

The Greenzones Of Delhi - Coffee Table Book



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PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MONTH



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Meme Of The Month



Bird Watching @ Okhla Bird Sanctuary



Our recent birdwatching workshop at Okhla Bird Sanctuary was a truly enriching experience. While the number of participants was small, the quality of engagement was exceptionally high, which turned out to be a blessing for both us and the birds. A smaller group meant less disturbance, allowing us to observe these beautiful creatures up close in their natural habitat.

The weather was perfect—clear skies and warm sunlight set the stage for a delightful day outdoors. As we strolled through the pathways, surrounded by tall grasses, tiny birds would curiously peek out at us, the “outsiders” in their peaceful home. Far removed from the noise of city roads, the only sounds we heard were the melodies of the birds, a refreshing change from the chaos of urban life. The crisp, fresh air was another welcome contrast to the pollution many of us endure daily without even realizing its toll.

The highlight of the day, of course, was spotting a wide variety of birds. White-throated kingfishers and purple swamphens, painted storks, greylag geese, and green bee-eaters, wagtails, hornbills, barbets, lapwings, and peacocks among many others. Each bird offered a unique charm, filling us with a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

This workshop reminded us how disconnected urban life can make us from the beauty and serenity of nature. Air pollution and other urban challenges often discourage people from stepping out, but this is the best season to explore. With forests and wetlands constantly under threat from urban expansion, it's crucial to visit and cherish these places. Do we really need fast-food outlets in every patch of greenery?

The best way to protect these natural sanctuaries is by experiencing them firsthand. When people connect with nature, they are more likely to advocate for their preservation. So, step out of your comfort zone, join us on future adventures, and rediscover the joy of being immersed in nature.

[Watch Here](#)

Nature Walk @ Arvalli Vasant Kunj



Our recent visit to Aravalli Biodiversity Park in Vasant Kunj was an unforgettable experience. With a small group of participants, we enjoyed a deeply immersive journey, guided by the park's dedicated scientists who graciously gave us access to restricted areas.

A highlight was the ghost trees, whose unique texture and captivating story of survival amazed us. The scientists shared their challenges in nurturing this rare species, making their presence even more remarkable. We also visited the butterfly conservatory, where an abundance of butterflies showcased the park's conservation success.

The bat cave offered a fascinating contrast, with noticeably cooler, cleaner air—a refreshing escape from urban pollution. Along the way, we learned about numerous plant and bird species while hearing how the park transformed from barren land into a thriving biodiversity hotspot through careful ecological restoration.

This visit left us inspired and grateful for the tireless efforts behind such a vital sanctuary. It's a treasure worth cherishing and protecting.

[Watch Video](#)

Nature Walk @ Aravalli Gurugram



Our visit to Aravalli, Gurgaon, with a small group of participants was a thrilling experience. The weather was pleasant, and the low pollution made it even more enjoyable. Participants were excited to explore the diverse flora and fauna, with some eager to venture off-track, navigating thorny bushes and adding an adventurous twist to the outing.

The scenic views from the sunrise and sunset points were breathtaking, and stumbling upon a snake skin in the forest added a touch of mystery. While we left with a few scratches and seeds clinging to our clothes, the joy of reconnecting with nature made it all worthwhile.

Encouraging more people to spend time in such natural settings can inspire stronger advocacy for environmental conservation in the future.

[Watch Video](#)

Air Pollution Workshop - Impressico Noida



We recently visited Impressico's Noida office, where we conducted a presentation and workshop on improving air quality in the city. The team members were highly engaged, asking insightful questions and exploring actionable solutions to combat air pollution.

After the presentation, participants scanned a QR code to take an interactive quiz on air pollution via their phones. This sparked friendly competition as everyone compared scores and deepened their understanding of the issue.

To further the cause, we distributed informative materials, including guides to Delhi's green zones, birds, and butterflies, encouraging participants to connect with nature and advocate for cleaner air.

Nature Walk - Tughlakabad Biodiversity Park



Our visit to Tughlaqabad Biodiversity Park with a small group of participants was a delightful experience. We explored the park's diverse habitats and spotted several water and woodland birds, including grebes, sandpipers, citrine wagtails, red-wattled lapwings, black-headed ibises, and Indian rollers. Each sighting added to the excitement as we learned about the park's rich flora and fauna.

We also visited old plantation sites where saplings we planted during past monsoons have grown significantly, a testament to the collective efforts to restore this green space.

The walk ended with a cozy discussion at the main office over a cup of herbal tea infused with lemongrass and tulsi grown within the forest. While the participants thoroughly enjoyed the experience, many others stayed away due to air pollution. This highlights the urgent need to tackle Delhi's air quality crisis so that more people can connect with and appreciate nature.

[Watch Here](#)

Flea Market (Without Fleas).



NDNS participated in a vibrant flea market near Khan Market in collaboration with Stray Buddy, where various organizations showcased pet-related items. The weather was perfect, drawing a large crowd of animal lovers who created a lively and fun atmosphere filled with meaningful interactions among like-minded individuals.

At our stall, we shared important awareness materials about environmental conservation and showcased our coffee table book, *The Green Zones of Delhi*, which was available for purchase. It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with the community, spread awareness, and celebrate our shared love for animals and nature.

Car Painting with NDNS



Participants of all ages gathered at Forest Spirit Learning (FSL) in the village of Shikohpur, Gurgaon, for a one-of-a-kind creative experience. After a quick picnic session, we rolled up our sleeves—literally—to turn an old scrap car, donated to FSL, into a canvas for collaborative art.

The first task was to roll the car to its designated spot and give it a thorough cleaning. Then came the fun part: deciding what to paint. Each side of the car became a unique masterpiece—kids painted their favorite cartoon characters on one side, another side transformed into a cosmic scene with planets and stars, the front showcased a scenic landscape of flora and fauna, and the final side proudly displayed the title Forest Spirit Learning alongside fiery flames in the corner.

It was an unforgettable experience—after all, how often do you get to paint a scrap car? Now, the car remains parked at FSL, drawing visitors who love capturing photos with it in the frame. The activity was capped off with refreshments and happy farewells, leaving everyone inspired and thrilled.

