

# harmony



FEBRUARY 2005 Rs 20

celebrate age

## Portrait of a Lady

Waheeda Rehman

**Quicksilver:**  
**Mumbai Marathon 2005**  
**Harmony Manifesto:**  
**Blueprint for progress**



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# THE NEXT STEP



RITU NANDA

**MY CONDOLENCES TO THE** victims of the tsunami. As nature's indiscriminating fury whipped across the coasts of Asia and Africa, with lives, homes and possessions swept away, people across the globe watched on their television screens. For the first time, it made me realise that the world was, ultimately, one. It was one of those days that stun you into disbelief.

And then there are days that are magical. They take your world by storm too, but the memories make you smile for the rest of your life. January 16, 2005, was one of them. Over 1,000 silvers took part in the Harmony-initiated 5-km run, celebrating the spirit of the Harmony Initiative. The run was held in tandem with the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon. American talk show host and magazine publisher Oprah Winfrey once said, "Running is the greatest metaphor for life, because you get out of it what you put into it." I see the 5-km run as a metaphor too—for change, a new tomorrow for Indian silvers.

To underscore that future, this month we aim to present to the Indian Government, various

state governments and key institutions the 'Harmony Manifesto'. You will find the highlights in this issue. It is a blueprint for progress that demands an urgent rethink on areas pivotal to the lives of Indian silvers—finance, health care, safety, mobility, second careers—issues we have relentlessly addressed since the Harmony Initiative took flight.

It is a sincere effort to present an alternative to the National Policy on Older Persons. We realise the government is willing to help the elderly. We merely want to suggest changes it can incorporate into the system and society at large to make a difference.

The success of the Harmony Initiative is testament to the long-felt need of silvers to have someone who speaks to them—and for them. The process of putting together a magazine has brought us closer to the concerns of the elderly.

Every month, we have researched and written articles on numerous aspects of the lives of silvers, and we have learnt a

great deal. Moreover, the Harmony Interactive Centre at Girgaum, Mumbai, has been the best laboratory of all. It has not only helped us evolve a successful working model for future centres across India, but literally brought us face to face with reality—our constituency, and its fears, hopes and challenges. These experiences have forged our manifesto.

Many may perceive the Harmony Manifesto as an ambitious wish list but we see it as the logical next step. All we ask is that the government not take silver citizens for granted, that it recognise their concerns and aspirations. That it take this next step with us. After all, if you can take one step, you can go the distance.

**Tina Ambani**

## A Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust Initiative

**Harmony—Celebrate Age—February 2005 Volume 1 Issue 9**

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Email: [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org) **Printed and published** by Anthony Jesudasan on behalf of Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust, 505, Dalamal

House, 5th Floor, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. **Printed** at Thomson Press India Ltd, 18-35 Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad (Haryana)

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## column one

Nothing has given us more pleasure than working as a team for the Harmony run last month. January 16 was a day of demonstration of courage from silver participants, and demolition of the stereotypes of old age! Enjoy the images. Previous assumptions are increasingly, and quite rightly, being questioned and revised, given the intention of a generation not ready to hang up its boots. The target to walk—5 km—may have seemed like a task for many. But the idea is not about running the marathon or jogging every day. It is to get you to quietly make small changes to your life, such as walking to the shops instead of driving, or taking the stairs instead of the lift. As active as possible.

A lot of brain-time is now being invested in examining the dilemmas of an ageing population, and how people want to grow old. An effort to keep that going is *Harmony's* alternative to the National Policy on Older Persons. We will soon present this blueprint for action to the Indian Government and other key institutions. We have excerpted some highlights in this issue. The full transcript is available on [www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org). Also in this issue, with our wish list for silvers, you will find an excellent overview of osteoporosis in India.

Waheeda Rehman—on the cover in a burnt orange sari and retro-coiffed hair—is a charismatic figure. She and the other subjects in this issue regard their biological age with disdain as they live with style, panache and a vigour that continue to astonish and energise us. They refuse to bow to the conventions of age—and they are great life-enhancers.

—Meeta Bhatti

Not only is *Harmony* magazine well produced, in terms of content and presentation it compares with the best in India. As Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the wonder of wonders is that people see others dying and somehow feel that death will spare them. It is the same with old age. We have a considerable population of senior citizens. By 2028, India will have almost 180 million people above 60, about 13 per cent of the population. Even among senior citizens, we need to distinguish between the comparatively 'young'—people between the ages of 60 and 75 who are healthy—and older senior citizens. The younger lot can be independent and contribute to society. The biggest question is how, in view of shrinking employment opportunities and general prejudice against older people, we can deploy their energies and capabilities in constructive ways, so they do not feel that they have outlived their usefulness.

### JOGINDER SINGH

Former Director, CBI, New Delhi

Hats off to you for a superb magazine. These days, youngsters consider seniors a burden and do precious little to make them feel wanted instead of making use of their experience. I am lucky to have had the most wonderful and supportive in-laws. They brought up my daughter and entertained her with stories from classics like the *Mahabharata* and *Panchatantra*. When she was young, she would sleep with them every night; she would say sleeping with us was "dull and boring"! My husband and I never needed to depend on undependable maids when we wanted to go out. Now, my mother-in-law is 88 and losing her



I wonder why no one thought of a magazine I like *Harmony* earlier! At 47, I don't feel old yet. But by now, I have fully realised the need to give our elders due attention. Seven years have passed since the departure of my father. Yet it seems like just yesterday when he lay still, free of pain and worry, a look of peace on his face. All through his life, he had struggled endlessly, facing the rigours of life, and protecting us, his children, from life's blows. Lighting the pyre at the cremation ground, my heart pleading with him to return as the face I had touched a million times dissolved into ashes, was a moment I'll never forget. Now, festivals have lost their meaning for me, especially Diwali, which we always enjoyed together as a family. Now, there's only regret, for the time I didn't spend with him, and for not telling him often enough how proud I was of all that he achieved. Only when people leave us do we realise their value. It's too late for me to make amends, but not for others. They are the lucky ones.

### JAGVIR GOYAL

Chandigarh

*The letter of the month wins a gift from Vimal*



memory. However, to make her feel wanted we give her small chores to do and she remains in high spirits. I sincerely hope more young people realise the value of our elders.

### PREMI RAMAKRISHNA

Bangalore

Congratulations to Joseph James for receiving the letter of the month award in the December issue for his views on 'care homes' for the elderly. I feel that whatever the circumstances, the family institution should be preserved. Elderly people and the younger generation will have to learn to live together and become useful to each other. However, a periodical change can do both parties a lot of good. One idea is

to develop elderly hostels on the line of youth hostels sponsored and subsidised by the state. These hostels can organise package trips for health check-ups, training and guidance for new vocations, hobbies, and counselling on financial, legal and family matters. The elderly would thereby return home happier, and enriched.

### DR NARENDRANATH SACHDEVA

Indore

I am a regular reader of your magazine for silvers. In Bangalore, there is an NGO, Sri Rahavendra Go Ashram Trust, which has been running a home for underprivileged silvers for the past 25 years. The trust is run by 84-year-old Janardhan Holla and

his wife Meenakshi. In the course of my business consultancy, I mentioned this organisation to the CEO of a Bangalore company, Madhu Jayanti International Ltd. He told his chairman about it, who then came up with a novel idea to help the trust. Instead of presenting New Year gifts to its business associates, the company decided to donate the sizeable amount to the trust's home for silvers. What a fine thing it would be if every private company would emulate this example!

**RAMESH PUTTANNA**

*Bangalore*

I am a 64-year-old retired Army Officer and I started subscribing to *Harmony* two months ago. The one thing that strikes me as totally different about the magazine is its positive attitude. Most other publications are full of criticism, scandal and aggressive negativity. In today's world, being critical is perhaps considered a sign of being intellectual, and scandal and trash tend to sell more. I, for one, find the positivity of your magazine stimulating and hope you maintain it in future.

**BRIG (RETD) K S CHHOKAR**

*Delhi*

I was recently in India on vacation and read your magazine. It was impressive in terms of content and quality and I'm sure it will be helpful for elders.

**VERNON REGO**

*Auckland, New Zealand*

### CLARIFICATION

In the December 2004 issue ("Service with a Smile"), we quoted Major General (retd) Ian Cardozo as saying, "It seemed like chaos initially. This NGO had no methodology, little professional virtue, no punctuality, no order," while talking about the Action for Ability Development and Inclusion (earlier known as the Spastics Society of Northern India). He would like to clarify that these were "much stronger words than the ones I used". Our intention was to portray his first impressions in an NGO after retiring from the armed forces. We, however, did add that his impressions changed later as he came to understand the virtues of work by consensus. We apologise to Major General (retd) Cardozo and the Action for Ability Development and Inclusion for any unintentional distress caused.

—Editors

## CONTRIBUTORS



**Sirish Chandran** says he's "crazy about anything with wheels". The 26-year-old correspondent with *Overdrive*, an auto magazine, road-tests cars and bikes, writes travel features and takes photographs. He also dabbles in motor sport—he won the Reliability class of the car rally Raid de Himalaya 2003 and the 2004 Rally Desert Storm, and finished second in the Reliability class of the 2004 Raid de Himalaya. In this month's Rip-Off Alert, "Auto Cop", he tells you how to make sure your car mechanic doesn't take you for a ride.



### AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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

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

Mail us at 4th Floor, Maker Chambers IV, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. Or email at [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)

## Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland

### TRENDS

#### TICKET TO RIDE

Ride, silvers, ride. From 2006, the elderly and disabled in Scotland will enjoy free bus travel under a new scheme announced by the Scottish Government. Smart cards will be used to minimise fraud, and sophisticated equipment, to cost millions of pounds, will be installed on buses across Scotland to register the cards electronically. "This new scheme will open up exciting new opportunities and dramatically improve the quality of life for those involved," said Scottish Transport



Minister Nicol Stephen, calling it the way to the future.

There's more good news. The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland plans to help people with dementia by tagging them electronically. These tags would give them more freedom to leave hospitals and care homes for short periods, yet prevent them from straying into danger.

The commission believes the tags could save lives and strike the perfect balance between a person's freedom and his right to safety and security.



#### COLD CASH?

Under a controversial new proposal by the ruling Labour party in the UK, the elderly could be given cash to directly buy key social services. The money would be put on a smart card or straight into the bank account of pensioners. Then, silvers could opt out of state social security provisions and choose to pay private firms for anything from meals-on-wheels to free

transport and long-term care. However, the proposal has been greeted with scepticism by many. "It could make life more inconvenient for the most vulnerable," said Andrea Lane of Help the Aged, a seniors' advocacy organisation, warning of the red tape that would ensue. Advocates of the scheme, though, say that those who wish to stay with state-sponsored services would be allowed to do so.

Meanwhile in Russia, a similar scheme that aims to replace social benefits with cash payments has met with huge opposition—a group of about 500 irate pensioners recently blocked one of Moscow's main thoroughfares protesting the move. It took 10 police detachments to clear them away.

## WORDAGE

### TO THE MAX

**Extreme-agers:** A group of Americans who have reached the age of 90 are showing others how to get there. Contributing to a growing body of research into the phenomenon called 'extreme ageing' is Dr Claudia Kawas, a professor of neurology, neurobiology and behaviour at the University of California. "In order to understand ageing, you need to understand how to age well," Kawas says. Thanks to her data and that of a few other longevity studies, the description of extreme ageing is



beginning to make sense—a little less than 2 million Americans are 90 and older; and the number is expected to grow to 10 million by 2050.

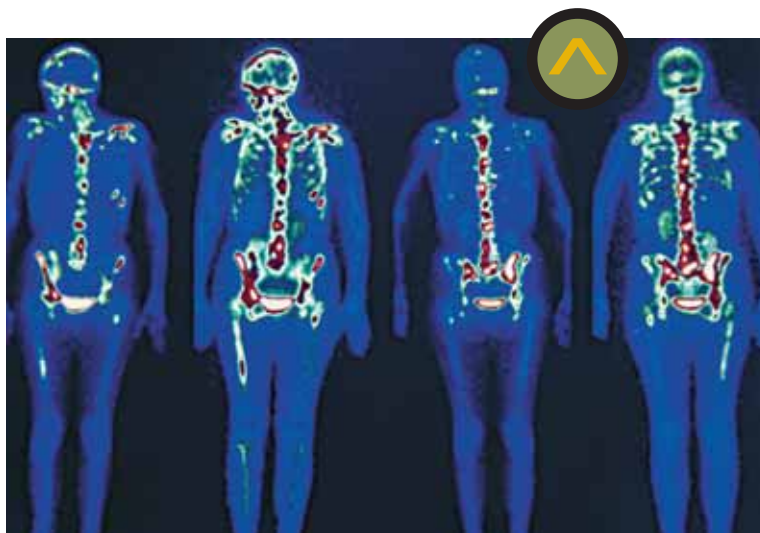
A review of Kawas' data showed that moderate wine drinking was linked to longevity, as was daily consumption of coffee. Being even borderline overweight or too skinny decreased the odds of surviving to age 90, while being physically active increased survival to 90. Most extreme-agers could accomplish many daily living tasks independently, such as bathing, eating, dressing, shopping, bill paying, cooking and using the telephone. But old age isn't a picnic for everyone. The study found that after 90 there is a decline in all areas of cognitive functioning. Falling was a problem for about 40 per cent of the group.

## HEALTH NEWS

### SILVER CHECK

If you find health check-ups prohibitively expensive, here's some good news. Wockhardt Hospitals have launched three value-for-money offers for silvers. The 'Senior Citizen Check-Up' is now available at the Calcutta Wockhardt Medical Centre at Rs 350 instead of the usual Rs 750. It comprises investigative blood tests and an electrocardiogram (ECG), and you don't need a prior appointment. Available on all days except Sunday, the check-up is administered at 8.30 am on an empty stomach. The offer is on till March. The other two offers—the 'Wockhardt Senior Citizen Check' and 'Health Angel'—are e-services that your children or a relative can gift you. Normally priced at Rs 6,050, the Wockhardt Senior Citizen Check is being offered at a special rate of Rs 2,070 till December 2005. It comprises comprehensive investigations and profiles, including diabetic evaluation, non-invasive cardiac monitoring, a cholesterol check, liver profile, kidney profile and consultations. The package can be ordered on [www.tajonline.com](http://www.tajonline.com) (for assistance, call 022-22031106, 22031075) and can be redeemed at all Wockhardt hospitals. The third package, Health Angel, can be gifted to you by your family by placing an order on [www.whhi.com](http://www.whhi.com) and paying for it by credit card. The rates depend on the health service selected. After your check-up, the report and doctor's advice will be mailed to you.

For more details, contact a branch near you: Bangalore Wockhardt Hospital and Heart Institute, 14, Cunningham Road, Bangalore-560052, Tel: 080-22261037, 22281146; Calcutta Wockhardt Medical Centre, 2/7 Sarad Bose Road, Vasundhara Building, Kolkata-700020, Tel: 033-24754320, 24851103; Mumbai Wockhardt Hospitals, Mulund Goregaon Link Road, Mumbai-400078, Tel: 022-55994444; Nagpur Wockhardt Hospitals, 27, Corporation Colony, North Ambazari Road, Nagpur-440010, Tel: 0712-5634444.



## WIRE-FREE WORLD

Cellular service provider Airtel has launched a special post-paid package for silvers, arguably the first company to do so. Called Seniors' Plan, it starts with a monthly rental of Rs 150. You also get a discount on one STD number and one local Airtel number of your choice.

While a normal Airtel-to-Airtel call is Re 1 per minute, the discounted rate is 50 paise, while an STD call to one outstation Airtel number is Re 1 per minute as against the normal charge of Rs 2.49 per minute. Airtel has also tied up with leading hospitals in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Ludhiana and Pune to offer its senior customers 10 to 50 per cent discount on health check-ups and screenings. Add-ons include a free subscription to devotional songs service for the first three months.

Contact Airtel customer care:

Delhi: 9810012345

Chennai: 9845098450

Hyderabad: 9885000111

Jaipur: 9829012345

Kolkata: 9831012345

Mumbai: 9892098920



## COOL AID

### READ ALOUD

Ability Foundation, a Chennai-based NGO that works for the disabled, has opened a cyber café for the visually impaired in the city—the first of its kind in India. Well-lit and spacious, it uses special software called JAWS or 'Job Access With Speech', procured from the Helen Keller Institute in New York and networked by Sify in Chennai. With a speech synthesiser and sound card, information from the screen is read aloud. "Anyone with a vision impairment, be it partial or total, can access the Net here," says Jayshree Raveendran, director of the NGO. The café remains open only on weekends, from 10 am to 1 pm, and beyond if required. Volunteers teach visitors to use the software and help them till they are able to browse on their own—it usually takes about two weeks. The only hitch—the American accent may take some getting used to.

**Contact:** Ability Foundation, No.18, 4th Main Road, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, Chennai-600020.

Tel: 044-24413013, 24452400.

Email: [abilityindia@vsnl.net](mailto:abilityindia@vsnl.net)



KRISHNAN

**PSU banks have been authorised to handle the Public Provident Fund Scheme and the 9 per cent Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme**

## TIME OUT

Eureka Forbes, better known for its Aquaguard water-purifying systems, is now promoting eco-friendly parks. The first park launched by the Eureka Forbes Institute of Environment, called Euro Parivaar Enviro Park, is located in Dadar in central Mumbai. The 3,743 sq m space has been designed by city-based real-estate developer Shelter Singhania. With an open-air museum on rainwater harvesting and water conservation, the

park also has recreational facilities for everyone in the family. Open from 6.30 am to 9.30 am and 4 pm to 9.30 pm, it has a special section for physically challenged children and seniors, where they can meet, read newspapers, attend health guidance workshops and enjoy a complimentary cup of tea.

If you are a member—enrolment is free and gets you an ID card—you can enjoy discounts up to 25 per cent on health check-ups

at Harkishondas Hospital in Girgaum, Mumbai, thanks to the efforts of Dr (Col) S K P Matwankar, Atul Adaniya, resident medical officer at the hospital, and Arun Bhende, secretary of the hospital and CEO of the Dhirubhai Ambani Foundation. They were all felicitated at the launch last month. Visit: Euro Parivar Park, Cricketer Vijay Manjrekar Marg, Near Portuguese Road, Opposite Kulkarni Brothers Showroom, Dadar, Mumbai.



## NOT JUST TRINKETS

Now here's some jewellery that gets you attention when you need it most. In the Australian state of Victoria, about 17,000 elderly and disabled people have signed up for a new personal alert system—the key is a pendant you wear around the neck or wrist. In case of an emergency, pushing a button on the pendant activates a receiver unit plugged into a phone line, which dials a monitoring centre. The staff at the centre then contacts an emergency service or nominated relative, friend or neighbour. The two agencies providing the service are Ballarat Health Service's Safety Link and Peninsula Health's Mount Eliza Personal Assistance Call Service.

And in the US, Medic ID has launched a range of jewellery—bracelets and pendants in gold and silver—engraved with the wearer's medical history. A specially finished background on each piece of jewellery allows the engraving to stand out clearly. Available at large pharmacies and jewellery stores all over the US, they can also be ordered on the Internet. Visit [www.medicid.com](http://www.medicid.com) for details.



## MEDIA WATCH

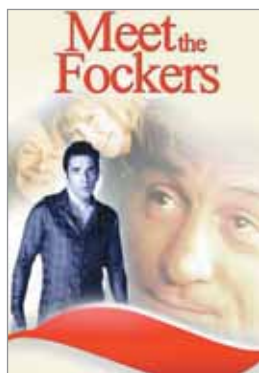
### HOT (GRAND)MAMAS

Irene Sinclair, a 96-year-old British grandmother, has appeared on a billboard in New York's Times Square as the face of cosmetics brand Dove's 'Campaign for Real Beauty' (see "Your World", *Harmony's* December issue). She is pictured next to tick-boxes marked "wrinkled?" and "wonderful?", wearing an off-shoulder top and silk headscarf. Sinclair, who lives in a care home in London, said, "I've never been beautiful in my life—but I feel I am now."

Also feeling pretty hot are 16 calendar girls in Townsend in the USA's Bay State area—all over 75.

The ladies, all members of the Atwood Acres Senior Housing Center, decided the 17-month 'Atwood Cuties Calendar' would be a great way to raise money for the town's 275th anniversary celebrations. "Even though we're seniors, we still have a lot of life in us," said Louise Rivet, 84, who posed by a river with a quilt draped over her bare shoulders for

November. Lu Porter, the 75-year-old Miss January, stripped down to her undies and flirted with an inflatable snowman. "My daughter told me to show my cleavage." And Millie Smith—Miss August—all 93 years of her in boots, helmet and sweet little else straddled a Harley-Davidson. "I felt great," she said. "Like a 'Motorcycle Mama'."



### MEET THE PARENTS II

While much popular culture is aimed at younger audiences, there are a fair number of 'mature' faces in Hollywood today. Four of them—Dustin Hoffman (67), Barbara Streisand (62), Robert De Niro (62) and Blythe Danner (61)—come together in *Meet the Fockers*, the sequel to 2000 hit *Meet the Parents*. Streisand and Hoffman star as Roz and Bernie Focker who meet their son's prospective in-laws, De Niro and Danner. Reviewers are raving about Streisand in her role as a sex therapist for senior citizens and Hoffman's relaxed turn as a dad who loves his son so much he doesn't know when to shut up. The film will release in India soon—enjoy.



## NEWSWORTHY

### CROSS-BORDER ACCESS

For the sake of silvers on both sides of the border, India has relaxed visa restrictions for Pakistan's 65-plus residents. Foreign Secretary of India Shyam Saran announced this in December 2004, saying that India has undertaken this confidence building measure on its own with immediate effect. All that senior Pakistani nationals need to do is get their visas stamped at Attari-Wagah border crossing.

## NEWSWORTHY

### A CAPITAL MOVE

Delhi's silvers will soon have 70 new places to put their feet up and relax. The Delhi government is constructing free recreational centres for senior citizens across all its 70 assembly constituencies. The idea is to provide silvers facilities



they may not get in their own homes—a colour television, radio, furniture, indoor games, books, periodicals and newspapers. To be supervised by New Delhi Municipal Corporation and Municipal Corporation of Delhi and run by local citizens groups and resident welfare associations across the city, the centres will also host discourses on spiritual and social issues from time to time, apart from organising contributory picnics and outings. They will also organise periodical health camps. More than 22 of these centres have already been completed and will be functional soon. Here's a word of caution, though. "Such centres can only sustain themselves if they charge a minimum fee from each member," says Himanshu Rath, convenor of New Delhi-based NGO Agewell Foundation. "Otherwise, they will meet the same fate as the three government-run old-age homes in the city."

