



NEWSLETTER

ON

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW



DECCAN EDUCATION SOCIETY'S
SHRI. NAVALMAL FIRODIA LAW COLLEGE, PUNE

NEWSLETTER

ON

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

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ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

BEAUTY OF NATURE



ROLE OF JUDICIARY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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- Presence of Arsenic, Fluoride in Groundwater: A Threat to the Society.
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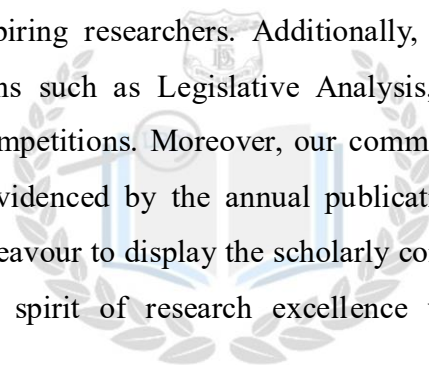
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LEGAL RESEARCH CELL
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FROM THE DESK OF EDITORS

It makes us immensely proud to introduce the first edition of the Newsletter on Environmental Law, published by DES' Shri. Navalmal Firodia Law College, Pune. The objective of launching this Newsletter on Environmental Law is to create awareness about Development, Environment and Sustainability. We are committed to providing our community with the latest news, insights, and resources on environmental law.

The Deccan Education Society, our overseeing body, has remained vigilant to the evolving needs of the broader societal framework within which it operates. As the world faces unprecedented environmental challenges, the role of environmental law has never been more critical. Our Law College functioning under the esteemed banner of the Deccan Education Society, we believe that knowledge is power, and we are committed to empowering our community with the tools and resources needed to address the critical environmental challenges of our time.

Joining hands on the same path the Legal research cell, DES SNFLC has taken this initiative to publish a newsletter to promote sustainable development and make people aware of the recent developments, trends and innovations in the field of Environmental Law.

This first edition covers recent updates and developments in various sectors such as Conservation of natural resources, Land use planning and development, Climate change mitigation and waste management. We have tried to bring the latest developments in the area of Environmental law in the simplest manner possible. We look forward to sharing our passion and expertise with you through our new newsletter. We would like to thank all the contributors of this issue and hope that this newsletter reaches the masses and makes its contribution in structuring and strengthening the legal system in India.

Regards,

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LEGAL RESEARCH CELL

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- **Introduction**

“The sustainable development is not only about adopting the emerging technology but also about the responsibility of everyone to protect the environment”

The right to live in clean and healthy environment is our fundamental right but simultaneously protecting the environment and maintaining the cleanliness in the environment is our fundamental duty. Considering the growth and development in India, there is a need of maintaining the balance between industrial growth and the environment. Sustainable development is the only solution for it.

This newsletter focuses on various case laws related to environmental issues and judicial perspective on it and the recent development in environmental law etc. The researchers tried to cover important verdicts given by court related to issues in environment and its impact on the society. Apart from it recent summit and conferences are also covered which talks about the steps taken to safeguard the environment.

- **National Highway Authority of India Breaking Environmental Norms**



(Image 1 - Delhi-Mumbai Expressway)¹

Recently the National Green Tribunal, Delhi has imposed a fine of Rs 45 crore on NHAI for violating the environmental norms.

A resident of Gurgaon Prem Mohan Gaur filed a petition for encroachment in the Hajipur while constructing the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway. The petitioner alleged that the NHAI used the catchment area of the pond to build the 6-lane expressway.

Considering the facts the bench of justices Prakash Shrivastava and Sudhir Agarwal of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed the National Highways Authority of India to pay environmental compensation of Rs 45 crore for violating environmental norms. The violations occurred within a stretch of about 3.5

¹Delhi-Mumbai Expressway: Why it runs through the heart of India's growth story, Money Control, available at, <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/delhi-mumbai-expressway-completion-date-route-map-speed-limit-features-10073271.html>, last seen on, 21/03/2024.

kilometres in villages Paroli, Hajipur and Kiranj in Haryana.²

Further the bench observed that hundreds of trees have been cut, maximum portion of pond land has been damaged, stormwater drains have been broken and various other environmental norms are violated. Being a part of state or being a statutory body, such violations cannot be ignored by mere imposing fine but strict actions should be taken.

