

DECEMBER 2008 Rs 30

# harmony

*celebrate age*



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# WE ARE 55

**Like the constituency it's so proud to represent, *Harmony* turns silver this month.**

This is the 55th issue of your magazine, a milestone for us. From a new publication striving to find its feet and understand the needs of its readership, *Harmony* has grown in strength and stature over the past four-and-a-half years. Just as we seek to empower silvers across India, we too have become bolder in addressing issues that matter.

As part of our ongoing advocacy, we have questioned the government for not fulfilling its mandate towards the elderly, emphasised the need for barrier-free mobility, and exposed the reality of life in state-run old-age homes. In our health features, we have addressed subjects, from hormonal replacement therapy and erectile dysfunction to incontinence, and provided detailed advisories on breast cancer, joint replacement and organ donation. Through our annual Harmony Silver Awards, we have brought the achievement of unsung silver achievers to the national stage. Our cover features have yielded extraordinary insight into the lives of some of the most respected people, such as former

president A P J Abdul Kalam, former justice Leila Seth, supercops Julio Ribeiro and Kiran Bedi, activists Ela Ben Bhatt and Aruna Roy, writers Anita Desai, Mahasweta Devi and Allan Sealy, and actors Waheeda Rehman and Dharmendra, to name just a few. Along with chronicling significant trends such as silver remarriage and increasing Internet usage among elderly, we have not shied away from addressing issues such as homosexuality among silvers.

These are just some of the many unforgettable moments in the past 55 months, made possible by a dedicated team. Another indelible memory was created on 9 November in Delhi, where over 1,200 silvers took part in the annual Harmony Senior Citizens' Run, a part of the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon. My thanks to actors Kajol and Ajay Devgan and champion wrestlers Sushil Singh, Olympic bronze medallist, and Rajiv Tomar, Asian Games gold medalist, for being on hand to cheer the participants, and everyone who helped put together such a successful event.

Indeed, a high note to bid adieu to the year 2008. What does next year



DONALD WOODROW

hold in store for Harmony? More events that address your concerns like our seminars on reverse mortgage; more spotlights for silver heroism, such as the Harmony Silver Awards and the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run; more titles from Harmony Publishing like *Yoga for Silvers*; a revamped website ([harmonyindia.org](http://harmonyindia.org)) that promises even more information and interactivity; and a magazine that will continue to think out of the box and push the envelope both in terms of the content we publish and the way we present it. See you next year.

*Tina Ambani*

**Tina Ambani**

## A Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust Initiative

### *Harmony*—Celebrate Age—December 2008 Volume 5 Issue 7

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### A class apart

Rajalakshmi Parthasarathy's vision  
of schools based on Indian values  
has become reality

Visit [www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org) and check out this month's stories!



### Abode of the Gods

Mahadev B Samjiskar reveals the  
enigma of Kailash Mansarovar

Cover photograph by  
**HEMANT PATIL**

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## column one

You can't change the course of time, but you can adapt to change. Acclimatising to new attitudes, cultures, technologies, and finding your own place in the world are challenges that pave the way for both self-acceptance and social acceptance. "Changes", our year-end special, features 12 people who have been on the cover over the past four-and-a-half years. Sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, activist Aruna Roy, architect Brinda Somaya and artist Yusuf Arakkal, to name a few, talk about vicissitudes that made them well-grounded. These weren't forced changes. Over the years, based on their experiences, life revealed them as answers to not-so-easy questions.

Take a leaf from their lives, as from the lives of others featured in *Harmony* this month. There are several examples to choose from. Bhausaheb Thorat, 84, from Sangamner and his tree plantation campaign; Leela Sekhar, also 84, from Chennai and her commitment to the Guides and Scouts movement; and Sunil Pal, the 67 year-old potter from Kolkata who is delighted to initiate his grandson into the art form. On the cover is auto design guru Dilip Chhabria who is reinventing the wheel by launching wall-mount installations, and starting an auto design academy in Pune. "I want to become self-sufficient to further feed my creativity and to take on more challenges," says the man who sets higher benchmarks with every project he undertakes.

That's the spirit of *Harmony*. Keep reading.

—Meeta Bhatti



For the past eight years I have been helping a number of wounded defence personnel, former servicemen and war widows. Some of these men and women are in their 80s. One such person is Colonel (ret'd) Anand. The first time I saw him he was driving his own car, ready to play a game of tennis—I estimated his age at about 65. I later came to know that he was actually 85 years old! Today, I see Colonel Anand as a heaven-sent foster father; he has brought love and new meaning to my life. I urge *Harmony* magazine to feature silvers like him—there can be no finer teachers on the art of ageing. And no better proof of the fact that the right attitude can shave years off your age.

### MUKESH ANAND

*Via email*

*The letter of the month wins music CDs from Big Music*



I had the pleasure of attending the Harmony Silver Awards in Mumbai this October. It was simply awe-inspiring to see silvers do such selfless yeoman service. The brief audiovisual clips of the winners featured at the event forced me to introspect on my own life and try to find a way to make a difference to my surround-



ings. Thanks a million for shaking me up and making me conscious of our responsibilities to society

and the need to make our lives more purposeful.

### SANJAY JAIN

*Via email*

I'm writing to inform the Netizens of Harmony about a networking site for silvers that has recently been launched by three lovely young people. Do check out [www.verdurez.com](http://www.verdurez.com) for some fun.

### FATIMA PAIS

*Via email*

Thanks to the Pay Commission, all central government pensioners will shortly receive 40 per cent arrears if they have not done so already. It will be helpful to everybody if *Harmony* carries an advisory on how this money can be invested in order to minimise tax liability. I also urge you to lobby government, banks and the corporate world to institute schemes for silvers that would grant them a higher rate of inter-



est—in the light of the current economic slump, this would be a boon. Another welcome step would be an increase in the rate of interest on the Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme, which currently stands at 9 per cent.

**M V RUPARELIA**

*Via email*

I am an orthopaedic surgeon based in Mumbai and my job involves dealing with the ailments of senior



citizens. I like reading *Harmony* as it reflects my perspective. I invite your readers to read my blog [orthoproblems.blogspot.com](http://orthoproblems.blogspot.com) where I discuss various orthopaedic problems.

**DR MIHIR GOSWAMI**

*Via email*

I am 78 but I don't feel old as I derive pleasure in service to others. I retired after four decades as an educationist. Though I was offered extension of service as an educational administrator, I chose to be free. I looked upon retirement as liberation from rules and procedures. I shifted from Coimbatore to Chennai. As I was associated with the Indian Council of Child Welfare, I spent some time working on their educational projects for poor children. Then, I helped establish a compensatory programme for weaker children who were not receiving adequate

attention in schools. Starting with about 36 children and one voluntary teacher, it grew into a large programme involving over 900 children and 34 volunteers. I have also helped orphanages, free medical centres, and homes for the physically challenged. Over the years, I have come to realise that there are many ways in which we can be of service to the community. My message to fellow retirees: don't cling to the past and don't be anybody's servant. Instead, find joy in service to the poor.

**S S RAJAGOPALAN**

*Via email*

## CONTRIBUTORS



This month in 'At Large', writer **Maya Jayapal** tells us why it's important to renew emotional togetherness in marriage with the years. "To grow old together one needs to have lived together and loved together," says the 67 year-old, who describes herself as a teacher by qualification, counsellor by vocation and writer by passion. She has published three books:

*Old Singapore* (Oxford University Press (OUP), Malaysia); *Old Jakarta* (OUP, Malaysia); and *Bangalore: The Story of a City* (East-West Press, Chennai). She is currently at work on another book and a regular contributor to magazines and newspapers on travel and family-related topics. Jayapal has a private practice as counsellor and lives in Bengaluru.

## AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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

- You had an experience related to money or finance
- 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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## NEWSWORTHY

### SUNSHINE IN DELHI

On 9 November, at the annual **Harmony Senior Citizens' Run**, a part of the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon, over 1,200 high-spirited silvers shattered the early morning chill with their radiant smiles and blazing yellow T-shirts. Actor-couple Kajol and Ajay Devgan and champion wrestlers Sushil Singh, Olympic bronze medallist, and Rajiv Tomar, Asian Games gold medallist, flagged them off on their 4-km route. After the run, refreshments were served to the

participants and prizes distributed to winners of a lucky dip. Also honoured were the oldest silvers at the event. "My age cannot stop me from participating in activities that give me a boost," said 90 year-old S C Sengupta amid cheers. "It gives me immense pleasure to see fellow seniors taking part in such an event with enthusiasm." For 85 year-old Sita Devi, the oldest female participant, it was her first time at the run. "The experience made me feel young," she exulted. "I'll be back next year."



HUMAYUN





## SILVER SWAYAMVAR

Almost 600 silvers from across India—and a couple from overseas—turned up in Ahmedabad in October for the **first-ever All India Senior Citizens' Marriage Mela**, organised by the Vina Mulya Amulya Sewa (VMAS) marriage bureau. The event was held at Town Hall where prospective candidates were introduced one at a time on stage. Those watching were free to take notes and meet their chosen ones for a personal chat session after the programme. Not surprisingly, it was the women who were spoiled for choice—there were only 80 compared to the 500 men who showed up. "Indian women still shy away from marriage in later years fearing social stigma and disapproval from their children," N G Patel of

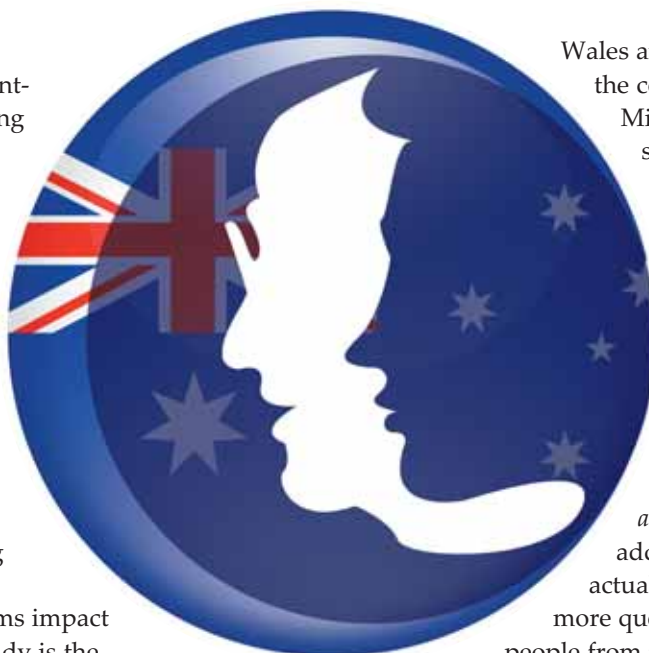


VMAS tells *The Indian Express*. "So, 80 is still an encouraging number." One woman who attended was 50-something Rekha. "Women should come out of a closed mindset and get set to start afresh," she says. "After all, at this age we

need companionship and security." For some others, the motivation was different. As author and columnist Kanti Bhatt says, "At 77, I can still enjoy sex. So oldies who think there is no life after 50 should correct themselves."

## TWO FOR ONE

Two mammoth government-sponsored studies on ageing in different parts of the world have decided to come together on what will be **the world's largest research project on ageing**. The recently announced collaboration between the 45 and Up Study in New South Wales, Australia, and the UK's Million Women Study will track around 1.5 million people, looking at how different locations, lifestyles and health systems impact ageing. The 45 and Up Study is the largest study of healthy ageing ever undertaken in the Southern Hemisphere. It will recruit 250,000 men and women aged 45 and over across New South



Wales and follow their health over the coming decades. And the Million Women Study is a study of women's health in the UK, involving more than 1 million women over the age of 50.

"The sheer size of the combined study will produce faster results," Emily Banks, scientific director of the 45 and Up Study, tells website [abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au), "and we'll be adding a lot of numbers that actually allows you to answer more questions quickly. We'll have people from the very north of Scotland to the north of New South Wales and we'll even be able to look at factors such as sunlight exposure and Vitamin D in relation to illness."



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NEWS



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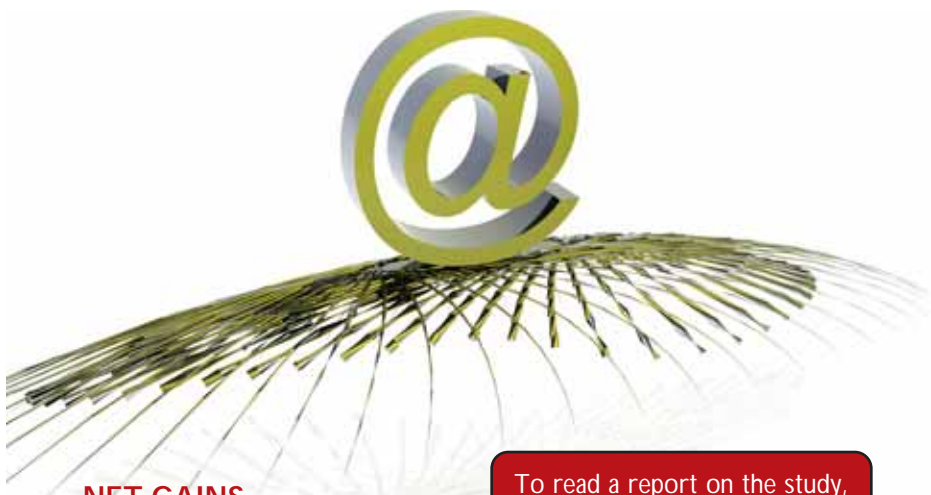
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**Work on:** A growing number of **silvers in the UK** are expected to work past the state pension age—60 for women and 65 for men—according to the government-sponsored English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. Nearly 30 per cent of men aged between 60 and 64 years old said they expected to carry on working past the age of 65 in 2006-07, compared to 25 per cent in 2002-03. On the other hand, the proportion of women aged between 55 and 59 who expected to carry on working past the age of 60 also rose in the same period from 35 per cent to 45 per cent.



## ANALYSE THIS



### NET GAINS

Don't curb your enthusiasm the next time you feel the urge to 'Google' something. **Searching the Internet doesn't just get you answers, it also improves overall brain function.** That's the conclusion of a new study by researchers at the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA) that finds that brain sensors are triggered when people search for things online. For the study, the UCLA team worked with 24 neurologically normal research volunteers between the ages of 55 and 76. Half had some experience searching the Internet, while the other half had none. They performed Web searches and book-reading tasks while undergoing functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scans, which recorded changes in brain circuitry. All participants showed significant brain activity during the book-reading task, demonstrating use of the regions controlling language, reading, memory and visual abilities. But Internet searches revealed a major difference between the two groups. While all participants demonstrated the same

To read a report on the study, which will soon be published in the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, go to [newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/ucla-study-finds-that-searching-64348.aspx](http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/ucla-study-finds-that-searching-64348.aspx)

brain activity that was seen during the book-reading task, the Web-savvy group also registered activity in those areas of the brain that control decision-making and complex reasoning.

"Internet searching appears to engage a greater extent of neural circuitry than reading, but only in those with prior Internet experience," says study leader Dr Gary Small, director of UCLA's Memory and Ageing Research Centre, in a media release. In fact, during Web searching, volunteers with prior experience registered a twofold increase in brain activation compared to those with little Internet experience. "It's encouraging that emerging computerised technologies may have physiological effects and potential benefits for middle-aged and older adults," he adds.



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## THE BIG SQUEEZE

Keep working. That's the message going out to people approaching retirement in the US with the stock market slump and their 401(k) plans—similar to our 'provident fund' plans, but market linked—freefalling in value. But, as *The New York Times* reports, this is easier said than done, with older workers being the first to be laid off as they are usually the highest paid employees. The result: **a financial squeeze that gets tighter with each passing day.**

According to a recent survey conducted by AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons), the economic slump has badly hit the nation's

78 million baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964): 20 per cent said they had stopped contributing to retirement plans, 34 per cent were thinking of delaying retirement and 27 per cent acknowledged they had problems paying rent and mortgages. And the US Congressional Budget Office reported two weeks ago that the nation's pensions and 401(k) plans had lost around \$ 2 trillion over the past 15 months, with many 401(k)s dropping by 20 per cent or more. For once, financial pundits are not offering any answers—easy or otherwise. And to think India, a country that doesn't offer social security, was actually considering linking provident fund schemes to the market.



## FACE OFF

### PUCKER UP



While you're busy slathering anti-ageing cream on your face, spare some thought for your lips, urges US lip care specialist Blistex. The company has recently launched Deep Renewal, an "anti-ageing lip treatment" formulated with state-of-the-art ingredients that will reduce visible signs of ageing like wrinkles and fine lines on lips". According to Blistex, features include Coenzyme Q-10 for moisturising and overall revitalisation; hyaluronic filling spheres to give lips a fuller appearance; vitamin-collagen anti-oxidant complex to promote lasting lip health; light refractors that improve lip lustre and youthfulness; and a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15. The good news: it doesn't break the bank at \$ 2.99 (about Rs 140) a tube. The bad news: it isn't 'officially' available in India, yet. To know more, check out [www.blistex.com/DeepRenewal](http://www.blistex.com/DeepRenewal)



## MEDIA WATCH

### ON CLOUD 9

"Who would want to see a couple of wrinkly seniors having sex?" asks German newspaper *Bild*, and then goes on to answer its own question: "Quite simply, anyone who finally wants to experience a realistic, passionate and moving love story." This glowing review is one of many received by *Cloud 9*, a German film that features a love triangle between a sexagenarian grandmother, her 76 year-old lover, and her husband of 30 years. Inge is a retiree who earns extra cash as a seamstress. When the charming Karl tries on a pair of trousers she has altered, it is only a matter of minutes before the two make love. But Inge has an equally ardent lover waiting for her at home—her husband Werner. Eventually, she finds herself falling



deeper for Karl and confesses her affair to Werner, with tragic consequences. "My aim with this film was to take a fresh look at ageing," says director Andreas Dresen. "Love can sneak up on you at any point."

### ROCK ON



Here's a documentary with a difference. *Young @heart* chronicles six weeks in the life of a choir in Northampton, Massachusetts—the average age of members is 81. The choir, which specialises in rock, punk and disco, is preparing for a concert while battling death and disease among its ranks. The silvers rage on with spirit and spunk; diagnostic tests be damned. The result is a gloriously uplifting movie that has left audiences in US spellbound. "What people take from the movie is that getting old is not a hopeless condition... that these people can still be full of joy," British filmmaker Stephen Walker tells [www.thehuffingtonpost.com](http://www.thehuffingtonpost.com). Go to [www.foxsearchlight.com/youngatheart](http://www.foxsearchlight.com/youngatheart), to see glimpses from the film.

### SINGLE AND SILVER

Author Anne Roiphe was just shy of 70 when she lost her husband of nearly 40 years. *Epilogue* is her account of learning to live a new life. While she deals with a new daily routine—forced to lock and unlock doors and pay bills on her own for the first time—she is constantly buffeted by memories of the past that threaten to derail her fragile peace. Another minefield she must negotiate: dating again in the Internet era after her daughters place a singles ad for her in *The New York Review of Books*. For an accomplished author like Roiphe, whose books revolve around family, identity and relationships, writing this book comes effortlessly—it's honest, tender, even funny, and manages to be both empathetic and motivational. With *Epilogue*, she hopes silvers like her will dare to walk unfamiliar ground. It was also a gift to her family. "It is very hard for children to see their parents in a state of grief they can't overcome," she tells magazine *The New Yorker*. "It was important that my family saw I was strong and living and doing well. This book did that."



## LOVE THAT

### TRIUMPH OF THE SPIRIT

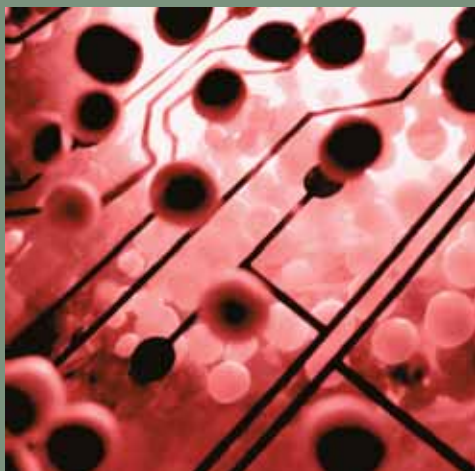
Here's a man who has lived life on his own terms—despite all odds. Tao Shaotang of Xinzhou in Hubei province, China, left his village in 1984 after quarrelling with a neighbour who he suspected of stealing his money. For two years, Shaotang wandered in search of a home until he discovered unused coffin pits on nearby Dahou Mountain. **Shaotang then set about constructing his own haven—he built four rooms in the coffin pits; planted a lush fruit garden (peach and Chinese chestnut trees) on the barren hill; and began to raise honeybees to earn an income.**

Now, as website [www.chinadaily.cn](http://www.chinadaily.cn) reports, Shaotang is 75, and financially self-sufficient. He has been living in the open graves for over 23 years. And despite repeated invitations from his old friends and relatives in the village, has no intentions of returning. "I am accustomed to living alone," he says. "I live life my way."



