GREENPEACE
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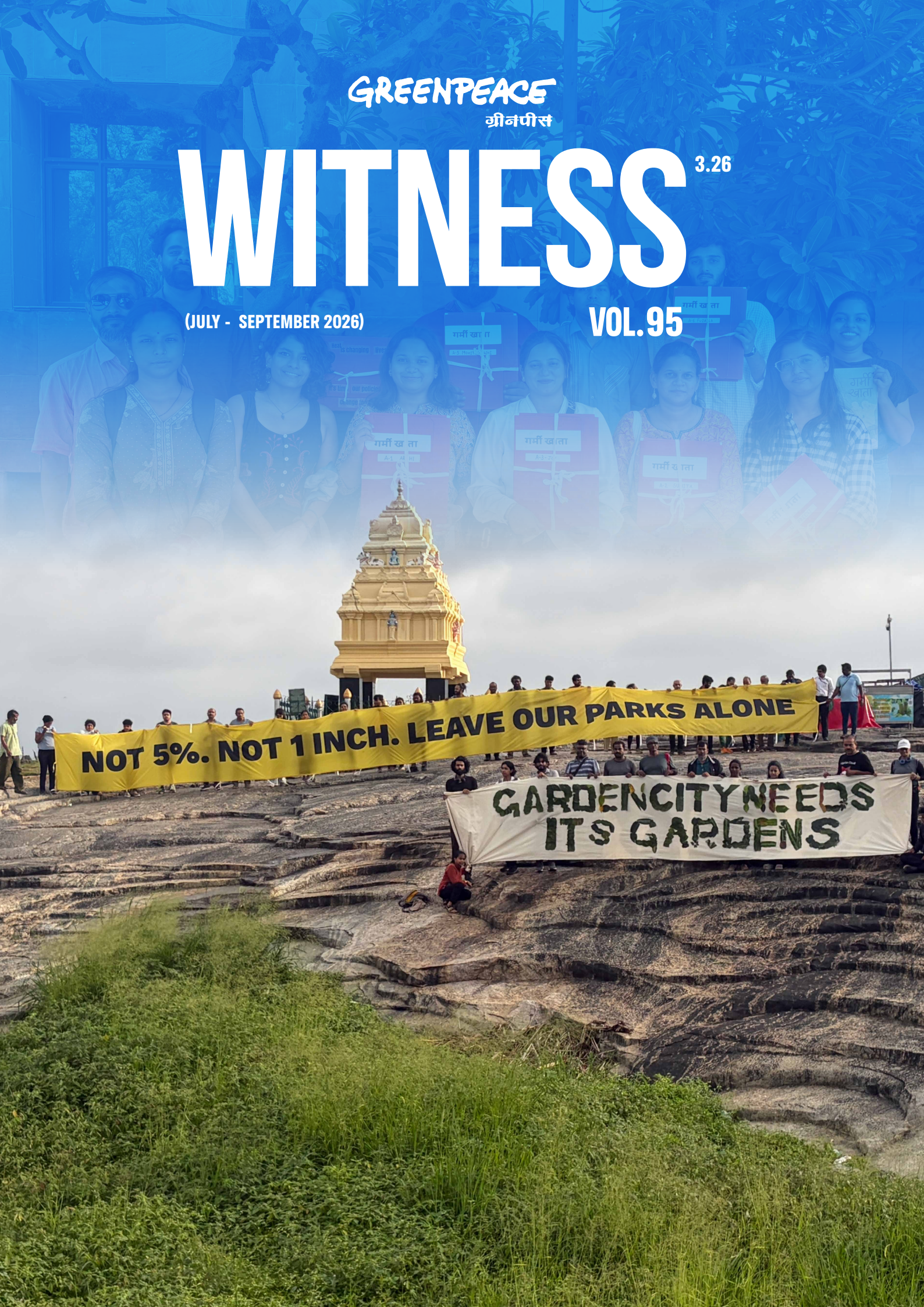
WITNESS

3.26

(JULY - SEPTEMBER 2026)

VOL.95



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK



We are often told that the future has already been decided. There is no alternative. There is no time. There is no other way. The city needs to be built this way. The climate will worsen. Technology will determine what comes next. If you don't jump on AI, you are leaving yourself behind. Development will require sacrifice.

