

AUGUST 2009 Rs 30

# harmony

*celebrate age*

Subscriber Copy Not For Resale

The magazine for silver citizens

PHOTO ESSAY

Excerpts from  
*Fathers and Sons*

NOSTALGIA

Veteran singer  
Shamshad Begum

DESTINATION

Majuli in Assam

COVER FEATURE

## *How safe are you?*

An in-depth report on  
crimes against silvers



A new column by author Mimlu Sen • Independence Day special

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# Silvers FIRST

Another Budget, another disappointment.

Last month, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee delivered a Budget that was lauded by many for its commitment to social welfare. But hype aside, the net gains for silvers were hardly significant—a hike in the income-tax exemption limit from Rs 225,000 to Rs 240,000; an additional tax benefit for families with disabled silvers as dependants for expenses up to Rs 100,000 (up from Rs 75,000); and, more tangentially, a cut on customs duty for some medical equipment and drugs—with no real impact on their lives. Meanwhile, the wishlist of organisations working for silvers, which included freeing older silvers from all taxes, uniform social pensions and livelihood opportunities in schemes like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, went ignored in a Budget that aimed to deliver “equitable growth”.

The irony has not been lost on anybody. As our international columnist Jane Barratt points out this month (*see ‘Exclusive’*), while the Indian finance minister announced that growth, inclusion and social uplift were the focus this budget, “what is less clear is the role of older people... keeping in mind that the silver population is growing more rapidly than fertility rates”. Indeed, any talk of ‘inclusion’ is mere lip service when one of India’s fastest growing demographic groups—silvers—has been so patently excluded from the ambit of the Budget, once again.

Harmony for Silvers Foundation exists to combat this exclusion. And in our five-year crusade to make silvers aware of their rights and society mindful of their concerns, we have taken every opportunity to celebrate their potential. That was the motivating force behind the

Donald Woodrow



establishment of the annual Harmony Silver Awards, which honours silver heroes who have made the world a better place; real people who have done extraordinary things and set benchmarks for themselves and society.

This October, we will host the third edition of the awards in Mumbai and preparations are already underway. I would like to thank jurist Fali Nariman, journalist Vir Sanghvi, actor Anupam Kher, cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty, S Sridhar, chairman and managing director of Central Bank, and artist Manu Parekh, all renowned in their chosen professions, for consenting to be part of our jury for the Awards. They are in the process of evaluating our list of nominations for the awards—the names have been chosen by our editorial team after an exhaustive process of identification of potential winners and verification of their credentials. Our chosen heroes will be awarded a cash prize and citation at the event, which will include an entertainment programme that showcases the power of silver. It’s time to put silvers first—and we hope the finance minister remembers it during next year’s Budget.

## A Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust Initiative

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**7 . ORBIT:** Trends, tips, ideas and news from around the world

**18 . EXCLUSIVE:** Dr Jane Barratt on social inclusion of silvers

**20 . INTAGLIO:** Author Mimlu Sen on artist Krishna Reddy

**30 . NOSTALGIA:** Veteran singer Shamshad Begum

**34 . PHOTO ESSAY:** Excerpts from *Father and Sons*

## BODY & SOUL



**41 . FOOD WISE:** Non-vegetarian delights

**44 . HEALTH:** Monsoon ailments

**46 . NUTRITION:** Banana and leafy greens

**48 . ASK THE EXPERT:**  
Dr Anjali Mukerjee

**54 . YOGA RX:** *Asana* to help you overcome depression

## FIRST AID

**55 . SECOND CAREERS:** From advertising professional to lifeguard

## COVER FEATURE

# 22.

## CRIMES AGAINST SILVERS

What you should know and how you can stay on guard

Cover illustration:  
Rahul Krishnan



**58 . WALL TO WALL:** Shockproof electricity distribution board

## ETCETERA

**59 . CULTURE**

**62 . DESTINATION:** Majuli in Assam



**66 . VIEW FROM MY WINDOW:**  
Vrinda Nabar

**68 . BOOKSHELF**

**74 . THE WAY WE WERE**

**75 . INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL**

**76 . HEADSTART**

**79 . ENLIGHTEN**

## WEB EXCLUSIVES

[www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org)



**CITY OF ANGELS:** Harmony reader Proloy Bagchi shares memories of his trip to Bangkok



**MR INDIA:** Even at 103, Mahadev Gokhale is passionate about exercise

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# column one

Originally, this month, we planned to have Shamshad Begum on the cover. The night before the photo shoot, though, the legendary playback singer had to be hospitalised. Without access to her personal albums and lack of archival visual material—Shamshad Begum was intensely camera shy all through her life—we couldn't do justice to a cover photograph. But that doesn't make the feature on her ("Gramophone Goddess") any less important. With rare insight into the life of an illustrious singer, it's a commentary on an era that reckoned her one of its best. We wish Begum well and hope for her speedy recovery.

On the cover this month is one of the most serious concerns for silvers: safety. After an unabated spate of murders and robberies targeting elderly in metros in the past few months, the *Harmony* team contacted police officers, crime reporters and NGOs for an in-depth report on the causes and effects of the increasing rate of crime. What makes silvers more vulnerable than ever before? How can they ensure their own safety? What are the measures being taken by police and government? These are some of the questions "Soft Targets" poses.

We thank you for your feedback. Some of you write every month, though we cannot carry your letters each time. And it's equally motivating to read letters from new readers complimenting us on our content and design. We will continue to break new ground. This month, we introduce 'Intaglio', a column by musicologist and author Mimlu Sen about the fabulous silvers she has met on her travels. In this issue, Sen writes about the place artist Krishna Reddy is making in history for himself and his art.

—Meeta Bhatti



Based on my own experiences of working with senior citizens in India and other parts of the world including Europe and the US, I would like to share my views with you. In India, elders are depicted very unfavourably in the media—TV serials that show seniors as weak people who cannot fend for themselves or contribute to society. Such messages—even if they are untrue or negative—get repeated and condition the minds of people. But despite what people think, 'old' does not mean 'out'. I am in my 30s and when I look at my parents who are senior citizens and my grandparents in their late 80s and 90s, I see vital, independent people. Though we have no control over the body, we have 100 per cent control over our minds—this is our real strength. We must protect this strength and use it, refusing to lose confidence in our thoughts and abilities.

We must also realise that retirement is not synonymous with 'rust'. With their years of valuable experience, senior citizens have a lot to teach the youth. Check with schools or colleges in your city and there is a good chance that some may need a part-time or vocational teacher. Other than tangible subjects like science, mathematics, history and English, you can teach children the intangibles—your lifelong learning experiences on how to handle emotional and financial difficulties.

Now, there are two generations of senior citizens out there, who have worked hard to build India, from 1947 to where it is today. Unfortunately, many of them are not fully aware of their own rights and what they can expect from the society and state in terms of support, making them vulnerable to social neglect and familial abuse. However, I am hopeful that improved awareness of personal and social rights will improve the lives of silvers. And that's why I am really happy that India now has an organisation like Harmony for Silvers Foundation with a highly motivated and responsive team that has created a platform to represent senior citizens.

Shankar AVSB, London



How can senior citizens make themselves more secure? Life and death are two inescapable realities but we can try and live life to its fullest while safeguarding our health, finances and homes. It is important to register yourself with the police in your city—like I have done—but none of us really know how they would respond in case of an emergency. Thus, it is important to be proactive about our security. We should build our own stamina, flexibility and agility with changing

exercises for the body and brain. Simultaneously, we should equip our homes with security gadgets to give us peace of mind. Most important, we must never be overawed by the shocking cases we read about in the media—instead, let's be confident and vigilant. After all, we have all weathered many storms. Let's make the most of these bonus years.

Vanita Kumta, Via email



We write to share some wonderful news for all seniors who have retired from Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). The 2nd Pay Revision Committee appointed for CPSEs had recommended that CPSEs may create a corpus by contributing 1 per cent to 1.5 per cent of profit before tax (PBT) to create a fund to take care of medical and other emergency needs of retired executives and those not adequately covered by the pension scheme. The Government of India has approved and implemented this recommendation with the release of an office memorandum on 8 July 2009 (available at [dpe.nic.in](http://dpe.nic.in)) that directs all chief executives of CPSEs to comply. All eligible retirees should immediately get in touch with their CPSE to avail the benefit. For clarifications or more information, feel free to contact me at (080) 25455160.

**Ernest Abraham, General Secretary  
All India Non-Pensioned Cum Senior  
Citizens Retirees' Association,  
Bengaluru**

They did it. No one flagged them off. They got no coverage either in the local press or electronic media. No person of any repute came to bid them farewell. No one recognised them. No T-shirts with insignia; no Nike shoes. Their faces were not photogenic, their dress not glamorous. There were no lofty ideals like 'World Peace' or 'Save the Universe' attached to their mission. They do not belong to any club or colourful social strata—one is a dairy man, the second a professional, the third an agriculturist and the fourth a merchant. They were just four senior citizens who decided to do a *pada yatra* (pilgrimage on foot) from Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh to Shirdi in Maharashtra via Karnataka.

The four seniors (three of them diabetic; the eldest 75 years old) set off from Kurnool on 12 February 2009; each carried a shoulder bag weighing about 5 kg, which included a 2-litre

water bottle, a set of extra clothing, a shawl and a torch. They drank unprotected water from over a hundred sources; ate unfamiliar food at odd times; took a bath only when water was available; walked for 10 to 20 hours a day, across different terrain; faced the vagaries of the weather; and slept when and where the sun set. Finally, 25 days and 750 km later, on the afternoon of 8 March, they reached their destination. This is what you call indomitable spirit!

**P Janardhana Reddy, Kurnool**

I have read a few issues of *Harmony* and believe the magazine should be made accessible to all those residents of old age homes in India who can read English. I live in an old age home in Thrissur, Kerala, where most residents are over 70 years of age and alone, having lost their spouse. The main problem is an inability to assimilate with each other—it takes a long time for the 'I' in them to dissolve. Magazines like this may be able to bring them together and spread the message of collective living. I would also recommend that you depute a study team to various old age homes in India and publish your findings.

**T V Somanathan, Thrissur**

The recent Central Budget announced by our finance minister barely touches the lives of senior citizens except increasing the exemption limit for income tax. It should be noted that not all seniors in India file tax returns and the percentage of tax assessees is meagre. Meanwhile, the interest on postal deposits has not been increased for the past four years though deposits by senior citizens are on the higher side today considering the safety of their hard-earned money. In fact, most seniors prefer to invest in postal deposits even though the interest offered is lower than that offered by nationalised banks. Our

elected members from Tamil Nadu have not raised this issue even once, leaving us with no option than to seek other avenues for redress. On behalf of hundreds of thousands of senior citizens, I urge you to publish this letter and take up this issue with the government.

**T T Varadarajan, Chennai**



#### **AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY**

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

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

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# Whenever the country needs guidance, there is a silver lining.

Harmony Silver Awards 2009



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When difficulties surround us, there are people who use their age and wisdom to become the silver lining that we're looking for. And we will honour them at Harmony Silver Awards 2009. An event that pays tribute to silver citizens who have made a difference in the golden years of their lives.



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## COGNITIVE EDGE

**A**geing is not synonymous with a dip in cognitive function. This heartening news comes from a study conducted at the University of California–San Francisco. The study followed 2,500 people aged between 70 and 79 for eight years, testing their cognitive skills several times over the years. While 53 per cent of the participants showed normal age-related decline and 16 per cent showed major cognitive decline, 30 per cent had no change or even improved on the tests over the years. The researchers then examined what factors made these people different. They found that people who exercise at least once a week are 30 per cent more likely to maintain their cog-

nitive function; those with a high school education are nearly three times as likely to stay sharp; non-smokers are nearly twice as likely to stay sharp; and elders working or volunteering and those living with someone are 24 per cent more likely to maintain cognitive function.

“The majority of past research has focused on factors that put people at greater risk of losing their cognitive skills, but much less is known about what helps people maintain their skills,” writes Alexandra Fiocco in the June issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. “And some of these factors are behaviours that can be changed. Discovering these may be very useful in prevention strategies.”

# AT YOUR SERVICE

**H**elp is now just a phone call, sms or email away for silvers in Chandigarh, thanks to **Dadadadi**, a new not-for-profit service and advocacy organisation. From finding a plumber or electrician to booking train tickets, buying medicines or even getting them a lawyer, volunteers ensure that elders enjoy a better quality of life. The organisation is the brainchild of Jorawer Singh, who runs a call centre in the city—his employees double up as operators for the Dadadadi helpline. Other than a website that offers silvers useful information, the organisation plans to evolve income-generation activities for silvers. “The idea is to make them self-dependent and get them involved in activities that are easy to carry out at home,” Singh tells media.



We Care

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## (100PLUS)

**CENTENARIANS ARE SCOTLAND'S FASTEST GROWING AGE GROUP, ACCORDING TO NEW FIGURES RELEASED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE NUMBER OF SCOTS AGED 100 AND OLDER IS NOW ESTIMATED TO BE 720, COMPARED TO JUST 570 IN 2002; AROUND 30 OF THEM ARE THOUGHT TO BE 105 OR OLDER. AND THOUGH ALMOST NINE OUT OF EVERY 10 CENTENARIANS ARE WOMEN, THE PROPORTION OF MEN IS SLOWLY INCREASING.**

## Bengal tigers

THE KOLKATA POLICE has joined hands with NGO The Bengal to provide **medical help to silvers**. Under the initiative, named Pranam, elders will need to fill out a form at their local police station with their address, phone number and blood group to access a 24-hour helpline. They will then get medical support on priority from 15 private hospitals, who will send their ambulances along with a doctor. In case silvers are unable to bear the expense of the treatment at a private hospital, they will be transferred to a state-run hospital after



initial intervention. According to media reports, when the project was launched the first two forms were filled up by 95 year-old Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) patriarch Jyoti Basu and reclusive 78 year-old actress Suchitra Sen.



# Help For Knee Pain In Women

## *What causes knees to hurt*

Three bones make up the knee joint: the end of the thighbone(femur), the top of the shinbone(tibia) and the kneecap (patella). The knee bones are cushioned by cartilage. When cartilage is healthy and intact, it prevents wear and tear on the bone surfaces when you bend and extend your knee. When the knee is healthy, all of these things work together unnoticed gliding smoothly and without pain.

But cartilage can become damaged over time, due to wear and tear (osteoarthritis), from injury or aging or rheumatoid arthritis. When the cartilage cushion is damaged or gone, the bones of the knee grind against each other. As a result, normal activities from climbing stairs to sitting on a chair can become extremely painful.

### **Mrs. Usha Goel, 63 yrs**

Undergone Gender Specific  
bilateral total knee replacement

## *Women are different and so are their knees*

Knee replacements have been a highly successful surgery for more than 30 years. There are more than half a million people who undergo Knee replacement surgery out of them 70% patients are women and that number continues to grow. For the first time, there is a knee implant designed especially for women. The new Gender Solutions Knee is the first and only knee replacement shaped to fit Women.

Women and men are different in many respects, including their knees. Traditional knee replacements are sized and shaped to fit an average of men's and women's knees. As more and more women have knee replacement surgery, it's become apparent that traditional knee replacements, while highly successful in alleviating pain, may not feel or move like your natural knee. Studies show that Woman knees tends to be narrower than a man's and their hips are wider. The Gender Solutions Knee is designed to accommodate those differences and is the only knee replacement shaped to fit a woman's anatomy.

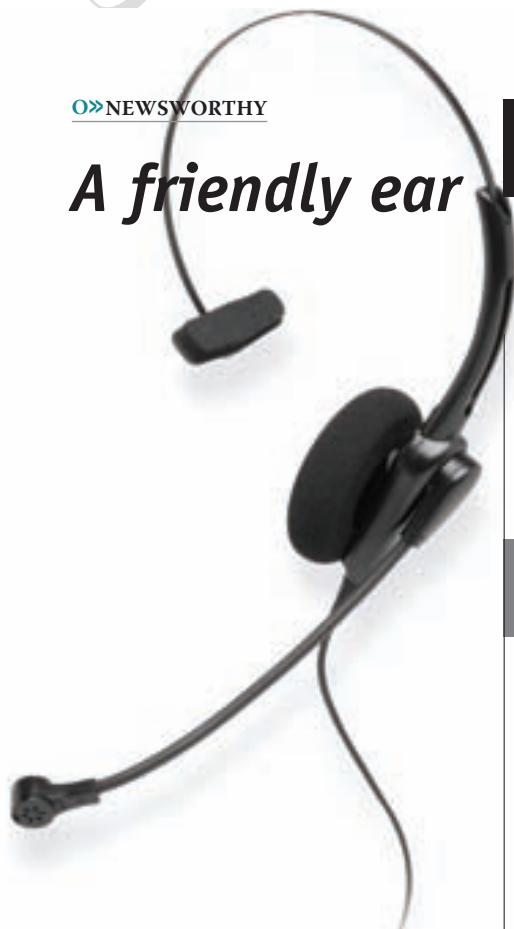
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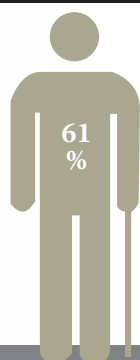
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## A friendly ear

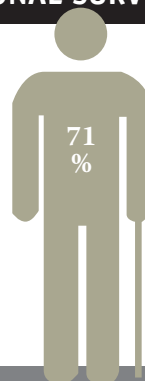


WITH a rather unlikely name—‘Love Passing’—China launched its first counselling hotline for silvers in June. Manned by 128 volunteers, many of whom are elders, the hotline has been specifically designed to tackle psychological problems and will be operational 24/7. “In the first two weeks of the helpline, we had already helped nearly 100 elderly people who had thought of suicide,” Xu Kun, founder of the hotline and a professor at Beijing’s Capital University of Economics and Business, tells news agency AFP. “Over time, the volunteers will also visit places where many older people congregate and arrange social events for them.” According to Li Baoku, president of the China Aging Development Foundation, each year more than 100,000 people aged above 55 kill themselves in the country, a trend that is particularly pronounced in rural areas. About 11 per cent of China’s population is aged above 60 and the silver population in China accounts for one-fifth of the world’s total.

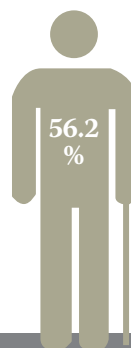
**69, NOT OLD:** WHILE THE OFFICIAL RETIREMENT AGE IN KOREA IS 65, A NATIONAL SURVEY REVEALS THAT...



Don't feel old until the age of 70



Don't need to live with their children in later life



Believe sex is important in later life

## Insure the future

It's being described by the British media as a radical shake-up of the care system. In July, ministers proposed an ‘age insurance’ scheme to protect pensioners from having to sell their homes to pay for homecare, reports *The Times*. Right now, thousands of silvers run down their savings to finance escalating homecare bills. Under the new proposal, silvers would pay into a scheme that would foot the bill for those who require long-term residential care. Of course, the poorest pensioners will continue to have their care paid for by authorities in the tradition of the British welfare state.

The British government will soon release a ‘Green Paper’ with a range of payment options. One option suggests that a prearranged sum is deducted from a member’s estate after death—a form of inheritance tax. Another recommends that a payment is made out of the pension pot on retirement. Other models

propose that payments are made during working years. While a model for a fully privatised system, similar to health insurance, to pay for old-age care will also appear in the Green Paper, the government has made it clear that it prefers an option that ‘pools risk’. All options will be open to public debate. The stakes are high—one in four adults in the UK will be over the age of 65 within 20 years, doubling the cost of care to £ 24 billion.





A man with dark hair and a beard is shown from the chest up, standing in a shower. He has his eyes closed and a relaxed expression. Water is spraying all over him, creating a misty atmosphere. His skin is wet and glistening. He is holding a yellow bar of soap in his left hand, which is positioned near his chest. The background is a dark, textured wall, likely the shower stall.

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## REAL AGE TEST

**I**t may just take a simple blood test to **determine your 'real' age**. According to researchers at the University of North Carolina, such a test can detect a protein called p16INK4a, the molecular biomarker of ageing in humans that is present in cells called T-lymphocytes (T-cells). As cells and tissues age, the expression of p16INK4a dramatically increases in mammalian organs. The researchers validated the test by obtaining blood from two groups of healthy human volunteers, totalling 170 subjects, who also filled out a questionnaire about current and past health status and health behaviours. They observed that the expression of the biomarker strongly correlated with the donor's chronological age, and increased exponentially with

age. Besides, increased levels were independently associated with tobacco use and physical inactivity as well as with biomarkers of human frailty.

"This is a major step toward a practical tool to clinically determine a person's actual molecular age, as opposed to just their chronological age," Dr Norman Sharpless, senior author of the study, writes in journal *Ageing Cell*. "Although we don't know whether this test is a good reflection of cellular age in all types of human tissues, we believe it is a first step toward a better understanding of issues like the suitability of organs for transplantation, how well patients are likely to recover after transplant surgery or the future toxicity of chemotherapy for cancer patients."

O» ANALYSE THIS

## GenePULL

**WE ARE ONE STEP CLOSER** to the elixir of youth—at least, that's the view of scientists at the University College, London, who have discovered **key genes that slow the ageing process**. They found that the mutations in genes that encode the protein components of the insulin and insulin-like growth factor 1 (Igf1) signalling pathways extend the lifespan of animals like worms, flies and mice. And, according to them, the genetic variants for these genes in humans are associated with lifespan. In fact, in mammals, insulin regulates blood sugar levels as well as metabolism in response



to food intake, while the related Igf1 regulates growth. "This finding offers fresh hope for people suffering from illnesses ranging from heart disease to Alzheimer's disease," lead researcher Linda Partridge tells *The Daily Telegraph*. "Tackling the causes of ageing, rather than treating the symptoms piecemeal, offers the best prospects for dealing with these diseases."



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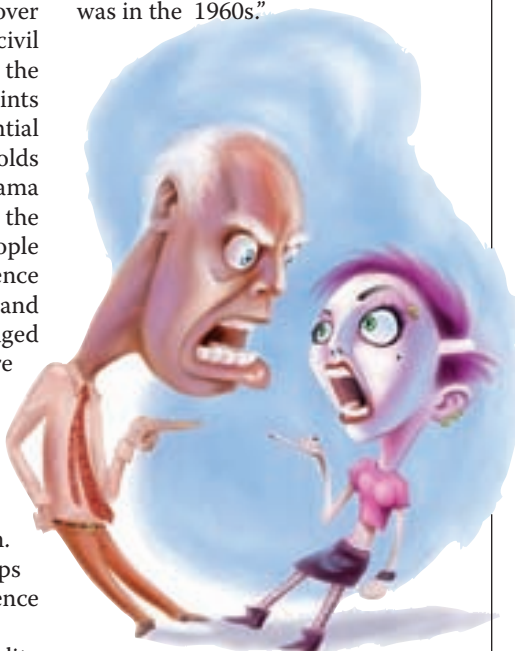
## O» TRENDS

# GENERATION GAP

The term 'generation gap' isn't just a hackneyed phrase but living reality. According to a new survey conducted by the US-based Pew Research Centre, **American adults from young to old disagree increasingly on social values**, ranging from religion to relationships. Calling it the largest generation gap since the chasm 40 years ago over incendiary issues like Vietnam, civil rights and women's liberation, the public opinion research group points to last November's US presidential election, when 18 to 29 year-olds voted for Democrat Barack Obama by a 2-to-1 ratio. According to the survey, almost eight in 10 people believe there is a major difference in the point of view of younger and older people today. People aged between 18 and 29 years were more likely to report disagreements over lifestyle, views on family and relationships, while older people cited differences in a sense of entitlement and attitudes towards religion. Those in the middle-age groups also often pointed to a difference in manners.

"Around the notion of morality and work ethic, the differences in point of view are pretty much felt

across the board," Paul Taylor, director of the Pew Social and Demographic Trends Project, comments in a media release. "There is much greater tolerance among younger people on cultural issues such as gay marriage and interracial relationships. Still, the generation gap in 2009 is more tepid in nature than it was in the 1960s."



