

CSR TODAY

RNI NO. MAHENG/2013/48866 ■ VOLUME 13 ■ ISSUE 06 ■ JANUARY 2026 ■ PRICE ₹100 ■ TOTAL PAGES: 52

CALI FUND

AIMING TO RAISE BILLIONS FOR
NATURE RECEIVES FIRST
DONATION – OF JUST \$1,000



CSR NATURE

Rare trees find
refuge in China's
temples

CSR OPINION

The trillion-dollar opportunity:
the smart economics of the
energy transition

CSR CONCERN

Life in the Sundarbans,
on the front line of
climate change



CSR TODAY

RATE CARD

ADVERTISEMENT SIZE	DIMENSIONS		1X RATE
	Non-Bleed	Bleed	
Inside Front Cover	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹1,00,000
Inside Back Cover	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹1,50,000
Outside Back Cover	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹2,00,000
Full Page (Colour)	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹75,000
Half Page - Vertical (Colour)	85 mm (w) x 250 mm(h)	-	₹30,000
Half Page - Horizontal (Colour)	180 mm (w) x 120 mm(h)	-	₹30,000
Quarter Page (Colour)	85 mm(w) x 120 mm(h)	-	₹25,000
Full Page (B/W)	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹40,000
Half Page - Vertical (B/W)	85 mm (w) x 250 mm(h)	-	
Half Page - Horizontal (B/W)	180 mm (w) x 120 mm(h)	-	₹25,000
Quarter Page (B/W)	85 mm(w) x 120 mm(h)	-	₹20,000

Bleed Advertisement charges: 20% extra for all sizes.



**INDIAN CENTRE
FOR CSR**

For More Information:

INDIAN CENTRE FOR CSR
106, Nirman Kendra, Dr. E Moses Road,
Mahalaxmi Estate, Mumbai-400 011
Ph: 9930139352

LI scheme drives robust growth in India's solar manufacturing sector but need policy coherence



Rajesh Tiwari
Publisher
rt@iccsr.org

According to the report, India's solar manufacturing capacity has expanded significantly since 2022, with current operational capacity reaching 120GW for modules and 29.3GW for cells (as of June 2025).

The report underscores that PLI non-compliance can lead to substantial financial losses for solar PLI awardees. According to JMK Research, across both tranches, solar PLI awardees can incur a monetary risk of up to Rs41,834 crore (~US\$4.80 billion) cumulatively, combining direct penalties (bank guarantees encashment), lost incentives, and unrealised revenue from sales.

Production Linked Incentive scheme drives robust growth in India's solar manufacturing sector, however, much of the progress will depend on sustained policy coherence, capital mobilisation and upstream integration.

A new report from JMK Research and the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) notes that while the solar PLI scheme has helped lay the groundwork for domestic PV manufacturing, it continues to face significant operational and policy challenges.

"The scheme channels government support towards measurable industrial output, helping build durable, long-term manufacturing capacity," says Vibhuti Garg, Director, IEEFA South Asia, and a contributing author of the report.

According to the report, India's solar manufacturing capacity has expanded significantly since 2022, with current operational capacity reaching 120GW for modules and 29.3GW for cells (as of June 2025).

Post-2022 capacity additions totalled 82GW in modules and 22.7GW in cells, representing a 216% and 344% increase, respectively, from 2022 levels.

Whatever limited polysilicon and wafer capacities exist in India have come solely through the PLI scheme — underscoring India's continued upstream dependence on imports — while about 36% of total cell and 24% of module capacity originate from PLI allocations.

"However, the PLI scheme for solar PV manufacturing faces implementation challenges like high capital intensity of upstream integration, inadequate incentives, inconsistencies in trade policy, import dependency, and global raw material price volatility," says Prabhakar Sharma, senior consultant, JMK Research, and one of the report's authors.

Policy asymmetries — such as unrestricted imports for polysilicon and wafers alongside module restrictions under the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) — and frequent ALMM revisions have created uncertainty for domestic manufacturers. Besides, the scheme's emphasis on fully integrated wafer-to-module facilities require steep upfront investments, while incentives cover only a small fraction of production costs.

"India's reliance on imported machinery, components, and Chinese technical expertise has further slowed capacity ramp-up, a situation worsened by visa restrictions and limited equipment availability," says Chirag H Tewani, senior research associate at JMK Research, and a co-author of the report.

The report underscores that PLI non-compliance can lead to substantial financial losses for solar PLI awardees. According to JMK Research, across both tranches, solar PLI awardees can incur a monetary risk of up to Rs41,834 crore (~US\$4.80 billion) cumulatively, combining direct penalties (bank guarantees encashment), lost incentives, and unrealised revenue from sales.

The scheme's trajectory hinges on comprehensive recalibration rather than timeline extensions alone.

"Future PLI iterations should focus on improving cost competitiveness, upstream integration and market resilience," says Aman Gupta, research associate, JMK Research, and an author of the report. 

Contents

CSR TODAY

JANUARY 2026 | VOL. 13 | ISSUE 06

PRINTER AND PUBLISHER: Rajesh Tiwari

EDITORIAL

Chief Consulting Editor: Kingshuk Nag

Consulting Editor: M Bose

Executive Editor: Devasia P. Devasia

INDIAN CENTRE FOR CSR

ADVISORY BOARD

Pankaj Pachauri, Ted McFarland,
Mag. Martin Neureiter, Chandir Gidwani,
Lou Altman, Kingshuk Nag, Toby Webb,
Anil Bajpai, Rajesh Tiwari, Satish Jha,
Jitendra Bhargava, Kapil Dev,
Dr. Kamal Kant Dwivedi, Suhel Seth,
Pradip Shetty, Sagar Adhikari

**PRODUCTION, CIRCULATION
AND LOGISTICS**

Harish Rathod

HEAD OFFICE

CSR Today

106, Nirman Kendra, Dr. E Moses Road,
Mahalaxmi Estate, Mumbai - 400 011

E mail: support@iccsr.org,

Website: www.iccsr.org

REGIONAL OFFICES

NEW DELHI

Regional Directors: V. Chopra,
Pratap Bhanu Singh

MUMBAI

Executive Vice President: Sangita Jha

Printed, Published and Edited by
Rajesh Tiwari on behalf of Indian Centre
For Corporate Social Responsibility.
106, Nirman Kendra, Dr. E Moses Road,
Mahalaxmi Estate, Mumai-400 001

Editor: Rajesh Tiwari

Disclaimer

The publisher, authors and contributors reserve their rights in regards to copyright of their work. No part of this work covered by the copyright may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means without the written consent. The publisher, contributors, editors and related parties are not responsible in any way for the actions or results taken by any person, organisation or any party on basis of reading information, stories or contributions in this publication, website or related product. Reasonable care is taken to ensure that CSR Today articles and other information on the web site are up-to-date and accurate as possible, as of the time of publication, but no responsibility can be taken by CSR Today for any errors or omissions contained herein.



32 | Cover Story
Cali Fund aiming to raise billions for nature receives first donation – of just \$1,000



CSR EXAMPLE

36 Kawasaki Heavy unveils Japan's biggest 'air carbon removal' pilot, plans megatonne system by 2030



CSR NATURE

38 Rare trees find refuge in China's temples



CSR OPINION

40 The trillion-dollar opportunity: the smart economics of the energy transition



CSR CONCERN

48 Life in the Sundarbans, on the front line of climate change

AND MORE...

REGULARS:

03 Publisher's note | **05** CSR News | **26** CSR India United |

30 News You Can Use

CSR NEWS

RBL Bank donates 400 bicycles to girl students in Bengaluru under its CSR Initiative UMEED



RBL Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks, through its CSR initiative – UMEED, has distributed 400 bicycles and school kits to girl students from underprivileged communities in Bengaluru. The initiative addresses one of the significant challenges contributing to school dropouts among girl students - the long distance between their homes and school.

The bicycle donation drive was held at Jawahar Bal Bhavan, Bengaluru, in the presence of N. A. Haris, MLA, Shanti Nagar Constituency, Dr. Priyadarshini Ishwar Sanikopp, ACP, Bengaluru, Pushpavathi R, Office Superintendent Bal Bhawan, Nagesh KR, Consultant, Bal Bhawan, and senior dignitaries from RBL Bank.

The UMEED initiative aims to offer a practical and sustainable solution by providing underprivileged girls with access to reliable

transportation. These bicycles will empower them to commute to school efficiently while promoting an energy-conscious and environmentally friendly approach.

R. Subramaniakumar, MD & CEO, RBL Bank said, "At RBL Bank, we believe that education is the

cornerstone of a bright future. Through our CSR initiative, UMEED, we strive to address critical barriers that prevent children from accessing quality education. By providing bicycles and school kits, we aim to empower young girls to overcome obstacles and pursue their dreams.

This initiative underscores our commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable society, where every child has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive."

RBL Bank's UMEED initiative has been a beacon of hope for marginalised communities across the country. With a focus on enabling education and fostering opportunities, the Bank continues to lead impactful outreach programs that bring meaningful change.



Millions Served, Lakhs Empowered: Flipkart's Festive Supply Chain at the Heart of Bharat

Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace, announced key milestones from its 2025 festive season – highlighting scale, speed, and social impact. The Big Billion Days were powered by its robust logistics network, which fulfilled record volumes, enabled near-instant deliveries, and significantly expanded its regional footprint. With over 4 lakh seasonal job opportunities created, a 44% growth in same-day/next-day deliveries, and heightened demand from Tier 2 / 3 cities, Flipkart's supply chain put both technology and people at the centre of India's festive momentum.

Powering Festive India, Minute by Minute

On peak days, Flipkart moved over 5,000 shipments per minute, enabled by a tech-led, demand-sensitive supply chain infrastructure. The company saw a 44% increase in same-day and next-day deliveries compared to last year, reflecting growing customer expectations and enhanced last-mile capabilities. With over 7.3 million shipments fulfilled in a single day – averaging more than 3 lakh an hour – Flipkart's network demonstrated precision at scale. In one standout example, an appliance was delivered in just 15 minutes at midnight, and a TV installation was completed within 36 minutes of delivery, setting new benchmarks for customer delight.

Technology at Scale, Festivities at Doorstep

Flipkart's festive operations were powered by an intelligent supply chain built to move billions of units with speed and consistency. AI-powered forecasting, ML-driven planning and real-time capacity

orchestration kept the network agile during surges, while automated inventory placement and AI-led IWIT (Inter-Warehouse Inventory Transfer) boosted in-stock availability. Inside fulfilment centres, AGVs, robotic arms, cross-belt sorters, and sensor-led tracking reduced turn-around times significantly, supported by AI powered X-ray fraud detection and advanced geocoding that improved accuracy across India's complex addressing landscape. AI-driven packaging tools further optimise materials and reduce waste. With a diverse, well-trained workforce and a tech-enabled network reaching 21,000+ pincodes, these capabilities enabled Flipkart to manage millions of peak-hour orders seamlessly, delivering a dependable, positive experience to households across Bharat.

Bharat at the Centre

The festive momentum this year was led strongly by Tier 2 and 3 cities, which accounted for over 60% of all BBD orders. Cities like Jhajjar and Bahraich recorded exponential order growth, as Flipkart deepened its regional infrastructure to meet this rising demand. Categories such as small furniture and household supplies saw the highest uptick in non-metro markets (90%), driven by growing aspirations and increasing digital confidence among customers. Behind this orchestration was a workforce scaled across 28 states, with over 4 lakh seasonal job opportunities created to meet the surge. Notably, 15% of these roles were filled by first-time entrants to the workforce.

Inclusion, Upskilling and Impact

Flipkart also placed strong emphasis

on building a future-ready, inclusive workforce:

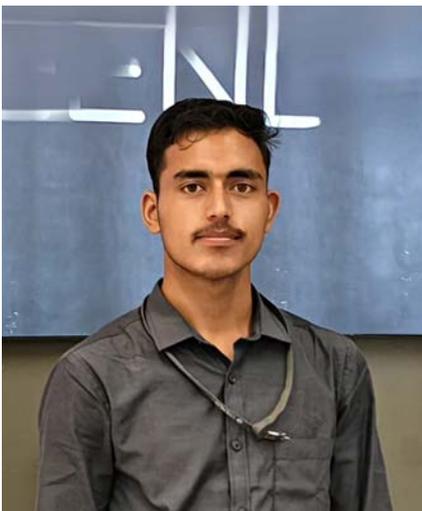
- A 20% increase in hiring from women, persons with disabilities (PwDs), and LGBTQIA+ communities
- Expansion of wellness benefits, including health checkups, Suraksha insurance, and employee care initiatives
- Through the Supply Chain Operations Academy (SCOA), over 10,000 associates were trained and upskilled in safety, warehouse operations, and tech tools
- Additionally, 6,000+ college students were trained in supply chain management via hybrid learning formats

Hemant Badri, Senior Vice President and Head of Supply Chain, Customer Experience & Re-Commerce, Flipkart Group, said, "The festive season is a true test of resilience, scale and precision – and our supply chain showcased what's possible when people, process, and technology come together at scale. From delivering large appliances in minutes to enabling deliveries in remote corners of the country, our network was built to meet the moment. What sets this season apart is not just the speed or volume, but the impact – over 4 lakh new jobs, deeper regional access, and inclusive hiring that reflects the real India. With technology as an enabler and people at the core, we are proud to have delivered not just packages, but trust and celebration to millions of households across Bharat."

Flipkart's multifaceted initiatives reflect an evolving festive playbook that combines operational excellence, regional inclusion, and social impact while delivering an enhanced customer experience.

Adani Foundation at ACC Gagal supports rural youth with industry-oriented training

ACC, part of the diversified Adani Portfolio and the fastest-growing building materials and solutions company, is enhancing livelihood prospects for rural communities through targeted skill development interventions. In Gagal, Himachal Pradesh, ACC along with the Adani Foundation is equipping young aspirants with the competencies needed to enter formal employment and support their families.



Girish Kumar

Girish Kumar, born into a small farming household in a village in Himachal Pradesh, grew up witnessing the financial strain faced by his parents. Determined to contribute and improve their situation, he looked for opportunities that could offer him a steady source of income and long-term stability.

His pathway forward began when he enrolled in the three-month Retail Sales Associate course at the Adani Skill Development Center (ASDC). The programme provided him with hands-on exposure to customer service, sales techniques, communication skills, and workplace behaviour—key requirements for roles in the retail industry.

Upon completing the training, Girish secured employment with Reliance Retail Ltd. in Sundernagar, earning ₹13,500 per month along with incentives. This job has eased the family's financial pressure and given him the confidence to build a better future.

Girish's progress illustrates how focused skill training under ACC is empowering rural youth to rise above limitations and transform their determination into tangible opportunities.

Swiggy Partners Utilize In-App Feature for Dignified Sanitation, Record 60,000 Searches

Swiggy has highlighted the success of its partnership with Sulabh International and its in-app feature that allows delivery partners to easily locate nearby Sulabh sanitation facilities across 7 key cities in the country, underscoring the company's commitment to providing dignified sanitation support on the road.

In March 2025, Swiggy partnered with Sulabh International to provide free access to Sulabh Shauchalayas (public toilets) for its delivery partners in Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai, discoverable through an in-app feature. This initiative is a tangible step towards providing dignified sanitation options for its delivery personnel and enhancing the overall working environment for its partners across the country. This access offers improved sanitation and relief for women delivery partners directly addressing a primary challenge they face while being on-the-go all day and supporting greater comfort while on the job.

According to Swiggy, in the initial days following the launch of this feature, its delivery partners have used the app to find the closest Sulabh facility approximately 60,000 times. This consistent and high volume of use demonstrates the importance of dignified sanitation opportunities for the gig workforce.