These narratives are powerful precisely because they make imagination unnecessary. If the future is inevitable, our only task is to adapt to it.

But imagination has always been part of how societies change. Before something can be built, someone has to be able to picture it. A different street. A different city. A different relationship with nature. A different economy. A different way of sharing power.

This quarter, Greenpeace India's work has increasingly been about that space between what exists and what could exist. A parent should be able to let their child step out to play without having to search for, or pay for, a designated and safe play space. An open ground or neighbourhood park should be an ordinary part of city life, accessible to everyone.

Through the Imaginarium, we created spaces for people to question the stories they have inherited about development, technology, cities, and the climate crisis. The work of City Rising has similarly asked people to look at ordinary urban spaces differently: who are they designed for, whose movement matters, and what might become possible when public space is treated as a commons rather than a commodity.

Imagination, however, cannot exist separately from reality. The women and workers documenting extreme heat in Delhi are not imagining an abstract future. They are describing the conditions under which they are already living. Their stories, the joint statement from frontline communities in India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, and our engagement with the National Human Rights Commission have helped turn those experiences into demands for recognition and protection. In August, India's decision to fund heatwave disaster response showed what can happen when evidence becomes policy and years of campaigning begin to shift what governments consider possible. This is a big win for us.

The same question extends to democracy. When young people mobilise, when citizens take to the streets, when people insist on their right to protest peacefully, they are also asserting something about the future: that public life belongs to all of us, and that disagreement is part of a healthy democracy.

This is why imagination matters. It gives us the ability to see beyond the arrangements we have been told are permanent, and to build the tools, evidence, movements, and institutions that can make another future real.

Witness 3.26 brings together some of that work: the questions we are asking, the futures we are imagining, and the beginnings of the tools needed to build them. Before you turn the page, try something. Think of one street you walk every day. Who was it built for? What would you change first, if someone asked? Hold on to your answer. It is where the next piece of this work begins.

The future is not waiting for us. It is being imagined, contested, and built right now. And you, dear reader, are an integral part of making this future happen.

Binu Jacob
Executive Director
Greenpeace India

CAMPAIGNS

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BLR RISING

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CITY RISING



GREEN CYPHER

When Music Meets Environmental Action

Can music change how we think about the city we live in? Through Green Cypher, BLR Rising brought art and environmental protection into the same space, using hip-hop and creative expression to get people talking about the environment. It showed how culture can bring new voices into the conversation and make protecting our city a shared concern.

IN ACTION

IMAGINATION TAKES SHAPE

Making a city's imagination something you can see, touch and take part in

The Bengaluru Rising Imaginarium brought citizen stories, art, sculpture and installations together with a huggable map of the city built from conversations with residents about the city they want. The pop-up traveled across Bengaluru, reaching 350+ people through public spaces, community events and cultural venues. Visitors shaped their own versions of the city through clay, drawings, stories and conversation, while performances, tree walks and readings opened new ways of thinking about Bengaluru.

People stopped, stayed, asked questions, signed up and offered to collaborate. The Imaginarium became a space to imagine what Bengaluru and our cities could be, and start building toward it.

LEARN MORE





More than 25,000 people signed the petition to protect Bengaluru's parks, while over 200 citizens, resident groups and environmental organisations came together at Lalbagh to oppose the Parks Amendment. The campaign became a city-wide conversation about who gets to shape Bengaluru and what belongs in a liveable city.

SEE WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IN OUR BIG WIN!

FROM CHIPKO TO CLIMATE CHANGE with RAMCHANDRA GUHA

What can environmental movements teach us about the future?