The bench further stated the reasoning behind the fine of 45 crores, as the project cost was 908 crores then 5% of such cost i.e. 45 crores should be compensated for the repair of damage caused.

NHAI has been directed to pay the amount within three months by depositing it with Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB). If environmental compensation is deposited by NHAI, the same shall be utilised for restoration of the environment. The plan for restoration shall be prepared by a Joint Committee. The plan shall be prepared within three months, after deposit of environmental compensation and amount of environmental compensation

shall be utilized within six months thereafter.³

Further the NGT directed that, the compliance reports of the given directions should be submitted by the Chief Secretary, Haryana and Member Secretary, Haryana State Pollution Control Board to the NGT by November 15, 2024.

- **Presence of Arsenic, Fluoride in Groundwater: A Threat to the Society.**

The National Green Tribunal has taken Suo-moto cognisance of the news published regarding the presence of arsenic, fluoride in groundwater of different villages of various states. Presence of such element is threatful for the society and quick action is required to be taken to resolve the issue.



(Image 2 – Arsenic, Fluoride in Groundwater)⁴

²Daily Court Digest: Major environment orders (February 14, 2024), Down to Earth, available at, <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/environment/daily-court-digest-major-environment-orders-february-14-2024--94477>, last seen on, 22/03/2024.

³NGT fines NHAI Rs. 45cr for Green Violations in Eway Constructions, Times of India (15/02/2024), available at, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/gurgaon/ngt-fines-nhai-45cr-for-green-violations-in-eway-construction/articleshow/107705584.cms>, last seen on, 23/03/2024.



Observing that presence of toxic elements like arsenic and fluoride in groundwater, causing serious toxic effects to human body are admitted by Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) but no effective steps have been taken. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notices to 28 States, 4 UTs, CGWA and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.⁵

Being responsible authority it was the duty to prevent such water issue and protect the health of people but mere giving flimsy reasons cannot be an excuse.

A bench of Justice Sudhir Agarwal and Expert Member A Senthil Vel said that the Central Ground Water Authority had submitted a report in which it admitted the presence of arsenic and fluoride in the various districts and the states. It is also admitted that both the chemicals have very serious toxic effects on the human body and health and cause health hazards.⁶

⁴*Notices to Assam, Manipur and 22 other states by NGT over presence of arsenic and fluoride in groundwater*, PRAG NEWS, available at <https://pragnews.com/ne/Notices-to-Assam-Manipur-and-22-other-states-by-NGT-over-presence-of-arsenic-and-fluoride-in-groundwater>, last seen on 24/03/2024.

⁵*Arsenic, Fluoride In Groundwater| NGT Issues Notice To 28 States, UTs, Raps CGWA For "Shirking Responsibility"*, LiveLaw, available at <https://www.livelaw.in/environment/national-green-tribunal-arsenic-fluoride-toxic-groundwater-state-governments-central-ground-water-authority-responsibility-245407>, last seen on 24/03/2024.

⁶*Arsenic and fluoride in groundwater: NGT issues notices to 24 states, 4 UTs*, Business Standard

The bench further stated that even after knowing this fact no steps were taken by Central Ground Water Authority. As to regulate the water is the main concern of it. The bench further called them as a authority "Shirking the Responsibility".

Considering the severity the tribunal sent notices to 28 states, 4 union territories, CGWA and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for urgent preventive and protective steps by all authorities.

- **The Supreme Court of India Directs Government to Develop Policy for Phasing Out Heavy Diesel Vehicles**

Heavy-duty vehicles constitute only 10 per cent of the vehicles on the road; they generate over 25 per cent of the total global warming emissions from the transportation sector. Diesel-powered trucks are a significant source of NOx emissions.

These emissions primarily consist of carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) heat-trapping gases that contribute to climate change. Heavy-duty trucks, often powered by diesel engines, emit a mixture of pollutants,

(26/12/2023) available at https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/arsenic-and-fluoride-in-groundwater-ngt-issues-notices-to-24-states-4-uts-123122600815_1.html, last seen on 25/03/2024.

including nitrogen oxides (NOx)⁷. NOx emissions are hazardous: They cause lung irritation and weaken the body's defence against infections. When combined with other pollutants and sunlight, they form ground-level ozone. It also increased rates of asthma, Heart and lung diseases, and certain types of cancer.



