

harmony

FEBRUARY 2015 ₹ 40

celebrate age

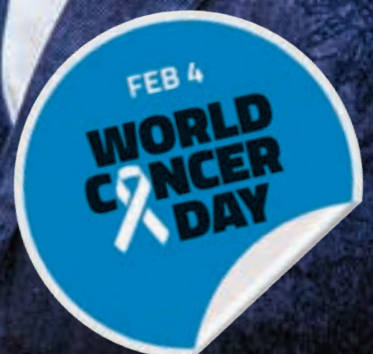
The magazine for silver citizens

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THE MONTH OF LOVE: SONS AND FATHERS

the melody makers

Hariharan and
Akshay Hariharan



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CAN ANSWER

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BRING HOPE BACK

Love is in short supply today. I don't mean affectations of romance or declarations of passion but true, all-encompassing love, a humanity that is inclusive and draws everyone inside a cocoon of togetherness and belonging. Instead, we have reactivity, regression, violence and vilification—it's an exhausting cycle of claim and counter-claim in a world gone mad. It is perhaps the greatest of ironies that while scientists work overtime to extend the human lifespan, the greatest threat to longevity comes from humans themselves, our own inhumanity.

There has never been a better time to introspect, to examine what we bring to our world. Grand gestures and pointless posturing aside, we need to rededicate ourselves to the people around us—our families and friends and, extending the circle, our neighbourhoods and communities. Most important, we need to rededicate ourselves to our own self-actualisation, living to our best potential.

Indeed for more than a decade, Harmony has urged silvers across India to do just that. And there's no more splendid manifestation of this than the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run, editions of which have been held in Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru. A double celebration of active ageing and silver solidarity, the Run is testament to the magic that can be wrought when people come together with hope and happiness.

This year's Mumbai edition of the Run, part of the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon, was no exception, with close to 1,650 silvers staking their claim on the streets of the Maximum City, brand ambassadors for Generation A. Waving them off at the start line were renowned actor Gulshan Grover, a long-time friend of Harmony, and anchor-actor-singer Ayushmann Khur-

Suresh Natarajan



rana. Interestingly, Khurana, in his capacity as a Big 92.7 FM radio jockey, was one of the hosts at our silver marquee for the Delhi Run in 2006—it is indeed wonderful to see how this young man has evolved!

I thank both our special guests for cheering our silvers on. My gratitude also goes out to Baccarose Perfumes & Beauty Products Ltd, Meril Life Science, OOH Division Hindustan Unilever, Dominos Pizza, Big 92.7 FM, Reliance Infrastructure, Reliance Communications and Procama International for their support; and, of course, the Harmony team for its unwavering dedication and commitment.

Indeed, this year, the Run served to affirm my faith in the power of community; a power that needs to be tapped more frequently, more proactively for the greater good. It's time for hope—and love—to stage a comeback.

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

Harmony Celebrate Age—February 2015 Volume 11 Issue 9

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श्री अखिलेश यादव, मन्त्रीय परिवहन, उत्तर प्रदेश



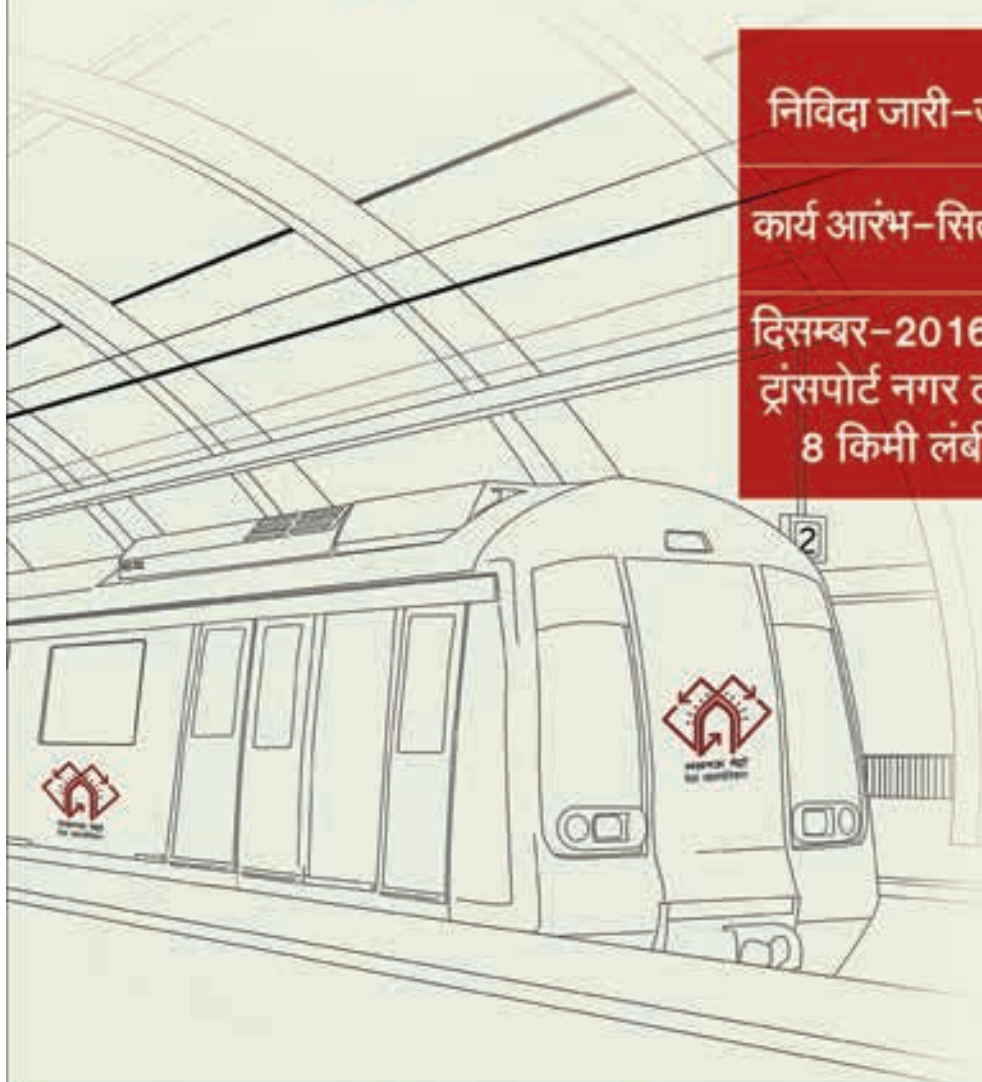
अब मीलों की दूरी मिनटों में तय करेगा लखनऊ

राजधानी लखनऊ में बढ़ती यातायात की समस्या के दृष्टिगत जनसामान्य को बेहतर एवं त्वरित परिवहन सुविधा उपलब्ध कराने के उद्देश्य से मेट्रो रेल परियोजना पर प्रभावी कार्यवाही प्रारम्भ।

निविदा जारी-जून -2014

कार्य आरंभ-सितम्बर-2014

दिसम्बर-2016 में चारबाग से
ट्रान्सपोर्ट नगर लखनऊ तक
8 किमी लंबी मेट्रो शुरू



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column one

Love is so much more than just romance, its boundaries further flung, its intricacies more complex, its ambit far broader. This month of love, we have chosen to focus on family, specifically the bond between fathers and sons. Our headliner is the inimitable Hariharan, master of reinvention, featured on the cover with his son—and collaborator—Akshay. “After 35 to 40 years in the music industry, if you don’t do anything new, it’s difficult to survive,” says the vocalist, adding that his son inspires him to push his own limits. In a similar vein, we visit seven father-son duos whose bonds of love and shared pursuits enrich their lives and warm the heart, whether it is cars or cameras, photography or pastry.

Another highlight this month is an exclusive interview with editor-columnist-author Sathya Saran, a pioneer of human-interest and lifestyle journalism, who is currently writing a biography of *ghazal* maestro Jagjit Singh. “Writing demands a vocabulary, a certain voice for the writer, and if these are present, the writing bends itself to any subject,” she tells us.

With World Cancer Day on 4 February, we also present a smorgasbord of articles to underline the maxim, ‘Cancer is just a word, not a sentence.’ From ‘The Last Word’ to ‘Food Facts’ and ‘Silver Lining,’ we seek to remind you that regular screening, a healthy diet, lifestyle modifications and, above all, a positive attitude are powerful weapons to battle the dreaded disease. Forewarned is truly forearmed.

And finally, we travel down south to experience the majesty of Mahabalipuram, a rock symphony like no other that resonates with myth and legend. Listen, read and enjoy.

—Arati Rajan Menon

The Income Tax department has issued notices to over 0.5 million taxpayers who haven’t filed returns. Though this is a welcome move to unearth undisclosed incomes and garner taxes, it is a big bother for the elderly who have stopped filing returns owing to an income below taxable limits. Many silvers are not registered on the tax e-filing portal; in fact, several do not even have email IDs. Silvers who are not IT savvy are now forced to spend on consultations. I request the authorities to spare these silvers from the issuance of such notices. If at all the department wishes to have a record of the reasons for not filing returns, they can get a simple hard copy signed by them and close their files.

Maresh Kumar

New Delhi

Since Vedic times, people have prayed for longevity. We are inexorably heading towards a life of 100 years; global surveys and projections point to this trend. There is no historical precedent for a majority of middle-aged and older adults having living parents as is the case today and, with the passage of time, more children will know their grandparents and even their great-grandparents than ever in history. Within the next five years, the number of adults aged 65 and above will outnumber children under the

ERRATUM

In “Budget Watch” (‘Money Matters’, January 2015), we inadvertently missed mentioning “My taxable income is just within the limit of ₹ 5 lakh” in the beginning of the article. The first paragraph should, in fact, read:

A close friend who recently celebrated her 80th birthday seemed truly glad that she had crossed the milestone that freed her from the income-tax net. Evidently relieved that she would not have to file her tax returns any longer, she echoed the sentiments of her peers: “My taxable income is just within the limit of ₹ 5 lakh and a big burden has been taken off the shoulders.”

We regret the error.

—Editors

age of five. At a time when the world at large is becoming *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (one family), I hope governments foresee the challenges they will have to face in looking after these numbers.

K D Bhatia

Delhi

CONTRIBUTOR



Our columnist in ‘At Large’ this month, **Virender Kapoor** revels in wearing many hats. An educationist of repute, he was director of SITM, a prestigious management institute under the Symbiosis umbrella. Currently, he is associated with the Management Institute for Leadership and Excellence (MILE), which he founded in Pune. Kapoor introduced *Jugaad*—the Indian concept of getting things done—in the management curriculum.

His book *Heart over Matter - Your Mantra for Success* is having a second edition run. He is also the bestselling author of management books such as *A Wonderful Boss* and *The Art of Effective Leadership*. Two of his books, *A Wonderful Boss* and *Leadership the Gandhi Way*, were published in 2014. Kapoor is also a known motivational speaker. His latest book is *The Greatest Secret of Success: Your Passion Quotient*.

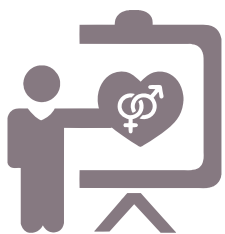


NEWSWORTHY

SLAKE YOUR WANDERLUST

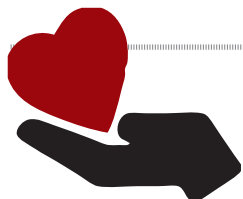
TRAVEL giant Thomas Cook is ready to indulge your wanderlust with **Silver Breaks, a new product line that delivers personalised holiday solutions for people over the age of 58.** According to a media release by the company, it will provide itineraries with support for special dietary needs, on-trip medical assistance, handpicked elder-friendly hotels, experienced tour managers, pre-departure meetings, entertainment evenings and easy-access vehicles; destinations will range from Thailand, UK and Italy overseas

to the Golden Triangle and Kerala in India. "The potential outbound senior citizens market is poised to grow rapidly from 1.3 million to over 7.3 million in the next 15 years, and our expectation that the domestic senior citizen traveller opportunity will also grow by at least the same multiple on a much larger base is truly exciting," says Rajeev D Kale, president and chief operating officer - MICE, Domestic & Sports Tourism, Thomas Cook (India) Ltd. "Silver Breaks assures silvers an unforgettable experience!"



LESS THAN SAFE: When it comes to sex, silvers have much to learn from the younger generation. The second Australian Study of Health and Relationships shows that condom use is much more likely among people who are younger, even though they were more likely to indulge in casual sex. This is a matter of concern, considering the rising number of silvers contracting HIV-AIDS as well as sexually transmitted diseases world over.

PLAY TIME: Jurong Point Shopping Centre in Singapore has launched an outdoor fitness area exclusively for silvers. Spanning 240 sq m, the free facility includes fitness equipment that makes muscles more flexible, improves leg strength and balance, and massages the waist and back.



THE ART OF GIVING: Here's a great example of how corporate India can do its bit for the silver cause. Telecom operator Uninor's *Sasta Bhi Suraksha Bhi* campaign launched under its Make a Difference (MAD) project has done much to support the residents of an Ahmedabad-based old age home. As media reports suggest, customers were requested to donate an amount of ₹ 5 by dialling a code that was deducted from their balance. In return, the customer got 50 minutes of local Uninor-Uninor talk time for two days. An impressive 36,194 customers made donations, which were given to Sri Manganlal Das and Sri Keshawlal Trikam Das Old Age Home in Ahmedabad. "This project endeavoured to connect different stakeholders at various levels—customers, employees and society," says Jinesh Hegde, circle business head of Gujarat for Uninor. "This initiative gave us all great satisfaction that we could make a difference to the lives of the elderly."



The project is coming up on the premises of the King Institute of Preventive Medicine

SOUTHERN COMFORT

ONE OF THE SILVER HIGHLIGHTS of the Union Budget, a **National Institute of Ageing (NIA)** is being developed in Chennai. The ₹ 150-crore project, the second of its kind after the one established at Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), will be built on the premises of the King Institute of Preventive Medicine and function under the Madras Medical College (MMC). The project will include a 200-bed hospital as well as specialties linked to geriatric care and research and training facilities in geriatric care and support for doctors and medical personnel from across southern India.

1090



Spurred by an increase in elder abuse and crime, the Goa government has launched a helpline—1090—to provide an interface between silvers and the state police. According to official statistics from 2013, over 75,000 silvers live in the state.



The Rajasthan government will restart its free pilgrimage train for silvers this year; its cancellation last November had led to much public protest. Under the initiative, senior citizens can avail rail travel free to 10 popular pilgrimage cities: Puri, Gaya, Rameshwaram, Vaishno Devi, Tirupati, Varanasi, Amritsar, Dwarkapuri, Bihar Sharif and Shirdi.

SPARK of inspiration



Farming facilities to enable silvers to work part-time under the direction of a professional implementation team

Singapore-based architecture firm SPARK has devised upon a novel ‘vertical urban farm housing scheme’ that caters to the needs of silvers as well as their desire to remain productive.

As website *architectureanddesign.com.au* reports, the conceptual project, titled ‘Home Farm’, offers high-density, flexible housing stacked in a curvilinear

terraced formation in an urban garden environment.

The idea is really quite ingenious—an eco-friendly housing project that incorporates farming facilities to enable silvers to work part-time under the direction of a professional implementation team, thus boosting their personal income and engendering a sense of community. The plan includes the

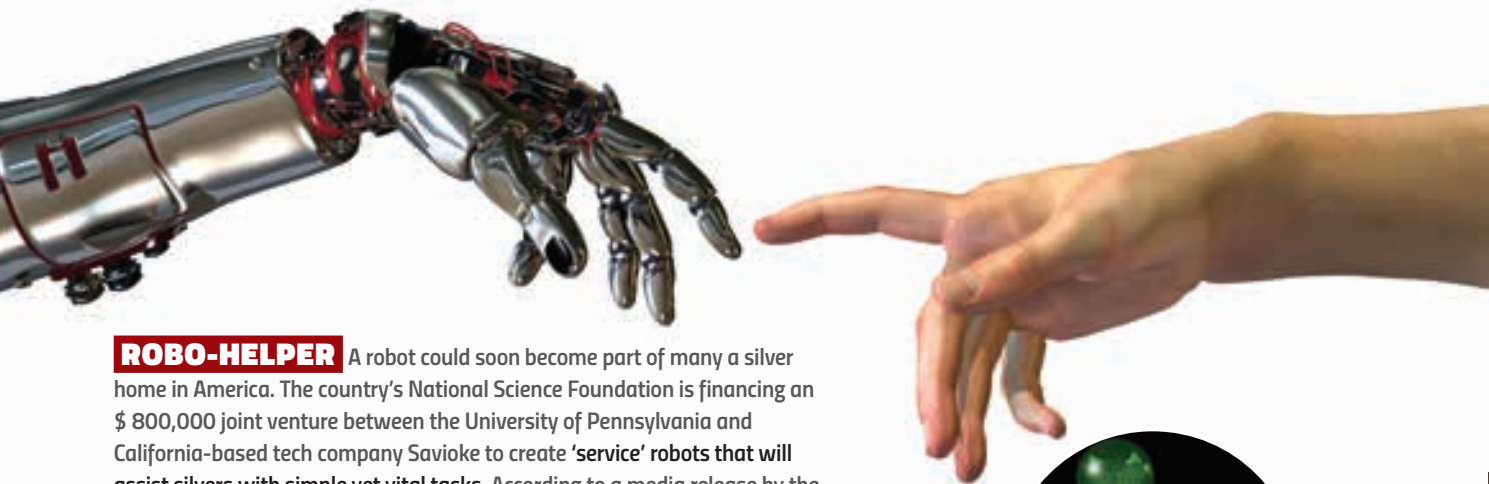
eventual establishment of a produce market, organic supermarket and agriculture centre to sell the produce grown in the gardens. While this is a project designed specifically for Singapore, the team at SPARK believes it is viable for any growing city that would support the growth of vegetation on building façades and rooftops. We love it.

A FITTING SALUTE: The Indian Army is building an ultra-modern senior citizens' home in Panchkula for retired soldiers. “This home will house 60 elders to begin with,” Western Command General Officer Commanding Lt Gen K J Singh tells media. “A proposal to build a similar home at Mohali is also the anvil.” A fantastic way to thank veterans for their service to the nation.

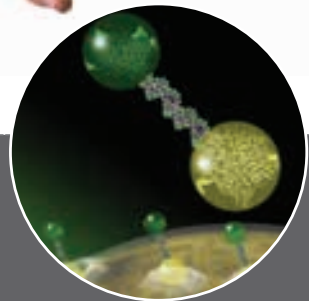


Dinodia Photo Library

CAPITAL PLANS Silvers have not been forgotten in the plans of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to build a world-class smart city. **The much-vaunted 24-hectare sustainable sub-city in Dwarka, comprising the city's tallest building, a financial hub and electric buses, will also include exclusive apartments for senior citizens.** “About 2,000 flats are being proposed for citizens over the age of 60,” says Balvinder Kumar, vice-chairman, DDA. “Eight hundred of them are being planned in Dwarka. We have already appointed a management consultant and we are calling in an architect. We are also in talks with banks to see if reverse mortgage facility could be allowed to them.” The proposed flats will be studio apartments with a combined bedroom, kitchen and living space, a bathroom and balcony, while the housing complex will have a library, medical facilities, meditation and yoga rooms, canteen and common rooms with a television and parks and walking tracks. These residences are expected to be ready by late 2017.



ROBO-HELPER A robot could soon become part of many a silver home in America. The country's National Science Foundation is financing an \$ 800,000 joint venture between the University of Pennsylvania and California-based tech company Savioke to create 'service' robots that will assist silvers with simple yet vital tasks. According to a media release by the University of Pennsylvania, the robots will be able to perform a "limited set of elder-relevant manipulation tasks", which include filling water glasses, fetching objects and picking up dropped items as well as monitoring health-related data. Going forward, the project aims to mainstream the use of robots in homes in the US to further the cause of independent ageing.



