

CSR TODAY

RNI NO. MAHENG/2013/48866 ■ VOLUME 10 ■ ISSUE 03 ■ OCTOBER 2022 ■ PRICE ₹100 ■ TOTAL PAGES: 52

WHAT MELTING TIBETAN GLACIERS REVEAL ABOUT DISEASE AND GLOBAL WARMING

Researchers have discovered new microbes on retreating glaciers, hinting that climate change may lead to their release and potential future disease outbreaks

CSR CONCERN

Nepal's honey hunters cling to traditions as bee numbers fall

CSR ANALYSIS

What does true sustainability look like in the hotel industry?

CSR FUTURE

Explainer: COP15, the biggest biodiversity conference in a decade





CSR TODAY

RATE CARD

ADVERTISEMENT SIZE	DIMENSIONS		1X RATE
	Non-Bleed	Bleed	
Inside Front Cover	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹2,00,000
Inside Back Cover	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹1,50,000
Outside Back Cover	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹3,00,000
Full Page (Colour)	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹1,00,000
Half Page - Vertical (Colour)	85 mm (w) x 250 mm(h)	-	₹50,000
Half Page - Horizontal (Colour)	180 mm (w) x 120 mm(h)	-	₹50,000
Quarter Page (Colour)	85 mm(w) x 120 mm(h)	-	₹35,000
Full Page (B/W)	185 mm (w) x 250 mm (h)	225 mm (w) x 290 mm (h)	₹60,000
Half Page - Vertical (B/W)	85 mm (w) x 250 mm(h)	-	
Half Page - Horizontal (B/W)	180 mm (w) x 120 mm(h)	-	₹30,000
Quarter Page (B/w)	85 mm(w) x 120 mm(h)	-	₹20,000

Bleed Advertisement charges: 20% extra for all sizes.



**INDIAN CENTRE
FOR CSR**

For More Information:

INDIAN CENTRE FOR CSR

104, Nirman Kendra, Dr. E Moses Road,
Mahalaxmi Estate, Mumbai -400011.

Tel: +91 22 2490 30 78, +9122 2490 30 82,
+91 22 2495 52 60

Central Banks and Financial Supervisors Urged to Step up Action on Nature and Climate



Rajesh Tiwari
Publisher
rt@iccsr.org

WWF joins with more than 90 partners for a new Call to Action recommending climate and biodiversity related financial risks be addressed as part of their primary mandates.

In a global Call to Action launched recently, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and more than 90 organizations, NGOs, think tanks and individual thought leaders call on central banks and financial supervisors to use all available tools to address the inter-related crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, recognizing the financial risks they create.

The Call to Action, co-signed by organizations including NRDC, Sierra Club, E3G, UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative, the European Environment Bureau, Nature Finance (formerly Finance for Biodiversity), Finance for Biodiversity, and New Economics Foundation, sets out tangible steps for central banks and financial supervisors to take to limit environmental and climate impacts, protect against future risks, and use their market-shaping role to influence broader change. The Call to Action emphasizes that today's environmental impacts generate tomorrow's risks, and therefore it is in the mandate of central banks and financial regulators to take precautionary action.


"The climate crisis, which is being exacerbated by nature loss, is already having a profound impact across every corner of the world and every sector of the global economy, and is already costing money and, more tragically, lives," said Marcene Mitchell, senior vice president, climate change, WWF.

"Climate change and nature loss are both "pay now or pay later" propositions, and exactly the kind of risks that financial institutions and policymakers should be acting upon with urgency. This is risk that can be addressed, if we can muster the will and mobilize all the tools at our disposal, including those available in the mar-

ketplace. Financial institutions can either help lead this effort or be left at the mercy of what transpires if we do nothing."

This Call to Action comes as international economic policymakers are due to meet for several critical gatherings over the next few months, including the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting and G20 Heads of State Summit, Climate COP27 and Biodiversity COP15. The signatories of the Call to Action urge central banks and financial supervisors to:

- Reversing biodiversity loss to achieve a nature-positive world by 2030, limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celcius, and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 as key anchors for their mandates.
- Encourage economic transformation by ensuring monetary policies and financial regulatory instruments better reflect the economic cost and financial risk of 'always environmentally harmful' economic activities, companies and sectors as these assets represent the highest financial risks.
- Require all regulated financial institutions to publish credible transition plans for biodiversity and climate change.

Monetary policy and financial regulation instruments need to address the significant financial and price instability that is caused by biodiversity loss and global warming that will continue to increase, according to the Call to Action. In particular, WWF argues that the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting taking place in Bali on October 13-14, presents a key opportunity for countries to translate commitments into concrete action. 

Contents



26 | Cover Story

What melting Tibetan glaciers reveal about Disease and Global Warming

CSR INITIATIVE

29 American Express and NASSCOM Foundation collaborate to empower 700 women from marginalized communities with digital skills

30 'Happy Number' scored by Vasu Dixit celebrates Bengaluru's Informal Waste Pickers

CSR CHALLENGE

32 Taking back the Ocean, Inc.

CSR CONCERN

34 Nepal's honey hunters cling to traditions as bee numbers fall

CSR ANALYSIS

37 What does true sustainability look like in the hotel industry?

CSR CHANGE

40 Reefs damaged by blast fishing revitalised by 'spiderwebs' in Indonesia

CSR EXPLAINER

42 Explainer: What is ecocide?

CSR FUTURE

45 Explainer: COP15, the biggest biodiversity conference in a decade

48 Climate forensics is fast and accurate. Now what?

REGULARS:

03 Publisher's note

05 CSR News

20 CSR India United

23 News You Can Use

CSR TODAY

OCTOBER 2022 | VOL. 10 | ISSUE 03

PRINTER AND PUBLISHER: Rajesh Tiwari

EDITORIAL

Consulting Editor: M Bose

Executive Editor: Neil Thakkar

INDIAN CENTRE FOR CSR

ADVISORY BOARD

Pankaj Pachauri, Ted McFarland, Mag. Martin Neureiter, Chandir Gidwani, Lou Altman, Kingshuk Nag, Toby Webb, Anil Bajpai, Rajesh Tiwari, Satish Jha, Amit Chatterjee, Jitendra Bhargava, Namita Vikas, Dinesh N. Awasthi, Kapil Dev, Dr. Kamal Kant Dwivedi, Sanjiv Kaura, Suhel Seth

PRODUCTION, CIRCULATION AND LOGISTICS

Hardik C

HEAD OFFICE

CSR Today

104, Nirman Kendra, Dr. E Moses Road
Mahalaxmi Estate, Mumbai - 400011
Tel: +91 22 249 03078 / 03082 / 55260
Email: editor@csrtoday.net
Website: www.iccsr.org

REGIONAL OFFICES

NEW DELHI

Regional Director: V Chopra

MUMBAI

Executive Vice President: Neil Thakkar
Circulation: C.R. Tiwari

Printed, Published and Edited by
Rajesh Tiwari on behalf of Indian Centre
For Corporate Social Responsibility, Printed
at The Pack-Age, 196-I, Katrak Compound,
J.S.S. Road, Gaiwadi, Girgaon, Mumbai -
400 004 and Published from Indian Centre
For Corporate Social Responsibility, 106/A,
Nirman Kendra, Plot No.3, Dr. E. Moses
Road, Mahalaxmi Estate, Mahalaxmi,
Mumbai 400 011.

Editor: Rajesh Tiwari

Disclaimer

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

Dalmia Bharat Foundation Commits to India's 'Self-reliance' Vision through Social Transformation MoU with NIIT Foundation



Dalmia Bharat Foundation (DBF), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm of Dalmia Bharat Group is on an accelerated path to make India's 'Self-reliance' vision a reality. For this purpose, DBF has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a not-for-profit education society, NIIT Foundation to develop state-of-the-art, community-centric skill-building and educational training courses that will benefit 8000 underprivileged youth across 16 DIKSHa (Dalmia Institute of Knowledge and Skill Harnessing) centres in India.

The aim of the MoU is to usher in a New India that is progressive and self-dependent by harnessing the collaborative strengths of DBF's robust community engagement and NIIT Foundation's quality educational process so as to empower children

and youth belonging to the disadvantaged sections of society.

"Through our collaborative efforts and strengths, we believe that this partnership will become a key enabler for the greater good of our nation and will bring about positive and transformative change in society. We are committed to the social transformation of our country and look forward to scaling our community reach by meeting its economic needs while closing societal gaps to make India truly Atmanirbhar," said Dr. Arvind Bodhankar, Executive Director, ESG & CRO, Dalmia Bharat Limited.

The MoU was signed in the nation's capital, New Delhi, between Dr. Bodhankar from Dalmia Bharat Limited and Ms. Charu Kapoor, COO, NIIT Foundation. Major training and skill building that will commence through this shared collaboration will include certificate courses in

Financial Literacy, Cyber Security Essentials and Professional Edge. The DIKSHa centres where the courses will be developed and conducted also include Sitapur & Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh; Kolhapur in Maharashtra; Khambalia in Gujarat; Satna in Madhya Pradesh; Dalmiapurum & Trichy in Tamil Nadu; Belgaum & Yadawad in Karnataka; Lanka in Assam; Medinipur in West Bengal; Rourkela, Jajpur, Rajgangpur, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda and Cuttack in Odisha; and Bokaro in Jharkhand where Dalmia Bharat Group has a local presence and works closely with the community. While NIIT Foundation will provide the necessary content, training of trainers, assessment and certification along with placement support, DBF has been entrusted with managing day to day activities of the center.

SIDBI signs MoUs with stakeholders that will contribute to India's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 Targets

SIDBI, towards its continuing effort for MSMEs to embrace energy efficiency in operations and reduce their Carbon Footprint status, entered MoUs with stakeholders that will contribute to India's SDG 2030 Targets.

1. Sectoral Engagements with GiZ

Waste Solutions for a Circular Economy in India

An agreement was signed to announce the collaboration of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH for operating a Risk Sharing Facility (RSF) housed within the NAMA Facility entitled 'Waste Solutions for a Circular



Economy in India' project. The project has the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) as the nodal Ministry and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) as the implementation partner Ministry.

SIDBI will operate the RSF that provides credit guarantees to loans from commercial banks or NBFCs (Non-Banking Financial Companies) in order to accelerate activities of waste management companies, low-carbon waste management

solutions, biometanation, recycling, composting, and Refused Derived Fuel for use in cement kilns.

The RSF's initial budget would be EUR 4.2 million which will be from the NAMA Facility. The project will also support building of awareness and capacities among various stakeholders, thereby enhancing the success of the RSF. Around 15 waste management companies have already shown interest in accessing debt guarantee facility from the RSF during the pre-launch event held in August.

The NAMA Facility is a multi-donor programme that supports the implementation of NAMA Support Projects (NSPs) that affect sector-wide shifts toward sustainable, irreversible, and carbon-neutral pathways. It is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities (KEFM) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the European Commission (EU), and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF).

2. TIFAC – SRIJAN

SIDBI signed an MOU with Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) to collaborate for the identification of scalable green and clean technologies under MSMEs. Under the collaboration, TIFAC will provide support through assessment of technologies and projects, where SIDBI will support MSMEs through financing under its various credit schemes to implement the identified

technologies. This will help commercialization of innovative technologies through industries particularly MSMEs and startups, where SIDBI would capitalize technical strength and capabilities of TIFAC as a knowledge partner in technoeconomic assessment and provide financing under its various schemes. SIDBI and Tifac shall explore deepening outreach of program including extending equity infusion into innova-



tive/ problem solving technologies and exploring to create a fund which will support the Green Innovative Technologies. A video showing the success stories under SIDBI – TIFAC Srijan Programme was also released by Shri Sivasubramanian Ramann, CMD, SIDBI on the occasion.

TIFAC and SIDBI recognize that cooperation among the two parties will further accelerate the development of MSMEs across India in a structured and planned manner through synergies. It may be mentioned that under jointly channelised SRIJAN, till now, 38 innovative technology projects have been supported and all have successfully been commercialised.

3. Capacity Building collaboration with CII

An MoU has been signed between SIDBI and The Confederation of

Indian Industry (CII). The partnership will enable SIDBI to Promote clean & green initiatives among MSMEs, facilitate their implementation, SIDBI's financing schemes for renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean & green projects, and capacity building & skill development. SIDBI will also recognise the rooftop solar vendor rating program and consider rating provided under the program as one of the tools in financing rooftop solar projects. CII will facilitate through organizing webinars/ workshops on various clean and green initiatives related



to renewable energy (especially rooftop solar), energy efficiency/ management, net zero, green buildings, resource efficiency, circular economy, etc. In these webinars,

some of the initiatives of CII-Godrej GBC such as Indian Green Building Council (IGBC's) Net Zero Energy Buildings Rating System, Green Company (GreenCo) Rating System, and Rooftop Solar Vendor Rating Program (VRP) may also be covered for the benefit of MSMEs.

The objective of this MoU is to provide collaborative support for the benefit of MSMEs which also includes continually improving renewable energy (RE) adoption, environmental performance, resource efficiency and reduce costs & improve competitiveness of MSMEs.

WOTR launches manual on its Water Stewardship Initiative to enable sustainable water management practices in rural India

Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR), a globally recognised nonprofit organization, has launched the Water Stewardship in Rural India - A How to Manual. The manual draws on WOTR's rich experience of over 27 years in designing and implementing systems to protect and nurture water resources and provides a step-by-step approach to water management by enabling stewardship at the community level.

The Water Stewardship Initiative (WSI) is based on the understanding that when various community stakeholders come together and are presented with realistic information of their climate, water resources, the related productivity, and their socio-economic context, dialogue, and discussions among them are inevitable. This leads to the development of a common systemic understanding of their situation and are motivated and mobilised for sustainable action towards achieving water governance. It looks at community stakeholders as 'Water Managers' or stewards of the

water resources in their villages.

While emphasising WOTR's ecosystem-based approach, the Water Stewardship in Rural India - A How to Manual draws from learnings and experience in designing and implementing the WSI programme in 250 villages across different Indian states, including 100 pilot villages in Maharashtra. The manual provides a credible and scientifically tested methodology which can be put to use by rural development and climate change practitioners for water management in the groundwater dependent, arid and semi-arid regions of the country.

Speaking about the manual, Prakash Keskar, Executive Director, WOTR, said, "The WSI manual captures our learnings and experiences from the Water Stewardship Initiative's pilot project. From the 100 pilot villages in Maharashtra, the project has now expanded to 250 villages in different Indian states. By sharing this manual, we hope to inspire further and wider action across the country. India needs many

more water managers or stewards to make water available sustainably and to all, while protecting her ecosystems – and we need to do it soon. We look forward to the participation of other organisations in furthering this cause and making our rural communities resilient to the water crisis."

A 2018 Niti Aayog report estimates that 600 people in India live in extreme water stress conditions. India is also the world's largest user of groundwater and consumes more groundwater than China and the US, the next two largest groundwater using countries, combined. With an alarming fall in groundwater tables and water related conflicts on the rise, water resources need an effective governance mechanism to ensure its sustainability. With the WSI programme, WOTR aims to bring the many stakeholders together to comprehensively address water related issues at the community level. The WSI firmly aligns with the National Water Policy, the PMKSY, the Atal Bhujal Yojana and various groundwater laws.

Vodafone Idea Foundation Unveils 'Teachers Diary' – a compilation of real life stories of outstanding and inspiring teachers in the country

Education is an important enabler of social change, inclusion, higher standards of living, and better quality of life. On the occasion of Teachers Day to celebrate teachers, Vodafone Idea Foundation (VIF), the CSR arm of Vi, hosted a virtual 'Vodafone Idea Teachers Day Celebration'. On the occasion, Vi Foundation unveiled 'Teachers Diary' – a compilation of real life stories of outstanding and inspiring teachers, and also felicitated select teachers for their exemplary work in the field of education.

