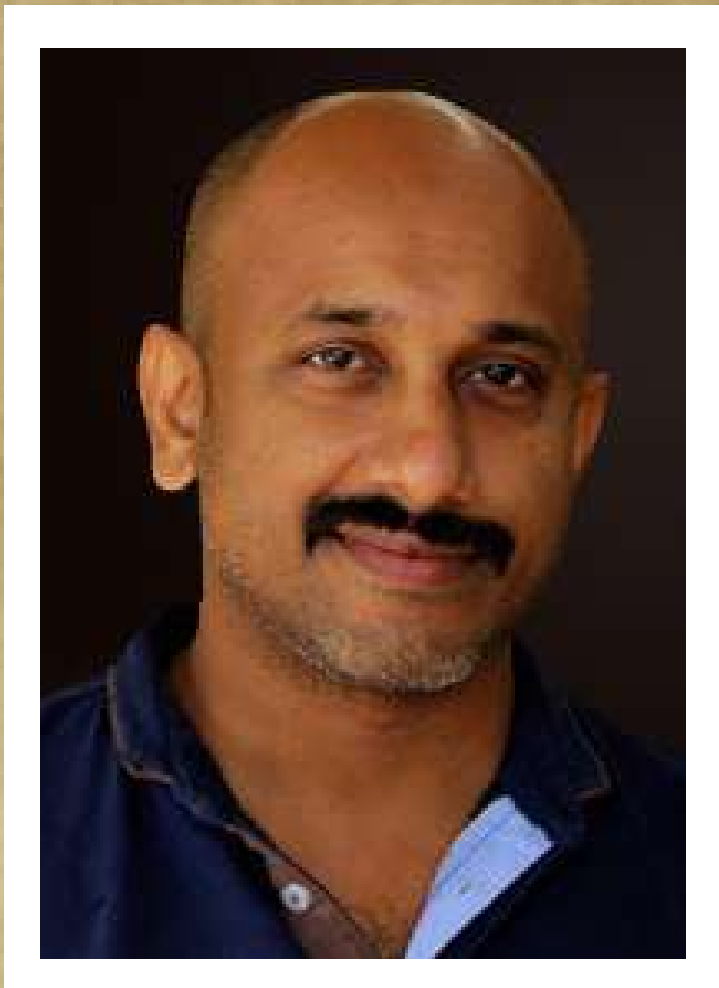


WITNESS 2.20

VOL. 71





EDITORIAL

Binu Jacob
Executive Director
Greenpeace India

We are living in an unprecedented pandemic where the basic human norms of greeting and interacting in person has become a challenge for most, and even dignified survival has become difficult for some. This situation has provided us with a thoughtful pause in our otherwise fast-paced life. We need to realise that nature has not given us time out, but provided us with a second chance towards rebuilding a just, equitable and sustainable future. We can be the change we want to see, supporting the vulnerable communities and opting for more sustainable choices.

With this principle, the Greenpeace family - supporters, volunteers, allies, board, and staff, - all came together to create the “Circle of Solidarity.” which helped in building a bridge between producers and consumers in these challenging times. Our team procured grains at fair prices from farmers around Delhi, Jamui-Bihar, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Chennai which not only helped farmers sell their produce but also provided healthy farm produce to stranded migrants, daily-wagers and homeless, through ration kits or meals at community kitchens.

With the consent of our ever-supportive donors, we contributed some of our donations in April to the Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund (PMNRF) to bolster India’s fight against COVID-19.

This pandemic is also a reminder that we need to revisit our lifestyles and adopt sustainable behaviours if we want nature to continue its healing. Greenpeace India is currently working on a set of “Green Recommendations” to guide the Government of India in rebuilding a better future for all, where people and nature are at its core. We will also reach out to you for your input and support on it.

Let us join the chorus of togetherness and strengthen our circles of solidarity in the fight against COVID-19.

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH FOOD SECURITY

The COVID-19 pandemic sent shockwaves across India, disrupting all aspects of life. As day-to-day human activities came to a sudden and screeching halt, we witnessed several ripple-effects severely impacting India's unorganised sector. Two key communities impacted the most by the lockdown, are farmers and daily-wagers.

An extreme shortage of labour, transport and markets, meant that small and marginal farmers were struggling to not only harvest their crops but also to sell them. This resulted in tonnes of produce rotting in fields across the country. To sustain their families and repay loans, many farmers were forced to rely on illegal money-lenders.



Greenpeace India joined hands with a network of farmers, farming collectives and allied organisations, to help build resilience in India's agrarian community, through the 'Circle of Solidarity'. We directly purchased produce from farmers practising sustainable agriculture in Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Patna and Jamui (part of rural Bihar) thus not only enabling them to sell their produce at fair prices but also helping feed distressed communities.

