

International policy on sustainable production and consumption has not received the due importance even after 10 years of the Earth Summit at Rio. The action plan to achieve sustainable production and consumption remains under the domination of developed countries. This is resulting in negative impact on the developing countries. As a result, the governments in such developing countries are hesitating to press for effective policy initiatives on sustainable production and consumption. Hence, little progress is being made on Chapter 4 of Agenda 21.

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) define sustainability as translation of environmental objectives into economic decision-making. Little or no attention is placed on the social aspects of sustainable production and consumption policy.

If there is no social cohesion in sustainable consumption policy, if sustainable consumption policy in developed countries does not mesh with the needs of developing countries, if there is a discrepancy between the aims of sustainable consumption and the means to reach that objective then it is better to redefine such policy.

Market based economic instruments can play a role in making the business sector more efficient. However, such instruments alone will not be able to curb the excessive use of natural resources. Even worse, there is a risk that some citizens, particularly the poor, might resist these economic instruments.

Many feel eco-efficiency is the most logical instrument to attain sustainable production and consumption. One advantage is that 'eco-efficiency' is an instrument that is non controversial and popular with both business and consumers. However, the billion-dollar question is whether 'eco-efficiency' can also serve the need to reduce the use of natural resources. The reality is that eco-efficiency policy has so far only led to more efficiency but disproportionately high use of natural resources still continue in industrial countries.

Although the present industrialisation and globalisation has led to more economic growth and prosperity, that prosperity is not evenly distributed. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to increase.

The concept of economic growth is unsustainable in the long run when one accepts the undeniable reality

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of the ecological limits of the earth and the limits of natural resource use. The effect may be that, although 'monetary poverty' is eased, 'ecological poverty' will increase, due to inequitable distribution of natural resources. This will mean that many poor countries, even when they are faced with more economic growth, will be incapable of developing a reasonable standard of living for every citizen within the ecological limitations.

A possible way as suggested by Manus van Brakkel, might be a transition from the present high input (in terms of natural resources)-high output (in terms of prosperity) consumption to low input-high output consumption patterns. However, the question remains whether such a input-output model is feasible technically.

Further, the advancement of world trade without incorporating sustainable consumption policy in both developed and developing countries can never create a situation in which a respectable standard of living for 10bn people

can be guaranteed.

A policy aimed at sustainable consumption should be developed multilaterally. It should ensure that sustainable consumption policies in both developed and developing countries are mutually supportive.

In order to make this happen, other policies viz. economic instruments, monetary policy, technological policy, etc. are required to be redesigned in such a way that they become consistent with policies to ensure human needs are met in the most optimal way using a minimum amount of natural resources.

## Sustainable Production Consumption-the global challenge



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**Dispute over Recycling of Bottles**

Recently, the glass industry has demanded a ban on the use of second hand bottles by manufacturers of alcoholic beverages. They pointed out that a majority of beer and liquor bottles are being re-used and re-cycled by the beverage companies in an effort to reduce costs. According to a study on recycled glass bottles, 83 percent of beer bottles and 35 percent of liquor bottles in India are re-used.

Countering this, the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has said that recycling of bottles prevents environmental problems and is an eco friendly approach. CIABC informed that state-of-the-art methods are used for washing and cleaning the bottles to ensure hygiene and cleanliness.

The government of India stipulates that returnable bottles that are recycled have to be replaced within six years. The crown must carry information regarding the date of manufacture.

(BS, 03.01.02)

**Coconut Turns Organic**

Organic farming i.e. cultivation without the use of harmful chemicals and pesticides significantly contributes towards improvement of the soil health. This in turn would improve the yield level. Turning organic also helps to reduce input cost thus boosting the profit margin. Thus organic cultivation has been recognised to become an important system to promote sustainable food production.

According to findings of a Indian study team, organic farming of coconuts could be a viable option as there is enough waste biomass available in coconut farms to facilitate organic farming.

Coconut Development Board, the nodal agency to promote the coconut industry in India, has already drawn up extensive guidelines on organic system of cultivation. The guidelines aim to help in conservation of soil and water, to promote the proper use and care of various resources like water, to help maintain and improve the long term fertility of the soil and to reduce the level of pollution.

(ET, 03.01.02)

**GM Crops are Environmentally Risky**

While India's Genetic Engineering Approval Committee was thinking on whether or not to allow commercial cultivation of genetically cotton, the European Union released a study confirming fears that (GM) crops pose an environmental risk.

The study published by the European Environment Agency states that genes will inevitably escape from GM crops, contaminating organic farms, creating superweeds, and driving wild plants to extinction.

This confirms environmentalists' worst fears and would make it difficult for the government to approve the commercial planting of GM crops in Britain.

(TOI, 26.03.02)

**Washing Without Soap!**

Sanyo Electric claim that they have developed a washing machine that could clean clothes with electrolysed water instead of soap.

The ASW-ZR machine can be used for washing clothes without without use of detergent for loads up to 4 kg. The machine relies on electrodes on either side of the drum to pump out dirt by means of electrolysis. Other options allow consumers to use soaps.

This announcement led to the conflict between Sanyo Electric and Japan Soap and Detergent Association (JSDA). JSDA bought several ASW-ZR machines and ran tests on a range of garments. After two months of near-constant washing, they concluded, in a press conference that ASW-ZR not only failed to remove heavy stains but also faded certain colours and stretched fabrics.

Sanyo disagree with JSDA's findings but has so far refused to adopt the association's testing methods that differ significantly from its own.

(FT, 18.01.02)

**India Approves Commercial Release of Bt Cotton**

Indian agriculture has formally entered the transgenic era, with the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) granting the approval for the commercial release of three varieties of transgenic (Bt) cotton seeds namely Mech 12, Mech 162 and Mech 184. These are being manufactured by Mahyco in collaboration with Monsanto.

The approval has been granted for three years starting from April 2002 with the rider that the seed company must ensure refuges between Bt cotton fields as a barrier to pollen flows to non-transgenic crops. The onus of ensuring compliance will rest with the state governments and local bodies. Mahyco will have to report periodically to the GEAC.

(TH, 27.03.02 & ET, 27.06.02)

**Hydrocarbon Fridges Hit Environment**

Toshiba Corp. and Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. have recently introduced hydrocarbon (HC) based refrigerators marking further progress in efforts to move away from chloro-fluorocarbon (CFC) and hydro-fluorocarbon (HFC) based appliances.

The use of CFCs, a known ozone depleting substance, as refrigerants for refrigerators was abolished in Japan in 1995. Currently, HFCs are being used as an alternative to CFCs in the production of refrigerators. But HFCs are also said to cause global warming.

(JT, 19.03.02)

**US Fuel Cell Makers Get Boost**

Announcement by the US President to subsidise US automakers' efforts to develop environmentally friendly fuel cell powered vehicles provided a big boost to them.

Fuel cells are regarded as the ultimate in clean car technology but they are still not ready as they are prohibitively expensive.

(WSJ, 11.01.02)

### Ireland Approves Green Energy Plan

The Irish government has recently approved green energy projects worth 400mn euro (\$346mn). This would significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions while providing electricity for 250,000 homes.

The new projects, resulting from a competitive bidding process under Ireland's Alternative Energy Requirement Programme, will use wind, hydro and biomass technologies to generate environmentally friendly energy, the government said.

Around seven percent of Ireland's electricity is currently generated from renewable sources. The latest investment, backed by the government, would double the amount of electricity generated from renewable energy sources. The latest projects would prevent 1.5mn tonnes of polluting greenhouse gas emissions, and cut Ireland reliance on imported fossil fuels by more than two million barrels of oil a year.

(Reuters, 06.02.02)

### Recycling of Containers Saves Materials, Money

A new study, "Understanding Beverage Container Recycling: A Value Chain Assessment" suggests that United States could double the recycling of beverage containers while saving money. Beverage industry leader Coca-Cola sponsored and participated in the study along with Waste Management Inc. and other industry stakeholders.

"These findings have the potential to break the historic impasse between environmentalists and the beverage industry on bottle bills" said Bill Sheehan of the Grass Roots Recycling Network (GRRN), which worked alongside beverage industry and government representatives on the Multi-Stakeholder Recovery Project (MSRP) that carried out the study.