Since its inception, Swiggy has focused on providing better opportunities for its large network of delivery partners, its backbone. Right from insurance to providing upskilling opportunities, Swiggy actively works on initiatives that empower its over 6.9 lakh delivery partners.

Providing accessible public sanitation facilities also helps curb open urination/defecation, leading to cleaner and more hygienic urban environments for everyone, aligning with national cleanliness mission and global SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)



Project Nanhi Kali's Fundraiser Proud Fathers For Daughters Returns with its 10th Season

The event captured heartfelt father-daughter moments through the lenses of India's top photographers, raising funds to support 700+ girls at Project Nanhi Kali. The tenth season of Proud Fathers For Daughters, an annual fundraising event by Project Nanhi Kali, was held on December 13 and 14, 2025 at the National Sports Club of India, Worli, Mumbai.

The milestone season saw an overwhelming turnout, with 240 father-daughter pairs participating from across India. The proceeds from the event will go towards supporting 700+ girls at Project Nanhi Kali, giving them the opportunity to learn, lead and soar.

Proud Fathers For Daughters was founded by Anand Mahindra,

Chairperson of the Mahindra Group and K.C. Mahindra Education Trust, and renowned photographer Atul Kasbekar, with an intention of reshaping societal perceptions of the girl child and championing gender equality. The initiative challenges long-standing stereotypes by showcasing fathers not simply as protectors, but as fierce supporters for their daughters' aspirations. Each portrait serves as a visual pledge, when fathers stand firmly beside their daughters, they help dismantle generational barriers and reimagine what's possible for every girl.

Acclaimed photographers Atul Kasbekar, Colston Julian, Jaideep Oberoi, Jatin Kampani, Prasad Naik, Rafique Sayed, Rid Burman and Tarun Khiwal lent their artistry and

creative expertise generously to make Proud Fathers For Daughters a truly unforgettable event. They turned every portrait into a cherished memory, while underscoring the power of storytelling through photography to inspire change and drive impact. Their commitment to using their art for social good added a profound depth to the event, amplifying its message of empowerment and hope.

This year's theme, "Wings of Courage," celebrates two powerful truths. For daughters, courage often takes flight the moment they are reminded they are seen, valued and believed in. For fathers, pride becomes a catalyst for change, encouraging them to champion their daughters publicly, loudly and unapologetically. The theme is also deeply inspired by Project Nanhi Kali's core mission of giving girls the wings to rise, through 21st century and sports leadership skills training.

Participants contributed Rs 10,000 for a professional father-daughter photoshoot, with each contribution funding the education of one girl for an entire year at Project Nanhi Kali. Beyond providing education and skilling, Project Nanhi Kali's new curriculum emphasises leadership through critical thinking, sports and teamwork, preparing girls to thrive in the 21st-century.

Over the years, Proud Fathers For Daughters has seen enthusiastic participation from celebrity father-daughter duos such as Neha Dhupia and Pradip Singh Dhupia, Vidya Balan and P.R. Balan, Shatrughan Sinha and Sonakshi Sinha, Sachin Tendulkar and Sara Tendulkar, and Leander Paes and Aiyana Paes, among others.

Since its inception, Proud Fathers For Daughters has become a symbol of hope and empowerment with the participation of 15 photographers, we have raised funds to support 6297 girls at Project Nanhi Kali.

Anand Mahindra, Chairperson of the Mahindra Group and K.C.

Mahindra Education Trust, said: “Every year, Project Nanhi Kali’s Proud Fathers For Daughters initiative reminds us of a simple truth: when a father invests in his daughter’s education and dreams, he builds the strongest foundation for her future. This initiative has grown into a movement that celebrates not just the father–daughter bond, but the belief that every girl deserves the opportunity to learn and lead. I am deeply grateful to the

photographers who have given their time and talent to the event, helping raise funds to support girls through Project Nanhi Kali. A special thanks to Atul Kasbekar for helping create this initiative and standing by it for ten remarkable editions; his commitment has been instrumental in shaping both its impact and its heart.”

Sheetal Mehta, Executive Director at Project Nanhi Kali and Senior Vice President, CSR, Mahindra, said: “At Project Nanhi Kali, we have always

believed that when you educate a girl, you uplift an entire community. Through our new curriculum which focuses on 21st century and sports leadership skills, we continue to give girls the wings they need to Rise- wings of confidence, wings of leadership, wings of courage. Wings of courage is a celebration of this journey: fathers proudly standing by their daughters, and girls discovering just how high they can fly when they feel supported and believed in.”

Nasscom Foundation and Applied Materials India Collaborate to Bring Hands-On STEM Education to Karnataka Government Schools

In a strategic initiative aimed at advancing equitable education and fostering innovation, Nasscom Foundation, in collaboration with Applied Materials India Private Limited, has established seven state-of-the-art STEM labs in Government Schools across Malur, Kolar district. This initiative is part of Applied Materials’ commitment to anchoring purpose at the core of its business strategy—aligning technology leadership with meaningful impact in local communities. By strengthening digital access and experiential learning for students in classes 8 to 12, the collaboration empowers both students and educators with hands-on exposure to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. Teachers will receive specialized training in modern STEM pedagogy, lab management, and digital tools, ensuring lasting improvements in teaching quality and student outcomes.

Jyoti Sharma, CEO, Nasscom Foundation said, “In India’s rapidly evolving digital landscape, technology skills are becoming a gateway to opportunity. Yet, students from underserved communities often lack access to quality STEM learning. Our collaboration with Applied Materials India brings STEM learning directly into government school classrooms, allowing students to learn through experimentation, creativity, and discovery. By strengthening both student learning and teacher capability, we are nurturing a generation of confident learners and expanding access to quality education and opportunities for youth to explore the world of technology.”

Through this initiative, the newly established STEM labs will enable students to explore physics concepts, engineering principles, innovation and design thinking, robotics, programming and mathematics in a practical and engaging way. Each lab has been equipped with robotics kits, DIY experiment kits,

table-top models, science and mathematics tools, and other learning materials that help students connect theoretical lessons with real-world applications.

Speaking at the inauguration of the STEM Lab in GJC Girls school, Avi Avula, President, Applied Materials India said, “India’s next decade of innovation will be built on strong foundations in STEM. At Applied Materials, we strive to align technology leadership with meaningful community impact. By expanding equitable, hands-on science and engineering and strengthening teacher capabilities, we are helping students especially in tier-2 and 3 communities to see themselves as future chip designers, materials scientists and problem-solvers. This is how we widen access, build confidence, and cultivate the talent India needs to invent—not just make—for India and the world.” Implementation of the labs follows a structured approach—starting with a thorough assessment of each school’s infrastructure, followed by installation of STEM equipment and furnishings. Teachers undergo extensive capacity-building sessions, and students participate in workshops focused on innovation and design thinking. The program also features continuous monitoring and on-ground support, backed by an online system that tracks lab activities, progress, and learning outcomes.

The initiative is designed to significantly increase student participation in STEM activities and build stronger awareness around STEM career pathways. It aims to boost teacher confidence in delivering STEM curriculum, improve problem-solving abilities among students, and enable them to showcase their creativity through tangible projects. With access to tools like robotics kits and emerging technologies, students will be encouraged to think critically, innovate freely, and develop solutions to real-world challenges.



RSCERT and EdIndia Ink Strategic MoU

Rajasthan State Council of Educational Research & Training, Udaipur (RSCERT) and Sterlite EdIndia Foundation have formally signed an MoU for Institutional Strengthening of B.Ed. and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) colleges across the state.

This collaboration was formalised in the presence of RSCERT Director Shweta Fagaria, Additional Director Piyush Agarwal and Joint Director Arun Kumar Sharma, along with 33 DIET Principals.

The faculty from the Teacher Empowerment Department, Chenna Ram, Uday Singh and Anita Chaudhary were also present. UNICEF Representative Chandra Shekhar Dubey also graced the event.

This MoU will actualise the vision of the Ministry of Education to transform DIETs into Centres of Excellence. Sterlite EdIndia

Foundation, through the Institutional Strengthening Program, will support SCERTs and ensure that the six DIETs materialise this vision in a phased manner over the next three years

"This MoU between RSCERT and Sterlite EdIndia Foundation marks an important step toward realising the vision of NEP 2020 in Rajasthan. Through this collaboration, we are strengthening our teacher education ecosystem, building the capacity of DIETs and empowering educators with new tools, research, and data-driven insights. This partnership will help us create Centres of Excellence that can sustain innovation and continuously improve classroom learning across the state," said Fagaria.

Sonakshi Agarwal, Director, Sterlite EdIndia Foundation, said, "Rajasthan is working towards turning DIETs and SCERTs into Centres of Excellence, and it's our endeavour to empower and support them in this journey."

Dr Antony Nellissery, Head Sterlite EdIndia Foundation, said, "While teacher education is important, we must also strengthen the ecosystem that empowers and sustains teachers. Supporting the system that supports educators is the foundation of lasting educational transformation."

As envisaged by the Ministry of Education, to bring about a systemic change and enhance the classroom learning outcomes, six pillars of support have been conceptualised. Infrastructure support, inclusive education for all, vocational education, collaboration and networking, empowering teachers, and research & innovation. The DIETs have the best faculty to deliver the courses, but they need support in execution, capacity building of faculty in pedagogy and facilitation, integration of research, and technology enablement, with the end goal of catalysing the building of institutional ownership.

Branch International & United Way Launch Saksham to Support 63 Women Entrepreneurs

Branch International, a leading NBFC, in collaboration with United Way Mumbai (UWM), a prominent social impact NGO, has successfully implemented Saksham, Promoting Entrepreneurship among Women initiative. The program empowered 63 women from Badlapur, Bhiwandi, and Diva in Maharashtra to take their first steps toward financial independence and entrepreneurial growth.

Over a three-day (18-hour) Entrepreneurial Development Program (EDP), participants received training in foundational business and financial management skills through interactive modules, group discussions, and hands-on sessions. Delivered by certified trainers and subject-matter experts, the program was designed to be accessible to women irrespective of their academic background. The training aimed to build entrepreneurial mindsets and equip participants with practical, actionable tools to strengthen and scale their micro-enterprises.

As part of the initiative, each participant received a Saksham Business Toolkit, tailored to their individual skills and aspirations. Designed according to the requirements of each business category, these toolkits provide immediate and practical support. The toolkits included:

- 20 flour mills
- 20 tailoring machines
- 3 beauty parlour setups
- 2 fall binding machines
- 2 cake-making kits
- 16 food service kits

These toolkits serve as a critical bridge between skill and opportunity, enabling women to launch or expand income-generating ventures and build sustainable livelihoods.



Neeraj Gupta, MD, Branch India said, “At Branch, our CSR philosophy in India is to enable communities to thrive by strengthening financial inclusion, entrepreneurship and essential social development needs. The Saksham program, which has supported 63 women entrepreneurs, is a testament to the impact we can achieve together. We look forward to broadening our CSR initiatives across diverse causes to create long-term, systemic change.”

George Aikara, CEO, United Way Mumbai, said, “We champion empowering women to transform lives and communities. Through the Saksham project, and with the support of Branch International, we helped realize the aspirations of 63

women entrepreneurs from marginalized communities in Mumbai. This partnership laid the foundation for lasting financial independence, enabling these women to uplift themselves, their families, and their communities.”

The event also highlighted several inspiring beneficiary stories, from women who had already started small businesses and were ready to grow, to those embarking on their entrepreneurial journeys for the first time. The initiative reflects Branch International’s continued commitment to gender empowerment, financial inclusion, and community upliftment, aligning with its mission to create equitable economic opportunities.



Toyota Kirloskar Motor inks deal with the National Institute of Solar Energy

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) exchanged an Memorandum of Understanding with the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), at the MNRE headquarters in New Delhi, marking a significant boost to India's National Green Hydrogen Mission and long-term carbon-neutrality ambitions.

As part of this strategic collaboration, Toyota Kirloskar Motor handed over its hydrogen fuel-cell electric vehicle, the Toyota Mirai, to NISE for an extensive real-world feasibility and performance evaluation under Indian driving and climatic

conditions. The partnership represents a critical convergence of industry, research, and national policy to accelerate India's transition toward a clean, secure, and hydrogen-based energy ecosystem.

Under the MoU, NISE will undertake a detailed assessment of the Mirai across key operational parameters including fuel efficiency, real-world range, drivability, refueling behavior, performance in diverse terrains, cold and winter operating conditions, and overall environmental resilience. The study will also examine the vehicle's adaptability to Indian road infrastructure, traffic patterns, dust exposure, and climatic variability.

The Memorandum of Understanding took place in the presence of Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy and Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Shripad Yesso Naik, Union Minister of State in Ministry of New & Renewable Energy and Power, Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Secretary, Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Abhay Bakre, Mission Director, National Green Hydrogen Mission, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Dr. Mohammad Rihan, Director General, National Institute of Solar Energy, along with the senior leadership from Toyota Kirloskar Motor,



Vikram Gulati, Country Head and Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs and Governance and other senior executives.

"India's shift to cleaner energy is now moving from planning to actual implementation. The MoU between the National Institute of Solar Energy and Toyota Kirloskar Motor, along with the handover of a hydrogen fuel-cell vehicle for testing, is an important step forward for our National Green Hydrogen Mission. These partnerships are essential for building our domestic capacity and moving closer to energy independence and carbon neutrality," said Joshi.

Added Dalvi: "The real-world testing of the Toyota Mirai under India's diverse climatic and infrastructural conditions will help generate critical insights into hydrogen's potential as a mainstream mobility solution. This collaboration showcases our commitment to introducing cutting-edge technology and actively contributing

to advancing India's overall energy goals and clean transportation ecosystem. We are grateful to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy for their visionary support and collaborative approach in enabling this critical study, which will strengthen India's pathway toward a net-zero commitments."

Gulati pointed out: "We are fully committed to a multi-pathway approach that integrates hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles, battery electric vehicles, strong hybrid electric vehicles, and alternative fuel technologies. This partnership with the National Institute of Solar Energy and the handover of the Toyota Mirai for testing reaffirm our dedication to supporting India's Green Hydrogen mission and accelerating the nation's transition toward future mobility that is powered by green & indigenous energy sources. We believe hydrogen fuel-cell technology, alongside other sustainable technologies, will play a

pivotal role in helping India achieve its net-zero commitments and energy independence objectives."

The Toyota Mirai, a second-generation hydrogen fuel-cell electric vehicle, produces electricity through a chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen, emitting only water vapour as a by-product. With a driving range of approximately 650 km and a refueling time of under five minutes, it is among the world's most advanced zero-emission mobility solutions.

This association aligns closely with India's evolving hydrogen policy framework and supports national goals of energy independence, deep decarbonization, and clean-mobility diversification. TKM remains dedicated to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 through net-zero emissions across the full product lifecycle, driven by renewable energy adoption, circular resource use, water stewardship, and ecosystem conservation.

Anudip Foundation and DBS Bank India inaugurate DeepTech Training Centre in Airoli, Maharashtra to empower underserved youth



Anudip Foundation for Social Welfare, a non-profit organisation dedicated to transforming the lives of economically and socially vulnerable youth, in partnership with DBS Bank India, inaugurated its new DeepTech Training Centre at Airoli, Navi Mumbai.

This signified a major milestone in their three-year initiative to skill and empower 2,400 young individuals from underserved communities across Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune, and Chennai. The programme aims to achieve a minimum 70% placement rate, with expected monthly salaries ranging between Rs 22,000 to Rs 25,000, significantly contributing to economic upliftment.

The DeepTech Programme for Underserved Youth, supported by DBS Bank India, addresses the growing skills gap in India's technology sector by offering industry-aligned training in non-programming digital technologies, communication,

career readiness and soft skills. Delivered through a blended learning model powered by AI tools, gamification, and a Moodle-based LMS, the programme prepares learners for the digital workforce, with third-party assessments by Mettl ensuring standardised evaluation and job readiness.