The book 'Teachers Diary' was unveiled by Dr. Rukmini Banerji, CEO, Pratham Education Foundation in the presence of P Balaji, Chief Regulatory & Corporate Affairs Officer, VIL, and Director, Vodafone Idea Foundation; and Dr. Nilay Ranjan, Head, Vodafone Idea Foundation. The book is a tribute to all the teachers across the country who not only play a powerful role in shaping the lives of their students but also in nation building. The book also captures instances on the various unique approaches that teachers have adopted to keep students engaged in learning.

At the event, P Balaji, Chief Regulatory & Corporate Affairs Officer, VIL, and Director, Vodafone Idea Foundation, said, "We at Vodafone Idea Foundation believe that use of technological interventions and innovations will improve the quality of education, learning outcomes of children and most importantly will help in reshaping the education sector. Our transformative programmes such as Jigyasa,



The book is a tribute to all the teachers across the country who not only play a powerful role in shaping the lives of their students but also in nation building.

Gurushala, and the Teachers & Students Scholarship are designed to improve the teaching and learning experiences by empowering teachers with training resources and technology. Lakhs of teachers are connected with the Vodafone Idea

Foundation delivering training to children from across the country. Our aim is to enhance the quality of education to promote social good and positively impact people's lives so they can secure a better and brighter future for themselves and the nation. On Teachers Day, we recognise the exemplary contribution of teachers in the society. It is our way of giving back to the teaching community which works selflessly for the good of the society."

Dr. Rukmini Banerji, CEO, Pratham Education Foundation, said, "As we seek to revisit our education policies, we also need to rethink what we give to our teachers. We need to enable teachers to continue finding purpose and relevance in their work and provide support through resources and engagement. Teachers need the involvement, participation and ownership of the community in helping children meaningfully grow and learn."

Vodafone Idea Foundation's flagship programme 'Jigyasa' aims to build capacity of teachers, introduce digital content, training tools and innovative pedagogy to make learning and teaching more enjoyable, and augment existing infrastructure as needed. Additionally, Gurushala, a knowledge sharing & exchange platform, digitally enabled thousands of teachers and students to upload and access material for students learning & development anywhere and anytime. Vodafone Idea Teachers Scholarship programme provides aid to teachers for e-learning infrastructure such as laptops, online courses etc.

Diamantaire from Surat to light up 750 Homes of Heroes of India's 75 Years' Journey with Free Rooftop Solar electricity



SRK Knowledge Foundation (SRKKF), the community welfare arm of Shree Ramkrishna Exports Pvt. Ltd (SRK), a leader in the world of diamonds, announced at an Independence Day event that they would install residential solar rooftop at the homes of 750 martyred soldiers and unsung heroes across India.

SRKKF under the leadership of Founder-Chairman Shri Govind Dholakia organised an event, named 'Rashtra ki Roshni' at SRK Sports Park, Surat to celebrate 75 years of India's Independence. The event began at 8 am. The parade escorted the chief guest, Commandant Chetan Kumar Cheetah of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative of celebrating 75 years of India's glory with the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' campaign, SRKKF, during 'Rashtra ki Roshni', pledged to continue helping and empowering the affected families of unsung heroes and committed to the installation of residential solar rooftop at their homes. The mentioned initiative is said to impact 3000+ lives while addressing the needs of energy day &

night. Once complete, this would be a pioneering initiative by a community welfare organisation.

The 750 KW rooftop solar systems will be used to power 750 homes. With this, the residents will be able to save Rs. 2000 per month over 25 years. SRKKF is accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and this initiative is a small step towards a green future among the various other initiatives.

In March this year, Govindkaka had announced to make Dudhala in Amreli district of Gujarat a green village by installing solar panels at all the homes. Earlier in 2016 at Nadabet, SRKKF had organised an event named "Hum Chale toh Hindustan Chale" to felicitate our brave army jawans.

Govindkaka remarked "Our unsung heroes are doing so much for us. We should take inspiration from them to always contribute to the development and growth of our nation. As responsible citizens of India, we, the SRK Family, thought of what should we do for our unsung heroes which could benefit them for a lifetime and came up with the idea of providing solar energy to their homes." Driven

by Govindkaka's far-sighted vision and motivated by his entrepreneurial spirit, SRK is well known for crafting diamonds at its world-class green facilities, and for sustainability practices and boasts several achievements and recognition in its growth history in the domestic, as well as international markets.

SRK under the visionary leadership of Govindkaka has touched several thousand lives through their selfless social welfare work for over six decades. Govindkaka has set up a community welfare initiative, SRK Knowledge Foundation (SRKKF). There are three more trusts working under the SRKKF umbrella—Shree Ramkrishna Charitable Trust, Shree Ramkrishna Welfare Trust and Matrushree Santokbaa Laljibhai Dholakia Charitable Trust.

Till date, over 3,008,160 people have received financial support for various educational scholarships and medical exigencies. Govindkaka instituted the 'Santokbaa Humanitarian Award' in 2006 in the fond memory and honour of his late mother, Smt. Santokbaa. The prestigious award till date has been conferred on 13 eminent personalities from distinctive backgrounds.



Climate Change has added additional burdens on women workers

The impact of climate change and its mitigation or adaptation measures that exclude women in decision-making and overlook their specific needs can compound the challenges to achieving gender equality in the world of work. This, in turn, also poses a significant challenge to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Cooch Behar, a border district between India and Bangladesh, is experiencing extreme weather events, including frequent storms, floods, and irregular rains coupled with a very hot and humid atmosphere. Climate change poses a severe threat to the lives of informal workers, particularly women workers. Agricultural women workers, bidi workers and home-based workers lose productive hours and experience increased forced labour migration and joblessness. Increased climate variability

makes agriculture more unpredictable and displaces millions of people from villages to cities. Rural women face the brunt as they are often dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, do most of the agricultural work, and are responsible for collecting water and fuel. The impact of climate change and actions that exclude women may exacerbate the range of obstacles and socio-economic vulnerabilities that characterise decent work deficits for women.

For the past 10 years, ActionAid Association (AAA) has been working closely with women groups of the district and engaging with tea plantation workers of the neighbouring communities. In the spirit of solidarity, a convention on the theme of “Climate Change, Gender and Labour” was held in the Dinhat block of Cooch Behar, in

collaboration with Gitaldaha Bikas Samity (GBS), a grassroots civil society organisation active in the area, and Pramila Bahini, a local women’s collective, both of which work to address gender-based violence and women’s right to property.

The convention was organised to initiate a dialogue on women workers’ ongoing struggle for improved wages, working conditions, dignity and social security in the context of climate change.

More than 800 women workers from three districts and diverse informal occupational sectors participated in the convention. Eight women representatives spoke on various issues and recommended alternatives based on community and collective power. Delegates expressed solidarity with the women workers’ struggle and encouraged them to speak out.

Lily Oraon from the tea garden of Kalchini block, Alipurduar district, said, "During rainy and massive heat, we have to pluck tea leaves without any shed or umbrella. We don't get the full payment if we can't pluck the specified amount. So workers are compelled to leave the garden and change jobs.

Moni Tudu, an MGNREGA worker, shared, " Climatic impact is huge in our profession. During rain, we can't work much, so we lose workdays. We need at least 200 days' work with a decent wage rate. Gender-sensitive work should be given to the women MGNREGA workers."

Women workers from different fronts delineated equality, freedom,

and interdependence on nature and rights as priority issues for their livelihood. They highlighted critical indigenous and local practices co-existing with the ecosystem and promoting a sustainable environment. The women advocated for climate change solutions linked to decent wages, better working conditions and universal social security, preventing forced migration and displacement and improving their livelihoods.

Celebrating the agency and ongoing struggle of women workers to achieve decent wages, wage parity, dignified social security and freedom from any form of discrimination, Sandeep Chachra, Executive

Director, said, "The climate crisis has added a third dimension to women workers' struggle for justice – to ensure recognition and compensation for the loss and damage suffered by them in the world of work and to their homes and habitats. Not only does climate change differentially impact women workers, but several times the burden and costs of climate response action falls onto them, differentially, and just transitions must begin with acknowledging, recognising and compensating the workers for the damage they have suffered and continue to suffer. ActionAid Association is honoured to work with women workers in their quest for a just and equal world."

Art be a Part by Medha Nanda hosts a Fundraiser at The Claridges

Art be a Part, a new artists' community conducted a fund-raising event to support UNICEF and its work for children at The Claridges situated in the heart of Lutyens' Delhi.

Recently acknowledged by the United Nations Children's Fund for her generous contribution to its programmes, philanthropist and artist Medha Nanda led the fund-raising event with the vision to create awareness about protecting the rights of children in need and other humanitarian causes. This community-based art initiative was supported by the like-minded community of the city and is believed that the therapeutic power of community will help the one in need.

Commenting on the event, Medha Nanda said, "As an artist who loves to paint and help people in need, this is my way of helping children trapped in the cycle of poverty and violence.



Being an Indian I want to begin charity at home and create awareness through my art. Dedicated to improving lives, I want to encourage others to support this cause and make a difference in the lives of children and their families. This initiative is a small contribution towards making this world a better place for all." Welcoming the initiative Richard Beighton, Chief Resource

Mobilization and Partnerships at UNICEF India said, "UNICEF relies completely on voluntary support and donations to help us protect the lives of children and their chances of realising their dreams. We are therefore grateful to have the support of champi-

ons for children like Medha Nanda, whose contribution will help us continue to give new opportunities to children across India."

Paintings and photographs have already been committed to the movement's inaugural fundraising effort by an international line-up of artists who have joined the cause and the initiative is planned to go a long way.

The Muthoot Group supports 10 villages in Mandawar under Rural development programme as part of Shantigram Project

The Muthoot Group supports rural development programme, The Shantigram Project which aims at the qualitative development of the lifestyle of about 20,000 poor and underprivileged inhabitants of 10 villages in and around Mandawar, in Sohna Tehsil of Haryana. As part of this integrated rural development programme, The Muthoot Group donated a Mahindra Scorpio Car in the presence of His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III Catholicos of the East & Malankara Metropolitan. The event took place on Saturday, 27 August, 2022 at the Delhi Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Church situated in Mandawar, in Sohna Tehsil of Haryana.

The Shantigram Project is a community development project of the Delhi Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Church functioning under the aegis of the Sophia Society. The main objective behind donating a new Mahindra Scorpio Car to the Malankara Orthodox Church was to enable for the easy execution of their day-to-day noble and welfare activities. The Muthoot Group has always been at the forefront in performing social and community service for the well-being of the underprivileged and needy sections of the society.

Speaking on The Shantigram Project, Alexander George Muthoot, Joint Managing Director, The Muthoot Group said, "In alignment of the vision of our former Chairman Late Shri M. G. George Muthoot, The Muthoot Group has strived to be a responsible corporate citizen which has always believed in giving back to the society. While the last 2



years have been very challenging for everyone owing to the pandemic, however it is the marginalized sections of our society that have been the most impacted section. In a bid to improve the lives the financially weaker sections of the society, we are supporting The Shantigram Programme which primarily focuses on community services helping the needy and underprivileged sections of the society. “

The Muthoot Group has also been carrying out various welfare initiatives for the underserved section of the society under its CSR banner. Some of the notable activities are as follows:

- **Healthcare:** Supported 94,000 people during COVID-19 and set up a 16-bed COVID hospital for Kanpur Police, and helped 15 other hospitals with medical equipment.
- **Food & ration distribution:** Provided more than 2.67 lakh underprivileged people with cooked food and dry ration.
- **Environment:** Under the green initiatives, the Group has donated

24KW Solar Panel to National Association of Blind, New Delhi. The Group also donated 500 fruit saplings to 50 Tribal Farmers at Palgar District of Maharashtra.

- **Education:** To promote education among slum children in Kurla suburb of Mumbai, 500 School bags were distributed. The Group also donated a SMART Classroom in the Geography Department of Allahabad University in Prayagraj, U.P. which is benefitting 5000+ students every year.
- **Support to Differently-abled People:** As part of the CSR initiative, 500 differently-abled children were distributed education kits. A file making machine was also donated to 40 visually impaired students of Mumbai.
- **Supporting Sustainable Livelihood:** To promote self-employment practices and sustainable livelihood, The Muthoot Group has recently donated 25 sewing Machines to women beneficiaries in Dehradun and 30 manual tricycle Carts to underprivileged people in Delhi.

Bajaj Finserv collaborates with Sightsavers to bring inclusive education and promote disability rights across four districts in India

Bajaj Finserv Limited, the holding company of the financial services businesses of the Bajaj Group, one of India's oldest and largest conglomerates, joined hands with Sightsavers India to launch the Social Inclusion and Inclusive Education Programmes in Raisen, Khagariya, Kasganj, and Pratapgarh districts of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan, respectively.

As a part of continuous CSR efforts by the group focused on children and youth, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Limited, the general insurance arm of Bajaj Finserv, will be extending their support to ensure quality education is imparted to children with visual impairment and help support people with disabilities.

For visually impaired children, blindness leads them to a cycle of illiteracy, poverty, and social exclusion, making them one of society's most vulnerable groups. Sightsavers works to create a supportive and enabling environment in communities, families, and schools to assist the comprehensive education for children with visual impairment. Through this association, Bajaj Finserv Limited and Sightsavers will provide support to children who are blind or visually impaired to receive extensive education support while ensuring their inclusion in mainstream education. Children under the age of 5 to 18 years will be supported under this Inclusive Education Programme. Also, 400 children with visual impairment from the four districts will get support and inclusion in mainstream education as part of this programme.



With support from Bajaj Finserv, Sightsavers will also help people with disabilities over the age of 18 gain access to social security benefits and employment opportunities. The aim behind the initiative is social inclusion for persons with disabilities while making sure they receive equal rights and are not subjected to discrimination, particularly in the areas of education, healthcare, and income. By the end of the project, approximately 1,260 people with disabilities will have access to social security programmes, including disability pensions and entitlements like child scholarships, aids

and appliances, and housing loans, among other things.

"We are very pleased to support Sightsavers India in their two major projects to promote equality for people with disabilities and visual impairment. Children are an important focus area for our CSR, and more than 100,000 children have benefited so far through our projects. We are confident that this project will take the children closer to their full potential," said Ajay Sathe, Group CSR Head, Bajaj Finserv Ltd.

"For Sightsavers India, inclusive education and social inclusion are two of our primary areas of focus, which are being launched in Raisen, Khagaria, Pratapgarh and Kasganj. I'm extremely grateful that Bajaj Finserv joined hands with us in this intervention. This partnership is unquestionably a step forward toward achieving an equal world for people with disabilities," said Mr RN Mohanty, CEO, Sightsavers India.

HCCB installs the first Reverse Vending machine for plastics at The World Heritage House in Darjeeling

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB), one of India's leading FMCG companies, has installed the first Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) and plastic crusher at World Heritage House at Darjeeling, Chowrasta Hawa Ghar (Monkey House). The initiative is in partnership with the Darjeeling Municipality.

Volunteers, HCCB employees, community elders, waste management officials, and GTA members came together in the presence of District Magistrate, Darjeeling, Shashank Sethi, Chairman, Darjeeling Municipality, Sushma Rai; Secretary, Darjeeling Municipality Robert Chetri; and Ajoy Edwards, Dipen Thakuri, Chairman of Solid Waste Management; Gopal Pariyar, Vice Chairman, Solid Waste Management.

On behalf of HCCB, Krishna Gopal Mondal, Factory Manager, Raninagar, HCCB; Amit Pandey, Cluster Head (East), Public Affairs, HCCB; Suchismita Roy, Lead for Public Affairs, Raninagar factory; Rajeev Kumar Singh, Area Sales Manager, HCCB were present. Shri Pranjul Thakur, COO, Biocrux Pvt Ltd also graced the occasion.

Speaking about this initiative Kamlesh Kumar Sharma, Chief Public Affairs and Communication Officer, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages, said, "HCCB has been closely working with the West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) to install RVMs at five high footfall locations in Siliguri, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling to facilitate the recycling of used plastic.



