

Understanding Climate Change in Chennai

News Digest

ClimACT Chennai



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Tamil Nadu government forms 'One Health' panel to address impacts of climate change on public health

The Hindu | Jul 27, 2024

The Tamil Nadu government has established a "One Health" panel to address the public health impacts of climate change. This multidisciplinary panel will focus on understanding and mitigating the effects of climate change on health, particularly concerning zoonotic diseases, food security, and water resources. The initiative aims to promote collaboration between various sectors, including health, agriculture, and environmental agencies. The government seeks to enhance resilience and develop strategies that integrate health into broader climate adaptation efforts.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/tamil-nadu-government-forms-one-health-panel-to-address-impacts-of-climate-change-on-public-health/article68453083.ece>

Heat stress is more than a degree of concern

The Hindu | Jul 23, 2024

Heat stress is an increasingly critical issue due to rising global temperatures, particularly impacting vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and outdoor workers. This phenomenon exacerbates health risks, economic productivity losses, and social inequalities, especially in urban areas lacking adequate infrastructure. Effective solutions require not only immediate mitigation strategies like heat action plans but also long-term investments in urban planning, public health, and climate resilience. Addressing heat stress holistically is essential for safeguarding public health and ensuring sustainable development.

Link: https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/experts-warn-against-relief-even-as-july-ends-streak-of-global-heat-record-124080800099_1.html

Climate change is drastic, we have to be ready for heavy rain: Chennai Mayor

The Hindu | Aug 13, 2024

The Mayor of Chennai, R. Priya, emphasized the city's urgent need to prepare for increasingly extreme rainfall due to climate change. She highlighted that the drastic changes in climate are leading to unpredictable and severe weather events. The city administration is focused on improving infrastructure to manage heavy rainfall and prevent flooding. She called for better public awareness and preparedness to mitigate the impacts of such climate-related challenges.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/chennai-rains-climate-change-is-drastic-we-have-to-be-prepared-for-high-rainfall-says-mayor-r-priya/article68510000.ece>

Mumbai, Chennai to lose 10% and 7% of their land to rising sea levels in just 15 years, says study

Business Insider | Aug 04, 2024

A recent study predicts that Mumbai and Chennai will lose 10% and 7% of their land, respectively, to rising sea levels by 2040. The study, conducted by the Center for Study of Science, Technology, and Policy (CSTEP), highlights the severe threat posed by climate change to India's coastal cities. The report urges immediate action to develop adaptation and risk mitigation strategies, particularly for economic hubs like Mumbai and Chennai. Coastal infrastructure, biodiversity, and major economic sectors in these cities are especially at risk.

Link: <https://www.businessinsider.in/science/environment/news/mumbai-chennai-to-lose-10-and-7-of-their-land-to-rising-sea-levels-in-just-15-years-says-study/articleshow/112259932.cms>

7% of land in Chennai will be submerged by 2040: Study

The New Indian Express | Aug 02, 2024

A study by CSTEP projects that by 2040, 7% of Chennai's land will be submerged due to rising sea levels, significantly impacting the city's coastal regions. The research warns of severe consequences for infrastructure, housing, and livelihoods in these vulnerable areas. The findings underscore the urgency for Chennai to implement comprehensive climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. This situation highlights the broader challenges faced by coastal cities globally in the face of accelerating climate change.

Link: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2024/Aug/02/7-of-land-in-chennai-will-be-submerged-by-2040-study>

Rising sea set to swallow Chennai's Island Ground, Pallikaranai marshland

DT NEXT | Aug 12, 2024

A recent report warns that Chennai may lose several major landmarks due to rising sea levels. The study projects significant coastal erosion and flooding, which could threaten iconic sites and disrupt urban areas. The report emphasizes the urgency of implementing climate adaptation measures to safeguard these landmarks and mitigate potential damage. Addressing the risks associated with sea-level rise is crucial for preserving Chennai's cultural and historical heritage.

