

FEBRUARY 2009 Rs 30

harmony

celebrate age

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TEAM INDIA

One voice, one city, one nation. That was the resounding takeaway from the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon held in Mumbai on 18 January. Over 1,500 silvers participated in the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run at the event, which brought together people from all walks of life in a show of strength and unity.

This was our fifth run in Mumbai. However, while the high levels of energy and enthusiasm were a familiar sight, this year there was a sense of community and comfort at the event that was unusual. I noticed that people were more responsive to their fellow participants than ever before. Representatives of different NGOs showed solidarity for each other's causes. And everywhere there were visible signs—placards, T-shirts, voices—to show that Mumbai hadn't forgotten the trauma of 26/11 but was determined to move on stronger, safer, more aware and, most important, together.

The Harmony marquee, where the silvers gathered before the Senior

Citizens' Run, also buzzed with excitement. The enclosure had a festive air with silvers catching up with old friends over refreshments. The run was flagged off by a wonderful mix of the silver guard and the new: Sharmila Tagore with her daughter Soha Ali Khan, Gulshan Grover and Tushaar Kapoor. Their presence added fuel to the fire of our participants who blazed a trail of coruscating yellow over the 4.3-km route amid cheering crowds. After the run, there was a lucky dip where silvers took home a range of prizes ranging from mobile phones and gift hampers to dinner vouchers. For their support, I would like to thank BJN Group, Wagh Bakri Group, Aditya Jyot Eye Hospital, Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (RADAG) and, of course, my team at Harmony for Silvers Foundation who worked around the clock to make the event a success.

Teamwork can make anything happen—you just need to believe. And today, we Indians have to go beyond narrow definitions of 'teams' to become more inclusive,



DONALD WOODROW

more encompassing—whether it's age, gender or religion. Events like the Marathon are proof that latent energy can be converted into momentum. The past year was a difficult one in so many ways and there is still a residual anger within us all. Rather than letting it fester within us, we must channel the negativity into a positive force. Let's begin this New Year with a pledge to give back to our neighbourhoods, our communities and, indeed, our country. India needs renewal and hope like never before—come play for the home team.

Tina Ambani

Tina Ambani

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WEB EXCLUSIVES



The silver life

The future is even more wonderful,
says Brendan MacCarthaigh

Visit www.harmonyindia.org and check out this month's stories!



Breaking free

Usha Subramaniam shares
her success story



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Cover photograph of
Bapsi and Fali Nariman
by **SHIVAY BHANDARI**

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column one

Silvers are the best examples of how to live well. They have designed their entire existence around the basics and are in no rush to change their fortunes by bartering the fundamentals of life for progress. More than the deliverables that money promises, silvers value time, patience and love—all non-commercial attributes. Love, the most tangible of the lot, is what cements relationships. And what better time to celebrate the sentiment than the month of Saint Valentine! Though we appreciate the sentiments of readers who make a case against Valentine's Day, we also think every opportunity to fete love should be embraced with open arms. The special theme for this month's issue, therefore, is love (with a little more flourish). Aptly titled "Golden Silvers", our cover story features couples who have been married for more than 50 years. For them ego is immaterial—togetherness and emotional dependence go hand in hand.

On the cover is one such pair that has lived a full life for, and because of, each other. After 54 years of being together, cookbook writer Bapsi Nariman and her husband Fali, the eminent jurist, won't have it any other way. The other couples featured feel the same way. If you feel you should have been featured, write to us with your life story. **The 10 best 'truelove' accounts will get a copy of Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group's calendar for 2009, which is designed around Harmony's Silver Achievers.** That's the cause closest to our hearts and forms the core of the magazine. Keep reading!

—Meeta Bhatti



My mother is 84 years old and has a host of health problems, including hypertension and poor vision. In

November we booked her on a flight from Mumbai to Nanded, where my sister lives. She was initially nervous to travel alone because she doesn't speak any English but we convinced her that private airlines were very reliable and took good care of unaccompanied elder passengers. Her flight was scheduled to leave Mumbai at 5.50 am and reach Nanded at 7.20 am. We reached the airport at 5 am and the airline staff seated her on a wheelchair. When we asked them whether we should wait before the flight took off, they assured us it was not necessary. We also asked them if there was a form to fill up with our numbers should the airline wish to contact us; again, they said no. So we left the airport and returned home.

At 7.50, my sister called me from Nanded airport to inform me that the flight had been cancelled. I rushed to the airport with my son and went to the airline's counter—to my shock, the lady there told me the flight had left as scheduled. When I insisted she was wrong, she made some enquiries and confirmed that the flight had indeed been cancelled. But she didn't know where the passengers were! By this time, I had started shouting. Senior staff from the airline arrived and warned me that they would call security if I continued to raise my voice. I called the security personnel myself and explained the situation. Meanwhile, my son had reached the arrival section and discovered that all the passengers were waiting there. With the help of the airport manager, he entered the area. My mother broke down as soon as she saw him, glad that her ordeal was over.

It's shocking that such an incident can happen with such a reputed airline. If they have so much money to spend on salaries, stylish uniforms and swank interiors, why not upgrade their communication system? The moment a flight is cancelled or rescheduled, an SMS should go to all staff, passengers and relatives (in case of children or elders travelling alone). In fact, in case of elder travellers, a relative must be advised to wait until the flight takes off. The travellers should be given badges or cards with contact information of relatives and details of any medical conditions. Also, the staff should be trained to be more compassionate and take every measure possible to ensure the comfort of elder travellers.

ALOK THOLIYA

Mumbai



The letter of the month wins music CDs from Big Music

I am not a senior citizen but I enjoy reading the brief biographies of outstanding elders you publish in each issue of your magazine. In the December 2008 issue of *Harmony*, I discovered the section 'Bookshelf'. I would like to take this opportunity to tell readers about Aminuddin Khan, an author from my own city of Hyderabad. He is 76, a much loved and honoured elder and truly noble descendant of the aristocracy of the old days. He has written three novels—*A Way through the Woods* (Orient Longman, 1997), *A Shift in the Wind* (HarperCollins India, 2005) and *A Right Royal Bastard* (Rupa, 2008). The first book was published when the author was 65—it has recently been reprinted by Rupa.

Khan's prose is matchless. All his narratives are so beautifully recounted that, very often, fiction becomes indistinguishable from reality. These novels are exquisite reflections of what life was like in the first half of the 20th century. They also give us an indication of the inner substance of the extraordinary man who wrote them. He is quintessentially Hyderabadi, and has wit, grace and charm of a very rare kind. Aminuddin Khan

is an industrial psychologist by profession, a management consultant and, at present, administrator of the Nizam of Hyderabad's private estate.

PARAMVEER MANN

Hyderabad

It happened to come across an old issue of *Harmony* and read an article on Laila Tyabji ("Oh Laila!", September 2004). I wanted to tell you that I enjoyed it immensely. I look forward to reading more interesting stories online on your website [www.harmonyindia.org].

RADHA NAIR

Via email

It is laudable that Harmony for Silvers Foundation is serving the elderly of the nation. I think you can also serve people of all age groups by imparting knowledge to them in a novel way—through ring tones of mobile phones! I am an author and am trying to simplify the English language and impart it to millions of mobile phone users through ring tones.

P MANMOHAN REDDY

Secunderabad

The Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority (MHADA) recently made available

over 3,000 residential flats at affordable rates all over greater Mumbai. It has reserved a percentage of these flats for 15 categories—regretfully 'senior citizens' is not one of them.

Today, there are about 1 million elders in Mumbai who have been living here for more than 20 years. Many of them have become a 'burden' on their own siblings or families or have made the mistake of transferring their own dwelling to accommodate their growing family. Now they either face neglect from their loved ones or are sent to old age homes. Why can't the government fulfil its social obligation and reserve a percentage of these affordable homes for these senior citizens and allow them to age gracefully with dignity? In fact, senior citizens with no income of their own who are fully dependent on their children should be offered these flats at concessional rates.

I appeal to all senior citizens and NGOs working for them to come together and seek a hearing from the chief minister of Maharashtra on this matter.

MOHAN SIROYA

Mumbai

AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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

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

...and we'll print it in the column 'Your Space'



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

ANALYSE THIS



MIRROR, MIRROR

If you don't 'feel' your age, you're not alone. According to the Berlin Ageing Study, which interviewed 516 men and women over the age of 70 over a six-year period, **silvers tend to 'feel' about 13 years younger than their chronological age.** "People generally felt quite a bit younger than they actually were and showed relatively high levels of satisfaction with ageing," says psychologist Jacqui Smith of the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (ISR), who conducted the study with researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. "The gap of 13 years remained steady on average. Only poor health reduced the gap between 'felt age' and 'actual age'."

The researchers also asked the silvers how old they felt when they looked in a mirror. At the start of the study people said they looked about 10 years younger than they were. By the end of the study, people felt they looked only about seven years younger. In general, women perceived their appearance as being closer to their actual age, probably because "women are more aware of their appearance, especially given the negative stereotypes of older bodies", as Smith reasons. The study was published in the January issue of the *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Science*.

20 PLUS!

Longevity may be a matter of choice. According to a new study by Harvard University that monitored 600 people for 60 years, seven lifestyle factors are vital to determining how well we age: avoiding alcohol abuse, not smoking, having a stable marriage, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight,

developing good coping mechanisms, and pursuing education. "Successful ageing isn't simply a matter of genes or fate," the authors of the study tell British newspaper *The Independent*. "Making healthy choices can pave the way for a long, vital life." In addition, the newspaper cites international research to show how you can **add up to 20 years to your life**.

**1.8 years. Win big.**

Nobel Prize-winning scientists live nearly two years longer than those who were nominated but missed out, according to a study by Warwick University in the UK. And researchers at Toronto University say Oscar winners lived four years longer on average, while double winners bagged an extra six. The theory: high social status has a positive effect on longevity.

2 years. Eat chocolate.

Dark chocolate contains antioxidants that are good for the heart and aid longevity. Research on Harvard graduates shows that chocolate eaters live a year or two longer than those who do not indulge. And those who eat one to three bars of chocolate a month score a 36 per cent lower risk of premature death.

2.5 years. Have sex.

It's good for health and longevity. A study at University of California reports that regular sex could add over two years, while a research team from Bristol

**EXTEND LIFE
BY 2.5 YEARS
HAVE SEX**

University says men who have frequent orgasms live longer. The study concluded that risk of an earlier death in men who had sex twice or more a week is half that of men whose frequency was less than once a month.

3 years. Keep the faith.

Regular attendance at your temple, mosque, *gurdwara* or church can be almost as good for you as jogging. A study at the University of Pittsburgh shows that weekly attendance at a religious service added two to three years, compared with three to five for physical exercise. Research at Harvard University shows that men and women who are less likely to attend church, travel, or take part in social activities are 20 per cent more likely to die early than those who socialise the most.

3.6 years. Eat less meat.

Vegetarian diets and diets with low levels of meat are linked to lower risk of premature death. According to research conducted at Loma Linda University in the US, people who rarely ate meat (less than once a week) added 3.6 years to life.

3.7 years. Keep active.

Moderate to high levels of activity can extend lifespan by 1.3 to 3.7 years because of the beneficial effect on the heart, say researchers at Erasmus University in the Netherlands. Exercise also means people will be less obese, more mobile and enjoy a better and healthy quality of life.

4 years. Drink wine.

Regularly drinking small amounts of wine can add four years to a man's life, according to researchers from Wageningen University in the Netherlands. They find that men who drank about half a glass of wine every day were 38 per cent less likely to die prematurely than those who did not.

4.1 years. Control blood pressure and cholesterol.

Maintaining low blood pressure and cholesterol levels can extend lifespan by more than four years, says a report by Yale University.

5 years. Be educated.

According to a study by Harvard University, highly educated women live more than five years longer than their less-educated contemporaries, while men with a university degree live almost eight years longer. Also, men and women with PhDs live longer than those with master's degrees, who in turn outlive people with a bachelor's degree.

ADD 6.6 YEARS
TO LIFE
EAT RIGHT

6.6 years. Eat right.

Adopt a diet by researchers at Erasmus University, which involves daily consumption of dark chocolate, almonds, fruits and vegetables, garlic and wine, and fish four times a week. This diet claims to cut risk of heart disease by 76 per cent.

7 years. Lose weight.

A study at Oxford University shows that people who are obese at the age of 40 (body mass index or BMI greater than 30) die seven years earlier on average. And a Harvard study finds that people who gain no more than 2.3 kg between age 20 and mid-life have one-third the risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and gallstones as men and women who put on 5-10 kg.



7.5 years. Think positive.

A 23-year study by Yale University based on 660 people over the age of 50 shows that those who have a more positive take on life and ageing live seven-and-a-half years longer on average. Supporting this is a Dutch study that shows that optimists have a 55 per cent lower risk of early death. Pessimists are believed to be more prone to smoking, becoming obese and developing high blood pressure.

8-10 years. Don't smoke.

A team at the University of Helsinki found that those who had never smoked lived an average 10 years longer than those who smoked more than 20 a day. Research on men in New Zealand showed that 50 per cent of smokers die prematurely and that they die 14 years earlier than non-smokers. The good news: it's never too late to stop. According to the US National Institute on Drug Abuse, a 35 year-old man who quits smoking can increase his life expectancy by five years.

14 years. Make four changes.

According to a study of 20,000 people over the age of 45 by researchers at Cambridge University, those who exercise regularly, eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, don't smoke, and consume moderate amounts of alcohol live an average of 14 years longer than those who don't.

20 years. Live in the right neighbourhood.

Health officials in Baltimore, US, find that average life expectancy is 63 in the city's impoverished neighbourhoods against 83 in wealthy suburbs.

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NEWSWORTHY

LAW ON YOUR SIDE

In December, the **Union Cabinet approved a proposal to provide free legal aid to senior citizens** as part of an amendment to the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. This provision, coming on the heels of the terror attack in Mumbai, has also been extended to dependent family members of security personnel who die in terrorist or extremist violence, and victims of terrorist and extremist violence. To be eligible for free legal aid, silvers must have an annual income under Rs 120,000. "The intention is to provide legal protection to special categories and to avoid any kind of economic disability," the government announced in a press release.

DIAL FOR HELP

Following a rash of attacks against silvers in the city, the **Chennai police will add another toll-free helpline to its existing helpline for silvers, 1253.** "This new helpline will function from the control room in the city police commissioner's office," police commissioner K Radhakrishnan tells media. "It will also coordinate with two vehicles that will attend to complaints from senior citizens. We will upgrade the present system to ensure full protection to senior citizens."

Apart from the new helpline—the telephone number is yet to be announced—the police will launch a major drive to identify silvers living alone with the help of information gathered from local NGOs. It is estimated that one out of every seven silvers in Tamil Nadu lives alone. Further, the elderly constitute 11 per cent (350,000) of Chennai's population, well above the national average of 6.8.



कीजिए अपने निवेश का भरपूर पोषण



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			वरिष्ठ नागरिकों के लिए: 0.50% वार्षिक की अतिरिक्त दर	
12 माह	9.25*	9.58*	9.75*	10.11*
24 माह	9.25*	9.58*	9.75*	10.11*
36 माह	9.00*	9.31*	9.50*	9.84*
60 माह	9.00*	9.31*	9.50*	9.84*

* एक करोड़ रुपये से अधिक के निवेश के लिए राष्ट्रीय आवास बैंक की पूर्व अनुमति आवश्यक है।

* 15 लाख या अधिक के व्यक्तिगत निवेश के लिए 0.10% सालाना की अतिरिक्त ब्याज दर

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अवधि	ब्याज दर (%)	वार्षिक वापसी (%)	ब्याज दर (%)	वार्षिक वापसी (%)
			वरिष्ठ नागरिकों के लिए	
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LOVE THAT

SILVER ZONE

Young fashionistas in Tokyo flock to the internationally recognised Harajuku area, the home for all things hip and avant-garde. Now, silvers have their 'Harajuku for Grannies': **Sugamo district**. As news



agency AFP reports, retailers in this northern suburb of the capital are cashing in on silvering Japan by focusing on elder customers. "Our cakes are organic and have very little sugar," says Haruko Sugisawa, who works at the popular Sugamoen bakery. Also doing brisk

business is Tokiwa Shokudo restaurant next door, which serves 'homemade' food. "Our customers are almost always older men who are alone," says manager Yuki Saito. For older women Sugamo's main attraction is its clothing stores that specialise in red underwear. (According to traditional Japanese medicine, red undergarments heat the body, making them and the colour itself very popular among silvers.) Another Sugamo speciality: pay-by-the-hour 'love' hotels where silvers head for furtive sexual encounters.



BOY BAND

Meet **Ireland's oldest boy band, the Bolton Street Band**. With a combined age of 310, the three lads (keyboardist, singer and saxophonist) are resident musicians at the Friends of the Elderly community centre in Dublin. And they are looking for a "mature" drummer—they've advertised in every city newspaper. The band plays at the club every Wednesday night, as well as on occasions like Christmas, New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, Halloween and birthday parties. Now, they plan to release a single against the government's healthcare policy, which cuts funding for silvers. Also on the anvil is an album to raise money for the centre. Hear their sound on www.friendsoftheelderly.ie/src/Media/the_bolton_street_band_foe_2008.htm

MEDIA WATCH

WISE WORDS



In the course of Henry Alford's research for *How to Live: A Search for Wisdom from Old People (While They Are Still on This Earth)* (Twelve; 272 pages), two of his subjects—his mother and stepfather—broke up after being together for 36 years. Rather than letting it throw him, he converted it into a subplot leading to his final piece of 'wisdom': "Maybe it's not until you've grown old that you realise you've picked the wrong person to grow old with."

Just one gem gleaned from a compendium of conversations with over 100 American silvers—from celebrities like litterateurs Edward Albee and Harold Bloom to real people, such as a 75 year-old survivor of Hurricane Katrina or an 89 year-old woman who took a 14-month walk across the US in support of campaign finance reform. So why did the 46 year-old writer, commonly spotted on the pages of *The New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair*, take on such a subject? "I'm preparing", Alford tells TIME magazine.

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EVENTS

CRIME WATCH

Senior police officers, members of the judiciary and representatives of NGOs—including Harmony—gathered in Delhi for the **2nd National Seminar on Crime against Senior Citizens from 22 to 24 December**. The seminar was organised by the National Institute of Criminology & Forensic Science along with the National Institute of Social Defence. Apart from an overview of crime against silvers in India, there was a discussion on the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007 and governmental and non-governmental programmes for the welfare of silvers. Participants put forth many recommendations on preventing crime against silvers. These included more clarity on the role of the judiciary and police in enforcing the Act; establishing neighbourhood watch groups; encouraging arbitration to settle property disputes; and collating statistics on crime against silvers. These recommendations will be passed on to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.



Crime in Japan: While Japan has one of the lowest crime rates, an increasing number of them are committed by silvers, according to a government report. In 2007, 48,605 elderly people were arrested or investigated for crimes other than traffic offences. The government attributes this trend to financial worries and loneliness. Nearly two-thirds of crimes by silvers were thefts.

A COMMON PLATFORM

In collaboration with the Senior Citizens' Council of Delhi, the **All India Senior Citizens' Confederation (AISCCON) organised its eighth national conference in New Delhi** on 23-24 December 2008. Apart from silvers from across India, participants included representatives of NGOs (including Harmony), government, police and judiciary. Following the inaugural address by Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Meira Kumar, the conference featured two seminars: Protection of Life and Property of Senior Citizens in India and Assistive Technologies for Senior Citizens in India. The first seminar emphasised the need for silvers to follow 'Best Practices' to enhance their personal security—networking with other silvers, registering themselves with the police, getting domestic help verified, fortifying their homes better, and proactive participation in resident welfare

associations. Meanwhile, the second seminar discussed the types of assistive technologies available for silvers along with demand patterns reflected by accessibility and affordability of products.



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MUMBAI MARATHON 2009



SILVER SPIRIT

On 18 January 2009, Mumbai ran for causes as varied as peace, secularism, health, child rights and, above all, sheer spirit. The Harmony enclosure in Azad Maidan in South Mumbai reverberated with the camaraderie of more than 1,500 silvers—including as many first-timers as veterans. Jamu Kapadia, 73, who attended the 4.3-km **Harmony Senior Citizens' Run** for the first time, was a picture of exhilaration: "I've wanted to participate in the marathon for the past three years," she said. "I'm so happy I made it this year." While 95 year-old Dattatray Balse (covered in "Get on Your Feet", January 2009 issue of *Harmony*) spoke with experience: "I have participated every year, and each time it's more exciting than before."

