

Rs 20

harmony

APRIL 2006

celebrate age

Agenda on Ageing

Harmony launches its first Monograph

Late Bloomers

The jasmine growers of Ernakulam

SUPER TROUPER

Playwright, director and actor

Habib Tanvir

WE CAN HELP

WHAT HAS THE GOVERNMENT done for you lately? It's a question *Harmony* first asked in its July 2004 cover story, "Silvers and the State", and one we plan to continue asking.

Another Budget has come and gone. There are no changes in tax except for one difference: from now, if your gross income is below the threshold of Rs 1.85 lakh, you do not need to file a return. This will save many people considerable effort. Unfortunately, the government has not offered anything new for silvers in terms of investment avenues. The much-touted recommendation of fixed deposits of five years and more with banks attracting the Section 80C benefit means little as similar options like National Savings Certificates and Public Provident Fund exist anyway.

Perhaps the most positive step taken by the Budget is the increase of old age pension for destitutes to Rs 200 per month, up from Rs 75. With the Finance Minister asking the states to pitch in with an equal share, it may be Rs 400 per month. The amount is still grossly inadequate but it is a

move in the right direction, showing that the government is making an effort.

We believe we can help. To that end, on 11 March, the Harmony Initiative launched its first monograph, *Ageing in India in the 21st Century: A Research Agenda—Priority Areas and Methodological Issues*. Authored by Dr S Siva Raju, vice-president, Research & Training, Harmony, it suggests alternative approaches to study ageing issues in India.

For too long, we have bracketed everyone over 55 as simply 'old'. We need to recognise that silvers are extremely diverse—female old, rural old, rich old, poor old—and their needs are diverse too. I hope the monograph, which we will circulate widely, spurs government and non-government agencies to look afresh at policies for silvers.

First, concerns like elder abuse need to be addressed. Fortifying family bonds can play a major role here. This was the subject of a seminar, "Quality of Life of India's Silvers: Need for Harmony among Generations", which followed the launch.



RITU NANDA

Speaking at the seminar, Dr S D Gokhale, president of Pune-based International Longevity Centre, said, "Indian society has not yet recognised the challenges of survival with dignity. The home and the family are the prime locales of neglect, abuse and violence faced by the elderly." And K R Gangadharan, managing director, Heritage Hospital, Hyderabad, spoke about the Chinese tradition of 'Filial Piety' as an example to emulate. This advocates obedience to one's parents and taking best possible care of them in old age. Now, did we really need the Chinese to tell us that?

Tina Ambani

A Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust Initiative

Harmony—Celebrate Age—April 2006 Volume 2 Issue 11

Publisher **Anthony Jesudasan** Editor **Tina Ambani** Associate Editor **Meeta Bhatti** Assistant Editor **Trina Mukherjee** Senior Writer **Arati Rajan Menon** Chief Sub-Editor **Amita Amin-Shinde** Correspondent **Teena Baruah** Trainee Writer **Ruchi Shah** Consultant Editor **Sudeep Chakravarti**

Design and Photo Editor **Ritu Nanda** Visual Coordinator **Anuradha Joshi** Production Manager **Rajeev Nambiar**

Design & Imaging **Haresh Patel**, **Anand Sutar** and **Rohidas Adavkar** Editorial Coordinators **Glenn Fernandes**, **Anita Rosario**

General Manager, Business Development **Shrenik Mehta** Senior Manager **Mahendra Ghule** Marketing Coordinator **Meghna Ghatge**

Editorial & Marketing Offices: 4th Floor, Maker Chambers IV, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. Tel: 91-22-30325423 (Editorial), 30325472 (Marketing).

Email: contact.mag@harmonyindia.org **Printed and published** by Anthony Jesudasan on behalf of Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust, 505, Dalamal House, 5th Floor, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. **Printed** at Thomson Press India Ltd, 18-35 Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad (Haryana)

Disclaimer: The material provided by *Harmony* is not a substitute for professional opinions. Readers are advised to seek appropriate advice from qualified and licensed professionals in the concerned field. © Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust. All rights reserved worldwide. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. *Harmony* does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material. www.harmonyindia.org



LINE UP

- 4** RESPONSE
- 6** ORBIT
- 12** YOUR SPACE
- 15** EXCLUSIVE:
The Shabana Azmi column
- 16** IN FOCUS:
Aini Seba gives free legal advice
to the underprivileged

SPECIAL FEATURES

- 20** LEGACY:
The Meghanis and their love
for Gujarati literature
- 24** COVER STORY:
Habib Tanvir

Cover picture of
Habib Tanvir by
Shilbhadra Datta

LOOK FOR

ONE
-on-
ONE
Personal Classifieds
FREE OFFER

BODY & SOUL

- 28** FOOD WISE:
Mouth watering recipes from
Dr Pushpesh Pant
- 30** SHOWING THE WAY:
Major H P S Ahluwalia's Indian
Spinal Injuries Centre
- 32** GET WELL SOON:
The problems women face
after 50
- 36** COLUMN: Yoga Rx
- 38** HEALTH BYTES
- 40** THE LAST WORD:
Sister Ayya Khema

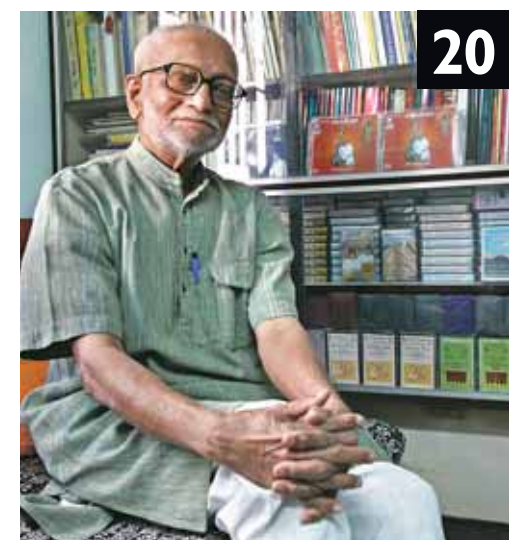
For subscription assistance contact: HarmonyCare, Living Media India Limited,
13th Floor, Videocon Towers, E-1, Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi-110055.
Phones: **New Delhi:** 011-51529556, 51020913 **Fax:** 23684841; **Kolkata:** 033-22821922,
22827726, **Fax:** 22825398, 22827254; **Bangalore:** 080-2212448, 2290562, 2218343
Fax: 2218335; **Mumbai:** 022-24444423/4/5/6 **Fax:** 24444358; **Chennai:** 044-28478525-44
Fax: 28472178; **Email:** harmony@intoday.com



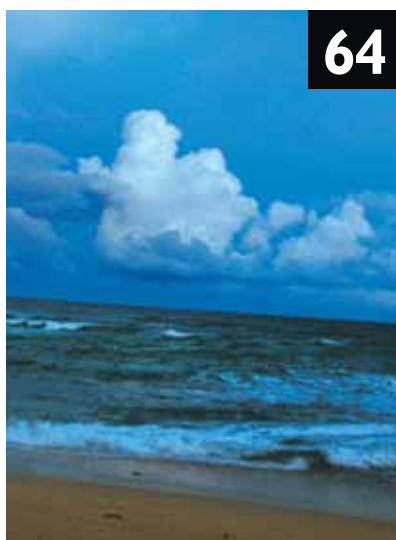
55



16



20



64

FIRST AID

- 42** TECHNOLOGY:
Purohiths enter the world of e-books and online libraries
- 44** LEGALEASE:
Medical negligence, Part II
- 46** MONEY:
The highs and lows of Budget 2006
- 52** HARMONY IMPACT:
Digital hearing aids change Vasant Newaskar's life
- 55** SECOND CAREERS:
Late bloomers
- 60** MONOGRAPH LAUNCH

ETCETERA

- 64** DESTINATION:
The magic of Andaman & Nicobar
- 68** BOOKSHELF
- 71** AT LARGE: Tom Alter
- 72** COLUMN: Amita Malik
- 75** H PEOPLE
- 77** HEADSTART
- 82** SPEAK

column one

As always, it's a wholesome issue this month. There are inspiring people stories; national and international news; and financial, legal and health advice. The highlight, however, is the report on the first monograph from *Harmony* and the seminar on quality of life of silvers. An overview of ageing-related issues in India in 21st century, it's a point-based agenda on areas that need to be researched. The report will be sent out to researchers, policy makers, students and teachers for feedback. The aim: to garner support for the cause of India's silvers because we care and we can help.

This holds true at all levels—from programmes for silvers, which will now be a regular *Harmony* feature, to what we offer through the magazine. In our Get Well section ("Ladies, Listen Up"), Dr Duru Shah, medical director, Gynaec World, a multi-speciality clinic for women in Mumbai, deals with problems faced by 50 plus women, and suggests medical and dietary solutions for them. We hope it will help make the right choices.

One such *Harmony* effort that helped a reader pick his option was the test drive section in the October 2005 issue, a special on products and services for seniors. Vasant Newaskar, 68, was invited to try digital hearing aids—he used a behind-the-ear aid till then. He liked the digital hearing aid so much that he invested a recently matured fixed deposit to buy it. His story is narrated in "Sound Decision".

Shabana Azmi is back with her power-speak. She says silver air passengers must ask for special services to meet their unique needs. Read on for more.

—Meeta Bhatti



I am 80 years old and my wife Mandakini is 73. We celebrated our golden wedding anniversary on 14 May 2002 at the same place we got married in 1952—in our native village in Sangli district. It was a very memorable occasion. Along with my son Avinash and two daughters Anjali and Aruna, many of our close relatives also participated in our celebration. On our last wedding anniversary, Avinash gifted us a subscription to *Harmony*. Since then we eagerly await the magazine's arrival every month.

But the reason why I am writing this letter is to tell you about the good deed done by my dear friend Y Samant who turned 95 on 20 February 2006. Samant stays with his son in the F-wing of my society. Last year, he came to me and said that after his death he would like his body to be donated to a medical college.

When I asked him if he had told his son and daughter, he said he had but they did not get the form for him. I then arranged for the form from J J Medical College, Mumbai, got him to fill it properly and sign it. He then got the No Objection Certificate from his children and even his son-in-law. With all formalities completed, I sent the form to the right address. Within a week, Samant received a card from the Dean's office giving instructions on how his relatives should act after his death. Samant is old but maintains good health. He still walks around in the nearby busy street without the help of a walking stick. He does not wear spectacles and can still read a newspaper. I hope Samant's service to society is worth it.

S M GARDE

Mumbai

The letter of the month wins a gift from Vimal

I consider it my good fortune that I was introduced to *Harmony* by my aunt-in-law. I felt it was my own magazine. Five years ago, my daughter got married and my son shifted to Mumbai to study engineering. Then, suddenly, I lost my mother-in-law. Their absence left a big void in my life. At the time, I was 50 years old and like any Indian housewife had done nothing but look after the household. I decided not to waste time over tears and reminisce the bygone years spent within the four walls of my house. Self introspection led me to the conclusion that I should bring about a change but within the parameters of what I have done till now. I learnt how to make chocolate and then started making and selling them

professionally. I also bake eggless cakes. Luck has favoured me so far. I hold an annual chocolate exhibition, which was a new idea in Vadodara.

I now live life with renewed energy and confidence. Eight months ago, some of us got together to start a club named Fifty Plus. Besides engaging in kitty parties and games, we kept a fixed amount for donation. Recently, we donated Rs 10,000 to a charity. Of course, this is nothing compared to what we read in *Harmony* about people taking up challenges in life. Through *Harmony*, I would like to tell all the women that years of household work kill the real person in you. Go for life!

NILIMA MEHTA

Vadodara

Your March 2006 cover story 'Forever Young' was fascinating. It is wonderful to know so much progress has been made in the field of anti-ageing and it is now possible to live longer without wrinkles. Plenty of anti-ageing products are available to keep one looking and feeling young but none of them come close to leading an active, disciplined life, eating well and avoiding excessive consumption of alcohol. It is important to look good but it is also important to feel good. In my opinion, Botox and plastic surgery should be avoided as they improve looks temporarily and have plenty of side-effects. It is more prudent to age naturally and gracefully.

RANJANA MANCHANDA

Mumbai

My family subscribes to *Harmony* magazine, which I feel, is not only informative but also impressive. Apart from back-dated issues, I have already read the February 2006 issue. It's interesting to read views expressed by different writers. I am 81 years old and live in Kanpur. I wish the team of *Harmony* could organise a regular meeting of silvers in my city. I started my own business of an Optical Retail Shop in 1959. But now my sons and nephew look after my business. As I have free time on hand, I wish there was some way to get in touch with other senior citizens in my city.

RAM NATH BHARGAVA

Kanpur

You can start your own senior citizens club. Start off with just the neighbourhood seniors and gradually increase the number of members by word of mouth. All the best!

—Editors

I had a chance to read your magazine at Reliance Centre and am highly impressed with the concept. The magazine is addressed to senior citizens, discarded as retired and spent force. On the contrary, silvers are

highly experienced and full of life. In a couple of years, I too will join the 55+ club. Last year, I underwent angioplasty but that hasn't dampened my zest for life.

BRIJ MOHAN SHARMA

Mumbai

It was heartening to read 'The Power Of Puppetry' by Anjana Basu (March 2006). The onslaught of television has led to untimely deaths of many forms of art—puppetry is one of them. At one time, puppet shows were the prime source of entertainment for children both in rural and urban areas. Today, *nautanki*, *Ramaleela* or puppet show are fast becoming things of history. I think it should be a cause for worry. Perhaps, puppeteer Suresh Dutta's lamentation has some meaning that there are no takers of this simplistic and colourful form of leisure. Let's not forget that puppet shows can be used to ward off many social ills in both villages and cities. One hopes that government will come to the rescue of the likes of Dutta and prevent this art from fading into oblivion.

ARVIND K PANDEY

Allahabad

CONTRIBUTORS



Tom Alter, 56, is a familiar face in Hindi and regional films as well as theatre. A trained actor from Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, Alter has been an enthusiastic triathlete (swimming-running-cycling) and still plays cricket matches for a Mumbai-based club. He is also a sports journalist, commentator and author of several books like *Rerun at Rialto*, a mystery novel, and *The Longest Race*, based on the life of a young marathon runner. Son of American missionary parents, Tom speaks fluent Hindi and effortlessly reads the Urdu script. He lives in Mumbai with wife Carol, a teacher. He has two children James and Afshaan, who live in the US.

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'

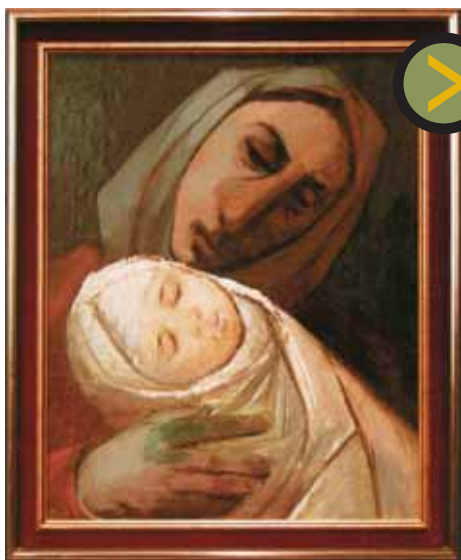
Mail us at 4th Floor, Maker Chambers IV, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. Or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org

ANALYSE THIS



THE LOOK OF LOVE

The best anti-ageing cocktail: a combination of love and money. According to a study in the March issue of journal *Age and Ageing* by the researchers of the University of Southern Denmark, **a happy family life and financial security are the best ways to keep the years at bay.** A group of nurses were asked to guess the ages of 1,826 identical and non-identical twins, all in their 70s, from photographs. It was found that a happy marriage could make a woman look two years younger by the time she reaches middle age. In turn, men could look a year younger. They also found that men and women who are financially well-heeled look up to four years younger. "Drinking, smoking, over-exposure to the sun, depression and a skinny body make people look older," said Professor Kaare Christensen, who headed the team.



MOM'S THE WORD

Late motherhood could make you live longer. Research conducted at Manchester University, UK, suggests that **later pregnancy might mean a later menopause and delayed onset of age-related diseases**. "People today are doing the right thing by having children much later," Dr Dawn Skelton, who headed the research team, said in an interview to the *BBC*. "After 30, there is a dramatic reduction of the oestrogen hormone in women. By leaving it longer before having our first child, we are giving ourselves a big burst of oestrogen, which helps in many ways, including muscle, bone and nervous function. Also, testosterone levels drop in men and women as they grow older. But sex produces more testosterone, which may help keep our hearts in good shape." Skelton's studies found that a woman who had her last child at the age of 35 would reduce her risk of death in each subsequent year by 28 per cent compared to a woman who gave birth for the last time at a younger age. However, the findings are controversial as being older carries documented health risks for mother and baby, primarily the risk of chromosome problems associated with Down's syndrome.

YOUR MONEY

NEWS FOR NRIs

The Centre has announced that **pensioners from the Armed Forces who have become naturalised citizens of other countries can continue to avail their full entitlements** through the pension paying office (PPO). The pensioner just has to convey his change of nationality to the PPO as well as the Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pensions), Allahabad.



PENSION RELIEF

The West Bengal government has announced that state government employees, teachers and non-teaching employees of non-government educational institutions, and employees of public undertakings, local bodies, statutory authorities and corporations will be provided with one instalment of dearness allowance, equivalent to 2 per cent of basic pay. The order came into effect on 1 March 2006. Along with the release of the dearness allowance, there will be a corresponding **increase in relief on pension of state government pensioners**. This will benefit 4,00,000 pensioners in the state. We hope to see other states emulate this move.

WORDAGE

SKIers: Those who 'Spend the Kids' Inheritance'. This is a **breed of active older people who no longer feel the need to leave all their worldly goods to their children**. They indulge in exotic holidays and luxuries for themselves, with some even selling their homes to free up more cash.

NEWSWORTHY

HOME COMING

On 9 March, LICHL Care Homes, a subsidiary of LIC Housing Finance, unveiled its first 'Assisted Living Community Centre' with 100 residential units for senior citizens, in Bangalore. "This is a care home where people over 50 purchase tenancy, which can be transferred to another aged relative in case of death," S K Mitter, CEO of LICHL, said at the launch. "If there are no aged relatives, the company will pay and take back the home." There are three types of units in the Bangalore facility: 800 sq ft (Rs 9.5 lakh), 600 sq ft (Rs 8 lakh) and 400 sq ft (Rs 6 lakh). Residents have access to services like food, laundry, health-care and housekeeping. The company now plans to build similar centres in Orissa, West Bengal and Kerala—talks are underway with state governments to acquire land.



RISING STOCK

On 1 March, Ludhiana Stock Exchange began a six-month **course on capital marketing**—and there were 12 silvers among the 36 people who enrolled. Among them was Uma Kaushal, a 58 year-old homemaker. "For years, I have been hearing my husband and son talk of investments," she told *The Indian Express*.

"I too wanted to learn something to gain knowledge." Another 'student' anxious to learn more about the stock market is Jagmohan Singh, a 59 year-old farmer. "I have been farming in

Uttar Pradesh for more than 30 years," he told the newspaper. "Now, I have settled in Ludhiana and have given my land on contract. My family had purchased some shares when I was busy farming. I want to make the best use of them and thus decided

to take this course. I can even make it a business venture in future."



For his part, H S Sidhu, executive director of the Ludhiana Stock Exchange (*see photo*), is thrilled with the response, especially from the seniors, and plans more such courses in future. To know more, call 0161-412316, 412317, 407304, 407439.

COFFEE, AND CARE

To ensure that more silvers join its Senior Citizens' Cell, Delhi Police have enlisted the help of HelpAge India and Café Coffee Day—seniors will now be able to register themselves at all the coffee-shop chain's outlets in the capital. "We have only 5,000 people registered so far with the Senior Citizens' Cell," says Additional Commissioner Police (Crime) Muktesh Chander. "With the support of HelpAge India and Café Coffee Day, we wish to reach out and register many more." Police constables will visit those registered every fortnight to ensure their safety. Silvers who can't make it to their local police station or a Café Coffee Day outlet to register can call the Senior Citizens' Security Cell on (011) 23490233 or email scsc_dp@yahoo.com.

REVIEW



GROUND REALITY

Like *Baghban* (starring Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini), *Umar* (see 'Orbit', December 2005), by Karan Razdan, explores how families mistreat their parents. Satish Kaushik, Kadar Khan and Prem Chopra (see photo) are retired men living in London. Social-security dependent Khan lives alone and Kaushik and Chopra live with their sons who have agreed to let them stay so they can help with housework. Then, the trio meets orphan Jimmy Shergill, and start thinking of him as their son. Shergill falls in love with a millionaire's daughter and a predictable twist is framed in the club owner's murder for which he is implicated. Khan, Kaushik and Chopra celebrate being fugitives with Shergill. The three men deliver some touching performances, the Manna Dey and Jagjit Singh numbers lend a nostalgic touch and the director's earnest effort to focus on elder abuse is laudable. But trying to combine it with a *masala* thriller is ultimately the undoing of the film. Still, this effort is a refreshing change.

TRENDS

RETIRE, AT 85

By 2050, the retirement age in the West could well be 85.

Researchers from Stanford University in California believe that new drugs capable of slowing the ageing process (see "Forever Young" in the March 2006 issue of *Harmony*) will start becoming available in 2010, increasing lifespan by 20 years. "If effective, these advances have the potential to trigger a serious rethink of retirement ages," Professor Shripad Tuljapurkar of Stanford told *The Guardian*. "For example, in Britain today there are 1.5 pensioners for every five workers; by 2050, the figure could rise to four pensioners for every five workers. If that happens, people will have to work to the age of 85."



ANOREXIA ALERT

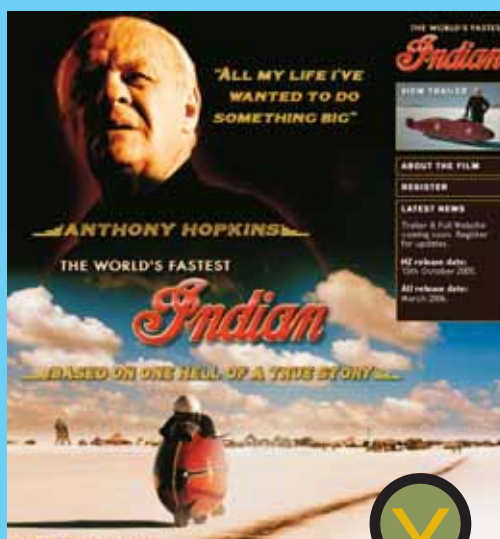
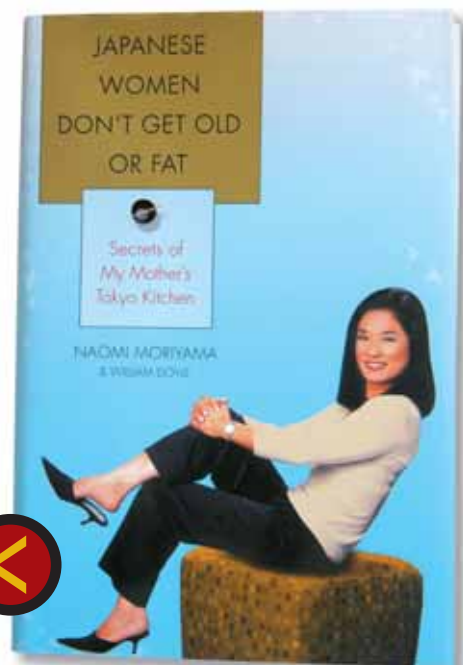
If you thought anorexia and bulimia—eating disorders characterised by skipping meals, bingeing, purging and losing too much weight—were the preserve of teenagers, think again. "There is a growing trend of older women with diet disorders in the US," says Beth Mayer of the Massachusetts Eating Disorders Association in *The New York Times*. "These days, even women hitting menopause are dying to be thin. Literally." For many, the disorder begins when they're in their teens and stays with them as they get older. But for others, reaching menopause may cause an eating disorder to appear as they get increasingly concerned about their changing body. "And older women are reluctant to enter therapy because they are worried they'll be stuck in a group of teenagers," adds Mayer. To counter this, the association has therapy groups for people in the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s. "There's no magic cure," she says. "But acknowledging that you need help is the first step." According to statistics, about 1,000,000 women suffer from anorexia and/or bulimia in the US and the death rate for eating disorders is approximately 20 per cent.



