



Illustration: Shrish Verma, AIS Noida, XI I

## Minting green

### One Greenwashed Product For The Aesthetics, Please!

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Strolling in the grocery store, rummaging through countless products, your eyes fixate on 'natural' and 'eco-friendly'. Considering yourself a responsible citizen, you buy these green items, falling in the trap of greenwashing. However, you are not the only one, for many of us fail to read the fine print, the print that proves that most things that seem green are just a faux coating.

**The what:** In 2018, McDonald's replaced its recyclable plastic straws with paper

ones, "embracing sustainability", only for the public to find out that the new straws are non-recyclable & not eco-friendly.

Eager to proclaim sincerity, McD forgot to follow through on the claim, with their non-recyclable straws – over 95 million used every day – generating greater waste. This perjury is called 'greenwashing' – a false claim made by an organisation about their positive environmental impact. First coined in 1986 by environmentalist Jay Westervelt, greenwashing, today, has risen to prominence with over 350 billion USD being invested in the 'green market' annually.

**The why:** Chevron keeps emptying its

pockets for campaigns that claim to 'protect environment', but their coffers run deeper for fossil fuel production, over ten billion USD being spent on it in 2020 alone.

One might ask: why are companies investing in greenwashing when it has no benefit? Well, it may not be beneficial for the environment, but it is for bank accounts. With over 66% buyers willing to pay more for sustainable products, why not transform the green on packets into green in pockets? Thanks to this, ENI Diesel+ gained more users after an ad that showed their unsustainable palm oil diesel as 'green', and even Shell, facing multiple lawsuits, reported highest profits in its 115-year-history.

**The how:** Coca-Cola Life was the company's claim to being 'environment friendly' & 'health conscious', all the while producing more than 100 billion SUPs a year & being the world's leading plastic polluter.

To sell greenwashing, companies employ the same clichés – bold claims with false labelling, which falters to "did we say that?" under slightest inquisition. Another trick is proclamation of lofty goals with no checkpoints. NewClimate Institute reported that of the top 24 global companies, only three aim to be carbon-neutral, but none have showcased a dependable plan to back it. Even the now-historical Global Climate Coalition has been exposed – being backed by enterprises in denial of climate change while pretending to remedy the situation. Oh, what a match made in heaven – extortion under the guise of altruism!

**The why not:** Having been caught cheating on their emissions test (engines emitting 40 times the reported pollutants), Volkswagen was charged with fraud, conspiracy & a 2.8 billion USD criminal fine.

Building castles out of not-so-solid claims for profit may seem easy, but it actually isn't, given the penalties. Case in point – Goldman Sachs was fined four million USD for failing to report the environmental implications of its endorsed investments. Even the Federal Trade Commission is proposing sanctions and the EU has introduced mandatory third-party checks for emission statements. Now everyone will pay heed as perpetrators fuss up the price indeed!

Sadly, these measures don't seem enough to faze scamming as companies continue to fool consumers. Hence, the only hope lies with the customer. When the market milks the wave of sustainability for the wrong 'green', the only way out is the realisation of the masses. Earth is hanging by a thread and the clock keeps ticking. Tick tock!

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#### THE GT POLL

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a) Yes    b) No    c) Can't say

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This special edition has been brought to you by Amity International School, Noida, as a part of the 'GT Making A Newspaper Contest'. Each page of this unique edition carries a special story handcrafted by the school's editorial team as a part of the competition. The inter-Amity newspaper making competition witnesses different branches of Amity schools across India churn out their own 'Contest Edition' which are pitted against one another at the end of the year, culminating with GT Awards. So, here's presenting the **second edition** of 'GT Making A Newspaper Contest 2023-24'.

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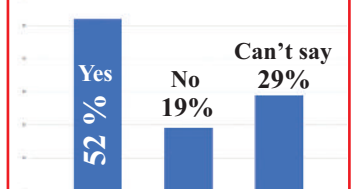
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#### POLL RESULT

for GT Edition October 30, 2023

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Results as on November 4, 2023