

## Need For a ‘National Policy on Right to Clean Air’



(Source : <http://gallery.oneindia.com/news-in-pics/photos-air-pollution-in-new-delhi/photos-c44-e56114-p654160.html> )

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## Lead Essay

### Need For a ‘National Policy on Right to Clean Air’

One of the biggest challenges facing India right now is countering the consequences of rapid urbanization. Urbanization has had a massive impact on the environment and it is most evident in the quality of air in major cities. The quality of air in India has been worsening every year despite measures being taken by both the Central and State Governments. The information regarding the bad air quality in India is not new. Considering the fact that the issue has been brought up every Diwali, and the worsening of air quality during this season was predictable, the Centre and the Ministries of Health and Environment should have issued stronger health advisories urging people not to burst crackers or debated their ban. Further, being a fundamental right, citizens have the right to clean air throughout the year and it should not be a seasonal issue. But, the issue has been severely politicized and measures which are taken every year are forgotten soon thereafter. The blame game between the Centre and the State has made it nobody’s baby and lead to inaction. Meanwhile the air quality worsens very year and is responsible for 50% of the heart attack cases in the national capital.<sup>i</sup> Various suggestions have been made to curb air pollution but, the need of the hour is a ‘National Policy on Right to Clean Air’ to go after air pollution on a war footing.

#### I. Current Status

- **Children in India Especially Vulnerable According to UNICEF**

A UNICEF study ‘Clear the Air for Children’ on the impact of air pollution on children globally has stated that every year, about 600,000 children under the age of five die from diseases linked to indoor and outdoor air pollution, which is higher than the casualties caused by Malaria and HIV/AIDS combined. It further states that at least 300 million children around the world live in regions that experience extreme air pollution and of the 300 million that live in parts of the world where the air is toxic, 220 million live in South Asia, mainly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The complex problem of air pollution makes children especially vulnerable to diseases in comparison to elders as they tend to breathe more rapidly. The pollutants don’t only harm children’s developing lungs; they can actually cross the blood-brain barrier and permanently damage their developing brains, according to Anthony Lake the executive director of UNICEF. This report is the latest one in a long list of reports which have all come to the same conclusion that India is in dire need of strict, stringent and well coordinated efforts to handle its air pollution problem.<sup>ii</sup>

- **Government in Denial**

Looking at Asia in context, according to OECD, India is likely to report one of the highest rises in mortality rates from air pollution. India, China and Korea will report the biggest GDP losses as health costs and lower labor productivity will affect output. Crop yields are set to suffer in most countries as well. Premature death rates are expected to be up to three times higher in 2060 than in 2010 in China and up to four times higher in India. Many reports in India have also cited similar numbers but, they have been criticized heavily by the Government and denied. The OECD report also confirms the trend established by a recent study by the Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) which states that air pollution is responsible for half a million premature deaths in India. Reacting to a similar study on pollution published in the Geophysical Research Letters Journal of the American Geophysical Union, then Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said in an official statement, "We reject the claims made in the so-called research article that Indians lose six years of their lives because of pollution. This study has not been done on sampling, it has not been done on ground studying and it is not based on long-term observations. The numbers have been confirmed by various international reports that were published later and clearly show the severe crisis in air pollution management in India and the state of denial of the Government. Air pollution is a complex issue and we must have patience, shooting the messenger for bad news is not the solution."<sup>iii</sup>

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- **Diwali not the Only Factor**

At the time the report came out India was celebrating Diwali and most of the highly polluted cities in India had crossed the safe limit on average concentration of particulate matter by a huge margin. For example, the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) of the Ministry of Earth Science had warned that the air quality in the National Capital Region was expected to be severe post-Diwali but, no one had expected that the Air Quality Index (AQI) would exceed such extreme limits. On October 30 and 31, 2016, from 9 pm to the wee hours of the next morning, North India—especially parts of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar—recorded PM 2.5 levels of over 500  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ —exhibiting “beyond scale” pollution values, according to the database run by Berkeley Earth, an independent US research organization.<sup>iv</sup> The PM 10 levels had crossed 1,000 at 10 pm in the NCR region and at 2.30 am, it had crossed 1,600 which is sixteen times higher than the safe levels. This story was repeated across all the northern cities including Gwalior, Agra, Kanpur, Patna and Lucknow.<sup>v</sup> But, contrary to popular belief the reason behind the bad air quality in North India is not just because of burning firecrackers. Unregulated construction, burning of crop stubble in Punjab and Haryana, vehicular pollution and low wind speeds are major contributors as well. A study also revealed that the transportation sector contributes to a relatively low 20% of PM 2.5, belying the notion that it is one of the biggest pollutants in the national capital as well.<sup>vi</sup> A study by the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, suggested seldom acknowledged sources of pollution, such as coal, which is popularly used in more than 9,000 hotels in Delhi in tandoors, big contributors to air pollution. Commercial use of coal has been seen as the biggest cause of air pollution in China and India must limit its usage and switch to greener alternatives.<sup>vii</sup>

