

THE WITNESS 4.07 GREENPEACE



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Nearly eighty years ago, the Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy wrote a short story called “Chains” in which he suggested that anyone on the planet can be connected to any other person on the planet through a chain of acquaintances that has no more than five intermediaries. His theory was called The Six Degrees Of Separation.

Today, there’s deep and wide consensus that everyone rich and protected is separated from everyone poor and vulnerable by just two degrees.

In less abstract terms this means that, to avoid catastrophic climate impacts that effect everyone – rich or poor, old or young, black or white – we need to keep global mean temperature increase to below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels.

Greenpeace has spent 2007 fighting that fight. In the three months since I last spoke to you through this column, we’ve released **Hiding Behind The Poor** – a damning report that reveals how the Indian government is citing the low carbon emissions of its vast poor population for its inaction on climate change. This inaction hides behind the fact that carbon emissions from India’s rich already match those of the industrialised world.

Will we manage to jolt the current dispensation – one distinguished by its denial and delusion – into action? Will we give the powers-that-be a rude awakening? Will we stop climate change in the next 100 months? Will we win?

Strengthened by the continued support of 45,000 people just like you, I am convinced we will.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "G. Ananthapadmanabhan".

G Ananthapadmanabhan

**Executive Director
Greenpeace India**



3 That sinking feeling...



5 Two degrees of separation.

No french connection. **12**



13 The gift that keeps giving.

- 08** Even God hates nukes.
- 09** Just seven years to save the Amazon?
- 10** Argentina back in the game.
- 11** Another Revolution in France?
- 15** Save the planet. Get paid for the privilege.
- 16** Hang an endangered specie on your wall.
- 17** 152 words about Greenpeace.
- 18** Stay in touch.



WHO WOULD **JRD** KILL?

2007 marked the centenary of the foundation of Tata Steel, Jamsetji Tata's dream. In the realisation of this dream, JRD Tata also emphasised on social responsibility and environmental protection.

But what would JRD say if he knew that Tata Steel's centenary year also marked the time that his nephew, Ratan Tata, commenced construction on the controversial 'turtle killing' Dhamra port in Orissa?

This is indeed what has come to pass, despite strong protests from Greenpeace that the port will destroy one of the last mass-nesting grounds for the highly-endangered Olive Ridley Sea Turtles. There is now clear evidence of turtle presence at Dhamra, and of rare species at the port site itself. Yet, in a spirit unbecoming of their illustrious predecessors, the current Tata management has ignored the evidence now available of the port's destructive potential, brazenly ignoring attempts at dialogue.

The Orissa coast has alternative port sites in less sensitive areas, yet these have been disregarded by the Tatas. Just to save a few hundred crores (small change for a business empire as well-heeled as the Tatas). And at the cost of the remaining Olive Ridges, a wonder of the natural world that science has barely begun to decipher and industry has already begun decimating.

While the Tatas continue to put profits before the planet, Greenpeace is continuing to remind them that they cannot have grand centenary celebrations on the one hand while quietly abetting ecocide on the other.

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Globally, 1 million birds and 100,000 marine mammals are killed every year by plastic.

THAT SINKING FEELING...

In early November, a devastating storm ripped across the Kerch Strait cleaving the Black Sea and Azov Sea in Ukraine.

Such was its intensity that it sank and damaged several freighters, broke oil tankers in two, spilling nearly 2,000 tonnes of heavy oil into the sea – some of it sinking to the sea-bed, and some soaking kilometres of coast in oil, killing an estimated 30,000 birds. Two months later, the full extent of the disaster has yet to be assessed.

With its limited resources and manpower, Greenpeace continues to monitor the situation. But the reality is that oil spills will keep happening as long as we have oil tankers.

One solution is to declare certain areas marine reserves, thus protecting them from extractive uses like fishing and oil drilling, and prevent tankers from entering the most sensitive areas.

Another is to reduce our dependence on polluting energy sources like oil, coal and nuclear... but more about that on the climate pages of this newsletter.



2 DEGREES OF SEPARATION.

On 8th October, as the sun rose over the City of Joy, a sprawling red message – shaped entirely from life rings – bobbed above the Ganga’s swift currents. Reading ‘BAN THE BULB’ this message from Greenpeace was a reminder to the Government that unless something is done, and fast, rising sea levels could threaten cities like Calcutta, cause massive displacement of its people, and result in untold economic losses.

