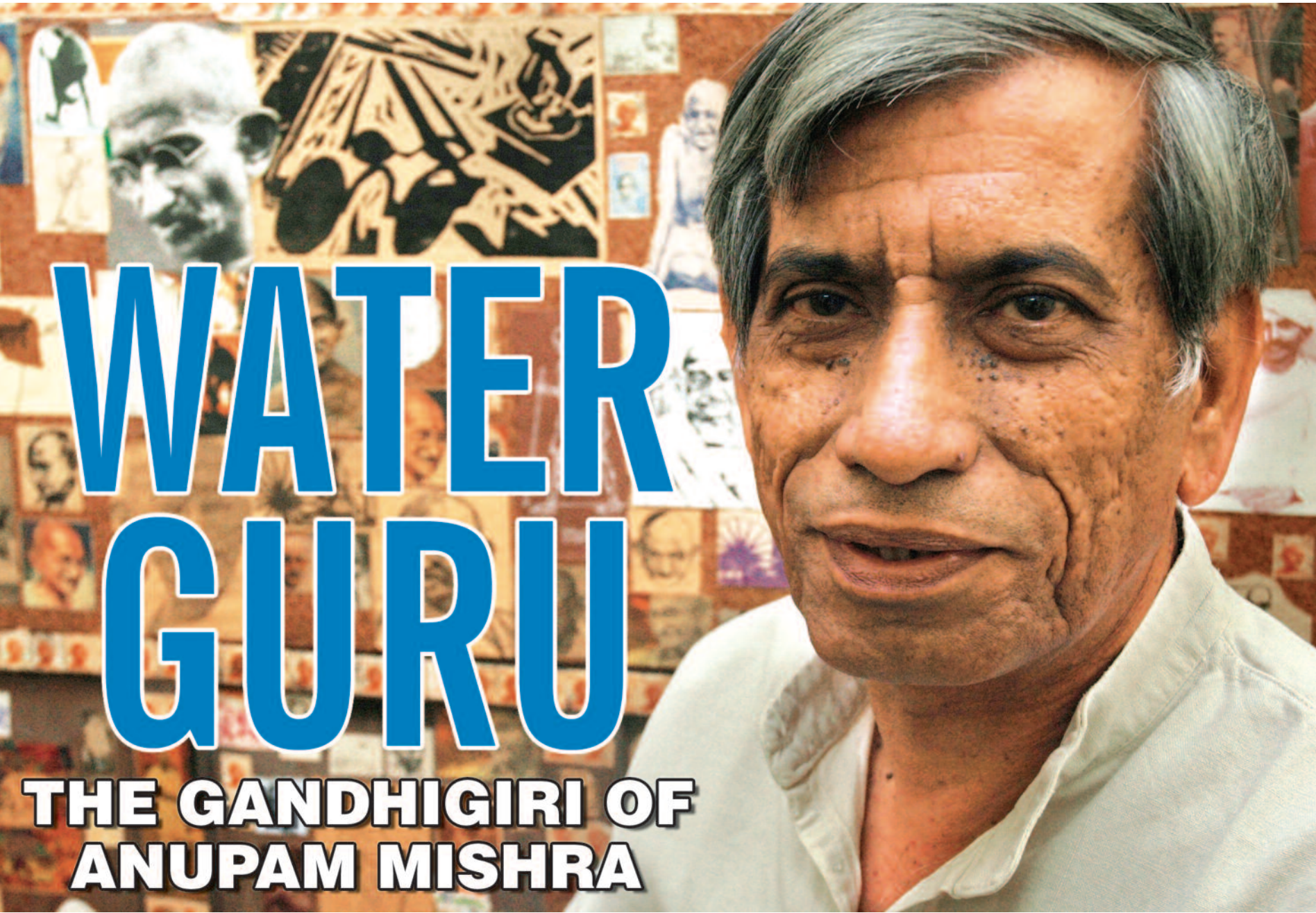


# Civil Society



## WATER GURU

**THE GANDHIGIRI OF ANUPAM MISHRA**



**PEPSI  
READY FOR  
TOUGH  
NORMS  
&  
CSE WILL  
TALK**

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**NGOs NEED GOVT HELP TO UPSCALE**

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**COUNTERING TERRORISM IN KASHMIR**

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GURGAON RESIDENTS LAUNCH A POLITICAL PARTY

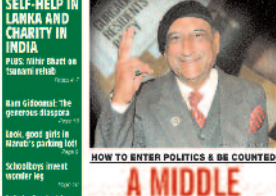


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DELHI RESIDENTS TEACH POWER FIRMS A LESSON, GET THE GOVT TO ACT, BUT WHERE DO THEY GO FROM HERE?

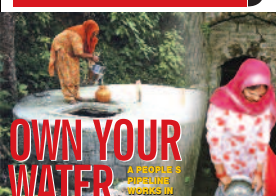


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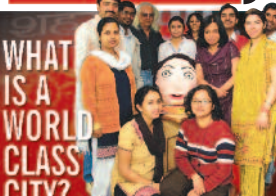


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RIAZ QUADRI ON THE CARTOON DOUBLEPEAK IN EUROPE




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TOP DOCTORS IN SLUM



## TOP DOCTORS IN SLUM

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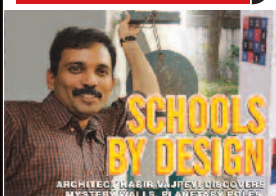


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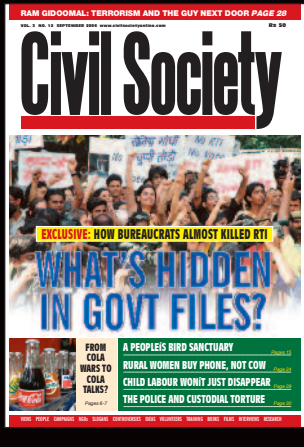
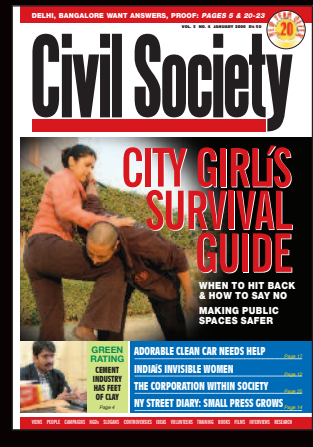
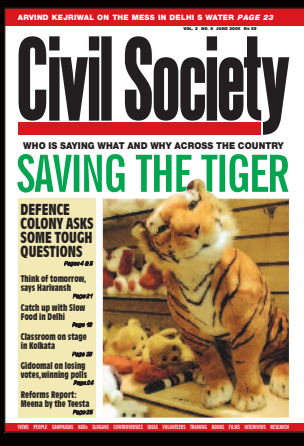
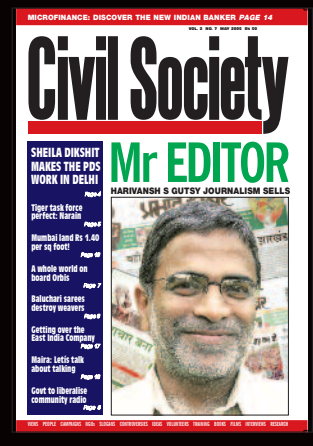
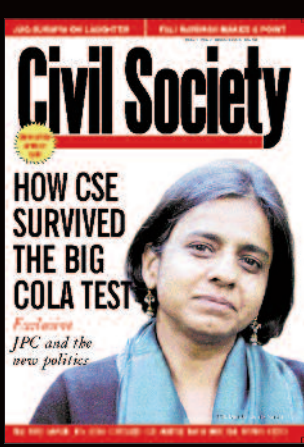
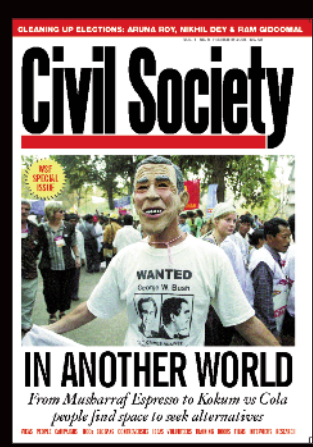
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## IN THE LIGHT

by SAMITA



## Pictures for change

I particularly liked the photo-feature on rural unemployment by Sohrab Hura. The bleak look on the faces of women squatting at a street corner in Ranchi tells it all. But my favourite is the shot of the pitted, scarred feet of a man holding an axe in the foreground. Behind it one can see bullocks cultivating a barren, harsh land, which can hardly yield enough for a single family. That is the story of 80 percent of rural India that depends on the monsoon. This is the India where the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) will hopefully have a positive impact provided activists continue to ensure that the Act is enforced. In a soft State there is no other option.

Priya Sen

## True dreams

"The best way to make your dreams come true is to wake up!" An appropriate motto for all those who want to develop their own lives and that of others. In fact, *Civil Society* is a magazine for all those who want to develop our nation. Your magazine reveals to us, very well, what is being done for our good and what needs to be done. Giving recognition to those involved in the selfless service of our nation is motivating further good work and a service in itself. Your *Civil Society* is an eye-opener!

Chandralekha Anand Sio

## Information right

Your cover story on the Right to Information Act being hijacked by bureaucrats was very correct. So far our colonial bureaucracy was vested with all authority. Now there is an Act that places some powers in the hands of the citizen and seeks to

## LETTERS



correct this imbalance. No wonder the bureaucracy opposes it. How dare citizens question them, is their attitude. They don't want to accept the simple truth, which the great reformer, Anna Hazare, has said many times: bureaucrats are the servants of the people and we have every right to know what they are up to.

Raja Menon

## Big daddy

I really liked Rina Mukherji's story, "RPF is big daddy to homeless children." The police have a bad image, especially among the poor. They are known to harass, humiliate and torture children on the streets. I hope many more police personnel follow the example of the RPF and adopt homeless children.

Suchitra Chatterjee

## Women power

I think the story, "Manipur women can end militancy," made a valid point. Women want peace and

development. But women in South Asia don't enjoy political and economic power. Women are relegated to the background. If our society had more women than men, if it was feminised, if it had female values, then issues of terrorism would perhaps be resolved by talking or through Gandhian methods.

Ajoy Sarmah

## Connect villages

The interview with Khalid Shams, managing director of Grameen Telecom, Bangladesh, by Vidya Viswanathan was very good. It was interesting to note how Bangladesh has connected most of its villages. We brag so much about the telecom revolution in India but the truth is we haven't achieved what Bangladesh has. Congrats Vidya!

Bharati Karlekar

## Boring stuff

I am a subscriber of your magazine and have been reading it since its inception. I'd like to say your magazine is getting more and more boring. The stories are more or less the same in each issue. One NGO after the other is written about. Mostly praise is heaped on them. Why don't you write spicier stuff? Why don't you criticise Indian society? It is full of humbugs, in my opinion. Do some exposés. Add some Page 3 stuff.

Major Girdhari

## Many problems

Our society is facing many problems. We don't know how to manage our towns and cities. Our farmers are committing suicide. Children beg on the streets. Every river in India is polluted. I could go on and on. Why don't you write more about solving these problems?

Anita Singh

“The same set of factors that make a private company accountable and transparent must operate for non-government organisations too. They must follow the laws of the land, fulfil contracts with funders and provide good services.”

Rajesh Tandon, director,  
Society for Participatory  
Research in Asia

“This is not a democratic process. We are not having a vote for the GPL licence. At the same time it is a global agreement about how to share software. It has to reflect what everybody in the world thinks.”

Eben Moglen,  
who heads the Software  
Freedom Law Centre

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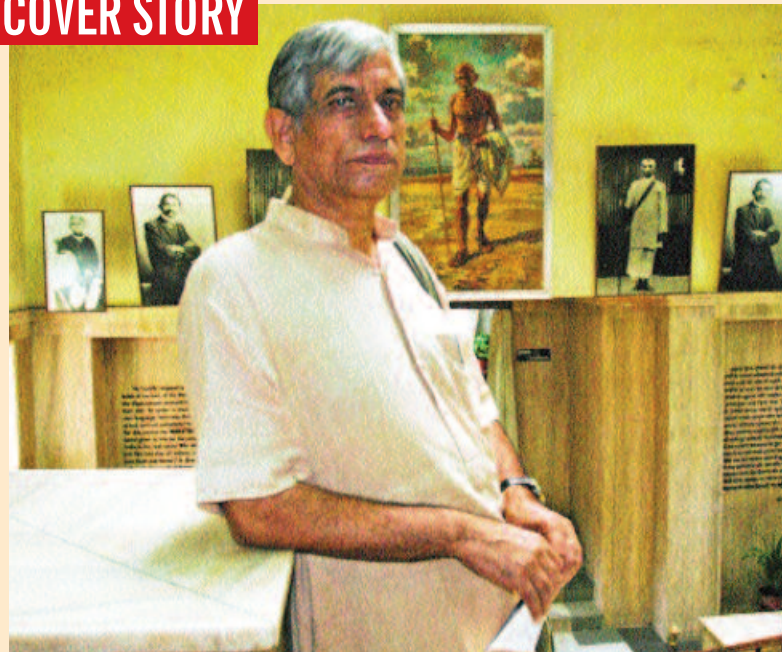
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## COVER STORY



## THE WATER GURU

Anupam Mishra, of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, is a lucid promoter of traditional water technologies. His work has awakened interest in sustainable use of water

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY LAKSHMAN ANAND

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## Civil Society

## Pepsi, CSE and standards

THE importance of standards for soft drinks is often not properly understood. It is not merely a question of getting miniscule amounts of pesticide residue out of the drinks, but of creating a culture of accountability that will apply across the booming processed foods market.

Public health is today in the hands of companies in the foods business. The huge sums spent on advertising and brand-building make it difficult to ascertain quality and the truth about what actually goes into products.

The way forward is through strict and independent regulation. It is only through this that the interests of the consumer can be protected. It is not enough for companies to say that their products are safe. They must open themselves up for scrutiny and be truly accountable.

It is a fact of life that Coca-Cola and PepsiCo are in the Indian market. The practical thing to do is to work with these companies to ensure that they deliver quality in their products and don't mess up the environment.

We feel that PepsiCo India's chairman, Rajeev Bakshi, wants to end the dispute over the quality of his soft drinks. He has said that he will accept a standard if it can be scientifically arrived at and validated. He has pledged himself in favour of regulation and consumer safety. Most importantly, he has said that he will talk to anyone, including his trenchant critic, the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

For its part CSE has always said that it is open to talks if standards are on the agenda. It has welcomed Pepsi's initiative and said that it is ready for a dialogue. This is the right way to go on a dispute that seems to be getting no one anywhere.

If there is one lesson to be learnt from CSE it is that you have to build expertise on issues that worry you. Emotional outbursts and old-style rabble rousing, though it may be prompted by genuine distress caused by irresponsible behaviour by industry, will no longer do.

Pepsi will today take CSE seriously because it speaks from a scientific position and does its homework. CSE has fought a long and hard battle with the cola companies. We in this magazine will take Pepsi seriously because Rajeev Bakshi is putting his cards on the table.

Anupam Mishra of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, who features on our cover this month, is perhaps the best example of an activist who has achieved through modest forays more than what others have sought to do in grand sweeps.

His work with water is unique. He has shown modern India and now the world how water should be managed and integrated with the lives of people. Without any fuss, he has promoted traditional water systems among ordinary folk. He has done so with simplicity and a sense of humour. His great strength is that he does not take himself too seriously. His approach is really Gandhigiri, the now popular expression for demystification of what Gandhi stood for. Long before the movie *Lage Raho Munnabhai*, Anupam was practising Gandhigiri in his own special way.

For those who want to understand Anupam and his work a little better we suggest they read his lucid books and hear him speak on water. It is a sheer delight. We would like to thank the inspired French photographer Antonie Alesieur for his wonderful pictures of traditional water structures.

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# CSE ready to talk norms with Pepsi

Civil Society News  
Gurgaon

THE Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has said that it is ready in "good faith" to discuss with PepsiCo finished product standards for soft drinks.

CSE was responding through its Associate Director, Chandra Bhushan, to the interview given by Rajeev Bakshi, chairman of PepsiCo India, to *Civil Society* that his company would accept the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norm of 0.5 ppb for pesticide residue in finished soft drinks provided there was a reliable and validated testing methodology.

Bhushan said he agreed with Bakshi that a validated testing protocol was needed so as to prevent foul play and misuse of the standard to serve partisan ends.

Bhushan also said that CSE had no problem with PepsiCo working with the Association of Analytical Chemists (AOAC) in the US.

"We respect AOAC for the work they have done so far," he said.

## ON TALKS

If Pepsi is serious about finished product standards, we can meet and talk in good faith. But the issue is not between CSE and Coke and Pepsi. It is about the nation and the right forum would be a national forum like the BIS committee where these issues can be deliberated in the presence of the scientific community.

Since the past three years, under the BIS committee in which CSE and Coke and Pepsi are represented, we have been open to discussion with them. But they have always refused to discuss these issues and have stalled the standard setting process. The result has been that we had to again go public for the second time.

Initially, we agreed to meet Coke in good faith but we found that they were not serious about setting standards and therefore we said there would be no use meeting us.

## FINISHED PRODUCT STANDARDS

We are happy that Pepsi has agreed to take the final product standards. We have been insisting for the last three years that the issue is final product standards and we need a principle for setting those standards. The BIS standard is based on sound scientific principles and it will move the debate on food safety in the country forward.

## ON VALIDATION

We agree with Pepsi that a standard requires a reliable testing methodology. Without a validation protocol there is the danger of misuse.

We don't mind Pepsi working with AOAC. Whatever the outcome of that work is they can present it before the relevant committee in BIS and they will be given due recognition.

We respect AOAC for the work it has done so far. We are sure BIS will be happy to take the methodology into account.

Validation is the integral part of every standard setting process. You need to validate the existing test methodology.

What you need are generic test methodologies which are internationally accepted and you have to validate those methodologies for each products. Basically validation is a confidence building process. We believe that BIS is the right agency to validate the test methodology because it is the government's premier standard setting body.

Developed countries test every product – including biscuits, chocolates, everything – for pesticide residues because the world has now realised that you don't have to only control pesticide use at the farm level but also at the fork level.

The principle for final product standards is the multi-constituent principle, which basically says that what you allow in the input should also be allowed in proportionate amount in the final product. That is how final products are regulated across the world. The only thing is that in the case of some sensitive product like baby food this multi-constituent principle has been neglected and stringent norms have been introduced based on acceptable daily intake (ADI).

Going through the multi-constituent route gave too high a pesticide standard for baby food and therefore regulators in Europe decided it would exceed the ADI limit. They felt the need to set a much more stringent standard, which is 10 ppb. But the assertion that the baby food standard can be applied to soft drinks is again scientifically wrong because babies have a limited diet. The only pesticides they consume are through mother's milk and baby food.

A normal person does not only drink soft drinks but eats hundreds of other foods. And if we all consume 10 ppb in each of the products it will exceed the ADI value for the normal consumer. It is according to body weight. For example the standard for monocrotophos is 0.6 ppb per kg body weight per day. A normal individual at 60 kg can have an intake 36 ppb.

# Pepsi ready for

*But set testing protocol, says Rajeev Bakshi*

Civil Society News  
Gurgaon

PEPSICO is willing to work with the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the government and any other interested party to establish finished product standards for its cold drinks provided there is an accurate, validated and agreed upon method to verify compliance.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has formulated a 0.5 ppb standard for pesticide residues in cold drinks. CSE wants this standard implemented.

Rajeev Bakshi, the chairman of PepsiCo in India, told *Civil Society* in an interview that the company is open to stricter regulation in the interests of consumer safety. The company wants to talk to CSE in this regard. But, Bakshi insisted, at present there is no scientific way of testing the finished soft drinks for pesticides at the 0.5 ppb level.

Bakshi said that PepsiCo is working with the Association of Official Analytical Chemists (AOAC) in the US to arrive at a finished beverage analytical method. This is needed since cold drinks are complex and nowhere in the world are they tested for final product standards.

It remains to be seen if AOAC provides a test methodology for 0.5 ppb or something higher.

Till a final product standard is reached, Bakshi said his soft drinks will remain within the 0.5ppb norm in separate tests on its water, sugar and concentrate.

**“As per law we are cleaning up our water in each and every plant. If I don't clean my water there is no way I can run my business.”**

"I'm confident that if you test my water separately and if you test my sugar separately and if you test my concentrate separately, forget everything else, if you aggregate that today I can give a challenge and a test result that I'm below 0.5 ppb," Bakshi said.

The problem is only with testing the final product for pesticides at the 0.5 ppb level. A letter from AOAC says that it "does not have an Official Method of Analysis that will detect pesticide residues in soft drink matrices" at 0.5ppb. It is working on two methods that will have to undergo validation in



# tough finished cola standard

Photographs by LAKSHMAN ANAND

“Our stand is only one. We are not against finished product standards. I'm saying you want to put any standard on me, put it.”



Rajeev Bakshi

eight laboratories.

A test methodology and validation for testing the final product are important, Bakshi said, so as not to expose the company to prosecution on the basis of wrong results from tests.

"I don't want to be hanged by every Tom, Dick and Harry," said Bakshi. "The biggest labs in the world have not been able to do accurate, validated testing at this level. Some guy somewhere in the country does testing and presents it before a magistrate and my factory manager goes to jail."

The acceptance of final product standards is a big step forward in the dispute over the quality of soft drinks sold in India. Thus far Coca-Cola and Pepsi have been opposing such a standard. Coca-Cola's talks with CSE failed on this particular issue.

