

**OUTPOST**

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**SNOW CAPPED HISTORY**

**GUEST WRITER**  
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 Bishop Cotton School, ISC 2019-20

Photograph: Arugna Adhikari

Sherpas are the Charles Perrault of mountaineering unknown to most, engulfed by the fog of oblivion. These uncelebrated names may not necessarily reside in our minds and yet it is exceedingly likely that we are aware of their achievements. Sherpas have evolved to become synonymous to the terms “The Everest Guides” or the “porters of Everest”, their achievements if not their dilemma, should hit our conscience.

The origin of the story begins with the settlement of the nomadic Tibetan tribes in the 13th century in the Khumbu District of Nepal. Their livelihood depended on the cultivation of potatoes and buck wheat as well as rearing Yak for milk and meat. Few went on to migrate to Darjeeling where they worked as laborers until 1950 when a queer mountaineering idea from the West suddenly galvanized this quiet community. By the mid-1800s Everest had earned itself the fame of being the tallest mountain peak on earth. This attracted many British mountaineering expeditions, who hired Sherpas as porters. These expeditions however failed. One of the prime reasons behind this failure was the gap in communication. Much they say, was lost in translation. Left in the dark about the intent of these expeditions, the Sherpas assumed that they were being undertaken in the search for gold and other hidden treasures buried in the womb of their powerful deity.

The situation remained so until the successful conquest of Everest by Edmund Hillary a New Zealand Mountaineer and Tenzin Norgay Sherpa who became the first humans, recorded to have summited Mt.

Everest. This daring conquest changed the fate of the tiny mountain community forever. It marked the beginning of tourism and the start of lifestyle changes for this secluded community. At the helm of this change was Edmund Hillary who is credited to have shaped the Sherpa community to what it is today. The community acknowledged his efforts and celebrated his contribution by giving him the title of ‘The King of Sherpas’ their highest honour. He is the only foreigner to have received such acknowledgement from this proud community.

Just like every other fairytale, this one of the mountains has its own dark past. With the rising popularity of the Everest expeditions came its own statutory warning. The cost of climbing Mt. Everest was steep. The cost was life itself. This demanded the Courts get involved who laid down the law that the safety of life rested on the Sherpas. A burden they were demanded to carry at the cost of their own. The responsibility of the security of life of the entire expedition team rested on the Sherpas and as for their security, it was to be borne by none. The fatality of this was seen in the doomed Nazi expedition to Mt. Everest where the Sherpas were left to die because they could no longer carry the extra weight.

Sherpas carry out tasks that regular climbers cannot accomplish. These invisible men of the mountains jump across crevasses, scale glaciers and explore shorter routes to reach their teams and are the cogs that run the massive Everest business machinery. Mistreatment and racial discrimination aside, deaths of Sherpas are a common affliction that stay buried by the side of the

mountain they worship. Lack of infrastructure, a global pay parameter, insurance and acknowledgement, remain merely a part of the job.

The race to mountain peaks remain till today the domain of the white man while the burden to take them to their goal, rests on the sturdy shoulders of this forgotten mountain community. While very little global recognition has come their way, the legends of Tenzin Norgay, the first person to have scaled the Mt. Everest, Apa Sherpa who summited the Everest peak 21 times and Pasang Lamu Sherpa, the first woman to have climbed

Everest who died during her descent; remain part of folk lore. Nima Chhamzi became the youngest woman to climb Everest at the age of 16. While the laurels of some have managed to make it to the daylight the laurels of most rest under the shadows of the privileged and conceited. The wayfarers of the deities now deceased, lay in the fabled valley of Shangri La resting in peace or re incarnated as another being. In the faith of the Sherpas, as in their hands, rests the glory and rage of their Chomolungma. *Rizipeng*

\**Rizipeng* - "goodbye" in the Sherpa tongue

## the truth

-Anoushka S. Rabha, Associate Editor

परतिराणाय साधूनां वनिशाय च दुष्कृताम् |  
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥ ४॥

**T**o protect the pious and to annihilate the wicked, as well as to reestablish the principles of the eternal religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.- Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 8.

Dharma is delineated as 'eternal' in the Vedas. The One can reestablish it through a *Saint*; he or she does not need to descend in a physical form, to accomplish this. The *Saint* is ambiguous; what was once a lucid entity has evolved into quintessential obscurity. The propagator of Dharma in contemporary India and the Hindu world is the Rastriya Svayamsevaka Sangha, popularly known as the RSS.

***"The RSS has grown into a Hindu nationalist umbrella organization with a presence in all facets of the Indian society, spawning several affiliated organizations under the stewardship of the Sangh Parivar."***

The Tilkakite Congressman and prominent Hindu Mahasabha politician Keshav Baliram Hedgewar's need for an organization that was deep-rooted in Indian culture and history, led to the birth of the RSS in 1925. It strived to propagate the Hindutva ideology, Hindu nationalist sentiments and to inculcate the morals and values that were once inherent, innate, and intrinsic to Indians while providing physical discipline. The emphasis has always been on the core family system and self-reliance. The Hindu Mahasabha, a political party meant for the protection of the Hindu community that owed its existence to the Muslim League, was an important influence on the RSS, even though it is rarely acknowledged to be so.

The organization has always been an unique blend of contemporary realities and historical perspectives. Its

lofty ideals have stood the test of time for decades, courtesy of the inherent strength seen from the time of its conception. The RSS attained a truly pan-Indian character under the aegis of its legendary *Sarsanghchalak* (Chief) Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar expanding rapidly from 1940 to 1973 even as the organization and the country went through tumultuous times: Partition in 1947, the ban on the organization following Mahatma Gandhi's death in 1948, the debacle of the Indo-Sino 1962 war, and the India-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971. He navigated the Sangh through these troubled waters, to emerge as an organization with greater ideological clarity and stronger organizational structural web ranging from social welfare to student politics to tribal welfare. The RSS has grown into a Hindu nationalist umbrella organization with a presence in all facets of the Indian society, spawning several affiliated organizations under the stewardship of the Sangh Parivar.

Interestingly, despite having been a breeding ground for stalwarts throughout its existence, the Organization has remained larger than the individual himself. The towering and dominant luminaries many of whom have not been given their due in history and public memory because of what was believed to be *ideological untouchability* thanks to the presence of the word *Hindu*. The *Sangh* spearheaded nationalist priorities and objectives, it considered to be of paramount importance over decades in sharp contrast to their contemporaries who valued individual aspirations over all else. As the world's largest voluntary organization, it encourages and teaches whoever joins the *shakhas* to lead a life supported and strengthened by strong moral character and physical fitness with a zeal to contribute to the betterment of the country.

The organization's religious, moral, intellectual, and instrumental heritage of *Seva* (service) continues to be instrumental in its prevalence in modern India. The stereotypical understanding of Hindutva as a challenge to liberal democratic principles has long become



redundant. We must look beyond the rose-colored lenses, to understand the limitations of the 'secular' and the repercussions of the political project of secularism to suppress and de-recognize the non-secular experience. To understand the appeal of the Hindutva clarion call, delve into the humanitarian perspective of the Sangh.

## WORDS FOR THE WORDSMITHS

# Vandana Shiva

-Aakanksha Kumar, VIII

In 1990, she wrote a report for FAO titled, 'Most Farmers in India are Women'. An attractive phrase for an attractive woman who worked for a very attractive cause which was 'not-attractive' to many. Her first book, 'Staying Alive' changed perceptions of third world women. Recognised as 'Environmental Hero' in 2003, this is Vandana Shiva, an Indian environmentalist, author and social activist. Born on the 5th of November 1952 and brought up in Dehradun, a love and appreciation for nature from tender age was inevitable, thanks to the influence of her father, a Conservator of Forest, and her farmer mother.

Shiva understood the core of the burning problems faced by Indian Agrian economy regarding productivity, farmers' rights and income. The problems were many. The seed-chemical package promoted by Green Revolution depleted fertile soil and destroyed living ecosystem. The globalization and profit-fetching encouraged the farmers to grow non-food and/or non-staple agriculture products. It was essential at this point of time, that someone blow the whistle and make the farmers aware. Vandana Shiva emerged as a saviour by starting a movement to make the farmers aware of the benefits of maintaining diverse and individualized crops rather than single and repetitive ones. She founded the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and

One is not a Hindu as much in religion, as one is a Hindu, in spirit. A spirit that accepts the presence of many narratives as it does of multiple faith, respecting all and subjugating none. In the darkest of nights, the *One's* Light awakens the tranquil man. But, what was darkness for the other was light for the *Saint*.

Ecology in 1982, and Navdanya (meaning nine seeds), a seed bank in 1991, where the seeds were stored under low temperatures to keep dormant till they are replanted. Over 40 seed banks were established across India to provide regional opportunity for diverse agriculture, and reject corporate patents on seeds. Shiva campaigned against the implementation of the WTO 1994 Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. Terming the patenting of life forms as 'bio piracy', she fought against it. In 1998, Navdanya fought and won, when a large section of the patent on Basmati Rice claimed by Rice Tech, USA was revoked by the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Five years later, the European Patent Office in Munich revoked Monsanto's patent on the Indian variety of wheat, and in between, in the year 2000 the patent on Neem was revoked.

These battles won for the indigenous crops and knowledge ensured all businesses involving them to profit the Indian farmer. The harvesting or growing of these is not affected by any natural disaster, like the current pandemic, due to the seed banks. These battles and techniques have ensured livelihood to the Indian farmers against all odds, for which many will silently thank the lady and her movement to save the seeds and the farmer.



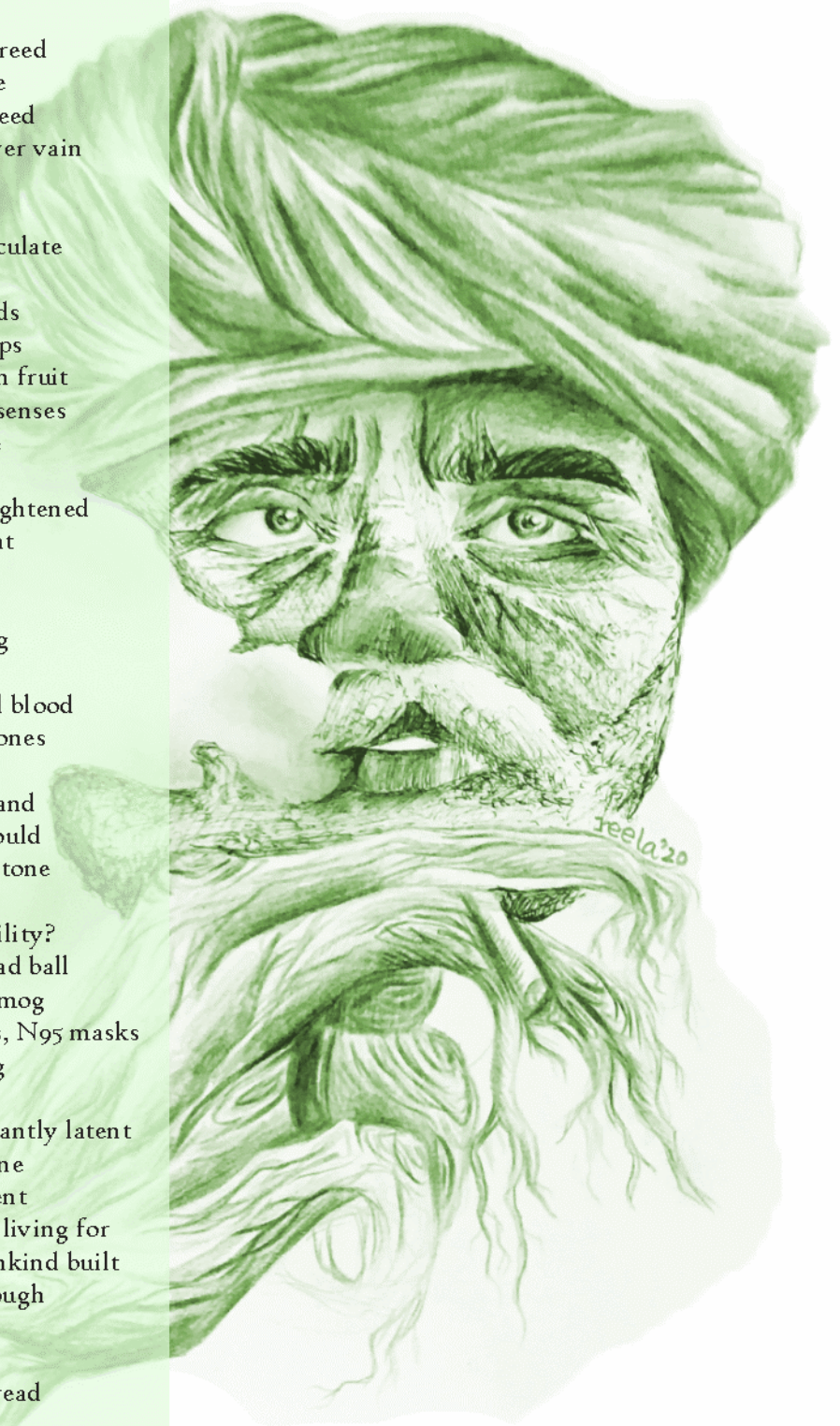


# PAYBACK TIME

-Mr. Thajeeb Ali Hazarika,  
Department of Political Science

Is it payback time?  
When nature's worth devalued  
To less than a dime  
When more of gluttony and greed  
Ignored, turned a blind eye  
Towards succor to those in need  
The pangolin when alive was never vain  
The bat gobbled up  
Or did it vanish?  
The world now shudders to calculate  
The taste buds of gain  
The mirth of the rising heads  
The swirl of the sensuous lips  
Sipping, biting not the forbidden fruit  
But everything palatable to the senses  
Becoming an ingrate brute  
The girth expanded  
The tummy trimmers and belts tightened  
The waist of those who's fat  
Would never ever waste  
At the other end  
The cogs continued to chug  
Objects of desire  
But those who toiled in flesh and blood  
Started to become skull and bones  
Life became frightened  
Things started to go out of hand  
Nature thought to be frigid could  
No longer be the cold lifeless stone  
To settle once and for all  
The question- who needs humility?  
It hurled a guile filled protein clad ball  
Choking mankind, not with smog  
But with tightly strapped hazmat suits, N95 masks  
And the accompanying fog  
The eerie silence  
Shut the cacophony of prejudices blatantly latent  
Views like the elusive vaccine  
Could no longer claim a patent  
Life was for learning lessons worth living for  
Nature's messy syllabus is what mankind built  
One lifetime might not be enough  
To atone, wash away  
Purify the sacrilege  
By any ritual or the sacred thread  
The crushing weight  
Even Atlas would shudder to shoulder  
Mankind's unpardonable guilt  
Yes, it is payback time.

Illustration: Tabhe Tamo Reela





# OPINIONS

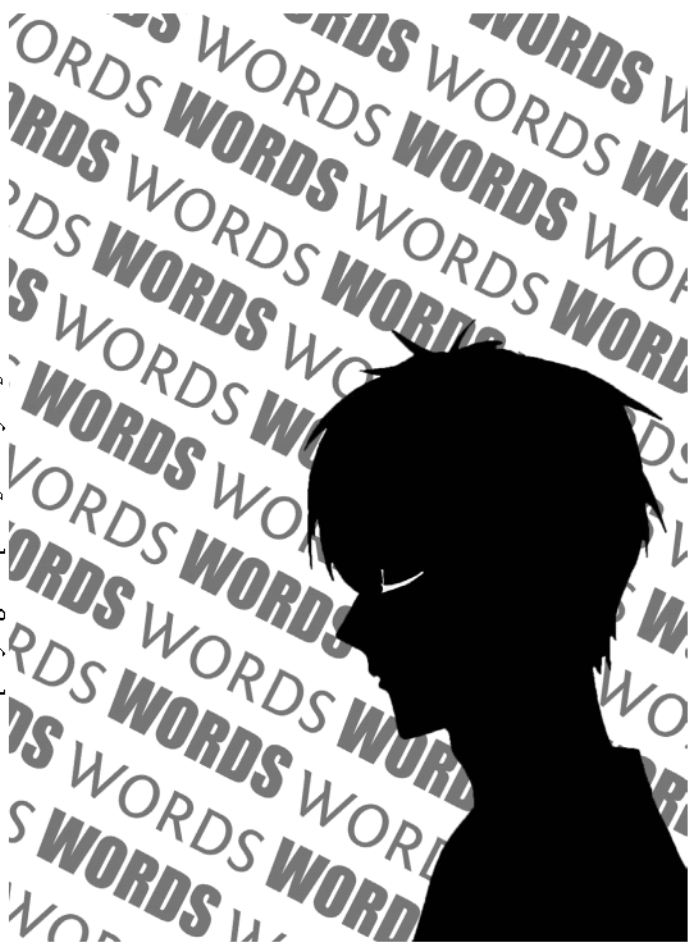
-Neelav Kashyap, XI

Someone once said,  
“Be like the river – always moving forward;  
Never stop or falter,  
Even if you are obstructed by a large boulder.  
Break through the obstacle  
Or find your way around it;  
But flow  
Onwards and onwards; perennially.”

Someone once said,  
“Be like the boulder – impervious and unyielding;  
Stand your ground,  
Remain steadfast in the strong current of the river,  
gushing;  
Let not the tide  
Sweep you off your two feet;  
Persevere  
Against the raging current, for eternity.”

So what is a paradox?  
It is when the river and the boulder meet;  
When the sharpest spear  
And the impenetrable shield, with each other, hit;  
Who will prevail?  
And who will yield? Nobody seems to know;  
Both rigid in their own beliefs,  
The boulder stands firm and the river continues to flow.

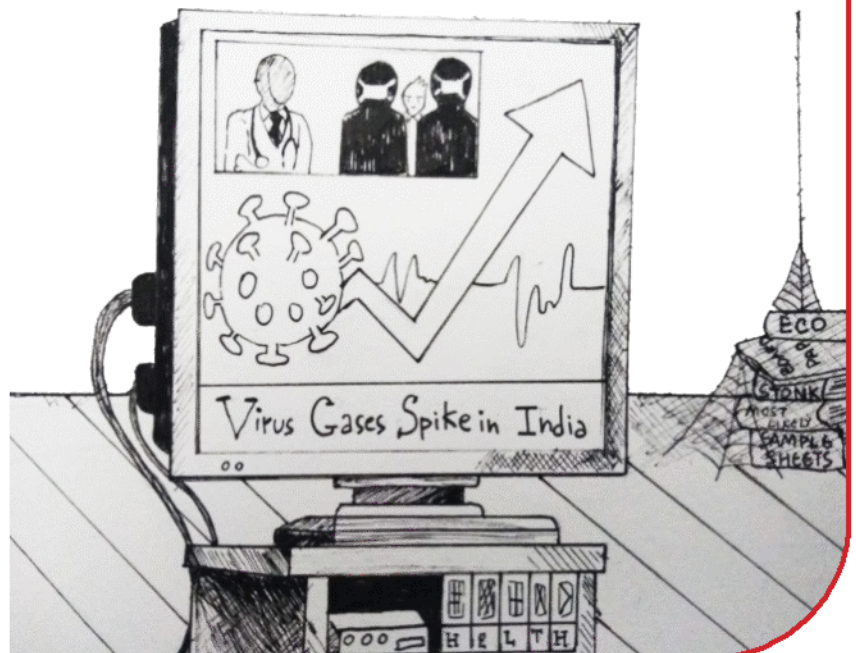
Accompanying Graphics: Jeremy L. Jahau



## THE OUTPOST

India warns China of dire consequences in the event of any attempt to alter the status quo at Ladak. Aggressive diplomacy seems to weigh heavily on the border bilateral relations . Allegations of death due to torture under Police custody have emerged, as the nation demands justice for the death of Jayaraj and Fenix in Tamil Nadu. Despite Modi’s claim of UP having done better than most western countries in handling the Covis, the situation remains grim. CBSE and CISCE have canceled the Board Examinations. The debate between death by Covid or a dead economy intensifies even as the creative Capitalist makes the most of the pandemic.

Illustration: Elozini Senachena





## The Quarantine Watchlist

Feeling sick and tired of the same four walls at home? Well grab your popcorn and immerse yourself in the world of media, here is a list of some of our suggestions:

**NORMAL PEOPLE:** Based on Sally Rooney novel of the same name, this Irish drama revolves around the lives of Marianne Sheridan and Connell Waldron and the relation they share with each other.

**5 CENTIMETERS PER SECOND:** Created by the legendary Makoto Shinkai, the mastermind behind 'Your Name' and other legendary animes, experience the life of Takaki Tono in this beautifully drawn depiction of Japan.

**DOCTOR PRISONER:** A medical drama that follows a falsely accused doctor who now works in a prison as he plots his revenge for those who conspired against him by slowly building up his connections with the various convicts who he must now treat.

**THE PROPOSAL:** The powerhouse that is Ryan Reynolds and the talented Sandra Bullocks in a Romance Comedy? A must watch in our books, come for the romance and stay for the laughs, or vice versa.

## Ripple #133

-Eloziini Senachena, XI

The roar of engines  
and a burst of sand,  
A final yell from a  
toppled biker

The greatest Daredevil  
alive-

Now the greatest that  
lived.

## Keep It Reel! Streamlined

-Aarnav Dutta, VIII



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Design & Layout: Moom Lego & Jeremy Jahau

Illustrator: Takhe Tamo Reela & Eloziini Senachena

Photo Credit: Letminlun Haokip

Mistress-in-Charge: Ms. Sarmistha Paul Sarkar

Publisher: The Assam Valley School, P.O. Balipara, Dist. Sonitpur, Asom-784101, India

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