(Image 3- Heavy Diesel Vehicles causing pollution)⁸

The Supreme Court of India in *Container Corporation of India Ltd. Vs Ajay Khera & Ors.*⁹ has taken a significant step toward addressing air pollution by directing the Union government to frame a national

policy for the phase-out of heavy-duty diesel vehicles.¹⁰

On January 11, 2024, the Supreme Court ordered the Centre to formulate a policy. The goal is to replace heavy-duty diesel vehicles (such as trucks and trailers) with BS-VI vehicles that run on cleaner fuels.

The court emphasised that air pollution affects every citizen's fundamental rights, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. This right extends beyond people living in the Delhi-NCR (national capital region); all citizens deserve a pollution-free environment.¹¹ The court recognised that air pollution adversely affects health and quality of life. It highlighted the need to explore better sources for heavy-duty transportation, including CNG, hybrid, and electric vehicles.¹²

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has been given six months to create a policy. The court expects

⁷ *Carbon Pollution from Transportation*, United States Environmental Protection Agency, available at <https://www.epa.gov/transportation-air-pollution-and-climate-change/carbon-pollution-transportation> last seen on 26/03/2024

⁸ Sindhu Bhattacharya, *Govt, industry begin work on reducing emissions from freight movement*, Economics Times (01/11/2023) available at, <https://auto.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/govt-industry-begin-work-on-reducing-emissions-from-freight-movement/104878492> last seen on 26/03/2024

⁹ *Container Corporation of India Ltd. Vs Ajay Khera & Ors.* Case No: CIVIL APPEAL NO. 3798 OF 2019

¹⁰ *SC tells Union Government to frame policy on phasing out heavy duty diesel vehicles*, Deccan Herald, available at [SC tells Union Government to frame policy on phasing out heavy duty diesel vehicles \(deccanherald.com\)](https://www.deccanherald.com), last seen on 27/03/2024

¹¹ *SC Tells Centre To Frame Policy On Phasing Out Heavy Duty Diesel Vehicles*, Lawbeat, available at [Supreme Court news] | [Delhi NCR, Air Pollution, Diesel (lawbeat.in)], last seen on 28/03/2024

¹² *Supreme Court asks government to frame policy to phase out heavy diesel vehicles*, Money Control available at [Supreme Court asks government to frame policy to phase out heavy diesel vehicles \(moneycontrol.com\)](https://www.moneycontrol.com), last seen on 27/03/2024

continuous efforts to explore alternative fuel resources during this time. The advancements in technology should guide the transition from diesel to cleaner options. The Supreme Court's directive aims to improve air quality and protect citizens' right to a healthy environment. Transitioning away from heavy diesel vehicles is crucial to achieving this goal.

• Mining in Aravalli range – A Threat to the Environment

The Aravalli Mountain range stretches approximately 700 kilometres from Gujarat to Delhi, passing through Rajasthan and Haryana. It is one of the oldest mountain ranges globally, rich in minerals, flora, and fauna. Aravalli acts as a natural barrier, shielding parts of Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi from dust, pollution, and sandstorms. Many water streams originate from these hills.



(Image 4 - Mining in Aravalli Hills)¹³

¹³ State to refer illegal iron ore export cases to CBI, deccanherald, available at <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/st>

Rampant illegal mining has wreaked havoc with the Aravalli range. Despite legal safeguards in Rajasthan, mining continues to occur in Haryana. Encroachment is a pressing issue, fuelled by a substantial lobby with close ties to bureaucrats and politicians. Unrestrained construction and encroachment have escalated over the past few decades. Groundwater aquifers beneath the Aravallis have been punctured and destroyed due to mining. Rivers originating in the Aravallis have also disappeared.¹⁴

The degradation of the Aravallis has led to a decline in wildlife habitat, exacerbating animal-human conflicts in nearby areas. The range's degradation has drastically reduced rainfall, impacting local ecosystems.

