

Energy and Climate Watch

April 2024

Welcome to the April 2024 edition of our monthly newsletter dedicated to energy and climate change. This issue presents significant global developments alongside key updates from India's energy and climate sectors.

In this edition, we cover a diverse range of topics including:

- [Supreme Court Affirms Citizens' Right to Freedom from Adverse Climate Impacts](#)
- [RBI Observes Climate Change May Hike Inflation and Hinder Growth in India](#)
- [Meteorites May be Lost to Antarctic Ice as Climate Warms](#)
- [European Court Rules in Favour of Swiss Women Group Criticising Government on Climate Change](#)
- [Deloitte Finds Linking Executives Pay to Net-Zero Goals Is the Key to Climate Action](#)
- [ISRO Observes Unprecedented Glacier Melting in the Indian Himalayan Region](#)
- [EU and India Join Hands to Promote Recycling of E-Vehicle Batteries](#)

Additionally, this newsletter captures power statistics for April 2024 to update the reader on the developments in the power sector. CUTS International held the 12th lecture in the series of 40th anniversary lectures in New Delhi. A brief description of the lecture is discussed in the CUTS AT WORK section.

We hope this newsletter serves as a valuable resource for staying informed about the latest developments at the intersection of energy and climate change.

Global Alliance for Leveraging Innovative Finance: Creating Fund of Funds



Climate change has dominated headlines, yet its inextricable link with biodiversity remains curiously muffled. This disconnects, despite both issues falling under the purview of most environmental ministries, underscores a dangerous silo mentality. To ensure a future worth inheriting, we must address these intertwined challenges in unison, guided by pragmatism and global equity.

CUTS International's 'Fund of Funds' proposal leverages diverse financing sources, creating a "Global Alliance for Leveraging Innovative Finance" (GALIF) that advocates an agnostic Fund of Funds and seeks to streamline financing, boost investments, and effectively channel resources toward climate and biodiversity initiatives, ensuring a more impactful and comprehensive approach to address these pressing global challenges.

To join the campaign please write to us at galf@cuts.org

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Supreme Court Affirms Citizens' Right to Freedom from Adverse Climate Impacts



Supreme Court in a judgment stated that climate change impacts the constitutional guarantee of the right to life. It also stated that India must prioritise clean energy initiatives, such as solar power as citizens have a right to be free from the adverse effects of the climate emergency.

Clean energy aligns with the human right to a "healthy environment," the judgment said, pointing out specific concerns of "unequal energy access" for developing countries like India, where women spend an average of 1.4 hours a day collecting firewood and an average of four hours cooking

What is it about?

The judgment came on a petition by wildlife activist MK Ranjitsinh and others to protect the Great Indian Bustard (GIB), a critically endangered bird found only in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The court recalled an earlier order of April 2021 that required the undergrounding of overhead transmission lines across an area of over 80,000 sq km in the two states after the Union government pointed out concerns about the feasibility of implementing the order.

By the present order, passed on March 21, but uploaded recently, the bench formed an Expert Committee comprising independent experts, members of the National Board of Wildlife, representatives of power companies, and former and serving bureaucrats drawn from departments of environment and forests and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to suggest ways to balance two objectives – the conservation of the bird and India's sustainable development goals. The committee's first report is expected by July 31.

Accepting the concerns expressed by the Centre, the bench headed by Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud said, "Without a clean environment which is stable and unimpacted by the vagaries of climate change, the right to life is not fully realised. The right to health (which is a part of the right to life under Article 21) is impacted due to factors, such as air pollution, shifts in vector-borne diseases, rising temperatures, droughts, shortages in food supplies due to crop failure, storms, and flooding. From these, it emerges that there is a right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change."

[**Read in detail**](#)

RBI Observes Climate Change May Hike Inflation and Hinder Growth in India



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cautioned that the climate-driven impacts may present frequent shocks to inflation, thereby undermining policy transmission and necessitating more stringent monetary measures.

The RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das reiterated concerns about the risks posed by global warming in his policy statement on Friday, emphasising the potential for frequent climate shocks to drive up both international and domestic food prices.

What is it about?

In its new monetary policy report, the RBI has highlighted three critical pathways through which climate change could exacerbate inflation and hinder growth in India. These are as follows:

1. Adverse weather conditions could disrupt agricultural production and global supply chains, leading to inflationary pressures.
2. Escalating temperatures and extreme weather events could alter the natural interest rate, dampening productivity and potential output.
3. The aftermath of climate change might impede the effectiveness of monetary policy in regulating financing conditions for households and businesses.

During the post-policy press conference, Governor Das also referenced the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) forecast for 2024, which predicts above-normal maximum temperatures during the hot weather season from April to June across most of the country. The report underscores the growing trend among central banks to explicitly integrate climate risks into their modelling frameworks. It emphasises that a decline in productivity could lead to a drop in the natural interest rate. However, even with a lower natural rate, sudden spikes in inflation may prompt the central bank to adopt a tighter monetary stance.

With discussions on the 'one nation, one poll' concept, which proposes the idea of simultaneous Lok Sabha and State elections, authorities have been urged to factor in weather and climate considerations. These remarks come amid preparations for potentially scorching weather during the general election, prompting the IMD to provide specialised forecasts to aid authorities in better preparation.

[**Read in detail**](#)

Meteorites May be Lost to Antarctic Ice as Climate Warms



The Journal "Nature Climate Change" published that as Earth warms, about 5,000 meteorites could disappear from the surface of melting ice sheets every year.

To date, more than 48,000 meteorites have been discovered in Antarctica, accounting for about 60 percent of specimens found globally.

What is it about?

Under current policies, which the study said may result in a warming of 2.6 degrees Celsius to 2.7 degrees Celsius (4.7 F to 4.9 F) above preindustrial levels, the researchers estimated that 28 percent to 30 percent of the meteorites in Antarctica could become inaccessible. Under a high-emission scenario, the estimate increased to 76 percent. Only at elevations above 2,500 meters (8,202 feet) will meteorite losses be less than 50 percent, the study said. The meteorites can sink into the ice even if temperatures are below zero degrees Celsius (32 Fahrenheit). The sun heats the dark rock, which absorbs solar radiation more easily because of its colour, which melts the surrounding ice. "With that heat, it can locally melt the ice and slowly disappear from the surface.

Righter, along with the study authors, called for collection efforts to be ramped up and prioritised. "If meteorites are not collected quickly enough, they will be a lost resource for present and future planetary science.

The report further projected that by 2050, about a quarter of the Antarctic meteorites estimated to be between 300,000-800,000 could be lost to glacial melt and about three-quarters could be lost under a high-warming scenario before the end of the century.

[**Read in detail**](#)

European Court Rules in Favour of Swiss Women Group Criticising Government on Climate Change



The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has ruled in favour of a group of over 2,000 Swiss women, mostly in their 70s, who sued the Swiss government for failing to adequately combat climate change.

This is the first time the ECHR has issued a ruling on a climate change-related case, setting a significant legal precedent.

What is it about?

The ECHR has ruled in favour of a group of over 2,000 Swiss women, mostly in their 70s, who sued the Swiss government for failing to adequately combat climate change. The women, known as the "KlimaSeniorinnen" or "Senior Women for Climate Protection", argued that the Swiss government's insufficient climate policies put them at particular risk due to their age and gender.

They claimed that the government's failure to meet its emissions reduction targets violated their human rights, specifically the right to respect for private and family life. The ECHR agreed, ruling that Switzerland had "failed to comply with its duties under the Convention concerning climate change" and that it had violated the women's rights.

