

Gulf crisis

Preparing for a new world the CNN way?

BOMBAY: Turner you are creating the new global village. The late media pundit Marshall McLuhan in conversation with CNN's Akish founding-father, Ted Turner. "DO YOU want to go dancing or shall we watch CNN," said one yuppie to another as cable news madness exploded in elite areas in New Delhi with the suddenness of a Scud missile. "Watch The Gulf War In Your Drawingroom" screamed the copy for an advertisement for dish antennas manufactured in Coimbatore. "Exclusive licenseship" claimed another C-band dealer only to be destroyed by a rival's anti-advertisement-advertisement which snidely struck target with: "You don't need a licence to tap sunlight. Or tune into the BBC."

The Gulf war has certainly managed to launch CNN in India with unprecedented velocity. In some parts of New Delhi it now reportedly costs

only about Rs 125/- a month, as a rental, to kill all conversation at home and go to bed with the world's most in-the-news leaders. A media proposition which has stood out in bas-relief in recent days is: the entertainment value of a tragedy increases in direct proportion to the distance influenced by the tragedy. And so in the first few days of the war as families in Iraq huddled in darkness and fear, and children in Israel fought the trauma of gas masks and midnight awakenings, a new electronic media alternative seems to have anchored itself in the minds of India's programming-starved urban elite.

Nick-named 'video valium' by a former CNN producer the 10 year old network now beams in to approximately 7 million homes around the world, not including those in the USA, as it rapidly continues construction of McLuhan's prophetic electronic community. Countries which allow

It is clear by now that the media is a key weapon in the Gulf war. Vikram Sundarji profiles the network and man, who might just play a vital role in any new order which emerges.

what was once snidely called the 'Chicken Noodle Network' to be viewed in private homes, include Hungary, Kenya and Greece. Castro and Arafat are regular viewers not to mention Saddam! It has altered the course of diplomacy—who do you think the Russians spoke to first when the Americans invaded Panama?—and played a significant role in the globalization of markets. For bottom-liners its operating profits in 1989 totalled a more than impressive \$134 million. These achievements have already paled into insignificance with the pivotal role the network has played in the early days of the Gulf war despite strict all round censorship. Predictably, CNN today is the only network still crackling in-

formation out of Baghdad (irrespective of what the Pentagon feels about the baby-food-content of such reports). There is obviously a potentially even larger role for it to play both while the war lasts and in its aftermath. Before speculating about just how large this part might be, however, let's look at the 52 year old, Atlanta based, Scorpio at the helm of the 24 hour news network's affairs.

Robert Edward Turner was born into a failing billboard-advertising business which he transformed, over his father's dead body, into a multimillion dollar conglomerate comprising of several radio and TV stations. Always modest about his own abilities, his successes led to him claiming 'folk hero

status for himself and to others naming him 'the Mouth of the South'. Raising morale and turning failure to success seem very close to and somewhat mixed up in Turner's heart. He once bought Atlanta's worst baseball and basketball teams and reportedly succeeded in significantly raising their morale and fan following, if not their track-record. As if all this were not enough to qualify for over-achievement, a former American sickness, Turner has also made waves as a champion Yachtsman. He was the winner of the prestigious 1977 America's Cup and a 'winning

survivor' of the tragic 1979 Fastnet race in Ireland which claimed 15 lives. He also incidentally was the sponsor cum creator of the 1986 friendship games in Moscow. Perhaps the most endearing act of his high-tension life has been the manner in which he has put two failed marriages and a cock-who-leaves-no-hen-untouched image behind him to settle down with another anti-establishment humanist Jane Fonda.

Why all these personal details take on great significance today is because it is already clear that the current war is being fought on two levels and

swimming expertly against the current. What is even more unnerving is the clarity with which he is reported to have anticipated and prepared for the current crisis.

The professor who most influenced him as an undergraduate at Brown university was a classicist called John Rowe Workman, who had an abnormal but healthy fascination for 'disaster'. Roger Vaughan, a fellow student, at Brown writes that Workman was 'not depressed by his thesis that disaster is what usually precedes human progress' and that 'it is not surprising that Turner would choose Workman as a mentor, because Turner has always had a similar quality.'