[Watch Video](#)

Deer at Deer Park, Delhi



The captive deer at Delhi's Deer Park are facing an alarming fate. Authorities have proposed sending these innocent animals to Mukundra Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, where they would be used as prey for tigers. The deer, who have lived in enclosures their entire lives, have never seen a predator and are unprepared for such a dangerous environment. They are accustomed to receiving care and medical attention just like pets – sending them to be killed is not an act of compassion. The real cause of this issue lies with the DDA, which ignored guidelines from the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) for years, allowing the over population of deer.. The CZA had recommended separating male and female deer, but the DDA failed to follow these guidelines, and now the animals are being blamed for the mismanagement. While authorities plan to import deer from Africa for Noida's new deer park, we've urged them to consider relocating Delhi's deer instead. Delhi is much closer than Africa, and local deer deserve a chance at a better life in the new park. Sadly, our requests have been ignored, and the clock is ticking. DDA claims that keeping deer in Delhi would encourage hunting. There has been no hunting in Deer Park, and in fact, hunting is more common in Rajasthan. Creating suitable enclosures in Delhi's biodiversity parks would be a more humane solution, ensuring the deer remain healthy and safe in their natural environment. As per CZA guidelines, transporting certain categories of deer, such as pregnant, lactating, or injured animals, is prohibited—but this is being ignored. Medical checks are conducted only after the deer have already been moved, risking lives of mothers and their young. It's time for the people of Delhi to stand up for these innocent creatures. Schoolchildren who visit the park are horrified to learn about the plan to send deer to their deaths, and so should we all be. It is our constitutional duty to protect wildlife, and the idea of using zoo animals as prey for tigers goes against the principle of compassion. We need your voice to join the fight to save the deer of Deer Park. The more we speak out, the stronger the call for compassion and better solutions will become. Together, we can ensure that these deer live the lives they deserve, right here in Delhi.

Air Pollution Workshop @ Soami Nagar Model School



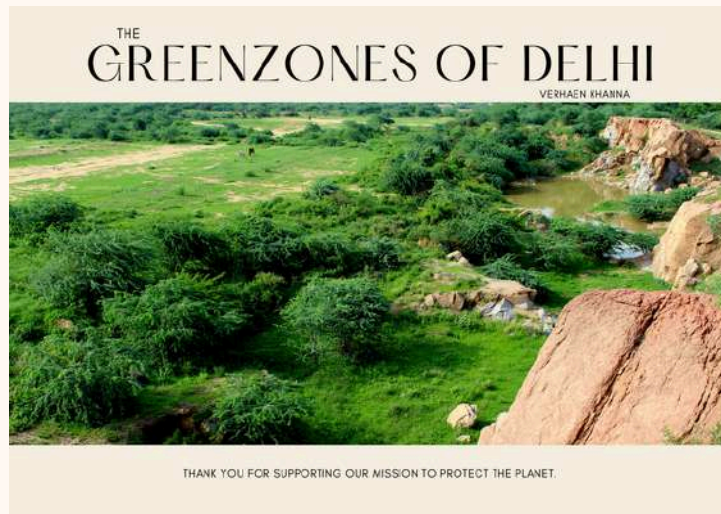
Our team member, Tapasya Singh, recently conducted an engaging workshop on air pollution for the students of Classes 6 and 7 at Soami Nagar Model School. The workshop aimed to raise awareness about the causes and effects of air pollution and empower young minds with solutions to help combat this pressing issue.

Tapasya led the session with a detailed presentation, covering key topics like the negative impact of waste-to-energy plants, the importance of waste segregation, and practical ways to reduce waste generation. The students learned how recycling and reusing everyday items can significantly reduce the pollutants that contribute to air pollution.

At the end of the workshop, the students took an oath to do their part in reducing air pollution and protecting the environment, promising to adopt eco-friendly practices in their daily lives. It was an inspiring session, and we're hopeful that these young participants will spread the message and help make a positive impact on their community and beyond.

[Watch Video](#)

NDNS Coffee Table Book



This beautifully illustrated book showcases the lush greenery and vibrant ecosystems found in the heart of India's capital. Each page offers a glimpse into the diverse flora and fauna that thrive in Delhi's green zones, from bustling parks to serene gardens. By purchasing this coffee table book, you not only bring a piece of nature's beauty into your home but also support the efforts of NDNS (New Delhi Nature Society) in their mission to protect and conserve these precious natural habitats. Your contribution helps promote environmental awareness and ensures that future generations can enjoy the city's green treasures.

[Buy Now](#)

Adoption Alert!

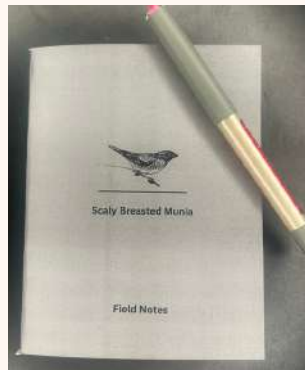
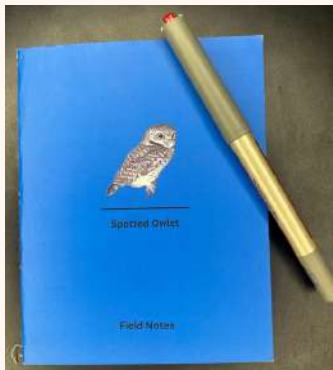
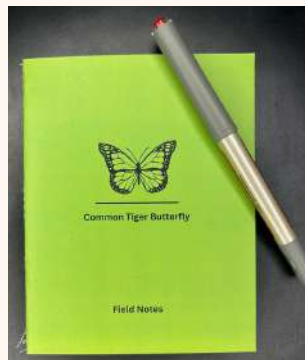
These Cuties have been rescued and are now looking for a happy home. If you can provide them a home please fill up the form.



[Adoption Form](#)



NDNS Diary



Important Articles Of The Month

AFTER REVIEW MEETING BY HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH

Identify law & order flaws, check BS-IV vehicles: Top cop's directives to police

SAKSHICHAND
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

TWO DAYS after Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a high-level meeting on the law and order situation in the Capital, Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora is learnt to have issued key directives Monday — to identify shortcomings regarding controlling criminal activities and deployment of police personnel to control air pollution in Delhi.

Amid rampant criminal activities, Arora, police sources said, ex-

pressed his displeasure regarding the law and order situation in the city. He asked all Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs) to take action against illegal activities, local criminals and prepare an action-taken report in 25 days.

"All district DCPs have been directed to visit police stations in their district concerned and identify shortcomings," an officer said.

Increasing incidents of firing leading to extortion bids, police losing grip on hardened criminals and poor projection of police's good work in the media — these were some of the key points high-

lighted by Shah in the meeting.

The Commissioner's key directions also included the deployment of district police personnel to take action against BS-IV diesel vehicles in tandem with their counterparts in the traffic department. "Ten prosecution machines have been issued to all 15 district police and they have been asked to start prosecuting BS-IV (diesel) vehicles. Currently, only traffic police are prosecuting these vehicles," a senior police officer said.

In addition, police control room (PCR) vehicles have been asked to work in close coordina-

tion with traffic police and alert them if any violations are witnessed on the road.