### CHANNELLING GODIVA

Lady Godiva, the British noblewoman who rode through the streets of Coventry naked with her tresses flowing to protest taxes imposed by her husband in 11th century AD, has inspired many a book, film and painting, even a brand of luxe chocolate. In November, though, **Lady Godiva inspired a 57 year-old Australian pensioner to ride through the busy streets of Melbourne—in a body suit and long wig—to highlight the plight of pensioners.** Marg Lennon and the Pensioner Action Group, which she represents, are calling for an increase in fortnightly payments to pensioners and not just the lump sum they have been promised by government. "It makes me really angry that our politicians have just given us a poxy \$ 1,400 (about Rs 45,000) to ease our burden and stop us whingeing for Christmas," she tells website [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au), "I call it 'appeasement payment'."



**Decoding longevity:** Bengaluru-based biotech firm Avesthagen has embarked upon a study of over 60,000 Parsis in India across all age groups to delve into the genetic bases of longevity. The Parsis have been selected for being homogenous with a high degree of intra-community marriages, making it easier to identify any particular gene linked to longevity. Over the long term, the **Rs 1.25 billion project 'Avesthagenome'** seeks to develop drugs and diagnostics to **prolong longevity.**



## H RECOMMENDS

**Try a tango.** Apart from being a heck of a lot of fun, dancing can improve balance and coordination. That's the result of a new survey by Patricia McKinley at the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She recruited 30 people between the ages of 62 and 91 who either took a tango class or went walking twice a week. After 10 weeks, the tango group outperformed the walking group in balance, posture, motor coordination and cognition. "Learning a dance like the tango or salsa is challenging, interesting and best of all, earns bragging rights," says McKinley. "And seniors love the music and sultry movement patterns that make it seem less like exercise and more like fun."



**Join your fellow alumni.** Never underestimate the power of association. Jawahar World Wide (JWW), an alumni group formed on website *Yahoo* by the 1977 batch of Jawahar Higher Secondary School (JHSS) in Neyveli, Tamil Nadu, doesn't just chat online—it changes lives. "One day while chatting, someone mentioned that the wife of our sports teacher Manickam was admitted to a hospital and we felt we could help," says S Sivaraman, director in a pharmaceutical company and coordinator of JWW. Donations poured in from around the world and the seeds were sown for the formation of the JWW Trust, which insures and helps ageing teachers and their families. JWW is now looking at ways to improve facilities in the school.



### **Tend your garden.**

Gardening is proven to improve physical health by increasing muscle and bone strength and coordination, improving our sense of well-being, and increasing blood oxygenation. And a beautiful garden could even get you noticed! In Island Bay, a small town in New Zealand, an 86 year-old nun who runs a community garden was recently named the country's Gardener of the Year. "I'm thrilled," she says. And, true to type, she'll use her NZ \$ 5,000 (about Rs 141,000) prize money to help other gardeners who don't have the money to buy their own tools.



*Have something to say? This is the place to do it. Reach out to fellow readers with interesting anecdotes, inspiring stories and heartwarming moments from your life. Write in with full contact details, and make this space your own!*

## LITTLE JOYS



RANJIT SINGH

Childhood rediscovered: Sethi with her tiny tots

I had been a teacher all my life. My retirement blues, in 1996, were no different from anyone else on the threshold of 55. On the flipside, retirement also represented an opportunity to finally bond with our two grandchildren and watch them grow.

Destiny though had other plans. Just after I retired, our only son received a lucrative job offer from a firm in Australia. Life suddenly seemed very empty without our son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. My husband Subhash and I would spend long hours in our lawn observing the world around us. Every day we noticed young mothers rush from work in the middle of the day to pick their children up from

school, drop them home and then rush back to work. As we both love kids, we came up with an idea that soon ushered new

**"We learn as much from these children as they do from us"**

purpose in our lives. We decided to take care of these children till their parents returned home from work.

We started by helping a young couple who lived in our block. Every day my husband brought their two sons—aged six and eight—home when the school bus dropped them at our colony gate. We fed them the

packed lunch that their parents deposited with us every morning. In the afternoon, we put them to sleep, and in the evening we guided them through their homework.

Right now, we have seven children in our care. One of them is a cute six year-old girl. The little one is a joy to be around. I sit with her in the garden, help her with her studies, and teach her about colours, butterflies, plants and seasons. We celebrate every child's birthday and always try to impart secular and moral values. More than the goodwill that we have earned from their parents and our neighbours, we treasure the laughter and innocence that these children have brought back into our lives. Somewhere along the way, we learn as much from them as they do from us.

—Balwant Sethi, Chandigarh

## LESSONS FROM LIFE

In August 1999, when my father passed away, my mother moved from her bungalow in Secunderabad to our apartment in Mumbai. She was 74. During the flight and the long wait at the airport, she clutched her purse hard. When I asked her what was so precious in it, she burst into tears. "This is all I have left," she said. The purse was filled with pictures of my father. I realised then how traumatic it must have been for her to leave the house and neighbours that she had loved for so long and move to a new city.

Mom lived with me for seven years before she passed away on 15 December 2006. In her last years, she unwittingly taught me about the many fragile facets of ageing. She had been suffering from arthritis for 25 years. At 79, she fractured her shoulder but refused to use a walking stick. As she had spent all her life cooking and caring for her family, when she came to stay with me, I wanted her to just sit back and watch TV or read a book. But she would insist on helping in the kitchen. Eventually, I let her have her way as I realised that the chores made her feel useful. Indeed, the assumption that age equals incompetence is offensive to most silvers and my mother insisted she





Rao with her mother

would never “be a burden”. When I finally brought Mom back to Secunderabad two years ago to live in the house that Dad built, she said, “This is the last journey that I will make.” She lost interest in

everything she loved doing earlier. Gradually, Parkinson’s disease took over and my beautiful mother’s mind ended up being trapped in the shell of her body. For me the greatest satisfaction was the chance to hear tales from her past that she had never told us as children. Towards the end, she made it a point to thank and bless us whenever she could.

Adult children of ageing parents understand the importance of attending to a parent’s medical and financial needs but we overlook the emotional aspects of ageing. We need to understand what our parents are experiencing so we can be sensitive to their feelings as we take on the responsibility of their care.

—Susan Rao, Hyderabad

## DEALING WITH DISASTER

I have served in the Indian Army for 30 years. In the course of my career, I was often sent to rescue people caught in natural disasters. Such experiences clearly show how ill-equipped we are when it comes to facing such calamities. Unfortunately, when it comes to disaster management, most of the education in India is oriented towards academicians and administrators.

So after my retirement in 2000, I started Saritsa (Security Awareness and Readiness by Information, Training and Social Awakening) Foundation. Along with a team of experts, I toured many villages. My mission: to educate people on how to cope with disasters. We spoke to women, children, the disabled, the aged and the poor. Through workshops, seminars, and family conferences, we demonstrated effective ways to respond to earthquakes, floods, tsunamis,

fires, terrorism and biological and nuclear hazards. So far, we have trained 150,000 people across India. Today, we have 10 state directorates and a team of 55 experts, trainers and motivators.

On 15 October 2008, we launched another innovative disaster management project spanning 11 states in India. Through this project, we aim to reach out to people in rural and urban areas and build awareness, knowledge and capacity to develop response mechanisms—using local resources—to reduce risk and adapt to climate change. The campaign is being conducted over a period of 65 days and we hope to reach 25,000 people including schoolchildren, teachers, women’s groups, maidservants, nursing students, disabled and aged people, sex workers, police and volunteers from social service organisations. In the meantime, I have written three books on disaster management: *Dynamics of National Security-Essential Dimensions and Perspectives*, *Disaster Management: Are You Prepared?*, and *Manmade and Natural Disasters Education and Preparedness-Equip and Safeguard Younger Generation by Education*. I have also been asked by the International Development Research Centre in Davos, Switzerland, to present a paper

titled *Providing Equal Opportunities to Disabled for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sensitising Public Private Partnership*.

At 67, I still find within me an abundant capacity to endeavour. I have been able to sustain the campaign with the volunteering zeal of like-minded friends and my meagre pension. All I remember on the path to my mission is what Buddha said: “When wisdom came to me, I resolved to defend the weak and to all living things, I gave compassion of my heart.”

—Colonel N M Verma, Mumbai



SARITSA FOUNDATION

Making a difference: Verma

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# Seeds of a REVOLUTION

Two years ago, **Bhausaheb Thorat** launched a campaign to turn a drought-stricken region into a lush forest. **Huned Contractor** traces his journey

Every year since June 2006, 45 million seeds and saplings are planted in Sangamner *tehsil* (a group of villages), 200 km from Mumbai, to transform arid zones into green carpets. Behind the geographical metamorphosis lies the zeal of 84 year-old conservationist Bhausaheb Santuji Thorat. Thorat's Dandakaranya Movement, which promises a thick wood cover in the years to come, was recently credited by the United Nations





## *The Dandakaranya project is credited by the UN for promising a thick wood cover in the coming years*

VILAS KALGUTKER

Environment Programme, with its website uploading a feature on Thorat's initiative ([www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/CampaignNews/Dandakaranya.asp](http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/CampaignNews/Dandakaranya.asp)) as an example of how determination can work magic in the face of odds. His story is also the subject of a Marathi book—*Aadhunik Dandakaranyachi Kathaa* (Ameya Prakashan; 2008)—by journalist Aruna Antarkar, who has travelled extensively with Thorat. (For greater reach, Nandu Dange trans-

lated it into English; *Dandakaranya: A Story of a Movement*.)

According to myth, Dandakaranya was an arid, dry land that sage Agastya turned into a green haven through a massive tree plantation drive. Thorat's movement, though, is more magnificent than any myth. In the first phase of the plantation drive between 23 June 2006 and 2 July 2006, 50,000 men, women and children worked on hills, dales and fields, and planted a total of 45 million seeds on

28,000 acres of land, well exceeding the initial target of 10 million seedlings. Villagers participated voluntarily, without expecting any reward in return. Between 23 June 2007 and 30 June 2007, 50,000 people again participated in this collective effort to plant another 45 million seeds and saplings over an area of 21,700 acres. This year's target was to plant 25 million seeds and 450,000 saplings. "We have achieved this despite the rains taking a long break in the middle of the season," says Thorat.

### THE IDEA

Thorat was inspired to go green in 2005 after reading *The Man Who Planted Trees*, an allegorical tale by Jean Giono about Elzéard Bouffier, a native of the Alps. "I set myself a target of planting 10 million trees a month but I couldn't have done it alone. So I decided to get the people of Sangamner with me. That's how I exceeded the target by over four times," says Thorat whose passion for trees is awe-inspiring, and sometimes even amusing. He studies them. He talks about them. He sings about them. And, once in a while, you will even catch him breaking into an impromptu jig when he sees a sapling holding its own against punishing climatic conditions.

For Thorat, leadership comes naturally. A freedom fighter, Congress legislator after Independence, active promoter of the idea of the cooperative movement, one of the founders of Sangamner Cooperative Sugar Mill, and past president of the District and State Cooperative Bank, he was born in village Jorve in Sangamner. Though his work often took him



## Thorat organised a series of musical rallies and used folk songs to whip up enthusiasm among villagers

to big cities in India and countries like Japan and Switzerland, his heart was always rooted to his hot, dusty village in western Maharashtra. So much so, that he even turned down high ranking political posts to stay here and work for its development.

His idealism is untarnished by cynicism or practicality. Thorat believes Bouffier was a real person and not a fictional character. "When my diabetes started having a severe effect on me, I had my doubts whether I would be able to accomplish the plantation drive. But then I thought about Bouffier, who had done it single-handedly." He adds that he was fortunate to have the backing of the entire *tehsil*. "My mind was made up," says Thorat, who knew that, to succeed, it had to be a movement. "I wanted it to be run for the people and by the people." As trees would be planted on common land, it was inevitable that the Forest Department, the Social Forestation Department and the Mamledar Office (the local municipality) would have to be roped in. "I wanted nothing more than their cooperation," he recalls. "I did not want any funds because funding from any government agency automatically gives way to corruption. I wanted this to be a freedom struggle of sorts."



Earlier a dry region, Sangamner is turning greener by the year

### GETTING TO WORK

Once the concept had taken root, Thorat drew a detailed map of the *tehsil*. He divided the villages into eight divisions and sent out volunteers. Their responsibility: to create an atmosphere of collective participation reminiscent of the freedom struggle. "Instead of delivering impassioned speeches, we decided to stir enthusiasm and involvement through folk songs,"

he says. About 100 volunteers organised a series of musical rallies across Sangamner to whip up the conviction required for the massive project. Each of the eight musical squads covered five villages every day for over two weeks, and rounded up thousands of villagers. "We told them that we would collect seeds without any government support. Every participant was expected to con-

tribute at least 5 kg of seeds. Each one of us started preserving the seeds of every fruit we ate—papaya, guava, pomegranate and grapes. And one didn't need to climb up the hills to plant seeds or saplings. A housewife or a sick person could even sow seeds in their backyards."

On 19 June 2006, the Dandakaranya movement was inaugurated on a hilltop near village Sayakhindi, 5 km from Sangamner Cooperative Mill. The seeds were to be planted on the hill slopes of Khaneshwar Tambkada, Waryachi Mal, Talyache Ran and Ramgad. As Thorat sowed the first seed, the air reverberated with the loud applause of thousands of villagers gathered on the hills of Sayakhindi. The echo awoke the whole of Maharashtra.

Raosaheb Shinde, advocate, social worker and member of MITTRA (Maharashtra Institute of Technology Transfer for Rural Areas), who has backed the project from the start, feels the movement has the capacity to awaken and unite the whole country. Thorat's son Balasaheb, director of Sangamner Cooperative Sugar Mill since 1992, agrees. "This project will serve as an example for the whole country," he says with pride. "In this day and age, tree plantation needs to become a part of our social life to keep environmental degradation at bay."

Dr Sudhir Tambe, a leading environmentalist in the region, has another interesting perspective to offer. "Such a project can help make villages self-sufficient," he reasons. "Consider the direct benefits. So far, we bought animal feed.



*The survival rate of seeds sown is only 10 to 12 per cent, thereby underlining the need for ongoing participation*

Once the grass [that we have planted across the *tehsil* wasteland] starts growing, villagers will be able to get their own animal feed at a very low cost. Eventually, this will reduce cattle grazing on fertile lands."

### THE HURDLES

The project is not without its share of obstacles. Despite a huge quantity of seeds being planted, the survival rate is only 10-12 per cent, thereby underlining the need for ongoing engagement. "We repeated the drive in 2007 and 2008. As rainfall is the main challenge, there has to be enough rain for the seeds to grow," says Thorat. Another problem: it's not possible to use water meant for irrigating crops, as it would put pressure on the meagre resources available. "Considering that

rural Maharashtra is reeling under a power crisis, there's no way we can use pumps to channel water into areas where seeds have been planted," Thorat points out, adding that infestation by animals and birds is another unavoidable risk. "I estimate that it will require at least 10 years for the positive effects of this movement to show up."

Despite the stumbling blocks, Thorat believes the movement has been 100 per cent successful. "Dandakaranya is not just a project or a revolution," he emphasises. "It's a people's movement that is not tied to any political party. There is no caste bias either. It will go on from one generation to another as it is a movement by the common man for the common man." ■



# CHANGES

There really is no magic switch to instantly transform dark into light when it comes to our lives, or how we live them. But even simple, sustainable changes can trigger a process of renewal over time that brings us happiness, health and contentment, empowering us to be

the best we can. *Harmony* believes there's no better time than the cusp of a new year to make that change. For inspiration—and some good old-fashioned advice!—**Nitika Bajpayee** spoke to 12 silvers who have been featured on our cover.



PHOTOS: HARMONY ARCHIVES

## **KIRAN BEDI, FORMER IPS OFFICER, 59**

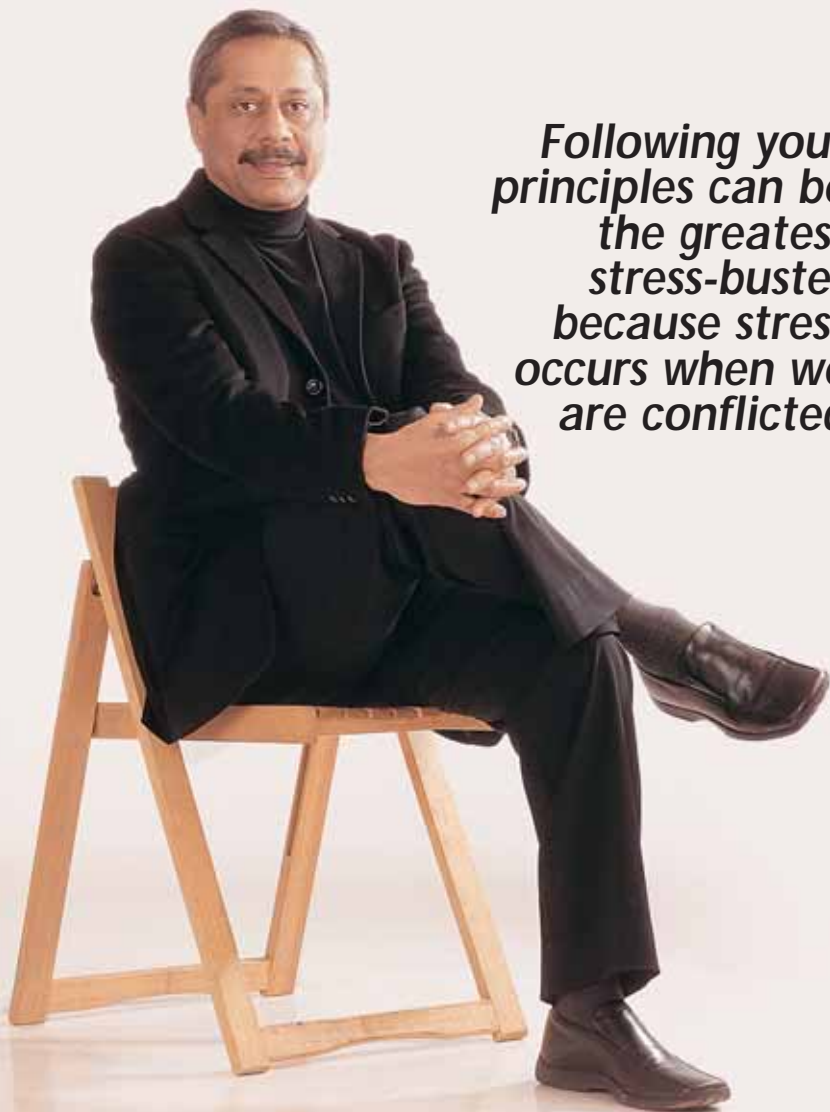
The year 1999 was a watershed in my life; two events occurred that had a tremendous impact on me. In January that year, I did the Vipassana meditation course and my mother passed away in the month of May. My mother was the person I relied on the most. After her passing I learnt to become my own anchor. In a way, I think Vipassana was preparing me to handle the loss and take charge of my own life. This process of 'self-anchoring' has helped me to move away from every form of dependency. For instance, I was recently able to turn my back on my own service, which I treasured the most. I walked away from my old support system and have built my own in the past nine months—one stronger and deeper than before. Today, I make my own decisions and live with them successfully. We all need to discover our inner selves. Whether the enabler is a course like Vipassana or any other programme is up to us. But the goal should be self-realisation and the ability to become one's own anchor.

***I walked away from my old support system and built my own—one stronger and deeper than before***

## **ELA BHATT, SOCIAL ACTIVIST, 75**

My life path has always been to live for others and struggle along with them. In the past few years, I have witnessed the struggle of our nation through the channel of the United Nations (UN). I have given lectures about the need to empower and organise poor working women. And I have learnt that the participation of women lends a new dimension to the peace process—their intuition and creativity can change the way our world functions. Now, I can afford to take a step further to work for my country in a larger pursuit and involve better participation from women. Another lesson I have learnt is patience and not to get carried away by despair. Let's believe in our strengths and learn the value of patience—these are the biggest gifts we can give ourselves and will help us design our own individual roadmap to contentment.





***Following your principles can be the greatest stress-buster because stress occurs when we are conflicted***

**NARESH TREHAN,  
CARDIAC SURGEON, 61**

All my life I have been a firm believer of holistic healing. Even before becoming a part of the medical fraternity, I have been involved in analysing the power of positive thinking and living life by principles. Today, after being in the industry for so long, I aspire to restore the dignity of medicine back to medicine—this has been my mission since I witnessed its violation by the greed of people. If you can strike a balance between your mind, body and soul, I think no fight is difficult, whether it is against greed, corruption or even age. In fact, following your principles can be the greatest stress-buster because stress occurs when we are conflicted. Trust your instincts, stick to your guns, fight for what's right and give back to society in whatever you can. Then, stress will be a thing of the past and you will achieve true mental strength.

