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M F Husain

Coping with bereavement

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BEYOND THE BUDGET

"WITH THESE PROPOSALS, senior citizens will be reduced to penury." These are the words of Suresh M Mody, a silver who wrote to *Harmony* in protest after Finance Minister P Chidambaram released this year's Union Budget. Newspapers too have been inundated with letters by silvers. "Pensioners have been cheated..." goes one letter, while another asserts, "Retired government servants have been fleeced by Mr Chidambaram."

They have a point. Though income of up to Rs. 1.5 lakh has been declared exempt from tax for senior citizens, and women, standard deductions and tax breaks under various sections have been removed (see our *budget analysis* on page 60). The net effect could well be more tax. This aside, there has been no move to address issues such as standardising the age for senior citizens across various agencies—for UTI schemes, it's 55; according to the Income Tax Act, it's 65; for railway concessions, it's 60 for women and 65 for men; in Indian Airlines, it's 63. Nor has

there been an attempt to provide new schemes that offer a higher return on savings.

The issue is larger than just this year's Budget though. After all, budgets come and go year after year. What is unfortunate is the fact that there is still no comprehensive strategy in place on what to do for our silver citizens, people who have worked hard all their lives and paid their dues to society—and government. In India, there is no real safety net for seniors, except those who were in government service by way of pension. They certainly deserve better. What you see instead are piecemeal measures. One example: You need a Unique Identification Number in order to trade over Rs 1 lakh in the stock market. Getting one is an arduous process. In a 'senior-friendly' move, government-sponsored agencies are willing to visit housebound seniors at home to ease the process along. The catch: you'll have to shell out Rs 4,000 for the 'service'. Measures such as these need urgent review.

RITU NANDA



The government needs to look at the bigger picture. While policy-makers continue to talk about 'youth-friendly' policies for a 'young' country, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan recently announced to the UN Economic and Social Council that by 2030, India's 60-plus population will go up to 198 million, and further rise to 326 million by 2050, outnumbering children for the first time. The irony is there for all to see.

In his address, Mr Chidambaram said he would be "doubly blessed" by women and seniors for his budget proposals. As a woman, he may still get my blessings. But he needs to do a lot more to get the blessings of India's silvers.

Tina Ambani

Tina Ambani

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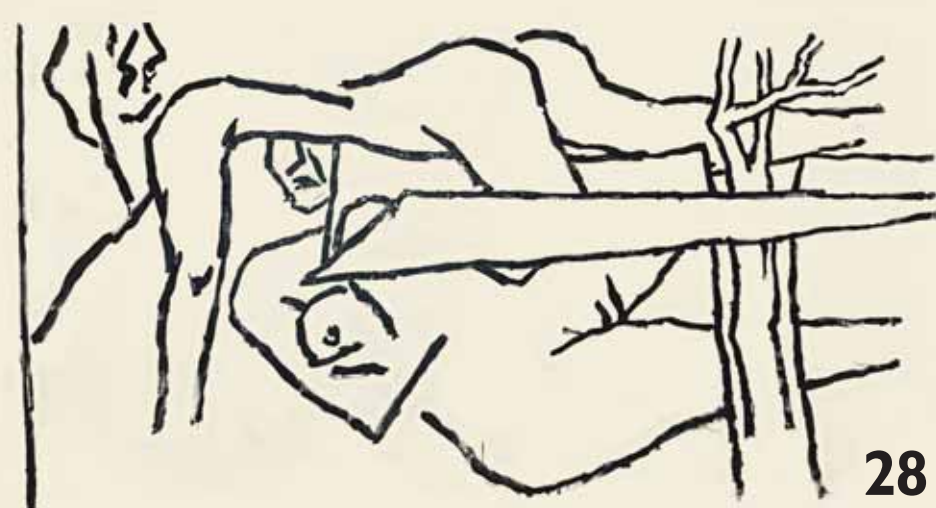
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Cover picture of
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by Meenal Agarwal

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column one

Physical challenges can actually be the start of a new adventure. Mahema and Manohar Devadoss, a silver couple from Chennai, have been working around their frailties for years. She is a quadriplegic, paralysed neck down, and he suffers from near loss of vision. Together, they design greeting cards for charitable organisations and savour every moment of life. As you will see in “Living in the Light”, the fact that they have to push harder as they grow older doesn’t deter them.

Pushing the limit in his own way is this month’s silver face, artist M F Husain, who is irrepressible at 89. In “Mr Prolific”, he tells us why a 10-minute plan works so well for him. With the mother of all art deals under his belt and his career flourishing as never before, he lives in the moment, having little time to think ahead.

The urge to continue is also evident in people who, with all their inner strength and practicality, are coming to terms with the loss of a spouse. In “Mending a Broken Heart”, they give others distressed from spousal bereavement a reason to go on. Do let us know if this article touches a chord.

On a lighter note, take our fun food quiz. The Indian diet is traditionally rich in fat. But quality over quantity can help you stay in shape. The *Harmony* quiz will help tell you which side of the scale you belong, and signal if it’s time for you to make amends.

—Meeta Bhatti

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In the Union Budget, the discontinuance of rebate of Rs 20,000 under Section 88B has hit seniors hard. Finance Minister P Chidambaram announced in his speech a very 'generous' additional exemption of Rs 50,000 for senior citizens, an effective reduction of Rs 5,000 in tax.

The net effect is a loss of Rs 15,000. Here are some grounds on the basis of which the senior citizens merit special consideration:

- Senior citizens have been paying income tax (IT) for decades and deserve a lighter tax burden.
- The purchase power of the pension through LIC's superannuation scheme is getting eroded year by year due to the high rate of inflation. Persons retired from private companies, unlike retired government servants, get the same amount as they got on the day they retired.
- The instruments for investment where the returns were not liable to tax have disappeared. PPF is the only one left and there is a limit to how much one can invest in it during a year.
- The rate of return on all debt instruments has gone down. The rate of interest on taxable PSU bonds was 16 per cent. IDBI bonds yielded 16 per cent interest 10 years ago with an additional 0.5 per cent to shareholders. Today, the yield is not even half of that.
- With the shift of investments from mutual funds to savings bonds and post-office schemes, the tax liability has gone up. At such a time, the loss of the Section 88B rebate adds an unbearable burden.
- The predecessors of the current finance minister had introduced a rebate under Section 88B of Rs 10,000, later raised to Rs 20,000. Thanks to standard deduction, deduction of Rs 15,000 under Section 80L and rebates of Rs 15,000 under Section 88 and Rs 20,000 under Section 88B, I filed a zero tax return for 2004-05. If the new proposals are passed, I will have to start paying tax again!
- The finance minister made a gesture in his 2004 budget by starting a 9 per cent senior citizens' savings scheme, which yields less than the 8 per cent post-office monthly income scheme as it is taxable. Now he makes a gesture of raising the exemption limit to Rs 1.5 lakh and effectively adding Rs 15,000 to our tax burden.

This way, senior citizens will be reduced to penury. I request you to lobby for us to undo the damage done in the budget proposals.

SURESH M MODY

Mumbai

We echo your concern in our budget analysis, "Unbalanced Sheet" (see page 60). Harmony promises to take up the issue with the government.

—Tina Ambani

The letter of the month wins a gift from Vimal



In your March issue, you wrote, "Banish negativity from your life and strive for *sanyam*" in the editorial "Be All You Can Be". These words really struck a chord. Often, we lose our zest for life because of our inherent pessimism. *Harmony* has done the elderly a great service by profiling inspiring silvers who continue to live their lives with unflagging energy. A silver salute to you for featuring sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan, filmmaker Mrinal Sen and jazz musician Anto Menezes.

VIJAYALAKSHMI ARAVIND

Bangalore

The article "A Family for Life" in the February issue brought tears to my eyes. The work done by the Manis in providing a home for the children of convicts goes to show how much of a difference we can all make in the world. I congratulate you for bringing to light such inspiring stories. In my own small way, I too wanted to do something for the needy. I often see small children begging at traffic signals. While waiting in my car for the signal to turn green, I would ask these children whether they would go to school if I sponsored all their expenses. Most of them looked at me as if I was from another planet and moved on to the next car. A few would give me a shy smile but move on. An occasional one would give me an affirmative nod. So I would give them my visiting card and ask them to bring an elder family member to see me. But not a single one ever turned up. I gave up asking after trying sincerely for 10 full years.

DR SHASHIKANT K SHAH

Mumbai

I am a subscriber of *Harmony* and love going through the magazine each month. I was delighted to see Waheeda Rehman on the cover in February and enjoyed reading about the Harmony-initiated 5 km Silver Run. The glow on the faces of the participants said it all. Also, the editorial "The Next Step" and the Harmony Manifesto were truly inspiring.

P V G K MURTHY

Visakhapatnam

Our members participated in the Silver Run as part of the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2005, and it was an unforgettable experience. We express our gratitude to Harmony for making it possible.

ANIL PARIKH

*Senior Citizens Mandal,
Ghatkopar (E), Mumbai*

As you reported in the 'Orbit' section of your January issue, the Karnataka government has done a laudable job by sending postmen to collect mail from the elderly. I have come across so many aged persons desperately catching hold of neighbours, servants or even strangers, beseeching them to post their

letters for them. If the elderly were helped in this way, it would help keep the art of letter writing, which is fast disappearing, alive. The example set by the Karnataka government should be followed in other states too.

GIRIJA RAO

New Delhi

I am an avid reader of *Harmony*. It is an easy read, yet gives us tremendous inspiration and guidance. Though your term 'silver citizens' is endearing, you should call us the 'golden agers' instead since some of us are fortunate enough not to have become silver yet—we still have black hair!

KATIE S WATCHMAKER

Pune

Harmony is an excellent magazine for silvers. The major concerns for a senior citizen are financial and physical security, health, mobility, the need for intellectual stimulation and ways to banish loneliness. Your magazine is the right platform to address these important issues. Keep up the good work.

ARUN CHITLANGIA

Mumbai

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Jug Suraiya,

columnist, writer and author of several books, lives in Delhi with his wife Bunny, and Brindle, the stray

dog who adopted them a couple of years ago. He is *Harmony's* 'man at large' this month. "Other people always change in appearance over the years," he writes in "Face the Facts". "While we ourselves, to ourselves, remain looking about the same, more or less." This, according to him, is 'the relativity theory of personal appearance'.

Hugh and Colleen Gantzer

pioneered travel writing in India 30 years ago and they travel for six months every year. When they are not travelling, they live in a 175-year-old cottage in an oak wood in the Himalayas. In "The Sound of Falling Petals", they write about their home, Mussoorie, and its timeless beauty: "Ours is no longer a little hamlet in the Himalayas... Mussoorie is now a naturally air-conditioned segment of a wide, satellite-spanning world." See for yourself.



AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

We are looking for contributions from our readers. Write to us if...

- You had an experience related to money or finance which others can learn from
 - You faced a serious health problem and conquered it
 - You know of someone who has done something exceptional after the age of 55
 - You want to share your hobbies and interesting travel experiences with others
 - You have a funny or insightful anecdote about your grandchildren
- ...and we'll print it in the column 'Your Space'

Mail us at 4th Floor, Maker Chambers IV, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. Or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org

NEWSWORTHY



LONGER FLIGHT

In view of the acute manpower shortage faced by local airlines, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has increased the age limit for pilots allowed to fly from 60 to 61. The decision, announced in March, follows the hiring spree by airlines, which in turn has pushed up the demand for pilots. However, the new age limit will not automatically apply to all professional pilots. As per the guidelines of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, pilots above the age of 60 can fly only if they have a clean flight and medical record. They must also undergo a fresh Class I medical assessment every three months and acquire a certification of flight tests every six months if they want to fly till they are 61.



KISSA KURSI KA

In 1999, BEST buses in Mumbai were the first to reserve two seats for seniors. Tamil Nadu Transport Corporation followed two years later. In 2002, Kerala State Transport also marked two seats for seniors in all its buses. Now, New Delhi has finally approved a long-pending proposal to do the same. From March, two out of 51 seats in each of Delhi Transport Corporation's 3,150 buses have been reserved for seniors. The order came a year after DTC issued concessionary passes of Rs 50 per month to its silver passengers. What we now need is an awareness campaign, carried out through banners and slogans, seeking right of way for silvers while entering and exiting these buses.

ON GUARD

After a spate of crimes against senior citizens in Mumbai, Commissioner of Police A N Roy has initiated a 'confidence-building' scheme for silvers. Beat constables in each of the 320 police patrol areas in the city will visit seniors living in their area once a week—16,000 senior citizens that live alone have already been identified. Part of the agenda is to issue senior citizens' identity cards with complete personal and emergency medical details. The card also displays the names of police officers in the area and their phone numbers. Commissioner Roy feels this exercise will act as a deterrent to criminals. He is also confident of roping in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd in this initiative so that a common platform can be built to highlight security and civic and communication related issues in the city. Also on the cards is a helpline for senior citizens—the police hopes to launch it later this year.



TRENDS

A TIME TO CARE



The article on caregivers in *Harmony's* March 2005 issue, "A Helping Hand", underscored the need for educating people entrusted with the responsibility of looking after seniors. While we wait for professional caregiving to become a well-defined concept, we can take some tips from a caregiver expo being organised in the US—the National Family Caregiver Association estimates that every year more than 50 million Americans provide care for a chronically ill, aged or disabled silver. This first-ever Family Caregiver Expo, sponsored by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, will be held on May 13 and 14 in Washington. Demonstrations and free health screenings will provide information on support groups and provide tips on how to be an effective caregiver. Participants will also have the chance to speak to legal counsellors and healthcare workers.

THE SILVER CEILING

The world over, senior citizens' groups are challenging 'ageism', defined as discrimination based on age. From October 2006, it will be illegal for British employers to refuse someone a job, promotion, training or benefits because of their age. However, a special report in UK quarterly *Recruitment Confidence Index* says employers are failing to gear up for the looming legislation. The study researched attitudes to age among nearly 1,500 employers and found that over a third (39 per cent) had introduced ageist policies at work. Commenting on the findings, Shaun Tyson, management professor at Cranfield, said, "They are making a big mistake because good people come in every race, gender, and age."

Is the Kerala government listening? The state government has no plans of following the rest of India in raising the retirement age, which is 55 for government employees here compared to 58 in other states. For central government employees, the retirement age is 60. State Finance Minister Vakkom Purushothaman's rationale: "We have no other option. The unemployed youth are our primary concern."

OFFBEAT

**WINDFALL**

An 83-year-old British widow, who died earlier this year, has left farmland worth more than £ 1 million (about Rs 8 crore) to the people of her county, Cumberland. Joyce Wilkinson's property comprises three farms—£ 15,000 (Rs 12 lakh) of income will be generated by the 360-acre estate this year. Wilkinson's property will be held in a trust in her name and will help charities, schools and people in the area. Needlework was her biggest passion and Wilkinson donated her needles and threads to the Embroiders' Guild, of which she was a member. The news was published in *The Cumberland News* last month.

THE BAR'S CLOSED

International brewer Scottish and Newcastle is playing spoilsport by stopping its 20-year-old tradition of offering free beer to former employees. The brewery's retired workers in Yorkshire had enjoyed two free pints of beer three times a week as part of an unofficial agreement with the brewery. The move to halt the free beer is not a cost-cutting measure, assures a company spokesperson. Instead, the company wants to translate the savings into concrete pension for the retirees. Retired employee Geoff Baker, who spent 19 years working for the brewery and enjoyed meeting with his colleagues over a free pint, is not convinced. "It is sad that a firm as large as Scottish and Newcastle can't even offer free pints for a lifetime of contribution," he told the local newspaper, *Knaresborough Today*.

**SUPER SEARCH**

In February, the Gerontology Research Group (GRG) expanded its select band of oldest humans to include one more member: California-resident Marion Higgins. Higgins has records to prove she is 111 years and 244 days old. That makes her a 'validated super centenarian'—someone who is 110 or older and has evidence to authenticate it. There are 61 documented living super centenarians in the world, according to GRG, which operates out of University of California, Los Angeles. The research group has 40 volunteers—a loose international network of demographers, gerontologists, epidemiologists and others—dedicated to verifying the ages of the world's oldest people. The group is initially sceptical of anyone who claims to be 115 or above, having had to contend with dishonest silvers and governments that gleefully support false claims. One example is a woman in the Dominican Republic who was supposedly 128 when she died in 2003. Her ripe old age was a "falsehood perpetrated by the tourism industry there", says GRG co-founder L Stephen Coles.

LOVE BUG

Of the 26 million Americans visiting online dating sites in January 2005, more than 18 per cent, or 4.8 million, were over 55, according to a news report published by Associated Press last month. That's up from the 16.75 per cent of people over 55 who visited dating sites last year. Nielsen/Net Rating, an Internet research firm, conducted the analysis. Though technology is still a barrier for most seniors, many are becoming more computer-savvy and comfortable surfing the Net, leading to their growing interest in meeting fellow silvers and online dating.

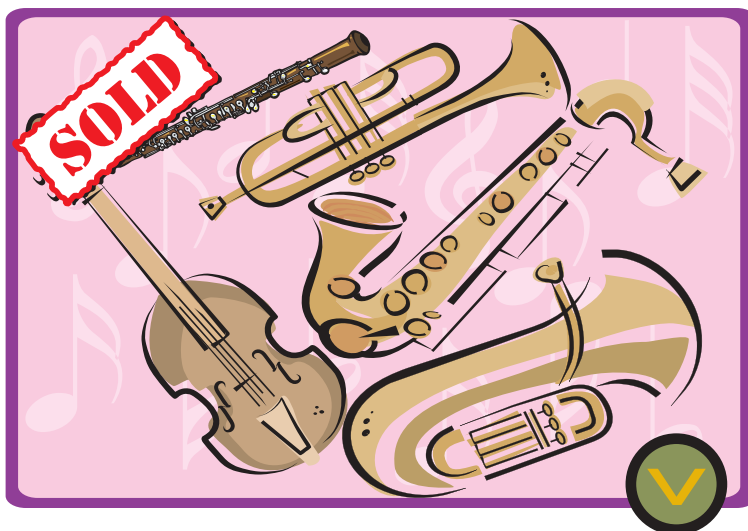
The growth has been dramatic for some of the big dating sites. In January 2005, the number of visitors to *eHarmony.com* who were above the age of 55 jumped 86 per cent to 350,000 from 196,000 a year earlier. *Match.com*, the biggest dating site in the US, attracted 100,000 more silvers this January compared to 2004. Some websites have also been actively reaching out to seniors. *Imatchup.com*, a popular online dating website that has over 2.5 million members, is featuring more seniors in advertising campaigns, said the report.



MARRY YOUR MUM-IN-LAW



If you lived in Scotland, you couldn't marry your mum-in-law. But now you can. You can also get hitched to your son's ex-wife. A woman can wed a former husband's father or her daughter's ex. All this has been made possible by an amendment to the Family Law Bill, which will allow non-blood relatives to wed. At present, such marriages are only allowed following the death of a spouse. The bill is expected to become law next year.



UP FOR GRABS

In the biggest auction ever of heirlooms belonging to families of famous jazz musicians, recently held at Guernsey's in New York City, jazz charities and museum curators competed with online eBay bidders. Up for grabs were 430 items, including Benny Goodman's clarinet, Thelonious Monk's jacket, a painting by Miles Davis, John Coltrane's sheet music and Lionel Hampton's vibraphone. If something like this were to take place in India, what would you like to see go under the hammer? R D Burman's sunglasses, M S Subbhalakshmi's veena or perhaps Pandit Bhimsen Joshi's Mercedes?

ANALYSE THIS

WORM-BUSTERS

'Sobig F', 'Lovebug', 'Melissa'. These aren't the names of books or rap songs but three new viruses ripping through your computer and crippling your email systems. And silver surfers are keeping track of these invisible intruders. A three-year study carried out by Preventon, a US-based security services company, says retired people purchase 40 per cent of home computer security services to guard their systems and carry out periodic anti-virus checks—women make up 53 per cent of all 60-year-olds who buy these products.

"Historically, security products were made for either software professionals or users," says Preventon's chief executive officer Paul Goossens. An earlier study found that senior Internet buffs spent more time chatting about computers than any other age group.



MONEY MATTERS

BANK ON SILVER

Exclusive banks for silvers—that's the latest initiative of Andhra Bank, a public-sector financial institution. If approved by the Reserve Bank of India, the bank will open special branches for seniors all over the country, beginning with Hyderabad where it is headquartered. Value additions will include health advice, library space and a corner for cultural programmes. This announcement came on the heels of the bank launching two insurance-linked deposit schemes for senior citizens, Ab Jeevan Prakash and Ab Jeevan Prakash Plus (see March 2005 issue of Harmony).



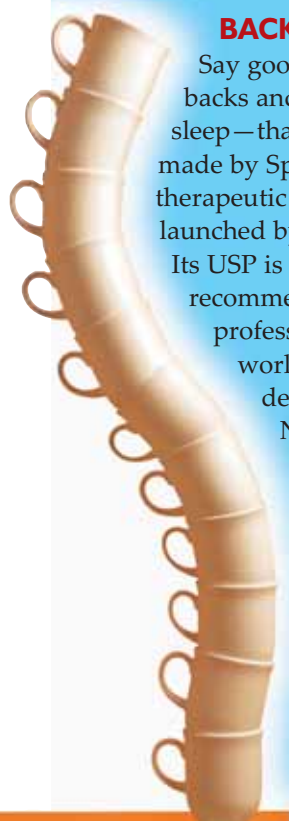
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NUMBER CRUNCH

It was announced recently that you need to acquire a Unique Identification Number in order to trade over Rs 1 lakh in the stock market from March 31, 2005. This deadline has now been extended to December 31, 2005. While the debate that another piece of identification besides a PAN number is useless rages, one thing is clear: acquiring a UIN is an ordeal for seniors. Individuals need to personally visit the office of the agents appointed by the National Securities Depositories Limited and provide their fingerprint, photograph and signature for registration. While the application form can be downloaded off the Net (<http://mapin.nsdl.com/Individuals.pdf>), it needs to be personally submitted to the agency along with a demand draft of Rs 300 in favour of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (A/c MAPIN DATABASE) as registration fee. A photocopy of the PAN card and proof of address are also required. For housebound seniors, the authorised agencies are only too willing to visit you at home, but it'll cost you Rs 4,000. *Harmony's* suggestion: If the UIN is indeed mandatory, reduce the fee charged by the agencies to visit the homes of silvers.

SHOPPING LIST



BACK UP

Say goodbye to bad backs and disturbed sleep—that's the claim made by Spinekare, a therapeutic mattress launched by Kurl On India. Its USP is 'memory foam', recommended by medical professionals

worldwide. First designed by the National

Aeronautic Space Association as protective gear in spacecraft, the foam reduced risk of injuries when astronauts regularly bumped into the vehicle's sides while flying into

zero-gravity zones. Kurl On has used this foam in Spinekare, which moulds to your body's contours and offers 'snug spine' support. As you change positions, it softens around the pressure points, improving blood flow and providing relief from backache. The company also says that the foam allows heat and sweat dissipation, thereby preventing bedsores. Priced at Rs 14,000 for a king-sized mattress and Rs 12,133 for a queen-sized one, Spinekare has a standardised thickness of five inches but sizes can be customised upon request. Call toll free on 1600440404, or customer care centres in Hyderabad: 040-24220886; Guwahati: 0361-2513451; Patna: 0612-2346199; and Chandigarh: 0712- 2652984.



INDULGE YOURSELF

Somatheeram Beach Resort in Kerala has made it to *Time* magazine's February 21 issue as one of the world's top getaways. The spa, a five-time winner of the state's 'Best Ayurvedic Centre' award, offers as many as 28 wellness programmes, usually a combination of Ayurveda and yoga, including anti-ageing, rejuvenation and body purification therapy. On the side, you can enjoy music, art and dance programmes. All this comfort doesn't come cheap—accommodation, Ayurveda therapy and vegetarian meals cost approximately Rs 1.6 lakh for a 14-day package per person. For details, call 0471-2268101; email somatheeram@vsnl.com or go to www.somatheeram.com.

THINGS TO DO

YOGA FOR YOU

It is the most attended activity at the Harmony Interactive Centre in Mumbai. Ever since yoga was introduced, members make sure they don't miss even one session. Ask them why, and the response will invariably include words like 'energetic,' 'strong' and 'young'. It will take some time for the centre to spread its wings to Delhi, but till then people can check out the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga's 'Happy and Healthy Ageing' yoga class for silvers, launched in January 2005. Classes are held between 10 am and 11.30 am, from Monday to Friday. Those interested can register for a monthly fee of Rs 100 at 68, Ashok Road, Near Gole Dak Khana, New Delhi-110001 or call 011- 23721472, 23718301, 23711657 for details.

HEALTH NEWS

MOVE TO CARE

A February 2005 survey conducted by the Indian Association for Retired Persons (IARP) in Kolkata revealed that loneliness, insecurity and a lack of support from the family during illness were the topmost problems faced by their 200 silver members. 'Affection' and 'personal care' were the main areas that silvers felt were lacking in their lives. Taking up the cue, the association has gone ahead and tied up with AMRI Hospitals, a city-based healthcare unit, to start a geriatric-care division from this month. The hospital's counsellors and IARP's volunteers will also pay regular visits to those in need of help.

In another initiative to help silvers, IARP has got together with a voluntary organisation to provide medical care and other support to senior citizens at odd hours.



THE BUZZ

SOUND OF FREEDOM



Maharashtra's Democratic Front government has pardoned women convicts aged above 60 and ordered their immediate release from jails in the state. The announcement came a day after International Women's Day, on March 9. However, the pardon does not extend to those serving terms under POTA, TADA, the Narcotics and Psychotropic Drugs Act and the Maharashtra Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Slumlords Act. Significantly less in number than male criminals, women have been found to be one-time offenders—a woman who has suffered imprisonment once seldom takes to crime once she is set free. While no specific information is available about the actual beneficiaries, Home Ministry officials are seeking details about the age-wise classification of the nearly 1,200 women prisoners lodged in prisons across Maharashtra.

