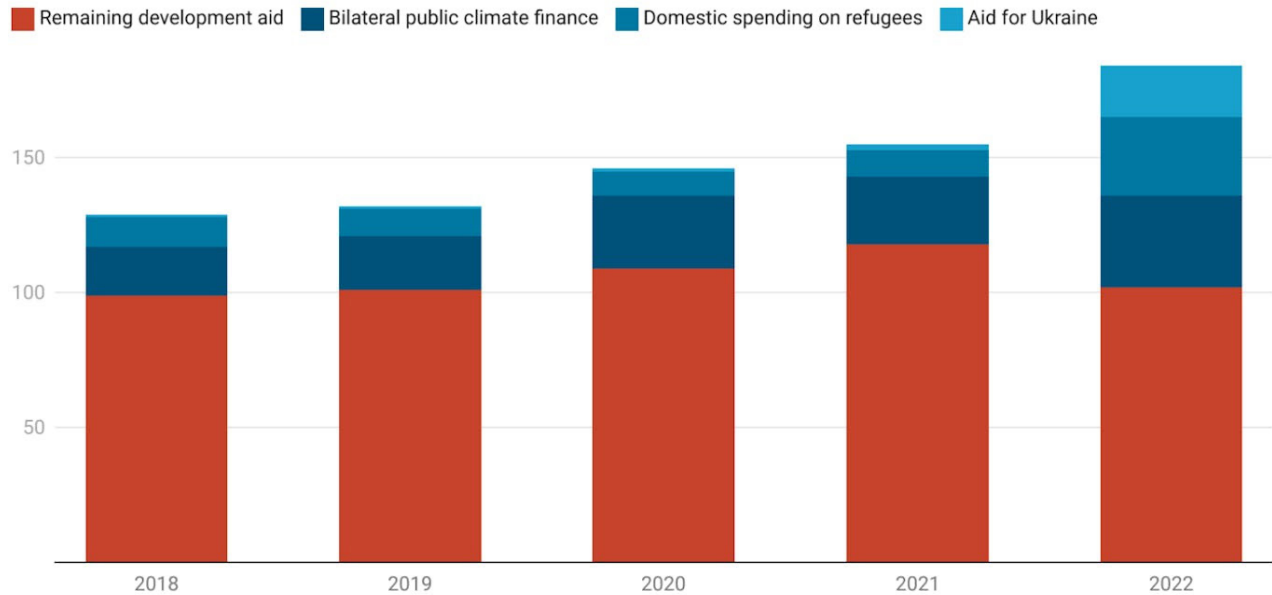


Climate finance, \$bn, provided and mobilised by developed countries between 2013-2022. Private finance data for 2015 is not available.

Source: OECD. Chart: Carbon Brief.

'Relabelling' bilateral funds as climate finance contributed to a drop in existing development aid in 2022

Development aid spending, \$bn, on different issues



Source: CGD

CarbonBrief
CLEAR ON CLIMATE

Bilateral development aid spending by developed countries, with specific issues indicated in shades of blue and everything else in red. This chart is based on CGD figures, meaning the bilateral public climate finance targets do not align precisely with the official OECD figures.

Source: CGD. Chart: Carbon Brief.

advocate at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), tells Carbon Brief that not all diversions are “bad diversions”.

A report by the thinktank ODI last year found that much of the funding being reclassified came from sectors such as energy and transport. Thwaites points out that this could mean cutting back on support for fossil fuels and targeting clean energy instead:

“Given the massive development and climate needs, we need to be growing the overall international public-finance pie. But shifting finance from one area to another isn’t necessarily a bad thing, it all depends what it’s being taken from and going to.”

More broadly, Harjeet Singh, global engagement director at the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative,

Some countries, including the UK, have opted to meet their climate finance targets by “redirecting” or “relabelling” existing funds as “climate finance”, while failing to commit new money in sufficient volumes.

tells Carbon Brief that developed countries are taking advantage of “creative accounting” and “fiscal loopholes” to meet their targets.

