

Arresting Global Warming: Businesses take up challenge - and find it profitable too!

The idea that something as profound as the climate in this 'our God's creation', Mother Earth, could be changed - both ways, in fact - by mere mortals, was a subject of esoteric debate confined to scientific circles, even a few years ago. No longer. Now, lawyers, industrialists, businessmen and other reputedly hard-nosed and down-to-earth fraternities as well as governments are realizing the great dangers posed by man-made global warming as well as the fact that man can (and NOW!) take initiative to reverse the trend.

The outcome of this realization is the Kyoto Protocol. Russia is expected to ratify the protocol by the end of this year, that will then have the minimum number of ratifications required to bring it into force and make reductions in carbon dioxide emission mandatory among the 124 signatory countries. One glaring absentee is the USA who aver that such steps will cripple the economy, and stress on developing need-based low carbon technologies instead of a reduction across the board.

The bulk of the responsibility for reducing carbon emission rests with the smokestack industries who, after some initial hesitation with an eye on their bottom lines, are gradually warming up to this social responsibility. "We accept that the science on global warming is overwhelming," says John W Rowe, chairman & CEO of Exelon Corpn. USA, "There should be mandatory carbon constraints."

The major way to cut greenhouse-gas emissions is simply to burn less fossil fuel. Energy efficiency is the key; and this would inevitably lead to a reduced fuel bill (oil bill with a capital 'O' and a capital 'B', in the Indian context!). Many companies that have cut emissions have discovered, often to their pleasant surprise, that it saves money and spurs development of innovative technologies. "It's impossible to find a company that has acted and not found benefits," says Michael Northrop, co-creator of Climate Group, a coalition of companies and governments set up to share such success stories. It is truly been said that businesses are now graduating from the 'pp' (polluter pays) regime through the 'pppp' (pollution prevention pays: in the form of, e.g., satisfied unions, simpler housekeeping, etc.) regime to the 'ppppp' (pollution prevention (is a) profitable proposition) regime. Businesses are now discovering the commercial advantages that lie in:

- Energy efficient processing and manufacturing
- New, innovative energy-conserving products and services
- The creation of 'cleaner' brands, often bringing first

EcoConsumer

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- m o v e r advantage
- C a r b o n trading systems
- Industrial ecologies
- Combined heat and power (co-generation)

However most climate scientists believe that even if a substantial cut in carbon dioxide emissions is achieved, it will still warm the earth to a certain extent. They also warn that seemingly small perturbations can cause the climate to swing rapidly and dramatically. That could slash agricultural yields, raise sea levels and bring more extreme weather. For businesses, this scenario presents

threats - and opportunities. Insurers may face more storms, floods and other disasters. Farmers must adjust crops to changing climates. Companies that pioneer low emission cars, clean coal-burning technologies, and harder crop strains - or find cheaper ways to slash emissions, will take over from those that cannot move as fast.

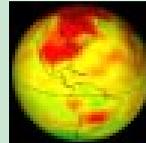
For the developing world there is a lesson to be learnt. At present, developing countries spew just a third of the world's greenhouse-gases, with per capita emissions of only a fifth of the industrialised world. Going by present rates of emission, this will certainly increase while these nations strive for industrial development. According to one estimate, by 2100

the developing countries of today will collectively emit two to three times that of the developed world. Therefore it is imperative for them to use clean technologies from now on itself. To spur them on, there is also a huge market for carbon trading that beckons.

In the matter of global warming, the good news is that the world sees the threat and has begun to respond. The bad news is the magnitude of the task. All in all, this is a testing time for the world in general and smokestack industries in particular. How the problem is addressed today will make for how we leave this world for our children tomorrow.

The dire consequences of global warming

- **Flooding:** With sea waters rising almost a metre this century many coastal areas will be inundated
- **Ocean Disruptions:** As more carbon goes into the sea the entire food-chain from plankton up, stands to suffer.
- **Shifting Storm Patterns:** Many scientists believe warming will bring more violent & unpredictable climate events.
- **Reduced Farm Output:** In certain regions each degree rise in temperature brings a further drop in crop yields.
- **Animal Extinctions:** Global warming may not be a factor as yet, but it is almost certain to take its toll
- **Droughts:** In extreme scenarios, areas that are fertile could become dry - as has also happened in aeons past.



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Disease-Resistant Wheat Variety

The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) has come up with high-yielding and disease-resistant wheat, along with good bread making quality named PUSA Vishesh. This medium- duration (123 to 163 days) variety, with average yield of 56.4 quintals per hectare, is rust resistant and pest resistant too. PUSA Vishesh can also be treated as a good alternative to the popular varieties 'PWD 343' and 'HD 2687', both having the same genetic background. It is also having longer grain growth period and higher quality grains than others. According to the Directorate of Wheat Research (DWR) this variety is the best for bread quality.



(TH, 07.10.04)

Ecofriendly Water Purification System

With access to safe drinking water becoming a critical issue in countries like India, a Holland based company, Solar Due BV, part of Akzo Nobel group has planned an affordable ecofriendly water purification system with the help of solar energy. Based on membrane technology, the system can filter seawater and brackish water and remove bacteria, viruses and toxic substances like arsenic.

This system needs little maintenance and meets World Health Organisation's drinking water standards too. Their pilot plants already set up in Oman and Canary Islands, are running successfully. They are also arranging to launch the product in India, at a reasonable price

(BL, 27.09.04)

Treaty to Ensure Sustainable Food Supply

Recently, an extraordinary treaty, to ensure global food security, came into force. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, is meant to help ensure a sustainable and plentiful food supply, regardless of the challenges posed by nature or humankind. This is not an easy task, given the unknown impacts of future forces such as climate change, disease and poverty, and sweeping technological advances.

(FT, 05.07.04)

British Aid for Providing Livelihood Opportunities

The British Deputy High Commissioner in Southern India, Stuart Innes, has handed over a cheque for Rs. 8.23 lakhs to the panchayat president of Kuthambakkam village. The fund will be used to start a panchayat academy for sustainable livelihood. "The aim of this project is to establish a rural network which will provide livelihood opportunities for families living below the poverty line," said Mr. Innes. "A network of elected village panchayats and self-help groups will work on child literacy, gender equality, better utilisation of local resources, health, sanitation and energy including renewable energy."

(TH, 02.07.04)

'Green' Buildings Catching on

With time the green movement is spreading all over the world and an increasing number of people are realising its advantage. 'Green' buildings are becoming more and more popular in India with more people willing to live in harmony with nature.

