

CSR TODAY

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CLIMATE CHANGE INDICATORS REACHED RECORD LEVELS IN 2023: WMO

The state of the climate in 2023 gave ominous new significance to the phrase “off the charts”

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Mumbai coast to have artificial reefs

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Manipur has seen maximum net warming during winter



Rajesh Tiwari
Publisher
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A new analysis from Climate Central, a US-based organisation of climate scientists and researchers, explains how temperatures in February have become warmer, leading to a missing spring season.

The winters are quickly transitioning into summer-like conditions in parts of India with the north-eastern state of Manipur witnessing the largest change since 1970 (2.3°C), while the national capital territory of Delhi had the smallest (0.2°C), according to a study.

A new analysis from Climate Central, a US-based organisation of climate scientists and researchers, explains how temperatures in February have become warmer, leading to a missing spring season.

The data has been analysed from 1970 till now.

Winter is the fastest-warming season for 12 out of the 34 states and territories.

In the northern part of India, the contrast between January trends (cooling or slight warming) and February (strong warming) means that these regions now have the potential for abrupt transitions from cool winter-like temperatures to the much warmer conditions that traditionally occurred in March.

“The cooling in the central and northern Indian states during January followed by very strong warming in February creates the potential for a quick jump from winter to spring-like conditions. By burning coal and oil, humans have warmed the planet leading to warmer conditions in all seasons across India,” said Dr. Andrew Pershing, VP for Science at Climate Central.


According to the study - ‘Winter Temperature Trends Across India: Faster Warming In February Makes Spring Feel Shorter’ - there are notable differences in the pattern of temperature changes during the winter season.

The southern part of the country has strong warming in December and January (Figure 2). Sikkim (2.4°) and Manipur (2.1°) had the largest changes in temperature in December and January, respectively. The northern part of the country had weaker warming and even cooling during December and January. Delhi had the lowest rates during this period (-0.2° in December, -0.8° in January), and among the states

Ladakh (0.1° in December) and Uttar Pradesh (-0.8° in January) had the lowest warming rates.

The pattern changes dramatically between January and February. All regions have warmed in February, but the warming is especially pronounced in many of the regions that showed cooling or low warming in the previous months. Jammu and Kashmir had the highest warming (3.1°C) and Telangana had the lowest (0.4°C).

In the northern part of India, the contrast between January trends (cooling or slight warming) and February (strong warming) means that these regions now have the potential for abrupt transitions from cool winter-like temperatures to the much warmer conditions that traditionally occurred in March.

The largest jump in warming rates occurred in Rajasthan (February warming=2.6° higher than January). A total of nine states and territories showed a January-February difference of more than 2°C: Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand. This supports the reports that it feels like spring has disappeared in many parts of India. 

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CSR NEWS



L&T Finance Holdings Ltd. wins ICC Social Impact Summit Award 2024

L&T Finance Holdings Ltd. (LTFH) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative has won the 'Jury Choice Award' at the 6th Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Social Impact Summit Awards 2024.

LTFH received the prestigious award for promoting gender equality and women empowerment. The

Company was also conferred with the Governor of West Bengal's 'Scroll of Honour' in the field of social upliftment through the judicious use of resources under CSR.

This prestigious recognition was accepted by Ms. Apurva Rathod, Company Secretary and Chief Sustainability Officer, LTFH by the Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, Dr.

C.V. Ananda Bose in an event held in Kolkata.

Speaking at the occasion, Ms. Rathod said, "As a Company committed to sustainability, we recognise that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental pillars of a thriving society. By investing in long-term initiatives like our flagship Digital Sakhi program, we are fostering inclusion and equal opportunities not only to drive positive social change but also to create a more resilient and prosperous future for all. The program also nurtures women entrepreneurs from the communities, providing them with upskilling and enterprise development trainings to help them build their businesses and enhance their livelihoods."



LTFH received the prestigious award for promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

Digital Sakhi is a flagship program of LTFH, which equips rural women and communities at large with the skills and knowledge on Digital and Financial Literacy. The program addresses issues of bridging digital and financial literacy, promotes gender equality leading to women empowerment. There are over 1,700 Digital Sakhis across 9 states and 20 districts who have benefitted over 40 lakh individuals in the country.



Shiv Nadar School Sets a New GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS (™) title for the Most Contributions to Handprint Painting in One Hour with the Aim to Promote Water Conservation

In a unique initiative that merges environmental awareness with a record-breaking feat, 2232 students and educators of Shiv Nadar School set the Guinness World Record title for the "most contributions to a handprint painting in one hour" on March 14, 2024, at Shiv Nadar School Faridabad.

This world record serves as a powerful symbol of the school's commitment to environmental stewardship and creating sensitisation on the conservation and preservation of nature in children from early years. The #EveryDropCounts pledge, taken by all participants, aligns with Shiv Nadar School's core principle of Responsibility and UN Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of Water and Sanitation for all. By

creating this giant handprint painting, students visually represented the collective power of individual actions to drive home the message that water is an important resource and needs to be conserved.

The initiative saw the presence of Col. (Retd.) Gopal Karunakaran, CEO, Shiv Nadar School; Arti Dawar, Deputy CEO, Shiv Nadar School; Anju Wal, Director Principal, Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad; Ms. Anju Soni, Principal, Shiv Nadar School, Noida; Ms. Monica Sagar, Director Principal, Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon; Ms. Vandana Marda, Director Brand and Communication, Shiv Nadar School; and Rishi Nath Official Adjudicator, Guinness World Records. It was flagged off by Gul Panag, who is known for her diverse roles as an actress, model, activist,

and entrepreneur working on education, environmental issues, and disaster management - a champion of sustainable living.

Congratulating the students at Shiv Nadar School for breaking the Guinness World Record and achieving this incredible milestone, Gul Panag said, "It was a thrill to be part of this event, especially as it was for such a noble cause: water conservation. In my opinion, truly driving change in children happens at an early age. By planting the seed of environmental consciousness early on, we empower every child to become a changemaker. Shiv Nadar School is setting a phenomenal benchmark in this regard. The students will undoubtedly take these valuable lessons home with them. Now, the responsibility falls upon parents to uphold these principles within the community, fostering a movement for environmental responsibility. We can only imagine the positive impact if such values had been instilled in us during our own schooling; perhaps things would have been different."

"In the near future, half of the world's population is projected to live in water-stressed areas. To ensure all people have access to water, we need to innovate new ways to help conserve and reuse this precious resource. A better future for India and the world necessitates that we raise children to be sensitive to the environment and our natural resources. Sustainability has always remained one of the key areas of focus at Shiv Nadar School. I believe education serves not only as a tool for personal advancement, but also as a catalyst for societal change. Within every student's pledge that we took today lies an acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of existence. This pledge goes beyond mere commitment; it signifies an awakening of our shared responsibility as stewards of the Earth," said, Col. (Retd.) Gopal Karunakaran, CEO, Shiv Nadar School.



With the Plaque on stage



Gul Panag at SNS



Every Drop Counts

While addressing the students, Arti Dawar, Deputy CEO, stated, “Today, we stand on the brink of an imminent water crisis. Water conservation is now an urgent need of the hour. As we participate in creating history through the ‘Every Drop Counts Pledge,’ we stand to inspire with a powerful call to action towards using water responsibly and saving countless lives. Each of us here is a change-maker, and we stand today, recognising our responsibility toward solving the challenges of a water crisis. Our pledge is just the beginning of our journey and movement towards water conservation.”

Breaking the Record for a Sustainable Future

The event was a vibrant celebration of environmental consciousness. Over 2,500 participants, including students, educators, and guests, came together to create a breathtaking handprint masterpiece. The official

record attempt was closely monitored by the Guinness World Records adjudicator and followed strict rules and documentation procedures. Super-washable, child-safe paints in shades reminiscent of nature - blues and greens echoing water, ocean and sky were chosen, reflecting the colours of Shiv Nadar School.

The day concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Vandana Marda, Director of Brand and Communication at Shiv Nadar School, who stated that we are a community united by a deep sense of responsibility and collective love for our planet. She mentioned that the journey was an incredible reminder of what we can achieve when we come together, driven by purpose and passion. This feat could not have been achieved without the dedication, grit, and resolve of all.

Shiv Nadar School has been at the forefront of promoting sustainable practices, and its efforts have

been recognised and lauded by many. The school has been committed to water conservation, which is evident through various initiatives, including the installation of advanced water purification systems and regular quality checks. Additionally, the school educates students on water conservation through workshops and innovative projects. The school minimises water wastage with measures like dual flushing systems and rainwater harvesting, contributing significantly to environmental sustainability.

About Shiv Nadar School

The Shiv Nadar School is a not-for-profit initiative of the Shiv Nadar Foundation in K12 private education to deliver educational excellence and provide “Education for Life”. With three campuses in the NCR and one in Chennai, Shiv Nadar School provides students with an environment that challenges them to discover their talent and skills while aiming to nurture ethical, respectful, happy, and purposeful citizens of society. 6000+ students and their parents, along with a team of around 1000+ educators, are a part of the Shiv Nadar School family.

About HCL

Founded in 1976 as one of India’s original IT garage start-ups, HCL is a pioneer of modern computing with many firsts to its credit, including the introduction of the 8-bit microprocessor-based computer in 1978, well before its global peers. Today, the HCL enterprise has a presence across varied sectors that include technology, healthcare, and talent management solutions and comprises three companies – HCL Infosystems, HCL Technologies, and HCL Healthcare. The enterprise generates annual revenues of over US\$13.1 billion, with over 224,756 employees operating across 60 countries. For further information, visit www.hcl.com

Flipkart Group Achieves New Milestone in Water Conservation; Recycles over 67 Million Liters of Wastewater in One Year

Flipkart Group has announced significant strides in its water conservation efforts by successfully recycling over 67 million liters of wastewater in a year across four of its facilities in Rewari and Sanpka (Haryana), Ludhiana (Punjab) and Malur (Karnataka). The organization's water conservation initiatives are aimed towards promoting a judicious approach to water consumption, driven by key focus areas to reduce, reuse, and recycle. These conservation efforts have also resulted in the reduction of over 14 million liters of freshwater consumption, thereby playing a key role in the conservation of the nation's natural resources. This has been enabled by a 30% reduction in the average LPCD (liter per capita per day) at all four facilities. In addition to this, through the establishment of groundwater recharge infrastructure, Flipkart is also prioritizing the potential recharge of rainwater while fostering a strong sense of environmental conservancy.

In alignment with the government's 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign, aimed at encouraging water conservation at the grassroots level, Flipkart is proactively implementing a series of strategic measures dedicated towards water conservation.

Speaking about Flipkart Group's water conservation initiatives, Rajneesh Kumar, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart Group, said, "At the Flipkart Group, we acknowledge the importance of natural resources and are taking conscious steps to preserve them. We believe that it is our responsibility to ensure that we set in place best practices that can have a positive impact on

What is Flipkart's approach towards water conservation at its four facilities in Rewari and Sanpka (Haryana), Ludhiana (Punjab) and Malur (Karnataka)?

REDUCE WATER DEMAND

- **Water Meter Installation:** Water monitoring ensured across all critical measurement points through installation of water meters
- **Flow Restrictors Installation:** Reduction of the flow rate of water for all the taps
- **Improvement in water filtration process:** Increased RO output efficiency leading to less water wastage
- **Empowerment through Education:** Building awareness on water conservation for all employees via creative showcases

USE OF ALTERNATE WATER

- Usage of treated wastewater for flushing purposes, thereby saving fresh water
- Usage of excess treated wastewater for landscaping purposes, thereby saving fresh water
- Usage of RO reject water for floor cleaning purposes which saves on fresh water usage

WATER BACK TO SOURCE

- Establishment of adequate water recharging infrastructure to cater water from roof and non roof spaces to recharge

the environment and business ecosystem at large. Our current efforts on water conservation are aligned with this intention to not only ensure conscious usage, but to also deploy the right systems to enable recycling and recharging. The Net Zero Water certification underscores our dedication to environmental stewardship and sets a new standard for water conservation in the e-commerce sector. We are committed to continuing our efforts towards achieving this status across all our operations, contributing to a more sustainable future for generations to come."

Gurmit Singh Arora, National Chairman, Indian Green Building

Council, congratulated Flipkart on this milestone achievement, stating, "Flipkart's commitment to achieving IGBC Net Zero Water ratings for four of its facilities exemplifies their leadership in sustainability. By implementing effective water management strategies, Flipkart sets a commendable example for the industry. By adopting water-efficient practices, Flipkart becomes the first e-commerce organization to achieve Net Zero Water status for four of their facilities at different locations; thereby reducing their environmental footprint and setting a precedent for fostering a more water-resilient future."

Indira IVF to Train India's Talent in Reproductive Medicine with NBE Accreditation

Indira IVF, India's largest network of infertility treatment hospitals, announced its accreditation in the esteemed Fellowship of National Board (FNB) - Reproductive Medicine course by the National Board of Examinations (NBE), India. The accreditation has been provided to its Udaipur and Pune hospitals for four and two seats, respectively. The company aspires to train 100 FNB candidates in the next five years hence, addressing the critical need gap for trained fertility specialists in the country.

As a distinguished institution in India, the National Board of Examinations (NBE) sets exceptional benchmarks for medical education and training, and provides accreditation to organisations that fulfil its stringent guidelines. Medical graduates who have a DNB/MS degree in Obstetrics and Gynaecology can appear for the qualifying examination and a selected few are allocated seats in NBE-accredited Medical Colleges, Institutes or Hospitals. The Fellowship of National Board - Reproductive Medicine course is widely recognised for its comprehensive curriculum and rigorous training protocols, ensuring that professionals in the field of reproductive medicine adhere to the highest standards of expertise and competence.

During the two-year fellowship, selected candidates will go through a rigorous course divided into theoretical, clinical, practical and symposia formats that takes them through knowledge, skills, behaviour, delivery of rehabilitative care, and methodology of research and training. Nitiz Murdia, Managing Director, and Co-Founder of Indira IVF, expressed his elation on the achievement of the accreditation, stating, "We are honoured to receive accreditation from the National Board of Examinations to train India's next generation of specialists in Reproductive Medicine. In addition to providing technologically-backed treatment to patients, Indira IVF hospitals are also equipped to facilitate research and training with its state-of-the-art infrastructure."

"As per recent estimates, there are currently 1,950 gynaecologists who perform IVF treatment in the country however, there will be a requirement of 1.5-2x of the current availability by 2028. The silver lining is that there are over 35,000 gynaecologists in India who can be trained to become specialists to meet the increasing demand of IVF treatment in the country," Murdia added.

The accreditation bestowed upon Indira IVF by the NBE is a testament to the company's unwavering commitment to delivering world-class fertility treatments while upholding the highest standards of medical education. In its existing efforts for the same, the academic wing of Indira IVF, Indira Fertility Academy (IFA), has trained 150+ andrology technicians, 200+ embryologists, and 350+ fertility specialists. In the next five years, it plans to add around 300 to 350 fertility specialists to address the gap owing to the increase in requirement of assisted reproductive technology treatments in the near term.

600 students of Adani Vidya Mandir, Bhadreshwar, pledge to plant over 25,000 saplings

In a unique celebration, students of Adani Vidya Mandir, Bhadreshwar (AVMB), dedicated their 12th annual day 'Utkarsh' to United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As part of this, 600 students pledged to plant over 25,000 saplings over a period of three years on the school premises and outside, including mangroves on the coast.

As part of 'Utkarsh', students creatively highlighted aspects of living in harmony with nature. It was a platform to showcase the essence and importance of all 17 SDGs through working models on environment and water conservation, skits, songs, and poetry. Exposure to SDGs is part of the school's focus on integrating sensitive and critical lessons, including moral and value education towards making the students responsible citizens of the country and the world. The event, carefully curated by teachers, sensitised guests on the importance of preserving coastal biodiversity. Kutch, known for its colourful traditions and celebrations, is a fragile ecosystem buckling under the pressure of climate change.

On the occasion, Dr. Priti Adani, Chairperson of Adani Foundation, sent her best wishes to the students. She said, "This pledge from our young students is a testament to their sensitivity and commitment towards our planet. I am proud that our schools are instilling these values in our future leaders." Chetan Misan, SDM, Mundra, who was the guest of honour at the celebrations, said, "I am spellbound seeing the performances of these children. I congratulate the school on this occasion and hope that it continues to spread the light of knowledge."

Jugeshinder ('Robbie') Singh, CFO of Adani Group, chief guest of the programme, was impressed by the state-of-the-art facilities at the school and the knowledge showcased by the children on topics generally discussed as part of higher education, policy roundtables and corporate chambers. He said, "I am humbled to be here and interact with these young children, who have shown immense promise. I am sure each of them will make great progress in their lives, and, in turn, help their families, communities and our great nation."

Leaders of the Kutch region, members of the fisherfolk community, parents, and other distinguished guests attended Utkarsh 2024.