Actors Sharmila Tagore, Gulshan Grover, Soha Ali Khan and Tushaar Kapoor, along with Tina Ambani, chairperson, Harmony for Silvers Foundation, cheered the crowd and announced the winners of the lucky dip. Silvers came with banners on combating terrorism, conservation of the environment and patriotism. But it was sprightly Shashikant Jhaveri's placard that struck the deepest chord: '86 not out'!



Silver stamina: (Clockwise from top left) Munnalal Yadhav, a farmer from Gondhia, Maharashtra, ran 4.3 km in 17 minutes; retired inspector Sudhir Kolekar is all smiles; 94 year-old Bhanumati Tanna, the oldest female participant; silvers in full form; Shashikant Jhaveri with his '86 not out' umbrella; (opposite page, from top) actor Soha Ali Khan flags off the event with Tina Ambani, chairperson of Harmony for Silvers Foundation; actors Tushaar Kapoor and Gulshan Grover cheer the crowd; Soha Ali with mother, veteran actor Sharmila Tagore



OFFBEAT

IF ONLY...

The untimely death of Jim Morrison of The Doors in Paris on 3 July 1971 left his legion of fans bereft—he was only 27. To commemorate his 65th birthday on 8 December 2008, researchers showed the world what the iconic singer would have looked like had he lived. The team from the Perception Laboratory of University of St. Andrews in Scotland created a computer-generated image using an image of Morrison in his 20s as a starting point. “We used ‘ageing’ software to reproduce the natural effects of ageing, taking into account changes in



skin texture, hairline and hair colour,” Professor David Perrett of the university’s school of psychology explains to the BBC. “The process of ageing was mimicked by changing the texture and shape of the original image to simulate the changes in the skin that would occur between the ages of 40 and 70.” The result: a greying pensioner

with the piercing eyes that were Morrison’s hallmark. The team, which has also created ‘aged’ images of actors Marilyn Monroe and James Dean and singers Elvis Presley and John Lennon, expect their software—when fully developed—to help the police trace people who have been missing for many years.



PRESIDENTIAL PERIL

Watch out President Obama.

Presidents of the US age at a faster clip owing to job stress, translating into wrinkles, grey hair and fluctuation in weight.

According to ageing specialist Michael Roizen, chief wellness officer at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, for every year in office, the average president ages two years. “It doesn’t matter if they’re Democrats or Republicans, it doesn’t matter if they’ve been athletes or not, it doesn’t matter if they were smokers or not,” he tells *The Boston Globe*. “For eight years in office, they age 16.” Roizen arrived at this conclusion after examining the medical histories of presidents—before joining office and during their term—from Theodore Roosevelt onwards. In his view, one significant contributory factor to presidential stress is lack of real friends. “Presidents tend to become isolated, wary of even their closest advisers,” he says. “You need close friends where you can let your hair down.”

Study gerontology: The Department of Psychology at Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai, has announced a certificate course in gerontology in association with Silver Inning Foundation. The month-long course aims to provide participants information about the study of ageing and services for silvers; basic skills for working with elders; and the opportunity to interact with silvers. It is targeted towards professionals working with elders, family caregivers and silvers themselves. To learn more, call Amruta Lovekar, director - programme and services, Silver Inning Foundation at (0) 9833136536 or email amruta76@yahoo.com

H RECOMMENDS

Share a dance. Dancing offers you a good cardiovascular workout and improves balance and coordination. It also keeps you happy. In Hanoi, Vietnam, silvers flock to the Quang Trung Dancing Club in the city's downtown district Dong Da. "I was keen to join the club because it's good for my health," says Nguyen Van Nhan, 80. "Most important, I can make friends with others and be happier." The club, which has 174 members, all over the age of 60, was founded in 2003 by former Army officer Doan Que, who says, "Dancing is very good for elderly. It encourages spirituality and gives them confidence."



Dive into the unknown: If you have a ken for adventure and are in good physical shape, try scuba diving. In the UK, over 15,000 pensioners a year visit Gildenburgh Water, a diving centre in Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire—their abilities range from beginner to instructor level. "Older people are often established in life and have that little bit more money available to pursue something they've always wanted to do," says owner Ian Forster, 59. "With scuba diving, people can leave their hum-drum lives behind and relax underwater." Peter Stewart, 55, an instructor at the diving centre, adds, "To take someone down for the first time and see them enjoy themselves is a pleasure. Many pensioners try scuba diving because they watch underwater programmes on TV and wonder what it's like. They get tremendous enjoyment out of it, as do I."

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

REDISCOVERING LOVE



Love is in the air: Janaki and her husband

What is the ideal age for ‘romance’? I would say there’s only one thing that can defeat age and that’s everlasting romance.

Ours was an arranged marriage. My husband, 71, and I were both teachers. Early in our marriage we had many responsibilities. For a long time our focus, and concern, was settling down our children (one son and a daughter)—their education and marriage. Our daughter got married only after our retirement. They are both settled now and we are blessed with lovable and loving grandchildren.

“Now, we have found time exclusively for each other”

lack of time—when we were young. We enjoy every second with our children, relatives and friends, and visit new destinations around the world. We spend our time meaningfully in prayer, reading, writing, hosting guests and guiding young students. Many of our students are still in touch with us. Our joy knows no bounds when we meet them. Thanks to our profession, I feel much younger than my 64 years!

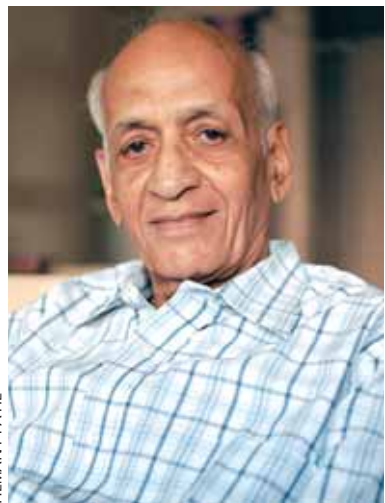
Now, we have found time exclusively for each other and are compensating for what we missed—owing to

The best part is that we can do all this together. It only helps that we have financial independence, self-confidence and the support and love of our children. In sum, we are content, comfortable and happy—the wholesome experience has added another dimension to our personalities and made us rediscover our love for each other. This love, I feel, grows stronger by the day. With God’s grace, we are playing our second innings with love that’s blind to age.

—S Janaki, Udumalpet

BIRTHDAY BUMPS

I have never celebrated my birthday. But last year on 14 August, on my 75th birthday, my daughter and relatives insisted on having a small party at home. My daughter took a day off from her office in Mumbai and arrived in Pune with my grandson a day before. Earlier in the week, my son, who lives in Dubai, had informed me that he had sent 45 boxes containing his belongings to Pune where he was constructing his bungalow in Kondwa—15 km away from where we live. On my birthday, I woke up early, bathed and was waiting for my breakfast when I received a call from the clearing agent. The agent told me that the shipment had arrived from Dubai and was held up at the octroi post in Kondwa for clearance. He asked me to reach the octroi post with my passport and other documents.



HEMANT PATIL

No more birthday parties for Mijagiri

My wife and daughter who were busy with preparations for the party were clearly disappointed to hear the news. I assured my family that the entire matter would be sorted out before lunch. My wife decided to come with me. By the time we reached the octroi post

at 11 am, it started raining. The cargo was cleared in an hour and we accompanied the truck to the bungalow site. As there was no sign of the building contractor, we had to unload the cargo on the porch, which was partly covered. By the time the last box was unloaded, it was 3 pm. Though the building contractor had promised to send labourers to help us cart the boxes inside, they did not arrive. After waiting for a couple of hours, I decided to shift the cargo to our residence as it was unsafe to keep it lying in the open.

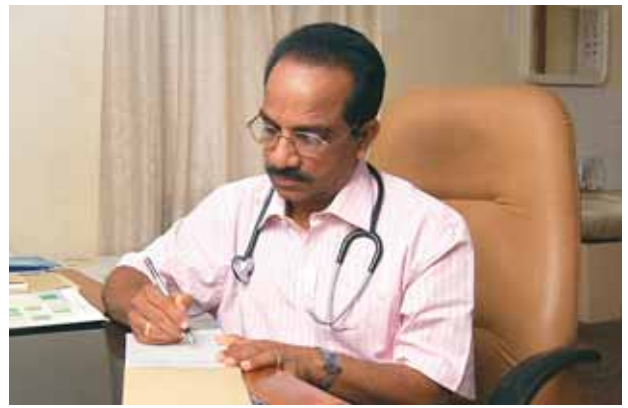
In the meantime, I received frantic calls from my daughter who informed me that many guests had cancelled their visit when they learnt that my wife and I could not make it for lunch. By the time the downpour subsided, it was 4.30 pm. The clearing agent had left with the truck and we didn't have a clue how to accommodate 45 cartons. The clearing agent's truck arrived at 7 pm and by 8.30 pm we finished loading all the cartons back into the vehicle. Little did we know that our misery had just begun—the roads were flooded and there was a power cut in the area. We reached our residence at 11.30 pm and unloaded the cargo in the dark. My wife and I were exhausted, wet and famished. Above all, I felt sad for my grandson who had decorated the house with festoons, waited enthusiastically for us all day and slept without eating his food. Our entire house looked like a godown with cartons lying around. With great difficulty, my wife and I managed to find some space in the kitchen where we ultimately slept.

I hope no silver has to go through such a disastrous birthday. I know life is full of ups and downs, but I have decided not to celebrate my birthday henceforth.

—K D Mijagiri, Pune

HEALING TOUCH

I am a retired surgeon by profession and now have a dual career. In the morning I am a practising surgeon; by afternoon, I practice 'psychic surgery', which involves getting to the root of a problem using spiritual, philosophical and psychological studies and teachings to dissect and analyse each and every part of our mind. I try to blend ancient spiritual and philosophical teachings and wisdom with recent advances in psychology and neural science.



Purushottaman unlocks the power of the mind

I believe science and spirituality go hand in hand. In the era we live in, the methodology of imparting spiritual knowledge and experience should also be updated accordingly so it is more accessible to all of us—especially the young generation. With this in mind, I plan to conduct a mind programming session on happiness where I will discuss ways to attain and experience everlasting happiness all our lives.

My pursuit of self-realisation, or self-actualisation, actually began 15 years ago. Since then, I have been travelling all over the country; meeting like-minded people; and studying Eastern and Western spiritual, philosophical and psychological text. As a surgeon, I have performed many surgeries on patients over the years. Later I decided to start psychic surgery on myself. When I practised it on myself, I discovered the problems that plagued my mind were generated by my own mind, and not even my so-called intellect could offer me a satisfying solution. As I accepted that my mind and intellect had absolutely failed me, I experienced a calm sense of nothingness. I went through a total annihilation of my intellectual ego.

I realised that the path of absolute faith, surrender and devotion to the Supreme Being—the Almighty—was the only way to absolute realisation. Now my prayers have become a daily routine. Today I help others discover self-realisation through psychic healing. As the process is unique, not many people are aware of its benefits. Psychic healing is not rooted in mumbo-jumbo—it has a strong scientific artery to it. I have four to five patients who approach me for psychic healing every week. Readers who are interested in knowing more about the practice of psychic healing or my happiness programme can write to me at ushus27@gmail.com

—Dr D Purushottaman, Kollam

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Ageing joyously

Vrinda Nabar presents an alternate perspective on growing older

Over the past month I have interacted with a spectrum of people ranging from the youthful to those around my age or

older. There is nothing unusual in this except that I am miles away from home, in a culture whose worldview has been moulded by an ideology somewhat different from that which has conditioned my responses. My current, highly individualised milieu is sensitive to concepts of 'space' that we in India are largely immune to: space seen not merely in physical terms but as a private domain that lets individuals lead their lives on their own terms so long as they do not endanger the larger social equilibrium. In such a setting individuals learn early that choices made carry a price. The youthful leave home to make their own lives and, growing old, accept that individual freedom has its consequences.

Self-pity is rare among my older friends here. They lead full lives for the most part and, more important, are able to laugh at their newly acquired quirks and eccentricities. If they fear the twilight years they don't let it shadow their present. They have seen their children go away the way they once did, stay in sporadic touch if at all and visit very occasionally. They see this as normal, even as a relationship of love, mutual respect and understanding. My own upbringing means I value the sense of community belonging I have always taken for granted. I see family ties as mutually supportive, a source of strength for the most part. But I have also known them to be inhibiting and bogged down in an endless round of expectations and seeming betrayals. Caring for the elderly is a concept ingrained in my consciousness and my choices remain grounded within this paradigm.

But I know that they are not the only choices possible or that they are necessarily the "right" ones.

While the experience of ageing may be culture-specific, there are valuable lessons to be learned if cultures remain open to a shared metaphoric 'database' of a universal given, viz. that growing old is unavoidable if we live long. Many old age anxieties arise because we subscribe to myths conditioned by the environment we live in. In *The Coming of Age*, French feminist author Simone de Beauvoir had described life as an unstable system in which balance is continually lost and continually recovered: it is inertia that is synonymous with death.

Beauvoir was 62 when *The Coming of Age* was published, and many of its concerns were no doubt the product of an individual angst. Warning against the tendency to look upon old age as a uniform condition that denied the aged their individuality, Beauvoir pointed out that the image of the aged differed in different times and different places.

Those who live on must be given some reason for doing so, not always easy when body and mind are inclined to pull the other way.

Life does not end as one grows old but merely changes gear

While loneliness and unhappiness are no strangers to old age they are not its distinguishing attributes. Nor is resilience the exclusive privilege of the young. The marginalisation

one experiences with age is both social and self-imposed. It feels good when students and friends here speak glowingly of the community support we seem to enjoy, but I would like to add that the self-contained individualism of the West has valuable lessons to supplement our legacy of family and community. It suggests that life doesn't end as one grows old; it merely changes gear and that the treasure-hunt goes on if one only looks for the clues. ■

Vrinda Nabar, 60, is a feminist writer based in Mumbai. She is currently a visiting professor at Northwestern University, USA

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I legacy

silken Song

Padmini Natarajan meets three
generations of weavers in Tanjore





CHENNAI PIX

I can trace my ancestors in the sari weaving tradition to seven generations," says a proud S V Rajaratinam. The 59 year-old and his entire family—wife, stepmother, stepbrother, two sons, sister and her family—are engaged in weaving Kanjeevaram saris. The Veerayya family has a network of 60 looms in Tanjore operated by 20 weavers each. Rajaratinam's elder son Vishwanath, 29, who graduated in computer applications, creates designs on the computer and his younger son Vijay Ganesh, 23, oversees marketing. Vishwanath and Vijay Ganesh learnt weaving during their school vacations. Rajaratinam's stepmother, 63 year-old Padmavathi, also helps wind the thread on the shuttle.

Each loom produces six to eight saris after which it is set to another design, and each sari takes seven days to be completed. The family produces 250 to 300 saris a month. "When we supply saris to retail shops, we have to compromise on the quality of silk used to accommodate their price range," says Vijay Ganesh. "When we market our saris directly we have the freedom to use good silk." The family sources pure *zari* (brocade) from Surat and saris retail between Rs 2,800 and Rs 45,000. The brothers are very keen to modernise the business by introducing new computer-aided designs, using contemporary colour combinations, reviving old motifs and experimenting with non-sari weaving.

Though innovation fires the dreams of the young generation, they don't allow it to intimidate their rich legacy. Vijay Ganesh is proud to be part of a family that supplied saris to the Mysore Maharaja for his wedding in the 1940s—the payment was given in a sandalwood bowl. "We still have the certificate preserved safely in our family home," he beams. ■



SILVERS FIRST

Following a heart surgery, **Bimal Chatterjee** brought purpose to his own life with Bethune Institute. In the process, he has provided succour to countless fellow silvers, reports **Ruma Dasgupta**

On Anwar Shah Road in South Kolkata there's a nondescript two-storied building that looks up, almost with disdain, at the mammoth glittering multiplex across the street. At night, Bethune Institute of Geriatric Research and Rehabilitation Centre is washed out by the lights that blaze down from the electronic signage of fashion brands on the façade of the glass-and-concrete shopping destination; during the day, it merges with the row of older, humbler family homes and roadside shops that line this traffic-beaten street. Despite its seeming insignificance, this building gives silvers a new lease on life.

The idea of Bethune Institute took shape in 2001 when a 70 year-old welfare activist, working for the rights of industrial employees, was recuperating from heart surgery. Bimal Chatterjee suddenly realised he had to pull the reins on his hectic pace and readjust his life. He had to take stock of his finances to pay endless bills. Chatterjee also realised he was not alone. There were other patients in the hospital facing an equally difficult future. "With no state social security for retirees, negligible health insurance cover and meagre pensions, who could they turn to?" he asked himself. Not one to believe that it was his right

to depend on his children; he also believed that eventually he or his wife Gayatri would face loneliness. Therefore, Chatterjee decided to work for silvers who needed assistance to live with dignity.

In his childhood, Chatterjee had read about Norman Bethune, the Canadian doctor who had fought in the Spanish civil war, introduced blood transfusion in the battlefield and died serving in China. The inspiration resurfaced. While still recovering from heart surgery, Chatterjee decided to start an institute and name it after Bethune. He contacted eminent doctors to be part of the initiative.

Before he could rope in medical assistance, he had to find space to set up the Institute. A friend suggested a small building on Anwar Shah Road. Built by Joy Engineering Works, the makers of Usha fans and sewing machines, the building was unoccupied as the factory had closed down in 1996. Chatterjee thought of turning the building into a healthcare centre for silvers and extending the medical facilities to the owners as well. The owners agreed and Bethune Institute of Geriatrics Research and Rehabilitation Centre was set up on 13 March 2005.

On any ordinary working day, Bethune Institute is like any other

office, with the staff busy attending to files and telephone calls. The plain walls are lined with portraits of Rabindranath Tagore, Nazrul Islam and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, among others who have enriched and served humanity. These luminaries look down at the sparse furniture, largely collected from kind donors. The two purified drinking water facilities also have the names of their donors—South City Mall and Hindustan Levers. Beyond the visitors' room is a hall separated by a door where a desktop computer sits proudly in a corner—a gift from another well-wisher.

"We have a library as well," says Jayati Bhattacharya, a young staff member, "and people come in everyday to read newspapers and Bengali periodicals. Our collection of books on poetry is also growing." Bhattacharya refuses to look at it as a paid job. She, like the other seven employees, is learning about the needs of the elderly through daily interactions with silvers and doctors.

Anybody above 18 can be a member of Bethune Institute for Rs 10 and pitch in to help silvers. Those who are 60 years and older can benefit from the services through

Chatterjee holding an image of Norman Bethune





Chatterjee firmly believes that silvers have a participative role in society and age should not put the brakes on this

discounts on diagnostic tests and treatment in hospitals across the city. On the panel are eminent cardiologists, eye specialists, urologists and geriatric specialists. The neighbourhood Silverline Eye Hospital offers a 50 per cent discount to silver members of the Institute. The hospital also makes regular donations and offers its premises to hold eye camps for the members of the Institute. With assistance from supporting medical institutions and doctors, Bethune Institute organises regular blood donation camps, prostate camps and health camps in slums.

Shyamal Sengupta, one of the vice-presidents of Bethune Institute, says, "Bethune has intention, energy and requisite expertise to garner public support for the Institute as well as its mission, which is to extend medical help to silvers." However, Chatterjee is not content just extending practical help. He believes that silvers have a participative role in society and age should not put the brakes on this. In his view, they are repositories of wisdom and experience who should set an example for others.

Like he does. Immaculately turned out in *dhobi kurta*, Chatterjee keeps regular office hours, helping the Institute raise at least Rs 40,000 every month through donations. This is used to pay the staff and meet other expenses. Currently, Chatterjee is supervising the construction of another floor. Donated by a construction company, the floor will be rented out for additional financial security.

Chatterjee may be a result-oriented activist and efficient executive, but above all he is sensitive to the needs of the elderly who often feel marginalised. "Bethune Institute is primarily a healthcare centre, but it's also a place where lonely silvers can spend time with each other," he says. Chatterjee is no stranger to bereavement—his wife passed away last year and his daughter in 1989. "My son supports me in many ways, but life would have been lonely without Bethune," he says, adding that the city does not offer enough entertainment and vocational options for silvers. "Children pursuing professions abroad leave their parents alone and depressed. Those

For silvers in Kolkata, the Bethune Institute is not just a healthcare centre but also a place to relieve loneliness

who have lived in nuclear families also find it extremely tough to face the future alone."