**AMJAD ALI KHAN, SAROD MAESTRO, 62**

Music is a deep ocean—the more you are submerged, the deeper it gets. So it gives you the chance to constantly discover and innovate. Over time, my approach towards music and life has evolved. Twenty years ago, I used to just play my sarod; now, I design symphonies for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, where over 50 European classical musicians play my compositions. Indeed, music has a power that transcends boundaries. This realisation has impelled many Indian musicians to partner with international players. It's important to show the world that we are a global village, one community. That's the only way to a lasting peace. When I read about terrorist acts, the horrors committed in the name of religion or region, sometimes I feel it is our own fault. We have put values on the back-burner. Our schools must devote more time to teach children about the importance of a unified, secular community. And we as parents and grandparents must take the time out to instil better principles in our children—let's teach them to respect their elders and love their neighbours, to look beyond barriers and borders so the world can be a better place.





**YUSUF ARAKKAL, ARTIST, 63**

I was barely 16 years old when I took a decision to leave home. I lost my parents at the age of seven, both of them in a span of six months. Despite this, my life was not difficult as I was born to a well-off family and looked after well by relatives. But my desire to become an artist was not accepted by the family. They wanted me to become a doctor or engineer. But I was adamant and decided to run away to Bengaluru from Kerala. It was the most momentous decision in my life and I am glad I had the courage to go through with it. I believe that it is never too late to live your dreams. Don't worry about your age and what has come before. Take a risk if you must, but give your passion—whatever it might be—a shot. Then, you will have no regrets.



***Take a risk if you must, but give your passion—whatever it might be—a shot. Then, you will have no regrets***

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**TARLA DALAL, COOKBOOK  
AUTHOR, 62**

I've always loved creating recipes. But the first time I thought of writing a book, many years ago, I was extremely apprehensive. It seemed like a very big step and I was worried that it may not be successful. But my late husband pushed me to follow my heart. His support helped me overcome my crisis of confidence. Now, my son encourages me to break new ground. With their encouragement, I have been able to stay creative with my recipes and have been able to transform a passion into a career. Never let fear get in the way of your life. Overcome your apprehensions and march to your own beat. Share your aspirations with those closest to you and let their strength give you confidence. Happiness will follow.



**ARUNA ROY, RIGHT TO INFORMATION  
ACTIVIST, 62**

When it comes to my life, I think I have excelled in my own way by choosing things that I want to carry out rather than what others wanted me to do. Over the years I have addressed the issues that most concerned me and not made any compromises. It hasn't been an easy task. It has involved a lot of struggle and I have changed jobs in order to ensure that structural barriers don't fall in my way. I left the conventional world I was working for and worked with an NGO, which gave me a platform to learn about the lives of people and the rawness of issues like hunger, poverty, Dalit and minority issues and gender discrimination. Looking at life from the perspective of others has helped me understand its sensitivity. For me, the biggest lifestyle change was to adopt struggle and live a collective life—this in turn has enriched me as an individual. I believe we as silvers should communicate with each other because we all share similar dilemmas and questions. Many of them can be resolved just by sharing. This way, we strengthen and empower each other, and ourselves.



***Always see the glass as  
half-full and live with  
creativity and spontaneity***

**BRINDA SOMAYA, ARCHITECT, 58**

My work has added so many dimensions to my life. Some projects have motivated me immensely and inspired me to do more for the community. They've also taught me how to face life. For instance, my team rehabilitated a village devastated by the Gujarat earthquake. When I visited the site, I remember one couple who invited me to their shattered home. And instead of being downcast, they spoke with enthusiasm about how they would rebuild it with the help of their three sons. Similarly, when I took on an assignment to design a school for differently abled children, I first went to visit them in their temporary school. I wanted to interact with them to learn more about their problems. I was astounded by their attitude—despite the challenges they face, they were so happy to see me and excited about the prospect of a new school. I have learnt so much from such situations and urge everyone to do the same. Think positive, always see the glass as half-full, and lead your life with spontaneity, creativity and excitement. You'll feel great all day, every day.



**WAHEEDA REHMAN, ACTOR, 72**

With time, all of us need to grow as human beings and become more aware of our surroundings. Over the years, I have increasingly begun to read, which has added to my knowledge bank and informed my thinking. Through reading, I got to know about environmental change and global warming and have been alarmed at the precarious state we find ourselves in today. I have thus become a convert to the 'green' cause and I now both practise and preach eco-friendliness! On Sundays, after it becomes dark, I switch off all the lights of my house for half an hour. I plant trees and try and save as much water as I can. I have also spoken to people in my housing society about the need to fight global warming. I believe the whole country, indeed the world, must participate to save our planet. Just imagine, if people across India were to switch off their lights for just half an hour, what a huge difference it would make!

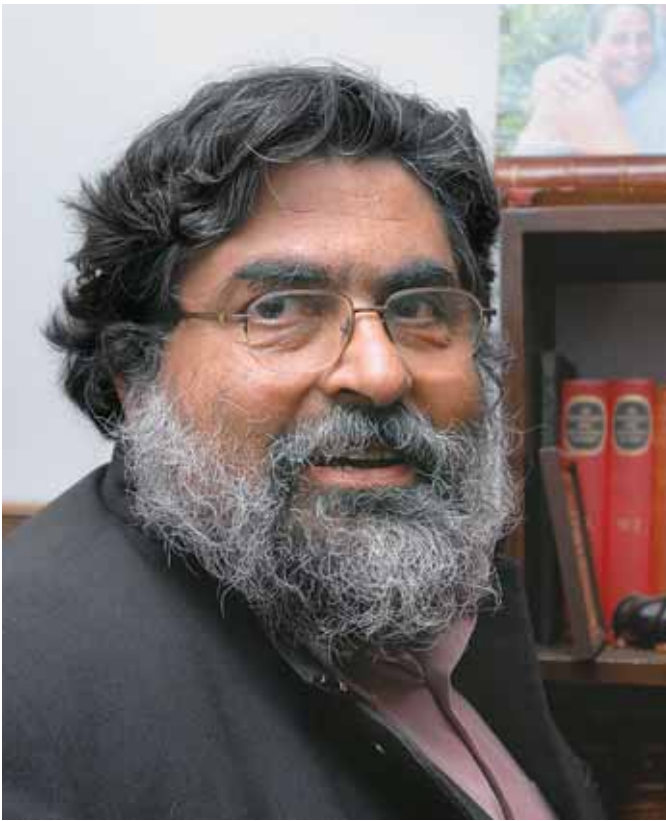
**P C SORCAR, MAGICIAN, 62**

I started off working as a pilot and was associated with the aviation field for about 10 years. But my parents wanted me to perform magic—the family profession—and I embarked upon a new career. Part of that change was learning classical dances like Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Kuchipudi to add value to my shows and stage performances. Dance or indeed any type of regular physical activity or exercise brings a certain commitment to life; I call it the three Ds—dedication, discipline and direction. Yoga, which I practise regularly, has the same therapeutic effect on body and mind. I have discovered that a healthy body leads to a peaceful mind that, in turn, paves the way to happiness. No matter what your age is, your body craves the benefits of exercise. So keep your body fit in order to set your mind free towards the process of self-realisation.

***Keep your body fit in order to set your mind free towards self-realisation***







### VALMIK THAPAR, WILDLIFE EXPERT, 55

This was a special year for me. I published my 17th book, *Ranthambore - 10 Days in the Tiger Fortress*. I went to Ranthambore for a holiday with my son and it turned out to be a fantastic trip because of all the different tigers we managed to see. When my publisher saw the photographs, he decided I should do a book. This personal diary with over 200 pictures was released in October. Now, I am focusing on another book: *My African Diary - 12 Days in Kenya*. Indeed, all it takes is a couple of weeks to rejuvenate ourselves and explore new frontiers. I know that many silvers are diffident about travelling but we must overcome that feeling and get out from our polluted concrete jungles. Discovering the treasure Mother Nature has given us can heal the body, soothe the soul and kick-start the imagination.

***Discovering the treasure Mother Nature has given us can heal the body and soothe the soul***

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### ANANT PAI, CARTOONIST, 79

My work has given me the liberty to get close to children and understand their psyche and this has helped me immensely in my personal development. There is hardly any English medium school that has not acknowledged my name and schoolchildren call me Uncle Pai, which gives me immense satisfaction. Even kids from far-flung places like Arunachal Pradesh know me. Recently, I was passing through Shillong when I overheard some children happily discussing the latest copy of *Tinkle* written by me. Making an effort to do something for children brings so much pleasure into our own lives. Looking at the world through their eyes, I feel young again. View life through the prism of your children and grandchildren. Teach them the importance of a good self-image, imbibe in them the lessons you have learnt from life. But don't forget to learn from them too.

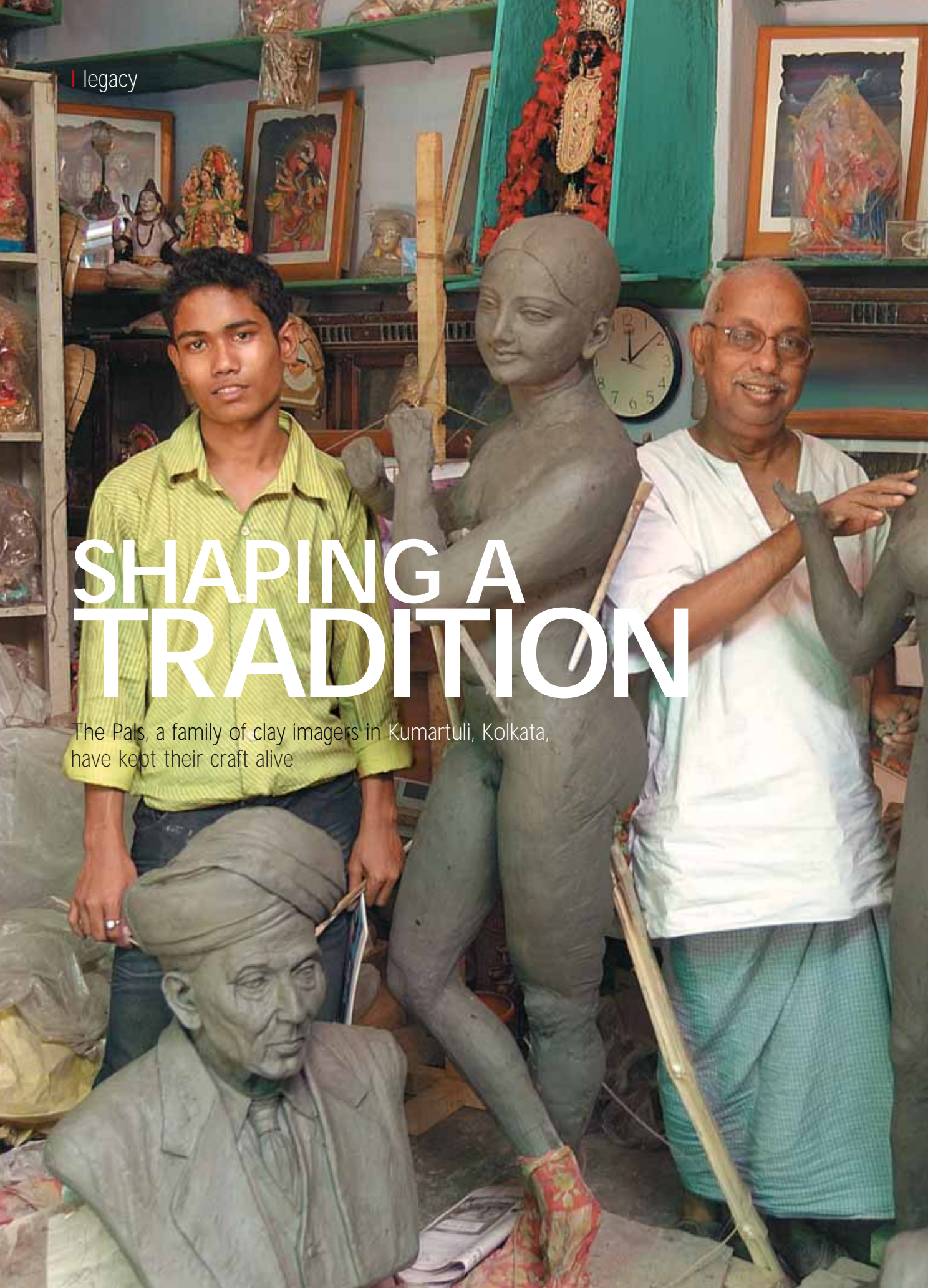




| legacy

# SHAPING A TRADITION

The Pals, a family of clay imagers in Kumartuli, Kolkata, have kept their craft alive







SHILBHADRA DATTA

I love the smell of clay in my hand," says artisan Sunil Pal. "Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to craft a lump into perfect shape." The 65 year-old is a resident of Kumartuli, a small potters' colony in north Kolkata, famous for Durga and Kali figurines. He spends five to six hours every day in his studio, imbuing life into chunks of clay. His 37 year-old son Monty Pal lends him a helping hand and his grandson, Sourav, 15, is an eager associate. Born in Shantipur in Nadia district of West Bengal, Sunil Pal was initiated into the craft by his maternal uncle Sudhir Pal. "I started helping him when I was eight and later followed him to Kolkata," he recalls. Thus began a romance with clay imaging that has only intensified over the years. As making deities is a seasonal affair, once the Durga Puja festivities are over, imagers have to fall back on making models for museums and public spaces. At times like these, Sunil etches casts of personalities like Rabindranath Tagore and Subhash Chandra Bose. "About 30 of my models now adorn Town Hall in Kolkata, and some of them enjoy pride of place in Parliament House in Delhi," he says with pride. Son Monty, who says he picked up the nuances of the art from his father, adds, "My clay models are on display at Blackpool Park in England." A Gangtok museum has also commissioned Monty to fashion lifelike statues of eminent personalities. "It is difficult to stay afloat in this business," concedes Sunil Pal. "Yet I would like my grandson Sourav to continue the craft." He never went to school and Monty had to drop out after Class VIII so Pal is glad that Sourav will appear for his Class X exams next year. "Education brings a certain suaveness," he says. "And that's good for business."

—Sonali Majumder

# CARWALLAH



He lives and breathes cars. And now auto guru Dilip Chhabria is serving them up as high art and gearing up to train others to make them. **Meeta Bhatti** runs into a man on overdrive

**A**uto design guru Dilip Chhabria, self-branded as DC, sees the world in his rear-view mirror. Passionate about his craft to the point of obsessiveness, indiscreet pride is his only vice, if at all. Chhabria's reputation rests on changing the way Indian cars look—from drab to designer. He can turn a Maruti into a convertible and an Ambassador into a sedan. The 54 year-old auto guru takes chassis and engine from 'any-which-car' and gives it a distinctive flounce from the outside and the swagger of a corporate office from inside, just like the coachbuilders of the early 20th century when the well heeled ordered for their cars and carts to ride in class. Chhabria goes beyond the customary and gives his customers dashing accessories, the largest-deepest seats, legroom, beds and baths, and audio-video experience (in that order).

Since 1993, when he started out, Chhabria has mined a previously (and still) under-tapped automotive

industry in India to the limit and become a household name and (in his own words) "a role model". Now, 15 years later, he is reinventing the wheel. We will soon see him as an artist and teacher. He will launch his first series of 40 wall-mount installations resembling car surfaces. And in August 2009, he will turn mentor with India's first auto design school.

## IN HIS WORDS

**'Luxury' is about being irrational.** And anything that is irrational stirs your emotions. It's also a product or service that's borne out of mastery over aesthetics leading to drop-dead gorgeous looks. And it's about exclusivity, so much so that it's coveted.

**People often ask me if I foresaw a trend.** I didn't. I simply started something unique that has stayed unique. Put all your eggs in one basket, do something that has never been done before, provided you have done market research, and then anything you do can't



be a risk; it would be a risk only if you lack something yourself.

**I was a shy and reticent child.**

I took my first imaginative leap reading *Life* magazine and then with the 'Autos' section in *Time* magazine, which inspired me the most as a youngster. I graduated from Art Centre College of Design in Pasadena, California. After a stint at General Motors' technical department in Detroit, I came back to India and started working on auto accessories as that was the closest I could get to cars, my prime passion.

**Every design is different, every product is unique, and every customer is new.** As I do challenging work, the world now comes to my doorstep. I scaled new heights in 2002 when the manufacturers of Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd spotted my super sports car 'Infidel' at the Geneva Motor Show and commissioned me to design a two-seater prototype of Agent 007's swash-buckler wheels. It was later previewed at Detroit Motor Show in January 2003.

In fact, Geneva has been my 'ticket to the world'. In 2003, I showed the Gaia—the recreation of the power and grace of Bentley and Bugatti, two classics—at Geneva. And in 2004, it was Go, another sports car that was lapped up by the sheikhs of the Middle East. Today, DCD (Dilip Chhabria Design) is the biggest independent car-design firm by volume. Since 1993, we have designed 600 original cars, which, by far, is a world record; in the West, car studios have turned out this kind of number in the entire industry in the past 100 years.



HEWANT PATIL



**I CAN NEVER MAKE AN AFFORDABLE DC. NOT BECAUSE MY PROFIT MARGIN IS HIGH BUT BECAUSE THE PROCESS IS SO LABOUR-INTENSIVE**

**I have more concept cars in the pipeline.** But the one that was ogled the most at a show in Delhi was Ambierod. The super luxury concept car is inspired by the Ambassador, which, in its time, represented what was right and wrong about India. It had the distinction of an eyesore and we turned it into a very captivating product that could draw a huge wow and at the same time take us forward in our business. This project will cost Rs 40 million. Funded by Toyota, it's

everything a DC stands for—luxury and the price for it. On the anvil: my first sports car with a pick up of 0-100 mph in 3.7 seconds.

**It's Gaia, my 2003 Geneva model, that I love the most.** It's my best design so far. Gaia means 'earth' and I christened the model myself. The only other car that can never be rivalled is the Porsche. The damn thing is so beautiful. I can make it different, which can be also stupid. Since 1953, so many car designers have tried and failed.

I have a Mercedes S-Class though I don't drive it myself. And I have an Aston Martin that I air once in a while in Pune, the city where I work and live now.

**I am aware that I have become a role model to youngsters in India.** I am starting an auto design school in Pune. I am still in the preliminary stages of setting up links with international universities. It can become the most favoured institute in the world—not because it would be cheaper but because the way we would train. The curriculum at the institute will be made up of processes at DCD. I would play a decisive role in the initial years because I would be the catalyst in organising the faculty and will be responsible for maintaining our credibility. Here, students will be able to build their own car. At other institutes it's impossible to build a

car because of the costs. It would be a real-world situation and not learning by rote. It would be a profitable venture as well. In a way, it's cashing in on our brand equity.

**There are very few people who elect to be car designers and a very few succeed.** As car designing is three-dimensional, there's a bigger responsibility attached to it. It doesn't take more than Rs 5 billion to



(From top) The plush interiors of actor Vivek Oberoi's vanity van designed by Chhabria; posing against one of his installations; (opposite page) bringing yet another dream to life on the drawing board



put a building on the market, but it takes Rs 100 billion to put a car on the market. And everything can fail because of engineering or price. A car can fail because of aesthetics alone. A car is also about emotions. If you have to be successful you have to think like Leonardo da Vinci.

**I might sound pompous but, really, I am like Vinci.** I am an artist first. Then I am an engineer who makes doors that can open and close a million times. I am a marketer who can impress customers; and a financier so I don't lose my shirt in the process.



**When I lecture at IIT and IIM, I am always asked one question: 'When will I make affordable cars?'** For a long time I wondered why they ask me this. Now I realise that it's their aspiration to afford a DC that makes them ask this question. I can never make an affordable DC. Not because my profit margin is high but because the process is so labour-intensive.

**There's one way people can now aspire to have a piece of the action—in their living room.** I am launching myself as an artist. Those who have seen my illustrations have always found them of artistic quality. Even I realise that I have the ability to create a powerful stroke, so I haven't had to make a huge effort in making inroads into art. I started painting acrylics two years ago. Last year, I started making installations. I will formally launch them soon. This red and white sample that you see looks like a car surface magnified 100,000 times. To make this I went through the same process as designing a car. It's just that my wall mounts [40 of them, 3 ft x 5 ft, made of

steel, wood, plastic, metal] have been laboriously assembled with software that I use to design cars.

I am the last word in car design in India, but just one of thousands of artists that people can choose from. The entry barrier to art is not as tough as it is for car design. You can only be successful if you keep others away. That's not my philosophy, it's the rule of the ecosystem. I want to create an impact that makes other artists go back to the drawing board. I am in the process of cataloguing my work before I launch it. I am looking at both Mumbai and Delhi, but I would love to do it in New York. Also as I get older, as an artist my fortunes will only increase [laughs].

**Despite the pressure to go green today, I can't be 'eco-friendly'.** Not that I don't want

to—I just can't. An electric car is still not a viable solution. It won't be a viable solution even if the price of oil goes up to \$ 300 a barrel. That's because there has been incremental investment of technology in the combustion engine of the car for the past 100 years.