As the war continues CNN's and Turner's role in the constantly changing world order could be pivotal. Logically his present successes would call for a conservative approach. This would not, however, be in keeping with a reputation which has been built on

They seem to worry less about dying than making a mistake

With Allied forces in Gulf, Feb 5: Allied pilots, spearheading the war to drive Iraq from Kuwait, talk tall, fly high on adrenalin and seem to worry less about dying than making a mistake, reports Reuters.

Nearly three weeks into the Gulf war, these men, many with the clean-cut looks and macho enthusiasm of Hollywood heroes, have born the brunt of the action.

They have secured what their commanders call supremacy of the skies, but at a price—some of their number are dead, others prisoners in Iraq.

If you liked the feeling after your first car accident, you'll love this," said Lieutenant Commander Duncan Cooper, 38, of the US Navy Flying Tigers Squadron.

Gulf war planes range from elite squadrons of F-117A Stealth Fighter-Bombers to machines with names like Wild Weasel.

"I don't think you'll find a humble pilot around here, it is

a contradiction in terms," said US Air Force Colonel Merrill "Ron" Karp, 45.

Karp, commander of the California-based 35th Tactical Fighter Wing, home of the Weasels, selected his men for the Gulf on the basis of their 'warrior attitude'.

"When the call comes, if you're not willing to go to combat, your life has no meaning and you should not be there in the first place," he said.

Pilots of the modified F4-G Weasels, electronically upgraded over the past 20 years to become "Radar-killers", led the January 17 night air assault that launched the war.

Keep, referring to a Hollywood hit movie on test pilots, starring actor Tom Cruise, says his men are not "the Tom Cruise of top gun, but serious professionals".

Yet, many of the aviators at bases and on aircraft-carriers in the Gulf have the clean-cut Hollywood looks of their fictional counterparts and often talk like them.

"When we go to war, we go to war smart," said fighter pilot Scott Hill. "We don't go with our hair on fire and our fangs out."

Once strapped into their cramped cockpit, pilots said all apprehension vanished.

"The fear, you just put it somewhere back there behind the adrenalin. You let the adrenalin take over," said pilot Mike O'dowd.

Hill said it was obvious that "when you hit the button" people were going to die, but added that two emotions took over.

"The thrill of the hunt and the fact the prey shoots back."

To hit the target, aviators must themselves become targets.

A stealth squadron commander confessed years of training did not prepare him for the intensity of anti-aircraft fire he faced over Baghdad on his first mission.

"They fired more bullets than I thought were ever made in the history of the world," said the 39-year-old pilot who declined to be identified. It was as if the sky had been "turned into the biggest popcorn popper."

"I'm never going to get through that, this is nuts," he thought. Many pilots on his squadron prayed aloud, he said.

In these split seconds, "you have to go on guts, on courage, on the real spirit of attack," said captain Bill Fallon, a 46-year-old Vietnam Veteran.

Marine squadron commander Dick Lazisky had no time for prayer when a ball of fire raced towards his small surveillance plane circling low over the Kuwaiti border.

"You see these SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) like big balls of fire coming at you, it gets your attention," he said.

But what the flying tigers worry most about is not death but making a mistake.

"What's going through my mind up there is please God... just let me do it right, let me do my job," said Lieutenant Phil Hurmi, 30, a bombardier-navigator.



SAUDI ARABIA: Flight Officer Rachael Berry of Mansfield, the 'sweet heart' of transport pilots in this undisclosed military facility, smiles as she boards a Hercules transport plane named after her, during the plane's routine check. Berry is the only woman movements officer in the Royal Air Force. — AFP/UNB photo

War sparks violence

LONDON, Feb 5: The Gulf war sparked violent incidents from Karachi to Jerusalem on Monday as countries around the world increased security in the face of calls by Baghdad for guerrilla attacks on the US-led Allies, reports Reuters.

Arsonists set fire to a British Airways Office in Israeli-annexed Arab East Jerusalem, causing extensive damage.