Over two months we helped 300 farmers and distributed 10,000+ rations kits, 20,000 meals and 20,000 kgs of produce. This initiative lent support to daily-wage earners, migrant workers, fishermen, old-age home residents,

differently-abled citizens, single mothers, transgenders, tribal communities and others severely impacted by the lockdown.

In such times of crisis, a resilient and agile system of food production and supply will complete the chain between producers and consumers. The key step towards this is supporting farmers, especially those practicing sustainable agriculture. Our government must set up an effective channel of procurement and distribution between farmers and consumers, while ensuring a fair pricing model at both ends.

The Greenpeace India Society (GPIS) also contributed a significant amount of our donations to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF), to help strengthen India's efforts to fight COVID-19. Last, but most importantly, these initiatives were possible only with the incredible support of our donors and supporters, including Celina Jaitly, T.M. Krishna, Dilip Pandey, Nandita Das and Suhasini Mulay. To all, we say a big thank you and together we are stronger!



Allied Farmer Groups: Bihar - Jivit Mati Kisan Samiti, Kedia and Tari Dabil Farming Community - Jamui; Chennai - Organic Farmers Market; Bangalore - Sahaja Samrudha Organics; Hyderabad - Sahaj Aharam; and Delhi - Urban Kyari.

Distribution Partners: Bihar - Samagra Seva and Bihar Kisan Kamgar Sangh; Hyderabad - Goonj, GHMC and Amanvedika; Bangalore - BBMP Mahadevpura, Munnade Social Organisation and Cividep India; Chennai - Greater Chennai Corporation, Sumanasa Foundation & Save Chennai Beaches, Aram Porul Foundation, Makkal Padhai, No Food Waste and Trust Children; Delhi - Goonj, Dilip Pandey Community Kitchen and Samadhan Abhiyan.

A LESSON; NOT A VICTORY

India awoke to blue skies during the national COVID-19 lockdown in what seemed like a rare silver lining amidst a deadly storm. Unfortunately, though citizens could finally breathe



freely and even the Himalayas became visible over 150 kms away for the first time in 30 years, this was not a victory. It took a complete national lockdown, which left millions of vulnerable communities without food, jobs and shelter, for India to witness clean air.

Greenpeace India's **analysis** of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, showed a major reduction in PM2.5 and NO2 levels during the lockdown. In the first ten days, Delhi-NCR and Ghaziabad (the world's most polluted city) both witnessed a PM2.5 reduction of over 65%. In Chennai and Bangalore as well, PM2.5 levels reduced by over 50% when compared to April 2019 and April 2020 levels.

It's important to note that though levels across India's heavily polluted cities dropped more than 50%, PM2.5 levels are still well over the safe level

AirVisual Rank (2019)	City	Avg. PM2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (24th Mar. to 4th Apr. 2019)	Avg. PM2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (24th Mar. to 4th Apr. 2020)	% of PM2.5 Reduction
1	Ghaziabad	104.4	35.75	65.75%
5	Delhi	84.8	35.92	57.64 %
6	Noida	85.4	29.8	65.10%
7	Gurugram	69.19	30.41	56.04 %
9	Greater Noida	86.56	26.98	68.83%

City	Avg. PM2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ April 2019	PM2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ April 2020	NO2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ April 2019	NO2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ April 2020
Hyderabad	37.21	30.38	33.33	22.67
Bangalore	51.05	24.72	33.36	12
Chennai	32.72	17.79	11.19	8.52

of $25\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Air pollution is a public health crisis as well as a threat to our economies.

According to the **'Toxic Air: The Price of Fossil Fuels'** report, air pollution from PM2.5 causes approximately 669,000 premature deaths in India annually and burning fossil fuels leads to 4.5 million deaths across the globe yearly. Another **research** by Harvard University found that long term exposure to PM2.5 increases the COVID-19 mortality rate. It also takes a massive toll on the global GDP, **3.3%** or **US\$2.9 trillion** in economic losses.

The steep and sudden decline of pollution paints a clear picture of how human activities like the burning of fossil fuels for energy and transport, contribute significantly to pollution. A detailed study of pollutant sources, along with the strict inclusion and implementation of the National Clean Air Program (NCAP) for all 241 non-attainment cities is crucial for a sustained reduction in air pollution.

India needs a systematic and consistent action plan to address major sources of pollution that exist throughout the year. Post-COVID-19, our government and policymakers must focus on environmental sustainability in order to arrest climate change and protect public health from natural disasters in future.

[READ MORE](#)

ONE VOICE, MANY ACTIONS

This is a turning point for humanity; one that will forever be recognised as a defining moment based on the decisions we make in a bid to rebuild the world. While societies and economies have been gravely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis has also pushed the world to stand together in solidarity, like never before. Greenpeace offices across the globe, joined hands with communities to lend support and provide relief to those in need. Here's a peek into some of the work:

Greenpeace Spain gave old protest banners a new life, by turning the material into hundreds of protective coveralls for use by local health NGOs. The team also donated to vulnerable communities and made personal protective



equipment (PPE) such as masks, thermal blankets, goggles and gloves.