MEDIA WATCH

SVELTE SECRETS

In 2004, Frenchwoman Mireille Guiliano's cookbook, *French Women Don't Get Fat: The Secret of Eating for Pleasure*, made waves across Europe and the US. But in late 2005, the kitchen got even hotter with the release of *Japanese Women Don't Get Old or Fat: Recipes from My Mother's Tokyo Kitchen* (Delecorte Press; about Rs 800). The author, 45 year-old Naomi Moriyama doesn't just promise slimness, but longevity too. And backing her claims is the fact that Japanese women have the lowest obesity rate in the industrialised world—just 3 per cent, compared to 11 per cent in France (aha!) and 34 per cent in the US—and the world's highest life expectancy, at 85 years. Moriyama, who now lives in New York with her husband (and co-author) William Doyle, credits this to home-style Japanese cooking. "Japanese women buy more fish, rice, soy and fresh vegetables and smaller amounts of less healthy foods like red meat and processed foods," she writes. "They also believe in the saying, *Hara hachi bunme*, which means 'eat until you are 80 per cent full'." The meat of the book: exotic recipes conjured up from fish, noodles, tofu, different types of rice, and seasonings such as rice vinegar, miso and soy sauce.



HOOKED ON SPEED

Here's a film that underlines the fact that people past 60 can dare to dream. In *The World's Fastest Indian*, written and directed by Roger Donaldson, Academy Award-winning actor Anthony Hopkins plays New Zealander Bert Munro, who achieves his lifelong ambition of winning the legendary bike race held at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah, in the US. In the film, the 62 year-old has a series of whacky adventures and plenty of sex, before he makes the 200 mph (about 322 km per hour) run that makes him the speed king of Bonneville. No word yet on whether the movie will be released in India.

LUST FOR LIFE

Nostalgia is a dirty word to Michael Shae. "If you spend time wandering down memory lane in front of embers of a fire then you are going to wither away," he tells *The Scotsman*. "There are so many exciting things you could be doing instead." A former diplomat and press secretary to the Queen, the Edinburgh-based 68 year-old is the author of a new self-help book for active pensioners, *The Freedom Years: Tactical Tips for the Trailblazer Generation* (Capstone, about Rs 1,000). The book is full of tips (on finance, second careers, travel, lifestyle and health) that help you max your life after 60. Shae believes in practicing what he preaches—he visits the gym twice a week, enjoys holidays with his wife Mona and their friends. "It is about lust for life," is his take. "Without it, there is nothing."

SHOPPING LIST

GRAB IT

Just out of a shower, your hands are damp and the damn doorknob just won't turn...sounds familiar?



Try the '**Door Knob Gripper**' from Pedder Johnson. This rubber ring fits easily over any door knob (or faucet) and is oh-so-easy to turn.

The price: Rs 50 (plus 12.5 per cent VAT).

Call 022-25228857/59 or email fordham@vsnl.in to order.

TEA TREATS

Tea lovers rejoice. The Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, has developed a whole range of '**tea**' treats, including tea toffees, tea ice-creams, tea biscuits, and even tea wine. The best part: they are good for you. "Tea has great medicinal value," P S Ahuja, director of the institute, told *Harmony*. "The anti-oxidants found in it act as anti-ageing agents and is recommended for seniors." The institute will soon market these products in collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh Cooperative Marketing Federation. The basic rate of tea wine called Kargil Sepoy minus the marketing and packaging cost is approximately Rs 160 for 750 ml.

H RECOMMENDS

ACTION PLAN FOR APRIL

Try taekwondo. The martial art, which is a combination of cardiovascular exercises and muscle training, helps flexibility, strengthens the heart and releases stress. It can also help you defend yourself. In Seoul, Korea, a group of 23 grandmothers, all above the age of 70, practice together at a gymnasium in suburban Incheon. They call themselves the Korea Grandma Taekwondo Federation. Ji Bok-hyun, 74, a black-belt holder, is the leader of the group. "I really like smashing the slabs," she says. "It releases all the stress I get from home."



Leave a culinary legacy. Put your recipes down on paper; you never know where it might lead. The late Meenakshi Ammal made a handwritten booklet in Tamil with all her recipes for her son and daughter-in-law back in 1950. The booklet was a hit with them, and their friends, and her son persuaded her to get it published. The first edition of *Samaithu Par* (Cook and See) came out in September 1951. Meenakshi Ammal passed away in 1962 but her legacy lives on. In 2005, the 35th edition of the book was published in Tamil, and the 14th in English—it continues to sell about 50,000 copies a year.



Picnic, anyone? It's the perfect time of year for an afternoon outing with friends. Last month, senior citizens from the Home for the Aged in Musheerabad in Hyderabad dusted off their goggles and hats, and went picnicking to Gandipet Lake, 20 km from the city. The picnic was organised by the city's police department.



Welcome to the section where you can share your thoughts and experiences on anything under the sun. Write in with full contact details, and make this space your own!

TOUCHING LIVES



Members of the Gangadevi Club in Chandigarh oil and comb each other's hair

Why should clubs or associations for senior citizens be associated with the urban middle class? Four years ago, I asked myself this question after I met Gangadevi, a 75 year-old resident of Panchkula slum in Chandigarh.

I had recently retired as senior librarian from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and started working with a local NGO called Youth Technical Training Society (YTTS) to educate handicapped children from Panchkula slum. Here, I met Gangadevi for the first time. She often came and sat around, not because she was keen on listening to what I had to say but because she had no home to go to. At the time, a *rehri* (pull cart) was her home. Soon, I learnt that her sons, who also lived in the same slum, were poor daily wagers who could not support or accommodate her in their hut. She slept on an old cot outside their hut, but that too broke, forcing her to sleep on the cart. I offered to repair her cot, a proposition she happily and gratefully accepted.

There were many senior citizens like Gangadevi in the slum. I resolved to do something for them, perhaps start a club. To know them better, I gathered 35 such women and explained to them the concept of a club—a place where they could enjoy an 'hour of dignity'. With support from YTTS,

under the project called Atmavishwas, we started the 'Gangadevi Club'. On 11 November 2004, we had our first official meeting with my friend Bobby Sodhi, 65, as vice chairperson, retired IAS officer P H Vaishnav, 69, as chairperson and Col Ravi Bedi, 51, as administrative director.

On the first day, we gave bottles of hair oil and combs to members. The idea was to draw their attention towards personal care. We asked them to oil and comb their hair right there. They did, and the change was magical. Dignity shone through. We got responses like, "I do not remember when I last put oil in my hair" and "nobody from my family has ever cared to oil or comb my hair". We also provided them with winter clothing like a pair of socks, *chappal* and shawls.

Since November 2004, we meet twice a month, on the 11th and the last day of the month, at 11.00 am for an hour. We start by serving tea and biscuits, followed by a different activity each time. I recall the time when we arranged for a drawing class and most of the women held crayons for the first time. Irrespective of the activity, everyone cherishes the time spent together, especially during festivals. Diwali is celebrated with sweets and fruits. It's a cosmopolitan group, and each member pitches in by singing religious songs during their festivals. We celebrated last Christmas with two women singing carols in Hindi.

Six months ago, we decided to collect a rupee from every member each month. I help in rounding off the amount to Rs 50 and we give it to a member who needs it the most. The amount may seem petty but it is of great value to them.

Today, the club has 40 members. We run on charity and our committee members have to sometimes struggle to get funds. In December 2005, Lion's Club (women's division) gave us 40 saris and 40 quilts. On another occasion, at an eye camp last year, we donated 23 pairs of spectacles. And when one of our members, Kamla, was diagnosed as

suffering from cataract, committee members pooled in the required sum for her surgery. We plan to issue senior citizens' identity cards to members. Rehabilitation and pension schemes are also on the cards. Another project is to have a similar club for men—recently, some neighbourhood men approached us asking to join the club.

At 64, I know how difficult it is to deal with old age, especially if you have no family support. In November 2005, Gangadevi passed away. We gave her family monetary support to perform her last rites with dignity.

—Dr Veena Wig
Chandigarh

A NEW BEGINNING



Pushpa with her grandsons, Harsh and Prakul

In another six months, I will retire from my upper division clerical job at the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune. I live alone. My day starts with Carnatic music and ends with evening walks. At 68, I enjoy independence and mind space. After retirement, I plan to utilise my time counselling cancer patients.

I never intended to work but I am happy that I did. In 1968, I married Dr H Subramonian, a surgeon in the Army Medical Corps. He was a captain then. I settled into the role of a homemaker as my husband continued to pursue his work. He was a workaholic, and remained so till the very end. Three years after our marriage, in 1971, he was called in to assist during the Indo-Pak war. I was alone in Pune with

my daughter Raji, who had just turned one. Fear was a constant companion but I had accepted it as way of life in the Armed Forces.

My husband's work kept him busy even after he returned from the war. When he was not on tours to attend surgeons' conferences, he was away attending to an emergency. He was also studying simultaneously. Managing the home rested entirely on my shoulders. Years rolled by and he became a lieutenant colonel. In 1982, he was selected for a two-year study leave to the UK to specialise in microsurgery (a super specialisation in plastic surgery). Raji was 10 and our second daughter Hamsa was seven years old. All three of us accompanied my husband to the UK. To support the family better, I took up my first job as an assistant at a supermarket. Between his studies and my work, we travelled through Europe. It was a wonderful period of my life.

But the happy days didn't last. Just when we were to return home, my husband was diagnosed with stomach cancer. The news shattered our world. We somehow managed to return to India and my husband passed away a few months later in 1984 at the age of 42. Those were tough days. I was asked to vacate the Army quarters. But our friends came to my help and I relocated to a rented flat. With two teenage daughters to care for, I managed to get a job at AFMC. Soon, a routine set in and bringing up two daughters took up most of my time and energy.

Now, 21 years later, my daughters are well settled. Raji got married and settled in Pune, close to where I live, and has an eight-year-old son, Harsh. Hamsa married two years ago. She lives in Bangalore with her seven month-old son, Prakul. My daughters call me everyday and Raji comes to visit once a week. I feel delighted when Raji asks me to teach Harsh small *shloka*. My family has always enjoyed my cooking and Harsh relishes my *dosa*.

Though I miss my husband a lot, I feel I am a self-sufficient woman today. I feel I have succeeded in sustaining my commitments to the family. After all, sincere efforts shine through life's challenges.

—Pushpa Subramonian
Pune

We reserve the right to select articles, which will be edited to suit space and editorial considerations. Harmony takes no responsibility for advice offered in this column. **For more Your Space letters, log on to www.harmonyindia.org**

The first day at school.

The first time you rode the bicycle.

The first crush you had at thirteen.

The first drama you got a part in.

The first day at college.

The first date you went on.

The first kiss.

The first time you proposed.

The first job interview.

The first board meeting you addressed.

The first day after retirement.

Butterflies never retire.

The first click of the mouse. www.harmonyindia.org

Trouble in the air

IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF HARMONY, IN THE letters section, a reader suffering from diabetes expressed her concern over the kind of food and beverages domestic airlines serve—creamy bread, sweets and sweetened juices. I thought about my mother, who in the past has voiced similar concerns about eating on a flight. And I have heard several other senior friends and acquaintances, all of them diabetics, complain about it, and rightfully so. Do airlines charge them less for not being able to cater to their special needs? No. And are they doing anything about it? No. So why aren't we bringing the roof down?

I believe it's our legal right to ask for special food, and even aisle chairs and 'ambulifts'. Aisle chairs are smaller wheelchairs to fit the aisle of an airplane, and ambulifts are platforms designed to accommodate a wheelchair that can be elevated by the press of a button. While aisle chairs are being used at most airports, there has been no initiative to install ambulifts as specified in the 1998 directive of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People.

Thankfully, now there's an opportunity to ask for these facilities. The Air Passengers' Association of India has initiated the exercise of drafting guidelines to provide air passengers legal rights. The draft is with experts for their feedback. Once it's ready, it will be tabled in Parliament.

This move has come at the right time. All of us have heard stories about substandard services, including ones where low-cost airlines don't allot seat numbers, forcing senior citizens, women and children to rush for their seats like in a passenger train, causing extreme inconvenience. Some airlines

even demand extra payment for providing wheelchairs to senior citizens and the disabled. There are others who offer escorts for passengers with restricted mobility but often when it comes to helping them at the airport, they are short-staffed or the wheelchairs are not well-oiled.

And then there are cases of being 'bumped'—left behind—when a flight is overbooked. This doesn't compare to delays owing to extraordinary circumstances like bad weather and last-minute safety checks. Every bumped passenger can claim his share of compensation but I feel compensation for

a senior passenger should be higher as inconvenience involved is much higher because of age. And while low-cost airlines across the world criticise the compensation regimes in their countries, arguing that the payout is worth more than the ticket, there isn't a compensation regime in India. So there's no one to turn to after filing a complaint.



RAM BHERWANI

The Air Passengers' Association of India is drafting guidelines for your rights. Write to them now!

Airlines in India must bear in mind that it is not enough to offer discounts and special packages to attract senior citizens. They have to understand that seniors have unique needs and these needs must be met if they are to be charged as much as young passengers. The boom in air travel must also be accompanied by proper protection of air passenger rights, including

those of senior citizens.

The Air Passengers' Association of India receives complaints every day and is fighting for your rights. But nothing is yours unless you demand it. Don't you think you should give the movement an impetus? Send in your letters and complaints to the association. You have nothing to lose—and flying returns to gain. ■

Shabana Azmi, 55, is an actor, activist and former Rajya Sabha MP

Pro bono

Retired judges in Kolkata come together to give free legal advice, reports **Ritusmita Biswas**

The dictionary defines *pro bono* as working for the good of the public, rather than for profit or income. This concept drives Aini Seba, which means legal service in Bengali, an organisation formed by retired judges in Kolkata to provide free legal advice to the poor.

The Aini Seba office, situated in the Salt Lake locality of Kolkata, operates from a single room in an old bungalow that belongs to Bharat Sevashram Sangha, religious guru Swami Pranabandana's organisation. Every alternate Sunday, from 3 pm to 6 pm, Room BD-205, with white-washed walls, a couple of wall-mounted photo frames and Spartan furniture—two benches, two dissimilar tables, plastic chairs and a cupboard—comes alive with the voices of the judges counselling and advising petitioners on their cases. Divorces, property disputes, physical and mental harassment, you name a problem, and they help.

Generally, Aini Seba's constituency is for the poor—people whose annual income is below Rs 7,000, deprived women, scheduled castes and tribes, and children of prostitutes and marginalised labourers. "We have worked in positions where

we have seen people getting misled and harassed," says Kamalendu Ganguly, 65-plus, who retired as registrar general of Kolkata High Court and now devotes his time to Aini Seba. "So we decided to do something fruitful."

This is how it works. A bench comprising three retired judges, all volunteers at Aini Seba, meticulously question the petitioners and check their documents. This is done to eliminate false claims and help the underprivileged. Then, the individuals are given legal advice. Sometimes, the judges also refer cases to the Legal Service Authority (LSA), a body constituted by the Central Government under the National



SHILBHADRA DATTA

only if we feel they are genuine." On an average, the members of Aini Seba offer advice on around 10 to 15 cases per month.

Aini Seba thoroughly checks and quizzes petitioners to eliminate false claims

Legal Services Authority (NALSA), also called the Central Authority. LSA is empowered to conduct Lok Adalats to settle cases amicably.

"LSA often provides petitioners with lawyers who fight the case free of cost," says Ganguly. "However, we refer cases to them

The idea of Aini Seba took shape in the early 1990s during a casual chat between Ranabir Mahapatra, a retired district judge, and his fellow members of the Retired Judges' Association West Bengal (RJAWB). They realised that they were constantly giving free advice anyway to people they knew or those referred to them



Members of Aini Seba, an organisation of retired judges, in front of their office in Salt Lake, Kolkata

by acquaintances. So why not free advice to those who need it the most? However, working out the logistics took time—especially finding space to open their free legal cell.

Their problem was solved years later, in 2002, when Bharat Sevashram Sangha offered them the use of its bungalow in Salt Lake. They didn't lose much time after that and the same year, Aini Seba was formally inaugurated on 29 September. "No one single-handedly formed this organisation," says Mahapatra. "We all wanted to do something for the welfare of people and it is our joint effort."

At present, Aini Seba has over 100 members. Except Kuhu Seal, who looks after the office and

informs Banerjee. All the members come here regularly to do their bit of voluntary work.

All members come on a regular basis to do their bit of voluntary work

administrative work, all the other members are retired judges from across West Bengal. "We have judges from the High Court and even from far off districts like Malda, which is about 350 km north of Kolkata," says Ganguly. "Our current chairman Dhruva Narayan Banerjee, who succeeded Mahapatra, is from Kolkata,"

They function on rotation basis so everyone knows when is their next visit scheduled for.

In the past four years, Aini Seba's popularity has grown manifold, with people learning about the organisation through word of mouth. "Many of those who come to us are elderly," says



Ujjala Sengupta, the 80 year-old widow of a civil court judge, attends the counselling session at Aini Seba; (left) Sengupta with her brother



Ganguly. "They come to us not only because they are economically weak but also because they probably identify with us as we are seniors." He narrates the case of an elderly woman who went to court against her son, claiming

harassment following the death of her husband. But the case dragged on for over two years. Utterly helpless, she turned to Aini Seba for advice. "We not only offered her free advice but also helped her with all our resources and recommended her to the LSA," says Ganguly.

Aini Seba doesn't just serve the elderly. Lata Das (*name changed*), a domestic help in her thirties, was thrown out of her home by her in-laws after her husband's death. "Legal advice is so expensive," she says. "When I heard that Aini Seba would help me for free, I rushed to meet them. I honestly didn't expect this kind of time and attention. For me, this is a blessing."

Occasionally, the members of Aini Seba also advise the affluent. "Money is not the

factor," says an elderly resident of Salt Lake, requesting anonymity. "I came here for advice on a property-related issue. The members have all worked in a top-notch judicial setup and are sure to give you sound advice."

Now, Aini Seba plans to increase its reach by opening one more branch, but the place is yet to be decided. The need for another branch stems from the fact that many petitioners come from far-off districts like Midnapur, Bankura, Durgapur, Jalpaiguri and Murshidabad. "Besides, the Salt Lake area is quite far from the main city," explains Mahapatra. "A place in South or Central Kolkata would be more easily accessible." The problem: finding room. He adds, "We are hoping some charitable organisation will come forward to help." Any takers? ■

Thanks to CorpBank's SSI Loan, my business is no longer an SSI.



Presenting CorpBank Loans for Small Scale Industries

Set up or expand your business unit with the scheme best suited to you. And realize your big vision.

- Term loan for setting up of projects.
- Term loan for capacity expansion.
- Working Capital facilities.
- Export/Import finance.
- Guarantees/Letter of Credit facilities.
- Finance for technology upgradation.
- Composite loan up to Rs. 100 lakh.

For details contact the nearest branch of Corporation Bank.

Corporate Office: Mangaladevi Temple Road,
Mangalore - 575 001.
Tel: 0824-2426416-20. Fax: 0824-2444617.

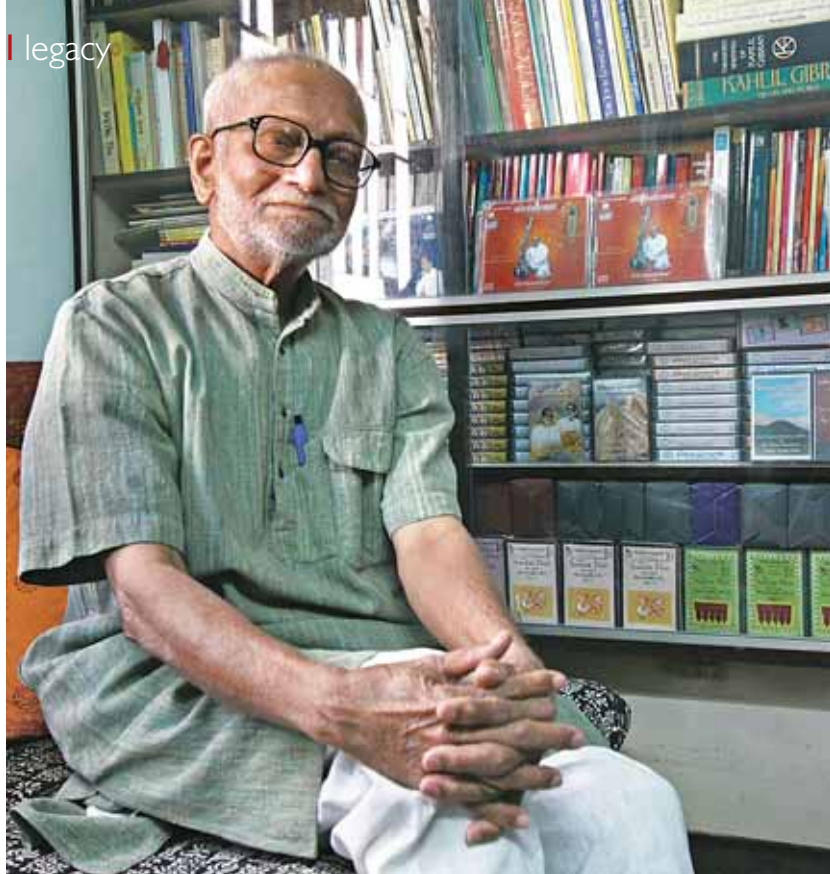


Conditions apply

कार्पोरेशन बैंक

Corporation Bank

A Premier Government of India Enterprise



SAMIR PATHAK



Bestsellers

Editor, translator and publisher Mahendra Meghani's dream of getting Gujaratis hooked to books is kept alive by his son Gopal, writes **Amita Amin-Shinde**

Everyday at 10 am sharp, Gopal Meghani, 52, opens up his 'house of wealth'. A wealth that grows, he says, with sharing. Lok Milap Trust bookstore at Bhavnagar's Sardar Nagar area welcomes book-lovers to soak in the opulence of words.

Gopal's father Mahendra Meghani set up the bookstore in a tiny room of a dilapidated High Court Road building in 1950. "I was a child then but I remember my father would display books on the staircase leading to his shop on the third floor so that passers-

by could have a look," recalls Gopal, who took over the running of the store when he was 21. "I was scared they might steal some. But he would say it only helps spread the love of words." Fifteen years later, the store moved to its current address—a 1,000 sq ft modern space.

Son of legendary Gujarati poet Zaverchand Meghani, Mahendra Meghani was always keen to preserve his father's legacy and popularise Gujarati literature. "My father was a big influence but I won't say he was the only one," says Mahendra, who shifted

from Bhavnagar to live with his daughter Manjari in Ahmedabad two years ago. At 82, he hasn't forgotten his journey as editor, translator, bookseller and a popular publisher.

In 1942, Mahendra Meghani joined Elphinstone College, Mumbai. "I thought I was a scholar and all scholars had to go to Elphinstone College," he says. A few weeks after he paid his fees, the Quit India Movement fuelled his patriotic fervour and he opted out. For six years, he helped his father, who was then editor of a Gujarati weekly *Phool Chhab*



Mahendra Meghani in his daughter's Ahmedabad flat (far left); grandson Yash and son Gopal at Bhavnagar bookstore

(flower basket) in Ranpur. In 1948, a year after his father's death, he went to New York to study journalism at Columbia University. During his stay, he wrote a weekly column for a Gujarati daily, *Nutan Gujarat*, on the American way of life.

Two years later, he returned to Bombay and launched *Milap*, a Gujarati monthly on the lines of *Readers' Digest*. "In states like Kerala, Maharashtra and Bengal, people are voracious readers but in Gujarat, the habit had to be cultivated," reasons Mahendra, who founded the Lok Milap Trust to publish the magazine, which carried articles from various sources, condensed and translated by him. In 1952, he relocated himself and the magazine to Bhavnagar. "I was determined to continue with my crusade of getting Gujaratis hooked to books," he says. *Milap* got only 2,500 subscriptions in 28 years. Yet it left an imprint on the minds of readers. When it closed down

in 1978, there were angry letters in newspapers. "I was 55 and didn't have the energy to scan 500 magazines for its content," explains Mahendra.

Restless without *Milap*, Meghani tried other diversions. Apart from compiling, translating and editing articles from renowned writers, which the Lok Milap Trust published in booklet form, he started Film Milap, a movie show

Meghani feels restless without his first love, the magazine *Milap*

for children, at Bhavnagar's Galaxy Theatre. "My father is a stickler for time," recalls Gopal. "The film would start at 7.30 am on the dot. Those who came at 7.31 am were politely turned away." Every child was supposed

to pick up just one cookie—provided free—while entering the theatre. Sometimes, in his speech before the show, Meghani senior would joke about how "someone took two cookies".

Film *Milap* was short-lived—Mahendra stopped it in 1985, believing that 'activities should not be overdone'—but its memories still linger. "Besides providing entertainment, it also taught the kids to respect time. Some of them still come to the bookstore and wish their children could experience it," says Gopal, who was then 24 years old.