- **National Green Tribunal and the Supreme Court on Air Pollution**

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has criticized the inaction by both the State Government and Central Government in tackling the issue of high levels of air pollution in Delhi. The State Government responded by stating that the high air pollution is due to crop burning in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan. The NGT has asked the Central Pollution Control Board and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee to take steps to curb air pollution and to stop 10-year-old diesel vehicles from plying on the roads in the national Capital. “Have you done anything to prevent children from going to school, did you give advisory to public. The people have the right to breathe fresh air,” the tribunal observed while reprimanding the Delhi Government over its lackluster response towards tackling air pollution.<sup>viii</sup> Schools were eventually closed for three days, a week after the worst AQI levels in Delhi in response to pressure from the NGT. With reference to the banning of diesel vehicles in Delhi as per a NGT order, the Supreme Court exempted small ones and specified that the diesel-run SUVs and cars having engine capacity beyond 2000 cc would not be registered in Delhi and National Capital Region till March 2016.<sup>ix</sup> Ban on burning of crops in neighboring states was not implemented properly and it may have led to the current state of Delhi. Considering the sheer number of farms and landholdings in neighboring states only a few farmers have been fined for crop burning. It is highly unlikely that only those farmers undertook crop burning.

- **National Air Quality Index**

As per the ‘National Air Quality Index’ for 56 cities at 128 locations in March 2016 created by the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme of the Central Pollution Control Board, of the total 56 cities covered for calculation of AQI during March 2016, 22 cities revealed good air quality, 38 cities revealed satisfactory air quality, 37 cities revealed moderate air quality, 14 cities indicate poor air quality, 5 cities showed very poor air quality and 2 cities indicate severe air quality.<sup>x</sup> The AQI for Delhi is so high; it is the most polluted city in the world now. The air quality deteriorates during the months of October to March due to winter and it also coincides with the harvesting period and crop burning. This leads to high levels of air pollution but, the question that needs to be asked is how often do cities in India reach ‘severe’ levels of pollution during a year and if the pollution levels are lower in summer months. According to a study done by IIT Kanpur, the levels of pollution during summer months are almost the same.<sup>xi</sup>

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- **Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act 1981**

India is the first country, which has provided a provision for environmental protection in its constitution. The constitution casts a duty on the State for taking steps for protection and improvement of the environment and also makes obligatory on every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment. The Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act 1981 is a legislation which is supposed to be enacted by the Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Board in order to control and prevent air pollution. The environmental laws in India have often been criticized for having too many rules but not enough implementation. The same can be seen in the case of Delhi where adequate preemptive measures were not taken to control air pollution and even after realizing the state of affairs it took more than a week before action was taken.<sup>xii</sup>

## II. INITIATIVES ARE NOT WORKING

There is no denying the fact that both the Central and State Government have taken various measures to curb air pollution. It is appreciable that the Central Government has declared an air quality index with health advisories, albeit too late. It has expedited implementation of Euro VI norm and had initiated action on industrial air pollution and biomass burning.<sup>xiii</sup> But, all measures have failed to reduce the PM2.5 levels back to the safe zone.

The following section looks at some attempts at curbing air pollution.

- **Odd/Even Scheme:** The most recent attempt at curbing air pollution in the capital has been with the odd/even scheme which limited the cars on the road by only allowing cars with either odd or even number plates on alternate days. While the idea may have helped with traffic congestion in the city it has not helped with reducing air pollution. The odd /even scheme has completed two phases and the third phase is yet to be announced. According to IndiaSpend, during the second phase the air pollution levels actually rose by 23%. Thus, this initiative needs to be reconsidered before being implemented again as Delhi Government spent over Rs 20 crore for the odd-even plan.<sup>xiv</sup>
- **Air Purifiers:** Satyendra Jain, The Minister of Health in Delhi, has spoken about putting up huge air purifiers in the major junctions in Delhi. Environmental experts question whether such a move can reduce the problem. "Air purifiers will make a difference if the Air Quality Index is around 500 or 600 but, if it is touching 1,600, there is no way air purifiers will work," said Sunita Narain, head of Centre of Science and Environment(CSE).
- **Restriction on Trucks :** The Supreme Court, earlier this year, barred heavy commercial vehicles from entering Delhi from national highways 2 (Delhi-Kolkata), 10 (Punjab-Delhi) and 58 (Uttarakhand-Ghaziabad-Delhi) as well as state highway 57 (Baghpat-Ghaziabad-Delhi). The Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi governments were asked to identify and prescribe alternative routes for such traffic. According to CSE, the scheme helped in reducing pollution by 19%.<sup>xv</sup>
- **Smart App :** The Government has launched a smart phone application called "Change the Air" inviting residents to send photos and complaints about illegal pollution sources, from the burning of leaves and garbage in public parks to construction crews working without dust control measures.<sup>xvi</sup>
- **Other schemes:** The central government recently launched a pilot project to run two-wheelers on compressed natural gas (CNG) in a bid to curb pollution. The project is based on a similar project observed in Bangkok five years ago. As per the idle emission test, the hydrocarbon emissions from CNG retrofitted two-wheelers are 75 per cent lesser and CO emissions are 20 per cent lesser as compared to their petrol-driven models.

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### WHY DELHI SUFFERS: ALL BIG TALK BUT NOTHING CONCRETE HAS BEEN DONE

A lot has been said and promised but very little has been done to control the pollution that is choking Delhi year after year in winters

#### DELHI GOVT'S PROMISES

##### SHORT-TERM

###### Road vacuuming

 Six machine sweepers launched in April to check road dust

**CHALLENGE:** Can't be operated on uneven roads  
**STATUS:** Machines called back. On Tuesday, Manish Sisodia, reintroduced them

###### Sprinklers, mist fountains

 Water sprinklers and mist fountains to settle dust

**CHALLENGE:** Won't help if dust not regularly cleared

**STATUS:** Not launched

###### Outdoor air purifiers

 Air purifiers to be set up at five locations

**CHALLENGE:** Don't work well in open space

**STATUS:** Not launched

###### Odd-even scheme

 Odd, even numbered cars ply on alternate days to check congestion, emissions.