## SHOPPING LIST

### STICK CRAFT

Here's some walking stick chic. These sticks made from sheesham wood, which is cheaper than rosewood, help you get about in style. Thirty-five inches long, they are beautifully crafted with embedded clock-and-compass brass grips. Manufactured and exported by Roorkee-based M J R Exports, you can buy them online at [www.indiamart.com](http://www.indiamart.com), order them on the phone by calling 01332-276066, or contact Jawed Akhter, 30/1, Pathanpura, near Telephone Exchange, Roorkee, Uttranchal-247667. Price: Rs 180 to Rs 200, plus courier charges.

### BAR NONE

To help silvers move safely around their homes, Health Craft, a US health products company, has launched the Super Bar. This support bar can be held like a pole and pivots freely to move with you step by step. Locking automatically at an angle of 45° on all sides, it prevents accidents. And more compact than a walker, it works great even in small areas like washrooms and toilets. Priced at \$ 195 (about Rs 8,400), it is not available in India right now.

### PC ABC

If you are logizomechanophobic—read, scared of computers—help is on the way. A Dutch company has developed a PC to ease older people's fear of computers. In May 2005, Secure Internet Machines (SIM) will introduce three versions of its



simPC, which comes preloaded with software and services, such as online banking, and a guaranteed boot up-time of less than 40 seconds. The basic model costs 299 Euros (about Rs 17,000). It will be initially available in the Netherlands and Belgium. The only drawback—users won't be able to install software, download big files, burn CDs or DVDs or edit videos.

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

## VICTORIES

### NEVER GIVE UP



Breast cancer caught me unawares. I remember very clearly the first Wednesday in March 2000, in Mumbai, when I noticed a lump in my left breast. I rushed to Nanavati Hospital in Mumbai for a mammogram and sonogram. When a tumour was discovered, I was referred to Dr Barwe in Tata Memorial Hospital who conducted a test immediately. When I received the report two days later, it showed that the tumour was benign, not malignant.

But Dr Barwe was not sure of the results and he advised surgery. I came to Delhi, my hometown, and approached the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Hospital for a second opinion. Again, the report showed a benign growth. As luck would have it, though, Dr Pandey, an experienced surgeon at the hospital, insisted on surgery. On his advice, I went ahead. Later, frozen therapy of the cyst revealed that it was indeed a Grade II malignancy. Sometimes, in tests malignant tumours show up as benign.

After the surgery, I was back in Mumbai and started my radiation treatment at Hinduja Hospital. I saw people from all age groups coming in for treatment and stopped feeling sorry for myself, realising that I was better off than many of them. The support given to me by family helped me to negotiate these turbulent waters.

Then came the last leg of treatment: chemotherapy. Those huge vials of 'coloured venom' were too much to bear. One shot would keep me in bed with nausea and gastritis for days. I was advised not to venture out in public places as the immunity system breaks down considerably. I had to go for check-ups every three months. A year later, some cysts developed on the other breast, but these were benign. The side effect of all this treatment were oesophageal ulcers, which have also subsided now.

Now, I am as active as ever as a homemaker and lecturer in communication skills and English at Amity University, Noida. I believe in the axiom that 'the past is history and the future a mystery'. My message to all those who face such situations: never give up, and take on any challenge with the right attitude and, of course, faith in God.

—Indu Rampal, Delhi

## WITH LOVE

### QUESTION TIME

My cousin had come from the United States to meet her parents. She spent a day with me. We were sipping coffee and chatting in the garden. Nearby, my five-year-old granddaughter was playing with her dolls. My cousin said, "In America, I go for groceries once a week. I mow my lawn once a week. I do my washing once a week. I clean my house once a week. I even cook once a week." To my surprise, my granddaughter asked, "Aunty, do you eat also once a week?"

—Shan Gurdev Singh, Pune

# AT LEISURE

## THE GOLDFISH BOWL

Cultivating a hobby can help you beat loneliness and retirement blues. According to Dr Robert Friedland, associate professor of neurology, psychiatry and radiology at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, USA, leisure activity reduces your chances of getting Alzheimer's disease. "The brain is an organ for learning," he writes. "It is a case of use it or lose it." One such hobby is maintaining an aquarium.

Research has found that Alzheimer's patients who maintain aquariums have improved appetites and need fewer nutritional supplements, and that aquariums act as a stress-buster, lowering blood pressure in both hypertensive and normal subjects. Attending to a fish tank is a spontaneously initiated activity—the brain is programmed to attend to water and the movement of fish, therefore no training or practice is needed to experience relaxation. However, since maintaining an aquarium may prove to be difficult and expensive, the next best option is a goldfish bowl.

Goldfish, considered cool water fish, are the ideal fish for beginners. A fairly hardy species, they are adaptable to different temperatures, water and food. They can be kept in a bowl without filtered oxygen as long as it has a large opening to provide enough air for your goldfish to breathe comfortably.

### TAKING CARE OF YOUR FISH BOWL:

**Choose a good place:** Sunlight can contribute to green algae growing in your fish bowl, so pick a place away from windows. Cool water is good for fish in fish bowls; don't put your fish bowl near a heater. Place it on a flat and sturdy surface so it won't rock, crack, or get knocked over.

**Don't crowd your fish bowl:** Since most fish bowls don't have filters or other life-support systems, you must keep the bio-load low. That really means a fish bowl can't cope with large amounts of fish waste.

**Start feeding your fish a very small pinch of food:** Feeding the fish twice a day is enough. The amount of food given should not be more than what the fish

can consume in five to 10 minutes. Excess food will only cloud and pollute the water and you will need to change the water frequently.

**Do not fill the bowl completely to the top:** The water level should be just a little more than halfway to the top of the bowl—this allows maximum surface area for exchange of gases. A small natural plant is always a good idea, as it will keep the water oxygenated, besides providing some nutrition to the fish and contributing to a more natural look. A quarter inch of gravel will increase the bio-filtration of the water.

SANTOSH PATNAIK



**Your fish need fresh water:** Twice a week, replace 20 per cent of the water with bottled drinking water. After a few weeks, transfer the water and the fish into a clean bucket. Take a clean paper towel and scrub the inside. Wash the bowl and the contents with salt and water. Don't use any detergent. Fill the bowl with chlorine-free water; treat it with anti-chlorine tablets, or just leave the water open overnight. Rearrange all the contents back into the bowl. Now, introduce the fish back into the bowl. The fish may seem a little lazy at first, but will soon recover, and they should be fed only then.

—Santosh Patnaik, Bhubaneswar

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*We reserve the right to select articles in order to offer fair representation and relevance to readers of Harmony. Articles will be edited to suit space and editorial considerations*

# A family for life

In Bangalore, V Mani and his wife Saroja provide convicts' children comprehensive care, hope and a home to wipe the tears away, writes **Chitra Ramaswamy**

**O**n the face of it, hearing the soulful chant of the *Vishnu Sahasranama* in the morning in a suburban Bangalore home is nothing out of the ordinary. It's special, though, when a group of children, between the ages of four and 14, are singing it. More so when they are the children of convicts.

Welcome to Desik, a 2,800 sq ft, two-storied house in Rajaji Nagar, home to 67-year-old Venka-

taraghavachari Mani, his 65-year-old wife Saroja and around 30 children, all of whose parents are serving life sentences in prisons across Karnataka. At Desik, there are two bedrooms and a living room on the ground floor, with a kitchen, tuition room, three verandas and three bathrooms. The Manis occupy the first floor while the second floor houses a computer room for the children. Thirty more children live in a larger house leased by the Manis

in nearby Chamrajpet with five bedrooms, four bathrooms, and a living room, dining room and prayer room. In a society where children of criminals are ostracised, the Manis provide a haven for these youngsters—their caste, creed, religious or social background is irrelevant.

"During my days as a banker, I would pass the Central Prison in Bangalore while commuting to office," remembers Mani, who retired as assistant general manager, Reserve Bank of India. "I saw women carrying very small children, waiting in queues to meet their husbands or family members. I would wonder about the kind of future these children would have." After his retirement in 1998, he decided to translate his concern into action. In June 1999, he threw open the doors of his home to two boys, aged three and four. Both their fathers had been convicted of murdering their wives. At the same time, he launched SOCARE IND (Society's Care for Indigent), a registered not-for-profit trust to provide comprehensive care for the children of prisoners with former DGP Prisons L Revannasiddaiah as chief patron and seven trustees.



Photos: ABHIJIT GHOSH

**Left, Mani (foreground) and wife Saroja (far right) with the children at Desik; right, Saroja playing with the children; study time**

Initially, his own family was sceptical. The response from his son and two daughters, settled overseas—his son and elder daughter live in California, while the younger daughter lives in Sydney, Australia—was far from encouraging. And wife Saroja had her own apprehensions. “It was not the children I feared but their kith and kin,” she confesses. “But these fears have dissipated. I am now so confident that I had no qualms bringing my own granddaughter from the US to spend a holiday here with us this June. Now, even our children can see how steadfast we are in our resolve.” Their children are so supportive, in fact, that they now raise funds for SOCARE among their own friends overseas. Saroja adds, “The children we look after, their discipline, their enthusiasm to prove themselves have been at the root of the change.”

Like 11-year-old Mahesh, who aspires to become a policeman when he grows up. So does six-year-old Shiva, whose father is a member of the notorious Dandupalya criminal gang. This gang, which comes from a village of the same name, 90 km away from Bangalore in Kolar district, is infamous for its criminal activities

but Shiva is clear he wants no part of it. Nine-year-old Vikram was a witness to his alcoholic father being killed by his mother. Seven-year-old Raju tells his own story: “I don’t have a mother because my father killed her. I was small when it happened. Yes, I go to see my father in jail. I want to become a policeman when I grow up and catch all those people who do wrong.” The newest residents at Desik are three sisters, aged three,

## Apart from getting admission to good schools, the children learn dance, martial arts and computers

five and eight—they all witnessed the killing of their mother. “The girls’ father set the mother on fire and the testimony of the eight-year-old was responsible for convicting and sentencing him to life,” says Mani.

With such traumatic backgrounds, these children need more than concrete-and-mortar buildings that just provide shelter and food. While Saroja ensures the children

get nutritious home food—simple southern Indian meals including rice, sambar, curries and vegetables, and breakfast foods like puri, idli, upma and khichdi—Mani lobbies vigorously to get them admission in good schools in Bangalore. “Initially, Mani had to plead with the schools,” says Revannasiddaiah. “But attitudes are slowly changing. In fact, Cluny Convent, a prestigious school, has not only given free admission to some of SOCARE’s children but also provides an additional Rs 10,000 a month towards the children’s maintenance.”

Part-time teachers help the children out with their studies. “The children respond well and want to learn,” says Veena Ramakrishnan, a part-time teacher. “It is as if they are walking that extra mile to prove themselves.” The activities at Desik include computers, martial arts and Bharatanatyam training, and lessons on mythology. Mani has roped in a priest from a nearby temple who teaches the children *shloka* every morning. The children return the favour by doing odd jobs at the temple every day, including sweeping the premises and making garlands for the idols.



SOCARE is prepared to take care of the children until they are ready to stand on their own feet. Every three months, Mani takes all of them to visit their father or mother in jail. While some children don't remember their parents' faces, others are unwilling to meet them. But Mani acts as the bridge between them because "we don't want to be the focus of all their love and affection; we don't want to take their parents' place. Whatever the circumstances, we feel the children should learn to respect their parents." There have been stray cases where children

bath on the second floor of Desik where parole prisoners can stay. "Everybody in society feels a prisoner deserves the punishment he gets," says Justice M F Saldanha of the Karnataka High Court. "But the fallout of this is that the kith and kin, especially children, are the most affected. People like Mani must be encouraged and given every support so that something is done for these people." Affirms Revannasiddaiah, "A lot of people have gathered around us and it has become a small movement now."

away from the original ISKCON organisation to maintain a distinct identity—chips in by providing the children lunch 250 days a year. SOCARE has placed drop boxes in several apartment buildings in the city to collect contributions and sells greeting cards for various occasions.

Like-minded people continue to come forward and make the cause their own. "I took voluntary retirement from Bharat Electronics Ltd in Bangalore in 1989 and went back to my native place," says Gopinath Rao, a



**"The children want to learn. It's as if they are walking that extra mile to prove themselves" —Veena Ramakrishnan, teacher**

have chosen to return to their earlier homes, either because their families' circumstances have improved or because they couldn't handle the discipline levels at SOCARE—the fixed hours for waking up and meals and the compulsory chores. "We don't stop them if they want to go," says Mani. "But we're equally firm about not taking them back if they desire to return."

SOCARE also organises counselling for the families of prisoners and, in some cases, arranges for parole in case of any emergency that requires convicts to visit their families. There's even a room with an attached

Though raising funds remains a constant challenge, the movement has managed to sustain itself financially. Mani has invested all his retirement benefits—a sum of Rs 3 lakh—into SOCARE. The project requires Rs 50,000 a month for day-to-day functioning. Apart from this, about Rs 2 lakh a year is spent on the children's education and activities. SOCARE's 'home participation' drive among the middle class has met with some success—under this scheme, people pay for one meal at Desik to mark occasions in their own families. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Bangalore, which, according to Mani, has broken

SOCARE volunteer who handles administration. "But when I came back to Bangalore a few years later, I heard about SOCARE and joined up. Yes, we do have day-to-day problems, but it is nothing that we cannot handle, with a little bit of patience and care."

This patience, care and commitment have won Mani several accolades, including the 'Exemplary Service to Society' Award 2003-2004, instituted by the Government of Karnataka. But for Mani and Saroja, the real reward is the promise of hope in the eyes of their extended family. ■

*To contact SOCARE, see page 95*



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

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

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

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

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

I still think Sunny's better than Sachin.

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



# Through the lens



**A NEW AMERICAN** documentary on violence against older women, *What's Age Got To Do With It?*, leaves one speechless. The film addresses the verbal, physical, sexual, and financial abuse that many older women face from spouses, adult children, and other family members. It is a resource that will help healthcare and other service providers in the US to recognise signs of abuse—one that India lacks. Barring a few efforts from NGOs, that, for academic and social awareness purposes, make films on issues concerning the elderly, there's no such concerted effort that can assist the government to respond accordingly.

In the West, there are several film festivals, including the Silver Images Film Festival in the US, that are dedicated to finding films and videos that present stories about life in later years, entertainingly and without condescension. There are also several platforms that offer people the chance to see films and videos that demonstrate the vivaciousness, diversity and wisdom of older people.

Aren't there more directors making such films in India? The success of films such as *Avtaar* and *Baghban* should encourage more filmmakers to frame intimate portraits of ageing lives—it would help redefine and challenge our society's perceived notions of old age.

I remember another American documentary that won the Academy Award a few years ago. Titled *Close Harmony*, the video is even available for classroom use in the US. It is about a seniors' chorus and an elementary school chorus who get together for a concert. The music teacher helps bridge the gap between the two groups. Even before they meet for the first time, she sets it up so that they become 'pen friends'. From then, through the rehearsals and their concert, a bond is formed. This moving intergenerational film breaks down every stereotypical image of ageing.

devoted her entire life to looking after her family. When her husband died and her children left home, she felt she had lost all reason to live. When she joined the West Bengal Women's Association and realised how many other women were in the same predicament, she discovered new purpose. Her story is typical of millions of elderly women worldwide.

There are other serious issues in India that are probably only filmed by organisations like HelpAge India and shown at their centres—dementia, elderly abuse,

## Indian filmmakers should frame portraits of ageing lives to challenge notions of age

In India, I have heard of efforts where students adopt grandparents and spend time with them every week, either through NGOs or residents' welfare associations. Though the idea is to facilitate the safety of those living alone, it also helps in preventing loneliness—something that can be filmed for classroom purposes across the country.

Four years ago, I saw another film, *The Silver Age*. Set in Kolkata, it's about Bani Gupta, a widow who lives alone. Like so many Indian women, she

menopause, seniors' esteem, caregivers, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's, depression and safety, to name a few.

The scope of these ideas and the platforms where they are shared needs to widen. Advances in science and healthcare have enabled increasing numbers of India's population to live well beyond retirement. In a time of shrinking resources for the middle-class, these films will help confront the uncomfortable question: 'Who cares for the aged?' Ask yourself that. ■

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

# Match Point

On the court, Ramanathan Krishnan was a magician, off it, a thorough gentleman.

**H Balakrishnan** meets the man whose tennis has been described as a thing of beauty

**A**sk any die-hard Indian tennis fan where he was when Ramanathan Krishnan became the first Asian to win the Wimbledon Juniors title 50 years ago—chances are he'll remember. He'll probably also remember sitting hunched next to his box radio, biting his nails, and swearing when the commentator's voice crackled at crucial points. Krishnan remembers being there too, nonchalantly though. Now 67, he says, "I believe winning gold isn't everything, but it is special to win your event."

**Krishnan spends about three hours a day at his tennis centre in Chennai**



KRISHNAN

It was a special time, in fact, when Krishnan picked up a racquet for the first time—two days before August 15, 1947. Then 10 years old, he accompanied his father T K Ramanathan for a game to Talkatora Club in New Delhi. Using his father's racquet, the first ball he hit went over the net and fell within the lines. "Father said it was a good augury, that I had good eyesight and sense of timing," recalls the soft-spoken champion. T K Ramanathan, who was rated third among Indian tennis players in the 1930s, resigned from his job with the government and returned to their village Tenkasi in Tamil Nadu, convinced his son would make a mark in tennis. The family later moved to Madras—the long trips to participate in tournaments across the country became tough to handle.

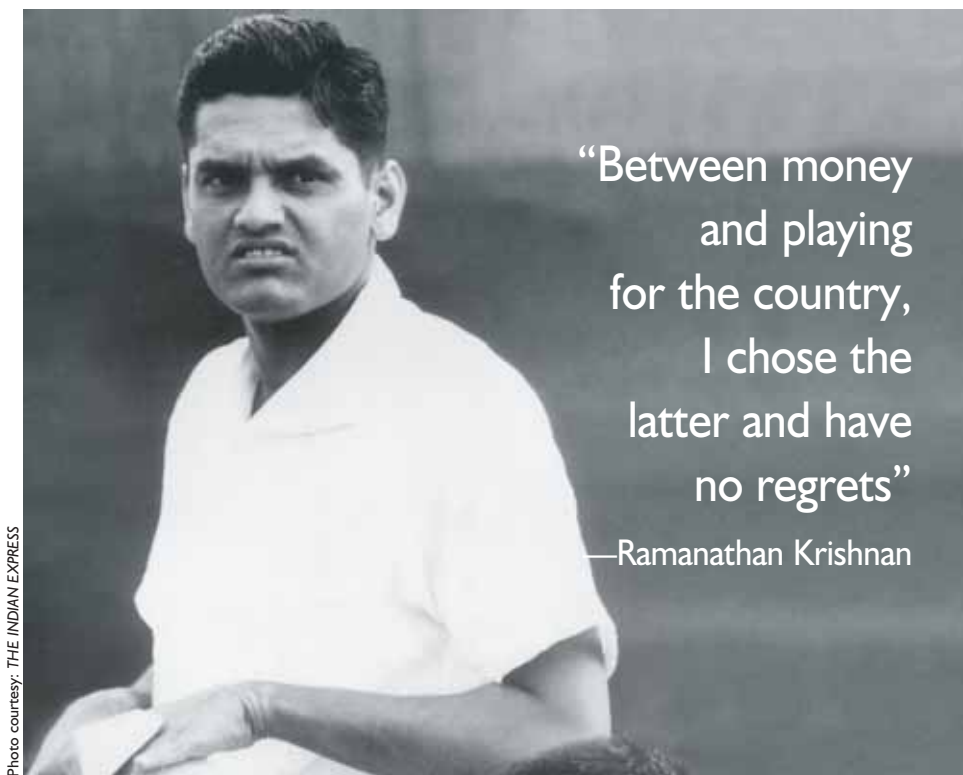
Ramanathan's commitment paid off. Krishnan became a junior champion, and went on to become the top Indian player of his era—at one time, he was even ranked No. 3 in the world. Playing for India in the Davis Cup, he played a total of 97 matches, and won 69. He took India to the Davis Cup final once—in 1966—but was not destined to bring it home. In singles, his record includes victories against Czech Jaroslav Drobný, and Australian legends Rod Laver and Roy Emerson.

Krishnan, though, feels his finest match was his 1966 Davis Cup encounter with Thomas Koch of Brazil in Kolkata where he beat Koch in five sets after being two sets down. "It was a golden summer," recalls Krishnan. "We were staying at the Grand Hotel. The morning after the match I

went for a haircut to Chowringhee. But the barber refused to charge me. 'You have won a great match for the country', he said. I crossed the road for a cool drink and the vendor said the same thing!"

Veteran sports journalist C V Narasimhan, who has also seen T K Ramanathan play, agrees that the match with Koch was Krish-

president] George Bush," says Indian ambassador to the US Lalit Mansingh, in whose office Krishnan's son-in-law Tirumurthi was once an assistant. That brings a laugh from Krishnan. "He was a left-hander. When I was in Houston in 1965, I played with him at a local club and taught him a trick or two." In 1959, when he was World No. 3, tennis player, promoter Jack



"Between money  
and playing  
for the country,  
I chose the  
latter and have  
no regrets"

—Ramanathan Krishnan

Photo courtesy: THE INDIAN EXPRESS

nan's best. "His service was never a powerful weapon," he remembers. "Krishnan would say, 'I won't serve any aces or double faults. I'll just put in my 'Ye Bhagwan' serve.' He had no lethal groundstrokes either. He won by consistency, angled volleys, and a graceful half volley drop shot now and again. His tennis was a thing of beauty, it was artistry."

Krishnan took his artistry across the globe for three decades. "Ask him how he knows [former US

Kramer offered him US\$ 150,000 to turn pro—"a great deal of money 45 years ago"—but he declined politely. "If one turned pro, Wimbledon and Davis Cup were certainly ruled out. Between money and playing for the country, I chose the latter and have no regrets," says Krishnan, remembering how he travelled extensively and played with his heart in place, without worrying about paying for his air tickets, which were either taken care of by the government or indirect



Photo courtesy: THE INDIAN EXPRESS

**Krishnan with son Ramesh**

sponsors. "I didn't have dollars playing on my mind and could concentrate on my game," he says. "I think the influx of vast sums of money into the game today has somehow taken some of the life out of its characters."

Krishnan was at the vanguard of Indian tennis players who made their mark on the international tennis scene. There were Krishnan's son Ramesh and Vijay Amritraj, much before Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi. "Like me, Ramesh won the Wimbledon Junior title, and reached the quarter-finals among seniors twice," says the proud father. "He also reached the quarter-finals at the US Open twice which I never did, and got the Arjuna Award and Padmashri. But he turned pro because the rules of the game had changed

with time." Father and son now run the Krishnan Tennis Centre in Chennai. They built it a decade ago as a payback to the game.

