

harmony celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

DECEMBER 2012 ₹ 30

10
OUT-OF-THE-BOX IDEAS TO
WELCOME



Subscriber Copy Not For Resale



SINDHI SAGA • BOND WITH RUSKIN • PUNE'S ONE-MAN ARMY



Growing gracefully

WITH CENT SWABHIMAN PLUS



First time in India, a Reverse Mortgage Loan enabled Annuity Product for Senior Citizens. Life-time Annuity will be paid by the partner insurance company till the demise of the last surviving borrower.



ISO 27001:2005 Certified Bank

"We appeal to the public to donate generously to Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF). We accept online payment. Donations are fully exempted from Income Tax under Sec. 80G of the I.T. Act, 1961."

For more detail log on to : www.centralbankofindia.co.in or Contact : 1800 200 1911 (Toll Free)

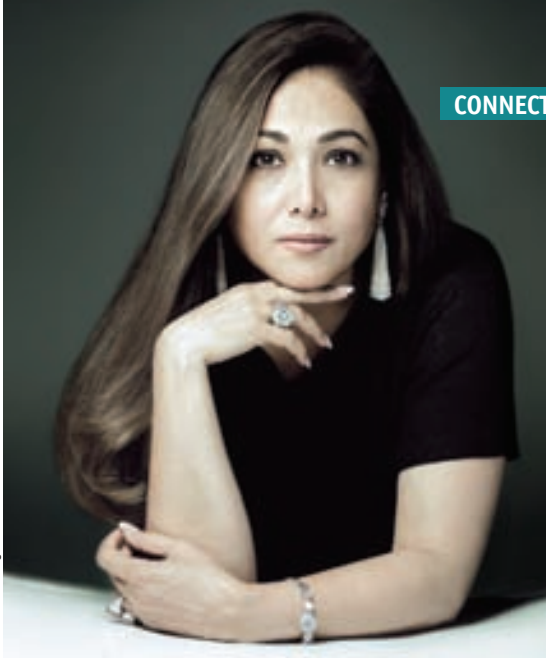
Counting SILVER

How do we make the numbers count?

That's the question we must ask when we read a new report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It asserts that India's population is ageing sooner than expected, pointing to a significant demographic shift: a 326 per cent increase in silvers between 60 and 80, and an incredible 700 per cent increase in our octogenarians from the year 2000 to 2050. The report's verdict: "India is gradually but surely transitioning away from a young age structure with the elderly population soon outnumbering children in India." There's more. An allied UNFPA survey conducted in seven states—Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Orissa, West Bengal, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh—tells us that nearly 71 per cent of our silvers between 60 and 80 are compelled to work; owing to economic necessity not choice. Another highlight: over 50 per cent of elderly contribute to household income in India.

While youth-centric social analysts may bemoan this evident 'greying' of India, we see this as a definitive reason to underline the potential of our silvering nation. Viewed from the prism of policymakers, businesspersons and marketing professionals, these numbers should be turned to an advantage, pointing to an untapped and burgeoning demographic that can contribute to national economic—and social—growth. As B D Ghosh, a senior fellow at the Kolkata-based Institute of Social Sciences, pointed out in one news report, "Even states that have a

Suresh Natarajan



considerable greying population have not taken demography into consideration while formulating policies."

He is echoing the refrain of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, a need we have expressed consistently and with commitment since inception. As we near the end of another year, we urge government and civil society alike to see these numbers as what they really are: a tremendous window of opportunity. We must understand this opportunity for what it is and grasp it—with concrete policy, institutional, commercial and social efforts and sustainable long-term initiatives to tap into the potential of silvers and offer the silver market the products and programmes it deserves. If, over the long term, we are able to accomplish this, these numbers will herald more than a demographic shift; they will become harbingers of a better, brighter future.

It's time to make these numbers count.

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

Harmony Celebrate Age—December 2012 Volume 9 Issue 7

Publisher **Dharmendra Bhandari** Editor **Tina Ambani** Deputy Editor **Arati Rajan Menon** Assistant Editor **Srirekha Pillai**

Copy Editor **Sai Prabha Kamath** Correspondent (Mumbai) **Radhika Raje** Consultant Editors **Malvika Singh, Meeta Bhatti** Design Consultant **Jit Ray**

Studio Manager **Hareesh Patel** Production Manager **Rohidas Adavkar** Graphic Designer **Dattaguru Redekar**

Visual Coordinator **Anuradha Joshi** Website Coordinator **Ajit Nair**

Assistant Vice-President, Business Development **Shrenik Mehta** Assistant Manager, Business Development **Kumar Kislay** Marketing Coordinator **Johnsi Nadar**

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, 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

index

features

38 . Journey: At Adipur-Gandhidham, a little town in Kutch, a group of silvers keep the Sindhi tradition alive

64 . Legal Eagle: Pune's one-man army Dr Shriram Pande takes the RTI route to set the city in order



73 . Bookshelf: Ruskin Bond continues to surprise with his latest novella *Maharani*

columns

28 . NUTRITION: Anjali Mukerjee spreads out wholesome menus that are easy on the tummy

30 . SILVER LINING: Padmashri V S Natarajan addresses the 'pill for every ill' syndrome

32 . YOGA RX: Shameem Akthar shows how to savour the present moment



WEB EXCLUSIVES www.harmonyindia.org



FEAT ACCOMPLISHED
At 93, Delhi's Marathon Man Madan Swaroop Sethi proves that life is not a race against time

LOOK WITHIN
It's time to introspect, says India Becoming author Akash Kapur

42 cover feature

2013: Where to be when the clock strikes 00:00

Cover designed by **Jit Ray**

every issue

7 . ORBIT: News, views, people, research, trends and tips from around the world

24 . YOUR SPACE: Reach out to fellow silvers with your inspiring stories

67 . ETCETERA: Culture, leisure, lifestyle, books, buzz and miscellany

80 . SPEAK: Madanlal Baldevraj Ghai on a mission to popularise math among schoolchildren

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANCE CONTACT: HarmonyCare, Living Media India Ltd, A-61, Sector 57, Noida (Uttar Pradesh) - 201301.

Toll-free: 1800 1800 100 Phones: New Delhi: (0120) 2479900 from Delhi and Faridabad; (0120) 2479900 from Rest of India

Fax: (0120) 4078080; **Kolkata:** 033-22827695 **Fax:** 22828949; **Bengaluru:** 080-2212448, 22213037, **Fax:** 2218335; **Mumbai:** 022-66063355
Fax: 24444358; **Chennai:** 044-28478525 **Fax:** 24361942; **Email:** harmonycare@intoday.com

HEAR MORE WITH CLARITY AND COMFORT



INTRODUCING WIDEX SUPER - THE POWER TO HEAR CLEARLY

Want to hear more, but in comfort? Then the new WIDEX SUPER™ power hearing aid is the ideal choice for people with **severe to profound hearing loss**. It is not only powerful but also comfortable. And more importantly, it gives you more audibility – so you can hear sounds and speech clearly, naturally and without distortion. Come explore a new power.



WIDEX SUPER™
THE POWER TO HEAR

Widex recommends use of Widex Batteries for better performance and longer life*

*Conditions apply.

WIDEX INDIA PVT LTD.

- CHANDIGARH** : DLF Infocity, Tower 'D', 2nd Floor, Rajiv Gandhi Chandigarh Technology Park, Ph : 0172-5000201, Telefax: 0172-5042075
- DELHI** : ICS House, C-19, Ground Floor, Safdarjung Development Area Market, Opp. I.I.T. Main Gate, Ph: 011-26514672, 26514673
- BENGALURU** : 406, 4th Floor, Prestige Centre Point, Cunningham Road, Ph.: 080-41635048, 22879500
- MUMBAI** : 110 & 111, Midas Building, Sahar Plaza, J.B. Nagar, Andheri (East), Ph.: 022-61278333, 28388447
- KOLKATA** : 2nd Floor, 87, Chowringhee Road, Ph.: 033-40085033

Also available at all leading Dispensers in India, Nepal & Bangladesh

For Products and Prices log on to www.widexindia.com Toll Free No. 1800 420 94339

Follow us on



column one

Neither time nor age withers the promise of the New Year. While bidding fond farewell to yesterday, each *Auld lang syne* resonates with the promise of a new tomorrow. Why not herald this promise in a way that reflects your unique aspirations? Our cover feature, "When The Clock Strikes 00:00", recommends 10 out-of-the-box ways to bring in 2013. From a rendezvous with ghosts, a walk across a blanket of ice to island escapes, musical interludes, a theatre soiree and a truly cheesy pursuit, our team has put together a smorgasbord of delights for you to savour. Pick one that tickles your palate—or improvise to create a year-end celebration perfect for you.

Indeed, there are many trails to happiness and self-actualisation. India's beloved Ruskin Bond ('Authorspeak') reveals how his love for nature and people has kept the child—and author—in him alive at 78. Journalist-chef-author Kaumudi Marathe writes about her 'Journey' to the town of Adipur-Gandhidham in Kutch to meet a group of silvers who are keeping their Sindhi heritage alive. And former hydrologist K Arumugam ('Second Careers') shares how he has channelled his love for hockey into a crusade to promote the sport.

Sometimes the paths we choose can help others. Like Dr Shriram Pande, our 'Legal Eagle', whose RTI sword-play has helped citizens in Pune wage war against injustice; and Dr Neelima Desai ('Your Space'), who established a home for the mentally challenged to give her own daughter a way to express herself. Whatever your chosen route, let your heart be your guide and your conviction your compass. And, remember, you can count on *Harmony-Celebrate Age* for directions!

—Arati Rajan Menon



I am a regular reader of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. I like the magazine both for its content and look. I appreciate your coverage of issues that have an impact on silvers. Keep it up! However, I miss the earlier puzzle section that used to appear on the last few pages. Can you not revive it?

D Vendantham
Chennai

I have been a great fan of Satyajit Ray and, therefore, wanted to check out Sandip Ray's work. I saw

some of his movies and was more than impressed. It's usually said that the late filmmaker's shoes are not easy to fill; however, Sandip has not just done an excellent job but raised the bar. I have always known Sandip Ray as a filmmaker. The fact that it was his photography that led him to it, as revealed by your cover story ("Master of Arts", November 2012), came as a real surprise. I think he merits applause to have made a mark of his own despite being born to a legendary filmmaker. One of his movies, *Nishijapon*, will remain my favourite forever. I wish him all the luck for his upcoming film and eagerly await it.

Arunima P Mukherjee
Kolkata

"Theatrewallah" ('Etcetera', November 2012) was a delightful read. I agree completely with Yasir's opinion that a nation without theatre is 'dead'. The article has come at a right time, when there is a sentiment to revitalise and redefine Kashmiri theatre. Hats off to his bold statement: "Only those who dare, live; so, here I am."

Jamal A Kidwai
Chandigarh

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



Health Check up Today For a Healthy Life Tomorrow

Aarogyam

Presents

AAROGYAM 1.4

Profile



Now with Cardiac Markers
& Electrolytes



SPECIAL OFFER RATE

@ ~~₹ 3600~~ 2200/- only*

Delivery code : 2200SB300H-CF

Profile Includes (59 tests)

- Diabetic Screen [2] (with Hba1c)
- Cholesterol Profile [7] +
- Liver Profile [10]
- Renal Profile [5]
- Iron Deficiency Profile [3]
- Hemogram [17]
- Vitamin D, B12 [2]
- Hormones (T3, T4, TSH, Testosterone) [4]
- and
- Cardiac Markers Profile [6]
- Electrolytes Profile [3]

+ 10-12 hrs fasting is essential

*offer valid for limited period only

#Home service in selected cities within city limit

For booking the service :

CALL 022 - 67 123456 / 3090 0000

WEBSITE www.thyrocare.com

EMAIL info@thyrocare.com

SMS AAR to 9870 666 333

Brought to you by

Thyrocare®

World's largest preventive care laboratory

ACCREDITED | NETWORKED | BARCODED

Thyrocare, D-37/1, TTC MIDC, Turbhe, Navi Mumbai- 400703.