Walmart Foundation Supports Resilient Agriculture with \$1.5 Million Grant to S M Sehgal Foundation

SM Sehgal Foundation has announced the extension of its project 'Bolstering Farmer Producer Organizations' in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. Initiated in 2023 for two years with a philanthropic grant of \$1.5 million from the Walmart Foundation, this next phase will reach 23 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) with 23,000 members with an aim to enhance the capacities of FPOs, promote climate-resilient practices and develop infrastructure that adds value to crop production.

"We are excited to support S M Sehgal Foundation for the second phase of the 'Bolstering FPOs project. We believe strengthening FPOs can enable more opportunities for smallholder farmers in India with capacity building at the core. Additionally, developing transparent structures, designing and implementing business models and establishing collaborations will help ensure more sustainable operations and outcomes," Julie Gehrki, chief operating officer, Walmart Foundation said.

The initial phase of the 'Bolstering Farmer Producer Organizations' project spanned from 2021 to 2023 and impacted 10 FPOs, strengthened 8,000 existing members, added 2,000 new members and ensured one-third representation of women in leadership roles. Approximately 2,500 women gained essential knowledge and skills development, with 40 to 45% actively participating in project activities at the FPO level.

The project's reach extended to over 30,000 beneficiaries. Key interventions included strengthening institutional and governance structures in FPOs, imparting knowledge

on agronomic practices and farm technologies, livelihood opportunities, fostering business development, marketing, enhancing value addition, promoting digitization, facilitating financial inclusion and convergence with government programs.

The forthcoming phase aims to build upon this foundation, with a strategic focus on preparing these FPOs for market engagement through a series of targeted initiatives. This will involve advanced training and support, ensuring the FPOs are not only self-sufficient but also market-ready and equipped to meet the dynamic demands of the agricultural sector. It is strategically designed to further strengthen FPOs to take the lead in working towards a resilient and prosperous agricultural sector. The emphasis will be on creating opportunities for smallholder farmers, with a focus on women producers. S M Sehgal Foundation strengthened its collaboration with FPOs in the districts of Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, and Kolar, Karnataka, during the first phase, thereby paving way for the second phase of the project.

Further, there will be a strong focus on business development and

establishing market linkages for high-value commodities from each FPO. Specialized training will be implemented with a focus on cultivation, post-harvest management, processing, marketing and value addition of selected commodities.

The overarching vision of the project is for the FPOs to independently undertake initiatives supported by this grant and offer value-added services to their members. By promoting transparent and inclusive business models, the project will support these FPOs in developing self-sustaining and progressive operations. This strategy aims to provide ongoing support to members, enhancing resilience and self-reliance in agricultural communities. The S M Sehgal Foundation will partner with grassroots groups, research bodies, academic institutions, and social enterprises, creating a robust support network and a conducive environment for FPOs.

"Organizing smallholder farmers into FPOs can leverage the advantage farmers have in emerging markets. It can also help mitigate challenges faced by individual farmers, such as low market prices, high input costs and limited access to technologies and markets, among others. With support from the Walmart Foundation, the S M Sehgal Foundation continues to build the capacities of FPO members. The first phase witnessed a turnaround in women's participation with 92 women-led Farmer Interest Groups (FIGs) benefiting more than 2,500 women farmers actively engaged in FPOs," Anjali Makhija, trustee and chief executive officer, S M Sehgal Foundation, said.

The overarching vision of the project is for the FPOs to independently undertake initiatives supported by this grant and offer value-added services to their members.

Three-pronged sustainable solution for the Bengaluru Water crisis

AquaKraft Group Ventures, (www.aquakraft.net) a water sustainability and impact group, focused on providing actionable solutions on the ground in the area of drinking water and sanitation is offering a comprehensive three-pronged solution to address Bengaluru's water crisis. Since Bangalore has been a recipient of good rain showers for years, the key lies in the effective utilization of the waters received.

The first prong constitutes a real-time IOT-based system for monitoring the rainwater harvesting structures to understand their efficiency, capture and recharge readings.

The second prong envelopes the treatment of sewage and effluents by employing AquaKraft's nature-based, time-tested, green & sustainable sewage treatment plants that consume no power, use a bioprocess with no usage of any chemicals, no odour, recover over 95 per cent of the water that is fit for recharging the underground aquifers.

The third prong stems from an understanding of the capital-intensive nature of the STPs. To this effect, AquaKraft has structured a sustainable financing model to fund sewage treatment and water recycling wherein the stakeholders enter a water purchase agreement akin to the power purchase agreement, address their captive needs and offer the excess water for groundwater recharge or other consumption.

All initiators of rainwater harvesting, STPs and groundwater recharge

will be monitored using real-time IOTs and the data will be used for integrated water risk management and policy making. This good behaviour in water will be incentivised by issuing AquaCredits – Water Credits after monitoring water use and efficiency on AquaKraft's digital innovation, AqVerium – World's 1st Digital Water Bank.”

With about a staggering 86 per cent of the water needs of the urban areas being met by extracting groundwater, the centrality of groundwater to the existing crisis cannot be denied. With an estimated 1000 million litres of sewage being discharged into the city's lakes and reservoirs that once functioned efficiently as sites for rainwater capture and groundwater recharge, it has also become clear that sewage treatment and water recycling form a complementary piece of the puzzle that is the Bangalore water crisis.

The Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board in the past had taken proactive measures to pass a regulation making rainwater harvesting compulsory for houses having an area of 1200 square feet or more to reduce the stress on groundwater. However, the implementation of this resolution has not yielded the desired results. Additionally, there is no central or local system to keep track of the harvesting structures, their capture measurements, efficiency readings, recharge rates etc. The same also applies to the rules regarding the mandatory installation of sewage-treatment plants (STPs) in residential,

commercial and educational institutions that were revised a few days back owing to the economic infeasibility for smaller-sized stakeholders.

Speaking on the occasion, C Sridhar – Governor, of AquaKraft group Ventures said, “One of the most important strategies to mitigate the crisis is rooftop harvesting. We have been able to make water villages depending on tanker water, tanker-free with simple rooftop harvesting. Though rainwater harvesting has been made mandatory, its implementation has been poor. AquaKraft will embark on “Jal Pe Charcha” an extensive advocacy programme engaging all stakeholders to catch the rain and recharge the ground water table.”

Carrying an experience of over a decade and a half in evaluating, monitoring and mitigating crises by implementing green & sustainable solutions surrounding the resource that is highly undervalued despite being the planet's lifeline - water, AquaKraft Group Ventures has taken a focussed initiative as one of the first responders to help resolve the labyrinth of crisis facing the city of Bengaluru.

“Monsoon is seasonal, sewage is perpetual. Our vision is to leverage the sewage generated daily in Bengaluru City and use the excess treated sewage to recharge the dry borewells and augment the groundwater table irrespective of rain. Added to that, incentives for rainwater harvesting will complement this effort leading Bengaluru to water positivity. A multifaceted problem requires a multifaceted solution through multi-stakeholder initiatives. We take this opportunity to invite all stakeholders including citizens, corporates, CSR and administrative bodies to come together and make the city of Bangalore ‘Water Positive’ through collective efforts.” Said Dr. Subramanya Kusnur, Founder Chairman & CEO, of AquaKraft Group Ventures and New Water Man of India.



Winds of Change: Dabur Sets Up First All-Women Production Line at Indore

Special Video released on International Women's Day to honour the crew that produces 'Made by Women, For Women' Vatika Hair Oil range

In a move that's testament to gender parity across workplaces, Dabur India Ltd has set up an all-women production line with 100% women employees at its largest-ever greenfield plant near Indore. In this first-of-its-kind development, a crew of 20 women are engaged in the production of Dabur's range of Vatika Hair Oils -- a range of products 'Made by Women, for Women'.

A special video honouring these 'Vatika Women of Substance' was launched on the occasion of International Women's Day.

The move is part of Dabur's efforts to build a more diverse workforce and promote women empowerment in the manufacturing industry. The company will be further expanding this initiative with the inclusion of 30 more women in its factory workforce, going forward.

"Dabur has always been committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment. We continue to make progress on our commitments

as we enhance representation and inclusion across our organisation. Setting up an all-women production line is one step forward in this direction and seeks to not only transform a traditionally male-dominated manufacturing sector but enhance the lives of local women and the community in the process," Dabur India Limited Executive Director-HR, Biplab Baksi said. This all-women production line has been established at Dabur's Rs 550-crore greenfield manufacturing unit being set up near Indore in Madhya Pradesh. This line has been established to meet the growing demand for its range of natural personal care



products, particularly hair oils. This line has a capacity to produce over 2.5 Million packs per annum and will be operating in 3 shifts.

"Our groundbreaking move is not just a powerful statement for gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, but also serves as a shining example of breaking stereotypes and providing equal opportunities. This unit exclusively produces a range of hair care products designed by women, produced by women, for women. This unique approach ensures that the products cater to the diverse needs and preferences of the female consumer base, fostering a strong sense of connection between the brand and its consumers. And in the process, this unit is also significantly contributing to economic independence," Dabur India Limited Global Head of Operations, Rahul Awasthi said.

The introduction of an all-women workforce, Awasthi added, has proven to be a catalyst for higher productivity, enhanced team cohesion, exceptional efficiency, attention to detail, and commitment to quality, translating into a 10% increase in the factory's overall productivity.

Tata Capital and Diganta Swaraj Foundation Join Hands to Transform Sanitation Facilities for Mumbai's Women Police Personnel

Initiative to benefit 450 women constables and officers across 10 police stations

Tata Capital, the flagship financial services company of the Tata Group has partnered with Diganta Swaraj Foundation a non-profit organization, to refurbish sanitation facilities for Mumbai's women Police personnel on the occasion of International Women's Day. The collaboration aims to provide women in police with basic necessities, improved facilities and creating a positive impact on their lives.

The initiative has led to the completion of crucial repairs and implementation of improvements at the 10 designated police stations, which will benefit over 450 women personnel on a daily basis.

The handover event was graced by the presence of Vivek Phansalkar, Commissioner of Police, Greater Mumbai, Deven Bharti, Special Commissioner of Police, and Satya Narayan Chaudhary, Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order), along with other dignitaries such as Rajiv Sabharwal, Managing Director and CEO, Tata Capital.

Speaking about Tata Capital's CSR initiatives, Sridhar Sarathy - Chief Ethics Officer & Head - Sustainability, CSR, Tata Capital said, "We are happy to collaborate with Diganta Swaraj Foundation, and we hope this initiative will make a positive difference in the lives of Mumbai's women police personnel. At Tata Capital, we are committed to supporting our communities, and this initiative is a reflection of those values. This joint endeavor is a heartfelt gesture to express our gratitude and support to the remarkable women of the Mumbai Police who tirelessly protect us."

Tata Capital in its Phase I plans to upgrade the sanitation facilities at Agripada Police Station, Colaba Police Station, Cuffe Parade Police Station, Dadar Police Station & Sion Police Station. Phase 2 consists of Dharavi Police Station, Mahim Police Station, Bandra Hill Road Police Station, Malwani Police Station and Deonar Police Station.

MakeMyTrip Foundation's efforts in Himachal Pradesh recognised by Indian Social Impact Awards

MakeMyTrip Foundation, the social development arm of MakeMyTrip, has been honoured with the prestigious Best Disaster Relief Initiative of the Year award at the Indian Social Impact Awards 2024 for its exemplary relief and rehabilitation efforts undertaken in Himachal Pradesh during the devastating floods.

Yuvaraj Srivastava, Trustee, MakeMyTrip Foundation & Group CHRO, MakeMyTrip said, "Driven by our twin mission to be at the forefront of community empowerment and climate action, MakeMyTrip Foundation is committed to make tourist destinations in India resilient & sustainable. We firmly believe that every small contribution coupled with focused initiatives go a long way in fostering a positive impact on people and planet. Our work in Himachal Pradesh, guided by these principles, is very close to our hearts, which makes this recognition even more special."

The destruction to communities and infrastructure brought on by heavy rainfall and flooding in Himachal Pradesh last year is well documented. Ever since, MakeMyTrip Foundation committed INR 5 crores towards addressing the needs of the affected families and localities in the state. In collaboration with local on-ground partners, government bodies, experts, NGOs, and residents of Himachal Pradesh, the Foundation began its work with relief efforts by way of supplying relief kits and tentage accommodation, ration and bedding to over 600 families, a few old age homes, orphanages and hostels. This was followed up with rebuilding efforts over the course of last year wherein the foundation supported the construction of bridges and schools, restoration of irrigation and water supply and repair work for an orphanage.

Besides the Indian Social Impact Awards committee, MakeMyTrip Foundation's efforts were also recognised by officials in Himachal Pradesh. Ashutosh Garg, Deputy Commissioner, Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, said, "During those extraordinary times, the voluntary contribution from MakeMyTrip proved to be a great supplement in further extending the aid and relief to the affected communities. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for the selfless service and assistance extended by the organisation towards the people of Kullu, during our difficult time."



Ace Cricketer Ajinkya Rahane promotes fitness among school children at an Inter-School Fitness Championship

Ajinkya Rahane, a name that needs no introduction was recently spotted at the grand finale of Body Fit Toh Life Hai Hit - Inter-School Fitness Championship. The event, organized by Salaam Bombay Foundation, showcased the dedication and achievements of participants in the fitness competition. Ace Cricketer, Ajinkya Rahane, known for his passion towards sports and fitness, graced the occasion as the guest of honor, extending his heartfelt congratulations to the deserving winners. Salaam Bombay Foundation hosted this event with a mission to encourage children to make right choices towards a healthy lifestyle which was in perfect synergy with Ajinkya's ideology of encouraging fitness right from young age.

The Inter-School Fitness Championship, organized by Salaam Bombay Foundation saw participation of 5000 students from over 100 Government and Government aided schools. This mega event brought together talented student athletes from schools across Mumbai to compete in a series of fitness challenges



Ace Cricketer Ajinkya Rahane felicitating winners of interschool fitness championship hosted by The Salaam Bombay Foundation.jpeg

aimed at promoting health, wellness, and sportsmanship among youth. During the felicitation segment, winners and participants of the Inter-School Fitness Championship were recognized and awarded for their outstanding performance and commitment to fitness excellence. Trophies, medals, and certificates were presented to deserving individuals and teams in various categories, including endurance, strength, agility, and overall performance.

40 best contestants were selected for the final round.

The felicitation event commenced with an opening ceremony featuring inspiring speech by Ajinkya Rahane and dignitaries, highlighting the importance of physical fitness and sports participation in the holistic development of students. Attendees were treated to thrilling highlights from the championship, showcasing the dedication, determination,

and exemplary sportsmanship displayed by participants throughout the competition.

Ms Padmini Sekhsaria, Founder and Director, Salaam Bombay Foundation says "Fitness plays a pivotal role in shaping every aspect of an adolescent's life, impacting not only physical health but also mental well-being. Investing in fitness during youth lays the foundation for long-term health and happiness. Salaam Bombay Foundation (SBF)

strongly advocates for the transformative potential of the 'Body Fit Toh Life Hai Hit' fitness competition. More than just a platform for showcasing physical abilities, it serves as a catalyst for personal growth and development. Through participation in this competition, students not only commit to improving their physical health but also embrace values such as discipline, dedication, and perseverance. We firmly believe that the playground can serve as a powerful tool for fostering a Healthy Body and Healthy Mind. Our vision is to instil an attitudinal change among adolescents through Sports and Fitness, motivating them to stay in school and complete their education."

"Happy to support the 'Body Fit Toh Life Hai Hit' fitness competition, which embodies the essence of holistic well-being. Fitness isn't just about physical strength; it's about nurturing endurance, flexibility, and resilience, both on and off the field. This initiative by Salaam Bombay Foundation not only promotes a balanced lifestyle but also instills values of discipline and dedication in our youth. I'm excited to witness the determination and spirit of the participants and to encourage them on their journey towards a healthier future" said Ajinkya Rahane.

"Fitness is essential and is for everyone. This is a great initiative by Salaam Bombay Foundation to have their fitness monitors to encourage underprivileged society - encompassing both the young and the elderly to be part of the Government's Fit India movement. One of Investec's social responsibilities is to build sustainable and stronger communities and we are delighted to be associated with this initiative that not only makes fitness as a mantra for the citizens but also hones mentoring skills for the youth who are facilitating the programme, said Rambhushan Kanumuri, Wholetime Director, Investec Capital Services (India) Pvt. Ltd.

CARE Hospitals Launches Tejaswini

A CSR Initiative Empowering Young Girls on International Women's Day

CARE Hospitals, one of India's leading multi-speciality healthcare groups, announced the launch of Tejaswini, an International Women's Day CSR initiative driven by Conexus in association with Jagathi Foundation. Supported by CARE Hospitals, the initiative is designed for girls aged 9 years and above in government schools across Hyderabad, and is aimed to raise awareness about feminine hygiene, menstruation, and cervical cancer.

Aligned with the Government's focus on cervical cancer vaccination for girls aged 9 to 14, highlighted in the Interim Budget 2024, CARE Hospitals continues its focus on tier II cities and rural areas, ensuring quality healthcare delivery.

Shalabh Dang, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, CARE Hospitals Group, said, "As an organization committed to holistic healthcare, CARE Hospitals recognises the importance of empowering young girls with knowledge about their health. Supporting Conexus and Jagathi Foundation, we aim to make a meaningful impact on girls' lives in government schools, fostering awareness and promoting overall well-being. This initiative aligns with our mission to create healthier communities and reflects our commitment to social responsibility."