Thus, Bethune Institute lends its library to interested silvers and holds music concerts for those who can't travel long distances. Anyone passing by the Institute between 8 am and 10 am on a Sunday can hear the strains of a joyous chorus. Under the patient guidance of Dola Dasgupta, a teacher of Rabindra Sangeet, young and silver members learn the songs of Tagore while bridging the generation gap. "I believe it's important for senior citizens to be in touch with younger people, and draw sustenance from youth," says Chatterjee, telling us why he has a young team to run the institute. He hopes to spread awareness about the physical and emotional needs of the elderly to the extent that silvers can go on to independently build a support system of their own. The Institute designs and distributes leaflets in schools to make children, their teachers and guardians take up the cause. Every month, a newsletter titled *Probin Barta*, which covers issues related to silvers, is distributed to all 800 members.

In the three years since its inception, Bethune Institute has not just brought joy to the elderly of Anwar Shah Road but has shown the way forward for all those who care for silvers—not just as 'fashionable' social workers but as concerned citizens—and want to put in place an organised and holistic support programme for them. ■

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GOLDEN SILVERS

We live in a time where we are surrounded by blatant symbols of love and romance. But there exists a generation for whom love was more about endurance than excitement. With Valentine's Day just around the corner on February 14, **Rajashree Balaram** takes a look at stories of love and togetherness that have survived all odds through 50 years of marriage

ACCORDING to a feature published in TIME magazine in November 2008, when we are newly in love, our bodies are flush with feel-good hormones dopamine and oxytocin, which stimulate bonding. As the relationship settles into a comfortable rut, the hormone levels drop and passionate promises of ‘happily ever after’ rapidly lose fizz. Though such scientific analysis may sound like a drab clinical diagnosis of why some couples drift apart, what’s more intriguing is how some others have resolutely kept the spark in their marriage alive for more than half a century — without letting the mundane overpower the romance.

Fifty years of togetherness is no small feat. The silver couples we met, however, are not brashly proclaiming their love for each other from the rooftop. Their love is more discreet—burnished by time and patience. They admit their marriages have not been entirely rosy, just as they insist that if given a second chance they wouldn’t have it any other way. They have had their share of tears, recriminations and arguments but the sheer magnitude of the journey they have covered now belittles all differences. After more than 50 years together, each loves the other not for what they want them to be, but for who they are.

Ask Mumbai-based **Bhagwan Punjabi**, 81 and his wife **Kamla**, 76. The couple still argue vociferously every other day, but all their arguments are usually held in check by their shared sense of humour. “We usually argue over silly stuff like the TV being too loud or either of us forgetting to take our medicines,” says 76 year-old Kamla. “And even when we argue, we still address each other by our pet nicknames and



Bhagwan and Kamla Punjabi have a grand party planned for their 50th wedding anniversary in February



The Iyers at Venkatraman’s 80th birthday celebrations held last year

invariably all our arguments end up in laughter,” says Punjabi with a chuckle.

For Punjabi, it was love at first sight when he saw Kamla at a movie hall in 1959, where he had gone to watch *Houdini*. Punjabi had two extra tickets to the movie that he was desperately trying to sell outside the theatre—which he eventually did to Kamla and her brother. After rejecting many proposals, Punjabi confided in his mother about Kamla. The matchmaking process began soon enough, but he had to wait till Kamla finished her graduation.

Punjabi candidly admits that Kamla is the ‘rock’ in their relationship. She cooks his favourite meals and still tucks him into bed every night. Both love each other as much for their flaws as good qualities. Despite being extremely organised, Punjabi still manages to misplace his things and then blames Kamla for the chaos. Both readily agree that they snore loudly in bed. “We have learned to live with the noise,” says Kamla.

Venkatraman and Pattamal Iyer from Mumbai too believe that mutual compromise and resilience are vital to a successful marriage. “When one gets angry, the other should hold on to his or her temper,” says the 83 year-old Iyer. He and Pattamal, 73, have no wedding album to help them recapture the three-day ceremonial rituals of their traditional Tamil Brahmin wedding, held in Nagenaloor in Tamil Nadu on 19 May 1955. “The photographer lived 18 miles away and we could not afford the expenses,” says Iyer

who was a 28 year-old clerk with the Central Railways in Mumbai when he married 18 year-old Pattamal. A match arranged by parents between two people who could not have been more dissimilar in temperament. She is soft-spoken; he is gregarious. She is relaxed about housekeeping; he is meticulously organised. She enjoys Tamil soaps and religious programmes; he loves old English movies. Though they have much to argue over, they also indulge each other with small adjustments. "He relinquishes the remote control without any complaints when I want to watch my TV serials," says Pattamal with a smile that borders on triumphant.

May our minds move in accord. MAY OUR THINKING BE IN HARMONY—COMMON THE PURPOSE AND COMMON THE DESIRE. May our prayers and worship be alike, and may our devotional offerings be one and the same.

—Rig Veda

even more depth now, their children having flown the nest. Though they are not openly demonstrative of their love, both are deeply sensitive to each other's needs. As Iyer suffers from diabetes and problems with his eyesight, Pattamal makes sure he has his food on time and rarely leaves him alone at home. She has wanted to visit Varanasi for a long time now, but has shelved her plans: "The long journey would be very tiring for him and I don't want to go without him." For his part, Iyer gave up eating *chapatti* as Pattamal's stiff joints make it tough for her to knead the dough.

Their 50th anniversary was a quiet celebration at home with their children and five grandchildren. When asked what she gifted him on their anniversary, Pattamal simply says, "He has all my love. Isn't that the best gift we can give each other?"

Initially, Iyer's modest salary barely covered the growing needs of the family of seven—they have two sons and three daughters, all settled in different cities. "We compromised on our comforts without complaining," says Pattamal. Iyer never interfered with the way Pattamal handled the monthly budget, and she ensured every paisa was used judiciously. Their quiet, sturdy partnership has gained

BAPSI AND FALI NARIMAN, DELHI

"**WHEN** you are old and spend too much time together with nothing to do, your marriage becomes a little troublesome," says Bapsi Nariman, cookbook writer who is married to eminent jurist and former Rajya Sabha MP Fali Nariman for the past 54 years. The statement laced with candour is typical of Bapsi, who is as gregarious and outspoken as Nariman is reserved.

"It was love at first sight for me," says 80 year-old Nariman, who first met his beloved wife at Parsik, a picnic spot near Mumbai in 1953. Bapsi took her own time to make up her mind. "Initially I turned down his proposals to meet at parties, but gradually we started dating," says the septuagenarian. The couple had a nine-month-long courtship before they tied the knot on 21 October 1954.

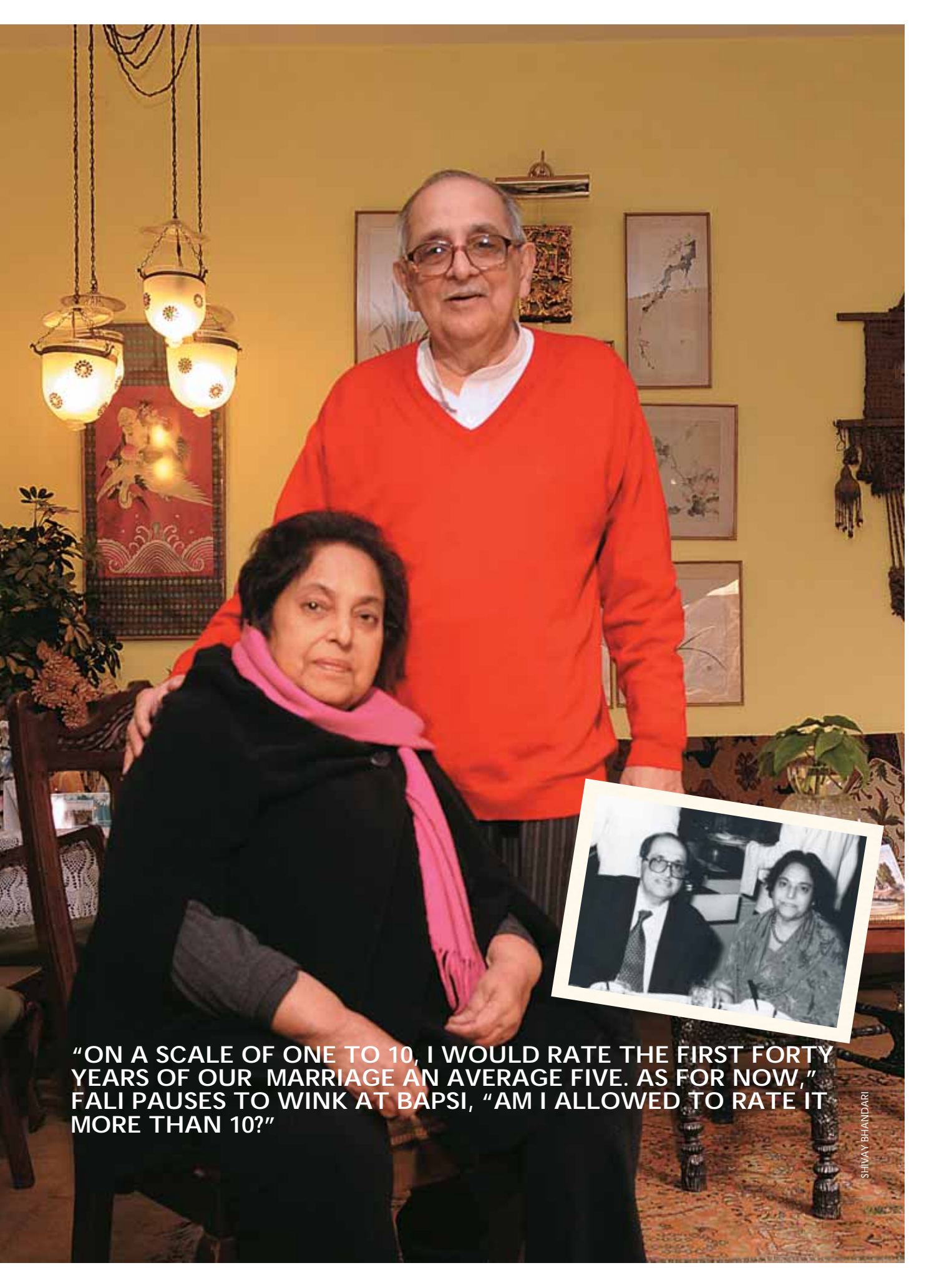
The years have changed them in many ways, but their chemistry has lost none of its spark—mischievous winks and hugs flow back and forth freely. "She used to be a hopeless cook earlier," says Nariman, ribbing his wife. However, he admits that it didn't take her long to learn cooking and bowl him over with her gourmet skills as well as her talent for painting.

Despite their different personalities, they have one thing in common—both lose their temper easily. "I always wanted two sinks in the kitchen... it has been 54 years and he still hasn't agreed to it," says Bapsi with a sigh. Tiffs apart, both agree that the passing years have made them more accommodating towards each other.

Bapsi still cherishes the diamond ring she received on their first anniversary. Nariman adores his wife for her loyalty and steadfastness. "She is the rock in our relationship," he says patting her back lovingly. The busy lawyer suffers from prostate cancer for which he is undergoing treatment, while Bapsi doesn't have any health problems except the usual aches and pains of old age. Both are too full of life to allow their health complaints from intruding into their time together—rendered even more precious because of their hectic schedules. (Besides being a cookbook writer, Bapsi is also a social worker.) Earlier the Narimans used to go out for dinner every Saturday; now they are content going out with their son Rohinton and his two daughters.

For all her vivacity, Bapsi lets Nariman have the last word. "On a scale of one to 10, I would rate the first 40 years of our marriage an average five. As for now," he pauses to wink at Bapsi, "am I allowed to rate it more than 10?" The twinkle in his eye and the blush on her face is proof of a love that's endured a journey of 54 years, only to grow stronger, richer and deeper.

—Nitika Bajpayee



"ON A SCALE OF ONE TO 10, I WOULD RATE THE FIRST FORTY YEARS OF OUR MARRIAGE AN AVERAGE FIVE. AS FOR NOW," FALI PAUSES TO WINK AT BAPSI, "AM I ALLOWED TO RATE IT MORE THAN 10?"

Pattamal's devotion to her husband is not uncommon in women of her generation, a time when marriages were meant to be forever. "Earlier, marriage was considered sacrosanct and walking out of a relationship was not an option," says Delhi-based counsellor Kamal Khurana. "So people learned to live with each other's differences and were more patient towards each other." Khurana feels marriages now are fraught with more tension because women are more expressive of what they want and most men are unable to handle the candour. According to statistics published in *The Times of India* early last year, for

I take your hand in mine for happiness, that you may reach old age with me as husband. BHAGA, SAVITRI, ARYAMAN, PURANDHI have given you to be my household's mistress.

—*Rig Veda*

every five weddings that are registered in Mumbai's family court everyday, there are two applications for divorce.

However, Maya Jayapal, a Bengaluru-based women and children's counsellor feels it's unfair to judge today's generation on the basis of statistics. "Women then were typically the 'dependents' and never walked out of an unhappy marriage because there was a lot of stigma attached to divorce. Also, remarriage with a more compatible person was not even an option to think about. Married women could not expect any financial or emotional support



The Rathores have stood by each other through 72 years of marriage



Amit and Meera Chatterjee at their 50th wedding anniversary celebrations

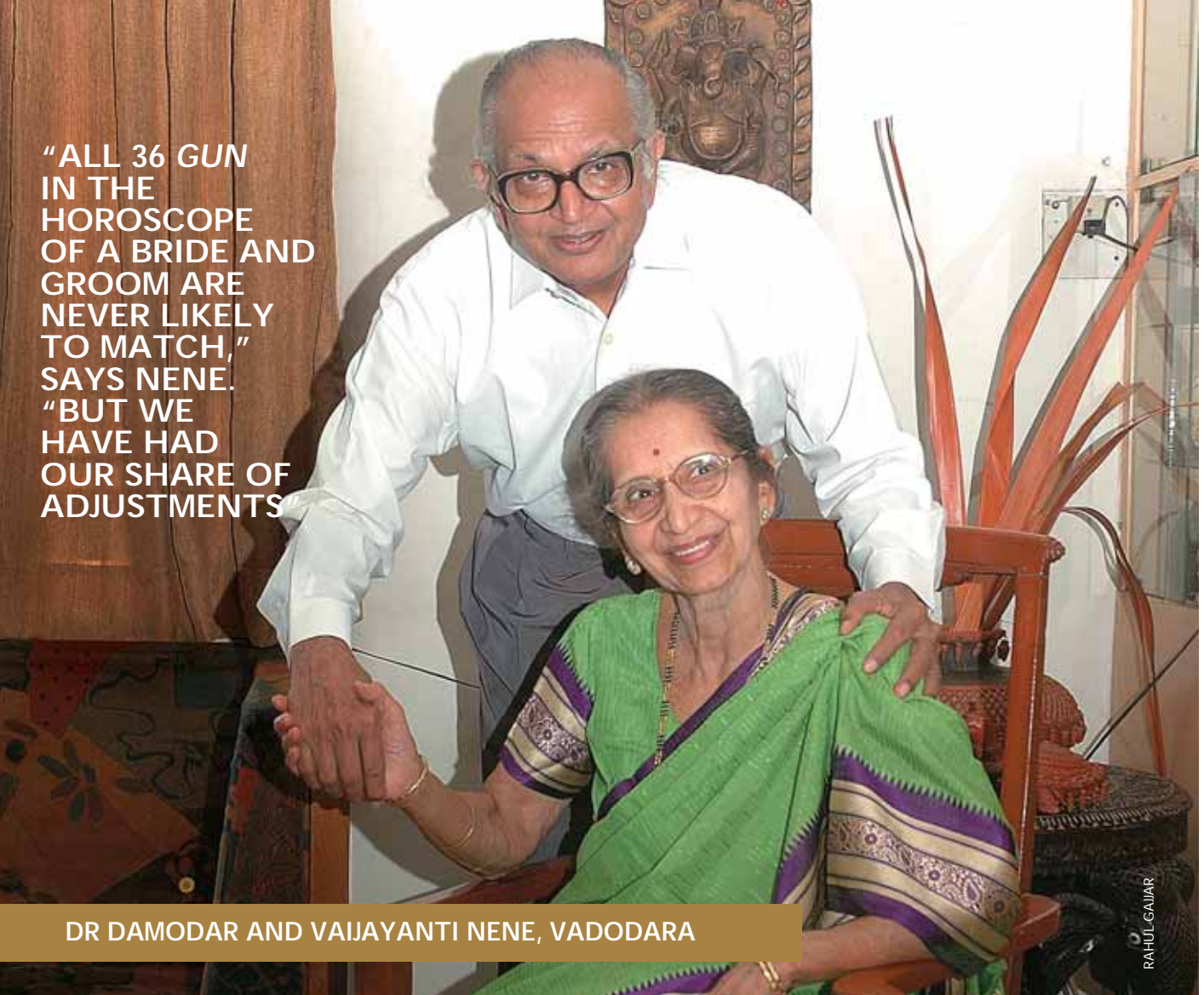
from their parents. Parents literally gave away their daughters."

With no opportunity to get to know each other before marriage, couples had a different set of challenges to confront and conquer then. For instance, **Sushila** and **Govind Singh Rathore** from Rai Bareilly, were only 11 and 16 respectively when they got married in 1937. Today, family and friends of the octogenarian couple who have been married 72 years are amused at their attachment towards each other and often tease them for being 'lovebirds'. While Rathore, who retired as a major from the Army, is gregarious and flamboyant, Sushila is a woman of few words. What Rathore admires most in his wife is her poise. About 40 years ago, a relative stole Sushila's ornaments. Instead of ranting over her loss, she chose to keep her cool. "Surprisingly, she tried to cheer me up," says Rathore, his pride in his wife clearly evident in his booming voice.

For her part, Sushila feels she is blessed to have such a wonderful husband and children. "We have had our share of tiffs, but now there is nothing left to argue over," says Susheela with typical brevity. She suffers from osteoporosis and Rathore has a slight hearing problem. The two spend their time between their older son in Rai Bareilly, younger son in Bhopal and daughter in Delhi. While love was nowhere in the picture when they got married, it has grown deeper over the years and helped them accept each other despite difference in temperaments. "She handled everything calmly—my frequent postings as well as my quick temper," says Rathore.

The marriage between **Amit and Meera Chatterjee** from Aurangabad was also entirely arranged by their parents. "We had not seen each other before marriage; all we had was a





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DR DAMODAR AND VAIJAYANTI NENE, VADODARA

RAHUL GAJJAR

DR DAMODAR NENE, 78, can't remember a single instance in his life when his wife Dr Vaijayanti Nene, 74, has been grumpy or unpleasant. "She attended to her two clinics and hospital, brought up our children and dutifully looked after my mother who passed away a few years ago," says the proud husband. The Nenes celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on 7 May 2006, very typically, like any other day of the year. When they tied the knot in May 1956, both had just completed their MBBS and set up practice in Vadodara. Today, both are successful general practitioners with clinics at Raopura and Sayaji Gunj.

At a time when most married Indian women did not work, Vaijayanti established her own identity as a doctor. However, though they are not a conservative couple, it is clear who has the last word between the two. Nene—like most Indian men—is clearly the head of the family, while Vaijayanti happily plays the role of the supportive spouse.

"All 36 *gun* in the horoscopes of a bride and a groom are never likely to match," says Nene. "But we have had our share of adjustments and acceptance." He relates an incident that shows how well tuned they are to one another now. "I have

been researching and writing the *Encyclopaedia Hindustanica*, a project entrusted to me by Swami Chinmaya of the Chinmaya Mission," he says. "After *Swamiji's* death I decided to give up the project. But Vaijayanti reminded me of my promise to *Swamiji*." Vaijayanti instinctively knew that Nene was abandoning the project as he was concerned about money. She offered him the required funds for the first volume from her savings. Nene too has been equally supportive of Vaijayanti's dreams. A few years ago, Vaijayanti decided to do a course in hypnotherapy—Nene encouraged her every step of the way.

When he is not practising, Nene writes for mainstream Marathi publications. On the other hand, Vaijayanti enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and daughter-in-law, Suchitra, who is married to their younger son, Milind. Their older son, Manoj, a biomedical engineer, lives in Canada.

The couple share more than the same professional background—both love to travel, and have explored most European countries. Despite their hectic schedule they still find time for common dreams and adventure. Next on their wish list: a trip to China and Egypt.