Mining has affected groundwater recharge, threatening water availability for millions living in the surrounding regions.¹⁵

T.N. Godavarman's role in environmental conservation earned him the nickname "the **Green Man.**" His litigations

ate-refer-illegal-iron-ore-2289021, last seen on 21/03/2024.

¹⁴ *Why Illegal Mining in the Aravalli Hills Should Scare Delhi and Its Neighbours*, science.thewire, available at *Why Illegal Mining in the Aravalli Hills Should Scare Delhi and Its Neighbours – The Wire Science*, last seen on 22/03/2024

¹⁵ *Aravalli : Story of a dying mountain range*, down to Earth (15/04/2019), available at *Aravalli: Story of a Dying Mountain Range* (downtoearth.org.in) last seen on 22/03/2024



contributed significantly to environmental jurisprudence, including concepts such as the polluter pays principle, sustainable development, and the precautionary principle.

T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad filed a writ petition in 1995 before the Supreme Court of India. The primary objective was to safeguard and protect the forestland of the Nilgiris, which was being exploited through unlawful timber activities. The T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India & Ors¹⁶ case involves several environmental conservation and forest protection laws. The case focused on the conservation of forests and their sustainable use. The court conducted a comprehensive hearing on the National Forest Policy and issued interim directions to enforce and implement forest laws and regulations within India.

The Supreme Court emphasised the need for a self-monitoring mechanism at the regional and state levels to control timber transportation. Some critics argued that the Supreme Court overstepped its constitutional mandate by taking over forest control and supervision matters. This case exemplifies how the judiciary can play a pivotal role in safeguarding

environmental concerns beyond mere legal interpretation.

The Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which initially functioned as an ad hoc body, was reconstituted as a permanent body for monitoring and ensuring compliance with Supreme Court orders related to the environment, forests, wildlife, and related issues. This reconstitution occurred through a notification issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.¹⁷

The Court issued detailed directions for the sustainable use of forests. It created its own monitoring and implementation system through regional and state-level communities, regulating the felling, use, and movement of timber across the country to preserve the nation's forests¹⁸.

The case reaffirmed the applicability of the Forest Conservation Act (FC Act) to all forests, irrespective of ownership or classification. This recognition aimed to protect forest rights and ensure responsible forest management

This case, often called “the Forest Case in India,” went beyond the conventional role of interpreting the law. The Supreme Court

¹⁶ Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India & Ors.,(1997) 2 SCC 267

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Id

acted as an administrator, lawmaker, and policymaker to safeguard India's forests and environment.

- **Stone Crushing Unit Pollution: An Appeal for Scientific Research from SC to CPCB**



(Image 5- stone crusher)¹⁹

The Supreme Court has directed the Central Pollution Control Board to carry out research studies, gather information on the pollution generated by stone crushing plants, and specify whether they need environmental approval before they can begin operations.

A bench consisting of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta was also placed on hold until the National Green Tribunal's Eastern Zone's May 1, 2023,

directive, which stated that potential stone crushing units in West Bengal require prior environmental clearance from the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA).

In order to determine whether stone crushing units should be included in the Schedule of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2006, dated September 14, 2006, which requires prior environmental clearance projects and activities, the bench, asked the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to file its report on the pollution caused by these units.

It stated that the CPCB would issue directives as may be necessary by law in situations when stone crushing units are required to obtain environment clearance, regardless of the current ruling.

The bench stated that it has been made aware of the environmental rules for stone crushing units that the CPCB released in July 2023 with the goal of lowering the emissions and pollution that are produced by crushers.

"The CPCB will place on record the necessary scientific data pursuant to which the said guidelines have been issued and whether they have examined and decided

¹⁹ SC asks CPCB to conduct scientific studies on pollution caused by stone crushing units, telegraph online available at <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/supreme-court-asks-cpcb-to-conduct-scientific-studies-on-pollution-caused-by-stone-crushing-units/cid/1992184> last seen on 01/04/2024

that environmental clearance is not required," it stated.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change filed an appeal against the NGT, Eastern Zone's May 1, 2023, order, and the highest court granted the appeal.

The decision was made by the green tribunal in response to a plea from Biplab Kumar Chowdhury. He claimed that quarries have been extracting large stones and boulders from the Raidhak-II River in the Alipurduar district of West Bengal, crushing them into small cubicles, and then selling them for profit without the required permits.²⁰

The petitioner further claimed that despite having permission to set up the setup and to apply for a renewal of permission to operate, none of the units could show an environmental clearance during inspections.

