

# CSR TODAY

RNI NO. MAHENG/2013/48866 ■ VOLUME 10 ■ ISSUE 02 ■ SEPTEMBER 2022 ■ PRICE ₹100 ■ TOTAL PAGES: 52

## INDIA BARES NEW CLIMATE GOALS

### AMID COAL DEPENDENCY WOES

The Indian cabinet approved India's updated Nationally Determined Contributions in line with the commitments under the Paris Agreement and the announcements made at the Glasgow COP26 Summit

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Life on the river islands  
of Bangladesh

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# Save the oceans



**Rajesh Tiwari**  
Publisher  
[rt@iccsr.org](mailto:rt@iccsr.org)

**MARPOL 73/78 is the most important international instrument covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. In 1997, a Protocol addressing prevention of air pollution from ships was adopted and entered into force on 19 May 2005.**

**“M**ARPOL at 50 – Our commitment goes on” – has been selected as the upcoming theme for the International Maritime Organization's 2023 World Maritime Theme, which will culminate in a World Maritime Day celebration on 28 September, next year.

The theme reflects the organization's long history of protecting the environment from the impact of shipping via a robust regulatory framework and emphasizes its ongoing commitment to this important work.

The theme spotlights the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), which covers prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes.

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim said: “A lot has changed in shipping in the 50 years since the MARPOL Convention was adopted on 2 November 1973, and IMO's commitment to protecting and preserving the marine environment has remained unwavering. The World Maritime Theme for 2023 will allow us to celebrate this legacy, while also underscoring our dedication to building on the existing foundations as we move towards a brighter future together.”

“Our work to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions is critical, and – given the urgency of the climate crisis – we must act now to strengthen our ambitions on this matter. We must also tackle other issues including protecting biodiversity, biofouling, the transfer of invasive species, and plastic and noise pollution. Protecting the marine environment requires shared action and I look forward to what the next 50 years will bring,” he added.

The theme, which promotes discussions on the next phase of IMO's work to further protect the planet and the oceans, is also linked to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These include affordable and clean energy (SDG 7); industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9); climate action and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine

resources (SDGs 13 and 14); and the importance of partnerships and implementation to achieve these goals (SDG 17).

The IMO Council, meeting for its 127th session, endorsed the theme following a proposal by IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim.


## History of the Convention

The Torrey Canyon oil spill in 1967, the largest oil disaster at the time, was one of the key moments that led to the development of the MARPOL Convention. The 1970s saw increased global awareness of the need to protect the marine environment from all sources of pollution, subsequently resulting in the adoption of the MARPOL Convention and the 1978 MARPOL Protocol in 1973 and 1978, respectively. The combined instrument entered into force on 2 October 1983.

MARPOL 73/78 is the most important international instrument covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. In 1997, a Protocol addressing prevention of air pollution from ships was adopted and entered into force on 19 May 2005.

## Evolution of MARPOL

Today, MARPOL covers pollution of the sea by oil, noxious liquid substances in bulk, harmful substances in packaged form, sewage from ships and garbage from ships, air pollution from ships, and regulation of energy efficiency. It also allows for the adoption of special areas with even stricter controls on operational discharges.

The Convention has evolved through the years. Some highlights include the requirements for oil/water separators on ships, phasing out of single hull oil tankers in 2010, the establishment of several special areas including the Antarctic area, the introduction of the mandatory IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) in all MARPOL annexes, the introduction of the IMO 2020 global sulphur limit, and the adoption of technical and operational measures to enhance the energy efficiency of ships. 

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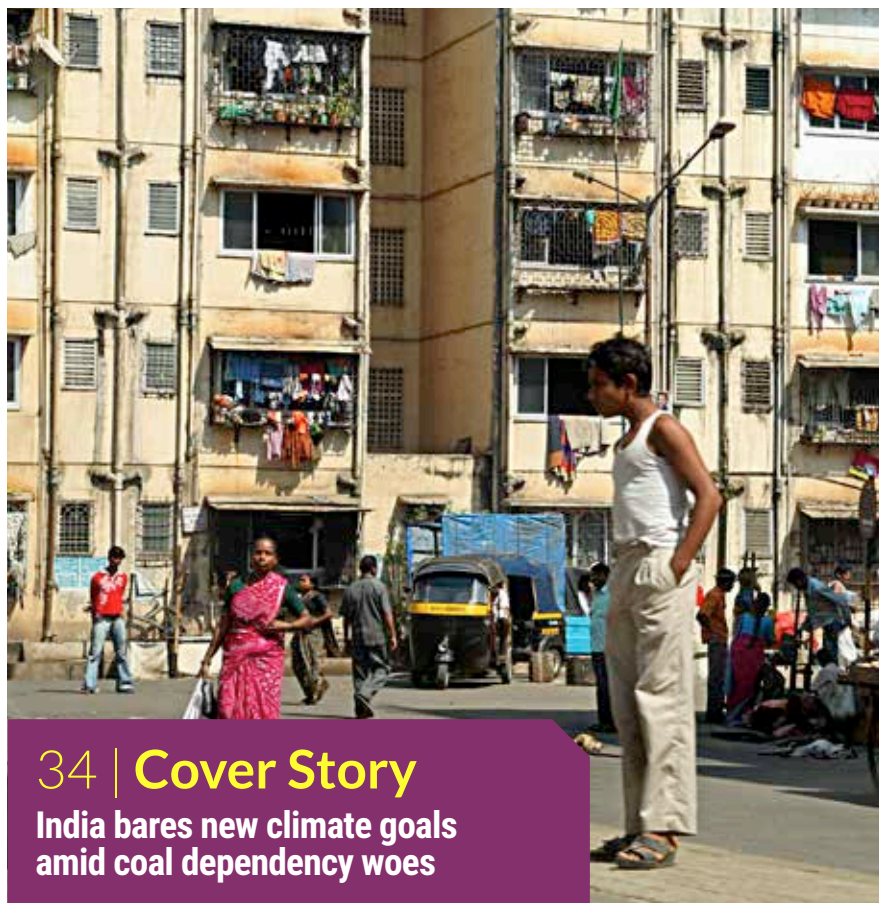
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# CSR NEWS

## HCL Technologies wins the National CSR Award for its urban poverty alleviation program



**H**CL Technologies (HCL), a leading global technology company, has won the prestigious National CSR Award 2020 instituted by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

The award recognizes the path-breaking work by the HCL Foundation, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm of HCL Technologies, toward equitable and sustainable development of communities living below the poverty line in urban slums.

Slum area development has been identified as a national priority by the Government of India. HCL Foundation's flagship program, HCL Uday, provides comprehensive support to underprivileged people, including migrant workers and working children, living in urban slums and on the streets. It provides

access to education for children, skill development for gainful employment, primary healthcare and sanitation services, clean water sources and more to enable equitable development of these communities. So far, the program has

**With an investment of over INR 900 crores to date, the HCL Foundation has created one of the largest CSR footprints in India and impacted over 3.7 million people with multiple interventions across urban and rural areas.**

impacted over 560,000 recipients across 11 Indian cities.

"HCL Technologies is deeply committed to serving local communities and contributing to inclusive growth and social development across the geographies we operate in. With an investment of over INR 900 crores to date, the HCL Foundation has created one of the largest CSR footprints in India and impacted over 3.7 million people with multiple interventions across urban and rural areas. We thank the Government of India for this recognition. It is a big source of encouragement for us to double down on our efforts to continue transforming communities and build an equitable and sustainable planet." said C Vijayakumar, CEO & Managing Director, HCL Technologies.

Started in 2012 as a volunteer-driven initiative, HCL Uday was structured and formally launched in 2016. It was conceptualized as a continuous ongoing program with various interventions and initiatives running on-ground. HCL Foundation's belief in the power of communities to lift themselves out of poverty and lead a life of dignity and self-respect lies at the heart of HCL Uday. Echoed across all interventions under Uday, this spirit sets the community on the path of resilience and success. HCL employee engagement and participation is a key lever that spans all programs.

# SBI Foundation Rolls out its 10th Batch of SBI Youth for India Fellows

**S**BI Youth for India is a pioneering rural development fellowship program initiated by SBI in 2011 and managed by the SBI Foundation. The fellowship has provided a platform for over 500+ aspiring change agents to explore the social sector, with over 70% of them pursuing meaningful careers in the development space upon completing the 13-month fellowship program.

The inaugural ceremony for the August Cohort of the 10th Batch of SBI Youth for India Fellows was

Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement, a public policy think tank, and Member-HR Capacity Building Commission (CBC), Govt. of India, was the special guest of the event. He is also the founder of the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement, a renowned development organization. He firmly believes that inspiring youth leadership can rebuild a resurgent India.

Sanjay Prakash, Managing Director & CEO, SBI Foundation, based on his experience of leadership roles and

service in rural areas, advised the aspiring fellows that “Ideas will overwhelm you initially, but please absorb and internalize every drop of insight as it will make you better future leaders.”

M. P. Vasimalai,

Founder and Executive Director of DHAN Foundation, in his address, called the orientation program an ‘immersion’ and the fellowship a ‘development adventure’. He said, “A great fellowship is one where you are able to change your attitude, skills, and knowledge.” He asked Fellows to focus on four development basics - to facilitate community choices, to develop the quality of life by finding the purpose, identity, and lifestyle, and to understand the responsibilities and accept changes.

Lalit Mohan, President & COO, SBI Foundation, formally welcomed the new batch of fellows with his encouraging remarks and emphasized that “This 13-month journey is a unique opportunity given to you to work on the burning issues of our country and bring a positive impact.”



SBI Youth for India Fellowship 2022-23 Batch flags off

Co-hosted by DHAN Foundation on 8th August 2022 at The DHAN Academy, Madurai, Tamil Nadu. The Orientation Program is a 10-day workshop for familiarizing the new cohort with the development sector, rural work culture and preparing them for the fellowship journey. The cohort gets introduced to the fellowship, understands rural India and its complexities through simulation experiences like the Naranpur Express - devised by IRMA, and learns from experts how to work and live with rural communities.

Dinesh Khara, Chairman, SBI, welcomed the 10th batch of SBI Youth for India Fellows through a video message and conveyed his good wishes to them for a successful fellowship journey. Dr. Ramaswami Balasubramaniam, Founder of

## KITKAT launches “Breaks for Good”, creates Break Zones made with recycled plastic packaging

**K**ITKAT has launched a unique initiative ‘Breaks for Good’. KITKAT has installed benches made from recycled plastic packaging across popular youth hangouts & colleges in various cities pan-India. These ‘Break Zone’ benches have been created in collaboration with Ricron Panels, one of India’s leading innovative plastic waste recycling company and one of the winners of the Global Nestlé Creating Shared Value Prize. Description automatically generated Speaking about the initiative, Rupali Rattan, Head - Confectionery Business, Nestlé India said “We wanted to bring alive the brand belief of KITKAT of breaks are good for you into our sustainability initiatives as well. By placing recycled break zones across youth hangouts, we want to communicate to the youth that these ‘break zones’ not only serve as a break for them, but for the environment too. This initiative is the first step in our commitment and journey towards sustainability and we intend to keep having more conversations & actions around it.”

Commenting on this initiative, Rahul Chaudhary, Director, Ricron Panels said “As a leader in innovative plastic waste recycling, we are proud to be associated with KITKAT and use our expertise in making these recycled plastic benches. This collaboration shows how post-consumer plastic waste can be part of the circular economy when stakeholders across the entire value chain work together.”

# Chairperson J&K Pollution Control Committee flags off On Wheels E-waste collection van with launch of awareness drive on E-waste in all districts of J&K

In continuation to the initiatives undertaken by J&K PCC to create doorstep awareness on E-waste in all districts of J&K, Dr. Neelu Gera, Chairperson, J&K Pollution Control Committee flagged off On Wheels E-waste Collection Centre (E-waste Mobile Collection Van) and launched doorstep awareness drive in collaboration with PRO Saahas Zero Waste and their partners Xiaomi India, LG India, EPSON India, Namo Ewaste Management, Red FM, MIER College of Education and ELFA International. The event was graced by K. Ramesh Kumar, Member Secretary, J&K Pollution Control, Sat Paul, Regional Director, JKPCC, Jammu, J.N. Sharma, EE, JKPCC, Neelu Sharma, PSO, JKPCC, Dr. Yashpaul Salgotra, Nodal Officer E-waste, JKPCC, Jammu, Smt. Anuradha, all Divisional Officers / Scientists, JKPCC among other senior officers of the Committee, to create awareness amongst consumers regarding E-waste, which is one of the most serious and fast emerging environmental issues. The awareness cum collection campaign shall be carried out in various districts of Jammu

and Kashmir in collaboration with Saahas Zero Waste under Producer Responsibility till January, 2023.

Chairperson, JKPCC appreciated the innovative initiative by the officials of PCC, PRO Saahas Zero Waste and its partners to conduct the awareness drive in the city. She highlighted the fact that India has emerged as the 3rd largest contributor of E-waste generated across the globe, with 6% contribution of total e-waste generation, thereby, making it the most serious cause of concern from environmental point of view. She also highlighted that the lack of proper collection mechanism and unscientific disposal is a major cause of environmental and health hazards triggered by e-waste & plastic waste.

K. Ramesh Kumar, Member Secretary, J&K Pollution Control Committee, noted that electronic and electrical items such as computers, televisions, mobile phones etc. are being discarded swiftly post their life completion and contribute to a huge volume of e-waste. He further mentioned that consumers should

play a responsible role in ensuring safe collection and disposal of all types of electronic and plastic waste. This in turn ensures scientific management of these resources, which if disposed otherwise can cause an irreversible damage to the environment. He requested general public to co-operate in making this campaign a success and ensure safe channelization of E-waste.

Commenting on the launch of the drive, Muralikrishnan B, President, Xiaomi India, said, "As India's No 1 Smartphone and Smart TV brand, our focus is not only on responsible recycling, but also educating, spreading awareness and building preference towards e-waste management amongst consumers. JKPCC's initiative 'On Wheels E-waste Collection Centre' is an important step towards building a sustainable and future ready tomorrow. We take immense pride in being a part of this e-waste drive in partnership with Saahas Zero waste. We will continue to encourage our consumers to participate and contribute towards greener and cleaner tomorrow."

## CRISIL bags National CSR Award for financial capability building and environment conservation

CRISIL Ltd has bagged the prestigious National Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Award, 2020 in the category 'Corporate Awards for Excellence in CSR' for financial capability building and environment conservation.

This is the second time in a row that CRISIL has received the accolade, after winning the 'CSR in Challenging

Circumstances, North-East' award for its flagship programme Mein Pragati in Assam, which was conferred by the Hon'ble President of India in 2019. The latest award once again recognises the tremendous work done by CRISIL Foundation, the CSR arm of CRISIL Ltd.

Says Amish Mehta, Managing Director & CEO, CRISIL Ltd, "We have focused on doing impactful work by

building the financial capabilities of rural women, vulnerable communities, and by conserving the environment. This has delivered high social returns for stakeholders via empowered and strengthened communities. The award is a testament to conscientious on-ground efforts, and a recognition of the highly committed and energetic team behind it."



# HCL Foundation and NOIDA Authority Unveil India's first 20-foot Tall Sculpture of Mahatma Gandhi Made Out of Plastic Waste

**H**CL Foundation, under its flagship program Clean NOIDA along with NOIDA Authority, today unveiled India's first sculpture of Mahatma Gandhi made from 1000 kg of plastic waste. Inaugurated at Sector 137 in Noida, the life-sized statue of 'Marching Bapu' demonstrated a concept of waste circularity (Reduce, Recycle and Reuse) and depicts Swachh Bharat's mission of 'Ek Kadam Swachhta Ki Aur'. It was inaugurated by Dr. Mahesh Sharma, MP Gautam Buddh Nagar in the presence of Tejpal Nagar, MLA Dadri; Pankaj Singh, MLA Noida; Ritu Maheshwari, CEO of Noida Authority; Dr. Nidhi Pundhir, Vice President & Director of HCL Foundation; and Alok Varma, Project Director of Clean Noida program.



The sculpture was made by an award-winning artist, Mr. Sandeep Panwar who took approximately 80 days to complete the same. It is 20 feet tall, six feet wide, six feet long and weighs 1150 kgs. It was made using the plastic waste collected in the NOIDA city. Collected plastic waste was melted, cast and molded into this spectacular art piece.

