Toxics Link
for a toxics-free world

TOXICS Dispatch

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A Newsletter from **Toxics Link**

As the lead-containing paint ages, by deteriorating **(peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking)** itcontaminates living spaces and is easily ingested by toddlers

IN THIS ISSUE



# CHALLENGES OF LEAD IN PAINTS PHASE OUT IN INDIA

Lead (Pb), a toxic heavy metal is being used in paints for ages. Lead is added to paint as a pigment or a drying agent, makes the paint more durable, and causes the paint to be more moisture resistant. Various lead compounds are being added to the paint as pigments, creating a specific color depending on whichever compound is being used. For example, lead (II) carbonate, known as white lead, makes the paint a white or creamincolor, and the application of lead tetroxide makes bright red the paint bright red in color. Lead chromates and lead molybdates, which are brilliant yellow, orange, or red in color, are the most often used in lead pigments. Water-based latex paints are generally safe, but oil-based enamel paints often contain high levels of lead as a necessary ingredient.

As the lead-containing paint ages, bydeteriorating it deteriorates (peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking) itcontaminates contaminating the living spaces and is easily ingested by toddlers. Lead exposure in the case of children, especially below the age of six, can affect their behavioural behavioral and cognitive development and can also cause death. Infants and children are most susceptible to lead poisoning,and may suffer from physical and mental development, behaviour behavioral problems, and lower IQ levels, even at the low levels of exposure.

After the health impacts of lead came into the limelight, many developed countries started taking decisive action to phase out lead from paints. The use of lead-based interior paints was were banned in France, Belgium, and Austria in 1909. Much of Europe followed suit before 1940, and the USA regulated it in 1978 after the decades of the opposition from the paint industry. Lead paint is banned in the European Union by the 2003 Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive (RoHS) in 2003, which forbids hazardous substances in the consumer goods, including paint. This act had superseded and harmonized existing laws of the member of states, many of which had banned lead paint years ago before.

But the issue was never addressed in the developing countries. Toxics link first released in a report in India in 2007 and hadfound that a very high content of lead in paints is being sold in India. Following this, Toxics Link and International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) jointly published a report in 2009 covering ten developing countries and had found high content of lead in paints sold in all these countries. The report received international attention and triggered the global action to eliminate lead from the paints. Subsequently, the issue was accepted as an emerging policy subject in Strategic Approach to Chemical Management (SAICM) and the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (GAELP) ,and was mooted jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to focus and catalyse the efforts to achieve international goals to prevent children's exposure to paints containing lead and to minimize occupational exposures to lead paint.

## INDIA'S CHALLENGE TO IN ELIMINATE ELIMINATING LEAD IN PAINTS

The Government of India in its effort to eliminate lead in paints, notified the "Regulation on Lead contents in Household and Decorative Paints Rules, 2016" on 1st November 2016 which came into effect from 1st November 2017. As of 31 December 2020, about 79 countries have legally binding being bound to controls control to the

As of 31 December 2020, about **79 countries** have legally binding controls to limit the production, import, and sale of lead paints.

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Salient features of the regulations in India are:

**Prohibition:**

Prohibition of manufacturing, trade, export, and import of household and decorative paints containing metallic lead in a concentration exceeding 90 parts per million.

**Self-Certification:**

Household and decorative paints , has been manufactured or imported after November 2017 should have the label: "Lead contents do not exceed 90 parts per million" along with the manufacturing/importing date.

**Transitory Provision:**

Two years had been allotted to paint manufacturers before the commencement of the rules to sell off old stock and further comply with the legislation.

**Testing:**

The manufacturers and importers are also required to get their products tested once in a year before putting them in the supply chain. The rules have also identified acclaimed The Central Power Research Institute as the authorized testing agency.

A 2020 UNICEF and Pure Earth report, "The Toxic Truth: Children's exposure to lead pollution undermines a generation of potential" revealed around 1 in 3 children – up to 800 million globally – have blood lead levels in blood at or above 5 micrograms per decilitre (µg/dL), which is alarming. Nearly half of these children live in South Asia , linking this with poor socioeconomic conditions. A study by Aligarh Muslim University pointed out that lead-based house paints were a potential source of lead exposure among 260 children (6-144 months) of Aligarh. The team suggested that meticulous renovation and painting of the walls with safe paints is desirable.

limit of the production, import, and sale of lead paints.

A series of Toxics Link research reports published in 2018, 2019 and 2020 reflected the minimal progress by the small and medium scale manufacturers (SMEs) in phasing out the hazardous heavy metals from their paints. Although Toxics Link studies reflect reflected that SMEs are capable of producing lead-free paints, still the trend depicts a clear pattern of the high level of lead content in paints that are still being sold across the country from the last three years.

Further, Toxics Link studies have indicated that most of the manufacturers did not have any label indicating that the lead content in their paints has been mandated as per the lead content in paint as per the rules. The Toxics Link studies have also confirmed that toxic lead paints are readily available in the market and no action has been taken initiated to remove these paints from the market. Hence, strengthening making the monitoring system more stringent to check the compliance of Lead in paints with the regulation and facilitating technical and/or financial assistance to the SMEs to shift to lead-free , has become the is of utmost importance.

During this lead prevention week, there is an urgent need of raising public awareness through media (digital, newspaper, and social), radio, and TV, and the regulators need to act on the large-scale about the violation of the rules and , to ensure that the lead-safe paints are available in the market considering its environmental and human health impacts.

**-Shania Tahir**

EDITORIAL

Wishing all our readers a very happy new year.

The world continues to experience unpredictable situation on account of the ongoing pandemic, we in India also are going through phase three of the pandemic and hoping that this uncertainty comes to an end. The pandemic situation has severely constrained our environmental interventions since we are unable to move out and visit field locations to capture the changes, especially the impacts of pandemic on the marginalised and vulnerable sections of society. We pray for the situation to return to normal so that we can move out to capture the changed scenario and bring to you stories of environmental and social changes in our future editions of the newsletter.

We are mindful of the impacts of pandemic on economic activities and its fall out on few aspects of environment that requires some degree of evaluation and analysis. One important fall out of COVID situation has been excessive generation of medical and vaccination waste also higher volumes of packaging material especially single use plastics due to increased volumes of packaged and home delivered goods gaining popularity and becoming a norm in towns and cities. Some of these changes could have long term impacts and require detailed analysis and suitable action.

One of our long term campaigns has been about lead in paints which we revitalised in Oct- Nov 2021. This long term campaign resulted in government making an announcing in 2017 notifying mandatory lead standard for house hold paints being sold in India and also the nature of certification and labelling to be made available on paint cans for the ease of consumers. These changes are extremely important and goes a long way in safeguarding heath of children since lead impacts the nervous system that cannot be reversed. While there are regulatory changes brought in by the government, there is very little or almost negligible information among citizens about these mandatory standards. There is a critical need to enhance the compliance of such regulatory frameworks through people's participation. Highly informed citizens can make significant shifts in demand for lead safe paints thus forcing the manufacturers to change the production process and create adequate visibility on availability of such products. Most major or big brands are currently manufacturing and selling pains that have no added lead in them.