The CII Godrej Green Business Centre at Hyderabad has received the highest platinum-rating from the US Green

Building Council. Tata Energy and Research Institute based at Delhi, which has done a lot of work in the area of creating a sustainable, low energy consuming built environment, has worked on many of these green projects. With the new friendly T-Zed, Biodiversity Conservation India Ltd will attempt to prove that engineers can meet people's needs without actually destroying the environment.

(BL, 06.08.04 & ET, 10.09.04)

Recycling Waste

A new initiative to recycle waste has been launched under the combined efforts of Clean Energy Nepal (CEN) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). A mascot for the new Mass Education Campaign for Effective Solid Waste Management, Askai, has been unveiled which would be used as a guide to urge others to consider solid waste as a beneficial by-product. The Campaign aims to promote the 3Rs - reduce, recycle and reuse waste - among the residents of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Kirtipur and Madhyapur Thimi municipalities in Nepal.

(EN, 03.08.04)

Aviation Growth is Unsustainable!

Growth in aviation is unsustainable! According to a new report by the University of York's Stockholm Institute, growth in the aviation sector is entirely at odds with efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and it is one of the severest challenges to sustainable development.

The report claims that aviation is one of the most serious environmental problems facing the planet and is expected to account for up to 15 percent of the total contribution to climate change by 2050. As its exhaust gases are injected into the atmosphere at such high levels, it causes three times more damage in terms of climate change than gases emitted at ground level, the study says.



(Edie, 09.07.04)

Grain Sector Unsustainable: World Bank

In a report dated July 30, 2004 the World Bank has opined that the anchor of India's existing policy on agriculture, namely, achieving self-sufficiency in foodgrains, is incompatible with both its stated goal of achieving a sectoral growth target of four percent, and with its goals on poverty reduction. Heavy dependence on the foodgrain sector will require ever higher output and input subsidies (electricity, for example) that are not fiscally sustainable. Besides, this emphasis will lead to the accumulation of large buffer stocks and exacerbate land degradation problems. Furthermore, it discourages farmers from diversifying to other, genuinely high-value crops.

(BL, 14.09.04)

Pro-Recycling Investors Listed Online

The first online listing of finance providers who are dedicated to protecting the environment through their recycling efforts, has been launched this week. Run by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the Investors in Recycling' listing will allow recycling businesses to make informed decisions on who to approach for financial services. Business and finance programme manager for WRAP, Dr Bevis Watts, hoped that the listing would help to attract more interest from both the commercial and public sectors.

(Edie, 30.07.04)

Guidelines Released for Recycling E-Waste

Environment Agency (EA) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) have recently published disposal and recycling guidelines for manufacturers of electronic waste. The guidelines will come into force from August 2005.

The regulations will implement the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive. All producers, importers and retailers of electrical and electronic equipment will be responsible for establishing a collection network for the treatment, recycling or recovery of products.



(Ede, 30.07.04)

Green Light for Degradable Bread Bags

People are becoming more and more conscious about protecting their environment. In a survey a Co-op found that six out of 10 people believed retailers should use only degradable or biodegradable materials. Earlier the Co-op had brought in biodegradable bags for shoppers. It is now going to come up with degradable wrapping for bread.

Traditional polythene bags can endure for 100 years. The plastic bread bags produced by the Co-op will rot away within a maximum of four years, breaking down into a small organic residue, carbon dioxide and water.

Some 1.67bn bread bags are produced in the UK every year. With each bag weighing an average of six grams, a massive 10,521 tonnes of waste are generated by bread bags every year. That is equivalent to 30 jumbo jets or 120 military tanks.

Some environmental campaign groups such as Friends of the Earth warn, however, that degradable plastic will fail to decompose fully in the oxygen-depleted environments of waste pits and may cause an increase in greenhouse gases, which contribute to global warming.

(TG, 02.08.04)

Record Number of US Tyres Being Recycled

A record 80 percent of old tyres were recycled for other uses including fuel and playground equipment in 2003, according to a US industry report.

In 1990 only 11 percent of scrap tyres were recycled. In 2001, 77.6 percent were recycled. Recycling is expected to grow to about 85 percent of discarded tyres by 2006, the group estimated. Last year, about 233 mn old tyres were recycled compared with 290 mn new tyres produced.

Discarded tyres are used in a range of ways. In 2003, 45 percent, or 130 mn old tires, were used to make tyre-derived fuels, a cheaper and cleaner alternative to coal for firing cement kilns, pulp and paper mills and industrial and utility boilers. The civil engineering market consumed about 19 percent, or 56 million tires, in road and landfill construction and as a lightweight alternative to stones in preventing landslides. Ground rubber applications, which includes playground and other sport surfaces, used about 10 percent, or 28 mn. The remaining recycled tyres were either exported or used in agriculture or steel production.

(PA, 22.07.04)



New Japan Car Recycling Law

In Japan, a new recycling law will come into force from January 1, 2005 requiring manufacturers to charge drivers for the

recycling of their vehicles. Under the new law, car owners will be asked to pay about 7000 to 18000 yen (\$65 to \$166) per disposed vehicle, to cover the recycling of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), a mixture of harmful gases used in air conditioners, airbags and automobile shredder residue. Thus, Japanese automakers are going to face tough competition to produce ecofriendly cars.

(PA, 14.07.04)

Grey Water can Fill Dry Taps

A family's water requirement can be reduced by 400 litres per day if they recycle water from their bathroom and laundry. This 'grey water' can be utilised for gardening, car washing, mopping and so on.

According to a study by the Research Foundation for Science Technology and Ecology (RFSTE) in co-ordination with the Water Workers Alliance (WWA) (comprising employees of Delhi Jal Board), as much as 235mn gallon (1045 mn Litres) of water a day (MGD) can be saved in Delhi, if all residents start using recycled 'grey water' for non drinking purposes. RFSTE founder director Dr Vandana Shiva says the plant has been modified to suit hard detergents used in India and that a pilot project for grey water recycling will be launched in two places in the next three months.

(HT, 15.09.04)

India Sets up Bank to Recycle Halon

The Government set up a bank for halon, the miracle fire-extinguisher component of the last century. Since the government cannot manage without halon in certain key sectors, like protection of atomic power installations, oil platforms and military use, it has decided to open a bank which will ensure that halon reserves will be banked, recycled and reused with strict norms on who gets to draw from the National Halon Reclamation and Banking Facility. It will also ensure that no new halon is indigenously produced or imported.

