

ENVIRONMENT JUSTICE MATTERS

A Bi-weekly News Digest from
the Environment Support Group

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ESG Features: A Climate Action Plan for Bengaluru



During March and June 2021, ESG worked with administrators of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike and Karnataka Government, senior representatives of regulatory agencies, representatives of multiple sectors across Bengaluru, academicians and experts, and importantly the wide public, in 9 webinars held through the 2nd major lockdowns imposed due to COVID in developing [“*Make Bengaluru Climate Friendly: A blueprint for integrated, participatory and inclusive urban governance*”](#).

[View Plan](#)

See a [*Kannada translation of this report.*](#)

This plan, now in public domain, is reaching rural and urban local governments across Karnataka, Members of Parliament representing Karnataka, Members of Legislative Assembly and Council of Karnataka, to all agencies of the Government of Karnataka, Union Ministries and Central/State regulatory

addressing environment and climate change concerns. ESG would also be presenting this strategy to relevant agencies involved with urban action to tackle climate change as part of the [COP 26](#) organised by [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#).

We hope this unprecedented effort will inspire Bengaluru in working its way towards a climate friendly future, and that this would inspire similar actions elsewhere. We believe that such collectivised ground up action will provide us a reasonable chance to reverse climate change for our benefit and that of generations to come.

We are thrilled to see similar efforts being undertaken by the Mumbai administration. As Nikhil Anand and Lalitha Kamath aptly argue in the [Indian Express](#), Mumbai's climate planning must not only cut across all sectors of governance, but should be an outcome of deeply democratic processes.

Forcible Evictions for “Environment Reasons”



In a must-read report, the Housing and Land Rights Network has found that at least 173,333 persons were [forcibly evicted](#) in India in 2020. Most were not rehabilitated or compensated in any way. Appallingly, almost half were evicted due to “environmental”

reasons, including wildlife and forest protection. We can add to the list the [ongoing eviction](#) of agriculturalists from the Banni grasslands of Kutch. It shows how a simplistic framing of environment-human interactions ignores complexities such as the erosion of communities' management of commons due to

centralised governance, as has been described in [this account](#) of how encroachments by Banni's local communities began.

Karnataka High Court Rules on Cauvery Calling



The Karnataka High Court has passed a [judgment allowing afforestation on farmlands through the Cauvery Calling Project](#). The logic is that trees will save the planet, and it is not a crime to plant them on “barren” private land. This [ruling](#) is the outcome of a Public Interest Litigation which challenged ISHA Foundation's claims that this project is the outcome of collaboration with the Government. The final ruling records that ‘Cauvery Calling’ is not a project developed with support from the Karnataka Government. See also the [report](#) of a national seminar organised at Asian College of Journalism on [Interrogating Cauvery Calling](#) on 23 November 2019.

Farm and Food Security

In this context, it is worth noting recent [reports](#) that provide a grim insight into increasing levels of agricultural distress, which is forcing farmers out of farms. Farm income is increasingly coming through wages from labour, and farm debt is mounting.

An overview of [changing rainfall patterns in the north-east](#), for instance, indicates foolhardiness in promoting oil palm crop in this ecologically sensitive region. In the meantime, Sri Lanka has taken a decision to ban the import of agri-chemicals and promote organic farming. But this move, which many complain has been didactic, appears to be contributing to a food crisis and a [nationally-imposed food emergency](#).

Interrogating Wetland Protection



India's decision to declare more wetlands in the country as sites of international importance under the [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance](#), needs to be deeply interrogated, which Ritesh Kumar of Wetlands International does not in his essay in [Mongabay](#). As ongoing efforts of [Indigenous Perspectives](#) of Manipur, [Ngamee Lup](#) and ESG has revealed, merely declaring [Loktak as a Ramsar site](#) does not guarantee its protection as a region of ecological and cultural diversities.

A Flawed Environmental Clearance Process



Mongabay India and Citizen Matters investigate how superficial the environmental clearance process is for [medium](#) and [large scale](#) real estate projects in Bengaluru.



**PROTECTING LAKES AS COMMONS,
THROUGH SYSTEMIC REFORM**

WE COULD DO MUCH BETTER IF YOU SUPPORT OUR ONGOING EFFORT. LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER.

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In Memoriam



[Gail Omvedt: Revolutionary activist who fought passionately for Dalit rights](#)

N Vinoth Kumar, The Federal, 25 August 2021



[Hermann Bacher, Jesuit who founded people-led watershed development, dies](#)

The Indian Express, 16 September 2021

More In The News



[The Mishing and the Miyah Have Learnt To Live With the Brahmaputra. Can Assam?](#)

Ashima Sharma, The Wire Science, 13 September 2021



[Farmers call off Karnal protest as Haryana govt agrees to demands](#)

Neeraj Mohan, Hindustan Times, 12 September 2021



[ILO and IUCN sign an agreement to harness the interdependence between jobs and nature](#)

ILO Press Release, 1 September 2021

Energy



[‘Unjustified’: Experts Write to PM Modi Against Hydro Projects in Ganga Himalaya](#)

The Wire Science, 10 September 2021



[Power generation surplus, proposed 27 GW of thermal power plants superfluous to India’s energy need: Report](#)

Gaon Connection, 10 September 2021



[BSES commissions Delhi's first urban microgrid system](#)

ET Energyworld, 10 September 2021

Law & Society



[Murders of environment and land defenders hit record high](#)

Jonathan Watts, The Guardian, 13 September 2021



[Khori Gaon Demolitions: Supreme Court Directs Faridabad Municipal Corporation To Roll Out Provisional Rehabilitation Scheme](#)

Srishti Ojha, Live Law, 14 September 2021



[Delhi High Court Refuses To Stay Centre's Notification Allowing Import Of Crushed, De Oiled Genetically Modified Soya Cake](#)

Nupur Thapliyal, Live Law, 10 September 2021



[How Public Land Will Be Saved From Unauthorized Construction In Name Of Religious Places: Allahabad High Court Asks UP Govt](#)

Sparsh Upadhyay, Live Law, 9 September 2021

Watch



[The Story of Plastic](#)

An Emmy-nominated documentary streaming free on Youtube this month.



[Janta Parliament: Response to Monsoon Session](#)

Sessions held on 9-11 September on issues including education, health, food and nutrition, pensions, and debunking government claims on Covid, food insecurity, and more.

[Team ESG](#)

Environment Support Group (Trust)

1572, 36th Cross, Ring Road

Banashankari II Stage

Bangalore 560070. INDIA

Tel: 91-80-26713560

Voice/Fax: 91-80-26713316



Website: esgindia.org **Email:** socialmedia@esgindia.org

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