Used plastics have an inherent value that can be channelled to good use for various purposes. This includes making jackets, shoes, caps, containers, clothes, textile materials etc. Reverse Vending Machines help collect and process plastic at the source such that the processed plastic is easy to carry in large quantities to the recycling centres. This prevents plastic litter and fuels a circular economy for plastics."

The RVM at World Heritage House has been installed by HCCB through Biocrux Pvt Ltd.

Earlier this year, HCCB installed 4 Reverse Vending Machines, one each in North Bengal University, Siliguri; NJP Railway Station, Siliguri, platform No 4; Cosmos Mall, Siliguri; and Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Station. A total of 14,000 plastic bottles have been collected over 3 months.

Marico Limited commits to support 10 Lakh children by 2025 to get literate in English

Marico Limited, one of India's leading FMCG companies has, over the years, created a strong purpose-led connect for one of their signature brands- Nihar Shanti. The brand has always championed education and skill empowerment and formed the Nihar Shanti Pathshala Funwala initiative to take this ahead in 2017. Having made a considerable impact since its inception, Marico Limited aims to educate over 10 lakh children in improving their English reading and speaking skills by FY25.

The Nihar Shanti Pathshala Funwala (NSPF) programme is focused on upskilling and empowering the government school-teachers to resolve the pressing issue of lack of consistency, and fluency in English Literacy, in the Hindi speaking belt. Currently operating in 5 states— Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Bihar and Chhattisgarh, the initiative has benefited over 4.17 Lakh students and 2.89 Lakh teachers in FY22. NSPF intends to increase the proficiency level of reading and speaking capabilities among the students from underserved areas in the 5 states.

In FY22, Marico launched the Nihar Skills Academy, as the next milestone towards deeper implementation of the brand purpose. The NSPF and Nihar Skills Academy collaborated with 3 implementation partners in FY22, to impart skill-based education, followed by placement opportunities to women and the youth of the country.

Speaking about their efforts on World Literacy Day, Amit Bhasin, Chief Legal Officer & Group General Counsel and Secretary, CSR Committee, Marico Limited said, "Purpose has been an integral part of the Nihar Shanti brand. We have always been dedicated towards creating a lasting impact by focusing on education and skill development in India, especially through our efforts under the Nihar Shanti Pathshala Funwala initiative. This World Literacy Day, we are committed to expand the scope and footprint of this program and aim to increase the English proficiency of 10 lakh students from underserved areas by 2025."

Over the years, the initiative has also created contextualised content and comprehensive training processes to improve the teachers' subject-matter knowledge to help them better engage and teach students. The NSPF initiative focuses on English learning solutions for government school teachers while collaborating with various state governments to provide quality teaching material. For students, NSPF designed a scalable and fun-based learning model, supported by online as well as offline tools to help boost overall literacy quotient in India.

Staying at par with technological advancements, NSPF has also created a WhatsApp Enterprise model-based learning programs to upgrade teachers' capabilities in learning and imparting English literacy. In FY22, WhatsApp (online) as well as workbook (offline)-led education was imparted in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh.

Moneyboxx Finance launches agroforestry drive as part of its beyond lending initiative to significantly elevate borrowers' income

Moneyboxx Finance Limited – a BSE-listed NBFC that provides small-ticket business loans to micro and small enterprises in Tier-III cities and below, announced its commitment to support its agri-preneurs borrowers in planting fruit bearing trees which can substantially elevate their income.

As a part of this initiative, Moneyboxx along with its partners planted 1,600 trees across Hisar, Kaithal and Naraingarh region in Haryana, in association with its execution partner Green Ananda. The company believes that this initiative has high potential to bring significant change in their borrowers' income and will have a positive ecological impact in terms of improvement in soil and air quality, water augmentation, food security and sustainability.

Until now, Moneyboxx has transformed the lives of more than 35,000 borrowers with cumulative disbursements of over INR 270 crores up to Aug '22.

Commenting on this initiative, Deepak Aggarwal, Co-founder Moneyboxx Finance Ltd said, "Moneyboxx is committed to make beyond lending initiatives as core to its business operations. India has the highest population of cattle in the world and about 2/3 of the rural population depends on the dairy industry. To help our borrowers who are dairy farmers, we hire qualified vets in our branches as impact officers who advise borrowers on improving milk yield, feedstock selection, cattle health, reproduction through AI, and creating awareness about government schemes on cattle insurance etc. To further support our livestock borrowers who also have farmlands, we are blessed to contribute and actively work towards the cause by planting fruit bearing trees as part of agroforestry initiative. We are committed to bring improvements in the overall environment through multiple such initiatives in the near future."

Himalayan Khardung La Challenge 2022 concludes successfully in Leh City



Nawaz Hussain emerged as the winner of the challenge by touching the finish line



The finish point of the Marathon was the Leh Main Market while it kicked off from Khardung village

The ninth edition of the 72-kilometer-long Himalayan Khardung La Challenge, the world's highest Ultra Marathon, came to a close on September 9, also celebrated as Himalayan Day. The finish point of the Marathon was the Leh Main Market while it kicked off from Khardung village. Having received an overwhelming response from across the country, the prestigious marathon also witnessed a momentous response from local communities across Ladakh, who participated in the event with indomitable gusto. The Marathon was jointly organized by Himalayan, the premium mineral water brand from Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) and Ladakh Marathon to support the cause of protecting local communities affected by melting Himalayan glaciers.

Commenting on the success, Vikram Grover, MD, NourishCo Beverages Ltd, the liquid beverage arm of TCPL states, "We are delighted with the success of the Himalayan Khardung La Challenge 2022 and are honored to be affiliated with a

cause that supports our source, the Himalayas. We would like to express immense gratitude to the Ladakh Marathon for helping us take a step ahead and do our bit by partnering with them for the marathon. We are happy to have been able to contribute to the cause of melting glaciers in the Himalayas and supporting the local communities. By virtue of our pledge this year, we intend to help construct a reservoir to help the local communities who seem to be heavily impacted by the melting of the glaciers."

Speaking on the success of the Himalayan Ladakh Marathon, Chewang Motup Goba, Founder & Race Director, Ladakh Marathon said, "The Khardung La Marathon has seen tremendous success this year, thanks to the collective support of brand Himalayan, police, volunteers, military forces, and healthcare professionals. The 9th edition of the Khardung La challenge after the pandemic this year is brimming with renewed energy, vigor and the overwhelming response we have received has surpassed our expectations."

The Marathon was run on the route from Khardung village and back to Leh City with nearly 200 participants. Deemed one of the most challenging marathons globally, The Khardung La Marathon also happens to be one of the world's highest races starting at 17,618 feet. While the marathon kicked off at 3 am and ended at 5 pm in the evening, hundreds of people gathered at the starting point and finish line to cheer and support the cause of protecting local communities affected by melting Himalayan glaciers in the Ladakh region.

Nawaz Hussain emerged as the winner of the challenge by touching the finish line in 6 hours 47 minutes and 20 seconds followed by Jigmet Stobdan who touched the finish line in 6 hours 56 minutes and 35 seconds while the second runner up Tsewang Kundan reached the finish line seconds apart at 6 hours 56 minutes and 39 seconds. The three winners were felicitated by Tashi Gyalson, Chairman and Chief Executive Councilor, LAHDC, Leh and the Ladakh Marathon team at the Leh Main city.

Bisleri International partners with Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam and IPCA to launch Gazab Street

Bisleri International Pvt. Ltd. partnered with Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam and Delhi-based NGO Indian Pollution Control Association (IPCA) to unveil Gazab Street, a distinctive street made using recycled plastic waste. Gazab street has been conceptualized with the aim to beautify the abandoned street that was once covered with dirt and filth.

The 250-meter-long street has been adorned with panels made from recycled plastic waste on one side. These panels have been further furnished with vertical gardens designed by using the old unused 20ltr plastic jars and 2ltr bottles. The other wall alongside the road displays colourful murals with impactful messages on saving the environment. Besides, slabs covering the drain passing through the street are made from recycled plastic waste. The entire street is set up with benches made from recycled plastic making it an Instagram-able tourist spot to sit, relax and admire the beauty.

Ghaziabad Mayor Asha Sharma inaugurated the street in the presence of Amrit Abhijat, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department, Uttar Pradesh, Mahender Singh Tanwar, Commissioner, Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam, and Ashish Jain, Founder-Director, Indian Pollution Control Association.

Speaking about the initiative Mahender Singh Tanwar, Commissioner, Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam, said, "Such types of projects are the need of the hour and more such streets should be developed to promote recycling of plastic waste. This will motivate people to adopt waste recycling and reusing." Ashish Jain, Founder-Director of IPCA, said,



"Plastic recycling is one of our key projects and associating with this initiative is a step towards influencing the masses through plastic tourism. Bisleri International is setting the right example by taking proactive measures to conserve the environment and beautify streets to help in the long-term goal. We hope more such projects are implemented in the near future, sensitizing people to contribute to saving and preserving the environment."

Commenting on the partnership, Angelo George, Chief Executive Officer, Bisleri International Pvt. Ltd., said, "Sustainability is at the core of our organisational priorities. We have a long-standing commitment to building a circular economy and are ensuring that used plastic

are recycled or rather upcycled to higher value products. This initiative of collecting plastic waste and recycling them to beautify the streets will further influence people to recycle plastic waste. We will continue to work in tandem with all stakeholders to foster an environmentally conscious community."

Bisleri International is a socially responsible organization with a strong focus on strengthening corporate citizenship by strongly emphasizing on long-term environmental conservation initiatives. The partnership is a step towards building a circular economy in used plastic management. Bisleri's sustainability commitments seek to holistically address the priorities set out by the government.

OPPO India Partners with Mensa India; Empowers Gifted Children from Underprivileged Backgrounds with Digital Literacy Tools

OPPO India has partnered with Mensa India, the national chapter of Mensa International, the world's oldest and largest high-IQ society to contribute to their Project Dhruv initiative. Mensa's Project Dhruv identifies gifted children from underprivileged families, to educate and nurture them so that they find the support they need to effectively contribute to their community and the nation. This collaboration demonstrates OPPO's commitment to uplifting bright minds from marginalized communities and empowering them with the help of digital access to learning opportunities.

In line with its global vision of Youth Empowerment and Digital Inclusion, OPPO has contributed Digital Literacy tools that are aimed at helping children with no access to technology to develop the skills they need to interact and excel in an increasingly digital world. These tools will support the academics of first-generation learners of Project Dhruv as they pursue meaningful careers in Engineering, Design, Medicine, Government Service, Academia, Arts etc. As part of the association, forty-five OPPO Pads, stylus, and internet dongles were distributed to the students at a function held at Vidya School, Sector 24, Gurgaon.

Digital Literacy Tools (DLT) are effective resources such as laptops, smartphones, tablets or desktop computers, audiobooks, interactive whiteboard, digital libraries, digital dictionaries, multimedia which students and educators use to communicate, teach, express



Mr Vivek Vasishtha, Vice-President, Public Affairs, OPPO India with students - Mensa Project

in the contemporary teaching-learning process.

Commenting on the initiative, Vivek Vasishtha, Vice-President, Public Affairs, OPPO India, said, "Education plays a significant and remedial role in balancing the

socio-economic fabric of the country. Digital literacy tools like the OPPO Pad are effective resources that help students as well as teachers to communicate, learn, and express themselves in the contemporary teaching-learning process. We are proud to

support these gifted children as we reinforce our commitment to the Government of India's vision of Digital India." He further added, "Our digital literacy tools will be instrumental in realizing innumerable possibilities for these children as they not only pursue their education but also responsibly contribute to the development of the nation."

Speaking on the partnership, Kishore Asthana, Chairperson, Dhruv Foundation, and former President of Mensa India said, "There are over 6 million under-privileged gifted children in India whose brilliance remains undiscovered and unutilised. They are India's most precious resource and Project Dhruv wants to ensure that we can

identify and help as many of them as possible so that they can maximise their potential and contribute to India's future. Oppo's valuable support for this nation-building project is truly appreciated. It will facilitate the education of Dhruv Scholars by providing much-needed devices to these bright children from under-privileged families."

Ashok Leyland extends its CSR initiative

Ashok Leyland Limited, flagship of the Hinduja Group, and the 2nd largest commercial vehicle (CV) manufacturer in India, launched the 'Road to Livelihood' initiative an extension of its current 'Road to School' program under its CSR commitment. The 'Road to Livelihood' program will focus on students in grade 9 to 12 and help them prepare for meaningful opportunities post their school finals. Its primary objective is to get them on a path of sustainable livelihood.

These students will receive structured interventions focused on spoken English, digital skills, employability skills and most important of all, career counseling. This program will be rolled out in 133 schools in Thiruvallur, Salem, Namakkal and Krishnagiri Districts this month. Thiru Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhil, Hon'ble Minister for Education inaugurated the program at the Govt. Girls High School, Thally, Krishnagiri District in the presence of Mr. K Nantha Kumar, IAS, Commissioner, Department of School Education and Mr. N V Balachander, Ashok Leyland Limited.

Sharing his views on the occasion, N V Balachander, representing CSR and Corp. Affairs for Ashok Leyland Ltd., said, "Our Road to School program has successfully brought in societal equity and inclusion through providing quality education in under resourced communities. Building on this, we are excited to launch the "Road to Livelihood" project, which will equip the high school and



higher secondary school students with relevant knowledge and life-skills. This we believe will help the students get better livelihood opportunities, and structured counseling will help them make better career choices."

The Road to School (RTS) the flagship CSR project by Ashok Leyland began in 2015, with the aim of making education

a social leveler impacts children in government schools. The program provides for a holistic development of primary and middle school children through education, health and hygiene, and nutrition. The Program started with 36 schools in Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri District, today it touches over 105,000 kids and 1100 schools.

CSR INDIA UNITED

Electrolux and Planet Water Foundation expand partnership into India, to bring clean water access



Electrolux carrying the water tower stand after assembly



Electrolux volunteers showing children how to wash their hands

First projects in Thane, Maharashtra for 2 schools and surrounding communities

Electrolux, a leading global appliance company that has shaped living for the better for more than 100 years, and Planet Water Foundation, a nonprofit

organization that addresses water poverty, have announced an expansion of their global partnership to provide access to clean, safe drinking water in India.

The two organizations' partnership began in 2019 and has seen Planet Water and volunteers from Electrolux build and deploy community-based water filtration systems in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, to date.

The expansion of the partnership into India in August, saw the deployment of two Planet Water AquaTower systems in elementary schools in Shahapur, Thane, Maharashtra.

Both systems were deployed by volunteers from Electrolux India and are capable of producing 1,000 liters of clean, safe drinking water per hour, enough to meet the drinking water requirements of up to 3,600 people.

The Electrolux volunteers also helped facilitate the teaching of Planet Water's hygiene education program which is designed to help spread knowledge on healthy hygiene habits to teachers, students, and surrounding community members.

Speaking on this activation, Sudhir Patil, Commercial Director, Electrolux India said "There is a sense of fulfilment and delight to know that we have positively impacted these communities in Thane. Electrolux's passion to shape living for the better finds synergy in Planet Water's goal to abolish global water poverty one community at a time."

"We are very pleased to extend our partnership with Electrolux into India" said Mark Steele, CEO & Founder of Planet Water Foundation. "Access to clean, safe drinking water continues to be a challenge for many communities in India and through corporate partnerships such as ours with Electrolux, we are able to help address some of these challenges."

The Akshaya Patra Foundation collaborates with FedEx Express to drive the Go-Green Initiative

The Akshaya Patra Foundation has collaborated with FedEx Express, the world's largest express transportation company, to further its 'Go Green Initiatives.' FedEx Express has donated solar panels to Akshaya Patra's kitchen in Panvel, Maharashtra, and electric bikes (e-bikes), at Bellary, Karnataka.

