NEWS AND VIEWS AT A GLANCE

This is the fourth edition of News & Views.As emphasized earlier, we once again request the scientific community, to contribute to this section of the journal. We are of the firm belief that knowledge of specific scientific developments can help a researcher in better planning his scientific works and appreciating the efforts made by others.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

IAVCEI 2013 General Assembly: Forecasting Volcanic Activity
Dates : 20 Jul 2013 → 24 Jul 2013
Location : Kagoshima, Japan
Weblink : http://www.iavcei2013.com/

8th IAG/AIG International Conference on Geomorphology and Sustainability
Dates: : 27 Aug 2013 → 31 Aug 2013
Location : Paris, France
Weblink : http://www.geomorphology-iag-paris2013.com/en

11th International Conference on Paleoceanography (ICP11)
Dates : 01 Sep 2013 → 06 Sep 2013
Location : Barcelona, Spain
Weblink : http://www.icp2013.cat/

2013 AGU Fall Meeting
Dates : 09 Dec 2013 → 13 Dec 2013
Location : San Francisco, Calif., United States
Organizer : American Geophysical Union
Weblink : http://www.agu.org/meetings/
Contact : AGU Meetings Department 2000 Florida Avenue, NW Washington D.C. U.S.A. 20009; Phone: (+1-202-777-7333)

2013 AGU Fall Meeting
Dates : 15 Dec 2013 → 19 Dec 2013
Location : San Francisco, Calif., United States
Weblink : http://www.agu.org/meetings.shtml

2014 AGU Fall Meeting
Dates : 15 Dec 2014 → 19 Dec 2014
Location : San Francisco, Calif., United States
Weblink : http://www.agu.org/meetings.shtmlI

IGU WORKSHOP AT NIO, GOA
18-19 Feb, 2013;
Contact : nigam@nio.org for details

HONOURS AND AWARDS

During the 49th annual convention of IGU (29-31 Oct, 2012), the following awards were given:

1) **Krishnan Medal :**
   Dr. M. Ram Miohan, Scientist, NGRI, Hyderabad
   Dr. Rajesh Agnihotri, Scientist, NPL, New Delhi
2) **Decennial Award :**
   Prof. Mrinal Kant Sen, Director, NGRI, Hyderabad
3) **IGU-Hari Narain Lifetime Achievement award in Geosciences**
   Prof. Devender Lal, Former Diector, PRL, Ahmedabad
4) **Prince Mukharrum Jha Endowment Lecture**
   Dr. Krishan Lal, President-INSA, New Delhi
5) **Prof. K.R. Ramanathan Memorial Lecture**
   Dr. A.Jayaraman, Director, NARL, A.P.
6) **Dr. H.N. Siddiquie Memorial Lecture**
   Dr. Rajiv Nigam, Chief Scientist, NIO, Goa
7) **Sri L.N. Kailasam Memorial Lecture**
   Shri Apurba Saha, President-SPG, Dehradun
8) **Electrotek & Geometrics Endowment Lecture**
   Prof. T. Harinarayana, Director, GERMI, Gandhinagar

Drs. K.S. Krishna, NIO; and G. Parthasarathy, NGRI were awarded fellowship of National Academy of Sciences (FNA).

Scientific News:
We have talked about LIFE on Earth, in the October, 2012 issue of IGU journal. Details given there have subjective assumptions. It would take considerable time to unravel the true picture. What we are going to detail, in this issue, has no subjectivity. The details given below expose us to the present day scenario, pertaining to LIFE`s degradation along with that of the ENVIRONMENT.