(HT, 01.09.04)

Sustainable India

Sustainable Power

Jawaharlal Nehru National College of Engineering (JNNCE) in Shimoga, Karnataka, is heading towards achieving self-reliance in power production. This was the result of research work taken up by Dr. L. K. Sreepathi, Department of Mechanical Engineering, through which he established a Biomass Gasifier plant for sustainable power.

Karnataka has been facing a power crunch for several years now, and tapping of energy stored in biomass could be an answer to this.

(TNIE, 24.09.04)

Agro-Waste Fuel to Replace Furnace Fuel

In a major initiative to promote ecofriendly and sustainable development, the Kerala State Planning Board has worked out a project to replace furnace fuels with agro-waste fuel in factories. The project titled 'Biomass Gasification of Fuels' will be launched this financial year. The project envisages replacement of furnace oil, diesel and other related fuels used in boilers with fuel made from agro-wastes like husk, tapioca stalk and coconut shells.

(TNIE, 19.09.04)

Green Cow

Parliament's standing committee on science and technology has suggested that a portion of biotechnology research be committed to breed low-fat milk generating and less methane producing special cows, to control climate change. Low fat helps to develop the immune system, improves lactose utilisation and relieves diarrhoea.

There are over two million ruminants including cattle, sheep, goat, camel, etc. worldwide. In all, animals are believed to be responsible for 20 percent of global anthropogenic methane emission, one of the green house gases. It is produced during fermentation of feed in the rumen. It takes away 5-15 percent of the gross energy along with a total waste of Rs. 2 crore worth of animal feed per day in India, better termed as unproductive use of dietary energy.

(TOI, 30.08.04)



Japan Struggles to Meet Kyoto Target

Japan will fail to meet its Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing greenhouse gases unless it buys a large quantity of emissions credits from other countries, according to analysts and diplomats, underlining the credibility problems of the unratified international treaty.

Japan, where the protocol was drawn up in 1997, has been seen as crucial to the success of the agreement, which has not been ratified by the US. Under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, Japan pledged to slash its GHG emissions by six percent from 1990 levels by 2012. But Tokyo is falling behind on this promise; fiscal 2002 emissions were 7.6 percent higher than in 1990.

(JT, 07.08.04 & FT, 16.09.04)

US to Join Global Methane Initiative

The United States which has evaded signing the Kyoto Protocol would now join India, Australia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, United Kingdom and Ukraine, in an international climate-change initiative to recover and use methane as a clean energy source. Methane is the second most abundant GHG after carbon dioxide. The Methane to Markets Partnership will be officially launched in November at a ministerial conference in Washington.

(FE, 04.08.04)

Clean Coal? Squeeze it

Victorian scientists have found a way of drying brown coal that could cut greenhouse emissions by a third - they squeezed it. Research scientists in Clayton have perfected a process that removes 70 percent of the water from brown coals found in Victoria and South Australia, resulting in huge reductions in greenhouse gases when the coal is burnt in a power station

(TA, 04.08.04)

European GHG Emissions Decline

Emissions of greenhouse gases have declined after two years of increase in the EU15, data from the European Commission and the European Environment Agency has shown. The figures show a drop of 0.5 percent between 2001 and 2002 of the six greenhouse gases identified in the Kyoto Protocol and take the EU a small step closer to its target of an eight percent cut within the next eight years.

(Edie, 16.07.04)

Impact of Global Warming

Australia to Face Water Crisis: According to the report "Climate Change - Solutions for Australia" by the Australian Climate Group, Australia is likely to suffer increasing water shortages, extreme weather events and natural disasters such as floods and droughts if it fails to cut its GHG emissions by 60 percent by 2050. The group, an alliance of scientists, the finance sector and WWF, claims that Australia's current water shortages are clearly linked to global warming, and that CO₂ emissions are contributing to the frequency and severity of droughts as well as a decline in winter rainfall in southern Australia.

(Edie, 09.07.04)

Belgium to be Affected: A study carried out by the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) that was commissioned by the environmental campaign group, Greenpeace, warned that Brussels would become a coastal capital by the year 3000 as Antwerp disappears beneath the waves, because of global warming. It predicted that Belgium will experience milder winters and more heatwaves in the summer. Temperatures were predicted to rise by around 4.9 degrees in winter and 6.6 degrees in the summer.

(Edie, 17.09.04)

Wine Grapes under Threat: According to a study by Dr Chris Field, director of the Carnegie Institution's Department of Global Ecology, California's illustrious wine industry could be destroyed unless more is done to cut GHG emissions. Due to increase in GHG emissions, heat waves will become more intense and crop irrigation will be disrupted.



(Edie, 03.09.04)

China's Rice Output to be Affected: Top rice grower China could see output of the staple crop plummet because of global warming, a study carried out by British and Chinese scientists said. The research has shown that yields of three staple crops - rice, wheat and maize - may fall by as much as 37 percent over the coming century, unless future levels of carbon emission are curbed.

(BL, 14.09.04)

Mt. Everest is Shrinking: A recent scientific, survey carried out by the Chinese Academy of Sciences has revealed that the world's highest peak, Mount Everest, is shrinking and is gradually losing its height by nearly 0.1 metres annually due to global warming and shrinking of glaciers in the Himalayas region.



(AA, 07.09.04)

Clean Power from Waste Coal

A new process using methane gas and waste coal could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This new technology being developed in Queensland, Australia, has the potential to reduce the nation's greenhouse emissions by more than three percent. The process will provide Australian coal mines with a way to dispose of waste coal that is better for the environment and will also increase the profitability of underground mining.

(TT, 16.07.04)

Record CO₂ Concentration in Atmosphere

Carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere today are perhaps the highest in the last 20 million years, the director general of the Delhi-based The Energy and Resources Institute, has said. This unprecedented concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) has led to the 1990s being, perhaps, the warmest decade globally. Even in 2003, high temperature records were broken all around the globe. London witnessed the first three digit Fahrenheit temperature and about 15,000 people died in France due to temperatures that have not been seen since 1873.

(TH, 12.09.04)

Proposal to Cut Gas Emission

SRF Ltd is keen to reduce emission of trifluoromethane (HFC-23) from the company's chemical business plant at Bhiwadi in Rajasthan. To this end, the board of directors has cleared a capital expenditure proposal worth Rs 12.7 crore (phase-I) for GHG emission reduction through thermal oxidation. HFC-23 is a GHG with global warming potential. It is generated as an unwanted product (one could even say a by-product) during the manufacture of HCFC-22 (chlorodifluoromethane), which is used as a refrigerant in several applications and also as a chemical feedstock for manufacturing synthetic polymers.