The NGT, Principal Bench order from July 19, 2017, which stated that no stone crusher would be allowed to operate unless they obtained consent from the state

²⁰ *SC Asks CPCB To Conduct Scientific Studies On Pollution Caused By Stone Crushing Units*, Outlook Planet available at <https://planet.outlookindia.com/news/sc-asks-cpcb-to-conduct-scientific-studies-on-pollution-caused-by-stone-crushing-units-news-416775>, last seen on 01/04/2024

pollution control board, a no-objection certificate from the relevant authorities, and environmental clearance from the competent authority, was noted by the tribunal along with a number of other directives.²¹

In order for the potential stone-crushing units to operate in the state, the tribunal had mandated and required them to seek an environmental clearance from SEIAA, West Bengal.

- **Supreme Court notifies the Central Government on their request to create the Indian Environment Service**



(Image 6-Indian Environment Services)²²

²¹ *Supreme Court directs Central Pollution Control Board to examine pollution by stone crushing units*, India Legal available at <https://www.indialegallive.com/constitutional-law-news/supreme-court-news/pollution-cpcb-stone-crushing-unit/> last seen on 01/04/2024

²² *Supreme Court hears a plea regarding formation of Indian Environment Services*, Lawstreet available at <https://lawstreet.co/environment/supreme-court-indian-environment-services> last seen on 01/04/2024



In response to a request for the establishment of an Indian Environment Service modelled after the All India Service to provide ground-level environmental protection, the Supreme Court on Friday requested the Centre's response.

In a notice to the Union Environment Ministry, a bench made up of Justices S K Kaul and M M Sundresh voiced uncertainty about its ability to grant a mandamus for the establishment of a distinct all-India service.

Nonetheless, the top court stated that it is possible to investigate whether the Centre planned to put the committee's recommendations led by a former Cabinet Secretary into practice.

The High-Level Committee, chaired by former Cabinet Secretary T S R Subramanian in 2014, recommended the creation of a new All-India service called the Indian Environment Service. This recommendation was referenced in a plea filed by advocate Samar Vijay Singh, who was on record. The top court was hearing this case.²³

²³ SC notice to Centre on plea for creating Indian Environment Service, Business Standard available at https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/sc-notice-to-centre-on-plea-for-creating-indian-environment-service-122012100889_1.html last seen on 01/04/2024

The plea stated that the Parliament Standing Committee (PSC) rejected the T S R Subramanian Report, which examined several Acts managed by the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change. Among other things, the report pointed out that the HLC was granted too little time to review six environmental Acts—three months—and suggested that the government form a new committee to examine the laws. K Sultan Singh, a senior counsel, defended the petitioner.²⁴

The appeal went on to say that the state and federal governments' policy administration, policy creation, and implementation supervision are all devoid of qualified staff.

However, many of the objectives have not been achieved because of issues with enforcement and implementation. The argument claimed that the establishment of the All India Service, or "Indian Environment Service," was imperative given the unrest around environmental issues across the nation.²⁵

²⁴ Supreme Court issues notice to Central govt on plea for establishing Indian Environment Service, Brandbench available at <https://www.brandbench.com/news/supreme-court-issues-notice-to-central-govt-on-plea-for-establishing-indian-environment-service> last seen on 01/04/2024

²⁵ Supreme Court hears a plea regarding formation of Indian Environment Services lawstreet.com available at <https://lawstreet.co/environment/supreme-court->

It stated that the government and the Civil Service should give special attention to the ongoing destruction of our ecosystem.

Nonetheless, it is implied by the administrative structure in place that government employees may not have the extra time to dedicate to environmental causes. The plea stated that in order to alleviate the suffering of the general public, it is now necessary to establish an independent All India Service Indian Environment Service.²⁶

In order to prepare officers for environmental law enforcement, the petition has also called for the establishment of an Indian Environmental Service Academy.

