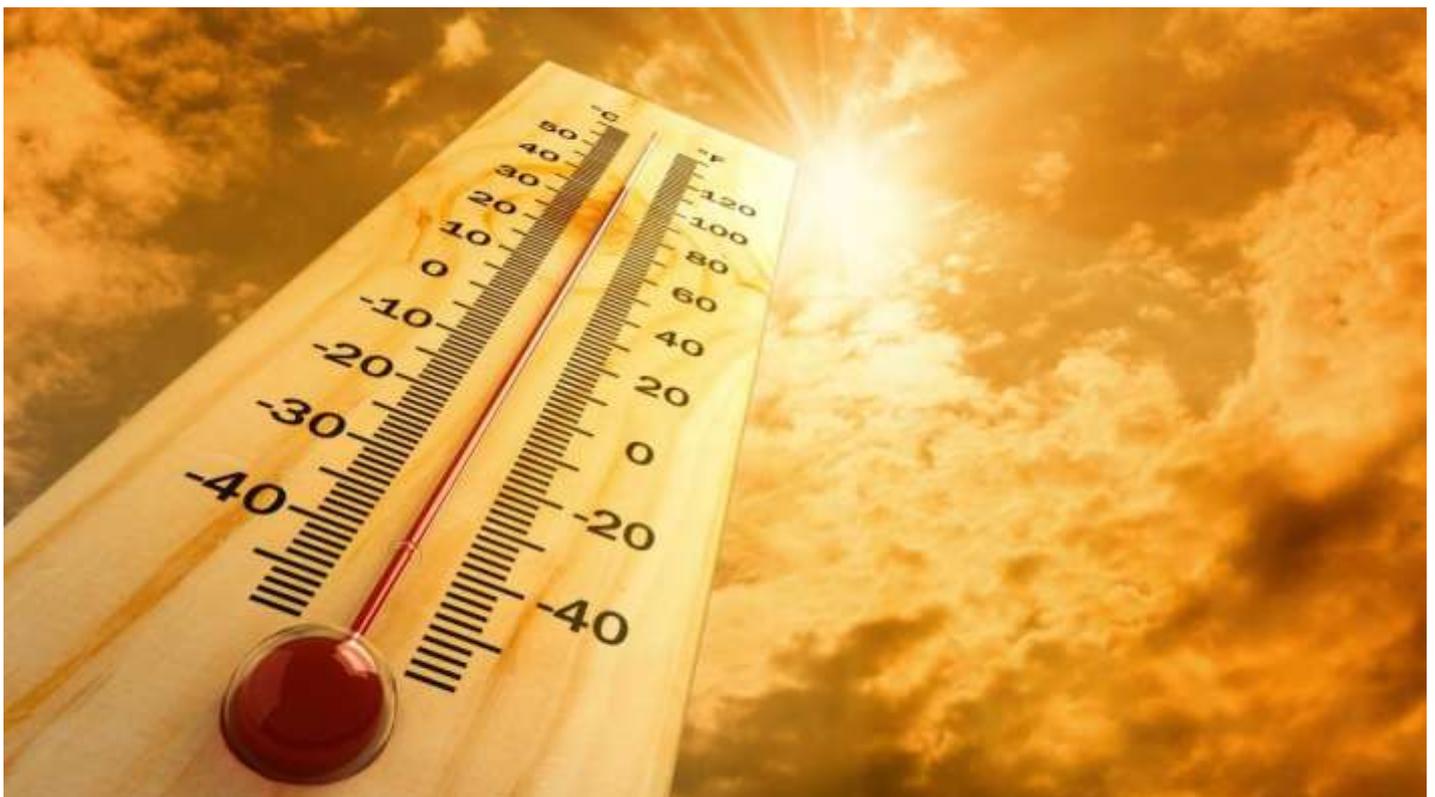


## In This Issue

# Heat Wave State Action Plans: Are They Enough to Tackle the Looming Threat from Global Warming?



(Source- <https://servicemarksolutions.com/whats-heat-wave-anyway/> )

## In This Issue

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## Lead Essay

### Heat Wave State Action Plans: Are They Enough to Tackle the Looming Threat from Global Warming?

In 2015, for the first time the United Nations issued guidelines – ‘Heatwaves and Health: Guidance on Warning-System Development’ – recognising the urgent need to mitigate the growing problem of heat waves aggravated by climate change. This was also the year India was hit with a severe heat wave. More than 2400 people died in its aftermath.<sup>i</sup> However, 2015 was not an anomaly. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) there was a 61 percent rise in the number of deaths due to heat strokes in India from 2004 to 2013 with indications that these numbers represented a vast under-reporting.<sup>ii</sup> Following this same pattern by the end of March this year temperatures soared to levels witnessed earlier in April-May causing several States to issue heat alerts. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning of ‘above normal temperatures’ accompanied by heat wave conditions in the core heat zone comprising of - Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.<sup>iii</sup> Clearly heat waves are a natural disaster India as a tropical country cannot afford to ignore.