Environment:
Life exists on this planet. But, the quality of life is degrading at an alarming rate. There is no co-operation between different nations, to save the environment----a sad state of affairs. We list below some of the facts, to mobilize our resources to address this important aspect that threatens our very existence and that of our future generations. It is now well established that both the nature and the Man are degrading our environment. The degradation is palpably visible when we take into stock the effects of extreme weather events. Observing, monitoring, and predicting extreme events and managing their impacts requires an extraordinary amount of information about the physical state of the Earth and how it changes from moment to moment and decade to decade. Multiple studies and assessments have found links between changes in global climate and changes in regional events such as heavy rainfall, heat waves, and flooding. It is virtually certain that increases in the frequency and magnitude of warm daily temperature extremes and decreases in cold extremes will occur in the 21st century on a global scale. It is very likely that heat waves will increase in length, frequency, and/ or intensity over most land areas. Many sectors of society are vulnerable to changes in weather and climate-particularly the destructive effects of extreme events.NOAA has come out with a document that points out that we need to continue to improve our environmental intelligence. By improving our observations, research and modeling of the environment we can strengthen our knowledge base to detect and understand changing patterns in weather and climate changes. Intelligence, however, is only as valuable as society`s capacity to use it. Our ability to withstand and recover from extreme events depends on many factors but most certainly on our ability to monitor changes in the frequency and intensity of extreme events. As scientists we need to generate proper knowledge base and use the acquired intelligence to help our society and there by our environment.
Let us look into some news items that appeared in the recent past.

Rich nations stall talks on their record of cutting emissions
During Bonn climate change negotiations, the US, the EU and other developed countries tried to stall discussions on whether the rich countries had met their obligations on reducing emissions and financing the poor countries. Many developed countries pushed for talks to take place only on a new single legal treaty that would wipe out all past and existing obligations. The talks got stalled with developed countries opposing adoption of the agenda, which requires pending issues from the Bali Action Plan of 2009 are addressed properly by all the nations before negotiations on this parallel channel come to an end by the end of 2012 (nothing tangible emerged till middle of Dec, 2012). Under the Bali Action Plan, the developed countries, including the US, are required to increase their ambition levels to cut emissions. At the Bonn talks, the BASIC countries in a joint statement expressed "serious concern" about "ship-jumping" by developed countries like Canada and Japan renouncing their commitments under Kyoto Protocol.

A crucial summit on global development took place in Rio, Brazil in June, 2012.Nearly 20 heads of state and government, including the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, attended, in a fresh bid to rally the world behind a common environmental blueprint amid economic woes and discord. World leaders were urged to commit to reaching an accord that addresses the most pressing environment and social woes. India negotiated to make sure that the Rio principles are reaffirmed and all sustainable developments will be viewed with the approach of equity and common but differentiated responsibility so that developing countries can have their share of development. India opposed the Green Economy norms, as propagated by the European Union, as it has put undue focus on environmental dimensions ignoring socio-economic issues. It is feared that EU's position will slow down the economic growth of India through environmental restrictions. India is also apprehensive about the moves by the West on adopting sustainable development goals without any

international financing, terming it as an attempt to blunt competition from developing countries. India's position is that poverty eradication and social development should be the overarching goals — green economy being one of the means to achieve them. The biggest divergences lie in four areas. They include action on climate change, protecting the oceans and achieving food security, and whether Sustainable Development Goals should replace the Millennium Development Goals when these objectives expire in 2015.The concept of common but differentiated responsibility reflects what developing nations consider their right to catch up with the rich world and as such have more leeway on emissions and other environmental concerns. Developing countries feel it is extremely difficult for them to develop a green economy and that the international community should provide favourable terms for them to address major environmental concerns. The 4 day meet ended on 23rd June,2012. A 50 page document was prepared for consideration by 120 nations. Like Copenhagen and Bonn meetings Rio meet ended without any tangible solutions (Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS).It is quite evident from these interactions that there is a huge gap in understanding between developed and developing countries and this gap will not allow implementation of a viable solution to the vexed problem. In this process the global environment continues to degrade.