Though Gopal was unable to inherit *Milap*, he did take over the reins of the bookstore. "As kids, my sister Manjari and I helped at the store," says Gopal. "This proved to be my real college." Today, the bookstore is thriving. Lok Milap has 150 publications of its own and the bookstore has 5,100 titles, of which 5,000 are in Gujarati alone. It also sells books



Gopal's wife Rajeshri at the Lok Milap Trust bookstore in Bhavnagar

from other publishers. "We want to promote reading, not just ourselves," says Gopal, who doesn't believe in hovering around readers while they are browsing.

Gopal is trying to revive a dying tradition—conducting book fairs in India and abroad. "My sister and I travelled abroad for exhibitions," he explains. "After her marriage, father was busy with his translation and editing, so I was left to manage the store." But two years ago, Gopal's son Yash, 22, started taking an interest in the store. Now, Yash and his wife Shweta often travel to cities to conduct exhibitions.

Lok Milap holds an annual book fair in Bhavnagar every December or January. This year too, the fair, was a hit as always. "There were about 25,000 people at the fair and books worth Rs 5 lakh were sold," says Gopal with pride. "Though I feel I could have done better, my son is covering up for me," adds his father. Mahendra's contribution of making Gujarati literature available to readers at throwaway prices, starting from Rs 3 to Rs 75, is

undeniable. However, he says his failing health has affected his translation work. The last translation he did was in 1999—

The Trust has 150 publications of its own and 5,000 Gujarati titles

Leo Tolstoy's *What Shall We Do Then?* (*Tyare Kari Sho Shu*)—Meghani's impressive list of translations include Henrik Herrer's *Seven Years in Tibet* (*Tibet na Bhitarma*; Rs 30; 175 pages) and Nicholi Noso's *School Boys* (*Bhaibandh*; Rs 30; 160 pages).

Lok Milap Trust also publishes books in English, like abridged versions of *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran for Rs 10 and *Hundred Poems*, of poets from the UK and US, for Rs 20. Then, there is the five-part series *Rojerojni Vaachan Yatra* (*Daily Reading*) for Rs 7. This stems from a four-part anthology *Ardhi Sadi Ni Vacchan Yatra* (*Half a Century on the Journey of Reading*). It is a compilation of writings by

Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Victor Hugo, Rudyard Kipling and Shakespeare. It also carries abridged passages by Gujarati writers like Umashankar Joshi and Pannalal Patel. Meghani is currently editing its fourth volume, which will be released in June 2006.

The first volume of *Ardhi Sadi Ni Vacchan Yatra* was printed in 2003, followed by two more in 2004 and 2005. Together, 94,000 copies were sold, a record of sorts in Gujarati literature. The USP of *Ardhi Sadi*: each hardback volume costs only Rs 75. If a reader buys 10 or more copies, the price is Rs 50 for each.

"The books are a hit as much for their price as for content," Gopal agrees, saying, "People walk into the bookstore and tell me that they keep it at their bedside and read them every night. That's enriching to hear."

But the Meghanis' dream of replicating their bookstore in every district of Gujarat hasn't yet materialised. Till then, book lovers are welcome to get lost in translation. ■

NEW RESEARCH BOOK

Pyramid Vastu to attract Peace, Prosperity & Happiness !

Unlock these new secret's and other 100's of proven ways to enhance health, wealth and wellness from this 224 pages step-by-step guide. Also learn Do-it-yourself, practical techniques to correct Vastu & Feng Shui defects without physical alteration or shifting with power of Pyramids.

By today more than 2.5 million people are benefitted with this Pyramid-Net, don't wait, just try a simple experiment from this book and expect a miracle!

9th*Enlarged & Updated International Edition*

- ☐ **Explore** countless easy-to-apply secrets to attract more money, happiness and success.
- ☐ **Genuine** know-how by Prof. Dr. Jiten Bhatt, founder of PyraVastu method and Pyramid Yantra.
- ☐ **Down-to-earth advice** for house, flats, shops, factory or office. With practical examples.
- ☐ **The inside story** of the Great Pyramids, its miracles, real photographs and latest theories.
- ☐ **Fast understanding** with more than 600 illustrations and plans in the book.

Order Now

Send a DD of Rs. 255/- today & get your book FREE door delivered.

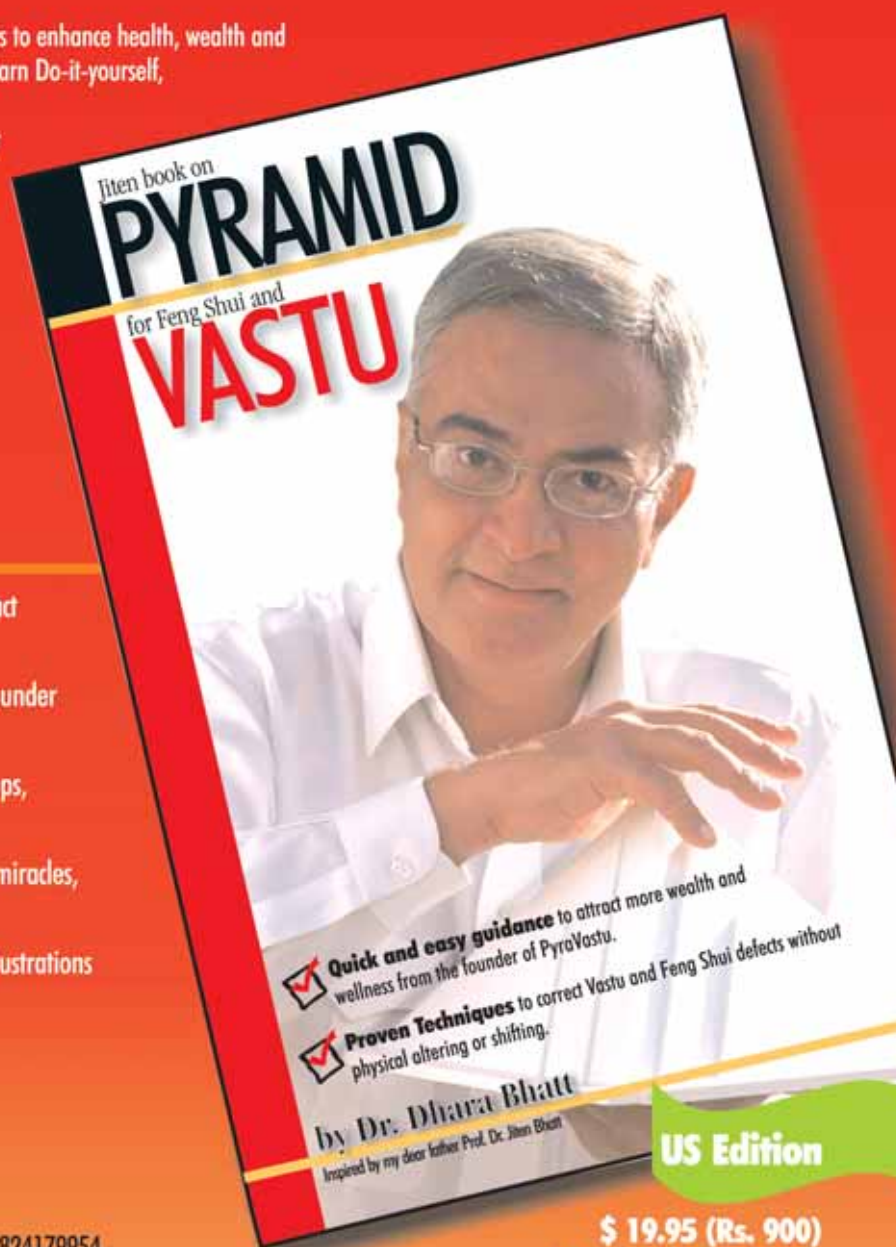
Call: 0265-2652037, 0-9825084612, RIM.3953466, 0-9824179954

Send DD of Rs. 255/- to or write for FREE leaflet detail to:

Personal Care Systems, 336/43, GIDC - Makarpura, Baroda 390010.

E-mail: personalcare@mail.com

Order Online: www.pyramidvastu.com

**US Edition**

\$ 19.95 (Rs. 900)
Special Price: Rs. 255
(For India only)

Pages: 224 in 2 color, Book size: 240 x 155 mm.
Also translated in Hindi, Gujarati & Marathi.

** If not satisfied, return within 10 days for a refund !*



Super t r o u p e r



Tanvir in *Tambaku Sevan Ka Nuksan*

SHILBHADRA DATTA

Finding Habib Tanvir in Bhopal was easy. Any theatre lover would direct you to his second floor apartment in the picturesque Shamlu Hills area. The 82 year-old dramatist and actor lives here when he's not travelling with his plays in India and abroad.

Tanvir's 60 years worth of trophies and mementoes are stashed away in two huge trunks in this house. "I don't like to wear my achievements on my sleeve," he says dismissively, driven by the 'now', and happy to let the past lie in those trunks. "The older I grow, the more I am in demand," declares the Padma Bhushan awardee.

Tanvir is currently obsessed with his latest production *Visarjan*

Tanvir is currently obsessed with his latest production *Visarjan*, a Hindi adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's Bengali play *Bisharjan*, and excited about enacting the role of a man older than his age in a film titled *Xapai* (Grandfather). While Kolkata-based playwright and actor Usha Ganguli asked him to direct *Visarjan* as a joint production with her Rangakarmee troupe, filmmaker Sai Paranjpe sought him out for her black comedy that deals with interpersonal relationships of children and grandchildren of a patriarch (Tanvir). "I needed an energetic actor with a fine sensibility and command over Hindi and English as the film is bilingual. I needed a

mobile face and a certain aura," says Paranjpe, speaking about her film and "old colleague".

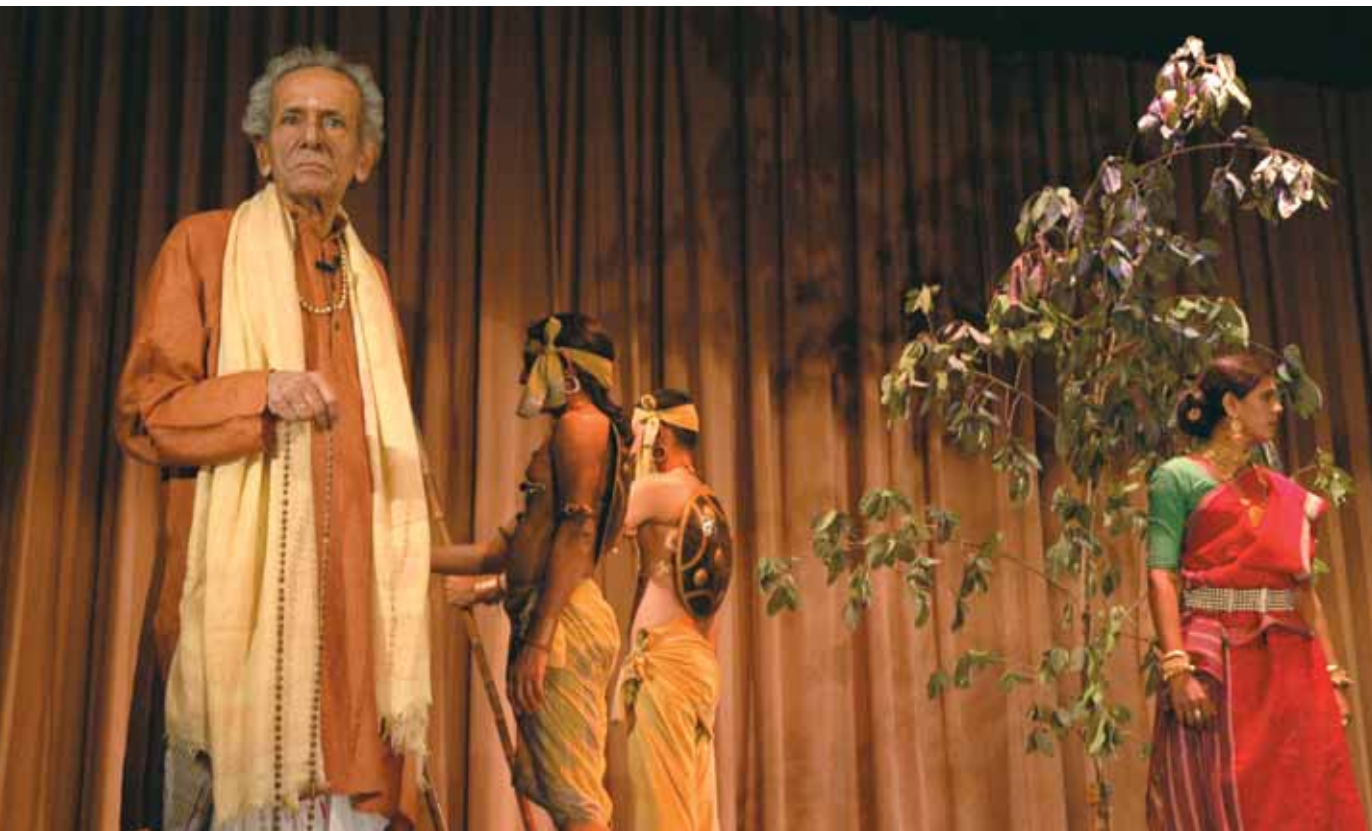
Tousled hair, walking stick in hand, Tanvir looks exhausted. A nasty fall in New Delhi last year led to a hip implant. The dimly lit living room is full of books. Tribal artefacts jostle with old files, musty ledger and frayed folders. Tanvir reaches for his pipe and a glass of water before he carefully lowers himself on a sturdy cane chair, dressed in white pyjama and mauve *kurta*.

"I am a slave driver who is now being driven by his slaves," he declares. But with his "slaves", the Chhattisgarhi actors of Naya Theatre, he's still the forceful taskmaster, laying down the law, forever assuming they are playing truant and planning to go on long vacations.

His daughter Nageen, 41, follows him to the room. She has slipped into the role of homemaker and troupe manager after Monika, her mother, passed away after a long illness last year. "Her last days were painful; too many surgeries...we could not do much," reminisces Tanvir as he stares at nothing in particular.

Four months of "silence" after his wife's death and Tanvir "threw himself back" into work. The shooting for *Xapai* is yet to wrap up. Tanvir has just finished a two-and-a-half month tour with his group Naya Theatre. Travelling to cities like Bangalore, Chandigarh, Delhi and Kolkata, the playwright conducted theatre workshops and staged old plays and premiered *Visarjan*, a play based on the Tripura royal family that ruled the state in late 17th century.

At 82, Habib Tanvir, often described as a 'living legend of Indian theatre', remains driven, still consumed by the stage and his beliefs, writes **Trina Mukherjee**



A scene from Tanvir's landmark play *Charandas Chor*

Tanvir's original troupe has changed many a times since 1958. Govindram, 71, and Devilal, 65, are the only two of the 10 regular performers who have stayed with Naya Theatre.

The group now meets at Tanvir's house after being evicted in 2003 from their state-allotted bungalow, given to them by the previous Congress government. The current BJP regime, however, declared it 'government property' and ordered them out. This came a year after RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal followers accused Tanvir of being 'anti-Hindu' and disrupted his play *Jamadarin Urf Ponga Pandit*. The play was a satirical take on religious hypocrisy. "He merely decided to stage the wrong play in wrong places," says Manoj Nair, 32, a former member of Tanvir's troupe. "I'll never forget those rotten tomatoes and chap-pals that greeted us. Habibsaab was unfazed by it all," he adds.

"I did not even write it. It is an old Chhattisgarhi play," explains Tanvir who refuses to relent and is currently occupied with

The dramatist keeps a logbook to jot down details of his cast and schedule

Visarjan. The play has enjoyed four full houses in Kolkata after premiering on 5 January this year in New Delhi. But Tanvir isn't satisfied. "He had a tough job," says co-director Usha Ganguli. "Just two months to prepare, two actor-directors and two groups of actors."

The only thing that bothers Tanvir about *Visarjan* is the way the main characters are etched in the

original play. "They show no progression. Why?" he asks. "I will have to read more of Tagore's plays to look for answers..." he trails off.

Reading is Tanvir's way of 'silent' conversation. Books lie stacked on shelves or precariously heaped on stools and windowsills of his living room—Eugene O' Neil's *Collected Plays*, Austin's *Making of a Democratic Constitution*, back issues of popular magazine *Urdu Duniya*; an eclectic collection. You pause to scan Arthur Miller's *After the Fall*, to see a packet of Glucon-D behind it. Also stashed away in the shelves are little packets of pills.

Apart from minor bouts of cough and cold and some aches and stiffness, Tanvir claims he doesn't suffer from any major ailments. But he is unable to recall many details of his plays or films and turns to his daughter for help.



MUJEEB FARUQUI

With daughter Nageen; Charandas Chor won the Edinburgh Fringe First Prize

Thankfully, he also meticulously maintains a logbook where he jots down information on his troupe and his schedules.

Despite his eye for precision and detail, his uncertain memory recently got him into a spot with the current BJP government—for failing to submit ‘appropriate’ break-up of a state grant to the tune of Rs 60 lakh in 2003. The State Culture Department has blacklisted his troupe. The grant, claims Tanvir, is no longer important. He will not rest until it’s sorted out, he says.

With the current spate of attacks on him by the Sangh Parivar, Tanvir has become a secular hero for Left cultural activists. “You get as political as the issue in question,” is his take. “My plays probe, provoke and delight in turns.” Politics and religion have often clashed in the pages of history, he observes. “A writer draws inspiration from such incidents. I have done it, not just *Ponga Pandit*...think of *Charandas Chor* and you’ll know,” he mutters almost to himself.

“Tanvir is engaging when he is raising political issues,” says Rakesh Sethi, secretary of the Bhopal-based Rangadhar theatre group. “But he is truly in his element when he is on stage or watching closely from the wings. No one can ignore his secular credentials.”

Tanvir is truly in his element when he is on stage or watching from the wings

Respect for religion has different connotations for different people, believes the dramatist. “*Charandas Chor* explains how difficult it is to stick to truth and the thief, like most people, has to survive on half-truths,” he talks about the play. He scripted and directed *Charandas* between 1973 and 1975. The play won the Edinburgh Fringe First Prize in 1982, catapulting its rural cast from Chhattisgarh into instant fame.



Ironically, Tanvir’s biggest problem now is finding a place to rehearse. “We keep moving in and out of places as they [state government officials] keep coming up with new rent and tenure rules,” he says. Right now, his troupe rehearses in Adivasi Press Auditorium, a cramped and decrepit place.

He is also busy finishing his autobiography *Matmaili Chadariya* in Urdu, his mother tongue. “I have managed about 350 handwritten pages,” he says. He excitedly describes his plans to attend the Bonn theatre festival in May to a caller from London. Meanwhile, it’s time to settle accounts with those “harassing Naya Theatre” by getting his papers in place and demanding his ‘rightful dues’. “I’ll ensure I get heard loud and clear on this political *tamasha*,” he says, with quiet determination writ large on his face. His face is lined with survival and fortitude. There is light in his eyes that refuses to dim. ■

Original flavour

Cook simply and retain the natural taste of food with **Dr Pushpesh Pant**

News reports about bird flu have forced many of us to stay away from chicken. And red meat is not really an inviting proposition for the health conscious. So, to keep non-vegetarian epicures happy, I have a fish recipe for you this time. The richness of Omega 3 helps lower dangerous cholesterol, and fish also guarantees enough variety to please every palate. Very little time is required to cook fish and fine delicacies can be rustled up using very little oil. Dry Peppery Fish, the recipe of the month, allows you to

enjoy the natural taste of the fish of your choice without it being drowned in overpowering spicy gravy or sauce.

Who would have thought that good old *lauki* (bottle gourd) can satisfy our sweet tooth so well? The noble vegetable has enough natural 'sweetness' of its own, so resist the temptation to top it with even a sugar-free sweetener. Dried fruits add welcome spots of colour and a sweet crunch to the mellow softness.

LAUKI KE LACCHE

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- *Lauki/doodhiya* (bottle gourd): 1 kg; for ease in grating, choose gourds that are small in size and tender
- Raisins: 25 gm
- Dried figs: 2, chopped coarsely
- Dates: 2, seedless; chopped not too finely but ensure that the dates are free from additional sugar (not the routinely bathed-in-sugar-syrup variety available in the market)
- Honey-roasted almonds: 1 per person
- Green cardamom: 6-8; crush the seeds
- Rosewater: a few drops
- Silver leaf for garnish (optional)

METHOD

Peel the *lauki* (bottle gourd), cut into large pieces and remove the core. Grate and squeeze out as much water as you can. Dry on a non-stick pan on low heat, then remove and leave aside for cooling. Mix the raisins and figs. Drizzle with cardamom seeds. A few drops of rose water will enhance your pleasure.



JIGNESH JHAVERI FOR HARMONY

PEPPERY FISH

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

Serves: 2-4

INGREDIENTS

- Fish: 400-500 gm, fillet-cleaned
- Black pepper powder: 1 tsp, freshly ground
- Lime juice: 2 tbsp
- Black peppercorns: 1 tbsp
- Green peppercorns: 1 tbsp; wash well if preserved in brine
- Salt: a pinch to ward off the sense of denial!

GARNISH

- Lime wedges
- Green chillies: sliced lengthwise
- Fresh coriander and mint: a sprig of each
- Banana leaf: 1; washed well, dried and softened by holding over a low flame and then cut into squares; or use baking foil

METHOD

Rub salt, pepper powder and lime juice to fish and marinate for 15 minutes. Coat a non-stick pan with a thin film of vegetable oil and pan grill the fish for about 5 minutes on each side. Wrap marinated fish fillets individually in banana leaf squares (or baking foil) with equal portions of green and black peppercorns and secure with a toothpick. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 180°C (350°F) for 15 minutes. Serve with garnish. 🍴



Dr Pushpant Pant, our culinary expert, is a documentary producer, author and die-hard foodie



Life at the top

Part of the first Indian Expedition to the Everest, Major (retd) H P S Ahluwalia battled a spinal injury before establishing the Spinal Injuries Centre in Delhi, says **Namita Singh**



Major (Retd) H P S Ahluwalia at the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre

What is mightier than Everest?" asks Major (retd) H P S Ahluwalia, 69, seated on his wheelchair in his office overlooking the ridge in Vasant Kunj, New Delhi. He answers his own question. "The mind. As you climb, it is a victory of mind over mountain."

He knows all about the uphill climb. Part of the first Indian expedition to the peak in May 1965, he survived a bullet during the Indo-Pakistan war in September 1965, and eventually built a rehabilitation institute for spinal

injuries and other disabilities in New Delhi. Commissioned in the Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering in December 1958, Ahluwalia learnt about spinal injuries first hand during the 1965 conflict. "We were at Kargil sector," he remembers. "Major Surat Singh, Captain Jal Master and I were returning to our base late one afternoon. Suddenly, there was a spurt of gunfire and I was down." The bullet had hit him in the neck.

In those days, treatment options in India for spinal injuries were next to none. He shuttled for

months between hospitals, trying everything from physiotherapy and homeopathy to Unani potions by the local *hakim*.

"I realised then that ultimately life was all about climbing the Everest within," he says. Then, his friend H C Sarin told him about a rehabilitation programme at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in the UK. Major Ahluwalia left for the UK. There, he underwent physiotherapy and occupational therapy, followed by typing lessons, swimming and archery. Five months later, the Major returned—still wheelchair bound



Patients learning coordination skills and exercising at the Centre



but empowered with new skills. Back in India in 1967, he had found his mission: to give other Indians suffering from spinal injuries the same world-class care that he had enjoyed in the UK.

It took a lot of time and effort, and the help of many people, including the late prime minister Indira Gandhi, his friend Sarin and the Italian government, that gave a generous \$10 million grant for building a centre to treat spinal injuries. But the Major had to clear several bureaucratic

though. He is now upgrading the centre to university level and plans to include regular courses and classes related to injuries including spinal problems.

Sitting back is just not in Ahluwalia's nature. He can't climb mountains but his wanderlust is far from being quenched. On 17 May 1994, after seven years of lobbying for permission from the Indian and Chinese governments, Ahluwalia, wife Bholi and daughter Sugandh, along with his former Army colleagues and

him several accolades—the Padma Bhushan, Padmashri and Arjuna awards, as well as international awards like the British FRGS (Fellow of Royal Geographical Society), UK for significant contribution to studies and literature on environment and adventure and Condor de Oro, an Argentinean honour given for contribution to adventure writing and participation in adventure sports.

Photography is another passion that goes back to his mountaineering days. Though Ahluwalia professes to write “a book once every 10 years”, he has already written 20, including *Eternal Himalayas*, *Faces of Everest*, *Ladakh: The Hermit Kingdom* and *Higher than Everest*. His next book (still untitled) about the Silk Route expedition is slated for release later this year.

