

16-30 JUNE, 2025

Down To Earth

FORTNIGHTLY ON POLITICS OF

HEALTH

Subscriber copy, not for resale

₹80.00

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY SPECIAL



DTE
LIBRARY
320

FARM TO FUEL

India's pursuit of blending biofuels with petrol to achieve carbon neutrality and energy sovereignty must not jeopardise the country's food security



MONSOON IN MAY
Rains hit early, spread rapidly

P12

GREEN CLEARANCE
Supreme Court rescinds retrospective environmental clearance

P22

Down To Earth

Founded in 1992 to arm you with knowledge critical to shaping a better world

FOUNDER EDITOR Anil Agarwal
EDITOR Sunita Narain
MANAGING EDITOR Richard Mahapatra
CHIEF COPY EDITOR Snigdha Das
ASSOCIATE EDITORS Aditya Misra, Rajit Sengupta
SENIOR CREATIVE DIRECTOR Ajit Bajaj
SUPPLEMENT EDITOR Souparno Banerjee
CHIEF CARTOONIST Sarit Gupta
REPORTING TEAM Shagun, Akshil Sangomla, Pulaha Roy, Rohini Krishnamurthy, Himanshu Nitnaware
SENIOR SUB EDITOR Dakshiani Palicha
WEB EDITORS Rajat Ghai, Preetiha Banerjee, Nandita Banerji, Pratyaksh Srivastava
DESIGN TEAM Chaitanya Chandan (Art Editor), Ritika Bohra (Assistant Art Editor), Tarun Sehgal (Senior Designer), Yogendra Anand (Illustrator), Vineet Tripathi (Graphic Designer), Shri Krishan
PHOTO EDITOR Vikas Choudhary
PRODUCTION Rakesh Shrivastava, Gundhar Das
TECH SUPPORT Rajendra Rawal, Jaidev Sharma
MULTIMEDIA Joel Michael, Sunny Gaulam, Shreya KA, Dhruval Parekh, Surangya Kaur, Danishmand Khan
INFORMATION AND RESEARCH SUPPORT Kiran Pandey, Susan Chacko, Madhumita Paul, Lalit Maurya, Dayanidhi Mishra
CONSULTING EDITORS Anumita Roychowdhury, Vibha Varshney

Vol 34, No 3; Total No of Pages: 60

Editorial, subscriptions and advertisements:
Society for Environmental Communications,
41, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 062.
Phone: 91-11-40616000, 29955124,
29956110, 29956394, 29956399 | Fax: 91-11-29955879,
Email: editor@downtoearth.org.in

© 2025 Society for Environmental Communications. All rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. Printed and published by Richard Mahapatra on behalf of Society for Environmental Communications. Printed at Viba Press Pvt. Ltd. C-66/3, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi - 110 020, India, and published at 41, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 062.

To subscribe, sms 'dte' to 56070
or visit www.downtoearth.org.in/subscribe

FOR ADVERTISEMENTS Jyoti Ghosh
jghosh@cseindia.org

FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS
KCR Raja, raja@cseindia.org



← Cover design:
Ajit Bajaj

Contents

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY SPECIAL



COVER STORY

28 India depends on three major food crops—rice, maize and sugarcane—to achieve the target of ethanol-blended petrol

08 Digest
Low-lying ponds in Rajasthan that cater to smallest of creatures

12 Unusual May
Heavy pre-monsoon rains, early monsoon arrival and rapid spread across country break records

18 Panchayati raj
Constitutional status notwithstanding, states delay devolving powers

22 Environmental clearance
Supreme Court's judgement calls for an introspection of all environmental governance

44 Sponge parks
Chennai tries new absorption technologies to mitigate floods



46 Patently absurd
Firms working on de-extinction bank on patents for big profits

50 Opinion
To restore the Yamuna's flow, move beyond tackling pollution

54 Life & Nature
Banda's shajar stone handicraft industry on a revival path

58 Civil Lines
A global backlash against GDP as measure of an economy

Down To Earth does not endorse the content of advertisements printed in the magazine. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only.