

# CSR TODAY

RNI NO. MAHENG/2013/48866 ■ VOLUME 11 ■ ISSUE 11 ■ JUNE 2024 ■ PRICE ₹100 ■ TOTAL PAGES: 52

## IN A BOILING WORLD, CHIEF HEAT OFFICERS BATTLE 'SILENT KILLER'

WITH HEATWAVES ROASTING CITIES, CHIEF HEAT OFFICERS TRY TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM TEMPERATURES SO HIGH 'THE BODY CAN'T COOL DOWN'.

### CSR INITIATIVE

Beating plastic pollution in three steps

### CSR ISSUE

Climate raise issues related to summer timing of polls

### CSR FUTURE

India bets on green credits, but could they reward deforestation?



# CSR TODAY

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# Time to act: people worried about global warming



**Rajesh Tiwari**  
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**Large majorities of the Indian public say global warming is happening, a serious threat to India, and support government action on climate change.**

**L**arge majorities of the Indian public say global warming is happening, a serious threat to India, and support government action on climate change, according to results from a nationally representative survey released in the United States by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and CVoter International.

The report, titled "Climate Change in the Indian Mind, 2023," finds that:

- 54% of people in India say they know either "just a little" about global warming or have never heard of it, while only 10% say they know "a lot."
- However, when given a short definition of global warming and how it affects weather patterns, 78% of people in India say they think global warming is happening.
- 52% think global warming is caused mostly by human activities, while 38% think it is caused mostly by natural changes in the environment.
- Majorities think global warming affects weather in their local area (71%) and monsoons in India (76%) either "a lot" or "some."

Meanwhile, 91% of people in India are worried about global warming, including 59% who are "very worried".

However, only 33% say they hear about global warming in the media at least once a week. "India is already experiencing climate impacts, from record heatwaves to severe floods to stronger storms," said Dr. Anthony Leiserowitz of Yale University. "While many in India still do not know much about global warming, they overwhelmingly think the climate is changing and are worried about it."

Majorities also support government action on climate change:

- 86% favor the Indian government's 'Net Zero' commitment to reduce India's car-

bon pollution to nearly zero by 2070.

- 67% say leaving most of India's coal in the ground is the best pathway to a healthy, safe, and prosperous future for India.
- 84% favor banning the construction of new coal power plants, closing existing ones, and replacing them with solar and wind energy.
- 74% think that overall, taking action to reduce global warming will either improve economic growth and provide new jobs (51%) or have no effect on economic growth or jobs (23%). Only 21% think it will reduce economic growth and cost jobs.
- 61% think India should increase its use of renewable sources of energy, while only 14% think India should increase its use of fossil fuels.

Moreover, 75% say they would be willing to pay more for energy-efficient appliances and electric vehicles to reduce costs and global warming.

"Indians strongly support the clean energy transition, which they see as beneficial for the economy and their health," said Dr. Jagadish Thaker of the University of Queensland. "And importantly, majorities support the 2070 'Net Zero' goal to reduce carbon pollution to nearly zero and are personally willing to commit to actions to achieve it."

At COP26, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a global mass movement for behavior change, Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE), and asked people to take the following three pledges: to make big changes in their daily life in order to protect the environment, to persuade their family and friends to take environment-friendly actions, and to publicly demonstrate environment-friendly actions in order to influence others. 🌱

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## CSR TODAY

JUNE 2024 | VOL. 11 | ISSUE 11

**PRINTER AND PUBLISHER:** Rajesh Tiwari

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Printed, Published and Edited by Rajesh Tiwari on behalf of Indian Centre For Corporate Social Responsibility. 106, Nirman Kendra, Dr. E Moses Road, Mahalaxmi Estate, Mumai-400 001

**Editor:** Rajesh Tiwari

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# CSR NEWS



## Manoj Bajpayee Joins the Nand Ghar Movement

**N**and Ghar, which aims to transform 14 lakh angawadis across India, unveiled a national movement – *Agar Bachpan Se Poocha Khaana Khaya, Toh Desh Ka Kal Banaya* with actor Manoj Bajpayee. This movement by Nand Ghar is aimed at nourishing India's future generation by ensuring holistic healthcare, quality nutrition and ensuring best-in-class preschool education for children.

Welcoming Manoj Bajpayee in joining this movement, Anil Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta said, "Project Nand Ghar is a national movement that supports the overall well-being of children and women with a focus on health and nutrition. We are delighted that Manoj Bajpayee ji has extended his support to this growing movement. His personal life story deeply resonates with Nand Ghar's cause to nourish and transform the

lives of our future generations." In the heartwarming campaign launch today, Manoj Bajpayee was seen narrating his personal journey as a young theatre actor and outlined the invaluable support of his friends in ensuring regular nutritious meals for him while pursuing the acting dream. Bajpayee poignantly describes an artist's struggle, acknowledging that the strength to pursue one's dreams comes from a full stomach and wholesome food. Bajpayee further urged people to extend their support by visiting [www.nandghar.org](http://www.nandghar.org) and to donate, volunteer or partner with Nand Ghar.

Enthusied about his association with Nand Ghar, Manoj Bajpayee said, "As someone who has lived with hunger pangs, I understand the deep impact it can have on physical, mental and emotional well-being. That's why initiatives like Project

Nand Ghar are so crucial. It not only ensures that children receive proper nutrition but also brings hope, opportunity, and a chance for a brighter future. Let's all join hands with the Nand Ghar movement to ensure that we nourish the potential of children, and together, prepare for a brighter India."

Sharing his thoughts on the movement conceptualised by McCann, Prasoon Joshi, CEO & CCO at McCann Worldgroup India and Chairman, Asia Pacific said "If we want to give our children a genuine chance at realizing their true potential, then well-rounded nutrition is essential. What better way to highlight this than to bring forth some of India's most famous sons and daughters who have faced this hurdle in their journey."

Nand Ghar is the flagship project of Anil Agarwal Foundation (AAF) and has been working towards ensuring that no child goes to bed hungry – a dream of Chairman Anil Agarwal. In a milestone moment for Nand Ghar, we have been successful in reducing malnutrition levels while increasing pre-schoolers' attendance at Nand Ghars across 14 states in India. Last year, AAF also launched multi-millet nutri bars which are currently being distributed daily to 50,000 children between 3-6 years across 1364 Anganwadis in Varanasi. These bars, rich in protein, fibre, and antioxidants have not only improved the daily nutrient intake of children, but also, reduced absenteeism.

With credible voices joining the #KhanaKhayaKya movement, Nand Ghar is inviting citizens and like-minded organisations to partake in this journey of transformation. It is paving the way to realise the dream of a better tomorrow for our nation.



# Nissan Motor India & Smile Train Transforms the Lives of 290 Children With Surgical Interventions

**N**issan Motor India marked the successful completion of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partnership with Smile Train India with a celebratory event at Sant Parmanand Hospital in New Delhi with the children and their families. The event, which was attended by Mr. Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India along with representatives from Smile Train India, and renowned plastic surgeon Dr SC Sood, highlighted the impact of their joint efforts in supporting cleft surgeries for underprivileged individuals.

Over the course of the partnership, Nissan's support enabled 290 cleft surgeries in the fourth quarter of FY23, enabling individuals from economically weaker sections of society to receive the life-changing treatment. These surgeries were conducted at Smile Train India's

partner hospitals, ensuring access to quality care for those in need.

Speaking at the event, Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, said, "Our association with Smile Train India exemplifies Nissan's commitment to corporate

citizenship, social responsibility and inclusion. Through this partnership, we aimed to address this critical healthcare need and make a meaningful and compassionate difference in the lives of those affected. We have witnessed firsthand the



profound impact of access to quality healthcare, and we are immensely proud of the positive change we have collectively achieved.”

Mamta Carroll, Smile Train's Senior Vice President & Regional Director for Asia, expressed her gratitude towards Nissan Motor India and their support for the cause. She said, “Supporting free, safe, and quality cleft treatment is Smile Train India's number one priority. Our CSR partners hold a pivotal role in our ecosystem, and the collaboration with Nissan Motor India has not only enabled cleft affected children to lead healthier and fuller lives but has also significantly enhanced the quality of life of their parents and immediate families.”

Cleft, a gap in the upper lip and/or the roof of the mouth (palate), is a facial birth difference which affects one in 700 babies and 35,000+ children are born with clefts in India annually. Without treatment, children have difficulty in eating, breathing, hearing, speaking and may face social isolation.

The impacted children, of whom 42% are female, will now have a better chance to attend school, pursue careers, and enjoy gainful employment. Surprisingly, even today, many girl children born with clefts are often abandoned at birth. Through Nissan's support, these girls have not only received a new smile but also the chance of a new life, free from stigma and social isolation.

Additionally, over half 56% of the beneficiaries (161 individuals), are infants aged two years and below. By addressing cleft conditions at a young age, Nissan and Smile Train India have contributed to reducing the disability-affected life years of these individuals. Additionally, 38% (110 individuals) of the beneficiaries fall within the age group of two to 18 years, while 6% are above 18 years, emphasizing the urgency to address the backlog of cleft patients who struggle to find help in time.

## EMFAI hosts a landmark meeting between EVMS members and 30+ Electric Mobility financiers in Delhi



**T**he Electric Mobility Financiers Association of India (EMFAI) has taken a substantial stride in bolstering the growth of e-Rickshaws in India. Spearheading a landmark gathering in Delhi, EMFAI brought together members from E rickshaw OEM associations EVMS (Electric Vehicles Manufacturer's Society) and over 30 financiers. This convergence marked a pivotal moment in shaping the future landscape of electric mobility financing in the country. The associations of OEMs, EVMS and financiers EMFAI, met recently to deliberate on best practices, challenges, opportunities and strategies to make this industry scalable and sustainable.

India has become the biggest market for electric three-wheelers globally, recording a sales figure of over 5,80,000 in 2023, according to the International Energy Agency's latest Global Electric Vehicle Outlook 2024. These 3w EVs, serving passengers and cargo, play a crucial role in revolutionizing India's last-mile transportation, offering a sustainable, economical, and eco-friendly mode of travel. Their widespread acceptance has reduced pollution and carbon emissions, spurred job creation and improved livelihoods for many. These collaborative efforts will lead to the identification of opportunities and strategies to make this industry scalable and sustainable. This partnership will help expand the reach and penetration of electric vehicles across India at a much faster pace.

Expressing the enthusiasm of EMFAI members towards the collaborative endeavour, Sameer Aggarwal, President EMFAI, said, “The electric rickshaw sector has positively influenced the lives of over 30 million individuals in India, while also promoting emission-free last-mile transportation for countless others. This meeting represents a significant stride in our journey towards a cleaner, greener future for India”

The President of the EVMS, Ashwani Sehgal echoed this sentiment, stating, “This collaboration between electric vehicle manufacturers and financiers represents a significant step toward promoting the widespread adoption of electric three-wheelers. Together, we can pave the way for India's sustainable and prosperous future.”

# Bike-Taxis Offer Sustainable, Affordable Last-Mile Connectivity, Help Create Jobs, Opine Experts

There was an urgent need for sustainable mobility solutions in India to combat the challenge of air pollution and bike-taxis could offer that said senior industry professionals and experts in the field, addressing a roundtable discussion on the 'Role of Bike-Taxis in India's Mobility Landscape', presented by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), in partnership with Uber.

"Electrification of the fleet is not going to reduce the number of vehicles plying on the road. To reduce the number of vehicles, Government shall adopt Travel Demand Management (TDM) measures, like congestion pricing, LEZ etc. Recently, the Transport Department of the Delhi Government notified the 'Delhi Motor Vehicle Aggregator and Delivery Service Provider Scheme, 2023', which mandates that bike taxis should be operational in electric mode only. Considering such policy-level interventions, E-Bike-taxis could be a perfect market fit, offering clean first and last-mile connectivity while complementing public transport usage by providing easy access to the transit stations," said Sourav Dhar, Programme Lead of Mobility at Council on Energy, Environment, & Water (CEEW).

Aishwarya Raman, Executive Director, OMI Foundation, said, "There's a misconception that embracing digital mobility services will result in revenue loss from commercial vehicle registrations. However, revenue from GST paid by mobility

platforms—covering not just taxi cabs but also auto-rickshaw and bike rides—far surpasses that generated solely from 10-year permit-based registrations for commercial vehicles. Exploring alternative revenue streams is imperative for sustainable growth."

She added, "Bike-taxis offer crucial last-mile connectivity and accessibility, filling a gap in transportation infrastructure. They also serve as effective tools for road and night safety interventions, particularly for young women who prioritise safety and vigilance from platform providers. Recognising bike-taxis as legitimate entities and enhancing safety features are essential steps forward."

The roundtable was addressed by industry captains, thinktanks, academia and various relevant stakeholders from the environment and sustainability verticals. It provided a platform for discussing the evolving landscape of urban mobility in India with strategic insights from industry experts. Among those who spoke at the roundtable were Dr. Niti Bhasin, Professor, Delhi School of Economics; Mr. Sharif Qamar, Associate Director, Transport and Urban Governance, The Energy and Resources Institute; Mr. Raghavan Viswanathan, Associate Partner – Deal Advisory, Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG); Mr. Sourav Dhar, Programme Lead of mobility, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), and Dr. Dhanya MB, economist, VV Giri National Labour Institute.

KPMG was the Knowledge Partner of the roundtable.

Raghavan Viswanathan, Associate Partner—Deal Advisory, KPMG, said, "Today, the primary concern for daily commuters revolves around navigating through traffic congestion. While public transport serves as a lifeline, the challenge lies in reaching bus stops or metro stations, causing additional stress. In such scenarios, bike-taxis emerge as crucial feeder services, playing a pivotal role in India's mobility landscape."

"The key takeaways from the research done by KPMG are that bike taxis help generate jobs. India boasts nearly 1 million gig workers, with bike taxi drivers constituting

**The key takeaways from the research done by KPMG are that bike taxis help generate jobs. India boasts nearly 1 million gig workers, with bike taxi drivers constituting nearly 50% of this workforce**

nearly 50% of this workforce. Last year, the sector showed promise, with the potential to reach 2.3 million, but due to regulatory challenges, approximately 80% of these workers remain underutilised,” Viswanathan added.

The experts engaged in deliberations on topics such as the impact of bike taxis on urban mobility in India, income opportunities generated by them, their sustainability and environmental impact, as well as the regulatory standards to facilitate industry growth. The roundtable consultations aimed to ensure

robust motorised connectivity, sustainability, low cost of travel, and employment for a gig economy.

Revathy Pradeep, Researcher, The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), said, “While bike-taxis are seeing organic growth in parts of the country, the electrification of bike taxis along with the need for driver training to prevent road crashes and enhance safety are critical areas of focus. While bike-taxis significantly reduce the time needed for last-mile connectivity, we must be cautious about the vehicle models being used.” Speaking about

the regulatory framework, Dr Niti Bhasin, Professor, Delhi School of Economics, said, “An effective regulatory framework for bike taxis requires coordination between the Centre and the States. While bike taxis are contributing to employment and decongestion in the transportation ecosystem of India, the unique socio-cultural aspects related to this industry also merit attention. Further, it is also important to understand how bike taxis can serve as a viable alternative to e-rickshaws, particularly in the context of last-mile connectivity.”

## Ambuja Health and Wellness Centres anchor consistent community healthcare at remote villages near Ambuja Cements' Bhatapara plant

**A**mbuja Cements, the cement and building material company of the diversified Adani Portfolio, is committed to enhancing healthcare access for communities in which it operates, no matter how remote their location.

Through Ambuja Cements' CSR arm, two community clinics under the banner of Ambuja Health and Wellness Centres have been successfully set up and operating in Devrani, and Karmandih, the core villages for Ambuja Cements' Bhatapara plant, Chhattisgarh. These centres have helped the communities overcome various challenges to offer professional, consistent, and comprehensive healthcare access at their doorstep, along with all necessary medication.