In *Higher than Everest*, Ahluwalia writes, “The physical act of climbing a mountain has a kinship with the ascent of that inward, spiritual mountain which every man has to climb some time or the other. Whether the mountain you climb is physical or spiritual, the climb will change you. It will teach you much about yourself and the world.” As for himself, he says, “I think I have done well for myself.” ■

Ahluwalia's 100-bed spinal injuries centre has state-of-the-art equipment

hurdles like delays in constructing the centre. In 1997, three decades later, he finally realised his dream with the opening of the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre (ISIC) in Vasant Kunj, New Delhi.

The centre, spread over 15 acres, has a state-of-the-art intensive care unit, 100 beds and operation theatres with the latest infrastructure and equipment. Patients enjoy the benefits of alternate therapies, hydrotherapy, natural and sports therapies in a spacious, green ambience and barrier-free environment. Ahluwalia's job is far from over

mountaineering pals, set out on an expedition to the fabled Silk Route. The group covered 12,000 km through cities like Bukhara, Samarkand, Xian, Andijon, Yarkand, Kashgar and Lhasa before returning to Delhi on 17 July.

When he's not travelling, the hospital keeps him busy. He also keeps a keen eye on his first love, mountaineering—he was recently appointed the president of the Indian Mountaineering Federation. At home, he unwinds by reading travelogues, listening to classical music and writing. His varied interests have won

Ladies, listen up!

Dr Duru Shah tells us
about gynaecological
problems faced by
women over 50

A woman needs to be watchful after 40 and take proper care of her health after 50. Many women believe that after they reach menopause (the natural termination of menstruation occurring usually between the ages of 45 and 55), they don't really need to visit the gynaecologist any more, unless there is a specific problem. This is far from true. Regular visits can spot many problems at an early stage—if unchecked, they could lead to serious physical, medical and social difficulties. Here's a look at some common problems faced by older women and ways to treat them.

URINARY INCONTINENCE

Many women mistakenly believe that urinary incontinence is a normal part of ageing or a temporary, albeit embarrassing, problem that will go away on its own. Urinary incontinence is loss of bladder control characterised by an urge to urinate frequently, and is common to millions of women. One out of every four women has urinary incontinence after the age of 30, and eight out of 10 affected women mistakenly believe that incontinence is a normal part of ageing.

There are different types of incontinence. **Urge incontinence** is the loss of urine when there is a strong urge to urinate on the way to the restroom, at night, or even on hearing or touching running water.

Stress incontinence can occur during exercise or movements like sneezing, coughing or laughing. And **overflow incontinence** creates a feeling of never completely emptying the bladder, leading to loss of small amounts of urine throughout the day. A general loss of pelvic muscle tone because of ageing or nerve or muscle damage resulting from injury or surgery can lead to incontinence.

Factors like childbirth, obesity, chronic coughing and constipation can also weaken the muscles that normally keep the outflow tract closed. Incontinence may discourage women from doing things to stay healthy, like drinking water or exercising. In addition, they may worry about lifting their children (or grand-children) and groceries and may avoid sexual intimacy. These self-imposed restrictions could lead to loss of self-confidence, frustration or defeatism. Current treatment

options range from pelvic muscle exercises, behavioural modifications (regulating urinating habits of women who feel psychologically compelled to visit the bathroom every few minutes) and medication to surgery. Medication remains to be a less effective method,



though. Surgery has the best rates of cure for stress urinary incontinence, even in elderly women. Surgical treatment involves the use of TVT (tension-free vaginal tape); this supports loose tissue and is an innovative solution for incontinence. Depending on the kind of tape used the surgery could cost Rs 20,000 to Rs 70,000. This simple procedure—the patient is back from hospital the same day—can give a woman a new lease on life.

OSTEOPOROSIS

This condition is characterised by reduced bone strength and increased susceptibility to fractures following a minor injury, or even no injury at all. Osteoporosis is often asymptomatic (displays no symptoms); hence it is called the 'Silent Epidemic'. Apart from calcium deficiency, other factors include hyperthyroidism, use of steroids, and excess intake of caffeine and lack of exposure to sunlight. It commonly affects women who are between 50 and 60 in India, though those older or younger can also suffer from it. Women often suffer from osteoporosis as they lose calcium in every stage of life—pregnancy, lactation and menopause. The good news: osteoporosis is a preventable condition.

The best treatment is prevention—it's never too late to start on a calcium-rich diet. For post-menopausal women, exercising at least thrice a week can help prevent bone loss and reduce the risk of falling. Also, consumption of at least 1,200 mg of calcium a day along with a bone-friendly diet (*see diet box*) that is high in fruits and vegetables and low in saturated fat and salt is recommended.



Active treatment includes hormonal (oestrogen + progesterone) and non-hormonal medications. The tablets cost Rs 30 to Rs 50 a day.

CERVICAL CANCER

The cervix is the neck of the uterus and cervical carcinoma (or cervical cancer) is one of the most

common cancers affecting women. It usually affects women between 45 and 60 years of age. Meanwhile, cancer of the lining of the uterus is called endometrial cancer; this generally affects women over 60.

The good news is that cervical cancer can be cured as it can be detected very early. For this, a pap smear test and pelvic examination are recommended for women aged between 25 to 64 once in three years. The simple test involves taking a smear from the cervix and studying the cells under a microscope. This can detect abnormalities in the cervix.

Cervical carcinoma can be caused by early sexual activity (at less than 18 years of age), sex with multiple partners (or if your partner has had multiple partners) and a history of sexually transmitted diseases. At the early stages of cervical cancer, there are usually no symptoms. At later stages, symptoms include abnormal vaginal bleeding or blood-stained discharge at unexpected times, after sexual intercourse, before or after periods, and after menopause.

At an early stage, cervical cancer can be treated with laser surgery, cryosurgery (where abnormal

OSTEO ARTHRITIS OF THE KNEE JOINT



Stay Mobile for Healthy Aging with assistive BRACES for **SUPPORT**

The **CLINICAL BRACE** practically takes over the knee compartment:

- * **Side Hinges** with pads and **polycentric gears** allow full flexion, unload the upper body weight from the Knee, hold 'condyles' to prevent friction between the Femur and the Tibia and restrict further degeneration.
- * Sewn-in **Horseshoe Buttress** tracks the **patella** to avoid erratic movements of the knee compartment.
- * Promotes healing by providing **continuous therapeutic heat**.



STABILITY
STRENGTH



McDavid USA products brought to you by **ORTHO FIT**

Telephone: (022) 23671674, 23673013 Email: contact@orthofit.biz Website: <http://www.orthofit.biz>

tissue is destroyed or removed by freezing), electrocautery (burning off abnormal cervical tissues with an electric current), cone biopsy (removal of a cylindrical or cone-shaped piece of tissue for diagnosis and, sometimes, treatment) of the cervix or hysterectomy, which is removal of the uterus.

Treatment of invasive cervical cancer depends on the extent of the cancer, the age and general health of the patient and the extent to which it has spread to other parts of the body. It may involve combined radiation and chemotherapy.

MENOPAUSE

Menopause occurs due to non-production of female hormones from the ovaries after a certain age. It is a natural biological process, not a medical illness. Some women may reach menopause in their 30s or 40s, and some not until 60s, but menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. Symptoms include irregular periods, decreased fertility, vaginal and urinary changes owing to the thinning and drying of tissues lining the vagina or urethra. A drop in oestrogen levels can lead to the sudden expansion of blood vessels, causing skin temperature to rise.

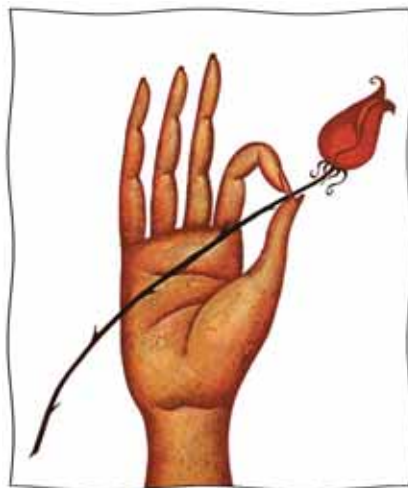
Commonly known as hot flashes, this may cause sweating, and the appearance of red blotches on arms, shoulders and neck that may last for around 30 seconds. Following menopause, every tissue in the body gets affected. This leads to wrinkling, sagging, pigmentation, and bone changes such as osteopenia (decreased

calcification or density of bone) and osteoporosis. Other accompanying problems include depression and mood swings.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) replaces lost hormones and can relieve symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, insomnia and mood swings. But HRT should be used with caution and under medical supervision.

CONTRACEPTION

Sexually active women need to use a contraceptive for a year after menopause. There are many



choices, depending on menstrual pattern such as quantum of flow, presence of medical disorders, such as high cholesterol, high sugar, or lifestyle habits such as smoking. The contraceptive option should be decided after a proper clinical examination.

POST MENOPAUSAL BLEEDING

The menstrual bleeding pattern changes on approaching menopause. Periods may become shorter in duration and the interval between them may increase.

A woman is said to be menopausal if more than six months have elapsed without a period. Postmenopausal bleeding can be caused by benign conditions but it is important to rule out malignancy. The presence of a benign tumour such as a polyp or fibroid, or infections such as cervicitis, vaginitis, trauma or forgotten IUCD (intrauterine contraceptive device) are some benign causes. However, endometrial cancer, cervical cancer, vulval/vaginal cancer and ovarian cancer may need to be ruled out in patients with postmenopausal bleeding. The use of HRT or Tamoxifen (an anti-oestrogen drug used to treat breast cancer) can also lead to endometrial growth and bleeding. A pelvic ultrasound and hysteroscopy with a biopsy of the endometrium may be needed for a conclusive diagnosis. Treatment will depend on the cause.

BREAST CANCER

Nearly 77 per cent of all breast cancers occur in women over 50 years. Over 80 per cent of those who develop breast cancer do not have an identifiable risk factor. Factors like reproductive experience (pregnancy before the age of 30 decreases the risk of breast cancer), ovarian activity, family history and HRT influence the risk of cancer. For early detection, women should begin self-examination of breasts after the age of 30, have an annual breast examination after the age of 35 (or an annual mammography for those with family history of breast cancer); and have an annual mammography after the age of 40.

Dr Duru Shah is medical director, Gynaec World, Mumbai, and consultant (obstetrics and gynaecology) at Breach Candy Hospital, Jaslok Hospital and Research Center and Sir H N Hospital and Research Center, Mumbai

Her ideal diet

Eating right can help the general well being of women over 50, says **Payal Khurana**

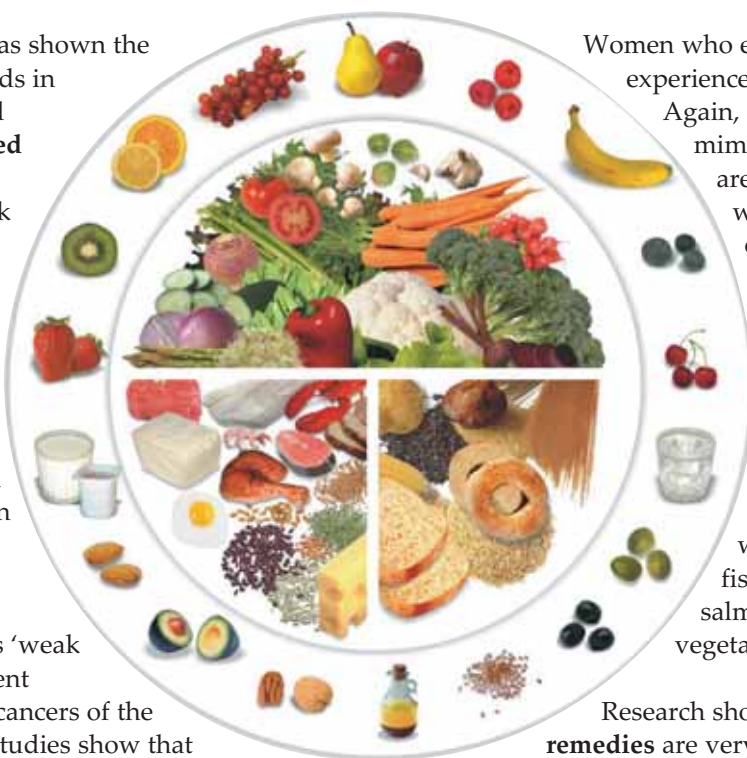
CANCER Research has shown the efficacy of certain foods in preventing breast and uterine cancers. Eat **red foods** like tomatoes, watermelons and pink grapefruits for protection from breast cancer. The lycopene in them is a powerful cancer-buster. Because lycopene is fat-soluble, it is absorbed well in the body when eaten with fat.

Soybean is rich in isoflavones that act as 'weak oestrogens' and prevent hormone-dependent cancers of the breast and prostate. Studies show that eating 25-40 gm of soybean everyday reduces the risk of breast cancer by five times. **Yellow-green fruits and vegetables**, like okra, spinach, tangerines and peas, contain lutein and zeaxanthin, which lower the risk of uterine cancer. The cryptoxanthine present in **orange foods** like oranges, papayas, peaches and tangerines is highly protective of vaginal, cervical and uterine tissues.

URGE AND OVERFLOW INCONTINENCE

Avoid drinks containing caffeine, like coffee and colas, and alcohol in the evening. Reduce your intake of high-oxalate foods like spinach, okra, beets, grapes, chocolates, *chaulai* greens and plums. Avoid artificial food colours, as they irritate the lining of the bladder. And quit smoking.

MENOPAUSE Low levels of oestrogen cause symptoms like hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, fatigue, insomnia and depression. You can combat these with your diet.



Women who eat **soy** everyday experience fewer hot flashes. Again, soy's oestrogen-mimicking isoflavones are responsible. As women's natural oestrogen levels fall during menopause, isoflavones help balance the slack. Eat **foods rich in omega-3 fats**, which are critical for hormone production. Good sources are walnuts, flaxseed, oily fish (sardines, tuna, salmon), canola oil, leafy vegetables and soy.

Research shows that some **herbal remedies** are very effective. *Dong quai*, also called female ginseng, helps alleviate hot flashes and vaginal dryness. **Evening primrose oil** helps balance hormone levels.

OSTEOPOROSIS Diet plays the most significant part in keeping osteoporosis at bay. Eat a **high calcium diet**. Good sources are milk and milk products, *ragi* (millet), *channa* (Bengal gram), *rajma* (red kidney beans), soybean, greens, *methi* (fenugreek) greens, sesame seeds, and almonds. Eat **food rich in Vitamin D** like oily fish, egg yolk and dried milk products.

Other nutrients required are boron (a trace mineral), for calcium absorption and retention, copper for bone production and zinc for bone protein. Because of its oestrogen-like behaviour, **soy** helps ward off post-menopausal osteoporosis. Eating 12 prunes (dried plums) everyday not only stops but actually reverses bone loss due to oestrogen deficiency. ■

The writer is a dietician from Delhi University

Keep your cool

Manage sunstroke and anger with cooling poses. **Shameem Akthar** explains how

EXCESSIVE HUMIDITY, HEAT AND DEHYDRATION can strike in summer, causing an emergency. As the season makes its prickly presence felt, include specific poses in your yogic calendar to cool down, both physically and mentally.

All forward bends are cooling poses, tempering the heat within. However, these poses can heat up the body when there is excessive physical exertion involved. So be gentle with yourself. Sun salutation (*surya namaskar*) should be done slowly. Even other poses must be relaxed by a measure. Ideally, yoga, in any season, must be done before sunrise.



Most heated poses have cooling counter-poses. The headstand (*sirsasana*) warms the blood. It must be immediately followed by the cooling shoulder stand (*sarvangasana*). Even in breathing practices, the heat

of the skull-cleansing pose (*kapalabhati*) must be moderated by alternate nostril breathing (*nadi shodhana*) and followed by the hissing practice (*sheetali* or *sheetkari*). During breathing exercises (*pranayama*), holding the breath (*kumbhaka*) or the energy lock (*bandhas*) should be avoided as these may aggravate anger and body heat. Similarly, meditative practices that help you relax should be given preference. These include healing practices like the sleeping pose (*yoga nidra*).

Yoga also advises diet modification. In *A Practical Guide to Holistic Health*, Swami Rama, founder of the Himalayan Yoga Institute, suggests we increase our

consumption of fruits and vegetables during summer to increase the moisture content in the body. Some hand gestures like rain and conch poses (*varuna mudra*/*shankha mudra*) are also cooling. ■

Yogic moves

Hissing breath (*seetkari pranayama*)

Sit in a meditative pose. Close your eyes. Place hands in wisdom *mudra* on the knees. To do this, touch tips of index finger and thumb of each hand. Fold tongue so it is firmly against the roof of the mouth. This is a powerful practice called tongue lock (*khechari mudra*) and induces a sense of calm. Clench your teeth and let the lips flare. If this causes discomfort, keep the tongue relaxed. Now inhale deeply, drawing the breath from the mouth. Relax the mouth and let the lips and tongue settle back. Then, exhale gently. This is the first round. Do three to six rounds initially. With practice it may be increased to nine. For those with false teeth, another version called *sheetali*, where the lips are rolled to form an 'O' (as while whistling), may be practiced.



Ideal for hot months, this must be done at the end of *pranayama* sessions. It is a great way to de-stress and is therapeutic in anger management. It also curbs hunger. It is so powerful that it is even used as treatment for heat stroke.

Caution: Avoid this practice in winter months, if suffering from respiratory ailments and if the atmosphere is polluted.

Rain pose (*varuna mudra*)

Sit in a comfortable meditative position, with the tip of your little finger touching the tip of the thumb on both hands. Hold for five minutes, or even more, to feel the cooling effect. This may be done anytime and anywhere, but *mudra* are most effective as part of meditation. Remember not to press down the little finger. This has the opposite, undesirable effect of heating the body.

Varuna mudra is a detoxifying exercise. It also heals most inflammatory and dehydrating ailments, such as dry joints and diarrhoea. However, this pose is best done (in moderation) when there is excessive water retention.

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)

THE GREATER BOMBAY CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. (SCHEDULED BANK)

Banking made easy

Chairman **Narendrakumar A Baldota** talks about the giant strides made by Greater Bombay Co-operative Bank



What is the objective of the Bank?

The Greater Bombay Co-operative Bank's objective is complete corporate governance by providing full satisfaction to its depositors, shareholders, borrowers and employees. We observe complete transparency in all our operations. We provide highest yield to our depositors and shareholders and competitive interest rates to borrowers. With these aims and objectives, our bank has grown from strength to strength. Our bank offers a wide range of modern banking products and services. Ours is also the first Indian co-operative bank to receive ISO 9001:2000 certification for all its branches. Our independent departments such as the Demat Cell and The Housing / Retail Loan Cell are also ISO 9001:2000 certified.

What is the normal rate of interest for depositors?

Interest rates on term deposits for the general public ranges from 4.00% to 6.75% for different maturity periods. These rates are best comparable in the banking industry.

What are the various senior citizens' schemes that the bank offers?

We believe we have social commitments towards senior citizens and have schemes specially designed for them. All our deposit schemes are open for the benefits of seniors. We offer them highest interest on term deposits, @ 9.00% with compounding benefits, which very few banks in the co-operative sector provide. Further, for short maturity deposits, we offer seniors 1.00% higher interest than for the general customers. We also give them full flexibility for change in ownership of deposits, period of deposit and interest rates during the currency of the deposit period.

What are the additional facilities provided to silvers?

Our Bank has a holiday home at Lonavala, outside Mumbai. We provide subsidized accommodation to senior citizens who want to stay here and spend some quality time. We regularly sponsor activities for senior citizens' associations and make them feel one with us. Our bank's ATM facilities and kiosks help seniors with

their banking needs. We work 8.00 am to 8.00 pm every day, including Sundays. Seniors are entitled to free ATM cards and can also avail our BILL CENTRE facility, whereby electricity, telephone and other bills can be paid through our bank without any additional charges.

What is the rate of interest for saving schemes for less than three years for senior citizens?

The rate of interest on term deposits of 1 year to 2 years is 7.00% and for 7.50% for 2 years to 3 years. This rate is also higher than the rate offered by other banks.

What are your loan schemes and can senior citizens avail them?

We have a number of personal loan schemes, suitable to all age groups. Anyone having a regular source of income can avail of our loan schemes.

How did the bank perform last year?

Our bank has faced several challenges and come out with flying colours. The bank posted a comfortable profit of Rs 7 crores in the year that ended 31 March 2005. Even during the current year, the operating profits are maintained at the estimated levels. We are confident to record comfortable level of profits during this year too.

Has the bank been graded by any credit rating agencies?

As of now, we have not gone for grading of our bank by an external credit agency. Reserve Bank and the Co-operative Department regularly assign grade to our bank. We were declared the "Best Urban Co-operative Bank" at the Financial Express Best Banks Awards for 2001-02.

At present, how many branches do you have and what is your expansion plan?

We have 17 branches and an extension counter in Mumbai and in Thane. As of now, RBI has put a cap on new branch licensing. Encouraged by RBI, we are also in the process of acquisition of other small banks. In fact, this year we have received few proposals for acquisition/amalgamation. We are looking for better proposals and will soon expand our branch network.

HEALTH BYTES

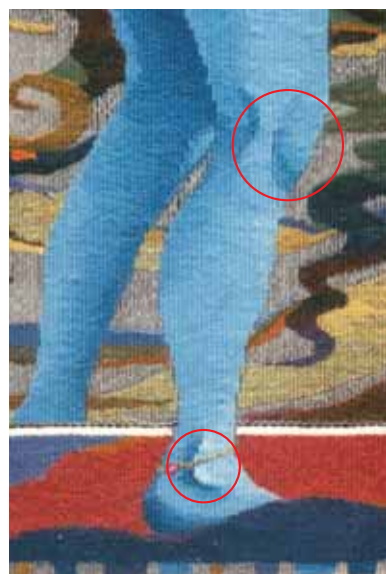
REALITY CHECK



Brace yourself for the truth. Glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, your arthritic drugs, are now found to be as effective as, well, sugar candy. According to a recent study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the **two most widely used nutritional supplements for arthritis have no remedial value**. Found naturally in joints, glucosamine is a modified sugar that helps in formation and repair of cartilage, while chondroitin is part of a large protein that provides elasticity to cartilage. However, the 24-week study, conducted by Dr Daniel O Clegg of the University of Utah School of Medicine and his team, found no positive effect on 1,500 patients of osteoarthritis using the supplements. “Almost no glucosamine that is eaten actually gets into the blood, and it certainly doesn’t travel to the joint,” says Dr Tim McAlindon, chief of rheumatology at New England Medical Centre, Boston.

DOC COM

Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi has adopted a **computer-based navigation system to assist doctors in joint replacement surgeries**. The system works like a surveyor tool, according to Dr Naveen Talwar, consultant, department of orthopaedics at the hospital. “It guides us with the alignments, angles and measurements,” he explains. “It also tells the doctor where to make the bone cuts, greatly reducing margin of error.” The system comprises an infrared camera, sensors and instrument-tracking software that converts the three-dimensional picture of the knee into a two-dimensional picture, making it easier for the surgeon to operate. The sensors attached to the



patient’s knee give doctors a precise idea about the angles needed to align the prosthetic knee with the patient’s. The use of this system can decrease the duration of hospitalisation by two to three days. Plus, you save on pre-operative X-ray or CT scan expenses.

OVER-EDUCATED?



A good education can get you a good job, a fat salary—and Alzheimer’s. Dr Nikolaos Scarmeas of Columbia University Medical Centre of New York and his team followed 312 people over 65 years old—both illiterate and highly educated—suffering from the nervous disorder. For five years, they were given brain function tests. The researchers noted that although cognitive decline occurred in all patients, the decline was 0.3 per cent faster for every year of education in those tested. “We looked at other factors, such as changes in the brain, high BP, depression and age, but couldn’t find any other explanation for it,” says Dr Scarmeas in *The Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry*. Currently, an estimated 12 million people worldwide suffer from Alzheimer’s disease.



PARK YOUR TROUBLES

A US government-sponsored study has zeroed in on an antibiotic called minocycline and a muscle-related compound named creatine that may arrest Parkinson's disease by protecting the remaining healthy neurons in the patient. About 200 patients participated in the study and scientists observed that those who took either of the two pills didn't seem to decline as rapidly as those given a dummy pill. Conventional treatments like the levodopa drug or brain implants work for a while, but can't stop the disease's inevitable march. "We are looking for the aspirin of Parkinson's disease," says Dr Diane Murphy, who oversees Parkinson's research at the National Institute of Health, which funded the study. However, it's far too early to definitively say if these pills are the answer, she warned.

CAN PIGS CURE DIABETES?

They are not ready to try it with people yet. But researchers at the University of Minnesota announced that they were able to reverse diabetes in monkeys by transplanting insulin-producing cells with cells from pigs. "Though the study involved only a dozen monkeys, it showed proof that pig cells can cure animals that are just one step away from humans," said Burnhard Hering, who led the research team. He hopes to begin human tests in about three years.



