

CSR TODAY

RNI NO. MAHENG/2013/48866 ■ VOLUME 11 ■ ISSUE 04 ■ NOVEMBER 2023 ■ PRICE ₹100 ■ TOTAL PAGES: 52

A portrait of Dr. Subramanya Kusnur, a middle-aged man with dark hair and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt under a dark blue vest. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

THE NEW WATERMAN OF INDIA

**DR. SUBRAMANYA KUSNUR'S JOURNEY
OF MAKING EVERY DROP COUNT**

CSR LEADERSHIP

**VISIONary Women in
Eye Health**

CSR ISSUE

**Scrolling into stress: How
climate fears hit youth**

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**The roots of the global
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Atoms for food initiative



Rajesh Tiwari
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The Atoms4Food Initiative seeks to provide Member States with ground-breaking solutions, tailored to their specific needs and circumstances, by harnessing the advantages of nuclear techniques along with other advanced technologies.

We find ourselves in an unprecedented time, where hunger and malnutrition are on the rise, posing a threat to humanity.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report unveiled that in 2022, between 691 and 783 million people across the globe experienced hunger. This number represents an alarming increase of 122 million more people facing hunger in 2022 compared to 2019, before the global pandemic. Africa remains the worst-affected region with one in five people facing hunger on the continent, more than twice the global average and disproportionately affecting women and people living in rural areas.

Food and agriculture are still facing significant challenges that must be addressed if we are to achieve our mission to eradicate hunger and poverty, and ensure the sustainability of agrifood systems. Global food security faces mounting pressures due to the escalating demands on natural resources and risks associated with the impacts of the climate crisis, both of which threaten the overall sustainability global agrifood systems.

The urgency of agrifood systems transformation is now irrefutable. Achieving an expanding, stable, and secure food supply capable of meeting the challenges requires more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for the Four Betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

Science, technology and innovation (STI) is indispensable for achieving a world free from hunger and malnutrition. STI has the capacity to address the four dimensions of food security, including food availability, accessibility, utilization and stability, as well as affordability.

The Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture is unique in the UN System, combining complemen-


tary mandates, common objectives, joint programming, co-funding and coordinated management. Leveraging its associated laboratories, it serves as a powerful example of interagency cooperation within the UN family, demonstrating remarkable synergy in action.

To further strengthen the strategic partnership between FAO and IAEA, the two organizations jointly launched the flagship initiative on food security – Atoms4Food.

The Atoms4Food Initiative seeks to provide Member States with ground-breaking solutions, tailored to their specific needs and circumstances, by harnessing the advantages of nuclear techniques along with other advanced technologies.

The Initiative will focus on the role of these technologies as drivers of agrifood systems transformation in various areas, including cropping systems, livestock productivity, natural resource management, and food safety, in order to adapt to a rapidly changing climate and anthropogenic impacts, to better support Member States to achieve the SDGs.

Partnership and collaboration will be the cornerstone for implementing the Initiative. Collaborating with traditional and non-traditional partners, including other UN Agencies, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), International Financial Institutions, development agencies, foundations, industry, national academia and research institutions, and other relevant partners, will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Initiative's outcomes.

Together, and with Atoms4Food adding a new impetus, FAO and IAEA remain committed to elevate their long-standing strategic partnership towards achieving common goals, seeking to foster a multi-disciplinary approach to develop a holistic Action Plan addressing the challenges to food security and expediting progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 

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CSR TODAY

NOVEMBER 2023 | VOL. 11 | ISSUE 04

PRINTER AND PUBLISHER: Rajesh Tiwari

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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

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CSR NEWS



HDFC Bank introduces its 'Bank on Wheels' van in, Ashok Circle, Koppal, Karnataka

An initiative of the bank's Rural Banking Business, the 'Bank on Wheels' van will offer 21 banking products and services in remote villages, located 10-50 kms from the nearest bank branch.

HDFC Bank has introduced a state-of-the-art 'Bank on Wheels' van in Ashok Circle, Koppal District of

Karnataka. With this initiative HDFC Bank is taking banking to people's doorstep in semi-urban & rural geographies to provide access to banking in Karnataka. Earlier the bank had introduced 'Bank on Wheels' van in B C Road Bantwal.

Karnataka becomes the eighth state after Maharashtra, Gujarat,

Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka & West Bengal where HDFC Bank has launched its 'Bank on Wheels' initiative.

With this initiative HDFC Bank has taken banking to people's doorstep in semi-urban & rural geographies to provide access to banking products and services in all districts of Ashok Circle Koppal.

The 'Bank on Wheels' van was flagged off by Shri. Abhinava Gavisiddheshwara Mahaswamiji Gavimath, Shri. K Raghavendra, Hitnal Member of Legislative Assembly, Shri. Nalini Atul I.A.S Deputy Commissioner & District Magistrate, Shri. Captain Mahesh Malagitti Assistant Commissioner, Shri. Sanjay Kotbal Chartered Accountant, Mr. Imran Patcha Circle Head – Retail Branch Banking – South 2, Mr. Hanamanthsa M S – Cluster Head, Retail Branch Banking and other senior officials of HDFC Bank.

Commenting on the introduction of the 'Bank of Wheels' van in Karnataka, Anil Bhavnani, Sr. Executive Vice President, and Head Rural Banking, RBB, HDFC Bank said: "We are pleased to take banking to people's doorstep with the launch of Bank on Wheels Van. There is enormous opportunity to serve people living in semi urban and rural areas and this initiative will improve access to banking in under banked geographies and key congregation points in all districts of Karnataka".

The van will offer a number banking services, including Cash Deposit Machine and ATM services, and an exclusive range of products designed specifically for rural banking customers. Going forward, we plan to launch this initiative in several other states."

Over 60 lakh lives positively impacted by Tata Motors' CSR initiatives in the past decade

Unveils 9th Annual CSR Report for FY23

Tata Motors, India's leading automobile company, released its 9th Annual CSR Report, highlighting its extensive efforts towards addressing some of India's most critical and social challenges across the domains of Health (Aarogya), Education (Vidyadhanam), Employability (Kaushalya) and Environment (Vasundhara). Collectively, these efforts have benefitted more than 60 lakh lives over the past 10 years, with a significant percentage of beneficiaries belonging to the marginalised communities.

In 2014, Tata Motors designed and adopted a comprehensive 4-pillar approach to harmonise its CSR initiatives across the country. Capabilities, experience and expertise acquired by individual units and teams in each identified fields led to the creation and execution of focused interventions with clearly defined outcomes and remarkable results. By harmonising programmes across locations, leveraging digital technologies, fostering partnerships with diverse stakeholders, and strengthening trust with the communities, the company effectively surpassed its projected impact.

Speaking on the occasion, Vinod Kulkarni, Head of CSR at Tata Motors, said, "At Tata Motors, our CSR efforts are deeply rooted in our unwavering commitment to promote inclusive growth, thus contributing to nation-building. We are



A piece of unutilized land converted into 'Wadi plantations' in Palghar District in Maharashtra, in convergence with Govt schemes. Tata Motors intends to plant one million trees in FY24 under this project.

humbled to have positively impacted millions of lives through our efforts. In fact, several of our CSR ideas and programmes have grown to become marquee projects, worthy of being emulated as models for community development. Using the novel approach of 'More for Less for More', we have narrowed the gap between our aspirations and the available resources, achieving pan-India scale for numerous projects. Our commitment to advancing our CSR agenda remains steadfast, as we strive to create a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable India. By meticulous planning and effectively utilising our financial and human resources, we aspire to make a progressively greater impact with each passing year."

Here's a quick glance into the company's select marquee projects in the areas of Health, Education, Employability, and Environment, that have made a significant impact in terms of convergence, scale and reach, over the last ten years.

Addressing Malnutrition Through Community-based Interventions

Tata Motors has made significant strides in addressing the issue of malnutrition among children. By shifting its focus from institutional-based clinical approaches to community-based health interventions, the company has been able to create a sustainable impact. Despite having high levels of severely acute malnourished and moderately acute malnourished children in some of the targeted states, the company has successfully moved more than 91% of malnourished children to healthy zones in the past decade.

Empowering Leprosy Patients with Early Detection and Care

Tata Motors has been actively involved in raising awareness about leprosy and providing early detection and care to affected individuals. Through annual door-to-door

awareness campaigns in hard-to-reach villages, the company has screened thousands of households, identified and treated over 4,000 leprosy patients. The company's community-based Leprosy programme in Jharkhand, a state with a high incidence of the disease, is the first of its kind initiative in the country to eradicate the disease.

Bridging the Educational Gap through Digital Empowerment

Tata Motors' flagship remote learning programme, ENABLE, has helped talented students from over 550 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas access resources and guidance for admission to the top engineering and medical institutions. Over the past decade, this programme has benefitted over 20,000 aspirants from underprivileged backgrounds, many of whom have secured admissions in prestigious institutions such as in IITs, AIIMS and government-run engineering and Medical colleges. Additionally, support classes are being conducted for students in grades IX and X in state-run government schools, utilising both digital and in-person modes. This approach has proven to be effective in improving the pass rates and academic performance. Notably, this model has been successfully implemented in about 200 schools under the Thane and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in Maharashtra.

Skilling Unemployed Youth for a Brighter Future

The LEAP programme, part of the Kaushalya initiative by Tata Motors, focuses on skilling unemployed youth, especially in Automotive courses and facilitating their entry into the workforce. This programme has also enabled young women to overcome stereotype barriers and attain financial independence. Over the past decade, this skilling initiative has grown from 2 to 60



Malnutrition Treatment Centre in Jamshedpur, awarded as the best MTC in the State, provides free of cost treatment to severely acute malnourished (SAM) as per WHO protocol.

institutes. About 85% of the trainees have secured placement with an average salary ranging between Rs. 15000 to 18000, thereby creating a positive impact on their lives and the economy.

Restoring and Expanding Rural and Urban Forest Cover

With the objective of creating sustainable livelihoods for the farmers through Agro-Forestry plantation and transforming unused land into cultivable areas by prioritising government convergence, the company

has successfully planted nearly one million trees, ensuring the survival of over 90% of them. In FY24, an additional one million trees are planned to be planted.

In collaboration with the Forest Department (GOI) and TERRE Policy Center, a significant expanse of 16.5 hectares of forest land in Warje (urban Pune) has been reforested. This initiative has led to the creation of micro-habitats that support a diverse range of flora and fauna. Over the past decade, the project has expanded to cover an area of 200 hectares, contributing to the restoration of urban forest cover and the preservation of biodiversity.



One of the 106 water bodies rejuvenated by Tata Motors' Sumant Moolgaokar Development Foundation in Palghar, Pune and Satara districts under 'Amrit Sarovar', the flagship program of Government of India

Water Security

This year, the company announced an ambitious project of creating 100 Amrit Sarovars with a capacity of storing one crore litres of water each, leading to enhanced water availability in 75 sites in Palghar district and 25 sites in Pune & Satara district.

Sustainability #ForBetter: Tata Consumer Products announces milestones & metrics for FY 2025-26 reaffirming clear long-term commitments

Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL), the consumer products company uniting the principal food and beverage interests globally, of the Tata Group, under one umbrella, has announced specific and measurable sustainability milestones & metrics leading upto FY 2025-26. This reaffirms a set of long-term commitments that are in line with our earlier announced ESG Strategy developed around the 4 pillars #ForBetter Sourcing, #ForBetter Planet, #ForBetter Communities and #ForBetter Nutrition. TCPL operates in a range of categories and has well-loved brands such as Tata Tea, Tata Salt, Tetley, Eight O'Clock Coffee, Tata Sampann, Himalayan, Tata Soufull, Tata Copper +, Tata Gluco + among others.

At Tata Consumer Products, creating sustainable value for all our stakeholders is a priority that is helping shape a premier FMCG organization. We have taken consistent steps to improve the organization's ESG performance and are committed to keeping our stakeholders updated about the progress we are making. Last year, we released our ESG Strategy 'For Better Living', which encompasses four key pillars: For Better Sourcing, For a Better Planet, For Better Communities, and For Better Nutrition.

These are in line with the Tata Group commitments under 'Project Aalingana', as also with the relevant regulatory frameworks in every market that we operate in.

The progress for FY 2022-23, which includes:

- On the Climate front, we have effected an 18% decrease in Scope

At Tata Consumer Products, creating sustainable value for all our stakeholders is a priority that is helping shape a premier FMCG organization.

1+2 emissions between 2020 and 2022, despite a significant increase in the scope and complexity of our business.

- As on date, 19% of our energy needs are met by renewable energy sources.
- We have ensured 314 million liters of water is recharged through initiatives like "Project Jalodari" in the State of Himachal Pradesh and Assam.
- All our beverages' factories worldwide are Zero waste to landfill.
- With regards to packaging, we have ensured 100% compliance to our EPR commitments in India.
- 900 MT potential reduction in packaging material annually through projects under implementation.
- Our CSR initiatives driven across 7 specific themes, have impacted more than 1.2 million beneficiaries so far.

As part of our long-term roadmap towards 2030 and 2040, and our endeavour to make consistent progress and track it by way of milestones & metrics, we are committing to the following goals by FY 2025-26.

Climate Adaptation

- Tata Consumer Products aims to

be Carbon neutral on Scope 1 and Scope 2 across all geographies.

- We will scale up and aim for 35% of all power requirement to be met from renewable sources.

Circular Economy

- We will ensure Zero Waste to Landfill across our operations in all geographies.
- We will endeavour to have 70% of all our packaging material recyclable, compostable, or reusable across all geographies.

People and Community

- We aspire to touch 1.75 million lives through our community initiatives.
- We aim to have 100% of our operations ISO 45000 certified.
- We will aspire to increase Women's participation in our global workforce to above 35%

Speaking about these commitments, Sunil D'Souza, MD & CEO, Tata Consumer Products said "As we progress on our transformation journey to becoming a premier FMCG company, we remain on course to delivering on our long-term Sustainability roadmap. The commitments we have announced for FY 2025-26 will serve to track and reaffirm the longer-term commitments made last year as part of our ESG strategy. We will continue to strengthen our Sustainability strategy, as this will play a crucial role in building a future ready organization, strengthening brands beloved by consumers, and adding value to our stakeholders."



SBI empowers district managers to expand Jansuraksha schemes at grassroots Level

Aims to ensure financial security through PMJJBY & PMSBY

The State Bank of India (SBI) organised a comprehensive workshop aimed at enhancing the outreach of Jansuraksha Schemes at the Gram Panchayat level. The workshop brought together bank officials from 11 States and Union Territories with the goal of empowering the Lead District Managers to facilitate the adoption of two important schemes: Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) among eligible citizens. As part of this drive, officials of the Bank will drive awareness through organizing successful camps in every Gram

Panchayat and Ward in each district across the nation.

Under the PMJJBY scheme, individuals can obtain life insurance coverage, while PMSBY offers accidental insurance cover of ₹2.00 lacs each, all at an affordable premium of ₹436 and ₹20 per annum, respectively.

The inauguration of this significant program was graced by distinguished individuals, including, Shri. Prashant Kumar Goyal, Joint Secretary (FI) from the Department of Financial Services, Government of India, Shri. Alok Kumar Choudhary, Managing Director (RB & O) at SBI, and Dr. P.C. Saboo, Chief General Manager - Financial Inclusion, SBI Corporate Centre, Mumbai. The workshop saw the participation of all Lead District Managers (LDMs) responsible for districts assigned to SBI, SLBC officials, and Nodal Officers (Lead Bank) from

the States and Union Territories of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Gujarat, New Delhi, Uttarakhand, and Daman & Diu.

This initiative underscores SBI's unwavering commitment to Financial Inclusion. Prashant Kumar Goyal, Joint Secretary (FI), Department of Financial Services, Government of India, emphasized the objective of achieving complete coverage of eligible citizens under the Jansuraksha Scheme, stating, "Our goal is to cover 100% eligible citizens under Jansuraksha Scheme." Alok Kumar Choudhary, MD (RB & O) at SBI, motivated the participants to extend banking services, including government schemes like PMJJBY and PMSBY, to all sections of society, with a particular focus on unbanked and under-banked areas.