However as on date the market continues to push both lead safe and non-safe paints in absence of weak or non-existent surveillance mechanism by the regulatory authorities. We urge all stakeholders and subscribers to spread a word on lead safe paints and support us in our mission of Toxics free world...

I also take this opportunity to informal all readers that we have temporarily shifted to a new location E-224, 1st Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065, since our permanent office at H2, Jungpura, has gone under major renovation. We hope to get back to our old address by mid-2023.

Satish Sinha,

Associate Director, Toxics Link

# THE UNEASY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WASTE, ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION, AND WELLBEING

The unsustainable urban spread along with fetishized production and consumption patterns are at the root of the ecological crisis, that the world is facing today. This frenzy of economic growth and development has, on the one hand, accelerated the exploitation of natural resources and, on the other hand, has created misplaced discards that adversely affected the environment and natural cycles of various components and elements. Further, the introduction of synthetic materials and, overproduction and displaced consumption has contributed to disruption in the natural cycles.

Of course, it is not so that humans did not discard things or were not generating waste in the past. But those discards mainly were organic and were part of nature's one or other metabolic cycles.

In living organisms, metabolism is the production process of energy and waste by breaking down complex substances into simpler ones and synthesising life-sustaining substances. It can be seen in the ecosystem level in the water, nitrogen, oxygen, and other nutrient cycles. Further, the breaking down of complex substances provides the raw material for the different synthesis processes. Thus, in a given ecosystem, the metabolic process maintains the circulation of energy and nutrients, consequently continuing the system. But, if the nutrient or energy is taken out from or a new element is introduced to that particular ecosystem, the metabolic disruption occurs, called "Metabolic rift'—a disruption in the nutrient cycles in that ecosystem1.

For instance, human excreta have been considered as useful manure but due to urbanisation, the same has become a health and environmental challenge to handle. Studies show excreta that once considered useful manure and carried to the rural areas from the cities to recharge the Agri-field, in due process of urbanisation turned rivers, lakes and ponds into cesspools and sewers. Thus, what could be useful in one ecosystem becomes waste in another, and poses ecological challenges.

The rupture in metabolic link is predominantly rooted in shift from local to global consumption--in overproduction and displaced consumption. This shift disrupts the waste cycle, too. The present socio-cultural and economic system has intertwined in a way that generates lots of discards. These mismanaged discards lead to pollution and generation of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) which

1 Clark, B., & Foster, J. (January 01, 2009). Ecological Imperialism and the Global Metabolic Rift. International Journal of Comparative Sociology, 50, 3-4.

contribute to global warming and climate crisis resulting in poor wellbeing of the human communities.

Moreover, human-generated waste is not only a challenge for humanity, but the existence of non-human creatures is also at risk. Because of mismanagement of waste, it has intruded into the ecosystem of almost all the organisms, whether they live in water, air or on land.

As per a recent estimate, humans have generated about 2.01 billion tonnes of waste on earth in 2016. The quantum of human-generated waste is expected to reach 2.59 billion tonnes annually by 2030 and about 3.20 billion tonnes by 2050. This waste also contributes to climate change by emitting greenhouse gases. As the World Bank Report, What Waste-2.0 has reported. '[A]n estimated 1.6 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide–equivalent ($CO_2$-equivalent) greenhouse gas emissions were generated from solid waste management in 2016. This is about 5 percent of global emissions. Without improvements in the sector, solid waste-related emissions are anticipated to increase to 2.6 billion tonnes of $CO_2$-equivalent by 2050.' (Pg-xi)

As per the World Bank report, over 90 percent of waste in low-income countries is still openly dumped or burned. Moreover, the developing countries have been working as discard-bins for the developed nations, which have worsened the situation in the low income countries with poor waste management infrastructure2. The gravity of the situation can be understood as out of the world's 50 biggest dumpsites only two active sites were reported in Europe and all others were located in the global south- in Africa, Asia and Latin America3.

In the particular context of India, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has reported (2019) that though there is inadequate information about the quantity of municipal solid waste generated, collection efficiency has reached up to 98.4 percent. However, the treatment is of only of 37 percent of generated waste in the country4. Another major challenge being faced by Indian cities is management of Wastewater. Sewage generation in urban India is about 72,368 Million Litre Daily, and only 28 percent of it gets treated. Thus, about 72 percent of total generated sewage gets discharged into the environment untreated5.

In India, the contribution of waste in GHGs emissions is about 3 percent, out of which wastewater handling accounts for more than 79 percent and solid waste disposal for 21 percent. GHGs emissions have been identified as responsible for climate change. Due to climate change, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events increase and pose social and environmental challenges and adversely affect human beings' well-being. WHO has estimated that, 'between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stresses.

Again, the huge amount of generated solid and liquid waste pollute the environment and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions consequently that is create creating a rift in the ecological metabolism. One of the apt examples to understand the consequences of metabolic rift is the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The adverse impacts of ecological metabolic rift is the adversely adverse impact of the microbial ecosystems, too. These microorganisms live on and in other organisms and their surrounding environment and contribute to growth, metabolic, and physiological processes. Therefore, the slight change in the ecological conditions, such as introducing new nutrients or chemicals (through untreated or partially treated MSW and wastewater) or changing temperature, may lead to the disruption in the microbial ecosystem and its functioning6 functions.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified AMR among top ten global public health risks. WHO defines it as,'AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, thus severe illness and death. As a result, the medicines become ineffective and infections persist in the body, increasing the risk of spread to others'.

The metabolic rift in the microbial ecosystem has been located in the indiscriminate use of antimicrobials in consumer products and unsafe discard of antimicrobial drugs.

Moreover, the lack of infrastructure to manage the discards adds to the challenges, particularly in developing countries. Poorly managed wastewater and landfills pollute the land, air, and water and worsen the sanitation and hygiene conditions during floods.

Further, when the world is facing century's biggest health crisis, Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen its impact on environment on two levels—first, improvement in air quality and visibility, clean rivers and other water bodies due to lockdown measure had been taken to control the infection. Second, generation of huge amount of plastic waste in the form of PPE kit, including mask and gloves.

On the one hand this pandemic has shown us that if we slowdown our speed of production and consumption the nature has capacity to bounce back and to restore its ecological balance. As there were instances where post-lockdown period people reported improvement in rivers water quality and could see beauty of the places which were hiding behind the thick smoggy air7. And on the other hand, excess use of anything will create a challenge to human health and well-being, for instance demand and use of PPE kit became a challenge to manage sustainably.

Thus, this is high time to ask how we all lead our lives to minimise discards/ waste to save our environment and check ecological disruption that produces adverse health outcomes.

**Nutan Maurya**

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# DO WE CARE TO REPAIR?

What comes to our minds when we hear the word "Repair"? Does it invoke a sense of belonging, visiting your grandparent's house to learn a few repairing tricks, an act of saving money or simply reducing your consumption? There are far too many emotions that arise when we hear the word repair, so finding out and documenting these emotions/values,. Toxics Link became part of a unique journey called TALES OF CARE AND REPAIR.

