

November, 2022

HARIT KHABAR

Monthly Newsletter featuring Environment Action by HCL Foundation



Read our special coverage on COP27 on page 3.



An initiative of HCL Foundation and World Comics India



CHOKED CAPITAL!

As northern India is bracing up for winter, it's that time of the year again when the residents of Delhi gasp for clean air. The capital recorded worse levels of air pollution as the Air Quality Index (AQI) went above 300 at most stations.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered - good
51 and 100 - satisfactory
101 and 200 - moderate
201 and 300 - poor
301 and 400 - very poor
401 and 500 - severe

Thick smog since late October is giving the city residents a living nightmare.

Two major pollutants are making life hell for the residents of Delhi – coarse particles called PM10 and fine particles bringing down visibility called PM2.5. The concentration of PM2.5 (particulate matter PM2.5 is an air pollutant) in Delhi goes up to 200 micrograms per cubic meter according to AQI.in. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the concentration of PM2.5 pollutants is deemed safe at less than 60 micrograms per cubic meter for 24 hours mean.



Photo: iStock

Why this situation?**The top four contributors to PM10 are -**

Road Dust - 56%
Concrete Batching - 10%
Industrial Point Sources - 10%
Vehicles - 9%

The top four contributors to PM2.5 are -

Road Dust - 38%
Vehicles - 20%
Domestic Fuel Burning 12%
Industrial Point Sources - 11%

Source - IIT Kanpur

Resorting to Burning the Stubble

There are multiple factors responsible for the capital city's grey air every winter, but one particular factor that stands out to be the most discussed is stubble burning in the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana. If so controversial, why does it persists? After paddy is harvested in mid-October, farmers are left with a stubble of about two feet high. They have to prepare the field for the next crop in little time and resort to burning the stubble.

This year we have positive news from Haryana where till November 3, incidents of stubble burning were only 2377 as compared to last year where incidents were as high as 3438. On the other hand, data from Punjab shows a bleak picture as the fire count was 3916 on a single day on November 11.



Photo: iStock

Tackling stubble burning through comics**What made you take up the issue of stubble burning through comics?**

Normally when we talk about the 'environment' we think of planting trees, saving water, waste management and other stuff. The issue of stubble burning is quite important and we generally don't talk about it. We see news and court judgements related to this issue frequently and it was on my mind when I attended the workshop, hence I created comics on the issue of stubble burning.

Do you discuss environmental issues when you work with children?

Yes, we do discuss environmental issues with children. More than teaching from books, we conduct awareness sessions on environmental issues like rising air pollution levels, especially after Diwali, etc.

Did you share your comics with the children? How was their response?

The first thing I did after attending the workshop was to show my comics to children. I read my comics aloud and explained it to them and also shared my experience. I also shared comics made by other participants.

Children did not know about the issue of stubble and stubble burning. I told them about stubble and explained how it causes so many problems such as rising air pollution and reduced soil fertility. I also told them that this problem persists in Haryana and Punjab as farmers fail to find any alternative practice to get rid of crop residue.

Post the grassroots comics workshop on environmental education in Lucknow, World Comics India team interviewed Shrawan Kumar who created powerful comics on the topical issue of Stubble Burning. Shrawan Kumar has been associated with Chetna, an organisation working with street children, for the past three years.

**पराली जला ली?**SHARWAN
CHETNA NGO

Burnt the Stubble? Two farmers, Hari and Mangal, discuss among themselves that this year's rice produce is nice. Mangal asks Hari what should they do with the crop residue (stubble)? He replies that they will keep some stubble and burn the rest of it. Mangal then says that do you know burning the stubble produces harmful gases and also affects the soil fertility? Some of the solutions include using chemicals to convert stubble into manure, or converting them to fodder for cattle, etc. He adds that remember you could also be fined if you burn the stubble. Comics by Shrawan.

Paris gave us the agreement. Katowice and Glasgow gave us the plan. Sharm El-Sheikh shifts us to implementation. No one can be a mere passenger on this journey. This is the signal that times have changed. Simon Stiell (UN Climate Change Executive Secretary)



Rising global temperatures on the table

As global temperatures are incessantly rising, the world once again gathered in one place for some heated discussions and debates on the ongoing climate crisis. Yes, we are talking about the 27th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) that was held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt from 6 to 18 November 2022. Wide range of issues ranging from finance, science, energy and biodiversity to decarbonisation, adaptation & agriculture, gender, water and civil society were discussed at COP 27.

