



NEWS BULLETIN

Plants and Pollution

ENVIS RP-NBRI

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Vol. 12, December 2019

Role of woman for sustainable Environment

CSIR-NATIONAL BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, LUCKNOW

Young girl in the United Arab Emirates adamant about creating a sustainable environment

UN Environment, 03 December 2019

Today's youth are not sitting idle. All across the world, young people have been taking a stand and voicing their concerns about global issues, from gender equality to climate change. Similarly, youth in West Asia have become more and more engaged in activism and environmental mobilization. To list a few examples: youth in Lebanon planted trees and participated in awareness-raising initiatives that tackle air pollution; young entrepreneurs in the United Arab Emirates developed innovative projects that seek to address the environmental challenges and priorities of their country; and in Bahrain, they organized a large scale sea clean-up campaign under the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) global Clean Seas campaign, collecting almost 3 tonnes of waste from the different coasts of the Kingdom.

It is clear that the climate crisis and the environmental threats facing the world have given impetus to the current generation of youth to play their part in finding solutions. When asked about the role young people in the United Arab Emirates can play in driving positive change towards creating a healthier environment, 14-year-old Sagarika Sriram enthusiastically answers: "we are all change-makers and must not wait for others to take action. This is the impact and power of the digital age we live in."

For Sriram, raising awareness and encouraging positive, incremental behavioral change through the adoption.....

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Vegetable gardens bring veritable gains for women in climate-struck Cambodia

UN Environment, 05 December 2019

On the road winding into Chreng village in Cambodia's Pursat province, a group of boys are playing volleyball on an arid plot of land as villagers watch and cheer. Around the corner, 24-year-old Lang Sokang is knee-deep in mulch, unearthing weeds and planting herbs in her garden. Her younger sisters are perched precariously on a wooden platform that serves as a makeshift greenhouse. The girls are carefully transplanting the saplings into little organic cups. In two weeks, the saplings will be ready to be planted in the ground. The sisters tend to the garden after returning from the rice fields in the morning. While they work steadily, a group of men from the village are drinking nearby in merry revelry.

Pursat province was once a stronghold of the Khmer Rouge. When the civil war ended, men who had been called away to fight returned to their farms to find that the bulk of agricultural labour had been taken up by the women and girls they had left behind. But little has changed in the distribution of work over the decades since. And now, they must contend with increasing environmental hostility brought about by climate change.

Pursat is particularly vulnerable to flash floods and communities are struggling to adapt to their increasing frequency and intensity.....

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Plantation: a pollution abatement habit

CSIR-NATIONAL BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, LUCKNOW

Ten amazing new plant and fungi discoveries in 2019 – in pictures

[The Guardian, 17 December 2019](#)

A snowdrop discovered from a holiday photo uploaded to Facebook A new snowdrop, *Galanthus bursanus*, from north-west Turkey was discovered on Facebook when a Turkish paediatrician uploaded her holiday photos. They were spotted by a Ukrainian snowdrop specialist who could see from the picture that they were something special. Sweet, not sour: A new species of ‘miracle-berry’ *Synsepalum chimanimani*, a new species of ‘miracle berry’ has been discovered in the lowland rainforests of the Chimanimani Mountains on the Mozambique-Zimbabwe border. The miracle berry is a small tree, just four metres in height, with glossy evergreen leaves produced in small bunches. The twigs produce a white rubbery latex when cut.

Doomed by a hydroelectric dam? New ‘orchid’ discovered in a waterfall *Inversodicraea koukoutamba* was discovered on a waterfall on the Bafing River in Guinea, west Africa. It has not been found anywhere else. The new species, identified to be in the family known as the ‘orchids of the falls’ is a rubbery seaweed shrub that grows to 20cm tall. Kew scientists expect it to become extinct when construction on a planned hydroelectric project in the area begins in 2020.

A bamboo-dwelling medicinal fungus found in China A medicinal fungus known in China for more than 400 years has been found to be a genus as well as a species previously unknown to science. It has now been formally named *Rubroshiraia bambusae*..... [Read More...](#)

Will the latest amendment to U.P.’s tree act help the state’s green cover?

[Mongabay, 23 December 2019](#)

Reacting to the outrage over a proposal to cut more than 64,000 trees for a Defence Expo in Lucknow, the Uttar Pradesh government has issued new norms to protect trees in the northern state. The amendment to the state’s tree protection act however, has experts and authorities coming out with opposing claims on the sustainability and benefit of the law.

While the government claims the new provisions aim to protect the environment and biodiversity, environment experts say it is too little too late.

The state cabinet approved an amendment to the “Uttar Pradesh Protection of Trees Act in Rural and Hill Areas, 1976”, on December 9, which makes it mandatory to plant and nurture at least 10 saplings for every tree felled. Earlier, under the tree protection law, one had to plant and tend to two saplings in lieu of cutting a tree.

In case of lack of private space for planting the saplings, designated forest land will be provided for the plantation activity, noted the amendment. The amendment also lists a monetary compensation option in place of plantation, under which, those looking to cut trees can deposit equivalent money (approximately Rs. 1,000 for 10 saplings) with the forest department, who will conduct the required plantation.