**CHALLENGE:** Farm fires, school season negates impact, no clarity on success

**STATUS:** Not on govt's immediate agenda

###### Night sweeping

 Sweeping of roads at night to allow dust to settle down by morning

**CHALLENGE:** Lack of sanitation staff  
**STATUS:** Except NDMC, no civic body abiding

##### LONG-TERM

###### Controlling crop burning

 Problem persists despite meetings and letters to Punjab, Haryana

**CHALLENGE:** Lack of coordination, fewer fines in Punjab because of election year

**STATUS:** First of many interstate meets on Friday, no concrete plan

###### Public transport

 DTC fleet has 5,951 buses, 8,000 short of need. Last mile link a problem.

**CHALLENGE:** Bus procurement stuck, auto-drivers overcharge customers, last mile issues

**STATUS:** Indefinite

###### Bharat Stage-VI

 SC ordered cleaner fuel standards by 2020 to cut emissions by 60%.

**CHALLENGE:** Faces reluctance from manufacturers and dealers

**STATUS:** To be in force by Apr 2017

#### WHAT EXPERTS REALLY WANT

- Impound vehicles using city as thoroughfare, no day movement of goods.
- Incentives for auto firms to take polluting vehicles, person one car norm, higher tax for fuel guzzling SUVs, incentive for electric cars.
- Hike parking fee, need congestion charge in busy areas, impound vehicles not parked at destined spots.
- Notify dust management rules for all agencies, govt and private. Violators have to pay hefty penalty

- Declare all shopping areas such as CP, Khan Market, Sarojini Nagar as no vehicle zones. Introduce pedestrian and cycle tracks
- Reliable public transport at 5 minutes walking distance of one's home and available within 2-5 minutes, an international norm. Improve last mile connectivity from all metro stations

#### CENTRE'S ACTION PLAN FOR STATES IN JULY 2016

##### Green buffers along traffic corridors within 90 days



**IMPACT:** Better dust management

**STATUS:** Not implemented in most states

##### Greening of open areas in 90 days to reduce dust pollution



**IMPACT:** Prevent recirculation of dust that aggravated pollution

**STATUS:** Work slow in most states

##### Ban on stubble and waste burning within 90 days



**IMPACT:** Contributes 26% to Delhi's air pollution

**STATUS:** Initiated in Haryana and Punjab, stopped for

political reasons

##### Install emission traps in brick kilns around Delhi in 120 days



**IMPACT:** Would have reduced capital's pollution load by 10%-15%

**STATUS:** Slow progress, politically connected kiln owners resist

##### Enforce construction rules



**IMPACT:** Would have reduced particulate pollution by 30%

**STATUS:** Poor enforcement and fear that it may lead to corruption

##### Decongest traffic



Central panel recommended taxing use of private vehicles.

**STATUS:** Indefinite

## Lead Essay

### III. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Considering the state of affairs in Northern India and the multiple reports as evidence of the quickly degrading air quality, action must be taken by both the State Government and the Central Government in cooperation. The Central Government needs to devise a 'National Policy on the Right to Clean Air' which can be implemented by the State Governments in cooperation with each other. Policies of neighbors like China who have suffered the same developmental problems and shown recovery must be studied in depth to avoid their mistakes and come up with a suitable Indian model which can be used to solve India's environmental problems.

The states cannot take sole responsibility to implement measures to control pollution as unless the neighboring states implement them as well the particles from air in one state would just travel with the wind to other states. For example, A study by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) - National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), that comes under the Ministry of Science and Technology recently stated that nearly 60% of pollution in Delhi caused by fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) originates from outside, with the neighboring states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh being major contributors. It pointed out that burning of biomass in cooking stoves and power plants is a major source of pollutants depleting the air quality.<sup>xvii</sup> Thus, there is a need for states to cooperate with each other in order to achieve results. This has already been observed in Europe during the 80s and in China as well. In order to do that, we need to observe steps taken by China to curb air pollution. Both India (Delhi) and China (Beijing) have capitals with severe air pollution. Both the cities face serious pressures to clean up their air; both have unique challenges. But Delhi seems to lack Beijing's scale, stringency and frantic pace of action. After years of consistent and aggressive efforts Beijing has evidence to show improvement in its air quality. But, Delhi has lost its air quality gains. Delhi faces the same challenge of cleaning up its air as Beijing, but lacks aggression and stringency of action needed to protect public health.<sup>xviii</sup> Thus, a 'National Policy on the Right to Clean Air' must be enacted and it must encompass the following points.

- **Need to Work Together**

"A real-time cross-border traffic survey done by Centre for Science and Environment has exposed the stunning fact that the number of personal and passenger vehicles that enter Delhi daily—cars, SUVs, two-wheelers, taxis, buses (excluding trucks and light commercial vehicles)—are close to the total number of vehicles that got registered in Delhi in one year - 2014-15. These contribute close to a quarter of the total particulate load from personal and passenger vehicles in the city. Incoming NCR traffic is undercutting the air quality and health benefits from local measures to reduce toxic air pollution, especially diesel pollution: Delhi has moved all its buses, autos and taxis to CNG and is trying to control dieselisation of cars. It has also reduced the influx of trucks from outside. But this is getting negated by the huge influx of personal and passenger vehicles, especially the diesel ones."<sup>xix</sup> It is clear from this example that in order for states to control the levels of pollution, they need to coordinate their efforts with other states. Also, there must be cooperation between Central and State Government to make and implement more effective policies.