Why COP27?

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that carbon dioxide emissions need to be cut by 45 per cent by 2030, to meet the goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. But the move towards this has been quite slow.

Another report that was published by UN Climate Change ahead of COP27 states that despite global greenhouse gas emissions plummeting, efforts remain insignificant to meet the goal. Moreover, since COP26 in Glasgow, only 29 out of 194 countries have come forward with tightened national plans to curb carbon emissions.

The time has come for action and if we go by the words of Sameh Shoukry, the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and COP27 President, COP27 must be remembered as the 'Implementation COP' – moving beyond the talking phase.



Photo: UN

India committed to Climate Resilience

India has now joined a selected list of 60 countries that have submitted their Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LTLEDS) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), during COP27.

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said India's approach to long-term low-carbon development strategy is based on the following four key considerations – low historic contribution to global warming despite large population, energy need for development, pursuing low carbon strategies as per national circumstances, and the need to build climate resilience.



Photo: PIB

Loss and Damage Fund Announced



Photo: UN News

COP27 took up the challenge to discuss what was considered the elephant in the room for the past few years and came out victorious. We are talking about the 'Loss and Damage Fund' which was announced at COP27 and is one of the major outcomes. The Loss and Damage fund puts the onus on rich countries with a history of high carbon emissions to compensate countries that can't avoid or adapt to climate change. Unfortunate climate events just before the COP27 like floods in Pakistan, and drought-withering crops in China, made COP27 the perfect platform to discuss the Loss and Damage fund.

No climate action without Women

Women and girls are essential, effective and powerful leaders to address the climate crisis. But they remain largely undervalued and underestimated.

- Amina Mohammed UN Deputy Secretary-General

COP27 dedicated a full day to gender-just climate action, bringing together women climate leaders at the national, regional and global levels and including them in discussing action points to address persistent challenges regarding how climate change adversely affects women. Other areas that the day focused on were women-led solutions, gender-sensitive policies and women getting access to climate finance.

HCL leaves its mark at COP27



With the ongoing discussions on climate change and action, HCL was represented by Dr Nidhi Pundhir, Vice President, Global CSR, HCLTech speaking from the Indian Pavilion.

She said, "It is a privilege discussing subjects such as carbon neutrality, water, etc with leaders from across the spectrum.

The Government of India under the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, has launched Mission LiFE- Lifestyle for Environment, a global mass movement that promotes environmentally conscious lifestyles at the individual level.

AI & technology is also being used innovatively in combating climate change. As an organisation, we are committed to implementing the biodiversity and climate resilience agenda," she added.

The Great Invasion



Photo: iStock

In the long history of march of civilisation, humans have made terrible mistakes knowingly or unknowingly but one mistake which stands out and is generally given less attention is transporting animals and plants from one part of the world to another. To some, it might not even sound like a mistake, after all, what's wrong with this? Little did we know that by doing this, we will create a Frankenstein's monster for the planet.

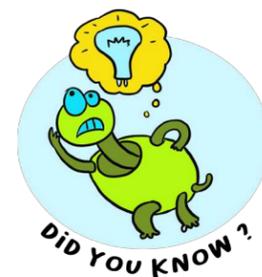
These animal and plant species have the capability of becoming Invasive Alien Species. Once established, some Invasive alien species can displace native plant and animal species, disrupt nutrient and fire cycles and cause changes in the pattern of plant succession. According to the Convention for Biological Diversity, invasive alien species are the second largest cause of biodiversity loss in the world, posing a greater threat to native biodiversity than pollution, harvest, and disease combined.

Naturalised vs Aliens

Invasive alien species are species of plants and animals that have been introduced to a different region by humans. On the other hand, alien species that have escaped from their original ecosystem and are reproducing on their own in a different region are considered naturalized species.

A species is declared an invasive alien species if the following parameters are met –

- If the species has been introduced from outside the political boundary of India
- If the species has established a reproductive population within the political boundary of India
- If the species has been reported as an invasive alien species in scientific studies conducted in India
- If the species has been well-recognised for its negative impacts on biodiversity/ecosystem and services/economy, health, social, and cultural systems.