On 19 September, historian Ramachandra Guha joined Bengaluru Rising for a conversation on the history of Indian environmentalism and the city's current struggles over lakes, wetlands, forests and other urban commons. Bringing together environmental history, citizen activism and local conservation efforts, the discussion asked what it takes for people to become active participants in protecting the places they live in.

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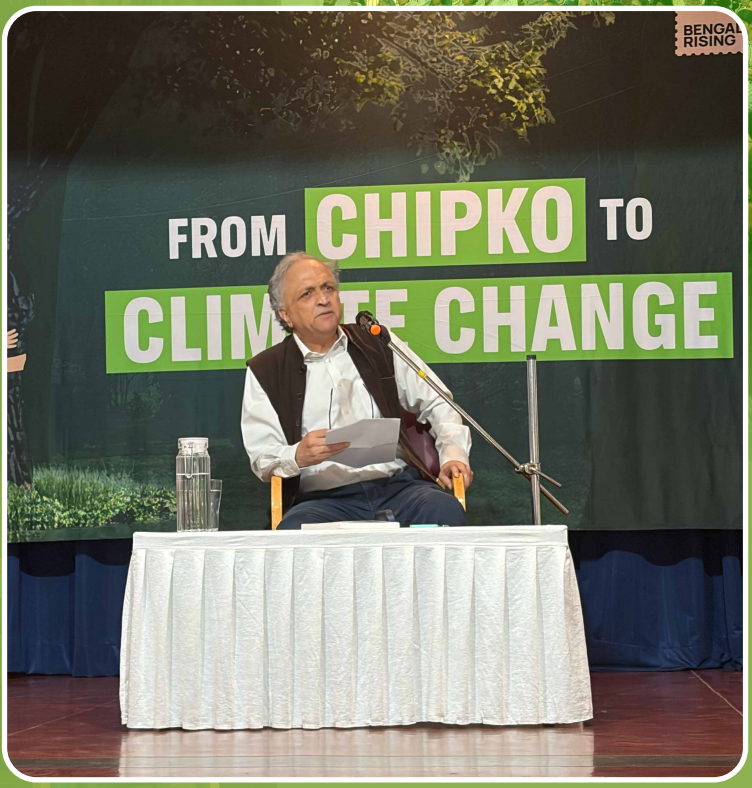




2.0 DELHI RISING

CITIZEN HEAT REGISTRY

What does extreme heat actually cost people? Since May, Delhi residents documented the answer through **Garmi Khata (Heat Account)**, a people-led heat registry capturing sleepless nights, lost wages, rising electricity bills, missed school days and heat-related illness.

On 14 July, around 40 residents and households submitted these records to the NHRC, alongside medical bills, electricity bills and income documents. On 21 August, the NHRC directed the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to examine the complaint and submit an Action Taken Report, observing that the allegations, if true, could amount to violations of human rights.

LEARN MORE

LETTER





AND THESE HEAT STORIES TOOK THE STAGE.

Through a seven-day storytelling workshop with artist Saahil, seven of these stories took the stage. Diarists shaped their experiences into **Garmi Naama (Chronicles of Heat)**, an intimate performance told in their own words. More than 60 people came together to listen, share and reflect on what heat really means in everyday life.

In July, first-hand testimonies from the Heat Registries, backed by medical, utility and financial records, were submitted to the **National Human Rights Commission**, calling for extreme heat to be recognised as a human rights issue and for Heat Action Plans to receive adequate funding.