THE NANO EFFECT

A home-grown breakthrough has the international scientific community excited. According to Media reports, researchers from Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have discovered that **nanowires made of the element vanadium can reduce cell damage**, paving the way for drugs to prevent ageing, cardiac disorders, and neurological problems like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. These nanowires mimic a natural antioxidant enzyme that proves very effective in combating oxidative stress, which is held responsible for diseases ranging from arthritis to cancer. "We wanted to concentrate on a mechanism that mimics natural detoxification pathways," team leaders Prof G Mugesh and Patrick D'Silva write in journal *Nature Communications*. "We have shown that 'nanovanadia' works at the cellular level. Next, we want to focus on administering it in animals, and see how it performs."

"We wanted to concentrate on a mechanism that mimics natural detoxification pathways"



SEAT-HEART The road just got smoother for silver drivers. American motor company **Ford is developing a car seat that can detect a potential heart attack and stop the vehicle safely.** As website *ft.com* reports, the seat monitors the driver's cardiovascular system for irregularities, and works with a camera to monitor head movement and sensors on the steering wheel to spot cardiac failure, and engage the steering and braking systems accordingly. "About 30 per cent of people above 65 have some kind of heart irregularity," says Pim van der Jagt, managing director of the Ford Research Centre. "If they are still driving, they will have a real interest in such a car. In future, even 100 year-olds driving will not be abnormal." It will take Ford less than five years to introduce the seat in cars under production.

NEW DIMENSION

For product designers, the 3-D printer is the wave of the future—a device with infinite possibilities. And now, one of those possibilities is nutrition for silvers. As part of a project funded by the European Union, food company Biozoon is developing an industrial process for producing **personalised food for silvers with problems chewing and swallowing by working on 'printable versions' of food.** "In nursing homes, about one-fifth of the residents need a special diet," Matthias Kück, project coordinator and CEO of Biozoon, tells website *youiris.com*. "These people often receive unattractive, porridge-like food, seven days a week. But meals are socially important. We aim to prepare food in such a way that elders are able to eat safely and even enjoy their meals. Large industrial food produc-

ers mainly use egg or starch to solidify their strained food. But this food all tastes the same. To keep the meal tasty and visually appealing, we apply a heat-stable, plant-based solidifying agent. The chef can reshape this smoothened food with the help of silicon moulds. However, this approach is not suitable for large canteens or catering services. Therefore, we are applying 3D printing technology to industrialise the manufacturing process."

The advantages are manifold. Printing the food layer by layer will allow variation in form and texture. Further, the meals can be enriched with proteins, vitamins and minerals, thus enabling them to be personalised in terms of caloric content and nutrition levels. The team is currently attempting to make food such as meat and vegetables printable and expect to present a prototype of the food printer this year. The next big challenge will be to see if the end result suits the silver palate.

OFF THE PRESS



THE BASICS OF 3D PRINTING



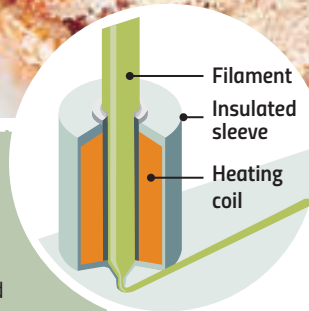
Plans are drawn in CAD and then passed to printer-specific software that allows materials to be specified, scale to be set, etc



Instructions can be passed to a 3D printer connected to your PC or sent to one of many online services for printing

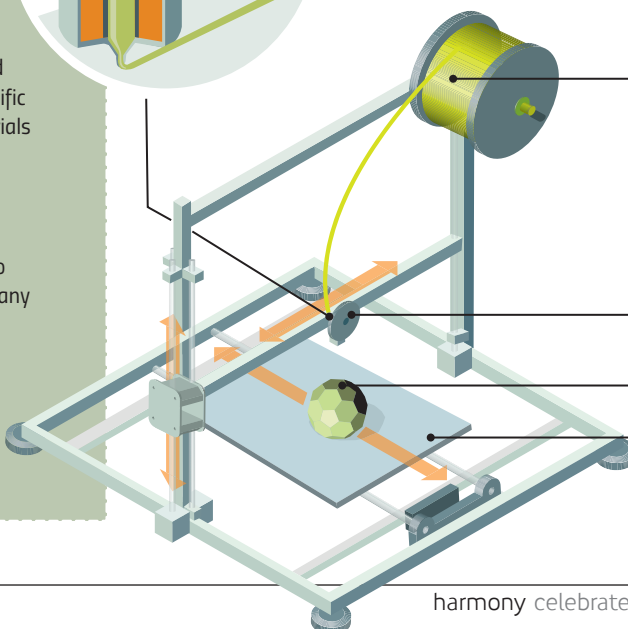


Depending on the size and complexity of the object, minutes or hours later the object is ready



Print Head

Filament is extruded through a heated nozzle and sets as it cools



Filament

Materials are stored and fed to the printer on spools

The printing head and base can move on all 3 axes

Thin layers of material are printed over each other

Tray extruded material is built up on base



WRAP AND WEFT



Creator of the 40 year-old iconic wrap dress, **Diane von Fürstenberg** is fashion royalty. And she writes candidly—and often movingly—about her remarkable journey in *The Woman I Wanted to Be* (Simon & Schuster). From her pride in her mother Liliane, a Holocaust survivor, to her relationship with her husband, TV and film mogul Barry Diller, and friendship with pop artist Andy Warhol, she shares fascinating nuggets from her life as well as her perspective on silver life. “Ageing means living. And if you live and you’re aged, it means you have a past and if you have lived it fully, then it’s okay,” says the designer, who has never had plastic surgery. “I don’t miss anything about being young. I am the way I am. The thing that makes me happy is I didn’t waste my time in my youth. The biggest advice I can give anyone is that the most important relationship you have is with yourself and then any other relationship is a plus, not a minus. You have to be non-delusional in order to like yourself but if you are straight to yourself, you will also be nice to yourself.”

Guy next door: Fan favourite Bill Murray is back on screen. In *St Vincent*, the 64 year-old plays a bawdy, hedonistic character who ends up playing caretaker to the new 12 year-old kid next door whose mother has to work long hours. The friendship between the boy and the crusty curmudgeon gives you a sense of déjà-vu—but the Murray magic remains untarnished by time.

CAREGIVER CONFIDENTIAL



CAREGIVER fatigue is a common syndrome—and no laughing matter. Yet, a sense of humour can go a long way in lightening the load, as author Pam Carey demonstrates in *Elderly Parents With All Their Marbles: A Survival Guide for the Kids* (Barking Cat Books). An excellent read

for spouses, children and extended family alike, it comprises 49 rules to bear in mind when caring for silvers—these range from handling dietary protests and modern-day maladjustments to romantic longings. “In the eight years I spent as a caregiver to my father, one of the most unex-

pected moments was when he announced he’d fallen in love with his home health aide,” she writes. “I handled my 93 year-old dad’s romantic aspirations by simply telling him the aide already had a boyfriend. And it actually turned out she did!” You can buy the book on www.amazon.co.in

Tiff's riff

Insanely likeable British stand-up comic, actor and writer **Tiff Stevenson** is making a documentary on “plastic surgery, ageing and the perception of women's faces”, as the BBC reports. Based on *Uncomfortably Numb*, a live show she performed in Edinburgh (and titled the same), the film will explore her own issues with her body image while growing up and the current worldwide obsession with staying young. “Sometimes I feel like beauty companies want us at war with our skin,” says the 36 year-old, who has long railed against what she calls ‘body fascism and social conditioning’. “Battle the bulge, blitz spots, fight wrinkles. It’s this apocalyptic battle and where will it all end? Probably with a Mel Gibson film or maybe with a documentary about reclaiming women’s faces made by me!” The film is expected to be out in 2015 on the film festival circuit.

A fine ROMANCE



This is what Technicolor dreams are made of. In romantic comedy *Elsa and Fred*, screen legends Shirley MacLaine, 80, and Christopher Plummer, 84, play two new neighbours who discover each other—and things about themselves they’d never known—against the backdrop of

New Orleans and Rome. “I think it’s a terrible blight on Hollywood that they don’t make more pictures for my generation,” MacLaine tells the *Wall Street Journal*. “Everything is for everybody from 12 to 19. I’d like to be the queen of AARP. I wanna do these kind of movies.” Thank you Shirley.

Snail's face

If you can get past the 'yuck' factor, British company Holland & Barrett promises you will look six years younger in just four weeks. **Snail slime is the key ingredient of its Dr Organic range of skincare products**, which comprises beauty gel, eye serum, face mask, face cream and hand and nail elixir. Other ingredients include aloe vera, jojoba oil and a host of proteins, antioxidants



and hyaluronic acid to remove dead cells, reduce inflammation and improve moisture retention. "Snail slime sounds like something you wouldn't want to put on your face, but you would be surprised," Martin Lightowers, marketing director, Dr Organic, tells London newspaper *Daily Mail*. "This is what snails secrete to regenerate themselves and their shells. When used on the face, it helps regenerate the skin cells." If the idea doesn't put you off, go to www.hollandandbarrett.com/shop/product/dr-organic-snail-gel; a 50-ml jar of beauty gel will set you back £ 19.99 (about ₹ 1,900), plus international shipping.



DERMA-DRAMA

Breakthrough!

Sometimes the research lab can yield a happy accident. While examining its role in heart attacks, researchers from the University of British Columbia in Canada stumbled upon the fact that the **human enzyme Granzyme B has the power to banish wrinkles**. As website *canada.com* tells us, in a study spanning 20 weeks, mice that lacked the enzyme aged significantly less than those with it who had it along with noticeably smoother skin and higher levels of collagen. "This is one of those moments that we live for in science," says lead researcher David Granville. "Granzyme B appears to interfere with the integrity of collagen and dismantle the scaffolding that binds cells together, resulting in structural weakness that we see on the surface as wrinkles." The researchers are now developing drugs that can block Granzyme B and hope to make them commercially available soon.

HOME-GROWN FORMULA

Here's a new frontier for an institution with a rich history of scholarship. Researchers at the Aligarh Muslim University claim to have developed a cost-effective anti-ageing cream with the use of nanotechnology. **The product is the brainchild of three scientists**

from the Department of Applied Physics, Dr Alim Naqvi, Dr Brij Raj Singh and Dr Wasir Khan. "Our product is made from natural substances readily available in India," Naqvi tells newspaper *DNA*. "The cost of making it would be half that of the products available in the market." Last year, the

department developed a formula to preserve fruits and vegetables at room temperature, which inspired the scientists. "We thought of making the formula work for the human skin," adds Singh. Once the product receives a patent, the university plans to put it on the mass market.



Get on your bike. A new study by King's College, London, and the University of Birmingham declares that cycling helps stave off the ageing process. Their study of 84 male and 41 female cycling enthusiasts aged 55 to 79 revealed that the participants had levels of physiological function comparable to a much younger age. "Cycling not only keeps you mentally alert but requires the vigorous use of many of the body's key systems, such as your muscles, heart and lungs, required for maintaining health and reducing the risks associated with numerous diseases," writes team leader Norman Lazarus in *The Journal of Physiology*.

Then: Plastic Bottles Now: Ottoman Seat

Is your house full of guests and not enough stools to seat all of them? Repurpose your waste plastic bottles and convert them into this fun ottoman seat. You'll need 10-15 plastic bottles, duct tape, a foam sheet, thin pillow and fabric of your choice, instant glue and a pair of scissors. To begin with, fasten bottles together using the duct tape (*see inset*) with as many pieces as necessary to create your ottoman. Once the pieces are ready you can choose the shape and join the pieces accordingly using the duct tape. Once this is done, cover the entire set with a thin sheet of foam and add a thin pillow on top to make it more comfortable. Finally, sew a cover on it using the fabric of your choice. Be creative and try to match your new ottoman with the decoration of your house!



RECYCLING FACTS

- In India, nearly 250,000 plastic bottles are dumped almost every hour. It is not surprising that plastic bottles constitute close to 50 per cent of recyclable waste in the dumps.
- When 1 tonne of plastic bottles is recycled, approximately 3.8 barrels of petroleum are saved.

MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...

1. CUT A PLASTIC BOTTLE IN HALF, PAINT IT IN A DESIRED COLOUR AND USE AS A PENCIL OR PEN HOLDER.
2. CONVERT AN OLD PLASTIC BOTTLE INTO A PLANT OR HERB CONTAINER BY CUTTING IT FROM THE HORIZONTAL TOP CENTRE.



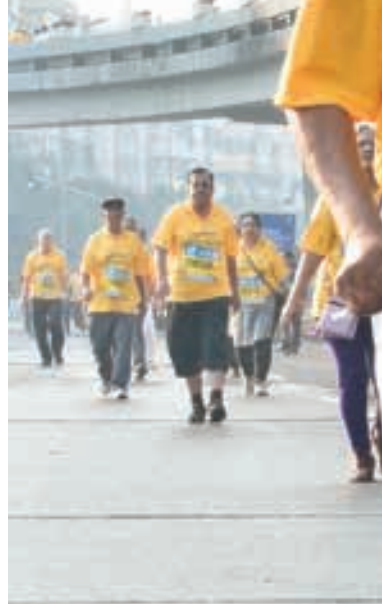
OUR RUN

Despite the chill wind whipping across Mumbai, our marquee at Azad Maidan on 18 January dazzled with silvers shining in their bright yellow T-shirts, ready to take part in the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon. Close to 1,650 silvers, flagged off at 8 am by Chairperson Tina Ambani and actors Ayushmann Khurrana and Gulshan Grover, moved forward strong and steady, with warmth, cheer and enthusiasm in their eyes. For some, the run was all about fun, for others it was pushing themselves to newer challenges. "It was an amazing experience; I look forward to this run every year. For the past four years, my husband has also been joining me. I was even awarded for encouraging others to participate," says Billis Patel, 63, who has been here for the past 10 years. For Mangala Pathak, 76, the run is another way to keep her health in check. "It gives me a lot of confidence," she says. "This year, despite my leg problem, I finished half the distance. I have been running since the year it started and I didn't want to miss it." We'll see them next year!



Photographs by Hareesh Patel and Dattaguru Redekar







BADLUCK?

This one may surprise you. According to scientists from the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Centre, **two-thirds of cancers in adults are just bad luck; the rest are owing to inherited genes and environmental factors.** The team created a statistical model that measures the proportion of cancer incidence across many tissue types. They found that all cancers are caused by a combination of bad luck, the environment and heredity. In their view, while lifestyle changes will help prevent certain cancers, they may not be as effective for a variety of others.

Cancer arises when tissue-specific stem cells make random mistakes, or mutations, when one chemical letter in DNA is incorrectly swapped for another during the replication process in cell division. They found that 22 cancer types could be largely explained by the 'bad luck' factor of random DNA mutations during cell division. The other nine cancer types had incidences higher than predicted by 'bad luck' and were presumably owing to a combination of bad luck plus environmental or inherited factors.

GENOMICS: THE PROMISE OF PRECISION CANCER TREATMENT

An understanding of the genetic profile of a specific tumour helps physicians better understand what caused the tumour and tailor treatment based on these findings:



Cancer patients today are treated according to their cancer type, stage and prior therapies



Research suggests that genetic changes in breast, colon and lung cancers link them to other cancers



Cancer patients often try out a few different lines of chemotherapy before the right combination is found



Clinicians now are starting to define what drives the cancer regardless of its location in the body

What is driving the shift?



A huge drop in the cost of sequencing an individual's genome. Sequencing an individual's genome cost \$ 10 million-\$ 50 million in 2003 but now is available for \$ 3,000-\$ 5,000



Increasing knowledge about the genetics of cancer. For example, many endometrial cancers have a gene mutation previously seen only in colon cancers



Efforts by pharmaceutical companies to target DNA defects that lead to cancer. More drugs are now packaged with genomic information that tells doctors to test their patients for genetic variants

**WORLD
CANCER
DAY**

How Genomic Testing works

For cancer in particular, tools can now test a tumour for sample of genetic mutations suspected of driving tumour growth. Here are the steps in genomic testing:



A sample of a patient's cancer tissue or biopsy of the patient's tumour is sent to a genomic sequencing lab



After extracting DNA from the sample, the normal genes and the genes linked to cancer growth are sequenced



The data is analysed to identify mutations critical to certain functions of the tumour



Doctors use the lab analysis to find a treatment that would be appropriate for the genetic variation identified

CYCLE OF RISK Researchers at the American Heart Association believe that women who have their first menstrual cycle younger than the age of 10 or older than 17 may be at higher risk of developing hypertension and heart disease or suffering a stroke. In fact, their study of data collected over 10 decades from 1.3 million women between the ages of 50 and 64 revealed that woman who had their first menstrual cycle at the age of 13 had the least risk of developing these conditions.



Dinodia Photo Library

REMEMBER THIS Older adults up to the age of 82 with a good heart and healthy lungs also have better recall and general cognitive capability, believe researchers at Boston University. Their study, which appears online in the *Journal of Gerontology*, examines the relationship between cardio respiratory fitness (CRF), memory and cognition in young and older adults. They compared 33 young adults (age 18-31) and 27 older adults (age 55-82) with a wide range of cardio respiratory levels. It was found that older adults with higher cardio respiratory levels performed as well as young adults and their better physical fitness was associated with improved executive function and long-term memory. They concluded that aerobic activities to enhance CRF (walking, cycling, dancing) are inexpensive, accessible and could potentially improve quality of life by delaying cognitive decline and prolonging independent function.



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BECAUSE I'M HAPPY

A positive attitude leads to happier bones and a healthy heart. That's the conclusion of two recent studies. The first, by the University of Eastern Finland, shows that long-term stress associated with depression can have detrimental effects on metabolism and, in consequence, bone health. The researchers observed that silvers in a healthier mental state had fewer traits of osteoporosis compared to those with low self-esteem and lack of interest. During a 10-year follow-up, the bone density of all study participants weakened by an average of 4 per cent; however, the difference between 'happy' silvers and the 'unsatisfied' was as much as 52 per cent. Changes in life satisfaction during the period also affected bone density. In people whose life satisfaction deteriorated, bone density weakened by 85 per cent in comparison to those whose life satisfaction improved.



In the second study, the American Heart Association found that people up to the age of 84 with a positive attitude were twice as likely to enjoy better cardiovascular health as those who didn't. People who were the most optimistic were 50 and 76 per cent more likely to have total health scores in the intermediate or ideal ranges, respectively. Optimists had significantly better blood sugar and total cholesterol levels than their counterparts. They were also more physically active, had healthier body mass indexes and were less likely to smoke, according to a paper on the study in the February 2015 issue of *Health Behaviour and Policy Review*.



Dinodia Photo Library

ADVANTAGE AVOCADO

An avocado a day helps keeps bad cholesterol away in the overweight and obese, according to new research published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. Researchers evaluated the effect avocados had on traditional and novel cardiovascular risk factors by replacing saturated fatty acids from an average American diet with unsaturated fatty acids from avocados. It was found that individuals between the ages of 21 and 70 on a moderate-fat diet who ate an avocado daily had lower bad cholesterol than those on a similar diet without avocado. Forty-five healthy, overweight or obese patients were put on three different cholesterol-lowering diets to arrive at the conclusion. Though avocados alone cannot control cholesterol level, if included in a daily diet with nutrient-rich food sources of better fats, they can certainly lead to a healthy heart. The researchers recommend replacing saturated fatty acids with monounsaturated fatty acids like extra-virgin olive oil and nuts or avocados to reduce the risk of heart disease. These are also believed to contain certain micronutrients and bioactive components that may play an important role in mitigating cardiac risk.

Whole benefits

Just one slice of wholegrain bread can significantly improve life expectancy, says a report published online by JAMA Internal Medicine. Conducted on 100,000 men and women, the study established that eating more whole grains was associated with 5 per cent lower total mortality and 9 per cent lower cardiovascular mortality.

10 health benefits of eating avocado



1

PROMOTES A HEALTHY BRAIN



2

PROMOTES A HEALTHY HEART RATE

3 **RICH IN FOLIC ACID**

4 **FOR A HEALTHY EYE**



5



MAINTAINS A HEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE



6

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY

7

HELPS MAINTAIN WATER BALANCE IN BODY

8

PROMOTES DIGESTION



9

ANTI-AGEING PROPERTIES

10

PREVENTS CANCER

COLD COMFORT OVER-THE-COUNTER FLU AND COLD MEDS ARE RISKY FOR SILVERS WITH HYPERTENSION, ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION. PEOPLE WITH MODERATELY ELEVATED OR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE SHOULD MONITOR WHICH PRODUCTS COULD CAUSE VARIATIONS IN BLOOD PRESSURE AND CONSULT A DOCTOR BEFORE POPPING A PILL.