FUEL Felicitates 90 Underprivileged Girl Students with Scholarships on its 17th Foundation Day

FUEL, a non-profit dedicated to empowering marginalized youth, celebrated its 17th Foundation Day in Pune, reaffirming its commitment to uplift underprivileged communities. The event featured engaging activities and included the awarding of scholarships to 90 needy female students, showcasing FUEL's dedication to improving lives through skill development and vocational training. Eminent personalities, policymakers, industry leaders, and government delegates were present at the momentous occasion.

FUEL has significantly impacted over 45,976 girls by focusing on education, employability, and empowerment. The organization has played a crucial role in enhancing skills and employability among underprivileged populations across states. With a track record of providing education, granting 10,000+ scholarships, and equipping over 98,667 individuals with skills, FUEL has facilitated placements for 62,753+ youths in diverse careers, supported 350 entrepreneurs, and conducted 1 million career counseling sessions. FUEL's Career EduConnect initiative targets students from Class 7 to Class 12, offering insights into education and career paths to address unemployment. The organization provides courses in Digital Marketing, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, and 3D Printing, empowering marginalized communities for improved employability.

The main highlight of the celebration was the Future Skills Summit. The summit was graced by renowned industry leaders and policymakers. The summit delved

The distinguished presence of Shri Rahul Narvekar, the Honorable Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, graced the felicitation ceremony.

Industry Leaders and policymakers congregate for the Future Skills Summit at FUEL's 17th Foundation Day Celebration

into future skills, talent acquisition, and innovation in CSR in education and skill development. Notable guests included Hon'ble Speaker of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Shri Rahul Narvekar, Social Worker and Corporator BMC, Harshita Narvekar, Vice-President Hitachi Air Conditioning India, Col. Rajesh Ohol, Vice President Corporate Communications Bajaj Group, Sanjay Ojha, Director-International Business Serum Institute of India, Parag Deshmukh, Chief Sustainability Officer LTI Mindtree, Paneesh Rao, Founder and Chairman of FUEL, and FUEL Business School (FBS), Ketan Deshpande and Santhosh Huralikoppi, Chief Mentor at FUEL.

The foundation day featured various programs, including a touching ceremony where 90 deserving female students from underprivileged backgrounds were awarded scholarships. These scholarships were part of an MoU between FUEL, LTI Mindtree, and the Oracle Scholarship Program, specifically for female PGDM students at FUEL Business School (FBS). The goal is to

empower these students for higher education and promising careers. The event also included the unveiling of "FUEL Hope Stories," a book showcasing the perseverance of FUEL students, and the launch of the Saksham Digital Skill Program. This program equips student leaders with essential skills like computer literacy, coding, data analysis, online communication, cybersecurity, and proficiency with digital tools and software applications.

The guest of honor Shri Rahul Narvekar, Honorable Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly said, "On FUEL's 17th Foundation Day, I congratulate Ketan Deshpande and the entire team for their outstanding work in empowering underprivileged youth through skill development, training, and scholarships. Their commitment to social progress, evidenced by collaborations with major MNCs and NITI Ayog, is commendable. Providing over 1 million career counseling sessions has been pivotal in guiding countless individuals toward meaningful careers. Best wishes for continued success as FUEL enters a new phase with its university campus, aiming to elevate expectations and contribute significantly to a prosperous future.

The Host Mr. Ketan Deshpande, Founder and Chairman of FUEL and FUEL Business School Said, "On our 17th Foundation Day, I'm proud to acknowledge progress in supporting underprivileged students. While witnessing positive outcomes is gratifying, I recognize more must be done. The ongoing success of our mission to empower every student relies on unwavering support from

stakeholders. Together, we must continue striving for our goal, ensuring no student is left behind in their pursuit of knowledge and empowerment. We have envisioned a future with equal access to career opportunities for every student, achieved through proactive initiatives like endowment scholarships, volunteer-guided internships,

blended learning, and collaboration with social organizations for on-the-ground implementation.

About FUEL

FUEL (Friends Union for Energising Live) has implemented large CSR projects in areas of Skill development, Career Counseling, Scholarships for Defence personnel

Children & rural youth through CSR initiatives of various corporates. FUEL is Innovation partner of NSDC & SOI partner of Niti Aayog has reached upto 1 million students & Successfully operating in India & expanded its operations to other countries for the last 17 years.

Please find the below website link: <http://fuelfornation.com/>

KC Mahindra Education Trust commits scholarships worth Rs 30,000 each for 35 students

KCMET Empowers Youth: 31 Girls among 35 Recipients of Prestigious Scholarships

The Mahindra All India Talent Scholarships (MAITS) scholarship was awarded to 35 students this year out of the 202 applicants by the K. C. Mahindra Education Trust.

From the applications received across Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh, 67 students were shortlisted to attend the interviews held on 6 October 2023 at Swaraj Division, in Mohali.

The K. C. Mahindra Education Trust (KCMET) was founded by the late Mr. K. C. Mahindra in the year 1953, with an objective to promote literacy and higher learning in the country. In addition to various other programs the Trust established the Mahindra All India Talent Scholarship in 1995.

This scholarship is awarded to students belonging to economically disadvantaged families, who wish to pursue a job-oriented Diploma course at recognized Government Polytechnic in India. This Scholarship was established to encourage and support young students from rural and urban areas to pursue job-oriented Diplomas.



The Trust awards Rs. 10,000/- per annum to 550 students annually, for a maximum period of 3 years. Till date 11,840 students have received the scholarship across India.

Sheetal Mehta, Sr Vice President CSR & Trustee, K.C. Mahindra Education Trust, said, "The Mahindra All India Talent Scholarship interviews give us an opportunity to directly interact with youth from extremely underprivileged backgrounds. It is humbling and satisfying when we see three years later these students being offered placements in good companies. The transformative impact of the scholarship can be seen in the vastly

improved standard of living of their families thereafter. Out of the 35 students selected this year 31 were girls. We truly believe that all the scholarship awardees will reach great heights in their chosen careers."

Arun Raghav, Vice President (ER, Admin & CSR), Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd Swaraj Division stated, "We are immensely proud to be a part of this noble initiative. Investing in the education of underprivileged youth is an investment in the future of our nation. These scholarships not only provide financial support but also empower these students to pursue their dreams and achieve great heights."

The New India Foundation is pleased to announce the **LONGLIST** for the **Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2023**

The New India Foundation announces the Longlist of the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2023 for the finest non-fiction about modern and contemporary Indian history. The longlist of the sixth edition comprises 10 remarkable books which provide a lens into a better understanding of how Independent India has come to be today.

The Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize (KCBP) is India's largest and most respected Book Prize for non-fiction. Awarded to the finest literature published in the previous calendar year, it is open to writers of all nationalities who are researching any aspect of Indian history after Independence. The Prize was instituted in 2018 and carries an award of INR 15 lakhs as well as a citation at the Bangalore Literature Festival.

Each year, the Prize receives an enormous number of nominations from around the world and a diverse range of books about key aspects of India's legal, economic, socio-cultural, political, and other histories. The Jury has selected 10 books from amongst these as the Longlist for the sixth edition of the KCBP.

The 2023 KCBP Longlist was selected by an eminent Jury, including political scientist Niraja Gopal Jayal (Chair of the Book Prize), historian Srinath Raghavan, columnist-writer Navtej Sarna, columnist-writer Yamini Aiyar, and entrepreneur Manish Sabharwal.

Jury Comment: "The Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Book Prize Longlist

this year is a testament to greater diversity in recent non-fiction. Each of the 10 selected books extends, enriches and nuances our understanding of India today - whether through biography and memoir, or art history, media history, constitutional history, urban history, or the evolution of political ideas and institutions. We hope readers will enjoy this rich selection of books on different aspects of contemporary India."

The 2023 Longlist (in alphabetical order) is:

- **Sudeep Chakravarti** — The Eastern Gate: War and Peace in Nagaland, Manipur and India's Far East [Simon & Schuster]
- **Achyut Chetan** — Founding Mothers of the Indian Republic: Gender Framing of the Politics of the Constitution [Cambridge University Press]
- **Rotem Geva** — Delhi Reborn: Partition and Nation Building in India's Capital [Stanford University Press]
- **Vinay Lal** — Insurgency and the Artist: The Art of the Freedom Struggle in India [Roli Books]
- **Nayanika Mathur** — Crooked Cats: Beastly Encounters in the Anthropocene [HarperCollins]
- **Akshaya Mukul** — Writer, Rebel, Soldier, Lover: The Many Lives of Agyea [Penguin]
- **Mrinal Pande** — The Journey of Hindi Language Journalism in India: From Raj to Swaraj and Beyond [Orient BlackSwan]
- **Gita Ramaswamy** — Land, Guns,

Caste, Woman: The Memoir of a Lapsed Revolutionary [Navayana]

- **Ronojoy Sen** — House of the People: Parliament and the Making of Indian Democracy [Cambridge University Press]
- **Taylor C. Sherman** — Nehru's India: A History in Seven Myths [Princeton University Press]

The Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize builds on the New India Foundation's mission of sponsoring high-quality research and writing on all aspects of the world's largest democracy. Works written originally in English or translated into English are eligible across a range of genres. The prize was named to honour the legacy of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay: the great patriot and institution-builder who contributed significantly to the freedom struggle, to the women's movement, to refugee rehabilitation and to the renewal of Indian theatre and handicrafts.

Shekhar Pathak was last year's winner of the KCBP for his environmental history *The Chipko Movement: A People's History*, translated from Hindi by Manisha Chaudhry (Permanent Black). Dinyar Patel won the 4th edition of the Prize for his definitive biography *Naroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism* (Harvard University Press). In 2020, the KCBP was jointly awarded to Amit Ahuja for his debut *Mobilizing the Marginalized: Ethnic Parties without Ethnic Movements* (Oxford University Press) and Jairam Ramesh for his

biography *A Chequered Brilliance: The Many Lives of V.K. Krishna Menon* (Penguin Random House). Ornit Shani was recognised for her scholarly work, *How India Became Democratic: Citizenship and the Making of the Universal Franchise* (Penguin Random House) in 2019 and Milan Vaishnav for his remarkable debut *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics* (HarperCollins Publishers) in 2018.

About the New India Foundation

Based in Bengaluru, the core activity of the New India Foundation is the NIF Book Fellowships which have been awarded to scholars and writers for two decades to enable the highest standard of research and writing about India after Independence, resulting in the publication of 32 books covering an extraordinary range of topics. The NIF Translation Fellowships (currently accepting applications) were instituted in 2021 and expand upon the core idea of fostering non-fiction by translating knowledge texts from 10 Indian languages to English. The NIF Book and Translation Fellowships are awarded in alternate years. The 2nd round of the NIF Translation Fellowships is currently open for applications; please visit the website for further details.

Ramachandra Guha, Nandan Nilekani, Niraja Gopal Jayal, Manish Sabharwal and Srinath Raghavan are the Trustees of the New India Foundation.

The Shortlist for the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2022 will be announced in the third week of November 2023.

The final winner will be announced on December 1st, 2023.

For more information, log on to www.newindiafoundation.org or write to yauvanika@newindiafoundation.org

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2023

L O N G L I S T



***The Eastern Gate: War and Peace in Nagaland, Manipur and India's Far East* by Sudeep Chakravarti**

***Founding Mothers of the Indian Republic: Gender Framing of the Politics of the Constitution* by Achyut Chetan**

***Delhi Reborn: Partition and Nation Building in India's Capital* by Rotem Geva**

***Insurgency and the Artist: The Art of the Freedom Struggle in India* by Vinay Lal**

***Crooked Cats: Beastly Encounters in the Anthropocene* by Nayanika Mathur**

***Writer, Rebel, Soldier, Lover: The Many Lives of Agyeya* by Akshaya Mukul**

***The Journey of Hindi Language Journalism in India: From Raj to Swaraj and Beyond* by Mrinal Pande**

***Land, Guns, Caste, Woman: The Memoir of a Lapsed Revolutionary* by Gita Ramaswamy**

***House of the People: Parliament and the Making of Indian Democracy* by Ronojoy Sen**

***Nehru's India: A History in Seven Myths* by Taylor C. Sherman**

Delhi-NCR Gets World's First Co-Working Space for Recyclers in a Bid to Formalize E-Waste Management

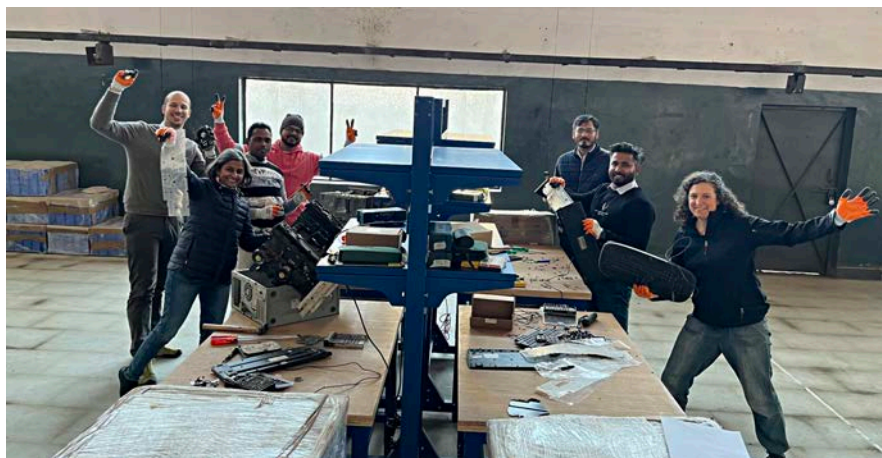
E[co]work has launched a first-of-its-kind co-working space in NCR's Ghaziabad region for microentrepreneurs, dismantlers, and recyclers in the e-waste sector in a bid to institutionalize e-waste management. The licensed facility is equipped with dismantling units, storage spaces, tables, tools, office and meeting rooms, equipment, and washrooms to offer the informal e-waste sector a space dedicated to dignifying and formalizing their work.

The co-working space provides plug-and-play units for a seamless work experience. It also aims to be an affordable working solution for microentrepreneurs in the sector through its offering of a "pay-per-use" model.

In India, the majority of e-waste is handled by the informal sector often under inferior conditions. While the sector provides livelihoods for many families, it also often negatively impacts the environment and workers' health.

Against this backdrop, E[co]work fills this gap by providing dismantling and recycling infrastructure for India's e-waste microentrepreneurs that is at par with the formal sector. The facility offers secure storage, personal protection equipment, and disposal of hazardous waste.

"We see ourselves turning a problem into an opportunity. We're driven with the purpose of connecting the formal and informal sectors, empowering micro-entrepreneurs, and creating effective solutions for safe and inclusive resource



With this launch, the award-winning enterprise is creating positive impacts on social, environmental, and economic fronts linked directly to Sustainable Development Goals such as decent work and economic growth, sustainable cities and communities, and responsible consumption and production

E[co]work aims to bring circularity and inclusivity to the e-waste recycling sector in India

The unique co-working space offers e-waste microentrepreneurs a shared infrastructure with relevant facilities

recovery. We see ourselves as catalysts that bring together the physical, social, and digital elements to drive change for a more sustainable, inclusive, and circular world", said Deepali Sinha Khatriwal, co-founder of E[co]work.

The vision is supported by the Government of India's LiFE Mission, legislation, and corporate commitments for improved conditions, efficiency, and transparency in the recycling sector. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's GREENE initiative intends to manage e-waste responsibly for a sustainable future through collaboration between the public, government, and industries.



Canadian International School announces IGCSE and IB Diploma Scholarship Programme

Offers up to 100% fee waiver for deserving students

The Canadian International School (CIS) Bangalore announced its Scholarship programme for high achieving students for the academic batch of 2024. The scholarship program is open to all new applicants for Grade 9 for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and Grade 11 for International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The last date for submitting the application form is 15th December 2023.

Candidates having minimum 80% in previous Grade or equivalent for the IB program can apply for the IB scholarship. For the IGCSE scholarship, candidates must have a minimum 85% in previous Grade or equivalent. The applicants for the scholarship program are also required to meet other

criteria including evidence of academic excellence, leadership qualities, significant artistic or athletic achievement, civic involvement/volunteerism and engagement in school activities. The shortlisted candidates will complete admission tests in English and Mathematics. This will be followed by a subsequent interview with the CIS scholarship committee. The final selection will be made based on the application documents, admission tests and interview.

Shweta Sastri, Managing Director, Canadian International School said, "In a bid to provide an opportunity to the strongest minds in the country and assist them in getting access to quality education and international level of learning standards, CIS is offering this scholarship. CIS mission is to help the deserving students realize their educational goals by providing annual scholarships that acknowledge academic excellence and consider financial need too."