Tejaswini, with a mission to empower young girls, sets out to make a significant impact on the lives of over 2000+ girls in the targeted age group across 12 government schools in Hyderabad. The initiative's primary objective is to reach and positively influence the lives of girls aged 9 years and above attending government schools. Tejaswini envisions widespread impact, fostering awareness and promoting a holistic understanding of feminine hygiene, menstruation, and cervical cancer.

Manish Handa, Spokesperson - Conexus and Durga Kalyani, Spokesperson - Jagathi Foundation, jointly said, "We are delighted to partner with CARE Hospitals on the Tejaswini initiative. By combining our expertise in community engagement and CARE's commitment to healthcare, we believe we can make a lasting impact on the lives of these young girls. It's essential to address the societal taboos surrounding feminine hygiene and menstrual health, and we are proud to be a part of this initiative."

In addition to informative sessions, Tejaswini employs various engagement methods, including doctors' interactions, Q&A sessions, and quizzes. Efforts are underway to actively involve mothers in the sessions, understanding the pivotal role they play in supporting their daughters' health education.

Tejaswini takes a proactive step towards ensuring hygiene and health of girl students during menstrual phase. While keeping in mind environmental sustainability, the team will be distributing organic, eco-friendly cotton sanitary napkins (pack of 10) to each girl during the awareness sessions. With this, the organisation aims at promoting not only health but also contributing to the broader goal of environmental preservation.



M P Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group formally handing over the project documents of 'Hunger Free World' to Douglas Syakalima, Minister of Education - Zambia, as part of implementing the transformative CSR initiative of Malabar Group in Zambia, Africa.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds Extends Hunger-Free World Initiative to Zambia; Pledges 3.6 Million Meals to Schoolchildren

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest global jewellery retailer, has announced the expansion of its Hunger Free World initiative to Zambia, aiming to provide 3.6 million meals annually to schoolchildren. The programme commences at John Laing Primary School in Lusaka, benefiting 6,000 children and marking the first-of-its-kind initiative by the Malabar Group in Africa.

The event held at the Malabar International Hub in Dubai Gold Souq was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including Honourable Douglas Syakalima, Zambia's Minister of Education, Mr M.P Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group, Professor Nkombo Muuka, the Consul General of the Republic of Zambia in Dubai, K P Abdul Salam, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group, Shamlal Ahammed, Managing Director - International Operations

(Malabar Gold & Diamonds), other dignitaries from the Zambian Consulate in Dubai and management team members of Malabar Group. The Hunger Free World programme aims to address child malnutrition, gender disparities in education, and community development in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Zambia.

The Chairman of Malabar Group, M.P Ahammed, pledged an additional 1 million meals from his personal funds for another school with a strength of 6000 students identified by Minister Syakalima. Malabar Gold & Diamonds will construct a kitchen and eating shelter at John Laing Primary School, providing 10,000 meals daily in the first phase.

Ahammed said, "Malabar Group has consistently led the charge in championing philanthropy that uplifts communities. Our Hunger Free World initiative has successfully

alleviated hunger for thousands in India—an achievement that fills us with immense pride. Expanding this programme to Zambia reflects our commitment to creating positive change in the country. Recognising the dire need in Africa, the largest gold miner, with many people facing starvation, prompted our decision to extend the free food distribution scheme there. Our endeavours at John Laing Primary School in Lusaka signify just the initial steps in the impactful journey we've envisioned for Zambia."

Douglas Syakalima, said, "I extend my sincere appreciation to the Malabar Group for this noble initiative. The Hunger Free World project is poised to make a positive impact on our community, especially among school-going children in Zambia who have been grappling with a lack of access to nutritious meals. I wholeheartedly affirm the

unwavering support of the Ministry of Education towards this commendable venture and gesture. Notably, John Laing Primary School serves a large population of underprivileged students in Zambia, making it an ideal starting point for this project. Through the launch of this venture, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is not only addressing a critical need but

also exemplifying the essence of giving back to society, establishing itself as a model organisation."

Ahammed emphasised the responsibility to give back to Africa, especially as the company sources its jewellery's raw material from the continent. The Hunger Free World initiative, launched in 2022 in line with UN's Sustainable Development

Goal-2, currently operates numerous kitchens in India, providing 30,000 nutritious meals daily. Malabar Group is gearing up to expand the 'Hunger Free World' project to additional areas in collaboration with customers and Malabar Group employees. The objective is to distribute one early meal daily to one lakh deserving people in India.

Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation: Empowering Farmers in Pollachi Through Knowledge, Sustainability, and Digital Innovation

Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation has positively impacted the lives of over 81000 Indian farmers across more than 3,11,000 acres of farmland

Launched in 2017, Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation, the flagship initiative by Marico Limited, has continued to make significant strides in empowering farmers across India by providing them with the necessary tools, knowledge, and support for sustainable agricultural practices. Since its establishment, the Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation has been dedicated to making farmers self-reliant, with a focus on modern and sustainable farming techniques. Through a multifaceted approach encompassing training, sustainability initiatives, and digital empowerment, the foundation has positively impacted the lives of over 81,000 Indian farmers across more than 3,11,000 acres of farmland. The enrolled farmers have seen a remarkable 16% increase in crop yield, demonstrating the efficacy of the program in enhancing agricultural productivity.

With a vision to address the pressing challenges faced by farmers, Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation identified three primary challenges faced by farmers in Pollachi and

devised targeted solutions to address them effectively. To improve the productivity of farms, PKF undertook initiatives towards water conservation and educating farmers on scientific and sustainable farming practices. The foundation implemented a comprehensive productivity improvement program to tackle the issue of low-quality crop yields. Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation assigned 120+ field personnel to educate farmers on modern farming practices such as pest management, disease control, nutrient optimization, and water management. Over 30,000 farmers are benefited every month through expert training and guidance.

Commenting on the success of the foundation, Amit Bhasin, Chief Legal Officer & Group General Counsel and Secretary of the CSR Committee, Marico Limited said, "Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation embodies Marico's commitment to sustainable agriculture and community development thus making a tangible difference in the lives of the farmers. By prioritizing sustainable agricultural practices

and providing comprehensive support to farmers, we aim to drive a positive change and foster a resilient farming community in Pollachi and other parts of the country."

Further, to address the challenge of traditional agricultural practices resulting in higher input costs and lower yields, the foundation launched the Kalpavriksha Knowledge Program which offers both online and offline training sessions to farmers. Focusing on scientific farm management practices, digital literacy, financial literacy, and awareness of government schemes and subsidies. Initiated this year, the program has undertaken over 40 trainings benefiting 3000+ farmers across 15+ districts, empowering farmers to optimize their farming methods and improve their livelihoods. In addition to physical training sessions, the program leverages digital channels to reach a wider audience of farmers using a specialized mobile app, website, Toll-free Farmer Helpline, and social media channels. With over 1.9 lakh downloads, the mobile app assists farmers in adopting effective agricultural practices, while the toll-free helpline provides personalized support to farmers, addressing their queries on pest management, nutrient deficiencies, and other agricultural issues.

TVS Motor Company Champions Children Safety with its Protect Little Riders Campaign

TVS Motor Company (TVSM) - a leading global automaker that operates in the two and three-wheeler segments - launched a new campaign, 'Protect Little Riders' as a part of #TVSRide4Safety initiative. This one of a kind initiative by TVSM aims to spread awareness on safety of children on two-wheelers and addresses barriers for adoption of helmets for young pillion riders.

Despite the government regulations, the incidences of children riding pillion without helmets are high. Children being the centre of attention to their parents makes this behavior unexpected. After studies and interaction with parents, the following reasons have been identified for the lack of helmet adoption for children:

- 1) Blind Spot - Illusion of safety with a vehicle in the parent's control.
- 2) Blind Spot - Proximity of destination hence lower risk of accidents.
- 3) Lack of availability of options.

As a two-pronged approach to the above, the TVSRide4Safety initiative aims to raise awareness for helmet adoption and development of a range of helmets specific to kids. A dedicated website has been created to provide parents with essential information to assist them in selecting the appropriate headgear size for their children's safety while riding on two-wheelers.

Commenting on the campaign, Aniruddha Halder, Senior VP (Marketing) – Commuters, Corporate Brand & Dealer Transformation, TVS Motor Company "In a nation deeply concerned about its young, the use of helmet for children is still a blind spot. Therefore, we are reaching out to parents to collaborate and

change behaviors. The campaign has a straightforward message: (1) Wear a helmet (2) Ensure your child wears a helmet (3) Ride safe. We invite you to join us in the Protect Little Riders campaign."

Protect Little Riders is an integral part of the #Ride4Safety Campaign, representing a socially responsible initiative to build awareness and drive positive action in the community. This underscores TVS Motor Company's commitment to addressing concerns within the ecosystem and actively contributing to a safer environment for young riders.

Sharing his thoughts on the campaign, Subramanyeswar S. (Subbu), Group CEO, MullenLowe Lintas Group & Chief Strategy Officer - APAC, MullenLowe Global, said "Protect Little Riders' is a crusade (and not just another campaign) through which we are putting a spotlight on one of the biggest blind spots on our roads - kids without helmets. There are millions of kids out there in our country going on two-wheelers every day without helmets, Ironically, as parents, we think about the good of the child first in every little aspect, yet here is an unfortunate exception that we don't find anything wrong with. We are glad that a thought leader like TVS Motor has taken up the cause to bring a serious behavioural change amongst adults to protect children's lives and create a culture of safety and responsibility."

It is TVS Motor Company's endeavour to educate and commit the consumers to pledge on inculcating the safety measures to Protect Little Riders.

Swaraj Tractors Leads Empowerment Drive with Vibrant International Women's Day Festivities

Swaraj Tractors, part of the Mahindra Group, announced the successful conclusion of its vibrant International Women's Day celebration at the Mohali manufacturing plant from March 4th to 7th, 2024. The events aimed to recognize and applaud the strength, resilience, and achievements of women in the workplace.

There were insightful sessions that not only promoted growth and inclusion but also oriented Swaraj's women employees towards breaking barriers and recognizing their immense potential. Additionally, expert-led health sessions, promoted a holistic approach, encouraging women to prioritize their well-being.

Swaraj, in emphasizing its commitment to empowering women to break stereotypes and display their talents, actively promotes diversity and inclusivity within its organization. This aligns with its pursuit of an equal world in accordance with Mahindra's Rise philosophy. The International Women's Day celebration served as a powerful testament to this belief, highlighting Swaraj's collective journey towards a more inclusive future.

The four-day celebration was concluded with joyous moments, talents, and a special lunch, underscoring Swaraj's commitment to diversity and equality.

CSR INDIA UNITED

The Akshaya Patra Foundation Spearheads Empowerment Efforts for Girl Children and Women

Through its initiatives and programs, The Akshaya Patra Foundation provides training, support, and mentorship to women from all backgrounds, empowering them to excel in their roles and pursue their passions. By harnessing the potential of women in cooking, management, and community outreach, the foundation is paving the way for gender equality and economic empowerment.

This endeavor aligns closely with the Government of India's initiatives such as Beti Bachao Beti



The Akshaya Patra Foundation, renowned for its efforts in eradicating hunger and promoting education, is making significant strides in empowering girl children and women throughout India. Contrary to popular belief, the foundation's mission extends beyond feeding children; including several initiatives to empower women and providing them with opportunities to shape their careers and lead others. The Foundation recently announced the increase in their feeding capacity from 50,000 children in 2021 to 2.2. Million in 2024, marking a significant increase in the number of girl child beneficiaries across the country.

The firm will also be expanding in Jammu and Kashmir, with the opening of two new kitchens in the near future, further adding employment opportunities for women in the region.

With its mid-day meal scheme, The Akshaya Patra Foundation not only ensures children receive nutritious meals but also creates employment opportunities for women. Currently employing 1036 women in its centralized kitchens nationwide, the foundation is breaking barriers and making a difference in the lives of countless individuals every day. The foundation has additionally employed 120+ women in their corporate offices.

Padhao (BBBP) and the National Plan of Action for the Girl Child, reflecting a collective commitment to empower girls and women across the nation. With nutritious meals playing a pivotal role in bridging the gender gap in nutrition and school enrollment in India, the foundation is committed to continue empowering women in the country through nutritious meals and employment generation across the country.

The Foundation feeds over 2.16 million children in 24,082 schools through its 72 kitchens across 16 states and 2 UTs of India, making it the world's largest NGO-run school feeding programme.

Salaam Bombay Foundation Empowers Grassroots Adolescent Entrepreneurs through Dolphin Tanki's Third Edition

Salaam Bombay Foundation (SBF), a non-profit organization empowering resource-challenged adolescents to make the right choices for their health, education and livelihood in partnership with the School of Business Management, NMIMS successfully concluded the third edition of 'Dolphin Tanki' – a unique initiative to offer market linkages and capital access to resource-challenged aspiring grassroots adolescent entrepreneurs. Dolphin Tanki is a part of Salaam Bombay Foundation's Entrepreneurship Incubator and these programmes have been recognised as a youth centric solution by Yuwaah India at UNICEF and 10 to 19 Dasra Adolescents Collaborative as part of their 'Joint Call For Solutions' initiative.

Among the participants, 28 entrepreneurs presented their innovative business pitches to a distinguished panel of judges. Of these, 12 outstanding ventures were awarded financial support of up to INR 50,000 each, recognizing their potential to drive positive change and innovation in their communities. Additionally, 8 entrepreneurs were granted support of INR 25,000 each, celebrating their unwavering determination and grit that impressed the jury.

This year's edition witnessed enthusiastic participation from entrepreneurs across Mumbai, Pune and Kolkata, showcasing the growing interest and potential within resource-challenged grassroots communities. This expansion underscores Salaam Bombay Foundation's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship beyond geographical boundaries, enabling greater inclusivity and impact. The



Dolphin Tanki 3.0 - Gold and Silver winners at Dolphin Tanki 2024



Dolphin Tanki 3.0 - Jue receiving the winning amount at Dolphin Tanki 2024



Dolphin Tanki 3.0 - Sagar receiving the winning amount at Dolphin Tanki 2024

collaborative efforts between Salaam Bombay Foundation and NMIMS facilitated a nurturing environment where participants received valuable guidance and support to refine their business models and pitches.

The prized jury consisted of Pratik Kothari (Film Director/ Actor/ Co-Founder White Wall Screenings), Shilpa Gode (Fine Artist, Art Educator), Zahida Ternikar (Head Of Customer Service - Kaya Limited), Vishal Vithalpura (JAPAC Sales & Marketing Leader - Intel Corporation), Rohit Sangwan (Area Culinary Director - West & Executive Chef, Taj Lands End, Mumbai) and Sneha Jain (Co-founder and Director - Bay leaf Chain Of Salons) for the semi-finals. For the finals, the jury consisted of Ambarnath

Sinha (Filmmaker, Entrepreneur, Educationist, Columnist, Scriptwriter, TV Consultant, Creative Director), Dr. Anupama Wagh-Koppar (Innovator with a purpose - Beauty Industry), Savita Chhabra (Chairperson - Hygienic Research Institute (HRIPL), Ashish Chinthali (Business Unit Head - Napino Digital Solutions), Ritesh Mathur (Founder - F2F Food and Beverage Consultants) and Girish Bindra (Head Coach - Asics Running Club).

Gaurav Arora, Vice President – Chief Growth Officer and Sr. VP, Salaam Bombay Foundation, said, "Salaam Bombay Foundation's Entrepreneurship Incubator and subsequently Dolphin Tanki has taught us that it is imperative to cultivate an entrepreneurial ecosystem amongst

resource-challenged adolescents that transforms them into job creators. These adolescents are no longer job seekers and instead metamorphose into self-reliant, financially independent risk takers willing to establish scalable businesses and even provide employment within their communities. Over the last three years we have witnessed nearly

150 entrepreneurs benefit from these programs and are eager to keep expanding this impactful initiative. We hope to ultimately aid the government in its aim to boost entrepreneurship as a key to nurture innovation and employment in the country." Dr. Meena Galliara, Director, Jasani Center for Social Entrepreneurship & Sustainability Management, SBM,

NMIMS, said, "Dolphin Tanki is a platform that empowers entrepreneurial adolescents from the most challenging backgrounds. With a great idea, passion, and the right guidance from our NMIMS We Care interns and judges, these young entrepreneurs have potential to turn their dreams into reality and become the future leaders of our economy."

USAID Launches Women's Health and Livelihood Alliance (WOHLA) - Bridging Healthcare and Economic Gaps for Women in India

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Samhita's Collective Good Foundation partnered to launch the Women's Health and Livelihood Alliance (WOHLA), a multi-stakeholder initiative designed to empower women in underserved communities across India by addressing the intersecting aspects of their health and economic wellbeing.