Senior leadership members of the Anudip Foundation and members from DBS Bank India also graced the occasion, providing guidance and strong encouragement to the learners. The welcome address eloquently articulated the unified vision of advancing digital inclusion and cultivating robust career opportunities for underserved youth. During the beneficiary engagement segment, students adeptly showcased their projects, unequivocally demonstrating their technical proficiency and the programme's nascent yet significant impact.

Nekzaad Vakil, Executive Director, Group Strategic

Marketing & Communications, DBS Bank India, said, "We are proud to partner with Anudip Foundation on the inauguration of the DeepTech Training Centre in Airoli. This aligns with our larger efforts and commitment towards fostering inclusion and empowering underserved youth with future-ready skills. We believe that addressing critical skills gaps can create pathways to sustainable careers. By supporting the development of advanced technological capabilities among the next generation, we aim to contribute to creating economic opportunities and building resilient communities."

Monisha Banerjee, CEO, Anudip Foundation said, "At Anudip, we believe success begins with access. By providing market-driven skills, mentoring, and employment opportunities, we enable young people from underserved communities to build brighter futures."

DBS Bank India is committed to creating impact beyond banking. Its efforts are further reinforced by the DBS Foundation, which actively aims to uplift the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities in Asia. This includes providing essential needs and fostering inclusion for vulnerable communities through grants, mentorship, and capacity-building programmes. The DBS Foundation also supports Businesses for Impact (social enterprises and SMEs with innovative solutions for creating positive social impact and forging strategic partnerships) to catalyse the growth of the ecosystem.



Signify to Illuminate 100 Indo-Nepal Border Villages, Enhancing Safety and Livelihoods

In line with its #BrighterLivesBetterWorld vision, Signify, the world leader in lighting, announces the street LEDification of 100 villages along the Indo-Nepal border, in collaboration with Tarq Foundation. This transformative initiative is being undertaken under the guidance of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh whose vision for safer, empowered, and better-connected border communities anchors this effort.

Stretching across 1700 km, the Indo-Nepal border is home to resilient and vibrant communities whose daily lives often unfold against infrastructural and safety-related constraints. Limited street lighting has long impacted mobility, economic activity, and community safety after dusk. The introduction of energy-efficient LED streetlights across these villages marks a

significant step towards addressing these ground realities, creating safer evenings, supporting local livelihoods, and promoting stronger community networks.

Nikhil Gupta, Head of Marketing, Strategy, Government Affairs & CSR - Signify, Greater India said, “At Signify, we believe in bringing the best of innovations to the communities across India, through our Har Gaon Roshan CSR initiative. Through this initiative, we aim to bring long-term safety, sustainability, and confidence to border communities. This partnership reflects our commitment to using light to positively impact lives in India, fostering sustainable growth and community empowerment.”

Building on this vision, the project has been designed to meet practical ground-level needs. Each village was identified based on community

input, footfall patterns, and specific safety concerns.

Manoviraj Singh, Founding Partner at Tarq Foundation, stated, “Real development starts by listening to the people it is meant to serve. Border communities have their own unique rhythms: evening markets, long walks home from school, and the daily movement of women whose sense of safety is directly shaped by how well-lit their surroundings are. This initiative responds to these lived realities. In these villages, light is not symbolic; it is practical, protective, and deeply empowering.”

The LED streetlighting of 100 Indo-Nepal border villages stand as a significant milestone in improving rural safety and community well-being. The partnership reinforces a long-term commitment to building resilient border communities.



(L-R: Ranen Banerjee, Partner and Economic Advisory Leader, PwC India, Sambitosh Mohapatra, Partner and Leader – Sustainability Transformation, PwC India, Dr. S. P. Yadav, Director General, IBCA, Soumitra Dasgupta, Director (Program), IBCA)

PwC India and the International Big Cats Alliance announce their collaboration to advance global big-cat conservation

PwC India and the International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA) announced their collaboration to strengthen global efforts for protecting the world's seven big cat species — Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Puma and Jaguar.

Over the next year, the two organisations will work closely to develop conservation strategies, empower communities, raise awareness and support field programmes. This collaboration will actively engage corporates and facilitate public-private partnerships (PPPs) to enhance private sector involvement in big cat conservation.

Dr. S.P. Yadav, Director General, IBCA, said, “Our collaboration with

PwC India brings valuable expertise and a powerful platform to amplify conservation finance, community stewardship, and partnerships. Together, we can accelerate progress to safeguard big cats and their habitats — a cause that resonates far beyond conservation circles.”

“We are proud to join hands with IBCA in this meaningful endeavour to help co-create solutions to protect iconic big cat species that play a critical role in maintaining ecological balance,” said Sambitosh Mohapatra, Partner and Leader – Sustainability Transformation, PwC India. “This collaboration allows us to apply our strategic and operational strengths in new ways, advancing

sustainability goals that benefit both nature and communities. Such initiatives create unique business opportunities along with equitable and inclusive growth.”

As part of the collaboration, PwC India and IBCA will jointly organise three major conservation events over a 12-month period — an international convening, a national-level workshop and a webinar dedicated to landscape restoration and habitat conservation. These platforms will not only bring together scientists, policymakers, conservation organisations and community groups, but will also help build a shared understanding of challenges across countries and accelerate coordinated

action and funding. The two organisations will also co-create a thought-leadership publication that translates scientific learnings, field experience and policy insights into a practical roadmap for organisations seeking to strengthen conservation models. Collectively, these initiatives aim to support governments and organisations in improving habitats, reducing human-wildlife conflict,

enabling sustainable financing, and adapting successful approaches from India to landscapes where big cats remain vulnerable.

By combining IBCA's global conservation mission with PwC India's strengths in sustainability, strategy and financing, the partnership aims to encourage stakeholder dialogue, support capability building, enhance funding, and foster new

forms of collaboration across regions in Africa, South America and South Asia. This combined effort aims to translate India's successful big-cat initiatives into scalable approaches that can benefit other countries facing similar ecological challenges, while reflecting a growing recognition of the link between biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Adani Foundation at ACC Gagag Empowers Youth through Skill Development and Livelihood Opportunities

ACC, part of the diversified Adani Portfolio and the fastest-growing building materials and solutions company, is strengthening livelihood opportunities for youth through focused, community-led skill development initiatives. In Gagag village, ACC along with the Adani Foundation continues to support young individuals from challenging socio-economic backgrounds by equipping them with employment-ready skills.

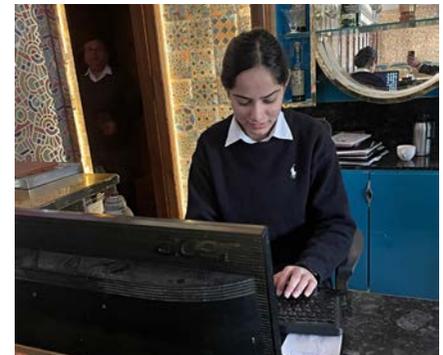
Sakshi grew up in a modest household and faced significant hardships after losing her father early in life. Her mother and elder brother worked tirelessly to sustain the family, with her brother taking up demanding work as a JCB operator to support both the home and her education. Determined to reduce her family's burden, Sakshi sought avenues to become financially independent.

Through the Adani Skill Development Centre (ASDC) in Gagag, she enrolled in the Retail Sales Associate course, where she developed essential skills in communication, customer engagement, and



sales. The structured training not only built her confidence but also prepared her for formal employment in the retail sector.

After completing the course, Sakshi secured a job with Royal Signet in Bhatinda, earning ₹12,000



in hand along with food and accommodation. Her journey is a testament to the transformative impact of ACC's livelihood-driven interventions, enabling youth like her to rise above adversity and build a secure future.



Habitat for Humanity India Unveils “Brick-Aid” Campaign to Address Affordable Housing Crisis—Mobilizing Nationwide Coalition for Resilient, Inclusive Communities

Habitat for Humanity India has launched Brick-Aid, a nationwide digital giving campaign to serve as a clarion call for collective action to support safe, secure and decent homes for the most marginalized and vulnerable sections of society. The initiative was announced on the sidelines of commemoration of 42 years of Habitat’s impactful journey in India, which brought together senior business leaders, global stakeholders, philanthropic partners and celebrity champions of the cause - building resilient, sustainable homes and climate-resilient communities- “one brick at a time, one home at a time, one family at a time.”

The campaign’s announcement by leaders such as Mrs. Rajashree

Birla, Chairperson, IndiaBUILDS Advisory Committee and celebrity champions like Mr. John Abraham and Ms. Jacqueline Fernandes gave the campaign a strong foundation. It also marks a pivotal intersection in India’s urban development journey, coinciding with Habitat for Humanity India’s 42nd anniversary and the 20th anniversary of the IndiaBUILDS Advisory Committee - A collective of highly inspired business leaders and philanthropists supporting Habitat India. Through the convergence of volunteerism, strategic partnerships and compelling storytelling, the event celebrated Habitat’s milestones while charting the course ahead - raising awareness and resources for the current need for housing, advancing

green building practices, renewable energy and climate-resilient designs integration in affordable housing sector catering to the most vulnerable sections of society.

The Brick-Aid Digital Fundraising Campaign is a virtual campaign that invites individuals to symbolically ‘donate a brick’ to help build homes for families in need. Each virtual brick moves people’s hands and hearts toward Habitat’s mission of creating a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Supporters of Habitat, donors and volunteers alike can donate at least one brick and encourage them to nominate or challenge friends and family to do the same, creating a ripple effect through a peer-to-peer, multi-level giving model.



Gala Evening

(L-R) Mr. Patrick Canagasingham, Mr. Jayesh Shah, Dr. Niranjn Hiranandani, Mr. Dhaval Monani

Anand Kumar Bolimera, National Director, Habitat for Humanity India, said, “The Brick-Aid campaign is more than a fundraising effort, it is a collective call to action for building sustainable, equitable communities. Every pledge brings us closer to the vision of housing that not only shelters people but supports their basic standard of living. We are deeply thankful to our IndiaBUILDS Advisory Committee and all our supporters who continue to stand with us on this journey. It is this unwavering support that continues to strengthen Habitat’s mission of building homes, communities and hope across India.”

Building on the spirit of the campaign, Habitat supporters at the launch also witnessed an insightful panel discussion on “Housing for All” featuring Dr. Niranjn Hiranandani, Managing Director of Hiranandani Group of Companies, Chairman-NAREDCO National and member of the IndiaBUILDS Advisory Committee (IBAC); Jayesh Shah, Director of Svatanttra Housing Microfinance Corporation and Patrick Canagasingham, Chief Operating Officer, Habitat for Humanity International. Guiding the conversation was Dhaval Monani, Professor at Anant National University and Advisory Board Member, TCIS, who moderated the panel.

While addressing the event, Dr. Niranjn Hiranandani highlighted that, for the first time since Independence, the government has allocated Rs 60,000 crore each for urban and rural housing—an unprecedented investment aimed at expanding subsidies for low-income, middle-income and economically weaker sections.

He emphasised that this commitment not only advances the national goal of ‘Housing for All’ but also creates significant avenues for private sector participation in strengthening India’s housing ecosystem. Dr. Hiranandani further commended Habitat India’s efforts, noting how the organisation’s initiatives align seamlessly with this national vision and play a critical role in mobilising citizens, corporates and communities to accelerate access to safe, affordable housing across the country.

At the commemoration of Habitat’s 42 years of impact in India, Ms. Jacqueline Fernandez reflected on her association with the organisation through a heartfelt address. She also shared her thoughts on the Brick-Aid campaign, saying, “With the Brick-Aid campaign we have a chance to build one brick at a time, one home at a time, one life at a time, together. Because when we build, we don’t build walls and roofs, we create hope, dignity and belonging.”

Other distinguished guests such as Rajashree Birla; Sheila Kripalani, Chairperson, Habitat for Humanity India; Harlan Stone, Chairperson, Asia Pacific Development Council, Habitat for Humanity and Rajni Basumatary, Filmmaker, Trustee, Habitat for Humanity India, also lent their voices and visibility to the campaign, spotlighting its significance.

With over four decades of dedicated service, Habitat for Humanity India and its network organisations – Micro Build India, the Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter (TCIS) and other Civil Society Organisations have impacted more than 97 lakh people through its housing, sanitation and disaster response programmes.

With this impact, over 78 lakh individuals now live in safer, more dignified homes built or improved through Habitat’s support, while more than 15 lakh people have benefited from its Housing Disaster Resilience and Response initiatives that help families prepare for and recover from natural disasters. In addition, Habitat’s WASH interventions have reached over 34 lakh people, strengthening access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene. Together, these efforts reflect Habitat for Humanity India’s enduring commitment to building safe, sustainable and resilient communities across the country.



Epsilon Foundation Launches Adolescent Education and Livelihood Programme in Odisha in Partnership with Magic Bus India Foundation

The initiative will equip 2,500+ adolescents, youth, and women in Jharsuguda with advanced skills, academic support, and livelihood opportunities, for school-to-work transition and sustainable community development.

Epsilon Foundation, the CSR arm of Epsilon Carbon Private Limited launched a transformative adolescent education and livelihood programme in Jharsuguda, Odisha in partnership with Magic Bus India Foundation, a leading non-profit organization in education and skilling. The initiative is designed as a model Childhood-to-Livelihood programme that builds agency, aspirations, and sustainable

livelihood pathways for underserved adolescents, youth, and women.

The interventions focus on adolescents in government schools, as well as youth and women from underserved and tribal communities. The programme will reach 2,000 adolescents (12–18 years) and 570 youth and women (18–45 years), ensuring at least 50% women's participation.

Speaking on the partnership, Vikram Handa, MD, Epsilon Group

said, "At Epsilon, we believe that sustainable growth begins with empowering communities through education and skills. Our partnership with Magic Bus India Foundation reflects our commitment to creating long-term social impact in Jharsuguda. By helping adolescents, youth, and women build employability and entrepreneurial skills, we aim to strengthen local livelihoods and contribute to a more inclusive and self-reliant future."

Speaking on the collaboration, Jayant Rastogi, Global CEO, Magic Bus India Foundation, said, "Our partnership with Epsilon strengthens Magic Bus's Childhood-to-Livelihood model by creating a

continuum of support from school to work, ensuring that young people are prepared for employment and equipped to lead change in their communities. By investing in skills, aspirations, and livelihoods at the grassroots, we are also contributing to the vision of Viksit Bharat and the larger goal of nation building.”

For adolescents, the programme delivers employability and green skills, foundational literacy and numeracy, financial literacy, and academic support for Grades 9 and 10 through Community Learning Centres (CLCs). It also offers structured career exposure, with parents, teachers, and communities engaged to ensure long-term impact. For youth and women, Livelihood Resource Centres (LRCs) will provide job-readiness training, placement support, entrepreneurship development, and opportunities for nano-enterprise.

This partnership stands out for its focus on inclusive development in Jharsuguda, a fast-growing district facing challenges like school dropouts, limited opportunities for women, and rising NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) risks. By helping adolescents stay in school and plan their careers, and supporting youth and women to access jobs, self-employment, and nano-enterprise opportunities, the programme strengthens families, reduces distress migration, and contributes to a more stable local economy, offering a practical model for school-to-work transition and community development.

Designed to be scalable and evidence-based, and aligned with NEP 2020 and NCF 2023, this partnership between Epsilon Foundation, Magic Bus, and government stakeholders establishes a model of resilience and opportunity, ensuring that families and communities can transition from vulnerability to stability and contribute meaningfully to India’s growth story.

DS Group launches ‘Living Billboard,’ A Green Plantation Drive

The Dharampal Satyapal Group (DS Group), a leading FMCG conglomerate and multi-business corporation has launched the ‘Living Billboard’ campaign, a high-impact, awareness-led plantation initiative. This campaign strengthens DS Group’s commitment to sustainability.