DRAWING ROOM का कदुआ

NAVEEN VAISH
CHETNA NGO



Drawing Room's Turtle - Anvi goes out with her father and sees a very beautiful turtle. She asks her father if they can take it home. The father agrees and they take the turtle home. Anvi thinks that the turtle is very lovable and wonders what will she feed the turtle. Next day, Rajan Bhaiya visits Anvi's home and Anvi shows her turtle to him. After seeing the turtle, Rajan asks Anvi why did she bring a turtle to her home says that according to Indian Wildlife Protection Act, this is a crime. He also explains that once such wild animals live inside the comfort of human homes, they lose their capability to survive in the wild. Anvi replies that I will go back to that place tomorrow and leave the turtle there. Comics by Naveen Vaish

Say Yes to Native Species

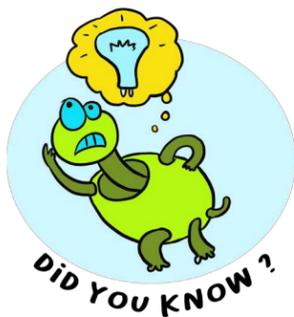
Make sure the plants you are buying for your home or garden are not invasive. Contact your state's native plant society for a list of native plants.

Don't take home any animals, plants, shells, firewood, or food from different ecosystems.

Never release pets into the wild.

Volunteer at your local park, refuge, or other wildlife areas to help remove invasive species. Most parks also have native species restoration programs.

Source: National Geographic



Invading the Economy



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

If you think that the spreading of invasive species is an isolated event and does not have any larger consequences for a country then this study will shock you. According to a study titled 'Massive economic costs of biological invasions despite widespread knowledge gaps: a dual setback for India' by Alok Bang and other

researchers, Invasive Alien Species have cost the Indian economy between at least US\$ 127.3 billion to 182.6 billion from 1960–2020 making India the second most invasion-cost-bearing country after the United States. Further, the study says that 35 per cent of the cost is caused by animal species, 15 per cent by plants, one per cent by fungi and bacteria and the rest is attributed to unspecified species. What is even more shocking is that out of the 330 declared invasive species in India, these costs are incurred only by 10 species.

For example, *Prosopis juliflora*, an evergreen shrub, is one of the most invasive alien species causing economic and environmental harm in arid and semi-arid areas. It is spreading rapidly in the rangelands, croplands and forests and in particular is threatening pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood.

Climate Invasion once again!

Out of the hundred ways in which climate change is affecting the planet, the spreading of invasive species is one. A study conducted by scientists from the Institute of Forest Productivity, Ranchi noted that climate change will worsen the spread of invasive species. Their study includes the dispersion dynamics of two invasive plant species - *Chromolaena odorata* and *Lantana camara*.

These invasive species have tremendous adverse repercussions for people and the planet as they promote wildfire in natural landscapes, stop the expansion of native species, and reduce natural resources for tribal people living in forest areas.

Nature Ki Paathshala: An Open Classroom

Breaking the monotonous pedagogical system of teaching environmental education inside four walls, World Comics India in collaboration with the HCL Foundation organised an outdoor event named – **Nature Ki Paathshala** in Lodhi Garden, Delhi on 5th November 2022. A total of 30 participants from five different organisations attended the event. The event was conducted by Peeyush Sekhsariya, an environmentalist and an artist.



The objective of the event was to impart environmental education through art and make people more aware and observant of their immediate surroundings.



The session was filled with knowledge and information about different aspects of the environment with a special focus on the different species of trees found in Lodhi Garden.



The session started with a very simple exercise – just sit back, relax, and observe the giant pink floss tree near the Bara Gumbad in Lodhi Garden. After closely looking at the beautiful pink floss tree, participants came up with their distinctive observations. They then took up the challenge to draw the tree. Their drawing completely broke down the monotonous picture that comes to our mind when we think of a tree.



The session also included a short walk around the garden that gave them the opportunity to look at a variety of species of trees. The guided walk was a fun and informative session and the participants got to know about different trees, their uses, their history, and other interesting stuff. Some trees had a specific fragrance, some trees had really big leaves that could cover your face and some trees looked sad because of their bent structure, all these were the observations by participants.

Other than imparting knowledge on the different types of trees, the walk was successful in developing the eye of the participants to look at things differently and observe their immediate surroundings from top to toe.

Taking Comics skills to the Community



Having attended the Grassroots Comics Workshop on Environmental Education conducted by World Comics India with the support of the HCL Foundation in Bengaluru, **Aadira and Sugandha from Sochara** took this new skill forward to their whole team and conducted a one-day workshop.

The workshop helped the entire team and empowered them with an effective communication tool that can be used for self-expression. Over 15 members participated in the workshop and created comics on issues that are close to their hearts. The participants recognised the power of grassroots comics and many said that they would use their comics to open discussions in the sessions they conduct in the communities where they work.