WOHLA aims to empower women by increasing their access to sexual and reproductive health information, services, and products. Additionally, it seeks to enhance their financial and digital literacy, thereby fostering livelihood opportunities and promoting workforce participation. USAID Assistant Administrator for Global Health, Dr. Atul Gawande, said, "When women are given the opportunity to thrive, the entire community thrives too. Women's economic security and rights is the critical foundation for communities, peace, and resilient economies. The Women's Health and Livelihood Alliance in India provides career development and job opportunities for women, and expands access to sexual and reproductive health care—services that promote gender equity and economic security for women."

Dr. Amit Bhanot, India Country Director and Chief of Party, USAID's Frontier Health Market (FHM) Engage program, said, "WOHLA is designed to



mobilize private sector resources, foster partnerships, and implement targeted interventions to cultivate an ecosystem that prioritizes the symbiotic relationship between women's reproductive health and professional advancement. The benefits are far-reaching and may even eliminate genderbased violence."

Priya Naik, Founder and CEO at Samhita Social Ventures Pvt Ltd, said, "Deeply committed to advancing the well-being of women and girls through multiple WOHLA interventions, we aim to increase access to reproductive healthcare information, products and services and unlock access to livelihood interventions for empowering young women." Sandeep Varma, Chief Executive Officer, The Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprise, Ministry of Medium and Small Enterprises, said, "We are committed to scaling micro and small enterprises led by women in the healthcare sector, facilitating seamless access to finance. Our goal is to empower

these enterprises to turn aspirations into tangible achievements, thereby catalyzing economic growth. Through our collaborative efforts, we aim to ensure essential credit accessibility for India's medium and small enterprises."

Tuan Pham, Head of Social Impact at LinkedIn in Asia Pacific, said, "LinkedIn is proud to join forces with WOHLA in our shared mission to uplift and empower women in India. Through this initiative, we are dedicated to leveraging our platform's capabilities to foster positive change in women's economic opportunities and success. Together, we are not just advocating for progress – we are actively working to create a future where every woman has the resources and support needed to thrive."

Ashwini Saxena, CEO, JSW Foundation, said, "WOHLA India syncs with JSW's goal to catalyze entrepreneurial journeys of two million rural women in India, giving them enhanced agency and incomes."



Bayer launches Better School Program

Bayer, a global life sciences company with core strengths in agriculture and healthcare, has joined hands with BharatCares, a social impact organization, to launch the 'Better School Program' at Adpodra Group Government Primary School in Himatnagar, Gujarat.

Aimed at enhancing educational facilities and enabling experiential learning opportunities for the students in Himatnagar, the 'Better School Program' focuses on providing a foundational leap to economically challenged students and will benefit more than 850 students from grades 1st to 8th, across four schools.

Through this initiative, Bayer and BharatCares will provide a STEM Lab, Smart Classroom, indoor play kits, computer labs, better sports facilities as well as equip the schools with solar panels for better power supply. The program will empower students with modern teaching methodologies and resources to foster innovative learning and skills. The Better School Program was launched in the presence of

government officials, Simon Britsch, Chief Financial Officer, Bayer South Asia and Bhomik Shah, Founder and CEO, BharatCares.

Commenting on the launch, Simon Britsch, Chief Financial Officer, Bayer South Asia, said "Children are the future of the world, and it is our collective responsibility to equip them with the right resources to seek knowledge, thrive and innovate.



Through the 'Better School Program' we are supporting students in government run schools to explore the field of LifeSciences, through well-equipped STEM labs, modern teaching methods and improved infrastructure. At Bayer, we remain

committed to supporting education, research, and innovation, and providing inclusive opportunities for all sections of society."

The program is also being implemented at the Mankadi Colony Primary School, Sardarpura Primary School and Vantada Primary School. With an aim to standardize education and STEM facilities at these schools, the collaborative project will also establish modular libraries which will boast a diverse collection of grade-appropriate books and learning aids to implore hands-on training and exploration. Interactive digital learning tools, through Smart classes will also be provided.

Bhomik Shah, Founder and CEO, BharatCares, said "The Better School initiative in collaboration with Bayer, breathes new life into primary government schools. By providing essential facilities, we are not just enhancing infrastructure but nurturing the potential of students to make them future-ready. As we move forward, BharatCares is excited to partner with Bayer, ensuring that together, we continue to uplift the educational landscape, one school at a time."

The Better School Program is also aligned with Bayer's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship, with the installation of solar panels to enable the schools to adopt clean and renewable energy sources. In addition, Bayer has also collaborated with IMPACT4Nutrition to improve nutritional health and awareness of students.

As part of its ongoing community engagement efforts, Bayer has also set up breast cancer screening camps in Adopodra, Tintoi, and Vatanda, Himatnagar using the novel 'iBreastExam' device. The program also focused on educating primary healthcare workers and women to conduct self-breast examination, enabling early detection. Over 460 women were covered under this initiative.

ACC's Bakery Initiative in Dungri village of Bargarh Creates Economic Opportunities for Locals

ACC, the cement and building material company of the diversified Adani Group, has inaugurated the first bakery production unit in Dungri, a remote village in the Bargarh district. This visionary initiative aims to address the pressing local demand for bakery products while nurturing self-reliance and fostering economic empowerment among community members. The launch of Dungri's first bakery under the Pratignya Trust, a Self Help Group supported by Adani Foundation, represents a significant economic milestone for a community comprising over 1,450 families, who were previously dependent on distant markets for their bakery needs. Equipped with cutting-edge machinery, this bakery is set to significantly enhance local commerce, particularly during festive seasons. The expected increase in sales not only promises to empower livelihoods of the community members but also reduces the burden of a 60km journey for bakery goods, reinforcing local self-reliance.

More than a mere economic effort, the establishment of "Dungri Bakery" symbolizes a collective commitment to community spirit, catalyzing a transformative shift towards sustainable development in Dungri. With the dedicated support of the ACC Bargarh plant's CSR team, the products from Dungri Bakery are marketed locally and to wholesalers, ensuring wider accessibility and reach. The unit, equipped with state-of-the-art bakery machinery, is ready to produce a diverse array of items such as toast, sliced bread, and buns. Upholding rigorous standards



of hygiene and quality, the bakery remains responsive to customer feedback, consistently delivering fresh, affordable products. With a commendable capacity of 38-40Kg per day, the unit expects a daily profit ranging between Rs. 900 to Rs. 1100. Given its capacity to meet daily demands and its growing popularity,

the bakery is poised for substantial growth, promising widespread benefits for the entire community.

The bakery project stands as a testament to ACC and Adani Foundation's dedication to nurturing local talent and promoting self-reliance, contributing positively to India's rural growth.

Marut Drones and PJTSAU's Revolutionary Direct Seeding Device Receives World's First Utility Patent

Marut Drones, India's leading drone manufacturer, has been granted the world's first utility patent for a term of 20 years starting from November 29, 2021, under the provisions of the Patents Act, 1970. This patent recognizes Marut's direct seeding drone, developed in collaboration with Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agriculture University (PJTSAU), which incorporates a multi-nozzle aerial seed dispensing device. With this patent, Marut Drones endeavors to facilitate the widespread adoption of direct seeding drones for rice cultivation at the grassroots level.

Marut's seeding drones have obtained the patent following scientific validation by PJTSAU, which has also released Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for their use. This validation underscores the reliability and efficacy of the technology in enhancing rice production.

The patented system enables the aerial dispersion of diverse rice seeds through a meticulously designed multi-nozzle mechanism, optimizing the efficiency and effectiveness of seed-sowing processes. Marut has adhered to standard operating procedures for seeding, ensuring precise parameters such as drone speed, swath width, nozzle type and pressure, spray volume, spraying altitude, and droplet size in Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) using drones.

Prem Kumar Vislawath, CEO and Founder of Marut Drones, emphasized, "This patented technology will revolutionize rice farming practices in India. By reducing on-farm



Prem Kumar Vislawath, CEO and Founder of Marut Drones

manual labor through drone technology, we aim to address the persistent challenges faced by farmers, particularly labor shortages due to rapid urbanization. From seeding paddy to controlling mosquitoes and pests in rice fields, labor costs pose significant hurdles. Through our collaboration with PJTSAU, we seek to promote the widespread adoption of Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) through drones, fostering a more economically viable and sustainable rice cultivation ecosystem."

Marut's direct seeding drone is a multi-utility attachment, enabling farmers to utilize drones not only for pesticide application/spraying but also for direct seeding, thereby accelerating Return on Investment (ROI). This multi-functionality allows the drone to be utilized round the year, justifying its name AG365.

By leveraging Marut Drones' innovative DSR drones, farmers can achieve a remarkable 92% reduction

in water usage, significantly accelerating ROI and profitability timelines from 3 years to just 1.5 years. The DSR drones are highly feasible under delayed monsoons, late release of canal water, or other contingency situations, addressing major challenges faced by rice farmers.

Traditional obstacles such as nursery time, transplantation, and skilled labor shortages are effectively mitigated, empowering farmers with enhanced operational efficiency and flexibility. With Marut's DSR drones, farmers can sow up to 30 acres in a single day, requiring only 33,333 man-days to cover 500,000 acres compared to the 50 lakh man-days required for manual transplanting. Moreover, this technology minimizes operational exposure to harmful pesticides during pest outbreaks.

Through extensive trials conducted across 5 states, Marut Drones is poised to revolutionize rice farming practices nationwide. As India

grapples with the impending dip of 2 million tons in rice production, creating disruptions in the global rice market, Marut Drones aims to seed 1 million hectares of land by 2030. By fortifying food security efforts with its patented technology, Marut

emerges as a frontrunner in innovation. The company's comprehensive training programs targeting farmers, rural youth, students, and agricultural stakeholders will promote the adoption of direct seeding in rice cultivation using drone technology.

Marut's patented technology not only opens avenues for rural employment but also encourages the establishment of Community Health Centers (CHCs) facilitated by Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Women Self-Help Groups.

SOS Children's Villages India partners with Uttarakhand Government's Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Development to strengthen Child Welfare Programmes in the State

SOS Children's Villages India, a leading non-profit organisation dedicated to providing care and support to vulnerable children, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Government of Uttarakhand. This strategic partnership aims to enhance child welfare initiatives across the state, focusing on various crucial areas.

The MoU was signed by Prashant Kumar Arya, IAS, Director, Women Welfare, Uttarakhand and Sumanta Kar, CEO, SOS Children's Villages India in the presence of Mohit Choudhry and Anjana Gupta, senior officials from the Department of Women Welfare, Uttarakhand. This significant event highlights the commitment of both parties to collaborate effectively in advancing child welfare in the region after the proposal was approved in the cabinet.

The MoU encompasses four key areas of collaboration:

- **Children's Home:** Under this initiative, efforts will be directed towards admitting children in need of care and protection in a family-like environment in a community setup.
- **Supporting vulnerable families in the community (Family Strengthening Programme):** The partnership seeks to implement Family Strengthening



(L-R) Sumanta Kar, CEO, SOS Children's Villages India & Prashant Kumar Arya, IAS, Director, Women Welfare, Uttarakhand

Programmes to support vulnerable families within the community, ensuring that children can grow up in a safe and stable family environment.

- **Mukhyamantri Vatsalya Yojana (Kinship Care):** Through the Mukhyamantri Vatsalya Yojana, efforts will be made to promote kinship care arrangements for children in need, emphasising the importance of family-like care solutions.
- **Mentorship Programme (Technical Assistance and Knowledge Partnership for CCIs):** This aspect of the collaboration will focus on providing technical assistance and fostering knowledge partnerships for Child Care Institutions (CCIs) to enhance

their capacity in providing quality care and support to children.

On the occasion of the signing of the MoU, Rekha Arya, Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Uttarakhand, expressed elation on this partnership, stating, "This partnership with SOS India will be a landmark endeavour in institutional and non-institutional care for the children of Uttarakhand, towards fulfilling our commitment to Juvenile Justice practices in the state."

Sumanta Kar, CEO of SOS Children's Villages India, stated, "We are delighted to join hands with the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Government of Uttarakhand, to strengthen our collective efforts in ensuring the well-being and protection of vulnerable children. Through this collaboration, we aim to create sustainable solutions that positively impact the lives of children and families across the state."

SOS Children's Villages India operates a Children's Village in Bhimtal, Uttarakhand, where currently 182 children are supported under the Family Like Care Programme.

SOS Children's Villages India remains committed to its mission of providing every child with a loving home and a supportive community, empowering them to build a brighter future.

Virtusa Embarks on Transformative Project at Lady Willingdon High School, Chennai



Virtusa Corporation, a global leader in digital engineering and technology services, proudly announced the commencement of a groundbreaking project at the esteemed Lady Willingdon High School in Chennai. This initiative, driven by the Virtusa Foundation's unwavering commitment to education and community empowerment, represents a pivotal moment in the school's illustrious history.

Lady Willingdon High School holds a cherished place as a beacon of educational brilliance in Chennai, its legacy echoing through generations. In alignment with its enduring mission, Virtusa is embarking on a journey of profound transformation at the school. This initiative will witness the creation of a cutting-edge science laboratory and a modern kitchen cum dining area, meticulously crafted to foster the holistic growth of students, shaping them into well-rounded individuals ready to embrace the challenges of tomorrow.

The project commenced with a Bhoomi Puja ceremony, graced by distinguished guests, including Shri Udhayanidhi Stalin, Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development and Shri Anbil Mahesh, Minister for School Education, Government of Tamil Nadu. Virtusa's esteemed executive leadership team, featuring Ram Meenakshisundaram, Chief Technology Officer; Ramaswamy P V, Chief Information Officer (CIO); and Venkatesan Vijayaraghavan, Executive Vice President - Delivery Program Management SL, Service line Leadership, alongside members of the educational board, lent their presence, adding significance and energy to the auspicious occasion.

"Founded in 1922, Lady Willingdon High School stands as a cherished symbol of Chennai's cultural legacy and educational heritage. Today, as we embark on this ambitious journey to revitalize and upgrade this esteemed institution, we are not just preserving history;

we are shaping the future. Our commitment to excellence in education is unwavering and through this initiative, we are not only enhancing the physical infrastructure but also rejuvenating the intellectual and cultural essence of the school. It is an exciting milestone in our quest to ensure that every student receives the quality education they deserve and to pave the way for a brighter tomorrow." said Ram Meenakshisundaram, Chief Technology Officer, Virtusa Corporation.

Amit Bajoria, Chief Finance Officer, Virtusa Corporation shared his thoughts on the project and said, "As Virtusa embarks on the transformative project for Lady Willingdon High School, it underscores our unwavering commitment to community betterment. Over 15 years, Virtusa Foundation has diligently worked to foster access to education, benefiting over 20,000 students. Through this initiative, we uphold our core values, leaving a lasting legacy of positive change."

SIDBI's EWEE Initiative: Empowering the Women of Rural Bharat through Electric Mobility

With an aim to accelerate the deployment of electric vehicles in line with EV30@30 and increase the adoption of EVs in Rural BHARAT, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), the country's principal financial institution for MSMEs, announced a developmental support to empower women in form of blended finance funds such that credit access by rural women aspirants is eased. In partnership with Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and partnered NBFCs the scheme brings different partners such as OEMs, NRDC and DFI on board.

The current programme called EWEE (Empowering Women and Enhancing their Business through E-Mobility) was announced by Chairman and Managing Director, SIDBI, General Secretary, SEWA, MD, Revfin, MD AMU in presence of leasing, and representatives from OEMs, NRDC, SEWA members and other stakeholders in an online event attended by over 100 participants including.

The scheme has been formulated as an extension to the first-of-its-kind rural e-mobility demonstration pilot (for supporting women entrepreneurs launched by SIDBI, SEWA and Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC) on January 25, 2024. The pilot was aimed to increase transportation equity, improve air quality, and enhance rural livelihoods through the adoption of EVs.

E-WEE will support inspirational and aspirational SEWA sisters initially in the two states i.e. Rajasthan and Gujarat. Thereafter it will be scaled to other states. The outcome will provide invaluable insights for formulating future national

and state-level policies for electric mobility adoption in rural India. Another potential outcome can be alleviating the perceived risk among the potential adopters and financial institutions resulting in increased financial products, thereby boosting the adoption in real India improving quality of life and more employment opportunities. After this step SIDBI and SEWA shall work on risk mitigation models to induce credit flow.


Sivasubramanian Ramann, CMD, SIDBI said "The rural India is critical for the nation's development and the women are the backbone of it. The empowerment of women at the grassroots level is important to build the nation. One of the many ways to empower women is to improve the mobility options in rural parts to encourage them to start their businesses, job opportunities, etc. The role of SEWA to bring these entrepreneurs together to support their journey and build a community that supports each other as well is laudable. To manage the community of the SEWA sisters spread across vast geographies of India and spreading awareness among them is a humungous task but the enthusiasm of SEWA sisters to support each other under the guidance of SEWA leadership is making it possible."

CMD SIDBI advised that phase 1 target of rural e mobility should be fifty thousand 2 and 3 e wheelers.

The E-WEE project brings the firm intent to ease mobility of women entrepreneurs of SEWA by providing access to affordable finance to purchase electric two-wheelers with the support of Revfin and AMU Leasing Pvt Ltd. The scheme will serve a multi-purpose i.e., it will increase access to affordable finance, second it

will also empower the women by having ownership of the green asset and encourage other women to switch or adopt the clean mobility options."