"At the border areas, from where most heavy vehicles and trucks carrying construction material enter, senior officers have been asked to hold briefings and give written instructions," the officer said.

Further, an officer said, Arora also directed the installation of 10 pickets by all 15 district police in areas under their jurisdiction for prosecution and enforcement of Commission for Air Quality Management's guidelines.

Court Directs CAQM To Take Action Against Govt, Police And Transport Commissioner

Amit Anand Choudhary
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New Delhi: Considering that many poor students, who are dependent on mid-day meals and also do not have facilities to take online classes, are facing hardships, Supreme Court on Monday allowed the Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) to take a decision on opening of schools and educational institutions in NCR but said that other stringent conditions imposed under GRAP-IV would remain in force till further order.

A bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih directed CAQM to consider to relaxation in terms of clause 5 and clause 8 of GRAP-IV as well as clause 11 of GRAP-III measures (pertaining to discontinuing physical classes).

The bench also took strong exception that the authorities did not comply with the order of CAQM in enforcing GRAP-IV measures on barring trucks to enter within the territory of the national capital and directed the Commission to initiate proceedings against the state govt, transport commissioner and Delhi police commissioner. This was revealed in a report filed by 13 young lawyers who were appointed as co-counsel and visited over 86 out of the total 113 entry points to check the ground reality. They said that checkpoints were put in place after the court passed an order asking them to visit.

Noting that the commission had passed an order to ban entry of trucks on Nov 18 but neither the transport department nor Delhi Police deployed their staff at entry point which was done only after SC passed direction on Nov 21, the bench directed the panel to in-



The SC bench also directed NCR states to extend financial help to construction workers who face hardship due to ban on construction activities under GRAP

voke Section 14 of CAQM Act.

Section 14 says any non-compliance or contravention of any provisions of this Act, rules made thereunder or any order or direction issued by the Commission, shall be an offence punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend up to five years or with fine which may extend up to one crore rupees or with both.

"It is apparent that the authorities which are mentioned against item numbers 1, 2 and 3 of stage IV of GRAP (state, transport & police commissioners) have made no earnest effort to implement the action in terms of clauses 1 - 3. Some police teams were deputed at a few entry points that also without any specific instruction. In fact the report of the court commissioner indicates that

at most of the entry points the police were posted pursuant to the order of this court dated 22nd Nov. There is a serious lapse on the authorities mentioned against clauses 1 - 3. We therefore direct the commission to immediately initiate action in terms of section 14 of the CAQM Act," the court said.

The bench also directed NCR states to extend financial help to construction workers who face hardship due to ban on construction activities. It directed them to release labour cess funds to the affected workers.

"We direct all the states to use the funds which have been collected as labour cess for the welfare of construction workers to provide them subsistence for the period during which construction activities are prohibited," the bench said.

Sleep disturbed, wives of Army & CISF personnel burn alive 5 pups

Meerut: Five puppies were burnt alive allegedly by two women — wives of an Army and a CISF personnel — as whines and grunts of the litter disturbed their sleep at night, reports Krishna Chaudhary.

The incident came to light on Thursday morning at Sant Nagar Colony under Kankar Khera police station of Meerut district. An FIR was lodged against the two women on Friday, after members of Animal Care Society demonstrated at the police station.

"The two women, Sobha and Aarti (who go by their first names only), allegedly eliminated the puppies because their barking disturbed them at night," said Anshumali Vashista, secretary of Animal Care Society.

"The two women poured petrol on the three-day-old puppies and set them on fire. The puppies, who didn't open their eyes even once, endured extreme cruelty. After the matter came to light, locals confronted the two women... When we told police about the matter, the cops initially didn't take any action," added Vashista.

Important Articles Of The Month

Delhi tops in deaths of kids aged under 5 due to outdoor pollution

Kushagra Dixit
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New Delhi: Delhi saw the highest number of deaths of children aged under five years due to outdoor air pollution in 2019, followed by Haryana and Punjab, asserts a policy communication by CAPHER India, which is a collaboration between IIT Delhi and AIIMS.

The Nov 2023 analysis by the Collaboration for Air Pollution and Health Effect Research, India (CAPHER), establishes that ambient air pollution affects children's health and mortality. Yet to be put in public domain, the report is based on previous research and estimate models related to mortality due to ambient air pollution and seeks the intervention of policymakers.

"In 2019 alone, exposure to PM2.5 from ambient (outdoor) sources and use of solid fuel for cooking was linked to more than 16 lakh deaths in India; of this, more than 1.5 lakh deaths were in children under 14 years," the analysis says. "Furthermore, air pollution was estimated to be the third largest risk factor for deaths in children among under five children in India. Children suffer disproportionately from the health impacts of air pollution, and the adverse effects they experience during childhood can result in impacts across

HOW BAD AIR IS CUTTING DELHI'S FUTURE SHORT

- > Air pollution was estimated to be the third largest risk factor for deaths in children under five in India
- > Since 2010, the percentage of deaths of children under five due to outdoor PM2.5 exposure was the **highest in Delhi, followed by Haryana and Punjab**
- > Mothers' exposure to air pollution during pregnancy is linked with an increased risk of their infants being born too small or too early; low birth weight and prematurity are leading risk factors for death in the first month of life

Percentage of total deaths in children under five linked to ambient PM2.5 and household air pollution



the entire life course."

It added that since 2010, Delhi, Punjab and Haryana have seen the highest toll of deaths of children under five related to outdoor PM2.5 exposures. Delhi topped with nearly 20% of the total deaths, followed by Haryana with just under 15%, Punjab with around 10%, and Uttar Pradesh with less than 10%.

"In India, air pollution is the second leading risk factor for deaths in children under 14 years; in 2019, 16% of all deaths in children under 14 were linked to air pollution," the report says, adding that in the same period, states like Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and West Bengal saw

arise in the percent of deaths related to outdoor PM2.5, while Goa, Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh were among those that saw a decline.

In states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, more than 10% of the deaths of children under five are linked to the use of solid fuels for cooking in homes, the report noted.

However, it also reported that deaths caused by household air pollution dropped drastically, with Delhi being at the bottom of the list. "Less than 5% of all deaths under five

are linked to household air pollution (HAP) in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab," stated the report.

According to the experts associated with the report, while it is very difficult to pinpoint if a certain death was caused by environmental exposure, heat, etc., the model estimations were fair enough to take firm action against pollution. "These are all estimates, created from various studies. There are lots of confounders or factors that can modify the relation of exposure to pollution and mortality," said Dr Hashal Salve, professor at AIIMS. "Confounders include age and gender and social factors like where the person is staying, green space, microenvironment, road traffic exposure."

