

GREENPEACE  
South Asia

# WITNESS 4.25

YEAR IN REVIEW

VOL. 05



# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK



## **Binu Jacob**

Executive Director (Honorary),  
Greenpeace South Asia

### **2025 has been a year when climate reality refused to stay at the margins.**

The science is clearer than ever, yet global politics remains unsettled. Fossil fuel expansion continues even as extreme heat, stronger storms, and rising seas reshape daily life across South Asia. What was once projected is now experienced by workers labouring in unsafe temperatures, by coastal families navigating uncertainty, by young people demanding a future that centres justice.

### **And yet, this year has also brought clarity.**

The Global Ocean Treaty crossed the threshold to enter into force. Climate attribution science strengthened the case for accountability. Youth movements organised across borders. Communities came together not only to endure, but to lead.

For South Asia, climate justice is not abstract. Our region contributes little to global emissions, yet carries profound consequences. Justice means ensuring that those most responsible are held accountable. It means financing loss and damage. It means protecting labour, health, and dignity in a warming world.

In times of political uncertainty, solidarity becomes strategy. Defending civic space, strengthening regional cooperation, and insisting on independent, people-powered action are not optional; they are essential.

As we look ahead, the challenges are real. But so is the growing collective resolve to meet them. This year has reminded us that when communities organise across borders and generations, change is not only necessary, it is possible.

# CAMPAIGNS

## PLASTICS

### END THE AGE OF PLASTIC

As negotiations toward a Global Plastics Treaty continued in 2025, momentum grew for a legally binding agreement that reduces plastic production at its source rather than relying solely on recycling.

Greenpeace South Asia amplified regional voices through the Let's End the Plastic Crisis petition, calling for caps on plastic production and a transition to refill and reuse systems.

Sri Lanka

JOIN THE  
MOVEMENT

PLASTICS TREATY NOW



## **HOLDING FMCG CORPORATIONS ACCOUNTABLE FOR PLASTIC POLLUTION**

In February, Greenpeace South Asia released a research brief examining the responsibility of major FMCG companies in driving single-use plastic pollution.

The report called for measurable, time-bound commitments to reduce plastic use and move beyond superficial packaging redesigns. By documenting corporate roles and policy gaps, the research contributed evidence to ongoing treaty discussions and regional advocacy efforts.

\*FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods)

**READ REPORT** 

# PLASTIC POLLUTION PERSISTS

Despite Sri Lanka's 2023 ban, single-use plastics remain common.

**37.2%**

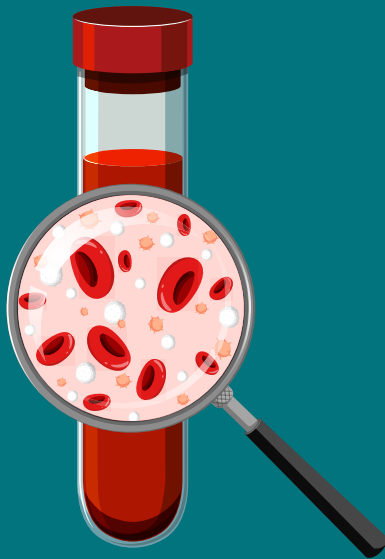
frequently encounter single-use plastics

**34.2%**

encounter them somewhat frequently

## MICROPLASTICS: AWARENESS GAP

Microplastics have been found in human blood.



Yet only **33.8%** of respondents were aware of this

**66.2%** Unware

## PUBLIC SUPPORT IS CLEAR



**76.2%**

strongly support a ban on single-use plastics



**93.3%**

believe FMCG companies must be held accountable



**87.4%**

are more likely to support brands that reduce plastic use

# CLIMATE JUSTICE

## DELHI RISING: HEAT JUSTICE IN ACTION

In May, as Delhi faced extreme heat, communities mobilised through the Delhi Rising campaign to support workers, create hydration points, and install shade in high-risk areas. Alongside these efforts, the campaign urged the Government of India to recognise heatwaves as a national disaster to enable structured relief and preparedness.



Delhi, India



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# MAY DAY: WORKERS DEMAND CLIMATE JUSTICE



SEE THE ACTION

India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka



On May Day, workers across India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka came together in a regional call for climate justice. Six labour unions representing over 2.2 lakh workers signed the Make Polluters Pay Pact and launched the **Workers' Collective for Climate Justice – South Asia**, strengthening informal-sector voices in climate policy spaces.

As part of Delhi Rising, Greenpeace India also released *Labouring Through the Climate Crisis*, a qualitative study documenting how extreme heat is affecting informal workers in Delhi.