Clean NOIDA aims to sensitize the residents of NOIDA about the importance of waste management, including proper disposal and segregation of waste. NOIDA's position in GoI's nationwide cleanliness ranking (Swachh Survekshan) has improved from 354 in 2018 to 4 in 2021 (1-10 lakh population category). Significantly, it is currently India's cleanest medium city. This was achieved through the combined efforts of the NOIDA Authority and Clean NOIDA undertaken over the last three years. Together we have taken up several campaigns for waste management with RWAs and urban villages and drove community engagement efforts and technology implementation initiatives.

## Generation India receives the 'NGO of the Year' award at the 5th Edition of Corporate Social Responsibility Summit & Awards 2022

**G**eneration India, a pioneer non-profit organisation that trains and places people of all ages into life-changing jobs, has achieved the 'NGO of the Year' award in the 5th Edition of Corporate Social Responsibility Summit & Awards 2022. Sharing his views on the milestone, Arunesh Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Generation India, said, "Generation India is pleased to receive the best NGO award and indeed humbled by this honour. I dedicate this award to our hard-working and passionate team, our partners and our learners for their persevered support and trust in our work. Such a respectful recognition undoubtedly heightens our motivation and gives us the added courage to march forward with our mission of improving employment outcomes globally."

Generation launched less than eight years ago, and in that time has scaled rapidly to meet the challenges of global unemployment — challenges that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. To date, Generation has more than 60,000 graduates across 16 countries. Within 3 months of program completion, 83% of graduates are placed in jobs and they see a 3-4x income increase over what they were making prior to Generation. We've worked with more than 8,500 employers, and 65% of graduates over the past 12 months have been hired by repeat employer partners. And Generation's results are durable — two to five years after the program, 70% of alumni continue to meet daily financial needs, ~40% are saving for the future, and 81% are confident about their ability to achieve their professional goals. Generation India recently launched Project AMBER in partnership with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) to drive higher quality skilling, improved employment, and retention outcomes.



# Honda India Foundation in association with Government of Haryana inaugurates its first Institute of Driving Training and Research (IDTR)

**T**aking a giant leap in its endeavour to build a collision free society and committing to carbon neutrality, Honda India Foundation (HIF) in association with the Government of Haryana today inaugurated Institute of Driving Training and Research (IDTR) and a Community Park in Karnal, Haryana.

The Institute of Driving Training and Research (IDTR) and Community Park were inaugurated by Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar, Moolchand Sharma, Transport Minister, Atsushi Ogata, Chairman, Honda India Foundation in the august presence of Vinay Dhingra, Trustee, Honda India Foundation, Katsuyuki Ozawa, Trustee, Honda India Foundation, V. Sridhar (CSR Committee Member, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India) along with other dignitaries from Government of Haryana & Trustees from Honda India Foundation.

Speaking on HMSI's commitment towards sensitizing India on road safety and focussing on carbon neutrality, Ogata, said, "Road Safety & Environment continue to remain key pillars in our long-term mission of becoming a 'Company that Society wants to Exist'. Today, the inauguration of this Driving Training & Research Institute in Karnal marks yet another step towards transforming citizens into responsible drivers & riders. Furthermore, as a responsible corporate, we also remain committed towards reducing the carbon footprint. With the inauguration of Karnal's Community Park, we aim to significantly reduce our CO2 emissions and build a greener future with blue skies for



our children. I would like to thank the Government of Haryana for associating with us and supporting us in inching a step closer towards the achievement of our global 2050 vision of zero traffic collision fatalities and carbon neutrality."

Located near New Bus Stand, Indri road, Baldi by-pass, Karnal and spread across a vast land of 9.25 acres, Honda India Foundation's first Institute of Driving Training and Research (IDTR) will help in building skilled and confident riders/drivers.

The scientifically devised refresher and learner courses will facilitate combination of theory, simulator and practical training to not only new and existing drivers of four-wheelers and HMV (Heavy Motor Vehicle) but two-wheeler riders too. The state-of-the-art simulators at IDTR will enable participants to experience multiple riding conditions before actual riding/driving on road. The IDTR in Karnal is the

first institute which is equipped with Automated Driving Testing Track (ADTT).

Additionally, the institute also offers special training programs to corporates and fleet owners. Further promoting the safe driving behaviour, HIF's trained experts will also provide training to participants on road safety and traffic rules & regulations. The other facilities at IDTR includes testing and training tracks for two-wheelers and four wheelers, air-conditioned smart classrooms, observation rooms, in-house workshop, computer lab and medical room.

Parallely, the solar powered Community Park of Honda India Foundation at Sector 7 in Karnal, consists of open-air gym, a running track among other facilities, will rejuvenate the local landscape and foster a spirit of community building while significantly reducing Co2 emissions.



## Games24x7 partners with Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation to support community-level 'Bal Mitra Mandal' programme in Pune

Games24x7, India's most valuable multi-gaming platform, commenced its partnership with Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation's (KSCF) community-level programme 'Bal Mitra Mandal' in Pune. As part of its continuous effort towards child welfare in India, Games24x7 has been associated with KSCF over the last sixteen months to support and drive child-centric community development.

Designed to provide a transformative solution towards securing child rights, the flagship 'Bal Mitra Mandal' programme will kickstart its work in Hadapsar ward of Pune Municipal Corporation in four select areas. The sustainable model

programme will raise awareness on gender neutrality, education, water, hygiene, sanitation and livelihood amongst children.

Speaking about the initiative and its importance for India, Trivikraman Thampy, Co-Founder and CEO, Games24x7, said, "Children are the greatest asset of our country and it's our responsibility to provide them with a dignified childhood. Games24x7 is proud to be associated with Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, to positively impact the lives of thousands of children in Maharashtra. We can't change the past, but we believe with the right support, we can empower our children to take control of their

future. This partnership will help strengthen our efforts in enabling a safe and child friendly environment to bolster their years ahead."

To mark the commencement of the flagship program, Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi along with Games24x7 representatives and other dignitaries were present during an event at Vishranwadi.

Bal Mitra Mandal is an innovative initiative to curb challenges and difficulties that have a negative impact on children's safety and wellbeing. The program has been designed to prioritise the best interests of children through child-centric development initiatives. Under this initiative, Games24x7 will support KSCF in generating awareness among children, ensuring parents' participation in child welfare activities, engaging with community members, counselling, identifying, and rescuing child labour victims, facilitating their re-enrolment in schools, and promoting education. Through these endeavours, Games24x7 aims to bring about a behavioural change among children and build leadership qualities in them.



# Inauguration of Digital Classrooms in five MCD schools under the CSR initiative by Globus Infocom Ltd. for education

Three schools of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi got complete digital transformation of education by the installation of Digital Classrooms; two more schools would be transformed in the upcoming week. This initiative was a step in the direction of digital transformation of education in Government schools of India & was commenced under the CSR initiative of Globus Infocom Limited, India's leading Ed-tech solution provider. This project was inaugurated by Alka R. Sharma, Additional Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Delhi at the MCPS School, Savitri Nagar, South Zone. The school is equipped with Digital Board Solution, which would transform the learning environment into a highly immersive and engaging one. MCD Primary School, Nithari No.1, Rohini Zone & MCPS School, Mubarakpur, Rohini Zone were also connected digitally with the Savitri Nagar branch during the inauguration ceremony. Ms. Alka. R. Sharma also addressed & interacted with the students of the other two schools.

"The digital solutions are highly comprehensive & advanced which will certainly prove beneficial in the holistic development of students in their educational journey. Now is the time that teacher should take the responsibility & ownership of such digital initiatives & ensure the maximum utilization of digital resources for the development of learners," Sharma said.

Kiran Dham, the CEO, of Globus Infocom Ltd, was also present at the inauguration and stated, "We have



been fortunate enough to contribute our bit to the Government's drive to transform the education landscape by providing digital solutions to the schools for several major reformative educational CSR initiatives. We are certain that this initiative will positively impact the educational landscape of these schools by providing much-needed digital exposure to the students & bring out the

best of their potential. Working at the forefront of the Digital transformation of education we as solution providers work to develop & implement meaningful advanced technology in the classroom and constantly try to create an accessible, engaging & collaborative learning space for children which could bridge the digital divide present across the geographies."

# Vodafone Idea Foundation and Nasscom Foundation Showcase Technological Solutions at the 'Connecting For Good' Conclave

Technology is the key to building a thriving ecosystem in India where high internet penetration and the Government's Digital India drive work in unison to bring about a sustainable transformation for societal needs. With the aim to bring together diverse stakeholders to discuss and strategize how technology can be harnessed for social good, Vodafone Idea Foundation (VIF), the CSR arm of Vi, in partnership with NASSCOM, organized the 'Connecting for Good: Partners Conclave' in New Delhi.

VIF's 'Connecting for Good' program implemented in partnership with NASSCOM, fosters an ecosystem to use technology for addressing social challenges in the areas of education, women empowerment, health, agriculture, etc. The program aims at empowering NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, CBOs, to drive innovation, disseminate knowledge, and upscale their interventions for greater impact. The Partners Conclave under the umbrella of 'Connecting for Good', is designed to discuss the role of technology to solve social issues through innovative tech-based solutions.

The 'Connecting For Good' Conclave was attended by P Balaji, Director, Vodafone Idea Foundation and Chief Regulatory & Corporate Affairs Officer, VIL; Dr. Nilay Ranjan, Head, CSR and Sustainability, Vodafone Idea Foundation; Nidhi Bhasin, CEO, NASSCOM Foundation; Dr. Sanjay Kumar, President, Corp. Affairs & Public Policy, UpGrad Foundation;



L to R - P Balaji, Director, Vodafone Idea Foundation and Nidhi Bhasin, CEO, NASSCOM Foundation

Sameer Kanwar, Director Digital Health, PATH; Harsh Jaitli, CEO, Voluntary Action Network India (VANI); Professor Arvinder A. Ansari of Jamia Millia Islamia; and Dr. Rishikesh Patankar amongst others. It saw stakeholders introduce their innovative technology solutions, identify new areas of collaboration to expand the reach of their solution, and ideate on the way forward.

Addressing the conclave, P. Balaji, Director, Vodafone Idea Foundation and Chief Regulatory & Corporate Affairs Officer, VIL, said, "Telecom has enabled unprecedented growth in internet penetration in India. The use of mobile technology has changed lives of individuals, businesses and society forever in countless ways. Vodafone Idea Foundation is focused at leveraging technology

and purposeful innovation to catalyse social prosperity, digital literacy and inclusivity. Through our various technological interventions, we have impacted the lives of over millions of people. Today, we are pleased to host this conclave, in partnership with NASSCOM, under our 'Connecting for Good' programme. The powerful exchange of ideas here will help address some of the toughest real-world problems and connect people for good."

Nidhi Bhasin, CEO, NASSCOM Foundation, said, "TechForGood is the catalyst to sustainable social transformation, especially seeing the huge surge in technology adoption across the country. As per a recent report, government spending on technology stood at \$9.6 billion and is expected to grow by 11.6%



in 2022. With this huge shift, it is imperative to ensure that we are empowering the non-profit ecosystem of the country with technology so that the impact translates right to the last mile. Cost-effective tech solutions that help non-profits in working more efficiently are the need of the hour and should be given immediate attention. That's exactly where 'Connecting for Good' initiative plays a vital role as it infuses the nonprofit ecosystem with the right technology intervention and revamps the NGO landscape."

Additionally, Vodafone Idea Foundation has developed and launched other tech-based solutions such as 'Jigyasa', which equips teachers with innovative teaching practices and helps them integrate technology in classrooms; 'Gurushala', a cloud-based collaborative knowledge exchange platform that enables teachers to engage with each other; 'Learning with Vodafone Idea Scholarship Programme', India's

Under the programme 'Connecting for Good', Vodafone Idea Foundation has built and implemented several technology-based solutions such as:		
Area	Application	About the Application
Women Safety & Empowerment	MyAmbar	A mobile-application designed for the safety and empowerment of women
Digital Learning	DigiSakshar	A user-friendly digital learning platform offering free, on-demand, universal access to a variety of courses across different subject areas
Operations	The ManagR	An easy-to-use digital platform to improve operational efficiencies
Women Empowerment	Girl Rising	An android-based game that helps break gender stereotypes
Health & Hunger	Share Food Share Joy	An interactive voice response system (IVR) that connects people with surplus food to distribution partners
Child Welfare	Childline 1098	Mobile-friendly case reporting system (CRS) that manages and reports cases of children in distress from any location.

largest multi-lingual scholarship portal; 'Jaadu Ginni Ka', a financial literacy programme providing content based on a simple storytelling format and featuring engaging

games and quizzes; and 'SmartAgri', which transforms agricultural practices into intelligent ones by using IoT solutions and enables farmers with relevant information.

## MPS student shares candid moment with President of India on Raksha Bandhan

**N**avya Arora, Class VIII a student of MPS went to meet the President Droupadi Murmu on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan on 11 August 2022. Navya shared candid moments with the newly-elected President, while she presented the first lady of the country with a hand-made 'Rakhi'.

President Droupadi Murmu celebrated her first Raksha Bandhan after resuming the top post of the country with representatives of different organizations and children from various schools at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. "Navya Arora sharing moments with the President of the country depicts MPS' commitment towards the overall growth of each of our students. Modernites have been active participants of the various activities



conducted under the aegis of the government during last one year of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav – celebrating 75 years of independence," noted Principal of Modern Public School Alka Kapur.

"We also extend our sincere gratitude to the Roti Bank and Rajkumar Bhatia for making this historic moment possible

and letting the MPS flag fly high. Every Modernites extend their heartfelt regards to the honorable President of India," added Alka Kapur.

Co-founded by social activist Rajkumar Bhatia, the Roti Bank has been playing a pioneering role in addressing the nation's hunger index. Roti bank is a non-governmental

organization dedicated to feeding the hungry and needy. MPS was the first school in Delhi with whom the organization was associated with. Roti Bank has been taking several initiatives in the social interest, like the distribution of clothes, household products, kitchenware and other commodities.

# Hindustan Zinc inaugurates 'Hindustan Zinc Mining Academy'

**H**industan Zinc, India's only and the world's leading integrated zinc-lead-silver producer, has set up a new 'Hindustan Zinc Mining Academy' at Zawar to help train in-house talent source from business partners in mining operations. Hindustan Zinc understands that India's mining sector faces a severe shortage of skilled manpower. To help address this problem, the company conducted research that helped identify Jumbo Drill Operators, a profile often taken up by ex-pats, as the occupation wherein more and better-skilled manpower could prove to be especially handy.

The Mining Academy has been developed in association with GHH India Mining and Tunneling Equipment Pvt. Ltd. with an aim to develop the talent within the organization to cater to the need for expert skills for Jumbo Drill Operations. Hindustan Zinc has fortified this program via various provisions such as a 3D simulator, which is a Virtual Reality hi-tech device used to train operators in heavy machinery. The simulators have proven to be a cost-effective, safe, and efficient method to impart requisite training about concepts as well as skills, including controls familiarization, procedure compliance, etc. The program is an amalgamation of Classroom and Simulator Training and On-the-Job training. One of the key elements of on-the-job training is Operator Shadowing wherein the candidates will be closely shadowing the current Jumbo operators that are assigned to them as trainers thus gaining comprehensive hands-on experience.

Commenting on the establishment of the new program, Mr Arun Misra, CEO, Hindustan Zinc, said, "The



**The unique initiative will enable jumbo helpers in underground mines to become certified operators**

**The five months-long training program will include 16 weeks of classroom instruction**

**The pilot Mining Academy batch will include 20 experienced jumbo helpers cascading to train operators from other mining operations of HZL**

objective of setting up the 'Hindustan Zinc Mining Academy' at Zawar is to enhance the skills of young talent in the mining industry. This academy will help develop jumbo drill operators, load haul dumper (LHD) operators, and low-profile dumper truck (LPDT) operators and thus reduce the dependency on the ex-pats. We have begun the Mining Academy's first



batch in Zawar with 20 mining experienced jumbo helpers and continue to invite batches from our other mining locations to get trained here."

As noted above, this unique initiative provides crucial training to helpers and associated crew members into certified jumbo drill operators. The program will take place over a five-month period which will include 16 weeks of classroom instruction, simulation training, and seven weeks of on-the-job instruction. This extensive training program will cover all the aspects of the Jumbo Drill Operation along with some basics of maintenance.