—Sandhya Bordewekar



NALIN AND HARINA SHAH, MUMBAI

NALIN SHAH is very possessive of his wife Harina. Last year when he was admitted for a month to intensive care owing to a severe respiratory problem, he insisted she sit beside him all day. "Just her presence next to me made me feel better," says Shah. The love that warms up his gaze as he looks at his wife has withstood 51 years of marriage.

Harina was only 16 when she met him at a local *navratri* dance. Shah, who was pursuing a degree in automobile engineering, offered to help her with her studies. Love blossomed and marriage followed soon after. Harina married into Shah's large traditional joint family in 1957. "She adapted to our customs and habits without me ever having to tell her anything," her husband says with pride. Harina, who was usually dressed in skirts and dresses before marriage, switched to *sari* because Shah "preferred her that way".

Shah went to the UK soon after marriage to pursue higher studies in automobile engineering from Chelsea College, London. Harina joined him four months later. "I dreaded that he would fall in love with some girl there and insisted he write to me every week," she says with a sheepish smile, now

amused at her own childishness. Shah indulged his wife with four letters every week, describing the life, food and culture in the UK. After they moved to India, Shah set up two automobile workshops in Mumbai and Harina often assisted him with bookkeeping and administration.

Shah is full of praise for his wife. "She is a fantastic homemaker, a wonderful mother to my three children and a gem of a wife." As for Harina, she used to chide him often for drinking and smoking—habits he gave up after he was diagnosed with a respiratory ailment. The trait she most admires in him is his ability to make her laugh when she is angry and initiate a reconciliation after they have had a fight.

Though both were socially very active earlier, Shah now prefers to stay home except to play cards with his friends at a nearby club. In fact, the couple often play cards at home in the evenings. "With him, I always play for money... I like to earn my money from him," says Harina with a mischievous smile. The youthful looking 69 year-old leads a packed life. She meets her sisters and in-laws every week; plays cards with her kitty group; enjoys going out for movies; and shops for vegeta-

"HE LIKES ME BY HIS SIDE ALL DAY. WHEN I GO OUT, HE CALLS ME EVERY FIVE MINUTES TO FIND OUT WHEN I AM REACHING HOME," SAYS HARINA SHAH WITH AN EXASPERATION THAT CAN ONLY BE BORN OUT OF LOVE



bles and groceries. "He likes me by his side all day. When I go out, he calls every five minutes to find out when I am reaching home," she says with an exasperation that can only be born out of love.

The Shahs are a close-knit family; while their daughter is married, their two sons, two daughters-in-law and grandchildren live with them in their spacious, tastefully designed flat in south Mumbai. Last year, they celebrated their 50th anniversary with their large circle of family and friends, amid much song, dance and laughter.

Though Shah feels that marriages earlier were smoother compared to today because women looked up to their husbands, Harina has more liberal views on marital relationships. "It's not fair to expect young women from today's generation to worship their husbands," she says. "After all, they have equally demanding careers and they have every right to their own dreams and aspirations." However, she agrees that trust, understanding, respect and the ability to adjust to the needs of our partners are as vital today for both sexes.

Shah smiles warmly at his wife when she disagrees with his traditional views. As we leave the couple, we ask them what they feel about their long journey together. They agree on this one: "Couldn't have been better."

—Rajashree Balaram



The Bagchis with their son and daughter-in-law; at their wedding ceremony



photograph," says Meera, 74, her eyes twinkling with fond remembrance.

Siblings, children, and grandchildren flew down from different parts of the world to shake a leg at their grand anniversary bash on 10 May 2007. Their marriage has been an appreciation of each other's personalities and a respect for each other's differences. Chatterjee, a connoisseur of rich food in his youth, now prefers to eat healthy while Archana still continues to be an ardent 'foodie'. Their arguments are mostly over trivial issues and they prefer to sleep it out instead of airing their differences.

Difference in opinion is a part of every marriage—how one deals with it, though, can buoy or wreck a relationship. Experts believe changing times have brought in a dramatic paradigm shift in marital relationships. "Earlier, even if people had bad experiences in their marriages, they preferred to gloss over it," says Jayapal, who also points out that "just because a couple stay together under the same roof for 50 years does not mean they have had a happy marriage". Chennai-based marital therapist and author of *Marriage 24/7*, Dr Vijay Nagaswami seconds the viewpoint: "Women in the earlier generation didn't speak up as they had a higher tolerance for frustration. Very often male chauvinism led to a lopsided power equation, which is slowly being corrected now. Many men too did not want to go through divorce as it was an unmanly thing to do." Nagaswami also observes that as our society does not exactly frown upon a man having an extramarital relationship on the side, many men sought an alternative relationship to deal with their frustration and assert their manliness.



KARUNA AND DHIRENDRA NATH CHAKRAVARTY, GUWAHATI

THERE are more than a few habits of Dharendra Nath Chakravarty that irritate his wife Karuna: “The way he litters the house with newspapers; his tendency to pluck vegetables from my vegetable garden even before they are mature; and the fact that he loses his handkerchief every other day.” Karuna has lived with Chakravarty’s absent-minded ways for the past 52 years. For his part, he readily admits, “Had it not been for my practical Karuna, we would have been nowhere.”

The couple met three years after their marriage was fixed in 1953. “My father and father-in-law worked in adjacent tea estates in Upper Assam and they arranged the match without even informing us,” says Karuna, reflecting back on a time when couples could not even imagine going on ‘dates’. She was a student in Class X, while Chakravarty was doing his MA from Guwahati University. For three years, before they married in December 1956, the two exchanged letters—though Dharendra did manage to get a ‘sneak peek’ once by meeting Karuna in her hostel.

After marriage, Chakravarty quit his job as subeditor at *Assam Tribune* and joined the Assam government as a district publicity officer in 1958. He rose to become the state’s director of information and public relations. After retirement in 1989, Chakravarty worked with a couple of other Assamese newspapers before becoming editor of Assam’s leading daily *Dainik Asom* in 2004—he was there till 2007. Simultaneously, he also founded the senior citizen’s movement in Assam in 1999, and was nominated a member of the National Council for Older Persons by the Government of India in 2007.

The couple have two sons and a daughter—all married and settled—and find it hard to believe that they have been together for over five decades. “It feels like we got married just the other day,” says Karuna. They celebrated their 50th anniversary without much fanfare at home. However, romance hasn’t taken a backseat. Karuna plans to explore Darjeeling and Kashmir with Chakravarty, someday soon. They just have to find the time.



“HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR MY PRACTICAL KARUNA, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN NOWHERE,” SAYS DHIRENDRA NATH CHAKRAVARTY

Eighty year-old Chakravarty leads a packed life. He conducts state-level meetings on senior citizens' issues and holds political discourses across the country—speaking against terrorism and insurgency. At 72, Karuna is not taking it easy either; she's part of a local women's organisation and an active member of a literary group. “We are busier now than we were in our youth,” says Chakravarty with a chuckle.

As for their health, Karuna has diabetes and wakes up early to do yoga. Though she has often tried to persuade Chakravarty to start exercising, he insists he has healthy genes. “My father lived till he was 104,” is his response. As we leave the vibrant couple, Chakravarty points proudly to a tablecloth in the drawing room—sewn and embroidered by Karuna before their marriage and still pristine and colourful. The perfect symbol of a love affair that hasn't faded with time.

—Tapati Baruah Kashyap

Then as in now, marriage between strangers is smoothened in the long term by compatibility in interests. **Archana** and **Sanjoy Bagchi** from Bhopal have a lot in common—both share a passion for travel, food, wildlife, cricket and tennis. Though she is sociable and he a loner, they both love entertaining friends at home. Bagchi was the district collector of Betul in Madhya Pradesh when he married Archana, who was appearing for her master's in 1959. Though Archana was a strict vegetarian before marriage, she slowly learned to adjust to her meat-loving husband's tastes. Now Archana eats non-vegetarian food, though not with the same gusto as her husband. Bagchi, 79, admires Archana for her warmth while she absolutely adores his wit.

Their relationship is enriched by their total acceptance of each other's temperament and habits. He loves photography, reading and writing, while Archana, 70, enjoys cooking, meeting people and making new friends. As Bagchi was working with the United Nations till a few years ago, the couple lived in Geneva for more than 20 years. Their only son Srinath, married to a French-German, lives in France. The couple celebrated their 50th anniversary on 15 January 2009 with a large celebration, where families on both sides gathered in Bhopal for a week.

According to the Bagchis, life is too beautiful to be wasted over egotistic tantrums and spats. “Even after 50 years of living together, at times, we still cannot avoid getting on each other's nerves,” concedes Bagchi. “But we have learned to take it in our stride.” Archana admires her husband's strength of character. “I realised very early in life that my husband is very outspoken and honest in his views. I respect him for not mincing his words.”

Often, words spoken casually can also hurt deeply. Khurana feels that silver years are the best time to

May happiness await you with your children! WATCH OVER THIS HOUSE AS MISTRESS OF THE HOME. UNITE YOURSELF WHOLLY WITH YOUR HUSBAND. Thus authority in speech till old age will be yours.

—Rig Veda

"DURING THE TIME WE SHOULD HAVE SPENT TOGETHER, WE WERE DRIVEN APART BY CIRCUMSTANCES," SAYS VIMLA SAHAI. "BUT THAT HAS MADE US CHERISH EACH OTHER'S COMPANY EVEN MORE."

VIMLA AND DHIRENDRA SAHAI, LUCKNOW

SEVENTY-NINE year-old Dhirendra Sahai hopes his elder son Rajeev will someday follow his footsteps. Sahai's wife Vimla, however, prays he does not. Vimla's fears stem from sheer maternal protectiveness—her husband has had a tumultuous political career during which he was jailed many times. Sahai's affiliation to the Janata Party began in Government College, Philibhit, where Vimla's father was the principal. Theirs was an arranged match solemnised on 17 May 1956.

The turbulence in their marriage started in 1975 during the Emergency. Sahai—who was then a minister in the legislative assembly—was arrested on then prime minister Indira Gandhi's orders and jailed for 21 months. Vimla held the fort through public ridicule and loneliness. "No one would mingle with us and it was tough on my children," recalls the 72 year-old. After his release, Sahai went on to become the agriculture and irrigation minister of Uttar Pradesh. Sahai is in awe of the way Vimla adjusted to his life. "She disliked my profession but she never interfered with my work." He remembers being very quick-tempered earlier. "She would calm me down and

help me understand people and situations more rationally," says Sahai.

Recently, Sahai was travelling to Philibhit when the suitcase where he had kept his medicines got misplaced. When Vimla called to ask if he had taken his medicines, he brushed aside her question. "I can instinctively sense when he tries to hide things from me," she says. The couple had a grand 50th anniversary celebration at a popular club in Lucknow, organised by their children. Though Sahai regrets not having spent enough time with his daughter and two sons, now that he has retired, Vimla receives his undivided attention. "He buys me lots of *sari* and even helps me with chores," she says. The two spend their time watching soaps and chatting with each other. "During the time we should have spent together, we were driven apart by circumstances," says Vimla. "But that has made us cherish each other's company even more." Indeed, sunset is a time for togetherness—and the Sahais have rediscovered it all over again.

—Nabila Zehra Zaidi

REVIVE THE ROMANCE



Who says relationships have to become predictable with age? Here are some ways to bring back the spark in your relationship...

- Surprise your spouse. Write a mushy love letter and post it.
- Your wife has cooked all your meals without complaint for over half a century. It's payback time—make tea or coffee for her every morning.
- Read love poems to each other. Or better still write some sentimental verse and watch her blush all over again.
- Diamonds may be a woman's best friend. But remember how her eyes always lit up when you bought her jasmine. Buy her some strands on your way back from your daily walk. And insist on weaving them into her hair.
- Take a camera and hit the nearby beach. Sip tender coconut, feast on *golgappa* and ask a passer-by to take your photographs.
- If you don't live by the sea, visit a heritage building near you and play king and queen for the day.
- Sign up for a foreign language course and insist on conversing with each other only in that language for a month.
- Invest in a scrabble board or a set of playing cards. And go ahead, cheat the way you always did.
- On your way back from the market, stop by at the movie theatre and book tickets for a movie. Don't forget—matinee shows are more affordable.
- Make time to play *antakshari* with each other every week or listen to old songs on the radio—together.
- Sign up for a rejuvenating massage at a nearby Ayurveda centre.
- Keep each other mentally stimulated; solve crosswords together.
- Every now and then, ditch your early morning routine. Switch off the alarm, cuddle up and stay in bed.
- And last but not the least; bring back the hugs in your relationship.

make amends. "Men belonging to the older generation find it tough to say sorry, just as women from that generation are not as expressive towards their partners as women now. In their golden years, couples should make an attempt to rediscover each other, soothe old emotional bruises that they may have inflicted on each other and pamper each other as spouses, instead of parents." Contrary to the media-fed frenzy over candlelit dinners, diamond solitaires and expensive cruises, romance can also be found in little things: going for a walk by the beach; playing board games; travelling; or just listening to favourite songs or watching old movies together.

With time, companionship and concern take precedence over everything else in a relationship. "In the later years, physical intimacy between couples becomes richer as it is not just confined to sex," says Mumbai-based sexologist Dr Deepak Jumani. "It's about the little joys that you offer and receive—praising your husband when he is well attired; complimenting your wife when she has cooked your favourite dish; holding hands; offering an unexpected hug; offering each other simple unexpected gifts; or solving crosswords together."

Not that physical intimacy is unimportant. Most Indians, including many silvers, shy away from the thought of being sexually active but things are changing. According to Jumani, a growing number of couples approach him to seek advice on ways to resume or enhance an active sex life. Among his recent patients is a septuagenarian couple, who sought advice on the health implications of using Viagra. "Sexual intimacy does not have to come to a halt with age," says Jumani. "Acceptance of each other's biological degradation and the ability to enjoy each other's company are vital ingredients to a healthy, happy marital relationship."

In a world where marriage is slowly losing its relevance and value, the couples we met are beacons. They admit their marriages are nowhere near perfect, but they decided to work on what they had, instead of yearning for what could not be. While the passing years may have diminished the excitement and chemistry between them, it has only left them richer with a togetherness and understanding worth all the ups and downs they have been through.

—With inputs from Shyamola Khanna

Last of the winter

Dr Pushpesh Pant on the gastronomical delights of the season

This is the time cauliflower tastes its best and oranges are sheer nectar. In West Bengal, the two are cooked together to make a sublime vegetarian treat—light and refreshingly different. Another Bengali speciality that's popular in winter is

borir jhal, a curry made from sun-dried lentil dumplings. In winter, you can also indulge a little without guilt as the body needs a few additional calories—so go ahead and savour the delights of the rich and meaty porridge, *halim*.

HALIM (CEREMONIAL MEAT PORRIDGE)

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 3-4 hours

Serves: 2-4

INGREDIENTS

- Mutton (shoulder): 250 gm
- *Dalia* (broken wheat): $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Onions: 2, sliced; 1, ground
- Garlic: Paste of 4 cloves
- Ginger paste: 1 tbsp
- Garlic paste: 2 tbsp
- Ghee or cooking oil
- Turmeric: 1 tsp
- Chilli powder: $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp

- Water: 2 cups
- *Garam masala*: 1 tbsp
- Chopped green coriander: 1 tbsp
- Salt to taste

METHOD

Heat ghee or oil in a thick-bottomed pan and add sliced onions and cook till brown. Add ground onion, ginger and garlic paste and turmeric and chilli powder. Wait until the spices change colour. Add the meat and stir-fry over

medium heat for 15 minutes. Add *dalia* and mix thoroughly. Stir-fry for about 15 minutes and add salt to taste. Add water and cook on low heat for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. As *dalia* tends to stick to the bottom of the pan, remember to uncover the pot at least twice and stir the *halim*. Continue cooking until nearly all the water is absorbed and the oil rises to the surface. Sprinkle *garam masala*, mix well and serve with wedges of lime and chopped green coriander.





BORIR JHAL (LENTIL BALLS IN MUSTARD SAUCE)

Preparation time: 10 minutes
(soaking time extra)

Cooking time: 25 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Split black lentils: 100 gm; soaked for 30 minutes
- Green chillies: 2; deseeded and chopped
- Ginger paste: $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp
- Asafoetida: a pinch
- Mustard oil: 1 cup
- Nigella seeds: 1 tsp
- Paste of black and yellow mustard seeds: 2 tbsp

- Salt: 1 gm
- Sugar mixed with three cups water: 1 tsp
- Sugar: $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp
- Salt: $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp

METHOD

Grind lentils with two green chillies, salt, sugar, ginger paste and asafoetida. Whip for 7-10 minutes by hand and for two minutes in a blender. Heat mustard oil in a wok till it smokes. Reduce heat. Drop spoonfuls of the batter into it carefully so that they form into balls (*bori*). Fry till the balls are gold-

en brown. Alternatively, you could use sun-dried lentils reserved for cooking. Remove them with a slotted spoon and leave to drain. Leave 2 tbsp of oil in the wok. Heat the oil to smoking point and fry nigella seeds until they start emitting their characteristic aroma. Add mustard paste to water, and add mixture to wok. When it starts boiling, turn down heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the *bori*, stir thoroughly and remove from the fire. The *bori* will absorb some of the sauce, but there should be some gravy left. Serve with steamed rice.



VILAS KALGUTKER; Food styling: ANITA SARIN

KAMALA PHULKOPI (CAULIFLOWER WITH ORANGES)

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Serves: 6

INGREDIENTS

- Oranges: 3; peeled, deseeded and skinned
- Cauliflower: 1 kg; cut into 1-inch florets
- Potatoes: 4; peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- Oil: 4 tbsp
- Bay leaves: 2
- *Garam masala* (4 cloves, 2 green cardamoms, 2-inch stick of cinnamon)
- Turmeric: 1 tsp
- Ginger paste: 1 tbsp
- Onions: 2; ground
- Chilli powder: 1 tsp

- Cumin powder (optional): 2 tsp
- Green chillies: 3-4; deseeded and chopped
- Sugar/sugar-free sweetener: 1 tsp
- Salt to taste

METHOD

Coat the florets lightly with turmeric. Heat oil to smoking point in a pan, reduce heat, and add vegetables. Stir till they are light brown. Remove from the pan and keep aside. In the same oil, fry bay leaves and *garam masala*. Add turmeric, ginger and onion paste, chilli powder and cumin powder. Stir until the spices change colour. Sprinkle water to prevent burning.

Add the florets and sprinkle salt to taste. Stir thoroughly. Add the pulp of two oranges. Mix well and cover and cook over low heat. If the vegetables look too dry, sprinkle water or add a cup of water. Add green chillies five minutes before removing the pan from the fire. There should be very little gravy in the pan. To serve, garnish with the remaining orange pulp. ■



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

I am 78 years old. I am an avid traveller. I love the route from Delhi to Mussorie. On the way you can participate in *arati* [prayers] at Haridwar or Rishikesh, and have a holy dip in the Ganges. Anyone who shares similar interest in travel can contact me at:

Y P Duggal
F-106, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi-110024.
Tel: 011-29812326

I am 60 years old. I would like to help fellow senior citizens who need round-the-clock care. I also offer advise on health insurance. And I am keen on starting a charitable trust for senior citizens. Anyone in need of help, or willing to help me in this endeavour, can contact me at:

Ravindra Gajanan Deshpande
SAPHALY, 42 Lok Jeevan Society,
Haripura, Maninagar (East), Ahmedabad.
Tel: 079-22720276 Mobile: (0) 9328265277

Though I am 82 years old, I look and feel quite young. I have no serious ailments. I live in a one-BHK flat in Mumbai and travel all over India and abroad very often. I am seeking a healthy female companion—someone in her late 60s or early 70s. No strings attached. You can contact me at:

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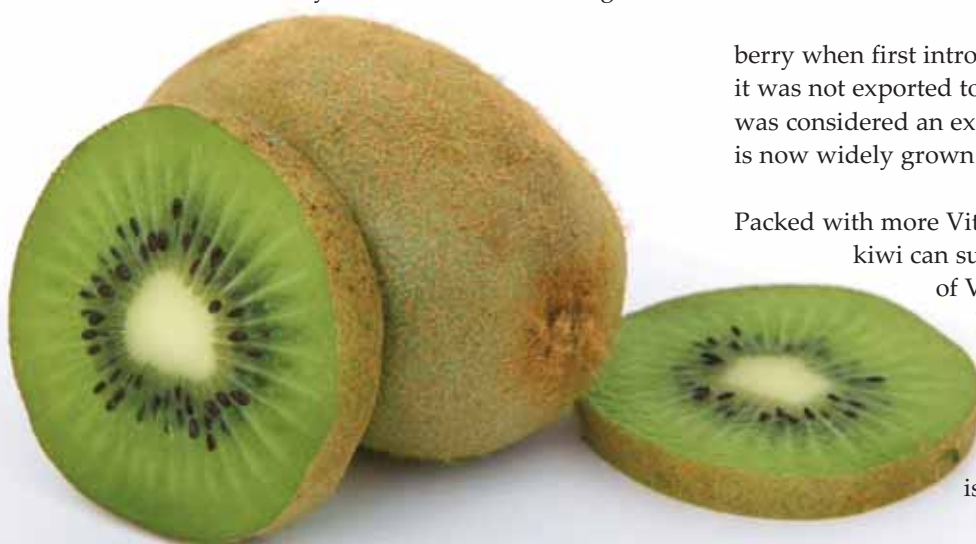
Rebuild and heal

Dr Vijaya Venkat discusses the benefits of the exotic kiwifruit and the native turmeric

KIWIFRUIT

Native to China, where it was called the 'macaque peach', kiwifruit was unknown to the western world until the 20th century. Known as the Chinese goose-

- A natural blood thinner, it reduces risk of clots and blockages
- Reduces risk of macular degeneration



berry when first introduced to New Zealand in 1910, it was not exported to the US till the 1950s. In India, it was considered an exotic fruit till a few years ago, but is now widely grown in Himachal Pradesh.