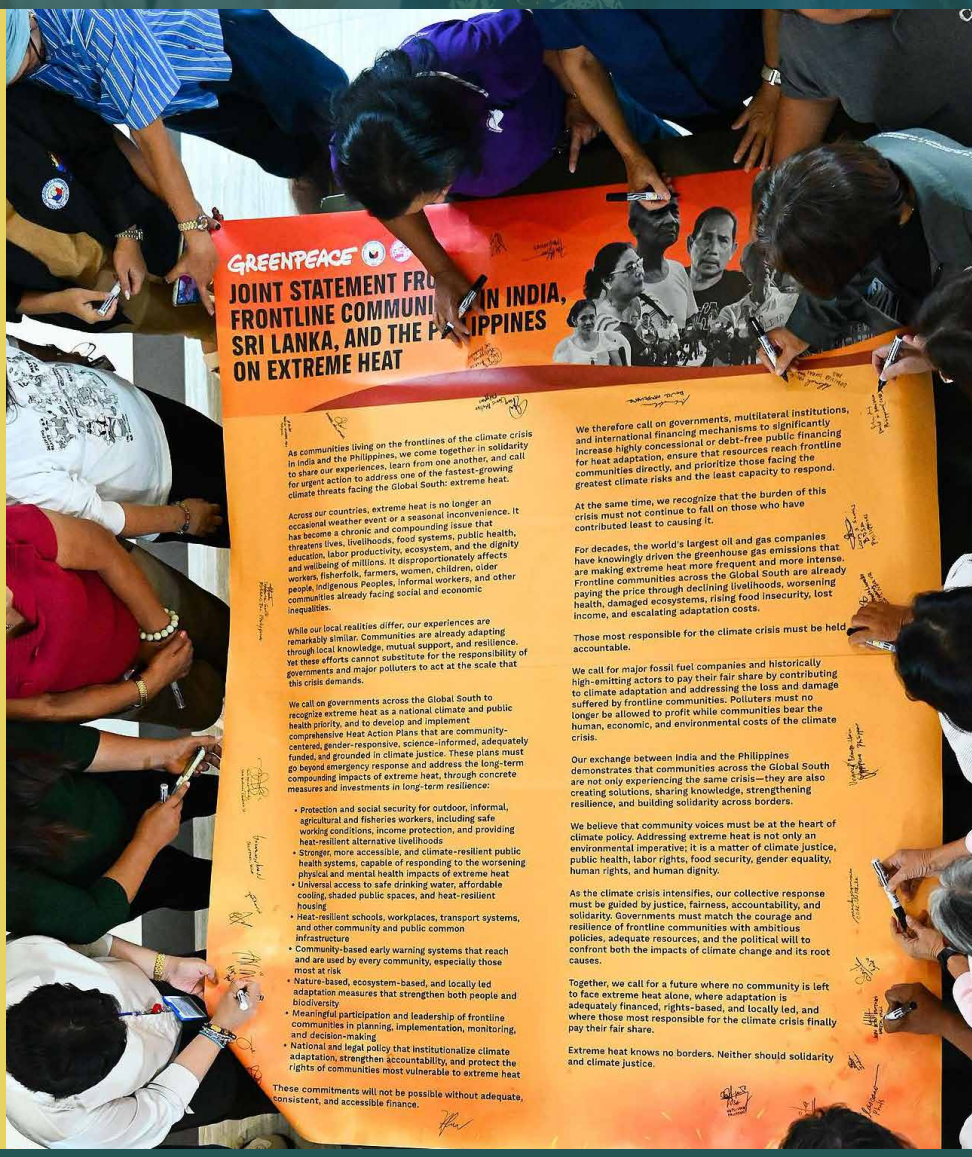
SOUTH ASIA | EXTREME HEAT

JOINT STATEMENT ON EXTREME HEAT

Extreme heat knows no borders.

Frontline communities from India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines came together to document how extreme heat is affecting workers, livelihoods, public health, food systems and everyday life. Their joint statement calls for community-centred Heat Action Plans, stronger public health and social protections, accessible adaptation finance, and meaningful participation of frontline communities in decision-making. It also calls for major fossil fuel companies and historically high-emitting actors to contribute to adaptation and loss and damage. The statement is a shared demand for climate action rooted in justice, accountability and solidarity.

READ MORE





NEPAL FLOODS:

A WARNING FROM THE HIMALAYAS

What started in the Langtang Himal did not stop there. The catastrophic Bhotekoshi flood and mudslide in Rasuwa, Nepal, has left hundreds missing, destroyed homes and livelihoods, and put communities downstream, including in India, on alert.