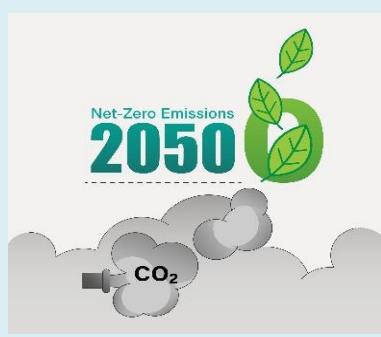
The court found critical gaps in Switzerland's climate policies, including a failure to quantify reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. This landmark ruling is binding on the 46 member states of the Council of Europe, including the UK, and could influence climate litigation in other jurisdictions, particularly in the Global South. It establishes a legal precedent that governments must protect their citizens from the serious adverse effects of climate change.

The court dismissed two other similar climate cases brought by Portuguese youth and a former French mayor, ruling that they had not exhausted domestic legal remedies first. However, the success of the Swiss women's case is seen as a major victory for climate activists and a significant step forward in holding governments accountable for their climate policies.

Greta Thunberg, the prominent climate activist, was present in the courtroom and described the ruling as a "call to action" and a reminder of the human rights implications of the climate crisis. Experts believe this decision will encourage more climate-related lawsuits against governments in the future.

[**Read in detail**](#)

Deloitte Finds Linking Executives Pay to Net-Zero Goals Is the Key to Climate Action



The report, citing the recommendations of the chairpersons surveyed, said that incentivising environmental, social, and governance (ESG) objectives within corporate boardrooms is pivotal to effectively addressing climate change.

It also underscored the importance of commitment by the leadership, particularly from the CEO and the executive team.

What is it about?

The report stated that as climate change risks escalate, the 'Chair of the future' must direct the leadership's focus towards adaptation and mitigation strategies, and incentivise alignments between individual and organisational goals towards sustainability. The Experts found merit in linking executive pay with ESG goals.

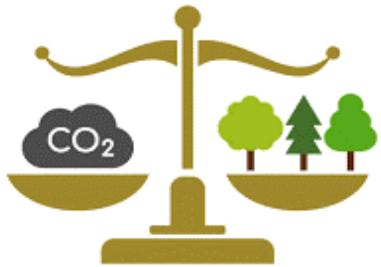
The report stated that given that corporate actions are guided by the leadership's vision, linking executive remuneration with ESG goals is a step in the right direction, as it would aid in ensuring that sustainability strategies translate into action on the ground, and are visible to stakeholders in the way business is done.

According to the report, businesses and consultants are increasingly focusing on green development as climate action has, in some instances, such as the European Union's implementation of a carbon border tax, resulted in trade barriers. This transformation underscores the importance accorded to green development in the global agenda, as evidenced by G20 leaders' resolution to strike a balance between pursuing environmentally sustainable action and inclusive economic growth during a meeting in Delhi last year.

The Deloitte survey also highlighted the participating chairpersons' suggestions to establish dedicated committees within boards for overseeing climate action, mirroring the role of audit committees in companies, which oversee accounting policies and statutory audits.

[***Read in detail***](#)

ISRO Observes Unprecedented Glacier Melting in the Indian Himalayan Region



The analysis of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) through satellite imagery has revealed that glaciers across the Indian Himalayas — often called the Third Pole because of extensive glaciers and snow cover — are melting at an unprecedented rate, resulting in a significant expansion of the glacial lakes.

What is it about?

Using the satellite imagery from 1984-2023, the ISRO noted that of 2,431 glacial lakes of the Indian Himalayas — larger than 10 hectares identified during the 2016-17 satellite survey, 676 glacial lakes have expanded since 1984. This includes 130 lakes situated within India — 65 lakes located in the Indus River basin, 7 in the Ganga River basin, and 58 in the Brahmaputra River basin.

The Bengaluru-based Indian space agency further said 89 percent of lakes (601 of 2,431 lakes) have expanded more than twice, 10 lakes have grown between 1.5 to 2 times and 65 lakes have expanded at 1.5 times their size in 1984. The ISRO study further noted that 314 lakes are located in the 4,000 to 5,000 meters range and 296 lakes are above 5,000 meters elevation.

Long-term changes in the Ghepang Ghat glacial lake (Indus River Basin) at an elevation of 4,068 meters in Himachal Pradesh, show a 178 percent increase in size from 36.49 hectares to 101.30 hectares between 1989 and 2022. The rate of increase is about 1.96 hectares per year.

