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BOOKS-AND-AUTHORS

Non-fiction: Journalism goes green

Reviewed by Ammara Khan
Sunday, 13 Jun, 2010 | 08:57 AM PST |



'Man has been endowed with reason, with the power to create, so that he can add to what he's been given. But up to now he hasn't been a creator, only a destroyer. Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wildlife's become extinct, the climate's ruined and the land grows poorer and uglier every day.'

— Anton Chekhov,
Uncle Vanya (1897)

WE have come a long way from the 17th and 18th century when philosophers such as John Locke and Jacques Rousseau were concerned with the pros and cons of the development of the nation-state at the cost of the state of nature.

Sadly, the evolution of nation-states through industrialisation saw nature disappear from political debates and become confined to the reveries of poets and writers. The globalised world remains preoccupied with political and economic issues — and the same can be said of the majority of journalism.

Environmental journalism is an attempt to inform people about the man-inflicted damage to the environment. Owing to political and economic instability, awareness of environmental issues in developing countries is seriously wanting.

The Green Pen: Environmental journalism in India and South Asia, a collection of essays edited by Keya Acharya and Frederick Noronha, is an effort to create public awareness regarding the dangers of climate change.

This is the first book to highlight the role of environmental journalism in South Asia, recounting the diversified experiences and predicaments of some of the most acclaimed environmental journalists in the region while focusing on what Darryl D'monte calls 'the context of the development versus environment debate' in the brilliantly written foreword.

Beena Sarwar and Ardeshir Cowasjee are the two contributors from Pakistan among others from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Maldives. Beena Sarwar's essay

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