Scientists say it's too early to say exactly how warming contributed to this event, which preliminary findings trace to a collapsed glacier. But the trend is clear: even at 1.5°C, over a third of the Hindu Kush Himalaya's ice will be lost this century. Greenpeace India stands in solidarity with everyone affected, and with the communities and rescue teams working under devastating conditions.

READ OUR STATEMENT



IN THE NEWS

MADHYA PRADESH: THE CHITA ANDOLAN

Adivasi families affected by the Ken-Betwa, Majhgawan and Runjh river-linking projects staged symbolic funeral-pyre protests, including lying on pyres in water and using noose-like ropes. They are demanding compensation and rehabilitation amid concerns over displacement, submerged homes, land and livelihoods. The protests continued into September.

Image for reference purposes only

SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN POST-FACTO ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCES

On 29 July 2026, the Supreme Court struck down the Centre's 2021 policy that enabled certain projects to seek environmental clearance after starting work in violation of prior-clearance requirements. This raises a fundamental question about whether environmental assessment can serve its purpose if it comes after damage may already have begun.

Image for reference purposes only



Image for reference purposes only

INDIA'S GREEN INDIA MISSION MISSED ITS AFFORESTATION TARGETS

A Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit tabled in Parliament on 12 August found that afforestation interventions under the Green India Mission covered around 0.148 million hectares against a target of 2.8 million hectares, roughly 5%. The audit also identified poor monitoring, underused funds and the neglect of ecologically vulnerable landscapes.

MUMBAI'S FALLING TREES EXPOSE THE COST OF POOR URBAN PLANNING

Reporting documented 902 uprooted trees and 1,251 fallen branches across Mumbai's public spaces between 22 June and 17 July. Three people died in separate tree-related incidents. Experts pointed to factors including concretised tree bases, repeated excavation, unscientific pruning and inadequate tree management, alongside strong winds and heavy rain.

INDIA'S MAJOR RESERVOIRS HIT A TEN-YEAR LOW

When reservoirs run low, the consequences reach far beyond the dams. They can put drinking-water supplies, farmers' crops and electricity generation under pressure, especially as the dry months begin. By 28 September, water storage across India's 178 monitored reservoirs had fallen to 70% of capacity, below the ten-year average of 76.62%. Southern India faced a sharper shortfall, with reservoirs at just 50% capacity after below-normal rainfall.

Water security cannot depend on rainfall alone. As changing rainfall patterns put greater pressure on already stretched water systems, we need better preparation, responsible water management and the protection of the natural ecosystems that help sustain our supplies. The question is whether we act before water shortages deepen, and whether communities have reliable, equitable access to water when they need it most.