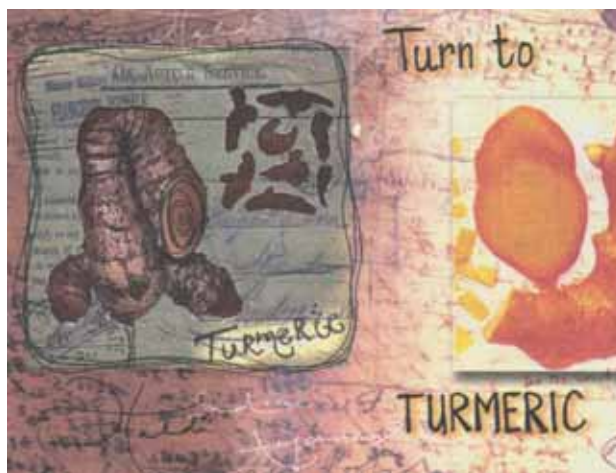
Packed with more Vitamin C than an orange, a single kiwi can supply your daily requirement of Vitamin C, which is useful for building collagen for healing wounds and strengthening the immune system. A great source of potassium—by weight, its potassium content is slightly less than that of a

TURMERIC

It was spices like turmeric (*curcuma longa* or *haldi*) that lured early colonisers and changed the course of world history. As a condiment, dye, ritual offering and traditional drug, turmeric has played a balancing role as both food and medicine.

Indigenous to Bihar, it is cultivated extensively in India and has several varieties. With characteristic colour, odour and taste, turmeric contains turmerol (an essential oil), resin, curcumin (an alkaloid), protein, minerals, fibre, carbohydrates, fat and carotene (Vitamin A). Turmerol distinguishes turmeric from other herbs. Ayurveda describes it as "pungent, bitter in taste, dry and light in quality, hot in virility and bitter in post-assimilation effect", the attributes that make it a healer, cleanser and purifier.

Turmeric pacifies, controls and prevents symptoms arising out of an imbalance in the three *dosha*: *kapha*, *vata* and *pitta*. A handy first aid, it is a natural disinfect-



tant. Turmeric is also effective for coughs and colds; in external applications for swellings, sprains and burns; for cleansing and purifying; for asthma; as a pain stabiliser; or simply as a regulator of metabolic activity. Besides being used by Unani physicians, turmeric is also a major constituent in a large number of pharma-

banana—kiwifruit helps counter high sodium levels for healthy blood pressure.

Rich in Vitamin A and Vitamin E, the skin of this brown, fuzzy skinned succulent fruit is a good source of flavonoid antioxidants. Crushed, the black edible seeds produce kiwifruit oil, which is rich in alpha-linolenic acid, an important Omega-3 essential fatty acid. The high level of dietary fibre in the fruit has also been proven to control sugar levels and reduce cholesterol, lowering risk of heart attacks. Reported to have a mild laxative effect, its fibre content also decreases the probability of colon cancer.

Kiwifruit adds a dash of colour to fruit salads; its taste is a blend of banana, pineapple and strawberry. However, the protein-dissolving enzyme actinidin (commercially available as a meat tenderiser) in the raw fruit can act as an allergen (capable of stimulating an allergic reaction) for some individuals. This enzyme makes the raw fruit unsuitable for use in desserts containing milk or any other dairy product, or any gelatine-based desserts that are not served as soon as cooked.

- Can be used fresh or dried for medicinal purposes
- Handy for cuts, wounds, skin irritations, burns, sprains and swelling
- Helps dry out excessive phlegm; good for asthma

ceutical preparations. Used as a condiment while cooking, it guards against the multiplication of bacteria, which makes cooked food decay faster. Fully mature rhizomes are boiled, dried and powdered to produce the *haldi* powder used as dye, condiment or medicine.



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

2 Weight WATCH

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

Q A few weeks ago, I adopted a diet plan. Since then I've been feeling tired most of the day. Is dieting inadvisable for silvers?

A The word 'diet' has become synonymous with a state of semi-starvation—eating much less than what your body needs, if not skipping meals. The better word for what's sensible is 'meal planning', which ensures that you receive the right amount of protein, fat and carbohydrates. The diet should also be dense in nutrients so you get your daily requirement of minerals like calcium, iron and vitamins. Most of the popular diets are grossly imbalanced in protein, fat or carbohydrate intake, which leave you feeling weak. This compromises health seriously, especially at an age when recovery tends to be slow.

When foods you like—and associate with feelings of comfort and bonding—are kept away for long, a psychological urge causes rebounds. Lifestyle is a collection of habits, each one woven with another. A change cannot happen in isolation. In a person with a sedentary lifestyle, dieting without exercise depletes muscle mass. Muscles are active tissues of the body that enable us to perform physical tasks and keep up the metabolic rate. Loss of muscle leads to reduced fitness and weakness.

Kaya Life has a special programme designed for silvers where the focus is on quality of life enhancement—meal plans that don't leave out festive foods; a fitness programme based on your health or physical needs; and a plan to keep you and your mind engaged in activities for yourself and others.



Dr Joe Lewis is head of research and development at Kaya Life, a chain of professional weight-control centres (SMS Life to 54646). If you have a question for him, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org

2 ASK THE EXPERT

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

Q Chronic constipation leaves me feeling bloated during the early hours of the day. I don't want to start taking laxatives. Please suggest a healthy eating plan for my digestive complaints.

A Constipation is a symptom not a disease, and usually temporary and not serious. However, repeated episodes of unsatisfactory bowel movements may cause increased pressure on the anal veins, leading to complications like piles or fissures. Besides age and lack of physical activity, other factors include certain liver disorders and deficiency of fibre and fluids. The problem may get aggravated for people with a sedentary lifestyle. Certain medications, dehydration and stress also worsen the problem—difficulty in chewing may encourage older adults to eat soft foods that are processed and low in fibre, increasing the incidence of constipation.

Although treatment depends on the cause, severity and duration of constipation, in most cases dietary and lifestyle changes help relieve symptoms and prevent recurrence. Make gradual changes in your dietary pattern by switching from refined and processed foods to a diet rich in whole grains and natural fibre. Following these guidelines will surely provide relief:

- As the most common cause of constipation is a diet low in fibre and/or high in fats (cheese, eggs and meats), maintaining a high fibre diet containing about 40-60 per cent complex carbohydrates, 30 per cent protein, and 10-15 per cent fat could prove beneficial. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains helps detoxify the system and improve bowel movements.
- Liquids add fluid to the colon and bulk to body waste, making bowel movements easier. People who suffer from constipation should increase fluid intake and drink at least 10-12 glasses of warm water through the day. However, avoid coffee, soft

drinks and alcohol as these beverages can worsen the symptoms by causing dehydration.

- Eat fibre-rich bulking agents such as psyllium seed husk. Add wheat bran to whole-wheat flour in the proportion of 1:1 to make *chapatti* or thicken your soup. This can help ease your problem significantly.
- Snack on prunes. They are nutritious, rich in fibre and act as laxatives. Eat around 10-12 prunes a day.
- Low oil intake could be another reason for recurrent constipation. People often switch to boiled food in order to shed pounds. A minimum of three to four teaspoons of oil a day is a must to prevent this problem.
- Rich in pectin, bananas hold water and provide necessary bulk to stools. Apricots, also known as *zardalu*, and figs (dried and fresh) act as laxatives owing to their bulk forming properties. High in soluble fibre, they absorb and retain water, stimulating peristalsis. While six to eight apricots a day could be beneficial, eat four to five figs on a regular basis to fight constipation.
- Soak four to five dates in water overnight, mash them into fine syrup and drink slowly. This will stimulate peristalsis and is energising too.
- Reserve enough time for a bowel movement and avoid ignoring the urge owing to a busy schedule or emotional stress.
- Above all, regular exercise is a must. Walking 30 minutes a day, six days a week will go a long way in regularising your bowels.

Most people who are mildly constipated do not need laxatives. However, if you continue to experience the problem despite diet and lifestyle changes, a doctor may recommend time-bound laxatives or enemas.



Nutritionist Dr Anjali Mukerjee is the founder of Health Total, a nutrition counselling centre. If you have a question for her, write to query@health-total.com
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Skin sense

Yoga can bring back the glow, says Shameem Akthar

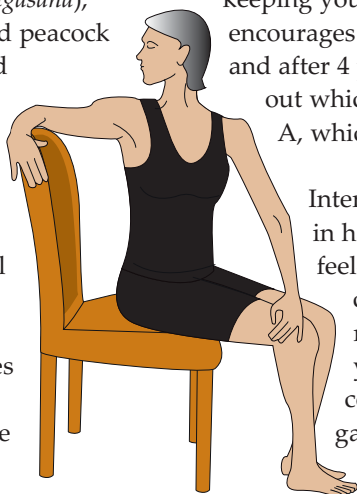
While acne is primarily seen as a problem for teenagers owing to rampaging hormones (particularly androgen) and emotional turmoil, it also attacks silvers—the vulnerable spots are the T-zone in the face (forehead and nose areas), inner ears, below the neck, back, even the buttocks.


Yoga recognises skin eruptions to be a manifestation of internal problems and recommends the sun salutation (*suryanamaskar*) series for problems including acne, eczema and dermatitis. This series activates the all-important endocrine glands. Other suggested *asana* include the shoulder stand (*sarvangasana*), plough pose (*halasana*) and the advanced peacock pose (*mayurasana*). In the shoulder stand and plough pose, the pressure is applied on the thyroid gland, while the uro-genital system gets a powerful thrust with the peacock.

Similarly, yogic twists are also powerful detoxifiers. They work on the liver and massage the kidneys, thus ensuring proper elimination of waste. These poses squeeze the entire digestive system, whose tone is essential to encourage the movement called peristalsis. This is

needed to push the food along the digestive tract and ensure proper excretion. Constipation indicates a rot within the entire system—the external manifestation of this is bad skin. A regular yogic practice with pressure on the abdomen can keep constipation at bay.

Forward bends have the most powerful effect on the skin. In poses like the hare (*shashankasana*), seated forward bend (*paschimottanasana*) and psychic union pose (yoga *mudrasana*), you can feel the blood vessels in the face engorge with blood. This means even micro-vessels that may have aged or been neglected are revived, so blood supply is boosted and subsequent repair and regeneration begins, keeping you glowing. Yoga skin therapy also encourages exposure to mild sunlight (before 10 am and after 4 pm) to absorb crucial Vitamin D without which the body cannot metabolise Vitamin A, which is essential for good skin.



Interestingly, yoga also leads to upsurge in happy hormones (endorphins) and feel-good neuro chemicals (serotonin) that contribute to the well-being of body and mind. The sense of inner control gives you the 'yogic glow' or *tejas*, which could well be responsible for yoga gathering such a celebrity following world over! 

Yogic moves

Rishi Bhadra's pose (*bhadrasana*)

Kneel down and sit back on your heels in the classic thunderbolt pose (*vajrasana*). Those with knee problems can sit cross-legged in the classic *padmasana*, the simple and easy *sukhasana* or on a chair (see **picture**). Sit up straight. Place left hand on right hip or knee. Inhale. Exhaling, twist towards right side, feeling the stretch powerfully along the spine and

abdomen. Hold for a few seconds, breathing normally. Release and repeat for other side. Beginners can try this pose thrice. Advanced practitioners can do it just once, but hold longer, for 15 seconds or more, breathing normally throughout.

Benefits: This pose powers liver detoxification and boosts metabolism that aids nutrient absorption for healthy skin. It squeezes out stress and boosts respiration, aiding oxygen transfer to the skin.

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



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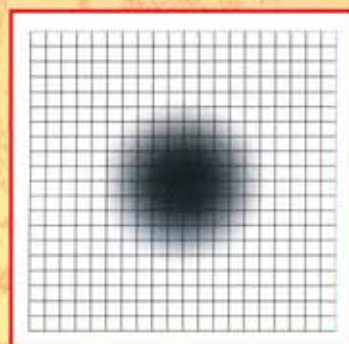
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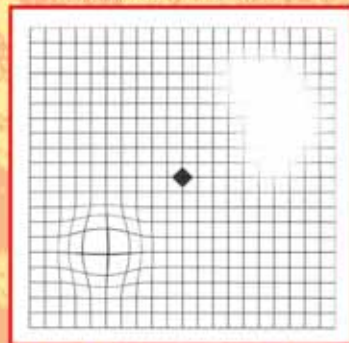
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ROBOT SURGEON

There may come a time when **gastroscopy and tissue biopsy will be performed by capsule-shaped bio-microbots** inside the body. Scientists from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (SFIT) are developing robot pills that will examine the gastrointestinal tract, and simultaneously obtain tissue samples for further investigation. Designed for specific functions, pills swallowed individually would assemble together to form a larger snake-like system in the body. The magnetic mechanism that enables parts of the robot to join together automatically in the stomach, enabling the surgical system to move together through the stomach and intestine, has been developed by SFIT researcher Zoltan Nagy. Though tested in an artificial stomach with 75 per cent success rate, in-vivo tests are not expected in the near future. "I have merely presented one possible mechanism for the self-assembly of a robot that has potential for surgical application," Nagy tells media.

SUGAR FREE

Scientists in the US have isolated **blood glucose levels as a major mechanism contributing to normal, age-related cognitive decline**. Their report, published in the December 2008 issue of *Annals of Neurology*, shows that rising blood sugar levels affect an area of the hippocampus, the part of the brain critical to learning and memory. Hippocampus damage is evident in Alzheimer's; normal ageing also affects this region of the brain. However, exercise helps stabilise blood sugar levels—this could explain why people who exercise don't have as many cognitive problems as they age.

"This suggests that anything to improve regulation of blood glucose would potentially be a way to ameliorate age-related memory decline," senior study author Dr Scott Small, associate professor of neurology at Columbia University Medical Centre's Taub Institute for Research on Alzheimer's Disease and the Ageing Brain, says in the report. During the study, researchers recorded functioning of the hippocampus in 240 healthy older people, with an average age of 80.





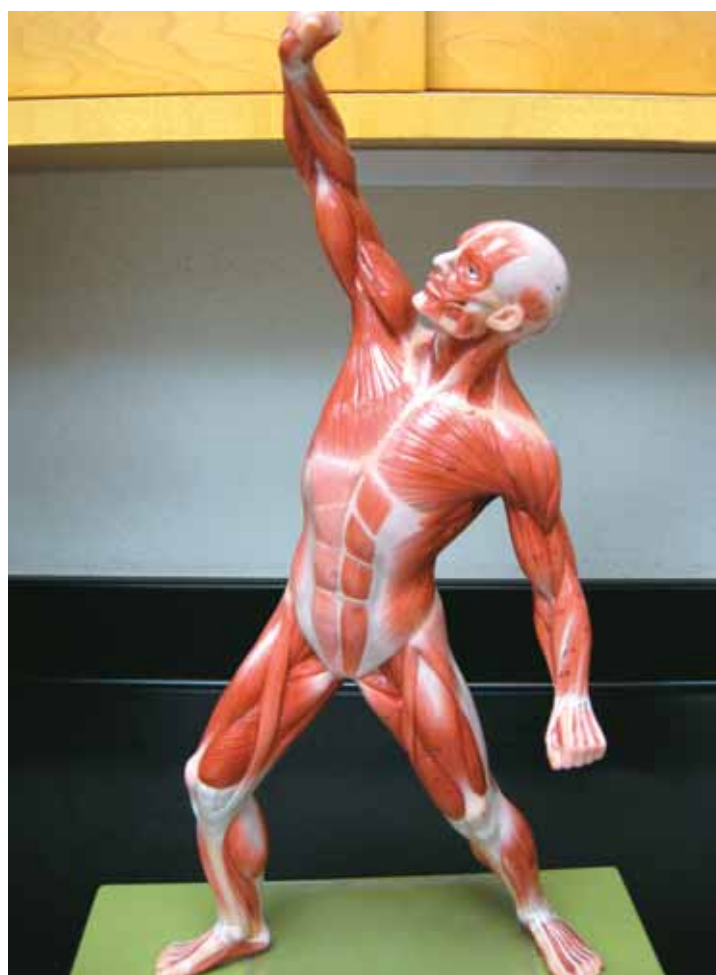
SLEEP IT OUT

Researchers from the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College, London, are convinced that insomnia or **lack of sleep can lead to paranoid delusions**. A study carried out on health volunteers and psychiatric patients indicates a clear link between the two. While 70 per cent of healthy volunteers who reported signs of paranoia had difficulty in normal sleeping, more than half the psychiatric patients suffered from moderate to severe insomnia. "A few nights of poor sleep can make us feel stressed, muddled in our thinking, and disconnected from the world," research leader Dr Daniel Freeman writes in the latest issue of *Schizophrenia Research*, the official journal of the Schizophrenia International Research Society.

"If we don't sleep for a night, we feel stressed and lethargic with no energy all through the day," Dr Deepak Raheja, National Institute of Psychiatry, tells *Harmony*. "Poor sleep can definitely cause significant interference with normal thinking procedure and result in paranoid fears and depression." According to him, the tendency is more aggravated in seniors, so a normal sleep routine is necessary to avoid undue anxiety and obsessive delusions and thoughts. Like Dr Freeman, he advises cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) for insomnia. A psychotherapeutic approach, CBT aims to influence problematic and dysfunctional emotions, behaviour and cognition through a goal-oriented, systematic procedure.

NEW HOPE

People suffering from dystonia—a neurological movement disorder associated with sustained muscle contractions—have reason to hope. Since the turn of the century, brain implants have helped patients of Parkinson's disease by blocking brain signals causing abnormal muscle movements. However, a recent operation by Dr Milind Sankhe, consultant neurosurgeon at Mumbai's Hinduja Hospital, has proved that **surgically implanted brain pacemakers** are equally successful. The 'Activa Therapy System', similar to a cardiac pacemaker, delivers precisely controlled electrical stimulation to targeted areas in the brain and helps patients regain voluntary control over abnormal posture and muscle movements. Though the treatment is now readily available in India, the implant is imported and costs about Rs 600,000. However, Dr Sankhe, with his newly founded Aastha Foundation, aims to make it more affordable.



TO YOUR HEALTH!

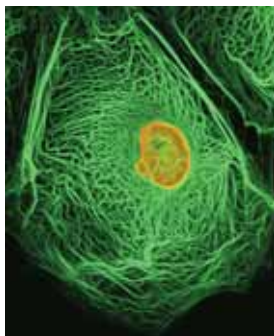
The next time you pour yourself a peg in the evening, don't feel guilty. A study conducted on 4,276 men and women over the age of 60 at the University of California-Los Angeles, reveals that **light to moderate drinking can benefit silvers** by reducing the development of physical problems in walking, standing and self-grooming. While light to moderate drinking indicated less than 15 drinks a week or five drinks (four for women) on one day; heavy drinking meant 15 or more drinks a week or five drinks (four for women) in one session. Abstainers were those who had less than 12 alcoholic drinks in the previous year. Of the participants, 51 per cent men and 45 per cent women who were light to moderate drinkers experienced no difficulty; 17 per cent men and 4 per cent women who were heavy drinkers had little to high level of difficulty; and the 32 per cent men and 51 per cent women who abstained were unable to do any physical activity independently or without using aids.