The Greenpeace Philippines team worked with a community agriculture association to provide support in the form of 80 food packets and 20 PPE to health workers from

Quezon City.

In Chile, Greenpeace activists published a petition demanding that the government provide guaranteed access to water for all. Approximately, 350,000 people have no water to wash their hands, a key-line of defence against COVID-19.



The health of our public and planet are so deeply interconnected, that we cannot safeguard one without protecting the other. This crisis presents a rare chance for us to rebuild a sustainable future. Greenpeacers have been protesting and asking governments to develop post-COVID-19 recovery plans to help build a just, equitable and green future. We have the power to urge our government to invest in a sustainable future which prioritises public good as a driving force.

[READ MORE](#)

GLOBAL & NATIONAL NEWS

LOCUSTS & CYCLONES HERALD THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY



While India was busy fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate emergency laid another blow - two severe cyclones and the largest locust attack in three decades. Just as farmers were gearing up to sow India's summer crop, swarms devastated farmlands in western and northern India, leaving behind crop damage, heavy economic losses, and fears of a food shortage. Last year, an unusually warm Indian Ocean **accelerated** by climate change, provided the perfect conditions for **locusts** to thrive and for tropical cyclones Amphan and Nisarga to grow and cause greater damage. The climate emergency has made it clear that we must keep our guards up and fight for the future we want to see.

[READ MORE](#)

BAN ON TOXIC PESTICIDES FACES OPPOSITION

Following an expert committee **report**, the Agriculture Ministry in May proposed a ban on the manufacture and sale of 27 extremely hazardous pesticides. These can cause irreparable environmental damage and endanger the lives of farmers and animals. However, the ban has faced opposition from the Chemicals Ministry who said it would create a major **loss of export earnings** for India. The committee reviewed 66 pesticides which have all been restricted or outright banned globally. Death by pesticide poisoning accounts for over **10,000 deaths** in India annually. Ecological fertilisers and pesticides can not only cut out these risks but also restore soil health, and boost crop production and nutrition.

[READ MORE](#)

A LEAP IN INDIA'S ORGANIC FARMLAND

In an encouraging move, India's efforts to boost organic farming were endorsed by international experts at a convention organised by NITI Aayog this May. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said India will reach **20 lakh hectares** of organic farming in the next five years. It was promising to see the support for his statement that organic farming can transform Indian agriculture to be not only productive but also sustainable and regenerative.

[READ MORE](#)

WELCOME THE 60s

It took a 60-day lockdown with no regular activity, for India's air to reach a safe PM2.5 limit of $60\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. To mark this milestone, we collaborated with the Clean Air Collective in #SaalBhar60, one of the largest digital campaigns against air pollution. The campaign, launched by 12 year-old climate activist Ridhima Pandey, featured a video of citizens demanding clean air. They urged the government to take measures to ensure PM2.5 levels in India stay below the Central Pollution Control Board limit, post-lockdown.



[READ MORE](#)

Impact Box

EIA DEADLINE: A NEW HOPE

Following protests by citizens, activists and allied organisations, the controversial Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) **draft notification 2020**, was allotted 60 days (August 11) more by the Central Government for airing and addressing grievances, due to the pandemic. The EIA, which is the foundation of India's environmental regulation, mandates how development projects receive clearances and environmental damages are balanced with development needs. The **new draft** reduces the time before clearances are passed, legitimises past environment violations and doesn't allow public consultations on projects. It must be rejected, while enforcing stringent measures to safeguard against environmental violations.

GREENPEACE

ग्रीनपीस

Greenpeace does not solicit or accept funding from governments, corporations or political parties.

Greenpeace is fiercely independent and survives on donations solely from individuals like you.

Supporter Services

Email: supporter.services.in@greenpeace.org

Phone: 1800 425 0374 (Monday to Friday, 10:00am to 6:00pm)

New address/email/ phone number?

Email your current contact information to
supporter.services.in@greenpeace.org

**If working for a cause and increasing awareness
is what you are looking for, then write to us:**

careers.india@greenpeace.org

www.facebook.com/greenpeaceindia/

www.greenpeace.org/india

<https://twitter.com/greenpeaceindia>

Greenpeace Office

Chennai:

No. 49/23, 2nd Cross Street, Ellaiamman Colony, Gopalapuram, Chennai - 600 086

T: 1800 425 4594

Bengaluru:

No: 173, 9th Cross 1st Stage, Indira Nagar, Bengaluru - 560 038

T: 080 411 54862

**Edited, printed and published by Binu Jacob, Executive Director
for Greenpeace Environment Trust.**

Donate Now!



Paytm



100% Recycled paper