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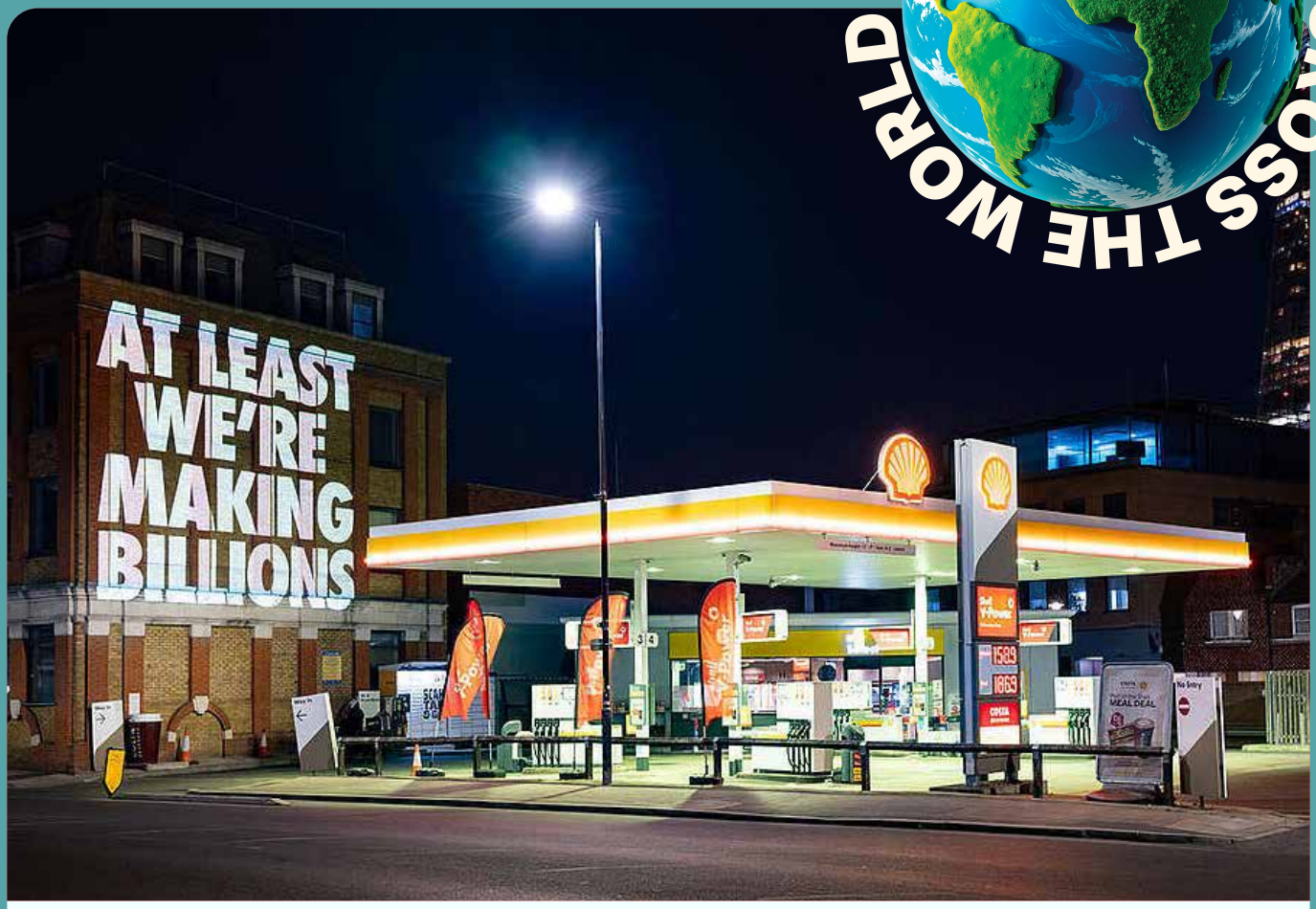


April 2026: Greenpeace activists project the truth about the source of Shell's huge profits onto their global headquarters by the Thames in London as well as next to a Shell petrol station. The projections include the messages "They Profit We Pay", "War Profiteers", "At Least We are Making Billions", "War Profits HQ" and "Making a killing". © Greenpeace

THE REAL COST OF FOSSIL FUELS

What happens when an energy system built on oil and gas meets war?

Fossil inflation. Fuel price shocks ripple through electricity, transport, fertiliser, food and even insurance. LPG price hikes in India were one reminder of how global energy volatility can reach into household budgets. Meanwhile, the world's governments are on course to spend US$1.1 trillion supporting fossil fuels in 2026.

WHO GETS TO TAX THE POLLUTERS?

A proposed Treaty at the United Nations: Global South countries are pushing for international tax rules that give governments more power to tax multinational profits, high-net-worth individuals and harmful corporate practices. The proposed Global Tax Treaty could help recover revenues currently lost through tax avoidance and create space for environmental taxes. Negotiations continue through 2027.



Greenpeace Thailand calls on major polluters to take responsibility for the climate impacts they have contributed to, and urges the Thai government to stop further fossil fuel expansion and accelerate a just transition to renewable energy.