The centre has many promising players but, according to Krishnan, what they need most is exposure. "They should be able to travel around the world and play," he says. "That's where sponsors come in. Even cricket, with all the gate collections, requires sponsors now. In tennis, you see them only if you are already big enough." The 11 courts at the Krishnan Tennis Centre, though, have all been sponsored by top stars—each one is named after them. "When we went to the sponsors with the idea, they didn't even wait for us to finish our request and came forward with the money." Krishnan spends

three to four hours every day at the centre with his grandchildren—Ramesh's daughters Gayatri, 15, and Nandita, 13; and daughter Gauri's children Bhawani, 15, and Viswajeet, 12. That apart, he has a small cooking gas business. But sometimes, when he sits in front of the television to watch a recording of an old match, the past comes flooding back.

Like memories of his favourite player, Australian Ken Rosewall. "He won the US Open in 1956 and then in 1971, 15 years apart. No one in the history of tennis has done that." And the golden days when the KLM combination—Krishnan, Lal (Premjit), Mukherjea (Jaideep)—dominated the Indian tennis scene. "When only two could play in Davis Cup matches, the third player came to cheer," he says wistfully. "We were the best Davis Cup team India has ever produced. I am not talking about the quality of play, but the team, the kind of camaraderie and trust one needs to play together."

Eighty-five-year-old Dr K S N Rao in Behrampur, Orissa, remembers this camaraderie. "In 1965, we invited Krishnan and Lal to play some exhibition matches here," says the former amateur player who spent most of the evenings on the tennis court till he was 76. "We paid them a mere Rs 1,500! Krishnan beat Lal effortlessly." That evening, Dr Rao invited them over for dinner where Lal revealed that Krishnan had an injured wrist, saying, "Even with that, my captain, three years older than me, could beat me." Krishnan, says Dr Rao, just smiled. ■

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ZANDU

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I have to admit that I've always been in awe of Waheeda Rehman's beauty and grace. When I first entered the film industry, my secretary organised a screening of all her films. Most of them were classic Guru Dutt movies. I was astounded by her luminosity on screen, her sheer presence. Over the years, she has acted in over 70 films and in each one, whether her role was pivotal or a walk-on, she left an indelible impression. Through time, I also came to admire her innate dignity, the way she shielded her life and her emotions from the public eye, which thrives on speculation and innuendo about celebrities. I heard about her breakfast cereal business and her fundraising for Pratham, an NGO, and bumped into her many times socially but I hadn't met her for many years. As I stepped into her bungalow in suburban Bandra in Mumbai after two decades on a recent Saturday afternoon, I was really nostalgic, and nervous.

I needn't have been. Resplendent in burnt orange, her hair retro-coiffed and a bulky keychain jangling at her waist, she greeted me with a warm hug, instantly putting me at ease. At 65, she is as lovely as ever. And her living room, dominated by an exquisite portrait of her by M R Achrekar, the perfect foil for her muted elegance, with its casually strewn Persian carpets, low coffee tables and comfy sofas, opening out to a leafy patio overlooking the Arabian Sea. For over two hours, we talked, laughed, ate, caught up. It was a charmed afternoon.



# PORTRAIT OF A

**Tina Ambani** in  
conversation with  
Waheeda Rehman

# L A



DY

Excerpts from our conversation:

**Waheedaji, it's been quite a journey for you, from screen goddess to the goodwill ambassador for an NGO that works towards literacy. Tell us how you came to be involved with Pratham.**

I have been working with the Spastics Society for many years. I have also been involved with SOS Villages, where orphans are provided trained 'mothers'. I've always felt that for a country to be truly developed, it needs to be literate. I couldn't devote too much time to my own education either; I still feel that is my weak point. So in late 2000, when Madhav Chauhan, the founder of Pratham, approached me and asked me to be their goodwill ambassador, I decided to do it.

**What do your tasks include?**

Pratham provides education to slum children, starting with three-year-olds. We pick teachers from



Photo courtesy: THE INDIAN EXPRESS

Guru Dutt and Waheeda Rehman in *Sahib, Biwi Aur Ghulam*

**Your cereal business in Bangalore, Good Earth Foods, is also very successful. How did that come about?**

Once my children went off to boarding school, I wanted to do something worthwhile with my time. It was about 1987, even Kellogg's hadn't come to India yet, and I realised there was no

Now, after my husband passed away a few years ago, I spend more time in Mumbai and may well sell off the business.

**You also continue to act. Tell us about *Brides Wanted*, a recent 'crossover' English film you did. How was the experience?**

I did it for the heck of it, because it was shot in Bangalore. I was there at the time and the work was only for eight to 10 days. It was like a picnic! I play a grandmother and Girish Karnad plays my husband. Our grandson comes from the US in search of a girl and we help him look for one. In the process, we find out how India has changed, how modern the girls have become. It was a fun role.

**Don't you think the movie-making business has changed a lot, from your time to mine, and now?**

We have advanced a lot, the technology is great and actors are much smarter. They won't be taken for a ride. When I did *Om Jai Jagdish* for Anupam Kher a few years ago, I realised how

Guru Duttji knew you didn't have to be blatant to convey emotion, that you could do wonders with your eyes

the same area so that comfort levels are high. The teachers are often destitute girls who find a new meaning to life through their teaching. It is an empowering experience for everyone concerned. I often go to the slums and talk to the teacher and the parents. The concept has been a great success. I travel overseas a great deal to generate awareness and raise funds from NRIs.

wholesome breakfast cereal available on the Indian market. So I decided to make muesli. First, we supplied it in simple, plastic jars. Then, on a trip to the US, I saw actor Paul Newman's range of salad dressings with his face on all the bottles! Although I was a little shy about it at first, I decided to put my photo and signature on all the cartons. We packaged the line and it became very successful.

different things were. In the old days, after the shot was over, we would all sit and chat, but now everyone is on their mobiles. I wonder how much they talk, and to whom! Don't they get tired? I am sorry; I am old-fashioned. I carry a mobile too but I got mine only when my husband was in hospital. In the studio, I put it off and keep it in my make-up room. When I first came to the sets, I would sometimes find two phones ringing during the shot. I told Anupam I can't work if this carries on, it's so distracting.

I also feel the present generation of actors is very insecure. The way newcomers are arriving; they don't know whether they will still be around tomorrow. Another thing I find irritating is that all the actors have their own costume designers. When they come on the set, there is a clash of colours and designs. Now, how will a costume designer know what kind of scene is being shot, what is the look required? There should be some harmony on the set; the costumes should be approved by the director or cameraman. I feel professionalism among today's actors is often for themselves, not for the movie. It's something one has to get used to if you're working in the industry today.

**It's great that you still continue to act, though. Do you have any new films coming up?**

I have recently done one film, *Jiya Na Jaye*, directed by Parvathi Balagopalan, with Gul Panag and Milind Soman. I have an interesting role, small but different. I play a 60-plus woman,

who travels alone, snorkels, hikes in the Himalayas. I do films now only when I really feel like it, not that I am making a comeback. *Is umar me kya* comeback?

**Do you still watch Hindi films? And do you have any favourites?**

I still go to the theatre and watch films. I liked *Maqbool* a lot. I like Tabu, Kajol, Aamir and Shah Rukh Khan. I thought Abhishek [Bachchan] did very well in *Yuva*.

**But films aren't what they used to be. Does the vulgarity today bother you?**

I think it isn't necessary. When I go abroad, I see that even Americans want to wear Indian outfits. We have such lovely, sensuous saris and garments but they have been completely forgotten at home. These remixes are so bizarre. *Ghazal baj raha hai aur yeh log chaddi mein naach rahan hain!* (A ghazal is playing and these people are dancing in their underwear.)

**Your own background is very conservative.**

Being a Muslim from Tamil Nadu, one would expect it to be. Since my first movie was in Telugu and I speak Urdu, everyone thought I was from Hyderabad. My father was an IAS officer, and both my sister Sayeeda and I learnt Bharatanatyam. In those days, it was a big thing. My father was very broadminded; he used to say dance is an art. If we can go and watch people dance, why can't we let our children learn? When C Rajagopalachari, the first Viceroy of India, came to Visakhapatnam for a visit, my father was the district commissioner. They had to put on a show for him and they were told to use only local talent. Finally, my sister and I performed! The Viceroy was very impressed that two young Muslim girls could do justice to Bharatanatyam. We made it to the newspapers and the South Indian film industry made a note of it.



Photo courtesy: WAHEEDA REHMAN

**Waheeda Rehman with husband Shashi Rekhi in *Shagun***



**So, that's how it began for you.**

Yes, after my father passed away, I got an offer to do a film but my mother refused. She was waiting to get me married. Then, I got another offer just to do a dance sequence in a Telugu film called *Rojulu Marayi*. The director persuaded my mother, assuring her that girls from decent families do work in the film industry. I was 15 and begged my mother to say yes. The movie became a super hit, especially the dance.



**And Guru Duttji offered you a role in CID when you were 16...**

That was a funny thing. He was sitting with a distributor in Hyderabad and heard about this hit Telugu movie that was celebrating

completely above board. He signed me on a monthly salary basis for *CID* directed by Raj Khosla, then *Pyaasa*.

**How was the move to Bombay?**

It was hard in the beginning. Halfway through *CID*, *Pyaasa* started. Raj Khosla and the unit of *CID* were unhappy, so was I. I knew I was not doing a good job. Raj Khosla would say, "*Yeh ladki main kuch baat nahin hai, bahut thandi hai*." (There's nothing special about this girl, she's too cold.) When he saw *Jane kyaa tune kahi* [a song from *Pyaasa*] shot in Calcutta, he told Guru Duttji, "She didn't do well in my film. How come she did so well in this one?"

I still don't feel I'm 65. I love to swim, and I have gone on a hot air balloon safari. Now, I'm waiting to go to Mansarovar



its silver jubilee. The distributor told him about this Muslim girl called Waheeda Rehman who has become so popular with just one dance. He asked the distributor if the girl spoke Urdu, and the man said yes. He was in search of new faces and tried to set up a meeting through the producer of the movie, who then contacted my mother. Down South, we had never heard of Guru Dutt but we decided to meet him. He hardly spoke to me and my mother felt nothing would come of it. Six months later, when I was working opposite N T Rama Rao in a Telugu film, he sent for me to take a screen test. We found everything *seedha sadha*,

**Guru Duttji certainly brought out the best in you.**

I was a newcomer, with no acting experience. But being a dancer, my facial expressions were good. Guru Duttji had learnt dance from Uday Shankar. He would tell me to sit down, keep my chin down and look flirtatiously into the camera. I had no idea how it would translate onto screen, but he knew what the effect would be. Also, he would shoot the songs first. And then when I was relaxed, he would come to the scenes. He was very clever.

**He was a great director...**

He did not know it; that was the best part of it. He operated on

instinct. He was totally passionate about his films. He brought out the best in all his actors. Take Rehman, for instance. He could not start a sentence with the letter 'k'; he would always fumble. So in *Pyaasa*, he changed the dialogue around to accommodate this. In that film, when my character gets the news that Vijay, her lover, is killed under the train tracks, I was supposed to scream. But I just couldn't. Guru Duttji was amazed. He said it was the first time that he'd seen a heroine who couldn't scream! But he worked out an alternative. I just crunched up the newspaper in my hand, closed my eyes and slid down. It was even more powerful than if I had actually screamed. On the other hand, there was Mala Sinha. He used to tell me that he had to control her since she used to go overboard. He used to balance between both of us. He knew you didn't have to be blatant to convey emotion on screen. That you could do wonders with your eyes.

**Among all the roles you played, which was your favourite?**

Rosie in *Guide*. It was a mature, different subject. It was not a love story, yet there was romance. Rosie is married to an old man, she commits adultery. People thought I was crazy to do the role, that I was jeopardising my career. I insisted on doing it, and Vijay Anand, the director, did a great job. The film also allowed me the opportunity to show off my dancing skills for the first time. Till that time, nobody believed that I could dance. They said, you don't walk or talk like a dancer, like Padminiji.

**Is there any role you missed out on?**

Shyam Benegal had offered me



Photo courtesy: THE INDIAN EXPRESS

**Waheeda Rehman in *Patjhar***

*Ankur*. Before that I had done a small budget 'art film' in Malayalam and Hindi called *Trisandhya* that never got released. So I was disheartened with the whole art film genre and refused *Ankur*. Then I saw the movie with Shabana Azmi and said to myself, 'You made a mistake.'

**Amitabh and Abhishek Bachchan both call you their favourite actress. How do you describe this appeal that transcends time, generations?**

It's very flattering, of course. What else can I say?

**I've heard that your beauty inspired poet Shakeel Badayuni to pen the lyrics of *Chaudvin ka chand*. Is it true?**

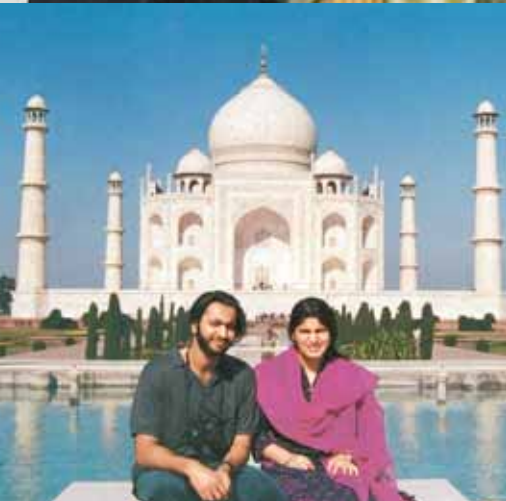
I've heard it too, but I have no idea if it's true.

**You decided to get married at 34. How did you meet your husband Shashi Rekhi?**

I first met my husband when we worked together in a film called *Shagun*. He was known by his screen name Kamaljeet then. Later, he became disheartened with the film industry and migrated to Canada, where he started a garment-export business. He used to collaborate with [late producer] Yash Johar who was also into garment exports. I met him in 1974 at Yash and his wife Hiroo's home. Slowly, we became reacquainted and one day, out of the blue, he asked me to marry him. I was initially hesitant but Yash and Hiroo persuaded me.

**Did you leave the industry after you got married?**

I had already signed on *Kabhi*



Photos courtesy: WAHEEDA REHMAN

**Above, Rehman with daughter Kashvi; Kashvi and brother Sohail**

*Kabhi and Adalat*. I told Yashji [Chopra] that I was getting married but he insisted I complete the film. I got married in 1974 and moved to Bangalore about seven years later. But I continued to act. I did films like *Coolie* and *Namak Halal*, I started doing character roles. Increasingly, the children began to take up my time.

#### **Tell us something about them.**

My son, Sohail, is studying animation and special effects. He's 29. And my daughter Kashvi is 27; she did her film studies in Toronto. Both of them studied in

Toronto because my husband had taken Canadian citizenship but now they are both here in Mumbai. Kashvi is now a script supervisor on Ketan Mehta's *The Rising*. She keeps raving about the English actor Toby Williams, saying, "Mummy, sometimes Aamir Khan forgets his Hindi dialogue, but he never does!"

#### **Apart from spending time with your children, what is your daily routine?**

I get up quite early and do my yoga, my prayers. I have my coffee, read the papers and then the housework starts. I run my own errands like going to the bank. I have a lot of stamina.

#### **I believe you suffered from spondylitis.**

I've had to learn to live with it. Yoga, of course, has helped tremendously. When I went to Bangalore, I would get up with severe pain. Painkillers didn't help. Then, I started going to a branch of the Bihar School of Yoga and it improved the quality of my life completely. In fact, when my son was in Toronto, he got a slip disc by over-exercising. He couldn't walk straight, couldn't even carry a book. When he came back to India, I got him started on yoga and he's recovered now. Once, right after my husband had a stroke and we brought him home from the hospital, my mother-in-law broke her hipbone. I was on the run from home to hospital. But I would take 20 minutes out for yoga and it kept me centred.

#### **You seem to take everything in life in your stride.**

Tina, I accept everything. Problems come knocking at everybody's door, health, finances, whatever. When we have prob-

lems, we feel time stands still. But think about it. The clock is going at the same speed, tick tick tick... You just need patience to get through it. The hands have to move, it's the law of nature.

#### **Tell us something about the real Waheeda. Something people might not know about you. I've heard that you tend to be absent-minded.**

Where did you hear that? [Giggles.] Yes, sometimes. I sometimes go and sit in the wrong car in a parking lot. And I've often given my driver the wrong instructions. Once I asked my driver to go to Khandala when actually I needed to go to the studio in Kandivali. Other things people may not know... I learnt how to cook after I got married and if I was making anything special, like dessert, I wouldn't let anyone disturb me in the kitchen. My kids would say, "Mummy is screaming so she must be making dessert!" I am better now. Also, most people wouldn't know how adventurous I am. I love to swim. I have gone on a hot air balloon safari. Now, I am waiting to go to Mansarovar. I still don't feel I am 65. I am always ready to learn new things, see new places.

#### **Looking back, is there anything in life you wish you could have done differently?**

I used to learn music and then I left it. I may start again. I could have been more careful about the movies I chose, I missed out on so many opportunities. Essentially, I was never in love with myself. I never really felt the need to indulge myself. I have no regrets about my life though. That's the kind of person I am. ■



# BELIEF TRIGGERS THE POWER TO DO

On January 16, 2005 it inspired over  
1,000 silvers to cover a distance of 5 km.

This year's Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon was nothing short of a phenomenon. Over 1,000 silver citizens resplendent in yellow Harmony T-shirts participated in the Harmony-initiated 5 km Senior Citizens' Run, organised in tandem with the marathon.

On hand to help with facilities, first-aid and support were Hindustan Lever Ltd (Foods Division, Mumbai); ITC Ltd (Foods Division, Bangalore); Monginis Foods Pvt Ltd; Lions Club of Golden Goregaon (NW); Proline T-shirts; Prime Site (a division of Mudra Communications Pvt Ltd); Sir Harkishondas Hospital, Mumbai; volunteers and security from the Reliance Group; Standard Chartered Bank; Procam International Ltd; National Gym, Azad Maidan; various senior citizens' associations and groups; and old-age homes.

We would like to thank the celebrities who came along to cheer the silvers, including the Baghban cast Ravi and Renu Chopra, Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini, Paresh Rawal, Viju Khote and Swaroop Sampat. Running along to the delight of the crowds were Adi Godrej and Jaya and Abhishek Bachchan.

What each one contributed was belief. Belief, without which 5 km would have been one step too far.



# Quick

Over 1,000 silvers came together to celebrate age at the 5-km Senior Citizens' Run, held in tandem with the Mumbai Marathon 2005, writes **Aparna Narayanan**

**T**hey ran, waving little flags emblazoned with support for various causes. They walked, hoisting placards that declared life begins at 60. They ambled, sharing in the camaraderie of an unprecedented gathering of senior citizens. They limped when they couldn't walk any more, testing their own powers of endurance. They participated, most of all, for the simple joy of it.

For the over 1,000 seniors gathered in Azad Maidan near CST station in Mumbai on January 16, the second annual Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon was a historic moment. As the yellow T-shirts they had pulled over saris and shirts made clear, they had come together to celebrate age—by taking part in the first-ever 5-km Harmony Run for Senior Citizens, held in tandem with the marathon.

As the first rays of the sun lit the carved Gothic tower of the municipal building opposite CST station, the countdown reached zero and the seniors surged

forward. A charged cry rose from the assembled crowds. "Nana-nani, run" they cheered. And then, echoing the sentiments on the signs held by seniors, they cried, "Abhi to hum jawan hain." CS Chopra, 62, from suburban Andheri, had woken up at 4 am—a full two hours before his usual hour of rising—to make it to the marathon. A heart patient, Chopra's participation was intended to make a point. "We want to keep ourselves fit," he said. "There's no question of winning the game."

A spirit of non-competitiveness dominated the mood of the participants. A trio of frail, wispy-haired women in saris and chappals shuffled hand in hand, unhurried but somewhat bewildered by the hooting hordes lining the roads of South Mumbai. "Maja hai," said Mangala Karamdikar, one of the trio. The 75-year-old, who flashed broad gaps between her teeth with every smile, was somewhat sceptical about her own ability to complete the run; but she reminisced at length about visits to hilltop forts in Raigad and



Daulatabad in her youth. “There were no buses in those days,” she said. “We trekked.” For others, the event provided a chance to look ahead. “We have an opportunity to judge ourselves,” said Raja Karambelkar, a 73-year-old retired accountant from Shivaji Park. “Then we can proceed with full confidence in our future life.” Karambelkar described the marathon as a “special experience” that beat television or film watching, or “sitting somewhere with a melancholy face”. Walking slowly but purposefully, he declared, “I will walk 5 km every day.”

Some participants enthusiastically chose to run the distance, foremost among whom was a senior in a Hanuman costume. He zigged and zagged up and down the roads, brandishing a mace. The crowds roared, spurring him to greater heights of creativity. “Jai Shri Ram,” he yelled. Also in fancy dress were the D’Souzas, who had travelled from Jalgaon to Mumbai a week ago for the marathon. Attired as Sai Baba and Mother Teresa, they exhorted the crowds to donate money for the victims of the tsunami disaster.

Along Marine Drive, which was reached approximately 30 minutes after the start, a light-hearted mood prevailed. The energy levels of several

participants had clearly flagged, but their nimble-footed attempts to cross the gaps in the median along the road were foiled by sharp-eyed co-participants. “No short cuts,” the latter cried, eliciting laughter from bystanders. “No cheating.”

Belly laughs resounded periodically along the entire route, courtesy more than 150 seniors representing seven ‘laughter clubs’ in the city. They stopped at key junctions to demonstrate their philosophy—throwing their torsos back, throwing their arms up, and laughing, quite simply, for the sake of laughing. “By joining laughter clubs, one becomes automatically healthy,” said Kishore Kuvarala, 58, a resident of Babulnath. “Laughter gives mind fitness.”

As the seniors trooped past Flora Fountain and then across the finish line, the onlookers gathered thickly behind bamboo barricades broke into raucous cheers and claps and whistles. A man with a makeshift cardboard bullhorn belted out what had become the slogan of the hour: *Abhi to hum jawan hain*. Another played the mouth organ. Someone else released a balloon. “Thank you, thank you very much,” said a stately senior, acknowledging the adulation with a wave of the bottled water clutched in his hands. ■





## I MAY NOT BE FAST, BUT I AIN'T LAST

Mumbai came out to cheer its silvers—and they did not disappoint. Playing to the crowd with spunky banners, turning it on for the camera, lending a helping hand to friends, old and new, riding the wave, proving that energy creates energy.