Jyoti Macwan, Secretary General, SEWA said "The SEWA sisters appreciate the efforts made by SIDBI to bring down the financial cost of owning vehicles for the sisters through the project. We also thank the OEM partners and the NBFCs implementing this project. The steps taken to support and promote these entrepreneurs are important for society as well as the economic growth of the country. We are also targeting the uptake of 50,000 electric vehicles among the SEWA sisters within a year."

The participants specially OEMs & NBFC interacted with SEWA and CMD, SIDBI to make this project more successful and future targeted interventions. One of the suggestions was to create a complete ecosystem for the electric two and three-wheelers by imparting training to SEWA sisters to repair the vehicles as well. Since, these sisters are based in different villages and the dealers might not be present everywhere, it is imperative to make these sisters self-sufficient. This will not only increase employment opportunities but also increase the confidence of potential users of electric vehicles. A collaborative effort needs to be made among different stakeholders i.e., SEWA sisters, OEMs, and NBFCs to accelerate the adoption. One of the suggestions was to use the electric three-wheelers for different business opportunities. These will improve the swift access of the services to the people living in the villages. It also came forth that different business opportunities leading to rural employment and income can be woven around EV eco system. 



CLIMATE CHANGE INDICATORS

REACHED RECORD LEVELS IN 2023: WMO

The state of the climate in 2023 gave ominous new significance to the phrase "off the charts"



new report from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) shows that records were once again broken, and in some cases smashed, for greenhouse gas levels, surface temperatures, ocean heat and acidification, sea level rise, Antarctic sea ice cover and glacier retreat.

Heatwaves, floods, droughts, wildfires and rapidly intensifying tropical cyclones caused misery and mayhem, upending every-day life for millions and inflicting many billions of dollars in economic losses, according to the WMO State of the Global Climate 2023 report.

The WMO report confirmed that 2023 was the warmest year on record, with the global average near-surface temperature at 1.45 °Celsius (with a margin of uncertainty of ± 0.12 °C) above the pre-industrial baseline. It was the warmest ten-year period on record.

“Sirens are blaring across all major indicators... Some records aren’t just chart-topping, they’re chart-busting. And changes are speeding-up.” said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

“Never have we been so close – albeit on a temporary basis at the moment – to the 1.5° C lower limit of the Paris Agreement on climate change.” said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo. “The WMO community is sounding the Red Alert to the world.” “Climate change is about much more than temperatures. What we

- ▶ **State of Global Climate report confirms 2023 as hottest year on record by clear margin**
- ▶ **Records broken for ocean heat, sea level rise, Antarctic sea ice loss and glacier retreat**
- ▶ **Extreme weather undermines socio-economic development**
- ▶ **Renewable energy transition provides hope**
- ▶ **Cost of climate inaction is higher than cost of climate action**

witnessed in 2023, especially with the unprecedented ocean warmth, glacier retreat and Antarctic sea ice loss, is cause for particular concern,” she said.

On an average day in 2023, nearly one third of the global ocean was gripped by a marine heatwave, harming vital ecosystems and food

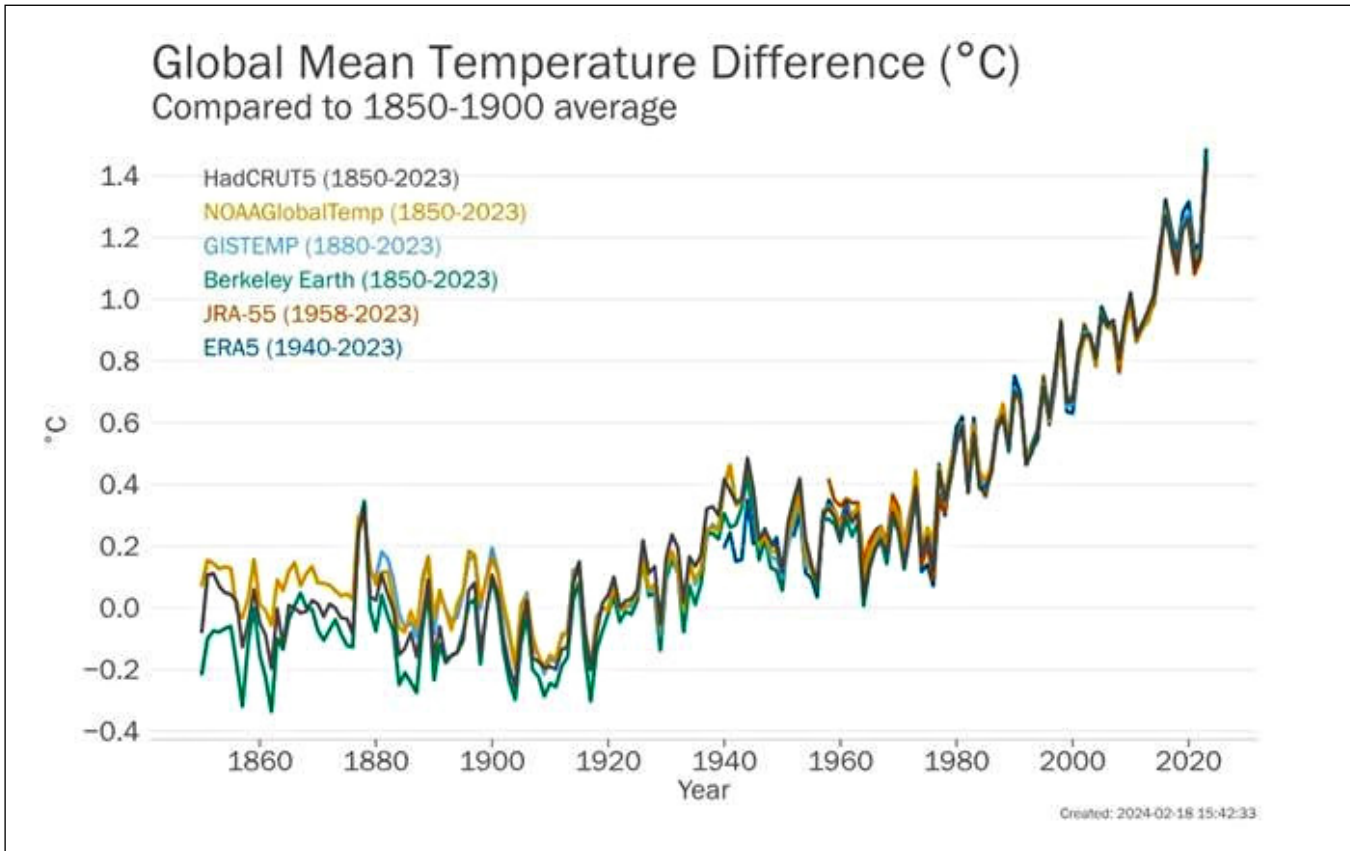
systems. Towards the end of 2023, over 90% of the ocean had experienced heatwave conditions at some point during the year.

The global set of reference glaciers suffered the largest loss of ice on record (since 1950), driven by extreme melt in both western North America and Europe, according to preliminary data.

Antarctic sea ice extent was by far the lowest on record, with the maximum extent at the end of winter at 1 million km² below the previous record year - equivalent to the size of France and Germany combined.

“The climate crisis is THE defining challenge that humanity faces and is closely intertwined with the inequality crisis – as witnessed by growing food insecurity and population displacement, and biodiversity loss” said Celeste Saulo.

The number of people who are acutely food insecure worldwide has more than doubled, from 149 million people before the COVID-19 pandemic to 333 million people in 2023 (in 78 monitored countries by the World Food Programme). Weather and climate extremes may not be the



Annual global mean temperature anomalies (relative to 1850–1900) from 1850 to 2023. Data are from six data sets

root cause, but they are aggravating factors, according to the report.

Weather hazards continued to trigger displacement in 2023, showing how climate shocks undermine resilience and create new protection risks among the most vulnerable populations. There is, however, a glimmer of hope.

Renewable energy generation, primarily driven by the dynamic forces of solar radiation, wind and the water cycle, has surged to the forefront of climate action for its potential to achieve decarbonization targets. In 2023, renewable capacity additions increased by almost 50% from 2022, for a total of 510 gigawatts (GW) – the highest rate observed in the past two decades.

This week, at the Copenhagen Climate Ministerial on 21-22 March, climate leaders and ministers from around the world will gather for the first time since COP28 in Dubai to

push for accelerated climate action. Enhancing countries Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) ahead of the February 2025 deadline, will be high on the agenda, as will delivering an ambitious agreement on financing at COP29 to turn national plans into action.

"Climate Action is currently being hampered by a lack of capacity to deliver and use climate services to inform national mitigation and adaptation plans, especially in developing countries. We need to increase support for National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to be able to provide information services to ensure the next generation of Nationally Determined Contributions are based on science", said Celeste Saulo.

The State of the Global Climate report was released in time for World Meteorological Day on 23 March. It also sets the scene for a new climate action campaign by the

UN Development Programme and WMO to be launched on 21 March. It will inform discussions at a climate ministerial meeting in Copenhagen on 21-22 March.

Dozens of experts and partners contribute to the report, including UN organizations, National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and Global Data and Analysis Centers, as well as Regional Climate Centres, the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), the Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW), the Global Cryosphere Watch and Copernicus Climate Change Service operated by ECMWF.

KEY MESSAGES

Greenhouse gases

Observed concentrations of the three main greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide – reached record levels in

2022. Real-time data from specific locations show a continued increase in 2023. CO2 levels are 50 % higher than the pre-industrial era, trapping heat in the atmosphere. The long lifetime of CO2 means that temperatures will continue to rise for many years to come.

Temperature

The global mean near-surface temperature in 2023 was 1.45 ± 0.12 °C above the pre-industrial 1850–1900 average. 2023 was the warmest year in the 174-year observational record. This shattered the record of the previous warmest years, 2016 at 1.29 ± 0.12 °C above the 1850–1900 average and 2020 at 1.27 ± 0.13 °C.

The ten-year average 2014–2023 global temperature is 1.20 ± 0.12 °C

above the 1850–1900 average. Globally, every month from June to December was record warm for the respective month. September 2023 was particularly noteworthy, surpassing the previous global record for September by a wide margin (0.46 to 0.54 °C).

The long-term increase in global temperature is due to increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The shift from La Niña to El Niño conditions in the middle of 2023 contributed to the rapid rise in temperature from 2022 to 2023.

Global average sea-surface temperatures (SSTs) were at a record high from April onwards, with the records in July, August and September broken by a particularly wide

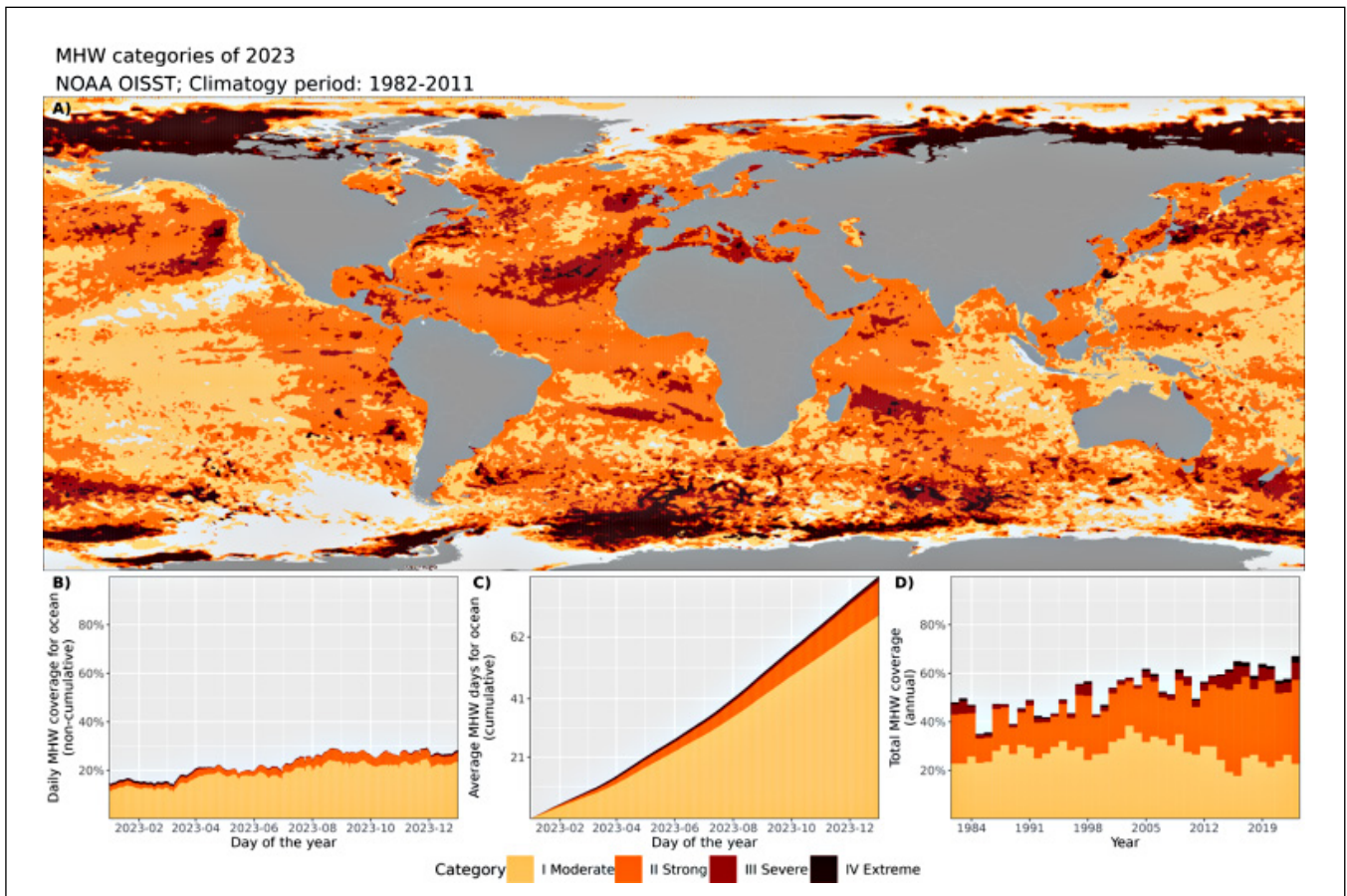
margin. Exceptional warmth was recorded in the eastern North Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, the North Pacific and large areas of the Southern Ocean, with widespread marine heatwaves.

Some areas of unusual warming such as the Northeast Atlantic do not correspond to typical patterns of warming associated with El Niño, which was visibly present in the Tropical Pacific.

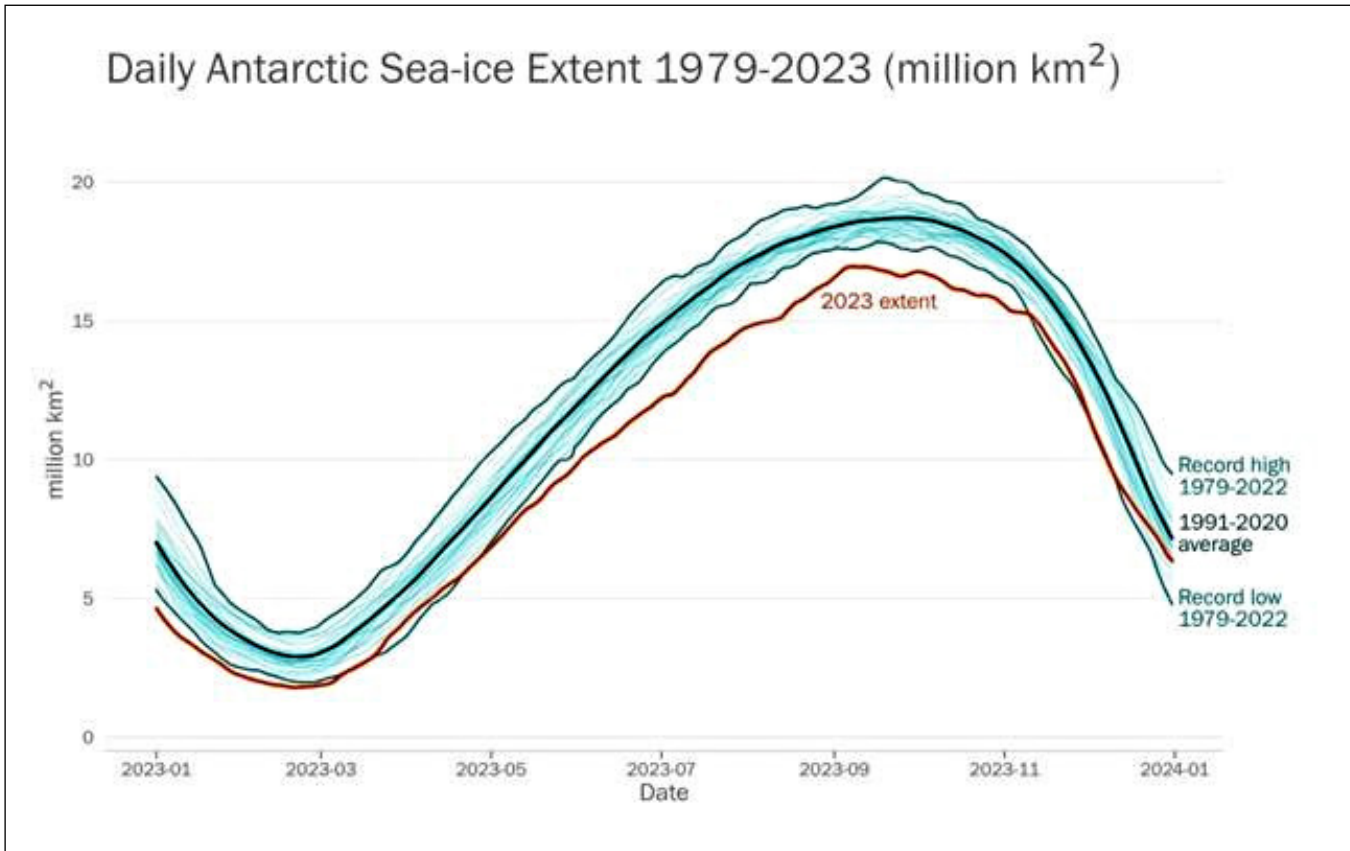
Ocean heat

Ocean heat content reached its highest level in 2023, according to a consolidated analysis of data. Warming rates show a particularly strong increase in the past two decades.

