

harmony celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

FEBRUARY 2012 ₹ 30

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Two for the road Shabana Azmi & Javed Akhtar

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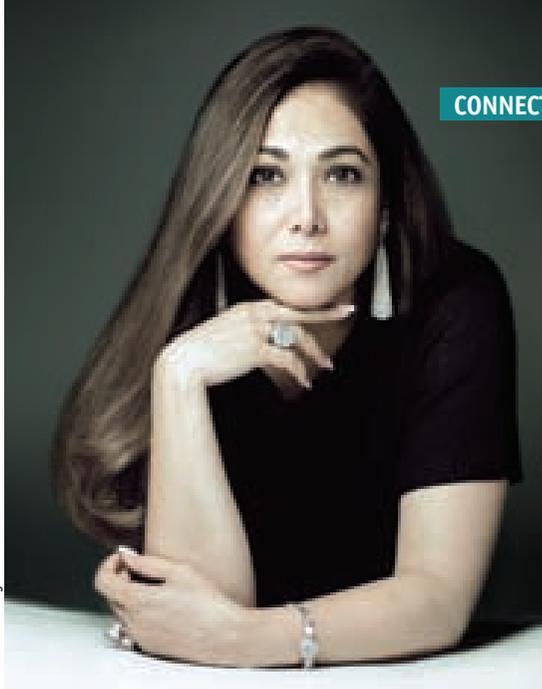
O, yes!

She is living proof that you can mould your destiny with your own hands—provided you add blood, sweat and tears to the supple clay of life. Born in poverty in rural Mississippi, Oprah Winfrey went on to host the highest-rated talk show in history and become one of the richest African-Americans in the 20th century. All that talk was followed up by plenty of action by this master of reinvention. She published *O*, her magazine on how to live your best life that has been a tremendous inspiration for the team at *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, and established herself as one of the greatest black philanthropists in American history through The Oprah Winfrey Foundation. Today, she is considered one of the most influential women in the world.

As someone who has always been inspired and motivated by Oprah and her incredible life, it was a pleasure to meet her in Mumbai this January during her visit to India. She was here to film segments of her new series, *Next Chapter*, where she will engage with newsmakers and thought leaders across the world. We spent little time together but the takeaway was immense—she was warm and compassionate, unfailingly accommodative of all the demands on her time, genuinely receptive to the people around her, and eager to absorb every new experience that came her way.

At 57, Oprah knows that despite all that she has achieved, she still has an entire lifetime of experiences and adventure before her. That's the spirit of Harmony, a

Suresh Natarajan



maxim that was on display at Mumbai's Azad Maidan at the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon on 15 January. Around 1,800 silvers wore the Harmony colours and stole the show, cheered on by actors Anil Kapoor, Mahima Chaudhary and Gulshan Grover. I thank them for their encouragement and enthusiasm. I would also like to acknowledge Baccarose Perfumes, British Biologicals, Healthspring Community Medical Centres, Jivraj Tea, Procarn International, The Westin Mumbai Garden City and Zimmer India for all their support. And, of course, my team at Harmony for working tirelessly to ensure the event ran smoothly like clockwork.

Take a cue from our silver participants and embark on your own run. Drive your body, challenge your mind, liberate your soul. Do whatever it takes to go one step further on the road to self-actualisation. You have the power to change your realities—harness it.

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

Harmony Celebrate Age—February 2012 Volume 8 Issue 9

Publisher **Dharmendra Bhandari** Editor **Tina Ambani** Deputy Editor **Meeta Bhatti** Associate Editor **Arati Rajan Menon**

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Editorial & Marketing Offices: Reliance Centre, 1st floor, 19, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai-400001. Tel: 91-22-30327108 (Editorial), 30327102 (Marketing). Email: contact.mag@harmonyindia.org **Printed and published** by Dharmendra Bhandari on behalf of the owners, Harmony for Silvers Foundation **Printed** at Thomson Press India Ltd, Plot No. 5/5A, TTC Ind. Area, Thane-Belapur Road, Airoli, Navi Mumbai-400708 (Maharashtra); Thomson Press India Ltd, 18-35, Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007 (Haryana). **Published** at Reliance Energy Centre, Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400055. **Disclaimer:** The material provided by *Harmony* is not a substitute for professional opinions. Readers are advised to seek appropriate advice from qualified and licensed professionals in the concerned field. © Harmony for Silvers Foundation. All rights reserved worldwide. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. *Harmony* does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material. www.harmonyindia.org

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BANG A GONG!
Harichand Dikka presents the news, the old-fashioned way

THE NEXT CHAPTER
Her passion for words sustains Anima Gogoi

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HURRY!! CONTACT YOUR NEAREST BRANCH

column one

The nameplate outside Javed Akhtar's and Shabana Azmi's house reads 'Azmi Akhtar'—a sign of parity in work, social eminence and, above all, relationship, which is also the reason why the two topped our list of favourites for February, a month we associate with mutual love and respect. While Shabanaji agreed to the interview, saying she "would love to do it", we had to approach Javed *saab* independently with the request. "He doesn't listen to me or me to him. We are married, remember!" she quipped. Eventually, as he was busy shuttling between cities, Shabanaji extracted a 'yes' from him to meet us and speak about togetherness, companionship and the independence therein ("Two for the Road"). Steady despite the tides of time, their relationship is based on common interests and ideologies. Equally inspiring are the Japtiwales from Pune, the Rahmans from Guwahati, the Bakshis from Hyderabad, the Mehndirattas from Chandigarh, and the Merchants from Mumbai. Blessed with friendship, love and marriage ("Everyday Magic"), their lives are coordinated to the last detail; the key word being 'harmony'.

Celebrate age with every single person featured in the magazine; those leading the march, as well as the ones leading humble, retired lives. Each one has a story to tell—not just of the full lives they have led, but of how complete they feel within today's realities. Acceptance plays a huge role in their current accomplishments and goads them to 'greater good' beyond themselves. The Deshpandes' science *yatra* for children in Pune ("Logic on Wheels") or Kitty Bakshi's love for strays ('Speak') are just two such examples. Read for inspiration—and pure pleasure.

—Meeta Bhatti

I am a student of the College of Engineering, Guindy at Anna University, Chennai. I don't really read a lot but I love your magazine, *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. Watching me read it, most of my friends and family have started reading the magazine too. I believe the work your team does is marvellous; the magazine is very motivational. I love the term 'silver' and have already started using it.

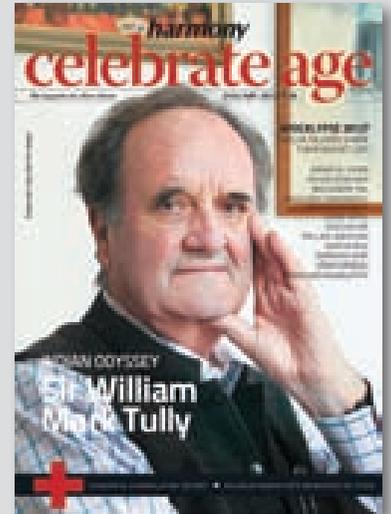
It struck me that my grandfather Y Balasubramanian, fondly known as YB or Raja, is also a unique silver and I wanted to share something about him. He turned 80 last November, yet never hesitates to walk 2 km to catch a bus despite undergoing knee replacement on both knees. He retired from BHEL as a general manager, and went on to head two more companies, one after the other, where he helped create a revolution. I learnt from him and his colleagues that he was a superman at work!

After becoming tired of working as an engineer, he studied homeopathy and became a doctor. He practised at home, giving free treatment to the poor. He then realised he could not sit in one place and wanted to do something more for society. Thus, he went on to teach English and Hindi to less fortunate children in Ooty and the interiors of Karnataka. Further, he got in touch with many ashrams and helped them with their administration. For this, he even received an award on behalf of the Amar Seva Sangam from President Pratibha Patil.

He is out of the house 20 days a month for his work; the other 10 days are spent resting in Chennai and Bengaluru, where his sons live. A strong man with immense willpower, he continues to be very active despite having undergone a series of surgeries, from cataract to bypass. He remains resolute even after the loss of his wife last November. Being a linguist, he is currently translating the *Bhagavad-Gita* into English verbatim, with meanings. He has already received offers for it to be translated into Tamil and Malayalam.

I believe such a man is a true role model for everyone.

Tejasvi Suresh Bala Chennai



I am a 75 year-old man. I was very impressed by the article written by M P V Shenoi about Mr T S Nagarajan ("My Friend, My Philosopher", 'Your Space') in the October 2011 issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. All of us go through the cycle of birth, marriage, parenting, and ageing. Unfortunately, one person in a couple passes away first, leaving

the other one bereaved. It was so moving to read about Nagarajan's tribute to his wife and his feelings for her: "...she made me believe she would live forever. I am now experiencing an emotional territory I had never explored—a landscape of grief, loss and longing." It is indeed unfortunate that death is not in our hands. All we can do

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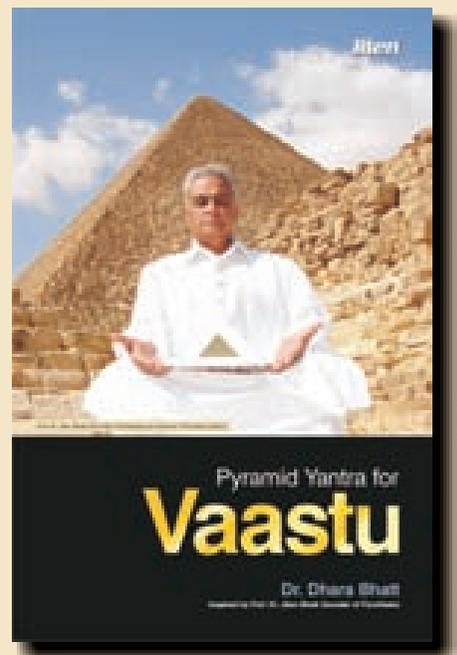
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is devote ourselves to our spouse and then console ourselves with our memories as living or leaving is not in our control.

T T Varadarajan Chennai

I was delighted to read the article written in the December 2011 issue of your magazine (“The Bombay



Boy”). I am extremely pleased and I have circulated it to many of my friends who have appreciated the

CONTRIBUTOR

Our cover feature this month (“Two for the Road”) has been written by **Tanmaya Nanda**. After working for 16 years in Delhi, New York and what he fondly calls the spittoon among metropolises, aka Mumbai, this journalist has settled for describing himself as a small-town boy with a big-city worldview. Having spent most of his adult life away from home, he now constantly questions the viability of moving his septuagenarian parents to Mumbai against letting them stay in their hometown, where they have an active social network. “With my parents having been married for over 46 years now, I am only all too familiar with the process of ageing together so I grabbed the opportunity to interview another silver couple, especially one as prominent as Javed Saab and Shabanaji,” he says. “What’s more, having been married less than two years to a wonderful person, I could use all the advice I can get!”

quality of the article as well as the photography.

Lord Gulam Noon London

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the helpful and invaluable service provided by Harmony for Silvers Foundation to the elderly community in Mumbai. I request you to look into the possibility of establishing a similar institution in Indore, or help us to do the same.

Mohan Kamath Via email

I am a subscriber to *Harmony-Celebrate Age* for the past five years. It has inspired me and my wife, who is a teacher, very much. I am 67. I was dealing in ball bearings but have retired. I want to start a small business to keep me busy. I have read in the papers about an industry that offers an income by making paper plates and disposable items. They offer machinery to make these items and are ready to buy the finished product. I would like to invest in this as it does not require a big budget but I have doubts about its genuineness.



I also wonder whether it would be profitable. Could you guide me?

Moiz Gandhi Secunderabad

Thank you for your letter. We will soon source a reply for your query and print it in our ‘Second Careers’ section. Watch that space!

Editors



AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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

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

Mail us at Reliance Centre, 1st Floor, 19, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai-400001. Or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org

INSIDE

P28: Lite is right

P32: Mind muscle



NEWS ● VIEWS ● PEOPLE ● RESEARCH ● TRENDS ● TIPS

► **NEWSWORTHY**

Paradise found

The expat life has never looked so good for American silvers. Following research on parameters ranging from climate to cost of living, healthcare, infrastructure, real estate, special benefits and ease of integration, US magazine *International Living* presented its list of the **World's Top Retirement Havens** in its January 2012 issue. "Many Americans are wondering when, if ever, they will be able to afford to retire," says editor Eoin Bassett. "What they often don't realise is the low cost of living in other countries can open up the door to an early retirement, and a standard of living way beyond what they could afford back home." Here's the magazine's Top 10:

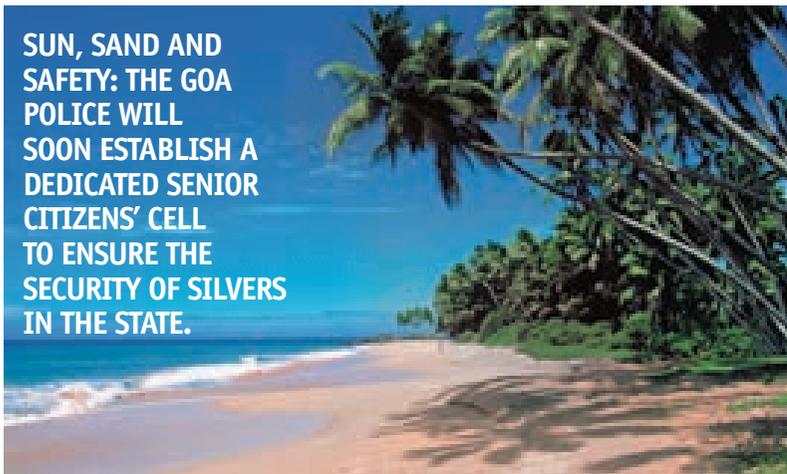
- 1. Ecuador**
- 2. Panama**
- 3. Mexico**
- 4. Malaysia**
- 5. Colombia**
- 6. New Zealand**
- 7. Nicaragua**
- 8. Spain**
- 9. Thailand**
- 10. Honduras**





Response time is no indicator of mental agility. That's the conclusion of a study recently conducted at Ohio State University, which argues that **the mind of silvers can be just as quick as younger people—they just take longer to make it up.** Study leader Roger Ratcliff and his team ran several experiments on over 300 volunteers to rate mental ability and agility across all ages. For instance, a group of asterisks was flashed on a computer screen; the volunteers were asked to quickly estimate the number of asterisks. "We found that response times and

accuracy both improved with age, up to a point," writes Ratcliff in journal *Child Development*. "Accuracy remained good even among older volunteers, but response times suffered. This should not be dismissed as 'sluggish thinking' but rather the result of seniors emphasising accuracy over speed. Older people don't want to make errors and that slows them down." He proved this theory in a subsequent experiment: when he and his colleagues coached older volunteers to obsess less about accuracy and focus more on speed, they were eventually able to react just as quickly as college students.



SUN, SAND AND SAFETY: THE GOA POLICE WILL SOON ESTABLISH A DEDICATED SENIOR CITIZENS' CELL TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF SILVERS IN THE STATE.

Your Act

Good tidings for the New Year—the Andhra Pradesh government has framed rules for effective implementation of the **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**. The state issued an order detailing the procedures for tribunals to process applications filed by parents against their children and childless senior citizens against their relatives for maintenance. Under the enactment, silvers can claim provision of food, clothing, residence, medical attendance or treatment from one or all of their children, provided they are above 18 years of age. In case



the legal heirs do not take care of their parents, the rules provide for a maximum of ₹ 10,000 to be paid to the parents. The government also announced that 10 per cent of the 500 old-age homes in the state (which collectively house around 25,000 silvers) will receive government aid under Section 19 of the Act. "The rules will be implemented strictly to help deserted parents," Women and Child Welfare Minister Sunita Lakshma Reddy announced at a press conference. "Aggrieved parents should first approach the appellate committees that will function under the chairmanship of a revenue divisional officer. If the grievance is not resolved at the committee level, the tribunal headed by the district collector will look into the complaint."



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Sip of youth

Can you really swallow the years away? UK company Rejuvenated is banking on it, with its much-touted **Collagen Shots, a unique 100 per cent marine collagen drink.** Kathryn Danzey, the founder of the company, claims that clinical trials have proven that drinking 10 mg of collagen per day cuts lines and furrows by about 40 per cent and boosts hydration by about 90 per cent. "Natural collagen plays a crucial role in maintaining even skin tone, suppleness and elasticity but after the age of 25, collagen synthesis begins to reduce," Danzey tells media. "That's where Collagen Shots comes



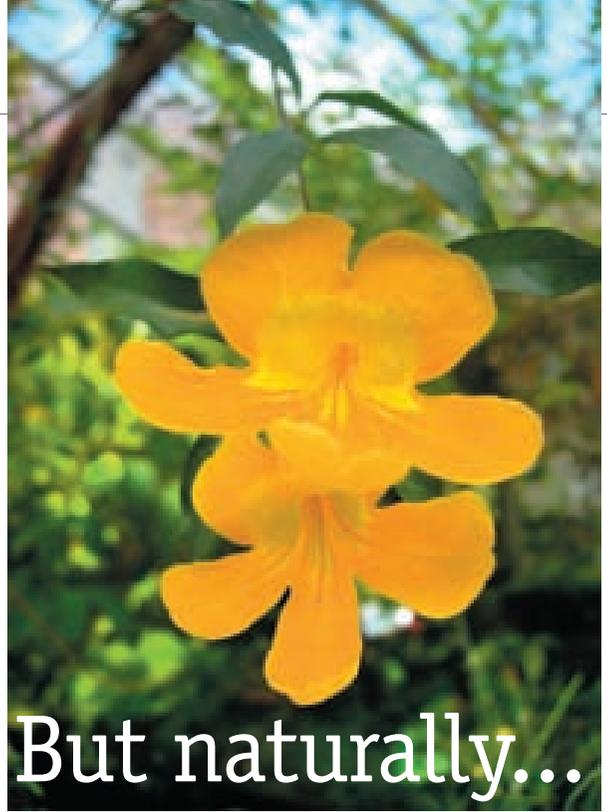
in. It combines powerful ingredients including natural marine collagen found in fish and acai berry that works synergistically to reduce premature facial and body ageing. And although collagens have been used in cosmetics for quite some time, orally taken collagens are far more potent." Willing to give it a try? Go to collagen-shots.com

Paint me silver

Impossibly perky American 60-something beauty expert Andrea Warshaw-Wernick is something of a self-styled Peter Pan. And now she's inviting her fellow silvers on the 'ageless' bandwagon with the launch of **Fabulous, a range of specially designed cosmetics for older women**—from eye shadows, pencils and lipsticks to glosses, blushes and mascaras. "The new line bridges the gap between natural and high fashion cosmetics," Warshaw-Wernick announces in a media release. "The natural, muted colour palette is chosen to complement mature skin tones and uneven pigmentation, avoiding



bright and jarring hues." All products, ranging from \$ 15 to \$ 30 (₹ 800-1,600) are allergen and fragrance-free. Check out the entire range at fabatanyage.com



If you're tired of all the hype and hoopla about expensive anti-ageing creams, it's time to look in your kitchen garden. The beauty team at website www.huffingtonpost.com urges you to go natural with its list of 10 herbs that help you zap age. Here are the miracle botanicals:

1. **Milk thistle:** Encourages the liver to make a powerful antioxidant that helps regenerate new skin cells, making your skin glow.
2. **Ginseng:** Battles high blood sugar and cholesterol, eases stress, protects the body from pain, and revs up physical and mental activity.
3. **Rhodiola Rosea:** Helps the body to cope with mental stress and protects the brain from Alzheimer's and other types of dementia.
4. **Rosemary:** Helps the skin's moisture balance, fending off sagging and wrinkles, and protects it from damage by aiding development of collagen.
5. **Ashwagandha:** Restores neurotransmitters in the brain, protecting it from Alzheimer's, builds resistance to stress, and strengthens the immune system.
6. **Ginkgo Biloba:** Elevates mood and improves blood flow to the brain, upping circulation in the fingers and toes.
7. **Cat's claw:** Strengthens the immune system and battles hypertension, poor circulation and high cholesterol.
8. **Grape seeds:** Helps neutralise damaging free radicals in the joints and halt the oxidation of bad cholesterol.
9. **Pine bark:** Strengthens capillaries, arteries and veins, fights inflammation, and improves blood circulation and joint flexibility.
10. **Reishi:** Known as the 'mushroom of immortality', it battles hypertension, arthritis, insomnia and lung disorders.

