



INCREDIBLE HIMALAYAS

Environment, Culture, Tourism and Adventure

2005

Hon. General Editor

Capt. M.S. KOHLI

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Editors
Yogendra Bali, R.S. Somi

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Contents

<i>From the Editors</i>	9
<i>From the HET Chairman's Desk</i>	11
<i>HET: Aims & Objectives, and Code of Conduct</i>	13
<i>Messages</i>	15

PART I—ENVIRONMENT

1. The Himalayas Still are the Places of Great Beauty to Visit	31
<i>Sir Edmund Hillary</i>	
2. Incredible Himalayas	34
<i>Capt. M.S. Kohli</i>	
3. Preserve the Beautiful Himalayas	37
<i>Junko Tabei</i>	
4. Climbers' Impact on the High Mountains	38
<i>Sir Chris Bonington</i>	
5. There is Only One Solution	42
<i>Maurice Herzog</i>	
6. Conservation of Himalayan Ecology	44
<i>Comdr. Joginder Singh</i>	
7. Himalayan Ecosystem	51
<i>M.P. Gupta</i>	
8. The Himalayas: A World Heritage	54
<i>Dr. Karan Singh</i>	

9. 21st Century Himalayan Tourism:
Macro Visions 63
A.D. Moddie

PART II—CULTURE

10. The Sherpas 73
Sir Edmund Hillary
11. Architectural Heritage of the
Western Himalayas 78
Subhashini Aryan
12. Buddhist Paintings of the Trans-Himalayas 80
Benoy K. Behl
13. Rock Art of the Indian Himalayas 87
Martin Vernier
14. Myths, Rituals and Religious Beliefs of
Kumaon Himalayas 91
Manju Kak

PART III—TOURISM

15. Uttarakhand: Switzerland of India 107
Capt. M.S. Kohli
16. Prospects of Himalayan Tourism in
the 21st Century 116
Capt. M.S. Kohli
17. Tourism Development in the Himalayas 128
Conrad Blanch
18. Tourism in Sikkim 131
Karma Gyatso
19. Tourism in Uttarakhand 135
N.N. Prasad
20. Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir 141
Mohammad Ashraf
21. Tourism in Himachal Pradesh 146
Ashok Thakur

22. Tourism Attuned to the Himalayas 156
Bill Aitken

PART IV—ADVENTURE

23. 2005: The Year of Indian Adventure 161
Capt. M.S. Kohli
24. White Wilderness 164
Reinhold Messner
25. My First Himalayan Expedition 168
Ko Yoshida
26. Adventure Tourism and its Activities
in Manipur 172
Dept. of Tourism, Manipur
27. Adventure Tourism in Bhutan 174
Capt. M.S. Kohli
28. Chaukhamba: The Mountain on the
Far Horizon 183
Colonel Ashok Abbey
29. Swachhand: The Silent Valley 192
Colonel Ashok Abbey
30. Remembering the First Ascent of Everest 195
Suman Dubey
31. Adventures in North-East India 198
Nasim Akhtor
32. Ski Explosion 202
Colonel N. Kumar
33. Indo-Pak Friendship for Environmental
Protection and Peace 207
Mandip Singh Soin
34. Siachen: A Proposal for Peace 213
Harish Kapadia
35. Weekend Climbing 218
Maninder Kohli

PART V—DOWN THE MEMORY LANE

36. My Memories of Everest 231
Capt. M.S. Kohli
37. The Summit Within 236
Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia
38. Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi ... 240
Colonel Ashok Abbey
39. Indian Mountaineering Foundation 247
N.N. Vohra
40. Resurgence of The Himalayan Club in Kolkata ... 252
Meher H. Mehta

From the Editors

This publication of the Himalayan Environment Trust being presented to the lovers of the Himalayas the world over, in collaboration with the well-known publishers of works on the Himalayas, the Indus, is a landmark presentation in a landmark year.