School Receives Musical Delight

In a heartwarming gesture that resonates with the spirit of harmony and education, the students and faculty of Manohar School & Pragati School, located in Borivali, were brimming with joy as they received a generous donation of musical instruments from the Music Matters Project. The atmosphere at both schools was filled with excitement and gratitude as these gifted musical instruments opened up a world of creative possibilities for the school's budding musicians. With this remarkable donation, the schools are poised to foster a new generation of musical talent.

The Music Matters Project, a non-profit organization committed to promoting music education and appreciation, has made a significant contribution to the cultural enrichment of our local community.

This heartwarming initiative serves as a testament to the power of music to inspire and uplift, and its ability to transform the lives of students and communities. The students and staff of Manohar School & Pragati School extended their heartfelt thanks to the Music Matters Project for their invaluable support.



Students of Manohar School posing for a picture after receiving instruments



Students of Pragati School posing for a picture after receiving instruments

McDonald's India extends its EatQual initiative; Makes McDelivery Colour Blind Friendly

First-of-its-kind initiative in the food industry

When it comes to ordering food, we eat with our eyes first. However, the experience might be different for colour blind people. Colour blindness is more widespread than many realize, with roughly 70 million people in India experiencing it. With an intent to make food ordering more enjoyable and easier for colour blind consumers, McDonald's India (West and South) - owned and operated by Westlife Foodworld Ltd, has launched a new feature on its McDelivery App and website to make it Colour Blind friendly, first of its kind initiative in the food industry. EatQual 2.0, builds upon McDonald's India's (W&S) inclusivity platform EatQual, which was launched three years back, to make delicious feel-good moments easy for everyone.

To spread awareness of the new feature, the brand has also unveiled a heartwarming brand film that gives us a perspective on colour

blindness and explains how this feature on McDelivery will help consumers with colour blindness improve their experience of viewing their favourite burgers on their McDelivery App and website before placing an order.

Speaking on the launch of this campaign, Arvind R.P., Chief Marketing Officer, McDonald's India (W&S) said, "We at McDonald's are on a mission to make delicious feel-good moments easy for everyone, and we literally mean 'everyone'. Born from this mission, our EatQual campaign underscores our commitment to breaking down barriers, ensuring that every customer is able to access the brand easily, feels welcome and has a great experience every time they choose to eat with us. Recognizing that we 'eat with our eyes first' and acknowledging that colour blindness is a widespread reality, we took the initiative to make our McDelivery App and website more accessible. We hope those with colour blindness will enjoy using this new feature to see the crave-able visuals of their favourite

iconic products before ordering, just like all other consumers".

To ensure a wider reach of the campaign, McDonald's has partnered with stand-up comedian and influencer Kenny Sebastian for this initiative. Being an individual who has colour blindness, Kenny Sebastian said, "I feel really happy to partner with an iconic brand like McDonald's on this initiative that makes its services more inclusive and easily accessible to colour blind people like me. I am sure the McDelivery experience will now become easier to navigate through. I look forward to using the feature to view delicious food images on the app before making my pick".

Rahul Mathew, Chief Creative Officer, DDB Mudra Group shared, "We've always believed that EatQual is more than just a campaign; it's a journey that McDonald's is on. With every intervention, we hope to enhance the eating experience, making it a little more equal for everyone. That's why we work closely with the community to help us understand what they might be missing and how we can bridge that gap."

CSR TODAY

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Hasan Mushrif inaugurated the Water ATM at Kolhapur Mahalaxmi Temple on the first day of Navratri for the benefit of pilgrims and devotees

AquaKraft launched SWACHH-INN, a livelihood generation innovation at Mahalaxmi Temple in Kolhapur in Maharashtra. SWACHH INN is a combination of a Water ATM, Hand wash and Pantry aimed at providing Healthy Water and healthy Food at the most accessible prices to the common man. SWACHH INN has been sponsored by RBL Bank under their CSR Initiatives.

SWACHH INN will be operated and managed by Women Self Help Groups registered under the UMED program of the National Rural Livelihood Mission. The model revolves around vending clean drinking water, tea, coffee, and food cooked at the pantry thereby generating livelihood and enabling micro-entrepreneurship.

SWACHH INN was launched by Minister for Medical Education Hasan Mushrif in the presence of Rahul Rekhawar, Collector Kolhapur, Mahendra Pandit, Superintendent of Police, K Manjulekshmi, Commissioner, Dr. Subramanya Kusnur – Founder Chairman & CEO, AquaKraft Group Ventures, Adil Faras amongst other dignitaries.

The launch was privileged with the grace of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Raje Maharaj, the descendant of Shivaji Maharaj, who appreciated the initiative and encouraged to spread it across Maharashtra, especially in tourist sites like the Raigad Fort.

More than 300 devotees and pilgrims enjoyed clean drinking water from SWACHH INN after the launch strongly vindicating the initiative.

“AquaKraft is committed to innovating newer models powered with its green and energy efficient water filtration technologies along with robust design and precision engineering. Our objective is to develop and implement operator-friendly units for easy operations and management leading to sustainability. We thank RBL Bank for their trust in us and look forward to a long and socially impactful partnership.” said Sachieen Maney, Director of Operations, AquaKraft.

Gandhi Darshan in collaboration with Health Fitness Trust will be organizing the 14th Edition of ‘Run for Swasth Bharat’ in New Delhi

Gandhi Darshan in collaboration with Health Fitness Trust will be organizing the 14th Edition of ‘Run for Swasth Bharat’ on 17th September 2023 at Rajghat, New Delhi. The event promises to be bigger and better than ever, with a wide range of activities to engage the participants. From the thrilling runs and cycling routes to exciting bike rides, creative poster-making competitions, and thematic activities will also be a part of the event. The event will have gathering of more than 1000 participants at the historic Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi.

This is a flagship annual event of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti and this year the 14th edition is being organised in collaborated with Health Fitness Trust (HFT). HFT was registered in 1994 by an eminent international athlete marathoner of repute Dr. Sunita Godara (1992 Asian Marathon Gold medalist). Health Fitness Trust is supported by Tourism Finance Corporation of India Ltd. (TFCI) as a part of its CSR initiative for athlete training programme for 5 national level athletes and Taekwondo Martial Art training programme for 75 athletes for financial year 2023-24.

The event will witness the honorary presence of esteemed dignitaries, including former Union Minister Shri Vijay Goel, Vice Chairman of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, Dr. Sunita Godara, Founder, HFT and Shri Anoop Bali, Whole-Time Director, TFCI. Prominent among the participants will be national level athletes, Ankur Kumar, Bhumi Negi, Abhishek Soni, Amit Choudhary and Pankaj Sharma who were part of TFCI's CSR initiative for athlete training programme.

The event will be flagged off by Shri Vijay Goel, Dr. Sunita Godara and Shri Anoop Bali. The program's highlights include an engaging Zumba warm-up session at 6:30 am, followed by the event flag-off featuring cyclists, skaters, and bikers. The thematic show and felicitation ceremony will showcase short insights on sport training along with empowering women through self-defense Martial Art and artistic yoga performances, promoting physical health and mental well-being.

‘Run for Swasth Bharat’ offers participants three categories to choose from: 10km, 5km, and 1km, ensuring that runners of all levels can join in this exciting event. Winners will receive gift hampers and various prizes to commemorate their outstanding achievements.

Shri Anoop Bali Whole-Time Director, TFCI said, “We are proud to be a part of HFT's initiative that promises a healthier lifestyle. Events like ‘Run for Swasth Bharat’ play a crucial role in keeping our overall health fit with an agile mind. Additionally, the event's focus on empowering women through self-defense and yoga demonstrates a commitment to holistic health and well-being. We believe that fostering a culture of physical fitness and mental strength is essential for the growth and prosperity of our nation.

CSR INDIA UNITED

Dalmia Bharat Celebrates Empowerment of 18000 women on International Day of Rural Women



Dalmia Bharat Group, India's leading conglomerate with businesses in cement and sugar, announced the successful empowerment of 18000 women on International Day of Rural Women. Through the establishment of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), these women are provided essential skill training and access to vital resources for sustainable livelihood development. In collaboration with various organisations like NRLM, NABARD, etc. Dalmia Bharat organizes various training initiatives like micro-enterprise development, handicraft production and others in both farming and non-farming sectors. All these activities are conducted in communities settled around their regions of operation across 12 states in India. These initiatives aim to upskill rural women to empower them, diversify their income sources and provide access to formal credit systems. Through access to credit linkages, many women have built successful micro-enterprises, shops and businesses. They have experienced a boost in their incomes, ranging from Rs 4000 to Rs.10000 monthly, which has significantly improved their individual well-being and the ability to support their families.

One of their notable programs includes upskilling women artisans from different regions in India. In a recent success story, eco-friendly handicraft products made of natural materials like 'Moonj' and 'Sabai' (types of wild grass) found a proud place of display as part of gift hampers for international delegates at the recently concluded G20 Summit. Dalmia Bharat also focuses on sustainable livelihood development through goat rearing, poultry farming, mushroom cultivation, tailoring and other initiatives. SHG women also undergo training in Entrepreneurship Development focusing on home-based products like spices, pickles etc.

Commenting on the company's initiatives on International Day of Rural Women, Ashok K. Gupta, CEO, Dalmia Bharat Foundation said, "Our goal at Dalmia Bharat is to aid marginalized women at grassroots levels, enabling them to secure additional income while balancing their household duties through these comprehensive programs. Our steadfast commitment to

empowering rural women aligns with our dedication to achieving the UN Global Sustainable Goals of eradicating poverty, eliminating hunger and advancing gender equality. We firmly believe that by investing in the potential of rural women, we are building an inclusive and sustainable future for India. Our efforts resonate with the essence of Atmanirbhar Bharat,

promoting self-reliance and progress throughout the nation."

International Day of Rural Women, observed annually on 15th October, celebrates the vital role of rural women in agriculture, food security, and rural development. It highlights the need to empower them, address inequalities, and aligns with global goals for gender equality and sustainable development.

Beyoung Uplifts Communities and Creates Opportunities for Positive Change through CSR Initiatives

Everyday fashion brand Beyoung is committed to creating a positive impact on society through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The brand's ethos centers around fostering a culture of support and collaboration, not only within the organization but also within the communities it serves.

As part of its commitment to making a difference, Beyoung recently visited Ashadham Ashram, a Rescue and Rehabilitation Center, to uplift abandoned individuals. Through a heart-warming initiative, they distributed a diverse array of gifts, extending a sense of togetherness to those who have been abandoned by their own families.

Beyoung also partnered with UAF India (Udaipur Animal Feed) to provide drinking water tanks for stray animals in Rajasthan's scorching heat. This initiative not only relieved the struggles of homeless animals but also showcased Beyoung's compassion and dedication to creating a more compassionate and sustainable world for both humans and animals alike.

"CSR, to us, signifies an integral part of our brand's identity," stated Shivam Soni, co-founder of Beyoung. "We are dedicated to empowering the society we



operate in by giving back and supporting each other. It's not just about fashion; it's about leaving a positive imprint on the world and inspiring others to join us in this journey."

Beyoung's future plans encompass a wide range of CSR activities aimed at empowering society. Initiatives include providing shelter to stray animals during harsh winter months, creating



job opportunities for widows to drive women's empowerment, and fostering education for underprivileged children. These concerted efforts are poised to create a meaningful and sustainable impact on various facets of society.

Addressing challenges is an integral part of Beyoung's CSR journey. The brand has formed a dedicated team of passionate employees who volunteer their time and efforts to participate in CSR initiatives. This collective effort serves as a driving force, overcoming obstacles and ensuring the seamless execution of projects.

Beyoung's compassionate efforts have already yielded inspiring results. As Beyoung continues its journey of making a positive impact, the brand invites individuals, organizations, and communities to join hands in creating a more supportive and compassionate world.

Smallholder Women Farmers See Improved Financial Independence with Support from Walmart Foundation Grantees

On International Rural Women's Day, Walmart Foundation highlights the impactful efforts of NGOs like PRADAN, ACCESS, Mercy Corps and Srijan, working in collaboration with the Walmart Foundation's Market Access Program.

The Walmart Foundation, through its Market Access Program, is committed to support agrarian communities in nine states across India – Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal, and Maharashtra. In March 2023, expanding on its commitment to improving farmer livelihoods in India, Walmart Foundation announced a new five-year strategy that aims to reach 1 million smallholder farmers by 2028 with at least 50% women. Since 2018, the program has invested over \$39 million designed to reach 500 Farmer Producer Organizations/ Farmer Producer Groups targeting 800,000 farmers, of which more than half are women.

According to an impact study conducted by Sambodhi, an India-based impact measurement firm, women farmers under Walmart Foundation's Market Access Program showed greater participation, awareness, and decision-making as FPO office bearers. Fewer women in program FPOs had to borrow from their household to pay FPO membership fees (22% vs. 40% comparison), indicating greater independence. An analysis of key farm metrics showed that women farmers had significantly higher cropping intensity (210% for Market Access women farmers vs 149% for comparison set) as well as diversity, and they cultivated more high value crops. The project PROWIT, implemented by PRADAN, intends to nurture 60 women led FPOs with membership of women from small, marginal holder farmers and mostly tribal households in the rural parts of eastern India. PROWIT works with 60 FPOs and 120,000 women farmers in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. Muni

Heprika's story from Rayagada in Odisha exemplifies the success of this project. From an annual income of Rs. 20,000, Muni's earnings grew to Rs. 122,914 per year. Being trained under the program on pest control and better cultivation techniques, Muni was able to maximise her yield and income.

Under its project UDAAN, ACCESS Development Services, works to enhance incomes of smallholder farmers through Inclusive Value Chains. They engage with 20 FPOs (6 women-led model), 12,000 farmers; out of which 6,600 would be women farmers, based in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. Hemlata Lodhi from Chaurai village who is supported by the project, sold 47.5 quintals of garlic worth Rs 52,250 through the Farmer Producer Company (FPC), she received payment the same day and earned an additional profit of Rs 9,500 over and above the price offered by local traders.

Srijan's project is aimed at economic empowerment of women



PRADAN - Muni Heprika with her agricultural produce; brinjals



Srijan - Farmer Producer company shows the way to march towards economic freedom

from small and marginal farmer families through community institutional linkages. They work with 12 FPOs, 25,000 farmers including 15,000 women farmers in Madhya Pradesh to increase incomes in a sustainable manner. The success story of 1,300 rural women of the Amarkantak Horticulture Producer Company, Madhya Pradesh shows the impact of the project. These women farmers set up a processing unit in Pushparajgarh and increased their total profit by selling processed Kodo (millet) at Rs.80/kg instead in the raw form which were sold at only Rs. 27/kg earlier.

Mercy Corps aims to build digital financial inclusion for 100,000 women smallholder farmers, bundled with services to increase productivity, income and resilience by at least 25% over a two-year period in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana. They partner with private sector organisations that have a proven track record to reach women farmers and provide them with services.

Julie Gehrki, Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, Walmart Foundation, said, "On International Rural Women's Day, we are excited about the strides made by these resilient women who have harnessed the opportunities presented by the Market Access Program. We are witnessing the emergence of women leaders within Farmer Producer Organisations breaking barriers, and spearheading change. With organisations like ACCESS, Mercy Corps, PRADAN and Srijan by our side, we are forging a path toward greater gender equality, economic empowerment, and sustainable rural development. Together, we are nurturing a brighter future for rural women farmers and their communities."

By enhancing market access for rural women, the program is driving gender equality, alleviating



ACCESS Development - Woman farmer operating power tiller in a paddy field in Nizampur, West Bengal



MercyCorp - Women observe what is required on the farm, they convey the observation to the family and that's when the men of the household purchase or act on it. Household expenses are handled by the women

poverty, and nurturing sustainable development. The voices and contributions of these remarkable women are being recognized and celebrated.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart.org represents the philanthropic efforts of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation. By focusing where the business has unique strengths, Walmart.org works to tackle key social and environmental issues and collaborate with others to spark long-lasting systemic change. Walmart has stores in 20 countries,

employs more than 2 million associates and does business with thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people. Walmart.org is helping people live better by supporting programs to accelerate upward job mobility for frontline workers, advance equity, address hunger, build inclusive economic opportunity for people in supply chains, protect and restore nature, reduce waste and emissions and build strong communities where Walmart operates. To learn more, visit www.walmart.org or connect on Twitter @Walmartorg.