It is pertinent to understand if India is aware of the imminent challenge posed by the heat waves. This article will examine the need for heat waves to not just be the concern of specific States but assume national importance. It will further evaluate India’s preparedness to deal with this natural disaster that has begun to engulf large parts of the country with increasing severity. In conclusion suggestions to improve the heat wave policy framework in India will be proposed.

#### Current policy framework to address risk from heat waves

Heat wave has been defined as a period of abnormally high temperature. The IMD has specific criteria for defining a heat wave. Broadly a heat wave occurs when the temperature is about 5-6 degrees above the normal temperature (although there are some nuances and region specific differences).<sup>iv</sup> Despite the large number of casualties owing to heat waves in the past years it is not notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the list of twelve disasters eligible for relief under National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) norms. This makes them ineligible to be covered under central compensation schemes. The Fourteenth Finance Commission however provided that the State government may utilise up to ten percent of the funds available under the SDRF to provide relief for victims of ‘local’ disasters. So if a State considers heat wave to be a disaster in the local context it can access the funds to provide relief for the victims.

At present it is the duty of the affected States to formulate heat action plans. Ahmedabad was among the first cities to prepare one in 2015. Till now Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Odisha and Maharashtra have committed themselves to action plans which are implemented to varying degrees in their districts.<sup>v</sup>

#### Concern regarding heat waves is not just State responsibility

The IMD organised a two day workshop titled ‘National Workshop on Heat Wave Forecasts for State Level Preparedness’ on March 28 in Delhi. One of the challenges identified by it was the unavailability of reliable and systematic health data.<sup>vi</sup>

## Lead Essay

By the present government's own admission in its 'Guidelines for Preparation of Action Plan – Prevention and Management of Heat Wave (2016)' accurate information and data related to heat wave deaths and illnesses are not available because heat wave is not a notified disaster at the national level. Importantly this also affects the death toll owing to heat waves which is likely to be much higher as heat related illness is often recorded inaccurately and figures from rural areas are hard to attain.

Despite this the government has not shown initiative to notify heat waves as a natural disaster which would improve data collection and help in policymaking. The guidelines propose that the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) and the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) will collect this information in the prescribed format. By subsuming heat waves as a local disaster the government attributes the primary responsibility of its management to the States. This responsibility involves preparatory steps such as giving wide publicity to Dos and Don'ts, provision of shelter and drinking water, rescheduling office working hours.<sup>vii</sup> This shift of responsibility to States for the management of heat waves is flawed for two reasons – one, the state governments, district administrations or health departments have not been forthcoming even though the IMD has been issuing heat wave alerts since the past two years<sup>viii</sup>; and two, the heat wave disaster management cannot be restricted to the preparatory steps mentioned above as the repercussions are no longer just localized.

As per the NCRB (2015) Out of 10,510 accidental deaths attributable to natural causes, 25.1 percent of deaths were due to 'Lightning', 18.2 percent due to 'Heat/Sun Stroke' and 10.9 percent deaths due to 'Exposure to Cold.' Unlike heat waves both lightening and cold wave are one the twelve notified natural disasters. The rationale for not attributing management of cold waves to States alone (like in the case of heat waves) given the narrow latitudinal range this calamity affects is unexplained. The gravity of the risk from heat waves is evident from the death figures reported by NCRB. It is certain that these figures though substantial themselves do not give the entire picture. The narrow definition of heat wave deaths includes only deaths caused due to heat stroke and heat exhaustion. It does not take into account the way heat exposure stresses underlying physiological systems like for instance respiratory diseases, chronic kidney disease (CKD) exacerbated due to excess heat but may not result in same-day deaths but with a time lag of a few days.<sup>ix</sup> These deaths so not get accounted a deaths caused due to heat waves.