(BL, 06.07.04)

Global Warming Related to Evolution of Wildlife

Scientists have for the first time, found a direct relationship between global warming and the evolution of contemporary wildlife, reported UNI. The scientists saw a decline in the population of both species during the Medieval Warm Period (850 - 1350 A.D.) when their habitats dried up and an increase during the Little Ice Age (1350-1950) when the climate was wetter. These findings established a direct correlation between climate change and population size, the press release said.



(FPJ, 10.09.04)

Climate Change Triggers Deadly Fires

Recent forest fires raging across Portugal could be the direct result of extreme weather conditions caused by global warming, according to experts at Friends of the Earth (FoE). The rising temperatures in Portugal have sparked over 10,000 individual fires, which have now devastated more than 66,224 acres of forestland throughout the country. Hundreds of firefighters, backed by water trucks and helicopters have been battling the blaze, but the heat and strong dry winds have made them difficult to control.

(Edie, 30.07.04)

Consensus of Business About Global Warming

Consensus is growing among scientists, governments, and business that they must act fast to combat climate change. This has already sparked efforts to limit CO₂ emissions. Many companies are now preparing for a carbon-constrained world. Researchers under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have pondered the evidence and concluded that the earth is warming, that humans are probably the causes, and that the threat is real enough to warrant an immediate response.

(ET, 15.08.04)

Step towards Phasing out ODS

The Ozone layer, that protects human beings from life threatening ultraviolet rays of the sun, is depleting fast. So both developed and developing countries should come forward regardless of political barriers to guard the ozone layer. This was the main theme of a workshop jointly conducted by the environment ministry of Pakistan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The ministry in collaboration with



United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) had started three projects for phasing out ODS under the Montreal Protocol.

(WTR, August 2004)

Infamous Five

The attorney general of eight US states and the corporation council of New York City are taking five of US' biggest power companies to the court as they are some of the largest contributors to global warming in the country. This is the first time an accusation is brought by state and local government against private companies on global warming.

The objective is not to recover the monetary damages from the companies but to fight against global warming. So the action will be to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide by three percent every year for the next ten years. Two land groups represented by the Natural Resource Defence Council have brought another legal action against these five companies. These cases represent a new frontier in the fight against global warming.

(DTE, 31.08.04)

United States Seek Pesticide Exception

The United States have requested yet another waiver for the continued use of the ozone-harming pesticide methyl bromide. Scheduled to be phased out next year under the Montreal Protocol, the pesticide has been linked to prostate cancer and neurological damage as well as contributing to destruction of the world's protective ozone layer. The Bush Administration's repeated requests for waivers has been a source of controversy as the US exemption for methyl bromide is twice as large as the combined waivers obtained by other countries included in the treaty.

(Edie, 16.07.04)

Acid Rain Limits Global Warming

Acid rain restricts global warming by reducing methane emissions from natural wetland areas, suggests a global climate study. Acid rain is the result of industrial pollution, which causes rainwater to carry small quantities of acidic compounds such as sulphuric and nitric acid. Contaminated rainwater can upset rivers and lakes, killing fish and other organisms. But the new study shows that sulphur in acid rain, may have benefits, limiting global warming by counteracting the natural production of methane gases by microbes in wetland areas.



(TNIE, 29.08.04)

Petrol from Rock and Water

Long-dead plant matter may not be the world's only source of hydrocarbons. Beneath its surface, in hellish temperatures and high pressures, the earth may be generating methane, say researchers who have squeezed common rock and water together to reproduce these conditions. The finding was made at the Geophysical Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, a leader in studying geology at high pressures, and is being reported in The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

(DH, 27.09.04)

Bio-diesel from Nahar Seeds

Once again the northeast region of India may emerge as the fuel supplier of the country. In an era of constant search for alternative fuel, prudent steps by the region's people may make them the enviable world leaders in matters of bio-diesel in the days to come. A research in the Assam's Tezpur University has led to the conviction that the oil of the nahar tree (*Mesua ferrea* L) seeds has a bright prospect in this field. A scientists' team under Prof Dolon Konwer of the University's Energy Department is working for production of bio-diesel from nahar seeds. The Union Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources sponsors the project.

(AT, 24.09.04)

Nagpur Duo Finds Petrol in Plastic Waste

Even as international concern grows with crude oil prices, Alka and Umesh Zadgaonkar, a couple from Nagpur is preparing to deliver a cheap, eco-friendly alternative. Refused support by the Oil Industries Development Board, the government funding agency in the petroleum sector, the Zadgaonkars approached the State Bank of India (SBI) for a loan to set up a Rs 8-crore project to produce petroleum from waste plastic. The country produces 7,000 tonnes of waste plastic daily. With the SBI Technical Cell passing the proposal after a thorough study, their Unique Waste Plastic Management and Research Company Pvt Ltd's plant is set to start production by December.

(IE, 19.09.04)

Sunflower Oil to Power Future Cars, Homes

According to British scientists, a new, greener way to power cars and homes in sunflower oil, a commodity more commonly used for cooking fries. Producing hydrogen from sunflower oil could provide a more environmentally friendly alternative by reducing pollutants while offering an abundant, low-cost and renewable resource. Researchers from Leeds University in England have found a promising method for producing hydrogen from sunflower oil.



(PA, 27.08.04 & TH, 02.09.04)

Fuel Cells no Bigger than Sugar Cubes?

Solid-oxide fuel cells - which use hydrogen and oxygen to produce an electric current - traditionally have been adapted to provide power for larger facilities such as homes, buildings and spacecraft. Now researchers at the University of Houston's Texas Centre for Superconductivity and Advanced Materials (TcSAM) are developing a solid-oxide fuel cell ideally no bigger than a sugar cube to power portable devices such as laptops and spacesuits at lower cost and increased durability, they said.

(TP, 05.08.04)

India's Energy Initiative

Hoardings to be Lit up by Solar Power: The Delhi government has decided to make use of solar power mandatory for lighting up hoardings besides heating up water in buildings. The move forms part of the Centre's plan to provide electricity to 25,000 remote villages from renewable sources by 2007 and to all households in by 2012.

(TOI, 07.09.04)

BSNL to power rural telephone exchanges with solar energy: The UP east circle of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has come out with a novel idea of energising telephone exchanges in rural areas, where either there is no power, or is only available for a few hours, with solar energy. There are about 1,751 rural exchanges in UP east circle of BSNL, of which 1,644 telephone exchanges are very small, with erratic power supply. The UP east circle has decided to run these telephone exchanges with solar panels.