Signify CSR Har Gaon Roshan Initiative Illuminates thousands of lives in the Sundarbans, World's largest mangrove forest area



Signify, the world leader in lighting, in association with the Society for Socio Economic and Ecological Department (SEED) has illuminated 25 villages in Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forests under the aegis of its CSR initiative 'Har Gaon Roshan' benefitting more than 50,000 lives.

Sundarbans is renowned for their ecological importance which are being adversely affected by severe weather conditions and super cyclones. Through Signify India's 'Har Gaon Roshan' CSR program, 1,000

families have received single solar lanterns, 100 families have received home solar systems, and 50 solar streetlights have been installed in the Sundarbans. The program had a notable impact on enhancing the well-being of families and localities in the area, ensuring their safety and security.

Commenting on the project, Nikhil Gupta, Head of Marketing and Commercial operations, Signify India – CSR, Signify Innovations India said, "We are strongly committed to our CSR initiatives and our

vision for developing underprivileged diverse communities. We took up this initiative to address the need for illuminating remote villages. We hope that these solar streetlights, lanterns, and home lights offer a long-term solution in lighting the village. Signify's 'Har Gaon Roshan' initiative is not only helping improve lives in the Sundarbans but also helping preserve its lush mangrove forests for years to come. Signify lays the groundwork for a future that is both brighter and more sustainable, ensuring a legacy for generations to follow."

These solar-powered solutions have replaced the dependence on kerosene, providing cleaner and greener lighting alternatives. The availability of solar lighting has particularly transformed the lives of children, enabling them to study during evening hours and enhancing their educational prospects; accelerating women's role in socio-economic development; mitigating human wildlife conflicts; helping ferries during nighttime; aiding communities of fisherman, crab hunters and honey collectors for their living.



CarTrade Foundation Launches DriveASmile Initiative to Uplift India's 37 Million Mobility Workers

In a bid to create a lasting positive social impact within India's mobility sector, CarTrade Tech's CSR Arm, CarTrade Foundation, on the auspicious occasion of Dussehra, is proud to announce the launch of its flagship 'DriveASmile' initiative. As India's leading multi-channel auto platform, CarTrade Tech is committed to driving innovation and social change within the automotive industry through this endeavour.

'DriveASmile' (www.driveasmile.org) is a digital marketplace connecting individuals in the mobility sector, including taxi drivers, food delivery personnel, auto plant workers, petrol station employees, automobile dealership staff, etc and their families, to compassionate donors and donor organisations. This platform provides a streamlined and transparent means for donors to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those encountering financial challenges within the mobility sector.

India's mobility sector, which includes the vast workforce of the automotive industry, is characterised by a significant number of individuals who do not have the assurance of social safety nets. With over a decade of leadership in this field, CarTrade Tech is deeply aware of the challenges faced by people working in the mobility sector.

In response to this pressing need, CarTrade Tech launched the 'DriveASmile' initiative, which aims to bring profound social change within India's mobility sector. Leveraging state-of-the-art technology and an unwavering commitment to transparency, 'DriveASmile'

offers a meticulously streamlined and verified donation process. This guarantees that those in need receive timely financial assistance while upholding the highest standards of accountability. Currently, there are two live programs on the platform: Support for Education & Health for Car Dealer Employees and Support for Education for Transport Industry Families.

Vinay Sanghi, Chairman, and Founder of CarTrade Tech, stated, "In our view, the path to business success should be paved with a commitment to reciprocate the support we receive from the very communities that underpin our enterprise. The individuals who are part of the mobility and automotive sector's intricate value chain are not just vital to our operations; they are an integral part of our journey. Through DriveASmile, a digital marketplace connecting donors with verified recipients, we are committed to

offering unwavering assistance to the dedicated workforce of the mobility sector and standing by them in their times of need. It is not just a program; it's a living testament to our ethos of compassion and solidarity. We are proud to have launched 'DriveASmile' on the auspicious occasion of Dussehra, symbolising our commitment to foster positive social change in the mobility sector."

The two live programs on the platform are:


- **Support for Education and Health of Car Dealer Employees:** CarTrade Foundation is committed to offering educational and healthcare support to Car Dealer employees and their families. This program will be run for all car dealer employees across India and we hope to make a meaningful difference in the lives of car dealer employees and their families starting today.
- **Support for Education of Transport Industry Families:** This initiative powered by Shriram Automall India Limited (SAMIL) is to help workers in the Transport Fraternity including commercial vehicle owner-cum-drivers, helpers, cleaners, labourers, workers, coolies, and transporters get financial aid for their children to pursue their education and transform their lives through the power of knowledge. The goal is to leverage DriveASmile's tech-enabled platform to empower these families and ensure that their children have access to quality education. 📖

Leveraging state-of-the-art technology and an unwavering commitment to transparency, 'DriveASmile' offers a meticulously streamlined and verified donation process. This guarantees that those in need receive timely financial assistance while upholding the highest standards of accountability.

A portrait of Dr. Subramanya Kusnur, a middle-aged man with dark hair and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt under a dark blue patterned vest. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

THE NEW WATERMAN OF INDIA

**DR. SUBRAMANYA KUSNUR'S JOURNEY
OF MAKING EVERY DROP COUNT**



n the world of finance, where numbers rule and profits are paramount, there exists a remarkable figure who has chosen a different path, one where every drop of water takes precedence over balance sheets. Dr. Subramanya Kusnur, the visionary force behind AquaKraft Group Ventures, is rewriting the narrative of corporate success. His journey, from a thriving career in banking to becoming the new waterman of India, is an inspiring tale of unwavering commitment to progress and humanity.

THE BANKER TURNED WATER WARRIOR

Dr. Subramanya Kusnur's journey began in the heart of the bustling financial district, where suits, ties, and stock markets were the order of the day. Armed with a degree in Science from the University of Mumbai and a Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Software and Applications, he ventured into the world of finance. It was a path many would consider the pinnacle of success, but for Kusnur, it was just the beginning. As a young banker, he navigated the complexities of finance and technology, climbing the corporate ladder with remarkable speed. He excelled in various roles, from equity broking to debt market operations, resource mobilization, and structured finance. It was a world of numbers, algorithms, and strategies, and Kusnur was proficient in them all.

A CALL TO A HIGHER PURPOSE

Amid the numbers and transactions, Kusnur began to feel a void. The allure of a higher purpose, of creating a positive impact on humanity, became ir-

resistible. He had achieved success in the corporate world, but he yearned for something more meaningful, something that could touch the lives of millions. It was in the year 2009 that fate intervened, setting in motion a series of events that would change Kusnur's life forever. A chance encounter would introduce him to a visionary inventor, Dr. Timothy Badger, hailing from Boston, USA. Dr. Badger's patents in water filtration technologies held the promise of transforming lives in India. His eyes sparkled with a passion to bring clean water to those in need, and he sought a partner to turn his dreams into reality.

AQUAKRAFT'S GENESIS

As fate would have it, Dr. Subramanya Kusnur introduced Dr. Badger to a respected Indian scientist who hailed the technology as nothing short of a "magic wand" for solving India's water contamination woes. Driven by the scientist's words and inspired by Dr. Badger's unwavering commitment, Kusnur found himself on a transformative jour-

ney of his own. In July 2010, he took a leap of faith and founded AquaKraft Projects Pvt. Ltd. It was a humble beginning to what would become a powerful force for change. India's water crisis was grave, with rampant bore-well drilling leading to depleted groundwater levels and the pervasive contamination of fluoride and arsenic in water sources. It needed a specific India solution to address existing contaminants and emerging challenges. Kusnur knew that AquaKraft's green and sustainable technology approach, coupled with continuous innovation & optimisation could be the answer the country sought.

TACKLING INDIA'S WATER CRISIS

AquaKraft's technology didn't require electricity, making it ideal for regions with limited power access. Unlike conventional methods like Reverse Osmosis, AquaKraft's system treated all the water without wastage or sludge. This was a game-changer, but the path ahead was far from easy. Undeterred, Kusnur traversed the length and breadth of India, spreading the message of AquaKraft's technology. He witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by communities and the lack of sustainability in existing interventions. Yet, through it all, he persisted with unshakable conviction and a determination to make a difference.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

As AquaKraft grew, so did his understanding of the water crisis. He realized that sustainable change required not only innovative solutions but also advocacy and education. He faced obstacles, scepticism, and financial risks, but his passion was his guiding light, illuminating the path ahead. In 2021, AquaKraft formed a crucial R&D partnership with the prestigious Institute of Chemical Technology. This opened doors to a world of possibilities,



AquaKraft's Solution- Soil Bio Technology (SBT)



AquaKraft's Solution- Soil Bio Technology (SBT)

fueling their drive to innovate and address India's water challenges comprehensively. AquaKraft's digital innovation, AqVerium, became a powerful tool for monitoring water use and efficiency. The company's offerings, such as the Water Balance Sheet, AquaCredits & Water Sustainability Score, embodied their commitment to water stewardship.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Dr. Kusnur was relentless in his pursuit of a water-positive world, and AquaKraft's endeavours began to make a significant impact. As AquaKraft's influence grew, the team dreamed of a day when every child could enjoy clean and pure drinking water, their smiles becoming the true measure of AquaKraft's

success. His voice quivered with emotion as he shared this dream, and his eyes shone with the passion that fueled his journey. AquaKraft's efforts received recognition and support from influential entities such as the Ministry of Jal Shakti, State Governments of India, the prestigious International Indian Film Academy (IIFA), Leo Burnett, leading global advertising firm.

A VISION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Their partnership with IIT Bombay further strengthened their arsenic filtration, sewage treatment, GIS, and rural water intervention capabilities. The unveiling of “Be Water+ve” – A global water sustainability influencer program, in association with the prestigious International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) took their philosophy global with film stars and influencers propagating it at the IIFA Awards held in May 2023 at Abu Dhabi, UAE.

A NEW MILESTONE

In 2023, AquaKraft launched AQUAFLUENCE, the Centre of Influence for Water Sustainability, in association with the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT). The program was inaugurated by Hon'ble Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Jal Shakti, Government of India. This marked a significant milestone as AquaKraft now addressed all stakeholders from rural, urban, and agriculture to industry. AquaKraft's latest innovation, AAPA, an energy-efficient, green, sustainable, and water-positive home filtration system, was dedicated to the nation at the launch of AQUAFLUENCE. With this innovation, AquaKraft aimed to bring the dream of clean water into every Indian home, urban & rural, further reinforcing their commitment to water sustainability.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

AquaKraft didn't stop at technologi-



Bio Toilet at a school at Panipat, Haryana



Bio Toilets, Govt school, Goa



Construction Phase 1 of Community Bio Toilet, Sachana, Gujarat



Water Atm, Baramati, Maharashtra

cal innovation. They had the vision to transform consumer behaviour and promote sustainability on a grand scale. To achieve this, they partnered with the global advertising company Leo Burnett to unveil the “Water Sustainability Score,” a first-of-its-kind denominator branding sustainability for consumer brands. This initiative encouraged brands to adopt water stewardship as an integral element in promoting sustainability among the masses. By incorporating the Water Sustainability Score into their branding, companies could demonstrate their commitment to responsible water use and conservation, fostering a culture of sustainability among consumers.

While advocating & implementing sustainability, Subramanya's ability to cut across diverse stakeholders right from a village zilla panchayat to a corporate board room, policy makers & elected representatives, multilateral aid agencies and global governments, leading a phenomenal global network, has been the fulcrum of his success.

To wrap up we can say, Dr. Subramanya Kusnur's journey from banking to becoming the new waterman of India is a testament to the transformative power of unwavering commitment, deep sense of purpose and an intent to serve. His vision, driven by a passion for creating a water-positive world, has led AquaKraft to become a pioneering force in addressing India's water challenges comprehensively. As he continues to make every drop count, Dr. Kusnur serves as an inspiration for us all, reminding us that true success lies in making a positive impact on humanity. His journey is a beacon of hope in a world where the water crisis looms large, and his legacy will undoubtedly continue to ripple through generations, leaving behind a greener, cleaner, and more sustainable world for all. 🌱



VISIONary Women in Eye Health

Dr. Suneeta Dubey,
Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital

Training to Transform

Dr. Suneeta Dubey, Medical Director, Director - Glaucoma Services & Quality Assurance, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital talks about her journey as an ophthalmologist and her experience with Orbis in training and capacity building.

Dr. Suneeta Dubey is an accomplished ophthalmologist and has performed over 30,000 surgeries for both, glaucoma, and cataract. She is the recipient of the Woman Achiever Award as Role Model in Health category by Business Rankers Magazine in 2017.

and has had various awards bestowed upon her by national and international organisations including All India Ophthalmological Society, International Congress of Glaucoma Surgeries, and Association of Community Ophthalmologists of India, among others.

"I completed my ophthalmology education back in the 90s when it was not such a popular field. While it was not the original plan, I was fascinated by the field when I witnessed the gift of vision my professors gave to their patients. I saw the joy on their faces and knew that this

is what I wanted to do. This motivated me to take up ophthalmology when it was not as developed as it is today," Dr. Suneeta narrated her story of how it all started. She pursued a Glaucoma Fellowship at Wills Eye Institute, Philadelphia, USA in 2002. "I joined Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH) in the year 1994 as a senior resident and took up Glaucoma as my specialty primarily because I had built a strong background during my post-graduate studies and I felt that glaucoma was not very well established as a specialty, despite being a major blinding disease."

Recounting her connection with Orbis, she added, "my association with Orbis dates to the early 2000s, when I attended the training sessions aboard the Flying Eye Hospital DC-10 with the volunteer faculty, when it had landed in New Delhi. I was just at the beginning of my career, and I found it quite fascinating and informative. Further, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital's partnership with Orbis to combat childhood blindness also kept me constantly engaged." Dr. Suneeta is also an Orbis Volunteer Faculty and

has delivered several trainings over the past few years, "through the Hospital Based Training program, I have taught Tube implants and Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery (MIGS). Not only do I appreciate the trainees' drive to learn, but they also provide me with an opportunity to learn as a trainer." In 2004, she also received the Orbis fellowship to train in the management of complex pediatric glaucoma and refractory glaucoma. Her proficiency in MIGS has been a cornerstone of her professional journey, which represent the forefront of novel surgical techniques in ophthalmology.

Dr. Suneeta has also been leading the efforts towards quality assurance through the Quality Resource Center aimed at building institutional quality for excellence in service delivery.

Glaucoma is a blinding disease. Early diagnosis is paramount in managing and treating glaucoma, especially among children. Sometimes children have congenital glaucoma. There is a common myth that children should wait to get glaucoma surgery as it is easier. Dr. Suneeta shattered this myth by adding how



Dr. Suneeta Dubey is an accomplished ophthalmologist and has performed over 30,000 surgeries for both, glaucoma, and cataract. She is the recipient of the Woman Achiever Award as Role Model in Health category by Business Rankers Magazine in 2017.

it is important to have surgery for pediatric glaucoma as soon as it is diagnosed. Timely intervention can even help the child completely regain vision and give them a fulfilling life.

On being asked what vision meant to her, she said, “vision is everything. When I see a blind or visually impaired person walk into my OPD, I recognise how different their perspectives must be. Moreover, there are people who have irreversible blindness or vision loss since childhood and have learnt to live with it. Therefore, it is important to not only prevent blindness but also enable rehabilitation for individuals with irreversible blindness to lead an independent and fulfilling life.”

“There is a significant need for specialization in medical education because diagnosis of many conditions is missed due to lack of adequate diagnostic skills. Training is an essential part of medicine, and it is imperative to constantly upgrade and upskill yourself,” she added, “whenever I interact with any of my trainees, I am always pleasantly surprised. They say that the sandwich fellowships (a blended learning model with both virtual and hands-on training) have helped them develop skills in new domains. They are able to perform basic diagnosis surgery for patients with glaucoma, and they don’t have to refer the patients to other facilities.”

“The Digital Training Hub offers state-of-the-art facilities and equipment to practice intricacies of the ophthalmic procedures and surgeries. The remote surgical mentorships and Cybersight (Orbis tele-medicine platform) add another dimension of being able to seek guidance during live surgeries in remote areas from experts stationed elsewhere. Moreover, the rotations between their base institutions and SCEH in Delhi also helped the trainees to learn new skills, practice them independently, and then refine them further. This is also building an incredible connect between them and the communities they work with, by instilling a sense of trust and comfort that solutions are available. This is very well indicated by the increase in the number of surgeries being performed at our secondary level hospitals that serve remote communities.”