Ambuja's CSR team identified that the residents of Devrani, Maldi, Mopar, and Karmandih villages had been facing severe challenges for access to medical

consultation, diagnosis, and treatment. The primary reason for this was their remote location. Hence, two Ambuja Health and Wellness Centres were established at Devrani and Karmandih, respectively.

These two centres have eliminated the villagers' health concerns arising from transportation constraints, limited access to primary healthcare services, as well as difficulties in timely medication procurement. Through the Ambuja Health and Wellness Centres, villagers now have access to a visiting doctor and paramedical officer at their doorstep once a week, year-round access to medication, as well as a plethora of reasonably priced medical screening tests.

Further, these community clinics also aim to educate and spread healthcare awareness amongst the beneficiaries through regular workshops and behaviour-change communication. A community health

volunteer (sakhi) is also assigned at each centre to remain available for consultation, advice, and referral to relevant doctors.

The model of these centres is unique due to its collaborative nature. The respective gram panchayats allocate the space, Ambuja's CSR arm then equips it with all requisite technical equipment, furniture, and connections with doctors to enable operations. The local village development committees then promote the centre, collect community contributions, facilitate medicine procurement, oversee its monitoring, maintain records and facilitate health camps – all in conjunction with the CSR team.

In this way, the Ambuja Health and Wellness Centres have been enabling the holistic wellbeing of these communities with a steadfast approach to address healthcare disparities and promote healthier lifestyles across geographies.

# The Convergence Foundation and India Impact Sherpas Release a first-of-its-kind report on Systems Change in the Indian context

**T**he Convergence Foundation, in collaboration with India Impact Sherpas, released their seminal report titled, 'Systemic Impact Exemplars: Unique Approaches Towards Solving India's Development Challenges.' This report aims to identify and learn from organizations that have achieved significant impact by adopting the systems change approach.

These organizations—System Support Organisations (SSOs)—work in close collaboration with governments at the Centre as well as State levels, to create impact at a large-scale. In addition to working with the governments and aiming for impact at population scale, systems change involves solving the problem at the root cause; no quick fixes or band-aid solutions.

The Central and State Governments in India already spend a lot on social and economic development. In 2022-23, the cumulative social expenditure by the Central and State Governments amounted to Rs. 21.03 lakh crore, according to the Reserve Bank of India. However, despite substantial investments by the Indian government, there is still potential for accelerating progress towards achieving India's development goals. More SSOs need to work with governments to provide technical and programmatic support for population-level impact. With this report, The Convergence Foundation and India Impact Sherpas aim to offer an actionable framework on how SSOs can work with governments to create outsized impact.

The report profiles 20 of India's leading SSOs, shedding light on their innovative strategies and impactful initiatives. By showcasing real-world examples, the report seeks to inspire and inform other nonprofits, providing valuable insights into what works in the Indian context.

At the launch event, Vini Mahajan, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, commended the work and contributions of the 20 organizations profiled in the report. "Nonprofit organizations that have adopted the system change approach by implementing scalable pilots and working meaningfully with governments can contribute to large-scale change," she said.

Ashish Dhawan, Founder and CEO of The Convergence Foundation, emphasized the importance of systems change in addressing the country's complex challenges. He said, "The systems change approach is a pivotal idea that has the highest potential for transformation. We conceptualized this report to identify and learn from leading Indian organizations that have adopted systems change to inspire and inform other social purpose organizations by building evidence on what works in the Indian context."

Highlighting the criticality of adequate financial resources to take on the country's sticky challenges, Hari Menon, Director, India Country Office, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, said that "Systems change, anchored by government

and supported by partners, holds the potential to deliver long-term transformation, enhancing the efficiency of development programs and creating lasting impacts on people's lives. Achieving such change, however, takes time and will require philanthropists and other funders to provide committed support for organizations partnering with the government on systems change over an extended period of time."

The report comprehensively examines various systems change practices, including:

- Creating demand and alignment for change
- Grounding the Theory of Change in data, evidence, and research
- Informing the design and implementation of policy
- Designing and demonstrating scalable solutions
- Investing in population-scale platforms
- Strengthening institutional capacity in government
- Building partner networks for scale
- Creating viable markets for the underprivileged

Each of these practices is explored in depth, providing valuable insights for organizations seeking to drive systemic impact and create meaningful change in India's development landscape. The report serves as a comprehensive knowledge resource, intended to shape thinking on systems change. It outlines frameworks for how social purpose organizations can adopt it, and offers models on how SSOs can create disproportionate impact.

# Whisper Teaches Young Girls - Periods ka Matlab Healthy hai Aap

India's leading feminine-care brand Whisper, from the house of Procter & Gamble, is raising awareness about - the early onset of menstruation among young girls - as part of the fifth edition of its #KeepGirlsInSchool (KGIS) movement. With girls starting periods as early as 8 years of age, the need to create awareness early on is crucial, as 26 million girls can be at the risk of dropping out of school without period education and access to period products. Studies have found that one out of five girls could be dropping out of school due to lack of period education and access to period products.

In India today, girls as young as 8 years of age are beginning their menstrual cycle, as per several reports, and so are at a higher risk of dropping out from school due to lack of period education. This could lead to escalation in absenteeism and increased drop out rate if they do not learn and are made aware at the right time. Whisper is at the forefront of educating girls across the country about the importance of menstrual hygiene, normalising any myths and taboos about periods, with an aim to decrease dropout rates caused by insufficient information and lack of access to period products. To date, Whisper's Keep Girls In School program has taught over 100 million schoolgirls and mothers about periods and period products, and provided free sanitary napkins to girls.

Whisper's new emotional film features young 8-year-old girls who know nothing about menstruation and think up the worst possible scenarios as the cause of unexpected bleeding in one of their friends. The film aims to normalise this natural biological change in their body



**Buy 1 Whisper Ultra pack and help keep 1 girl in school**

by educating young girls in school about the early onset of periods with a fun, catchy jingle that reiterates, “periods ka matlab healthy hai aap (periods means you are healthy)”.

Rajdeepak Das, Chief Creative Officer, Publicis Groupe - South Asia and Chairman Leo Burnett - South Asia said, “Our ongoing research about the changing conversations around menstruation identified a glaring anomaly - girls today are getting their periods much earlier than before. However, they are being educated about periods at a much later stage or oftentimes not at all. Whisper and Leo Burnett have been on a journey to keep girls in school for a long time and we wanted to bridge this gap. Our latest work talks to the 8-year-olds in a language they can understand, with a heartwarming song that teaches them that getting periods means they are healthy. The goal is to not just teach the little girls but also use the song as a tool to equip her ecosystem- parents and educators, enabling them to teach periods in an empowering manner.”

“There is a seismic shift happening in period biology. This heightens

the need to educate girls early on and to prepare them to embrace this biological process. Through this initiative, we strive to educate them about how periods are healthy and how they can take care of themselves on their period days. Every year, Whisper goes to more than 60,000 schools to create period education programs and we are now also going to younger standards. Consumers too can do their bit buying a Whisper Ultra pack which will help us educate and donate pads to one girl to keep her in school,” said Girish Kalyanaraman, Vice President & Category Leader - India Feminine Care at Procter & Gamble.

KGIS is an initiative by Whisper which aims to reduce the stigma attached to menstruation, create awareness and reduce the number of girls who drop due to the lack of information around menstrual hygiene. KGIS has taught over 100 million school girls about periods and period products till date. For the first time, Whisper has used music to raise awareness about periods; through a fun and catchy jingle, “periods ka matlab healthy hai aap”.

# Honasa Consumer Releases its First-Ever Social Impact Report, Showcasing Commitment to Sustainability and Community Engagement

**H**onasa Consumer Limited, India's leading beauty and personal care company with a diverse portfolio of purpose-driven brands, announces the launch of its first impact report, 'Driven By Purpose', assessed by Aspire Impact Ratings Pvt. Ltd., highlighting the impact of their social and environment efforts while showcasing a responsibly governed organization. Aligned with its overarching commitment to enriching both consumers and communities, the company embarks on a mission to foster a sustainable future through environmentally conscious practices and socially impactful initiatives seamlessly integrated into the ethos of its brands.

The report details the significant impacts of various purpose-driven initiatives, assessing their contributions to economic development, environmental stewardship, and community empowerment. These efforts have catalyzed positive change across India, reaching 14 states and 2 Union Territories, and promoting sustainable growth and transformative societal benefits.

Starting with the first brand, Mamaearth's Plant Goodness initiative, which is dedicated to afforestation and supporting farmer livelihoods. In collaboration with Sankalptaru Foundation, Honasa planted 5 lakh trees and empowered 581 farmers with livelihood opportunities. This initiative not only encourages sustainable agricultural practices but also anticipates a significant yield of over 10,000 tons of fruit annually, generating a

**Planted half a million trees and encouraged organic farming, offsetting 250,000 tons of carbon emissions contributing to environmental sustainability, and fostering co-existence with nature.**

**Empowered more than 10,000 women through vocational training in hair styling, promoting skill development and financial independence.**

**Educated over 10,000 students on climate change across 76 schools in Chennai and Bengaluru empowering them to become ambassadors of environmental sustainability.**

**Delivered clean water to 500 households in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, enhancing quality of life and health standards.**

potential revenue of more than INR 20 crore. Additionally, the initiative has led to substantial environmental benefits, including the sequestration of 250,000 tons of carbon and the production of 500,000 tons of oxygen each year, while greening 3,500 acres of land.

Additionally Mamaearth has a Plastic Positive initiative, through

which the brand has recycled 8311 Metric tonnes of plastic.

Through the initiative under The Derma Co, the company aimed at empowering underprivileged children through The Young Scientist Program. This initiative, executed in collaboration with Bhumi NGO, focuses on providing high-quality, practical science education. With 456 hours of uniquely designed activity modules delivered in 76 schools, the program has engaged over 10,000 children in hands-on scientific learning. This immersive approach has notably resulted in a 42% increase in their science assessment scores, highlighting the impactful nature of practical education.

The third brand Aqualogica addresses a critical challenge through its Fresh Water for All initiative, aiming to make clean, safe drinking water accessible in remote areas where it remains a luxury. In many marginalized communities, women are forced to walk several kilometers daily just to fetch drinking water. To combat this issue, Aqualogica's Fresh Water for All mission, in collaboration with the Watershed Organisation Trust, has installed water tanks in four villages. This strategic initiative now provides 496 households with easy access to clean and safe drinking water, saving them over 400 collective hours each day that were once spent on fetching water. These hours are now being redirected towards productive activities such as earning income, childcare, and household chores, thereby significantly

improving the overall livelihoods of these communities.

Bblunt, in collaboration with the Sambhav Foundation, has launched The Bblunt Shine Academy, a transformative initiative that has empowered over 10,000 women across 11 states by offering training and certification in hair styling. Designed to promote skill development and financial independence, the initiative provides both online and offline courses. These courses are delivered by 12 master trainers across 240 batches, accumulating a total of 6,000 hours of training. This comprehensive approach equips participants with professional skills,

opening up avenues for employment and self-sufficiency.

Speaking on the report launch, Varun Alagh, Co-founder and CEO, Honasa Consumer Limited commented, "We crafted Honasa with a vision to go beyond products and strived to create a greater impact on the lives of our consumers and the society at large. Within our diverse portfolio of purpose-driven 'Me & We' brands, each element embodies a commitment to our consumers, our communities, and our planet. The release of our first impact report marks the beginning of a new chapter in the Honasa story. We combine purpose with passion, endeavoring

to create beauty that extends well beyond the superficial. Our aim is not merely to address challenges but to make a lasting impression on the lives we touch, ensuring our brands are celebrated not just for their products, but for the depth and reach of their impact."

These initiatives are a testament to Honasa's deep-rooted commitment to building a better tomorrow for everyone. With trust, transparency, and sustainability as key pillars, Honasa is trying to make a difference in people's lives across India, ensuring a brighter and more sustainable future for generations to come.

## Dalmia Bharat Foundation and Karur Vysya Bank Join Hands to Empower Youth through Skill Development

### *DBF to train 400 rural youth through its DIKSHa centres in South India*

**D**almia Bharat Foundation (DBF), the corporate social responsibility arm of Dalmia Bharat Ltd. (DBL) and Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), aimed at empowering rural youth through skill development. This collaboration will focus on enhancing employability skills and sustainable livelihood opportunities for 400 rural youth across the Southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka. Under the terms of the MoU, Karur Vysya Bank, as part of its CSR initiatives, will extend financial support for two financial years till FY25. This support will enable Dalmia Bharat Foundation to implement a comprehensive skill development program through its DIKSHa centres located in Belgaum, Kadapa and Dalmiapuram in the Southern states of its operation.

The program will focus on providing short-term skill training courses in areas such as apparel manufacturing, construction, healthcare, IT-enabled services, beauty & wellness, among others. Through this initiative, the aim

is to equip individuals with the necessary skills to secure gainful employment opportunities and contribute to the economic growth of their communities.

Speaking on the occasion, Ashok Gupta, CEO, Dalmia Bharat Foundation stated, "At Dalmia Bharat we are committed to enabling social transformation and creating sustainable livelihoods for the nation's youth. We are pleased to collaborate with Karur Vysya Bank in our shared commitment to youth empowerment and community development. By imparting skills and creating opportunities, we aspire to empower young individuals in the region to achieve self-reliance and contribute to India's sustainable future."

DIKSHa, the flagship project from Dalmia Bharat Foundation provides placement-linked, short-term skill training to youth and women, adding them to skilled workforce for enhanced income. There are 19 centres spread across 10 states of their operation. Till date, DIKSHa has trained 15709 individuals successfully with more than 11435 individuals placed in gainful employment, earning monthly wages ranging from INR 8,000 to INR 20,000. DBF has further expanded partnerships to include the State Skill Development Missions of Odisha and Karnataka, as well as collaborations with organizations like NABARD, NBCFDC, OSDA, BOSCH, Schneider Electric, etc.



## AstraZeneca and Vaayu Chest & Sleep Center collaborate to enhance respiratory care for severe asthma patients in Bengaluru

**A**straZeneca Pharma India Ltd., a science-led biopharmaceutical company, has partnered with Vaayu Chest & Sleep Center to elevate the standard of respiratory care for severe asthma patients in Bengaluru.

Severe asthma poses a significant challenge as a prevalent non-communicable disease in India, contributing to premature morbidity and mortality. Recent data indicates that approximately 22 lakhs of individuals in Karnataka are grappling with asthma, placing the state seventh in terms of asthmatic population in India.

The Centers of Excellence (COEs) for severe asthma, aligned with the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA)

guidelines, are designed to offer a systematic and uniform approach to managing patients with severe asthma. Since the start of this year, AstraZeneca's Severe Asthma COEs have screened over 3000 patients nationwide, accurately assessing disease severity and providing tailored treatment through skilled healthcare professionals engaged in AstraZeneca's educational initiatives. The company aims to establish 20 clinics across India by the end of 2024, anticipating to screen over 10,000 COE patients.

Dr. Anil Kukreja, Vice President - Medical Affairs & Regulatory, AstraZeneca India, said, "Severe asthma continues to have a debilitating impact for people living with

the disease. At AstraZeneca, we are committed to transforming care for some of the most debilitating and chronic respiratory and immune-mediated diseases. Our collaboration with Vaayu Center underscores our commitment to providing innovative solutions and improving patient outcomes. We are dedicated to filling this gap through our COE network, which not only monitors patients but also educates healthcare providers, offering comprehensive respiratory care solutions to enhance the quality of life for those with NCDs."