### **Has India understood the true import of heat wave as a disaster?**

In addition to incomplete accounting of deaths attributable to heat wave the statistics are also unable to capture the negative impact of heat on workplace productivity. According to the recently released report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 'Climate Change and Labour: Impacts of Heat in the Workplace' India is set to lose 3.6 per cent of annual daylight work hours by 2025 due to rising temperatures.<sup>x</sup> The profile of our job market is already changing especially in the service industry. The increase in employment as drivers for ride-sharing companies, labour providing last mile connectivity for deliverables for e-commerce companies, independent workers offering household services within the sharing economy is significant. As the workspace will not necessarily have a sheltering roof the advisory to stay indoors as protection from heat will not be enough to tackle heat waves. Further excessive heat reduces work capacity and labour productivity India has a lot to lose given its geographical disadvantage and lack of concerted governance strategy to address this issue. The government adamantly continues to view heat waves as a disaster that needs to be managed at the State level. It considers deaths as the primary adverse consequence of heat wave without realising the looming disaster it poses to be in the near future.

## Lead Essay

Shockingly India's response to heat waves continues to be piecemeal. Responding to the three sunstroke deaths in Maharashtra last month the IMD stated that technically there had been no heat wave in these districts, though the temperatures recorded there had been higher than usual. The IMD Director stated that their 'job is merely to warn of the possibility of heat waves.'<sup>xi</sup> By extension of this argument the job of the NDMA is to issue advisories to government and urge States to formulate heat wave action plans. While the job of SDMA and DDMA is to identify victims of heat wave and compensate them by utilizing the allocated 10 percent fund. If the authorities and departments refuse to go beyond their boundaries then who will be responsible for the larger policy ramifications of ignoring the threat from heat waves? The climate change head of Department of Science and Technology (DST) suggests that the IMD state centres and the DST state climate change cells must work together.<sup>xii</sup> This would be a helpful start but the need of the hour is even more engagement starting with the Ministry of Home Affairs notifying heat waves as one of the twelve natural disasters. Building on this the central ministries of earth sciences, labour and employment, health and family welfare need to deliberate to form an action plan that tackles heat wave not just as a climate hazard. The social and economic consequences of heat waves must not be ignored. The specific of how Indian society stands to be affected by heat waves is testimony to how real the danger of otherwise vaguely understood global warming. A tropical country like ours needs a forward thinking policy framework to address this concern. Seemingly heat waves are no longer a local weather aberration and hence the central government cannot divest itself of its responsibilities.

### Prepared by:

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<sup>vi</sup> "Frequency of Heat Waves Increasing; We Must Prepare: Experts", The Down to Earth, March 29, 2017 Available at: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/frequency-of-heat-waves-we-must-prepare-for-it-experts-57474> Accessed on 14.4.2017

<sup>vii</sup> Unstarred question no. 372, asked on April 26, 2016

<sup>viii</sup> "Early Heat Wave Grips Country", The Indian Express, April 1, 2017 Available at: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/early-heat-wave-grips-country-4594670/> Accessed on 14.4.2017

<sup>ix</sup> "Heat Waves in India Claim more Lives than Government Statistics Reveal", The Scroll, June 7, 2014 Available at: <https://scroll.in/article/666506/heat-waves-in-india-claim-more-lives-than-the-government-statistics-reveal> Accessed on 14.4.2017

<sup>x</sup> "Rising Heat Could Cut 3.6 percent of India's Daylight Work Hours", The Business Standard, June 10, 2016 Available at: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/rising-heat-could-cut-3-6-of-india-s-daylight-work-hours-special-to-ians-116061000603\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/rising-heat-could-cut-3-6-of-india-s-daylight-work-hours-special-to-ians-116061000603_1.html) Accessed on 14.4.2017

<sup>xi</sup> "Three Sunstroke Deaths in Maharashtra are the First Casualties of 2017", The Scroll, March 31, 2017 Available at: <https://scroll.in/article/833291/three-sunstroke-deaths-in-maharashtra-are-the-first-heat-casualties-of-2017> Accessed on 14.4.2017

## Lead Essay

<sup>xii</sup> “A repeat of the 2015 Andhra-Telangana heat wave that killed 2,500 people is 10 times more likely now”, The Scroll, March 5, 2017

Available at: <https://scroll.in/article/830811/a-repeat-of-the-2015-andhra-telangana-heat-wave-that-killed-2500-people-is-10-times-more-likely-now> Accessed on 17.4.2017

## Headline

### **The long road to fiscal sanity**

*(Live Mint, April 17, 2017)*

The committee headed by veteran bureaucrat N.K. Singh has now recommended a new fiscal architecture that will eventually replace the original fiscal rules introduced because of an enlightened bipartisan consensus at the turn of the century. The committee has suggested a glide path to reach the fiscal targets.