- **Need for Better Public Transport**

State and the Centre needs to prioritize scaling up of affordable, comfortable and reliable public transport service and cycling and walking infrastructure while promoting compact city design to reduce dependence on personal vehicles in Delhi and NCR. The analysis by CSE reconfirms that ineffective public policy on public transport connectivity is increasing dependence on personal vehicles, leading to enormous pollution and ill-health in Delhi-NCR. While so much effort is being made to bypass polluting trucks, both state and central governments are turning the city roads into highways and elevated high-speed corridors for personal vehicles from the region. This is undercutting Delhi's effort to control emissions and exposures in all sectors. The incoming vehicles contribute close to a quarter of the total particulate load from personal and passenger vehicles in the city. If this trend is not reversed, it will become increasingly difficult to reduce high exposure to toxic fumes and crippling congestion.

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Cars and SUVs together contribute 66 per cent of the particulate load from all incoming traffic (excluding trucks and light commercial vehicles). The two together also contribute 46 per cent of the nitrogen oxide load. Cars and SUVs coming to Delhi are also the biggest fuel-guzzlers and the highest emitters of heat-trapping carbon dioxide.

Even though buses are a mere one per cent of the incoming fleet, they carry 30 per cent of the commuters from NCR: There is a huge potential to expand this transport that has been ignored so far. It is extremely worrying that the trend in number of buses and ridership is declining continuously. The number of buses of Delhi Transport Corporation have sharply fallen from 6,077 in 2011-12 to 4,977 in 2014-15; the average daily ridership of DTC has reduced from 47 lakh per day in 2012-13 to 39 lakh per day in 2014-15—a drop of 17 per cent.

- **Stronger Health Warnings**

People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should remain indoors and keep activity levels low when air quality turns severe. Despite this classification, school children and office goers were not given leaves. Green body SAFAR advised people to avoid all outdoor physical activity but, the warnings issued by the Government were not strong enough to reduce the number of people leaving their homes. Schools should have been shut down due to high levels of smog in the city.

- **Debate on Ban of Firecrackers :**

Diwali may not be the only contributor to air pollution but, firecrackers are used during weddings and for other festivals as well. The sale of firecrackers must be taxed appropriately to ensure that it is limited. Banning of firecrackers should also be debated in parliament.

- **Cure the Problem not the Symptoms:**

“While our fundamental environmental laws are comprehensive and well intentioned, what we lack is an active entity that focuses exclusively on ensuring these laws are adhered to right at the beginning, during the planning process. Many individuals and organizations adhere to these laws only on paper, taking advantage of loopholes in licensing processes. Identifying those who bend the rules to procure permits has been left to public activists or to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The only method of redressal for them is to appeal to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for justice. This mechanism, however, is not sustainable. When tap water was found to be contaminated, water filters emerged. We then had bottled water everywhere, letting us bask in our false sense of security of having surmounted the problem. Today, we are trying to battle air pollution with air filters and face masks. Soon, people will start stepping out of their homes with portable air filters, raising the false sense of security to a whole new level”<sup>xx</sup>

- **Learning From China**

“In Beijing, vehicles contribute 30 per cent of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, a scenario similar to Delhi. To control emissions, Beijing has capped the number of cars that can be sold in a year, banned diesel cars, introduced Euro V emissions standards, phased out more than 600,000 old vehicles and restricted movement of more than 1.5 lakh old and polluting vehicles. It is now setting harsher targets of limiting car numbers below 6 million cars. The plan sets ambitious targets for air quality progress, requiring hundreds of cities to meet “good” or “excellent” standards 80 per cent of the time—meaning they must score below 100 on China’s Air Quality Index of 0-500. The 80 per cent target is in addition to a target to reduce the number of polluted days by 25 per cent, and to reduce by 18 per cent the number of days when PM<sub>2.5</sub> exceeds allowable limits. The plan also steps up the reduction targets for sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides (SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>). The plan stresses any new coal-fired power plants should have “ultra low emissions” comparable to the emissions of natural gas plants. The plan also calls for the replacement of coal in non-power sectors either with electricity or natural gas.”<sup>xxi</sup>

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From 2000 to 2013, Beijing has decreased its PM10 levels by about 40%, while in India the PM10 levels have increased by 47% from 2000 to 2011. By reviewing the actions taken by both cities it is clear that China has taken a very strong stance and succeeded in implementing its policies effectively when compared to Delhi. The following list of actions taken by Beijing is proof of the same.