© Chanklang Kanthong / Greenpeace

WHEN DISASTERS STOP LOOKING "NATURAL"

Heatwaves, floods and wildfires across 2026 are revealing the infrastructure of a warming world. Nepal's devastating floods have raised concerns around glacier melt; Europe has experienced repeated heatwaves and severe wildfires; and Indonesia has faced its biggest fires since 2015. Meanwhile, atmospheric CO_2 continues to reach record levels. The question is increasingly about who bears the cost of a climate made more dangerous by fossil fuel emissions.

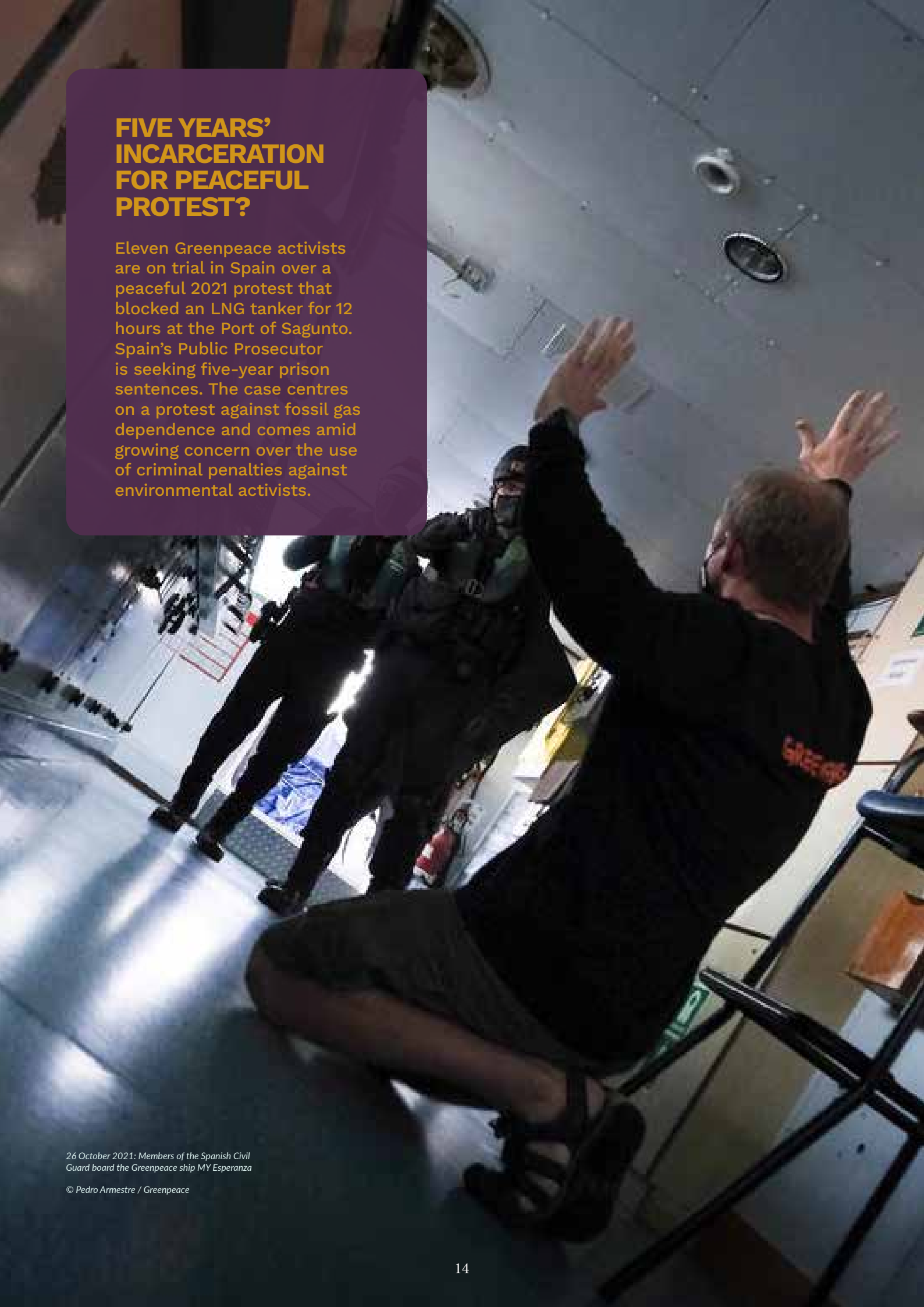


TWO MILLION SAY: MAKE POLLUTERS PAY

More than 2 million petition signatures from organisations and campaigners around the world were delivered to the UN General Assembly in September, calling for fossil fuel companies to pay more towards climate damage, adaptation and a just transition. The campaign comes as communities face rising costs from climate disasters while fossil fuel companies continue to report extraordinary profits.

Leaders of the Make Polluters Pay coalition – Mads Christensen (Greenpeace International), Amitabh Behar (Oxfam International), Anne Jellema (350.org), Jamie Henn (Fossil Free Media), and Fletcher Harper (GreenFaith) – present over 2 million petition signatures to Selwin Hart, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Climate Action, during New York Climate Week 2026 and UNGA, demanding fossil-fuel companies pay for the climate damage they have caused.

© Greenpeace / Layne Quevedo



FIVE YEARS' INCARCERATION FOR PEACEFUL PROTEST?

Eleven Greenpeace activists are on trial in Spain over a peaceful 2021 protest that blocked an LNG tanker for 12 hours at the Port of Sagunto. Spain's Public Prosecutor is seeking five-year prison sentences. The case centres on a protest against fossil gas dependence and comes amid growing concern over the use of criminal penalties against environmental activists.

26 October 2021: Members of the Spanish Civil Guard board the Greenpeace ship MY Esperanza

© Pedro Armestre / Greenpeace

ACTION BOX
BIG WIN!



NOT 5%. NOT 1 INCH

A rapid-response campaign by the citizens of Bengaluru under BLR Rising brought people together against a proposed amendment that could have diverted 5% cover of public parks for infrastructure.

200+
CITIZENS, RESIDENT GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS
GATHERED AT LALBAGH.

28,000+
PEOPLE ACROSS INDIA SIGNED THE PETITION.