It is expected that warming will continue – a change which is ir-



Global map showing the highest Marine Heatwave category in each pixel over 2023 (reference period 1982–2011). Light grey indicates that no MHW occurred in a pixel over the entire year; (b) Stacked bar plot showing the percentage of the surface of the ocean experiencing an MHW on any given day of the year; (c) Stacked bar plot showing the cumulative number of MHW days averaged over the surface of the ocean. (d) Stacked bar plot showing the total percentage of the surface of the ocean that experienced a MHW from 1982 to present. Data are from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Optimum Interpolation Sea-Surface Temperature (OISST).



Daily Antarctic sea-ice extent from January through December, showing 2023 (red) conditions against the 1991–2020 climate normal (dark blue) and the record highest and lowest extents for each day (mid blue). Individual years are shown in light blue. U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center.

reversible on scales of hundreds to thousands of years.

More frequent and intense marine heatwaves have profound negative repercussions for marine ecosystems and coral reefs.

The global ocean experienced an average daily marine heatwave coverage of 32%, well above the previous record of 23% in 2016. At the end of 2023, most of the global ocean between 20° S and 20° N had been in heatwave conditions since early November.

Of particular note were the widespread marine heatwaves in the North Atlantic which began in the Northern Hemisphere spring, peaked in extent in September and persisted through to the end of the year. The end of 2023 saw a broad band of severe and extreme marine heatwave across the North Atlantic, with temperatures 3 °C above average.

The Mediterranean Sea experienced near complete coverage of strong and severe marine heatwaves for the twelfth consecutive year. Ocean acidification has increased as a result of absorbing carbon dioxide.

Sea level rise

In 2023, global mean sea level reached a record high in the satellite record (since 1993), reflecting continued ocean warming (thermal expansion) as well as the melting of glaciers and ice sheets.

The rate of global mean sea level rise in the past ten years (2014–2023) is more than twice the rate of sea level rise in the first decade of the satellite record (1993–2002).

Cryosphere

Antarctic sea-ice extent reached an absolute record low for the satellite era (since 1979) in February 2023

and remained at record low for the time of year from June till early November. The annual maximum in September was 16.96 million km², roughly 1.5 million km² below the 1991–2020 average and 1 million km² below the previous record low maximum. Arctic sea-ice extent remained well below normal, with the annual maximum and minimum sea ice extents being the fifth and sixth lowest on record respectively.

Ice sheets: There are two principal ice sheets, the Greenland Ice Sheet and the Antarctic ice Sheet. Combining the two ice sheets, the seven highest melt years on record are all since 2010, and average rates of mass loss increased from 105 Gigatonnes per year from 1992–1996 to 372 Gigatonnes per year from 2016–2020. This is equivalent to about 1 mm per year of global sea level rise attributed to the ice sheets

in the latter period. The Greenland Ice Sheet continued to lose mass in the hydrological year 2022–2023. It was the warmest summer on record at Greenland's Summit station, 1.0 °C warmer than the previous record. Satellite melt-extent data indicate that the ice sheet had the third highest cumulative melt-day area on record (1978–2023), after the extreme melt season of 2012 and 2010.

Glaciers: Preliminary data for the hydrological year 2022–2023 indicate that the global set of reference glaciers suffered the largest loss of ice on record (1950–2023), driven by extremely negative mass balance in both western North America and Europe.

Glaciers in the European Alps experienced an extreme melt season. In Switzerland, glaciers have lost around 10% of their remaining volume in the past two years. Western North America suffered record glacier mass loss in 2023 – at a rate which was five times higher than rates measured for the period 2000–2019. Glaciers in western North America have lost an estimated 9% of their 2020 volume over the period 2020–2023.

Extreme weather and climate events

Extreme weather and climate events had major socio-economic impacts on all inhabited continents. These included major floods, tropical cyclones, extreme heat and drought, and associated wildfires.

Flooding linked to extreme rainfall from Mediterranean Cyclone Daniel affected Greece, Bulgaria, Türkiye, and Libya with particularly heavy loss of life in Libya in September.

Tropical Cyclone Freddy in February and March was one of the world's longest-lived tropical cyclones with major impacts on Madagascar, Mozambique and Malawi.

Tropical Cyclone Mocha, in May, was one of the most intense cyclones ever observed in the Bay of Bengal

and triggered 1.7 million displacements across the sub-region from Sri Lanka to Myanmar and through India and Bangladesh, and worsened acute food insecurity.

Hurricane Otis intensified to a maximum Category 5 system in a matter of hours – one of the most rapid intensification rates in the satellite era. It hit the Mexican coastal resort of Acapulco on 24 October, causing economic losses estimated at around US\$15 billion, and killing at least 47 people.

Extreme heat affected many parts of the world. Some of the most significant were in southern Europe and North Africa, especially in the second half of July. Temperatures in Italy reached 48.2 °C, and record-high temperatures were reported in Tunis (Tunisia) 49.0 °C, Agadir (Morocco) 50.4 °C and Algiers (Algeria) 49.2 °C.

Canada's wildfire season was the worst on record. The total area burned nationally for the year was 14.9 million hectares, more than seven times the long-term average. The fires also led to severe smoke pollution, particularly in the heavily populated areas of eastern Canada and the north-eastern United States. The deadliest single wildfire of the year was in Hawaii, with at least 100 deaths reported – the deadliest wildfire in the USA for more than 100 years – and estimated economic losses of US\$5.6 billion.

The Greater Horn of Africa region, which had been experiencing long-term drought, suffered substantial flooding in 2023, particularly later in the year. The flooding displaced 1.8 million people across Ethiopia, Burundi, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia and Kenya in addition to the 3 million people displaced internally or across borders by the five consecutive seasons of drought in Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, and Somalia.

Long-term drought persisted in north-western Africa and parts of the

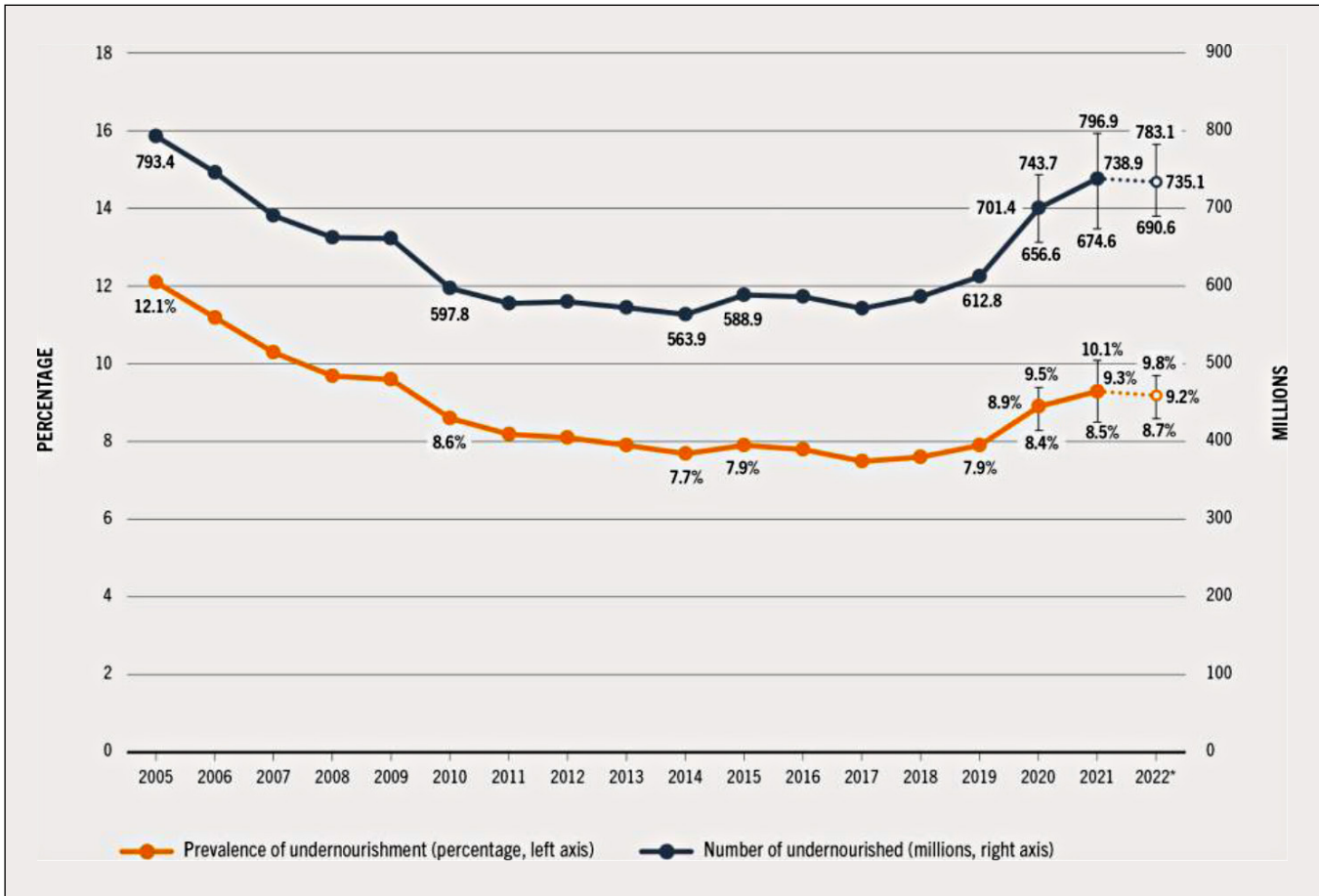
Iberian Peninsula, as well as parts of central and southwest Asia. It intensified in many parts of Central America and South America. In northern Argentina and Uruguay, rainfall from January to August was 20 to 50% below average, leading to crop losses and low water storage levels.

Socio-economic impacts

Weather and climate hazards exacerbated challenges with food security, population displacements and impacts on vulnerable populations. They continued to trigger new, prolonged, and secondary displacement and increased the vulnerability of many who were already uprooted by complex multi-causal situations of conflict and violence.

One of the essential components for reducing the impact of disasters is to have effective multi-hazard early warning systems. The Early Warnings for All initiative seeks to ensure that everyone is protected by early warning systems by the end of 2027. Development and implementation of local disaster risk reduction strategies have increased since the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The report cites figures that the number of people who are acutely food insecure worldwide has more than doubled, from 149 million people before the COVID-19 pandemic to 333 million people in 2023 (in 78 monitored countries by the World Food Programme). WFP Global hunger levels remained unchanged from 2021 to 2022. However, these are still far above pre-COVID 19 pandemic levels: in 2022, 9.2% of the global population (735.1 million people) were undernourished. Protracted conflicts, economic downturns, and high food prices, further exacerbated by high costs of agricultural inputs driven by ongoing and widespread conflict around the world, are at the root of high global food insecurity levels. This is aggravated by the effects of climate



Daily Antarctic sea-ice extent from January through December, showing 2023 (red) conditions against the 1991–2020 climate normal (dark blue) and the record highest and lowest extents for each day (mid blue). Individual years are shown in light blue. U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center.

and weather extremes. In southern Africa, for example, the passage of Cyclone Freddy in February 2023 affected Madagascar, Mozambique, southern Malawi, and Zimbabwe. Flooding submerged extensive agricultural areas and inflicted severe damage on crops and the economy.

Renewable energy generation, primarily driven by the dynamic forces of solar radiation, wind and the water cycle, has surged to the forefront of climate action for its potential to achieve decarbonization targets.

Worldwide, a substantial energy transition is already underway. In 2023, renewable capacity additions increased by almost 50% from 2022, for a total of 510 gigawatts (GW). Such growth marks the highest rate observed in the past two decades

and indicates, demonstrates the potential to achieve the clean energy goal set at COP28 to triple renewable energy capacity globally to reach 11 000 GW by 2030.

Climate Financing

In 2021/2022, global climate-related finance flows reached almost USD 1.3 trillion, nearly doubling compared to 2019/2020 levels. Even so, tracked climate finance flows represent only approximately 1% of global GDP, according to the Climate Policy Initiative.

There is a large financing gap. In an average scenario, for a 1.5°C pathway, annual climate finance investments need to grow by more than six times, reaching almost USD 9 trillion by 2030 and a further USD 10 trillion through to 2050.

The cost of inaction is even higher. Aggregating over the period 2025-2100, the total cost of inaction is estimated at USD 1,266 trillion; that is, the difference in losses under a business-as-usual scenario and those incurred within a 1.5°C pathway. This figure is, however, likely to be a dramatic underestimate.

Adaptation finance continues to be insufficient. Though adaptation finance reached an all-time high of USD 63 billion in 2021/2022, the global adaptation financing gap is widening, falling well short of the estimated USD 212 billion per year needed up to 2030 in developing countries alone. 📌

The World Meteorological Organization is the United Nations System's authoritative voice on Weather, Climate and Water



PwC India Foundation launches intervention for sustainable development in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The pilot to scale intervention aims to create a sustainable solid waste management system in the islands

Aligned with the Government's vision of scaling the island region's blue economy efforts via investments in infrastructure, research and policy frameworks - the PwC India Foundation and Dakshin Foundation are collaborating on a pilot to scale intervention focusing on creating a sustainable solid waste management system in the Andamans. The initiative aims to address rising concerns of improper waste management which pose a significant threat to blue economies by endangering marine ecosystems and coastal areas.


Sanjeev Krishan, Chairperson, PwC in India and PwC India Foundation, said: "The Andaman and Nicobar Islands will play a crucial role in India's blue economy agenda,

and we at PwC India are committed to enabling this journey. We are collaborating with organisations, local communities and the government to curate holistic solutions and drive meaningful change. Our specialists focused on climate, energy, water and circular economy are working on developing policies and frameworks to leverage the rich biodiversity in the region and unlock the scalable potential here."

Jaivir Singh, Vice Chairman, PwC India Foundation, said: "We envision this pilot-to-scale model in association with Dakshin to be a catalyst for transformative change, not only in Wandoor but as a replicable model for marine sustainability globally. This initiative aligns with the PwC India Foundation's ethos of fostering lasting environmental and community development, creating a

ripple effect that extends beyond the Andaman and Nicobar Islands."

The intervention involves collaboration and involvement at the Gram Panchayat level, along with local communities like the Wandoor Gram Panchayat and women self-help groups (SHGs) as well as tourism-related business owners and the Department of Environment and Forest, Andaman and Nicobar Administration. The objective is to take an interdisciplinary approach - right from investments to quicker decision making around emerging risks by strengthening local networks, building grassroots' capacities and involving local stakeholders.

The intervention's pilot succeeded in expanding the reach of the solid waste management (SWM) system to 110 new households, bringing the total reach to around 350 households at present. The PwC India Foundation grant enabled Dakshin Foundation to support the Wandoor Gram Panchayat (WGP) by hiring additional sanitary workers that were critical to the expansion to new households. 

BALA VIKASA LEADS THE WAY

Since the past three decades, Bala Vikasa, a leading community-driven development organization, has been quietly and persistently crafting a legacy of sustainable development that transcends conventional paradigms of development assistance. This organization stands as a testament to the transformative power of grassroots initiatives and the profound impact they can have on entire communities. Principles of community participation, capacity building, gender inclusion and environmental stewardship are seamlessly integrated into its core mission. This not only fosters a sense of ownership but also promotes the sustainability of the interventions, as the communities become active partners in their own development.