The installation of the ‘Living Billboard’ campaign is a large green billboard made of 4,000 plants, strategically placed on the DND Flyover at the entry point to Delhi from Noida. For 4,000 unique shares tagging DS Group on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/dsgroupindia/?hl=en>) and LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/dsl/>), the company will create a similar green installation.



To extend the initiative into homes, DS Group will also distribute seeds as part of print ad bookmark through morning newspapers, encouraging readers to join the effort and grow more plants.

Highlighting the urgency of corporate responsibility in environmental protection, Mr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, DS Group said, "For DS Group, sustainability is an enduring responsibility, not just an initiative. With critical global dialogues like COP 30 driving the world towards stronger environmental action, we see the business sector as a key architect of a greener future. This begins with robust public awareness. The launch of our Living Billboard campaign is a tangible commitment that contributes to this essential dialogue and reinforces our dedication to a sustainable planet."

Diageo India and Nashik Municipal Corporation Sign MoU to Strengthen River Health and Waste Management Initiatives Ahead of Simhastha Kumbh 2027

Diageo India (United Spirits Limited) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC) to advance a series of river conservation and solid waste management initiatives aimed at preserving the health of the Godavari and Nandini rivers ahead of Simhastha Kumbh 2027. The signing took place at the NMC office and was attended by Manisha Khatri, Commissioner & Administrator, Nashik Municipal Corporation and Karishma Nair, Additional Commissioner, Nashik Municipal Corporation, Abhay Dabholkar, Senior General Manager-Manufacturing at Diageo India, and representatives from CSRBOX.

Under the MoU, Diageo India will support the installation of boom barriers at two critical points on the Godavari and Nandini rivers near Tapovan, an important first step in reducing solid waste inflow into the river system. These efforts will support NMC's preparation for the Kumbh, which attracts millions of pilgrims and places significant pressure on Nashik's civic and environmental infrastructure.

Devashish Dasgupta, Director, Corporate Relations at Diageo India, said: "This partnership with the Nashik Municipal Corporation is deeply aligned with our Spirit of Progress ESG action plan, especially our commitment to Preserve Water for Life. Through The Godavari Initiative, which we are proud to have co-founded, we are working to improve water



quality and strengthen ecosystem health across the river basin. The installation of boom barriers is an important on-ground intervention, and we look forward to supporting NMC as the city prepares for Simhastha Kumbh 2027."

Manisha Khatri, Commissioner & Administrator, Nashik Municipal Corporation said "We are pleased to welcome Diageo India to the

Floating Barriers Project, a flagship effort under The Godavari Initiative aimed at making the Godavari River pollution-free ahead of the upcoming Simhastha Kumbh. This collaboration marks a vital step toward a cleaner and healthier river ecosystem. We look forward to continued partnership with Diageo India and invite all to join hands in protecting and rejuvenating our rivers." This

partnership marks an important milestone in Diageo India's Spirit of Progress ESG action plan, which places strong emphasis on water stewardship, climate resilience, and community wellbeing through its focus on Preserving Water for Life. As part of this commitment, Diageo India has been investing in watershed protection, groundwater

recharge, and sustainable water access across several Indian states.

A key part of these efforts is The Godavari Initiative (TGI), a pioneering multi-stakeholder collaborative platform launched to address critical challenges related to the health of the Godavari River basin. With Diageo India as the founding partner, the initiative is supported

by leading corporates, Alliance for Water Stewardship, CSRBOX, and others. TGI aims to create a resilient and thriving riverine ecosystem that balances community well-being with ecological integrity and long-term water security. Spanning 55,350 sq. km of catchment area, the initiative will benefit 23 million people across 9 districts in Maharashtra.

National Energy Conservation Day: Vedanta Mitigates Nearly 20 Lakh Tonnes of CO₂ Through Clean Energy

Vedanta Limited, India's leading energy-transition metals, oil & gas, critical minerals, power and technology conglomerate, reaffirmed its commitment to accelerating India's clean-energy transition on the National Energy Conservation Day.

The Group's decarbonisation strategy uses four levers: renewable energy expansion, switching to low-carbon fuels, energy and process efficiency, and carbon offsets. Leveraging a multi-pronged approach, till November FY26, Vedanta sourced 2.58 billion units of renewable energy, mitigating nearly 2 million (or 20 lakh) tonnes of CO₂e emissions, equivalent to removing 4.1 lakh cars from India's roads for a full year.

Since FY21, Vedanta has mitigated over 28 million (or 2.8 crore) tons of CO₂ emissions, equivalent to annual carbon absorption of over 1 billion mature trees. In FY25, Vedanta further strengthened its commitment to large-scale decarbonisation and energy efficiency, investing approximately USD 170 million (approximately INR 1500 Crores) towards its Net Zero efforts. Concurrently in FY26, Vedanta



has actively undertaken over 30 energy-saving and decarbonisation projects, improving waste-heat recovery of steam, periodic overhauling, and optimising energy consumption through state-of-the-art pot controllers. These controllers will significantly streamline energy use precisely to boost industrial performance, stability and energy efficiency. The projects are expected to save over 150,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year, equivalent to carbon absorption from 7 million (or 70 lakh) trees.

Reaffirming the Government of India's 'Waste to Wealth' mission and circularity focus, Vedanta uses high-quality biofuel made from biomass and agricultural residue

with far greater energy density than original feedstock. In 2025, Vedanta has used 182 Kt of biomass across its operations mitigating over 300,000 tons of CO₂, equivalent to annual absorption of 15 million (or 1.5 crore) mature trees.

From solar to wind energy, Vedanta is powering India's clean energy mission by producing transition metals and critical minerals that clean energy depends on. Since 2021, Vedanta has advanced low-carbon production, reducing carbon intensity (tCO₂e/INR Million in Revenue) by nearly 30%.

As Vedanta celebrates its 'Energy Conservation Week' across its operations, it has saved over 33,000 Mega-watt hours (MwH) of energy across its Zinc and Ferrochrome operations. Vedanta Aluminium is also expanding its capacity from 2.4 to 3.1 million tonnes per annum (MTPA), with its Restora low carbon 'green' aluminium widely used in solar, EVs, packaging and modern infrastructure. Hindustan Zinc is advancing its 2x Growth Plan across zinc, lead and silver, with its low carbon 'green' zinc, EcoZen offering a 75% less carbon intensive solution for applications in infrastructure.

Vedanta & CFI Successfully Conclude Tour-De-Thar, Celebrating Endurance, Powering #CycleForZeroHunger

Close to 800 participants from India and abroad ride through the Thar Desert while contributing overall 1 Lakh poshan packs under #CycleForZeroHunger

Vedanta Limited, India's leading energy transition metals, oil & gas, critical minerals, power, and technology conglomerate and The Cycling Federation of India (CFI) successfully concluded the inaugural Vedanta Tour de Thar, India's first desert endurance cycling race. The races were flagged off by Arjun Ram Meghwal, Union Minister for Law and Justice and Vedanta leadership alongside dignitaries, govt. officials and prominent personalities. This initiative brought together close to 800 professional cyclists, enthusiasts, adventure riders, and international participants for a landmark event in the Thar Desert at Bikaner, Rajasthan.

Through Vedanta's #CycleForZeroHunger initiative, the participants' close to 1 Lakh km ridden were converted into Poshan Packs, providing nutritious supplements for children at Vedanta's Nand Ghars across 16 states. Developed in partnership with the Ministry of Women and Child Development, 10,000 Nand Ghars across 16 states are transforming rural India by providing nutrition, healthcare, and early childhood education for children, alongside skill development and entrepreneurship opportunities for women.



Vedanta Tour de Thar offered multiple race categories designed to challenge athletes of all skill levels. Riders competed across 100 km and 200 km formats, with several prominent national and international athletes including Ashok Tyagi (U-23 National champion), Naman Kapil (Asian Games Indian Representative), Nilesh Kumar (Multiple time national champion, Indian Airforce), and over 240 professional national cyclists taking part in the event.

Recognising the event's role in promoting sports and sustainable tourism in Rajasthan, Arjun Ram Meghwal, Union Minister of Law & Justice, said "Vedanta Tour de Thar showcases the immense potential of Rajasthan as a destination for endurance sports while also promoting eco-tourism and cultural heritage. As part of Sansad Khel Mahotsav 2025, the participation of athletes from across India and overseas reflects growing interest in

desert sport, and I commend CFI and Vedanta for creating a platform that supports both athletic excellence and community welfare through #CycleForZeroHunger."

Barnali Mahela, secured first position in the 100 km female challenge, while Harsh Pawar secured first position in the 100 km male challenge in the Amateur category. Arpitaketan Pandya dominated the 200km female challenge along with Anup Pawar, who dominated 200km male challenge in the Amateur category. In the Elite category, Sahil Kumar secured the first place in 100 km male challenge and Swasti Singh secured the first place in 100 km female challenge.

"Vedanta Tour de Thar has shown what is possible when sport, sustainability, and community purpose come together. What makes this edition truly special is its contribution to our #CycleForZeroHunger initiative, where every kilometer covered translates into Poshan Packs

for children at Nand Ghars. We are proud to support an event that not only pushes human potential but also nourishes the next generation.” said Vedanta spokesperson.

Beginning from Norangdesar and concluding at Deshnok near Bikaner, cyclists navigated varying desert conditions marked by strong winds, sandy gradients, and high daytime temperatures. The event engaged local communities through

cultural showcases, heat-safety orientation, and desert biodiversity awareness activities, reaching more than 10,000 beneficiaries while staying aligned with Vedanta’s vision of a greener future through various eco-friendly initiatives and a 2-day sustainability expo.

Barnali Mahela, winner of the 100 km solo women’s division, said: “The inaugural Tour de Thar was unforgettable. The desert tested

our endurance, but local support kept us going. Proud to race for Indian cycling’s future and #CycleForZeroHunger. Teaming up for this challenge was intense and exhilarating.”

Vedanta Tour De Thar is a transformative initiative that has laid the foundation for an annual desert endurance event centered on sport, sustainability, community engagement and welfare.

Jyoti Global Plast Unveils AeroCrop Agricultural UAS

Jyoti Global Plast has announced the launch of the AeroCrop Agricultural UAS, a drone developed to advance precision agriculture through dependable, accurate and high output field performance. The company, known for more than forty years of expertise in precision plastic and FRP moulding, has steadily expanded into unmanned systems and now brings its manufacturing strength to the agricultural sector with a platform built to address the real operational needs of farmers across the country.

The AeroCrop system has been engineered with close attention to reliability in field conditions. It delivers up to 29 minutes of flight time without payload and 22 minutes with payload, supported by a strong 27.5 kilogram maximum take-off weight. The aircraft carries a 10 liter tank that works with flat jet and centrifugal nozzles to ensure consistent droplet quality and even spraying. Its efficiency allows it to cover one acre in five to eight minutes, enabling up to 30 acres of spraying in a single day while keeping chemical wastage low and coverage uniform across different terrains.

A key strength of AeroCrop is its intelligent radar-based navigation system, which helps the drone maintain constant height, follow terrain profiles, avoid obstacles, and execute autonomous missions with accuracy. This makes spraying operations safer, more predictable, and



Devan Shah, Whole Time Director & Chief Executive Officer, Jyoti Global Plast

easier for operators to manage. The design approach reflects a strong focus on simplifying the work of farmers who traditionally rely on manual spraying. By delivering uniform coverage, reducing input wastage and automating repetitive tasks, the system supports improved crop protection, better health outcomes for field staff, and more efficient use of resources. It is intended to serve farmers who are already using drone spraying as well as those transitioning to mechanised applications for the first time.

Devan Shah, Whole Time Director & Chief Executive Officer, Jyoti Global Plast said, “AeroCrop is a direct extension of our manufacturing philosophy, which has always centered on

dependable performance and practical design. We believe this drone will help farmers adopt precision spraying easily and safely. Our goal is to make modern agricultural tools accessible without compromising on engineering quality or operational stability.”

The launch of AeroCrop builds on the company’s broader progression into the unmanned systems category. Earlier this year, Jyoti Global Plast introduced its first surveillance drone designed for day and night operations, which features both thermal and visual cameras to support a range of monitoring and inspection tasks. This was followed by the launch of an industrial cleaning drone line developed for high pressure cleaning of building facades, solar installations, and other large structures. The company recently secured its first commercial order for this cleaning system from a solar EPC firm, signaling strong early demand for its solutions.

As the company continues to diversify its offerings in the drone segment, the addition of AeroCrop positions Jyoti Global Plast firmly within the growing ecosystem of Indian UAV manufacturers. The company aims to contribute meaningfully to the country’s adoption of reliable, efficient, and cost-effective drone solutions across agriculture, surveillance, industrial cleaning, and infrastructure support.

CSR INDIA UNITED

PV Sindhu Launches 'Naari Shakti' – A Women Empowerment Initiative from EBG Group



EBG Group, a fast-growing Indian conglomerate with diversified interests across Mobility, Health, Realty, Lifestyle, Food, Services, Technology, and Education, today announced the launch of 'Naari Shakti', a nationwide women empowerment mission led by the EBG Foundation. The Group has committed USD 1 million for FY 2025–26 towards the

programme, aimed at empowering 1,00,000 women across India in its first phase. As part of the initiative, EBG also unveiled Suraksha Line — a 24/7 national SOS helpline (777777963) dedicated to ensuring real-time assistance, guidance, and safety for women.

The initiative was launched in Hyderabad by Padma Shri awardee and professional badminton player

PV Sindhu, who unveiled the mission and the national helpline.

Speaking at the launch, Dr. Irfan Khan, Chairman & Founder, EBG Group, said: "Seventy-five years after Independence, countless women still live without safety, voice, financial independence, healthcare, legal protection, and dignity. Naari Shakti was created to change this reality through action - not charity. The programme does not raise public funds; instead, the EBG Foundation invests resources earned through our businesses with complete transparency and accountability.

The initiative is inspired by what we see within EBG, where women already power our growth. With over 60% of our workforce being women, we wanted to extend our learnings to build a national platform that enables economic independence, health access, education, safety, legal recourse, and dignity - all in one continuum."

PV Sindhu added: "Naari Shakti represents dignity in action. When a woman can earn from home, safeguard her health, restart her education, seek help without fear, assert her legal rights, and age with respect, society rises with her. I am proud to unveil an initiative that delivers real power - not promises - to women."

Naari Shakti: Six-Pillar Framework for Women's Progress

- **Kaam & Kamaai:** Work-from-home income opportunities
 - **Sehat & Swachhta:** Basic health checks and dignity kits
 - **Padhna & Badalna:** Second-chance education and digital skills
 - **Suraksha Line:** 24/7 national SOS helpline — 777777963
 - **Kanoon & Hakk:** Legal support for safety and rights
 - **Saath & Sahara:** Care for abandoned or elder women through Naari Shakti Homes
- Naari Shakti is open to women



across all ages, backgrounds, and communities without discrimination. Priority will be given to domestic violence survivors, widows, single mothers, abandoned elder

women, those without income, and young women whose education was disrupted due to early marriage or financial hardship. Through its six-pillar model and USD 1 million

commitment, EBG Foundation aims to build a scalable, measurable, and self-sustaining empowerment framework that can be replicated across India.

Groundbreaking Ceremony Held for New Classroom Block Under Happy School Project in Koloru Village

The Rotary Clubs of Rotary Bangalore Lakeside and Rotary Bengaluru South Samarpane, in partnership with CIGMA India, conducted the Bhoomi Pooja (groundbreaking ceremony) for the construction of a new classroom block at the Government Higher Primary School, Koloru Village, Doddaballapura Taluk.