**I have spent a lifetime building this dream.** I am happy that my son Bonito takes pride in what we do. He is not a designer but has the leadership skills. He is not a spoilt kid. But I am scared for him that he might have unreal expectations from life. I would want DCD to be a professionally managed company, not a family-run business. But to carry on with the passion I have, one person from the family has to be at the helm of affairs. My biggest regret: my daughter turned down working with me to be a hair stylist.

**My mantra is simple: you must love your craft obsessively.** Achievement depends on how badly you want to succeed. If you have the edge and your back to the wall, you are bound to succeed. 🚗



# Shield YOUR EYES

Don't take vision problems lightly. It could be the beginning of macular degeneration, warns Swati Amar



**D**o words on a page look blurred? Has fine print on a medication bottle become impossible to read? Does even threading a needle appear to be a difficult task? Do straight lines look distorted and recognising road signs and traffic light colours require extra effort? Believing these symptoms to be just signs of ageing, you may decide to buy a pair of reading glasses at the nearest optician. But your problems could be the beginning of age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Little understood but destructive, AMD has begun to emerge as one of the major health crises of the 21st century—it is the most common cause of poor sight in people over 60. This eye condition causes progressive damage to the macula—the central portion of the reti-

na, densest in photoreceptors that allow us to see finer details and colour. When the macula degenerates, it leads to loss of central vision needed for activities such as reading, driving and recognising faces. Consequently, it becomes difficult to remain completely self-sufficient. However, peripheral vision is usually retained and total blindness does not occur even in the advanced stage.

## WHAT IS AMD?

This painless, degenerative eye disease can be either 'dry' (atrophic) or 'wet' (neovascular). The dry form accounts for 90 per cent of all AMD cases. A result of ageing and thinning of delicate macular tissues, deposition of pigment in the macula or a combination of the two, it gradually causes loss of central vision. It is diagnosed when yellowish spots known as

'drusen' begin to accumulate (from deposits or debris of deteriorating tissue) around the macula.

The wet form is less common but more severe than the dry form. It

## EYE CARE

- Increase intake of leafy green vegetables, fruits, fish and omega-3
- Add nutritional supplements to daily diet in consultation with your doctor
- Decrease BMI
- Exercise to increase fitness
- Check vision daily, if diagnosed with AMD
- Use prescription and not over-the-counter glasses
- Get eyes checked regularly and report any changes
- Stop smoking

accounts for approximately 10 per cent of all AMD cases, but causes 90 per cent of all blindness from the disease. Abnormal blood vessels develop beneath the pigment cell layer of the retina and leak blood and fluid. This leakage causes macular scarring, further resulting in irreversible damage to the light-sensitive retinal cells that die and create blind spots in central vision. Vision loss is usually more severe when the blood vessel growth and scarring form very clear delineated outlines beneath the retina. Wet AMD can develop quickly and vision loss is rapid if left untreated. In earlier stages, it sometimes responds to treatment.

AMD in one eye usually leads to the condition developing in the other eye. Sometimes though, one eye is affected long before the other; it is initially difficult to detect the condition as sight in the good eye compensates for loss of sight in the affected eye. Macular degeneration does not lead to total blindness and—except for a few cases—some vision remains.

## WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT CAUSE AMD?

**Ageing:** Chances of developing the condition increase with age.

**Smoking:** Cessation of smoking has been shown to decrease the risk factor, with the risk believed to disappear after not smoking for 20 years. In 2006, *British Journal of Ophthalmology* reported that people living with a smoker doubled their risk of developing AMD.

**Heredity:** Risk of developing late-stage macular degeneration is 50 per cent for people with a family history of AMD compared to

12 per cent for those who have no relatives with the disease.

**Genetic makeup:** Complement factor H (CFH) and factor B (CFB) have been identified as genes strongly associated with a person's risk for developing AMD.

**Obesity:** Overweight AMD patients have double the risk of developing the advanced form.

**Physical activity:** A sedentary lifestyle increases risk and any physical activity like brisk walking, jogging or exercising for at least 20 minutes three or more days a week reduces the progression rate of AMD by 25 per cent.

**Dietary habits:** Studies show that higher intake of vegetable fat, and monosaturated and polyunsaturated fat has been associated with an increased risk of developing AMD in both men and women. However, linolenic acid (omega-3 fatty acid)—a type of polyunsaturated fat found in cold-water fish—is believed to lessen the risk among individuals with lower intake of linoleic acid (omega-6 fatty acid) prevalent in vegetable oils.

**Cardiovascular status:** While high blood pressure is known to hasten AMD, high cholesterol is also a risk factor.

**Exposure to sunlight:** Studies suggest that exposure to sunlight may result in greater likelihood of developing early AMD changes ('drusen' or increased retinal pigmentation). However, the presence of 'drusen' does not necessarily indicate AMD as some patients with these deposits have normal visual acuity. Ophthalmologists

## SYMPTOMS



- Difficulty in reading, despite wearing glasses
- Newspaper print appears too light
- Words are distorted or letters are missing
- Telephone poles or bathroom tiles appear wavy
- Difficult to distinguish between traffic lights
- Problem matching clothes
- Glare sensitivity—both indoors and outdoors
- Visual hallucinations

recommend using sunglasses with UV protection for AMD patients.

## DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

**Fluorescein angiography**, a technique that evaluates blood circulation in the retina using a special dye and camera, **enables identification** and localisation of abnormal vascular processes. Ophthalmologists also use optical coherence tomography (OCT), a new non-invasive imaging technique to obtain high-resolution cross-sectional images of the retina.

At present, there is no complete cure available for AMD, though some treatments may delay its progression or even improve

vision. Effectiveness of the treatment depends on the stage of the condition and whether it's in the dry or wet form. Most treatments in the past, including some laser procedures, have given disappointing results. Multivitamin and multi-mineral supplements with a combination of vitamins C and E, beta-carotene and zinc are suggested for AMD patients.

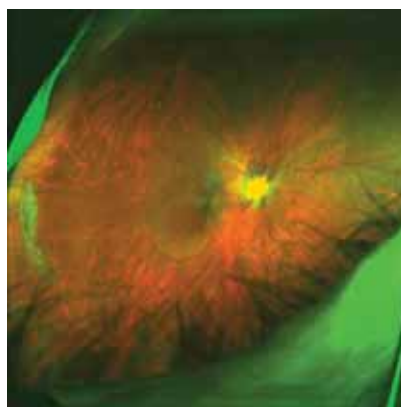
### ADVANCES IN THERAPY

No effective treatment was known for wet AMD until recent advances in technology introduced the use of injectable drugs. Anti-angiogenics are a class of drugs that prevent the formation of abnormal new blood vessels in the eye, and dries up leaking vessels. Injected into the vitreous of the eye (the clear gel that fills the space between the lens and the retina), they can cause regression of abnormal blood vessels and improve vision. For most patients, the injections have to be repeated every month or two months to stabilise and improve vision.

Currently, the use of Avastin (bevacizumab) and Lucentis (ranibizumab) is showing promising results. FDA-approved drugs Macugen (pegaptanib) and Visudyne (verteporfin) are also used to treat wet AMD.

### A HEALTHY DIET

A correct diet is known to slow the progression of dry AMD and even improve visual acuity in some patients. Foods rich in antioxidants help neutralise the free radicals that cause degenera-



*With ageing, it is not unusual for a person to develop cataract and age-related macular degeneration simultaneously*

tion of the macula. Dark green, yellow and orange fruits and vegetables, especially those with large amounts of the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, provide the best protection for wet and dry AMD. Lutein and zeaxanthin are the primary pigments in the macula and believed to protect the retina from ultraviolet rays. Flavonoids and omega-3 fatty acids also help reduce the stress caused by free radicals. Eating cold-water fish and nuts and reducing the intake of red meats and whole milk, cheese and butter may also help.

### AMD AND CATARACT

There is a growing concern that cataract removal may hasten the progression of AMD. Though sev-

eral studies have assessed the connection between cataract surgery and the risk of AMD, there appears to be no consensus. With ageing, a person develops cataract as well as AMD to some extent, and it is not unusual for both problems to occur simultaneously. Therefore regardless of whether a person has cataract surgery or not, the risk of AMD progressively increases.

During assessment for cataract surgery, the back of the eye is examined for signs of AMD, and other retinal and optic nerve problems. In some cases—when wet AMD or macular holes are detected—it may be necessary to treat these problems before considering surgery. The natural lens and cornea protect the macula from UV and blue light. On removal of cataract, the retina is exposed to greater intensity of light, increasing the risk of AMD. Intraocular lens implants contain UV blocking and/or blue light filters to protect the macula after surgery. However, it is important to wear sunglasses when you go outdoors.

### REHABILITATION

Many optical and electronic visual aids allow for magnification and contrast enhancement. These devices include strong reading lenses (microscopic lenses), magnifiers, telescopic systems, absorptive lenses and filters, and electronic magnifying aids. In addition, vision rehabilitation services for better mobility and modification of the home environment enable a person with AMD to pursue normal activities. ■

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*With inputs from Dr Mohan Rajan, chairman and medical director, Rajan Eye Care Hospital, Chennai; and Dr S Natarajan, chairman and medical director, Aditya Jyot Eye Hospital Pvt Ltd, Mumbai*



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# Renewed vision

Dr Cyres Mehta discusses how implants help after cataract surgery

**Q** Why is my ophthalmic surgeon advising an implant after cataract operation?

**A** All problems caused by spectacles after cataract surgery can be avoided if a lens is placed inside the eye with an injector. Earlier, implanted lens used to be placed in front of the iris (the brown part of the eye), which is very rare nowadays. Now all lenses are posterior chamber lenses—they are fitted behind the iris, in the original human lens bag.

**Q** Are implants a new concept? Do they have specific power?

**A** The first implant was carried out in 1949 in the UK. Since then, over 200 million implants have been done. Implanted lens has a specific power, which depends on the power of the patient's eye. Sometimes the diameter of the lens (11-12 mm) can be altered to fit a baby's eye (7-8 mm) or a large eye of someone with high minus number (14 mm).

**Q** Are all implanted lenses the same? How do I decide which lens is appropriate for me?

**A** Except the fact that modern lenses are foldable, they vary. Your doctor will decide the type of lens that will be most suitable for you.

If you read a lot, a multifocal lens is not advisable. If you are a lawyer, architect, engineer or doctor, multifocal is not advisable except in some cases, as you will probably demand both perfect distance and perfect near vision. Multifocal lenses offer only 90 per cent vision. If you do a lot of night driving or spend a lot of time outdoors, a tinted yellow lens for less glare is more advisable. If you have diabetes or uveitis, the material should be soft acrylic. The cost of lenses range between Rs 4,000 and Rs 35,000.

**Q** Can implanted lens dislocate in the eye after the surgery?

**A** Properly fitted implants do not move unless a large force like a punch or squash ball travelling at great speed hits the eye. Light taps to the eye or even punches to the head will not dislocate a lens. There have been cases where even after a skull fracture the lens was found in the correct place.

**Q** After an implant, will I need to wear glasses for distance vision?

**A** Yes, in 60 per cent of cases. Some spectacle power for distance can be expected after cataract surgery and the consequent implant. Usually the residual power is around  $\pm 1$  dioptres. In all cases, unless a multifocal lens has been implanted, there will be an additional power of the spectacles for reading as a plastic lens cannot become thick or thin like a human lens to accommodate close-range vision.

**Q** What is a secondary implant? Does it have any drawbacks?

**A** If a lens had not been implanted in the past, it can be implanted in a second surgery. This gives it the name secondary implant; and reading the last line on the reading chart with a secondary implant is called 'super vision'.

The vision after a secondary implant is always one or two lines less than the vision in a post-cataract operated eye with an implant. This is because the eye has a certain amount of irritation because of being operated twice. At times, your doctor may have had complications during the first surgery when it was not possible to implant a lens. However, except for not reading a chart, a patient can manage well with a secondary implant.

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*Dr Cyres Mehta is CEO of CYRESEYE and consultant ophthalmic surgeon at Mehta International Eye Institute & Colaba Eye Hospital, Mumbai. Call 9819850971/65261579 or email [cyresmehta@yahoo.com](mailto:cyresmehta@yahoo.com)*



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- Built-in Speaker Phone
- Hindi SMS



# A classic *menu*

Inspired by the Awadhi table, **Dr Pushpesh Pant** crafts a wholesome meal

**S**ome vegetables have a timeless aura about them. Their charm and exotic appeal never fades away. Mushrooms, bamboo shoots and wax gourd (*parval*) are some of these. You may argue that they are not real vegetables as one belongs to the

world of fungi and the other is akin to grass, while wax gourd is best placed with plebian squashes. However, these are great ingredients for some light and nutritious delicacies and I have used them to craft a classic menu from the Awadh repertoire.

## KHUMB PULAV



**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

**Serves:** 2

### INGREDIENTS

- Mushrooms: 200 gm; sliced
- Long grained rice: 200 gm; soaked in water for half an hour and drained
- Onions: 200 gm; sliced
- Ginger-garlic paste: 2 tsp

- Bay leaf: 1
- Cloves: 3-4
- Brown cardamom: 1
- Cinnamon: 1-inch stick
- Kashmiri *lal mirch*:  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp
- Kashmiri *garam masala*: 1 tsp
- Butter/ghee or oil: 2 tsp

### METHOD

Cook rice with bayleaf till almost done. Heat butter in a pan and

add whole spices. Add onions and saute till translucent. Add the ginger-garlic paste. Stir-fry for a minute and add mushrooms. Sprinkle the *masala* and salt. Cook uncovered till most of the moisture evaporates. Arrange rice and mushrooms in layers ending with mushrooms on top. Cook for five minutes on *dum* on a pre-heated *tawa* on slow fire.





## BAANS KA SALAN

**Preparation time:** 25 minutes

**Cooking time:** 10 minutes

**Serves:** 2

### INGREDIENTS

- Bamboo shoots: 200 gm
- Onions: 200 gm; finely sliced
- Turmeric powder:  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp
- Coriander powder: 1 tsp

- Cumin powder:  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp
- Green chillies: 2; deseeded and slit lengthwise
- Salt to taste
- Oil: 1 tbsp

### METHOD

Rinse the bamboo shoots many times to remove all traces of brine.

Slice into bite-sized pieces. Heat oil in a pan and add sliced onions. When translucent, add bamboo shoots along with the powdered spices. Stir-fry for about two minutes. Add half a cup of boiling water and let it simmer uncovered for about five minutes. Garnish with chillies.

## PARVAL KI MITHAI

**Preparation time:** About 5 hours

**Cooking time:** 45 minutes

**Serves:** 12-15

### INGREDIENTS

- Wax gourd (*parval*): 1 kg
- Sugar-free sweetener: 2 cups
- Milk: 2 1/2 litres
- Juice of two limes
- Rose water: 1 tsp
- Seeds of 8 green cardamoms
- Chopped dried fruits and nuts of choice: 2 tbsp
- A few strands of saffron (optional)

### METHOD

Peel the *parval*. Boil water in a large pan and simmer the *parval* for about 10 minutes. Drain and cool. Slit lengthwise and remove and discard seeds and pulp. Dissolve sugar-free sweetener in water. Boil for 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in rose water. Put hollowed wax gourd into syrup and keep aside for 3-4 hours. Boil milk in a thick-bottomed pan. Pour limejuice to curdle it. Remove from heat and stir till all the milk has curdled and water has separated. Tie in muslin

and put under a weight for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Untie cottage cheese and grind to a paste (*chhena*). Blend the dried fruits and nuts. Remove and drain *parval* from syrup. Fill hollowed *parval* with *chhena* and nuts mixture. Sprinkle powdered saffron on top. Serve chilled. ■

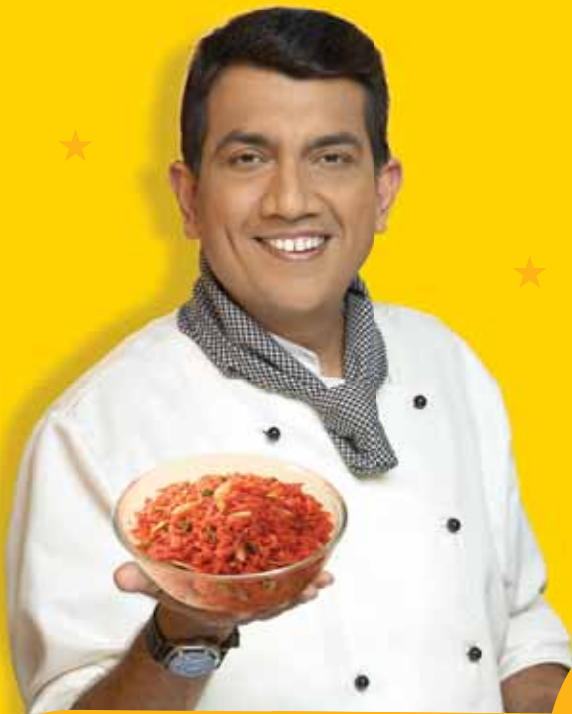


*Dr Pushpesh Pant, our culinary expert, is a documentary producer, author and die-hard foodie*

VILAS KALGUTKER: Food styling: ANITA SARIN







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# A natural boost

Chikoo and sprouts are excellent sources of energy, says **Dr Vijaya Venkat**

## CHIKOO

A native of Mexico, sapodilla (better known as *chikoo* or *sapota*) is a super-sweet tropical fruit cultivated extensively in coastal India. Mostly oval or round in shape, this small brown fruit resembles a kiwifruit or potato and its flesh is either slightly grainy or smooth. Hard, gummy and astringent when immature, *chikoo* becomes pulpy and juicy when ripe. Eaten fresh, it makes a tasty addition to desserts.

Low in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium, *chikoo* is a rich source of pre-digested sugar glucose that supplies most of the energy our body needs in an instant and easily transportable form. It is unlike refined white sugar—with zero nutritional value and plenty of calories—that gets our energy mechanism burning quickly but offers no nutrition.

*Chikoo* is a great source of Vitamin C

*Chikoo* pulp with ice cubes makes a stimulating drink

and dietary fibre, and rich in potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron, phosphorus and protein. While fibre is good for constipation, the absorbable iron content makes it a refreshing and inexpensive option for those with anaemia.

Its protein content helps build tissues while the calcium-phosphorus ratio helps withstand strain and exposure to disease. It's the proportion of several minerals in the bloodstream that determines our capacity for degeneration or regeneration. For example, refined sugar disturbs the balance more than anything else. When its effect wears off, a rebound in the opposite direction causes weak bones, and eyes, and dental decay.

With *chikoo*, nature has provided an entire natural pharmacy that eliminates the need for costly prescriptions. The fruit is in season now—go out and gorge.



JIT RAY

## SPROUTS

**Wanted:** Alive, a vegetable that will grow in any climate, rival meat in nutritional value, mature in three to five days, be planted any time, requires neither soil nor sunshine, rivals tomatoes in Vitamin C, has no waste, can be eaten raw.

**Found:** Sprouted seeds. Discovered by the Chinese in 2939 BC, they were also part of the diet of the Himalayan Hunza tribe, renowned for their lifespan and absence of disease. Sprouts are one of mankind's most ancient foods—the organic answer to simple, inexpensive and natural energy, especially for silvers.





Almost any edible seed can be sprouted—whole grains (wheat, *bajra*, *ragi*, *jawar*) or beans and lentils from the pulses and legume families (*moong*, *masur*, *chowli*, *channa*, *matki*). Groundnuts, fenu-greek (*methi*), mustard (*rai*), sesame (*til*), sunflower and alfalfa can also be sprouted. Germination eliminates nearly all the anti-nutritional and toxic factors of most pulses.

**Sprouts are living food with no loss of nutrients at groceries**

The seed is a treasure chest of genetic material with low metabolic rate. Soaked in water, an almost magical lifelike celebration unfolds and the seed transforms into easily utilisable and digestible life components. As it germinates and turns into tender young leaf, dormant enzymes are activated. Many chemical changes occur in the sprouting seed owing to the action of enzymes. Harmful acids are neutralised. Complex proteins split into free and simple amino acids, creating a 12 per cent increase in proteins. These amino acids produce hormones and enzymes, vital for growth and regeneration. Saturated fats are converted into free fatty acids. While the Vitamin B content jumps from three to tenfold over the dry seed, Vitamin C is actually created in the sprouting process—the Vitamin C of *moong* beans increases by 600 times. Vitamins A, E and K increase too. Calcium, fibre, zinc and iron that are latent in the seed are released. When consumed, stable nutrients like proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals are more easily absorbed with no extra loss of energy. The easily assimilated iron induces vitality, while fibre improves digestion.

Sprouts fight anaemia, ulcers, blood clots, infertility and degenerative diseases. They have potent cancer-fighting properties, they retard the mutation process. Eat them raw and whole—seed, skin, root—in soups, salads or with other vegetables.



*Dr Vijaya Venkat, Mumbai-based nutritionist and health activist, is founder and head of the Health Awareness Centre. If you have any questions for her, write to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)*

## **2** Weight WATCH

**Dr Joe Lewis** answers your questions on diet, weight and exercise

**Q** I have never been overweight, but nowadays I tire easily. My friend suggests I join a fitness centre. What should I do?