For those of you in the know, banning energy-guzzling incandescent light-bulbs would cut India’s CO₂ emissions by a whopping 55 million tonnes. That’s like saving 12,000 MegaWatts or shutting down a dozen coal-fired power plants. It’s simple, it’s quick and it’s doable. Except that no-one’s doing it.

So three days later, Greenpeace climbers decided to do just that, and scaled a 260-foot smokestack at the highly-secure Kolaghat thermal power plant, painting the statutory warning ‘SMOKING KILLS’ on the chimney.

Retribution was swift. The activists were arrested, charged with criminal trespass, and jailed for five days...

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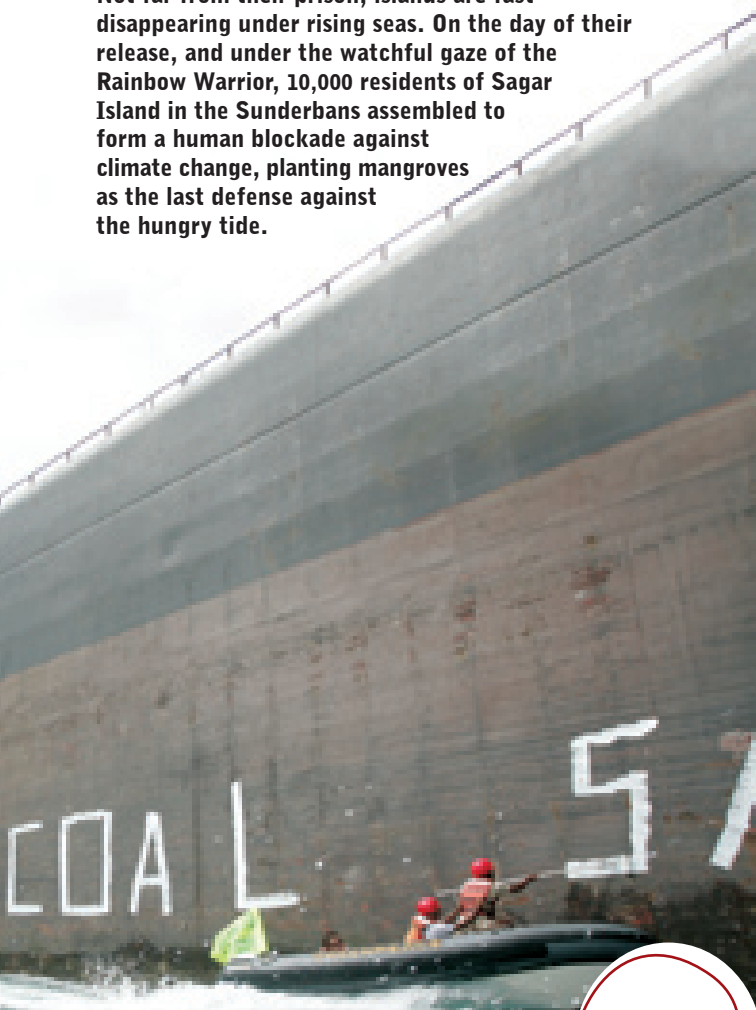
“I can’t understand why there aren’t rings of

young people blocking bulldozers,
and preventing them from constructing coal-fired
– Al Gore



all for fulfilling a moral obligation to defend the health of the planet and those that live on it. Supporting them and the cause they were incarcerated for, the Greenpeace flagship Rainbow Warrior sailed into Calcutta the very next day, a banner between its masts demanding “Arrest Climate Change, Free the Climate Six!”

Not far from their prison, islands are fast disappearing under rising seas. On the day of their release, and under the watchful gaze of the Rainbow Warrior, 10,000 residents of Sagar Island in the Sunderbans assembled to form a human blockade against climate change, planting mangroves as the last defense against the hungry tide.



power plants.”

And then David met Goliath. Armed with no more than paint brushes, 'CLIMATE PATROL' flags fluttering behind them, and tossed about in two miniature rubber dinghies, six Greenpeace activists sliced through the Bay of Bengal and approached a monster ship.

The APJ Sridevi was steaming out of the Ennore Port and heading to Paradip to pick up yet another shipment of coal, one of the dirtiest fuels known to man. By the time this messenger of death reached the high seas, however, it bore another message: 'CUT COAL, SAVE CLIMATE.'