Overheard: The Home Ministry is considering a demand to introduce pension benefits for retired governors. Allowances for secretarial staff and travel may be an additional benefit.

MEDIA WATCH

REALITY TV

A BBC television documentary on dementia is getting rave reviews in the UK. Based on the experiences of members of the Alzheimer's Society who live in care homes, the documentary, titled *Dad*, is about those who lose track of time. Screened recently, it tackles real-life situations candidly, yet sensitively. The film also focuses on elder abuse in families and care homes. The documentary, in fact, kicked off charity organisation Comic Relief's campaign against elder abuse in the country.

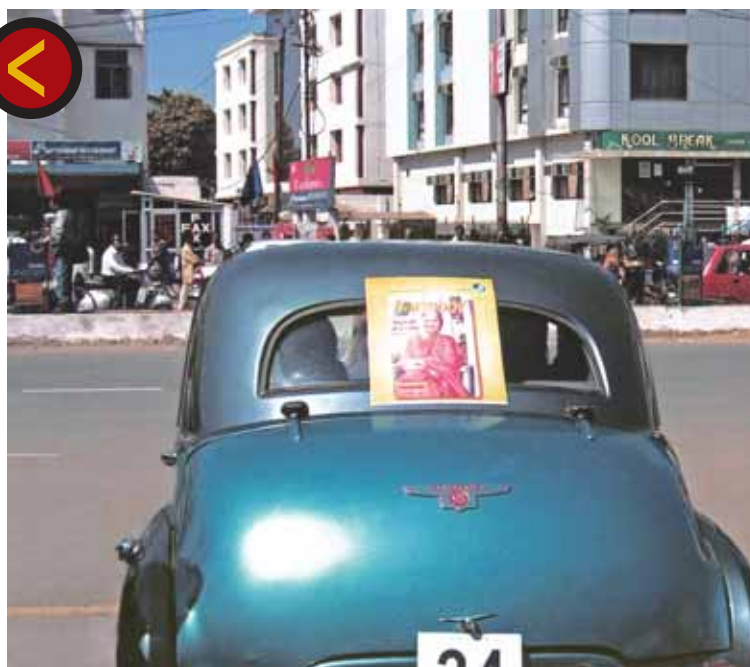


FINE ART

India's largest private exhibition of contemporary art, the Harmony Show, beginning April 1 at the World Trade Centre, Mumbai, will see the works of at least 50 silver artists, including the late Arup Das, Shakti Burman, A Padamsee, Anjolie Ela Menon and Krishen Khanna. The entry of 204 artists is the show's highest ever since its inception in 1996. Two awards instituted in 1998—the Harmony Excellence Award for the Emerging Artist of the Year carrying a sum of Rs 1 lakh, and the Harmony Heritage Award for Lifetime Contribution to Art, Culture or Literature worth Rs 2 lakh—will be announced. This will be the fourth year of the show's support to Aseema, an NGO working towards the rehabilitation and education of street children. This year, this support extends to Pratham, another NGO that works towards the same goals.

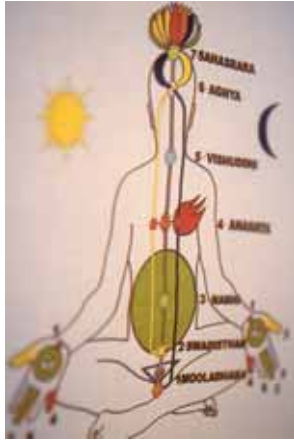
ON A ROLL

Nostalgia reigned at a vintage car and motorcycle rally at Lucknow last month, organised by the Vintage Car and Motorcycle Club in association with Indian Oil Corporation. Participating in the show were 44 cars, 17 motorcycles and two jeeps. Spectators jostled to see a 1911 Merry Weather fire engine, a 1935 Fiat Balilla that featured in the Hindi blockbuster *Gadar* and a 1925 Austin among other vintage beauties. Also riding high on appreciation at the venue was *Harmony*—all the copies of our March issue, distributed by our team there, were lapped up by the mostly silver vehicle owners. Immediate reactions ranged from “at last, something nice for seniors” to “great job”.



Welcome to the section where you, our readers, can share your thoughts and experiences on anything under the sun. Write in, and make this space your own

MUSIC FOR THE MIND



Nada Yoga, a branch of Kriya Yoga (the yoga of technique), works on the premise that we, and the universe around us, are made up of *nada*, or sound vibrations. Nada Yoga divides music into two categories: inner music or *anahata* and outer music or *ahata*. While outer music is heard through the ear, the inner music owes its

reception to the subtle heart-*chakra*, also known as *anahata* chakra, which is not a sensory organ.

Anahata is private, exclusive to its 'possessor'. One can make use of it with commitment and patience to achieve inner harmony and self-realisation, the goals for those who undertake meditation. How can you search out your own music? First select a place where you are least likely to be disturbed and sit down comfortably with your spine erect. Start breathing in and out slowly. Then, focus your awareness to the sound that emanates when you breathe out. Give your total attention to the vibrations you feel when the breath leaves your system. Initially, you should be able to hold your concentration for two or three minutes and over a period—say one month—you will be able to focus for at least five to 10 minutes at a stretch. This relieves all tensions from the mind and helps you control your mind, the first step towards the expansion of your consciousness.

Unlike *anahata*, outer music is not esoteric or hidden. The 'first reaction' to a musical form—irrespective of its origin or region, Western classical, Carnatic or Hindustani—is one and the same, even for a mixed audience. The subsequent reaction to a melody is influenced by the listener's cultural upbringing, his tastes and preferences, likes and dislikes. There are tremendous possibilities for musical achievement offered by myriad rhythmic variations. Composer Igor Stravinsky once

remarked: "I know that 12 notes in each octave and the varieties of rhythms offer me opportunities that all of human genius will never exhaust."

Outer music with its infinite varieties affects our moods and minds in various ways. It can agitate or relax us. Meditative music does not require elaborate orchestration or voice-culture. Simple sounds that are close to nature and its elements, like wind, fire, water, earth and ether, are found to be the most effective in uplifting one's level of consciousness to greater heights.

Tunes found in *bhajan* and *kirtan*—like *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*, *Govind Bolo Gopal Bolo*, *Buddham Sharanam Gachchami*—are called 'sticky' because of their almost endless repetitions of melodies. They have been welcome assets for enhancing meditation. Professor James Kellaris of the University of Cincinnati, after questioning 1,000 people in 2003 about tunes that they could not get out of their heads, observed that a combination of simplicity and repetition can turn an ordinary sequence of notes into something unforgettable. According to him, these elements produce "mental mosquito bites" creating a "cognitive itch" that can be scratched only by replaying a tune again and again. Melodically and lyrically simple and repetitive, these tunes over time can bring about changes in the brainwave pattern converting beta waves (which govern our alert mental status) to alpha and theta levels. This change is believed to be an ideal state for meditation and relaxation where our creative and intuitive potential peaks.

Saying that simple tunes are enough for meditation in no way intends to undermine Western classical music. For instance, by overlapping melodies as in his fugues, Johann Sebastian Bach had mastered the art of arresting the minds of his listeners. In fact, all the great symphonies can be used as a tool in mind-control programmes. Whether it's the engulfing flames you can almost touch when you listen to Antonio Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, or the majesty in Richard Strauss' *Blue Danube Waltz*, your consciousness wafts to new levels.

—Dr T V Sairam, Visakhapatnam

THE COMPENSATIONS OF RETIREMENT

*Retirement is freedom
From stifling routine and undignified haste
That leaves no breathing space
And no time to meditate.*

*Good riddance from unhealthy rivalry
And bickering over trivial things.
From suffocating rules and regulations
And erratic hours and forced decisions.*

*You are not your own master,
Boss at office, spouse at home
Dictate terms and make you dance
To their tune whether you like it or not.
You waste yourself in pleasing them
Pleasing none you displease yourself.
To pursue your hobby with no leisure
Carry load like a beast of burden.*

*Now no more boss to control your life
And regulate your body clock
To mind you even in your sleep
Make you awake at the right stroke.*

*Free from all encumbrances
I will do things of my own will.
To enjoy the beauties of nature
I am going to sit on the top of a hill.*

—Nalini Sharma, Bhilai



FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

My wife and I held three ICICI Safety Bonds each to the value of Rs 30,000, which matured on March 31, 2003. According to Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) guidelines, we should have received our redemption cheques in the third week of April 2003. They didn't arrive. In response to our formal enquiry, ICICI Infotech informed us that the cheques had been dispatched on March 26, 2003.



Later, it became clear that the cheques had been sent by regular post and gone missing. ICICI Infotech maintained that using ordinary post was in keeping with their regular procedure. This was despite the fact that bond certificates stipulate that redemption papers should be dispatched under registered post. Thus, for no fault of ours we had been deprived of liquidity to the extent of Rs 30,000.

We reported the matter to the Chief Executive, ICICI Bank, on May 1, 2003, and finally received duplicate cheques on June 9, 2003. But we decided to fight for justice. It was clear that the bank had acted illegally by sending the cheques by regular post. We approached the Banking Ombudsman, a dispute resolution mechanism instituted by the RBI, in Mumbai, who advised us to approach SEBI. We did so on July 29, 2003. Still, nothing happened.

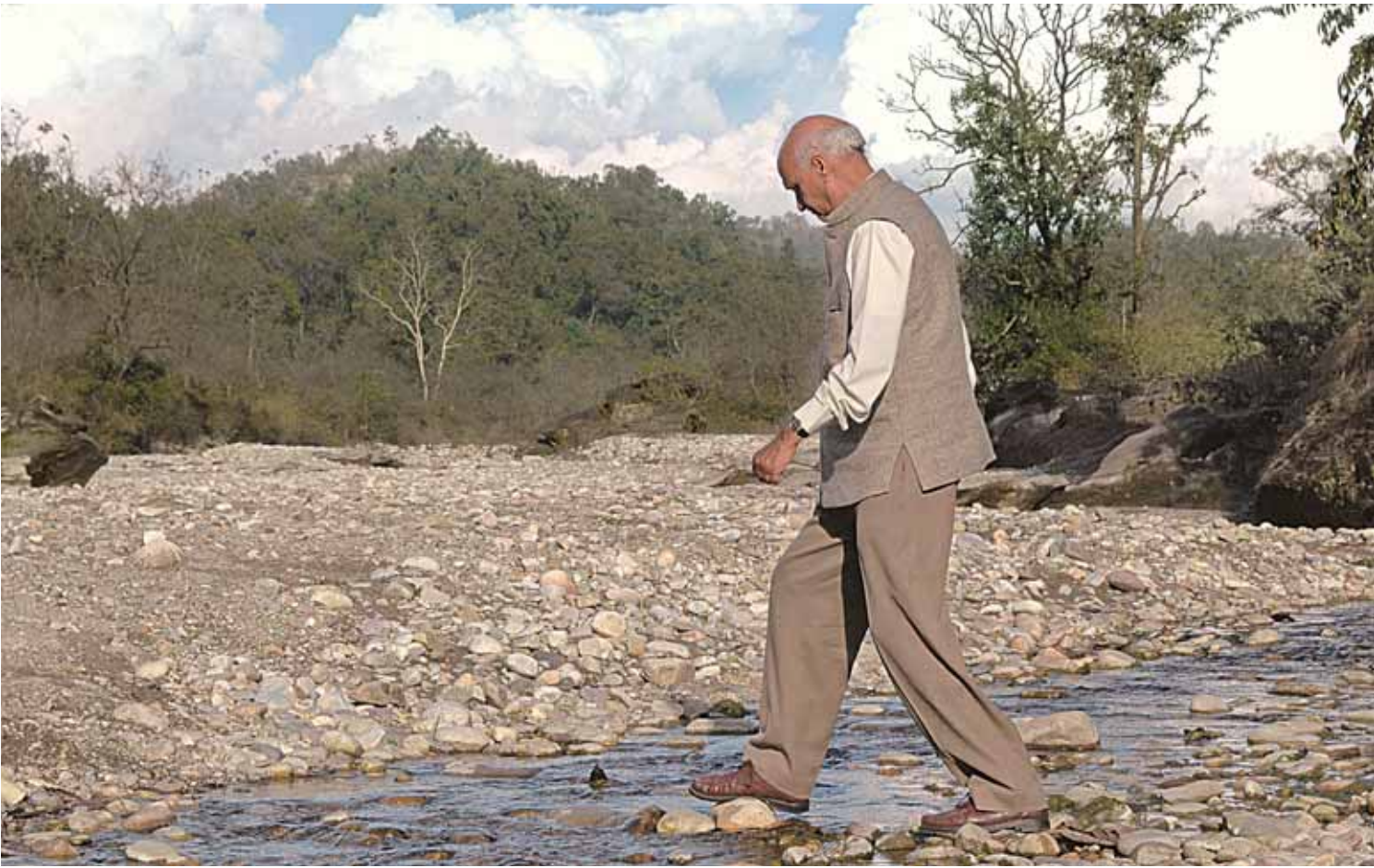
On June 11, we sent our complaint to the Director, Public Grievances, Government of India in New Delhi, who then passed on our papers to the Joint Secretary, Banking Division, Ministry of Finance. Finally, on November 11, 2004, we received a total compensation of Rs 4,252 as penal interest.

—Sushil Kumar, New Delhi

We salute the efforts of Sushil Kumar and his wife. This is a lesson to us all.

—Editors

Son of the



SOIL

Avdhash Kaushal, a pioneer in the field of human rights and rural litigation, has brought technology, education and freedom from exploitation to the nomadic Van Gujjar community in Uttarakhand. Text: **Teena Baruah** Photographs: **Ajay Goel**



Kaushal's mission of reaching the unreachable has been instrumental in enabling the Van Gujjar tribe in Uttarakhand to protect its identity and home



I am somewhat like Michael Henchard of *Mayor of the Casterbridge*," says Avdhash Kaushal, famously called *bagh* (tiger) in Dehradun. Messiah for a community of nomads called Van Gujjar, Kaushal is a mild-mannered man much of the time. But when faced with an obstacle, he becomes fierce and determined, stopping at nothing to achieve his ends.

The 68-year-old acquired a reputation for being fiercely antagonistic in 1986 when he won a legal battle against the limestone mine owners' cartel in Dehradun. One morning in 1983, Kaushal was scanning the headlines of a newspaper when he first read about water shortage in Dehradun.

"I couldn't understand why a region where it rains all year should experience water crisis," he recalls. So Kaushal, who was then heading the Nehru Yuva Kendra of Dehradun, an autonomous body created by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to mobilise youth for environment conservation, began looking for an explanation. He also involved the Rural Litigation Empowerment Kendra (RLEK)—an NGO that he founded in 1973 to empower indigenous groups, marginalised people, women and children in Dehradun. Initial research and consultation with experts revealed that mindless deforestation and limestone quarrying in the area had led to the water crisis.

The only solution: ban quarrying. So Kaushal filed public-interest litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court on July 14, 1983, the first environmental PIL in the country. Meanwhile, he began getting threats from the mining cartel that owned 141 mines in the region. "For three years, my house was a virtual police station," he remembers. "My wife Prabha and three children had to move house twice." But he refused to give in. Three years later, after an intense legal battle, the Supreme Court banned quarrying in the valley.

The 'Big Cat' image grew stronger in 1992. Kaushal stepped forward to help the Van Gujjar, a community of Muslim, vegetarian nomads who kept buffalos. They were on the verge of losing their identity and home, in the forests of the Shivalik Hills in Mohund district. Kaushal first met

these nomads on his way to Dehradun from Delhi. They stood blocking the road, protesting against the Centre's decision to convert their winter abode into the proposed 825 sq km Rajaji National Park. The forest guards wouldn't let them enter the forest. Kaushal decided to fight their battle and launched an intense campaign that finally compelled the state government to let them enter the forest.

Kaushal has won a host of awards since then, including the Padma Shri in 1986 and an invitation to speak at the United Nations World Summit in Geneva in 2003. He, however, considers the 1976 Bonded Labour Abolition Act as his biggest achievement. In 1972, Kaushal was passing through the Jaunsar Bhavar tribal region of Uttaranchal, when he spotted a frail woman carrying wood. She was a





Kaushal considers the 1976 Bonded Labour Abolition Act his biggest achievement, but Van Gujjar nomads think his contribution to their community is even greater—he freed them from an era of exploitation by moneylenders and forest guards, bringing technology and a sense of leadership to their doorstep

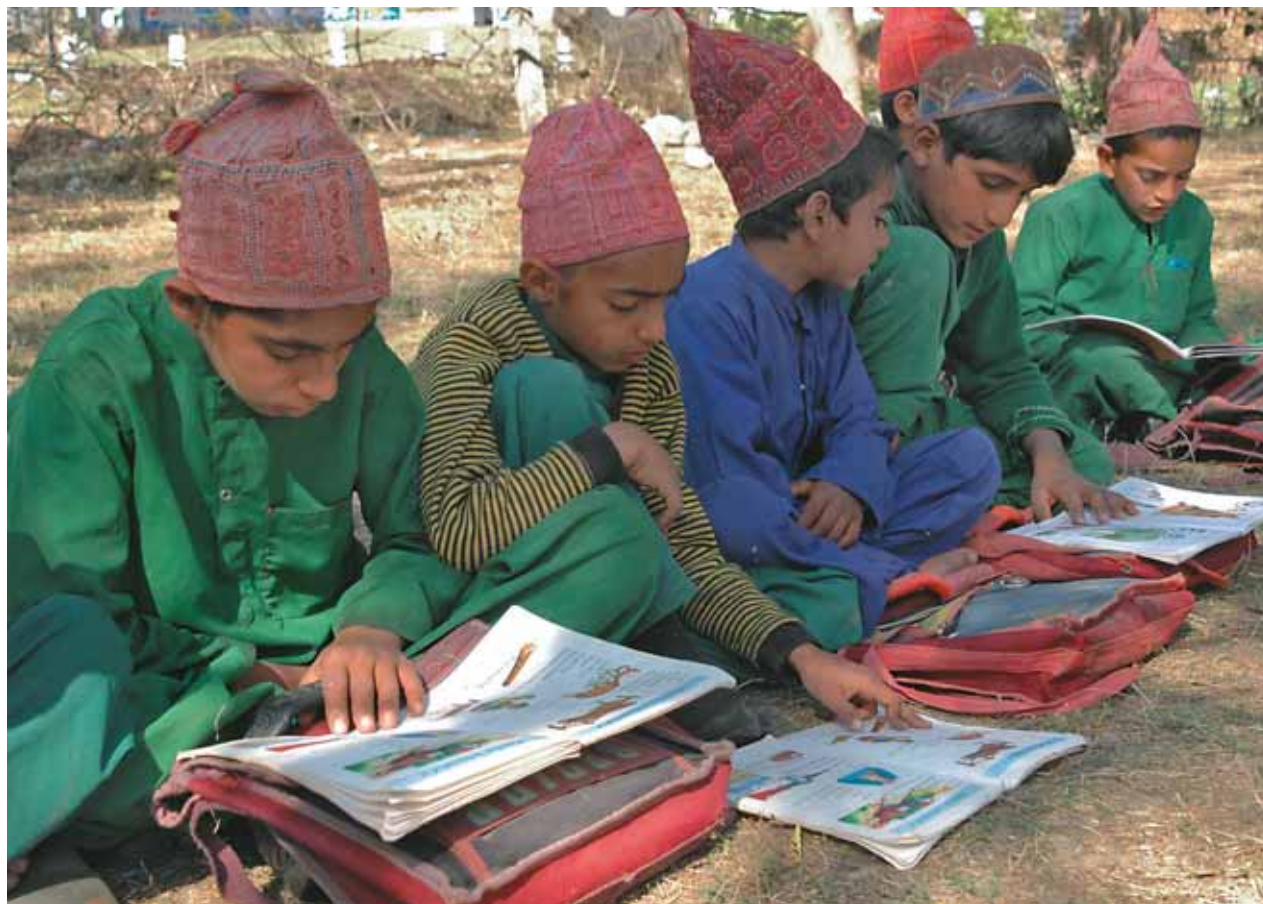
bonded labourer, and there were many like her. Kaushal publicised the extent of this exploitation in bureaucratic circles and distributed pamphlets. It led to the 1976 Bonded Labour Abolition Act that freed about 19,000 people in the region.

I always dreamt of reaching the unreachable and including the excluded, and here was the big opportunity,” says Kaushal. However, he also realised that he couldn’t take on the challenge of rehabilitating the Gujjar tribe while being tied down to a full-time job. That’s when he quit his job as a professor of Economics and Public Administration at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Mussoorie. He fought until the Gujjar were given access to the forest, and decided to find a permanent solution to their problems.

Kaushal took the help of the 150-strong workforce of RLEK, his own NGO, which operates in 13 districts of Uttaranchal. It began with an adult

education programme in 1993. Within two years, the community asked it to open a children’s school. Kaushal says, “These people were always on the move. So we decided to take the school to them.” Around 350 volunteers, usually trained tribals, lived with the nomads to educate 21,000 Gujjar. They even developed books suited to their sensibilities. The effort won RLEK the Unesco Literacy Award in 1998 for running an innovative mobile forest academy. In 1993, Kaushal distributed 75 battery-operated wireless handsets among the community, provided by the Ministry of Telecommunications. With that, he converted a bunch of nomads into forest guards, tracking poachers, illegal wood contractors, controlling fires, besides helping in medical emergencies.

With technology and education, an era of exploitation by moneylenders and forest officials came to an end. “Earlier, we used to shiver at the thought of



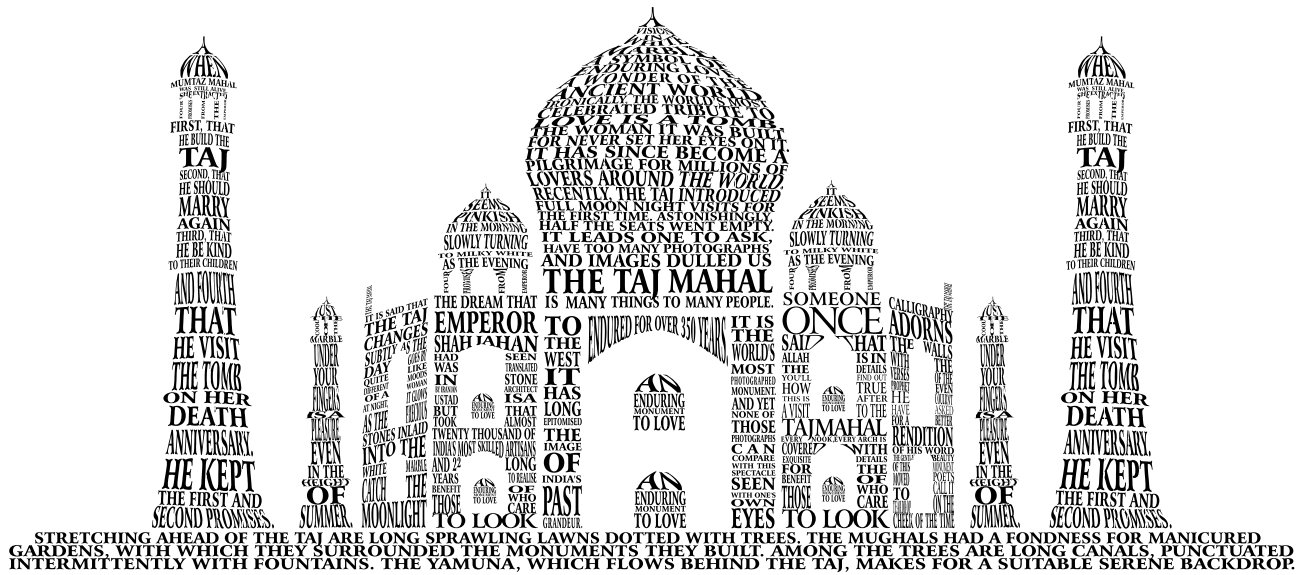
Since the Van Gujjar tribe is always on the move, Kaushal took education to them, establishing a mobile school for 21,000 Gujjar. The effort won Kaushal's NGO, the Rural Litigation Empowerment Kendra, the Unesco Literacy Award in 1998

approaching a forest guard for fear of being beaten up without reason," says Noor Alam Pradhan, a Gujjar chieftain. "Now, Sir has told us if anyone hits us we should hit back. If we get arrested, he says he'll free us." His brother Yusuf adds, "While earlier, forest guards duped us by taking our thumb impressions on crucial documents, now we read every paper before signing."

In 1996, Kaushal met former election commissioner T N Seshan, a friend, to get the community voting rights. Then came first-aid and veterinary training and a mobile veterinary van from Sonia Gandhi under the banner of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. However, the van had to be returned. Kaushal breaks into a loud guffaw as he recalls how a matriarchal head of the community asked him not to take donations from Sonia Gandhi because she was a *bewa* (a widow)—it was against their tradition to take help from someone to whom they owe help.

Kaushal's NGO, RLEK, also trains women candidates in leadership and organisational skills for the panchayat elections. One of the panchayat trainers, Rekha Pundhir, 35, who works in the Chamoli, Pithoragarh, Rudraprayag, Kumaon and Garhwal regions, recalls how they taught women to end abuse at home before trying to make a difference in society. "Once, I saw Sir crying as he listened to these *pradhans* talking about their drunken and abusive husbands." RLEK's latest project is to involve the Gujjar community in promoting a forest management programme. "Considering their life is completely dependent on the forest, it is only natural to include them in preserving it," says Kaushal.

Today, RLEK projects are funded by the state, the Centre and the United Nations Development Programme. For his personal needs, though, Dehradun's beloved tiger claims his pension from the Mussoorie academy is sufficient. ■



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I still listen to K L Saigal and
watch Guru Dutt's masterpieces.