The initiative forms part of the Happy School Project under Rotary's focus area of Basic Education and Literacy.

With a CSR contribution of approximately Rs 33.34 lakh from CIGMA India, the project aims to upgrade essential school infrastructure and provide students with a safer, more engaging learning environment. The effort supports the broader goal of strengthening access to quality education in rural communities.

The Happy School Program focuses on improving infrastructure and co-scholastic facilities in state-funded schools to make them secure, cheerful, and conducive for learning. Enhancing these basic conditions is known to positively influence enrolment, attendance, retention, and overall learning outcomes.

The ceremony brought together employees of CIGMA India, Rotarians from both participating clubs, members of the Koloru Village Panchayat, representatives from the education department, school management, and students. The

gathering reflected collaborative community participation and a shared interest in supporting educational development in the region.

Projects like the Happy School initiative reinforce Rotary's commitment to strengthening basic education and literacy. Enhancing school facilities creates long-term benefits for



students and helps build a foundation for better learning outcomes." The event concluded with a vote of thanks acknowledging all contributors, including CIGMA India, village leaders, school authorities, and parents. Community members expressed optimism that the new classroom block would significantly benefit the academic growth and well-being of children in Koloru Village.



Beyond Nutrition: Akshaya Patra and Crestron Extend Support for Students' Academic Journeys

The Akshaya Patra Foundation, a social impact organisation dedicated to supporting children's health and education, in association with Crestron Software Development India Pvt. Ltd., facilitated the distribution of educational scholarships worth over ₹15 lakhs to 24 meritorious students from government and government-aided institutions.

In its first phase, this initiative will extend over ₹15 lakhs in educational support, directly benefiting 24 meritorious students from government and government-aided

institutions. The scholarship distribution ceremony was hosted at The Akshaya Patra Foundation's head office in Bengaluru and witnessed the participation of senior leadership from both organisations.

The Crestron delegation included Gagan Verma, Vice President – India & SAARC; Anil Prabhandam, Senior Director, Engineering; Suraj Parkash, Director, Quality Engineering; Gautham Basti, Director, Mechanical Engineering; Rashmi Ramachandran, Finance Controller; and Sudheer Kumar

Goud, Senior Manager, Enterprise Integration and Operations.

Representing Akshaya Patra were Dhananjay Ganjoo, Chief Resource Mobilisation & Marketing Officer, along with senior officials.

This pioneering initiative marks a strategic expansion of The Foundation's commitment beyond its flagship Mid-Day Meal Programme under PM POSHAN, by supporting higher education across diverse academic streams such as BA, B.Sc, B.Com, Engineering, BCA, M.Sc, and MCA.

Ambuja Cements' CSR Initiatives Advance Community Health and Nutrition in Baloda Bazar



Ambuja Cements, the 9th largest building materials solutions company globally, and part of the diversified Adani Portfolio, continues to advance rural health and nutrition through focused CSR interventions in Baloda Bazar, Chhattisgarh. The integrated program, implemented across 13 villages, has empowered communities to adopt healthier practices and strengthened convergence with local health systems.

During Poshan Pakhwada (Nutrition Month), Ambuja Cements conducted nutrition demonstration sessions across all villages, reaching over 250 participants including adolescent girls and lactating mothers. Additionally, 366 home visits provided personalized guidance on maternal and child nutrition, while Anganwadi workers were trained on the Poshan Tracker app to enhance digital monitoring and planning.

To promote dietary diversity, seeds for kitchen gardens were distributed to 123 households, encouraging families to grow vegetables and herbs for improved



nutrition. A health camp in Rawan village screened 34 adolescent girls for anaemia and sickle cell, offering counselling and nutritional supplements. On World No Tobacco Day, a community-wide awareness campaign reached over 600 villagers through mobile vans and

interactive sessions, reinforcing preventive health practices. With a strong focus on community empowerment and system-level integration, Ambuja Cements continues to strengthen rural health resilience and promote sustainable well-being across its operational areas.

Kotak Education Foundation felicitates over 1,400 scholars under the Kotak Junior and Graduate Scholarship Programmes in Mumbai at RIZE 2025, awarding scholarships to meritorious students from economically disadvantaged sections of Mumbai

Kotak Education Foundation (KEF), the CSR implementing arm of Kotak Mahindra Group, celebrated its annual scholarship felicitation ceremony, RIZE 2025, with pride and joy, recognizing 1,400+ new scholars and supporting their higher education from economically disadvantaged sections across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The event underscored KEF's commitment to fostering educational excellence and holistic development for its beneficiaries.

The ceremony was graced by Rinku Hooda, a celebrated Indian para-athlete and 2025 World Champion in javelin. With multiple global podium finishes, including silvers at the World Para Athletics Championships 2023 (Paris) and 2024 (Japan), along with notable medals at the Asian Para Games, he stands as one of India's most accomplished and inspiring sporting talents. His presence deeply motivated the scholars, as he personally engaged with them, offering heartfelt words of encouragement and inspiration.

The event featured several memorable moments, including a soul-stirring address by alumnus and Chief Guest, Mr. Vishal Nevege, Assistant Commissioner of State Tax, GST Department, Government of Maharashtra. He expressed deep gratitude for the Kotak Junior

Scholarship Programme and shared inspiring words of encouragement with the scholars.

Additionally, Devang Gheewalla, Group Chief Financial Officer, Kotak Mahindra Bank, motivated the scholars, highlighting the significance of the scholarship program and its remarkable growth over the past few years.

Paul Parambi, Trustee, Kotak Education Foundation, delivered an inspiring address, urging the new batch of scholars to pursue their goals with determination and resilience.

Arati Kaulgud, Director of Scholarship Program, Kotak Education Foundation, said, "These 1,400+ Kotak Scholars are a testament to how education can shape futures. With these scholarships, we're not just supporting their academic journey, we're opening a world of opportunity, growth, and mentorship that will help them rise to their highest potential."

The ceremony witnessed stellar performances by the scholars, showcasing their talents beyond academics. Each scholar was awarded their scholarship certificate, along with felicitating the achievers, marking the beginning of their journey in higher education across diverse fields. The atmosphere was filled with pride and accomplishment as the scholars received their certificates amidst enthusiastic applause.

The ceremony was also attended by prominent members of Kotak Education Foundation's management, including Mr. Ganesh Raja, CEO at KEF; Jayasree Ramesh, COO, Education at KEF; and Kavita Shanghvi, Director, Education at KEF.

RIZE 2025 was a celebration of talent, perseverance, and promise, a testament to Kotak Education Foundation's unwavering commitment to empowering the next generation through education and ensuring they achieve their full potential.

RIZE 2025 was a celebration of talent, perseverance, and promise, a testament to Kotak Education Foundation's unwavering commitment to empowering the next generation through education and ensuring they achieve their full potential.



Career247 and Kotak Mahindra Bank partner to enable Bharat's Youth with BFSI Careers: Brings Kotak's SKY Banker Program to Emerging India

Career247, the skilling and higher education arm of Adda Education, has partnered with Kotak Mahindra Bank to bring the SKY Bankers Program to its platform. This partnership supports Adda Education's vision of making India's youth employable through practical, accessible, and industry-linked learning.

The SKY Bankers Program is designed to train aspiring professionals for the Virtual Relationship Manager (VRM) role, one of the fastest-growing positions in the banking sector. The role focuses on building and managing customer relationships virtually, enabling personalised banking experiences through digital channels.

The Kotak SKY Bankers Program offers specialised, job-linked training that combines practical learning with real-world banking exposure. Delivered through Career247's platform, the program focuses on

developing the right communication, sales, and relationship management skills needed to excel as a VRM, an evolving role central to digital-first banking.

Through Career247's online learning platform and learner reach, the program will connect with aspiring candidates, particularly from emerging towns and cities. Learners will gain domain knowledge, industry-relevant skills, and the confidence to succeed in BFSI (Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance) sectors.

The partnership benefits both learners and the industry. While learners receive structured, job-linked training and placement opportunities, Kotak Mahindra Bank gains access to a pool of job-ready professionals trained specifically for the VRM role. For Career247, this collaboration reinforces its positioning as a trusted bridge between leading organisations and skilled talent. Commenting on the partnership,

Bimaljeet Singh Bhasin, CEO – Skilling & Higher Education, Adda Education, said, “The BFSI sector remains one of the largest employers in the country. The real challenge is not the availability of jobs but the readiness of candidates. Career247 bridges this gap by aligning training with real-world requirements. Our collaboration with Kotak Mahindra Bank is helping young professionals build sustainable careers and become industry-ready.”

With the BFSI sector rapidly evolving and digital banking becoming mainstream, initiatives like the SKY Bankers Program reflect the future of skilling, focused on real-world roles, practical training, and measurable employment outcomes.

Career247 remains committed to expanding such impactful partnerships, continuing its mission to prepare youth for meaningful careers and enable employers to access skilled, job-ready talent.

CALI FUND

AIMING TO RAISE BILLIONS FOR NATURE RECEIVES FIRST DONATION – OF JUST \$1,000

A MAJOR BIODIVERSITY FUND – WHICH COULD, IN THEORY, GENERATE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS ANNUALLY FOR CONSERVATION – RECEIVED ITS FIRST DONATION OF JUST US\$1,000 IN NOVEMBER, WRITES **ARUNA CHANDRASEKHAR, & ORLA DWYER** FOR CARBON BRIEF



A modest US\$1,000 payment to the UN's new Cali Fund marks its first contribution – sharpening pressure on larger companies to share profits from digital genetic resources with biodiversity-rich countries. Image: UNclimatechange, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

The Cali Fund was created under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the COP16 nature negotiations in Cali, Colombia, last year. On 19 November, nine months after the fund officially launched, UK start-up TierraViva AI put forward the first contribution.

The US\$1,000 payment is an “ice-breaker”, the company’s chief executive tells Carbon Brief, aimed at encouraging others “who may be hesitating” to pay in.

The fund is designed to be a way for companies that rely on nature’s genetic resources to share some of their earnings with the developing, biodiverse countries where many of the original resources are found.

Companies use genetic data from these materials to develop products, such as vaccines and skin cream.

One expert describes the US\$1,000 as a good “first step”, but says it is “time for larger actors to step forward”. Another says it “squarely points the finger to the profit-making enterprises that are not contributing”. The CBD is “pleased” about the first payment, a spokesperson tells Carbon Brief, adding that “many discussions” are ongoing about future donations.

FUNDING BIODIVERSITY ACTION
Companies all around the world use

genetic materials from plants, animals, bacteria and fungi often found in biodiversity-rich, global south countries to develop their products.

There are existing rules in place to secure consent and ensure compensation if companies or researchers travel to a country to physically gather these materials.

Today, however, much of this information is available in online databases – with few rules in place around access. This genetic data is known as digital sequence information (DSI).

The Cali Fund is part of an effort to close this loophole.

The COP16 agreement on the creation of the fund outlined that large companies in several sectors, including pharmaceutical, cosmetic, biotechnology, agribusiness and technology, “should” contribute a cut of the money they earn from the use of these materials.

The money is intended to fund biodiversity action, with 50 per cent of resources going to Indigenous

peoples and local communities who protect vast swathes of the world’s nature and biodiversity.

These contributions, however, are voluntary.

The fund officially launched at the resumed COP16 negotiations in Rome in February 2025, where a spokesperson for the CBD said that first contributions could be announced in spring.

However, Carbon Brief reported in August that the fund was still empty.

On 19 November, the first contribution was announced during the COP30 UN climate summit. At US\$1,000, the amount was significantly lower than the potential millions that larger companies could pay in.

A UK government press release described it as a “major milestone” that will “pav[e] the way for others to do the same and mobilise private sector finance for nature at scale”.

The payment was an “expression of our commitment to the objectives

of the Cali Fund”, TierraViva AI chief executive Dr Paul Oldham wrote in a letter to the executive secretary of the CBD, Astrid Schomaker.

The US\$1,000 is an “initial contribution”, Oldham said, and the company plans to give more “as our business grows”. Based in the UK with a team of programmers in Nairobi, TierraViva AI was set up in 2023 and uses AI to support conservation.

An anthropologist who worked on Indigenous peoples’ rights in the Amazon, Oldham’s research helped inform the list of sectors most likely to “directly or indirectly benefit from the use of DSI”, including “generative biology” and AI companies.

Oldham noted in a speech at the sidelines of COP30 that although the company’s earnings are not large enough to meet the contribution thresholds set out in the Cali Fund agreement, its contribution showed that companies “of any

It’s not a voluntary offsetting scheme or a... risky or fringe fund; it’s a multilateral mechanism designed to meet the highest fiduciary and equity standards.

DR JUNE RUBIS
Indigenous peoples and local communities lead in Asia, Cali Fund

size” can pay in. He tells Carbon Brief that while “some” companies “are not serious about contributing and are seeking to delay” paying into the fund, others have different concerns, including the “need for a level playing field” and positive incentives to contribute:

“This will be hard-earned company money, so it’s reasonable enough

to imagine that one of the first questions companies will want an answer to is: ‘well, what is this actually going to be spent on?’ And: ‘what is the benefit of this to us’, which is likely to vary by sector.

“In my view, the best way forward would be for companies that can to make contributions. That would give everybody, including governments, confidence that there might be constructive ways to address difficult topics.”

FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

A spokesperson for the CBD tells Carbon Brief:

“We are pleased that the Cali Fund is not only ‘open for business’, but that this first contribution also demonstrates it is fully operational. We thank and congratulate TierraViva AI for being the first company to step up.”

“Many discussions” are ongoing around future donations to the fund, the spokesperson says, and the CBD

CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors

The work of The Cali Fund is possible thanks to the efforts of 1 contributors. Since 2025 together they have contributed \$1,000.

CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors

2025 2025

EXCEL CSV PRINT

Contributor/Partner	Commitments	Deposits
TierraViva AI Limited	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Total	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000

The contribution page on the Cali Fund website, which shows the first payment of US\$1,000. Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.

is “hopeful that further announcements can be made soon”, ahead of the next UN biodiversity summit, COP17, in October 2026.

Asked whether the CBD was expecting more contributions at this stage, the spokesperson says the fund was set up in “very short order” and that the first payment shows that companies are “able to contribute”.

US biotechnology company Ginkgo Bioworks was the first to pledge to contribute to the fund earlier this year, but has so far not put forward any money. The company did not respond to Carbon Brief’s request for comment.

Carbon Brief reported earlier this year that at least two companies were contacted by a UK department with opportunities to be involved in the Cali Fund before its launch in February, but no company took up on the offer.

The first contribution coming from a “startup that has just begun

operations squarely points the finger to the profit-making enterprises that are not contributing”, Dr Siva Thambisetty, associate professor of law at the London School of Economics, tells Carbon Brief. Thambisetty adds:

“Strident cries of lack of legal certainty, unfairness or stacking obligations [combining responsibilities from different agreements and laws] would be more credible if industry organisations encouraged large firms that use DSI to begin contributing, instead of denying the last 20 years of multilateral [negotiations] that have led to this point.”

Dr June Rubis – Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) lead from Asia on the Cali Fund’s steering committee – welcomes TierraViva AI’s “first step”, but tells Carbon Brief that the “real test lies ahead” and that it is “now time for larger actors to step forward”.

She says the Cali Fund offers “clarity” on how the private sector

can directly increase support to UN-backed funds at a time when “states are retreating” from their climate and biodiversity finance obligations:

“It’s not a voluntary offsetting scheme or a...risky or fringe fund; it’s a multilateral mechanism designed to meet the highest fiduciary and equity standards. We invite companies to see this not as philanthropy, but as participation in a globally endorsed system where trust is institutionalised, benefits are traceable and equity is operationalised.