# Mahindra Group Hands Over 1000 LPM Oxygen Plant to Government General Hospital in Nandyal, Andhra Pradesh

In its on-going endeavour to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure in the country, the Mahindra Group announced the installation of a 1000 LPM Oxygen Plant at the Government General Hospital in Nandyal, Andhra Pradesh. The Oxygen plant was inaugurated by Shri Buggana Rajendranath Reddy, Hon'ble Minister for Finance, Planning and Legislative Affairs, Government of Andhra Pradesh in presence of Mr. V.S. Ram, Vice President, Mahindra Farm Division, Zaheerabad and other government dignitaries.



The Mahindra Group has been supporting the Government of Andhra Pradesh in the fight against COVID-19. In the past, the Group has donated two oxygen plants, two ambulances and ten Oxygen Concentrators to the Government hospitals in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Tech Mahindra Foundation provided a 1000 LPM Oxygen Plant to Government General Hospital in Vishakhapatnam and a 500 LPM oxygen plant to the Government General Hospital in Tirupathi.

The Mahindra Group has set up 23 oxygen plants and donated 94 ambulances across 19 states, in addition to its commitment of substantial funds across India to address the pandemic. The Group has supported the government's relief efforts, re-engineered production lines and facilities to manufacture face shields, face masks and aerosol boxes, and provided ICU beds, emergency cab services, quarantine centers, oxygen-on-demand, monetary support and dry rations for the underprivileged.

## Bayer Environmental Science Professional Business To Be Called Envu Upon Successful Acquisition Close

Bayer's Environmental Science Professional business announced it will become Envu as a standalone company, contingent on the successful close of Cinven's acquisition of the business from Bayer\*. Pronounced "ehn-VIEW", the name is derived from "environment" and "vision" and developed with input from both employees and customers around the world.

"As a trusted industry leader, we know that ensuring continued customer success requires strong partnerships and a renewed perspective," said Gilles Galliou, president of the Environmental Science Professional business at Bayer and future CEO of the new standalone company. "That's why Envu will be dedicated to bringing customers innovative solutions to help them push their business forward and tackle the toughest challenges our environments face today." Envu will work alongside customers to see challenges through their eyes, bringing together diverse points-of-view and a vision beyond chemistry.

"The fact that our new company will be focused solely on environmental science will allow us to solve problems faster, smarter and more efficiently," said Galliou. "The challenges we solve today will help ensure a healthy future for all is clearly in view," Galliou continued.

"We have an established track record of bringing effective, safe and sustainable solutions to customers," said Tiffany Fremder, head of global marketing for Environmental Science. "We will continue this commitment as Envu and expand our focus on innovation to achieve long-standing environmental health and sustainability."

From now until the divestment transaction officially closes, the organization will remain the Environmental Science Professional business of Bayer. However, the company looks forward to fully launching its new corporate identity upon the successful close, which is on track for later this year. The business will also continue to proudly collaborate with Bayer as a standalone company.

# Bisleri International conferred with National CSR Award

**B**isleri International Pvt. Ltd was honoured with the prestigious 'National CSR Award' under large enterprises - food and beverage sector at the 10th Global Safety Summit Awards 2022 in New Delhi. The award lauds Bisleri International's efforts in recycling used plastic and harvesting rainwater. It was organised by the Fire and Safety Forum in association with the United Nations Global Compact Network India.

Building a circular economy in used plastic management, Bisleri International focuses on creating awareness and educating the citizens across housing societies, schools, slums, corporates and HoReCa's through its programme - Bottles For Change. The model aims to create awareness by adopting best practices through a 3-stage process. This includes cleaning the plastic, segregating it at the source and handing it over directly for recycling, preventing used plastic from ending up in landfills.

Through these efforts, Bisleri International has been able to modify the behaviour of over 600,000 citizens across metros. Furthermore, the programme has collected over 6,500 tons of used plastic due to its



Bisleri International wins National CSR Award at 10th Global Safety Summit Awards 2022

continuous actions of creating a channel for recycling.

The socially responsible organisation strongly believes in strengthening corporate citizenship by giving back to the community through its initiative, Project Nayi Umeed. The project focuses on water conservation by building and restoring check dams. The programme was developed to create reservoirs of water that also helps to improve the water table in the nearby areas.

It has constructed and restored over 200 check dams across Gujarat and Maharashtra since 2001. The project has helped irrigate about 9638 acres of land, turning barren land into fertile farms and benefited close to 12,000 families of farmers in over 125 villages.

Commenting on receiving the award, Angelo George, Chief Executive Officer, Bisleri International Pvt. Ltd., said, "Bisleri International is one of the first consumer goods organisations in the country to become 100% water and plastic neutral. All aspects of our business are aligned with sustainability. We are honoured with this award as a testimony of our efforts in recycling used plastic and harvesting rainwater. As an organisation, we are proud to say that we collect and recycle more plastic than we put in the market. He further added, "We foster in building an organisation that takes proactive measures of giving back to the community through our Project Nayi Umeed. All Bisleri manufacturing plants have a comprehensive rainwater harvesting system. Our check dam projects benefit farmers with more crops and significant income. With our efforts in harvesting rainwater, we replenish 1.08 litres of water for every litre we draw from the ground. Our sustainability commitments seek to holistically address the priorities set out by the government."

The Global Safety Summit Awards are the most prestigious safety awards demonstrating the commitment of the organisation in Health and Safety. The award measures the best practices undertaken by corporates in Environment, Health, Safety and CSR activities. It is governed by 140+ certified assessors globally.

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# Lumina Datamatics makes a significant Social Development achievement by adopting Konda Village near Mumbai

*Lumina Datamatics is transforming people's lives through social upliftment programs*

The pandemic was challenging for a significant chunk of the population in India. In addition to the loss of life, people suffered monetary losses pushing them to the brink of poverty. Since most of this population resides in rural areas, Lumina Datamatics decided to concentrate its efforts on the social upliftment of villages. The company firmly believes that a holistic development model must be at the core of sustainable change in rural India. This model requires self-sustaining communities empowered to transform their own lives.

Marking a new milestone in its CSR endeavours, Lumina Datamatics has announced the adoption of a new village-Konda near Mumbai. The company sponsored and distributed rations, medicines, wheel-chairs, walkers, manure, umbrellas, and sanitary napkins, among others, to around 50-60 underprivileged residents of Konda during the recently held CSR drive on July 24, 2022.

Lumina Datamatics envisions achieving a sustainable society and strengthening the country's social fabric. While growth and success are business priorities, the company's management team believes in giving back to the community with available resources. Hence, they continue to drive meaningful and welfare-driven initiatives to impact more lives and make the communities future-ready. The employees of



Lumina Datamatics voluntarily participated in this event, leaving them satisfied and inspired, knowing that this will bring about some change in society at a local level.

Mrs Anju Kanodia - Executive Director, Lumina Datamatics® Limited, said, "At Lumina Datamatics, community development remains at the core of every initiative we undertake. We are deeply committed to the holistic progress of society, and therefore we

are determined to work towards the same through our CSR contributions. We are proud to start a new chapter in our CSR endeavours with the adoption of Konda. The smiles across the faces of the residents encourage us to continue our pledge for social development. We are optimistic that Lumina Datamatics will be able to bring about even more significant changes in the community, empowering the people to grow in a better and sustainable environment."

# Pi Green Innovations receives a patent for its filterless technology in India

**P**i Green Innovations Pvt Ltd, one of the emerging cleantech start-ups has been granted the India patent for its filterless technology, Carbon Cutter. The patented Pi Green Carbon Cutter Technology is used to manufacture retrofit devices for diesel generators and heavy vehicles. Pi Green Innovations filed for its India patent in 2017. The company develops technology-driven solutions to reduce particulate matter emissions (PM 2.5/PM 10) at the source and from ambient air. The company already holds patents for Carbon Cutter in the USA, China, UK, European Union & Singapore. The patents will enable Pi Green Innovations to present opportunities for businesses to adopt technology that will help address emissions at the source and contribute toward a sustainable future.

Pi Green Carbon Cutter, is a fully automatic, filterless solution that can be installed on diesel generators, heavy vehicles and industrial boilers to capture over 70% particulate matter. The company has several customers across key sectors like Auto, Hospitality, FMCG, Ports, SEZs, Heavy Engineering and Manufacturing etc. Pi Green's



Irfan Pathan, Co-Founder & CEO, Pi Green Innovations



Rizwan Shaikh Co-Founder & Inventor

Carbon Cutter solution has also been recognized as one of the best technologies for air purification globally at Smogathon 2018, a global summit conducted in Poland.

Commenting on this, Irfan Pathan, Co-Founder & CEO at Pi Green Innovations said, "We are delighted to receive this recognition for Pi Green's Carbon Cutter technology. This is an encouraging validation for the entire team on how innovative and meaningful initiatives can lead to significant transformation. We aim to make clean air accessible to all and with India patent we are a step closer to our mission."

Rizwan Shaikh, Co-Founder & Chief Invention Officer at Pi Green Innovations said, "Since early college days, I had a dream of making India proud on a global platform through innovation, Pi Green's Carbon Cutter is a mix of some very basic scientific concepts with path-breaking innovation in the field of environment. It was satisfying to be granted patents across the Europe Union, USA,

Singapore, China and UK, but being granted the patents in India is a dream come true. Going forward, my team and I will continue to contribute towards cleaning the air in India and make it a better place to breathe."

The company was founded in 2017 as a five-member team operating out of a 150-sq-ft workshop and has since grown into an established Cleantech start-up with a team of over 100 operating from a 50,000-sq-ft. manufacturing facility in Pune. This is a company that is working to reduce pollution at source at the grassroot level.

## TresVista wins 'Leading Practices in CSR' at PeopleFirst HR Awards

**T**resVista has won the prestigious HR Excellence award in the 'Leading Practices in CSR' category held by PeopleFirst. The awards, which saw 150+ entries from 80+ organizations across different industries, recognized TresVista

for its ongoing commitment to corporate social responsibility.

Since its inception, TresVista has been committed to serving the community. With Contribute, Serve, Reform as a pillar of TresVista's culture, the organization is privileged

to have impacted several lives over the past 16 years, achieving great heights and milestones.

TresVista's CSR focus areas overlap with the 17 Sustainability Development Goals of the UN. It focuses on partnering with social



leaders and creating a sustainable impact through various initiatives ranging from advisory and consulting, volunteering, events, and contributions.

The PeopleFirst HR Excellence Awards are the most coveted, sought and longest-running awards in the field of HR. They recognize the professionals and companies stretching the boundaries of people strategy. They celebrate the finest HR initiatives by organizations across geographies and provide an opportunity for professional experts to recognize the world-class work done by their colleagues. Nominations for the 'Leading Practices in CSR' award were evaluated for the organization's embedding of corporate social responsibility across the firm, mainly through its people. Demonstrating

entries of the role played by HR in the strategy and execution of CSR initiatives and how the CSR initiatives denote a clear link between corporate strategy, community benefits and societal responsibility.



Vishal Shah, Executive Director, TresVista, said, "CSR for us is 'Contribute Serve Reform,' and it forms the core of how we contribute to society. We aim to empower our employees to be empathetic social leaders by creating awareness on

social causes, encouraging participation, and providing various platforms for all our employees to collaborate and contribute."

TresVista had earlier celebrated World Environment Day with great enthusiasm by organizing 'Art From the Heart,' an exhibition and auction of various art pieces by the employees. The event aimed to raise awareness of sustainable practices and foster a community of purpose-driven individuals by raising money for a charitable cause.

TresVista announced its Sustainability initiative during its Annual CSR Day event in January 2022 and officially launched it with this event. With a people strength of 1,200, the company targets 12,000 cumulative hours of CSR Volunteering in FY23 among its employees.

## L&T debuts at No.3 spot in ENR's 2022 'Top 200 Environmental Firms' list

Larsen & Toubro (L&T), an Indian multinational engaged in EPC Projects, Hi-Tech Manufacturing and Services, has ranked No.3 in the 'Top 200 Environmental Firms' list for 2022 released by Engineering News-Record (ENR), New York. L&T is the only Indian firm in this list, with pro environmental revenues of USD 4.83 billion in 2021, accounting for 30% of the company's total revenues.

In terms of ENR's segmentation of the sector-wise share of the companies' revenues, L&T has ranked No.3 in both the lists of projects pertaining to Air Quality / Clean Energy and Water Treatment/Supply. While L&T earned total pro environmental revenues of USD 4.83 billion in 2021, the projects from these two categories accounted for 67% of that.

The other notable aspect is that in terms of client-wise segmentation of revenues, L&T ranks No.1 when

its client is Federal Government and No.2 when its clients are State/Local Governments. In all, 94% of L&T's revenues are sourced from clients who are Federal Government and State / Local Governments. This is reflective of the fact that L&T's pro environmental revenues are largely aligned to and driven by the government's commitment to promote environment-friendly practices.

Commenting on the development, Mr. S N Subrahmanyam, CEO & MD, L&T, said, "Over the years, true to our commitment to reduce the carbon footprint, we have made substantial investments to create a clean, green and sustainable future. It definitely feels nice when our efforts get recognised internationally. What is even more special is the fact that we came third when pro environmental revenues account for about a third of our total revenues, whereas the corresponding figures for the first and second rank-holders are 100% and 51% respectively.

So, we have plenty of headroom to go up the international rankings in the coming years. Our efforts to promote Green Hydrogen and its linkage technologies will definitely add momentum to this."

As part of its ESG commitments, L&T has pledged to achieve Water Neutrality by 2035 and Carbon Neutrality by 2040. L&T's climate change, energy efficiency and renewable energy programmes are aligned with the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), released by the Government of India. The Company's programmes are also being aligned to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) ratified by the Government of India during the COP 21 – Paris Agreement.

One of the world's most authoritative publications covering construction industry affairs, ENR has been providing a comprehensive coverage of news, analysis, data and opinion for the construction industry worldwide since 1917.

# Ambuja Cement Foundation awarded for its efforts in women empowerment & community development

Ambuja Cement Foundation, CSR arm of Ambuja Cements has been awarded for working rigorously on the ground for community development and women empowerment. The Company has been continuously acknowledged over the time for its effort in women empowerment, health, water and overall community development.

The Company won the ICC Social Impact Awards 2022 for the 4th consecutive time for its Women Empowerment and Water Resource Management & Healthcare initiatives in Sankrail and Farakka respectively. Similarly, the Foundation's efforts on women empowerment in Rabriyawas were also recognized and awarded with Indira Mahila Shakti Promotion and Honor Award.

The Skilling Centre in Chirawa received the Indira Mahila Shakti Samman Award for its outstanding work as the Best Skilling Institute in the field of Women Empowerment. The centre was recognized for its work in Gender Equality ensuring 50-50% participation of male and female trainees in its courses and also encouraging women enrol in gender breaking courses like electrician, security guard etc.

The Foundation's Skilling team also implemented Hindustan Zinc's Skill & Entrepreneurship Development Institute, which received Indira Mahila Shakti Pratsahan Award from the Chief Minister, Government of Rajasthan for its work on women and girl empowerment. Neeraj Akhoury, CEO India Holcim and MD & CEO of



Ambuja Cements Ltd. said, "We are honoured to be recognized for our efforts in women empowerment with awards at both district and state level. This recognition will give an impetus to our efforts for making difference in lives at community level. We will continue our efforts to empower women in the communities to take a step ahead and create an impact."

At the community front, many institutions and beneficiaries received awards at the district and state level for their work in bringing community impacts. The Rupnagar Farmer Producer Company in Ropar received the Best Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) amongst 16 FPOs in Punjab. In Bathinda, NABARD recognized two women of a women's group with the Excellent Entrepreneur Award. The Company was also awarded for its work in agriculture sector in the region as Best NGO Award.

In Darlaghat, three women leaders from the Women's Co-operative society, the Women's Federation and the Watershed Committee were honored by the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh for empowering and involving more women either in the institutions or creating platforms for them to voice out their opinions.

**In Bathinda, NABARD recognized two women of a women's group with the Excellent Entrepreneur Award.**



## NIIT University (NU) offers a glimpse into the future: Organises 'Camp Future' for students who have recently completed class XII

**E**stablished with a vision to bring about innovation in higher education and learning in emerging areas of the knowledge society, the not-for-profit NIIT University (NU), offers students who have just completed class XII, opportunities to explore various career options available to them and to experience life in the campus.