In the face of climate change and environmental degradation, Bala Vikasa has emerged as a pioneer in nurturing rural communities into pro-planet people. 23,000 women savings groups (SHGs) operating under Bala Vikasa spearhead regular plantation activity at both the household and community level, take up organic farming practices in their own farms, and work towards maintaining proper sanitation and hygiene as part of village development committees. About 75,000 farmers have been engaged in community-led watershed activities like tank desiltation and construction



Shoury Reddy
EC of Bala Vikasa

of farm ponds, and 1500+ farmers are engaged in organic farming. Some of the combined results of the aforementioned efforts are the plantation of about 10 Lakh saplings by rural communities in 1600+ villages significantly increasing the village green cover,

construction of 32,000+ household soak pits to manage wastewater effectively, annual water savings of approximately 1 TMC through farmer-led conservation projects, and 1000+ acres of farmland under organic cultivation.

In a world where the challenges of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation are becoming increasingly intertwined, organizations like Bala Vikasa offer a blue-



Bala Vikasa Founder 'Andre Gingras' speaking at Social Entrepreneurship Summit Impulse 2023



Bala Vikasa Founders 'Bala T Singareddy Gingras and Andre Gingras' with Staff and Community Members

print for a more sustainable and inclusive future through its diverse community development programs.

Quenching Thirst, Transforming Lives: Bala Vikasa's Community-Led Safe Water Program

Access to safe drinking water remains a critical challenge across a large part of rural India. Bala Vikasa's Safe Water Program provides a lifeline to over 50,00,000 individuals struggling with safe water access. Through a multi-faceted approach encompassing community engagement, sustainable infrastructure, and economic empowerment, the program has not only quenched the thirst of communities but has also become a catalyst for profound social, economic, and health transformations.

At the heart of this initiative are 1500+ Community Water Purification Plants that combat the pervasive issue of water contamination, particularly high fluoride levels in affected areas. The economic ingenuity of the program lies in its affordability. Purified drinking water, available at a nominal cost of Rs 3 per 20 liters through rechargeable Any Time Water (ATW) RFID cards, is a testament to Bala Vikasa's commitment to making safe water accessible to even the most economically marginalized.

Since 2014, Bala Vikasa partnered with 13 CSR Partners to set up 598 CWPPs with a total CSR fund of 20.06 Crores. Over 11 Lakh people, especially from rural poor communities, are accessing safe drinking water everyday from these plants. However, in all of these projects, the CSR contribution was only 40% of the total cost. There was a 40% contribution (~20 Cr) by the Gram Panchayat to the project cost (in the form of land, room, borewell allocation) and 20% of the costs (~10 Cr) were met through beneficiary contribution (in the form of a one-time member-



Bala Vikasa 'Sujal ATW' Kiosks for Urban Commuters



ship fee, purchase of jerry cans, etc). This ensures that the ownership of the CWPPs and the responsibility to maintain and sustain them is with the communities.

The effectiveness of this model led a CSR partner to choose Bala Vikasa to revive 93 defunct Community Water Purification Plants established by the Government of Karnataka in the district of Kalaburagi. With active community participation and contribution, 28,500 families are now accessing safe water from these revived plants.

The program extends its reach beyond rural landscapes, recognizing the diverse needs of urban centers. Any-time Water Dispensing

Kiosks, strategically placed in 25 urban centers, provide inexpensive chilled purified water at Rs 2 per liter, catering especially to the needs of poor commuters.

This innovative approach not only tackles the urban water crisis but also emphasizes Bala Vikasa's adaptability to the evolving challenges of water accessibility.

In addition to the purification plants, the program deploys a variety of water infrastructure projects, including borewells, handpumps, and overhead tanks, to bring potable water closer to home for numerous villages, including 136 tribal communities. The impact is not confined to improved health



BVR Mohan Reddy Founder-Chairman of Cyient Interacting with Social Start-Ups at Bala Vikasa CSRBs Impulse 2023



Social Entrepreneurship



Skill Training for Women as Part of Widow Emancipation Program

alone; the time saved in fetching water is redirected toward income-generating activities for adults and educational opportunities for girls. This strategic shift is pivotal in elevating the overall standard of living within these communities.

The ripple effects of the Safe Water Program extend far beyond the realms of health and hygiene. With reduced medical expenses and increased productive hours, communities are making substantial contributions to the national economy. Moreover, the program has become a catalyst for educational empowerment, particularly for girls, as the burden of fetching water diminishes, opening avenues for learning and development.

Breaking the Chains: Bala Vikasa's Crusade for Widow Empowerment in India

The deeply ingrained beliefs that label the presence of widows as unlucky and inauspicious not only defy reason but also perpetuate a cycle of oppression, leaving these women economically downtrodden, psychologically scarred, and socially ostracized. Bala Vikasa, recognizing the urgent need for change, has emerged as a powerful force advocating for the rights, dignity, and empowerment of widows. Over the past decade, the organization has spearheaded a movement that not only challenges the status quo but actively works towards reshaping societal attitudes and breaking down the barriers that shackle widows.

Central to Bala Vikasa's initiatives is a concerted effort to bring about attitudinal change within communities. By engaging with local leaders, influencers, and the wider public, the organization has fostered conversations challenging the irrational beliefs that perpetuate widow discrimination. Education and awareness programs have played a pivotal role in dismantling stereotypes and fostering empathy, helping commu-

nities recognize the inherent dignity and resilience of widows.

The organization has provided tangible support, creating opportunities for widows to regain control of their lives. Through skill development programs, vocational training, and economic empowerment initiatives, Bala Vikasa has empowered thousands of widows to stand on their own feet, breaking free from the chains of economic dependence. Crucially, the organization's interventions have also acted as a lifeline for widows facing the specter of psychological distress. By offering counseling services and creating support networks, Bala Vikasa has played a pivotal role in preventing suicides among widows, offering a glimmer of hope in their darkest moments.

Bala Vikasa CSRB: Fostering Social Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development

In the evolving landscape of sustainable development, Bala Vikasa stands tall as a pioneer in community-driven initiatives, consistently adapting to contemporary challenges. Recognizing the limitations of traditional development models, the organization has shifted its focus to champion social entrepreneurship and nurture social innovation, viewing these as integral elements for achieving sustainable development goals in the face of a rapidly changing world.

While support systems for conventional business entrepreneurs abound, a palpable gap exists when it comes to resources dedicated to strengthening and guiding social startups. Bala Vikasa CSRB, understanding this critical need, has emerged as a catalyst in fostering social innovation and supporting social entrepreneurs through diverse programs and activities. Bala Vikasa CSRB has delivered comprehensive capacity-building programs that bring together subject matter




Bala Vikasa Founder 'Bala T Singareddy Gingras' Interacting with Widows as part of Women Empowerment Program



Bala Vikasa Widow Empwerment Program - Counselling Session

experts, professionals, academicians, and thought leaders to impart knowledge and share experiences.

Bala Vikasa CSRB's commitment extends beyond theoretical knowledge to practical support through its Social Startup Incubation program. This initiative provides budding social entrepreneurs with mentorship in management, finance, infrastructure, and networking, leveraging the support of CSR partners and funding institutions. An impor-

tant part of this effort is the annual flagship event, the Social Entrepreneurship Summit - Impulse. This gathering brings together a diverse array of stakeholders, including social entrepreneurs, impact investors, social incubators, mentors, and enthusiasts. It serves as a dynamic space for integrating, innovating, and imparting entrepreneurial strategies adaptable and scalable to address the social and economic challenges of the modern world. 



NAGPUR LEADS WITH INDIA'S FIRST CITY-SPECIFIC ZERO CARBON PLAN FOR BUILDINGS

Aligning with both National and Subnational policies, Nagpur targets comprehensive building efficiency and decarbonisation in pioneering city-wide initiative.

Nagpur city has embarked on an ambitious journey towards sustainable development by launching the Zero Carbon Buildings Action Plan (ZCBAP). It sets a precedent for the state of Maharashtra, and is also a pioneering effort to boost building sector decarbonisation, contributing to India's net zero by 2070 target.

The plan includes a holistic roadmap covering public buildings, government-led affordable housing, commercial buildings as well as homes, and an implementation strategy to achieve net-zero buildings city-wide by 2050. The roadmap further includes actions to help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the context of choice of building materials, and how buildings are designed, built, managed and deconstructed.

Residential, commercial, and institutional buildings were responsible for 58% of Nagpur's total energy consumption and for 56% of the city's GHG emissions in the year 2017-18, according to Nagpur's Climate Resilient City Action Plan developed by Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) and Nagpur Smart and Sustainable City Development Corporation Limited (NSSCDCL), with technical assistance from ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, South Asia and UN-Habitat.

The ZCBAP has been led by the NSSCDCL along with NMC, in collaboration with international partners such as the World Resources Institute (WRI), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and ICLEI South Asia through the Zero Carbon Buildings Accelerator (ZCBA) project.

Emani Kumar, Executive Director, ICLEI South Asia, said, "The ZCBAP represents a significant milestone in Nagpur's low emission development, aligning with national and international goals for sustainable development and climate action. It is aimed at transforming Nagpur into a city where all buildings, whether new constructions or existing structures, achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. This plan is adeptly interwoven with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that focus on reducing GHG emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030 from 2005 levels and on achieving

the country's long-term strategy to reach net-zero emissions by 2070."

Prithviraj BP, IAS, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), NSSCDCL said: "This plan aligns with the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF), India's Long-Term Low-Carbon Development Strategy, and the Urban Outcomes Framework, among others instrumental in tracking and assessing urban sustainability and climate readiness. The action plan also supports Nagpur in meeting its global commitments with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) and the Race to Zero campaign."

Net-zero emissions refer to reducing GHG emissions to the lowest possible amount, and balancing out any remaining emissions by using natural processes that absorb gases, like the absorption done by green cover and oceans. Net-zero buildings aim to minimise GHG emissions from construction materials, building use, and end-of-life demolition by employing reduction strategies across their entire lifecycle.

The ZCBAP is structured around a phased approach consisting of targeted interventions at various stages of a building's life cycle. The action plan is segmented into stages such as pre-construction, during construction, occupancy, and end-of-life, each carrying a set of interventions designed to minimise carbon emissions. For instance, during the pre-

construction phase, interventions focus on promoting passive and low-carbon architecture and design supplemented with a policy and regulatory framework. In the construction phase, interventions address on-site practices and resource efficiency, while the occupancy phase includes interventions ensuring operational energy efficiency and occupant well-being. Finally, the end-of-life phase comprises interventions that aim at responsible deconstruction and material recycling.

The timeline for ZCBAP outlines a series of interventions targeting different stages of a building's life, starting in 2023 with short, medium, and long term interventions. It sets clear short-term goals for all new buildings to be net-zero by 2030 and extends this ambition to all buildings by 2050 for carbon neutrality. Additionally, the plan underscores comprehensive strategies such as capacity building and financially enabling measures to support the implementation of action plan interventions, ensuring stakeholders are equipped to implement and sustain green building practices, which are vital for the city-wide decarbonisation effort.

Nagpur is already making significant strides towards sustainability in its architecture, with numerous buildings including the illustrious Metro Bhavan and the Forest Department Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) Bhavan both embracing green building certifications like the Indian Green Building Council's Platinum rating. Notably, the Maha Metro project features the longest multi-layer viaduct in Asia, reflecting innovative sustainability in transport infrastructure. Across sectors, from IT, manufacturing and healthcare to residential living and hospitality, Nagpur demonstrates a city-wide commitment to integrating green practices across key buildings.

This plan also seeks to improve the quality of life for Nagpur

The ZCBAP represents a significant milestone in Nagpur's low emission development, aligning with national and international goals for sustainable development and climate action.

A snapshot of the Zero Carbon Buildings Action Plan, encapsulating interventions across the four building lifecycle stages and cross-cutting measures:

1 Pre-Construction: Buildings should be designed and planned to include passive cooling design and low carbon materials and technologies such as Compressed Stabilised Earth Blocks, cavity walls, rat trap bond, among others. The importance of reducing energy consumption is emphasised by prescribing that occupied spaces in buildings be designed to maximise daylight and cross ventilation. Rooftops should be designed to be more solar photovoltaic ready.

2 During Construction: The plan encourages in-situ production of sustainable building materials such as sun-dried bricks. It promotes the use of concrete mixes with industrial and agricultural by-products and natural resins in non-structural parts as well as structural parts of buildings where possible. For materials that are sourced away from the construction site, it stresses on ensuring these are procured locally or within the region.

3 Occupancy Stage: Focus on improving energy performance by undertaking energy audits to understand energy-use patterns, deploying BEE star-rated equipment and appliances in common areas and habitable spaces, and implementing building envelope improvements related to shading devices/chajjas, window glazing materials and installation of UV films, high reflective and low VOC paints, and cool/green roof techniques for existing buildings. Government offices are required to periodically replace old low-efficiency equipment and appliances with high-efficiency models. Prescribes use of rooftop solar PV and other off-site renewable energy options to move towards net-zero energy use.

4 End of Life: Measures to ensure sustainable building deconstruction instead of demolition are recommended, such as submission of a Building Deconstruction Plan when initiating redevelopment projects and training of demolition contractors.


5 Circularity: It outlines requirements on the use of recycled construction and demolition (C&D) waste materials to promote circularity, along with demonstration pilot projects in public and affordable housing projects to begin with.

6 Cross-Cutting: Enabling measures to supplement the interventions mentioned above, such as adoption of appropriate urban design and planning to encourage wind-induced air flow and inclusion of nature-based solutions to reduce urban heat island effect at the neighbourhood scale; encouraging use of materials from manufacturers that publish Environmental Product Declarations (EPD); creation of a skilled local workforce that is able to design and construct zero-carbon buildings; and financial measures and models to boost net-zero building adoption among different stakeholders.

residents through healthier, more sustainable living environments. “By engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, domain experts, NGOs, builders, and developers, Nagpur is fostering a collaborative approach to sustainability, ensuring that the ZCBA is comprehensive, inclusive, and effective in achieving its ambitious goals,” said Dr. Abhijeet Chaudhari, IAS, Municipal Commissioner and Administrator, NMC.

The action plan is further bolstered by case studies from India (Indira Paryavaran Bhawan in New Delhi, Institute of Rural Research and Development in Gurugram, Galaxy School in Rajkot to name a few) and around the world, providing practical examples and encouraging knowledge transfer. “The city government is keen to take the lead and demonstrate the benefits of ZCB actions in public buildings in particular. To kickstart action on-ground, a model request for proposal (RfP) document has been developed with technical support from ICLEI South Asia and the ZCBA project. The document will help guide the integration of low-carbon and sustainable measures in Nagpur’s future public buildings, including offices, health-care spaces and affordable housing,” said Kumar.

About ICLEI South Asia

ICLEI South Asia is the South Asian arm of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, a global network of more than 2500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low-emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient, and circular development. ICLEI South Asia works to support cities on multiple aspects of sustainable development, in order to achieve tangible improvements in regional and global sustainability through local initiatives. 



Mumbai coast to have artificial reefs

In a first-of-its-kind of initiative, the Mumbai coast would now have artificial reefs.

The RPG Foundation (RPGF) has initiated a marine conservation initiative under Project nature:re - under which 210 artificial reefs were installed in the Arabian Sea off Worli in Mumbai. Reefs provide a win-win solution that serves the environment by creating carbon sinks and by increasing biomass, they provide more fishing opportunities to coastal communities.

An artificial reef is a concrete structure made from cement and steel. When immersed, they initiate the formation of bacterial biofilm, which covers the surface of the artificial reef modules. Over time, they will be covered by micro and macro



algae. They also become a sanctuary for small and large-sized native fish species. This transformation is visible between 3-6 months.

Across the globe, there are efforts taken to build climate-resilient artificial reefs that are like underwater homes for marine life. Countries like Indonesia, Australia, the US, Japan, India and Venezuela, to name a few, are spearheading successful reef projects to combat climate change.

They help bring back marine animals to areas where their habitats have been damaged. These reefs also protect coastlines from big waves and storms, preventing erosion. People love visiting these reefs for activities like snorkelling and diving, which brings in tourists and helps local economies.

RPG Foundation has commissioned Kuddle Life Foundation, a marine conservation NGO, for scientific assessments and timely evaluation.

“We plan to extend its success to other areas in Mumbai and beyond. Such projects reflect RPG Foundation’s commitment to addressing environmental and social issues responsibly. As we launch this initiative, we renew our dedication to creating a better future for marine life and coastal communities,” an RPG Foundation spokesperson said.

Over the years, fisherfolk in the city have been experiencing a drop in their incomes due to the declining fish population caused due to pollution from sewage and plastic waste being dumped into the oceans. Artificial reefs remove pollutants from water, providing a natural filtration process for the water.

As the reefs mature, they transform into carbon sinks as they increase the sea surface area (about 50-60 sqft per module), which results in more productivity and biodiversity. This ability to capture carbon from the air would be a potential solution for the deteriorating air quality of the city. 🌱

World Monuments Fund India to handover Mumbai's newly restored Afghan War Memorial Church in Mumbai to Pastorate Committee on March 3

The World Monuments Fund India (WMFI) has completed the restoration of the 165-year Afghan War Memorial Church in Mumbai. It was opened for the general public following the handover ceremony scheduled on March 3, 2024.

WMFI undertook the restoration of the war memorial church in Colaba, Mumbai in collaboration with the Afghan Church's Pastorate Committee & Custodian with funding support from Citi. The restoration project commenced in March 2022 and has been completed in a record time of 24 months.