ATTENTION SENIOR CITIZENS

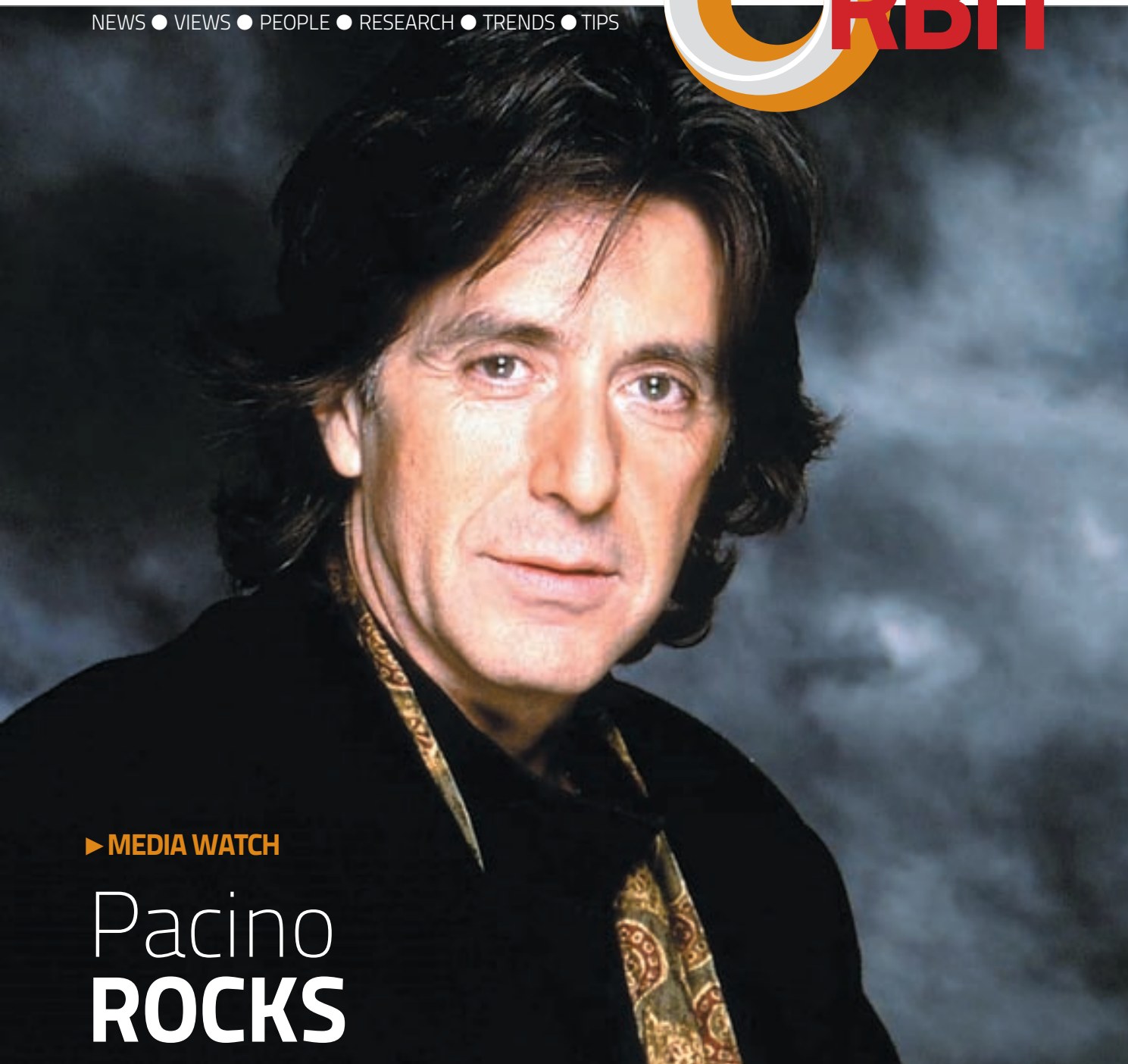


get a **loan** against your house,
live in it and **get paid every month**

REVERSE MORTGAGE TOLL FREE HELPLINE

1800 100 1111

**CALL
NOW!**
Mon-Sat
9am to 5pm



► MEDIA WATCH

Pacino ROCKS

If Al Pacino floats your boat—as he does ours—mark this one as a must-see. Next year, the iconic 72 year-old actor will star in *Imagine, the story of an ageing rocker* inspired to change his debauched ways after he discovers a letter from Beatle John Lennon written to him decades ago. The film will mark the directorial debut of screenwriter Dan Fogelman. “Every writer has that one

project, the one they feel so strongly about that they can’t bear to turn it over to anyone else,” Fogelman tells entertainment website *deadline.com*. “For me, that project is *Imagine*. It was a career highlight simply to get a script of mine into Al Pacino’s hands. To have him read it, and then want to star in it, it’s five steps past career highlight!” Shooting on the film will begin in spring 2013.



VEGAS, BABY!

It's a recipe for movie magic—four hunks who boast six Oscar wins and 14 nominations, and an estimated box office gross of \$ 16.6 billion between them. Welcome to *Last Vegas*, starring 68 year-old Michael Douglas, 69 year-old Robert De Niro, 75 year-old Morgan Freeman and 65 year-old Kevin Kline in a caper about four friends who come together for a bachelor party like no other. The film releases worldwide on 20 December. Will you be there?



BUNNIES FOREVER

Object of male fantasies spanning countries and generations, **Playboy Bunnies**—emblazoned on the pages of Hugh Hefner's magazine and dotted across his mansion—embody a decadent sexuality that cemented a global lifestyle brand and projected an unreal image of the female anatomy. But Bunnies, too, inevitably age, a phenomenon **American artist Robyn Twomey** decided to explore with her camera. The result is a montage of images both poignant and proud, reflecting an array of emotions. "They are complex characters that are proud and empowered by their beauty and sexuality, at the same time stricken by the fleeting nature of it," writes Twomey on her website. See for yourself at www.robynthwomey.com

Cover GIRL



American fashion and lifestyle magazine *Dazed & Confused* has a reputation for controversy; the overt sexual imagery of its September issue led to a ban in seven countries. Still, style pundits agree that its November cover is its most radical yet—it features **91 year-old Iris Apfel**. The lecturer and art historian, who was in charge of interior design at the White House under nine US presidents, headlines the magazine's art special on 'The New Aesthetic', resplendent in a red and yellow ensemble from Rei Kawakubo's 2D collection for Japanese label Comme des Garçons. The magazine says in a media release: "Iris herself famously once said, 'When you don't dress like everybody else, you don't have to think like everybody else.' We're in full agreement, and hope you are too." We sure are. Visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SM51UYe3AFo>

Hard Fact of Life

Highly compromise environment (polluted air) and non-healthy food etc. have severely weakened our natural free radical defense system resulting in low immune system and increase in harmful free radicals (toxic molecules that damage every area of our body)

RESULT

Due to increase in free radicals our body not been able to adjust with change of environment resulting in problem which includes common cold, fever, high cholesterol level etc.

ACTION

We need anti oxidant

.....

Anti oxidants converts toxic free radicals into harmless elements boosting our immune system and increase metabolism

ADD

GRECOBE

An ultimate Anti-oxidants
to your Diet TODAY

Green coffee bean extract standardized to 50% dietary Chlorogenic Acid, highest in anti-oxidants helps to neutralize harmful free radical in our body.

Benefits of GRECOBE:

- Preserve Natural Antioxidants in the body
- Decrease the production of free radicals (Fat metabolism by-products)
- Neutralize Carcinogenic compound.
- Burns both Sugar and fat & slows the release of sugar into blood stream

For enquiries or order, please contact:

09915002390, 07814122220, 07814422220 or email: grecoabe@fenfuro.com

INDEX OF EMBARRASSMENT

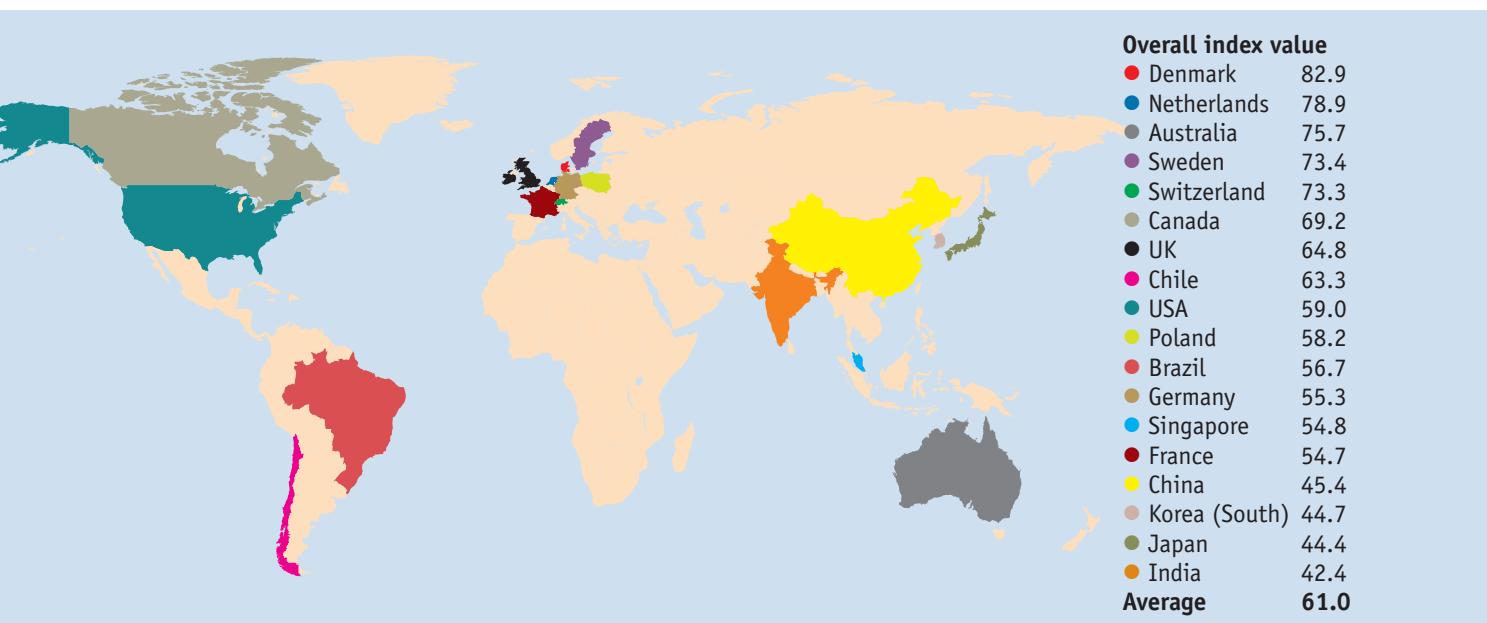
While we pride ourselves on the strides we have made as a nation, here is a timely reminder that we lag far behind the developed world in terms of public and private pension initiatives. **In the 2012 edition of the Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index, India ranked last among the 18 countries analysed**, with a dismal overall index value of 42.4. The top spot went to Denmark, with a value of 82.9, against an average of 61, for its “well-funded pension system, high level of assets and contributions, provision of adequate benefits and well-developed regulations”. The annual report, which ranks pension systems around the world covering over 50 per cent of the global population, examines both the publicly funded and private components of a system as well as per-

sonal assets and savings outside the pension system based on the parameters of adequacy, sustainability and integrity.

“Many of the world’s retirement systems are under increasing stress with an ageing population, low investment returns and, in some cases, significant government debt,” says author Dr David Knox. “Reform is needed to ensure that adequate benefits are provided over the long term in a sustainable manner. This report highlights several reforms relevant to each country that will provide improved results for individuals, households and the community.” For instance, noting that India’s retirement income system “comprises an earnings-related employee pension scheme, a defined contribution employee provident fund and voluntary employer managed funds”, the report has the following recommendations to increase our overall index value:

- A minimum level of support for the poorest aged individuals
- A minimum access age so that it is clear that benefits are preserved for retirement purposes
- Improving regulatory requirements for the private pension system
- Continuing to improve the required level of communication to members from pension arrangements
- Increasing the pension age as life expectancy continues to increase
- Increasing the level of contributions in statutory pension schemes

You can read the report on www.globalpensionindex.com





More than mail

Harmony-Celebrate Age has led the media in consistently expressing its alarm about the rising levels of crime against silvers in our metros. This concern has now found an echo in a new advocate for the silver cause—while getting more silvers to open accounts in post offices, **the Maharashtra & Goa circle of India Post has expressed its willingness to collaborate with Mumbai Police to work towards the safety of elders.** By virtue of its widespread network that encompasses a num-

ber of silvers, postal officials believe they can initiate a dialogue with silvers. Abha Singh, director of the India Post's Maharashtra and Goa circle, tells media that a formal proposal to the police will be sent out soon. "We have 800,000 senior citizens' accounts," she reiterates. "We also have over 4,000 postmen and postwomen with direct access to people who can help the police to register the elderly and identify vulnerable people; when we sense something amiss, we can report it to the police." We like it.

Walk in

It's not just your ticket to travel, but one of the most important proofs of identity you could have. And now, **getting—or renewing—your passport just got easier.** In a periodical review, the Government of India's Passport Seva Project has removed



the 'online appointment' requirement for silvers, allowing them to 'walk in'. The online requirement has also been waived for the physically challenged and infants under the age of three whose parents hold valid passports. For more information as well as details on your nearest passport office, go to www.passportindia.gov.in



CANADIAN CONCERN: OVER 60 PER CENT OF SILVERS IN CANADA SAY THEY'VE BEEN TREATED UNFAIRLY OR DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF THEIR AGE; OVER 50 PER CENT OF ALL CANADIANS AGREE THAT AGEISM IS THE MOST TOLERATED SOCIAL PREJUDICE, VERSUS GENDER OR RACE-BASED DISCRIMINATION; AND OVER 35 PER CENT OF CANADIANS ADMIT THEY'VE TREATED SOMEONE DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF THEIR AGE.



BLOOD BROTHERS

Blood transfusions don't just save lives, they can revive brains too. According to scientists from Stanford University, **blood from young mice can rejuvenate the brains and cognitive capabilities of older mice.** When the team connected the circulatory systems of old and young mice and allowed their blood to mingle, they discovered that the ageing process in the old mice had slowed down—the number of stem cells in their brains had increased; connections between brain cells

had improved 20 per cent; and they performed better on memory tests. "Do I think that giving young blood could have an effect on a human? I'm thinking more and more that it might," team leader Saul Villeda said at the American Society for Neuroscience in New Orleans in late October. "It is now distinctly probable that not too far in the future, people in their 50s could take therapies based on the rejuvenating chemical factors in younger people's blood, as a preventive against the degenerative effects of ageing."

HELP AT HAND: THE VARANASI POLICE ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL SOON INTRODUCE A SENIOR CITIZENS' HELPLINE. ALONG WITH RESIDENTS, THE DEPARTMENT IS AIMING TO HELP THE COUNTLESS SILVER TOURISTS WHO THROG THE HOLY CITY. WE'LL KEEP YOU POSTED AS MORE CONCRETE DETAILS EMERGE.



Masterchef, at last

Much like a good bottle of Bordeaux, a good cook takes time to mature into a great one. A rather offbeat survey of over 1,000 British women by The Co-operative Food, a grocery chain, insists that **an average woman masters her culinary skills only by the time she turns 55,** reports London newspaper *The Telegraph*. Here are some highlights of the study with regard to women over 55:

- They have a repertoire of over 15 meals they can quickly rustle up.
- 85 per cent of them can confidently cook a perfect fried or boiled egg.
- 80 per cent can make a delicious meal from random ingredients.
- 50 per cent never use artificial sauces and always make their own.



- Over 75 per cent regularly bake cakes and biscuits.
- About 70 per cent can confidently cook bread from scratch.
- Over 75 per cent of them don't use kitchen scales; they throw baking ingredients into the mixing bowl using guesswork.

"It stands to reason that it takes time to master cookery, and confidence comes with age," says Helen Nunn, head of marketing for The Co-operative Food. "There is some truth in the fact that you learn from your mistakes, so women need to endure dinner disasters and mishaps in the kitchen before getting everything spot on." Interesting; but we can't help but wonder why the survey neglected men altogether.