Camp Future, a 2-day event that allows students and their parents to experience the University campus before commencing college, is one such unique initiative.

Camp Future is an interactive event aimed at helping the students and their parents in choosing the right university by giving them a sample of NU life. In Camp Future, the aspirants and their parents experience a day of NU college life. Meeting with the NU leadership team, interacting with the faculty of their respective streams and with senior students, staying in the hostel, enjoying the mess food of NU, getting to know about the unique geo-thermal cooling system, going for trekking across the green campus, and experiencing Astachal moment at sunset are some of the experiences of Camp Future.

The first edition of Camp Future this year was organized on July 9 and 10 2022 at the NU campus. Over 120 students and parents participated in the 2-day event. The next edition of the event is scheduled for August 6 and 7 2022. The students attending Camp Future have already been accepted in various disciplines

of NU availing early admissions. Speaking on this unique initiative Prof Rajesh Khanna, President, NU said, "This is a very important juncture in every student's life. Choosing the right college and the right academic programme now will go a long way in helping them chart a successful career path. To facilitate this, we have been organising an innovative event Camp Future,

### Top leadership of NU interacts with students to discuss various career opportunities

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### A glimpse of 'Life as a Nuton': Provides aspiring students an opportunity to experience the campus

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a 2- day event for NU aspirants and their parents to give them a sample of NU life."

The University of the future, NIIT University (NU), offers new-age programmes such as BTech in Data Science, BTech in Cyber Security, and Integrated Master's in Business Administration that have been

designed to provide students with the skill sets aligned to the future world of work. Students can also opt for BTech in Computer Science & Engineering, BTech in Electronics & Communication Engineering, BTech in Biotechnology, 3-year BBA and 5-year integrated MTech programmes. NU has made 'application orientation' a critical part of the coursework for all the programmes in the form of project-based learning, summer internships and the flagship six-month Industry Practice. NU's BTech programmes, in fact, give 35% weightage to application-oriented learning opportunities.

Conceptualized as an institution of excellence, NU provides exceptional education based on the Four Core Principles that make learning Industry-linked, Technology-based, Research-driven and Seamless. NU is well poised to meet the emerging needs of the knowledge economy through its focus on building strong industry linkages and a research-oriented approach. NU ensures a great future for students by not only preparing them for new age job roles but also helping them become job creators. Apart from imparting a deep knowledge of technology, NU also focuses on sustainability and teaches students to give back to the environment by bringing them closer to the nature..

For more information on admissions and placements please visit: <https://admission2022.niituniversity.in/brand/#applynow>

# CSR INDIA UNITED

## Pay Autention partners with local anganwadis to create early identification champions for Autism in Trombay, Mumbai



**A**fter having successfully launched 'Pay Autention' – A different mind is a gifted mind', India's first bridgital Autism support network on World Autism Awareness Day in April, the program continues its series of workshops & awareness-building within normal child care ecosystems – especially in underserved parts of the country. The experts conducted an interactive workshop with Anganwadi workers, Govt. staff & parent groups from the Trombay region to learn basic identification marks & behavior patterns for early identification of the Autism Spectrum & related learning diversities. This event also saw the announcement of further strategic synergies with Tata Power's Adhikaar initiative that enables support to access social welfare schemes for the differently abled.

In line with Tata Power's overall CSR vision of 'Powering Transformation', Pay Autention, India's first bridgital Autism Support network by Tata Power in collaboration with The Centre for Autism and other Disabilities Rehabilitation Research and Education, is aimed at strengthening the Autism Support network by increasing overall awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and help people understand, accept and support individuals with Autism as well as their parents and caregivers. The session at Trombay was led by Nandita Nayer, Head of Research Program and Head of Psychology, CADRRE. As part of the Pay Autention initiative, a series of awareness programs are being conducted to empower citizens in small towns and rural India by giving them access to specialized

care and support and helping create an auxiliary network of champions for the differently-abled. As a part of this series, Tata Power has conducted similar awareness programs in Maithon, Jharkhand, in April 2022 and many other online workshops for play, dance & music therapies – to better autism acceptance & quality of living in our target communities

The program is aimed at strengthening of Autism Support network through the exchange of experience, partnership building, and reaching out to grassroots communities. It is aimed to create a network of champions who would spot the early signs of autism in toddlers, explain the need for a diagnosis to parents sensitively and professionally and help them to understand the importance of early diagnosis and intervention as well as multi-disciplinary intervention. More than 75 Anganwadi workers and parent group members attended the interactive session and are now empowered to strengthen the Autism Support Network, which helps spread the message of awareness in the community. The Anganwadi workers represent slum communities of M East Ward, who are now empowered to create awareness for over a lakh of the slum population whom they service.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neuro-developmental disorder of variable severity, characterized by challenges in social interaction, communication, and restrictive or repetitive patterns of behavior; signs of which usually begin during early childhood and last throughout an individual's lifespan. It is the third most common developmental disorder in the world.

Foram Nagori, CSR Head of Tata Power sharing the long-term vision of this program, said: "Tata Power has always been committed to inclusive social development in its surroundings. Pay Autention aims to work with its network partners to facilitate, train & certify auxiliary



networks of inclusivity champions in key regions and enable more early identification and support through aware & equipped Anganwadi workers, ANMs, and primary school teachers, parents groups; especially in small-town India. The intent is to work closely with the Government ecosystems, other experts & influencers to support normal child-care, schooling & educational systems to be more inclusive & supportive of learning diversities "

G. Vijaya Raghavan, Honorary Director CADRRE adds, "We are honored to be able to extend our expertise and experience with children with Autism, to the various communities in India like Maithon and Trombay. In collaboration with Tata Power, we are glad that we have

empowered community champions who will go out to create and spread awareness further of this neuro-developmental disorder. Autism awareness is not very high and hence a large number of our population silently go through this invisible disability without understanding the disorder and not knowing who to go to for professional guidance."

"This workshop was an eye opener for all of us to understand the needs of children with Autism better. It also encourages acceptance, to seek help - professional as well as connect to other parents and to learn how we can empower a child with Autism to lead an independent life." Said Swati Thombare, Anganwadi Supervisor Chembur who took part in the program. In the first phase,

the Pay Attention initiative primarily focuses on supporting children with autism, and subsequently, in the second stage, it will focus on young adults, empowering them with life skills and career readiness. In addition to reaching out to the larger public, the initiative aims to create a support network with community champions like corporates, influencers from disability and CSR space, schools and specialized educational institutions, govt. stakeholders, and NGOs/non-profit institutions. Under the initiative, pre-recorded content and monthly live seminars on the subject are offered to local partners, schools, social development institutions, and volunteers associated with the Tata Group and around Tata Power operational areas.

## APM Terminals Pipavav initiates Vaccination Drive for livestock in nearby villages

**The vaccination drive is to control the spread of lumpy skin disease amongst the livestock**

**More than 1000 animals died in Gujarat due to the infectious lumpy skin disease.**

**A**PM Terminals Pipavav has launched a vaccination drive for livestock in nearby 45 villages like Rampara, Bherai, Chhatadiya, Hadmatiya, Thavi and Shiyalbet villages under the 'Pashuuday project'. This is to control the spread of the infectious lumpy skin disease in livestock.

According to the survey done by the state of Gujarat, the highly contagious lumpy skin disease has been found in cows and buffaloes in 1,126 villages in



15 districts of the state. It has affected more than 40,000 animals and continues to spread further.

Commenting on the drive, Jakob Friis Sørensen, MD, APM Terminals Pipavav said, "The spread of the infectious disease is an unfortunate incident as livestock is the livelihood of many villagers.

APM Terminals strongly believes in protecting and nurturing the ecosystem near the port. We are happy to start the vaccination drive and awareness as precautionary measure, to control the spread further. We hope that the vaccination drive helps curb down the disease and keeps the cattle healthy."

## Reliance General Insurance launches the “The D-series Project” to raise awareness about Organ Donation

**R**eliance General Insurance, one of India's leading general insurance companies, has launched "The D-series Project" – an awareness campaign to popularise Organ Donation on the occasion of World Organ Donation Day.

The campaign is leveraging catchy lyrics of popular Hindi songs to raise awareness about Organ Donation among the public. Through media and creative contextualization, messages are thoughtfully plugged in by playing around with words like 'Dil', 'Aankhein', and 'Jigar' in the communication. Using popular Hindi songs in the campaign is aimed to connect with the audience effortlessly and linking Organ Donation with the lyrics is intended to make the awareness enduring.

To make initiative more impactful, Reliance General Insurance has launched a microsite, [www.thedseriesproject.in](http://www.thedseriesproject.in) where people can learn about Organ Donation and pledge to this cause through Organ India.

The shortage of organs for transplant is a universal issue; however, the situation is grave in India. With less than one person per million people, the organ donation ratio in India is estimated to be one of the lowest in the world as per WHO report. Experts have estimated that only 2-3% of the overall organ transplant requirement is met in a year in the country. For instance, as per Organ Retrieval Banking Organization (ORBO), AIIMS, on average, 2 lakh people need kidney transplants every year, whereas only 10,000 get donors. It is important to note that one donor can save up to 8 lives as 8 organs can be harvested from one brain dead person. Lack of knowledge and prejudices about Organ Donation often hold people back from donating their or their family members' organs. There is thus an urgent need to create awareness about organ donation on a monumental scale, such that it becomes a mass movement and people voluntarily pledge to donate their organs.

Speaking about the campaign, Mr. Anand Singhi, Chief Distribution Officer of Reliance General Insurance, explained, "According to National Organ Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO), almost 5 lakh people die every year and 17 people every day in India due to a lack of organ donors. This shows the dire situation in our country, where the act of Organ Donation and awareness about it are both significantly low. Being a responsible corporate citizen, Reliance General Insurance has always been a forerunner in spreading awareness about critical health issues. With "The D-series Project" campaign, we aim to raise awareness and demystify Organ Donation. Thereby putting into motion, a movement that will encourage people to donate their organs."

## AB de Villiers collaborates with Make a Difference to mentor underprivileged children in India

**M**ake a Difference (MAD), a leading Indian NGO for underprivileged children, is collaborating with AB De Villiers, a former South African international cricketer, to help underprivileged children realize their career potential. AB de Villiers, who has captained South Africa in all three cricketing formats and played for Royal Challengers Bangalore, has signed up to volunteer his time for Make a Difference (MAD). The NGO is working with children in need of care and protection in India, and has developed a prosperity model working with children from the age of 10 up until they turn 28 years of age and settle down in life with stable income levels.

Commenting on the association, AB De Villiers said, "India has been incredibly kind to me over the years, and I am always looking for ways to give something back. I am happy to be associated with MAD and will mentor two young people supported by the team. The NGO offers consistent support to children born into extremely difficult circumstances until they break the cycle of poverty. Their work is incredible." During the initial stage of his volunteering, AB De Villiers will mentor two beneficiaries over the next six months; 18-year-old Ayan from Lucknow, who has just finished school and wants to play cricket at the under-19 level and possibly for India and Anitha, who is 21 years old and studying journalism in Bangalore. She wants to be a TV news anchor one day.

Talking about the process, Jithin Nedumala, Co-Founder and CEO, Make a Difference, said, "The uniqueness of our model lies in its being volunteer-driven and we are simply delighted at having a global sporting icon like AB de Villiers supporting us. Mr. 360, as he is fondly known in India, and his support for our organisation will further strengthen our resolve to help children in need of care and protection."



# NextG Apex plans to support women's welfare and empower over 1 lakh women in the next 3 to 5 years

**L**eading 360-degree retail sales & execution company NextG Apex has always focused on making the world a better place. Be it with the brands they help build or the brands they own, it doesn't matter. Hence, NextG Apex pledges to earmark 1% of its brand Mamafeast sales (on MRP) to mother welfare, this I-Day as a lifetime commitment. This Make-in-India brand looks to make a lifetime commitment to support women's welfare and empower over 1 lakh women in the next 3 to 5 years through providing 360-degree development across economic development, health, education and better livelihood. This CSR plan is also in alignment with their nutritious breakfast ready-to-eat range Mamafeast's overall theme that wishes to support Mothers everyday by providing nutritious meals for their families. The company is so serious about this commitment that it will now become a permanent feature on its CSR and brand horizons.

Amarnath Halembur, Executive Director & CEO, NextG Apex India

Pvt Ltd. says, "We always build a sustainable foundation for our products and work towards the collective growth of society at large. As a retail execution brand, our vision for Mamafeast – to help Mothers provide healthy, nutritious break-



fast and any-time snack options to their families – is part of our overall theme of making nutrition affordable for mothers everywhere. Our overarching source of inspiration for this has always been our own hard-working mothers who manage families and prepare healthy food after choosing the best farm-to-fresh ingredients available. On the same lines, since Mother's Day we have been working on mothers welfare

plans for our long-term CSR commitment. Single mothers who carry their families entirely on their shoulders need support and NextG Apex wants to do so by pledging 1% percent of our brand Mamafeast sales for them. It means a lot to us that

our announcement coincides with our I-Day celebrations since we are supporting the future of our nation by supporting its mothers today."

As responsible brands, both NextG Apex & Mamafeast wish to make it easy for Mothers to take care of their families and provide for them in all ways they deem fit. Hence, their flagship CSR activities will necessarily centre on this theme for this year and many more to come.

Halembur elaborates, "What a Mother feeds, the nation eats. That has always been on our mind; hence, besides nutrition we are also conscious of our price points. And we will be ready to unveil some massive announcements for Mamafeast products soon on those lines."

To get your hands on Mamafeast Cornflakes, Mamafeast Muesli, Mamafeast Peanut Butter and Mamafeast Chocolate Spread, other than your nearest retail store they are also available across India through leading e-commerce platforms like Amazon.com & Flipkart.com, Jiomart.com.

**This Make-in-India brand Mamafeast looks to make a lifetime commitment to support women's welfare and empower over 1 lakh women in the next 3 to 5 years through providing 360-degree development across economic development, health, education and better livelihood.**

# The University of Queensland join hands with Asha Society India to uplift the marginalized communities in India; offers scholarships to Indian students to pursue



A growing number of Indian students have sought post-graduate education by considering opportunities overseas. The University of Queensland (UQ), as part of its commitment to enhance its contribution to diversity and equity of opportunity, has signed an agreement with the Asha Society India (Asha) to support the Asha International Education Program through India Equity Scholarships for students from the marginalized communities of New Delhi, India.

A senior executive delegation from UQ, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) Rongyu Li, visited Asha in August 2022. As part of the agreement, UQ will provide three scholarships for postgraduate master's coursework study at UQ. Each scholarship will cover the student's full tuition fees,



as well as an annual living stipend of \$13,000, on-campus accommodation and meals, overseas student health cover, a book allowance per semester, and \$2,400 towards flights to and from Australia.

Talking about the University's delight to continue its partnership with Asha to open pathways to a world-class education for some of India's most vulnerable communities, Rongyu Li said, "While in India, I had the pleasure of meeting with

several Asha students and hearing their personal stories. These students are driven by a determination to learn that is genuinely inspirational, and we are delighted to be able to nurture their journey to success. Access to education has not only changed the lives of these students but has also impacted their wider communities.

Through the India Equity Scholarships, we are committed to supporting students like Amritesh Kumar Maurya, who is currently in Brisbane, Australia, studying a Master of International Economics and Finance at UQ. Amritesh, who achieved outstanding academic grades, has aspirations of working for the World Bank. He is a wonderful example of how partnerships like this, between Asha and UQ, help create global changemakers who have a real and meaningful impact on global communities." Abhinav Bhatia, Senior Commissioner for Trade, Investment & Education – South Asia at TIQ said: "We aim to act as a bridge between India and Queensland in identifying talents, synergies, and finding sustainable solutions aligned with the UN's SDGs. Through this rewarding and inclusive engagement from one of the world's finest education institutes, I am confident this will broaden the horizon of many talented young minds from disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, the partnership between UQ and Asha will empower deserving individuals through fully funded scholarships, which certainly will strengthen bilateral relations between India and Australia."