Britain is a leading member of the Anti-Iraqi Coalition.

In Pakistan, scene of widespread protests against Pakistan's contribution 11,000 troops to the alliance, gunmen fired at the head of a Saudi Arabia diplomat in Karachi, slightly wounding a guard.

No-one claimed responsibility.

In Athens, police defused a bomb at a branch of City Bank the third bomb planted at the US bank's offices in the city since the Gulf war began.

Greece's Leftist November 17 guerrilla group claimed responsibility for bombs planted

at two other City Bank office 10 days ago. One exploded, causing damage.

The group has staged six other bomb or rocket attacks on US, British and French targets, causing extensive damage but on injuries, since Allied forces attacked Iraq on January 17.

US officials found on Monday what were believed to be two pipe bombs attached to inflammable storage tanks in a commercial port area of Norfolk, Virginia, close to America's largest navy base.

"It's being treated very seriously," an FBI spokesman said.

In Peru, guerrillas have turned the capital, Lima, into the Latin American focus of attacks on targets linked with US-led forces fighting Iraq.

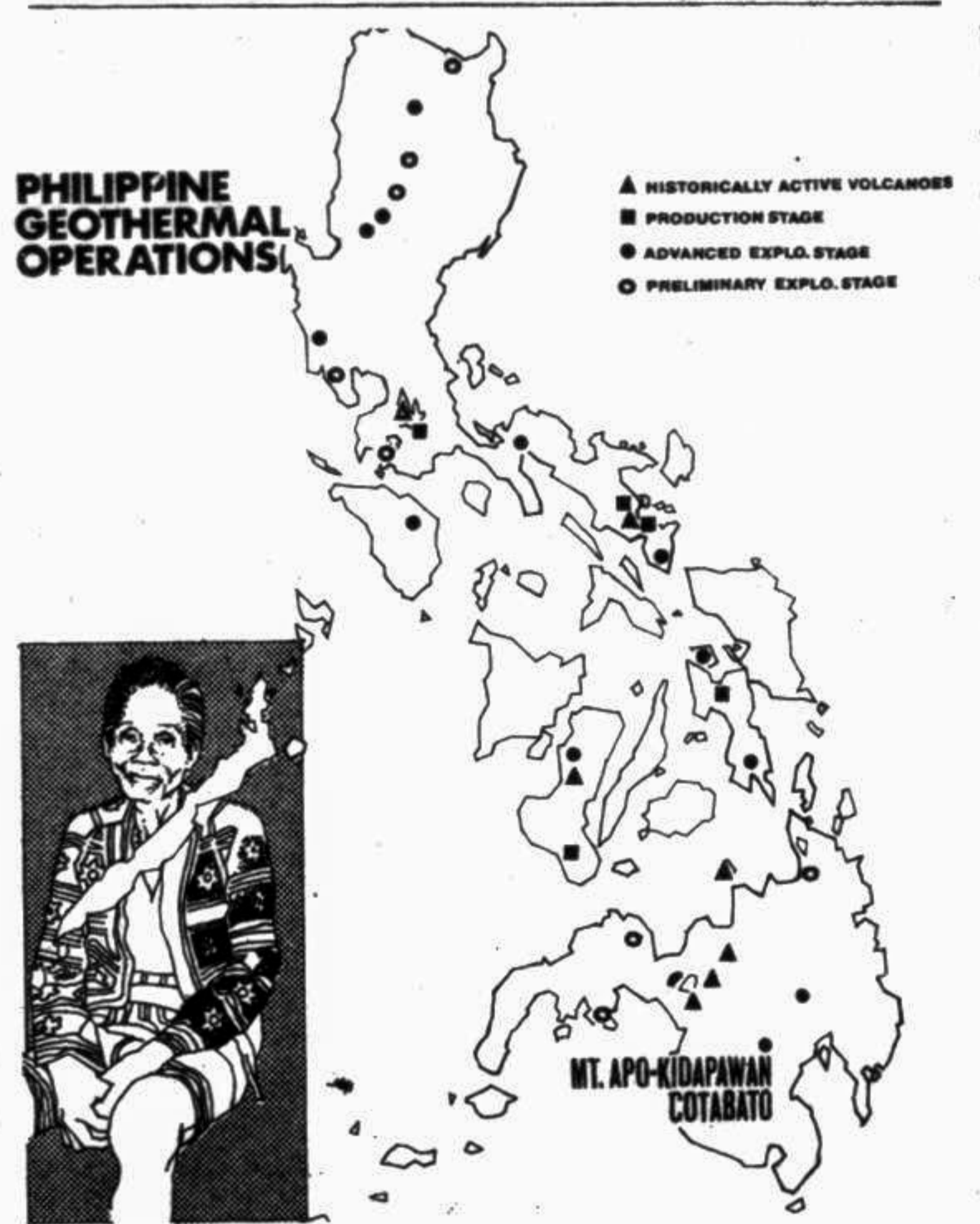
In a wave of attacks last weeks, leftist rebels damaged the Italian Embassy and two US Peruvian Cultural Centres in bomb blasts, toppled a bust of late US President John Kennedy with a bomb and fired shots at the US Embassy.