We would like to invite the attention of the readers that 2005 marks the 40th anniversary of the historic Indian Everest Expedition of 1965, led by Capt. M.S. Kohli which put nine Indians atop the world's highest peak. It is a day of a great reunion for the Everesters. It is also the year, which marks the 40th anniversary of the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi in the leading Himalayan State of India, now Uttaranchal. It marks the revival of the annual Himalayan mountaineering tourism and protection of environment in the Himalayan region.

In this year, while a host of celebrations were expected in Delhi, Mussoorie and elsewhere, the world's leading Himalayan celebrities and experts were expected together in India to participate in the commemorative celebrations organised by the Union Ministry of Tourism, Uttaranchal Government, the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, and the Himalayan Environment Trust in which several top dignitaries of India and other countries were expected to join.

A landmark of great significance was expected to be the launching of the HET's Youth Leadership and Adventure Parks Movement in the country.

This commemorative publication celebrates all these great happenings with the hope that the youth of India and other

countries, shall come forward to lead the movement and spread awareness about the preservation of the Himalayan ecology and culture, one of the greatest heritages of man.

In the present very special publication, for the first time, writings of some of the greatest living Himalayan celebrities are being brought together for the worldwide fans and lovers of the Himalayas. To them all is dedicated this volume.

R.S. SOMI
YOGENDRA BALI

From the HET Chairman's Desk

It is a matter of pride and pleasure for all of us in the HET to present this commemorative publication under the exciting title of '*Incredible Himalayas*'. It deals with Himalayan environment, culture, tourism and adventure. The scope of the publication is wide-ranging, and it was decided to bring it out regularly to coincide with the 'Mountaineering and Tourism Meet', revived after some gap. Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, which specialises in books on the Himalayas, came forward to publish it.

The issue has interesting articles from leading Himalayan celebrities and enthusiasts. We appeal to the experts to regularly write on the subject of Himalayan environment, culture, tourism and adventure. There is phenomenal growth of adventure tourism in India and I hope this journal will keep on growing in popularity along with sustainable Himalayan tourism. And so should be our annual Meets which will be held in rotation in different Himalayan States of India and neighbouring countries.

Our 1973 Meet in Darjeeling was the biggest ever gathering of history-making world mountaineers. It included Sir Edmund Hillary, Tenzing Norgay, John Hunt, Maurice Herzog, Harish Sarin, Paul Bauer, Harrer, Raymond Lambert, Wyss Dunant, Gaston Rebuffat, Chris Bonington, Jimmy Roberts, Norman Dyhrenfurth, Egger, Douglas Haston, Hornbein, Fritz Moravac, Gurdial Singh, Brigadier Gyan Singh, Narinder Kumar, Karma Paul, Keki Bunshah, Schwarzenback, Bernard Pierre, C.P. Vohra, Matsuura, Sonam Wangyal, Alfred Gregory, Von Gunter, F. Luchinger, Jurg Marmet, Earnest Schmidt, Dolf Reist, Rubi, Ang Temba, S. Thulgharia, J.C. Joshi, M. Gicquel, Kawasaki, Lala

Telang, N.S. Bhagwanani, Chris Briggs, Deacock, and Keval Krishna. The second Mountaineering and Tourism Meet was held in New Delhi in May 1983. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Foreign delegates included legendary Naomi Uemura; Mr. Inada, Chairman, Himalayan Association of Japan; Chris Bonington, and Mrs. Wanda Rutkiewicz of Poland; Lord Chorley, President, Alpine Club, London; Kumar Khadka Vikram Shah, President, Nepal Mountaineering Association; Adams Carter, Editor, American Alpine Journal; Boris Lazaret Marinov of Bulgaria; Graeme Dingal of New Zealand; Dr. Mala of Germany; and Mr. Berry Bishop; Major Warwick D'cock; Heinrich Harrer of Germany and Lute Jerstad. There was also a TV team from Australia.

The 1984 Meet was held in Kashmir and was followed by the Manali Meet in 1986. The fifth Mountaineering and Tourism Meet was held at Mussoorie from 23rd to 25th September in 1988, which attracted a large number of delegates, especially Australia where I was then posted.