NCDs such as severe asthma can become a socio-economic burden for the patients, their families, and the healthcare system due to the various treatment costs involved. As a

result, effective disease management requires specialized care from a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals and caregivers. The establishment of specialized asthma clinics represents a leap forward in technological advancements and holistic disease management.

Dr. Ravindra Mehta, Director and Head and Dr. Sameer Bansal, Clinical Head at Vaayu Chest and Sleep Specialists said, "World Asthma Day 2024 has an interesting theme "Asthma Education Empowers". One wonders why? It is crucial to understand that knowledge is power, and empowerment is therapy when it comes to managing this respiratory condition. Asthma affects millions worldwide, and in India, its prevalence is significant, with Bangalore infamously dubbed as "Asthma Capital of India". India accounts for 13.9% of global asthma burden, while contributing to 42% of global asthma related deaths. However, with the right information and proactive measures, individuals can lead fulfilling lives despite this chronic illness. Our aim at Vaayu in 2024 is Knowledge, Education and Commitment to beat the Asthma pandemic."

At Vaayu's Severe Asthma Clinic, focus is on holistic asthma management with expert team of doctors for both, adult and pediatric patients, point-of-care advanced testing such as lung capacity test, airway inflammation and allergy testing, integrated pulmonary wellness and rehabilitation services, preventive clinics such as adult vaccination services, smoking cessation and comprehensive sleep clinic, and access to advanced treatment modalities such as high-end injections and procedures.

The collaboration between AstraZeneca and healthcare professionals in the fight against severe asthma has been instrumental in bridging the knowledge gap and providing integrated respiratory care.

## Donors on Milaap are Fueling Life Saving Mission for a Couple Runs Free Ambulance Service in India



A remarkable couple in India, Himanshu and Twinkle, has dedicated their lives to providing free ambulance services to those in need through their NGO, the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Help And Care Society. Fueled by a personal tragedy, their inspiring journey exemplifies unwavering compassion and a commitment to saving lives.

Himanshu's childhood experience deeply impacted his life. At the young age of 14, he witnessed the devastating consequences of limited access to medical care. His father's accident left the family struggling to find transport and afford treatment, ultimately resulting in his father falling into a coma. This hardship ignited a passion in Himanshu to prevent others from facing similar struggles.

In 2002, their wedding marked the beginning of their extraordinary mission. Instead of a traditional gift, they received an ambulance. Motivated by Himanshu's past, the couple established their NGO and embarked on a journey to provide free, 24/7 ambulance services. "We handle a significant number of critical cases daily, receiving over 15-20 calls requesting urgent medical transport," says Himanshu. Their dedication runs deep, as they have even sold their own home and reinvested the earnings, along with their income from selling insurance, to sustain this vital service.

Despite facing personal challenges, including Twinkle's battles with Hepatitis B and cancer, and Himanshu's own heart condition requiring treatment, their resolve remains unwavering. The Shaheed Bhagat Singh Help And Care Society, now with a fleet of 14 ambulances, has expanded its reach beyond its North Delhi roots, serving the entire National Capital Region. Their swift response to emergencies, ranging from building fires to railway accidents, has undoubtedly saved countless lives.

"Every day presents new obstacles, but we are determined to support those in need," says Twinkle. "We offer more than just transportation – we provide a lifeline during some of life's most difficult moments." Currently running a fundraiser on Milaap, the organization has garnered support from over 690 individuals, raising over INR 7.8 lakhs towards their mission. These funds will be used to cover operational costs, support their team of 10 members, and potentially expand their services to additional cities throughout India.

# FICCI FLO Renews Commitment to Livelihoods for Specially-abled, Extends Partnership with Mitti Cafés

**F**ICCI FLO, the women's wing of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), reaffirmed its commitment to empowering livelihoods nationwide by extending its memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Mitti Social Initiative Foundation (MSIF). This collaborative effort aims to bolster the chain of 'Mitti Cafés', renowned for being inspiringly managed by specially-abled staff. Building upon their successful partnership in key locations such as Delhi's Supreme Court, Mumbai's Terminal 2, and Amritsar, FICCI FLO and MSIF are poised to expand their impact across India.

The objective of this renewed collaboration is to create more opportunities for individuals with special needs and foster inclusivity in society. By supporting initiatives like Mitti Cafés, FICCI FLO aims to champion the cause of empowerment and provide a platform for those with unique abilities to thrive in the workforce.

Joyshree Das Verma, National President of FICCI FLO, emphasized the organization's dedication to fostering inclusive growth. She remarked, "Empowering individuals with special needs is not just a social responsibility; it is necessary for a truly inclusive society. Through our partnership with the Mitti Social Initiative Foundation, FICCI FLO is proud to support initiatives that create meaningful livelihoods and promote diversity in the workforce. Together, we are developing the narrative of inclusivity and pushing the boundaries of possibility."

Alina Alam, Founder and CEO of Mitti Café, expressed her enthusiasm



for the continued partnership, stating, "At Mitti Café, we believe in the power of inclusion and the potential of every individual. Our collaboration with FICCI FLO has been instrumental in driving positive change and opening doors of opportunity for those often marginalized in society. Together, we are not just serving meals, but also serving a greater purpose of empowerment."

The success stories emerging from Mitti Cafés serve as a testament to the transformative power of inclusive employment. By providing a supportive environment and opportunities for skill development, these Cafés have become beacons of hope for individuals with special abilities, proving that with the right support and resources, anyone can achieve their full potential.

## Infosys Foundation Joins Hands with Ashoka University to Augment Scientific Research

**I**nfosys Foundation, the philanthropic and CSR arm of Infosys, has signed an MoU with Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana, which will help augment scientific research at the university's Chemical Biology Lab. Infosys Foundation has committed a grant of Rs 27 crore for the upgradation of this laboratory into a world-class facility that will enhance education and research opportunities for undergraduate students.

The new Advanced Chemical Biology Lab will have cutting-edge equipment such as Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR), Scanning electron microscopy-energy dispersive X-ray analysis (SEM-EDAX), High-resolution transmission electron microscopy (HRTEM), Imaging Mass cytometry, and Spatial Nucleic Acid Hybridization System. With this laboratory, students at Ashoka University will get an opportunity to train on high-end equipment, enhancing their understanding and skill development as well as enabling scientific research of diverse projects in the country.

Through periodic courses, conferences, and workshops, the Advanced Chemical Biology Lab will aim to foster awareness and opportunities within the Indian science community. In addition, the laboratory will enable interdisciplinary collaboration among departments and institutions, elevating the university's visibility on both the national and international stage as a premier destination for science education and research.

Somak Raychaudhury, Vice Chancellor, Ashoka University, said, "We are delighted to have Infosys Foundation join us in our vision to enhance scientific education at Ashoka University. This collaboration equips our students and faculty with cutting-edge resources, empowering them to excel in research and sciences. Together we hope to shape a future where interdisciplinary learning fuels India's scientific progress".

Sumit Virmani, Trustee, Infosys Foundation, said, "Infosys Foundation believes that STEM education, especially at undergrad levels, moulds learners and helps them to participate in meaningful and contextualized ways in the real-world. We are delighted to collaborate with Ashoka University and help equip their Chemical Biology Lab with cutting-edge facilities. Through this initiative, we envision a future where Chemistry and Life Sciences education propels youngsters to nurture their potential in STEM-related fields."

## Ambuja Cements continues supporting water conservation efforts through workshop in Himachal Pradesh

**A**mbuja Cements, the cement and building material company of the diversified Adani Portfolio, through its CSR arm, continues to spearhead sustainable water management and conservation initiatives across Himachal Pradesh. It recently organised a closed-door workshop on 'Sustainable Watershed Management for Climate Resilience' in Shimla, bringing together various experts and stakeholders to address the region's pressing water challenges.

Ambuja Cements, through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm, has been actively involved in implementing multiple watershed development projects especially in Darlaghat, Himachal Pradesh, in conjunction with various government agencies. At the core of Ambuja Cements' CSR initiatives lies a commitment to empowering communities and preserving the environment around its operations. Under its CSR arm, the company has undertaken watershed projects in nearly 200 villages across three districts of Himachal Pradesh.

Speakers at the event included water conservation experts who interacted with over 100 attendees comprising corporate, government, community, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The experts discussed the critical importance of sustainable water resource management practices, including watershed development, green energy utilisation, and farmer capacity building. Additionally, participants were briefed on available government schemes promoting solar pumping, irrigation efficiency, and sustainable water conservation practices. Community members were also invited as speakers to share their experiences on watersheds and climate change.

Furthermore, experts from educational institutions emphasised the key role of education and awareness regarding eco-literacy among the next generation. Proposals were made to introduce eco-literacy courses and establish a dedicated department focused on watershed development and climate resilience, highlighting the need for long-term approaches to address water-related challenges.

Through such initiatives, Ambuja Cements reaffirms its dedication to promoting sustainable water management practices and climate action. The company also strives to secure a resilient future for generations to come, ensuring the preservation of vital water resources.



## Adani Foundation introduces tribal farmers at ACC Chaibasa site to sustainable irrigation techniques for year-round yield

**A**CC, the cement and building material company of the diversified Adani Portfolio, along with Adani Foundation has infused modern irrigation techniques to uplift the socio-economic landscape of a traditional farming community near the ACC Chaibasa site. Through CSR efforts, the predominantly tribal community has been introduced to solar-powered lift irrigation, resulting in significant positive impacts on the revenue, scale, variety, and continuity of agricultural yield through the year. This success has even encouraged the youth and community members here for higher participation in the activity, reducing their need to migrate.

For 80% of farmers of West Singhbhum district, Jharkhand, agriculture has been the primary source of livelihood. However, being an area surrounded by dense forest cover, hilly terrain, and rivers, it had always been a challenging activity. During their assessment, the Adani Foundation team identified undulating terrain, rain-fed agriculture, a

lack of technical knowledge, limited market access, and huge poverty as some of the primary challenges for the farmers here, of whom 67% (2001 Census) belong to indigenous tribes.

Owing to these concerns, the farmers had been unable to make ample and stable income, reeling from effects of inconsistent crop cycles, as well as declining interest of the younger generation in agriculture, resulting in high migration to earn livelihoods after the monsoon cultivation. Hence, CSR efforts have been focused on ensuring livelihood sustainability with the support of sustainable irrigation options.



**Prakash Honhaga**

With a vision of supporting year-round irrigation, the CSR team narrowed down on solar-powered lift irrigation units, which facilitate stable supply of water to wider patches of farmland, irrespective of terrain. A total of 169 farmers from six different kisan samitis (farmer groups) across three villages – Dokatta, Kondowa, and Rajanka – of the district have benefitted from the support provided by six lift irrigation units. One of these units (80 HP) covers 95 acres, while five others (5HP) have the capacity to support irrigation across 10 to 18 acres each, covering 169 acres of farmland in all.

Benefitting from a stable water supply, this initiative has not only helped farmers cultivate Kharif, Rabi, and even Jayad crops through the year, but the diversion from traditional to cash crops has also resulted in significantly higher yield, an average of Rs 30,000 per acre increase over earlier. This translates to generation of additional daily income equivalent to 10 human days per acre.

Take for example, Prakash Honhaga, a beneficiary from Dokatta village. His 1.5-acre farmland has yielded an additional income of Rs. 40,000, thanks to Kharif and Rabi crops made possible by lift irrigation. Additionally, this initiative has reduced malnutrition through regular availability of vegetables and nutritious food for the community. Further advantages include initiation of agriculture-allied activities such as

animal husbandry and food processing in the area. A new fruit tree plantation has also been envisioned in the command area as an added advantage of the lift irrigation system. And, in a complete turnaround, all these positive impacts have encouraged the youth to take a keener interest in agriculture, and helped the community cut down the need for outward migration. Prompted by this success, the Foundation plans to augment

the scheme by adding a new 80 HP lift irrigation unit which will further benefit an additional 100 farmers covering 100 acres more of farmland in this financial year. These irrigation solutions by Adani Foundation at villages near the ACC Chaibasa site underscore their commitment to social responsibility and sustainable development, creating positive impacts, and fostering inclusive growth in West Singhbhum district.

## Headline: Mudrex Celebrates Bitcoin Pizza Day with Nearly 2K Kids Across Bengaluru

**M**udrex, a leading global crypto investment platform, today celebrated Bitcoin Pizza Day with a heartwarming initiative that brought smiles to the children of Bengaluru. The event was celebrated with 2000+ children across HSR Layout, Sarjapur, JP Nagar, Whitefield, Shivajinagar, Adegodi, Marathalli, Krishnarajapura, Koramangala, Lalbhag, Electronic City, Shanthinagar and others. This special day, commemorating the first real-world Bitcoin transaction for two pizzas, was transformed into an unforgettable event that blended joy, learning, and community spirit.

Mudrex celebrates the very first transaction which has now become a symbol of Bitcoin's journey from a digital experiment to a mainstream financial phenomenon. To mark this historic day, Mudrex partnered with various child shelter homes and children in need of care and protection (CNCs) in Bengaluru such as Thaiy Mane, Gift Apled, Ashanilaya, Diyan Charitable Trust, Swanthana, SevaSadan, Angels Orphanage, Need Base India and many others, treating kids to delicious pizzas. The initiative aimed not only to celebrate the occasion but to also foster technological curiosity among young minds. As the aroma of freshly baked

pizzas filled the air, the excitement and laughter of children echoed across the venues. For many, this was their first taste of pizza, making the experience all the more special. "I've never had pizza before! This is amazing!" exclaimed the little boy at Ashanilaya, with his eyes wide with delight. The joy of the children was palpable, and their smiles were the true highlight of the day.

Edul Patel, CEO and Co-founder of Mudrex, expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative: "Bitcoin Pizza Day is a significant date in the crypto community, symbolizing the beginning of a new era in digital finance. At Mudrex, we believe in the power of education and community. By celebrating this day with children, we hope to plant seeds of curiosity and knowledge that will grow into a deep understanding and appreciation of blockchain technology in the future".

"We believe in the power of small acts of kindness," added Patel. "Today, it's pizza; tomorrow, it could be something else. What matters is that we continue to make a positive impact."

"Thanks to Mudrex! Today was a wonderful treat for the kids. They adored the treat", said Deepa Mendan, Program Officer, Need Based India.

"We are thankful to Mudrex for their thoughtful initiative on Bitcoin

Pizza Day. The event brought great joy to the children", said Mahesh, Coordinator at Sevasadan.

The celebration included engaging and interactive sessions where Mudrex team members explained about blockchain technology in a fun and accessible way. These sessions were designed to spark curiosity and inspire the next generation.

By bridging the gap between technology and young minds, Mudrex is paving the way for a future where digital literacy is accessible to all. Mudrex looks forward to continuing its efforts to make a positive impact in the community and to inspire the innovators of tomorrow.

### About Mudrex

Launched in 2018, Mudrex has the vision of making crypto accessible to the masses so that ordinary investors can benefit from the massive wave of wealth creation. Founded by Edul Patel, Alankar Saxena, Rohit Goyal, Prince Arora the Y-Combinator backed enterprise has established a robust investing platform that can be used by both newcomers and seasoned investors. The US-headquartered and Bengaluru-based fintech startup aims to be the largest asset management platform for crypto.



# CSMIA advances its green initiatives, with Vertical Green wall at the Airport

**I**n line with Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport's (CSMIA) commitment towards sustainability, the airport has implemented an array of innovative initiatives. CSMIA proudly announces the implementation of a cutting-edge feature in its infrastructure - a remarkable Vertical Green Wall at the airport. The initiative aims at reducing carbon footprint while constantly elevating the passenger experience.

This endeavour encompasses approx. 1,000 square meters of lush green walls, seamlessly integrated throughout the Terminal 1, Terminal 2, General Aviation Terminal, and the ceremonial lounge at CSMIA. These green walls not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the airport but also contribute to environmental conservation.