Salve said existing illnesses or something related to exposure at community levels also had to be considered. "Air pollution cannot impact everyone equally. So we need a study to follow participants for a longer term but this will be resource-intensive," he said.

He added that since "the model estimates are fair enough" to prompt action on the matter at the policy level, the communication suggests some actions such as incorporation of air pollution in health policymaking, working on social determinants of health such as the cost of cleaner fuel, etc.

Important Articles Of The Month

Toxic pollution sends nearly half of Delhi families to the doctor



The Indian capital Delhi remains one of the most polluted cities on the planet all year round, but the situation worsens during the colder months. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

DELHI – Nearly half the families in and around New Delhi have sought medical help for respiratory ailments connected to severe pollution engulfing India's capital, according to a new survey.

About 81 per cent of respondents to a questionnaire by pollster LocalCircles reported that one or more family members are experiencing an illness connected with exposure to toxic air.

Four out of 10 households saw a doctor, and the most severe cases went straight to a hospital.

Answering a separate question, half of the participants said that in the past three weeks, they have bought medicines or devices including cough syrup, inhalers and,

in some cases, antibiotics.

The survey results underscore the risks that environmental degradation poses for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration as it seeks to expand the economy in the world's most populous nation.

Prolonged exposure to airborne toxins, which the authorities have historically failed to address, contributes to an estimated one million yearly deaths in the country.

"It is a public health concern and we are going to escalate this survey to the government today," LocalCircles founder Sachin Taparia said, adding that he will be approaching both national and local authorities.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare was not immediately available for comment.

The LocalCircles survey, which reached about 11,000 respondents for each of the two questions, provides a rare snapshot of the immediate health impacts of the capital's poor air quality.

Delhi remains one of the most polluted cities on the planet all year round, but the situation worsens during the colder months. In 2024, pollution levels in the capital fell into the "very unhealthy" or "hazardous" category for 25 days in October alone, according to Swiss monitor IQAir.

BLOOMBERG

Important Articles Of The Month

Workers at plant tipped off about checks by pollution boards, claims NYT report

► Continued from P1

NYT collected 150 air and soil samples from the vicinity of the plant as well as the dumping site from 2019 to 2023, and found not just hazardous metals but also 10 times the permissible amounts of persistent organic pollutants such as dioxins. It also found that a schoolyard and a park were sitting right on top of toxic ash.

Among the substances found in the samples NYT got tested in independent labs was cadmium, commonly found in batteries, in amounts 19 times higher than the standard prescribed by the United States' Environment Protection Agency. Prolonged exposure to it can cause kidney, lung and bone diseases.

The report also alleged that workers at the plant were tipped off about checks by pollution boards, giving them time to take corrective measures. It quoted former staff at the plant as saying that they were "notified by the pollution boards that they were coming and started using the necessary measures to mitigate emissions".

NYT said toxic ash was being dumped near residents, flouting norms set by gov't regulatory agencies. For instance, at Khadda Colony, where the ash is dumped, cadmium levels were nearly four times the EPA threshold.

Queries sent by TOI to the Timarpur Okhla Waste Management Company Pvt Ltd, a part of the Jindal Group which operates the plant, did not elicit a response.

An MCD official said, "It will not be proper to comment as the matter is sub judice in the Supreme Court. Nonetheless, it is emphasised that all statutory clearances have been obtained to run the plant. This matter was also before the NGT, which gave a nod for its operation. The plant has adopted the best practice in its operation."

The ministry of environment, forests and climate change, Delhi gov't, Central Pollution Control Board, Delhi Pollution Control Committee, and Commission for Air Quality Management in the national capital region and adjoining areas also did not respond to TOI's queries.

TOI, over the past several years, has been highlighting

TRASHING THE ENVIRONMENT? A BLOW-BY-BLOW ACCOUNT

2006
► Delhi gov't proposes setting up of a waste-to-energy plant in Okhla

2009
► A resident of Sukhdev Vihar files a petition in Delhi HC, urging it to pass an order against the plant being commissioned near a residential area; PIL claims violation of Delhi Master Plan 2021 as it's a 'green area'
► HC warns the project proponent that the plant is being built at their own risk

2011
► Timarpur-Okhla Waste Management Co Pvt Ltd of Jindal Urban Infra Ltd commissions the project, says the aim is to reduce carbon emissions by 2.6 lakh tonnes annually

2012
► Plant becomes operational in Jan, with a capacity of 16MW, processing 2,000 tonnes of waste daily
► Within a week, residents of Sukhdev Vihar, Haji Colony, Ishwar Nagar and Jamia Nagar report accumulation of fine dust on roads, cars, clothes, etc

2013
► HC transfers case to NGT
► A high-level committee



in NGT, led by CPCB, finds untested and unapproved Chinese incineration tech being used in plant

2015
► CPCB and DPCC inspect plant

2017
► NGT imposes fine of Rs 25 lakh on plant for failing to meet standards

► But disposes of plea to shut plant, on the condition that it will be strictly monitored

► Residents move Supreme Court

► Residents complain of emission of high level of toxic gases like dioxins and furans

2019
► Union environment ministry takes note of norm violations at the plant

2020
► CPCB and DPCC confirm high levels of furans, dioxins and PM2.5; imposes a fine of Rs 5 lakh

► Union environment ministry approves expansion of plant from 16MW to 23MW

2022
► DPCC calls for public

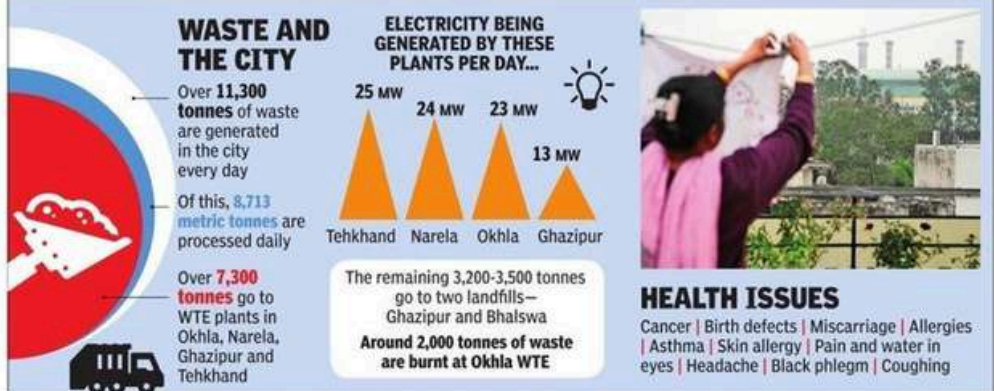
hearing on expansion plans for the plant

► An Expert Appraisal Committee conducts environment impact assessment, refuses to allow expansion to 40MW capacity

► Later in the year, EAC is reconstituted; plant allowed to expand

2023
► Residents challenge expansion in Supreme Court

2024
► SC asks CPCB to check if pollution control measures are in place



the pollution crisis caused due to the plant and how it has failed to adhere to norms. In

Feb 2017, NGT imposed a fine of Rs 25 lakh on the plant for failing to meet standards. In

Aug 2021, three waste-to-energy plants in Okhla, Narela-Bawana, and Ghazipur were

fined Rs 5 lakh each by DPCC for failing to meet prescribed environmental norms.