The new fiscal framework can best be understood in terms of four key components. First, the anchor of fiscal policy will be a public-debt target rather than a fiscal deficit target—a stock rather than a flow variable. Second, the annual fiscal deficit will continue to be the operating target for budget makers. Third, the new fiscal rule will be more flexible since there are clear escape clauses that allow the government to increase spending when faced with severe exogenous shocks. Fourth, an independent fiscal council will not only analyse the impact of fiscal decisions over the medium term but also give an opinion on whether the government of the day can use an escape clause to ramp up public spending.

Read More: <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/dYjxld7K7mhw2QHp0Quu7N/The-long-road-to-fiscal-sanity.html>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

## Economy

### Domestic LPG consumption set to grow 10% this fiscal

(Twesh Mishra, *Business Line*, April 16, 2017)

The country's domestic liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) consumption is expected to grow by nearly 10 per cent in 2017-18, over the last fiscal. "We estimate the country's total LPG consumption to be at 23.5 million tonne for fiscal 2018," a top official in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas told *BusinessLine*. "For the connections released under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), till September last year, at least 85 per cent have approached for a refill of LPG cylinders," the official said. There is a gestation period of three months for new connections. The refill percentage is expected to grow as households get used to the cooking fuel, he added.

Read More: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/domestic-lpg-consumption-set-to-grow-10-this-fiscal/article9642347.ece>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

### The Life of Labour: Police Firing Injures 24 Workers in Motihari, Haryana Transport Workers' Strike

(Venkat T., Srividya Tadepalli & Thomas Manuel, *The Wire*, April 16, 2017)

Workers of Haryana Roadways, the department of state transport of Haryana Government, struck work on Monday after their demand to scrap the new transport policy was rejected. The policy will increase the number of routes and buses run by private operators, rather than increasing adequately the buses operated by state transport. The employees felt that such action would increase the precariousness of the jobs in the sector, while also lowering the quality of service. In an attempt to break the strike, the government suspended 120 employees on Tuesday.

Read More: <https://thewire.in/124653/labour-news-india-workers-rights/>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

### Labour participation rate of women in India visibly low, says World Bank study

(Nagesh Prabhu, *The Hindu*, April 17, 2017)

Despite high growth rate during the economic reform period, five economists of the World Bank have found that women's ability to access job opportunities in the new economy has been "precarious".

India's Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) rate has remained visibly low and the International Labour Organisation ranks India's FLFP rate at 121 out of 131 countries in 2013, one of the lowest in the world. India had the lowest FLFP rate in South Asia, with the exception of Pakistan. Globally, only parts of the Arab world held a lower FLFP rates than India.

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/labour-participation-rate-of-women-in-india-visibly-low-says-world-bank-study/article18075087.ece>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

## Economy

### India's steel plans may prove too ambitious

(Kunal Bose, *Business Standard*, April 17, 2017)

By any reckoning, it will be an uphill struggle for India to build steel capacity of 300 million tonnes (mt) by 2030 against the current about 125 mt. In fact, the confirmation came from the government when earlier in the year the steel policy was revised principally to give the industry an extra five years to achieve the target. The roadblocks to achieving the ambitious capacity that will put India well ahead of every other major steel producing country except China are one too many. The main hurdle will be to find 91,000 acres of land to pack new 175 mt capacity to be built both by way of expansion of operating mills and setting up of green-field ventures.

Read More: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/india-s-steel-plans-may-prove-too-ambitious-117041700185\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/india-s-steel-plans-may-prove-too-ambitious-117041700185_1.html)

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

## Governance & Development

### *POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE*

#### **Are Jan Dhan Bank Accounts Actively Used?**

*(The Livemint, April 17, 2017)*

Many analysts attribute the recent electoral success of the Bharatiya Janata Party to the effective implementation of social sector schemes launched by the government of India. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is one such scheme, extremely ambitious in scope. It gave every person in India a bank account, including hundreds of millions of poor, financially excluded individuals. Are these accounts used and if so, how active is the usage? In a recent paper, we analyse these questions.