Global Warming: Dozens of streams going dry in Kullu

The debate may be continuing about global warming, but the ground reality here is that dozens of streams and brooks of Kullu district have dried up completely, while many others are about to disappear. Climate change has left dozens of gharats (water mills) useless here in the absence of water. Residents are witnessing that water levels of the streams are gradually going down. They strongly believe that eventually the streams will disappear. Water levels in all tributaries of Parbati and Beas rivers have decreased. Natural drinking water springs are also thinning out rapidly. Residents said that insufficient and declining level of snowfall is the main reason behind drying up of water sources.

The area under cultivation is regularly increasing in Kullu and small streams are apparently unable to fulfil the large demand for irrigation water. A web of paved canals has been built in the district but there is not enough water in the streams to feed them and meet the demands of farmers.

Scientists say that depleting water sources are the reason for climate change and irregularity in snowfall. Some parts are witnessing heavy snowfall while others are recording sharp fall all through the year. The aerosol particles are playing their role in global warming. (Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS)

Groundwater depletion`s contribution to sea level rise increasing

Since the turn of the 20th century, industrial-scale redistribution of water from landlocked aquifers to the ocean has driven up the global average sea level by more than 12 cm.During1900-2008, roughly 4500 cubic km of water was drawn from the ground, largely to feed an agricultural system increasingly reliant on irrigation. Of the total 4500-cubic-km, 1100 cubic km were pumped out between 2000-2008 alone. This early 21st century ground water depletion was responsible for raising global sea level at a rate of 0.4 mm per year, an eighth of the observed total. These updated values, falling near the middle of the range of previous estimates, are the product of an investigation by Konikow that drew together a variety of volumetric measurements of groundwater storage (Courtesy: EOS, vol.92, no 45, Nov, 2011). The results clearly show how we are rat-mining our groundwater resources. Just in Andhra Pradesh we have 30 lakh irrigation pump sets running on free electricity. From this you can visualise the magnitude of ground water extraction. Unless we take steps to properly recharge our groundwater table and optimally utilise the waters ,using new irrigation techniques— sprinkler and drip and raise crops taking note of water availability (for example in arid and semi arid tracts we should only confine to rain fed irrigation to raise drought resistant crops).Farmers should come together adapting co-operative farming and share waters to avoid large scale wastage. Unless we take up these measures, on priority, we would end up in misery. The 21st century scenario clearly shows our continued callousness.

Global Warming, one of the main threats to birds of Nilgiris

There is a pertinent need to protect the birds of the Nilgiris by installing nest boxes, feeding and providing them with water. Main threats for birds in the Nilgiris plateau are global warming and mismanagement of

grasslands and marshlands.
In Segur plateau, the threats are incorrect zoning of the landscape, forest fires, unregulated tourism, manipulation forestry, exotic plant species, etc (Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS).If this is the condition in Nilgiris one can understand the situation in other parts of the country.

Global warming to blame for Heat Wave

The heat wave that people of North-coastal Andhra Pradesh experienced for more than 20 days, from mid May till around 10th of June, 2012 made the life miserable. It is quite evident that this had a direct link to the phenomenon of global warming. The heat wave condition was due to the blowing of dry, hot, and low northerly winds.

Director of the Cyclone Warning Centre told that though there was no significant rise in temperature over the last couple of years, the hot wind that was blowing across, even during night time, was a recent trend. He attributed it to the weakening and oscillation of the low pressure troughs over the region. The change over the sea surface due to global warming is the key factor for the climate change.(Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS).Since the activity in and over the bay is the triggering factor for the development of low pressure, which leads to depression and heavy rain, everyone is perplexed by different unexpected developments. It is now evident that monsoon activity is so irregular that no model can exactly fore cast monsoon vagaries, resulting in a considerable set back to our food production. This fact was evidently supported by 2012 South-West Monsoon vagaries/ failure and unprecedented rains in the end of October (in areas not expected to be fed by North-East monsoon) and beginning of November. The destruction caused by Nilam cyclone clearly exposes our limitations in forecasting the intensity of tropical cyclones.