It is well-known that these Meets were instrumental for the growth of Himalayan tourism. The HET was happy that besides boosting Himalayan tourism these meets spread awareness about the need to follow the Himalayan Code of Conduct with a view to protect this vital world heritage. The HET has taken the initiative to organise these Meets now on regular basis. From 1989 to 1993 I was President, Indian Mountaineering Foundation. During these years Meets were held regularly every year. We are grateful to the Ministry of Tourism and the host State of Uttaranchal for establishing the sound basis on which these Meets could be continued by various Himalayan States in India or other Himalayan countries.

ICIMOD Kathmandu has always been supporting our journals. We are most grateful to them.

CAPT. M.S. KOHLI
Chairman
Himalayan Environment Trust

Himalayan Environment Trust

Aims & Objectives

- To mobilize support from mountaineers, trekkers, alpine clubs, adventure tour operators and the Himalayan region governments to protect the Himalayan environment, its flora and fauna and natural resources as well as protect the customs and interests of the local people.
- To evolve a code of conduct and ethics to be followed by all visitors to the Himalayan region, as part of a continuing effort to maintain and sustain the well-being of the Himalayan region.
- To hold international conferences, seminars and Himalayan tourism meets, to discuss problems of Himalayan environment and focus world attention on such matters.
- To exchange information and cooperate with other local, national and international agencies engaged in similar work, such as the International Centre for the Integrated Mountain Development, Kathmandu and the Mountain Protection Commission of UIAA.
- To evolve necessary guidelines in consultation with the Himalayan countries concerning adventure tourism, to avoid overcrowding of certain popular trails and achieve a fair spread of trekkers and mountaineers throughout the Himalayas.
- To encourage cleaning up programmes and evolve healthy environmental practices in areas of the Himalayas which are severely polluted. The Trust may help raise funds and provide support for these projects and maintain supportive role in cooperation with the local authorities.

Code of Conduct

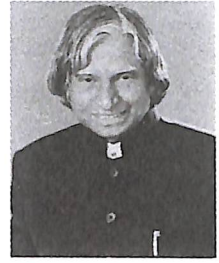
By following these simple guidelines, you can help to preserve the unique environment and ancient cultures of the Himalayas:

- **Campsite**—Remember the other party will be using the same campsite after you have vacated it. Therefore, leave the campsite cleaner than you found it.
- **Limit Deforestation**—Make no open fires and discourage others from doing so on your behalf. Where water is heated by scarce firewood, use as little as possible. When possible choose accommodation that uses kerosene or fuel-efficient firewood stoves. You will help the cause greatly by taking with you some saplings and planting these on your trail.
- **In a safe place burn dry paper & packets**—Bury other waste paper and biodegradable material including food. Carry back all non-biodegradable litter. If you come across other people's rubbish, remove their rubbish as well.
- **Keep local water clean**—Avoid using pollutants such as detergents in streams or springs. If no toilet facilities are available, make sure you are at least 30 metres away from water sources and bury or cover wastes.
- **Plants should be left to flourish in their natural environment**—Taking cutting, seeds and roots is illegal in many parts of the Himalayas.
- **Help your guides and porters to follow conservation measures**—Do not allow the cooks or porters to throw garbage in the nearby stream or river.
- **When taking photographs, respect privacy**—Ask permission and use restraint.
- **Respect Holy Places**—Preserve what you have come to see, never touch or remove religious objects, remove shoes when visiting temples.
- **Refrain from giving money to children since it will encourage begging**—A donation to a project, health centre or a school is a more constructive way to help.
- **Respect for local etiquette earns you respect**—Loose, lightweight clothes are preferable to revealing shorts, skimpy tops and tight fitting action wear. Hand-holding or kissing in public are disapproved by local people.



सत्यमेव जयते

DR. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM
President of India



Message

The President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, is happy to know that the Himalayan Environment Trust is organising the "Himalayan Mountaineering and Tourism Meet" during May 26-28, 2005 at Mussoorie and also bringing out a special issue of its Journal "Incredible Himalayas—Environment, Culture, Tourism and Adventure" on this occasion.