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FIGHTING CANCER

In a remarkable initiative, the Tata Memorial Centre (TMC) in Mumbai has introduced **uniform guidelines for doctors and specialists providing assistance to cancer patients living in rural areas.** "The introduction of these guidelines will benefit cancer patients and result in an improvement in their lives," Dr R A Badwe, director, TMC,



tells *Harmony*. "We have been carrying out research based on the treatment of different kinds of cancer for some years now. Taking this research to the interiors of India was a natural progression. This development will help doctors across the country provide treatment to patients at their doorstep instead of making them travel long distances." The guidelines have already been disseminated across India.

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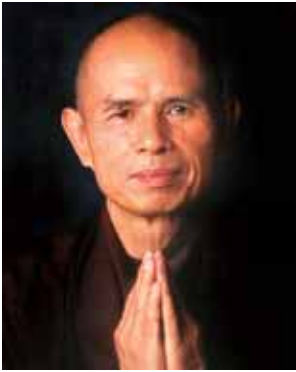
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Finding fulfilment

You already have everything you want, says Thich Nhat Hanh

The 18th century French scientist Antoine Laurent Lavoisier said, "Nothing is born. Nothing dies."

He was not a Buddhist

but a scientist looking deeply into the nature of reality, and he discovered this truth. The Heart Sutra also says, "No birth, no death, no production, no destruction." If you have never been born, how can you die? Grasping and rejecting are only possible when you have not seen into the heart of reality. In the ultimate dimension, there is no beginning and no end. We think there is something to attain, something outside of ourselves, but everything is already here. When we transcend notions of inside and outside, we know that the object we wish to attain is already within us. We don't have to search for it in space or time. It is already available in the present moment. The contemplation on non-attainment is very important. The object we wish to attain is already attained. We don't need to attain anything. We already have it. We already are it.

The teaching of non-attainment is developed from the teaching of aimlessness. The teaching of the Three Doors of Liberation is common to all the Buddhist schools. The first door is emptiness. Everything is empty. Empty of what? Empty of a separate self. A flower is full of everything in the cosmos—sunshine, clouds, air and space. It is empty of one thing, a separate existence. That is the meaning of emptiness. We can use this as a key to unlock the door to reality.

The second door is signlessness. If you see a flower only as a flower and don't see the sunshine, clouds, earth, time, and space in it, you are caught in the

sign of the flower. But when you have touched the nature of interbeing of the flower, you truly see the flower. If you see a person and don't also see his society, education, ancestors, culture, and environment, you have not really seen that person. Instead, you have been taken in by the sign of that person, the outward appearance of a separate self. When you can see that person deeply, you touch the whole cosmos and you will not be fooled by appearances. This is called signlessness.

The third door is aimlessness. We already are what we want to become. We don't have to become someone else. We already contain the whole cosmos. We simply return to ourselves through mindfulness and touch the peace and joy that are already present within us and all around us. I have arrived. I am already home. There is nothing to do. This is the third key for unlocking reality. Aimlessness, non-attainment, is a wonderful practice.

We can ride the waves of birth and death in peace. We can travel in the boat of compassion on the

ocean of delusion with a smile of non-fear. In the light of interbeing, we see the flower in the garbage and the garbage in the flower. It is on the very ground of suffering, the ground of afflictions, that we can contemplate enlightenment and well-being. Bodhisattvas are those who have penetrated into the reality of no birth and no death. That is why they are fearless, day and night. With that freedom, they can

do a lot to help those who are suffering. We can become a Buddha only by being in the world of suffering and afflictions. And when we are free, we can ride on the waves of birth and death without fear, helping those who are drowning in the ocean of suffering. ■

We think there is something to attain outside of ourselves, but everything is already here

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk and author, who travels extensively around the world promoting peace between warring countries. Excerpt from Understanding Our Mind (Harper Collins; Rs 295; 251 pages)

Back in command

B N RAO, 68

WAS: Major General in the Army

IS: Administrator of a senior citizens' home in Pune

Iretired as a major general from the Army in September 1996, receiving an AVSM, VSM and Bar during my career. During my posting in Bengaluru in 1990, my in-laws and widowed aunt came to live with us. Soon her brother came to stay as well. The problems of caring for four silvers compelled us to send him to an old age home in Shirali, Karnataka. While checking out suitable homes, I realised the condition in most of these places left much to be desired. It struck me that I could do something constructive at an old age home one day.

After retirement, when I came to live in Pune, I learnt that Vishwa Jagriti Mission Trust was starting an old age home. I contacted them and became involved with the project in 2000. In 2005, when Punya Dham Ashram was ready, my wife passed away. With no commitments—my sons are both settled—I moved into the home and have been a resident administrator since then. It has added purpose and meaning to my life.

The Ashram has 27 permanent residents from different parts of the country. Silvers in search of a spiritual retreat are also accommodated on a short-term basis. The Ashram has a convention hall, temple, library, rose garden, *tapovan* (meditation centre), *gaushala* (cowshed)



Rao: bringing new purpose in the lives of silvers



Food for thought

Experts answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement



I am a 56 year-old homemaker. For the past couple of years, I have been taking party orders from friends and relatives. Now I would like to start a regular catering service. Please tell me how can I get started.

Starting a catering service is not something I would recommend. There is a lot of competition in the field and it takes at least five to six years before a business can really get going. Besides suitable space—at least 300 sq ft—in a residential area and five or six workers, you will either need someone reliable to purchase the essentials or do it yourself. A good network of contacts is also important for getting regular orders from different offices and private parties, as well as for marketing non-perishable products in various

stores. Instead of investing your money—a minimum of Rs 75,000 for rent, salaries and raw material every month—it would be more advisable to join an organisation that needs someone to manage their canteen. It will give you the satisfaction of being in the catering business without the associated risk.

—Vandana Navalkar

Navalkar is chairperson of Kutumsakhi Sahakari Audyogik Utpadak Sanstha, a catering cooperative in Mumbai



My grandson has been diagnosed with a learning difficulty. I would like to start a centre where other children like him can be guided to cope with the school curriculum.

Is it a feasible idea?



HEMAN T PATIL

and computer centre. The vegetarian menu is balanced and nutritive and everyone is assigned responsibilities—kitchen supervision or repair work—to enjoy a sense of belonging and usefulness. Ladies spend a couple of hours daily in a workshop knitting socks and sweaters, making TV and mobile covers, and bags and toys. Every Wednesday, an hour is devoted to spiritual discussion.

The home serves as a base for the Trust's charitable and welfare activities—mobile clinics, free dispensaries and dental clinic, to name a few. As a coordinator, besides financial and administrative responsibilities, I oversee these activities. People often come and ask how they can help. We tell them we are fine and ask how we can help them instead.

—As told to Khursheed Dinshaw

There are a variety of learning difficulties—dyslexia, Down's syndrome, autism, to name just a few. As you have omitted to mention the kind or degree of your grandson's problem, it is difficult to give you specific advice. Most cities have good special schools for children with different disabilities. However, unless the problem is very severe, it is not a good idea to isolate the child, as segregation will only hinder development of social and interaction skills. Instead, it would be better to admit him in an existing inclusive school that will offer him an opportunity to mix with regular students and thereby equip him better to integrate into the mainstream. Starting a new learning centre from scratch will require sizeable investment, besides getting together a qualified team of educationists and other professionals from the field. It will also be necessary to visit various institutes to find out how best to set up such a service.

—Kavneet Khullar

Khullar is principal of Akshar, an inclusive ICSE school in Kolkata



My job entailed extensive travel across India. After my retirement, I took two years to write a book on my travels. I am very keen on getting it published. Please advise me.

It is remarkable of you to have written a book. Though you can send your manuscript to different publishers, it is usually difficult for a new writer to achieve a breakthrough. If you are willing to invest money, it is best to self-publish your book. There are several publishing houses that specialise in this. Some even agree to share costs. You could print about 500 copies—photographs will increase the cost—and reprint later. Select a publisher who will promote the book and market it in the initial stages. Check out www.depotindia.in/self_publish.php—they are the publishers of my second book and have done a good job.

—Nargis Natarajan

Natarajan, a writer based in Bhubaneswar, is currently writing her third book

Send queries to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org; for second career options, go to www.harmonyindia.org

Hot stuff

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



When you think of room heaters and radiators, your mind instantly conjures images of a bulky metal contraption with exposed pipes and valves. Who could have thought of a glamorous radiator? Well, Milan-based design firm Hellos did. Its flower-shaped radiators have caused quite a sensation in Europe.

The LED-lit colourful blooms are fully customisable in shape and hue and can be bought per piece, so you can create your own flower arrangement on your walls. Made from die-cast aluminium, the flowers are available in pastel colours in a choice of finish—matte, rough or polished. The daisies also offer chromotherapy, an alternative medicinal therapy that uses light and colour to balance physical, mental and spiritual energy in a person's body. You can choose from electric or hydraulic installations.

Though the product is not yet available in India, you can log on to www.trendir.com and order online.

RECYCLE

- Cut off the pockets from your old denim jeans; glue a magnet to the back of each pocket; and stick them on the fridge. You can use them to store grocery bills or coupons.
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FineVERSE

Adab Nawaz meets connoisseurs who won't let the sun go down on the art of *mushaira*

It was a *mushaira* held to pay homage to the heroes of the 26/11 terror attack last month. Seated on stage at the sea-facing Islam Gymkhana ground in Mumbai were over two dozen poets—some of them prominent, many almost anonymous. As the evening wore on, out of the blue descended a senior income tax officer. Even as the audience winced in their seats, the officer pontificated for 10 minutes on patriotism and ended his pedagogy with a forgettable couplet.

"The officer was not on our original list of poets for the evening; we had to accommodate him because he had sent in a request to recite a poem," says the *mushaira*'s organiser Urdu journalist Sami Babure. If

such is the condition of *mushaira* today, once a popular art form that helped enrich India's celebrated *ganga-jamuni tehzeeb* (composite culture), it urgently needs resuscitation. Like so many other forms of arts, *mushaira* too is terminally ill. Fortunately, there are a few die-hard connoisseurs who are not ready to give up easily.

Take Delhi-based former diplomat, author and cultural commentator Pran Nevile. Through his K L Saigal Memorial Circle, Nevile keeps revisiting the fascinating reservoir of unforgettable Hindi songs. Keeping alive the rich tradition of *mushaira* tops Nevil's priorities. Recently, at the India Habitat Centre in Delhi, he presented rare recordings of recitations of an

Indo-Pak *mushaira* held in 1958. Several leading poets of the time, including Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ali Sardar Jafri, Kaifi Azmi and Hafiz Jalandhari, had participated in the *mushaira*. Nevile, who had hosted Faiz a couple of times in the 1970s when he was a diplomat in Moscow, recalls that *mushaira* used to epitomise a refined culture, an expression of love and anguish—even bitterness—through sublime poetry. "Then, poets of repute enthralled the audience not just with their beautiful verses, but their voice, diction and style of recitation," says the octogenarian, who has penned several seminal works, including *Nautch Girls of India* and *Lahore: A Sentimental Journey*. "Today most *mushaira* programmes are aimed to appease



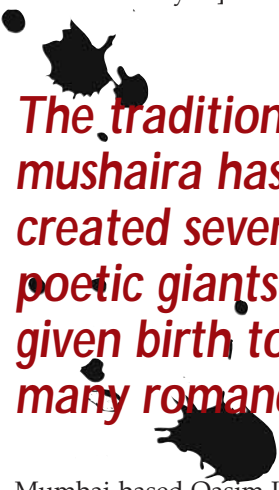
politicians who invariably chair the event," he adds grimly.

Mushaira, which began during the reign of Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah Rangeela (1719-48), found patrons in later emperors, *jagirdar* (landlords) and *nawab* (aristocracy). The last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar patronised several poets, including the iconic Mirza Ghalib. Ghalib was so indebted to Zafar's largesse that he even acknowledged it in a couplet: "*Ghalib, wazeefa khwar ho de Shah ko dual/wuh din gaye jo kahte the naukhar nahin hoon main* (Ghalib, pray for the king as you are now getting a stipend/The days are gone when you claimed that you were nobody's servant). Popular poets like Ghalib, Zauq and Dard were followed by the next generation, including Seemab Akbarabadi, Allama Iqbal, Faiz and Firaq.

Sadly, today the tradition is in dire straits. Mumbai-based Nida Fazli, a popular poet of the *mushaira* circuit, calls it a collective downfall of our cultural values. "Which is why we see several beautiful *shairat* (women poets) who can hardly pen a few correct lines," he rues. "*Mushaira mein mujra chalu ho gaya hai* [*Mushaira* seem like *mujra* where nautch girls performed as their patrons desired]."

Mumbai's Nehru Centre is among the institutions that have not lost faith in the art form. Its annual *mushaira* held at its auditorium attracts a full house and features over a dozen poets—many of them from abroad. "It's difficult to organise a *mushaira* with good, established poets because we don't get sponsors," says Latafat Kazi, director (culture), Nehru Centre.

"But seeing the audience's craze for good poetry, we can't discontinue the event." A couple of years ago at the Centre's *mushaira*, late Pakistani poet Ahmed Faraz recited his immortal *ghazal* explaining his own immense popularity: "*Aur Faraz chahiye kitni mohabbatein tujhe/maoon ne tere naam pe apne bachchon ka naam rakh diya* [How much more love do you want Faraz/Mothers have named their children after you]."



The tradition of *mushaira* has created several poetic giants and given birth to many romances

Mumbai-based Qasim Imam, moderator of many a *mushaira*, feels the tradition suffers from "topical poetry". "In order to sound contemporary, poets use newspaper headlines as couplets," he says. "*Shairi ke naam par reporting ho rahi hai* [They are reporting in the name of reciting poetry].

This trend began with the demolition of the Babri Mosque in December 1992. And over time, Urdu poetry, whose practitioners included several non-Muslims like Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast, Daya Shankar Naseem, Jaggannath Azad, Kalidas Gupta Raza and Pratpal Singh Betaab, got confined to the fringes. "I have even heard people presenting Muntadar Al-Zaidi [the Iraqi journalist who hurled shoes at the former US

president George W Bush] as a hero in their poetry," laments poet-writer Faiyaz Riffat who, as programme director at All India Radio in the 1980s, had organised several successful *mushaira*.

Many have tried to revive *mushaira* through theatre. In 1969, to coincide with Ghalib's death centenary, Kaifi Azmi rewrote an earlier play *Delhi Ka Akhri Mushaira* as *Akhri Shama*. Since then it has been staged several times by actors of the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). These days Salim Arif directs *Akhri Shama*, and has cast Bharat Kapoor as Ghalib and A K Hangal as Zauq. As it begins, a huge candle is kept before the poet who is supposed to recite. "Though the format looks outdated, our shows are packed," says Arif, who is better known for *Ghalib Nama*, a presentation of Ghalib's letters on stage accompanied by some of his *ghazal* sung by popular singer Jaswinder Singh.

It was at a *mushaira* in Mumbai that legendary filmmaker A R Kardar mapped poet-*hakim* (Unani doctor) Majrooh Sultanpuri and roped him in to write lyrics for the 1946 movie *Shah Jehan*. Sultanpuri went on to become Bollywood's busiest bard before he died in the late 1990s. It was also at a *mushaira* in Hyderabad when a young Shaukat first heard the lanky Kaifi Azmi. As Shaukat records in her memoir, *Yaad Ki Rahguzar* (Down Memory Lane), theirs was love at first sight. Indeed, the tradition of *mushaira* has created several poetic giants and given birth to many romances. Hopefully, it will survive the tides even in the age of instant messaging and blogging. ■



DNA

HEALING HAND

It takes more than skilled hands to heal wounds—it takes compassion. Mumbai-based **Dr Bharati Kondwilkar** has soothed the city through more than a few disasters including the December 1992 riots, the serial blasts in 1993 and the recent 26/11 terror attack. The professor of anaesthesia at the city's J J Hospital for the past 26 years, she was recently felicitated by the Maharashtra government for her services. On the first day of the 26/11 attack, she was at home watching television. Sensing impending crisis, within minutes, she called up her team and asked them to gather at the hospital's casualty ward. From previous experience, Kondwilkar already knew that hospital facilities would prove inadequate against the stream of victims. The team worked around the clock so patients could be stabilised and operated upon quickly. "The government should conduct drills so doctors are better able to cope with such emergencies," she says.



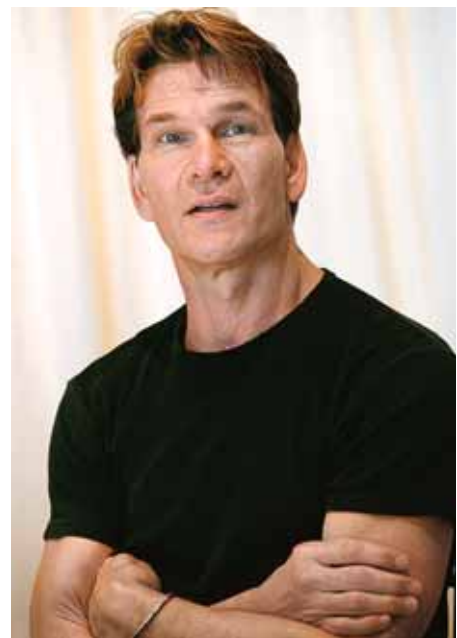
PICTURE PERFECT

Talent needn't take a backseat with the passage of time. Ask 85 year-old photographer **T S Satyan** whose works were on display at The Stainless Gallery in New Delhi from 17-24 January. The exhibition, *The Long Exposure*, showcased

stunning black-and-white prints captured throughout the photographer's 57-year-long career. The work displayed not only Satyan's keen eye but also his rapport with his subjects: classical singer Mallikarjun Mansoor offering a piggyback ride to his grandchild; former president Dr S Radhakrishnan stretched out on his bed; and Maharani Gayatri Devi at her ethereal best during an election campaign in rural India. Satyan, who was earlier a photojournalist with *Deccan Herald* and *Illustrated Weekly of India*, rose to international prominence with his work for *Life* magazine—especially his eloquent profiles of people. The humble silver is, however, dismissive about the impact of his photography. "I never thought I was creating art," he says with nonchalance.

THE LAST DANCE

He tangoed to superstardom in 1987 with his slick moves in *Dirty Dancing*. Now, **Patrick Swayze** is taking a new step—the 56 year-old Hollywood hunk, who is battling pancreatic cancer, plans to pen his memoirs with wife Lisa. Till the end of November 2008, the indefatigable star was filming *The Beast* in Chicago, clocking 12 hours a day on the set despite his illness. But now, according to media reports, he has started preparing himself for death after learning that the cancer has spread to his liver. The book will be an account of his life, career and battle against cancer.



KNEE HIGH

Here's proof that an innovative spirit can only shine brighter with age. Of the 36,000 orthopaedic surgeons in India, **Dr K H Sancheti**, 69, is the first to design a knee implant and receive a patent for it. Sancheti developed the indigenous Indus knee implant that aims to bring knee replacement surgery within the reach of the common man suffering from arthritis. While an imported artificial knee costs more than Rs 150,000, the implant costs Rs 78,000. The low-cost implant is the outcome of five years of extensive research conducted at the Sancheti Institute of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation in Pune. "The Indus knee is extremely flexible," says Sancheti. "Patients can sit cross-legged for *puja* or, like most Indians, eat their meals sitting on the floor." Around 65,000 Indians need knee replacement every year but, owing to the cost, only 15,000 to 18,000 patients undergo the surgery.

HEMANT PATIL



MIRACLE MOM

Seventy year-old **Rajo Devi** from Haryana has raised both eyebrows and hopes worldwide. After giving birth to a girl in November 2008, Rajo Devi—who now holds the title of the world's oldest mother—and her husband Bala Ram are keen to have another child, a boy. Married for 55 years, the couple was childless till they tried in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment in March 2008. Earlier, depression and disillusionment drove Bala Ram to marry Rajo Devi's sister, Omvati (with Rajo's



consent) in the hope of bearing a child. However, even Omvati could not conceive. After reading a newspaper article about a 58 year-old woman in Haryana who conceived with IVF, the cou-

ple decided to try their luck. In March 2008, after three months of treatment at the fertility centre in Hisar, Rajo became pregnant. Bala Ram, a local landlord, spent all his savings on the treatment. Surprisingly, the pregnancy was smooth and uncomplicated despite Rajo being well past her childbearing years. "I stayed put on my *charpai* [bed] and my sister took care of me," says Rajo, who also breastfeeds her baby. The couple's three-month-old daughter, Naveen, though born premature, is healthy.