He warns that, as nations prepare to negotiate a new climate finance target at COP29, there is a need for a clear definition of what counts as “climate finance” to avoid such behaviour:

“The absence of a unified definition of climate finance is not a mere oversight; it mirrors historical patterns of power...Developed countries have aimed to keep their financial responsibilities ambiguous.”

This story was published with permission from Carbon Brief.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/rich-countries-met-us100-billion-climate-finance-goal-by-relabelling-existing-aid/>)



Large-scale protests erupted in France on 17 November 2018 in the wake of the government's decision to raise fuel prices and increase fuel taxes.
Image: Daniel Briot / Flickr, CC0 1.0

HOW EUROPE CAN GET THE GREEN DEAL DONE

If the EU is to achieve its 2030 and 2050 climate goals, it must act now to ensure that it can weather the inevitable political headwinds.

A new green social contract and industrial policy can make all the difference, states **Simone Tagliapietra**

Since the European Green Deal was introduced in 2019, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has touted it as the European Union's new economic-growth agenda. After all,

while the strategy's core objective is climate-related – to reduce the EU's greenhouse-gas emissions to net-zero by 2050 – it aims to achieve that by modernizing the economy and fostering innovation. But not everyone is convinced.

In recent months, European drivers have complained about the EU's looming ban on the production and sale of cars with internal combustion engines, households have resisted plans to phase out gas boilers, and farmers have revolted

against environmental regulations they view as overbearing.

With the approach of next month's European Parliament elections, far-right parties are jostling to establish themselves as the official standard-bearers of this growing discontent and preparing to use any power they win to sabotage the green agenda.

The protesters make some legitimate points. The radical transformation that the European Green Deal entails raises difficult questions about who should bear the costs of climate action, both within and among countries.

If those costs end up falling disproportionately on ordinary workers – let alone the poorest and most vulnerable communities – the transformation will exacerbate inequality, with potentially serious social and political knock-on effects. Fortunately, properly designed climate policies can avert that outcome and actually lead to greater social equality.

The European Green Deal has accounted for climate-justice considerations since the beginning. Advocates always knew that they would need to secure the political support of coal-intensive Poland, and they had not forgotten the “yellow vest” revolt that erupted in France in 2018, after President Emmanuel Macron attempted to introduce a carbon tax in road transport.

It is no coincidence that the first flagship initiative under the European Green Deal was the Just Transition Fund, which will dedicate €20 billion (US\$21.6 billion) in 2021–27 to support the “economic diversification and reconversion” of the territories expected to be the most negatively affected by the green transition.

Nor is it a coincidence that, while creating the first ever carbon market for buildings and road transport, the European Commission established the Social Climate Fund, which is

expected to mobilise at least €86.7 billion between 2026 and 2032 to compensate the most vulnerable groups for higher energy prices.

These policy initiatives reflect the advice one would find in the economic literature on carbon dividends. But they will prove insufficient to offset the profound distributional effects of climate policy, particularly as decarbonization accelerates and includes sectors that directly affect ordinary people's daily lives, such as buildings and transport. That is why Europe also needs a new green social contract, which focuses primarily on these sectors.

To this end, the EU should streamline and simplify existing funding instruments to deliver even more decisive support for the transformation of coal and carbon-intensive regions.

It should also take steps to ensure that EU countries make better, more targeted use of carbon-market revenues to support the uptake of green alternatives, from electric vehicles to home heating systems.

The protesters make some legitimate points. The radical transformation that the European Green Deal entails raises difficult questions about who should bear the costs of climate action, both within and among countries.


And it should push for a “Rural Green Deal” that supports small farmers while requiring the agri-food industry to transform its systems. While such EU-level action would not eliminate the distributional consequences of climate policy, it would help significantly.

The EU must also turn decarbonisation into a real economic opportunity by developing a solid green industrial policy. This will require, first and foremost, revitalizing the “boring” EU single-market agenda, in order to leverage the bloc's greatest asset – a huge shared market for goods, financial services, energy, workers, and ideas – to incentivise new investments in clean tech.

Interventions in specific technology areas will also be needed. Rather than mimic the broad-based US Inflation Reduction Act, the EU should make the most of its limited resources by delivering targeted support in areas where it already has a solid comparative advantage on which to build.