- **Climate Conference 2024, on “Decoding the Green Transition for India”**



indian-environment-services last seen on 01/04/2024

²⁶ Ibid

(Image 7 - The Climate Conference, 2024)²⁷

The Climate Conference 2024, themed “Decoding the Green Transition for India,” was conducted on January 12, 2024, in Mumbai, Maharashtra. This conference was Organized and conducted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. The objective behind the conference was regarding the pivotal role of the private sector, climate tech Startups and institutional investors in mobilizing financial resources and technical capabilities and to leverage the Government efforts, engage civil society and communities, developing innovative climate services and adaptation of various technologies etc.

Dignitaries such as Ms. Leena Nandan, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Mr. Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa, underscored India’s commitment to net-zero by 2070 and discussed various strategies to boost climate finance, promoting renewable

²⁷Climate Conference, 2024” Decoding the Green Transition for India” organised by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, FARMERS TODAY, available at <https://farmerstoday.in/climate-conference-2024-decoding-the-green-transition-for-india-organized-by-ministry-of-environment-forest-climate-change-government-of-india/>, last seen on 25/03/2024.

energy, and scaling up innovative climate solutions.²⁸

- **‘Environmental Sustainability Summit’ 2024, on ‘Harnessing Bamboo Potential for a Sustainable Tomorrow’**

A one-day summit on Environmental Sustainability was conducted on 9th January 2024 in Mumbai. The occasion was graced in the presence of various luminaries from different fields. The purpose behind the gathering of such summit was to discuss the importance of bamboo and its role in combating global warming.

Another purpose behind the summit was to prepare the report on different challenges related to climate change and bamboo-based solution on the same.



²⁸SAMANVAY Sphere India Bulletin Jan 2024, Sphere India, available at <https://www.sphereindia.org.in/sites/default/files/2024-02/SAMANVAY%20Sphere%20India%20Bulletin%20Jan%202024.pdf>, last seen on 26/03/2024.

(Image 8 – Governor of Maharashtra visiting the Bamboo Exhibition)²⁹

The environmental sustainability summit was inaugurated by the Governor of Maharashtra Shri Ramesh Bais. The Governor addressed the gathering, witnessed the panel discussion, and visited the bamboo exhibition. The exhibition was full of bamboo products which reflects the sustainability of bamboo.

The bamboo is not just a plant but a symbol of adaptability. The environmental sustainability summit on harnessing bamboo potential gives us the idea about the sustainability of bamboo, its use in different products where we can avoid the use of plastic and which will not harm the environment. The summit had set an example before all to live sustainable life.

- **Initiative of Tamil Nadu Government on Biodiversity**

Biodiversity plays a crucial role in maintaining the health of our environment and sustaining life on Earth. Biodiversity ensures a delicate balance in ecosystems. Different species interact with each other, regulating populations and nutrient cycles.

²⁹Maharashtra Governor Inaugurates Environment Sustainability Summit, MUMBAI LIVE, available at <https://www.mumbailive.com/en/environment/maharashtra-governor-inaugurates-environment-sustainability-summit-82472>, last seen on 27/03/2024.

A diverse ecosystem is more resilient to disturbances like climate change, disease outbreaks, and habitat loss.³⁰

Many medicines are derived from plants, animals, and microorganisms. Biodiversity holds the potential for discovering new drugs and treatments.³¹

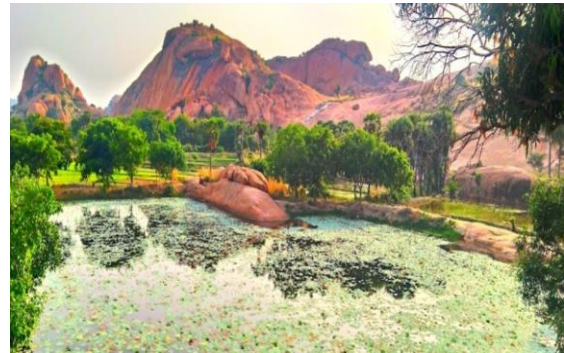


(Image 9 – Biodiversity on planet)³²

The Tamil Nadu government has outlined an ambitious ten-year vision on biodiversity to become a green crusader. Tamil Nadu aims to transition into a climate-smart state by adopting sustainable practices. The focus is on minimising environmental impact and promoting clean

energy.³³ The state intends to create a green society and green economy. This involves sustainable practices, conservation efforts, and eco-friendly initiatives.