- a) To control vehicular pollution and congestion, the Beijing government has already fixed the number of cars that can be sold in one year in the city at 240,000.
- b) Beijing government has also proposed banning half the private cars on roads based on odd and even license plate numbers if the red alert on pollution persists for three or four days.
- c) As the Chinese government does not allow a wide difference between petrol and diesel prices, dieselisation of the car segment is absolutely negligible at one per cent, as opposed to more than half in Delhi. Beijing is introducing Euro V standards.
- d) Public transport: Beijing has scaled up as well as integrated its public transport and fares have been reduced to improve usage.
- e) Adopted an air quality index and a health alert system: This is to inform and warn people about the severity of daily pollution and the need for precaution. This year, the smog has forced Chinese cities to close some of the large factories. Smog episodes in Beijing have also led to restrictions on highway movement. In some provinces smog episodes have forced schools to suspend classes. People were advised to wear masks.
- f) Local governments in China are now liable to pay a fine if air pollution levels hit critical rank. Local governments in eight cities in northeast China's Liaoning province have been fined of US \$8.9 million.
- g) State-of-the-art advanced testing facilities for in-use vehicles. Stringent action taken to seal oil vapour leakage from petrol refuelling stations.
- h) Range of action on polluting industry and other sources<sup>xxii</sup>

Similar to China and India, London has suffered from the same aftereffects of development and has had to deal with air pollution for many years. The new mayor of London Sadiq Khan has taken a very proactive approach reducing air pollution in London and has asked its citizens for advice on the ideas he wishes to implement. This form of communication between the mayor and the citizens is helpful on many levels and maybe India should try something similar as well.<sup>xxiii</sup> Though, there are some who believe India has exhausted all its soft options like Anumita Roychowdhury, CSE's executive director. They believe that the city needs aggressive and time-bound action to meet clean air standards and reduce public health risks. Restricting car usage, upgrading public transport with walking and cycling access, and leapfrogging vehicle emissions standards to Euro V and Euro VI and controlling dieselization are now the only options left for Delhi.”

“India will need to recognize and factor in environmental implications of development into its growth roadmap upfront, rather than deal with these issues as an after-thought. We can learn from the “mistakes” of our predecessors, who have been on similar development journeys and combine it with the emergence of newer, better and cheaper technologies to ensure that our choices and solutions address environmental aspects. Environmental issues must be addressed simultaneously as we move along the path of development.” India must realize that the cost of high PM10 levels is 3% of the GDP, while the cost of mitigation is only 1%. The cost of air pollution is very high and action must be taken by the Government to ensure that its citizens have access to clean air, which is their fundamental right.<sup>xxiv</sup>

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## Lead Essay

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- <sup>xvi</sup> Shreeja Sen & Myank Aggarwal, Live Mint, January 6, 2016, Available at : <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/UFbyAr9iUEFrNdG9VL2TjM/Two-billion-children-breathe-toxic-air-worldwide-Unicef.html>
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- <sup>xviii</sup> Down to Earth, 29 January 2014, Available at : <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/delhi-loses-air-pollution-control-race-to-beijing-centre-for-science-and-environment-43353>
- <sup>xix</sup> Anumita Roychowdhury, Vivek Chattopadhyay, Usman Nasim, Polash Mukerjee, 3 June 2016, Down to Earth, Available at : <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/more-cars-enter-delhi-everyday-than-are-registered-in-a-year-cse-study-54206>
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- <sup>xxii</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Rebecca Smith, Cityam.com, 10 October, 2016, Available at : <http://www.cityam.com/251087/mayor-london-sadiq-khan-gears-up-charge-londons-most>
- <sup>xxiv</sup> *ibid*

## Headlines

### **Delhi struggles to enforce court's orders on curbing air pollution: EPCA report**

**(Down To Earth, 7 November, 2016)**

Delhi needs short-term emergency action and strict enforcement of Supreme Court's directives for effective control of toxic and dangerous air pollution, according to the report submitted by the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority for National Capital Region (EPCA) today (November 7, 2016) to the Supreme Court. Urging the government to treat this smog episode as a public health emergency, the report stated that actions on the court's directive are lax and "do not recognise the urgency of toxic air pollution, particularly in winter months".

Read More: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/delhi-struggles-to-enforce-court-s-orders-on-curbing-air-pollution-epca-report-56254>

Date of access: 8.11.2016

## Economy

### **The GST Is Essentially a Modified Value-Added Tax At This Point**

(Abdul Muheet Chowdhary, *The Wire*, 31st October, 2016)

The Centre has recently proposed a four slab structure for the goods and services tax (GST). This would be 6%, 12%, 18% and 26% respectively and a cess beyond 26% for sin and luxury goods. The state governments have broadly supported the cess though there is disagreement over the slab rates. These rates will be discussed at the next meeting of the GST Council on November 3-4.

[Read More: http://thewire.in/77014/gst-may-contribute-to-stagflation/](http://thewire.in/77014/gst-may-contribute-to-stagflation/)

Date Accessed: 7.11.2016

### **What do we know about the wealthy in India? A pre-liberalisation analysis**

(Rishab Kumar, *Ideas for India*, 26th October, 2016)

Academic attention on the metamorphosis and concentration of wealth has so far excluded poor countries. This column analyses wealth distribution in India, post-independence and pre-liberalisation. It finds that during this period of modest economic growth, the importance of the elite, especially the top 0.01%, declined quite dramatically relative to national income.

[Read More: http://www.ideasforindia.in/article.aspx?article\\_id=1710](http://www.ideasforindia.in/article.aspx?article_id=1710)

Date Accessed: 7.11.2016

## Governance & Development

### *POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE*

#### **International Law: Sacrificing India's Reputation at the Altar of Petty Political Gain**

(Aditya Roy and Anmolam, *The Wire*, 7th November, 2016)

The United Nations was founded not only to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, but also to “establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained.” Encouraging the development of international law as a way to regulate international relations has been a major objective of the United Nations since its very beginning. In 1948, the General Assembly established an expert body, the International Law Commission (ILC) “to promote the progressive development of international law and its codification.”