You can read the entire report on [pewsocialtrends.org](http://pewsocialtrends.org)

## OVERHEARD



"I DON'T MIND GETTING OLDER; I MIND GETTING UGLIER! NO ONE ELSE IN THE WORLD IS OUT THERE SAYING, 'IT'S A TRAGEDY SHE'S GETTING OLDER.' SO WHY BRING YOURSELF DOWN? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT EVERY DAY WHEN I WAKE UP AND THINK, 'IT'S STILL HAPPENING.' THE WORLD AROUND CHANGES ALL THE TIME, CLEARLY EVERYTHING IS CHANGING, BUT I JUST STAY THE SAME. I'M ON MY OWN LITTLE PATH AND I'M STILL DOING IT."

Rock musician Chrissie Hynde, 57  
in Britain's Stella magazine

## O» ANALYSE THIS

## The colour of stress

**HERE'S A WAY** to cut down on hair colour bills: bust stress. Researchers at the Tokyo Medical and Dental University aver that **it's not ageing but stress that causes greying**. They have discovered that 'genotoxic stress' damages human DNA and reduces melanocyte stem cells within hair follicles responsible for pigment-producing cells. When confronted with a tough situation, instead of dying off, these stem cells differentiate and turn into mature melanocytes. The good news: Anything that can limit stress can stop the greying from taking place. The findings are published in the journal *Cell*.



O» WORTH YOUR WHILE

## Flower power

"I've always loved flowers," says Nischinta Gokhale, 70. A former arts and crafts teacher in Nagpur, Gokhale chose to busy herself making paper flowers, and painting landscapes, flowers and Warli motifs using oil and acrylic paints. Seven years ago, she discovered a new interest. Fascinated by her garden, she decided to **dry flowers to create wall hangings and greeting cards**. She even has a name for her art: 'Parna Chitra'. Selecting petals or leaves with unusual shapes, or shaping them to suit her requirements, she makes beautiful landscapes. In her hands, leaves, stems, grass and petals don new avatar as graceful trees, hills, lakes, and dresses like skirts, shirts and saris. Her rural scenes are inhabited with village women drawing water from a well or swaying gracefully with pots on their heads; farmers and shepherds going about their daily work, pigtailed children happily tripping along. Attention to detail is the key to her work. "Absolute neatness is a must and even a small card can take two to three days to complete," she explains. Her meticulousness has paid off. She has sold her creations in shows at Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra.



### DIY: A GREETING CARD

**Materials:** Card paper, dried petals and leaves, Fevicol, a thin paintbrush.

### METHOD

Collect suitable petals and leaves. Place them between the pages of a magazine or book. Weigh down and let dry completely. Take

them out carefully and place them on a white sheet. Form a picture in your mind. Then draw an outline on the card paper and choose the necessary petals to complete your design. Apply a thin layer of Fevicol on one side of the petal or leaf and paste carefully. Press with a soft cloth.

O» LOVE THAT

## Silvers' day out

On 14 June, over 500 residents from 12 old age homes in Ahmedabad enjoyed a rare **Sunday treat**. Thanks to an initiative sponsored by city-based businessman Sanjay Patel, 10 private buses left in the morning for Khodiyar Mata temple in Bhavnagar, 187 km from the city, with the silvers. After they offered their prayers at the temple, they travelled to Mahakali Temple in Gogha, another 20 km away, where a special entertainment function was



organised by theatre and television artists. The silvers returned to Ahmedabad late evening—wary but happy. "We planned it as a fun event with all the trappings of a school picnic," says Farsu Kakkad of Jivan Sandhya Old Age Home, who helped organise the day. "The seniors got a chance to extend their social boundaries by interacting and striking friendships with people from outside their old age homes."

O» MEDIA WATCH

## FUN AFTER 55

If you find sites like Orkut and Facebook too youth-centric, here is the answer: **Verdurez.com**, a **social networking website exclusively for Indian silvers and NRIs**. Promoted by Ishita Sukhadawala in London and Robina Gupta in Mumbai, the site allows users to create their profiles, set up image galleries, and network through chat rooms, blogs and book clubs. Registration is free. "Our aim was to reduce the feeling of loneliness that comes with old age and promote life after 55," Sukhadawala tells media. "Many of our users are vocal about their need to make friends, have space to voice their thoughts, and remain active. One member even quipped that he was bringing out his *pachpan ka bachpan* [childhood of 55]!"



# Adventurous LEADERSHIP



“One cannot learn to solve problems in a simulated scenario,” avers **Virender Kapoor**, founder-director and chief mentor of Management Institute for Leadership and Excellence (MILE), Pune. The 58 year-old has recently made adventure sports an integral part of the curriculum at MILE. Students are put through a rigorous endurance testing bout of canoeing, kayaking, rafting, trekking, rappelling, tent-pitching and mountaineering. Even the faculty at the institute is a carefully handpicked bunch of qualified mountaineers and swimming and sailing champions. Kapoor believes management theories and classroom brainstorming are not enough to mould brilliant thinkers and leaders. “In the great outdoors, when students go through crisis situations and discomfort, they unwittingly hone their survival instincts, lateral thinking abilities, and resource maximisation and planning skills” says the retired army colonel. At the end of the course, Kapoor plans to reward students who excel with an expedition to the Everest base camp.

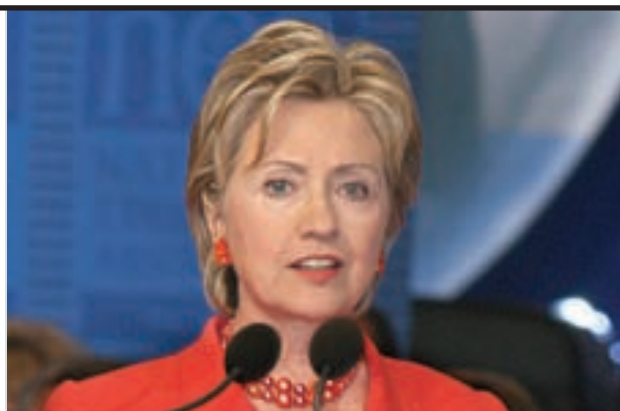
## VISITOR

**Who:** US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

**When:** 18-21 July

**Where:** Mumbai and Delhi

In India for enhanced Indo-US strategic partnership talks, Hillary Clinton proved to be a tough negotiator right through her whirlwind tour—the savvy 61 year-old drove a tough bargain even at Delhi Haat, where she shopped for brass bangles and *kurti*. Clinton flew back to the US showered with much hospitality and an apron designed by artist M F Hussain.



## IN PASSING

**Farah Fawcett**, pin-up sensation and star of the 1970s hit TV series *Charlie's Angels*, passed away after a prolonged battle with cancer in Los Angeles on 25 June. She was 62.

Artist **Tyeb Mehta**, whose triptych *Celebration* fetched an incredible Rs 10.5 million at a Christie's auction in 2002, died of a heart attack in Mumbai on 2 July. He was 84.

The world's oldest man and World War I veteran **Henry Allingham** died in his sleep on 18 July at a care home near Brighton in the UK. He was 113.

Legendary classical vocalist **Gangubai Hangal** died of bone marrow cancer in Hubli on 21 July. She was 96.

## BIRTHDAYS

- Spiritual guru **Dalai Lama** turned 74 on 6 July
- Actor **Sylvester Stallone** turned 63 on 6 July
- Actor **Tom Hanks** turned 53 on 9 July
- Musician **Carlos Santana** turned 62 on 20 July
- Actor **Naseeruddin Shah** turned 59 on 20 July

O» WILD SILVER

## CHICK FEST

Inhabitants of the island of Mull, Scotland's oldest pair of sea eagles are also the most productive. Almost 30 years old, Frisa and Skye—so named by wildlife enthusiasts—have just had two new chicks, bringing their tally up to an astonishing 33. As the BBC reports, experts from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty Birds (RSPCB) in Scotland say the sea eagles have broken all records by rearing so many chicks—sea eagles typically rear between 18 and 20 chicks through their lifetime. Like their siblings, the newborns have now been tagged with satellite tracking devices by RSPCB to chart their progress.

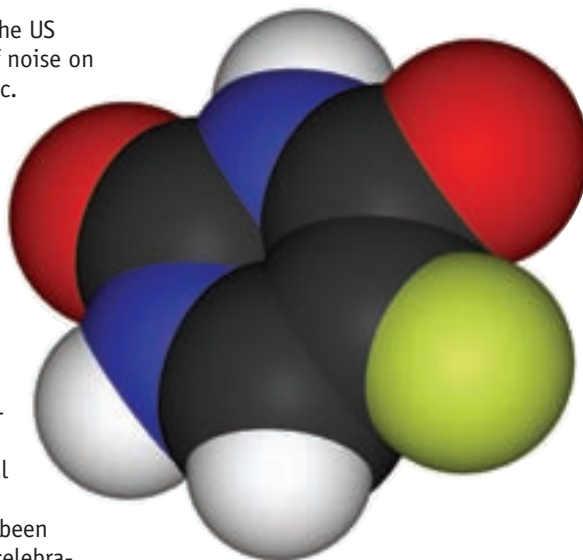


**SWEEPING STUDY:**  
THE £ 12-MILLION  
MARK-AGE STUDY BRINGS  
TOGETHER 27 KEY PARTNERS  
(UNIVERSITIES AND  
RESEARCH CENTRES) ACROSS  
EUROPE TO BUILD AN 'EARLY  
WARNING' SYSTEM FOR  
SIGNS OF DIFFERENT  
ILLNESSES. THE STUDY WILL  
RECRUIT 5,000 MALE AND  
FEMALE VOLUNTEERS FROM  
DIFFERENT EUROPEAN  
REGIONS—MAKING IT ONE  
OF THE LARGEST STUDIES  
OF ITS KIND—TO IDENTIFY  
AND ESTABLISH OPTIMAL  
BIOMARKERS OF HUMAN  
AGEING. VOLUNTEERS  
PARTICIPATING IN THE  
STUDY WILL BE AGED  
BETWEEN 34 AND 75 YEARS.  
THESE BIOMARKERS  
CAN THEN BE USED TO  
PREDICT THE ONSET OF  
AGE-RELATED DISEASES  
AND ALLOW FOR EARLY  
INTERVENTION BEFORE  
FURTHER PROBLEMS OCCUR.

O» FACE OFF

## About-face

A small clinical trial in the US has drummed up a lot of noise on both sides of the Atlantic. When scientists at the University of Michigan discovered that **fluorouracil**—a chemotherapy cream used to treat skin cancer—may also help improve the appearance of ageing skin, and announced it in the *Archives of Dermatology*, the news was greeted with a great deal of enthusiasm. However, Cancer Research UK has been quick to point that the celebrations may be a trifle premature. "Many people will be intrigued by this study but it's worth bearing in mind that the research was done with a small number of people and the treatment causes significant side-effects that last for several weeks," Dr Laura Bell, science information officer at Cancer Research UK, announced to media. Possible side-effects include severe redness,



oozing, weeping and scabbing of skin. Nina Goad of the British Association of Dermatologists seconds this, saying, "Although this is a useful treatment for precancerous skin changes, the risk of a severe reaction would probably put off most people looking for a solution to cosmetic concerns."



Dr Jane

# Barratt

## Inclusive policies:

A sense of community is essential for a better life for silvers

Intrinsically, we have a sense of belonging to our families and, because of the family, to the surrounding neighborhood and the community. At some stage during our life we begin to understand community from a few different angles and elements. For instance, we may belong to the 'school community' or 'engineering or business community' or even the community of *Harmony* readers.

At the core of community is its membership and what it means. Some of us remember what it was like to be rejected at school, at work or in the local community—being excluded can bring with it a sense of worthlessness. In this month's column, I want to talk about the concept of social inclusion and social exclusion; across the world many governments are recognising the importance of every citizen having the opportunity and ability to contribute to 'community'.

Social inclusion and social exclusion are highly contested terms and it is difficult to define one without describing the other. Many credit Lenoir's description of those excluded by France's social insurance system as the contemporary naissance of the terms social exclusion and inclusion. Those excluded, also known as *les exclus*, were people with a disability—single parents, unemployed people,

marginalised youth and isolated individuals. Some of you may be thinking that being older or 'aged' excludes us from various activities, or it's honourable (and therefore exclusive) to reach the age of 60 years or perhaps even 70 or 80 years of age.



Many European, Australian and, more recently, North American and South-east Asian agencies have tried to define social inclusion. I was interested to read that earlier this month India's Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee announced that growth, *inclusion* and social uplift were the focus this Budget, with more funds for welfare schemes and infrastructure, and a 'vision' to reach the fruits of progress to each of the country's 1.17 billion people. What is less clear is the role of older people in the regeneration, keeping in mind that the silver population is growing more rapidly than fertility rates. In 2008, over 700 representatives of elders' self-help groups from Tamil Nadu and Kerala travelled to Delhi to submit a memorandum of demands for social inclusion of the

aged, including the constitution of a National Commission for the Aged.

Over a decade ago, the United Kingdom Social Exclusion Unit reported that social exclusion is what could occur to individuals or populations that suffer interconnected sources of oppression such as joblessness, low levels of education, poor housing, high crime rates, ill health and disintegration of family structures. Numerous studies demonstrate that poverty in India is often linked to exclusion and marginalisation; there are many other causative factors and variables that give rise to this ever increasing trend.

The Eurostat Taskforce on Social Exclusion and Poverty Statistics suggests that social exclusion is a 'dynamic process' where essential resources like employment, health, education, social or political life are denied to people in the community. Social exclusion can be viewed as a process caused by intersecting socioeconomic and political agents that prevent certain groups, including older people, from accessing resources and acquiring the skills necessary to fully participate within society. For example, older people are limited in achieving second career options because of inadequate training and employment opportunities.

Social inclusion is also a multidimensional concept with many mitigating factors. It invokes action, rather than the removal of obstacles, in order to bring low-access populations to the centre of society. It requires investment and organised action to create conditions necessary to validate and recognise all persons. It's not merely a



solution to social exclusion, but goes one step further by proposing that the onus is on society to adapt for socioeconomic distances to close and ensure that all are included.

### Five principles of social inclusion

The Scottish government's approach to promoting social inclusion was first developed in 1999 with the identification of five core principles: integration, prevention, understanding, inclusiveness and empowerment.

Integration is the key principle of an effective approach to promote inclusion. Different agencies must work together *as if they were one organisation*, driven by the needs of clients; and their programmes must be designed to contribute to an effective, integrated effort. This is particularly challenging for immigrants as well as older people trying to navigate complex healthcare systems. The North Somerset Council, England, introduced a project to change the way community services work for older people. It developed a single point of access for health and social care services, including mental health for older people.

Prevention is better than the cure [1240 Bracton De Legibus]. Therefore tackling immediate problems of exclusion includes the growing problem of homelessness. There is a growing trend of older people being rendered homeless in developed countries more than ever before. For instance, Wintringham Housing ([www.wintringham.org.au](http://www.wintringham.org.au)) is an example of best practice dedicated to providing safe and affordable housing to the elderly who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Australia. Wintringham has consistently maintained the position that the elderly homeless are entitled to the same standards of care that the rest of the aged community sees as their right.

Understanding what works and what doesn't require rigorous evaluation and levels of accountability for both

public and private sectors. People may be born into an excluded group (in the case of ethnicity, caste, or being born with a disability), or may become excluded either owing to changes in circumstances (such as migration, acute illness, or disaster) or chronic processes (such as long-term unemployment). People may also be excluded because of where they live (for example, people who live in remote areas or slums). There is no single criterion for identifying the socially excluded or included, nor is it always agreed who these people are in a society. This is why the identification of criteria for social exclusion is one of the primary tasks for evaluation of programmes.

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## Numerous studies demonstrate that poverty in India is often linked to exclusion and marginalisation

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The Chiltern District Council in England has encouraged the formation of local older persons' *action* groups, or OPAGS. This has been very successful in places where parish plans and community appraisals are being developed. OPAG members identify their local needs and work with a range of agencies, including local authorities, the primary care trust, the police, paradigm housing and public transport providers, to find solutions.

Having a voice is not a new concept in India and many other countries where the population of older people often exceeds that of the younger populations. What is special about the OPAG is that the voices of older people help to create realistic and manageable solutions. Another more recent example in the use of technology is being empowered and having a voice. There is now a People Empowerment Project on Facebook, the social utility that

*connects* people with friends, family and others who work, study and live around them.

### Policy implications: older persons and social inclusion

Many countries have implemented policies to combat social exclusion, but fewer have adopted a social inclusion framework. The UK, Ireland and Australia are some countries that have delineated a clear action plan on promoting social inclusion. For example, in Australia, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard has listed the required opportunities for social inclusion: the opportunity to attain employment; access services; connect with others through family, friends, community and various social media, to deal with personal crises like illness, bereavement, and the loss of employment; as well as the opportunity to be heard.

Social inclusion priorities may address the incidence of homelessness; close the gap for indigenous Australians; create employment for those living with a disability or mental illness, addressing the incidence and needs of jobless families with children; focus on neighbourhoods and communities to ensure that services are reaching those most at need; and deliver effective support to children at greatest risk for long-term disadvantage.

Governments across the world play an important role in the status of their older populations and each has much to share by way of policy and practice trends. It is both relevant and important for government senior officials to reflect on the subject of social inclusion systems, related financial incentives and the government's role. It can be of great value to engage in peer discussions with colleagues from other countries, compare experiences and perhaps even identify best practices.

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*Dr Jane Barratt is Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing*



# Mimlu Sen

## Krishna Reddy's blessings:

In the first of a series on iconic silvers, Mimlu Sen sketches the life of artist Krishna Reddy and names the column 'Intaglio' after his style of printmaking

True gurus, we've been told since the night of times, always bless authentic disciples. And we are many already to have been blessed by Krishna Reddy; and many more will come.

Intaglio. The groove dug deepest on a zinc plate is the one that gives Krishna Reddy's graphic prints their final outlines: delicate and profound, precise, ephemeral, universal.

This simple, humble, grave and discreet man, born in the village of Nandanoor in Andhra Pradesh in 1925, has given all of humanity a marvellous gift, that of his own trailblazing life, that of an artist, a sculptor, a teacher, an explorer of the unknown; an environmentalist before the concept became small change, a minimalist who will surely influence nanotechnologists far into the future.

The life of this unique, original and ferociously independent artist of complete personal integrity seems blessed by Dhara, the blind messenger of the gods, who writes the traits of our lives on our foreheads, traits that relate the main events and define the span of human life. Quite miraculously, Krishna seems always to have been at the right place at the right time. The remarkable traits of Krishna's life



Rahul Krishnan

show us a man who has lived in depth and in clear focus on his mission as an artist. As a child, he painted murals on temple walls of his village. He was noticed by the art teacher of Rishi Valley School not far from his village Nandanoor where he first received spiritual guidance from the great spiritual teacher Jiddu Krishnamurthi. Subsequently, he learnt from a scintillating pantheon of masters: from the legendary artist Nandalal Bose in the lively cultural atmosphere of erstwhile Santiniketan to Rukmini

Devi Arundale in Kalakshetra in Adyar at the Theosophical Society, from sculptor Henry Moore in London to sculptor Ossip Zadkine, bathing in the artistic and philosophical ferment of post-war Paris. The Russian-born French artist Zadkine, aware of the sculptural propensities and amazing graphic talent of this young and unassuming, soft-spoken Indian, in turn led him to William Hayter and his Atelier 17, a workshop of graphic printing in the celebrated Rue Daguerre.

Atelier 17 became the space for Krishna to explore techniques that revolutionised modern printmaking. Far from losing his soul as many an individual who have strayed away from their place of origin, his new experiences only reinforced his integrity and the mystic Indian quality of his expression. In his sculptures and graphic prints: *Wave, River, Fish, Butterfly and Flower*. It led Hayter later to famously comment: "Krishna Reddy owes more to Madras than to Montparnasse." Turning his back on the rampant commercialism that blighted the art scene in the 1960s, Krishna the hermit withdrew into a self-made caul of artistic creation.

As Hayter's assistant director he developed, in tandem with Hayter, the technique of viscosity printing, a method of printing on images sculpted into zinc plates, anchored in a precise chemistry of colours and designed on pure geometrical and sculptural abstractions. By sheer hard physical work and patient experimentation with three primary colours (red, blue and yellow), with giant rollers over the sculpted dents and acid cavities of his zinc plate, Krishna Reddy, with different quantities of linseed oil and water, produced a kaleidoscope of myriad and infinite colours. Oil is viscous, and therefore the colours instead of fusing into each other reject each other, offering the artist an infinity of permutations and combinations. This transformed his etchings into a perfect alchemy of subtle and provocative colours, challenging infinity itself.

In December 1975, at the end of his epic and exemplary career in Paris, about a year before he finally left for the US to head the graphic arts section of New York University (which he still does), I was lucky to meet him for the first time. I had just returned to a grey, chilly, wintry Paris. I was drawn back to this city bejewelled with visionary thinkers and artists and philosophers, having lived through intense experiences of Indian social, political and family life.

Krishna and his wife Judy, a warm and quietly happy couple, lived in a little house in Vanves in the suburbs of Paris in those days, delighting in their four year-old daughter Apu. They fed me and clothed me, listened to my stories, plied me with books and ideas along with the students and artists who thronged his workshop.

The plate on which Krishna was working on slow and steady at the time was Apu crawling, multiple versions of Apu as a toddler, innocent as nature itself, clambering across infinity over a parquet, oblivious of the impregnable wall looming beside her. The work was a metaphor of human life.

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**Krishna taught us that the deepest groove is the one to concentrate on the intaglio; so is the darkest colour that, in its turn, would render essential form and a pageant of colour to a work of art**

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Krishna—like Apu, me and the others—had been thrown into a global wave where invisible powers clashed and telescoped, leading to chaotic migrations of individuals and cataclysmic movements of populations. Many of the fault lines he had crossed over were my own and without so much as an exchange of words Krishna's artistic and philosophical vision gave me a clear sense of my own identity as an Indian. He introduced me to his hugely talented students from India: Akkitham Narayanan, Anju Chaudhuri, Sharmila Roy, Rini Das Gupta. I too became a student of art. His sense of devotion to each and everyone who crossed his path is inimitable. When I'd cook a meal for everyone, which was my way of participating in this joyful collective experience, he'd say:

"Look she's painting with food." He found his way simply to the creator within each of us, teaching us, while he scraped and plucked on his plate, his burin digging deep into the zinc, signifying that the deepest groove is the one to concentrate on the intaglio; so is the darkest colour that, in its turn, would render essential form and a pageant of colour to a work of art—there is light at the end of a tunnel of aspiration and suffering for each human being.

Krishna's atelier in Vanves in those days had the industrious ambience of a beehive, glorious smell of fresh paint mingled with turpentine and linseed oil. He worked there, a quiet island, in the midst of a river of students, every single day, teaching the technique of intaglio printmaking. His art was sacred to him. Social niceties were beyond him and his intense concentration always inspired humility. On one occasion, a major patron of arts, hugely solicited by the Diaspora of Indian artists in Paris in the 1970s, came to buy a print and had to wait in her Rolls for hours, till he finished running a series of prints. She waited patiently and in all humility and left with his print when he was ready to give it to her.

Krishna Reddy is a man of his epoch, anchored in the highest ideals of the 20th century—a Gandhian, a man of frugality, his energy channelled as a factory worker combined with a Lama of the highest order. His atelier is a workshop, a magnetic field of a cosmic order, a place of cultural and spiritual transmission. Today, an authentic and truly international guru, Krishna Reddy has formed shoals of graphic artists in every corner of the world. This simply by giving true value to each person who has come in contact with him, and turning them into vessels of true cosmic knowledge.

