

VK:e Updates...



Indradhanu, Solapur

“Indradhanu” a proposed residential project by Ganesh Ramchandra Apte, Solapur received **3 star** Green Building Pre-Certification under Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA).

The project developer is very enthusiastic to incorporate all the recommendations suggested by GRIHA.

Sustainable measures have been proposed for the construction as well as the operational phase. Climate responsive strategies have been incorporated in the building design. Waste water treatment, rain water harvesting, on-site renewable energy source, solar water heating system, well designed landscape with drought tolerant and native species, eco-friendly building materials have been proposed in the project.

No clearance for projects in Western Ghats Ecosensitive Zone - 1

The Kerala State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) has decided not to grant environmental clearance to any proposals coming under the Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ) -1 of the Western Ghats. It says the proposals coming within the ESZ – 1 will be canceled in the initial stage of processing itself. Promoters of various projects will be asked to submit fresh applications at a later stage especially after the finalisation and implementation of the WGEEP report.

The decision has been directed by National Green Tribunal to consider the recommendations of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) while granting environmental clearance to projects in the ESZ-1 in the Western Ghats.

The ESZs have been divided into three segments in the report. ESZ-1 areas are those which fall outside the boundaries of wildlife sanctuaries and reserve forests but have been given the status of a protected area in the WGEEP report. The report says there will be a ban on the use of private forest land for non-forest purpose or agricultural activity in ESZ-1 that lies in close proximity to the Western Ghats. But ESZ-1 does allow extension of village settlements to accommodate increase in population.



Western Ghats

Development of roads and public infrastructure is permitted once the Ministry of Environment and Forests gives its green signal.

ESZ-2 allows renovation and extension of existing structures such as hotels and resorts. ESZ-3 allows land to be changed from agriculture to non-agriculture purpose.

The WGEEP report had recommended that no mining should be allowed in the Western Ghats in the existing protected areas including national parks and wildlife sanctuaries and in regions of high sensitivity (ESZ-1). It had also suggested that all environmental clearances for mines in these areas should have an additional conditionality requiring 25 per cent reduction in mining every year till 2016, when mining has to be stopped in ESZ-1.

Source: The Hindu, Kerala, Feb 22, 2013

Introduction of green building rating system

The Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC, Pune) has already incentivized GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment) rated green buildings and PCMC hopes to have the proposed new buildings to be GRIHA rated. GRIHA typically applies for a built up area of more than 2,500 sqm. Now the municipal corporation has also decided to follow a new green building rating system called “SVA (Small Affordable versatile) GRIHA” newly developed by GRIHA for buildings with built up area below 2,500 sq.m.

Buildings can earn 1 to 5 stars under both the rating systems. Currently PCMC provides discounts in premium charges paid by developers and also rebates in property tax paid by home owners, in proportion with the GRIHA rating obtained. PCMC also plans to provide similar incentives under SVA GRIHA rating system which is still in process of approval.

Source: Times of India, Pune, Feb 2, 2013

Surat as the first solar city

The standing committee of Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) has passed Rs 7,320 crore on 22nd February, 2013 for Surat Solar City Master Plan. The plan will fasten the process of developing Surat as country's first solar city. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) had given its nod in principle for the development of Surat as solar city in 2011.

The proposal envisages raising Rs 1,952 crore through subsidies for which the SMC will be making presentations before Central and state government departments on energy conservation and for the installation of non-conventional sources of energy production.

(SMC) has decided to replace street lights at different places with LED in coming days as a part of energy conservation. The initial experiment will begin at pre decided places in all seven zones of the city by March replacing nearly 86,000 street lights of the city.

Source: The Times of India, Feb 13, 2013

It is said that SMC generates 30 per cent of its total energy requirement from green sources like solar, wind and solid waste, where as on the other side, by using modern LED, it plans to reduce its daily consumption. The production of energy through different non-conventional sources could reach 80 per cent by 2015-16 the report added. The city plans to reduce use of electricity by 10 per cent by 2015-16 from its present consumption of 1699.17 million units.

The plan will also take up the issue of making necessary amendments in the building bye-laws to increase the usage of solar water heating systems. This would also bring down green house emissions, which was 40 per cent of the total emission from the city. The production of energy through different non-conventional sources will compete towards more sustainable and least pollution city. The SMC is proactively involved in finding environmental solutions.

US challenges India's solar program

The US has challenged India's solar energy policy before the World Trade Organisation (WTO), on 6th February, 2013, saying it favours domestic sourcing of solar panels which violates the global trade rule and the principle to treat foreign goods and services the same way they treat domestic goods and services.

US trade representative said that India's discriminatory policies in its national solar program lessens the successful cooperation, raise the cost of clean energy, and undermine progress toward our shared objective."

India has argued its solar policy measures are legal under WTO government procurement rules that permit countries to exempt projects from non-discrimination obligations.

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), experts said that "The United States has been able to do so by using the climate 'fast start financing' to its advantage,". Under this fund, they have been offering low-interest loans to Indian solar project developers on the mandatory condition that they buy the equipment, solar panels and cells from US companies.

Source: The Times of India, Feb 7, 2013

American energy efficient tax credits

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 has two subsections mentioning the tax credits for energy-efficient residences and appliances. The credits were expired on December 31, 2011, however, it was reinstated and made them applicable to both 2012 and 2013 projects.

The credits are under title 26 subsections (SS) 45L and 25C respectively. SS45L is a business tax credit for contractors or developers building or renovating dwelling units of up to three stories, including multifamily properties and SS25C is an individual tax credit of 10% of the cost of efficient appliances or property improvements, such as insulation.

Did you know?

Which revolutionary book marked the beginning of environmental movement world-wide?

Please write to us at:
mail@vke-environmental.com

Find the answer in our next newsletter along with name of the person who replies first!

Source: Various Newspapers and Websites