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# COP28: Five passionate environmentalists who are restoring India's biodiversity tirelessly

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Photograph:(Twitter)

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Eco-warriors Pradip Shah, Bittu Sahgal, Vandana Shiva, Rajendra Singh and Purnima Devi Barman are at the forefront of environmental conservation in India

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As the world faces the Triple Planetary Crisis of pollution, climate crisis and biodiversity loss; global conversations at forums like COP28 play a pivotal role in discussing positive interventions. Scheduled from November 30 to December 12, 2023, this United Nations Climate Change Conference will set the stage in Dubai for global leaders to come together and address pressing environmental issues.

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for climate change, a greener India and sustainable agriculture.

Meet five eco-warriors who are working hard to ensure that India meets some of the green goals that will also be discussed at COP 28.

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Pradip Shah

In 2010, Pradip Shah co-founded Grow-Trees.com; and since then, the social enterprise has planted millions of trees across India to restore forests, repair animal corridors and generate livelihoods for rural communities. Projects like 'Trees for Tribals', 'Trees for Tigers', and 'Trees for Rivers' among many others target specific ecological problems and each plantation activity is designed around the geographical, social and geographical context of a region. These projects elevate water tables, rich biodiversity and create carbon sinks in rural and urban areas. Any individual or corporate entity can contribute to these projects via the innovative 'Greet with Trees,' concept where trees can be dedicated or planted with just a click.

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### Bittu Sahgal

Bittu Sahgal is an iconic environmentalist, wildlife advocate, and editor known for his unwavering commitment to the environment. As the founder of the Sanctuary Nature Foundation, a non-profit organisation that strives to protect biodiversity and foster environmental journalism, he has contributed to policies, habitat restoration, wildlife monitoring, and community outreach.

At the apex of his work is the foundation's flagship Sanctuary Asia magazine and Sanctuary Cub which have inspired generations of naturalists since the early eighties.

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### Vandana Shiva

Often referred to as the 'Gandhi of Grain', Vandana Shiva is a passionate environmental activist and ecofeminist who intertwines environmental concerns and women's issues while advocating fervently for food sovereignty, farmers' rights, and endorsing the concept of seed freedom rooted in open-pollinated organic seeds. Her organisation, Navdanya, is at the forefront of biodiversity conservation and sustainable agriculture.

With a dedicated focus on seed sovereignty and organic farming, Navdanya empowers farmers to safeguard traditional seeds, fostering strong and eco-sensitive agricultural practices.

### Rajendra Singh

Known as the 'The Waterman of India,' Rajendra Singh is a renowned environmentalist and water conservationist. As the founder of the NGO 'Tarun Bharat Sangh' (TBS) in 1975, Singh pioneered community-driven water management in arid Rajasthan. His contribution to reviving traditional water harvesting techniques has not only earned him prestigious awards such as the Magsaysay Award in 2001 and the Stockholm Water Prize in 2015 but has also transformed water-scarce landscapes.

Through innovative techniques like johads, rainwater storage tanks, and check dams, TBS has empowered communities with agency over water use.

### Purnima Devi Barman

Assam's Purnima Devi Barman, a wildlife biologist, works to conserve the Hargila, a Greater Adjutant stork. She founded the Hargila Army, an all-woman grassroots conservation group in Assam and her efforts have led to an eight-fold increase in the local Adjutant population. Barman focuses on habitat protection by actively engaging with local communities, particularly women.

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