# Lenovo, Micron Foundation, AVPN and more partner to advance gender inclusion through US\$1 million STEM fund

**W**ith a shared vision of closing the gender gap in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), Lenovo has joined with other corporate stakeholders to pool US\$1 million in a new STEM fund initiated by the Micron Foundation and managed by AVPN, the world's largest network of social investors in Asia.

The fund will support the development of innovative solutions designed to increase access to STEM learning opportunities for girls below 18 years in India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan Region. By chipping away at the barriers that girls face when taking up dream careers in technology, the fund ultimately aims to drive a more inclusive STEM workforce.

In the last decade, there has been a growing recognition that skills developed through STEM Education are pivotal in driving innovation, creativity, and productivity across various industries. According to UNESCO, by 2030, up to 80 percent of jobs in Southeast Asia will require basic digital literacy and applied Information and Communications Technology skills.

However, despite the growing employment opportunities that the STEM industry promises, there is still a low proportion of girls pursuing and studying STEM. This translates into lower representation of women in STEM fields as the gender gap often begins at early childhood education and secondary education stages. In countries where the gender gap is unfavourable to girls at the lower education levels, women tend to be underrepresented in

STEM higher education and eventually in the STEM workforce.

"Given that the digital divide has become more pronounced post-pandemic with women being one of the hardest hit groups, partnering with AVPN to double down on our digital inclusion efforts is a natural step for us," said Calvin Crosslin, Chief Diversity Officer and President of the Lenovo Foundation. "By providing women and girls from disadvantaged groups with unfettered access to STEM education and equipping them with the requisite digital skills and knowledge, we hope to help them succeed in the workforce of the future and achieve a better sense of autonomy and quality of life."

Lenovo is committed to empowering under-represented communities and diverse populations with access to technology and STEM education through its global philanthropy partnerships and programs. Lenovo's philanthropy leaders have set a goal to impact 15 million people and transform the lives of 1 million people by 2025. "Our vision for Gender at AVPN is to see a more equitable world for women and girls across Asia and mobilizing unrestricted financial capital through this STEM Fund will no doubt play a role in actualizing this vision. However, while we are seeing more funding to close the SDG Gender gaps in Asia, we must also remain cognizant of the rich diversity and complexities of Asia, and ensure more stakeholders join us to catalyze their capital, technical assistance, and policy influence — to truly see the systemic changes needed," Patricia Mathias, Head – Gender platform at AVPN said.

## Breast cancer screening for 12,000 families of Goa Police initiated by cricketer Yuvraj Singh

**U**nder the 'Swasth Mahila, Swasth Goa' endeavor of cricketer Yuvraj Singh's YouWeCan Foundation, in collaboration with the SBI Foundation, Indian Institute of Banking & Finance and the Government of Goa, 12,000 families allied to the Goa Police will be screened for breast cancer. Launched in October 2021, this project aims to screen 1 lakh women in Goa within two years for the most common cancer in females, thereby ensuring that at least 50% of the age-eligible female population in the State is screened.

The screening process for the families of Goa Police was kick-started with a small ceremony that was held at GO's Institute, GRP Camp, Altinho, Panaji in the esteemed presence of Goa DGP Jaspal Singh, IGG Omvir Singh Bishnoi, Kiran Bishnoi, Mentor and guiding force to Yuvraj Singh Foundation and a prestigious member of the Goa Police family, Mr Reshwin Washington of SBI Foundation and Dr Kedar Raikar, Health Officer at PHC Corlim, Nodal Officer at Directorate of Health Services. Regarding this latest initiative under the 'Swasth Mahila, Swasth Goa' project, Yuvraj Singh said, "A big thank you to Goa Police for supporting our Swasth Mahila, Swasth Goa initiative and for enabling us to screen the female members of your esteemed force and their families for breast cancer. You keep us safe and this is our turn to make you feel safe from cancer. I am confident that through our collaboration, many women will step forward for screening and give a strong fight to this disease."



# PayNearby Launches 'zero investment' plan to celebrate financial independence for rural women and commits to sustainable livelihood for 10 lakh families

## *Second leg of 'Pragati Mahotsav' campaign aims to inspire and onboard women entrepreneurs*

**O**n the occasion of the 75th Independence Day, PayNearby, one of India's leading branchless banking and digital network, has announced the launch of 'zero investment plan' for women entrepreneurs at the last mile, across 20,000+ PIN codes. This comes as an extension of its Independence Day campaign, Pragati Mahotsav, which celebrated the contribution of its retail partners. In addition to accelerating the national vision of financial inclusion for all, this initiative aims to build financial independence among rural women of India by waiving off business account opening fees and thereby inspiring women at the last mile to join the nation building movement. The company aims to on-board 10 lakh+ women entrepreneurs by FY23-24.

With Sashakt Naari, Sashakt Samaaj, Sashakt Desh at its core, the Women Sustainable Employment campaign looks to ensure that every household in India has a woman financially capable of taking care of her family and thus create an empowered society and an empowered nation. PayNearby's 'zidd' is to upskill all women and bring them up the employment curve so that they contribute equally to the growth of the economy, to build a more inclusive and sustainable society.

Commenting on the development, Anand Kumar Bajaj, Founder, MD

& CEO, PayNearby, said, "A country progresses when its women become equal participants in the progress. While the pathway to women's enablement are many, one of the most important facilitators is financial empowerment. It is important women have access to digital and financial tools that give them better control over their earnings and savings. With women as our partners, it will ensure seamless delivery of accessible banking services to every section of the society while uplifting their social standing.

The path that we have undertaken towards the Sashakt Naari, Sashakt Samaaj, Sashakt Desh mission is challenging. But then, the path to a greater good is always riddled with challenges. We believe that women are key to social change and PayNearby is extremely honored to be driving this Sustainable Employment campaign to help them realize their potential in creating a sustainable future. We would like to welcome all Self-Help-Groups and other like-minded institutions to join us in this journey, so that we can maximize the reach of this campaign and empower as many women as possible. We want to empower at least 10 lakh+ women within the next 1 year with steady income opportunities so that they become the harbingers of change, and we are giving them the tools to make India an inclusive and stronger nation. PayNearby, Zidd Aage Badhne Ki!"

Speaking about the campaign, Jayatri Dasgupta, Chief Marketing Officer, PayNearby said, "While Pragati Mahotsav was an ode to PayNearby's retail partners who

are persevering to make Bharat a financially and digitally inclusive nation, the 'Women Sustainable Employment' campaign serves as its perfect finale. In India, close to 48% of the rural population is female. However, owing to societal construct and low literacy rate, they have very little or no access to any form of financial services or employment. Today, only 27% of women in India are employed, out of which women running small businesses account for only 13%. For India to progress, women need to come forward and participate. In such a scenario, the importance of financial and digital education for women at the last-mile becomes very important.

The distribution of Free Business Accounts/banking IDs will allow women, in the rural hinterlands, to easily become the banking and digital points of their areas so that essential financial services can reach every home. With PayNearby, women will learn about cash management, savings, banking, insurance and other financial services that will, in turn, bridge the gender gap at the last mile. As aware banking sakhis, these women will play a crucial role in acquainting people with financial services while furthering the cause of financial inclusion across the country and bringing all into the formal financial fold. The campaign is geared towards giving every woman in the country a new identity, a sustainable livelihood, and an opportunity to become self-reliant, a true reflection of our brand promise, Zidd Aage Badhne Ki," she added.

The Women Sustainable Employment commitment which is

the final leg of the Pragati Mahotsav is aimed to bring women from the confines of the home to the forefront of the economy. In the 75th year of India's Independence, PayNearby hopes to build an equal opportunity platform for them to come ahead and contribute to its One Nation One Service ideology and take Bharat to the next level of growth and inclusion. Towards this purpose, the company is waiving

the cost of the Business Account, currently priced at 1000, required to create and maintain the account. However, women partners will have to pay a bare minimum cost for the KYC completion.

This is one among a series of initiatives that the company will roll out over the next few months to create a more empowered society. Very soon, PayNearby aims to partner with leading banks in the country

and launch savings and current bank accounts at a store nearby for last mile SMEs and customers. This will ensure every household in the country, including its women folks have easy access to opening and operating a bank account, something crucial to the financial well-being at the last mile. The company is on a mission to double its commitment to create a more inclusive and empowered nation.

## Glamyo Health & Milaap join hands to provide required surgical help to the underprivileged

**G**lamyo Health, a healthcare brand that specialises in elective and cosmetic surgeries, has announced a collaboration with Milaap to provide surgical treatments to marginalized communities earning less than Rs 20,000 per month.

With a vision to change the dysfunctional healthcare system in India, the brand looks forward to facilitating the required surgical help to old-age homes & orphans, labourers, migrant workers, rickshaw pullers, auto-rickshaw drivers, house-helpers, security guards, drivers, vegetable and fruit vendors, teasellers and anyone who cannot afford the treatment.

"At Glamyo Health we are extremely glad to have joined hands with Milaap to launch an initiative #healthcareforall. While more than 80% of people in India do not have insurance support, they depend on their immediate earnings to cater for daily expenses, leaving no savings to bear the medical costs. Glamyo Health envisions positively impacting the lives of millions of people suffering from pain and discomfort, ensuring that no one is denied the opportunity to live a healthy life due to financial constraints," says Mr. Archit Garg, Co-founder, Glamyo Health.

The collaboration of Glamyo Health and Milaap to launch the

#healthcareforall campaign is applicable under the following conditions:

- Patients' medical conditions make it difficult for them to work productively.
- Patients must be under the age of 50.
- It should only be possible to curtail a patient's ailment through surgery based on the doctor's recommendation
- The monthly income of a household should not exceed Rs. 20,000.
- The patient has no insurance coverage (group or individual).
- The patient is ineligible for any government programme (Ayushman Bharat, CGHS, ESI, state subsidies, etc.).
- The cost of treatment should be less than Rs 3 lakh.

For us, it is just a small contribution, but it can save someone's life. For the patients who are untreated because of financial constraints, it can be a breadwinner situation. Through this initiative, Glamyo Health wants to extend all the medical support we can to enhance the medical standards of our country. We believe that through this #healthcareforall campaign with Milaap, we will be able to work progressively towards our mission of ensuring quality surgical care for all," says Dr. Preet Pal Thakur, Co-Founder, Glamyo Health.

With 300+ co-branded hospitals, Glamyo Health is a full-stack healthcare service provider enabling patients with a hassle-free experience from admission to discharge. Glamyo offers the most advanced surgical procedures and specialises in treating conditions, like Piles/Fissure/Fistula, Hernia, Kidney Stones, Gallbladder Stones, Enlarged Prostate, Lipoma, Painful Gynecomastia, Cataract, Diagnostics, Varicose Veins, Knee Replacement, and many other conditions. As elective surgery is essential, delay can cause serious medical conditions or pose a threat to life. Given the same, Glamyo Health shares the belief with Milaap that no one should be denied access to healthcare, particularly due to a shortage of funds. Milaap is the largest free crowdfunding platform in India for personal and social causes. Anyone in India can use it to raise money for healthcare, education, sports, disaster relief, and other personal causes.

"The pandemic has taught us the value of healthcare, and it was heartwarming to see everyone banding together and taking a stand to help those in need. Glamyo Health's collaboration with us has launched a ground-breaking initiative to raise funds to provide timely healthcare to those who require it urgently but lack funds," says Mayukh Choudhury, Co-Founder & CEO, Milaap.

# Hyundai Motor India Foundation announces 'Mobile Youth Library and Science Lab' program to empower youth through education



**H**yundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF), the philanthropic arm of Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) flagged off 5 'Mobile Youth Library and Science Labs' from its Headquarters in Gurgaon. This is a new initiative launched by HMIF to provide access to quality education in rural areas of UP. The vans will be received in Lucknow on 5th August 2022 from where they would travel to Gazipur, Gonda, Lalitpur, Shamli and

Shahjahanpur districts, where they would be reaching out to 60 schools in all districts touching approximately 16 000 students.

During the flag off, Unsoo Kim, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL), said, "Youth are the future of our country and we are aware of the lack of access to quality education faced by rural youth. As a youth-centric and socially responsible brand, Hyundai is committed towards empowering children

through education. This program is aimed at promoting intellectual growth and creativity of students by exposing them to a variety of information resources beyond their curriculum. We are sure that the program will help reform rural education and increase accessibility to hands-on learning, embodying our company's global vision of Progress for Humanity."

The vans are equipped with 500 books, 100 experiments, an instructor and 2 librarians who will engage students in the schools through reading sessions and live science experiments suited for students from 6th to 9th standard. The experiments pan across scientific subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. Additionally, school teachers will be trained to conduct these experiments to continue the experience in absence of the van. A Young Instructor Program, Science Fairs wherein unique and interesting activities will be conducted to create a fun-filled learning environment, summer camps, etc. are also included. During school hours, the van will be placed in a school, while in the evening it will travel to a community centre to engage with children and adults who are interested in studying but don't have the means.

The initiative will be expanded in a phased manner in other parts of the state and in select areas across the country. These efforts by Hyundai will render an enjoyable, engaging, and interactive experience for students with the goal of raising awareness on the significance of education among underprivileged children and teachers.



# Bigbasket honours farmers over 75 years of age marking 75 years of Independence



**b**igbasket, a popular online supermarket, recently felicitated over 25 farmers associated with them on the occasion of its 75th Independence Day. All veterans and over 75 years, these farmers are still actively farming. Celebrating the spirit of the country and the grit of the farmers, the ceremony gave a huge boost to them and motivated them to keep going.

The farmers were rewarded with mementos and gifts at the bigbasket's head office in Domlur. They were from the Malur, Denkanikottai, Chintamani and Chikbellapur centers. Gracing the event was Mr TK Balakumar, Chief Operating Officer and Mr. Rakshit Daga, Chief Technology Officer, bigbasket. It was a part of bigbasket's long-standing association with the sons of the soil and the various initiatives that the company undertakes for them.

Speaking about this, TK Balakumar, Chief Operating Officer and Mr. Rakshit Daga, Chief Technology Officer, bigbasket, said, "At bigbasket, we take pride in our association with 30,000+ farmers who strive every day to bring food to



our plates and smiles to our homes. They are the building blocks on which the nation's progress rests and therefore, it is only prudent that we recognize their role in the larger scheme of things. bigbasket's association with its farmers is the backbone of our fruits and vegetable business and we are ensuring that they not only earn a better living with us but are also recognized for their work."

Adding his thoughts, Moksh Ramayya, a farmer from Malekote, said, "My entire family depends on agriculture. While earlier we incurred heavy costs, our association with bigbasket has enabled us to save on commissions and marketing our produce. As a farmer, apart from selling our produce profitably,



security is also of utmost importance to me. With bigbasket, we are assured on all these fronts."

As a part of its Farmer Connect, bigbasket is currently working with over 3000 farmers. About 85% of bigbasket's produce comes directly from farmers. The Farmer Connect program was launched in 2016 to cut the supply chain and ensure quality of the fresh produce. As a result, it helps increase farmers' income by 10% to 15%. bigbasket has set up 65 collection centers across the country.

bigbasket has always strived to put its farmers and customers at the forefront. The company guarantees next-day bank transfers and remunerative payout to farmers and ensures safe, fresh and best quality harvest to consumers at competitive prices.

## India's Youngest, Seventeen Months Baby, Gets an Implantable Cardioverter-defibrillators (ICD) Implant

**G**enesis Foundation has announced the successful implant of Implantable Cardioverter-defibrillators (ICD) on a seventeen-month-old baby boy, who became the youngest child in India to get an ICD implant via an open chest surgery.

The support from their CSR partner, Wipro GE Healthcare, a leading global medical technology and digital solutions innovator, provided the family with the required financial assistance and saved the budding little heart. was operated on July 22 by Dr. Vijayakumar, Director-Centre for Paediatric Congenital Heart Disease at G Kuppuswamy Naidu Memorial Hospital (GKNM Hospital), Coimbatore.

The surgery is one-of-its-kind - since in general cases the ICD device implant is done inside the heart via open heart surgery, but owing to Thomas' age, the device was placed on his heart. The baby was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect known as Long QT Syndrome, a rare heart defect where an abnormal cardiac rhythm is experienced due to a delay in the electrical impulses triggering the heart to beat. This leads the patient to recurring syncope (loss of consciousness), which can lead to sudden death due to cardiac arrest. In such cases, an Implantable Cardioverter-defibrillator or an ICD device can help regulate the heart's electrical impulses and stabilize the patient.