“The field of ophthalmology has evolved a lot since I started, and so have the perceptions and delivery of training in this domain. I believe that the future of training lies in efficiency and ease of access, that can help transform the lives of both, the practitioners, and the patients.”

There is a significant need for specialization in medical education because diagnosis of many conditions is missed due to lack of adequate diagnostic skills. Training is an essential part of medicine, and it is imperative to constantly upgrade and upskill yourself



THE ROOTS OF THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS

Instead of pursuing the systemic changes needed to address water-related challenges, the world's governments are bowing to corporate interests and settling for insufficient incremental reforms, according to **Joshua Castellino**

In March 1977, representatives from 116 countries gathered in Mar del Plata, Argentina, for the inaugural United Nations Water Conference. At the time, the event received very little attention. Global politics was dominated by a handful of powerful countries, most of them in temperate regions where water scarcity, severe pollution and flooding were not considered major issues.

The atmosphere at this year's UN Water Conference, which took place in New York in March, was markedly different. Instead of apathy, there was a palpable sense that the water crisis is a global problem. Today, every country in the world faces water-related challenges, underscoring our collective vulnerability as the planet's most vital natural resource is increasingly threatened. The robust engagement of the scien-

tific community and civil society was also instrumental in shedding light on the far-reaching consequences of this crisis.

Unsurprisingly, the countries that were most at risk in 1977 are even more vulnerable today. The reckless exploitation of the planet has accelerated humanity's breach of planetary boundaries. The long-anticipated sea-level rise is now submerging vast areas, while deserts

are expanding at an alarming rate as water sources diminish and aquifers become depleted. Meanwhile, pollutants from human waste, along with the byproducts of industrial activities, contaminate our rivers, lakes and oceans. At a time of growing scarcity, our seemingly insatiable thirst for consumption has aggravated these trends.

The fact that some remain unaffected by this crisis attests to their privilege. While many experience environmental degradation on a spiritual level, some of the world's poorest populations face immediate and tangible consequences as they try to adapt to rapidly changing conditions.

Much like the response to the climate crisis, the response to the water crisis suffers from a lack of global coordination and opposition from entrenched interests seeking to prevent crucial reforms. As the Indian environmental activist Vandana Shiva puts it: "When the rich, powerful, and dominant economic forces of society" exceed their fair share of Earth's resources, "Indigenous communities and minority groups are deprived of their share of water for life and livelihoods." This, she writes, forces entire communities "to carry the heavy burden of water poverty."

A recent petition proposed by prominent water-rights activist Rajendra Singh offers a potential path forward. Singh, chairman of the People's World Commission on Drought and Flood, outlines ten critical transformations required to restore water harmony. By transcending anthropocentrism, his proposed pledge aims to rejuvenate the global water cycle and harness its immense power to promote the well-being of all living things.

At the heart of Singh's pledge lies the bedrock principle of climate-oriented thinking: a complete system overhaul. This perspective views humanity as part of a much larger

The fact that some remain unaffected by this crisis attests to their privilege.

whole that encompasses the diverse species with which we share our planet. Instead of commodifying natural resources for profit and relentless consumption, this ethos encourages people to be mindful of the potential consequences of their actions and commit to repairing any damage they cause.

This raises three fundamental questions. First, what actions are required to address the global water crisis? Second, which key stakeholders must step up? Third, how can we ensure that these stakeholders implement vital systemic changes?


For too long, policymakers have emphasised minor changes in household consumption habits, thereby unfairly shifting the burden to families and communities whose contributions to the water crisis have been negligible. The root causes of water scarcity are large-scale industrial production, lack of attention to quality, and the failure to address rampant pollution. At the macro level, extractive industries and an economic system centered on profit maximisation drive the increase in global temperatures, further disrupting water cycles.

While reducing household consumption is important, it pales in comparison to the potential impact of forcing corporations to adopt sustainable practices. But the increasingly symbiotic relationship between politics and big-business interests complicates this task. Instead of pursuing systemic changes, the world's most powerful governments have opted

for incremental reforms to create the appearance of commitment.

The recent UN Water Conference underscored the urgency of today's crisis. If governments are unwilling or unable to pursue the necessary structural reforms, they must be replaced by political leaders with the vision and determination to overhaul the systems that jeopardise the natural resource sustaining all life on Earth.

Growing up in India, I observed the country's relentless drive to catch up with wealthier economies. By investing in higher education, building roads and hospitals, and boosting economic growth through consumption and increased production, the thinking went, India could become richer and eliminate poverty. The mainstream education system frequently championed the commodification of nature, anthropocentric dominance and extractivism. It revered the architects of our flawed economic system, treating their words as sacrosanct.

Indigenous communities have long warned that such "progress" was misguided, but they were dismissed as hidebound and out of touch with reality. As climate change disrupts water and food systems around the world, many now recognise the prescience of these warnings. Given that we might be the last generation capable of mitigating the worst effects of the water crisis, it is our responsibility to hold accountable those who are exploiting the planet for personal gain. 

Joshua Castellino, co-executive director of Minority Rights Group International, is Professor of International and Comparative Law at the University of Derby and founder of the School of Law at Middlesex University London, where he served as dean from 2012-18.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/the-roots-of-the-global-water-crisis/>)

India has one of the world's most ambitious renewable energy targets, to install 500 gigawatts (GW) of capacity by 2030 and meet half of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, including nuclear and hydro.

Image: Wind Denmark, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.



INDIA'S ENERGY TRANSITION REQUIRES A DELICATE BALANCING ACT

The most important issue for India is to grow sustainably while adhering to its international climate commitments and keeping its energy constraints in mind, writes **Saon Ray**

There are less than 40 days to go until the Conference of Parties (COP28). This also marks the halfway point for nations to achieve their self-determined emission reduction goals by 2030 and to limit global warming

to below 2 degrees Celsius as part of the Paris Agreement signed at COP21. While most countries agree on the need to reduce emissions and greenhouse gases, there are differences on how this can be achieved.

Developing countries like India have been pointing out the imple-

mentation gap from the pre-2020 era or the voluntary pledges under the 2010 Cancun Agreement, which ignored the ambitious targets required from developed countries and shifted a portion of the burden onto developing countries. The targets not being met by developed

countries puts added pressure on developing countries.

At COP 21, ambitious targets for 2030 were announced by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, including 500 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity and reducing emissions intensity — the volume of emissions per unit of GDP — of the economy by 45 per cent as part of its nationally determined contributions.

There were three goals: for cumulative electric power-installed capacity from non-fossil sources to reach 40 per cent; reducing emissions intensity by 33 to 35 per cent compared to 2005 levels; and the creation of an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover.

India has also announced its decarbonisation plans and transition to net zero emissions by 2070.

This will depend on the phasing out of coal, which still contributes more than 55 per cent to India's total energy demand. This needs to be accompanied by the use of cleaner coal and technologies that enable energy efficiency. The emissions reduction emerging from this will be comparable to limiting the increase in temperature to 2 degrees. Instead of coal, India hopes to meet 50 per cent of its energy requirements through renewable sources — wind, solar, etc. Incidentally, India has achieved the target of 40 per cent of its power capacity from non-fossil fuels well ahead of time.

There are three issues for India. First, it still needs to provide energy to about 9 per cent of its population.

Second, phasing out coal is important and needs to be done, but the important domestic conditions that confront India cannot be ignored.

A phaseout has to be done in a just manner. Livelihoods will be impacted, which can have consequences for the rest of the country. India's coal-rich regions are in the

Decarbonisation of industry and the energy system will be key. While this will be easy in certain sectors, it will not be so in sectors such as iron and steel, bricks, etc.

east of the country while renewable energy sources are in the west, which could lead to large-scale westward migration.

Third, India is dependent on energy imports of oil, gas and coal, and depending on the fuel mix in use, there will be implications for the country's energy security, with new alliances necessary for imports of minerals for batteries or electrolyzers for green hydrogen.

The other question is whether greater renewable deployment can meet the technical requirements of grid balance, which means maintaining a balance between production and consumption in an electrical grid and balancing issues like fluctuations or capacity overflow.

The most important issue for India is to grow sustainably while adhering to its international climate commitments and keeping all its energy constraints in mind. This could mean using the principles of energy efficiency in all aspects of energy use, including appliances and in the commercial and residential sectors.

Decarbonisation of industry and the energy system will be key. While this will be easy in certain sectors, it will not be so in sectors such as iron and steel, bricks, etc. For this, access to technology will be necessary. Finance will be absolutely critical in the context of India and other developing countries.

At the same time, countries undertaking the transition should


not be getting into debt. It has been suggested that India will need USD\$10 trillion for a net-zero transition. At COP28, higher energy commitments are expected to be put forward.

The first global stocktake process of five years will conclude at COP28 in Dubai. The global stocktake — launched at COP26 in 2021 to assess the progress of the Paris Agreement goals — will also need to identify the sources of finance that will be available to developing countries.

The deliberations will determine how countries respond to the gaps identified in the technical assessment phase (there are three phases of which technical assessment forms the second) and form guidance for future commitments.

For a country adversely affected by climate change, the pathways to low carbon growth include reduction of carbon emissions and increasing energy efficiency.

International cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other groups like the G20, particularly the Environment and Sustainability Working Group whose mandate is to enhance cooperation, is needed in order to achieve this.

Whether COP28 will deliver on all of the above remains to be seen. 

Saon Ray is Visiting Professor, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi. An economist specialising in industry and international trade issues, her areas of interest include global value chains, technological upgrading of Indian industries, free trade agreements and trade creation effects, technology transfer, foreign direct investment, efficiency and productivity of firms, energy and climate change-related issues.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/indias-energy-transition-requires-a-delicate-balancing-act/>)



The ocean is essential to tackling climate change.

So why has it been neglected in global climate talks?

Climate change is commonly discussed as though it's a uniquely atmospheric phenomena. But the crisis is deeply entwined with the ocean, and this has largely been neglected in international climate talks, states **Dr Sali Bache**

Climate change is commonly discussed as though it's a uniquely atmospheric phenomena. But the crisis is deeply entwined with the ocean, and this has largely been neglected in international climate talks. The latest international cli-

mate negotiations made some progress by, for the first time, anchoring oceans permanently into the multilateral climate change regime. But the Glasgow Climate Pact is still leagues from where it needs to be to adequately reflect the importance of oceans to our climate system.

Most countries have targets for land-based emissions — but there are no such targets for oceans. Yet the ocean plays a vital role in helping balance the conditions humans and most other species need to survive, while also offering a substantial part of the solution to stop

the planet warming over the crucial limit of 1.5°C this century. So how can oceans help us tackle the climate crisis? And what progress has been made in international negotiations?

The ocean's incredible potential

Since industrialisation, the ocean has absorbed 93 per cent of human-generated heat and one-third of anthropogenic carbon dioxide (CO₂). The consequences of this are profound, including the thermal expansion of water (the key cause of sea level rise), ocean acidification, deoxygenation (oxygen loss), and forcing marine life to redistribute to other places.

Alarmingly, this may one day lead the ocean to reverse its role as a carbon sink and release CO₂ back into the atmosphere, as its absorption ability declines.

Equally important is ocean-based climate mitigation, which could provide more than 20 per cent of the emissions reductions needed for the 1.5°C goal.

Crucially, we must see changes to maritime industries. The shipping industry alone has a similar carbon footprint to Germany — if shipping were a country it would be the world's sixth-largest emitter. Although high on the International Maritime Organisation's agenda, the decarbonisation of shipping still lacks adequate targets or processes.

Oceans can also provide climate-safe, sustainable food choices. Current food systems, such as emissions-intensive agriculture, fishing, and processed foods are responsible for one-third of global emissions. Considerable environmental (and health) benefits can be gained by shifting our diets to sustainable “blue foods”.

These include seafoods sourced from fisheries with sustainable management practices, such as avoiding overfishing and reducing carbon emissions. Markets and technolo-

gies should also be geared towards the large-scale production and consumption of aquatic plants such as seagrasses. There's also a wealth of opportunity in “blue carbon” — capturing CO₂ in the atmosphere by conserving and restoring marine ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrasses and salt marshes. However, the success of nature-based solutions depends on a healthy ocean ecosystem. For example, there are emerging concerns around the impact of plastic pollution on plankton's ability to absorb CO₂.

But perhaps the greatest impact would come from adopting offshore renewable energy. This has the potential to offer one-tenth of the emissions reductions we need to reach the 1.5°C goal. The International Energy Agency has estimated offshore wind could power the world 18 times over its current consumption rate.

Climate talks are making slow progress

For more than a decade, the inclusion of oceans in climate talks has been piecemeal and inconsistent. Where they have been part of negotiations, including at COP26, talk has focused on the potential for coastal areas to adapt to climate change impacts such as sea-level rise, as first raised in international fora in 1989 by small island states.

The final COP26 agreement, known as the Glasgow Climate Pact, made slight progress.

The pact recognised the importance of ensuring the ocean ecosystem's integrity. It established the “the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue” as an annual process to strengthen ocean-based action. And it invited UNFCCC bodies to consider how to “integrate and strengthen ocean-based action into existing mandates and workplans” and report back.

While these are positive measures, at this stage they don't require action by parties. Therefore, they're

only a theoretical inclusion, not action-oriented.

We still lack national targets and clear, mandatory international requirements for countries to consider sinks, sources and activities beyond the shoreline in their climate planning and reporting.


Where COP26 did progress was its focus on whether ocean impacts and mitigation will finally be brought into the mainstream climate agenda. For the first time in five years, a new “Because the Ocean” declaration was released, which calls for the systematic inclusion of the oceans in the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement process.

What do we do now?

What's now needed is a list of mandated requirements that ensure countries report on and take responsibility for climate impacts within their maritime territories.

But as COP26 president Alok Sharma said of the summit as a whole, it was a “fragile win”. We still lack any reference to consistency with existing mechanisms, such as the law of the sea convention or how funding will be allocated specifically to oceans.

As such, the actual impact of COP26 on the inclusion of oceans in climate action remains uncertain. It will depend on how the UNFCCC bodies respond to these directives, and their success in extending obligations to state parties.

Responding to the climate crisis means we need to stop pretending the ocean and atmosphere are separate. We must start including ocean action as a routine part of climate action. 

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/the-ocean-is-essential-to-tackling-climate-change-so-why-has-it-been-neglected-in-global-climate-talks/>)

While social media can help raise awareness and climate activism, it also increasingly exposes young users to a barrage of alarming information and the risk of misinformation.

Image: Rendy Novantino / Unsplash

SCROLLING INTO STRESS: HOW CLIMATE FEARS HIT YOUTH

It is particularly important for emerging economies like Indonesia that has a large youth population to address the issue of eco-anxiety, often driven by a perceived lack of political will and action from those in power, writes **Gabriela Fernando**

Young people are suing their governments in the state of Montana and in European countries, accusing them of not doing enough to protect the environment. They have effectively stepped up from a case of anxiety over the environment to embark on legal action.

It is perhaps one of the most spectacular results of youth concern over

the environment and their assessment of progress on climate action.

Those concerns are driving increased eco-anxiety – a term used to describe the emotional distress caused by the shifting environment and the growing climate crisis. Social media often feeds it.

Young people typically use social media for self-expression, social connection and information sharing but there are problems with using

these platforms too. While social media can help raise awareness and activism, it also increasingly exposes young users to a barrage of alarming information and the risk of misinformation. That can intensify their feelings of helplessness, fear and despair over climate change.

This wave of negative news and imagery can create a sense of urgency that young people might struggle to process, leaving them

anxious about the state of the planet and its future.

It begs the question: how to ease young people's eco-anxiety while still using social media for environmental awareness? Studies suggest young people tend to experience higher levels of eco-anxiety.

The global survey on climate anxiety among children and people aged 16 to 25 years from 10 countries, including Brazil, India, Nigeria, Philippines and Australia, revealed that they are extremely worried and feel sad, powerless, helpless and betrayed by their governments.

This survey also revealed that the adverse impacts on daily life from the climate crisis were greater for youth in the Global South.

While problem-focused coping has seen young people engaging more in climate action and activism, the unpleasant emotions – including frustration over governments' lack of political will and action – is contributing to the rising eco-anxiety and poor mental health.