Can you see it?



SEEING, IN THIS CASE, could possibly be believing. Developed by British company Eye Secrets, a **collagen-rich eye patch, or 'eyelid lift'**, claims to **reverse the signs of ageing by up to eight years**. Just leave it on for 15 minutes, and it promises to repair damaged skin around the eyes, and eradicate dark circles and puffiness by an incredible 92 per cent. "The product can be used in the comfort of your own home and has no downtime, unlike cosmetic treatments that can not only be extremely painful but can leave you with a recovery time of up to seven days," goes a media release from the company. This comfort comes at just under £ 25 (about ₹ 2,000) for a patch. Go to www.eye-secrets.com to learn more.

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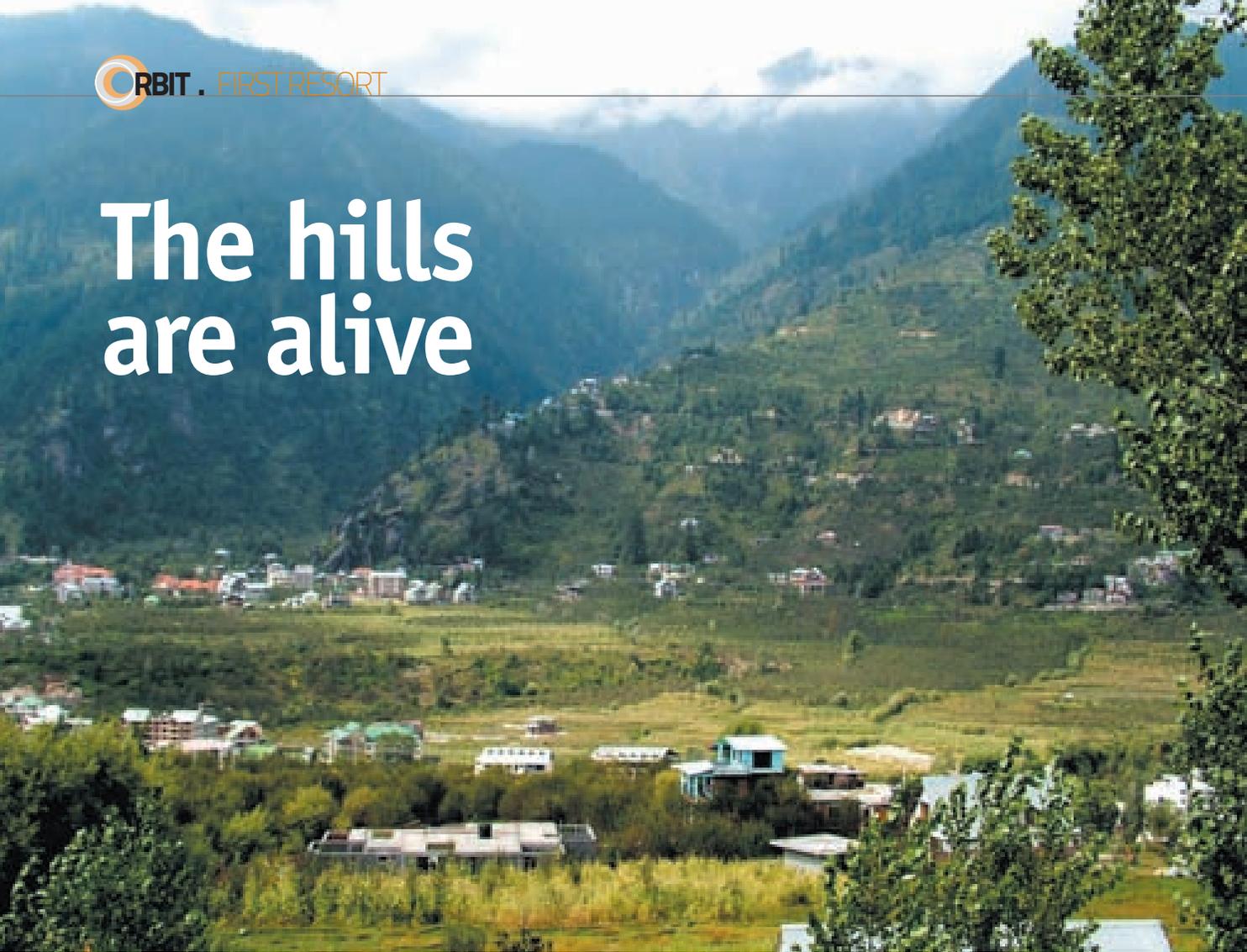
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The hills are alive



Here's the answer for silvers who wish to retire to peace and serenity. NGO Bhartiya Sanskriti Raksha Shakti is establishing a **senior citizens' village in Dawara, situated in the Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh**, along the banks of the Vyas River. The village is open to silvers over the age of 58 years. Apart from a refundable security deposit of ₹ 25,000, lifetime charges

range from ₹ 300,000 for a shared room to ₹ 500,000 for a double bedroom. An additional monthly payment of ₹ 3,000 (for the first year; with an addition of ₹ 500 per year) will be charged for water, electricity, food, maintenance, laundry and entertainment facilities, including a library. Medical care is also available. For more details, go to www.bhartiya-sanskriti.org

Help at HOME

ASSISTED LIVING will soon come to northern India, courtesy Delhi-based Ashiana Housing Ltd. A pioneer in developing homes for silvers, the company is now extending its project

portfolio to include 'care homes' for silvers with significant health considerations. Its **Utsav Care Homes in Bhiwadi are envisaged as assisted-living communities that combine independent accommodations with support services** such as dining, wellness, social activities, personal care, medication management, and more. These homes will each house 27 beds; the first phase will comprise seven such homes. Monthly charges begin from ₹ 29,000 to ₹ 47,000 with

a deposit of ₹ 400,000 (₹ 200,000 refundable). Subsequently, these Care Homes will be developed in other locations. "The lack of a viable strategy and people for elderly care has created a huge demand for assisted living in India," says Ankur Gupta, joint managing director, Ashiana Housing Ltd. "This new project is in line with our commitment to provide a quality life with accessible healthcare to senior citizens." To learn more, go to www.ashianahousing.com

She likes it

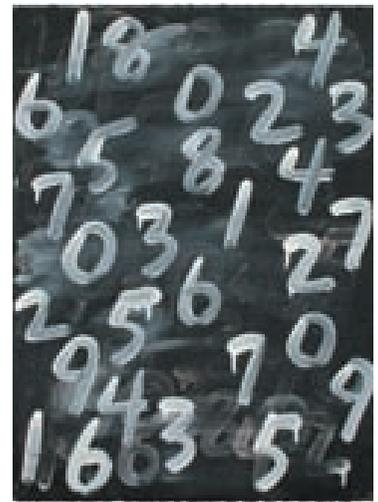
WOMEN don't just have sex well into their silver years, they enjoy it too. A new study on sexual satisfaction published in the *American Journal of Medicine* finds that **although older age is usually associated with less sexual pleasure in women, the percentage of satisfied women did not decrease with age.** The study tracked 806 women from Rancho Bernardo, a community near San Diego, California, for 40 years and discovered that the oldest women—80 years or older—re-



ported they were as satisfied as 40 year-olds. "Not only were most of the women in the long-term study satisfied with their overall sex lives, they were happy regardless of partner status or type of sexual activity," writes lead author Susan Trompeter of the University of California-San Diego's School of Medicine. "Those who were not engaged in actual intercourse may have achieved sexual satisfaction through touching, caressing, or other intimacies developed over the course of a long relationship. This is proof that emotional and physical closeness to the partner may be more important than experiencing orgasm." You can read the study at [www.amjmed.com/article/S0002-9343\(11\)00655-3/fulltext](http://www.amjmed.com/article/S0002-9343(11)00655-3/fulltext)

Reduced to a number

Do you face 'stereotype threat'? Research commissioned by the Australian National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre suggests that **most older workers experience the fear of being reduced to a stereotype and having one's skills and experience ignored because of age.** More worrying, this fear is working against government measures to encourage silvers to keep working longer. "A lot of stereotypes about older people tend to be negative, like older people are not good at learning to use technology, or are prone to ill-health," Peter Matwijiw, general manager of policy and research at National Seniors, tells www.australianageingagenda.com.au. "There's been a lot of work to debunk that. There's a lot of documentation and research about



why these are myths, but people still harbour them. And this is getting in the way of recent initiatives like the creation of the Age Discrimination Commissioner and the abolition of the age limit for the superannuation [pension plan] guarantee. Clearly, every organisation needs to send out more positive signals about how they value their older workers."

Grandma's new fix?

Drinks like Red Bull that promise an instant pick-me-up have always targeted young consumers. But that may soon change. American consumer research body The Values Institute predicts that **energy drink manufacturers will shift their focus to senior citizens**, as news website nydailynews.com reports. For instance, 5-Hour Energy, a company that produces energy 'shots', has enlisted popular silver actor John Ratzenberger to front their product as part of an extensive—and expensive—advertising campaign. Energy shots, marketed by brands like Rockstar, 6 Hour Power and NOS Power, as well as 5-Hour, come in portable 50 ml bottles that deliver a powerful caffeine hit in a few sips; in fact, they contain as much caffeine as



their larger counterparts like Red Bull, Monster and Lucozade, but with less calories. A further draw for silvers—they also contain traditional stimulants like guarana, ginseng or ginkgo biloba, known for their 'restorative' (read libido-enhancing) properties.

Twilight tales



When beauty is your currency, does its waning leave you emotionally bankrupt? That's the question renowned American filmmaker and photographer Timothy Greenfield-Sanders seeks to answer in *About Face*, a documentary on ageing that features some of the world's top supermodels from the 1970s and 80s. As news agency AFP reports, iconic faces including Christie Brinkley, Paulina Porizkova, Christie Turlington, Jerry Hall and Isabella Rossellini (see picture) candidly speak about the inevitable loss of self-esteem in a youth-centric industry, and the need for plastic surgery.

Speaking of going under the knife, 80-something Carmen Dell'Orefice, a former *Vogue* cover girl who still models, has this to say: "Well, if you had the ceiling falling down in the living room, would you not go and have a repair? And when the house is your livelihood, there's no doubt you'd fix it, right?" The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah in January and will be released publicly later in the year. Check out the trailer at www.youtube.com/embed/bmFhOLGL204



PUNK'D

You could call it a novel way for silvers to act out their angst. In *Off Their Rockers*, a new TV show anchored by 90 year-old actor Betty White, silvers 'punk' (scam or play a prank on) the younger generation, with the jokes ranging from slapstick to dirty. *The New York Times* gives us an example: An elderly man with a white cane and dark glasses makes his way, slowly, down a sidewalk. He asks a younger gentleman, "Have you seen a blue Mustang around here?" The young guy helps him to the car. The 'blind' guy gets in and drives away as a camera zooms in on the shocked man's face. Not too funny? That's not the point, insists White (see picture). "It's a fun show that gives oldsters the opportunity to get their revenge," she says. "We are hip enough, and maybe mean enough, to want to get even. We've a sense of humour, warped as it may be!" The show premiered on NBC on 16 January.



They're back!

Wham, bam, thank you gran? A sequel to its 2010 forerunner, *The Expendables 2*, directed by 65 year-old Sylvester Stallone, brings back veteran big guns Bruce Willis, 56, Dolph Lundgren, 54, Jean-Claude van Damme, 51, Chuck Norris, 71, and 64 year-old Arnold Schwarzenegger to the screen to flex their biceps. The plot is negligible, but there are plenty of high jinks, firepower, blood and gore for the action fan. (And enough well-toned silver muscle on display to thrill the ladies.) The film will hit theatres in August 2012 but you can catch a sneak peek at www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rkdTcQLwZ4

The Miracle of Modern Science

“Hip Hip Hurray!”

Dr Harish Bhende



When a young Narendra left to play with his friends in the evening, he had no idea of the danger lurking around the bend. While riding his bicycle, he did not see a deep pothole and suffered a bad accident. His face was injured and his

hip was bruised. Narendra's parents took him to the local orthopaedic surgeon. The news was not good! Narendra had to undergo an urgent surgery to mend his fractured hip. This took away his chance to appear for his 8th standard examination. By the end of three months, Narendra could hobble around his house, but the pain was still there. The surgery gave him little relief, but he had to walk with support and with significant pain. He was told that he had AVN of his hip joint; in other words, the circulation of the hip joint was defective and that caused the ball of the hip joint to collapse. A young, lively and carefree teenager was now handicapped. The pain was increasing by the day and he stopped going to school; his teachers advised him to drop out of exams. Narendra's dream about his bright future was fading and he felt helpless.

This was when he heard about Laud Clinic—the Centre for Complex Joint Replacement Surgery. Situated in the picturesque area of Hindu Colony in Dadar East, Mumbai, this specialised centre is famous for its ability in handling complex problems of hip and knee replacement surgeries. Narendra was informed about the doctors at the clinic by another patient who himself had undergone similar surgery at Laud Clinic. Narendra visited the clinic to get his condition evaluated and find out about his future prospects. By now his operated leg had become almost 2 -3 cm short and his walking had come to standstill due to pain. Thorough examination at Laud Clinic revealed a collapsed hip ball and non-salvageable joint. The only way to get him on his feet was surgical removal of the damaged ball and its replacement with artificial ball and socket joint.

The surgery comprised use of artificial ball and socket to replace the damaged hip joint; it is being done all over the world for the last 40 years. These hip joints have a maximum life of 10 to 15 years. The socket usually wears out and the patient needs to undergo another surgery after that. This means Narendra would need maybe three to four such surgeries to have a continuous pain-free life. The second problem of a conventional hip replacement is the risk of dislocation, which prevents the patient from sitting on the floor and in cross-legged position. It was a challenge to operate such a young

person who has a full life ahead of him and assure him about normal function and long-term survival of his artificial hip.

The doctors at Laud Clinic, especially Dr Bhende who was treating Narendra, decided to use a special type of hip joint which was not used in India before. This joint required “screw-less” fixation of the socket. The technique requires extensive experience to get it right, as the surgeon gets only one chance to fix the socket of the hip. This socket is made of titanium with coating of hydroxyapatite, which can bind to the patient's bone easily. The socket is lined inside by special ceramic called “Delta Ceramic” that gives almost no wear-tear for the ball-socket mechanism. This can give the hip joint easily 30 to 40 years of life, the longest so far in the world! The recently raised concerns about cobalt and chromium leak with subsequent problems for patient is also not an issue with this joint. The large ball used gives exceptional stability and allows the patient to sit on the floor in cross-legged position.



Narendra underwent hip replacement and was able to walk on the next day of the surgery. His shortening of the leg was corrected. His pain was completely gone. Within five days, when he was discharged from the hospital, he was able to walk, climb stairs and use the toilet seat easily. Three months after the surgery, when he went to meet Dr Bhende at Laud Clinic, his walk was normal and the other patients did not realise that this was the same young boy who was in so much pain that he needed two people to help him earlier. When Narendra left Laud Clinic, he was on his way to a new life with lots of possibilities and hope.

Operating on damaged hip and knee joints to get them normal is an art, where only access to new technology is not sufficient. As we all know, getting best painting technology is not enough to create a masterpiece; we need a Michael Angelo or a Raja Ravi Varma to use the technology and create the masterpiece. Dr Bhende and his team of dedicated people at Laud Clinic are creating such surgical masterpieces to help handicapped arthritic patients and get them over their disabilities.

For more information, go to www.laudclinic.com

Dr Bhende can be contacted at Laud Clinic, 180 Hindu Colony, Dadar (East), Near Dadar TT, Mumbai, 400 014.

022-24143167, 24158309, 24128443

OUR RUN



Photographs by Haresh Patel

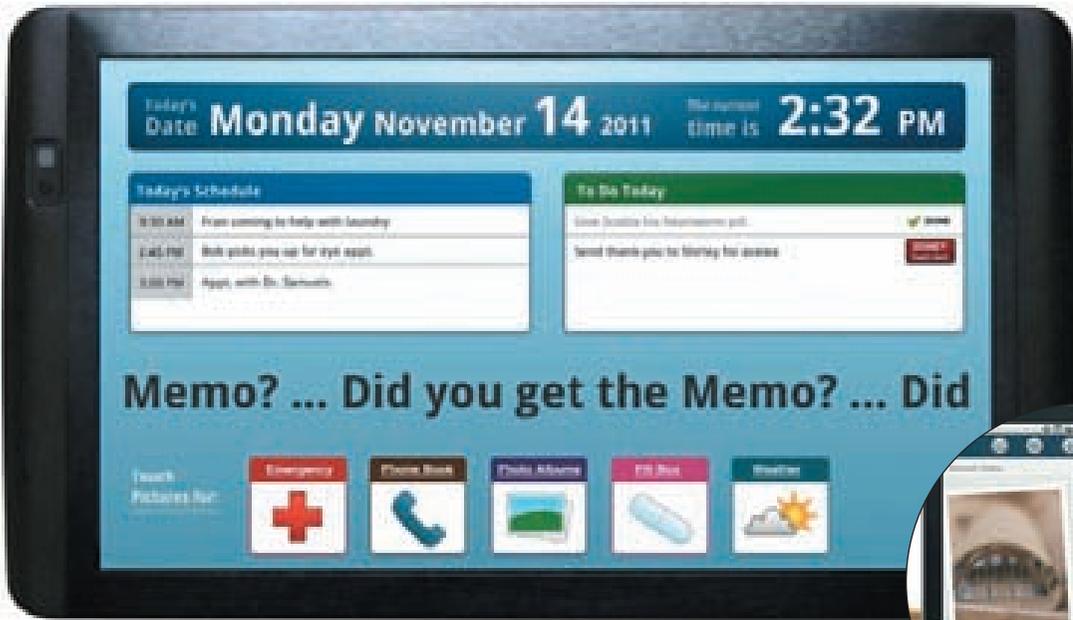
Despite the chill wind whipping across the city, on 15 January Harmony for Silvers Foundation's marquee at Azad Maid reverberated with warmth, cheer and the enthusiasm of close to 1,800 silvers gathered to participate in the **Harmony Senior Citizens' Run** at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2012. There was fun aplenty as actors Anil Kapoor and Gulshan Grover entertained the participants amid loud cheers and applause; silvers in myriad, eye-catching outfits grooved to the latest film songs; and the lively 'Clapping Club' swore their loyalty to the Harmony Run, exclaiming, "We have been running since the year it started and will continue to as long as we breathe." The pictures say it all.





Silver flash

THE FLASH MOB IS A PHENOMENON THAT HAS BEEN EMBRACED BY CITIES ACROSS THE GLOBE AS AN EXPRESSION OF SHARED EXUBERANCE. MUMBAI IS NO EXCEPTION. ON 4 JANUARY, 50 SILVERS FROM THE HARMONY INTERACTIVE CENTRE CAME TOGETHER IN THE PHOENIX MILLS COMPOUND TO DANCE TO THE LATEST BOLLYWOOD HITS, FROM *CHAMMAK CHALLO* TO *DHINKA CHIKA*. THE PERFORMANCE, WHICH WAS CHOREOGRAPHED BY STUDENTS OF WILSON COLLEGE, ENCHANTED BYSTANDERS—MANY EVEN JOINED IN! TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT, PHOENIX MILLS OFFERED SNACKS AND BEVERAGES TO THE SILVERS. WE SALUTE OUR NIMBLE-FOOTED SILVERS!