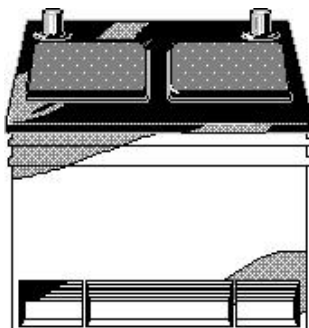
Shaheen also said that while cost effective deposit/return systems do not take us to GRRN's goal of zero waste immediately, they create the infrastructure that encourages producers to move to more sustainable beverage container design and management systems, such as the use of refillable bottles and recyclable materials.

(ENS, 17.01.02)

### Amara Raja Focus on UPS Battery

Amara Raja Batteries Limited (ARBL) plans to focus on two new growth engines-UPS battery segment and exports. ARBL is planning to launch an upgraded version of its existing UPS battery range called Kombat. ARBL is also looking at export markets and has already started exporting to various countries including the UK, Japan, Africa, Middle East and Indonesia.

Growth of batteries is largely driven by infrastructure sectors such as telecom and



railways. ARBL Executive Director said a slowdown in basic telephone services in the last two years has led to the shrinking of the market for telecom batteries.

(FE, 19.01.02)

### Safety Rules for Biotech Foods

The Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology has recently concluded that all foods that are being made using biotechnology should be subject to pre-marketing safety assessments and nations should be free to use tracing systems as part of their risk management procedures for such products.

When foods are genetically engineered, genes from bacteria, viruses, other plants or animals are inserted into crops like corn, soybeans, potatoes, tomatoes, squash, and papayas to achieve more favorable characteristics such as higher yield, faster ripening, pest control, or herbicide tolerance.

The task force will continue till March 2003 to develop guidelines for risk assessment of GM foods originating from microorganisms. The final work will be submitted to the Codex Alimentarius Commission during July 2003 at Rome for adoption.

(ENS, 12.03.02)

### Ecofriendly India

#### Eco-Friendly Bamboo Composite Laminates

The Kolkata based Emmbee Forest Products Pvt. Ltd. in a joint collaboration with the Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) has planned to produce 1600 cubic metres of bamboo composite laminates by December 2002. EFP Chairman, said that bamboo composite laminates are eco friendly. It can be used as furniture material and as building material in place of timber thus reducing felling of trees. The laminates would be moulded with innovative resin system for reduced energy requirement.

(FE, 28.01.02)

#### Eco-Friendly Holi

The Institute of Natural & Modern Cosmetech, Faridabad has developed completely natural and eco-friendly herbal colours for playing holi (colour festival of India). According to the institute, unlike toxic chemical colour and dyes, these colours developed from natural products are soft and completely safe to use.

(BS, 25.03.02)

#### Eco-friendly Lipstick and Herbal Soft Drink

Lucknow based National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) has developed 'Luvstic', a herbal, safe and Eco-friendly lipstick. Interestingly, men too can use it as it provides transparent composition containing essential oil and aroma isolates. Aroma serves as an anti-depressant, anti-stress and anxiety-reducing agent.

Besides lipstick, NBRI has also developed a herbal soft drink that contains a combination of five-six indigenous medicinal plants. The drink is stated to be non-toxic and has no alcohol, cocoa or cola nut.

(BL, 05.01.02)

#### Eco-friendly plywood

The Mangalore-based B.A. Group has launched its eco-friendly brand of plywood products in Kerela. Joint Managing director, informed that the plywood manufactured using Silver Oak timber is a durable, hardwood and plantation species that is sourced from sustainably managed plantations.

(BL, 27.02.02)



**Hitachi to Introduce CO<sub>2</sub> Trading**

**E**lectronics giant Hitachi Ltd. is preparing to impose limits of its own on emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) at its factories and set rules allowing them to trade emissions rights. Nationwide, about 100 facilities belonging to the Hitachi group will be affected by the new system, which is to be introduced in April 2004.

Under the new system, plants that stay within their limits can sell off excess CO<sub>2</sub> emissions allowances to plants that are having trouble hitting their emissions targets. Hitachi's plants will trade emissions rights through a special inhouse fund, called the energy-saving activities fund. Plants meeting their emissions targets will receive money from the fund, while those missing their targets will have to pay.

(AS, 17.01.02)

**Greenhouse Gas Market Working**

**A**ccording to a new report released by the Pew Centre on Global Climate Change, the global trading market in greenhouse gases is fragmented and mostly voluntary, but it has produced 65 "significant transactions" encompassing 50 and 70m tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions since 1996.

The report said the prospects for a well-functioning GHG market had greatly improved since last year's agreement on international climate change despite the absence of US, the world's largest emitter.

(FT, 20.03.02)

**Sharp Rise In Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

**T**he State of the Environment Survey, conducted every five years, has found out that Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, already among the highest in the world on a per capita basis, rose by nearly 16.9 percent between 1990 and 1998.



The report compiled by a committee of leading scientists, government and private sector bodies states that river water in several catchments would cease to be fit for drinking within the next 20 years because of salinity. The report is likely to increase pressure on Australia to sign Kyoto Protocol.

(FT, 20.03.02)

**WWF Warns of Mass Extinction by 2100**

**A**ccording to a World Wide Fund for Nature report, if greenhouse gas emissions continue to climb, ecosystems within a century may recede at speeds greater than 1 km a year raising the chance of mass extinctions of plant and animal species.

The report found that some of the highest "ecosystem migration" rates would be seen in Russia, Canada and southwestern Australia, while 19 to 42 percent of the eco-regions targeted could be moving rapidly, often exceeding 1,000 meters per year a century from now.

(JT, 09.02.02)

**Threat to Carbon Emission Targets**

**C**ambridge Econometrics (CE), the privately owned economic and industrial forecasters, has warned that cheaper household electricity poses serious threat to UK government target to reduce carbon emissions. UK household electricity prices had fallen by 28 percent in real terms since 1990.

CE pointed out the need for introduction of new measures to attain reduction target for carbon dioxide. Carbon emissions from power stations fell by 23.5 percent between 1990 and 2000 as generators switched from coal to cheaper, cleaner natural gas. This trend had reversed, said the forecasters, who now expected carbon emissions from power stations to rise by 8.9 percent between 2000 and 2010.

(FT, 04.02.02)

**Compensation for Absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions**

**M**alaysia will look into the possibility of seeking compensation from industrialised countries for its role in absorbing harmful carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases (GHG).

Primary Industries Minister argued that for the past 20 years, Malaysia's natural forest has been absorbing the gases generated by the developed countries. Malaysia is 62 percent covered by natural forest and together with planted areas such as oil palm and rubber the total covered area comes to 74 percent.

Emission trading is economically efficient because emitters have the choice of making the reduction themselves or paying someone else who might be in the position to reduce the same quantity of emission at a lower cost, said Primary Industries Minister.

(BT M, 26.02.02)

**729 Buildings Earn Energy Star Label**

**T**he U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) informed that the most energy efficient buildings in the nation use about 40 percent less energy than average buildings.

EPA recently announced the 729 top energy performing buildings in America, which have earned the EPA's Energy Star label. These buildings have saved \$134m in energy costs and emitted 1.9bn fewer pounds of carbon dioxide, the chief global warming gas, than average buildings.

Energy Star is a voluntary partnership between business, government and others united to protect the environment by adopting energy efficient practices. Last year, Energy Star helped businesses and consumers save more than \$5bn in energy costs while reducing global warming emissions equivalent to taking 10m cars off the road.

(ENS, 21.03.02)

**DVC Dual Fuel Option Power Plant**

**T**he Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) has decided to set up the country's first 1000-MW power generating plant at Bokaro with dual fuel option of gas and coal.

DVC has signed an initial expression of interest (EoI) with the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) to source coal bed methane (CBM) gas to fire its boiler. The power plant will be equipped to switch over to coal fired boilers when required.