The state aims to bring more land under legal protection and develop these areas as biodiversity spaces. Instead of focusing solely on biodiversity hotspots, Tamil Nadu aims to create larger, well-preserved biodiversity zones.



(Image 10- Arittapatti, a village in Madurai district, Tamil Nadu)³⁴

Arittapatti, a village in Madurai district, Tamil Nadu, has been declared the first biodiversity heritage site in the state. Arittapatti village is situated in the Melur block of Madurai district. It covers 139.63

³⁰ 5 reasons why biodiversity matters – to human health, the economy and your wellbeing, available at 5 reasons why biodiversity matters to health and the economy | World Economic Forum (weforum.org) last seen on 29/03/2024

³¹ Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, available at <https://www.unesco.org/en/biodiversity/conservation?hub=405> last seen on 29/03/2024

³² ASTHA PASRICHA, Jagaran Josh (28/07/2023), *What is the Biodiversity Act? How did the Lok Sabha make changes?*, available at <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/what-is-the-biodiversity-act-how-did-the-lok-sabha-make-changes-1690479893-1> last seen on 27/03/2024

³³ Tamil Nadu chalks out a 10-year roadmap on biodiversity, The Hindu businessline, available at Tamil Nadu chalks out a 10-year roadmap on biodiversity conservation (thehindubusinessline.com), last seen on 28/03/2024

³⁴ Arittapatti: Tamil Nadu's first biodiversity heritage site, Civils Daily available at <https://www.civildaily.com/news/arittapatti-bhs-tamil-nadu/> last seen on 30/03/2024

hectares. It is home to approximately 250 bird species, including three essential raptors: the Laggar Falcon, the Shaheen Falcon, and the Bonelli's Eagle.³⁵ The area supports wildlife such as the Indian Pangolin, Slender Loris, and pythons. Arittapatti serves as a watershed, recharging 72 lakes, 200 natural springs and three check dams.³⁶ The historic Anaikondan tank, built in the 16th century during the reign of the Pandyan kings, is a part of this network.³⁷ As per section 37 (1) of the Biodiversity Act, 2002, The State Government may, with the calculation of local bodies, declare the area of biodiversity as a Biodiversity Heritage Site, and the Tamil Nadu government declare Arittapatti, a village, as a Biodiversity Heritage Site. The Tamil Nadu government aims to protect its rich and exclusive ecosystem.

- **Warmest February in History Breaks Critical Climate Records**

In February 2024, our planet experienced the warmest February, marking the ninth

month of new temperature records. February 2024 was approximately 1.77°C warmer than pre-industrial times before humans significantly burned fossil fuels. This temperature surge broke the previous record set in 2016 by around 0.12°C³⁸. Air temperatures and sea surface temperatures have been breaking records. Ocean warming raises global sea levels, threatens coral reefs, and influences weather patterns.



(Image 11- Temperature in month of February 2024)³⁹

Changes in ocean circulation and warmer temperatures disrupt standard weather patterns, leading to more frequent and severe storms like hurricanes and typhoons. These extreme weather events

³⁵ *Arittapatti in Madurai District gets Notified as the first Biodiversity Heritage Site in Tamil Nadu*, Tamil Nadu Government, available at [pr221122_e_2098.pdf](#) (tn.gov.in) last seen 29/03/2024

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ *In Arittapatti, Tamil Nadu gets its first biodiversity heritage site*, The Hindu, available at [In Arittapatti, Tamil Nadu gets its first biodiversity heritage site](#) - The Hindu last seen on 29/03/2024

³⁸ *More climate records fall in world's warmest February*, BBC NEWS, available at [More climate records fall in world's warmest February](#) (bbc.com) last seen on 30/03/2024

³⁹ *India experienced warmest February in this year since 1877*, udayavani available at <https://www.udayavani.com/english-news/india-experienced-warmest-february-this-year-since-1877-imd> last seen on 31/03/2024

result in property damage, loss of life, and habitat destruction.⁴⁰

According to the World Health Organisation- Approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year due to undernutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress caused by climate change.⁴¹ Climate change affects every aspect of our lives, from health and food security to ecosystems and economies. These critical climate records underscore the urgency of addressing climate change and its impact on our planet. As we witness unprecedented warmth, it becomes increasingly vital to take collective action to mitigate its effects and protect our environment for future generations.