World's oceans need greater protection: UN chief

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has sought global attention to the fragile state of the world's oceans and the importance of marine diversity for global survival. Speaking on the International World Biodiversity Day, the UN chief said: "Oceans cover almost three-quarters of the surface of the globe. They are home to the largest animal known to have lived on the planet – the blue whale. From sandy shores to the darkest depths of the sea, oceans and coasts support the rich tapestry of life on which human communities rely on". The UN chief laid emphasis on the impact of commercial exploitation of fish stock. Ban said, more than half of world's fisheries have exhausted their stock, with an additional third of the world's fisheries in complete depletion. Moreover, an estimated 30 to 34 per cent of marine environment consisting of coral reefs, mangroves, and sea grasses have been destroyed.

"Increased burning of fossil fuels is affecting the global climate, making the sea surface warmer, causing sea level to rise and increasing ocean acidity, with consequences we are only beginning to comprehend," the UN chief said. On May 22, 2012 the UN General Assembly marked International Day for Biological Diversity, to increase awareness of issues affecting global marine life. (IANS). (Courtesy- CMS-ENVIS).

The International Bio-Diversity conference held in Hyderabad (1-19, Oct, 2012) has brought into focus various aberrations in our pursuit to understand and strengthen Bio-Diversity. It is pertinent to note that the lack of understanding between developed and developing countries has even affected this sector.

Reviving dying springs: Sikkim experience of groundwater recharge using geo-hydrology

As mountain communities depend on springs for both domestic uses and for irrigation, conservation of these springs has become crucial. However several factors, of which climate change is one, are leading to a drying up of springs. A study carried out in Sikkim has clearly shown that geo-hydrological knowledge to plan recharge structures is essential to increase the efficiency of recharge measures.
Solutions to the water crisis, especially in rural areas, hinge upon the storage of seasonal rainwater. An integrated approach that considers revival of hilltop lakes, streams and springs while developing their catchment is needed. The spring shed approach considers the underlying geology during planning, thus increasing accuracy.
National water supply programmes may need to explore spring conservation.
This study proves that artificial recharge augmentation in spring recharge areas is possible. The study recommends mainstreaming spring-shed development in programs related to watershed development, rural water supply, and climate change

adaptation, especially in the Himalayan region. (Courtesy: water portal, Banglore)

"Excreta Matters" - A profile of the water and sewage situation in 71 Indian cities - A report by the Centre for Science and Environment

The Report on the State of India's Environment, "Excreta Matters: How urban India is soaking up water, polluting rivers and drowning in its own excreta" deals with where Indian urban centers get their water from and where their waste goes. The report by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) calls for using correct technology, planning for cost recovery and resource sustainability, building and renewing local water resources and designing sewage systems differently. It also calls for a law on the right to clean water.The report attempts to find answers to how should the country manage its water needs so that it does not drown in its own excreta. The question is not just about water, pollution and waste but about the way Indian cities will develop and more generally about a paradigm of growth that is sustainable and affordable. (Courtesy: Water Portal, Bangalore).

CO_2 market wants stricter measures

The European Union needs to aim for a deeper emissions cut soon, to rescue a record low carbon price and spur long-term investment in low-carbon technology, leading carbon market players said at an industry gathering. Europe's economic slump has made it easier for the EU to reach its 2020 climate goal, and a tougher target to cut emissions would restore relevance in the EU emissions trading scheme by lifting carbon prices from record lows, they said. Europe's stagnant growth has caused a massive surplus of so-called EU Allowances (EUAs), which are the instruments of compliance for more than 12,000 power and industrial plants taking part in the scheme. The European Commission proposed in July, 2012 measures to create scarcity in the market. Yet market participants fear intervention will fall short of fixing the problem. Analysts say the surplus will likely exceed an equivalent of 1 billion tonnes of emissions by the end of 2012, taking into account a healthy supply of U.N.-backed emissions offsets which can be used for compliance in the EU scheme. As of mid December, 2012 no clarity emerged regarding the excess quantity. A majority of carbon market experts called for supply intervention in the EU ETS, though the preferred policy choice was the EU increasing its 2020 target to 30 percent. Valued by the World Bank at nearly $150 billion in 2011, the EU cap-and-trade scheme is by far the world's biggest carbon market. Despite some teething pains since its launch in 2005, the EU ETS has become a role model of sorts for other schemes. Carbon market initiatives are emerging in Australia, South Korea and Mexico, as well in California and Quebec.