The President extends his warm greetings and felicitations to the organisers and the participants and wishes their endeavours all success.

Press Secretary to the President



DR. MANMOHAN SINGH
Prime Minister of India

Message

I am glad to know that the Himalayan Environment Trust is organizing the Mountaineering and Tourism Meet in Mussoorie during 27th and 29th May 2005 and bringing out a special issue of its journal "Incredible Himalayas: Environment, Culture, Tourism and Adventure".

While exploring the mighty Himalayas and engaging in adventure activities to scale its high peaks, we must also work to conserve its fragile ecology. The inception of the Himalayan Environment Trust and its activities to encourage adventure sport while protecting the eco-system of the region is therefore doubly commendable. Along with its initiative to establish Leadership and Adventure Parks, the organization of the Mountaineering and Tourism Meet and the publication of a special issue of the journal "Incredible Himalayas," focussing attention on environment, culture, tourism and adventure are important steps in nurturing the spirit of adventure and preservation of the Himalayan eco-system.

On this occasion, I extend greetings and good wishes to all those associated with the Trust for the success of the Meet and the publication.

Manmohan Singh



सत्यमेव जयते

SONIA GANDHI
Chairperson
National Advisory Council



Message

I am delighted to learn that the Himalayan Environment Trust (HET) is launching 500 Adventure and Leadership Parks throughout the country, at the initiative of Capt. M.S. Kohli.

Captain Kohli himself is the very personification of adventure and leadership. His triumphant expeditions to Mount Everest, and the vital role he has played in establishing standards of excellence in mountaineering and other adventure sports, have not only brought pride and glory to India, but also demonstrated the qualities of true leadership—courage, meticulous planning and organization, and a vibrant team spirit.

Smt. Indira Gandhi once memorably observed that for centuries the Himalayas have protected us, and now we must protect them. The thoughtless damage to the fragile ecological system of the Himalayas perturbed her greatly, and continues to cause us great concern today. I hope the HET's Leadership and Adventure Parks will, while encouraging the spirit of adventure, also help create awareness among young people of the importance of preserving and protecting the Himalayan environment, which is the source of our great river, and which boasts a wealth of species of flora and fauna, many of which are now endangered.

I wish Capt. Kohli and all those participating in the HET Leadership and Adventure Parks all success in this challenging new venture.

Sonia Gandhi



सत्यमेव जयते

K. NATWAR SINGH
Minister of External Affairs
Govt. of India, New Delhi

Message

I feel privileged to salute the courageous men and women, who have the heart, spirit and stamina to conquer the highest Himalayan peaks. We salute them.

I am delighted that the Himalayan Environment Trust is bringing out a special issue of its journal '*Incredible Himalayas*', to mark the 40th anniversary of the historic Indian Everest Expedition of 1965, led by the indefatigable and intrepid mountaineer Capt. M.S. Kohli. I recall their brilliant achievement with pride and admiration. Great human achievements are always the result of combined endeavours and sacrifices of an entire team.

We are indeed indebted to the Himalayan Environment Trust for its invaluable contribution to protecting the Himalayan environment and engendering the spirit of adventure and leadership among the youth of India.

I wish the Himalayan Environment Trust and all men and women of goodwill who join in their worthy enterprise, all success. The Himalayas have truly been the mystery behind our great civilization.

K. Natwar Singh



सत्यमेव जयते

SUNIL DUTT

*Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports
Govt. of India, New Delhi*



Message

I am happy to know that the Himalayan Environment Trust in collaboration with the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, Union Ministry of Tourism and the Uttarakhand Government is organising the 'Mountaineering and Tourism Meet' in Mussoorie from May 26 to May 28, 2005. I am glad that several mountaineering legends from abroad including Mr. Maurice Herzog and Mrs. Junko Tabei as well as large number of Indian mountaineers will be attending this Meet.