Then, in November, we launched a report so shocking in its findings about the climate, it was hard to believe it ourselves. We'd discovered that a small, wealthy bunch of Indians produce nearly as much CO₂ as someone living in a developed nation, while the rest of India produces less than a quarter. In effect, rich India is hiding behind the poor. Why is this happening? And what can be done to change it? Find out for yourself at greenpeace.org/HidingBehindThePoor)

And finally, as twilight cast its lengthening shadow over the year, and as India and Pakistan battled it out on a pitch, over a thousand Greenpeace volunteers took to the stands in Bangalore's Chinnaswamy stadium, reminding millions of cricket lovers that climate change has no boundaries...

Only two degrees of separation. Between disaster and recovery. Between hope and failure. Between life and whatever nightmare might pass as an alternative.



"Last year someone saw a mosquito here..."
Paul Attagootak, resident of Resolute Bay, 555 miles north

EVEN GOD HATES NUKES.

Indonesia is building a nuclear reactor in Jepara, where an earthquake killed nearly 3,000 people in 2006, and where the Merapi volcano is threatening to erupt.

Greenpeace has for long been supporting locals already protesting against this plant. We've tried lobbying, demonstrations, mass mobilisation, creative non-violent direct action, but without much success.

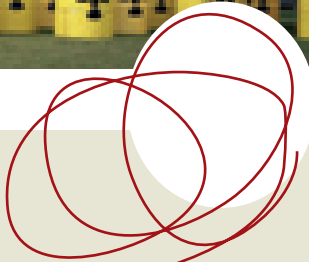
Imagine our surprise, then, when a group of Islamic scholars and clerics, the Ulemas of Jepara, issued a fatwa against the plant.

A fatwa, as you know, is a religious ruling based on Islamic law. Before issuing the fatwa against the nuclear plant, the Ulemas heard all sides of the argument. They consulted scientists, energy industry experts, community leaders, environmental activists, and the Quran.

After long deliberation they issued their finding: Nuclear power is haraam (or forbidden) because the negative impacts far outweigh the benefits.

We already know that nuclear power is dangerous because of its radioactivity. We already know there's no way to properly deal with nuclear waste. We already know that of the 435 reactors world-wide, hardly any have been built within the planned timeframes or budgets. And now we know that even God is dissed with nukes.

Which begs the question: if the Lord is against it, who can be for it? That'd be the devil, we suppose, but our nuclear lobby is unavailable for comment.



JUST SEVEN YEARS TO SAVE THE AMAZON?

It's a tall order, but Greenpeace has a cunning plan that could see deforestation of the Amazon drop gradually over the next seven years.

Part of the plan is to create financial incentives that promote forest protection rather than forest destruction. Another part is to beef up the forest protection agencies so there is a hugely increased presence of state and government officials.

It's thinking on a massive scale, but we believe it can be done. And given the rainforest's role in moderating climate change, it's something we all have an interest in preserving... up to 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions are a result of deforestation, and 75% of Brazil's carbon emissions come from clear-cut logging in the Amazon, making the country the fourth-largest climate polluter in the world.

We have the plan. We all have the reasons. All that's left is for the Brazilian government to act.

Or in seven years, it could all be over.



“People who will not sustain trees
will soon live in a world that will not sustain people.”

– Bryce Nelson

ARGENTINA BACK IN THE GAME.

While Brasilia debates whether or not to summon the political will to stop ancient rainforest destruction, its southern neighbours have already got down to it.

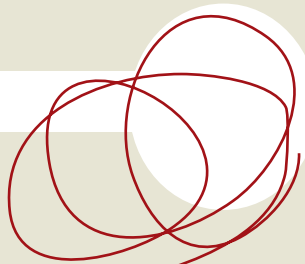
The forests of Argentina are being cleared at a rate of 40 football fields every hour. Every year, 300,000 hectares of native forest are destroyed to make way for genetically-engineered soy crops.

To stop the destruction, Greenpeace took to the trees, and to the streets. While our activists protested in the forest, we got 1.5 million signatures of support, encouraged thousands of people to call senators, and pushed through Argentina's first federal forest protection law.



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The new law includes a nationwide moratorium on clearing of native forests, a prohibition on new logging and land-clearing permits, establishment of environmental impact studies and public hearings, and allocation of funds from the national budget for forest protection.



ANOTHER REVOLUTION IN FRANCE?

Late in October, when Greenpeace climbers scaled the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and draped the monument with a huge banner proclaiming “Ban GMOs Now”, they had no idea they’d lit a spark that would quickly turn into a raging conflagration.