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*Mimlu Sen is an author, musician, and translator. She lives in Paris*





*Urban life is a potential health hazard for Indian silvers who have to negotiate threats on life and property from strangers, and physical and emotional abuse from relatives. Despite a slew of initiatives from law enforcement authorities and NGOs, we still have a long way to go before our streets and homes become safe, writes Arati Rajan Menon*

**THE MONTH OF JUNE IS TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PEARL, A STONE THAT SYMBOLISES HEALTH AND LONGEVITY. HOW CRUEL THE IRONY—THIS JUNE, NEWSPAPERS IN MUMBAI ANNOUNCED A GRISLY ROLL CALL OF DEATH: EIGHT SILVERS MURDERED IN JUST FOUR MONTHS. REVA SANGHAVI, 84. LAXMI SANGOI, 74. BADRI-NATH KULKARNI, 65. SUREKHA NARVEKAR, 72. CHARAN KUNDNANI, 79. KAMLA KUNDNANI, 69. SAYEEDA SAYYAD, 65. ASHA BHOSLE, 60.**

**J**une was also the month that 70 year-old Basanti was found brutally murdered in her flat near Garhi in Delhi's East of Kailash, her jewellery and cash stolen. Much to the police's surprise, the perpetrator wasn't her domestic help but her grandson, acting with an accomplice. And if you blame it on Delhi's much discussed reputation for crime, consider the fact that this January in Bengaluru, four silvers—A S Venkata Rangan, 79, and his 72 year-old wife Vasantha, Sathyabhama, 84, and her 55 year-old daughter Vijayalakshmi—were murdered in a span of 11 days in the posh suburb of Jayanagar.

Welcome to the big city. For Indian silvers, the term 'urban jungle' just doesn't begin to describe it—it's a minefield. In addition to coping with independent living and feelings of isolation, they have to negotiate very real threats of robbery, assault and even murder from strangers, and property disputes and physical and emotional abuse at the hands of loved ones. While law enforcement authorities and NGOs have responded with helplines in major cities and new initiatives to protect elders, a systematic, community-based mechanism that co-opts the police, volunteers and silvers themselves to make neighbourhoods safer continues to elude us.

This fact has not been lost on the public. In fact, sustained media outrage prompted the National Institute of Criminology & Forensic Science in collaboration with the National Institute of Social Defence to hold a National Seminar on Crime against Senior Citizens last December in Delhi to search for solutions. Senior police officers,

members of the judiciary and representatives of NGOs—including Harmony for Silvers Foundation—came together under a common platform to find ways to make urban neighbourhoods safer for silvers. And underlying the proceedings was the need to evolve security mechanisms that remain in step with a changing social milieu.

#### **CAUSE AND EFFECT**

"The social landscape is rapidly altering with family bonds being weakened," observes Parantap Das, criminologist at the National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science. "Nuclear families are mushrooming and elders have been marginalised." Of about 81 million senior citizens in India, about 28 per cent live in urban setups and many of them face fear, neglect, isolation and economic insecurity. Their vulnerability makes them soft targets for crime.

Citing recent research in Mumbai, Pune and Delhi conducted by the All India Senior Citizens' Confederation (AISCCON), Justice Adarsh Sein Anand, retired chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Courts, says, "Senior citizens have a regular routine, limited interaction with neighbours, limited access to a bank, and a tendency to shower their resources on their domestic help. These factors increase their proximity to violent and non-violent crimes, especially at the hands of domestic help and utility providers."

Manabendranath Mondal, president of the Socio Legal and Aid Research and Training Centre in Kolkata, is only too aware of this fact—through his development organisation, which works in the field of women's, children's, disabled

and elderly rights, he has seen first hand the crisis of security plaguing silvers today. “Increasing urbanisation has led to a rise in crime,” he says. “Criminals pick on the aged because they are easy targets. Earlier, the joint family system offered them inbuilt protection but today they have no security net. In our experience, a large number of crimes against the elderly never get reported. Many deaths involving the elderly look natural on the surface and the police or even their relatives or friends never try to probe deeper.”

What’s worse, as Joginder Singh, former director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), points out, is that silvers themselves are reluctant to go to the police. “Nobody expects a 70 year-old person to go to a police station and fight for justice,” he says. “In India, a normal case takes between 10 and 15 years to conclude. By that time, he would either be no more or physically unable to reach the court for a hearing. Many criminals count on that and act with impunity.” Singh cites the case of a 62 year-old merchant from Delhi who was looted and shot by three motorcycle-borne youths on 11 April 2009 on Geeta Colony Bridge across the Yamuna—they took his bag thinking it was full of cash but the bag actually contained books.

### MISSING NUMBERS

Murder, cold-blooded and senseless. But who’s keeping track? A look at the figures provided by the National Crime Records Bureau of the Ministry of Home Affairs tells a tale of exclusion. Consider the fact that while crimes against women, children, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, merit their own exhaustive sections in the Bureau’s annual Crime in India report, there is no similar section for crime against the elderly. The only data available is on the number

of people over the age of 50 murdered as part of a general table (*see Table 1*). It has taken in-depth research by criminologists to yield the break-up of crimes against silvers to enable at least a rudimentary analysis (*see Table 2*).

Indeed, lack of comprehensively collated pan-India data on the elderly in India is a major lacuna—it doesn’t just stymie researchers who want to explore the issue in greater detail but also hinders law enforcement authorities from developing appropriate response mechanisms. As Jawed Shamim, Deputy Commissioner (Detective Department), Kolkata Police, concedes, “We find ourselves thwarted in our work relating to the elderly by a lack of data.”

More unfortunate, while police departments in major metros are quick to speak about the many initiatives they have launched to protect silvers—registration drives, phone calls and house visits, verification of domestic help, help-lines in collaboration with NGOs—many of them balk at providing actual statistics of crime. And even when these statistics are provided—and are subsequently officially recorded by the National Crime Record Bureau—they often vary from the numbers given by NGOs. When *Harmony* asked crime reporters from three prominent newspapers in Delhi which numbers they use in such a scenario, the answer was unanimous: the official version because the numbers coming from NGOs are not verifiable—even though they may actually be more accurate.

### MURDER LURKS

What makes analysis even more complicated is that crime comes in many hues. As Das says, “Crimes against the elderly fall under the categories of violent crimes, includ-

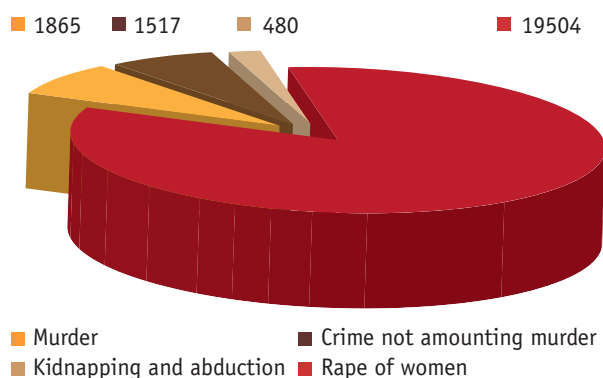
**TABLE 1: AGE & GENDER-WISE PROFILE OF VICTIMS OF MURDER FOR THE YEAR 2006 & 2007**

Sl. No.	Age groups*	2006			2007			% Share (2007)
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1.	Up to 10 years	350	290	640	379	329	708	2.1
2.	10-15 years	259	144	403	306	160	466	1.4
3.	15-18 years	447	233	680	391	193	584	1.7
4.	18-30 years	11985	3701	15686	11167	4016	15183	45.4
5.	30-50 years	10407	2624	13031	10549	2706	13255	39.7
6.	Above 50 years	2674	694	3368	2530	702	3232	9.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>26122</b>	<b>7686</b>	<b>33808</b>	<b>25322</b>	<b>8106</b>	<b>33428</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Courtesy: *Crime in India 2007*



**TABLE 2: MAJOR CRIMES AGAINST ELDERLY IN INDIA 2006-2007**



Courtesy: *Crime in India 2007*

ing murder, sexual assault and burglary; financial crimes, such as property disputes and fraud; and elder abuse, both physical and emotional.”

As Table 2 reveals, murder is clearly the most common crime against the elderly. And it can take place anywhere, to anyone. Very often, the perpetrator is someone known to the silver, usually domestic help. Take the case of Usha Chokani, a 54 year-old divorcee in Kolkata who lived alone in her home. She was found murdered in October 2008, stabbed repeatedly with a pair of scissors. The perpetrator was her live-in domestic Kishan Bagharia, 21, who made off with cash and valuables worth Rs 1 million—the police are yet to catch him.

“The police always assures its support but government initiatives for senior citizens are more on paper,” says Joginder Singh. “Manpower is also an issue. For instance, Delhi Police has about 50,000 personnel overall. Of these, 15,000 are deputed on security duty; 5,000 are usually on leave on any given day and 30,000 are deputed in the New Delhi area of Delhi. The condition is pathetic in the outskirts. Who do seniors living in these areas turn to?”

#### PROPERTY PAINS

At certain times, it is lack of manpower that bedevils law enforcement. At others, it is apathy. Last year, *Harmony* reported how Prakash Hundraj Hingorani, a 65 year-old

resident of Wanavdi, Pune, sought an arms license when he was threatened by a relative in a property-related matter (*H People*, May 2008). He was forced to take this step after he submitted more than 10 applications to the city police in 18 months. “The police are not interested,” he told us at the time. “I also approached the senior citizens’ helpline at the police commissionerate. But nothing has been done.”

In fact, according to a recent study by Pune-based NGO International Longevity Centre (ILC), which helps the Pune crime branch run its 24-hour helpline, about 60 per cent of the crimes against seniors in Pune are property-related, a statistic that would probably hold true in other major cities too. Take the case of Prakash Mhatre, a 69 year-old resident of Kandivali in suburban Mumbai. He and wife Sangeeta, 63, are facing eviction from their son, Sandeep, who wants to sell their house. The couple has had no recourse but to go to the police. The same holds true for Anjum Patil, a 68 year-old widow who lives in Bandra, again in suburban Mumbai. She approached the police as a last resort, tired of the threats she was facing from her 32 year-old son and his wife who want her to sign over the property to them.

The problem spans the length and breadth of the country. For instance, K Radhakrishnan, director of the Dignity Foundation in Chennai, which runs a helpline, tells media that it gets five or six calls relating to elder abuse every month; 95 per cent of the cases arise out of property disputes. And HelpAge India recently revealed that almost 52 per cent of silvers in Delhi face harassment over property. Adding to the woes of the capital, crime against the elderly people is four times more than in Mumbai and double than that of Bangalore, according to the NGO. Its study revealed that of the total cases of crime against silvers registered in the capital last year, the most common was physical harm (42.2 per cent) followed by murder and robbery which accounted to 35.5 and 13.3 per cent respectively.

#### HEARTBREAK AT HOME

Even more insidious is emotional abuse from family, which could include denial of food and medicines to silvers, verbal abuse or refusal to communicate, forcing them to do certain chores, or even locking them up at home. In fact, a recent study by HelpAge India revealed that most elders are ill-treated by their own children, who have emerged as the largest group of perpetrators at 47.3 per cent. Spouses follow next at 19.3 per cent, while other relatives and

Earlier the joint family system offered the elderly inbuilt protection but today they have no security net. A large number of crimes against the elderly never get reported. Many deaths involving the elderly look natural on the surface and the police or even their relatives or friends never try to probe deeper

grandchildren follow at 8.8 per cent and 8.6 per cent respectively. A spokesperson for the Social Counselling Cell (SCC) of Mumbai Police tells us that of about 1,200 applications on domestic disputes received, 40 per cent of the cases involve the abuse of silvers at the hands of their sons and daughters.

"I have patients who are physically insecure following systematic neglect or heckling at home," points out Dr Ranabir Ghosh Roy, a psychiatrist based in Kolkata. "Several suffer from deep depression, anxiety disorder or respiratory problems following conflicts with children. I tried to reason with the children of a few of my patients—they justified their selfishness on the grounds their parents behaved in a similar fashion with their elders." Anupama Dutta, Deputy Director—Policy Research and Development, HelpAge India, seconds the need for what she calls 'trauma counselling'. "In fact, providing trauma care for elder abuse should be mandatory," she insists. "HelpAge runs helplines in cities like Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi and Shimla and we try to facilitate this process, along with providing

assistance related to shelter, protection from abuse, repatriation, police intervention and legal assistance."

### CALL FOR HELP

The silver lining is that such helplines—run by NGOs alone or in collaboration with local authorities—are available in most major cities in India (*see box*). And it is heartening to know that elders are actually reaching out to them rather than suffering in silence. This in itself is a major step in a country that shies away from airing the family's dirty laundry. The coordinators of these helplines are only too aware of this fact.

As Radhakrishnan explains, any intervention following a call for help has to be "gentle". At the Dignity helpline, a trained social worker and volunteer visit the home of the complainant. After they ascertain the severity of the situation, they try peaceful avenues like counselling before involving the authorities. In fact, Radhakrishnan claims that amicable resolution has been achieved in about 80 per cent of cases.

## SAFETY CHECKLIST

### GENERAL

- Keep emergency numbers handy including the police, ambulance, hospitals, friends and neighbours.
- Take the help of local police to verify servants before hiring them.
- Do not allow your servants to have their guests over to stay.
- Don't keep valuables at home. Keep jewellery in the bank locker.
- Use bank lockers judiciously. And don't announce trips to the bank to your domestic help.
- Do not disclose your financial resources to anyone.
- Use a key chain or walking stick with a light.
- Leave addresses and contact numbers of your family and friends with your immediate neighbours.
- Leave a duplicate key with friends.
- Sign up for a martial art course. Or follow a regular exercise regimen so you are fit for any emergency.
- Keep a dog for safety.
- Regularly interact with your beat constable.

### WHEN YOU ARE HOME

- Ensure your door has a peephole/eye glass. Think about investing in

- a modern security system.
- Secure the door with a chain even when you open it. Never open the door without ascertaining who is on the other side.
- Ask for ID cards of gas cylinder supplier, plumber or electrician before releasing the chain.
- If you have a porch and/or a backyard, leave a light on at night.
- Never allow strangers beyond the front room or lobby. Never leave a repairman alone in a room.
- If you hear strange noises outside your house and suspect you may be in danger, don't waste any time—telephone the police, your neighbours and friends immediately.

### WHEN YOU LEAVE HOME

- Always lock the door whenever you leave the house.
- Only tell close friends if you are going out of town, and for how long you plan to be away.
- Leave a light on (that is visible at night) when you are out of town.
- If you are away for some days, ask a friend to park his car in your driveway if you have one.
- If you have reliable domestic help,

ask him/her to sleep in the house at night, but provide access to only one room.

- Don't leave notes to say you are out or when you will be back.

### WHEN YOU ARE OUT OF THE HOUSE

- Avoid going alone for early morning walks, especially if the area is deserted at the time.
- When you go to the bank always carry cash in a secure bag.
- Don't travel in crowded buses to avoid pickpockets.
- Don't count cash openly.
- Don't wear a lot of visible jewellery such as chains and heavy rings.
- Don't leave your chequebook or passbook on open desks.
- Avoid giving personal details on your mobile phone in public—you never know who is listening.
- Always carry chilli/pepper spray; if you are attacked, use it in self-defence. A walking stick can also come in handy.
- If you are in an auto or taxi, use your cell phone and make an imaginary conversation to someone to indicate that you have friends awaiting you.



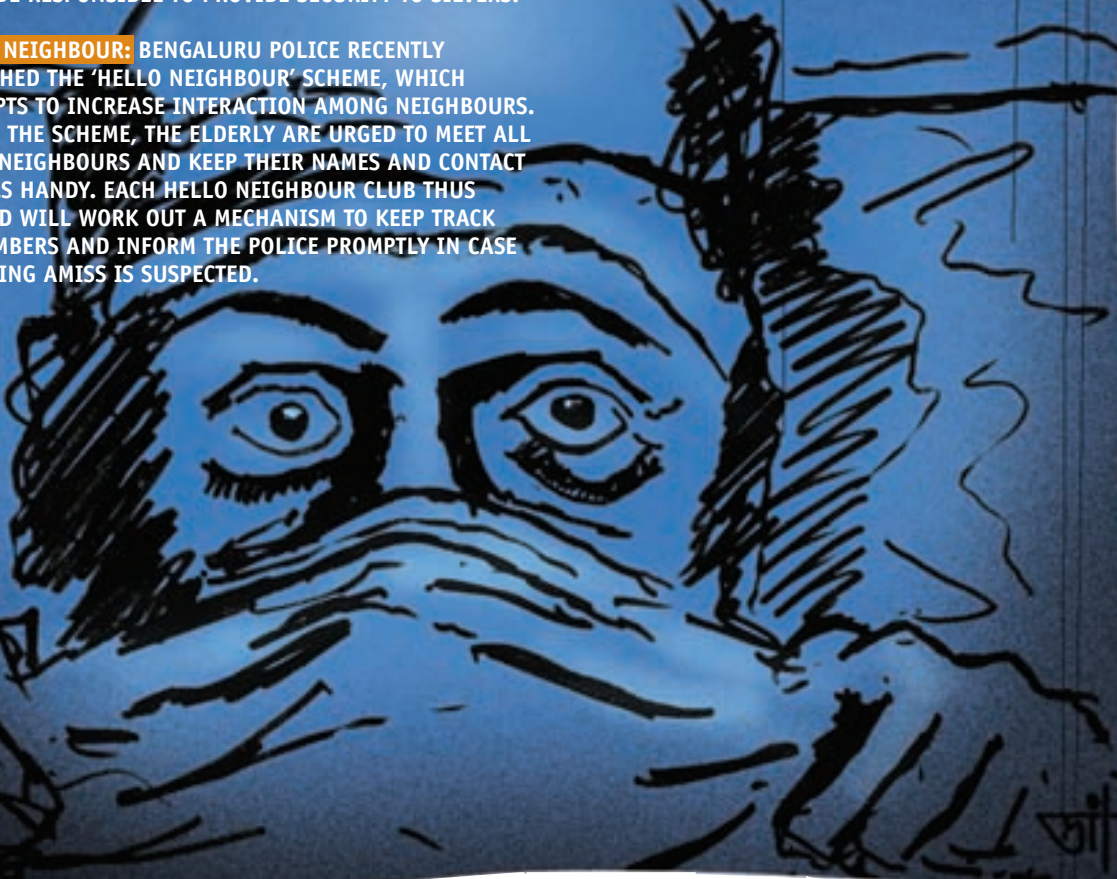
**OMNIPOLICE:** AFFLUENT SILVERS IN HYDERABAD WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR SECURITY WILL GET MORE. OMNIPOLICE IS A PRIVATE VENTURE LAUNCHED BY CITY-BASED ENTREPRENEUR D C JAIN WITH THE BACKING OF THE CITY POLICE. FOR RS 69,000 (INCLUDING TAX), YOUR HOME WILL BE CONNECTED TO THE CENTRAL CONTROL ROOM OF HYDERABAD POLICE—YOU SIMPLY PRESS A BUTTON IN CASE OF FIRE, BURGLARY, UNAUTHORISED ENTRY OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY AND THE CONTROL ROOM DISPATCHES HELP IMMEDIATELY. THOSE INTERESTED CAN CALL (0) 9440000480.

**CHEERS TO CHANDIGARH:** ACCORDING TO CHANDIGARH POLICE, THERE HAS NOT BEEN A SINGLE CASE OF THEFT, BURGLARY OR VIOLENCE AGAINST SENIOR CITIZENS REGISTERED IN THE CITY IN 2008 OR 2009 THUS FAR.

**OPEN-SHUT-OPEN:** FOLLOWING A MEDIA REPORT ON THE LARGE NUMBER OF UNSOLVED SILVER MURDERS—60 OUT OF 175 BETWEEN 1996 AND FEBRUARY 2008—THE MUMBAI POLICE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL REOPEN THE CASES. WHILE THE DETECTION RATE IN MURDER CASES, UNDERWORLD-RELATED KILLINGS, RAPES AND MOLESTATION WAS 80-90 PER CENT, DETECTION RATE IN MURDERS OF SILVERS WAS ONLY 55-60 PER CENT.

**AHMEDABAD ON ALERT:** THIS MAY, 59 YEAR-OLD TASVEENA PATEL WAS MURDERED—STABBED BRUTALLY IN THE BACK AND CHEST—AT HER HOME IN GOKUL TENEMENT IN AHMEDABAD. THE POLICE BELIEVE THE MURDERER WAS 'KNOWN' TO THE VICTIM BUT THE CASE IS YET TO BE SOLVED. THE CRIME PROMPTED DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE S S KHANDWAWALA TO MEET MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S FEDERATION OF GUJARAT AND ASSURE THEM THAT TWO OFFICERS IN ALL POLICE STATIONS ACROSS THE STATE WOULD BE MADE RESPONSIBLE TO PROVIDE SECURITY TO SILVERS.

**HELLO NEIGHBOUR:** BENGALURU POLICE RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE 'HELLO NEIGHBOUR' SCHEME, WHICH ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE INTERACTION AMONG NEIGHBOURS. UNDER THE SCHEME, THE ELDERLY ARE URGED TO MEET ALL THEIR NEIGHBOURS AND KEEP THEIR NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS HANDY. EACH HELLO NEIGHBOUR CLUB THUS FORMED WILL WORK OUT A MECHANISM TO KEEP TRACK OF MEMBERS AND INFORM THE POLICE PROMPTLY IN CASE ANYTHING AMISS IS SUSPECTED.





The need for sensitivity has not escaped Deputy Commissioner Jawed Shamim of Kolkata Police, which runs its own helplines. Calling them “an education”, he says, “So many elderly people call just to be able to hear the voice of another human being. It’s not about action; we just have to listen to them.” Similarly, in Bengaluru, the main focus of the Nightingale Medical Trust’s helpline, which is run in collaboration with the city police, is to provide counselling services to silvers in distress. “We receive about 25 calls everyday,” says Dr Radha S Murthy, managing trustee of Nightingale Medical Trust. “Our main aim is to achieve reconciliation, relief and reunion.”

However, every response is not passive in nature. As Dr Murthy explains, each caller is registered through a BSNL phone connection that is linked to the police control room. The neighbourhood details of every caller are recorded. If the call is suddenly disconnected and the volunteer manning the line feels it was forcibly disconnected, he informs the control room. The police then coordinates with neighbours to verify if the caller has been attacked.

The infrastructure is clearly in place as far as such helplines are concerned. But do they always deliver? Take the case of Elderline, an initiative of the Mumbai Police in association with HelpAge India that has been in operation since 2006. Officials at the helpline claim that it has over 4,000 silvers registered with it and gets about 70 calls daily. “Most calls are related to medical problems or abuse by family members,” says sub-inspector Firoz Patel, who is in charge of the helpline. “We promptly provide medical help or get them a lawyer to sort out legal problems. We also send volunteers to help deal with other problems.” However, a recent media report in Mumbai quoted a silver who tried unsuccessfully—thrice—to get himself registered with Elderline.

### NEW AVENUES

While helplines continue to attempt to bring relief and redress to silvers, the police in major cities are embarking on a slew of allied initiatives to curb the crime wave.

For instance, Bengaluru Police recently launched the ‘Hello Neighbour’ scheme, which attempts to increase interaction among neighbours. Under the scheme, the elderly are urged to meet all their neighbours and keep their names and contact details handy. Each Hello Neighbour Club thus formed will work out a mechanism to keep track of members and inform the police promptly in case anything amiss is suspected—this is essentially a rudimentary version of the neighbourhood watch system that has proved successful in many American communities. In such a system ‘observers’ or ‘patrollers’ take their turn on duty; if they find any suspicious activity, they relay the information to ‘communicators’ who then either try to ascertain the problem through a phone call or, if they suspect foul play, alert law enforcement authorities immediately.