**A** Your friend has given you good advice. For many of us, growing older involves not only an inevitable loss of strength and vitality but also the apprehension of injury. As we age, loss of lean body mass or muscle mass occurs owing to inactivity. Despite not being overweight, you need to keep active to maintain precious muscle mass and prevent wastage.

Fitness means strength, balance, flexibility and endurance. Ageing diminishes our capabilities in all four areas and it's evident from symptoms like tiredness, sense of imbalance or sudden pain while stretching to reach the top shelf. You need strength training to maintain muscle and aerobic exercises for cardiac health. In fact, people suffering from arthritis, osteoporosis or heart disease often benefit the most from exercise.

Consult your physician before you choose a good fitness centre and start any physical activity. For instance, Kaya Life has special need-based programmes for senior citizens. You get a counselling, diet and a fitness plan supervised by a physiotherapist or doctor. They also help you build your own gym at home with inexpensive equipment. How will you know your new regimen is working? Look back one month and mark the days you were ill or under the weather, less confident or had some ache or pain. Once you start exercising, you will see your quality of life improving as the marked days become less and less every month.



*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 him, write to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)*

## 2 ASK THE EXPERT

**Dr Anjali Mukerjee** answers your questions on nutrition, fitness and health

**Q** After indiscriminate indulgence during the festive season, I constantly feel bloated and sluggish. How can I detoxify my system?

**A** Festivals are often celebrated with bingeing highly fattening foods and too little water intake. Irregular gaps between meals also have a huge impact on digestion, leading to acidity, bloating and constipation. However, don't despair. Festivities make life fun and fun is an important aspect of health. Occasional indulgences may add a couple of pounds and disrupt your digestion, but you can surely get rid of these toxic excesses by following a detox plan.

Start by ensuring that you are **well-rested** (get at least eight to 10 hours of sleep for better clarity of mind) and eat **light meals** (sprouts, lightly cooked vegetables, lentil soups and vegetable broths). To flush out the toxins, have fresh vegetable juices (carrot and beetroot), chlorophyll-rich wheat grass juice and green tea (it's laden with antioxidants). Drinking lots of water and eating fibre-rich fruits and vegetables are pivotal steps to detoxification.

To help you overcome the festive indulgences try following these **guidelines**:

- For two days, follow a raw food diet. You can eat any amount of fruits and raw salads. Omit sugar completely and limit salt intake. Avoid regular tea and coffee and switch to green tea, chamomile tea or herbal tea like ginger tea with *tulsi* or lemongrass.
- On the third day, eat only steamed vegetables and raw fruits. You can have fresh fruit and vegetable juices. Have apple or grape juice without added sugar, while the options for vegetable juices are carrot, beetroot, cabbage, coriander and gourd (*dudhi*). These serve as excellent blood and kidney cleansers.
- From the fourth day onwards, begin by eating a soft diet of vegetable soup, porridge, *khichdi*, *dal*, and grad-

ually upgrade to eating a normal diet of *roti*, vegetables and *dal*.

- Drink eight to 10 glasses of water with a dash of lime. Avoid tea, coffee and sweetened drinks as they have a diuretic effect. Water flushes out toxins and relieves muscle aches, heartburn, constipation, acne, and indigestion to a large extent.
- Consume sufficient fibre to keep your body cleansed. Whole grains, whole pulses, fresh fruits and vegetables help cleanse mucus along the small intestine, create bulk in the colon, and flush toxins from the gastrointestinal tract. You can add fibre to your diet by taking 1-2 tbsp of psyllium husk with water before meals or at bedtime.
- Eat dinner by 7 pm and don't eat anything after that till the next morning. Instead of two to three large meals, eat small and frequent meals to reduce bloating.
- **Regular exercise** stimulates sweating and eliminates toxins through the skin.

The above plan will help you rejuvenate your body and glow with good health and stronger immunity.

**Q** My tendency to snack between meals is adding to my weight. Are there any low-calorie snacks that will satisfy my cravings?

**A** If you must snack, eat fibre-dense snacks like fruits, nuts (almonds), roasted *chana*, *khakhra*, *dhokla*, sprouts, peanuts, wheat and soy biscuits, whole-wheat sandwiches and clear soups. Your meals can comprise *jowar chapatti* with soy nuggets or *paneer* with salads or brown rice or wheat breads with sprouts, greens and soup. Avoid fattening foods like pizzas, burgers, *pav bhaji*, *pulav khadi*, white bread, *idli*, *dosa*, cakes, chocolates, *paratha* and *thepla*, and switch to vegetables, juices, whole grains and fruits. This will help keep your stomach full and your tummy flat.



Nutritionist Dr Anjali Mukerjee is the founder of Health Total, a nutritional counselling centre. If you have a question for her, write to [query@health-total.com](mailto:query@health-total.com)  
Website: [www.health-total.com](http://www.health-total.com)  
Tel: 022-26732883, 56044001



# HOW TO MANAGE ARTHRITIS

Arthritis, affecting nearly one person in every family, is one of the most common causes of disability. It is common after the age of 50, but some forms of arthritis can affect younger people as well. Usually elderly people suffer from 'osteoarthritis', which affects their hip and knee joints; it is a result of ageing of joints and comprises nearly 70-80 per cent of arthritic conditions. Rheumatoid arthritis is a type of inflammatory arthritis, which often affects more than one joint at a time and is more prevalent in women between 20 and 50 years of age. The only common feature of all types of arthritis is, that joints are affected and there is constant pain, which gradually increases with time and affects the person's everyday activities. While preventing arthritis is not possible, as the exact cause is not known, it is possible to minimise the progress of the disease by managing it effectively by simple measures such as diet, exercise and suitable treatment options.

As a result of a hectic lifestyle, the biggest challenge is to maintain a healthy, well-balanced diet. This, if achieved, maximizes one's intake of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that can help in managing arthritis better and/or delay the progression of disease. Popular nutritional supplements (like glucosamine, chondroitin and diacerin) can also help.

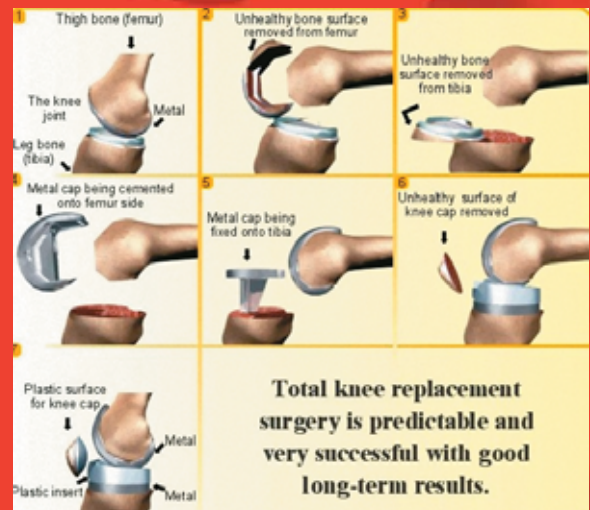
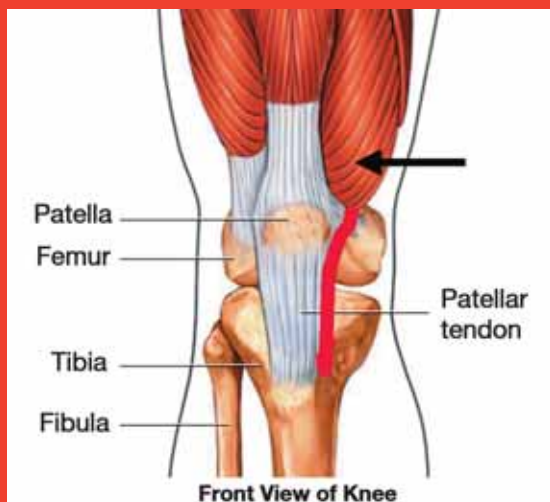
In addition, advice from a physiotherapist can help—appropriate exercises help strengthen the muscles, protect the joints and increase bone density. These exercises also help maintain the health of cartilage, which is the cushion inside the joint. Increased bone density means stronger bone and a healthier base for cartilage. Avoiding smoking and limiting alcohol intake helps avoid arthritis, as both habits weaken the structure of bone. People who are at risk of getting affected by arthritis should lose weight if they are obese and minimize high stress activities like climbing stair and sitting cross-legged on the floor.

Surgery is usually recommended for end-stage cases. Tailored to the needs of each individual, modern techniques are less invasive (smaller surgical incisions) and enable faster recovery. Options like 'Unicompartmental Knee Resurfacing and Hip Resurfacing' are excellent bone conserving options for severe osteoarthritis. These muscle-sparing techniques cause less damage to soft tissues, with specialised implants allowing bone conservation. The function, stability and range of movement of these implants closely mimic a normal joint. The results of a standard total knee replacement (TKR) are also much better when done through a muscle preserving minimal exposure. Rehabilitation after the muscle-sparing technique of TKR is blood-less, nearly three times faster and with lesser pain. Knee bending, strength and function after surgery are also much better with this technique. Patients can walk on the day of surgery and go home 3-4 days after the operation.

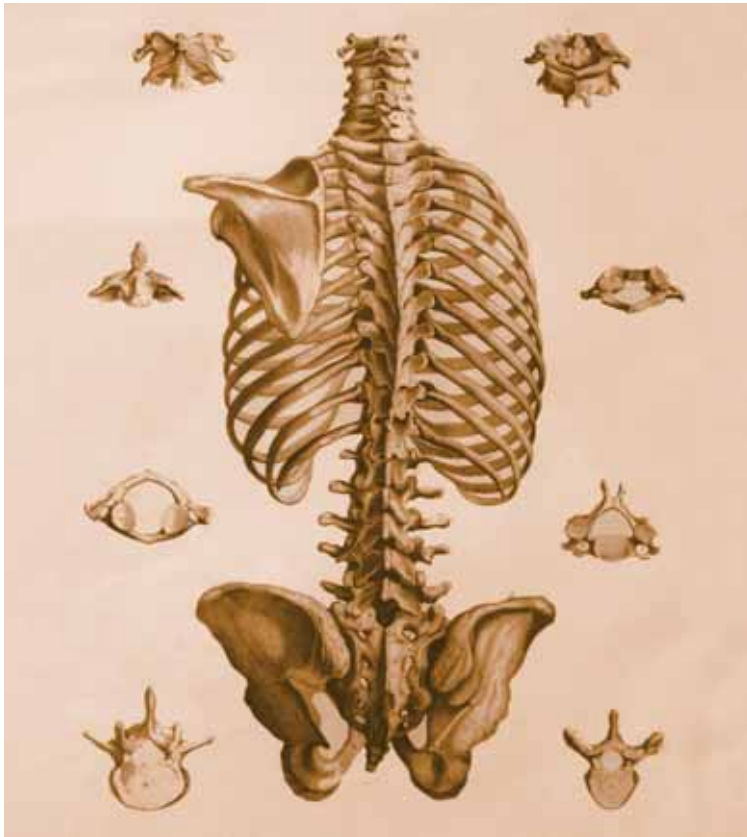
Computer-assisted surgery (CAS) helps surgeons align the patient's bones and joint implants with a degree of accuracy not possible with the naked eye. Surgeons have detailed information allowing them to balance the ligaments and it is given to them before they make the necessary cuts. So successful and convenient are these modern techniques that patients can now opt to get both knees replaced at the same time without any concerns.

If a person feels pain, stiffness or swelling in or around a joint for more than two weeks, he/she should immediately consult the doctor. It's better to diagnose the condition early and start the treatment. Early treatment can often mean less joint damage and less pain.

**Dr Kaushal Malhan**  
**Head of Department of Orthopaedics,**  
**Wockhardt Hospital**  
**Knee and Hip Surgeon**  
**(Minimally invasive joint reconstruction)**



\* (The small red incision preserves the main quadriceps muscle in the muscle-sparing exposure for total knee replacement as pointed out by the arrow above)



### GROW A SPINE

For most of us this may read like science fiction, but for researchers at Nichi-In Centre for Regenerative Medicine (NCRM), Chennai, it is business as usual. NCRM is using **skin tissue to develop iPS (Pluripotents Stem)**, which researchers claim can be morphed into any cell to generate multiple cell lines and used to develop regenerative drugs. In future, they can also help in total spine replacement. "Once developed, these cells would work as a substitute to embryonic stem cells, which are embroiled in serious ethical issues," says NCRM director Samuel Abraham. Abraham says that iPS are also superior to bone marrow stems cells that can be used only on the patient from whose body they have been taken. Institute for Frontier Medical Sciences at Japan's Kyoto University has been working on the project in collaboration with NCRM—it will train the first batch of students in advanced cell culture techniques early next year.

### PRACTICE IMPERFECT

The Delhi High Court has recently ordered the Medical Council of India (MCI) to screen Indian students graduating abroad and returning to India to practice. Raising **doubts about the standards of medical education in several countries**, a bench headed by Justice S K Kaul observed, "Serious aberrations have been noticed in the standards of medical education in some of the foreign countries which are not on a par with the standards of medical education available in India. A licence to practice has a larger public ramification; such a person deals with the life and death of the citizens of the country. The quality of education to be provided to such medical practitioners before they are entitled to practice is crucial." The order came after the court dismissed a petition filed by a few graduates from Manipal College of Medical Students, Nepal, protesting against MCI's screening test for permission to practice in India.







### CHEW ON THIS

You've probably heard this before—but now it's backed by research. According to a study at Osaka University, **wolfing down meals may double your risk of being overweight**. Researchers looked at the eating habits of 3,000 people and found that fast-eating men are 84 per cent more likely to be overweight, and women are twice as likely to be fat. Commenting on the study, which was published in the *British Medical Journal*, Professor Ian McDonald of Nottingham University in the UK tells the BBC: "If you eat quickly, you basically fill your stomach before your gastric feedback has a chance to start developing—you can overfill the thing." He insists that though rushing meals is a behaviour one learns in childhood, it can be reversed.

### NATURAL, BUT UNSAFE

Seemingly harmless **new-generational biological drugs made from living material have now come under serious scrutiny**. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recently issued a safety warning against arthritis drugs Humira and Remicade, cancer drugs Rituxan and Erbitux, and heart failure drug Natrecor, which can cause side-effects like brain and fungal infection and cancer. According to a recent report published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, about 41 genetically engineered drugs have got safety warnings in the US and the European Union. Log on to the website [www.jama.ama-assn.org](http://www.jama.ama-assn.org) for the complete list.



### BEAT THE BLUES

The US FDA has approved **NeuroStar, a non-invasive magnetic stimulation therapy for the brain to treat depression**. It is less risky than surgically implanted electrodes or shock therapy, which is often used as a last resort. For patients who haven't benefited from anti-depressants, NeuroStar should be used only under prescription. Dr Mark George of the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, who helped pioneer the use of transcranial magnetic stimulation, tells Associated Press, "Nobody thought this would work; it was a crazy idea." According to Dr Sanjeev Kumar Jha, a neurosurgeon at Vidyasagar Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (VIMHANS) in New Delhi, the treatment is expected to be available in India in about four years.

## BAD BLOOD

According to recent research at Cooper University Hospital in New Jersey, **the risk of blood poisoning or pneumonia doubles if a patient receives blood stored for more than 29 days.** Researchers examined the rate of hospital infections in 422 patients against the age of the blood transfusion they received—while in the UK blood cannot be stored beyond 35 days, in India it stretches to 42 days. The results of the study are also based on the fact that after two weeks in storage, red blood cells start to undergo changes that lead to the release of chemicals called ‘cytokines’. These are known to hinder immune function, and in high levels could possibly make patients more susceptible to infection. In other words, you must check the credentials of the blood bank you use.



The US FDA has issued a warning to several Ayurvedic drugs and products for their lead and arsenic content. Some of these products are Bala Guti, Maha Sudarshan Churna, Bala Sogathi, Himalaya Diabecon, Diabet Guard, Mahalaxmi Vilas Ras, Majyogaraj Guggulu, Pushpawdhanwa tablets, Navaratna Rasa, Safi Blood Purifier and Fair and Lovely Fairness Cream.

## REALITY CHECK

According to research published in the September issue of *New England Journal of Medicine*, **arthroscopy (the commonly performed non-invasive surgical procedure for arthritis) has been found to be ineffective.**

Lead researcher Brian Feagan of the University of Western Ontario conducted a study on 178 arthritic participants and found that 92 people who underwent the procedure fared no better than the 86 who underwent arthroscopy. “I think we have definitive evidence that



the procedure is a sham,” writes Feagan in the journal. “And if it isn’t effective, patients should not be undergoing it.”

Another study, by Professor Allen D Sawitzke of University of Utah, claims that **dietary supplements glucosamine and chondroitin are completely ineffective for all arthritis patients.** An earlier study (done in 2006) had found the two supplements useless for most osteoarthritis patients, but mildly effective for only a few arthritic patients.





# Regain control

Shameem Akthar tells us how yoga can combat incontinence

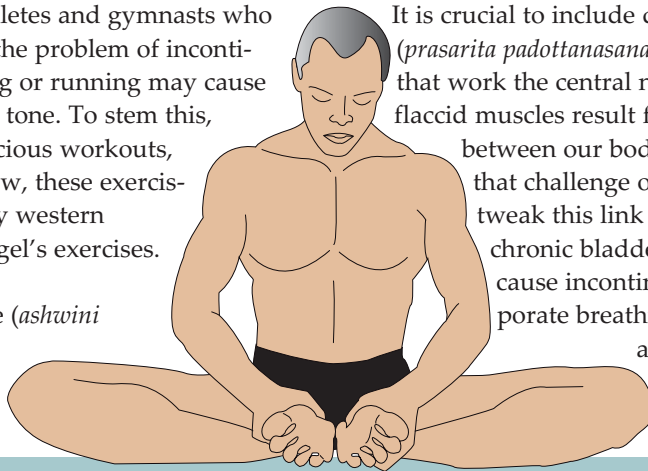
In yoga, the master root lock called *moola-bandha* is believed to keep you eternally young. It involves a set of muscles in the pelvic region that often turn flaccid over time, causing incontinence, a source of acute embarrassment that can severely constrict our lifestyle.

Yoga believes the flaccidity of these muscles is more because of disuse than years. So, as you advance in your yogic *sadhana* or practice, you are encouraged to include such locks. This assures us robust health as the stamina and strength of the uro-genital muscles prevents energy leakage and physiological ageing. Athletes and gymnasts who over-exert may also face the problem of incontinence—excessive skipping or running may cause the pelvic muscles to lose tone. To stem this, you need to include conscious workouts, as suggested by yoga. Now, these exercises have been borrowed by western medicine and dubbed Kegel's exercises.

In yoga, the horse gesture (*ashwini mudra*), which works the anal muscles, and *moola-bandha*, which works the

muscles in the perineum, are powerful and definite ways to prevent incontinence. But other practices that tone this region superbly, both as preventives and therapy, should also be included in your daily practice. These include the wide angle pose (*upavista konasana*); seated forward bend (*paschimottanasana*); locked angle (*baddha konasana*); lying leg raises and all its variations (*supta padangushtasana*); mountain pose (*parvatasana*), and the forward bend, standing pose (*uttanasana*). Poses like the wide angle pose and spread-legged head-to-ground (*prasarita padottanasana*) also encourage a powerful workout of the saddle region (pelvic-inner thighs), encouraging blood flow and revitalising the glands and muscles in this region.

It is crucial to include downward facing poses (*prasarita padottanasana*, *parvatasana*, *uttanasana*) that work the central nervous system. Often flaccid muscles result from slack coordination between our body parts and the brain. Poses that challenge our balance and coordination tweak this link back to health. Further, chronic bladder infection is also known to cause incontinence. To prevent this, incorporate breathing practices (*pranayama*) and meditation that strengthen the immune system and cultivate holistic health. ■



## Yogic moves

### Locked angle pose (*baddha konasana*)

Sit on the ground, with legs out in front. Fold them at the knees, bringing soles together. Bring them as close as possible to the groin. Ensure knees do not lift off the ground. Though this may be tough initially, work on pressing them down so that the hip region becomes more flexible to accommodate the full pose. Adjust spine to ensure your back is upright. Hands may be placed on knees to press

them down. You can also use the hands to hold the feet, or place them behind the hips, on the ground behind. Close your eyes, holding the pose for as long as comfortable, breathing normally. Initially hold for a short duration, slowly increasing to a minute.

**Benefits:** Opens up the 'saddle region' of the inner thighs, making the legs supple and boosting blood supply to the pelvic region. It aligns the spine, increases mental focus and calms body and mind.

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)

# The right choice

JOYANTA CHATTERJEE, 66

WAS: Banker

IS: Disabled Rights Activist

In 2002, when I retired as general manager and a board member of Housing Development and Finance Corporation (HDFC) in Kolkata, the bank had become a major centre for retail housing loans and deposits. In 1978, when I joined the bank, there were only two other people in our branch—a secretary and a peon. From dusting my desk to convincing people to go for a home loan, I did it all.