Their support will help the Foundation generate 25 kW power, adopt an environment friendly mode of transportation and reduce its carbon footprint. The savings in transportation costs as a result of the adoption of the e-bikes as a replacement for fuel-powered vehicles will enable Akshaya Patra to provide meals to more than 2,800 children for an entire academic year.

Since 2000, Akshaya Patra has been serving hot, nutritious mid-day meals to children every school day. The Foundation is conscious of its responsibility towards the children and communities it serves, and its responsibility towards the planet. The organization has strived to reduce its carbon footprint by adopting various green initiatives, including the use of biogas plants to convert organic waste into energy which generates 120-150 cubic metres of biogas. These plants reduce the dependency on LPG while also producing organic manure, which is a more sustainable alternative to chemical fertilizers. The Foundation also has Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs) to treat, dispose, and recycle kitchen waste and prevent environmental pollution.

Akshaya Patra kitchens has also installed solar panels that use photo-voltaic (PV) cells to convert sunlight into electricity. The organisation has also added e-bikes to ensure sustainable practices to and from its kitchens to further reduce its carbon footprint.

The solar panels in Panvel and e-bikes in Bellary donated by FedEx Express, will accelerate Akshaya Patra's efforts to adopt green energy across its operations. Suvendu Choudhury, Managing Director, International Operations for FedEx Express said, "At FedEx we are committed to connect the world responsibly and resourcefully, and we're delighted to collaborate with Akshaya Patra to make a sustainable change in the way they work. As part of our FedEx Cares program, we're working with communities across the globe to help them move people and goods more sustainably. The solar panel contribution to Akshaya Patra will positively impact the environment, resulting in more meals for school children."

Anant Arora, Chief Sustainability and Communication Officer, The Akshaya Patra Foundation lauded the partnership and said, "While we work towards our endeavour to erase childhood hunger and malnutrition at the grassroots level, we are also striving to fulfil another goal – to give back to the environment. FedEx Express efforts to encourage and support the Go-Green initiative by donating e-bikes to the School-Relationship officers and Solar Power Plant at Panvel are deeply appreciated. I am confident that this partnership will help us adopt more sustainable practices into our daily operations and ensure our carbon footprint gets smaller with time. We are deeply grateful for FedEx's philanthropy as it will take us one step closer to our green goals. I also want to thank the Central Government and the Government of Karnataka for providing us this opportunity to serve children and communities during the pandemic, and supporting and encouraging our efforts all along."

SVB India donates ambulance

SVB India, the global delivery center of SVB, financial partner of the innovation economy and parent of Silicon Valley Bank, has partnered with The Association of People with Disability (APD) to help improve timely access to medical care for people with disabilities during emergencies. SVB India's support includes donation of an ambulance to APD. The announcement was made today at APD's Jeevan Bhima Nagar Community Center.



Continuing SVB's social impact initiatives, Premil Dennison, Managing Director & Country Head, SVB India visited the community center to meet with the beneficiaries and inaugurate the operation of the ambulance. He said "Our small efforts can make a huge difference in the lives of people in need. Medical emergency is one of the areas where in time doctor's intervention can save someone's life. With the donation of an ambulance to APD, we intend to help the community we live in."

Previously, as a part of SVB's COVID-19 relief efforts in India, the global delivery center donated 4000 endurance kits to the Bengaluru Traffic Police Department, and PPE kits with nutrition bars to KSRTC hospital worth INR 28 lakhs.

ACF partners with Godrej Agrovet to support livelihoods

The Ambuja Cement Foundation (ACF) has partnered with Godrej Agrovet Ltd to create income opportunities and support livelihoods via the 'Grameen Vikas Project' across 6 villages of Bundi, Rajasthan and 8 villages of Tilda, Raipur, Chhattisgarh - impacting a population of more than 28,000+ people. The project will provide necessary skills, expertise, infrastructure and training for the community to strengthen agro-based livelihoods, whilst leveraging government schemes, empowering women by strengthening SHGs and training youth in vocational skills.

In both the regions, agriculture is considered to be the primary source of income, but due to high input costs, low yields and limited access to government schemes, the majority of the population have been moving into the unorganized sector in search of a livelihood. Women have been confined to their homes - lacking confidence and basic entrepreneurial skills - and youth are either forced to support their families in the fields or by taking up labouring jobs.

Through the partnership, the 'Grameen Vikas Project' will reach out to farmers to develop multiple avenues for increasing income levels. ACF will train farmers with advanced horticulture practices, animal husbandry techniques and focus on promoting a community cadre and farmer clubs to create direct market connections and implement efficient water use practices. The team will also motivate community members to use water consciously in the area, where uncontrolled extraction of groundwater for irrigation is registered.

Through the women empowerment program, ACF will strengthen



the existing 5 SHGs, promote women based group enterprises, and support 30 marginal, landless women by financing livelihood generation activities and ensuring their participation in agri-allied activities. A few women are already involved in making vermicomposting as an income generation activity and have sold it to the Department of Horticulture and Cooperative Society.



With the aim to curb migration and provide alternative career and income choices for youth, ACF will mobilize youth to enrol at the Skill & Entrepreneurship Development Institute (SEDI) Bhatapara, by creating awareness through door to door visits and parents meeting.

Commenting on the new partnership, Pearl Tiwari, Director & CEO, Ambuja Cement Foundation said, "We are pleased to have a strong

partnership with Godrej Agrovet and launch the 'Grameen Vikas Project' to support rural communities. This takes us yet another step further towards our vision of 'building prosperous rural communities, via partnerships.' We look forward to strengthening villagers by providing appropriate skills along with technological and financial support, to enhance their livelihoods and overall quality of life."

Gayatri Divecha, Head CSR & Sustainability, Godrej Industries and Associate Companies, said, "In our work with small and marginal farmers, we found three things that enable in making agriculture a viable livelihood option. One, adopting scientific agri practices and accessing timely information. Two, diversifying both farm and off-farm income streams. And three, connecting with market and leveraging government welfare schemes. The Grameen Vikas project is an integrated model that is developed from the realisation that farm-based livelihoods are all interconnected. Our continued partnership with Ambuja Cement Foundation will further strengthen the small and marginal farm communities and assist them to be agri-entrepreneurs of India."

How your local birding hotspot could become a new protected area

In a game-changer for conservation, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and BirdLife International join forces to integrate BirdLife Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) into eBird

The eBird project is one of the largest citizen-science data platforms in the world – with more than one billion records. Birders worldwide use eBird for recording the species they observe, and this vast information repository contributes to our global understanding of species' distribution, abundance, movements, and population trends. Through a new collaboration with BirdLife, eBird data will be more useful than ever to identify new key sites for nature as well as support the vital conservation efforts of BirdLife Partners.

This week, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (which manages eBird) and BirdLife launched a new tool that marries the power of eBird with the strength of BirdLife's network of national partner organisations, as part of a collaboration to monitor and conserve the most important sites for nature. BirdLife has identified over 13,600 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) worldwide, and these form the core of a wider network of Key Biodiversity Areas



Birdwatchers © Barend Van Gernerden



Aves Argentinas, BirdLife in Argentina, will be able to see recent sightings for Mar Chiquita, an IBA in Danger that was recently declared Ansenusa National Park by the Argentinian Government, thanks to conservation and advocacy work.

(KBAs) – critically important sites for the persistence of global plant and animal diversity. Data on IBAs and KBAs are now integrated into eBird, enabling BirdLife Partners to see key summaries in eBird for each of their country's IBAs and KBAs, including the species that have been observed, by whom, when and in

what numbers. Likewise, eBird users can see when their observations fall within IBAs – their personal contributions to the monitoring of these sites.

Filling data gaps with the power of citizen science

Protecting and conserving sites is a vital part of international targets to

save nature. One of the key commitments for the Global Biodiversity Framework (to be adopted by the world's governments at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's COP15 in December 2022) is to expand protected and conserved areas to cover 30% of land and seas by 2030, especially 'areas of particular importance for biodiversity.' KBAs are the most comprehensive, systematically identified network of such sites worldwide and will be crucial in focusing protected area expansion on the most important locations, and to achieving the targets in the framework. However, gaps in the network remain, many site assessments need updating, and all need effective monitoring.

Data provided by eBird's more than 800,000 users can help fill these gaps. These data are also updated in real time, so accurate, current assessments can be made of the state of populations of key species in these important sites and how they change over time.

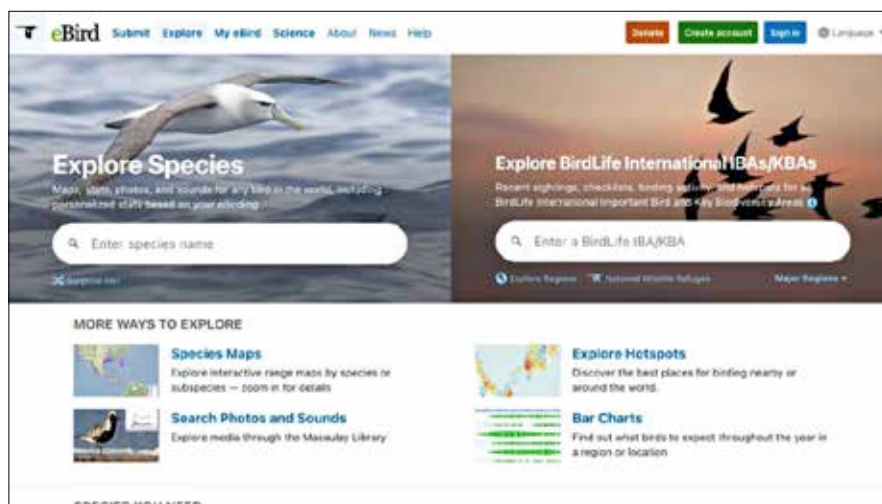
"The eBird data can be used to help pinpoint new sites that qualify as IBAs and KBAs," said Dr Stuart Butchart, Chief Scientist at BirdLife International, "by highlighting locations outside the existing network that support globally significant populations of species of conservation concern. They can also help monitor the populations of such species in these sites over time, for example, by tracking the proportion of birders' checklists reporting a particular species at a particular location."

Birders play an important role

Local birders can provide vital information on species such as the timing of arrival from migration to track climate change impacts, or provide population estimates for key species to inform the effective management of a site. The growth of an international community of people supporting nature conservation is



eBird's more than 800,000 users can help fill in gaps in site assessments by providing their data.
© Cornell Lab of Ornithology



The new tool allows users to explore specific IBAs and KBAs in eBird.

a shared goal of both the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and BirdLife. The number of people contributing bird observations to eBird grows

"The eBird data can be used to help pinpoint new sites that qualify as IBAs and KBAs, by highlighting locations outside the existing network that support globally significant populations of species of conservation concern."

Dr Stuart Butchart, Chief Scientist at BirdLife International

by approximately 20% each year, thanks in part to Cornell's Merlin Bird ID app, a bird-identification tool that utilises cutting-edge technology to help users identify the species they see and hear, and to engage people in the joy of birds.

The ever-growing dataset of observations generated by these users can be used by BirdLife Partners to identify, update, and monitor IBAs. This then can inform BirdLife's advocacy work and highlight to governments particular sites in need of protection. Data from eBird can therefore be used to help to designate new or expanded protected

areas, to recognise community-managed reserves or other conserved areas, and to ensure these are managed effectively, thereby helping governments to meet their 2030 commitments to save nature.

So next time you log an observation on eBird, you should feel proud that you're contributing a vital data point to help us understand our

world – potentially supporting the case for a new protected area, helping to ensure that existing protected areas are effectively managed, or supporting the growth of the global birding community. Thank you.

Future directions

BirdLife and Cornell are now exploring further collaborations and

greater integration of their datasets, with the aim of strengthening this network of critical IBAs and KBAs and supporting bird community and conservation globally.

(Source: <https://www.birdlife.org/news/2022/09/08/how-your-local-birding-hotspot-could-become-a-new-protected-area/>)

Bajaj Electricals launches Innovate and Rise

India's leading consumer durables company - Bajaj Electricals Limited, with a vision of enhancing the quality of life and bringing happiness with sustainability, has launched a new first-of-its-kind open innovation platform 'Innovate and Rise' to engage with the external ecosystem in driving innovation across Consumer Products and Lighting businesses. Bajaj Electricals aims to partner with individual inventors, academics, designers, research institutions, universities, start-ups and other small, medium, and large companies, and existing and potential new suppliers to ideate and deliver on the company's most challenging opportunities.

All the details are available on their website: <https://innovateandrise.bajajelectricals.com/>

'Innovate and Rise' will play an instrumental role for the company in discovering and harnessing business and product ideas across its Consumer Products and Lighting business verticals. The company calls out to external innovators to come up with new product ideas that help solve some of the complex problems faced today and deliver stronger consumer proposition. These challenges have been

uploaded on the platform to invite applications with a focused selection criteria depending upon the inventiveness, business relevance, commercial viability, etc. of the innovation. The submissions will be reviewed by an internal committee and the decision will be communicated to the innovators within 3 weeks' time.

Speaking on the initiative, Anuj Poddar, MD & CEO, Bajaj Electricals Limited said, "The new normal has proven the adage innovate or perish, emphasising how crucial innovation will be as we move forward. Solutions that solve real problems and provide superior proposition to today's consumers in a manner that is disruptive, economically viable and has scalability potential are the need of the hour. As one of the building blocks of our open culture at Bajaj Electricals Limited, we are keen to partner with the industry and the broader ecosystem to take the power of innovation to every Indian household. This will provide

a unique opportunity for the wider community and driven minds to work on real-world opportunities and potentially see their ideas go on to take real shape and presence in the market. Based on the viability of the idea, we will partner the innovator through a mutually agreed contract and commercial terms to further help scale the solution."

Bajaj Electricals is currently actively seeking solutions from external innovators under various categories like kitchen appliances, domestic appliances and fans; and will soon further extend the invite to consumer lighting

and luminaire categories as well. Designing mixer grinders for silent operations or inviting innovators for solutions around air coolers that can work effectively in humid conditions or designing silent air coolers, energy conservation in household appliances, easy cleaning of domestic & kitchen appliances are some of the challenges already posted on the platform.



Anuj Poddar, MD & CEO, Bajaj Electricals Limited

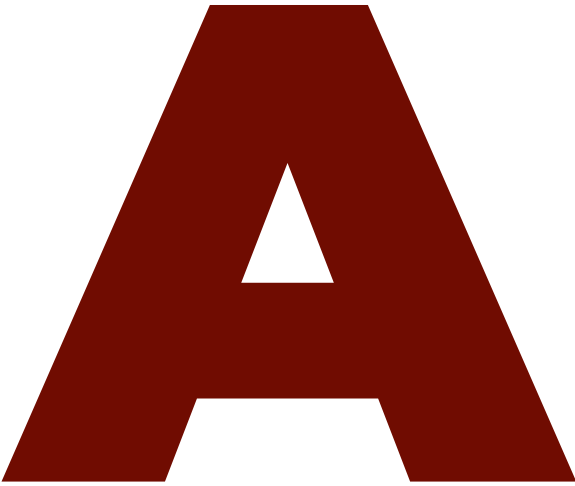
WHAT MELTING TIBETAN GLACIERS REVEAL ABOUT DISEASE AND GLOBAL WARMING

Researchers have discovered new microbes on retreating glaciers, hinting that climate change may lead to their release and potential future disease outbreaks, writes **Cheena Kapoor**, thethirdpole.net



A newborn is immunized at a rural health post in Nepal.

Image: World Bank Photo Collection, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.



As the Covid-19 pandemic wreaked havoc worldwide in 2020, scientists scrambled to produce vaccines. Millions of lives were lost, even though the existence of coronaviruses – the class to which the virus causing Covid-19 belongs – was well known.

Scientists had known coronaviruses could infect humans for over 60 years, but they were not considered a serious enough threat to be studied for a possible vaccine until the 2003 SARS outbreak, which killed 10 per cent of people who contracted it. The threat level escalated when Covid-19 transferred from animals to humans in 2019.