Key features of the vertical greenery project include:

- Integrated Sustainability: Each green wall is equipped with an

inbuilt drainage and drip irrigation system, ensuring efficient water usage that saves over 50% compared to conventional watering methods.

- Innovative Design: The green walls feature over 30 plant varieties, totalling more than 35,000 plants, with the growing media composed of coconut industry



waste and neem-based manure. This sustainable approach to horticulture fosters healthy plant growth. Greenwall pots are designed to be easily replaceable, allowing for flexible design changes. The integration of wheels allows for easy movement of the green walls, while the design enables them to be dismantled and installed in a few minutes.

- Enhanced Passenger Experience: The green walls not only provide a visually captivating experience but also contribute to air quality improvement and overall well-being of passengers. Various patterns, shapes, and festive plants display throughout the year adding an element of delight to the traveller's journey.

CSMIA has entirely transitioned to green energy sources, becoming one of India's first 100% sustainable airports. Furthermore, CSMIA's commitment to sustainability extends beyond its green initiatives. The

airport has achieved the highest-level 4+ "Transition" accreditation in the Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) program by the Airport Council International (ACI). Some key initiatives include, installation of a unique Vertical Axis Wind Turbine & Solar PV system, the launch of Uber Green, an electric vehicle (EV)

product, in partnership with Uber, making CSMIA the inaugural location in Mumbai to offer this eco-friendly transportation option.

Moreover, the airport's commitment to waste management is evident through initiatives such as recycling 8,890 used plastic bottles through Reverse Vending Machines

(RVMs) and achieving an impressive 42% water recycling rate in the fiscal year 2023-2024. CSMIA's dedication to sustainability not only reinforces its position as a premier aviation hub but also adds to its beautiful infrastructure, showcasing a synergy between technology, innovation, and environmental consciousness.

## Data Patterns supports construction of school for children with special needs

**D**ata Patterns (India) Ltd, a vertically integrated Defence and Aerospace electronics solution provider catering to the indigenously developed defence products industry, has supported in the construction of a new building for Jayam Special School, a school for children with Autism, ADHD, Intellectual Disability, slow learning and learning Disability. This contribution stems from their enduring commitment to the community.

The new building of Jayam Special School was inaugurated at Ayapakkam, Chennai by Mrs. Rekha Murthy Rangarajan, Promoter and Whole-time Director, Data Patterns (India) Limited. The company has contributed Rs. 29 Lakhs for construction of four classrooms in the new building. This generous contribution has helped build the school which has a play area, hydrotherapy facility, lift for disabled children, OT classrooms, separate hall for baking & confectionaries, computer room and an Auditorium along with class rooms.

Rekha Murthy Rangarajan, Promoter and Whole-time Director of Data Patterns said "Embracing our commitment to social responsibility, it warms my heart that we could construct four classrooms in the new building of Jayam Special School. We believe in nurturing the potential of India's youth, thus fostering a brighter future for generations to come. Knowing that we're making

a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most, fills me with immense joy and pride. Through our unwavering support for education, we aim to empower specially-abled children and transform communities. Here's to creating more opportunities for education and empowerment in our community!"



Jayam Special School has 174 children enrolled, with hostel facility and follows State Board syllabus for education. This new building will help in improving the quality of life for the children while also supporting their educational and vocational needs. Data Patterns holding true to its value of community empowerment has made this contribution towards education of these specially-abled children and their future, thereby ensuring a self-sustainable life for them.

# Hinduja Foundation's Sujal Mahila Mahasangh Alwar Collaborates with Atal Community Innovation Centre at BML Munjal University to Empower Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Alwar

*Aims to help 80% of participating women establish micro-businesses*

In rural India, where people depend on groundwater or weekly municipal water supply, getting fresh water daily is a major household chore, mostly shouldered by women. On average, it takes about three hours to fetch water to meet the needs of a family of four - a rough estimate for when the water source is within a 2 to 5 km radius.

In rural Rajasthan, however, the number can go up to four hours, including the time for travel on foot.

Things are albeit a bit different in Alwar, Rajasthan. Five years after Hinduja Foundation (HF), the philanthropic arm of the 110-year-old Hinduja Group, and Ashok Leyland (AL), the Group's flagship subsidiary, successfully carried out sustainable water resource management initiatives, 450 women beneficiaries are gearing up to be trained as women entrepreneurs in Alwar.

The new initiative – an offshoot of HF's flagship CSR Water Stewardship program, Jal Jeevan – will empower rural women through skill development and business outreach. In the first phase, 30 women will be trained in the food industry and running tailoring business.

The project will be implemented jointly by the Hinduja Foundation, Ashok Leyland, and BML Munjal University (a Hero Group initiative). Under this partnership, the University, through its Atal

Community Innovation Centre - BML Munjal University, will collaborate with Sujal Mahila Mahasangh Alwar (SMMA), a grassroots organization supported by the Hinduja Foundation and Ashok Leyland.

SMMA is a collective of women leading village-level planning and promoting Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) practices. In this pilot program, ACIC-BMU have initially identified about 450 women, known as Sujal Sahelis, who have entrepreneurial aspirations and a desire for self-reliance.

For the Hinduja Foundation, the new venture by Sujal Mahila Mahasangh Alwar is a testament to the resounding benefits accrued under Jal Jeevan, Hinduja Group's flagship CSR program of Water Stewardship. The CSR project was started in Alwar in February 2020 with an investment of approximately Rs 9 Crore, and till date, it has benefited approximately 31,000 rural women.

With an objective to enable at least 80% of the participating Sujal Sahelis to launch their micro-businesses successfully, ACIC-BMU has said it is committed to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and community development. This collaboration with Sujal Mahila Mahasangh exemplifies its dedication to empowering marginalized communities.

Paul Abraham, President, Hinduja Foundation, commented: "We are pleased to establish a partnership with BML Munjal University to empower our Sujal Sahelis with the requisite skills

and resources to become successful entrepreneurs. This program is aligned with our mission to create sustainable livelihoods and foster economic independence among women in rural communities. By equipping these women with essential training and support, we endeavour to unlock their full potential and assist them in becoming self-reliant entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to the holistic development of their communities."

Dr. Davinder Singh, CEO, ACIC-BMU said: "Our needs assessment indicated that the women in the village are keen to utilize their existing skills to generate income and support their families. The enthusiasm and resolve they have demonstrated to the concept of starting their own micro-businesses is indeed inspiring. This has impelled us to launch this program and furnish them with the requisite training and resources. We are grateful to Paul Abraham, President, Hinduja Foundation, for accepting our proposal and enabling this empowering training initiative for the Sujal Sahelis. Through this collaboration, our objective is to establish a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem that not only empowers these women but also contributes significantly to the economic development of the region."

This program is a collaborative effort involving several organizations including Ambuja Foundation.

SWAN Livelihood as the training implementation partner. Sujal Mahila Mahasangh, led by President Sangeeta, plays a crucial role in facilitating this initiative.

# CSR INDIA UNITED

## mPokket Partners Roti On Wheels to Provide Nutritious Meals to Cancer Patients and Their Families



In line with its sustained commitment to community welfare and corporate social responsibility, mPokket – India's fastest-growing digital lender – has once again set a benchmark via its latest CSR initiative. Demonstrating compassion and solidarity, mPokket partnered with Roti On Wheels to distribute hot and hygienic meals to cancer patients and their families in Kolkata.

Through this collaboration, mPokket and Roti On Wheels is serving nutritious food such as freshly made Roti and Sabji, with fresh fruit, to help those in need,



near Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute, Kolkata every Thursday and Friday. The teams have been providing approximately 300-400 meals per day, totaling 3000+ meals throughout the month.

This initiative aims to address the nutritional needs of more than 3000+ individuals and their families, who often face immense financial and emotional challenges during their arduous medical battles. By providing solace and sustenance, the teams hope to alleviate some of the burdens faced by the patients and their families while battling with cancer.

Rajani Jalan, Director – CSR & People Relations, mPokket com-



mented, "At mPokket, we believe in giving back to the communities we serve. Our partnership with Roti On Wheels highlights our commitment to social responsibility and to making a difference in people's lives. It's most pleasing to see the positive impact the initiative has had on the local community. Our aim is not just to be a responsible financial entity but also to act as a torchbearer of hope and support for needy communities. These efforts resonate with our core values and commitment to give back to society. Seeing the warm smiles and gratitude of the people we have

helped is a profound reminder of the difference we can make.”

As part of its ongoing commitment to community welfare, mPokket plans to sustain its partnership with Roti On Wheels, ensuring that this meaningful programme remains a consistent source of support and sustenance for cancer patients and their families in Kolkata. A commendable initiative begun by Santosh Lalita Jain Foundation, Roti On Wheels operates mobile vehicles that traverse the slum areas of Greater Kolkata, providing hot and



hygienic meals free of charge to approximately 2,000 people daily.

Cancer patients and their families often face immense financial

and emotional burdens, making it difficult for them to access proper nutrition during their treatment. Through this ongoing partnership with Roti On Wheels, mPokket aims to address food insecurity. This initiative aligns well with organization's ethos of empowering underprivileged communities and fostering a culture of social responsibility. As it continues to grow and expand, mPokket remains dedicated to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those facing challenges across India.

## UST to Train Over 25,000 Employees in Generative AI Technologies

UST, a leading digital transformation solutions company, has launched a groundbreaking new initiative to train over 25,000 of its employees globally in Generative AI (GenAI) and provide opportunities for career advancement. This ambitious program builds on UST's long history in artificial intelligence (AI). It underscores its commitment to comprehensive workforce training and upskilling, keeping its talented personnel future-ready and always at the cutting edge of technological innovation.

The AI training program exemplifies UST's commitment to leveraging its considerable knowledge and expertise to maintain its leadership position in this rapidly evolving field. The program comes just months after the unveiling of UST AlphaAI, which consolidates the company's AI offerings to enhance business agility, streamline operations, and accelerate digital transformation journeys.

UST will offer a range of GenAI training programs that are specifically tailored to its employees and

their different roles and responsibilities, improving efficiency while helping each employee reach their own unique potential.

The comprehensive training program will build upon insights gained through UST's rich history of collaboration and partnership with distinguished AI researchers from renowned academic institutions such as the MIT Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. This legacy of close collaboration with leading researchers will help UST expand on its culture of continuous learning by bringing the latest academic breakthroughs to its workforce.

“Our comprehensive GenAI training initiative will set a new industry standard and bring over 25,000 employees up to speed on everything from foundational GenAI concepts to cutting-edge applications. Adaptable and customizable for each participant, the flexible training program provides hands-on experience with industry-leading tools and platforms

like GitHub Copilot, setting our employees up for future success by ensuring that they can apply GenAI capabilities across diverse domains, said Sunil Balakrishnan, Chief Values Officer and Global Head – Development Center Operations, UST.

“At UST, we recognize that the key to staying competitive in today's fast-paced digital landscape lies in the continuous upskilling of our workforce. As GenAI continues to revolutionize industries and transform business operations, we remain dedicated to equipping our employees with the tools and knowledge they need to leverage these cutting-edge technologies effectively,” said Dr. Adnan Masood, Chief AI Architect, UST. This pioneering GenAI training initiative exemplifies UST's commitment to fostering a dynamic, future-ready workforce that remains at the forefront of GenAI advancements. By further augmenting the talents of UST employees, the training program will drive innovation and create a meaningful impact for clients and partners alike.



## OneEarth Foundation Hosted NatureMiles Awareness Walk and Cleanup Drive for International Day of Biological Diversity

In celebration of the International Day of Biological Diversity, OneEarth Foundation successfully hosted the #NatureMiles Awareness Walk, a recreational educational event designed to foster a deeper connection with nature and promote environmental stewardship. The event was held on 22nd May 2024 from 7 am to 10 am around the scenic Batim Lake in North Goa, a paradise for bird enthusiasts and nature lovers. Batim Lake, surrounded by serene paddy fields and the charming village of Batim, attracts a diverse array of bird species from far and wide, making it the perfect backdrop for raising awareness about Goa's rich biodiversity and the importance of protecting our natural ecosystems.

The walk was led by young botany graduate and bird enthusiast, Aidan Fonseca, Project Assistant at OneEarth Foundation. The event brought together individuals from diverse backgrounds to experience the natural beauty of Batim

Lake, observe local flora and fauna, network with like-minded individuals, and gain a deeper appreciation for the environment beyond Goa's beaches. Emphasizing the critical role biodiversity plays in maintaining ecological balance, the NatureMiles walk also included a cleanup drive around Batim Lake to help participants understand the impact of waste on natural habitats and promote a shift towards more sustainable behaviors. This hands-on activity aligned with the foundation's broader goal of fostering mindful consumption, correct waste disposal, and adherence to the 5R framework are Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Repair and Recycle.

"We are part of nature, and nature is part of us. Sometimes we get disconnected from this truth of life, so it's important that at times we give in to the call of the wild, and immerse ourselves into the beauty of our planet earth," said Mr. Ferdin Sylvester, Founder & Director of OneEarth Foundation.

"Committed to hosting a near-zero waste event, we encouraged participants to bring their non-plastic water bottles, and refreshments consisted of locally sourced fruits from a nearby vendor. During the event, we raised awareness about the importance of home composting, waste segregation at the source, and the implementation of circular systems in waste management. We showcased OneEarth's efforts in intercepting low-value plastic waste from reaching seas and landfills and transforming it into functional products. Additionally, participants were encouraged to join us in future workshops for government schools and colleges, promoting environmental education and sustainable practices among the youth." Ferdin added.

Everyone enjoyed celebrating the International Day of Biological Diversity and took a step towards a sustainable future. Together, we made a significant impact on preserving our natural heritage and promoting sustainable living practices.

# Turning Organic Waste into Floor Cleaner – Bal Raksha Bharat and H&M support local youth from community set up venture

**A**s Yuva Bharat takes centre-stage, H&M has come forward to support a social enterprise proposed by a group of youth from the Gokulpuri intervention area of NGO Bal Raksha Bharat.

The establishment is a groundbreaking bio-enzyme-based floor cleaner production unit in Gokulpuri, New Delhi, and aims to revolutionize waste management to create sustainable livelihoods in the region. The production unit will focus on manufacturing organic floor cleaner and fertilizer utilizing citric fruit peels as the primary raw material. By harnessing the power of natural ingredients, the project not only addresses the challenge of fruit waste disposal but also provides new employment opportunities in the local community. Organic production process is followed in the unit; hence, no special machinery is required in it.

This enterprise was chosen from Bal Raksha Bharat's Youth Innovation Action Lab (YIAL), a unique incubation programme that brings together a cohort of youth and adolescents from humble backgrounds to identify problems faced by them and their communities, and develop & pilot innovative solutions to address those challenges.

The production unit, operated by a dynamic team of nine local youths through a partnership firm, is poised for a successful venture. In its inaugural cycle, the unit aims to produce 976 liters within the first 90 days, each priced at a competitive Rs. 150 per liter. With a strategic approach to market penetration, the product will initially target local consumers, leveraging community



**Inauguration of Innovatin unit**



**Demonstration of floor cleaner making**



**Making of Orgaic floor cleaner with fruit peels**

engagement and word-of-mouth promotion. Subsequently, expansion into broader marketing channels such as online shopping, social media platforms, and other avenues will be pursued, ensuring widespread visibility and accessibility.

The manufacturing process of the floor cleaner involves a meticulous balance of jaggery, fruit peels, and water, mixed in a specific ratio (1:3:10). This carefully crafted blend undergoes a 90-day fermentation process in open-mouth HDPE plastic containers, ensuring the development of potent bio-enzymes. Upon completion of the

fermentation period, the mixture is meticulously filtered and separated, yielding approximately 90% of high-quality floor cleaner. The remaining material is repurposed to create organic fertilizer, demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and resource efficiency.