- **In a decade, India's Renewable Energy Capacity has More Than Doubled**



⁴⁰ *Climate Change Indicators: Sea Surface Temperature*, United States Environmental Protection Agency available at <https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators/climate-change-indicators-sea-surface-temperature> last seen on 30/03/2024

⁴¹ *Climate change*, World Health Organisation, available at [Climate change \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int) last seen on 29/03/2024

(Image 12-Renewable Energy)⁴²

A number of factors, including supportive government regulations, falling costs for renewable technology, and growing environmental concerns, have contributed to the rise of renewable energy in India's energy landscape in recent years.

Over the past ten years, India has achieved great progress in the green energy space. According to data from the Central Electricity Authority, in 2022–2023 renewable electricity would account for 43% of installed power capacity, up from 31% in 2014–2015.

According to the data, the total installed renewable energy capacity increased from 75.5 GW in 2014 to 180 GW in 2023. From 69 percent in 2014–15, the share of power derived from fossil fuels has dropped to 57 percent.

With an ambition to add 50 GW of renewable energy capacity yearly, the government has now set a plan to treble its contribution of renewable energy to 500 GW by 2030.

⁴² Can India double its renewable energy capacity by 2027?, Downto Earth available on <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/renewable-energy/can-india-double-its-renewable-energy-capacity-by-2027--87204> last seen on 01/04/2024

To help with this, government organizations such as the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), SJVN, and NHPC have been aggressively bidding out contracts in recent months for the expansion of solar, wind, and hydro capacity.

In order to ensure that the installed renewable energy capacity is profitable, the government is also aiming to address the slow rate at which transmission lines are being added.

Up till March 31, 2022, 37,200 MW of interregional transmission capacity was built between 2017 and 2022. According to data from CEA's annual report, the nation's inter-regional transmission capacity was at 112,250 MW as of March 2023.⁴³

India's total transmission line length was 471,341 km in 2022–2023 compared to 313,437 km in 2014–15. The government has set a target of adding 16,602 ckm of transmission lines for the current fiscal year, up from 14,625 ckm added in FY23..



(Image 13- Renewable Energy)⁴⁴

Experts think it will be difficult to triple RE capacity to 500 GW by 2030. There could be a delay in the coal-fired power plant's peaking and eventual phase-out. This is due to the fact that domestic power demand has increased more quickly than anticipated and it has become apparent that adding more renewable capacity may not meet the lofty goals.

Concerns exist over the extreme unpredictability and fluctuation of energy derived from renewable sources. Another difficulty is effectively integrating green capacity into the grid to meet peak power demand.

Furthermore, acknowledging that it might take over ten years for renewable energy

⁴³ *India's Renewable Energy Capacity More Than Doubles In A Decade*, Outlook Planet Available at <https://planet.outlookindia.com/news/india-s-renewable-energy-capacity-more-than-doubles-in-a-decade-news-416890> last seen on 01/04/2024

⁴⁴ *India on path to triple renewable energy capacity by 2030 but faces financing hurdle: Report*, *economictimes*, available at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/india-on-path-to-triple-renewable-energy-capacity-by-2030-but-faces-financing-hurdle-report/articleshow/105584023.cms?from=mdr> last seen on 29/03/2024



resources to reach full potential, India has reaffirmed its commitment to using fossil fuels to meet the country's population's growing electricity needs. The nation's most recent National Electricity Plan calls for raising the percentage of non-fossil fuel capacity from about 42.5 percent to 57.4 percent by 2026–2027 and 68.4 percent by the end of 2031–2032.⁴⁵

All things considered, India's shift to a low-carbon and sustainable energy future depends heavily on renewable energy. To further speed up the adoption of renewable energy technologies across the nation, sustained government backing, private sector investment, and technological innovation will be crucial.

⁴⁵ *Torrent Power Wins 150MW Hybrid Project Contract*, Outlook Planet Available at <https://planet.outlookindia.com/news/torrent-power-wins-150mw-hybrid-project-contract-news-41741> last seen on 01/04/2024



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