Some also said that they would create more comics to communicate their message easily and also engage better with the community.

Grassroots Comics Workshop

Visual story-telling to support environmental causes

A three-day grassroots comics workshop on environmental education was held in Lucknow by World Comics India in collaboration with the HCL Foundation from October 12 to 14, 2022. Representatives of partner organisations working in Lucknow and adjoining areas of Uttar Pradesh with support from the HCL Foundation participated in the three-day workshop. The workshop was aimed at introducing grassroots comics methodology to the participants so that they get the skills to capture and communicate stories on the environment visually adopting a story-telling approach.



Through visuals, the participants were able to talk about various environmental issues plaguing the planet and the comic stories that came out as a result resonated with the work that the organisations are carrying out in the community. There were stories on industrial pollution, stubble burning, keeping wild animals at home, etc. The comics were also exhibited at the HCL Foundation premises and at a livelihood training centre run by the Apparel Training & Design Centre (ATDC) in collaboration with the HCL Foundation.

What are Urban forests?

Urban forests can be defined as networks or systems comprising all woodlands, groups of trees, and individual trees located in urban and peri-urban areas; they include, therefore, forests, street trees, trees in parks and gardens, and trees in derelict corners.

Urban forests provide key ecosystem services, like filtering air and water that are essential to healthy human communities in cities where air pollution and water management can pose public health risks.

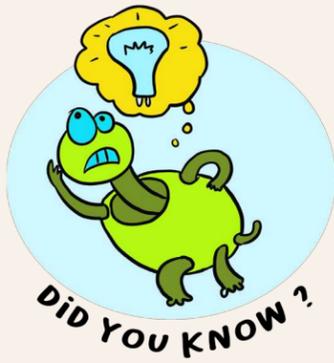


Photo: iStock

Harit Upvan comes up in Lucknow!



Atal Harit Upvan in Lucknow is being created as an integrated tree plantation site, which is powered by community and volunteers.

It is being developed as an integrated development model on urban forestry to the entire state and country.

The activities under Harit Workshop are seed collection drives, compost making, bird nest making (of all shapes and sizes, especially for sparrows and owls), nature walks, bird watching, plant

nursery management, how to make micro-nurseries, bio-enzyme making, proper tree plantation and maintenance techniques.

Through this campaign the Give me Trees Trust is engaging nearby communities, RWAs, schools, etc. and encouraging them to join in creating organic compost at their site.



Integrated development model on urban forestry

With support of the HCL Foundation, Give Me Treest Trust has developed an integrated tree plantation site, which is powered by community and volunteers in Sorkha five years back. Known as Harit Upvan, it showcases an integrated development model on urban forestry to the entire state and country.

The Harit Upvan has been developed as an institutional model for successful environmental programs. Some of the activities that are conducted here are mass afforestation and mass scale community engagement, citizen enrolment, green skills workshops, green skills for women and children, community ownership and leadership.

Communications and education for awareness among citizens of the city and students from schools and colleges, government organizations etc. are also being carried out in a big way.



Indian Robin spotted at Sorkha

Pinky -- Standing up for dignity and self-respect

"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women." – **Maya Angelou**

Probably this quote sums up aptly what Pinky is to Give me Trees Trust. She is the perfect example of a woman standing out for her dignity, self-respect and carrying out her duties in this society no less than a man defining her as a torch bearer of gender equality. Pinky is 25-year-old young ambitious woman born in the year 1998. At home she has an old mother, 1 brother and sister-in-law. After the death of her father, she is the only bread earner and as the head of the family she looks after all their basic requirements.

She has been associated with Give me trees trust from last 2 years i.e. from 2019 till date. Earlier she was involved in basic duties in the nursery at Lucknow. Now she's involved in CSR initiative of HCL named as ATAL Harit plantation project. Her major works at this project are mulching and plantation. Due to her family constraints and financial issues she is not educated enough but her communication skills and social aura makes it very hard to believe that. She is very active, agile and a keen Yoga practitioner. She is great learner and blessed with a sharp brain with good catching power. She is unmarried and a woman with strong will power and determination.

Woman like Pinky makes us believe that even in today's society where several women are deprived of their basic rights on the basis of their gender, she's standing strong emerging out as a role model for many girls of her community and as an inspirational source for girls to come out and work for themselves and their families to remove this social stigma that woman are less than man.



RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION FOR LONGEVITY OF MOTHER EARTH



DON'T WASTE
FOOD

SAVE
ELECTRICITY

SAVE
WATER

RECYCLING

SECOND HAND

DONATIONS

The world has enough for everyone's
need but not for everyone's greed

Partnering for Change 2022



HCL Foundation conducted its annual partner for change meeting in the India Habitat Centre, Delhi on 9th and 10th November. It was a tremendous event that celebrated HCL Foundation's achievements so far – over 5.13 million lives impacted, more than 7,000 PwDs reached, over 66,000 acres of land greened, 10,711 tonnes waste treated and 36 billion litres water harvested. A wide range of sessions were held covering topics on education, environment, livelihood, gender, finance, etc. and eliciting participation from different echelons of society. Awards like best practices and best poster were given recognising the work of partners.

The event was attended by Ms Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson, HCLTech & Chairperson, CSR Board Committee, HCLTech; Dr. Nidhi Punthir, Vice President, Global CSR, HCL Foundation and over 400 HCL Foundation partners from across the country.

Sensitising Communities towards Water Commons



In order to follow up their tremendous work on pond rejuvenation, **Action Aid Association** organises

frequent meetings with the community in villages where they have rejuvenated ponds with the support of the HCL Foundation. A similar such meeting was organised with youth groups in Village Kot and Beel Akbarpur late in October. The goal of these meetings is to sensitise the community and make them responsible towards the water commons that have been rejuvenated.

Carbon Sequestering

As part of the Youth Engagement Program supported by the HCL Foundation, a hands-on Carbon Sequestration Activity was organized by the **Centre for Urban Water Resource**. During the session, a total of 54 students learned an easy method of measuring carbon stored in trees and plants and realized the importance of green spaces in their surroundings.



Comics wave in Chennai Continues...

Grassroots Comics workshops are not isolated events but have wider offshoots than one can imagine. After attending the comics workshop on environmental education in Chennai in August, Sreemathi from **Ekam Foundation** took the grassroots comics methodology further to college students. Functioning as a master trainer, Sreemathi taught students about the basics of comics and since Ekam Foundation is working on issues related to maternal health and pregnant women, Sreemathi encouraged students to create comics on issues related to pregnancy, newborn children, and parenting. Students grabbed the opportunity and covered the following topics –

1. Harassing women to have only the boy child
2. Killing girl child
3. Family pressure to get pregnant soon after marriage
4. Pregnancy myths
5. Understanding the environment
6. How traffic affects pregnant women in the delivery

The most interesting thing that students mentioned was that they don't have restroom facilities in their college, due to which they are facing health issues. And they will frame stories regarding it and post them in their college.



Bringing the Sparrows back

HCL Foundation organized a two-day Bird Nest Making Workshop at the HCL Noida Campus for HCLTech volunteers and family members. It was an interactive and fun-filled nest-making session, delivered by Mr Rakesh Khatri, popularly known as the Sparrow man of India and his team. The session highlighted the change in the habitat of birds due to unplanned urbanization and the importance of nests. Post an informative session, the nature enthusiastic participants made the nest from the kits given to them.



Understanding Sewage Treatment



The **Centre for Sustainable Development** in association with the HCL Foundation and their training partner Eco Tech Engineering organized a site visit to the sewage treatment

plant at Bellandur on 10 November 2022. The purpose of the visit was to make trainees aware of how various preliminary, primary, secondary, and advanced processes related to sewage treatment are carried out in the field.

About the publication

HCL Foundation and World Comics India's collaborative initiative 'Harit Khabar' is a monthly newspaper that aims to educate people on environmental issues and challenges and raise community participation towards the cause of the environment. This publication has been launched a platform to various partner organizations working in collaboration with the HCL Foundation's distinct flagship programme HCL Harit - The Green Initiative to showcase their work and accomplishments and also to create a network between them. Through Harit Khabar we aim to stir meaningful debates on critical issues concerning our environment and ecosystem, accessibility to environmental education and public participation in decision-making processes in the country.

About HCL Foundation

HCL Technologies implements its Corporate Social Responsibility agenda through its CSR arm, the HCL Foundation. Various flagship programs and special initiatives of the Foundation endeavor to contribute toward national and international development goals, bringing about lasting positive impact on people and the planet through long-term sustainable programs.

About World Comics India

Advancing Grassroots Comics as an alternate tool of communication to local communities, World Comics India has been continuously working for the past 20 years. Many successful mass campaigns have also been organized using this medium of communication.

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We are grateful to HCL Harit partners for their significant contribution to this publication.

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