BONE TRUTHS



A study by researchers at the Women's Health Initiative, in the US, reveals that calcium and Vitamin D supplements, recommended for years by doctors and nutritionists, offer only limited protection against broken bones. For the study, 36,282 women, between 50 and 79 years, were given 1,000 milligrams of calcium and 400 units of Vitamin D every day. "There's probably a small benefit," key researcher Dr Rebecca Jackson at Ohio State University wrote in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. "But women need to know it's not enough." Meanwhile, co-researcher Norman Lasser of New Jersey Medical School toes a cautious line, saying, "We don't want to send the message to people to throw away their calcium pills, which was my wife's first reaction."

Accept yourself

If you learn to love who you are, you can love others, says **Sister Ayya Khema**

IT'S STRANGE HOW DIFFICULT PEOPLE FIND IT to love themselves. One would think it is the easiest thing in the world, because we are concerned with ourselves. We are always interested in how well we can perform, how comfortable we can be. The Buddha mentioned in a discourse that "oneself is dearest to oneself". So with all that, why is it so difficult to actually love oneself?

Loving oneself doesn't mean indulging oneself. Really loving is an attitude towards oneself that most people don't have, because they know quite a few things about themselves that are not desirable. One doesn't want to acknowledge them. That's one way of dealing with oneself, which is detrimental to growth.

Another unskilful way is to dislike that part of oneself that appears negative and blaming oneself every time it arises. With that comes fear and often aggression. If one wants to deal with oneself in a balanced way, it's not useful to pretend that the unpleasant part doesn't exist, those aggressive, irritable, sensual, conceited tendencies. If we pretend we are far from reality, we put a split into ourselves. Even though such a person may be totally sane, the appearance given is that of not being quite real. We have all come across people like that, who are too sweet to be true, as a result of pretence and suppression.

We all have six roots within us. Three roots of good and three of evil. The latter are greed, hate and delusion, but we also have their opposites: generosity, loving-kindness and wisdom. They are the underlying roots of everyone's behaviour. We

must look at ourselves a little more realistically, not blaming ourselves for the unwholesome roots, not patting ourselves on the back for the wholesome ones, but rather accepting their existence within us. Then, we can accept others more clear-sightedly and have a much easier time relating to them.

We will not suffer from disappointments and we won't blame, because we won't live in a world where only black or white exists, either the three roots of unwholesomeness or their opposites. Everybody has the same job to do, to cultivate the wholesome tendencies and uproot the unwholesome ones. We all have the same problems and also the same faculties to deal with them.

If one can love that human being, the one that is 'me' with all its faculties and tendencies, one can love others realistically and usefully. But if one makes a break in the middle and loves the part that is nice and dislikes the part that isn't nice enough, one will never come to grips with reality.

Just as a mother loves and protects her child, we must learn to love ourselves in a wholesome way. If we want to have a relationship with ourselves that is realistic and conducive to growth, we need to become our own mother. A sensible mother can distinguish between that which is useful for her child and that which is detrimental. But she doesn't stop

loving the child when it misbehaves. What does a mother do? She tells the child not to do it again, loves the child as much as she has always loved it and just gets on with the job of bringing up her child. We must start to bring up ourselves. ■



Everyone has
to cultivate the
wholesome
tendencies and
uproot the
unwholesome ones

Excerpt from Twelve Dhamma Talks on Practice, given on Parappuduwa Nuns Island, Dodanduwa, Sri Lanka, on 31 December 1989. Sister Ayya Khema (1923-1997), a Buddhist nun, has written 25 books on meditation



Trust

In every sphere of activity, working together requires trust. When trust is at play, it breeds teamwork, which in turn breeds success.

At UI, it's trust that brings people together. It keeps employees working in harmony and delivering the best service possible. And it keeps millions of customers coming to us, which in turn has made us one of India's most successful general insurance companies.



UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.

Solutions that bring back smiles... real fast!

Registered & Head Office: 24, Whites Road, Chennai-600 014.

Hooked to e-books

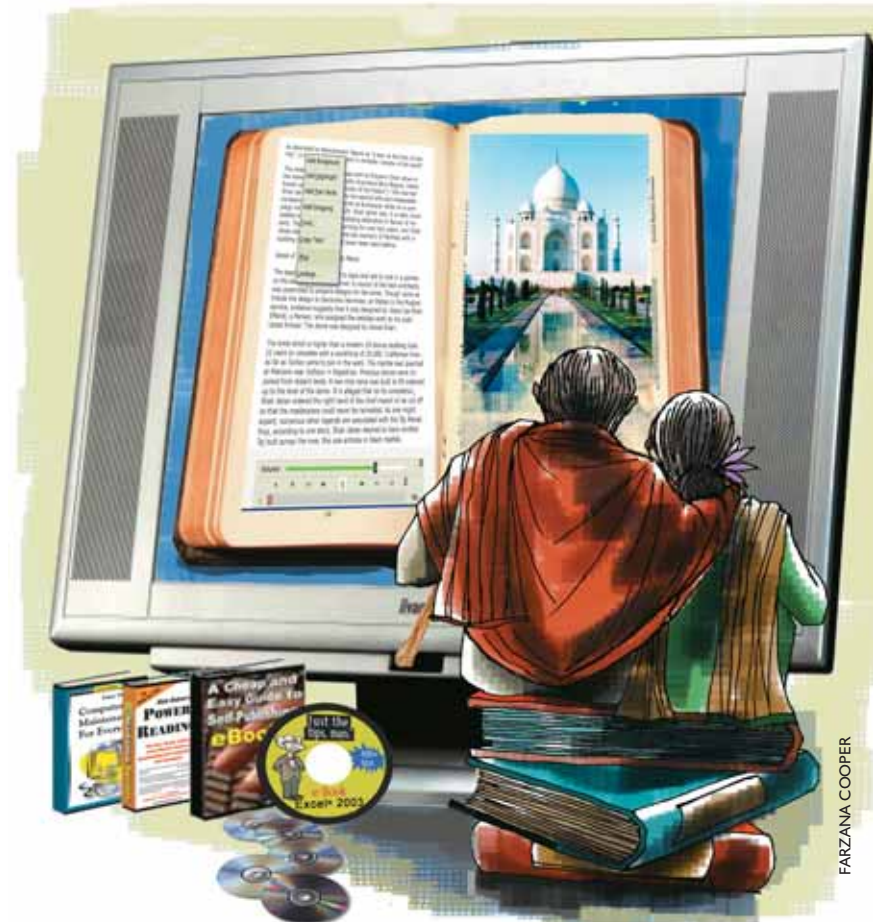
The Purohits step into the world of audio books, digital books and online libraries with their friend

Dinesh C Sharma

I was at the Purohits' apartment, contentedly sipping my coffee, waiting for Mr Purohit to return from the local library. "See how long he's taking. And I can't open the gift till he gets here," grumbled Mrs Purohit. I had come over to wish them a belated 35th wedding anniversary—it was last week. And Mrs Purohit's eyes had been riveted to the gift on the coffee table I had got for them.

"Go ahead and open it," I urged her. She opened the present saying, "It looks like a book, but it seems light." She opened the wrapping and exclaimed, "It's a CD!" She was right the first time "It is a book; an e-book," I said. "Are we talking about books here?" interjected Mr Purohit, as if on cue. He was back from the library, loaded with magazines and hardbound books. "You know, we were planning to buy some books for our grandchildren as Ankita is coming next month for a holiday."

Mrs Purohit didn't quite agree. "They hardly read story books. According to Ankita, the only time they get to 'hear' new stories is when they are listening to something called audio books." "What on earth are audio books?" asked Mr Purohit. Earlier, you had cassettes for children where stories were read aloud, often accompanied by music and songs,



FARZANA COOPER

I explained. Now, you get these in the form of an audio CD or other digital formats such as MP3.

Audio books in MP3 formats are now becoming popular because you can listen to them on portable audio devices such as iPods [a nifty personal digital music player]. Using suitable software, you can also convert text into audio formats. Commercially available audio books are dramatised versions of the printed book with dialogues and sound effects.

"Audio books have been around for almost 50 years," I told him. One of the earliest publishers is Listening Library, a division of New York-based Random House.

"Now, an audio book would be a great gift," said Mrs Purohit. "But do we get them in India?" I assured her they were available. You can buy them at good music and book stores or order them at eBay India (www.ebay.in), although their collection mainly

revolves around spiritualism, meditation and motivation. "So is this book you've given us an audio book?" asked Mr Purohit.

"This goes one step beyond," I replied. "As I said earlier, it's an e-book, which basically means it's an electronic or digital book." Mr Purohit picked it up with interest—it was a classic, *10,000 Dreams Interpreted* by G H Miller, and I had bought it at the World Book Fair in Delhi. "So how do I read it?" he asked.

"On our computer, obviously," said his wife. She was right. All you need is software called Adobe Acrobat Reader on your PC, because the book is in PDF or portable document format. If you don't have it on your computer already, you can download it free from www.adobe.com and start reading. "Will it look like a Word document?" Mr Purohit asked. "No," I answered. As it is in PDF

text-to-speech (TTS) software—this is a program that converts text to speech output, enabling your computer to read to you. Hundreds of TTS software are available, and some for free. But most are unsuitable for Indian phonetics in English because of foreign accents. Some Indian language TTS are also being developed—sample one at "<http://vaachak.mla.iitk.ac.in/vaachak/speak.htm>". Further, digital books never go 'out of print', and can be shared, printed, stored and even published by individuals.

"But you can carry normal books everywhere. Besides, these e-books would be very expensive," said Mrs Purohit. I told her you don't necessarily need a PC to read an e-book. You could read one on a laptop, a palmtop, a personal digital assistant or other portable devices such as Microsoft Reader. All these devices can carry a small library and can be

ding his *Gitanjali*) are featured, but titles in Indian languages are not yet available. The website adds about 400 new titles every month. All the books on this site are classics whose copyright has expired and thus they can now be made available free.

In fact, many publishers and entrepreneurs are publishing digital versions of copyright-expired classics. While they do it for profit, the books available on the Gutenberg website are free. Another website is www.archives.org, which archives audio, video and other digital material, besides books and other texts. And search engine Google has initiated a project to create the world's largest online digital library with billions of books in it.

"Will it be free too?" asked Mrs Purohit. Google is a commercial company. However, as of now, it has promised to keep its digital library free. It plans to digitise some 60 million volumes available in the world's largest libraries like Oxford University, Harvard University, Stanford University and the New York Public Library. The publishing world and libraries are said to be in turmoil over the project.

"But people like me would still go to a library," Mr Purohit said. At this his wife harrumphed, "Yes, and also to meet your friends without your wife around to bother you." Her husband—wisely, in my opinion—declined to respond to that one. "Dinesh, let's run this new e-book on the PC now," he suggested, getting up. I quietly followed him. ■

You can adjust the type size and font, and enlarge or magnify the text in an e-book

format, it will look like a normal book with a table of contents, page numbers and pictures.

"But why read e-books instead of real ones?" asked Mrs Purohit. Well, an e-book has several advantages. For example, you can search the text for a particular section or line, something you can't do with a regular book so easily. You can also adjust the type size and font, and enlarge or magnify the text, making it easier to read. You can even use it with

taken with you wherever you go. As for the cost, new e-books come cheap—starting from Rs 99—as the only cost of production is burning a CD, once an original PDF file is ready. And a large number are already available free on the Internet. To start with, you can visit the website of an interesting initiative called Gutenberg Project (www.gutenberg.org). It has some 50,000 e-books in English and several other languages. Indian authors like Rabindranath Tagore (inclu-

Dinesh C Sharma is a science and technology columnist based in New Delhi. He is a regular contributor to Cnet News.com (US) and The Lancet (UK)

When docs go wrong

Legalpundits on how doctors can be charged for medical negligence—Part II

In the case of *Jacob Mathew vs State of Punjab* (August 2005), the Supreme Court held that a mere accident is not evidence of negligence. The judgement was given on an appeal filed by a doctor in Chandigarh, who was booked for the death of a terminally ill cancer patient.

According to the complaint made by the deceased's family, the hospital could not provide oxygen on time, as there was no gas in the cylinder. The court held that the doctor could not be prosecuted for this and "extreme care and caution" should be exercised while initiating criminal proceedings against doctors for alleged negligence. The court also drew up safeguards, including asking the police to avoid arresting a doctor unless it is unavoidable. Drawing elaborately from established provisions, the bench ruled that this was necessary as "the service which the profession renders is probably the noblest of all".

After Jacob Mathew's case, the criminal liability of doctors has been set aside in almost all circumstances but they have not been given complete freedom. The court has recognised the need to curb misuse of diagnostic procedures and brokering deals for sale of human organs.

According to the Supreme Court,

■ **Negligence proceeds upon the idea of a duty** or an obligation on the part of the doctor to use required care and caution. The breach of this duty may result in injury to the patient.

■ A case of occupational negligence is different from one of professional negligence. **Lack of care, an error of judgment or an accident is not a proof**

of negligence on part of a medical professional. So long as a doctor follows a practice acceptable to the profession of that day, he cannot be held liable because a better alternative treatment is available, or because a more skilled doctor would not choose to resort to the same practice that he follows.

■ A professional may be held liable for negligence if he is not possessed of the requisite skill that he claims or he does not exercise it with reasonable competence in the given case. 'Reasonable competence' is measured in terms of an average, competent person, exercising a basic level of skill. The standard to be applied for judging whether the person charged was negligent or not would be of an ordinary competent person exercising ordinary skill in that profession. **It is not possible for every professional to possess the highest level of expertise.**

■ **Negligence, which is neither gross nor of a higher degree, may provide a ground for action in civil law** but cannot be the basis for prosecution. To prosecute a medical professional for negligence under criminal law, it must be shown that the accused did something or failed to do something that no medical professional in his ordinary senses and prudence would have done in the given circumstances.

In addition, the Supreme Court has decreed that until the Centre and/or the state governments, in consultation with the Medical Council of India, issue statutory rules, a complaint without police intervention may not be entertained unless the complainant has produced *prima facie* (authentic and obvious) evidence in the form of a credible opinion given by another competent doctor. ■





Reliance
Mutual Fund

India's Most Trusted Mutual Fund Brand

Source:
Economic Times Brand Equity survey
by AC Nielsen ORG-MARG

Call: 3030 1111 www.reliancemutual.com

CATEGORY: MUTUAL FUND RANKING. Rating Methodology: Derived from Brand Equity supplement published in The Economic Times on February 15, 2006. The Most Trusted Brands Survey aims to identify the brands that bond the best with consumers. Conducted by AC Nielsen ORG-MARG, with a sample of over 7000 distributed across socio-economic class, age, income and geography. Each brand was evaluated on relatedness, perceived popularity, quality connotation, distinctiveness and repurchase intent. For mutual funds, the total business generated and assets under management were used. These were then further subject to scrutiny to ensure that due to influence of public sector in these sectors, private sector players were not pushed out merely because of size. The final brand rating is arrived at in four steps. First a familiarity weight is attached to each brand for every respondent. Then the brand score is calculated based on the familiarity score, the overall rating of the brand, and the rating of the brand on each of the various parameters. After this, the brand score is multiplied by the familiarity weight and then is averaged across all respondents to get the final overall brand score. Sorting the numbers for all brands in ascending order yields the Most Trusted Brands List. Source: www.economicstimes.com. The information contained herein has been obtained from sources published by third parties. While such publications are believed to be reliable, however, neither the AMC, the Trustees, the Fund nor any of their affiliates or representatives assume any responsibility for the accuracy of such information.

Sponsor: Reliance Capital Limited. **Trustee:** Reliance Capital Trustee Co. Limited. **Investment Manager:** Reliance Capital Asset Management Limited. **Statutory Details:** The Sponsor, the Trustee and the Investment Manager are incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956. **Minimum Application Amount:** Rs. 5,000/- and in multiples of Re. 1 thereafter under each option. **General Risk Factors:** Mutual Funds and securities investments are subject to market risks and there is no assurance or guarantee that the objectives of the Scheme will be achieved. As with any investment in securities, the NAV of the Units issued under the Scheme can go up or down depending on the factors and forces affecting the capital markets. Past performance of the Sponsor/AMC/Mutual Fund is not indicative of the future performance of the Scheme. Reliance Equity Fund is only the name of the Scheme and does not in any manner indicate either the quality of the Scheme, its future prospects or returns. The Sponsor is not responsible or liable for any loss resulting from the operation of the Scheme beyond their initial contribution of Rs.1 lakh towards the setting up of the Mutual Fund and such other accretions and additions to the corpus. The Mutual Fund is not guaranteeing or assuring any dividend/ bonus. The Mutual Fund is also not assuring that it will make periodical dividend/bonus distributions, though it has every intention of doing so. All dividend/bonus distributions are subject to the investment performance of the Scheme. For details of scheme features apart from those mentioned above and scheme specific risk factors, please refer to the provisions of the Offer Document, Offer Document and Key Information Memorandum cum Application Forms are available at AMC office/Investor Service centres/AMC website/ Distributors. **Please read the offer document carefully before investing.**

How are you affected?

Sandeep Shanbhag decodes the highs and lows of Budget 2006 for silvers

■ First things first. **Budget 2006 has brought no changes in your tax quotient.** The tax-free income remains the same—Rs 1.85 lakh. But, from this year, if your gross income is below the tax threshold (before deductions), you needn't bother with the annual ritual of filing a tax return. Earlier, according to the 'One-by-Six scheme', anyone who owned residential or commercial property, a vehicle, a telephone, travelled abroad or held a credit card had to file a return. **The One-by-Six scheme is now abolished.** This move will benefit a number of senior citizens who did not earn taxable income but had to file a tax return.

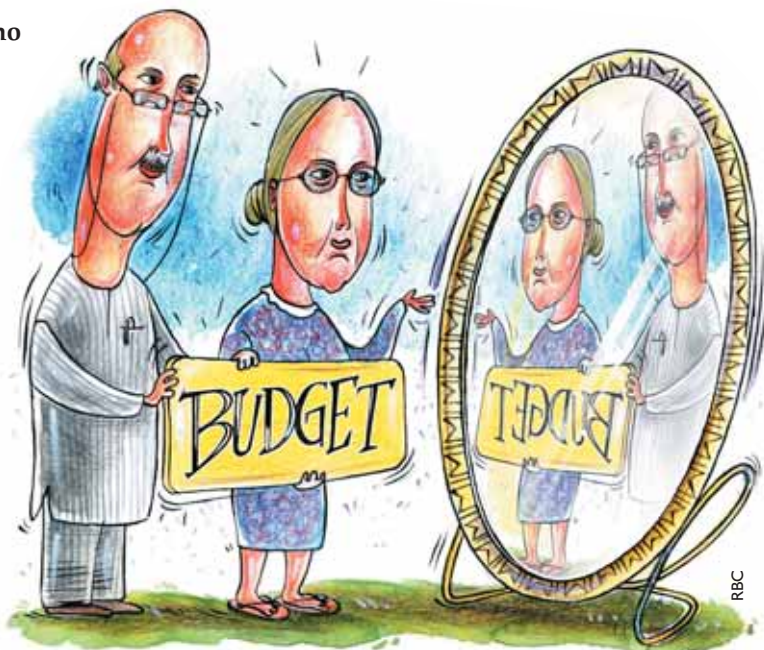
Bonus points This amendment is from the 2005-2006 financial year and not the next.

■ The other big-ticket change: **Section 80 C benefit will now be given to fixed deposits of five years and more with banks, including scheduled banks.** That means you can invest up to Rs 1 lakh and get up to 20 per cent rebate on the actual tax. There will be few takers for this as the interest will be taxable and similar options—National Savings Certificates and Public Provident Fund—already exist. It's also not clear whether the interest from FDs, like NSCs, will earn the Section 80C benefit.

Bogus points This move is essentially for banks as they were constantly complaining about the competition with other small savings instruments.

■ **Securities Transaction Tax (STT) is increased by 25 per cent.** This means redemption of units of a mutual fund will attract STT of 0.25 per cent as against the earlier 0.2 per cent. Similarly, buying and selling equity shares would attract STT of 0.125 per cent as against the earlier 0.1 per cent. So, for equity shares worth Rs 1 lakh, you pay Rs 125.

Bogus points This will raise the cost of investing by 0.25 per cent of STT.



■ Do good but take the credit, as anonymous donations to charitable organisations will now be taxed. Donations to partly religious and partly charitable organisations will be taxed only if the donation is for an educational or medical purpose.

Bonus points Donations to completely religious organisations will be exempt from any tax.

■ Service tax has been increased from 10 per cent to 12 per cent and, besides other services, covers ATM operations, maintenance and management. **There is no service tax liability on ATM cardholders.** This is applicable only to third parties who provide services to banks in relation to ATM operation, maintenance and management.

Bogus points However, customers will have to pay more for almost all major banking transactions, like transferring money, making demand drafts, overdrafts, locker maintenance and credit card bills. And the 0.1 per cent tax on cash withdrawals of Rs 25,000 and more stays. There is no getting away from that. ■

The writer may be contacted at shanbhag@vsnl.net

Most silver citizens
would give anything
to experience youth again.

Our 2-year subscription
costs just Rs. 384.

Wouldn't it be great to have a second childhood? To start life afresh?
Because at Harmony, a magazine for people above 55, we believe
that age is in the mind. Which is why, you should live young.

Please turn overleaf for our exciting subscription offers.

Visit us at : www.harmonyindia.org


celebrate age **harmony**
the magazine



Subscribe to Harmony Magazine now and get
Zandu Chyavanprash Special free.



Subscription Card

(Please tick below for your choice of subscription)

☐ I would like to gift a subscription **OR**

☐ I want to subscribe to HARMONY

And the subscriber will also get Zandu Chyavanprash Special free with this offer.

Subscription	You Pay	You Get
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years (24 issues)	Rs. 384	Zandu Chyavanprash Special 2 bottles of 450 gms. worth Rs. 210
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year (12 issues)	Rs. 220	Zandu Chyavanprash Special 1 bottle of 450 gms. worth Rs. 105

Please fill in CAPITAL LETTERS and mail the form below with your Cheque / DD in this Business Reply Envelope. In case of Credit Card payment you may fax the form to 011-2368 4841.

Personal details: Mr/Mrs.

Address

City State Postal Code Country

Phone E-mail

I wish to pay by: ☐ Cheque ☐ Demand Draft

I am enclosing Cheque / DD No. dated drawn on (specify bank)

made payable to **M/s LMIL-A/C Harmony** for Rs.

(Add Rs. 10/- for non-Delhi cheques) or please charge to my Credit Card.

☐ Amex ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Diners

Card Number

Card Member's Name

Card Expiry Date Month Year

Card Member's Signature

Date of Birth Date Month Year

I want to gift the subscription to (Please do not fill if subscribing for yourself):

Mr/Mrs/Ms First Name

Last Name

Address

City State

Postal Code Country

Phone (Off.) (Res.)

E-mail

Website: www.harmonyindia.org For queries e-mail us at: harmonycare@intoday.com



SUBSCRIPTION TERMS & CONDITIONS: Rates and offer valid in India only. Allow 3-4 weeks for processing of your subscription. Free subscription gift will reach you within 8-10 weeks of commencement of your subscription. It will not be possible to entertain any request for cancellation of your subscription once your free gift has been dispatched. The free subscription gifts are covered by guarantee for manufacturing defect / quality / damage in transit as per standards laid down by the manufacturer. Add Rs. 10 for non-Delhi cheques. Please write your name and address on the reverse of the Cheque / DD. Do not send cash. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi / New Delhi only. The publisher reserves the right to terminate or extend this offer or any part thereof at any time, or to accept or reject any or all forms received at their absolute discretion without assigning any reason. Information regarding such cancellation / extension / discontinuance will however be published subsequently in the magazine. For further details, please contact our Customer Care Department: Write in to: **Harmony Care, Living Media India Limited, Videocon Tower, 13th Floor, E1 Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi - 110055**, Call: (011) 5102 0913, Fax: (011) 2368 4841, E-mail: harmonycare@intoday.com

NOTE: The Harmony collects and processes personal information for the purposes of customer analysis, market research and to provide you with any further details from our organisation. Steps have been taken to ensure that consistently high standards of data protection are in place.



Insurance can only
reimburse your
hospital bills,

What about the
pain and suffering?

Aarogyam

Know it early... Exactly.