# DHAKA HEAT STRESS PROTECTION

In September, Greenpeace South Asia released Dhaka Heat Stress Protection: Policy Responses for Urban Resilience and Climate-Labour Justice, outlining urgent policy measures to protect urban workers from extreme heat. The brief highlights gaps in labour safeguards and calls for structured heat action plans, worker protections, and climate-responsive urban planning to strengthen resilience in one of South Asia's fastest-warming cities.

[READ MORE](#)

Dhaka, Bangladesh





Kathmandu, Nepal

# YOUTH UNITE FOR CLIMATE ACTION

In November, young climate advocates from across South Asia came together at **LCOY 2025 in Kathmandu**, amplifying youth voices and ideas ahead of global climate negotiations at COP30. The event provided space for youth to exchange perspectives, build networks, and elevate their demands for climate justice, equity, and meaningful policy action.

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# CLIMATE SCIENCE AND CYCLONE DITWAH

A World Weather Attribution study found that climate change intensified the heavy rainfall associated with Cyclone Ditwah in Sri Lanka. Following the findings, Greenpeace South Asia called for stronger climate adaptation measures and urgent support for affected communities.

As extreme weather events grow more severe, the need for science-based policy and protection for vulnerable regions becomes increasingly clear.

[READ MORE](#)

# MAKING POLLUTERS PAY

Greenpeace South Asia released Making Polluters Pay: A Climate Justice Agenda for South Asia's Fossil Fuel-Driven Climate Crisis. The brief outlines how fossil fuel expansion is deepening climate impacts across the region and calls for accountability measures that ensure major emitters contribute to loss, damage, and adaptation costs. The report advances a regional climate justice framework centred on fairness, responsibility, and public financing for vulnerable communities.



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# WE REFLECT ON X-PRESS PEARL'S UNSEEN IMPACT...

On May 20, 2025, we marked four years since the X-Press Pearl disaster. We reflected on the fallout, checked up on the promises made, and documented the lingering environmental and livelihood impacts of the 2021 container ship fire and spill off the Sri Lankan coast. The story highlighted how plastic pellets, toxic residues, and economic losses continue to affect coastal communities, long after the headlines faded.



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## ...AND JUST DAYS LATER



Just days later on May 25, a new shipwreck in the same waters sparked coordinated global attention from Greenpeace teams. From targeting Mediterranean Shipping Company headquarters in Switzerland to actions in Colombo, Kochi, and Mumbai, all underscoring the ongoing risks of maritime pollution and the need for accountability and stronger protections.



(L-R) **Anita Perera** (Greenpeace South Asia Ocean Campaigner), **Kasumi Ranasinghe Arachchige** (Integrative Climate & Social Facilitator; Program Director The Biodiversity Project), **Mr. Hemantha Withanage** (Senior Advisor of the Centre for Environmental Justice), **Melani Gunathilake** (Environmentalist), **Krishan Eewalwala** (Marine Environmental Expert)

# HOLDING MSC ACCOUNTABLE

When the MSC ELSA-3 sank off Kerala's coast, coastal communities were once again forced to confront the consequences of maritime disaster. Within days, local residents, volunteers, and Greenpeace teams mobilised to document damage, demand transparency, and call for immediate action from Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC).

This marked the beginning of a coordinated regional effort for corporate accountability and environmental justice.

**Join the 8000+ voices demanding accountability from BIG polluters!**



## ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE KNOWS NO BORDERS

Following the spread of plastic nurdles across regional waters, Greenpeace South Asia and partner organisations held a press conference in Colombo highlighting the transboundary impact of pellet pollution and calling for coordinated clean-up and accountability.

**READ MORE**





On World Ocean Day 2025, Greenpeace South Asia brought together communities across Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to renew calls for ratification and implementation of the Global Ocean Treaty.

Through postcard drives, meetings with policymakers, and coordinated public actions, the One Ocean, Many Lives campaign highlighted a shared regional demand for stronger ocean protection. The message was clear: safeguarding the ocean is inseparable from safeguarding the lives and livelihoods it supports.



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# A WHITE PAPER CALLS FOR TRANSPARENCY

Weeks after the sinking, a joint white paper released with civil society allies documented environmental and livelihood impacts and called for a transparent clean-up plan, independent monitoring, and full compensation. Coastal families amplified the message through on-water protest in Muthalapozhi, demanding accountability.

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# WRECKED FUTURES

On 16 September, Greenpeace South Asia released Wrecked Futures, documenting how families in the coastal village affected by the MSC ELSA-3 Shipwreck lost an average of INR29,000 per month after boats and nets were damaged.

The report called for swift compensation, accessible claims processes, and long-term ecosystem restoration.



[READ THE REPORT](#)

## SUSTAINED PRESSURE AND A LEGAL BREAKTHROUGH

Public pressure intensified through postcards, letters, and coordinated outreach across multiple countries.