(ET, 21.01.02)

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## Effect of Climate Change

### Climate Threat to Australian Rainforests

A new review of literature on the impact of climate change on the Australian environment warns that up to half of Australia's tropical rainforests could be threatened if global temperatures lift by an average of 1 degree Celsius. It says that three of the island continent's World Heritage areas could be significantly damaged by even low-level warming. (CNN, 04.02.02)

### Climate Change Could Change Forests

The composition of forests and other plant communities will change as a result of global warming, argues new research published in the journal "Ecology." Using fossilised lake sediments, scientists have been able to match up the assemblages of trees that were present during a variety of climatic periods. (ENS, 13.02.02)

### Warming Climate may Increase California Floods

A new study finds that climate warming over the next century could bring wetter winters and drier growing seasons to California. The research suggests that warming temperatures could bring increased winter flooding as a result of increased stream flow throughout California, but less water would be available during the summer months. This is because global warming will reduce the number of freezing days in the season, increase early melt, and decrease the seasonal snow storage. (ENS, 18.01.02)

### Global Warming Hits Species All Over World-Study

Scientists have opined that with the world's mean temperature increasing by around 0.6 degrees in the 20th century its impact is already being felt by flora and fauna from the equator to the poles. World's coral reefs, one of the most dramatic barometers of climate change have been devastated by 'coral bleaching', a direct result of warmer ocean water. Meanwhile in Europe, trees have started to show their autumn colour between 0.3 and 1.6 days later per decade, while some migrating birds are changing their travel plans. (NZH, 28.03.02)

### Climate Change Spreads Drought Across Australia

Scientists with the Commonwealth Scientific, Industrial and Research Organisation (CSIRO) are investigating the possibility that a climate shift has brought a long-term decline in rainfall over the southwestern region of Western Australia. The average rainfall has become 20 percent lower than the norm for the first half of the 20th century. (ENS, 14.03.02)

### Climate Change Threatens Global Biodiversity

Two new reports by National Wildlife Federation (NWF) in U.S. and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) internationally, concludes that global warming threatens the world's most biologically diverse natural areas. WWF report concludes that one-fifth of the world's most vulnerable natural areas may be facing a "catastrophic" loss of species. NWF report states that global warming will likely mean growing threats to U.S. wildlife, more trouble with invasive species, and significant environmental changes. (ENS, 07.02.02)

## Kyoto Update

The Kyoto Protocol will be presented to the Jordan Prime Ministry in the next few days for ratification, Minister of Municipal, Rural Affairs and the Environment informed. (JT, 16.01.02)



The Spanish government recently took the first step to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on global warming by handing it over to parliament for its approval. (Xinhua.net, 02.02.02)

On March 20, 2002, the Slovak parliament ratified the Kyoto protocol on reducing carbon dioxide emissions responsible for climate change. (BBC MS, 20.03.02)

Germany, France and Belgium called on the United States to change its mind and ratify the Kyoto accord on fighting global warming. The EU plans to formally ratify the treaty by June 1. (TOI, 24.03.02)

India is likely to ratify the Kyoto Protocol before October this year, according to official sources. (ET, 15.03.02)

Brazilian President Cardoso will sign an official memorandum sending the Kyoto Protocol on global warming to the National Congress for ratification, the Environment Ministry informed. (KN, 12.03.02)

Uganda is to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in a bid to conserve the environment and attract investment for tree planting projects. (NVK, 04.03.02)

With launch of the "Kyoto Protocol Task Force", the Korean government has informed that it will step up efforts to ratify the Kyoto global warming accord in the first half of this year. (KD, 06.03.02)

Italy's cabinet has passed a draft law to ratify the Kyoto climate change agreement. (Reuters, 18.02.02)

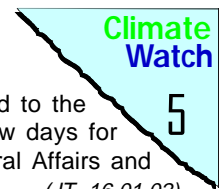
## Alternate to Kyoto

Seoul Welcomes the new climate change policy adopted by US. (KD, 19.02.02)

Australia backs U.S. Climate plan to combat climate change. (ABCN, 15.02.02)

Moscow welcomes the steps taken by the USA to find solutions to the problem of greenhouse gases emission, the Russian Foreign Ministry informed. (BBC/ITAR-TASS NA, 20.02.02)

Switzerland has greeted with skepticism new proposals by Bush to tackle global warming. It opined that the plan proposes only voluntary measures to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions. (BBC MS, 17.02.02)



## Public Awareness on ODS

Usha Chandrashekharan, Director of Ozone Cell speaking at a meeting of industrialists, convened by Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB), stated that the Ozone Cell of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, India will launch a campaign against the use of ozone depleting substances (ODS) and create an awareness among people of the need to adopt CFC free alternatives .

(BL, 04.01.02)

## Canada's Response to Ozone Depletion

Canada's success in protecting the ozone layer should be used as a model to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, a new report says.

Gerry Scott, director of the David Suzuki Foundation's Climate Change campaign said that by ratifying the Kyoto protocol and then adopting laws, standards and policies similar to those used to respond to ozone depletion, Canada can meet its international obligations on climate change.

Although the Kyoto Protocol was negotiated in 1997, Ottawa has only recently started to take small steps to fulfill its international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, resistance from some provincial governments and industries continues to threaten the legal ratification of the Kyoto protocol by the federal government.

According to Scott the protection of the Earth's ozone layer proves that Canadians are capable of summoning the wisdom necessary to protect the planet for future generations and Canada now must apply that wisdom to challenge the climate change.

(DSN, 23.01.02)

## Recycling Firm Admits CFC Blunder

Kansai Recycle System Corp., based in Hirakata, Osaka Prefecture, admitted that they illegally released into the atmosphere 300 kg of chlorofluorocarbon gas stored in used air conditioners and refrigerators. The firm was established in April by Sharp Corp., Mitsubishi Material Corp. and other home appliance makers in Japan to recycle air conditioners, refrigerators, televisions and washing machines.

(JT, 01.03.02)

## EU Clamps down on Ozone Pollution

The European Union will clamp down on ozone pollution which is the main component of smog. Smog can be lethal to severe asthma sufferers under new rules passed by the European Parliament. The EU assembly formally adopted a law which will require countries to ensure ozone levels do not exceed World Health Organisation (WHO) standards more than 25 times a year.

(PA, 18.01.02)

## UK Fridge Fiasco to be Probed

Britain's prime minister, Tony Blair, ordered an investigation into what is being described as a multi-million pound fiasco caused by minister failing to prepare the country to comply with new EC regulations on the disposal of domestic fridges.

From 1 January 2002, under EC regulation No 2037/2000 on substances that deplete the ozone layer, the requirement to remove CFCs was extended to include CFCs in the insulating foam of all redundant refrigeration equipment, as well as liquid CFCs.

(Eddie-Internet 25.01.02)

## CFC-Free Asthma Inhaler

India's third largest drugmaker Cipla is close to completing the clinical trials on a chlorofluorocarbons (CFC)-free inhaler for asthma patients. The trials are taking place in Germany.

Inhalers deliver a variety of asthma drugs like salbutamol, fluticasone, budesonide, beclomethasone etc. Cipla has been marketing CFC-free salbutamol and budesonide inhaler for couple of years.

CFCs are used as propellants in asthma inhalers creating the fine spray that is breathed in. Analysts said most countries in Europe had recommended for CFC-free inhaler to prevent ozone depletion.

(ET, 15.01.02)

## Ancient Supernova Damaged by Ozone Layer

According to a new theory presented at this week's meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Washington DC, an ancient supernova may have triggered an ecological catastrophe by destroying part of earth's protective ozone layer about two million years ago.

A stellar cluster with many large, short lived stars prone to producing supernovae passed near Earth's solar system several million years ago and the cosmic ray emitted from supernova could have had a devastating effects on the Earth's ozone layer of the atmosphere that absorbs harmful ultraviolet emissions from the sun. This would have produced a significant reduction in phytoplankton abundance and biomass, with detrimental effects on other marine populations, said Narciso Benitez, an associate research scientist of John Hopkins University.

Benitez emphasised on the consistency of theory with the fossil evidence and also with the pattern of movement of the star cluster, which would have been its closest to Earth's at that time.

(ENS, 08.01..02)

## Ozone Causes Asthma in Athletic Kids

A decade long study on Californian children has produced the strongest evidence to date that ozone, in smog, can cause asthma in children.

The study carried out by the University of Southern California, concludes that children who compete in sports in communities with more heavily polluted air are more likely to be diagnosed with asthma than other children.

Although asthma is the most common chronic disease of childhood and the disease has been becoming more common for several decades, this is the first study to examine athletic activity, air pollution and the development of new onset asthma.

Athletes get a higher dose of pollutants to the lung, because they must breathe fast and deep.

(ENS, 01.02.02)



## Electricity From Mud Microbes

Certain microorganisms can transform organic matter found at the bottom of the ocean into electrical energy, researchers at the University of Massachusetts have learned. According to them the microbes could someday be used to produce power for unmanned submarines or underwater sensing device.

After thorough experiments the UMass group found that a family of energy harvesting micro-organisms, called Geobacters were key to produce electrical current by using toxic porganic compounds. So it will be helpful to use Geobacters to clean up wastewater and contaminants from petroleum.

Most life forms get their energy by oxidising organic compounds with oxygen, but Geobacters can grow and can produce electrical energy by using iron in soil instead of oxygen. The resulting electrical current was strong enough to activate a lightbulb or a computer.