While some incumbent industries might need support as they decarbonise, supporting breakthrough innovations should be the primary goal.

The European Green Deal has come a long way since it was conceived five years ago. But if the EU is to achieve its 2030 climate goals and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, it must act now to ensure that it can weather the inevitable political headwinds.

A new green social contract and industrial policy can make all the difference. 

Simone Tagliapietra, a senior fellow at the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, is an adjunct professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Bologna.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/how-europe-can-get-the-green-deal-done/>)



Farmers and their families visit a wheat field during a training on wheat production in Bihar, India.

Image: Bioversity International, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

RISING TEMPERATURES THREATEN INDIA'S WHEAT PRODUCTION

Yields of the country's second most important food staple have declined significantly in the past two years, says **Biswajit Dhar**

Decline in wheat production over the past two seasons because of rising temperatures has reduced domestic availability.

India is facing a third year of falling wheat production. The culprit? Heat. Yields of the country's second most important food staple have declined significantly in the past two years.

In 2022, excessive temperatures in March hit wheat production,

lowering output by almost 4 million tonnes below the government's forecast of 110 million tonnes.

Studies show that the impact of "heat stress" was more evident in key wheat growing states of north India where wheat productivity declined significantly during the 2021–2022 rabi or winter planting season (sowing in mid-November and harvesting in April–May).

In Punjab, for instance, the decline was 13.5 per cent compared

to the previous year. Scientists have estimated that for every 1 degree Celsius increase in temperature wheat production reduces by 4–5 million tonnes.

Worryingly, the adverse effect of "heat stress" is threatening to reverse the substantial improvements in wheat production India experienced between 2014–2015 and 2020–2021 when output increased from 86 million tonnes to 110 million tonnes.

Production target missed

In 2023, the official target for wheat output of 113 million tonnes was again down by almost 3 million tonnes. This year, the government expects wheat output to be 110 million tonnes again, but the actual level will not be known for several months. However, these figures are disputed by the main industry body, the Roller Flour Millers' Federation of India.

It says wheat output levels were lower than those projected by the government by at least 10–14 per cent. This year, the federation expects wheat production to be around 105 million tonnes, 8 per cent lower than government projections, although this would be about 3 per cent higher than the federation's estimates of the previous year's output.

Lending credence to the estimates of the industry was the consistently lower-than-expected level of wheat procurement by the government.

During the 2022–2023 rabi marketing season, procurement by government agencies was 18.7 million tonnes as against the government target of 44.4 million tonnes, a 60 per cent shortfall.

The following year, the government set a considerably lower procurement target of 34.2 million tonnes, but actual procurement was 26.1 million tonnes, almost a quarter lower. Given the experiences of the past two rabi marketing seasons, the government lowered the wheat procurement target for the current season further to 30–32 million tonnes. However, as in the past two seasons, actual procurement is expected to remain below the target.

Latest estimates indicate that wheat procurement would be marginally higher than that of the previous year.

The decline in production over the past two seasons has reduced domestic availability of wheat, thus jeopardising the government's targets on two fronts.

First, by lowering publicly held stocks, namely buffer stocks, critical for providing subsidised food grains to the poor as well as for conducting open market operations necessary for keeping domestic wheat prices in check. Secondly, lower output has affected the government's aspirations for transforming India into an agriculture export hub.

Export ban

These aspirations were fuelled during 2021–2022, when India emerged as one of the major exporters of wheat, exporting a record level of over 7.2 million tonnes of the commodity.

But with wheat output declining in 2022 after increasing continuously for six years, between 2015–2016 and 2020–2021, the government banned wheat exports in order to “manage the overall food security of the country and control the increasing prices of foodgrains”.

However, even while imposing the export ban, the government decided to “continue with deals which are done directly with other governments” resulting in export of more than 4.6 million tonnes during 2022–2023. But with wheat production declining during the year, continued wheat exports made its impact felt on the domestic food reserves.

Buffer stock of wheat maintained by the Food Corporation of India (FCI), had dropped to 29.9 million tonnes on June 1, 2024, almost 4.7 per cent lower than the 31.4 million tonnes a year ago.