Carbon prices trading near historic lows, just above 6 euros a tonne, the carbon market has liquidity and the low prices reflect the current level of ambition and economic conditions, said James Atkins, chairman of brokerage Vertis Environmental Finance. ETS emissions have fallen in two of the past three years, thanks mainly to Europe's sluggish growth and fiscal crisis."The market is working and emissions are going down," Atkins told Reuters. He said some people in the market are worried about carbon prices being too low. "For me, the problem is that the target isn't high enough." (Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS).It is not clear what strategy India is going to adopt, without affecting its own developmental plans.

Sign on now, UN climate Chief says

The United Nations climate chief has called on Australia to sign up to a new round of the greenhouse-gas-limiting Kyoto Protocol, saying it already has significant clean-energy policies in place.

''From a national perspective it wouldn't change that much what Australia is already doing,'' the head of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Christiana Figueres, said in Sydney. However, it would send a very clear message internationally that what Australia is doing at a national level is actually contributing to global interests. The comments by Ms Figueres come as the government weighs joining the federal opposition in backing a second round of the 1997 climate treaty. The current period of the Kyoto Protocol, under which most developed nations pledged to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, lapsed at the end of 2012.Negotiations over a second stage are fraught, with several wealthy nations, including the US, refusing to sign up to a binding greenhouse target until the major developing countries - mainly China and India - also agree to be bound by the protocol. In South Africa(2011, December), a deal was struck to work on a binding agreement that would cover all

nations. That work would continue until 2015, and if a deal were reached it would not take effect until 2020.

Until then, only the European Union and some smaller wealthy nations have committed to an internationally binding goal under a second round of Kyoto.

$1 trillion had already flowed into renewable energy technology, providing proof that countries around the world see it in their competitive self-interest to address energy security, pollution and other related issues. ''If we successfully address climate change, we will be accelerating an unavoidable energy revolution.''. (Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS) Business options seem to introduce hurdles at different stages.India and China are concerned about sustainable development of living standards of billions of people.They fear that in the name of emission cuts, developed countries want to put hurdles for their development.

Clinton in Arctic:

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Arctic Circle in June to see firsthand the way climate change is opening a once frozen region to competition for vast oil reserves. Experts here estimate the value of the Arctic's untapped oil alone -- not including natural gas and minerals -- at $900 trillion, making it a huge prize for the five countries that surround the Arctic if they can reach it. And with climate warming opening up some 46,000 km a year that had once been bound in ice, the region is expected to burst open, not just with oil exploration but with East-West trade along a more accessible northern route.

"We believe strongly it's important for the five principal Arctic nations to begin working together to make plans for what will almost certainly become greater ocean travel, greater exploration, therefore greater pollution, greater impact of human beings," Clinton said.

Studies have found that between 1979 and 2007, the Arctic's expanse of ice in the warmer summer months has decreased by 45,000 square kilometres per year. Despite worries that a thawing Arctic could set off a "great game" among powers seeking to carve out their slice of undersea riches, experts here say that under the Law of the Sea only five countries can lay claim to most of the Arctic. They are Russia, which has about half the Arctic coastline, Canada, Norway, Denmark and the United States. But even countries with no territorial claim to the Arctic are being drawn to the region because, as the ice melts, northern shipping routes are opening between Europe and Asia that cut the distance between them by 40 percent. A big player is expected to be China which already has made overtures to Greenland and Iceland, seeking not just access to minerals like rare earth and energy but also ports as it extends its trade lines across the Arctic. Analysts believe that as much as 70 percent of the trade that could in the future move across the Arctic between Europe and Asia will be to and from China. And US officials believe that the thawing of the ice has significant military implications since more naval and air assets will be needed to protect sea lanes and other strategic interests (Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS). This is going to damage the entire global environment and lead to an irrevocable ill-effect on life on the Earth. Man's greed has no bounds.