### HELLO!

A list of functioning helplines for silvers across India

CITY (AREA CODE)	HELPLINE
<b>Ahmedabad</b> (079)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agewell Foundation: 26620606</li> </ul>
<b>Bengaluru</b> (080)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bangalore City Police &amp; Nightingale Medical Trust: 1090</li> <li>● Dignity Foundation: 41511307, 41661122, 41661076</li> </ul>
<b>Chennai</b> (044)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tamil Nadu Senior Citizens’ Association: 26213908, 26213850</li> <li>● HelpAge India: 1253</li> <li>● Dignity Foundation: 24493165</li> </ul>
<b>Delhi</b> (011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment: 6836486, 6910484</li> <li>● Delhi Police &amp; HelpAge India: 1291</li> <li>● HelpAge India: 1800-180-1253</li> <li>● Agewell Foundation: 29836484, 29830484</li> </ul>
<b>Hyderabad</b> (040)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Heritage Trust: 23390000</li> <li>● Association of Senior Citizens of Hyderabad: 23532149</li> <li>● Hyderabad: 1253</li> </ul>
<b>Indore</b> (0731)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We Care for You: 2510308, 2522111</li> </ul>
<b>Kolkata</b> (033)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kolkata Police: 9830088884, 22143970</li> <li>● Pranam: 24190740</li> <li>● Dignity Foundation: 24187937, 24296048</li> </ul>
<b>Mumbai</b> (022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Elderline (HelpAge and Mumbai Police) 1090</li> <li>● HelpAge India: 26370754, 26370740</li> <li>● Dignity Foundation: 23898078, 23898079, 23885090, 23841845</li> </ul>
<b>Pune</b> (022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pune Police &amp; International Longevity Centre: 1091</li> <li>● Aadhar: 24210683</li> </ul>

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Social integration and greater intergenerational bonding can help the elderly overcome their fear of gadgets, especially simple gadgets with one-touch operation. Technology such as CCTVs and burglar alarms coupled with community policing can make the lives of the elderly better and safer

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In Kolkata, Pranam, a new initiative between the Kolkata Police and NGO The Bengal to provide medical help to silvers (see 'Orbit'), will also help silvers facing harassment from relatives. "We have 8.1 million senior citizens in the city and many of them face harassment," acknowledges police chief Gautam Mohan Chakrabarti. "Now, they just have to call the Pranam helpline and the information will be passed on to us for necessary action." To this, Shamim adds that the police is in the process of preparing a digitalised map that will show every high-rise building and dwelling unit in the city. "This will shorten response time."

In the capital too, the police is determined to be proactive. Despite the fact that crimes against silvers are highest in Delhi, statistics show that these have declined in the past five years. In 2004, the number of registered crimes against silvers was 37; the figure stood at 30, 22, 25 and 21 in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively. Determined to bring this figure even lower, from 15 July, inspectors from all 133 police stations began to meet silvers in their homes to conduct a 'security audit' and get them registered with Delhi Police's Senior Citizens' Cell—an earlier survey had revealed that only 26 per cent of silvers were registered. "The inspectors will help them verify domestic help and counsel them on property and community-related matters," says Mansoor Ali, Joint Commissioner of Police, who heads the Cell. "They will also check security gadgets; ensure the availability of the security arrangements; educate seniors on the need for these gadgets and help them install them."

There are many, in fact, who believe that greater access to technology—mobile phones, home security systems—can pave the way to greater security. "Elderly are vulnerable to crime because they are averse to developments in the field of technology," says Dr Gita Handa of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the All India Institute for Medical Sciences (AIIMS). "Social integration and greater intergenerational bonding can help the elderly overcome their fear of gadgets, especially simple gadgets with one-touch operation." Dutta agrees, adding, "Technology can play a very important role in making the lives of the elderly better. It goes hand in hand with public participation to reap benefits."

In Mumbai, too, when Police Commissioner D Sivanandan issued a circular directing all police stations to execute a list of precautionary measures for silvers, an awareness drive

on the importance of CCTVs, biometric record systems and other technologies ranked high on the agenda.

### THE WAY AHEAD

But ultimately, safer neighbourhoods require a community effort. "Nationwide, local police and supporting organisations must create a system that takes the help of resident welfare associations [RWAs] to actively monitor silvers," insists Dutta. "Neighbourhood authorities have to work hand-in-hand with the government system and NGOs," echoes Justice Anand. "Police authorities across India have already been asked to keep a close vigil on elders living alone and promote interaction with neighbourhood authorities like RWAs. We must ensure that this happens."

Here, Parantap Das cites the example of the US, where 'community policing' has proved successful in many neighbourhoods. This involves the police, NGOs and volunteers (many of whom are active pensioners) working together to build a neighbourhood watch system for small areas. "There is great potential for such a scheme in India," says Das. "But first we have to give the police more resources and manpower and make our neighbourhoods less apathetic. We need to build awareness on the concerns of the elderly in all our cities." True. As Manabendra Nath Mondal says, "Even in politically conscious Kolkata, no political party devotes any thought to the elderly in their manifesto."

Indeed, putting the elderly first was the foremost takeaway from the National Seminar on Crime against Senior Citizens held in the capital last December. A highlight of the event was a list of recommendations by participants, which included the establishment of neighbourhood watch groups; encouraging arbitration to settle property and other family disputes; and collating nationwide statistics on crime against silvers to track emerging trends. The recommendations were passed on to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Here's the real question: will they meet the fate of other recommendations and proposals and languish in a flood of paper, or will they be translated into effective policies to control and prevent crime against silvers? The answer could hold the key to your safety.

*With Nitika Bajpayee in Delhi, Malabika Bhattacharya in Kolkata, Kasmin Fernandes in Mumbai, Khursheed Dinshaw in Pune, Shyamola Khanna in Hyderabad and Vandana Shukla in Chandigarh*

# Gramophone GODDESS

It has been four decades since she last sang. Yet in June 2009, when a fan club felicitated Shamshad Begum at Jubilee Hall in Hyderabad, more than 1,500 ardent fans turned up. **Rajashree Balaram** meets the 90 year-old singer whose earthy voice with its nasal twang reigned over Hindi cinema in the 1940s and '50s

**A**mong the many trophies in Shamshad Begum's living room, there's one with her picture imprinted on it—whole-some features, short coiffed hair, shy smile. The black-and-white image belongs to Begum's glorious days when producers and music composers fell over each other to bag a playback contract with her; when her songs monopolised the popularity charts on All India Radio; when she was both admired and envied for her versatility.

Famed music composer O P Nayyar compared Begum's voice to that of a temple bell. Director and actor Guru Dutt often said that if it weren't for his wife, the gifted singer Geeta Dutt, he would have used Begum as the female playback in all his films. Music director Naushad relied on her voice to create many of his greatest hits. And when C Ramachandra composed Bollywood's first westernised song, *Meri jaan, meri jaan, aana Sunday ke Sunday*, he could only think of Shamshad Begum to render it with the required joie de vivre. Undeniably, she was nothing less than a playback empress in the post-Independence era.

The Begum we meet today, though, is anything but a diva. Clad in a white cotton *salwar kameez*, her thinning white hair pulled back in a knot, she

leans heavily on her walking stick as she shuffles her way into the room. "Could you please switch off the dictaphone and write down what I am saying? I am allergic to that thing," she says with a wry smile, as she settles into a chair. The famously robust voice is a tad gravelly at the edges. It's hard to reconcile this frail, diminutive silver with the seductive voice that once held an entire nation in thrall with *Leke pehla pehla pyaar*; *Kabhi aar kabhi paar*; *Boojh mera kya naam re*; *Kahin pein nigahein kahin pe nishana*; *Mere piya gaye Rangoon*; *Teere nazar*; or *Milte hi aankhein dil hua deewana*. For all the unbridled vivacity that defined her voice, Begum was essentially a low-profile person. Even at the peak of her career, her pictures rarely appeared in the glossies. "I don't remember mother ever taking me to the studio," says her only daughter Usha Ratra, 73, with whom she lives in her elegant apartment in the plush Hiranandani Gardens in Powai in suburban Mumbai. Married to Ganpat Lal Batto, a lawyer, Begum stopped singing briefly after his death in the mid-1950s. She returned in the late 1960s to even bigger and brighter glory with hits like *Kajra mohabbat wala*, a duet with Asha Bhosle for the movie *Kismet*.

Winner of the Padma Bhushan (2009), Shamshad Begum chose to leave the

industry at a time when audiences could not get enough of her. Her songs may no longer play on air; her voice, however, continues to linger in a million memories.

## IN HER WORDS

**I cannot say music runs in my blood.** I was born in Lahore in a conservative Muslim family that had scant regard for women who took up singing. I don't remember either of my parents even humming a tune. I used to sing *naat* [Islamic devotional songs] and folksongs during family weddings. Very often, a relative would give me an *anna* for my prowess. My uncle, a connoisseur of music, was the first to notice the promise in my voice. I was just 12 when he took me for an audition to Jenaphone, a Lahore-based recording company. I had no idea the audition was being conducted by the great Ghulam Haider [renowned music composer of the 1940s era]. Haider *sahab* asked me to stop singing after I had sung the first two lines. I was nervous, wondering if I had blundered. Imagine my amazement when he asked his assistant to draw up a 12-song contract with me right then! In the three years that followed, he honed me thoroughly in classical singing and I later joined his troupe.

**Sometimes I was Uma Devi, sometimes Surinder Kaur.** I always had an





DNA

I don't think it's fair to compare today's music with that of years gone by. The present will be past tomorrow. Even the mighty sun has to surrender its place to the moon everyday. Time changes everything. While we may not change with the times, we need to accept the change around us

alias for every album depending on the nature of the song. When I sang an *arati*, my name on the album was mentioned as Uma Devi; when I sang a Punjabi *shabd*, I was introduced as Surinder Kaur. Though it sounds strange now, back then recording companies believed that people from different religious communities felt more comfortable listening to 'one of their own'. From Jenaphone, I soon graduated to singing for Peshawar Radio, AIR Lahore and AIR Delhi. All this while, my parents reeled under my rebellion.

**Fame, when it finally arrived, was heady.** I got my first break in Hindi cinema with *Khazanchi* (1941) for which Ghulam Haider composed some phenomenal gems. The film went on to become a super hit and the songs became very popular. After *Khazanchi*, I was approached by some of the greatest music directors: S D Burman, Naushad, Anil Biswas, C Ramachandra. In the first year of my career itself, the movies I sang for became jubilee hits one after the other: *Patanga*, *Humayun*, *Babul*.... Despite the fame and fortune, I always rushed back to Lahore after the songs were recorded. Once, Panjoli Studios, a well-known production house in Lahore, offered me a chance to act as the main lead in one of their films. In those days, actors sang their own songs. Though I passed the screen test, my father threw a fit when he heard of my 'impudence' [laughs]. Of course, I dropped the idea later. A year after that, producer Mehboob Khan travelled to Lahore and persuaded my father to let me relocate to Mumbai. Khan *sahab* was a generous man. He arranged a flat for me near Central Studios in Tardeo along with a car.

He even sent me food from his house everyday. I continued to go to Lahore during Muharram—the sacred month when Muslims are prohibited to sing. Today Mumbai is where my heart and home are.

**I was never good with money.** I was paid Rs 200 for each song in *Khazanchi*. I remember asking for a raise rather timidly. The producer asked me how much I expected and I asked for Rs 700. He hiked my fees immediately and told me that if I had asked for Rs 2,000 per song, he would have agreed as that was my true worth. On one hand, I was flattered; on the other, I felt like a fool. By the grace of God, with each successful film my remuneration leaped higher.

**Competition was fierce then.** My contemporaries were all legends: Noorjehan, Suraiyya, Geeta Dutt and Amirbai Karnataki. But we thrived on the competition and welcomed it. We enjoyed observing the finer nuances in each other's voices and that in turn spurred us to perform better. A race is no fun with two competitors, is it? The more, the merrier.

**My work was always worship for me.** Perhaps that's one reason why I could never bear the thought of being late for a recording. I felt passionately about every song I sang in my entire career. I have no favourites. I loved the sheer experience of being able to express myself through music. And I never took for granted the team effort and hard work that went behind it. Once I was rushing to the studio despite a high fever. My daughter was thoroughly exasperated with my being a workaholic and scolded me for being so money-minded. I

later told her that I was rushing to the studio because many of the musicians who played the instruments earned daily wages. I could never tolerate unprofessional behaviour.

**I was not exactly soft-hearted. But I always rooted for the underdog.** When Raj Kapoor was making *Aag*, his first film, he approached me and bluntly said that he couldn't afford me, but he wanted me to sing for his film. I was touched by that passion and candour and, of course, he was the son of Prithviraj Kapoor whom I deeply admired. I told Rajji to come over to my house along with his musical troupe—Shankar-Jaikishan and Ram Ganguly—in the afternoon when I came home for lunch. We did our rehearsals in my house. The movie became a hit. Though Rajji never repeated me in any of his later films, *Aag* will always remain a special experience. I delivered some great hits with first-time music directors—O P Nayyar, Nashad Ali, Naushad and Madan Mohan. My family and close friends used to be very upset when some of these composers didn't repeat me in their later films. I chose to look at it practically. I was not dependent on them for my work.

**I always kept to myself.** I never partied and rarely ever hung around the studio after recording. But I cherish fond memories of those years. When I was recording for a song in *Filmistan*, there were two young boys who were part of the chorus; one was very well-dressed and the other appeared slightly eccentric. The two boys used to hold a chair out for me after recording. The eccentric had an outstanding voice that was distinctive even in chorus. He also had a great sense of



Begum receiving the Padma Bhushan from President Pratibha Patil

humour and would tell me how he was a loser while his brothers were established actors. I always used to tell him that one day he would race far ahead of his brothers. And I was so happy when my words came true. The eccentric young boy went on to become one of the greatest voices of all time. Tell me, can you imagine Indian film music without Kishore Kumar?

**Talat Mehmood, one of the most melodious voices we have ever had, was a nervous wreck when he sang a duet with me for *Babul*.** He was still a newcomer then, while I was an established artist. I think the equation unsettled him. We went through several retakes over three hours for the famous song *Milte hi aankh dil hua deewana*. Naushad *sahab* was about to throw his hands up in despair when I told him to simply raise his two hands in the thumbs up sign for approval for the next two three retakes. I assured him that if he did that Talat would get it right on the fourth retake. And he did. I think as artists it's important to be competitive, but it's even more important to be empathetic. When you run someone down you only hold up a mirror to your own weak character.

**The film industry is as much about rivalry as team spirit.** Though my songs continued to be mega hits, the number of offers started diminishing in the 1960s. I don't want to name anyone as mudslinging was never my favourite game. Why dredge up memories that are best forgotten? But I later discovered how professional jealousy can make people manipulative. In 1971, I decided to quit singing and join my daughter in Ambala. A year later, some music directors even came over to Ambala with offers. But by then I had made up my mind about retirement. I wanted to leave at a time when my audience and my fraternity still loved my voice; not when they wanted me to shut up.

**People often ask me how I feel when I see scantily clad girls dancing to *Kabhi aar kabhi paar* in remix music videos.** No, it doesn't offend me. If it weren't for remix albums, perhaps my songs would have languished in musty oblivion. At least remixes have given old numbers a fresh lease on life. The tempo of the song may have changed but the essence still remains the same. I feel wonderful knowing that in pubs, young boys and girls sway happily to my songs. They may

not know who Shamshad Begum is, but I don't mind the anonymity as long as I can still connect to an audience. I do have one grouse with makers of remix albums—they should offer written credit to the singers and composers who worked on the original song. As for the scantily clad girls, they are just doing their job. While we happily run them down with charges of 'obscenity', we disregard the hard work they put in to get those steps right. Why doesn't it ever occur to us that they could probably be the sole earning members in their families?

**I don't think it's fair to compare today's music with that of years gone by.** The present will be past tomorrow. Even the mighty sun has to surrender its place to the moon every day. Time changes everything. While we may not change with the times, we should accept the change around us. I see some fantastic young talent on music reality shows. My personal favourite among the new generation of singers is Sonu Nigam. *Poore dil se gata hai* [he sings with all his heart].

**I am not in touch with anyone from the industry.** I don't call up my contemporaries and discuss the good old days. I had my share of glory. I am happier that I had the chance to work with the giants of Indian cinema. And though we have all had our bad times, I would rather remember the good.

**I love watching television soaps.** I tune off only when the plot turns too sad. As for films, I loved *Jodha Akbar*. I think it had an old-world charm to it. Another movie I thoroughly enjoyed was *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*.

**I want to leave the world the way I have lived my life—with dignity.** I want to stay active and able till my last breath. I spend a lot of time in prayer these days. And there's just one wish that I repeatedly ask the Almighty: to let me make my final exit without being a burden to anyone and with my head held high.



# love's legacy

When does a father turn into a friend? And when does a son start watching over his dad? *Harmony* found the answers in the newly released large-format book, *Fathers and Sons*. Co-authored by Anjali and Amar Ambani, the book is supported by Sonal Ambani. All proceeds will go to the Cancer Screening & Research Trust





*“He is a great inspiration for us in whatever we do. He moves so fast with his works—it’s difficult to keep up with him. He is always very positive. His thinking is always to move forward. He is like a charger. If our batteries go down and he spends even half an hour with us our batteries are charged for a few months. He has a fantastic sixth sense. You don’t have to tell him how you are feeling.”*

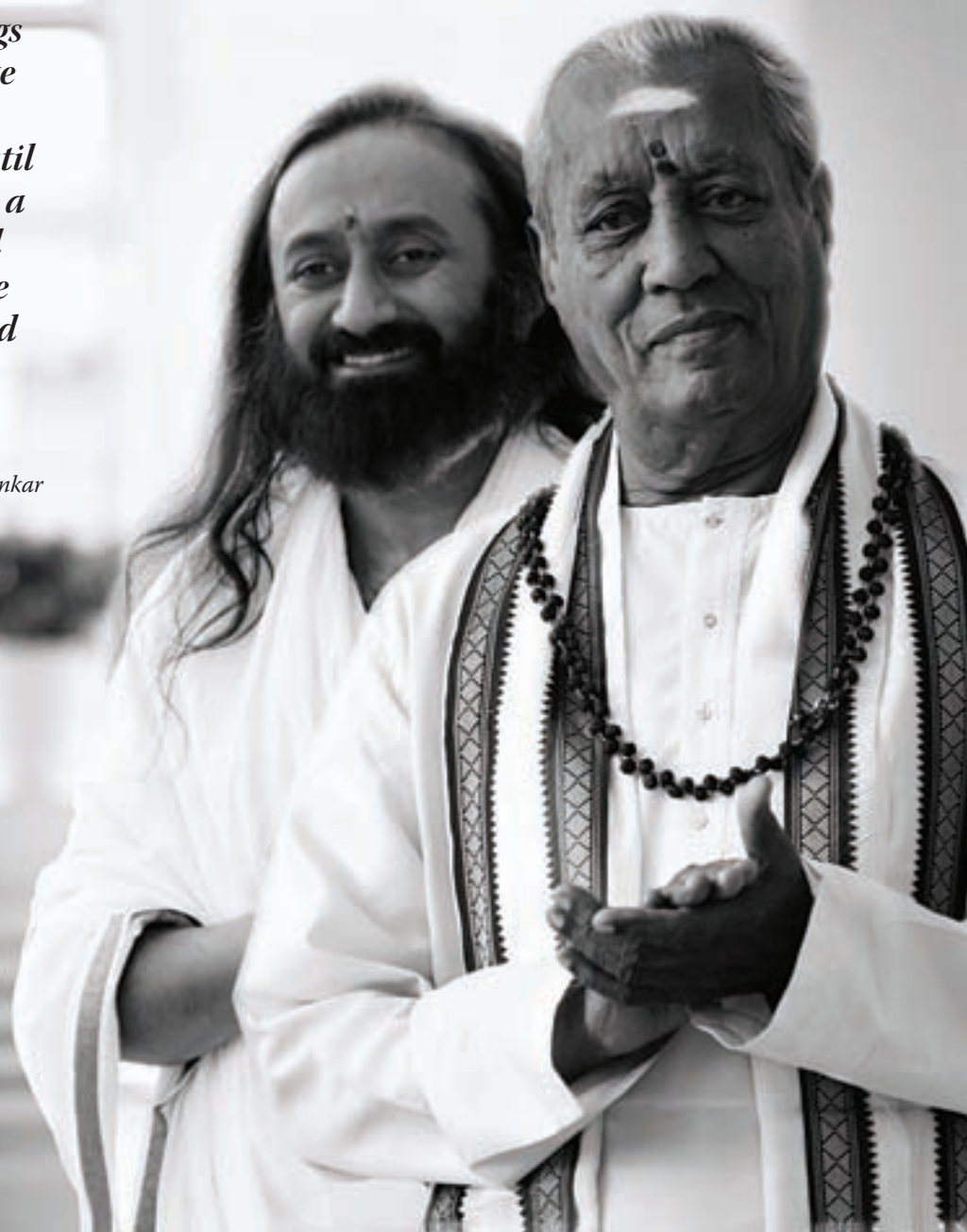
*—Mustafa Husain*

Artist M F Husain with his friends and family; hotelier son Mustafa Husain, extreme right, back row



*"My relationship with my father is a special combination of mutual respect and love. As a child, I always looked forward to the evenings when Pitaji would take a new story from his treasure trove and instil wisdom and values in a very light and natural way. For me, the whole world is my family and Pitaji is a very special part of it."*

—Sri Sri Ravi Shankar





*“Over the years, my relationship with my father has evolved and transformed significantly. It has evolved from a strictly hierarchical one to that of an equal (in many aspects); from a father who seemed to know everything to a friend who knew a few things but not all; from an authoritative figure who commanded that I do as he says to a friend who merely gives advice when I seek it; from a father who seemed incapable of talking about anything but computer science, physics, or mathematics to a friend who talks about life, philosophy, and my social pursuits, and finally from one who goaded me to work harder to a friend who suggested I find balance in my life.”*

—Rohan Murthy

(Opposite page) Sri Sri Ravi Shankar  
with spiritual guru Acharya  
Ratnananda; (below) Microsoft  
scholar Rohan Murthy with Narayana  
Murthy, Infosys chief mentor





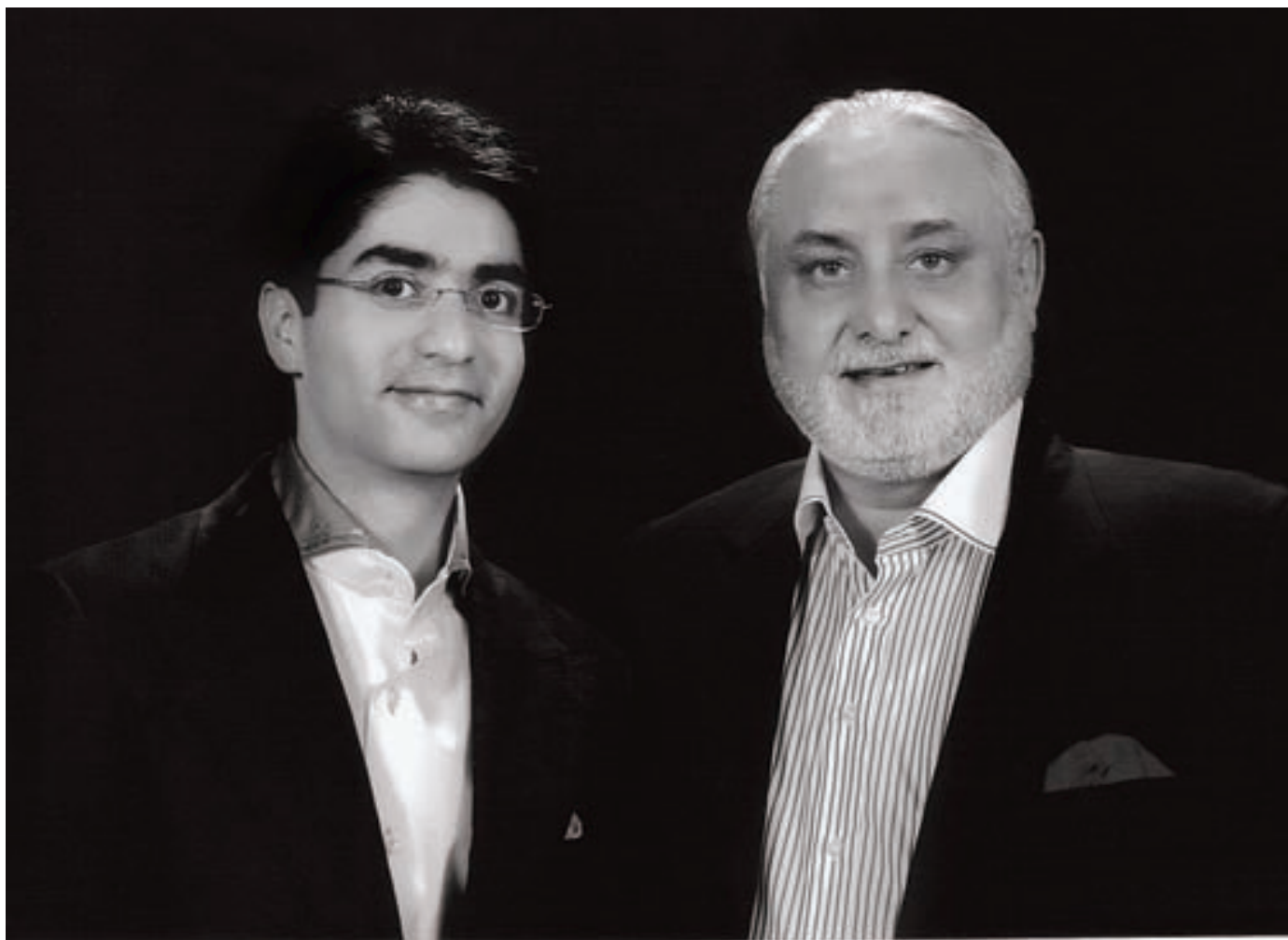
Journalist Srinivas Laxman with cartoonist R K Laxman; (opposite page) Olympian shooter Abhinav Bindra with Dr A S Bindra

*“My father at work was a tough disciplinarian and a stickler for time. I used to have lunch with him at 1 pm sharp and once when I entered the room at 12.58 pm, Dad sent me back saying that there were still two minutes left! I am not an artist and have flown into an entirely different trajectory from the rest of the family—space. Dad is, therefore, happy there is someone to continue the family tradition: Rimanika, my daughter. He treasures her paintings and takes them back with him to Pune, where he now lives.”*

—Srinivas Laxman

*“My dad gave me happiness, unqualified support, love, great attitude and great motivation. He instilled in me the differentiator that made me special, that really set me apart from my competition: great focus. He was always there when I needed him. If I were to define three milestones that were critical for the success of my journey towards India’s first individual gold medal, I would unhesitatingly point to great attitude, great motivation and great focus. In substantial part, Dad created the environment that made these milestones important for me.... At Athens, in 2004, I had broken the world record. I was in the finals. Yet, I missed out. It was one of the deepest lows of my life. At the moment of despair, I remembered Dad. That was enough. In my loss, I had discovered strength and the ability to persevere.”*

—Abhinav Bindra



Publisher: Cancer Screening & Research Trust; Price: Rs 1,895



# When we need experience to show us the way, there is a silver lining.

## Harmony Silver Awards 2009



Instituted by  
**harmony** for Silvers  
Foundation | Empowering  
India's  
Senior Citizens

When difficulties surround us, there are people who use their age and wisdom to become the silver lining that we're looking for. And we will honour them at Harmony Silver Awards 2009. An event that pays tribute to silver citizens who have made a difference in the golden years of their lives.