Besides promoting Himalayan tourism & Himalayan environment, this Meet will also spread the spirit of adventure in the country. I wish the Meet a great success.

Sunil Dutt



S.S. SIDHU
Governor of Manipur

Message

I am glad to learn that the Himalayan Environment Trust is organizing 'Mountaineering and Tourism Meet' at Mussoorie from May 26 to May 28, 2005.

In the field of 'Adventure Tourism' Manipur is undoubtedly in the forefront in the North East. We plan to give a big boost to this segment of tourism in Manipur which has a tremendous potential in this regard.

I wish the Mussoorie Meet all success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S.S. Sidhu'.

S.S. Sidhu



सत्यमेव जयते

RENUKA CHOWDHURY
Minister of State for Tourism
Govt. of India, New Delhi



Message

I am happy to note that the Himalayan Environment Trust is bringing out a special issue of its Journal "Incredible Himalayas: Environment, Culture, Tourism and Adventure" and celebrating its 40th Anniversary of the Indian Everest Expedition 1965.

I wish all success to the Himalayan Environment Trust.

Renuka
Renuka Chowdhury



VIRBHADRA SINGH
Chief Minister
Himachal Pradesh

Message

It gives me immense pleasure to know that the Himalayan Environment Trust is organising the 'Mountaineering and Tourism Meet' from May 27 to 29, 2005 at Mussoorie and special issue of its journal '*Incredible Himalayas: Environment, Culture, Tourism and Adventure*', brought out to mark the celebrations.

The endeavour of the trust in carrying various activities directed towards adventurous and environmental activities deserve appreciation and commendations for the landmarks set under its aegis.

I hope the Trust would contribute significantly towards channelisation of the energy of the youth towards adventurous and constructive activities.

I send my best wishes for the success of the meet.

Virbhadra Singh



सत्यमेव जयते



DR. D.D. LAPANG
Chief Minister
Meghalaya

Message

I am happy to note that the Himalayan Environment Trust has taken the initiative to organise the Mountaineering and Tourism Meet 2005 at Mussoorie in May, 2005. Forty years back, in May 1965, the Indian Everest Expedition had done us proud in establishing a world record by putting nine Indians atop the Everest.

I am also happy to learn that the Himalayan Environment Trust will bring out a special issue of its journal '*Incredible Himalayas: Environment, Culture, Tourism and Adventure*' during the Mountaineering and Tourism Meet 2005. I am sure that this journal will provide vital information about the Himalayan Eco-system to the amateur mountaineers, researchers, environmentalists and to the general public.

I wish the Himalayan Environment Trust all success in their endeavour.

D.D. Lapang



GEGONG APANG
Chief Minister
Arunachal Pradesh

Message

I am delighted to learn that the Himalayan Environment Trust, New Delhi is going to organize the Mountaineering and Tourism Meet 2005 at Mussoorie. The meet will be a befitting homage to those pioneers of Indian mountaineering, especially those of the historical Indian Everest expedition of 1965. I am also very pleased to know that the HET is going to bring out a special issue of its journal, 'Incredible Himalayas—Environment, Culture, Tourism and Adventure.' I trust, these activities will give exposure of our great nation and its potential in terms of adventure sports and tourism.

The Mountaineering and Tourism Meet 2005, I hope, will mobilize support from the participants and governments to protect the Himalayan environment and its flora and fauna. I also hope that the Meet will encourage cleaning up programme in severely polluted areas of the belt and evolve healthy environment practices for the tourists, trekkers and mountaineers while visiting the pristine region.

The journal, I trust, will develop a sense of responsibility among the people of the world to protect the splendid mountains for centuries to come. It will, I believe, will encourage our adventure sports lovers to bring out the best of their experiences, which in turn will exhort our youths towards adventure sports.

I, on behalf of people of Arunachal Pradesh and on my own behalf extend my best wishes in your endeavour.