Feature

Environment

GEOHERMAL PROJECT SPARKS CONTROVERSY

The project has been stalled for two years over conflicting issues, by Isabel San Pedro.



If all goes well, a geothermal project in southern Philippines is set to let off steam this year.

Subject to a public hearing, the Mt. Apo geothermal project will be given the Environmental Clearance Certificate. This clears the road for project stalled for two years now.

An official "Environmental Impact Assessment" report was submitted mid-January by the state-owned Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The report will assess the potential environmental impact of a 240-Megawatt geothermal power plant to be constructed in a 700-hectare site inside a 72,900-ha. National park. The site is 1,400 metres above sea level, midway up the country's highest peak, Mt. Apo, in North Cotabato province.

The site is located in one of the more troubled regions of Mindanao Island, the second largest island in the Philippines, often crisscrossed by rebels and government soldiers.

The national park is also home to tribal families and the rare and endangered Philippine eagle, the biggest eagle in the world. Both tribals and environmentalists are naturally wary of the geothermal project.

An Environmental Impact Assessment is required by law for activities within environmentally critical areas, including national parks and watershed reserves. Meanwhile, the long-delayed project has been stalled for two years over conflicting cultural, legal, environmental and socio-economic issues.

PNOC officials are confident the assessment will pass. Some consultants to the assessment came from respected institutions, like the Ateneo de Davao University and the University of the Philippines.

Tribals are reportedly not against the project itself. But they want to make the project a means to help them assert and define their ancestral identities, rights and domain.

For a start, they want a new law identifying ancestral domain and the extent of bound-

aries. They want a law to protect tribal rights as well as an inventory of tribal communities and territorial boundaries which will lead to the granting of certificates and procurement of land titles.

They want the right to be consulted by government regarding the development of natural resources. And they want a share of the benefits derived from the exploitation of natural resources, including, but not limited to, royalties, fees and other charges.

To be precise, they want a fixed share of the royalties paid by the PNOC to the government for geothermal development. The PNOC currently pays 38 per cent of net proceeds and 32 per cent as tax for geothermal exploration and development.

Leonardo M. Ote, head of PNOC's Energy Development

Corporation geothermal division, told Depthnews that granting tribal communities in the area their share of royalty— to be determined by the government—is acceptable.

The geothermal project will have a stipulation that part of the benefits and gains derived from its operations will be retroactively applied to cultural communities. A lead time of three to four years before commercial operations is ideal for this arrangement.

The ethnolinguistic group closest to the project is the Cotabato Manobo, a relatively small ethnic community inside the project site at the foot of North Cotabato's side of Mt. Apo. Other tribal communities include the Tiruray to the west, the Maguindanao to the northwest and the Tiboli and B'laan to the south.

The PNOC says it has con-

ducted tribal consultations to assist the ethnic communities preserve their ancestral rights, help define their territorial boundaries and provide basic services. Two consultations last November reportedly endorsed the geothermal project.