The current buffer stock level is at a 16-year low, slightly higher than the previous lowest wheat stock that was at 24.1 million tonnes on June 1, 2008. Though the government claims that the existing level of buffer stock was adequate for meeting any exigencies, there are indications that it is less certain than it professes.

Imports increase

That supply constraints have become an area of concern from the

government stems from the fact that India has begun importing substantial quantities of wheat, the first time since 2017–2018.

Imports began in June 2023 and have increased consistently since. Until April this year, total imports have been almost 115,000 tonnes.

There is no doubt that India would find it difficult to enhance the production of wheat given the significant challenges posed by consistent increase in temperatures in the immediate pre-harvest phase.

Faced with similar imperatives to ramp up wheat production in the mid-1960s, the then government had adopted the green revolution with strong research support that allowed the realisation of the objective of food self-sufficiency.

The National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) is expected to play a similar role having been tasked with the responsibility of transforming Indian agriculture into an ecologically sustainable climate resilient production system.

In addition, National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture aims at “strategic research on adaptation and mitigation, demonstration of technologies on farmers' fields and creating awareness among farmers and other stakeholders to minimise the climatic change impacts on agriculture”. However, fiscal support for agricultural research has remained inadequate as increases in budgetary allocations have often not been increased in real terms, which shows a lack of political commitment in this vital area.

This situation needs to change quickly to prevent a catastrophic decline in wheat production. □

Biswajit Dhar is distinguished professor at the Council for Social Development in New Delhi.

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(SOURCE: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/rising-temperatures-threaten-indias-wheat-production/>)



Singapore_cityscape_degrowthSingapore's cityscape. The country's prime minister-in-waiting Lawrence Wong said his government would "make no apology for pursuing growth" when he unveiled the country's latest budget in February. Image: Leslie Hui/Flickr

SOUTHEAST ASIA'S GROWTH STRATEGIES

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL, 'DEGROWTH' OR A THIRD WAY?

For Southeast Asia, it need not be a binary choice between maintaining status quo or pushing for 'degrowth'. Reducing emissions without neglecting job growth imposes lower social costs, and can be a pathway to take for the region, writes **Vinod Thomas**

If the global economy could chart an ecologically sustainable path, all growth-aspiring countries would benefit. The strongest reason is that low-carbon growth will slow the dangerous pace of climate change. The system, however, remains firmly in pursuit of short-term GDP growth—even as it is proving to be a recipe for ecological catastrophe.

The crucial question is which of the three growth strategies countries will adopt. The first, business-as-usual mode, calls on countries to press for maximum short-term GDP growth, even as it inflicts a high environmental cost.

Second, countries can follow an alternative strategy that takes their eyes off growth measured in terms of GDP, even if this slows or reverses

growth, which benefits the environment but likely at the expense of employment creation, at least in the short-term. A third approach adopts adequate regulations that motivate or require businesses to pursue sustainable growth, such as by using non-polluting fuels.

These three growth approaches translate into three pathways of industrial production. In the business-as-usual approach, industry generates vast health hazards from air and water pollution, or high social damage from pollution with little investment in clean-up.

The second strategy would regulate if not cut back industrial production, delivering a salutary impact on the environment and health but also shedding jobs. The third way sets requirements for reducing the use of polluting fuels or increasing use of pollution control equipment, or both – or better still, putting a high enough tax or restriction on emissions which financially motivates industry to cut effluents.

The second and third strategies both reduce environmental damage, but the third strategy, with its focus on job growth, imposes lower social cost than the second strategy. The third approach also entails risk-taking and long-term commitment, and tends to be hindered by political short-sightedness.

Unfortunately, the way countries compute growth makes no distinction on how the growth is generated, and Southeast Asia is no exception to this fatal error. GDP growth forecasts for 2024 are in the range of 5–6 per cent for Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Philippines, 4–5 per cent for Indonesia and Malaysia, 3–4 per cent for Laos, Thailand and Brunei, and 2–3 per cent for Singapore.