Baccarose Perfumes & Beauty Products Ltd

BIG 92.7 FM

Dominos Pizza

Meril Life Science

OOH Division Hindustan Unilever

Procam International

Reliance Infrastructure

Reliance Communications

Special mention:

Ayushmann Khurrana, Gulshan Grover

harmony
celebrate age

thanks

**all those who supported the Senior Citizens' Run
at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2015!**



Standard Chartered
Mumbai Marathon
Jan 18, 2015

Visit us at www.harmonyindia.org



Sanjay Kurl

Armed to heal

Brig Dr M L Kataria believes his career actually began after retirement even though he boasts a spotless record while serving in the Indian Army. It was the doctor rather than the soldier in him, and his heart of gold, that steered him towards social service, earning the 96 year-old the National Award for Senior Citizens in 2014.

A resident of Chandigarh, Dr Kataria helms two non-governmental organisations—BCS Kataria Foundation and Healthcare India—and has been tirelessly serving people for 30 years. “After I retired from the Army in 1973, I worked as a surgeon for 10 years at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh and in Rohtak. But I wasn’t satisfied. I realised I was only providing treatment to patients and wasn’t addressing the other challenges people faced, like lack of healthcare facilities and illiteracy.”

Dr Kataria had an impressive resume that includes five postgraduate degrees in surgery, eye surgery, medical radiology, and hospital and health administration from various universities in India. Yet, he chose to follow his heart.

It is hard to sum up three decades of serving people, saving lives and changing destinies but that’s exactly what Dr Kataria has done. His NGOs currently operate 27 health centres, largely in slums and rural Chandigarh, and a primary school for 500 slum children. “I have always been driven by a phrase I came across in school, ‘Work is Worship.’ Work becomes worship if you don’t consider it work.”

Giving full credit to his wife Dr Sharda Kataria, he adds, “They say that ‘behind every successful man there’s a woman.’ I say that my wife was never behind me; instead, she took up all the challenges before me.” As vice-president of both NGOs, she takes care of the financial management of the health centres run by the NGOs. “I must also mention that my NRI brother has given me all the financial help I needed to set up the NGOs.”

Dr Kataria, who is also an avid poet, has been blessed with good health and still sees 50 to 60 patients at his health centres daily. “It is the passion to keep doing something for society that keeps me going even at this age.”

—Tejandeep Singh Kalra



Jackie Shroff



Deepti Naval



N L Balakrishnan



Rajan Devadas

BIRTHDAYS

Indian actor **Jackie Shroff** turned 58 on 1 February.

Indian filmmaker and actor **Deepti Naval** turned 58 on 3 February.

American singer, songwriter and actor **Natalie Cole** turned 65 on 6 February.

American actor and activist **Mia Farrow** turns 70 on 9 February.

Indian actor, anchor and radio presenter **Annu Kapoor** turns 59 on 20 February.

Indian film producer, director and screenwriter **Prakash Jha** turns 63 on 27 February.

IN PASSING

Malayalam film actor **Narayanan Lakshmi Balakrishnan** died after a prolonged illness on 25 December, at the age of 72.

Noted Hindi poet and litterateur **Nand Chaturvedi** died after a brief illness on 26 December, at the age of 91.

Acclaimed Indian-American photojournalist **Rajan Devadas** passed away following a cardiac arrest on 26 December. He was 93.

American country music singer **Little Jimmy Dickens** died on 2 January. He was 94.

Former ISRO chairman **V R Gowariker** died after a brief illness on 2 January, at the age of 82.

MILESTONES

➤ **FORMER PRIME MINISTER ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE** WAS CONFERRED WITH THE BHARAT RATNA, THE HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD OF THE COUNTRY, FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN POLITICS, ON 24 DECEMBER.

➤ **RBI GOVERNOR RAGHURAM RAJAN** WAS GIVEN THE GOVERNOR OF THE YEAR AWARD FOR 2015, FOR DEMONSTRATING STRONG LEADERSHIP DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW, ON 12 JANUARY.

➤ **EMINENT SANSKRIT SCHOLAR PRABHU NATH DWIVEDI** WAS AWARDED THE SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARD 2014 FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE ON 14 JANUARY.

OVERHEARD *British actor Julie Walters, 64, in an interview with Radio Times magazine*



"I didn't have a crisis at 60—I found it a relief and felt liberated by it. I thought I could legitimately give up work if I wanted to. I could have white hair. I thought, 'I can be who I am.' So I'm not about to go and have a facelift or anything. Mind you, there are times when I wonder what I would look like. Because that's what everyone has done and pretends they haven't, isn't it?"

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.

GROWING DREAMS

When I invite people to visit my 'sky farm', they are usually a little disappointed as I escort them upstairs and out onto my balcony. But what they see never fails to amaze them. This is a 150-sq-ft space where I have 15 lightweight aluminium pillars, each one with 40 pockets. In these small pockets, I grow tomatoes, cauliflower and aubergine. Under the green netting, there are water pipes along the beams that spray a fine mist of nutrient-enriched water at fixed times. My visitors find it hard to believe that these vegetables grow almost out of thin air!

I am 72 years old and I have only recently discovered the joys of growing vegetables on my balcony. I was born in Lahore but I grew up in Kolkata and worked in the badlands of Bihar's coal belt before I fled for my safety to

Bangalore because the coal mafia was chasing me. Never one to despair, I tried my hand at various ventures, including setting up India's first and largest electronic screen in Bangalore, which was destroyed for political reasons. I earned a patent for a reusable matchstick that could light up 20,000 times but that too did not work commercially. Finally, I set up a furniture manufacturing unit and worked hard to make it a success.

My house in Sarjapur is 'far from the madding crowd' and both my wife and I like it that way. While she works on getting the civic authorities to level the approach roads, I am happy pottering around in my 'vertical' vegetable garden.

How did I hit upon the idea of a sky farm? Well, on one of my trips to Thailand, I was fascinated with the vertical floral pillars at the airport, which seemed to reach up six

Bhasin gives a whole new dimension to rooftop gardening



Shyamola Khanna

floors. On close examination, I discovered I could replicate the idea at home. I read up a lot and the final clincher came from a NASA article that spoke of growing fresh vegetables on the Discovery spacecraft with the help of fresh air and nutrient-enriched water—a system called aeroponics.

Soon, I am hoping to grow 500 plants on the roof of my home. I am still tweaking the system but should iron out the glitches. The end product should be so easy and effective that people should say, 'If this senior citizen can do it, anyone can!'

Sometimes, people scoff at me because at 72, I want to become a manufacturer all over again. But the truth is, I don't want to sell my produce; I want to sell my aeroponics system because I want every rooftop in Bengaluru to have its own vegetable garden so no family has to depend on *bhajiwalli*. I have been approached by many vendors of organic vegetables, so I know there is a huge market for this system. Whatever surplus people have can be sold to these vendors who will, in turn, retail it. It's never too late to try something new.

—Devinder Bobo Bhasin, Bengaluru

TO SERVE WITH LOVE

I am 91 years old but age has not slowed me. I continue to be associated with International Hospital, a private hospital in Guwahati, of which I am also a promoter. Although I no longer practice medicine, I still get calls once in a while from neighbours and friends, whom I never refuse.

There were many influences in my life that steered me in the direction of saving lives. Among them were the tough times our family endured while I was growing up, which instilled in me a sense of compassion. I was born and raised in a small village in Upper Assam. I lost my father when I was just two years old. My mother struggled to make ends meet as she had seven children. As I had to work hard in our paddy fields and walk to the village market to sell goats, ducks, bananas, pineapples and other produce, I enrolled in school at the age of eight. But I soon proved my mettle and received a scholarship. Another strong influence in my life was the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, which I joined in high school. We would go from village to village and help construct roads and even houses for the poor; we dreamt of a great revolution.

I eventually chose medicine and graduated from Assam Medical College. I was then selected to serve in the Indian Army in 1953. My first posting was in Jammu & Kashmir, and my job not only involved treating *jawan* and officers but extending medical services to people in nearby villages. Over the years, it went on to involve a lot of administrative work and I even headed military hospitals in various plac-



Tapati Baruah Kashyap

Compassion is the greatest virtue for Col (retd) Dr Borgohain

es. Further, I served as director of medicine at the College of Combat in Mhow, near Indore.

After I retired from the Army, I was appointed director of health as well as secretary of health in Mizoram, which was then a Union Territory. Later, I was appointed medical superintendent of Gauhati Medical College Hospital for six years. Later, I served with Downtown Hospital, International Hospital and Brahmaputra Hospital, all reputed private hospitals in Guwahati.

In our day, doctors were regarded as demigods. Now, it's more about making money than saving lives. Doctors have become dependent on machines and electronic gadgets and cannot diagnose a patient with intuition and simple examination, as we did. Saving lives is a very special gift and when I brought wounded soldiers back from death's door against all odds in the snow-clad Himalaya, it was almost miraculous.

I have met many patients who have had to sell or mortgage ancestral land to undergo treatment. Many fall into debt traps. Providing free medicine to such patients has been so satisfying that I felt like I was working on behalf of God. Many patients did not have money to pay their bus fare to travel for treatment and giving them the fare was almost a duty for many doctors in our times. Rich or poor, every life is precious—that is the greatest lesson I have learnt.

—Col (retd) Dr Benudhor Borgohain, Guwahati

From spice to service

P S A SHUKKOOR, 63, MUNNAR

Twenty years ago, 'Munnar' was nothing more than an unfamiliar name on the labels of packed spices grown in Kerala. A far cry from the bustling tourist destination it now is, this beautiful region in Idukki district in Kerala was one of those back-of-beyond places whose only claim to fame lay in its abundant production of Indian spices.

I had no small part to play in the growth and expansion of Munnar's spice market. My father was a respected spice planter in Kanjirapally, my small but vibrant hometown in Kottayam district, Kerala. After I graduated from college, I joined the family's spice business, which was anchored in a huge plantation spread over 30 acre. It was a beautiful place and boasted winding hills and little rivulets but I realised that to expand the business, I had to move out and set up a bigger establishment.

I was determined to imprint our spices on every household in Kerala and perhaps even ensure visibility across the country. So I moved to Kochi and started the first retail consumer trade in packed spices in Kerala, under the brand name Estate Fresh. I poured my heart and soul into the venture and made it a roaring success.

But I wanted to do more and meandered into the tourist space, and now run four tourist resorts in Kerala. The idea came to me after many visits to Munnar with my family. It struck me that I could develop a homestay here, where other people could come, walk the hills, breathe the fresh air and relax. So I set up a homestay on land adjoining a

spice plantation and called it Tea Garden. It was an exciting experiment for me, a small step in the tourism scene of Munnar, which has since grown by leaps and bounds. It gave me immense satisfaction when our guests would thoroughly enjoy their stay here and leave with everlasting memories. So I decided to develop this charming place into a full-fledged eco-friendly resort so visitors could revel in the pristine beauty of the place.

The Rivulet Resort took four years to complete and we finally threw open our doors in 2013. It was the perfect spot to commune with nature and unwind amid the scenic countryside. Although I am proud to have piloted the project, I have the complete support and involvement of my sons and daughters-in-law who run the resort as well as my spice business, which recently ventured into manufacturing and marketing curry powders.

At the age of 63, I feel completely fulfilled as I meet, greet and make friends with our guests and work towards making my dreams come true. These dreams include two more hotels in Munnar, which will start operations soon, and a hotel in Kochi, which opened only recently.

I believe if one has a dream, one should go for it with sincerity and passion. I like meeting new people from different parts of the world and I enjoy the work I do. My family says I am a workaholic but if you do enjoy what you are doing, it's not really work! I don't think I can ever retire, God willing, as long as He gives me this life.

—As told to Shyamola Khanna



YOGA RX BY SHAMEEM AKTHAR



Wonder why you get those terrible pins and needles when you sit cross-legged or kneel for long? It is because the blood circulation is cut off to the legs and feet. According to yoga, when the blood is blocked this way, it has no choice but to move up the torso, so it flows to the stomach and, then, further up, if you sit long enough, to the brain, calming two highly volatile systems that otherwise do not rest, even while sleeping. Interestingly, those who practice the seated meditative poses in yoga do not suffer so much from the pins-and-needles effect.

AQUARIUS

20 January to 18 February

Quirky Aquarians are regarded as visionaries because their ideas are far ahead of their times. Their range of interests is very eclectic and their mind buzzes with projects on how to change the world and make it better. However, their high nervous energy makes them prone to problems of the mind. They are not natural worriers, but suffer from the habit of thinking too much, which indicates emotional problems, or those of the nervous system, including epilepsy. Though they normally have a strong constitution, they tend to have issues with bones, cardiovascular system (including heart problems) and the legs (particularly ankles).

Aquarians may indulge in activities that are physically challenging and exciting, but because of this they may not invest in an exclusive health-promoting workout. As they are mentally agile and young at heart, they are likely to not feel sick or suppress symptoms for long, further compounding the problem. Weight management, heart health and bone strength all need a regular and individualised exercise regimen.

Inversions are ideal for grounding a high-energy personality, especially simple ones like *viparita karani mudra*. To promote heart health, they can use poses like the shoulder pose (*kandharasana*), lying leg raises (*supta padangushtasana*), standing crescent (*ardha chandrasana*), angle (*konasana*) and palm tree (*tadasana*). Breathing practices (*pranayama*) like alternative nostril breathing (*anulom vilom*), victory breath (*ujjayi*) and humming bee (*brahmari*) are also healing and health-promoting. For bone health, downward-facing dog (*adhomukha svanasana*), plank pose (*setuasana*) and upward plank (*purvottanasana*) are recommended. Depending on individual capacity, more challenging poses like the cradle pose (*lolasana*) and other arm balancers may be attempted to bring a fun element into the yoga practice.

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 the advice given here)

Upward plank (purvottanasana)

You may have learn this pose in several stages and stay in each stage to gain strength. Sit on your hips, with palms placed beside hips. Legs may be bent at the knees initially. Keep the feet flat. Look ahead, inhale and lift the hips high up. The knees may remain bent. This is a preparatory pose for the more challenging actual plank pose. Continue with this stage till confident enough to move into the actual one. For that, you have to lift the hips high up and straighten the legs as



shown. Even now, you may keep the pressure on the heels. As you gain strength and flexibility, you may be able to fully flatten the feet. The final stage is when you can drop the neck back fully to look up, instead of looking ahead. Hold the pose for a few seconds. Exhale and lower the hips to break the pose.

Caution: Avoid if you have weak wrists. If you have a neck problem, do not drop the neck back but keep to the first stage, with eyes looking ahead.

Benefits: This pose powers and tones the body, lifts the spirit, boosts immunity and aligns the spine, rectifying postural defects.

Model: Shriram P Achrekar,
Harmony Interactive Centre
Photographer: Haresh Patel



Combat cancer: A diet rich in antioxidant and nutrients can keep the disease at bay

I am 60. Though I'm healthy today, I have a family history of cancer. What are the foods I need to consume and avoid to protect myself from the disease?

Whether you have a history of cancer in your family or currently battling the disease, lifestyle factors, including diet, can make a huge difference. Some foods actually increase your risk of cancer, while others support your body and strengthen your immune system. By making smart food choices, you can protect your health, feel better, and boost your ability to fight cancer and other diseases. Research shows that a large percentage of cancer-related deaths are directly linked to lifestyle choices such as smoking, drinking, lack of exercise, and an unhealthy diet. Avoiding cigarettes, limiting alcohol, reaching a healthy weight, and get-

ting regular exercise are a great start to preventing cancer. But to best support your health, you also need to look at your eating habits.

Focus on cancer-fighting fruits and vegetables with less fat and more fibre and nutrients that support your immune system. Fruits and vegetables are the best sources of antioxidants such as beta carotene, Vitamin C, Vitamin E and selenium. These protect against cancer and help the cells in your body function optimally.

Eating a diet high in fibre may help prevent colorectal cancer and other common digestive system cancers, including stomach, mouth and pharynx. Fibre plays a key role in keeping your digestive system clean and healthy. It helps keep food moving through your digestive tract and moves cancer-causing compounds out before they can create



Dinodia Photo Library

harm. Fibre is found in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. In general, the more natural and unprocessed the food, the higher it is in fibre. There is no fibre in meat, dairy, sugar, or 'white' foods like white bread, white rice, and pastries.

Cut down on meat consumption. Research shows that vegetarians are about 50 per cent less likely to develop cancer than those who eat meat. Meat lacks fibre and other nutrients shown to have cancer-protective properties. It has very high levels of saturated fats and high-fat diets have been linked to higher rates of cancer. You don't need to cut down meat completely and become a vegetarian but choose leaner meats such as fish, chicken or turkey. Avoid processed meats such as sausage, salami and hotdogs. Eat red meat only occasionally and keep the meat to a minimum in your diet to no more than 15 per cent of your total calories.

Eating a diet high in fat increases your risk for many types of cancer; there's no need to cut out fat entirely but choose your fats wisely and eat them in moderation. The two most damaging fats are saturated fats and trans fats. Saturated fats are found mainly in animal products such as red meat, whole milk dairy products and eggs. Trans fats, also called partially hydrogenated oils, are created by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid and less likely to spoil—which is very good for food manufacturers but very bad for you. Good fats are unsaturated fats that come from plant sources and are liquid at room temperature. Primary sources include olive oil, canola oil, nuts, and avocados. Also focus on omega-3 fatty acids that fight inflammation and support brain and heart health. Good sources include salmon, tuna and flaxseeds.

Choosing healthy food is not the only important factor. It also matters how you prepare and store your food. The way you cook your food can either help or hurt your anti-cancer efforts. When cooking vegetables, steam until just tender using a small amount of water. This preserves more of the vitamins. Overcooking vegetables removes many of the vitamins and minerals. If you do boil vegetables, use the cooking water in a soup or another dish to ensure you're getting all the vitamins. Flavour food with immune-boosting herbs and spices. Garlic, ginger and curry powder not only add flavour but offer a cancer-fighting punch of valuable nutrients. Other good choices include turmeric, basil and coriander. Use them in soups, salads, or any other dish.

Keep these points in mind and protect yourself from the disease:

- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day.
- Ensure you don't become obese.
- Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and pulses such as beans.

I am a 55 year-old woman. Suddenly, I have started developing skin discolouration with pigmentation on my face, hands and back. Can I reduce this condition with my diet?

Pigmentation could be caused by genetics, sun exposure, stress, hormonal changes during pregnancy or birth control pills, menopause, insulin resistance, injury or even frequent use of hair dye. Though it is harmless, it can be embarrassing at times. There are various treatments available but a good diet is the easiest way. A diet rich in vitamins and minerals can help; include fruits like kiwi, orange, papaya, strawberries and blackcurrants; foods like pumpkin, carrots, sweet potatoes, almonds, hazelnuts; healthy fats (avocados, nuts, fish, seeds); low GI carbohydrates (plenty of beans, pulses, porridge); omega 3 (oily fish and plant sources like flaxseed oil, linseeds, walnuts); selenium (brazil nuts, eggs, fish, tomatoes, broccoli); zinc (whole grains, poultry, nuts, seeds, shellfish); and phytoestrogens (soy, whole grains, vegetables). Stay away from crash diets as they are short on essential vitamins and nutrients, causing skin pigmentation. Drink at least six to eight glasses of water per day as it keeps the skin hydrated and prevents it from greying and ageing. Herbal and caffeine-free teas are good too. Avoid smoking and consumption of alcohol.

|||||

- Avoid sugary drinks and limit consumption of energy-dense foods high in fats and added sugars and low in fibre like fast foods as well as sodas and energy drinks.
- Limit consumption of red meat (beef, pork and lamb) and avoid processed meats.
- Limit alcoholic drinks to no more than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women.
- Limit consumption of salt and processed foods with added salt to ensure an intake of less than 2.4g sodium a day.
- Where possible, aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone instead of using supplements to try to protect against cancer.
- It is best for mothers to breastfeed for up to six months and then add other liquids and foods. Babies who are breastfed are less likely to be overweight as adults.