A study found that individuals experiencing eco-anxiety had higher rates of depression, anxiety, stress, lower self-reported mental health and functional impairment.

Eco-anxiety is compounding the pre-existing mental health issues of young people that are often neglected or overlooked.

The World Health Organisation reports that globally one in seven 10 to 19 year-olds live with a mental health condition, with suicide being the fourth-leading cause of death among 15 to 29-year-olds.

In Indonesia, the National Adolescent Mental Health Survey found that around one in three people aged 10 to 17 showed symptoms of a mental disorder in the past year.

Eco-anxiety during adolescence can cause chronic distress that can affect a young person's well-being into adulthood. It is crucial for them to receive timely and appropriate mental health support.

Eco-anxiety was found to have a significant correlation with the rate of exposure to information about the impacts of climate change, the amount of attention paid to climate change information and what is seen as acceptable by peers. Social media plays a critical role in this exposure to information and can significantly influence cognitive biases that increase the tendency to trust and circulate information that fits with existing beliefs or political inclinations. These biases are magnified in a digital landscape where biased social media algorithms often create echo chambers and filter bubbles. Those algorithms will reinforce existing viewpoints.

Social media giants like Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) employ algorithms that tailor the users' content based on online sponsorship, promotions, and predicted emotional reactions, regardless of whether these reactions are of joy, sympathy or anger. This overexposure to unbalanced and biased information about climate change can deepen the effects of eco-anxiety and the general mental health on the young, especially those with pre-existing conditions.

This is particularly important for emerging economies like Indonesia — the world's fourth-most populous country — that has a large youth population and is a nation grappling with substantial climate risks.

Indonesia is home to the world's fourth-largest group of Facebook users and the fifth-largest group of X (previously known as Twitter) users.

While more evidence about the role of social media on eco-anxiety is needed, governments could also focus more on safeguarding the growing and vulnerable youth populations from the dark side of social media in the context of the climate crisis. That would encourage young people to actively engage in climate action while mitigating the risk of social media-driven eco-anxiety.

Building media literacy education into schools and youth networks to increase awareness about climate change is also part of the solution.

Schools could actively engage with youth-led climate initiatives. There are also youth-driven platforms that allow them to engage positively in climate action.

Including young people's voices and experiences is crucial in understanding the impacts of social media and eco-anxiety on their mental health and helping governments develop effective programs.

A 2022 study found that positive news stories about climate action can help young people's mental and social well-being.

Governments could drive this by establishing youth advisory boards and collaborating with social media and news platforms to formulate appropriate climate change reporting guidelines.

This initiative will ensure that young people's voices are considered in the decision-making process and that social media and news platforms actively contribute to strengthening youth action and well-being around climate change. ■

If this article has raised issues for you, or if you're concerned about someone you know, visit <https://findahelpline.com/i/iasp>.

Additional reporting and contribution by Ida Bagus Nyoman Adi Palguna, a youth mental health advocate and health science student at University of the People. He is the founder and head of Indonesia-based youth mental health community, Dengarkanaku.org.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/scrolling-into-stress-how-climate-fears-hit-youth/>)



Governance remains vital, but no longer suffices. In addition to emerging regulations that touch on environmental and social issues, ever-evolving international relationships will transform the way businesses operate, write Steven Okun and Gillian Meyers. Image: World Bank Photo Collection/Flickr

It's time for a second 'G' in ESG: Geopolitics

Investors now need to be fully aware of the environmental and social implications of geopolitics – or else remain oblivious to the risks and opportunities. ESG must become ESGG, state **Steven Okun** and **Gillian Meyers**

The climate crisis, rising income inequality, competition between the United States and China, the rise of populism and authoritarian governments, and the 24/7 news cycle hyper-driven by social media lead to growing government intervention that impacts business. Traditional environmental, social and governance (ESG) requires companies to maximise financial return while ensuring fair treatment for employees and customers, and minimise environmental impacts while being in full compliance with laws and regulations.

Today, however, investors must consider and predict actions by governments across multiple jurisdictions simultaneously. They must also figure out how those actions

will impact their actual and social licensees to operate if they want to generate outsized returns while taking into account investing in sectors for which regulations will impact the bottomline.

To ordain the material risks and opportunities of any given business, integrating ESG into the investment process requires investors to possess an intimate understanding of how the business operates, generates revenue, impacts the environment, and effects workers, customers, and the locations in which they operate.

In the world of private capital in Asia, ESG leads must not only understand what happens in their home markets. They need to know what's happening in Beijing, Brussels, Washington DC, and any other capital in which a company oper-

ates or sources – and predict what might come next. As crises worsen, policymakers will act. A price on carbon, tougher rules to protect human rights globally, requirements for the environmental and social impacts of global supply chains to be the responsibility of the sourcing company, and the expansion of the definition of national security to include trade and investment are coming from governments around the world. It's time for a second G in ESG – geopolitics.

ESG needs another 'G' beyond governance

Geopolitics goes beyond governance.

Governance focuses on how well a company manages itself. Gauging the independence of its board, ensuring regulatory compliance, achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion, being transparent with its stakeholders falls under the first 'G'.

Governance remains vital, but no longer suffices.

In addition to an emerging suite of regulations that touch on environmental and social issues, ever-evolving international relationships will transform the way businesses operate. In the world of private capital, investors need to anticipate the legislative and geopolitical developments of the next five-10 years, which will impact the exit valuations of investments being made today.

Four areas highlight what fits within geopolitics, and why it should be on every investor's radar screen.

First, Asia must stay a step ahead of the decisions being issued in Brussels. When it comes to following the European Union (EU), investors in Asia seem to channel Henry Kissinger's apocryphal quote that Europe does not exist because there is no phone number to call them. Asia's private sector must stay apprised of new developments in Europe – or else face the consequences.

A long and growing list of EU sustainability legislation will have pro-

found financial and legal implications for many businesses in the region. This will include new disclosures and fees associated with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, which requires all large companies and listed small-to-medium sized enterprises to publish regular reports on their environmental and social impact, and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, a regulation that places a tariff on carbon intensive products imported by the EU.

Second, heads of state are increasingly raising the need for multilateral bank reform. At next month's World Bank meeting in Morocco, President Ajay Banga will begin enacting a suite of changes which could change the viability of projects in emerging markets. President Banga will ask shareholders to broaden the Bank's mission statement to include climate and hopes to nearly double the organisation's lending capacity over the next decade – an increase that could soar as high as US\$125 billion. Investors tracking these developments could achieve outsized returns.

Third, a global plastics treaty could have major impacts on plastics-heavy businesses once its negotiations wrap up. Even if a treaty does not transpire, customer demands will impact business regardless.

Already, heightening trade tensions between the US and China impact markets globally, such as from China's "dual circulation" policies and the proposed US' outbound investment regime, which could prohibit or require notification of certain types of US investments into China. In the coming decade, nothing will impact geopolitics and investing as much as the climate crisis. Businesses should prepare for the regulatory and legal environment to heat up.

Climate action and a price on carbon

Global climate action will result in

emissions disclosure requirements and carbon pricing from countries around the world.

At this year's COP28 climate talks, delegates will discuss several proposed global taxes – on fossil fuels, shipping, and even kerosene. It's unlikely that they'll win broad support, but businesses should be aware of emerging requirements and fees regardless.

However, even though these discussions are taking place on an international stage, don't expect nations to coordinate on what they ask of the private sector.

The EU's new levies on maritime shipping provides one such example. Starting in January, shipping into the EU will fall under the bloc's Emissions Trading System, incurring hundreds of millions of dollars in carbon taxes.

EU policies like this and its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism could prompt Asian countries and the US to launch their own climate-related trade restrictions.

With the 14-country Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) negotiations heading into the home stretch, there are opportunities to discuss how IPEF can facilitate investment and opportunities as countries make the transition to clean economies, which include complicated issues like carbon credits, opening new markets for investment.

California, which may as well be a country in terms of its global influence on environmental policy, has already passed legislation that will force major companies operating in the state to report their greenhouse gas output, including Scope 3 emissions. As the US implements the Inflation Reduction Act, which offers tax breaks to companies that deploy clean technologies inside the United States, China's "dual circulation" policy includes government support for domestic technology companies, each impacting global investors.

Risks and opportunities


As the climate crisis worsens and as US-China competition intensifies, governments will react with even more legislation and regulation impacting investments in clean technology, transition pathways and net-zero. Southeast Asia will be impacted by what happens in China, the EU, and the US. Going forward, investors need to be fully aware of geopolitics – or else remain oblivious to risks and opportunities.

Governments' spotty environmental records paired with lagging international climate negotiations will put pressure on companies to make strong ESG commitments regardless – another form of geopolitics. Corporate net-zero commitments, though scrutinised, will be demanded considering the continued global deadlock.

In the coming years, corporates will be expected to become a driving force in achieving net-zero climate targets, as nations increasingly prioritise domestic concerns and political survival over commitments on paper. Investors who understand this, and act accordingly, will outperform the market.

Managing ESG issues will not be enough. Now, ESG requires the application of materiality for geopolitical risks. Already, ESG practitioners should be assessing their supply chain with that in mind.

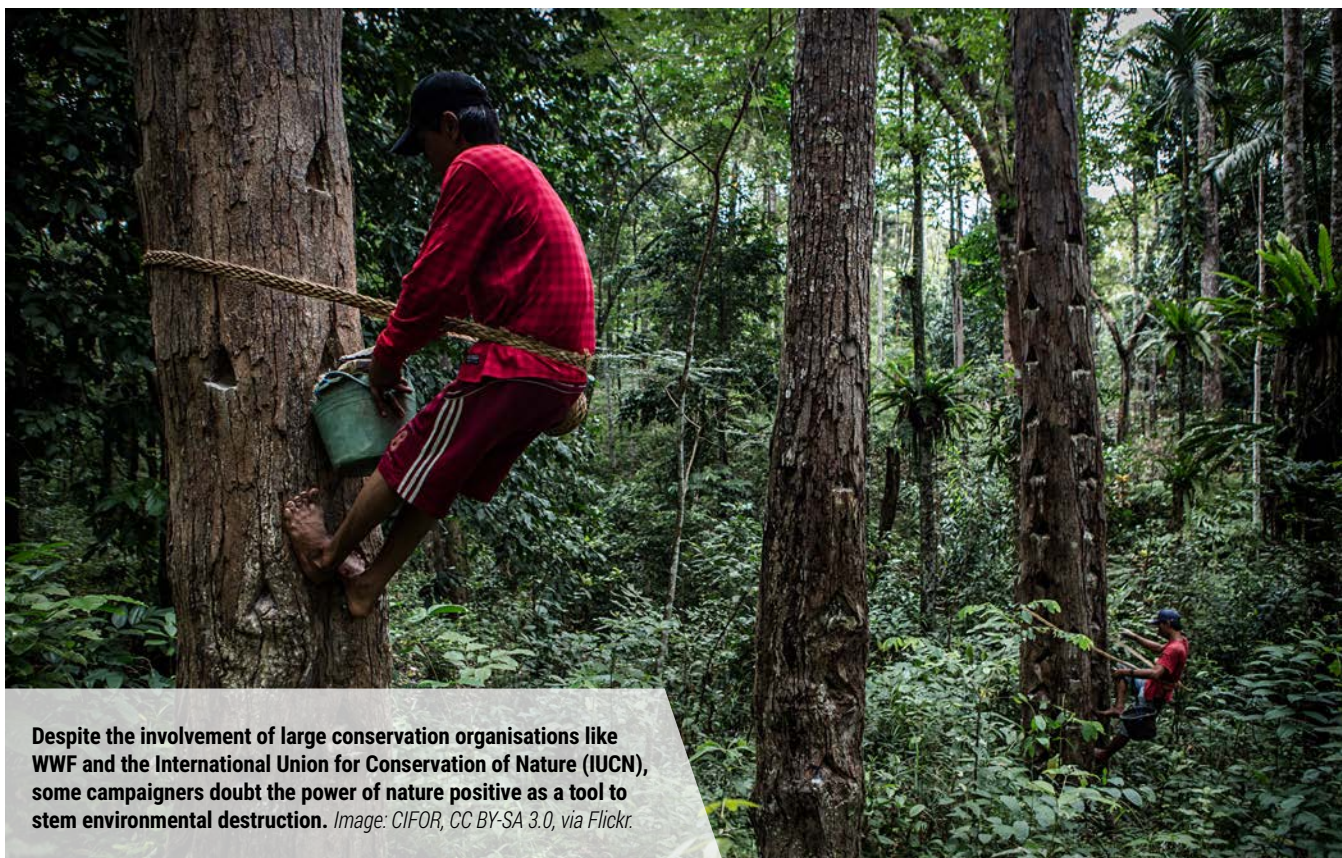
Geopolitics now features heavily in business considerations, whether or not investors want it to.

To stay competitive, ESG must become ESGG. 

Steven Okun served in the Clinton Administration and is chief executive of APAC Advisors, an ESG consultancy in Singapore and Senior Advisor to geostrategic consultancy McLarty Associates.

Gillian Meyers is a climate and ESG associate at McLarty Associates.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/its-time-for-a-second-g-in-esg-geopolitics/>)



CONSERVATIONISTS PUSH ‘NATURE POSITIVE’ AS BIODIVERSITY’S NET ZERO

The Nature Positive Initiative wants to hold businesses to account for their impacts, but can biodiversity be measured?

A coalition of conservation and business groups is calling for governments and companies to adopt a global ‘nature positive’ goal of having more of the natural world left in 2030, but critics say the aim is too vague and may be open to abuse.

From deforestation and pollution to overfishing, human actions are causing often irreversible biodiversity loss, while eroding nature’s ability to absorb planet-heating

carbon dioxide emissions and ward off the worst of global warming.

The Nature Positive Initiative aims to create a collective mission around nature, much like the 2015 UN Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius that sent a signal to policymakers, markets and the public, said Eva Zabey, CEO of Business for Nature, a corporate coalition. Originally launched at COP15 UN nature talks in Montreal last December, campaigners now want to put some meat on the

bones - to better define their goals and how companies and other institutions measure their contributions towards them.

“Ultimately, it’s about strengthening our accountability systems in order to be able to increasingly make sure companies are held responsible for their impacts on nature and biodiversity,” Zabey said.

But critics say the terms of nature positive are unclear and could be used to offset destruction in one place with restoration in another,

like some companies use carbon markets to reach 'net zero' instead of cutting their own emissions.

Nature's answer to net zero?

Despite the involvement of large conservation organisations like WWF and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), some campaigners doubt the power of nature positive as a tool to stem environmental destruction.

Marília Monteiro Silva, senior portfolio manager in nature finance at Greenpeace International, believes it is a "problematic" concept as the term is being used before there is a "clear and aligned understanding" of what it means.

Silva said biodiversity was too complex to measure in a similar way to carbon emissions, and that doing so neglected nature's intrinsic value.

"You're basically talking about measuring what is unmeasurable," she said. But those involved with the initiative say companies must avoid and reduce their own damage before looking to increase nature elsewhere and transform how they interact with nature more broadly.

"We need to hold people to account, particularly for irreplaceable parts of nature," said E.J. Milner-Gulland, professor of biodiversity at the University of Oxford and co-lead of the Nature Positive Universities network.

But she said organisations and companies her team had analysed would eventually need to offset a significant portion of their environmental impacts, even if strong actions were taken to avoid and reduce them first.

"We can't solve these problems by just protecting wild nature," she said. "All analysis shows that we have to protect wild nature and we have to change our supply chains - and this net argument is fundamental to that."

She said work was being done to create standardised biodiver-



We can't solve these problems by just protecting wild nature. All analysis shows that we have to protect wild nature and we have to change our supply chains - and this net argument is fundamental to that.

- E.J. MILNER-GULLAND

Professor, University of Oxford

sity metrics which were appropriate to local contexts, but could be compared at scale, such as the Accounting for Nature framework developed in Australia.

Can nature positive create accountability?

A major challenge facing the Nature Positive Initiative is the potential for its dilution by companies looking to use the slogan, but not transform how they operate in practice.

Marco Lambertini, special envoy for WWF International, said it was not meant to be a buzzword, but a measurable global goal to "inject a clear, high level of accountability".

He said many companies had been cautious in embracing it in the absence of clear guidance, but initiative partners were releasing more resources on how to disclose and take action on nature impacts.