I still go to my old bank, take the token
and wait for my turn.

I still miss the smell of gum on the inland letter.

I still manage to find spare parts
for my vintage Amby.

I still enjoy filter coffee at
India Coffee House, *Estd.* 1940.

I still think Sunny's better than Sachin.

I still have to download *pritam aan milo*
on my computer.



A lesson in arithmetic



AMERICAN JOURNALIST KIN Hubbard once said, "The only way to double your money is to fold it over once and put in your pocket." Even if that one fold translates into 5 per cent interest in the bank, it's clearly gain and not loss. And who knows this better than silvers—to maximise every rupee that they have, they deal with savings schemes (the loss of old ones and the launch of new ones) more than anyone else. Priorities are different for the youth. Now, that doesn't mean that fast-track loans, the rush to have the latest cell phone, or shopping sprees at malls are unjustified for those who have the money. After all, the younger generation is meant to spend and energise the economy. But there's a lot to be learnt when seniors say: "You aren't wealthy till you have something money can't buy."

That 'something' is the ability to do some mental arithmetic. Calculate how much your job can earn you by the time you turn 60. And how much you are spending on everyday needs and pleasure. Subtract the second from the first and you will get what you will be left with. Our seniors have this simple math going on in their heads all the time. The fact that they know exactly how much they paid for each thing they possess should say something.

As much for seniors as for the youth, money is strength, freedom, and a cushion. Even the

definitions are the same. Strength is empowerment, freedom is independence and cushion is security. The only difference: The words 'empowerment', 'independence' and 'security' are individually customised, the meaning derived from social and financial standing and attitude towards money. Our seniors have always been money-wise, and everyone, bar none, turns wise with age. But what use would wisdom be after everything is lost? Most of our seniors may penny-pinch, yes, but the same people can live comfortably today, despite tax burdens and dipping returns.

Our seniors are positive role models, always ready to dole out encouragement

Everyone has something to learn from seniors, starting from the youngest family member. Teaching grandchildren the value of a rupee is a point most seniors ponder about. The world over, grandparents feel good when their grandchildren tell them how they plan to use the money they gifted them, and make sure the kids follow through with their plans by questioning them about it.

Seniors like to instil a sense of responsibility in younger members of the family by giving them small tasks to perform. I know of

people who were paid one rupee per grey hair that they pulled out from their grandmother's head. Of course, children living in nuclear families don't interact with their grandparents and other elders much. But let me tell you, whether you live with them or meet them once a year, our seniors are positive role models, always ready to dole out guidance, encouragement and incentive.

Never try parting them from their retirement fund to finance some harebrained 'quick-to-riches' scheme though. This is the money they have slaved for and saved for a secure retirement. Borrowing is

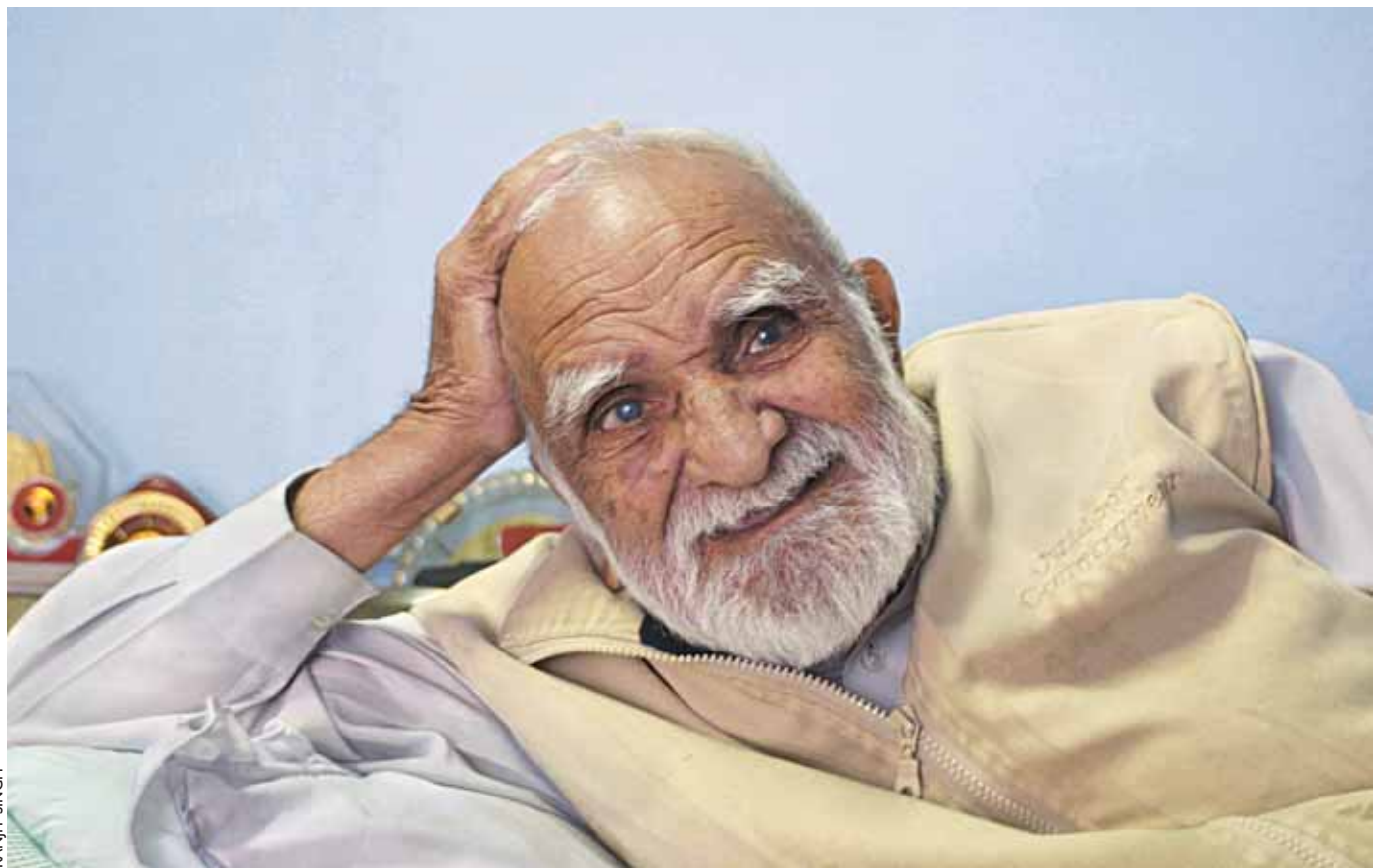
a no-no. Most seniors grew up in large families where the income earned by the head of the household was spent wisely to meet the basic necessities of each member. They know how to stretch the rupee and avoid a debt trap.

Our grandparents and parents are the ones who have lived through the tough times to give the youth the good times—not to squander but to cherish. Let's take a leaf from their book and learn from their ability to spend wisely. Not on material pursuits, but on the future. ■

Shabana Azmi, 53, is an actor, activist and former Rajya Sabha MP

Talking about a revolution

Bhagat Singh Bilga, the last survivor of the Gadar Movement, tells **Teena Baruah** about his many adventures



RAJIT SINGH

The man former prime minister I K Gujral calls “a legend” is not a scholar or a man of many words. Ninety-eight-year-old Bhagat Singh Bilga is a revolutionary, the last survivor of the Gadar (revolution) Movement, a

struggle launched by expatriate Punjabis in the US and Canada to overthrow the British in India.

Bilga still remembers the heady days when he signed up for the movement. It was 1931 and he, then 24, had just reached the

Republic of Argentina in search of a job. The first person he met was revolutionary and freedom fighter Bhagat Singh’s exiled uncle Ajit Singh. Soon, Bilga was won over by the cause. The money he earned by working as a clerk in a railway store went

into the kitty that funded revolutionary outfits like Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Kirti Party, and he became a key member of the Gadar Movement in South America. “*Gaye the kamai karne ke liye, leke aye inqalab* (We went to earn a living, and brought back revolution),” says Bilga, reclining on a narrow bed in a room at Desh Bhagat Yadgar Memorial Hall in Jalandhar. The hall was inaugurated by him and his comrades in the Gadar Movement.

The movement had its roots in discrimination against Indian immigrants in Canada and the US. In April 1914, Gurdit Singh, a prosperous Punjabi contractor from Singapore, chartered a Japanese ship, the *Komagata Maru*, to take a party of Indians over to Canada. The ship sailed from Hong Kong and, after collecting other passengers at Shanghai, Kobe and Yokohama, arrived at Vancouver on May 23, 1914, with 376 Indians—all Punjabis, with 340 Sikhs, 12 Muslims and 24 Muslims—on board. Canadian immigration authorities refused all but 22 passengers permission to land. The ship eventually headed back to India. As it approached Calcutta on September 26, 1914, a European gunboat corralled the ship and held the passengers prisoner. The *Komagata Maru* was then taken to a place called Budge Budge, about 17 miles away from Calcutta and the passengers were told that they were being sent to Punjab on a special train. Many of them were reluctant, preferring to remain in Calcutta and seek employment there. In the scuffle that resulted, the policemen opened fire and 20 people died. It was the spark that lit the torch of the Gadar

Movement. And the Soviet revolution in 1917 fanned the flames; the ‘Gadaris’—as the followers of the movement came to be known—looked to Moscow for financial support and revolutionary training, their ultimate aim to establish a communist state in India.

Bilga too was sent to Moscow by the Gadar Party with 60 other Gadaris to learn the Russian language, Marxism, politics, economics, military techniques and guerrilla warfare. In 1933, he received his orders to return to Punjab. Sikhs in those days were followed by the British all over the world on their journey back home, and arrested the moment they touched home ground. Travelling on a fake passport under the pseudonym ‘Milky Singh’, Bilga took an impossible route, crossing Paris, Berlin, and

Bilga’s home, the Desh Bhagat Yadgar Memorial Hall, is a treasure trove for researchers, safekeeping over 17,000 books about India’s revolutionary history. There are handwritten statements of Gadaris, a British directory containing sketches and whereabouts of Gadaris, original copies of the movement’s handwritten newspaper *Gadar* (in Punjabi and Urdu) which was published from San Francisco in 1913, and 2,000 rare pictures of revolutionaries, who usually took great pains to conceal their faces and identities.

“I have dedicated myself to this museum which has 35 other freedom fighters as its members,” he says. “It traces the life of each and every Gadari along with their photographs. We have collected them from their villages, relatives and friends, in

“I have dedicated myself to preserving the memories of my fellow freedom fighters”

—Bhagat Singh Bilga

Colombo, before reaching Kanyakumari. He crossed Nagpur and Calcutta before coming to Kanpur. It took him a year.

Bilga is preparing to travel again. “Today, I have a valid passport,” he says with a smile. He is going to Birmingham in the UK to stay with his two sons, Kulbir, 76, and Prem, 56, and consult doctors about his prostate problem. “When you travel after 90, you should travel light,” he adds, packing his age-old grey overcoat in a tiny suitcase. It’s also hard for him to find things in his small, cluttered room at the memorial hall.

India and abroad. And all this to tell the world that Englishmen didn’t leave India because a handful of Indians threw salt into their eyes. They left because we sent them packing.”

Over the past 46 years, the museum has received financial help from NRIs, as well as information about their revolutionary relatives and friends. “They know these pieces of history will be safe with us,” says Bilga. Every October, a five-day festival called Gadari Mela is hosted at the Yadgar Hall to celebrate the contributions of revolutionaries. It is attended



Bilga at the Desh Bhagat Yadgar Memorial Hall in Jalandhar; right, in his younger days

mostly by families of martyrs of the Gadar Movement—400 revolutionaries were hanged and 5,000 were sent to Kala Pani for life imprisonment; most of them never returned—who often come from abroad to be a part of it.

Jamana. But Bilga regularly listens to TV news bulletins and receives a steady stream of visitors. His comrades' family members often drop in for a glass of tea. And then there's 52-year-old Gurmit Singh, 52, a former journalist and

Bilga's daughter Kranti died of typhoid after he was arrested for his anti-Partition protest after Independence. His two sons live in Birmingham and are active leftists—elder son Kulbir is currently the president of the Indian Worker's Association in Birmingham. "It's in their genes," he says with pride. "And they love fussing over their father, sending money and arranging expensive medical treatment for me."

Bilga's emphatic belief in pluralism led him to take on Sikh extremists during the Khalistan separatist movement

Last year, a BBC reporter who filmed a documentary on Bilga sent him some cash and a rare picture of Gadaris in Singapore taken on February 15, 1915. Unfortunately, Bilga can't enjoy viewing his collection as he used to, having lost his eyesight three years ago.

The debility has also robbed him of his habit of reading his favourite Punjabi daily *Naya*

student communist who has dedicated his life to keep alive the memories of the Gadaris. Gurmit spends 12 hours with Bilga every day and is family now—Bilga's wife Jannat died 35 years ago. "I talk to him about everything from family problems to pressures at work," says Gurmit. "He listens carefully and his advice is in sync with the times. Sometimes, it seems he is 20 years old."

His family aside, Bilga has many well-wishers. CPI (M) general secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet, 90, has known him for 30 years. "His village Bilga is about 8 km away from my village Bundala," he says. "Also, we have worked together as comrades for the Communist Party. I have rarely seen a more dedicated father, a finer freedom fighter and a more grounded politician in my lifetime." And

Balwant Singh Ramoowalia, 60, former union minister and former secretary general of the Akali Dal, calls him a "true patriot". Ramoowalia was introduced to Bilga a quarter of a century ago while he was settling pension cases of freedom fighters as an MP in 1998. He adds, "Bilga's commitment to the nation is so strong that he could never get along with any political party completely. In fact, he earned the reputation of being *ziddi* (stubborn) by standing to his personal ideology."

Bilga continues to act stubbornly on his beliefs. His emphatic belief in pluralism led him to take on

Bilga went from one village to another on his cycle, requesting Hindus not to give in to communal hatred. "I once went to a condolence meeting of a slain Hindu and addressed Sikh mourners there against the movement. After coming back home, I sat in the courtyard awaiting my death. I desperately wanted to be a martyr!"

Bilga has had many close calls. Once, he travelled from Colombo to Kanyakumari with a British spy in tow. He posed as a Tamilian and exchanged his ticket with a co-passenger. But the spy wasn't fooled. Finally, Bilga had to jump out of the

"I have rarely seen a finer freedom fighter and a more grounded politician"

—Harkishan Singh Surjeet

Sikh extremists during the Khalistan separatist movement in the late 1970s and 1980s.

"In 1978, it was impossible to challenge Punjabi terrorists if you were a Sikh," recalls journalist Kuldeep Nayar, 79. "While covering the Punjab unrest, I heard of Bilga. He stood alone and spread his pluralistic ideas. The fact that he had no weapons to defend himself didn't bother him either." Bilga agrees that it was impossible to speak against Khalistani mobs in the emotionally charged villages of Punjab in the early 1980s. "We recruited more than 200 young intellectuals to pacify the fanatics," he remembers. "Most of them were gunned down."

train at Nagpur. He reached Kolkata, worked as a trade union leader and played an important role in bringing the shutters down on Juggi Lal Kamlapat cloth mill—the strike was called because the mill owners had beaten a worker to death. He also established two underground presses, one in Kanpur and another in Lahore.

As the memories come flooding back, Bilga becomes animated again, belying the fact that he's 98. He has only recently allowed his body certain concessions. "Earlier, I used to wake up at 6 am," he says. "Now, my body revolts. It tells me to go back to bed. And I listen to it. Sometimes." ■

To know more about the Gadar movement, log on to www.gadarmemorial.com

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Mr Prolific

A series of 100 paintings, part of the biggest deal ever in Indian art. A landmark UK show. Another film to make. A mission to take art to the masses. M F Husain is busy, busy, busy. **Maria Louvella** pins him down for a chat

He zips around on a chair with wheels at the Pundole Art Gallery in Mumbai from one painting to another, a dab on one canvas, a slash on the other. That's M F Husain for you. Impatient, always on the move, jetting about even at 89 (he turns 90 this year), arguably India's most prolific painter. Someone who, in his own words, lives "10 minutes at a time". "I alter my plans not by the year, but by the minute," he says.

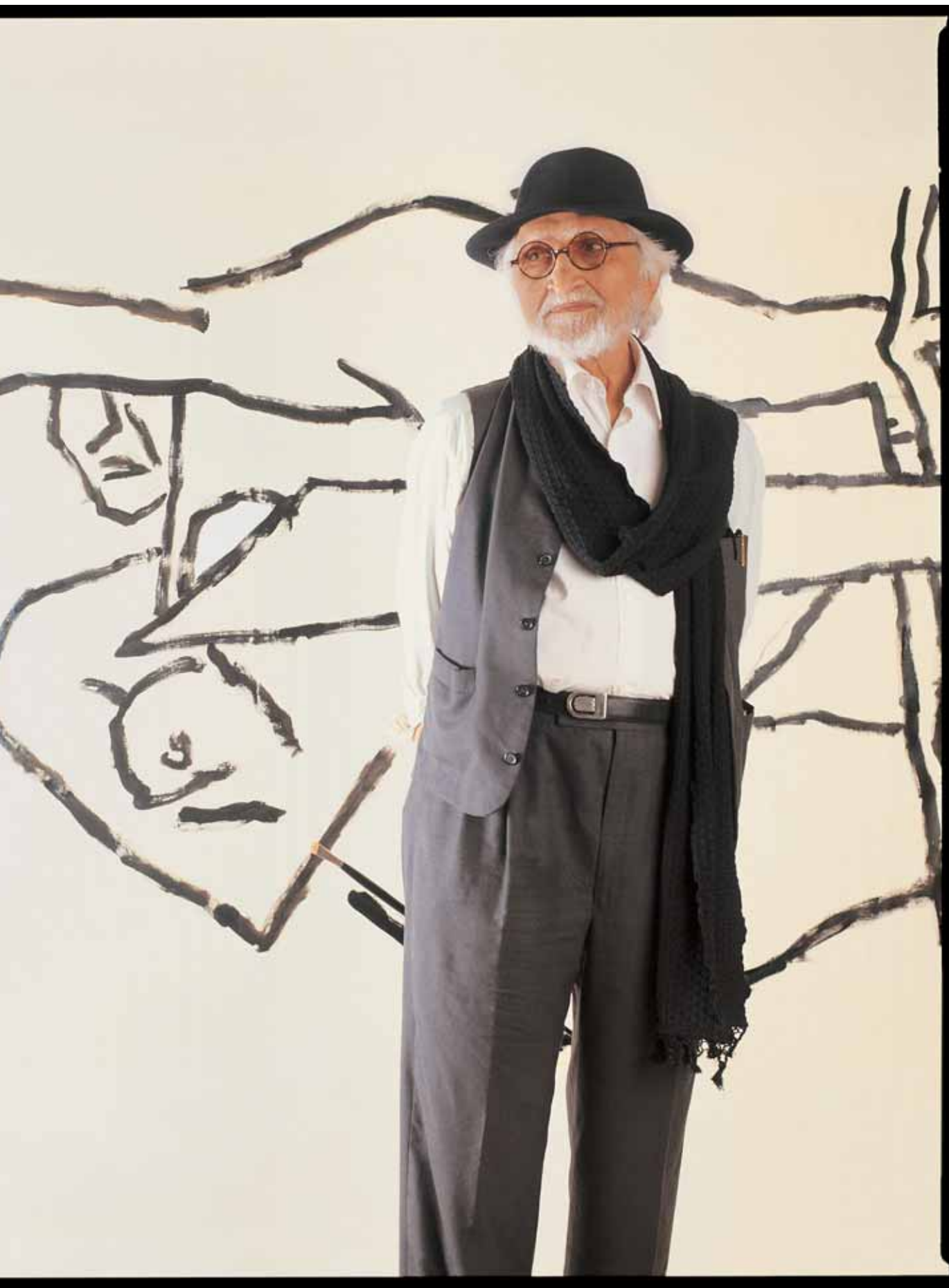
He has many plans this year. A grand show in the UK in July, a series of 100 paintings to complete by September, and a third film that goes on the floors in October. Meanwhile, his youngest son Owais plans to chronicle his life on celluloid—a portrait of the artist as a young man.

With so much to do and so many places to be, Husain makes sure no one has a chance to pin him down—even his two sons and four daughters can't tell you where their father is at any given point of time. He could be on a flight to Ahmedabad or Hyderabad, Paris or London. He could be anywhere. After all, Husain doesn't have a home to call his own—he lives out of suitcases, sometimes with his children, sometimes friends.

Ask shopkeepers on Fountain, a hawkers' haven near Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in Mumbai, though, and they would point to Husain's watering hole, Pundole. "I have grown up with him painting away next door," says Nawaz Arif, 51, the owner of American Dry Fruits, a shop next to the gallery. In fact, whenever



MEENAL AGARWAL



Photos courtesy: THE INDIAN EXPRESS



Husain is there—gallery owner Kali Pundole gave Husain his first art project in the early 1950s—he asks everyone waiting to meet him to come there at 11 am. From then, it's a motley crowd of buyers, journalists and family, with Dadiba Pundole, Kali's son who now runs the gallery, taking pictures of Husain at work. Through it all, his mobile, with its blaring rooster ring-tone, crows with astonishing regularity.

the genius who roams the streets of Mumbai on bare, paint-stained feet, never mind that he slipped on a pair of Italian shoes with his tuxedo at an exhibition in 2003 paying tribute to actor Madhuri Dixit in the film *Devdas*. He's also his own travel agent—it takes just one phone call to secure a ticket to Paris—and finance manager too. "I was the first to raise the price of Indian art in the market. Art pundits said I was off my head. Today, when my *Our Planet*

industrialist and Swarup Group of Industries (SGI) chief Guru Swarup Srivastava to create 100 paintings for the series. The mother of all art deals, it even put into the shade the hype of his 88th birthday, when he made a series of 88 paintings. The reported payoff: a cool Rs 100 crore for Husain; for Srivastava, fantastic projected returns from overseas auctions at London, Dubai, perhaps even Amsterdam. And a more visible profile. Husain's

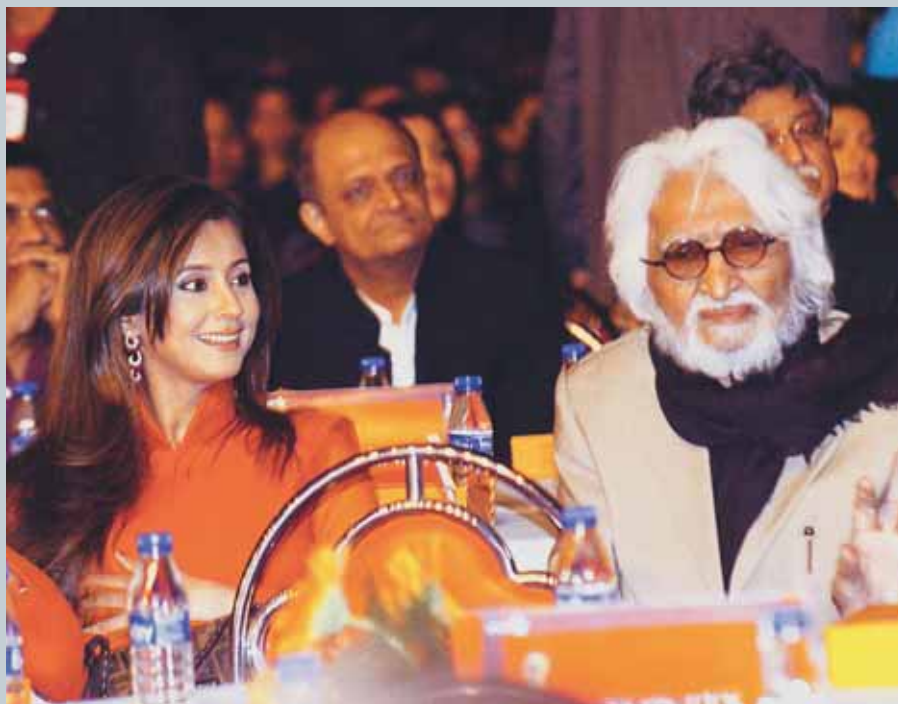
Husain is his own PR man. "I created the label M F Husain, the most highly paid artist in India," he boasts

Husain's mental planner overflows with events that would shame even the most zealous PR agency. After all, Husain is his own PR man. "I created the label M F Husain, the most highly paid artist in India," he boasts. There are other labels too: the eccentric,

Called Earth series has been valued at \$ 1 million per painting, they have to eat their words," he says with a grin.

Last September, jaws dropped in the art world when Husain was commissioned by Mumbai-based

intervention enabled Srivastava to become the official sponsor of the recently held *Filmfare* awards, which were, for years, sponsored by Manikchand, before its owners were allegedly linked to the underworld. In the meantime, SGI has tied up with cellular services



The artist with his muses: from left, Madhuri Dixit with husband Sriram Nene, Tabu and Urmila Matondkar

provider Airtel in another one-of-its-kind deal—Airtel customers can download paintings from Husain's series as mobile phone screensavers and wallpapers. Husain's comment: "I have always looked forward to the 'massifying' of art." It's his term for reaching out to people through art. As for the 100 paintings, September 2005 is the deadline.

In October, Husain will turn to the camera to start shooting his third, still untitled film. His latest muse—after Madhuri and Tabu—is Urmila Matondkar. Film, in fact, has always been a passion for the artist. At the same time that Satyajit Ray was canning his shots for *Pather Panchali* in 1955, Husain was making a three-minute untitled abstract film using symbols like the bicycle and the brush. Today, he carries a brush the size of a riding crop—not to paint but to wave like a baton when he

conducts symphonies that only he can hear, for photo shoots, and as a walking stick during his walks at 7 every morning.