Beauty on wheels



We thought we'd seen everything until this: an **anti-wrinkle car**. Apparently, the good folks at Japanese car giant Honda decided that creams, potions and procedures weren't enough of a fix for age-obsessed women; their wheels had to follow suit. The result: the oddly named **Fit She's**, designed especially for women. The car, now available in Japan, features a windscreen that blocks 99 per cent of UV rays, and a 'Plasmacluster' air-conditioning system that releases ion-charged particles that are supposed to make your skin softer. Then, there's the aesthetics: a heart instead of an apostrophe in 'She's'; pink details and stitching on the interiors; and colours that mimic eye-shadow shades: pink, brown and white. The price tag for this magic machine is \$17,500 (about ₹ 960,000) but there's no word yet on a global rollout. Don't hold your breath.

Most silver citizens
would give anything
to experience youth again.

Our yearly subscription
costs just Rs. 324.

Visit us at : www.harmonyindia.org



Top gear!



With over 88.7 million people over the age of 50 on the road in the US, leading insurer Hartford Insurance teamed up with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's AgeLab to come up with **a list of the best technologies to keep silver drivers safe.** "Our primary interest was equipping consumers, so when they go shopping they can bring our

list and talk to the salesman and use it in the decision-making process," Jodi Olshevski of Hartford Insurance tells newspaper *The Los Angeles Times*. "We really didn't look at specific manufacturers. We were more interested in looking at the technologies themselves to get a sense of which ones do we think drivers should have." Here's the Top 10, along with cars that feature them:

Smart headlights: They switch from low to high-beam, depending on traffic and glare. Example, the Chrysler 300.



Emergency response system: If the car is in a collision, it dials a call centre to pinpoint your location and notify the authorities. Example, the Chevy Spark by General Motors.

Reverse monitoring system: It warns drivers of obstacles when the car is backing up, and is often used with a backup camera. Some cars even stop



automatically if they're about to back into something. Example, Infiniti JX.

Blind spot monitoring: It works by illuminating a light in the side mirror if another vehicle is in your blind spot. Example, 2013 Mazda CX-5.



Lane departure warning: It monitors your position in a lane and warns you if you veer out of the lane without a turn signal. Some systems even work to pull the car back in. Example, 2013 Lexus ES.

Vehicle stability control: All cars manufactured 2012 onwards must have electronic stability control, according to the US Department of Transportation. Example, 2013 Honda Accord.

Assistive parking system: If you just work the throttle, it will parallel

park the car for you. Example, 2013 Ford Fusion.



Voice activated system: It lets you set navigation destinations, make phone calls and adjust climate controls. Example, Audi A6.



Crash mitigation system: It can detect an imminent collision and can warn the driver and prepare the vehicle to minimise injuries. Example, Cadillac XTS.

Smart launch

For silvers who want the functionality of a smartphone but none of the complication, here's the answer: the **BIG Launcher App**. Developed for silvers and people with vision problems, it transforms the home screen of your existing Android phone, offering you large and bright icons for calls, contacts, text messaging and camera operation, and simplifies access to key functions like wireless connectivity and Bluetooth. And the app includes different colour schemes



developed specially for people suffering from retinitis pigmentosa, cataracts and other eye diseases. "Even for users without any disabilities, BIG Launcher offers a fast and simple interface for using all the functions of the phone and quick access to favourite applications," says Jan Husak, co-founder of BIG Launcher, which was a winner of the Vodafone Smart Accessibility Awards 2011. The best part: anyone in the world can download it, for a price of \$ 9.99 (about ₹ 550), a relatively small add-on to the hefty price of a smartphone. Interested? You can test drive a trial version of the app for free—go to biglauncher.com



Cave of wonder

It's like something out of *The Matrix*. A former cigarette factory in Ireland's northern town of Dundalk is now wired, weird and wonderful—a **hi-tech 3-D cave dedicated to research on ageing**. As the BBC reports, the cave features 'immersive virtual reality' to enable a team of scientists from the Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) to develop the perfect living environment for silvers. Translating the virtual to the actual, the team has used the cave to design 16 apartments in the centre of Dundalk, which house 20 silvers to function as a living lab. A highlight of these apartments is the presence of pressure sensors everywhere. They will shut your windows if it rains, lock your doors if you forget

to, put the lights on as you begin to get out of bed, and even turn on your corridor and bathroom lights if that's the way you're headed. "We really have to start thinking of older people as being a huge success of improvements in public health and improvements in education so we are living longer," says Rod Bond, who heads the team. "It's a huge opportunity to really build on that bounty of ageing as opposed to thinking of it as a problem. And one way to do that is to ensure independent and sustainable living arrangements for our seniors. In our living lab, we use them as co-designers to help us develop new technologies and infrastructure. Going forward, we wish to retro-fit these in existing older people's homes."

Green land

Mix green with silver and you get a state-of-the-art housing project that redefines elder living. **The Paisano Green Community in El Paso, Texas, is the first 'net zero energy public housing project' for silvers** in the US (and probably the world)—a net zero energy construction is a building that generates at least as much energy as it consumes. Built by Pavilion Construction, this 73-unit community is powered by rooftop solar panels and two 80-ft wind turbines; excess power is sold to the local electricity company. Further, as the company tells us in a media release, each unit maximises natural daylighting to reduce energy demands; the complex features desert landscaping to reduce water needs; and is served by several bus stops so seniors can be mobile without cars. Smart, and sustainable.



Nature's aspects

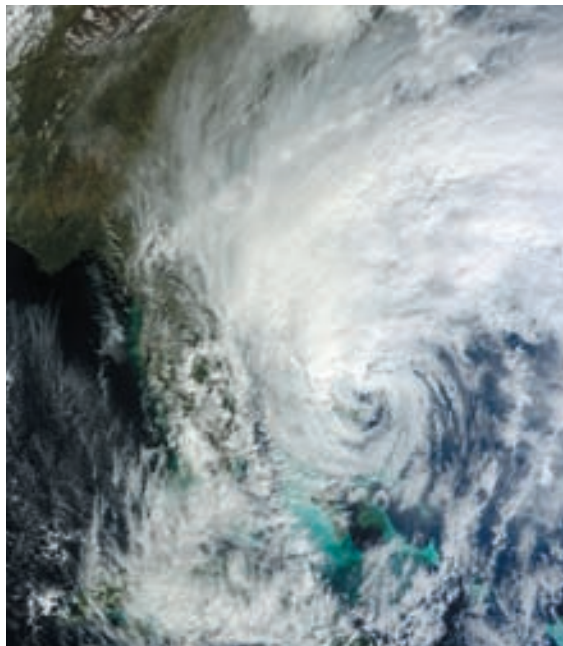
When you view the myriad aspects of life through the prism of nature and terrain, it can be a humbling experience. America's states may be 'united' but are astonishingly diverse when it comes to topography, climate and culture. Last month, we travelled across three time zones from the chilly fall winds of Newport, Rhode Island, on the north-eastern coast, to the hot, cacti-dotted desert of Tucson, Arizona, in the southwest. Our destination was the spectacular 446-km-long, 29-km wide and 1.8-km-deep Grand Canyon, carved by the Colorado River. A six-hour drive from Tucson saw the temperature dip again, this time to sub-zero temperatures, as we entered the rustic Grand Canyon National Park, the home of the Hualapai and Havasupai tribes as well as the traditional haven of the Hopi Indians, a fast diminishing tribe.

Indeed, successive generations of Native American tribes have inhabited this harsh terrain for thousands of years; while many continue working for the bustling tourism industry, many more have chosen to move out, thus diluting a heritage and bloodline that ran pure for centuries. It's a fact that Edwina, among the two Hopis (along with her sister) remaining in the park, plainly regrets—the 60-something cafeteria attendant married a 'white' man; her two grown daughters have little time for tribal rites and customs, preferring to seek more lucrative city careers. A universal dilemma it would appear.

For visitors, though, the Canyon is a lure like no other.



While the younger generation of Native Americans is in a rush to leave, hundreds of people of all ages flock here for work; the Park offers a host of part-time and second career opportunities (along with accommodation) in its many lodges, gift shops, and as tour guides. And, of course, they come here to walk. In fact, on our hike down the narrow trail, we encountered scores of intrepid walkers, on their way back up after the walk of a lifetime. Incredibly, most of them were silvers, men and women, faces weathered by time and the elements but limbs and sinews strong and steely. It was one of the most remarkable takeaways of our visit.



Two days on, while we re-embraced the heat four hours down from the Canyon at scenic Scottsdale, another aspect of nature—her fury—was being unleashed back on the eastern seaboard. We were truly fortunate to skirt Superstorm Sandy, unlike countless others. As always during any natural disaster, silvers were the worst hit; Sandy left many elders in New York and New Jersey stranded in their apartments and homes, with no gas or power. While many needed to be bailed out by the National Guard, others living in assisted living communities had a distinct advantage: a pre-prepared hurricane checklist followed to the letter. This included

three-day supplies of food and water for residents and staff; generator refuels before, during and after the storm; extra flashlights and batteries stored on site; multiple refills of medical prescriptions and extra medical supplies, first-aid materials and oxygen; and, in worst-case scenarios, alternative housing options offering temporary stays. Proof that though nature cannot be regulated, our response to its vagaries can (and should) be.

In the wake of Sandy's blitzkrieg, another mega-event came and went by with nary a whimper—President Obama won re-election. And it wasn't even close.

—Arati Rajan Menon

Keep moving. Exercising your body can stop your brain from shrinking, according to a new study reported in journal *Neurology*. When researchers at Edinburgh University examined the brain scans of over 600 seniors over a three-year period, they found that those who were most physically active displayed the least brain shrinkage over time. What's most encouraging, the level of exercise didn't have to be strenuous; just a 30-minute walk up to five times a week or regular gardening sufficed.



Then: Plastic Bottle Now: Bird Feeder



FACTS

- » One recycled glass bottle would save enough energy to power a computer for 25 minutes and power a 60-watt light bulb for about three hours.
- » According to a survey in 2010, India was the third largest consumer of plastic in the world.

Are you an avid bird watcher? Here's a great way to make them come to you. Make a bird feeder by recycling a plastic bottle. Cut off the bottom of a regular plastic bottle and make two to three square openings at the edge of the bottle for the birdseed to flow out. Glue the bottle onto a strong plate. Avoid steel as the reflection of the sun may

scare the birds away. Make holes on a bottle cap and run a rope through the holes. The ends of the rope can be tied to make the bottle hang from a tree. Fill the bottle with birdseed and find a good spot to hang it in your garden, balcony or window. Decorate the feeder as you desire to make it even more attractive.

ANOTHER RECYCLING IDEA...

INSTEAD OF SEEDS, FILL THE BOTTLE WITH WATER AND REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE SQUARES AT THE EDGE TO LET WATER FLOW SLOWLY—YOUR WATER DRINKER FOR BIRDS IS READY. MAKE SURE TO USE A SHALLOW PLATE.

RELIANCE

Life Insurance

**For a Life Cover of ₹ 1 crore
my premium is only ₹ 8400 p.a.***

Premium that is easy on your pocket!

Presenting...

Reliance Life Insurance eTerm Plan



Benefits

- ▶ **Instant Cover** at affordable premiums
- ▶ Gives **Special Rates** for female lives
- ▶ **Protects** your family
- ▶ Choose from two **Life Cover Options**
- ▶ **Simple and Easy** online application process
- ▶ **Tax Benefits** u/s 80C & 10(10D), subject to conditions

Apply at www.reliancelife.com



Instant Protection for your family at affordable rates!

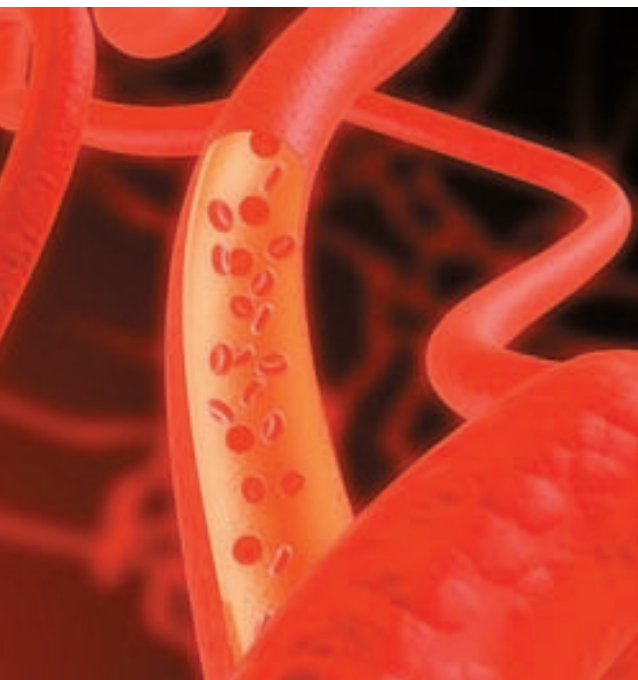


▶ Income Tax Benefits under the income tax laws of 1961 are subject to amendments and interpretation. ▶ Kindly consult a tax expert.
▶ Kindly review the offer documents carefully before investing. ▶ *Conditions apply.