TALES OF CARE AND REPAIR is an international project which brings together artists, designers, academics and environmental NGO's from India, Brazil and the UK to create a digital repository of repair-related stories, which can be accessed through an interactive website. Considering repair as a radical act that transforms our relationship with our material worlds, our project links to the United Nations sustainability goal on responsible consumption and production to climate change. In highlighting these stories of repair, a complex set of dynamics is revealed, including issues relating to planned obsolescence, resource efficiencies, cradle-to-grave economics, resource consumption,and the effects of waste pollution on earth. Such stories also place attention on what we choose to repair in the first place and also includes the values we put on our goods, cultural and situated the differences in the costs of repair, the skills and craft that go into repairing objects, including how acts of innovation and creativity, hacking, kludging and reuse. With an ever-rising market for goods, we tend to forget to take account of the repercussions of what will happen post-consumption of our goods/ objects. Thus, this project highlights the importance of repairing or reusing our belongings in unique manners, which will help to reduce our ecological footprint and help us approach a sustainable lifestyle. The role of Toxics Link was to initiate conversations and discussions on the slowly fading away repair culture in India and why is it important and how can we revive the culture of repair in India, conduct workshops and also collect local situated stories around repair and their associated economies, also emphasizing on the intergenerational aspects of this work indicates how in such a short space of time (since World War 2) our consumption patterns have radically changed but also show the potential of how they can change again. This change in consumption also maps to species decline and global changes in temperature, all contributing to the changes in climate that we are experiencing and/or witnessing around the world. Tales of Care and Repair resonates with Toxics Link's Mission Statement - "Working together for environmental justice" in a unique blend of art, craft, economy, and ecological understanding. We conducted a seminar and two workshops for university students, collected around 265 stories from all over India, spoke to around 11 repair experts, and got a few repair Declarations.

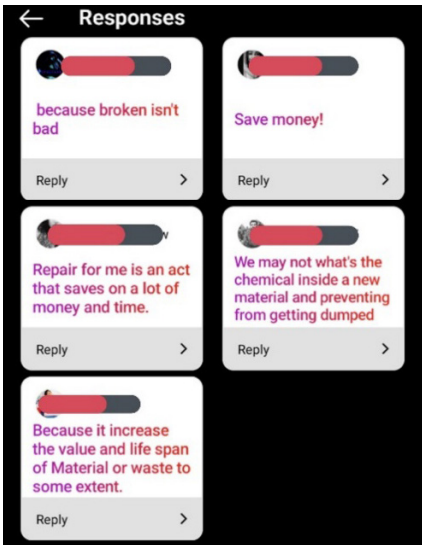
These interactions with people from different socio-economic-cultural backgrounds helped us understand understanding how a word can impact an individual. How crucial is it to consider and include all for a just and an equitable right to repair. These discussions, declarations and stories have a lot of potentials to bring about change. We envisage that our repository will also act as a backbone through future responses (further research, journal articles, publications), mappings (ethnographic research, policy support), and artistic artefacts and exhibitions relating related to climate change and consumption and repair can emerge. We will link these collected stories and the people we engage engaged with to the global shifts, policy and legislation changes that are taking place in this area, including the ongoing efforts of the Right to Repair movement, Repair.org, iFixIt, Restart. Examples of policy change include France's introduction of repair indexes, Sweden VAT cuts on repaired goods, US legislation and incoming EU legislation on repair. Grass-roots work includes Repair Cafes and Restart Parties. In much more recent news, Apple unveiled a Self Service Repair program that will enable customers to perform their own repairs using genuine Apple parts and tools. The program will be available early next year in the US and will expand to additional countries throughout 2022.Apple will begin by offering parts, tools, and manuals to individual owners of the iPhone 12 and iPhone 13 starting in 2022. Several other companies are now trying to include reparability in their design and conversation.

Though the current rate at which we are producing and consuming resources is unsustainable, despite these initiatives, we believe there is still much work to be done in this field, particularly given that values in relation to the right to repair are situated differently and that globally, the conversation, policy and legislation is patchy and not always joined up. We hope that through this project, we can put forth a unique lens to look from and take up the conversation of RIGHT to REPAIR through CARE.

**-Sahil Gochhayat**

**Figure 1: Indian repair stories submitted**

**Figure 2: Interview with local repair experts India) and Repair Declarations submitted by citizens**

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# DECODING INDIA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

## ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (NAP–AMR): NEED TO MOVE INTO THE NEXT STAGE

AMR is the broader term for resistance in different types of microorganisms and encompasses resistance to antibacterial (antibiotics), antiviral, antiparasitic and antifungal drugs. AMR poses a global public health challenge and also threatens our ability to treat infectious diseases. Resistance to first-line drugs are also increases health care costs, since infections last longer (more days at the hospital) and become more expensive to treat. The threat posed by antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to public health as well as global health security has been reiterated in numerous World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions.

India woke up to the threat of the AMR the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) identified AMR as a one of the top 10 priorities for the ministry's collaborative work with WHO. The Government of India notified a National Policy for Containment of AMR in 2011. Further, based on the global action plan, the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) published the National Action Plan for containing AMR in April 2017.

This 5-year action plan on AMR (2017–2021) outlines the priorities and implementation strategies for curbing AMR in India. The plan covers all the five major objectives as listed in the global action plan and incorporates an additional objective in the context of strengthening India's leadership on AMR. The plan proposes to target several key aspects of AMR in both human and non-human sectors (such as agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, and environment) incorporating the 'one health approach'. The target periods for the components of various objectives have been listed as short-term (within 1 year), medium-term (from 1 to 3 years), and long-term (more than 3 years).

**Key Interventions during five years**

- India notified the Food Safety and Standards (contaminants, toxins and residues) Amendment Regulations 2018, relating to the tolerance limits of 43 antibiotics and other veterinary drugs in food products such as meat, poultry, fish, milk, etc.
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) also initiated the Indian Network for Fisheries and Animal Antimicrobial Resistance (INFAAR) with 18 labs at ICAR institutes.
- ICMR launched Antibiotic Stewardship initiative, released treatment guidelines for antimicrobial use in common conditions and the hospital infection control guidelines were made available on the NCDC website, in addition to the NCDC guidelines for antimicrobial .
- In 2019, MoHFW banned the use of colistin, a last-resort antibiotic in fish and livestock industries .

The National Action Plan has identified six strategic priorities and these priorities are;

1. Improving awareness and understanding of AMR through effective communication, education, and training;
2. Strengthening knowledge and evidence through surveillance;
3. reducing the incidence of infection through effective infection prevention and control;
4. Optimizing the use of antimicrobial agents in health, animals, and food;
5. Promoting investments for AMR activities, research, and innovations; and
6. Strengthening India's leadership on AMR

1. **Improve awareness and understanding of AMR through effective communication, education and training**

   This priority focuses on developing resources to raise awareness amongst all stakeholders, including policymakers, the general public, and farmers. Moreover, it proposes to offer education and training to professionals to improve their knowledge on AMR

2. **Strengthening knowledge and evidence through surveillance**

   Strengthening the analytical facilities in human, animal, food, and environment sectors for evidence-informed policy-making is the major scope under this priority area. Moreover, focus should be on surveillance of antimicrobial resistance in these sectors.

3. **Reduce the incidence of infection through effective infection prevention and control**

   The focus should be on taking steps to reduce the burden of infection in healthcare, to reduce the spread of AMR and antimicrobials through animals and food, and to reduce the spread of AMR and antimicrobials in the community and environment .