These projections do not deduct the negative impacts of fossil fuels, and actions to clean up pollution or repair environmental damage are only counted as positives in GDP, omitting the damage that requires

remedy. Conventional measurement of output, indeed, perpetuates policies along the lines of the business-as-usual first scenario above. Southeast Asia’s participation makes the region a part of the climate problem, rather than the solution.

GDP growth targets send the wrong signal, distorting the design of policies that seek to improve people’s lives. UNDP’s Human Development Index (HDI), computed and disseminated as part of the annual Human Development Report (HDR), is a composite indicator with income, education and health components.

The HDI shows how GDP gives only a partial picture. The HDRs also display country rankings based on gross national income (GNI), a modification of GDP that more accurately represents the income received by a country’s residents, juxtaposed with rankings based on HDI scores. Countries that rank better on the GNI per capita chart than the HDI chart have done better in raising output than in improving lives more generally.

For 2022, among 193 countries, Malaysia ranked 56th in gross national income (GNI) but 63rd in HDI; and Thailand was 76th on the GNI chart but did better in HDI (66th) (Figure 1). Combining education and health indicators with GNI improves Thailand’s ranking and lowers Malaysia’s.

The HDI score can also be adjusted for climate impacts by deducting more points in countries that register more negative “planetary impacts”. Malaysia slips 11 places, and Thailand improves 14 places on the planetary index (PHDI); high-income countries register more dramatic changes. Norway is ranked 8th on GNI and improves to 2nd on HDI, then drops 12 spots on the PHDI league table. Singapore, ranked 3rd for GNI and 9th for HDI, slips 38 places to 47th on PHDI.

With the universal predicament of unprecedented heat waves and catastrophic events, the case for slowing, if not arresting or reversing, growth is getting traction, and the clash with fossil fuel driven growth has heightened. “Degrowth” refers to the view that the pursuit of endless growth as measured by GDP conflicts with the limits of planetary boundaries.

The framing varies, from “doughnut economics” to “zero growth,” but these ideas commonly call into question the unbridled

environmental regulations and a low carbon growth path, which yield vast advantages. For Southeast Asia, this would mean a massive commitment to green investment and a shift of national development targets from narrow GDP growth rates to measures that include social outcomes and environmental damages.

Business as usual versus degrowth in Southeast Asia presents an all-or-nothing choice: either a recipe for a climate catastrophe or a political non-starter. Before the window closes totally on a third way,

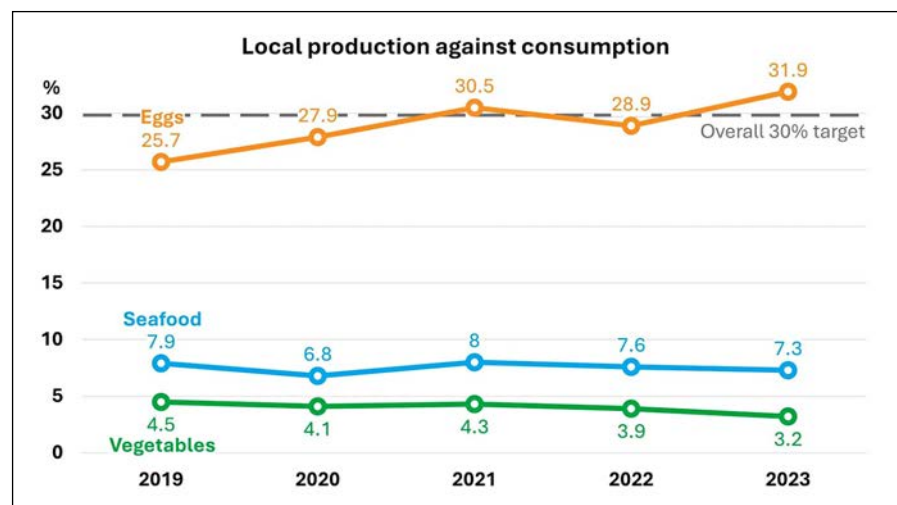


Figure 1. Selected countries ranked by GNI per capita, HDI and Planetary HDI (2023).