Last month, Business for Nature and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, for example, worked with the World Economic Forum and published guides for companies in 12 different sectors.

Meanwhile, an international working group of business and finance executives launched a set of guidelines from the Taskforce on Nature-Related Financial Disclosure for companies to report their nature-related risks and impacts.


Lambertini said biodiversity was "by definition local", meaning restoration work must be local too, such as regenerating a degraded area of the Amazon rainforest. That, he argued, could make it easier to ascertain whether efforts to protect it were doing what they promised.

"It has to be like for like. It has to be local compensation," he said.

But many companies have a long way to go to even understand the effects of their operations and sourcing on nature.

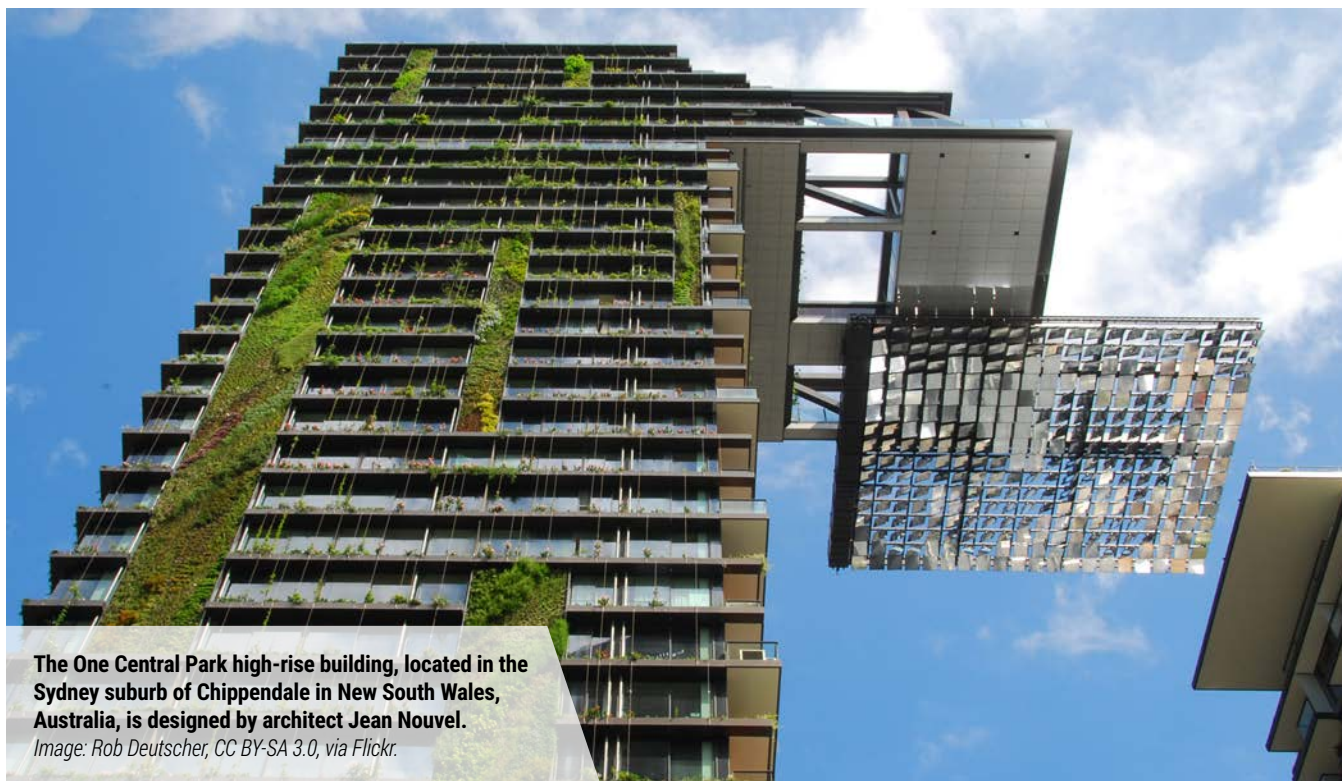
Marissa Balfour, a corporate engagement advisor at US-based non-profit The Nature Conservancy, said she was surprised by the lack of visibility companies had throughout their supply chains when she worked in the textile and apparel industry. "A huge barrier is lack of traceability into a company's value chains," she said, particularly for the raw material stage - which is where the largest impacts on nature tend to happen.

Balfour explained there was now real pressure on companies to obtain this information and act on it, which will take significant investment, time and expertise, as well as genuine interaction with Indigenous peoples and local communities.

"But that's absolutely the path that everyone needs to be on at this point," she said. 

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/conservationists-push-nature-positive-as-biodiversitys-net-zero/>)



The One Central Park high-rise building, located in the Sydney suburb of Chippendale in New South Wales, Australia, is designed by architect Jean Nouvel.

Image: Rob Deutscher, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

THE URBAN JUNGLE NEEDS MORE TREES

As cities grow and heat up, it's time to get rid of your air-conditioner and have more plants in your homes, writes **Dr Tamil Salvi Mari**

Ever wonder what's the most cost-effective solution to cool the temperature? Simple. Planting more trees or incorporating more vegetation/plants in city design. It puts a new slant on the idea of the "urban jungle." Climate change is one of the most serious risks to urban life. Our cities are heating up. The dangers of the urban heat island — when concrete buildings, asphalt roads and other urban infrastructure absorb and re-emit solar radiation more than natural landscapes — are well documented,

increasing temperatures in built-up areas which can increase the risk of heat-related illnesses.

Poorly planned city development increases this risk. According to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, only 40 per cent of the urban areas expected to exist by 2030 exist, meaning significant further urban development will occur over the next decade.

"Nature-based solutions" refer to a wide range of strategies with the potential to curb greenhouse gas emissions. They can improve an ecosystem's capacity to absorb carbon

dioxide or reverse degradation to the point where an ecosystem once again becomes a "net sink" of carbon (storing more carbon than it emits).

Of all the methods for reducing the heat island effect, those involving plants have proven to be the most successful. There is still disagreement in the scientific community over how much green space people need and whether current systems adequately address this issue, despite the importance of urban green space to the layout and impact of today's dense urban centres. The World Health Organization

advocates for easy access to green space, suggesting everyone lives no more than 300 metres from a green area covering at least half a hectare.

Vegetation can mitigate the effects of extreme climate, reduce energy use, and improve people's physical and physiological well-being, all of which go a long way towards making urban living more bearable.

In tropical regions, buildings exposed to more sunlight increase energy demand. Using plants for shade can reduce solar radiation, cool the building and improve energy efficiency. While trees have been planted to shade homes for generations, there has been substantial innovation in the application strategy in recent years.

A tree canopy

Tree canopies cool the ground below by blocking sunlight and controlling how much heat a building radiates into the environment. For tropical cities, Ceylon Ironwood trees have dense branching, and high leaf coverage provides excellent shading. Due to the shade, less absorbed heat is radiated to the air, encouraging evapotranspiration, reducing the surrounding temperature and increasing people's thermal comfort. Indoor and outdoor temperatures can be lowered by more than 3 degrees when plants are used to modify the microclimate.

The shading performance of each species is different, resulting in varying scales of effectiveness on microclimate alterations, making living walls with climbers and creepers a suitable alternative when there is no space for trees.

Living walls

A "living wall" is a system that irrigates and sustains a vertical garden. Living walls can influence the microclimate by reducing surrounding temperature and may also be part of a water treatment system. Vegetation incorporated into

a building's exterior has two purposes: it lowers the heat transferred inside and improves the building's look. A green facade is one in which plants such as vines and creepers are grown directly on the building's exterior, while green walls are one in which a system is used to cultivate different species of plants along the wall surfaces.

Green facades and green walls are two common living wall systems that increase a building's energy efficiency. Green facades have vegetation either planted directly in the ground or planters climbing onto building surfaces or light framework, and green walls have vegetation growing on a different system then attached to the wall instead of being planted directly. A green wall uses materials and innovative technology to cultivate various plants along the wall surfaces. A continuous green wall, also known as a "vertical garden," usually instils lightweight and permeable frames where plants would be planted individually.

Climbing plants like Double Rangoon for a green façade are essential for optimal performance and a sustainable living environment. Climbers like the Yellow Trumpet vines create a more pleasant microclimate, while the Curtain Creeper lowers the surrounding temperature and cleanses the air.

Using plants to moderate the heat and reduce dependency on artificial cooling can be the seed of a solution to the dangers of rapidly heating cities.

Growing food

Urban farming is not as cutting edge as you think; people have been doing so for centuries at Machu Picchu and the ancient Hanging Gardens of Babylon. People all across the world have always had gardens in their homes. They shaped their surroundings to enhance their quality of life. Today's urban garden integration has progressed, emphasising their ability to reduce greenhouse emissions and greening cities.

Green infrastructure could help the city coordinate the revitalisation of unused, abandoned, or underutilised spaces. Small-scale farming in these areas might offer urban residents food while reducing carbon emissions. Spaces between buildings (interstices) in the city can be used for urban farming, which also helps modify the city's microclimate. Rooftops, balconies, and vacant lots are all excellent places to start an urban farm.

The presence of vegetation significantly influences a building's microclimate. It has been demonstrated that vegetation can reduce temperatures by 1.32 to 5 degrees Celsius compared to a hard surface area. Because of evapotranspiration, vegetation can lower local temperatures, hence altering microclimates. Urban greening can mitigate the urban heat island effect, especially in the spaces between buildings. Using plants to moderate the heat and reduce dependency on artificial cooling can be the seed of a solution to the dangers of rapidly heating cities. 🌱

Dr Tamil Salvi Mari is a senior lecturer in architecture at Taylor's University, Malaysia. Salvi's research area revolves around investigating humane design – the interaction between humans, the built environment and the natural environment, focusing on current societal and environmental needs.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/the-urban-jungle-needs-more-trees/>)



UNDERSTANDING THE VOLUNTARY CARBON EXCHANGE LANDSCAPE

The complex landscape of VCMs is still expanding. How are carbon credits created and who are the key actors on both the buy- and sales- sides?

Voluntary carbon markets (VCMs) have seen rapid growth in the last decade as carbon offsets became an important part of climate strategies across the globe. In 2021, the market value of VCMs grew fourfold to US\$2 billion (RM9.3 billion) compared

to 2020, and is expected to grow to between US\$10 billion (RM46.5 billion) to US\$40 billion (RM186 billion) by 2030.

Demand for voluntary carbon credits is being fuelled by commitments made by governments and organisations to reduce their carbon footprint. In line with the 2015 Paris

Agreement, where most countries agreed to limit the increase in global temperature to 2°C, many governments have also announced their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) towards cutting global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. While the Paris Agreement involves state actors, private actors are increas-

COMPLIANCE CARBON MARKETS

Compliance carbon markets are markets created by regulation or policy in specific local, national or regional jurisdictions. These markets typically involve a cap and trade or Emissions Trading System (ETS), where each market participant is given a set quota of emissions which they may trade with other participants who are looking to exceed their quota.

VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKETS

Voluntary carbon markets are used by entities to buy and sell carbon credits without a compliance purpose. These markets are often used by organisations or individuals to offset their carbon emissions voluntarily.

ingly taking part in climate action, either through compliance carbon markets imposed in certain jurisdictions, or through their participation in voluntary carbon markets.

In certain jurisdictions, there are interactions between compliance and voluntary carbon markets, whereby carbon credits from the voluntary markets are permitted to be used as part of the carbon reduction requirements in the compliance market. These markets have helped put a price on carbon and help to channel funds to finance proj-

ects that mitigate climate change through the buying and selling of carbon credits.

This infographic is a non-exhaustive map illustrating the different global actors involved in the complex landscape of VCMs that is still expanding.

Buy-side – buyers financing climate action

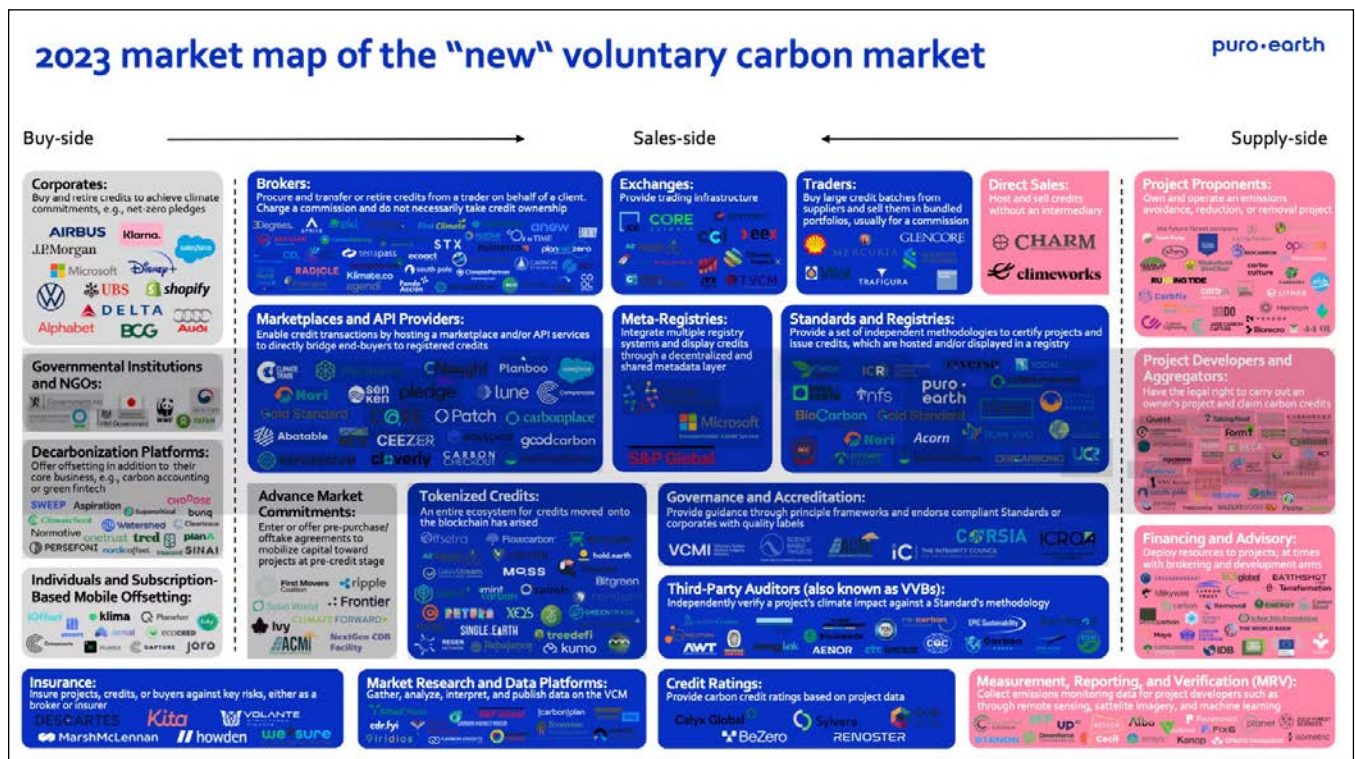
Carbon credit purchasers come from an array of backgrounds. In VCMs, the buyers are most often organisations with climate strategies in place,

aiming to offset GHG emissions from their operations or seeking to improve their climate impact. If organisations chose to use carbon credits to offset their GHG emissions, those carbon credits must be retired to avoid double counting.

Sales-side – the enablers of the carbon market

VCMs are facilitated by actors in the sales-side of carbon markets. Crucial to the growth of VCMs are the actors who maintain the integrity and ensure transparency of markets and the credits being traded on the exchanges. This includes standards, registries, and auditors, whose roles are to ensure the legitimacy of the carbon credits produced. Standards are responsible for developing methodologies and maintaining the carbon credit registry, and also providing accreditation to auditors and validators who assess and verify the performance of carbon projects.

The buying and selling of carbon credits can be facilitated by marketplaces which provide a platform



Market map infographic republished with permission from Puro.Earth.

PROJECT CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Emissions Avoidance	Projects which prevent or reduce greenhouse gas emissions from entering the atmosphere	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Energy efficiency projects 2. Renewable energy production 3. Avoided deforestation 4. Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS)
Emissions Removal	Projects which remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reforestation and afforestation 2. Direct Air Carbon Capture, (DACC), Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS)

that bridges buyers directly to registered credits. In these marketplaces, buyers are given access to information that supports their decision-making when it comes to making investment decisions in carbon credits.