(FE, 16.09.04)

Electricity from Babool Tree: The health benefits of the babool, a thorny mimosa, are well known. Now research is on in Rajasthan to produce electricity through the plant that grows widely in the state. According to an official if the effort proved successful, electricity generated would be much cheaper than that from conventional sources like thermal, hydro-power or gas.

(ST, 18.09.04)

Haryana Boasts Solar Energy: Haryana has allocated a fund of Rs. 6.7 crore with the target of installing 6998 solar home lighting systems, 300 solar street lighting systems and 500 solar pumps during the year.

(BL, 16.08.04)

Solar Lanterns: 6.6 lakh rural households out of 23 lakh households with no power connection in Karnataka have been provided with a solar lantern this year. All the 23 lakh households in rural areas would be provided with lanterns in a phased manner.

(TNIE, 20.08.04)

Kancheepuram Takes the Solar Route: Currently 115 solar-powered streetlights and 40 biogas plants are operating in Kancheepuram, which proves the use of non-conventional energy sources for lightning and cooking. This will serve the common people through reducing the electricity bills of streetlights, supplying free gas to houses.

(TH, 12.08.04)

Japan Assists Power Generation Master Plan

The Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has undertaken to work with the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) in preparation of the Master Plan Study on Development of the Power Generation and Transmission System in Sri Lanka. Preparation of a Scope of Work for the above Master Plan Study was carried out by a JICA Study Team and CEB officials during the period from July 25 to August 7, 2004. JICA and the CEB agreed on the Scope of Work for the Master Plan study, which will cover the whole country including the North and

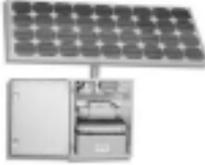
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East Provinces. The objective of the study is to prepare a comprehensive master plan of 20 years for generation and transmission system expansion for Sri Lanka.

(DN, 03.09.04)

California to Tap Solar Power

California is proposing to add solar power to a million homes in the next 10 years, paid for by a surcharge on consumers' electricity bills equivalent to about 27 cents a month. The plan, proposed by the California Environmental Protection Agency, is intended to honour the election pledge of California's Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, to ensure that half of all new homes in the state are built with solar power facilities.



(TH, 07.08.04)

Sri Lanka to Face Another Power Crisis Next Year

Sri Lanka will face another power crisis next year, if measures are not taken to overcome the worsening situation, the Grid Connected Small Power Developers Association President Dr. Nishantha Nanayakkara warned. He said that with an annual demand growth rate at nine percent, the Ceylon Electricity Board will be forced to resort to high cost power purchasing from outside. "This will result in an additional burden on the Treasury", he added.

(TI, 17.09.04)

UK Set to Miss Renewable Energy Targets

The UK is set to miss its own targets of generating 10 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2010, according to a report by the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee. The report gives recommendations and analysis for all forms of renewable energy, and is critical of the government's reliance on market mechanisms to keep electricity affordable

(Edie, 16.07.04)

Wind Farm Blows New Life into Spanish Village

The village of Higuera is dwarfed by the 15-story high windmills of Europe's largest wind farm, but none of its residents are complaining. While some might consider the turbines an eyesore, in this farming village in one of Spain's least developed regions, Castille-La Mancha, Two new schools are testament to the improvements the plant has brought the isolated village, where an annual 2,400 hours of wind make it a prime site for generating power. Wind speeds of 10 mph are enough to set the mills in motion, and with 161 megawatts of installed capacity, the complex can meet the electricity needs of around 640,000 people.

(ENN, 08.07.04)

Cheap Renewable Energy Systems Stressed

The participants of a symposium "Private Sector Participation in Small and Medium Size Hydropower Development" in Islamabad (Pakistan) stressed Pakistan should develop inexpensive renewable energy systems, particularly in hydropower, to meet its growing energy demands. The two-day symposium was organised by the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) in collaboration with German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Integration-Environment & Energy GmbH at the Wapda Staff College.

(Dawn, 21.09.04)

Talk to Solve Power Woes

Ontario, Canada, is in talks with TransAlta Corp. aimed at getting a C\$500mn (\$380mn) power plant running full-out to help avoid electricity shortages in Canada's biggest market. The talks are part of several initiatives by the Ontario government to convince private-sector generators that the chaos that enveloped past efforts to restructure the province's huge power industry are over.

(Planet Ark, 06.08.04)

Hewitt Pledges £50mn for Wave and Tidal Power

Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has pledged £50mn to help ensure the UK is a world leader in wave and tidal power this week. In addition, Stephen Timms, Energy Minister, announced plans for the review of the renewables obligation.

Announcing the £50mn Marine Research Development fund, Ms Hewitt said: "The UK's wave and tidal flows are the greatest in Europe and I want to ensure we harness these immense natural resources to generate power for the UK."

(Edie, 05.08.04)

German Firm to Set up Power Plant in Thar

A leading German power producer has shown keen interest in setting up 1,000MW power generation plant in Thar, (Pakistan) region at a cost of about 2.4 bn euros. In this regard, a delegation headed by Sindh Chief Minister Dr Ghulam Arbab Rahim is leaving for Germany on August 8. Provincial Mines and Minerals Minister Irfanullah Khan Marwat stated this at a press conference.

(BR, 04.08.04)

India and Russia Research on Gas Hydrates

A programme on gas hydrate research has been initiated by the government to identify an alternative source of energy. As part of this, an Indo-Russian Science and Technology Centre for gas hydrate studies has been set up in the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) campus at Chennai.

This centre will take up detailed investigations on gas hydrates, as a joint research programme between India and Russia, department of ocean development secretary Harsh K Gupta said.

(FE, 09.08.04)

Ireland Turns to Wind-Powered Energy

According to Ireland's Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, wind power will be the key to reaching government targets for combating climate change. Announcing the planning proposals for optimizing wind power, the Irish government stated that achieving a wind energy level of 13 percent of total energy needs by 2010 would "bolster the government's national climate change strategy and reduce our dependency on dirty fossil fuels."

(Edie, 06.08.04)



Say No to E-Waste!

With the growing need of electronic goods in our daily life, we are hardly aware of the fact that each year India is producing \$1.5bn worth of e-waste. These goods contain highly toxic chemicals that can pollute soil, groundwater and air in landfills and unscientific recycling units.

Thus, there is an urgent need for environmentally sound technologies to treat e-waste. In a report, Toxics Link, an NGO has pointed out that the recycling of e-waste requires sophisticated technology and processes, which are very expensive and need specific skills and training.

India has no law on collection and disposal of e-waste. To combat this problem of rising e-waste, manufacturers can be encouraged to buy or take back their products from consumers after they are done with them. A Pune-based rural organisation has sent 28,000 used computers to rural schools. This could be one of the ways to make India free from e-waste.