Important Articles Of The Month

Waste Plant Has Ruined Our Lives: Residents

Say Toxic Smoke, Fly Ash From WTE Plant Compromising Lungs, Causing Other Ailments; Experts Call For Stricter Compliance

Kushagra Dixit & Piyangli Agarwal | INK

New Delhi: About a kilometre southeast of the waste-to-energy plant in Okhla, which incinerates about 2,000 tonnes of solid waste every day is Jasola Vihar, home of 78-year-old Dev Kumar Bansal and his family. Like countless others in the area, such as in Sukhdev Vihar, Hazi Colony and Jamia Nagar, Bansal suffers from seasonal ailments that don't disappear easily. His chest pains and headaches have become more aggravating in the past few years, as has the air around his home, which remains visibly polluted even during the summer. The septuagenarian moved to the locality in 2012, a place that seemed serene and open. He claims his dream of a comfortable life in Jasola Vihar turned into a nightmare when the WTE plant was commissioned soon after.

"Almost everyone here has problems related to breathing. Itchy eyes and headaches. Simple fevers last longer and people cough for months," alleged Bansal, who is president of Jasola Vihar's Pocket 1&2 Residents' Welfare Association. "I was a fairly healthy person and didn't have medical problems. Now, the doctor says my lungs will die before me. People get tired quickly. It seems youngsters are suffering. We cannot even go for morning walks."

The WTE plant, operational since Jan 2012, has allegedly been releasing toxins all these years and it has been officially reprimanded for flouting pollution norms, yet has managed to increase its incinerating capacity. There is a plan now to raise power generation from 20MW to 40MW while burning more garbage, leaving the residents constipated on the Supreme Court to deliver them from what they say is the bane of their lives.

A recent report by The New York Times claimed that the plant was releasing heavy metals and leachable toxins into the air. "The NYT story provides foolproof evidence of the impact of the power plant on residents living in its vicinity," maintained Swati Singh Sambyal, an independent resource management expert. "The WTE plant incinerates about 2,000 tonnes per day of mixed waste, 30-40% of which becomes highly toxic bottom ash, which is being disposed of without proper safety measures. This is contaminating our air, soil and water. We do not need quick fix, silver bullet solutions for our cities, but holistic, circular resource management options that put people at the centre of it."

Complaining that the city's WTE plants aggravated the air quality, Atin Biswas, programme director, municipal solid waste unit, Centre for

AIRING PEOPLE'S VOICE

The waste-to-energy plant in southeast Delhi's Okhla is in the eye of a storm again following a report by The New York Times on how violations of norms are putting citizens in harm's way. Over the past decade-and-a-half, TOI has relentlessly highlighted this growing health hazard, detailing how residents in the surrounding areas suffer from respiratory difficulties and skin conditions, and face increased risk of cancer and other severe medical complications.

- Oct 28, 2023**
Activists want curbs on WTE plants, ops put under GRAP's purview
- Oct 24, 2024**
GRAP has no clear norms for WTE plants
- Sept 27, 2023**
SC seeks report on Okhla waste plant expansion
- Sept 18, 2024**
Thank Jhaloo: Why WTE Plants Must Have a Negative Impact on Health
- Aug 17, 2022**
WTE plant expansion: Jobs vs pollution debate rages
- May 2, 2023**
Killed in lead water and thick smoke from WTE plant, residents seek help
- Jan 7, 2023**
Okhla WTE plant gets expansion and residents in vicinity clamour
- Sept 24, 2022**
Expert Panel Denies Need To Expand Okhla Waste Plant
- July 18, 2022**
Relocate Okhla waste plant to Tughlaqabad, Residents in LG

- Sep 23, 2018**
Okhla plant falls foul of Swachh norms, says plea
- Nov 21, 2016**
Okhla waste plant's fate may be decided today
- Dec 9, 2016**
Okhla waste-to-energy plant safe: CPCB tells NGT
- May 30, 2017**
Okhla Plant: Residents in Supreme Court
- Mar 24, 2019**
Residents rally for Okhla plant closure
- Apr 22, 2019**
Green ministry notice to Delhi's Okhla waste plant after protest
- Feb 16, 2020**
Delhi: Nod to expand waste plant at Okhla draws ire of locals
- Aug 12, 2016**
Okhla plant has until Dec to better emission
- May 6, 2016**
DPCC nod to Okhla plant upsets locals
- Nov 26, 2015**
Okhla residents to move Court over waste plant
- Aug 16, 2014**
In October, tribunal will decide whether to shut Okhla plant
- Feb 28, 2013**
Government skips Okhla plant case hearing
- Jan 8, 2012**
Okhla plant chokes colonies
- Jan 30, 2011**
ADB no longer associated with Okhla waste plant

Science and Environment, claimed. "In India, certain principles are widely flouted by WTE plants. For instance, either wet waste or dry waste is to be used as fuel to produce energy, but these plants collect mixed waste for burning. This has high moisture content and needs extra fuel to incinerate or won't burn well. Besides, the temperature standard of 150-160 degrees Celsius has to be maintained so that there is complete combustion to avoid residual emission."

Burning mixed waste, Biswas explained, can produce toxic particles, ranging from carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and sulphur dioxide due to incomplete combustion. "These particles can cause serious respiratory diseases and also lead to chronic lung problems, such as asthma. People who are residing in the close proximity of the plants are extremely susceptible to health hazards," he said.

Biswas added there are apprehensions that the WTE plants operating in the country are consuming more energy than they are producing.

Gynaecologist Niveta Misra often advises her pregnant patients to shift from the neighbourhood to other places, perhaps their relatives' houses. Dr Misra, who lives and practices in Sukhdev Vihar and is a consultant at nearby Apollo Hospital, said her patients often visited her with breathing problems, skin issues and migraines and these had increased over the years.

"People here have the sensation of a foreign body in their eyes at all times," said Misra, also claiming that her mother, who visited from Agra, a fairly polluted city itself,

complained of itchy red and painful eyes. "So you can imagine the conditions here," she said, adding that in winter, she takes a literal week-long breather in places like Astan-kantak or Bengaluru.