Know the inside story and Prevent

A unique diagnostic profile for a
comprehensive health evaluation

aarogyam 30

- ▶ Lipid Profile [7]
- ▶ Thyroid Profile [3]
- ▶ Iron Deficiency Profile [4]
- ▶ Liver Profile [10]
- ▶ Renal Profile [4]
- ▶ Infectious Diseases [2]

**AVAIL SPECIAL
DISCOUNT OFFER!**

(TILL WORLD HEALTH DAY)

PRESENTED BY

Thyrocare

World's largest thyroid testing laboratory

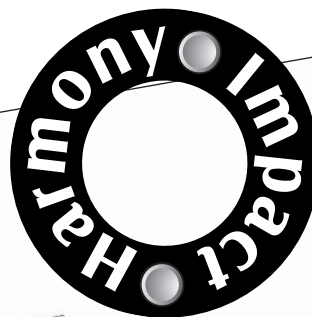
Available in a majority of pharmacies, laboratories and hospitals



THE BEST EQUIPPED CLINICAL CHEMISTRY LABORATORY IN INDIA • NABL ACCREDITED • ISO CERTIFIED • CRISIL GRADED

For more details, please contact: **AHMEDABAD** (079) 27545321 • **BANGALORE** (080) 32716713 • **BHUBANESHWAR** (0674) 2531312 • **CHENNAI** (044) 28282111, 28217180 • **COCHIN** (0484) 5514501 • **COIMBATORE** (0422) 2496473, 2493144 • **HYDERABAD** (040) 55229970 • **JAIPUR** (0141) 2366912 • **KOLKATA** (033) 23344077 • **MUMBAI** (022) 23739518, 23790098 • **NEW DELHI** (011) 41000839, 41658685 • Email: aarogyam@thyrocare.com visit www.thyrocare.com

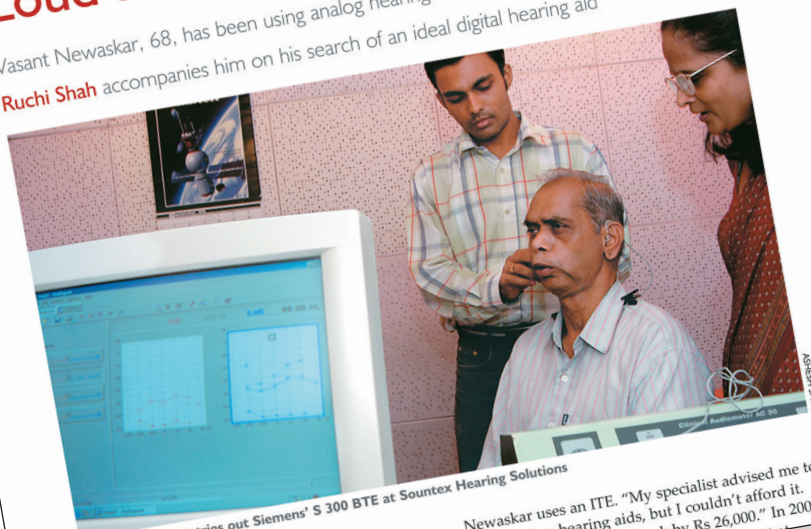
Sound decision



products & services | trial room

Loud and clear

Vasant Newaskar, 68, has been using analog hearing aid for seven years. Ruchi Shah accompanies him on his search of an ideal digital hearing aid



Vasant Newaskar tries out Siemens' S 300 BTE at Sountex Hearing Solutions

In 1998, a few months before Vasant Newaskar was to retire from Bombay Suburban Electric Supply, he realised he couldn't hear properly.

Newaskar uses an ITE. "My specialist advised me to go in for two hearing aids, but I couldn't afford it. Both would have set me back by Rs 26,000." In 2003,

aids. The analogs increase the volume of sounds, therefore not allowing the user to hear the sounds. Aditee recommended an ear, saying, "Mr Newaskar is not hearing with the right ear. If he uses an aid, he will be able to hear the sounds. Widex has three families of digital hearing aids: Widex, Senso and Senso Diva. The price of Widex is Rs 14,000 to Rs 75,000. Newaskar could afford even the cheapest model. He bought a two-band Bravo B-12 (Rs 22,500), was tested on his left ear. The number of channels and bands, which can differentiate between speech and noise, of the level of distribution of noise, When he was made to answer questions, Newaskar felt the vast improvement.

Verdict: Newaskar's first encounter with a digital hearing aid (in his left ear) was a floor for the first time, differentiate the analog to digital hearing aid.

SURROUND SOUND

Siemens' S 300 BTE | at Sountex Hearing Solutions, Vile Parle, Mumbai | Rs 28,000

After going over Newaskar's hearing test, another audiogram at Sountex, he told him he could go on with one hearing aid. The difference would be noticeable. The S 300 BTE with active voice channels, priced at Rs 28,000, or

In October 2005, 68 year-old Vasant Newaskar tried digital hearing aids for the first time as part of a *Harmony* test drive. The experience has changed his life, says **Ruchi Shah**

In October 2005, *Harmony* published "55 Plus Ways to Make Silver Sparkle", a special issue on products and services. The aim: to make your life easier and better. The issue evoked a host of letters from readers—while a few criticised it as an advertising gimmick, many more wrote in to tell us that it had the potential to improve their lives.

That's what happened with 68 year-old Vasant Newaskar, a member of the Harmony Interactive Centre in Girgaum,

Mumbai. For the special issue, we asked Newaskar to 'test drive' a digital hearing aid for us—it changed his life.

IN THE BEGINNING

In 1998, when Newaskar first consulted an audiologist, he was advised to wear hearing aids in both ears. "It would have cost Rs 26,000, which was a bit much for a retired pensioner like me," he told *Harmony*. So Newaskar opted for a Behind-the-Ear (BTE) analog hearing aid from Danabox in his left ear alone.



ASHESH SHAH

A close-up of Oticon hearing aids; and Newaskar at the Interactive Centre

THE TRIAL

The three-day trial room, held at three different clinics in Mumbai, exposed Newaskar to the latest digital hearing options available in the market. At all three clinics, specialists who examined him informed him that he had severe hearing loss in his right ear and

that he needed a hearing aid in both ears. He also experienced the clarity of digital hearing aids for the first time. Newaskar was impressed by the aids termed as Completely-in-the-Canal (CIC) aids, which rest inside the ear canal, making them virtually invisible once worn.

DECISION TIME

Newaskar couldn't get them out of his head! After two months of mulling it over, in January he gathered his audiogram reports from the trial and told his own audiologist, Dr Satyan Bhan, that he wanted digital CIC hearing aids for both ears. "I didn't want hearing aids that could be seen," he admits. Dr Bhan recommended CIC aids from Swiss company Oticon for Newaskar, with features like fully automatic volume control, which is capable of adjusting the volume in milliseconds. The cost: Rs 19,600 each. "I know they are expensive but I trust Dr Bhan. And fortunately, my fixed deposit matured this year so I could afford them. Besides, they have a shelf life of 10 to 12 years." Newaskar sold the spare BTE aid he used to keep for emergencies to Dr Bhan and paid the final price of Rs. 37,000 in two instalments.

AND NOW

With any new hearing aid, the first three months is a time of adjustment and Newaskar experienced discomfort in the first month. The sound has become omni-directional for him, which means he can hear almost everything clearly, even several sounds and voices. "But sometimes when five people are talking simultaneously, I can't hear distinctively," confesses Newaskar. But he insists his hearing has improved. "With the analog, I couldn't watch TV with a low volume. There is much more clarity and the noises from the street aren't so loud. I am so used to digital hearing aids now and so happy with them that I wouldn't ever want to go back to my old analog now." ■

Afterlife

Experts at www.naukri.com answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement



Q After retiring in 1996 as a lab assistant, I moved to my native village in Andhra Pradesh where I had a large coconut plantation. A couple of years ago, I incurred huge losses after a disease ruined the yield. Now, at 68, I am forced to look for a job. Please tell me how and where I can start.

First and foremost, don't lose hope. Put the past behind you and start thinking about the future. Take some time to examine your likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. Then, meet a professional at an employment agency who can help you choose a career according to your aptitude and temperament.

Alternatively, you can also learn basic computer operating skills that will enable you to work as a data entry operator. These jobs are easy to get and you can work from home as well, if you have a computer. In fact, if working with computers interests you, you can enroll in distance learning programmes or e-learning modules, preferably in a lab technology course, to enhance your knowledge and skills. You will never be short of opportunities.

Q I recently lost my husband and now loneliness is gnawing at me. A neighbour recently suggested I get myself a job. Apart from my culinary and piano playing skills, I don't have any other qualifications. I am 54 years old and a graduate in Commerce. Can I apply in a school as a piano teacher without a BEd degree or do I need to get one?

Right now, you need to think of ways to keep yourself busy. You can't apply for a BEd degree as you have exceeded the age limit. But that shouldn't stop you from becoming a piano teacher. Start spreading the word in your neighbourhood that

you are starting piano lessons at home. Ask children in your neighbourhood to spread the word in their schools and colleges as well. You are bound to get students. You can also join a cookery course to further hone your skills and then begin to take lessons for others once you master it.

Q I recently retired from the post of physical training (PT) teacher from a college in Goa. My main job was to teach football, the favourite sports in Goa, to the students. Though I was looking forward to retirement, I now realise that I miss my job as a coach. Is it possible for me to look for a part-time job as a trainer in some big company that encourages football? If yes, how do I go about it?

Retirement can be a time to do all the things you did not do while you were working. You should pursue what you have overlooked all your working life, be it a hobby, travelling, reading or learning a new skill. But if you think you must step back in time to take up coaching a football team, then go right ahead. You should consider giving big clubs like Vasco Sports Club of Goa and Dempo Sports Club a try.

If not for a position as coach, you can at least apply for the position of an assistant coach. This position is much easily available. But the key word here is patience. Find out from relatives and friends if a company is looking out for a coach. Else, you can also contact colleges and your former colleagues in your area for a part-time job.

To keep yourself engaged while you look for a good opening, take up part-time voluntary work with NGOs involved in educating children. See if you can coach poor kids. This may turn out to be more fulfilling in many ways. Truly, life begins at sixty, go ahead and enjoy it!

Late Bloomers

K Gopalakrishna Pillai's idea to cultivate jasmine jumpstarted a district-wide movement in Ernakulam, Kerala, says **John Mary**

After 35 years at LIC in Vazhikulangara in the North Parur taluk (a cluster of villages), Ernakulam, K Gopalakrishna Pillai was reconciled to a gaping stretch of superannuation. After retirement in 1997, the days would go by slowly while he waited for his wife Santha Devi to come back from the school

where she worked as principal. Then one day, on an impulse, he picked up his spade and planted a few jasmine saplings. In some months, the plants bloomed; Santha Devi's hairdo took a turn for the better with home-grown jasmine in her hair; and the idea began to blossom in Pillai's mind that this could be more than just a pastime.

He sat down with friends C U Ravi Kumar, a retired 60 year-old professor of zoology, and K K Joy, 56, a former Tata employee, to discuss the prospects of jasmine cultivation. The shrub, *jasminum sambac*, flowers in four months and sprouts fragrant buds perennially for more than a decade. The buds fetch between Rs 80 and Rs 400 a kilo. And with



A S SATHEESH

Gopalakrishna Pillai, with his wife Santha Devi, pioneered the movement but he is still a reluctant businessman



Sasikumar has formulated a natural pesticide for his own plants; Ravi Kumar and wife Ambika in their garden

the existing gap in demand and supply of buds in Kerala, they realised that jasmine held out a great promise for those who wished to make a living out of it. They did.

Initially, they faced several obstacles. Vendors didn't want the market to be controlled by a new breed of growers and preferred wilted buds from Tamil Nadu to better local produce. In response, Pillai, Kumar and Joy formed the Parur *Taluk* Floriculture Development Society in January 2000, ignored the local vendors and started selling directly to main suppliers in Kochi. That worked.

Buoyed by their success, the three friends initiated the formation of the Ernakulam Jilla Pushpa Karshaka Swashraya Sanghom in 2002, a self-reliant society to handle trade from four other

taluk. Gradually, they initiated the younger generation into the business, reined in middlemen, empowered women and learnt the art of scientific farming.

Today, jasmine farming has become a rewarding activity in a state often criticised for its entrepreneurial laggardness. The Ernakulam Sanghom is now a leading producer of jasmine in Kerala (100 acres are reserved for cultivation) and services markets

Sanghom to grab a piece of the pie. In Pillai's village, the number of jasmine growers was four in 1997. Now, 1,100 families are members of the Sanghom and each family earns an income throughout the year based on the extent of cultivation.

"As jasmine growing is mostly a family enterprise in this region, it also plays a seminal role in bringing the family together," says Professor Ravi Kumar,

Farmers from other districts are now flocking to the Ernakulam Sanghom

in Coimbatore and Mumbai. From a paltry Rs 2.3 lakh in 2002-03, its turnover crossed Rs 50 lakh in 2004-05. The turnover at the end of March 2006 was close to Rs 1 crore. Farmers from other districts too are flocking to the

talking about flower picking that begins with participation from everyone in the family every morning. For instance, Pillai's wife Santha Devi contributes to the business after she retired as school principal; and their

KNOW YOUR JASMINE

- Peak flowering season: February-May
- The December chill brings down production
- The Kerala variety is noted for its aroma, colour and size
- The yield per plant ranges from 0.75 kg and 1 kg a year
- Prices range from Rs 80 to Rs 400 a kilo
- Flowers are graded for their size, aroma and freshness
- A cent (one-hundredth of an acre) of land can hold around 30 plants and there should be at least 1.25 m distance between two plants
- The first harvest can be made after six months
- On an average, 100 plants can yield 100 gm or more of jasmine every day
- The Sanghom has five retail outlets in Ernakulam; the latest outlet is called the Flower Shoppe; it's in Kaloar, on Azad Road; the other outlets are in Paravoor, Thripunithura, Edavanakkad and Perumbavoor. The Sanghom has collection centres at Paravoor, Thripunithura, Perumbavoor, Kolencherry, Kothamangalam, Vypeen and Thrikkakara
- The Paravoor Taluk Pushpa Krishi Vikasana Samithy has published a booklet called *Kuttimulla Krishi* giving directions about the kind of land and place suitable for growing jasmine, the soil mixture required, the water requirement, fertilisers, pruning, pest and disease control and other details of the production
- For further details, contact: 0484 2444321/3957712

daughter Reshmi helped until she got married. "And because the majority of jasmine is grown in homesteads, there are no labour disputes," adds Ravi Kumar. His wife Ambika Devi says the business has given her family a chance to go back to nature. "My son had no clue about gardening and garden tools," she says. "In a

end of last year, he had 600. In 2005, his total income was Rs 50,000 and he expects the yield to rise further as the plants mature.

Ironically, Gopalakrishna Pillai, the man who started the movement, insists that profit should not really be the point. "Jasmine farming, whether in pots or plots,

cooperative inspector, has formulated a natural pesticide, *panchakaviam*, comprising cow dung, urine, milk, ghee, curd, plantain, jaggery and tender coconut water, for the 200 jasmine plants in his garden. "The seniors here have busted the myth that elders know things but can't do them," he says with a chuckle. "They know it and they've done it!"

The myth that elders know things but can't do them is busted, says Sasikumar

state where the youth think farming is 'infra-dig', jasmine has blurred the distinction."

The trade has also gained respectability because it has changed the economy at the village level, generating income and employment for almost everyone. While collection boys get Rs 2 from every family to deliver the produce to the Sanghom, growers earn between Rs 25,000 and Rs 50,000 every year. K K Suresh, 48, began growing jasmine in 2002, supported by wife Anita and son Kirpal. He began with 200 plants—by the

is not a money spinner. Tending plants like one's own children will fetch decent returns. An overkill is unethical and will be unrewarding sooner than later," he says.

More than 60 per cent members of the Sanghom are women. "Women outnumber men as active members in our societies," says Pillai. "That's because the trade has given them a sense of purpose, some income and loads of self-confidence." Members are also making their own efforts to guard against attack by mites and pests—N G Sasikumar, 45, a

The Sanghom is not yet exploring the export option. At current rates, a minimum consignment of 240 kg is required to justify the freight. Given that volume, the freight would be around Rs 20 a kilo. If the volume is lower, the freight rate can shoot up to Rs 80 a kilo.

Ensuring a daily export of 240 kg is not an easy target in Ernakulam where production hovers between 60 kg and 450 kg. However, when more districts come in to the fold of the Sanghom, the society can contemplate the idea of direct trade with flower markets overseas. That'll be the next big step for this tiny, bold initiative. ■

Agenda on ageing

Harmony launches its first monograph on how to deal with ageing in India



The cover of Harmony's first monograph; (above) Tina Ambani, Maharashtra State Minister of Social Justice, Chandrakant Handore and Dr S D Gokhale lighting the lamp at the monograph launch

The Harmony Initiative was born of a dream to touch the life of every elder person across India, to improve the quality of life of these 'silvers', to ensure that society and government cannot ignore them any longer, and spur them into greater self-reliance. Over the past two years, we have realised we need to learn more about silvers if we are to make a real difference to their lives, and share this knowledge with government and non-government organisations working towards the welfare of the elderly.

With this in mind, the Harmony Initiative launched its first monograph, *Ageing in India in the*

21st Century: A Research Agenda—Priority Areas and Methodological Issues, on 11 March 2006, at the Reliance Energy Manage-

ment Institute complex in Goregaon, Mumbai. The monograph, authored by Dr S Siva Raju, vice-president, Research & Training, Harmony, is a country-specific report prepared on the lines of the research agenda framed by the United Nations Office on Ageing and International Association of Gerontology in 2002. Its major aim: to focus on emerging issues related to ageing and to suggest alternative approaches to study these issues.

"Till recently, ageing was not a priority issue in India," observed Dr Raju at the seminar. According to him, the rapid population growth of the elderly and wide diversity in their profiles needs

significant consideration of researchers and policy planners. The growth of individualism in modern life has led to greater isolation of the elderly. Further, the profile of the elderly is undergoing a change—they no longer wish to be passive receivers, instead choosing to lead an active life of fulfilment.

Researchers need to look at ageing in new ways, recognising that silvers are extremely diverse—with segments like female elderly, rural elderly—with diverse concerns. "Given the heterogeneity of the elderly population, there is a need for a multi-level approach to research, training, advocacy and services," said Tina Ambani, who heads the Harmony Initiative, at the launch of the monograph. "I hope the issues highlighted in the report will spur government and non-government



ANURAG T SHARMA

Chandrakant Handore and Tina Ambani with the monograph; the audience listening to speakers at the seminar

agencies to treat them as 'priority areas' and make concrete plans to address them." These issues include the need to study the determinants of successful ageing; evaluate the impact of health problems; focus on elder abuse; evolve successful support systems; and, most important, strengthening inter-generational bonds and family networks.

Indeed, all good things begin at home—and that was the theme of a seminar, "Quality of Life of India's Silvers: Need for Harmony among Generations", which followed the launch. Moderated by Anuja Gulati of UNFPA (United Nations

haran, managing director of Heritage Hospital, Hyderabad. He also expressed concern about the existing number of 'professional caregiver' courses in India and said that they are insufficient.

For his part, Dr S D Gokhale, a former UN advisor on ageing and the acting president of International Longevity Centre, Pune, came down heavily on the traditional mindset and attitude of government bodies towards policies and provisions for elderly care in India.

"Senior citizens want dignity and respect and the creation of old-age homes defeats the purpose,"

The difference between families in India and Western countries was also emphasised at the seminar. "It would be misleading to make a clear distinction between disintegrating joint families and emerging nuclear families in India," said Sharit K Bhowmik, head of sociology department, University of Mumbai, in his valedictory address. "Both continue to retain strong ties with family members. So the concept of extended family holds greater credence in India."

The Harmony Initiative will widely circulate the monograph to students, researchers and policy makers. We hope the document spurs government and non-government agencies for urgent action.

At the launch, Maharashtra's State Minister of Social Justice Chandrakant Handore said, "We need to interact at an official level with proposals to further the cause." We definitely won't settle for less. ■

—Arati Rajan Menon
with Trina Mukherjee
and Ruchi Shah

The report should spur government and non-government agencies into action

Population Fund) and Prof C P Prakasham of International Institute for Population Sciences, a dozen experts discussed the role of the family in improving the lives of the elderly. "Feeling responsible towards elders instead of treating them as a burden can work well for joint families," observed K R Gangad-

Dr Gokhale said. And he described the National Policy for Older Persons (formulated in 1999) as a mere "shopping list" with no funds to support it. "Day care centres, counselling centres and assistive devices for senior citizens are ways to encourage them to live a meaningful life," he concluded.

Total recall

The centre organises a one-day camp on dementia



DEMENTIA, DEFINED AS DETERIORATION OF intellectual faculties, such as memory, concentration and judgment, resulting from an organic disease or a disorder of the brain, is a serious concern for silvers. With this in mind, following a lecture on dementia by Dr Anjali Chhabria two months ago at the Harmony Interactive Centre in Girgaum, South Mumbai, another camp on dementia was held at the centre on 4 March.

For the camp, a team from Eisai Pharmaceuticals India Pvt Ltd joined hands with psychiatrist Kavan Lakdawala, a consultant at Sir H N Hospital and Conwest Jain Clinic in Girgaum, Mumbai, to examine members and educate them about dementia. They used a simple 'Mini Mental State Examination', which gauges the degree of memory loss suffered by a person—a score of 31 points denotes a sound memory.

Seventy-two members took the test and most of them were confident they would clear it. Shaskar Samant, 72, from Koliwadi, Mumbai, and his wife Suhasini, 68, were among them. "I want to learn more about the disease as one of my family members suffers from it," said Suhasini Samant. "Such informative camps also keep us updated about our own health."

When the results were out, 15 people scored below 29. While 12 members were advised to consult a psychiatrist, three were found to be 'cases of concern'. Dr Lakdawala stepped in to calm the ripples of anxiety among members, asserting that dementia could be cured if detected early. You need to recognise the signs. These include forgetting important appointments, your name or names of family members. "Don't accept or dismiss this as a sign of growing old," urged Dr Lakdawala. "Act on it." He also explained that people could take preventive measures to ward off dementia. Fear, tension, self-doubt, substance abuse, loneliness or hypochondria (a conviction that one is or is likely to become ill) are some of the contributing factors to dementia. Be aware, and be alert.

IN APRIL

YOGA

Mondays, Wednesdays; 10.30 am-12.00 noon (men); 3.00 pm-4.30 pm (women)

COMPUTERS

Mondays, Wednesdays; 10.30 am-12 noon; 3 pm-4.30 pm

INTERACTIVE

April 4: 5.00 pm-6.00 pm. Session on Naturopathy by representative of *Kala Vidya Sankul*

HOBBIES

April 18: 5.00 pm-6.30 pm. Session on fun games by Gaurav Sharma

April 27: 5.00 pm-6.00 pm. Session on fun cooking by Deepa Agarwal

COMMON BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

April 29: 4.00 pm onwards

Programmes are subject to last-minute change

To know more about the centre and its activities, call us at (022) 32976440/6441 or email centre.thakurdwar@harmonyindia.org

I am 60 years old and live in Pune, Maharashtra. I am looking for home stays at any hill station from 1 May to 10 June 2006. I require a clean double bed with private bathroom. Please get in touch if you have an accommodation within Rs 300 per day.

Contact Abdul Razzak Mewan on 09422079871

I am running an old age home in Mira Road (East), Mumbai by the name of 'My Home Foundation Trust'. It is a registered trust and we even enroll bed-ridden patients. Those interested are free to visit the home anytime to check the infrastructure and facilities.

Contact Muzaffar Khan on 09867458422; email: muzaffar15@rediffmail.com

I am a 63 year-old, retired senior officer from Bank of Baroda living in Lucknow. I want to utilise my

experience by working with NGOs (Non-government Organisations) or NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company) based in Lucknow as caretaker, consultant or an auditor.

Contact Om Prakash Srivastava on (0522) 2418916; Mobile: 09335266767

I am a 63 year-old resident of Mumbai and like collecting coins and currency notes for school exhibitions. Anyone willing to offer resourceful guidance and help on the subject is welcome.

Contact A Varghese on (022) 55552044

I am 60 year-old retired professor from Panchkula, Haryana. I have travelled all over the Himalayan states. Like-minded silvers interested in exploring the mountains kindly get in touch with me.

Contact Prof V R Sethi on Mobile: 09318799612, 09417431308

Way to lead an independent life when it matters...

Pedder Johnson

Quality Independence



Raised Toilet Seat & Safety Rails



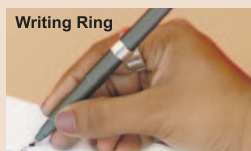
Wall Mounted Indian Pan Toilet



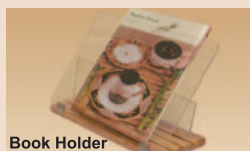
Backrest



Folding Shower Seat & Grab Bars



Writing Ring



Book Holder



Folding Bed Tray



Velcro Grip for Spoon, Fork

Pedder Johnson offers you a wide range of products with unprecedented safety, comfort and convenience. Making you as independent as you want to be.