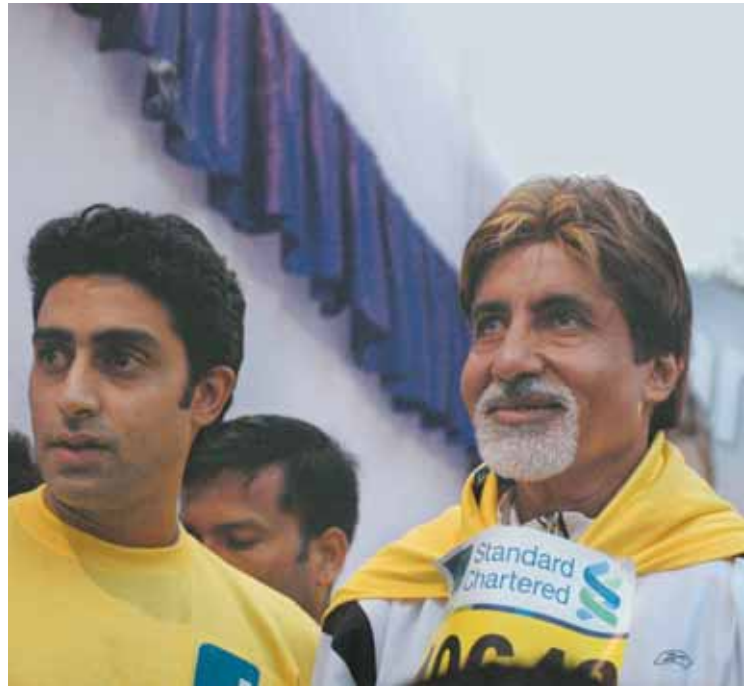
## ONE CHANCE IS ALL YOU NEED

They ran, but they were never alone. For the doctors from Harkishondas Hospital, it was an opportunity to be part of a life-enhancing event, for the volunteers present, a day they added fuel to silver fire.

Photos: ANCHAL KEJRIWAL, PRADNYA GULWANI,  
YASH GORE & JAYANTO SAHA

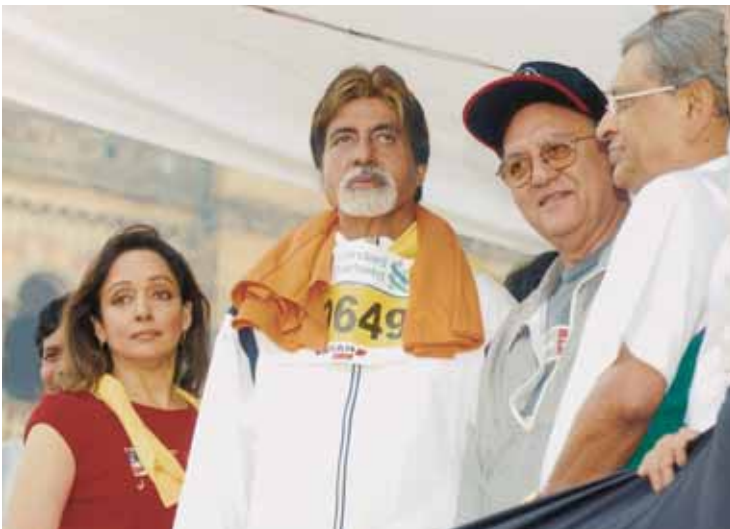






## I HAVE MET MY HERO, AND HE IS ME

Top-draw actors and corporate leaders in their yellow-like-blazing-sunshine T-shirts got bystanders hooting and shutters clicking overtime. For the participants, they added sparkle to the magic of the moment.



In 1999, the Indian Government decided to improve the quality of life of the country's elderly. The result: the National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP). It was announced with fanfare and covered the gamut—financial security, healthcare, safety, shelter, the works. The first term of the policy came and went with little to show, with most of the issues pointed out remaining unaddressed. Now, its second term—2004-2009—has begun.

From financial security through viable investment avenues and second careers to good health with systematic geriatric care, safety with the support of the community and state and mobility facilitated by a barrier-free environment, the concerns of Indian silvers are substantial. We believe these concerns need to be urgently addressed.

We believe silvers in India need to be equally aware of their rights, and the power they wield. We want to translate this latent force into concrete action—through the Harmony Manifesto. The manifesto, our alternative to the NPOP, is a blueprint for action. This month, we will present it to the Indian Government, state governments and other key institutions.

**Here are some highlights:**

### **HEALTH—PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL**

Geriatrics is based on the premise that problems of the aged are unique, and best dealt with by a multidisciplinary team of specialists and nurses—termed caregivers—trained to be sensitive to the needs of senior citizens. Comprehensive programmes are chalked out, the

# THE HARMON

Think about it. The rapidly escalating population of senior citizens stands at about 80 million, and is expected to rise to 177 million by 2025. This may add up to just 7 per cent of the total population now, but the future implications are enormous. Especially because the number has doubled in just 25 years—it took France 120 years. Diversity in terms of age, gender, income and work participation also intensifies the need for attention.

In Britain last year, in one of the biggest coordinated protests ever staged in the country, thousands of senior citizens came together to present the first ever Pensioners' Manifesto to more than 150 British MPs. The message was clear: Want our votes? Give us what we need.

emphasis being on physical medicine, remedial exercise, counselling, occupational therapy and recreation with typical ailments like Alzheimer's, arthritis, Parkinson's and heart disease being factored in.

As things stand, a few government hospitals in India do boast of separate facilities for senior citizens, but very often they are confined to holding weekly clinics for check-ups and medicines. Currently, there is no strategy in place to develop an environment for the care of the elderly—neither in the National Policy on Older Persons nor the Central Government Health Scheme. It's time for hospitals to see geriatric care as an opportunity, not a burden.

### Proposals

- Health programmes for people in different age groups cannot be the same. The needs of a 60-year-old are different from that of an 80-year-old and those aged 100 and over.
  - To begin with, the discipline of geriatric medicine must be introduced in primary, secondary and tertiary health services at both private and government levels.
  - Within five years, say experts, every medical college could have a geriatric medicine department. These must be monitored and reviewed constantly to stay effective.
  - Yet, the Medical Council of India hasn't recognised the first ever MD programme in Geriatric Medicine (launched in 1997) at Chennai's Christian Medical College.
- Scheme (CGHS) is strangled with red tape. All medical officers serving under CGHS should be given short-term orientation to care for the elderly; the present system of indenting drugs that calls for repeated visits needs to be made senior-friendly; and the CGHS needs to create additional bed facilities for seniors, with a provision for admission even to private hospitals in case of emergencies.
- Emergency drugs should be available to the elderly on producing voter identity cards—the idea of using a voter card should be encouraged instead of spending more on issuing separate senior citizens' identity cards.
  - The government must create and maintain facilities like day-care centres and long-stay centres in small towns and cities.

# Y MANIFESTO

- The government should provide quality health services close to home—especially in rural areas. Services should be complete in terms of caregivers, consultation, drugs and rehabilitation.
- According to reports, Mediclaim policy-providers have been incurring losses because some policyholders are misusing the facility with help from hospitals. The process of using the policy, for the sake of those who genuinely need it, needs to be streamlined and made foolproof.
- The Directorate of Health Services needs to sponsor a survey to study the most 'common health problems' and 'commonly needed medicines' for the elderly from all sections of society.
- The Central Government Health

### SHELTER AND SAFETY

Behind the closed doors of various police headquarters across India, officials are still in the process of upgrading basic security schemes for senior citizens. These are based on the simple premise of registering yourself and your domestic help with the local police station. Statistics reveal that a majority of murders of senior citizens take place indoors, perpetrated by domestic help. The need of the hour is a community effort.

### Proposals

- All senior citizens across the country should be brought under a single identification system—ideally, the existing voter identity card system.
- Every city needs a local and active help line dedicated to counselling seniors

on social, health and safety issues. The numbers should be publicised and seniors' participation should be encouraged through awareness programmes coordinated either by the state government or NGOs.

- Some initiatives that have generated awareness: preventive and community policing, the neighbourhood watch scheme and the School Children Contact Programme, whereby students are motivated to pay weekend visits to the elderly in their neighbourhood. There should be a method to effectively monitor the progress.
- The system of registering seniors and their domestic help with the local police needs to be given priority. From this, a 'crime-stopper' cell can emerge where the police, with its intimate knowledge of its area, can pre-empt crime.

## MOBILITY

The term 'barrier-free environment' has come into use in India only in the last decade. The Disability Act, enforced in 1995, and the NPOP acknowledge the need for easy access to services and public places. For its part, the Ministry of Urban Development has circulated Model Building Bylaws among the various state governments and municipal corporations. While not much can be done in buildings already constructed, the Ministry of Urban Development's Delhi Urban Art Commission doesn't approve the construction of any public building that disregards access guidelines. Most new constructions are also being fitted with ramps and other facilities providing easy access, but much still remains to be done.

### Proposals

- The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has not only made the metro accessible by installing 'grab' rails but also constructed an overhead ramp at Tis Hazari station, fixed handrails inside toilets at stations, and installed ticket gates exclusively for disabled

passengers. The Indian Railways needs to replicate this exercise across India.

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has roped in the Council of Architecture, New Delhi, to discuss the concept of a universal design in cities and new townships that would respond effectively to any user. Inclusion, not exclusion, should be the agenda.
- The introduction of barrier-free design in the curricula of architecture schools is already on paper. It must be implemented immediately.
- A 1998 Supreme Court judgment has directed all airports to install 'ambulifts'—platforms designed to accommodate a wheelchair that can be elevated by the press of a button—and aisle chairs (smaller wheelchairs to fit the aisle of an airplane). While aisle chairs are being used at most airports, there has been no initiative to install ambulifts. To begin with, the 14 cities (metros and mini metros) for which the order was passed must get ambulifts.
- Able Disable All People Together, a Mumbai-based citizens' action group, has evaluated 50 public places in Mumbai for accessibility. Action on the suggestions—redesigning toilets, building ramps adhering to the correct slope and handlebars, non-slip floor finishes and better signage—is still awaited. Similar suggestions need to be implemented in other metros and mini-metros.
- Action is also awaited on the 2003 Mumbai High Court order to fit 30 BEST buses with lower chassis that will enable a lower floor. BEST and other bus transport companies across India should gradually shift to this new system for all their buses.

## FAST-TRACK JUSTICE

As the expression suggests, fast-track justice is justice made available as speedily as possible. Aimed at bolstering public confidence in law, besides expediting justice, it calls for a fair hearing at reasonable expense. A 1999

ruling by the Supreme Court laid down the guidelines for speedy disposal of cases involving senior citizens. The directive was communicated to all high courts in India. Also, Article 226 and Article 41 of the constitution say special care has to be bestowed upon senior citizens.

### Proposals

- Every High Court should issue directions giving priority to all cases pertaining to senior citizens.
- The reemployment of competent retired judges should also be undertaken.
- In each state, subordinate courts should report reasons for delay in clearing cases that are pending; for six months in case of criminal matters and two years for civil matters. The reasons should be scrutinised by the High Court, which in turn should guide subordinate courts to carry out speedy clearance.
- The Himachal Pradesh Maintenance of Parents and Dependents Bill, 1996 was passed to provide speedy relief to old parents unable to maintain themselves—it makes it mandatory for children to maintain their elderly parents. Maharashtra has a similar Bill. Yet, they are not being referred to in practice.

## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Silver care is a huge initiative. To get somewhere, both the government and society have to work together. Strong backing from the NGO sector is also imperative. While senior citizens' associations are already active at neighbourhood and community levels, they are limited in terms of infrastructure, manpower, funds and organisation. NGOs, on the other hand, have the capability to identify disabled seniors, isolate required products (like hearing aids) or treatments (surgery for cataracts) and procure adequate sponsorship.

### Proposals

- NGOs can mediate in family disputes. One solution is to empower resident welfare organisations to resolve shelter and security-related problems through community pressure, just like panchayats in villages.
- The government should include more NGOs in its circle of action, to maintain records, operate phone lines for counselling, and use its manpower (voluntary or paid) to route government aid.
- Though some NGOs may face a money crunch in including the elderly in their list of priorities, they can work around it. For instance, instead of building new systems, an NGO that is already focussing on women in reproductive age and children—about one-third of the total population—can be asked to accommodate another 4 to 5 per cent by including elderly women in their base. This makes it more feasible in terms of cost and time.

## FINANCE

What did the Budget last year bring for silvers? Just the Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme, which came into effect from the first week of August 2004. Initially available through post-offices, it is now available through PSU banks—like ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank—that can also now handle the Public Provident Fund Scheme. The mission isn't accomplished though. Harmony had written to Finance Minister P Chidambaram with some suggestions that would benefit silver citizens. We list them for you:

### Proposals

- There should be direct tax incentives to ensure that seniors remain in a position to retain a minimum level of tax-free income.
- There should be direct tax incentives to corporations, the business community and society at large to encourage them to contribute to welfare schemes for seniors.
- We need direct tax incentives for

## THE NATIONAL POLICY ON OLDER PERSONS

*Here are some specific suggestions for NPOP's second term:*

- The elderly need to be segmented in terms of age, gender and work sector. Branding everyone over 60 'aged' is too simplistic. Even among senior citizens, we need to distinguish between the comparatively 'young'—that is, people between the ages of 60 and 70, who are healthy—and the older senior citizens. Further classification in terms of gender can lead to brackets like 'widowed' or 'widowed and homeless'. Efforts then need to be made to provide each segment with the facilities it needs.
- Though studies and research projects on the elderly in India are carried out regularly, we can achieve concrete results only by integrating findings with action-oriented/active programmes.
- The NPOP should be modified to include employment creation for pensioners. There should be cells set up for counselling and bureaus to facilitate employment.
- The idea of a national institute of health research, caregiver-training and documentation—mentioned in the NPOP—must be realised in its second term.

those on whom seniors are financially dependent.

- Apart from the new Senior Citizens' Saving Scheme—a welcome measure—there should be more tax-friendly investment avenues that offer better market returns to the elderly.
- The interest earned on the Senior Citizens' Saving Scheme should be non-taxable.
- Medical expenses and house rent could be completely tax-deductible for the elderly.
- There should be no ceiling on investment in policies that give good returns.

### SENIOR WORKFORCE

There are over 80 million senior citizens in India today, and of this the silver workforce is estimated at 20 million. But where are the jobs? Australia, with a population of over 19 million, less than that of New Delhi and Mumbai combined, is already thinking about its ageing workforce. Last month, 500 top companies received a letter from the government urging them to review policies about hiring and firing senior workers. Kevin Andrews, Federal

Workplace Relations Minister, suggested an audit of the age profile of their workforce and the changes expected over the next five to 10 years, and a new attitude. India could use one too.

### Proposals

- Retirement age should be abolished.
- The government is rightly concerned about the young and unemployed—but it needs to broaden its perspective to include the 'old and unemployed'.
- The public and private sectors should be encouraged to respond favourably to job applications from seniors.
- A 'grey skill bank'—a special employment exchange for senior citizens into which both the government and private sector can dip—could be created.
- The blueprint instituted by the Health Ministry to appoint retired bureaucrats and army personnel as 'district health managers' should be implemented and other ministries and departments should follow their lead. ■

*For full transcript of the manifesto, go to [www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org)*

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# Bone weary

Osteoporosis, a silent disease causing brittle bones, affects every third woman and eighth man over the age of 50. It's time we recognise it as a threat, says **Nilanjana Sengupta**



The World Health Organisation (WHO) first technically defined osteoporosis in 1994. It's an unseen and dangerous process that leaches calcium from our bones, decreasing bone mineral density. It causes back pain as it progresses and, later, curving of the spine and loss of height—sometimes as much as six inches. Osteoporosis primarily affects the spinal vertebrae and bones of the hip and wrist, causing them to shrink. Frequent fractures are a common result. In extreme cases, it leads to fatal disabilities.

## WORLDWIDE ALERT

The WHO launched the Bone and Joint Decade in 84 countries, including India, four years ago. The world has begun to wake up to the danger. In America, for example, the US Preventive Services Task Force recommended routine osteoporosis screening for all women aged 65 years or older three years ago. In India, there is still no clear data available. "A few small surveys have been conducted in urban areas and a guesstimate would be that only 10 per cent of people are aware of the problem," says Dr Sushil Sharma, chairman of the Arthritis Foundation of India.

**I**n January 2005, representatives of the Switzerland-based International Osteoporosis Foundation and Delhi-based NGO Arthritis Foundation of India asked the Indian Government to accord osteoporosis 'serious status'—the same as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Osteoporosis, a 'silent disease' causing brittle bones, affects every third woman and every eighth man over the age of 50. It took the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare five years to accord AIDS priority status. By then, India had become one of the most infected countries in the world. It will be tragic if osteoporosis is snagged by the same red tape.

"Till a few years ago, backaches and joint pains were dismissed as part of ageing," points out Dr Sanjeev Jain, consultant orthopaedic at Hiranandani Hospital in Mumbai. "Awareness about detection and prevention of osteoporosis is still abysmal." Low awareness is also a problem within the medical fraternity itself. Radiologists and general practitioners often neglect the signs at the initial stage rather than recommending the patient to an orthopaedic surgeon right away. Doctors, however, blame it on the system, with only the International Osteoporosis Foundation publishing journals and mailing circulars to healthcare personnel and physicians.

## READING THE SIGNS

The key to early detection is awareness among both doctors and patients. Sixty-one-year-old Neeruben Sonpal, who lives in Raniganj, a small town in West Bengal, suffered a relentless backache for two years. A series of general practitioners had prescribed pain-killers and bed rest—none of it worked. Her spine had begun to curve, giving her a stooped posture. The simple action of opening the refrigerator and reaching in worsened the condition. Finally, she visited a specialist in Mumbai, who diagnosed her with osteoporosis following a bone density test.

Now in her fourth year of treatment, Sonpal has learnt the right way to bend and pick up things from a low height and the right way to sit. She keeps aside an hour everyday for light limb exercises. “My doctors tell me that if I fall now, I won’t recover,” she says. “My bone density, though improved, is still low. I take my own time to climb stairs, go to the bathroom and alight and embark trains when I travel to visit my children in Ahmedabad.”

Medical intervention after a fall can also reveal osteoporosis. “A fragility fracture is often the first sign,” says Dr Nilen Shah, consultant orthopaedic and joint replacement surgeon at Bombay Hospital. “This occurs with a low-impact fall or pressure, which normally would not even lead to cracks in the bone like a hug, or even while coughing.”

Dhara Avatramani, 73, discovered her condition when she fell while walking in the park near her home in Dadar, Mumbai. After being treated for fractures in the hip and forearm, she discontinued her physiotherapy. That was a wrong move. “Most patients feel that the treatment is over once the

**Diagnosed three years ago, Anant Nene spreads awareness among people about osteoporosis**



CECIL

**Neeruben Sonpal suffered a backache for two years before she was diagnosed with osteoporosis**

fracture heals, but the underlying problem of osteoporosis remains, making the patient vulnerable to another fracture,” warns Dr Shah.

## DETECTION AND TREATMENT

In fact, treatment comprising medication and exercises needs to continue for two to three years, sometimes for life, depending on the extent of bone loss. Normal X-rays cannot detect osteoporosis. Diagnosis and medication entails measuring the patient’s bone mass—the most reliable method being the dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry, or DEXA scan, which costs about Rs 3,000. The spine, hip, wrist, and sometimes fingers or the heel bone, are scanned for bone density mass. In some cases, doctors even order a whole body scan.

Results are then compared with optimal bone mass. After the age of 30, the rate of bone loss exceeds the rate of new bone formation. “If one has not reached the maximum mass by 30, it’s a losing battle against osteoporosis,” says Dr Arvind Chopra, director and consulting rheumatologist at the Centre for Rheumatic Diseases, Pune, and national secretary of Bone and Joint Decade - India.

RAHUL GAJJAR

# Managing osteoporosis



## EAT RIGHT

You need calcium to help maintain healthy strong bones throughout your life. Indian diet is low on calcium. Some foods you can include in your diet are:

- Almonds
- Broccoli
- Orange juice
- Milk
- Yoghurt
- Cheese
- Ice cream
- Cabbage
- Sesame seeds
- Soybeans
- Tofu (soybean curd)

Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium. Good sources are:

- 15 minutes of exposure to sunlight
- Egg yolks
- Saltwater fish
- Fortified dairy products
- Vitamin and mineral supplements



## FITNESS TIPS

If you have low bone density or osteoporosis, you should protect your spine by avoiding exercises and activities that flex, bend, or twist your spine. Examples of physical activity that will increase flexibility and improve balance are:

Swimming



Walking



Dance/aerobics



Cycling



Climbing stairs



Lifting weights





**A spine (left) and compressed and curved vertebrae showing the effects of osteoporosis**

For women, the most popular treatment, though controversial, is hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The process replaces the oestrogen lost after menopause—a prime cause for osteoporosis. Besides strengthening the skeleton, halving the risk of hip fracture and reducing the risk of spinal fracture by up to 75 per cent, HRT is said to have the added benefit of protecting against heart disease and stroke. However, there have been cases where bone mass depletion is much faster after stopping HRT. Also, it can also cause uterine bleeding and increased risk of breast cancer over a period of time.

This apart, there's a new class of synthetic oestrogens known as selective oestrogen receptor modulators that emulate the oestrogen molecule with slight modifications and mitigate side effects. Drugs called bisphosphonates also help reduce fractures. All these, however, are slow acting. Faster-acting drugs like parathyroid hormone Analog come in the form of injections, costing between Rs 35,000 and Rs 40,000 per month.

For their part, orthopaedics maintain that prevention is the best way out since drugs may reduce bone loss, but they cannot rebuild bones. They recommend a combination of exposure to natural sunlight for Vitamin D production, mild

physical exercise for automatic bone density enhancement and avoidance of acidic foods and beverages—like soft drinks, caffeine drinks, added sugars—that strip away bone minerals (*see box*).

Baroda-based Anant Nene now swears by the diet-exercise formula. The 67-year-old's job as president of the Pest Control Association of India has always kept him on his toes. Despite his active lifestyle, he was diagnosed with osteoporosis three years ago after he suffered severe back pain walking his Alsatian one morning. Now, during his walks, he tries to spread awareness among the people he encounters along the way.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare would do well to learn from his example. So far in India, it is NGOs like the Arthritis Foundation of India and Osteoporosis Society of India that hold health camps and lectures on the subject. Bone and Joint Decade - India is also trying to bring orthopaedics, endocrinologists, rheumatologists and patients together, and plans research on the prevalence of bone and joint diseases. Meanwhile, the government is still to take a decision on including osteoporosis in the National Health Programme. Watch this space. ■

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*For more information, see page 95*

# Down to the bone

Rallyist **Kishie Singh** recounts his wife

Neena's battle with osteoporosis



Photo courtesy: KISHIE SINGH

**N**ever mind what it means, I didn't even know how to spell it. But today, osteoporosis is an important word in my life. I first flipped through the dictionary for it when my wife Neena was diagnosed with it. It's a Greek word that means 'porous bones'. It became clearer after consultations with the doctor. "Lady, your bones need immediate attention," he said. We led an active life in a slow-burn city like Chandigarh, going for morning walks, even travelling to faraway places by road—I am a rallyist and she loves the mountains.