In fact, I try and walk whenever I can," says Husain. To stay fit he also avoids oily food, eating only fruits and cooked vegetables. All his friends and gallery owners know his diet, making arrangements if they know he is visiting. They also know that the artist loves *motichoor ke ladoo* on all occasions. After such meetings, Husain prefers to walk again, sometimes long distances. He walks around Mumbai, his eyes fixed on hoardings, remembering how he once painted them before Kali Pundole thought this was an artist who could make the world go crazy one day.

Soon all this and more about Husain will be the subject of son Owais' film. "I don't intend to glorify him but talk of the

struggle of a young painter," says Owais, also an artist, who worked with his father on *Meenaxi—A Tale of Three Cities*, Husain's second feature film, after *Gaja Gamini*. They've had their share of creative differences. "Dad likes to translate his approach to the cinematic medium in a theatrical way," he says. "I, on the other hand, prefer allegory." And while Husain likes to believe that "nearly 80 per cent of the population is happy; it is our custom to even celebrate death," Owais prefers a starker canvas, one that reflects the angst-ridden concerns of his generation.

His son is not his only critic. People like Girish Shahane, former editor of India's only art magazine *Art India*, have pointed out that his attempt to straddle cinema and painting has not been entirely successful. After all, both his films neither qualified as art-house cinema, nor were they

blockbusters. But Husain doesn't care. "I fund my own films and I'm not expecting to run to a house full, not in India at least," is his retort. "The kind of cinema I make has got much acclaim when it is screened in Europe."

The artist will head back to Europe this July for an exhibition at the Victorian and Albert Museum—*Vision of the 20th Century*—which will feature a series of 25 works that draw upon his journeys through rural India, places like Bastar, Nagaland, Rajasthan. The show, conceived at the Pundole, will tour all around the UK before coming to India.

The exhibition, when it comes home, will definitely see the swish set in full attendance. As it happened at his recent tribute to his first lady Mother Teresa—she came even before Madhuri—at the picturesque Afghan Church in South Mumbai. "I decided to have the show there to pay due tribute to a woman like Mother Teresa, a symbol of *shakti*," he says. Two sources of his *shakti* have been his mother Zainab and



Husain poses with one of his 'Madhuri' series

critic and filmmaker Khalid Mohammed, and Husain's biographer. But not everyone is as impressed.

"Husain is undoubtedly one of the most popular painters in India today," says a gallery owner, who wishes to remain unnamed. "But his habit of taking on six projects at a time gives him the stamp of a *karkhana* (factory), not a painter." This label Husain doesn't care much for. According to him, it is theorists and some painters who

able" series of serigraphic prints from the *Our Planet Called Earth* series, and tie-ups with builders and banks to display the prints in their buildings. Citibank and ABN Amro have already been roped into the scheme—you will find only Husain in their lobbies.

It's all part of his game plan to leave his stamp on the world. "It's important to be a good painter," he says. "But that isn't enough. One has to be remembered in

"Art should be accessible to the common man," says Husain. He's coined a term for it: 'massifying'

his wife Sazila. His mother died when he was just a toddler and his wife passed away eight years ago. "I believe that *shakti* is the power that runs the universe," says the artist. His muses come and go, but Husain's own *shakti* seems undimmed by time.

"That Husain can work on so many projects is because of his ability to transcend age," says

have made the act of painting far too precious. "Creating such an aura around art is not really my intention," he says. "Art should be accessible to the common man."

Back to 'massifying' again, one of Husain's favourite topics these days. Srivastava of the SGI Group is taking care of that end. First came the collaboration with Airtel. Next up is a "more afford-

history and only then you have truly lived." For that, the artist is planning a 'Husain Museum' with all his money and works after his death. Until then, retirement is not an idea that crosses his mind ever. "I seek it only when I don't wake up. Right now I'm enjoying life so much that waking up each day is a tiny miracle in itself." The interview is done—our 10 minutes were over a long time ago. ■

A detailed image of a classic wooden rocking chair, likely made of oak or a similar hardwood. The chair features a high, curved backrest with vertical slats, a seat with horizontal slats, and armrests that curve downwards. The base consists of two large, curved rockers. The wood is polished, showing natural grain patterns and some darker staining or wear on the seat and rockers. The chair is positioned at an angle, casting a soft shadow on the white background.

- 100

Mending a Brok heart



Losing a spouse can be devastating, often leading to depression and reclusiveness. But social networks and exploring new activities can help the recovery process, writes
Aparna Narayanan

en

Life is not a Hallmark card. When a friend or a family member suffers a loss, especially that of a spouse, no expressions of sympathy or love can make it any easier. While the occurrence of bereavement is a near certainty for one spouse, its impact and duration is much less predictable. It takes a long time and everyone has to set one's own pace—the urge to continue coming from inner strength and practicality, so that the event doesn't lead to depression or, in some cases, even mortality.

A study published in the January 2005 issue of *Southern Medical Journal*, an American publication, discusses the impact of the death of an elderly spouse on the surviving partner, concluding that it increases the symptoms of depression as well as mortality. The study urges physicians to be alert to mood disorders in elderly persons who have recently lost a spouse, and suggests treatment with medication, psychotherapy and psychosocial support. "While most people may appear sad or tearful, other results may include work-related difficulties, sleep disturbances and behavioural changes," says a four-year-old study on bereavement in older adults, published in *Psychiatric Times*, an American medical journal. Furthermore, appetite and weight change; poor memory; increased risk of suicide; and an increase in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and tranquillisers have been seen after spousal loss. Spousal bereavement is also associated with prolonged or unresolved grief, traumatic or complicated grief such as searching and yearning, generalised anxiety or panic disorder, and even major depression.

"The impact of this life-changing event on surviving partners ranges from mild or extended grief to catastrophic illnesses and sometimes 'suicide'," says Mumbai-based psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty, asserting that one should avoid treating grief with medication. "A significant factor in the recovery process is the companionship of relatives and friends. If there is good support from the kids, some people cope well." Madhumita Singh, a psychiatrist with Samvedna Psychiatry Klinik, New Delhi,



agrees with him. "It's paramount for relatives and friends to help in the recovery process," she says. Singh, who is also a resource person with the National Institute of Social Defence, an offshoot of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, adds, "They can help by taking time out for their seniors, involving them in family events, being good listeners, and accompanying them on walks."

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Patricia Sequeira, 65, who lost her husband Raul last year, attributes her emotional well being in large part to her family, neighbours and friends in the community. Her unmarried adult son lives with her in Mumbai, and her two other children, who live abroad, "are constantly in touch".

But she still can't get over the suddenness of the death of Raul, a man who she describes as a "mind-over-matter person". When he was

admitted to a suburban Mumbai hospital with stomach discomfort last October, he insisted on walking around his room for exercise. A couple of days later, though, he phoned Patricia from the hospital room complaining of breathlessness. When she got there, she found him lying dead from a massive heart attack on the bathroom floor. "It was quite a shock," says Patricia. "I keep reliving it." Their 38-year marriage had been "basically compatible"—both enjoyed dancing, partying and attending shows at Bandra Gymkhana in Mumbai. "There's no finality about it. I feel that he has gone somewhere and will come back," she says. To banish the loneliness when her son is not home, Patricia visits neighbours in her building without feeling that she's an imposition on them.

As part of developing 'social networks', another study, *The Daily Consequences of Widowhood* (published in 2004 in the US-based *Journal of Family Issues*) also affirms that "personal activities, such as social or religious activities, can add value and purpose to life and have a positive influence on survival and health". The church has played a pivotal role in Nancy Fonseca's life after she lost her husband last year. The sprightly 80-year-old former schoolteacher in Mumbai rattles off the names of organisations she is involved with—a ladies' prayer group, the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, the Young Women's Christian Association.

Fonseca isn't a believer in widow's weeds. "My husband was a good man," she says emphatically. "I'm quite sure he's happy up there, so there's no need for me to put on a long face and wear black." It also helps that her adult children live nearby, as do her two sisters with whom she often eats out or goes on day trips. "We are the 'three merry widows'," she says, adding with a glint in her eyes, "I'm sorry to use the word merry." Occasionally, feelings of loneliness do surface when Fonseca remembers the tours, concerts and church trips with her husband. But she staves it off by immersing herself in church activities, household errands and hobbies like needlework. "I wouldn't say I didn't grieve," she says, "but it was not so 'bursting out'."

Her 89-year-old husband had been confined to the house, and then to his room and bed during the last weeks of his life. When he died peacefully in December last year, Fonseca was emotionally



ASHESH SHAH

Patricia Sequeira attributes her well being in large part to her family and friends

prepared for the loss. Matter-of-fact in her attitude towards death, she had even prepared a file about morgue and church formalities in the event of his death, or her own, for her children.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Not everyone finds succour in faith. Wing Commander (retd) R D Ahluwalia, whose wife Sheila died in July 2004 of leukaemia, says his wife's death shook his religious convictions. "For the past 40 years, I have said my prayers to God," says the resident of New Delhi. "But after Sheila's death, I have completely lost faith. I haven't been to the church [she was a Christian] or to the temple since."

The shock of losing his wife, who was undergoing extensive treatment, is evident. "I wasn't prepared," he says wryly. "I was too busy keeping her alive." Whatever he does, wherever he is, the 60-year-old finds his mind straying to the woman who was "the best thing to have happened to me". Almost eight months after the event, he visits her grave almost every day. "I can't help it," he says. "It has become a habit to hang around with her, talk to her."

For silvers, a significant part of recovering from bereavement is the companionship of relatives and friends, and involvement in social and spiritual activities

Ahluwalia doesn't talk to anyone else about it though; he says the subject is private. His grief is also a private matter for Utpal Chatterjee (*name changed*), who lost his wife of 25 years to chronic lung congestion in 2003. "One should be allowed to grieve in dignity," he insists. His friends and sisters have been "kind and very supportive", but in the evenings, when he is all alone, his mind returns to his wife, who remained positive despite frequent hospitalisations for her chronic lung congestion. "Nothing could dim her spirit," he says. Despite being devastated by the bereavement, Chatterjee has never visited a psychiatrist or counsellor.



Aroti Bose believes that positive thinking can get you through any crisis

Chatterjee's 20-year-old daughter Roshni is away at college and though work has helped to some extent in banishing the loneliness, he finds it tough to go on living alone in his flat in Kolkata. A high cholesterol count requires him to watch his diet and take pills, but he sometimes forgets. "Radha used to remind me to take my medicines like clockwork," says Chatterjee, adding, "Every evening when I was home, we would sit and play Scrabble together. I cannot bear to see that room again."

Sixty-five-year-old Aroti Bose has a different take on the matter. "Cry and you will cry alone," she believes. "Smile and the world will smile with you." Her husband Moni died of a heart attack in New Delhi eight years ago. Her daughters, Naina and Trishna, were away in Europe. She organised the final rites on her own, after which she moved to Kolkata to live with her mother. A believer in Swami Vivekananda's teachings, Aroti pulled herself together for the sake of her children, and even evicted an illegal tenant from her house on her own.

Gender differences in coping with spousal bereavement are abundantly evident in India, says Chennai-based psychiatrist Muthukrishnan Vedarethinam, a consultant with Apollo Hospitals. "A large number of women are philosophically accepting, they anticipate grief much better, and cope better due to their children's support," he explains. "Indian men don't grieve as much as they should. They can't make their own tea, can't cook,



ABHIJIT GHOSH

Vimala Devi Sandu's book project—a compilation of traditional Rajasthani music—gives purpose to her life

and don't cry or share their grief so easily." Consequently, they exhibit more physical illnesses and a marked increase in symptoms of existing illnesses. "A large number of men don't live long when their spouse passes away," adds Shetty.

MOVING ON

Reactions to death are variable. While some people need a healthcare professional to ease the recovery

process, others buoy themselves with the thought of being able to pursue activities that add value and purpose to life. They try exploring interests that they were long forced to deny themselves. Patricia Sequeira had always wanted to give tuitions to poor children and to join Bible groups. She never did so because "it would mean that when my husband came home, I would be out". These activities now keep her occupied almost every evening of the week, and she admits, "Now, of course, I am able to do what I want to."

Vimala Devi Sandu, a resident of Bangalore, was intensely lonely after losing her husband three years ago. But rather than allowing herself to be overwhelmed by emotion, the 70-year-old devoted herself to writing a book, a compilation of traditional Rajasthani folk ballads, *bhajan* and women's songs. "I hope to have it published for future generations, including my own grandchildren," she says, adding that the project helps her remain positive and gives

Gender differences in coping with spousal bereavement are abundantly evident in India. Women are philosophically more accepting and anticipate grief much better

purpose to her life. Sandu's father was a Padmashri recipient and the author of a Rajasthani-Hindi dictionary.

In certain cases, survivors may even feel 'liberated' after the death of their spouse, according to Shetty. "Many feel free if they have taken care of their spouse over an extended illness," he says.

Some seniors buoy themselves with the thought of being able to pursue activities that add value and purpose to life. They explore new interests and acquire new skills

"Some feel freed from the bonds of abuse and control. It is not happiness but internal freedom that they experience. I have heard women say, 'I feel free now'."

Belief in the theory of reincarnation also partly explains why many Indian seniors take this life-changing event in their stride. "In India, there is considerable acceptance that life is not a full stop, but a comma," says Shetty.

This sentiment comes to the fore when 72-year-old Rani Talwar of Amritsar talks about her husband Sham Sunder's last moments. A heart patient for 30 years, he suffered two cardiac arrests within a short span of time, five years ago. Eight days after the second episode, Rani says, "I prayed to God that if he is not going to recover, take him without suffering. An hour later, he was dead." Ever since, she has maintained the same routine as before—an early morning walk, yoga, cooking, participating in four kitty groups, and reading books by Premchand and Rajneesh.

She has also acquired new skills. Rani now does her own banking and pays her bills, something her husband handled while he was alive. She even undertook a trek to the Vaishno Devi shrine recently. Remembering the challenging years after she lost her husband, she says proudly, "I did not need even one sleeping pill, not even for one day."



RANJIT SINGH

Rani Talwar has learnt independence, and new skills

Even Ahluwalia, devastated as he is by the loss of his wife, has learned to move on and explore new interests. He used to miss Sheila's cooking, and eventually decided to learn how to cook for himself. "I have mastered the art of baking a perfect pizza," he says with pride.

The bereavement has engendered non-culinary positives too. He plays four hours of golf every day and is considering sponsoring a child in the school where his wife used to teach. Ahluwalia has also become closer to his two children, Ashima, 32, and Anjali, 30. "It's a curious situation where they are continuously worrying about me and I about them," he says. "But they have started talking to me about a lot of things which they earlier shared with my wife."

Like many other grieving silvers, Ahluwalia knows that pragmatism is his best approach: "The best solution for me is to be busy, be with friends and relatives, and perhaps take a few lessons on the art of living." ■



Photos courtesy: ROLI BOOKS

LEARNING TO LIVE ALONE

BY KHUSHWANT SINGH

My wife died three years ago. She was in her mid-80s. We had been married for 62 years. She was stricken by Alzheimer's for five years before she gave up the fight. She had completely lost her memory and ability to perform bodily functions. I had to hire a day and night nurse to help my daughter look after her. Though we were prepared for her death, when it came we were shattered.

I could not talk to relatives and friends who came to condole with me. I could not bring myself to light her funeral pyre. In the absence of my son, my daughter lit it on our behalf. Since we did not subscribe to any faith and my wife had wished that no ceremony be performed, we had no prayers said, no *kirtan* sung or *chautha* observed. I had to cope with my loss with whatever inner resources I could muster.



From above, Khushwant Singh and his wife at Dal Lake; with friends Manzur and Asghari Qadir

The first night was the longest in my living memory. I sat in my armchair, switched off all the lights, and talked silently to myself. I had to teach myself how

to live alone in an empty home. I broke down many times. By morning I was exhausted. Despite having announced my wife's death in the papers with the request that people should not call on me or write letters of condolence, I had a stream of visitors and received dozens of telegrams.

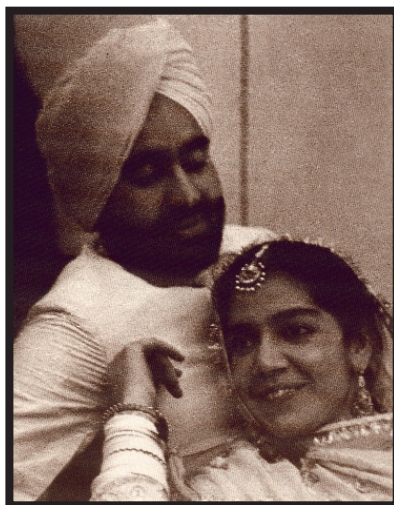
I took myself off to Goa for 10 days to be by myself and work out a routine of life without my life partner. I went over our years together. We had been to the same school as children. We met again as grownups in England, where I had gone earlier to study law and she had come a couple of years later to be trained as a teacher. Her parents had other boys in mind for their daughter. However, when we decided to get engaged, they readily gave their consent. We returned to Delhi and got married in 1939.

Ours was described as a love marriage. It had its ups and downs and more than once we thought of calling it quits. But we hung on to it largely because we had two children to bring up and were gradually adjusting ourselves to each other. We lived in Lahore for seven years till Partition forced us to return to Delhi. Thereafter it was a peripatetic life in different countries—England, Canada, the US and France with long stays in Germany and Japan. When we returned to India, we had evolved a routine of life that suited both of us.

My wife was very house-proud. She taught our cook how to prepare gourmet quality dishes—Punjabi, Chinese, French, Italian. I had to be left alone for many hours every day to write. We met at mealtimes and took our

evening walks together in Lodhi Park. We cut down on our social life and maintained strict hours for people we invited for meals.

The past 40 years of our lives together had fallen into a pattern. My day began early between 4 and 5 am. I wasted a lot of time reading papers and solving crossword puzzles. I did my reading or writing till noon, had a light lunch, rested for an hour, and resumed work with a possible break for exercise—like swimming in summer. We restricted our



My wife had an overwhelming personality and I sense her presence everywhere

visitors to 7-8 pm—no one was allowed to overstay. I watched news on TV for a while and switched off by 10 pm. Whenever I felt tired, I switched on my radio and listened to Western classical music.

Within a fortnight of her death, though, I had made terms with my having to live alone. I am fortunate in having a daughter living next door who makes sure my health remains stable. A couple of young ladies volunteer to take me to see doctors and dentists whenever I need help. I am now over 90 and have become dependent on my children and friends. But so far I have not detected the slightest sign of any of them resenting the demands I occasionally make on them.

I decided earlier on not to owe anyone any debts. I have given away most of what I owned to my children and assigned royalties I received on my books to them. I do the same with my monthly earnings. Shedding one's material belongings is not very hard if you keep reminding yourself you will not be able to take anything with you. Shedding emotional baggage is much harder. Fortunately I had little time to cultivate friendships and distancing myself from them has not been too difficult. I am sure my two children, who are now in their middle ages, will not find it too hard to do without me. I am unduly attached to my only grandchild. I am doing my best to distance myself from her. I believe in the Buddha's exhortation to detach oneself from worldly attachments.

Do I miss my wife? Of course. She had an overwhelming personality and I sense her presence everywhere. I am also aware that I will never see her again. I leave it at that and immerse myself in work. It leaves me no time to brood and feel sorry for myself. ■

Khushwant Singh is a New Delhi-based author and columnist

Do you eat smart?

Does your daily diet keep you healthy, and happy? Take *Harmony's* quiz and find out. Answer the numbered questions, enjoy the fun ones and savour the quick bites. The answers are given at the end—tally up your scores and read the verdict. It may surprise you

1. Good morning. You wake up, brush your teeth, and head for

- a. A glass of warm H₂O and the morning paper
- b. Tea with a biscuit
- c. Sugary, creamy coffee with cream biscuits
- d. Lemon juice with a dash of honey

Bite into an apple. It will help lower your blood cholesterol and make waste move through your tummy faster. And the pectin will help keep your gums healthy

2. Now on to breakfast. For you that means

- a. Milk and cereal, perhaps with some fresh fruit mixed in
- b. Hot, buttery *parantha* with *sabzi* and pickle
- c. Steamed *idli* and green *chutney*, with absolutely no *sambar*
- d. Eggs, the way you like them, and toast

Feeling tired often? Boost your intake of iron-rich foods like whole grains, cereals, dark green vegetables, dates, nuts and beans

Food for you is

- A sublime pleasure
- An essential ritual
- Fun only with friends
- An opportunity to nag your spouse

3. How bone-friendly are you?

- a. Bone-friendly? What's that?
- b. Very. I drink skimmed milk and eat yoghurt regularly and have at least two servings of leafy vegetables.
- c. I drink a glass of milk a day.
- d. I drink milk every day and eat leafy vegetables occasionally.

To prevent osteoporosis, kick that caffeine habit as it causes natural calcium loss. Boost your bones with skimmed milk products

4. When you get into the kitchen to do your thing, what's your method?

- a. An age-old iron *kadhai*
- b. A non-stick pan
- c. A pressure cooker
- d. A microwave

The fat in nuts like almonds and walnuts is healthy, monounsaturated fat, which can help lower blood cholesterol. Nuts also help reduce the risk of cancer

5. And what's your medium?

- a. Good old *desi ghee*
- b. Coconut oil
- c. Olive or groundnut oil
- d. Sunflower or safflower oil

6. How liberal are you with it?

- a. Incredibly. A *kadchi* or two
- b. Just enough so food doesn't stick to the pan
- c. Careful. Strictly two tablespoons per dish
- d. Only steamed food for me

What food would you gift-wrap for your friends?

- Juicy Alphonso mangoes nestled in straw
- A basket of gorgeous red strawberries
- *Anjeer barfi*, stacked in a colourful box
- Crisp, roasted pistachio nuts

7. How much water do you drink a day?

- a. Four glasses
- b. Hardly any. Maybe a glass or two
- c. Five to seven glasses
- d. Litres of it. Eight to 10 glasses at least

Say no to meat. Heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity tend to develop less often among vegetarians

8. It's lunchtime, and you will eat

- a. Light. Roti, a little rice, vegetables and a piece of chicken or fish
- b. A heavy meal with dal, a variety of vegetables, *raita*, and dessert, maybe *gulab jamun* or kheer
- c. Soup, salad and a sandwich
- d. A greasy Mughlai spread with kebabs, korma and naan

Grab potassium from fruits and vegetables, beans, fish and almonds. It maintains fluid balance and releases energy from protein, fat and carbohydrates

9. How do you see salt in your diet?

- a. Can't get enough of it. Sprinkle it generously on everything
- b. Stay away from table salt and use lemon juice instead for taste
- c. A necessary evil; use it sparingly
- d. Use moderate quantities where necessary

10. Match the following:

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| a. Vitamin D | Oranges |
| b. Vitamin C | Milk |
| c. Potassium | Dates |
| d. Iron | Tomatoes |

Apricots, pumpkins, melons, spinach and tomatoes are all sources of antioxidants, which help increase immunity and could decrease the risk of cancer

11. When you imagine a drink in your hand, it is a

- a. A steaming cup of coffee or tea
- b. A glass of *chaas* or *nimbu pani*





- c. A chilled Coke
- d. A sundowner, I mean the hard stuff

The perfect meal is...

- Something that you eat while watching TV in bed
- Something that reminds you of your mom's cooking
- Something that doesn't cost you a lot
- Something that doesn't have an expiry date

Fig leaves may provide cover but figs go further, giving you fibre, potassium, iron, and calcium—more than other fruits

12. You're in the mood for a snack, and you reach for

- a. Crunchy potato chips or *bhujiya*
- b. Biscuits
- c. Fresh fruit or dry fruit
- d. Cake or *mithai*

13. Comfort food for you is

- a. Hot *khichdi*, just like mom would make it
- b. A piece of chocolate cake
- c. *Suji ka halwa*
- d. Curd rice with *tadka*

A tomato is a wonderful thing. A great source of Vitamin C and potassium, it can help prevent heart disease and reduce the risk of prostate cancer

14. A typical dinner for you would be

- a. *Roti* or rice with a little *dal* and vegetables
- b. A plate of fruits



- c. No short cuts. A full meal with rice, *roti*, *dal*, a variety of vegetables, *raita*, and a dessert
- d. A piece of fish and vegetables

15. Take the cholesterol quiz.

Mark true or false

- a. Nuts like almonds and walnuts eaten in moderation give you high cholesterol.
- b. Different oils have different levels of cholesterol.
- c. Some types of cholesterol are good for you.
- d. Only overweight people have high cholesterol.
- e. An apple a day helps keep the cholesterol away.
- f. White meat contains high cholesterol.

Soluble fibre, found in oats, barley, beans, apples, oranges and other fruits and vegetables, can help prevent heart disease by lowering LDL, or 'bad' cholesterol

Your favourite pick-up line

- Have you tried my *gajar gobi achar*?
- I put extra *kismis* in the *kheer*, just for you
- Are these *kebabs* too spicy for you?
- Make this *halwa* again and I'll be back

16. Your preferred nightcap would be

- a. Brandy
- b. Milk
- c. Coffee
- d. Herbal tea

Did you know that people don't need to consume extra dietary cholesterol because the body can make enough cholesterol for its needs?



Onions and garlic can give you bad breath — and a healthy heart. They help lower ‘bad’ cholesterol, control blood pressure and prevent clotting in blood vessels

17. You eat your last meal

- a. At least four hours before bedtime
- b. Two hours before bedtime
- c. Right before you pass out at the table
- d. And then go for a walk

18. What do you do with your leftovers?

- a. Consume them within a week; what’s a

- fridge for?
- b. Share them with the needy
- c. Freeze for later use
- d. Finish them the next day

What’s the key to healthy eating?