Namita Jain is a wellness specialist and celebrity nutritionist at Diet Mantra and has written bestsellers on diet and fitness. Visit www.dietmantra.in. If you have any questions for Namita Jain, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



Battle against cancer: The dreaded word is not an automatic death sentence

Cancer is the most feared diseases of mankind. However, certain cancers can be treated successfully in elders and a true cure—or at least a prolonged remission—can sometimes be achieved. Thus, a mere diagnosis of cancer does not necessarily imply a death sentence. Even if the cancer is advanced, most symptoms can be managed effectively, although it remains true that most silvers with advanced cancer will die from the disease.

Cancer is a disease of the older adult population, being relatively rare under the age of 35, and increasing in incidence with each decade. Currently, 60 per cent of all cancers and 70 per cent of all cancer deaths occur in people over 65 years of age.

Why are cancer rates higher among elders?

- **Longevity:** As a result of medical and biotechnological advancements, more people avoid death from infections and vascular events and hence live long to catch cancer.
- **Environmental susceptibility:** Increased longevity results in longer cumulative exposure to environmental carcinogens.
- **Cellular alterations:** Ageing affects the process of cell replication, which increases the chance of malignant change among the body cells.

Common tumours among male silvers are carcinoma of the prostate, lung, head and neck, oesophagus, colon, lymphoma and leukaemia. Among women, common carcinomas are of the breast, cervix, head and neck, oesophagus, ovary, endometrium, thyroid and lymphoma.

Symptoms

Cancer symptoms depend on the organ affected. For instance, change of voice in case of throat cancer, lump in breast cancer, haematuria (blood in urine) in bladder cancer, or rectal bleeding in colon cancer.

Symptoms may be owing to direct pressure of tumour on the organ, affecting its functions or the spread of the disease to different parts of the body (metastasis). Sometimes, cancer may be found incidentally, e.g. a mass on a routine x-ray.

Warning symptoms

Warning signs of cancer are often vague, particularly in the early stages. Many symptoms of cancer can be caused by other conditions also. Nonetheless, even vague symptoms may provide an early warning—and early diagnosis means a better chance of a cure.

- Weight loss without apparent cause
- Change in bowel or bladder habits
- A sore that does not heal
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- Thickening or a lump in the breast or elsewhere
- Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
- Obvious change in wart or mole
- Continuous fever
- Nagging cough or change of voice

Warning signs of cancer are often vague, particularly in the early stages

Screening

Doctors are able to treat cancer best when found early. However, in early stages, cancer rarely causes symptoms, making it difficult to detect cancer early. Regular screening can facilitate early diagnosis. In general, doctors recommend that older people get screened for several types of cancer. For some cancers, such as those of the breast and colon, screening has proven to reduce the risk of death.

However, screening is not as beneficial for all cancers, and experts have mixed opinions on which people would benefit best from screening tests. For example, many experts agree that older men should have regular rectal examinations to test for prostate and rectal cancer.

The prostatic-specific antigen (PSA) blood test has to be done periodically to diagnose prostatic cancer. But the test is controversial. Usually, the PSA level in the blood is elevated in men with prostate cancer, but the PSA level

can also be high in men with a noncancerous condition called benign prostatic hyperplasia and, sometimes, it may be normal in men with prostate cancer.

Moreover, screening may not reduce the risk of elders dying from prostate cancer.

The type of screening test varies, depending on the cancer.

- To check for colon cancer, a person can collect small samples of stool on special cards, which are then sent to a healthcare practitioner and analysed for the presence of blood.
- A woman may be able to detect breast cancer at an early stage by self-examining her breasts monthly. In case of silvers, breast examination by a doctor and mammography are needed once in three years.
- To detect cervical cancer, a pap smear should be done once in five years.

Cancer treatment

The main avenues of treatment for cancer are surgery, radiation therapy and drugs (chemotherapy). Surgery is used when possible to completely remove the cancer or partially remove ('de-bulk') it. Radiation therapy is directed at a tumour to destroy it or reduce its size.

Chemotherapy involves drugs that kill cancer cells. However, chemotherapy will always kill some normal cells as well, and the drugs often cause side-effects that can make people very ill. Having other associated diseases can complicate cancer treatment. For example, heart failure or impaired kidney function may limit the choices and dosage of chemotherapy drugs.



survive

SURVIVAL RATES IN INDIA ARE QUITE LOW FOR MOST TYPES OF CANCER, LESS THAN HALF OF THE ADVANCED COUNTRIES



For stomach cancer, survival rates are just 19% compared to 25-30% in most countries



Survival rate for colon cancer is 37% while it is 50-59% in most countries



Only 4% of liver cancer patients survive for five years compared to 10-20% elsewhere



Only about 60% of Indian patients survive breast and prostate cancers



Ovarian cancer survival rates have declined 23% in 1995-99 to 14% in 2005-09



Cervical cancer survival rates are 46% compared to the global figure of 50%, but there is a slight decline from 47% in 2005

Source: Lancet

Preventing cancer

Cancer can be prevented, provided safety measures are taken from middle age itself. That is around the age of 40-50 years.

- Smoking or chewing tobacco should be totally avoided to prevent lung cancer.
- Avoid alcohol to prevent liver cancer.
- Snuffing tobacco powder should also be avoided to prevent nose, throat and lung cancer.
- A fatty diet should be avoided to prevent breast cancer.
- A high-fibre diet will prevent colonic cancer.
- Avoid too much sun exposure to prevent skin cancer.
- Regular exercise may prevent cancer. A study conducted in the US found that the incidence of breast and uterus cancer was considerably low among women with an exercise regimen.
- Keep weight under control. Some types of cancer appear to be closely linked to obesity such as cancers of the breast (in women who have been through menopause), colon and rectum, uterine and kidney.
- Certain cancers can be prevented by immunisation. Talk to your doctor about immunisation against hepatitis B, which can increase the risk of developing liver cancer. Vaccine to prevent cervical cancer has to be given during adolescent years before the first sexual exposure.
- Get regular medical care. Regular self-exams and screenings for various types of cancers can increase the chances of early diagnosis, and hence treatment is most likely to be successful.

Padma Shri Dr V S Natarajan, a specialist in the field of geriatric medicine, runs Memory Clinic, a service for silvers in Chennai. If you have a question for him, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



HIS LADLE LOVE BY PRATIBHA JAIN

Sattvik sensibility

NARAYANAN RAO • SALEM

An engaging series about silver men who wield a deft ladle in the kitchen

A meeting with 60 year-old Narayan-an Rao and his family was an insight into how India's spiritual heritage has been nurtured by devotees across eons. As a family, they have dedicated their life to preserving their religious traditions. Religion to them seems to be a way of life and, oblivious of globalisation and changing times, this family seems to live by their own stringent rules.

For me, this was a challenging interview because when one's religiosity is so deeply embedded in tradition, questions about modernity and changing times become superfluous. Even though Narayanaji's children have travelled in pursuit of higher studies, their value systems and way of life are rooted in their religious upbringing. He speaks chaste Tamil and was patient with my broken sentences, willing to repeat his answers as well as allow his brothers to explain the details in layman's terms for my understanding.

Namaste Narayanaji, tell me about your origins.

We are Madhva Brahmins who are originally from North Karnataka. Our main deity is Raghavendra Mrittika Brindavana. Five centuries ago, our ancestors moved to Salem and the following generations have accepted this city as home.

What was their occupation?

My father S T Ramachandhar Rao was in the catering business. My grandfa-

ther was a teacher but he became a head cook later. Our family members have also always trained to become priests. Religion is the prime aspect of our life. We have always taken care of our temples and spent time studying the scriptures.

"In the next generation, we have bankers and software engineers, but when they come home, they all follow the rules.... We don't encourage eating out as food is greatly connected with our thoughts and desires"

Does that still continue?

Yes, we recently built a temple nearby, popularly known as the Kannankurichi Raghavendra temple. We take care of the temple completely, from maintaining it and preparing the *prasadam* to conducting the *puja*. And I would like you to know that we carried the deity from Mantralayam.

You carried the deity all the way? Tell me more.

The *mrithika* [deity] of this temple is from Mantralayam, which is around 1,000 km from Salem. As a family, we walked this entire distance carrying

the deity. It took us almost 12 days to complete the journey.

Did you follow any rituals during the journey?

Yes, we would begin the day with a *puja* in the early hours of the morning. We would then start walking at 5 am. At around 10 am, we would stop at a spot where a natural water source was available. We would then perform the main *puja* and make the offering, known as *asthotaka*, to the deity. After lunch, we would rest for an hour. At around 3.30 pm, we would begin to walk again and continue till 9 pm. Any one of us would carry the deity for a kilometre before handing it over to another.

How did you manage such an arduous journey?

The enthusiasm was really high and the rituals bound us all together. A couple of people travelled in vehicles and they would go ahead and search for the spots where we could stay in the afternoons and nights. Any clean place, preferably temples, is ideal for this. Cooking vessels and other necessities are carried in the vehicles. This was the routine we followed throughout the journey.

What is the special celebration in this temple?

During the month of August, an annual celebration known as Aaradhana Mahotsava is celebrated for three days. This event takes place in every Raghavendra Brindavana across the world. On this occasion, our trust undertakes all important tasks such as *abhishekam* [bathing the deity] and *archanai* [worshipping the deity]. We also take care of the *annadana* [offering of food] for all the devotees who visit the temple. This event attracts over 1,000 people from far and wide.



Chennai Pix

Do you follow a strict lifestyle and undertake religious fasts?

Yes, the routines are fairly fixed. Waking up early is a must. *Puja* and fasts are part of our life. From the age of 18, I was expected to undertake fasts. On the day of Ekadasi, the entire family is expected to fast. It is quite rigorous, almost like your Jain fasting. We

are not even allowed to swallow spit on that day.

I understand that you are also in the catering business?

Yes, we are eight brothers of which five of us are in the catering business for the past seven years. My brother Gokul is an independent caterer while

the other four work along with me. Our catering company is known as Narayana Rao Brothers.

Do you like cooking?

Yes, but my brother Gokul is a better cook than me. He also caters at a bigger level. At a recent celebration at the Kumbakonam temple, he undertook a catering order overnight and cooked for 2 lakh people.

Do you travel as a family?

As a family we go on pilgrimages, and visiting holy places is important to us. Most of our life's activities revolve around spirituality.

What about your children? I am sure the impact of globalisation must have had its impact on them, however strong their *samskara* may be!

The children follow the systems quite strictly. I have two sons and one daughter. Once the boys get married, the daughters-in-law are expected to do the same, which they comply with.

Has the next generation branched into different professions?

Yes, education is important. In the next generation, we have bankers and software engineers, but when they come home, they all follow the rules. They wake up in the morning and do their prayers. All this is part of their upbringing. You may be surprised to note that none of them have travelled abroad even for education. That is considered *nishiddha*, meaning banned.

What about eating out?

Not really! We don't encourage that as food is greatly connected with our thoughts and desires. It is important to ensure that our food is *sattvik*. Most places have our Raghavendra *madam*, so we stay and eat over there when we travel.

BISI BELE BAATH

Food is a dynamic force that acts on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels. Narayanaji believes *sattvik* food nourishes not just the body, but the mind and soul. When I asked him to share his favourite recipe, his family unanimously echoed: *Bisi*

bele baath! An authentic rice and dal dish from Karnataka, this is a popular preparation during celebrations, and Narayanaji was quite willing to share his prized recipe with us.

Ingredients

- Uncooked rice: 1 cup
- Tur dal: 1 cup
- Peanuts: ¼ cup
- Turmeric powder: ¼ tsp
- Thick tamarind pulp: 3 tbsp
- Dry coconut (*kopra*): 1 tbsp
- Jaggery: 1 tsp
- Cashew nuts: 10-15; chopped into bits
- Refined oil (preferably sesame oil): ¼ cup



- Ghee: for serving
- Salt to taste

The masala

- Coriander seeds: 2 tsp
- Fenugreek seeds: ½ tsp
- Poppy seeds (*khus khus*): 1 tsp
- Red chillies (round): 8-10; stalks removed

- Cinnamon and clove: 1 each
- Coconut: ½, grated
- Curry leaves: a few sprigs

The tempering

- Mustard seeds: 1 tsp
- Asafoetida powder: ½ tsp
- Coriander powder: 1 tbsp
- Chilli powder: 1 tsp

Method

Pressure-cook the *tur dal* and peanuts in 3 cups of water along with turmeric powder and 1 tbsp oil. Now, add the rice and continue to cook. Alongside, prepare the masala. Heat 1 tsp oil in a pan, lower the flame and roast the coriander seeds, fenugreek seeds, *khus khus*, red chillies, cinnamon and clove for 3-4 minutes. As the aroma rises, add the grated coconut and roast for 4-5 minutes. Add the curry leaves and roast for a couple of minutes. Grind these roasted ingredients using very little water into a fine paste. Set aside.

When the rice is fully cooked, add the tamarind pulp and cook for a few minutes. Add the masala and salt and continue to cook until the raw smell disappears. Add the jaggery. For the tempering, heat the remaining oil in a small pan. Add the asafoetida powder and switch off the flame. Add the coriander powder and chilli powder and immediately pour this tempering over the *bisi bele baath*. Add the *kopra*, mix gently and switch off the flame. Roast the cashew nuts in 1 tsp oil until golden and garnish the *bisi bele baath*. While serving, add a warm dollop of ghee. Serve fried *appalam* or *vadam* as accompaniments.

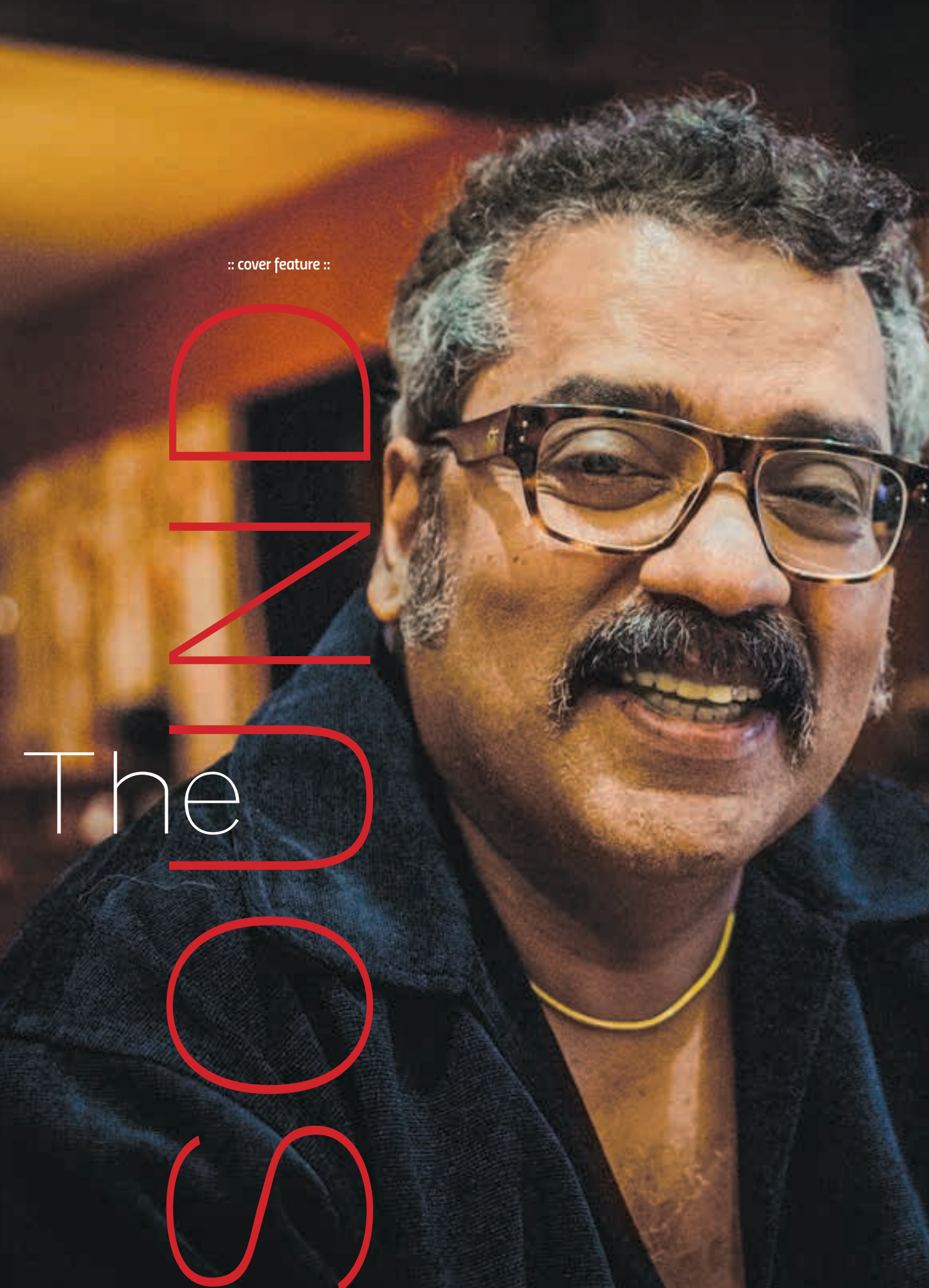
Narayanaji says that this dish is traditionally prepared without any vegetables. However, you can add chopped vegetables of your choice such as bottle gourd, beans, carrots, potatoes and onions. He explained that if you add the vegetables, the dish must be consumed that very day. Otherwise, it stays good in the refrigerator even up to a week.

Pratibha Jain, an author and translator from Chennai, is the co-author of two award-winning books Cooking at Home with Pedatha and Sukham Ayu. Her area of specialisation is documenting Indian traditions through research, translation and writing

Yamini V

:: cover feature ::

THE DO S



Born	3 April 1955 (age 59) Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India
Occupation	Singer
Years active	1977–present
Associated acts	Colonial Cousins, <i>Lahore Ke Rang Hari Ke Sang</i>



OF MUSIC

Reinvention is the key to survival, according to music maestro Hariharan. He shares his success mantra—and story—with Neeti Vijaykumar



He can bring alive emotionally vivid *ghazal*, create magic in Sufi *kalam*, and effortlessly sync with strumming guitars and electronic music. For Hariharan, one of the pioneers of Indian fusion music, a genre is but a label; music is free of boundaries, open to diverse elements and styles—that's his metaphor for life. And diversification is intrinsic to him, whether it's creating new musical genres, singing in myriad languages or acting in films.

Born in Thiruvananthapuram to renowned Carnatic vocalists Alamelu Mani and the late H A S Mani, Hariharan was raised in the cultural melting pot that is Mumbai. He graduated in chemistry and zoology and then studied law, but it was music that captured his heart. He started his musical journey with *ghazal*, his "first love". His exceptionally calm and soothing rendition of Urdu songs brought him to the notice of music composers Jaidev and A R Rahman. After chartbusters such as his debut *Ajeeb saneha mujh par guzar gaya* from *Gaman* (1978), *Thamizha thamizha* from *Roja* (1992) and *Uyire uyire* from *Bombay* (1995), there was no looking back. His film music repertoire includes nearly 500 songs in Tamil, 200 in Hindi and many in Marathi, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada. The Padma Shri winner continued cutting *ghazal* albums while working on collaborations such as Colonial Cousins with Leslie Lewis and a Lahore-based *ghazal* album, *Lahore Ke Rang Hari Ke Sang* (2005) with Pakistani music composers Wazir Afzal, Nazar Hussain and Qadir Shaggan.

"The feel of newer kinds of music has always driven me," says the 59 year-old singer, who has been busy with album releases and concerts of late. During a recent tour of the US, he released *Hazir 2*, rekindling a collaboration with Zakir Hussain after nearly 20 years. "I'm also working on a Sufi album with a lot of modern arrangement," he shares, adding, "There really isn't such a thing as Sufi music, only *kalam*, which can be sung or recited in any manner." It's just another day at work for him in his studio, his personal space for experimentation for decades. Following in his footsteps is eldest son Akshay, also bitten by the experimental bug. Akshay's debut album, for which Hariharan has also lent his voice, is an electronic fusion of Indian classical elements. Besides this, the father-son duo has worked together on the anthem for the National Games 2015, currently underway in Kerala. Hariharan's future agenda includes taking music to Generation Next by launching a music academy. "There are many young kids who are really good singers," he says. "Our aim would be to nurture them."