Gegong Apang



ADMIRAL ARUN PRAKASH
Chief of the Naval Staff

Message

I am glad to learn that the Himalayan Environment Trust (HET) is holding a Mountaineering and Tourism Meet from 27-29 May 2005 in conjunction with the launch of a major initiative on 'Adventure and Leadership Parks'.

There is a dire need to encourage adventure activities amongst our youth, as the great outdoors are the best classroom for building character, and developing sterling qualities like courage, stamina, fortitude and loyalty. Fortunately, India is a veritable treasure trove of mountains, which provide a ready avenue of such activities. The Indian Navy has always promoted the great sport of mountaineering, and 2005 marks the 40th anniversary of the historic Indian Everest Expedition in 1965, which was led by an Indian Naval officer: Captain M.S. Kohli. This feat was bettered last year by the first all-Indian Naval team to scale Mount Everest.

I wish the HET all success in its initiative. I am sure that the Mountaineering and Tourism Meet will propel environment-friendly tourism and mountaineering activity throughout the country.

Arun Prakash



AIR CHIEF MARSHAL S.P. TYAGI
Chief of the Air Staff

Message

I am happy to know that Himalayan Environment Trust (HET) is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Indian ascent of Everest during its Himalayan & Tourism Meet on May 27-29, 2005.

I would like to congratulate Capt. M.S. Kohli (Retd), Chairman, Himalayan Environment Trust, on the initiative being taken towards creating environment awareness among the youth of the country through the 'Adventure Leadership Parks' concept.

I wish him and HET all success for the ALP's venture and for the Mountaineering & Tourism Meet, 2005.

Jai Hind!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a long horizontal stroke with a small upward flick at the end.

S.P. Tyagi



GENERAL J.J. SINGH
Chief of the Army Staff



Message

It gives me great pleasure to note that the Himalayan Environment Trust (HET) picked up the gauntlet to promote tourism, adventure and environment awareness in the Himalayas. HET has rendered yeoman service to Mountaineering and Tourism in India and has been actively associated with prevention of degradation in the Himalayan environment and ecology. The novel idea of 'Adventure and Leadership Park' is praiseworthy and will surely assist our youth to develop and sharpen their leadership acumen.

The celebration of 40th anniversary of the historic success of the Indian Everest Expedition 1965, which made us the fourth nation in the world to conquer Everest, and the publication of the commemorative issue '*Incredible Himalayas*', is a befitting tribute to the outstanding feat by those nine redoubtable Indians—a world record which remained unsurpassed for several years. The success of that expedition established the credentials of Indian mountaineers in the global mountaineering fraternity and thus brought praiseworthy laurels to the nation.

I wish the participants and organizers of the commemorative event all the very best for its successful conduct and hope that HET continues to grow from strength to strength in the times to come.

J.J. Singh



EDMUND HILLARY

Message

Dear Captain Mohan Kohli and all the members of the first successful Indian ascent of Mount Everest. Please accept my congratulations on your mighty effort in 1965. You are now celebrating your 40th Anniversary and the skill and ability of Indian mountaineers has grown enormously in the last forty years to reach the highest international standard.

I wish you increased success in your endeavours and many successful new climbs.

I am very sorry not to be there.

Edmund Hillary

PART I
Environment

1

The Himalayas Still are the Places of Great Beauty to Visit

Sir Edmund Hillary

Like many of my colleagues on the HET, I can look back on many decades of activity in the Himalayas. I have seen a number of changes. Some of the changes have been good, I believe, and some perhaps not so good. In April 1993, I was up in the Himalayas. While camping at 13,000 ft, I was laid low with cerebral oedema (altitude sickness), and for a week, I was not at all well. I was finally evacuated to Kathmandu and soon recovered at the lower altitude. A few weeks later, I was back at my home in Auckland, New Zealand, and I received a very nice letter from a pleasant gentleman in the U.S. I thought I might read a part of it to you:

He said, "Yesterday, while in my car, on my way to work, I caught a bit of news that prompted me to write this letter. I heard that you were taken out of the mountains of Nepal by helicopter with altitude sickness." He went on to say that, "you are 73 years old. Well, I have got to tell you that was good news to me. I thought you were dead, several years ago."