“Contributing to the Cali Fund isn’t just ethical, it’s strategic. [But] It’s about more than funding; it’s about trust, power-sharing and making sure IPLCs are part of the decisions, not just the outcomes.”

This story was published with permission from Carbon Brief.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/cali-fund-aiming-to-raise-billions-for-nature-receives-first-donation-of-just-1000/>)

STAY INFORMED...

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE

Order **CSR Today** Magazine now

To subscribe, contact:

CSR TODAY, Indian Centre for CSR, 104, Nirman Kendra,
Dr. E. Moses Road, Mahalaxmi Estate, Mumbai- 400 011 (India).

Tel: +91 22 249 03078 / 03082 / 55260





A view of the city of Tokyo in Japan. Image: Graham Powell-Wood on Unsplash

KAWASAKI HEAVY UNVEILS JAPAN'S BIGGEST 'AIR CARBON REMOVAL' PILOT, PLANS MEGATONNE SYSTEM BY 2030

The heavy-industry giant says the new system can regenerate CO₂ absorbing materials at just 60°C using factory waste heat, a design it plans to scale into one of Asia's largest carbon-removal projects, writes **Taejun Kang**

Japan's Kawasaki Heavy Industries said it has completed one of the country's largest direct air capture (DAC) demonstration units at its Kobe plant, aiming to accelerate development of technology that removes carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere.

Direct air capture uses chemical processes to pull CO₂ out of ambient air, allowing the captured carbon to be stored or used in products. The technology is seen as a potential tool for achieving net-zero emissions by offsetting hard-to-abate pollution from sectors such as aviation, heavy industry, and shipping.

The 13-metre-tall facility can capture 100 to 200 tonnes of CO₂ a year using a proprietary sorbent that separates the gas at about 60°C, compared with the 100–120°C typically required by liquid absorption

tures ranging from about 100°C to several hundred degrees. Energy use is a major cost barrier, and Kawasaki's low-heat design targets that challenge by regenerating sorbents at around 60°C and tapping industrial waste heat.

Globally, DAC deployment is led by the United States and Europe. The International Energy Agency notes major projects under construction in the US and Iceland, while most Asian countries remain at pilot-scale development. Japan has few commercial-scale DAC projects.

The pilot's 100–200-tonne-per-year capacity is small by global standards but significant for Japan. Kawasaki aims to scale the system to a commercial unit capable of capturing 500,000 to 1 million tonnes annually by 2030, which would place it among Asia's largest announced DAC deployments.

“Alongside cutting emissions, separation and capture are indispensable technologies,” Kawasaki's executive vice president Motohiko Nishimura said during a press briefing. “We will work to create new markets as we move toward a decarbonised society.”

Kawasaki's move comes as Japan's heavy-industry sectors such as steel, chemicals and shipping face growing pressure to decarbonise but remain dependent on fossil fuels.

Under the Green Transformation (GX) Plan by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Japan has identified CO₂ capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) and carbon-recycling technologies as priority industries for future export growth.

Under its updated energy strategy, Japan aims to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 60 per cent by

Globally, DAC deployment is led by the United States and Europe. The International Energy Agency notes major projects under construction in the US and Iceland, while most Asian countries remain at pilot-scale development. Japan has few commercial-scale DAC projects.

systems, the company said in a statement on 12 November.

It added that the lower temperature allows the process to run on factory waste heat, reducing energy use and environmental impact. The company drew on CO₂ removal technologies originally developed for submarines and space stations.

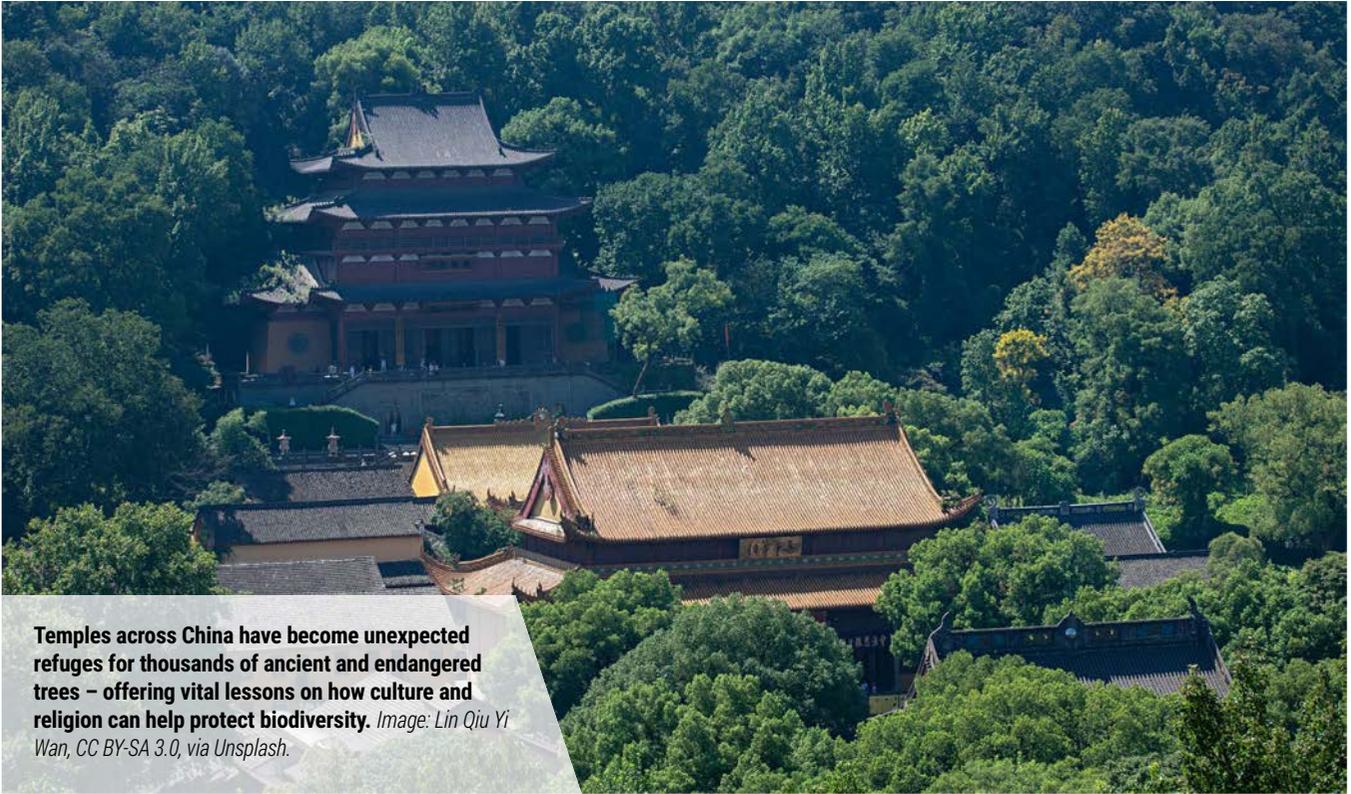
Capturing CO₂ directly from air is more energy-intensive than capturing it from industrial exhaust, with many DAC designs requiring sorbent regeneration at tempera-

Kawasaki expects demand from emerging economies with heavy reliance on fossil fuels, including Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and parts of Africa.

The market focus aligns with Japan's longstanding strategy of exporting industrial equipment and energy technologies to developing countries, as well as its broader push to support decarbonisation in Southeast Asia through technology transfer rather than large-scale domestic DAC rollouts.

FY2035 and 73 per cent by FY2040 compared with FY2013 levels, while pursuing all decarbonisation technologies, including CCUS, to achieve net-zero by 2050. Japan has also set a target of capturing or storing 120–240 million tonnes of CO₂ per year by 2050, and 6–12 million tonnes per year by 2030. 

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/kawasaki-heavy-unveils-japans-biggest-air-carbon-removal-pilot-plans-megatonne-system-by-2030/>)



Temples across China have become unexpected refuges for thousands of ancient and endangered trees – offering vital lessons on how culture and religion can help protect biodiversity. Image: Lin Qiu Yi Wan, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Unsplash.

RARE TREES FIND REFUGE IN CHINA'S TEMPLES

Logging has undone many ancient trees, but those protected by temples survive down the centuries, according to **BHuang Li, Yang Yongchuan and Tang Zhiyao.**

A flourishing nanmu tree towers over a four-storey Taoist temple, perhaps standing guard over it, perhaps taking refuge behind it. The tree, in Guizhou province's Wuchuan county, is about 400 years old. Timber from the species, *Phoebe zhennan*, is extremely valuable and was once used in the construction of imperial temples. Nanmu trees were harvested for their timber for centuries and *Phoebe zhennan* is now listed as Vulnerable on the International Union

for Conservation of Nature's Red List. Yet here, in the Wenqige temple grounds, an individual survives.

Nor is it a rarity. Our survey found many ancient trees surviving behind the walls of China's temples. This made us wonder if the temples are really helping protect China's ancient trees? If so, how? And can this inform our own efforts to protect biodiversity?

Trees and temples

We came across that particular nanmu tree during a 2017 survey of

ancient trees in settlements in the ethnic minority areas of the southwest. In the years since, we have carried out multiple surveys in 1,324 of China's 2,846 county-level regions. From these we have built a database of ancient trees surviving on temple grounds. We now have complete data for 5,125 Buddhist temples (about 15 per cent of the total) and 1,420 Taoist temples (about 17 per cent).

Our data shows that it is extremely common for temples to retain ancient trees, particularly in the east of China. We recorded

46,966 trees of over a century old across 6,545 temples – or 7.2 trees per temple. The density of ancient trees inside those sites is 7,000 times higher than outside.

Some well-known sites are home to many individual trees. In Beijing, Tanzhe Temple, a Buddhist place of worship built in around 307 AD, contains 178 ancient trees; nearby Jietai Temple (first built during in the 7th century) has 88.

But smaller and lesser-known sites can have more than their share. Tieding Temple, on the outskirts of Chongqing, is tiny (about 0.03 hectares) yet home to four ancient white fig trees (*Ficus virens*). These are planted as an alternative to the bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*) which is sacred in Buddhism but hard to grow in China.

Often, the ancient trees growing within temple walls are older than those surviving outside, with the oldest being over two millennia old. That's about as old as White Horse Temple in Luoyang, regarded as China's first official Buddhist temple and built in 68 AD. This indicates that some of the ancient trees were growing when the temples were built, or were planted at the same time.

The temples we surveyed preserve 5,989 ancient trees from 61 of the 130 tree species on the China Biodiversity Red List that survive in areas inhabited by humans. Eight of those species, such as *Carpinus putoensis* and *Firmiana major*, are found nowhere else but in temple grounds.

Carpinus putoensis, or Putuo hornbeam, has only one surviving example in the wild, a 200-year-old at Huiji Temple on Zhejiang's Mount Putuo. *Firmiana major* was for a time thought to be extinct in the wild, but 200-year-old trees were later found in two temples in Yunnan.

Trees and religion

How do these temples become refuges for ancient trees? It's to do with the importance of trees in

Buddhist and Taoist culture, and Chinese tradition.

In Buddhism, certain plants are special. Scripture lists “five trees and six flowers” which should be planted in temple grounds. These are the bodhi tree, the lofty fig, the talipot palm, the betel palm and the palmyra palm. The flowers are the sacred lotus, the giant crinum lily, the yellow ginger lily, the great white frangipani, the white champaca and the golden lotus banana. These, or close relatives and similar-looking alternatives, are therefore common in Buddhist temples.

In Chinese traditional culture, trees in the cypress family, such as Oriental arborvitae and Chinese juniper, are believed to ward off evil and symbolise longevity. They also represent immortality in Taoism and purity and serenity in Buddhism. Such trees are often present in temple grounds.

Temples are often built in wooded areas, with naturally growing trees included within their walls. Those trees make up an important subset of the ancient trees we studied. Millennia of logging have meant many natural forests and ancient trees have disappeared, but those protected by temples survive through the centuries.

Protecting and propagating

Interestingly, some trees valued in Buddhist culture grow in temples far beyond their natural range. The ginkgo, for example, grows more easily in China's climate than the sacred bodhi tree, so is sometimes chosen as an alternative.

At the end of the last ice age, about 11,700 years ago, the ginkgo was found only in a few refuges, including around Mount Tianmu in eastern China and the Dalou Mountains of the south-west. Today, it is found in Buddhist temples throughout China, with many examples over a thousand years old. We think the arrival of Buddhism in

China, about two millennia ago, led to the tree being spread from its few natural homes.

It's often thought that transportation difficulties in those times meant plants could not easily be propagated beyond their natural habitats, particularly in the south-west, with its difficult terrain. But trees sacred to Buddhist culture spread across ancient China. We found over 20 other species growing outside their natural habitats, including the Buddhist pine and Chinese yew.

The ecological value of culture

We found huge diversity in the ancient trees growing in temple grounds – 534 species in all. Most of those also thrive in natural forests and are commonly seen. But in areas long subject to human activity, those ancient trees could be the last surviving examples. Temples provide a last refuge for those endangered tree species, demonstrating the particular value of those sites to biodiversity protection.

Cases of cultural practices aiding biodiversity conservation are extremely common, both in China and worldwide. Two further examples are the fengshui forests of southern China and the church forests of Ethiopia. Culturally protected biodiversity is often very resilient, surviving for centuries – even during our current rapid economic growth.

More importantly, those cultural practices include a lot of valuable traditional ecological wisdom. Recognising the positive role of culture and religion in conservation would point the way to meeting future biodiversity targets and building an ecological civilisation.

This article was originally published on Dialogue Earth under a Creative Commons licence.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/rare-trees-find-refuge-in-chinas-temples/>)



Navigating the energy transition is not about virtue signalling; it's prudent business sense, writes Eric Usher of UNEP FI. Image: Robin Hicks / Eco-Business

THE TRILLION-DOLLAR OPPORTUNITY: THE SMART ECONOMICS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION

With the planet headed for well beyond 1.5°C of warming, the stakes for business are rising. Those who confront climate risk now could unlock what many economists say is the growth story of the century, opines **Eric Usher**

The news of the first catastrophic climate tipping point – decline of the coral reefs – paradoxically comes at a time when geopolitical headwinds are casting doubt on the value of climate change mitigation.

While some firms have pulled back from public commitments on

tackling the climate crisis, we are now seeing the start of a quieter, more deliberate focus on making sustainability efforts substantive. There is a reason for this. The climate really is changing, and the recent headlines remind us pressingly so.

In UNEP's Emissions Gap Report released this month, the latest

estimates put the world on course for a temperature rise of 2.8°C this century if we maintain current policy for mitigation efforts. Should the latest Nationally Determined Contributions be fully implemented, this could lower the projected temperature warming to 2.3-2.5°C. This is well above the 1.5 degree ambition in the Paris Agreement. The

recent Global Tipping Points report suggests that global warming must be reduced to 1.2 degrees ‘as fast as possible’.

We know that financial institutions recognise the need for action. It is clear to them that the climate crisis and energy transition it necessitates will impact how they and their clients do business.

It’s not just about risks, there is a great opportunity - and this is where it gets interesting. In a recent interview, leading British economist Lord Nicholas Stern called investment in climate action “the economic growth story of the 21st century”. We can see this playing out when we look at the pace of development of the renewable energy sector and the huge investment that some of the world’s biggest economies are making to see what is possible.

Despite coal being just over 50 per cent of China’s electricity mix, in 2024, China’s investment into clean energy reached US\$940 billion, almost a clean trillion. As a result, China has now installed more solar and wind than the rest of the world combined – leading in the first half of 2025 to a slight decline in fossil fuel use.

Underpinning China’s efforts are its comprehensive green finance policies and regulatory frameworks. These have supported a shift toward more innovation and capital-driven growth and are aligned with China’s broader policy ambitions for a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable development model.