Speaking on the occasion, Sudarshan Suchi, Chief Executive Officer of Bal Raksha Bharat, expressed enthusiasm for the project's potential impact on both environmental conservation and economic empowerment. "Empowering children, youth & the community is at the core of our work. This also is a

significant step towards realisation of a Yuva Bharat. We thank H&M for collaborating with us to support initiatives that harness the potential of India's young population for national development, empowerment, and progress. Through this partnership, we not only mitigate

environmental pollution but also empower local communities through job creation."

Speaking at the inaugural event, Karishma Vohra, Head, Sustainability & CSR, H&M, congratulated the team, and said, "The launch of this production unit marks

a significant milestone in the journey towards a circular economy and underscores the power of collaboration in driving positive change. Bal Raksha Bharat and H&M remain committed to fostering innovation and sustainability, paving the way for a brighter, cleaner future."

## NABARD AND NRLM sign a landmark MoU for the benefit of women SHGs



**M**arking a strategic alliance to benefit rural women SHGs, NABARD and the National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) under the Ministry of Rural Development, GoI inked a landmark MoU which covers a period of 3 years, seeks to harmonize NABARD's role of enabler and facilitator in the SHG ecosystem since inception of the movement, with the transformative goal of NRLM to promote women led development in rural areas by leveraging on the unique strengths of both entities. The MoU was signed by Charanjit Singh, Additional Secretary, (Rural Livelihoods), MoRD, on behalf of NRLM while Ajay K. Sood,

Deputy Managing Director, signed for NABARD, in the presence of Shaji K.V., Chairman and G.S. Rawat, Deputy Managing Director, NABARD. Others present included L. Leivang, CGM, NABARD and NRLM officials.

DAY-NRLM will engage with respective State/UT Rural Livelihood Missions to facilitate their participation as Project Implementing Agencies with the Regional offices of NABARD in each state/UT under NABARD's niche development schemes for capacity building, skilling & entrepreneurship training of matured women SHGs in the spirit of the Lakhpati Didi Scheme objectives, physical and online marketing

support schemes, graduation of SHG clusters to Producer Organizations both in farm and non-farm sectors for sustainable economic activities and promotion of climate resilient agriculture for women SHGs, livelihood interventions to women SHGs in NABARD's Wadi and Watershed development project areas along with deepening of financial inclusion. The MoU further aims to develop pilots in digital transactions of SHG federations to usher in transparency and efficiency with quick TAT for members, besides exploring options to facilitate deployment of women SHG members as business correspondents of banks.

# Practo Foundation Completes 2000 Free Cataract Surgeries, Sets Sight on 10,000

**P**racto, India's leading healthcare technology company, marked its 16th year by announcing the completion of 2000 free cataract surgeries since May 2023 through the Practo Foundation Trust. Started in response to the urgent needs of disadvantaged communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation provided 15,000+ free medical kits and doctor consultations and issued 6000+ free prescriptions as part of 700+ health camps. Now, it is focused on addressing the prevalent issue of cataracts, introducing its #Mission10kCataracts.

Research highlights that 82% of adult blindness is preventable and cataracts, a clouding of the lens in the eye, constitute a major portion of these avoidable cases, making up 63% of preventable blindness. The cumulative loss of Gross National Income in India due to this avoidable blindness is Rs 11,778.6 billion (Int\$ 535 billion). Over the last two decades, this has increased by almost three times. In India, eliminating cataract blindness requires a significant increase in surgical intervention and despite the safety and effectiveness of cataract surgery, only 54% of individuals with cataracts actually undergo the procedure.

Practo Foundation's work aligns with this critical need. Last year, during health screenings of 1300+ beneficiaries, cataracts emerged as a prominent concern, constituting over 18% of overall healthcare issues. Witnessing the significant number of individuals living with preventable blindness motivated the Foundation to address this issue head-on.

Shailendra Singh, MD, Peak XV and Supporter of Practo Foundation said, "Since its inception, Practo's



mission has been to help improve healthcare in India. It has been a great privilege for Peak XV to be a part of this journey for over a decade, right from the seed stage. I have also been thrilled to be able to support the Practo Foundation in my personal capacity as an anchor donor. The Foundation's impact-driven vision and purpose to help improve access to healthcare for those who need it the most is truly inspiring."

To date, the Foundation has helped provide free cataract surgeries to close to 2000 individuals, across Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh, at an average cost of INR 2000 per surgery. Among the beneficiaries, 58% were farmers, followed by 20% daily wage earners and 19% were unemployed. Additionally, 65% of the beneficiaries were aged 61 – 80 and 59% were female.

"We envision a future where Indians are empowered to lead fulfilling lives, free from preventable illnesses, while maintaining their productivity. Despite facing increased vulnerability with age, middle-aged and older Indians remain the backbone of our communities, shouldering significant responsibilities. Through targeted support

and healthcare solutions, we aim to protect their well-being and enhance their productivity. Our vision is to create a world where aging gracefully is achievable for everyone", says Shashank ND, Trustee of Practo Foundation, and CEO & Co-founder of Practo.

Surabhi Patodia, Founder Trustee of Practo Foundation and AVP – Communications & Content, said, "Cataracts are just the start—a key step in our journey towards bigger changes. Each surgery builds trust and paves the way for our larger goal, which is to build self-sustaining communities. Together with our healthcare partners, we want to restore dignity and purpose in the lives of the economically disadvantaged by providing essential healthcare services in their vicinity."

To bridge the gaps for scalability, sustainability, and outcome of various government initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, the Foundation, together with its partners such as LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPIE) and Pushpagiri Vitreo Retina Institute (PVRI) actively works towards awareness of government welfare schemes (national and state) at the ground level and drives them for increased utilization.

With the evolving needs of the underserved community, Practo Foundation has operated across three phases since its inception, each serving a different need. As of now, the Foundation has partnered with close to 20 NGO & hospital partners to touch the lives of 50,000 individuals.

## Approach to Camps and Screening:

Practo Foundation's approach to screening goes beyond mere

## #Mission10kCataracts

### VISION

Leave no one behind. Make access to quality healthcare a reality for all.

#### Phase 1

(June 2021-May 2022)

Rapid Covid-19 response via telemedicine and doctor consultations

- 9,000 free online consultations
- 6,104 free prescriptions
- 6,343 in-person doctor consultations with free prescriptions
- 15,000 free medical kits
- 711+ camps across eight states and 11 cities

#### Phase 2

(Dec 2022 - Mar 2023)

Extending Comprehensive Healthcare

- 1300+ beneficiaries screened for primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare support
- 10+ NGO partners for village-level outreach
- 5 hospital partners across Karnataka for secondary and tertiary healthcare support

#### Phase 3

(June 2023 onwards)

#Mission10kCataracts

- 8800+ Indians screened for cataracts
- 160+ health camps across 3 states
- 2000 free cataract surgeries



accessibility, it organizes health-care checkup camps, identifies and screens hospital partners, and ensures consistent quality throughout the process. By strategically organizing camps closer to beneficiary residences, and minimizing travel distance, Practo Foundation partners with local administrative officials to streamline the process and improve attendance rates. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are implemented at every stage, guaranteeing standardized and efficient processes. Surgical eligibility is carefully assessed, and consent forms are obtained from beneficiaries before each surgery. Post-operative care protocols are rigorously followed to minimize the risk of reinfection, with beneficiaries educated on proper care practices. Regular audits ensure operational integrity, ensuring surgeries are executed seamlessly without any gaps. Each camp operates

with the utmost quality and integrity, delivering essential healthcare services to those in need.

#### About Practo Foundation:

Practo Foundation Trust (BTM 344/2022-23 BK – IV), a non-profit initiative by Practo, is dedicated to democratizing access to quality healthcare for all. Collaborating with a network of clinics, nursing homes, hospitals, non-profits, and like-minded organizations, it strives to assist



the underserved in leading healthier, disease-free lives. With a vision to restore dignity and purpose in the lives of the economically disadvantaged, Practo Foundation aspires to establish self-sustaining administrative units such as taluqs/mandals, villages, panchayats, or districts as model communities. Targeting middle-aged to older adults, typically ranging from 40 to 60 years of age, Practo Foundation aims to alleviate their caregiving burdens and safeguard their prime years from being compromised or deteriorated due to illness or the burden of caregiving. Currently, the foundation is actively working in over 3 districts in Andhra Pradesh and plans to initiate 2 districts in Karnataka, districts in Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh. Presently, there are three trustees on the Foundation's board: Surabhi Patodia, Dr. Alexander Kuruvilla, and Shashank ND.

# Bangur Cement to donate more than Five Lakh Kilos of cement as part of its 'Vote Solid, Desh Solid' campaign

**B**angur Cement, one of India's leading cement brands, will donate more than Five lakh kilos of cement as part of its 'Vote Solid, Desh Solid' multimedia campaign. The announcement also underscores the outstanding success of the campaign which was aimed at encouraging citizens to vote in the 2024 general elections.

As part of this campaign, Bangur Cement launched 'vote ka vachan' initiative, encouraging citizens of India to pledge their vote @ [voteka-vachan.bangurcement.com](https://voteka-vachan.bangurcement.com). For every pledge received, Bangur Cement committed to donate 1 kg of cement for social welfare purposes.

Since the campaign's launch, it has received an overwhelming five lakh 'vote ka vachans', with numbers growing on a daily basis.

Celebrating the milestone, Mr. Sushrut Pant, Head of Marketing, Bangur Cement, said, "Bangur Cement's 'Vote Solid, Desh Solid' campaign has received an unprecedented support from people all over the country. With over five lakh individuals already taking the 'vote ka vachan', and the numbers growing on a daily basis, we are truly honoured to have played a part in promoting the democratic values of the country and to have encouraged voter participation across states."

Today, Bangur Cement undertook the first batch of national donation to 11 underprivileged families in the Shishvi and Onkar villages of Udaipur district, to build their homes. This is the first batch of national donation which is flagging off from Udaipur.

Speaking on the occasion, Pant, added, "We are proud to kickstart



our pledge to donate to underprivileged families to construct their solid homes. We will soon be planning several more cement donations."

The donation ceremony was graced in the presence of village panchayat members and representatives from NGO Hanuman Van Vikas. The cement distributed to the families will help them to build their solid homes from Bangur Cement. The contribution is set to greatly

improve their living conditions, providing them with the stability and security of well-constructed homes.

This initiative not only emphasises the importance of voting but also highlights Bangur Cement's commitment to social welfare and community development. As the campaign progresses, Bangur Cement remains dedicated to making meaningful contributions to benefit numerous families across the country.



(LtoR) Mr Ishwar Singh, Deputy Director General Training, MSDE, Mr Atul Tiwari, Secretary MSDE, Dr Anish Shah, Group CEO and MD, Mahindra Group and Ms Abanti Sankarana

## Mahindra & Mahindra and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) sign MOU for flagship Drone Didi Yojana; skilling women to become drone pilots

**M**ahindra & Mahindra Ltd., India's leading Farm Equipment company and the world's largest tractor manufacturer by volume signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) to conduct two Pilots under the Drone Didi Yojna. Launched earlier this year, the scheme aims to train 15,000 women to operate drones for agricultural purposes such as fertiliser sowing, crop monitoring

and seed sowing, thereby creating new livelihood opportunities for women through imparting skills in new technology areas.

Under this partnership, Mahindra and MSDE will conduct two pilots at National Skill Training Institutes (NSTI) at Hyderabad and Noida to skill 500 women in exclusive batches of 20 women only. The 15-day curriculum approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation will be delivered through RPTO (Remote Pilot Training Organisation) instructors at these Centers.

Speaking about the initiative, Dr Anish Shah, Group CEO & MD, Mahindra Group said: "Aligned with our Rise philosophy, the Mahindra Group is committed to empowering the women with the skills necessary to join the workforce and achieve financial independence. The pilot under the Drone Didi Yojana represents a first-of-its-kind convergence of women, farming, and technology. We are absolutely delighted to provide technology training to grassroots women and ensure that agriculture is equipped for the future."

"We are excited to announce our partnership with Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., leveraging their agricultural expertise for comprehensive training. Two NSTIs in Hyderabad and Noida have been chosen for the pilot program, with the goal of empowering rural women in agriculture. This collaboration advances our mission of upskilling women for nation-building, particularly through the successful implementation of the Drone Didi program in empowering women in emerging trades. I firmly believe that this collaboration with Mahindra will advance our vision, equipping women with the skills needed to contribute to nation-building. Building on our past successful collaborations with leading technology industry partners, this initiative represents the beginning of many collaborative projects with Mahindra. Through rigorous training methodologies and hands-on learning experiences, we will equip our students with the practical skills and competencies required to excel in their chosen fields and make meaningful contributions to the nation's socio-economic growth," says Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, MSDE.

Within this partnership, the NSTIs will provide infrastructure for running the training programme, hostel for participants and tap into local Women Self Help Groups and NGOs to mobilise participation. Mahindra Group will provide initial set-up support through simulation machinery/drones, simulator controller, simulator software, Desktop computer with i5 Processor and trainers, and meet the operating costs for the duration of the Pilot project, including the cost of DGCA License Holder Instructors at the centres.

The learnings and outcomes from the Pilot project will assist MSDE in scaling up the Drone Didi Yojana at identified NSTIs/ITIs across the country. As a further support to the intent of the Drone Didi Yojana, Mahindra will soon roll out Drone training for women at the company's skilling centres at Zaheerabad, Telangana and Nagpur, Maharashtra.

## Building Generation of Climate Champions: Mahindra University Joins UNESCO's Greening Education Partnership

Mahindra University announced its strategic partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to become a part of the Greening Education Partnership, an initiative aimed at addressing the pressing need for climate action through education. The partnership takes a comprehensive approach by integrating climate change into existing educational systems and curricula. It will serve as a model for other institutions in India and around the world.

The Greening Education Partnership marks a significant milestone in the global effort to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to combat the climate crisis effectively. Its mission is to equip learners of all ages with the tools needed to navigate and mitigate the challenges posed by climate change.

According to Dr. Yajulu Medury, Vice Chancellor of Mahindra University, "Education is a powerful catalyst for change, and by integrating climate education into our curricula and learning environments, we can inspire a new generation of climate champions who are equipped to drive meaningful action. Our partnership with UNESCO to become a part of the Greening Education Partnership reaffirms our dedication to equipping learners with the tools they need to address climate change head-on."

"The Greening Education Partnership offers a unique opportunity to create a generation of climate-conscious individuals. Through innovative educational programs and community engagement initiatives, we can make a significant impact on the fight against climate change," said Anirban Ghosh, Head of the Centre for Sustainability at Mahindra University.

### The Partnership operates on four key pillars:

- **Greening Schools:** Ensuring that education policies are climate-smart, school facilities are climate-proof, decision-making is inclusive, and local communities are engaged.
- **Greening Curriculum:** Developing relevant and high-quality curriculum and pedagogy focused on climate change education.
- **Greening Teacher Training:** Strengthening the capacity of education systems and educators to support sustainability through training and professional development.
- **Greening Communities:** Promoting lifelong learning and youth-led climate action to build climate-resilient communities.

Mahindra University will actively participate in the Greening Education Partnership's platform. This includes sharing best practices, developing innovative educational resources, and contributing to global efforts to prepare future generations for a sustainable future. The Secretariat of the Greening Education Partnership is hosted by UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris.

# Climate raise issues related to summer timing of polls

**A**mid the sweltering heat, a question is being asked whether climate change will allow India to hold another summer Lok Sabha elections in 2029? Since this has been the warmest decade on record, with temperatures rising each year, experts weigh in if India will be able to hold another election amidst its acutely hot summer months, as impacts of climate change worsen local weather systems.