We settle down for a chat with Hariharan at his home in Powai, Mumbai, where he lives with wife Lalitha, sons Akshay and Karan, and pets, a German shepherd and a husky. The family bonds over music, food, and football. Hariharan's warm and endearing personality, coupled with wit and a laidback, calm approach to life, makes it a pleasure to converse with him. With a break for authentic South Indian filter coffee and biscuits, we chat about a range of topics from the music industry to real estate in Mumbai, until his dogs demand his attention.

Excerpts from the interview

You were born into a family of musicians; did you ever think about doing something else?

I never learnt music or started singing because I wanted to be a professional singer; that was never the agenda. It was just a way of life. In my house everybody sings: my father, mother, aunts, uncles, and mostly everyone from my maternal side sing and perform. During my childhood, we used to indulge in either music or food [smiles]. Every evening, we would get together, learn something new and sing it; it was always an element of life. When I went to school or college, I sang there; it was all natural—a gradual assimilation of knowledge over the years. It was more about learning new things and experimenting with the voice.

How and when did you fall in love with *ghazal*?

When I was around 17 years old, I went to Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan to study *ghazal* and Urdu. I learnt the nuances from him, especially *Khayal*. *Khayal* singing is the mother of Hindustani music; if you know *Khayal*, you can use that *gayaki* [technique] in other formats. In 1975, I heard Mehdi Hassan, and that blew me away. I was like, 'Wow, what an incredible guy!' So that's where the craving to know more about this genre came up.

Besides *ghazal*, you have rendered Sufi, pop music and film songs. When did you want to start diversifying?

It was never about *when* I wanted to. For instance, going back to my childhood, there was always Carnatic music at home, there was Vaidh Bharati that played film music, and when I sang in school it was in English; during our times it was all Beatles and Woodstock. When I sang, I didn't realise that the songs were from different genres. In fact, it was only later that I understood that most Hindi film songs were actually *ghazal*. For the same reason, Co-



With wife Lalitha and sons Akshay and Karan



"I think all artists have the choice to either be purely of one genre or mix and match. But, when you experiment, you have to be sure that you yourself like it. That's why I take a long time to do an album"

lonial Cousins also was a mix of many styles. When any kind of harmony chord would play, I would do an *aalap* or *sargam*, as that harmony would trigger something. As I said, it was the assimilation of knowledge. So when the opportunities came, diversification seemed right. The thought process was always, "*Chalo yeh kartein hain; chalo woh karte hein.*"

What were your major turning points, career-wise?

The turning points are quite a few. If I look back now, I'd say it was from 1990 that my career got moving. I started my career in 1977. I used to release *ghazal* albums every year. I also used to sing in films in the '80s. However, things started picking up pace only after my albums *Reflections* (1987) and *Gulfam* (1994) clicked in a major way. Simultaneously, I worked on *Hazir* (1992) with Zakir Hussain, and then came *Roja* in '92. After that, the buzz started even in the South. In '94, *Gulfam* was one of my first albums with a video. Then, by '96 I was collaborating with Leslie Lewis on *Colonial Cousins*. So my voice could be heard and experienced in different genres.

Who are the people who helped shape your success?

First, my mother; she inspires me even today. She's 80 now and still performs on stage. Then, of course, my guru Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan and my early inspiration Mehdi Hassan. It was music director Jaidevji who first gave me a break in films. He was my friend, philosopher and guide. Getting the right person to direct you in the right way is very important, otherwise you lose many years finding your way.

You've created a new genre, Urdu Blues.

Well, I just stumbled upon it. We were experimenting with the song *Ye aaine se* in *Kaash* (2000) and it turned out quite bluesy. That's how I thought of calling it Urdu Blues. I've done one in *Hazir*, and then there's an album called *Waqt Par Bolna* (2007).

A section of listeners feel *ghazal* should not be tampered with. Have you faced any criticism?

[Shrugs] Well, I don't know. There are people who ask "Arre, yeh kyun karte ho?" I tell them that I have to do this to appeal to myself [chuckles]. I think all artists have that choice. You can either be purely of one genre, or you can mix and match. My mother, for instance, is a purist. But, yes, when you experiment, you have to be sure that you yourself like it. That's why I take a long time to do an album. *Waqt Par Bolna* took me two years to complete. Sometimes you make something and then discard it because it doesn't appeal to you. You can't do fusion just because you want to be different.

You have worked with A R Rahman. How has the experience been?

Working with him is always wonderful. He's a very talented musician and great as a person too. What I like about him is that when he gives you a song, he gives you the space to absorb it and interpret it the way you want, but with the vital musical movements he has created. He's a brilliant producer because he makes it the artist's



Civilian Award
2004 Padma Shri

National Film Awards

1998 National Film Award
for Best Male Playback Singer:
Mere Dushman, Border

2009 National Film Award for
Best Male Playback Singer: *Jeev*
Dangla Gungla Rangla, Jogwa

Kerala State Film Award

2011 Kerala State Film
Award for Best Singer: *Pattu*
Paaduvaan, Pattinte Palazhi;
music by Dr Suresh Manimala

Tamil Nadu State Film Awards

2004 Best Male Playback
Singer for various films

1995 Best Male Playback
Singer: *Koncha Naal, Aasai*

Filmfare Awards - South

2011 Best Male Playback
Singer: *Aaro Padunnu,*
Katha Thudarunnu

song. I would say that he has used my voice very well. He used to listen to me as a *ghazal* fan much before we started working together. There was a meeting point, and so we were at ease working with each other.

How did Colonial Cousins come about?

I used to do jingles for Leslie Lewis a lot in the late 1980s and early '90s. As we had a lot of free time, he would play his guitar and I would sing with him, creating a different kind of music. We got together and made a demo. It was quite difficult to explain what exactly our music was and where we were heading. And Leslie, being the brilliant producer he is, suggested we do it in a song format. Then the lyrics happened, and the rest is history!

Are you going to collaborate with Leslie Lewis on more albums?

Yes. Our last album was in 2012, called *Once More*. Unfortunately, albums are no longer promoted by the media. FM radio stations don't play them, music channels don't air them, and there's a total blanket ban on non-film music. A lot of people don't even get to know when an album is out. It's disheartening to see



that after you compose and produce an album, there's no way of reaching out to a wider audience.

Is it a similar situation with *ghazal*?

I put my *ghazal* albums on the Internet. I have a fan base that follows my work keenly. I also do a lot of shows and concerts and put my albums on sale there too. But, of course, when the creative urge comes calling, there's nothing else you can do but create!

Today, almost all songs are available for download on the Internet for free.

It's appalling that music is absolutely free on the Net. That's one of the reasons why the music industry is stunted. Moreover, film music has become the staple diet. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with film music, but that's not the only kind of music that's out there. I don't understand why nobody propagates other kinds of music. Fine, it doesn't sell as much as film music, but there still has to be a market for other kinds of music.

Tell us about the academy you plan to start.

Well, there are a lot of people who want to learn from me; it's not that I'll be able to teach all of them, but the gurus who will teach in the academy will be handpicked by me. The academy will take off this year. I plan to first start the academy in Powai and see how it goes before branching out.

Does ageing affect the vocal chords? How do older people continue singing without any change in their voice?

First, if the technique of singing you use is perfect, the vocal chords do not age. You have to know where to use your chest voice or where to sing from the throat. Basically, you never use your throat to sing. The vocal chords are very delicate; they're like reeds of a harmony, which are subjected to outflow of air from your lungs, to which it vibrates. So the pressure has to be from the lungs. You can't pressurise the muscles around the vocal chords as it might cause wear and tear. Second, our priority is to maintain good health, because any complication will show in the voice. If your lungs are weak or you have any problem with your health, there's this



"It's appalling that music is absolutely free on the Net. Moreover, film music has become the staple diet. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with film music, but that's not the only kind of music that's out there"

discomfort that shows in your voice. Of course, ageing does affect the timbre of the voice, but you can still sing.

How do you spend your time?

Besides my tours and concerts, I also spend time in my studio, where I keep experimenting and making albums. I propose to cut at least one album every year...till I can do it right [chuckles]. I go on a lot of tours and do a lot of live shows, *ghazal* shows, even Colonial Cousins shows. Touring takes up at least 10 to 12 days a month, and the rest of the time I'm in the studio.

What do you do when you're not working on music?

I like to travel and watch a lot of films. I have a farmhouse in Karjat, where I spend time to unwind and let the creative juices flow. Sometimes I also go to the South. We are a family of dog lovers; they take up a lot of our time.

Is everyone in your family musically inclined?

Yes, everybody! My wife, Lalitha, loves listening to music, and she produces some of my shows such as Soul India. My eldest son Akshay is a music producer, while my other son Karan is an actor. He's a member of an acting school from LA and also plays the piano.

Can you tell us about the album on which you are collaborating with Akshay?

He is into electronic music and the album he's working on is a fusion between electronic music and Indian classical, with artists such as U Srinivasan, flautist Ashwin Srinivasan and many tabla artists featuring. Though it's in the electronic genre, it gives a platform to Indian classical expressions.

Does Akshay's work inspire you to explore new genres?

Of course, I've always been thriving on pushing my limits. After 35 to 40 years in the music industry, if you don't do anything new, it's difficult to survive. As for me, I get bored quite easily [laughs]. So I have to keep reinventing and pushing the envelope further.



Like father, like son

Much like his father, Akshay Hariharan promises a brand new fusion sound. His soon-to-be-released album fuses electronica with Indian classical music. The 28 year-old already has a Marathi film, *Kokanastha* (2013), to his credit. Married to interior designer Amrita Parekh, Akshay tells us more about his upcoming album and the unwavering friendship he shares with his father.

Dad and I are more like friends. I have a lot of respect and admiration for him, but it doesn't have to be overly apparent. Work or not, we chill out together. He has always moved with the times. I share ideas with him. Even if it's not his genre of music, he's always willing to listen and give feedback. I accompany Dad on tours as well.

I enjoy listening to Dad's *ghazal*. His career has deeply influenced mine. Also,

as an artist, I admire his perfectionist streak. I think that's rare in today's times when most of the music is adulterated. He has worked really hard to be where he is today.

I've not always been into music. I'm an economics graduate from the London School of Economics. I've always had a passion for music; I learnt vocals from Dad in childhood, and learnt guitar and other instruments in school. I never thought I would get into it professionally until I was about 22 years old, which is when I decided to seriously pursue music. Predominantly, I used to do [music] programming and started taking piano lessons. When I played a couple of tracks to Dad, he felt I could manage composing or producing tracks.

The album I'm working on right now is very contemporary and different. I'm trying to venture into the different genres

of electronic music, such as psy-trance, dark house, dubstep, drum 'n' bass and so on. Along with Dad, I've tried to blend in some hardcore *bol* and *sargam* into this music. For instance, this album has a very dark flute track and a tabla-based track. Even Dad's tracks are quite abstract; there is the whole *mukhda* and *antara*, but it's not how it usually is. So it's a bit of Hindustani, Carnatic, and different forms of electronic. I'm in the last stages of production. I hope to go live with it at music festivals too.

In my head, there are a hundred things playing, and that's why I think I'm more of a composer, programmer and producer than singer. I sit in all the stages of music production, from ideation till post-production. I've learnt singing, and I think I know the mechanics of singing, but I'm not much into singing. I think a singer's music has to be in his voice, but my music is in my head. Dad always keeps humming or singing to himself, even my brother. They are more vocal with their music. But I have done my share of singing or learning the piano and guitar; when I do my live set-up shows, I will incorporate those elements as well. I'll leave the singing to Dad, however!

I don't think there is any scope for comparison yet. I've worked on a Marathi film, *Kokanastha*, directed by Mahesh Manjrekar, which has been the only work of mine that has released. It was a mix of trance, classical and folk music. I've not yet faced any comparison with Dad. I've also worked on a Bollywood film, *Black Home*, which is yet to be released. I'm sure once that and my album release, there will be comparisons. But that's fine with me. 🌸

Darius and Kynan Chenai
Shooters HYDERABAD

“Shooting has cemented our relationship in a way that watching TV together or playing video games together would not have”

{ bonds } dear dad

One of the joys of fatherhood, they say, is looking forward to the day when you will be able to play catch with your little boy. That, of course, is a metaphor for a shared love, a passion that will keep you together when you might otherwise have drifted apart. As little boys turn into men and raise families of their own, these passions bridge the gaps between father and son. What would have been fleeting visits turn into afternoons looking through a camera lens, building model planes, or tinkering with car engines. For some, the passion turns into a lifestyle, with days spent baking or teaching and performing Kathak. We take a look at father-son duos who have turned their ‘game of catch’ into full-fledged hobbies, passions and a way of life



Darius and Kynan Chenai are both national-level shooters from Hyderabad. But the 24 year-old Kynan wants more—he looks forward to making a mark at the Olympics! Although Darius, now 52, was the national trap shooting champion in 2009, he never played professionally. But he introduced



Anand Kumar Soma

Kynan to the sport at the age of 10. By the time Kynan was in Grade XI, he was already participating in national and international tournaments and was the national junior champ six times in a row. Father and son go to the shooting ranges together, travel overseas for international coaching and discuss strategy frequently. "It is

great fun when we travel together," says Darius. "Last year, we were in Spain and China, where Kynan was shooting for the championships, and both of us thoroughly enjoyed it." They also share a love for the outdoors and go camping and fishing together and have a passion for cars. "Shooting has cemented our relationship in a way that

watching TV together or playing video games together would not have," adds Kynan. "Sharing my highs and lows with Dad has given our relationship a special strength. Shooting is a very individual sport and one cannot share one's secrets with others. But I can do that with my father."

—Shyamola Khanna

Samir and Malay Pathak
Automobile enthusiasts AHMEDABAD



Samir Pathak

“My father is more a friend to me than a father. Watching him tinkering with cars since I was a child rubbed off on me”

Seated in Autobahn, his auto workshop off the highway in Ahmedabad, 62 year-old Samir Pathak chuckles, “I am not a typical father.” His son Malay, mechanical engineer, emerges from the depths of the workshop. Looking fondly at his dad, the 38 year-old adds, “My father is more a friend to me than a father. Watching him tinkering with cars since I was a child rubbed off on me.” Samir set up Autobahn in 2002, after calling it

quits at the WIAA-Castrol Institute of Motoring, an agency he set up himself. Besides toiling together at their workshop, the father-son duo also runs a training institute called Centre for Advanced Training in Driving. Leaving their work behind, Samir and Malay also love taking road trips together. “We recently drove to Rajkot and before that to Mumbai,” says Samir. “I now avoid long trips on the Harley but we often ride to Mehsana

in north Gujarat on early morning trips to have a cup of tea.” So when did the Senior Pathak decide to make a career of automobiles? “I have a master’s degree in economics and a degree in law. I was in a job I did not like. In 1978, I joined the Western India Automobile Association and there was no looking back.” He didn’t know it then but it was also the beginning of a special journey with his son.

—Nayeem Quadri



Surendra Jain Paras

"When I make a mistake while performing, my father joins in and the audience never realises that something had gone wrong!"

**Pandit Girdhari Maharaj
and Kaushal Kant**
Kathak dancers JAIPUR

It's not just a ringtone that Pandit Girdhari Maharaj and son Kaushal Kant share; their lives revolve around singing, dancing and the tabla. While the 72 year-old Maharaj took to Kathak at a very early age, he passed on his talent and passion for music and dance to Kaushal, who inherited his father's grace and poise. "The atmosphere at home is so enchanting that we are effortlessly driven towards this beautiful art form," says the 39 year-old. His first public performance with his father and guru was in the temple of Govind Deoji, the principal deity of Jaipur, and is indelibly etched in his mind. Father and son do their *riyaz* together; when not singing or dancing, they enjoy watching cricket and football. There was a time they loved watching movies together but with film music not being what it used to be, they've given up that pastime. Kaushal has a master's degree in Kathak but Maharaj says a college education doesn't count for much in their tradition. "Basic education is necessary to help one understand good from bad but, if one wants higher education, one can't be a performer." Kaushal says having his father as his mentor makes him feel secure. "But he evokes the same respect as any other guru would have," he adds quickly. There are some perks though. "When I make a mistake while performing, my father joins in and the audience never realises that something had gone wrong!"

— Abha Sharma

Vinod and Akash Sidhu
Bakers CHANDIGARH



Sanjay Kurl

“I look forward to those moments when we bake a cake together. We share the same sense of humour and that makes the experience very enjoyable”

Akash Sidhu, 26, says 58 year-old Vinod is more an elder brother than father, and the perfect role model. It's a bond that grew over cakes and caramel as Akash followed in his baker-father's footsteps. Vinod has been in the bakery business since 1977 and was the man behind Chandigarh's popular Polka pastries. "I was barely six years old when I first cooked; I was adamant I would be like my father," says Akash with

a smile. Vinod adds, "My son has a natural talent and passion for cooking. I just helped him nourish his talent and he did the rest himself." Akash earned a degree in hotel management in 2008 and started assisting his father with his business; soon after he graduated, the two opened a bakery together called Vinnie's in Chandigarh in 2011. "I look forward to those moments when we bake a cake together at home. We share

the same sense of humour and that makes the experience very enjoyable," laughs Akash. Father and son also share a love for music. "My father is a fabulous singer and I am a trained classical singer,, we often spend time singing together," reveals Akash. "My personal and professional lives are the same. The day starts with my family around me and ends with the same people. What more could I ask for?"

—Tejandeep Singh Kalra

Pandit Shankar and Bickram Ghosh
Classical musicians KOLKATA



"I consciously emulated my father as a child. Baba constantly coaxed me to bring out my individuality, which led to success"

He learnt the tabla in a narrow, dingy lane in old North Calcutta and went on to teach his art to Americans from the famous Ali Akbar School of Music, simultaneously playing with some of the legends of Indian classical music like Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar. His son learnt his art from his father and now enthalls audiences around the globe with his masterly strokes. Pandit Shankar and Bickram Ghosh are among the select few elite performers

who have actually collaborated on stage in Indian classical music. "I had to wait till I was well into my 30s to play with my father on stage; the feeling was electric," recalls Bickram. While Pandit Shankar Ghosh is of the classical mould, Bickram has a star appeal. "I consciously emulated him as a child. But I was constantly being compared with him in a negative way. *Baba* constantly coaxed me to bring out my individuality, which led to

success." Pandit Shankar devotes a lot of time teaching his students, but Bickram believes he would be doing an injustice to his students if he took up teaching at this stage of his career. "I definitely want to teach and create my own legacy while also carrying on his. That is why I have set up the Bickram Ghosh Academy. After all, the *guru-sishya parampara* must continue."

—Sudipto Roy

*"We learn from each other by waiting patiently
for the animal to come into sight.
Teamwork is very important"*

Vinod, Bharat and Ankit Goyal
Wildlife photographers DELHI



What started as a chance sighting of a tiger in a game reserve in Chhattisgarh snowballed into a pure passion for Delhi's Goel family. That was in 1982, recalls Vinod, now 59, a senior official with the Central Board of Customs and Excise. During the summer vacation, Vinod returned to the game reserve with his children Bharat and Nitya to go tiger-spotting. "Bharat, who was just 10, wanted to pick up the camera instantly. And, since then, photography has become his life. As I used to be transferred frequently for work, we used to visit wildlife sanctuaries wherever we went, and Bharat's interest kept growing. Watching him, my brother's son, Ankit [*standing left*], also became a wildlife photography enthusiast." Bharat, 27, says his relationship with his father is richer for all the time they spend together outdoors. "We learn from each other by waiting patiently for the animal to come into sight. Sometimes it takes days, sometimes seconds. So teamwork is very important." Both father and son have answered the call of the wild as best they could. Despite his busy work schedule, Vinod exhibits his pictures at different forums to campaign for the planet. And when Bharat wanted to give up his full-time job with Tata Consultancy Services in favour of a career in wildlife photography two years ago, Vinod instantly agreed. "My father even paid the bond penalty for leaving the firm before the stipulated three years," smiles the proud son.

