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Agartala wins 'Skoch Order of Merit award 2015'

With the Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) elections barely twelve days away, Agartala city will receive the prestigious 'Skoch Order of Merit award 2015' for the successful implementation of the Light Emitting Diode (LED) illumination system in Agartala. New Delhi based, Skoch Consultancy Services Private Limited, every year select 'Skoch Smart City Safe City' recognizes the governments, municipalities, local bodies and other organizations for their exemplary performance in the area city governance. In these award categories, Agartala city has been selected for the 'Skoch Order of Merit award 2015' for the successful implementation of the Light Emitting Diode (LED) illumination system in Agartala.

AMC superintendent engineer Arupam Sen, speaking with tripurainfo.com, said the Skoch Consultancy Services Private Limited is a boutique strategy and management consulting firm of the government, which will give away the award at the 42nd Skoch Summit on December 10-11, 2015 at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi. Earlier, Tripura government initiated the move to illuminate Agartala through LED lights, replacing sodium vapour and other lamps to save energy by over 40 percent.

The Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) has signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) to put up LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights in the entire Agartala city. The entire cost of the project of Rs.20 crore (to put up 35,000 LED lights) has been borne by the EESL. After completion of the work within six months, over 40 percent of electricity has been saved by AMC. Agartala city is the second city in eastern India after Kolkata has set up LED street lights. So far, Hyderabad and Vijayawada have LED lighting systems.

With a population of around five lakh, the AMC is the northeast India's oldest municipal body. The Agartala Municipal Council was tuned into Municipal Corporation last year. Agartala is the second largest city in northeast India after Guwahati in Assam. However, AMC superintendent engineer Arupam Sen said

Agartala is the only city in the country, which has installed 33,816 LED lights across the capital in six months' time without any capital investment by replacing Sodium viper and CFL halogen bulbs with the energy-efficient LED lights. It may be recalled here that the Skoch Smart Technology Award 2015, India's highest independent civilian honour since 2003 for reducing power consumption without compromising on illumination that has saved a huge amount of power for the nation.

Initiative to promote bamboo treatment

In a bid to encourage the farmers and the users to take bamboo treatment on commercial basis and to add value to the product made out of Bamboo, CFLE and TRIBAC have join hands to promote Bamboo Treatment on commercial basis. The product launching ceremony will take place at Common Facility Centre of Gandhigram Craft Processing Cluster today. On the occasion, a number of prospective bamboo farmers, entrepreneurs and experts have been invited. Tripura is facing a scarcity of bamboo because of large scale flowering and resultant dying of the plants, specially Muli Bamboo. In such a situation to conserve and enhance the durability of bamboo, Both CFLE and TRIBAC have decided to promote Bamboo treatment on commercial basis.

Pawan K Kaushik, Regional Director, CFLE said bamboos treated with a chemical formulation in machines have an extended life up to 5 times as compared to untreated bamboos. A bamboo which is not treated will rot or become infested by termites or other insects in a year, but the treated bamboo will be free of pests for 5 years, thus adding life of furniture, fences or housing material made of Bamboo, Kaushik added. He said that RFR-ICFRE, Dehradun under which the Centre operates, patented the bamboo treatment machine. The machine is further modified to be able to treat 6 Bamboos in one batch within 30 minutes in total.

Dr. Selim Reza, Coordinator of TRIBAC, mentioned that the product TryBam is being launched in view of the concerns of the rural people to motivate them for adoption of this pro-poor technology in value chain management context of bamboo in Tripura.

This initiative will create an enabling environment to set up small enterprise development in rural pockets in Tripura leading towards conservation of this valuable resource besides saving time, labor and money.

124 turtles recovered from Manipuri district; one arrested

Making a breakthrough in checking smuggling of turtles from UP to South East Asian countries, a team of forest officials recovered 124 turtles from Mainpuri district and arrested a gang member involved in the racket.

A team of forest department conducted a raid in Nagla Rateh area in Mainpuri district yesterday on a tip off and recovered 124 turtles, divisional forest officer (DFO) Manish Singh, who led the team told PTI.