According to experts, microorganisms have the capability to present danger spanning centuries. Modern and ancient pathogenic microbes trapped in ice could lead to epidemics or even pandemics when released.

“There was [a] study that showed that virus found on frozen bodies of 1918 Spanish flu victims is still capable of infecting others. This is only 100 years old,” says Gautam Menon, professor of physics and biology, and director of the Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability at Ashoka University in India.

As part of a study published in June in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*, scientists from Lanzhou University in China took samples

from 21 glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau to evaluate the potential health risks of glaciers melting. The researchers identified 968 microbial species and 25 million protein-coding gene clusters.

They concluded that almost half (47 per cent) of the virulence factors identified are not currently well known as molecules that help bacteria to infect a host at the cellular level. This means the researchers have discovered new, potentially hazardous, microbial species that may cause disease outbreaks.

And they occur close to the two most populous countries in the world – India and China – where these microbes can easily be transported in the rivers that originate in the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau.

The researchers could not be reached for comment, but experts say there is cause for concern.

“What we are talking about here is something that is completely unknown – though a rare worry now, it needs attention. These are microbes stuck for centuries; we have not

been exposed to them and have no natural immunity,” says Menon.

The study revealed that while some of the microbes belong to the proteobacteria class (also known as pseudomonadota), 82 per cent are novel species.

“Microbes in the pseudomonadota class are less worrisome, since they are the general bacteria that cause an upset stomach. But it is the unidentified microbial species that are a cause for concern. These unidentified microbes can be a threat to the ecosystem as well as to humans,” says Aliya Naz, an expert in environmental toxicology and health risk assessment, and assistant professor at OP Jindal Global University in India.

The study has led to the creation of the Tibetan Glacier Genome and Gene (TG2G) catalogue, a platform to identify and compare glacier microbial functions on a global scale. But, experts say, this highlights the need for wider glacier studies.

“More research is needed for the identification of changes in microbial diversity in the different Himalayan regions. [It has been]

established that unidentified microbial communities now predominate in the Indo-Tibetan region, north-east Himalayas and even in the western Himalayas (Ladakh)," Naz says, citing a paper confirming the discovery of methanogens in soil samples. Methanogens are microorganisms that produce methane as a byproduct of metabolism, and are mostly found in environments that lack oxygen.

Another paper on the microbiome of the Himalayan ecosystem described the presence of "unknown" microbes, even though it found proteobacteria to be dominant, indicating that more studies are required.

"It is very important to conduct a genomic analysis on our glaciers and assess who [is] potentially at a higher risk," Menon says, referring to remote communities who live close to rivers and have not been exposed to these microbes previously.

THE GLOBAL WARMING CATAclysm

Global warming has increased the rate at which glaciers melt. Between 2000 and 2020, 85.3 per cent of 1,704 of the world's glaciers retreated. The Tibetan Plateau contains low-latitude glaciers that are vulnerable to global warming, and glaciers in India are melting at a similar rate. This retreat will increase the volume of nutrients and microorganisms released into downstream ecosystems, posing a risk to life.

"Global warming accelerates glacier retreat, and the enhanced

“
Some of these microbes have strong adaptive abilities and, in favourable conditions, they may proliferate. Thus it is highly important to learn the role of these microbes on the human population, their adaptive features, and which flora they exist in.

RAM CHANDRA, department of environment microbiology head, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University.

meltwater discharge can increase the chance of these virulence factors interacting with local plants, animals and humans," the Lanzhou University study says.

Menon stresses that since humans do not have defences against these microbes because they originate from unexpected sources, this will become an increasingly important problem associated with global warming.

The Lanzhou University study reveals that some of these microorganisms have demonstrated "the ability to adapt to these extreme conditions and contribute to vital

ecological processes, such as carbon and nitrogen cycling", creating a vicious feedback loop. Naz explains that the methanogenic microbial strains beneath melting ice caps that are being exposed are accelerating global warming. As they produce methane, an extremely potent greenhouse gas with a global-warming potential of up to 34 times that of CO₂, this could cause ice caps to melt even faster in future.

THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH INTO MICROBES IN GLACIERS

The microbes that inhabit glaciers differ from place to place, meaning one study from Tibet may not be valid for other glaciers. It is therefore important to conduct individual studies to prepare countries for potential disease outbreaks.

"Some of these microbes have strong adaptive abilities and, in favourable conditions, they may proliferate. This will lead to pathogenicity [the ability of the pathogen to produce disease]. Thus it is highly important to learn the role of these microbes on the human population, their adaptive features, and which flora [plants] they exist in," says Ram Chandra, head of the department of environment microbiology at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University in India.

Chandra cites the example of Covid-19. Even after coronavirus was discovered, its effect on the population and its highly adaptive nature could not be known.

"The government should invest more in similar studies as [the one] done by Lanzhou University, as there is no concrete data available at the moment," he says. ■

This story was published with permission from The Third Pole.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/what-melting-tibetan-glaciers-reveal-about-disease-and-global-warming/>)

Global warming has increased the rate at which glaciers melt. Between 2000 and 2020, 85.3 per cent of 1,704 of the world's glaciers retreated. The Tibetan Plateau contains low-latitude glaciers that are vulnerable to global warming, and glaciers in India are melting at a similar rate.

American Express and NASSCOM Foundation collaborate to empower 700 women from marginalized communities with digital skills

Laying a strong foundation to bridge the digital skill gap amongst women, NASSCOM Foundation and American Express have partnered to train and upskill 700 women graduates through an employment-linked training project, 'Women Empowerment Through Technology'. Under this project, American Express and NASSCOM Foundation are working with two training partners - FUEL (Friends Union for Energizing Lives) and RCED (Regional Centre for Entrepreneurship) to impart women with technology-based skill development and entrepreneurship training.

Ruchika Panesar, Vice President and Head of Technology at American Express India, said, "There has been a significant uptake of technology across all industries during Covid, and at the same time, the digital skill gap has grown wider due to lack of facilities and financial aid. At American Express, we are committed to backing equal futures and fostering diversity, equity and inclusion while serving communities. Through this partnership with NASSCOM Founda-

Focus on skilling women beneficiaries through employment linked training

Technical partners, FUEL (Friends Union for Energizing Lives) and RCED (Regional Centre for Entrepreneurship) to impart technology-based skill development and entrepreneurship training

Beneficiaries to receive certificates upon successful completion of training; confirmed placements for women aspirants

tion, we aim to empower women from marginalized communities and support them in building digital skills for enhanced employment opportunities." Nidhi Bhasin, CEO, NASSCOM Foundation, commented, "India has one of the largest young

populations in the world. In fact, this window of opportunity, a "youth bulge" is expected to last till 2025. To ensure we leverage this talent and demographic dividend, fixing the existing skill gap becomes the top priority of the country. This will need us to prioritize digital learning and skill development for which creating access and opportunity is a must. We are honored to collaborate with American Express to digitally train 700 women beneficiaries to upskill them for employment opportunities for a better livelihood."

'Women Empowerment Through Technology' project focuses on training 700 women on various technical courses including Cloud and Data Analytics, Blockchain, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence. The enrolled beneficiaries will also be groomed through non-technical courses including communication skills, holistic personality development and interview skills. On successful completion of the program, the women beneficiaries will receive a validated professional certificate and job placements. 

CSR TODAY

INDIA'S FIRST MAGAZINE ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

To subscribe, contact: CSR TODAY, Indian Centre for CSR, 104, Nirman Kendra, Dr. E. Moses Road, Mahalaxmi Estate, Mumbai- 400 011 (India). Tel: +91 22 249 03078 / 03082 / 55260



‘Happy Number’ scored by Vasu Dixit celebrates Bengaluru’s Informal Waste Pickers

The recently released music video of the song delves into the role of Bengaluru’s informal sector waste pickers in the city’s waste value chain.

BBC Media Action has released a music video called ‘Happy Number’, celebrating and highlighting the role of Bengaluru’s 22,500 informal waste pickers in the city’s circular economy. They achieve this by helping divert a massive amount of waste - 38,32,50,000 kilograms - from reaching landfills every year.

BBC Media Action has conceptualised and produced this song and its accompanying video in collaboration with Bengaluru-based musician Vasu Dixit.

Why is this diversion such an important issue? Waste accumulation in landfills has immense negative environmental impact, contributing to air, water, and soil pollution. Scientific evidence shows

that the work of waste pickers leads to better environment – cleaner air, water, and soil.

The music video revolves around the Happy Number and the people who make it happen – Bengaluru’s informal waste pickers, the #InvaluableRecyclers. Along with Vasu, the music video features rapper Karthik S Gubbi, actor-comedian Shraddha Jain who goes by the moniker @

AiyyoShraddha, and a few of the thousands of Bengaluru's informal waste pickers who contribute to the Happy Number. @AiyyoShraddha has supported the #Invaluables campaign for the last year.

The #InvaluableRecyclers form the backbone of the waste management system of India's Silicon Valley, ensuring that only non-recyclable materials end up in landfill. The Happy Number music video gives them their space in the sun.

Earlier, BBC Media Action's research around the informal waste pickers of Bengaluru showed that even though waste on the streets is visible, and is of concern, informal waste pickers remain virtually 'invisible' to most people. Nearly 55% of respondents said that informal waste pickers are dirty in appearance, while 56% believed that they should not be allowed inside building complexes and societies. Research after the first phase of the 'Invaluables' campaign indicated a nearly 6% increase in awareness of informal waste pickers and their contributions among respondents.

BBC Media Action's campaign is part of the H&M Foundation funded Saamuhika Shakti initiative, that brings together multiple organisations to join forces to improve the lives of informal waste pickers in Bengaluru. Partners of this collaborative include CARE India, Hasiru Dala, Sambhav Foundation, Save the Children, Social Alpha and WaterAid, along with The/Nudge Institute serving as the backbone organisation for this collective impact initiative.

The Happy Number Music Video: #InvaluableRecyclers

The Happy Number song is at the core of the music video, which captures the significance and the efforts of the informal waste pickers in recycling the unimaginable quantities of waste generated by the city. The song is a foot-tapping

fusion of folk and rock, with a rap interlude, with the Happy Number refrain – '38,32,50,000' (the zeros are sung as not-not-not-not), urging listeners to appreciate and acknowledge the efforts of the waste pickers and sing along! Through the song, listeners learn why 38,32,50,000 is a Happy Number for Bengaluru, and compares it to the weight of 95,000 elephants, so that listeners can easily visualise the enormity of the volume. The song talks about the role of street waste pickers, itinerant waste buyers and sorters, who in their own ways contribute to a cleaner and better environment.



It also acknowledges Mansoor, Velu and Megamalai – informal waste pickers from Bengaluru – who, along with several others, are the face of the #InvaluableRecyclers campaign. Hasiru Dala and Save the Children also supported the making of the video by helping cast people from the waste picking communities.

Talking about the #InvaluableRecyclers, Soma Katiyar, Executive Creative Director, BBC Media Action India says, "Thanks to the pandemic, numbers have become scary, harbingers of the worst possible news! But here's a 'happy number' that we need to know about and celebrate – an estimated 38,32,50,000 kilograms of waste stopped from being added to already overflowing landfills by the informal waste

pickers of Bengaluru. We see our #InvaluableRecyclers as silent environmentalists. They are the first link in the waste recycling value chain. This song celebrates the invaluable service they provide to the city and is a tribute to them. Through this Happy Number song and campaign, BBC Media Action aims to highlight their role in the city's circular economy, showcasing the skills and expertise they bring to the profession of waste picking".

Musician Vasu Dixit (@dixitvasu) who co-created with BBC Media Action and composed the Happy Number song says, "We as citizens

have a responsibility towards the informal waste pickers of Bengaluru – of treating them with the respect and dignity they deserve for protecting our environment. And most importantly, ensuring that the waste we give them remains recyclable. The Happy Number song was a great opportunity for me to celebrate them and their work. It would be a dream come true if Bengaleans sing along and recognise waste pickers for what they do."

The launch of the song has been endorsed by city-based environmentalist Vani Murthy and comedian Sonu Venugopal among several other prominent Bengaleans. 📺

Link to the Music Video on YouTube - <https://youtu.be/zn41RJFZxel>

Taking back the Ocean, Inc.

The United Nations still relies on incremental change to protect the high seas, with the private sector firmly in charge. Under current technological constraints, we must reverse the privatisation of oceans to prevent further degradation, states **Alexander Kozul-Wright**

Earlier this summer, the United Nations convened its Ocean Conference (UNOC) in Lisbon, Portugal. The goal was to “to propel much needed science-based innovative solutions aimed at starting a new chapter of global ocean action.” The world needs a “sustainably managed ocean,” according to the UN’s under-secretary-general for legal affairs, Miguel de Serpa Soares, who hailed the conference as an “enormous success.” If only.

The ocean’s importance cannot be overstated. It is the planet’s largest biosphere, hosting up to 80 per cent of all life on earth. It generates 50 per cent of the oxygen we breathe and absorbs one-quarter of all carbon dioxide emissions, essential for climate and weather regulation. And it is also economically vital,



A quarter of the Pacific Ocean’s marine catch, or 15 million tonnes of fish, is estimated to be unreported every year. Image: Gary Todd via Flickr, CC0 1.0

with roughly 120 million people employed in fisheries and related activities, mostly for small-scale enterprises in developing countries.

Yet over the last four decades, the ocean has come under unprecedented pressure, largely owing to the rapid growth of commercial maritime activity. This growth is particularly significant in exclusive economic zones, contiguous areas of territorial water that stretch some 230 miles from country coastlines.

The principle of national sovereignty over EEZs was enshrined in the UN Convention on the Law of

the Sea in 1982. In the years that followed, governments sold off vast tracts of ocean territory through state licenses and concessions, effectively handing over management of marine ecosystems to the private sector.

Policymakers apparently reasoned that corporations would have a financial interest in adopting responsible business practices in order to preserve the resources from which they were extracting so much value. Instead, widespread oil and gas exploration, industrial fishing, and frenetic maritime trade have, as UN Special Envoy for the

Ocean Peter Thomson recently put it, caused “the ocean’s health” to “spiral into decline.” Marine acidification and heating reached record levels last year. Only about 13 per cent of the ocean now qualifies as “marine wilderness”, or biologically and ecologically intact seascapes that are mostly free of human disturbance. More than one-third of marine mammals, and nearly one-third of reef-forming corals, are now threatened with extinction.

It was against this backdrop that the UNOC was convened to “halt the destruction” of ocean ecosystems. But, despite much lofty rhetoric, all that came of it were vague pronouncements: the UN’s 193 member states reaffirmed their pledge to bolster maritime governance by, among other things, strengthening data collection and promoting finance for nature-based solutions.

In fact, beyond Colombia’s recently announced plans to create four new marine-protected areas, no binding commitments were made. And, tellingly, the deadlock on deep-sea mining was not broken. Whereas many advanced economies, including Japan and South Korea, support the controversial practice, Pacific countries like Palau and Fiji demanded an industry-wide moratorium, citing the lack of environmental data.

The key takeaway from the conference was that the UN remains committed to incremental change, with the private sector firmly in control. This is reflected in an emphasis on “natural capital” solutions, which involve putting a price on nature in order to save it. The neoliberal policymaking that created today’s crisis has undergone an ideological makeover. Where shareholder capitalism failed to ensure self-regulation by private owners, “stakeholder capitalism” supposedly will succeed, because companies will balance the competing interests of investors, workers, communities,

and the environment. It is not hard to see why stakeholder capitalism is so appealing: it gives the impression that we can have our cake and eat it. But, when it comes to the ocean, the cake is already past its expiration date. Given current technological constraints, protecting the ocean from further degradation precludes any additional maritime industrialisation.