4. **Optimize the use of antimicrobial agents in health, animals, and food**

   Regulating antimicrobial use to ensure rational use without affecting access to antimicrobials. Promoting antimicrobial stewardship in healthcare to optimise the use of antimicrobials in human along with animal and food sectors.

5. **Promote investments for AMR activities, research, and innovations**

   Research on new medicines and diagnostics should be promoted to ensure the availability of effective diagnostics and drugs to treat infections. Innovations should be focused on developing alternative approaches to manage infectious diseases. Financial help should be provided to ensure sustainable resources for containment of AMR.

6. **Strengthen India's leadership on AMR**

   India should collaborate with international agencies and other countries to ensure India's contributions towards global efforts to contain AMR. Moreover, there should also be national and state-level collaborations to ensure action at the ground level against AMR.

- On the recommendations of ICMR, DCGI has banned 40 fixed dose combinations , (FDCs) which were found inappropriate .
- In the line with NAP-AMR, three states have launched their state action plans; namely, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi .

## WAY FORWARD

The National Action Plan of AMR was planned till 2021 and we are at the end of the plan year. The national action plan is a good beginning to strengthen the defense against the AMR in the country. Further during these years some key decisions have been taken to minimize the risks associated with AMR.

However, there are also coexisting challenges considering the size and population of the country which need to be revisited.

**Some of the key challenges are:**

1. The consumption of antibiotics in India are is very high especially the Covid -19 accelerated the antibiotics use in India to many folds.
2. The states are not proactive to deal with the issue of AMR and many states have not taken adequate measures to minimize the risks associated with AMR .
3. India is a hub of pharmaceutical industries and studies have raised concerns on the release of high amount of AMR residues through the effluent effulece in the environment.
4. The public information has not gained adequate pace during these five years, which was key strategy, proposed in the action plan.

Finally, the AMR is growing challenges as a challenge across the globe and the Covid-19 pandemic is putting put the countries into the dire straight to deal with the challenges. Therefore, considering these aspects, the countries need to build upon the future action plan, taking the gaps and challenges of the exiting action plan.

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**INTERVIEW**

# RITURAJ PHUKAN

**Rituraj Phukan, Environmental writer, TEDx Speaker, adventurer and naturalist, member of IUCN**

**Founder Indigenous People's Climate Justice Forum; National Coordinator for Biodiversity, Climate Reality Project India; Chief Operating Officer for Walk for Water; Secretary General of Green Guard Nature Organization and member IUCN.**

**Q: CAN YOU PLEASE TELL US BRIEFLY ABOUT YOU JOURNEY AS AN ENVIRONMENTALIST, WHAT MOTIVATED YOU? HOW IT STARTED?**

I have been fascinated by nature since childhood and I remember every moment in the wilderness as a magical trip of discovery. Assam is known for its biodiversity and experiencing nature was part of our everyday lives. I grew up in a the period of civil unrest due to a mass students-led agitation against illegal infiltration of people into my native state. We have missed our school for over a year of school, spending months at home doing nothing. It was very frustrating, and I have always wondered why people would want to leave their own countries and

cause causing trouble in other lands.

Years later, I quit my government job to begin a lifelong engagement with nature. The documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" was my eye-opener as it answered a lot of questions that had lingered in my mind since childhood. I understood that the challenges we face faced in Assam from increasingly increasing intense annual flooding, riverbank erosion and all the conflicts, including deteriorating human wildlife interactions, were all connected to climate change. I was convinced that my home state was in fact, one of the early climate-change impacted regions of the world.

I wanted to do something about it, but I had limited options with my educational background. Travelling to Antarctica in 2013 was life changing in many ways. Besides first-hand experience of warming impacts on the fragile ecosystems of the remote continent, I learnt more about the consequences of polar melting on the planet. Just a few months later, I was trained as a Climate Reality Leader at Istanbul by former US Vice President Al Gore, the man who won the Nobel Prize for "An Inconvenient Truth."

**Q: YOU HAD LAUNCHED A BOOK DURING THE 2019 EXPEDITION TO THE NORTH POLAR REGION, WHICH IS PERHAPS THE FIRST SUCH INSTANCE FOR THE COUNTY; PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THIS BOOK AND YOUR EXPEDITION EXPERIENCES? HOW DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CLIMATE FORCE ARCTIC EXPEDITION ENRICHED YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENHANCED COMMUNICATION OF CLIMATE SCIENCE?**

My book 'Fin Del Mundo- Lessons from the End of the Earth' was launched by Robert and Barney Swan during the expedition. The book chronicles my journey from having grown up in a climate change impacted region to the first-hand experience of warming during the International Antarctic Expedition in 2013. The final version has been delayed by the pandemic and I hope to have it published this year.

The Climate Force Arctic (CFA) Expedition to the north polar region was led by Robert Swan, OBE, F.R.G.S, and the first man in history to who have walked to both the poles. Climate Force International Director and Robert Swan's illustrious son Barney, who last year became the first person to reach the South Pole powered solely by renewable energy and The Explorer's Passage Founder Jeff Bonaldi, were among the Team Leaders. The team comprising of 86 scientists, naturalists, corporate leaders, writers, filmmakers, civil society leaders and other experts from 27 countries with leadership sessions, workshops and discussions on climate change scenarios and solutions.

On the second day, I was invited to deliver an audio-visual presentation about the proposed Marine Arctic Peace Sanctuary for all marine areas of north of the Arctic Circle and make a forceful case for MAPS as an immediate and effective response to today's global ecological and humanitarian crisis. I also talked about the water crisis and the human-wildlife conflicts in India and the challenges for the survival of rhinos, elephants, and tigers.

The next stop was Longyearbyen, the world's northernmost town, which is located at only 800 miles from the North Pole. It was disconcerting to learn that the Svalbard archipelago had warmed by over 5 degrees Celsius in the past 20 years, threatening the lifestyles of the people and biodiversity of the region. The National Geographic Explorer expedition ship took the team for field visits to various fjords, glaciers and biodiversity rich areas across the Svalbard archipelago and learns about the changing dynamics of biodiversity in the warming arctic ecosystems.

The entire Arctic region is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet and scientists say it could be free of sea ice during the summer by 2030. During our visit, we saw several islands where the ice cover was record low. Animals like the seals, walrus and polar bears were facing survival threats because of the loss of sea ice. Several of the fjords had ice free spaces and we were told that the volume of ice had shrunk considerably every year.

The team also completed the 'Leadership on the Edge' program curated by Robert Swan, with focus on environmental leadership development, understanding of the latest climate science, scenarios and country specific solutions and sustainability education.

**Q: CAN YOU SHARE YOUR FIRST–HAND EXPERIENCE OF COP26? WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE GLASGOW CLIMATE PACT?**

The 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at Glasgow concluded with the signing of the Glasgow Climate Pact last week. The high expectations from COP26 were fuelled by months of news headlines dominated by heat waves, wildfires, storms and floods, and a slew of alarming studies including the "code red for humanity" report published in August 2021.