Reliance Life Insurance Company Limited (Reg. No 121) Registered Office: H Block, 1st Floor, Dhirubhai Ambani Knowledge City, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra 400 710, India
Customer Care Number: **1800 300 08181 & 3033 8181** ▶ Email: rlife.customerservice@relianceada.com ▶ Website: www.reliancelife.com

ISO 9001:2008
CERTIFIED COMPANY

For more details on terms and conditions please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.
For internal communication only, Insurance is the subject matter of the solicitation. UIN for Reliance Life Insurance eTerm Plan: 121N087V01

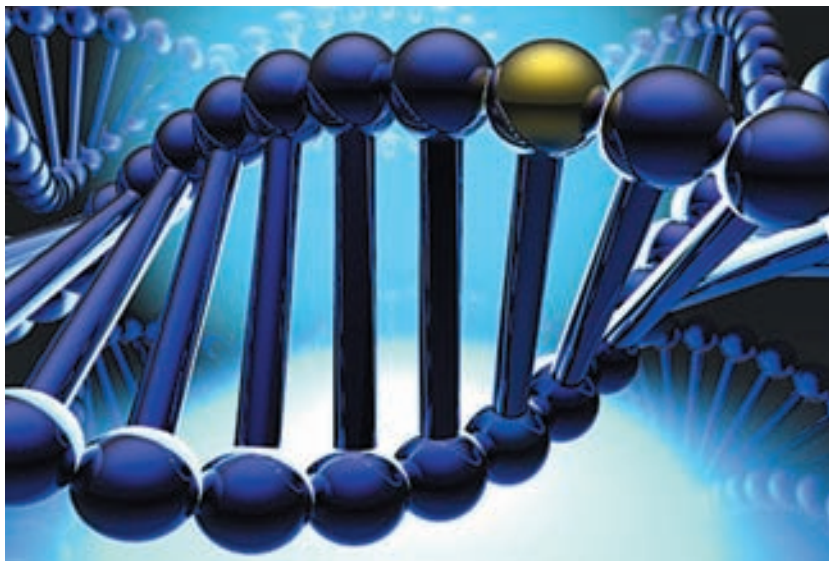


The pressure's off

In the alarming *World Health Statistics* report released by the WHO, one in three adults across the world suffers from high blood pressure. Generally, lifestyle changes such as cutting down on salt and alcohol and regular exercise can keep hypertension at bay. Doctors also prescribe medications for extreme cases. However, with a new Australian breakthrough, **hypertension can be treated by exposing kidneys to radio waves**. Researchers from the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute of Melbourne have designed a procedure called 'renal denervation', where a blast of radio frequency energy delivered through a catheter destroys a few tiny nerves around the lining of the arteries in the kidneys. Faulty signals from these nerves to the brain are said to be one of the causes of high blood pressure. This treatment can keep hypertension away for at least a year. Blood pressure is considered high if it goes over 140/90 millimetres of mercury. This procedure was tried on 100 patients with readings of at least 178/97. One-and-a-half years later, those having the procedure maintained a reduction of between 28/11 and 32/12 in their reading. Renal denervation is expected to be available by 2013.

Gene FACTOR

DNA mapping is known to be used in extreme health and criminal cases, but now an assessment can help you restore health and wellness. XCODE Life Sciences, a Chennai-based biotechnology company, has been promoting **DNA assessment in the field of ageing**. According to the institute, DNA analysis gives deeper insights into one's health and equips individuals with knowledge that can be used to plan a better future that entails good health and longevity. "In addition to the health risks, DNA analysis looks at a person's metabolism," explains Dr Saleem Mohammed, CEO and co-founder of XCODE Life Sciences. "If people cannot metabolise fat, fat consumption in their diet needs to be reduced. Someone unaware of one's metabolism rate will continue to



feel the discomfort and put on extra pounds. In order to feel good, even after a certain age, people need to know their genetic makeup." Assessment done well in advance can delay the onset of diseases such as diabetes and obesity and, in a few cases, can also prevent these diseases. Knowledge of high genetic risks allows a person to

take informed decisions that can alter the occurrence of chronic illnesses. "By introducing the DNA assessment programme, we are combining DNA with nutrition and fitness," adds Dr Mohammed. "We believe that wellness starts from the basic building blocks of life that is your DNA; it holds the key to good health."



Eye evolution

One of the most sensitive parts of the body and the first part to be affected by ageing, eyes could be lost to cataract and macular degeneration. Surgeons at the University of California, Davis, have invented a **tiny telescopic implant that can restore vision in ageing people**. In a pioneering surgery conducted on 89 year-old Californian artist Virginia Bane, a miniature telescope was implanted through a

new procedure that restored part of her vision. Bane had lost her central vision to end-stage age-related macular degeneration. The implanted telescope projects the object a person is looking at onto the healthy area of the light-sensing retina undamaged by the disease. The retina, located at the back of the eye, switches the light falling on it into electrical signals and sends them to the brain via the optic nerve. The brain translates these

signals into pictures that are seen by the person. For people affected with macular degeneration, these pictures are unclear and blurry. The telescope has proved to be helpful and has restored the vision of many in the past few months. The criteria for eligibility: patients should be 75 years or older and suffering from the dry type of eye disease, which is the most common form of age-related macular degeneration.



THE KERALA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCE (KIMS) IN ANAYARA, SREE UTHRADOM TIRUNAL HOSPITAL IN PATTOM, COSMOPOLITAN HOSPITAL IN POTTAKUZH AND S K HOSPITAL IN PANGODE HAVE COLLABORATED WITH THE SENIOR CITIZENS' FRIENDS WELFARE ASSOCIATION IN KERALA TO OFFER 10-15 PER CENT DISCOUNT IN TREATMENT COSTS FOR SILVERS.

BIRTHDAYS

● American filmmaker, comedian and writer **Woody Allen** turned 76 on 1 December.

● Multilingual playback singer **Udit Narayan** (right) turned 56 on 1 December.



● Legendary actor Dharam Singh Deol, famously known as **Dharmendra** (left), celebrates his birthday on 8 December. He turns 76.

● Veteran actor **Dilip Kumar** (below) will turn 90 on 11 December.



● Recipient of the Padmashri and Padma Bhushan, cinema stalwart **Shyam Benegal** turns 77 on 14 December.

● Evergreen actor and producer **Anil Kapoor** turns 55 on 24 December.

OVERHEARD



"Hollywood should make more films for older people. It seems to me there is a change in what audiences want to see. I can only hope that's correct, because there are an awful lot of people of my age around now and we outnumber the others. I don't think films about elderly people have been made very much. But I think of films like *Cocoon* and *Driving Miss Daisy* and they always seem to be fairly successful, so it's a bit baffling as to why everybody has to be treated as if they were five years old."

—British actor **Dame Maggie Smith**, 77, speaking at the premiere of her new comedy-drama *Quartet*

IN PASSING

● TV personality and Punjabi film actor **Jaspal Bhatti** (right), known for his satire on the establishment's attitude to a common man's problems, died in a car accident on 25 October. He was 57.



● Senior Telugu Desam Party leader and former Union minister **Kinjarapu Naidu** died in a road accident on 2 November. He was 55.

● India's consul general in Melbourne, Australia, **S K Behera** (left) died on 9 November after a massive heart attack. He was 50.

● Champion of Indian art **Kekoo Gandhi**, who co-founded Chemould, one of Mumbai's oldest art galleries, passed away on 10 November.

● Former defence minister and economist **K C Pant** died following a heart attack on 15 November. He was 81.

● Shiv Sena supremo **Bal Thackeray** (right) passed away on 17 November after a protracted illness at his home 'Matoshree' in Mumbai. He was 86.



MILESTONES

● **Dr Vijay Bhatkar**, 66, (left) best known as the architect of the PARAM series of supercomputers, GIST (graphics and intelligence-based script technology) multilingual technology and



Education-To-Home mission, has been conferred with the prestigious Sitaram Jindal Foundation Award (SJF Prize-2012) for his outstanding work in the field of science, technology and environment.

● Author **Kiran Nagarkar**, 70, and businessman **Babasaheb Kalyani**, 63, received the Order of Merit, Germany's highest civilian honour, as an acknowledgment of their outstanding contribution to Indo-German relations over the past decades.

Blood Sugar... **...common, serious but manageable**

Join the growing number of
FENFURO™ users

Fenfuro™ helped me to withdraw insulin completely within a period of 15 months. (I was taking 80 units per day). My C-peptide levels have increased from 0.20 to 2.12

Thanks to Fenfuro™

Dr. K. Srivastava, MBBS, MD (Gold Medalist)
Varanasi

Regular use of FENFURO™ can help

- Reduction of insulin intake to a large extent
- In many cases intake of insulin is no longer required
- To improve C-peptide levels
- Reduction of HbA1c from high risk level to recommended level of <7%
- Reduction of Oral dosages

FENFURO™

NATURE + SCIENCE

Novel & Innovative Process, US Patent Granted

For enquiries or order, please contact:

09915002390, 07814122220, 07814422220 or email: fenfuro@fenfuro.com

www.fenfuro.com

HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

THIS IS THE PLACE TO DO IT. REACH OUT TO FELLOW READERS WITH INTERESTING ANECDOTES, INSPIRING STORIES AND HEARTWARMING MOMENTS FROM YOUR LIFE. WRITE IN WITH FULL CONTACT DETAILS, AND MAKE THIS SPACE YOUR OWN.

YOURS, SPECIALLY

There's a personal story behind most NGOs, and this is mine. Navkshitij, our residential home for mentally challenged adults in Pune, owes its existence to our daughter Aditi. Mentally challenged herself, Aditi is an extrovert. When she was in her teens, she wanted to explore the world but could not express herself. As she was growing up, we realised she needed the company of a peer group. I began to think about Aditi's future and visited many residential organisations but found something missing. So I talked to my husband about starting a residential home for mentally challenged adults and he instantly agreed. Thus Navkshitij was born in 2003.

I wanted Navkshitij to be a place that was full of life, with happy surroundings, a good ambience and a nice garden. I wanted a place that was clean, with a good daily routine, morning exercise and evening games and walks, lots of outdoor activities and yummy food. What I wanted most

was to offer respect and dignity to its residents, who would be treated as adults, not kids.

For the first three years, we ran Navkshitij as a day-care centre. Getting a place for our activities was very tough and we shifted five times in three years. In 2007, we finally found a place. The home opened with just two special 'friends,' including Aditi and three assistants. Today, 35 special people live with us, and there's a waiting list of 85. Twenty-four staff members help us.

At Navkshitij, everyone wakes up to the sound of devotional music, followed by a jog, yoga, *pranayama*, gymming or exercise. After breakfast and a bath, the residents make greeting cards, eco-friendly jewellery, candles, paper lanterns, handmade paper bags, newspaper bags and delicious chocolates. They also learn simple skills such as folding bed-sheets, personal hygiene and cleanliness. Dancing and singing are a part of the daily activities. In the evening, we go for a long walk and water the many

Navkshitij: Share the love, spread the warmth



Hemant Patil

saplings we have planted near the facility. On Wednesday and Sunday evenings, we watch good, entertaining movies together.

This year, I took 18 of our residents to Bangkok and Pattaya, where they experienced the joy of parasailing and sea walking. I wanted to expose them to a different culture, different food and people—a totally different atmosphere. I wanted them to experience air travel. Life is a sum total of our good and bad experiences. I want to add good experiences to their lives and make every day special for them.

I launched *Voice of Navkshitij*, a monthly newsletter in April this year. For my innovative contribution to society, the JSPM Group of Institutes, Pune, honoured me with their Women Achiever's Award and the Rotary Club has conferred their Vocational Excellence Recognition Award on me twice. But my most precious award is the love of our special friends. Being in their company is very special and they have taught me to love unconditionally.

—Dr Neelima Desai, Pune

TRANSFORMED BY TAI CHI

It's strange how a chance event can change your life. It happened to me when my yoga centre invited a Tai Chi expert to deliver a free lecture to us, three years ago. I practised the discipline for a month, little knowing the benefits it would bring. It is no exaggeration to say that Tai Chi was a turning point in my life.

I am 67 years old and I retired from Associated Cements Company as a manager. My job was highly stressful and it took a heavy toll on my health. I developed cholesterol problems, hypertension and diabetes. It was not easy, especially as I don't like taking medicines, and here I was being treated for three diseases! Sure, I had been practising yoga for a long time but it hadn't kept my health problems at bay.

Tai Chi uses an ancient set of exercises with smooth, slow, elegant, dance-like movements. The expert lecturer's demonstration was so inspiring that my wife and I both signed up for classes immediately. With the passage of time, I found myself becoming a calmer person; my energy levels went up; and, best of all, I reduced my medication by as much as half! Tai Chi has brought me a sense of peace I had never known. The discipline improves health and doesn't call for strength. It doesn't leave you fatigued, like a workout does, and there is no risk of injury.

I have noticed that my meditation has improved, as has my circulation and breathing. My indigestion has disappeared, my joints are no longer stiff and even my skin is rejuvenated. Thanks to this wonderful and gentle therapy,



Haresh Patel

Kaveri: Health is wealth

I feel so good that I play the stock markets by trading online and also pursue my hobby as a palmist. Contrary to what many people believe, Tai Chi is not difficult to practise, and I advise all senior citizens to give it a chance to keep them in good health, in both mind and body.

—Prafullakumar R Kaveri, Mumbai

Batting for hockey

K ARUMUGAM, DELHI, 53

“From being a hydrologist to writing and promoting the national game, my journey has been dictated by my heart ”

I worked for the Government of India as a hydrologist for 20 years, before taking voluntary retirement at 48. My tryst with hockey began during my student days. I wrote a ‘letter to the editor’ on the sport in the 1980s for a newspaper and it got published. I started writing more letters and it motivated me to know more about the game. While studying in Chennai (1979-81), I met the captain of the Indian hockey team when he visited our college. In 1982, I followed the Asian Games during my IIT-Bombay days. I have never played on the field but have been following the game since.

Even while I was in a full-time job, I was preparing to write about hockey. I did whatever was allowed, but could not cover any matches internationally. To be an effective journalist, I opted for voluntary retirement. As a hydrologist I worked for eight hours every day, enjoyed all holidays and had less work and a better social life. This is a completely different world.