YOU SHARED IT WIDELY.

The message travelled far beyond Bengaluru: when one green space is threatened, our collective health and climate resilience are at stake.

Parks are climate infrastructure, helping cool cities, manage heat and rain, support biodiversity and make neighbourhoods more liveable. Our work aims to protect our blue and green spaces which are increasingly under threat.
The people's power took the city by storm, and on 11 September, the Karnataka Government withdrew the amendment.

One campaign. One green space. A much bigger question about the cities we build for a hotter future.

READ MORE

HEATWAVES ARE NOW A NOTIFIED DISASTER

IMPACT BOX

INDIA HAS OFFICIALLY RECOGNISED HEATWAVES AND LIGHTNING AS NOTIFIED NATURAL DISASTERS UNDER THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT, 2005.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PEOPLE?

States can now access disaster funds to prepare for heatwaves and respond when they hit. This could mean better access to drinking water, cooling spaces and medical support, as well as stronger protection for people working outdoors. The impact will depend on how effectively these funds reach the communities that need them.

For four years, Greenpeace India has worked with communities to document the human cost of extreme heat and campaign for stronger public funding and protection.

This policy shift creates a pathway for resources to reach heat-affected communities.

The next test is where the money goes: into Heat Action Plans, worker protections, cooling infrastructure and locally led responses that can protect people as temperatures rise.

A policy change that puts heat response on the books. Now, it needs to reach the people living through it.

READ MORE



Melting Futures (2024): A dramatic ice sculpture at Saket, Delhi, which melted under a 44°C sun to demand that heatwaves be officially declared a national disaster



25 YEARS OF PEOPLE-POWERED CHANGE

For 25 years, Greenpeace India has challenged polluters, defended our environment and stood with communities fighting for change.

We don't accept money from governments or corporations. Our independence is powered by people like you, who make it possible to speak truth to power and keep campaigning for a greener, more just future.

Help power the next 25 years. Make a donation today.



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