The Glasgow Climate Pact has been widely described as a compromise, but I am happy that the pact has kept the prospect of achieving the target of limiting warming to 1.5 C alive by calling on countries to come back next year with increased ambitions. Besides, for the first time in the UNFCCC process, there is a reference to phasing down unabated coal power and phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

At Glasgow, besides having a ringside view of the proceedings at the Blue Zone, I was a witness to the anxiety of the youth and anger of the affected communities including the indigenous people from all over the world. I listened to Greta Thunberg and indigenous leaders at the George Square on the 5th and walked with the protesters in the cold November rain from Kelvin grove Park on the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice next day. Following the People's Plenary on

the 12th, thousands of us walked out of the Blue Zone to protest the lack of urgency and intent to deliver climate justice.

Although the outcome does not guarantee a 1.5 C limit to warming, the Glasgow Pact is a strong framework for enhanced and collaborative action. The path to success has many obstacles and COP27 will be another opportunity to overcome these, because failure is not an option.

**Q: WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FINANCIAL PROMISES MADE BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, THE COMMITMENTS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT? WAS THERE ANY PROGRESS ON THESE ISSUES AT COP26? WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PROGRESS ON FINANCIAL MATTERS AT COP26?**

The issue of climate finance was the most debated with developed countries having acknowledged, shortly before the commencement of COP26, which they had failed to provide the $100 billion per year in climate finance to by 2020, pledged to developing countries over a decade back in 2009.

At Glasgow, leaders from the Global South talked about trust, credibility, and accountability, pointing towards the disconnect between pledges and reality and a clear definition of what counts as climate finance. The $100 billion per year target is now inadequate and vulnerable countries had sought at least $500 billion between 2020 and 2024 with India asking for $1 trillion by 2030. The Glasgow Climate Pact "urges" developed countries to meet the $100 billion per year target "urgently and through to 2025." For adaptation, the pact called for developed nations to "at least double their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation" from 2019 levels by 2025.

COP26 saw many disputes over "loss and damage," considered as the third pillar of international climate policy along with mitigation and adaptation since the Paris Agreement but ignored during negotiations. Countries agreed to operationalize the Santiago Network of Loss and Damage initiated at COP25 by allocating funds "to support technical assistance for the implementation of relevant approaches to avert, minimize and address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change in developing countries." It was also decided that "loss and damage will be the focus of COP27 in Egypt.

A key outcome of COP26 is the conclusion of the Paris Agreement Rulebook, which will make it fully operational. This will give certainty and predictability to both market and non-market approaches in support of mitigation as well as adaptation. On the Clean Development Mechanism, the pact says that carbon credits earned by reducing emissions can either be sold to other nations or counted as own climate targets by a country, removing a loophole that led to double counting and corruption.

More than 30 countries and financial institutions signed a statement committing to halting all financing for fossil fuel development overseas and diverting the spending to green energy. The Glasgow Breakthrough Agenda by 35 world leaders was announced for countries and businesses to work together to scale up the development and deployment of clean technologies.

**Q: ADAM READ, PRESIDENT , CHARTERED INSTITUTION OF WASTES MANAGEMENT (CIWM), POINTED OUT THE LACK OF CONVERSATION ON E-WASTE IN THE COP26 AGENDA AS A "CRITICAL OVERSIGHT", WHAT DO YOU THINK HOW IS CHEMICALS, E-WASTE AND OTHER SOURCE OF TOXINS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BE HANDLED? IS THERE ANY SUCH AGENDA RAISED IN COP26?**

It is indeed an issue that is often ignored, despite the huge amounts of E-waste being created globally everyday and a massive strain on natural resources. Any model of sustainable waste management and circular economy will have to be a factor in E-waste. I think ecosystem restoration and enhancement of locally sustainable community-led nature-based solutions is vital to address the interconnected planetary crises of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. The management of E-waste will emerge as a critical issue at the upcoming global negotiations for effectively tackling pollution and climate change.

**Q: AS A RESULT OF GLOBALISATION, THERE IS A HUGE PRESSURE ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH FOR THE HOLISTIC USE OF ENERGY AND MANAGEMENT OF POLLUTION AND WASTE. ALSO A LOT OF WASTE ARE COMING TO THIS PART OF GLOBE FOR DISPOSAL, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS AN IDEAL WAY TO HANDLE THIS SITUATION BY THIS DEVELOPING COUNTIES?**

It is a fact that solutions must be localized but policy interventions and lifestyle changes could drive better management of air, water, and land pollution. The dumping of waste in poor countries is another type of colonialization; If garbage was wealth, we already generate too much of it already, why not utilize the locally available 'waste' resources first before we start importing from other countries? Besides the regulation of plastics, and blanket ban on single-use plastics used for packaging, the focus should be on reviving local bakeries which have mostly disappeared. Most of us used to buy a lot of locally produced food, including bread, biscuits, etc., with a much lower carbon footprint than the brands that are now universally popular. There are start-ups specializing in waste management and utilization and they need all the support they can get.

**Q: DO YOU FEEL INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISES IS ADEQUATE?**

India was ranked at the 10th position by the 17th edition of the Climate

Change Performance Index published during the COP26 by German watch, Climate Action Network (CAN) and New Climate Institute. The top three ranks in the index were empty as none of the countries qualified to achieve an overall very high rating and India is the only G20 nation that is in the top 10.

In November 2019, India passed the target of 40 percent of total installed electricity capacity from non-fossil energy sources by 2030, a commitment made as part of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the 2015 Paris Agreement. At COP26, India committed to 50 per cent energy from non-fossil fuels and 500-gigawatt total renewable energy capacity by 2030. Currently, India ranks fourth in the world in terms of installed renewable energy capacity.

In Paris, on the sidelines of the COP21 negotiations, India, along with France, conceived the International Solar Alliance to mobilize efforts against climate change through deployment of solar energy solutions. This alliance of sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, has enabled technology exchange and partnerships for efficient consumption of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and is one of the most significant long-term contributions by India.

At COP26, on transport day, 30 countries including India pledged to accelerate transition towards Zero Emission Vehicles. On the same day, the government of India launched the E-Amrit portal on EVs, a one-stop destination on all electric vehicles-related information to facilitate the transition.

Only Denmark (4th position), Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom, Morocco and Chile were ranked above India in the Climate Change Performance Index and therefore India must continue to provide leadership to the world, strive to pass these countries and claim the empty ranks at the top.

**Q: INDIA HAVE FIVE COMMITMENTS ('PANCHAMRITA') AT COP26 TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE, DO YOU THINK THERE IS A VISION AND TIMELINE IN PLACE TO TAPER OFF FOSSIL FUEL AND CLEAR DIRECTION TO ACHIEVE THE COMMITMENT?**

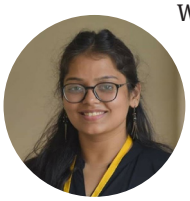
India has emerged as the torchbearer for climate justice the Global South, ensuring that the concerns of developing countries and those worst affected by the climate crisis are addressed. Besides making tangible commitments, India asked for $1 trillion to be paid to the worst affected countries, which have historically contributed the least to the climate crisis, by 2030.

But the continued expansion of fossil fuels, while making huge strides in renewable energy production, provides contradictory signals to the world at large. I want to see more forceful domestic climate action to complement our country's global commitments and leadership. I also want to see a timeline for ensuring that the lives and livelihoods of indigenous people and local communities are safeguarded against all climate emergencies around the country. The vision for inclusive and equitable growth can be expedited with the mobilization of climate finance for adaptation, mitigation, and loss & damage with adequate representation of affected frontline communities on the global stage including the United Nations climate change negotiations.


*Rituraj Phukan with Sir Robert Swan, OBE, FRGS and Barney Swan at North polar region (left, 2019 and at Antarctica (right, 2013)*

STUDENT'S CORNER

# TOXIC WASTES DELETERIOUS TO PUBLIC HEALTH



With the advent of industrialization, the process of generation of waste has been accelerated. There are hazardous wastes discharged from the industries and after the arrival of noble corona virus recurring, heaps of biomedical wastes is everywhere. Mostly, these wastes fall under the category of toxic wastes, thereby, improper disposal of such wastes is not only harmful for the environment, but can also cause several air borne, water borne and soil borne diseases. As per the report many people are losing their lives or passing genetic disorder in the future generations after consumption of such toxicities.1Bio magnification can also take place once these toxicities are consumed by animals.2It also harms the aquatic life when toxic water is released in the water bodies.3

The concept of public health is incorporated since ancient times in India. Old Indian texts mention some norms related to public health, such as in Arthshastra punishment was prescribed for the person who is violating the norms of hygiene.4 Earlier in the British colonial period, there was no specific law for the protection of the environment but later enacted some regulations.5 Under section 269 of IPC, 1860 "if a person who unlawfully or negligently does any work which is or which he knows or has reason to believe to be likely to spread infection of any disease dangerous to life, has to be punished".6State legislatures in India are empowered to make laws related to public health and sanitation.7 The central government also has power on certain subjects related to it under the concurrent list.8 Article 47, 48A and 51A (g) of the Indian Constitution oblige states to take action for the improvement of public health.9 In PaschimBangaKhetMazdoorsamity vs. State of West Bengal10, SC emphasis the role of the state with the health cares care facility to ensure public health. India is a party to ICCPR and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution also guarantees health as a right.

Internationally, according to the Stockholm Conference 1972, there is a duty of every person to protect the environment and prevent its pollution. This duty is imposed on every state. A meeting convened by UN in Stockholm pulled the strings on this matter. There is an obligation on the present generation to protect their future generations. The imperative goal of mankind is to protect and improve the human environment for upcoming generations. One of the well-recognized social rights is good health which can be achieved by proper management of waste. It is also a legal responsibility. During this pandemic, it has emerged as a responsibility towards entire international comity.

The right to health has been adopted by domestic law or Constitutional law of many countries.11 The right to health is also defined under Article 12, of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. UDHR also guarantees health under Article 25. Article 11 of the European Social Charter guarantees right to protection of health, for the "attainment of which it stipulates health promotion, education and disease prevention activities". The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, also considered as the tool to protect the health security, recognizes "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health." To secure this right, many nations have incorporated biomedical waste management in their national health policy. In this pandemic, the life of every individual is under threat due to the unlikely transmission of coronavirus. Hence proper management of toxic wastes is the only key to ensure the right to health of every individual.

In India all the three organs organizations of the government proactively participating to protect the very sanctity of public health. Article 253 of the Indian Constitution enshrines that the Parliament has the power to implement the agreements, conventions and treaties that India has entered into.12 With the virtue of Sec. 6, 8 and 25 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, the parliament used the power to draft rules for disposal of different kind of wastes such as, hazardous waste management rules, biomedical waste management rules, etc. With the virtue of Section4 of the Water Act of 1974, Central Government has established Pollution Control Board and Committees in each state for the effective implementation of the rules. Judiciary being the torch bearer of justice and guardian of fundamental rights is contributing by interpreting these rules and clearing out if there is any vagueness.

Yet there are many loopholes in implementation on the individual level which is corrupted with greed and in capabilities of the people working on the ground level. Whereby, it is nothing but one more nail in the coffin of public health.

**Radhika Dwivedi,**
LLM in environmental and natural resources law (TERI SAS)

1 PriyankHirani&VikasDimble, Water pollution is killing millions of Indians. Here's how technology and reliable data can change that (2019) <weforum.org>accessed on 22 August 2021.
2 Ibid at 154.
3 Ishrat Bashir, F. A. Lone, et al, Concerns and Threats of Contamination on Aquatic Ecosystems, Nature Public Health emergency Collection (Jan 2020) <nih.gov> accessed on 24 August 2021.
4 KANGLE R. KAUTILYA, THE KAUTILYA ARTHSHASTRA (1st ed. 1960).
5 Sheikh NA, Hospital Waste Management: Indian Perspective, 6(2) INDIAN JOURNAL OF FORENSIC MEDICINE & TOXICOLOGY (2012).
6 Indian Penal Code, no. 45 (1860), §269.
7 INDIA CONST. entry 6, List II.
8 INDIA CONST. entry 23, 26, 29 List III.
9 M.P. SINGH, INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW (7th ed. 2014).
10 PaschimBangaKhetMazdoorsamity v. State of West Bengal, (1996) 4 S.C.C. 37.
11 https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/human-rights-and health,(last visited, 1th Nov 2021).
12 INDIA CONST. art. 253.

RESOURCES

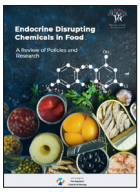
# PUBLICATIONS

The adoption of the stringent Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 by the Govt of India has put a mandate on the industries to install Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP). In this context, this report has been prepared to give an overview of the effluent treatment process with a special focus on the pharmaceutical effluent treatment. This study highlights the challenges involved in the treatment of pharmaceutical effluents, failure of conventional treatment system and the need for advanced treatment processes to treat pharmaceutical effluents. Moreover, it also highlights the international case studies where successful treatment processes have been implemented for the removal of pharmaceutical compounds from the effluents.

The study titled "Dark truth of skin whitening creams: Presence of Mercury in skin whitening creams" highlights the presence of mercury in skin whitening creams. The study, which access samples from Vijayawada, Mumbai, Delhi, and Tiruvandpuram, found high concentrations of mercury ranging from 4000 to 14000 ppm in imported brands despite the stringent regulation of unintentional presence up to 1ppm under the Drugs and Cosmetics Rule 2020. The study also highlights the need to address the liability of the online platforms which is currently lacking in the country.


This study is an indication on the overall status of the mercury-free alternative products in India. It was found that in some of the sectors like health care and lamps, India has made considerable progress in shifting to the alternative products. However, the cost and quality of the products are the major concerns for India considering the wide diversity of the socio-economic class of people living in the country. Further information on the health hazards of mercury is low among the consumers, traders, manufacturers and the workers as well. Another important aspect of the study is that the domestic demand for mercury and mercury-free products are largely met with the import from China. Incidentally the study also reflected that with the ban on export of mercury products from China, business is getting affected particularly of health care instruments like thermometer and sphygmomanometer. Nevertheless, there are industries which are manufacturing mercury-free products in India and with suitable policy and government handholding India can become a manufacturing hub for the mercury-free products. Therefore, it's the right time for the government to assess the current scenario and act accordingly to make it a mercury-free country and also emerge as a manufacturing hub for mercury-free products.


The study titled 'Clean Drinking Water: A pipe dream?', which assesses microplastics in tap water in Goa reveals that the drinking water supplied to Goan homes is contaminated with plastics. The study, which assessed tap water from Margao, Panjim, Mapusa, Marcel and Canacona and the water treatment plants in Goa found Microplastic particles in all the water samples and raises concern over increasing microplastic contamination of our water bodies.




Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) are a group of complex chemicals that are emerging as serious environmental pollutants and threats to public health globally. EDCs are considered highly toxic due to their persistent properties and ability to cause serious and long-term impacts on various critical endocrine functions such as adverse developmental, reproductive, neurological and immune effects in both humans and wildlife. There are several global research reports which address various aspects of EDCs including the sources& exposure to EDCs and the possible impacts on human health. However, the information on EDCs is very limited in the Indian context for the concerned stakeholders and the general public. Toxics Link has developed this report as food is found to be an important source of exposure to EDCs. The report has been derived from the most published research studies and data from India and across the globe and has highlighted the gaps and challenges on the issues of EDCs in food in India. Items to get an overview of the status of EDCs in food and food products in India from the regulatory and policy perspective as well as attempts to incorporate the global regulatory developments on EDCs in food. The report has covered three major sources of exposure of EDCs -EDCs in industrial applications and consumer products, organo-chlorine pesticides and environmental by-products. It is expected to benefit the policymakers to frame new policies on EDCS in food, catalyze new research studies, and will help in alerting the consumers with new information on EDCs and get access to safe food.

NEWS

## 1. INDIA'S COP26 PLEDGES: AMBITIOUS, BUT AMBIGUOUS

**https://www.orfonline.org/, Nov, 10, 2021**

India's COP26 pledges are commendable, but will they be feasible in the long run?

A joint statement issued by Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) countries in September 2021, stated that all member states intend to update or communicate ambitious nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement before the 26th Conference of Parties, or COP26. But statements by the concerned ministers from the Indian government that followed this news reiterated historical responsibility of the western nations over climate change and repeated the issue of inadequate financial assistance from rich countries leading most observers to believe that India is not likely to make any significant change from its traditional position. The day before the speech of the Indian Prime Minister (PM) at COP26, there was news that India is likely to link any new pledges on decarbonising India's economy to its membership in the nuclear suppliers' group (NSG).

*Read more at: https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-cop26-pledges-ambitious-but-ambiguous/*

## 2. ELECTRONIC WASTE EXCLUDED FROM COP26 AGENDA

**https://www.computerweekly.com/, Nov, 02, 2021**

Data sanitation industry group calls on UK government to add electronic waste to the climate summit's agenda

The International Data Sanitisation Consortium (IDSC) has urged COP26 president Alok Sharma to include electronic waste (e-waste) in the climate summit's agenda, calling its exclusion a missed opportunity to encourage engagement with the circular economy.

According to the United Nations' (UN) Global e-waste monitor 2020, e-waste is the world's fastest-growing domestic waste stream, with a record 53.6 million metric tonnes (Mt) generated in 2019 alone. It predicted that by 2030, global e-waste will reach 74 Mt annually.

The IDSC, which was established in 2017 to standardise terminology and practices across the data sanitisation industry, said in an open letter to Sharma that, as the second-largest producer of e-waste per capita in the world, the UK has the opportunity to set an example in this area.

*Read more at: https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252508945/Electronic-waste-excluded-from-COP26-agenda*

## 3. INDIAN MOVES TO PHASE OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTIC ITEMS BY 2022: HERE ARE ALL THE PLASTIC ITEMS THAT WILL BE BANNED

**https://www.firstpost.com/, August 20, 2021**

India generates around 25,940 tonnes of plastic waste per day and approximately 9.46 million tonnes of plastic waste per year.

In India, 60 percent of plastic waste (15,384 tonnes) is collected and recycled, while the rest is uncollected and littered in the environment. Image credit: India Water Portal/Flickr

If you are an Indian and are living with your parents, you most likely to have a big plastic bag full of even smaller plastic bags socked somewhere in your house; in either the kitchen or behind a bedroom door or maybe even under your bed.

While it is a common sight in most Indian households, estimation by the Central Pollution Control Board states that India generates around 25,940 tonnes of plastic waste per day and approximately 9.46 million tonnes of plastic waste per year.

Of this, around 60 percent of plastic waste (15,384 tonnes) is collected and recycled, while the rest is uncollected and littered in the environment.

India is now attempting to take a strong stand against plastics and plastic pollution, in the form of banning the sale and use of single-use plastics (SUP). An SUP is defined by any commodity that is a plastic item intended to be used once for the same purpose before being disposed of or recycled.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has introduced a new set of guidelines - Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021. This will replace the existing Plastic Waste Management Rule, 2016 (PWM Rules, 2016) that was amended in 2018.

In June 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said India will eliminate SUP by 2022.

This was reinforced during the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), held in March 2019, where India piloted two resolutions - one relating to SUPs and Sustainable Nitrogen management. This helped in acknowledging the urgent need for the global community to focus on this critical problem and was also a significant step for India.

*Read more at:https://www.firstpost.com/india/indian-moves-to-phase-out-single-use-plastic-items-by-2022-here-are-all-the-plastic-items-that-will-be-banned-9900701.html*

## 4. WHO UPDATES EMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Hindu, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021**

Why has the World Health Organisation (WHO) updated emission recommendations?

The WHO has updated global air pollution standards, a first since 2005. The update, in most instances, reduces the maximum permissible limits for several classes of pollutants from nitrous oxide to particulate matter (PM). This is to recognise the research in the last decade and a half that shows air pollution to be much more strongly linked to poor health than previously recognised. Since 1987, the world body has periodically issued health-based air quality guidelines to assist governments and civil society to reduce human exposure to air pollution and its adverse effects.

In 2015, the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution on air quality and health, recognising air pollution as a risk factor for non-communicable diseases such as ischaemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and cancer, and the economic toll they take. "The global nature of the challenge calls for an enhanced global response. These guidelines, taking into account the latest body of evidence

on the health impacts of different air pollutants, are a key step in that global response," says WHO Director General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

*Read more at: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/the-hindu-explains-who-updates-emission-recommendations/article36632848.ece*

## 5. NGT VESTED WITH SUO MOTU POWER IN DISCHARGE OF FUNCTIONS, SAYS SC

**The Economics Times, Oct 07, 2021,**

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) is vested with suo motu power, the Supreme Court ruled on Thursday and said it is vital for the "wellbeing of the nation and its people" to have a flexible mechanism to address issues related to environmental damage so that a better legacy can be left for the future generations. The NGT can hardly afford to remain a "mute spectator when no-one knocks on its door" and the "hands-off mode" for the tribunal, when faced with exigencies requiring immediate and effective response, would "debilitate the forum" from discharging its responsibility, the apex court said.

A bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar said, it must adopt an interpretation which sustains the spirit of public good and not don't render the environmental watchdog of the country "toothless and ineffective".

"It is accordingly declared that the NGT is vested with suo motu (on its own) power in discharge of its functions under the NGT Act," the bench, also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy and C T Ravikumar, said in its 77-page judgement.

*Read more at: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/ngt-vested-with-suo-motu-power-in-discharge-of-functions-says-sc/articleshow/86847319.cms*

## 6. IN A YEAR, DELHI TO GET ECO PARK TO MANAGE E-WASTE

**Hindustan Times, Septamber, 22, 2021**

In about a year, Delhi will have an e-waste management eco park, which will be the first of its kind in the country, lieutenant-governor Anil Baijal's office said on Wednesday. The idea to build such a park was finalised in a meeting chaired by the L-G on Wednesday, even as its location and model is yet to be decided. The meeting was attended by deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, urban development minister Satyendar Jain and environment minister Gopal Rai, apart from top officials of the Delhi government, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and the municipal corporations.

"Such a park is needed for scientific and environmentally safe dismantling, refurbishing, recycling and disposal of electronic waste in the city. It is estimated that Delhi generates about 200,000 tonnes of e-waste annually that comprises electrical appliances, electronic items, computers, accessories and mobile phones, among others. This waste is potentially hazardous to not only the environment but also to human health," the L-G's office said in a statement issued after the meeting.

*Read more at:https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/in-a-year-delhi-to-get-eco-park-to-manage-ewaste-101632329921917.html*

## 7. GOVT IMPOSES RESTRICTIONS ON MERCURY IMPORTS

**Business Standard, September 9, 2021**

The government on Thursday imposed restrictions on the imports of Mercury, used in different sectors including older thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs and electrical switches

He The government on Thursday imposed restrictions on the imports of Mercury, used in different sectors including older thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs and electrical switches.

"Import policy of mercury has been revised from free to restricted, subject to obtaining prior informed consent from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

Earlier, there were no restrictions on the imports, but now an importer would have seek sought permission from the government.

Import of mercury stood at USD 6.15 million in 2020-21. It was USD 3.49 million during April-June this fiscal.

*Read more at: https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-imposes-restrictions-on-mercury-imports-121090901449_1.html*

## 8. ORDER OF THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL REGARDING DISPOSAL OF CIGARETTE AND BIDI BUTTS, INDIA

**India Environment Portal, August, 9, 2021**

Order of the National Green Tribunal in the matter of Doctors For You Vs MoEF&CC & Others dated 09/09/2020.

The application was filed on September 23, 2015 with a prayer to direct regulation of disposal of cigarette and bidi butts, apart from prohibiting consumption of tobacco in public places. Notice was issued on September 28, 2015 to the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Tobacco Board and other respondents.

The response of MoEF&CC was that cigarette and bidi butts were not listed as hazardous. The cellulose acetate, which is prepared by converting cellulose into an acetic acid ester, is essentially a biodegradable substance. However, the biodegradability of cellulose acetate is not necessarily satisfactory in practice.

The Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR) filed its report on July 9, 2020 on "Whether cigarette and bidi butts fall within the category of toxic waste or not."

*Read more at: http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/content/468494/order-of-the-national-green-tribunal-regarding-disposal-of-cigarette-and-bidi-butts-india-09092020/*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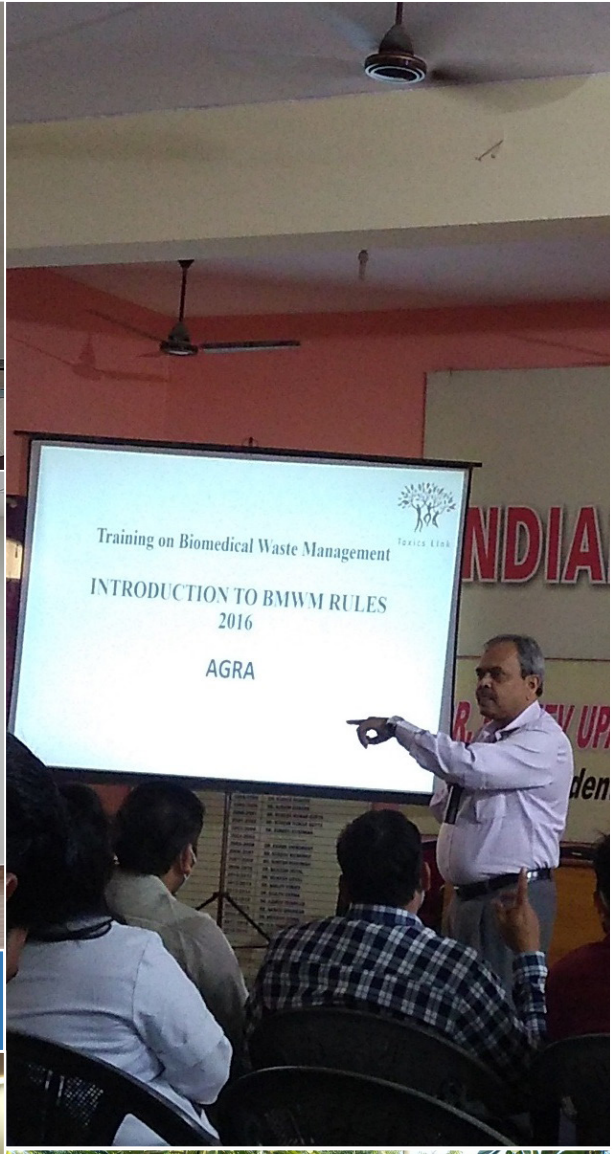
Training on Biomedical Waste Management
Toxics Link
INTRODUCTION TO BMWM RULES
2016
AGRA

# SNAPSHOTS

## TRAVELLING FILM FESTIVAL- "QUOTES FROM THE EARTH"

Along with the biennial "Quotes from the Earth", Toxics Link also organises travelling film festival at cities, towns and remote locations of our country. The purpose is to provide a platform for local residents/ institutes to connect their surrounding issues with that of larger global environmental concerns, to further enhance awareness and strengthen the policy advocacy initiatives at all levels. The travelling film festival is organised with support of local civil society organisations or schools or any other environment based institution. If you are interested in organising "Quotes from the Earth" in your area, please write to us or call us at our office numbers.

## PHASING OUT BPA!

It's almost impossible to find a product that does not have synthetic chemical added into it, and one of them is the commonly used baby feeding bottle containing the chemical BPA in it. BPA or Bisphenol-A found in baby feeding bottles play the role of Endocrine Disruptive Chemicals (EDCs) that are capable of harming infants and newborn babies. Many countries have banned it as a precautionary measure. Toxics Link has been campaigning against the chemical and released a lab tested report titled "Bottles can Be Toxic" that received considerable attention from all stakeholders including the media. The report was also discussed during winter session of the Indian Parliament. Currently, we are having dialogues with Bureau of Indian Standards to completely phase out BPA from India. Join us in our campaign against BPA.

## TOXICS LINK LIBRARY-A TREASURE HOUSE OF KNOWLEDGE

The library of Toxics Link houses a variety of books, magazines and reports which are well-stocked, classified and indexed, for the benefit of the readers. One can also get the entire collection of around 520 documentary films from around the world on various issues concerning environment. It has over 4900 books and research based reports; and new books, magazines and periodicals are added from time to time. One can also find media coverage on environment that are updated on a regular basis. Besides, the library also has stock of parliament questions that are raised on the research based studies on environment done by Toxics Link. The readers can find all the studies done by Toxics Link on its website.

## TOXICS ALERT (E-NEWS)

**An environment news bulletin**

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Toxics Link
for a toxics-free world

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For more information materials, invitations and updates on environmental issues please write to us at info@toxicslink.org

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