(ENS, 18.01.02)

## Energy From Wind

According to Earth Policy Institute (EPI) there has been a 31 percent increase in the global installed wind energy capacity during 2001.

In 2001, Germany was the world leader in wind energy, with a capacity of 8000 MW, US was second with 4150 MW followed by Spain with 3300 MW. India was in the fifth position with an installed capacity of 1349 MW.

The Institute feels that low cost electricity from wind brings the option of electrolyzing water to produce hydrogen, which can easily be used to fuel gas-fired turbines when wind power ebbs.

This hydrogen is the leading candidate to replace natural gas in gas-fired power plants as gas reserves are depleted. Already, trials are on to use hydrogen as fuel in specially-designed vehicles which would be tentatively in the market by 2003.

(CUTS Internal File)



## Fuel From Hazardous Wastes

The U.S. Environmental Protection agency (EPA) is proposing to allow certain hazardous waste materials to be burned in special power generating plant. The proposal would exempt some byproducts of petroleum refining and other industries from hazardous waste regulations such as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

The materials would be processed along with fossil fuels such as coal, petroleum, coke and even municipal solid waste and sewage sludge called gasification to produce synthetic sludge, comparable to natural gas.

According to the Agency the gasification proposal will promote increased energy efficiency while reducing the volume of hazardous waste that would otherwise be treated and disposed of on land. It will also conserve natural resources by supplementing crude oil sources in electricity production, petroleum refining and chemical manufacturing.

(ENS, 26.03.02)

## Biodiesel to Fuel Buffalo Buses

The Buffalo Niagara region of New York State is about to be fueled with biodiesel to supplement the conventional diesel fuel for bus transport and home heating. Biodiesel is a renewable, biodegradable fuel that can substitute for petroleum diesel or be blended with it.

Speaking at the Renewable Diesel Workshop 2002, the President of New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) announced a \$320,000 award to the NOCO Energy Corporation for two projects to develop and use biodiesel fuel in transport sector.

(ENS, 18.03.02)

## Biomass and Methane Contracts in USA

The U.S Department of Energy (DOE) has announced that five energy service companies have been selected to use biomass and alternative methane energy sources to reduce energy use, manage utility costs and promote renewable energy at federal facilities. These companies will develop, finance and implement projects that guarantee energy related cost savings at federal facilities using biomass and methane.

Biomass includes dedicated energy crops and trees, agricultural crop residues, aquatic plants, woods and wood residues, animal wastes and other organic wastes. Alternative methane is generated in landfills, wastewater treatment plants and coalbeds.

(ENS, 18.03.02)

## US Govt, Automakers Launch Fuel Cell Plan

A new effort between the US govt and the big three automakers called "Freedom CAR" could take years if not decades to meet its goals.

The joint research project would eventually help to reduce US dependence on foreign oil and end pollution from vehicles by making hydrogen-powered vehicles viable. The US secretary of energy said that the long term results of this cooperative effort will be cars and trucks that are more efficient, cheaper to operate, pollution-free and competitive in showroom.

(ET, 11.01.02)

## Ethanol Use Reduces Greenhouse Gases

The renewable Fuels Association (RFA) announced that according to the latest figures from Argonne National Laboratory the use of ethanol-blended fuels reduced carbon-di-oxide gas emissions. This reduction is equivalent to removing more than 520,000 cars from the roads, which the basic source of greenhouse gas like carbon dioxide, methane and other gases contributing to global warming.

(GN, 04.02.02)

## Electricity From Rice Husk

As per the estimate of the State Government of West Bengal, gasifier technology can produce a total of 465 MW electricity. Out of this, 200 MW is supposed to be generated from rice husk.

Electricity from rice husk costs only Rs.2.25 per unit. However, only 3.6 MW electricity is being produced using rice husk.

(ABP, 11.05.02)





## Environment

### Medicinal value of mine waste

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Large dumps of earth and rocks near coal mines will not remain an environmental hazard if the success of a pilot project in Chattisgarh, India can be repeated at other mines.

The project shows that these mine wastes can be used for cultivating medicinal plants. An NGO entrusted for this work, has grown Ashwagandha, Kavach, Kalmegh, Chandrachur and Adusa plants using such mine wastes. Ashwagandha and Kavach are used in the manufacture of aphrodisiacs, Kalmegh is used in making allopathic medicine for malaria and Chandrachur is used as a high protein diet supplement.

(TOI, 04.02.02)

### Air Pollution Constricts Healthy Blood Vessels

A study conducted at the University of Toronto shows that shows that air pollution can harm even the blood vessels of healthy humans.



The study found that after exposure volunteers' blood vessels in healthy lungs became constricted between two percent and four percent on average. Their vessels did not constrict when they were exposed to ozone free and particle free air.

(ENS, 12.03.02)

### Ballast Water Causes Eco Hazard

Ships transfer about 10bn tonnes of ballast water around the globe each year without realising its impact on the environment. According to study undertaken by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and UNDP, the discharge of ballast water by ships has created ecological hazards at various ports all over the world including India.

Research in India have shown that a gamut of organisms contained in the seawater had posed serious threat to the existence of the precious coral reefs of Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. Apart from carrying goods the ocean-faring cargo vessels were also transporting bacteria, microbes and other forms of microscopic marine life from one global region to another.

(BL, 26.03.02)

### On the Verge of Environmental Collapse !

Uncontrolled growth and lack of access to technology are driving some cities of the China to the verge of environmental collapse.

In the Chinese province of Shandong pollution from coal-burning electrical plants causes hundreds of thousands of deaths each year. The capital of the province, Jinan, is one of the seven most contaminated cities in China, according to the World Bank.

China is the world's third leading emitter of carbon dioxide because of its enormous population and the widespread use of coal in generating electricity. The burning of coal also releases other gases and particles that cause serious respiratory ailments.

(AT, 27.03.02)

### Degrading Ecology of Sunderbans

An Asian Development Bank report has identified the proliferation of shrimp farms in the Sunderbans as the biggest threat to its environment.

The diverse vegetation of the Sunderbans forests includes about 36 mangrove species that provide a unique mix of habitats for wildlife, which includes turtles, dolphins, estuarine crocodiles and several species of birds. The extinction of several mammal species in recent times signals the alarming trends in the decline of bio diversity in the Sunderbans caused by increasing population pressures, poverty and legal and illegal over harvesting of natural resources.



Unless urgent measures are taken to the situation, the bank apprehends a severe damage to the biodiversity of the area.

(TOI, 15.02.02)

### Rosy Future for EU's Flower Ecolabel

The profile of the European Union's flower Ecolabel could grow dramatically under a three-year promotional initiative to be published shortly by the European Commission. The Ecolabel programme aims to promote the design, production, marketing and use of products, which have a reduced environmental impact during their entire life cycle.

The commission believes that the EU's burgeoning Integrated Product Policy will "open new opportunities for the European Ecolabel," raising the prospect of reduced taxation on ecolabeled products. 94 licenses for the use of the logo have been granted for more than 350 products. Within five years, the commission wants to increase the number of product groups. The plan closes with a plea for specific new funds to support the flower label's future.

(WEN, 03.02.02)

### FAO Warns of Environmental Crisis

In the port of Djibouti, 10 shipping containers are leaking a toxic pesticide. This is causing serious human health and environmental problems, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warned.

In a statement issued, it said the present location of the containers was already severely contaminated and it called for immediate emergency intervention to avoid further contamination of the port and its workers.

FAO pointed out that the plastic containers might have suffered a catastrophic failure resulting in leakage from the container. Until recently, the port authorities had not received information about the toxicity of the cargo and safety data. They have taken first steps to safeguard the contaminated areas, and the potential for the spread of contamination by dust or wind has been reduced. The FAO recommended that the state of Djibouti to pursue a "polluter pays" approach.

(AEN, 21.02.02)

### Report Nails State Pollution board

Pollution control and environmental laws are a shame in Karnataka. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), in a report, has nailed the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), the Transport Commissioner and other State authorities for failing to implement pollution and environmental laws.

(TINIE, 30.03.02)

1/2002



## New Guidelines on Plastic Waste

Experts from over 100 governments have adopted a set of technical guidelines for protecting human health and the environment from the improper management and disposal of plastic wastes.

Prepared under the auspices of the Basel convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, adopted in 1989, the guidelines respond to growing concern that many developing countries lack the necessary legislation and facilities for coping with the dramatic growth in the quantity of these wastes.

According to UNEP, in many of these countries, plastics are disposed of through open, uncontrolled burning and land filling. The pollutants produced from burning of plastics circulate globally and are classified as possible human carcinogens.