—Ambica Gulati



“Dad and I started making our own planes and drones to fuel our hobby, rather than buying them. This fuelled our common interest”

Sai and Venkatesh Pattabiraman
Model plane designers CHENNAI

When this father-and-son team is not designing aeromodelling planes, they fly them. “What began as a hobby turned into a business venture and this led us to create India’s first aeromodelling hobby shop in 2007,” explains 55 year-old Sai Pattabiraman. “While growing up in the early 1970s, I recollect seeing a boy in my school flying these planes. I wanted to fly my own model plane ever since.” His 20 year-old son Venkatesh was not impressed, at least not until he began to study engineering. “Dad and I started making our own planes and drones to fuel our hobby, rather than buying them. This fuelled our common interest.”

The Pattabiramans started spending more and more time together, making model planes, and won first prize at the IIT Tech Fest in Mumbai in 2009. “We work as a team and divide the work in the company. My father is very good with the management aspects of the business and I pitch in with the technical aspects.” Pattabiraman Junior makes a poignant observation. “In the typical family, I notice that the interaction between father and child is limited. In our case, our hobby has brought us together, allowing us to learn from each other professionally and personally.”

—Jayanthi Somasundaram



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Rock SONG

The magnificent stone monuments of Mahabalipuram resonate with stories of a bygone era

❖ 📷 Ramya Srinivasan

It's still the early hours; the coastal city of Chennai is waking up to bustling traffic and the aroma of delicious steaming *idli*. After a heavy downpour the previous day, the clouds have cleared out, paving the way for a beautiful sunny morning. This is a city known for many things—a booming IT corridor, a boisterous movie industry and a vibrant cultural scene. But, most of all, the two places that are integral to the Chennai scene are Marina beach and Mahabalipuram. If your order of the day is 'beach on the rocks', then Mahabalipuram or Mahabs, as it is fondly called, is the destination of choice.

A legacy of the Pallava dynasty that ruled the southern parts of the country in the 7th century with Kancheepuram as their capital, Mahabalipuram is a UNESCO heritage site situated about 60 km from Chennai. 'Mahabali' in Tamil means



Clockwise from above: Corridors connecting the shrines in the Shore Temple; *ratha* in a line starting from Dharmaraja *ratha*; a sculpture of a lion Facing page (clockwise from top left): Intricate carvings on the wall depicting Trivikrama avatar; a *shivalinga* in Trimurti caves; Arjuna's Penance

warrior, and it's believed that Mahabalipuram is named after the illustrious Pallava king Narasimha Varman. He was also called *Mamallan* (wrestler in Tamil), and hence the place is also referred to as Mamallapuram.

Cruising along the smooth East Coast Road we reach Mahabs, and after negotiating through a couple of narrow alleys we reach the counter to collect our entry ticket of ₹ 10. The place has several attractions; the same ticket can be used for all. We start with the monument complex of the *Pancha Ratha* named after the Pandava brothers—Dharmaraja (Yudhishtira), Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula-Sahadeva—and their wife Draupadi. With intricate carvings, the chariot-shaped monolithic structures are a feast for the eyes. It's believed that a gigantic boulder, sloping south to north, was used in the making of the five chariots, with the southernmost Dharmaraja *ratha* being the biggest, and the size of the chariots decreasing as we move northwards. We were shocked to see parents lofting children atop animal structures in the complex for clicking

pictures on their smartphones, with scant regard for their archaeological value. It's sad that there are no guidelines against this.

Coming back to the *ratha*, with a Durga idol and women *dwarapalaka*, the Draupadi *ratha*—a statement in feminism—stands apart from the rest. Next to it is the Arjuna *ratha*, which is a smaller version of the Dharmaraja *ratha* with sculptures of Vishnu on Garuda, Shiva leaning on Nandi and Indra on his elephant Airavatha. The Bhima *ratha* has a rectangular base and beautiful horse-shoe shaped *chaitya* windows. The Dharmaraja *ratha*, the most splendid of the chariots, sits on a square base with tastefully carved pavilions. The outer walls are adorned with idols of Lord Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva and Murugan. The *Ardhanareeswara* sculpture, demonstrating the union of valour and vulnerability, is a standout work on this *ratha*. In a separate panel, there is also the sculpture of King Narasimha Varman, who built these shrines. Stationed separately from the rest is the Nakula-Sahadeva *ratha*, the

smallest of the lot. The roofs of the chariots are equally distinct. While the roof of the Draupadi *ratha* resembles a thatched hut, the roof of Bhima *ratha* looks like a covered cart; the Arjuna and Dharmaraja *ratha*, meanwhile, are crowned with pyramidal rooftops.

By the time we wrap up the *Pancha Rathas* and head towards Arjuna's Penance and other caves, it is impossible not to be astounded by the marvel of this heritage monument and the cultural and architectural contribution of the Pallava kings. The story goes that the Pallava dynasty traces its origin to the child born to Guru Drona's son Ashwathama and a

Naga princess. The Pallavas also feature significantly in ancient Tamil literature; their rivalry with the Chalukyas features prominently in Tamil author Kalki Krishnamoorthy's *Sivagamiyin Sabadham*.

Arjuna's Penance, one of the largest bas-reliefs in the world, has a multitude of stories and sub-stories featured on the huge rock-canvas. As it is difficult to identify the figures, it would be ideal to hire a guide. We, for one, were expecting a handsome Arjuna carrying his bow and arrow, but were instead pointed to a bearded sage standing on one foot, praying to Lord Shiva for *Paashupathastra*. With a noticeable cleft in the middle of

It is a complete treat to the senses with the rhythm of the bluish white waves lashing against the rocks in the background, adding to the charm of the imposing temple towers

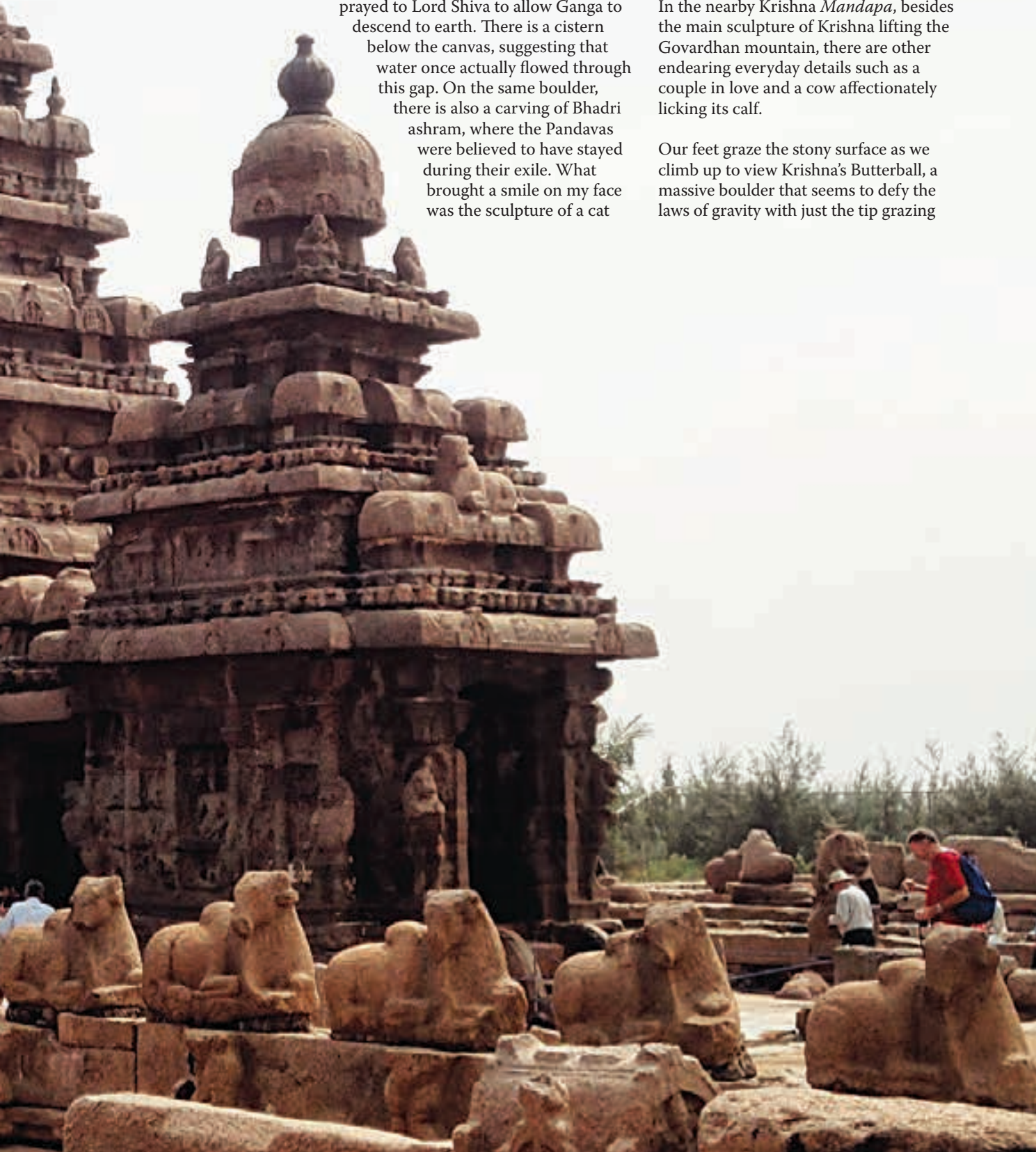


The Shore Temple is the only surviving structure of 'The Place of Seven Pagodas'

the rock, signifying the flow of Ganga through the crevice, no wonder that the bas-relief is also referred to as the 'Descent of Ganga'. Some believe that the sculptures refer to the penance of Bhagiratha, Rama's ancestor, who prayed to Lord Shiva to allow Ganga to descend to earth. There is a cistern below the canvas, suggesting that water once actually flowed through this gap. On the same boulder, there is also a carving of Bhadri ashram, where the Pandavas were believed to have stayed during their exile. What brought a smile on my face was the sculpture of a cat

in meditation, in a pose similar to that of Arjuna—with rats playing around it—suggestive of Duryodhana's derision of the Pandavas. It is amazing how a single boulder can be subjected to different interpretations and narrations. In the nearby Krishna *Mandapa*, besides the main sculpture of Krishna lifting the Govardhan mountain, there are other endearing everyday details such as a couple in love and a cow affectionately licking its calf.

Our feet graze the stony surface as we climb up to view Krishna's Butterball, a massive boulder that seems to defy the laws of gravity with just the tip grazing





Clockwise from top left: A parrot astrologer waiting for fortune seekers; a shell souvenir shop; colourful, stringed beads for sale; Facing page: Entrance to Trimurti caves

Mahabalipuram is perfect for a full day out, at the end of which you can either choose to laze around on the beach or play in the waters. Although this is a temple hub, you are not required to remove footwear anywhere except in the sanctum sanctorum

the surface. In fact, it's so precariously perched that it looks like it could roll down the slope any moment. This is an important photo shoot spot for most tourists and you will be lucky if you manage to snatch a single second alone here!

Further down is the Trimurthi cave with separate sanctums for Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. It has to be stated here that this is one of those rare shrines to Brahma, who is generally not worshipped. The nearby Sthala Sayana Perumal temple also has a rare reclining posture of Lord Vishnu, who is depicted resting directly on the land, and not on Adishesha, the serpent.

Our final stop is the Shore Temple, a marked shift from the earthen hues of black, brown and grey that defined the

landscape so far. The Shore Temple offers an expansive green lawn to park your family for a small picnic.

It is a complete treat to the senses with the rhythm of the bluish white waves lashing against the rocks in the background, adding to the charm of the imposing temple towers. Mamallapuram was originally called 'The Place of Seven Pagodas' as it housed seven temples. Of these, only the Shore Temple, built by Narasimha Varman II, also called Rajasimha, survives. The row of Nandi bulls encrusted on the long temple wall looks spectacular. There are three shrines here, two dedicated to Lord Shiva and the third to Vishnu, on the three sides of the temple. While walking through the narrow corridors connecting the shrines we spot many idols engraved on the sides.



factfile

Getting There

- **By air:** Meenambakkam airport in Chennai is 58 km away.
- **By rail:** The closest railhead, Chennai Central Station, is 55 km away.
- **By road:** The roads leading to Chennai are in good condition and the East Coast Road that leads to Mahabalipuram is particularly a pleasure to drive on. Bus facilities are also frequent.

Best Time to Visit

You can expect the best weather from November to mid-February. The classical dance festival in January is celebrated with grand fervour and festivities.

Accommodation

- **Hotel Mamallaa Heritage;** Email: info@hotelmamallaheritage.com; Tel: 044-27442060
- **Hotel Sea Breeze;** Email: seabreezehotel@hotmail.com; Tel: 044-27443035

Tips

Book a beach resort and take your time to enjoy the place. The East Coast Road, which stretches along the Bay of Bengal, is also home to several other tourist attractions including amusement parks (VGP Universal Kingdom and MGM Dizzee World), MayaJaal (movie complex and other entertainment activities such as bowling), Crocodile Park, Go Karting tracks and Muttukadu Boat House.

Mahabalipuram is perfect for a full day out, at the end of which you can either choose to laze around on the beach or play in the waters; there are changing rooms nearby. If you are a connoisseur of classical dance, it's the place to flock to during Pongal, when scintillating classical dance performances are staged annually against the magnificent backdrop of the Pallava rock sculptures.

In the by-lanes, you find vendors selling shell trinkets and idols carved in stone. Foretellers are a common sight. There are many restaurants around the place where you can savour local food. Other than the typical vegetarian fare and street food, there are also many seafood options, with Moonrakers being a popular hangout. As the sultry town of Chennai is infamous for its scorching heat, it is best to avoid it during the summer months. Although this is a temple hub, you are not required to remove footwear anywhere except in the sanctum sanctorum. Even that appeared to be a voluntary act of devotees; there are no guidelines insisting on it. This, perhaps, is the best indication that Mahabalipuram is predominantly perceived as an architectural wonder than a temple complex. ✨

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festival

rhyme & rhythm

The stage is set for the 30th Konark Dance & Music Festival, held every year from 19 to 23 February. The country's rich tapestry of dance and music will be on display at the festival, with the exquisite Sun Temple serving as the perfect backdrop. The open-air cultural treat—a brainchild of late Odissi maestro Guru Gangadhar Pradhan—will feature artists of national and international repute, exquisite handicrafts and delicious local fare.

The word Konark derives from Sanskrit words *kona* (corner) and *arka* (sun), referring to the temple dedicated to the Sun God. It took 12 years and 1,200 craftsmen to construct this 13th century temple shaped like an ornamented chariot of Surya.

Passion for Persian

He calls it a poet's language—a language of love and brotherhood. It is no exaggeration to say that eminent Persian scholar Professor **Sharif**

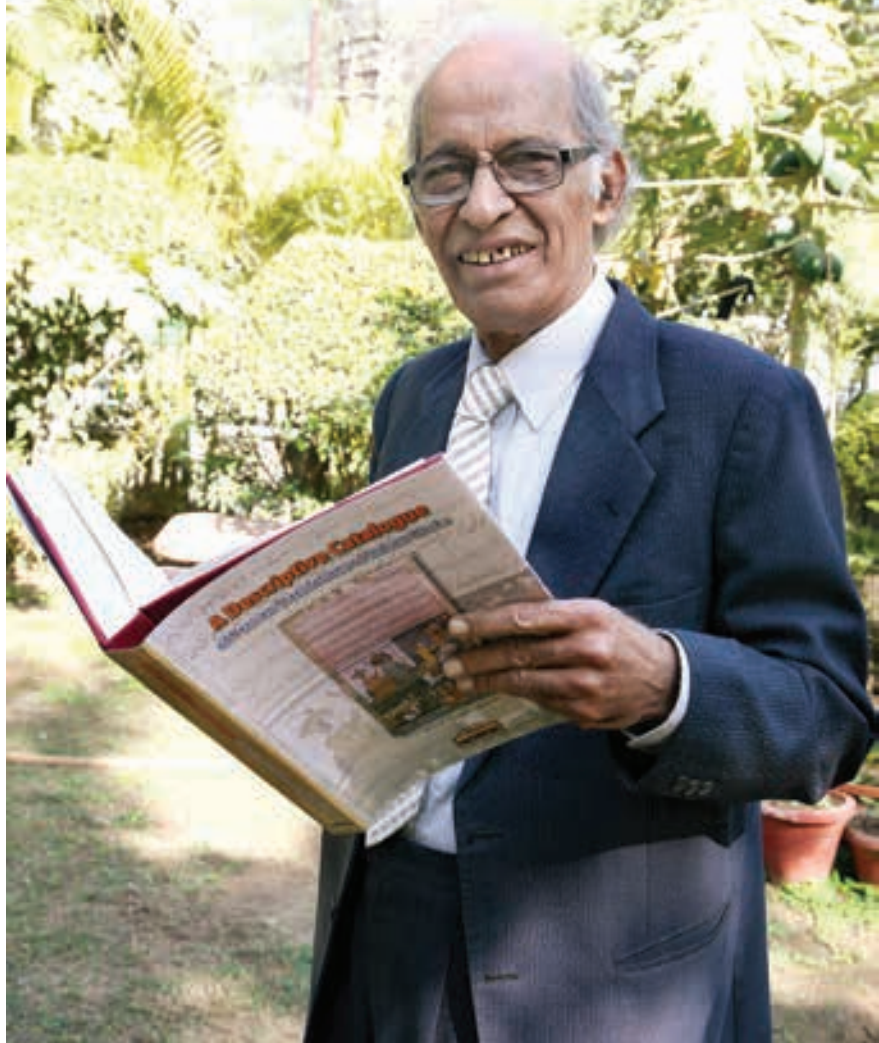
Husain Qasmi, 72, has burned the midnight oil to keep the ancient language alive in India. His recent book, *Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Translation of Indian Works*, is a decade-long labour in print. The 550-page catalogue has a list of over 2,500 Persian manuscripts that are translations of Sanskrit works from the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Upanishads*, *Panchatantra* and more. Receiver of the Certificate of Honour in Persian in 2000 and Majlis-e-Farogh-e-Urdu Award at Qatar recently, the New Delhi resident says that the loss of a language is a cultural loss. Excerpts from a conversation with **Ambica Gulati**:

What does your labour of love, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Translation of Indian Works*, highlight?

I traced around 216 manuscripts to compile this and discovered that the Muslim rulers in India were rulers who wanted to integrate all aspects of life. And the scholars of those times translated many important Sanskrit texts into Persian. The *Yoga Vasistha*, *Ramayana*, *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Mahabharata*, *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Panchatantra* and important works of mathematics were translated into Persian from Mughal emperor Akbar's reign in the 16th century to the middle of the 19th century.

What do you feel was the need for these translations from Sanskrit to Persian and vice-versa?

The Mughal rulers wanted India to be one society with a common thread. They believed in camaraderie, love, peace and harmony. And this was one way of doing that—an amalgamation of cultures. There are almost 50 translations of the *Ramayana* in Persian as people across Lucknow, Kashmir and other parts of the country wanted to read it. Mir Mohammad Hashim Mohtaram, a Muslim, had memorised the *Mahabharata*. Scholars belonging to medieval India like Abul Faizi and Allama Abul Fazal had translated the *Bhagavad-Gita* in Persian. Even Guru Gobind Singh had written *Zafarnāma*



Himanshu Kumar

[a letter to Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb] in the language. There are also evidences of Guru Nanak writing in Persian. Also, the poems of Amir Khusrau have Persian verses.

Where did you research for this catalogue?

I researched in at least 50 libraries across the country. Libraries such as The Bombay University Library, National Museum, Maulana Azad Library and Peer Mohammed Shah Library have manuscripts—some seven centuries old, some even with the seal of Akbar. But few know about these shelved treasures.

How did you develop an interest in Persian?