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<http://silverawards.harmonyindia.org>

## Relish without GUILT

**DR PUSHPESH PANT** RETURNS TO PLEASE NON-VEGETARIAN FRIENDS

**T**wo dishes, chicken and prawn, cooked in as little oil as possible; one improvised with plums and the other with vegetables—sure to thrill your palate.

Vegetarians needn't be disappointed as there's tofu, which I prefer any day over cheese for health reasons.

### Murgh Aloo Bukhara

Chicken and plums in a rich gravy

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 35 minutes

**Serves:** 4

#### INGREDIENTS

- Chicken (drumsticks and breast pieces): 500 gm
- Ripe plums: 500 gm; remove stones and cut into quarters
- Onion: 1, large; finely chopped
- Plum jam/jelly: 2 tbsp
- Oil: 4 tbsp
- Freshly ground pepper: ¼ tsp
- Low sodium salt to taste (if absolutely necessary)

#### METHOD

Wash and clean chicken pieces, remove skin and prick with a fork all over. Heat 3 tbsp oil in a nonstick saucepan and add chicken. Cover and cook for about 15 minutes, uncovering and turning the chicken once or twice in between till golden brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and place on absorbent paper. Sprinkle very little water if necessary. In a separate pan, heat the remaining oil and add onions and stir fry until golden. Now add plums and cook for



five minutes, massing them to obtain a thick sauce. Add the plum jam/jelly and mix well. Place the chicken in the sauce and cook on low medium heat for five minutes. Sprinkle black pepper before serving. Serve hot with rice or *phulka*.



#### FRESH FACTS

Plums have a laxative effect and help ease digestion as they are loaded with dietary fibre. The fruit is also rich in iron and Vitamin C. On a headier note, *slivovitz*, the national drink of Serbia, is made from plums.



## Jheenga Aloo Stew

Prawns and potato in a tango

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** 2

### INGREDIENTS

- Prawns: 100 gm, medium sized; shelled and de-veined
- Potatoes: 200 gm, medium sized, sliced round
- Tomatoes: 200 gm
- Carrot: 1, medium-sized; scraped and cut into large diamonds
- Chilli sauce: 1 tbsp
- Garlic: 2-3 cloves; crushed
- Oil: 1 tbsp
- Coriander (fresh): 1 large sprig
- Low sodium salt to taste (if absolutely necessary)

### METHOD

Boil potatoes for about 15 minutes until tender but not very soft. Drain, peel and cut into halves. Wash and chop tomatoes very fine or puree in a blender. Heat oil in a pan, add tomatoes and carrots and bring to a boil, add chilli sauce and crushed garlic. Cook for about five minutes. Then add potatoes and mix well; add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of hot water if thinner gravy is required. Add prawns and cook on low-medium heat for five minutes. Garnish with coriander before serving hot.

### FRESH FACTS

Prawns are an excellent source of protein and Omega-3 fatty acids. Though they are rich in cholesterol, they are low in saturated fats.







Vilas Kalluri; FOOD STYLING: Anita Sarin

## Tofu Tikka

Tofu with a touch of five spice

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** 2

### INGREDIENTS

- Tofu: 200 gm
- Corn flour: 1 tbsp
- Chinese five spice powder: 1 tsp
- Soy sauce: 1 tbsp
- Red/green chilli sauce: ½ tsp
- Low sodium salt

### METHOD

Sift the five spice powder with salt and corn flour. Cut tofu into bite-sized pieces and roll in spiced corn flour. Heat 1 tbsp of oil to smoking point in a pan and then reduce to medium. Put tofu in it and stir fry till golden. Remove and drain oil well. Place on absorbent paper to remove excess fat. Dip lightly in soy sauce (if you prefer a stronger flavour) and enjoy with sauce of your choice.

### FRESH FACTS

Tofu, the *paneer* lookalike, is derived from soybean. Add it to your daily diet to stock up your body's protein and calcium reserves.





# RAIN CHECK

MINOR RAIN-INDUCED INFECTIONS  
CAN TAKE A SERIOUS TURN IF  
NEGLECTED, LEARNS ANJANA JHA

**A**fter months of scorching summer, waiting impatiently for the monsoon is an annual ritual. Yet, no sooner do the first showers offer a little respite that a host of health problems follow in quick pursuit.

The rainy season poses an increased susceptibility to viral, fungal and bacterial infections ranging from the simple cold, cough, fever and indigestion to the more serious gastroenteritis, diarrhoea, pneumonia,

malaria, dengue, cholera, typhoid and jaundice. Even the skin, eyes and feet are prone to infections owing to humidity. Responsible for this spate of ailments is the cloud cover that prevents the sun's ultraviolet rays from destroying bacteria and viruses, and the ambient temperature that practically nurtures their growth. While many of these diseases are air or water-borne—with infected water and food contributing significantly to their proliferation—vectors like mosquitoes add to the woes.

## DIARRHOEA

During the monsoon, the digestive system and intestinal functions become more vulnerable. Simple food poisoning and gastroenteritis are caused by contaminated food and water, with viruses, bacterial toxins and parasites serving as infectious agents. Diarrhoea, which is often ignored as an upset stomach, can be a symptom of more serious diseases like dysentery, cholera and typhoid.

"Diarrhoea can lead to severe dehydration and be life-threatening," says Dr Manish Khaitan, gastroenterologist at Medilink Hospital, Ahmedabad. "This is particularly significant for silvers as dehydration can trigger renal failure faster in older people. In the event of diarrhoea, patients should consume a lot of liquids to avoid any chance of dehydration, though heart patients should be careful about overdoing this."

## TIPS

- Diabetic patients should avoid getting their feet wet during the monsoon. It could lead to gangrene.
- Avoid contact with anyone suffering from conjunctivitis. Even shaking hands puts you at risk.

Earlier, people curtailed intake of food with the onset of a stomach infection. Nowadays, though, doctors encourage normal food intake if the person is able to eat. "In case of dehydration, besides water and *nimbu pani*, oral rehydration solutions (ORS) should be taken," adds Khaitan. "ORS is recommended even for people with diabetes as the complication can be intensified if a diabetic has severe diarrhoea." An alternative to ORS is adding half a teaspoon of salt and three teaspoons of sugar to 1 litre of water.

### LEPTOSPIROSIS

Leptospirosis has been on the rise in the past few years. Water contaminated by animal excreta overflows from gutters during monsoons. During contact with floodwater, germs transmitted through open wounds or cuts enter the bloodstream and attack the liver. High fever, chills, severe headache and jaundice follow. If not diagnosed and treated early, this could lead to kidney and liver failure, and even prove fatal.

### RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

The rains tend to trigger seasonal allergies like coughs and colds, body ache and viral fever. Allergic bronchitis affects the lungs and can cause breathing problems. "Flu or influenza is common during damp weather and can be life-threatening for silvers," says Dr M V Rao, head of department (medicine) at Yashoda Hospital, Hyderabad. "Patients should seek immediate medical attention and start antibiotics. An influenza vaccine taken annually in May-June is advisable. Secondary infections can lead to pneumonia or broncho-pneumonia. Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases like bronchitis or emphysema can be dangerous."

Asthmatic patients should be careful during monsoon as respiratory symptoms can develop into pneumonia in severe cases.

Starting with a fever, flu has symptoms like body ache, headache, chills and

lack of energy. While many people develop a dry cough, nasal discharge and sneezing are also common. "Anti-allergy and antihistamine drugs can alleviate symptoms of allergy but it is advisable to avoid exposure to affected people as even a cold and cough can develop into something more serious," cautions Dr Rao.

### DENGUE AND MALARIA

Dengue is most common in post-monsoon months. A viral infection carried by mosquitoes (also known to spread chikungunya fever), it causes fever, body ache, joint pain and skin rash. Malaria is another disease transmitted by mosquitoes during and after the monsoon—the most dangerous variety, falciparum malaria, is most active after the rains.

"Measures to prevent mosquito bite are particularly important for silvers," insists Dr Khaitan. "Malaria medication can have serious side-effects and lead to long-term damage. It is better to take precautions like using mosquito nets and repellents during this season." Reiterating the importance of taking preventive action, Dr Rao adds, "Anti-malarial drugs are used for treatment in our country. Taking the medication as a prophylactic is not practical as malaria and dengue are annual hazards."

### FACTS

- **Dhobi's itch is a common fungal infection that develops between the toes of the foot.**
- **Fresh wounds often take longer to heal during the monsoon.**

### WARNING NOTE

Diarrhoea-induced dehydration is common with silvers but diabetics cannot be given glucose even during an emergency. Hence any risk of a situation becoming uncontrollable should be avoided. "With about

### DOS & DON'TS

- Eat moderately as digestion is more difficult during the rains.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Ensure drinking water is boiled and purified.
- Drink warm beverages like herbal or ginger tea.
- Avoid drinking any juice at roadside stalls.
- Restrict eating out to a bare minimum.
- Eat freshly cooked food within a few hours of preparation.
- Avoid foods kept in the refrigerator for long periods.
- Check colour, smell and taste of refrigerated food before consuming.
- Avoid raw seafood.
- Avoid pre-cut or peeled fruits.
- Be careful about leafy vegetables owing to the presence of dirt and worms.
- Take special care with vegetables that tend to contain worms such as cauliflower and aubergine.
- Ensure sweets are fresh before consumption
- Go easy on mangoes.
- Prevent growth of fungus on furniture, clothes and leather.

40-50 of per cent senior citizens suffering from diabetes, hypertension or coronary artery diseases, they should be very careful as any new infection could enhance already existing problems," warns Dr Anil Gomber, diabeto-cardiologist at Tirath Ram Shah Hospital in Delhi. "Further, the doctor being consulted should be informed about the patient's medical history." For silvers, even dosages of drugs need to be carefully monitored. "A doctor should prescribe only after considering the interaction of different medicines with pre-existing drugs taken by the patient," says Dr Gomber. "Dosage should be tuned accordingly and carefully monitored. Self-medication is out of the question," he adds.





# Health BONANZA

Vegetable greens and bananas  
beat all nutrient supplements,  
says Dr Vijaya Venkat

## BANANA

Traditionally used to wean babies, it has now been proven that the banana comes closest in composition to mother's milk. The incredible growth of a child from conception to weaning and the growth of the brain to almost adult size during this stage unfold with just 1.1 per cent protein in mother's milk. So if the banana is considered to be nutrient poor—the reason for being excluded in prescriptions—the same should be said of mother's milk! In fact it is the best source of nutrients; it builds immunity and assists in cell function and growth. Banana supports digestion by increasing gut flora. Its easily digestible sugars give the energy to build immunity, reducing the risk of cancer as well as age-related macular degeneration. Wholesome, easily digested and assimilated, it is ideal to normalise weight. Shown to prevent high blood pressure, replenish the bone matrix and replace electrolytes, it also acts as an antacid and neutralises bowel movement.

A symbol of plenty and fertility in our culture, almost every part of the banana tree has an economic or medicinal

- 
- The banana contains only 0.37 per cent fat
  - It cleanses the body by assisting in elimination of internal toxins
- 

benefit. The banana flower and stem are used for preparing delicacies in Bengali, Tamil and Malayali cuisine. While the skin is used to make dyes, the sap is used to make marking ink. The dried leaf stalk and fibre are used to make ropes. Besides being used as festive decoration, the leaves serve as plates or wrapping material. It's even useful for protection against rain.

Banana supplies human needs far better than animal products. Available in various shapes and sizes—from the most commonly eaten yellow and green banana to reds and pinks—banana is the easiest to eat, most inexpensive and available throughout the year, across the country. When doctors recommend Vitamin A and zinc supplements, peel a banana instead of popping a pill.

## LEAFY GREENS

Plants are the first link in every food chain. The chlorophyll in leaves (which makes them green) is structurally similar to haemoglobin. And just like haemoglobin, it is fundamental to restore vitality. In fact, irrespective of the species of plants they belong to, greens share similar nutritional benefits. Typically low in fat and high in protein and dietary fibre, leafy green vegetables act as building blocks to life. Their role in reconstruction, repair and restoration of worn out cells is crucial. Green leaves are the most concentrated source of minerals (including iron, calcium, potassium and magnesium) and vitamins (including K, C, E and most of the Bs). Consequently, they strengthen the immune system, prevent cancer, help fight depression, increase mental clarity and sustain long-term energy. And as comparisons go, they work better and faster than any nutrient supplement or mineral booster.



- A cup of herbal tea or glass of chilled green juice keeps you going longer than caffeine
- Any green can provide the same health benefits as wheatgrass

If you wince at the thought of having green leaves, perhaps you haven't found the right one for yourself! There are plenty of options available—from locally grown greens like cabbage leaves to the more exotic lettuce (from romaine to chicory) and bog choy (Chinese cabbage). Besides the slightly more pungent spring and mustard greens, you have regular household greens including mint, coriander, celery (*ajmud*), fenugreek (*methi*) and all the varieties of spinach (*palak*). Most leafy vegetables are best eaten raw in salads or sandwiches. They can also be had as juices. You can easily grow a number of greens in pots and old trays—a simple way to keep a regular supply of health handy!



*Dr Vijaya Venkat, Mumbai-based nutritionist and health activist, is founder and head of the Health Awareness Centre*



## WEIGHT WATCH

DR JOE LEWIS ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ON DIET, WEIGHT AND EXERCISE

**Q:** I have recently had bypass surgery. How soon can I start exercising? Please suggest an appropriate regimen.

**A:** Cardiac rehabilitation often begins while still in hospital and continues through monitored programmes in an outpatient setting until home-based maintenance programmes can be safely followed. Give yourself at least six to eight weeks to recover or as advised by your physician. Rest is important, but so is regular physical activity. Consult your doctor before commencing any exercise.

Initially exercise the large muscles of the lower body—a light walk thrice a week increasing in time and frequency. A good thumb rule is to stop when you feel tired. Avoid steep inclines. Once it's easy to walk 20-30 minutes, you can move on to resistance bands. These allow a wide range of motion and help work out the large and small muscles. Choose the resistance according to your needs and do not attempt weights immediately. At a gym, make sure the instructor knows your condition.

Long absence from activity slows coordination and balance, so you need to move your joints through a full range of motion. Regaining body balance prevents injury from accidental falls or uncertain steps. Unless restricted by your doctor, climb stairs—a flight at a time according to your ability. It is better to undertake this after you get your balance in order. Avoid jumping, running or jogging, lifting heavy objects or weights, as well as any activity that is jerky or requires bending like touching toes or doing sit-ups. Do these activities only when advised.

If there is a Kaya Life centre in your vicinity, you can avail of a comprehensive programme that includes nutritional plans, exercise programmes and building emotional support to lead a productive and healthy life.



*Dr Joe Lewis is head of research and development at Kaya Life, a chain of professional weight-control centres (SMS Life to 54646)*



If you have a question for Dr Venkat or Dr Lewis, write to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)



# Dr Anjali Mukerjee

## ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ON NUTRITION, FITNESS AND HEALTH

### **I am 65 years old. These days, I feel tired all day. What should I do to increase my energy levels?**

Correct nutrition is essential for good health, and eating the right combination of food can definitely act as an energy booster. The good news is that proper nutrition and appropriate lifestyle choices can improve energy at any age or at any level of fitness.

Follow these dietary guidelines to increase your energy levels optimally:

- Take Vitamin B supplements. A deficiency of B-Complex vitamins leads to chronic fatigue as food cannot be converted into glucose and utilised. B-Complex protects the nerves and increases energy level. Natural dietary sources of B vitamins are whole grain cereals, leafy vegetables, unpolished rice, banana, yeast, peas, *dal* and pulses.
- Eat more complex carbohydrates that are rich in fibre like *jawar*, *bajra*, brown rice, oatmeal, sprouts, nuts, seeds and dry fruits.
- Avoid tranquilisers—they help you sleep but do not reduce fatigue; on the contrary, they make you feel more lethargic, and cloud your thinking process.
- Avoid smoking and extra sugar, and restrict consumption of coffee and alcohol. These give a temporary boost but make you feel worse later.
- Drink a glass of raw vegetable juice (for instance, one tomato, one carrot, one beetroot or half a bunch of coriander, one-fourth bunch of mint, and a lime) everyday. This helps increase the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood and instantly improves one's energy levels.
- Try eliminating wheat and dairy products and see if your energy level increases. These are difficult to digest and cause fatigue. In case you do feel the need to eliminate these, substitute with brown rice and *bajra roti* and ensure you take other sources of calcium like leafy vegetables and soybeans.
- Limit your sugar intake. Sugar may give you instant energy but it will make you more easily tired in the long run.
- Take supplements of CoQ10. It is a potent antioxidant and helps improve energy levels.

- Increase your activity level by exercising for 40 minutes regularly. Do remember not to over-exercise as it can work the other way round on your body, leaving you feeling exhausted. A brisk walk, though, is the best form of exercise.

### **I look after my three-year-old grandson when his parents are at work. The hectic pace is leaving me drained. Could you suggest a high-energy diet plan that would help me?**

What we put on our plate can have a profound effect on overall health, in the way we look and how we feel through the day. Looking after a three year-old can be really strenuous. You can perk up your energy by following a nutrient-dense and energy-boosting diet.

A typical diet plan would be:

- Start your day with two glasses of warm water, a cup of herb tea and fresh fruits of your choice as breakfast.
- Your mid-morning snack could be a whole grain sandwich with vegetables or egg whites.
- Have two to three chapattis (made from wheat, *jawar*, *bajra* or oatmeal) with one cup of any vegetable, a cup of raw sprouts mixed with salad and a bowl of curd or glass of buttermilk for lunch.
- Have a cup of herb tea in the evening or substitute it with a glass of vegetable juice—you can choose from cucumber, bottle gourd (*dudhi*), tomato, spinach (*palak*), beetroot or carrot.
- For the evening snack, add a few dry fruits or two to four whole wheat or *moong dal khakra*.
- Dinner can be similar to lunch, or you could have whole wheat pasta or unpolished rice with one cup *dal*, fish or chicken (150 gm), one cup vegetable and some green salad.

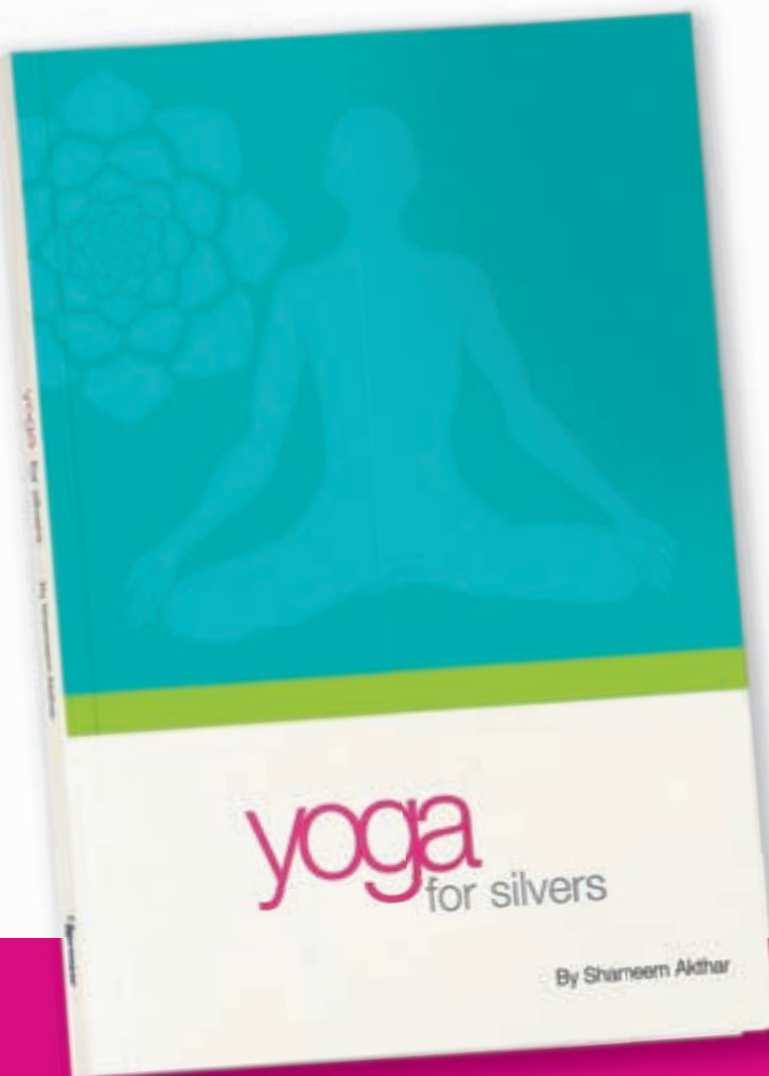
Experiment to see which has the most energising effect—and good luck!

*Nutritionist Dr Anjali Mukerjee is the founder of Health Total, a nutrition counselling centre*



**If you have a question, write to [query@health-total.com](mailto:query@health-total.com) Website: [www.health-total.com](http://www.health-total.com)**





# yoga for silvers

Yoga shiromani and acharya **Shameem Akthar** urges the elderly to heal body, mind and soul with ancient yogic habits that are easy to learn. From the philosophy behind practices and poses to step-by-step instructions with illustrations, this is a comprehensive guide written especially for Silvers.

A publication by

**harmony for Silvers** Foundation | Empowering India's Senior Citizens

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# CONTROL AND CARE

Interstitial cystitis can be both painful and embarrassing, says **Dr Nagendra Mishra**

## **I am experiencing painful urination with frequent trips to the toilet.**

### **What could be the problem?**

First, make a note of how long you've been suffering from the problem. If it started a day or two ago, you could be suffering from urinary infection. But if the problem has persisted for about a month, it could be a long-term bladder condition called interstitial cystitis (IC), also known as painful bladder syndrome (PBS). Although it can develop in men, 9 out of 10 people with IC are women. Another possible diagnosis is urinary stones.