Why does the UN – or anyone, for that matter – believe that private companies will become responsible stewards of the planet? The rapid degradation of marine ecosystems is not exactly new information, yet corporations have only increased their damaging activities. Realistically,

of species they support is enormous, with many more expected to be discovered. And they are getting busier – and becoming more threatened – by the day. Protection of the high seas has long been overseen by a patchwork of international agencies. As a result, just 1.2 per cent of this fragile ecosystem is currently safeguarded against exploitative commercial activity.

As Guy Standing, a professorial research associate at the University of London, recently told me, there is little reason to believe that the conference will do much to “roll back the power of oligopolistic corporations” in non-territorial waters. Instead, it will turn out to be just


Realistically, stakeholder capitalism will merely defer difficult decisions about profit maximisation in a climate-constrained world to future generations.

stakeholder capitalism will merely defer difficult decisions about profit maximisation in a climate-constrained world to future generations.

Now, the world has an opportunity to embrace a more promising approach to protecting the ocean: the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. The meetings, which are resuming in New York this week, are expected to produce a legal framework for governing all marine areas beyond coastal countries’ EEZs.

The high seas comprise 64 per cent of the ocean’s surface area and host the largest reservoirs of biodiversity on Earth. The number

another opportunity for the UN to peddle the narrative that the profit motive, which is largely responsible for destroying the ocean, can spur the necessary action to save it.

As Standing puts it, if we are going to save our oceans, we must reverse their privatisation. That means pushing for binding commitments, effective regulation, and reliable enforcement. Above all, it means recognising that the ocean’s true value has no price tag. 

Alexander Kozul-Wright is a researcher for the Third World Network.

© Project Syndicate 1995–2022

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/taking-back-the-ocean-inc/>)

Best Mad Honey, a company based in Nepal that exports cliff honey around the world, sells three to four tonnes of honey a year.

Image: Tony Armstrong-Sly, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.



NEPAL'S HONEY HUNTERS CLING TO TRADITIONS AS BEE NUMBERS FALL

For thousands of years, the Gurung people have risked their lives for the honeycomb of the Himalayan giant honeybee, but its numbers are plummeting due to overharvesting and the construction of dams and roads, writes **Nabin Baral**, thethirdpole.net

Ganga Bahadur Gurung is praying quietly to the gods. He is asking the water god, earth god, fire god, wind god and snake god for their blessing with a honey hunt: members of his hunting group are about to climb down a 50-metre-high cliff on a swaying handmade rope ladder and prise honeycomb away from the world's largest honeybees.

"The wild honeybees make hives only in the safe cliffs where there are gods," explains Ganga, as he asks the deities to make the hunt safe and successful.

Harvesting honey from the cliffs is an ancient tradition in the foothills of the Nepal Himalayas. Men from the Gurung ethnic group, who live in the hills and mountains of central Nepal and northern India, have been risking their lives this way for thousands of years. The hunt, which happens twice a year in autumn and spring, is tightly woven into the Gurung's culture, with festival celebrations in villages.

Ganga is the leader of the 15-strong honey hunting group from Naiche, a village in Marshyangdi rural municipality of Nepal's central Gandaki province. Naiche sits in a gorge created by the Nyadi River (a tributary of the Marshyangdi River) when the Himalayas first formed.

For a long time, wild honey was plentiful on the cliffs around Naiche, but this is changing.

Ganga comes to the end of the prayer. The 48-year-old begs the

bees – which grow to 3 cm long – for forgiveness for destroying their nests, and asks that they keep the group's children safe.

Leaving the rest of the group at the base of the cliff, two hunters, Bicche Man Gurung and Prabin Gurung, climb to the top and fasten the rope ladder that will allow them to clamber down and reach the nests. The hunt is safe but unsuccessful, despite Ganga's prayers. When a bucket containing honeycomb is passed down by the hunters, the group find that it is dry. Ganga says in the past they might harvest as much as 15 litres of honey from a big nest on this cliff; today there is less than 200 millilitres.

This is the third time in the past 10 years the group has had a poor harvest on the Kamcho cliff.

At the end of the hunt, Ganga thanks the bees and blesses the colony so that it may flourish and spread to create 100 colonies by next year.

Ganga says: "Nature is our god; we have to respect and harvest carefully, as our ancestors did, so that harvesting continues for centuries to come."

Fewer bees, greater demand for honey

Ratna Thapa, senior bee scientist at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, says that the species is declining at an alarming rate in Nepal. "Every year there is a 70 per cent decline in the Himalayan cliff honeybee population," he says.

Surendra Raj Joshi, a senior resilient livelihoods specialist at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), says: "The data from Kaski and Lamjung districts, anecdotal evidence and reports from other countries suggest that there is a decrease both in the number of colonies per cliff and the total number of cliffs nested by bees," stressing that this varies by district and country.

Thapa and Joshi attribute this rapid decline to a range of factors, listing pesticides, loss of habitat and food sources, infrastructure development, and attacks by pests and predators. Another important driver they identify is "destructive honey hunting practices".

Twenty years ago, the honey harvested by the villagers of Naiche sold for around USD 3.5 per litre. Today, it is one of their main sources of income, selling for USD 20 per litre according to Ganga. On the international market prices are far higher. The increase has been driven by rising global demand for the honey.

Ganga says: "Two decades ago wax was more valuable than honey, so we used to harvest it after the bees had left the hive. At that time, the honey was used to make local alcohol or was mixed with tobacco... No one would buy the honey."

Sanjay Kafle is chief executive and founder of Best Mad Honey, a company based in Nepal that exports cliff honey around the world. He says his company exports three to four tonnes a year, and

that this is “increasing every year”. The rise in demand for the honey has been driven by enthusiasm for its psychoactive effects. Known as “mad honey”, in small amounts it can cause lightheadedness and euphoria, and hallucinations in larger doses. It is believed to have medicinal properties, such as improving cholesterol and joint problems, but has also been established to be capable of causing poisoning.

“People have realised the medicinal value of this honey and scientists may have proved it, that’s why we are making money from it these days,” says Ganga.

But bee expert Ratna Thapa disagrees. “I have not seen or read any scientific research paper that proves its medicinal value. Instead, what I can say is that it has a chemical called grayanotoxin that affects our nervous system,” he says.

Grayanotoxin is found in the leaves and flowers of rhododendron plants, which are abundant in the Nepal Himalayas.

Thapa points out that Himalayan giant honeybees are a “major pollinator” of high-altitude vegetation.

With the species found at 4,200 metres above sea level, where no other honeybees occur, many flowering plants depend on it, adds Joshi, the ICIMOD livelihoods specialist.

“The value of the honey collected from these bees is nothing in comparison with the ecosystem services that they provide to us in high-altitude biodiversity conservation,” says Thapa. “If Himalayan cliff honeybees go, all the species of Nepal’s national flower, the rhododendron, will follow.”

“Honey hunting is one of the bases for tourism,” says Arjun Gurung, the chair of Marsyangdi rural municipality, adding that the local government is keen to increase its promotion to encourage tourists.

“Honey hunting is practised in a traditional way; we do not want

to disturb the traditional ways and rights of the villagers,” he stresses.

Arjun told The Third Pole the authorities were not aware of the importance of the bees to biodiversity. When asked what conservation efforts are being made by the local authority, he said: “We have not yet seen any need as we have not had any complaints about the loss of nesting sites if there is a need for conservation we will do it.”

Ratna, meanwhile, says that honey harvesting should be stopped and eco-tourism activities developed, such as symbolic hunting performances. He suggests that groups

“
Every year there
is a 70 per
cent decline in
the Himalayan
cliff honeybee
population.”

RATNA THAPA
Senior Scientist, Tribhuvan University

can show how they hunt on real honey hunting cliffs without actually harvesting the honey – generating income from tourism without negatively impacting the bees.

ICIMOD’s Joshi recommends a range of measures to make honey harvesting more sustainable. These include harvesting only a portion of the comb and leaving half of newly built combs undisturbed. He also advises raising awareness of the importance of forests and nesting sites; giving honey hunters ownership and management responsibility of cliffs to incentivise their protection; and ecotourism activities such as bee-watching tours.

How dams impact bees

Overharvesting is not the only threat to the Himalayan giant honeybee. Across the Nepal Himalayas, earth-blasting and the construction of roads and dams is impacting the fragile mountain ecosystem.

In the Nyadi river basin, where the honey hunters from Naiche village live, there are five hydropower projects: three on the Nyadi’s mainstream and two on its tributaries. Two of these are already in operation, while the others are still being built.

Thapa says that one nest needs four to five litres of water per day. The bees also need the sand and minerals carried by the water to stay healthy. Because of this, the nests are normally near water sources. If running water around the nests dries up, the colonies also start to disappear from the area, Thapa’s research has found.

One of the main honey hunting sites near Naiche village is just downstream of the under-construction dam for the 30 MW Nyadi Khola hydropower project, work on which started in 2017. Ganga recalls there used to be 22 nests on the cliffs near the project; fewer than half remain.

He attributes this to disturbance created by the blasting and construction work, as well as the pollution from the vehicles.

Soon, Ganga worries, there may be no more water in the section of the river beneath the nests, downstream of the Nyadi Khola dam and before the outlet of its turbine. “In future when the water goes inside the tunnel making the river dry, the wild bees may find this location unsuitable for making hives,” says Ganga. 📍

This story was published with permission from The Third Pole.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/nepals-honey-hunters-cling-to-traditions-as-bee-numbers-fall/>)

What does true sustainability look like in the hotel industry?

As demand for green accommodation grows, environmentally sustainable practices in hotels are becoming more commonplace — but so is greenwashing. Experts say the idea of luxury hospitality may need to be redefined for the sector to become truly sustainable, writes **Kate Yeo**

In a bid to become more environmentally sustainable, Raffles Hotel Singapore has reimagined its signature drink: the Singapore Sling, a fruity gin-based cocktail dating back to the 1900s.

In 2018, the 5-star ultra luxury hotel partnered with spirits company Proof & Company's ecoSPIRITS programme to transform the drink's life cycle. Using a closed-loop distribution system, they were able to eliminate several thousand kilograms of packaging waste annually. Furthermore, for every 25 Singapore Slings served, a native tree is planted in Kalimantan and Sumatran rainforests.

According to consultancy firm Deloitte's calculations, every glass of Singapore Sling now emits 200 fewer grams of carbon dioxide than before. Raffles Hotel is not the only establishment raising its sustainability game. In 2019, Marriott International, the world's largest hotel chain, phased out single-use plastic



Front view of Raffles Hotel Singapore. Image: Eco-Business.

toiletry bottles in favour of larger pump dispenser bottles. Meanwhile, Hilton committed to reducing food waste by 50 per cent by 2030.

Many of these initiatives are driven by consumer demand for more sustainable accommodation, which has skyrocketed in recent years. According to Booking.com's 2021 Sustainable Travel Report, 81

per cent of travellers said that they want to stay in sustainable accommodation in the upcoming year, a significant jump from 62 per cent in 2016.

Local hospitality and tourism institutions are also putting greater pressure on hotels to decarbonise. In March 2022, the Singapore Hotel Association (SHA) and Singapore

Tourism Board (STB) launched a Hotel Sustainability Roadmap which urged establishments to reduce emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

“There’s just more pressure all around now,” said Eric Ricaurte, founder of hospitality consulting firm Greenview. “While previously we only saw incremental changes like reusing linen towels, hotels are now also paying attention to issues like energy and carbon. We’re seeing sustainability appear on the radars of hotels everywhere.”

But amidst hotels’ greater focus on sustainability, how many of these changes are greenwashing — initiatives designed to mislead guests and present a false environmentally responsible public image?

Greenwashing, or genuine change?

There’s a mix of both, says Tim Williamson, customer director of Responsible Travel, an activist company seeking to design conscious trips. “There is some great work happening, but there’s a lot of PR-driven hot air too,” said Williamson. “For example, while some hotels have set net zero targets, they may ‘hide behind’ carbon offsetting to reach these goals, which is not the same as a real reduction in their emissions.”

According to Ricaurte, another form of greenwashing is when hotels offer an asymmetrical representation of their environmental impact. He pointed to some hotels which may have removed plastic straws, but still use large amounts of plastic in other aspects of their operations.

To identify hotels that genuinely care about sustainability, Ricaurte said guests could consider whether the hotel pays attention to both lower-hanging fruit — like providing plant-based options on their restaurant menus — as well as formal certifications. There is currently a growing list of globally-recognised

sustainability certifications for the hotel sector, including the Green Key eco-label, Green Globe, as well as Booking.com’s recently launched Travel Sustainable Badge. But Williamson says not all certifications are created equally. Less credible schemes may only require hotels to undertake a self-assessment, rather than be evaluated by an independent third party.

“There is also the issue of what is relevant,” said Williamson. “Reducing water consumption may be less of a priority for a hotel in Scotland than for a hotel in a drought-ridden area of southern Spain, but many green certification schemes don’t make this distinction. This means businesses may have a green badge but still be failing to address the challenges most pressing in their local area.” Rather than relying solely on certifications, Williamson instead encouraged consumers to “look behind the labels” and ask for written policies and specific examples.

“What percentage of employees are local, and do they receive a fair wage? How much of the produce is sourced from local suppliers? What are they doing to help protect and restore nature, and how are they cutting food waste? Don’t take all labels at face value,” he said.

“
There is some
great work
happening, but
there’s a lot of
PR-driven hot
air too.”

TIM WILLIAMSON
Customer Director, Responsible Travel

Transparency trade-offs

While green marketing is on the rise, not all hotels have opted to integrate sustainability into their branding. Raffles Hotel Singapore, for example, features little about sustainability on its website.

“We think that sustainability and saving the planet shouldn’t be used as marketing highlights,” explained general manager Christian Westbeld. “They should be something that you really live by. We all have to do the right thing.”

Westbeld says that when the hotel closed its doors for extensive restoration from December 2017 to August 2019, sustainability was high on the agenda. The environmental footprint was taken into consideration in all aspects, from the plumbing systems to kitchen equipment, and even the linen in each guest suite.

“For example, the windows in each suite are now double glazed to better retain cold temperatures, therefore encouraging guests to use air-conditioning for shorter periods of time,” said Westbeld. However, most of this information is not highlighted to travellers on Raffles Hotel’s marketing platforms.

Dr Victor Nian, Chief Executive Officer of Singapore-based think tank Centre for Strategic Energy and Resources, said such an approach eliminates the issue of greenwashing entirely. However, he cautioned that transparency is also very important.

“If a hotel publishes a sustainability report on their website, it’s often a positive sign that they are trying to do something. It also gives you a chance to compare sustainability among different hotels,” he said, adding that such reports are often endorsed by a verified body.

“But if they don’t publish anything, people won’t know what they are doing at all,” he said.

Laura Houldsworth, Asia Pacific managing director at Booking.com, an online travel agency, shared



Double glazed windows in a Raffles Hotel Singapore guest suite. Image: Eco-Business.

similar views: “We think hotels should be encouraged to share their sustainability initiatives. We believe in educating travellers and empowering them with the right knowledge, so they know how to avoid these pitfalls.”

An uphill battle

Westbeld admits it can be difficult to prioritise sustainability as an ultra luxury destination.

“We will never compromise on service standards and guest experience,” he said. “For example, we won’t openly recommend guests not to change sheets. It is a guest’s choice — they can approach us and say they only want to change it every other day. But we don’t compromise on hygiene and comfort.” Hotels also face constraints that they may not be able to immediately address. According to Ricaurte, one of the biggest challenges in reducing emis-

sions is the design of the building itself, since the key moments when those design decisions are made may not have factored in sustainability. This results in the hotel lagging behind on building sustainability standards. Hotels are often also constrained by their location and local energy grid.


“In Singapore, if the electricity grid is mostly powered by fossil fuels, there’s very little hotels can do to decarbonise that,” said Dr Nian.

While there are still ways hotels can reduce their energy consumption, such as improving the air-conditioning efficiency or exploring rooftop solar, Dr Nian said that these measures often have limited impact in driving down absolute emissions. Hotels may also be reluctant to implement these changes due to cost barriers, he added.