- **Variety**
- **Balance**
- **Moderation**
- **All of the above**

Cultured milk products, such as yoghurt and paneer, which have the milk lactose partially broken down, are easier to digest

ANSWERS

- 1. a-1; b-3; c-4; d-2.
- 2. a-1; b-4; c-2; d-3
- 3. a-4; b-1; c-3; d-2
- 4. a-3; b-2; c-1; d-4
- 5. a-4; b-3; c-1; d-2
- 6. a-3; b-1; c-2; d-4
- 7. a-3; b-4; c-2; d-1
- 8. a-1; b-3; c-2; d-4
- 9. a-4; b-2; c-1; d-3
- 10. Vitamin D *Milk*
Vitamin C *Oranges*
Potassium *Tomatoes*
Iron *Dates*
Give yourself no points if you got all right, and one for each wrong
- 11. a-2; b-1; c-3; d-4
- 12. a-3; b-2; c-1; d-4
- 13. a-1; b-4; c-4; d-1
- 14. a-1; b-3; c-4; d-2
- 15. a-false; b-true; c-true; d-false; e-true; f-false.
Once again, no points if you got all right, and one for each wrong

- 16. a-4; b-1; c-3; d-2
- 17. a-2; b-1; c-4; d-3
- 18. a-3; b-1; c-4; d-2

Now for the moment of truth. Total up your score. If you got...

18-24: Congratulations, you are eating healthy. Hope it’s keeping you happy too!

25-36: You take some risks with your diet but you seem to be generally aware about what’s good for you and what isn’t it. A little more discipline can’t hurt though.

37-54: You are skirting with danger when it comes to your diet. It’s time to make some informed choices.

55-72: Please visit a dietician now. It’s time to change the way you eat.

—with inputs by Vibha Kapadia,
a Mumbai-based consultant dietician



Advanced therapy

Yoga can complement conventional treatment for a range of ailments, explains **Shameem Akthar**



YOGA IS OFTEN FEARED AS A contortionist act that excludes those who are ill or suffer from specific ailments. Nothing can be farther from the truth.

Yoga's thrust is extremely therapeutic. In ancient India, yoga's physical culture was developed to wean the sick away from their preoccupation with their illness. Yoga's entire game plan is to free one from the rituals of illness like medicines, bed rest, therapies and dependence on caregivers.

The West appreciates yoga as a complementary treatment to all ailments, including terminal ones where it is used to raise pain thresholds. Therapeutic yoga is used to complement conventional treatment for a range of ailments from migraine to rheumatism.

For instance, for menstrual problems, poses like the wheel, camel, locust and cobra massage the urogenital system to provide relief. In spinal problems like cervical spondylosis, lower back pain and slipped disc, if surgical intervention is the last resort, yoga is the first one. Blood pressure and diabetes show astounding response to yogic intervention. Medical centres have now started researching yoga's impact on epilepsy, hernia, chronic fatigue, muscular dystrophy, sexual problems, obesity, piles, hormonal imbalances, arthritis, etc. Even AIDS patients are using yoga to strengthen their flailing immunity.

Such trust is being reposed in yoga because its effects, though slow, are steadfast. For instance, in treatment of obesity, yoga slowly leads the practitioner up to a level where weight loss is gradual, but long lasting. Some weight loss poses are extremely gentle, like the neck pose (*griva asana*). These work on the endocrine glands and satiety centres of the brain to silence hunger signals. The soft movements of energy-releasing poses (*pawanmukta asana*) are a far cry from aggressive gym rituals. Yet, they help the practitioner firm up lymphatic drainage, which clogs up drastically when weight loss is badly planned and can cause fever, water retention and other toxic fallouts.

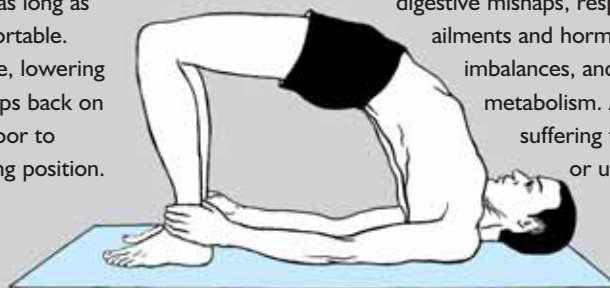
Yogic anti-obesity treatment also includes relaxing poses like crocodile (*makarsana*) and cow-face (*gomukh asana*), which enhance deep breathing. Efficient breathing hikes the metabolism, helping you shed the pounds. Vertigo can be eliminated by strengthening the cerebellum and inner ear with balancing poses and forward bends. And for breathing problems like asthma and bronchitis, yoga armours chronic sufferers by strengthening the lung's function.

Part of yoga's miraculous effect may be due to the proactive nature of yogic intervention. Since it directly involves the patient's participation, it arms him or her with a sense of purpose that works at a subliminal level. ■

Yogic moves

Shoulder pose (*Kandharasana*)

Lie on your back. Bend the knees. Hold ankles with hands. Inhale. Exhale, lifting the buttocks off the floor. Keep breathing, holding the pose as long as comfortable. Exhale, lowering the hips back on the floor to starting position.



Rest. Repeat three to five times. Initially, push up just a few inches. This pose is a back-strengthenener and tones the entire spine, particularly the neck. It also aids weight loss, is therapeutic in uro-genital problems, digestive mishaps, respiratory ailments and hormonal imbalances, and boosts metabolism. Avoid if suffering from hernia or ulcer.

Shameem Akthar is a Mumbai-based yoga acharya. If you have any queries for her, mail us or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org (Please consult your physician before following advice given here)

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Living in the

Visual impairment has not stopped Manohar Devadoss from drawing, writing books and remains his right hand in all his endeavours, discovers **Sabita Radhakrishna**



In a charming house off Santhome High Road in Chennai, Manohar Devadoss sits comfortably on a chair, poring over his pen-and-ink creations. His drawing board is bathed with light that pinpoints every detail of the drawings that are part of his autobiography, *Green Well Years*. Next to him sits his 64-year-old wife Mahema, in a bright sari with fresh jasmine flowers in her hair. She's incorporating her husband's artwork into greeting cards that will soon go for printing. It's a pretty picture of two silvers basking in their retirement idyll. That Mahema is wheelchair bound and paralysed from the neck down and 68-year-old Manohar suffers from retinitis pigmentosa—a

genetic eye disorder that has left him practically blind—strikes you only at second glance.

The irreparable damage to his vision has not stopped Manohar from writing books—*Poem to Courage, Dreams, Seasons and Promises* and an upcoming tribute to Madurai—designing cards and making posters. Mahema helps him in all his endeavours. Recently, when Manohar exhibited his drawings at an exhibition organised by Max Mueller Bhavan, Mahema included her own watercolours and their daughter Sujatha pitched in with her photographs. The proceeds from the exhibition were donated to Sankara Netralaya, a well-known eye hospital in Chennai.



light

designing greeting cards while his wife Mahema, a quadriplegic for the past 33 years,

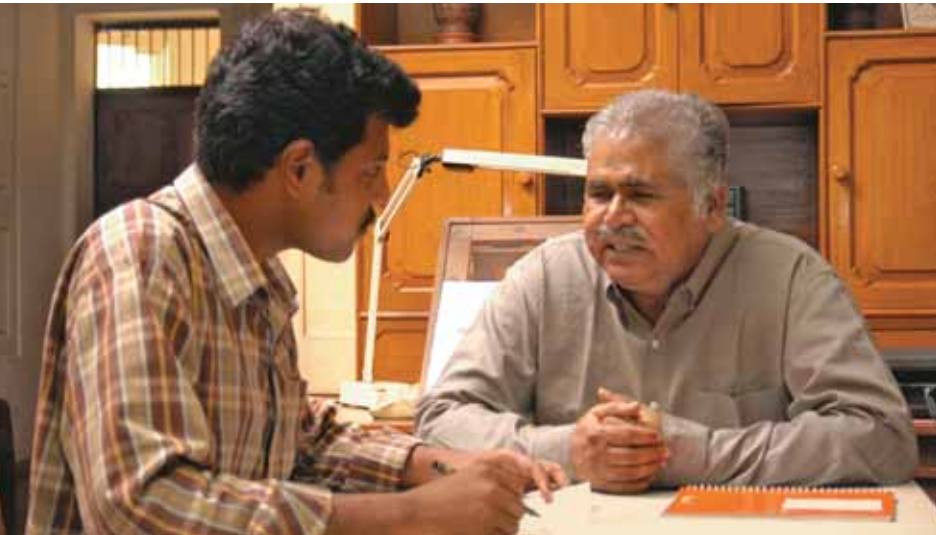
The money they make from their greeting cards is also donated to the hospital and other charities.

The couple first met in the 1960s—they were introduced by a distant relative of Mahema—and soon married. Sujatha was born three years later. Soon after, Manohar was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. He continued working though—at Standard Batteries in Chennai as a technical director—and then the couple moved to the US for three years. “I told myself, ‘Enjoy the now’ and worry about all this later,” he remembers. Manohar completed his Masters in Chemistry from Oberlin College, south of Cleveland, while Mahema, a graduate in fine arts and a

trained teacher, became the programme director at Oberlin’s Asia House, where she worked to propagate Indian culture, assisted by Manohar’s posters.

After their return, on a family drive to Madurai with Manohar’s mother one sunny morning in December 1972, tragedy struck. Mahema was driving their new Herald car and a lorry driver, who was trying repeatedly to overtake her, ended up colliding into the car, sending it hurtling down a slope. Mahema was flung out of the car onto a paddy field. Manohar recalls how even through the haze of shock and pain when he found her, it struck him that she looked “like Shakuntala in a Raja Ravi Varma





Photos: R. PRASANNA VENKATESH



Minimal assistance from others enables the couple to lead a full life

painting". Mahema was declared a quadriplegic, paralysed from the neck down.

She was in hospital for 10 months where Manohar played her favourite music—Judy Collins' *Who knows where the time goes?*—treated her to slide shows on the ceiling and pasted her favourite verses from the Bible on the wall. And when she came home, he redesigned their home so she could move about comfortably in her wheelchair. "There was simply no time for self-pity," he says of those harrowing days.

Soon after the accident, though, Manohar's vision began to deteriorate rapidly. He underwent laser surgery at Sankara Netralaya to enlarge the iris of his left eye to improve his vision. He also began to use eye drops to dilate his pupil, which enabled him to draw freely in bright light. Manohar continued working at Standard Batteries for many years, and even started his own company, Compact Power Sources, which manufactured battery lamps for miners. This has since shut shop as there was no one to carry the business forward.

The Devadosses still visit music festivals, watch plays and entertain friends

"We wanted to have a second child, but it was not to be," says Mahema. "But God must have had a reason." Sujatha was the strongest motivation for Mahema to come to terms with her new reality. "We had to build a happy home for her." Sujatha, married to an American, is now settled in the US. She gave birth to her son Aniketana Raphael in Chennai, so that her parents could be present.

Today, the couple are determined to make the best of life. Over the years, Mahema has learnt to move her hands with aluminium braces attached to her forearm. With them, she can use the telephone and write and draw slowly. She puts together the greeting cards the couple produce, choosing the text and determining its placement alongside the artwork. She even taught English to foreign students and wives of senior bureaucrats, despite being occasionally racked by spasms that lead to nausea. And Manohar's custom-made power bifocals and specially designed and lit worktable enable him to keep drawing. Beeping clocks mark the hours for him.

The Devadosses still go out, visiting music festivals and watching plays—they have a driver and their car has been converted to accommodate Mahema's wheelchair. There are holidays too. Mahema enjoyed soaking in the sun at a recent trip to Mahabalipuram. Entertaining friends is also a regular event. Manohar instructs the servants while Mahema supervises. An

accomplished cook, Manohar rustles up a fantastic baked fish with mayonnaise for guests and soft food, like mashed vegetables, for his wife. He also exercises and lifts weights in order to carry his wife from one place to the other. "My arms have to be like a boxer's to lift this woman," he laughs as his wife smiles back at him. "We try not to worry about the future," he adds. It shows. ■

Reliance Mutual Fund wins at the ICRA Online Awards 2005



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Reliance Growth Fund, awarded 'Silver',
Category-Diversified Equity Defensive (3 years performance).



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Reliance Income Fund: Investment Objective: The primary objective of the Scheme is to generate optimal returns consistent with moderate levels of risk. This income may be complemented by capital appreciation of the portfolio. Accordingly, investments shall predominantly be made in Debt & Money Market Instruments. Entry Load: Nil Exit Load: 0.50% if redeemed within 6 months, for subscriptions upto Rs. 5 lacs. 0.10% if redeemed within 7 working days from the date of allotment of units for subscription amounts exceeding Rs. 5 lacs. Reliance Gilt Securities Fund: Investment Objective: The primary objective of the Scheme is to generate Optimal credit risk-free returns by investing in a portfolio of securities issued and guaranteed by the Central Government and State Government. Entry Load: Nil Exit Load: 0.80% if redeemed within 1 year from the date of investments. Reliance Vision Fund: Investment Objective: The Primary Investment objective of the scheme is to achieve long-term growth of capital by investment in equity and equity related securities through a research based investment approach. Entry Load: For Subscription below Rs.2 crores 2.25% for Subscription of Rs.2 crores & above and below Rs.5 crores 1.25% for Subscriptions of Rs.5 crore & above Nil Exit Load: Nil. Reliance Growth Fund: Investment Objective: The primary investment objective of the Scheme is to achieve long term growth of capital by investing in equity and equity related securities through a research based investment approach. Entry Load: For Subscription below Rs.2 crores 2.25% for Subscription of Rs.2 crores & above and below Rs.5 crores 1.25% for Subscriptions of Rs.5 crore & above Nil Exit Load: Nil.

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Anger management

There is really no basis for anger. Meditate on karma and banish your temper, urges **Lama Zopa Rinpoche**

EMPTINESS IS A REMEDY FOR the foundation of all delusions—ignorance. The minute one meditates on emptiness, anger will stop. Anger arises when you believe in the false I. So when one meditates on emptiness of the self and other objects, there is no foundation for anger. This is the most powerful antidote. But if it arises again, it is because there is no continuation of the meditation. The problem is to remember the technique.

One thing I tell people is always to think about karma. His Holiness the Dalai Lama always says Buddhists don't believe in God. The minute one meditates on karma, there is no room in the mind for anger because there is nothing to blame. Anger is based on believing in a creator: somebody created this problem; this happened because of this person. The minute you think of karma and realise there is no creator, there is no basis for the anger.

We need to think, 'In the past I gave such harm to someone, therefore I deserve to receive this harm from someone else.' When you get angry what you are actually saying is that you can harm others, but you should not receive harm from others. This is illogical. You must say, 'I deserve this harm.' Another practice is to use this situation to develop compassion: 'I received this harm because of my karma.' Who started all this? It's not because of the

other person; it's because of your own actions. You treated other sentient beings this way in the past and that is why you receive harm now; your karma persuaded the person to harm you now.

By practicing compassion on that person, one is able to generate compassion towards all. This person, who is so kind, so precious, is helping you stop harming all others and, on top of that, receiving help from you. All the peace and happiness that you are able to offer all beings comes from this one person. Remember

whatever means you can find. If there is nothing you can do, pray to pacify the person's mind. Meditate on how that person is kind, how that person is precious.

Ultimately, if no one has anger towards us and everybody loves us, we can never generate patience. Therefore, there is a need for someone to have anger towards us. It's important that someone loves you, but even more important that someone has anger towards you. If someone loves you, it does not help you benefit others or actualise the

If no one is angry with us and everybody loves us, we can never generate patience

this, practice patience and cease anger. Also remember that one doesn't get angry at the stick, or vehicle, that the person used to beat or harm you. The person's body, speech and mind are completely taken over by the anger. They are like slaves, used as tools of the anger.

The person should thus become an object of our compassion. One must also take the responsibility to pacify that person's anger by

path to enlightenment. To you, this person's anger is like a wish-granting jewel. Also, your anger destroys merit and happiness, not only in day-to-day life but also in terms of long-term happiness.

It is said that one moment of anger delays realisation for 1,000 eons. Because this person is angry towards me, I am able to develop patience and overcome my own anger to complete the entire path to enlightenment. ■

Excerpts from a talk by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Boulder Creek, California, in May 1997. Zopa Rinpoche was born in Thami, Nepal, in 1946. At the age of three, he was recognised as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama of the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. He began teaching around the world in 1970. He is the spiritual head of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, which has over 60 centres across the world



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HEALTH BYTES



KILLER PAINKILLERS

Copraxymol, a common painkiller, has been withdrawn in the UK after it was proven that its

risks far outweigh benefits. In India, the drug is sold as Proxyvon (Wockhardt), Parvon (Jagson Pal), Sudhinol (Ranbaxy) and Walagesic (Wallace), and is available over the counter. The drug is commonly used for relief from backaches, pulled muscles, arthritic pain, headaches and toothaches, besides common cold and flu. Taking only two doses more than the recommended maximum of eight tablets a day can cause death, a risk that is absent even when doubling recommended limits of aspirin or paracetamol. "The drug is no more effective than paracetamol, so there is no rationale for its existence," says drug expert Dr C M Gulati, editor, *Monthly Index of Medical Specialities*, an Indian medical journal. The British review of the drug also said that Copraxymol could not be taken with other medicines containing paracetamol as it may have fatal side effects.

FISH FACTS

In *Harmony's* February 2005 issue, we published an item in this section telling you how eating oily fish is good for your brain. A new US research study, published in *Archives of Internal Medicine*, says that the benefits may depend on whether the fish is fried or broiled. In a study conducted over a period of 12 years on nearly 5,000 men and women above 65, participants consumed five or more servings of tuna or other baked or broiled fish each month. It decreased their risk of stroke by 28 per cent. But the protective benefits disappeared when the fish was fried. Eating at least one serving of fried fish or a fish burger each week led to a 37 per cent increased risk of stroke, which grew with each additional serving. Frying seems to alter the ratio of good to bad fats in the fish—scientists think it could be linked to increased formation of blood clots.



ACTIVE AND ALERT

If you have been following a regular fitness regime, smile. New research by the Harvard School of Public Health reveals that men who have exercised regularly run less risk of developing Parkinson's—a nervous disorder generally afflicting people in their 50s—compared to men who have not. The study, published in the February issue of the journal *Neurology*, claims that physically active men slashed their risk of developing Parkinson's by 50 per cent, while results were not statistically significant in women participating. For the study, about 48,000 men and 77,000 women free of Parkinson's disease, cancer or stroke completed comprehensive questionnaires on disease, lifestyle and physical activities. During its 14-year course, 387 cases of Parkinson's were diagnosed among participants.



VITAL SIGNS

A new study conducted by researchers at London's Institute of Psychiatry suggests that losing weight late in life (usually after 70) may indicate that the brain is inching towards dementia. The team found that men

with dementia lost nearly 10 per cent of their body weight a few years before diagnosis. Participants—1,800 Japanese-American men—were examined six times from 1965 to 1999. They weighed in at each visit and were screened for dementia at their last three appointments. When the participants were between 77 and 88 years, the link between weight loss and dementia emerged. Eventually, 112 men were diagnosed with dementia.

GOOD GOING

Until now, constipation has largely been overlooked for major health studies. However, a new UK project called Lifelax could go a long way in gathering data for informed advice to those suffering from constipation. Funded by the British government—£650,000 (about Rs 5.3 crore)—this biggest-ever study of the condition aims to involve nearly 2,000 men and women aged 55 and above. A research team from Newcastle University's Centre for Health Services Research and the Human Nutrition Research Centre, with doctors from primary and secondary care will train nurses and general practitioners, create a range of information

leaflets, track the progress of each patient over one year and collect and analyse diet diaries and questionnaires. In India, constipation affects one in 10 older people, and doctors prescribe as many laxatives as drugs for diabetes or high blood pressure. Currently, one-fifth of those over 65 use laxatives. Seniors with constipation are often reluctant to leave the house in case they need the toilet, suffer painful bloating or feel tired and depressed.



GIRTH CONTROL

A US study suggests that elderly patients can safely undergo gastric bypass surgery for weight loss—sometimes prescribed for seniors with osteoporosis and arthritis—and experience similar benefits as younger patients. Conducted at the Mayo Clinic Scottsdale, Arizona, the study analysed the results of the surgery (laproscopic Roux-en-Y) in 20 patients aged 60 years and above and found that during the following 10 months, older patients lost an average of 86.35 pounds. The results, reported in the February issue of journal *Archives of Surgery*, also found older patients experiencing a significant decrease in obesity-related diseases, including high blood pressure and diabetes, after the surgery.

HEALTH BYTES

ENCAPSULATED



GOOD NIGHTS

Ajinomoto Co., a Japanese agricultural products firm, recently announced plans to develop an insomnia treatment based on glycine, an amino acid. Its researchers conducted studies on men and women with sleep difficulties and found that glycine supplementation promoted deep sleep. Subjects who took three grams of glycine an hour before bedtime fell asleep sooner and woke up feeling refreshed, with no indication that glycine produced 'morning hangover', a foggy feeling often associated with the prescription of sleeping aids.

'A' PLUS

A study presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference in February revealed that stroke survivors taking their daily dose of aspirin should continue doing so. Without it, they could triple their risk of another stroke within a month.



SAY WHAT?

For many seniors, the cause of their hearing problems may lie not in their ears but in ageing brains. The findings were presented by the Association of Research in Otolaryngology—an international association of scientists and physicians—at a recent conference in Los Angeles. Our brains do a masterly job of sorting out signal from noise amid the daily din. Age can diminish this ability. So someone who can hear just fine in a quiet environment may find a busy restaurant auditory chaos.



KING OF HEARTS

Researchers from the Netherlands have found that an increased intake of Vitamin K2—found in leafy vegetables—is associated with a lower risk of coronary disease. The study was conducted on about 5,000 men and women over 55. Vitamin K2 was also associated with a decrease in cholesterol.



YOUNG BLOOD

Here's some good news. According to new research at Stanford University, blood from young people can actually help heal ageing muscles. Old muscles do have the capacity to repair themselves. But they can do so only when infused with a supply of "younger" blood. However, finding the right blood may be tricky—you cannot use young blood rich in sugars for older people.

Harmony does not take responsibility for the validity of the research published in this section. Please consult your doctor before following any advice offered here

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The doctor is in

The Purohits get medical information and check out diagnostic tools online with the help of **Sachin Kalbag**



Mrs Purohit has suffered from joint pain for the past few years and it flares up whenever the weather turns. She hates going to the doctor, preferring to pop a couple of painkillers and ride out the episode. Truth be told, Mr Purohit suffers more than her at these times, facing the brunt of her temper. I happened to visit the couple on one such day and found myself occupying a ringside view of the tussle.

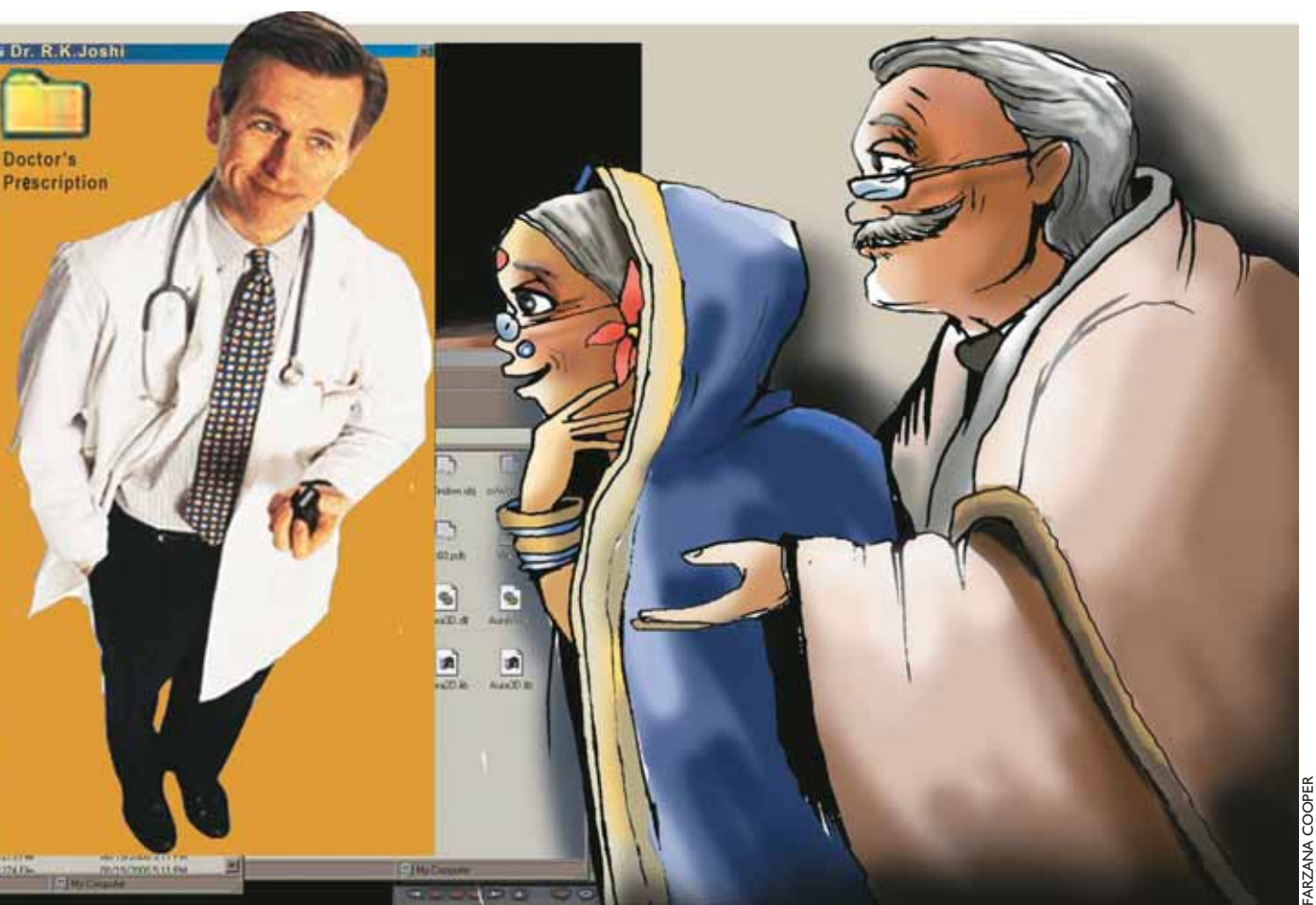
"The pain will go away soon," Mr Purohit was saying patiently. "Just don't think about it." She wouldn't have any of it. "It's easy for you to say, you don't get these pains," she shot back. "I don't even know what's causing them. Suppose it's something more serious." I suggested a visit to the doctor but that idea was shot down with a "they'll just order a load of tests and fleece us of all

our money". Then Mr Purohit had one of his epiphanies. "Why don't you do some research on the Internet about it?" She brightened up at the suggestion, and when they both looked at me very expectantly, I knew my entire evening just got booked.