Green land ice sheet melted at unprecedented rate during July, 2012

Scientists at Nasa admitted they thought satellite readings were a mistake after images showed 97% surface melt over four days. An estimated 97% of the ice sheet surface had thawed by July 12. The Greenland ice sheet melted at a faster rate this month than at any other time in recorded history, with virtually the entire ice sheet showing signs of thaw.The rapid melting over just four days was captured by three satellites. It has stunned and alarmed scientists, and deepened fears about the pace and future consequences of climate change.

The most immediate consequences are sea level rise and a further warming of the Arctic. In the centre of Greenland, the ice remains up to 3,000 metres deep. On the edges, however, the ice is much thinner and has been melting into the sea. The melting ice sheet is a significant factor in sea level rise. Scientists attribute about one-fifth of the annual sea level rise, which is about 3mm every year, to the melting of the Greenland ice sheet.

Antarctic

In 2012 summer, the Arctic Ocean ice melt reached a record high level. Now, with the southern hemisphere summer approaching, scientists' attention is focused on climate change effects on the Antarctic Ocean. An important issue is the effect melting ice and the subsequent attraction of fishing activities have on the rich bio-diversity of the Antarctic Ocean.

The ocean is still relatively less exploited by human activity. Environmentalists have for quite some time now, mooted the idea of creating Marine protected zones (MPAs) — areas where fishing would be restricted and some areas where fishing would be totally banned. Even as fishing vessels are heading for Antarctic waters this season, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) have proposed the restrictions.
The Antarctic Ocean Alliance (AOA), a coalition of environmental groups, supports the U.S.' stand on the southern zone which has a total ban as it includes much of the slope and shelf of the Ross Sea proper. There are differences, even amongst developed countries—a pitiable situation. (Courtesy : CMS-ENVIS)

Is going green just a fad?
One hears about businesses benefiting from revenue growth that has come from products, services and business model innovations that are in line with green stewardship. Others benefit from purchasing and using those products and services, from both increased efficiency and lower costs. The global environment also benefits from lower greenhouse gas emissions and less resource consumption.

Over the last 10 years, green stewardship has gripped popular imagination. Environmental issues have challenged our self-awareness and started many global initiatives to respond to critical issues such as global climate change and resource depletion. As a result, attitudes toward the environment are changing to encourage innovation in conservation. The benefits that arise will outlive our current generation. Regulations to implement the National Action Plan on Climate Change and other guidelines like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) are being framed and have started to get rolled out to incentivise such programmes. All businesses, whether on their own or under pressure, will have to join the green bandwagon some day and the sooner that happens, the better for them as well as for the civilization. Leaders are already taking action. The concept of the 'green economy' has emerged as a potential remedial measure in an era marked by the severe challenges of climate change, energy and food security, compounded by economic uncertainty. A number of recent trends show that the green economy is growing and that with increasing consumer awareness, the demand for green products is on the rise. The success of 'green economy' depends on developing a number of green initiatives, green policies and programmes by different economic institutions including corporate (Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS).The information is useful as we need to follow a change knowing well its use and limitations. In the absence of such an approach we will be exploited by street smart business men.

Nano technology a solution for environment problems:Tessy
DRDO scientist and 'AGNI' project director Dr Tessy Thomas said nano technology can provide practical solutions to various environmental problems in the modern world. She said advancement in technology and increasing population cause environment concerns worldwide, especially in countries like India. "Increasing technology causes environment concerns from water contamination to space pollution. But nano technology is a great solution for various such problems. It is highly beneficial in the areas like waste management, water conservation, solar power generation and so on. We should look at environment with a green eye. Energy efficient equipment and environment-friendly transportation vehicles should be promoted. Green houses can also play a significant role in reducing atmospheric pollution," she said. (Courtesy: CMS-ENVIS).