Touch and go

If short-term memory loss is getting in the way of your life, the answer may well lie in a **Memo—a user-friendly touch tablet that will remind you of your daily tasks and activities.** According to tech website *www.empowerednews.net*, this standalone gadget features day/date displays, everyday reminders, weather updates, and

a help button to send messages and email. What's more, other family members can access it from their computers to update or change information. In fact, Memo has been developed specifically for patients suffering from Alzheimer's in consultation with gerontologists. To learn more, go to *memotouch.com*



Baby love

It's the cutest anti-depressant you'll ever see. Designed as a **companion for silvers, Babyloid, a fluffy robot** developed in Japan, has a round silicone face with two black dots for blinking eyes and a small horizontal slit that poses as a mouth, which is also premeditated to produce a smile. It can speak in about a hundred different voices and LED lights indicate its moods—lights in his cheeks make it look happy; blue LED tears mean it's sad. Rock it, and Babyloid will fall asleep in your arms. As website *newscientist.com* reports, when its creator Masayoshi Kanoh, a university professor, test-drove the robot at a retirement home, he discovered that users interacted with it for a total of 90 minutes per day (in seven to eight-minute sittings) and it palpably eased their symptoms of depression. According to Pune-based psychiatrist Dr Biswaroop Dey, "Babyloid features treatments already used for depression. We use light therapy treatment for depressed elderly, especially in winters. This light therapy has been used in the robot with LED lights. And forming the robot in the shape of a baby brings out the emotions of the elderly. The only way Babyloid could have been improved is by incorporating a little bit of music."

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		Mira Road (E)	28555970, 28555971		

Act it out. Set up an amateur theatre group with your fellow silvers and discover your stage worth—it will keep your brain active and expand your social circle. For instance, in the German south-western town of Heidenheim, the association of German amateur theatres, BDAT, has established a special working group to promote senior citizens' theatre. "No matter what they per-



form—Shakespeare, comedies or dramas—the delight of the elderly people who participate is constantly increasing," says Tanja Eberhardt of the BDAT. "Plays written by seniors are also riding high. These tackle issues from dementia and loneliness to wartime experiences. We already have 18 senior theatre groups in the association and the number just keeps on growing!"

Then: Old Cardboard Boxes Now: Keepsake Tree

Cut an old cardboard box into a large square. If the cardboard is too thin, stick two layers of cardboard together to form a stronger base. Punch small holes in the top square of the base and join the dots with a knife, making it a slot. Make about five such slots to hold your cardboard 'pillars'.

Now, cut thin strips of cardboard in different sizes. Make at least five such pairs of varying lengths. Holding a pair of the same length together, fold the top of the strip in by just over an inch and fold the bottom out by an inch. Glue the strips together with the top folds facing each other. Leave the folded parts unglued; this is where you will place your keepsakes (photographs or notes). Paperclip them together till they dry.

Slide the glued strips into the slots made on the base. You can also glue them to the top base and weigh down or paperclip till they dry. Once dry, paint or decorate as you wish. Your 'keepsake tree' is ready.



FACTS

- » Cardboard is fully recyclable and biodegradable; it is safe to dispose as it does not contain any toxic constituents.
- » Recycled cardboard only takes 75 per cent of the energy needed to make new cardboard and lessens the emission of sulphur dioxide produced when making pulp from wood trees.
- » Recycling 1 tonne of cardboard saves over 6.88099372 m3 of landfill space.

Haresh Patel

MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...

1. INSTEAD OF STICKING STRIPS AS A PILLAR ON THE BASE, STICK AS A SUPPORT BEHIND THE BASE AND STICK A PICTURE ON THE FRONT OF THE BASE TO MAKE A CARDBOARD PHOTO FRAME.
2. CUT THE BASE IN SMALL SQUARES TO MAKE COASTERS. PERSONALISE BY PAINTING/DECORATING AS YOU WISH.



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TAKE YOUR TIME

A Japanese study reveals that **fast eaters have a higher chance of getting diabetes.** Thus, to reduce your risk later in life, it is important to eat slowly. After analysing weight, age, gender, family history, blood pressure, cholesterol levels and lifestyle habits like smoking and drinking, the researchers found that eating fast was the only pattern that significantly increased the risk of impaired glucose tolerance (IGT). "When people eat fast, they consume more than they need," says Dr Amol Hartalkar, diabetologist at Rural Medical Hospital in

Ahmednagar. "The risk of IGT is directly proportional to caloric intake. The risks are higher in junk food as it can be consumed faster than a staple diet." However, increased IGT was not noticed in people with other eating patterns such as snacking or late-night eating. Even in IGT, while blood glucose levels are higher than usual, they are not high enough to cause diabetes. However, it can later progress to Type 2 diabetes if preventive steps are not taken; 40-50 per cent of people with higher IGT have developed Type 2 diabetes within 10 years.

DEEP DOWN: CONCERNED THAT HEALTH AND NUTRITION ADVERTISEMENTS BLATANTLY MISLEAD YOUNG CHILDREN AND SENIOR CITIZENS, UNION MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS K V THOMAS HAS PROMISED TO SET UP A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO THESE ADS AND CURB THEM WITH HELP FROM THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING.

NEW KNEE

A team led by Newcastle University in Britain has devised a **new technique using stem cells that could cut down on hip or knee replacements.** As there is no cure for arthritis yet, painkillers and physiotherapy are primary options, followed by joint replacement surgery. Andrew McCaskie at Newcastle University says, "Joint replacement uses metal and plastic to replace the joint, whereas in our treatment every patient has a self-repair job made of stem cells from bone marrow or muscle, injected with vitamins and chemicals to trick them into becoming cartilage cells." This technique



could be in use in the next five years and will harness the power of stem cells that can turn into other cell types in patients still in their prime. Kolkata-based rheumatologist, Dr Sunil Nag says, "Factors like personal, family and mental history and lifestyle have to be studied before prescribing these injections." Meanwhile, the scientists are now trying to grow enough cartilage for an entire joint. This technique could also help people whose cartilage is wearing out and who wish to save a sample of their stem cells.

No-diabetes pill

With increasingly mind-numbing facts about diabetes making us lose hope of ever being rid of it, a new study has brought a fresh wave of expectations. A group of scientists in Britain claim they are working on a **pill that could not only cure but prevent diabetes.** They believe this miracle drug could be consumed like daily vitamins and completely stop Type 2 diabetes from developing. On experimentations with diabetic mice, a compound called nicotinamide mononucleotide (NMN) was discovered. Produced naturally by the body, NMN, when injected in diabetic



mice, successfully restored normal blood sugar metabolism and lowered high levels of cholesterol and triglyceride blood fats. Scientists are further working on administering NMN through drinking water. Dr R K Lalwani from the Diabetes and Heart Care Clinic in Delhi says, "We already have pills to keep blood sugar levels normal but if the NMN pill is found to be effective, it will be a great invention in the field of diabetes." Once the human

consumption grade of NMN is set, the pilot study will be open for trials.

NO URGENCY: THE SECOND PHASE OF THE UNION HEALTH MINISTRY'S NATIONAL TRAUMA CARE PROJECT AT PUNE-BASED SASSOON GENERAL HOSPITAL HAS BEEN STALLED FOR LACK OF FUNDING. WHILE THE FIRST PHASE COMPRISING CONSTRUCTION OF THE CENTRE HAS BEEN COMPLETED, THE SECOND PHASE, WHICH INVOLVES THE SETTING UP OF EQUIPMENT, AWAITS A SUM OF ₹ 50.5 MILLION FROM THE GOVERNMENT.



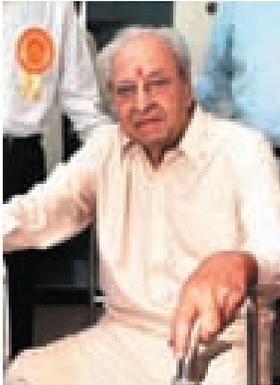
Apples and pears

A one-of-its-kind Dutch study, published in the journal *Stroke*, has revealed that **eating lot of fruits and vegetables with white flesh may protect against stroke.** Earlier stroke-related studies linked high consumption of fruits and vegetables with lower risk. Now, however, research is examining the association of colours of fruits and vegetables with the disease. In this particular decade-long study, researchers studied the link between the consumption of fruits and vegetables from different colour groups with the pattern of stroke incidence in 20,069 adults with an average age of 41. At the start of the study, participants were free of any cardiovascular diseases. Following the pattern for 10 years, 233 strokes were documented. Results reveal that green, orange/yellow and red/purple fruits and vegetables were not even remotely related to stroke. The risk of stroke was 52 per cent lower among those with high intake of white flesh fruits and vegetables. It was also noticed that higher intake of white fruits and vegetables (25 gm per day) was interlinked with 9 per cent decrease in the risk.

BIRTHDAYS

● Actor **Farrah Fawcett** (right) of *Charlie's Angels* fame turns 67 on 2 February.

● **Dan Quayle**, US vice-president under George Bush, turns 64 on 4 February.

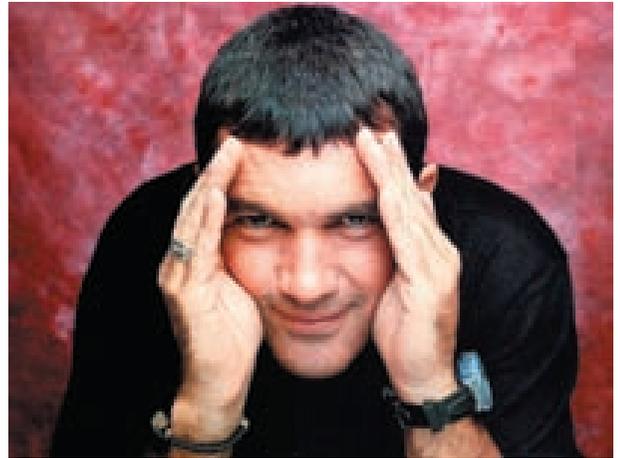


● Jazz and pop vocalist **Natalie Cole**, daughter of Nat 'King' Cole, turns 61 on 6 February.

● Legendary Hindi cinema actor **Pran** (left) turns 92 on 12 February.

● Star of the Seventies, **Randhir Kapoor** turns 65 on 15 February.

● Former prime minister of Britain **Gordon Brown** turns 70 on 20 February.

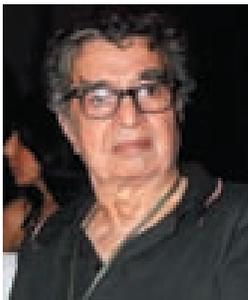


OVERHEARD

"I prefer to let life take me wherever it's going to take me. Wrinkles are welcome because they mean I have lived a life. If I looked in the mirror and saw somebody I was not supposed to be, I would freak out."

—*Spanish actor Antonio Banderas, 52, in the UK edition of Hello magazine*

IN PASSING



● Former Karnataka chief minister **S Bangarappa** died of a kidney-related ailment in Bengaluru on 25 December 2011. He was 79.

● Indian theatre icon and visionary **Satyadev Dubey** (left) passed away on 25 December 2011 after being comatose since September. He was 75.

● India's first woman press photographer **Homai Vyarwalla** (right) died of injuries from a fall on 16 January. Her iconic collection of photographs was meticulously handed over to a trust last year. She was 98. Vyarwalla was a role model for readers of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*—in fact, she appeared in the magazine's very first issue, in June 2004.



Harmony Archives

● Blues queen and three-time Grammy Award winner **Etta James** died on 20 January. She was 73.

MILESTONES

● She's probably the most flexible woman over 90 in the world! *Guinness World Records* has named 91 year-old American **Bernice Bates** the world's 'oldest yoga teacher'. Bates started practising yoga 50 years ago after watching a television programme.

● Just a few days after celebrated Marathi poet **Manik Sitaram Godghate** received the Vidarbha Bhushan Award on 18 December 2011, his name was announced for the Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection of essays *Varyane Halte Raan*. Popularly known as Kavi Grace, Godghate, 71, will receive the award on 14 February.

● Molecular biologist **Venkatraman Ramakrishnan**, (right) 58, the 2009 Nobel Prize winner in chemistry, has been listed in Britain's New Year Honours List 2012—he has received a knighthood.



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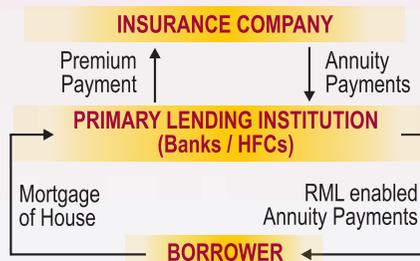
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Age	Property Value	LTV	Net Monthly RMLeA*
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65	1000000	60%	Rs. 2267 to Rs. 3987
70	1000000	60%	Rs. 2419 to Rs. 4816
75	1000000	70%	Rs. 3311 to Rs. 7166

* Net of Servicing Charges subject to detailed terms.

The above estimates are indicative and the actuals may vary depending upon the age of borrower, annuity options and other terms of the Primary Lending Institutions..

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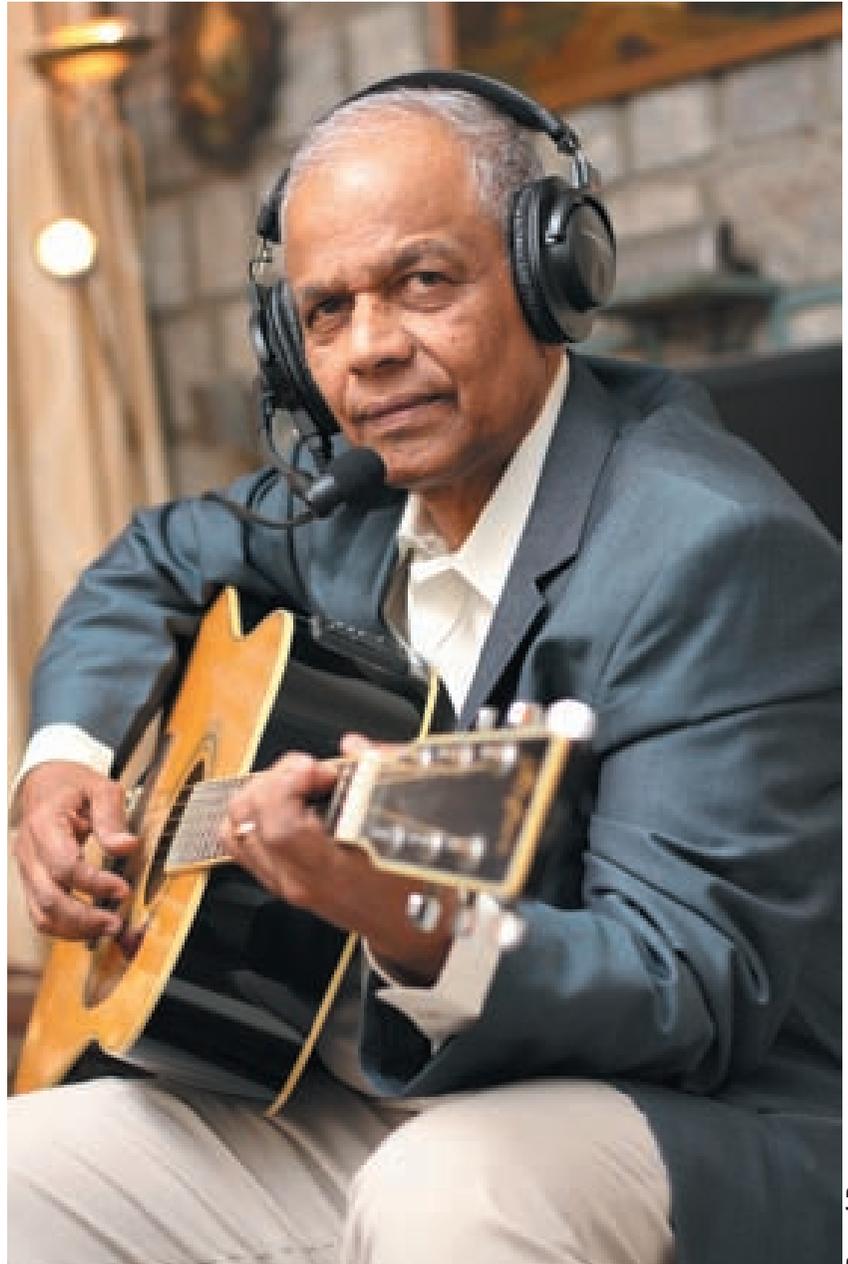
I DID IT MY WAY

I was always known as a shy guy, the quiet one. No one had heard me sing, least of all my course mates and their wives. So it came as a huge surprise when I set up my guitar, amplifier and the rest of the equipment to entertain them in Mysore at our annual reunion in November last year. They were very encouraging and helped me get over my initial hesitation. I had someone sing along with me and we even had someone on the dance floor!

My baptism into music was quaint but precious. You see, when I was in Stanes High School in Coimbatore, I used to hum but I never sang. When I turned 16 back in 1962, I was asked to accompany a band comprising my friends, on the Bass. The Bass was an empty tea-chest with a bow and string attached. The twang of this 'instrument' resembled the sound of the double bass and it worked very well!

Then, in college, our group played in clubs and also organised our own shows; my singing was limited to just a few songs. Basically, my stint with our band lasted only two years before I joined the Air Force at the age of 18. For the next 40 years, only my wife Susha heard me sing! When I retired at 58, I busied myself with a job that kept me going till I turned 60.

A year later, I felt a strong urge to learn to play an instrument. I decided on the guitar and planned to sing along with it. I engaged a tutor to help me get the hang of it and I must confess that there were times I was tempted to give it up. Thus, Susha had to bear the brunt of screechy, twangy noises till they turned soothing and musical!



Prasad Durga

His passion for music keeps the spring in K P Sreekanth's step

As you get older, you realise that everything becomes that much more difficult, and playing the guitar was no exception. Even though I have not reached a stage where

I can say I am a real musician, I certainly can sing a bit and play quite a few songs with the guitar as accompaniment. A passion for music has kept me going. So when I sang *My way* with the band at the Reunion Dinner, I really meant it in more ways than one. It has been a grind but 'I did it my way'!

—K P Sreekanth. Hyderabad

RIDING HIGH

Over 20 years ago, a friend lent me his Kawasaki GTO 110cc and I was zipping around Mumbai at a time when very few girls took to the roads. It was the beginning of a love affair that still gives me a huge thrill. Now, at 53, I can't wait for the Triumph to hit the Indian roads as it is one of my dream bikes.

Being a woman with a mop of grey hair under a helmet draws unflattering reactions from passers-by. But it doesn't really matter; the only thing that matters is the exhilaration I feel while riding. There's nothing better than a great

stretch of asphalt, the wind whistling through my helmet, riding through mountains and fields, and seeking out new places to quench my thirsty soul. I am lucky to be living my dream as a biker and I've ridden through Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

My biggest dream was to ride to Ladakh and it came true recently, with a road trip from Delhi to Khardung La. I went along with 10 other girls and was the oldest. But I believe age has nothing to do with passion. We covered 1,600 km, crossing some of the most awesome passes in the Himalayan Range. When we were crossing the Rohtang Pass, one of the most dangerous passes in the world, I fell off my bike twice. It was a little scary but once I had crossed, I said to myself, "Rohtang La, I conquered you!"

Sometimes, we rode for eight to nine hours at a stretch with breaks of around five hours. It was very tiring but we also managed to indulge in some rock climbing, rappelling, river crossing and rafting, and also saw places like Chandigarh, Gushaini, Manali, Tandi, Sarchu, Pang, Pso Kar, Tso Moriri and Leh.

Pintueli Gajjar quenches her thirst for adventure and lives life "queen size"



The biggest high was when I crossed Khardung La, arguably the world's highest motorable pass, at 18,300 ft. For me, it was a moment of glory as I was the first lady biker, not only from Rajkot, but from our community to have achieved this. And that too at an age when women usually sit at home and take care of grandchildren.