A paper by Climate Trends, a research-based consulting and capacity building initiative that aims to bring greater focus on issues of environment, climate change and sustainable development, discusses the issue in perspective and detail. As 49% of the global population is heading to vote across 64 countries this year, how climate and local weather systems are playing an important role in the ongoing Indian elections is worth noting. India is grappling with record-setting heatwaves where 90.7 million people are expected to vote in the world's largest democracy. Indian elections have been spread between 19 April-1 June, 2024. "Data clearly indicates that there has been an increase in density, frequency, duration and area covered by the heatwave due to global warming. This means that there is no escape from the heat.

All the models are predicting that heatwaves are going to increase in the future at a faster pace than what we had expected. With this, one of the challenges that arises is that rising heat stress compounds with other weather patterns. This would in turn exaggerate health impacts, forest fires and air pollution to name a few. We need to have more in depth research to counter these compound effects," said Roxy Mathew Koll, Senior Scientist, Indian Institute of Tropical

Meteorology, Pune. The paper quotes former Chief Election Commissioner OP Rawat and Ashok Lavasa, a former Election Commissioner. "There is a six-month window to hold Parliamentary elections. For the current tenure elections had to be held between 17 December 2023 and 16 June 2024. However, since state assembly elections were scheduled in November and December, Parliamentary elections are usually conducted after a gap of at least 2-3 months. Therefore, union elections 2024 were announced in March. To avoid such a situation in future, the election commission must call for an all-party meet where it can collectively agree on delaying the state elections by two months and hold the parliamentary elections during the 6-month window," said Rawat.

"Now for the next general elections in 2029, the window falls between January 1 to June 30. Spring season (February and March) is the best time to hold the elections. Or else, there should be an amendment in the law that empowers the Election Commission to conduct a state assembly election a little earlier," he added.

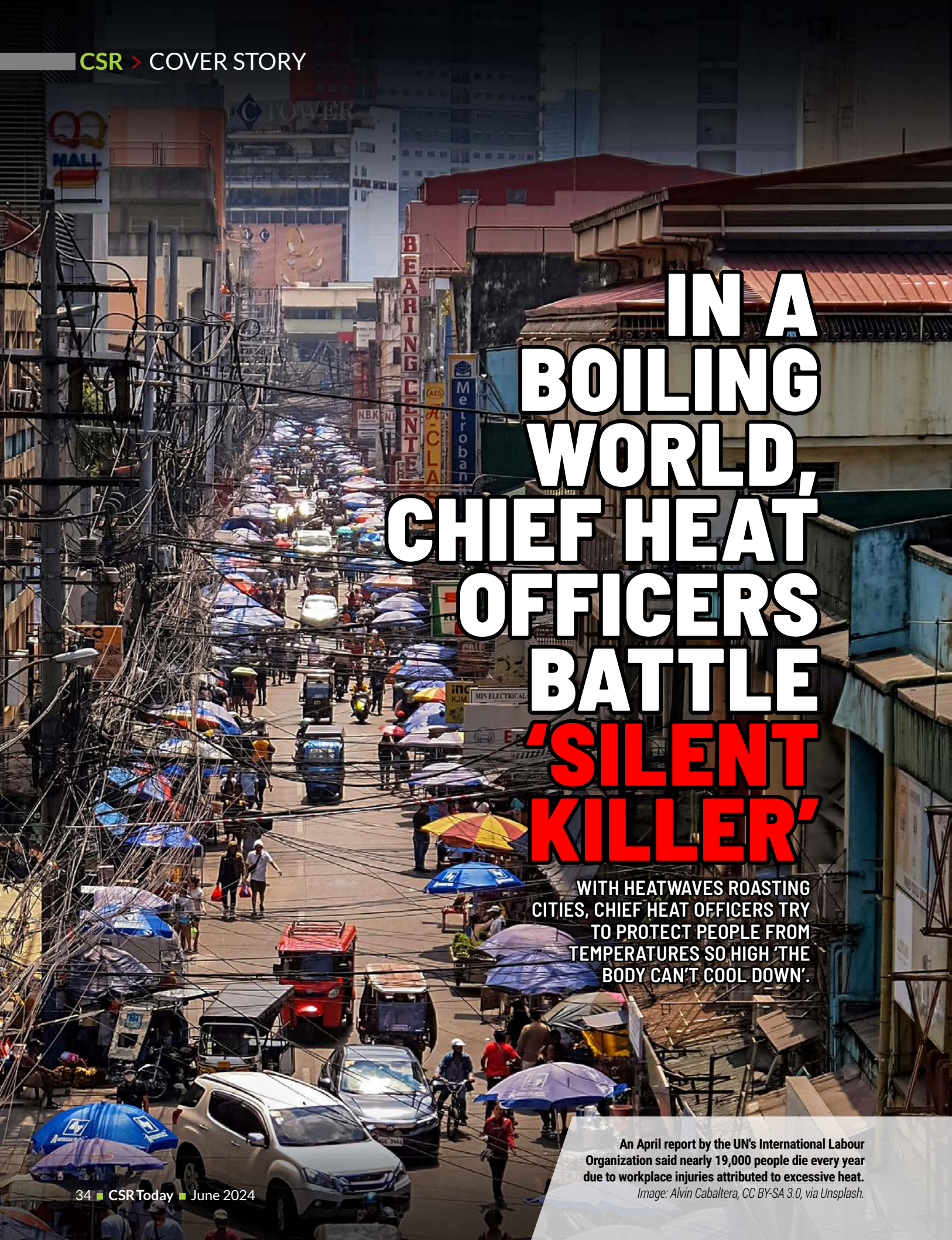
"Weather conditions are always taken into account to avert major disruption. There are mitigation measures which are taken well beforehand like arrangements for making people stand in queue in cool places, availability of drinking water, etc. There is a provision by which the Election Commission of India can conduct elections anytime in 180 days but they have to be extremely careful that the term of the government is not curtailed even by a day," said Lavasa.

However, he added that another problem is that the month of February-March is exam time in schools and colleges so one cannot disrupt the academic cycle as well. "Maximum

precautions are taken to minimise the extremes. However, one may consider this, if (temperatures) continue to increase," he said. State-run India Meteorological Department (IMD) had already predicted more than double the average heat waves during April-June, i.e. 10 to 20 days of heat waves against a normal of 4 to 8 days to be precise. The heat this year is expected to be worse than 2023, which has been the warmest year on record till date. Mercury has been settling between 42-45 degrees, even soaring to 47 degrees in some parts of the country. April has seen one of the longest spells of heatwave extending up to 15 days. Parts of East and Peninsular India have been the worst hit, which are also battling humidity.

"Persistence of anticyclones over Oman and adjoining areas and over Andhra Pradesh did not let the formation of any weather systems. In wake of this, sea breeze was cut-off over Odisha and West Bengal for most days, paving way for unabated hot winds from land, leading to soaring temperatures. However, due to passage of Western Disturbances at regular intervals, heatwaves did not set in over northwestern plains. In addition to this, remnants of receding El Nino has also contributed to the heat stress," said Mrityunjay Mohapatra, Director General, IMD.

"Heatwaves in India are by far the deadliest type of extreme weather events. At the same time they are the type of extremes most strongly increasing in a warming world. As long as the world continues to burn fossil fuels, events like these will become an increasingly common disaster," said Dr Friederike Otto, Scientist and Senior Lecturer in Climate Science at the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment. 🌱

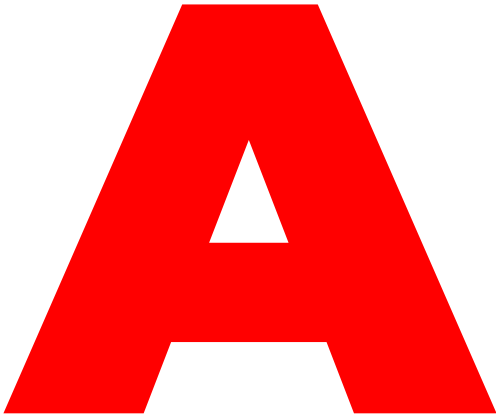


# IN A BOILING WORLD, CHIEF HEAT OFFICERS BATTLE 'SILENT KILLER'

WITH HEATWAVES ROASTING CITIES, CHIEF HEAT OFFICERS TRY TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM TEMPERATURES SO HIGH 'THE BODY CAN'T COOL DOWN'.

An April report by the UN's International Labour Organization said nearly 19,000 people die every year due to workplace injuries attributed to excessive heat.

Image: Alvin Cabaltera, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Unsplash.



s the era of “global boiling” spawns ever deadlier heatwaves, a handful of heat tsars are working with officials in cities from Miami to Melbourne in a race against time to cool urban heat traps and prevent tens of thousands of deaths.

Seven chief heat officers - who all happen to be women - are working in Miami, Melbourne, Dhaka, Freetown and Athens to plant trees, create “pocket parks”, install water fountains and teach people about the effects of extreme heat on the human body.

The role of chief heat officer was created three years ago by a US-based think tank, but even in that short time the task has become more urgent as planet-heating emissions - largely from the use of coal, oil and gas - are pushing temperatures into “uncharted territory”, according to scientists.

Already, last year was the hottest on record, and new research suggests that the intense northern hemisphere summer heat made it the warmest summer in some 2,000 years - more evidence of what UN Secretary-General António Guterres called “the era of global boiling”.

This year, heatwaves have already ravaged several countries in Asia, costing lives, disrupting education and damaging livelihoods. In Europe, where as many as 61,000

people may have died in the 2022 heatwaves, people are bracing for more record temperatures in the coming summer months.

Despite this increased frequency, many people do not fully comprehend how dangerous extreme heat can be, said Krista Milne, co-chief heat officer for Melbourne.

“In Australia, as around the world, it (heat) kills more people than any other natural hazard yet people don’t understand that it’s an issue and therefore don’t prepare for it.”



**Heat is the most deadly climate danger. It’s a silent killer.**

**—ELISSAVET BARGIANNI**  
Chief Heat Officer, Athens

Extreme heat can cause heat stroke or kidney failure and exacerbate heart or respiratory diseases. Children, older people, pregnant women, farmers and gig workers are among the most vulnerable, especially in poorer countries.

An April report by the UN’s International Labour Organization said nearly 19,000 people die every year due to workplace injuries attributed to excessive heat.

“The simple fact is that there is a point where the body can’t cool down,” said Milne.

#### **‘SILENT KILLER’**

The chief heat officer posts were created through an initiative by the US-based Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center (Arsht-Rock), which says that by 2050, heatwaves will affect more than 3.5 billion people globally – half of them in urban centres.

“Heat is the most deadly climate danger. It’s a silent killer,” said Elissavet Bargianni, who was appointed chief heat officer for Athens in May 2023.

The city was the first in Europe to rank heatwaves from Category 1 to Category 3, helping residents to decide whether to stay indoors or cancel outdoor sports events. The ranking also helps officials assess whether they need to temporarily shut tourist sites, like the ancient Acropolis, Bargianni said.

Cities are often several degrees warmer than nearby rural areas because heat trapped by dense clusters of concrete and dark-coloured roads and buildings creates a “heat island” effect, meaning nighttime temperatures also remain high.

Nearly half of schools and hospitals in European cities are located in urban “heat islands” - areas that are at least 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the regional average, according to the European Union’s environment agency. The chief heat officers aim to raise awareness of the risks of this extreme heat and coordinate actions to mitigate it.

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, chief heat officer Eugenia Kargbo and Arsht-Rock have built shade covers for three of the largest open-air street markets, providing shelter for around 2,300 women traders and ensuring their produce lasts longer. These low-cost covers also have solar panels, which provide light at night, enabling people to shop for longer.

In Melbourne, where a heatwave sent temperatures soaring to around 39°C (102.2°F) in March, the City Council aims to plant 3,000 trees a year to boost the resilience of its forest areas and to cool the city by 4 degrees Celsius (7.2 Fahrenheit).

The Council has also proposed a new planning rule that requires future buildings to have a certain amount of greenery depending on their size.

Milne, who shares the chief heat officer job with Tiffany Crawford, said their aim is to ensure all decisions about the city are viewed through a “heat lens”.

## SHADY BUSINESS

Along with Melbourne and Athens, many cities in the United States and an increasing number in Asia have set up cooling centres to help residents find relief during heatwaves.

Some cities have also developed apps that show users the shadiest walking route between two points, or have mapped hot spots, allowing officials to target the most vulnerable people.

In Bangladesh’s capital Dhaka - a crowded city with few green spaces

In April, temperatures in Bangladesh - ranked the seventh most vulnerable country to climate change - soared to over 40°C (104°F), forcing schools to close. Schools were also closed in the Philippines and India.

Afreen said a heat awareness campaign will be launched later in May and “cool kits”, including handheld portable fans and health booklets, will be distributed.

Water fountains will be installed in public spaces like markets and at bus terminals, and thousands of

**Nearly half of schools and hospitals in European cities are located in urban “heat islands” - areas that are at least 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the regional average, according to the European Union’s environment agency.**

and little shade - people are used to having hot and humid summers but this means it is even more challenging to raise awareness, said Bushra Afreen, the city’s heat officer.

“There are still people who don’t understand the deadlier impacts of extreme heat, or the difference between what was once safe or normal hot weather and the dangers of a heatwave,” Afreen said.

“So now we have to convince people that in order to survive the heat, they need to slow down and rest, drink water and seek shade, and even stop working if they feel unwell. For people living in poverty, that is a very difficult choice to make.” Many of these people will also be unable to afford air conditioners.

fruit trees will be planted. But Afreen knows her task will only get harder.

“These record-breaking temperatures are quite possibly going to be among the coolest summers that we experience moving forward,” she said.

“Until we take meaningful action to mitigate greenhouse gases, climate-driven extreme heat is only going to get worse.” 🌱

*This story was published with permission from Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, climate change, resilience, women’s rights, trafficking and property rights. Visit <https://www.context.news/>.*

*(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/in-a-boiling-world-chief-heat-officers-battle-silent-killer/>)*



"Waste management is not about recycling but behaviour change – which is difficult in hospitals," says Mahesh Nakarmi, founding chairman of a non-profit that provides alternatives to burning and burying hospital waste. Image: Eco-Business

# USED SYRINGES AND SANITARY PADS: NEPALI ENGINEER'S MISSION TO RECYCLE ALL HOSPITAL WASTE

Convincing busy doctors and nurses that waste is worth their time is the biggest obstacle to a circular economy for healthcare, says Nepali engineer and social entrepreneur **Mahesh Nakarmi**. He was interviewed by **Robin Hicks**.

**H**ospitals mostly dispose of waste by burning it – the tried and trusted solution. But medical waste should be recycled, said Nepali engineer and social entrepreneur Mahesh Nakarmi, who has campaigned for hospitals in the South Asian country to repurpose everything from used syringes to

sanitary pads and even amputated limbs since the late 1990s.

The most difficult thing about recycling hospital waste is not the technical, procedural or financial obstacles of doing so. It is the attitudes to waste among busy doctors and nurses, said Nakarmi said, whose idea for a circular economy for hospitals has taken more than a

decade to bed in to Nepal's health-care system. "Waste management is not about recycling. It's behaviour change," he said.

The medical industry generates huge amounts of hazardous waste, and contributes to four per cent of global carbon emissions – higher than in shipping or aviation. In Nepal, healthcare institutions

generate up to two kilogrammes of waste per hospital bed, per day.

Nakarmi founded the Kathmandu-based non-profit Health Environment Climate Action Foundation (HECAF360) in the mid-1990s, working out of a dialysis centre. He had noticed that medical waste from the dialysis centre, which included blood and urea, was being mixed in with municipal waste, which posed a serious contamination risk to the people handling the waste.