Environmental activist Bhavneet Kandiari, who has been leading protests against WTE plants, said, "Air pollution in Delhi-NCR has reached critical levels, waste incineration plants continue to burn thousands of tonnes of unsegregated waste each day, releasing hazardous emissions and

TIMES VIEW: It is a matter of great irony and concern that a waste management plant is allegedly adding to the city's unbearable toxic air. What's worse is the alleged collusion of govt officials with those working in the plant, in their efforts to prevent the case from being investigated and, if proved, take strict action against the law breakers.

worsening the already polluted air. Despite their dangerous impact on public health and the environment, these plants are expanding, threatening the community's right to breathe clean air. To truly address air pollution, Delhi must urgently prioritise sustainable waste management practices and bylaws over incineration, must enforce pollution controls strictly and protect its citizens from the grave health risks posed by toxic air."

Kandiari added that with the NYT report revealing toxic levels of heavy metals and chemicals, it was clear that the Okhla WTE plant was endangering people's lives.

Organise India into 15 zones to fight pollution: Study

Jasjeev Gandhik
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NEW DELHI: Categorising India into 15 distinct geographical zones or "airsheds," each with its own unique climate and pollution sources, can significantly improve efforts to fight air pollution particularly in sensitive areas such as "Trans Gangetic Plains" which has Delhi at its centre, according to a study.

The study, published in the Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI)'s air journal, analysed PM2.5 (particle matter having a diameter of 2.5 microns or less) data between 1998 and 2022, and assessed the India Meteorological Department's (IMD's) climatological airsheds and long-term emissions inventory.

It identifies urban centres within each airshed, generally major cities or state capitals, where targeted actions would be required.

"Although attention often

centres on stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana as source of Delhi's pollution, a broader approach is essential for truly tackling the issue which looks at problem from a multisector and socioeconomic perspective. How can Delhi and its environs work to address all major sources that contribute to the problem: residential, industrial, transport and waste combustion sources?" said Sarath Guttikunda, the study's author and founder-director of air pollution think tank Urban Emissions Info.

The peer-reviewed study "Designating Airsheds in India for Urban and Regional Air Quality Management" defined airsheds as areas where pollution must be managed holistically, cutting across state boundaries, thus necessitating state-specific air pollution management plans and improved interstate coordination. "It will benefit Delhi and the entire country as a whole," Guttikunda said.

Anumita Roychowdhury,

executive director, research and advocacy at the Centre for Science and Environment said identifying airsheds was easy, but executing airshed-specific plans was where NCR is still lacking.

"We have seen it with NCR, where Commission for Air Quality Management has mandate to enforce rules. But even then, we see lack of cooperation between states and limited action. It will be difficult to enforce this across the country, unless we see the will between states and local bodies to take action," she said.

The divisions

The study grouped India's 15 airsheds into six physical land blocks: the Himalayan region (two airsheds), the Indo-Gangetic Plains (four airsheds), the Plateau region (four airsheds), the Arid or Desert region (one airshed), the Coastal Plains (three airsheds), and the Islands (one airshed). For instance, the Western Himalayas airshed, centred in Dehradun, spans Ladakh,

Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir, while the East Himalayas airshed, centred in Guwahati, covers northeast India.

Localised solutions needed

Discussing Delhi-NCR being classified as a priority, Guttikunda said: "The Indo-Gangetic Plain bears a heavy pollution burden, and even cities like Delhi can benefit from a regional strategy. For NCR, this would involve collaboration among ULBs, state bodies, and ministries of designated airshed beyond city boundaries to address shared air quality concerns, ensuring coordinated action improves outcomes."

The study also highlighted significant pollution increases in other areas. Guttikunda said while the focus remains on Delhi-NCR, most cities in the country are not meeting the ambient air quality standards, including coastal cities, such as Mumbai.



Important Articles Of The Month

Trees deconcretised at 24,000 locations across city, says MCD

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New Delhi: Municipal Corporation of Delhi has established joint teams across all 12 zones to count trees and remove concrete around them, with plans to finish the de-concretisation process within two months.

Officials say that out of 41,000 trees identified by MCD's horticulture department along roadsides under their jurisdiction, the engineering department has completed de-concretisation at roughly 24,000 locations.

"Teams from the horticulture department have counted 41,870 trees on roadsides, with the maximum in the central

zone (78,381), followed by Keshavpuram (64,383), south zone (63,686), Rohini (55,866), Narela (33,522), Shahdara south (31,145), Shahdara north (30,589) and Karol Bagh (25,122). Among the zones where the minimum number of trees were counted on roadsides were Najafgarh zone (1,857) and civil line zone (3,641)," the civic body said.

The engineering department is actively working to visit these locations and remove concrete to ensure proper tree growth. An official confirmed that most de-concretisation work had been completed in south, central and nearby zones, with other areas to follow. The court continues to over-

see this matter, with the next hearing scheduled for Jan 2025.

In Sept, HC issued contempt notices to MCD and PWD after discovering trees without adequate breathing space. The court criticised MCD and Delhi's forest department regarding a 60-year-old peepal tree, noting minimal progress in de-concretisation despite orders issued over two-and-a-half years ago.

In Aug, Delhi forest department penalised MCD officials for tree concretisation in Nizamuddin East and Jangpura areas. Their report to the National Green Tribunal identified eight trees with concrete extending less than one metre from their trunks..

SC to hear RWA plea against tree-felling for overbridge

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New Delhi: With Delhi losing on an average five trees per hour and the city facing life threatening pollution levels, city residents seem to have woken up to the importance of trees in their life and one resident association of a colony on Thursday approached Supreme Court against cutting of trees for the construction of a

foot-over-bridge.

The Resident Association of Inderpuri in central Delhi filed the petition to restrain railways for constructing a foot-over bridge at Railway Halt near the colony as 15-20 trees would have to be cut for the project. The petition was mentioned before a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih agreed to hear its plea and listed it for Friday.

"It is of paramount impor-

tance to note that the protection and preservation of existing trees has a direct and proportional effect on the protection of the environment in the National Capital. The inaction of the authorities concerned to protect the existing trees has a direct and proportional effect on the health and well-being of the applicant and the general public including the violation of their right to a clean and healthy en-

vironment, which is implicit in their fundamental right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution," the petition, filed through advocate Manan Verma, said.

The petition said that the National Forest Policy mandates that 1/3rd of the total land area of the country should be under forest or tree cover. "However, it is pertinent to note that till date, Delhi has not met the standards prescri-

bed under the said policy. As per the India State of Forest Report 2021 the Forest Cover in Delhi is 13.15% and Tree Cover is 9.91%, therefore the total green cover is approximately 23% as opposed to 33% mandated by the said policy," it said.