About two years ago, when Neena was 60, the first signs of her crumbly bones began to surface. A sportsperson since her schooldays, she has put on only four kilos in the 30 years I've known her. At first, she complained about stiffness in her legs while taking the stairs. Then, it was her upper arms—she couldn't reach behind her back to close her bra strap. Sitting cross-legged on the floor became an effort. And then she was complaining about not being able to kneel to say her prayers at the Golden Temple during a recent visit there. That's when we consulted our family

physician. He advised us to see an orthopaedic consultant, who suggested a bone density test—they make you dip your foot in a water tub wired to a computer that measures your bone density. The report showed that osteoporosis had set in. Neena was advised to take up hormone treatment but she opted instead for a weekly dose of osteophos (a drug that helps calcium absorption) and a daily dose of calcium, vitamins and painkillers. She was asked to switch over to a diet rich in calcium and fibre, and do special exercises.

But she began to look over-cautious all the time—the doctor had told us that one in every two women and one in four men over 50 have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. She would often have trouble getting out of the car and it would take her a few moments to straighten her legs. Painkillers provided only temporary relief. There were side effects too. She started having bouts of acidity and, quietly, blood pressure set in.

Four months ago, Neena started complaining of pain above her heart when she was lying down. We immediately rushed her to

hospital. The doctor put her on a drip with medication to control her gastritis and blood pressure. The next two days were reserved for X-rays, scans, MRIs. Neena was diagnosed as suffering from a very severe form of osteoporosis, which, if left untreated, would increase the risk of fractures. In no uncertain words, we were told that she could fracture her legs standing, or even sleeping.

A daily injection, Forteo, was recommended to stimulate bone mineral density—she has been self-administering it for two months. The only time I have left her alone in these two years was to go for the Raid de Himalaya car rally in October 2004. It's reassuring, though, that the condition is manageable.

I now tell everyone I know, men and women, to take the bone density test if they are over 40. Or else osteoporosis may stop you in your tracks. Having children and menopause lead to depletion of calcium. How healthy or fit you have been is of no consequence, Neena is the best example of that. The first person I warned was my 21-year-old daughter, who lives in Canada. After all, forewarned is forearmed. ■



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**EK BALM TEEN KAAM**

# Ananda ashram!

Shameem Akthar explains how yoga can banish the blues and flush you with joy



**IN YOGA, ANANDA OR JOY CAN** be both a physical and mental manifestation. If you nosedive physically, yoga's meditative practices can revive you. And if you hit the blues mentally, yoga can prop you up physically.

When the heart centre, called *anahata chakra* in yoga, is blocked, it can cause depression, anger and coldness. Meditative practices that combine breath consciousness with soothing movements, like the mountain pose (*parvatasana*), prove to be rejuvenating since they remove emotional and physical bottlenecks. When a person is blue, the breathing pattern feels the first blow. It becomes shallow, running on weak capacity. Thus, the body not only reflects the mental state, but conspires to aggravate it.

In yoga, breathing practices (*pranayama*) like bellows breath (*bhastrika*), skull-cleansing (*kapalbhati*) and abdominal breathing are part of the first line of offence, reviving the respiratory pattern. In these breathing practices, the diaphragm—the large muscle running below the ribcage that enhances lung capacity—is powered.

All backward bending poses work on this principle. They open up the lungs, encouraging deep abdominal breathing. Similarly, standing poses strengthen the nervous system which, when it wobbles, manifests as depression. So, focusing on standing poses, even simple ones like prayer pose

(*pranamasana*), one-legged stand (*ekpadaasana*), the convoluted standing twist like garuda or eagle, the simple triangle (*trikonasana*), or the basic angle (*konasana*) can reboot our emotions superbly.

Sun salutation (*suryanamaskar*) further detoxifies the system, flushing and working out the endocrine glands. Similarly, simple poses like stick pose (*yastikasana*), butterfly (*titili*), cat stretch (*majarisana*) and the boat pose (see box) are all powered to flush us

with bliss. Doing them with breath consciousness and pushing each stretch to its logical completeness is, however, necessary to truly enjoy the *ananda* inherent in them.

Yoga also emphasises good vegetarian food with must-haves like brown rice, whole grains, beans, oatmeal, milk and dairy products, vegetables like cabbage and fruits like bananas. What's common to this list? Vitamin B, called the 'Happiness Vitamin' because it affects our moods! 🌱

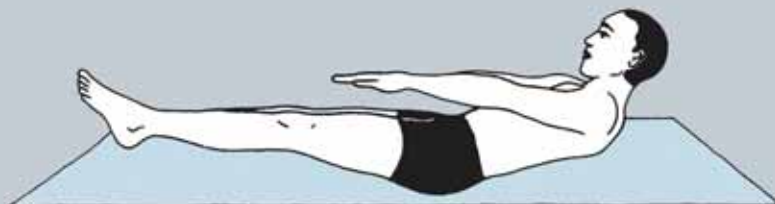
## Yogic moves

### **Naukasana (boat pose)**

This can be attempted lying down or sitting up. Beginners find the latter easier. Sit up, legs out in front. Inhale deeply, raising legs off the floor. Hands can be out in front or pressed alongside the knees. The body must form a 'V' shape. As in all balancing poses, attention should be firmly fixed on a *drishti* or point of focus. In this case, it should be the feet. Keep breathing and hold the pose as long as comfortable. Repeat three to five times. Those who find it tough to balance can initially

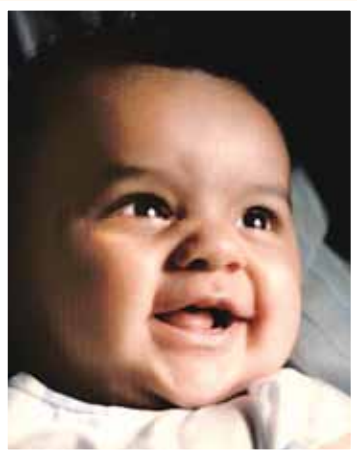
attempt it by using props at the back, like bolsters or chairs, to lean against as well as to place the feet on.

Like most balancing poses, this brings into play all the subtle muscles of the body and the nerves that are usually neglected. It electrifies the entire body. Therapeutic for diabetes, obesity and knee problems, this pose also affects the digestive tract, blood circulation, cerebral system, endocrine glands and hormone flow. This immediate pick-me-up is a great way to start the day, done as soon as you wake up.



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)

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black turban, Dr Sethi, 58, is one of India's 450,000 deaf-blind people. However, his multiple disabilities have only egged him on, inspiring the many disabled of the country and abroad through his voluntary work and the example of his life.

Born blind in Peshawar, his birth was a "second uprooting" for his family. "First Partition, and then to find your first-born blind," recalls Sethi, who also started losing his hearing in his teens. Today, he is a Braille teacher-trainer at the National Association of the Blind (NAB) in Mumbai, the editor of *Towards Light* and the assistant editor of *Deafblind* in Asia, and the vice-president of NAB. He routinely presents papers on deaf-blindness at conferences in Bahrain, Sweden, France, Italy and the United States. "I am like a doctor who moves from place to place trying to make other disabled comfortable in small ways," says Sethi. Financially supported by his parents with whom he lives, Sethi is reticent when he talks about his family, only saying he has a sister whose son was also born blind.

# Out of the dark

Dr Rajinder Singh Sethi may be visually challenged and hearing-impaired but his determination to triumph over adversity is an inspiration, discovers **Roshni Bajaj**

**R**ajinder Singh Sethi leaves his home near suburban Khar Gymkhana in Mumbai every morning at nine. Taking trains doesn't bother him.

Changing buses to reach the National Association of Blind, where he works, is a part of life too. Finding his way with his collapsible cane, a fist-sized hearing device wired under his

But he is willing to tell his own story, and he tells it without any trace of bitterness. "I did not go to school till I was 10. My hearing was normal then, so I picked up English and other things from my

younger sister and cousins. Then I went to the Princess Victoria Memorial Blind School at Tardeo in Mumbai but couldn't learn anything because the medium was Gujarati and my hearing was becoming difficult as well." Finally, his Braille teacher Rehmat Fazulbhoy showed him the way. He was one of the first two blind boys in New Activity School, as part of Fazulbhoy's Integrated Education Programme where disabled students study with regular children. The result was Sethi's excellent command over Braille—the language helped him satisfy his curiosity

screen, while he picked up romance, comedy and drama through the dialogues and the inflections of their voices.

"I have 'seen' all the old movies with my family," he recalls wistfully. "I remember *Sangam*, *Awara*, *Chori Chori*, *Mughal-e-Azam* and *Ayee Milan Ki Bela*. If I had a choice between sight and sound, I would pick sound. I don't miss seeing things, but I miss hearing them. I miss guests being welcomed and seen off, family quarrels and mundane sounds from the kitchen. It makes me feel lonely."

India and overseas. "The people at these conferences inspired me further," he says. "While I could still hear, they had no sense of either sight or hearing." Sethi's determination has even inspired some sighted friends to become Braille teachers and transcribers.

Today, Sethi enjoys the Braille versions of *Reader's Digest*, *Dialogue* and *Matilda* (international magazines for the visually impaired), and *Playboy*—minus the pictures, of course. And his 'volunteer readers' help dispel the loneliness. "Voluntary readers

## "Braille provided me with a platform of equality and helped me explore my talents. It gave me a chance to fight"

about the world and express himself through the combination of six raised dots. Braille computers, he thinks, are "too slow and far too expensive"—he needs to keep moving his hands away from the keyboard to read the Braille output, which he finds cumbersome.

In one of his prize winning essays, he wrote, "Braille provided me with a platform of equality and helped me explore my talents. It gave me a chance to fight, and I decided to make the most of it—and that, I did." With progressive hearing loss, the little pleasures of life, like chatting on the phone, and listening to classical music and Hindi films became close to impossible. At the cinema, his escort would tell him about the characters flitting across the

Braille, then, became Sethi's salvation. "It makes no demands," he explains, fingers flying across the bumpy sheets, "I can read in a dark room as easily as in a crowded train." He went on to win All India Best Braille Reader twice, in the 60s, and began writing for disability magazines. Sethi completed his doctorate in education from Bombay University in 1990. His dissertation: problems of the employed blind in India.

In 1974, Fazulbhoy introduced him to Behroze Vachha, honorary director of the Helen Keller Institute of Deaf and Deaf Blind in Byculla, Mumbai, another pioneer in the field of deaf-blind education in India. Vachha encouraged Sethi to teach Braille and be a part of related organisations and conferences, in

are people with time to spare," he explains. "In fact, a lot of senior citizens can read to the blind, even record books for them, becoming their prosthetic eyes." For his part, Sethi continues to make a difference to people's lives, raising funds for organisations like Sense International India, The World Blind Union, the Helen Keller Institute and the NAB. "Rajinder's life is full of quiet achievements," says Vachha. "Once he takes on a project, he goes through it diligently whether he receives acknowledgement for it or not."

Another quiet achievement: Sethi ran the Harmony 5 km run at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon this January—and the Dream Run the year before—to raise money for the NAB. ■



## POWER NAP



Don't feel guilty about taking a delicious early afternoon nap. New research says that it appears to help older adults compensate for the sleeping problems that tend to occur with age. The study, conducted by Dr Scott S Campbell of the Weill Cornell

Medical College in White Plains, New York and reported in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics*

*Society*, found that people between the ages of 55 and 85 who had the opportunity to nap between 2 pm and 4 pm performed better on tests of mental ability—both that day and the day after—and had little trouble falling asleep at night. Nappers got an average of one hour more of sleep each day they napped, giving them more than seven hours, which is close to the average for young adults. "There is a biological tendency to sleep in the middle of the day, just as there is to sleep at night," said Dr Campbell. "So, our brains and bodies have evolved to accommodate both types of sleep, without negatively affecting the other." He recommends napping from 30 to 120 minutes in the early afternoon, choosing a dark, comfortable room, and not letting the nap go past 5 or 6 pm.

## VERDICT ON DIURETICS



There's good news for people on medicine's oldest blood pressure drugs—diuretics. The first long-term study to examine whether their risks outweigh their benefits found that while they do raise the chances of getting diabetes, they clearly reduce the long-term risk of death from heart attacks and strokes. The new study, published in the

*American Journal of Cardiology*,

was led by Dr John Kostis, director of the Cardiovascular Institute at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Kostis and colleagues at the University of Texas School of Public Health in Houston followed 4,732 patients with high blood pressure for over 14 years. At the end of that period, 19 per cent of patients given diuretics—that work by removing fluid from the body—were dead from cardiovascular causes, compared with 22 per cent of those who got dummy pills. When the study began, about 17 per cent of patients in each group had diabetes. During the four years that followed, an additional 13 per cent of patients on diuretics and 9 per cent of patients on dummy pills developed diabetes. Among patients who developed diabetes, there was a 32 per cent lower risk of cardiovascular death in the diuretics group.

## THE SINGLE LIFE

Ladies, can you believe it—a man could be what comes between you and a healthy old age! A study conducted by Queensland University and Queensland University of Technology in Australia on 2,300 people over 60 suggests that divorced, widowed and single women in older age appeared to be healthier than their married counterparts. This challenges long-held beliefs that married people had better overall physical and mental health than unmarried people. "Maybe married women are worn out from looking after their husbands," said University of Queensland School of Social Science researcher Belinda Hewitt. However, women who were separated, but not divorced, reported poorer health than all other groups of females. "Perhaps they had no sense of closure and no divorce settlement, and socially and financially they were worse off than both the married and divorced," suggested Hewitt. In contrast, the study found that a man's health appeared to be unaffected by his marital status.





## GO FISH

You may know that fish oil protects your heart—it's also great for the brain. Researchers from the University of Aberdeen and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland found that people who eat oily fish or take fish oil supplements are less likely to show early signs of Alzheimer's disease, which is the leading cause of dementia in the elderly. The study, carried out on more than 300 people, gathered data from people who had taken part in a national IQ survey in 1947, when they were aged 11, and tested them again in 2000-01 when they were 64. Cognitive function in the 64-year-olds was found to be higher if they were supplement users than if they did not take supplements. "The brains of fish oil users seemed to be faster," said Lawrence Whalley, professor of mental health at the University of Aberdeen and head of the research team. "The results suggest that they have younger brains than the non-users. The ageing of their brain is being slowed down by a year or two."

## AYURVEDA ALERT



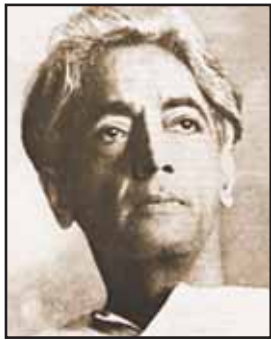
One out of every five Ayurvedic herbal medicinal products produced in South Asia, mainly India, and available in South Asian grocery stores in Boston, has been found to contain potentially harmful levels of lead, mercury or arsenic, according to an article published in the *Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA)*. The study, conducted by Dr Robert Saper and his colleagues at Harvard Medical School, calls for testing of Ayurvedic medicines for toxic heavy metals. The products that were examined were purchased between April 25 and October 24, 2003, and people consuming these drugs for diseases like arthritis and diabetes may be at risk for heavy metal toxicity. The objective of the research was to determine the concentration of heavy metals in Ayurvedic medicinal products, and to compare daily metal ingestion with regulatory standards. "Properly processed Ayurvedic products are harmless and effective," maintains Dr Scott Gerson, founder of the National Institute of Ayurvedic Medicine in the US. "The study just points to the need for better quality control, which is currently underway in India."

## NO MORE NEEDLES

Good news for diabetics. Antares Pharma, a Pennsylvania-based specialty pharmaceutical company that distributes needle-free injector systems in 20 countries, has introduced needle-free insulin in India. Antares has introduced the device under the trade name Recojet. Distributed by Mumbai-based Shreya Life Sciences, it combines needle-free technology with recombinant human insulin supplied by Singapore-based SciGen Ltd. India has the largest number of patients with diabetes in the world, with 30 million diagnosed—the number

is expected to grow to approximately 57 million by 2025. Needle-free insulin could eliminate the use of approximately 1,000 needles per patient per year, and the resulting disposal problems. ■





# Guru gripe

According to J Krishnamurti, gurus who promise salvation are a substitute for opium

**Questioner:** Often we feel abandoned by you. We know you have not accepted us as disciples, but need you shirk your responsibility towards us completely? Should you not see us through?

**Krishnamurti:** This is a roundabout way of asking, 'Why don't you become our guru?' (laughter). Now, the problem is not abandoning or seeing you through, because we are supposed to be grown-up people. Physically we are grown-up; mentally we are the age of 14 and 15; and we want a glorified somebody, a saviour, a guru, a master, to lead us out of our misery and confusion; to explain our chaotic state to us, to explain it, not to bring about a revolution in our thinking, but to explain it away. That is what we are concerned with.

When you put this question, you want to find a way out of confusion, to be free from fear, from hatred, from all the pettiness of life; and you look to somebody to help you. Other gurus have perhaps not succeeded in putting you to sleep with a dose of opium, an explanation, so you turn to this person and say, 'Please help us through'. Is that our problem—the substitution of a new guru for an old one, of a new master for an old one, of a new leader for the old? Please listen to this care-

fully. Can anybody lead you to truth, to the discovery of truth? Is discovery possible when you are led to it, have you experienced it? Can anybody—it does not matter who—lead you to truth? When you say you must follow somebody, does it not imply that truth is stationary, that truth is there for you to be led to, for you to look at and take?

Is truth something that you are led to? If it is, then the problem is very simple; you will find the most satisfying guru or leader and he will lead you to it. But

never find what truth is. A petty mind will create only a petty thing, it will be empty, it will create a shallow God. So our problem now is not to find, to discover what God is, but first to see how petty we are. Look, if I know that I am petty, miserable, unhappy, then I can deal with it. But if I say, 'I must not be petty, I must be great', then I am running away, which is pettiness.

What is important is to understand and discover what is, not to transform what is into something else. After all, a

## What is important is to discover exactly what is, not what should be

surely the truth of that something you are seeking is beyond the state of explanation. It is not static, it must be experienced, be discovered, and you cannot experience it through guidance. How can I experience spontaneously something original if I am told, 'This is original, experience it?' Hatred, meanness, ambition and pettiness are the problems and not the discovery of what truth is. You cannot find what truth is with a petty mind. A mind that is shallow, gossiping, stupid, ambitious—such a mind can

stupid mind, even if it is trying to become very cunning, clever, intelligent, is still stupid because its very essence is stupidity. We do not listen. We want somebody to lead our pettiness to something bigger and we never accept, never see, what is, what actually is. The discovery of what is, the actuality, is important; it is the only thing that matters. At any level—economic, social, religious, political, psychological—what is important is to discover exactly what is, not what should be. ■

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*Excerpt from On Truth; EastWest Books (Madras) Pvt Ltd; Rs 200*

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# Auto cop

Make sure your car mechanic doesn't take you for a ride, says **Sirish Chandran**



## THE STORY OF BEING BILLED

for other people's accidents is as old as the wheel itself. And that isn't just in India. A recent survey rated auto mechanics as one of America's least-trusted professionals. So how do you know if you're being taken for a ride?

**1** Choose your mechanic carefully. Go by word-of-mouth popularity. If you're satisfied the first time, go there again. Building a rapport with the staff pays off in the long run—the immediate benefits are loyalty discounts for regular customers. The added benefits: home pick-up and delivery, work completed on time, a complimentary spit and polish, and less chance of finding a half-eaten samosa under the seat.

**2** Servicing your car at an independent garage is much cheaper. If you don't insist on a

proper bill, you pay less. You can buy your own oils and consumables from the market and they will dump it into your car without a fuss. On the other hand, the five-star treatment your car gets at company-authorised service centres gets reflected in your bills.

**3** That said, most modern cars need diagnostic tools only available at the authorised set-ups. Additionally, spare parts aren't always available on the market and can only be ordered by these service centres. The mechanics are also better trained than the ones at your local garage. With everything computerised and part and labour rates standardised across the country, the chances of being ripped off are not too high. And not servicing your car at authorised centres could nullify your warranty, which could prove expensive in the long run.

**4** Still, be careful. Insist on a written estimate of all work and make sure no work is carried out without your prior approval. Check what's covered under your warranty—many manufacturers offer comprehensive warranties that include consumables (like oil and filters) and, in case of an expensive car, the use of a courtesy car while yours is being serviced. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Make sure the service advisor explains exactly what's wrong and why it needs replacing. Also, don't be afraid to

shop around. Exercise your right to get a second opinion, even from an independent garage.

**5** If you have the time, insist you be present during servicing. Many small garages specialise in pilfering good parts—like spare tyres—and replacing them with inferior ones. Another grey area is the oil change. Some garages replace only half the oil and sell the rest. If you can't be there, insist on taking back all the old parts, and the packaging for the new parts installed.

**6** High repair bills are inevitable with today's complex cars. If anything goes wrong, it inevitably has to be replaced, and that costs a packet. Preventive maintenance like regular oil and filter changes and tune-ups can pre-empt a major breakdown. Here again, if you've stuck to one garage, you can haul up the mechanic in case something goes wrong in an unreasonable (two years/50,000 km) time frame. Keep a detailed record of all your bills for future reference. Some garages have a habit of recommending unnecessary repairs. That's where shopping around makes a difference.

**7** Finally, make sure the work is guaranteed. For example, if your engine needs overhauling, the job should be guaranteed for at least the next 20,000 km. Ask for it in writing. If the garage says no, look elsewhere. ■

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*Sirish Chandran is a correspondent with Overdrive, an auto magazine*

बूंद बूंद में विश्वास



Kinley is a trademark of The Coca-Cola Company.





# Recipe for safety

Kitchen designers tell **Vatsala Kaul** how to adapt your kitchen for comfort

**E**ver thought about pullout storage instead of wall shelves, and easy-to-grasp knobs and handles in your kitchen? While most people think such modifications are for people with disabilities—anyone with a bad back or on a wheelchair—designers argue that good design can make a difference to everyone.

## STORAGE

With pullout storage, you don't need to sit on your haunches and explore the innards of a dark cupboard, or climb a chair or ladder to find the saffron jar you used two months ago. Pullout storage comes in all shapes and sizes. Ladder pullouts are great for storing same-sized bottles and jars. Wardrobe pullouts are ideal for different-sized things—they also help you sort them out depending upon how often they are needed. With corners having the tendency to turn into

'dumps', corner pullout storage helps you utilise space better. Trays at the back come out in front so that you don't have to dig deep. For all this, you needn't hire German or Italian kitchen manufacturers. Additions and alterations can be made gradually with help from your neighbourhood carpenter.

Store foods, utensils and other often-used items at a convenient height; say, heavier objects at waist level. Cabinets and storage should shut well, or else they can cause falls. Also, make sure drawers have easy-to-grasp knobs and handles.

## FLOORING

Anti-skid, of course. Marble and other soft stone tend to absorb spills and maintenance is higher and requires more effort. Tiles, which are more affordable than marble or stone, are the best option. Ask a sanitaryware retailer and he can provide

custom-made, cheaper solutions. Don't use wax or polish on the kitchen floor, though.