Manufactured & Marketed By:

Fordham Pressings (I) Pvt. Ltd.

318, Swastik Chambers, Sion Trombay Road, Chembur, Mumbai 400071. Phone: +91-22-25228857/ 59. Fax: +91-22-25228858. Email: fordham@vsnl.in

Accessories to make life easy

Paradise islands

More than a year after the tsunami, the Andaman and Nicobar islands are seeing a new rush of visitors. **Sheila Kumar** is among them

An aerial view of the Andamans with its white beaches and emerald-blue water

The tsunami of December 2004 savaged the Nicobar Islands, and did not spare the Andamans either. A series of unrelenting tremblers inflicted damage on roads and buildings, submerged lighthouses and smaller islets, wreaked havoc on boats and people. However, with over 60 per cent of the local population dependant on tourism, it wasn't long before the Andamans set themselves right. Today, the Information, Publicity and Tour-

ism Department of Andaman and Nicobar tourism is not holding back on publicity. The catch phrase of the television commercial: 'Emerald. Blue. And You.' The 'tsunami damage' just makes for another facet of tourism!

Balmy weather, swaying palms, white sand beaches, coral reefs laid out just so, and a variety of delicious seafood are an invitation from the island. However, be warned: 60 per cent of the islands are closed to tourists for security

reasons and permits are required to visit the islands and reserves. Even Indians require a special pass to trawl the Nicobar Islands, which the Government of India declared an Aboriginal Tribal Reserve Area in 1957.

The former British penal colony consists of more than 550 islands, some really small, most with sandy beaches, shallow coves, dense tropical vegetation, mountain peaks and lush rainforests. I went on a five-day trip, sight-



ing around; *jhalmuri* (spicy puffed rice) and candy floss vendors plying a brisk trade. Just a stone's throw away is the Light-house, by far the best seafood restaurant in Port Blair, where platters of live fish are brought to you to inspect and select.

To the northeast of the jetty lies Ross Island, with a candy-striped, green-canopied lighthouse to one side. Boats take tourists to the island, controlled by the Indian Navy, from Aberdeen Jetty thrice a day. The small island, which was once house to the officers of the British Empire posted to the Andamans, bears an eerie air now. It's all there—Officer's Mess, tennis and squash courts, ballroom, church, bakery, hospital, bazaar, residential quarters, cemetery—but in the form of moss-and-brick skeletons. Gigantic roots of banyan trees support the bricks; at places, the bricks themselves have fallen but the roots still retain their shapes. To the far end of Ross Island stand the Japanese bunkers, ugly concrete monstrosities that face Aberdeen Jetty, reminders of the time the Japanese had take over the islands.

seeing at a relaxed pace. Let me give you a guided tour.

Day One: I saved the sunny day for Port Blair and the surrounding region. The room at the Circuit Guest House extends into a splendid balcony view of the fascinating Aberdeen Jetty with its hoary old cannon and its far-reaching promenades that circle the waters in the bay. By night, the jetty is awash with lights; little boats bobbing up and down in the inky waters; people stroll-

Day Two: More beachcombing today. Not all the beaches in the Andamans are a lotus-eater's

By night, Aberdeen Jetty is awash with lights; little boats bobbing in waters and *jhalmuri* vendors plying a brisk trade

delight, many being tidal beaches festooned with rocks and boulders, unending flat stretches of sand leading to foamy waves. Corbyn's Cove, a shallow beach

too close to a quarry for comfort, doesn't have clean waters washing in, yet it's popular with Indian tourists. Surprisingly, no one minds sharing the beach with stray cows.

Havelock Island, 58 km away from Port Blair, is the 'best beach you can get to in Asia', voted Beach No. 7 by *TIME* magazine in November 2004, a month before the tsunami. Left untouched by the disaster, Havelock has a good stretch of white sand, an outlying hedge of coral reefs, and waters full of large fish—you can occasionally see dolphins here. Glass-bottomed boats take you a little further out to gaze upon the ocean floor bright with blue fish, pink starfish, tiger-striped fish, sea slugs and coral reefs. Visiting Havelock Island means a five-hour boat ride from the Phoenix Bay Jetty, and two hours by air-conditioned speedboat from the Phoenix Bar jetty at Port Blair. Don't try to rush back the same day as Havelock needs to be experienced at leisure.

Other tourist beach havens include Long Island, Neil Island, Mayabunder, Cinque, Diglipur,

Little Andamans and Rangat. Barren Island has a deceptive name—it is one of the densest forests in the area. It also has India's only active volcano that



(From top) Dense tropical greenery surrounds the Andamans; Waterfall at Hut Bay, the main town of little Andaman; and the Cellular Jail, where the echoes of India's freedom struggle still linger

was last seen in its full fury in 1994, and is now spewing fire again. Barren Island, unfortunately, is not open to tourists.

Day Three: Today, I take a pleasant car ride through the Jarawa reserve of Jirikatang and then a ferry to the mangrove-ringed isle of Baratang.

The indigenous tribes of the Andamans are some of the oldest known inhabitants on earth. There are six tribes: the Jarawas, the Shompen, the Sentinelese, the Onge, the Great Andamanese and the Nicobarese.

but friendly. They used to climb the tall trees and unleash arrows on vehicles. Even today, vehicles go into the reserve with armed guards. And as the Jarawas are extremely wary of camera flashes (a wary Jarawa is not a good thing), photography is prohibited. However, the inexorable tide of civilisation has had its way with the Mongoloid Jarawas, too. I find some of them in T-shirts and shorts, striking poses in a decidedly tutored fashion and, sadly, begging for food. Baratang has mud volcanoes that wreak devastation, the killer clay stifling and

At Havelock Island, take a glass-bottomed boat ride to admire the marine life

Islanders tell you 'the best sighting you can get of them is in the early hours of the morning before the sun comes out', leading you to wonder whether they are talking of human beings or animals. This impression is reinforced when you come upon signboards that repeatedly warn you against 'feeding the tribals'. Until a decade ago, the Jarawas were anything

strangling all vegetation in its path. The mud volcanoes are bubbling again, warning of imminent spewing. The waters here are full of hammerhead sharks, manta rays, dog-toothed tuna and leather-backed turtles. The expanse of mangroves that hedge the Baratang waters has withstood the tsunami and protected the forests. At Naya-dera on Baratang, stands a



FACT FILE

WHEN TO GO

The temperature stays fairly even most of the year, between 22°C and 33°C. There are two rainy seasons, one from June to mid-September and the other from November to mid-December. December and January are the busiest; you'll do well to avoid that rush.

HOW TO GET THERE

By air: Indian Airlines, Jet Airways have regular flights from Kolkata and Chennai to Port Blair. Air Deccan too has daily Chennai-Port Blair flights.

By sea: Boats ply these routes as well, though it's a long 60 hours from Chennai and 66 hours from Kolkata. Passenger ships head for Port Blair from Visakhapatnam too. To learn more, contact Shipping House or Andaman & Nicobar Administration. See page 81 for details

GETTING AROUND

Port Blair has a reasonably priced taxi service. Inter-island travel is on motorised boats. Taxis can be hired from Aberdeen Bazaar.

WHERE TO STAY

Citi King Palace at Supply Line, Port Blair; Tel: 01382-233754, 233320, 230766; Fax: 01382-233166; Tariff: Rs 800 to Rs 1,200; Email: citikipalace@yahoo.com

Hotel Gem Continental at Goal Ghar, Port Blair; Tel: 01382-234534, 237537; Tariff: AC Deluxe Rs 1,200; Email: gemcontinenta@vsnl.com

The Directorate of Tourism offers accommodation at affordable prices at Andaman Teal House, Hornbill Nest and Sainik Vishram Ghar at Port Blair; Dolphin Yatri Niwas at Havelock Island; Hawabill Nest at Neil Island; Hawksbill Nest at Rangat; Swiftlet Nest at Mayabunder and Turtle Resort at Diglipur.

Andaman & Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO) runs the Megapode Nest/Tourist Home Complex at Port Blair. Reservations: Director of Tourism, A&N Administration, Port Blair-744101. Director Information, Publicity and Tourism, Tel: 01382-230933. Email: dipt@cal3.vsnl.net.in

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Directorate of Tourism Offices of the Andamans are in Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata.

The Andaman and Nicobar Tourist Office in Port Blair has information on tours and ferry schedules. There is a tourist counter at the airport, which provides information about accommodation and sites on South Andaman Island as well.

For contact details, see page 81

fascinating and recently discovered limestone cave full of stalactites and stalagmites (calcium deposits of various shapes and sizes).

Day Four: Back in Port Blair, I spend the morning exploring the Cellular Jail. The sunshine beaming down on the two remaining wings of the original seven in the prison and the occasional glimpse of turquoise waters cannot dispel the air of silent suffering still present here.

The cells, which held hundreds of freedom fighters, are stark and empty. The gallery with its hoard of old photographs of the Andamans is moving, as is the light-and-sound show staged every evening, in Hindi and English. Later, I take a boat ride out to Viper Island (yes, it was once full of snakes) to see the eerie gallows and prison that preceded the Cellular Jail.

Other tourist draws in Port Blair include India's largest saw mill at Chatham (an island that is now part of the mainland in the Andamans, yet called Chatham Island) the Samudrika Museum run by the Indian Navy which offers interesting insights into the history of the Andamans, its ecosystem and marine life; the Sippighat Agricultural Farm, a sprawl of over 80 acres growing cloves, cinnamon, pepper and coconuts; the Anthropological Museum; and Chidiya Tapu, a popular beachfront.

Day Five: All I did on the last day in the Andamans is relax. Laze. Admire the ceaseless waves. Watch the palms sway. And bid a silent and reluctant goodbye to this beautiful place. ■

BOOKSHELF

Getting personal

The Nehrus: Personal Histories

By Mushirul Hasan; Photo research and editing by

Priya Kapoor

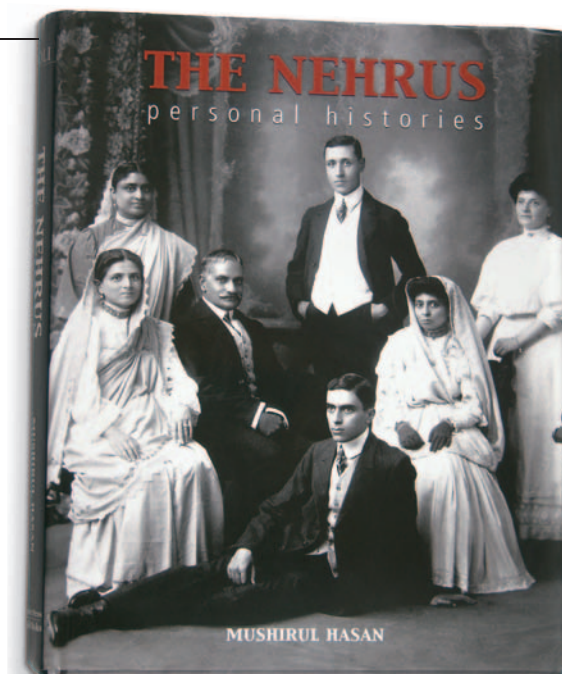
Roli Books

Rs 1,295; 320 pages

Things are not what they used to be. They say that even nostalgia is not what it used to be. Away with the yellowed photographs. Nostalgia comes these days with nicer togs on. Those for whom Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi are part of living memory will love this glossy picture book.

Here was a family touched by the hand of history and historian Professor Mushirul Hasan has lent his name and formidable gravitas to this book. It is, shall we say, a delicate task. As Arthur Schlesinger once said while writing about the Kennedy family, it is easier to rescue such a family from their assailants than from their adulators. However, in this instance the immensely accomplished author's text is put somewhat in the shade by the pictures, researched by Priya Kapoor. She collected rare photographs from various branches of the Nehru kinship network with admirable assiduity.

Some of these photographs were seen by the common public earlier in newspapers of the day, especially those about happenings in the centre



stage of Indian politics. The journey from news-pulp to coffee table is a long one for some, and shorter for others for obvious reasons. The good thing about this book is the technical quality of the reproductions. But some of these photographs do not belong to the public space—they are of private moments and often intrude into family privacy.

I have heard from Dr Sarvepalli Gopal, the author of an authoritative three-volume biography of Jawaharlal Nehru, that Jawaharlal was alert to the need to keep away from public display pictures snapped without his knowledge and consent by photographers in his entourage, including those in

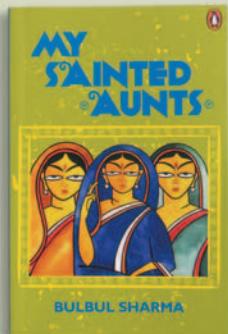
BRIEFLY

It wasn't **BULBUL SHARMA's** choice; she just happened to have them as aunts. What the writer chose, though, was to write their stories. Neither pretty nor elegant, but with enduring qualities of character, they commanded respect and terror. In *Sainted Aunts*, we visit eight of

them, in their native settings, both urban and rural, coping with lifestyle changes and traditions. Mayadevi, whose age changes with her moods, travels for the first time to meet her eldest son. She is determined to serve a year of penance for spending a week in London, but invites her *firang* daughter-in-law for her funeral and lets her "fool of a son" be. There is child bride Mini who hates her new house but learns to love its luxuries, Protima and her mother-in-law who rebel against the man of their family after decades of

submission, Gita who runs away after her husband renounces the world—all of them make their first journeys past social signposts they can't describe. You may have met them before. (Penguin; Rs 200; 173 pages)

The title of *Funny Side Up* by **RUSKIN BOND** is misleading. This is no laugh-fest; just a pleasant





Nehru with daughter Indira and grandsons Rajiv and Sanjay (top); and in *shirshasana*

the service of his government. He was conscious of the sanctity of privacy while leading a public life for decades. "And this our life, exempt from public haunt", as Shakespeare put it, was precious to him. The same desire for privacy is evident in Jawaharlal's autobiography as well (unlike the memoirs of Mahatma Gandhi).

This book includes some pictures that might have been interdicted by Jawaharlal. How would you like to be snapped trying to wriggle almost on all fours through a barrier? There is a picture of Indira Gandhi in that posture. How would you like your greatest moments of grief photographed to satisfy the curiosity of strangers? There are pictures of that kind too in this collection. The pursuit of the visual

byte can go to any length. The question is: What ought to be the limits of intrusive public exposure of private moments of public men or women? The sensibilities of Jawaharlal Nehru's generation may be a thing of the past. But there are valid questions as yet about the focus on the family line, on the 'dynastic' element that assailants of the Nehru tradition dilate upon. Nevertheless, there will be a great demand for this book—as indeed there will be for visual representations of the Indian past through contemporary photography.

Malavika Karlekar's recent photographic research into the history of Indian women has just begun a quest for new material of that kind. That brings us to the point that perhaps it would have been a good thing if the present picture book on the Nehrus could situate the portraits of members of the family in a wider historical context by being more inclusive. The contextualisation of these pictures in the wider frame of the society and politics and the common people of those times might have been interesting.

—Sabyasachi Bhattacharya

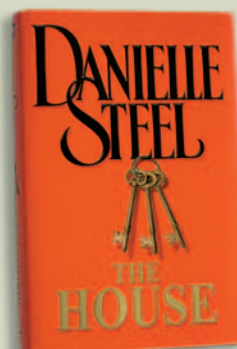


The writer is professor of history at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

collection of anecdotes, stories and poems from the countryside. Bond writes a lot about monkeys—on his windowsill, toilet seat and even his typewriter. There's a fair amount of wit in other chapters, especially in his encounters with Uncle Ken and seven year-old Gautam. And then Bond tells you how much he hates phone calls, especially invites to conferences like 'Alzheimer's Disease in Ageing Authors'. He writes, "I have respect for people who lecture, but I have no desire

to listen to them." Maybe he should listen to Seinfeld. (Rupa; Rs 95; 156 pages)

The word prolific is apt for writers like **DANIELLE STEEL**—*The House* is her 66th novel. The story is about 39 year-old estate and tax attorney Sarah Anderson's mission to renovate the grand old



mansion of her 99 year-old client, who has bequeathed her a fortune. For Sarah, this is a life-changing experience, cutting her loose from her complicated life and her relationship with divorcee Phil. Then architect Jeff Parker comes into her life, and helps her revive the house... you know the rest. The funny thing: this will be a bestseller. (Bantam Press; Rs 948; 343 pages)

All titles available at Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata, Bangalore, Mumbai, Goa, New Delhi and on www.oxfordbookstore.com

Family ties

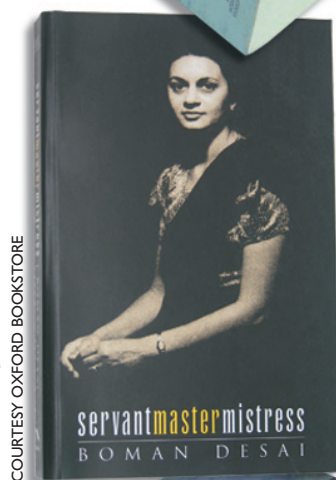
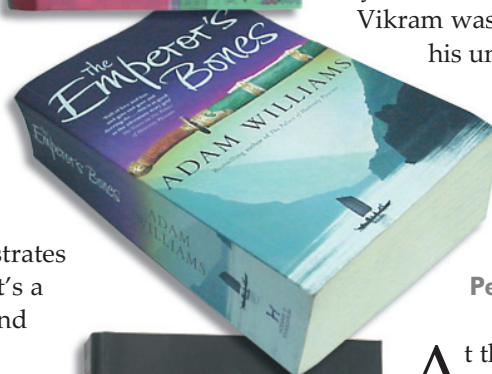
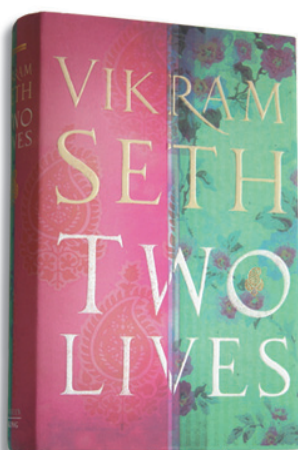
Exploring the boundaries of kinship

EMPERORS' BONES by Adam Williams is set against the backdrop of the Sino-Russian War. Catherine, unable to forget the atrocities she has seen in the war, goes back to China, where she was born. There, she meets another survivor of war and secret Communist Yu Fu-kuei, who is masquerading as the faithful concubine of a general. Catherine also meets her father, a man who has given in to his 'dark side' because his heart was broken. In this book, everyone loves China. And people die because of their love. There is a well-known Chinese curse: "May you live in interesting times." The book illustrates that Chinese paradox perfectly. It's a sweeping epic of betrayal, love and survival.

Hodder and Stoughton; Rs 420; 669 pages

In Sharmistha Mohanty's **NEW LIFE**, Anjali grows up surrounded by *bel* flowers and rituals like her mother's obsessive bathing. Then, she falls in love with a Muslim boy and disturbs life. Anjali goes to the US to study creative writing but once there, she leaves college to be closer to her husband Riaz, in another city. Soon she becomes involved with a black American poet, Richard. "A fragile light this," Mohanty writes, talking about the American sunlight, but she could just as easily be talking about their relationship. A great deal about this story is predictable. What sets it apart is the distinctly poetic style in which it is written.

Indialnk; Rs 295; 292 pages



TWO LIVES is a personal memoir of Vikram Seth's uncle and aunt. Born in 1908, Shanti Bihari Seth was sent by his family to Germany and found himself adrift—he did not speak a word of the language. Then, he met Henny Gerda Caro, a German Jew. World War II brought the two closer. She lived in England fretting about the family she had left behind, while Shanti accompanied the British troops through North Africa and later had his arm blown off at the Monte Cassino battle. In 1951, they decided to marry—and Shanti's nephew Vikram was the child they never had. After his uncle and aunt died, Seth

promised himself that he would write this book. Part memoir and part musing on the state of man, the book pays homage to a generation that is now in danger of being forgotten.

Penguin India; Rs 695; 512 pages

At the centre of Boman Desai's **SERVANT. MASTER. MISTRESS** there is a proud woman, Dolly. She is married to two brothers, Kavas and Savak, and has two sons Sohrab and Rustam. Rich and spoilt, Sohrab marries Daisy Holiday because she is every Parsi boy's dream come true. Daisy is pregnant, desperately looking for the father of her child, and stranded in Bombay because it is World War II. Dolly sees history repeating itself with Rustam falling in love with Daisy. In this story of hidden skeletons, secrets jostle against secrets.

Desai spins a fascinating story of Parsi bloodlines, romance and intrigue, against the backdrop of World War II.

Indialnk; Rs 395; 494 pages

—Anjana Basu

I'm younger now!

The first 50 years of our lives are a training ground for the next 50, says **Tom Alter**

WHEN I CROSSED THE MILESTONE OF 50, I DID not feel as if I were finishing a journey, but as if I were embarking upon one. I found fresh thoughts, fresh energy and fresh vision filling, and fulfilling, my body, mind, and spirit. I was amazed at myself. Really amazed. In sports, I found myself batting, bowling, running and jumping with an ease that often left me admiring myself. In my chosen fields of endeavour—acting, writing, and compering—the same ‘ease of effort’ surprised me again and again. And the same ease, albeit often limited, seeped into my relationships with friends, family, acquaintances and strangers.

Why? Had my body suddenly found new life, my mind new depths, my spirit new truths? Had some mystical elixir found its subtle way into my being? Yes and no.

What I realise now, almost six years after crossing that milestone is that, the first 50 years of my life, especially the mistakes, were simply a training ground, a testing ground, for the next 50. And when the second ‘50’ began, answers, solutions and remedies sprung up naturally from that ‘well of experience’ which those first 50 years were.

What are those answers and solutions and remedies? In a nutshell, it would be that, somehow, I have realised my limitations. More important, I know that to achieve my true potential I must simultaneously let my limitations expand and yet not be frustrated by them. By doing so, the ease of effort, the ‘rhyme in the rhythm’, blossoms. In other words, I am not bowling any faster, or hitting any

harder, or running any faster, or jumping any further—quite the opposite. But I am now not so bothered by my limitations; so all my efforts bear greater fruit.

It is not an easy lesson to learn. In fact, it is impossible to learn. It simply has to happen—as it did with me. If you strive to learn it, it will vanish as a dream does upon awakening. That is why it takes those first 50 long and frustrating years for the lesson to happen, to be imbibed. But (and this is vital) those first 50 years must be spent in defeat and occasional victory, searching and losing, testing and changing; otherwise, the next 50 will not be blessed with this kind of ease.

This is not to say that this ease is easy to achieve, or maintain. Certain very difficult compromises and sacrifices must be made—in diet, sleep, exercise, work and travel. Eat only when you are hungry, rest whenever a chance arrives, exercise only when feeling strong, work just enough to maintain a balance, travel for reasons other than your job. But—and this is the wonder—these sacrifices come naturally most of the time. And when they don’t, your ‘younger’ body and mind and spirit join hands to give you the strength to carry on.

Bob Dylan wrote, “I was so much older then, I’m younger than that now.” And like with so many of his songs, he created a whimsical truth that is eternal. At the time of writing those words, he was far away from the milestone of 50—on the wrong side of it, that is. ■



To achieve my true potential I must let my limitations expand and yet not be frustrated by them

Tom Alter, 56, is a film and theatre actor. Besides acting in over 200 films, he has authored several books, including Rerun at Rialto and The Longest Race

A friendly neighbour

Amita Malik tells us about the hospitality, friendliness and warmth of Pakistanis

I WISH I COULD SAY THIS WAS A FIRST-HAND experience. But as a writer, I feel compelled to share with my fellow Indians the extraordinary experience of a young lawyer friend who took his parents to Lahore to visit their ancestral village. The cricket match made a visa so much easier.

The first hurdle was at the Wagah border, which they were to cross on foot. They arrived at 9 am to find chaos at Wagah as the Indian authorities had not anticipated the influx of 4,000 cricket fans. While some jumped the fence, others feared a stampede. My friend and his parents were able to walk across the border only at 6 pm. Nine hours of what should have been their first day in Lahore ruined by the confusion.

As they made their way to the famous Food Market in Lahore for a taste of the city's cuisine, they also got a foretaste of Pakistani friendliness. An elderly gentleman came up to their table, addressed my friend's mother as "*Begum Sahiba*" and asked for permission for his *Begum Sahiba* and three daughters to join them. After food, they asked for permission for the two families to be photographed together. Followed by an invitation for a meal at their home.

As they walked to their hotel, strangers walked up to them asking if they were from India. Invitations like 'Why should you stay at a hotel? Come and stay in our home' came their way. Touched, my friend's mother started crying.