I began to take an interest in Persian through my father Maulana Akhlaq Husain's teachings. He was a scholar of Islamic studies and we lived in Old Delhi. Even in my school, Fatehpuri Muslim School, I would study Persian. My love for the language continued in college. Finally, it became a profession and I retired as professor of Persian in 2008 from the University of Delhi.

With English fast turning into the official language and languages like Persian, Sanskrit and Arabic being overlooked, what do you feel went wrong in keeping their significance alive?

literature

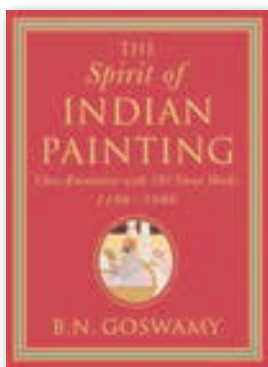
It was during British rule that English became prevalent and the older languages were lost. There is nothing wrong in speaking any language, but we should not lose a treasure. The Government's recent decision to remove Persian and Arabic from the UPSC examination is one such national loss. We cannot know our history without knowing these languages.

Where can we trace the roots of this language in India?

Persian was the official language during the reign of Qutubuddin Aibak, the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, in 1206. And it remained the language of the common man till the British arrived in 1857. And even the British realised that without knowing the language of the people, they could not conquer the country. So they opened a department of Persian at Fort William College in Kolkata where their senior officers learnt this language. Even today, we find nuances of this language in our daily life though we don't recognise it as Persian. For instance, Chandni Chowk and Daryaganj in Delhi are Persian names. Historical monuments such as Taj Mahal, Bada Gumbad and Qutub Minar have inscriptions in Persian. Not many know that the dome of the Ashoka Hall in our Rashtrapati Bhavan has inscriptions written in Persian that are about love for humanity. The Sanskrit works of Akbar's court poet Tansen are no longer available in the original, but as a translation in Persian.

How can people benefit by learning Persian today?

This is the prevailing language in countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. To maintain trade relationships with these countries, we need Persian experts. Professionals who work in these countries need to know the language. Also, there is a demand for translators and interpreters in the tourism industry and the Ministry of Home Affairs.



“In all the years I have been involved with Indian art, I have repeatedly been asked to recommend a book that covers the whole subject. This is it. This is it. This is it.”

British painter Sir Howard Hodgkin in praise of art historian B N Goswamy's recent publication The Spirit of Indian Painting: Close Encounters with 101 Great Works, 1100-1900 (Penguin; ₹ 1,499)

divine dance

More than 200 artists will perform at Nattyanjali, an annual dance festival dedicated to the Lord of Dance, Nataraja, at Sri Subramania Samaj, Chembur, Mumbai. The 10-day event begins on 11 February and will culminate on 20 February. On 17 February, the day of Mahashivaratri, senior dance gurus such as Dr Malati Agneswaran, Chetan Saraiya and Dr Maddali Usha Gayatri will showcase their flair in the many genres of classical dance.

Aroma of Avadh

Noted food historian and Persian scholar Salma Husain has been using the ancient language in exploring the history of food. In her recent book *Flavours of Avadh: Journey from the Royal Banquet to the Corner Kitchen* (Niyogi; ₹ 795), she traces the history of Avadh cuisine, well known for its aroma and distinct taste. The book sketches out an exclusive regional food history and dining traditions from celebrated courts to Avadhi bazaars.



As the Burdwan-Katwa narrow gauge service chugged into the annals of history recently, Shilbhadra Datta captures memories of its final journey

redsignal journey





Clockwise from left:

The last service of Burdwan-Katwa Railway (BKR), a legacy of the McLeod's Light Railways—now under Eastern Railway—cuts through rice fields on its way. The authorities of Indian Railways have decided to convert the 2-ft, 6-inch narrow gauge track into a 5-ft, 6-in broad gauge

Loco pilot Praddyuman Singh set to operate the last service; the train with four small carriages ran at a maximum speed of 30 km per hour

For poor farmers of Bardhaman, BKR served as a lifeline to transport goods economically. The new electric broad gauge line will be operational between Katwa and Balgona in 2017

Passengers experience one last journey of the 53-km stretch. Bardhaman (also called Burdwan) is a town 125 km away from Kolkata and is known as the rice bowl of West Bengal

Lineman Mohammad Enamul coupling coaches to the engine

A ticket counter goes empty



journey



Clockwise from top left: For migrant workers, the rail trip ensured a safe, timely means of reaching the destination; an elderly passenger looks on; a vendor serves *jhaal murri*—a spicy, crunchy snack; *gawja*, a deep-fried sweet snack



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.

The all new

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celebrate age

sports

good innings

As curtains go up on the Cricket World Cup 2015, we go back in time to trace the history of the game

TOP
WICKET
TAKER

71

WICKETS
Glenn McGrath
Matches: 39

1611

Cricket became a sport played by adults, when two men in Sussex were prosecuted for playing cricket on Sunday instead of going to church

West Indies
defeated
Australia by
17 runs

1975
Lord's
LONDON

1979
Lord's
LONDON

West Indies
defeated
England by
92 runs

1983
Lord's
LONDON

India
defeated
West Indies
by 43 runs

1987
Eden Gardens
KOLKATA

Australia
defeated
England by
7 runs

The ICC Trophy was introduced and the decision to make the World Cup a quadrennial (once every four years) event took place in a meeting after the event.

There was no 'man of the series' award. All-day matches were played consisting of 60 overs; to qualify to the semi-finals, two groups of four teams were made, each team playing each other twice.

This was the first time the World Cup was held out of England. The number of overs was brought down to 50 from 60 owing to shorter daylight hours in the subcontinent.





India became the first country to win a World Cup on home soil.

India
defeated Sri Lanka by 6 wickets



Australia's win made it a hat trick for the country. Also, this was the year of the first ICC World Twenty20, where India defeated Pakistan in the finals



The number of teams taking part went up from 12 to 14. The largest ever total in finals was recorded at 359 runs by Australia.

2011
Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai

Australia
defeated Sri Lanka by 53 runs

2007
Kensington Oval, BRIDGETOWN

Australia
defeated India by 125 runs

2003
Wanderers, JO'BURG

1912

The first attempt at a World Championship was arranged between the Test playing nations, Australia, England and South Africa

1975

The experiment was repeated after the success of domestic one-dayers. Test playing nations England, Australia, New Zealand, West Indies, India and Pakistan were joined by Sri Lanka and East Africa in the first World Cup

1999
Lord's, LONDON

Australia
defeated Pakistan by 8 wickets



The Super Six round was introduced, and was the most viewed segment of the year's game as India and Pakistan, who were engaged in the Kargil conflict at this time, were up against each other on 8 June. India won the match.

1996
Gaddafi Stadium, LAHORE

Sri Lanka
defeated Australia by 7 wickets

1992
MCG, MELBOURNE

Pakistan
defeated England by 22 runs



Several changes were introduced: Day-night matches were made possible, teams switched from white to coloured uniform, and red balls were replaced by white. South Africa, which was banned from playing by ICC in 1970, was allowed to participate for the first time after a lifting of the ban in 1991.

The Sri Lankans won two games by forfeit as per the ICC ruling when Australia and West Indies refused to send their teams to Sri Lanka citing security reasons. This ruling automatically qualified the team for the quarterfinals without having played a single game.

188

RUNS
Gary Kirsten
OPP: UAE

TOP SCORER





Follow your passion

Keep the flame burning; now is the time to indulge in your true calling, says management guru **Virender Kapoor**

Most of us have worked all our life to make a living. Most of us have done what someone else asked us to do; those who wanted to do engineering became doctors, those wanting to join the Air Force joined the Army, writers became salesmen and painters went on to do engineering. It is not really any twist of fate, but we were guided by reasons beyond our control, including financial constraints, family compulsions, lack of guidance, and lack of opportunities.

For most of us, there were a limited number of professional avenues during our schooldays. For us, it was important to get our *roti, ka-pada aur makan* first. Passion could wait. Since then, career opportunities have multiplied manifold. Children passing out from schools today can therefore choose a profession they love. The good thing is that these opportunities are now available to silvers too. Our children are settled, we have taken care of our basic needs, we have homes to live in and, most important, we have enough free time. In fact, now is the time to do what we wanted all our life.

I, like many others, took up a Central Government job. In the early 1970s, this was probably one of the best career choices. I too was happy. I got into writing almost by accident.

I used to be very vocal about my ideas and could easily win an argument. I had no passion as such, but I used to sketch and play musical instruments

as hobbies and loved reading. I thought of writing some short articles to voice my opinion. I tried my luck with *The Times of India*. I got lucky, with my very first article being published on the edit page of the newspaper! Encouraged, I started writing frequently for other prestigious dailies as well.

If you have not been able to identify your passion, go back in time and try to identify your strengths. Passion in isolation is like a genie in a bottle. It has to come in contact with 'drive and determination' to finally get moving

Thereafter, I thought of writing a detailed technical article on information systems that I was working on. I was disappointed because my article was rejected by a leading computer magazine. However, one of my friends suggested that I write a book based on that article. Reluctantly, I agreed to write and self-publish, thus ending up as an author.

I was not writing for money but just for the kick of it. By now, writing and teaching had me completely hooked. I needed an opportunity to make a

switch after three decades of a stable job. I was a few years short of my retirement, when I was offered to head a prestigious management institute under the Symbiosis umbrella. Thereafter, I also started writing books in the self-help space. Until now, I have eight books to my credit.

My story illustrates that it is not necessary for us to discover our calling right from our schooldays. You can keep identifying your strengths while at a regular job. Keep indulging in what you like to do in small measures; you will hit the bull's eye one day. Passion is like flowing water that gradually finds its own course and, then, the final destination. You just need to go with the flow. It is very rare that it will be a tsunami for anyone. Therefore, keep your flame burning; never let it go.

If you have already retired and not been able to identify your passion, go back in time and try to identify your strengths at work. What were the assignments you enjoyed the most? What was it that came naturally to you and what is that one thing you would love to do for free? But remember, passion in isolation is like a genie in a bottle. It has to come in contact with 'drive and determination' to finally get moving, and 'willpower' to take it to a logical conclusion.

Another case in point—Vikram Mehmi has held high-profile jobs in the corporate sector. He served as president and CEO of IDEA Cellular

and later became CEO of Birla Sun Life Insurance. On retirement, he followed his heart to found Sparkpluggers, a non-profit organisation that helps aspiring entrepreneurs. Right from the birth of an idea, Sparkpluggers helps individuals make a viable business plan, get it validated by experts and helps them pitch it with investors. It is an end-to-end school of learning. Vikram has roped in some other like-minded mentors to create an effective team.

I have known Vikram for the past 15 years; his biggest strength is his enthusiasm. The Sparkpluggers initiative has some great takeaways. First, you must stick to your core competence. Second, get like-minded people associated with you. It augments your strengths and divides the load. It is important that you don't end up getting stressed out. The idea is to remain happily occupied. Third, don't start something that requires a large capex. Your expertise is what matters, not your capital investment.

Like Vikram, Brigadier Gurmeet Kanwal, my friend of over four decades, has found his passion. An intellectual at heart, he made a place for himself in the space he was most comfortable with. After premature retirement, he has been doing what he has loved all along: thinking, speaking and writing. He is the adjunct fellow at the Centre for Strategic International Studies (CSIS), Washington, and has co-founded two Delhi-based think tanks. Gurmeet has been writing for various journals from the time he

was a young captain. He has written several books such as *Nuclear Defence: Shaping the Arsenal* and *Indian Army: Vision 2020*. His forthcoming book is titled *India's National Security Strategy*. "I write because I love to write and to keep my creative juices flowing," says Gurmeet, who could have been a professor in a university



Dinodia Photo Library

for sure. He nurtured his passion while serving the Army.

Prabir Sen is my school friend. His father Abani Sen was a great artist. Prabir did his electrical engineering from IIT Delhi and joined DRDO in the early 1970s. But the artist in him could not remain bottled up

for very long. His college mates had founded NIIT and approached him to join them. They had started making computer-based training (CBT) modules for the international market and required someone who could integrate technology with visuals. An artist at heart and engineer by training, Prabir left his government job to join NIIT. Later he became its media director and established a massive creative team. After retiring from NIIT, he now helps budding artists hone their skills and teaches art and craft at some NGOs.

Vinay Agarwal, another friend, quit when he was at the peak of his career. An alumnus of IIM Calcutta, he headed leading brands such as Saint Gobain, RPG Group and BPL Mobile. He is a mentor and consultant at heart and wanted to make a second career around this. He left his well-paid job to work on the profit and growth transformation (PGT) of companies, using the Theory of Constraints methodologies. He is happy putting his competence to good use now.

In conclusion, it is certain that one size does not fit all. Each one of us has to find a unique calling. Most

of us have some dormant desires that can be fulfilled by making a little effort. Opportunity and awakening could appear in the middle of your career, at the fag end of it or many times well after retirement. Keep your passion aflame. And when the opportunity comes knocking, don't hesitate, just go for it!

The writer's latest book is *The Greatest Secret of Success: Your Passion Quotient* (Macmillan India, ₹ 285, 258 pages)

Language of love

We toast the season with an excerpt from Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877), the epic saga of star-crossed lovers

Steps were heard at the door, and Princess Betsy, knowing it was Madame Karenina, glanced at Vronsky. He was looking towards the door, and his face wore a strange new expression. Anna walked into the drawing room... Vronsky bowed low and pushed a chair up for her.

She acknowledged this only by a slight nod. She addressed Princess Betsy:

"I have been at Countess Lidia's, and meant to have come here earlier, but I stayed on. Sir John was there. He's very interesting..."

The conversation, interrupted by her coming in, flickered up again like the light of a lamp being blown out.

"Sir John! Yes, Sir John; I've seen him. He speaks well. The Vlassieva girl's quite in love with him."

"And is it true the younger Vlassieva girl's to marry Topov?"

"Yes, they say it's quite a settled thing."

"I wonder at the parents! They say it's a marriage for love."

"For love? What antediluvian notions you have! Can one talk of love in these days?" said the ambassador's wife.

"What's to be done? It's a foolish old fashion that's kept up still," said Vronsky.

"So much the worse for those who keep up the fashion. The only happy



marriages I know are marriages of prudence."

"Yes, but then how often the happiness of these prudent marriages flies away like dust just because that passion turns up that they have refused to recognise," said Vronsky.

"I imagine, joking apart, that to know love, one must make mistakes and then correct them.... What do you think about it?" she turned to Anna, who, with a faintly perceptible resolute smile on her lips, was listening in silence to the conversation.

"I think," said Anna, playing with the glove she had taken off, "I think...of so many men, so many minds, certainly so many hearts, so many kinds of love."

While Betsy was pouring out the tea, Vronsky went up to Anna.

She glanced towards the sofa beside her, and he instantly sat down.

"I have long meant to tell you this," she went on, looking resolutely into his eyes, and hot all over from the burning flush on her cheeks. "I've come on purpose this evening, knowing I should meet you. I have come to tell you that this must end. I have never blushed before anyone, and you force me to feel to blame for something."

"What do you wish of me?" he said simply and seriously.

"I want you to go to Moscow and ask for Kitty's forgiveness," she said.

"You don't wish that?" he said.


He saw she was saying what she forced herself to say, not what she wanted to say.

"If you love me, as you say," she whispered, "do so that I may be at peace."

His face grew radiant.

"Don't you know that you're all my life to me? But I know no peace, and I can't give it to you; all myself—and love...yes. I can't think of you and myself apart. You and I are one to me. And I see no chance before us of peace for me or for you. I see a chance of despair, of wretchedness...or I see a chance of bliss, what bliss!... Can it be there's no chance of it?" he murmured with his lips; but she heard.

She strained every effort of her mind to say what ought to be said. But instead of that she let her eyes rest on him, full of love, and made no answer.

A photograph of an elderly man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a dark shirt, sitting in a pond. He is smiling and gesturing with his hands towards a young girl sitting on a wooden dock. The girl is wearing a white dress and is also smiling and gesturing back. The water is dark blue, and the dock is made of wooden planks.

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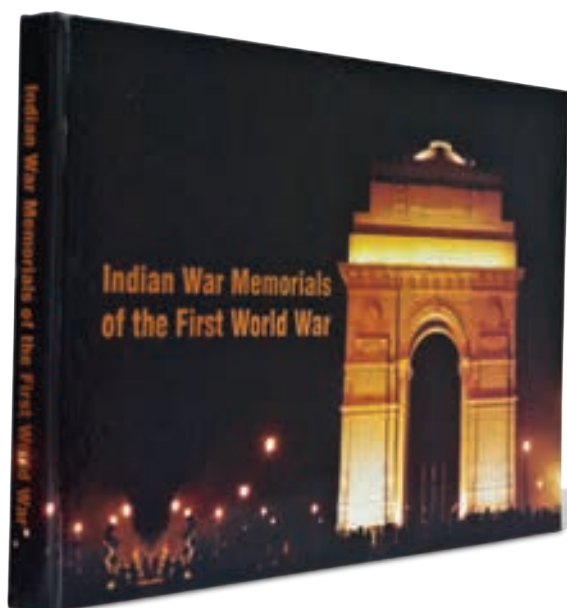
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In **INDIAN WAR MEMORIALS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR** (The Press; Limited Edition; 113 pages), Asoke Kumar Mukerji—permanent representative of India to the United Nations—provides a brief overview of the many battlefields where Indian soldiers laid down their lives during World War I (1914-1918). Through this photo book, the author revisits the memorials in the hope that the terrible lessons of the past would rekindle a reflection on the pointlessness of war. The featured memorials include India Gate in New Delhi; Mazargues War Memorial in Marseilles, the base of the Indian troops in France; Haidar Pasha Memorial in Istanbul that honours 122 soldiers of the Indian Army; the Zehrendorf Indian Memorial in Germany; and the Damascus Indian Memorial in Syria. A fitting tribute to the valour and sacrifice of Indian soldiers, the book ends on an optimistic note, hoping that such a remembrance will dissuade unnecessary confrontations and clashes in the future.

Recalling his colourful media career spanning nearly three decades, veteran journalist **Ajith Pillai** recounts stories that never found their way to print. His memoir, **OFF THE RECORD** (Hachette India; ₹ 395; 384 pages), written in a self-deprecating manner, takes us on an interesting journey involving the murky world of the Mumbai underworld, sex workers and drug traffickers, the first shots of Operation Vijay during the Kargil war, Mumbai blasts and even the Nira Radia tapes. From guiding Sir V S Naipaul to meet the 'boys' from the underworld to tailing the sensuous Silk

Smitha around Mumbai

on a New Year's eve, it's all been in a day's work for the seasoned scribe. The stories, which were kept off the record so far owing to threats, editorial and political pressures and even personal promises, have wisely found their way into this book. Besides being testament to a journalist's life, the compelling recollections are also a comment on the changing nature of the effervescent Indian media.



German-born writer **Martin Kampchen** presents a collection of essays on a wide range of topics concerning India and Europe in his latest book, **THE HIDDEN SIDE OF THE MOON** (Niyogi Books; ₹ 295; 214 pages).

Initially published in *The Statesman*, the essays—packed with cultural comparisons—reflect Martin's unique take on Indo-European issues, besides the places and people that have influenced the course of his life. Written in a self-exploratory manner, it's an account of real life encounters experienced by a European living in India for close to 40 years. Kampchen's admiration of poet-author Rabindranath Tagore can't be overstated—the pages are filled with references to Tagore's style and works. Through his writing, Kampchen attempts to unveil the true meaning of everyday incidents. Whether it is travelling by train in Kolkata, staying silent during a flight, or even shedding tears, Martin makes the readers sensitive to the seemingly minor but essential significance of each activity and opens the way to our fulfilment as human beings, unfolding the art of living.