Link: <https://www.dtnext.in/news/city/chennai-may-lose-major-landmarks-due-to-sea-level-rise-warns-report-799116>

Hidden, forgotten: GCC blind to well-being of key micro canals in city

The Times of India | Jul 23, 2024

The article highlights the neglect of key micro-canals in Chennai, which play a crucial role in managing stormwater and preventing flooding. Despite their importance, these canals have been largely forgotten and suffer from inadequate maintenance and encroachment. The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has been criticized for its lack of attention to these vital waterways. The article calls for urgent action to restore and protect the canals to improve urban flood management and overall environmental health.

Link: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/hidden-forgotten-gcc-blind-to-well-being-of-key-micro-canals-in-city/articleshow/111936500.cms>

Shifting sands

The Hindu | Aug 04, 2024

The article addresses the issue of coastal erosion in Tamil Nadu, where shifting sands are affecting the coastline and causing damage to properties and infrastructure. The erosion has been exacerbated by human activities such as construction and sand mining, as well as natural factors like storms. Coastal communities are struggling with the impacts, which include loss of land and increased vulnerability to severe weather events. The article calls for comprehensive coastal management strategies to address erosion and protect vulnerable areas.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/shifting-sands/article68482974.ece>

The city of Chennai ran out of water in 2019 — and as more shortages loom, it may not be alone

ABC | Jul 16, 2024

Chennai is facing severe water shortages due to prolonged drought and the depletion of groundwater resources. The city's water crisis has led to reduced water supply for residents and has strained local infrastructure. Efforts to address the shortage include increasing water imports and implementing conservation measures. The situation underscores the need for sustainable water management practices to ensure future water security for Chennai's growing population.

Link: <https://www.abc.net.au/asia/chennai-india-water-shortages/103896300>

India's record heatwave vows to return: Can we survive the next?

Frontline The Hindu | Jul 23, 2024

The article discusses the growing intensity and frequency of heatwaves in India, attributing these extreme weather events to climate change and rising greenhouse gas emissions. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has reported that heatwaves have become more severe and prolonged in recent years. This increase in temperature extremes poses significant health risks and impacts agricultural productivity. The article underscores the urgent need for comprehensive climate action to mitigate these effects and adapt to the changing climate.

Link: <https://frontline.thehindu.com/environment/heatwaves-india-extreme-weather-events-climate-change-imd-greenhouse-gas-emissions/article68389127.ece>

Experts warn against relief even as July ends streak of global heat record

Business Standard | Aug 08, 2024

Despite July breaking the global heat record, experts caution against complacency, emphasizing that the extreme temperatures highlight the ongoing climate crisis. The record-setting heat underscores the urgent need for sustained action to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Experts warn that individual heat records are part of a broader trend of rising global temperatures. Continued vigilance and proactive measures are essential to address the long-term impacts of global warming.

Link: https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/experts-warn-against-relief-even-as-july-ends-streak-of-global-heat-record-124080800099_1.html

Urban Heat Islands: In Indian cities, poor neighbourhoods suffer more

The News Minute | Jul 31, 2024

Urban Heat Islands (UHIs) in Indian cities disproportionately affect poorer neighborhoods, where densely packed settlements lack vegetation and open spaces, leading to extreme heat exposure. In contrast, affluent areas with more greenery experience cooler temperatures. Vulnerable populations, including construction workers, street vendors, and slum dwellers, are most impacted, with limited resources to mitigate heat effects. Addressing this requires comprehensive urban planning focused on increasing vegetation, implementing cool roofs, and improving infrastructure to reduce heat stress in these communities.

Link: <https://www.thenewsminute.com/news/urban-heat-islands-in-indian-cities-poor-neighbourhoods-suffer-more>

Chennai to experience 2°C temperature increase by 2030: Report

The Times of India | Jul 27, 2024

Chennai is expected to experience a temperature rise of 2°C by 2030, driven by urbanization, reduced green cover, and climate change, according to experts. This increase will likely exacerbate heat-related health issues and strain water resources. Vulnerable populations, including the elderly and low-income communities, will face heightened risks. Mitigation efforts such as enhancing green spaces, improving infrastructure, and adopting sustainable practices are crucial to combat the impending heat stress.