Ultimately, as demand for sustainability grows, the notion of luxury

may need to be redefined for travellers and hoteliers alike to meet their sustainability goals, says Responsible Travel’s Williamson.

“Luxury doesn’t have to be all about air-con and all-inclusives. It can also be about bespoke, authentic experiences and great personal service,” he said. “It could be a small, locally-owned hotel with its own vegetable garden and hosts who know the best off-the-beaten-track spots for hiking, food and culture. Or a small ship cruise which really gets you into the nooks and crannies of a place, instead of a colossal liner.”

“High-value, low-impact tourism can benefit local communities and important conservation work too. Everyone wins.” 

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/what-does-true-sustainability-look-like-in-the-hotel-industry/?sw-login=true>)



REEFS DAMAGED BY BLAST FISHING REVITALISED BY 'SPIDERWEBS' IN INDONESIA

A small-scale project in Indonesia is seeing success in efforts to restore coral reefs damaged by blast fishing, write **Agustinus Wijayanto & Warief Djajanto Basorie**, Mongabay.com

Ultra-strong fibres, multi-legged robots, pain relievers — all are human innovations inspired by spiders. Now, conservationists in Indonesia are rehabilitating coral reefs using what's known as the coral spider technique.

The method is a type of reef restoration project involving the installation of man-made “spiderwebs” onto which new corals are grafted. It entails placing small, lightweight rods “made from cast iron that is welded into a hexagonal shape, like a spider web,” Imam Fauzi, head of the National Aquatic Conservation Center (BKKPN) in Kupang, a port city on the island of Timor where one such project is underway, told Mongabay.

Indonesia has one of the most extensive coral reef systems in the world, but more than a third is in poor condition, according to a 2018 study. Much of the damage is due to warming oceans, blast fishing, plastic pollution, and severe storms.

The spider technique was previously deployed in Indonesia under a project backed by food giant Mars in which thousands of “coral spiders” were installed off the islands of Sulawesi and Bali.

At Oesina Beach in Kupang Bay, conservationists are installing spider frames. The six-sided structures have three top beams spanning 54 centimetres (21 inches) each and six 36-cm (14-in) side beams. The frame is latched onto the reef with plastic cable ties.

The practice is low cost, materials are readily available, construction is easy, and getting the material to the rehabilitation location doesn't require great effort, Imam said.

“On average, transplanted coral with this method can grow well if maintenance and cleaning are routinely conducted,” he said.

BKKPN Kupang started using the spider technique in 2019 on the

“
If it evolves well, in three or four years it can become a coral garden allowing for underwater tourism and a source for adopting coral fragments for other locations needing rehabilitation.

FREDIK NGILI
Field Coordinator,
YAPEKA East Nusa Tenggara

islands of Sabu (Sawu) and Raijua, west of Timor. Within its work scope, the centre has done rehabilitation jobs in the provinces of West Nusa Tenggara, South Sulawesi, Maluku and Papua.

Currently, BKKPN Kupang is teaming up with two locally based units of national companies and YAPEKA, a conservation nonprofit, to rehabilitate the coral reefs of Oesina Beach. The damage there is due to blast fishing and poison fishing, Imam said.

The centre has placed 150 spiderweb units covering 150 square meters (about 1,600 square feet) of reef, he said.

YAPEKA began work in Kupang Bay in October 2021 after Tropical Cyclone Seroja hit the area in April that year. The NGO started with 700 finger-long coral fragments secured by 50 spiderweb units covering a 0.2-hectare (0.5-acre) expanse. It has

now expanded to 0.4-0.6 hectares (1-1.5 acres).


YAPEKA has installed 200 spiderweb units in one location in collaboration with PLN, the state-owned electricity company, which operates a coal-fired power plant in the bay area.

“If it evolves well, in three or four years it can become a coral garden allowing for underwater tourism and a source for adopting coral fragments for other locations [needing rehabilitation],” YAPEKA East Nusa Tenggara field coordinator Fredik Ngili told Mongabay.

YAPEKA has also set up an ecotourism information centre on the beach, where tour guides are trained.

The coral garden area can be enlarged beyond Oesina Beach to cover other locations in the waters of Kupang Bay, Fredik said. He emphasised the need for community education on using environmentally friendly fishing gear as a way to preserve healthy coral reefs. There should also be an end to littering in the sea, especially plastic waste, and a campaign to spread the message about the benefits and functions of coral reefs, he added.

Imam agreed, adding that people shouldn't overuse the benefit of coral reefs. He also called for safeguarding the health and quality of the water. He said boats shouldn't drop anchor in coral reef zones and spiderweb units shouldn't be installed on living coral.

Among the beneficiaries of the coral reef rehabilitation efforts are the inhabitants of Lifuleo village by the beach. “Fish development has increased income,” village head Zwingli Say told Mongabay. 

This story was published with permission from Mongabay.com.

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/reefs-damaged-by-blast-fishing-revitalised-by-spiderwebs-in-indonesia/>



EXPLAINER: WHAT IS ECOCIDE?

Activists are calling for ecocide to be criminalised in the International Criminal Court (ICC). Eco-Business' **Kate Yeo** explains what this could mean for Asia.

What is ecocide?

In short, ecocide refers to the mass destruction of ecosystems.

Formally, it is defined as “unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts”. This definition was crafted in June 2021 by an independent expert panel comprising 12 lawyers from around the world, convened by non-profit Stop Ecocide Foundation.

According to the Foundation, some general examples of ecocide include oil spills, deep sea trawling — the practice of dragging heavy nets across the sea floor to catch fish — and tar sands oil extraction.

How is ecocide relevant to the Asia Pacific region?

The history of the term “ecocide” is rooted in the Vietnam War. From 1962 to 1971, United States military forces sprayed over 75 million litres of toxic chemical herbicides — enough to fill 30 Olympic-sized swimming pools — over South Vietnam. Their aim: To destroy forest cover and food sources used by enemy troops. But the chemicals left a devastating trail of cancer, birth defects and barren forests, prompting American biologist Arthur W. Galston to coin the term “ecocide” in the 1970s to protest the mass environmental and social harm that had occurred.

Tarini Mehta, assistant professor of Environmental Law at India’s O.P. Jindal Global University, says South-east Asia has witnessed “some of the worst cases of ecocide”, citing mass deforestation in Indonesia as an example. Activists have also pointed to sand mining in the Mekong Delta, bottom trawling in Sri Lanka, and the destruction of coral reefs in the South China Sea as ongoing acts of environmental destruction that could qualify as ecocide.

Criminalising ecocide

Some countries already have implemented domestic ecocide laws, including Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Vietnam. “Those who, in peace time or war time, commit ... acts of ecocide or destroy the natural environment, shall be sentenced to between 10 years and 20 years of imprisonment, life imprisonment or capital punishment,” states Vietnam’s 1999 Penal Code.

In March this year, the Ukrainian Prosecutor General’s Office launched criminal proceedings of ecocide following Russia’s seizure of two nuclear power plants, citing the threat of a nuclear explosion.

However, domestic enforcement of ecocide laws is limited, with few reports of successful prosecutions since the 1990s. This is why some activists believe an international ecocide law is needed.

Ecocide as an international crime?

There is a growing ground-up movement to criminalise ecocide in the International Criminal Court (ICC), an intergovernmental court recognised by 123 states. At present, the ICC tries individuals for four crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity (like murder and enslave-

ment), and crimes of aggression (unprovoked military attacks).

Activists say that adding ecocide to this list would “profoundly” change the status quo by making clear that environmental destruction is morally unacceptable. Moreover, because the ICC prosecutes individuals as opposed to whole establishments, an international ecocide law will likely be directed at top decision-makers, such as senior officers of corporations. Stop Ecocide says this will have a powerful deterrent effect since no business leader “wants to be seen in the same way as a war criminal”.

If state parties to the Rome Statute — the treaty governing the ICC — agree to an ecocide amendment, they will also have to incorporate it into domestic legislation. The ICC will then be used as a “last resort” when national courts are unable or unwilling to prosecute perpetrators.

However, Southeast Asian nations are glaringly absent from the ICC’s Rome Statute, with only Cambodia and Timor-Leste on the list. This means that states such as Indonesia and Malaysia will not be required to introduce domestic ecocide laws even if ecocide is criminalised in the ICC.

So what’s stopping ecocide from becoming an international crime?

While several states such as Vanuatu have publicly expressed support for criminalising ecocide in the ICC, none have begun the official process to introduce this amendment.

In a number of countries including Cyprus, United Kingdom and Bolivia, parliamentarians have spoken about ecocide or drafted laws, but these are still in the early stages. In Asia, it appears that ecocide is not even on the radar for most states; only Bangladesh has formally discussed making ecocide a domestic crime. A quick keyword search in Singapore’s parliamentary records showed no mention of the term ecocide in Parliament since

“No CEO or financier wants to be seen in the same way as a war criminal. A law of ecocide on the horizon will signal the end of corporate immunity.”

STOP ECOCIDE



Sand mining in the Mekong. Image: PsamatheM / Wikimedia Commons

1955. There is clearly still a long way to go in raising awareness about the concept of ecocide among key decision-makers in the region.

Meanwhile, some academics have highlighted issues with the independent expert panel's definition of ecocide. The current definition attaches criminal liability to an individual's knowledge of serious harm, as opposed to the harmful outcome itself. The panel also wrote that "wanton" here means damage that is "clearly excessive in relation to the social and economic benefits anticipated". In practice though, academics say these factors are highly subjective. Kevin Jon Heller, Professor of International Law and Security at the University of Copenhagen, presented a hypothetical example of the construction of a new coal power plant in Australia. Even if coal's environmental harms are "beyond doubt", new coal projects are still entirely lawful in Australia, and an argument can be made for the economic benefits of the Australian coal industry. So

is the CEO who approved the project guilty of ecocide?

Given the complexity and uncertainties of the IEP's definition, judges could still reasonably acquit the CEO, said Heller. "It would simply not work in practice." Others fear that adding ecocide to the ICC may

diminish the gravity of the four existing crimes. Professor Kai Ambos, chair for criminal law at the University of Göttingen, pointed out that the independent panel "does not justify why serious environmental crimes should actually be equated with the intentional destruction of entire humane groups".

Finally, some have questioned if the ICC is an effective avenue to pursue stronger environmental legislation given past accusations of politicised prosecutions. Moreover, the top three historical emitters globally — United States, China and Russia — are all not party to the ICC.

Given these barriers, it seems like ecocide will not be criminalised on an international scale any time soon. Professor Philippe Sands, one of the members of the independent expert panel, estimates that amending the ICC statute could take up to 50 years. 🟩

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/explainer-what-is-ecocide/>)

Ecocide, as defined by the Independent Expert Panel

"Unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts."

Explainer: COP15, the biggest biodiversity conference in a decade

An updated guide to the intergovernmental negotiations taking place in December 2022 in Montreal, Canada, that have a crucial role to play in halting biodiversity loss and restoring nature, explains **Mike Shanahan**

Biodiversity encompasses the full variety of life – all genes, species and ecosystems – and it is in danger. That means we are too. As this article explains, a major conference in December 2022 could have a big impact on our collective fate by helping to end biodiversity loss and restore nature.

What does COP15 stand for?

COP15 is shorthand for the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In fact, COP15 includes meetings of parties to three international agreements: the CBD and its two subsidiary protocols, namely the Cartagena Protocol on biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing.



An endangered crowned lemur at the Bristol Zoo in the United Kingdom.

Image: Charlie Marshall, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

The CB-what?

The CBD was agreed at the Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992. It has three objectives: the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. Some 195 countries and the European Union are now parties to the CBD. The United States is the only member state of the United Nations that has not ratified the agreement. The CBD's Cartagena Protocol has 173 parties and its Nagoya Protocol has 137.

Why is biodiversity important?

Our fate is inextricably linked to that

of the rest of nature. In 2019, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) made this clear when it warned that nature loss is accelerating at an unprecedented rate, with grave impacts for human wellbeing, and that a million species face extinction.

When will COP15 take place – and where?

COP15 was meant to take place in the Chinese city of Kunming in October 2020, but it was delayed four times because the Covid-19 pandemic prevented in-person meetings. To maintain momentum, China officially opened COP15 in Kunming

in October 2021, a largely online event at which parties to the CBD adopted the non-binding Kunming Declaration.

With Covid-19 restrictions still in place in China, the CBD Secretariat announced in June 2022 that the main part of the COP15 meeting would take place in Montreal, Canada, on 5–17 December 2022. China will remain the official President of the meeting.

What is the intended outcome of COP15?

Among other things, a new plan to save life on Earth. COP15 is meant to adopt something currently being called the “Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”. It will outline what countries need to do, individually and collectively, in the next decade and beyond, to set humanity on course for achieving the CBD’s overall vision of “living in harmony with nature” by 2050.

Haven’t we been here before?

Sadly, yes. In 2002, parties to the CBD committed “to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss”. They failed. So in 2010 they met in Japan and agreed on a new plan, which included the 20 Aichi Targets. But not one of these targets was fully met by the 2020 deadline. With each failure, the task grows ever harder.

What’s different this time?

The post-2020 framework’s goals will be more “outcome-oriented” than before, with clearly articulated and time-bound aims underpinned by targeted actions to address the drivers of biodiversity loss.

How is the plan shaping up?

A CBD working group co-chaired by representatives of Canada and Uganda is developing the text of the post-2020 framework for CBD parties to finalise and agree at COP15. The latest version has four long-

term goals for 2050 and 22 targets to achieve by 2030.

The four goals focus respectively on conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity, fair benefit-sharing, and adequate means of implementation – meaning money, as well as technical capacities. The targets cover a wide range of topics, from expanding protected areas and reducing pollution to ensuring that food production is sustainable and phasing out billions of dollars of public subsidies that harm nature.

But already two years late, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is still far from complete. Square brackets surround much of the text, meaning that parties have not agreed on the wording or whether even to include the subject. The working group’s fourth meeting in Nairobi in June 2022 was meant to be its last. But it made so little progress that an extra meeting will take place on 3–5 December in Montreal, just before COP15.

Does the CBD need an apex target (like the Paris Agreement’s 1.5C)?

Scientists, nongovernmental organisations and parties to the CBD are split about whether or not to have a top-level target to be achieved by 2030, such as an overall biodiversity status or global rate of extinction. Some believe it would help. Others say it would distract from the work of implementing the post-2020 framework and that it is impossible to capture the complexity of ecosystems and species with a single metric.

Who leads the talks and why is this significant?

China holds the rotating Presidency of the Conference of Parties to the CBD. Its minister of ecology and environment, Huang Runqiu, will preside over the talks in Montreal. It is the first time China has overseen major intergovernmental negotiations on the environment. This

provides China with an opportunity to showcase its efforts to protect biodiversity both at home, through its vision of “ecological civilisation” and use of “ecological redlining”, and abroad, through greening its Belt and Road Initiative. But COP15 also presents a significant challenge to China. It will need to work hard and creatively to bring other nations together and achieve consensus on an ambitious agreement.

Which other countries will be key to the talks?

Costa Rica and France co-chair the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which includes more than 100 countries that support the goal of protecting 30 per cent of land and ocean by 2030. Separately, leaders of 93 countries and the European Union have endorsed the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature, committing to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.

The members of these alliances come from all world regions and include rich and developing countries. But there are some notable absences, including Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa. These countries hold a large share of the world’s biodiversity, so they are influential players in the COP15 talks. Among other things, they will want to see firm commitments of finance from industrialised countries before they consider agreeing to other proposals.

What sticking points can we expect?

Much of COP15 will focus on the final content of targets in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In these negotiations, nothing will be agreed until everything is agreed. While many countries want to include the target of protecting 30 per cent of the planet, others will seek changes in other parts of the framework before agreeing to that.