"Our stand is only one. We are not against finished product standards. They are saying you accept the standard and the protocol will come later. I'm saying no because the testing protocol takes about three years to develop and validate. I'm exposed to prosecution if it goes into law," said Bakshi.

"As far as I'm concerned is that a cop out? No it is not a cop out. I'm saying you want to put any standard on me put it."

He insisted that Pepsi currently meets every stipulation of the government including the 0.5 ppb for pesticide residue in water. Anyone was free to check out Pepsi's plants and test its water.

But significantly Bakshi also declared: "We recognise that our results are very different from the Centre for Science and Environment. While we believe in the science of our approach we would welcome the opportunity to meet with CSE and any other interested party to discuss details of our methods and to gain a clearer understanding of theirs, to decide on a clear way forward in the interests of developing finished product standards for consumer safety."

Bakshi is an affable man, but in the current circumstances evidently harried and even snappy if pushed. The day we met at his offices in Gurgaon, employees had turned out in sweat shirts that proclaimed a single global standard for Pepsi. The mood was evangelical. The wear it, shout it kind of thing.

These are clearly difficult days for the brand after the report by CSE that unacceptable levels of pesticide have been found in its soft drinks. This was CSE's second report in three years.

There is also Indra Nooyi, the new Indian CEO of PepsiCo worldwide, on her

way to India in October. Nooyi's hallmark has been to take PepsiCo in the direction of foods and health drinks. Can a company with these aspirations afford to carry the taint of pesticides in its soft drinks in a market as significant as India? Does the cold drinks regulation debate have international ramifications? Colas and fast foods are facing growing rejection in developed markets. Arnold Schwarzenegger's ban on colas in schools in California is now famous.

Bakshi has himself been featured in TV commercials as the head of PepsiCo in India personally taking a young consumer on a tour of a Pepsi plant and assuring him that the drink is absolutely safe. "Pepsi is safe for your children and mine," he declares into the camera.

But such proclamations are evidently not enough. There is little point in PepsiCo declaring Pepsi safe. So, what Bakshi now seems to want is dialogue and public scrutiny.

Bakshi is responsive but combative with us. He questions *Civil Society's* report in its September issue that water used in his cold drinks is not properly treated. Importantly, he also strongly denies that he has been publicly critical of CSE. Pepsi is open to discussion, he insists.

"As per law we are cleaning up our water in each and every plant. So water is getting cleaned up. If I don't clean my water there is no way I can run my business."

Asked if he was talking of all his plants for soft drinks and bottled water, he replied: "Yes. The water norms have been met. We can also give you results on our treated water and it is hundred per cent secure."

*Civil Society:* Who were the tests conducted by? By you? By the government?

*Bakshi:* Independent labs.

*Civil Society:* But these would be labs you would have gone to and paid to do the tests?

*Bakshi:* See, that is not the point. Even if you take that with a pinch of salt and say that could be wrong, that's your judgment. But if its law as per PFA that my input treated water has to conform to EU water standards there is no way that as a multinational you can expose your factory managers to a non-bailable offence or imprisonment without a trial if your sample fails. You can't run a factory, simple, there will be no factory manager for you. Why should a factory manager become a nominee because it is a non-bailable offence under PFA."

# NGOs need govt help to upscale

**Rakesh Agrawal**  
New Delhi

THE government wants to work with NGOs. So after years of dawdling and acrimony, a draft policy for the voluntary sector is on the cards. A fairly large section of NGOs say it's a good thing. The voluntary sector has grown, like the IT sector, without government patronage. And it's been facing all the problems of an informal sector economy.

That chapter should come to a close. The new policy defines the role of NGOs and the frameworks and regulations under which they will function. It gives them separate registration status. Every year, a few NGOs are black-listed for corruption. The new policy calls for self-regulation (see *Civil Society* August 2006).

But some NGOs disagree with the idea of working with the government. Why should we become contractors, they ask. Others accuse the government of fobbing off its moral responsibility to provide health, education, and so on to them.

The Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI), an association of 2,000 voluntary organisations across India, played a key role in drafting the new policy. At a VANI convention, held in New Delhi, collaboration and partnership with the government was debated.

Apart from VANI's 400 delegates, senior government officials attended, probably an indication of the importance the government attaches to a relationship with the sector.

Syeda Hameed, member, Planning Commission, said the new policy would bridge the gap between NGOs and government. She wanted NGOs to be 'transparent, efficient and responsive'. She said NGOs are the only agency of development in areas hit by insurgency.

The government is keen that NGOs raise their own resources. "In the Netherlands, voluntary organisations generate net assets worth four per cent of GDP and in the US, it's about 2.3 per cent. Here too they should target at least one per cent of GDP," said Montek Singh Ahluwalia, deputy chairman, Planning Commission.

The government also wants voluntary organisations to undertake projects with elected representatives in villages. But a lot of these Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are corrupt, caste-driven and gender insensitive.

Besides, "PRIs get only five per cent of the government budget," said eminent Gandhian LC Jain who supported decentralisation of power to PRIs and clipping the wings of the bureaucracy.

At the same time delegates agreed that NGOs are 'cost-effective' and work more sincerely than government officials. NGOs have come up with excellent small models in health, education, micro-finance and environment, but they can't seem to expand these to more people.

"Their work cannot be replicated," said Hari Mohan Mathur of the Council for Social Development. "The new policy will improve their work culture and bring them closer to the government."

Since India is urbanising rapidly, the emphasis on rural areas was questioned. Ramesh Ramanathan, Campaign Coordinator, Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, stressed the importance of working in cities "where people are becoming consumers not citizens."

Accountability of NGOs was also discussed and participants supported self-regulation.

How this could be brought about was a matter of conjecture. Another demand of the sector was that the Foreign Contribution Regulatory Act (FCRA), an irritating piece of red tape, be changed.

*Civil Society* spoke to **Rajesh Tandon**, chairperson of VANI and director of the



**Rajesh Tandon**

Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), about the partnership between the government and the voluntary sector. Tandon is an important architect of the new policy.

## ***Should there be a partnership between the government and the voluntary sector?***

A partnership with the government is not new. This partnership has been tried out in various fields, but there has been no institutional mechanism and framework so far. Until now, it all depended on the good wishes of the dealing officer. Our limited purpose is to provide an institutional link.

## ***Will NGOs become contractors for the government after the policy comes into force?***

The policy does not define the collaboration between us and the government. If some NGO

wishes to become a contractor, it jolly well can. Even without the policy many NGOs are acting as cheap contractors.

## ***Is the government abdicating its responsibility for social development to the NGOs?***

The role of the policy is to provide a guideline. In following the guideline voluntary organisations may keep acting for social development. But their role will remain limited, as they cannot match the size and reach of the government. At best, they can be role models. Their reach and resources are chicken feed in comparison to the government's.

## ***What about the government's responsibility to provide health and education?***

People go to schools and health facilities run by the private sector since the public sector is in a big mess and has largely become corrupt and inefficient in these two crucial fields. The job of NGOs is to put pressure on them to become accountable, but they cannot take over the entire health services.

## ***How can Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and NGOs work together?***

PRIs are the elected representatives of the people. Until now NGOs are not used to working with elected representatives. Since panchayats are a microcosm of society, NGOs should learn to work with them. They can challenge them and pressure them, but they cannot ignore them.

## ***How can NGOs raise their own resources?***

The government will remain a major source of funding for them. Not all NGOs can generate funds. But more contribution from society is needed and a favourable tax regime, greater education of the masses with awareness building and a positive role by the media can help us generate funds.

## ***Do you think the government will amend the FCRA?***

While it's true that the FCRA is an irritant in its current form, the security atmosphere of the country is a constraint. After any terrorist incident happens it has been found that money to terrorists was routed through charity, so I don't think that the FCRA will be amended now.

## ***How can NGOs be accountable and transparent?***

The same set of factors that make a private company accountable and transparent operate for NGOs too. They must follow the law of the land, fulfil contracts with funders and provide good services. For accountability, they should provide information about their work to people who demand it.

**The policy does not define collaboration between us and the government. If some NGO wishes to become a contractor, it jolly well can.**



# Are Green Hands the answer in Tamil Nadu?

**Susheela Nair**  
Chennai

ON October 15, a green revolution will sweep across Tamil Nadu. Around 200,000 volunteers of the Isha Foundation will go on a marathon tree planting spree, planting 700,000 saplings in a single day.

The campaign, called Project Green Hands, expects to create a new Guinness World Record. The saplings are being planted in 1,000 villages in seven districts and 65 towns of Tamil Nadu.

The Action for Rural Rejuvenation (ARR), headed by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev of the Isha Foundation, a Kovai based organisation, has launched Project Green Hands. Volunteers come from nine districts of the state: Coimbatore, Chennai, Cuddalore, Erode, Salem, Tiruchi, Vellore, V. Palayam and Pudukottai.

"In the last 10 years, ecological degeneration in Tamil Nadu has been large and rapid," says Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev explaining the rationale behind the project. "Rivers that were perennial 10 years ago have become dry. Water used to be available at 250 to 300 feet near Coimbatore city but today all the bore wells are 1,000 feet and below. Palm trees are getting parched. I think in Tamil Nadu, there is a saying, if the palm trees go dry, you're heading for disaster."

The state's forest cover has shrunk from 30 per cent to around 17 per cent in the past four

decades. This is far below the national average of 23 per cent. Increasing salinity and natural calamities like cyclones and the tsunami ravage the dying remains of Tamil Nadu's forests. Besides, green cover is shrinking as more land is acquired for people's homes.

The Isha Foundation wants to increase forest cover to 30 per cent within the next 15 years. Sadhguru believes reforestation will rejuvenate rural India where nearly three-fourths of the country's one billion population lives. Project Green Hands, therefore, goes beyond planting trees. It hopes to revive lost economic resources, promote the idea of living in harmony with nature, inculcate a culture of growing trees and mitigate environmental hazards. Villagers and school children will carry out seed collection, nursery development and plantation.

A lot of preparation has gone into the mega tree-planting event.

To inform people about Green Hands, door-to-door campaigns, street plays, *padayatras* (walks) by celebrities, were carried out in villages. Local people were enrolled because, finally, they will have to nurture seedlings into trees. Since the last six months, volunteers have travelled to remote hamlets in every nook and corner of Tamil Nadu, conducting awareness programmes and bringing families and institutions together to raise saplings for the marathon planting. These are being grown at easy to get to locations in 250 villages so that plants don't suffer during transit.

The project will be carried out in phases. First, volunteers will be registered, then pits dug, and finally, saplings planted.

Production of seedlings has been completed. Nearly 10,000 people from over 200 villages took part. Project Green Hands propagates diverse species including 15 native varieties that are endemic and drought resistant. Planting will be done on protected private lands, residential areas, by the roadside, on common lands and wastelands.

Mammoth efforts have gone into reviving herbal home remedies. ARR created medicinal herbal gardens on common lands, small plots donated by villagers and in people's homes, on request. Till date, 153 herbal gardens have been planted in 69 villages. Villagers are informed about how they can include herbs in their daily diet.

Project Green Hands was first launched by ARR in September 2005 in the tsunami affected coastal villages of Cuddalore. In less than six months the local landscape got transformed. In Nagapattinam district, over 80,000 trees were planted in 24 hours making it a Guinness World Record. Altogether, in its first phase, the project was implemented in 172 villages by planting 60,698 seedlings in Tamil Nadu. Under the scheme, 20,000 fruit bearing tree sapling were distributed. The slogan for the campaign, 'a tree for every being', evoked enormous interest. Growing fruit trees increased the intake of fruit into the daily diet of coastal communities, which till then only ate fish.

Project Green Hands does tree planting in a scientific way. Due note is taken of local conditions and ideal growth parameters of trees. ARR plans to revive traditional sacred groves by encouraging people to plant trees on at least five percent of their agricultural land. It also bestows awards to rural centres that expand tree-planting.

Sadhguru wants to make tree plantation a regular social and cultural celebration that can be replicated in India and the world. If each person plants one tree and takes care of it, within five years Green Hands can make the planet a cool shade of green.

## Suspensions, doubts over forest Bill

**Civil Society News**  
New Delhi

JUST four months ago the mood was upbeat among activist groups fighting for the rights of forest people and tribals. A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) had listened sympathetically to their point of view and agreed to incorporate several important changes in the original Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill.

It was decided, for instance, that the Bill would recognise the rights of other forest dwellers and not tribals alone. Also, the cut-off date had been fixed at December 13, 2005, the ceiling on land ownership removed and the gram sabha given due authority. The Left had resolutely backed these changes and the Congress had said yes.

After that there was silence. Parliament closed without further mention of the Bill.

People's groups that have waited patiently insist on the Bill being passed in Parliament with the changes the JPC accepted. They are getting their act together to bring the Bill back on the government's agenda.

The Lok Sangharsh Morcha has organised a cycle rally from Gujarat to Maharashtra to coincide with the birth centenary of Shaheed Bhagat Singh. The rally starts on September 28 in Gujarat and winds its way to Maharashtra from October 25. About 200 youth and 350 villages are taking part. Apart from the forest rights bill, the Morcha is campaigning for the Right to Education Bill and removal of corruption from the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

The National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) are holding their second national convention in Ranchi from October 31 to November 3. The key theme is 'to resist commodification of forests and establish community forest governance'. Workshops are being held on community control over natural resources, specifically, the rights of youth, International Financial Institutions,

commodification and privatisation of forests and peoples' resistance as well as environmental politics and livelihood.

Why is the forest rights Bill in cold storage? Several rumours are doing the rounds. Some activists say 'vested interests' are scuttling the Bill. Is it the conservationist tiger lobby? No, say others, the tiger conservationists don't have credibility. There is no conflict either between proponents of the Bill and the Tiger Task Force.

Another version is that the government is hesitant to expand the ambit of the Bill to include forest people who are not tribals. Politicians see tribal rights to forests as an election issue.

The BJP government drafted the original forest rights bill, which gave rights to tribals, as an election ploy and it won in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The Congress took careful note and decided to emulate.

But sources question whether this strategy is really correct. People living in and around forests without rights include Dalits, Muslims, and other non-tribals. Their population is considerably larger than of tribals. In a state like Uttarakhand, those without forest rights are upper caste. Excluding forest people from the Bill may create a 'Mandal-like situation' warned one source. It will be opposed by people's groups.

But activists are also worried about the World Bank's espousal of community rights to forests. They believe this is a ploy to allow entry of international commercial players into forestry. Communities may barter away their interests to companies. They will not know how to negotiate. Therefore the role of the forest department is critical but the question is how can the disreputable forest department truly work in the best interests of the people.

For cycle rally phone: Pratibha Shinde-09423191556

For NFFPFW Convention phone: Sanjay Basu Mullick - 0651 2532067 & 09431103041,

Email: nffpfwconf06@gmail.com

# Reviving Meerut's water history

**Rakesh Agrawal**  
Meerut

**W**ATER is a valuable treasure that must be conserved. This is the mantra of the Janhit Foundation, a voluntary organisation in Meerut, that has been working to revive dilapidated, dying water sources since 1988.

While in Meerut city urban dwellers are now opting for rooftop rainwater harvesting structures, villagers in the district have revived ten big ponds in ten villages. Janhit has a Rain Centre that provides technical expertise.

Janhit realised it was important to revive dying water bodies rather than create new ones in 2003,

abandoned and turned into dustbins and sewers."

Janhit decided to take care of these structures. Volunteers from the Rain Centre (RC) went to villages and motivated people to revive defunct water bodies. Consequently, a *talaab bachao* (save ponds) programme was launched. Since the focus was on community participation, two groups, one of men and the other of women, (*Jal Bhais* and *Jal Behans*) were established, in which people offered *Shramdaan* (voluntary labour). They revived and recharged ponds in the district.

People are now reaping the benefit of their work. "The pond is full of water and we have plenty of fish," says Asha Rani, a Dalit woman from Alamgirpur village. Rani encouraged many women

says Rakesh Kumar, coordinator of Kishoripura's water committee.

Janhit decided to utilise people's religious beliefs to revive the Gandhari pond, said to date back to the Mahabharata era. Located about 18 km from Meerut city in Parikshit Garh village, the pond has been named after Duryodhana's mother. It is said that sacred waters from many water sources were put into this pond.

"It is good strategy to unite people for a worthy cause," says Rana. "Our success can be measured by the fact that hundreds of PAC (provincial armed constabulary) men and many government officials took part in the *Shramdaan* along with ordinary people."

More than 2,000 people who had gathered at the *paani panchayat* (water meeting) to celebrate the revival of the Gandhari pond were told to restore natural water resources in their villages.

Senior government officials now want to know more about local water resources. "The Planning Commission has recommended a water census be carried out in the entire country," says Rana.

If that happens, a realistic picture of existing and dying water bodies will come to light. The census will be a useful tool for policymakers who wish to provide a sustainable answer to the existing water crisis in the country.

Realising that water conservation cannot be only a rural ideal, the Rain Centre decided to involve urban people in the campaign. They promoted the slogan: 'Catch Water Where it Falls.'

Located in the upmarket part of Meerut city, the Rain Centre has an attractive exhibition hall, a well-managed library and models of rooftop rainwater harvesting systems. The Rain Centre is the second such centre in India. The first one is in Chennai.

"We provide detailed technical guidance to individuals and institutions on how to implement rainwater harvesting, free of cost," says Rana. People pay for equipment and construction cost.

Several individuals, institutions, factories and offices in Meerut and neighbouring Muzaffarnagar district have opted for rainwater harvesting.

"The Muzaffarnagar chapter of the Indian Industries Association advocated this to us. We decided to implement rain water harvesting structures last year and since then our water crisis has eased," says Rajesh Garg, CEO, Silverton Paper Mill, Muzaffarnagar.

About 25 households in Meerut city have also adopted rainwater harvesting and are quite happy. "Earlier, we were at the mercy of *sarkari pani* (government water supply). Now, we rely on nature which is more dependable," says Anil Yadav of Mayur Vihar, a residential colony in Meerut city.

The Women's Police Station in Meerut city also has an elaborate rainwater harvesting structure that the Rain Centre helped them to construct, last year.



Sunita Narain, director, CSE, digging a pond



Villagers doing voluntary labour .

**While in Meerut city urban dwellers are opting for rooftop rainwater harvesting structures, villagers in the district have revived ten big ponds in ten villages. Janhit has a Rain Centre that provides all technical expertise.**



Anil Rana (right) explaining water harvesting at Rain Centre

after it undertook a census of water bodies in the district, the first of its kind in the country.

The census, called *Paani Ghano Anmol* (water is very valuable), was carried out in all 663 villages. First, Janhit checked the number of water bodies by carrying out a detailed study of *farads* (land revenue records). Then, a team of its workers went to every village to inspect the condition of existing water bodies themselves.

"The census was an eye-opener for us," says Anil Rana, director of the foundation. "It depicted a horrible picture. According to revenue records there should be 3,062 ponds in Meerut district. But there are only 1,944. There should be 2,086 wells but only a quarter, exist. To make matters worse, 715 ponds have dried up. Nearly 1,541 wells have been

to join the programme, a daring act in this male chauvinistic society. The water committee, the executive platform of *Jal Bhais* and *Jal Behans*, also supported her. "She really helped to revive this one hectare pond," says Mahendra Singh, coordinator, water committee, Alamgirpur village.

A similar situation exists in two neighbouring villages – Kalyanpur and Kishoripura. Here too people revived big ponds. "We used to gather at dawn and work till sunset. The Rain Centre provided us technical know-how and machines for de-silting," says Om Vir Singh, coordinator of Kalyanpur's water committee.

"People took out huge amounts of muck from the pond by sheer hard work. Thanks to that, we now have a treasure our ancestors left for us, intact,"

LAKSHMAN ANAND



Sister Youna

**Amit Sengupta**  
New Delhi

**S**ISTER Youna can be deceptively simple and straight, so don't get disillusioned if you discover a tough, hard-headed woman, who knows her mind. She and her comrades of the Domestic Workers Forum – Sarita, Maksina Ekka, and Jyoti Ekka – all Adivasis from Jharkhand, are in the midst of a protracted struggle against sex-trafficking, bonded labour and exploitation of domestic workers in big cities.

For two decades Sister Youna worked in Jharkhand. She has now relocated to New Delhi because this city has become one of the biggest transit points for tribal girls who are smuggled by agents from the poor interiors of Jharkhand to unknown homes, farm houses, hotels and so on.

Trafficking of girls has spread to Haryana and Punjab, with its abysmal sex ratio and rampant female foeticide. Even girls from Assam are being transported and sold into sex and domestic slavery.

"Girls are raped. We rescue them. We tell them to come out. We pursue the issue, if we come to know. We go to the police, we chase the case and we get the rapist into prison," she says. "Domestic workers are fooled into a bad job by agents who dupe them or tell lies to their parents. They don't get salaries. They work almost 24 hours. They have no freedom, no rights, no social security. Often they are sexually exploited and it becomes difficult to find out what's going on behind those walls. They become invisible slaves."

That's why the helpline of the Domestic Worker's Forum often gets a signal: Help! And then these sisters of a Christian organisation called Chetnalayar, move, and they move relentlessly. They are unafraid. "We caught four rapists, three in Delhi and one in Jaipur. We sent them to jail," they say.

# Harried maids get a guardian

The forum is creating awareness in villages, talking to parents, getting the girls to register themselves asking them to go for a proper employment contract, including wages, salaries, holidays, work hours, the nature and quantity of work, economic and social rights. "For instance, why should they do massage. That's not part of domestic chores. Earlier it was very difficult. Now, despite the walls, the girls go to a phone booth and give us a call. And we try to do our best," says Sister Youna.