## WORKSTATION

In most kitchens, the sink, the stove and the storage space are close to each other. This is ideal. Called a space-and-time-saving 'triangle', it has you at its centre. Things of maximum daily utility should be kept within 2 feet of the stove on either side—tea kettle/saucepan, the frying pan, daily use cutlery, twin shelves for spice jars used every day. Utensils used only twice a day can be kept a little further away.

Another option is to build an 'island'—a table or storage unit with a non-shiny countertop in the middle of the kitchen. When you bring in the shopping, it's a good place to sort everything out and keep away in designated slots; it's the perfect place to sit down and chop vegetables, mix stuff or read a recipe; and it's also



a good vantage point to supervise your domestic help if that's what you want. You can use it for small meals, too. Make sure there is some leg space under it or it can get uncomfortable. If you don't have space for an island, you could have an inbuilt laminate on the main shelf that pulls out like a computer keyboard.

## GADGETS

Designate a space for the gadgets that you use. If you keep them where you use them, you won't have to go around the kitchen pulling them out and pushing them back in. Half the time, effort-saving electrical gadgets are not used because it becomes too much of a hassle pulling them out from storage spaces. Keep the plug points close to the work area, so you don't have wires snaking over the floor or counter.

## LIGHTING

Have two-way switches just outside the kitchen, just as you do outside the bathroom, so you can switch on the light before you come in. After the bathroom, a kitchen is the other place likely to have spills and slippery floors. The cooking range, the sink and counter top should be well lit. Light up your storage units too.

## OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Try to keep ovens and microwaves at eye level, so you can easily see what is happening inside and use the functions without having to sit or bend.
- Install a suitable, small fire extinguisher in your kitchen, and make sure you know how to use it.
- If your stove has a hood and chimney, clean regularly as grease can be a fire-hazard.
- An exhaust is essential in the kitchen if you don't have a chimney. Keep the exhaust on when you use the stove.
- A wiper with a long handle is indispensable for cleaning up spills. If you have to reach up

From left, an 'island' for sorting, chopping or mixing; microwave at eye level for easier access; a pull-out laminate for chopping; pull-out storage to utilise space optimally

for things, use a proper stepladder, not a chair or a stool.

- If you spend a fair amount of time in the kitchen, do keep a cordless extension mounted on the wall, or place a stand for your cell phone there, so you don't have to run to the phone in a hurry. ■

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*With Mandeep Singh, Manager Operations (North), CC Impex Pvt Ltd, which markets Veneta Cucine kitchen concepts in India*

Photos courtesy: VENETA CUCINE



# Banking on the net

The Purohits learn how to manage their money online. **Sachin Kalbag** gives them a helping hand



**T**he Purohits were delighted because their son, who lives in Seattle, USA, had just got a pay hike. He emailed his parents the good news, also announcing that he would now send a part of his income every month to them, in dollars. But to begin with, he needed a bank account where he could transfer the funds to his parents.

The Purohits then went to their bank, 2 km away, to find out about the procedure. They spoke

to an official there, who was also a friend from the neighbourhood. He told them the transfer would take two to three days every month. "Isn't there anything faster?" asked Mrs Purohit, ever the impatient one. "Well, there's always online banking," the official ventured. "But, of course, you need to be familiar with the Internet for that."

That got Mr Purohit going immediately. "Familiar is not the word," said Mr Purohit proudly.

"We are very net-savvy!" And he hurried home with Mrs Purohit in tow. That evening, he called me up at home, asking me to come over and teach him all about online banking. I knew I had a long evening ahead.

The good thing about the Purohits, though, is that they always ask the right questions, and keep probing until you give them answers that satisfy them. Today was no different. As always, I decided to get to the

basics first. To bank online, you need to have an Internet banking account. "And just how do I get one?" Mr Purohit asked.

Actually, I told him, just about every bank these days provides Internet banking facilities, including the staid old nationalised banks. With competition hotting up, they really have no choice but to do so.

All you need to start up is to create an Internet banking account which is usually numeric in nature, and a password which is alphanumeric—a combination of numbers and letters. "This way, the chances of your account being misused by someone becomes negligible," I said.

"But what can I do with Internet banking?" asked Mrs Purohit. "What can't you do?" I countered. "If you hate standing in long queues to pay all your bills, you can pay online. Imagine paying your electricity, telephone and gas bills sitting at home in comfort."

But Mr Purohit looked a little worried. "Isn't that a bit risky?" he wondered. "What if a hacker wants to access my bank account? These days it is so easy. And then all my money would just vanish." His concern was understandable, and one that several people share. "These days, it is almost next to impossible to hack into an online banking account," I assured him. "Unless, of course, you give away your user name and password to someone else. Also, most banks require another 'transaction' password before you can actually transfer money from your account, making the process even more secure."

"What else can I do online?" Mr Purohit was now warming up to the possibilities.

Apart from paying your bills, I told him, you can check your balance, invest that balance in any fixed deposit you want, convert part of your balance into a mutual fund of your choice, and make internet transfers to anyone you want instantaneously.

You can also order personalised cheque books, withdraw money and get it delivered to your home, take printouts of your balance statements, get access to the latest foreign exchange rates and a currency converter, apply for a credit card and check your

do not have access to the Internet, and if they do, they are either unaware of Internet banking or are just plain afraid of operating the account." It may seem strange, but it is true.

For their part, most banks encourage people to go online to bank to reduce the amount of footfalls in their branches. This also allows their executives to concentrate on building new financial products for their clients. Also, the banks need not invest so much in real estate and can spend that money to give other value-added services.

The world over, at least in developed countries, people generally use the Internet for all

## With Internet banking, you can pay your bills, check your balance, transfer money and even get help on buying shares

account, and get help on buying and selling shares. Some banks even give you the flexibility of operating your demat account (which converts your securities and shares into an electronic format) from your Internet account so that you can track your portfolio online.

"But if it is so convenient, why doesn't everyone switch over to Internet banking? There must be a reason why so many people prefer to go to a 'normal' bank," chimed in Mrs Purohit, who always loves to play devil's advocate. "The reason, really, is simple," I told her. "Most people

their banking transactions rather than go to their branches. "There is a friend of mine who lives in Chicago and has never seen his bank," I told the Purohits. "All his banking transactions are done online and at the ATM. I bet he does not even know the address of the bank."

Now, Mr Purohit was convinced that he simply had to have an Internet banking account. But Mrs Purohit wasn't as thrilled. "The only exercise he ever got was walking to the bank and back," she complained to me. "Now, because of you, he won't even get that." ■

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*Sachin Kalbag is executive editor of Digit, India's premier personal technology magazine. Next month, the Purohits go shopping online*

# Set your house in order

Legalpundits solve some more property-related dilemmas

**Q** I am 67 years old and have a long pending court case against a builder in Navi Mumbai. In *Harmony's* November 2004 issue ("Home Truths", page 66), you said that a High Court circular—dated August 12, 1999—entitles senior citizens who have crossed the age of 65 to an early hearing of their pending cases. I'm worried about how long my case will drag, and whether it will be settled in my lifetime. I would like to see the circular issued by Bombay High Court.

**A** Here's what the circular said: This has reference to the High Court Circular No.P. 1615/91, dated 7.8.1996, in the matter of giving preference to the cases wherein one of the parties is of advanced age, crossing 70 years of age. The Hon'ble Chief Justice and Judges, after reconsidering the issue, have now directed that precedence be given by the Courts for hearing and final disposal of the cases wherein one of the parties is of advanced age, crossing 65 years of age. However, the Courts may grant such indulgence on written request made in that behalf. This circular shall be applicable to the High Court and its Benches as well as Courts subordinate to it.

**Q** I am 62 years old and have rented my three-bedroom house in Lucknow for Rs 4,000 every month to a family of four.



**How is rental income from the property treated for the purpose of taxation?**

**A** Rental income is taxable under the head 'Income from House Property'. Deductions are available under Section 23 and 24 of the Income Tax Act. It must be noted that only actual expenses against repairs, at the municipal corporation rates, are deductible.

**Q** I am 82 years old. My son and his wife died in an accident last year and I am looking after their only son. He is five years old. With no one to inherit my assets, can I nominate my grandson?

**A** As per Section 39 (1) of the Insurance Act, 1938, there is no bar to a minor being nominated as the person to whom all your assets, including money secured by a policy, shall be paid in "the event of the death" of the assured. When a

person chooses to nominate a minor, it is automatically lawful for the nominee to receive everything, but has to be handled individually for each asset and policy. However, you need to appoint a person to receive the property on behalf of your grandson—he would be treated as his guardian.

**Q** We are a group of seniors living together on rent in Nagpur. The landlord cuts off our water supply every other day, and sometimes switches off the electricity mains at night. He says he is cutting costs. Can he do that?

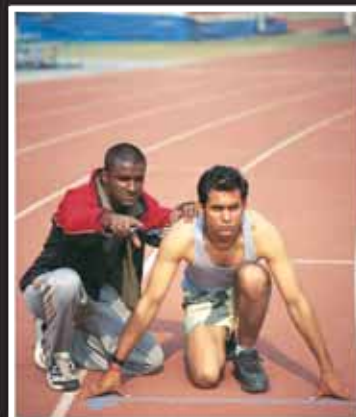
**A** A landlord cannot cut off or withhold any essential supply or service enjoyed by the tenant. If he does so, the tenant can make an application for restoration of the essential supply or service to the Small Causes Court under Section 29 of the Maharashtra Rent Control Act, 1999. The application can be made jointly or by all tenants of the premises. The court may pass an interim order, even before giving the landlord notice of the enquiry, directing him to restore the essential supply before a specified date. If the landlord fails to do so, the court conducting the enquiry can fine him up to Rs 100 per day. ■

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



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# Room to grow

Harmony's plans for the year ahead

**WHEN AN INITIATIVE IS BORN, IT BRINGS HOPE** and promise. And when it takes wing, it begins to reach out and touch lives. Last month, we wrote about the Harmony Initiative's plans to open more interactive centres in Mumbai by May 2005. Silvers in Mumbai suburbs like Andheri, Mira Road and Ghatkopar are now waiting anxiously for a Harmony centre near their homes.

While a 4,000 sq ft site has already been finalised in Andheri, surveys and meetings are on simultaneously in the other areas too. A need-assessment evaluation is being conducted on seniors living within 2 km of the designated locations by students of the city-based Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies led by Dr R K Jadav, the director of the institute, and faculty member B Moradian.

"Keeping the Girgaum centre as the basic model, the framework and agenda of the new sites will be based on what seniors in these areas need most," explains programme coordinator Hiren Mehta. For example, when a similar survey was conducted in Girgaum before the launch of Harmony's first centre, the foremost requirement of the seniors of the area was a good library. The spacious, well-stocked reading area is, in fact, the most popular section of the centre.

Apart from creating more interactive spaces, there is another project taking shape. There are over 2,000 silvers in Ghatkopar who are active members of numerous senior citizens' communities and clubs. The Harmony Initiative is considering bringing all these associations under a common umbrella. Meanwhile, at the Harmony Interactive Centre in Girgaum, Mumbai, spirits are high after the Harmony 5 km Senior Citizens' run. Over 140 members from the centre took part—they're now waiting for next year's event. ■

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



HIREN MEHTA

**An activity in progress at the Harmony Interactive Centre in Girgaum, Mumbai**

## **FITNESS**

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays; 10.30 am to 11.30 am (men); 4 pm to 5 pm (women). Yoga classes conducted by instructors from Kaivalyadham Centre, Marine Drive

## **MUSIC**

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

## **GROUP THERAPY**

Wednesdays; 4 pm to 5 pm (men); 5.15 pm to 6.15 pm (women). Sessions by Dr Anjali Chhabria, Dr Sharita Shah and Aruna Prakash

## **COOKING COMPETITION**

Feb 8; 4 pm to 6 pm. Organised by members

## **HEALTH TALK**

Feb 12; 5 pm. Talk on diabetes

## **BE ALERT**

Feb 19. Talk on disaster management

## **COMMON BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Feb 26

## **HOME TRUTHS**

Feb 28. Talk on Vastu Shastra

*Programmes are subject to last-minute changes*

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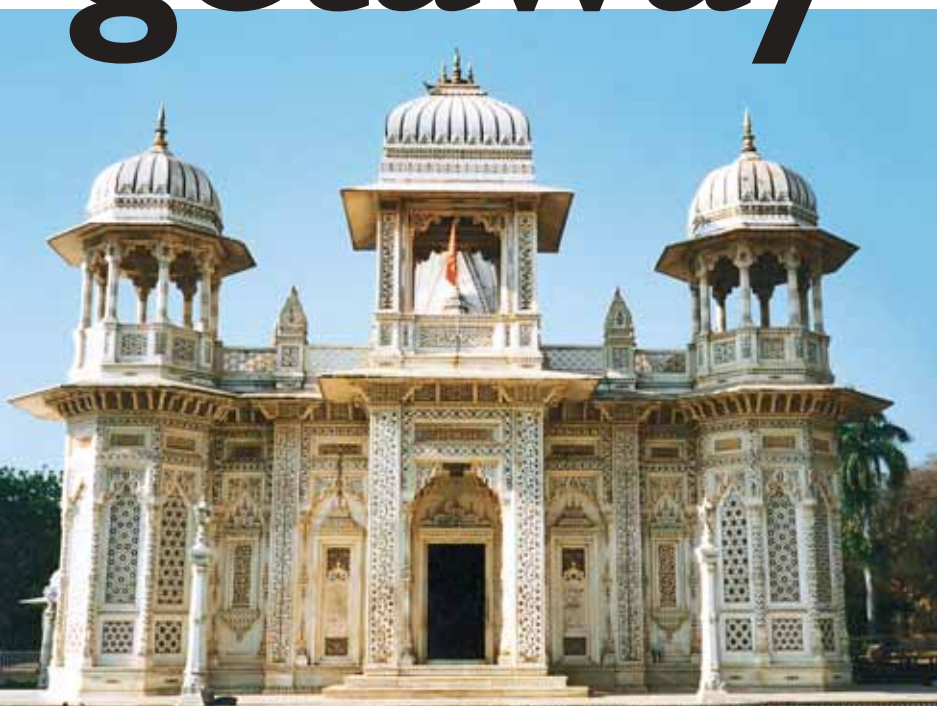


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# Royal getaway



Photos: PROLOY BAGCHI

Harmony reader 66-year-old **Proloy Bagchi** took a trip to the tiny town of Shivpuri, playground of Gwalior's erstwhile rulers. While the big game has gone, the blue waters, green forests and exotic birds still remain, he writes



**O**n the Delhi-Mumbai National Highway, about 112 km from Gwalior, surrounded by green hills and numerous lakes is a tiny little town that once used to be the summer capital of Gwalior state. To get away from the scorching summers of the capital, Gwalior's erstwhile maharajahs, the Scindias, used to move lock, stock and barrel to this little town, Shivpuri, 'the abode of Shiva'.

From left, Madhav Rao Scindia senior's memorial; the Bagchis

Although I was born in Gwalior and grew up there, I had never had the occasion to visit Shivpuri. But I had heard a lot about it, about how, despite its location bang on the famous Agra-Bombay Road, the Scindias established a toy train-line—narrow gauge, since upgraded to broad gauge—through picturesque country to travel in style in their extravagantly appointed 'saloons' to the town. I had heard of the blue lakes, with a boat-club on the biggest one, and the tiger-filled forests the then Maharaja Jiwaji Rao Scindia would visit for *shikar*.

Finally, I was prodded by an old friend, who's now settled in Shivpuri, to make the trip. My wife Bandana and I set out from Bhopal one winter morning on a privately owned mini-bus. It took us a torturous nine hours to cover a distance of 300 odd km, halting almost every kilometre to pick up whoever cared to wave at the bus to stop. Mercifully, the seats were well cushioned or else it would have been hell for a 66-year old and his wife. The highway, including a stretch of the famous Bombay-Agra Road, was horribly potholed. Worse, toilet facilities being non-existent, passengers



Clockwise from top, the placid blue waters of Chandpata Lake; Tourist Village; two interior views of Scindia senior's memorial; the memorial from outside; George Castle; and below, Bandana Bagchi

were left to their own devices. The toilet at the newly constructed bus-stand at Biaora, a rural township, was still awaiting inauguration—the minister concerned hadn't found the time to fit it in his busy schedule! Perhaps I should have taken the train—after all, there is one.



My friend had booked a room for us in the Tourist Village, owned by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation. A large complex, the village has hut-like structures with well-appointed rooms providing reasonable facilities. It was dark and cold when we reached, and our bones ached. However, a good night's sleep and the gorgeous morning view melted away the previous day's fatigue.

Our room overlooked the large, beautiful Chandpata Lake. The best view of the lake, though, is from Madhav National Park, just



a kilometre and a half away from the Tourist Village. The tracts of protected forests that the Scindias would visit regularly for *shikar* have shrunk over time and the game dwindled. Its remnants—about 350 sq km—have since been converted into the park. This includes the lovely Sakhya Sagar boat club, complete with a wooden dance floor projecting over the lake, which can be hired out for occasions, and green hills in the background. The park also has a golf course and a dilapidated observation tower. There's also the never-lived-in George Castle, a copy of an English castle, built for the King Emperor as a hunting lodge in anticipation of his visit, which never took place, after the Delhi Durbar of 1911. Still retaining some of its stained glass, the castle offers a stunning view of the surrounding forests and the lake.

The park's all-weather roads make it the only national park in the country accessible during the rains. It is said that these roads were constructed under the supervision of Madhav Rao Scindia senior (1880-1925), great grandfather of MP Jyotiraditya Scindia. You can still see a variety of animals, especially antelopes like chinkara, chital, sambar, chausinga, blackbucks, etc. A large herd of chital within our view scampered away after hearing a noisy group of visitors. You also find wild boars, sloth bears and blue-bulls. As for the predators, there are just three left—two leopards and a lone tiger, all in enclosures.

Avian life, however, thrives on the Chandpata, particularly in the winters when migratory birds home in. We spied white ibis,

cormorants and geese, and watched in fascination kingfishers dive and then emerge from the water with their catch. A keener bird-watcher may even be able to spot a golden oriole, a falcon, even a paradise flycatcher.

Scindia senior also built palaces and hunting lodges close to the town. Fittingly, after his death in Paris in 1925, his ashes were brought to Shivpuri where they found their resting place in an exquisite marble memorial, just a kilometre's walk away from the Tourist Village. Set in an extensive garden, his mausoleum, or *chhatra*, built in front of that of his mother, is inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones, with engraved pure silver doors. Surprisingly, the mausoleum has remained largely unknown and unacknowledged despite its extraordinary beauty. Even the state tourism authorities have failed to promote it. The *chhatra* of the Maharani, meanwhile, is more traditional, radiating peace and piety.

Peace, in fact, is all around you at Shivpuri. It's a slice of tranquillity away from the rough and tumble of modern life. Green forests, placid waters and a host of Shiva temples for the devout all make for a soothing interlude, the perfect weekend getaway. But of course, the lack of infrastructure, a perennial problem across India, rears its head here too. The state tourism authorities make no arrangements for visits to the Madhav National Park or other sites. We had to fall back on autorickshaws and Ambassador taxis that run on diesel and pollute the forest. One suggestion: BHEL in Bhopal manufactures battery-operated vehicles. How about hiring them out to visitors? ■



## FACT FILE

### When to visit

- The best time to visit Shivpuri is from November to April
- The Madhav National Park, however, can be visited all year round

### Where to stay

- There are numerous hotels and lodges in town
- The best place to stay is the Tourist Village of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation. Located bang on Chandpata Lake, the hutments with well-appointed rooms in ethnic furnishings offer a glorious view of the lake. The tariff is around Rs 600 per night for a non-AC room and Rs 800 for an AC room. For contact details, see page 95

### How to go

- The nearest airport is Indore. Also, Alliance Air is expected to start service to Gwalior soon. When that happens, that would be the nearest airport
- By train, via Gwalior and Indore
- By road, located on the Agra-Mumbai Road



They may be made from rags and waste but Tara Bhattacharjee's dolls are her favourite companions, writes **Teena Baruah**

# Dolls' House

old underwear went into it as stuffing, a patchwork ghagra choli forming its other skin, with pockets to store needles and scissors. It was to become Bhattacharjee's sewing kit. Others followed, with anything from old bulbs to unused keys becoming their ornaments.

Photos: RAJESH KASHYAP

**T**ara Bhattacharjee was once travelling through Rampur in Uttar Pradesh when she spotted a sea of people surrounding her companions, debating animatedly, '*Arre yeh insaan hain ke gudiyan hain?*' (Are they humans or dolls?) With veils covering their faces, Bhattacharjee's dolls look far from playthings. On a cold January afternoon, at her Panchsheel Park home in New Delhi, they recline on the divan, flowing, colourful ghagras tucked under them, looking more human than most.

The 70-year-old crafted her first doll 30 years ago in Italy where her husband, Dr Jyoti Prasad Bhattacharjee, was a director at the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation. Then, her daughter Sukanya was six years old and son Vinayak, two. Growing out of their clothes faster than she could say polyester pleats, she had no one to donate their hand-me-downs to. So she piled her dining table with needles, thread, scissors and clothes and shifted the eating area to the kitchen. First emerged the torso with slim limbs. Even

"It takes anytime between nine days and nine months to complete one human-sized doll," says Bhattacharjee. "Sometimes I feel like the fictional carpenter Gepetto who created Pinocchio." She also makes quilts from old sweaters and sews together old saris to make tablecloths. "I once saved drycleaners' tags and stitched them together," she recalls. "Sukanya liked it so much that she framed it." Her daughter was averse to Barbie as a five-year-old—but she loves her mom's dolls. For her part, Bhattacharjee has always been fascinated with

dolls. Her mother Lakshmi, daughter of India's first Governor general C Rajagopalachari, often appeased her with them whenever her father Devadas, Mahatma Gandhi's youngest son and then editor of *The Hindustan Times*, got arrested or if they had to travel without her. "Once she bought me an imported doll," remembers Bhattacharjee. "And another time, she gave me an African doll with a black face."

Bhattacharjee's dolls, too, are dark, with no features. "They don't have eyes and noses, but they have character," she says. "And very few people can make

when I felt cornered and lonely after my husband died and the children went their own ways." Vinayak now works for a bank in London, while Sukanya heads the Delhi chapter of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust.

At the age of 52, after her husband's death, Bhattacharjee also began to work with weavers at the trust—she is the vice-chairperson—and travels in India and abroad, talking about khadi and the need to revive spinning. For her, her work with khadi blends seamlessly with her doll making. "Though my dolls are made of different fabrics, I call them khadi

dolls as they are a result of recycling waste," she says. "They also help me get over my guilt as, otherwise, I'm a wasteful person."