Read More: <http://thewire.in/74467/decoding-indias-surprising-nomination-to-the-international-law-commission/>

Date Accessed: 7.11.2016

#### **Citizenship on a Divisive Agenda**

(Jaydeep Biswas, *the Hindu*, 4th November, 2016)

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh introduced the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, in the Lok Sabha during the last monsoon session to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955. The Bill, since sent to a 30-member joint House panel on August 11 for a “thorough examination”, contains proposals for bringing in changes to sections 2 and 7, and the Third Schedule of the principal Act.

The Bill states that persons belonging to the minority communities in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India with or without valid documents would now onwards cease to be treated as “illegal migrants” and be eligible to apply for Indian citizenship under the provision of naturalisation.

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/joydeep-biswas-on-bjps-politics-in-assam-citizenship-on-a-divisive-agenda/article9301316.ece>

Date Accessed: 8.11.2016

#### **Anti-talk ULFA warns against the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016**

(Bikash Singh, *The Economic Times*, 25th October, 2016)

Proscribed militant outfit anti-talk faction of Ulfa on Tuesday warned a section of Hindu Bengali individuals and organizations and alleged that this section of people is trying to jeopardize the indigenous peoples' movement against the New Delhi's design to rehabilitate the Hindu Bengali foreigners in Assam through the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016. The outfit in a statement to media houses warned of dire consequences if this section of people and organizations do not keep away from the New Delhi's conspiracy to stop the movement against the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016.

Read more at:

[http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/55055350.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cpps](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/55055350.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cpps)

Date Accessed: 8.11.2016

#### **Regressive and Undemocratic**

(Professir K Nageshwar, *The Hans India*, November 5, 2016)

Often governments resort to measures like imposition of cess or collection of user charges from people in a bid to mop up resources to finance public expenditure. Governments are justified in collecting user charges for certain kind of services and from a certain section of people as someone or other should pay for the public expenditure. Especially so, as public enterprises become white elephants, gobbling up fiscal resources rather than yielding any revenue for the exchequer. But, the devil lies in the detail.

Read more: <http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Editors-Desk/2016-11-05/Regressive-and-undemocratic/262518>

Date Accessed: 08.11.2016

## Governance & Development

### GOVERNMENT

#### **What Shivaji Statue, World's Tallest, Can Do For Maharashtra—If Not Built**

(India Spend, November 08, 2016)

The idea for the Shivaji statue first emerged in 1980. In 2004, the budget was around Rs 100 crore, which jumped to Rs 700 crore in 2009, Rs 1,400 crore in 2013 and Rs 3,600 crore in 2016. The state government bypassed legal procedure by getting an exemption on February 5, 2015, from conducting public hearings on the statue's construction—local fishermen say it will affect their fishing grounds, and the island—from the Union Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change.

Read More: [http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/what-shivaji-stature-worlds-tallest-can-do-for-maharashtra-if-not-built-33355?utm\\_content=buffer369f4&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/what-shivaji-stature-worlds-tallest-can-do-for-maharashtra-if-not-built-33355?utm_content=buffer369f4&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

Date Accessed: 8.11.2016

### HEALTH

#### **Indians may have to pay more for medicines as drug pricing policy is set for overhaul**

(Jyotsna Singh, Scroll, 7th November 2016)

Medicines may become more expensive in India as a result of the major overhaul of the drug pricing policy that is being planned, activists fear. The changes in the prices of medicines are being considered by a government committee set up about a month ago. "We are working with the aim of 'ease of doing business' and 'Make in India'," said health secretary CK Mishra, who heads the committee. "The new pricing policy of drugs will be in tune with this."

Read More: <http://scroll.in/pulse/820756/indians-may-have-to-pay-more-for-medicines-as-drug-pricing-policy-is-set-for-overhaul>

Date Accessed: 7.11.2016

#### **Average Indian consumes 119% more salt per day than WHO limit**

(Devnik Saha, Money life, 7th November, 2016)

An average Indian consumes 10.98 grams of salt per day -- 119 per cent more than the recommended limit of five grams per day by the World Health Organization (WHO) --according to an IndiaSpend analysis of a study conducted by the Australia-based George Institute of Global Health (GIGH), published in the Journal of Hypertension.

Read More: <http://www.moneylife.in/article/average-indian-consumes-119-percentage-more-salt-per-day-than-who-limit/48725.html>

Date Accessed: 7.11.2016

#### **Low Birth Weight Pre-Term Delivery Cause Most Newborn Deaths in India**

(Devanik Saha, IndiaSpend, November 1, 2016)

Neo-natal mortality is defined as death during the first 28 days of life. And India reports the highest numbers in the world: As many as 700,000 newborns die in India each year—29 per 1,000 births. This accounts for 26% of neo-natal deaths in the world, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Thirteen African countries have better infant mortality rates (IMR) than India, IndiaSpend reported in May 2016.

Read more: <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/low-birth-weight-preterm-delivery-cause-most-newborn-deaths-in-india-45376>

Date Accessed: 08.11.2016

## Governance & Development

### ENERGY

#### Solar power tariff dips to all-time low of Rs 4 per unit

(PTI, *Indian Express*, November 08, 2016)

“Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) has finalised a tender issue for 750 MW solar PV projects in Bhadla solar park, Rajasthan at record low tariff for power sale of Rs 4 per unit with VGF (viability gap funding) support,” a source said.