In September, the Kerala High Court ordered MSC to deposit ₹1,277 crore as interim security in relation to the sinking. The ruling marked a significant step toward ensuring financial accountability while legal processes continue.

[READ MORE](#)

# [ INVESTIGATING THE SYSTEM ]

## BELOW DECK: THE TRUTH BENEATH WHAT YOU SEA

READ THE  
INVESTIGATION

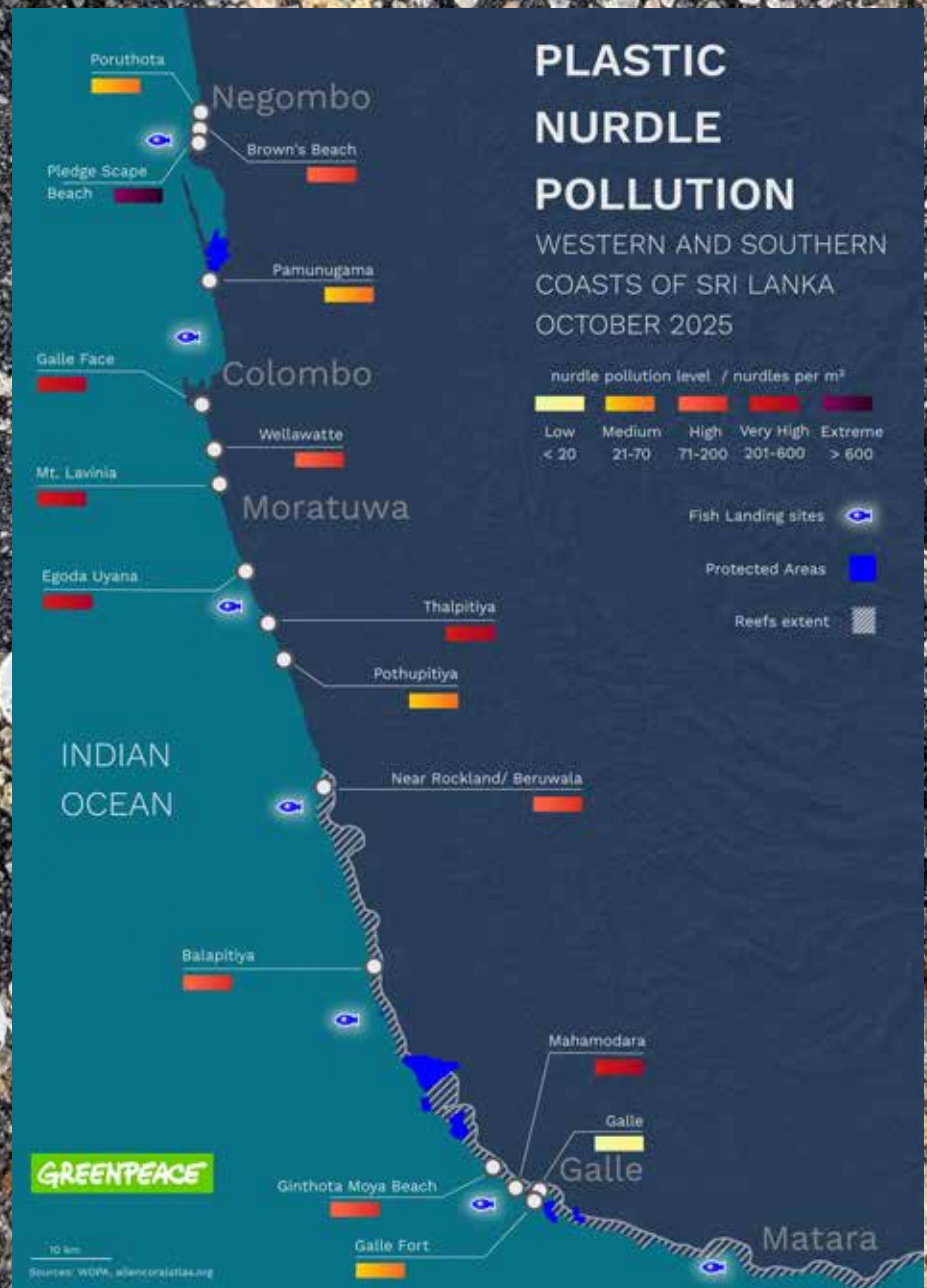
Greenpeace South Asia released a bold publication titled, 'Below Deck: The Truth Beneath What You Sea,' is an investigative report examining patterns in MSC's operations, including the deployment of ageing vessels, regulatory loopholes, and flag-of-convenience practices that have contributed to environmental accountability gaps in South Asia.