Of the 124 turtles, 100 are Black Pond turtles, 20 Indian mud turtles and 4 Softshell Turtles, he said.

During the raid, one Jitendra resident of Nagla Rateh was arrested while the kingpin of the smuggling gang Akhilesh resident of the same village managed to fled.

An FIR has been registered in this regard against the accused.

Turtle smuggling from Mainpuri and nearby regions is being reported for a while.

"These turtles are smuggled to South East Asian countries where they are served as delicacies. In the past also, turtles were rescued from other parts of Mainpuri", the officer said.

The turtle smuggling has taken shape of an organized crime and the accused Akhilesh is the main kingpin, police said.

Chennai floods: Climate change footprints in freak weather

In 24 hours ending Wednesday, Chennai got almost twice the rain it normally receives in the entire month of December. This was just the sort of extreme weather event associated with global warming and the news of the deluge reverberated at the Paris climate summit. But can the record rain spell be linked to climate change?

The short answer appears to be 'yes' but the complex connections of the freak rain event with the changes being wrought by global warming need to be understood.

No single weather event can be directly attributed to climate change. What can be said, however, is whether the probability of that extreme event increases or decreases with the rise in global mean temperatures. Then there are some events whose frequency is predicted to increase due to the changing

climate. To see how this fits into the Chennai event, consider the immediate causes of the downpour. The rains were caused by a cyclonic circulation, a weak rain bearing system that lifts moisture from the Bay of Bengal and dumps it on the coastal areas.

"In meteorology, these are feeble systems. But because of Chennai's proximity to the coast and the strong winds that lifted the moisture, we have got these record rains," said B P Yadav, director, IMD. "Unlike the far more violent cyclones, these are slowmoving systems that are likely to stay over the TN coast for three-four days," he added.

Cyclonic circulations routinely bring rain to coastal TN and Andhra during the northeast monsoon between October and December. But what was striking about this rain spell was its intensity.

FLOOD FIGHT FROM GROUND ZERO



RAINFALL		
NOV 16 24.6cm	DEC 1 23cm	DEC 2 34.5cm
Avg rain in Chennai this season 121cm (Till Dec 1)		
City Avg, Oct - Dec 43cm		
Highest rainfall on a single day in Chennai (Nov 25, 1976) 45cm		
NEXT FOUR DAYS DEC 3 TO DEC 6		
MODERATE TO HEAVY RAIN Across most TN districts and Puducherry, all of coastal TN & many places in interior TN should brace for further rain		
Death toll 251	In relief camps 72,119	35 lakes in Chennai expected to breach banks ▲ Autos submerged on a Chennai street
RESCUE & RELIEF OPS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSNL to provide free internet & phone calls for flood-affected in Chennai Three C-130s of the Indian Air Force have flown from Hindon airbase (Ghaziabad) to Tirupati with NDRF personnel & relief material Air Force & Army choppers pressed into service, rescue sorties and food packets, ration, items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of daily needs air dropped in worst-hit areas Gemini boats, specialised teams and dry ration sent from Vizag to Chennai Navy's deployed three flood relief teams Shelter for 100 people ready at INS Adyar Medical team on standby UAVs to assess situation 	Helpline Numbers State emergency 1070 District Emergency 1077 Electricity 1912 Fire & Rescue 101 DGP Control 044-28447701 CRA Control 044-28523299 RailMin 044-29015204, 044-29015208, 044-28190216, 044-25330714 Navy helpline 044-25394240
HEAVY RAIN WARNING Till Dec 6, IMD predicts isolated heavy to very heavy rain over coastal TN & Puducherry. Interior TN can expect isolated heavy rain too. All of TN will see some rainfall every day till Sunday at least		
CHENNAI CITY Generally cloudy, Rain or thundershowers in some areas. Temp about 24 to 28 degree Celsius		

"Studies show that with rising global temperatures, the intensity of rain spells is increasing. This has been seen both in the southwest and northeast monsoons," says M Rajeevan, director, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune. So, while no single weather event can be directly affected by global warming, the probability of heavy rain increases in the climate change scenario.