Governments will start using the new guidelines to promote the environmentally sound management of plastic wastes. The guidelines addresses a range of waste management issues such as sorting for mechanical recycling, health and safety, shipping and transport, feedstock recycling, compaction, energy recovery and final disposal.



(WBN, 03.02.02)

## War on Drugs Poisons Land Water

The public interest environmental law firm Earthjustice called on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to pressurise US and Colombia to halt the aerial application of herbicides to eradicate coca and poppy plants and use alternative methods.

According to Earthjustice, since the spraying began there have been thousands of reports of serious health problems, destruction of food crops and livestock, contamination of surface water, damage to surrounding wilderness areas, deforestation resulting from the need of peasants to clear forests and plant food crops on uncontaminated lands.

The aerial spraying has drawn objections from 141 scientists, physicians, environmental and human rights groups from all over the world. Earthjustice says the situation provides a clear example of the link between the environment and human rights. Severe damage to the air, water, land and biodiversity caused by the spraying is violating various human rights.

(ENS, 15.01.02)

## E-Waste Flooding Landfills

Health and environmental concerns are growing as e-waste accumulate in USA. According to a study 2 to 3 pounds of lead can be found on an average from 18 inch TV sets and computer monitors. Lead is used in the glass of cathode-ray tubes to shield users from exposure to harmful radiation.

Consumer groups say that figure is closer to 4 to 6 pounds and warn that over-exposure to lead can damage kidneys, nervous and reproductive system.

The focus on discarded electronics comes at a time when the growth of recycling is slowing across the USA. Manufacturers, retailers, local and state governments and consumer activists agree that reusing and recycling electronics is the best way to cope with e-waste.

Some countries in Europe and Asia have enacted "extended producer responsibility" laws. They require manufacturers or importers to collect their products at "end of life" and ensuring sorting and recycling.

(WBN, 03.02.02)

Environment

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## California's Environment Approaches a Crisis

To demonstrate the impact of high population growth on the environment, there is no better example than California. The city is staggering to accommodate its rush of new residents. California is in a constant water crisis and this is projected to worsen.

Overpopulation has also exacted a price in state air quality. Southern California, where population growth is concentrated, has produced the highest smog levels in the United States.

(ENN, 21.03.02)

## Environment Friendly Educational System Vital

Guston Chola, Central province minister of Zambia, observed in Kabwe that the majority of people did not appreciate the importance of sustaining the environment. He regretted that the education system in Zambia has failed to develop environment-minded citizens.

Chola admitted that for a long time the education system had emphasised academic excellence with little effort to provide skills on environmental matters to those falling out of mainstream schools. He was disappointed that much of the environment was being wasted through indiscriminate charcoal burning and other unsustainable methods of forestry exploitation. The fact that only a few people raise concern when the country's fragile environment is infringed upon, reveals that majority of people are barely knowledgeable in the matters that are indispensable for the quality of lives, he said.

(AEN, 22.02.02)

## Earth's Rotation Slows down!

Steady release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere could inadvertently slow down the rotation of the Earth says a new scientific report.

A team of Belgian researchers came to that conclusion after using climate models to simulate a per cent increase in the primary greenhouse gas each year, a rise they said coincides with current trends.

While slight, the shift in the planet's spin could be measured over the course of decades, providing an ideal method to check the effects of civilization-induced warming of the world, the scientists said.

(TP, 18.02.02)

## Burden of Environmental Disease

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) over 40 percent of the global burden of disease due to environmental risk factors may fall on children under five.

In industrialised as well as developing countries, the health and well being of children is threatened by unsafe food and chemicals in household products and consumer goods. Three million children under the age of five die each year due to environmental hazards and accidents.

(ENS, 05.03.02)

### Nationwide food deficit

Over 20,000 villagers in Singida Rural and Kisarawe districts in Tanzania are facing an acute shortage of food. Over 10,000 villagers in 17 villages are now going with a single meal and single bag of millet is being sold at a price too high for poor people to afford. If the deficit continues, the regional authorities might purchase food relief from the Strategic Grains Reserves.

While lack of rain is the main culprit behind the food problem in the above region, interestingly, Mauritania is likely to experience a nationwide grain deficit due to untimely heavy rains during winter this year as reported by Food Early Warning System (FEWS). The rains and accompanying cold wave have abruptly changed crop production and food security prospects. Prices of traditional grains around the country have climbed to levels that the country has not seen for more than 30 years.

(EACN, 21.02.02 & AEN, 26.02.02)

### Maize to Overcome Malnutrition in Uganda

The food people used to take in Uganda usually lack the necessary nutrients especially for growth and good health. Quality Protein Maize (QPM) released in 2001 by the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) as 'Longe5' is a potential contributor to solve this protein deficiency problem.

Mexocam Scoemstots have developed a high-protein maize that could prevent malnutrition among millions of people worldwide, particularly children. Maize breeders conducting QPM trials said the maize looks and tastes like ordinary maize but with high nutritive protein value.

Scientists informed that the QPM varieties produce 70 to 100 percent more of two essential amino acids-lysine and tryptophan-than normal maize varieties.

(EACN, 21.02.02)

### More Protection Needed from Mercury in Fish

According to Environmental Working Group (EWG), the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has failed to protect pregnant women and the developing foetus from the toxic effects of mercury.

EWG warns that fish consumption advisories issued by the agency do not reflect the true danger posed by mercury in fish.

During January 2001, the FDA advised that pregnant women and women of childbearing age should avoid eating the four fish species with the highest levels of methyl mercury: shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) recognises that mercury is a substantial public health problem and recommended much stricter standards for allowable levels of mercury in fish.

(ENS, 01.03.02)



### Pesticides Hitting Food Safety in India

Pesticide use has gone up by several times in the past few decades, threatening food safety, but Indian government is yet to put into place a well-planned and properly designed system for monitoring of contaminants in food and food products. This major issue was discussed at a workshop on strengthening food safety and quality systems in India, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

A paper by a World Health Organisation (WHO) consultant pointed out that consumption of pesticides has increased from 432 metric tonnes in 1950s to 70,000 metric tonnes in 1960s. The use of pesticides leaves residues in crops, air, water and soil.

Government has set standards for maximum residue limit, but the responsibility of enforcing rests with the state's administration. The Bureau of Indian Standards also has constituted a Pesticides Residues Analysis Sectional Committee to prepare standards for analysis of pesticide residues in food. But certain methods recommended are non-specific and there is a need to develop standards for multiple residues for analysis of all pesticides.

(TOI, 05.02.02)

### Indian Farmers in Dilemma over Food Path

Indian farmers are facing a dilemma over food path. While the political leaders in India are asking the farmers not to grow more cereals as the government cannot buy it, Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the multi-billion dollar agri-biotech industry are harping relentlessly on the need to produce more food keeping the projected global requirement in 2020.



Some 24,000 people die of hunger, starvation and related diseases in the world. By the year 2015, more than 122 mn people could succumb to hunger at the times of plenty. Though the world leaders at the first World Food Summit (WFS) at Rome in 1996 reaffirmed the right to have access to safe and nutritious food, the task of feeding the world has postponed to 2040.

(TOI, 04.02.02)

### "Gene Banks" Seen Vital for Future Food, Health

Geneticists opined that plant varieties are becoming extinct at an unprecedented rate, with eight percent of plant species running the risk of extinction in the next 25 years. Pressure on the international community to preserve the remaining plant genetic resources is thus increasing.

Plant genetic diversity has shrunk rapidly as farmers demanded more productive crops. Over time some 10,000 plant species have been used for human food and agriculture, but now no more than 120 cultivated species provide 90 percent of human food supplied by plants.

(AEN, 20.03.03)

1/2002

### Chlorinated Water Could Harm Pregnant Women

The first nationwide assessment of chlorination by-products (CBPs) in drinking water shows that more than 100,000 women are at elevated risk of miscarriage or of having children with birth defects because of CBPs in tap water.

CBPs are formed when chlorine reacts with organic material in the water. Chlorine is added to tap water to kill microbes. But chlorine also reacts with organic matter, including sewage, animal waste, and soil and plant material from polluted runoff to form harmful CBPs.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has estimated that CBPs cause 9,300 cases of bladder cancer nationwide every year.

(ENS, 09.01.02)

### Small Dams for meeting Water Needs of Rurals

Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI) Director while speaking of a national seminar in India on 'Recent Trends in Civil Engineering' said that small-sized dams should be constructed to ensure a regular water supply to rural areas. He stressed on developing new techniques for the conservation of natural resources.