Ahead of COP30, China shared its updated Nationally Determined Contribution, which includes targets for increasing wind and solar power capacity by six times above its 2020 levels, and for reducing economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 7 to 10 per cent from their peak by 2035.

China is not alone. India also grew its renewable energy by more than three times its electricity

demand growth in 2024, causing its coal and gas use to fall by 3.1 per cent and 34 per cent respectively. Eighty-three per cent of India’s power sector investment went to clean energy in the same period. Investment in India’s renewable energy sector for the last quarter of that same year totalled over US\$4.66 billion, marking a dramatic 91.5 per cent year-on-year increase. Pakistan also saw remarkable deployment in 2024, adding 15 GW of solar capacity to a power grid that is only about twice that size.

In fact, 2025 has been a turning point for global power supply. According to climate thinktank Ember, the world’s wind and solar farms have generated more electricity than coal plants for the first time this year.

The world generated almost a third more solar power in the first half of the year compared with the same period in 2024, meeting 83 per cent of the global increase in electricity demand. Wind power grew by just over 7 per cent.

The result? Renewables have now displaced fossil fuels for the first time. The energy transition is well underway. It will be a bumpy transition, especially with demand growth from AI now surging, but the direction of travel is clear.

Let’s look at what we know. The environment is changing. Countries, regulatory regimes and economies are responding – albeit not all at an even pace. This means that sooner or later, businesses and economies will have to adapt and indeed, many are already doing so. Those that don’t will be left behind.

Financial institutions, meanwhile, continue to play the same important role they always have. The provision of financial services is critical to facilitate the resilience and growth of the real-world economy.

Evolving operations to be more sustainable is not only good business sense, but also a part of

prudent risk management and fiduciary duty. Financial institutions are experts at managing risks and taking necessary precautions to protect their own and their clients’ assets – not just for today but to safeguard longer term outcomes.

For a great many, the impacts of climate change already feature in their commercial decisions. You only have to look at the challenges faced by homeowners in trying to insure their properties in areas at risk from the adverse impacts of climate change. Premiums are spiking, and some regions are now being described as uninsurable.

From an investment perspective, pension funds and other longer-term investors are among those at the forefront of considering how climate change affects their portfolios.

Take the example of La Caisse, one of Canada’s largest pension funds. After exiting fossil fuels in 2023, La Caisse recently modelled what its returns would have been had the fund stayed invested in oil and gas. The result: over five years, the annualized return of its approach to the energy transition has reached nearly 12 per cent, compared to the MSCI ACWI Energy index’s position of roughly 8 per cent.

Navigating the energy transition is not about virtue signalling; it’s prudent business sense. Being aware and managing risks opens the door to opportunities today and tomorrow. In the words of Lord Stern, it’s much better to “invest in the technologies of the 21st century” than those from previous eras. The smart money is already planning and investing in the future. Those who don’t, do so at their peril. 

Eric Usher is the head of United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI)

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/the-trillion-dollar-opportunity-the-smart-economics-of-the-energy-transition/>)



New research shows the wars in Ukraine and Gaza have produced hundreds of millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions – underscoring how armed conflict fuels climate change and complicates efforts to cut global emissions.

Image: Samuel King Jr, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

F-35S, FIRES AND FIXING: UKRAINE, GAZA WARS THREATEN CLIMATE

Groundbreaking research shows how wars accelerate global warming; experts say militaries must report emissions.

From fuel guzzled by fighter jets to wildfires sparked by shelling, the war in Ukraine has created vast amounts of planet-warming emissions, according to a new study that says Russia should pay for the damage to the global climate.

The first three years of conflict have generated almost 237 million

metric tons of greenhouse gases (GHG), equivalent to putting 120 million fossil-fuel cars on the road, or the combined annual emissions of Belgium, Austria and Ireland, according to researchers.

“This is pushing us in the wrong direction at a time when we drastically have to cut emissions,” said climate researcher Lennard de

Klerk, lead author of the report tallying the war’s emissions, which was published this month.

The cost of the climate damage attributable to the war - in which hundreds of thousands have been killed on both sides - already exceeds US\$43 billion, de Klerk said.

“Russia should pay compensation for this damage as part of wider

war reparations,” he told Context. A separate study looking at the Israeli-Hamas war in Gaza estimates the carbon footprint for the first 15 months topped 32 million tons of emissions, when post-conflict reconstruction is factored in. That is comparable to the annual emissions of Ivory Coast.

“The numbers are staggering for such an intense period,” said Benjamin Neimark, who led the research by UK and US-based experts. “Most direct conflict emissions come from jet fuel, but what really surprised us were the projected emissions for reconstruction. That was a shock and made us sit up.”

The pioneering studies will be presented on the sidelines of next month’s COP30 climate summit in Brazil.

Climate researchers say conflicts and climate change create a cycle of destruction - not only does war drive climate change, but climate change can fuel conflict in fragile regions as competition intensifies over water and other resources.

Wildfires

While military activity is the biggest source of conflict-related emissions in Ukraine, de Klerk said he was surprised to find wildfires account for a fifth of the war’s carbon footprint since Russia’s 2022 invasion.

Relentless shelling has sparked thousands of blazes which have ravaged forests and farmland, with some likely exacerbated by the detonation of landmines and unexploded ordnance strewn across the landscape.

Nearly 850,000 hectares were torched last year, according to the report by the Initiative on GHG Accounting of War, an international research team led by de Klerk.

“This is more than 20 times the annual average,” he said. “The summer of 2024 was extremely dry, most likely due to climate change, which enabled fires to spread.”

With the expansion of the war in Gaza, missile strikes across the Lebanon-Israel border also ignited fires, destroying forests and farmland.

As in Ukraine, blazes quickly raged out of control due to the dangers firefighters face operating in these war zones.

Reconstruction

The destruction of energy infrastructure in both Ukraine and Gaza has also increased emissions.

Russia’s targeting of oil depots has sent tons of fuel up in flames, while attacks on gas and electricity infrastructure have released potent GHGs like methane and sulphur hexafluoride or SF6, which has a global warming potential 24,000 times greater than CO2.

Before Israel launched its assault on Gaza in October 2023, about a quarter of the enclave’s electricity came from solar panels – one of the highest shares in the world.

But the destruction of most solar infrastructure has increased reliance on polluting diesel-powered generators.

Neimark said the carbon footprint of post-war reconstruction in Gaza, where about 68,000 people have been killed, would dwarf emissions from the conflict itself.

Israel’s intense bombardment has destroyed more than 90 per cent of housing and turned Gaza into a wasteland, creating 60 million tons of debris, according to UN estimates.

Rebuilding homes and infrastructure will require enormous quantities of concrete and steel, whose production are highly carbon-intensive.

The decimation of farmland, orchards and shrub land has also raised the risk of desertification in a region that is already vulnerable to the effects of climate change, said Neimark, a senior lecturer at Queen Mary University of London.

Both wars have additionally increased global emissions away from the frontlines.

Airspace closures have forced commercial flights to reroute, pushing up fuel consumption. Flights from London to Tokyo now take almost three hours longer, de Klerk said.

Unrest in the Middle East has similarly disrupted international shipping through the Red Sea, boosting emissions due to longer routes and the need for faster sailing speeds.

Military data hole

This new research on Gaza and Ukraine is part of a wider push to increase transparency around global military emissions.

Even in peacetime, armies have large carbon footprints - maintenance of bases, transport of troops and equipment, military exercises and weapons production all add up.

The Conflict and Environment Observatory, a UK-based non-profit, estimates the world’s militaries are responsible for about 5.5 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions.

But countries are not required to report their military emissions to international climate bodies.

Experts say the data gap means we risk underestimating the size of emission cuts required to limit the global temperature increase to below 1.5 Celsius.

With many countries now ramping up defence spending in response to multiple crises, there are fears this will both increase military emissions and divert funding from efforts to tackle climate change. Climate researchers say militaries must be forced to report their emissions.

“We can’t start making meaningful cuts without adequate baselines,” Neimark said.

“The military has long operated as if the emissions coming out of an F-35 don’t stink, and that has to stop.”

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/f-35s-fires-and-fixing-ukraine-gaza-wars-threaten-climate/>)



Worsening sand and dust storms, wildfires intensified by record-setting winds, and increasingly severe hurricanes, derechos, short-lived convective storms, and other extreme weather events are impacting people's lives, health and property around the world.

Image: Alex Gindin, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Unsplash.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS DISRUPTING GLOBAL WIND PATTERNS, AFFECTING PLANETARY HEALTH: REPORT

Climate change is affecting global wind patterns in multiple ways, many of which have direct implications for human health, writes **Sean Mowbray**

Climate change is disturbing wind patterns across the globe in dramatic ways. And when combined with land-use change and desertification, these changes are spawning immense sand and dust

storms that pose an ever-increasing risk to human health.

These mega wind storms now affect an estimated 330 million people annually, exposing communities to harmful particulate matter, and sometimes including toxic mate-

rials. That's according to a warning released by the World Health Organization and World Meteorological Organization earlier this year.

"The frequency and severity of sand and dust storms is increasing, and it's increasing globally," says

Aaron Cohen, principal scientist emeritus with the Health Effects Institute, who was part of an international team of scientists who recently advised that such storms present a “growing global health threat.”

“[S]and and dust pollution travels over very long distances. And it isn’t just carrying dust and sand; it picks up all kinds of other pollutants,” Cohen explains. These intensifying storms have been linked to respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, while also being directly linked to meningitis outbreaks in the Sahel region of Africa.

According to a WMO and WHO analysis, around 3.8 billion people were exposed to dust levels exceeding the WHO’s safety threshold between 2018-2022; that’s a 31 per cent increase from the 2.9 billion people exposed during 2003-2007.

Concerningly, these sand and dust storms are now occurring in, and affecting, areas not previously considered sources of dust, says Sara Basart, a WMO scientific officer who leads the Sand and Dust Storm Warning Advisory and Assessment System. “These [new] sources are usually close to where ... people live,” she adds.

As climate change escalates, these extreme events will likely increase and strengthen further, Basart notes, driven by short-lived convective storms that bring strong winds able to pick up huge amounts of sand and dust and carry it thousands of miles from the points of origin.

“If the occurrence of these extreme convective storms is higher, the possibility to have more sand and dust storms is higher [too],” says Basart, adding that this potential rises when combined with intensifying land-use change, vegetation loss and soil degradation.

Wind is “an environmental weather phenomenon. That means changes in the land and changes in the frequency of weather patterns can increase both their occurrence and intensity,” she explains.



The climate change component is adding that extra [wind] intensity. Our simulations are showing that in a warming world, these storms and extreme winds will just get stronger and more devastating.

—RALF TOUMI

director, Grantham Institute at Imperial College London

Whipping up a storm

Sand and dust storms are, however, just one face of changing global winds, and offer just one example of how globally warmed wind patterns are impacting communities and public health across the planet.

Climate change is supercharging ever more powerful and dangerous storm systems, ranging from supercell thunderstorms and derechos to hurricanes — all of which can include dangerously high wind speeds and occur in increasingly unexpected places.

As the world’s climate gets hotter, warming ocean waters combine with warmer air that can hold much more moisture to create stronger and more destructive precipitation events. Those conditions can also fuel intense winds.

Research shows, for example, that hurricane wind speeds in the North Atlantic increased by 8.3 meters per second (nearly 30 kilometres per hour, or 19 miles per hour) on average between 2019 and 2023 due to climate change. This resulted in

40 hurricanes moving up a hurricane category — leading to more violent winds packing a more powerful punch able to kill or harm more people.

Ralf Toumi, director of the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London, and his team are tracking how climate change intensifies the wind speeds of destructive storms. He uses hurricanes Helene and Milton that struck the US in 2024 to illustrate his point. Toumi and his team found that climate change increased Helene’s wind speeds by 13 mi/h (nearly 21km/h) and Milton’s by 11 mi/h (17.7 km/h) This shift moved up Milton from a Category 2 to a Category 3 storm, which ultimately caused upward of US\$30 billion in damage; Helene made landfall as a Category 4, costing US\$78.7 billion.

“The climate change component is adding that extra [wind] intensity,” Toumi says. “Our simulations are showing that in a warming world, these storms and extreme winds will just get stronger and more devastating.”

Severe damage is happening not only to human communities, but natural ones. In the tropics, for example, researchers believe intensifying convective storms may pose a threat to forests by combining higher winds with lightning.

Climate change and its drought inducement is likewise increasing the number of “fire weather days” — hot, dry weather that combines with strong winds to fuel flames. These are the kinds of conditions that produced the 160 km/h (100 mi/h) Santa Anna winds that drove the catastrophic Los Angeles wildfires of January 2025. Wind-whipped fires, with their intense toxic smoke result in both short- and long-term public health and property threats, including harm posed by post-fire “sick homes.”

Over the past 20 years extreme wildfires have doubled in number.

This is contributing to massive destruction of forests, but also mega wildfires that sweep into urban areas and pose a high risk to human health, especially children.

Changes to winds high up

The winds of change we experience directly are surface winds, but wind patterns high above Earth's surface are also being dramatically altered by global warming; those changes, too, impact our health in major ways.

Escalating extreme weather events have been linked to changes in the jet stream — bands of high-altitude, high-speed winds that circumnavigate the planet, moving generally from west to east. Recent research suggests that more violent wind gusts resulting in increased high-altitude turbulence can pose a risk to air travel in some parts of the world. As climate change progresses, this problem is set to increase, meaning bumpier — and potentially more dangerous — flights in the future.

But airline jitters aside, shifts in Earth's jet stream have been linked to a laundry list of extreme events, from hot and dry summer heat waves in Europe that resulted in thousands of deaths in 2022, to reduced rainfall in California, raising the wildfire threat.

In the Northern Hemisphere, researchers believe climate change-induced slowing of the jet stream circling the Arctic is resulting in increased "waviness," as weather-driving high-altitude winds dip far from the polar region to lower latitudes, with those waves then sometimes stalling in place.

This waviness, some researchers say, is linked to both extreme drought and deluge, as the stalled jet stream blocks both high- and low-pressure weather systems, holding extreme heat, drought, precipitation or even cold snaps in one place for days or weeks at a time. The vast heat domes sometimes produced by jet stream blocking can be especially

unhealthful and deadly. Put simply, a meandering, sometimes static jet stream makes extreme weather events more persistent, says Jennifer Francis, a senior scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center, increasing the damage and harm they can cause to people and ecosystems. However, a recent study challenges the hypothesis that global warming is causing big jet stream fluctuations, arguing that waviness existed prior to human impacts.

In winter months, a jet stream that dips from the Arctic as far south as the Gulf of Mexico produces the so-called polar vortex, with its more sustained more intense cold snaps, or slow-moving snow storms that disrupt communities and put vulnerable people at risk.

"The weakening of the wind can change the speed of a storm system and make it move slower," explains Shuang-Ye Wu, a climate scientist at the University of Dayton in the US "Even if it's the same intensity, if it moves slower, it means it stalls in place, and it could generate more precipitation, leading to greater floods, for example."

When the wind doesn't blow

Climate change is complicated, and while it is clearly intensifying wind speeds during extreme storms, the overall global daily trend is contrary to that and likely one of "global stalling," or reduced average surface wind speeds. Because wind is governed by temperature and pressure gradients, in general, the global wind system tends to weaken as climate warms, says Wu.

"What we've seen is that from the 1960s through to around 2010, wind speeds have been kind of generally slowing down," notes Hannah Bloomfield at Newcastle University in the UK. Since the '60s, average terrestrial wind speeds have declined by 0.5 km/h (0.3 mi/h) each decade. From around 2010 onward, there are indications this trend reversed,

with winds speeding up slightly. But there remains uncertainty around these calculations.

"Interestingly, since 2010 winds have actually sped up again," says Bloomfield. "But when we look [slightly] forward using climate models, and [then] look far forward into the future, our average wind speeds globally are expected to decline."