But it's not easy. "Thousands of young girls, some just 10 or 12-years-old, are hoodwinked by pimps, posing for placement agencies, and then lured into a different kind of bondage across Delhi and beyond," says Sister Philomena. "We have identified more than 250 placement agencies in Delhi, some of them out rightly dubious. On September 12, we saw six young girls in such an agency in Punjabi Bagh, Delhi. They were not allowed to speak to us, and we were surrounded all the time we tried to make contact."

Sister Youna argues that the Delhi government has to take stronger initiatives to help these girls, since there is no legislation to protect their fundamental, constitutional rights.

The Domestic Worker's Forum has petitioned the Chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit, and sought the following: There should be clear working hours, defined working conditions and norms and no physical, mental or sexual abuse of domestic workers.

They should have comfortable and dignified shelter with Sundays off, health facilities and annual leave for one month with salary.

"She has not responded as yet," says Sister Youna, "but this is an issue from which the government just can't run away."

A Domestic Workers' Bill, protecting their constitutional working rights, has to become a reality for thousands of exploited and invisible workers living in subhuman conditions at low wages, confined within the walls of homes in alien towns and cities.

Sister Youna is concerned with the Supreme Court's ruling that child labour will not be allowed after October 1. "We welcome the order. We are also fighting against child labour. But then the court and the government should also realise what will happen to children who are the sole earners in their families. For instance, a brother who has to take care of his little sisters since both parents are dead. Or an eldest sister who does not have a father or just has an ailing mother. The government must ensure that they get shelter, education, physical protection and basic survival. Can you leave all these girls and boys to the sharks on the streets? Where will they go now?"

That is, solutions to this huge human paradox have to be found. Little girls and boys trapped in a labour rat trap, without rights or dignity or future, bereft of education, health or social facilities, often sexually degraded and raped, often unknown and silent.

Sister Youna and her friends are fighting against heavy odds but they have already helped hundreds escape the black hole of oppression.

"There is no point in cribbing. Just carry on the struggle. There is light at the end of the tunnel," says Sister Youna and laughs. Her Adivasi friends laugh along.

Easy, joyous laughter that penetrates the walls of domestic prisons in our impersonal metros.

But that's Sister Youna. Simple and straight. With an easy laugh. And tough.

Contact: Domestic Workers Forum, 9-10, Chetnalaya, Second Floor, Bhal Vir Singh Marg, New Delhi. Phone: 9312473428/ 55254388

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# Is Barmer becoming Assam?

**Purba Kalita**  
Jodhpur

**T**HIS year's monsoon has been most unusual. While dry desert regions of Rajasthan got inundated with rain, wet Assam in the northeast witnessed drought. Villagers in Barmer, Rajasthan, used to a scarcity of water, lost their homes, cattle and crops to floods. The sight of swollen rivers frightened them. Lakes sprang up overnight. This kind of downpour took place nearly a century ago, it is believed.

Will the ecology of the desert change? To find out the impact of this sudden spurt of water, *Civil Society* spoke to **Dr Ranjana Arya**, scientist and head of non-wood forest products division, Arid Forest Research Institute (AFRI) in Jodhpur.

## **What is the reason for flash floods in drought-prone Rajasthan?**

Rajasthan is divided into two parts, arid and semi-arid regions. The arid regions, that include Barmer and Jaisalmer, normally receive an annual average precipitation of 100-400mm, but this time all of it happened in one day. The soil is not meant to take so much rainfall. In most places, soil is calcareous, that is, it contains calcium carbonate. In other places, the soil has gypsum or calcium sulphate which makes it impervious, so the water cannot seep easily. This causes floods.

Although semi-arid districts including Udaipur, Banswara and Rajsamand were also affected, these places usually receive an annual average rainfall between 500 to 1,200 mm.

## **Why was Barmer the worst affected?**

Jaisalmer usually receives the least annual rainfall of around 100 mm. Parts of Barmer get up to 150 mm of rainfall. But Barmer happens to be on a natural slope. When Jaisalmer got flooded, water from there started flowing into Barmer.

## **Perhaps water-harvesting structures could take care of such downpours?**

Water harvesting is very much present here but structures like anicuts, *nadis* or pillage ponds,



**Dr Ranjana Arya**

*tankas* and *khadins* are not equipped to handle such a surge. It's also difficult to predict such calamities and remain prepared. However, these structures can be improved by taking into account what happened this year. For instance, they can be widened to make allowance for more water to flow in.

## **What are the ecological implications of this freak phenomenon?**

The soil will change. Water has come from all over, bringing along upper layers of soil. There will be moisture regime in the soil. Despite impervious soil conditions, there will be percolation. While floods have caused havoc in the lives of locals, ecologically speaking, it will do good to the land and environment. If we are able to utilise these conditions for afforestation and raising of crops, everyone will benefit in the long term. Today, not much land is available. We have to look to the desert for plantation.

*It is believed millions of years ago Rajasthan was not a desert. Ecological changes made it arid. If the weather and ecology get altered, will the desert change too?*

Yes, it is believed the state was not so much a desert and a return to that condition may be possible.

## **How many years of benefit will we see from this year's downpour?**

People will benefit up to five years. The water should be channelised for proper use. Plants and trees should come up wherever the soil is conducive for growth.

## **Can the crop pattern be altered?**

Normally people here grow *bajra* and *ragi* but scientists feel mustard and Bengal gram will do well under the new soil conditions. Farmers can also try growing wheat, which requires more moisture, for the next two or three years.

## **Is AFRI planning to grow trees in the region?**

Yes, we are. AFRI director, Dr R L Srivastava, has visited the rain-affected region. We are planning to study the ecological changes that may occur due to the presence of new vegetation after the rain. We have to find out whether the vegetation pattern will bring about permanent or temporary changes in the environment.

## **How about trees?**

Yes, we should carry out plantation activities. Indigenous plants take time to grow but when they do, they require less water.

I would recommend *desi babool* (*Acacia nilotica*), *khejri* tree (*Prosopis cineraria*), *rohida* or Marwar teak (*Tecomella undulata*), *ber* (*Zizyphus mauritiana* Lamk), *Aradu* (*Ailanthus excelsa*) and neem tree (*azadirachta*

*indica*). Barmer is the natural zone for Marwar teak, but today the number of such trees is less. The reason is that this tree grows slowly and cannot match the rate at which it is felled.

**People will benefit till five years. The water should be used to plant trees.**

## PRIMER ON EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT

### Employment Guarantee Act

A Primer

Nikhil Dey  
Jean Dreze  
Reetika Khara

The National Book Trust has published a primer on the Employment Guarantee Act by Prof. Jean Dreze, Nikhil Dey of the Mazdoor Kissan Shakti Sangathan and activist Reetika Khara. The primer is available in English, Hindi, Hindi for neo-literates and Assamese. It is being translated in all other Indian languages.

The primer is in a question-answer format. It informs an unemployed person how to take advantage of the Act. It educates concerned citizens on how the Act can be implemented effectively. The English primer costs Rs 25. The Hindi one is priced at Rs 12. For neo-literates, prices are Rs 19 for the deluxe edition and Rs 10 for the normal edition.

To order copies please contact:  
**Manager (Sales & Marketing),  
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## Right to Information Workshop

October 9 and 10, Dehradun

The People's Science Institute (PSI), Dehradun, is holding a state-level workshop on October 9 and 10 on the Right to Information (RTI) Act. Aruna Roy, Arvind Kejriwal (or a representative from Parivartan), Sailesh Gandhi, Dunu Roy and Chandi Prasad Bhatt will participate in the workshop.

PSI has noted that not many people in Uttarakhand are using the RTI. There is need for a campaign to enable residents to use the Act to get information from the government on public interest issues.

The workshop has been organised with the following objectives:

- To educate potential users of the RTI Act about the rules and procedures for effective implementation.
- To disseminate knowledge on practical experience of several important RTI activists
- To formulate a strategy for effective use of the RTI Act in Uttarakhand

Participation at the workshop will be strictly by invitation.

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Dehradun-248006, Phone: (0135) 2773849, 2763649E  
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# Women constables protect women

**Vidya Viswanathan**  
New Delhi

THE Delhi Police held their first annual review of Parivartan, a community policing effort to prevent violence against women, at the India International Centre on August 29. The meeting was attended by school children, college students, residents' welfare associations, academics and voluntary organisations.

The Police Commissioner, Dr KK Paul, and his colleagues, presented the results of Parivartan, answered questions and took suggestions from the audience.

Dr Paul said the number of rape cases registered in New Delhi had declined this year. Delhi police figures show that 419 rape cases were registered till August 31 this year as against 492 last year.

The Police Commissioner pointed out that rapid rural to urban migration, urbanisation, income disparity and the dwindling sex ratio are increasing violence against women in Delhi. "We have to go to its roots and change attitudes, habits as well as the environment," he said.

Paul pointed out that recent immigrants are not wholly absorbed into the city. Many live in places where civic amenities are poor and living conditions inhuman. These conditions increase criminal activity. "In slum clusters there is no privacy and

hence no moral barriers," he said.

The Delhi Police found that a lot of complaints of violence against women were received at police stations in four areas – Sultanpuri, Dabri, Uttam Nagar and Nand Nagari. Their analysis showed that rape by strangers declined from 18 per cent in 1998 to 2 per cent. In more than 53 per cent of the 698 cases registered last year, the assault was by a

## A woman constable talked about how a postmaster wanted a bribe of Rs 200 to give a widow her pension.

neighbour. In 12.46 per cent of cases it was either by a family member or friend.

So the police decided to launch Parivartan in these four areas. The police officer in charge of the campaign is Sagar Preet Hooda, the deputy commissioner of police of Delhi's northwest district. Hooda, who was briefly a sociology professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, said: "We decided to deliver the services of the police at the doorstep to women." He then presented an audio-visual where women police constables related their stories.

A woman constable talked about how a postmaster wanted a bribe of Rs 200 to give a widow her pension. The woman constable intervened. Another female constable said a woman who was being harassed by her male co-worker, sought help from her. In yet another case a 40-year-old lady wanted to commit suicide. So a woman constable went to her home every day for a month and convinced her not to take her own life.

When a woman complained that her husband beat her, a policewoman talked to the husband and continued going to their house every day for over a month. Another woman constable, after receiving complaints that drunken men hanging out in a local *dhaba* (roadside eatery) made women feel unsafe, went to the *dhaba*. The men confronted her but when they realised she meant business and could take legal action, a conversation ensued.

Hooda also circulated an annual report which outlined what the police intends to do in the second year of the campaign. One project is to work in collaboration with RWAs and conduct safety audits in various colonies. Delhi Police staff are to be trained on issues concerning violence against women. Women's safety committees will be appointed in select beats. Delhi Police also plan to work with voluntary groups to improve services like legal aid for women, counselling centres, crèches, de-addiction centres and shelter referrals.

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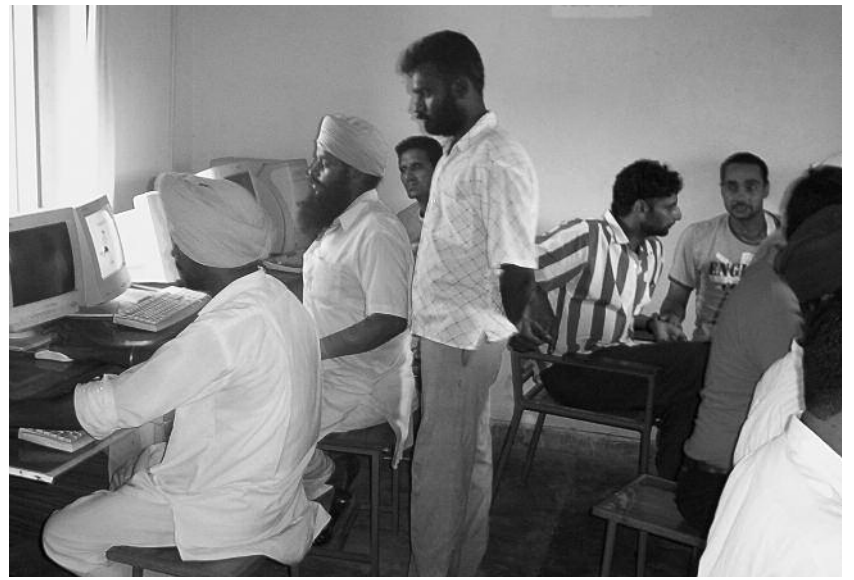
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Inmates doing yoga



The computer centre for inmates

# Amritsar gets a model jail

**Civil Society News**  
New Delhi

WHEN Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh took over as DIG of Amritsar Central Jail last year, the prison was in horrible shape. Built to accommodate a thousand prisoners, it housed more than double. Jail staff, notoriously unkind to inmates, was divided into warring factions. Prisoners had to grease palms for everything.

In short, Amritsar jail was like any other Indian prison. Conjure an image of a dank, cramped cell with dirty bathrooms, rotten food and jail officials ready to roast you.

But in the space of one year, Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh turned Amritsar jail into a model that is being replicated across Punjab.

"I dedicate my work to the holy soil of Amritsar," he said as he walked away with an award given by the India Vision Foundation in recognition of his work. The foundation is headed by Kiran Bedi, India's first woman police officer, well known for her zealous efforts to reform Tihar jail, Asia's largest prison, which won her the Magsaysay award. She started the foundation to continue her work.

While most Indian jails carry on as medieval dungeons, a small movement for reform is underway inspired by Kiran Bedi's efforts. "It showed us that relations between jailors and prisoners can be changed," remarked one jail official.

The award function, held on 31 August, also honoured SP Singh, the vice-chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, (GNDU) for extending educational facilities to inmates of Amritsar jail. Sunil Kumar Gupta, a law officer from Delhi Central Jail, was honoured for his efforts to get undertrials released while a team of jail officials from Haridwar were awarded for introducing organic farming in their prison.

The turnaround at Amritsar jail is dramatic because Vijay Pratap's reforms sought to change the character of the prison. Jails don't need to be congested. Across India thousands of prisoners are under trial. Most jail officials agree that almost

80 per cent are arrested for offences that are bailable but many prisoners are too poor to pay.

"I wanted to save ordinary prisoners from becoming criminals," says Vijay Pratap. He helped to get 350 undertrials released. He got a Legal Aid Cell started with help from the India Vision Foundation, Lawyers for Social Action and local advocates. Free legal help is given to Bangladeshi and Pakistani prisoners as well. He also got the cooperation of the District and Sessions Judge, Amritsar.

Three types of prisoners were helped to get release orders: those arrested for petty offences who had already served time in prison and whose trial was still going on, those arrested in connection with excise cases and those against whom the police had not filed any charge sheet within the stipulated period.

The departure of 350 prisoners created more room. Instead of sleeping on the cold hard floor,

Singh, vice-chancellor of GNDU, visited the prison and took a decision to link the university to it. "He has shown what a university can do," says Kiran Bedi.

Prisoners run the education centre. The Principal is an undertrial with a Ph.D. There are five faculties: higher education, adult education, school education, languages and computer education. Educated inmates run the courses.

Inmates can study for graduate and post-graduate courses. IGNOU has also set up a centre in the prison and a library has been started. Seven hundred students have enrolled.

None of the children were going to school when Vijay Pratap took over. A government school was identified and the children are sent there. Some jail officials objected, saying it's not in our rule-books. Vijay Pratap asked them where is it written that children should not be sent?

There is also a crèche for the children. Women are taught candle-making, tie and dye etc.

To improve the mind and relieve mental stress there is yoga and meditation every morning and sports in the evening. Some 40 prisoners have become yoga teachers.

Also, a de-addiction centre has been started. Drug abuse was rampant among inmates. All those involved in selling and distributing drugs, including jail officials, medical staff and prisoners were rounded up. They were transferred and FIRs lodged against some. The de-addiction centre is being run with help

from the Civil Defence and Rotary Club in Amritsar.

The prisoners have a say. There are complaints and suggestion boxes near the Gurdwara and temple inside the jail. The boxes are opened either by Vijay Pratap or his assistant. Prisoners can meet the DIG during office hours.

The prisoners were very moved when the Brahma Kumaris visited the jail and prayed for their long life and happiness. The Brahma Kumaris tied rakhis on their wrists and on Bangladeshi and Pakistani prisoners as well.

"It is possible to do your job honestly and truthfully in this profession," says Vijay Pratap, an MA in Sanskrit from Patna. "though to tread this path is like walking on the edge of a sharp sword."



Kiran Bedi with Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh (on her left).

**Prisoners run the education centre. The Principal is an undertrial with a Ph.D degree.**

for the first time, cots are being provided to prisoners. These are made in the jail premises and have been given to women inmates. Efforts are on to improve infrastructure.

Committees of prisoners make sure food is of good quality, is distributed fairly and cooked hygienically. Corruption has been weeded out.

The jail also provides inmates an alternative career so that they can contribute to society and don't need to turn to crime.

The jail's education centre was started in May this year and inaugurated by Kiran Bedi. The Guru Nanak Dev University offers certificate courses in computer basics, TV maintenance and tailoring. The university has financed a computer lab. SP

# THE WATER GURU



Anupam Mishra at the Gandhi Museum

## Anupam Mishra shows how tanks, ponds and wells serve even today

**Umesh Anand**  
New Delhi

**A**NUPAM Mishra is back from Barmer in Rajasthan full of news. There has been a downpour in the desert. Towns are under water. Railway stations have been decimated. An Air Force strip has been submerged. These are the headlines all over, but they are not Anupam's news. He has found three forgotten rivers, a subterranean bed of gypsum that the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has confirmed and data which show that Barmer does get such downpours – even if the last one was in 1917.

Eighty-nine years is a long, long time. Everyone has forgotten Barmer's 1917 deluge. Everyone has also forgotten that at one time three rivers would serve as drainage channels and carry all that excess water into the Loni basin. When it did not rain for long, the rivers shrivelled up and people finally gave them up for dead. What used to be the courses of the rivers were built over. Now as the water looks for those old routes out of Barmer it runs into schools and homes and gobbles up fields. The rivers are back to life and they show no mercy on people who come in their way.

Anupam Mishra is India's low-profile Water Guru. He, however, likes to call himself a clerk, a mere taker of notes. But during a lifetime of barefoot research for the Gandhi Peace Foundation's (GPF) environment cell he has scoured much of the country trying to understand collection, storage and dispersal in traditional water systems. He has tracked tanks and stepwells like no one else has. He has gone deep into cultural practices and forgotten technologies in his quest to learn how communities deal with water scarcities and equally daunting problems of surplus.

Much of this learning has gone into two books in Hindi: *Aaj bhi khare hain talab* and *Rajasthan ke rajat boodein*. The first title has done over 100,000

copies, which must surely be a record in Indian publishing. Equally important by way of records should be the fact that Anupam hasn't taken a rupee by way of royalty nor does he have the copyright.

But if you think Anupam is a crusty Gandhian bore who hides behind bushy eyebrows and dusty ledgers and mourns the decline of values in a quivering voice, you are mistaken. His writings are simple and attractive and the books have a mellifluous quality about them. His approach is interactive. He sends his message home as though it were some environmental popcorn so that everyone can put a hand in the packet and take a little away.

It is beyond Anupam to be boring and so his approach to water is great Gandhigiri, practised with his personal stamp for more than two decades. Like the Gandhigiri of the film *Lage Raho Munnabhai*, Anupam's message travels lightly and thrives where it settles.

Both books have inspired people to do their own thing with water. Many have gone from being casual readers to avid practitioners – digging tanks, building bunds and generally trapping rainwater where it falls.

There are English and French editions of the Rajasthan book. In recent times Anupam has been much in demand in Europe as a speaker and an exponent of traditional knowledge of how people use water and, sometimes, how water returns to haunt people who misuse it. This year he was a distinguished visitor at one of France's premier institutes for studies in the social sciences. He was feted for his deep understanding of ancient water systems.

Anupam's quest has been a Gandhian one, a search for solutions that involve people, particularly those who don't have a voice and live in the fragmented fringes of the economy.

The Gandhian way is of governance through self-help and articulation of local needs and solutions. Nothing perhaps serves the management of water better in India because it is hugely diverse in topography, far-flung and

LAKSHMAN ANAND



beholden to a few months of rain in the year.

The research that Anupam undertook in the Environment Cell of GPF was really aimed at learning how people met their own needs for thousands of years before the centralised model of administration arrived under the British.

It is this perspective that led him to celebrate not giant irrigation works and other temples to technology, but the humble tank. Two million tanks had been dug by communities before British rule and they worked efficiently for people by collecting rain and raising ground water levels. They were a dependable source of safe water. Importantly, tanks could be built by leaving habitats intact and because there was a sense of ownership over them they were maintained.

The tank, the bund and the well for centuries served to keep the hydrological cycle in good health. People knew how to make and maintain them. They drew on them with an eye on the sky, being conservative in times of scarcity and leaving surpluses in the bank for difficult days. There was balance.

For instance, a Johad in Churu district in Rajasthan is a marvel of engineering. It has three tiers on four sides. Till the rains end in September, water collects and comes to the top. As the months pass into winter and then to March and summer, the open water surface reduces to half together with the depth. What does this do? It reduces the evaporation. In addition, there is a narrow ledge at each level to trap silt. Why does this matter? If the silt were not trapped, it would go all the way to the bottom and getting it out of there would be much more difficult.

There is the exquisite Gadasisar at Jaisalmer. Satyajit Ray's film *Sonar Kela* was shot here. You could call this the Golden Temple of Water, says Anupam. The Gadasisar, though it is in the middle of the Jaisalmer desert, is an expanse of blue water.