Other representatives from CAZRI mentioned that the modern managers of water resource systems have to consider a large number of conflicting demands on the available water supply and devise ways to tackle the problems accordingly.

(HT, 24.02.02)

### UNESCO on Management of Water Resources

UNESCO Director-General has warned that without better management of water resources and related ecosystems, two-thirds of humanity will suffer from severe or moderate shortages by 2025. Global demand for this precious resource has increased more than six fold over the past century compared with a threefold increase in world population.

Through a concerted effort involving 23 UN agencies, the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) hosted by UNESCO will produce the World Water Development Report, whose first edition will be released at the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan, in March 2003.

UNESCO is launching a major project for the Volga/Caspian Basin. Representatives of 39 Russian Federation provinces and republics will work with UNESCO to develop an inter-disciplinary development plan to balance the hydrological, ecological and socio-economic needs of the basin. This holistic approach will be presented as a unique example at the World Summit for Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 2002.

(AEN, 21.03.02)

### \$90 Million Supports for Safer Water Systems

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will spend almost \$90mn to help local utilities safeguard the water systems in USA. EPA is committed to make drinking water and wastewater utilities as safe as possible.

EPA will work cooperatively with states, tribes and appropriate organisations to further develop and disseminate tools and support security efforts at small and medium drinking water and wastewater systems.

(ENS, 21.03.02)

### Judicious Use of Water

The nine member countries of the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) recently met in Abuja to examine ways to ensure that the waters of River Niger and its tributaries are used in an ecologically balanced way.

Nigerian President proposed to think carefully about the current trend of proliferation of dams along the river and its tributaries and the ways to keep the Niger and its basin healthy, ecologically balanced as well as productive so that it can continue to be the livewire for our peoples.

(AEN, 19.02.02)

### Clean Water for Guatemalan families

The partnership between the Guatemalan and American Red Cross, has helped 1400 people in the municipality of Camotán, one of the poorest in the east of the country, to have safe piped water supply.

This water and sanitation project is part of the reconstruction and development work being undertaken in Guatemala after the devastation caused by the Hurricane Mitch in the twentieth century. The communities will be responsible for assuring the distribution of water and maintaining the piping.

(IFRCRCS, 16.01.02)

### \$326 Million Awards for Local Water Projects

Massachusetts Governor has recently awarded \$326mn for local water projects. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) will provide \$208mn in financing for 77 construction and planning projects aimed at eliminating combined sewer overflows, upgrading wastewater treatment facilities, extending sewers and developing long term wastewater management plans.

An additional \$118mn in loans from the Drinking Water SRF will finance 28 drinking water treatment, storage and distribution projects across the state. The SRF programmes will offer municipalities the resources needed to ensure a clean, abundant supply of water and provide responsible wastewater management.

(ENS, 09.01.02)

### Arsenic Found in Foodgrains

At a conference at Dhaka, regional representatives of FAO has warned that arsenic contamination is taking place in food grains like rice, wheat and vegetables like potatoes, arum, green papaya and radish in arsenic prone areas of West Bengal and Bangladesh.

After testing 15000 different samples of paddy, wheat and other vegetables, FAO has found that the arsenic contamination has reached to a dangerous level. Independent tests carried out by Jadavpur University, Cornell University, Dhaka University, CSIRO of Australia and FAO have arrived at the same result that maximum amount of arsenic is deposited in rice husk and arum.

Carrying out a field survey in Kolsur village in Deganga block, it was detected that in every kilogram of rice husk 1900 microgram of arsenic was present. Although domestic animals like cows consume this husk, till date no arsenic has been found in pure milk. However, arsenic has been found in milk supplied by milkmen, which means the water that is being used to adulterate milk has alarming level of arsenic contamination.

(ABP, 28.01.02)



**Sustainable homes**

**A** fortnightly Sustainable Households course called Save Money And The Environment From Your Home will start at Mairehau High School at New Zealand. The aim of the programme is to teach people how to care for the environment and live a healthy lifestyle at the same time.

It is quite easy to reduce the amount of chemicals we use in our homes, for example, it is possible to replace most household cleaners with nothing more than soap, baking soda, and vinegar. If many people make little changes, an impact can be felt by actions such as buying recycled goods and reducing fuel consumption.

Sustainable Households is a joint project between eight local and regional authorities, including the Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury. It receives financial backing from the Minister for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund.

(TCP, 25.03.02)

**Sanitation Equipment**

**T**an effort to improve sanitation work, the European Union (EU) in collaboration with the Liberia Water & Sewer Corporation (LWSC) distributed an assortment of equipment to help residents of Monrovia improve their environment.

The items included wheel barrows, shovels, rakes, plastic boots, mouth and nose protectors, lines, tape rules and cutlasses to be used by residents of Lynch Street, Soniween, Clara Town and other parts of Monrovia. The items are primarily intended for the drainage system which is in bad condition and needed urgent service.

(AEN, 08.03.02)

**Sanitation and Shelter for Volcano Victims**

**T**he American Refugee Committee (ARC), a humanitarian aid organisation based in Minneapolis, evacuated its staff from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) after a volcano erupted nearby and is assessing ways it can help victims of the disaster.

ARC staff on the ground reported that tens of thousands of people are fleeing into Rwanda to escape lava from the volcano, which erupted near the eastern town of Goma.

ARC Interim Executive Director expressed hope that they can expand their operations in Rwanda to provide food, shelter or other basic necessities to the victims of this disaster. Some of the people fleeing the volcano will be transferred to the Kiziba refugee camp near the eastern side of Lake Kivu in Rwanda, where ARC recently began providing services including water, sanitation and shelter.

(ENS, 17.01.02)

**Radon Testing Urged for All U.S. Homes**

**U**S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has urged Americans to test their homes for indoor radon gas.

Radon, a radioactive product of the element radium, is invisible and odorless and occurs in soil, rock and water across the country. Although harmless when diluted in the open air, radon can pose a serious health threat when concentrated indoors. When inhaled, radon releases small bursts of energy that can damage the DNA in lung tissue over time and lead to lung cancer.

Although some areas of the country have naturally higher radon levels than others, the EPA recommends everyone test because isolated radon hot spots can

occur anywhere. The EPA also recommends testing in schools, work places, community centers and other buildings where people spend long periods of time. Radon test kits, sold at home improvement and hardware stores, are easy to use and provide accurate readings of home radon levels.

(ENS, 18.01.02)

**HUD Funds Lead Cleanup in Subsidised Housing**

**T**he Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of USA is offering about \$10mn to more than a thousand communities across the country to help protect children from the dangers of lead. The assistance is part of HUD's strategy to help communities comply with the nation's new Lead Safety Regulation covering federally subsidised housing.

HUD will provide states and local governments up to \$150 for each housing unit cleared of lead hazards. HUD's transition assistance provides the first comprehensive lead based paint risk assessment of federally supported housing developments that were built before 1978, the year lead based paint was banned for residential use. The funds will help defray the cost of clearance testing - the process used to ensure that cleanup work was done properly and to declare housing lead safe.

(ENS, 13.02.02)

**Sustainable Shelter and India**

**I**ndia, housing inadequacy is largely felt at the level of low income groups and more so with continuous rise in cost of construction at all levels. This necessitates the use of appropriate and cost effective technologies in house construction.

Housing needs can be segregated into two different clusters, namely housing for urban population and housing for rural population. As the problems associated in both these clusters are different, they are being looked at separately. Housing need for urban population calls for high degree of resource efficiency and resource conservation in areas like water, energy, etc while rural population are confronted with the problems like lack of water within their premises, sanitation and energy for general use and cooking.

The Building Centre Movement undertaken by the government for utilisation of the human resource from the community

with appropriate em-powerment and enablement to evolve and contribute shelter solution by easily utilising appropriate technology in the local context. It has also helped in house construction programmes with people's participation through upgradation of skill levels of the local construction workers.

Over 45,000 construction workers have been given practical, hands-on training using various innovative technologies till now. Over 385 building centres were set up all over India. About 15 to 40 percent savings were achieved over the conventional costs.



Source: HUDCO

### High intake of meat, milk linked to cancer

People who eat meat-laden diet have more than triple the average risk of esophageal cancer and double the risk of stomach cancer, US researchers recently reported.

The report adds to several studies that link eating meat, especially red meat such as beef with certain cancers. Colon cancer has been the most strongly linked with a high-meat diet.