Source: Author’s compilations from Human Development Report 2023-24.

pursuit of growth, especially the ways climate change inflicts costs on economies and societies. Growth remains a powerful anti-poverty tool, but runaway climate change is imposing a huge macroeconomic cost that threatens to arrest growth.

If business as usual continues, even with some tinkering on the margin, global warming will make working conditions impossible, render parts of the planet uninhabitable, and reverse growth and poverty reduction. Consequently, countries might end up with the second, no-growth approach.

However, rather than continuing with business as usual or involuntarily adopting degrowth strategies, countries should shift to tough

countries of the region should revise their growth aspirations, replace the quantity of growth with quality of growth, and ensure slow-carbon green growth paths. □

Vinod Thomas is currently Visiting Senior Fellow at the ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, and previously Visiting Professor at National University of Singapore. He is a Distinguished Fellow in Development Management at the Asian Institute of Management, Manila, and a member of the advisory panel on climate change at CSEP, New Delhi.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/southeast-asias-growth-strategies-business-as-usual-degrowth-or-a-third-way/>)



Habitat destruction is accelerating species decline and extinction.
Image: Adam, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

HABITAT DESTRUCTION HURTING MORE THAN CLIMATE CHANGE

Habitat destruction and modification harms biodiversity, and compounds the impacts of climate change and other threats to wildlife, writes **Euan Ritchie**

Earlier this year the Great Barrier Reef experienced its worst coral bleaching event on record. It's been described as "like a bushfire underwater" and the reef looking like "it has been carpet bombed".

Understandably, much of the discussion surrounding the event has focused on how such coral bleaching events are becoming more severe and frequent under climate change.

But there's another threat that is contributing to the rapid disappearance of our extraordinarily colourful and diverse coral reefs, and other ecosystems, that doesn't receive nearly as much attention.

The destruction, fragmentation, and modification of habitat from the oceans to the land exceeds the overall impacts of climate change, for now, and is having a devastating effect on biodiversity.

Habitat destruction and climate change are of course closely linked and along with other threats — including the overexploitation of natural resources, killing or exclusion of wildlife such as large carnivores due to conflict with people and food production, invasive species, and pollution — they compound each other, driving what many experts believe to be Earth's sixth mass extinction event.

Destruction happening everywhere

Habitats — and the plants, animals, fungi and other life that call them home — are being destroyed across ecosystems, from the tropics to polar regions and in our cities and more regional areas.

In the case of coral reefs, the combined impacts of bleaching, smothering and pollution from agricultural erosion and sediment runoff, ocean acidification, and storms, mean that the once complex, multi-dimensional architecture of healthy, vibrant corals is often

greatly reduced, replaced by simpler, algae-dominated systems.

Many species that specialise and depend upon the corals must then either move elsewhere or perish.

In Northern Australia, centuries-old trees and their hollows — which threatened species such as Gouldian finches, black-footed tree-rats, and northern brushtail possums depend upon for shelter, food, and to raise their young — were recently controversially destroyed for defence housing at Binybara/Lee Point on the edge of Darwin.

On the outskirts of Melbourne, endangered southern-brown bandicoot habitat will also soon make way for further urban development.

But habitats do not always need to be physically destroyed for species to be endangered. Greatly diminishing their quality can still have a profound impact on species.

Tasmania's endangered Maugean skate is such a species.

First discovered in Bathurst Harbour in 1988, this skate is now thought to only survive in Macquarie Harbour. Deteriorating aquatic conditions due to oxygen depletion caused by the salmon farming industry, the production of hydroelectricity that alters stream flows, and rising temperatures due to climate change, are all thought to

be responsible. The skate is now on the brink of extinction.

The support our species need

If we are to conserve biodiversity and meet both global targets and federal government ambitions to be "Nature Positive" and have no new extinctions, the biodiversity that exists in both disturbed and less disturbed areas, and on and off formal nature reserves, would benefit from better recognition and support.

Habitat destruction is accelerating species decline and extinctions.

Tree hollows can take more than 100 years to form, but can be cut down in minutes destroying what was once a home for a bird, mammal, reptile or invertebrate.