In the 1970s, consumers seldom went for home loans and we had to devise innovative ways to sell the concept—publishing advertisements and eye-catching slogans in the personal column of *The Statesman*. Despite all odds, within

a decade, the bank experienced a turnaround and the number of customers went up.

Besides attending national and international seminars and workshops on housing, I took part in missions undertaken by World Bank and IFC (Washington) in Bangladesh. I participated in housing studies sponsored by Asian Development Bank and led a team of experts from HDFC to set up a private sector housing finance company in Bangladesh.

Juggling responsibilities taught me how to multitask. Today, my first commitment is the disability rights movement. Being the parent of a spastic child, this issue is very close to my heart. In 1977, I started the Disability Activists Forum to press for the rights of the disabled,



With students from the Kisholoy Institute



## Guiding light

Experts answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement



**During my career as schoolteacher, I often gave advice to students who approached me with their problems. At 56, I would prefer to only counsel. How do I start?**

To be a counsellor by profession, the minimum educational qualification required is a post graduate degree in psychology. Many short-term courses are also available that will enable you to use various counselling methods. Guiding students is an integral part of a teacher's job and I am sure you have many years of experience. You could continue offering advice and suggesting solutions to specific problems at an informal level. Or you could offer your services

to NGOs [in the field of education], as they always welcome dedicated volunteers. I am sure many young people would benefit from your experience.

—Vijaya Dutt

*Dutt is a Delhi-based special educator and psychologist*



**I am 58. Despite being a qualified teacher, I haven't been able to work for some years. I'm thinking of coaching students in science. Do you think it's a good idea?**

Private coaching is always in demand, and as a qualified teacher you can definitely start tutoring on a small scale. It's always easier to get students if you





SHILBHADRA DATTA

but later disassociated myself due to differences with other members.

As honorary vice president of Kisholoy Institute, a school for slow learners in north Kolkata, I am actively involved in mobilising funds for a school building. We initiate professional courses for visually impaired students in association with the Welfare Society for the Blind in south Kolkata. When not working for the less privileged, my involvement as honorary administrative committee member of the Calcutta Club and the Rotary Club keeps me busy. The aim is to introduce a bit of corporate governance and professionalism in these clubs.

Occasionally, organising my day's schedule requires my old managerial skills. But given a choice, I prefer to interact with those who need my services.

—As told to Sonali Majumder

are attached to a school. In your case, you will initially need to rely on word of mouth through friends and relatives. You can also print flyers or leaflets with your contact details and distribute them in your neighbourhood. The investment required for starting a coaching class is very minimal—blackboard, tables and benches. You can always expand later and rent a room. Despite competition from coaching centres, you can get enough students after you have developed a reputation for good quality teaching.

—Tanushree Ghosh

*Ghosh coaches science students at her residence in Kolkata*



After my husband's retirement, we have been living in Mumbai. I have always been interested in vocal music and would like to join a music academy. Please advise.

You have not indicated whether you are interested in learning or teaching music. Even if you have a diploma in music, it is advisable to sign up for a short course, initially, as a student. It will not only give you an opportunity to interact with others but it's also a great way to develop contacts necessary for a breakthrough.

You should also convey to the academy where you are applying for a job about your area of interest—teaching classical music, *ghazal*, or *bhajan*. If you are good, it should not be difficult for you to be absorbed as a teacher when there is a vacancy. There is no dearth of music academies in Mumbai. However, make sure you choose a music school near your home to minimise travel.

—Sushmita Mitra

*Mitra, a Sangeet Visharad-Bhatkhande, teaches at Prangan Music School in Mumbai*

Send queries to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org); for second career options, go to [www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org)

# Breathe EASY

Make your home a safer, brighter, better place with  
*Harmony's* new series

**W**inter is here and allergens are not far behind. Pollution, pollen, dust mites, mould spores and pet dander can trigger a nasty allergy attack. As we age, our immune system becomes less resistant to seasonal allergies. A December 2007 study published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* also states that menopausal women are more vulnerable to respiratory problems owing to falling oestrogen levels.

So we scanned the shelves for a device that could help keep the sneeze and cough out of your life, and came across the Bionaire Permanent Filter Air Purifier. Manufactured by US-based Sunbeam Products Inc, the air purifier works through a double filtering process—a pre-filter traps large airborne particles, and two 'High Efficiency Particulate Air' (HEPA) filters trap tinier particles that are not visible to the naked eye. The air that's dispersed is free of 99 per cent of airborne particles. The purifier also neutralises unpleasant odours. And with its slim dimensions—27"x10"x 7"—it doesn't take up much space either. Just plug in and switch on.

Bionaire filter air purifiers come with a two-year warranty and compact remote control.

*Available at ezone, Croma, Hypercity and other major electronic shops across India.*

**MRP: Rs 5,200**

## RECYCLE

### Old towels

- Sew two towels together on three sides, attach a cord and hang it behind the bedroom door as a laundry bag.
- Sew up old towels together and turn them into covers for throwpillows.



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# Autumn duet

Now is the time to invest in your marriage, says Maya Jayapal

Marriage has been likened to many things: a journey, a book, even a pair of scissors whose blades move in opposite direc-

tions but cut up anything that comes in between!

Personally I would compare it to a partnership where both individuals commit to love, trust, respect and be intimate with each other. However, we are often ill prepared for this undertaking, having received no training to ride the rough parts and cherish the smooth. Once the strains of the *shehnai* die down, we find ourselves in situations we have never faced before. We trudge along, hoping that somehow we will get used to each other. In the meantime we pay attention to our arriving children; our budding careers; our hordes of relatives; and our increasing interests—in fact, to everything but our partners. We grow in all other aspects, neglecting the single most crucial factor—the marriage. And the single most important person—our spouse.

After all, when our parents die, when our children leave us to live their own lives, when we are no longer defined by our careers, when bodies and minds begin to play tricks on us, who do we turn to but our spouses? If we do not cement these bonds right at the start, marriages begin to drift apart; affairs, staying together for the sake of the children.

Cementing these bonds right from the beginning of marriage requires three ingredients: space to grow and bond; attainment of comfort level with each other; and companionship. ‘Space’ is not a Gen-Next pop psychology word. Even Kahlil Gibran who lived between the 19th and 20th centuries mentions it: “Let there be spaces in your togetherness, and let the winds of the heavens

dance between you.” Space translates as allowing partners to explore themselves and each other, to decide for themselves what they would like to achieve, to encourage them in their endeavours. For instance, when I travelled to Afghanistan in order to have talks with the local women, my husband was extremely nervous about my trip. However, he did not put any obstacles in my way, for which I am grateful. Over the years he has realised that I need this stimulation and I know that I need to honour my commitment to be with him when he needs me.

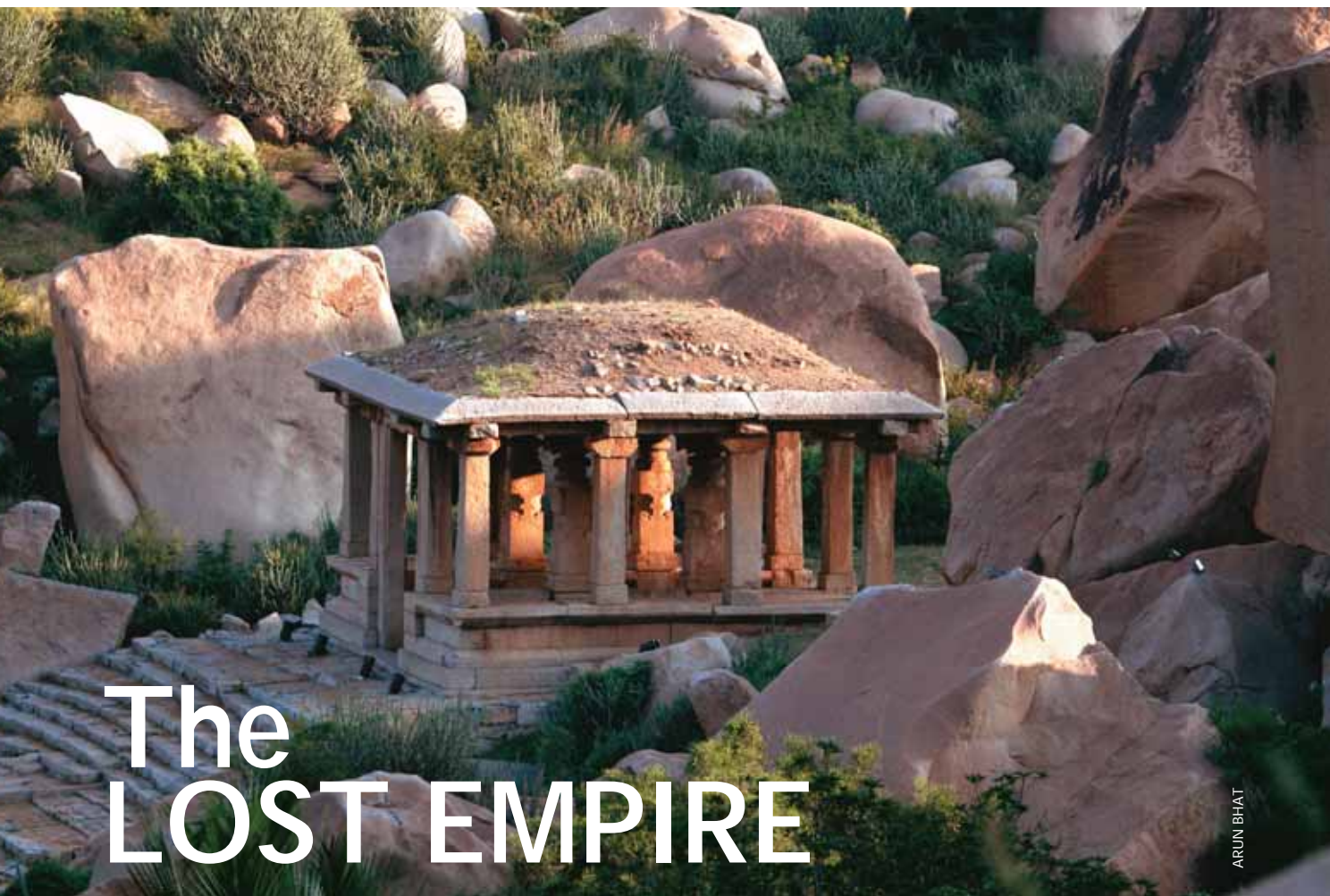
The comfort level felt by partners with each other will have its origin in the love, trust and intimacy that exists between the two; a palpable quality that will deepen as the relationship grows. Interests do not have to be shared; however, communication does, for it is a key factor in marriage. We need to go beyond merely accepting our partner; we need to work actively to create value in the way in which our partner is different. And retirement need not be a pain. On the other hand, it can be an experiment in meaningful living, when even silence is shared.

**Interests do not have to be shared; but communication does, for it is a key factor in marriage**

A couple that have remained friends throughout will also, when the sexual passion that fuelled their early years dies down, allow for exploration of other horizons within each other. If we invested as much time and effort in retaining our partner’s friendship as much as we do with others, the path remains as much of a joy at the end as it does at the beginning. The wag who said that

marriage is like an insurance policy for you to pay in the beginning for the reward at the end was not being merely facetious. The physical, mental and emotional investment we put in laying the foundation stones and cementing the bonds will build a lasting relationship, which will provide harmony and companionship in our autumn years. ■

Maya Jayapal, 67, is a counsellor and writer based in Bengaluru



# The LOST EMPIRE

ARUN BHAT

**Srikumar Menon** returns enriched from Hampi, a world of ruins

I sat on a large rock on a hill-top at sunset, a breeze blowing gently around me, facing a mass of boulders on a hillside that dropped away to a vast landscape of fields, coconut palms and more hills strewn all the way to the horizon. Behind me, was a massive stone and brick wall encircling a temple whose *vimana* (pyramidal tower over the sanctum sanctorum) sat atop a massive boulder. I was trying to take stock of the barrage of experiences that had assaulted my senses since the morning, when a ramshackle bus from the town of Hospet in Karnataka had deposited me in this fantasy world called Hampi.

I had long been planning a trip to Hampi, the celebrated World Heritage Site of the ruins of the Vijayanagara Empire that ruled most of south India for more than 200 years from 14th to 16th century AD. Finally, impulse helped where diligent planning didn't—one weekend I hopped onto an overnight bus trip from Udupi to Hospet. After a bumpy 13-hour journey, I reached Hospet from where I boarded another bus to Hampi. Mercifully the journey took just 10 minutes. Tourists heading to Hampi got off at Kamalapura, a charming





## *It's impossible to see all the sights that Hampi offers in one day. For silvers, a four to five-day trip would be ideal*

village close to the southern extreme of the ruined city—maybe because it offers a choice of hotels unlike Hampi, which has several small lodges. Kamalapura also has the Archaeological Museum that exhibits tools, coinages, arms and artefacts from the golden era of the Vijayanagara Empire.

I continued my onward journey to Hampi village. The bus was packed to its seams but the view outside offered soothing distraction. I caught glimpses of the Tungabhadra river, colonnades, pavilions, temples and what could only be a look-out point—a tiny pavilion perched precariously on a rock atop a hill. The rugged landscape seemed to echo with both history and mystery. I quickly realised that it was impossible to see all that Hampi offered in one day. In fact, for silvers heading towards Hampi, a four to five-day leisurely trip would be ideal.

Auto Raja, a gregarious auto rickshaw driver, befriended me as soon as I got off the bus. I struck a deal with him for a comprehensive tour of the ruins. In return he directed me to a conveniently located lodge. The lodge was the upper storey of a residential cottage—many locals lease out a part

of their house to tourists. Though the lodge was modestly furnished, it offered a stunning view of the Virupaksha temple.

Hampi has many legends and myths inextricably woven into its boulder-strewn hills. Three hills—Matanga, Hemakuta and Malyavantha—dominate the territory. The name Hampi is derived from the name of Pampa, the beautiful daughter of the sage Matanga. After severe penance she won the heart of Virupaksha, the guardian deity of Hampi, and became his divine consort. Legend has it that Virupaksha showered gold on Hemakuta hill by way of dowry. Another myth associates this area with the capital of Kishkinda, the dominion of the monkey kings Vali and Sugriva. The region is scattered with niches of mythological importance—a pond where Sita once bathed, the temple where



(Clockwise from top) The Virupaksha Temple dazzling against the night sky; a stepped tank; the Achutraya temple; (opposite page) fascinated tourists studying the half-man half-lion monolith of Narasimha, a reincarnation of Lord Vishnu; one of the many *mantapa* (hall)



The stone chariot remains the most enduring motif of Hampi

Sugriva was crowned king after the death of Vali, the cave where Sabari fed Rama with the choicest fruits. In Hampi, quite literally, every rock has a story to tell.

According to recorded history, Hampi was the capital city of the Vijayanagara Empire founded by the brothers Harihara and Bukka in 1336 AD. The two brothers, who were agents of the Sultan of Delhi, were sent out to quell revolts and restore order to the southern dominions of the Delhi Sultanate. With the blessings of Hindu sage Vidyaranya, they conquered the territories and established the city of Vijayanagara (City of Victory) on the banks of the Tungabhadra. Thereafter Hampi stood firm as the wall of resistance of Hindu culture till the defeat of Vijayanagara in a war against the Bijapur Sultanate. The brutal plunder that followed left Hampi a shrivelled shadow of its dazzling self. Today, the ruins cover an area of nearly 70 sq km,

surrounded by Greater Hampi—a lush suburb of banana plantations and paddy fields spread over 350 sq km. Centuries ago, the outlying villages were home to the artisans who wrought the grandeur of Hampi with their skilled hands.

The sheer abundance of the platforms, megalithic rocks and temples can be slightly baffling. I picked up a guidebook from the office of the Archaeological Survey of India at Kamalapur. Like all tourists, I started my exploration with the group of monuments near the Queen's Bath, near Kamalapur. The Queen's Bath is a square structure with a tank in the central courtyard with projecting balconies from corridors all around. This structure, distinctly Indo-Islamic in style, was presumably used by the womenfolk of the palace to bathe in. Around the Queen's Bath are many interesting monuments and temples. For instance, the Mahanavami Dibba, where the Dassehra festival was

## FACT FILE

### WHEN TO GO

October to March

### GETTING THERE

**By air:** Bellary airport is 74 km away. Other airports are at Belgaum (190 km) and Bengaluru (353 km).

**By train:** Hospet is the nearest railway station, 13 km away. Hospet is linked by rail to Bengaluru, Bijapur, Hubli and Guntakal.

**By road:** Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) buses ply regularly between Hampi and Bengaluru, which is 350 km away. KSRTC buses shuttle between Hampi and Hospet every 30 minutes.

### WHERE TO STAY

■ **Hampi Boulders Resort;** Tel: 022-24042211; Rs 6,000 upwards

■ **Hotel Mayura Vijayanagar,** Thungabadhra Dam, Hospet; Tel: 0839-4259270; Rs 312 to Rs 432

■ **Hotel Priyadarshini,** Station Road, Hospet; Tel: 0839-4228838/39; Rs 1,600 to Rs 2,150

■ **Hotel Malligi,** 6/143, J N Road, Hospet; Tel: 0839-4228101; Rs 500 to Rs 2,200

■ **Hotel Mayura Bhuvaneswari,** Kamalapur, Hampi; Tel: 0839-241574; Rs 900 to Rs 1,800

### DO...

■ Pick up hand-stitched blankets and stone carvings.

■ Try the *thali* at Mango Tree on the banks of the Tungabhadra.

■ Check out the *gunta pongal* (popular Andhra snack made from lentils and rice) at Sagar Hotel near Virupaksha Temple.



Coracles, on the banks of the river Tungabhadra, are now banned by the government

once celebrated, is today survived by just a three-layered platform. Sculptured panels of horses, elephants, and scenes from royal ceremonies adorn the sides. Some historians speculate that the Mahanavami Dibba could have been a sort of photo gallery for foreign envoys. Clambering up on this platform, I could see the ruins of several structures all around. Notable are the stepped tank and the system of aqueducts that carried water to this and other tanks—most of these structures are surprisingly well-preserved. Two massive, ornate shutters of a stone door lie near the Mahanavami Dibba, each hewn out of a single piece of stone. I wondered where such a door would have been used and was puzzled by the motivation to build it with stone. The door looked like it has been restored from shattered fragments.

Also nearby is the granite Hazara Rama temple, believed to be the private place of worship of the royal family. It has sculptured panels with scenes from the Ramayana and a pillared hall within. Equally breathtaking is the summer palace of the queens, the Lotus Mahal, shaped like a lotus flower. The double-storied pavilion has exquisite arches reminiscent of Hindu and Islamic architectural elements. Nearby are the famed elephant stables—a series of 11 chambers with arched openings and domed roofs. The essence of the place, though, is made up of many other scattered elements: the broken line of the massive stone walls, large open courts and clev-

erly designed watchtowers at various points in the enclosure walls. Overall, it's an aura that can only be experienced, not defined.

After quickly going through the monuments in this area, I was famished. As I was keen to sample the local fare, the ever-helpful Auto Raja escorted me to a small restaurant in Kamalapura where we had a simple and delicious meal of *jowar roti*, eggplant, *dal* and rice before hurrying on to Hampi's most splendid monument, the Vitthala temple complex with the famous 56 musical pillars. The Vitthala temple, built by the greatest king of the Vijayanagara

Empire, Krishnadevaraya, is a large complex with a ruined *gopura* in the east and the marvellous stone *ratha* (chariot) in the courtyard it opens out to. The wheels of the chariot have more than superficial cosmetic appeal—they can actually revolve. Sadly, many of the pillars in the large *mandapa* (hall) in front of the shrine have been savagely destroyed by invaders. Just outside the temple complex are the colonnades of the Vitthala bazaar standing forlorn for some distance to the southeast. Nearby is the King's Balance, where kings were earlier weighed against gold, and the money was distributed to the poor.



## *Vijayanagara, the fabled city of victory, was on the banks of Tungabhadra*





The Hampi Festival, held every November, is a riveting spectacle of music, dance, drama and art

I had heard that there were remnants of prehistoric settlements somewhere atop the hill to the northeast of the temple. Driven by the urge to do something off the conventional tourist circuit, I decided to explore the hill. A few minutes' walk transported me to a surreal landscape. Rounded boulders of all sizes and shapes lay scattered as though thrown there by a careless giant. It was easy to imagine the architects and artisans wandering this rugged land, drawing inspiration for their creations. As for the prehistoric sites, I couldn't find any, unless the large natural cave that I scrambled up had been an abode for wandering prehistoric nomads. As I hurried to make it back by sunset, I was treated to a magnificent bird's-eye view of the entire temple complex and bazaar.