Similarly, the Toda Rai Singh tank was built at least 350 years ago and was meant to serve the irrigation needs of 18 villages. Incredibly, it continues to perform that role though it has been acquired by the irrigation department of Rajasthan.

What happened to these tanks and step-wells, many of which were built with great effort and

expertise and can even today be regarded as marvels of engineering? Why did Anupam need to put in years of dedicated exploration to rediscover these subtle equations in water if at one time they did so much for people? Many of them remain in use today and are more reliable sources of supply than what the government has set up. Why then was it essential to seek so hard to understand their worth?

The answer lies in the shift to a centralised regime under the British and the continuance of such a top-down model of governance in independent India. Management of resources such as water and forests went out of the hands of the people who depended on them and into the files of an amorphous government. Over the years local initiatives petered out and efficient traditional technologies went into disuse.

By the late Seventies and early Eighties it was clear that serious problems related to water were looming up. Irrigation departments and their engineers couldn't deliver to people what people had been able to give themselves with efficiency at one time. That gap has only widened. While irrigation projects completed at great cost have initially shown some results, in the medium term they have faltered in ways more complex than governments can grasp. There has also been the growing spectre of displacement and migration from villages to the slums in the cities. Big projects need land and leave people homeless.

In addition, the mechanised pump has replaced the well and the tank. With it has come the crisis of depleting groundwater. So while on the one hand people have been forgetting how to catch the rain where it falls, on the other they have been depleting the earth's reserves.

Thirdly, there has been the uncharted growth of urban areas. Cities have come up without a thought for their needs. They have either depended on groundwater or looked to hydroelectric projects in the rural areas for their supplies. Dam after dam has been built by displacing rural people to meet urban needs. A good example is the recent rejoicing in Delhi over the arrival of water from the Tehri Dam. Residents of Delhi are known to be most profligate in their use of water, sucking aquifers dry. Now they will squander the water from Tehri for which people have given up their lands and an entire ecology has been threatened.

Such examples abound across the country and the post-Independence story of water is a complex one in which politicians, bureaucrats, engineers and the average Indian are all caught up in a twister of greed, ignorance and consumption.

It was in the late Seventies that Anupam (he is now 57) began working as a young researcher, in the Environment Cell of GPF. His father, Bhawani Prasad Mishra, the poet, was a Gandhian and a freedom fighter.

The journey to GPF was, therefore, a short one. However, it wasn't an inevitable journey because Anupam had a Masters in Hindi literature and perhaps it would have been natural for him to choose teaching as a career. But his first job he got at GPF and it was to read proofs for Rs 350 a month. Very quickly he became involved with the Environment Cell. The first area of concern was water and Anupam found himself travelling across the country for his research.

It is a strange conspiracy of circumstances that seems to have made a water researcher out of a poet's son. Anupam has a flair for writing and sensitivity to cultural traditions and both have proved to be vital in seeking an understanding of the problems relating to water.

Perhaps someone else, for example an engineer, would not have been able to capture the spirit of community systems so well or approach traditional technologies with the respect and patience that is required for understanding them in a modern setting. Any other young man with a degree in the sciences would surely not have seen what Anupam could with his unique perspective tempered by literature and Gandhism.

"If I had studied engineering, I would have gone in a completely different direction. If I was very good I would have ended up at MIT or some such place. If I was no good I would have landed in Ghaziabad," says Anupam with his trademark wit.

A student of literature on the other hand has no hesitation in entering through cultural trapdoors in search of lost science and technology. "Technology gets absorbed and embedded in culture. Rediscovering it means understanding culture first," says Anupam.

So it was that *Aaj bhi khare hain talab* got written over 10 long years and published in 1993, a slim book almost poetic in design, embellished with fine line drawings and packed with vivid accounts of community efforts in water.

In 13 years, this one book, going from hand to hand, growing from one imprint to the next, has done more to change the way people think about water than any other work. More than 100,000

**Anupam sends his message home as though it were some environmental popcorn so that everyone can put a hand in the packet and take a little away. It is beyond him to be boring and so his approach to water is great Gandhigiri.**



copies have been printed and sold without a rupee going to the author. It is available in Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Bengali and Urdu.

GPF only publishes one of the Hindi versions. It is always sold out even before it comes off the press. All the editions, apart from the GPF one, have been brought out by people who have read the book and felt influenced by it. Stories abound about each imprint. The most recent Punjabi version for instance was done by Souren Bansal, a journalist. When it was sent for printing,

Asked what she personally finds in Anupam's message, Joya says: "When I was a Naxalite, I would go to the villages to educate villagers. It was our mission to bring them out of their ignorance. We assumed that because of our modern education we knew better. But from Anupam I realised the importance of going to villages to learn and understand. It is this approach which has helped him discover traditional wisdom."

Anupam's Guru status comes from the way in which he is perceived by

groups like the innovative Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS). Founded by Rajender Singh, TBS has been instrumental in digging tanks and building low-cost dams across Rajasthan. It has also been a source of inspiration for people with water problems elsewhere in the country.

In the September issue of *Civil Society* we featured the greening of the campus of the Aravali Institute of Management at Jodhpur. Once again it was Rajender Singh and TBS that had served as the model.

Says Rajender Singh: "Anupamji is to me a friend. Our friendship goes deep, I would even say it is spiritual and I consider myself to be lucky to know him in this way. His books have captured like few others have the culture and tradition that is the soul of the water systems on which he writes."

It has been much the same with the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). The remarkable work CSE has done in creating awareness on water draws on the foundations prepared by Anupam's research.

Says Sunita Narain, CSE's redoubtable director: "I have no words to describe Anupam's work. He is one of the most unsung heroes of our country. His contribution to creating awareness of traditional water systems will never be adequately rewarded or understood. His book has been an inspiration for so many people. It is also amazing that he has done all this with virtually no resources."

Ask Anupam how to define a Gandhian and you don't get a straight answer. He says Gandhi

himself believed that he was merely restoring the good things from the past because they served the majority in the country well.

The tank, the bund and the step-well certainly fall in this category. But what about the task of bringing them back and popularising them among Indians who have grown up without knowing what they are? That needs extraordinary skills of communication, Gandhigiri, if you will.

Bhawani Prasad Mishra, Anupam's father, was a poet who didn't get the recognition he deserved and is being reassessed today as one of the great writers of Hindi literature. Anupam says he never knew him as a poet. But as we talk, Anupam mentions the poem *Geet Farosh* or *The Seller of Songs*, which his father wrote after a brush with the Hindi film industry in Bombay.

Oh, so the self-effacing Clerk does remember his great father's verse? Is this some Freudian slip? Perhaps it is.

In *Geet Farosh*, the poet is like a sari seller offering a variety of colours and styles, making his verse seem as attractive as possible. He admits songs should not be sold like a commodity, but then he only sells songs. Others sell their self-respect.

*Geet Farosh* is regarded as a lament for the commercialisation of literature. Perhaps its message runs a little deeper: that all creativity involves salesmanship, but the creative person can't have a price.

Is Anupam then that poet in *Geet Farosh*? Selling but never making transactions? To date Anupam commands no great funding and survives on a modest salary with his wife Manju and son Shubhan. Like the poet, he has so much on offer, but he himself is not for sale.



Anupam Mishra with the many versions of *Aaj bhi khare hain talab*

**In 13 years, the *Talab* book, going from hand to hand, growing from one imprint to the next, has done more to change the way people think about water than any other work. More than 100,000 copies have been printed and sold without a rupee going to the author. It is available in Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Bengali and Urdu.**

**GPF only publishes one of the Hindi versions. It is always sold out.**

the owner of the press read it and liked it so much that he decided to do the job at cost price.

Perhaps this is the only example of its kind of community publishing and absence of copyright for truly original work.

It is not insignificant that such an effort should relate to water. So severe are the scarcities that the country is facing and so ineffective are the efforts of governments that people feel the need for a new approach.

At Lapodiya village on the Jaipur-Ajmer highway, Lakshman Singh, a Thakur, began in 1995 creating tanks after eight years of drought. He was influenced by the *Talab* book. Now the water table is back and the village has no scarcity.

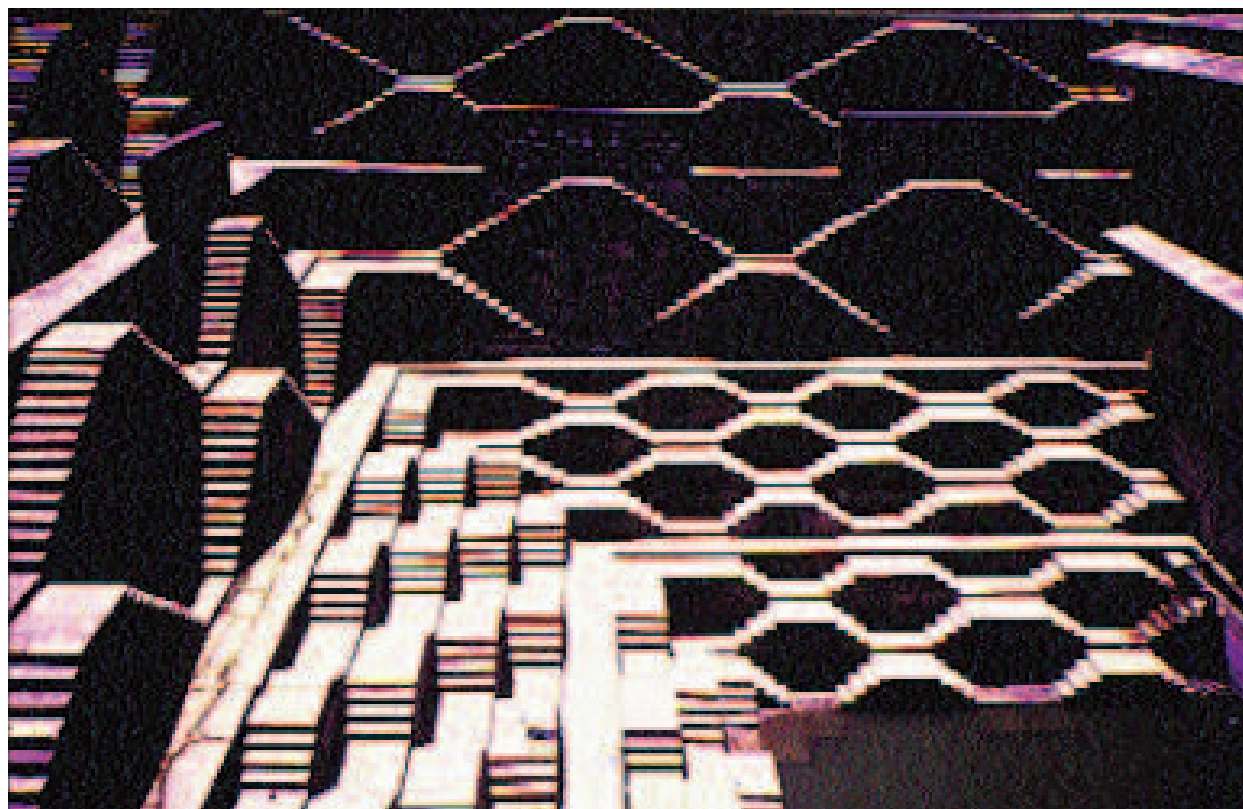
At Pauri Garhwal in Uttarakhand, Sachidanand Bharti, a school teacher has been inspired to create 10,000 water bodies and grow trees. He enjoys his anonymity and so his story is rarely told, but the water bodies have directly served to improve the quality of life of hill people and they come handy in putting out disruptive forest fires.

In Karnataka, the Jal Samvadhan Sangh used World Bank funding to restore traditional tanks. If you went to their offices five years ago, the walls featured reproductions of illustrations in the *Talab* book.

Joya Mitra is a former Naxalite. In 1998 she came across something Anupam had written on the environment. She then read his books.

So influenced was she that she travelled through the districts of Bengal reading out the books to people in villages.

"I have done this so many times now, but never have I come across resistance to the ideas. On the contrary people immediately make connections," says Joya.



**Tonk district, Malpura village: This is a step well built with amazing symmetry. Such precision in stone require rare craftsmanship.**



**Believe it or not, this beautiful blue expanse of water at Gadasisar is in the middle of the Jaisalmer desert. Such water bodies are created from harvesting the rain.**

ANTONIE ALESIEUR

ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**The Chand Bawri Abhanere in district Dausa. In this picture, its grandeur is evident. Unfortunately, the Bawri is the target of smugglers who take away its stone to sell outside the country.**

ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**A water body near Sikar.**

**The Jaseri Nadi near Jaisalmer. This Nadi, in the heart of the desert, has never gone dry. An interesting story is that the person who created the Nadi named it after his daughter and placed the foundation stone in a well in the middle of the Nadi.**



**This rugged pulley is locally known as a Bhun. It is used to draw water from 300 feet.**



**The Toda Rai Singh tank was built at least 350 years ago to serve the irrigation needs of 18 villages. Incredibly, it still performs that role though it has been acquired by the irrigation department of Rajasthan.**



**A young shepherd in Alwar stands proudly at a tank he helped build with the Tarun Bharat Sangh**

ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**A step well which served people for several hundred years but now lies in disuse, perhaps waiting for new users to arrive.**

**A step well near Sikar. Some scenes of Shahrukh Khan's *Paheli* were shot here. But despite the Bollywood film, it lies in neglect.**

**Lime mortar used in traditional structures is prepared like this. You could call it a green cement factory.**



ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**Chand Bawri Abhanere in district Dausa. There are 17 landings in this well on three sides and a seven storied palace on the fourth.**

ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**A water body near Sikar with elaborate extensions for animals to drink water.**

ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**This tank in Barmer is called a Nadi. The ancient trees on the periphery of the tank are living proof of its vintage.**

ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**A palace in Deeg. There are fountains that celebrate water in semi arid conditions on the periphery of the desert.**



**An aerial view of a step well. These structures are complex and go several storeys high.**



**A panoramic view of the exquisite Gadasisar at Jaisalmer. Satyajit Ray's film, Sonar Kela, was shot here. You could call this the Golden Temple of Water.**

ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**A hexagonal Johad with embankments built 200 years ago to catch the rain and ensure a local supply of sweet water. A modern water plant lies derelict on its periphery.**



**A Johad in Churu district, a marvel of engineering. It has three tiers on four sides. The structure is designed to reduce evaporation. Narrow ledges trap silt.**



**A Kund in Taranagar, district Churu. Rain that falls on the surface of the Kund goes through tiny filters to collect 40 feet below. The area is saline.**

ANTONIE ALESIEUR



**A village tank at Malpura in Tonk district.**

**The Deeg Palace tank with holes in the walls. The holes were used to store colours.**



**Kund at Sikar. The channel leading out provides water to animals and people. This prevents people from entering all the time and contaminating the Kund's supply.**

# Business

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## BEYOND PROFIT

**Rethink money with us. What should the entrepreneur of the future be like? How can you get rich and still serve society? Do causes need bottom lines?**

## Rural India's crosslegged PC

**Vidya Viswanathan**  
New Delhi

WHAT would be the specs for a truly Indian computer that could be used in village schools and panchayats? Rural children and adults tend to sit on the floor, so the computer would need to be comfortable to use on the ground. A range of Indian languages are spoken. The computer would need to speak in many tongues. That means software to create content, fonts and input devices. The computer should also occupy very little space. Ideally, it should be possible to put it into a box and store it away when not in use. Finally, the computer would need to use very little power and work on alternate energy.

Sounds like a tall order? Well, Kirti Trivedi, a design professor from the Industrial Design Centre at IIT, Mumbai, has designed a computer that matches these specs after visiting Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) run by the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation in Tamil Nadu. Trivedi exhibited a working prototype to grassroots fellows of the Jamsheji Tata National Virtual Academy who had convened in Delhi.

"I'm a book designer and one of the most computer illiterate people at the IIT Design Centre in Mumbai," he says. "In fact, we are four computer illiterate people."

Trivedi graduated in design from IIT, Mumbai, before going to study at the Royal College of Art. He has been teaching graphic design and design history at IIT since 1976.

Perhaps that is why Trivedi and his team saw the PC differently. Most computer savvy people tend to design a low cost computer. But Trivedi has concentrated on designing a PC for rural India.

The machine Trivedi created has a TFT monitor, dual language keyboard, speakers and stereo system integrated into one piece. It weighs less than a 15 inch monitor. The machine is shaped like a traditional munshi's desk and can be used sitting cross-legged on the floor. It can, of course, be placed on a table. Many peo-



ple can see the high-resolution screen at the same time. They can sit around it and that makes it ideal for a community centre.

The rural computer will be priced cheaper than anything of comparable configuration.

"There are several approaches to cost reduction," explains Trivedi. "One is to produce obsolete products. Another is to price deceptively. The third is to reduce the number of components but create a state-of-the-art product. That is what we attempted to do. This machine has three components whereas most machines have seventeen."

The machine he was exhibiting ran on a Pentium four 3 ghz chip. The motherboard was ruggedised and the CPU was embedded. The machine shell was made of ABS, an engineering plastic. The cooling system is a continuous horizontal cooling system that is more effective than a fan cooling one. The machine needs 160 watts of power instead of the usual 270 watts. Just one wire comes out of the machine, to be plugged into a power source.

Trivedi has also planned to design a box, like a typewriter box, to store away the machine. In several rural kiosks, rats damaged the wires hanging around. The box could also be used as a pedestal to place the machine and work on it. The machine can work with solar powered UPS systems. Trivedi pointed out that it is naïve to think that only hardware is enough. His team is working on several content creation tools in Indian languages.

Has the machine been tested by users? Can it be manufactured in existing assembly systems? It has been tested for ergonomics at a Mumbai based non-profit called Stree Bal Shakti. The systems will be manufactured at the Hyderabad facility of the PSU, ECIL, which has advanced manufacturing facilities to make electronic voting machines. The rural PCs are expected to roll out in December this year. The factory has the capacity to make 70,000 machines a month. But it remains to be seen if they can create an effective marketing campaign.

# New worshippers at free software

Vidya Viswanathan  
New Delhi

**W**HAT does an ardent biodiversity campaigner like Vandana Shiva have in common with a geek who writes free software? Well, both believe knowledge should be shared, modified and distributed freely.

So do nuclear scientist VS Ramamurthy, CPI (M) ideologue Prabir Purkayastha, Ayurveda physician VS Raju, and High Court Justice Yatindra Singh.

For many years the free software movement was seen as the terrain of techie nerds. It is now attracting followers from diverse professions. The reasons are not hard to seek. Consumers are finding free software as good as paid for software. The movement's philosophy of team spirit and sharing is catching the attention of other opponents of intellectual property rights.

For one, they all believe in the same mantra: let knowledge move freely for the benefit of mankind. Do away with the intellectual property rights for it stymies the spread of wisdom. And now even the czars of software are listening.

Advocates of the free software movement shared their views at a two-day symposium called, "Owning the Future-Ideas and their Role in the Digital Age," organised by Red Hat and IIT in New Delhi.

"A significant number of people, within the scientific community and outside, believe today's strategy of handling intellectual property assets is flawed. It is against the traditional belief that knowledge is public property, particularly knowledge for public good," said nuclear scientist VS Ramamurthy. "Roentgen, Pierre Curie and many others chose the path of no patenting on moral grounds. Even Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose, the first Indian to get a US patent, was reluctant about the whole idea."

The first session was titled "Intellectual property – an oxymoron". Speakers included Lawrence Liang of the Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore, and open source evangelist Danese Cooper of Intel who argued that India, which is spending Rs 30,000 crores on e-governance, needs to follow open standards.

People are opting for free software for it is user friendly and saves money. Justice Yatindra Singh of the Allahabad High Court made a presentation on how his court now runs on it.

"I switched to free software because I did not want to use illegal software," said the tech savvy judge.

**Free software is user friendly and saves money. Justice Yatindra Singh of the Allahabad High Court made a presentation on how his court runs on it.**

Justice Singh saved Rs 5.2 million by having all the court's computers run on Linux. "I had to spend six months convincing my brother judges about the advantages of shifting to Linux," he said.

The court's website is best seen in Firefox, a free browser. All the court's documents are in open document format (ODF) and can be read by any software. Important judgments and administrative decisions made by the court are on RSS feeds and can be aggregated by any website subscribing to it. Justice Singh said the court was creating software for a library and it would release it under the GPL license so that other courts could use it.

V Ponraj, director for technology initiatives in the President of India's office, also rooted for free software and said it was critical for their functioning.

The free software movement is getting more sophisticated. Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikipedia, made a presentation on open content. He said with just four people his team had created a "sum of human knowledge". His free encyclopedia was made by free software called Media Wiki and written by hundreds of programmers across the world. They have 200 servers and four data centres which volunteers manage. The site supported only free file formats and avoided MP3, since it came encumbered with patents. He compared Wikipedia with Britannica, which is a closed model. Wikipedia now has 250,000 articles and was in 347 languages whereas Britannica has just 80,000 articles.

But was free knowledge accurate? Wales said scientists had compared articles published in Britannica and Wikipedia and published their results in *Nature*. Britannica had three errors per article. Wikipedia had four but they also had a mechanism to get better everyday. Paul Jones of *ibiblio* pointed out that successful models of business in this century would be of collaboration.

Biodiversity activists and practitioners of traditional knowledge are teaming up

**The industrial intellectual property laws were for machinery. Such laws cannot apply to seeds, software, traditional knowledge and life forms, which multiply, said Vandana Shiva, an ardent biodiversity campaigner.**

with the free software movement. "What open source software is to IT, open pollinated seeds are to the agricultural commons," said Vandana Shiva, who has been campaigning against biopiracy. She has pioneered the open seed movement and she spoke on 'Nurturing India's Traditional Knowledge'.