The top court is also examining a plea for complete ban on felling of any trees in the city without court's permission, which at present is applicable to forest trees.

Important Articles Of The Month

ANAND VIHAR }

To open or not to open: Flyover stuck after HC denies approval to cut trees

Paras Singh

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NEW DELHI: With the Delhi high court reprimanding the forest department for seeking permission to transplant a neem and a jamun tree located in the carriageway of the Anand Vihar flyover last week, the Public Works Department (PWD) now finds itself in a quandary about opening the flyover with trees intact.

Traffic movement on the two carriageways is permitted for short periods to alleviate the traffic pressure on surface level, however, the flyover has not been opened formally.

A senior PWD official said that the department now plans to open the flyover with trees intact and "higher ups" will now make a call regarding the inauguration date.

"The efficacy of the traffic movement with barricades has been tested in trial runs and it would be more beneficial to general public to open the facility



One of the trees on the flyover on Monday.

ARVIND YADAV/HT PHOTO

rather than waiting for permission to cut trees," an official said. PWD will add reflective markers, spring board and rumble strips around the trees for the flyover to be opened for traffic during the night.

On Monday afternoon, one of the carriageways of the flyover

was closed and the other one with the trees was opened for traffic movement.

"The high court has straightforwardly denied the permission regarding relocation of these trees. There is not other work pending. We have barricaded the space around the tree and traffic

police sometimes allows the vehicular movement based on local needs," said a PWD official associated with the project.

The Delhi high court on Wednesday had reprimanded the city's forest department for seeking permission to transplant trees for infrastructure projects. The bench expressed its disapproval when the forest department sought permission to transplant three trees located in a deemed forest for constructing a flyover. The court even rejected the Deputy Conservator of Forests' (DCF) request to withdraw the application and directed the department to file an affidavit clarifying whether the deemed forest status had been considered before filing the plea.

There are two trees – a larger neem (*Azadirachta indica*) tree and a smaller jamun tree (*Syzygium cumini*) – on the carriageway going from Anand Vihar to the Apsara border. A third tree in the area is not directly located on the flyover carriageway.

SC irked by lack of tree census in Delhi

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday pulled up the Delhi Tree Authority (DTA) for failing to carry out a tree census in the Capital as required under the Delhi Tree Preservation Act (DTPA). The court added that it will order the constitution of an expert body to vet every proposal for tree felling in the city, observing that DTA lacks the expertise to do this job.

A bench headed by justice Abhay S Oka was considering an application filed by a Delhi resident, Bhavreen Kandhari, which raised questions over the performance of DTA – a statutory body under DTPA that has allowed more than 60,000 trees to be felled between 2015 and 2021.

The court had issued notice on the application on November 8 as the data presented by Kandhari suggested that Delhi was losing five trees every hour.

On Friday, the bench, also comprising justice Augustine George Masih, took up DTA's response and said, "We want to know how DTA is functioning.

COURT QUESTIONS HOW PERMISSION FOR FELLING CAN BE GIVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF A COUNT OR RECORD OF THE NUMBER

Has it carried out any census of trees?" The court cited Section 7 of DTPA, 1994 (or is it 1995), which says "carrying out census of the existing trees" and "preservation of all trees" in Delhi is one of the functions of DTA.

"We intend to pass an order that no permission for tree cutting shall be passed unless it is vetted by this expert body. Unless there is a record of the number of trees, nothing can be done. Has this been undertaken? It was the duty of DTA to do this under the Act," the court said.

The bench asked senior advocate Guru Krishnakumar, who was assisting the court as amicus, to indicate whether there should be a threshold, such as cutting of 100 or more trees, when an issue can be sent for consideration to the expert body.

"Considering the diminishing green cover, we are considering whether a body of experts should consider every permission for felling of trees. We will pass orders that no permission for tree felling shall be passed unless vetted by this body. Some threshold can be fixed and DTA will have to comply with the recommendation made by the expert body," the court said.

Justice Oka, who has previously served as chief justice of the Karnataka high court, said that Karnataka has an expert body which considers each tree felling proposal. The bench said that the expert body would consider the number of trees that need to be cut and the variety of trees to be planted under compensatory afforestation, and added, "We do not think DTA has this kind of an expertise."

Additional solicitor general (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati appearing for DTA, said details have been provided in its affidavit filed late Thursday evening.

The bench posted the matter for consideration on November 29 as details in the affidavit about what DTA has done were not made available to it.

Important Articles Of The Month

Forest dept asks to cut trees, faces HC ire again

Shruti Kakkar

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi high court on Wednesday delivered a second sharp rebuke in as many days to the city's forest department for seeking permission to transplant trees for infrastructure projects, at a time when the national capital struggles with hazardous air pollution levels.

Justice Jasmeet Singh, who on Tuesday chastised the department for seeking permission to transplant trees for a building within the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) premises, once again expressed outrage—this time over a plea to cut trees in a deemed forest for a flyover construction.

On Tuesday, justice Singh had termed the plea tone-deaf in the current air quality crisis, and even questioned CPCB's effectiveness, calling it a "defunct organisation".

The court on Wednesday was responding to a request by the forest department to transplant three trees located in a deemed forest to facilitate constructing a flyover. "How can you file an application for cutting trees in a deemed forest? Why has this application been moved in the first place?" justice Singh asked



the department's counsel.

The court's ire intensified after petitioner's counsel Aditya N Prasad pointed out that the area where the trees are located is part of a deemed forest. The bench rejected a request from the deputy conservator of forests (DCF) to withdraw the application and ordered the department to file an affidavit clarifying whether the deemed forest status was considered before filing the plea.

"Let a clarification be filed on affidavit indicating whether this

aspect was considered before filing the present application," the court ordered.

The DCF had sought permission to transplant three trees to facilitate constructing a flyover on PWD's Road No. 56 between Anand Vihar and Apsara Border. The request was made in the backdrop of a contempt plea filed by climate activist Bhavreen Kandhari, who alleged that tree officers had failed to comply with an April 2022 high court directive requiring them to issue detailed, reasoned orders for

tree-related decisions.

In September 2023, the high court prohibited tree officers from granting permission to fell trees for residential construction in Delhi.

On Tuesday, the same bench reprimanded the forest department and CPCB for seeking approval to transplant trees for a new building on the CPCB premises. Justice Singh expressed frustration at the timing of the application, stating: "CPCB has become a defunct organisation. They should shut down if they lack the will to act."