Additionally, the government has made it mandatory to seek online... [Read More...](#)



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Impact on Ecosystem

CSIR-NATIONAL BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, LUCKNOW

This railway station opens an 'oxygen parlour' to combat air pollution

The Economic Times, 24 December 2019

In a unique initiative to battle rising air pollution in cities, an 'Oxygen Parlour' has been opened at Nashik railway station to provide an experience of breathing clean air to the commuters. The initiative comes with the efforts of Airo Guard in collaboration with the Indian Railways.

The co-founder of Airo Guard, Amit Amritkar said that the concept of Oxygen Parlour is based on the recommendation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

"In 1989, NASA had conducted a study in which they identified some plants that better absorb the five most harmful pollutants from the air. We have planted most of those plants here," Amritkar told ANI on Monday.

He said that these plants can clean the air in an area of 10X10 feet around them. "There are around 1500 plants here, so, these plants can directly and effectively bring down the pollution in the air at the railway station and allow the people to breathe cleaner air," he said. Amritkar said that their objective is to expand this initiative to every railway station as well as every home. "People can also gift one of these plants to friends and family. It will expand the reach of this initiative and help improve the air quality across the country," he added.

The commuters at the railway station also commended the effort as a positive step towards combating air pollution in the cities across the country. "This is a good effort towards improving air quality.....

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Dark times await Odisha's Talabira as forests razed for mining

Mongabay, 27 December 2019

Till less than a month ago, a lush forest area in Talabira village in Odisha's Sambalpur district was standing tall, with trees several decades old. The morning of December 7, 2019, however, marked the beginning of the end of this green expanse. As the winter breeze swept into the forest areas of Sambalpur district in Odisha, hundreds of personnel of security forces rushed in these areas, particularly near Talabira village. Local people said they had in fact seen security personnel from Odisha police, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and others, parading the village roads near the forest areas, a couple of days earlier and guarding the gates leading to the forests.

The high security in this green patch in eastern India was to facilitate smooth, large-scale felling of thousands of trees and prevent any opposition. What is left now is an expanse of tree stubs that remain from the mass axing activity. Officials and labourers load the trunks of cut trees onto trucks to clear the forest for mining and claim that the cut trees are being taken away for transplantation.

In this area, an opencast coal mining project of central government-owned NLC (Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited) is expected to come up. The company is reported to invest more than Rs. 170 billion (Rs. 17,000 crore) to produce 20 million tonnes of coal per year from the Talabira coal blocks to power 4,200 MW of its thermal power projects.....

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Way to slow down Climate change

CSIR-NATIONAL BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, LUCKNOW

The huge potential of agriculture to slow climate change

UN Environment, 04 December 2019

Soil's contribution to climate change, through the oxidation of soil carbon, is important, and soils—and thus agriculture—can play a major role in mitigating climate change.

“Through multiple agricultural practices, we could help store vast amounts of atmospheric carbon in the soil, while at the same time regenerating soil fertility, plant health and whole ecosystems. This is a no regret option that offers multiple benefits and deserves high-level visibility,” says a recent United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Foresight Brief titled Putting carbon back where it belongs - the potential of carbon sequestration in the soil.

Industrial farming systems succeed in producing large volumes of food for the global market. However, they cause significant soil erosion, biodiversity (including pollinator) losses and pollution of freshwater bodies. They promote a high dependency on the agro-industry and its products and require huge amounts of freshwater and fertilizer. Agriculture contributes about 23 per cent of all human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, with the livestock sector representing 14.5 per cent of such emissions.

The fragility of soils, the thin layer of the earth which is the foundation of nearly everything growing and almost all that we eat, puts the “sustainability” of industrialized agriculture into question. One major problem is that we are losing soil due to poor land management practices.

“Overall, soil is being.....

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1000 trees planted under ‘Debrecen, Our Garden’ program

The Mayor, 20 December 2019

The high level of air pollution is one of the biggest environmental problems in Debrecen, the second largest city in Hungary. A particularly harmful effect on air quality has the burning of solid fuels, green waste, and garbage to heat homes in autumn and winter.

Addressing this problem in a sustainable way, Debrecen city council launched the program ‘Debrecen, our garden’ in April 2019. The outcome of this unprecedented initiative, a joint effort of Debrecen Municipality, locals, companies, institutions, NGOs and friendship societies, was that a total of one thousand trees were planted in all areas of Debrecen by this December.

The 1000th tree was planted by Mayor László Papp in a year-end push during which 50 oaklings were planted in Wesselényi district.

During the event Mayor László Papp said, quoted by Debrecen.hu: „We are committed to preserving the environmental values of Debrecen, as well as to the cleanness of public areas. At the launch of the program ‘Debrecen, our garden’ in April, we set goals for renewing urban green areas: parks and avenues, and we targeted afforestation as well. We have planted 50 oaklings in Wesselényi microdistrict. We have placed the saplings in a way that – when they grow up – they should provide shelter for the residents of the area against particulate matter. We planted trees in all districts, and we shall put 10 thousand saplings..... [Read More...](#)