"Since the past 20 years, I've been saving seeds and creating community seed banks. Biodiversity, traditional knowledge and agriculture are matters of life and death, depending on whether resources and knowledge are in the commons, or in privatised property," said Shiva.

She said India had rice varieties that were really tall. "That helps the rice to tolerate floods. Just moving the gene doesn't mean some scientist has invented any gene. It is in the commons."

Shiva lashed out against multinational corporations for patenting traditional knowledge. She said she had fought the patent against neem and that took eleven years to settle. Then she had fought Monsanto's patent on low gluten wheat, which was an ancient Indian variety. To counter multinationals who propagate patented seeds, Shiva's organisation, Navdanya, has started an open source seed bank of which 300,000 farmers are members.

But Shiva said these are not solutions. The industrial intellectual property laws were for machinery. Such laws cannot apply to seeds, software, traditional knowledge and life forms, which multiply. She called for an amendment in international intellectual property rights against bio-piracy. Shiva said the state always bends towards industry but society has to shape another culture.

VS Raju, a physician of Ayurveda, argued that patents and intellectual property rights inhibit the spread of knowledge. "If something is practised freely, knowledge spreads. Patenting prevents practise and then that knowledge will be lost." He argued that the government should patent traditional knowledge and give its rights to the people. As an example, Raju pointed out that knowledge about spices was widespread in the first half of the last century because of the free flow of knowledge.

VK Gupta, the director of NISCAIR, made a presentation of TKDL (the traditional knowledge digital library). According to him there were 18,000 patents on medicinal plants mostly from India. In 2005 that number increased to 35,000.

The research organisation has decided to put all traditional knowledge into digital libraries and give it to patent offices across the world so that officers there would know about it. Gupta has over a hundred volunteers translating medical formulations found in ancient Unani, Siddha and Ayurveda documents.

Sudhir Krishnamurthy, a young lawyer, was critical of all these approaches. He said defensive and offensive approaches to bio-piracy have not worked so far. Fighting 20,000 patents was not a solution and would turn expensive. Creation of a database and seed banks are defensive strategies. He warned that seed banks bring a lot of seeds and plants into a single site and could be the focal point of piracy. He also said some intellectual property laws on traditional knowledge like Geographical Indications are actually detrimental. For example, traditional weaving techniques like Pochampalli would get frozen with legal protection. Such skills thrive only if they can borrow and influence.

Professor Vijay Kumar of MIT spoke about how all MIT's courseware, including interactions of professors with students, was now open source. About 1,600 courses were available as video lectures under the creative commons license for students and teachers.

Eben Moglen, the co-founder of the Software Freedom Law Centre said the software industry has realised that patenting is detrimental. Even a giant like IBM that owns several patents, had to first search all the patents that would be violated, if it had to write a piece of code.

Moglen said the patenting system in software cannot be fixed by a government mechanism because that was being held hostage by the pharmaceutical industry. The drug sector wants to keep the IT sector in the intellectual property rights regime because it doesn't want to be seen as promoting protection for their industry alone. Paul Jones called for a society that had open access, open format, open code and open service. It seems followers of the free software movement have tuned into Asian values.

# How free can free software be?

*Eben Moglen is working on a new version of GPL*

**Vidya Viswanathan**  
New Delhi

IN February 2005, Eben Moglen, a Columbia law professor, launched the Software Freedom Law Centre to offer legal help to geeks who make free software.

The centre's charter includes finding lawyers across the world to support creators of free software. Moglen is funded by large hardware manufacturers like IBM, HP, Fujitsu and Intel who benefit from the free software movement. He is also a director of Public Patent Foundation that fights the abuse of patents in the US.

Moglen began his career in the 1970s as a programmer with IBM. For 12 years he worked as a lawyer for the Free Software Foundation and as the guardian of software launched under GPL (General Public Licence).

In fact, Moglen got involved in the free software movement when he offered legal help to Richard Stallman, the author of GPL. Almost all free software in the world, including Linux, is released under GPL. Moglen's organisation is now helping Stallman draft the third version of the licence.

Moglen was in India to address a conference of the free software community in Bangalore about changes in the licence. He then spoke at the Redhat conference on intellectual property where he also announced an India office of the Software Freedom Law Centre.

*Civil Society* spoke to Moglen about the process of changing GPL, and the future of the free software movement. Excerpts:

***The General Public Licence was written by Stallman because he wanted to share his software. Why are you working on changing the licence now?***

When Stallman published the second version of GPL in 1991 there were a few hundred people using it. Almost all of them were in the US and most were in universities and research institutions. Fifteen years have gone by without a change. But hundreds of thousands of people now use the licence to protect their work. It needs to change to meet the requirements of a much larger, diverse community and work very specifically in all the world's legal systems, a task that is hard to do.

The changes to GPL cannot be done the way Stallman did in 1991 when he just sat down with a couple of lawyers for a few days. Millions of people in the world feel they have an important stake in what the licence says. There are a lot of businesses that have been built using software under this licence and they want to make sure that their businesses are safe.

Now in making these changes we have to do two jobs that are a little conflicting. One, we have to listen to everybody. We have to make sure that every fact has been understood. The unusual features and quirks of every legal system have to be considered. Everybody, who rationally or emotionally feels that they have a stake, has to have an opportunity to get their point across.

At the same time we have to meet Stallman and the Free Software Foundation's moral right to protect the freedom of software. So if 100,000 businesses say please do something that is good for us but is not good for free software, Stallman senses his responsibility to say no. So this is not a democratic process. We are not having a vote for the licence. At the same time it is a global agreement about how to share software. It has to reflect what everybody in the world thinks.

***How do you manage this? At one end the stakeholder is a giant like IBM and on the other it is a 16-year-old kid who is programming from home.***

You have to use the technology of collaboration. Put all those people in a technologically assisted conversation. We used the web to get everybody to comment on this on equal terms.

We built a system to allow people to interact with the debate in intuitive and specific ways. We said here first mark a block of text on the screen and watch all previous comments and then add whatever you want to.

Then you need public committees to read those comments and discuss

them. We held an inaugural meeting in MIT, the birthplace of the licence, in January. We invited people from all over the world. We made committees from diverse people: free software projects that use the licence, individual hackers, free software projects of different licences, large users, vendors, governments...

You combine people with those whom they are comfortable talking to. You get them to review public comments, do some private work and publish that to maintain transparency.

We had international conferences in Brazil, Barcelona, Bangalore and we will have another one in Beijing or Tokyo. We also published a rulebook of the process with deadlines we stick to. My organisation, the Software Freedom Law Centre, on behalf of the Free Software Foundation runs that process and guarantees that it will be executed exactly that way.

***Can this be a model for other global negotiations like the WTO?***

This is a primitive model. Fifty years hence we will say back then they really had to use creaky

machinery to do global legislation. But it is the beginning of a process that is going to become very important.

***A lot of this is playacting between governments. An American citizen would not want its government to use their tax money to subsidise an industry that affects people elsewhere in the world...***

We have technology that now enables collaboration between individuals and organisations of different scale, equally. The GPL process equalises units that are very different in their size. The 16-year-old programmer and the IBM lawyer feel that they are treated similarly and with respect. Of course at the end of that if IBM wants to own it, we may not agree with them. They may ask who elected Stallman. But who elected them? Money elected them. And that is not a reason not to talk to them.

***Why can't intellectual property law itself work this way?***

That is because of the very mysterious and detrimental magic of the word 'property'. People think that they own it and any attempt to interfere with it is regarded as forcible re-distribution of property.

Suppose we don't think of it as property anymore. Suppose we say that yesterday the government decided it would be a benefit to society if some people had some privilege. This is what we call cost benefit analysis. But we are not allowed to do that with property. Intellectual property is just a metaphor. It is a government order saying you can have a monopoly. You might simplify the order by saying that the government ought to give those monopolies only after a full survey of the circumstance, to see if the costs are outweighed by the benefits.



Eben Moglen

**“ The GPL process equalises units that are very different in their size. The 16-year-old programmer and the IBM lawyer feel that they are treated similarly and with respect. ”**

# Worldview

## LATITUDE MATTERS

**Everyone owns a shrinking planet. People count more than governments. Track change before it becomes news.**

# Arnie flexes green muscles

*California decides to cut greenhouse gas emissions*

Andrew Gumbel  
London

**T**HINK of Arnold Schwarzenegger, and he hardly comes across as a poster-child for the environmental movement. For much of his movie career, he wasn't engaged in saving the planet so much as causing sizeable chunks of it to blow up. Off camera, he cut a figure almost as extravagant as his muscular physique – flying on private jets, showing up at wantonly lavish Hollywood parties, smoking cigars and single-handedly championing production of the Hummer, a civilian version of the ultra-wide four-wheel-drive military Humvee, which is widely regarded as the most obnoxiously wasteful vehicle on America's roads.

And yet the action star turned California governor is nothing if not a man of surprises. He mixes in the social circles of Hollywood's liberal elite and is married to a member of the Kennedy clan, Maria Shriver, and yet he has always regarded himself as a staunch Republican – among other things, an act of rebellion against the staunch social democratic values of his native Austria.

He is capable of schmoozing with the hardest of hard-edged conservatives from the Bush administration, and yet he shares none of their puritanical disgust for gay marriage, abortion rights or any of the social "wedge issues" that have proved so successful in promoting Republican candidates and securing party control of both houses of Congress as well as the White House.

When Schwarzenegger made his typically dramatic entry into politics three years ago – throwing himself behind a rebellion against California's anaemic then-governor Gray Davis and replacing him in a special recall election – he promised to break all the usual rules of the game and use his celebrity to shake up a broken system. Until now he has proved something of a disappointment on that front, falling in with much the same special-interest campaign contributors he had denounced so loudly on the stump.

September, though, marks something of a watershed. After months of negotiation with the Democratic leadership in California's state assembly, he gave his blessing to a ground-breaking initiative on global warming – a new state law that would require California businesses to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent before 2020.

It's hard to overstate the significance of this, especially at a time when the Republicans in Congress and the Bush administration have treated the whole question of global warming as the fever dream of a bunch of ivory-tower scientists and academics they feel they can safely ignore.

Schwarzenegger's fellow California Republicans are furious, as is the state Chamber of Commerce, which until now felt convinced it had the governor in its pocket.

There are plentiful reasons to see Schwarzenegger's move as smart politics, though. First of all, environmental activism is popular with California voters – eight out of 10



Arnold Schwarzenegger

told a polling organisation last month they regarded global warming as a threat to the economy as well as their quality of life. As Schwarzenegger runs for reelection this November, he can now be confident he has robbed his Democratic challenger, Phil Angelides, of any possibility of attacking him for his environmental policies.

The initiative is also an opportunity to put California – powerful enough to qualify as the world's sixth largest economy – in the forefront of an issue that will have to be addressed, sooner or later, by everyone. Just a month ago, Schwarzenegger scored a major coup when he persuaded Tony Blair to share the limelight with him, instead of the recalcitrant Bush administration. Together, they announced a joint UK-California partnership on combating climate change.

Both men share a similar conviction – that the only way to reverse global warming is to find market-oriented solutions and convince companies it is in their economic interest to cut emissions. Under the deal hashed out this week,

California will introduce a trading system so that companies ahead of schedule on cutting greenhouse gas emissions can sell the excess as a form of credit to companies running behind. In other words, environmental virtue will carry a monetary value.

He is breaking the Republican Party mould on other issues as well. He has approved funding for stem-cell research that the Bush administration, influenced by its Christian fundamentalist grassroots, feels is unethical. And he has championed an increase in the minimum wage and helped to devise a discounted drug scheme

**He gave his blessing to a ground-breaking initiative on global warming – a new state law that would require California businesses to cut GHG emissions by 25 per cent before 2020.**





## From Terminator to Green Governor

### BORN

Arnold Alois Schwarzenegger, 30 July 1947, in Thal, Austria, to police chief Gustav Schwarzenegger and his wife Aurelia.

### EDUCATION

Attended local schools, and as a teenager began attending a gym in nearby Graz for weight training and body building. BA in international marketing and business administration (1979) from the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

### FAMILY

Married to TV journalist Maria Shriver, 1988; four children.

### CAREER

**Body-building:** Junior Mr Europe, 1965, followed by four Mr Universe and seven Mr Olympia titles. (Documentary about his career: *Pumping Iron*, 1977.) **Acting:** Best known for his action films, particularly the Terminator series (1981-2003). **Politics:** Governor of California (2003).

### HE SAYS

"I would rather be Governor of California than own Austria."

### THEY SAY

"Governator III is a different person than Governor II. He's being much more the Kindergarten Cop than the Terminator."

*Phil Trounstine, political media consultant.*

for the uninsured.

In some ways, Schwarzenegger is now governing like a Democrat – an acknowledgement that California remains a solidly Democratic state. Perhaps more significantly, he is spurning the wishes of his corporate campaign contributors, from whom he has assiduously extracted tens of millions of dollars, and stretching the patience of his party's grassroots supporters.

The gamble, bolstered by Schwarzenegger's considerable personal charisma and continuing movie-star status, is certainly paying off. His popularity ratings, which were mired somewhere in the mid-30s this time last year, have climbed back up over the 50 per cent mark, and his prospects for re-election look distinctly rosy.

This is the Schwarzenegger that Californians thought they were voting for three years ago but has taken a long time in coming. He may have been in elective politics for only three years but already he has undergone several dizzying transformations, to the point where it is hard to remember that there has been just one man, not three, in the governor's office since November 2003.

The first incarnation of Arnold the Politician, which lasted until the end of 2004, was of the slick, somewhat superficial campaigner who filled his speeches with body-building metaphors and well-known lines from his

Terminator movies, but didn't betray too many hints of what he actually intended to do in office. Everything, in this phase, was "fantastic". He opened a smoking tent outside the state capital building in Sacramento so he could share his cigars with legislators, slapped a lot of backs and, memorably, used his charisma to give George Bush some crucial last-minute presidential election campaign support in Ohio, where he just happened to be attending an annual body-building contest.

The biggest challenge in that first phase was a multibillion-dollar budget deficit, which Schwarzenegger vowed to sort out once and for all. But all his vague campaign lines – to cut down on waste and eliminate spending mandates established on behalf of special lobbying interests – proved easier to say than to enact. One person's waste, after all, is another person's pay packet. So Schwarzenegger, together with the legislature, put together an underwhelming bond measure to cover the immediate budget shortfall but shrank away from making tougher decisions.

The second incarnation, which first manifested itself in 2004 but mostly spanned the 2005 calendar year, was altogether harder edged. Having initially made friends with the Democrats in the state assembly, he now denounced them as "girlie-men" and vowed to use his celebrity status to shove a hard-line Republican agenda down their throats. When they refused to go along with him, he decided to go straight to the people.

Sure enough, Schwarzenegger called a special election last November, inviting Californians to clobber the political reach of the (overwhelmingly

**He may have been in elective politics for only three years but he has undergone several dizzying transformations, to the point where it is hard to remember that there has been just one man, not three, in the governor's office since November 2003.**

Democrat) public service unions, gut a key provision of education funding, and give him unprecedented powers to change the budget without legislative approval if revenues started to falter.

The whole initiative was a disaster. Schwarzenegger's attacks on public service workers – he once told the state's nurses he would "kick their butts" – backfired spectacularly. A brief flirtation with the vigilante movement calling for mass expulsion of Mexican immigrants lost him the sympathy of the state's growing Latino population. His popularity plummeted, and the quartet of ballot measures he championed last November all went down to defeat.

Clearly, a new incarnation was called for. So Schwarzenegger stopped listening to his hard-line Republican advisers and paid closer attention instead to his

wife, who had disapproved of the special election from the get-go. He hired a prominent Democrat – and, to the horror of the social conservatives, a lesbian – as his new chief of staff, and revamped his media strategy to make himself more available, more spontaneous, and more open to public criticism.

"I've tested movies, and I know right away," Schwarzenegger told reporters as he explained the changes. "I've got to re-edit this thing."

Soon, he and the assembly Democrats were best friends again, making plans for an ambitious public works scheme to overhaul California's groaning infrastructure of roads, bridges, aqueducts and river dams. This year's budget was, unusually, done and dusted on time, without the slightest hint of partisan rancour.

Part of that can be ascribed to luck. The California economy, whose temporary woes earlier in the decade had prompted the budgetary shortfall, has started recovering, which means that the state's coffers are filling up again and that the immediate need for either tax increases or draconian cuts in public services is gone.

Part of that, though, is a testament to Schwarzenegger's dogged refusal to bow to political convention. The environment, curiously, is one area where he has been relatively consistent all along – harking back to the environmentalism of Republicans such as Teddy Roosevelt and Richard Nixon rather than following the Big Oil agenda of the Bush administration and much of the rest of the modern Republican movement.

With some of his wife Maria's best friends as his advisers, he has promoted solar energy and other renewables, hydrogen fuel cell technology and cleaner car exhaust pipes. These initiatives have not been spectacular, but they have been several shades more progressive than those of his Democratic predecessor, Governor Davis.

Now, perhaps improbably, he is making a serious claim to be regarded as the ultimate Green Governor. If his gamble pays off – if the state holds its nerve and California enjoys a new boom in technologies to combat global warming – he will have earned himself more than a political legacy. The whole planet may have cause to be grateful to a muscle-bound movie star.

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# Global water wars are a myth

**Thalif Deen**  
Stockholm

THE world's future wars will be fought not over oil but water: an ominous prediction made by the CIA, the British ministry of defence and even by some officials of the World Bank.

But experts and academics meeting at an international conference on water management in Stockholm dismiss this prediction as unrealistic, far-fetched and nonsensical.

"Water wars make good newspaper headlines but cooperation (agreements) don't," says Arunabha Ghosh, co-author of the upcoming Human Development Report 2006 themed on water management. The annual report, commissioned by the UNDP, is to be released in December.

In reality, Ghosh told the meeting in Stockholm, there are plenty of bilateral, multilateral and trans-boundary agreements for water-sharing. Several agreements were "models of cooperation", including the Indus Waters Treaty, the Israel-Jordan accord, the Senegal River Development Organisation and the Mekong River Commission.

Asked about water wars, Prof. Asit K Biswas of the Mexico-based Third World Centre for Water Management, said: "This is absolute nonsense because this is not going to happen – at least not during the next 100 years."

He said the world is not facing a water crisis because of physical water scarcities. "This is baloney," he said. "What it is facing is a crisis of bad water management," argued Biswas, who was awarded the 2006 International Stockholm Water Prize for "outstanding achievements" in his field.

According to UNESCO, one-third of all river basins are shared by more than two countries. Globally, there are 262 international river basins: 59 in Africa, 52 in Asia, 73 in Europe, 61 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 17 in North America. Overall, 145 countries have territories that include at least one shared river basin.

Between 1948 and 1999, UNESCO says, there have been 1,831 "international interactions" recorded, including 507 conflicts, 96 neutral or non-significant events, and most importantly, 1,228 instances of cooperation.

"Despite the potential problem, history has demonstrated that cooperation, rather than conflict, is likely in shared basins," UNESCO concludes.

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) says that 10 to 20-year-old arguments about conflict over water are still being recycled.

"Such arguments ignore massive amounts of recent research which shows that water-scarce states that share a water body tend to find cooperative solutions rather than enter into violent conflict," the institute says.

SIWI says that during the entire "intifada" – the ongoing Palestinian uprising against Israel in the occupied territories of West Bank and Gaza – the only thing on which the two warring parties continued to cooperate at a basic level was their shared waters.

"Thus, rather than reaching for arguments for the 'water war hypotheses,' the facts seem to support the idea that water is a uniting force and a potential source of peace rather than violent conflict," SIWI said.

A study sponsored by the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars points that despite newspaper headlines screaming "water wars are coming!", these apocalyptic warnings fly in the face of history.

"No nations have gone to war specifically over water resources for thousands of years. International water disputes – even among fierce enemies – are resolved peacefully, even as conflicts erupt over other issues," it says.

The study also points out instances of cooperation between riparian nations outnumbered conflicts by more than two to one between 1945 and 1999.

Why? "Because water is so important, nations cannot afford to fight over it. Instead, water fuels greater interdependence. By coming together to jointly manage their shared water resources, countries can build trust and prevent conflict," argues the study, jointly co-authored by Aaron Wolf, Annika Kramer, Alexander Carius and Geoffrey Dabelko.

The study also says most of the conflicts have been within nations, and that international rivers are a different story. In the early 1990s, California farmers bombed pipelines moving water from Owens Valley to Los Angeles, and in 2000 Chinese farmers in Shandong clashed with police to protest government plans to divert irrigation water to cities and industries.

*Asia Water Wire*

## Afghan newspapers search for readers

**Jawed Omid**  
Kabul

UNDER Afghanistan's post-Taliban government the country has seen an unprecedented flourishing of the media, but the apparent choice of print publications belies the fact that no one is actually reading them.

The easiest explanation should be Afghanistan's high rates of illiteracy, especially but not only, among women.

Yet that does not appear to be the main reason. The papers are not attractive enough to win a regular readership in a country where radio has traditionally been the major source of information.

Since the first newspaper, called *Shams ul-Nahar* or *Midday Sun*, came out in 1863, the press has had difficult times – sometimes censored, rarely independent and in recent decades both actor and victim in a succession of conflicts. That changed after 2001, when international funding for media and liberalised press laws created an explosion in the number of titles.