Researchers today are concerned that tomorrow's future warming will bring periods of prolonged low winds, known as wind droughts. Lengthy periods of little, or no, wind can intensify heat domes and increase pollutant concentrations (including ground-level ozone), by eliminating the atmospheric mixing and circulation needed to disperse heat and contaminants.

It's expected that this terrestrial stalling will also cause declines in wind power output in some regions, impacting energy grids. A power outage and shutdown of air conditioners in an intense heat wave could expose vulnerable people to dangerously high temperatures.

A recent paper suggests that around 20 per cent of wind turbines "are in regions at high future risk of record-breaking wind drought extremes." This study found that wind drought under a future warming climate could bring serious water drought to eastern North America, western Russia, northeastern China and north-central Africa.

Based on projections, Europe's wind speeds could fall by around 5 per cent on average by mid-century, and this could increase to 10 per cent by 2100. "Europe is one of the regions where we see prolonged low wind speed times increasing, particularly in the North Sea, which is one of the places where we are building a lot of wind farms," says Bloomfield.

Weak winds can combine over the oceans to exacerbate the effects of marine heat waves. A marine heat wave in the North Atlantic in

2023 broke temperature records, contributing to heat waves across the European continent. Earlier this year, researchers published a paper that found weak winds played a key role in this event.

“We can get periods of time where you have particularly low winds that can obviously affect the delivery of power if you’re relying on wind energy,” says Matthew England, lead author on that paper and a physical oceanographer at the University of New South Wales, Australia. “But weak winds under a global warming scenario are also particularly dangerous for heat waves.

“Under climate change, we’re getting these marine heat waves playing out because of ocean warming and extra heat trapped by greenhouse gases,” he explains. “But they get particularly bad and nasty if the winds are weak. The reason for this is that a weaker wind field means that the overturning effect — that churning of the surface warm [ocean] layer with the waters below — is reduced.”

England’s team didn’t find any evidence that winds in the North Atlantic have weakened over time thus far. Rather, “It’s as though 2023 just got particularly unlucky and had these periods of very weak winds play out,” he says. But a warming world with prolonged wind droughts could make marine heat waves worse, in turn impacting large land masses.

Rapid polar changes

Long term, some of the most impactful alterations in wind patterns may be happening in the Arctic and Antarctic — with far-reaching global implications.

In the Arctic, wind’s role is hastening sea ice loss, which in turn is helping heat up the planet.

“Generally, the relatively weak winds in the Arctic [didn’t] have much of an impact on the [polar] ocean” in the past, says Morven Muilwijk, a physical oceanographer with

the Norwegian Polar Institute. That’s mainly due to the region’s sea ice acting as a shield against the effects of wind and waves. “But what we’re seeing now is that, as the Arctic is warming up, we’re transitioning to much more of a seasonal sea ice cover with more open water.”

With the sea ice shield diminished, wind is helping break up fragmented ice. “Stronger winds mean more drag on the ice and the ocean,” says Muilwijk. This, in turn, increases mixing of the ocean’s layers.

This “enhanced ocean circulation beneath the ice” can mean more ice melt as warmer, saltier waters mix with colder and fresher surface layers. Research also suggests that winds are increasing in Antarctica, which could cause a similar impact on ice melt.

Arctic cyclones are changing too, with research suggesting they’ll intensify with climate change. It is already estimated that Arctic cyclones have intensified and become longer lasting over past decades.

That’s a concern, as these short-lived storms can result in rapid seasonal sea ice loss. Steven Cavallo, a professor at the University of Oklahoma in the US, says it’s possible

these cyclones are accelerating a shift to an ice-free Arctic in summer. But Cavallo cautions that “There’s still a lot of unknowns. It’s really hard to figure out definitively from our observations what’s going on with Arctic cyclones, because there’s so many changes happening in the Arctic.”

Major shifts in wind and sea ice have implications for Arctic communities, bringing intensifying storms that cause coastal erosion, infrastructure destruction, and loss of traditional livelihoods such as hunting and fishing conducted from atop floating ice.

But Muilwijk also notes that the wind’s effects on sea ice have far-distant consequences, with changing atmospheric currents altering freshwater distribution and ultimately influencing global weather.

“I think the key message here is that these changes ... have implications that go far, far beyond the Arctic’s borders,” he says.

Experts Mongabay spoke to underline that these dramatic changes — extremes of wind blowing harder or not at all — necessitate a range of measures: mitigating the health impacts from sand and dust storms, and preparing for reduced energy output from wind turbines by diversifying renewables and storage capacity. Above all, these planet-wide changes underline the need to address climate change.

“There’s actually kind of an upside or a silver lining to some of these very bizarre weather events and extreme weather,” says Francis from the Woodwell Climate Centre. “I think part of what we’re experiencing is a wake-up call and a recognition that the climate crisis is here now ... affecting all of us now.” 

This story was published with permission from Mongabay.com.

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/climate-change-is-disrupting-global-wind-patterns-affecting-planetary-health-report/>

Arctic cyclones are changing too, with research suggesting they’ll intensify with climate change. It is already estimated that Arctic cyclones have intensified and become longer lasting over past decades.



As climate change, rising seas and unequal conservation policies threaten both people and ecosystems in the Sundarbans, marginalised communities call for their knowledge and rights to be recognised in efforts to protect the world's largest mangrove forest. *Image: Paul Williams, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.*

LIFE IN THE SUNDARBANS, ON THE FRONT LINE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Dalit and Adivasi communities who have protected the mangrove forest for centuries say they must be listened to, writes **Puja Mandal**, Dialogue Earth

The Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest in the world. A maze of tidal waterways, mudflats and small islands, shaped by the ebb and flow of the Bay of Bengal, it stretches across 10,000 sq km of the India-Bangladesh border.

The Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers all meet the sea here, forming a rich habitat for Bengal tigers, spotted deer, saltwater crocodiles, fishing cats, monitor lizards and a wide variety of birds and fish.

What is sometimes overlooked is that millions of people also reside

here. Behind the famous biodiversity lies a complex history of human dispossession, migration and climate adversity that shapes these people and threatens their existence.

As part of Dialogue Earth's Indigenous Voices project, I visited the western edge of the Sundarbans to

ask local people about the threats to the region and why they must be included in plans to protect it.

Settlements and historical marginalisation

The Sundarbans has long been a site of resource extraction and exploitation, from Mughal settlements and Portuguese smugglers to East India Company rule.

By the late 18th century, colonial rulers began clearing vast tracts of the mangrove forests for agriculture, with timber production displacing ecosystems and communities. Today, mangroves are still being lost due to a variety of factors including climate change and over-exploitation, making the Sundarbans even more vulnerable.

Communities of Dalit (formerly known pejoratively as untouchables) and Adivasi (meaning Indigenous) make up the majority of the population. Locals told me how their ancestors migrated as early as the 1820s from the Chota Nagpur Plateau in eastern India, nearby towns, and parts of eastern Bengal.

Both Dalits and Adivasis are historically oppressed communities who face ongoing discrimination. Caste discrimination against the Dalits has led to atrocities such as the Marichjhapi Massacre in 1979. While Adivasi communities only arrived in the Sundarbans after being forcibly relocated by the British and colonial-era landlords, who needed labour to clear the forest.

As a result, these communities have lived, adapted and protected this mangrove ecosystem for centuries, yet remain largely invisible in conservation frameworks that prioritise wildlife over human rights.

The Sundarbans is often portrayed as largely uninhabited, but it is home to 7.2 million people. These people now experience more frequent and destructive cyclones and flooding, as well as riverbank erosion caused by the rising sea and,

as a result, increased salinisation of fresh water.

Climate impacts

Life in the Sundarbans is labour-intensive, harsh and, thanks to the tigers, crocodiles and venomous snakes – often dangerous.

Fishing and agriculture have been the two main forms of work for a long time but now climate change is taking its toll.

During my visit, a fisherfolk family told me they lost half their land in 2020 to rising sea levels. Sadly, they are not alone. Since the 1960s, 210 sq km of Sundarbans land has been lost to the rising sea.

Farmers told me they cultivate rice in paddies, vegetables, fruits such as watermelon and lately pulses (moong daal). The cultivating period is largely from July to November and harvesting takes place from December to February. From March to May the land remains fallow.

Locals said farming has become more and more challenging. Older generations shared stories about difficult but prosperous harvest cycles. Growing traditional crops becomes harder each year, damaging livelihoods and food insecurity.

Both Dalits and Adivasis are historically oppressed communities who face ongoing discrimination. Caste discrimination against the Dalits has led to atrocities such as the Marichjhapi Massacre in 1979.

“The water was sweet [here] before,” one farmer told me in the village of Namkhana, the gateway to the Sundarbans. “We could grow rice, and vegetables easily and the yield was good. Now the water has become saline. It ruins our crops.”

Extreme weather events

Sundarbans and its residents are surviving in severe environmental stress and anxiety. The locals I spoke to recalled the devastation caused by Cyclone Aila in 2009, which destroyed 778 km of mud embankments that protected fields and aquaculture ponds from salt-water intrusions.

At the time, a project worth INR 50 billion (US\$570 million) was proposed to rebuild the British-era embankments, but 10 years later only 15 per cent of the project had been completed. When the more intense Cyclone Amphan hit in 2020, the region was once again devastated. Some 250 people died and the environmental losses were huge.

In the Indian portion of the Sundarbans, ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss costs INR 6.7 billion (US\$147 million) per year, equivalent to 5 per cent of the region’s GDP in 2009, according to a 2014 World Bank study.

“Floods are common here,” one local told me. “Every year the sea is so fierce it breaks the bandh.”

Bandh means embankments. Here they are supposed to be installed and maintained by the local government, though around the coastline all that is seen are incomplete or broken structures.

One farmer said floods last year killed freshwater fish in two of the ponds in his village. “We saw all the fish die and their eyes turning hazy within minutes of the flood. We had no fish for consumption that whole season,” he said.

Another farmer said soil in the Sundarbans is now too muddy for cultivation because of the rising salt

content. Salt is known to lower the drainage capacity of soils.

Fishing problems

Some farmers have decided that fishing and fish farming offer better sources of income even though they are also impacted by climate change. “At least there are still fish to catch,” one said. “There is less and less land to grow with each passing year.”

The rise of commercial seafood farming – mainly crab and shrimp – has brought its own problems, however. To walk around the villages is to see many pond-like structures used for aquaculture. Mangroves are cleared to construct these, further weakening defences.

The Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, a tourist attraction that will soon be expanded, brings yet more problems for local fishers. Designed to protect the endangered Bengal tiger, it currently covers over 2,585 sq km in West Bengal. Of this, 885 sq km acts as a buffer zone, and is the only area small-scale fish farmers are allowed to operate in. If they cross into the rest of the area, called the ‘core zone’, their boats are likely to be seized.

Small-scale fisherfolk are fighting another battle on the coastlines. Fish workers said the number of trawlers has sharply increased, reducing their catch. One told me: “I have been fishing for 30 years here, before that my father. We could catch 100 kg of fish in a season, but now I am lucky if it’s even 25 kg.”

Over 300 species of fish have been recorded in the mangroves. The small-scale fishers and fish farmers are natural custodians of these water bodies. One farmer said: “We don’t catch small fishes, we know where the breeding grounds are, we place our catch far away from there.”

Women fish workers who I had the chance to meet shared a slightly different experience. They told me they make up half of the workforce, if not more, but remain under-

represented in labour discussions, collective bargaining efforts or are represented tokenistically for political gains.

Then there is the annual fishing ban. In India, the government bans fishing for two months each year to help stocks regenerate. During this period, local and state governments provide welfare to affected fishers. But in West Bengal, where fishing is restricted from mid-April to mid-June, this does not happen. After protests, the local government announced it had introduced its own scheme in 2019. But locals told me they have not received any support funds since the announcement.

In the wake of recent climate disasters like Cyclone Amphan, however, grassroots organising has emerged, with local groups asserting their rights to land, livelihood and dignity.

During my visit I was told that across West Bengal, 8,000 small-scale fishworkers organised a protest against repressions by local governance bodies. The group held a press conference demanding recognition of small-scale fish workers and for smooth processing of licence applications. They say the process

is currently riddled with corruption and delays.

Building climate resilience through collective action

One local leader, who is part of a small-scale fish worker union, told me: “The future of the Sundarbans and its inhabitants cannot be fulfilled by tokenistic approaches to conservation or short-term climate projects.”

Another union leader, who has been organising inland and oceanic fishworkers across West Bengal, added: “The need of the hour is to support grassroots movements and collectives who are forging new paths for themselves to advocate for and amplify their demands for economic alternatives, sustainable management of resources, and decolonising authoritarian structures.”

When asked about sustaining life and livelihoods in Sundarbans, many members of the local Dalit and Adivasi communities have a constant fear of displacement. A “managed retreat” of the population has been floated for over a decade, but locals I spoke to were strongly against the idea.

One of the locals said: “We have been witnessing hardships since we were young, now our children are growing up. We still face the same fears, all the restrictions are for us, but the tourist departments, forest departments have to follow no rules.”

While discussing how to adapt to these changes, many locals echoed that fisherfolk and farmers should be involved in restorative actions planned for the region. They believe that until Indigenous and local knowledge of the region is taken into account, the efforts will fail. □

This article was originally published on Dialogue Earth under a Creative Commons licence.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/life-in-the-sundarbans-on-the-front-line-of-climate-change/>)

The Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, a tourist attraction that will soon be expanded, brings yet more problems for local fishers. Designed to protect the endangered Bengal tiger, it currently covers over 2,585 sq km in West Bengal.

Make the Right Move

ABC

Ready to Lease Office Spaces



ABC

Assotech Business Cresterra
Sector - 135, Expressway, Noida

1 Integrated Intelligent IT Park Complex

2 1.8 Million SQFT Mixed Use Development

3 LEED Gold Certified Green Building Complex

4 Market Leading Floor Efficiency of 83% [+2%]

5 70% leased out of Phase - I



OFFICE SPACES



SERVICED APARTMENTS
Phase - I



RETAIL
Phase - I



www.assotech.in

Assotech Realty Pvt. Ltd.

46, First Floor, Janpath, New Delhi - 110001

Ph: +91 - 8010821111

info@assotech.in

Our Leasing Partners

CBRE

"The Plans, images and facilities shown in the advertisement are merely indicative in nature (not a legal offer) and are subject to variations and modifications at the sole discretion of the Company or the competent authority. The Project is being developed as an IT/ITES complex as per the IT Policy of Government of Uttar Pradesh. Phase 1 of the Project has been completed and Phase - 2 of the Project consisting of Tower No 4, 5 & 6 is under construction and has been registered under UP RERA vide Registration No. UPRERAPRJ1594."

SAVE LIVES GIVE SMILES

Every Year, **35,000+** children are born with cleft lip and palate in India. Untreated clefts lead to difficulties in eating, breathing, hearing and speaking. The children often face social stigma and drop out of school.

Cleft treatment can change this. Forever.

OUR LEGACY & REACH:



640,000+
cleft surgeries
since 2000



150+
partner
hospitals



30+
states
and UTs



300+
cleft medical
professionals

Smile Train empowers local medical professionals with training, funding, and resources to provide free cleft surgery and comprehensive cleft care to children across the country. We advance a sustainable and scalable global health model for cleft treatment, drastically improving children's lives, creating both an immediate and long-term impact.



Let your CSR Program transform lives and create lasting impact.

Join us to change India, one smile at a time.

Contact us:

Email ID: csrindia@smiletrain.org

Address: Plot No. 3, LSC, Sector C Pocket 6&7,
Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070 Ph: 011 47856300
www.smiletrainindia.org



National Cleft Helpline - 1800 103 8301