Today, I am a full-time chronicler of hockey. I have written for many newspapers and magazines and covered national and international matches. I count myself among the handful of journalists who have covered international matches for India. The public perception is that the national game is not a winning game. I believe it needs more facilities. For my part, to promote the interest in the game I started a website www.stick2hockey.com. It is an objective and reliable resource for players, researchers and

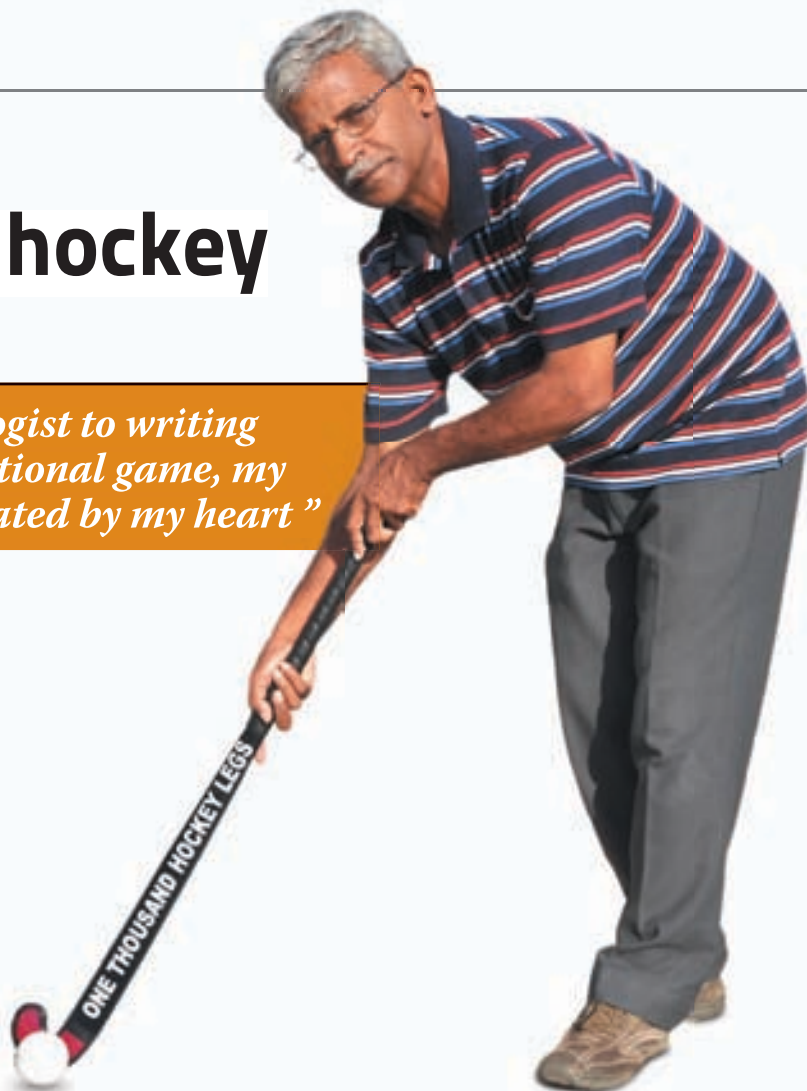
anyone interested in hockey. There is even a live test commentary section, which I have developed—I believe my engineering background has helped me give live commentary in a clear, analytical manner. This is the lifeline of the website.

To put the game together in a comprehensive manner, since 1995, once in two years, I have been publishing the *Hockey Year Book*; self-written and self-published. For years, I have collected data and photographs for this series. This Olympic year, I published three books. *Glimpses of Women Hockey* is the first of its kind on women's hockey. *The Great Indian Olympians* is co-authored by NDTV's former sports editor Gulu Ezekiel; in this I have written a chapter on Dhyan Chand which has been included in the XI grade English textbook (CBSE syllabus). The third is a profile of Indian hockey Olympians.

Since 2008, I have run an NGO called Hockey Citizen Group to promote the game. One Thousand Hockey Legs, a programme run by this NGO, aims to introduce 500 schoolchildren to the game of hockey. At present, I am working with 15 schools, of which 10 are government-run. The national game lacks lustre today as it is not taught in schools and colleges. The programme is run in Delhi, Chennai, Kanpur and Kolkata with the help of volunteers—most of them are my friends from IIT days.

I provide all the gear needed for the game, right from sticks to shoes. I work with four to five schools during weekends. In a school we even had a potholed ground prepared for hockey. As the organisation grows, I will try to involve professionals as well.

—As told to Ambica Gulati



Experience

A second childhood

Wouldn't it be great to have a second childhood? To start life afresh? Because at Harmony, a magazine for people above fifty five, we believe that age is in the mind. Which is why, you should live young.

Visit us at : www.harmonyindia.org



Silver diet: Wholesome menus

I am the caregiver of a 90 year-old woman. I would like to change her diet plan. Can you recommend a few recipes that are easy on the stomach, yet interesting?

The nutritional requirements of the elderly are based on physiological changes taking place as they silver. These changes affect food patterns, such as decreased secretion of digestive juices, motility of the gastrointestinal tract and absorption and utilisation of nutrients. With years, there is reduced physical activity and the basal metabolic rate decreases—both affect energy needs. As a result, energy requirements decrease in old age. Thus, one should control the intake of carbohydrates, mainly simple carbohydrates like sugar. You should include complex carbohydrates in your diet like whole cereals. While proteins can comprise 20 per cent of your total calorie intake, limit your fat intake to only 10 per cent of the total. Special attention must be given to consumption of vitamins and minerals as well. So, make sure you include rich sources of these in her diet.

The most important thing while planning menus for silvers is that a meal should be nutrient-dense, palatable, visually appealing and of proper consistency. The following things must be kept in mind while planning any recipe for the elderly:

- Four to five meal patterns should be followed.
- Choose wholegrain varieties of grains, as they provide you with nutrients and fibre and help prevent constipation.

- Nutrient-dense recipes should be chosen.
- Two to three servings of low-fat dairy products can be taken a day as they provide calcium.
- Choose foods rich in polyunsaturated fat and Omega 3, including nuts and seeds, oily fish (either canned or fresh: tuna, sardines, salmon, mackerel, warehou and eel) and oils (soybean, canola, flaxseed and walnut).
- Put colours on the plate; include lots of fruits and vegetables.
- Excess of oil or salt should be avoided
- Easily digestible soft-cooked recipes should be made.
- Eating plenty of high-fibre foods, such as wholemeal or wholegrain breads, breakfast cereals, vegetables and fruit, is important.
- Also, plenty of water and other fluids is a must.

You should also make sure she eats meals with other people; food and eating are part of social life, which also contributes to good health. She may enjoy a meal more if she eats with others, so create opportunities of sharing meals with family, friends, and social groups.

Here are a few recipes:

APPLE CINNAMON OATMEAL

Ingredients: 20 gm oats; 1½ cup milk; apple cut into small pieces; 1 tsp cinnamon, a dash of salt

Method: Add all ingredients to a small pot. Bring to a boil, then turn down to a simmer and cook until soft, for about 5-7 minutes.





READERS ASK

What is the recommended daily intake for Vitamin B? What are its sources?

B vitamins are an important part of the diet and are necessary to avoid many health problems. Vitamin B includes Thiamin (B1), Riboflavin (B2), Niacin (B3), Pantothenic Acid (B5), Folate (B9), Biotin (B7), Pyridoxine (B6), Cobalamine (B12). These vitamins come under the category of water-soluble vitamins that are important for cell metabolism. These vitamins help in making energy from the food you eat. They also help form red blood cells.

Recommended daily intake for these vitamins

Vitamin	Requirement for men	Requirement for women
B1(mg/d)	1.2	0.9
B2 (mg/d)	1.4	1.1
B3 (mg/d)	16	12
B6 (mg/d)	2	2
B9 (mcg/d)	100	100
B12 (mcg/d)	1	1

B vitamins are also important for the normal functioning of the nervous system. Most B vitamins are present in brewers' yeast, whole grain, pulses, green vegetables and dry fruits. Vitamin B12 is supplied mostly by animal foods. Rich sources are kidney, liver and lean meat. Vitamin B12 is generally not present in plant foods, but fortified breakfast cereals are a readily available source of Vitamin B12 with high bioavailability for vegetarians. Also, milk, eggs and cheese supply a fair amount of this vitamin. The need for B vitamins increases during stress or infections. Children, adolescents, pregnant women and older people need extra B vitamins for rapid growth and cell repair.

The most important thing while planning menus for silvers is that a meal should be nutrient-dense, palatable, visually appealing and of proper consistency

NUTRI-RAGI

Ingredients: 20 gm ragi ; 200 ml skim milk; two dates; 5 gm jaggery; a small banana; ½ tsp cardamom powder

Method: Boil milk with little water; add ragi and stir continuously. Add banana and cardamom powder; serve hot.

DAL KHICHDI

Ingredients: 15 gm yellow *mung dal*; 10 gm rice; water (to cook *dal* and rice); *palak* (spinach) leaves: 7-8; salt to taste; garlic: 3 cloves, finely chopped; cumin seeds: 1 tsp; green chillies; curry leaves: 4-5; asafoetida: 1 pinch; to garnish: fresh coriander

Method: (For *khichdi*) Soak the *dal* and rice in the water for 10-12 minutes. Then pressure-cook it after adding turmeric powder, spinach and salt. Cook up to three whistles and then on slow flame for next 5 minutes. When cooked, add the tempering. (For *tempering*) Heat the oil in a vessel, add cumin seeds. When seeds start to crackle, add chopped garlic, green chillies, curry leaves and asafoetida. Pour this tempering over the *khichdi*. Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and serve hot.

Serve with plain or masala buttermilk or yoghurt.

Plan for a day

● **Breakfast:** Steamed *idli* or porridge (made of oats or *dalia*) or soft-cooked egg and a slice of brown bread or yoghurt with muesli.

- **Mid-morning:** A bowl of fruits (including banana, papaya, pomegranate, apple and orange).
- **Lunch:** *Khichdi* with yoghurt; or brown rice with a green vegetable; or brown rice with fish or chicken curry.
- **Evening:** Tea and *khakra* or biscuits; or a handful of raisins with 4-5 almonds (powdered, if chewing is problem).
- **Before dinner:** A bowl of vegetable soup.
- **Dinner:** 2 chapattis with vegetable and *dal*.
- **After dinner:** A glass of warm milk.

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



SILVER LINING BY V S NATARAJAN

Poly pharmacy: The what, why and where

I am an 84 year-old suffering from ailments like hypertension, diabetes, calcium deficiency and interstitial lung disease. Sometimes I feel I am having too many medicines and want to reduce my medicine intake. What should I do?

“A pill for every ill” seems to be a sacred doctrine nowadays, not only among patients but some members of the medical profession too.

‘Poly pharmacy’ is a term indicating the use of multiple drugs. The exact number of medications that constitute poly pharmacy is variable—ranging from three to five in some studies, to nine or even more in others. Certainly, this type of multiple drugging is a burden on the patient. Is it a must? Is there any possibility of reducing this burden? The time has come to think on these lines.

Elders are generally prone to multiple diseases, which can be attributed to any of the reasons listed below:

- Diseases purely owing to the ageing process; eg, tremors, dry skin, itching, constipation, excessive gas formation, cataract, increased pigmentation of skin, to name a few.
- Diseases detected at later stages of life; these can be contracted in middle age because of various reasons like lifestyle, food habits and genetics manifesting themselves rather vigorously—hypertension, diabetes, heart attack, arthritis.
- Diseases mainly pertaining to old age (not necessarily because of ageing)—dementia, Parkinson’s disease, osteoporosis, falls, urinary problems, certain types of cancer.

The role of a family physician

About 30 years ago, people consulted family physicians for every health-related problem. A family physician is conversant and familiar with the family, and the personal and health history of his patient. No wonder then, that family physicians are generally successful in offering relief to the patient with least possible medical expenses. Only in acute and deserving cases does the family physician refer the patient to the correct specialist for advice and management. As the concept of the family physician has almost become extinct, this convenient and dependable line of treatment has become a thing of the past. With the growth of the Internet, people start assuming various diagnoses for their

problems and consult a specialist/super specialist; most of the time, this turns out to be unnecessary.

Seeking specialists’ advice

In the absence of a family physician, the tendency is to rush to a specialist even for minor ailments like headache, gastric problem, arthritic pain, etc. Though there is nothing wrong in such consultations, there are certain practical constraints and limitations in this process. Elders are prone to multiple health-related problems. For different symptoms, elders choose different specialists. The natural outcome is multiple prescriptions. Generally, specialists do not have the time to go through and check thoroughly the current medicines taken by the patient. Thus, there is every possibility of duplication of drugs.

For instance, the specialist may prescribe antacids or vitamins, which are already being taken by the patient under another brand name. This not only causes unnecessary expenditure but adverse effects at times. It is painful to see old patients coming to the geriatric clinic with several files, each for different problems obtained from a different specialist.

The pill burden

Older people generally suffer from deficient sight, hearing infirmity, failing memory, confusion and unfamiliarity with modern medicines. When they are prescribed multiple drugs, they fail to comply with medical instructions. Consequences of poly pharmacy include non-adherence to routine, adverse drug reactions, drug interactions, geriatric syndromes (falls, urinary incontinence, memory impairment). When loaded with multiple drugs, they may not be able to remember the prescribed format of drugs—



READERS ASK

Even though the elderly are suffering from multiple diseases, it is not absolutely necessary that they should take multiple drugs. "A pill for every ill" is not the rule

whether to take a drug before meals or after. In such cases, the action of the drugs may not be up to the expected level. The fact that many silvers take multiple drugs is a rude reminder that they are not healthy. This leads to negative thoughts, which ultimately may cause depression.

The bill burden

Most silvers do not enjoy financial freedom. Once the symptoms are relieved or appear to have subsided after taking a few doses of drugs, they tend to discontinue the drug without following the prescribed regimen; mostly owing to financial crunch. Moreover, as patients are not physicians, they do not know which drugs are life-saving and which are just supplements like vitamins. When they discontinue drugs at random, there is a risk of relapse of the original ailment in a more vigorous form.

No drugs please

Even though the elderly are suffering from multiple diseases, it is not absolutely necessary that they should take multiple drugs. "A pill for every ill" is not the rule as stated already. Many diseases in old age may be treated without drugs. For nutritional deficiency, proper dietary advice is sufficient. For arthritis, physical therapy offers a good amount of relief. Mental depression can be treated by counselling patients along with their family/caregivers. Mild diabetes mellitus and high blood pressure can be controlled with dietary advice and exercise. Constipation can be managed with high fluid intake and a high-fibre diet.

What is the solution for poly pharmacy?

Here comes the role of a geriatrician. Initially, he will assess the problem in totality—medical, mental, functional and social problems. Accordingly, he will classify the problems into two categories: active and inactive problems.

● **Active problems:** Heart attack, very high level of blood sugar, high blood pressure, breathlessness, high fever, severe pain anywhere in the body, altered sensorium, etc.

● **Inactive problems:** Constipation, body pain, neuropathy, past history of fracture, past history of surgery, etc.

The geriatrician will write down the prescription initially for the active problems, which will relieve the symptoms at the earliest. After completing his prescription, he will go through the specialist's prescriptions and include his

I am a 76 year-old active senior. I am a health freak; I do yoga/stretching and also participate in marathons. I undergo regular health check-ups. My last report was 'normal'. However, I have the following complaints:

1. Arthritis of knee joints: I take calcium with Vitamin D3 daily.
2. Hypertension with ventricular missing or extra beats: I take Revelol AM (25/2.5) daily.
3. Benign enlargement of prostate: I take one tablet Urimax .4 in the morning and 1 Hytrin 2 mg in the night.
4. For years, my weight was constant at 61-63 kg. Last year, it came down to 58.8 kg in spite of my active lifestyle and controlled diet. These days, I also feel exhausted easily with physical activities. Please advice.