The court's remarks reflect mounting frustration over what it perceives as lax environmental accountability, especially during a time when air quality remains perilously low. It underscored the need for stronger environmental accountability, particularly during a period of extreme pollution, and expressed dismay at inability by authorities to prioritise ecological preservation over infrastructure.



READ: 'Defunct' bodies: Delhi HC slams tree relocation plea

{ LANCET STUDY }

2.5mn Indians died from rising air pollution

Rhythmia Kaul

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NEW DELHI: At least 2.5 million people in India have died on account of health issues arising from air pollution caused by so-called landscape fires (such as those caused by the burning of farm stubble) between 2000 and 2019, according to a study published by Lancet on Wednesday.

The study added that the world saw at least 30 million deaths in the same period attributable to health issues arising from landscape fires, with at least 90% of these deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries, with the highest burdens in China, India, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, and Nigeria. China,

according to the study, saw a little over 2.81 million deaths.

Landscape fires are fires that occur in natural and cultural landscapes, including both wild-fires and human-planned fires. Between October and December, India's northern plains are choked by air pollution arising from cooler temperatures (a phenomenon called inversion), vehicular emissions, and, also, the burning of farm stubble, especially in Punjab.

While these fires can result in direct fatalities, the majority of deaths associated with them stem from the air pollution they generate, which contributes to long-term health issues such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. For instance, according to the study, there were 221



A man covers his face with a cloth in Delhi on Wednesday.

direct deaths reported globally in 2018. However, the health risks from landscape fires are much greater, as landscape fire-sourced (LFS) air pollution (particularly fine particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 µm or less [PM2.5] and ozone [O3]) often

travels hundreds and even thousands of kilometres away from the source and affects much larger populations than the flames and heat do, according to the authors.

The authors claimed the study is the largest and most comprehensive assessment to date of the health risks associated with air pollution from landscape fires.

It found an increasing number of global cardiovascular deaths associated with pollution from landscape fires with approximately 450,000 deaths per year attributed to cardiovascular disease, and 220,000 deaths attributable to respiratory disease.

The total number of deaths attributable to air pollution from

landscape fires in India rose from 117781 a year in the decade between 2000 and 2009 to 137,711 a year in the decade between 2010 and 2019, according to the study.

The researchers said they calculated country-specific population-weighted average daily and annual fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and surface ozone (O3) arising from landscape fires during 2000–19 from a validated dataset.

Annual mortality, population, and socio-demographic data for each country or territory were extracted from the Global Burden of Diseases Study 2019. These data were used to estimate country-specific annual deaths attributable to LFS air pollution using standard algorithms.

Media Coverage

Cloud Seeding Not Feasible: Pollution Control Board Amid Delhi's Smog Crisis

The CPCB shared its observations on a cloud seeding proposal by IIT Kanpur, which aims to combat Delhi's severe air pollution crisis through artificial rainfall.

India News | Press Trust of India | Updated: November 22, 2024 10:48 pm IST

[Pollution Control Board Amid Delhi's Smog Crisis](#)

Delhi

Artificial rain 'not feasible' option to combat Delhi air pollution crisis, says CPCB

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), cloud seeding for artificial rain faces significant challenges due to insufficient moisture in the air and the dependency on pre-existing clouds influenced by Western Disturbances.

[Air Pollution Crisis: Artificial Rain not feasible](#)



Here are some hot nature gossip tweets from our @NDN_HQ page in June.

Dive into these juicy stories by clicking the links and get ready to be wowed!

Follow our Twitter page for your daily dose of nature and conservation buzz!

Destroying a forest isn't temporary.

[Click to View](#)

GRAP 4: Ban construction and demolition.

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[#DelhiAirPollution](#)

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Who would you rather listen to, scientists or politicians?

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Delhi chokes on stubble smoke and urban pollutants as the AQI reaches 800-1300 level.

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Most children CANNOT avoid toxic air.

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Delhiites are effectively smoking the equivalent of 49.02 cigarettes daily

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1959 :: Blue Sky and Clean Air to Breathe In Delhi

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How many people report tree felling on the green helpline?

[Click to View](#)

Volunteer Or Intern At NDNS

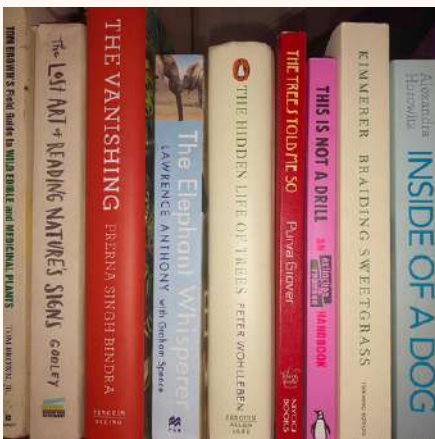
Join NDNS in our mission to conserve nature and make a positive impact on our planet! We are looking for dedicated individuals to volunteer or intern with us. Whether you're passionate about saving trees, spreading awareness through social media, editing impactful videos, organizing workshops, contribute your skills in your free time as a volunteer or commit to a two-month internship, there are many ways to get involved. Click the button if you're interested in joining us . Together, we can make a difference!



[Internship Form](#)

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We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the amazing individuals who have donated nature-related books towards the #newdelhinaturesociety library. Your generosity will help us in building a comprehensive library that will be a valuable resource for nature enthusiasts and students alike. If you too would like to contribute to our library, we welcome book donations and encourage you to get in touch with us for more information. You can visit our website at www.ndns.in to learn more about our organization and our various initiatives.

De-Choke Trees

The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in its order dated 23rd April 2013 has directed all Public Authorities to ensure that all the sign boards, names, advertisements, any kind of boards or signage's, electric wires and high tension cables or otherwise are removed from the trees.

They shall also ensure that the concrete surrounding the trees within one meter of the trees are removed and all the trees are looked after well and due precaution is taken in future so that no concrete or construction or repairing work is done at least within one meter radius of the trunk of trees.

NAILS, WIRES (10,000 RS. FINE)

NGT ORDER FOR DE-CHOKING TREES

DELHI PRESERVATION OF TREES ACT



SOS NUMBERS

(TREES AND ANIMALS)

- NDNS - 9711115666
- Wildlife Rescue - 9810129698, 9810639698
- People For Animals - 011 23719293 / 9294.
- For Cows - Dhyan Foundation - 9999099423

A TREE IS BEING CUT?

- Click pictures
- Tell them to stop immediately
- Ask them to show the Forest Department permission.
- No permission, then Call 100 and wait till help arrives.
- Report the matter on the Green Helpline 011-23378513
- Write a letter to the Forest Department
- If they do have permission, then take the supervisor's details who must be present there and contact the Forest Department .

FOREST DEPT. EMAILS

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Access to previous Newsletters