They also pose significant risks, such as Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), which can have devastating consequences for communities downstream. GLOFs occur when glacial lakes release large volumes of meltwater due to the failure of natural dams, such as those made of moraine or ice, resulting in sudden and severe flooding downstream.

[**Read in detail**](#)

EU and India Join Hands to Promote Recycling of E-Vehicle Batteries



The European Union (EU) and India launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) for startups working in Battery Recycling Technologies for Electric Vehicles (EVs).

It aims to enhance the cooperation between European and Indian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and startups in the clean and green technologies sector.

What is it about?

The EOI provides a platform for Indian and EU startups/SMEs in the field of EV Battery Recycling Technologies to pitch their innovative solutions and engage with Indian/European venture capitalists and solution adopters. Twelve innovators, six each from India and the EU will be selected and get a pitching opportunity during the Matchmaking Event, scheduled for June 2024. Six finalists (three from the EU and three from India) will be selected following their pitching presentations and awarded the possibility to visit India and the EU, respectively.

The key highlights of the event are to: (i) identify, support, and promote startups/SMEs dedicated to advancing the field of battery recycling technologies for EVs; and (ii) facilitate cooperation, explore potential trade avenues, deepen customer relations and explore investment avenues for the shortlisted startups/SMEs.

The Matchmaking Event under India-EU TTC Working Group 2 offers Indian startups/SMEs an exclusive platform to demonstrate their expertise in battery recycling technologies. It provides a chance for Indian innovators to establish strategic alliances with their counterparts in the EU, accelerating the development of advanced battery recycling techniques focused on waste minimisation and resource sustainability.

[**Read in detail**](#)

CUTS International held the "12th lecture in the series of 40th-anniversary lectures of CUTS International" in New Delhi. Nripendra Misra, Chairperson of the Executive Council of the Prime Ministers Memorial Museum and Library and Chairman of the Temple Construction Committee of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust delivered a lecture on The Message from Shri Ram Lalla Temple in Ayodhya.

He said that the importance of Shri Ram Lalla Temple needs to be understood in a civilisational context. He underscored that the rise of Shri Ram Lalla as the civilisational icon will be beneficial not only for all communities in India but also for the world at large.

Presiding the event, former Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and former Commerce Secretary of India, Tejendra Khanna also resonated that India's rise is benevolent for all. The country is undergoing a cultural awakening, which is good for our society as well as for resolving global problems that demand a consensus-based benevolent approach.

Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General of CUTS International spoke about the 40-year journey of CUTS and its consistent contributions from grassroots to global level. In this context, he fondly recollected the visionary leadership of Tejendra Khanna as India's Commerce Secretary when he promoted CUTS and other Indian NGOs to actively undertake high-quality research and participate in the policy process.

He highlighted that the current global challenges from disbelief in the global trade order to armed conflicts demand a sobering influence to address them. He emphasised that while working on national, regional, and global issues of our interest, we have not forgotten our societal obligations to ensure fraternity, duty consciousness, value-based life, and social justice.

In this event, Dr Okonjo-Iweala said "For a civil society organisation from a developing country to be able to last this long is something to be proud of. I want to congratulate you personally and CUTS for the substantive work that you do".

The event was attended by many thought leaders and policymakers, such as Laxmi Puri, Sujan Chinoy, Sanjeev Sanyal, Raj Chengappa, Didar Singh, Ashok Chawla, Rajiv Bhatia, and General Arun Sahni.



Power Statistics for April 2024									
Installed capacity (GW)	Thermal		RE (including large hydro)		Thermal power penetration in the generation mix (%)	RE power penetration in the generation mix (%)	Peak demand (GW)	Peak demand met (GW)	Shortage
	Capacity (GW)	As a % of the total installation	Capacity (GW)	As a % of the total installation					
441.96	243.21	55.02	190.57	43.11	79.65	17.64	221.70	221.68	0.0