My children were very worried about me taking this trip but after it was over, they were bursting with pride. At a personal level, biking is freedom, breaking away from taboos, and pushing me to go beyond my physical and psychological limitations. It means being self-disciplined; maintaining a balance with my priorities and dreams; setting goals I can achieve; and, eventually, being a role model for many who, like me, are struggling to break free from the norm. Most of all, it's all about living life 'queen size'. I feel truly blessed.

—Pintueli Gajjar, Rajkot



The lite way: Include healthy snacks in your diet

I am a 65 year-old woman and can't eat too much at one time. My doctor has advised me to have frequent, healthy snacks. I am confused about what actually constitutes a healthy snack. Please explain.

As large meals tend to put off appetite, it is best to eat in smaller portions. Healthy snacks need to be loaded with vitamins and minerals and help increase the intake of nutrients that your conventional diet may lack.

Tips for choosing snacks

Avoid snacks high in fat: Eating snacks high in saturated fat and trans-fats can impact blood cholesterol; they should be consumed sparingly. Check intake of bakery products like cookies, pastries, cakes, croissants, doughnuts, sugary snacks (chocolates, canned fruit, sweetened fruit juice and soft drinks) and deep-fried foods.

Go easy on salty snacks: Excessive intake of high sodium snacks such as chips, sausages, hot dogs, and nuts with added salt should be avoided. Unprocessed snacks are always healthier options.

Choose snacks rich in fibre: Dietary fibre serves different functions in the body. It helps give a sense of satiety and controls food intake. It also benefits people with high cho-

lesterol, relieves constipation, and lowers the incidence of certain types of intestinal diseases. Some high-fibre snacks include fresh fruits such as apple, banana, orange, sweet lime, and pomegranate; whole wheat biscuits; *khakra*; vegetable rolls made from whole wheat flour; and cut salads like sliced tomatoes, carrot and cucumber sticks.

Have appropriate portions: Snack time should be arranged between meals to not affect appetite for the next meal. Check portion size. While pre-packaged snacks are handy, natural snacks are the best, as they are unprocessed and devoid of additives and excess salt and sugar.

Here are some nutritious and tasty options:

Precut vegetables like broccoli, carrots and cauliflower are a colourful treat and packed with essential vitamins. You can eat them with dips like salsa.

Fresh fruits like apple wedges, orange slices and banana halves make a satisfying sweet snack.

Nuts are a crunchy alternative to chips. They are a rich source of antioxidants, healthy fats and calories. Unprocessed nuts are rich in original nutrients. Best options include almonds, walnuts, cashews, pistachios, peanuts and roasted *channa*.

Popcorn can be made at home and seasoned lightly with salt or cinnamon.





READERS ASK

I have heard that some vitamins don't actually get absorbed into the system. How do you know which ones will be absorbed? Is it better to take them as liquids or pills?

Vitamin absorption, also known as bio-availability, is important to human health. Vitamins are absorbed with the help of water or fats. To be turned into functional nutrients, water-soluble vitamins (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B7, B9, B12 and C) need water from the body; they pass through the body unabsorbed without water. It is important to drink enough water to ensure that the body is hydrated enough. Similarly, fat-soluble vitamins require body fat to absorb the nutrients. Like water-soluble vitamins, they are not flushed from the system daily. It is important to take in enough healthy fats to aid their absorption. Vitamins absorbed with the aid of fat include A, D, E and K. However, the most important factor that influences absorption of vitamins is the level of toxins in your body. More toxins mean less absorption. Therefore, a good detoxification programme is required if you want to improve absorption of nutrients. Liquid vitamins may be unpalatable owing to taste; they are often recommended as pills as they are easier to consume and carry around.

At 76, I was diagnosed with anaemia and asked to increase my iron intake. I am vegetarian. What is the best source for iron for me?

Absorption of iron from food falls in people with low stomach acid, a condition common in the elderly as they frequently use antacids. In addition, caffeine and tannins found in coffee and tea reduce stomach acids. To overcome iron deficiency, your diet should include greens like spinach, lettuce, mustard greens, turnip greens, string beans and broccoli. Other foods rich in iron are wheat flour, *ragi*, jaggery, dates, tofu, garden cress seeds and lentils. Eating the right combination increases iron absorption. One nutrient that helps increase absorption of plant-food iron is Vitamin C—found aplenty in *amla*, cabbage, strawberries and lemon. Combine juice with toast or cereal or fruit with breakfast. Copper is another key nutrient that supports iron metabolism; in fact, iron-deficiency anaemia sometimes reflects the more basic underlying problem of copper deficiency. Sources of copper include spinach, mushrooms, eggplant, sesame seeds, tomatoes and potatoes. Also, iron absorption generally becomes inefficient in later years. It is therefore recommended to take supplements along with an iron-rich diet.

Snack time should be arranged between meals so your appetite for the next meal remains unaffected. And don't forget to check portion size. While pre-packaged snacks may be handy, natural snacks are the best options as they are devoid of additives and excess salt and sugar

Boiled eggs are a great source of protein.

Finger sandwiches made of wholegrain bread, peanut butter, cucumber, tomatoes, cabbage and onion slices (cut in small squares) are both healthy and appealing.

Boiled black channa is a filling snack and rich in both fibre and protein. Add chopped tomatoes and onions to make a spicy *bhel*.

Hummus is a flavourful chickpea dip made with olive oil, lemon juice, garlic and a little salt.

Pre-cut, cooked chicken pieces also make a good snack.

Plain, unsweetened yoghurt with fruits, wheat flakes or natural jam is a good filler.

Peanut butter or almond butter on wholegrain crackers or in wholegrain bread is a healthy snack as well.

Cherry tomatoes are convenient to eat as no cutting is required. They are high in antioxidants.

Balance your meals with these nutritive, filling and convenient snacks. They will give a boost to your appetite and overall health.

Dr Anjali Mukerjee is a nutritionist and founder of Health Total, which has 15 centres in Mumbai to treat obesity and other health related disorders. Visit www.health-total.com If you have a question for Dr Mukerjee write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



Take the plunge: Water can make your legs stronger

I have heard that aquatic exercises can help older people who cannot stand for a long time. I am in my mid-60s. Are there exercises that can make my legs stronger?

There are many ways to work the lower body in a swimming pool. Many classes offer standard leg raises done in the shallow end while holding on to the pool wall. You can begin to strengthen and tone your legs just by moving them against the resistance of the water. However, after a while, you may need more resistance. By using water noodles around your legs, you can increase the intensity of the exercise, which will help increase leg strength.

To begin with, choose your noodle. (Noodles used by children are usually not strong enough. Look for those especially made for water exercise or water aerobics.)

Quadriceps and hamstrings/front and back top of thigh

Stand up straight with your back flat against the pool wall. Hold the ends of the noodle so it is in a 'U' shape. Push it underwater and step on it in the middle of the U with the right foot. Then let go if you can. Lift your right knee up and straighten your right leg and press out with the heel. Bend the knee again and replace the foot on the pool floor. Keep your lower back against the wall and abdominal muscles contracted. Do eight to 12 repetitions. Then repeat with the left leg.

Outer thigh

Stand up straight, with the noodle in the same position as before. Stand with your left side to the pool wall, but do not lean on it. Lift your right leg straight out to the side. Try to turn your foot so the heel leads and toes are slightly turned in. Make sure the toes do not point up. Lift until you feel the hip and outer-thigh muscles contract. Be careful not to tip the body sideways as you lift. Do eight to 12 repetitions. Then repeat with the left leg.

Inner thigh

Stand up straight with the noodle in the same position as before. Stand with your left side to the pool wall, but do not lean on it. Lift your right leg straight out to the front, about waist high. Keeping the knee and back straight, press your right foot towards the wall, touching it if you can. You are bringing the right foot and leg across in front of the body. Bring the leg back, only going as far as you can without swinging the hips out to the side. The leg is merely going from its position in front of the body to the pool wall. Do eight to 12 repetitions and repeat with the left leg.

Quadriceps

Stand up facing the pool wall. Hold the ends of the noodle so that it is in a 'U' shape. Push it underwater and step through it with your left foot. Place your left foot on the pool floor. You are now straddling the noodle with both



feet on the floor. Bend your right knee and catch the noodle behind you with your right foot or ankle. Keep the body straight and press the right foot and noodle towards the floor. Slowly, bring it back up. For this exercise, you are just straightening and bending the knee. Do not push the leg back at all. Be careful not to tip the body forward as you lift. Do eight to 12 repetitions. Then repeat with the left leg.

Water marching

To begin with, stand up straight and breathe evenly, make continuous strides as if marching on the spot, extending arms and legs as far as you can. The resistance created by the water will keep the march in slow motion. Stretch your limbs to the full, pointing your toes and pulling your arms vigorously back and forth. Start with two minutes or as long as it makes you slightly breathless. Simply aim for a good, rhythmic walking movement.

Standing kickbacks

Stand an arm's length away from the pool wall. Keep your shoulders relaxed, your feet together and arms hanging by your sides. Breathe normally. Rest both of your hands against the pool side at shoulder height. Keep your arms straight. Bend your knees a little and tuck in your bottom as you do so. Using your hip and thigh muscles, raise your left leg and swing it back gently. Keep the supporting leg bent a little and don't raise your leg too high.

Standing calf raise

Stand near the pool wall with its support. Slowly raise both heels as much as you can and hold for 10 seconds, coming back to the original position. Do 20 repetitions.

Benefits of exercising in water

The physical properties of water make it a highly desirable medium in which to exercise to treat back pain and other musculoskeletal injuries. Some important properties of water that make exercise easier are:

- **Buoyancy:** Water counteracts gravity and helps support the weight of the person in a controlled fashion when immersed. This can aid improved balance and strength. The buoyancy of water also permits a greater range of positions owing to the virtual elimination of gravitational forces, particularly for exercises that require lifting legs, the heaviest limb of the body for most people.

- **Viscosity:** Water provides resistance by means of gentle friction, allowing strengthening and conditioning of an injury, while reducing the risk of further injury owing to loss of balance.

- **Hydrostatic pressure:** There are powerful effects produced by hydrostatic pressure that improve heart and lung function, making aquatic exercise a useful way to maintain and strengthen heart and lung function. This pressure also aids improvement of muscle blood flow.

Often it is easier to start an exercise programme in water before trying it on ground. For example, a range of motion stretches for hip flexors and abductors are generally much easier to try out first in water because legs are supported while the person learns the right positioning. Buoyancy, when doing water therapy exercises, can be increased with the use of floats.

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Steel your mind: Firmness is a cherished quality that can be developed through yoga

Firmness is often seen as just a decision of the mind. But it is also biological in a manner of speaking. Hormones involved with impulse control and reward or feel-good hormones complement mental firmness, which can be harnessed in our life.

We can employ firmness of the mind to heal ourselves by following a regimen of proper diet and exercise. We can revitalise our social life by making time for people, which in turn keeps us vital overall. It has been found that those who are socially engaged as the years advance remain healthier. Firmness can help us over our inhibition towards learning new things, again an important ingredient to remain vital in our silver years.

To develop firmness through yoga is rather easy. You can choose any type of *asana* (pose), including very easy ones, and learn to hold it for several minutes at a stretch. This needs tremendous stamina, and a long learning curve. But it is worth the investment. Standing poses, balancing poses (both standing and on the floor), arm balancers and seated forward bends also invite this grit in your mind-body complex. Some good

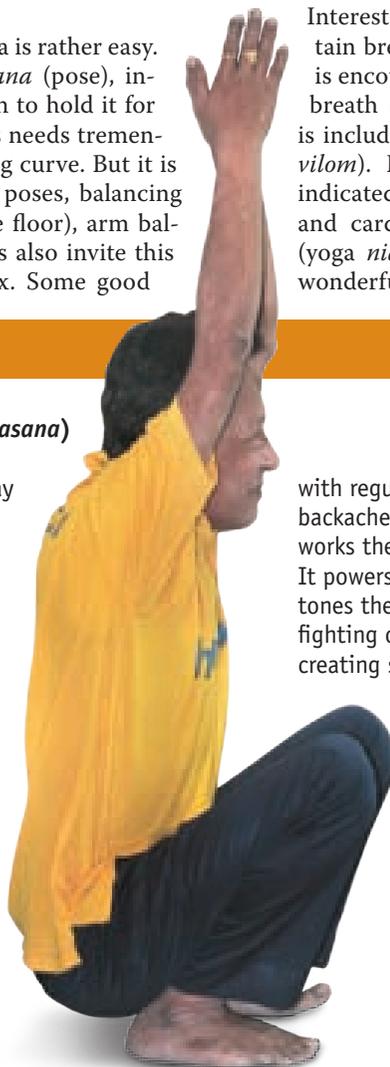
examples of standing poses are the palm tree pose (*ta-dasana*), warrior series (*virabhadrasana*), the squat pose (*utkatasana*) and all its variations, and the triangle pose (*trikonasana*) and its variations. Balancing poses include the one-legged prayer pose (*ekapada pranamasana*) and the dancing Shiva pose (*natrajasana*) and its variations. Arm balancers include the crow (*kakasana*), peacock (*mayurasana*) and Sage Vashistha's pose (*Vashisthasana*). Seated forward bends include the seated forward bend (*paschimottanasana*) and the downward-facing dog pose (*adhomukha svanasana*). Inversions, if you have been practising them, also calm and centre you, creating the right foundation for mental grit.

Interestingly, firmness can also be cultivated with certain breathing (*pranayama*) practices where exhalation is encouraged to be longer than inhalation, as in victory breath (*ujjayi*) as well as in practice where retention is included, as with alternate nostril breathing (*anulom vilom*). However, remember that retention is contraindicated in chronic ailments like high blood pressure and cardiac problems. Meditations like sleep of yoga (*yoga nidra*) and inner silence (*antar mouna*) are also wonderful tools.

YOGIC MOVES

Dynamic squat pose (*drutautkatasana*)

Stand with feet together. (Feet may be apart if overweight or new to yoga.) Place palms overhead as shown. Inhale. Exhaling, lower yourself as much as you can. Initially, you may not be able to reach as low as shown. Also, you may find that it is easier to do this on your toes, though ideally both the feet must be flat on the ground. Continue normal breathing to hold the final position. This also involves balance. So challenge it by lifting your chin up to look ahead to create a resistance against the gravitational drag. Hold for a few seconds initially, building in stamina for 10 to more seconds



with regular practice. Avoid if you have severe lower backache or weak ankles and knees. **Benefits:** This pose works the entire body and keeps the face and body young. It powers the entire digestive tract; prevents constipation; tones the spine and the spinal nerves; shapes the body, fighting obesity; boosts respiration; and powers the mind, creating steadiness and focus.

Model: D K Vaidya
Harmony Interactive Centre
Photographer: Haresh Patel

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



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SOULFOOD AND SOULMATES JIGYASA GIRI AND PRATIBHA JAIN
MEET CHAMPA AND HARIPRASAD KANORIA, KOLKATA

An exclusive series about life, love and food that unites hearts



Shilbhadra Datta

Champa, 69, and Hariprasad Kanoria, 72, are from Rajasthan but are settled in Kolkata. Deeply spiritual and affectionate, romantic and hospitable, loved and admired, they made us feel a part of their family with absolute ease. An industrialist of high repute, Hariprasad Kanoria established the Bengal Flour Mills. He then headed the Srei group of companies, founded the IISD (Institute for Inspiration and Self Development), and is now the editor-in-chief of *Business Economics* magazine.

Jigyasa Giri and Pratibha Jain: It would be nice to begin with your roots in Rajasthan.

Champa Kanoria: We are from Rajasthan but have been living in Kolkata for decades. Ours is primarily a business community where the families work together as well as stay together. We have always lived in a joint family.

Hariprasad Kanoria: I am an Indian first and then a Rajasthani, Bihari and now a Bengali. The term 'global Indian' is more apt. My forefathers were from Rajasthan, the land of desert, hardship and bravery. They were enterprising, patriotic and unafraid of taking risks. They were also people of a generous spirit. As you may be aware, our community is known for its charitable service to humanity.

How did you meet?

He: I was in my final year of graduation in 1961 at St. Xavier's College. My family wanted me to get married. They convinced me to meet a girl who had a strong astrological birth chart with wealth and fame. Both of us were charmed by each other and said 'yes.'

What is the singular factor that unites you?

She: I think being inclined to spirituality is the fundamental that has always kept us rooted and connected.

Are you both inclined to spirituality?

He: Champa has always been deeply spiritual and inculcated those values in our children. She used to teach them devotional songs. I too was born in a highly religious family. We have our own temple for public viewing in Bihar. My mother, though uneducated, was an avid reader of the *Ramayana* and *Bhagavad-Gita*. I grew up reading scriptural texts and the writings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda and poems by Ramaprasad. My wife moved towards spirituality in 1995 when she became free from the fetter of household duties.

She: Apart from bringing up my four sons and daughter, I have also enjoyed drawing and painting, singing devotional songs as well as dancing. I was popular as an Odissi dancer during my school years and continued the same at home in my private space. To me, there is no greater bliss than dancing to Meerabai's songs; I become engrossed and oblivious of my surroundings. Now, I travel a lot to visit my children who stay outside Kolkata. I am also a part of the Brahmakumaris group and that gives me immense will power and peace.

That is so inspiring to hear, but given a choice what is it you would like to change in each other?

He: We understand each other now; it is a journey traversed over decades. Understanding is a process that will continue and bring greater acceptance rather than the need to change anything.

She: I do not want to see any change in him. I believe that by living together, we have already changed according to each other's likings.

Together, you have made a beautiful family. How have you been successful in keeping all your daughters-in-law and grandchildren so happy?

He: Family matters more than money, fame and power. Despite daughters-in-law from different cultures, we are

happy with our family. Our pleasure lies in their happiness. We give time to our grandchildren. They are our priority and we have to be their role models. The philosophy of Swami Vivekananda prevails in our family. I am happy to have sons who have imbibed our spiritual values.

She: I believe a happy family is one that is spiritual. Faith in love and God has kept all of us together. We laugh together, pray together and eat together.

What are your favourite home-cooked dishes?

He: Traditional Rajasthani food is my favourite. In our family, we keep each one's taste in mind while cooking. Earlier, Champa used to cook herself. But now she cooks only when she visits her grandchildren.

“In a marriage, love is the binding factor and the ultimate goal. All disagreements will burn in the fire of love and disappear in the camphor of tears”

She: I enjoyed preparing Rajasthani dishes as well as pizzas when our children were young. I still remember how excited they would be when I would make *kachori*, *samosa* and *pani puri*.

He: Occasionally we like eating out with children, but both of us prefer home-cooked food. I enjoy cooking and have my own recipes for soups, pastas, *kheer* and vegetable dishes. During my trip to Boston, I was delighted to discover that my grandson enjoyed my cooking.

Having completed 50 years of togetherness, would you like to share

something on love and commitment with youngsters?

She: Life always brings ups and downs, but if there is mutual understanding, happiness is assured. Views and perspectives may be different, but common values and interests help people come together.

He: In a marriage, love is the binding factor. I believe there must be unity in disagreements too. We can manage our disagreements if we never forget our ultimate goal of love for each other and the family. All disagreements will burn in the fire of love and disappear in the camphor of tears.

A RECIPE FROM CHAMPA KANORIA'S KITCHEN

Rose Petal Sandesh

A popular sweet from Kolkata, *sandesh* is healthy, tasty and versatile; there is no end to its creative modifications and combinations. It combines well with many seasonal fruits—apple *sandesh*, mango *sandesh*, orange *sandesh* and pineapple *sandesh* are some popular varieties.

Ingredients

- Milk (preferably cow's milk): 1 litre
- Citric acid: ¼ to ½ tsp
- Sugar: ¼ cup
- Rosewater: ½ tsp
- Saffron: a few strands
- Cardamom powder: a pinch
- Rose petals to decorate

Method

To make chenna

Dissolve citric acid in 1 tbsp water and set aside. Bring the milk to a boil and switch off the flame.

After 5-10 minutes, add half of the citric acid solution, stir gently and cover with lid. Milk curdles in a couple of minutes. Check that the whey is clear or else add the remaining citric acid solution so the milk curdles completely. Strain using a thin muslin



Sanjiv Valsan

cloth or strainer. Press down gently so the whey is completely removed from the *chenna* or *paneer*. (The whey can be discarded or used to knead dough for making soft *roti*.)

To make the *sandesh*

Transfer the *chenna* on to a plate, add sugar, rosewater and saffron and knead gently. Knead until sugar crystals are dissolved and the mixture becomes soft. Roll the mixture into

small lemon-sized balls and flatten gently. Make a depression in the centre to place a rose petal.

Tips

Make *chenna* by curdling milk with ½ cup yoghurt or 1 tbsp lemon juice.

In cold weather, instead of rolling into balls, Champa Kanoria bakes the *sandesh* for 8-10 minutes. The slightly roasted warm *sandesh* is delicious.

She also enjoys making mango *sandesh* by adding tiny mango pieces to the *sandesh* mixture halfway through kneading.

Jigyasa and Pratibha are authors and publishers of two award winning books Cooking at Home with Pedatha and Sukham Ayu. They specialise in documenting culinary traditions. Visit them at www.priya.com



The wintry Sunday morning of 15th January 2012 was very special for Mumbaikars. Thousands of people were on the streets participating in the Mumbai Marathon, and among them were over 1,500 senior citizens who had come to participate in Harmony Senior Citizens' Run, supported by Zimmer. With a common cause to fight arthritis, showing the way were a few silvers who had undergone joint replacement surgery. They wanted to show the world that with proper treatment for arthritis one can smile again. These silvers chose joint replacement surgery in time and now they can easily go through their daily activities without any pain.

Zimmer India consistently works towards spreading awareness about arthritis. Every year in January, the company associates with Harmony for Silvers Foundation for a good social cause of honouring silvers participating in the Senior Citizens' Run. Keeping in mind this tradition, Zimmer India held an Arthritis Awareness Talk on 12th January 2012 at Harmony Interactive Centre in Girgaum, Mumbai, where Dr Sridhar Archik and Dr Milind Padgaonkar, orthopaedic surgeons from Lilavati Hospital in Bandra, interacted with 100 participants on causes of arthritis and the available treatment options. The session included tips on how to prevent arthritis and the precautions one needs to take while participating in such events.



Dr Archik says, "It was wondrous to see the energy level of silvers who had undergone joint replacement." According to Dr Padgaonkar, "it was heartening as an indicator of the success of joint replacement surgery and winners' spirit to fight against arthritis."

On the day of the Marathon, the spirit of exemplary silvers with all new joints was encouraging. They reached Harmony marquee at sharp 6.00 am with promise to participate in the run. With a replaced knee, silver Mrs Lucy Gomes from Bandra shared her experience about joining the event to prove to herself and her husband that she is back to a pain-free life. Mrs Gomes was surprised when she noticed that she had completed more than half of the track and then decided to touch the Finish mark. Zimmer India was very active at the Harmony marquee and distributed free arthritis education booklets among silvers.





Photographs by Hemant Patil

Logic on wheels

The Deshpandes returned from the US to Pune to conduct a unique social experiment to spread science to rural Maharashtra. And for over 15 years, their laboratory-on-wheels has also brought the spark back for retired teachers, discovers **Khursheed Dinshaw**

A group of 10 to 12 year-olds peers speechless as a cloud of colourful fumes emerges from a glass beaker. But wait, no one said “Abracadabra!” Well, it’s magic all right. Only, the ‘magician’ is a retired high school teacher and his ‘laboratory’, a much-travelled mobile van. For deep in the heartland of Maharashtra, this laboratory-on-wheels is taking science and ‘rational thinking’ to children where education leaves much to be desired.

The initiative, pioneered by Madhukar and Pushpa Deshpande, does not aspire to create Einsteins. More practically, it aims to encourage in the next generation a natural curiosity for science and a rational approach to life. And every time the Mobile Science Lab (MSL) is greeted by eager faces at a private or government school, it validates a decision the Deshpandes took 30 years ago.

Back then, Madhukar was a professor of mathematics and Pushpa a trade and technical high school teacher in the US. Then, in 1994, the couple moved to Pune to launch the Vigyanvahini Dialogue and Action Group (DAG). “We are happy to serve students who have very little

resource material while providing a constructive avenue for retirement,” beams 75 year-old Madhukar. “At present, DAG has 25 members, ranging from scientists and engineers to retired school teachers. It’s a win-win situation.”

Vigyanvahini was inspired by a television news clip the couple had watched in the US. It featured a ‘Science on Wheels’ project, where a group of college professors took a bus to a rural school, explained the science behind sophisticated equipment too expensive for the school district to purchase, left it at the school for a couple of weeks for the teachers to demonstrate experiments to the students, and picked it up before loaning it to another school. The idea struck a chord with the couple, who were considering working in a voluntary service environment in India.

The Deshpandes set up Vigyanvahini in Pune with a little over \$10,000, which included grants and their personal funds. “We chose Pune as we had friends, relatives and well-wishers. Also, this city has a cultural heritage of service to society, and our expectations were borne out,” smiles 74 year-old Pushpa, who also loves to paint and is a prolific reader.

So the couple set about doing their homework. They consulted other voluntary organisations and visited science and education centres before they developed a blueprint. “Things were difficult when we began in 1995,” recalls Pushpa. “As we were new to this field, the teachers did not take us seriously. Also, many schools did not have tables and chairs and even had leaky roofs. At times, we would hold our sessions in temples, cowsheds and godowns. We still come across this situation today. But on the bright side, the children ask a lot of questions, some of which suggest that they have grasped their mobile science lessons. Today, there is a curiosity about new technology. Mobile phones are very common but the Internet is still largely unavailable. We give the children introductory lessons on computer literacy as most schools have a PC for follow-up.”

Madhukar and Pushpa sourced their knowhow from their own volunteers and education-related NGOs. Next, they designed their mobile lab to accommodate scientific equipment, a TV, VCR, generator, water tank and even a washroom as the instructors would have to spend several days at a stretch in a rural environment. To date, the MSL has logged over 200,000 km and 220,000 student days. A typical day begins when school opens at 11 am and ends at 4 pm. The instructors cover 80 to 100 students and use the ‘learn-and-teach approach’, where brighter students are trained to explain experiments to their peers. The sessions then take place in small groups. This works for up to 300 students. While one group of students participates in experiments, another watches videos in the MSL.

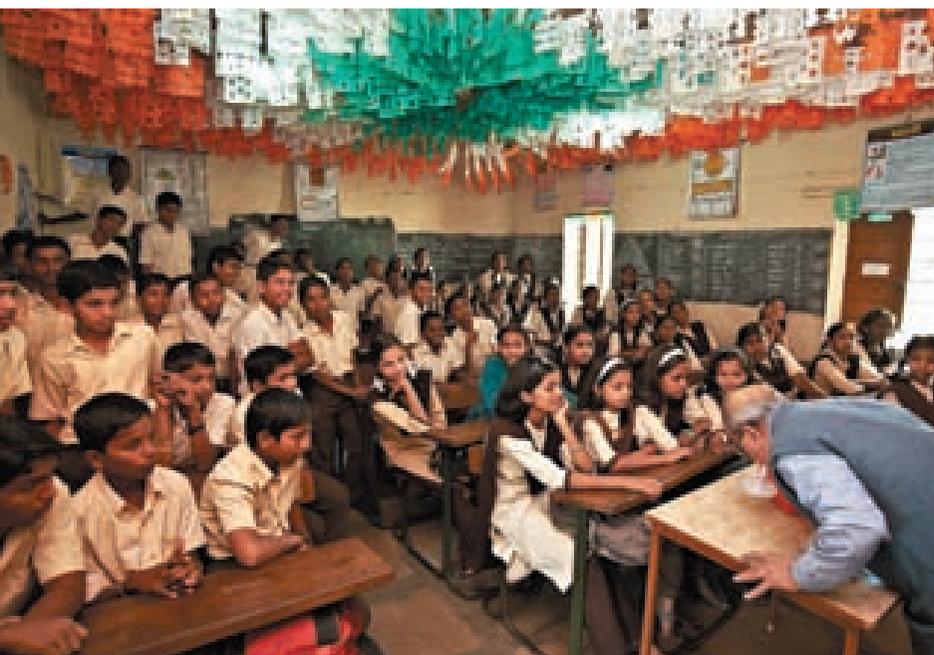
“Students learn practical things like calculating their own body mass index by using simple tools like a metre stick and weighing scale,” reveals Madhukar. “Then, there are experiments on testing proteins and carbohydrates that familiarise the children with nutrition concepts. We



(Clockwise from top) Children eagerly enter the Vigyanvahini mobile laboratory; a multimedia approach to learning has the students transfixed; a host of scientific, health and nutritional concepts are taught through activities that are engaging and innovative; the children are urged to join in with the experiments

also demonstrate a host of standard experiments like finding the refractive index of a glass slab and verifying Ohm’s Law.” Pushpa chips in, saying, “Students thoroughly enjoy experi-

ments on solar energy, electrolysis and electroplating. They love to watch different colours precipitate during chemical reactions. They are transfixed by experiments involving real



The Deshpandes' MSL has logged over 200,000 km and 220,000 student days, and their methodology has evolved from experiments to computer presentations

images using two concave mirrors, which appear as a mirage. They also love Newton's cradle, which demon-

strates conservation of energy and momentum with balls bouncing with impact. The principle of persistence

of vision is another hit; they relate to it as it is used in the movies."

Over time, Vigyanvahini has evolved its methodology from hands-on experiments to PowerPoint presentations, supplied to schools at a nominal cost. "Our vision is to spread horizontal growth, not vertical heights. We are happy if our beneficiaries try to live without superstition and solve their daily problems with a rational temper. Also, being among youngsters makes us feel young, which is a side benefit," laughs Pushpa.

On a serious note, Madhukar adds that Vigyanvahini goes way beyond mobile science. "We also provide schools with book bags to encourage reading and organise student and teacher workshops in and around Pune. We guide OBC students on how to best use government grants for a college education. One of these students is now a lecturer, one is a police sub-inspector and another works in hospital management," says Pushpa, adding that Vigyanvahini's expenses are met by simple investments as well as donations from the US and India.

Apart from the excitement and knowledge the MSL generates, there are many other payoffs the Deshpandes treasure. Pushpa explains, "When the MSL was being refitted, I was stopped at an octroi check *naka*. I explained I had only briefly driven the van out of Pune and was returning but the officer didn't believe me. He allowed me to pass through but followed me on his two-wheeler to check where I was taking the van. When the inauguration of the MSL was reported in the media, the officer came to our house and told us he wanted his college-going daughter to volunteer with us. Imagine our surprise! She worked with us for several years till she began raising a family. We were taken aback when she rejoined Vigyanvahini as her daughter is now old enough for her grandmother to look after." It's a commitment that comes from having a stake in the country's future. ✨



Photographs by **Vilas Kalgutker**

Location courtesy **JW Marriott Hotel, Juhu, Mumbai**

Makeup: **Subhash Singh**

Hair: **Rekha Ji**

two for the road

After 28 years of a highly visible and equally successful marriage, Bollywood luminaries and Parliamentarians Javed Akhtar and Shabana Azmi reflect on living, loving and ageing together, as **Tanmaya Nanda** listens

In a constantly shifting world, where allegiances are as slippery as a sheet of ice, stability is inevitably the first casualty. The situation is particularly rife in two areas that dominate Indian life—politics and Bollywood—with the rumour mills churning out one lurid tale after another of fickle alliances. In such a situation, therefore, it is heartening to see an oasis of consistency that is Javed Akhtar and Shabana Azmi, particularly when you consider that they both straddle both politics and Bollywood. Indeed, they are the only couple since Independence where both partners have been nominated to the Rajya Sabha. She served between 1998 and 2003 while he is currently serving out his first term in the Upper House.

To mark the month of love, *Harmony-Celebrate Age* decided to catch up with this power couple, each of whom is a public figure. We meet at the poolside of the JW Marriott Hotel in Juhu, Mumbai—incidentally on Javed *saab's* 66th birthday—where she is dressed in a mint-green sari with a brown-and-gold full-sleeved blouse, even while struggling with waves of pain from a fractured shoulder bone, while he is in a green *kurta* with turquoise embroidery. The camaraderie between the two is evident as they banter easily—she calls him Jadoo, the name he went by before it was formalised to Javed—and discuss politics and public life. And his almost-impish sense of humour is ever present even during a sometimes trying photo shoot as we struggle against the wind and light. “Behind every successful woman is a man,” he whispers to us as he settles into a chair just behind her, eyes twinkling like an eight year-old who has just said something clever.

You've been married for 28 years, almost 30.

Shabana Azmi: Ah, 1984, so yes.

What has kept you together...the secret recipe?

I think it's something Javed says often enough; he says that Shabana and I are such good friends that even marriage couldn't ruin our friendship. I think that is the essence of this relationship that we are each other's best friends.

But if there's one thing apart from the friendship factor that you could pinpoint, because in India a lot of marriages are not between friends but strangers....

You know you'll be surprised but once you get married you really are different people than through courtship—unless it's an extremely long courtship and unless you are living together. Living together is about very mundane, everyday things, so romance is the first thing that goes out of the window. I don't think we are prepared for what marriage offers. We are told about how marriage is a bed of roses but love and respect for each other and really thinking of yourself as a unit requires a lot of hard work. Because when you are married, you are very, very young. By the time Javed and I got married, though, we were mature people....

How old were you?

I was 33, which was by Indian standards late. And, the thing is that if you have a good marriage, there is nothing

more fulfilling in a relationship. I think the real kind of love that exists between the mother and child, that's a given, but when it's one of equality, you have to work towards that and give and take on a daily basis. There are no ground rules; it's flexibility, and certain things that with time will sort themselves out. But love and respect is the basis.

Javed saab, what's your take? From 1984 to 2102? Raaz kya hai (What's the secret)?

Javed Akhtar: *Dekhiye, raaz nahin hote hain* (There are no secrets). To think that there is a formula is perhaps not the right way because every relationship in the world is original and it finds its own balance, compatibility or discord in its own way. But ultimately, common sense says that two people, whether they are spouses, or partners, or friends, or anybody, if two people are interacting they can be happy only by seeing to it that *both* of them are happy. There is no other way to have a healthy relationship that is at the cost of one person. As long as you accept that you are anyone—and it's true of anyone and particularly this is something men should not forget—that you are not the star and the other person is not the planet, that the other person has as much right to dream, to ambition, to desire to achieve, to live the way that person wants to live, to have a point of view or opinion about things independent of what you have. And if there is more compatibility than discord, if there is more understanding than misunderstanding, if there is more pleasure than pain, the relationship works. But after everything said and done, there is one thing both of us—both spouses but particularly men—must remember is that any love that boasts of being love but does not offer respect is suspect, at least in my eyes, because then it is a vehicle for exploitation and degradation of the other person. If you love another person, it is not enough that you love that person; you have to respect that person. Respect that person's individuality, respect the dissension.

How do the two of you resolve your differences, do you let it go for a couple of days or talk it out right away...?

JA: Yes, sometimes we let it go, sometimes we talk it out immediately, and sometimes we don't ever talk it out, we just let it phase out. What happens many times, when you are irritated you react very strongly to something that is not strong, and you can feel stupid later. So either you can gather some moral courage and apologise; or if you can't, you hope it will be forgotten and it is, most of the time.

SA: When I look at couples around me, a lot of couples feel it is important to talk it out and let your partner know that you are irritated about this or that or the other. But I think I have drawn from example. My parents had an extremely good marriage...they were both very strong-willed people and they both had their differences and their disagreements. But I realised that my mother had this amazing

quality of letting a lot of things go and not making an issue about every single disagreement. I think it's very important to let it pass and it will sort out. What you need to work out is your non-negotiables. And that is true not just of marriage, for me it's true of my best friends. So most of the rules I apply to my friends are what I apply to my spouse. The exception being that one can't... there are no fixed...

He gets a little more leeway...?

SA: No, he doesn't! In fact, he fights much less than I do. Largely, Javed is a good-tempered person and in good cheer, which is a healthy vibe to have around you.

What are your top non-negotiables for him?

SA: [thinks for a while] No, I don't think I want to discuss my non-negotiables, that's too private.

Javed saab, Shabanaji mentioned that the real test is in living together, things become mundane. That living together involves give and take daily, that one of the first things to go out of the window is romance. How have the two of you managed to keep the romance alive?

First, what is the definition of romance? Is romance talking of flowers and rivers and waves and breeze and fragrance and colour? Is that so? A romance is sharing even the so-called most prosaic moments with enthusiasm and interest; even sitting together and eating peanuts, that is romantic. And you can be in a hill station and meadows but if you are not too happy, it's not romantic at all. Life is romantic if you are interested in each other and then everything you touch, everything you talk about, whether you are discussing tractors, it is romantic.

Both of you are very famous in your own right. What is it like to live with somebody who's always in the public eye?

SA: Well, the one... I feel largely the perception is that we are very serious, and we are very intellectual and we are only given to very meaningful talk, and you will find that most of the time we are very facetious, talking complete nonsense like everyone else. But one thing, one misconception, let me tell you, a lot of young girls come up to me and say, 'My God! He is such a romantic poet, he writes such romantic verse, he writes so many romantic songs, how romantic is he in real life?' and I say, 'He doesn't have a single romantic bone in his body.' Now please ask him why he doesn't have a romantic bone in his body.

Javed saab?

JA: I don't agree that I don't have a single romantic bone in my body [Shabana laughs lightly]. *Agar nahin hogi to*



“It’s very important to let some disagreements pass...they will sort themselves out. What you need to work out is your non-negotiables” —*Shabana Azmi*

“Non-negotiables only happen in people with serious differences of morality or aesthetics or basic values of love. We don’t have that.” —*Javed Akhtar*

aap likh bhi nahi sakte romantic poetry (If you don’t have it, how can you write romantic poetry?). But perhaps, you know, it is believed that writers and poets don’t write what they do, they write what they can’t do in their personal life [Shabana laughs again], that they are too shy or too scared or too insecure or whatever, I think that goes in their writing. But allow me to go back a little. When you are talking about non-negotiables. Shabana said it’s too private. I think she thought about it and couldn’t find it so gave that answer. So let me tell you. You see, non-negotiables can only happen in people who have serious differences of morality or aesthetics or basic values of love. I don’t think we have that. So there is nothing that has to be negotiated under the title of ‘non-negotiable’. There was nothing, never. I mean, yes, we have little fights but they are over very, very unimportant issues. But there haven’t been any serious issues between us. Basic issues of morality or choices of life, or what are the attitudes we should take...

SA: [speaking at the same time] Yeah, I think the fact that we have a common worldview....

JA: [continuing] ...or that, ‘You are a woman, you should be like this’, or ‘You are a man, you should be like this’ [chuckles], I don’t think for a second. Our differences or fights have been over very unimportant and frivolous and flippant matters.

SA: It’s not a usual marriage; you know you said both of us lead very busy lives. Sometimes, we have not even had time to communicate that we are leaving for the day or something. Now I can imagine that in a lot of marriages that would create a lot of problems. But as part of people who lead very, very busy lives, I think one of the secrets of why we have such a successful marriage is that we meet each other so rarely!

Now, you are both in your 60s, a time when most people are retired or approaching or contemplating retirement. The both of you, on the other hand, have your hands full....

SA: You can say that again!

“Energy comes from interest. If you are interested in anything, it is not an ordeal but a privilege.... I don't think I have done enough. I genuinely feel there is so much to do and it is within my reach. I can do it, I should do it. So once I have this feeling that I have done whatever I could, I may think about retirement, but it's not at least in the near horizon



How do you manage to pack in such a hectic schedule?

JA: I think the energy comes from interest. If you are interested in anything, if you want to do it, it is really not an ordeal, it is a privilege, and it's a pleasure. But if you are doing things you really don't want to do, then within 10 minutes you will feel tired. *Aur kuch aisa bhi hota hai ki* (Sometimes, it so happens that) people like us think, '*Abhi yahin tak to jaana hai* (I only have to go so far), then I will have a comfortable life, then I will not take so many assignments, I will not make so many promises that I will come here or go there, then I will have a slower tempo of life, '*bas abhi tak ye kar lete hain*' (let me just get this done first). But by the time one has reached there, again you have a long list of commitments. So, sometimes I keep thinking that but so far it has not happened.

Have you ever contemplated retiring, giving it all up?

JA: No, no, no. Because I don't think I have done enough. And I'm not saying this because it's a nice thing to say, '*Dekho ye kitte humble hain, kitte modest hain*' (Look how humble and modest he is)...*aisa kuch nahin* (nothing like that) but because I genuinely feel there is so much to do and it is within my reach. I can do it, I should do it. So once I have this feeling that I have done enough or I have done whatever I could, I may think, but it's not at least in the near horizon.

SA: I can't think of retirement but what I want to do and create time for is to teach. I think I have benefited a lot be-

cause of the teachers I had in Roshan Taneja and others. I am a firm believer in training and I wish I could create the time to teach young, aspiring actors.

But what would you say to our readers, is it too late for them to restart a new life. Is there such a thing?

JA: I'll start from another point. You've been working and now you are free of all the responsibilities; now look for your pleasure, your happiness. Think what you really wanted to do or what you would have rather done given a choice. Do it now! And do it wholeheartedly. Don't think it is late.

SA: For me, the biggest example in my life is my father. He suffered a brain haemorrhage and his left arm and left leg were incapacitated for life and he had a stroke when he was just 53-54 years old. Instead of giving in to despair, he actually single-handedly went back to Mijwan, the village of his birth and started working for the upliftment of the village, and did it till his dying day. So we have living examples like that around, so I don't think so. But also what I think is very important is to embrace age positively. And particularly in our profession, it is very difficult because there is this constant struggle to look younger, to feel younger, to behave younger. So what I'm saying is don't get into that struggle, just embrace whatever age you are...because at 61, which I am today, I embrace that, and Javed embraces that, because all his wisdom comes from the experiences, having lived a full life, and I think it's important to continue to have life as your base.



“It is very important to embrace age positively. There is a constant struggle to look, feel, behave younger. Don't get into that struggle.... I think it is the responsibility of us as a society to make it possible for our seniors to enjoy life as actively as they can. We need to commit ourselves to including the voices of our elders in the decision-making process

Do you think there is enough for senior citizens to engage and fill their lives with after retirement?

JA: No, not at all. As a matter of fact, our society is not considerate at all to the needs and requirements of senior citizens. You don't have facilities in trains and public places for senior citizens for even to climb up properly, or even ramps for wheelchairs. I don't think we are very sensitive.

SA: Well, I think it's a strange contradiction because, on the one hand, we revere our senior people. But what we do is we revere them and sort of bring them out on occasions...but the general attitude in society is, '*Wo budhay ho gaye hain, unko ghar pe rehne do*' (They have aged, let them stay home). I think that is the responsibility of us as a society to make it possible for our seniors to enjoy life as actively as they can. Even when I go into the multiplexes, I worry all the time because there are granite floors and an old person can slip. It is increasingly a society that is aiming only towards the young and I think we are making a *huge* mistake. For example, if we are going to change home, we will say '*Child ka school ka kya hoga, child ka neighbourhood ka kya hoga*' (What will happen to the child's school, its neighbourhood) but when it's with our parents, we've just decided we are going to a better place. What is going to happen to their support group; how important is it to include their voices in the decision-making process? That is what we, as a society, need to commit ourselves to. A time comes when you don't even feel it is necessary to tell them where you are and you come to know from the staff that these people have gone. It's terrible, it's terrible.

JA: I find that we need to find some acceptability for senior citizens; they have retired, they have ample free time, but they don't know what to do with their time. We have to think as a society about what we are offering to this segment, saying, 'That is how you can use your time.' The answer is that we have not done it. Collectively, as a society, I don't think there is any plan, any thought about it. Gradually, they start losing self-esteem, they feel they have no utility and that brings depression and inferiority that make life very unpleasant for them. What are we doing? I don't have any readymade answer but I have a question.

Looking back over your 28 years together, is there anything both of you would want to do differently now?

JA: This is interesting. This is a question I have confronted earlier also; not for 28 years but for all of my 66....

... I'll stick to the 28 years!

JA: No, no, it doesn't matter. Ultimately, the answer will remain the same. Are you happy with your today? If you are happy with your today, this is the package that comes to you. The moment you change Scene No. 26, which is a bad scene, Scene No. 36 or 38, which is the highlight of the story, will also go away. So this is the package that is offered to you. Want it? You can only decide if you are happy at present. I am happy. So I don't want to make any changes. Why should I? Because then everything will change!

SA: That's such a good answer that I'd like to say, 'Ditto' ✨



EVERYDAY MAGIC

LOVE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ABOUT CANDLELIGHT DINNERS AND EXPENSIVE GIFTS. SOMETIMES IT'S THE SIMPLE THINGS—A WALK HAND IN HAND, A STOLEN SMILE OR A TENDER GESTURE—THAT CAN MAKE YOUR DAY EVEN AFTER DECADES OF TOGETHERNESS. THIS FEBRUARY, FIVE SILVER COUPLES SHARE THEIR STORIES AND SHOW US HOW LOVE, FOR THEM, IS SIMPLY A WAY OF LIFE

FRIENDS FIRST

Sunanda and Chandrahas Japtiwale

Sunanda was just 20 when she married Chandrahas in 1976. "He was an officer in a bank. It was a love marriage and I was proud to be the wife of this scholarly, smart-looking and confident man," recounts Sunanda, a journalist by profession.

In 2005, the couple lost their 22 year-old daughter Ashwini to a road accident. "We felt as if our lives had stopped but it also brought us closer," says Chandrahas. "She was very depressed and thought only of Ashwini. So I surprised Sunanda by sending her on a group tour abroad. She came back better balanced."

Sunanda is the emotional type while Chandrahas is the practical one, which worked perfectly when, in memory of their daughter, they set up the Ashwini Japtiwale Memorial Trust for orphans and economically backward children. And to make it more personal, they invested the money they had set aside for Ashwini—savings, insurance and for her wedding. Giving concrete shape to her memory, they also built a community hall called Ashwini at Vanaprastha Ashram and a home for silvers at Talegaon Dabhade.

Chandrahas plays the harmonium, harmonica and flute at music events while Sunanda composes. And when Sunanda needs his opinion on a piece she needs to turn in for publication, he offers an invaluable perspective. "From our morning walks to our social work, we are always together," says Chandrahas. "I think we are made for each other."

—Khursheed Dinshaw



LOVE, ACTUALLY



Photographs by **Utikarsh Sanjanwala**

LOVE AFTER MARRIAGE

Kishori and Shantikumar Merchant

It was love after marriage," he says, looking adoringly at his wife. "Our parents chose us for each other because we were so similar," she says, returning the look.

Fifty-one years after this 'happily ever after' tale began, Shantikumar Merchant, 75, recalls the first time they met. "During the 15 minutes we were given in private, we were convinced we would have a good life together," he says. "I had just started my company. With the understanding she showed when we had our very first conversation, I knew she would be a great life partner. My very first question to her was whether she was 'interested.'" Kishori, 73, laughs, "I was very 'interested!'"

Being engaged in the 1950s was very "difficult" but phone conversations and occasional meetings helped the couple grow into good friends. "That's when we realised we both

loved watching movies," says Shantikumar. Call it prophetic but their first movie, *Time Lock*, opened the doors to discovering many more common interests.

Parents of three grown daughters, the Merchants love to chuck it all up sometimes and go footloose. Their first trip together, of course, was their honeymoon to Kochi. "We went on an unforgettable three-day cruise." Rummaging through their rich bank of anecdotes, Shantikumar chuckles. "Have you ever eaten 'potato chicken' in a vegetarian restaurant in South India? Well, we were served potatoes with cloves that were meant to look like 'eyes!'"

The couple says there is nothing either would change about their relationship. "The recipe for a strong and lasting marriage is adjustment," reveals Shantikumar. "It is important to respect each other's individuality."

—Radhika Raje





LITTLE BLESSINGS

Sofika and
Saidur Rahman





Photographs by Subhamoy Bhattacharjee



Like all happily married couples, Sofika and Saidur Rahman's marriage is based on love and a healthy respect for each other. But a common love of children has added that special something to the decades they've spent together.

Fifty-nine year-old Sofika runs a kindergarten but it became even more fulfilling when Saidur, 69, began helping her after he retired. Saidur is not a teacher but thanks to his big heart, the kids and their parents call him "Sir".

"We spend 30 minutes every night reviewing the day's activities in school, problem areas and plans. I wouldn't have been able to open this school without my husband's support," reveals Sofika. "I am the school van's conductor and substitute driver," jokes Saidur, a former employee with a fertiliser company.

The Rahmans share many common interests, like gardening, taking long and leisurely walks, visiting neighbours, and watching movies and TV together. "We are inseparable," smiles Sofika.

The couple lives with their son Saif in Guwahati, while their daughter Haida lives in Delhi. And between them, the Rahmans have three grandchildren. "Saif's son Ayaan is much more attached to me than his grandmother," says Saidur with a twinkle. Sofika retorts, with a chuckle, "I think Ayaan dislikes my discipline whereas my husband loves him so much and cannot find any fault with him."

Sofika and Saidur don't celebrate Valentine's Day but, evidently, 40 years after marriage, Cupid continues to occupy a special place in their pantheon.

—*Tapati Baruah Kashyap*



LOVE, ACTUALLY



COLOUR ME LOVE

Vinod and
Norma Bakshi



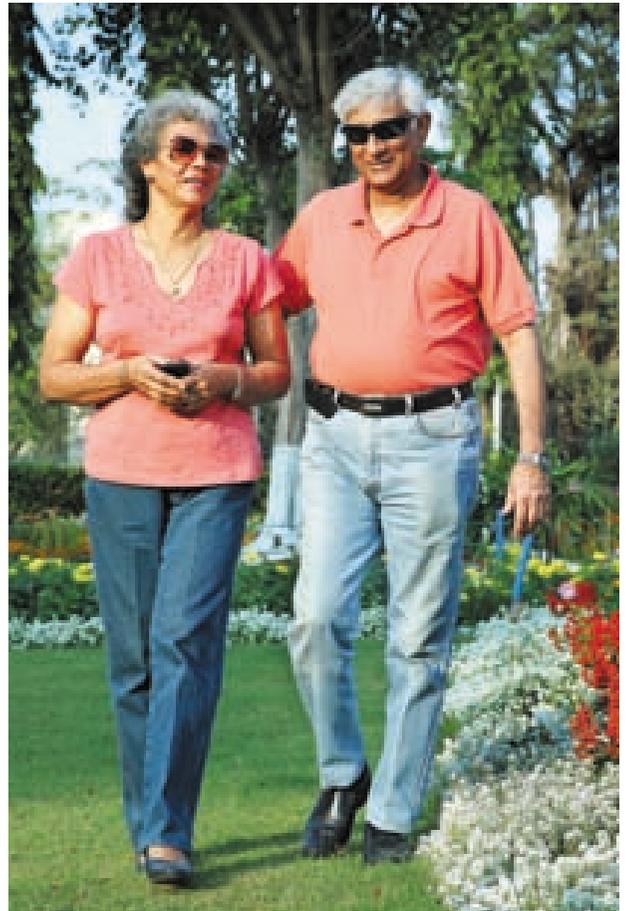
Photographs by Anand Kumar Soma

If he's wearing blue trousers, she's decked up in a blue sari. If today's a 'green day' or a 'pink day', both wear the same shade! You guessed it: Vinod and Norma Eldrid Bakshi from Hyderabad are the colour-coordinated couple. Why, everyone in their social circle can spot them from afar by the colour of their wardrobe. They started coordinating about 30 years ago after Norma suggested it when they lived in Pune.

Sixty-seven year-old Vinod and Norma, 60, have now been married 41 years and are still very much in love. They met when she was barely 16 and he was a pilot-officer, freshly commissioned in the Air Force. Though Cupid struck with a vengeance, tying the knot was no cakewalk. Vehement objections from Norma's orthodox Roman Catholic family notwithstanding, Vinod went ahead and sought an interview with the Archbishop and managed to get a special dispensation as neither wanted to convert to the other's religion. The love-struck couple was finally married in church in 1970.

They've bridged the religious divide with aplomb. Vinod says, "Norma has never missed a single *karva chauth* fast." Norma smiles, adding, "He has always been there with me for Midnight Mass." Clearly, it's not only their wardrobes that are in sync. Every Christmas, the couple celebrates the spirit of togetherness as they put up zillions of decorations and baubles. Their other passion is food—she cooks, he tastes! They love to entertain and Vinod makes a snazzy bartender. Cheers to them!

—Shyamola Khanna



MR & MRS WRITE

Kanta and Virender Mehndiratta

When Kanta was to marry Virender, she did not have any preconceived notion about Mr Right. But Virender, a devoted Sarat Chandra loyalist, wanted an elegant Bengali girl with poise. “Kanta was straight out of the novels of Sarat Chandra. She is as beautiful, gentle and humble as Sarat’s heroines,” smiles the award-winning novelist.

If it’s not clear already, the deep devotion the Mehndirattas share extends to a common love for Hindi literature. While Virender is a short-story writer, Kanta has a doctorate in Hindi literature and taught Hindi at a girl’s college in Chandigarh. “When we got married, I was self-conscious of my huge family. But Kanta respected all my relatives and had a deep understanding of human behaviour. She won everybody’s hearts, and my father doted on her,” recalls the professor fondly.

Over 50 years, their marriage has matured like wine and their tribulations have only brought them closer. Around a decade after they were married, Virender was diagnosed with porphyria, a condition that induces paralysis. “During the 100 days I spent with my husband in hospital, there was only one question in my mind: How could I increase his 2 per-cent chance of survival to 200 per cent?” recalls the gritty, yet elegant lady. “She understood exactly what I was trying to say from my expressions,” adds Virender.

Today, Kanta’s failing vision prevents her from reading. So Virender sits by her side and reads poetry and literature to her, showing the very same patience and perseverance with which Kanta had nurtured him back to health.

—Suparna-Saraswati Puri





Photographs by Sanjay Kurt



Doomsday CALLING

ICMR's latest study reveals that 60 per cent of new breast cancer cases by 2020 will be from India, reports **Radhika Raje**



It's not the apocalyptic warnings for 2012 that are depressing the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) but the doomsday statistics of India becoming the world's Alzheimer's capital by 2030 and the ever-rising toll from breast cancer. In 1994, ICMR identified breast cancer as the second most common form of cancer in cities like Bengaluru, Chennai and Bhopal, and the most common cancer in Delhi and Mumbai. Based on estimates for 2007, cervical and breast cancer accounted for more than 36 per cent of cancer cases in the country. And though cervical cancer leads the race as the most common cancer today, the *National Health Profile 2010* indicates that by 2020 breast cancer will take over, afflicting urban and rural women alike.

According to Dr Rajni Mutneja, head of preventive oncology at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute in Delhi, lifestyle is the most common factor affecting women detected with breast cancer. "Women have become ambitious and want their careers in place before getting married or having children. They marry after 30 and conceive even later. This affects a woman's body. It is very important to give birth and breastfeed at the right age." Apart from our lifestyle, there are other factors that can expose women to breast cancer, says Dr Mutneja, adding genetics and hormonal changes to the existing list. Although she lays stress on the rise in the number of cases, she also affirms that it is the only form of cancer that can be detected in its earlier stages; and if diagnosed early can be treated completely.

The bad news: by 2020, breast cancer will be the most common cancer in India. The good news: it is the only form of cancer that can be detected in its early stages and then treated completely

Comparing the rise of breast cancer cases in Indian urban cities to rural areas, Dr Satish Kamat of Mumbai-based Asha Cancer Hospital says, "One out of 80 women gets detected in cities, while one of 200 to 300 are detected in rural areas; it's mostly because women are shy to be examined by doctors. However, in the US, one of every 30 women is detected with breast cancer." According to Dr Kamat, while preventable factors are yet to be confirmed, there are others like a high-fat diet and various forms of addiction that still have to be looked into. "Alcohol and smoking expose breast cells to cancerous substances, thus reducing the survival rate; a polysaturated diet, on the other hand, triggers oestrogen and fuels tumour growth," he explains. Late menopause and no breast feeding may also contribute to the risk factors. ✨

ALTERNATE RELIEF: A PERSPECTIVE

"In India, where religion commands more support than science, alternative treatments have always been very popular since they appeal to peoples' values and beliefs about health and life. The mythological origin of natural forms of treatment is still a major influence in the lives of Indians. But alternative treatments do not help in case of lethal diseases like cancer. The delay in the proper form of treatment aggravates the disease instead of abating it. Cancer currently kills 135,000 people annually; by 2020, about 60 per cent of new cases will be from developing countries like India. In the light of these ever-worsening statistics, it becomes all the more important to get cancer treated at the right time and in the right manner."

—Dr J B Sharma, senior consultant, medical oncology, Action Cancer Hospital, Delhi

FACTS AND FIGURES

- The left breast is statistically more prone to developing cancer than the right breast. Scientists are unsure why.
- The risk of breast cancer increases with age; if you live to be 90, your risk of developing this cancer is almost 14 per cent. Early treatment can increase chances of survival to 98 per cent or higher by five years.
- North America, Australia, Europe have the highest incidence of breast cancer. Large parts of Africa and Asia have the lowest rates. In the past 25 years, its incidence has gone up by 30 per cent in the West.
- In 2002-06, the median age in the US at the time of breast cancer diagnosis was 61 years. This means that 50 per cent of women who developed breast cancer were 61 years old or younger at the time of diagnosis.
- In 2002-06, 95 per cent of new cases and 97 per cent of breast cancer deaths occurred in women 40 years and older. The biggest single risk factor for breast cancer is age.
- In 2007, 1.7 million breast cancer cases were diagnosed worldwide and 465,000 women died from this cancer.

Mountain MAGIC

Two former Air Force pilots risk life and limb to achieve their life's dream—to trek to the remote, and stunning, Zaskar Valley in Ladakh





Photographs by Mohit Sadarangani

Two friends who occasionally connect via email share a much deeper connection. Both former pilots with the Indian Air Force, they were mesmerised by the same dream: to trek across a deep bowl in the earth, bone dry, barren and with soaring rock faces strewn with shallow rocks. This bleak landscape is called Zaskar Valley, or more colloquially, Ladakh Valley, which ascends from 11,500 ft to 23,000 ft (Everest is 27,000 ft). The extreme cold does not support much vegetation and the monasteries are like castles built into the mountains. Zaskar Valley is also known as the coldest desert in India.

Sukhcharan Singh Garewal aka 'Gary', and Mohit Sadarangani, both over 65, have always been drawn to the great outdoors. While Gary, who now lives in Norway, often dreamt of ejecting from his aircraft into the valley while flying over it, Mohit, who resides in Baroda, is a passionate motorcyclist. A random email from Gary to Mohit about Zaskar Valley in February 2011 culminated in what turned out to be the trek of their lives. They were to traverse the valley on motorcycle but inclement weather decided otherwise.

Extracts from notes penned by Mohit Sadarangani during their adventure:

11 September

As our flight descended, Gary was cool yet excited that he was actually about to achieve his life's ambition. We stayed two nights at a guesthouse to acclimatise ourselves to the altitude. Gary was doing all right but I was feeling nauseous. So we bought some medicines for altitude sickness, maps, etc.

14 September

The original plan had been to ride our motorbikes up to Darcha, 100 km from Manali (Simla), and cross over into the valley through the Rohtang Pass. Instead, we boarded a bus to Lamayuru, and when we alighted, our bones—and egos—were hurting. We realised we were not as young as we used to be! Overnight at the home of a local family.

15 September

Another bus to a point 15 km away, close to Kargil and the Kanji-La Pass (17,500 ft). We walked towards the pass, each of us lugging 12 kg on our backs. Happily, we were distracted from our plight by Noga, a 24 year-old Israeli who was trekking all by herself. She was happy to join us and we were glad for her company—it kept us from talking nostalgia and health issues!

We reached Kanji-La and stayed overnight with a Ladakhi family. We were

looking at the prospect of a five-day trek ahead, to the Rangdum Gompa. There were no men or animals available to hire as it was harvest season. But for extra money, they were willing. We set off, with two mules and a guide.

16 September

It was a bright, clear morning and Noga left early as she realised it was uncomfortable for the three of us to squeeze into a tent meant for two. We started walking towards the pass. It was a gradual incline, but as Gary jumped across little streams and rivulets, I began to feel uneasy. My breathing became laboured and we had to take a break. We stopped at a huge grazing ground, where the cattle from all the surrounding villages came to graze. As soon as we pitched our tents, it began to rain and the wind howled eerily like a banshee. The temperature kept dropping, and when we woke up the next morning, we realised it had snowed during the night.

17 September

It was too cold to even step out. The sun played the kind of hide-and-seek that was very pretty to look at but not warm enough to thaw the chill in our bones! We were keen to carry on but our guide was adamant. The rain had washed out the roads and it was not worth the risk.



A deep bowl in the earth: Zaskar Valley can be rough for beginners but offers a treat of a lifetime nonetheless

18 September

We couldn't trek further as the weather was getting worse. It would have been wiser to return to Kanji-La but we had paid in full for our guide and mules and we wouldn't get a refund. We walked 6 km across the grazing ground and pitched our tent for the night. More rain and sleet.

19 September

We set off for Kanji-La but I was still uneasy—the altitude was getting to me. As we began to descend from 14,000 ft to 12,000 ft, the unease seemed to wear off. We reached the solitary guesthouse and settled in for the night.

20 September

Early the next morning, we headed off on the road towards Kargil. We walked a bit and then took a bus. We reached late at night, and after a bone-rattling journey, we were relieved to get to bed early.

“Most of all, we believed in ourselves, and although friends and relatives thought we were insane, we followed our dream”

21 September

This was to be our longest day. We boarded a bus at 4 am for Pudum via the Rangdum Gompa—Gary's destination. Actually, the Rangdum was only a day's trek across the Kanji-La Pass, which we had abandoned earlier. So we took a circuitous route via Kargil and were looking at one of the most beautiful sights I had ever seen.

Once we went past the Rangdum, we were confronted with some of the most exhilarating landscapes in the

Himalaya, at Pensi-La Pass [at 14,400 ft, it is also known as the Gateway to Zaskar], overlooking the awe-inspiring Drung Drang Glacier. During the bus ride, we saw villages with modern signboards announcing the village names, and quite a few solar panels. These were, we learnt, courtesy a government subsidy for backward areas.

In the evening, we finally reached Pudum, where there were many foreign trekkers on the only street we could walk on. The restaurants offered French, Tibetan, Israeli and German cuisine! We shared a hearty meal with a Singaporean girl called Chin Chee.

Our plan was to take a four-wheeler towards Shingu-La Pass and then hire mules and trek to Darcha in Himachal Pradesh en route to Manali on the Leh-Manali Road. We stayed at the J&K Government Guest House, where Gary started complaining of a giddy feeling associated

with altitude sickness. He took a tablet and we decided to take stock the next morning.

22 September

The next morning, Gary's condition had worsened and he was complaining of fluid accumulating in his brain. He also found it difficult to coordinate his hand movements. We found a doctor who advised complete bed rest but Gary wanted to turn back so that we could lose altitude. We hired a taxi to take us back to Kargil; we had barely descended 500 m and Gary was back to his old, chirpy self. We arrived at Kargil at 2 am.

23 September

It was time to head home. We could either take the shorter route via Srinagar-Jammu to Chandigarh or return to Leh and take the Manali route. As my train booking back to Baroda was on 30 September, we preferred to spend some more time in the valley. So we chose the latter option.

Travelling in the relative comfort of a shared taxi, we could now take the time to notice details. The first thing that strikes you is the lack of proper roads. The government was allotting thousands of crores to infrastructure but, quite literally, the ground reality was miserable. We were joined by an officer of the Border Roads Organisation who admitted that funds were being liberally siphoned off. "Why do you think petrol and diesel are freely available at roadside shops?" he asked. And why weren't there tunnels instead of needless long and winding roads? I am no engineer but isn't that plain common sense? It was the same common sense the Chinese had used to build six-lane expressways on their side on similar terrain.

We reached Leh around 10 pm and checked into a guesthouse.

24 September

At Leh; walks and chicken curry at the local eateries. Chatting with trekkers and tourists from across the world.

25 September

We hired a motorcycle and went zipping to Chilling, 60 km away. At Nima, we crossed the *sangam* or confluence of the Zaskar and Indus rivers, which then flows westwards towards Pakistan as the mighty Indus. Midway, there was a flurry of activity as a group of tourists were getting ready for some river rafting.

This stretch was absolutely breathtaking with mammoth rock faces bathed in shades of green, blue, orange, ochre and magenta rising towards the sky. It was a feast for the eyes.

26 September

Spent the day at Leh, shopping and walking. Took a tempo back to Manali at midnight. There was a time when travelling from Leh to Manali took two days; now it takes 17-18 hours. But thanks to crazy drivers racing each other at breakneck speeds, it was a nightmarish journey, not to mention the dust and bumps in the road. "Never again," I muttered to myself.

Towards late afternoon, we crossed the Rohtang Pass after a hold-up of around an hour owing to landslides. In 1996, I remember the pass as a small, sleepy hamlet. Now there were crowds. Some were even paragliding. At 6 pm, we were finally back on terra firma. Our trek had ended and we were both miraculously in one piece.

Footnote: Although we had aimed high (17,500 ft), we couldn't make it beyond 14,500. Twice, when within striking distance, we had to take a detour. This cost us around 500 km. There were a lot of shortcomings but we were satisfied that we had pressed on. We simply followed our dream.

Our 'Mountain Men' may not have planted a flag at their destination but they are already dreaming of their next challenge. Gary, who says he "cannot live with failures of any kind", reveals that Arunachal Pradesh is calling. And this time, they will be taking their motorcycles!





BRAVE ACT

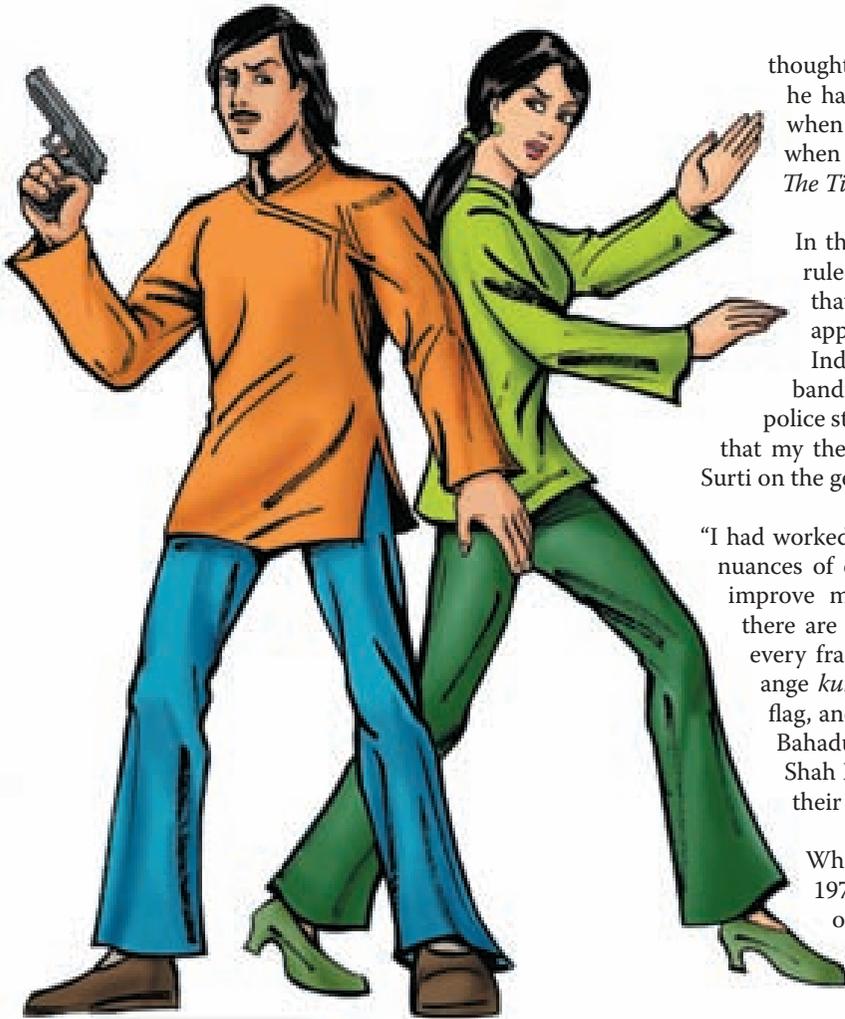
CARTOONIST ABID SURTI, NO STRANGER TO THE TRENCHES OF THE FILM INDUSTRY, TELLS RADHIKA RAJE HE WILL SOON UNVEIL THE CINEMATIC AVATAR OF HIS CULT CREATION BAHADUR

Abid Surti smiles as he recounts bittersweet memories. "I only have to thank that 'unknown soldier' for the life I have and the cartoons I have sketched". Growing up in the notorious area of Dongri in Mumbai, which fell right in between the trail of soldiers travelling from Dockyard to Victoria Terminus had its own advantages. "Though our living conditions were pathetic and we had no money, even small things gave us pleasure. We would run behind the trains, and soldiers travelling

in them would throw us chocolates and gifts. One day, someone threw a Mickey Mouse comic at us and we all pounced at it. All I got was a page of that comic book and it left me intrigued."

MULTIMEDIA

Surti read and re-read that single page and started copying and thinking of his own cartoon characters when he was only 11 years old; he started cartooning even before he finished school. Too nervous to show it to people, selling them was not even a



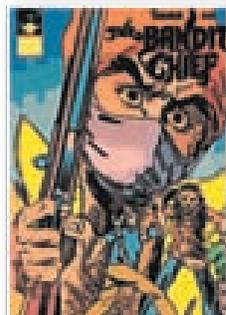
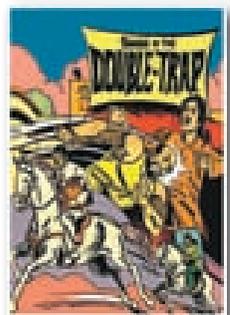
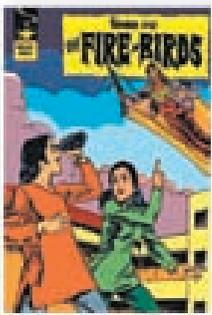
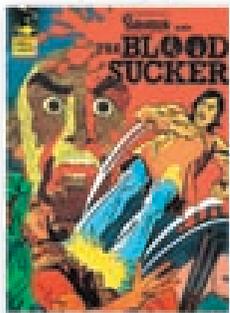
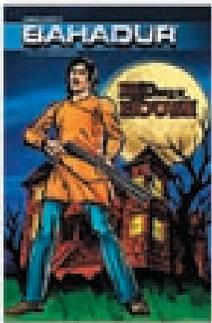
thought. As an active member of scouts and guides, he had to follow a day called 'Khari Kamai Day' when each scout had to earn his own bread; that's when he finally thought of selling his cartoons to *The Times of India*.

In the world of comics, Phantom and Mandrake ruled the roost for the longest time. Sensing that readers wanted change, weekly *Dharmyug* approached Surti to start a comic strip with an Indian protagonist. "My research revealed that bandits were quite a terror but there was only one police station for every 100 villages. And it struck me that my theme should be centered on that," comments Surti on the genesis of his protagonist Bahadur.

"I had worked as a spot boy in Hindi films and learnt the nuances of editing and directing. In fact, it helped me improve my cartooning skills. Just like the movies, there are angles and semiotics in comics as well and every frame has to speak." So, Bahadur wore an orange *kurta* that matched the colour of the national flag, and his jeans symbolised modernisation. Soon, Bahadur became a cult figure and earned fans like Shah Rukh Khan, who went on to become stars in their own right.

When Surti started work on Bahadur in the 1970s, Dacoit Mansingh was the most notorious bandit. Surti shaped Bahadur's father's character on this dacoit and used related information from newspapers to shape other characters and incidents in his comics. Bahadur sets out to take revenge for his father's killing by the police, and instead becomes reformed into a brave man who wants to wipe out all evil from the world. Surti's comic strip that revolutionised cartoons was also considered way ahead of its time as Bahadur was shown in a live-in relationship with his martial arts expert girlfriend Bela.

It was because of the era portrayed in the comic strip that its metamorphosis into a film was delayed. Though directors such as Anurag Kashyap and Pooja Bhatt offered to turn it into a film, the project stayed short of finalisation. The dream is finally coming true. "We are still working on the script but we know for sure that Bahadur will have a double role, wherein there will be a new-age Bahadur against a more humble old Bahadur," Surti confirms. Who will play Bahadur? Well, that remains to be seen.



A colourful coat

MALA KHAMIJA DEMONSTRATES HIS LACQUER COATING SKILLS TO A RAPT KHURSHEED DINSHAW. THE BAD NEWS: IT'S A DYING ART

I have a passport but I haven't travelled abroad; my family in the village says I would be a misfit for being uneducated," says 65 year-old Mala Khamija, holding out his identification. However, he is quick to add that he has travelled extensively within India as part of government exhibitions, demonstrating lacquer coating on wood.

A resident of Nirona village in Kutch, Khamija and his 70 year-old brother Bhatiya are the last of the surviving lacquer coaters. Belonging to the Vadha community, which was once renowned for this skill, lacquer coating is a dying art on account of it being labour-intensive and not lucrative. "Seven generations

CRAFT

from my family have been lacquer harvesters [it takes three days to search for the right tree in the hills to harvest lacquer]. I started when I was five. We have no land; all we have is this art. My son and nephew have no interest in pursuing our family lineage. They prefer working as labour for more money," says Khamija. He doesn't blame them but simply remembers the hard times he and his brother have faced, selling their art for a few rupees so they could have food on their plate.

Khamija enjoys sourcing lacquer from the hills; it's also more economical than buying from others. Its edges are then lit with a matchstick to liquefy it and a fine thread removed. This thread is quickly mixed with colourful powder and wrapped around the rolling pin; the powder is safe, non-allergic and waterproof. The handmade equipment used for coating consists of a steel rod called *kho* and a bow-like wooden contraption called *khapta* with a thick



Photographs by Hemant Patil

cotton thread attached to it. It is used to make lacquer smooth and fix it on the rolling pin.

Khamija dabs a piece of cotton cloth in oil (any cooking oil can be used) that is continuously rubbed on the



lacquer to make it smooth and bring out its colour on the rolling pin. "Oil ensures that the cloth does not absorb the colour," he explains, looking satisfied after he gets the psychedelic zigzag design right. "The colour is now set and won't come out. Only fire can destroy it," says Khamija, explaining how the same process is used to coat *dandiya*, tops for kids, spatulas, wooden decorative pestle-mortar and small utility items. It takes anywhere from one to five hours to coat a *dandiya* depending on the design. "Last year a couple from the US liked my finish so much that they bought all the *dandiya* I had in stock. They said they had no use for them but bought them anyway," he says with a smile.

Lacquer coating comes with its own problems. Khamija suffers from back pain from constant handling of *kho*; it also puts pressure on his heart. Cutting lacquer from trees is also exhausting. "At times I need to take a painkiller before I sleep," explains Khamija who received a state award in 1977 for coating a wooden *chakki* with lacquer. It helped create awareness about the art. This winter season is witnessing a good flow of tourists and therefore better sales, which makes him happy. "Khamir, an organisation that works to reposition craft and music in Kutch, helps me during the rest of the year by selling my products," he ends on an optimistic note. "It also helps me with loans."

WOMEN OF FAITH

THE WELFARE OF JEWISH WOMEN IS IN SAFE HANDS. THE INDIAN CHAPTER OF WIZO OR THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL ZIONIST ORGANISATION, WHICH CELEBRATED ITS 4TH ANNIVERSARY IN NOVEMBER 2011, WAS FOUNDED BY 10 MUMBAI-BASED JEWISH WOMEN. GENERAL CONCERNS LIKE HEALTH, SEXUAL ABUSE AND DOMESTIC PROBLEMS GAIN FURTHER GRAVITY OWING TO THE DWINDLING POPULATION OF JEWS ACROSS THE WORLD. WHEN Yael Jhirad, A FOUNDED MEMBER OF THE INDIAN CHAPTER, WAS APPROACHED BY WIZO'S TEL AVIV HEADQUARTERS, SHE WENT ABOUT GETTING LIKE-MINDED WOMEN TOGETHER TO BRING THE SERVICE TO WOMEN OF HER FAITH. AS PART OF WIZO'S ACTIVITIES, THE FOUNDERS ORGANISE WORKSHOPS AT KENESETH SYNAGOGUE IN MUMBAI'S KALA GHODA ART DISTRICT, AT A MEMBERSHIP OF RS 500 FOR FOUR YEARS. PURSUITS LIKE CANDLE-MAKING, VEGETABLE CARVING, PHOTOGRAPHY, SKETCHING AND PAINTING ARE COVERED IN THESE WORKSHOPS, WHICH ARE ATTENDED BY YOUNG AND OLDER WOMEN ALIKE. THE NEXT ON WIZO'S AGENDA: A BOOK CLUB AND READING SESSIONS. GO TO WWW.HARMONYINDIA.ORG FOR UPDATES ON THE CLUB.



An epicure's journey

From Dubai to Chandigarh, Chef Peter D'Rozario shares his journey of acquired tastes with **Suparna-Saraswati Puri**

Sanjay Kurt

If you were to agree that “food evokes a deep, subliminal response among us”, you would no doubt be curious to hear tales of those who prepare the finest. Meet Chef Peter D'Rozario, a 59 year-old Bengali whose epicurean expertise has allowed him to savour a more hectic second innings. With an insatiable appetite to learn, D'Rozario's culinary *jatra* brought him to Chandigarh from Kolkata in 2010; over a year after retiring from Rotana Hotels in Dubai where he had worked for 35 years. “While browsing the Net, a ‘requirement’ for a French epicure by a new restaurant in Chandigarh caught my attention. Somehow French food and Chandigarh didn't gel but I was suffering from withdrawal and waiting to get back to kitchen operations,” D'Rozario confesses.

D'Rozario works with Flamme Bois Bistro, a two year-old restaurant serving Italian and Mediterranean fare; recently, it received the Times Food Award 2012 for Best Italian Cuisine in Chandigarh. Almost every afternoon, its two branches in Sector 35 and Sector 7 are packed. Amid the cacophony of kitty party regulars, silver couples savour moments of togetherness over beer and pizza. Evenings witness an amalgam of celebs, politicians and bureaucrats enjoying D'Rozario's aperitifs and hand-picked wines over performances by artists, a chic trend in Chandigarh.

This exciting journey actually began by default. After completing senior Cambridge, he left home in 1969 and landed up in Delhi with no game plan; an unintended admission to a catering college initiated him into hospitality. The end

of his course providentially coincided with the launch of the Oberoi Hotel, where he worked as a kitchen trainee for three years—he considers it the foundation of his career.

His work has taken him to the finest eateries in Switzerland, Austria, France and the Gulf; D'Rozario's marks of distinction are hygiene, discipline and a humane disposition. “During my stint abroad, I got carried away by European cuisine. The freshness of ingredients, an organised method of preparation, treating every item with respect as if it had life...the final product was superb and the experience of putting it together breathless,” D'Rozario gushes. From his formative years at the Hilton in Bahrain to his certificate from City and Guilds in London, D'Rozario has imbibed nuggets through his travels to add to his repertoire. Whether it was the feast at the coronation of Bhutan's monarch Jigme Singye Wangchuck or working with the illustrious Paul Bocuse at Lyon in France, D'Rozario's feet remained firmly on the ground.

Even today, his daily meal and all-time favourite is rice and chicken curry at his restaurant; at home in Kolkata his wife doesn't let him enter the kitchen but his son, a student of St. Xavier's, loves his father's cooking. Having adapted well to his Punjabi environs, he finds the flashiness of cars around him thoroughly amusing. “I have not seen so many flashy cars anywhere else, not even in Europe. What adds to the fun is that the owners literally eat out of my hand,” quips the charming chef, who never drives himself; the steering wheel of his Scorpio is in his son's hands.

FOOD



AZZARO
POUR HOMME
L'eau

Enrique Iglesias



For further details please contact Baccarose on 022-22817766 or E-mail azzaro@baccarose.com

Before VIAGRA

In this excerpt from Sir Richard Francis Burton's classic 1883 translation of Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra*, we learn how to brew some potent ancient tonics

A man obtains sexual vigour by drinking milk mixed with sugar, the root of the *uchchata* plant, the *pipar chaba*, and *licorice*. Drinking milk mixed with sugar, and having the testicle of a ram or a goat boiled in it, is also productive of vigour. The drinking of the juice of the *Hedysarum gangeticum*, the *kuili*, and the *kshirika* plant, mixed with milk, produces the same effect. The seed of long pepper, along with the seeds of the *Sansevieria roxburghiana*, and the *Hedysarum gangeticum* plant, all pounded together, and mixed with milk, is productive of a similar result.

According to ancient authors, if a man pounds the seeds or roots of the *Trapa bispinosa*, the *kasurika*, the Tuscan jasmine and licorice, together with the *kshirikapoli* (a kind of onion), and puts the powder into milk mixed with sugar and ghee, and having boiled the whole mixture on a moderate fire, drinks the paste so formed, he will be able to enjoy innumerable women. In the same way, if a man mixes rice with the eggs of the sparrow, and having boiled this in milk, adds to it ghee and honey, and drinks as much of it as is necessary, this will produce the same effect.

If a man takes the outer covering of sesame seeds, and soaks them with the eggs of sparrows, and then, having boiled them in milk, mixed with sugar and ghee, along with the fruits of the *Trapa bispinosa* and the *kasurika* plant, and adds to it the flour of wheat and beans, and then drinks this composition, he is said to be able to enjoy many women. If ghee, honey, sugar and licorice in equal quantities, the juice of the fennel plant and milk are mixed together, this nectar-like composition is said to be holy, and provocative of sexual vigour, a preservative of life, and sweet to the taste.

The drinking of a paste composed of the *Asparagus racemosus*, the *shvadaushtra* plant, the *guduchi* plant, the long pepper and licorice, boiled in milk, honey and ghee, in the spring, is said to have the same effect as the above. Boiling the *Asparagus racemosus* and the *shvadaushtra* plant, along with the pounded fruits of the *Premna spinosa* in water, and drinking the same, is said to act in the same way.



Drinking boiled ghee in the morning, during the spring season, is said to be beneficial to health and strength, and agreeable to the taste. If the powder of the seed of the *shvadaushtra* plant and the flour of barley are mixed together in equal parts, and a portion of it, two *pala* in weight, is eaten every morning on getting up, it has the same effect as the preceding recipe.

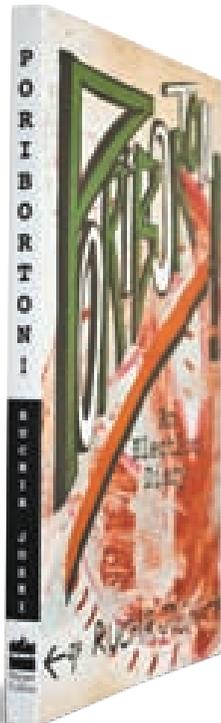
The means of producing love and sexual vigour should be learned from the science of medicine, from the Vedas, from those who are learned in the arts of magic and from confidential relatives. No means should be tried which are doubtful in their effects, which are likely to cause injury to the body, which involve the death of animals, or which bring us in contact with impure things. Only such means should be used as are holy, acknowledged to be good and approved of by Brahmans and friends.

A footnote from Burton: From the earliest times, Oriental authors have concerned themselves with aphrodisiacs. As the *Ananga Ranga* tells us, 'Most Eastern treatises divide aphrodisiacs into two different kinds: the mechanical or natural, such as scarification and flagellation; and the medicinal or artificial. To the former belongs the application of insects, as is practiced by some savage races; and all Orientalists will remember the tale of the old Brahman whose young wife insisted upon his being again stung by a wasp.'

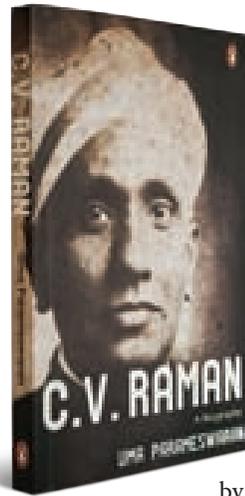
On the shelves

NEW READS THAT MAY GRAB YOUR FANCY

In the summer of 2011, filmmaker and writer **Ruchir Joshi** chronicled 'The Battle for Bengal' in *The Telegraph*; the landmark state elections that, after 34 years, swept away Communist rule and brought prodigal daughter Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Party into power. In **PORIBORTON!** (HarperCollins; ₹ 199; 162 pages), he weaves his reportage, vivid, pithy and witty, into a more comprehensive ac-



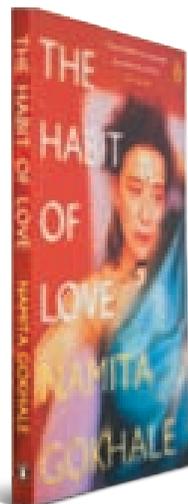
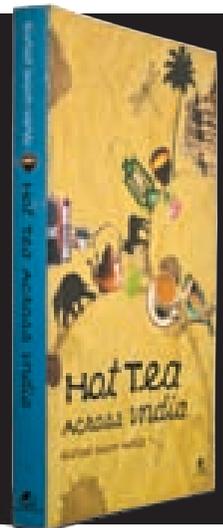
count. Joshi travels across the state, from Murshidabad and Darjeeling, to Medinipur and Maoist Lalgarh, and paints portraits of some of the most idiosyncratic characters on the electoral landscape. In the process, you get a precious insight into the mercurial Mamata Di, politician, painter, and a master of plainspeak—the woman has no time for “people trying to get into politics from the backside”, and lets them know it. A most entertaining take on democracy as we do it in India.



Going beyond the science, **Uma Parameswaran** sets out to discover the man behind The Raman Effect—an explanation of the molecular diffraction of light—in **C V RAMAN – A BIOGRAPHY** (Penguin; ₹ 350; 274 pages). The first Asian to receive the Nobel in the sciences, in 1930, Raman (1888–1970) was a charming and ebullient yet mercurial man who, despite his acknowledged genius, had a fractured relationship with many of his peers; found it hard to be a ‘team player’; and had to leave two leadership positions in Calcutta and Bangalore, eventually spending the last two decades of his life working in an institute he named after himself. His reliance on the women in his life (grandmother, sister, wife), the chasm between him and his son, and his hatred of the system

by the end of his life are all told with clarity, underlined with a deep empathy. A window into an extraordinary mind.

The aromas of history, geography and wanderlust fuse in this travelogue on a bike. As the title of this book suggests, in **HOT TEA ACROSS INDIA** (Tranquebar; 191 pages; ₹ 195), travel writer **Rishad Saam Mehta** remembers the cups, stalls and hands that serve tea on our country's highways. From the dacoit belt of Chambal to cross-border firing grounds in Kargil and Drass; *shikara* in Srinagar to the back road into Jaisalmer; the temples of Khajuraho to the enigma that has been the Grand Trunk Road... Mehta recalls from the recesses of his mind and travel diaries every cup of tea drunk in every corner of India he has travelled to on trucks and his Suzuki bike. Mehta lets his bike and his guides speak equally well. Take it with you on your next vacation.



Namita Gokhale's THE HABIT OF LOVE (Penguin; 184 pages, ₹ 250) is a collection of betrayed sentiments and loss of love and fidelity. The breast that her infants suckle turns cancerous as they fly the nest. But the pain she felt for Udit, the boy who fancies the life on Mars, was stronger than she felt for her brood or the lost breast. Everybody dies, but it was different when Princess Diana died; and with her the princess in so many girls. His cheating on her didn't kill their relationship; it's his wife's love for Diana that did it in. The Taj Mahal and Shah Jahan's love for his Begum unchained Malika's grieving heart, as does the visit to the Himalaya for one woman in the collection. And that several of them don't have a name in *The Habit...* is a telling sign of the omnipresence of emotions called love and grief.

Open your heart

Love is the bridge to god, says Osho

Love is the only quality, a natural quality that has something of eternity in it. Hence love is the first experience of god, the beginning of the experience of god. God is much more than that, but love opens the door. God is inconceivable, but love is not inconceivable. Love is natural, so love functions as a bridge between man and god. If the bridge is not there you cannot reach god; god remains simply an empty word. But with love, immediately you start understanding god in a new way. It is no more an empty word; it starts having great content... meaning...significance in it.

Knowing love is the first lesson in knowing god. That is the beginning of the alphabet, the ABC. Of course god is far more, because the alphabet will have to go to XYZ, but if you have begun rightly with ABC, XYZ is not far away. A good beginning is almost half the journey, a right beginning is half the journey.

Begin with love so one day you can know god. And never begin with god because you cannot begin there. That's where all the religions have failed: they begin with god, which is not possible. You are stuck on this bank and you start your journey on the other bank, where you are not. So your journey remains just a fantasy, a journey of dreams—beautiful dreams, but dreams are dreams, beautiful or ugly. When you wake up, you will see that all that time has been wasted. Even if they were nice dreams, they have not given you anything.

So there are worldly people who dream of worldly things, and there



Both worldly and religious people are dreamers stuck on this bank. God is the farther shore. You need a bridge or boat—love can function as both

are so-called religious people who dream of religious things, but both are dreamers—stuck on this bank. And god is the farther shore. A bridge or a boat is needed. Love can function both ways. Either it can become a bridge or it can become a boat, but it can take you to the other shore.

The so-called religions teach you to begin with god, and then you have only to believe in god. You don't know, you have to believe. This is the beginning of superstition, and all kinds of stupidities will be born out of it—Christian and Hindu and Mohammedan and Jewish, and there are thousands of forms. Stupidity comes in every size and shape, in all colours. The market is full of stupidity and you

have infinite variety; you can choose. You can go on changing from one stupidity to another.

But unless you know, you don't know. Belief is not knowing. Belief is a deception, deceiving others and deceiving yourself. And I am not worried about others—if you deceive others it is okay—but don't deceive yourself because that will destroy your whole life. And my understanding is that the person who deceives himself is the person who will deceive others. The person who cannot deceive himself cannot deceive others either; it becomes impossible for him to deceive. And belief is the greatest deception.

The only way to begin is with love, because that is a natural phenomenon. Everybody is born with a loving quality. You have to purify it, you have to make it more and more refined, cultured, so it loses all animality and lust, and slowly, slowly starts rising higher than lust. Drop jealousies because those are poisons, heavy weights that keep your love low; it cannot rise high. Possessiveness, ego trips, domination—go on dropping all these, and slowly, slowly your love will become weightless. A moment comes when there is no jealousy, no possessiveness, no lust, and love is pure.

You have wings, you can fly. Now you have something in you that can take you to the ultimate source of life, to god. Hence I say love is the first glimpse of eternity, and the last glimpse is god. Love is the beginning of god and god is the end of love. Love is the first step towards god and god is the ultimate goal of love.

An excerpt from Just the Tip of the Iceberg: Darshan Diaries (Individual Talks with Seekers, September 1980) by mystic, guru and spiritual teacher Osho (1931-1990). This e-publication is available for free download at www.livingworkshop.net/PDF-files/dd-Just_the_Tip.pdf

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REWIND

In today's age of digital sound, spare a thought for the compact cassette that first brought portability to our music. Popularly known as an audio cassette, this magnetic tape recording format comprises a protective plastic shell with two miniature reels. An oxide-coated plastic or magnetic tape passes between them, producing the sound. Although it was intended as a medium for dictation, it went on to become the most accepted format of pre-recorded music, giving the LP record a run for its money.

The first ever compact cassette was invented and released by The Philips Company of the Netherlands in 1962. It contained high-quality polyester produced by chemical company BASF. In 1963, Philips launched the Norelco Carry-Corder in the US with the new cassette tape to record dictation. However, the company failed to anticipate consumer demand for the tape, which began to be increasingly used to record music. The cassette's popularity grew further in the 1970s when Japanese company Sony introduced its Walkman. This high-fidelity (hi-fi) and portable pocket recorder was the size of the cassette tape itself with electronic buttons to play, pause and rewind the music on the cassette.

Despite its popularity, the entrance of the compact disc and, subsequently, the digital MP3 format, spelt the death knell for the cassette. By 2001, cassettes accounted for only 4 per cent of music sales globally; the number continues to dwindle, rendering them virtually obsolete today. Proof: in 2011, *The Revised Oxford English Dictionary* announced the removal of the word 'cassette tape' from its concise version.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: FEBRUARY 1962

- On 4 February, *The Sunday Times* in the UK became the first newspaper to print a colour supplement.
- On 4-5 February, during a new moon and solar eclipse, an extremely rare grand conjunction of the classical planets occurred (including all five of the naked-eye planets plus the sun and moon), all within 16° of one another on the ecliptic.
- On 14 February, US first lady Jacqueline Kennedy conducted a White House tour on television for the first time.

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Nukebot

n. A robot designed to operate in high-radiation areas.

Example: The precursor to the Japan Atomic Energy Agency came up with several **nukebots**, including RaBot, a rolling, double-armed robot that was resistant to radiation and could open and close valves while operating under remote control.

—Tim Hornyak, “Where are the robots in Japan’s nuclear crisis?”, *CNET*, 19 March 2011

Hopium

n. The irrational belief that, despite all evidence to the contrary, things will turn out for the best.

Example: You’d better not shout, pout or cry because you know who might be coming to town. At least that seems to be the growing feeling among commentators. Realistic? Or is it a case of, as CNBC beautifully put it on Wednesday, markets being on a new drug called **hopium**?

—Greg Peel, “Next week at a glance”, *FNArena*, 2 December 2011

“We are not put into this world to sit still and know; we are put into it to act.

—Woodrow Wilson

Bustaurant

n. A restaurant set up in a converted bus

Example: But when Mr. Schick and his business partner, Blake Tally, decided to open Le Truc, a San Francisco **bustaurant**, with a gourmet kitchen and dedicated seating area inside a converted school bus, the two quickly learned that the kitchens in food trucks are very different from their brick-and-mortar equivalents.

—Todd Lapin, “The vehicle of street food is getting an overhaul”, *The New York Times*, 14 January 2011

JANOPAUSE

n. The practice of abstaining from alcohol for the month of January.

Example: The **Janopause** describes the post-Christmas abstinence from anything remotely pleasurable. Look around your workplace and you’ll see people on the Janopause everywhere. They’ll be the ones with a litre bottle of Brecon Carreg on their desks, a packet of pumpkin seeds and an expression of utter misery.

—Carolyn Hitt, “Abstinence and grim resolutions of Janopause just don’t fit in”, *Wales Online*, 9 January 2012

Grey sky thinking

n. Negative or pessimistic thoughts, ideas, or solutions.

Example: **Grey sky thinking** might be a better way of putting it. Officials at Glasgow City Council have been told to indulge in ‘blue sky thinking’ in the quest for economies that could see its budget cut by 15 per cent in three years and its workforce shrink by up to 3,000.

—“Cutting to the quick”, *The Herald*, 24 September 2009

Fat-finger problem

n. The tendency to make errors on a device where the keys or screen elements are too small.

Example: Sizeable erase and undo buttons at the bottom of the screen let you fix mistakes easily. Nevertheless, anyone who suffers from the so-called **fat-finger problem** or has stiff or arthritic hands should approach the game with an ounce of patience.

—Jill Duffy, “Trainyard express (for iPhone)”, *PC Magazine*, 14 February 2011

Ineptocracy

n. A government or state ruled by people who are incompetent.

Example: Cardiff Council operates a ‘no can-do-culture’ and morale among general staff is low. The council operates as a private club, with the Liberal Democrats, Labour and the Conservatives all too happy to perpetuate an **ineptocracy**.

—Neil McEvoy, quoted in Phillip Nifield, “Call to cut council bosses’ wages”, *South Wales Echo*, 31 August 2007

Showroom

v. To use retail store to view and research a product and then purchase the product for less money online.

Example: According to Codex Group, a book audience research firm in New York, people use their neighbourhood stores as a form of literary dressing room: Try it on for size, but buy it elsewhere. It's a trend that shows no sign of abating, said Peter Hildick-Smith, president of Codex. Earlier this year, his firm surveyed 5,067 book buyers from around the country about their buying habits and 28 per cent said they **showroomed**.

—Rosalind Bentley, "Bookstores losing browsers to Web", *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 17 December 2011

Humblebrag

n. An ostensibly humble comment that also demonstrates the person's wealth, fame, or importance.

Example: In Paris, super producer Marin Karmitz had money and wasn't afraid to spend it to help Kieslowski make a trilogy both artful and lavish. (Karmitz **humblebrags** in an interview on these discs that, during *Red*, he was taken to the cleaners by a Geneva woman whose apartment was to be the heroine's; Karmitz put her up in the city's most expensive hotel, all expenses paid, for two months.)

—Dan Kojs, "The white stuff", *Slate*, 15 November 2011

BUZZ



LOST, AND FOUND

After two missing seniors in Bengaluru were tracked down with the help of social networking sites, Mumbai-based Silver Innings Foundation, a non-government organisation, has decided to do its part to keep silvers safe and sound. Their new blog, www.missingseiorcitizens.blogspot.com, aims to trace lost elders not just in India but all over the world. We like it!

ARRIVAL CITY

n. A slum, shantytown, neighbourhood, or other urban area that serves as an initial destination for a large population of rural migrants or foreign immigrants.

Example: The capital became, as it remains, an **arrival city**, crammed with new communities: first from rural England, then Wales and Ireland, then continental Europe, then the former Empire, then the whole world.

—Boyd Tonkin, "Brenton Brown, By Alex Wheatle", *The Independent*, 12 August 2011

“ Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

“I am just a mediator; the rescuer is up there”

Kitty (Raina) Bakshi, 61, Chandigarh, for rescuing injured and sick animals



Sanjay Kurt

Awidow spending each day of her life learning and living, Kitty (Raina) Bakshi battled illnesses from infancy to adulthood and survived a childless marriage with grace and humility. A retired English lecturer, Bakshi grew up in a home that always had animals, but her love for animals came from her husband Deepak. “He had a drinking habit and would on several occasions come home doddering with a cat or a deserted pup. One mangy little dog named Shammer changed my life forever. He just walked into our hearts and home and adopted us!” However, it was Mitti, an ailing mud-coloured Apso that took her to People

for Animals (PFA) in Chandigarh a decade ago. Since then she has been taking every animal that comes her way to PFA, where she is also a regular monthly donor. There’s Whiskers the street cat, who does not live with Bakshi but comes for all her meals to her for the past five years; and Feathers, the mynah, who accompanied Bakshi and her husband on long road trips, even to Leh. “I trust PFA’s veterinarians the most, as I have closely seen them at work,” says Bakshi. While she has lost count of the number of animals she has saved, she believes, “I am just a mediator, the rescuer is someone up there.”

—Suparna-Saraswati Puri

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