The Church of St John the Evangelist, commonly known as the Afghan Church, is an Anglican structure. The building and its setting acts as a great touchstone of the early settlement of Mumbai. Affiliated with the Mumbai Diocese of the Church of North India, this exemplar of Gothic architecture, designated as a Grade I heritage structure, was constructed between 1847 and 1858. Initially conceived as a Garrison Church, it once earned the moniker 'Bride's Church.' Designed by Henry Conybeare, the Afghan Church commemorates various regiments, including the Bombay Army, the Madras Army, the Bengal Army, and H.M.'s army, and other regiments who fought in the First Anglo-Afghan War I (1838-1940) & Second Anglo-Afghan War II (1878-1880).



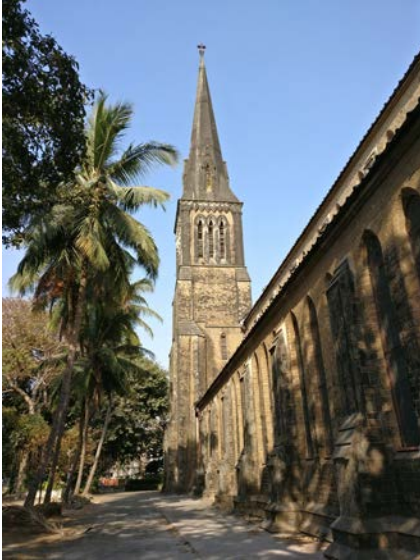
The Afghan Church was built on land designated by the British Govt to honor the overwhelming loss of lives of 4,500 soldiers and 12,000 of their camp followers in these wars. William Brydon, an assistant surgeon in the army, turned out to be the sole survivor on the British side or so it was recorded at the time. During the course of this project it was recognised that the thousands of Indians who would have gone to war for the "Company" had never been known. A plaque installed today recognises the officers and men who died in these wars, undoubtedly a very large number of them Indian.

World Monuments Fund India, through its expert Conservation Con-

sultant Kirtida Unwalla drew up a comprehensive conservation plan. Citi provided the complete funding to plan and execute the restoration of the Church. The Church's intrinsic value lies in its memorial tablets and emblematic stained-glass windows. It was constructed using locally available buff-coloured basalt and limestone; the gothic arches of the doorway and the splendid spire showcase classic Gothic design, contributing significantly to Mumbai's famed Gothic architectural heritage. The War Memorials in the Altar, Chancel, Main vestibule, the landscape and even the flags within the caskets are commemorative of the historical event and have a deep and profound value.

According to Amita Baig, Executive Director of World Monuments Fund India, "The restoration of the Afghan Church marks the end of a thirty plus year quest by experts and heritage aficionados' to raise awareness for the value of this early Gothic building. Its restoration is enormously satisfying and hopefully returns the Afghan Church to its rightful place in Mumbai city's heritage map. It is notable that the restoration project was executed without interrupting the Church services during the last two years. We remain deeply grateful to Citi for their enduring partnership."

According to Sangita Jindal, Chairperson of JSW Foundation and Board Member of World Monuments



Before



After



Before



After

Fund India, “The Afghan Church is a remarkable gem in India’s ecclesiastical architecture, serving as a guiding beacon for ships entering Bombay Harbour. Despite its status

as a Grade I Heritage site, obtaining governmental or special grants proved challenging due to its religious nature. Thanks to the World Monuments Fund’s intervention,

restoration efforts are underway, preserving its historical significance. Recognizing the Afghan Church’s architectural brilliance and its role as a poignant war memorial is crucial on a national scale. This restoration project sparks renewed interest in conserving India’s cultural heritage. I am confident that the newly restored church will reclaim its status as a vibrant social landmark in Mumbai.”

“For us in the pastorate committee of the Church, the Bible has been a constant reminder that this house of God urgently needed renovation and repairs. The sheer size of the structure, years of deterioration, the amount of work required and our limited funds, meant we were facing an almost impossible task. As it is stated in the Bible “The Lord makes everything beautiful in His time” (Eccl 3:1) and after many years of efforts and prayers the Lord opened a window through the World Monuments Fund India Association, who, with funding from Citi India, engaged a highly skilled team of Heritage restoration professionals enabling successful restoration of this magnificent Church to its former Glory.” said the Afghan Church Pastorate Committee.

Future Plans: Following its reopening, the Afghan Church will serve as a social venue for revival of a wide range of cultural activities. The Church will once again host public concerts, art shows, and other cultural events. The church grounds will also be utilized for community outreach programs, including health camps for local schools and the community. Encouraging local community investment in the church will play a vital role in transforming it into a key attraction in Mumbai. By reinstating its role as a vibrant cultural and community hub, the Afghan Church will once again contribute significantly to the city’s cultural landscape and its gothic heritage. 🟩



The Bajaj Group commits Rs. 5,000 crore over the next five years towards various CSR initiatives to benefit over 2 crore Indians

Unveils 'Bajaj Beyond'—an identity for the Group's social impact programs, which aim to empower tomorrow's youth with a sharp focus on skill development.

The Bajaj Group has committed Rs. 5,000 crore to social impact initiatives over 5 years, with a sharp focus on skill development, under 'Bajaj Beyond'—the Group's new identity for all its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and charitable programs. This will benefit over 2 crore of tomor-

row's youth and enable them to take advantage of the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities offered by India's growing economy.

Social responsibility is deeply entwined in the Bajaj Family's businesses and its philanthropic endeavours through generations. In the last 10 years alone, the Bajaj Group has contributed close to Rs.

4,000 crore towards CSR initiatives largely focused on skilling and education, health, livelihood, water conservation, and several other areas of development.

The Bajaj Group's humanitarian efforts are channelled through several institutions. The Jarnalal Bajaj Foundation, Jankidevi Bajaj Gram Vikas Sanstha, and the Kamalnayan Bajaj Hospital, among others, have worked unceasingly to uplift and empower communities. The Group stays firmly committed to co-creating a thriving and inclusive future for all Indians.



The Bajaj Group's key CSR initiatives:

- The Bajaj Engineering Skills Training (BEST) program, launched in 2023, aims to enhance the skills of engineering and diploma graduates in the latest technologies relevant to Industry 4.0. The program has successfully inaugurated its flagship centre in Pune, enrolling 120 students. It is now scaling up with a plan to establish 15 centres across India.
- Bajaj Finserv Ltd's Certificate Program in Banking, Finance and Insurance (CPBFI), works to bridge the skilling gap, by linking industry with academia, enabling young first-generation students from tier 2 & 3 towns to take advantage of employment opportunities in the financial services sector. With a presence in 140 towns, the CPBFI program has trained and benefited over 53,000 fresh graduates across India. Bajaj Finserv has forged a partnership with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and AICTE, under the aegis of the Ministry of Education.
- The Bajaj Water Conservation Project, which empowers communities to manage water resources, was launched in 2015, across 161 villages in the Aurangabad district.

Over Rs. 140 crore was dedicated to communities for preventive healthcare, water, and sanitation in the water-scarce regions of Vidharbha.


- Hamaara Sapna, a Jamnalal Bajaj Trust initiative launched in 2012, endeavours to transform the lives of marginalised women residing in Mumbai's slums through education and entrepreneurship. Regular development activities encompass communication, computer skills, legal and social knowledge, finance management, personality enhancement, health, hygiene, and yoga.

Expressing his views on the initiatives, Shekhar Bajaj, Chairman and Managing Director, Bajaj Electricals Ltd., "Our initiatives have demonstrated the transformative impact of empowering India's youth. Today, we unveil Bajaj Beyond, continuing our mission to equip future generations with the tools they need for success."

Sharing his thoughts about the initiative, Niraj Bajaj, Chairman, Bajaj Auto Ltd., said: "As stewards of the Bajaj legacy, we recognize our responsibility of giving back to society. Our new initiative, Bajaj Beyond, truly goes beyond mere training programs. What we have launched is a holistic approach that trains and prepares first-generation

graduates from smaller towns and cities to realize their full potential. By addressing all aspects of employability—attitude, skills, and knowledge—Bajaj Beyond equips them to build successful careers. We are not just closing the skill gap; we are creating a versatile pool of skilled resources that will drive India's growth story in a comprehensive manner and strengthen the economy to compete in the global arena."

Speaking at the launch of the initiative, Rajiv Bajaj, Managing Director, Bajaj Auto Ltd., said: "Launching the Bajaj Engineering Skills Training (BEST) last year has been a valuable learning experience for us. It gave us a very clear picture of the critical gap between theoretical education and practical skills needed in the manufacturing industry. The insights gained through BEST acted as a cornerstone in laying down the groundwork. With Bajaj Beyond, we will expand our skilling efforts across the group. Together, we will design future-proof curriculums, provide real-world, hands-on experiences, and equip our youth with the adaptability and innovation required to thrive in the ever-evolving mobility landscape."

Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman & Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv Ltd, said, "Inspired by our founder, Jamnalal Bajaj, the Bajaj Group has a legacy of working for the 'common good' of society and of serving the nation. Skilling has been at the heart of our social impact initiatives and we have seen the positive multiplier effect it has on the well-being of youth and their families. Our Certificate Programme in Banking, Finance and Insurance (CPBFI) prepares youth for employment in the fast-expanding financial services sector which is currently seeing a shortage of talent. With Bajaj Beyond, we commit to strengthening India's skilling ecosystem, especially in the hinterland, enabling greater access to economic prosperity." 



Only about 30 per cent of national plans so far include efforts to promote a just transition, while just 3 per cent of the world's 150 most carbon-polluting companies have developed such strategies. Image: World Bank Photo Collection, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

THE SECRET TO A SUCCESSFUL ENERGY TRANSITION? PUT PEOPLE FIRST

After the COP28 climate summit agreed a deal to move away from fossil fuel energy, the focus is on how to avoid social disruption, a report by **Thomson Reuters Foundation**

The COP28 UN climate summit in December produced the first global deal calling on countries to transition away from climate-heating fossil fuels in their energy systems. The big question for 2024 is how to start putting that into practice quickly - and fairly.

This week, hard on the heels of COP28, held in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates amid fears of heavy

influence by the fossil fuel industry, German farmers kicked off protests against plans to phase out diesel subsidies, blocking roads with tractors.

The social unrest echoed similar disruptions in recent years in countries from France to Ecuador and Nigeria, triggered by state-led efforts to curb consumption of carbon-polluting fuels by hiking prices.

Experts surveyed by Context on their expectations for climate action

in 2024 urged policy-makers to avoid putting the financial burden of a green shift on those who can least afford it.

“We can’t talk about transitioning away from fossil fuels... without talking about what this means for labour markets, what this means for the people that depend on lower fossil fuel costs,” said Cassie Flynn, global director of climate change with the UN Development Pro-

gramme. “Being able to do this in a way that puts people first... is going to be very important,” she added.

Ignoring the social impacts risks a backlash that can be co-opted by politicians and others on the “populist right” who are portraying clean air and cheaper energy bills as “the fantasies of an out-of-touch liberal elite”, said Rachel Kyte, visiting professor at the University of Oxford’s Blavatnik School of Government.

Britain, for example, last year saw debate around the affordability of green measures for the public, such as buying electric cars and installing heat pumps, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak justifying delays to deadlines by arguing they would “impose unacceptable costs on hard-pressed British families”.

And in Germany, Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck of the Greens has warned that the farmers’ right to protest could be exploited by extreme groups, amid support for the agriculture sector’s grievances by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.

To tackle the “extreme inequality and excessive consumption” that threaten progress on climate action, Kyte flagged the need to argue for - and invest in - green infrastructure that benefits ordinary people “more successfully than to date”.

‘Modern slavery’ risk

To drive forward such efforts, governments at COP28 approved a three-year “work programme” aimed at planning and implementing a “just transition”. That could include anything from channelling more renewable energy investment for poorer nations to helping workers who are set to lose jobs dependent on fossil fuel use and production.

Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, global climate and energy lead at green group WWF, said the new programme would ensure the issue is part of formal discussions at future UN climate summits.



In Dubai, rich countries claimed they wanted a fossil fuel phase-out but their lack of finance didn’t back this up.

– MOHAMED ADOW

Founder, Power Shift Africa

He also urged countries to take a “just transition approach” in their national climate plans - which they are due to be updated by early 2025 - “to ensure the benefits of the energy transition are fairly shared and to avoid negative impacts”.

For example, governments could use those plans to design new fiscal systems where a portion of the savings from reducing fossil fuel subsidies could be used to compensate vulnerable households for any subsequent rises in energy prices, said Marcene Mitchell, senior vice president for climate change at WWF-US.

Only about 30 per cent of national plans so far include efforts to promote a just transition, according to Nick Robins, a professor of sustainable finance at the London School of Economics’ Grantham Research Institute, while just 3 per cent of the world’s 150 most carbon-polluting companies have developed such strategies.

Ritu Bharadwaj, principal researcher for climate change at the International Institute for Environment and Development, warned the transition could endanger the livelihoods of millions of workers, potentially leading to “conditions resembling modern slavery” unless they are supported with the necessary skills, employment opportuni-

ties and a living wage to take up new vocations. Such considerations are seen as particularly important in poorer nations like India and Bangladesh, where many work in the informal sector or without union representation.

Help for developing countries

Climate justice campaigners also pointed to the importance of using international gatherings throughout 2024, including the G20, to make progress on a just transition at the global level.


The small share of climate finance going to fund renewables such as solar and wind power in places like sub-Saharan African was a key reason why some developing nations were reluctant to sign up to a full phase-out of fossil fuels at COP28.

Mohamed Adow, founder and director of think-tank Power Shift Africa, said the test for how serious countries are about the energy transition will be how much money they are prepared to commit to enable countries like his - Kenya - to pursue green growth.

“In Dubai, rich countries claimed they wanted a fossil fuel phase-out but their lack of finance didn’t back this up,” he said.

Adow called on wealthy governments to rectify this at the 2024 COP29 summit in Azerbaijan where a target is due to be set for climate finance from 2025 onwards.

Harjeet Singh, global engagement director at the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, said COP29 should secure robust commitments on an equitable shift away from fossil fuels, and boost funding particularly for the most vulnerable countries.

“It presents a vital opportunity to accelerate global just transition and address the intensifying climate crisis effectively,” he told Context. 

(SOURCE: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/the-secret-to-a-successful-energy-transition-put-people-first/>)

Flipkart Foundation Teams Up with Kineer Services; Fosters Inclusion through Employment Opportunities for the Transgender Community and other LGBTQ+ Individuals

Flipkart Foundation, the charitable arm of the Flipkart Group, has collaborated with Kineer Services, an organization advocating for gender sensitization, to launch 'Trans-formation', an initiative aimed at uplifting the marginalized transgender community and other members of the LGBTQ+ spectrum. Through this collaboration, the project endeavors to provide comprehensive skills training to 300 transgender and LGBTQ+ individuals, with the goal of facilitating the successful job placement through dignified employment opportunities.

Operating across Delhi and Mumbai, this collaborative effort underscores a dedication to nurturing livelihood creation and advancing societal inclusion for the LGBTQ+ individuals who will receive tailored support throughout various stages. These include, establishment of training facilities, mobilization, hands-on holistic training, certification, and job creation and placement.

Moreover, by partnering with companies open to hiring from the LGBTQ+ community, the initiative strives to create a supportive and inclusive environment, fostering long-term success and societal acceptance for the community.

Commenting on the programme, Pujja Trisal, Director, Flipkart Foundation, said "At the Flipkart Foundation, we recognize the importance of creating pathways for marginalized communities to thrive. Through our collaboration with Kineer Services, we are not



Skill-training session by Kineer Services in collaboration with Flipkart Foundation


just providing skill-training and job placements, we are also actively breaking social barriers and advocating for the respectful recognition of the trans community and other LGBTQ+ individuals. This initiative exemplifies our belief that every individual deserves the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the workforce and the society at large."

Dr. Manish Jain, Executive Director, Kineer Services, commented, "Kineer is focused towards the inclusion and mainstreaming of this often forgotten and ignored community. The lack of education and skills further increases the gap of employment opportunities for the community. We are extremely thankful to the Flipkart Foundation for not only ensuring that the community gets to learn the desired skill sets but also ensures that state of the art learning facilities are made available for the members. Together we will make a more inclusive world".

Trans-formation stands as a beacon of hope and progress for the

transgender community and other LGBTQ+ individuals. By equipping individuals with skills of holistic housekeeping service aspects including standard operating procedures, knowledge about chemicals, tools, cleaning machines, and budgeting, the trainees can get well

versed with the subject matter. The training, apart from covering the technical aspects of housekeeping, also empowers the trainees in soft skills such as customer handling, workplace etiquette and grooming. Situation specific role plays are also conducted to enhance the decision making and situation handling skills of the trainees. By enabling dignified employment, this collaboration is not just creating opportunities but transforming lives. With a steadfast commitment to providing post-placement support and fostering inclusivity, this initiative is working towards building a more equitable and accepting society.

In the past, Flipkart Foundation has worked with underserved communities across Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal to serve, support, and empower unskilled and underprivileged sections of society in various sectors, to ensure maximum reach and sustainable impact. 

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