"Do spend the evening at the hillside behind the Raghunatha temple on Malyavantha hill," was the reply from a dear friend and Hampi aficionado to my hurried SMS while I was leaving for Hampi. So sunset found me on the

rocky terrain mulling over the glorious sights I had seen. The temple itself was a testimony to the ingenuity of the builders, incorporating a massive boulder into the structure. The idols are carved out of the base of the boulder and the *vimana* sits atop the boulder in a synthesis of natural and built form. A cleft in the rocks here is supposedly the mark left by one of Lord Rama's arrows. A series of *lingam* and Nandi have been carved on either side of the cleft.

***For sheer intensity of experience, there are few places in the world that can beat Hampi***

As the light faded over the surreal landscape, I had one last place to see. So after Raja dropped me back at my lodging, I headed out to the Virupaksha temple. The temple stands majestically, with its 120 ft

tower, in the western entrance of the Hampi bazaar. It is a living temple—with shrines dedicated to Shiva, Pampa and Bhuvaneshwari—where worship still goes on. After paying my respects to this presiding deity of the city, I wandered out to the Hampi bazaar. The bazaar is encroached by many small establishments and restaurants that serve everything from German and Israeli to Thai and Italian cuisine. My reverie about a bazaar where traders from all over the world jostled chaotically was interrupted by Raja, who reminded me that I had to catch my bus back from Hospet.

As I headed back, my mind kept returning to the sights that I had seen. I had read and heard a lot about Hampi but nothing had prepared me for what I had just experienced. For sheer intensity of experience, there must be few places in the world that can beat Hampi. A rugged terrain, a magical landscape of legends, a repast of architectural riches all combine to make Hampi an experience that is not forgotten in a lifetime. ■

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## **Special mention**

*Ajay Devgan*

*Kajol Devgan*

*Sushil Kumar (bronze medallist of Beijing 2008 Olympics in wrestling)*

*Rajiv Tomar (gold medallist in Asian and Commonwealth Games in wrestling)*



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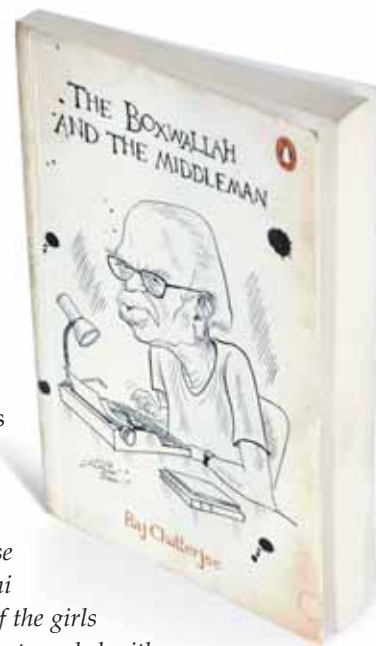
# On middle ground

*The Boxwallah and the Middleman* by Raj Chatterjee  
Penguin, Rs 250; 203 pages

The 'middle' article—a refreshing counterpoint to the 'serious' commentary on a newspaper's editorial page—happens only in India. The closest you get to one of these overseas is an 'op-ed' (opinion-editorial) piece. Thus, this collection of middles by Raj Chatterjee is as much tribute to his prolific writing as a nod to a uniquely national interest.

A former *burrah sahib*—although he calls himself a *boxwallah* (travelling salesman)—with Imperial Tobacco (now ITC), Chatterjee started writing a year before his retirement. Over the next 40 years, he went on to write thousands of middles for *The Statesman* and, more recently, *The Tribune*, leading to his christening as 'King of the Middle Kingdom' by Jug Suraiya, himself an accomplished 'middleman'.

where he tries to interpret 'The Chemistry of Opposites', the middle "Roadside Juliets" is about his short-lived pride when he gives three young girls a lift. 'Could you please drop us near Chandni Chowk?' asked one of the girls while her companion struggled with their loads of books, drawing boards and T squares. 'I shall be delighted,' I said, opening the door for them. I wasn't a bit delighted, of course, to leave Ring



Grey hair, in my opinion, lends charm and dignity to a man even though he be an embezzler or an unrepentant libertine. And a few silvery strands, artistically arranged, give a woman an air of maturity, a sort of mellowness that one associates with vintage port or a violin made by Stradivarius. Contrariwise, a few sights are more likely to repel the viewer than one of a head, male or female, that is a glossy black on top but a carrot red beneath, a sure indication that a fresh application of the most foul-smelling chemical is necessary. One must also accept that after a certain age the candle cannot be burned at both ends without seriously impairing its efficiency.

Divided into six distinct sections, this book, featuring articles written between 1964 and 2007, is a compilation of some of Chatterjee's best.

The first section, 'The Boxwallah', recounts Chatterjee's experiences with Imperial Tobacco; his faux pas at parties, strange encounters during train journeys, and quixotic English bosses and colleagues. Like "Cawnpore and I": 'Tiny' Pattison stood six-foot-three in his socks. He was my boss in what was then called Cawnpore and was one of the few Englishmen in the Company who did not take kindly to the intrusion of 'wogs' in their midst. This was in the mid-1930s. However, he and I got along fairly well, more so after he had asked me over to lunch at the manager's bungalow and discovered that I could use a knife and fork.

Chatterjee also has no qualms about poking fun at himself, and his advancing years. In section three,

Road for the congested thoroughfare that runs parallel to it. Some light conversation seemed called for. So I asked the girl sitting in front if she made a habit of this sort of thing. 'It could be dangerous, supposing someone tried to kidnap you?' 'Oh, we wouldn't stop just any Tom, Dick or Harry. It is all right with some elderly gentleman like you.'

Chatterjee is not rip-roaringly funny and his writing won't make your sides ache. But these sections along with the others—on themes like the city of Delhi, nostalgia and miscellany—will make you smile, readily and often. His characters are real people you will recognise and identify with. His jabs at our society and its institutions are kid-gloved, never vicious. His humour is gentle, even self-deprecating. And his writing has an insouciant charm that keeps you turning the pages. Reasons enough for Chatterjee's success—and to read this book.

—Nitika Bajpayee

# "My book is not biographical"

Even if he denies it, one can't help but draw parallels between Charles Sobhraj and the protagonist of Farrukh Dhondy's latest offering *The Bikini Murders*—Johnson Thhat. Like Sobhraj, Thhat is a cold-blooded murderer who speaks French; lures foreign tourists; gets arrested in a casino in Kathmandu; and jailed in Tihar. Here 64 year-old Dhondy tells Rajashree Balaram why his new book doesn't deserve the controversy that surrounds it



## What are the books that have influenced you?

*Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell had a great influence on me. However, I am not sure if I will still find the tetralogy as profound today as when I first read it—the years have changed my perspective on a whole lot of things. Back then I was doing my chemical engineering in Mumbai and feeling a little lonely. And this set of four novels sort of made me halt and wonder if I should become a writer instead. Another book I still marvel at is *An Area of Darkness* by V S Naipaul. It serves up the less admirable side of India in such an unabashed way... we suddenly see it without the haze of exoticism. Seeing Naipaul's name on the cover sort of reassured me that I did not have to change my name to Eliot or Smith to be a successful English writer.

## What are you reading these days?

You won't believe it, but I am hooked to *Chanakya Neeti* by Manoj Publications. I may invite a lot of wrath here, but I confess I found it hilarious [laughs] and not just because of the typos. I am also reading *60 Indian Poets* edited by Jeet Thayil.

## So is *The Bikini Murders* really based on Charles Sobhraj's life?

No, it's not. The book is my attempt to uncover the mind of a serial killer. I find a certain hypnotic quality in the way such a devious intelligent mind works. I think a large part of the controversy is because of the newspaper epithet that I adopted as the title of the book.

You may find parts that are similar to Sobhraj's life, but I write from my observations about the world

around me. The characters are authentically invented but not biographical.

## But it's reported that Sobhraj is out to sue you.

Whatever for? Come on, I don't even know for sure whether he has really committed the 'bikini murders'. I have always preferred to keep my distance from Sobhraj. Most of what I know about him is what I have gleaned from newspaper reports. Like I said earlier, it's not biographical. If you want to read a biographical account of his life, I would recommend *Serpentine*.

## You are also writing a sequel to your earlier best-seller *Poona Company*.

Yes, it's titled *Cambridge Company*. Though I will not call it a sequel exactly, more like an extension where the story goes further in a different setting, in Cambridge.

## Besides the book, what's keeping you busy these days? Are you tempted to write a masala Bollywood flick?

Why not? Depends on who is paying me and how much [laughs]. I have just finished writing a screen adaptation of V S Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* and another screenplay, *Carpet Boy*, on child labour in the carpet industry. Besides that I have finished writing a screenplay for Sanjay Khan, and *Guru of Sex*, another screenplay for a London-based production company.

## What keeps you ticking?

Good food. Good conversation. Good music. And no, not Sudoku or shopping for designer shirts. ■





## BRIEFLY

**Sam Bourne**, the pseudonym of Jonathan Freedland, an award-winning journalist and broadcaster, proves once again why he's widely touted as a challenger to Dan Brown's crown with **THE FINAL RECKONING** (HarperCollins; Rs 295; 552 pages). In his latest international thriller, lawyer Tom Byrne is hired by the United Nations to placate the family of an elderly man who is shot by security staff



at its headquarters in New York. But it rapidly becomes apparent that the old man—a Holocaust survivor—was not so harmless after all. With Rebecca, the victim's daughter, by his side, Byrne's investigation leads him onto a trail of conspiracy and retribution that dates back to the little-known massacre of Jews in Lithuania during World War II. Bourne combines history lesson, suspense, action and a dash of romance to create a potent cocktail.

Advertising professional **Anuja Chauhan**, who gave us iconic slogans like 'Yeh dil maange more', tries her hand at writing something "longer than six seconds" with **THE ZOYA FACTOR** (HarperCollins; Rs 295; 514 pages). This is the story of the Indian cricket team's fascination with ad executive Zoya Solanki, who was born at the moment that India won the World Cup in 1983. Once they discover that having breakfast with her the morning of a match guarantees victory, the team and management want her to travel to Australia for the World Cup as a lucky mascot. Zoya, who (gasp!) doesn't 'get' cricket at all, agrees. Unfortunately, the only thing that interests her about the game—the captain, Nikhil Khoda—doesn't believe in luck. A delightful, genuinely funny book that mocks our national obsession with cricket and proves that Indian writing in English doesn't have to be banal in order to be accessible.



Just weeks after winning the Man Booker Prize for *The White Tiger*, **Aravind Adiga** is back on the shelves with **BETWEEN THE ASSASSINATIONS** (Picador India; Rs 295; 284 pages). This



collection of 12 stories set in the fictional town of Kittur (not dissimilar to R K Narayan's Malgudi) in coastal, south-western India is actually Adiga's first book but he reportedly chose to release his novel first so that he could establish himself internationally. As the title indicates, the stories are set in the seven-year period between the assassinations of former prime ministers Indira and Rajiv Gandhi. Through his varied protagonists—an illiterate Muslim boy, a Dalit bookseller, a rich student, a sexologist—Adiga charts the changing social-scape of a small town and takes a jab at the forces that divide it, such as caste, class, economic inequity and religion. High in detail and irony, this book is an incisive commentary on development (and its cost) in India.



American mythologist Joseph Campbell once said all the great myths, the ancient great stories, have to be regenerated in every generation. **Devdutt Pattanaik**, medical doctor by training, marketing consultant by profession and mythologist by passion, has done just that in **THE BOOK OF RAM** (Penguin; Rs 250; 208 pages). The book celebrates Ram and

explores the many layers of his identity. We meet Ram, the common man who triumphed against all odds to become a hero first and then a god. We also meet *maryada purushottom* Ram, the upholder of civilised human values; Vishwamitra's student; Sita's husband, Ravan's archrival; and Hindutva's icon. Which of these Rams is most relevant in today's context? The book, written in a lucid and engaging style, lets you decide in the light of your own experience.

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**ROYAL TURN**

Contemporary choreographer and dancer **Astad Deboo**, who dazzled on the cover of *Harmony* in January 2008, gave a royal performance this November—literally. Along with his troupe of 30 Pung Cholam drummers from Manipur, he performed at the coronation of Bhutan's fifth king, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk. It was a singular honour—Deboo's *Rhythm Divine*, a celebration of movement, rhythm, sound and spectacle, was the only performance sponsored by the Indian government to be included in the coronation celebrations held at the palace grounds in Thimpu. "It was an honour to represent India on such an occasion," the 61 year-old tells *Harmony*. "I was thrilled to see so many flags fluttering around me." The company was pretty impressive too. Apart from the Bhutanese royal family, on hand to see Deboo's show were President Pratibha Patil, UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee from India, and heads of state from around the world.

**TRYST WITH THEATRE**

Here's a lady after *Harmony's* own heart. For over three decades, writer-director **Sarita Vohra** has used the stage to showcase the concerns of silvers in India. And her latest play *Urban Tadka*, which played to audiences in New Delhi in October, was no different—it

portrayed four generations in transition, with the elderly finding it hard to keep pace with new lifestyle choices. "I write and direct to evoke sensitivity among the younger generation about the problems of the elderly," the 59 year-old tells *Harmony*. "Theatre is a very strong medium for spreading awareness." Vohra, who has used her plays to create awareness on conditions like thalassemia, multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's in the past, is also actively associated with NGO HelpAge India.

**NOVEL EFFORT**

'Mobile novels'—where subscribers receive short chapters as text messages on their cell phones—are big in Japan. And the latest to join the trend is an 86 year-old author-translator-turned-nun. **Jakucho Setouchi**, previously known for her translations of classical texts like *The Tale of Genji*, has found renewed popularity with *Tomorrow's Rainbow*, a romance about a high school girl who is devastated by the divorce of her parents and finally finds love. So far, 30 mobile novels have been released in book form in Japan since 2001. Setouchi decided to try the genre when she was chosen as honorary chairperson for a mobile phone novel award.





## A MAN WITH DRIVE

Eight years ago, as a truck driver from Ummergaon in Maharashtra, **Chandrakantbhai Purant's** only brush with dazzling cities were the wide inter-state highways that he traversed every day. Since then, 57 year-old Purant has travelled a long way. Today he runs two successful companies—one providing valet parking services and another offering repair services—and employs 200 drivers and 10 supervisors in two offices in Mumbai. Now he's found a way to pay it forward: giving poor women the means to a living. Purant will create an all-women team of drivers to cater to female passengers, who are often uncomfortable or nervous travelling with male drivers. "It is smart business," acknowledges Purant. "But it will also give underprivileged women a way to earn a dignified living and become financially independent."

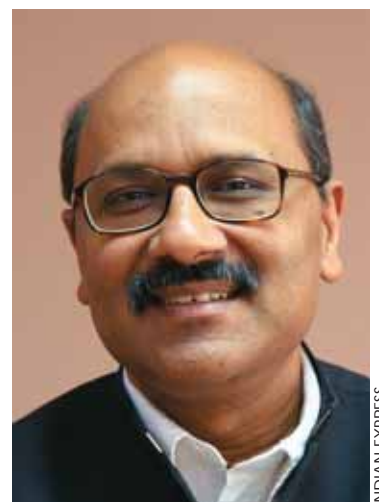


## MILESTONES



**Awarded.** The Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, to **Pandit Bhimsen Joshi**, 86. The Hindustani classical vocalist is also a recipient of the Padmashri (1972), Padma Bhushan (1985), Padma Vibhushan (1999) and the Tansen Sanman (1998). Joshi said he is happy to accept the award on behalf of musicians representing the *khayal* tradition of Hindustani classical music.

**Awarded.** The Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Memorial Award for National Integration to **Shekhar Gupta**, editor-in-chief, *The Indian Express*, and actor-activist **Shabana Azmi**, 58. President Pratibha Patil presented the awards to them at a ceremony in Guwahati in October. While Gupta receives the award for the year 2006, Azmi receives the award for 2007. In her address, President Patil lauded Gupta for his "analytical writings that have influenced public opinion on important matters" and for "highlighting issues that need a national perspective in a non-partisan manner". And Azmi was felicitated for acting in many "socially sensitive films" and "taking up many causes about which the public needs to be educated", such as the HIV/AIDS campaign.



INDIAN EXPRESS

## IN PASSING



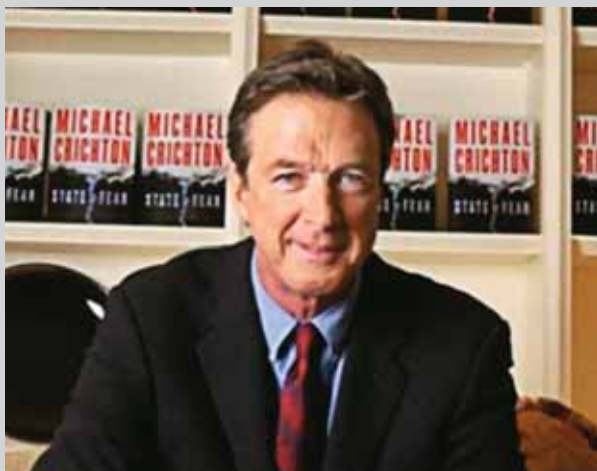
American fashion critic **Richard Blackwell** was both feted and feared for his annual 'Ten Worst Dressed Women List', which he unveiled every January. Over the years, few celebrities have been spared the acid tongue of this journalist and TV and radio personality, who was known simply

as Mr Blackwell. For example, he once called Madonna the "Bare-Bottomed Bore of Babylon" and famously christened Camilla Parker-Bowles the "Duchess of Dowdy". He also wrote two books: *Mr Blackwell: 30 Years of Fashion Fiascos* and an autobiography, *From Rags to Bitches*. Blackwell died at the age of 86 on 19 October in Los Angeles owing to intestinal infection.

**Sister Emmanuelle**, a French Roman Catholic nun, dedicated 20 years of her life to poor people and scavengers living in the slums of Cairo. After returning to France, she worked for the homeless, even campaigning on television to get her message across. French President Nicolas Sarkozy described her as a "woman of action for whom charity meant concrete actions of solidarity and fraternity" and the Vatican compared her to Nobel Peace laureate Mother Teresa for her work that transcended boundaries of nationality, race and religion. She died in Paris at the age of 99 on 20 October.



Veteran Tamil film director **Sridhar** gave southern superstars like AIADMK chief J Jayalalitha and Ravichandran their start in the movies, and also worked with legends such as Gemini Ganesan, Sivaji Ganesan and Vyjayanthimala. With hits like *Thenilavu*, *Kadalikaa Neramillai*, *Ooty Varai Uravu* and *Kalyana Parisu* to his credit, he was often dubbed one of the chief architects of contemporary Tamil cinema by media. Sridhar died on 20 October in Chennai owing to cardiac arrest. He was 75.



Author **Michael Crichton** not only thrilled the world with bestsellers like *Jurassic Park*, *Congo*, *Rising Sun*, *Disclosure* and *State of Fear* but also conquered the small screen with the smash-hit drama series *ER*. An MD from Harvard Medical School, Crichton was a postdoctoral fellow at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, taught anthropology at Cambridge University and writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In his books, he tackled varied themes—from science fiction and genetics to nature and even sexual politics—with gusto and an indefatigable spirit of inquiry. He died unexpectedly in Los Angeles on 4 November after a private battle against cancer. He was 66.

## WHAT I LOVE



In a career that spanned 60 years, veteran producer-director **B R Chopra** made films tackling a gamut of social issues, including widow remarriage, infidelity, and redress for victims of rape. Among his biggest hits were *Naya Daur* (1957), *Ek Hi Raasta* (1956), *Gumrah* (1963), *Pati, Patni Aur Woh* (1978), *Kanoon* (1960) and *Insaaf Ka Tarazu* (1980). A winner of the Dada Saheb Phalke Award (1998), he created history on the small screen with *Mahabharat*. Chopra died at the age of 94 on 5 November.



Renowned artist **Paritosh Sen** was the founder member of the Calcutta Group, the first group of modern artists in India. An alumnus of Madras Art School, Sen studied at Andre

Lhote's school, Academie Grand Chaumier, Ecole des Beaux Arts and Ecole des Louvre in Paris and interacted with legendary artist Pablo Picasso, who had a seminal influence on his work. He died on 22 October in Kolkata. He was 90.

### FRUITS OF LOVE

Love for mangoes inspired Kaleemullah Khan to create seven new varieties of the fruit

Born in a family that has been growing mangoes for nearly 250 years, Kaleemullah Khan grew up in Malihabad, a dusty village near Lucknow that prides itself as the mango capital of north India. "There is nothing more to my life than mangoes," he says. "It is something I did not choose. I was nurtured amid them. They are my destiny."

Familiar with mango trees in his father's Abdullah Nursery, Khan was barely 14 when he started grafting. "I picked seven varieties on a whim and put my soul into creating new species," he reminisces. "Unfortunately, it rained furiously that summer of 1957 and all my efforts were washed away." Three years later, he started experimenting again—and met with success. So far, the 65 year-old has created seven new varieties of mango, as well as a new variety of guava that bears fruit throughout the year.