From *Me* to them

The poise is intrinsic to her mien; her appearance defies her age. Award-winning writer **Sathya Saran** has a penchant for human-interest narratives. In a career spanning almost three decades, while her style of writing has remained distinct, the content, across literary genres, has continued to engage readers. The former editor of *Femina* and *Me* abhors politics and has no patience for potboilers, instead adventure stories hold her interest. Currently a consulting editor with HarperCollins, Saran writes on fashion, travel and lifestyle issues for Indian and international publications. The latest book from Saran—the author of *Night Train and Other Stories* reprinted as *The Dark Side, Ten Years with Guru Dutt: Abrar Alvi's Journey* and *From Me to You*—is *Sun Mere Bandhu Re: The Musical World of S D Burman*. In conversation with **Suparna-Saraswati Puri**, the 60 year-old shares her experiential travel from being a seasoned scribe to an acknowledged chronicler of biographies and her work in progress, a book on *ghazal* guru Jagjit Singh.

As a journalist, your forte has been luxury and lifestyle. What led you to make that choice?

I think the forte, so to speak, chose me. I started as an editor for *The Hitavada* in 1974, and my forte was human-interest stories. As editor of the magazine section of the paper, and thanks to a scarcity of good contributions, I wrote many columns under different names to fill the pages. I entered the luxury, fashion and beauty space as *Femina*, which I later joined, needed these spaces to be created and filled, and I learnt as I went along. I suppose being in an evolving space and learning about it enough to be able to communicate with the readers helped me get acquainted with these areas as well.



As glamour is everything in today's world, that is what people remember most easily. Personally, I would rather be known for the developmental journalistic writing I did.

From journalistic writing to fiction and biographies, was meandering within the genres experimental?

The writing of the first biography was some kind of destiny. I was going through a rough patch at work. When I read that Abrar Alvi might have stories to share on Guru Dutt, I approached him hoping to write a series of articles. The material was

rich enough to fill a book. I was blessed to be able to meet and record his story before he passed away. Again, S D Burman's biography came through similar serendipity. An SD fan, having read the book on Guru Dutt, approached me and handed over all the clippings on the maestro he had collected over the years. Incidentally, I still write short stories. Owing to a paucity of

publishing avenues, I place them in online fiction sites.

What engaged your literary sensibilities between the two biographies?

From 2005 to 2010, I was engaged in editing a new magazine for women, *Me*. A supplement of the newspaper DNA, it became a rage; the feedback was stupendous. As we were keen on benchmarking the magazine, my team of four writers and I wrote it almost entirely. I think my five years at *Me* are among my best journalistic years, but it did eat into my creative work.

What was the kind of groundwork that went into the book on S D Burman?

I spent a lot of time listening to SD's music; I read everything at hand, including his brief autobiography and, subsequently, pieced together the 'imaginary' portions. Never did I forget while writing that this was not Sathya Saran writing, but SD. So I thought like he would. I think the fact

authorspeak

that a Bengali like Sushmit Sen—of the rock band Indian Ocean—thought the letters in the book were real and very much written by someone who thinks in Bangla vindicates what I tried to do. Maybe my growing up in Calcutta and Assam made it easier. Also the fact that Kersi Lord, who used to be one of S D Burman's accompanists, exclaimed to me during the book launch that I had described "Burman *dada's* movements, actions and speech exactly like he was".

How did *Night Train and Other Stories* get written?

I wrote stories even in school, especially when math and geography classes bored me. *Night Train and Other Stories* was not written as a book. They were individual stories published in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *Femina* and elsewhere, which were later collated into the book. Only a few stories in the collection were new. 'Night Train' itself was published in *Debonair*. In fact, Gulzar *sahab* had forwarded it to Doordarshan for a series of short telefilms he was making for them. The story was rejected because of its supernatural content.

How have you evolved as a writer?

I think all writing is derived from the same source. Only the style and content differ. Writing is like music...whether you are singing a *thumri*, nursery rhyme or a *tarana*, the voice and the mind have to work at it; a trained voice can sing almost anything. So also, writing demands a vocabulary, a certain voice for the writer, and if these are present, the writing bends itself to any subject. I continue to write on fashion and travel, and enjoy writing for the media, but books and short stories give me a pleasure that is more deep-seated. I try to bring in a

literary element into the biographies, using styles that are offbeat. For Jagjit Singh, however, I am being more linear, as there is no book on him, and people know little about his private life and his evolution as a singer. I have ensured the flow is smooth and the reading fast-paced and easy.

What intrigues and impresses you significantly enough to want to write on Indian cinema and music?

I have always loved cinema. Even as a schoolgirl, I was a quiet critic, slotting the films, acting and music into good and bad. Of course, film songs were not considered the right thing to be sung in our house while

“Writing is like music... whether you are singing a *thumri*, nursery rhyme or a *tarana*, the voice and the mind have to work at it. So also, writing demands a vocabulary; the writing bends itself to any subject”

I was growing up, so I kept my views to myself. Perhaps years of building on the fascination make me want to write on cinema and music. And then there is the fact that I can remember most of the songs even from films before my time—lyrics, tune and all. That makes it a bit easier to write on the subject.

Coming back to your book on Jagjit Singh, what fascinated you the most about him?

HarperCollins asked me if I would write Jagjit Singh's biography and I grabbed the idea. I loved his voice, knew his songs, and had met him and Chitra a few times. It seemed only natural that I should say yes.

Has Chitra Singh been a part of the work? If so, was it difficult for you to convince her to share her memories, given that they are painful?

Chitra knew me and, perhaps as a result, trusted my intentions. The first session was formal and strained, but we were easy and open with each other after that. She has been most kind, frank and cooperative.

Is there intimidation along with inspiration while attempting biographies of famous lives?

A little bit. People close to famous people like to 'own' them, and are not open to any point of view beside their own. Also committed fans think they 'own' the celeb and will not brook any kind of criticism.

Tell us about your family.

I live with my husband, son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. We all work and travel, often alone, so we enjoy the times together too. My mother too lives in the same house, but has her space downstairs, so she can live as she is used to. We all love dogs and the latest addition is a stray.

What are your hobbies?

I love reading, and watching films and select television. I abhor politics and am lukewarm about sports. I love the mountains and for the past four years have taken to a yearly trek in the Himalaya. I also enjoy theatre, and have been a part of good productions with Veenapani Chawla, while she was in Bombay, before moving to Pondicherry.

Whom do you enjoy reading?

My favourite authors include John Le Carre, Graham Green, Henry James, Emily Dickinson, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Rumer Godden, Manu Joseph and John Galsworthy. I read anything that is well written. No potboilers please, I do not have the time!

Zest for life

Faith and self-belief can work wonders for cancer cure, says oncologist **Ranjana Srivastava**

If doctors are allowed to confess to favourites, then Irma would be my clear choice, for the simple reason that when I see Irma, she cheers me up within a few minutes of our meeting. For the rest of the time she spends in my office, she effortlessly drives away the sombreness that forms an unavoidable part of the day-to-day work of being an oncologist. Her sheer zest for the concept of a well-led life and joy in the living of it makes me rejoice and restores my sometimes-wavering faith in the redemptive power of modern medicine.

There are days when I feel I could exchange all my patients for one encounter with Irma, not because I care any less about them but because she has that rare knack of making me temporarily put aside my responsibilities and see the world through a different set of eyes.

It is close to two years ago now, but the details of Irma's remarkable journey are clear in my mind. The first time I call out Irma's name she answers from a corner. Quickly gathering up her bag and X-rays, she makes for my office. She is slightly built and has shoulder-length greying hair. A stray strand skims her right eyebrow. Her attire is simple; old but neat. There is not a button out of place or a crease on her blouse or skirt. Her face is devoid of makeup but her warm smile seeps into all the wrinkles, lighting it up effortlessly. Wondering what fears hide beneath, I invite her to sit down and tell me all she knows about her cancer.



She shrugs her petite shoulders. "All they have told me is that I have a tumour in the bile duct and I have six months maximum."

"I see." I didn't expect her to encapsulate her predicament so neatly in one sentence.

"But I tell you, I am going to beat this, I am!"

"Let's have a look at your films." I flick on the light switch to study her CT scan. I don't need the report to spot the ominous mass embedded in her liver. Enfolding major blood vessels, it looks impossible to remove, even to my non-surgical eye.

"What I don't understand is why anyone would give up so easily. In my life, I have fled war, divorced an alcoholic husband and brought up a child on my own. Every time people have said life is bad I have fought hard and won."

Her short speech would sound desperately clichéd if it were not for

the defiant blaze of conviction that accompanies it. "I am going to fight this," she declares again. "And I need your help."

After she has finished treatment, she comes to see me, her grin broader than ever. "You know, the radiation doctor just did a scan and most of the tumour has gone!"

She hands me the films. As I put them up on the same screen I used when I first met her, I find myself hoping that she is right. And indeed she is! The large tumour that sullied the neat architecture of the area has shrunk to a nubbin, still visible but nowhere near as threatening as it had appeared before.

Irma and I have never talked about her being cured because she recognises very well that the sword of recurrence will always hang over her. But it is how she treats whatever time she has left that is nothing short of inspiring. Irma was the only one who ever believed that she could beat her cancer. Her doctors, including me, found her resolve so infectious that we felt compelled to give her the benefit of the doubt.

I like to see Irma and be reminded that sometimes, doctors can get it wrong. Wrong as to how a disease will behave and wrong about how a patient will cope. It is not a reflection of the lack of skill but more a reminder of the diversity of nature, the reach of biology and the immeasurable contribution of individual traits such as confidence, faith and hope.

Excerpted from Tell Me The Truth – Conversations With My Patients About Cancer, Life & Death (HarperCollins; ₹ 399; 320 pages)

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The 'British Bulldog'

There was no love lost between him and the leaders of the Indian independence movement. In fact, Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill made no bones about his contempt for Indians, including Mahatma Gandhi. Churchill, who earned the moniker 'British Bulldog' thanks to his belligerent scowl, was loath to let go of Britain's imperial hold over India. Known as much for his wit and razor-sharp tongue as for his domineering presence, Churchill was unarguably one of the most influential figures of the 20th century—both as a statesman and wartime leader. Little wonder then, that his state funeral on 30 January 1965 saw the largest congregation of statesmen from around the world.



Interestingly, Churchill was also a prolific painter, with 600 works to his credit. He also won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1953 for his six-volume history of World War II. In addition, he wrote a novel, *Savrola*, two biographies, three volumes of memoirs and several histories. One of the most articulate leaders of his time, his quotes are etched in popular imagination. In his first speech as British prime minister in the House of Commons, he famously declared, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat." On another occasion, he defined tact as "the ability to tell someone to go to hell in such a way that they look forward to the trip". Instantly recognisable in his iconic bowler hat, trench coat and cigar, Churchill came from a long line of English aristocrat-politicians. Though he is

considered a symbol of all things British, Churchill was half-American, his mother being an American heiress.

His lifetime spanned not just the two World Wars but other conflicts, including the onset of the Cold War. In 1963, President John F Kennedy conferred Churchill with Honorary Citizenship of the US, the first-ever personality to be granted such an honour. Considered the chief architect of the victory of the Allied troops during World War II, he was also named TIME magazine's 'Man of the Year' twice—in 1940 and 1949. Aptly enough, his epitaph states, "I am ready to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the great ordeal of meeting me is another matter."

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: FEBRUARY 1965

- On 13 February, US President Lyndon B Johnson authorised Operation Rolling Thunder, a campaign of air strikes against North Vietnam.
- On 15 February, The Beatles recorded *Ticket to ride* at the EMI studios in London.
- On 17 February, lunar probe Ranger 8 for transmitting photographs was launched from Cape Canaveral in the US.
- On 22 February, a revised, colour production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* was broadcast on US television by CBS.

narcisstick

n. Pejorative name for a selfie stick.

Example. I'd seen the same phenomenon when I was touring the Colosseum in Rome last month. So many people were fighting for space to take selfies with their long sticks—what some have called the **Narcissistick**—that it looked like a reprise of the gladiatorial battles the place once hosted.

—David Carr, "Selfies on a stick, and the social-content challenge for the media", *The New York Times*, 4 January 2015

winter dibs

n. The saving of a parking space that one has cleared of snow by blocking the spot with one or more chairs or similar objects.

Example. Cars parked in saved spaces after a blizzard in February 2013 saw their tires slashed by the angry resident who had initially shovelled the spaces out—and that's not even an outlier. They had broken the code of **winter-parking dibs**: Shovelling out a parking space entitles the shoveller to that specific space, according to popular convention. The claim is signalled by putting something in the space as a placeholder. (A chair, a bin, anything will do.)

—Kriston Capps, "No more winter 'dibs' on parking spots", *City Lab*, 5 January 2015

manspreading

n. The act of a man sitting with his knees spread widely apart, particularly when this crowds people next to him or prevents someone from taking an adjacent seat.

Example. Any woman travelling by public transport will be aware of **manspreading**—where a male passenger sits with his legs splayed out, totally oblivious to the woman next to him who's forced to double cross her legs for lack of space.

—Radhika Sanghani, "Ban manspreading: Londoners want men to sit with their legs together on the Tube", *The Telegraph* (London), 23 December 2014

autofail

n. An error introduced into a message by automatic spell-checking or word-completion software, particularly when that error is indecorous or nonsensical.

Example. It was the PG version of what's come to be known as the **autofail**, the accidental (and sometimes mortifying) autocorrection from which many a blog and book have spawned.

—Jessica Bennett, "When autocorrect goes horribly wrong (and so, so right)", *The New York Times*, 9 January 2015

bridechilla

n. A bride-to-be who, while planning her wedding, remains calm, relaxed, and easy-going.

Example. But the level-headed model has kept her cool in the run-up to her big day and is not a stressed-out Bridezilla.

"I'm not a Bridezilla anyway," she said.

"My sister keeps calling me a **Bridechilla** because I'm so chilled about everything. It's all really very relaxed."

—Melanie Finn, "Sarah leaves model friends behind for 'amazing' hen party", *The Evening Herald* (Dublin, Ireland), 30 April 2014

“We may never understand illnesses such as cancer. In fact, we may never cure it. But an ounce of prevention is worth more than a million pounds of cure.

— American physician David Agus

Let us
always
meet each
other with
a smile,
for the
smile is the
beginning
of love.

Religious sister and
missionary Mother Teresa
(1910-1997)

unimoon

n. A vacation taken separately by each person in a newly married couple in lieu of a honeymoon.

Example. Busy lives lead couples to take separate honeymoons. You heard correctly. Some people are actually taking honeymoons without their spouses called **unimoons**. Demanding jobs and conflicting schedules lead to the separate post-wedding trips.

—Larry Dowdy, “How busy is too busy”, *Sunny 93.5*, 6 January 2015

STINGRAY

n. A device that spoofs a cellular network tower to identify and track mobile phones.

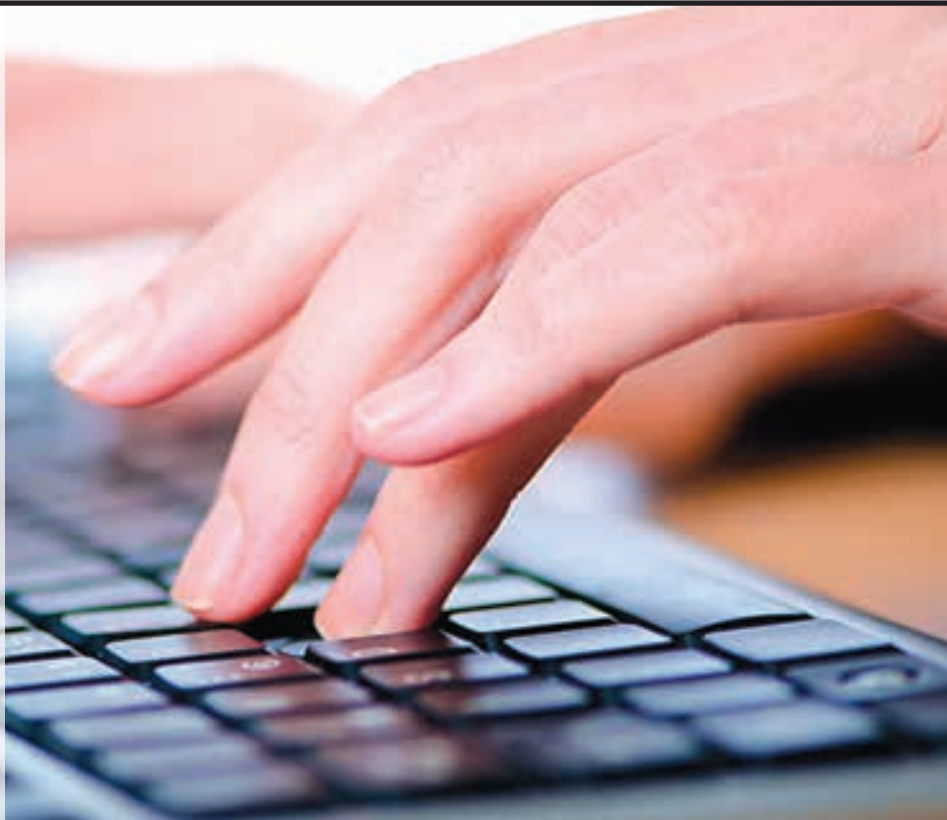
Example. Police in Florida have offered a startling excuse for having used a controversial **stingray** cell phone tracking gadget 200 times without ever telling a judge: the device’s manufacturer made them sign a non-disclosure agreement that they say prevented them from telling the courts.

—Kim Zetter, “Florida cops’ secret weapon: Warrantless cell phone tracking”, *Wired*, 3 March 2014

LOG ON

Here’s an opportunity for silvers in Bengaluru to bridge the digital divide—R V Institute of Management offers free computer classes for silvers between the ages of 55 and 90 with basic knowledge of English. The brainchild of director T V Raju, the initiative was prompted by the need for elders to stay in touch with their children overseas. The classes include basic computer training and instruction in online transactions, web calling and social networking. Each batch comprises 40 students—the next batch begins on 2 April 2015 and ends on 2 July 2015; classes are conducted between 5 pm and 6 pm, Monday to Saturday. To enrol, call A Chandran on (0)9449828204 or 080-42540329, or email csr_rvim@yahoo.in

BUZZ



“Education is a safe and sound investment for children”

Syed Firoz Ashraf, 73, Mumbai, teaches poor children



Haresh Patel

In the evenings, a modest two-room ground floor apartment in Jogeshwari, a western suburb of Mumbai, gets transformed into a private coaching class. Poor school-going children, mostly girls, flock to the home of 73 year-old **Syed Firoz Ashraf** to clear their doubts with ‘Uncle Ashraf’ and ‘Auntie Arifa’. Ashraf, who has been running free tuition classes since 1997, says, “Education is like a fixed deposit for these children, safe and profitable in the long run.” Soon after the Mumbai riots of 1992-93, when he moved to Jogeshwari, Ashraf was appalled to see the poor conditions in which people lived. Opting for voluntary retirement from his job at the Indian Oil Corporation, Ashraf soon started scripting for television programmes and freelancing for newspapers. In his spare time, he started coaching his watchman’s daughter Niloufer. “She had failed in math; the father couldn’t afford to send her to tuition classes, and hence he came to me for help,” says Ashraf. “She became my first student and when the sweeper got wind of this, she sent her daughter too.” His first batch of SSC, comprising three students—Niloufer, Raeesa and Rahimunnissa—passed with flying colours in 1998. Gradually, the strength of his classes grew, and his wife, a BMC employee, started chipping in. Many of his students today are lawyers,

teachers and media professionals. If it wasn’t for Uncle Ashraf, many of these girls would have dropped out of school and been married off. Recalling one such incident, he says, “One of the girls was going to be married as she had failed in the 7th grade. Her father relented to let her continue her studies after a lot of persuasion.” “Today”, Ashraf adds proudly, “she scripts for radio.” His charitable work has won Ashraf numerous government awards; he was also invited to a workshop on education in Tokyo, conducted by UNICEF. This do-gooder is unhappy with the disparity between girls and boys. “While most of the boys are sent to English medium schools, girls are sent to Urdu medium *madrassa* or municipal schools.” Currently, Ashraf has about 100 students and an additional coaching centre in Andheri, where other teachers take classes. He is supported by charitable trusts such as Vikas Adhayan Kendra and the Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, with family and friends also pitching in. Though funding is a constant source of worry, Ashraf is undeterred, “Many of these girls have a very hard life. It is only education that can help them overcome it.”

—Moeena Halim

You can contact Firoz Ashraf on (0)9323284889

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