### **What is interstitial cystitis?**

IC is a syndrome marked by chronic pelvic or bladder pain, urinary urgency and frequency. The definition has now been expanded to include all causes of urinary tract pain that cannot be explained by other problems. In IC, the protective lining of the bladder is damaged, leaving it exposed to toxins present in the urine. The exact reason why IC develops is not known. It is common in women between 30 and 60 years but can occur at any age.

### **What are the symptoms?**

The most common and disabling symptom is pelvic pain, pressure or discomfort. The pain, which can be unbearable sometimes, is usually in the lower abdomen below the bellybutton, between the hip bones and in the lower back region. It can come and go, or be constant and vary from mild to severe. It is at its worst

when the bladder is full and usually improves after urination. The urge to urinate is often more than eight times in the day—even every five to 10 minutes in severe cases.

### **Is IC easily diagnosed?**

Women with IC are often misdiagnosed with other conditions for years before a correct diagnosis is made and the right treatment provided. Factors that make IC cases particularly challenging are that it has no known cause, no specific diagnostic test and is often misdiagnosed as a urinary tract infection. This is compounded by lack of awareness about this condition in patients as well as healthcare providers. Left undiagnosed and untreated, IC can significantly interfere with a woman's quality of life—her ability to work, sleep, and care for her family. Some women don't want to leave home for fear they will not find a bathroom, or that their pain will worsen and become unbearable.

### **What is the treatment for IC?**

Treatment can dramatically improve symptoms of IC, though there is no permanent cure. Drugs include dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) and pentosan polysulfate sodium (PPS). DMSO is a liquid chemical mixed with other medications and inserted into the bladder through a catheter—it is expelled during urination in 15-30 minutes. This treatment needs to be repeated every week or two weeks for six to eight weeks. Though other

oral drugs exist, US FDA-approved PPS should be tried for three to six months to give it a chance to work. Currently unavailable in India, it is soon to be manufactured by Swati Spentose. For patients whose severe, persistent symptoms are not relieved by these treatments, options like intravesical Botox, therapeutic hydrodistension, neuromodulation or surgery may be advised. Consult your doctor to decide the line of treatment appropriate for you.

Although not supported by scientific evidence, avoiding certain foods such as caffeine, alcohol, tomato-based products, citrus, chocolate, soda, and supplements containing vitamin C and potassium may help. Healthcare professionals may suggest an 'elimination diet', where a patient begins with a bland diet, slowly adding various foods and beverages one at a time to see which causes symptoms or worsens them. Stress is also believed to have a profound impact on the disease and is often associated with flare-ups. Relaxation exercises, stress management, yoga and massage can help reduce stress and its negative impact on your health.

Whichever treatment you choose, it is important to follow up on appointments with your healthcare professional. There is no way to know which treatment will work for you, so you and your healthcare professional should watch your progress and decide if a different approach is necessary. It is not unusual to try more than one option, or a combination to obtain relief. There is hope, as research continues to reveal causes.

*Dr Nagendra Mishra is consultant urologist at Jivraj Mehta Hospital, Ahmedabad, and chairman of Indian IC/PBS Society*

# STOP BRAIN DRAIN!



If you have deliberately closed your mind to the damage smoking can cause, here's an eye-opener. A research team from the Indian National Brain Research Centre (NBRC), led by Debapriya Ghosh and Dr Anirban Basu, has discovered a direct link between smoking and brain damage. According to their study, which appeared in the *Journal of Neurochemistry*, a **compound called NNK present in tobacco has the ability to aggravate the brain's immune cells** known as microglia, which attack damaged or unhealthy cells. However, NNK provokes these cells to strike healthy brain cells rather than unhealthy ones; this steady assault could lead to acute neurological damage. "Our findings prove that NNK can activate microglia significantly, which subsequently harms the nerve cells," says Basu. NNK is a procarcinogen—a chemical that becomes carcinogenic when changed by the metabolic process of the body—and is commonly found in all forms of tobacco. Consequently, apart from smoking, even consuming tobacco regularly can lead to severe nerve cell damage.

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## Travel easy

HERE'S another addition to rehabilitation aids and healthcare products manufactured in India. **Zip1.0 launched by VISSCO is a motorised wheelchair, manoeuvrable effectively both indoors and outdoors.** Made of powder-coated structural steel, the cushioned seat and pneumatic wheels increase comfort level by several notches. While a joystick controller makes it easy to navigate and rollers provide anti-tip assurance, batteries require recharging only after 20 km. Easily foldable for storage and transport, Zip1.0 is a great option for independent mobility. For more details, check out [www.visscoindia.com](http://www.visscoindia.com) or call 022-22852728, 22840682, 43330300 (30 lines). Helpline: 022-43330333.



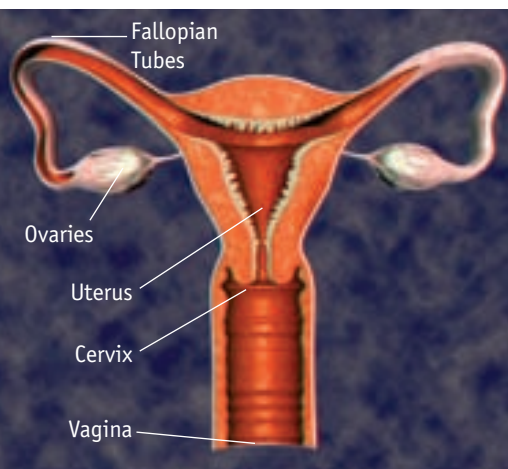


## GOODBYE insomnia

**L**atest findings by Evanston Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Illinois reaffirm that **therapeutic benefits of meditation can help people suffering from sleep inadequacy or insomnia.** Practicing meditation improves sleep rotation, total sleep time, total wake time, wake after sleep onset, sleep efficiency, sleep quality, and depression in insomniac patients. Experts evaluated data compiled from 11 patients of chronic primary insomnia aged between 25 and 45 years. Participants were divided into two groups for two months. Intervention for the first group was *Kriya Yoga* (meditation to reduce wakefulness by focusing on internalised attention) while the second group received only health education, which includes improving health with exercise, nutrition and stress management—the first group fared much better than the second. “Insomnia is a 24-hour problem with varied measures of arousals all day,” according to study author Dr Ramadevi Gourineni. “Deep relaxation techniques during daytime can help improve sleep at night.” Dr Rahul Chandhok, senior consultant psychiatrist, Fortis Hospital in New Delhi, agrees, saying, “Meditation has healing qualities that relax the mind, body and soul. Once body and mind are relaxed, sleep becomes easy.”



Experts from the Breakthrough Breast Cancer Research Unit at King's College, London, confirm that the new drug Olaparib may help women suffering from genetic breast cancer. Tests have shown promising results in halting the growth of tumours and eventually shrinking them.



## TARGETING CANCER

**The verdict is in for mesometrial resection (TMMR), a surgical option for patients suffering from cervical cancer.** With fewer complications and increased effectiveness, the technique involves removal of a specific tumour-infected section. Experts from the University of Leipzig studied the effects of the surgery on 212 patients who underwent TMMR between 1998 and 2008. The results revealed that cancer recurred in only 10 patients after 41 months of

surgery—the recurrence was 5 per cent in high-risk patients; and 63 per cent did not suffer any serious complications. “Based on medical histories, TMMR without adjuvant radiation has the potential to improve survival by 15-20 per cent,” Professor Michael Hockel from the University of Leipzig tells BBC. Closer home, doctors are still in wait-and-watch mode and prefer to study further consequences of the surgery before coming to a conclusion.



## Miss a beat

Research conducted by Dr Reena Mehra of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio, reveals that an increasing number of **older men suffering from severe sleep-related breathing problems appear more prone to arrhythmia or abnormal heart rhythms.** Different breathing disorders seem closely linked to different categories of arrhythmia. The study, which was carried out on 2,911 elderly men, concludes that more incidents of apnoea (brief pauses in breathing) or hypopnoea (shallow breathing) are associated with higher probability of two types of arrhythmia. While one involves the heart's upper chambers (atria), the other involves the lower chambers (ventricles). Obstructive sleep apnoea, the most common type that affects partial or total blockage of the airways, is linked to irregular heartbeats resulting from problem with ventricles and lower levels of blood oxygen. On the other hand, central sleep apnoea that involves error in brain signals that regulate breathing muscles is more strongly linked with arrhythmia in the atria. "Insomniacs do suffer from shortness of breath," Dr Gurmukh Singh, psychiatrist at Ashray Clinic & Rehabilitation Home in Delhi, tells *Harmony*. "However, medical professionals need to gather further details before coming to a conclusion and suggesting treatment options."



**The discovery of the whereabouts of the HIV virus in the body brings a cure for AIDS closer.** Canadian scientists have revealed that the virus hides in long-living memory cells of the body and becomes active when a new virus or disease-causing force appears.

promotion

## Digital Dentistry



Dr Suchetan Pradhan, Director of Pradhan Dental Centre, Mumbai, and internationally acclaimed implant and cosmetic dentist. He is also faculty for Implant Programme with Manipal Academy of Higher Education. Contact details: Tel: 26244324/26204486 Mobile: 9820453031 Website: [www.pradhandentalcentre.com](http://www.pradhandentalcentre.com)

***Q1. I have no teeth and wear dentures. My dentist wants to place implants [tooth root substitutes] in my jaws surgically, but I am a little apprehensive about the procedure. Is there an alternative?***

Yes, fortunately today we have minimally invasive techniques for placing implants [tooth root substitutes]. This is done with the help of CAD/ CAM design. First, a CT scan is taken with the help of Nobel Guide Procera software. This software reproduces an exact 3D image of your jaws on a computer. We then place the implants on the virtual jaws in the exact position that one desires. With the help of this information, a stent is manufactured in Sweden. Along with the stent, even the new teeth are designed and made in Sweden. With the help of this stent we can accurately place the implants in your jaw without opening up the gums. The surgical part is very minor with no need for even sutures [stitches]. The implants then form a base for the teeth on top.

***Q2. Is the Nobel Guide procedure complicated and painful?***

On the contrary, the 3D mapping makes the procedure simple and precise. There is minimal or almost no pain, swelling, very little bleeding and no stitches need to be given. These are all the advantages that come from the procedure being minimally invasive.

***Q3. My dentist has recommended dental implants to replace my missing teeth but can I have the new teeth on the same day?***

The biggest advantage of Nobel Guide comes from the fact that the teeth can be placed on the implants on the same day! The teeth are predesigned and manufactured in Sweden. Even the back teeth can be replaced all in one go. Therefore, you can walk out with that wow smile almost straight away.

***Q4. Is it possible to do this in India?***

This service is being successfully done in India for the last few years. In fact, in 2006 November, I performed a live surgery on television demonstrating the concept of Nobel Guide and 'teeth in an hour'.



Shameem

## Akthar

**Beat the blues:**

Heal body and mind  
and battle depression

**T**hough severe or chronic depression is clinically recognised, it still gets shoved under the carpet as an embarrassment when it afflicts us. Tragically, even pills meant to treat it cause side-effects or dependence that aggravates the problem over the long term.

For instance, many people do not know that selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), which are prescribed to treat depression, can actually increase suicidal tendencies. Other depressing side-effects of anti-depressants include loss of libido; insomnia; uro-genital problems, including inability to urinate and pass motion; blurred vision; headaches; sluggishness; weight gain; nausea and diarrhoea; dry mouth (the ideal condition for halitosis or bad breath); and acute anxiety. Worse, they create an addictive dependence that can be alarming. In fact, some people begin to crave higher doses over time—the fallout could include seizures.

The trick to combat depression is to use the body and mind to heal—that's where yoga can help. Yoga therapy in depression actually uses poses that are a wise integration of breath, nervous system, the endocrine glands and

*marma* or acupressure points that stimulate. It also uses the Ayurvedic principle of suppressing those elements that cause the heaviness and hiking those that can uplift you.

The most basic yogic therapy in depression involves *surya namaskar*. If it is done in the prescribed manner, it tweaks the pineal gland and melatonin secretion. The flow of melatonin, if imbalanced, can cause seasonal affective disorder, a form of depression that is induced in low light or winter. It also afflicts those who remain cooped indoors or are exposed to very little sunlight.

Breathing practices or *pranayama* like bellows breath (*bhastrika*) and skull-cleanser (*kapalabhati*) are also powerfully stimulating. They work by expanding lung capacity through intense hyperventilation. The effect on sinus cavities also changes the levels of nitric oxide in the blood, further enhancing oxygen levels. This creates a natural high that accompanies mental alertness. Chest-openers and backbends, which include poses like the cobra (*bhujangasana*), bow (*dhanu*), camel (*ushtrasana*) and crescent and all its variations (*ardha chandrasana*), work further on breath expansion and mental stimulation. In yogic parlance, you could say the higher *chakra* (nerve plexus) are opened, where intelligence is married to wisdom, so our attitude to life's problems is also transformed.



**Yogic moves**  
**Raised swing pose**  
**(Uttitha lolasana)**

Stand up straight with your feet about a metre apart. Raise both hands overhead, inhaling. Exhaling, swing the torso and arms, passing your hands between the legs. Immediately raise your hands inhaling and swing again. Do this 10 to 15 times vigorously. Rest. You can do this several times a day but avoid if you suffer from acute lower backache or vertigo. **Benefits:** This is a powerful stimulating practice that ups lung capacity and creates a sense of exhilaration. The brain gets a powerful and vigorous gush of blood. The challenge in the pose helps kick the mind out of its sluggishness and lethargy.

Shameem Akthar is a Mumbai-based yoga acharya



If you have any queries for her,  
mail us or email at [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)  
(Please consult your physician before following advice given here)



**“After 25 years in advertising, today I head Rashtriya Life Saving Society. I am happy about how my life has changed.”**

**KAVITA SHARMA, 62**

## Advantage LIFE



I stepped into advertising in 1972 with the newly opened Delhi branch of National Advertising Services. Two years later, I moved to Mumbai and worked with Hindustan Thomson and Mudra Communications. In 1990, I returned to Delhi and started my own agency Ad-vantage. When my husband, Rear Admiral Purushottam Sharma, retired in 1997, we decided to settle down in Pune. I was finally ready to sit back and relax.

In January 1998, a school bus fell into the Yamuna and many young children died. Convinced that more than half of them could have been saved with first aid, my husband formed the Rashtriya Life Saving Society. He invited lifeguards from the 100 year-

old Royal Life Saving Society to give demonstrations. He began to conduct workshops in schools, colleges and clubs that had swimming pools.

I assisted him with computer work and drove him around. As there were no mobile phones in those days, it gave me a chance to be with him. Gradually, my interest deepened. My experience proved useful and I helped them design programmes and with marketing.

In 2001, six public pool deaths rocked Pune. The condition of the pools was shocking. Contacting the police commissioner and pool operators, we offered to train lifeguards. Gradually, we started lifesaving classes. Now, at a

rented pool in Wanawadi, we conduct 21-day ‘Swim to Survive’ programmes. Over 25,000 children and adults have been trained. In fact, *Harmony* featured my husband in 2004. Today, I am responsible for the organisation. Recently, we began free sessions for physically disabled children.

The Service Cross Award I received from the Royal Life Saving Society in 2002 and the Bar to the Service Cross this year serve as recognition of my efforts. What makes it worthwhile is when people come back and tell us how our training helped them save a life—whether it is during a road accident, drowning, heart attack or, as it happened once, choking on a *paan*.

—As told to Mita Banerjee

## THINK RATIONALLY

EXPERTS ANSWER YOUR QUERIES AND CONCERNS ON JOBS AFTER RETIREMENT

**Considering the demand for mineral water, I plan to invest my retirement returns in a mineral water plant. Do you think it is advisable at my age?**

First, you should tap the market and analyse local demand and supply. A very large number of mineral water brands—both regional and national players—are already available on the Indian market. Competition is quite tough and starting from scratch will require tremendous effort. A lot of preliminary research and legwork would be necessary—feasibility report, applying for license, acquiring land. Next would be the factory and purchase of machinery. Manpower is another issue you would need to tackle. You would have to tap retail channels in advance. Ideally, this kind of business should be family-oriented with at least three or four persons willing to share responsibility. Functioning without a proper support system is difficult. Even a small mineral water unit entails considerable investment and an adequate flow of funds. Investing all your savings and retirement returns may not be very wise. Applying for a loan may not be a viable solution either.

—Ram Prakash Gaur

*Gaur owns a mineral water plant in Mirzapur*



**I retired recently and have plenty of spare time. I would like to start a vocational training centre to improve the career prospects of young people. Please tell me how I should go about it.**

Starting a vocational training centre to help youngsters hone their skills is a commendable idea. Job-oriented modules that are both useful and popular include beautician courses, fashion design, interior design, stenography, typing, secretarial duties, book-keeping, desktop publishing (DTP), computer basics, electronic basics and mobile repair. However, running a training institute will not be easy. The investment is quite substantial, at least Rs 500,000. You also need adequate space—at least three reasonably sized rooms—in a good locality. Affiliation to Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) would give you a brand advantage. Besides staff for miscellaneous work, you would further need the services of trained faculty for different professional courses. Attracting students regularly

would be a major challenge because of the competition. When you advertise, highlight the special strengths of your institute. Such centres keep mushrooming but once the quality of faculty is established, the returns are good.

—P C Sharma

*Sharma runs a polytechnic institute in Lucknow*

**I want to start a local search engine on the lines of *justdial.com* or *asklaila.com*. I am in my mid-50s. How should I proceed?**

Starting a local search engine is rather tedious. It does not entail much investment but requires a huge amount of research and data collection. To run a website like *justdial.com*, you need to book a domain name, which is easily done. To acquire the web space, you only have to spend about Rs 1,500. Collecting data is the main difficulty. First, identify the city you plan to cover and then hire manpower—at least 20 people. They will be responsible for collecting all relevant data from schools and colleges, restaurants and cinema halls, beauty salons and hairdressers, hospitals and chemists, and doctors and lawyers. Once the information is collated, employ trained computer professionals to upload each entry. This process is time-consuming and may take three to six months depending on the size of the city/town. Data should be segregated into various categories as well as different localities. Once your site is ready to go live, advertise actively.

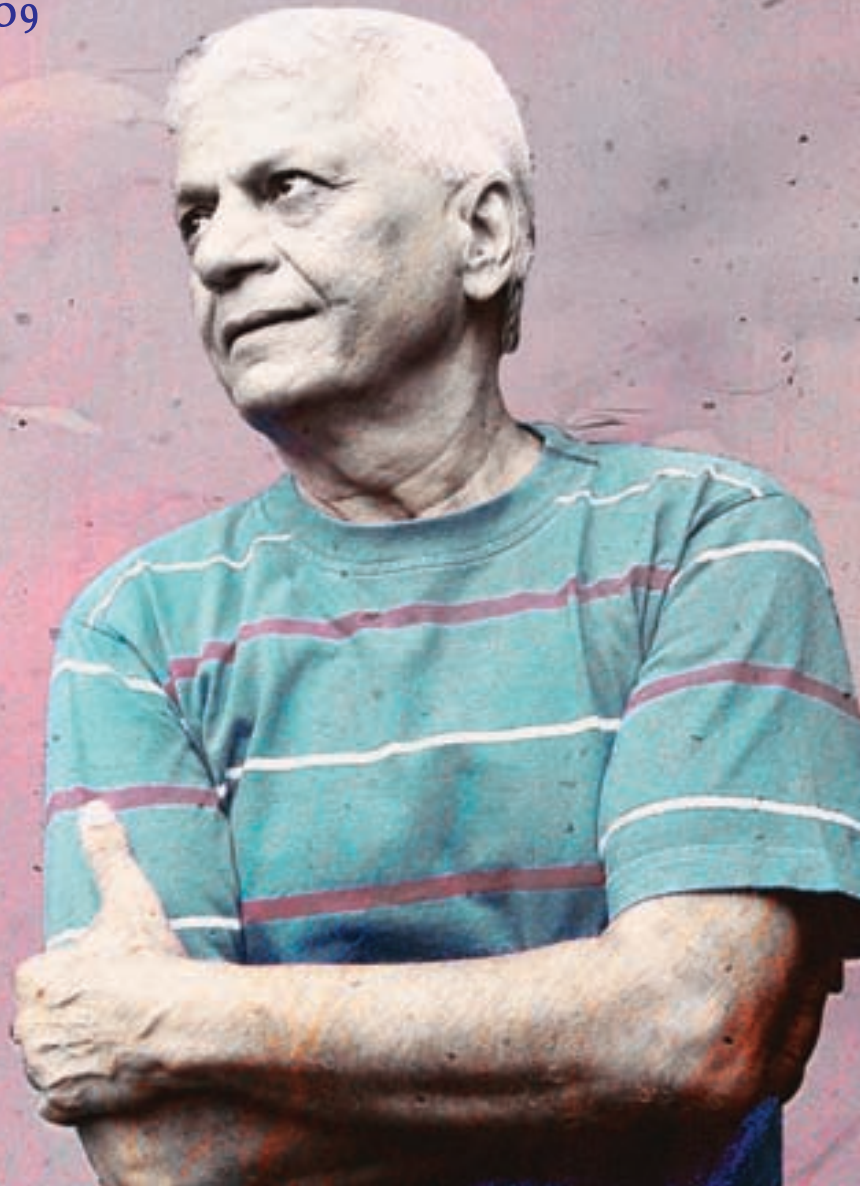
—Sushil Singh

*Delhi-based Singh has developed a local search engine catering to the Delhi/NCR area*



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# SHOCK TREATMENT!



Havells

**MONSOON HAS ITS MAGIC** but it's not without its menace either—especially when it comes to exposed electrical wiring. We went window-shopping on the slushy sidewalks and came up with a shock-proof buy: Havells DBOXx.

The designer electricity distribution board has a tough, stylish, compact shell that protects it from

the elements and can be opened at the push of a button. It has added safety features like shockproof integrated mechanism, brass neutral links and earth links to facilitate effective distribution of current. It comes with a voltage rating of 240 V, and can be flush or surface mounted.

**Price: Rs 1,100 onwards**

## RECYCLE

- Don't trash the wine cork after you are done with that bottle of wine. Use it as a pin cushion.
- Wine corks also make great kindling. So save up some for the next bonfire.



# Time-keeper

In Bengaluru, Rani Ponappa gives old heirlooms a new identity, writes **Rajashree Balaram**

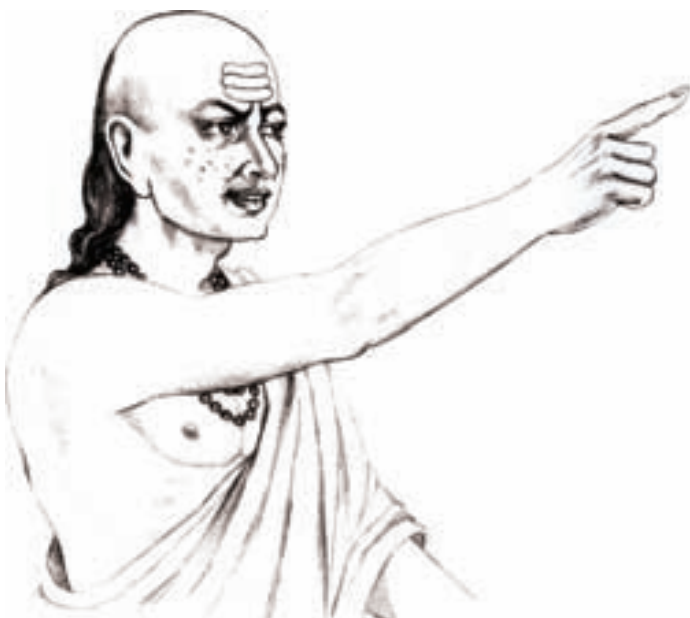
**R**ani Ponappa sees a new story in every old sari. The Bengaluru-based 52 year-old cuts *butti*, *pallu* and borders of heirloom silk saris and transfixes them onto fresh chiffon, georgettes and silks to create a style statement that blends mesmerising antiquity with contemporary chic. Ponappa started her business in the garage of her home in R T Nagar three years ago. Her first 'project' was her grandmother's 100 year-old Coorgi silk sari. Impressed by her finesse, friends and acquaintances approached her with their old saris. Ponappa takes anywhere between four days and two years to resurrect and renovate an heirloom. As the *zari* on old saris are painfully fragile, they need to be handled

**C** REVIVAL

with extreme care. Often she weaves in fresh *zari* to reinforce old *zari* or provides brocade with a backing of sturdy fabric. She detests the thought of cutting up old saris to create *salwar kameez*. Recently a client—who has two daughters—approached her with an old silk Kanjeevaram. "All that could be salvaged were its two borders," says Ponappa. "So I stitched the upper border on one sari and the lower one on the other. She had two heirloom saris to bequeath to her two daughters." Her fees range between Rs 3,000 and Rs 10,000 depending on the complexity and effort of the project.