Within days, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, someone whose politics Greenpeace is not a particularly great fan of, blew our socks off.

Citing doubts about the usefulness of Genetically-Engineered (GE) crops, fears about their impact on human health and the environment, and concerns about their uncontrolled dissemination, Sarkozy declared the proud nation out-of-bounds for GE crops.

From now on in France, rather than environmentalists having to show that there’s a better way, companies and people proposing ecologically-destructive decisions need to prove there is no other choice.

Greenpeace believes that these Gallic pronouncements could spur a revolution across Europe, and indeed across the planet. Already, Austria, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Poland have closed the doors to GE contamination of their food supply. Now let’s take a look at India...



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‘There is no pressing need for GE crops,

as world agriculture is in overproduction,
and people go hungry because of poverty, not because of

– Peter Rosset

NO FRENCH CONNECTION.

It seems that apart from an Alliance Francaise centre in every big city and a handful of pretty colonial avenues in Pondicherry, India has chosen to gain nothing from France.

Companies such as Monsanto-Mahyco and their accomplices in our pro-GE government are starting field trials of GE crops any day now. The decision ignores the will of farmers and traders and even the Supreme Court, which has ruled that no new field trials may happen until a full court hearing takes place.

The move also threatens our basmati rice industry, which is committed to remaining GE-free. Many of the planned GE field trials will take place right next to where basmati is grown, and as genes do not understand political boundaries, traditional rice types will face serious danger of contamination.

If you think that's far-fetched, consider that just two years ago, one-third of the US long-grain rice crop was contaminated by strains of GE rice. Orders and contracts were cancelled, products were removed from shelves, and shipments were halted and recalled.

If something like that happens here, it's Indian farmers whose livelihoods will be destroyed. India must learn something from the American disaster and the recent French Revolution: the only way to keep crops safe from GE contamination is to ensure that GE crops do not exist at all.



lack of GE seeds.”



13 TOXICS

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING.

Here's how the scam works... You live in a rich Western nation producing mountains of toxic electronic waste every hour. Local law forbids you to dump this e-waste into your soil and rivers, and international law forbids you to export it to Third World nations for it to be disposed.



©GREENPEACE/PRAKASH

Microchip production involves more energy,

water, fossil fuels, toxic chemicals, and elemental
than any industry in history.



So you call it charity and ship it off to grateful places like India, where recycling laws are lax, recyclers' lives are cheap, and corrupt public officials connive with criminal cartels to play with peoples' lives for a few bucks on the side.

In October, Greenpeace discovered a policy loophole that permits the import of second-hand computers for 'reuse' and for charitable donations. Reuse, of course, is an euphemism for the highly-dangerous dismantling of toxic e-waste by unprotected workers in scrap yards and back alleys across the country.

We also procured import records pertaining to shipments entering through the Madras port, which showed that even old cables, mouse-pads, printed circuit boards, printers, batteries, keyboards, RAM chips and hard disks are being smuggled in, aside from old monitors and processors. In fact, in the first six months of 2007, 628 tonnes of such e-waste was imported through the Madras port alone.

And this is just the tip of the toxic iceberg, with thousands of tonnes entering from other ports such as Bombay, Cochin and Calcutta, all destined for the informal recycling system.

Greenpeace has confronted the Union Commerce Ministry with this evidence, demanding that it enforce an immediate and complete ban on the import of second-hand electronics. Until that happens, we can keep gloating about GDP growth rate, while our begging bowl fills with the electronic excrement of the West.

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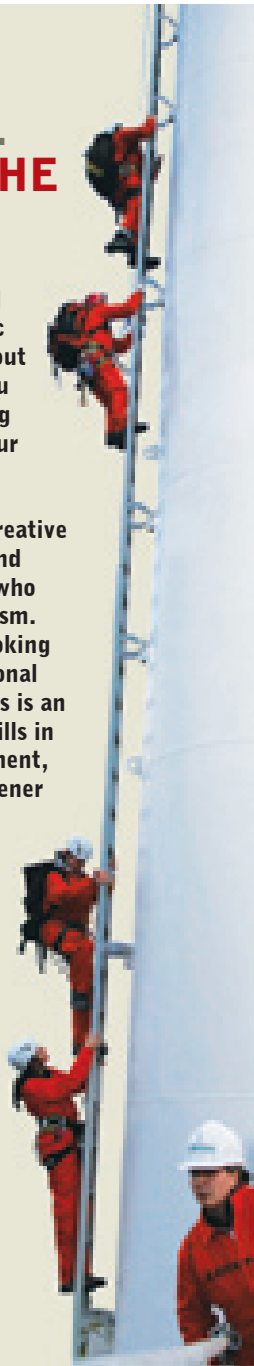
WE'RE HIRING!