Read more: <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/lqe7zOgoHkH8O3Y9XtKCuM/Are-Jan-Dhan-bank-accounts-actively-used.html>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

### *EDUCATION*

#### **A narrower education**

*(Ashok Thakur, The Indian Express, April 17, 2017)*

The recent news of the Cabinet Secretary giving directions to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to transfer four schemes related to polytechnics to the new Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has more serious implications than meet the eye. This, seen in conjunction with the earlier decision to transfer architecture institutions from the MHRD to the Ministry of Urban Development (MUD), could well be the beginning of the process of dismantling of the higher education system as we have known it. Already, the grapevine has it that the next subjects in line for transfer could be management and pharmacy, both of which today form part of higher education in the MHRD.

Read More: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/a-narrower-education/>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

#### **In 5 Years, Private Schools Gain 17 Mn Students, Govt Schools Lose 13 Mn**

*(IndiaSpend, April 17, 2017)*

In 2016, for the first time in 10 years, private-school enrolment did not increase in rural areas—it fell from 30.8% in 2014 to 30.5% in 2016, according to the ASER 2016 report. But this has not stemmed the growth of private schools nationwide. Between 2010-11 and 2015-16, the number of private schools grew 35%—from 0.22 million in 2010-11 to 0.30 million in 2015-16—while the number of government schools grew 1%, from 1.03 million to 1.04 million. Section 6 of the Right to Education Act 2009 legally obligates states to create more government schools.

Read more: <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/in-5-years-private-schools-gain-17-mn-students-govt-schools-lose-13-mn-26146>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

## Governance and Development

### *ENVIRONMENT*

#### **Despite efforts, clean water is scarce in India's industrial Gujarat state**

(Cecilia Tortajada, Sanchita Talukdar, *Down To Earth*, 14 April, 2017)

The issue is particularly salient in the drought-prone industrial state of Gujarat. Numerous efforts over the years have not stemmed widespread discharge of untreated effluents, which has reduced the biodiversity and regenerative capacity of its water bodies. Coastal areas in this western state have seen a 15% decline in high-value fish stocks, and many rivers are facing extinction of fish communities. In 2011, *Down to Earth* magazine reported an almost 50% decline in fish catch from the Damanganga river in the Daman district, situated near the Vapi industrial cluster in south Gujarat. Where industrial waste water is being used for irrigation, for example on farms located near industrial clusters, there is increasing evidence of crop contamination with heavy metals. Groundwater is also polluted as a result of indiscriminate industrial dumping, causing freshwater scarcity in the region.

Read More: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/despite-efforts-clean-water-is-scarce-in-india-s-industrial-gujarat-state-57603>.

Date of Access: 17.04.2017

## Opinions/Books

### ***GENDER***

#### **Alcohol Ban Succeeds as Women Warn, ‘Behave, or We’ll Get Tough’**

(Geeta Anand, *New York Times*, April 15, 2017)

Dozens of women brandishing brooms swooped down on a straw house in this village on a recent Saturday, sending the owner fleeing through a rice field as they seized buckets of fruit juice being fermented into a cheap liquor. An hour’s drive away, a group of village women followed the scent of alcohol into a cornfield to find vats of moonshine dug into the ground, which they guarded for several hours until the police arrived.

Read More: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/15/world/asia/india-bihar-alcohol-ban-women.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fworld&action=click&contentCollection=world&region=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=sectionfront&r=0>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

## Opinions/Books

### Cross signals across the Himalayas

(M.K. Narayanan, *The Hindu*, April 15, 2017)

Very recently, China had floated the idea of an Integrated National Security Concept, reflecting the extent of its prevailing insecurities. This has introduced certain ‘redlines’, that China would never compromise its legitimate rights and interests, or sacrifice its “core national interests”. On more than one occasion during the current exchanges, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokespersons had referred to issues concerning Tibet (and Southern Tibet) as having a direct bearing on China’s “core interests”. Current China-India exchanges, hence, need to be examined from the purview of both international relations as well as the domestic situation prevailing in China. It must not be overlooked that the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 occurred soon after China’s disastrous Great Leap Forward, in which a large number of Chinese perished, and the Dalai Lama fleeing Tibet and taking sanctuary in India.

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/cross-signals-across-the-himalayas/article18036011.ece>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

### A glacial fight

(Dinakar Peri, *The Hindu*, April 17, 2017)

Siachen is often referred to as a low-hanging fruit, an issue to be sorted out by both sides before addressing the Kashmir question. However, it may not be that simple for historical, operational and practical reasons.