**Contact Rani Ponappa at (0)9341253627**

Prasad



## RARE FIND

In 1905, the Oriental Research Institute (ORI) in Mysore found a historical treasure in the inner recesses of its dusty shelves: a manuscript of Chanakya's *Arthashastra*, written circa 4 BC. The manuscript, written in the Tamil Grantha script was retrieved by Sanskrit scholar Rudrapatna Shamashastry who in 1909 translated and published the treatise in Sanskrit and later in English. This year marks the centenary of the landmark publication. The original manuscript still lies at the ORI wrapped in red cloth and sprayed with preservative citronyl oil. Let's hope the literary treasure survives the ravages of time.

## Pure **MUSIC**

**IF ALL THOSE HIP-HOP REMIX** numbers are setting your teeth on edge, soak up some pure classical Indian music on DD 1 every Sunday at 10.30 am. The *IDEA Jalsa Series* is a musical reality show that brings you the best of Hindustani and Carnatic classical music as well as genres like *qawwali*, *ghazal*, *bhajan*, poetry, folk and Sufi music. Anchored by singer Durga Jasraj and actor Annu Kapoor, the show hosts young maestros and legendary musicians—Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, Javed Akhtar, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Hariharan, Niladri Kumar, Anuradha Paudwal, Dr L Subramanian, Jagjit Singh, Wadali Brothers and Pandit Ajay Pohankar to name a few. Switch on the TV and surrender to the experience.



## Dream come true

Though sarod maestro the late Ali Akbar Khan achieved worldwide fame for his musical prowess, his ambition to propagate Indian music in India remained unfulfilled all his life—the Ali Akbar College of Music that he started in Kolkata in 1956 closed two decades ago. Now, his dream will soon be realised with a new identity, thanks to his daughter Aneesa Chaudhuri who plans to organise a three-day music festival in his memory every year, and his sister, sitar exponent Annapurna Devi (*see pic*), who has convinced the Indian government to allot land for a new music school: Allauddin Sangeet Bhawan. The foundation stone for the proposed school is scheduled to be in place by September 2009. It will be a five-storey structure with classrooms, a seminar hall, meditation hall and guestrooms. Devi, 81, also started the Allauddin Sangeet Sadhanaloy in 2005. Music connoisseurs can now look forward to savouring the Maihar *gharana* all over again.





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# Island in the STREAM

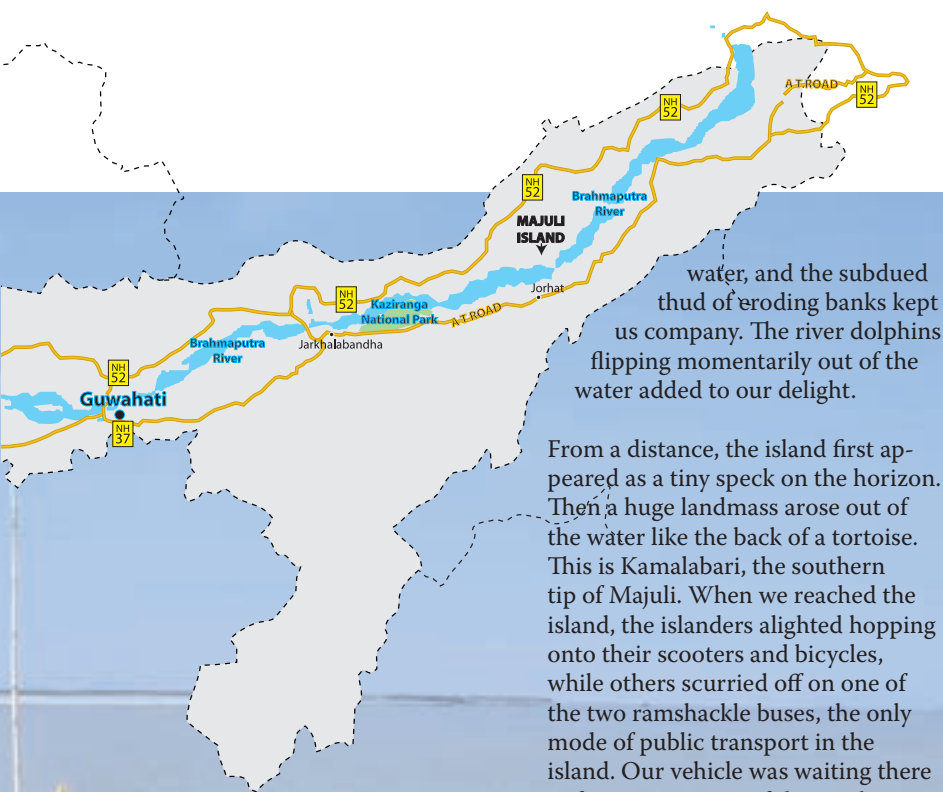
Rich biodiversity and a fascinating cultural experience await visitors to Majuli in Assam

Text and photographs: SUSHEELA NAIR

**F**rom the somnolent town of Jorhat in Upper Assam, we headed to Nimmati Ghat Point to board the huge ferry bound for Majuli, the world's largest inhabited river island. As the sunlight glistened on the white stream of foam, the enormous ferry cast off its mooring ropes and sailed smoothly out, carrying aboard a motley crowd of passengers, including a film crew, cars, scooters, cattle and material. There was even a tractor and a dredging machine! Some passengers sat atop the ferry playing cards while others revelled in the scenery and local gossip. Running thrice a day, up and down from the mainland, it is Majuli's only link with the outside world. Less than 25 km from the district headquarters of Jorhat, the journey to Majuli with bus and ferry rides spanning over three hours is an exciting one. As the ferry sped along the mighty Brahmaputra, the droning of the engine, swish of the river







water, and the subdued thud of eroding banks kept us company. The river dolphins flipping momentarily out of the water added to our delight.

From a distance, the island first appeared as a tiny speck on the horizon. Then a huge landmass arose out of the water like the back of a tortoise. This is Kamalabari, the southern tip of Majuli. When we reached the island, the islanders alighted hopping onto their scooters and bicycles, while others scurried off on one of the two ramshackle buses, the only mode of public transport in the island. Our vehicle was waiting there to ferry us to some of the Vaishnavite monasteries or *satra* that Majuli is reputed for. We cruised past a platter of pastoral delights—paddy fields, clumps of bamboo, water meadows, fish traps, banana plantations and hyacinth-filled fishponds.

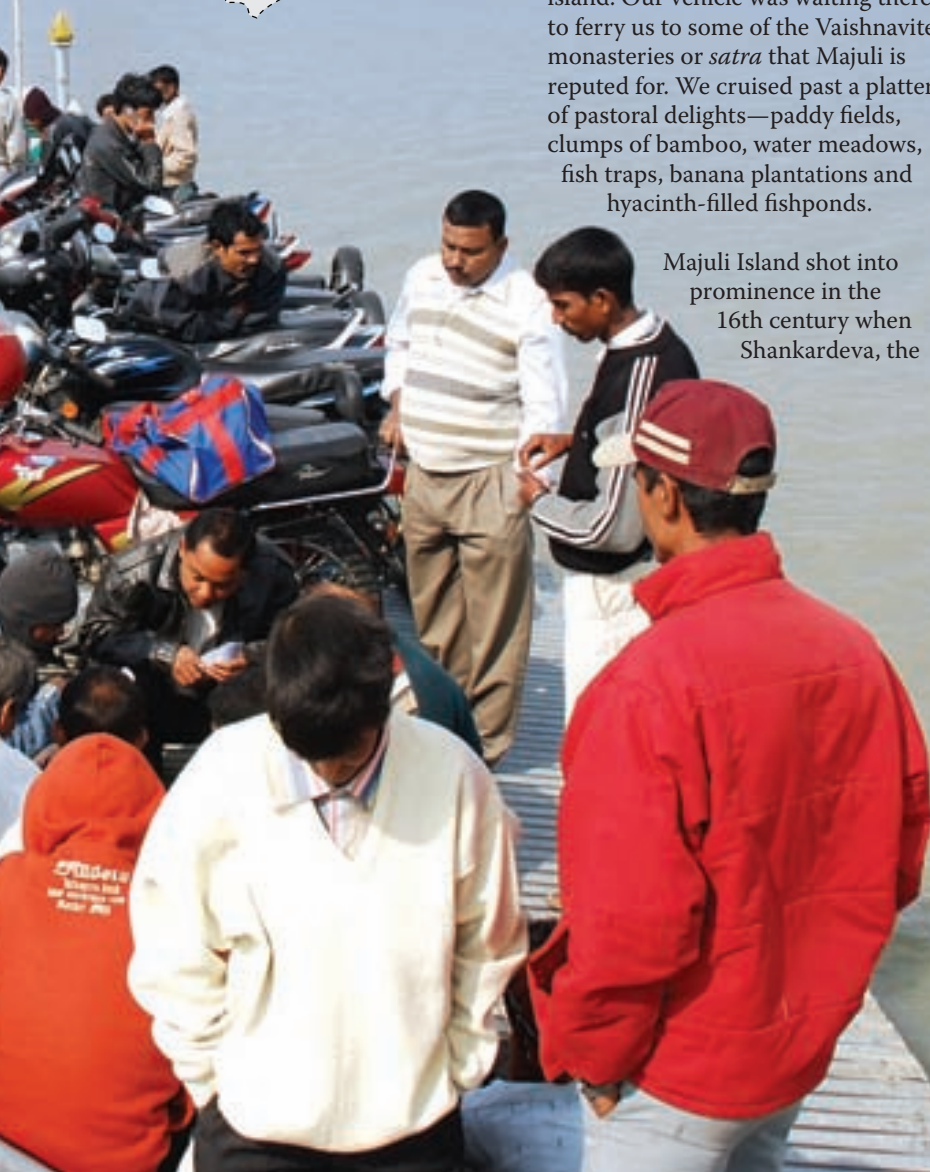
Majuli Island shot into prominence in the 16th century when Shankardeva, the

‘father’ of Assamese culture, took shelter in Majuli and spent a couple of months at Beloguri (West Majuli) propagating a new form of Vaishnavism (a form of Hinduism distinctive in its primary worship of Lord Vishnu). Shankardeva’s Vaishnavism was simpler and less ritualistic than the complex Hindu religion. It is also said that Lord Krishna provided the backdrop for a historic meeting between Assam’s Shankardeva and his disciple Madhabdeva in the 15th century.

Bound by the Brahmaputra to the south and the Subansiri and Kherketia in the north, the 886-sq-km Majuli Island is remote and isolated, distinctly separated from the mainland. The beguiling island is home to many rare varieties of flora and fauna. Indeed, Majuli plays gracious host to many indigenous and rare migratory birds such as the pelican, Siberian crane, and the adjutant stork. We also spotted pond herons and kingfishers, apart from the ubiquitous egrets.

As fascinating as its biological diversity is the colourful tapestry of the Assamese past carefully preserved in the 22 *satra* that dot the island. A ramble through the winding lanes of the villages gave us an insight into the fascinating tribal lifestyle and the traditions associated with Vaishnavism. Though there exist other such Vaishnavite Hindu monasteries in Assam, Majuli developed as the crowning glory of the Vaishnavite culture, with its *satra* serving as centres for dissemination of education and the preservation of Assamese arts. These monasteries, which house priceless artefacts, have existed since the *satra* was invented in the 15th century by Shankardeva, who eschewed idolatry and the caste system.

The first halt on our island visit was Kamalabari *satra*. We were escorted to the *namghar* (a large prayer hall) facing a simple shrine at the centre. This is the focal point of all villages











Majuli is the only place in the world where the potter's wheel is not used for making pots. Villagers fashion clay pots with their hands using techniques dating back to the Harappan era

#### Getting there:

**By air:** There are flights to Jorhat from Guwahati, Kolkata and Mumbai.

**By rail:** The nearest station is in Jorhat.

**By road:** Jorhat is connected by road to Guwahati. Assam State Transport Corporation and private-run buses are available. Then, take a local bus from Jorhat to Nimatighat.

**By ferry:** Ferries leave for Majuli thrice a day. Buses meet the ferries and run to various points around the island. As the ferry schedule changes regularly, check the timings with the tourist office in Jorhat before you set off.

**Transport:** The most pleasant way to see the *satra* is on foot, but you can hire a taxi in Kamalabari for around Rs 800 per day.

#### Where to stay:

There are a few small hotels in Garamur and Kamalabari. The best accommodation option on Majuli is the Circuit House in Garamur. You can also stay at the guesthouses of the various *satra* but facilities are Spartan. There is also an Inspection Bungalow on the island. Both Kamalabari and Garamur have *dhaba* serving Indian meals.

the Harappan era. Villagers fashion symmetrical clay pots using only their hands. Majuli also has a rich agricultural tradition, growing as many as 100 varieties of rice, all without chemical fertilisers or pesticides.

We left the island with a fervent prayer for saving the ecosystem when we heard that soil erosion had resulted in the depletion of its size. The silver lining: efforts are underway to get the island included in UNESCO list of world heritage sites.

where people gather to sing and pray. It is more than a temple—usually, after the sessions in reading and discussion, members congregate here to discuss matters concerning the village. Most *satra* consist of a large prayer hall, surrounded by a quadrangle of huts or monks' dormitories and bathing tanks. Accommodating 40 to 500 disciples each, these buildings pulsate with dance, drama and *kirtan*.

In each room is a group of monks, headed by a guru. In the hierarchy, the *satradhikari* is supreme, followed by the *deka adhikari*, or heir apparent. Even today, so sacred is the institution to the local Assamese that he takes pride in pledging a son to the *satra*. We were impressed with the Kamalabari monastery, which resonated to the music of cymbals and *kirtan*. Some *bala bhakta* donning masks enacted a short dance-drama for us. Even more remarkable were the *satradhikari* and the *deka adhikari*, the white-robed monks with their long mane, astonishing grace. The *satradhikari* explained how disciples, in older times, were trained in mask making, boat building and other traditional arts. Each *satra* was known for its particular speciality, for example Natun Samugri *satra* for mask-making and Kamalabari *satra* for its fine boats. Frequent damages have forced many Vaishnavite *satra* to shift to mainland Assam though. At one stage, Majuli boasted of 65 monasteries; sadly now there are only 22. The two main settlements that

Clockwise from top left: a Mishing woman weaving handloom; another with her grandchild slung on her back; children at a *satra*; a group of *bala bhakta* enacting a dance drama

have *satra* are Kamalabari ('the centre of learning') and Garamur (a centre of ancient weaponry), 5 km north. Other important *satra* are Aunati (jewellery and handicrafts), 4 km west of Kamalabari; Shamaguri (mask-making), 6 km east of Bengenaati; and Dakhinpat (dance festivals), 13 km beyond Shamaguri. At Aunati *satra*, we were shown around a small museum with an enviable collection of relics, old utensils, jewellery and handicrafts. What impressed us most was an intricate ivory chess set of mounted elephant figures and a mat woven from slivers of ivory.

En route, we also stopped by a Mishing settlement comprising elevated huts, standing on wooden poles. The Mishings, a tribe from Arunachal Pradesh who migrated to Majuli centuries ago, comprise 40 per cent of the population of Majuli. (The Deori and Vaishnavite Assamese are some of the rest.) We had a peek into their massive dormitories that did not have partitions among members of the same family. We were greeted with the customary cup of *apong* (rice beer). Some Mishings women were engrossed in weaving their colourful sarong-like wraps while their children huddled around them. With 5,000 families, Borpomua in south Majuli has the largest concentration of Mishings. Like everybody else, the Mishings live in an amphibious culture roaming the numerous river channels in their boats. Fishing and weaving are the other primary occupations.

Majuli is also the only place in the world where the potter's wheel is not used for making pots. Its exotic pottery products are made from beaten clay and burnt in driftwood-fired kilns, using techniques dating back to



# HEAD FOR THE HILLS

No, it's not renunciation that **Vrinda Nabar** is suggesting. Read on for a twist in the tale

**T**he June 27th issue of *The Economist* contains a 14-page special report on ageing and a Leader titled "The end of retirement", which looks at changing global demography. The magazine's cover has an elderly couple in red-striped deck-chairs on a pristine, sandy beach, complete with cell phone, laptop and a wicker hamper—as delightful a prospect as anyone could wish for at a time when the world is coming to acknowledge that by the end of the 21st century "the age of 100 may have become the new three score and ten".

The twist in this rosy picture is that though people are living longer, and often leading full and active lives for most of that time, no one yet seems to have discovered a miracle, fool-proof drug that could combine longevity with youth. I have now begun to appreciate even more the tragic irony implicit in Tennyson's dramatic monologue *Tithonus* where the ageing Greek is left to live with the consequences of a foolish boon asked for and granted. The story goes that when the goddess of dawn Aurora grew besotted with Tithonus he was granted immortality but the gods, jealous that the beautiful goddess had chosen a mere mortal, held back from also gifting him eternal youthfulness. Tithonus can never die but he grows more and more wasted with each passing year.

It is perhaps in recognition of this two-edged reality—increased longevity but not prolonged youth—that *The Economist* also looks at the more complex canvas of a world where growing numbers of the aged are

mismatched with a corresponding decline in the number of births. As the world ages, social security for the elderly is something which governments the world over will need to factor into their agendas on a scale hitherto not thought of. More importantly, living sensibly is going to matter more and more. While keeping mind and body active has for some time been the new mantra of many older individuals, the paradigm shift from regarding themselves as not weak and vulnerable but capable of overreaching their goals and raising the bar will call for a fundamental shift in attitudes.

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**The paradigm shift from regarding oneself as not weak and vulnerable but capable of overreaching goals will call for a basic shift in attitudes**

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Can the elderly do this? I believe they can if they resolve to do so. They need to fight the all too visible pressures to see themselves as diminished in some ways. I know slowing down is inevitable, but slowing down that process is something everyone can aspire towards. Returning from a morning walk the other day I was pleasantly surprised when a loud symphony of giggles, shrieks and laughter in one of the parks near my home materialised into a group of older women playing games I had long forgotten about. Saris hitched up, *dupatta* firmly tied at the waist, they hopped, *hu-tu-tu*-ed

and *lagori*-ed barefoot. They formed chains for *sakli* and squatted on their haunches, sciatica and arthritis forgotten. One of them came up and asked why I was only watching, pulling me into their midst, and for the next 40 minutes or so I was a young girl all over again. At the end of it all, they spoke of mundane things as they panted and mopped their glowing faces: ordinary women, who had overcome constraints of age-related conditioning to find themselves again.

Individual efforts can of course only go thus far unless backed by social policy. It was heartening to note that a handful of carrots were thrown the way of senior citizens in the recent budget and one can only hope that the government increases measures that bring the older population into its reckoning at every budget time. The long overdue tax exemption on pensions which many retired individuals (those who held modest jobs with modest incomes) had hoped for in the wish list drawn up by media channels was alas not given, but hey, maybe the Finance Minister sees a brighter prospect for the elderly in the great outdoors! In a morning-after review of the budget's highlights, a local daily listed snow skis and other snow-ski equipment, waterskis, surfboards, etc., as surprisingly being fully exempt from customs duty. It could be the government wants us to spend what's left of our taxed pensions on some of these and head for the Himalaya in a new-age avatar of *sanyāsāśrama*!

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*Vrinda Nabar, 61, is a Mumbai-based feminist writer*



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# The human jungle

## THE MIDDLEMAN

BY SANKAR;

TRANSLATED BY ARUNAVA SINHA

PENGUIN; RS 200; 192 PAGES

Set in Kolkata in the 1970s, the world of *The Middleman* is contemporary today as it was almost four decades ago. Idealistic and young, Somnath Banerjee is one of thousands of educated young men and women in search of work. Filling up endless application forms, he appears for sporadic job interviews with renewed hope only to face frustration every time. In the 'human jungle'—the *Jana Aranya* as author Sankar had named his original Bengali novel—Somnath's 'pass degree' is not qualification enough to get him a respectable white-collar job. Though considering it a waste of effort, he queues for hours at the employment bureau to renew his registration card only in deference to his father's dictates. Fear creeps in as he witnesses desperation and imminent penury driving his friend Sukumar to lose control of his faculties. Going into the order-supply business as a middleman, ambition makes him use an innocent girl as bait to finalise his first big contract.

This is a poignant narrative of how circumstances metamorphose a naive youth into a corrupt businessman. Bitterness and despair surface with a sense of inevitability as the protagonist unwillingly barter his obsolete values to shore up crumbling remnants of his hopes and dreams. A realistic commentary of the metropolis during an era of rampant unemployment and political instability, the evocative writing and vivid imagery keep the reader engrossed. Faithfully retaining the style and mood of the original novel, this first-time translation adds to the wealth of regional classics.

—Anjana Jha

## AUTHORSPEAK

***The Middleman* is believed to be largely autobiographical. Is it based on your own experiences?**

Every author's writing is ultimately autobiographical. My agonies were also added to the story. The middle class in West Bengal faced a crisis of acute unemployment at that time. A chance meeting with a young man from Tamil Nadu who had started a wastepaper basket manufacturing unit gave me the opening of becoming an agent for the company.

**Do you feel your novel is dated considering it was written almost four decades ago?**

I would have been delighted if there had been an expiry date. But sadly, the employment scenario painted in the novel is not only real today but has worsened considerably. And the problem is evident not just in Bengal but throughout the country. My novel focuses on the problem, diagnoses it but can neither treat nor cure it. I only hope the writing attracts the attention of society. As long as the conscience is alive, there is hope of a solution someday. The book not becoming dated is good for me as a writer, but bad as a human being.

**Your father's death put a lot of responsibility on your shoulders at a very young age....**

I was 13 when my father died in March 1947. For the next three or four years, I did every kind of work to support my family. You could say that I'm a product of child labour! Though it was terrible at the time, I feel fortunate now as the struggles taught me so



much. The biggest lesson I learnt is that hope persists despite the darkest hour.

***The Middleman* is the highest selling Bengali novel of all time. What inspired you to become a writer?**

I became a clerk to Noel Frederick Barwell, the last British barrister of Kolkata High Court at the age of 16. Despite being a very junior employee, Barwell gave me an opportunity to experience many things in life I could never have otherwise. He helped build my self-belief and determination to succeed. After his death, I wrote my first novel *Kauto Aujanarey* (So Many Unknown) as a tribute to him. Instead of my real name Mani Shankar Mukherjee, I preferred Sankar, the professional name adopted for the law courts.

**Your novel *Chowringhee* was universally hailed by British literary critics at the London Book Fair this year. Do you think Indian regional literature has finally arrived globally?**

*Chowringhee* did receive page-long reviews in England but it would be arrogant to claim that I've arrived

globally. Irrespective of whatever the literature, readership in Europe is voracious. There's always a search for mature clearing houses of world ideas.

#### How do you relate to contemporary young writers?

I haven't read too many new writers. But I believe that every age has a message to convey. These writers too will keep the torch alive. India is a young country that respects the past.

#### You recently wrote *Achena Ajana Vivekananda* and *Aami Vivekananda Bolchi* on Swami Vivekananda. Are you switching over to non-fiction?

Life has been lonely since I lost my wife two years ago. Swami Vivekananda's philosophy is inspiring and gives me a sense of happiness. The books

are a compilation of his thoughts and sayings woven together. Though I'm also working on a biography of Sri Aurobindo, it doesn't mean I've stopped writing fiction.

#### In the 1960s, your books were said to be bold and unconventional. Has age changed your style?

A writer's style cannot change beyond a point. The road may take a turn, but the destination is the same. I was never young; life matured me beyond my years. I was *akal pakka* (prema-turely ready) and so were my themes. So probably with age—I'm now 75—my topics are finally in keeping with the times.