This can have knock-on effects through ecosystems due to species interactions. For example, bandicoots and other mammals are known to dig and turn over large amounts of soil as they search for food, and in doing so benefit soil health, the spread of fungi, and plant germination and growth.

When these links are severed, whole ecosystems can begin unravelling and ultimately, collapse.

Australia is a global deforestation hotspot, having cleared roughly 50 percent of its forests and leaving much of the remainder highly degraded.

One MCG destroyed every 90 seconds

An area equivalent to global sporting icon, the 20,000 square metre Melbourne Cricket Ground, has been estimated to be destroyed roughly every 90 seconds in Australia — giving a picture of just how confronting the scale of the issue is.

Habitat destruction and modification, and associated biodiversity decline and extinctions, are cited as major reasons in the extensive Samuel review as to why Australia's Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act is failing.

Conservation efforts are starting from a long way behind, hence we can ill afford to keep destroying habitats.

The homes of swift parrots, greater gliders, koalas, Leadbeater's possums, and many other native species are continuing to be destroyed, despite these species being listed as threatened. And, with increasing pressure to further develop extensive, biodiversity-rich but relatively less modified areas, such as northern Australia, for livestock grazing, cotton and gas production, laws are needed that better conserve wildlife, areas of significant habitat and ecosystems, and that promote genuinely sustainable development.

Currently, substantial land clearing and water extraction is

A drive along the Hume Highway, between Melbourne and Sydney provides a perfect example.

In many paddocks, cleared for cropping and livestock production, stand solitary large eucalypt trees, once part of extensive woodlands that extended for many hundreds of kilometres.

A keen eye will reveal that in most cases there are no young trees to take the place of the larger, older trees, so once they die, there will be nothing to replace them.

This ecological phenomenon is known as extinction debt, and is a common issue facing many long-

'no go zones' for development, and more sophisticated approaches for food production, housing construction, and infrastructure projects must be better supported.

Death by a thousand cuts

Importantly, death by a thousand cuts is not just an issue of rural areas either. As human populations continue to increase and many move to cities seeking employment opportunities, urbanisation is also continuing at great pace, and in many cities, this is leading to a reduction, not increase in tree cover and areas of green space. This is despite many cities being critical strongholds for wildlife, including threatened species. Despite this dire situation, a great opportunity still exists.

If governments and policymakers truly implement a Nature Positive agenda, the benefits across society and for nature could be profound.

Australia is exceptionally well-placed in this regard, having a wealth of climate, environmental and ecological experts, and a population that is known to want governments to increase their efforts to conserve biodiversity.

Investing in environmental protection and restoration — and viewing this as a public good — will protect cultural values, drive job creation and economic growth, and ultimately, ensure we can still live in a world rich in biodiversity with all its myriad benefits. 🌱

Professor Euan Ritchie is a professor of wildlife ecology and conservation at Deakin University. His research aims to better understand species and their interactions, as well as ecosystem dynamics. This information is vital for informing more effective environmental policy, and conservation and management of biodiversity.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/habitat-destruction-hurting-more-than-climate-change/>)

Conservation efforts are starting from a long way behind, hence we can ill afford to keep destroying habitats. Instead, restoration efforts need to be ramped up, some areas declared 'no go zones' for development, and more sophisticated approaches for food production, housing construction, and infrastructure projects must be better supported.

occurring without proper oversight and assessment of perceived and actual environmental impacts.

Just as experts have called for a climate trigger in the EPBC Act to account for the impacts of proposed developments on rising emissions and climate change, law reform is needed that better recognises the value and importance of habitats, on land and in marine and freshwater systems.

The damage is already done

In many regions, much of the damage has already been done and yet the consequences are yet to be fully realised.

lived species that can persist for decades or in some cases even centuries without reproduction, but once they're gone, habitats and ecosystems may be irreversibly changed.

In the case of large paddock trees, or narrow strips of remnant vegetation that line country roads, these are the last remaining homes for arboreal mammals, microbats, reptiles, birds and other wildlife in highly fragmented landscapes.

Conservation efforts are starting from a long way behind, hence we can ill afford to keep destroying habitats. Instead, restoration efforts need to be ramped up, some areas declared

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