COP-11 Bio Diversity Meet in Hyderabad—Oct, 2012et on biodiversity
More than 170 countries participated in a 12-day discussion on how to stem the loss of natural resources and increasing funding for global conservation of biodiversity. The 11th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention of Biological Diversity began with the warning that efforts to reverse the loss of Earth's biodiversity in the next ten years might well alter the relationship between human and nature.

Setting the tone for the discussions, Jayanthi Natarajan, Union Minister for Environment and Forest, Govt of India, who took over as the president of CoP 11 from her Japanese counterpart, said "this is the time of reckoning for us. If we miss this one chance, it would be our collective failure to achieve the biodiversity targets by 2020."She warned that assuming that "we can continue to survive and flourish with business as usual approach would be a grave error." She stressed that the conference should

set targets on resource mobilisation, failing which the targets would be severely impacted."The present global economic crisis should not deter us, she said, adding that expenditure on this should be looked at as an investment for the future," she said. The targets include reducing the rate of loss of natural habitats by half and bring at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water and 10 per cent of marine areas under protected areas. While 20 per cent of vertebrate species are under threat, more than 30 per cent of Earth's land surface used for agricultural production has been shrinking by more than 20 per cent since the 1980s.

Hundreds of billions of pounds will need to be spent on preserving the world's biodiversity, if the destruction of habitats, species and natural resources is to be slowed, a new report for the United Nations has found. But the amounts needed are insignificant compared with the costs of allowing the destruction to continue, according to the study. These costs include water scarcity, declining agricultural productivity, climate change and the exhaustion of fish stocks. Taken together, the perils of our destruction of biodiversity represent one of the most serious threats to the world's future, so actions taken now to tackle these threats will pay off, in both the short and the long term, it said. One of the ways of trying to preserve biodiversity is to take "natural capital" into account – estimating how much our natural resources are worth in monetary terms. This includes putting a value on "ecosystem services" – for instance, the fact that well-kept forests are of key importance in providing fresh water for human consumption, and prevent soil erosion – that are normally not valued. When these services are not valued, it is easy for them to be destroyed without taking the consequences into account. Governments met in Hyderabad and discussed ways of meeting biodiversity targets that were set two years ago at a UN conference in Nagoya, Japan. The key target is a halving of the rate of the loss of the planet's natural habitats by 2020.Every one stressed the need to meet the set targets. Kyoto protocall failure in addressing climate change problems weighed heavily in making this statement (Courtesy : CMS-ENVIS).

Setting up of Flood defence schemes in U.K Agency sets up flood defences

Flood defence schemes will be set up across the south east of UK, as part of an Environment Agency (EA) campaign to prepare the region for flooding. Such measures need to be taken even in South Asia, as 2008 Kosi river, 2009 Krishna river and 2012 Nilam cyclone resultant floods have devastated India. The recent floods in Pakistan and Myanmar and almost regular devastations in Bangladesh support such an initiative. The EA also hopes to raise public awareness of flood risks. Since South Asia is continuously affected by floods, it is essential that SAARC takes an initiative to follow the strategies adopted in U.K. Peter Quarmby, EA flood and coastal manager, said the internet and social networks will be used to teach people how to find out if their homes or businesses are in a flood risk area and how they can minimise potential damage to their properties. He said: "Raising awareness is just one of the ways of trying to bring home to people why they need to accept that flooding can happen and how they can prepare for when the worst does happen.". (Courtesy : CMS-ENVIS).

In nut shell the details given in this subsection expose the reader to various facets of our threatened LIFE and urge him/ her to advocate the importance of sustaining it through proper measures. As scientists and technical experts it is our duty to save our ENVIRONMENT and with it the very existence of LIFE.

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