Link: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/city-may-get-2c-hotter-by-2030-say-experts/articleshow/112053377.cms>

“Buildings in Chennai expected to grow about 1.5 times by 2030”

The Hindu | Jul 26, 2024

The ‘India Report - Chennai 2030’ predicts that buildings in Chennai could increase by about 15 times by 2030 due to rapid urbanization. This growth is expected to strain the city’s infrastructure, leading to challenges in managing resources like water, energy, and waste. The study emphasizes the need for sustainable urban planning to accommodate this expansion while minimizing environmental impact. Authorities are urged to focus on resilience strategies to ensure the city’s future livability amidst this rapid development.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/buildings-in-chennai-expected-to-grow-about-15-times-by-2030/article68450553.ece>

Panel recommends green nod for Vinfast EV plant in Tamil Nadu

The New Indian Express | Jul 14, 2024

A panel has recommended granting environmental clearance for VinFast’s electric vehicle (EV) plant in Tamil Nadu. The recommendation follows a review of the project’s potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures. The plant is expected to boost local employment and support the transition to sustainable transportation. However, the final approval will depend on further regulatory assessments and adherence to environmental guidelines.

Link: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2024/Jul/14/panel-recommends-green-nod-for-vinfast-ev-plant-in-tamil-nadu>

‘Offshore wind farm will pose threat to biodiverse Gulf of Mannar ecosystem’

The Hindu | Aug 07, 2024

The proposed offshore wind farm in the Gulf of Mannar is raising concerns about its potential impact on the region’s biodiverse ecosystem. Environmentalists worry that the construction and operation of the wind farm could disrupt marine life and affect local biodiversity. The Gulf of Mannar is known for its rich marine habitats, including coral reefs and endangered species. The article emphasizes the need for a thorough environmental impact assessment to safeguard the area’s ecological balance.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/offshore-wind-farm-will-pose-threat-to-biodiverse-gulf-of-mannar-ecosystem/article68493098.ece>

India’s Cities at the Centre of the Climate Crisis

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung | Jul 15, 2024

India’s cities are at the forefront of the climate crisis due to rapid urbanization, which exacerbates environmental vulnerabilities like extreme heat, flooding, and air pollution. The lack of climate-resilient infrastructure and social inequalities worsen the impact on marginalized communities. Despite contributing relatively little to global emissions, Indian cities face significant challenges in adapting to and mitigating climate change. Addressing these issues requires urgent, comprehensive planning that includes climate justice and sustainable development goals.

Link: <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/52323/indias-cities-at-the-centre-of-the-climate-crisis>

Chennai resident initiates drive to clean-up Muttukadu beach

The Hindu | Aug 10, 2024

A Chennai resident has launched a community-driven initiative to clean up Muttukadu Beach, motivated by the area's worsening pollution. The cleanup drive aims to raise awareness about environmental preservation and encourage locals to participate in maintaining the beach's cleanliness. Volunteers, including students and environmentalists, have joined the effort to collect and dispose of the waste responsibly. This initiative highlights the importance of community involvement in addressing environmental challenges at the grassroots level.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/chennai-resident-initiates-drive-to-clean-up-muttukadu-beach/article68510510.ece>

Study finds limited impact of single-use plastics ban in T.N.