There are other indirect connections too. IMD had predicted above-normal rainfall during the northeast monsoon season. One of the factors behind the forecast was that this is a strong El Nino year. El Nino — a periodic, abnormal warming of surface waters in the central-eastern equatorial Pacific — is linked to below-normal rain in the summer monsoon but an above-normal rain in the northeast monsoon.

"Some studies indicate that frequency of El Nino, which cause abnormal rain over India, is increasing," said IMD's D Sivananda Pai. That's another factor that could increase frequency of freak rains over India.

Delhi races ahead of Beijing

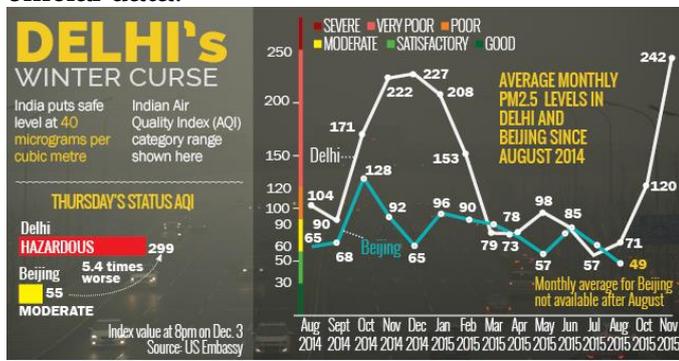
After a neck-and-neck race with Beijing over the past few winters, Delhi may soon find itself without a rival for the 'most-polluted-city' crown. The Chinese city is doing its best to fall behind although, as happened last week, it sometimes nudges ahead with a wind-aided spurt.

A recent assessment by Beijing-based Greenpeace East Asia shows that between August 2014 and August 2015, Delhi's levels of PM2.5 (fine, respirable pollution particles) were far higher than those in Beijing.

Using data from Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and Beijing Municipal Environmental Monitoring Centre stations in Beijing, Greenpeace East Asia found that the Chinese city's monthly PM2.5 averages were between 100g/m³ and 200g/m³. Delhi's monthly averages for October, November, December and January were well above 200g/m³. A microgram (g) is a thousandth part of a milligram.

Not only the Chinese government but also civil society organisations are now saying that Beijing's air quality is improving steadily due to aggressive anti-pollution policies. Average annual PM2.5 levels fell by about 25% from November 2014 to November 2015, after more modest reductions since 2012.

"This November was the worst on record in Beijing since 2010, largely due to the horrendous smog episode that the city just experienced. However, even after that, 2015 is on track to be by far the best year on record," said Lauri Myllyvirta, global campaigner, coal at Greenpeace. "This reduction is not happening only in Beijing but all across eastern and central China, and it can be verified from NASA satellite imagery along with official data."



Other Chinese cities have also shown improvement, say activists. A Greenpeace East Asia analysis of data from 360 Chinese cities released last year reveals "modest" air quality improvements in coastal regions and cities such as Beijing over 12 months. Even the

industrialised Hebei province, just outside Beijing, has improved by 31%.

"Our analysis shows that the government's strict pollution control measures are working," said Zhang Kai, climate and energy campaigner at Greenpeace East Asia.

On the other hand, DPCC's average PM2.5 data for winter months in Delhi shows no improvement whatsoever. DPCC monitors air quality at RK Puram, Mandir Marg, Punjabi Bagh, Civil Lines and Anand Vihar. Some of the stations have in fact shown an increase in PM 2.5 pollution. Only IGI Airport showed considerable improvement in December 2013, January 2014, and January, February, October and November this year. This might be because construction activity—a major polluter—at Aerocity which started in 2010 finished by 2014. Spokespeople for Aerocity said they also have a traffic plan for the area.