The source further said, “With this SECI has completed auction of more than 5 GW (total being 5,410 MW) under VGF scheme in a span of less than 15 months. Out of this power purchase agreements (PPAs) signed for 2,520 MW and PSA (power supply agreements) signed for 2,725 MW.”

Read More: <http://indianexpress.com/article/business/solar-power-tariff-dips-to-all-time-low-of-rs-4-per-unit-4363579/>

Date Accessed: 8.11.2016

### TECHNOLOGY

#### Companies, Govt gear up to manage e-waste

(Arnab Dutta, *Business Standard*, November 8, 2016)

To streamline the process and set up an organised mechanism to manage e-waste in the country, the government is planning to bring traditional waste managers – the kabaddi wallah – on board. The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship has laid out a plan under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikash Yojana to skill 300,000 kabaddi wallahs in the next 10 years for efficient collection of e-waste.

Read More: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/companies-govt-gear-up-to-manage-e-waste-116110701888\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/companies-govt-gear-up-to-manage-e-waste-116110701888_1.html)

Date Accessed: 8.11.2016

### ENVIRONMENT

#### The Daily Fix: Delhi's air pollution is the result of India's failed policies

(Sruthisagar Yamunan, *Scroll*, 7th November, 2016)

The Delhi government and the Centre finally woke up on Sunday to the gravity of the horrendously poor air quality in some parts of North India. Air toxicity levels are 40 times higher than World Health Organisation standards, according to data from pollution monitoring agencies. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who described the city as a "gas chamber", chaired a cabinet meeting and ordered schools in Delhi to stay shut until Wednesday – a decision many felt should have come much earlier, given the toxic levels of pollution since Diwali.

Read More: <http://scroll.in/article/820904/the-daily-fix-delhis-air-pollution-is-the-result-of-indias-failed-policies>

Date Accessed: 7.11.

### Planting Problems

(Shruti Agarwal, *Down to earth*, 7th November, 2016)

With complete disregard for people's rights, the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd (FDCM) felled thousands of trees in Brahmapuri forest division early this year. It felled the trees despite protests by the residents of 22 villages located in and around the forest. FDCM did stop felling in June after the monsoon arrived. But by then, it had already cleared 385 hectares (ha) of the old-growth forest to raise teak wood plantations. As a mark of protest, the residents refused to provide labour for planting teak, and FDCM had to hire labour from other districts.

Read More: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/planting-problems-56169>

Date Accessed: 7.11.2016

## Governance & Development

### AGRICULTURE

#### Farmers are caught in the tussle between the WHO and the tobacco industry

(Scroll. In, 8 November, 2016)

On Monday morning, farmers agitating outside at the seventh session of the Conference of Parties to World Health Organization's Framework Convention of Tobacco Control at Noida were detained by police. The farmers were peacefully protesting being denied entry into the convention. While encouraging governments to promote better public health by curbing tobacco production, the WHO says it wants to work with tobacco farmers whose livelihoods will be affected. But organizers of the international convention refused to allow tobacco farmers to participate in proceedings. The farmers who came together under the umbrella of the Federation of All India Farmer Associations and applied for the status of observers at the conference.

Read More: <http://scroll.in/pulse/820977/farmers-are-caught-in-the-tussle-between-the-who-and-the-tobacco-industry>

Date of access: 8.11.2016

### LAW AND JUSTICE

#### NDTV ban: Why must government play judge, jury & executioner?

(Charu Kartikeya, Catchnews, 5 November 2016)

The one-day broadcast ban imposed by the union government on NDTV India is a classic case that gives an insight into the mindset of the Narendra Modi government. It is also a good opportunity for the media community and the television news community specifically, to demand for revisiting a law that has been amply proved to be draconian.

Read More: <http://www.catchnews.com/politics-news/ndtv-ban-why-must-government-play-judge-jury-executioner-1478354631.html>

Date of access: 8.11.2016

### DEFENCE

#### Russia's upgraded T-90 battle tanks to give Indian Army 'unmatched' firepower against Pakistan!

(Smriti Jain, *The Financial Express*, November 08, 2016)

The Indian Army already has T-90 main battle tanks, which are assembled at the Avadi Heavy Vehicles Factory. However, according to a report in the Sputnik, the upgraded versions will have thermal imaging night vision cameras along with a host of other countermeasures. These will reduce the chances of the tank being hit by the enemy. The current Indian versions of the T-90 tanks are Shtora self-protection system and Catherine thermal images from Thales and Peleng, the report added. Also, the T-90s would help replace the ageing fleet of T-72 tanks.

Read More: <http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/t-90-battle-tank-russia-indian-army-pakistan-firepower-make-in-india/440862/>

Date Accessed: 8.11.2016

### Five Point Focus

(Ajai Shukla, *The Business Standard*, November 7, 2016)

The Indian Navy, the smallest but most strategic of the three services, is suffering from chronic malnutrition, with its share of defence allocations cut from 18 per cent, four years ago, to just 14.5 per cent today. In dealing with a Chinese military offensive, the army and air force will be on the defensive. The navy alone can take the offensive, with its control over the Indian Ocean trade routes providing an instrument to throttle China's economy.