In addition, there are also carbon market exchanges which provide the infrastructure for carbon trading, such as spot trading or auctions. Exchanges also provide additional services that further support trading activities. For example, Bursa Carbon Exchange (BCX) integrates Islamic finance in carbon trading, being the world's first Shariah-compliant carbon exchange in addition to offering Shariah-compliant carbon credits. Additionally, BCX also conducts due diligence on carbon credits and participants before being onboarded on the exchange, requiring applicants to pass know-your-customer (KYC), anti-money laundering, anti-bribery and anti-corruption requirements. BCX reduces counterparty risks through the application of these measures and the use of an omnibus account which requires carbon credits (from suppliers) and funds (from buyers) to be deposited with the Operator's unit and cash custodian accounts respectively.

Third-party research platforms, credit rating agencies and insurers also have a role to play as enablers of the carbon market ecosystem.

Research platforms keep buyers and sellers informed by providing expert insights and analysis on the latest market trends and development, which help facilitate informed decision-making among participants. Credit rating agencies perform a complementary role by rating carbon projects based on their types, such as carbon sequestered or removed, permanence of the projects and alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals to help buyers better assess the quality of carbon credits. Meanwhile, carbon credit insurers offer buyers protection against potential underperformance or invalidation of credits.


Supply-side – how are carbon credits created?

Carbon credits are generated through different types of projects. These can be broadly grouped into two categories, namely nature-based solutions and technology-based solutions. On top of that, there are two different types of carbon projects, namely emissions avoidance projects, which prevent emissions from entering the atmosphere compared to a business-as-usual scenario; and emissions removal projects, which remove existing carbon dioxide or its equivalent from the environment.

The project proponents are sometimes supported by external project developers and aggregators,

who may be given the legal right to execute the project and claim the carbon credits generated. A key component for credit generation is measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV), whereby data on GHG emissions avoidance or removal is collected and used to support the verifiability of the generated carbon credits.

The VCM landscape is quickly evolving, with increasing volumes being traded across global carbon exchanges. For instance, the total value of carbon credits traded increased by nearly 60 per cent in the first eight months of 2021 compared to the year before, and more carbon credits were issued in the first half of 2022 than in the full years up to 2018.

Asia is a critical region for the growth of VCMs, where the volume of carbon credits traded doubled between 2019 and 2021. In Southeast Asia, VCMs are estimated to contribute as much as US\$10 billion in economic value by 2030, especially from nature-based carbon credits. 

This article was first published on Bursa Sustain, Bursa Malaysia's one-stop knowledge hub that promotes and supports development in sustainability, corporate governance and responsible investment among public-listed companies. It has been edited for brevity.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/understanding-the-voluntary-carbon-exchange-landscape/>)

One-rupee meals initiative: Swabhiman Bhoj's crusade against hunger and food insecurity

While access to quality and nutritious food is considered a basic right, it remains a distant reality for millions of people. For many, a simple meal consisting of a bowl of rice with a spoonful of dal twice a day is a luxury. Some are not even lucky to have access to this bare minimum and often go to bed starving. These challenges are exacerbated by a variety of factors, including the burgeoning population, and rising costs of living, making it increasingly difficult for households to provide nutritious meals to their families.

The project 'Swabhiman Bhoj' originated from the growing need to address food insecurity and malnutrition in different parts of Rajasthan. Dedicated to minimizing the existing nutritional gap, Jawahar Foundation (the CSR initiative of LNJ Bhilwara Group) under the leadership of Mr. Riju Jhunjhunwala, launched this progressive and benevolent program with the goal of providing wholesome, nutritious, and hygienic meals for rupee one. The initiative is not just about providing food but restoring self-respect and upholding the dignity of those in need, irrespective of their background.

Launched in 2019, the community kitchen served nearly 200,000 meals in just 9 months. Currently, it provides warm and fresh meals to 2,500 people per day at its ten centers in four cities in Rajasthan: Ajmer, Bhilwara, Banswara, and Jaipur. The initiative is expected to expand into other regions of Rajasthan and eventually across the country.



The Swabhiman Bhoj initiative made significant strides in supporting the community in addressing the pressing issue of food insecurity. However, it proved invaluable in the post-pandemic period when the majority of the population was struggling to restart their lives after a long halt. Rajasthan being one of the most impacted states in terms of deaths due to starvation post-pandemic, witnessed a critical need for assistance. 60,000 food packages were supplied under this programme on the request of the Bhilwara and Ajmer administrations during pandemics, offering aid to the needy people.

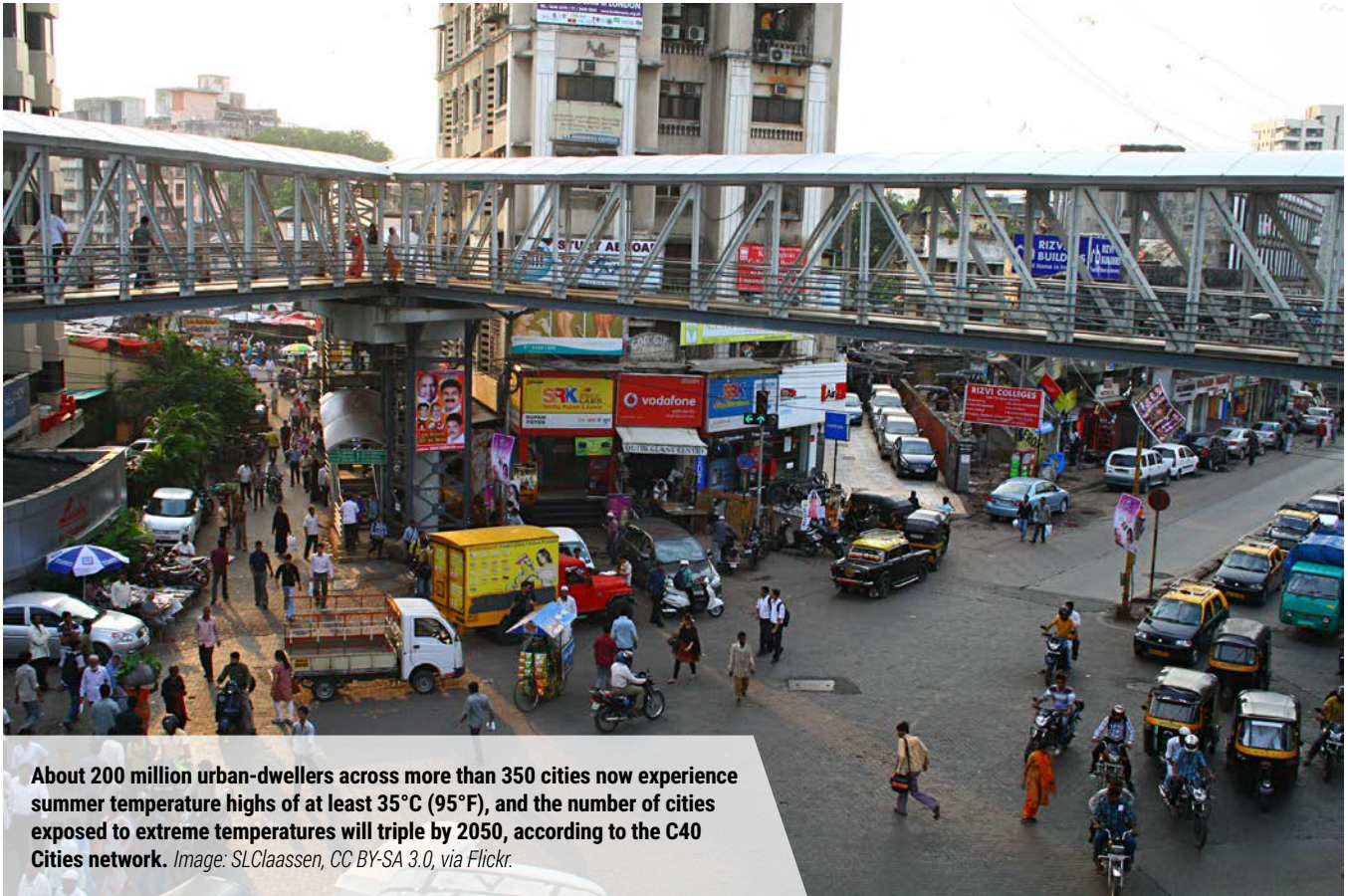
The food served in the Swabhiman Bhoj centres is cooked with utmost care and in hygienic conditions to ensure the health and well-being of the people. The vegetables and grains are procured from local vendors and farmers to support and strengthen their livelihoods.

Even the food is cooked by locals to foster a sense of community engagement and contribute to the economic empowerment of the region.

Swabhiman Bhoj's journey of helping people in need and giving back to society is close to the heart of Mr. Riju Jhunjhunwala. It has been his dream

to do something for his homeland - Rajasthan and carry his legacy of supporting the communities ahead. Looking at the massive success of this program, the Jawahar Foundation also started the 'Swabhiman Jal' initiative to provide clean and safe drinking water to the people residing in the remote regions of Rajasthan.

Through this initiative, the Jawahar Foundation is helping to build a healthier India where food is not a luxury but a fundamental right. Food insecurity can have far-reaching consequences. It may not only impede an individual's physical progress, but it may also have widespread impacts on emotional and psychological well-being. Access to nutritious food is essential to life. It provides nourishment for the body, fuel for the mind, and solace for the soul. Nobody should be denied it, regardless of their socioeconomic status. 🌱



About 200 million urban-dwellers across more than 350 cities now experience summer temperature highs of at least 35°C (95°F), and the number of cities exposed to extreme temperatures will triple by 2050, according to the C40 Cities network. Image: SL Claassen, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

HOW URBAN HEAT ISLANDS ARE MAKING CITIES DANGEROUSLY WARM

Urban heat islands can face higher temperatures than green or rural areas, increasing risk of illness and death for city residents.

As people around the world swelter in rising heat hitting new highs, spare a thought for those living in city centres - where research has found that temperatures can be considerably higher than in nearby green spaces or surrounding rural areas.

This phenomenon is known as the urban heat island (UHI) effect - where dense clusters of concrete

buildings and infrastructure such as roads absorb, retain and radiate more heat than green areas, leading to temperatures that are often several degrees hotter.

A recent study of six cities - Cairo, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Mumbai and New York - found that temperature variations between the hottest and coolest spot in each city ranged from 4.5 degrees Celsius (8 degrees Fahrenheit) in New York to

8°C (14.5°F) in Madrid. An increasing number of people in major cities are enduring “worrying levels of heat”, according to researchers at Arup, the sustainable development consultancy behind the study.

“We’ve inadvertently designed many of our cities to be hot,” said Dima Zogheib, a design lead at Arup. “We’ve pushed out nature – concreted our streets, built high in steel and glass.”

Meanwhile, nonprofit Climate Central separately studied 44 US cities and found that more than half of the residents analysed lived in areas with a UHI index of 8°F (4.5°C) or higher.

This means, for example, that on a day when temperatures in a park outside a city are 90°F (32.2°C), it would feel like 98°F (36.7°C) or higher for downtown residents.

“In some cities, the temperature is as much as 12°F (6.6°C) warmer ... on top of a temperature that is already rising because of climate change,” said Jen Brady of Climate Central. About 200 million urban-dwellers across more than 350 cities now experience summer temperature highs of at least 35°C (95°F), and the number of cities exposed to extreme temperatures will triple by 2050, according to the C40 Cities network.

Here is what you need to know about urban heat islands:

What exactly is an urban heat island?

From buildings to roads, urban infrastructure has been designed with materials that make cities warmer. Unlike asphalt and concrete, vegetation including grass and trees absorb less heat and release more water into the air.

Emissions from commercial and residential buildings that use air conditioning also contribute to the heat, as do vehicles.

Heat can feel worse from one neighbourhood to another due to how the areas are designed – often having a disproportionate impact on lower-income households, research has shown. This is because such homes are often located in densely populated areas with scarce green spaces, where families struggle to pay the energy bills needed to cool their houses.

Although nighttime should provide a respite from the heat, Arup's study found that Cairo, London and



We've inadvertently designed many of our cities to be hot. We've pushed out nature – concreted our streets, built high in steel and glass.

–DIMA ZOGHEIB
Design Lead, Arup

Madrid experienced worse heat spots after the sun went down due to solar radiation getting trapped by buildings and surfaces during the daytime. “When we have a heatwave, we've got several days where it's hot,” said Dimple Rana, an environmental engineer at Arup. “If you don't get respite at night, then that leads to more adverse health outcomes in cities.”

How deadly can urban heat be?

Exposure to urban heat islands was linked to 6,700 premature deaths in 93 European cities in 2015 - representing about 4.3 per cent of summer deaths in those cities that year - found a study published in *The Lancet* medical journal in January 2023.

The study found that vulnerable populations were at greater risk of dying from dehydration, cardiovascular disease, or heat stroke.

“Heat exacerbates previous (health) conditions,” said lead author Tamara Lungman, a researcher at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health. “That's why it has a greater impact on vulnerable populations like those with chronic

illnesses, senior citizens, and new-borns,” she added.

What can be done to beat the heat?

With this northern-hemisphere summer - the June-August period - being the hottest on record, experts say urgent action is needed in cities to prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths.

Lungman and her team estimated that increasing tree coverage in cities by 30 per cent would prevent at least one-third of premature deaths linked to urban heat islands during the summer.

Unlike materials like asphalt, trees help reduce heat by releasing water vapour through their leaves and providing shade.

Although planting more trees can be difficult for some cities that face obstacles such as drought and poor urban design, Zogheib of Arup said this could be remedied by taking advantage of open spaces such as roads and roundabouts.

“Trees take 50 years to grow and reach their potential. It is not only important to think on strategies to increase the number of trees, but also on how to care for the ones we already have,” said Lungman.

Other options include installing cool spaces in cities with shade and water fountains, as well as green roofs - covered in vegetation - or painting them white to better reflect sunlight.

“We need a shift of paradigm in which we start to think more about having cities for people than for cars,” said Lungman.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/how-urban-heat-islands-are-making-cities-dangerously-warm/>)

Climate change increased temperatures for nearly every living human between June and August 2023

Attribution analysis of temperatures in 180 countries finds the hottest northern hemisphere summer in recorded history would have been almost impossible without the influence of carbon pollution

Not one of 180 countries and 22 territories in a Climate Central attribution analysis of global temperatures escaped the influence of climate change between June and August 2023. Approximately 7.95 billion people—98 percent of the entire human population—experienced temperatures that were made at least two times more likely by heat-trapping carbon pollution in Earth’s atmosphere during the hottest boreal summer in recorded history.


During this span, 6.2 billion people experienced at least one day of average temperatures made at least five times more likely by climate change—the maximum value calculable by the Climate Shift Index, Climate Central’s global attribution system. (The Climate Shift Index compares observed or forecast temperatures to those generated by models which remove the influence of human-caused climate change.) Between June and August,

nearly 2.4 billion people across 41 countries or territories were exposed to more than 60 days with temperatures reaching five on the Climate Shift Index.

Nearly half of the global population—3.9 billion people—experienced 30 or more days between June and August with temperatures made at least three times more likely by climate change (corresponding to three-to-five on the Climate Shift Index). For 1.5 billion, temperatures during every day of the period reached that level.

The influence of climate change was inequitably distributed throughout the world, with residents of G20 nations exposed, on average during the period, to 17 days of temperatures made at least three times more likely. Meanwhile residents of the United Nations’ Least Developed countries (47 days) and Small Island Developing States (65) were exposed to far more days of three or above on the Climate Shift Index. “Virtually no one on Earth escaped the

influence of global warming during the past three months,” Dr. Andrew Pershing, Climate Central’s vice president for science, said. “In every country we could analyze, including the southern hemisphere where this is the coolest time of year, we saw temperatures that would be difficult—and in some cases nearly impossible—without human-caused climate change. Carbon pollution is clearly responsible for this season’s record-setting heat.”

The influence of climate change for this analysis was assessed using the Climate Shift Index, which applies a peer-reviewed model- and observation-driven methodology to determine the likelihood of local, daily temperatures around the world with and without current levels of carbon pollution. The change in likelihood is scored on a five-point scale, with 1 (at least 1.5 times more likely) through 5 (at least 5 times more likely) representing temperatures made more common by climate change. 

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