But the tribals also insisted on preferential employment, livelihood extension services, health care and sanitation. They also wanted a proper waste disposal system and indemnification on properties affected by the project.

Environmentalists, and even government officials, have also said the project violated forestry, park and environmental laws. It was also reported that the project will affect the habitat of the endangered Philippine Eagle.

But the PNOC says there had been no resident eagle in the area for the last 20 years. And even if there were hypothetically, the homing range of the Philippine Eagle is only 400 to 1,000 metres above sea level on a dipterocarp forest range. The PNOC maintains the project site is 1,400 metres above sea level and in a mossy forest range.

Geothermal exploration completed in 1988 showed that two sites are possible re-injection wells. These wells revert hot water back to the earth 2,000 to 3,000 below the surface. Hot water is used to mine the heat coming from the magma below Mt. Apo, an inactive volcano.

Hot water converts this into steam which runs the turbines that generate the electric power.

The project has a commitment to supply at least 240 MW of power capacity by 1993-94. Ote explains, to be able to ride out the critically galloping growth rate of Mindanao, expected at 13 per cent for the early 1990s.

The geothermal project's construction will cost, from 1991-95, 2 billion pesos (US\$ 72 million). It will generate 40MW by 1993, another 80MW the next year and 120MW by 1995.

Mindanao gets 90 per cent of its power needs from hydroelectricity. But energy planners believe it cannot expect hydropower alone to fuel its economy.

NOT ANY OLD LOAD OF RUBBISH

Swedish households produce about 300 kilograms of rubbish per person each year. Vigorous attempts are being made to sort this rubbish at source so that the reusable proportion can be kept and the dangerous removed. Gemini News Service reports, local communities play a key role in this process, encouraged by subsidies costs on the one hand and by tougher government requirements on the other. by NORMAN PERSTON

containers.

Skara municipality has also gone into business with a private company to build a rubbish recycling plant, as well as a waste-gas recovery unit at nearby Rodjorna.

According to Sven-Ake Heimar, managing director of



The waterways of more than 50 tropical countries on four continents are occupied by the fast growing water hyacinth, posing a threat to public health. But even as this weed clogs waterways, findings reveal it also provides food, feed and fertilizer, can be manufactured into paper and boards and can be used for biogas production and waste water treatment.

At Sodertorn the sorting has been taken a stage further. In December 1989, a pilot scheme involving 740 households was started with the goal of sorting rubbish into three different sacks. Organic material for composting is separated from burnables and non-burnable fill material.

The response has been encouraging; 94 per cent of organic rubbish is correctly sorted and 73 per cent of the burnables. But residents are less careful when it comes to the unusable fill, only 30 per cent in these sacks is sorted accurately.

At present, Sweden is spending about \$1 billion or about 1 per cent of gross national product, on environmental protection. This places it on a par with Germany, but somewhat lower than the estimated 1.34 per cent spent by Holland.

Though there was been a growing awareness in Sweden of personal responsibility and the duty of citizens to use the earth's resources more sparingly, recycling is not always profitable. Central government is forced to provide substantial subsidies to operators of glass recycling plants. It is relatively easy to set up mass collection system but more difficult to sell the byproducts.

Meanwhile, in his own neighbourhood of Ulveklet, in the province of Skaraborg, Johansson keeps an eye on the local newspaper collection. Once a month, rain or shine, everyone in the area is encouraged to leave all their waste paper in the community parking lot. The local football club raises money by collecting the paper under contract to the local council and delivering it to a recycling firm.

Further down the road is a box clamped to a lamp-post, the collection point for waste batteries—part of an attempt to check the spread of heavy metals in the environment.

Nevertheless, Johansson remains enthusiastic about the advances. "I don't see the extra work as a burden," he says while holding up his baby son. "It's more something positive we can do for the environment. Issues like this have come to stay and we must act now if our children are to have a decent world to live in."

—GEMINI NEWS
About the Author: NORMAN PERSTON is a New Zealander living in Sweden working as a freelance writer and journalist.