Pakistan’s calls in the recent past for demilitarising Siachen stem from a position of desperation to save the lives of its soldiers from the extreme conditions there, while at the same time continuing cross-border terrorism along the LoC.

India has shown willingness for demilitarisation conditional on first authenticating the 110-km AGPL, which is the current position on the glacier. But Pakistan refuses, which means that once India vacates the posts, Pakistan may try to occupy them. India currently has the advantage of height as it commands higher ground, and any demilitarisation without proper delineation and acceptance of the current positions would be disastrous.

Read More: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/a-glacial-fight/article18073438.ece>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

### India and Big Power Play

(*The Tribune*, April 17, 2017)

New strategic thinking is needed if India has to counter the US-China-Russia triangle and tackle redistribution of global power. While Pakistan has multiple options available to it, India will have to safeguard its interests in the region by recalibrating the US-centric strategy.

Read more: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/india-and-big-power-play/392890.html>

Date Accessed: 17.04.2017

## Opinions/Books

### BS-IV checkmate

(Sunita Narain, *Down To Earth*, 15 April, 2017)

Let's understand the issue. Firstly, vehicles contribute to the pollution that is making us ill. Secondly, improving the quality of fuel and vehicle technology is a critical way to clean up emissions. But thirdly, this improvement in fuel quality and technology has always been hard-fought. It has always come in spite of Indian automobile companies and not because of them. It was in April 1999 that the Supreme Court had directed that all vehicles in India would have to meet Euro I (BS norms were not fashioned then) by the June of that year. It also directed that Euro II would be mandatory in the NCR by April 1, 2000. At that time, the court had set a precedent by directing that "no vehicle shall be registered unless it conforms to Euro II norms".

Read More: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/bs-iv-checkmate-57601>.

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### School 'Loot': Are Parents Being Cheated With Massive Fee Hikes?

(Hansa Malhotra, *The Quint*, 17 April, 2017)

200%. That could be the increase in fees for students in Delhi Public School Ghaziabad, located in Gurugram's Palam Vihar. "A Class IX student last year paid Rs 32,600. This year, the proposed fee is Rs 1,04,000," says Dev Kumar, whose child studies there. As distressed parents across the country protest the fee hike, schools continue to expel students for non-payment of fees, sending circulars justifying the hike, and in some cases, even shutting down for a few days without notice. At the heart of the debate lie two questions – how much should private schools charge as fees and how much of an increase is justified each year?

Read More: <https://www.thequint.com/india/2017/04/15/school-fee-hike-parents-protest-gurgaon-noida-delhi>.

Date of Access: 17.04.2017

### Ambedkar on How the Lawful is Lawless in Hindu Society

(Manash Firaq Bhattacharjee, *The Wire*, 14 April, 2017)

The disturbing nature of their fates may outwardly seem to be universal. Human beings face violence, discrimination and frustration anywhere in the world. But Vaibhav, Divya, Rohith and the young girl in Bikaner were Dalits. Their caste names them apart from the world's victims. Their caste exposes them to a specific, historical form of violence that has no parallel. They are citizens without certain social and cultural permits. They are individuals who are denied their individuality in relation to those from other castes. They are vulnerable subjects for whom freedom primarily meant erasure of prejudice.

Read More: <https://thewire.in/124051/ambedkar-jayanti-hindu-rohith-veemula/>.

Date of Access: 17.4.2017

### In Kerala, a Beef Fry Dilemma For the BJP

(Nisar K, *The Wire*, 14 April, 2017)

There is an interesting history to how Vinayapuram acquired a rightwing-Hindu character. Earlier, the village and others nearby were known for grassroots socialist politics. In the 1970s, when the Janata Party was formed by socialist leader J.P. Narayan (uniting with the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the-then political wing of RSS, plus the Congress (O) and Bharatiya Lok Dal) it became dominant in Vinayapuram. When the Janata Party broke up, the majority of socialists in the village turned to the newly-formed BJP, and to active local involvement in the RSS. The dominant caste in the village are the Thiyya, who grew more saffronised in rituals and expressive culture, but not in their food. Thiyyas were traditionally toddy-tappers and labourers, once treated as untouchables. They and their deities still eat meat and dried fish, and drink toddy and liquor, unlike the Gods of the upper castes.

Read More: <https://thewire.in/124119/kerala-beef-fry-bjp/>

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