BIRTHDAYS

- Actor **Nana Patekar** turned 58 on 1 January
- Hollywood actor **Mel Gibson** turned 53 on 3 January
- Scientist and author **Stephen Hawking** turned 67 on 8 January
- Boxer and peace activist **Mohammad Ali** turned 67 on 17 January
- Director **Subhash Ghai** turned 64 on 24 January

IN PASSING



A trenchant critic of US and UK foreign policy in Iraq, British playwright **Harold Pinter** wrote more than 30 plays—*The Caretaker* and *The Birthday Party* being two of his most acclaimed offerings. Pinter's plays were often laced with an undertone of alienation and

violence. His spare, seemingly bizarre dialogues, made 'Pinteresque' an official entry in the English dictionary. He also wrote the script for 20 movies including *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981) and *Betrayal* (1983). The Nobel-prize winning playwright died after a struggle with cancer of the oesophagus and pemphigus, an autoimmune disease, on 24 December 2009. He was 78.



It was perhaps her own Jewish background that made **Helen Suzman** keenly sensitive to racial discrimination. For decades, the anti-apartheid activist was the lone 'white' voice in protest against the injustices of apartheid in the South African parliament.

Suzman, who was active in South African politics between 1953 and 1989, even drew grudging admiration from critics for her wit and vigour. Once a minister told her in parliament, "You put these questions to embarrass South Africans overseas." She retaliated, saying, "It is not my questions that embarrass South Africa, it's your answers." Suzman died peacefully at her home in Johannesburg on 1 January 2009. She was 91.

Tapan Sinha's films, steeped in the common man's struggles, reflected his innate simplicity. His works, such as *Ankush* (1954), *Aadmi Aur Aurat* (1982) and *Ek Doctor Ki Maut* (1991), are counted among the classics of Indian cinema. Starting his career as an assistant sound recordist at Kolkata's New



Theatres Studio, Sinha moved to Pinewood Studio in London as sound engineer where he mastered filmmaking. Of his 41 films, 19 have won National Awards and critical acclaim globally. Sinha died in Kolkata after a prolonged fight against septicaemia on 15 January 2009. He was 84.



Artist **Manjit Bawa's** authorised biography, *In Black and White*, was ready to go to press when he suffered a stroke in 2005 that plunged him into a coma. Bawa's commitment to his art was as commendable as his work—despite a long drought in sales at one point of time, he

continued to be one of the most prolific artists in the Indian art circle. His canvases, characterised by vivid colours and iconography, always spoke of peace and hope. In September 2008, one of Bawa's untitled works sold for \$ 362,500 at a Christie's auction in New York. He passed away in Delhi on 29 December 2008 at the age of 61.

The clash of civilisations dominated **Samuel Huntington's** mind for most of his distinguished career as a political scientist. Huntington, who retired from Harvard University in 2007, focused his intellect on American government, military politics, strategy and democratisation. He always believed that world conflict would stem from religious and cultural differences, rather than ideological clashes between nations. Huntington posed this argument in his seminal books *The Clash of Civilisations* and *Remaking the World Order*. Huntington died on 27 December 2008 at the age of 81.



MILESTONES



Awarded. The Jnanpith Award for the year 2006 to Sanskrit poet **Satya Vrat Shastri**. The 78 year-old, who is a visiting professor at six universities around the world, is the first Sanskrit scholar to be chosen for the award. While on a stint in Indonesia, Shastri penned

the 2,000-stanza *Sriramakirtimahakavyam* (the story of Rama). The poem won him 11 national and international awards. Later, Shastri also launched a Sanskrit course in the University of Thailand.

Awarded. The Maharashtra State Award for literary creation to eminent art critic and author **Shanta Gokhale**, 65. Gokhale's book *Tya Varshi (That Year)* is among the 80 books chosen for the award. Set in 2004, *Tya Varshi* revolves around the lives of a group of artists, painters and musicians against the backdrop of violence. Gokhale received the award on 18 January 2009.



WHAT I LOVE

MODEL JOURNEY

C L Singh's miniature trains chronicle a rich history

An 1829 Stephenson rocket engine shares space with a 1999 WDG4 Konkan railway high-speed engine and a 1853 Falkland engine, all in a small room. These are three of the 37 miniature train models that comprise the aptly titled collection 'History of Indian Railways' created by Mumbai-based C L Singh. A section engineer with the Central Railways workshop in Parel, 56 year-old Singh has painstakingly created these models by preparing drawings from detailed photographs, constructing and assembling individual parts. "Each model takes me about two months, with almost four hours of work every day," says Singh, explaining that cleaning, maintenance of the models and research for the detailed history of each model is extremely time-consuming. Of all the models, his favourite is a 140-tonne rail crane. "The 6 ft tall, 10-kg model took me almost two years to make," says the proud silver.

Singh's hobby, which began over 20 years ago, demands a lot in terms of energy, time and money but he is adamant that he will never sell any of his models. With help from the government, his collection has been exhibited at Lokmanya Tilak College and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in Mumbai, and the Lonavala and Delhi rail museums. "My dream is to set up a museum where the rich heritage of Indian Railways can be preserved for future generations," says Singh, who also enjoys advising and helping other model enthusiasts.

—Roli Gupta



VILAS KALGUTKER



Middle-class morality

In the Country of Deceit, by Shashi Deshpande
Penguin; Rs 399; 259 pages

Family relationships form the bedrock of Shashi Deshpande's body of work and this, her 10th novel in a 30-year career as novelist, stays true to type. The protagonist Devyani—reincarnated from an earlier novel, *Come Up and Be Dead*—is a staid 26 year-old content to live in the small town of Rajnur in Karnataka and teach English following the death of her parents. Her simple pleasures: an airy new home with its walled garden (rebuilt after demolishing her parents' oppressive house); letters exchanged with her sister Savitri and aunt

Sindhu; and a budding friendship with Rani, a former actor who is unable to lay her celluloid past to rest. But these pale when she meets new district SP Ashok Chinappa, older, married and father of a 10 year-old. Their affair leads her into the country of deceit—there

she is forced to lie to the people she loves and betray her principles to continue the illicit relationship.

While Deshpande skilfully establishes the milieu with her customary austerity of prose and evokes the warmth and richness of Devyani's ties with her family, she flounders when it comes to the lovers themselves. Ashok remains a one-dimensional character, their intimate moments are woefully puerile and the desperate madness to their affair that Deshpande wishes to convey never quite touches you. Also, the subplots—a property dispute, Rani's attempted comeback and Devyani's memories of a near-assault as a young girl—are not followed through, making them mere punctuations to the plot rather than enriching additions. A missed opportunity that fails to do justice to the author's skills.

—Arati Rajan Menon

Life's lessons

True Dummy: A Fable of Existence, by Ashish Jaiswal
Rupa & Co; Rs 195; 247 pages

A PhD student at Oxford University, Ashish Jaiswal is clearly a fan of Paulo Coelho—he channels the author's seminal work, *The Alchemist*, to surprisingly good effect in his debut novel and delivers an allegorical work that is simple yet powerful. *True Dummy* is the tale of two boys who hail from an unknown valley of yellow flowers and their search for the truth of their existence. They realise their destiny with the help of an intriguing character—an old gypsy woman who makes them play the game of 'true and dummy pearls'.

Here's how it goes: the earth is full of two kinds of people. While the dummy pearls exist just to make the bag of the earth look full and large, the true pearls, who enjoy success, are few. In a quest to fol-

low their ambition, the boys journey to the Island of True Pearls, where they are forced to choose between the three temptresses: Money, Power and Fame. Their travels lead them—and the reader—to explore the many layers of human existence, its mysteries and follies, joys and disappointments. Jaiswal uses short stories, magic realism and vivid imagery to construct an entertaining and thought-provoking fable that addresses eternal human dilemmas. One for the entire family.

—Nitika Bajpayee



BRIEFLY

Following his critically acclaimed 2006 debut *Passarola Rising*, a fable located in 18th century Europe, **Azhar Abidi** gives us a cross-cultural family saga with **TWILIGHT** (Penguin Viking; Rs 399; 215 pages). Set in Pakistan and Australia, the book explores the conflicting nuances of love, family relationships, religion and politics. The mid-1980s are a time of turmoil in Pakistan with the military and *mullah* in control, and the beginning of political insurgency in Kashmir. Traditional values are changing with the younger generation migrating to foreign countries. Samad, the only son of Bilqis Ara Begum—matriarch of the Khan family—has married Kate, an Australian. And as she prepares for her son's wedding reception, Bilqis strives to convince herself of his familial loyalty, his commitment to the ideology and beliefs he grew up with. Abidi's skilful use of language and dialogue keeps the reader engrossed.



Nobelist **Toni Morrison** has dedicated herself to giving voice to the 'un-free' in democratic America. **A MERCY** (Chatto & Windus; Rs 499; 165 pages) is no exception. Set in untamed America in the late 18th century, this is the tale of Florens, a young black girl whose mother 'gives' her to Jacob Vaark, a white farmer, in the hope she'll find a better life than the plantation she lives in—the 'mercy' of



When the Soviet Union held Kalashnikovs to the temple, and heart, of Afghanistan, Afghanis used the same guns to revolt; just like Prophet Daud used Goliath's own sword to slay him. **THE WASTED VIGIL** (Faber and Faber; Rs 599; 246 pages) by **Nadeem Aslam** is the story of this forever invaded and plundered country. This beautiful work presents the pain and consequences of war in the starkest way. The pain experienced by men, women, children and nature. The pain of knowing that "the explanation of these events exists in another realm, a world with its own considerations and law". Englishman Marcus Caldwell is a "prophet in wreckage" after his teenage daughter Zameen

is taken away by Russian soldiers and, later, his Afghani doctor wife Qatrina's grave is pelted with stones for being a liberal. The puzzle begins to fall together when a Russian woman Lara seeks refuge with Marcus to look for her long-lost brother. A storm is unleashed when she realises he was one of the men who abducted Zameen. This book is a surge of grief.



the title. And while the idealistic and humane Vaark moves further from his principles in search of wealth, Florens becomes enmeshed in a household with three other conflicted and—in their own ways—enslaved women: Rebekka, Vaark's wife; Lina, their native American servant; and Sorrow, the daughter of a sea captain. When Vaark, their anchor, dies of smallpox, the women find themselves rudderless and powerless. This is a lush song of history, heartbreak and identity that reaffirms Morrison's status as America's conscience and ends with a sliver of hope—realised so remarkably in real life with the election of America's first African-American president.

In **COURTING DESTINY** (Penguin; Rs 650; 395 pages), senior advocate and former union law minister **Shanti Bhushan** traces India's constitutional history through nail-biting legal tussles that rocked

India's judicial landscape. The book steers clear of pulp-fiction flamboyance though, and wades through legal details: Indira Gandhi's election case, which toppled her throne; the Supreme Court's restrictions on life and liberty during the Emergency; the Bofors case; the contempt case against author Arundhati Roy; the controversial case on the attack on Parliament; and many others that may have faded from public memory but have the potency to trigger fresh headlines. Interestingly, the letters included as appendices to the book make equally riveting text.

In particular, Bhushan's letter to former president R Venkataraman, seeking prosecution of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi over Bofors, offers an insight into the cover-ups that litter our political corridors. No light reading this.



"Eyes closed; A lamp in my hands; I roam".

Acharya Mahaprajna is the light bearer of Jainism and the fountainhead of 'Prekshadhyana' consciousness that liberates human beings from mortal

tensions. On a perpetual *ahimsa yatra*, the 88 year-old has authored over a hundred books of poetry, prose and philosophy. **THE SUN WILL RISE AGAIN** (Penguin; Rs 250;

97 pages) is the latest of his selected poems, translated into English from Sanskrit, Hindi and Rajasthani by Sudhamahi Ragunathan, former vice chancellor of Jain Vishva Bharati University. The soul-searching poems largely bear the message of non-violence, a philosophy the world needs now. Acharya's writings lend themselves to multiple interpretations without losing focus of fundamentals of humanity like tolerance, detachment, prayer and hope. "Once again it is a dazzling afternoon; Lost are those clouds, which left my blanket of dreams, drenched."



Tim Parks serves up an unusual read with **DREAMS OF RIVERS AND SEAS** (Harvill Secker; Rs 499; 431 pages). It's set in India but all the pivotal characters are Western. The character who dominates the narrative—maverick anthropologist Albert James—is already dead when the book begins. And it juxtaposes Western 'science' and Indian 'faith' in ways that redefine our perceptions of those two clichés. Leaving his pretty (and unfaithful) girlfriend behind, John abandons his PhD thesis and rushes from London to Delhi to mourn his father Albert, whose research and death are



shrouded in uncertainty. Adding to the strangeness of the plot is his philanthropist doctor mother's icy aloofness to him and growing fondness for the journalist who arrives to write his father's biography. John has to read between the lines to make sense of it all amid the distraction posed by India in all its chaotic, wondrous glory. 'Communication' or the lack thereof—"how every message can be misunderstood"—lies at the heart of the flawed relationships and mysteries in this book and Parks unravels each one until you reach the startling climax. Complicated and compelling.

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The first day at school.

The first time you rode the bicycle.

The first crush you had at thirteen.

The first drama you got a part in.

The first day at college.

The first date you went on.

The first kiss.

The first time you proposed.

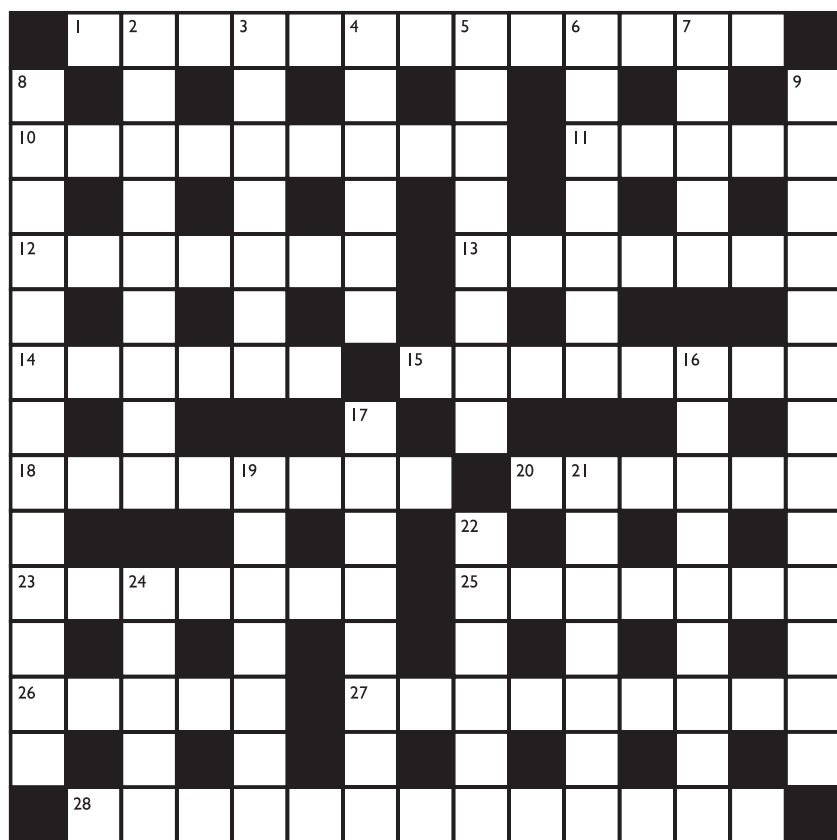
The first job interview.

The first board meeting you addressed.

The first day after retirement.

Butterflies never retire.

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



EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 52

By **Raju Bharatan**

ACROSS

- 1 *Ishwar* is on your lips the moment you glimpse it as a line of reasoning (5 4 4)
- 10 Pele was eye-riveting, his controlling artistry depending upon 'that part of the foot' (2 3 4)
- 11 How refreshingly Suraiya came through as a Singing Star with *Kaale-kaale aaye baadarva/Aao sajan morey aao* in this 1947 A R Kardar-directed Naushad-Shakeel ear-catcher (5)
- 12 His name is money-driving law (7)
- 13 So great, so eminent (7)

- 14 Amar Singh's mood indicating the election round on which he is Sanjay Dutt-launched (6)
- 15 Constant movement inside and father too outside (2 3 3)
- 18 Call to police station: "Capture the woman don by so positioning her picture on the wall"? (3 3 2)
- 20 As this in disguise did that *monkey-twisting* legalese end up for Harbhajan Singh, seeing how it only emboldened him to turn IPL into 'a slap in the Sreesanth face' (1 5)
- 23 What the big matches due in New Zealand are going to be for Rahul Dravid? (7)
- 25 Nitu left if Mao comes out as an

object of reverence (7)

- 26 *Banya server* (5)
- 27 An Om ed's Ed in retreat classically associated with a handkerchief (9)
- 28 The dollar shedding its sheen is just your luck (3 2 3 5)

DOWN

- 2 Let's hope Rahul Dravid doesn't see red, in the form of a 'drop-down', while passing one (6 3)
- 3 A lea in which you spot the lady's name (7)
- 4 Best describing state of mother who went through hell during 26/11? (6)
- 5 Oriental connection (8)
- 6 Figure not a single horse 'on the job'? (7)
- 7 Maybe Shabana Azmi challengingly inviting the performer facing her to deliver? (5)
- 8 State of Jiggs with Maggie taller to boot! (4-9)
- 9 What you needed to be to have backed up a Sunil Dutt hamming all the way (1 7 5)
- 16 In Bhagyashree's case, how rudely was hers pronounced a 'Himalaya blunder'? (5 4)
- 17 The scorer does in the book as the dasher lashes out and totally misses (4 1 3)
- 19 England-US be turning ten for ace footballer (4 1 3)
- 21 Flattering view of Lata Mangeshkar rendering *Ae mere watan ke logon* today? (3 4)
- 22 What you have to be to get to feel the true Nariman House impact in the years to come (1 5)
- 24 From me opposite (2 3)

For answers, see Page 79

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

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS: A whole variety of clues goes into framing a cryptic puzzle. For instance, the anagram. The clue here could be: *Unresting opponent of authority* (*Unresting* being the 9 letters of *insurgent* rearranged). Another variety of clue is the palindrome—*DEIFIED*, when viewed backward or when viewed up in a Down clue, reads *DEIFIED* all the way. Next, there could be the clue (8-letter answer) reading: *Complete view of daughter sandwiched between parents*—*PANORAMA* (*PA/NORA/MA*). The 8-letter solution to the clue, *The framework of our constitution*, is *SKELETON*. At times, what looks straight could prove tricky. For example, the clue, *How we stand*—has *UNITED* for its 6-letter answer. The clue, *How we fall*, has *DIVIDED* for its 7-letter answer.

SAY IT OUT LOUD



If we knock on the door until it opens, not taking no for an answer, our lives will be transformed as we step up into a higher awareness

— American author James Redfield

THE BUZZ

MAHATMA'S WORDS

All the literary works of Mahatma Gandhi are now in the public domain—the copyright on these expired in January 2009, 60 years after his death, in accordance with Section 22 of the Copyright Act, 1957. Now, anybody can publish his writings and speeches without seeking permission from the Navjivan Trust, the custodian of his works. Before his death, Gandhi had endowed his works—over 200,000 pages of philosophical writings, articles, letters and speeches—to the Trust. Similarly, on 30 December 2001, Visvabharati University in Santiniketan lost its copyright on the works of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.



THE WORD IS OUT

returnment. *n.* The act of returning to work after having retired.

Example: Chris Ball, chief executive of campaign group The Age and Employment Network ... called on employers to allow a larger number of older staff to either stay in work longer, or return to the workforce after retirement. "The current economic situation where more and more older people are having to turn to credit to meet their everyday living expenses, and where fewer than four out of 10 people are contributing to an occupational pension, means that longer working and 'returnment' are two trends that are becoming well established," Ball said.

—Mike Berry. "Employment figures show older workers are on the increase", *Personnel Today*, 22 April 2008

iCrime. *n.* The theft of a personal media device, particularly an iPod or iPhone.

Example: In most cases, police say the targets, perpetrators and beneficiaries of these **iCrimes** are young people. Last weekend in Toronto's West End, four people with iPods were taken to hospital with cuts and bruises after being swarmed by a gang of youths wielding a metal mallet used to tenderise meat. Nine people were subsequently arrested and charged. At least nine people in Toronto—most of them youths—have been mugged for their iPods since late October.