I first took the couple to *Doctorndtv.com*, a highly recommended medical portal by New Delhi Television, the popular television production company. Mrs Purohit was very impressed with the fact that the site has more than 100 experts on its panel to reply to questions by email. After reading about arthritis and osteoporosis, she started browsing the site. "From AIDS to autism, cancer to diabetes, you find everything here," she told her husband excitedly. The site has news, information, a medical dictionary, health tips and even reviews of the latest medical books for lay readers.

Mr Purohit wanted to see more. So we moved on to other India-based health sites, including *Medicomm.net*, a health portal with a comprehensive database of doctors, chemists and hospitals; *Lillyindia.com*, which has detailed information on various ailments and treatments for both patients and doctors; and *India-health.info.com*, a 'knowledge' portal on Indian health with information on the country, its people and health infrastructure and spending.

Mrs Purohit decided to tell her neighbour Mrs Prasad about *Diabetesindia.com*, which tells you all you'd ever need to know about diabetes in India—"her husband has just been recently diagnosed as diabetic and she has too many questions"—and Mr Purohit spent a long time browsing through *Parkinsonindia.com*, a valuable site on how to learn about and cope with Parkinson's disease.



Diagnostic tools available on the Net let you calculate your daily calorie count, risk of heart disease and level of stress

I then took them to *Apollolife.com*, created by the Apollo Group of Hospitals, where the Purohitis go for their annual check-up. They were surprised to find that the next time they had any tests conducted at any of the Apollo hospitals or affiliated labs, they could check the results online without going to the hospital. Of course, for most of the services, you need to register on the site. And there's an online store too.

"Are there any sites that tell you if you are healthy or not without going to the hospital at all?" wondered Mrs Purohit. I guided them to *Mayoclinic.com*, a website based in Rochester in the US, affiliated to the hospital of the same name. Although set up to further the brand of the Mayo

Research Clinic, the site is a great resource for learning about health conditions online. It lists almost every disease in alphabetical format, which makes it a breeze to search for the stuff you need. Its diagnostic tools allow you to assess your 'state of depression', stress levels and body-mass index, which is calculated on the basis of your height and weight. Here, you also find a daily calorie count calculator, heart disease risk calculator and pregnancy 'due date' calculator. "Well, I probably won't need that one," said Mrs Purohit with a giggle. That made her husband laugh. What made him even happier was the personalised healthy weight

pyramid that the site calculated for him based on his weight. Turned out he is doing just fine.

Still, all that reading made him realise that their lifestyle was rather sedentary. And he quickly calculated how much exercise they both needed with the help of a calorie burner calculator. Surprisingly enough, Mrs Purohit agreed with him, concluding that her joint pain could well be the result of inactivity as much as age. "Maybe it's time we exercised a bit," she said. "And not just using the mouse." Mr Purohit pulled her off the chair, saying, "Let's get ready for a walk." I knew it was my cue to leave. ■

Sachin Kalbag is executive editor of Digit, India's premier technology magazine

Unbalanced sheet

Tax consultants **A N Shanbagh** and **Sandeep Shanbagh** analyse the fine print in Union Budget 2005-06 for *Harmony* readers

When Finance Minister P Chidambaram finished presenting Budget 2005-2006, he expected senior citizens to "bless him". Based on his speech, the proposals for silvers looked pretty innocuous. But now, devils in the fine print are emerging fast and furious.

First, the good news: The highlight of the Budget is easily the alteration of tax slabs. Income up to Rs 1 lakh is exempt from tax across the board; salaries between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 1.5 lakh will attract 10 per cent tax and 20 per cent from Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 2.5 lakh. Income beyond Rs 2.5 lakh will be taxed at the rate of 30 per cent. And senior citizens earning up to Rs 1.5 lakh have been exempted from tax.

Now the bad news: Silvers have suffered a bad hit. An unfair deal makes them more tax liable than ever.

WHAT'S OUT

The most damaging provision is the removal of Section 88B of the Income Tax Act. The section entitled seniors to a tax deduction of Rs 20,000. This was available to all senior citizens regardless of income level or whether they made any tax-saving investments or not.

Section 88, by far the most popular tax saving device, offered tax rebate on provident fund, public provident fund, life insurance, unit-linked insurance plan, equity-linked savings scheme (ELSS), housing loan and more. This rebate too has been abolished and now the above investments will have to be made through Section 80C, introduced this year.

Removal of standard deduction further increases liabilities. Available on the pension receipts of seniors, the rate of standard deduction (SD) was Rs 30,000 or 40 per cent of pension—which ever is less—for pensions up to Rs 5 lakh per annum. For income above Rs 5 lakh, the rate was a flat Rs 20,000.

Interest income up to Rs 12,000, exempt from tax under Section 80L, has also been taken away.

This includes interest on fixed deposits and the post-office monthly income scheme – a major source of funds for seniors. An additional tax deduction of Rs 3,000 on investment in RBI savings bonds has also been lopped off.

NET EFFECT

Now, both non-pensioners and pensioners will have to pay more tax. Let's see how that works.

The maximum non-taxable income before the budget was Rs 1,53,333. Now, since that has been pegged at Rs 1.5 lakh, the additional income of Rs 3,333 is rendered taxable. From now, non-pensioners will pay a tax of Rs 667 on the additional income of Rs 3,333—not a small amount if viewed in conjunction with other expenditures like interest and pension receipts, which no longer enjoy any benefits.

BEFORE AND AFTER

	Before Budget	After Budget
Pension income	2,50,000	2,50,000
Standard deduction thereon	30,000	Nil
Net pension income	2,20,000	2,50,000
Interest from FDs, 8% bonds, etc (investment)	15,000	15,000
Less: Sec 80L (tax-saving investment)	15,000	Nil
Net taxable income	2,20,000	2,65,000
Tax thereon	40,000	24,500
Less: Rebate u/s 88B (tax-saving investment)	20,000	Nil
Tax Payable	20,000	24,500
<i>Figures in INR</i>		



exempt accumulation, taxable withdrawal) method. Both deny the investor permanent tax saving. Under EET, the investment in savings plans and the earned interest are deductible from taxable income. However, the maturity amount could be taxable. The instruments this will apply to and to what extent are yet to be decided by an expert committee to be set up by the Ministry of Finance.

Section 80C allows people across all income brackets to reduce the taxable amount up to Rs 1 lakh by saving through specific instruments such as life insurance, ELSS or bonds. But the worrisome factor here is that Rs 1 lakh is a large sum for silvers to keep aside. Moreover, most schemes under this system are subject to substantial lock-in periods. Since liquidity of funds is of prime importance to silvers, we suggest the fixed periods of these instruments be reduced. However, here again when the investment matures, tax could be levied.

Therefore, the new budget proposals favour deferment and not saving on tax payment.

AND, FINALLY

Standardisation of age has not been carried out—it is different for tax benefits under various schemes. There is a dire need for savings plans taking inflation into consideration. Several other areas where the government must step in and assume an active role are social security, medical care, establishment of old-age homes and nursing services. We must see some action on this front. Is the Ministry of Finance listening? ■

Silvers have suffered a bad hit. An unfair deal makes them more tax liable than ever

Let us assume pensioner M R Mehra draws a pension of Rs 2.5 lakh and has an interest income of Rs 15,000. Earlier, he enjoyed standard deduction of Rs 30,000, reducing the net amount to Rs 2.2 lakh. Before the Budget, his interest income of Rs 15,000 – which included RBI's 8 per cent bonds – was exempt from tax under Section 80L. While Mehra's net taxable income before the budget was Rs 2.2 lakh, it now amounts to Rs 2.65 lakh (Rs 2.5 lakh + Rs 15,000), in the absence of standard deduction and Section 80L concession. As per pre-Budget

rates, the tax applicable on Rs 2.2 lakh was Rs 40,000, but Section 88B brought it down by another Rs 20,000. After the Budget, the taxable income of Rs 2.65 lakh attracts a tax of Rs 24,500. However, there is no further reduction in the amount. Thus Mehra will end up paying Rs 4,500 more tax this year.

RAW DEAL

The big change this time is the introduction of Section 80C and the EET (exempt contributions,

The authors may be contacted at wonderlandconsultants@yahoo.com

A tug of war

Legalpundits answers a property-related query from a *Harmony* subscriber

I AM A 70-YEAR-OLD WOMAN.

My mother had property in Vijaywada in Andhra Pradesh, which she left to her two sons and two daughters. All our names were mentioned in the legal documents. However, owing to a disagreement between the four of us, we decided to sell the land to a builder. A sales agreement was drawn up and signed by all of us.

In the meantime, one of my brothers expired and his share was legally transferred to his wife and children. But his family is now refusing to sign the necessary papers required by the builder to complete the formalities for development of the land. Under this pretext, the builder has also stopped paying us the remaining instalments—he has paid us only two so far, the last one in 2002. We are all suffering financially. My elder brother is not willing to proceed legally against the builder or against my deceased brother's family. Kindly advise my widowed sister and me on the following:

Can only my sister and I legally file a case against the builder?

Yes, two sisters alone can legally file a suit against the builder. The builder, your surviving brother and the heir(s) of your deceased brother should be made defendants to the suit.

Can we file a case for division of property?

Yes, daughters can file a suit for partition of property.



Is the builder liable to pay interest on default while paying the remaining instalments?

Yes, the builder will be liable.

We do not have any written demand for payment of the remaining instalments. Does that make the agreement void?

No, the sale agreement does not become legally void just because it is not demanded in writing.

Can any one of the signatories demand payment of instalments from the builder?

Yes, provided the mode of payment and the manner in which it is to be paid has been agreed upon by both parties—seller and buyer—and is mentioned in the sales agreement. The mode of payment could be either part payments in various instalments or a full and final sum. This is the

main condition applicable in the sale agreement that comes under the Contract Act.

Can the behaviour of my deceased brother's family be termed as a breach of contract since they are acting in a manner that is detrimental to us?

Yes, it is a breach of contract. Even if there are many parties on one side of the contract, and one of them acts contrary to his or her liabilities under the contract, their conduct can be said to be in breach of the contract. Breach of a contract, in simple terms, means deliberate non-performance or neglect on the part of one party to execute his promise, fulfil his duty and discharge his obligation. An active breach is one that occurs owing to negligent performance of a contractual obligation in a way that the person responsible acts outside the terms of contract. A passive breach occurs when there is no performance or failure to perform the terms of the contract.

Note: You have not stated whether the builder has already got possession of the land. If so, you must file a suit as soon as possible because otherwise he may develop the land and create 'third party rights' by selling the construction. If you are still in possession, you must not part with the authority, except in accordance with the agreement for sale. ■

Courtesy: Legalpundits International Services Pvt. Ltd. For advice from Legalpundits, mail us or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org or fax at (022) 22852217. Harmony takes no responsibility for advice offered



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Our December 2004 cover story “Back to Work” introduced you to a group of seniors who had re-entered the workforce successfully. Taking up from where we left off is a new section on post-retirement jobs. Each month, this section will profile silvers who have found a successful career after retirement. Also on board are experts from employment portal www.monster.com, answering your queries on the job market

Fresh start

Experts at Monster.com, India's leading job portal, answer your questions on post-retirement jobs



Q I am a 55-year-old public-sector employee. After living for 20 years in Mumbai, I will shift to Ahmedabad, my hometown, after retirement. I am looking forward to a peaceful life after my tenure comes to an end but my wife is keen that I remain occupied. Sometimes, I also feel that if I am engaged in some other work for a few hours a day I will remain active and alert. But I don't want to enter full-time employment again. Can I post my resume on a job portal for part-time accounting work? Do senior citizens receive any responses?

It would be a good idea to post your resume on any of the job portals available today. You can clearly mention that you are looking for a part-time job in accounting. If you have a computer at home, you can express your interest in accepting work on a retainer or freelance basis. Considering that you will be looking for a job locally, it would be a good idea to meet your local contacts in Ahmedabad. Or draw up a list of placement consultants in the city, and write to them with your details so that potential employers can contact you.

Q I am a 65-year-old homemaker living in Guwahati with my retired husband. A few years ago, on a visit to the US where my children are settled, I came across beautiful appliquéd aprons and oven gloves. Since I love stitching, on my return to India I began making

such aprons and gloves and gifting them to my relatives and friends. Everyone who has received them has urged me to start a business and market them. I have no idea how to charge money for something I like doing. But the idea of earning something for the first time in my life fills me with enthusiasm. Any suggestions?

It's a brilliant idea to convert a hobby into a small business venture. Begin with noting down the actual costs of the materials you use. Add to this the cost of the time that you spend on making the aprons and gloves. One way to do this is to put in Rs 30 or Rs 40 for every hour you spend. Now add 10 per cent to the total cost. That is the time and money you will be investing. Begin the business in a small way, and once the orders start increasing, you can step up the cost. Good luck!

Q My wife and I run a company that supplies spare parts to motorcycle dealers in Lucknow. The enterprise is not doing too well. We are being coaxed by our children to shut shop and start a restaurant in its place. The idea is to have my wife's healthy and tasty home recipes as the USP, so that customers can enjoy *ghar ka khana*. I am a little apprehensive about starting fresh at this stage of my life—I am 58. My children say they are ready to help us start the venture. Should I shut my 25-year-old shop and go ahead with their plans?

Changing from a 25-year-old business to a completely new one will be difficult, even if it is something as basic as *ghar ka khana*. Cooking for home is very different from cooking in bulk. The health of the business would depend on the way it is managed, rather than simply on the quality of the food served. Your first step should be to make a business plan: calculate the cost you would incur to set up the business, number of possible clients your restaurant would attract and the turnover you

expect to make. If the business plan looks good on paper, look at the finances—how much you need to invest and where you'll get the capital to start the business. The children may help initially, but your restaurant must be lucrative enough for you to manage on your own later. Once you are satisfied that the plan is viable, we suggest you do a test run on a smaller scale before going full steam ahead. You could begin with delivering food to offices or parties. Gauge the response and then decide. ■

STROKE OF GENIUS

Ramappa Hadpad, 71, a resident of Mumbai, was security divisional commissioner of the Railways Protection Force until 1995. Today, he runs education centres for four to 12-year-olds. For teaching, Hadpad uses the universal concept mental arithmetic system (UCMAS) or abacus. An age-old manual computing device of Chinese origin, the abacus is a frame with parallel rods strung with movable counters.

For this recipient of the President's Police Medal, the idea of taking it easy after retirement was never a consideration. "Retiring from one profession does not mean retiring from work," says Hadpad, who first branched out into a security and detective agency. A trip to the US in 1998 changed his focus. Hadpad came across children doing maths using the abacus and calculating faster than a calculator. The idea stuck with him. After extensive market research—a key to success in any venture—Hadpad bought franchises for centres in Mumbai and Goa from the UCMAS chapter in Malaysia in 2002.



ASHESH SHAH

Investing in the abacus arithmetic system has paid off for Hadpad

Hadpad invested Rs 1 lakh from his personal funds. With one trained teacher and seven students, he began classes from home. Today, the enterprise has grown into a company with an annual turnover of Rs 2 crore. Hadpad oversees the administration, marketing, and training of the course instructors and moderators. Classes are held at 189 centres with 500 trained teachers. "People often ask me why I need to work when my

children are well settled," he says. "I tell them, I work because I believe in being active."

His second innings has brought Hadpad sweet success. In 2004, UCMAS India entered the *Limca Book of Records* for conducting a national level competition for 11,000 students. The same year, he was awarded a certificate for outstanding contribution to UCMAS by the governor of Shaanxi province in China.

—Purnima Goswami

Play time

An exclusive performance sets the centre abuzz

IT WAS SHOW TIME AT THE HARMONY INTER-active Centre in Girgaum last month. Members got the chance to view a special performance of *Kaal Chakra*, a play based on a novel by eminent Marathi writer Jayawant Dalvi. This Yatri theatre group production, directed by Om Katare, had enjoyed a 70-show run across the country till it closed in 2000.

The 45-minute excerpt of the play narrated the tale of aged parents who have become a burden to their children. Faced with little alternative, the father advertises for someone willing to take care of them. Eventually, the parents refuse to go back to their own blood, preferring the adopted son instead.

About 60 members along with the staff gathered together to watch the play. "This performance was in front of a very deserving audience, very close to what the spirit of the play is," said Katare, who also played the lead role. Centre member K N Giri, 67, was moved to tears. "Old people are made to feel useless nowadays," he said. "It was not so earlier."

While some in the audience found it hard to relate to the fact that the couple would actually advertise for an outsider to take care of them, others like 59-year-old Harish Thakkar felt that the situation demanded it. Another member Joseph Deodhar, 63, had his own take: "Elders must learn to give away their rights to the next generation by choice. And youngsters should not consider the elderly a nuisance either. Such problems can be avoided only by confronting them."

The theme of the play, though, was something everybody could relate to. "The emotional bond that was established with the audience is one of the strong points of the play," felt 72-year-old Suniti Redkar. Which is what Katare hoped to achieve with this exclusive performance. Ultimately, *Kaal Chakra*, like the Harmony Initiative, is all about realising the importance of age—and celebrating it.

—Dipannita Ghosh Biswas

To know more about the centre and its activities, call us at (022) 30976440/6441 or email centre.thakurdwar@harmonyindia.org



Photo courtesy: YATRI

A scene from *Kaal Chakra*

THIS MONTH

YOGA

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays; 10.30-11.30 am (men); 4-5 pm (women). Classes by instructors from Kaivalyadham Centre, Marine Drive

MUSIC

Thursdays; *bhajan* from 4-5 pm. Marathi *sugam sangeet* from 5-6 pm

GROUP THERAPY

Wednesdays; 4-5 pm (men); 5.15-6.15 pm (women). Conducted by Dr Anjali Chabbria, Dr Sharita Shah and Aruna Prakash

COMPUTERS

Monday to Saturday; 8-9.30 am and 6.30-8 pm

HOBBIES

April 9. 4-5 pm. Dance class organised by centre members

April 26. Session on origami by vocational institute Kalavidya Sankul

HEALTH

April 4. 5.30-6.30 pm. Talk: wheat grass for health
April 16. 4-5 pm. Talk: dementia and Alzheimer's
April 23. Medical camp by BSES MG Hospital, Andheri

COMMON BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

April 30

Programmes are subject to last-minute changes

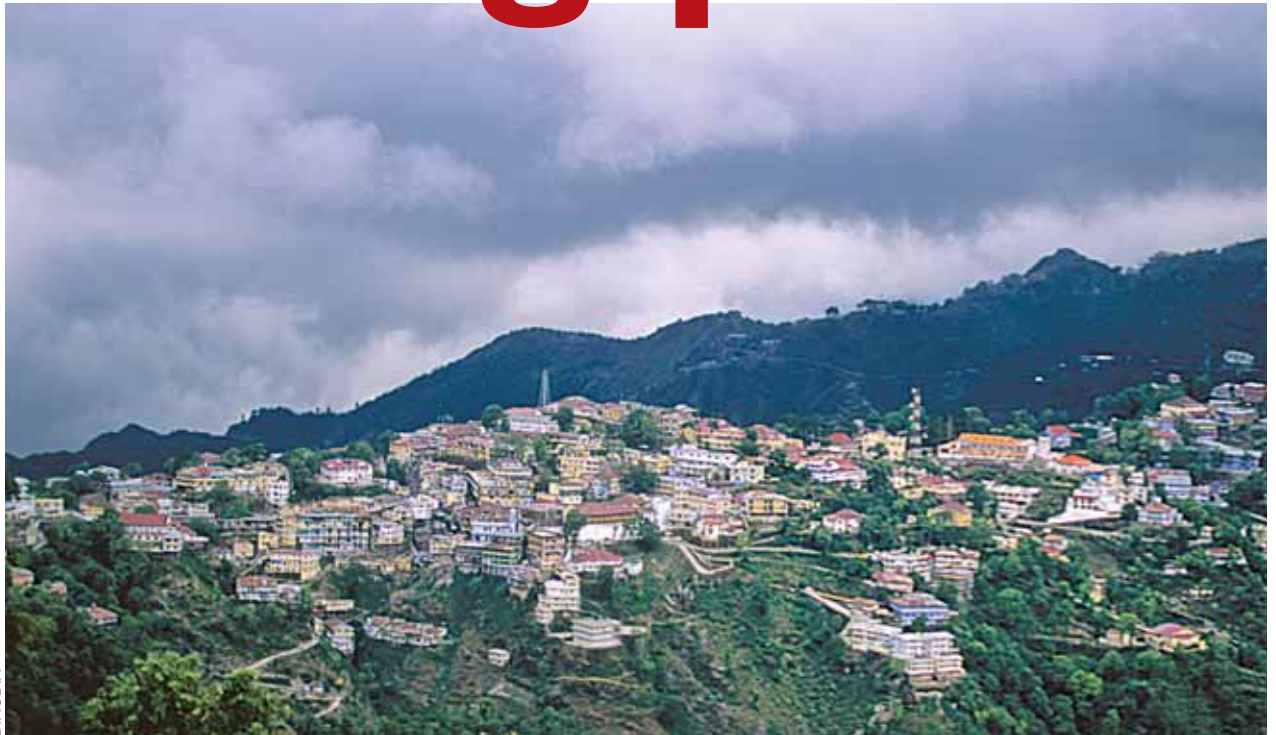
बूंद बूंद में विश्वास



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The sound of falling petals



DINODIA

Hugh and Colleen Gantzer write about the timeless beauty of their home Mussoorie, a naturally air-conditioned place where everyone can find their own space

Five minutes ago, something strange happened. Just as the evening sun had touched our spring daffodils, it began to hail. Not a determined, kettle-drum hail but a sort of soft and preoccupied hail as if its mind was elsewhere: in the Higher Himalayas, possibly, or to the northeast of our town, where Ruskin (Bond) lives,

writing his gentle lines about the mountains in a beautiful, cursive hand. When we were questing for a title for this piece, we came across his *Rain in the Mountains*; he had given it to us for Christmas '96. In his essay, "Sounds I Like to Hear", he had asked: "Do falling petals make a sound? Just the tiniest and softest of sounds, like the drift of falling snow."

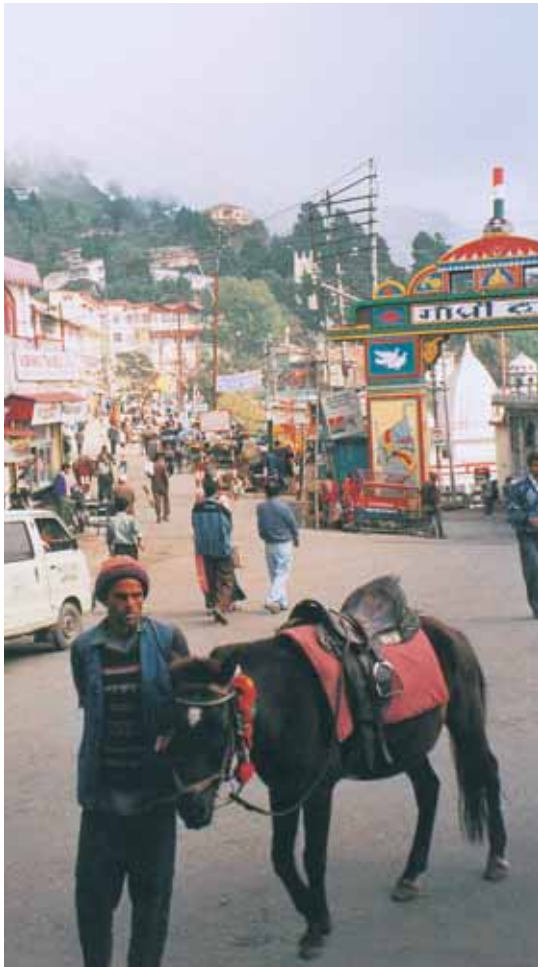
A lot of petals have fallen since the Gantzers first came to 2,000-m high Mussoorie and made a cottage in its oak woods our home. Sometimes we feel that the collective sound of the falling petals of time have made a deafening avalanche of change. The hand-pulled rickshaws have vanished from our hill station. The church fetes, where comely matrons of the Raj sold their

kisses for charity, would shock the double standards of the now-generation, in spite of taking mini-skirts and spaghetti straps for granted! But you can't freeze time and we wouldn't want to.

'The Good Old Days' are great for nostalgia, but we prefer to live in the here and now. We

of an amphitheatre from east to west, gazing down at the valley of the Doon to the south, backed by the Higher Himalayas to the north. Mussoorie is now a naturally air-conditioned segment of a wide, wide, satellite-spanning world. Which doesn't mean that you can't find your own space in our hill

"We escape to the hills every year," she said. He added, "As soon as we reach their ghat roads, like your *jalebi* bends on the road up to Mussoorie, we feel at peace." Later, we saw them queuing up for a ride on the cable car to the top of Gun Hill. On an impulse, we joined them and soared above Mussoorie for



Left, a panoramic view of Mussoorie; clockwise from above, the buzz of the Mall; the popular Kemty Falls, a tourist favourite; inside the serene Tibetan Temple in Happy Valley

revel in the buzz of the Mall with starry-eyed honeymooners holding hands, and folk in cycle-rickshaws or horseback, cell phones glued to their ears, talking to Mumbai, Manchester or Melbourne. Ours is no longer a little hamlet in the Himalayas, stretching like the grandstand

station. For such a small town, we have more than our fair share of writers, and writers need their space.

About a month ago, we gave a lift to a silver-haired couple that had returned to India five years ago after 23 years in the States.

unmatched views of the valley of the Doon on the south and the snow peaks of the Higher Himalayas to the north.

Gun Hill is festive with visitors, snack stalls and photographers offering to immortalise couples in 'hilly costumes' for the women,



DINODIA

In Mussoorie, summer is festive crowds; spring and autumn, that is March-April and September-October, are the most beautiful

and as 'dacoits' for the men. But our couple avoided all these, went to the edge of the hill, and stood looking at the horizon-wide span of the eternal snows. Slowly, their hands met and they were lost in their own world. When they returned to us, she said, "This is timeless. But then so much of this hill station is timeless. If you know where to find it."

Timelessness is old Christ Church rising above the Mall, accessed by the road winding above the sculpted Lion. When the present Queen of England's grandmother was the Princess of Wales, and her husband was shooting in Dehradun, she came here and

planted a deodar tree, which still stands. More importantly, the stained glass windows are beautiful, giving the church a pervasive sense of peace and serenity. There is a different sort of serenity in the Tibetan Temple, in Happy Valley to the far west of Mussoorie. These exiled people came here when the Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa. In their colony, fluttering with prayer flags, we've bought some authentic Tibetan handicrafts. And it's a pleasant, though longish walk from the old Mussoorie Library at the western end of the Mall to the Tibetan colony where their temple stands. Most of the friendly, and well-organised, Tibetan sweater sellers walk from

here everyday to set up their camp-bed stalls much closer to town, just off the Mall. A friend from Goa found their woollens "very cheap" and bought them for her trip to Berlin in the winter.

But if you, like us, don't consider shopping a major diversion, and would rather opt for a relaxing stroll on a shaded road, Camel's Back would be an excellent choice. It's a flat road, curving like a double-humped camel on the map, giving long views across a deep valley to the Higher Himalayas stretched along the northern horizon. It's the same view that you get from Gun Hill, now rising behind



Left, soaring above Mussoorie on the ropeway to Gun Hill; the winding road from Dehradun

you, without the crowds of tourists. This is also an excellent road to experience the five Himalayan seasons.

Spring is bright green and bird-chirruping; summer is the time of our wild flowers, fairly shy and peeping out of banks of green-gold moss; the monsoons are for mist, mushrooms and sudden squalls sweeping across the valley, back-combing the tops of the trees with a soft roar; autumn settles gently on the hills with bursts of dahlias exploding like fireworks on the green hillsides. And as the air gets crisper and colder, and frost begins to glisten silver on the dark patches of moss, the Winter Line begins to glow. If you stand on the Mall at sunset, just as the lights twinkle on across the spread of Dehradun, you'll see a band of brilliant light hanging, suspended over the southern horizon. And the colder the winter gets, the brighter the Winter Line. Oddly,

however, we have never noticed it when Mussoorie is quilted under a mantle of snow.

The winter is not for everyone. Summer is festive crowds; spring and autumn, that is March-April and September-October, respectively, are the most beautiful. They are also the best times to drive out of Mussoorie and encounter our popular Kempty Falls—a high cascade of water, reputedly rejuvenating. Our silver-haired couple could have visited Kempty Falls because when we saw them last, they were boating with great delight in the Jheel, our artificial lake. The other boaters ranged from half to one-sixth their age. Judging from the way they were enjoying themselves, and each other's company, they were really the best advertisement for Mussoorie. And, come to think of it, they were, in many ways, the youngest couple on the Jheel. ■

FACT FILE

How to get there from Delhi

Air: Air Deccan has daily flights to Jolly Grant Airport. From there, it's 58 km by taxi to Mussoorie

Rail: Take a train to Dehradun. From there, it's 30 km by taxi or bus

Road: It is 300 km by car, taxi or bus to Mussoorie

Where to stay

There is a wide range of hotels in Mussoorie, which include:

■ **Garhwal Terrace;** double rooms from Rs 1,300;

Tel: 0135-2632682, 2632683

■ **Hotel Brentwood;** double rooms from Rs 2,100;

Tel: 0135-2632036, 2632102

■ **Hotel Broadway;** double rooms from Rs 150;

Tel: 0135-2632243

■ **Hotel Grace Mount;** double rooms from Rs 1,895;

Tel: 0135-2632534, 2632434

■ **Hotel Laxmi Palace;** double rooms from Rs 700;

Tel: 0135-2632774

■ **Hotel Mayur;** double rooms from Rs 1,000;

Tel: 0135-2632696

■ **Hotel Sunny Cottage;** double rooms from Rs 850;

Tel: 0135-2632789

■ **Padmini Niwas Hotel;** double rooms from Rs 1,700;

Tel: 0135-2632793, 2633123

■ **Shingar Hotel;** double rooms from Rs 950; Tel: 0135-2632170

■ **The Claridges Nabha;** double rooms from Rs 5,000, includes breakfast and dinner;

Tel: 0135-2631426, 2631427

■ **Vikas Hotel;** double rooms from Rs 900; Tel: 0135-2632735

■ **Walnut Grove Hotel;** double rooms from Rs 900;

Tel: 0135-2632311

Drive through the security gate at the entrance of Sainik Farms in South Delhi, and you notice the guards perched on some seriously cool chairs made of scooter tyres. Yes, tyres. They got them from Rama Anand's furniture studio in her sprawling 7,500 sq ft farmhouse, situated a few metres ahead on Western Avenue.

The 60-year-old started making eco-friendly furniture from discarded and defective tyres a decade ago. "It's so hard to dispose of tyres," Anand explains. "And you shouldn't burn them. By turning them into furniture, you are taking care of waste rubber, reducing the pressure on the environment and also cutting down on the consumption of wood."

The idea came to Anand in 1996 when she discovered a pile of discarded tyres in her backyard. She lives in a joint family with her 65-year-old husband Ashok Kumar



Rama Anand and her durable eco-friendly furniture

Anand, three sons Ashwini, Abhinav and Ashish, two daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren aged between three and 13—and they own eight cars. Afraid to sell the tyres to the *kabadiwallah* fearing he might burn them, she carried them to her basement, determined to recycle them somehow. Her family saw very little of her for the next few days.

She began by mounting a Maruti 800 tyre on four chrome-plated wheels. But the

rubber was soft and pressed into the wheels. Next, she put wooden blocks inside the hollow of the tyre. That didn't work either. So she tried placing an iron base plate under the tyre and it did the trick. When she finally resurfaced, she was brimming with excitement—in the basement lay a new coffee table. Then, the ideas poured forth. Three-wheeler tyres were transformed into bar stools. Tractor tyres cut into half were formed into ornate backs for sofas and beds, or just decoration pieces for the wall. Glass-topped tables with tyre bases. The possibilities were endless, and surprisingly chic when dressed in colourful upholstery.

Anand was savvy enough to realise the importance of intellectual property rights. "A lawyer friend advised me to patent my furniture worldwide," she remembers. "But it takes time. As I applied for a patent in the US, I wouldn't let anyone venture near the basement. My carpenters were sworn to secrecy. I even used to

Wheel of fortune

Discarded tyres become eco-chic with Rama Anand's furniture creations, writes **Teena Baruah**

shoo away the sparrows perched on our window grill," she adds with a giggle.

She wasn't even ready to confide in her family. Only her nephew Kamal Ghei saw what she was up to. "For the next few months, he went about telling everyone, 'Aunty is making something amazing but I can't tell you what it is'." She made 13 prototypes and they remained hidden in the basement. Anand finally relaxed after patenting her invention across 101 countries in 1998, including the US, India, France and the UK.

When she finally revealed her creations to the family, the initial reaction was disappointing. "I remember thinking, 'Doesn't she have anything better to do?'"



Photos: TOA

confesses her youngest son Ashish, who now runs Delhi Art Gallery. "We weren't supportive. Even today, none of us have time to sit with her and give her ideas. But we asked her to hire the best people in the business and agreed to fund her project." Her granddaughter Sanya loved the idea though—she was rewarded with an exclusively crafted

computer table. Support also came from Anand's childhood friend Prem Sharma, now 70. "You have created wealth from waste," Sharma told her friend.

Anand began to sell her products to friends and acquaintances. Through word-of-mouth publicity, the media got a whiff of her products in 2000 and all the major news channels—from Doordarshan and Zee News to the BBC—subsequently interviewed her. The accolades began to pour in. In 2003, she was given the Best Inventor of the Year award by the World Intellectual Property Organisation based in Switzerland and was featured in the *International Who's Who of Professional and Business Women* published by the

American Biographical Institute. She also won the Jawaharlal Nehru National Memorial Award in 2002, and the Golden Peacock Innovative Product award from the Institute of Directors in 2003.

It's not surprising. Anand's furniture costs 40 per cent less than wood furniture. While photo frames cost between Rs 400

and Rs 700, sofas are priced from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,500. The finishing material used determines the final price. For example, cotton works out cheaper than leather. She's hoping to persuade tyre companies to give her defective tyres at lower prices—then, the costs will go down even further.

Anand continues to work 12-13 hours a day in her basement, perfecting her furniture. Part of that process is attending research and development workshops and surfing the net to ensure that her products are ergonomically sound. Her biggest challenge, though, remains finding a dream team of carpenters and upholstery makers. "I want them to suggest ideas, explore my concept further," she says. "But they prefer to stick to my idea."

Right now, Anand's profit margins are minimal. In New Delhi, the Uppal's Orchid Hotel and the Horticultural Department have placed bulk orders for her furniture, but such orders are few and far between. She is confident, though, that business will pick up. And when it does, she wants to set up a charitable home. Another dream of Anand is to set up a 100-acre tyre garden with planters, swings, a swimming pool and benches made of tyres. She's hoping the Ministry of Tourism and Culture joins hands with her in this effort.

Anand's sons claim that her work has become an obsession and her hectic schedule leaves her with little energy and no time for friends and family. She brushes away the criticism with a succinct "I am aiming for the stars". She knows she's on a roll. ■

BOOKSHELF

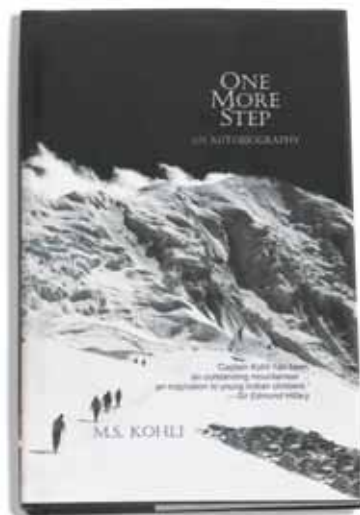
KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

One More Step:

An Autobiography

By M S Kohli

Penguin; Rs 495; 322 pages



In 1965, Manmohan Singh Kohli, a 34-year-old naval officer, led the first successful Indian expedition to Mount Everest, putting a record nine climbers on the summit. It was Kohli's fourth attempt at the world's highest peak. During an expedition in 1962, he missed the summit by a mere 100 m, spending three nights in raging blizzards at 27,650 ft, two of them without oxygen—a record that remained unbroken for several decades. When he finally made it, he received mail from all over the world. Writes Captain Kohli in *One More Step*, "One letter was addressed to 'Commander Kohli, Mount Everest, India'."

Born in Haripur in the Northwest Frontier Province, Kohli was carried atop his first peak—Martyrs' Summit in Haripur—at the age of three by his father. The habit stuck. During the next 12 years, he climbed that one, and various others in the neighbouring Kaghan hills many times.



Sir Edmund Hillary in Kohli's turban

During Partition, he survived a journey to Amritsar amid communal frenzy and mass killing; the riots that took place at the time killed the majority of Sikhs living in Haripur. Kohli went on to join the Indian Navy—a stint that enabled him to go back to climbing mountains, this time the Himalayas—moved on to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police after the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962, and then to Air India in 1971. In his 19 years with the national carrier, he came to be known as the 'godfather' of adventure tourism in India, introducing trekking in the Himalayas, white-water rafting, aero sports, and island tourism to Lakshwadeep and the Andamans. Through it all, he continued to play a pivotal role in the Indian Mountaineering Federation.

Kohli takes us through his life, on and off the mountains, in a simple, almost formal, way, describing but never sensationalising events, whether he's talking about the Everest triumph or the misguided Indo-US exercise—which he was part of—to place plutonium-powered

monitoring devices on Nanda Devi and Nanda Kot in the mid-60s. His encounters with former prime ministers Indira Gandhi and son Rajiv are also presented in a matter-of-fact way. There is no romance injected, no dramatic licence taken, but Kohli's zest for life, apparent on every page, keeps you reading.

Busy protecting fragile mountain ecology through his Himalayan Environment Trust and the Gangotri Conservation Project, the 74-year-old is still not ready to hang up his boots. The next step: the Vivekananda International Students Awards Scheme, a 'global youth movement' he has recently launched, aimed at the all-round development of students.

—Arati Rajan Menon

BOND WITH THE BEST

Ruskin, Our Enduring Bond

By Ganesh Sali

Roli Books; Rs 395; 143 pages



Ruskin Bond is one of India's best-known literary figures. His life is documented for children in his Rusty stories, and the hills, valleys, slinking leopards in the night and snow are familiar Ruskin Bond



territory for every reader. The fact that he ran away to England to start a writing career when he was 15 may also be known by some, along with the fact that he came back again in two years overcome by homesickness for his beloved hills.

What this book does is reintroduce Ruskin Bond to us with the simplicity and directness that characterise the man and

writer. His father, Aubrey, who was a teacher, named his son after Victorian author John Ruskin, perhaps in the secret hope that his boy would grow up to be 'aesthetically inclined'. Aubrey Bond also passed on his love of the hills to his son.

Writing came early to Bond—he used it as an escape for sorrow, as a chance to grieve for lost loves, just as he used the beauty of Mussoorie as a chance to escape from the bustle of the world.

Each chapter begins with quotes from Bond's worldview, like the thoughtful, "I think I have been able to pass through life without being any man's slave or tyrant." The book is rich in reproduced letters, documents, a few samples of his prose, some funny pieces of verse and an epilogue in his



Baby Bond (left); and in his teens

own hand. Photographer and writer Ganesh Saili and Bond have co-authored several books and been friends for over 30 years, and the book vividly brings out Bond's essence through personal anecdotes.

—Anjana Basu

SHOBHAA, THE SHRINK

Spouse, The Truth About Marriage

By Shobhaa De

Penguin Books; Rs 250; 287 pages



If Shobhaa De hadn't mistaken her role as a writer for a shrink, this 'food for married souls' would have been more palatable. It's not far from reality when she calls marriage a flawed

institution; it is what you make of it, with no formula for a happy one. And nobody has all the answers. But De soon loses track of her own words—"this isn't a self-help book with authoritative dos and don'ts"—and assumes the role of a marriage counsellor offering, what else, dos and don'ts. One expects filmi chapter titles like *Pyar kiya to darna kya*, *Ghar ghar ki kahani* and, in her *Socialite Evenings* style, *Kuch love*, *kuch masti*, to have something more to sing about.

But all that the love-shaped pointers at the end of each episode about her marriage and her friends' marriages provide is advice rolled in tissue paper: "It's important to keep touching. Seek legal advice if confused about your rights and claims.

Don't go crying to mama each time you have an argument with your spouse or in-laws."

A devoted wife—she hasn't worn a *salwar kameez* after Mr De told her how unflattering a garment it is—and a mother of six, with this book the writer has bared her own marriage. From wake-up alarm to bedtime, from what makes their hearts go *dhak dhak* to what makes them growl. Advice on flirtation, sex toys and sex during pregnancy has been left without examples, though. "For All Spouses; For mine; For Dilip," it begins. For Dilip, sure; one will have to ask the writer's ex—written off in one line—what he thinks; for all other spouses, maybe not.

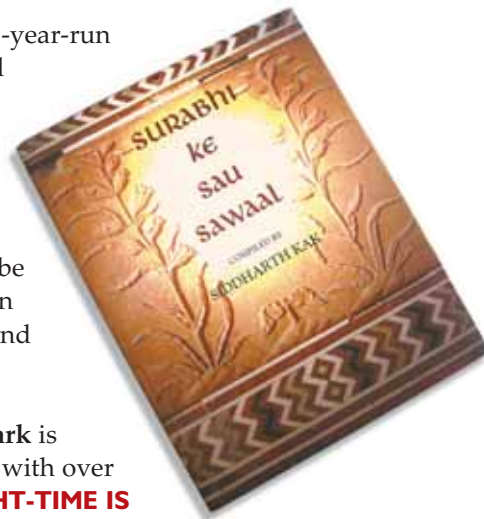
—Meeta Bhatti

BOOKSHELF

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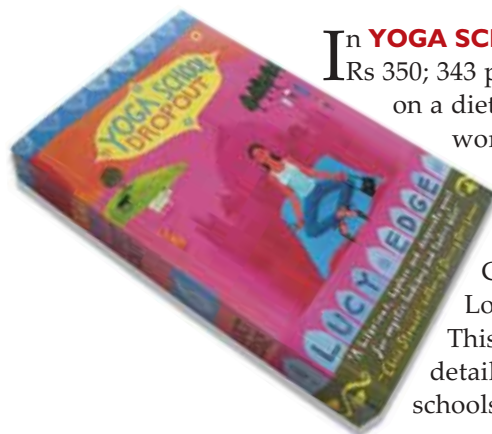
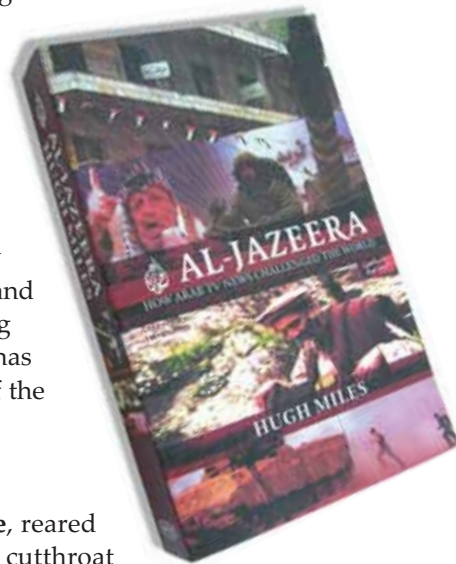
Remember *Surabhi*? The 'infotainment' show, which enjoyed an 11-year-run on TV, answered questions on every aspect of Indian culture and tradition and history, establishing itself as a firm family favourite.

Siddharth Kak, producer and co-presenter of the show, has now compiled **SURABHI KE SAU SAWAAL** (Rupa; Rs 500; 207 pages), a collection of 100 questions and answers culled from the show. Some examples: 'What is the meaning of the word *surabhi*?' 'What unique kind of art is created from dried sea froth?' And 'In which tribe in India are couples married only when the bride is seven months pregnant?' A treat for the whole family, and the perfect gift.



Seventy-six-year-old Mary Higgins Clark is America's queen of suspense writing, with over 30 bestsellers to her credit. Her latest **NIGHT-TIME IS MY TIME** (Pocket Books; Rs 250; 370 pages) is sure to join the list. This one is about enigmatic historian Jean Sheridan—a woman with a big secret—who attends her 20-year high-school reunion in Cornwall on Hudson, a stone's throw from West Point military academy. The reunion is a tense one; someone is threatening to let Sheridan's secret out. Worse, five women in her class have been killed, one by one, over the past 20 years and she may just be next. This may not be the best thriller you've ever read, but Higgins Clark keeps you guessing till the end.

If you were to see an exclusive interview with Osama Bin Laden, it would probably be on Al Jazeera, the news channel the Bush administration failed to silence, and one that was once accused by Saudi Arabia of "serving up poison on a silver platter". In the fascinating **AL JAZEERA: HOW ARAB TV NEWS CHALLENGED THE WORLD** (Abacus; Rs 435; 438 pages), journalist Hugh Miles uncovers the real story behind one of the world's most watched—with over 50 million viewers—and influential media outlets. His conclusion may surprise many: Despite being lambasted as a mouthpiece for reactionaries, Miles argues that Al Jazeera has done more to educate the Arab world about democracy than any nation of the so-called 'democratic world'.



In **YOGA SCHOOL DROPOUT** (Ebury Press; Rs 350; 343 pages), Englishwoman Lucy Edge, reared on a diet of red wine and battered by the cutthroat world of British advertising, recounts her journey to India in search of spiritual salvation. She criss-crosses the country on planes, trains and automobiles, looking for the best yoga centre, from Mysore to Kerala, Pune to Rishikesh, Chennai to Tiruvannamalai and Pondicherry. She returns to London, not quite a "yoga goddess" but enlightened nonetheless. This travelogue is sharply funny. But it's also a surprisingly well-detailed manual for anyone who wants to learn about the various schools of yoga. ■

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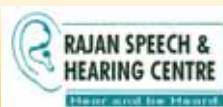
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Wrong number

Amita Malik gets the run-around from the telephone department while trying to avail a senior citizens' concession



I ALWAYS SEEM TO GET ON late to many privileges offered to silvers by various authorities. So I was grateful to a friend when he tipped me off that the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam in the capital was giving a concession of 20 per cent to senior citizens on certain fixed monthly telephone charges. This did not apply to charges on actual telephone calls, which is understandable, but things that do not change from month to month. It was not an enormous amount. For instance, the monthly rent for the telephone is Rs 250, which means one would get a rebate of only Rs 50. But this amount means quite a lot to elderly people living on modest pensions, the telephone being a vital necessity for them.

I duly sent off an application to my local telephone office asking if I could be extended the facility. I was then asked to provide proof of my senior citizenship. I sent along the office boy with my senior citizen's card from Indian Airlines. He was sent back with the reply that only my passport would do as proof of age. I immediately sent off a photocopy of my passport. He was sent back again as they wanted to see the original. That was also duly shown and the passport was sent back with the promise that I would get the concession from my next bill.

I was feeling on top of the world when the lady at the counter who had sent the message about the rebate being included in the next

bill rang me up. "Did you move from Kaka Nagar to your present address two years ago and have your telephone transferred?" she asked. "Yes," I replied. "Do you have any documentary evidence?" she asked sternly. Taken aback, I said: "The very fact that you knew my telephone had been transferred two years ago and you know the two addresses surely shows you have it on your records." "No, we don't," she continued in the same stern tone. "The central office was supposed to send it to us, but didn't." "In that case," I replied in an equally stern tone, "You can ask the central office to

address and that it was now operative. I sent it off in triumph to the telephone office, having done their job for them.

This time, miraculously, they did not raise any objection. Besides, I had also sent them a letter telling them that it was a pity that the kind concessions given by the government to senior citizens were being made a mockery of by bureaucrats at lower levels who did everything to stall them and caused unnecessary harassment and worry, not to mention waste of time. I said I was sending a copy of my letter to the minister.

It's a pity that bureaucrats are making a mockery of government concessions

send it to you, since it is the mistake of your office. I am prepared to wait. Besides, a senior citizen is a senior citizen and even if I had been in this flat for one month, I am still entitled to the rebate, aren't I?" She remained silent.

As I knew they would not stir on their own, having wasted two years already, I reverted to the good old do-it-yourself method. I delved through my two-year-old files and found a letter from the telephone department telling me that my telephone had been transferred from my old to new

Well, my latest bill has 'Senior Citizen' stamped on it. But, alas, there is no rebate anywhere. So now I have paid the bill, and sent with it a letter asking if they could please tell me how, when and where I will get the concession? In the words of William Shakespeare: I pause for a reply.

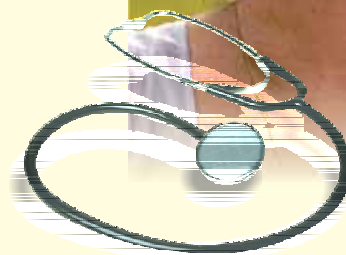
And I would like to share with readers my long-held belief: This country is not being ruined only by politicians—after all, they come and go—but by petty bureaucrats, who seem to be there forever. ■

Amita Malik, often referred to as 'the first lady of Indian media', is a columnist and film critic

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Do people change in their appearance over the years?

Jug Suraiya takes a long, hard look



MY WIFE BUNNY AND I WERE meeting Annie and Robin after almost 30 years, and I had butterflies in my stomach. Annie and Bunny have known each other since they were kids in Calcutta. In 1960, Annie's family migrated to the UK, where Annie later married Robin. The last we'd met them was in 1976, when we'd stayed with them in their home in Yorkshire. I remembered Annie as strikingly attractive and Robin as having the most boyish smile. Both were extremely hospitable and we'd got on famously.

Now they were in Delhi, the first leg of a 70-day *Bharat parikrama*, which would take them through the length and breadth of the country. We were meeting them for lunch, and to wish them a safe and pleasant passage through India. The reason for my slight trepidation wasn't that we'd have little to say to each other. On the contrary, what gave me pause is what always does when I meet people after a long spell: Would the strange alchemy of time have outwardly changed them beyond recognition from the changeless image of them that I had?