Mubarez Rashidi, recently appointed deputy minister for information and youth, said that there are now 532 newspapers across the country registered with his ministry, 437 of them independent and the rest state-run.

But what these figures do not show is that most titles are based in Kabul, and circulation figures are low – even a prominent newspaper like *Arman-e-Milli* has a daily circulation of just over 4,000 – and many of the ostensibly independent ones serve as the mouthpieces of the politicians or factions that stand behind them.

Rashidi is optimistic about the increased number of newspapers and the relative freedom they now enjoy, and says the main reason people are not reading them is that the change has been so swift. "It will take some time to boost the culture of newspaper reading," he said.

Fahim Dashti, chief editor of the independent *Kabul Weekly*, shares this view.

"Reading newspapers is a cultural phenomenon. In other countries, people are used to reading the paper during breakfast and when they come home from work – even in their cars.... It will take time for this culture to grow in

Afghanistan," he said. He added that the problem applies particularly to young people, and is also in part a consequence of low literacy rates, which mean radio and television are dominant.

Evidence of low sales was provided by Waliullah, who runs a stationery shop in Kabul's Da Afghanistan area and stocks a range of newspapers, many of which he gets for free from chief editors desperate to boost circulation figures. Yet he is not selling more than 10 to 15 copies a day.

Some like Mohammad Jaan Haqqal, a Kabul University lecturer who is also chief editor of the *Diwa* magazine, said readers are dismissive of newspapers and see them as being of bad quality.

Daud Daadras, a student at the university, also sees the low demand stemming from a perception that "most of the newspapers in our country are linguistically or ethnically based, and are not neutral". In any case, he added, readers will not learn anything they have not already heard on the radio or TV news.

Daadras recalled an amusing incident which showed the lengths publishers – in this case the peacekeeping International Security Assistance Force, ISAF – will go to win people over.

"I saw a few ISAF vehicles outside the foreign ministry handing out copies of *Sada-e-Azadi*, ISAF's own newspaper," he said. "Since people aren't interested in reading papers, the ISAF forces were giving everyone a banana in return for taking a copy."

At Kabul University, where literacy and education are certainly no obstacle, this reporter saw stacks of newspapers by one of the entrances waiting to be picked up for free by students arriving for morning classes. After half an hour, all the students had gone in, but only three had taken copies.

My excitement rose as a man appeared and lifted all the newspapers – could they still be destined for a group of eager readers? Unfortunately not.

Followed into a snack bar, the man explained with a smile, "If they were for reading, the students would have taken them themselves. They're for wrapping the burgers, chips and sandwiches."

*Jawed Omid is a freelance reporter in Kabul.*

*Courtesy: www.iwpr.net*

# The demise of western journalism

## LETTER FROM EUROPE



Riaz Quadir in Versailles

SINCE its early days there existed, in the world of journalism, this lofty notion of 'objectivity' which, however cherished, seems to have fallen by the wayside. Before mourning its demise we need to acknowledge that just as quantum physics revealed that when we delve into matter we find newer realities exist, in the same way, when we examine the human psychè we discover that our views are shaped

by our beliefs and values which ultimately colour our reporting.

Hence the term 'professional' – an epithet worn as a badge of honour in the modern or westernised world – seeks to deprive man of his very humanity. In a society dedicated to functional excellence it promises exactly that: functional excellence but devoid of human 'weaknesses'.

More than two decades ago when I frequently travelled to China on business I discovered how important it was for the traditional Chinese businessman to first get to know you and like you before discussing business, much less transact any. Thanks to globalisation this very human behaviour, common to most of the old world, has been rapidly replaced by a more 'civilised' professionalism. The ultimate 'corporate' man is like a professional killer who leaves all his emotions at home when setting out to do a deal. Your employer couldn't care less about your values, your feelings and your beliefs regarding the project on hand and its impact on life around it. You are paid not to think about anything other than the efficient and successful completion of the job on hand.

Values and beliefs, however, are perennial. Only, in the professional's world they are no longer his own. In exchange for a materially rewarding life he has accepted to suspend his personal values and beliefs, or over time, learned to align them in total subservience to corporate values and beliefs. That done, he can then be labelled a true professional; functionally adept, his skills available to the highest bidder.

Unfortunately, in the world of journalism the conflict between our human 'weaknesses' and professionalism is more stark and unsettling than, for example, in cancer research or civil engineering. Probably because our expectations from journalists are unrealistic in this much-compromised world. We want them to deliver the 'truth' to us. The unvarnished facts as it were. Given the structure of the world, this borders on the utopic. Imagine a journalist working for CNN, SkyNews or ABC challenging their employer's political positions and giving us the unvarnished facts. It would be like asking an IBM manager to objectively analyse an Apple computer and come out in praise for it, even if that were the truth.

In a world where we cannot avoid CNN, SkyNews or ABC, it would do well for us to know what their real values and beliefs are. For example, it is easy to understand why MSNBC's military analyst, Rick Francona, when describing the Israeli raid in Baalbek on August 2, (which the Israeli military had reported as the kidnapping of five Hezbollah members and local witnesses described as the kidnapping of some local farmers) called it an excellent raid on Israel's part, because with its 'highly accurate intelligence' it had possibly apprehended the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah. Francona managed not only to analyse the situation solely from Israel's point of view, but in his enthusiasm even exceeded the Israelis themselves.

Three weeks later, on August 23, the five farmers, including a farmer by the name of Hassan Nasrallah, were returned to Lebanon through the auspices of the International Red Cross. Why MSNBC and countless others chose to report the claims of the Israeli military machinery over those of the witnesses on the scene should not be a mystery to those of us who know that MSNBC's values are merely reflective of the Israeli government and the US government itself. The fact that they trip over the facts, time and time again, is hardly discerned

by the gullible American public.

According to Oxfam's August 14 report, the destruction across Lebanon included "7,000 homes, 160 factories, markets, farms and other commercial buildings, 29 water and sewage-treatment plants, electrical plants, dams, ports and airports, 23 petrol stations, 145 bridges and overpasses; 600 kilometres of roads"...

Yet, the repeated message from mainline media was Israel's 'war on Hezbollah'. Likewise, the casualty figures according to Reuters were: Lebanese death toll 1,100, the vast majority being civilians. On the Israeli side, the majority of deaths were military, 117 soldiers and 40 civilians. Yet the constant message on American TV and to a lesser degree, European TV, seemed to tell a different story, using the adjective "indiscriminate" to describe Hezbollah's rocket attacks and "very accurate" in describing Israel's tactics and weaponry.

The 'lazy' mind of a passive listener doesn't put together the facts which clearly tell another story because he has habitually put his trust in the media to present him with the truth. But, as has been often established, civil society doesn't function very well based solely on trust and without constant accountability. Like the Brahmins of yesteryears the Mandarins of Media have acquired godly status and are often placed beyond the human pale. When Blair goofs up on Weapons of Mass Destruction he has to pay a political price. When the media goofs up we have no redress...

Does the media have the obligation of examining the 'facts' before presenting

it to the public or are we now living permanently in the world of 'embedded' journalism where the fourth estate has had a business merger (or was it forced takeover?) with the State? How insane must the world be when Dick Cheney, one of the architects of the Iraq War, says on September 10, that without the invasion, Saddam would have posed a significant threat to the US. "He would be sitting on top of a pile of cash" from high oil prices, Cheney said. "He would be a major state sponsor of terror. To suggest, somehow, that the world is not better off by having Saddam Hussein in jail, I think, is just dead wrong."

This, after five years of total mayhem in the Middle East. This, after every artifice in the Anglo-American bag of tricks has failed to produce a connection between Saddam and international terrorism. This, after the US Congress has released its Report published by the US senate intelligence committee this week, which has categorically declared that there were no links between Saddam Hussein, the former Iraqi leader, and any members of al-Qaeda.

On the very same day in a separate interview with CNN, Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of state, said that the US might yet uncover evidence of links between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda. "There were ties between Iraq and al-Qaeda," she said.

To what limits has our credulity been stretched? Does the media have a role when presenting us with such untruths without commentary? Specially, to a populace that is undiscerning, gullible and whose ignorance is legendary.

In democracies we talk of the 'Court of Public Opinion' where political issues are ironed out but the irony here is that the media where such public opinion ought to be reflected is itself compromised. As a result, our faith in mainstream media is fast diminishing only to be replaced by the chaos and cacophony of a vast array of highly polarised voices, mainly over the internet.

What, then, is the average audience of the media to do? Go to the source of the entity that gives you information and judge it for the values it embodies and its history of manifesting those values – and take it to task every time it defaults. Our histories are important. We cannot be separate from our histories and our origins. What credibility should a nation that is built on the killing field where it has decimated and buried another entire nation have, when speaking of genocide - without having atoned for its sins, that is. Let us not forget how inextricably linked we are to our past. "Tomorrow, tomorrow and tomorrow..." is naught but "all our yesterdays..." put together. If our history remains clouded in untruths, our future is surely lost.

**When Blair goofs up on Weapons of Mass Destruction, he has to pay a political price. When the media goofs up, we have no redress. Does the media have the obligation of examining the 'facts' before presenting it to the public or are we now living permanently in the world of 'embedded' journalism where the fourth estate has had a business merger (or was it forced takeover?) with the State?**

# Perspectives

## CATCHING

**Have an idea? Perhaps a lost cause? Tell your story or just express an honest opinion in these pages.**

## Largesse for the right idea

RAM GIDOOMAL



### Through NR Eyes

**E**ARLIER this summer we saw the most extraordinary sight of the second richest man in the world, Warren Buffet, announcing the fact that he would be giving \$31 billion of his hard-earned fortune to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, founded by the world's richest man, Bill Gates! This single donation effectively doubled the size of what is already the largest foundation. At current values, it makes it the largest philanthropic gift in history. By comparison, two earlier giants of American philanthropy, John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, gave away only \$7.6 billion and \$4.1 billion respectively, measured in 2006 dollars.

What struck me was the fact that Buffet chose to give his money to another foundation, instead of using this opportunity to create another channel or channels that could have encouraged greater

creativity in a market place where ideas are in desperately short supply. He had said a few years ago that he would give his money to causes that no one else was willing to support. If he were living in the 1950s, he said, he liked to think that he would have used his fortune to promote higher education for Black Americans in the segregated South.

I can think of many causes that Buffet could have supported and which not many funders seem willing to support – e.g. the refugee crisis that faces this planet following the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, Sudan – and this list could go on... instead of just handing his money over to another foundation.

Mr Buffet's approach is in direct contrast to that of another great American philanthropist, George Soros, who set up his own Open Society foundations. His wealth, while nowhere near that of Buffet, is still significant. His annual compensation exceeded the gross domestic product of at least 42 member nations of the UN and was roughly equal to that of Chad, Guadeloupe and Burundi. According to one analyst, 'he could buy 5790 Rolls Royces at \$190,000 a pop. Or pay the annual tuition of every student attending Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia combined for over three years.'

Soros is deemed to have played a significant part in what was arguably the most important and benign event of our lifetime, the miraculously bloodless collapse of Communism. The activities of his foundations have ranged from supplying dissident movements with photocopiers and fax machines so that they could promote civil society in Eastern Europe to paying the salaries of the entire Russian scientific establishment after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in order to prevent nuclear scientists emigrating to rogue states such as Iraq!

The amounts being donated are huge by any standard and have had significant impact and influence, not just for those to whom funds have been sent, but also in causing many others who have made money to review their own financial situations and be challenged to follow suit.

In India the wealthy bosses of Infosys, Wipro and Dr Reddy's are joining more established business philanthropists such as the Tata, Birla and Bajaj families. And NRIs, certainly in the UK, are not lagging when it comes to charitable giving. Sir Gulam Noon, the curry magnate, set up the Noon Foundation after selling his business for £50 million to help not only projects in India but also projects in the poorest parts of the UK.

The explosion of what has been dubbed 'venture philanthropy' and 'philanthrocapitalism' among the newly emerging rich may have been inevitable. As one national newspaper in the UK put it: 'Once you have bought a £200,000 Bentley, colour coordinated your Gulf stream jet with the yacht and spent £300,000 on a diamond ring for your wife's birthday, only one thing can make you feel as good as sampling a £1,200 bottle of champagne – doing something for your fellow men.'

The giving of large sums of money does, of course, pose challenges. How do you manage such largesse so that the impact of the gifts is truly effective?

'It is more difficult to give money away intelligently than it is to earn it in the first place' said Andrew Carnegie.

So what exactly is effective giving? What should the guiding principles be? Are there criteria that can help govern allocation and use of donations? How should effectiveness and impact be measured and monitored? These are, of course, not new questions, as the issues surrounding philanthropy have been around for time immemorial.

What is encouraging is the growth in the number of organisations and resources that now exist to help those intent on learning how best to give to charity – be they individuals, corporations or indeed other trusts and foundations. Philanthropy UK recently launched its own resource called 'A Guide to Giving'. Charles Handy's latest book 'The New Philanthropists' (William Heinemann Publishers) is being launched in October. The Institute for Philanthropy, an offshoot of the Rockefeller Foundation, is offering courses in London for those seeking help.

An aspect of philanthropy that is gaining increasing attention is 'Diaspora philanthropy'. The World Bank puts the remittance and philanthropic transfer globally at \$90 billion, nearly twice the total flow of Official Development Assistance.

A critical issue that this raises is the need for transparency and accountability. The recent cases cited by governments following the Mumbai bomb blasts, Gujarat disturbances, London Underground bombings and the events of 9/11 are not the only reason to be concerned – important as they are. The amounts involved are so large that in many cases they dwarf the GDP of the beneficiary countries, thereby creating situations that could undermine democratically elected governments.

While the need for regulations to control and monitor such flows is clear, Dr Robert L. Payton, first professor of philanthropic studies in the United States, warns of 'the danger of philanthropic sclerosis that over-regulation can and in many cases is causing.' Philanthropic organisations are increasingly constrained in their work by legal and even legalistic interpretations of the law. It occurred to me to think of the Good Samaritan walking down from Jerusalem to Jericho accompanied by his friend, a lawyer. At the Good Samaritan's first movement to help the victim, his friend the lawyer would grab at his sleeve and say, 'Don't you dare get involved with that!'

But not getting involved would have serious consequences, not least because of the importance of transnational philanthropic flows which reinforce civil society. Philanthropy is an expression of a community's commitment to its future even if only expressed in monetary terms. Remittances and diaspora philanthropy provide a stream of evidence of the commitment of private individuals to the future of their families and communities. The challenge is to get the balance between our rights and freedom to remit money and our accountability and responsibility to ensure its rightful use.

# How to counter terrorism in

YATEENDRA SINGH



## Police Reforms

**T**HE terrorist movement that erupted in Kashmir in 1989 remains dangerously alive. The government's response to it is primarily an armed response. Obviously, police action is not a final answer. Terrorism can be defeated only when the people of Kashmir reject it. Its root cause is not Pakistan. Rather it is the people's alienation that Pakistan has been successfully exploiting. This means that the central and state governments should address the people's grievances and solve their basic problems, and the police forces must heal their wounds by humane policing. The Border Security Force (BSF) tried this strategy in 1991 and its success showed that it was a practicable approach.

In the summer of 1991, the BSF took over the security of Srinagar, Sopore and Baramullah from the CRPF. These towns were known as "liberated zones" where terrorists struck at will and the writ of the armed forces did not run.

Srinagar and Baramullah were swiftly controlled and pacified. But Sopore remained a haven for terrorists. In September 1991, they attacked BSF troops and were subdued only after a daylong fierce engagement. This writer visited Sopore the next day and saw deep anger against the BSF. The markets were shut. Transport was at a standstill. A dismal silence pervaded. Only the footsteps of BSF Jawans echoed on the streets.

On the spur of the moment I called a meeting of prominent local people at the girls' degree college. I told them that terrorists had taken over the town, attacked government vehicles and endangered the army and police whose path to the border areas of Kupwara and Tangdhar lay through Sopore. We apologised for the excesses committed in the heat of action. We assured them that innocent people would not be harassed.

As the dialogue progressed, the tension began to abate. We asked the people to open their shops and conduct their daily business without fear. We were keen that the girls' college should reopen as a conspicuous symbol of normalcy.

It would not be reopened, they shouted, as long as the BSF company was bivouacked there. Instantly, I announced the immediate withdrawal of the BSF and there were smiles and cheers. Before we left, the same people were extending their hands to shake ours, and invoking Allah's blessings upon us.

The message was clear: the simple, sentimental and forgiving Kashmiris were not against India but were misled by Pakistan and the terrorists. Therefore, the strategy should be to isolate the terrorists from the masses. The BSF managed to do this through certain initiatives.

The first step was taken in Pulwama, South Kashmir. SK Seth, the BSF Commandant, policed this restive town by putting constant pressure on the terrorists. His strong methods had kept them at bay but also earned the people's ire. One day, JN Saxena, DGP J&K, introduced this writer to an elderly Muslim who was the *sarpanch* of a village in Pulwama. The terrorists had vowed to wipe out his family. We deployed a BSF platoon at his house. The *sarpanch* felt so safe and happy, that this writer decided to use his influence to win over the local people.

At our behest he organised a public meeting. More BSF Jawans were visible than local persons. A few persons gathered under the shamiana. Many more sat on walls and roofs as curious bystanders. We distributed sweets among the villagers and gave gifts to the children. The tense atmosphere began to thaw. More people slipped inside the shamiana and there were smiles and good cheer. The *sarpanch* spoke first, mainly about the good performance of the BSF. This writer assured people that the BSF was not there to harass but to protect them. Our

only targets were the terrorists and people should not shelter them. At the end of the meeting, this writer raised the slogan "Hindustan Zindabad". In a tepid voice, a few locals joined in. However, it was for the first time since the outbreak of militancy in Kashmir that we were hearing this slogan. The only words uttered in those days were "Indian dogs, leave Kashmir".

Soon we revisited the *sarpanch's* village and addressed a larger and more cheerful gathering. The BSF platoon's good conduct and generous distribution of sweets and gifts had helped. "Hindustan Zindabad" was heard much louder this time. Encouraged, we brought the Director General of the BSF to this village. He gave away sweets and gifts, though he seemed somewhat annoyed when kids in their enthusiasm forgot their good manners and attempted to snatch gifts from his hands! Ultimately, the *sarpanch* and the BSF between themselves had made this village a pro-India isle of peace. Though a small experiment, it showed the way to tranquility and public acceptance of the BSF. The best compliment came from the tough SK Seth. He remarked that so far he had only been ruthlessly killing terrorists, but this new approach to counter-terrorism was very rewarding.

A second measure was adopted in Srinagar. As the state government's pri-



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mary health centres (PHCs) were defunct, we decided to establish medical centres in Rainawari and Nawhatta, erstwhile terrorist strongholds. No local patient appeared for the first few days, because despite the substantial peace brought about by the BSF, the people hated it. However, ailing people sorely needed medical facilities and soon many, especially women with gynecological complaints, began visiting these clinics. A BSF woman doctor valiantly attended to them regularly. Medicines were given free and the BSF gained considerable goodwill.

These clinics petered out as neither the BSF headquarters in Delhi nor the State government provided medicines, bandages etc. for these clinics and our own budget was inadequate to sustain them. But this humanitarian work showed the power of public service for winning over the people. Indeed, the police forces should learn from the army which provides medical and other help to people in the forward areas of the state and gets their loyalty and assistance in return.

# Kashmir

One day, the DIG BSF Baramulla Sector presented a young Kashmiri girl who had been rescued from the atrocities of terrorists in Bandipura to this writer. We arranged to keep her in a women's hospital to be trained as a nurse. However, one day, a terrorist identified her. The hospital authorities demanded her removal in case the terrorists harmed them for protecting the girl. She was sent home, as there was no other safe place for her. The BSF had tried to help her, but the circumstances defeated our effort. The girl, however, remains grateful to the BSF.

During 1991-92, Muslim women launched protest marches in Srinagar. Shouting frenzied slogans, they would advance upon BSF troops, who would slowly retreat to avoid a confrontation. These troops, who had only firearms, were not equipped to handle agitating women. There were also occasional complaints of BSF personnel misbehaving with local women during their operations.

The answer was to have women police for such situations. There was only one company of CRPF women soldiers in Kashmir, which was monopolised by the army for its operations. This writer proposed to the BSF headquarters to raise a battalion of women soldiers. But the proposal was stillborn, as the male leadership of the force rejected the idea of recruiting women into the BSF.

Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the Union Home Minister, had got land allotted to the BSF and CRPF in Srinagar for establishing recruitment-cum-training centres. This scheme opened up a great opportunity for public service. As it generated employment, the educated youth of Kashmir began joining these forces. The BSF training centre was a sick unit until JS Bajwa, Additional DIG, infused life into it.

One day he complained that many recruits were going on leave and several never returned perhaps because they feared the terrorists. Many recruits would return after long absences. We decided to be lenient in the larger national interest. Any recruit who overstayed his leave but returned was allowed to resume training with an extended period of training.

Accordingly, we could retain many Kashmiri boys, some of whom would now be serving as proud soldiers in Nagaland, Darjeeling or the Rann of Kutch. Vigorous and systematic recruitment of Kashmiri youth in the armed forces provides an extraordinary opportunity for helping and fraternising numerous local families.

These episodes indicate that a thoughtful strategy of counter-terrorism policing is feasible. The foremost requirement is to understand that the vast majority of the people of Kashmir are pro-India. The Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) poll conducted in April-May 2002 revealed that about 61 percent of the people in the state felt that they would be better off politically and economically as Indian citizens. The rank-and-file of the armed forces are ignorant of these facts and should be conditioned to overcome their irrational dislike and distrust of the Muslims of Kashmir. This will, in turn, reduce the hostility of the people against these forces.

Secondly, Kashmiris are as much the victims of atrocities by terrorists as of the zeal of the armed forces. As the armed response to terrorism has not always been employed carefully, it has led to civilian complaints. The armed forces lack suitable weaponry, training, tactics and temperament for handling protests by unarmed agitators. Having only lethal weapons, they have used excessive force in such situations causing loss of innocent lives.

However, the sensitive environment of Kashmir demands greater operational flexibility and improvisation. These forces should be trained to handle crowds and protest marches with the help of non-lethal weapons such as tear-gas, batons, shields, stun grenades, dogs and plastic bullets. Men with automatic weapons should be kept close by and can be brought into operation, if unavoidable. Local commanders of these forces need intensive training in the skill of using calibrated force according to the level of the threat.

For winning the hearts and minds of Kashmiris, pro-people measures are required. The government should generate employment for Muslim youth, repair broken roads and bridges, provide drainage systems, drinking water, power and basic medical care.

The security forces, which have given considerable peace and security to the masses, are still unwelcome in Kashmir, as their thoughtless operational zeal, overreaction and misbehaviour affects the daily lives of the tormented people of Kashmir. Hence, they must exercise respect for human dignity and human life, restraint in using lethal force, eschew a trigger-happy or recklessly authoritarian approach during raids, searches and interrogations, and focus on welfare activities for the public. Eventually, Mufti Sayeed's 'healing touch' is as much a prescription for the armed forces as for the political bosses.

*Yateendra Singh, Indian Police Service (retired) handled counter-terrorism operations in Punjab in 1988 and in Kashmir in 1991-1992.*

## *Be prepared for floods like Surat*

MIHIR R BHATT

**T**HE 82-hour flooding of two-thirds of Surat city, the bustling diamond and textile hub of India, is a wake up call for civil society. The lesson is: do not leave your safety and security to the mercy of any administrative authority. It is a high-risk venture, however impressive the authority's credentials may be.

So, what is the agenda for action from the Surat disaster for civil society in other cities and towns located along river-banks across India?

Do not wait for flooding. Be prepared. Go back to newspaper reports of the last flooding in your town or city. For example: Delhi near the Yamuna, Ahmedabad on the Sabarmati, and Patana next to the Ganga. Make two lists: one for citizens on preparatory action and a second one of all the promises made by various authorities to take risk reduction measures after the last flood.

From the list prepared for citizens, estimate the costs for each preparatory action and demand resources from the respective authorities to implement them. These actions may range from setting up rescue teams and emergency response training for youth to school safety modules or buying life jackets.

From the list of promises made by the authority, demand in writing "action-taken-reports" from them. Disasters are even more delicate than democracy: the price of disaster risk reduction is eternal vigilance.

Citizens, especially those who are poor or have low income, must document, with photos and public records, proof of their income, assets, shelter and services available. When flooding takes place, they will then be able to show accurately what has been lost and what it will cost to replace these assets. Without documentation we will continue to hear stories about how a measly Rs 120 or Rs 175 was paid as relief to victims. The best way to prepare against this unjust compensation is to have documents that have been legitimised by public officials, the local CBO or NGO, and by the community itself.

Civil society living in cities near river banks must invite an autonomous expert group to publicly review the city's development plans, its disaster management plans and river flood management plans. Such plans must be made available by the local city authority, the state's disaster management authority, and water and irrigation departments. A review of these strategies should enlist the strength and weakness of each plan, and rate its performance during the last flood. In fact all cities receiving funds from the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission must write to the mission and demand that they ensure the city's safety from floods before infrastructure investments are made.

And most importantly, civil society must initiate a citywide, broadly held and publicly managed Tripartite Fund of citizens, the urban authorities and business to invest in flood mitigation measures, and flood recovery. The fund must reach out, not only to large infrastructure projects but also to local micro mitigation measures. It should include slums and informal sector communities and focus on women and schools.

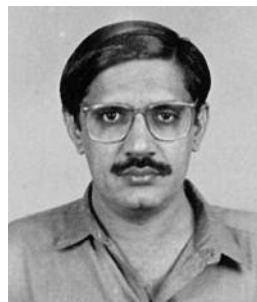
If these four actions do not find place on the agenda of our flood-prone cities then what will drown in future are not only houses and livelihoods, but also the autonomy of civil society.

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**Do not wait for flooding. Be prepared. Go back to newspaper reports of the last flooding in your town or city.**

# Surat need not have had floods

HIMANSHU THAKKAR



## Water Report

**C**ONSIDER the immense losses caused by floods in Surat district of south Gujarat this monsoon: over a hundred people dead, more than 200 missing, damages worth over Rs 20, 000 crores and economic losses above Rs 50, 000 crores.

More than 80 per cent of Surat was submerged for days. The impact was far reaching – even the power supply for the national capacity was affected, as the gas supply infrastructure at Hazira, downstream from Surat, had to be shut down.

This happened because the Ukai dam, upstream from Surat on the Tapi river released large quantities, of about eight to 11 lakh cusecs of water, for four days starting from the evening of Aug 7. This, when dam authorities knew that the current carrying capacity of the river downstream is under four lakh cusecs, and that Aug 9 was a full moon night

when high tides at sea would further reduce the Tapi river's carrying capacity.

But Surat need not have had any floods. If Ukai dam authorities had operated the hydropower installed capacity at optimum level from January to the day of the floods and if they had started releasing three lakh cusecs of water from Aug 1, there would have been no floods.

The Ukai dam has been designed to have a flood cushion capacity of 1.332 BCM (billion cubic metres), which means that 1.332 BCM capacity on top should not have been filled till the end of August. Moreover, due to siltation, Ukai reservoir's live storage capacity has reduced from the original 7.092 BCM to 6.615 BCM (current live storage capacity as per the Central Water Commission) and now to 5.77 BCM. Therefore, the water level should not have been allowed to go above 332 feet till the end of August, as also reportedly mandated by the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority.

However, the water height at Ukai dam had reached this level by Aug 1. Yet the dam authorities refused to release water in sufficient quantities to take care of the incoming floods.

Moreover, when we looked at rainfall figures in the Ukai catchment area and compared those with how the level of water at Ukai reservoir was rising, we saw that there was further reason for the release of water from the dam.

The daily taluka-wise (sub-district) rainfall data available every day on the Maharashtra government's website (over 81 percent of the Ukai's catchment is in Maharashtra) showed a high incidence of rainfall throughout the Tapi basin talukas during the entire month of July and the first fortnight of August. This information, that was available to everyone including the Ukai dam management, confirmed that there was sufficient actionable information available to start release of three lakh cusecs of water from Aug 1 or earlier.

Incidentally, one reason why dam authorities tend to keep water levels high is to maximise power generation. However, when we examined power generation figures at Ukai, we saw that the project was generating much below its potential capacity. It had not met its target of power generation throughout this year. In fact, in July the power generated at Ukai was the lowest, when it could have been the highest. It generated just 13 million units, less than 25 percent of what could have been produced. This was a big economic loss. Had the project authorities generated optimum power throughout this year, there would have been no floods at Surat.

Our analysis was confirmed when we learnt from a correspondent of a leading daily that on Aug 2 the Collector of Surat district was heard asking the Ukai Chief Engineer to release water from the dam. The Collector said she was getting phone calls from the collector of Nandurbar in Maharashtra informing her about heavy rainfall in the Tapi catchment and its likely inflows into the Ukai dam. Despite this request from the Surat Collector, no water was released from the Ukai dam for at least the next three days.

Criminal mismanagement of large dams leading to flood disasters is not unique to Surat. It has led to a number of flood disasters in India this year, in

the Mahi, Sabarmati, Narmada and the Tapi basins in Gujarat, Parbati and Chambal basins in Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh, the Krishna basin in Maharashtra-Karnataka-Andhra Pradesh and the Godavari Basin in Maharashtra-Andhra Pradesh. Many of these disasters could have been prevented or damages reduced with better management of dams. However, the unaccountable dam authorities are likely to get away with criminal negligence.

There are two major factors that have caused this situation. First, is the high pre-monsoon storages in these reservoirs and secondly, the sudden release of large quantities of water for prolonged periods, only when the dams are nearly full, as we saw in the case of the Ukai dam and the Surat floods.

It is true that the thoughtless development of urban areas, roads, railway lines and canals increase the likelihood of floods, especially when development of drainage does not take place alongside construction of infrastructure. It is also true that the existence of dams leads to a false sense of security and that the encroachment of flood plains in downstream areas, reduces the carrying capacity of the river and increases damages when floods come, as they inevitably do.

But this does not take away the responsibility of dam management, as in the case of the Ukai reservoir. However, it does raise the need for the inclusion of adequate drainage whenever any land-based development takes place. Moreover, we need to remember that if we take away the space for rivers to flow, the rivers are bound to hit back at us, in a way that is not pleasant.

All these raise many questions, the chief being the utterly non-transparent and unaccountable functioning of water resource establishments in India.

Some important recommendations to avert preventable floods are listed below:

- National enquiry: A nationwide independent enquiry should be set up on the issue of floods this year, particularly those from the sudden releases of water from dams all over India. With proper use of water in the reservoir before the monsoon and timely releases of water from the dams, many of these disasters could have been avoided or damages substantially reduced.
- High pre-monsoon storages: The investigation should look into why this was the case, what the consequences were and how these could have been avoided.
- Transparency in dam operations: The inflows, outflows, levels, storages and forecasts at all reservoirs should be routinely made public on a daily basis. The reservoir operation rules, the rule curves and disaster management plans should be in the public domain for all reservoirs.
- Provide basin wise rainfall data, forecasts: The Met Dept (and others, including state governments) should give basin wise rainfall data. Rainfall and flood forecasts should be done river basin wise and not according to geographical area as is done now.
- Failure of CWC: The Central Water Commission's performance about flood forecasting leaves a lot to be desired. It seems to have totally failed to predict floods, both due to heavy rainfall and due to releases from dams. For example, even as a number of river basins in Gujarat were experiencing floods due to releases from dams, the flood forecasts at CWC website were completely silent on all these floods.
- Review dam operation rules: As recommended by the National Flood Commission (1980) and the National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development, periodic review of dam operation rules and rule curves should be taken up in a transparent manner and made public.
- UNDP reports inaccurate: UNDP routinely puts out flood situation reports that seem to have no understanding of how sudden releases of water from dams are leading to floods. UNDP reports should give an accurate picture.
- Citizens groups: Most importantly, citizens groups near large dams need to monitor dam operations and the flood situation and make the government answerable for avoidable disasters.

Himanshu Thakkar is coordinator of South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers & People, Delhi  
E-mail: cwaterp@vsnl.com www.sandrp.in

**There are two major factors. First, is the high pre-monsoon storages in these reservoirs and secondly, the sudden release of large quantities of water for prolonged periods, only when the dams are nearly full.**

# Reviewer

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## THE FINE PRINT

Get behind the scenes. Books, films, theatre, street plays, posters, music, art shows. The one place to track creative people across the country.

## The passionate publisher

*Pramod Kapoor gives Train to Pakistan a new and powerful identity*

LAKSHMAN ANAND

Umesh Anand  
New Delhi

PARTITION left no scars on Pramod Kapoor. He was born six years after it happened and his family did not suffer any personal losses. But publishers with soul live in zones of their own making. So, when he found Margaret Bourke-White's historic unpublished pictures of the brutal division of the subcontinent and strung them together with Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, he brought fact and fiction together like never before. It was a moment of inspiration.

Margaret had been a witness to Partition with her camera, recording the killings and devastation for *Time* and *Life*. Khushwant lived through it and wrote a novel that showed how his world had been ripped apart.

For those who did not see it happen and don't have elders who can tell them about it, Margaret's pictures would seem to be the record of some unspeakable fiction. And in the fiction of Khushwant's powerful novel is a realism that could only have been mirrored in Margaret's pictures.

Pramod's new edition of *Train to Pakistan* thus brings back Partition for everyone with this unique fact to fiction and fiction to fact arrangement.

Few stories get told like this and for the sake of future sanity on the subcontinent it is important that Partition's skeletons be put on full display.

History is invariably all around us: in the people we meet and the buildings we visit. The decision to launch the special edition at Khan Market in Delhi was therefore taken to put it in the context of the anonymous millions that Partition affected. It was in Khan Market that Hindu refugees from West Pakistan were resettled and where they have lived till recently when rising real estate prices have prompted some to sell their small shops and flats and move on.

But a launch ceremony in the car park with the aged Khushwant, Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit and a few others and a picture exhibition sprawled all over Khan Market is another example of the special character of the book beyond its neat design and careful use of black and white.

Excerpts from an interview we did with **Pramod Kapoor** at the offices of Roli Books.

### Why did you reprint *Train to Pakistan*?

I had gone to the Getty Foundation in New York, scouting for new



Pramod Kapoor

ideas. In their archives I saw these pictures of the Partition of 1947. Some of them, about 20 or 30 had been published in a special issue on India's freedom in *Life* magazine in 1947. But the photographer, Margaret Bourke-White, had shot thousands of pictures, some of them extremely gory.

I felt these stark pictures should be republished. Yes, I could have got some historical research book done and married the pictures to it. Instead, I decided to place them with Khushwant Singh's classic story on Partition. And coincidentally the book was completing 50 years.

When I told Khushwant about my plans and these pictures he said do what you like, its true, Partition was gruesome.

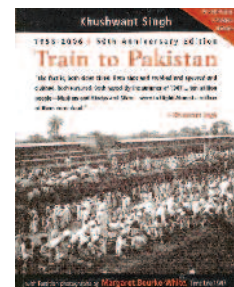
### Did your family also experience Partition?

No, not at all. It hardly had any impact on me. My father married in Peshawar, moved to Lahore and then to India much before Partition.

### How has the reprint of the book done?

It has done very well. We sold 5,000 and are reprinting within one month. The earlier avatar of the book was done in a less

(Continued on page 34)



**Publisher**  
Lotus Roli  
**Author**  
Khushwant Singh  
**Pictures**  
Margaret Bourke-White  
**Price**  
Rs 495



## The passionate publisher

(Continued from page 33)

expensive way. This time it was done a little exclusively for an audience who would like to keep the copy but it found many general readers. Partition was a dark, dead horse. Now *Time* magazine is doing a story on *Train to Pakistan*.

**Here a novel, which is fiction, is blended with fact.** We have blended a classic text with classic pictures. Both the novelist and the photographer are saying the same thing. In parts of the novel Khushwant is relating incidents that the photographer has actually shot. For instance, there is one incident when there is no wood to burn dead bodies and diesel from a truck is used. The photographer has captured it all...villagers looking on from the terraces of their homes while bodies are brought in trucks to be burnt, the preaching of hatred by both Muslims and Sikhs, it's not contrived at all.

**After all these years you remain very much the passionate publisher?**

I suppose with age, passion grows.

**There hasn't been that much writing on Partition.**

There has been in regional languages and some books have been published in English. But compared to what happened, the magnitude of the disaster that took place, if you compare it with the Holocaust for instance, it is not that much. Ten million people crossed over to the new nations of India and Pakistan, almost half never reached.

**How has the book been received in Pakistan?**

We have sent 500 copies so far. We changed the cover: the train has a banner that reads "Pakistan zindabad". That worked better but everybody liked that cover here too.

**What were the reactions to the book and its pictures here?**

We were apprehensive. Some pictures were disturbing and some were edited out. Khushwant's reaction was, don't worry I saw much worse. Put up the exhibition. We decided to exhibit the pictures and the book in public spaces so that more people would see the pictures and it would not be limited to a hall with a select audience. We exhibited at Khan Market because some families are descendants of those who came from Pakistan during Partition. We felt there would be some empathy. It sparked anger in some people. Others said why not just bury the past.

**What impact have the exhibition and the book had?**

Well, if this was done 20 years after Partition it might have triggered so much literature. It would have led to a safer world. But we have had response from schools and colleges who want us to exhibit there. We plan to take the exhibition next to Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh and surprise early morning walkers. There has been a request to make it a permanent exhibition.

**So, the pictures have made a big difference?**

If there were no pictures with the book it would have been read simply as a novel. But now with those pictures it is seen as something factual, as much more real.

# Ruzbeh, the honest eyewitness



Ruzbeh N Bharucha

**Jauymini Barkatky**

New Delhi

TWO years ago, Ruzbeh N Bharucha, a documentary film-maker from Mumbai, was all set to make a film about leprosy victims. He'd completed a film called "Shadows in Cages" about women and children locked in prison and he was pleased with its outcome. It had received critical acclaim and improved the lives of some prisoners.

Kiran Bedi, India's celebrated woman cop, happens to be his mother-in-law. She advised Ruzbeh to take a look at Yamuna Pushta in Delhi, a chain of 22 slums along the banks of the Yamuna where her NGO Navjyoti was working. Leprosy affects the poor and it was possible he would find people he'd like to talk to.

So Ruzbeh took a look, went back to Mumbai, slept over the idea and returned with his team. Yes, he was going to make a film on leprosy in Yamuna Pushta.

But the hand of fate deemed otherwise. No sooner had Ruzbeh begun filming, the Supreme Court order that Yamuna Pushta be demolished and its

residents relocated arrived.

The demolition squads turned up. Ruzbeh saw scenes he would never forget. All around him were wailing children, smashed homes and ruined lives. Ruzbeh stood there, angry and emotionally devastated. So, he decided, his film would now be about the destruction of Yamuna Pushta. He got almost 40 hours of footage before the bulldozers rolled up, he says.

He has now made a film and authored a book called "Yamuna Gently Weeps", straight from his heart. The book is full of pictures to accompany the text.

"I had not intended to write a book," explains Ruzbeh. "When I was looking at the raw footage I realised that a film and a book appeal differently to different people. I wanted to attract both. So I went through the film carefully and whenever I found an eye catching scene, I picked it up for the book."

The book and film are an eyewitness account of what happened at Yamuna Pushta. These 22 slums, along a 3 km stretch of the river, housed 150,000 poor

people. Between February and March 2004 all the slums were smashed. Only 20 per cent of slum-dwellers were given land by the state government in Bawana, a barren expanse with no services, on the outskirts of the city. The rest were left to fend for themselves on the streets.

In the film, residents of Yamuna Pushta speak about their situation. The camera captures their sense of deep loss, hurt, anger and alienation. Ruzbeh follows the slum-dwellers to their new place in Bawana. With no jobs, homes or even water, they grapple to build their lives again. Ruzbeh does not mince words. He too conveys his anger at this blatant violation of human rights.

He also examines why the demolition took place. The slum-dwellers were accused of polluting the river and being encroachers. Ruzbeh shows how this was far from true. He has interviewed experts on toxic waste, architecture and town planning, and human rights activists. He also got to talk to Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, former Prime Minister and human rights activist VP Singh, Congress MP from Delhi Kapil Sibal and the origi-

(Continued on page 35)

# Street kids can be Davar's stars

Jauymini Barkatky  
New Delhi

SHIAMAK Davar is a household name in India. A famous dancer from Mumbai, he is wooed by Bollywood's top film directors to choreograph their song-and-dance scenes. Tall and lithe, Davar runs an academy called the Shiamak Davar Institute of Performing Arts (SDIPA) in Mumbai where would-be starlets eagerly enroll so that they can learn all the right moves.

Far away in Delhi, lives Lilima, a 13-year-old street child whose home is in the down and out Okhlapur area. Two years ago she used to beg to earn a little money. Can Lilima become a starlet? Before you begin to laugh, let me tell you she can.

Lilima loves to dance. Children like her got a chance of a lifetime to show off their skills at a talent hunt organised by Shiamak Davar's academy and Chetna (Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action), an NGO.

The talent show, aptly named *Chupey Rustam*, will identify and nurture street and working children who have a flair for dance. The renowned Mumbai choreographer will pick six of the most talented children. They will be enrolled in his academy and trained, free of cost.

"When we approached Shiamak Davar with this idea, he was very happy to oblige. The children are ecstatic. Everybody has heard of him. It is a great opportunity for them to learn under him," said Sanjay Gupta, director, Chetna.

For one month the NGO spread word about the dance competition, far and wide. "The response has been overwhelming," says Sanjay Tiwari, programme coordinator, Chetna. More than 250 children from 20 different NGOs are taking part eagerly.

The dance competition is in three stages. In the first stage, street and working children from east, north Delhi and Noida will join in.

In the second stage, children from south, west and central Delhi will unveil their dance prowess. Then, 10 children from each territory will be selected for the Mega Final, which shall be graced and judged by no less than Shiamak Davar himself.

Before the competition started, SDIPA's professional dancers trained the children for four days. "Our steps were mostly our own. The SDIPA people showed us how to make them better," says 14-year-old Rabya who makes bangles. "I dance whenever I get a chance and I try to imitate what I see on TV. Sometimes I come up with new steps of my own."

The first part of the competition was held at Mekhla Jha auditorium, Bal Bhavan. The latest Bollywood film songs blared as children danced with vim and verve. Not one was struck by stage fright. The crowd cheered.

Who were the participants? There was 13-year-old Nadeem who stepped on



stage for the first time. There was Geeta, a 13-year-old from Noida. "I make beads and I study in Class 3," she said. Eleven-year-old Ajay, also a student of Class 3, danced vigorously. He wants to become a lawyer. Then there was 17-year-old Sunil who worked the audience to a frenzy with his dance moves.

"I am involved with *Bardhte Kadam* (a project for street children)," he said. "I encourage children to leave work and get an education. I do it because at one time I was like them but now I know the value of education."

In the first round the children danced to a tune of their own choice.

Fourteen students made it to the final round. From among them, 10 children were selected for the Mega Final, which will be held in November. The next round of the talent hunt will be in September.

The judges heartily congratulated the children. "Solo dancing is hard.

But you made it look so easy," said one of them.

Chetna also used the occasion to voice its concerns over the government's recent move to ban children under the age of 14 from working in *dhabas*, (road-side eateries) shops, homes etc.

"A very important aspect is that, although the government has banned children under 14 from working, it hasn't formed any policy to rehabilitate them. As a result, the children are anxious and worried. The event has been organised by us to bring this matter to light and make the government and citizens aware of the situation street and working children face," says Chetna's press release.

(Continued from page 34)

nal demolition man, Jagmohan.

Making the film was not a cakewalk. Ruzbeh had to overcome many obstacles. And, no, having a famous mother-in-law did not help. Slum-dwellers were chary of him, the cops eyed him with suspicion, the NGOs led him a dance and he had to chase important people for interviews. The film also burnt a hole in his pocket.

He was denied permission to shoot once the demolition started. "The cops were wary of us," he says. "We used to drive around in a car with tinted window panes. We would shoot at 6 am when no one was around. It took us five months to edit the film."

The slum-dwellers, facing the demolition squads, did not want to talk. His driver Shakeel, a resident of Sanjay Amar colony, a slum that was demolished, helped out.

"Apart from the authorities, the NGOs gave me the most grief," says Ruzbeh.

"I wanted to feature them in my film. I wanted to

point out that what happened at Yamuna Pushta could happen to the slums they worked in. The NGOs kept my offer hanging for months with endless enquiries and finally never picked up my calls."

The suspicious NGOs thought Ruzbeh was making a film to glorify Kiran Bedi's NGO, Navjyoti. For nearly 15 years Navjyoti worked in Yamuna Pushta. Their *galli* schools were enormously popular with

**'Yamuna Gently Weeps' is an eyewitness account of what happened at Yamuna Pushta. These 22 slums, along a 3 km stretch of the river, housed 150,000 poor people. All the slums were demolished.**

children. The NGOs wouldn't believe he just wanted to make a film on Yamuna Pushta.

Then, for almost two years Jagmohan refused to give an interview to Ruzbeh. He didn't want to talk about Yamuna Pushta, either.

"Finally, I changed my tactics and said I only wanted to talk about Delhi. I had to ask him about slums and specifically Yamuna Pushta, very tactfully."

Since Yamuna Pushta does not exist anymore what difference will Ruzbeh's film make? Well, his film is going to be screened in many international human rights conventions. He is taking it to schools, colleges, law and media institutes. More people are logging into his website [yamunagentlyweeps.com](http://yamunagentlyweeps.com) "I want to make people aware about slums and human rights," he says.

Maybe Ruzbeh's book is not a literary masterpiece. It was not meant to be either. His work has a certain reality and passion. When he started, he just wanted to make a documentary on leprosy. But now 38-year-old Ruzbeh is a journalist, author and film-maker all rolled in one. He is the ultimate honest witness.

# Weak baby? Massage is the answer

Dr G G GANGADHARAN



**T**HE word '*Abhayanga*' means application of oil all over the body. There are 40 to 50 different kinds of massage oils available with leading traditional medicine manufactures. All these oils have their own specific therapeutic activities. Some oils are good for giving strength to a worn out body. Some oils make lean persons fat; others can convert fat bodies to lean ones. Certain oils improve skin texture, some neural conductivity while others can increase cutaneous circulation and so on.

Vagbhata, a great exponent of Ayurveda who lived in 8th Century AD, advised oil massage on a daily basis as an anti-ageing process. It can remove tiredness and eliminate or reduce vatic vitiations. It improves the eyesight and cleans the eyes. It increases the strength and builds body muscles. It is good for longevity as it reduces the ageing process of the body. Daily oil massage helps in improving sleep qualitatively and quantitatively. That means long and deep sleep. Oil massage is a panacea for skin disorders. It improves the skin texture and prevents all skin diseases. It also promotes skin tone and elasticity. It brings stability to the body joints and in the process makes them flexible to work smoothly. Oil massage also prevents any possible inflammation of joints by age or work.

During massage, it is advisable to apply more oil and massage to the head and the bottom of the feet with extra care. Also, apply a few drops of oil in each ear. This improves hearing.

*Abhayanga* is not advisable for people who are suffering from a stomach upset or digestive problems, like intolerance to fat and high protein foods. One should treat these conditions with carminatives and digestives and once the problem is cured, then only oil massage can be initiated.

*Abhayanga* is also not advisable for people who are suffering from cold, running nose, sore throat, respiratory tract infection and sinusitis. It may not be a good time to practice oil massage after undergoing a strong purgation or any other body purification measures. *Abhayanga* is a very good daily practice for all age groups. It is especially good for infants and children.

For infants, the best oil for *Abhayanga* is oil prepared from pure coconut milk by extracting milk from a fresh, fleshy coconut. Boil coconut milk in a wide mouthed vessel under very low temperature. When the water has fully evaporated, the leftover pleasant smelling oil can be used for body massage. It is better to use it within seven days.

If the birth weight of the baby is below 2.5 kg then an oil massage using the oil extracted from the roots of *bala* (*Sida acuta* or *sida cordifolia*) can prove to be an effective remedy. Boil 250 gm of *bala* roots (crushed) in four litres of water till the quantity is reduced to one litre. The next day, the filtered extract should be

mixed with 250 ml. of gingerly oil and boiled with 60 gm of the root paste of *Bala*. This whole process has to be carried out on a low flame.

This oil is very soft and extremely good for tender baby skin. Daily application of this oil increases the baby's muscle growth, skin texture and also improves the body weight.

For emaciated children massage should be done with wild *Navara* rice (a variety of traditional rice that can be harvested in two months). The *Navara* rice is cooked in the milk decoction made with *Bala* root (*Sida acuta* or *Sida cordifolia*), made into a paste and then applied warm. The massage is given from the upper part of the body to the lower part for 30 to 60 minutes a day, regularly for 14 days. After a gap of a month, this massage can be done again for 14 days.

Three such courses of massage will stimulate body growth and increase body weight. This is also very good for improving appetite and inducing sound sleep, which are very necessary for the growth and development of the baby.

Photographs by FRLHT



Sida Cordifolia

**Massage is good for longevity too as it reduces the process of ageing.**



According to Ayurveda, oil is the personification of 'unctuousness'. It is exactly opposite to dryness, which is the basic character of *Vata* (the principle of all movements in the body). The application of appropriate medicated oil can prevent and cure all problems caused by *Vata*.

Daily oil massage is an integral part of Ayurvedic therapy and the primary step of any "*Panchkarma*" treatment. Massage is the first step in the process of any therapeutic applications of topical medicines and the type of oil and type of ingredients in the oil, the temperature and other mediums used in the massage play a significant role.

Massage is probably the only treatment that is advised at all stages of the lifecycle, from birth to old age. Daily oil massage will prevent arthritis and other diseases of

the muscles and the bones. There is no agent other than oil, which can actively prevent the vitiation of *Vata* in the body, which is the primary factor in all ageing and degenerating processes in the body.

Modern science does not explain the mechanism of action of these herbal oils which carry healing/curative actions of the herbs to the body. But Ayurvedic science has defined the actions of oil massage through the concept of *Guna* (qualities), *Veerya* (therapeutic action) and *Prabhava* (individual uniqueness of potency). Ayurveda assumes absorption of the therapeutic properties of the oil via the skin.

Daily oil massage has been a part of Indian life for centuries, but now it is losing its importance due to the ignorance of our health traditions. Don't you think it's time we revived the practice?

Dr G G Gangadharan is Joint Director at FRLHT, Bangalore. E-mail: (vaidya.ganga@frlht.org)

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Malpua

# Sweets for the Goddess

## Purba Kalita Jodhpur

**A**UTUMN rings in the festive mood in India. For Bengalis, it is the best time of the year. This is the season when Goddess Durga descends on earth to bless her devotees. The five-day fiesta that celebrates her arrival is marked by prayer, uninhibited revelry, new clothes and delightful bhog. Ornate pandals are put up with artistic images of Goddess Durga. The beating of drums at dawn and dusk resonates in every heart. The air is thick with smoke arising from artis.

Durga Puja is a community festival. Everybody gathers at pandals to offer prayers, catch up with old friends and make new ones. The smell of food wafts through.

On Sashthi, the first day of Puja, after bodhan or invoking Devi Durga, ladies who have been fasting for their children's well-being, get their first glimpse of Ma. Then they feast on luchi or deep-fried puri made of flour, alurdom or potato curry, cholera dal or split gram peas and payash made from rice and milk.

On Saptami, the bhog offered to the Goddess consists of khichudi, a hotch potch of rice and dal, along with labra or mixed vegetable curry and different types of bhaja. These are fried tidbits made by deep frying vegetables rubbed with turmeric and salt.

On Ashtami, along with khichudi and labra, five types of bhaja-brinjal bhaja, potato bhaja, cauliflower bhaja, pumpkin bhaja and gourd bhaja are eaten. Tomato chutney, papad and

payash are indispensable add-ons.

On Nabami, Devi Ma is offered the best bhog as the next day the Goddess will be given a tearful farewell. The fare includes pulao, paneer kalia, a salt-sweet cheese curry, beguni or brinjal pieces dipped in chickpea-flour batter and deep fried, bhaja moong daal or yellow split moong peas, aloo-phulkopi kalia or potato-cauliflower curry, tomato chutney, roshogolla and mishti doi or sweetened curd.

The image of the Goddess is immersed on the final day of Durga Puja called Bijoya.

The day is celebrated mostly at home. Maangsho jhol or mutton curry and luchi is eaten. Sometimes people gather for one last time at the puja pandal for feasting.

Wearing new clothes in the evening, family members observe kolakuli, where people hug and express their affection for one another. The young touch the feet of elders to seek blessings. This is one day, wives claim, when they touch their husbands' feet as a mark of affection and respect.

A variety of sweets are made at home and relished by the family. These include the famous roshogolla, the pantua, sandesh, malpua, payash, narkol or coconut laddoo.

There is also a sweet called Lady Kenny, named after the wife of a governor-general, Lord Canning. She was especially fond of fried cheese balls stuffed with raisins.

Bijoya continues with friends and relatives till Kali Pujo, which coincides with Diwali. An interesting cus-

tom practiced a day before Kali Pujo is the cooking together of 14 types of greens like spinach, raddish, mint, coriander, pumpkin, mustard and fenugreek leaves. This wholesome dish is cooked with a small amount of mustard oil, tempered by nigella seeds, green chillies and peanuts.

## Sondesh

### Ingredients

**Fresh chenna (cottage cheese):**  
Half kg

**Sugar: 3 tbsp, ground**

**Green cardamom: 3-4, deseeded**

**Ghee: 1 tbsp**

**Method:** Hang freshly made cheese in cloth for half an hour. Knead cheese to make smooth dough. Heat ghee in kadai. Add chenna, sugar and cardamom. Keep stirring continuously without letting chenna stick to pan and till all water evaporates. Make small balls of the mix. Flatten balls a bit and make dent in centre. Place a raisin each in the centre and keep pieces on greased plate. Refrigerate for 15 minutes to let sondesh set.

## Chennar payash

### Ingredients

**Fresh cheese made from 750 ml skimmed milk, hung in cloth for 10 min**

**Milk: 1 litre**

**Bay leaf: One**

**Sugar: 2 tbsp, heaped**

**Saffron: 10-12 strands soaked in**

lukewarm milk for 10 min

**Green cardamom: 2-3, ground**

**Method:** Make crumbs of warm, soft cheese. Boil milk with bay leaf and reduce it to one third. Add sugar. Continue to thicken milk. Add cheese and saffron with milk. Mix well and cook on low flame for a few minutes. Serve chilled.

## Malpua

### Ingredients

**Milk: ½ litre, reduced**

**Flour: 100 gm**

**Semolina: 100 gm**

**Aniseed: One and a half tsp**

**Sugar: ½ cup**

**Cashew nuts: few, cut into pieces**

**Raisins: few, cut into pieces**

**Dry coconut: 2 tsp, cut into pieces**

**Oil for frying**

**For sugar syrup**

**Sugar: 250 gm**

**Water: 3 glasses**

**Method:** Prepare sugar syrup by dissolving sugar in water and boiling till a thick stickiness is formed. Remove froth. Add dry ingredients to milk. Mix well to get thick consistency. Drop portions of batter in hot oil to form small dumplings and deep fry. Add dumplings to sugar syrup and remove after 15 minutes.

## Lobngolotika

### Ingredients:

**Flour: 300 gm**

**Ghee: One and a half tsp**

**Oil for frying**

**For filling**

**Khoya: 300 gm**

**Cardamom: 3-4 pieces, deseeded**

**Sugar: 2 tbsp Sugar syrup**

**Same as above**

**Method:** Mix flour and ghee. Add little water and knead into soft dough. Keep aside. Place kadai on slow flame and add khoya, sugar and cardamom. Keep stirring till sugar melts completely and a nice mould is formed. Roll out small puris and fill with mixture. Fold from four ends to form a square. Seal the intersection by inserting a clove into each. Deep fry and add to sugar syrup.

## Elojhelo

### Ingredients:

**Flour: ½ kg maida**

**Baking soda: one pinch**

**Oil: 4 tbsp oil**

**For sugar syrup**

**Same as above**

**Method:** Knead dough and keep wrapped in polythene for half an hour. Make small balls and roll out slightly thick, oval-shaped puris. Cut along centre leaving ends intact. Hold ends and wring in gently. Deep fry and dip in sugar syrup. Let sugar dry on gojas before removing.

**WHERE TO VOLUNTEER**

**CanSupport India**

Kanak Durga Basti Vikas Kendra, Sector 12, R.K. Puram, Near DPS School New Delhi-110022  
Tel: 26102851, 26102859, 26102869  
E-mail: cansup\_india@hotmail.com

**Rahi**

Rahi is a support centre for urban middle class women suffering from the trauma of incest. It provides information, individual support, group support and referrals. Through workshops and peer educators they help survivors and spread awareness.  
Contact: H-49 A, Second floor, Kalkaji, New Delhi-3  
Phone: 26227647

**Association for India's Development (AID) – Delhi Chapter**

AID works for the environment, children, women's issues, education, and health. They also undertake fund raising.  
Contact: Anuj Grover B-121, MIG Flats, Phase-IV, Ashok Vihar Delhi- 110052  
Phone: 9818248459  
E-mail: anuj.grover@gmail.com

**Youthreach**

A volunteer team at Youthreach helps to match your skills and interests with the needs of their partner organisations. This exchange is monitored and facilitated from beginning to end by the volunteer team. The team also partners other non-profit organisations that are working with children, women and the environment.  
Contact: Anubha or Ria 11 Community Centre, Saket, New Delhi - 110 017  
Phone/Fax: (011) 2653 3520/25/30  
Email : yrd@youthreachindia.org

**Deepalaya**

They work with economically,

socially deprived, physically and mentally challenged children. They believe in helping children become self reliant and lead a healthy life. Deepalya works on education, health, skill training and income enhancement.  
Contact: Deepalaya 46, Institutional Area, D Block Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110 058  
Phone: 25548263, 25590347  
Website: www.deepalaya.org

**Mobile Crèches**

Mobile Crèches pioneered intervention into the lives of migrant construction workers by introducing the mobile crèche where working parents can leave their children. They work in the following areas: health, education, community outreach, networking and advocacy, resource mobilisation and communication. You can volunteer by filling out a simple form online.  
Contact: DIZ Area, Raja Bazaar, Sector IV New Delhi -110 001  
Phone: 91-11-23347635 / 23363271  
Website: www.mobilecreches.org

**The Arpana Trust**

Arpana is a charitable, religious and spiritual organisation headquartered in Karnal, Haryana. They work with rural communities in Himachal Pradesh and with slum dwellers in Delhi. Arpana is well known for its work on health. They have helped organise women into self-help groups. These SHGs make beautiful and intricate items which are marketed by Arpana. For more details: Arpana Community Centre, NS-5, Munirka Marg Street F/9, Next to MTNL, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057.  
Phone: (Office) 26151136 and (Resi) 26154964

**HelpAge India**

HelpAge India needs volunteers from doctors to lay people in all our locations. Older people love to talk to younger people and

need emotional support. We require volunteers in Delhi and Chennai to survey older people staying alone in homes, who could use our Helpline for senior citizens. If you wish to volunteer please email Pawan Solanki, manager at pawan.s@helpageindia.org or write to Vikas, volunteer coordinator, HelpAge India.

**Hazards Centre**

Hazards Centre is a support group involved in environment and urban issues. We seek to challenge all such processes (hazards) that undermine the rights of marginalised groups in the city. In alliance with these groups, we advocate for alternate planning frameworks that can counter the forces aiming to create sanitised and commercialised cities, devoid of the poor who build and run them. You can volunteer with us as per your time, interest and skills on issues such as Housing, Livelihoods, Pollution, Waste, Transport, Right to Information, Development Communication etc.  
Contact: Supriya Chotani 92-H, Third Floor, Pratap Market Munirka Village, Delhi - 67  
Ph: 26174244, 26184806, 9811503379 Haz\_cen@vsnl.net

**iVolunteer**

iVolunteer is a non-profit promoting volunteerism since 2001. We have a presence in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore. We welcome individuals who wish to volunteer. We assess organisations that need volunteers. We match the skills of volunteers with the right organisation so that both benefit.  
Contact: Jamal or Seema, D-134, East of Kailash, New Delhi-65,  
Phone: 01126217460  
E-mail: delhi@ivolunteer.org.in

**WHERE TO DONATE**

**Indian Red Cross Society**

The society provides relief, hospital services, maternity and child welfare, family welfare, nursing and community services.  
Contact: Red Cross Bhavan Golf Links New Delhi-110003  
Phone: 24618915, 24617531

**Child Relief and You (CRY)**

CRY, a premier child rights organisation, believes that every child is entitled to survival, protection, development and participation. You can sponsor a child's education, healthcare, or a health worker and a teacher.  
Website: www.cry.org

**Community Aid and Sponsorship Program (CASP)**

CASP enhances the capacities of children, families and communities through participation and advocacy leading to sustainable development and empowerment. You can help by sponsoring underprivileged child/children from any work area where CASP implements its programmes. These include building old-age homes, projects relating to AIDS etc.  
Website: www.caspindia.org

**ActionAid**

ActionAid is an international development organisation which works with poor and marginalised women, men, girls and boys to eradicate poverty, injustice and inequity. You can become a part of their Karma Mitra loyalty program, which is based on the concept 'When you do good things you should get good things in return.' As a member of this program you can avail various tangible benefits.  
Contact: ActionAid India C-88, South Extension - II New Delhi-110 049

Website: www.actionaidindia.org

**CanSupport India**

Kanak Durga Basti Vikas Kendra, Sector 12 R.K. Puram Near DPS School New Delhi-110022  
Tel: 26102851, 26102859, 26102869  
E-mail: cansup\_india@hotmail.com

**HelpAge India**

HelpAge India is involved in the care of the poor and disadvantaged elderly in 55 locations across the country. They organise primary health care at village and slum level through 53 mobile medical vans, care of the destitute elderly through Adopt a Gran programme with 222 voluntary agencies, Helplines and income generation for the elderly. Their recent programmes are in the tsunami affected regions and in Kashmir for the rehabilitation of the elderly affected by the earthquake disaster. HelpAge serve more than a million elderly in India. If you wish to donate or adopt a granny, please donate online on our site www.helpageindia.org or send an email to helpage@nde.vsnl.net.in  
Address: HelpAge India C-14 Qutub Institutional Area New Delhi- 110016  
Chief Executive: Mathew Cherian - mathew.cherian@helpageindia.org

**Bharatiya Academy**

The Eco Development Foundation and the Soni Foundation Trust have set up the Bharatiya Academy which runs a school for underprivileged children and for children of defence employees serving on the border who are victims of violence and war. The school is located in Tashipur, Roorkee, Hardwar district and has 115 children on its rolls. The school requires money for buildings and sponsors for the children. Temporary buildings have been made by the Bengal Sappers regiment. Teachers are also required.  
Contact: Soni Foundation Trust, F-2655 Palam Vihar, Gurgaon, Haryana-122017

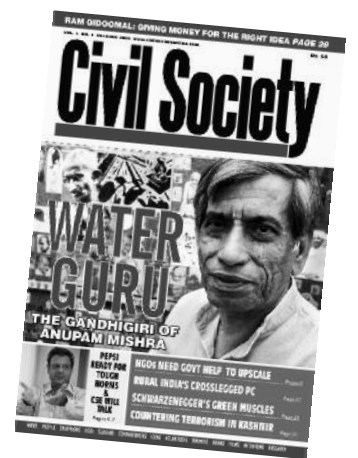
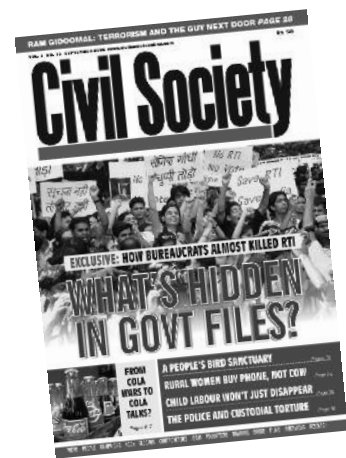
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