—Misty Harris, "Lure of iPods leads to hike in iCrime", *Regina Leader Post*, 19 November 2008

netroots. *n.* A grassroots movement that uses the Internet to communicate, organise, and raise money.

Example: Democratic congressional candidate Darcy Burner ... followed her husband to Washington state in 1998 when he was hired at Microsoft; she landed a job there in 2000, working as a marketing manager dealing in network architecture for software developers. What has made Burner different from other political newcomers is her ability to attract campaign contributions (she's out-raised her opponent, a rarity for congressional challengers). And she owes a good part of her fundraising success to her links to the **netroots**. "She's one of us," Seattle blogger David Goldstein,

BRAIN GYM

who has solicited contributions to Burner on his website, *horsesass.org*, said earlier this year. “Down deep, she’s a geek.”

—Gregory Roberts, “Darcy Burner’s interest in service started early”, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 29 October 2008

third-hand smoke *n.* Particles that linger on surfaces after second-hand tobacco smoke has dissipated.
Example: Researchers have found that **third-hand smoke** containing heavy metals, carcinogens and even radioactive materials lingers long after second-hand smoke has dissipated, and can be ingested by children crawling around a room. Winickoff says parents who try to protect their children from second-hand smoke by rolling down a window of the car or smoking only when the children are out of the room are not doing enough. If the smell of the cigarette lingers, he said, so does the danger. “Your nose isn’t lying. If your body detects it, then it’s there,” he says. “And children are more susceptible than adults.”
Third-hand smoke has been found to contain hydrogen cyanide, used in chemical weapons; butane; toluene, found in paint thinners; arsenic; lead; carbon monoxide; and polonium-210, the highly radioactive carcinogen that was used to murder former Russian spy Alexander V Litvinenko in 2006.

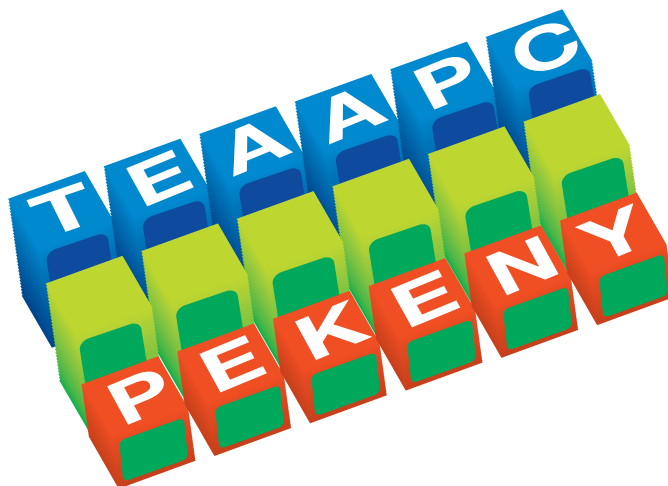
—Stuart Laidlaw, “Toxins from ‘third-hand smoke’ linger on”, *The Toronto Star*, 6 January 2009

shovel-ready *adj.* Relating to a construction site or project that can be used or started right away. Also: **shovel ready**.

Example: Nearly every economist who spoke here agreed that a dollar invested in, say, a new transit system or in bridge repair is spent and respent more efficiently than a dollar that comes to a household in a tax cut. A bigger percentage of the latter is saved, they said. There was concern, however, that the nation lacked enough **shovel ready** projects that could be ramped up quickly, generating jobs.

—Louis Uchitelle, “Economists warm to government spending but debate its form”, *The New York Times*, 7 January 2009

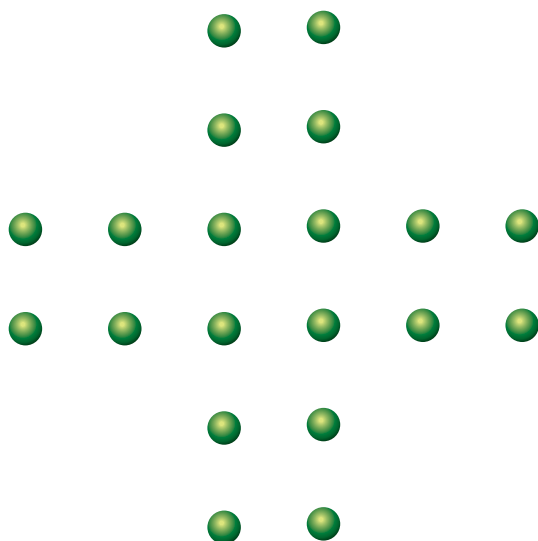
MAGIC WORD



Put the right letters on the green cubes in the illustration so that each vertical column is a three-letter word, and the centre horizontal row spells the name of a familiar sea animal.

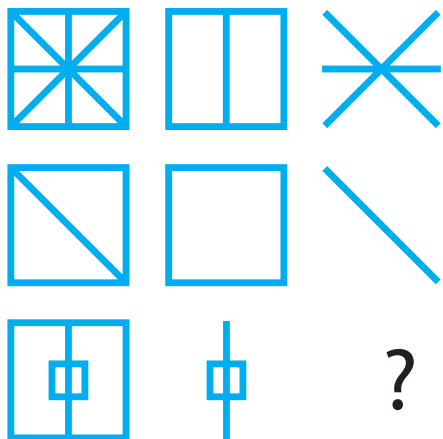
SQUARE FUN

Count how many perfect squares of all possible sizes are hidden in the cross of dots below. A square is counted if any four dots are placed exactly in its respective corners.



THE RULE

In each row, the third pattern is obtained from the first two by applying a rule. What is the rule, and what pattern goes at the end of the third row instead of the question mark?



LAUGH LINES

"How was your game, dear?" asked Jack's wife Tracy.

"Well, I was hitting pretty well, but my eyesight's gotten so bad I couldn't see where the ball went," he answered.

"But you're 75 years old, Jack!" admonished his wife. "Why don't you take my brother Scott along?"

"But he's 85 and doesn't play golf anymore," protested Jack.

"But he's got perfect eyesight. He would watch the ball for you," Tracy pointed out.

The next day Jack teed off with Scott looking on. Jack swung and the ball disappeared down the middle of the fairway. "Do you see it?" asked Jack.

"Yup," Scott answered. "Well, where is it?" yelled Jack, peering off into the distance.

"I forgot."

SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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

KOFFEE WITH KAKURO

			17	41			
		11				16	17
		17	15		17		
13			21				
10			11				16
	14				13		
20	4				10		
8			11				
			6				

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

THE WAY WE WERE

WE GO 50 YEARS BACK IN TIME TO BRING YOU PRODUCTS, PEOPLE, EVENTS AND FASHION THAT INFLUENCED THE WORLD...

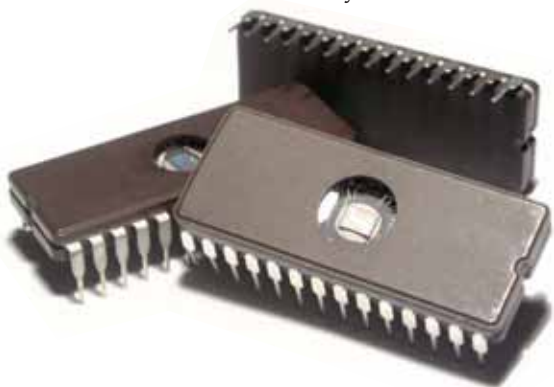
CIRCUIT TALES

The computers and electronic machines we take for granted would not have been invented if it weren't for the integrated circuit, invented 50 years ago in 1959 by engineers Jack Kilby and Robert Noyce in the US. Integrated circuits are equipped with small silicon and germanium chips along with transistors that help in reducing the cost of electronic functions. Both inventors worked separately, ignorant of the other's work, and invented two similar integrated circuits almost at the same time. The monolithic integrated circuit placed the previously separated transistors, resistors, capacitors and all connecting wiring onto a single crystal—or chip made of semiconductor material. While Kilby used germanium for the semiconductor material, Noyce used silicon.



A far cry from its current sophisticated form (below), the integrated circuit when it made its first appearance in 1959

Both inventors applied for patents in 1959—Kilby received one for miniaturised electronic circuits and Noyce for the silicon-based integrated circuit. The first commercial launch of the integrated circuit came in 1961 by Fairchild Semiconductor Corporation, which was co-founded by Noyce. These were used to design personal computers. Meanwhile, Kilby's chips were used in computers for the US Air Force and the Minuteman Missile in 1962. Later, these chips were used to produce the first electronic portable calculators.

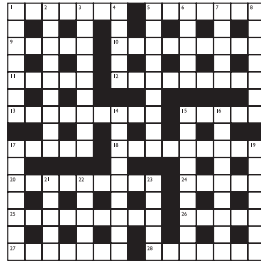


THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: FEBRUARY 1959

- **On 3 February 1959**, a chartered plane transporting musicians Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper went down in foggy conditions near Clear Lake, Iowa, in the US, killing all four occupants on board. The tragedy was later termed 'The Day the Music Died' and immortalised in Don McLean's 1972 song, *American Pie*.
- **On 6 February 1959**, the first Titan intercontinental ballistic missile was successfully test-fired at Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- **On 16 February 1959**, Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba after President Fulgencio Batista was overthrown.
- **On 17 February 1959**, the US launched the Vanguard II weather satellite. Vanguard II supposedly measured cloud-cover distribution.
- **On 19 February 1959**, the UK granted Cyprus its independence, which was then formally proclaimed on 16 August 1960.

SOLUTIONS TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 52

ACROSS: 1 *Allah tero naam* (Ishwar part of Ishwar Tero naam follows as a natural sequel); 10 On the ball (reference to Pele's skills tantalisingly resting on the 'ball' of the foot); 11 *Natak*; 12 Gresham; 13 Tagores (so great: 7 letters of Tagores rearranged); 14 Upbeat (U. P. beat on which Amar Singh is); 15 To and fro (t/and fr/o: and fr inside, too outside); 18 Fix her up; 20 A curse; 23 RETESTS; 25 Manitou (Nitu left if Mao comes out of Manitou), Manitou meaning a spirit viewed as an object of reverence); 26 *Nayab* (Pankaj Udaas album: banya, the 5 letters of nayab, meaning server, rearranged); 27 Desdemona (An Om ed's Ed does Desdemona read in retreat); 28 Rub of the green (green for dollar)

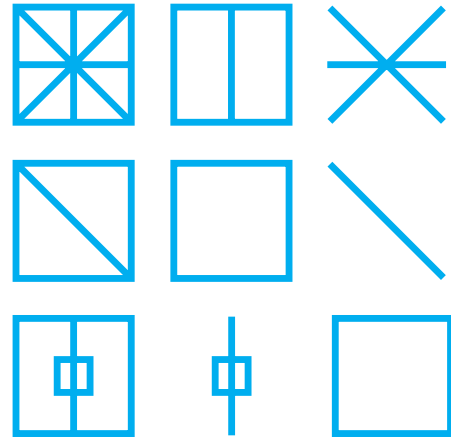


74

There are 21 squares shown in the five diagrams.

The rule

The rule for obtaining the third pattern in each row is to superimpose the first two patterns and eliminate any lines they have in common.

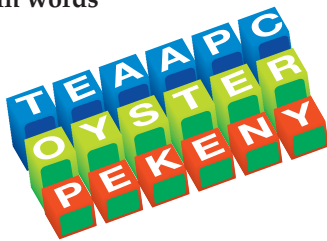


77

DOWN: 2 Letter box; 3 Alethea: A/le(the)a: A lea in which you spot the; 4 Trauma (Trauma); 5 Relation (its 8 letters rearrange as Oriental); 6 Nonagon (no/nag/on); 7 Actor (Act-or-?); 8 Long-suffering; 9 A Kishore Kumar; 16 First love; 17 Puts a dot; 19 Eusebio (E/US/eb turning 10); 21 Can hear; 22 A Moshe; 24 To you

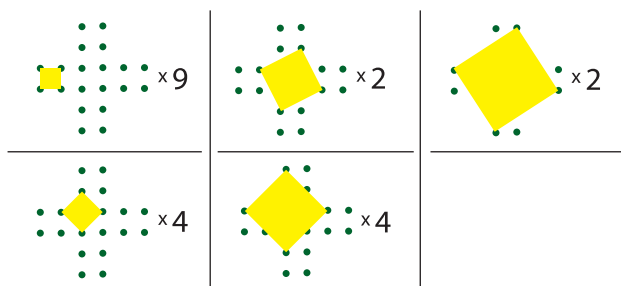
SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

Fill in words



The sea animal is Oyster

Square fun



76

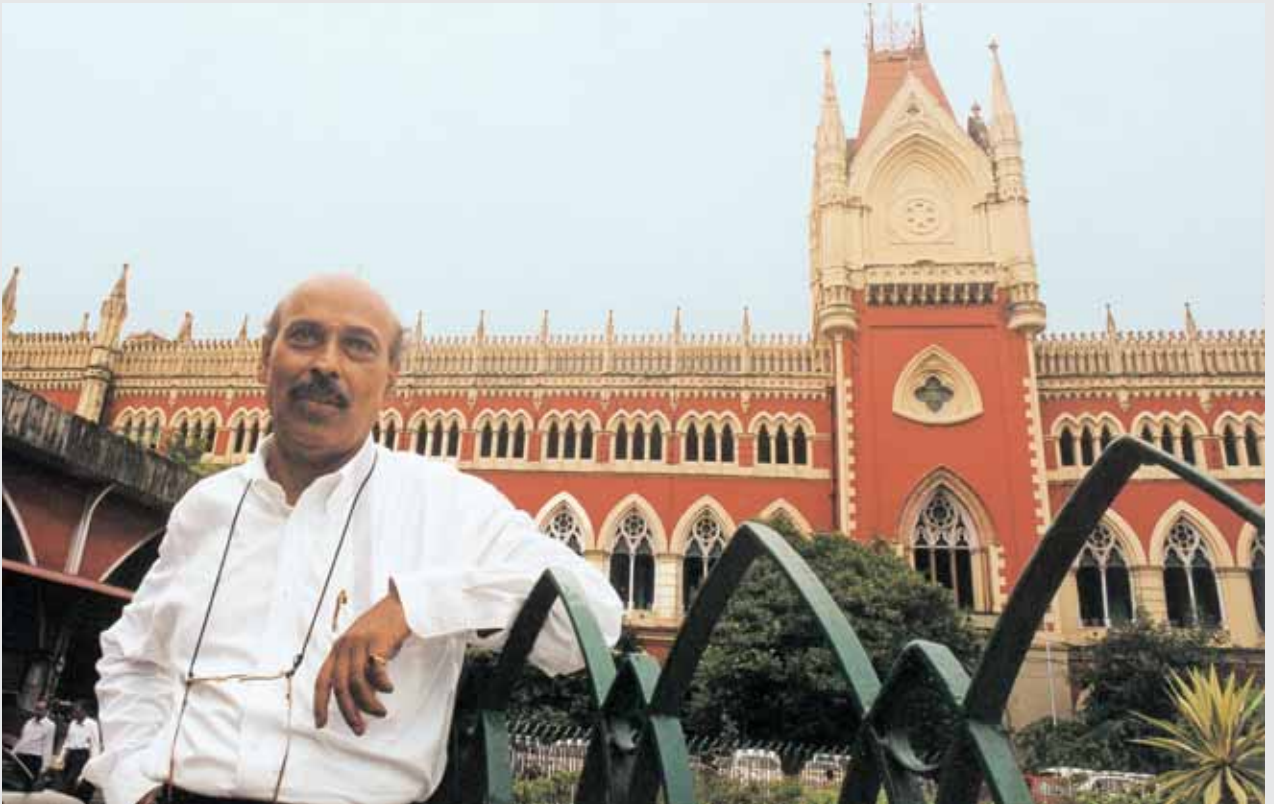
SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

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

SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

			17	41				
		11	9	2		16	17	
		17	8	9		15	6	9
13	9	4	21	3	9	1	8	
10	8	2	11	1	8	2	16	
	14	1	7	6	13	4	9	
20	1	3	9	7	10	3	7	
8	3	5	11	8	3			
			6	5	1			

Subhas Datta, 59, for checking pollution in Howrah



TEXT: SONALI MAJUMDER; PHOTO: SHILBHADRA DATTA

"When I see that the streets and parks of this dusty town are much cleaner, I am motivated to work harder."

Born in a refugee camp in Bangladesh, **Subhas Datta's** parents moved to Howrah a year after his birth. Early adversities and life in Howrah—the notoriously polluted twin city of Kolkata—willed him to fight against the deteriorating environment. In 1977, Datta, a chartered accountant, formed the Howrah Ganatantrik Nagarik Samity or the Howrah People's Forum to highlight the city's myriad problems like overworked morgues, improper garbage disposal and unattended industrial waste. He filed several petitions in the Calcutta High Court. In 1995, he decided to take the matter to the Supreme Court. He condensed all the cases he handled in 19 years and filed a 442-page petition. In June 1996, his efforts paid off when the Supreme Court redirected the Calcutta High Court to designate a separate Bench to deal with environmental matters. Popularly known as the Green Bench, it was the first in India. Even today, whenever there is ecological injustice, the 'green man of Howrah', as Datta is fondly called, rushes in. He is now fighting against vehicular pollution, pollution of the Ganges and maintenance of the Botanical Gardens in Howrah.

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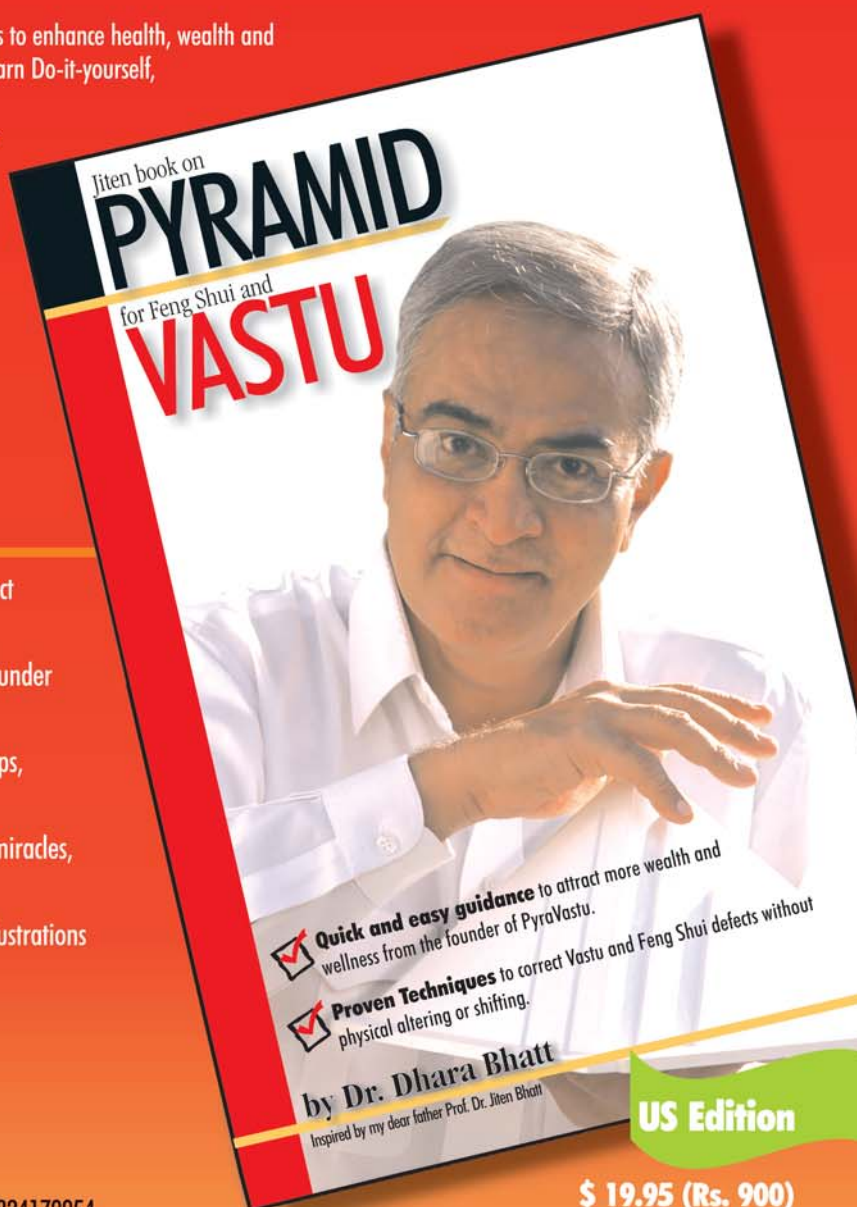
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