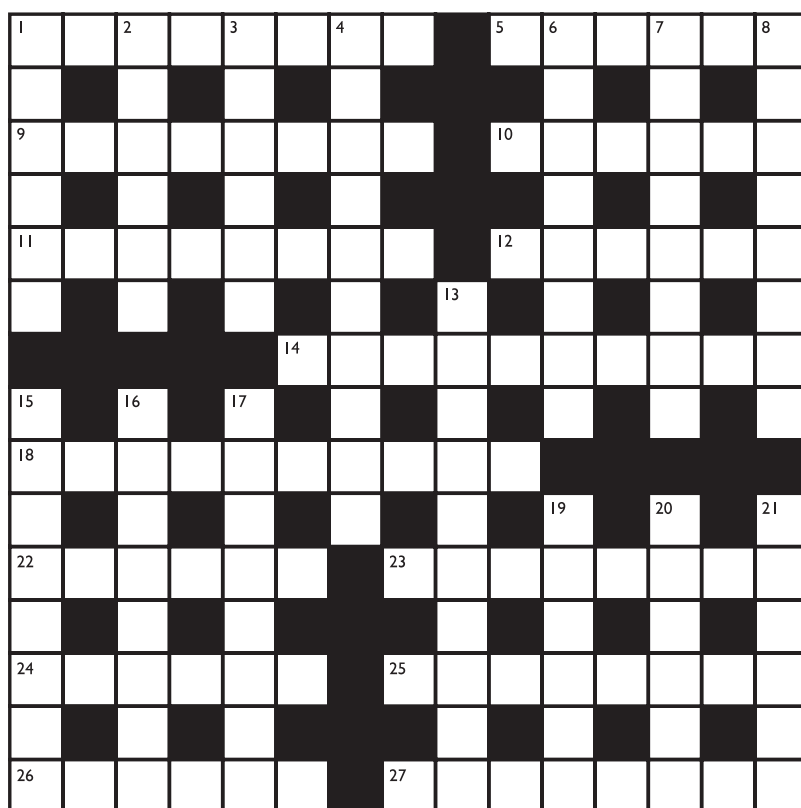
PREETI VERMA LAL

On a 90-year Asroor Mukarar mango tree, Khan has grafted 300 different varieties of mango—a fact that has found place in *Limca Book of Records*. Amid dense foliage of the huge tree, one discovers tiny mangoes like ping pong balls, craggy like bitter gourds, almost heart-shaped and petite, stout and handsome, varieties that leave you breathless with wonder. And this year, Khan unveiled his latest creation Anarkali—a mango variety that not only has two layers of skin but also two-toned flesh.

Khan remains rooted to his orchard, with tempting offers to work in Dubai and Iran failing to lure him. "I did go to Dubai and Iran but soon returned," he says. "Money is not everything. And I cannot imagine living and dying somewhere else." In recognition of his love for mangoes and his country, Khan was honoured with a Padmashri this year. All of Malihabad celebrated this honour. "Some said it came too late but I do not see life in ifs and buts."

—Preeti Verma Lal





## EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 50

By **Raju Bharatan**

### ACROSS

- 1 Attention, Mr Bank Manager, do instruct your clerk to accept that bit of soiled currency! (4 4)
- 5 What the well-wed Aishwarya looks (3 3)
- 9 Just what the publisher ordered by way of a title for a Sachin biography (3 2 3)
- 10 Appreciatively welcomed vat figuring in *Oxford English Dictionary* (6)
- 11 Passed round in the hope of making hay? (5 3)
- 12 Ambassador not in tune with the times? (3 3)
- 14 Who but this legend, upon reaching 1000, could have observed: "A penalty is a cow-

ardly way to score!" (5 5)

- 18 What the stripper's final backstage act, that of dressing to go home after the show, does and does not suggest (4 1 3-2)
- 22 Territory divided by rash not easy on the eye (6)
- 23 Hangs out, going off with a report? (1 7)
- 24 Viewing the 1954 shot-abroad film, starring the ardently involved romantic pair of Nalini Jaywant and Ashok Kumar, in a vintage Lata Mangeshkar-Anil Biswas vein of *Kat-tee hai ab toh zindagee marne ke intezaar mein* (4 2)
- 25 Be about a throb instinctively associated with Esther Williams by the poolside (8)

26 Not natives as accommodating Neil retreating (6)

27 No way looking like being Meher Moos-loosened in the near future? (4-4)

### DOWN

- 1 Ricky Ponting on our native heath (late-2008) perhaps could have tried practising this, like Lala Amarnath did on our maiden 1947-48 tour of Australia, a series seeing that India captain calling wrong four Test times (2 4)
- 2 Say it twice and you have, if only by 1963, a rare Meena Kumari-Dev Anand starrer as directed by Chetan Anand and as scored by Jaidev in lingering Lata tones of *Aaj achanak toot gaye kyon man veenaa ke taar* (6)
- 3 Sen won? Haven't a clue! (2 4)
- 4 Nobel Prize Winner Albert Camus is what M F Husain refuses to be (3 4 3)
- 6 Closing it needs the correspondent's finishing touch (8)
- 7 Hardly cast in the mud-worn Muhammad Ali mould (3 1 4)
- 8 Must ring true when declared by a David Shepherd looking almost as broad as he is tall (4 4)
- 13 What marks considerably given, over and above those scored, represent (3 2 5)
- 15 Type of yoga going with Ms Rai's stature? (8)
- 16 One who commands Tapan to rise in South-East India (8)
- 17 Imagine a slot-machine's being put up for sale on this condition! (4 4)
- 19 Where to go to unlearn the finer points of the English language? (2 4)
- 20 Vijay Sales underwriting position in which Gautam Gambhir, matchingly, deserved to be Man of The Series vs Ricky Ponting's Australia? (3 3)
- 21 What a century before lunch by South Africa opener Barry Richards was, do remember that he accomplished this rare feat no fewer than 9 times for Hampshire in County Cricket (1 5)

For answers, see Page 79

**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.

## SAY IT OUT LOUD



I would rather entertain and hope that people learned something than educate people and hope they were entertained.

—American film producer Walt Disney (1901-1966)

## THE BUZZ

### VA-VA-VROOM

At a time when cars were considered to be the preserve of the rich, along came the Maruti 800—and suddenly India's middle-class couldn't get enough. Twenty-four years after wheeling in India's most affordable car, Maruti Suzuki launched the A-Star this November, a premium hatchback priced at around Rs 350,000. For a compact little car, the A-Star is already making mighty strides—it will be sold in 151 countries. What's more it's built according to European standards, which means lower emissions.



## THE WORD IS OUT

New terms that have made their appearance in newspapers, magazines, books, websites and other recorded sources

**fakeaway** *n.* A homemade meal that is similar to a takeaway meal purchased from a restaurant. [Blend of *fake* and *takeaway*.]

**Example:** If economy and health concerns put you off high-street sandwiches, you could find inspiration for making your own tasty **fakeaways** in new book *Sandwiches, Panini and Wraps*.

—Ann Evans, "Make your own fantasy fakeaways", *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 16 August 2008

**recession chic** *n.* Style and elegance on a tight budget.

**Example:** That's why I urge women to approach this month's Carrie-tribute collection by *Sex and the City* stylist Patricia Field for Marks & Spencer with caution. Because you have to ask why M&S—bastion of sleek, chic, understated style—would belatedly embrace fussy, decadent, fast-fashion Carrie when everyone is moving towards **recession chic**; which means investing in shift dresses instead of smock dresses and stilettos instead of wedges.

—Gwen Halley, "For the story, just ask your man", *Evening Herald*, 13 October 2008

**micro-donor** *n.* A person who donates a small amount of money to a political campaign or other cause. Also: **microdonor**.

—**micro-donation** *n.*

**Example:** Meanwhile in Chicago, Obama's elite high-end fundraisers, his National Finance Committee, met Thursday for strategy sessions. Obama has developed an army of **micro-donors** during his campaign.

—Lynn Sweet, "Obama passes on public money", *Chicago Sun Times*, 20 June 2008

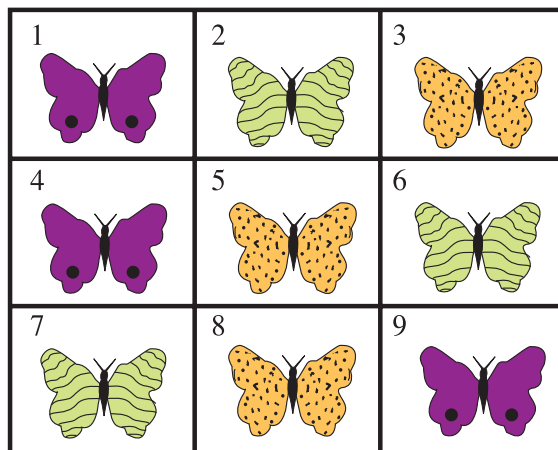
**carborexic** *n.* A person who is obsessed with minimising his or her use of carbon. —*adj.*

—**carborexica** *n.*

**Example:** Being environmentally aware is one thing, and being obsessed with it, is another, say US psychiatrists, who warn that extreme environmental aware-

## BRAIN GYM

## BUTTERFLY BUZZ



Professor Sudhakar Iyer has recently returned from South America where he picked up a number of fine butterfly specimens. The nine butterflies pictured are of the following varieties: The Double-Spotted (1, 4 and 9), the Greater-Striped (2, 6 and 7) and the Many-Speckled (3, 5 and 8). Can you match the position of each butterfly with its country of origin and the name of the fellow enthusiast it was purchased from?

1. Professor Iyer acquired two specimens of the same variety of butterfly from fellow enthusiasts in Bolivia and Brazil.
2. The butterfly from Peru is pictured either immediately above or immediately below the one purchased from Mr Peiro.
3. One of the Greater-Striped butterflies is from Chile and is pictured to the right of and immediately next to the butterfly obtained from Mrs Fernandez.
4. The Double-Spotted butterfly purchased from Mr De Falla is pictured immediately next to a Many-Speckled butterfly (acquired in Ecuador).
5. The Many-Speckled butterfly from Paraguay is pictured immediately next to the butterfly from Bolivia.

ness may be creating a generation of **carborexics**. In a new survey, it was found that 7 per cent of Americans come into the category of 'dark green'—hardcore recyclers and carbon footprint worriers. However, scientists claim that there is a thin line between these behavioural traits qualifying for eco-leadership or bordering on the obsessive-compulsive.

—“Dark-green carborexics-the latest generation of extreme green addicts”, *Asia News International*, 21 October 2008

**adorkable** *adj.* Delightful and charming in a socially awkward way. [Blend of *adorable* and *dork*.]

**Example:** Michael Cera walks into a room at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto, shrugs off his red knapsack, and shyly asks if anyone minds if he makes himself a cup of java. “Do you mind if I make a coffee real quick?” asks the actor. “I like it with sugar and milk,” he explains. “It’s really, really delicious.” And while he stirs with a plastic stick, the 20 year-old chats—in his halting, **adorkable** way—about his new film, *Nick and Norah’s Infinite Playlist*, a light-hearted, indie version of a John Hughes coming-of-age film.

—Gayle MacDonald, “Michael Cera, the little dweeb who could”, *The Globe and Mail*, 4 October 2008

**myco-diesel** *n.* Diesel fuel manufactured from a fungus. Also: **mycodiesel**.

**Example:** A tree-living fungus that manufactures diesel fuel has been discovered in South America. Experts believe the organism, *Gliocladium roseum*, could potentially be a completely new source of green energy.... Scientists were amazed to find that it was able to convert plant cellulose directly into the biofuel, dubbed ‘**myco-diesel**’ ....Professor Gary Strobel, from Montana State University in Bozeman, US, said: “*G. roseum* can make **myco-diesel** directly from cellulose, the main compound found in plants and paper. This means if the fungus was used to make fuel, a step in the production process could be skipped.”

—John von Radowitz, “Fungus could offer green energy breakthrough,” *Press Association Newsfile*, 4 November, 2008



The specimen purchased from Mrs Gilberto is pictured at position No 6.

6. The butterfly from Argentina is pictured immediately above the one purchased from Mr Bonares (which is immediately to the left of the one bought from Mr Gomez) and all three butterflies are of different varieties.

7. The butterfly purchased from Mr Valdúz and the butterfly from Venezuela are of different varieties and one is pictured immediately below the other.

8. The butterfly from Uruguay is on the same vertical line but not immediately above or below the butterfly from Mr Mendez (which is on the same horizontal line but not immediately next to the butterfly purchased from Mr Garcia (which isn't one of the Many-Speckled variety)).

### TEST OF TIME

1. You are locked in a jail cell with no windows and you need to tap out a message on the wall for the man in the other cell next to you at exactly 9:15 pm when the guard outside is switched so your noise won't be heard. You can't hear the switching of the guards through your walls, and you have no clock. There is a faucet with water dripping very consistently from it in the corner. You can just make out the chiming of a church bell at each hour. You can feel the wall facing west start to cool when the sun sets. Your dinner is always passed into your cell between 6.15 and 6.45 pm. How will you determine when it is exactly 9.15 pm?

2. If a clock takes six seconds to strike six times at 6 o'clock, how many seconds will the clock take to strike 11 times at 11 o'clock?

3. On May 5, 2006, three clocks were set at noon. The following day at noon, one was found to be a minute slow, another a minute fast, and the third still had the exact time. If they continue at the same speeds, on what date will they once again all read 12:00?

## SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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

			36	3				3	36	
	8				6		4			21
12					15					
6			6		10			9		
13			6			7		6		
3				3				3		
5			9					10		
10			3					3		
	9				16		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.

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# Clean SWEEP



JIT RAY

Though the Scotch-Brite scour pad reached the Indian kitchen sink only in 1990, for harried homemakers in the US it's been a boon since it was first launched in 1958. Made with a combination of non-woven fibre, abrasives and adhesives, the pad was an instant hit. Over the years, Minnesota Manufacturing and Mining Company (3M), the company behind Scotch-Brite, has developed several variations on it (scrub-sponge, soap pad, soap-filled sponge, non-scratch pad, steel scrubber and sponge). In some countries, the scrub-sponge is even colour-coded according to the required scouring intensity.

3M has often employed out-of-the-box marketing gimmicks to promote the brand. In 2006, the company organised a walkathon in Pune where hundreds of housemaids pledged to use Scotch-Brite. Good old coconut fibre and the latest nylon variation have had no choice but to run for cover.

## THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: DECEMBER 1958

- On 21 December 1958, the Indian government entered into an agreement with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) to receive an assortment of engineering and electronic equipment worth Rouble 3 million for the laboratory of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Mumbai.
- On 21 December 1958, Charles De Gaulle founded the French Fifth Republic.
- In December 1958, the Cheshire Home—established by Captain Leonard Cheshire for humanitarian services—opened a branch in Chennai.
- On 30 December 1958, an Act to validate the constitution and proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of the New State of Himachal Pradesh was formed under the Himachal Pradesh and Bilaspur (New State) Act, 1954.

## 74

**DOWN:**

## SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

## 76

No	Country	Name
1	Peru	Garcia
2	Bolivia	Valdúz
3	Paraguay	Mendez
4	Argentina	Peiro
5	Venezuela	Fernandez
6	Chile	Gilberto
7	Brazil	Bonares
8	Ecuador	Gomez
9	Uruguay	De Falla

## 77

2. 12 seconds. The timing would naturally start on the first strike. At six, there would be five more strikes in the next six seconds, for a time of 1.2 seconds per strike. After the first strike at 11, the following 10 strikes would then take 12 seconds.

3. One must lose 12 hours and the other gain 12 hours to read the same as the correct one. Twelve hours is 720 minutes, so it will take 720 days from the first day to all be synchronised at 12 again. This would be on April 24, 2008.

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

			36	3				3	36		
		8	7	1	6		4	1	3		
12		5	4	2	1		15	5		21	
	6					10	4	2	6		3
		1	5		6	3	2	1		9	
13		7	6		6	2	4		6		1
3		2	1			3	1	2	3		2
5		3	2		9	2	3	4		10	8
	10	4	3	2	1		16	1	2	7	6
			9	8	1				5	1	4



Leela Sekhar, 84, for her commitment to the Scouts and Guides



TEXT: RAJASHREE BALARAM; PHOTO: CHENNAI PIX

**"It's our duty to teach the younger generation to be more sensitive to humanity and the environment around them."**

Vice-president of the South Madras Bharat Scouts and Guides, Chennai-based **Leela Sekhar** refuses to 'sit back and take it easy' just because she is in her 80s. "I have been a guide for over 74 years and have enjoyed every moment," says Sekhar who has just finished organising a gala where scouts and guides from 55 schools in southern Chennai came together to showcase their talents. She was also involved with the West Bengal Chapter of Bharat Scouts and Guides for 20 years when she lived in Kolkata, where she started patrols and flocks in two schools—the National High School and the Modern High School (where Aparna Sen was one of her students). On returning to Chennai, Sekhar was appointed as assistant district commissioner of the South Madras Bharat Scouts and Guides. Among her many initiatives is the 'Khari Kamayi', through which guides are trained to clean up their neighbourhood; help illiterate people write letters; implement conservation efforts; and assist in scenes of calamities. All, of course, for a nominal wage. Sekhar loves to unwind by camping with students and still enjoys a song-and-dance session around the bonfire. As the vivacious octogenarian puts it, "What better way to keep the heart young!"

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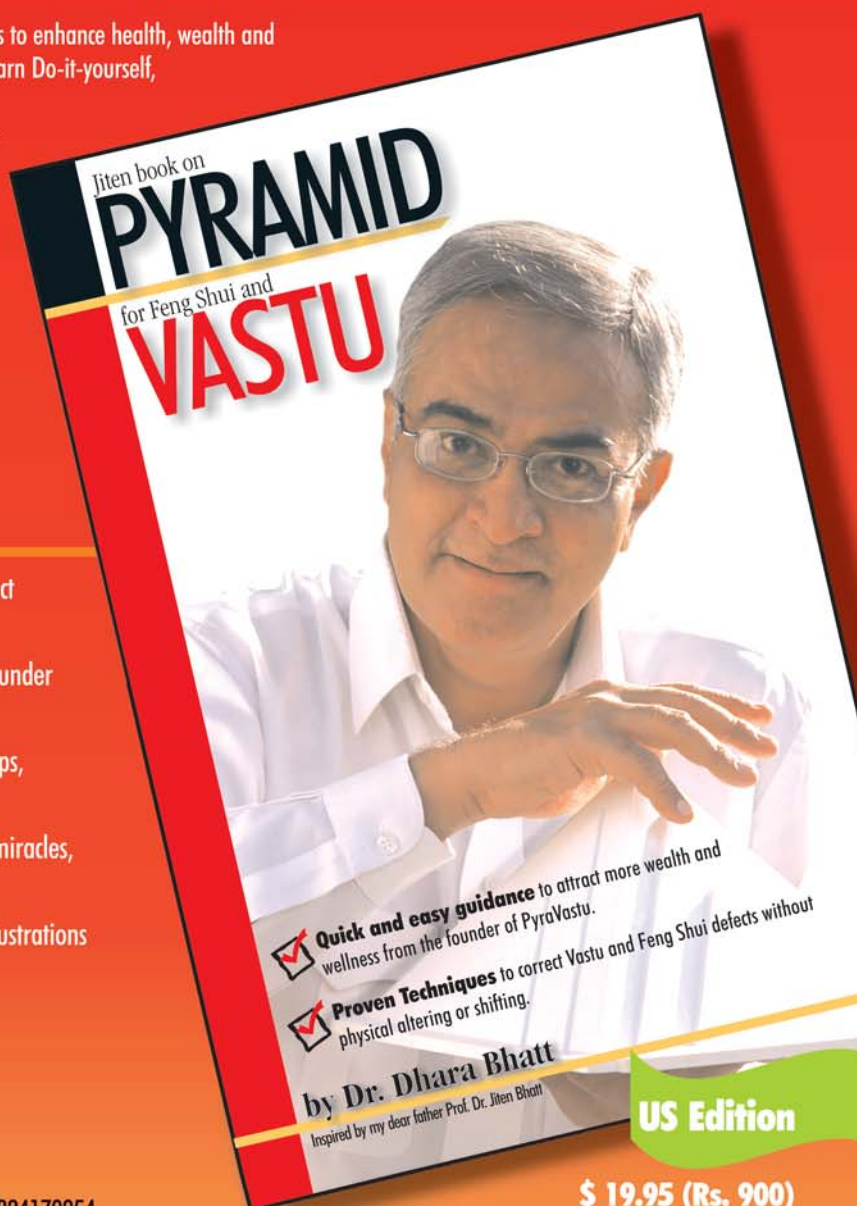
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- \* The total of survival payments upto maturity is more than the sum assured (110% of sum assured)

\* As per the prevailing income tax laws



IRDA Registration No. 127  
Insurance is the subject matter of solicitation.

**You can also contact our nearest office or Insurance Advisor**

**Toll Free: 1800 180 9000**

**Sahara India Life Insurance Company Limited**

Corporate Office: Sahara India Centre, 2, Kapoorthala Complex, Lucknow - 226 024

Ph.: 0522-2337777, email: life@life.sahara.co.in, website: www.saharalife.com