Only once, one of her dolls upset her. It was modelled on a beggar woman on the streets of Delhi. And it looked so sad in tatters that it frightened Bhattacharjee. "I couldn't believe I had made art out of something so painful." Though she has held a few exhibitions, she feels her dolls look out of place in sophisticated galleries—she'd rather have them perched on a rag picker's cycle. "They are like gypsies, wanderers, searching what's beyond the horizon." ■



**Bhattacharjee (left) and her dolls sitting pretty**

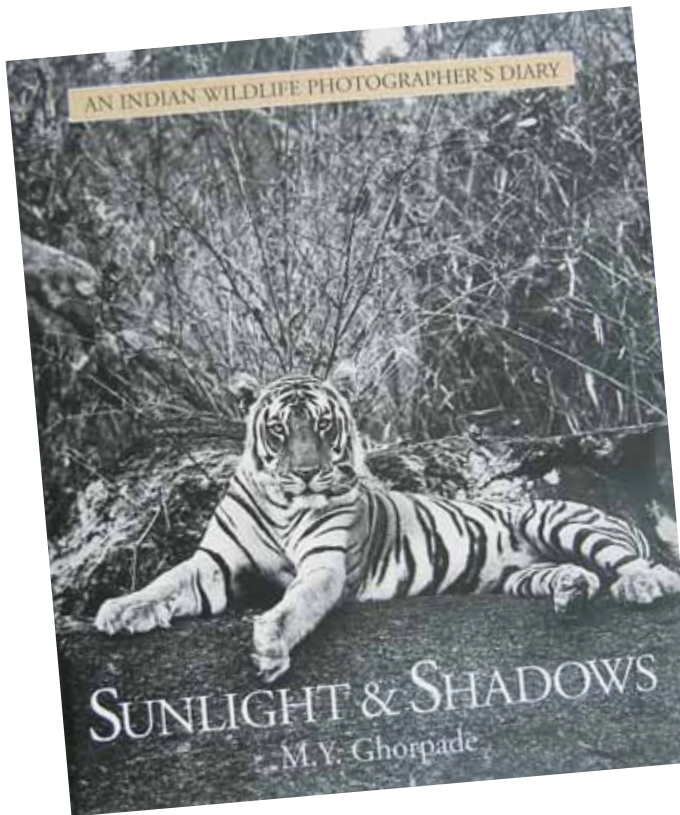
them sit right." There have been times that her friends have borrowed them but returned them soon after, unable to look after them. "Except a friend from Uruguay. He had taken one and kept it so well that when I saw it next, seven years later, I cried: 'Oh God, you've saved her'."

Bhattacharjee's attachment to her dolls goes beyond mere whim and fancy. For her, they are more a manifestation of self-reliance. "Doll making remained with me

## MAKE YOUR OWN DOLLS

- Craft the head in a shape of your choice and stuff with used pieces of cloth
- Make the torso around a long piece of wood, with the support just a little within the head
- Stuff with old shreds and sew from the back
- Use your imagination to craft the limbs—they just need to be slim and in proportion to the body
- Avoid fresh fabric as stuffing as the effect isn't the same. In fact, the older your shreds, the better the fall
- You can use gunny bags to make the ghagra or make a patchwork outfit
- For ornaments, use old bulbs, wires, broken chains, old keys, broken car parts
- To dust the dolls, hold them by the waist and shake well
- The dolls need to be aired and sunned occasionally
- Store the dolls in cupboards or bed boxes, carefully wrapped in newspaper. Though newsprint acts as an insect repellent, you can use naphthalene balls as an added precaution
- Don't wash in water, though you can occasionally wash their outfits

# The Jungle Book



Photos courtesy: PENGUIN BOOKS

In wildlife photographer M Y Ghorpade's book, images of Indian fauna stand cheek to jowl with anecdotes of trips through the country's forests, says **Arati Rajan Menon**

**S**eventy-three-year-old M Y Ghorpade's earliest memories of childhood in Sandur, his hometown, in Karnataka's Bellary district, read like a pastoral symphony.

He learnt all about nature in the classroom from his teachers and was submerged by it every time he stepped outside—a variety of antelopes, wild bears, exotic birds and panthers were familiar sights and bedtime stories would often be punctuated by the plaintive cry of the jackal.

He never forgot the sights, the sounds. Though he went on to become active in political life with the Congress party—he served as the finance minister of Karnataka from 1972 to 1977 and was elected MP from Karnataka's Raichur constituency in the 1986 by-election—his true calling was photography, which took him back to the wild, time and again.

*Sunlight & Shadows* (Penguin; Rs 1,495; 167 pages) is the result of these excursions to forests and sanctuaries across India over the years—a collection of memories,

in words and images. In his beloved Sandur, Ghorpade chases after a perfect shot of the Indian great horned owl, captures myriad birds in their nests and freeze-frames a panther in moonlight. In Kanha, the heart of tiger land in Madhya Pradesh, perched on a disobedient elephant he plays a game of cat-and-mouse with a full-grown male tiger who is supremely unwilling to be photographed. Wild buffalos and rhinoceros are on the agenda at Kaziranga, close to Guwahati in Assam and in Sawai Madhopore, near

Ranthambhore Fort in Rajasthan, he tails a baby sambar running after its mother and captures blackbucks jousting.

There are many other stories, and many other stops, including Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh, the Bharatpur bird sanctuary in Rajasthan and Manas at the Bhutan border. His son Ajai and daughter Anuradha, his companions on many of his jaunts, appear frequently throughout the book, as do an assortment of forest officers, scouts, mahouts, assistants and friends. There's great potential here for edge-of-the-seat suspense and adventure, tales of narrow escapes and close



in battle, a too-close-for-comfort tigress snarling at you through the tall grass, a lion club wrapped snugly around a tree, four mother elephants scrubbing their babies in the river, a langur doing "Hanuman's leap", and much more.

Then you know what the fuss is all about, the national and international accolades over the years, including the 1977 Australian Museum Award for his photograph, *Tusker in the Rain*, and the prestigious Master Photographer (MFIAP—Master Federation Internationale de L'Art Photographique) award in 1983. ■

## The photographs speak their own language, giving you goosebumps

calls. Unfortunately, Ghorpade's anecdotes, in turgid prose, read more like a must-do essay about a school trip written by a reluctant teenager. Descriptions of cameras and lenses he used, along with specs and shutter speeds, peppered through the text—rather than being confined to photo captions—don't help matters.

The photographs, though, are another matter altogether—they speak their own language, giving you goosebumps. You see two blackbucks locking horns



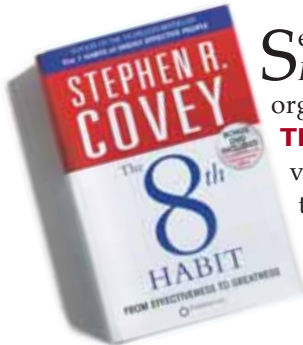
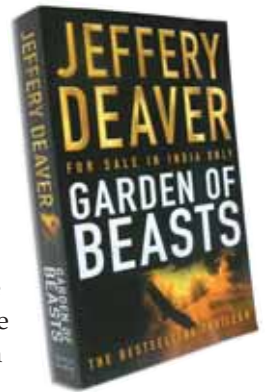
**From top, lion cub on a tree; blackbuck contest; mother elephants scrubbing their babies; Hanuman's leap**

## BRIEFLY



**THE MULK RAJ ANAND OMNIBUS** (Penguin; Rs 695; 695 pages) contains the three most memorable novels by one of the founding fathers of the Indian novel in English, and editor of fine arts magazine *Marg*. His first two novels, *Untouchable* and *Coolie* are grouped with *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, the writer's final and definitive work. A profound interpreter of Indian life, Mulk Raj let his characters take control of the narrative. The fiery voice of the people speaks through his characters—Bakha, the sweeper boy in *Untouchable*, Munoo in *Coolie* and the Maharaja in *Private Life*. Published on the eve of Mulk Raj's 100th anniversary, this anthology is a picture of a nation caught between folklore and new age.

It's 1936 and American button-man—Mafiaspeak for hit man—Paul Schumann is the unlikely hero hired by spooks in his own government to bump off Reinhardt Ernst, the architect of German rearmament, during the Berlin Olympics in **Jeffery Deaver's GARDEN OF BEASTS** (Hodder & Stoughton; Rs 395; 404 pages). In the cat-and-mouse game that ensues, it gets increasingly hard to separate the bad guys from the good ones. Deaver's tale is deliciously twisty, moving at a pace athlete Jesse Owens—who makes a cameo appearance—would be proud of. For the author of a slew of forensic whodunits like *The Bone Collector*, this one is quite a departure. While the top Nazis who flit in and out through the pages, including Hitler and Goering, are predictable over-the-top caricatures, you feel for the ordinary German grappling with his conscience while his country lurches on the brink of madness.



Seventy-two-year-old **Stephen R Covey** wrote *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* 15 years ago—it was a smash hit. Now, to achieve personal and organisational excellence in the 'new Information Knowledge Worker Age' comes **THE 8TH HABIT** (Simon & Schuster; Rs 795; 409 pages). The mantra: "Find your voice and inspire others to find theirs." Everyone has an inner longing to seize the day and live a life of contribution, asserts Covey, and they can get there by establishing trust, searching for 'third' ways (not 'your way' or 'my way') and developing a shared vision. This isn't the liveliest self-help book ever written, not by a long shot, but Covey makes his point, and well.

If you're an unabashed foodie, and cock a snook at calorie charts and low-carb diets, you'll savour every bit of **RECIPES FROM MY KITCHEN** (Eminence Designs; Rs 1,500; 207 pages) by **Roshan Chagla**, who has translated four decades of entertaining swish guests into this yummy cookbook with pictures good enough to eat. The menu is truly international and vast, from Spanish gazpacho and Thai Tom Kha Gai soup to American blue cheese mousse, Italian gnocchi and French strawberry parfait for dessert. You may need a French-to-English dictionary to figure out some of the names of the recipes but the instructions are always simple and doable. There's also a chapter on Indian recipes and a great 'tips' section that would prove handy in any kitchen. Like the food, the price is haute, but for a daughter, or daughter-in-law, starting out in the kitchen, you can't get a gift more perfect. ■



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# One world

**Amita Malik** on how the tsunami brought people across the globe, old and young, rich and poor, together in a show of solidarity and support



**HARMONY HAS CARRIED SOME** touching and delightful articles on the relationship between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren and even mothers and daughters. As we were all shattered by the dreadful havoc and devastation caused by the cruel and ruthless tsunami, as a professional TV watcher I have been noting with increasing awe and wonder how such terrible crises bring out the worst as well as the best in human nature.

If a few people have indulged in looting the houses of fishermen while they were searching for loved ones and even tried to pick up children with evil intent, a hundred times over we have seen acts of heroism, of human kindness that led people to lose their own lives while saving others.

But in the field of human relationships, it has been wonderful to see how old people have coped with the crisis. Two of the most incredible survivors were a man in Sri Lanka who was 60 plus and survived under the rubble without food or water for seven days. And the day I write this comes the story of another even older man emerging from beneath layers of rubble after 10 days. Both had injuries, but were stated to be stable in hospital. We salute their indomitable spirit. However, if we are to talk of silvers from the most humble

strata of society, how many times have we seen grandparents, uncles, aunts and other elderly people coming to rescue and comfort little children whose parents or siblings have been washed away forever? And how tenderly they have responded to each other, even if in some cases they were meeting for the first time as complete strangers.

Then, I was also impressed by the way young people like Vivek Oberoi, often the subject

survived and was recovering, must also have inspired the cricketers to give their best. Every four meant \$ 1,000 and every six an even bigger sum. And all entered into the spirit of the game. It was an inspiring sight.

But even more than the warmth of family ties, and stranger comforting and helping stranger, was the way the calamity brought the world together. If schoolchildren in India polished

## More than the donations by the rich, the effort of little people touched humanity

of cruel *filmi* gossip, plunged in and helped entire villages to rebuild shattered lives and recover from the trauma. Oberoi might have been young, but he gave courage to elderly people and young children and brought some hope and comfort into their lives.

And talking of youth, look at how young cricketers, the best in the world, flew down to Melbourne at short notice and raised millions for relief. That Sri Lankan cricketer Sanath Jayasuriya's mother had been hit by the waves, but had

shoes and street children gave their tiny mite, children in Europe gave up their Christmas presents to help the distressed. Much more than the huge donations by rich nations and the contributions of film stars, it was the effort of little people, young and whole, that touched the whole of humanity.

The motto of our international film festivals, and one of the best known Sanskrit phrases, is *Vasudeva Kutumbakam*—the world is one family. In the case of the tsunami disaster, it has certainly proved to be true. ■

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



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# Vanity box

Makeup artist Pandhari Juker has wrought his magic on stars over the years, from Nutan and Waheeda Rehman to Meena Kumari. **Roshni Bajaj** gets under his skin



## MY HANDS

I can do the work of an electrician, a motor mechanic, a carpenter, and a makeup artist. As a boy, I would spend hours in Chor Bazaar in Bombay to pick up electronic scrap. I would tinker with it, fix a few things, and sell them off. Today, I'm 72 and my hands work because of my lifelong craft. Otherwise, by this time most people's hands quiver. Mine can still apply eyeliner in one perfect, smooth, swift stroke. And I can do it in a moving bus.

## MAKEOVER MAGIC

I have walked up to perfect strangers and told them, "You really shouldn't use such dark lipstick. Try a lighter colour." I can take any girl walking down the street and say what makeup will suit her best. Recently, at 'Image', an exhibition of makeup artists held at the World Trade Centre in Mumbai, everyone brought along a model. I took an ordinary girl with droopy eyes from the crowd. I made up half her face to show what good makeup can achieve.

## MY LIFE

My father passed away when I was young and I had seven sisters to take care of. My friend's father was Baba Vardhan, the famous makeup artist of Prabhat and Rajkamal Studios. I was just 17, and in need, so I worked with Baba Vardhan. I didn't think too much about it. Today, I call my craft a true calling. I have two daughters, one is an architect in America and the other is a speech and hearing therapist in Australia. One son is an engineer

in a cement manufacturing company and the other is in a German shipping firm. They're both married. And I enjoyed doing the makeup for both my daughters and daughters-in-law for their weddings.

### LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Today, directors can make you look bald by using latex caps. A long time ago, Dilip Kumar needed to look bald in *Chanakya Chandragupta*. The film didn't get made eventually, but I went to London to learn the process—I used it on the original Onida devil.

Martaba made *Char Din Char Rahein*. There was a huge star cast—Meena Kumari, Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, Nimmi, Ajit and Kumkum. I needed to show Meena Kumari dusky on a black-and-white screen. That image became very famous, emerging on cover pages of magazines. That got me mileage and more work.

### SUSHMITA SEN'S FACE

After Nutan, Waheeda Rehman and Meena Kumari, it's Sushmita Sen. She reminds me of a movie in which Sophia Loren is a fisherwoman. Loren enters with a

**“At 72, when most people's hands quiver, mine can still apply eyeliner in one smooth stroke. And I can do it in a moving bus”**

### CREATING A CHARACTER

In the making of a character and a star, the collective responsibility is shared by the makeup man and the cameraman. In *Kasautii Zindagi Kay*, a Balaji Telefilms serial, there's a character by the name of Komali. If you see her on the street, you wouldn't look twice. But her entry into the serial as a Bengali girl made heads turn. That feels good because I was her artist. She trusted me. Actor Shammi also used to come to my home in the middle of the night for her makeup with that trust.

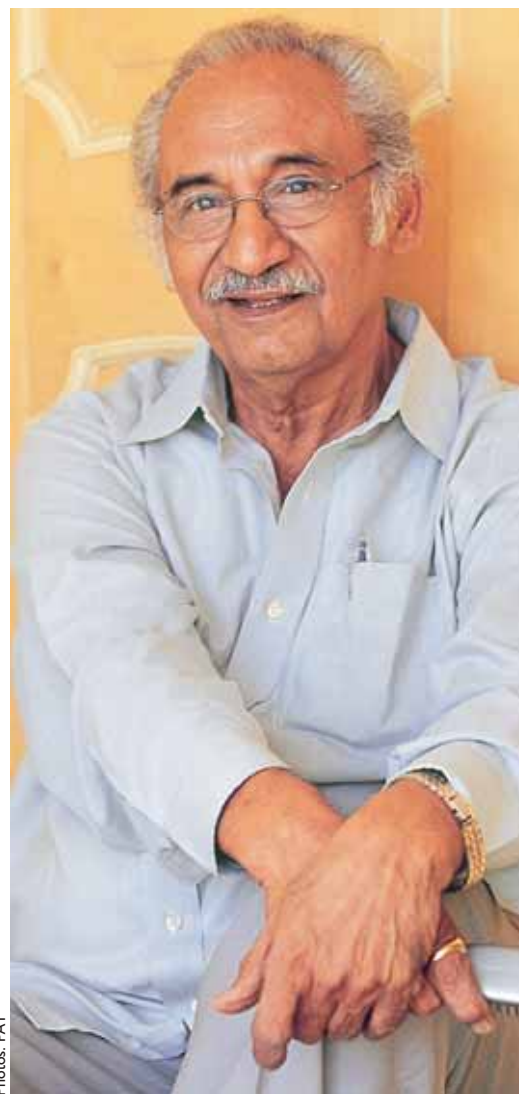
### MY FIRST BIG MOMENT

After working in Russia for a year for the film *Paradesi*, an Indo-Soviet venture that Nargis had recommended me for, people thought I was an expensive artist. Shortly afterwards, Khwaja

shiny, glossy fish in her hands, holding it up near her face. Her body has glitter on it, presumably from the scales of the fish. Goodness, she looked so good. If someone did that for Sushmita, she'll look exactly like that.

### MY TOOLS

I keep a set of brushes at home and at the studio. They are like Goddess Laxmi for me and I even worship them on Dussehra. I'm comfortable with any brand. They're just whims, these brand preferences. I use Derma, Mac, Crylon, Bob Kerry, anything. There's Bobbi Brown but it's expensive and difficult to get. I liked the results of Max Factor, but now the company is dissolved. For eye shadow, I will use anything. There's a glut of colours and shades in the market, so I don't bother with the brand.



Photos: PAT

**Opposite page, Juker at work on TV actor Poorva Gokhale of *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki* and *Kahin To Milenge***

### MY ART

Just like a portrait artist uses highlights and shadows to shape a profile, I use them on real faces. Features are brought to the fore with light colours and deepened with a darker shade. Like a nose has a highlighter along the bridge and darker foundation on the sides. Sometimes we're even called to literally paint on the face, like Bengali bindis, which I love doing. I am restless if I don't work. ■

# Body language

The passage of time leaves its mark on every part of us.

**Ponnappa** takes a top-to-bottom look



## LET'S START FROM THE TOP.

The hair is thinning but one still has a shock of it, more salt than pepper now. Bending low to pick up the dropped reading glasses from the floor, the head-rush is a come on. The eyes are behaving funny. The left eyeball insists on a 2.5 reading power, while the right seems content for now on just a 2. The nose seems to be behaving well as far as the olfactory sense goes, but the breathing is a tad heavy. The ears, both east and west, need an occasional cupping to catch distant notes.

The lips are presentable but inside the mouth, it is a different story. The teeth, once pearls, have lost their sheen and the dentist has frequent holidays abroad thanks to his bridgework.

Thankfully, the tongue loosens up by the second drink and all is well with the world as one has known it for the last 50-plus years. The jowl reacts to the gravitational pull of the earth and the skin tends to extend a bit loose. Shaving is a grace. A pain but a grace because the good lady at home appreciates the youthfulness of the stubble-less face.

The face is now beginning to develop rings like those across the cross-section of the tree of life. Furrows on the forehead, crows leaving their footprints by the corners of the eyes, now puffed below, sebaciously

speaking. One's voice in the just-woken-up-morning hour takes on a deep, gruff tone, the kind that would make women groan with passion in the days of yore. But then, it never had that timbre when one needed it 30-odd years ago, when love had a fresh meaning and necking was never a serious problem.

Now the neck. That's quite a problem. One simply cannot scarf the looseness of the skin out there. The neck is a clean giveaway of the years spent under the sun.

**One's voice takes on a gruff tone, the kind that would've once made women groan**

Let's stop right there. For, below the neck there are all sorts of other things that keep happening all the time. Matters of the heart, lunging for air, stomaching the problems of the world while crouching at unmentionable ends, making no bones about it, down to the very nails that society insists on being clipped. There are also internal tube systems and one needs to have the gall to talk of the bladder. Joints of the youth are long forgotten for they now pertain to the shoulders, the elbows, the knees.

So that is how it is when one is over the hill—but what a view it is from the top. Such a lot of the past to remember, and quite some time ahead, hopefully to add on more memories.

Over 50 is when life really begins. Not at 40. This is almost grandparenting time. Time to look after and really enjoy the children of one's children. This is also the time to catch up with long-lost friends, bird and butterfly watching and studying the

stars in the sky. There is the then, and the now. The then is what one was and the now is what one is. Then was when one could run a mile with ease, and now a mile is much slower. Then was when one had fewer jokes to share with friends and now the bag is brimming.

One of the happier things about life is to be able to laugh along. This is heady stuff, above the neck. As one ages, one has to bear humour in mind. The body returns to nature, naturally. ■

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*Fifty-year old Ponnappa is a Bangalore-based cartoonist and columnist*

**The last thing on your shoulder  
should be your stomach.**

Constipation could be a burden, not only on your body but also on your life. But now you need not worry because Zandu is here to relieve you from the pressure. Zandu brings you an authentic 300 years old remedy, Nityam Churna. A mixture of six effective remedial herbs, it not only cures stomach disorders, but also maintains a proper balance in your life. When constipation becomes a burden, ease off the pressure with Nityam Churna.



**Fresh ho jao!**

SINCE 1910

**ZANDU**

**Uncompromised ayurveda**

## HE MEANS BUSINESS

Piping hot tea served in fine bone-china cups right on the tarmac of Tata Group's airstrip in North-eastern India would impress any visitor. And the guys from *Forbes* magazine, here to check out their Asian Businessman of the Year 2004, **Ratan Tata**, were delighted too. "His \$ 14.3 billion family conglomerate is a picture of what was and is India Inc," *Forbes* said in its January 2005 issue, while crediting the 67-year-old leader with re-engineering the 'stodgy' group into an international player. The chairman manages an empire of 90 companies in businesses as diverse as cars, steel, hotels, tea, chemicals and software, but Tata, schooled in architecture at Cornell University, is already dreaming of starting a small product design firm once he steps down from his executive position at the age of 70.



## A CHARGED CENTURY

When a newspaper went over to cover her 100th birthday on January 8, former social activist and teacher **Rukmabai Tullur**'s instructions were clear: "Cut a zero out." After being widowed young, Tullur turned to education. She joined the movement to bring social change to Mumbai and taught "seven hours a day to make some money, and for free through evenings and weekends". In 1976, she launched the Punyatma Prabhakar Sharma Seva Mandal, which runs schools, vocational centres, savings groups and a rehabilitation centre for leprosy patients in Maharashtra. The one hunger that burns brightly even into her next century? "*Saaksharta ka prachaar* (Popularising the benefits of education)."