The Hindu | Aug 01, 2024

A recent study found that the ban on single-use plastics in Tamil Nadu has had a limited impact on reducing plastic waste. Despite the ban, compliance has been inconsistent, and alternatives are often not readily available. The study highlights challenges in enforcement and the need for better implementation strategies. It calls for stronger measures and increased public awareness to effectively address plastic pollution.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/study-finds-limited-impact-of-single-use-plastics-ban-in-tn/article68472194.ece>

Why keeping Elliot's Beach in Chennai litter-free remains a struggle

Citizen Matters | Aug 07, 2024

Food stalls at Besant Nagar Beach in Chennai are contributing to significant littering and environmental degradation, with waste being improperly disposed of, affecting both the beach and the surrounding areas. The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has been criticized for inadequate waste management and enforcement of regulations. Efforts to clean up and maintain the beach face challenges due to the continuous influx of waste. Effective solutions require stricter enforcement and community involvement to preserve the beach's environment.

Link: <https://citizenmatters.in/food-stalls-littering-environment-gcc-besant-nagar-beach/>

BIODIVERSITY

Global lakes are in hot water amid climate change

Mongabay | Jul 30, 2024

Global lakes are heating up due to climate change, leading to increased evaporation, reduced oxygen levels, and disrupted ecosystems. These changes threaten freshwater supplies, biodiversity, and the livelihoods of communities dependent on lakes. The warming of lakes also accelerates the release of greenhouse gases, creating a feedback loop that further intensifies global warming. Addressing these challenges requires urgent action to reduce emissions and protect freshwater resources.

Link: <https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/global-lakes-are-in-hot-water-amid-climate-change/>

India's open ecosystems face an unusual threat: trees

The Hindu | Aug 01, 2024

The article discusses the issue of woody encroachment in India's open ecosystems, where trees and shrubs are increasingly invading grasslands and other open areas. This phenomenon is a significant environmental concern as it threatens biodiversity, alters local climates, and impacts traditional land uses. Researchers have noted that climate change and changing land management practices are contributing to this trend. The article emphasizes the need for better management strategies to protect these ecosystems and maintain their ecological balance.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/india-open-ecosystems-unusual-threat-woody-encroachment/article68463152.ece>

LIVELIHOODS

Chennai Corporation workers continue to work with no appropriate safety gear

The Hindu | Aug 09, 2024

Chennai Corporation workers are continuing to perform their duties without adequate safety gear, raising concerns about their health and safety. Despite the hazardous nature of their work, such as handling waste and working in potentially dangerous environments, proper protective equipment is often lacking. The situation highlights ongoing issues with worker safety and the need for improved protective measures. The article calls for urgent action to ensure that all workers are provided with the necessary safety gear to protect them from potential risks.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/chennai-corporation-workers-continue-to-work-with-no-appropriate-safety-gear/article68505640.ece>

When conservation clashes with livelihood

The Hindu | Aug 09, 2024

The article highlights the conflict between wildlife conservation efforts and local livelihoods in Karnataka. It details how conservation measures, particularly those aimed at protecting endangered species, can negatively impact the daily lives and economic activities of local communities. Farmers and indigenous people are facing challenges as their land and resources are restricted due to conservation policies. The piece underscores the need for solutions that balance ecological preservation with the rights and needs of local populations.

Link: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/when-conservation-clashes-with-livelihood/article68498464.ece>

TN forms panel to combat climate change

The Times of India | Jul 28, 2024

The Tamil Nadu government has formed a high-level committee to address climate change, chaired by the Chief Secretary. The committee's focus is to develop strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change, with a particular emphasis on coastal areas, agriculture, and water resources. This initiative aims to strengthen the state's resilience against climate-related risks by integrating climate action into policy and planning. The government is also planning to introduce climate literacy programs and establish a state climate data center for better decision-making.