Argentina and Brazil, for example, are likely to resist targets

that restrict agriculture. And while the EU strongly supports a target on pesticides, other parties are less interested. The overall outcome of COP15 will therefore depend on how parties trade off demands in some areas of the framework against concessions in others.

One of the most significant topics the COP15 negotiators must grapple with concerns digitally stored information on genetic sequences. Companies could profit from such information, such as by developing new medicines without needing physical access to the species in question.

This means they could avoid having to comply with CBD rules on sharing with the country of origin the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. While some parties say digital sequence information is beyond the remit of the CBD's Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing, others say a failure to address this issue could render the protocol useless.

As mentioned above, a major sticking point will be about “resource mobilisation”; in other words, how to fund activities to implement the new framework and, specifically, how much richer countries will provide to help poorer ones to conserve their biodiversity.

Brazil and 22 other countries have called for the rich world to provide at least US\$100 billion a year until 2030. That figure is in the latest draft of the post-2020 framework, but like much of the rest of the text, it remains up for debate in Montreal in December 2022. The big question is, will countries build on the draft and raise ambition or water down what is there?

Who will attend COP15?

Thousands of delegates, including representatives of all 196 parties to the CBD, will be there. The event is not a summit, so few, if any, heads of state are likely to attend. The “high-level” segment on 13–15 December

will instead attract environment ministers, though not all countries will send theirs.

The remainder of COP15 will involve negotiating decisions that all parties can agree to by the conference's end. Civil society groups, indigenous peoples, scientists, businesspeople and others will participate as observers and through side events. Hundreds of journalists will cover the talks.

What do the talks mean for endangered species?

COP negotiations rarely mention individual species, but there is a proposed goal of reducing extinctions and increasing population sizes. Decisions made at COP15 will therefore have a bearing on the fates of everything from pangolins and jaguars to coral reefs and monkey puzzle trees – and our own species too.

Can the UN climate change talks influence COP15?


Yes. There is a growing overlap between the agendas of the UN treaties on climate change and biodiversity. This reflects an increasing understanding of the linkages between the two issues and the need for integrated solutions.

Just two weeks before COP15, Egypt will host COP27, the next session of negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. What happens in Egypt will influence the negotiations in Montreal, for better or worse. A positive signal for COP15 is that Egypt has designated one day in its COP27 host agenda – 16 November – for discussions focused on biodiversity.

Will COP15 succeed?

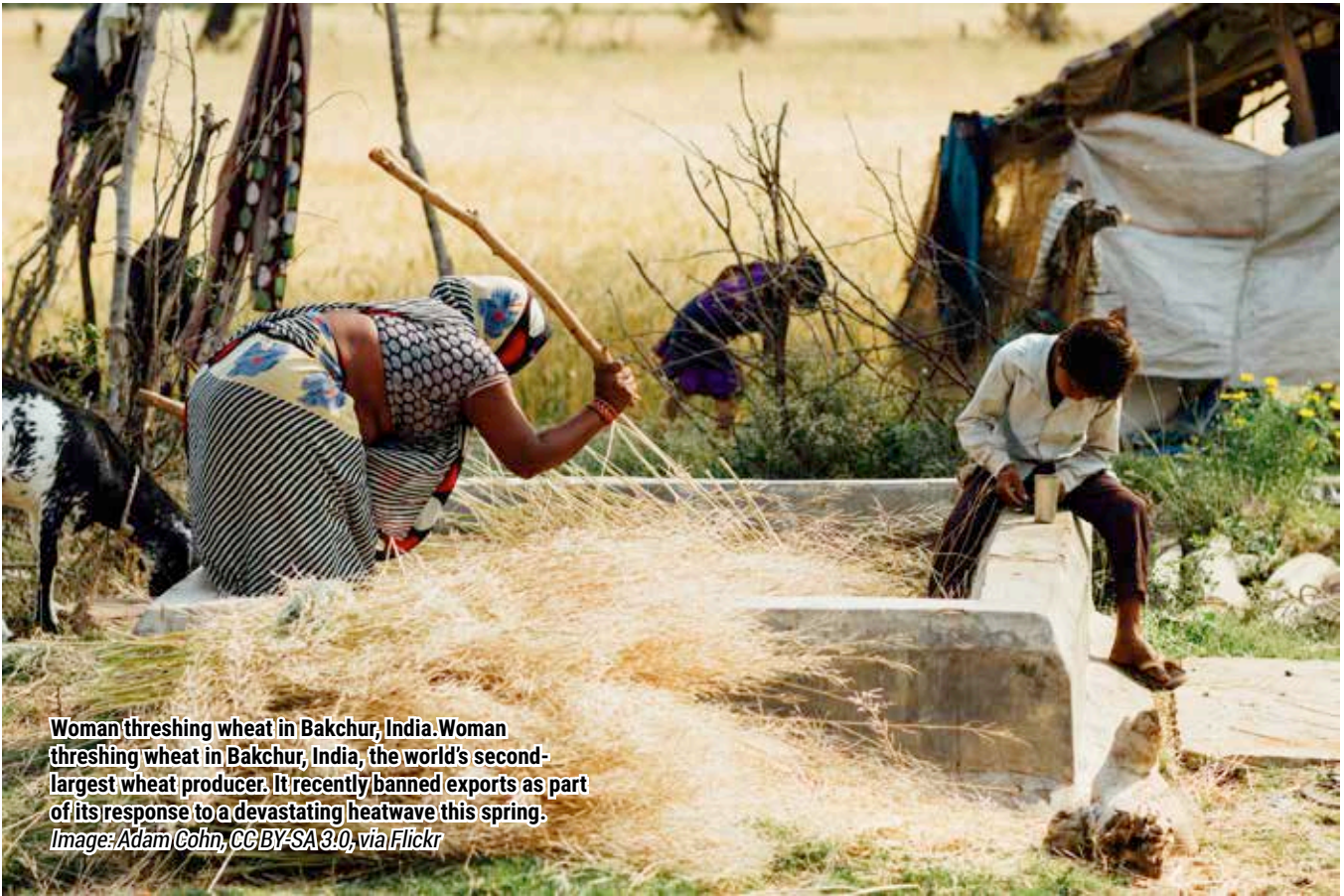
There have been high hopes that COP15 would impel countries, businesses and citizens to act on biodiversity loss in the same way that the Paris Agreement has increased action on climate change. But “the process has reached a crisis point” according to the Wildlife Conservation Society, Greenpeace, Avaaz, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and other organisations.

In June, they wrote an open letter to the UN secretary-general, António Guterres, and the heads of state of parties to the CBD, decrying “a notable absence of the high-level political engagement, will and leadership to drive through compromise and to guide and inspire the commitments that are required”. The letter calls for Guterres and the governments of Canada and China to convene world leaders before COP15 to rectify the situation.

But with COP15 finally in sight after two years of delays, there is very little time left for political breakthroughs – and much of the world's attention is elsewhere. The public pressure and media coverage that could tip the balance are also lacking. In this respect, the decision to hold COP15 at the same time as the 2022 FIFA World Cup may turn out to be an own goal. 

This article was originally published on China Dialogue under a Creative Commons licence. (Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/explainer-cop15-the-biggest-biodiversity-conference-in-a-decade/>)

There have been high hopes that COP15 would impel countries, businesses and citizens to act on biodiversity loss in the same way that the Paris Agreement has increased action on climate change.



Woman threshing wheat in Bakchur, India. Woman threshing wheat in Bakchur, India, the world's second-largest wheat producer. It recently banned exports as part of its response to a devastating heatwave this spring. Image: Adam Cohn, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr

CLIMATE FORENSICS IS FAST AND ACCURATE. **NOW WHAT?**

Knowing the precise cause of weather disasters is a better way to explain worsening floods, droughts and heatwaves than simply blaming climate change, experts say. Such data feeds into a heated debate on who is liable for the risks, write **Liang Lei**

The guilty verdict came fast. Ten days after a record 40 degrees Celsius heatwave swept over London, researchers concluded that the chance of such high temperatures in a region known for dull, drizzly weather was made 10 times higher by man-made global warming.

The event was also either two or four degrees Celsius hotter because of climate change, depending on whether statistical models or historical records were the basis of comparison, according to climate science group World Weather Attribution.

The group has been analysing extreme weather events since 2014. The mid-year hot spell in India and Pakistan was 30 times more likely because of global warming, it found. The probability of a 2018 drought in South Africa was tripled by man-made emissions. Last year's North America heatwave was deemed "virtually impossible" without human influence. Scientists have long been advocating a nuanced understanding of the effects of climate change, in response to both a concerned public facing increasingly bad weather events, and climate deniers scoffing that bouts of snowstorms rubbish greenhouse effect theory.

"No events are "caused by climate change" or global warming, but all events have a contribution. Moreover, a small shift in the mean [temperature] can still lead to very large percentage changes in extremes," wrote Dr Kevin Trenberth, lead author of major climate international change reports between 1995 and 2007, a decade ago.

But as climate science improved, scientists have been able to point the finger of blame with more confidence at climate change, where deserving, through the kind of simulations and studies experts at World Weather Attribution conduct.

Results from such studies go beyond the scientific realm and

could influence key decisions in policymaking and the corporate world, experts say.

Accountability

A more precise understanding of how global warming weighs on weather extremes could feed into calls by developing countries for the richer world to pay for their historical emissions, in a decades-long debate known as "loss and damage", according to Winston Chow, associate professor at the College of Integrative Studies, Singapore Management University.

"It is front and centre. The extreme weather that we have seen and will continue to see is going to make this conversation much more heated and much more topical for this coming Conference of Parties and the next one in Dubai," Chow said, referring to the annual global climate change conferences that have produced landmark pacts such as the Paris Agreement.

Climate negotiators from many developing countries and island states have been working to include stronger loss and damage negotiations into the upcoming conference in November, to the objection of developed countries.

Recent events, such as the South Asia heatwaves this year, have contributed to the debate.

"In India and Pakistan, because of the extreme heat, there was a reduction in crop yield. Those are losses due to climate change and how the losses could be compensated is one of the big debates that we are having right now," said Sandeep Chamling Rai, senior advisor for global climate adaptation policy at environmental group WWF International.

But weather attribution data will probably not turn the tables fast. Rai conceded that the technical aspects of climate risks are already well-understood by climate negotiators, and the conversation has taken a turn towards legalities and

politics. Alain Mahieu, Asia Pacific sustainability solutions manager at consulting firm Engie Impact, said that world leaders are moving from focusing on past emitters to "forward-looking solutions".

But extreme weather attribution could move the needle in the corporate world.

While businesses look more at projections of future climate risks than the specific causes of extreme events already past, firms could still be affected by how such events and their climate fingerprint swing investor and policymaker sentiment, Mahieu said.

"We are seeing more governments and citizens around the world mobilising to get businesses that are massive emitters to take action. For those heavy emitters not taking action, their social licence to operate may begin to be questioned," he added.

There are already precedents. In 2019, environmental group Milieudefensie sued petrochemicals giant Shell for violating a "duty of care" under Dutch law by not taking adequate action to reduce its contributions to climate change.

The Hague District Court sided with Milieudefensie in calling for Shell to cut carbon emissions by 45 per cent by 2030, citing how studies have shown the increase in frequency and severity of weather disasters due to climate change. Shell said it would appeal the ruling, and has since shifted its headquarters out of the Netherlands into the United Kingdom.

"With more intense climate events happening, stakeholders are likely going to be a lot more critical when scrutinising your decarbonisation effort," Mahieu said, adding that such "transition risks", which also include changes in commodity prices and new technologies, could be "significantly higher" than direct climate impacts in the next decade.

Meanwhile, the insurance industry, which has been receiving

ever larger bills from extreme weather events, is also looking at ways to price its services accurately.

A survey by US-based credit rating agency S&P Global Ratings last year found that only a third of reinsurers, which are huge corporations that finance insurance firms, could say they had a specific portion of their pricing allocated for climate change, with such charges topping off at 10 per cent of the bill, a fraction that “does not appear to be a significant determinant of market pricing”, it said.

“From a reinsurance perspective, and from the private sector, how can we make the case that things that usually were “acts of God” within the realms of natural variability are no longer natural?” said Chow.

“The fine tuning of how impacts can be understood by different stakeholders, such as the finance sector, might get more mileage than it has now,” Chow said. Last year, the World Weather Attribution group found that 40 per cent of the US\$10 billion of insured losses from Typhoon Hagibis, which struck Japan in 2019, could be attributed to climate change.

Spurring action

“As extreme weather events become more frequent, the attribution framework is evolving from an academic exercise to an operational and advisory tool,” said Dr Mariam Zachariah, a research associate at the Grantham Institute for Climate Change, Imperial College London.

The World Weather Attribution initiative, which the Grantham Institute is part of, has been using its studies to call for more action.

“Heatwaves are almost like invisible disasters, invisible risk,” said associate professor Emmanuel Raju from the University of Copenhagen’s Centre for Disaster Research, who is a co-author of the World Weather Attribution report on the UK heatwave.

“It’s less spoken about, it’s less acted upon,” Raju said, during a press briefing on the paper, which also pointed out unequal access in London to shade and water, as well as existing health inequalities within ethnic minority groups.

Scientists from the World Weather Attribution group have also called out instances where climate change was erroneously blamed for disasters, such as the ongoing drought and food crisis in Madagascar, which researchers said was made worse by existing issues with transport infrastructure, poverty and Covid-19.

“It can be appealing for politicians to blame climate change alone

that human-induced climate change is leading to devastating results by scientifically demonstrating the frequency of extreme weather events,” Li said.

The value of the message does not go away even as extreme weather becomes more common, she said, as it takes time for the public to absorb the knowledge.

“As far as I’m concerned, even if extreme weather events become a new norm, it is still of great importance to keep emphasising the message,” she said.

Rai said that using climate attribution as a communications tool may be more effective in places where the impacts are already keenly felt,

Scientists from the World Weather Attribution group have also called out instances where climate change was erroneously blamed for disasters, such as the ongoing drought and food crisis in Madagascar, which researchers said was made worse by existing issues with transport infrastructure, poverty and Covid-19.

for domestic disasters,” World Weather Attribution co-founder Friederike Otto had written in a commentary in non-profit publication Knowable Magazine.

“But there is also local responsibility, everywhere, for good governance, functioning infrastructure and warning systems,” she added.

Extreme weather attribution plays a key role in getting the general public on board with climate action too, according to Li Zhao, a senior researcher at environmental group Greenpeace East Asia.

“We quote extreme weather attribution to help people understand

compared to places like Singapore where the risks are relatively controlled and mild.

But with the near-certainty of climate change’s role in several phenomenon worldwide, from heatwaves to glacial lake floods in Nepal, Rai has a firm message to policymakers: “Do you want science to prove things when they happen, or do you want to act now, so that those climate impacts will be much lower?” 🌱

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/climate-forensics-is-fast-and-accurate-now-what/>)

Make the Right Move

ABC

Ready to Lease Office Spaces



ABC

Assotech Business Cresterra
Sector - 135, Expressway, Noida

1

Integrated Intelligent IT Park Complex

2

1.8 Million SQFT Mixed Use Development

3

LEED Gold Certified Green Building Complex

4

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

5

70% leased out of Phase - I



SERVICED APARTMENTS
Phase - I



OFFICE SPACES



RETAIL
Phase - I


ASSOTECH
www.assotech.in

Assotech Realty Pvt. Ltd.
46, First Floor, Janpath, New Delhi - 110001
Ph: +91 - 8010821111
info@assotech.in

Our Leasing Partners
CBRE

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

SAVE LIVES GIVE SMILES

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

Cleft treatment can change this. Forever.

OUR LEGACY & REACH:



640,000+
cleft surgeries
since 2000



150+
partner
hospitals



30+
states
and UTs



300+
cleft medical
professionals

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



Let your CSR Program transform lives and create lasting impact.

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

Contact us:

Email ID: csrindia@smiletrain.org

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



National Cleft Helpline – 1800 103 8301