The family was deluged with offers of dinners, lunch and even breakfast. A young boy who had been pursuing them for three days said: "At least have *naashta* (breakfast) in the morning before you leave." Remembering the chaos at the border, my friend left

without accepting the kind offer but not before his mother broke down again and blessed the young boy and sent their profuse thanks to his parents.

At the cricket match it was a different story, of fun, laughter, jokes. Young Pakistani boys in the seats behind my friend's family at the Lahore one-day international waved the Indian flag when our boys did something better. They even coined a memorable couplet: "*Yeh andar ki baat hai. Dravid mere saath hai*" (This is an internal secret, Dravid is with us). But they did not forget their concern for *Ammiji*. Would

she like water, cold drinks, *paratha* from home? "It was overwhelming," said my friend, "such warm, caring people, such genuine hospitality. We had never seen anything like it, even in India."

As they neared the border in their bus, the family couldn't stop discussing Pakistani hospitality. Two burly Indians from Amritsar, who were sitting behind them, said, "Don't you believe it. They are *zaalim*" (roughly translated as brutal, treacherous). As both the driver and conductor of the bus were Pakistanis, my friend got up and said: "Please, there are people other than Indians. They can hear what you are saying". "Let them hear," they retorted.

My friend gave up. But as they entered their home, the telephone rang. It was the young boy from Lahore with whom they had missed breakfast. "Did *Ammiji* arrive in good health?" he asked. "My *Ammiji* asked me to make sure. And next time you must stay to breakfast." "Words failed me," said my friend. Which is why I decided to put it all down so that we not only know what wonderful neighbours we have across the border, but try to treat them with equal kindness and courtesy when they visit us. ■



In Pakistan, they were deluged with offers for dinner, lunch and breakfast

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

WHERE ELSE
WOULD YOU FIND
SOMEONE ABOVE
55 YEARS
WHO'S PERFECTLY
IN TUNE WITH YOU?

HARMONY, OBVIOUSLY.

Cooking. Reading. Fitness. Whatever your interests are, you're sure to find a silver citizen who shares your passion. Thanks to One-On-One, our personal classified section. You can post your messages in our columns absolutely free (for a limited period only). For more details, please refer to the form on the next page.

ONE
-on-
ONE


celebrate age **harmony**
the magazine

Name of Advertiser:

Address:

..... Age: E-Mail:

Tel: Signature:

Tick chosen category

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel | <input type="checkbox"/> Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet & Animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hobbies & Interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Health & Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewellery & Watches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment & Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Computers | <input type="checkbox"/> Exchange |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books & Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Antiques & Collections | <input type="checkbox"/> Others |

Please fill in the space provided below

Terms and conditions

1. Advertisers are required to read and approve the text and other details of the advertisement before sending the form.
2. The Publishers reserve the right to decline, change or reschedule any advertisement.
3. Advertisements are accepted in good faith and the Publishers accept no responsibility whatsoever regarding the bonafides of the Advertisers, not the contents of the advertisements. No interviews shall be granted or correspondence entered into regarding any advertisements published .
4. Under no circumstances will we be liable for any loss to the Advertiser for any error or omission by us.
5. The above conditions and any other conditions stipulated by us will govern the acceptance and publication of any advertisement.
6. One-on-One is a free readers service only for bonafide readers of Harmony.
7. Please fill up the enclosed form along with all the necessary details and mail it to: 'One-on-One', Harmony- The Magazine, 4th Floor, Maker Chambers IV, 222, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 021.
8. Harmony shall not be responsible for any loss/delays in transit for the forms.
9. The offer is open for a limited period and is on first cum first serve basis.
10. No correspondence shall be entertained regarding non-publication of One-on-One.
11. Harmony reserves the right to modify/change the One-on-One received at their end.
12. Maximum number of words allowed per One-on-One is 30.
13. All forms should be sent by ordinary post only. No registered post or courier shall be accepted for One-on-One.
14. Only one entry per person shall be accepted.
15. Each entry should be in the original form printed in Harmony. No photocopies shall be allowed.

For office use only

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advt. No. | <input type="checkbox"/> Heading | <input type="checkbox"/> No. of Words |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

BRAVEHEART

Talk about going out with a bang. **Laxman Gawde**, 60, a security guard in Mumbai's Vijaya Bank, in suburban Juhu, proved his mettle a week before he retired—on 22 February, he prevented a bank robbery by five armed youngsters. Gawde, an ex-Armyman, was asked to surrender his double-barrel .12 bore rifle. Instead, he blocked their path, shot one of them in the waist and escaped a retaliatory gunshot. One of the robbers hit Gawde on his head. "I am glad I was able to do my duty," says Gawde, who got seven stitches on his head. Mumbai Police Commissioner A N Roy felicitated him with a certificate and Rs 2,000. After retiring, Gawde returned to his hometown Kolhapur to spend time with his family.

**PIN-UP QUEEN**

She was the quintessential pin-up girl, feted in her heyday as 'The Queen of Curves' and 'Dark Marilyn'. Between 1949 and 1957, **Bettie Page** was immortalised in thousands of saucy photos that spawned biographies, comic books, fan clubs, websites and commercial products. And now she is hogging newsprint again—*The Notorious Bettie Page*, directed by Canadian director Mary Harron, is scheduled for April release; and artist Olivia De Berardinis will publish a book featuring her idealised portraits of Page later this year. Three marriages, severe depression, 10 years in a California mental institution and five decades later, Page, now 82, says, "Women say I helped them come out of their shells," she says. These days, she spends time reading the Bible, listening to Christian music and exercising.

**GOOD WORDS**

She's often referred to as the first lady of Indian media. And at the 10th anniversary of the Bimal Roy Memorial Foundation held on 1 March in Mumbai, film critic and *Harmony* columnist **Amita Malik** was honoured for her writing on Indian films. "My most precious memory is a photograph that Bimalda had taken of me in front of the Ming tombs of China," Malik said at the event. "It will have a special mention of it in my autobiography," the first lady of Indian media said.

The event was organised by Bimal Roy's daughter Rinki Bhattacharya, and attended by veteran actors Dilip Kumar and Nimmi, scriptwriter S Ali Raza, and singers Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan, Manna Dey and Kavita Krishnamurthy, among others.

MILESTONES

Awarded. The prestigious Saraswati Samman, by the K K Birla Foundation, to renowned Malayalam scholar and poet Padmashri **K Ayyappa Panicker**, 75, for outstanding literary work in an Indian language.



Awarded. The Golden Kinnaree award at the Bangkok International Film Festival to Canada-based filmmaker **Deepa Mehta**, 55, for *Water*. The film tells the story of a child-widow portrayed by Lisa Ray in early 20th century India.



Awarded. The Best Director Award at the 78th Annual Academy Awards for *Brokeback Mountain*, to **Ang Lee**, 51, from Taiwan. He is the first Asian to bag a major Oscar. Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian called him 'the pride of Taiwan'.



Appointed. Retired career diplomat **Vijay Nambiar**, 62, as special advisor to United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan. Nambiar is currently holding the post of deputy national security advisor to the Prime Minister.

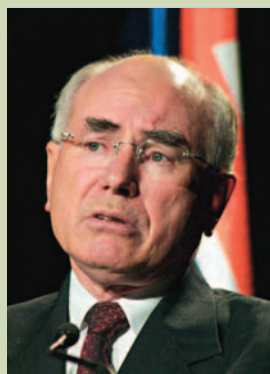


VISITORS

**1-3 MARCH**

Who: George Bush, 59, president of the United States
Agenda: To sign a landmark 'nuclear cooperation' agreement that allows India to keep its nuclear weapons.

Extracurricular activities: In Hyderabad, the US President was introduced to the simple Indian wooden plough. He promptly posed for photographs with it slung across his right shoulder. An amused Bush also tried to lift a jumbo-size pumpkin up to his chest and pretended he was going to fall under its weight.

**5-8 MARCH**

Who: John Howard, 66, prime minister of Australia
Agenda: To strengthen bilateral trade by signing several agreements on trade, defence, science and air services.

Extracurricular activities: Visited the Dennis Lillee Cricket Foundation in Chennai. When asked to bowl the last ball of the day, the Australian prime minister declined, saying his intention was not to participate but only to be a spectator. "I look with some trepidation at this new breed of Indian fast bowlers," was his compliment.

**16-18 MARCH**

Who: Mikhail Fradkov, 55, prime minister of Russia
Agenda: To enhance trade cooperation with India by increasing the current trade of \$ 2 billion to \$ 8-10 billion by 2011; to supply nuclear fuel for two civilian power reactors in India. Promised to look into complaints of red tape in getting a visa to Russia.

Extracurricular activities: Called on Indian President A P J Abdul Kalam, who said it was time to market Brahmos cruise missile, jointly produced by India and Russia.

IN PASSING



Former Yugoslav president **Slobodan Milosevic**, 64, was being tried by the United Nation's International Criminal Tribunal for crimes against humanity during Kosovo war, charges of genocide in Bosnia and grave breaches of the

Geneva Conventions. He was found dead in his prison cell bed at The Hague.



Oscar and Tony award winner **Maureen Stapleton**, 80, was best known for her performance in films such as *Reds* and *Cocoon*. Her last big-screen appearance was in 1997's revenge fantasy *Addicted to Love*. Her career in later life was hampered by a fear of bridges, airplanes and elevators. Stapleton passed away on 13 March.

LAUGH LINES



THE TRUTHS OF LIFE

1. Don't worry about what people think; they don't do it very often.
2. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
3. Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.
4. If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you've never tried before.
5. If you look like your passport picture, you probably need the trip.
6. A conscience is what hurts when all of your other parts feel so good.
7. A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand.
8. Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.
9. Opportunities look bigger going than coming.
10. Junk is something you've kept for years and throw away three weeks before you need it.
11. Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.
12. When you can make ends meet, they move the ends.

Courtesy www.seniorresource.com

SAY IT OUT LOUD

Hide not your talents, they for use were made.

What's a sun-dial in the shade?

— *Publisher, inventor and American founding father Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)*

Put yourself on view. This brings your talents to light.

— *Spanish Jesuit philosopher and writer Baltasar Gracian (1601-1658)*

Use what talents you possess: the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.

— *American author, poet, educator and clergyman Henry Van Dyke (1852-1933)*

Work while you have the light. You are responsible for the talent that has been entrusted to you.

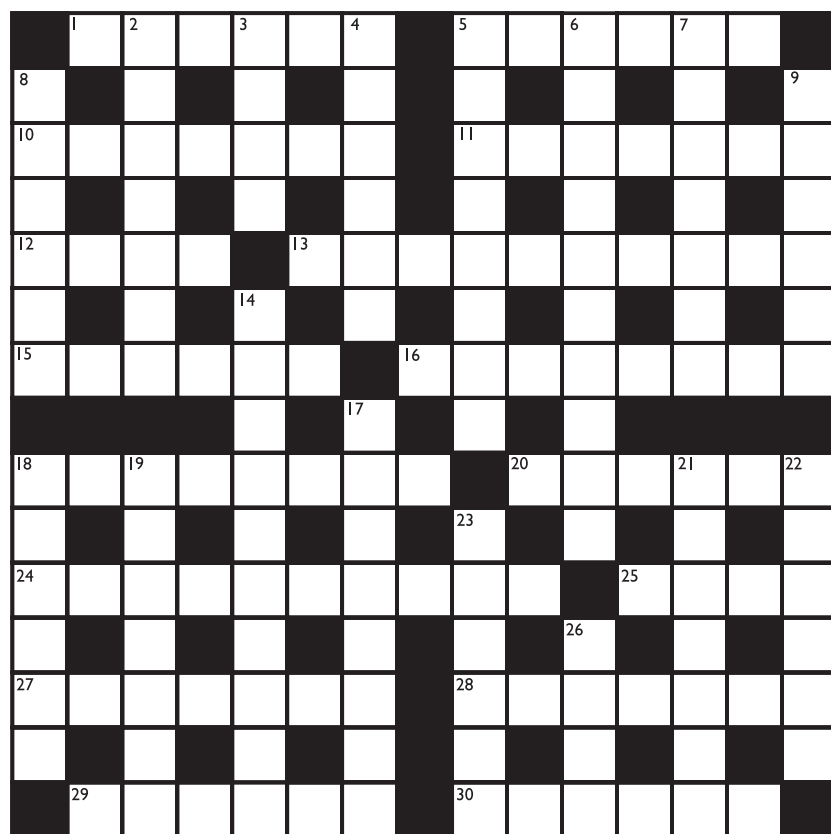
— *Swiss philosopher, poet and critic Henri-Frédéric Amiel (1821-1881)*

SUDOKU FOR YOU

6	8		5				7	
		1	6			8	9	
					7	2	8	4
	7			1				
				9	5			
	3	9	4	8			1	6
	5							9

Choose a number from 1 to 9, and place it in the grid. Every digit from 1 to 9 must appear once, and only once, in each of the columns, rows and in each of the sets of nine boxes.

HEADSTART



EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 19

By Raju Bharatan

ACROSS

- 1 State not your spot of bother! (6)
 5 Distinguishing features of portrayal for artist (6)
 10 Alternative to naming the building *Oceana*? (7)
 11 Met about Sena turning humble as humble could be (7)
 12 Hare as the South American ostrich? (4)
 13 Symbolising a burning desire in you to perform still? (2 3 5)
 15 *Harvest* that had Ronald Colman narrowly missing the 1942 Best Actor Oscar (6)
 16 What coloured South African cricketers, racist-abused, now

seek with genuine white support (4 4)

- 18 While such a Weeping Willow does Sunil Gavaskar proclaim every other England cricketer even now to be! (1 3-4)
 20 Not necessarily a lech, the one in action at this workplace (6)
 24 'Wankhede'-fish for the ball and get caught behind before scoring? (6 4)
 25 Something you have the geometrician describing (4)
 27 An unwed mother? Don't breathe a word! (7)
 28 Pahadi mentor of Mohammed Rafi in the matter of that singer's 1949 *Dulari*-peaking with *Suhani*

raat dhal chuki (7)

- 29 How you never can forget Audrey Hepburn (6)
 30 No way did they deter 'Baroda Dynamite' George Fernandes from continuing to fight Indira Gandhi and her Emergency (6)

DOWN

- 2 Sunil Dutt as the one man etched in our 1964 memory (7)
 3 Circular piece dead on the target? (4)
 4 The one romanticising British India for Jawaharlal (6)
 5 *Mili* going into *taan* far from Hindustani (8)
 6 Did not the tricky Nimbus camera turn, into such an illusion, Kevin Pieterse's being out (Nagpur-caught and bowled by Anil Kumble) when 36 on his Test debut in India? (1 4-5)
 7 Football controlling elation (2-5)
 8 Coin collector (6)
 9 Sly holder of tee inflexibly severe (6)
 14 A name known for centuries to the whole world (3 7)
 17 The Black Cat in *The Loves Of Carmen* as in Nalini Jaywant's *Jadoo*? (1 3 4)
 18 Sonia eliminating a spokesperson (6)
 19 BJPillars still relentlessly at the Ayodhya theme? (7)
 21 Andhra's glimpse of NTR? (7)
 22 "Play on!" sayeth the referee (6)
 23 Railway 1961-picturing Asha Parekh and Dev Anand enacting the *Jab Pyar Kisi Se Hota Hai* number in the Nasir Husain film of that name (6)
 26 *Bolo bolo Kaana bolo chhaliyaa, Man ke Brindavan mein hai tu* (4)

For answers, see page 80

Raju Bharatan is the originator of the 'Sunday Cryptic' crossword in *The Times Of India*, where he set the first 1,500 puzzles

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.

MEMORISE IT



COME LIVE WITH ME

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

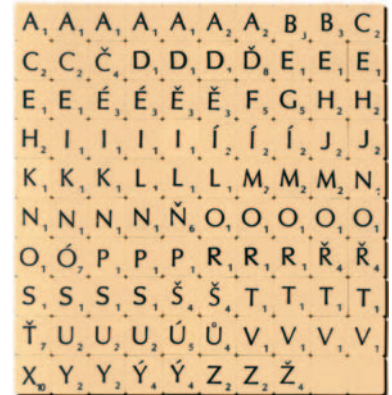
A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

By Christopher Marlowe

English dramatist and poet **Christopher Marlowe** (1564-1593), was regarded as the greatest dramatist before Shakespeare. His plays include *Dr Faustus* (1588), *The Jew of Malta* (1589) and *Edward II* (1592).

WORD PLAY



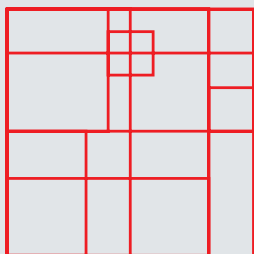
1. I am the wealthiest man in the world. My last name is an anagram for a word that means platform.
2. My first three letters is a word which means disencumber. I am a mystery.
3. I am the study of the history of words. Change my third letter then add a letter between my first and third and you have a study of insects.
4. I am a poem that expresses melancholy. My second, third and fourth letters are an appendage.
5. I am a long journey. Change my fourth letter to a vowel and you have a large organic object which seems to attract felines.
6. I am a comparison between two things. Remove a letter from me and you have a facial expression.
7. I am short, concise and to the point. Change my first letter and you have a body of metrical writing.
8. I am a word which means unchanging. I am also a form of energy. If you change my first letter then I become an anagram of a device for accomplishing an end.
9. I am a compound word and a popular snack. My first word means bust or explode. My second word is also edible.
10. I am might, authority, strength and control. Most people can't handle me and I change them for the worse. Change my first letter and you can make several words. One such word is a tall edifice and another means to cringe.

BRAIN GYM

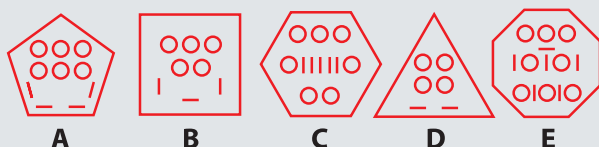
PUZZLE

FIGURE IT OUT

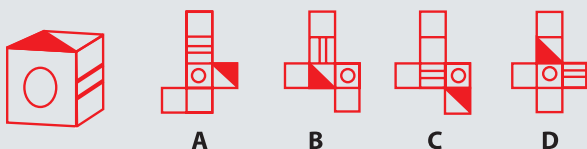
1. How many different squares (of any size) are in this figure?



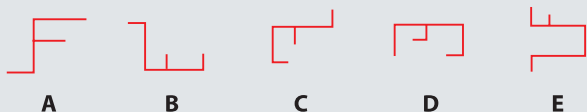
2. Which figure does not belong with the other four figures?



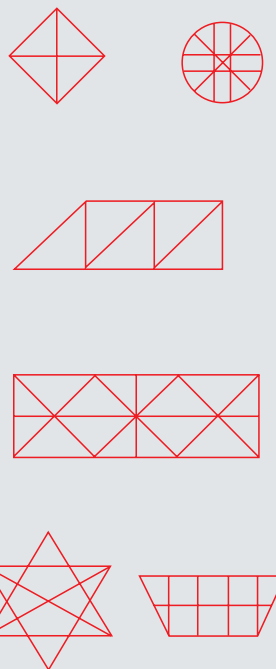
3. Which of the four choices given can be folded to form the cube?



4. Which one of the following patterns does not belong with the rest? Hint: Think of the alphabet.



5. One of the figures shown here lacks a characteristic common to the other five. Which figure is it? Hint: Don't consider symmetry.



Courtesy: www.puzz.com

1. 19
2. E. There is one more circle and one less straight line inside each figure than the number of sides to the figure—except for figure E. This eight-sided figure is the odd one out, because it contains only six straight lines and only eight circles.
3. C and D can both be folded to form the cube.
4. C. All the patterns contain a figure similar to a capital F except pattern C, which has a backward F.
5. Figure 5 is the only one that doesn't include a square in its design.

ANSWERS:

GYNEAC WORLD

Kwality House
Above Chinese Room Restaurant
Kemps Corner, Mumbai 400 026
Tel.022-23802584/23803965, Fax:
022-23804839

HERITAGE HOSPITAL

6-3-907/2
Kapadia Lane, Somajiguda
Hyderabad 500082
AP, India
Telephone +91-40-23379999
Fax +91-40-23379207

PARADISE ISLANDS

Shipping House, 13 Strand Road,
Kolkata; Tel: (033) 22482354,
22488013
Andaman & Nicobar
Administration, 6, Rajaji Salai,
Chennai-600001, Tel: (044)
25220841, 25226873

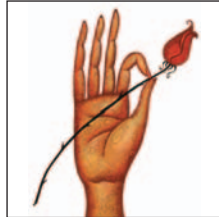
The Directorate of Tourism
Offices of the Andamans
Chennai: North Main Road
Extension, Anna Nagar West
Extension;
Tel: (044) 26549295,
Delhi: 12, Chanakyapuri; Tel: (011) 26871443
Kolkata: 3A, Auckland Place; Tel: (033) 22475084

The Andaman and Nicobar Tourist Office,
Port Blair (near the GPO), open Monday to
Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm; Tel: (01382) 2326794,
232747; Email: ipt@and.nic.in;
Website: www.tourism.andaman.nic.in

SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

3	9	7	1	2	8	6	4	5
6	8	2	5	4	9	3	7	1
5	4	1	6	7	3	8	9	2
9	1	5	3	6	7	2	8	4
8	7	6	2	1	4	9	5	3
4	2	3	8	9	5	1	6	7
7	3	9	4	8	2	5	1	6
1	5	8	7	3	6	4	2	9
2	6	4	9	5	1	7	3	8

32



64



77

EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 19

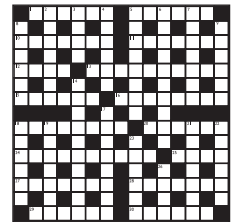
ACROSS:

1 Mysore: (*My sore, not your spot of bother*); 5 traits (6 letters of *artist* rearranged); 10 Seaview; 11 MEANEST: *Me(aneS)t — Met* about (around) *Sena* turning, *meanest* meaning *humble as humble could be*; 12 rhea (4 letters of *hare* rearranged); 13 an old flame; 15 *Random* (*Harvest*), the 1942 MGM release; 16 fair play; 18 a cry-baby; 20 studio (*stud*/io), *stud* symbolic of *lech*; 24 Bombay duck (name of fish); 25 arcs; 27 keep mum (idea of *mum* as a *keep*, an *unwed mother*); 28 Naushad (music director of the Suresh-starring *Dulari*); 29 as a nun (reference to Audrey Hepburn in *A Nun's Story*); 30 chains

DOWN:

2 *Yaadein*; 3 obit (*o*/bit, *circular piece*); 4 Edwina (Mountbatten); 5 TAMILIAN (TA/MILI/AN): *Mili* going into *taan*; 6 a half-truth; 7 toe-nail (7 letters of *elation* rearranged, *toe-nail* is *football controlling*); 8 usurer; 9 steely: *s/tee/ly* (sly as holder of *tee*); 14 Don Bradman; 17 a bad omen; 18 Ambika (*Soni* you get eliminating a from *Sonia*); 19 rammers (Ram/mers); 21 darshan (7 letters of *Andhra's* rearranged, *darshan* is *glimpse of NTR*); 22 onside (not offside); 23 scenic (railway); 26 Runa (Laila as the pioneer singer-enactor of Jaidev's *Bolo bolo Kaana bolo chhaliyaa* on DD)

78



SOLUTION TO BRAINGYM

- Gates
- Riddle
- Etymology
- Elegy
- Trek
- Simile
- Terse
- Static
- Popcorn
- Power

79





TEXT AND PHOTO: PREETI VERMA LAL

“In board meetings at DuPont, I was often the only Indian. Once someone remarked, ‘One billion pairs of hands and what have you done with it?’ It rattled me. It also made me think about coming back to rural India and working with those innumerable pairs of hands. Pardada Pardadi School was born from this reaction. It empowers the girl child, teaching her new skills, helping her earn money and giving her confidence. Well, I may have not been able to do much about a billion pairs of hands, but I have made a beginning.”

Six years ago, Virendra ‘Sam’ Singh, 66, was the head of global giant DuPont’s marketing division in the US. But he wanted to return to his roots. So one day, in April 2000, he packed his bags and came back to Anoopshahar, his ancestral village, 40 km from Bulandshahar in Uttar Pradesh. Here, he set up the Pardada Pardadi School—the name was suggested by his elder daughter Renu Agarwal, 35, who works as a lawyer in Singapore. It took Singh a year to convince villagers to send their daughters to the school, which provides free education and vocational training, bicycles, money, and two meals a day. Today, the school has 300 girls. By the time a girl finishes her 10th year, she would have at least Rs 40,000 savings and a job. Sam Singh hopes these ‘empowered’ girls will in turn empower more girls.



Some people stay young forever...