1. Continue your regular exercise and calcium with Vitamin D3 tablets. These measures will strengthen your muscle, cartilage and bone. You can manage your arthritis without any surgical intervention at present.
2. Revelol AM (25/2.5) is the correct drug. As you are also taking Hytrin 2 mg tablet for enlargement of prostate, your blood pressure is likely to go down. So check the blood pressure and adjust your medicine.
3. Continue the same drugs.
4. As a thumb rule, unintentional weight loss of more than 2-3 kg per year is worrying. As your appetite is normal and there is no other specific complaint related to weight loss, there is nothing to worry right now. It looks like your weight loss is age-related. Try to include more protein-rich foods like *dal*, egg white, mushroom, soy, milk, as well as starch-rich roots like rice, potatoes and sweet potatoes in your diet. You can also try Ensure powder (two teaspoons at night with milk). Check your weight after three months and let me know.

prescription, the drugs which are a 'must' for the patient. Many elders are usually prescribed too many antacids, vitamins, calcium and tranquilisers. This can be minimised by a geriatrician.

Though the Internet is a boon, do not rely on it totally. Each individual's body constitution is different. This can be understood only by a good physician who can give the right medicine for the right patient.

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



YOGA RX BY SHAMEEM AKTHAR

All you need is now: Savour the current moment

The most difficult aspect of life, but the most exciting, is to stay completely in the current moment. Somewhat simply but aptly, a Zen lesson tells you, 'While peeling an orange, do nothing else but peel the orange.' This seems like a redundant suggestion; obviously when you peel an orange, you cannot peel an apple or swim! Yet, it may be rather difficult. When we do what we believe are humdrum or simple tasks, our mind is actually churning with other ideas that have become such patterns that we are not even aware of them. Nevertheless, they leave a footprint in our mind, and affect our moods. Often the patterns we are not aware of are negative ones: sadness, remembrance of past unhappiness, depression, anger.

In meditation, towards which a physical yoga practice leads us, we first become fully aware of the thoughts in the mind and, then, we can either allow them (if they are happy) or talk back to them (if they are negative). Though theoretically this sounds like a marvellous, easy-to-practice exercise, it is rather tough. Only a dedicated yoga practice on the mat can help us deal with the translation of this theory into practice.

Balancing poses—on the legs, the arms or inversions—help us understand this concept and ease its transition into our daily lives. Once this transition is made, we can deal with

the bigger emotional problems of our life such as depression, impulse control, anger management, boredom, envy and greed, all of which appear to have a life of their own and can be frustrating to manage. The best poses for acquiring a clear idea of enjoying the present moment, to stay in the now, would be the tougher poses like the headstand, and the arm balancers like the crow. Though these appear intimidating, they are actually rather easy to learn if you do not have any health problems. Age is not a limitation on the mat.

Equally impactful are the standing balancers that are easy to learn. But to understand the idea of the 'now' we spoke of, we need to learn to hold them longer. If we focus over weeks on strengthening our muscles, we can learn to hold these poses with ease. Once this is learnt, you will find that a lot of physical problems also sort themselves out, almost miraculously. It appears that a meditative practice has that healing effect. Some standing balancers that work here are the crescent pose (*ardha chandrasana*) and all its variations, the dancing Nataraja (dancing Shiva) pose and all its variations, the one-legged prayer pose (*eka pada pranamasana*) and its variations, and the eagle pose (*garudasana*).

YOGIC MOVES

Extended twist/Sage Marichay's pose (*utthita Marichayasana*)

Stand up straight. Fold your right leg at the knee, as shown. This may be done with support, with a foot on the chair till balance is acquired. Place your left hand on the right knee to draw it towards the body. The other hand is behind (or on the wall, if using it as support). Stay for a count of 10 to 15 seconds, with the pressure on the knee as firm as possible, continuing to breathe normally. Release and repeat for the other side. Once balance is gained, release dependence on the props and supports.

Benefits: This is a marvellous pose to strengthen the whole body and



mind. It tones the legs and hips. The squeeze at the stomach massages the pancreas, digestive tract and pelvic region, helping to control problems in that region such as diabetes, digestive upsets and uro-genital issues.

Model: Bhaskar Samant,
Harmony Interactive Centre
Photographer: Hareesh 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)

The first day at school
The first time you rode the bicycle.
The first crush you had at thirteen
The first drama you got a part in
The first day at college
The first date you went on
The first kiss
The first time you proposed
The first job interview
The first board meeting you addressed
The first day after retirement

***BUTTERFLIES** never retire*

The first click of the mouse.

The all new

www.harmonyindia.org



*the website
celebrate age*



THE GREAT GRANNY DIARIES BY PRATIBHA JAIN SMT CHAMPAKA VENKATRAMAN

An engaging series about the wisdom of love, nurturing and culinary bonding across generations

She shares quick cooking tips while passing the tray for food photography, makes coffee for her husband, taking care to wipe the counter, all at the same time! Her Kanjeevaram seems to represent her, as the silk becomes more and more enchanting with the years; it does not look as though it has been worn and washed several times, just as she does not look or behave her regal 82 years. Champakaji is the quintessential ‘Mylapore Maami’, a phrase that conjures the silk sari-clad Brahmin ladies who have grown up learning and appreciating music, dance and the arts.

When the children in my family heard I was going to interview Champakaji, who is the mother of their favourite teacher Mrs Lalitha Srinivasan from Bambino School, they were excited. I mention this because I noticed a similarity between them—they exude the same warmth and love for teaching and learning.

Champakaji is a Tamil Iyer living in a quaint lane of Mylapore in Chennai. Fascinated by her warmth and agility, I quiz her on her love for reading and chanting. She says, “Let me begin by bowing to the Almighty and my Guru Paramarthanandaji; my *namaskaram* to them.” This deep faith unveils the secret of her joy for life.

As I put forth my questions, she produces two small slips of paper. She has prepared for my visit by noting down things she would like to share. She says, “I am happy to be featured in this magazine and would not like to forget important things. Hence I jotted them down.” She then says, “I was born on 16 August 1931, near the rear entrance of Kapaleeswarar temple in

Mylapore. I think that very location instilled deep love for religion in me. I come from a family of high values. Both my grandfathers are judges and there are many lawyers in my family. My aunt Harini was a prolific writer. We grew up in a joint family and were fortunate to receive good schooling as well as love for music. I was among the first batch of students at Stella Maris College where I did my intermediate in Indian music and Indian history in 1949-50. In 1951, I was married to T M Venkatraman,

“I don't know about expertise, but my children know most of the dishes I cook. Our food is simple, healthy and typically South Indian”

an expert in aviation, who worked as the chief commercial manager of Indian Airlines. We have one son, one daughter, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Our children are well settled and take good care of us. What more can one want from life!”

I now understand your passion for music. What about your love for cooking? Did you learn it from your mother?

Not really. As a child, I hardly ever entered the kitchen. There was always a cook. Also, in a Brahmin household, there are many rules for the kitchen.

Even after my marriage, I hardly ever went into the kitchen. Slowly, my sister-in-law taught me cooking. I do wish my mother had taught me some housework earlier in life.

In most North Indian families, girls are taught to work from a young age. So as a daughter-in-law, what were your responsibilities?

I don't think there is a clear divide like that. For instance, my daughter-in-law knew a variety of cooking even before her marriage. Though she is the only child, her mother and aunt taught her housework. But as a young bride, my main work was to attend to guests and give company to my mother-in-law. She had a commanding nature and I accompanied her wherever she went.

Would you say that family systems have changed or evolved over the years?

Yes, things have really changed. For one, the notion of joint family hardly exists any more. Girls and boys are much more independent these days.

Is that disturbing?

Not at all; this is a good system. They have their freedom and we have our space. Yet they are always there for us.

That is a very healthy way of looking at change. What brings such equanimity in your thoughts?

I am a student of Vedanta and enjoy chanting and learning the meaning of the great *shloka*. Along with my younger sister Gita, I studied Vedanta and the *Upanishad* for more than a



Photographs by **Chennai Pix**

decade. The message in them is bound to influence the way one thinks. Also I learnt yogic *mudra* from my Guru Vaidyanathanji 25 years ago. Regular practice brings balance in body and mind.

Many of your relatives appreciate your *shloka* chanting. I have heard that you often conducted group chanting at home and taught adults as well as children.

I love music and *satsang*. I regularly chant *Lalitha Sahasranamam*, *Chandrakala Stuti* in praise of Ma Durga, and *Soundarya Lahari*, where each of

the 100 *shloka* is in a different raga. I also enjoy singing the *Tiruppugal* in praise of Lord Muruga; it gives us the capacity to work from morning to night. In Chennai as well as Madurai where I lived for some years, neighbours, relatives and children simply joined my chanting.

Share a memory you cherish!

Two things—once, when my great-granddaughter Smrithi played *Vande mataram* on her keyboard, tears welled up in my eyes and I started singing with her. And the second is when my other great-granddaughter

Aradhana calls me from Bangalore and sings the *varnam* she has just learnt on the phone.

They seem to have inherited your musical talent. Have you also passed on your culinary expertise to your children?

I don't know about expertise, but they know most of the dishes that I cook. Our food is simple and healthy, and typically South Indian. Apart from the yam *thovayal* I am going to share with you, the family loves my brinjal side-dish with coconut milk, and also a potato side-dish with curd gravy,



which is something I learnt from my North Indian neighbour.

From Champaka Venkatraman's kitchen

***Pidi karunai thovayal* (chutney made with yam)**

Having lived in Chennai for over three decades, I was surprised to discover yet another variety of yam, which is loved by most Tamilians. *Pidi karunai kizhangu* is neither the large yam

nor colacasia, but the oblong shaped variety 3-4 inches in length. Champakaji informs me that it is a seasonal vegetable and seen in the market during winter months. Popularly used to prepare curry as well as chutney (*thovayal*), it has a unique texture that makes it a pleasure to cook.

(Makes 2 cups)

Ingredients:

- Small yam (*pidi karunai kizhangu*): 3
- Whole red chillies: 2

- Thick tamarind extract: 2 tsp
- Jaggery: 1 tsp
- Chilli powder: 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1 tsp
- Asafoetida powder: ¼ tsp
- Salt to taste

(For tempering)

- Split black gram: 1 tsp
- Mustard seeds: 1 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Sesame oil: 2-3 tbsp

Method

Wash the yam thoroughly. As yam is generally covered with mud and grit, you can soak it in water for a couple of hours. This will allow it to be washed easily. Pressure cook or boil until tender. Peel off the skin and grind along with the red chillies, tamarind extract, jaggery, chilli powder, turmeric powder and salt. If you like, you can simply mash the yam and mix the ingredients well. Heat the oil in a wok. Add the gram and as it turns golden, add mustard and cumin. Allow to pop and add the yam mixture. Roast for 10-12 minutes or until the mixture is well cooked and stops sticking to the sides of the pan. Serve with steamed rice and a dollop of ghee. Also makes a tasty accompaniment with chapattis.

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



PAKISTAN

INDIA

Rann of Kutch

Adipur-Gandhidham

Jai Sindh

Map not to scale

Kaumudi Marathe writes about her visit to Adipur-Gandhidham, a little town in Kutch where a group of silvers have kept the past alive

The state my family comes from and the native state of my husband's family both figure in the Indian national anthem: "Punjab, *Sindh*, Gujarat, *Maratha*." I was born in Maharashtra but my husband Sanjiv has never seen his 'homeland' because the entire state of Sindh was allocated to the newly formed country of Pakistan in 1947.

I learned about my history firsthand; I travelled in Maharashtra, my grandfather took me on tours of my hometown, pointing out landmarks from our personal and community histories. Sanjiv only heard bitter-sweet nostalgia; stories of Shikarpur, the family home, the clock tower his great-grandfather had built in the centre of town, the delicacies available at the covered market in the heart of the far Northwestern province.

How does a community maintain its connection to its roots and history when it has lost access to its physical terrain and landmarks? During and after Partition, the community, forced to emigrate, settled all over the globe, often bringing only memories and their cooking with them. Compelled to learn other languages and not surrounded by their own, their knowledge of Sindhi suffered. Because of its complexity, many younger Sindhis never learned how to write the Arabic-based script.

Many elders feel their history has been irreversibly eroded. As more of the Partition-era generation passes away, the connection to the past is being further severed. But a love of one's land dies hard. While the rest of the world moves on, Adipur-Gandhidham, a little town in Kutch, just south of the Sindhi border, is stuck in a time

warp of sorts, as I discovered last year. A group of silvers there have made a lifelong commitment to preserving their Sindhi history and culture as best as they can.

Over the two decades of my marriage, I learned how to speak Sindhi, adopted my in-laws' traditions, and was taught how to cook Sindhi food by my husband's grandmother and mother. Last year, in the spirit of documentation, I pitched an article about Sindhi cuisine to an American food magazine that picked it up, sending me on a research trip to South Asia in August. Travelling to the Sindh was not possible, given the fragile state of affairs in Pakistan, so my mother-in-law Madhu Bajaj pointed me in the direction of Adipur. "Many Sindhi refugees came across into Kutch," she explained. "They were given shelter in Adipur and have kept Sindhi tradi-

tions alive. You should go there.” My friend, journalist Sameera Khan, introduced me to her colleague Shefalee Vasudev who is of Sindhi extraction and grew up in Adipur. She, in turn, connected me to her mother, Indra Vaswani, one of the many silvers I hoped to interview.

Indra, who was born in Mirpur Khas, and her husband Harish, who is from Baluchistan, moved to Adipur during Partition, making a home among other Sindhi émigrés. Rudely torn from their homeland, the Vaswanis, both writers and teachers, were committed to the idea of preserving Sindhi culture in their new home. Others, like Sahitya Akademi award-winning writer Lakhmi Khilani and architect Sahib Bijani moved to Adipur from Delhi and Calcutta after retirement.