SAVE THE PLANET. GET PAID FOR THE PRIVILEGE.

Greenpeace is looking for creative and innovative people who are enthusiastic about the internet, and passionate about the environment. If you, or anyone you love, think this is just the kind of thing that spins your wheels, then here's your chance to help make a difference.

We're hiring a new team to produce creative and inspiring stories for our website and build a community of online activists who will revolutionise environmental activism. Whether you're a young enthusiast looking for experience, or a seasoned professional looking for more meaningful work, this is an opportunity for you to develop new skills in an energetic and challenging environment, while helping us make the world a greener more peaceful place.

To apply, simply visit
greenpeace.org/india/jobs



"Our most basic common link is

*that we all inhabit this small planet,
we all breathe the same air, we all cherish our children's
and we are all mortal."*

– John F. Kennedy



HANG AN ENDANGERED SPECIE ON YOUR WALL.

The Wildlife Protection Act forbids the trafficking and possession of endangered species. But we've found a way around it, and packed a bunch of tamarin monkeys, technicolour macaws, sperm whales, crested lizards, namibian elephants, adelic penguins and polar bears into one tiny container.

It's the limited-edition, award winning Greenpeace 2008 calendar. Printed on oxygen-bleached 100% recycled paper and costing as little as Two Rupees a day, it's the perfect gift for yourself, for someone you love, and for the planet. Because every single paisa you spend on it goes into protecting the planet for all creatures, big and small.

To have one smuggled over to your doorstep now, simply do one of three things:

- Log on to greenpeace.org/india/goodies
- Call 1-800-425-0374 (from BSNL or MTNL phones)
- Write a cheque for Rs. 729 favouring Greenpeace India Society and mail it to Greenpeace India #3360, 13th B Main, HAL 2nd Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore 560038.



152 WORDS ABOUT GREENPEACE, NONE OF THEM WRITTEN BY GREENPEACE.



HI,
I AM SEEMA

I had always heard of Greenpeace, knew what it was up to and for some time was a contributor too. But I never had an opportunity to interact with them until two young activists caught me in the middle of handling GoaFest-07. They wanted Leo Hope to help put together communication for World Environment Day. I told them to meet me in a month's time... and on the dot, a month later, there they were.

A few meetings later we had something exciting but no idea how to pull it off in less than fifteen days. Then I met the real Greenpeace: persistent, enthusiastic, obsessive, idealistic, zealous, passionate and extremely committed. It was refreshing to work with such a fabulous group of people. I was genuinely amazed at their deep desire to see things through. I know only people like them will make a real difference. I wish Greenpeace a happy Earth!



“We are just an advanced breed of monkeys

on a minor planet of a very average star.”
– Stephen Hawking

HELP GREENPEACE TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOU

As part of our ongoing efforts to move towards a 100% paperless office, we encourage you to communicate with us electronically only, instead of through the dead-tree format. To opt for word from Greenpeace via email, do write us at sservice@in.greenpeace.org

To let us know any changes in your contact details, simply email us your old and new contact details. Do remember to include your name and Supporter ID, as well as your most current street address, phone number and eMail ID.

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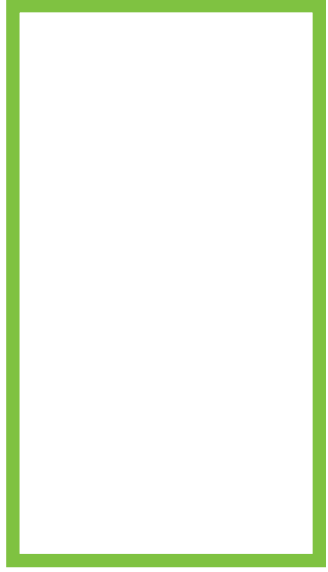
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We're available Monday to Friday,
10am to 1pm and 2pm to 6pm.

Email: sservice@in.greenpeace.org.

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You can read them all online at
<http://www.greenpeace.org/india/about/witness>





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