"Thomas survived four episodes of syncope before the surgery. He was fortunate enough to survive them all but another one could have been fatal. This baby proved to be a brave little heart to undergo such major surgery and recover at a good pace. Together we have enabled him to live a near-normal life," said Dr. Vijayakumar, Paediatric Cardiac Surgeon, GKNM Hospital, Coimbatore.

"Every child is precious, and we believe no child should die due to a lack of funds for treatment. At Genesis Foundation we're always trying to push boundaries when it comes to ensuring support for underprivileged children born with rare heart defects. We are grateful to GKNM hospital and our CSR partner- Wipro GE for supporting us in giving Thomas a healthy and bright future," said Simran Sagar, Operations Director, Genesis Foundation.

## KDM celebrates Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav with ISKCON Govardhan Eco Village

**M**umbai-based leading consumer lifestyle and mobile accessories brand KDM joined the nation in celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour by creating a new micro-forest at ISKCON Govardhan Eco Village.

Project VRUKSHYGEN is a KDM initiated revolutionary Miyawaki afforestation project to raise similar 75 micro-forests across India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Independence. The project is aimed to make India green with a unique concept of growing self-sustaining micro-

forests to enhance and increase the oxygen levels in urban, semi urban, tier 2 & 3 cities.

N D Mali, Founder of KDM, who is on a mission to raise 75 micro-forests by next Independence Day said, "KDM is dedicated and committed towards the environment and believes in values, culture, heritage and spiritual evolution. With all this, there is growth. Likewise, India also has exponential potential to grow by the centenary year. Govardhan Eco Village is an epitome of natural self-sustainability,



KDM Founder N D Mali with GEV Gurukool students



KDM Founder N D Mali and Co-Founder Bhawarlal Suthar planting micro-forest at ISKCON GEV

empowering rural India towards Aatmanirbharta."

"VRUKSHYGEN is a collaborative project of KDM, GEV, Go Shoonya, NSS & other associations to plant 75 micro-forests and contribute back to the ecosystem," said Bhawarlal Suthar, Co-Founder, KDM.

"KDM's noble initiative of restoring the forest cover in the country in association with GEV is commendable and indeed a benchmark in corporate social responsibility," said Madhava Gaur Das, GEV Monk, Secretary Sustainability and Spirituality.

KDM conveyed heartfelt gratitude to His Holiness Radhanath Swami, Gauranga Das, Madhu Madhav Das, and Madhav Priya Das for the opportunity.

GEV Gurukool students participated in the flag march with enthusiasm. Besides, food was served to the tribals.



# WayCool creates 7500+ sq ft tricolor with fresh vegetables

In commemoration of the 75th Independence Day - Azaadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, WayCool Foods, India's leading food and agri-tech platform today created a first-of-its-kind food flag installation spread approx 7632 sq.ft near its Distribution Centre at Kannamangala, Bangalore. The food flag was symbolic of India's successful transformation from a food scarce to a food surplus nation and a journey to become a food powerhouse for the world. It is also one of the largest producers of fruits and vegetables in the world. The fruits and vegetables being used in the creation of the flag were distributed to The Akshaya Patra Foundation immediately after the event. A refreshing take on the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign, WayCool successfully recreated the tri-colors of the flag with a fine selection of grown-in-india fresh produce like carrots, radishes, green okra, beans, capsicum, as well as value added products such as Potato flakes, and more. Over 20 tonnes and various varieties of fresh produce were used, this showcasing India's incredible versatility and diversity of agricultural output. The saffron was represented by carrots, radishes and potato flakes forming the white & the flag was given a magnificent finish of green with capsicum, beans and ladies finger (green okra).

The company also used its storage and handling technologies to ensure that not a single gram of the produce used in the display was wasted, and the produce was handled with the best hygiene practices. The produce was then donated to Akshaya Patra Foundation. One of the largest Food Flags created, the company also ensured that it fed the needy with near to zero food wastage.



**The Grand Indian Food Flag Installation consisted of various varieties of vegetables weighing approx 20 tons as a part of Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign**

**Entire produce was donated to Akshaya Patra foundation**

About WayCool - WayCool Foods is India's leading food and agri-tech platform. Focusing on food development and distribution, the company leverages innovative technology to scale and operate a complex supply chain from soil to sale. Through its farmer engagement program - Outgrow, the company works closely with 150k farmers. WayCool operates a full stack, broadline product range across multiple channels and categories such as fresh produce, staples, and dairy, serving over 100,000 clients in the general trade, modern trade, and food services space. WayCool's consumer brands basket consists of Madhuram, Kitchenji, L'exotique, and Freshey's, to name a few.



# INDIA BARES NEW CLIMATE GOALS

## AMID COAL DEPENDENCY WOES

The Indian cabinet approved India's updated Nationally Determined Contributions in line with the commitments under the Paris Agreement and the announcements made at the Glasgow COP26 Summit, writes **Manish Kumar**, [Mongabay.com](https://www.mongabay.com)

A pedestrian waits to cross a street in Mumbai, India. Image: World Bank Photo Collection, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.



India has gotten its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) approved by the Cabinet. This will be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). NDCs, which are long-term voluntary commitments made by countries signatory to the Paris Agreement, make up a global effort to reduce emissions and global warming.

In the latest updated NDCs, which broadly represent India's framework for its energy transition between 2021 and 2030, the country has committed to attaining 50 per cent of its total electric power installed capacity through non-fossil fuel-based energy resources (renewable energy, including hydropower) by the year 2030.

At the UN climate change conference (COP26) at Glasgow last year, India announced a target of achieving 500 gigawatt (GW) of its total energy from non-fossil fuel-based energy sources by 2030.

The updated NDCs also committed to reduce India's emissions intensity (volume of emissions per unit of its Gross Domestic Product) by 45 per cent in 2030 from the 2005 levels. They maintain the commitment of going net zero by 2070. However, the updated NDCs are silent on the commitment of the total reduction of carbon emissions by one billion tonnes.

As per the latest data from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), India's current total installed capacity of power stands at 404 GW out of which the majority of the power (50 per cent) comes from coal, whereas renewable sources of energy account for 28 per cent and hydro energy accounts for 12 per cent.

In the announcement of the updated NDCs, the government said that a policy push to achieve these goals could help in creating more green jobs in the clean energy sector,

increase its manufacturing capabilities, pace up exports while increasing the manufacture of low emission alternatives such as electric vehicles, with the added thrust on innovative technologies and green hydrogen.

The announcement also said that the government's previous target of making the Indian railways emission-free by 2030 would also help in reducing emissions worth 60 million tonnes annually. It also batted for the dues from the developed countries to developing countries like India, for the Climate Finance and Technology Transfers, a mandate accepted by the developed countries at different COPs held over the last few decades.

### **CAPACITY BUILDING AND GREEN FINANCE**

Experts working on the energy sector and related policies in India welcomed the global commitments made by India through the updated NDCs. However, they highlighted the hurdles that are likely to show up on India's path towards energy transition. Chennai-based Bharath Jairaj, Director (Energy) at the World Resources Institute (WRI) India, told Mongabay-India that the updated NDCs helped in bringing clarity on the issue of India's commitment to reduce its emissions and tackle the challenges of climate change. "During COP26, the Indian government made the commitment that 50 per cent of the country's energy would

come through non-fossil fuel energy. But it was not clear if it was related to the total generation or installed capacity. We were hoping this would be an ambitious generation target, but NDCs clarify that the focus is on total installed capacity," he said. He also added that in the past few decades there has been a good growth of renewable energy in India starting from the initial target of achieving 20 GW of solar energy as mandated by the Solar Mission in 2009 which, in 2018, was updated to 175 GW of total renewable energy by 2022.

"Besides the impact of Covid and existing developmental issues, India proved strong in its clean energy pathway as its targets and success rate increased. Now with the latest NDCs, the destination and the road to that destination are clear, and the journey is well underway. However, as climate change is a shared problem for the whole world, India and other developing countries do need climate finance and technology transfers from developed countries as committed by them during the Paris Agreement and at other COPs in the past," he added.

Jairaj's views also coincide with Indian government's data on receiving global green funds as committed by developed countries way back in 2009 at the COP15 held at Copenhagen. The Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change told Parliament that the commitment of a total of \$100 billion every

year by 2020, by developed countries for developing countries like India, was delayed.

Shantanu Srivastava, Energy Finance Analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) opines that there is some dilution of commitments, while comparing the announcements made by India at COP26 and the updated NDCs. He however told Mongabay-India that the new NDCs can help in bolstering the confidence of private investors who are keen to invest in the clean energy sector in India, in the days to come.

“For any foreign investor who is keen to invest in the clean energy sector, a country with a concrete policy is always preferred. With the updated NDCs, India has put forth its long-term policy which could leverage private foreign investments in the sector. Any investor who is keen to invest in the Indian RE market now knows an approved long-term plan of the government, where it has planned to scale up its clean energy production basket,” he said.

Srivastava said that global aid in the form of climate finance has been miniscule and complex for developing countries to receive. This could curb the growth of clean energy as envisioned by the Indian government through their NDCs. Srivastava however batted for using global Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Financing which includes green bonds and other means of sustainability-linked facilities to scale up its clean energy sector financing. He also cited how NTPC, SBI, ReNew, Adani Greens and others used this route to finance their projects in the past successfully.

A study report released recently by IEEFA in June 2022 hinted at the shortfall of investments in the clean energy sector in India. The report claimed that while the investments in India in the sector increased by 125 per cent in 2021-22, it needed further acceleration. It said that if

India wanted to achieve its 2030 targets, it needed around \$30 billion to \$40 billion every year, whereas the real investment now stands at around \$14.5 billion.

### COAL DEPENDENCY AND OTHER HURDLES

Other experts however claimed that the several paths adopted by the Indian government to boost the clean energy sector in the country in the last few years suffered from some faulty policies. Ranjan Panda, Convener, Water Initiatives based in Odisha, who keeps a track on global climate negotiations told Mongabay-India that the lack of a decentralised thrust to promote clean energy has kept it away from the masses. The focus of the government is on the mega clean energy projects by big players.

“If we want to counter the usage of fossil fuels we need to create demand and accessibility of solar energy to the masses at a local level, like at a municipal level. If there is accessibility and people adapt to these new technologies, only then can people plan to shun fossil fuels. You take the example of rooftop solar, the whole idea did not find its reach in local levels and it got confined to limited consumers. The need of the hour is to make it affordable, incentivise the domestic consumers so that there is large-scale revolution in the sector. Such steps can also lead to creation of more green jobs in local areas, rise in entrepreneurship and give impetus to local manufacturing,” Panda said.

According to CEA forecast, India, which relied on coal for 50 per cent of its total energy by the end of June 2022, will see 33 per cent of its total energy coming from coal by 2029-2030 whereas 64 per cent of the total energy is likely to come from non-fossil fuels during the same period. However, Panda says the work progress on phasing out coal slowly in the country, has not been satisfactory. He also said that the pace of decommissioning coal-based plants

is not going up with the pace of rise of renewable energy and claimed that if the decentralised planning of clean energy is not promoted with accelerated interest, India could fail in achieving its commitments as presented in the updated NDCs.

Chhattisgarh-based environmentalist and lawyer Sudiep Shrivastava told Mongabay-India that the commitments made in the updated NDCs are very conservative and not in line with the expected growth of the clean energy sector in India.

“Under the updated NDCs, India planned to include hydro energy too, with renewable energy and plans to achieve 50 per cent of their total installed capacity with non-fossil fuels, which are highly conservative and not at all ambitious if comes to growth of clean energy in India. According to the estimates of Central Electricity Authority (CEA) solar and wind energy alone were expected to share 50 per cent of the total energy share by 2030. The government is going back on its own expectations and past pace rates. This will lead to higher dependency on coal citing higher demands as we saw in the recent few episodes of the coal crisis,” he said.

He accused the government of going back on its own announcements made at international platforms such as at the International Solar Alliance among others.

Also, even if global commitments were set aside, India seems to be floundering on its own targets too. India’s Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) admitted in a recent Parliamentary Panel Report that the country’s set target of achieving 175 GW of renewable energy by the end of 2022 could not be achieved, citing Covid pandemic and other reasons. 

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*(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/india-bares-new-climate-goals-amid-coal-dependency-woes/>)*



Two young girls use a bamboo bridge to cross a river after collecting fresh water in Bangladesh.

*Image: WorldFish, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.*



# BUILD, COLLAPSE, REBUILD:

Life on the river islands  
of Bangladesh

## New adaptation measures bring hope to people on the chars of the Brahmaputra, whose homes are often lost to floods and erosion, writes By **Rafiqul Islam,** **thethirdpole.net**

**S**ukhi means happy. But there have been few happy moments in the life of 70-year-old Sukhi Begum. She has lost her home seven times in the last 50 years due to flooding and riverbank erosion by the Brahmaputra river.

The mother of five still lives on a riverine island – called a char – and fears her home will be washed away again. However, people are adapting in ways old and new. There are signs of hope. “We came to Pakuar Char of Sariakandi [in Bogura district of northern Bangladesh] around 50 years ago. I still remember the day when we were first displaced due to riverbank erosion. We built homes there to start a new life, but the river devoured our homes time and again.”

Still, Sukhi does not want to live anywhere else. She knows that floods destroy, but they also bring fresh silt from the Himalayas, making the chars the most fertile land in the Bengal delta. “I was born in a char and want to breathe my last in a char too.”

The Brahmaputra – called the Jamuna in Bangladesh – destroys chars and simultaneously adds to them by depositing silt. As it did so on one side of Pakuar Char, 34-year-old farmer Ziaur Rahman sowed jute, though he knew a flood could wash away his crop any time, especially during the June-September monsoon.

He has shifted his home to a relatively more permanent island

– just another way of adapting to the floods that are becoming more frequent due to climate change.

### **Adaptation every monsoon**

People living on the Brahmaputra chars know that large parts of the low-lying sand-and-silt islands will be inundated every monsoon. It does not take a big flood. Some raise the earthen foundations of their homes as high as they can afford to. Then they hang their bedsteads from rafters, hammock style. Planks are hammered together to make lofts at the same higher level. This is where they live when the floor is flooded.

But the water may rise further. So, in just about every home, trunks of banana plants are lashed together to form rafts on which families will live, sometimes for months. The wealthiest shelter in their own boats. Huts, roads, markets – all are under water.

“When floods inundates our homesteads, we must live in lofts built inside houses or on boats or the rafts. When the situation gets worse, people move to [government-run] shelters. But they do not want to go there leaving their all belongings behind,” said Ziaur.

There is one thing to be seen in every char household, however poor – a waterproof box. Land title deeds and all legal papers are carefully folded inside polythene packets, which are kept inside the box.

The big adaptation is in agriculture. Mozam Mondal of nearby Char Shovagacha said farmers are now cultivating flood-tolerant varieties of maize. “I cultivated maize on one acre this year and there was bumper production.”

“We like to sow maize on chars as we get a fair price for the cash crop. It’s higher than for other crops. I sold maize at BDT 1,300 [USD 15] per maund [37.32 kg] this year,” said Mozammel Haque, a farmer on Char Dawlatpur in Sharishabari sub-district.

What happens to their livestock? Mozam said residents must keep the livestock on the same rafts. People carry dried rice in various forms as food. There is nothing for the livestock until they manage to pole their rafts to the nearest patch of grass.

### **Raising homes, raising hopes**

Eamilly Begum, 50, knew her family could not afford to raise the foundation of their char home. But she got

“  
**Collecting drinking water is a hard task indeed. We have to go a long distance by boat or raft.**

**MAHMUDA BEGUM**  
Resident, Char Damudpur

support to do so in 2021 from the Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation, a government-run development organisation. She thinks the family will be relatively safe now.

“In the past, we had to sell our goats at lower prices before the monsoon as we had no way to keep our goats during floods,” Eamily said. But now the raised plinth of her family homestead has enough space to house the goats they rear. “Now we will not sell our goats [cheap] during a flood.”

Some raised plinths are large enough to grow fruits and vegetables around the homestead. “I have already earned about Taka 1,400 [USD 16] by selling bottle gourd,”

tation has improved on many chars – government-built public toilets have been raised higher so they are not submerged as quickly as before.