# IN PASSING



## AN INSIDER'S LEGACY

**Pamulapari Venkata Narasimha Rao**, India's ninth prime minister, remains the only Congress leader outside the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty to complete a five-year term between 1991 and 1996. He was also the only Indian PM convicted on corruption charges. Yet he will be most remembered for being the architect of liberalisation. Plagued by ill health of late, the 83-year-old Rao admitted that his only regret was not completing the second volume of his book, *The Insider*. He passed away on December 22, 2004.



## THE PEACEKEEPER

National security advisor **J N Dixit** knew all about keeping the neighbours quiet. He negotiated with Pakistan over Kashmir and China over the border that led to war in 1962. Dixit joined the Congress after almost a decade of retirement from the post of India's foreign secretary. India's first high commissioner to Bangladesh in 1971, he represented the country in almost all neighbouring countries—Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Pakistan. He was 68 when he passed away on January 3 after a heart attack.



## SO LONG, COACH

The last day of 2004 saw Indian hockey enthusiasts bid a mournful goodbye to 72-year-old **Balkishen Singh**, arguably India's toughest coach and best hockey strategist. Singh led India in the Melbourne (1956) and Rome (1960) Olympic teams and coached two generations of the team for Moscow (1980), Los Angeles (1984) and Barcelona (1992). Moscow was the Indian team's last Olympic gold. He recently said, "I can't think of life without hockey. If I am born again, I would love to be a hockey player all over again."

## BORN AGAIN

Twenty-seven years after his death, and 47 since he first topped the UK music singles chart, **Elvis Aaron Presley** recently hit No. 1 again, with the single *One night* becoming the 1,000th No. 1 track on the UK music singles' chart. Elvis' record label, SonyBMG, is re-releasing all his 18 UK No. 1 singles in the coming weeks to celebrate the year in which the 'King' would have turned 70. Elvis starred in 33 successful films, and won 14 Grammy nominations (three wins) from the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences and the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, which he received at the age of 36. He died at his Memphis home, Graceland, on August 16, 1977.

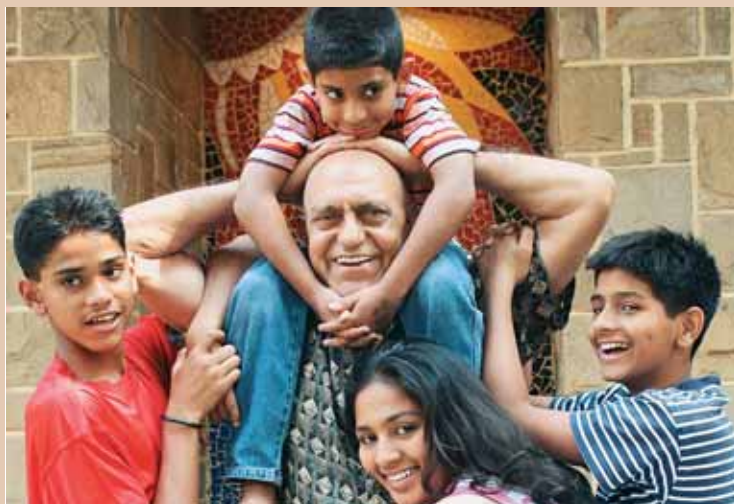
## MAMMA MIA!

What sets Eliza Maria, born in January, apart from other babies is her mother. **Adriana Iliescu**, a single retired university professor in Romania, will be 67 in May, and is believed to be the oldest recorded woman to give birth. She was originally carrying triplets, but two of the babies were removed after 10 weeks because they had stopped growing. Iliescu, who taught history and wrote children's books, underwent hormone treatment for nine years to delay her menopause. She told the press, "I believed all my life that a woman has a right to give birth and that is why I had to follow my dream, no matter how old I was." The age record for motherhood was previously held by Satyabhama Mahapatra, a teacher from Orissa, who gave birth at 65 two years ago.



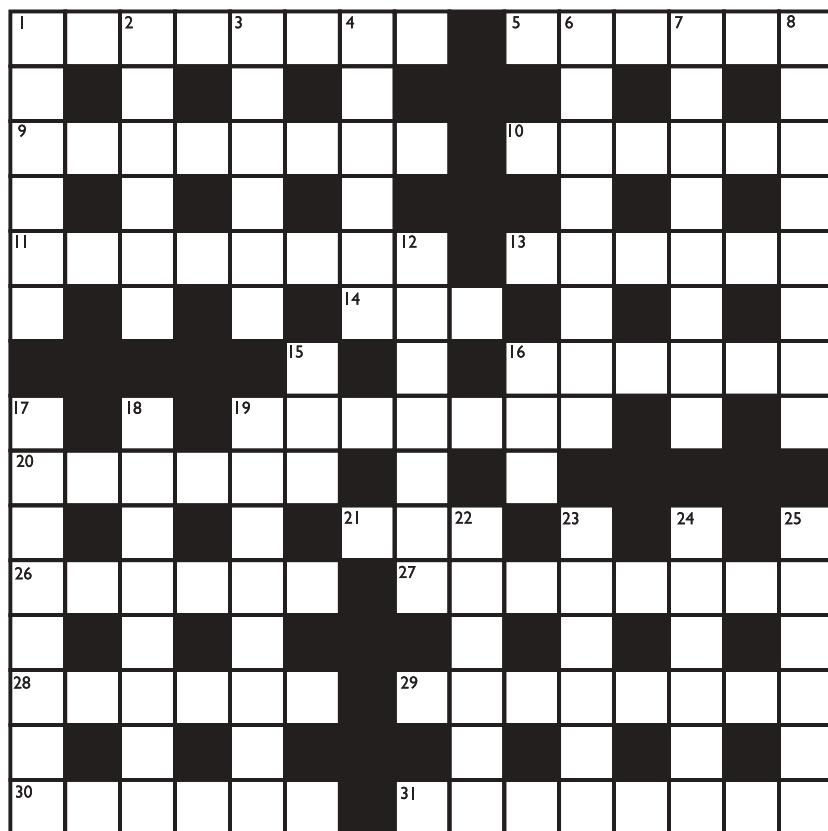
## A FINE INNINGS

In *Namak Halal*, when Amitabh Bachchan's character wants to demonstrate his knowledge of "walking, talking English", he leans on cricket commentary: "In 1929, Sir, when India was playing against Australia in Melbourne City, Vijay Merchant and **Vijay Hazare**, they were at the crease..." Right there is a salute to the captain of India's first Test victory—*Harmony* saluted him too in its October issue. Right arm medium pacer Vijay Samuel Hazare, known for his unruffled and patient style, made up for his lack of aggression with a quiet confidence and perseverance. When he wasn't on the field, he hunted tigers, a throwback to his princely patronage. Hazare passed away on December 18, 2004, at 89.



## MOGAMBO NO MORE

From the superstar of villainy in Indian cinema to revealing his cuddly grandpa side on *Harmony's* pages in July, **Amrish Puri** played many roles—as many as 221 in the movies. Puri gave us a version of evil layered with versatility. But the Mogambo of *Mr India* and Mola Ram of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* started his film career only at the age of 40—following a successful career in theatre—after an initial rejection in 1954. Our best-loved bad guy passed away on January 12, at the age of 72, just before the release of his latest film, *Kisna*.



## EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 5

By Raju Bharatan

### ACROSS

- 1 What the *Miss Mary* style of heroine, in Hindustani Cinema, had traditionally to be to start with: *Yeh mard bade dilsard, bade bedard, na dhoka khaana* (3-5)
- 5 A run for which Sachin goes ever so swiftly (2-4)
- 9 Appear so provocatively clad as to display those Golden Globes twice over (4, 4)
- 10 Nothing doing! (6)
- 11 *Bete* Dias going around is on no count to be neglected (8)
- 13 Confessing to being in the States is no advantage (1, 5)
- 14 Losing nine Test tosses in a row

put the stamp on Sunil Gavaskar as one (3)

- 16 Sestet leading to sleeping sickness (6)
- 19 Hero slipping into cot open at both ends (7))
- 20 Movie classic having three successive letters of the alphabet going together (6)
- 21 Was not faster (3)
- 26 A Negro employed for throwing rocks (6)
- 27 I am on a DD fringe forever (1, 7)
- 28 A believer he is coming in the way of a non-drinker (6)
- 29 They simply must stick their necks out (8)
- 30 How come Mohammad Kaif's going down with it (64 run out). Did not Chepauk prompt Adam

Gilchrist to call back the little Indian? (6)

- 31 Maran surrounding the holiday resort (8)

### DOWN

- 1 What ails Deputy under Khushwant Singh's daughter (6)
- 2 Far from fit to hold a candle to *Dr Zhivago* (2, 4)
- 3 The Izaak Walton work, published in 1653, is *The Compleat*—(6)
- 4 Who but Shabana could have, now as Asha, now as Swarnalata, from *Saaz* to *Morning Raga*! (6)
- 6 The personable young CEO who marries his lovely steno-sec and still hopes to dictate to her? (8)
- 7 Be no friend of *Evening News* going after Ali over 21 Across (8)
- 8 How you'd be inclined to identify 'Mr & Mrs Rai-To-Be' watching an England-Australia series (3, 5)
- 12 A rude non-Maradona style reminder of "The Hand of God" (7)
- 15 More than halfway past Karachi (3)
- 16 A sight more than one-fifth of a foot (3)
- 17 Coasting as the very antithesis of 28 Across (8)
- 18 American not in open court (2, 6)
- 19 What 'Bottoms Up!' in a sense means (6, 2)
- 22 The Red Rose blooming in Jawaharlal's life and times (6)
- 23 The 1969 Sharmila Tagore-Rajendra Kumar starrer in which Lata Mangeshkar gave exquisite expression to S D Burman's *Khayali hai re hum ne qasam sang rahne kii* in Raag Barva (6)
- 24 No bread-winner (6)
- 25 A revolutionary discovery, one of Liz Taylor's many husbands caught in the singing act (6)

For answers, see page 95

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

**TIPS FOR BEGINNERS:** There are a variety of clues employed in cryptic puzzles. For instance, the anagram. One anagrammatic clue could be: Stipulated as empty truisms. Stipulated is the 10 letters of platitudes rearranged to make an anagram. Another type of clue used is the palindrome. For example: A TOYOTA reading as ATOYOT A when viewed backward, or when viewed up in a Down clue. Next, there could be a clue (8-letter answer) reading: Begin to tell what I did in the restaurant. The solution: INITIATE (IN IT I ATE). The solution to the clue, An organised series of operations to promote a soft drink, is CAMPAIGN, the CAMPA part of it covering the soft drink. At times, what looks a straight clue could prove tricky. For example, It's slightly more than a foot in length, has SHOE for its answer. Or the solution to the clue, Mrs Ram, could be SITA. Madagascar could split into Mad Aga's car, Franciscan into Franc I scan, Abracadabra into A bra, cad, a bra. The possibilities are endless.



## LAUGH LINES

Three old ladies are sitting in a diner, chatting about various things. One lady says, "You know, I'm getting really forgetful. This morning, I was standing at the top of the stairs, and I couldn't remember whether I had just come up or was about to go down." The second lady says, "You think that's bad? The other day, I was sitting on the edge of my bed, and I couldn't remember whether I was going to bed or had just woken up!" The third lady smiles smugly. "Well, my memory is just as good as it's always been, knock on wood." She raps the table. With a startled look on her face, she asks, "Who's there?"

III

An elderly couple were having problems remembering things, so they decided to go to their doctor. After checking the couple out, the doctor told them that they might want to start making notes to help them remember things. Later that night while watching TV, the old man got up and his wife asked, "Where are you going?" He replied, "To the kitchen." She asked, "Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?" "Sure," he said. Then his wife asked him, "Don't you think you should write it down?" "No, I can remember that," he replied. "Well, I also would like some strawberries on top. You had better write that down," his wife said. "I can remember that," he replied. She said, "Well, I also want whipped cream on top. You had better write it down." Irritated, he said, "I don't need to." He went into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, he returned from the kitchen and handed her a plate of bacon and eggs. She stared at the plate for a moment and said, "You forgot my toast."

III

A man and his wife were having difficulties with their memory. They visited a doctor who was reputed to have great success in this field. A few weeks later they were chatting with a friend about it. Their friend said he was having problems with his memory also, and asked for the name of the doctor. The husband said, "You'll have to help me here a little with my memory technique. Uh, let's see, a flower, long stem, uh, thorns..." "Rose," the man guessed. "That's it," the husband said, "Hey Rose, what's the name of that doctor?"

## MEMORISE IT

The test of this poem's worth is in its immortality. Rudyard Kipling's words transcend time and technology. Kipling had Dr Leander Starr Jameson in mind when he wrote this poem. In 1895, Jameson and his 500 countrymen failed in a raid against the Boers, in southern Africa. But Jameson was portrayed as a daring hero. It is about holding your head up high and facing reality in intimidating circumstances.

### IF...

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

## A FAMILY FOR LIFE

PAGE 14

**SOCARE IND**, 2642, Desik, 12th 'E' Main, Rajaji Nagar, II Stage, Bangalore-560010. Tel: 080-23321864, 23520329

## BONE WEARY

PAGE 46

**Arthritis Foundation of India**, 15 A, Pocket-B, Mayur Vihar, Phase II, New Delhi-110091. Tel: 011-22732895. Email: queries@arthfound.org  
**Osteoporosis Society of India**, Department of Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi-110029. Tel: 011-26594993. Fax: 011-26588663, 26588641. Email: osteoporosis\_society\_india@hotmail.com  
**The Bone And Joint Decade**—India Office, Centre for Rheumatic Diseases, 11, Hermes Elegance, 1988, Convent Street, Camp, Pune-411001. Tel: 020-26348291. Email: bjdindia@vsnl.net

## ROYAL GETAWAY

PAGE 74



Hotel Tourist Village, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 0749-223760, 221297

## HEADSTART

PAGE 92

### SOLUTION TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 5

**ACROSS:** 1 Man-hater; 5 Go-cart; 9 lOOk gOOd; 10 Strike; 11 Dia(bete)s; 13 A minus (Am in US); 14 Dud; 16 Tsetse (is six letters of Sestet rearranged); 19 C(hero)ot; 20 G(AND)HI; 21 Ate; 26 Onager (six letters of A Negro rearranged, Onager is employed for throwng rocks); 27 A diamond A D(I AM ON)D; 28 Theist -- T(he is)T; 29 Giraffes; 30 Cramps; 31 Matheran --- Ma(the)ran

**DOWN:** 1 Malady --- Mala/Dy: reference to Mala Singh; 2 No Omar; 3 Angler (reference to Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler); 4 Emoted;

6 Optimist; 7 Alienate—Ali(EN)ate, EN referring to Evening News; 8 The Ashes; 12 Subrata (Paul); 15 chi (end part of Karachi); 16 Toe; 17 Agnostic (eight letters of coasting rearranged); 18 in camera (its eight letters rearrange into American); 19 Cheers up (read cheers as Cheers!); 22 Edwina (Mountbatten); 23 Talash; 24 Loafer; 25 Edison (Ed is on)—reference to Eddie Fisher

## MIND GAMES

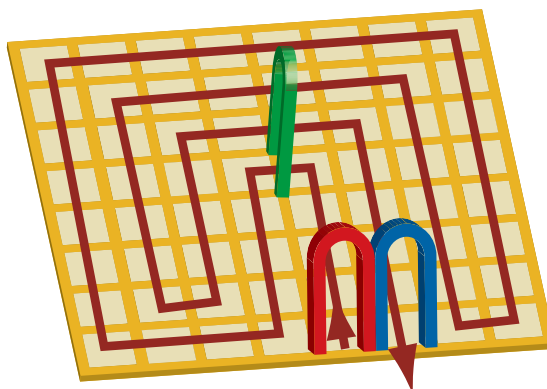
**1** He asks either man, "If I were to ask you if this is the way I should go, would you say yes?" If the man he asks is the one who tells the truth, he will of course get the right answer. If the man he asks is the man who always lies, that man lies about the answer he would give thus giving the right answer. By forcing the liar to lie twice you cancel out the first lie, then he is forced to tell the truth.

**2** White. It is a polar bear, For the North Pole is one of the places where you can go one mile south, one mile east, and one mile north, and still end up at your starting point. (The others are near the South Pole.)

**3** Turn the first switch on for a few minutes and then shut it off. Turn the second switch on and then go to the other room. The light bulb that is warm is connected to the first switch, the light that is on is connected to the second switch and the light that is off and cool is connected to the third switch.

**4** The faulty reasoning lies in the addition at the end— $3 \times \$9$  does equal \$27, but the \$2 tip is included in that \$27, so it makes no sense to add the \$2 to \$27 to make \$29. They paid \$25 for the hotel room, \$2 for the tip (\$27), and then got \$1 back each to make the original \$30.

## VISUAL CHALLENGE





**“The younger generation cannot read Chinese. After I give up the editorship, who knows what will happen to the paper? Today it runs only because the tannery owners support it. While we are there, we will try to keep the paper running.”**  
—C J Chen

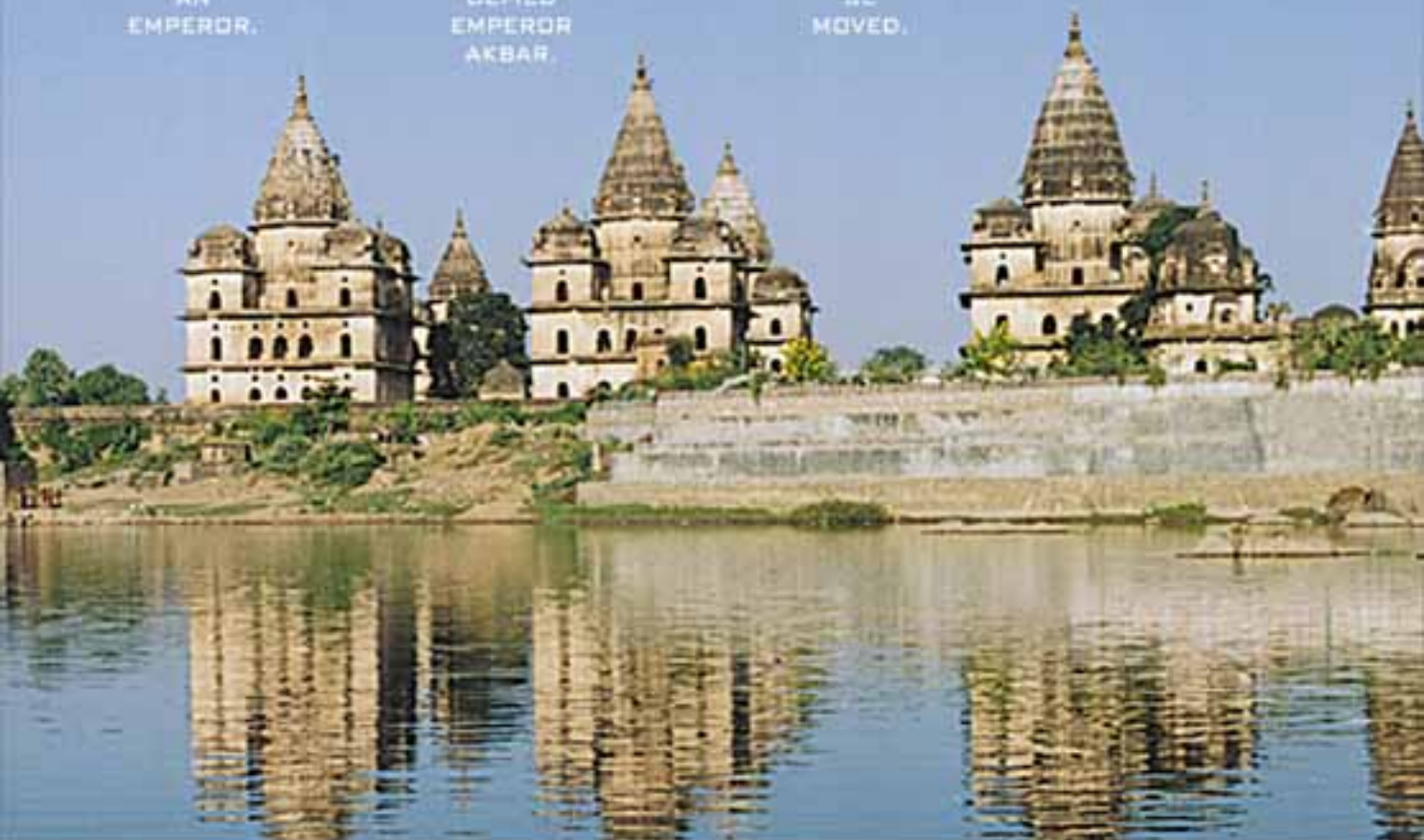
*C J Chen, 78, may one day be remembered as the last editor of the last Chinese newspaper in India—a mark of distinction he would rather not have. Sitting inside a tannery in Tangra in Kolkata, every morning from 8 am to 11 am, Chen, along with his team of six people, puts together the next day's edition of the Overseas Chinese Commercial Journal of India. Reticent, uncomfortable in English, speaking only a little Hindi, and mainly conversing in the Hakka dialect with his colleagues, Chen is one of the few remaining elders in the 4,000 strong Chinese community who still have their roots in the past. He moved to India with his family in 1949, just after World War II. The paper is still written in Chinese characters and is funded by the Chinese Tanneries Owners' Association. Most of its news is gleaned from the Net and from Taiwan or Beijing dailies. With a meagre circulation of 350 and sold at Rs 2.50 a copy, it also carries a smattering of matrimonial and obituaries—vital in this case since that is only way the Chinese elders find out what is happening in their community.*

A PALACE  
BUILT ONLY  
TO  
RECIEVE  
AN  
EMPEROR.

THE  
HOUSE OF  
A COURTESAN  
WHO  
DEFIED  
EMPEROR  
AKBAR.

A TEMPLE  
WHOSE  
IDOL  
CANNOT  
BE  
MOVED.

FRESCOES  
THAT  
SPAN  
CENTURIES.



Orchha. A city where kings and queens still reside, where palaces and temples retain their pristine perfection, where time seems to stand still. Explore the Jehangir Mahal, whose magnificent portals were opened only for the Mughal emperor, Jehangir. Visit the Ram Raja temple where the idol of Lord Rama still resides (and the legend has it that it can never be moved). Linger a while in the house of legendary courtesan Rai Praveen who outwitted the mighty Akbar with her poetry. Admire the vibrant murals that take you from the Ramayana to 16th century India. Or just take a walk in the forest, sit by the river, listen to the evening "aarti".

Orchha. Just another nugget waiting to be discovered in magical, mystical Madhya Pradesh. Steeped in history. Blessed by nature. Sanctified by faith. Alive with wildlife. So, for the holiday of your life, don't go north, south, east or west. Make it Madhya Pradesh this time.

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