People who ate a lot of dairy products, and also tended to eat a lot of meat, had double the risk of both cancers, researchers reported in the January issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Meanwhile, high daily doses of folic acid may lower the risk of stomach cancer, according to a study in Beagles conducted by Chinese researchers. Deficiency in folic acid, a vitamin B found in oranges, grains and leafy greens is known to increase cancer risk.

(OJIS Internal file)



### Wealthy Women have Worse Body Image

According to research, the more affluent an area, the more likely a woman is to be dissatisfied with her body weight, regardless of her own income. The research looked at a random sample of 895 women in Canada, aged between 25 and 56.

The study found women of average weight, who lived in areas of above average affluence, were more than 70 percent likely to be dissatisfied with their body image. However, they were only 58 percent as likely to feel this way if they lived in an area of average affluence, according to a report in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

An overweight woman was 89 percent as likely to be dissatisfied with her weight if she lived in an area of above average affluence, while only 71 percent as likely to feel this way if she lived in an area of below average affluence. Early indications show that European students have higher levels of dissatisfaction compared to those in less developed countries.

(BBC, 12.02.02)

### Affluence Leading to Unsustainable Consumption

800mn consumers in affluent nations have been joined by 800mn new consumers in developing and transitional nations. These new consumers if enjoy the fruits of their affluence, there will be a markedly adverse impact on the environment.

Since 1950 the global economy has nearly quintupled. The consumption of grain, beef, water has all but tripled, while paper consumption has risen six times. The combustion of fossil fuels has grown nearly four-fold, and carbon emissions likewise. Some of these like consumption of water and paper, could become sustainable through greater recycling, but much of the rest cannot be made sustainable with current and foreseeable technologies. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with affluent communities consuming a large percentage of natural resources, provided these resources remain plentiful and can be recycled.

Per-capita consumption worldwide has increased by 3 percent per year during the past quarter century. In future, according to conservative estimates, consumption is expected to increase by at least 2 percent per year. If global population reaches 11bn people by 2100, total consumption would expand 15 times and if it is 6bn by 2100, consumption would increase 8.4 times.

Even this lower level of consumption increase would prove unsustainable given the available stocks of non-renewable natural resources and Earth's limited capacity to absorb pollution among other forms of waste.

(<http://iisd.ca/susprod/newconsumers.htm>)

### Bangla Slaps Taxes on Luxury Goods Imports

Bangladesh has imposed duties ranging between 10 and 25 percent on imports of a range of luxury and non-essential goods, a government official said.

Duties were hiked on 30 items including fruit, toiletries, office stationary, toys, ceramic products and imitation jewellery. The new levies are in addition to 25-37 percent in effect for these items.



An official of the National Board of Revenue said the duties have been imposed to stop misuse of foreign exchange and ease pressure on the reserves.

(OJIS Internal file)

### Population Pressures on Development and Environment

According to a new report of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), world's six billion people are using more of the earth's resources than ever before. Unless significant action is taken, the damage to the environment will only increase as the world's population continues to grow. It is projected that by 2050, the world will have 9.3 bn people. The population of the world's poorest countries will be 1.86 bn in 2050. Increasing affluence, especially in developed countries, has led to a sharp rise in consumption.

UNFPA estimates that a child born today in an industrialised country will add more to consumption and pollution over his or her lifetime than 30 to 50 children born in developing countries. At the same time, an increasing population in developing countries will require a major increase in food production and will lead to the further overuse of already fragile lands.

The report points out that around two billion people already lack food security, while water supplies and agricultural lands are under increasing pressure. Unclean water and poor sanitation presently kill over 12 mn people each year while air pollution kills nearly three million.

UNFPA estimates that by 2050, 4.2 bn people will be living in countries that cannot meet people's daily basic needs.

To address these concerns, UNFPA called for specific actions that include the empowerment of women, universal education and primary health care, including high-quality reproductive health services.

([www.johannesburg.org](http://www.johannesburg.org))

**Misleading or Comparative !**

According to Office of Fair Trading in Europe, an advertisement is said to be misleading if it deceives or is likely to deceive its audience and affect their economic decision-making. This also applies if it harms or is likely to harm a competitor.

An advertisement can be deceptive in various ways, for example, if it contains a false statement of fact, conceals or leaves out important facts promises to do something but there is no intention of carrying it out creating a false impression.

On the other hand, an advertisement is comparative if it identifies either plainly or by implication a competitor or their goods or services. This kind of advertising is allowed, but only if it is not misleading and meets the following conditions:

- ♦ it compares goods or services on a 'like-for-like basis'
- ♦ it objectively compares representative features of those goods and services, which may include price
- ♦ it does not create confusion in the market regarding the identity of the advertiser and its competitors including matters such as competing trademarks, trade names, goods or services
- ♦ it does not exploit the reputation of a trademark, trade name, etc, of a competitor or of the place of origin of competing products
- ♦ it does not present goods or services as imitations or replicas of goods or services bearing a protected trademark or trade name.

When a comparative advertisement refers to a special offer it must also include further information in a clear and unequivocal way. This includes the date on which the offer ends and the period during which the special offer applies.

(www.aft.gov.uk)

**Suit Filed in against Three US Cigarette Majors**

Smokers from the United States hired several lawyers to file suit against three major cigarette manufacturing companies on the ground of cheating consumers with "misleading information."

The consumers alleged that three companies, Philip Morris, Brown and Williamson Corporation and R J Reynolds have been misleading consumers through their advertisements campaigning that cigarettes manufactured by them are 'mild' and contains less tar.

(ABP, 26.03.03)

**New Fuel Economy Ad Campaign Misleading**

A new radio ad campaign of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) program that features Robert Redford is said to be making some highly questionable claims. The advertisement claims that higher fuel economy standards would give "safer and more fuel-efficient cars."

For fuel efficiency, carmakers have had to restrict their sales of larger cars and to downsize other models. As larger cars are more crash worthy than smaller cars in practically every collision mode, the result is more highway deaths.

The CAFE program was originally introduced in 1975 as a conservation measure but it has yet to demonstrably reduce gasoline consumption. According to a National Academy of Sciences' report in 2001, the current program already kills 1,300-2,600 people each year. If the standards were raised then they are likely become even deadlier.

(www.cei.org, 13.02.02)

**GOI Initiative on Advertising**

Under Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 of the Rio Earth Summit for "reinforcing values that support sustainable consumption" it is mentioned that governments and private-sector organisations should promote more positive attitudes towards sustainable consumption through education, public awareness programmes and other means, such as positive advertising of products and services that utilise environmentally sound technologies or encourage sustainable production and consumption patterns.

The Government of India have been responsible for promoting positive advertisements on issues such as conservation of water, prevention of air pollution, conservation of automobile fuel, electricity etc. On the occasion of National Tourism Day (January 25, 2002) the Department of Tourism

has come up with an advertisement titled "Relish. Not Ravish."

The ad asks consumers to be "Ecofriendly" and take a pledge to "use only recycled paper for stationery, not use polythene bags, use alternate energy wherever possible, dispose off garbage in a responsible manner, recycle water by adopting treatment systems, conserve animal and bird life in our surroundings, encourage planting and greening of environment, adopt ethnic architecture and local material for construction, generate employment for local communities, limit deforestation with no open fires, encourage spread of saplings of local plants, leave campsites clean, keep local water clean, leave plants alone in their natural habitat, respect local cultures and use recycled handmade paper for publicity material."

(TOI, 25.01.02)

**Tea Board Threatens Action against Salt Company**

The Tea Board, a statutory body under the Union Commerce Ministry of India, has threatened action against Kunvar Ajay Foods Limited if the latter did not change the wordings of its advertisement campaign for promoting its 'Dandi' brand of salt.

Kunvar Ajay Foods advertisement suggests consumers to cut expenditure on tea purchases in order to buy and consume Dandi brand of salt. Tea board has made it clear to the company to "immediately delete the offending words from the advertisement so as not to put tea or any other product at a disadvantage and stop all advertisements of similar nature."

Besides, taking up the matter with the company, the Tea Board has also taken it up with the Advertising Standards Council Of India asking them to take action against Kunvar Ajay Foods under the pretext of "unfair trade practice."

(TOI, 4.01.02)





## World Water Day

The looming water crisis is one of the most critical challenges facing the world today. Global demand for this precious resource has increased more than six-fold over the past century compared with a threefold increase in world population. Without better management of water resources and related ecosystems, two-thirds of humanity will suffer from severe or moderate shortages by the year 2025. This year the theme for World Water Day was Water for Development.