Nakarmi suggested to the hospital board that the centre should be closed down until a solution was found. “You are the engineer, so find a solution,” he recalled being told by the board.

Most countries, even now, burn medical waste. But Nakarmi was against it. “Burning is not a sustainable solution,” he said. His idea was to use an autoclave, a machine that steam-blasts medical equipment to kill harmful bacteria, to disinfect the waste glass, plastic and metals before sending it to scrap dealers for recycling. However, after sourcing a donated autoclave – the first autoclave in Nepal to be used for medical waste – from the United States

Agency for International Development (USAID), Nakarmi was met with resistance from some doctors.

“They were not happy with me. They said an autoclave should not be used for waste, it should only be used for medical equipment.”

However, after a visit from a World Health Organisation (WHO) official from the Netherlands in 2007, Nakarmi found himself presenting his concept at the WHO headquarters in Geneva. He was encouraged to export his solution beyond Nepal, and elsewhere in South Asia. But getting traction for his concept has not been easy.

“It took me three years to get one project off the ground, because no one was convinced it could be done in Nepal,” he said. It wasn’t until 2010 that Nakarmi landed a project, with the National Hospital of Nepal in Kathmandu. Since then, Nakarmi has been approached by other hospitals around the country to trial his concept, which he has developed for other kinds of waste.

He has also introduced anaerobic digesters to convert biological, pathological and food waste into methane gas that could be used as

cooking fuel. His innovations not only earn an additional revenue stream for the hospitals he works with, but help to raise their profile. “Hospitals that burn their waste face a risk to their reputation,” he said, pointing to the health impacts of smouldering medical waste.

In this interview published ahead of World Health Day, the 2023 Sustainability Leadership A-List winner talks about why all types of hospital waste should be recycled and the obstacles blocking the circular economy for healthcare.

### **Tell us how big of a problem healthcare waste is in Nepal.**

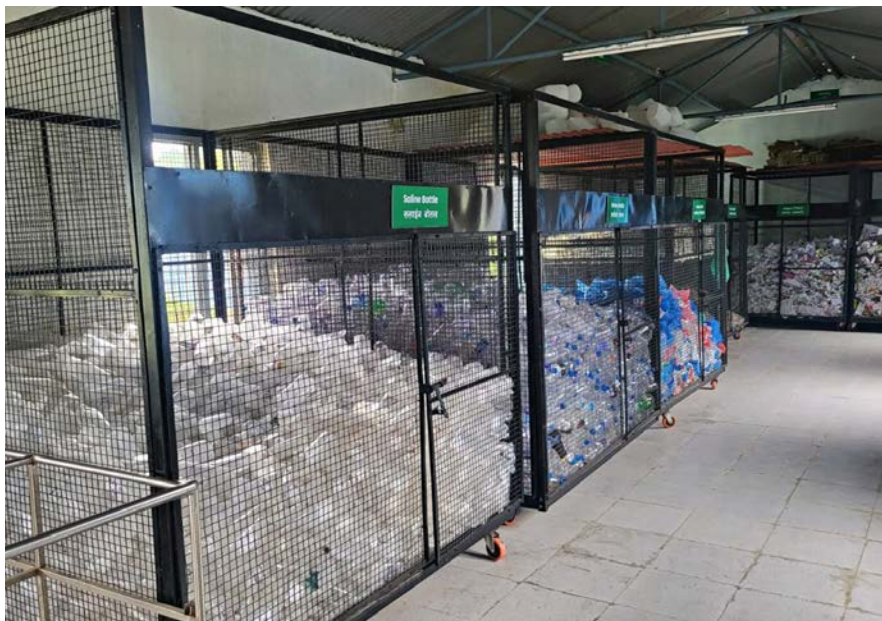
There is a big problem with mishandled medical waste leading to infections. WHO estimates that 300,000 people die in India as a result of dirty syringes annually, as many used syringes find their way onto the black market. Across the world, 1.3 million people die from using dirty needles.

### **How difficult has it been to integrate your methods into traditional healthcare systems that are often resistant to change?**

It is really difficult to change behav-



**A hospital worker places medical waste inside an autoclave, which is used to disinfect it. Image: HECAF360**



A storage facility for different kinds of plastics used in a hospital in Nepal. Image: HECAF360H

in hospitals. Nurses and doctors don't have the time to manage waste. But it doesn't take long to cut a used syringe needle, which are made of highly recyclable stainless steel. We lined up a group of nurses, gave them a syringe and timed how long it took them to cut the needle using a cutting machine. It took them two seconds. But it did take a training programme to change their mindset and convince them that it was worth their time.

### Is there any type of medical waste that you cannot recycle?

Just 10 to 15 per cent of the waste we manage is sent to landfill, the rest is recycled. The better hospital staff are at segregating the waste, the less is sent to landfill. We try to go to patients' bedsides and separate the waste at source, because if it is mixed it becomes expensive to salvage contaminated recyclables.

We have developed a biodigester that can process pathological waste – body parts, for instance amputated legs and even aborted babies below the age of three months. We convert it into cooking gas, in the same way that food waste is processed. Food waste makes up 50 to

60 per cent of the waste we manage in a hospital.

We have also been working on a programme that involves earthworms eating soiled bandages and used sanitary pads, converting what they ingest into a non-toxic residue. But we have found through our research that menstrual sanitary pads contain toxic chemicals, so cannot be processed [a December study by George Mason University found endocrine-disrupting chemicals that can interfere with human hormones and cause medical issues in sanitary products]. We found that the earthworms in our projects would not ingest the sanitary pads because of the toxic chemicals in them. This is an issue that no one is talking about. Cotton medical tapes and gauze are compostable, although hospitals rarely have the space to do composting.

### What is the most difficult type of medical waste to recycle?

The easiest material to recycle is the harder plastics. But it's not so much the material the object is made from, it is collecting enough of it to achieve scale and storing it, which is difficult to do in a hospital environment.

### Who are the offtakers of the stuff you recycle?

Recycling is in its infancy in Nepal. But we do recycle some of it locally. Some is shipped to India. We only deal with scrap dealers we know. We show them how we disinfect the material in the autoclave and how to use the system. We make sure that there is no blood on the material they take. We also have to be careful that the autoclave doesn't melt the material. The plastic is hospitals tends to be of high quality, so there is always demand for it. But one problem is that the manufacturers do not print the type of plastic on the side of items. It would be a lot easier for recyclers if they knew what combination of plastic item such as blood bags were made from.

### Did you experience problems during the Covid-19 pandemic to keep your programmes going, because of the heightened sensitivity around contamination and waste?

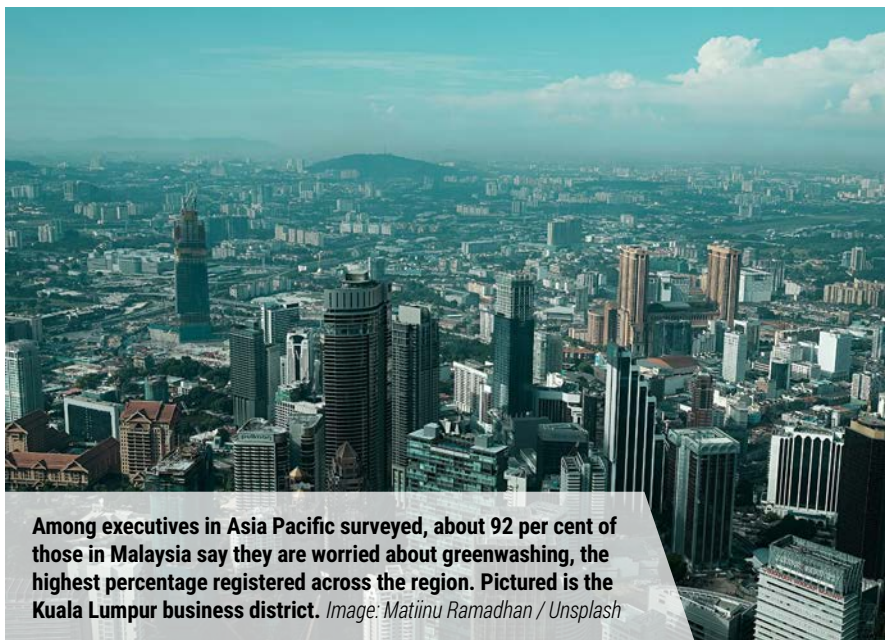
No. We used the same system to manage vaccination waste during Covid-19. We are also now working on a system to help drug users to recycle their used syringes. After they have consumed the drugs, they bring back the needle to use and we provide them with a new one.

### What's your plan in the future?

Our model can be deployed anywhere in the world, and adapted to the local situation. Right now we are working with the government of Laos and WHO to introduce a system there. We already have a very well already defined system. Implementing the system is not difficult. But changing mindsets is key. ☑

*Mahesh Nakarmi was one of 10 sustainability leaders selected for the Eco-Business A-List 2023.*

*(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/used-syringes-and-sanitary-pads-nepali-engineers-mission-to-recycle-all-hospital-waste/>)*



Among executives in Asia Pacific surveyed, about 92 per cent of those in Malaysia say they are worried about greenwashing, the highest percentage registered across the region. Pictured is the Kuala Lumpur business district. Image: Matilnu Ramadhan / Unsplash

# Greenwashing fear is driving investment in sustainability in Asia – but also stunting climate ambition, study finds

Business executives around the region are very wary of being called out for greenwashing, a survey by Kearney finds. Changing rules for how firms can communicate their sustainability credentials are fuelling angst, writes **Robin Hicks**

**A** fear of greenwashing is having a complex effect on the psychology of business executives in Asia Pacific, both pushing companies to improve their sustainability programmes but also retreat into their shells when setting and communicating climate goals, a phenomenon known as greenhushing.

More than eight in 10 (82 per cent) executives in Asia Pacific are

concerned about greenwashing, with executives in the Philippines and Malaysia the most worried (92 per cent), and in Indonesia, the least (72 per cent), according to a study of 1,000 executives in nine territories by management consulting firm Kearney. The study finds that greenwashing fear has made more than eight in 10 (84 per cent) companies more cautious in their sustainability planning and target-setting

and 74 per cent more hesitant to discuss sustainability plans publicly.

Seven in 10 (72 per cent) of executives say greenwashing anxiety has made their company more reluctant to communicate emissions reduction plans publicly – a finding reflected in the growing number of APAC companies whose climate targets have been removed by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), a standard that aligns corporation decarbonisation targets with the Paris climate accord.

Greenwashing fear is partly being driven by tightening rules for how companies should communicate their environmental, social and governance (ESG) credentials to investors and consumers, the report's authors say.

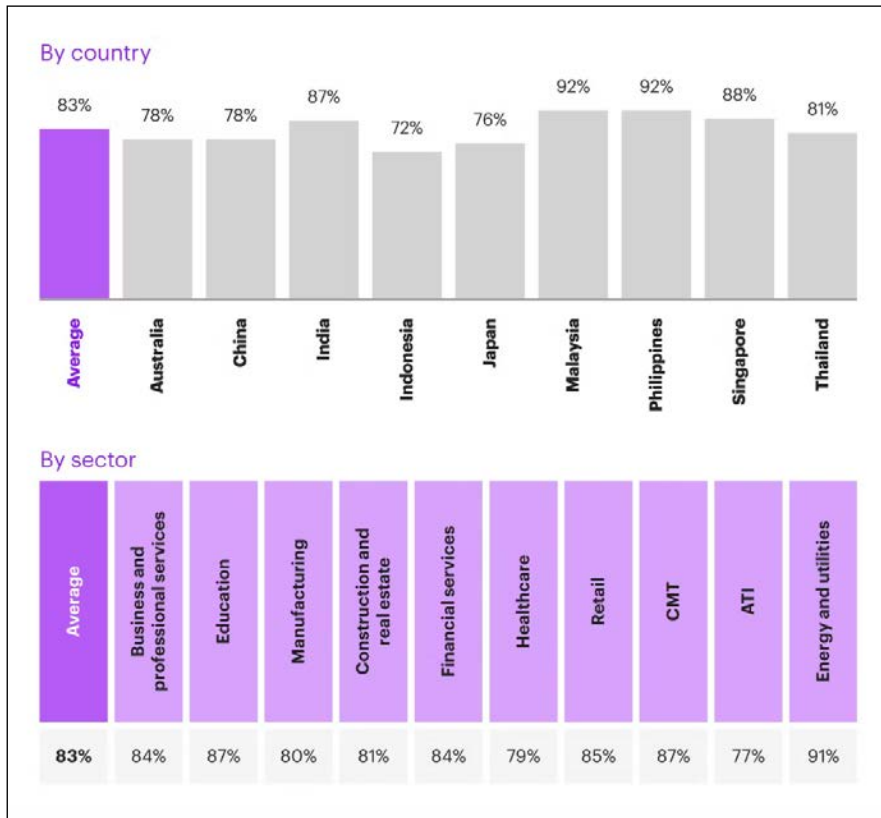
Regulators have started to turn the screw on sustainability over-claims in advertising in recent months, while jurisdictions from Malaysia to Australia have set a higher bar for sustainability disclosure this year, with the introduction of mandatory reporting against the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) standards.

Carolina Rodriguez, a former United Nations executive who leads sustainability-focused creative agency Dilicidar in Singapore, said that regulation is changing so fast that it's hard for companies to keep up. "Some don't know where they stand," said Rodriguez, who described regulation as a "hot potato" that is driving greenwashing concern.

Reporting on sustainability is still a relatively new concept for companies that feel they lack a "safe space" to be transparent about flaws in their programmes and communicate these gaps with confidence, which fuels greenwashing angst, she said.

"The alternative is to say nothing, because it's safer," she said.

Multinationals headquartered in the West with regional offices



Percentage of executives in key Asian territories who say they are concerned about greenwashing. Source: Kearney

in Asia are more exposed to greenwashing scrutiny and a more aggressive activist scene, and some of that fear has been “exported” to Asia, Rodriguez suggested.

There could also be a cultural element to greenhushing, with corporates in Asia less inclined to hype their sustainability programmes than Western firms, she said.

### The positive impact of scrutiny

Fears surrounding greenwash might also be having a positive impact on corporate sustainability progress in Asia. Eighty-six per cent of executives say that worrying about greenwash backlash has motivated their firm to invest more in resources and capabilities to deliver on commitments.

Nine in 10 executives believe that concerns about greenwashing has motivated their businesses

to be more conscious of supplier and partner arrangements; 88 per cent say that this trepidation has prompted them to tighten their sustainability policies and processes.

Executives in the energy sector are by far the most worried about greenwashing, a reflection of the growing scrutiny the industry has come under for exaggerating the progress it is making to decarbonise in line with global climate goals.

Rodriguez said that if companies were braver in how they communicated where they are falling short in meeting sustainability targets, greenwashing would no longer be an issue.

Firms will always face accusations that they are not doing enough, but they still need to be having honest conversations about the challenges they face, she said. “Companies should be able to say: this is what we’ve discovered. It’s

not pretty, but we are going to try to fix it.”

But despite growing scrutiny of corporate sustainability goals, most executives in Asia remain bullish about achieving their targets, Kearney’s study finds. Three-quarters anticipate attaining net zero in their Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030, while 64 per cent aim to achieve net zero for Scope 3 emissions by the end of the decade.

However, less than one-third of respondents said their companies’ decarbonisation plans were aligned with the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit planetary warming to safe levels.

Also concerning is that more than one-fifth of executives are unaware of their own employer’s decarbonisation targets.

Low internal awareness of decarbonisation goals could contribute to “confusion and inconsistencies” when defining net zero targets, leading companies to underestimate the scope of the change needed to mitigate their carbon footprint, the report warned.