Read more: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/ajai-shukla-five-point-focus-for-the-navy-116110701902\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/ajai-shukla-five-point-focus-for-the-navy-116110701902_1.html)

Date Accessed: 08.11.2016

## Society

### **GENDER**

#### **Now, Kerala government favours entry of women entry in Sabarimala temple**

(Krishnadas Rajagopal, *The Hindu*, 7th November, 2016)

After coming back to power, the present LDF government led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan filed an additional affidavit supporting the stand of the then UDF government. Today, the State government said it has changed its position and said it will stand by the original stand undertaken in the November 2007 original affidavit favouring women's entry into the temple. The Board appealed to a three judge bench led by Justice Dipak Misra to refer the case to a Constitution Bench.

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/now-kerala-government-favours-entry-of-women-entry-in-sabarimala-temple/article9315196.ece?homepage=true>

Date Accessed: 7.11.2016

#### **In Poorest Nations, a Third Fewer Women Than Men Online with Gap Widening: Report**

(Belinda Goldsmith, *The Wire*, 8 November, 2016)

A study by the ONE organisation, co-founded by Irish rock star Bono to tackle extreme poverty, found that 18% of men in the 48 least developed nations are online versus 12.5% of women, with a gender gap of 22.3 million or about 30%. The analysis, released at Europe's biggest tech event the Web Summit, forecast the digital gender divide would widen further by 2020 to about 32% when factoring in population growth and current internet trends, to a gap of 53.5 million. The report said a global target set by UN member states last year to have universal affordable internet access in the least developed countries by 2020 was off track.

Read More: <http://thewire.in/78540/gap-between-men-and-women-who-are-connected-to-the-internet-set-to-widen/>.

Date of access: 8.11.2016

## INDIA AND WORLD

### *INDIA IN THE WORLD*

#### **It Is Time for India to Stop Blaming China for Blocking Its NSG Bid**

(Jabin T. Jacob, The Wire, 8 November, 2016)

Even as India's application to become a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is due to be reconsidered at a consultative meeting in Vienna later this month, questions over China's response still remain unanswered. According to the external affairs ministry, India's argument for pursuing NSG membership is that being a member "would place our existing cooperation on a predictable basis and facilitate the enhanced investments, industrial tie-ups and technology access required to accelerate augmentation of nuclear power capacity in India".

Read More: <http://thewire.in/78262/it-is-time-for-india-to-stop-blaming-china-for-blocking-its-nsg-bid/>.

Date of access: 8.11.2016

### *INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS*

#### **Overwhelming questions - America cannot swim against the tide of history**

(Ashok Sanjay Guha, The Telegraph, 7th November 2016)

As the low comedy that is the American presidential election of 2016 winds down to its dreary conclusion amidst a spate of scandalous revelations about the two major candidates, one is bound to be struck by an overwhelming question. How, one wonders, does an unlikeable clown who commits a *faux pas* every time he opens his mouth and apparently alienates voters with relish, attract and retain the support of well over 40 per cent of the electorate and a majority of the white male vote?

Read More: [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1161107/jsp/opinion/story\\_117775.jsp#.WCBhgdV97IU](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1161107/jsp/opinion/story_117775.jsp#.WCBhgdV97IU)

Date Accessed: 7.11.2016

#### **India, U.K. must help each other break down barriers: May**

(Vikash Dhoot, The Hindu, 7 November 2016)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Theresa May on Monday pledged to extend cooperation in trade and green energy. Ms. May said she wanted Britain to become a global standard bearer of free trade, saying more investment and fewer barriers to trade between it and India would boost prosperity. "We want Britain to be the most committed and passionate advocate of free trade in the world." India and the U.K. must help each other break down barriers. "We are helping India improve its ease of doing business but I am determined to go further," she said at the inaugural of an India-U.K. Tech Summit here. Ms. May elaborated on the reasons for choosing India as her first destination for a bilateral visit. "I chose India...because of the special partnership between our countries."

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/theresa-may-narendra-modi-address-the-indiauk-tech-summit-in-new-delhi/article9314329.ece>

Date Accessed: 8.11.2016

## INDIA AND WORLD

### **Hillary Clinton has 70 per cent chance of winning elections: pollster (PTI, The Hindu, 8th November, 2016)**

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has a 70 per cent chance of winning the White House race against her Republican rival Donald Trump, a top American pollster has said on the eve of what is being described as the most crucial election in decades. "Hillary Clinton has a 70 per cent chance of winning the election," said Five Thirty Eight website's Nate Silver, who accurately predicted the outcome of 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. This is up from a 65 per cent chance on Sunday night, so Ms. Clinton, 69, has had a good run in the polls in the final days of the campaign, he said. Ms. Clinton's projected margin of victory in the popular vote has increased to 3.5 per cent from 2.9 per cent, Mr. Silver said. In the 19 latest polls taken into account by the poll, Ms. Clinton is leading in 17 polls while Mr. Trump, 70, leads in just two polls.

Read More: [http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-presidential-election-hillary-clinton-has-70-per-cent-chance-of-winning-elections-says-fivethirtyeight-websites-nate-silver/article9318940.ece?google\\_editors\\_picks=true](http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-presidential-election-hillary-clinton-has-70-per-cent-chance-of-winning-elections-says-fivethirtyeight-websites-nate-silver/article9318940.ece?google_editors_picks=true)

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