#### *Chowringhee* and *Jana Aranya* were made into films in the 1970s.

#### Why weren't the novels translated earlier?

My arrogance didn't allow me to go forward but wait till they came to me on their own. During wartime as a child, I remember seeing advertisements in the newspaper saying 'Horlicks... not available now but worth waiting for!' Perhaps that is the story of my novels. Actually it's all destiny and things happen when it is the right time.

#### What has life taught you that can inspire others?

No matter how difficult the struggle, everything is never lost. There is always hope. Believing this is vital for succeeding. This is the message I've tried to convey in *The Middleman*.

— In conversation with Anjana Jha

## CROSSING THE LINE

### THE HELP

BY KATHRYN STOCKETT

PENGUIN FIG TREE, RS 600; 451 PAGES

This is a book about the so-called 'lines' between African-Americans and the whites in the 1960s; about three women who see them but wish they weren't there; and about how they finally cross them. Eugenia (Skeeter) Phelan is smart, kind and tall for her small (and closed) circle of friends at Jackson, Mississippi. With fond memories of her coloured help Constantine, who disappeared before the girl she raised could see her again after the boarding years, Skeeter finds warm resemblance in school friend Elizabeth Leefolt's help Aibileen. Looking after Elizabeth's two-year-old daughter Mae Mobley and teaching her "You is smart. You is kind. You is important", Aibileen is on her 17th white baby in 37 years as a maid. Minny, Aibileen's sharp-tongued friend, has rubbed many the wrong way, including Hilly Holbrook, the president of the League and the lady who no one in Jackson wants to upset.

It all starts with Hilly starting an initiative for a separate bathroom for maids. Skeeter, an aspiring writer earning a meagre income from a housekeeping column in a local journal, wishes things were different. And when she has to suggest an idea to a New York-based publishing house,



she chooses to write a book on this racial bias, hoping someone will tell her where Constantine is, as her mother won't. "They say it's like true love, good help. You only get one in the lifetime." Skeeter works hard to get support from Aibileen and a dozen of her friends, but has to string a bunch of lies, the plot getting thicker with each one. Together, they write *Help-Coloured Domestic and the Southern Families for Which They Work*, chuckling that the publishing house would "get tired of typing all that on top of every page". *The Help* is full of many lighter moments of women bonding with each other, irrespective of their colour. But "who knew paper and ink could be so vicious?" Constantine's truth shocks Skeeter, Minny includes the "terrible awful" truth about Hilly in the book as a defence for her friends, and they wait for Jackson to read *The Help*. Everyone's happy about precipitating a change, but dread getting fired. Of course they don't; else Jackson would know its white ladies as chapters from the book. Mostly rollicking, this is also a tear-jerking lesson on civil rights in America.

—Meeta Bhatti



## PASSAGES

## DIVINE RITES

FOUR HYMNS FROM THE *RIG VEDA*, *YAJUR VEDA*, *SAMA VEDA* AND *ATHARVA VEDA* THAT CELEBRATE CREATION, *AGNI* (FIRE) AND *VISVAKARMAN*, THE DIVINE ENGINEER

**HYMN CXXX: TO CREATION**

The sacrifice drawn out with threads on every side, stretched by a hundred sacred ministers and one. This do these Fathers weave who hitherward are come: they sit beside the warp and cry, 'Weave forth, weave back'.

The Man extends it and the Man unbinds it: even to this vault of heaven hath he outspun it. These pegs are fastened to the seat of worship: they made the Sama-hymns their weaving shuttles. What were the rule, the order and the model? What were the wooden fender and the butter? What were the hymn, the chant, the recitation, when to the God all Deities paid worship?

Closely was Gayatri conjoined with Agni, and closely Savitar combined with Usnih Brilliant with Ukthas, Soma joined Anustup: Brhati was aided. Viraj adhered to Varuna and Mitra: here Tristup day by day was Indra's portion. Jagati entered all the Gods together: so by this knowledge men were raised to Rsis.

So by this knowledge men were raised to Rsis, when ancient sacrifice sprang up, our Fathers. With the mind's eye I think that I beheld them who first perform this sacrificial worship. They who were versed in ritual and metre, in hymns and rules, were the Seven Godlike Rsis. Viewing the path of those of old, the sages have taken up the reins like chariot-drivers.

**HYMN IX: TO AGNI**

One half of day is dark, and bright the other: both atmosphere move on by sage devices. Agni Vaisvanara, when born as Sovran, hath with his lustre overcome the darkness.

I know not either warp or woof, I know not the web they weave when moving to the contest. Whose son shall here speak words that must be spoken without assistance from the Father near him? For both the warp

and woof he understandeth, and in due time shall speak what should be spoken, who knoweth as the immortal world's Protector, descending, seeing with no aid from other. He is the Priest, the first of all: behold him. Mid mortal men he is the light immortal. Here was he born. Firm-seated in his station, Immortal, ever waxing in his body. A firm light hath been sent for men to look on: among all things that fly the mind is swiftest. All Gods of one accord, with one intention, move unobstructed to a single purpose.

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Father who made us, he who knoweth all races and all things existing, him other beings seek for information

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**HYMN LXXXII: TO VISVAKARMAN**

He who sat down as Hotar-priest, the Rsis, our Father, offering up all things existing. He, seeking through his wish a great possession, came among men on earth as archetypal. What was the place whereon he took his station? What was it that supported him? Whence Visvakarman, seeing all, producing the earth, with mighty power disclosed the heavens. He who hath eyes on all sides round about him, a mouth on all sides, arms and feet on all sides. He, the Sole God, producing earth and heaven, weldeth them, with his arms as wings, together.

What was the tree, what wood is sooth produced it, from which they fashioned out the hearth and heaven? Ye thoughtful men inquire within your spirit whereon he stood when he established all things. Thine highest, lowest, sacrificial natures and these

they mid-most here. O Visvakarman, teach thou thy friends at sacrifice. O Blessed. And come thyself, exalted, to our worship. Let other men around us live in folly: here let us have a rich and liberal patron.

Let us invoke today, to aid our labour, the Lord of Speech, the thought-swift Visvakarman. May he hear kindly all our invocations who gives us all bliss for aid, whose works are righteous.

**HYMN LXXXI: TO VISVAKARMAN**

The Father of the eye, the Wise in spirit, created both these worlds submerged in fatness. Then when the eastern ends were firmly fastened, the heavens and the earth were far extended. Mighty in mind and power is Visvakarman, Maker, Disposer, and most lofty Presence. Their offerings joy in rich juice where they value One, only One, beyond the Seven Rsis. Father who made us, he who, as Disposer, knoweth all races and all things existing, even he alone, the Deities' name-giver, him other beings seek for information. To him in sacrifice they offered treasures, Rsis of old, in numerous troops, as singers, who, in the distant, near and lower region, made ready all these things that have existence. That which is earlier than this earth and heaven, before the Asuras and Gods had being; what was the germ primeval that the waters received where all the Gods were seen together?

The waters, they received that germ primeval wherein the Gods were gathered all together. It rested set upon the Unborn's navel, that One wherein abide all things existing.

Ye will not find him who produced these creatures: another thing has risen up among you. Enwrapped in misty cloud, with lips that stammer, hymn-chanters wander and are discontented.

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**K**iwi pharmacist Colin Murdoch invented a syringe gun that operated on compressed gas in 1959. Intended to be a substitute for tranquiliser darts used to capture, control and treat animals, it reduced the force of the blow and trauma among animals. The syringe gun, which worked on changeable velocity, was tested in Africa and Australia before being patented and mass-manufactured.

Murdoch, who went on to set up his own company Paxarms (a word connoting a conjunction of peace and weapons),

invented an array of devices like the disposable syringe, silent burglar and fire alarms and the childproof medicine bottle cap. Though a pharmacist by profession, he had gained experience in the repair and modification of weapons during World War II, when rifles and shotguns could not be imported into New Zealand. He incorporated a small valve that controlled compressed gas in the chamber, allowing control of the velocity of the tranquiliser dart. Murdoch never sued people who violated his patents—he believed that everything was fair as long as it benefitted animals and humans.

### THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: **AUGUST 1959**

- On 7 August 1959, The US launched Explorer 6 from the Atlantic Missile Range in Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- On 14 August 1959, Explorer 6 sent the first picture of Earth from space.
- On 17 August 1959, Columbia Records released Miles Davis's groundbreaking album, *Kind of Blue*.
- On 26 August 1959, the original Mini designed by Sir Alec Issigonis was launched.

# Freedom facts

Volumes have been written about India's Independence; the movement preceding it and the nation-building process that began after 15 August 1947. Here are some interesting nuggets about the events and people of the time

## India shares its Independence Day with three other countries:

- South Korea (from Japan in 1945)
- The Republic of the Congo (from France in 1960)
- Bahrain (from Britain in 1971)



*Dr B R Ambedkar was the only Indian to be appointed by the Bombay Presidency Committee to work with the All-European Simon Commission in 1928.*

**IN EARLY 1947, BRITISH PRIME MINISTER CLEMENT ATLEE HAD ACTUALLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE BRITISH WOULD NOT LEAVE INDIA BEFORE JUNE 1948.**

## *Rs 550 million*

The amount Mahatma Gandhi ordered Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was India's first home minister and deputy prime minister, to give to Pakistan after Partition.



*Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was the first woman to hold a cabinet rank in independent India—she was the health minister and went on to be elected the president of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1950.*



**The Indian National Congress (INC) wanted Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to be India's first prime minister, but Mahatma Gandhi convinced the INC to change its decision as he wanted Jawarharlal Nehru to be India's first leader.**



Dadhabhai Naoroji was the first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament by a British constituency.

*London-based lawyer and head of the Boundary Commission Sir Cyril Radcliffe submitted the Partition map as late as 13 August 1947.*



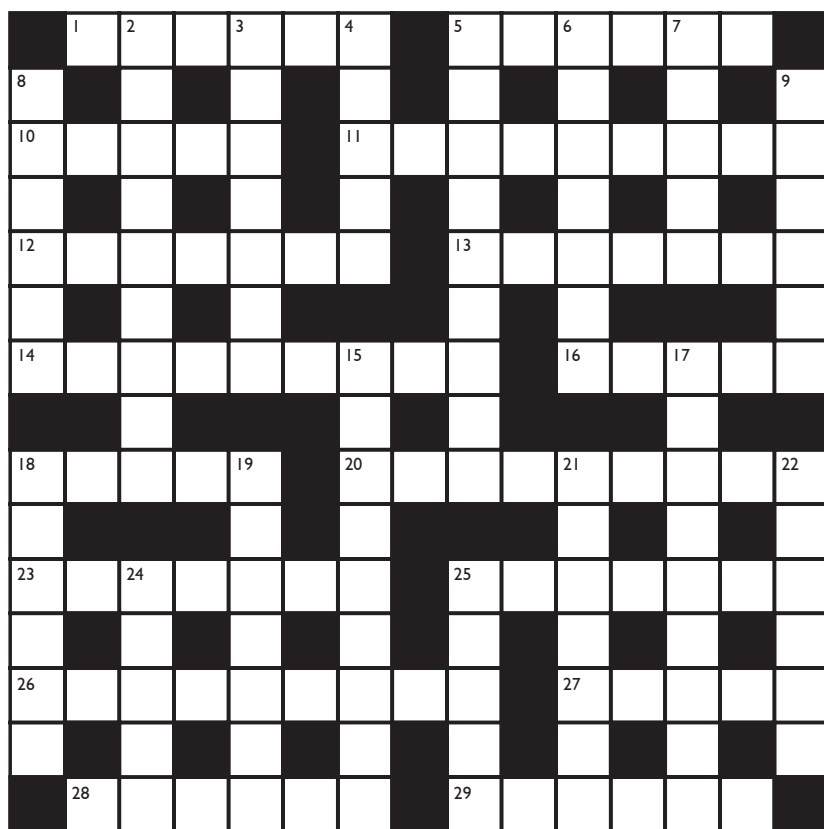
*On 31 December 1929 in Lahore, the national flag of India was hoisted officially for the first time by Congress President Jawarharlal Nehru.*

## 62%

The voter turnout in independent India's first general elections, which were held in 1952.



## EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 58



BY RAJU BHARATAN

## ACROSS

- 1 Supporter breezy as breezy could be (3 3)  
 5 Greene abandon? (6)  
 10 Reflecting display choice as course of action? (5)  
 11 Pathbreaker Sham surrounding Ratna withdrawing (9)  
 12 Bad apple? (7)  
 13 Lassi, full of it does Yuvraj's dad look, given his TV-acting air of injured innocence (7)  
 14 A yak confessing to being in no

position, any longer, to stand classic-matching movie? (1 8)

- 16 Bhagat to follow? (5)  
 18 Andy Symonds dangerously poised? (2 3)  
 20 Odds indicated by morning hours of work (4 2 3)  
 23 The 1964 L Vijayalaxmi starrer in which lady music director Usha Khanna had Lata Mangeshkar warbling *Hasnun alla ya habbee hasnun alla ya habbee* (7)  
 25 Citadel peculiar to a specific region? (7)

- 26 Face to face with John Gavin in Romanoff And Juliet (6 3)  
 27 Naidu not to be confused with Dom Moraes cricket writing (5)  
 28 Plus side having me meeting stir (6)  
 29 Undertaken standing (6)

## DOWN

- 2 Point taken (4 5)  
 3 Olly was of Stan without ever being a disaster (7)  
 4 Rains in name (5)  
 5 In which *Zindagee bhar nahein bhulegee woh barsaat ki raat* had the Sahir-Roshan team wrapping Madhubala (4 5)  
 6 Luggage defying identification? (2 3 2)  
 7 Shobha attachment (5)  
 8 Speaker telling mother how full of music he was? (6)  
 9 Constituency Gandhian (6)  
 15 As good as gold? (4 5)  
 17 President loves rote (9)  
 18 For all the exposure it got, Her Nights was moving in his directorial custody (1 1 4)  
 19 Rani turning into Bai brought to the screen by Kishore Sahu (4 3)  
 21 Coming before Now Showing? (7)  
 22 Not adding up to much in a film stars cricket match (6)  
 24 What Qurratulain Hyder was to this compiler on The Illustrated Weekly Of India staff (5)  
 25 Acting is in their blood (5)

For answers, see Page 78

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

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.

## BRAIN GYM

### THE ENGINEER

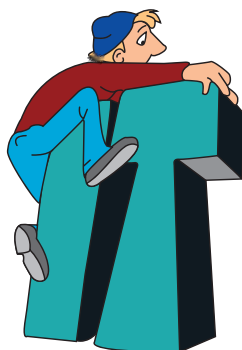
On a train, Smith, Robinson, and Jones are the fireman, brakeman and the engineer, but NOT respectively. Also aboard the train are three businessmen who have the same names: a Mr Smith, a Mr Robinson, and a Mr Jones.

Mr Robinson lives in Detroit. The brakeman lives exactly halfway between Chicago and Detroit. Mr Jones earns exactly \$ 20,000 per year. The brakeman's nearest neighbour, one of the passengers, earns exactly three times as much as the brakeman.

Smith beats the fireman in billiards. The passenger whose name is the same as the brakeman's lives in Chicago. Who is the engineer: Jones, Robinson or Smith?

### READ THE IMAGE

Can you figure out what this picture is saying?



### HOW OLD ARE THEY?

If Frank and Sam total their ages, the answer is 49. Frank is twice as old as Sam was when Frank was as old as Sam is now. How old are Frank and Sam?

### WHO AM I

You will know that I am coming from the jingle of my bell, but exactly who I am is not an easy thing to tell.

Children, they adore me for they find me jolly, but I do not see them when the halls are decked with holly.

My job often leaves me frozen, I am a man that everyone should know, but I do not do business in times of sleet or ice or snow.

I travel much on business, but no reindeer haul me around—I do all my travelling firmly on the ground.

I love the time of Christmas, but that's not my vocational season, and I assure you that is because of a sound economic reason.

## HIDE AND SEEK

Inside each set of the following words, there is a pair of smaller words. By putting an '&' between them, lo & behold, you'll make a familiar phrase. For example, 'Thigh-bone/Swallowtail' conceals 'High & Low'.

1. Skyrocketing/Trolleyman
2. Thermometer/Apoplexy
3. Delaware/Bordering
4. Surprised/Trashiness
5. Throughout/Stumblebum

## SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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.

## KOFFEE WITH KAKURO

	17	24					7	16
17			4			10		
16					29	3	9	
	25							
				6				
			3					
		10						
	23				16	6		
	27							
17								4
				13				
14						5		

The object of a Kakuro is to insert digits from 1 to 9 into the white cells to total the clue associated with it. However, no digit can be duplicated in an entry. For example, to total 6, you could have 1 and 5, 2 and 4 but not 3 and 3. You may, however, use a number again in the same row or column.

## SOLUTIONS TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 58

**ACROSS:** 1 Old fan; 5 Renege (its 6 letters rearranged is *Greene*); 10 Adopt (*Ad/opt*: Display choice); 11 (V) Shantaram (*Sh/antar/am*: *Sham* surrounding *Ratna* withdrawing (*antar* is *Ratna* withdrawing, meaning turning); 12 Gessler (William Tellys apple-to-cleave tormentor); 13 Yoghurt (Yog/hurt); 14 A *Satyakam* (*A/sat/yak/am*): A *yak* confessing to being in no position, any longer, to stand; 16 *Narsi* (*Bhagat*); 18 In pub; 20 Nine to one; 23 *Shabnam*; 25 Dialect (its 7 letters rearranged is *Citadel*); 26 Sandra Dee; 27 Leela (Naidu); 28 *Merits* (*Me /rits* (*me* meeting *stir*: *rits* reversed)); 29 Surety

**DOWN:** 2 Look sharp; 3 Fatally (*fat/ally*); 4 Nasir (*rains*, the 5 letters of this name rearranged); 5 *Raag Yaman*; 6 No tag on; 7 (Shobha) Gurtu; 8 Sangma (*Sang/Ma*); 9 Amethi; 15 King Midas; 17 Roosevelt (*loves rote*, its 9 letters rearranged); 18 I V Sasi; 19 Bina Raiñ (*B /inaR /ai*: *Rani* turning into Bai, she was 1951-introduced by Kishore Sahu in *Kali Ghata*); 21 Trailer (meaning film Comingy); 22 Extras; 24 Annie (pet name of Qurratulain Hyder); 25 Doers

## SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

### THE ENGINEER

Smith is the engineer. Mr Robinson lives in Detroit, and the brakeman's nearest neighbour who lives halfway between Detroit and Chicago earns three times exactly as much as the brakeman. Hence, neither Mr Robinson nor Mr Jones are the brakeman's nearest neighbours; hence it must be Mr Smith. Smith beats the fireman at billiards and the passenger whose name is the same as the brakeman's lives in Chicago. Mr Robinson lives in Detroit and Mr Smith lives halfway between Chicago and Detroit; thus, it must be Mr Jones who lives in Chicago and Jones is the brakeman. Smith is not the brakeman and he is not the fireman whom he beats at billiards; thus, he must be the engineer.

### READ THE IMAGE

Get over it!!

### HOW OLD ARE THEY?

Frank is 28. Sam is 21.

### WHO AM I?

Ice-cream man

### HIDE AND SEEK

1. Rock & Roll
2. Mom & Pop
3. Law & Order
4. Rise & Shine
5. Rough & Tumble

### SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

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

### SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

	17	24				7	16
17	9	8	4		10	1	9
16	8	7	1	29	3	2	7
	25	9	3	7	2	4	
			6	5	1		
		10	3				
		23	1	9	16	6	
	27	9	2	8	7	1	
17	9	8		13	9	3	1
14	8	6			5	2	3



## CARROTMOB

*n.* An event where people support an environmentally friendly store by gathering en masse to purchase the store's products. Also: **carrot mob**.

—**carrotmobber** *n.*

—**carrotmobbing** *pp*

**Example:** Forget sticks, and stick with carrots instead. So says Brent Schulkin, founder of a fledgling movement of activist consumers employing a kind of reverse boycott that he calls a **carrotmob**. The concept is simple: instead of steering clear of environmentally backward stores, why not reward businesses with mass purchases if they promise to use some of the money to get greener?

—Jeremy Caplan, *Shoppers, unite! Carrotmobs are cooler than boycotts,*  
TIME, 15 May 2009

**weisure** *n.* Free time spent doing work or work-related tasks. [Blend of work and leisure.]

**Example:** Weisure has been fuelled by social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace, where 'friends' may actually be business partners or work colleagues. "Social networking as an activity is one of those ambiguous activities," Conley said. "It's part fun and part instrumental in our knowledge economy." These networking sites offer participants in the **weisure** life lots of ways to do business—and to have fun.

—Thom Patterson, CNN.com, 11 May 2009

## VB6

*n.* A person who eats a vegan diet before 6:00 pm, and then whatever they want after that. [From the phrase *vegan before 6*.]

**Example:** VB6. No, it's not a tomato cocktail or the latest version of a computer programming language. **VB6** is short for Vegan Before 6, the increasingly popular veggie-heavy diet that converts say can do wonders for both the body and the planet. Coined and devised by food writer Mark Bittman, the regime is pretty self-explanatory: no animal products, processed food or simple carbohydrates during the day. After 6 pm, anything goes.

—Alexandra Gill, *Tick tock, it's steak o'clock,*  
The Globe and Mail, 27 May 2009



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## Phantom fat

*n.* Lost body fat that is still perceived by a person who used to be overweight.

**Example:** Body-image experts say it's not uncommon for people, especially women, who have lost a lot of weight to be disappointed to some extent to discover that they still aren't 'perfect'. The excess fat is gone when they reach their goal weight, but they may have sagging skin, cellulite or a body shape that they still deem undesirable...some even continue to see themselves as overweight. Some specialists use the term **phantom fat** to refer to this phenomenon of feeling fat and unacceptable after weight loss. "People who were formerly overweight often still carry that internal image, perception, with them," says Elayne Daniels, a psychologist in Canton, Massachusetts, who specialises in body-image issues. "They literally feel as if they're in a large body still."

—Jacqueline Stenson, *Phantom fat can linger after weight loss,*  
MSNBC.com, 23 June 2009

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives

— American author Annie Dillard

## “Every time I hoist the national flag, I recharge my life and soul.”

**Sudhir Kumar Banerjee, 95, for upholding the patriotic spirit**



Shilbhadra Datta

**O**n the night of 15 August 1947, at the Dhemo Main Colliery in Asansol, West Bengal, a young coalmine worker hoisted the tricolour at the behest of the colliery manager. Ever since, for the past 62 years, Sudhir Kumar Banerjee has hoisted the national flag at the colliery on every Independence and Republic Day—even though it's been more than three decades since he retired. Always clad in white khadi *kurta* and *dhoti*, his posture still ramrod straight, Banerjee is a staunch Gandhian. As the block president of Hirapur in Ranigunge Colliery belt, he had galvanised youth in the area to participate in the Salt Satyagraha and Quit India movements. In 1972, when coal mines were nationalised, Banerjee helped gener-

ate employment for hundreds. A recipient of the 'Koyla Ratna' award in 1986, Banerjee also dabbled in theatre in the 1950s, launching Mithani Tarun Binapani Opera, a regional theatre group to entertain coal miners and their families. Today, apart from meditation and a long morning walk, Banerjee practises a fixed routine of jumps to touch the leaves of the banyan tree he planted 30 years ago. And every afternoon at 4 pm, he plays football at a nearby playground and still manages to shoot 10 spot kicks. Fondly known as Aku Babu, Banerjee attributes his agility to simple pleasures: a cup of Darjeeling tea every morning; a *mishti* (sweet) for breakfast; two pieces of *rohu* fish for lunch; and a glass of milk for dinner.

—Shilbhadra Datta

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#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Unit linked insurance plan for 0-13 year old children
- Advantage of risk cover for children 7 years of age and above
- 4 Fund options like Balance, Secure, Smart and Growth
- The benefit of premium waiver of the Proposer on payment of a small extra premium. The policy continues to be in force for full benefits even after the unfortunate death of the Proposer without payment of future due premiums
- Income Tax rebate according to the provisions of Section 80C of the Income Tax Act, 1961

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