"Delhi and Beijing started neck and neck. Both had severe pollution levels but Beijing never lost the momentum in dealing with it. They implemented restraint policies such as limiting car numbers and scaling up public transport at the same time," said Anumita Roychowdhury, head of Centre for Science and Environment's (CSE) Clean Air campaign. Experts say Beijing may have been able to achieve rapid improvements in air quality by idling coal-burning power plants, which helps it meet climate targets along with controlling air pollution.

In 2013, China had released an air pollution action plan called Air Ten, setting targets for 2017 that gave it the momentum to act quickly. Three of Beijing's four coal-fired power plants have been shut down and the last one will be closed in early-2016. A new air pollution law will also take effect next year," said a campaigner from Greenpeace East Asia. Severe pollution has undermined public health in both cities and reduced life expectancy.

In an article about China published last year, he and Dr Doug Dockery at Harvard School of Public Health, had said life-time exposure to ambient air pollution in a city like Beijing may also result in an estimated loss of life expectancy of approximately three years.

World's richest 10% produce 50% of CO2

The richest 10% of people produce half of the Earth's carbon emissions, while the poorest half-most threatened by droughts and super storms linked to climate change—contribute a mere 10%, British charity Oxfam said in a study released on Wednesday.

The richest 10% have, on average, carbon footprints 11 times that of the poorest 3.5 billion people on the planet, the campaign group said in its report. One of the biggest obstacles facing negotiators from 195 countries, attending the Paris climate meet, is how to find the billions of dollars needed by developing nations to enable them to stop using fossil fuels and adapt to the weather shocks. "Climate change and economic inequality are inextricably linked and pose one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century," Tim Gore, Oxfam's head of food and climate policy, said.

Emissions are rising fastest in developing countries, Oxfam said. Yet emissions relating to goods and services consumed by the richest citizens in China, India, Brazil and South Africa are way behind those of their counterparts in the wealthiest countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, it said. Oxfam found that India's richest 10% use on average just one quarter of the carbon used by the poorest half of the population of the US. It also said total emissions of China's poorest 600 million people are one third of the total emissions of US's richest 10%, some 30 million people.

The PM of Tuvalu, the world's fourth smallest nation, has appealed for help from EU leaders to stop it disappearing from Earth. Enele Spoaga arrived in Brussels on Monday to call on EU leaders for support. The islands, home to just 10,000, is under threat from rising sea levels as it is just 4m above sea level. He called on Europe to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to keep warming down to 1.5°C.

Air Pollution Situation In Delhi Of An Emergency Nature: High Court

Air pollution in the national capital is of an "emergency nature", the Delhi High Court today observed and said this situation would not have arisen if the authorities had implemented laws and rules in place to prevent environmental degradation.

A bench of justices Badar Durrez Ahmed and Sanjeev Sachdeva was of the view that while legislations were in place for ensuring maintenance of air quality levels, individuals and departments tasked to enforce the rules, "have not done their work".

It directed officers of all concerned authorities, including Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), that "all the rules have to be followed to the 't' as the situation today is of an emergency nature". "This situation would not have arisen if all authorities had implemented the rules," the court said. The court, referred to particulate matter-PM 2.5 and PM 10-and said as per the statutory norms their levels are not to exceed 60 microgram per cubic meter per day and 100 microgram per cubic meter per day, respectively. However, as per DPCC monitoring stations, their levels are always far in excess of 400/500.

Another exercise the panel has been directed to carry out is to give a weekly chart of the pollutants during the months from October to February for all the years from 2011 to 2015. DPCC has also been asked to provide the court with details of action taken by it, against any violations, in the last five years.

Meanwhile, on the issue of traffic management to reduce the timings of idling vehicles, the court observed that despite its direction for zero tolerance towards violation of rules, especially by people who jump onto other carriageways to get ahead during traffic snarls, police was doing nothing. "People in Delhi need to be disciplined. Send anyone who changes carriageways to turnaround and go in the opposite direction from which they came, as they do in Mumbai," the bench said while hearing a PIL initiated by it on the issue of increasing air pollution in Delhi.

Delhi Traffic Police, in an affidavit, told the court that it had identified 14 areas in the city which were heavily congested and that, in those places, it had observed zero tolerance for violation of rules.

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