“In the past, our tubewells and toilets were inundated during the floods. Now we have installed them on raised plinths. We hope we will not face any drinking water and sanitation crisis during floods in future,” said Afroza Begum of Nadaghari Char at Madarganj.

### Floods take heavier toll on women and children

A flood does not change the traditional roles of women – cooking and fetching drinking water. It makes their jobs harder. Some have to

facilities for children in char areas. The few schools that exist are flooded every year, leaving children to miss classes for months.

### Why do people live on chars?

The chars formed as the Brahmaputra, Ganga and other rivers brought silt down from the Himalayas. The river islands are so fertile that they have been fought over for centuries. Local landlords used to keep private armies (called paiks and lathials) to take over chars, and incentivised landless farmers to cultivate the char lands and live there despite the difficulties. Many of the farming families living on chars today are descendants.

They grow rice, maize, jute and vegetables – all of which grow better here than on other soils. “There is no shortage of crops in the chars anytime of the year,” said Mahmuda Begum.

### Shortage of health and other services

Alal Mondal, a resident of Char Shovagacha, said that if anyone falls ill, there is no doctor on the island. “So, the patient must be taken to Gabergram, three kilometres away, by boat or raft. Then they may have to be shifted to a hospital in Jamalpur.” His neighbour Abdur Rahman said there is no community clinic on the char.

Char residents have little access to government-run schemes such as the vulnerable group feeding scheme, vulnerable group development programme, old-age allowance, widow allowance or disability allowance. There are allegations that officials seek bribes before agreeing to include anyone in a scheme. ■

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(Source: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox?compose=DmwnWrRlQmchbDvZMFgnBdmGQZwkdKGgdkvJWHvpNJIRJmqVSwkCqMCWzdTDHmvTRZfMTfcScI>)

**Char residents have little access to government-run schemes such as the vulnerable group feeding scheme, vulnerable group development programme, old-age allowance, widow allowance or disability allowance.**

said Seema Begum, another resident. “I will be able to earn more by selling papaya. The fruit has started ripening.”

Pogidur Rahman, coordinator of the PKSP Extended Community Climate Project – Flood, said the project has provided financial support to 87 families to build climate-resilient houses by raising plinths. But, Rahman said, this support is not enough as there are a huge number of poor families living on the chars.

### Tackling flooded tubewells and toilets

Floods submerge the tubewells from which char dwellers get their drinking water. Every monsoon, they face a water shortage. But sani-

travel up to a kilometre to get to a functioning tubewell. Some reach it on boats or rafts. Others must wade through, sometimes barely keeping their heads above the floodwaters.

“Collecting drinking water is a hard task indeed,” said Mahmuda Begum, resident of Char Damudpur in Jamalpur district. “We have to go a long distance by boat or raft.” And when women are forced to stay in shelters or atop embankments, they are vulnerable to sexual harassment, especially when they use public toilets at night, said Muhammed Forruq Rahman, research and advocacy manager of the local NGO Network on Climate Change, Bangladesh. There are not enough education



# Erratic monsoons cast long shadow over India's economic heartlands

A late-arriving monsoon has hammered India's agricultural output and affected global food supply chains. It has also revealed how vulnerable India is to climate risk, writes **Biman Mukherji**

**E**very summer, thousands of Hindu pilgrims trek through miles of snow in Indian Kashmir to pay homage to a natural ice formation believed to be the embodiment of God Shiva called Baba Amarnath, but even veteran devotees were caught unawares when a cloud burst swept the mouth of the cave shrine on 10 July. Sixteen people have died and 40 are missing in the unprecedented disaster, which scientists have attributed to global warming. The impact of climate change is now being felt across the South Asian sub-continent's most important season, the annual monsoon that brings 70 per cent of rains.

Indian kings once erected palaces to watch the dark clouds sweep across the horizon during the June-September season and the country's most famous poet, Kalidasa, wrote an epic romance Meghaduta in tribute to them. But erratic monsoons are now emerging as one of the country's biggest policy headaches.

Mawsynram, the world's wettest place located in north-eastern India, recorded the highest single day of



**A flood affected resident in India.** A flood affected resident in India. Mawsynram, the world's wettest place located in north-eastern India, recorded the highest single day of rainfall in more than half a century on 17 June. Image: Biju Boro via The Third Pole

rainfall in more than half a century on 17 June, even as large tracts of northern-western and central provinces have been battling drought-like conditions that affected the summer seed-sowing season.

Until a couple of decade ago, such weather extremes were uncommon and rainfall distribution across the four-month season was far more even. But weather disasters are now occurring regularly and the rainy season's onset in different provinces has become more unpredictable, making it tough for farmers to plan when to sow their crops.

India's total volume of rains during the four-month monsoon is expected to be in line with a historic long period average for a fourth year this year, according to the state-run

India Meteorological Department. But experts now question the weather department's description of "normal monsoon" because of the uneven spread of rains that have characterised the monsoon season of late.

## Normal monsoon turns abnormal

"The definition (of normal monsoon) hides a lot of variations that are emerging which have serious implications. If the rains are not equitably distributed, then it creates droughts and floods. In either case, it's not good for agriculture," said Sunil Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings, a credit rating agency,

India's poor planning to cope with the shifting course of monsoon has been compounded by rampant urban-

isation that has blocked traditional water channels in towns and cities, further compounding the weather's impact, he says.

Although India has announced an ambitious target to produce around half of the country's electricity from non-fossil fuel sources to combat climate change, the country has lagged behind in efforts to better prepare rural communities to adapt their livelihoods.

The implications of erratic monsoon patterns are significant as India is the world's largest exporter of rice and the bulk of the water-guzzling crop is sown in the summer season. India recently imposed a wheat export ban that sent prices spiralling globally.

Other important crops such as oilseed and cotton are also planted during the monsoon season as over 40 per cent of the country's crop sowing area is rain-dependent. Lack of adequate advance information about changing weather patterns is prompting farmers to switch to hardier cash crops from traditional food varieties.

The weather extremes that have played out half-way into this year's monsoon have resulted in a 24 per cent decline in the sowing area of the main summer crop rice compared to last year, as well as a 13.7 per cent drop for other cereals. The planting area for oilseeds has also declined, by 20.3 per cent, and for sugarcane and cotton by 0.5 per cent and 0.2 per cent, respectively.

If sowing activity does not pick up dramatically over the next few weeks, it will significantly hurt India's economy and affect global food supply chains.

The uncertainty over agricultural production comes at a time when India's food price inflation is likely to top 9 per cent in the second half of 2022 on the back of higher feedstock costs due to the Russia-Ukraine war and higher assured prices of crops provided by the Indian government

to farmers, according to a report by Nomura, a financial services firm.

Climate experts blame policy-makers for the country's inadequate preparedness for monsoon's fluctuations.

The Council for Energy Environment and Water (CEEW) estimates that India could have saved \$89.7 billion over the last two decades if the country was better prepared for climate change. Around 75 per cent of Indian districts—an administrative sub division of the country's geographical area—are extreme climate event hotspots, says CEEW.

It estimates that a 1 per cent decrease in monsoon rainfall can lead to a 0.34 per cent drop in the country's agriculture dependent economy. This is because the impact of a weak monsoon season is not limited to agriculture alone and can shave off 13 per cent of the country's electricity generation, as India's hydropower output is affected.

"Each district should have a disaster management plan that is annually updated, but unfortunately none of the zones [a large administrative area comprising several districts] have a high capacity to adapt to weather disasters such as floods, droughts, cyclones and thunder storms, said Abinash Mohanty, programme lead for risks and adaptation at CEEW.

He urged authorities to install technological systems that can help improve provinces to predict and prepare for extreme weather events.

"This will only happen when we provide granular climate information that can inform a farmer of the impact it will have on crops and the steps that need to be taken in the short, medium and long term," said Mohanty.

The state-run Indian Meteorological Department has been accurate in predicting rainfall over the short to medium term, but has fallen short on long term predictions, according to experts.

## Staving off a food crisis

India produced a record 303 million tonnes of food grain in 2021 and has vast buffer stocks that helped authorities to distribute highly-subsidised food to the needy during the pandemic. But the South Asian country, which is set to be the world's most populous by next year, needs to plan ahead to cope with intensifying climate impacts.

The biggest fear that scientists have is "what will happen to India's food security in the years to come," said Davinder Singh, an agriculture trade policy analyst during a recent webinar. "The (Russia-Ukraine) war has shown that the world cannot be dependent on global supply chains."

According to a report by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation, the number of people affected by hunger globally rose to 828 million in 2021, up 18 per cent, or 150 million people since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, an all-time high of up to 49 million people in 46 countries are at risk of succumbing to famine or famine-like conditions including parts of Africa and Afghanistan. India needs better ways of implementing climate change policies to stave off a future food crisis, say experts.

"We need a separate ministry for climate change," said Anjal Prakash, research director at Bharti Institute of Public Policy, a thinktank. Decisions to cope with climate change are taken by one of 20 administrative divisions of the federal Indian government's Ministry of Environment. "The new-age information and skills that are required to combat climate change are just not there at the moment," said Prakash. "The problem is so huge and the response of the government is miniscule and fragmented. There are enough policies, but the information is not reaching people," he said. 

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/erratic-monsoons-cast-long-shadow-over-indias-economic-heartlands/>)



DHL is testing electric vehicles in Malaysia and Singapore and e-Scooters in Vietnam as it works towards a goal of cutting its logistics-related greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050. Image: DHL

# SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS AND THE ROAD TO NET ZERO

The road to decarbonisation requires commitment and collaboration between the private and public sector to ensure that companies and countries reduce their carbon emissions. Logistics is one key area where there is vast room for improvement.



**T**here were 131 billion parcels shipped worldwide in 2020 — a figure that is predicted to double in the next five years. Asia represents a huge market for global trade and logistics with the continent expected to account for 57 per cent of the growth of the global e-commerce logistics markets between 2020 and 2025.

But getting things from A to B creates an enormous carbon footprint.

Transportation was responsible for 8.26 gigatons, or about 26 per cent, of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions globally in 2018, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). Freight, the transport of goods, accounts for more than 7 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the International Transport Forum.

Slashing planet-warming gases produced by transport and logistics will be instrumental in helping nations and corporates hit their climate goals. A raft of corporate net-zero commitments has largely led to rapid efforts to drive down direct Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions. More organisations are pledging to reduce Scope 3 emissions generated upstream and downstream of the value chain and those embodied in transport and distribution.

Supply chains have become longer, more complex as logistics networks link more economic centres together and consumer preferences change leading to more regular, smaller freight shipments and rapid delivery by energy-intensive transport such as air freight.

While Europe and North America dominate historic transport emissions, much of the projected growth in emissions is in Asia, according to the World Economic Forum which reckons that highly ambitious policies could cut emissions by 70 per cent – but not to zero.

Operating in 220 countries and territories, Germany-headquartered

Deutsche Post DHL Group is one of the largest logistics firms in the world. It also produced 33.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in 2020.

The organisation has pegged its pathway to decarbonisation on reducing annual group carbon dioxide emissions to below 29 million tonnes by 2030 as it attempts to hit zero emissions by 2050. An investment of US\$7.6 billion until 2030 will be funnelled into alternative aviation fuels, the expansion of electric vehicles and climate-neutral buildings, the group announced on 22 March.

“Logistics is a key contributor to the global carbon footprint. DHL occupies a big share of global logistics,” said Amrita Khadilkar, regional director, Operations Development,

Digitalisation and GoGreen, APAC. “In order to accelerate the move towards net zero carbon logistics, more work needs to be done to develop solutions within transport,” Khadilkar said. Private sector efforts alone are not enough, governments and policymakers must also buoy decarbonisation efforts.

## From burning less, to burning clean

The S-curve charts the firm’s path to net zero logistics emissions.

The early climb on the solid S-curve represents carbon reduction strategies through supply chain efficiencies using existing technology that will enable the firm to burn fewer fossil fuels.

Carbon offsets are used to compensate for the hard-to-abate



The S-curve framework - used to illustrate the typical pattern of start, rapid growth and maturity of technology diffusion as well as the corresponding efficiency improvements across an industry or economy - is one way to guide carbon reduction in logistics. This is achieved by reducing, compensating and removing. Image: DHL

emissions and bridge the leap to the second dotted line S-curve—which represents the impending usage of new and currently less familiar types of technologies and approaches for carbon reduction—the final leg to net zero.

On this ‘burn clean’ pathway, the company sees the removal of carbon through sustainable fuels and alternative technologies, such as electric vehicles.

However, there are several roadblocks to getting transport and logistics firms to burn clean fuels and move closer to net zero. Initial efforts show that firms find it challenging to navigate this road alone without meaningful collaboration.

“Most logistics firms have the know-how for reducing their carbon footprint using their existing

greater opportunities for carbon footprint reduction,” he added.

Transport is still largely dependent on fossil fuels and is likely to remain so in the coming decades. Long-distance road freight (large trucks), aviation and shipping are areas from which carbon is particularly difficult to eliminate.

The potential for hydrogen as a fuel, or battery electricity to run planes, ships and large trucks is limited by the range and power required; the size and weight of batteries or hydrogen fuel tanks would be much larger and heavier than current combustion engines.

Currently, the logistics sector has low clean-technology maturity and high costs for such, such as new energy vehicles (NEVs), sustainable fuels, according to DHL. Supporting

cuts in fossil fuels to reach the mid-century target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Climate Action 100+, the world’s largest grouping of investors representing US\$65 trillion in assets, warned in March that the aviation industry needed to take “urgent action” to align with the world’s climate goal. Its report highlighted the need for a “substantial” increase in sustainable aviation fuel between now and 2030.

### Collaboration is key

In a bid to cut the reliance on fossil fuels in its air freight, DHL has set an ambitious goal of using 30 per cent sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) for all air transport by 2030.

Last month, DHL announced one of the largest SAF deals with bp and Neste which have committed to provide 800 million litres until 2026. DHL expects its strategic collaborations to save about two million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions over the aviation fuel lifecycle – equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas emissions of about 400,000 passenger cars.

Tackling emissions created on land, DHL teamed up with Swedish firm, Volvo Trucksto introduce heavy duty electric delivery trucks for regional transport in Europe. The initiative is buoyed with funding from the country’s innovation agency, Vinnova and energy agency.

The adoption of new fuel technologies, essential to helping firms complete the journey to zero carbon emissions, requires partnering with governments to fund research and development efforts. Public investment in higher-risk programmes can also lead to the development of potentially disruptive technologies for energy applications.

“Government support can improve the rate of adoption of such technologies or solutions,” said Khadilkar. “Government incentives can also enable more research in

**The adoption of sustainable alternatives has accelerated in countries where governments are offering financial support. This includes subsidies and incentives through tax relief. Government subsidies have helped China become the world’s largest market for EVs. It is expected to exceed the government 2025 target and hit 20 per cent nationwide penetration this year.**

technologies and familiar ways of working. But that will only take them so far as per the solid S-curve,” said Professor Emeritus Steven Miller, former vice provost (Research), Singapore Management University.

“To make the required progress in carbon reduction, companies need to jump to the next-generation (dotted line) S-curve enabled by new technology and new ways of working which will enable far

infrastructure like charging ports for EVs and access to renewable energy is currently lacking in some markets, driving up the cost of sustainable alternatives further. Meanwhile, aviation is still grappling with hitting on a viable low-carbon strategy.

“Some of the sustainable technologies and solutions in the early stages may not be commercially viable or operationally scalable,” acknowledged Khadilkar. The IEA says that there needs to be deep

green technologies and speed up any efforts to bring them to market.”

This would also reduce the cost. While companies like DHL and its industry peers can pilot new green technologies into freight, the cost will have to be shouldered by the consumer to some extent. Customers and companies say they want to live more sustainably but not all are willing to pay a premium to enable it.

Firms can only edge closer to net zero through trial and error. “Governments need to help through more research and development support, staging and coordinating larger scale domestic and international field trials, and by providing incentives for relevant business investments in new technology and capital, as well as in the related needs for human learning and training to work with these new technologies,” Miller said.

The adoption of sustainable alternatives has accelerated in countries where governments are offering financial support. This includes subsidies and incentives through tax relief. Government subsidies have helped China become the world’s largest market for EVs. It is expected to exceed the government 2025 target and hit 20 per cent nationwide penetration this year.