Well, some of the old-timers are still around and still intensely interested in the problems and the beauties of the Himalayas. I listened with great interest to our distinguished speakers, often dealing with the overall natural problems of the Himalayas. But my activities have tended to be rather on a more modest scale. I have spent little time on theory, important though it is, but more

perhaps on small practical things.

I have made a number of visits to the Indian Himalayas and a brief visit to Bhutan, but the majority of my work has been carried out in Nepal, particularly in the Solu-Khumbu district. I sometimes feel a sense of guilt, almost, for the past development of the Sagarmatha area, as I was responsible for building the Lukla airfield, which became the tourist gateway into the Everest area. People poured into the Khumbu well before any facilities were provided; and this resulted in the much destruction of the forests, pollution of the environment with rubbish; and making Mount Everest the highest rubbish dump in the world. But in those last 30 years, many changes and improvements have taken place.

I have to admit I personally played a part in expressing concern around the world at the rubbish deposited at tracks and campsites. The damage being done to the environment, the lack of toilet facilities, and the destruction of the forests. But in the last five-six years, great improvements have been undertaken. World Wildlife, and His Majesty's Govt. of Nepal have contributed valuable funds for clean-up purposes. The Sagarmatha clean-up programme has been instituted, where the local people are accepting the responsibility of tidying up their own environment. For twenty years now, my Himalayan Trust has been working hard on reestablishing the forests, although there is still very much to do.

One unfortunate consequence of all this negative publicity has been that the media completely overlooks the improvements that have been made. Not a week goes by without me receiving a telephone call from some reporter around the world saying that his or her editor is planning to send him to Nepal to throw light upon the devastation in the environment of the Himalayas. When, I mentioned the good progress that has been made, he has little interest. It is rubbish they want to film and to write about. They seemed to have little interest in the work of the Sagarmatha clean-up programme; the strenuous work done by a Japanese team at Lukla airfield (cleaning up the rubbish); the fact that this year, one expedition carried down 300 empty oxygen bottles from the South Col or at least paid the descending Sherpas to bring them down. These are all constructive steps and perhaps,

that must give us hope for the future of the Himalayan environment.

We all know that there is still a tremendous amount for us to do. But I think that we should all stress that some good work is being done. It is not impossible, in fact, that the present reduction in tourism to the Himalayas is partly caused by all the negative publicity about the accumulation of rubbish. While we work for our clean-up programmes, do not let overlook that the Himalayas are still places of great beauty and magnificent places of great beauty and magnificent places to visit. I am delighted that the HET is cooperating with the Governments of India and of U.P. to undertake an extensive clean-up programme in the Gangotri area. This has been stimulated by the US\$ 50,000 raised in San Francisco by the American Himalayan Foundation. Its Chairman is Richard Blum, a member of this Foundation. Richard could not be at the seminar but he was represented by Norbu Tenzing, son of the great climber himself. Other members of the HET also played a major part in this fund-raising. Reinhold Messner was there, so was Chris Bonnington and Maurice Herzog and Junko Tabei too. And it was great financial success and quite a remarkable occasion. It was really quite an experience to be there; and it raised a lot of money.

Now we must see that what practical and sensible work can be undertaken in Gangotri to protect its beauty as well as its religious heritage. The funds are now available. It is time for good work to be done. As far as Gangotri is concerned, a vast number of people who visit this shrine are pilgrims; it would be appropriate that the GCP should have a religious representative on it who could express the views of the religious community.

You know, problems in the mountains are not confined to the Himalayas. Recently I spent four days floating down the rapids of the Snake river in Idaho in the USA. This is a beautiful mountain area and this has a magnificent river. But jet boats sweep up and down the river, heavily laden with tourists and the water is not safe to drink. So there are problems everywhere.

It is my hope that the Gangotri Scheme will become a strong, sensible, practical scheme to protect this beautiful area and its people.