To commemorate the occasion, CUTS-Centre for Sustainable Production and Consumption (CSPAC) organised a panel discussion on March 22, 2002 titled "Management of Surface Water in West Bengal." The objective of the discussion was to sensitise media on the above issue and to focus on the success and failures of management of surface water in West Bengal.

Arunabha Majumdar of All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health spoke about the problems with underground water in West Bengal. Kalyan Rudra, Visiting Lecturer, Vidyasagar University spoke on the success and failures in management of surface water in West Bengal.

According to statistics of the state irrigation department the per capita availability of water in West Bengal has gone down from 5,608 cubic metres in 1951 to 1,839 cubic metres in 2001. In 2011, the per capita availability of water is likely go down to 1,579 cubic metres if the same consumption pattern is followed. Arunabha Majumdar suggested that the farmers could be taught to purify the stored rainwater for drinking by filtering it through pebbles and sand.

The decline in ground water levels had a severe negative effect on biodiversity. It has also adversely affected the life of animals due to the scarcity of fodder. Arsenic contamination in West Bengal, already a major problem has been fuelled by declining levels of ground water. Recent soil tests in arsenic-affected blocks have shown that around 6.4 tonnes of arsenic is being deposited in the farmlands in these areas. As a result, crops that are being grown here, including paddy, wheat, and vegetables like papaya, potatoes and radish, have also shown a dangerous level of arsenic contamination in them.

The panel discussion pointed out the need for urgent action by the government to start managing water resources sustainably and look into the various aspects of proper management of surface water. Journalists from various media and NGOs working on environmental issues and academia participated in the above discussion. Dipankar Dey, Director, CUTS CSPAC, chaired the session.

## Ecofrig Workshop

CUTS CSPAC participated in an event titled "Conference on Meeting Challenges in Change-over to Ecological Refrigeration" on 5th-6th March at New Delhi to mark the end of the first phase of the HIDEBOOR project.

The conference, divided into seven sessions, namely Montreal Protocol, challenges and Responses, CFC (Chlorofluoro Carbon) phase out from RAC (Refrigeration and Air-conditioning) sector and Technology transfer under the Montreal Protocol policy.

CSPAC  
Watch  
15

## Useful material for mass awareness

I had the opportunity to see your publication entitled "Greening the Lead Acid Battery Sector: Structure, Problems and Needs." This is a very useful material for mass awareness in this area. May I kindly request you to send me a hard copy of this publication for our information.

Dr. D.B. Boralkar  
Assistant Secretary  
Central Pollution Control Board  
Delhi, India

## Green Ads

Please let me know whether you have any report entitled "Green Advertising: Are they Telling the Truth?" If so, please let me know how to get a copy of the same.

Karabi Basu  
Research Assistant, Centre for Social Markets  
Calcutta, India

## Interesting issue

Thank you for an interesting issue of Chapter 4.

Ole Erik Yrvin  
Ministry of Consumer Affairs  
Oslo, Norway

## Chapter 4

Thank you for your information. I hope to receive such in the future as well. All the best.

A.P. Gautam  
NICU, Nepal

## Request to register

We, American Bureau of Shipping, are one of the leading worldwide Ship Classification Society involved in Safety and Certification of Ocean-going Ships and Marine Industry. We request you to kindly register our name for your updates.

D. Mazumdar  
Surveyor  
American Bureau of Shipping  
Calcutta, India

## Quest for a better environment

This is with reference to your advertisement in your quarterly newsletter "EcoConsumer" 4/2001 (Oct- Dec) about a report "Quest For a Better Environment" published by you. We wish to purchase a copy of the same. We shall be grateful if you could let us know how the procedure of purchasing the report.

Ramany V. Nair  
Asstt. Librarian  
National Centre for Human Settlements & Environment  
Bhopal, India

## Subscription of EcoConsumer

I work on issues of toxics and waste. I liked your email posting and would like to be on your list. Please let me know how to subscribe EcoConsumer.

Bharati Chaturvedi  
Director  
Chintan Environmental research and Action Group  
New Delhi, India

Feedback

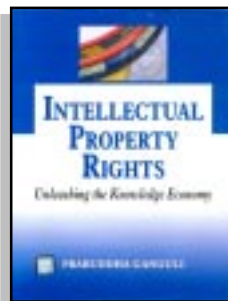
## "Intellectual Property Rights: Unleashing the knowledge Economy"

The book by Prabuddha Ganguly, is designed to address key issues in IPR and its impact on emerging international trade. With Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) as the backbone, the book provides business perspectives of IPR related issues, to enable corporations in charting their organisational trajectories for business growth. Richly illustrated with a plethora of case studies, the book unravels the complexities of the knowledge economy and explores in a practical way the mechanisms of the patent system.

The book gives business perspectives of patents, the issue of exercising and focusing patent rights as well as controlling other use or misuse of patents. It focuses on the crucial role of patents in the pharmaceutical industry, which has been a major issue of debate and discussion. Information technology forms the essence of the new knowledge economy. The chapter on protecting the software and computer related innovation is particularly valuable from this point of view.

The book offers a comprehensive reference source, which can be widely used by researchers, industrialists, knowledge economists, lawyers and wide range of communities who are interested in the area of wealth creation through Proper IPR protection of knowledge..

*Published By: Tata McGraw- Hill*



## "Towards sustainable household consumption? Trends and Policies in OECD Countries"

The changing unsustainable consumption patterns is crucial for achieving the goal of sustainable development. In the past, there has been a lack of understanding of the consumption patterns and the drivers behind them.

The report "Towards sustainable household consumption? Trends and Policies in OECD Countries" published by OECD Environment Directorate is about the day-to-day actions of households in OECD countries and its affect on the environment. It provides a comprehensive analysis of household consumption patterns in five key areas: food, tourism-related travel, energy, water and waste generation. It brings together the various elements of household consumption that are necessary to better understand consumption trends and to identify the best policy options towards sustainable consumption.

The book provides a policy framework and general policy guidelines to promote sustainable consumption. It analyses the effectiveness of different types of policy instruments (regulatory, economic, social) in influencing consumer decision-making, and identifies combinations of instruments for promoting more sustainable consumption.

For more information about the above publication visit: <http://www.oecd.org/env/consumption>



## Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Trade and Development: Issue and Policy Options Concerning Compliance and Enforcement

The trade versus environment debate is highly complex and a rapidly evolving one. Better environmental regulation at both the national and global levels could reduce trade-environment tensions.

This study by Eric Neumayer, Lecturer of Environment and Development, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK, highlights that for the majority of developing countries, failure to comply with environmental obligations stems from lack of technical and financial capacity. Therefore the provisions for financial and technology transfer within the relevant MEAs are crucial in ensuring the success of the MEAs in meeting the agreed objectives.

The report examines the role of provisions for technology and financial transfer as well as capacity building as an alternative to trade measures in multilateral environmental agreements to improve compliance and enforcement in developing countries.

The research findings draw lessons from various positive and negative measures used for compliance and enforcement, and suggest how policy measures can be reformed and reorganised to address the negotiating requirements in dealing with such issues in future.



## SOURCES

ABP: ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA, ABCN: ABC NEWS, AEN: AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER, AS: ASAHI SHIMBUN, AT: ASIAN TIMES, BBC MS: BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION MONITORING SERVICE, BL: BUSINESS LINE, BS: BUSINESS STANDARD, BTM: BUSINESS TIMES (MALAYSIA), CNN: CABLE NEWS NETWORK, DSN: DAVID SUZUKI NEWS, EACN: EASTERN AFRICA CROPS NEWSLETTER, EC: ELECTRONIC CONFERENCES, ENN: ENVIRONMENT NEWS NETWORK, ENS: ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, ET: THE ECONOMIC TIMES, FE: FINANCIAL EXPRESS, FT: FINANCIAL TIMES, GN: GULF NEWS, HT: HINDUSTAN TIMES, IFRCCRS: INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES, JoT: JORDON TIMES, JT: JAPAN TIMES, KH: KOREA HERALD, KN: KYODO NEWS, KT: KOREAN TIMES, NVK: NEWS VISION KAMPALA, NZH: NEWZWLAND HERALD, PA: PLANET ARK, TCP: THE CHRISTCHURCH PRESS, TG: THE GUARDIAN, TH: THE HINDU, TJP: THE JAKARTA POST, TNIE: THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS, TOI: THE TIMES OF INDIA, TP: THE PIONEER, UNEP: UNEP INFORMATION RELEASE, WBN: WARMER BULLETIN NEWS, WSJ: WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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