Link: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/tamil-nadu-forms-panel-to-combat-climate-change/articleshow/112071919.cms>

IE Thinc session today: How to deal with climate change in coastal cities

The Indian Express | Aug 12, 2024

The IE Thinc session focuses on strategies to tackle climate change in coastal cities. Experts discussed the unique challenges faced by coastal areas, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and the need for sustainable urban planning. The session highlighted the importance of integrating climate resilience into infrastructure development and emphasized community involvement in creating adaptive strategies. The discussions aim to guide policy and action plans for better preparedness and mitigation efforts in coastal regions.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/ie-thinc-session-today-how-to-deal-with-climate-change-in-coastal-cities-9508626/>

Identifying entry points for adaptive governance in peri-urban Chennai (India): a multi-dimensional, multi-level, and multi-scalar approach

Frontiers in Sustainable Cities - Research | Aug 06, 2024

The article discusses innovative approaches to improving urban sustainability and resilience, particularly in the face of climate change. It emphasizes the importance of integrating technology, policy, and community engagement in creating sustainable cities. The research highlights case studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of interdisciplinary strategies in addressing environmental challenges. Additionally, the article explores the role of governance and collaborative planning in fostering long-term sustainability in urban environments.

Link: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/sustainable-cities/articles/10.3389/frsc.2024.1368240/full>

India March for Science rally held in Besant Nagar on climate change and environmental issues

DT NEXT | Aug 12, 2024

The "March for Science" rally in Besant Nagar highlighted climate change and environmental issues, with participants calling for greater scientific literacy and action. The event aimed to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change on health, agriculture, and ecosystems. Speakers emphasized the need for policy changes and scientific research to address these challenges. The rally also included educational activities to engage the community in environmental advocacy.

Link: <https://www.dtnext.in/news/city/india-march-for-science-rally-held-in-besant-nagar-on-climate-change-and-environmental-issues-799197>

EFFORTS

GCC partners with NGOs, RWAs to plant 1 cr saplings

The Times of India | Jul 28, 2024

The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has partnered with NGOs and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) to plant 10 million saplings across Chennai. This initiative aims to enhance urban greenery and combat climate change by increasing the city's green cover. The project involves community engagement to ensure the survival and growth of the saplings. The GCC's collaboration with various organizations underscores a commitment to environmental sustainability and urban development.

Link: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/gcc-partners-with-ngos-and-rwas-to-plant-1-crore-saplings-in-chennai/articleshow/112071913.cms>

Mangroves along TN coast to be mapped using geospatial tech, AI

The Indian Express | Aug 08, 2024

Tamil Nadu plans to map its mangroves using geospatial technology and artificial intelligence to better understand and protect these crucial ecosystems. The initiative aims to create detailed maps of mangrove areas, which are vital for coastal protection and biodiversity. By leveraging advanced technology, the project seeks to improve conservation efforts and monitor changes in mangrove coverage. This approach is expected to enhance the state's ability to manage and preserve its coastal environments more effectively.

Link: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2024/Aug/08/mangroves-along-tn-coast-to-be-mapped-using-geospatial-tech-ai>

'Vidiyal' of a greener Chennai

The New Indian Express | Aug 11, 2024

M. Sreedhar, a renewable energy consultant, transformed his home in Chennai into a green sanctuary, planting and nurturing native trees since 1988. His efforts expanded into a community movement called "Vidiyal," launched in 2011 to increase the green canopy in his neighborhood. This initiative has led to the planting of over 82,000 trees across Chennai, improving the local environment and groundwater levels. Sreedhar's work serves as a model for urban greening and climate resilience in the city.

Link: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/good-news/2024/Aug/11/vidiyal-of-a-greener-chennai>

Chennai Councillor Talk: JK Manikandan wants to make Ward 186 flood-free

Citizen Matters | Aug 05, 2024

The Councillor of Ward 186 in Chennai, covering areas like Puzhuthivakkam, Ram Nagar, and Madipakkam, focuses on addressing civic issues such as inadequate drainage systems, waterlogging, and waste management. The region faces challenges with infrastructural development, especially in maintaining roads and improving public amenities. The Councillor emphasizes the need for better coordination between residents and the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) to resolve these issues effectively. Active community participation is highlighted as crucial for achieving sustainable urban development.

Link: <https://citizenmatters.in/councillor-talk-ward-186-chennai-puzhuthivakkam-ram-nagar-madipakkam-gcc/>