No matter when they arrived there, all derive great comfort in living near their Sindhi homeland, albeit on the other side of a national border. As Khilani writes, “I nestle[d] here among [the] fellow Sindhi writers, artists and educationists in our [artists’] village named ‘Maleer’. The warmth this Sindhi township exudes, the love and affection our brethren shower, is quite exhilarating. The reason could be the invigorating air we breathe which comes from across the border of Sindh, the water we drink, which reaches us through many of its subterranean tributaries. It is the firm belief of the locals that this elixir enhances the longevity of life by at least 10 years.”

Certainly these 70-somethings exude an energy and passion I have rarely seen in their contemporaries elsewhere in India. They write fiction and poetry, indulge in hobbies like photography, meet for music lessons and musical evenings, enjoy the fresh air every evening when they meditate or take their constitutionals. In a town most younger Sindhis have escaped from, this generation lives a leisurely but satisfying life with peers who share a common history.

In a town most younger Sindhis have escaped from, this generation lives a leisurely but satisfying life with peers who share a common history

To achieve one of their goals, leaving a legacy for future generations, the Indian Institute of Sindhology opened its doors in 1989. Khilani is one of the founder-trustees and currently officiates as its director, bringing enthusiasm and passion to his job. Bijani oversees the library and documentation centre. The institute also boasts a museum and art gallery that features art, crafts and artefacts from the Sindh, Partition-era photographs and memorabilia, a Sindhi-medium school, and a publishing wing that produces educational materials for children, historical monographs, and preserves rare books. Much of the

work is done by elderly volunteers who donate their time and wisdom.

At their neat home in Adipur, the Vaswanis showed me old books from the Sindh and recounted its history, sharing Partition anecdotes they had experienced. Harish’s laughter often filled the room. A poet and writer, he writes every day and meditates every evening. Indra, a Sindhi short-story writer, had a positive attitude to life which I admired. This October she passed away and in my condolence letter to her daughter, I told Shefalee that her mother had quickly become one of my heroes because of her sense of fun and *joie de vivre* that a tough life had not managed to eliminate.

Indra arranged for me to meet with Khilani, Bijani, and other amateur Sindhi historians. She no longer cooked but she enlisted her cousin and several friends to demo classic Indian recipes for me for my food story. She spent three days accompanying my photographer, Sameera

Author Kaumudi Marathe with Indra Vaswani (seated) and her sister Pushpa in Adipur





Professors Harish and Indra Vaswani

and me everywhere, never showing exhaustion, in fact, coordinating our visits to various home cooks with gusto. Everywhere we went, people knew her and old students greeted her.

Bijani, with his wry sense of humour, showed me around the Institute and shared some of his prodigious memories of food. "The Sindh is a desert, very hot in the summer, very cold in the winter. The summer sun was so fierce that your eyes would burn. So you would roast mango pits and eat them, washed down with lots of water. This would reduce the *pita* in your body.... The favourite fish of the Sindhis is the *palla*. It was sometimes roasted in the sand, there is nothing like the flavour of that fish.... When people from a community live together, they are inspired to celebrate festivals. That is why here in Adipur we celebrate Sindhi festivals that many other Sindhis don't observe any-

more, like *Cheti Chand* or *Thadree*...." I could have talked to him all day.

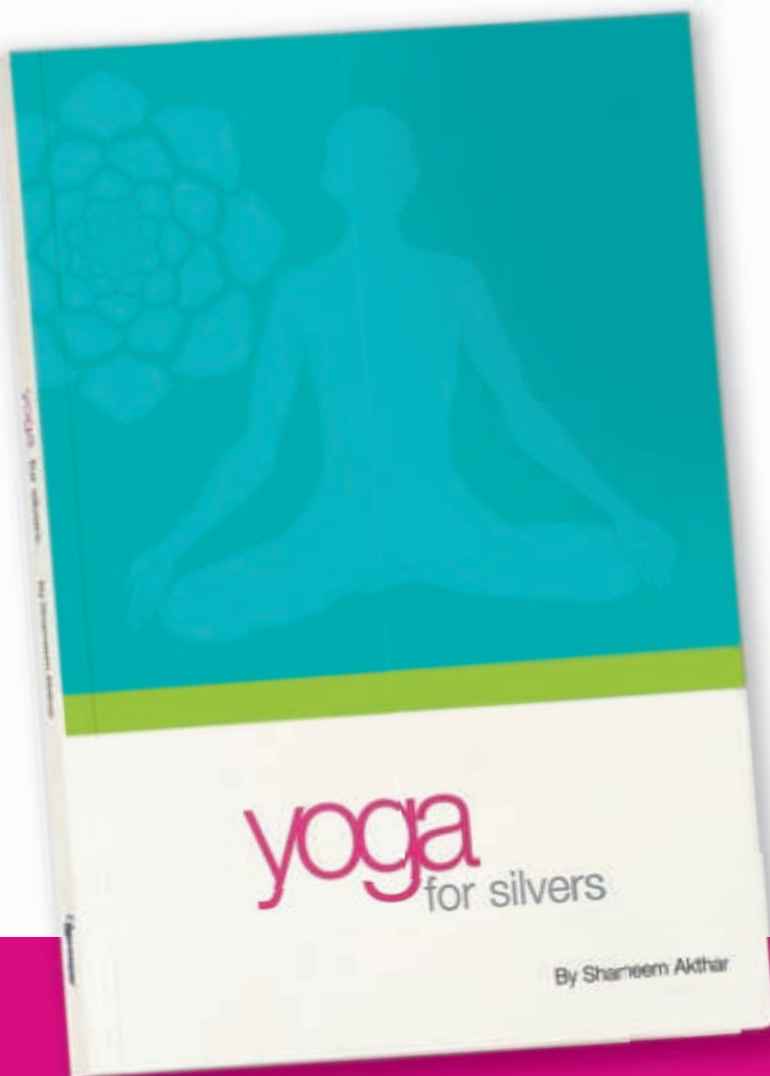
Khilani gave me a historical overview of the Sindh, saying national borders

"Sindhis and Kutchis are essentially the same people and went back and forth across the border freely for centuries between what is now India and Pakistan"

are largely artificial. "The idea of a nation is a creation of Western powers. Sindhis and Kutchis are essentially the same people and went back and forth across the border freely for centuries between what is now India

and Pakistan." Khilani drove with me to the Rann of Kutch north of Adipur to meet Sindhi Muslim tribals at an outpost of the Institute of Sindhology.

The Vaswanis, Lakhmi Khilani and Sahib Bijani shared their Sindhi history with me. I learned about Sindhi food; it is simple and hearty, lightly spiced and generously served. But what they shared wordlessly by the examples of their own lives was most significant. They know the importance of respecting history to prevent making the same mistakes again; they understand the need to adapt to changing circumstances. They showed me how satisfying life can continue to be at any age. Thanks to them, I understand better the fortitude of the Sindhi people, their love of laughter and community, and their ability to move beyond hardship and tragedy to live rich and fulfilled lives, wherever they might be. ✨



yoga for silvers

Yoga shiromani and acharya **Shameem Akthar** urges the elderly to heal body, mind and soul with ancient yogic habits that are easy to learn. From the philosophy behind practices and poses to step-by-step instructions with illustrations, this is a comprehensive guide written especially for Silvers.

A publication by

harmony for Silvers Foundation | Empowering India's Senior Citizens

Special offer for Harmony readers!

get 20% off buy the book at **Rs 140**
against regular price of Rs 175

Aug 09/Mag



Personal details: Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I wish to pay by: ☐ Cheque ☐ Demand Draft

I am enclosing Cheque / DD No. _____ dated _____ drawn on (specify bank) _____

made payable to "Harmony for Silvers Foundation" for Rs _____

(Add Rs 10/- for non-Mumbai cheques)

Send form to **Johnsi Nadar, Harmony for Silvers Foundations, Reliance Centre, 1st Floor**
19, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai - 400001

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Delivery within 4 weeks after receipt of payment • For additional copies, use photocopies of form • Offer open till **31 DEC 2012** or till stocks last • Publisher and author shall not be liable for any loss or injury as a result of yoga performances shown in the book • Harmony for Silvers Foundation shall not be liable for any delay in transit due to operational reasons • Offer valid in India only • For queries, write to contact.us@harmonyindia.org

WHEN THE CLOCK STRIKES





No matter which part of the world you belong to, the advent of a New Year speaks of hope, optimism, and all things good and bright. Indeed, across the globe, the New Year is considered the best time to make new beginnings, new resolutions.

While spectacular fireworks mark the break of a new dawn universally, whether it is at Sydney Harbour, the Thames in London, Times Square in New York City or Benaulim Beach in Goa; there have been other unusual ways of celebrating the New Year as well. For instance, families in the Netherlands count their friends on the basis of the crockery found broken on their doorsteps; single women in Ireland place leaves of mistletoe under their pillow in the hope of catching a suitable suitor;

Filipinos wear polka dots to ensure prosperity; and the Brazilians, Mexicans and Bolivians wear colourful underpants to 'catch' good fortune. If it's action in the bedroom they desire, the colour is red; if it's money and wealth they eye, they go yellow!

Speaking of weird practices, talking to spirits on New Year's Eve is a part of Mexican tradition and is legally practised. They believe it's the best time to communicate with their dear departed ones and seek their guidance. Here's the thing, though—you don't have to be in Mexico to communicate with the spirits. You can do it right here in India at the Nicholson Cemetery in Old Delhi on New Year's Eve. It's just one of 10 offbeat ideas to kick-start 2013.

—Contributed by *Srirekha Pillai, Sai Prabha Kamath, Radhika Raje & Sudha G Tilak*



Jumbo JUNKET

If your New Year resolution is to break the mould, what could be more surreal than swimming in the greenish-blue waters of the Andaman Islands with—hold your breath—an elephant?

This is no ordinary pachyderm. Rajan is the 61 year-old hero of Havelock Island and arguably the only elephant on the subcontinent that can swim. You can join Rajan in a thrilling underwater adventure by

swimming alongside, keeping a safe distance from this majestic mammoth. As you splash along, you can watch him rock from side to side, paddle and blow plumes of water into the air. You can also play hide-and-seek with schools of tiny fluorescent fish and savour close-up views of spectacular corals and turtles swimming lazily by.

A swim with Rajan comes with riders attached. The sea has to be conducive (read calm and serene) and he has to be in the mood. Thanks to the vigilance of animal rights' activists, there's no forcing Rajan to embark on his snorkelling expedition. So you have to be lucky.

There's much more to Havelock though: sun-kissed white beaches, pristine blue waters, lush green tropical rainforest, and water sports such as sailing, snorkelling, scuba diving and kayaking serve as added attractions. During this time of the year, the weather in the Andaman Islands

₹ 8,000
per person





is not chilly but pleasant—ideal for water sports, nature walks and other activities.

Although the archipelago comes alive in December and January, New Year is a quiet affair, in keeping with the sanctity of the ecosystem. Of course, when the clock strikes 12, hold your breath for the countdown as the resorts prepare to celebrate the



When the clock strikes 00:00

Candlelight dinner by the beach with a panoramic ocean view under a star-studded, moonlit sky

special moment. For those who want to stay away from the hullabaloo, a candlelight dinner by the beach is a perfect alternative.



Package deal

A four-day/four-night package includes sightseeing at Port Blair (Anthropological Museum, Corbyn's Cove Beach, Cellular Jail, etc) and Havelock Island (excluding a snorkelling trip to Elephant Beach), ferry ride from Port Blair to Havelock Island, accommodation with breakfast included.



(0) 92222 72222



www.travelguru.com



Getting there

By air: Daily flights to and from Chennai. It takes about two hours from Chennai to Port Blair.

By sea: There are passenger ships from Kolkata, Visakhapatnam and Chennai. It takes three to four days from Chennai and an additional day from Kolkata to Port Blair. Ferry services and private charter boats will take you from Port Blair to Havelock Island.



What to pack

Smart casuals, cotton wear with long sleeves, light trousers, mosquito repellent



Health check

Hypertension, asthma, sun/insect allergies



Active level

Moderate



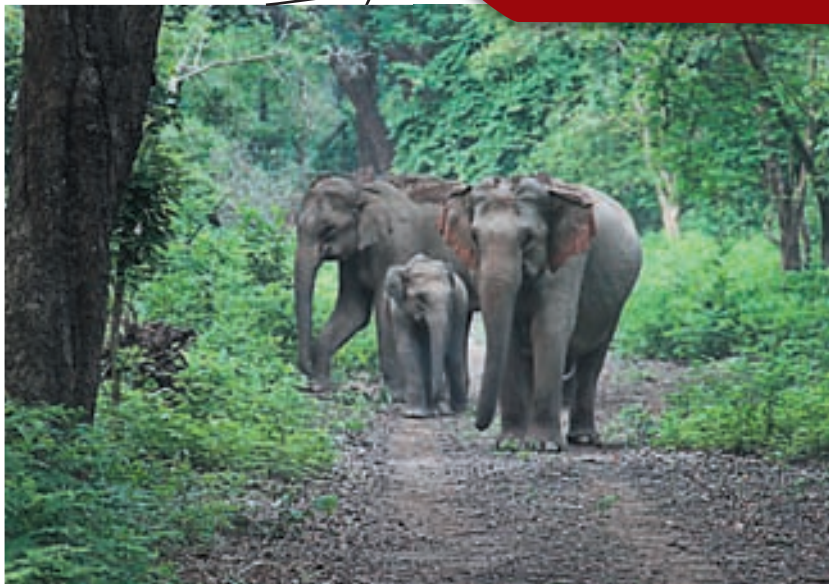


Wild, wild WOODS

₹ 10,000
per person

Close your eyes and picture this: you're on a night safari in the Jim Corbett National Park. It's the dead of night, and even more chilling than the freezing winter air are the sounds of the forest as it reveals its nocturnal face. The jeep is cramped—four passengers plus driver and guide—but, remember, you've chosen to stay out of your comfort zone and ring in the New Year to the call of the wild.

The night safari at Corbett is an adrenaline-pumping adventure on the outskirts of the forest. As your eyes grow accustomed to the inky blackness, your guide will pick out owls, jungle cats, snakes and, if you're really lucky, a leopard in the underbrush.