“Investing or promoting green infrastructure can enable local businesses’ operations to be greener—through available and affordable renewable energy or developed local EV charging infrastructure, for example. A regulatory push such as inner city emissions regulation, or incentives like tax breaks, subsidies, are other ways we have seen help accelerate sustainability efforts,” said Kevin Jungnitsch, project manager & APAC sustainability lead, DHL Consulting APAC office.

Governments have also proven that they can help reduce emissions created by last-mile delivery.

In Singapore, a nationwide parcel delivery locker network spearheaded by the Infocomm

Media Development Authority of Singapore allows e-commerce platforms and their customers collect and return online purchases using parcel lockers scattered across the city. It is expected to reduce the distance travelled for delivery purposes by 44 per cent daily and the city state’s CO2 emissions by up to 50 tonnes a year.

Waste also needs to be addressed. Out of the 1.56 million tonnes of household waste generated in Singapore in 2018, approximately one-third was packaging, according to a study by the World Wide Fund for Nature and DHL Consulting published in November. About 2000,000 e-commerce parcels are delivered daily in the city state, and this is expected to grow by about 50 per cent in the next three years.

In a bid to stem the tide of waste, a six-month pilot scheme was launched last month in Singapore to encourage shoppers to return packaging from their online purchases and encourage retailers to adopt a circular waste model. The pilot is an attempt to tackle the mountains of waste caused by the high volume of online shopping.

### Navigating the decarbonisation road map

Supply chains are coming under greater scrutiny as firms and countries accelerate efforts to decarbonise. If the transport and logistics industry fails to respond effectively, it is likely to face significant and rapid regulatory tightening, and ever greater scrutiny from capital markets.

Strong public-private partnerships are needed to accelerate the necessary transition to the new generation of technology and new supporting business processes and ways of working in order to get supply chains to net zero carbon emissions, Miller added.


The private sector and government institutions could follow a

simple framework to prompt deeper discussion and action surrounding the acceleration of adopting decarbonising logistics. This begins with a discovery phase where current infrastructure, resources and technologies are evaluated, sustainability challenges assessed, and key areas of focus are prioritised.

Embedding sustainability into corporate governance could help influence the decision-making that flows into the supply chain. This includes measures such as introducing mandatory sustainability requirements around reporting and transparency. The challenge for governments will be to encourage companies to form robust decarbonisation plans with supporting incentives so that no single player is penalised for taking the harder path to sustainability.

Lastly, companies on the path to net zero need to examine each aspect of decarbonisation and identify where they can follow, share or lead on aspects of the net zero journey. While some firms will be able to distinguish themselves as sustainable leaders in some areas, they will also need to make alliances with public and private stakeholders.

But time is of the essence as capping the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels — a target key to avoiding the worst climate impacts — is slipping further out of reach.

“Climate promises and plans must be turned into reality and action now,” said Antonio Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations, following a clarion call by hundreds of scientists last month to take action against climate change. “It is time to stop burning our planet, and start investing in the abundant renewable energy all around us.” 

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/sustainable-supply-chains-and-the-road-to-net-zero/>)



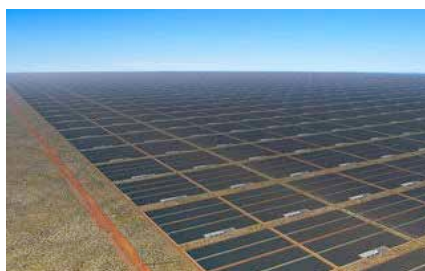
# Southeast Asia cross-border clean energy trade gets a boost with Laos-Singapore sales

A project to send solar power from Australia to Singapore has also been deemed investment-ready. These are important milestones for multilateral energy trade in Asia-Pacific, said experts, but the incremental gains reveal huge challenges.

**S**ingapore has started to import hydroelectricity from Laos, using existing cables running through Thailand and Malaysia, according to a statement by policy-makers and utility firms in the two transacting countries.

At the same time, the Australian government has labelled a project to send solar power from Australia to Singapore via thousands of kilometres of undersea cables “investment ready”, signalling the authorities’ greater confidence in the deliverability of the proposal.

Both represent progress in plans, many years in the making, to trade renewable energy in Asia Pacific, though it could still take till the end of the decade to see large-scale transactions happening, according to current plans.



Australian energy firm Sun Cable wants to build solar panels on 12,000 hectares of land in northern Australia, as represented in this render image. Part of the energy generated is to be sold to Singapore, thousands of kilometres away. Image: Sun Cable.

## Laos-Singapore trade

According to a two-year power purchase agreement announced by Singapore electricity retailer Keppel Electric and its Laotian counterpart Électricité Du Laos (EDL) on Thursday, Singapore will import up to 100 megawatts of electricity from Laos. The inking of the agreement comes eight years after the inception of the plan.

The price of the imported electricity was not revealed. The import quantity, however, represents under one per cent of Singapore’s current electricity generation capacity. This traded amount will also drop to 30 megawatts during the dry season, when water levels at the Laotian dams dip, said media reports from Laos and Vietnam.

Elrika Hamdi, an analyst at US-based think-tank Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), said the Laos-Singapore transmission is a new milestone for

power interconnections for Southeast Asia. But the eight-year gestation period highlights the challenges such projects face, Hamdi said.

“Cross-border interconnections are always faced with geopolitical, security, regulatory and social-economic issues, on top of technical ones,” she said.

“Scaling the project up will not be easy. Land-constrained Singapore might not have many choices to accelerate their decarbonisation target unless the neighbouring nations agree to work together with the city-state,” she added. Indonesia recently announced a halt to clean energy exports to focus on fulfilling local needs.

The new Laos-Singapore purchase agreement is the first time electricity is being passed along four Southeast Asian countries from seller to buyer. Previous sales in the region have either been bilateral, or through one intermediary country.

The Laotian hydropower is Singapore’s first overseas consignment of renewable energy. Singapore has an ongoing energy import trial with Malaysia, but Malaysia has a ban on clean energy exports.

Singapore and Laos authorities say the transactions will guide the development of multilateral electricity trade in Southeast Asia — an idea first mooted in 1997 but that has faced obstacles in scaling up.

“Interconnected power grids can accelerate the deployment of renewable energy, promote supply diversification and strengthen grid stability

for the region,” said Ngiam Shih Chun, chief executive of Singapore’s energy market authority.

“We believe this project is just the beginning of a new era where distance is no longer an obstacle,” Chanthaboun Soukaloun, managing director of EDL added.

Singapore wants to have 30 per cent of its energy needs fulfilled via clean energy imports from its neighbours by 2035. A tender launched last year received proposals to get the energy from Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia and Thailand.

Laos is one of the world’s largest electricity exporters, owing to its nearly 80 hydroelectric dams. Nearly 250 other hydropower projects are in the planning stage, according to Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Laos is already selling electricity to countries like Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.

While hydropower is considered renewable, river damming in Laos has led to warnings of silt build-up and loss of wildlife in one of the most biodiverse places in the world.

### Australia-Singapore cable

The Australia-Asia PowerLink, or AAPowerLink, is now one of eight proposals the Australian government deems to be of national importance and is ready to accept funding.

The project was announced in 2019, and included in Australia’s priority list of developments in early-2021.

It involves building solar panels on 12,000 hectares of land in northern Australia to generate a maximum of 20 gigawatts of electricity, coupled with battery storage. Over three gigawatts is set aside for the Darwin region in Australia, while about two gigawatts will be sent through subsea cables to Singapore, 4,200 kilometres away.

Sun Cable, the Australian firm behind the project, said it expects to provide 14,000 jobs, US\$5.5 billion

of investment into Australia and US\$1.4 billion in annual export revenue from 2028 onwards.

The project is valued at about US\$20 billion in total. Sun Cable raised US\$150 million in March to work on the project.

Construction is expected to start in 2024, with electricity flowing to Darwin in 2027 and Singapore by 2029, the company said. Indonesia has agreed to maritime surveys in its waters for the subsea cables needed.

“This is clearly positive and a step in the right direction towards a final investment decision. It would however be a further boost to have a firm view on the offtakes for this power in Singapore — and in Australia’s

thinking that is required but the overall business case remains challenging — particularly as Singapore has started importing renewable electricity from Laos and the beginnings of an ASEAN power grid are starting to be seen,” Allen added.

Australia is currently the world’s second largest supplier of coal, one of the most pollutive forms of fossil fuels. The country’s new prime minister Anthony Albanese, voted in last month, has promised to turn it into a renewable energy superpower.

“Sun Cable’s project will position the Territory as a renewable energy powerhouse,” said Natasha Fyles, chief minister of Australia’s Northern Territory, in a state-


**Singapore wants to have 30 per cent of its energy needs fulfilled via clean energy imports from its neighbours by 2035. A tender launched last year received proposals to get the energy from Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia and Thailand.**

lia’s Northern Territory. If there was some evidence provided of power purchase agreements, that would certainly help a lot,” said Marc Allen, an energy consultant and co-founder of Singapore climate-tech platform Unravel Carbon.

Singapore’s trade and industry ministry said last November that Sun Cable needs to file a proposal first if it intends to sell electricity to the city-state. Sun Cable could not be reached on Friday for a query on whether it has filed an application, or intends to do so.

“This is an innovative project and definitely the sort of visionary

ment, echoing Albanese’s campaign promise.

Australia also has a 26-gigawatt “Asian Renewable Energy Hub” situated in the state of Western Australia and helmed by a group of energy firms. United Kingdom-based oil giant BP acquired a 40 per cent stake in the project last week to use wind and solar power to produce hydrogen fuel, which can be shipped to other countries in Asia Pacific. 

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/southeast-asia-cross-border-clean-energy-trade-gets-a-boost-with-laos-singapore-sales/?sw-login=true>)





Nepal Seed According to the Nepali government's Centre for Crop Development and Agro Bio-diversity Conservation, there are currently 53 entities that could be classified as community-run seed banks across Nepal.

Image: Bioversity International, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

# Native species conservation bolstered by community-based seed banks



A grassroots movement to revive native varieties of food crops is gaining support in Nepal with the establishment of seed banks across the country, writes **Abhaya Raj Joshi**, Mongabay.com

**T**he monsoon clouds that arrive in Nepal in the first week of June herald the start of the rice-planting season. The country's hills, valleys and plains turn green as farmers take to their muddy fields to start sowing the crop that will feed them for the whole year.

As most farmers turn to the market for seeds they hope will give them the maximum yield, Krishna Prasad Adhikari and other residents of the village of Maramche in Gandaki province, western Nepal, are opting for a variety that won't necessarily do that. They've settled on a native rice variety well suited for the high altitude and wet climate.

"We are trying to save our heritage," says Adhikari, secretary of the Maramche Community Seed Bank, established in 2020 to conserve local 12 varieties of crops that include rice, cucumbers and maize.

"We have understood the importance of saving local varieties for future generations," Adhikari says. Among the crops, he takes particular pride in the cold-resistant variety of rice.

Until three years ago, Adhikari and his neighbours didn't know that saving local varieties was important. Things changed when Adhikari got the opportunity to attend a meeting of Nepal's national association of community seed banks in Kathmandu.

It was here that he understood the importance of native seeds and crops, and decided to join the movement, already in its 25th year. The

farmers learned that these varieties were not only tolerant to extreme weather and pests, but the conservation of their genetic resources could also be used for the development of new varieties resistant to the effects of climate change.

"When I returned home, I shared what I had learnt with my neighbors and we decided to set up our own community seed bank that would be run by our already existing cooperative," Adhikari tells Mongabay.

Previously, the community bought seeds from the market, often sold in loose packets, Adhikari says. There was no guarantee that it was the seed of the crop it claimed to be. At times, when the villagers planted what they thought were radish seeds, the roots never developed. Or another legume or grain would sprout up instead of what was advertised.

According to agronomists, this is to be expected, given that more than 90 per cent of vegetable seeds used in Nepal are imported. Nearly 30 per

cent of maize seeds and 15 per cent of rice seeds are also derived from other countries. Different varieties of vegetables and crops traditionally grown in Nepal have been lost as farmers shifted to improved seeds. The exact number of varieties lost is not yet known.

For example, the cucumber variety that's native to Maramche village is shaped like the madal, a traditional Nepali folk music instrument. A native variety of rice is black, in stark contrast to the white varieties available in the market.

Farmers in Nepal's hills used to keep their traditional seeds to sow during the next season. When the same seed is used generation after generation, through refinement, diversity thrives. But in the case of Nepal, an entire generation of farmers abandoned the profession in the 1990s to move to urban areas in search of better opportunities for themselves and their families.

### Dozens of community seed banks

According to the Nepali government's Centre for Crop Development and Agro Bio-diversity Conservation, there are currently 53 entities that could be classified as community-run seed banks across Nepal.

A typical seed bank has members who use the seeds to grow crops year after year and save them for future use, says Pitambar Shrestha from the NGO Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD). The organisation has helped establish 25 community seed banks across the country and



**Conserving genetic resources is vital for the development of new varieties that can withstand changes in the climate.**

**JAMUNA ADHIKARI**  
Member, Maramche Community Seed Bank

guides communities in meeting their objectives.

“A seed bank is a living bank of seeds that the farmers utilise regularly and return to it again for the next season,” Shrestha says.

It wasn’t just problems associated with hybrid seeds that led the community to start the seed bank.

“We also realised other benefits of conserving native species,” says Jamuna Adhikari, a member of the cooperative. “For example, the native species are more tolerant to extreme weather and pests compared to non-native ones.” In Maramche, the native rice species can tolerate the cold and wet weather of the hills.

“Also, conserving genetic resources is vital for the development of new varieties that can withstand changes in the climate,” Jamuna, who lives in the same village as Krishna Adhikari, tells Mongabay. “Native species are always good at surviving extreme weather events caused by climate change.”

Community seed banks also participate in regular seed exchange programs organised by the national association. “The exchange programs help farmers get seeds from other farmers and conserve native species,” Shrestha says. “The exchanges take place not only under customary rights of the farmers, but also under international law,” he adds, citing the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

The national seed bank association, with technical support from LI-BIRD also has an Android app through which farmers and their organisations can exchange information about native varieties of seeds. In addition to participating in exchanges, the cooperative sells seeds certified by local government agencies. A seed producer needs to get each batch certified by the government before it can be sold in the market.

## Challenges getting seed banks on their feet

Despite the success in saving some native varieties, the seed banks across Nepal face a host of challenges, Shrestha says. The mass migration of young population to cities in Nepal and abroad means that the zeal and enthusiasm to keep the seed banks running may run out among future generations.

“The government has also not yet provided a procedure to register these community seed banks, which these days need to register as cooperatives or NGOs to do their work,” Pitambar Shrestha tells Mongabay.

The other issue is that the seed banks need sustained financial support for seven to eight years before they can stand on their own feet, Shrestha says. This support is especially required to market the products based on native species.

For example, a native quinoa variety from Lamjung district and a red rice variety from Jumla district have had some commercial success due to their unique taste and nutritious nature, Shrestha says. In Maramche, both the supporting organisations and the community

are yet to figure out how to market the native variety of rice they produce.

Although many NGOs working in Nepal are trying to emulate the community seed bank model, they fail to fully understand the issues at work, Shrestha says.

“They just collect seeds in a bottle and place them in a room, which they call a seed bank,” he says. “That doesn’t work as it doesn’t follow the norms we have laid out for seed banks.”

Rakshya Shah, senior livelihoods manager at the Nepal office of the IUCN, the global plant and wildlife conservation authority, says municipal authorities need to step up to help these seed banks sustain, survive and prosper.

“We need the municipal authorities to register them and provide the support,” Shah says. The community seed banks can’t run on their own for a long time, she adds, and the central government also needs to come up with policies to facilitate the activities of community-run seed banks.

Such policies were introduced, on paper, in 2009, when the government announced it would register community seed banks and provide them with support such as funding and expert advice.

“However, the policies were not practical, especially with regard to the technicalities such as number of seeds, farmers and available resources,” Shrestha says.

Back in Maramche, Krishna Adhikari continues to work on his farm, despite the hovering clouds of uncertainty over marketing his produce and the success of his endeavours. □

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*(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/native-species-conservation-bolstered-by-community-based-seed-banks/>)*

**The national seed bank association, with technical support from LI-BIRD also has an Android app through which farmers and their organisations can exchange information about native varieties of seeds.**

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