(TOI, 19.07.04)

**'Eighteenth Elephant' in Race for Green Oscar**

A documentary film in Malayalam will vie for the prestigious 'Green Oscar' prize instituted by Wildscreen Trust at the biennial environmental film festival to be held at Bristol, UK, in October. 'Eighteenth Elephant - three monologues' on the plight of pachyderms, directed by P.Balan, is among the final list of 30 environmental films selected from around 410 entries from across the world.

Four other films from India include Mike Pandey's 'Vanishing Giants,' Ajay and Vijay Bedi's 'Policing Langur,' a film on rain water harvesting by Nandita Das and one on 'Tiger Poaching' by NDTV. These films will contest for the prestigious award under the category 'Television Trust for Environment.'

(TNIE, 13.07.04)

EU Green Taxation Stabilises in 2002

Environmental taxation in the EU-15 in 2002 accounted for 6.5 percent of all taxes and social contributions and 2.7 percent of GDP, the EU statistical office Eurostat has reported. Both figures are unchanged from 2001, after two successive annual falls. In an overview of EU tax trends to 2002, Eurostat estimates that energy taxes made up 77 percent of environmental tax receipts, transport taxes 20 percent and pollution and resource taxes together just three percent.

Denmark had by far the highest ratio of environmental taxes to gross domestic product (GDP), at 4.8 percent. The ratio was above three percent in the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland. At the other end of the scale, France, Spain, Ireland and Belgium each had ratios under 2.5 percent.

(Ede, 09.07.04)

'Green GDP' Growth

Shanxi province, the first Chinese province to calculate 'green GDP' - economic production less environmental costs - has concluded it barely grew during the country's expansion over the past two decades. The province, a coal-mining heartland south west of Beijing, found that in 2002 its green GDP was a mere 66 percent of the officially announced Rmb 13 bn if costs incurred through environmental degradation and resource exploitation were counted.

(FT, 19.08.04)

Deaths from Air Pollution to Rise

Liberal Democrat Shadow Environment Secretary, Norman Baker MP, has warned that up to 100,000 deaths could be caused over the next 20 years as a result of air pollution from increasing levels of ozone. Figures from the national air quality archive have shown that ozone, a major air pollutant, is exceeding dangerous levels and has been increasing year on year since 1997, and that in 2003, average ozone levels were up 32 percent since 1997 in UK.

(Ede, 05.08.04)

Ammonia may Raise Salivary Gland Cancer Risk

New research raises the possibility that exposure to ammonia in air pollution may increase the risk of salivary gland cancer, a rare cancer for which there are few known risk factors. In a county-by-county breakdown in South Carolina, USA, researchers found that the risk of dying from salivary gland cancer was greatest in counties with the highest levels of ammonia in the air. But the increased risk was seen only in white men, not white women or African Americans.

(PA, 11.08.04)

Asian Soot is Clouding New England Skies

Scientists engaged in a major study of air quality and climate change have discovered that pollutants from Asia are hanging high over New England and the Atlantic. The research aimed at clarifying how smokestack and auto emissions travel and change in the atmosphere. The discovery is the first observation of Asian pollution plumes over the East Coast of North America, and it suggests that improvements in American air quality could be threatened as Asian countries rapidly become more industrialised, one lead researcher said.

(IHT, 11.08.04)

**No Breathing Space**

On June 24, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) announced the findings of its 10-year long study 'Epidemiologic investigation to identify chronic health effects of ambient air pollutants in southern California'.

The study is based on 5,500 children from 52 schools, both outdoor and indoor pollution measurements in schools and homes. Annual information on respiratory symptoms and diseases, physical activity, time spent outdoors, and factors such as parental smoking and pets in house were also collected.

The report reveals that exposure to nitrogen dioxide, atmospheric acidity and fine and coarse pollutant particles are the causes behind the deficits in lung function. Active children living in areas having high ozone concentration are more prone to develop asthma. Moreover, short-term exposures to high ozone levels were associated with an increase in school absence.

(DTE, 15.08.04)

Sri Lanka Drafts Vehicle Emission Testing Policy

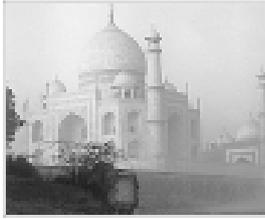
Vehicle emission is a major cause of air pollution. Sri Lanka Transport Ministry has drafted a Vehicle Emission Testing (VET) policy which aims at reducing vehicle emissions. The policy prepared in collaboration with the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry is yet to receive Cabinet approval, Transport Ministry Secretary Dr. D. S. Jayaweera said.

(DN, 23.08.04)

3/2004

Toxic Environment Takes its Toll on Monument

The 350-year-old Taj Mahal is ageing fast because of its toxic environment. While dirty air is affecting its marble exterior, the dirtier water of the Yamuna threatens its foundation. The waters laced with chemicals cling on to the sandstone foundation resulting in chemical reaction where the stones deteriorate, weakening the entire monument.



(HT, 29.09.04)

Irish Litter Pollution Figures Drop

National cleanliness rates are improving, but cigarettes are the single biggest cause of litter and litter-related pollution in Ireland, according to a report produced by the Irish Litter Monitoring Body. Half of Ireland's litter related pollution is caused by the careless disposal of cigarettes. The report is an invaluable source of information on littering trends, providing crucial statistical information about the nature and extent of litter pollution in Ireland.

(Edie, 20.08.04)

Environment-Health Linkage Module for Students

The Himalaya Drug Company along with Tata Energy Research Institute (Teri), an NGO, has launched a year-long awareness programme on environment-health linkages for school and college students in Bangalore. Divided into three modules, the programme will involve research, finding practical solutions for pollution and implementing them. Students will be involved in activities such as photography, street theatre, debates, essay writing, quiz, music, cartooning, slogans, crosswords, banner painting, news letter preparation and field visits.

(DH, 17.08.04)

Pollution High in the Thames

Safety watchdogs have launched a year-long study into whether pollution in Britain's river Thames is putting public health at risk. The investigation follows mounting concern over discharges of untreated sewage into the river and is another blow to the public perception that the Thames is cleaner than it has been for centuries. Agencies have warned people not to row, canoe or sail after heavy rainfall downstream of Teddington Lock, where the tidal river starts, because of health hazards.