Named after legendary British hunter-turned-conservationist Jim Corbett, the park—actually a thickly wooded forest—is spread over 1,200 sq km and situated along the Ramganga River at the foot of the Kumaon Hills in Nainital District. At Corbett, you can spend the chilly nights curled up around a crackling campfire with friends and family on the campus of your resort. The New Year's eve packages are packed with fun things to do, like nature walks, fishing in the Kosi River, elephant safaris and, the biggest draw of all, tiger-spotting.

An hour-long tiger safari takes you deep into the heart of the forest at the crack of dawn. This jeep ride can suddenly turn into a heart-stopping chase if a big cat is spotted. Imagine gazing at a Royal Bengal tiger strolling lazily through tall elephant grass,



When the clock strikes 00:00

Night safari on the outskirts of Jim Corbett National Park

flicking his tail at you as he walks past! You could also take a canter ride, a gentle rumble in a bus-like vehicle through the woods which lasts a good three hours.

And, for those who want to welcome the New Year in rustic style, you can camp in tents in the midst of Sitabani forest on a *machan* (tree house). Rooms are also up for grabs in the core area but to get one of these coveted vantage points, you need to book directly with the park authorities and well in advance. And lest we forget, don't forget those binoculars!



Package deal

Hotels and resorts at Corbett are offering special packages with different elements thrown in. And, yes, customisation is possible. For year-end deals, contact the resorts.



(0) 97192 51997



corbettpark@gmail.com



Getting there

By road: Corbett is a four-hour drive from Delhi. Daily buses and trains also ply between Delhi and Ramnagar.

By rail: Utr Samprk K Express and Ranikhet Express



What to pack

A comfortable pair of trousers, boots, floppy hat or cap, woollen jacket, gloves, muffler, binoculars, fishing rod



Health check

Hypertension, asthma



Active level

Moderate





Freeze FRAME



Ready to walk a path others shudder to tread? If you're game for some really serious adventure, dig out your woollens and layer yourself with thermals because we're about to take you to a frozen river. Think about it, how many can boast of bringing in the New Year on the stunning Zaskar River, a tributary of the Indus in Jammu & Kashmir?

Here's what to expect on this trek: high altitude,

icy temperatures and a place where time stands still. As the old year melts into the new, you look at life and the universe with a fresh perspective. Suddenly, life as you know it appears mundane as you gaze at a jaw-dropping sheet of ice as far as the eye can see.

**₹ 46,900
per person**

(for a group of at least 6)





When the clock strikes 00:00

Traditional Ladakhi song-and-dance around a campfire in Chilling village

We are in *Chadar*—a blanket of ice—because it covers the entire Zaskar River during the extreme winter months of December, January and February. The beautiful Zaskar Valley can be accessed only during these months by walking on this frozen river. Trekkers and adventure-seekers are increasingly making their way here but it's still virgin territory.

Begin your trek at Chilling village, a five-hour drive from Leh. The trek will take you through breathtaking views of sapphire skies, crystal-clear waters running under a thick veil of ice, frozen fingers of ice creeping down mountains, mystic caves and rocky gorges. And if you're lucky, you could chance upon the notoriously reclusive snow leopard.

While the more adventurous can trek up to Dambuchan (15 km) for a home stay or opt for an overnight cave stay (12 km), back in Chilling, you can bunk in a warm Ladakhi home (made of thick mud blocks) and relish local delicacies like *thupka* and *tsampo*. When the clock strikes 12, ring in



the New Year with the locals, who are always happy to regale visitors with traditional songs and dance around a campfire. To make sure you don't freeze in the sub-zero temperature, they serve *gurgur chai*, a salty Ladakhi tea. And if you're brave enough to opt for a cave stay, you can cook your food inside a cave and usher in 2013 in classic back-to-nature style.

Your trip would be incomplete without sightseeing. So reserve a day to explore Chilling—meet the local Ladakhi population, learn about their culture, be wowed by their architecture, and treasure hunt for their famous iron and copperware and Buddha statues.



Package deal

The five-night/six-day package includes a return ticket to Delhi, full board, field safety equipment, high-altitude trekking tents, mats, walking sticks, sleeping bags, local transfers, porters and guide.



(0) 88001 80333



info@hindustanmotorcycling.com



Getting there

By air: Daily flights to and from Delhi to Leh. It takes about 75 minutes from Delhi to Leh.



What to pack

Thermals, rainproof jacket (preferably furry), high-ankle trekking shoes, gloves, monkey cap, goggles (only black), personal medical kit



Health check

Acute mountain sickness, blood pressure, asthma, arthritis



Active level

High





Island DIARIES

Most of us who have read Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* have spent enchanted evenings wondering how it would be to stay marooned on a remote uninhabited island, growing your own crops and making a meal out of the catch of the day. You can live that dream this New

Year's eve at the Chilika lake camp, near Puri, which will transport you from the cacophony of urban life to place you in nature's lap, leaving you to polish and perfect your island skills in a tiny tent. This includes catching fresh fish and cooking it over a campfire; birding (Chilika

is the largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian

₹ 7,500
per person





subcontinent), and playing with tiny dolphins.

Organised by Kolkata-based Walks of India, in association with Odisha's Grass Routes, the two-night camp (31 December - 1 January) will help you unwind on the banks of the tranquil waters of Asia's largest saltwater lake, Chilika, an ecosystem rich in microalgae, marine seaweeds and many varieties of fishes and crabs. Imagine lying lazily in a tent under the shade of casuarina palms, enjoying the cackle of egrets, herons, sandpipers, moorhens, warblers and endangered black-tailed godwits. That's not all. You can also glide out on a *donga*, a traditional pole boat, and feed the playful Irrawaddy dolphins, an endangered species, as you watch the sun go down on 2012.

Talking about the New Year, what could be more cathartic than indulging in some symbolic cleansing? Col-



When the clock strikes 00:00

Sit around the campfire with your partner, sharing stories, cooking dinner and stargazing

lect all the litter washed ashore from the mainland and make a positive difference to the local ecosystem. Learn about local traditions and cultures; travel to a nearby inhabited island on a bullock cart to interact with the fishing community that populates the shores of Chilika.

At the stroke of the midnight hour, even as you sit under the starlit sky, soaking up the quiet rhythm of waves lapping at the shore, take in the smell of roast fish, slowly cooking on the burning embers and hark back to the delights of an unhurried world where time and space are at your beck and call!



Package deal

The one night/two-day package includes a pole boat cruise on Chilika Lake, overnight camp (international standard two-man tents) and local assistance. There are meal options for vegetarians as well.



(0) 94370 22663



info@grassroutesjourneys.com



Getting there

By air: The nearest airport is Bhubaneswar, about 120 km away; from there, taxis, trains and buses are available to the lake.

By rail: The nearest railway station is Balugaon, on the Howrah-Chennai track. Buses are available from there to the lake.

By road: Many buses ply from Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.



What to pack

Waterproof shoes, swimming gear, *lungi*/sarong, hat/sunglasses, torch, toothbrush, book, binoculars, personal medical kit



Health check

Hypertension, sun/insect allergies



Active level

Moderate





Toast the GHOSTS

If Alfred Hitchcock, Bram Stoker and Manoj Night Shyamalan are your staple, this is one hell of a spine-chilling encounter you don't want to miss. Toast the ghosts this New Year; junk the wine glasses and champagne flutes for K2 meters aka ghost meters, that record energy variations; engage in some spirited communication with an EVP recorder that catches even disembodied voices. And at the chime of the midnight hour, get set for an out-of-the-world date with the supernatural in the ruins of the Nicholson Cemetery in Old Delhi.

Arranged by Delhi-based Let's Get Packing in association with the Indian Paranormal Society, this five-hour trip to Nicholson Cemetery on New Year's Eve is guaranteed to catapult you into 2013 on an eerie high. Guided by members of the Indian Paranormal Society, who will demonstrate the use of ghost meters and give you the dos and don'ts, you will be taken on a round of the cemetery, which is one of the oldest in Delhi and is located

in the area that was a battleground for British troops and the Indian rebels during the 1857 revolt. The cemetery houses the remains of European soldiers killed in the 1857 rebellion, including that of Brigadier General John Nicholson. There have been alleged sightings of a headless horseman in the cemetery, believed to be Brigadier Nicholson.

Don't expect to see bats flapping their wings, owls hooting ominously or women in white shrieking hysterically, stuff that Bollywood horror movies thrive on. But yes, your K2 or ghost meter will detect various electromag-

₹ 3,000
per person





netic fields and respond accordingly by changing colour—ghost hunters believe this signifies paranormal activities. So keep checking; your meter, which has five lights (light green, dark green, orange, light red and dark red) to indicate different levels of activities, might shift shades from light green to orange or even dark red.

While each touring group can have up to 20 members, subgroups of about five members are made at the touring site; each led by a trained paranormal investigator. One of the cardinal rules is to stick together. And yes, you can go click-happy with your full-spectrum lens. Many a time, pictures taken at the cemetery have reported apparitions in the images (*facing page; below*). You can also converse with the ghosts, whose voice, though inaudible to human ears, gets recorded on the EVP recorder.

Let's Get Packing, along with the Paranormal Society of India conducts tours



When the clock strikes 00:00

Communicate with the spirits; maybe even wish them Happy New Year!

to other sites of paranormal activities as well, including the infamous Bhangarh ruins in Rajasthan, one of 'the top 10 haunted places in the world'—the eerie fort, believed to have been cursed and abandoned after the famine of 1783, is said to resound with the spirits of the dead; locals refuse to set foot there after sunset. Then, there's the 'haunted' and 'jinxed' Mukesh Mills in Mumbai, an abandoned mill now used for film and TV shoots; many people have lost their belongings here without explanation, many more firmly refuse to work here after dark.

Calling all creatures of the night... what are you waiting for? Get ghost busting!



Package deal

Spread over five hours, from 8.30 pm to 1.30 am, the package will include transportation from Khan Market to Nicholson Cemetery, a light meal comprising a sandwich, patty, canned juice, dessert and mineral water, and an equipment training session with investigators of the Indian Paranormal Society, who will provide you with K2 meters and EVP recorders.



(0) 98184 03336



arjunsachdeva85@gmail.com



Getting there

You can gather at New Delhi's Khan Market, from where you'll be transported to the cemetery, which is located near the Kashmir Gate Metro Station and the Inter-State Bus Terminal.



What to pack

Walking stick (to ward off creepy, crawly creatures), salt (to ward off evil spirits), full-spectrum cameras and flashlights. Wear comfortable clothing. No shorts and short skirts allowed.



Health check

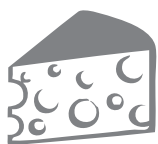
Hypertension, heart problems



Active level

Moderate activity with high pulse rate





Say CHEESE

Lofabu! Auroblochon! Gorgonzola! This is no alien language, just different varieties of cheese. If food is your poison, you could be savouring these delicacies at the stroke of midnight—with a glass of wine, of course—on a cheese trail in Pondicherry.

This 'cheesy' New Year's Eve is being hosted by La Ferme Cheese, where you can learn how creamy, full-bodied, melt-in-the-mouth cheese gets a mouth-watering makeover from its humble, milky origins. If you're worried about putting on a few pounds, well, you could add a regular workout as one of your New Year resolutions!

La Ferme Cheese in Auroville offers a hands-on feel of the nuances of

cheese production. Watch as the milk is churned by machines and water is pumped out of a windmill in lush surroundings that complement the experience. The churned milk is then transferred to large vessels, where vegetarian enzymes and seasoning cultures are added. The room fills with a cheesy aroma and you can't wait to sink your teeth in. We're guessing you'll have your eye on Blue D'Auroville, a soft, white cocktail cheese with a coating of blue mould.

As the countdown to New Year begins, nibble on platters of cheese to guess each kind and taste. A handy tip when you play the guessing game; the one with cumin seasoning is *Jeera* Cheese, the creamy sweet one is Gruyere and the one with a fresh sparkling taste

**Free tour but
needs prior
booking**





When the clock strikes 00:00

Eat a sumptuous meal with fresh cheese and old French wine at Pour Tous or Café La Terrasse



is Farm Cheese. While you are out tasting the marvellous dairy product, why not convince the chef to give you some cooking lessons? Each cheese has its own use; like Swissly with its characteristic taste is often used in sandwiches or melted on pizzas, and Cheddar with its full flavour is ideal for salads and cocktail nibblers.

Cheese-maker Benny, who shut down his unit in France to open La Ferme in Auroville, heads a team of 25 professionals from Italy and Holland, to produce about 100 kg of handmade cheese a month using only natural ingredients. Though you

can see cheese-making process at La Ferme, considerations of hygiene do not allow you to taste cheese at the factory. For sampling though, head for Pour Tous, their adjoining distributing outlet, or restaurants like Café La Terrace or Pour Tous Restaurant, both a few minutes walk away from La Ferme in Auroville, and treat your palate to a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

And, surprise, surprise! La Ferme offers much more than a cheese tour. There's rock climbing and a dance studio too. And you're in Pondicherry, remember? So the beach is never far away!



Package deal

Guided tour of cheese production at La Ferme, followed by cheese tasting at Auroville restaurants.



(413) 2622212



lafermecheese@auroville.org.in



Getting there

By road: La Ferme, Auroville, is a three-hour drive from Chennai airport. You can book a taxi at Auroville Transport Service by calling (413) 2622400 or (413) 2622183.



What to pack

An overcoat for breezy nights at the beach.



Health check

Cholesterol, blood pressure



Active level

Low





A song and DANCE

For all the accusations about it being unglamorous and uninviting, Chennai has an answer: the *Kutchery* Season. And that too on the cusp of the New Year. This New Year, be a part of the Madras Music Season, one of the largest cultural events around the world, and lose yourself to the *varnam* and *kriti* of Carnatic

music; *jatiswaram* and *thillana* of Bharatanatyam. The six-week annual festival hosts a major platform where connoisseurs and critics come together to appreciate art.

Locally called *Kutchery* Season, as the name suggests, this is the season for concerts in the pleasant

month of *Margazhi* (mid-December to mid-January) in the Tamil calendar; music and dance performances regale locals and visitors from all over the world simultaneously at several venues in the city. It's the time when women dress up their best in rustling Kanjeevaram silks accessorised with

₹ 500 onwards per person





dazzling temple jewellery; hair neatly plaited and adorned with fragrant jasmine, while the men scramble for the best seats in the *sabha*.

As the evening unfolds, performances of Indian classical music, dance and allied arts by stalwarts like T M Krishna, