

EDITORIAL

THE STRICT DISCIPLINE that Harish Kapadia has inculcated in the printing press is evident once more as the present issue is released exactly on 15th April — as it has been since he took charge. With him are Muslim Contractor, Milind Pansare (ace editor and proof-reader respectively, in their own right), Arun Samant (of the HJ sketch-maps fame, Genevieve deSa (HJ index) and the forceful business manager Shailesh Mahadevia who terrorises the business community for advertisements. I have made it a point to mention these members, because the one thing I have against them is that they edit out all the footnotes I insert to give them credit — they see the pages last before the proofs go to press. They dare not fiddle around with my editorial!

The year has seen some remarkable ascents — solos, winter ascents, solos in winter, routes comparable to the most difficult in the Alps (except that the height is almost double). Few eight-thousanders remain unclimbed without oxygen — one wonders where it will all end — the next barrier could well be 'without rope or ironmongery'.

Meanwhile the ecology continues to suffer the deprivations of the filth and waste brigade, that is, to the delicate vegetation and soil after the politicians, contractors and *developmentwallahs* have decimated the forests and pastures. The results are frightening, and obvious for all to see — the various conservation organizations are too weak and intellectual to have any clout either with the powers-that-be or with the populace they are trying to save. With few exceptions of localized success, the efforts go unnoticed and ignored by the vote-grabbing ministers and their cohorts. We continue to see the inexorable change in the weather, soil erosion, silting of lakes, rivers and hydro-electric dams, the water table receding beyond the point of no return. Action? Yes, but where, how and by whom?

The Himalayan Club completes 60 years in 1988. The credit for survival goes to all the volunteers and office bearers, who gave of their time and energy in making the HC what it is today. Some of the articles in the present issue reminisce about the good old days.

SOLI S. MEHTA