Rodriguez commented that companies need to invest in “how they tell their sustainability story to themselves”, so that employees are aware of where the gaps are and where greenwashing risks might lie.

“The scary thing about net zero is that companies are setting targets with no real plan in how to meet them. It’s like mislabelling [a type of greenwashing],” she said.

Almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of Asian executives continue to view sustainability efforts as a cost to business rather than a value creating opportunity, a sentiment that is particularly strong in India (78 per cent), Australia and Indonesia (77 per cent), the study found. ■

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/greenwashing-fear-is-driving-investment-in-sustainability-in-asia-but-also-stunting-climate-ambition-study-finds/>)



# INDIA BETS ON GREEN CREDITS, BUT COULD THEY REWARD DEFORESTATION?

Companies that clear forest may end up profiting from the Green Credit Programme, which aims to protect the environment.

**W**hen Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi showcased the country's Green Credit Programme at COP28 in Dubai, he billed it as a new tool in the fight against climate change that "goes beyond the commercial mindset associated with carbon credits".

But as officials hone the methodology for awarding tradeable credits for green actions - initially just planting trees and water conservation - environmental campaigners say the initiative could end

up profiting businesses responsible for deforestation.

That is because the Green Credit Programme (GCP) will allow credits to be generated by privately owned tree plantations grown to compensate for the clearance of natural forest in line with India's forest laws, official documents show.

That risks - at the very least - the large-scale privatisation of forested land in India, said Tushar Dash, an independent researcher on forest rights. That would violate legislation protecting communities' forest rights, he added.

"At worst, it would benefit companies profiting out of diverting natural forests by rendering the compensatory afforestation rule completely meaningless," Dash said.

India's Environment Ministry, which is developing the programme, did not respond to a request for comment.

Globally, the voluntary carbon market allows companies and countries striving to shrink their carbon footprint to buy offsets through funding pollution-reducing projects such as forest or savannah preservation. But the trade is facing

mounting scrutiny, with some critics calling it a form of greenwashing, and saying a smarter way to pay for protecting nature would be to hold accountable those responsible for damaging it.

India's programme seeks to replicate the carbon offset mechanism to include a wider range of environmentally friendly actions - aiming to incentivise green initiatives by businesses, individuals, village councils, city authorities and other entities.

They would then be able to sell the credits they generate to companies seeking to reduce their carbon footprint, counter other environmentally damaging activities such as heavy water consumption or to boost their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) scores.

### Plantations vs forests

Under India's Forest Conservation Act, if forest land is cleared to make way for a mining project, business development or new infrastructure, the company or project developer must carry out "compensatory afforestation". But due to a controversial rule change in 2022, they can now simply buy up existing, privately owned plantations in a practice known as Accredited Compensatory Afforestation (ACA).

Now, under the terms of the GCP released on Feb. 24, companies will simply be able to buy green credits from privately grown plantations to meet their compensatory afforestation compliance goals.

As a result of that mechanism, forest resource experts said companies that engage in deforestation could potentially generate credits from their own compensatory afforestation - granting them two potential financial benefits.

They said that if an entity that wanted to clear natural forests - for instance, a mining firm - raised its own plantations by establishing a separate company, it could sell green credits to others or use them to meet



**My view is that likely all compensatory afforestation in India is greenwashing. We found that the average effect of the plantations we studied on the percent of tree cover was zero. In other words ... plantations did not lead to a long-term improvement in tree cover, essentially implying that a lot of plantations failed.**

**-FORREST FLEISCHMAN**

Assistant Professor, University of Minnesota

its own compliance needs, considerably reducing its costs and efforts.

Government documents seen by Context show the steering committee spearheading the GCP ignored advice by another committee to exclude ACA plantations from the programme to reduce the risk of companies profiting from compensatory tree-planting.

The current framework opens a door for companies engaging in deforestation to attain a double benefit, said Shomona Khanna, a Delhi-based lawyer who focuses on the land and forest rights of India's Indigenous peoples and Dalits. "What are the mechanisms in place to check such activities?" she added.

### Poor forest replacement

Besides the questions over the GCP, critics have long said tree planting is a poor replacement for the loss of mature forests, even if it does

eventually help cut CO2 emissions. "These (plantations) will be known for their carbon potential and exchange value rather than biodiversity, livelihood rights or cultural association," said Kanchi Kohli, a law and policy researcher based out of India.

She said that if compensatory afforestation were integrated with the GCP it could "legitimately encourage" businesses involved in clearing natural forest to also gain credits from offset plantations.

There is also concern that the programme overlooks other flaws in the India's compensatory afforestation law, such as the widespread failure of many tree plantations or fraudulent reporting of non-existent plantations, said Forrest Fleischman, an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota who specialises in forest resources.

Fleischman said that it is "unlikely" that the values being lost in felling of a natural forest are being replaced through the compensatory plantation process.

"My view is that likely all compensatory afforestation in India is greenwashing," said Fleischman, who co-authored a 2021 study that studied tree planting on government lands in parts of the Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh.

"We found that the average effect of the plantations we studied on the percent of tree cover was zero," he said.

"In other words ... plantations did not lead to a long-term improvement in tree cover, essentially implying that a lot of plantations failed." 

*This story was published with permission from Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, climate change, resilience, women's rights, trafficking and property rights*

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/india-bets-on-green-credits-but-could-they-reward-deforestation/>)

# CSR EXECUTION REPORT

## PROJECT NAME:

PWP – Period With Pride

## PROJECT DETAILS:

Menstruation Hygiene Awareness Sessions and free sanitary napkins distribution to underprivileged menstruating school going girls. Installation of 20 numbers of vending machine and incinerators in 20 schools.

## FINANCIAL YEAR:

2023 – 2024. Targeted Beneficiaries: 10000 girls Target Locations: Mumbai and Thane.

## CSR PARTNER:

UNIVERSAL NUTRISCIENCE PVT. LTD.  
2ND Floor, Fleet House, Marol, Mumbai.

## EXECUTING PARTNER:

INDIAN CENTRE FOR CSR  
(CSR 1: SRN-F62389911)

**VIDE WORK ORDER:** O1PSI0377 DATED:  
05.02.2024 ISSUED BY UNS

## SCHOOLS CONSIDERED FOR THIS PROJECT:

### MUMBAI:

- I. Shramik Vidyapeeth Municipality Urdu School
- II. Dharavi T.C Municipality Urdu School (1)
- III. Dharavi T.C Municipality Marathi School
- IV. Dharavi T.C Municipality Urdu School (2)
- V. Dharavi T.C Municipality Tamil School
- VI. Dharavi T.C Municipality English School (1)
- VII. Dharavi T.C Municipality School (1)
- VIII. Nityanand Marg Mumbai Public School

### MHM AWARENESS AND FREE SANITARY NAPKIN DISTRIBUTION SESSIONS CONDUCTED IN MARCH 2024:

- I. Shramik Vidyapeeth Municipality Urdu School
- II. Dharavi T.C Municipality Urdu School (1)
- III. Dharavi T.C Municipality Marathi School
- IV. Dharavi T.C Municipality Urdu School (2)
- V. Dharavi T.C Municipality Tamil School
- VI. Dharavi T.C Municipality English School (1)
- VII. Dharavi T.C Municipality School (1)
- VIII. Nityanand Marg Mumbai Public School

**Total no. of girls received awareness and sanitary napkins in March is 1600.**

## PWP AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AT SCHOOLS IN DHARAVI



## PWP AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AT SCHOOLS IN DHARAVI



**Records:** All above mentioned school data base survey report submitted as hard copy with this report.

**Evidence of project:** Pictures and videos recorded for every session in each school. Few pictures attached in this report.

Awareness given and sanitary napkin

distributed records are submitted as hard copy with stamp of school, signature of school i/c, date and numbers of attendees.

**Project Feedback:** Video evidences of project feedback has been recorded. Schools i/c mentioned their feedback on the record format while signing on the form.

**Project feed forward:** After 15th June 2024 the project PWP will be restarted and completed within September with targeted beneficiaries and objectives.

Report Made By,

**Sangita Jha.**  
VP - ICCSR  
9836205019

## NITYANAND MARG MUMBAI PUBLIC SCHOOL



### CSR FUND UTILISATION DETAILS

- A. Total amount of tax invoice raised from ICCSR to UNS : 21.89 lacs.
- B. Total amount released from UNS to ICCSR : 20.99 lacs.
- C. Total sanitary napkin stocked at Mumbai : 10000 packets (Budget consumed 4 lacs)
- D. Total sanitary napkin ready to be dispatched : 20000 packets (Budget consumed 8 lacs).
- E. Total vending machine ready to be dispatched : 20 numbers (Budget consumed 4 lacs).
- F. Total incinerators ready to be dispatched : 20 numbers (Budget consumed 3.62 lacs).
- G. Total number of students given awareness and sanitary napkins as of 31st March 2023: 1600  
(shall be dispatching D, E & F, once the election code of conduct is withdrawn, else transportation might engage unwanted disturbance at different cross state border check point)



# BEATING PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THREE STEPS

Asean states need to unite on a common stand to beat plastic waste, but national and local efforts matter too, according to **Dr Theresa Mundita Lim**

**P**lastics are one of the contributors to global pollution causing today's triple planetary crisis. For every minute, one truckload of plastic waste is being dumped into the oceans which is about 80 million tonnes of plastic waste every year. If unabated, this will cause oceans to have more plastic than fish by the year 2050, and about 99 per cent of seabirds will have ingested plastics by then.

The Asean region, being endowed with very diverse terrestrial and marine life forms, stands to lose much in natural wealth if nothing is done about the threat of single-use plastics. According to the report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, plastic pollution in the Asean region has increased tenfold since 1980.

What is worse is that the region accounts for about 20 per cent of the global plastic production. Marine species and ecosystems bear the brunt as plastic wastes are carried from land to the ocean by inland waters that connect them.

Despite recycling efforts, Asia is expected to increase its solid waste generation by 140 per cent, from 0.76 million tons per day in 2000 to 1.8 million tons per day in 2025. With this foresight, how can plastic pollution be minimised, or at best, eliminated in Asean?

There are three practical ways. First, by strengthening ties among Asean Member States by solidifying an Asean stance on plastic wastes and promoting biodiversity-friendly and nature-based solutions. Second, by advancing policy frameworks and regulations at the national level, including sustained nationwide communication and public awareness campaigns and programmes.

And lastly, by developing innovative approaches at the local and individual levels.

## 1 'One Asean' vs. Plastics

Undoubtedly, beating plastic pollution is a daunting yet necessary task to ensure the future and wellbeing of the people in Asean. The region with its fast economic growth and a promising path towards sustainable development, has the capability to deal with this global challenge by fostering cooperation at the regional level and finding innovative means to address transboundary issues such as this. The Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in the Asean Region, adopted by the Asean Member States (AMS) in 2019, is the region's primary response to the issue of pollution including plastic waste.

In 2021, the AMS launched the Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris, a five-year plan aiming to support regional

The guidelines encouraged the AMS and other Asean bodies to avoid single-use plastics and food waste, and minimise printing documents and waste, among other environment-friendly practices in regional dialogues and events.

In addition, the Asean Blue Economy Framework was released in September 2023 at the 43rd Asean Summit to reaffirm the AMS' commitment as the plastic crisis knows no borders, therefore it is essential to promote cross-country cooperation and policy alignment within the region.

In the same Asean Summit in 2023, during the Asean Climate Forum, the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the Asean Business Advisory Council (ABBI) formally launched their partnership through a memorandum of agreement

**Despite recycling efforts, Asia is expected to increase its solid waste generation by 140 per cent, from 0.76 million tons per day in 2000 to 1.8 million tons per day in 2025. With this foresight, how can plastic pollution be minimised, or at best, eliminated in Asean?**

policies and and improve coordination across three main areas: reducing plastic use and production; improving collection and recycling; and promoting reuse.

The Asean also released the Asean Guidelines on Green Meeting in 2020 to act as a guide for AMS, Asean bodies and centres, and other organisations planning Asean-related events to ensure that they are more ecologically conscious and resource-efficient.

that gave birth to a novel regional platform called, Asean Business and Biodiversity Initiative (ABBI), which aims to promote biodiversity and nature-based solutions in business operations across Southeast Asia.

One of the goals of the ABBI is to help empower micro-, small, and medium enterprises to adopt sustainable business practices to create nature-positive business initiatives in Southeast Asia. ABBI can help develop business models

that can assist in minimising plastic production, facilitate better waste management, pioneer businesses that utilise alternatives to plastics or eco-friendly materials, and promote recycling or upcycling.

Furthermore, the ACB and the AMS are currently crafting the regional biodiversity action plan or the 'Asean Biodiversity Plan,' which would help translate the targets and objectives of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework into strategic actions. This Plan is seen as the main framework by which the Asean region will contribute to global biodiversity targets and implement these actions at the national level.

Malaysia, and Myanmar made efforts to ban and/or impose taxes on the use of plastic bags. Moreover, Thailand has drafted its action plan, which banned single-use plastics in 2022, and single-use plastic cups and straws by 2025. The Bring Your Own Bag scheme of Cambodia, Lao PDR, and the Philippines, encouraged the recycling or reuse of shopping bags while in Viet Nam, businesses and enterprises have introduced eco-friendly bags for shoppers, and the government imposes environmental tax on plastic bags at US\$1.76 per kilogram.

In Singapore, the government envisions being a Zero Waste Nation through recycling and

are also significant to complement national policies, as well as to translate leaders' statements and regional frameworks.

In 2019, the ACB launched the campaign, "Oceans are Fitter without Our Litter," to help amplify their commitment to the AMS to combat plastic pollution as stated in the Bangkok Declaration Combating Marine Debris in the Asean region. Campaigns help continuously educate the public on the effects of plastics to the environment and help drive transformative change at the institutional level.

**Nationwide communication and public awareness campaigns are also significant to complement national policies, as well as to translate leaders' statements and regional frameworks.**

## 2 Strengthening national policies

At present, the AMS have various national policies related to plastic pollution. These efforts, along with the revision and updating of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans of each Asean country, national policies are being aligned to global and regional biodiversity goals that include solutions to challenges including plastic wastes.

Brunei Darussalam launched their "No Plastic Bag Everyday" which aimed for a 15 per cent recycling level in 2020. At least 50 stores participated in this campaign which reported to have saved US\$2,000 per month from reduced plastic use. Other AMS such as Indonesia,

reusing of materials. Almost all of their non-recyclable waste is incinerated, with the ash and some solid waste shipped to a man-made island nearby that doubles as a nature reserve.

The country also passed the Resource Sustainability Bill in 2019, which mandates a system-level approach to enable nationwide reuse and recycling, by establishing the mandatory reporting framework for packaging that was initiated in 2020. Enterprises were required to report annually on the type and amount of packaging materials they bring into the market as well as their packaging waste reduction plans.

Nationwide communication and public awareness campaigns

## 3 Encouraging community and individual actions

With the global problem as complex as the plastic problem, no small effort becomes insignificant as it requires multi-stakeholder participation.

There have already been creative ways and social enterprises launched by various groups in the Asean region such as, Bye-Bye Plastic Bags; Plastic Tides Philippines; Second Life; and Octopus, as cited by the World Economic Forum in 2023. Noteworthy activities such as beach clean-ups, raising public awareness, the use of artificial intelligence for collecting plastic wastes, and highlighting the wellbeing of waste pickers, and many more have been already organised. Such efforts straightforwardly deal not only with environmental and economic factors, but also social considerations of these plastic pollutants.

With a whole-of-society approach coupled with sound regional frameworks, science-based and creative national policies, and adaptable solutions fit to the multicultural communities in Asean, beating the plastic problem in the region is never impossible. 🌱

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/beating-plastic-pollution-in-three-steps/>)

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