(The Hindu, 28.08.04)

Air Pollution Hits Record Levels in Hong Kong

Air pollution in Hong Kong has hit record levels, the government said, and it warned people with heart or respiratory problems to stay indoors. The new record highlights the vulnerability of the city to pollution drifting from the rapidly industrialising Chinese mainland and the futility of attempts in recent years to clean up the city's air. Government figures showed the air pollution index hit a record of 201 recently, putting it into the "most severe" classification. The index eased to 140 in the Central business district and 123 in Mongkok, one of Hong Kong's most crowded market and shopping districts, but those levels were still classed as "very high."

(PA, 16.09.04)

Dire Pollution in North Korea

The forests in North Korea are depleted, its rives and streams are filled with run off from factories and the country's reliance on coal energy has created severe urban air pollution, the United Nations said in its first report on the Communist nation's environment. The evaluation, by the UN Environment Programme, was completed late last year with the help of the North Korean government, but its release was delayed until a delegation from the North visited the agency's headquarters, in Nairobi, to sign an agreement on future cooperation to protect the environment.

(IHT, 28.08.04)

UK Air Pollution 'will Claim More Lives'

Air pollution will continue to claim lives in Britain because the air quality targets set for 2005 and 2010 will not be met, Mike Pilling of the University of Leeds told a British Association meeting. London will remain polluted with nitrogen dioxide and particles from traffic and other fossil fuel burning. Roads and main urban centres are likely to remain unhealthy environments. Further problems will blow in from abroad, according to studies of drifting pollution.

(TG, 08.09.04)

Fishing Warnings up due to Mercury Pollution

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has cautioned Americans about eating fish from more than one-third of US lakes and nearly one-fourth of its rivers last year due to pollution from mercury and other chemicals. Nationwide, about 102,000 lakes and about 846,000 river miles were under fishing advisories in 2003, the EPA said in its annual report. Fishing advisories are issued by states if high concentrations of mercury, dioxin, DDT or three dozen other chemicals harmful to humans are found in local fish.

The advisories range from an outright ban on all fishing to restrictions on certain species or sizes of fish.

(Planet Ark, 25.08.04)



Reducing Traffic Emissions Key to Cleaner London

Traffic emissions were identified as the main cause of air pollution at a conference held by Environmental and Sustainable Transport (EAST) to celebrate 50 years of air quality action. Deputy chairman of Barclays Bank, Sir Brian Jenkins, opened by discussing the infamous pea-souper smog of 1952, caused by black smoke from coal burning, which was eradicated after London became a smokeless zone in 1954. He then compared this to another smog, in 1991, which was caused by emissions from motor vehicles.

(Edie, 16.07.04)

'Gau Mutra' Replacing Pesticides in Kutch

Greens fighting against pesticides may find something to cheer about in Kutch in Gujarat. Farmers in many villages in the district have found a unique way to keep the pests away - 'gau mutra' (cow urine). Using 'gau mutra' in place of inorganic pesticides has given the farmers a good yield. It is also eco-friendly and has helped save a lot of money.

(TOI, 09.08.04)



Basic Needs



Poverty Rising Faster in Cities

Poverty ratio in India has been on the decline. From 1977-78 to 1999-2000, both urban and rural poverty ratios declined by almost the same margin. However, absolute figures tell another story. It seems that the number of urban poor actually rose, even when the number of rural poor declined. The number of rural poor stood at 193m in 1999-2000, down by 71m from 264m in 1977-78. On the other hand, the number of urban poor rose from 65m in 1977-78 to 67m during 1999-2000. The rural poverty ratio from 1977-78 to 1999-2000 declined from 53 percent to 27 percent, while the urban poverty ratio declined from 45 percent to 24 percent.



(ET, 14.07.04)

Poor Nations not Benefiting from MDGs

Although the broad global consensus around a set of clear, measurable and time-bound development objectives, widely described as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has generated unprecedented coordinated action across the world, progress has been hardest to come by in the poorest countries, the United Nations (UN) has warned. The MDGs set targets for progress in eight areas:

Basic Needs in India

Foodgrains at Lower Rates: The state government of Karnataka has announced subsidised foodgrain facility for 75.76 lakh families living below the poverty line from September 1, as an Independence Day gift. Government had already distributed same number of cards to the poor families. Each card assures 20 kg of rice and 5 kg of wheat at Rs.3 a Kg.

(TH, 16.08.04)

India's Public Health Spending: India ranks 171st out of 175 countries in terms of public spending on health. On the other hand it ranks 18th in terms of private spending on health. The most recent review of country's health sector reveals that there is one doctor per 1800 people and per bed there are 1123 people. The Study also reflects the crying need of more than 42000 doctors and paramedics in just government run hospitals only.

(TNN, 28.07.04)

High on Harmony, Low on Development: India ranked 127 out of 177 countries as per the latest Human Development Report. HDI is based on the country's performance in terms of life expectancy, education and per capita gross domestic product. Though 127th rank of India is unchanged since last year but she went down from 115th position (HDI, 2001). For this situation partial blame goes to the poor performance of education index.

(TOI, 16.07.04)

Insurance Scheme for Poor: Facing a serious situation in the healthcare for the poor, the Andhra Pradesh Government has decided to launch a health insurance scheme for the poor. Under this scheme, each beneficiary will have to contribute Rs. seven to Rs. 10 per month and the Government will make its own contribution to the premium. Initially, the scheme will be implemented in five to six mandals of every district on a pilot basis.

(TP, 14.08.04)

poverty and hunger; primary education; women's equality; child mortality; maternal health; disease; environment; and a global partnership for development.

(BL 09.09.04)

Children Suffering from Poverty, Malnutrition

Death rates are rising among more than 400,000 children in Eritrea who are living in extreme poverty with many youngsters under five suffering from acute malnutrition, according to a new United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report. The agency called for an additional \$3.8mn to fund health, nutrition, water and sanitation projects and to support children displaced by the crisis in the East African country.

With 425,000 children under the age of 14 affected, child mortality rates have risen to 15 per day per 100,000 children in some areas due to the extreme water shortages. UNICEF is supporting 30,000 malnourished children with supplementary food and providing 30 therapeutic feeding centres with supplies and equipment.

(UNNS, 26.07.04)

Africa's Poorest 'should not Pay Back Debt'

A senior United Nations economic adviser suggested that impoverished African countries should refuse to pay foreign debt worth tens of billions of dollars. Jeffrey Sachs, a special adviser to Kofi Annan, UN secretary general, told, "The time has come to end this charade, the debts are unaffordable." He added, "No civilised country should try to collect the debts of people that are dying of hunger and disease and poverty."

(FT, 06.07.04)

Ambitious HIV Plan Slowed by Obstacles

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said that its controversial effort to deliver antiretroviral therapy to three million HIV-infected people in poor countries by the end of 2005 can still be met despite obstacles that have severely limited the number now under treatment.

The programme known as 'three by five' has been controversial since the WHO's director general, Dr Lee Jong Wook, announced it last fall after declaring the lack of anti-HIV treatment to be a global public health emergency.



(IHT, 12.07.04)

World Bank lauds India's efforts in reducing poverty

World Bank has appreciated India's effort in poverty reduction while registering a healthy growth rate among the other South Asian countries. According to its publication, Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics 2003, released in July, the region still houses about 40 percent of the world's poor and therefore a strong performance in South Asia is crucial for achieving the millennium development goals at a global level.

(FE, 31.07.04)

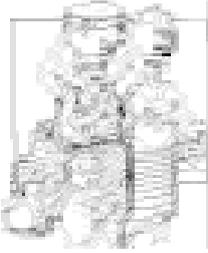
36mn Americans Live in Poverty

Some 1.3mn Americans slid into poverty in 2003 as the ranks of the poor rose four per cent to 35.9mn, with children and blacks worse off than most, the Census Bureau said in its annual poverty report. Despite the economic recovery, the percentage of the US population living in poverty rose for the third straight year to 12.5 percent - the highest since 1998 - from 12.1 percent in 2002. One-third of those in poverty were children.

(HT, 28.08.04)

3/2004

One Billion People Still Drink Unsafe Water



In the report "Meeting the Millennium Development Goals", the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF have warned that more than one billion people drink unsafe water and over 2.6 bn have no access to basic sanitation. Children were particularly vulnerable to sicknesses brought on by dirty water and poor hygiene. Diarrhoea kills

some 1.8 mn people each year, most of them children under five, with millions left permanently debilitated. The report aims to measure progress in achieving the UN target of halving the percentage of people around the world without safe water and sanitation by 2015.

(PA, 27.08.04)

Needs for Better Nutrition Among Children

Asia is home to two thirds of the world's poor and malnourished. One of two children living in the Asian region are underweight. These are some worrying nutritional facts doled out at the inaugural session of the three day Regional Ministerial Consultation on Maternal and Child Nutrition in Asian Countries recently.

(AA, 16.09.04)

China Fears Food Crisis as Imports Hit \$14bn

China has become a net importer of farm produce, raising concerns at the highest levels of government about the security of the food supply for 1.3bn people as land and water shortages put pressure on domestic grain production. Hu Jintao, China's president, has commissioned urgent studies on food security after evidence in 2003 and this year that China's grain output was dwindling as demand rises in the long term, officials and academics said.

(FT, 23.08.04)

Impact of Global Trade on Food Security

Almost all Asian countries have pledged at several international fora as well as at national levels to reduce their number of hungry and food-insecure. In fact the member countries of the United Nations in New York in 1995 decided to work for specific goals of human development and pledged to reduce the number of poor and hungry in their respective countries by half by the year 2015. A study recently conducted by the Asian Development Research Forum (ADRF) at this juncture to assess the situation in select Asian countries is, therefore, appropriate.

(FE, 13.09.04)

Ugandan Database of Social Development

Praising Uganda for setting up a national database containing measures from more than 200 indicators of social development, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said it would help the African country monitor its progress towards achieving its anti-poverty goals. UgandaInfo, which was developed by the Ugandan Government with the help of UNICEF, comprises data from key indicators in such fields as education, health and poverty.

The database will provide the backbone to efficient decision-making and resource allocation.

(UNNS, 06.07.04)

Japanese Food Aid for Hungry

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has welcomed a \$40mn Japanese donation to help millions of



needy people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), hard hit by a decade of floods, droughts and economic hardship. WFP is appealing for \$171mn for 2004 and before the Japanese donation, it had received only \$28mn, leaving a shortfall of 83 percent.

(UNNS, 05.08.04)

Basic Needs

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All About the Water of Life

Kitulgala water project launched: 3000 people in the Kitulgala area (Sri Lanka) would be provided with drinking water and sanitary facilities, under the Rural Water and Sanitation Programme, funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

(DM, 21.08.04)

Plan to instal water meters criticized: The Network for Consumer Protection has criticized the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) and Asian Development Bank's (ADB) plan to install water meters in Rawalpindi city (Pakistan) at approximately 80,000 households. A press release issued by the Network said WASA's plan to sell drinking water to 80,000 houses in Rawalpindi city was a violation of fundamental human rights enshrined in the Constitution.

(Dawn, 26.08.04)

World water improves: The world is on track to halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015 but is lagging well behind a similar target for sanitation, according to a United Nations study published. The report, by the World Health Organisation and the UNICEF says more than 2.6 bn people - half the developing world -lack basic sanitation.

(FT, 27.08.04)

Half the world still without sanitation and safe water: Over a billion people must drink unsafe water, while nearly half of the world's population has no access to proper sanitation, UN agencies have reported. A report compiled by UN children's fund UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has shown that 40% of the earth's population does not have the most basic sanitation available to them. It also states that, if nothing is done to tackle the problem, around 2.4 billion people will be left drinking unsafe water in 11 years time.

(Edie, 03.09.04)

Indians in murky waters: Million of Indians living in around two lakh habitations all over the country are facing a severe health hazard as they consume water which has dangerously high presence of flouride, iron, nitrate, arsenic and salinity. West Bengal, Tamil nadu, Rajasthan, Nagaland, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are the worst affected states in this regard. According to latest information available with the Union Ministry of Rural Development 36,988 habitations are drinking water contaminated with fluoride beyond permissible limits.

(TS, 30.09.04)

Project Overview

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Peer Group Review Meeting on 'Stocktaking of Progress Towards Sustainability' (SoPS) - A Pilot study of Recent Indian Initiatives

The Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India (MoEF) commissioned CUTS to conduct a survey on the status of implementation of certain laws related to the environment viz: the Ecomark scheme, ozone depleting substances, lead-acid batteries, fly ash, and the Biodiversity Law and Rules. The research was based on literature survey and interviews with important corporate and non-corporate stakeholders. As part of the project, a one-day peer group meeting was organised by

Calcutta Resource Centre (CUTS-CRC) at the India International Centre, New Delhi on Oct 28, 2004, to review the draft report and to cull more inputs on the subjects from experts.



About 50 experts in the above fields attended the meeting and gave their considered comments. Ms Meena Gupta, Additional Secretary, MoEF and Mr Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General CUTS, spoke in the inaugural session and provided the right springboard for the erudite discussions that followed during the rest of the day.

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