Other people always change in appearance over the years. While we ourselves, to ourselves, remain looking about the same, more or less. "What nonsense," said Bunny. "I know how much I've changed looks-wise over the years," she added. "Not to me,

you haven't," I assured her. "That's because you see me every day," said Bunny. I didn't say it, but I felt that, for once, she was talking rot. Of course she hasn't changed. Nor have I, from the mental image I have of myself: a fellow of mature years now, certainly, but looking much like he'd done when he was thirtyish—well, make it fortyish—bounding up and down the Yorkshire moors or Himalayan foothills along with the best of them. The fact that I haven't actually done much bounding for quite a while doesn't matter; that's the mind's-eye image I have of myself.

what we looked like to them?" she added. I shook my head at this obtuseness. "I've told you; we don't change," I repeated. "Oh really, when did you last look in the mirror, Dorian Gray?" she asked. I explained that I looked in the mirror frequently: when shaving, brushing my teeth, seeing if my hair needed cutting, and if my shirt and pants matched—which Bunny tells me very often don't. But when I look in the mirror I see the bristles on my chin, my teeth, my hair, my clothes. I never see me. Whoever that might be, apart from the picture of him that I carry around in my head.

The relativity theory of personal appearance: everyone else changes, not me

Other people, met after years, always look very different from how I'd imagined them. It's one of those strange phenomena of the universe, the relativity theory of personal appearance. Everyone else changes, but not oneself. In the case of Annie and Robin, I needn't have worried. They looked wonderfully chipper, and remarkably as they had all those years ago. We had a wonderful time swapping notes of the interim period since we'd last met. "Touch wood, they both look marvellous," said Bunny on our way home from lunch. "I wonder

That, of course, is the real meaning of Oscar Wilde's parable. Each of us has a mental portrait of what we are, inviolate from the vandalism of time. We seldom see ourselves as we really are. What's that you just asked? What about the objective evidence of photographs, how do I dispute that? I'll answer that in just a sec. Soon as I've sorted out, talking about photographs, just how the dickens some jowly old codger with not just bags but Samsonite suitcases under his eyes smuggled his mugshot on top of this column. ■

Jug Suraiya is a New Delhi-based columnist and author

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An equal music

Delhi-based businessman Vinod S Kapur, 70, tells **Teena Baruah** how his *baithak* has become an integral part of Delhi's cultural calendar

MUSIC TO MY EARS

In 1967, I heard thumri exponent Girija Devi singing at a *mela* in Rampur. Almost instinctively, I invited her for a *baithak* at our club in Bareilly where I was posted as the general manager of the Western Indian Match Company. Since then, I have hosted over 100 *baithak* at my Panchsheel Park residence and the India Habitat Centre (IHC) in New Delhi. The VSK *baithak*, named after me, has featured some of the biggest names in classical music, including Parveen Sultana, the late Shobha Gurtu, Rajan and Sajan Mishra, Shubha Mudgal and Prabha Atre.

It is the only way to enjoy music—the way PVR claims multiplexes are the only way to watch movies. At a *baithak*, an artist performs in an intimate and relaxed ambience, surrounded by an audience that responds spontaneously to music. It bridges the artificial distance that a stage creates between the performer and a listener. If music concert is fast food, *baithak* is fine dining. I host six to seven of them a year, between August and April.

GETTING DOWN TO IT

For every *baithak*, a dingy basement at IHC is converted into an intimate space, with soft lights, white sheets and flowers sprinkled all around. Incense is not allowed as it causes discomfort to some, though Rajan and Sajan Mishra insist on sprinkling *ittar* (perfume made of natural oils). At IHC and my residence, the show is well managed—in the past 100 sessions, we've lost only one pair of shoes!

We never start at 6.30 pm sharp, giving people time to chat and have tea before they take their places on the floor. Those with arthritic joints take the row of seats at the back. The recital usually lasts for four to five hours with an intermission. By break-time, both the audience and the artist have their guard down. And the music that follows is always better.

There are some rules. No lounging or drinking while the recital is on. You cannot point your feet at the artist, whisper, or get up in between. And mobiles should always be switched off.

MY LIFE, LOVE AND REGRETS

I was born in Lahore and was trained as a mechanical engineer from Loughborough College of Technology in 1956. The only music we heard in our childhood was film music aired on the radio.

My first *baithak* was hosted in 1975 at home. Naina Devi of Kapurthala helped me with it as she had been hosting similar soirees. It took about a year to become popular. And after shifting the venue to the IHC, we play to a full house of 400 people, with more



People in Delhi saw me as an exotic animal who strayed into their territory. But the *baithak* is not a Page 3 affair

waiting patiently. The regulars include actor Sushma Seth, author Uma Vasudev, politician Vasant Sathe, columnist and writer Prem Shankar Jha, former ambassador Chinmaya Gharekhan and Air Marshal (retd) Vinod Patni. The *baithak* is my pet project. My

wife Rani has no choice but to play host. The one time I was not part of a VSK *baithak* was two years ago when I had bypass surgery. I told my son Rahul to call it off only if I die. It hurts me that Rahul and my daughters Anjali and Adita rarely attend the soirees. For running the show, the credit goes to my assistant Shirley.

OUT AND ABOUT IN DELHI

My friend, former ITC executive Amar Misra, wrote in his book *Some Musical Memories* that my greatest contribution was to get “a large number of so-called socialites of a rather soulless Delhi actively interested in classical music”. A section of the city’s culture cartel was not impressed though. They saw me, a Punjabi businessman, as an exotic animal straying into their preserved territory. It doesn’t bother me because the *baithak* is not a Page 3 affair. Nor am I on a mission to spread cultural awareness. Music is not a business for me. I make my money from a poultry farm called Keggfarms Group.

TALE OF TWO WOMEN

I share a special chemistry with two artists: Girija Devi of the Benaras *gharana* and the eccentric Kishori Amonkar. When Girija sang for seven hours at our Bareilly club in 1967, I fell in love as much with her thumri, purvi and dadra as her *nazakat* or style. She sang about relationships—with the *nanadiya* (sister-in-law), *sautan* (mistress), *devar* (brother-in-law)—all with a touch of coquetry. Sparks flew when our eyes met. It was personalised music. Girija’s music at 74 is as sensuous as ever.

Kishori Amonkar, on the other hand, seemed distant when I first met her. I saw her screaming at an audience that dared to drink Coca Cola while she was performing. And I thought, ‘Forget her music, she’s insufferable.’ But the next time I heard her singing at (bureaucrat) N K Singh’s house, I was completely astounded. When I expressed my appreciation, she invited me to her next show in Bombay. I haven’t yet invited her to sing at my *baithak*.

THE MUSIC PLAYS ON

Good music is not about big names. Unfortunately, most Delhiites don’t think so. Apart from the famous names who take part in my shows, my role is to be a patron to ‘not-so-known’ singers too. I scout for my artists at music festivals. I also want to create a trust that will help, support and sustain artists through fellowships. ■

H PEOPLE



THE X FILES

He was one of the most charismatic—and most feared—figures in the American civil rights movement. Former convict **Malcolm X**, born Malcolm Little, was a fiery opponent of white domination and racism and a black separatist for many years until he

converted to Islam. Four decades after he met a violent end at the age of 39, his daughters have embarked on a crusade to convince people he was a champion of human rights. They are converting the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan—where he was assassinated on February 21, 1965—into a history centre that will house documents about Malcolm X's life, including memoirs, notes, speeches and other personal items. "We need to preserve our history to

empower future generations," says Ilyasah Shabazz, the third of six daughters born to Malcolm X and wife Betty Shabazz. The official opening of the Malcolm X and Dr Betty Shabazz Memorial and Education Centre is slated for May 19, on what would have been his 80th birthday.

Closer home, the family of **Dadasaheb Phalke** (1870-1944), the 'father' of Indian cinema, wants to bring alive his memories, 61 years after an unnoticed death. The Dadasaheb Phalke award for outstanding contribution to Indian cinema is one of the greatest honours for a member of the film industry. But son Chandrashekhar Pusalkar, 54, wants people to know more about his father's contributions to the industry. On Phalke's death anniversary on February 17, Pusalkar announced plans to build a museum in his honour, which will house priceless prints of films, photographs and personal items.



PROLIFIC PEN



"There is nothing under the sky I don't like to write about," says veteran Shiv Sena leader **Pramod Navalkar**. So the 65-year-old went ahead and released not one, not two, but five books—together. Labelled as a grand collection of his articles in Marathi newspapers over the past 51 years, *Aishwarya*,

Sandhyachaya, *Pahara*, *Smarak* and *Manora* were launched at a glittering function in Mumbai attended by former Maharashtra chief minister Manohar Joshi, and former municipal commissioner of Mumbai S S Tinaikar. With the addition of these five, Navalkar, the founder of Nana Nani Park in Chowpatty, now has 50 books to his credit.

ONE-MAN CRUSADE



At 90, he may be the oldest man in Parliament, but **Nanaji Deshmukh**, a nominated member to the Rajya Sabha, is determined to make a difference. In January, he wrote a letter to all MPs and sent copies to leading businessmen, editors and NGOs, detailing the unacceptably high costs of Parliament. Two associates helped Deshmukh with his research, like calculating the direct monthly expenditure of an MP by adding perks such as phone calls, tickets for travel and medical facilities. "Enacted in 1954, the law of fixing the salaries and allowances admissible to Members of Parliament underwent 25 revisions until 2002. The conclusion: Salaries and allowances have gone up 90 times," reads the letter. Not surprisingly, the response has been lukewarm, with only Sports Minister Sunil Dutt acknowledging the letter. The document has now been published as a booklet by the Deendayal Research Institute in Chitrakoot, Madhya Pradesh—it's an alternative development network headed by Deshmukh.

VISITORS

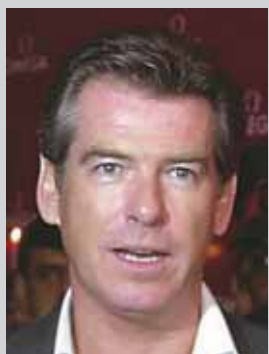
FEB 10-15



Who: Joseph P Kennedy, 58, nephew of John F Kennedy, chairman of Citizens Energy Corporation, a non-profit energy company; and board member of Iflex, a US-based entertainment and software company.
Agenda: To meet actor Shah Rukh Khan and explore possible tie-ups between the film industry and Iflex.
Extracurricular

activities: He visited Film City in Mumbai's suburban Goregaon.

FEB 19-22



Who: Pierce Brosnan, 51, actor best known for playing James Bond, and brand ambassador for Omega watches.
Agenda: To launch the new Omega Seamaster.
Extracurricular activities: Met actor Amitabh Bachchan.

FEB 23-26



Who: Adolfas Mekas, 80, experimental Lithuanian filmmaker settled in the US since his country's invasion by the Nazis.
Agenda: To attend, along with wife Pola Chapelle, the recently held Experimenta 2005, the international experimental film festival at

The British Council, Mumbai.

Extracurricular activities: A talk on New American Cinema and a presentation on his path-breaking film *Hallelujah The Hills*.

MAR 5-7

Who: Mark Knopfler, 54, guitarist, singer, front man of British rock band Dire Straits that hit big time in the late 1970s and 80s

Agenda: To make the people of Bangalore and Mumbai 'rock'

Extracurricular activities: Met Sachin Tendulkar before he flew off to participate in the ongoing Indo-Pak cricket series. Tendulkar presented the guitarist an autographed bat and received a guitar signed by Knopfler.



MAR 5-10

Who: Michael Caine, 72, British actor.

Agenda: A holiday trip to Rajasthan with wife Shakira.

Extracurricular activities: Shopping, sightseeing and a meeting with chief minister of Rajasthan Vasundhara Raje, Lalit and Menal Modi and erstwhile Maharaja Bhawani Singh.



MAR 16-17

Who: Dr Condoleezza Rice, 51, US secretary of state.

Agenda: On her first visit to India, Rice discussed the sale of F-16 warplanes to Pakistan and Nepal's political situation with External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh. The fact that India is her first stop in Asia, even before China, has not gone unnoticed.

Extracurricular activities: She visited Humayun's Tomb in New Delhi.



H PEOPLE



EJECTED

Did she quit? Was she fired? No one really knows, but the exit of **Carleton 'Carly' Fiorina**, 51, as chairperson and CEO of the Hewlett Packard Development Company, a leader in computing and imaging solutions, made headlines.

Named the world's most powerful woman in business for the past three years by *Fortune* magazine, Fiorina cited differences with the board on strategy in a statement to the media. The former Lucent Technologies and AT&T employee's appointment at HP in 1999 was feted as a symbol of the glass ceiling finally breaking. The board has begun looking for a new CEO. The buzz: Fiorina's name has surfaced as a candidate to become the next president of the World Bank.



AND FINALLY...

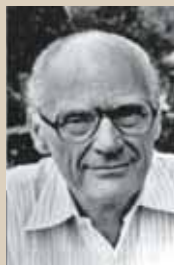
After 34 years and a failed marriage for each, **Prince Charles**, 56, and **Camilla Parker Bowles**, 57, are tying the knot. The date has been set—April 8—and the venue, The Council Chamber in Windsor's Guildhall, confirmed. The Queen won't be in attendance but she has bestowed her "blessings" on the couple, as have UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, the Cabinet and the Archbishop of Canterbury. According to palace aides, Princes William and Harry—Charles' sons with Diana—"like Camilla and recognise her importance in their father's life". The media's response has ranged from indifference to enthusiasm, and even outrage. While one headline screamed, "Boring Old Gits To Wed", another asked: "What Would Diana Say?"

BEST FRIENDS



Many moons ago, when **Lata Mangeskar** bought her first diamond ring, she engraved her initials 'L M' on it. Last month, the 75-year-old singer launched her signature collection of jewellery titled Swaranjali, in association with Adora, a diamond retailer. This is the first time Mangeskar has lent her name to a brand, with each piece engraved with her signature. "I never wanted to be known as a brand ambassador," she said at the launch. But Adora netted her. She even provided the company's designers with creative ideas for the collection.

IN PASSING



At performances of his classic *Death of a Salesman*, you could look around the audience and spot men in business suits weeping openly. **Arthur Miller**, 89, one of America's greatest playwrights, died of congestive heart failure on February 11 at his home in Connecticut.

His plays exposed the flaws in the fabric of the American dream. He once held a part of it himself—he was married to screen goddess Marilyn Monroe, for five years.



He was the model for Garry Trudeau's balding 'Uncle Duke' in the comic strip *Doonesbury*. Hard-living writer **Hunter S. Thompson**, 67, was found dead in his Colorado home of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound on February 20.

Thompson inserted himself into his accounts of America's underbelly and popularised a first-person form of journalism—'gonzo journalism'—in books such as *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, where he also played the central character Dr Thompson, a snarling, drug and alcohol-crazed observer and participant. "Fiction is based on reality unless you're a fairy-tale artist," Thompson told the Associated Press in 2003.

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HEADSTART

BRAIN GYM

ISLAND FRUITS

The four islands in the Tropicana group each produce a different type of fruit. Can you match each island name with the type of fruit produced, the island population (293, 305, 328, 402) and its location (A-D) in the chain?

- 1 The Kolahani islanders inhabit the island west of but not immediately next to Holahu island. Holahu doesn't produce bananas or pineapples and has a higher population than Wahani island.
- 2 Molaku island isn't the one with a population of 293, nor is it the one immediately next to the island with a population of 293.
- 3 The islanders who grow bananas inhabit the island east of but not immediately next to the island of Kolahani.
- 4 The island at location D isn't the one with the highest population.
- 5 Molaku island (which isn't the one at location B) is the next island due west of the one where papaya fruit is grown.
- 6 The islanders who grow coconuts don't inhabit the island immediately next to the one where bananas are grown.

TROPHY CABINET

Thomas College has a fine history of sporting achievement and a number of its major trophies are proudly displayed in the cabinet below. Can you match the position of each trophy (1-9) with the sport it was awarded for and the year it was won? Years: 1982-1994

- 1 The rowing trophy was won 10 years earlier than the football trophy and both are in opposite diagonal corners.
- 2 The tennis trophy is right of and immediately next to the trophy won in 1995, which is directly above the trophy won for athletics in 1996.
- 3 The rugby trophy is immediately next to and left of the cricket trophy, which is in the opposite diagonal corner to the trophy won 10 years later.
- 4 The hockey trophy was won four years later than the swimming trophy and both are on the same shelf but not immediately next to each other.
- 5 The gymnastics trophy (won five years earlier than the one immediately above it) is immediately next to the trophy won two years later.

SAY IT OUT LOUD

A great marriage is not when the 'perfect couple' comes together. It is when an imperfect couple learns to enjoy their differences.

—Dave Meurer, humorist

The middle years of marriage are the most crucial. In the early years, spouses want each other and in late years, they need each other.

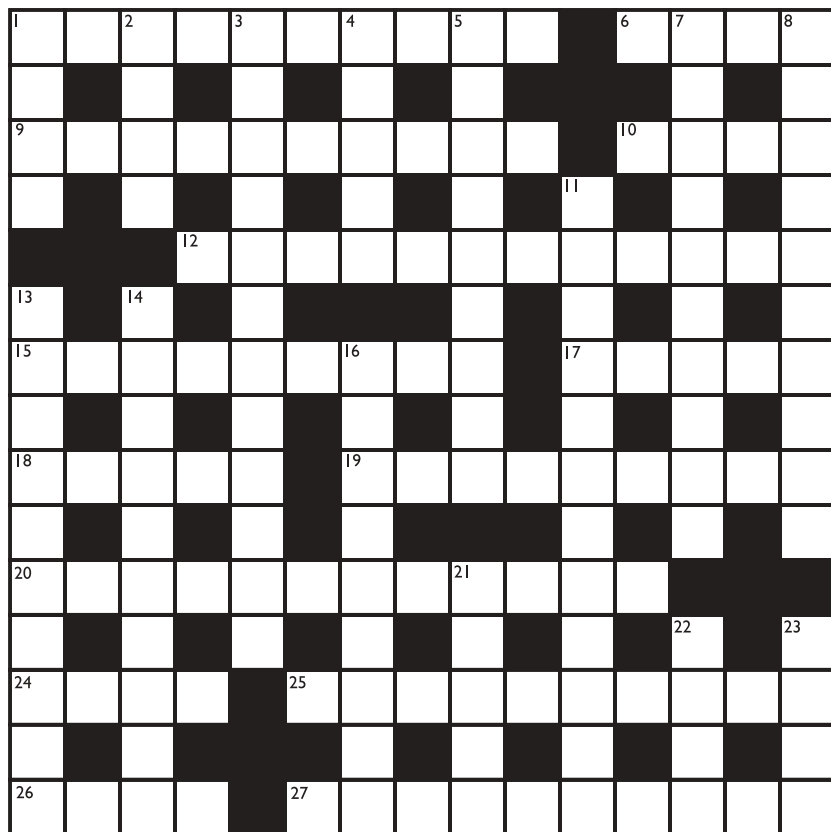
—Rebecca Tilly, journalist

Marriage is not a word; it is a sentence.

—King Vidor, American film director

There's only one way to have a happy marriage, and as soon as I learn what it is I'll get married again.

—Clint Eastwood, actor and director



EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 7

By Raju Bharatan

ACROSS

- 1 What a crucial catch missed could prove for an Indian player in this 'grudge series' (4, 6)
 6 Embrace the return of Anita as *Jai Santoshi Maa* (1, 3)
 9 All the more gripping such a development could make an India-Pakistan play-off (6, 4)
 10 No 'penny dreadful' heroine (4)
 12 Joined issue? (7, 5)
 15 The 1939 'show of magnanimity' for which Brian Donlevy came to be nominated for the 'Best

Supporting Actor' Oscar (4, 5)

- 17 Sikh character tellingly vivified by *filmindian* Baburao Patel, in 'The Editor's Mail', as: "One who works for the Communists and gets paid by the film producers" (5)
 18 Honda following here is Sourav Ganguly (1, 4)
 19 "Attention!" (3, 2, 4)
 20 Shall we just let it slide? (6, 6)
 24 Seal so expecting is seasonal (1, 3)
 25 What Paswan's would-be Assembly Army just wouldn't

let Rabri and Lalu do after 15 years (3, 2, 5)

- 26 Still to be undertaken for all that fuss (2-2)
 27 What the doc, looking up the patient, uses to feel the pulse (5-5)

DOWN

- 1 Some row did we have being kicked up by Sharmila in a bikini on that *An Evening In Paris* cover of *Filmfare*! (4)
 2 Measure of esteem? (4)
 3 Our film industry's time-honoured idea of a *baithak*? (7, 5)
 4 Photo exhibition (5)
 5 A feel of it there is to a stab in the back (4, 5)
 7 Playing cards (4, 2, 4)
 8 Not what you mean by drug addict (5-5)
 11 Elephant Boy Sabu did with *The Thief Of Bagdad* (5, 3, 4)
 13 Hardy annual as a Stan beef article (1, 9)
 14 Something Dada Burman never failed to let Kishore Kumar have, in advance, by way of a 'homely' *Phoolon ke rang se* style of song rehearsal (4-6)
 16 What a crate of Kingfisher's still is for the Windies team (5, 4)
 21 The odds are on their endeavour to win you over (5)
 22 This cover read *The Ashes Crown The Year* in the case of Jack Fingleton's 1953 bestseller (4)
 23 Raga in which 'Mughal-e-Azam' Naushad set *Pyaar kiya to darna kya* on Madhubala playing Anarkali (4)

For answers, see page 95

Raju Bharatan is the originator of the Sunday Cryptic in *The Times Of India*

NEW TIPS FOR BEGINNERS: A whole variety of clues goes into framing a cryptic puzzle. For instance, the anagram. The clue here could be: *Unresting opponent of authority* (*Unresting* being the 9 letters of *insurgent* rearranged). Another variety of clue is the palindrome—*DEIFIED*, when viewed backward or when viewed up in a Down clue, reads *DEIFIED* all the way. Next, there could be the clue (8-letter answer) reading: *Complete view of daughter sandwiched between parents*—*PANORAMA* (*PA/NORA/MA*). The 8-letter solution to the clue, *The framework of our constitution*, is *SKELETON*. At times, what looks straight could prove tricky. For example, the clue, *How we stand*—has *UNITED* for its 6-letter answer. The clue, *How we fall*, has *DIVIDED* for its 7-letter answer. The clue, *Walls have them yet they hear not*, has *EARS* for its answer. Next, *pertinacity* could split into *Pert in a city, face to face into facet of ace*. For *ANISEED*, the clue could be: *Carminative I see inside and outside*—*AN(I SEE)D*. The possibilities are endless.

HEADSTART

LAUGH LINES



A priest parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and could not find a space with a meter. So he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block ten times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES." When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note. I've circled this block for ten years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

|||

Two women met for the first time since graduating from high school. One asked the other, "You were always so organised in school. Did you manage to live a well planned life?" "Yes," replied her friend. "My first marriage was to a millionaire; my second marriage was to an actor; my third marriage was to a preacher, and now I'm married to an undertaker." Her friend asked, "What do those marriages have to do with a well planned life?" She replied, "One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go."

|||

Two silvers were discussing their husbands over tea:

"I do wish my Satish would stop biting his nails. He makes me terribly nervous."

"My Pratap used to do the same thing," the other woman replied. "But I broke him of the habit."

"How?"

"I hid his teeth."

|||

I married a younger man,
Twenty years younger than I am,
I figure it like this:
If you can't find a good man,
Then raise one!

— Unknown



MEMORISE IT

This poem is a part of **Robert Frost's** 'Mountain Interval' series and has stood the test of time. Frost believed that all poetry is the reproduction of the tones of actual speech. While writing these lines, little did he realise how often quoted these lines would be.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

HEADSTART SOLUTIONS**PAGE 93****EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 7**

ACROSS: 1 last chance; 6 A HUG (GUHA on return); 9 greasy ball; 10 Anna (Karenina); 12 Siamese twins; 15 Beau Geste (film meaning 'a show of magnanimity'); 17 Achla (Sachdev); 18 A Hero (Honda); 19 all at once; 20 French letter; 24 a boy—read seasonal as se(a son)al; seal expecting a son (a boy); 25 set up House (House standing for Assembly); 26 to-do; 27 wrist-watch

DOWN: 1 legs; 2 seer; 3 casting couch; 4 album; 5 cold steel; 7 hand in hand; 8 grass-eater; 11 steal the show; 13 a beanfeast (its 10 letters are 'Stan a beef a' rearranged, the last a being symbolised by the word article in the clue); 14 tape-record; 16 small beer (meaning 'trifling thing'); 21 touts; 22 Dust; 23 Megh

ISLAND FRUITS

Island Name	Fruit	Pop.	Location A-D
Holahu	Papaya	328	D
Kolahani	Coconuts	293	A
Molaku	Bananas	402	C
Wahani	Pineapples	305	B

TROPHY CABINET

Pos	Sport	Date
1	Football	1994
2	Rugby	1992
3	Cricket	1986
4	Swimming	1995
6	Hockey	1999
7	Athletics	1996
8	Gymnastics	1982
9	Rowing	1984



Actual Photograph

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“Sitting at my *charkha* relaxes me mentally. It helps me work on my concentration. I’m trying my best to keep this dying art alive by teaching as many people as I can, including blind children. The best part is that I have never had to purchase my clothes from outside.”
—Madhavdas Thackersay

Eighty-five-year-old Madhavdas Thackersay is a practising homeopath. As a child, he was fascinated by the movement of the charkha and coaxed his mother to teach him how to spin yarn. Now, every weekend, he teaches a batch of students between 10 and 40 years, including blind children from Happy Home Blind School in Worli. His first student was a 65-year-old blind woman in Kutch, in Gujarat, where he worked in the 1980s as a director at Khadi & Village Industries. Thackersay owns three charkha and makes sure he weaves at least one hank (reel) daily, which takes at least two hours; in a year, he spins almost 30 to 40 metres of yarn. Of his seven children, only his second son knows the art. The others, he rues, have never been interested.



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Age is in Itself
reason to celebrate



*Fruits get sweeter as they grow ripe,
wine gets tastier as it gets old,
flowers get prettier as they bloom.
See how things get more special
as they mature.*

*Isn't it reason enough to celebrate life.
Let's celebrate age!*