# NURDLE PATROL: MAPPING THE POLLUTION

Alongside this, the Nurdle Patrol survey documented plastic pellet pollution along Sri Lanka's coastline following maritime disasters, providing visual and scientific evidence of long-term impact.

[READ THE SURVEY](#)



[FULL REPORT](#)



# WE WILL NOT BE SILENCED

In March 2025, a North Dakota jury ruled against Greenpeace USA, Greenpeace International, and Greenpeace Fund in a lawsuit brought by Energy Transfer, the company behind the Dakota Access Pipeline. The case has been widely described as a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP), raising concerns about the protection of free speech and the right to peaceful protest.

From South Asia, Greenpeace activists and volunteers held a solidarity photo action, standing with colleagues globally to defend civic space and the freedom to speak out for environmental justice.

# A WORD FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

**SUPPORT ANTI-SLAPP  
LAWS AND STAND AGAINST  
CORPORATE EFFORTS TO  
SILENCE DISSENT.**

**GREENPEACE**

**#WEWILLNOTBESILENCED**

**OUR FUTURE ACTIVISM  
DEPENDS ON IT.**

# THE NICE DECLARATION: GLOBAL MOMENTUM BUILDS



In May 2025, over 100 nations signed the Nice Declaration, calling for an ambitious Global Plastics Treaty that includes caps on plastic production. The declaration reflected growing political will to tackle plastic pollution at its root. Negotiations now move forward with increasing pressure to deliver a treaty that prioritises reduction, accountability, and long-term systemic change.



# UK ENDS NEW OIL & GAS EXPLORATION



In November, the United Kingdom ended new oil and gas exploration in the North Sea: a breakthrough nearly three decades in the making. From occupying rigs to taking the government to court, Greenpeace UK has relentlessly challenged new oil licensing since 1997. Investigations, legal action, and high-profile direct actions kept public and political pressure on decision-makers, helping shift what once felt impossible into national policy. No new exploration means no new untapped reserves. It's a decisive step toward ending fossil fuel expansion and proof that sustained campaigning works.



**'BUTCHERED'** by artist Anish Kapoor

# MEET THE GREENPEACE SHIPS

Long before headlines and courtrooms, Greenpeace's story has often unfolded at sea. Around the world, our ships have supported scientific research, witnessed environmental harm, and stood alongside communities protecting their oceans.

## THE ARCTIC SUNRISE

In the fleet since 1995, the Arctic Sunrise has travelled from the Congo Basin to the Amazon and recently completed a three-month scientific expedition to Antarctica, documenting biodiversity and the impacts of climate change in one of the world's most fragile regions.

## THE RAINBOW WARRIOR

Carrying a name that has sailed since 1978, the current Rainbow Warrior has been at sea since 2011. It continues to support ocean protection, climate justice, and peaceful protest across the globe.

## THE WITNESS

The newest and smallest vessel in the fleet, the 22.5-metre Witness is designed to access shallow coastal waters that larger ships cannot reach. It reflects a growing focus on community-centred, low-impact campaigning.

From polar waters to tropical coasts, these ships help bring environmental stories to light and connect global movements for justice.

[READ MORE](#)





## 2025: THE YEAR THE GLOBAL OCEAN TREATY CAME TO LIFE

Throughout 2024 and into 2025, Greenpeace South Asia mobilised public support for the UN High Seas Treaty through awareness drives, postcard campaigns, public activations in Colombo, and engagement with policymakers.

In January 2025, Sri Lanka's Cabinet approved the proposal to sign the Agreement, a decision we welcomed. The country formally acceded on 20 February and ratified it on 16 September, becoming the 58th signatory.

By the end of the year, the treaty crossed the 60-ratification threshold globally, triggering its entry into force in January 2026 and marking a major step toward high seas protection.

# IMPACT BOX

# TESTIMONIALS



“It is heartening to work with the team of Greenpeace South Asia. Though the office is young yet the volunteers and staff are full of enthusiasm and believe in bringing about change among our stakeholders, particularly for South Asia region. The major focus remains climate change and its impacts apart from ocean research.

I am impressed by the dedication and hard work of team members. I wish them success and may they achieve best results for the region. Their connect with the community who are the most important stakeholder is strong and vibrant which I am sure will fetch us the much needed local support to take us far.”

**Biswajit Mohanty, LL.B, FCA, Ph.D,**  
President , Greenpeace South Asia



# SUPPORT US

## THIS WORK CONTINUES BECAUSE OF YOU

We do not accept funding from governments or corporations.  
Our independence is our strength.

Across South Asia, communities are demanding ocean protection, climate justice, and corporate accountability. This work continues because individuals choose to stand with us.

If you believe in people-powered change, this is your moment.

**Defend what matters. Donate. Stay independent. Keep going.**

**DONATE**

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

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

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

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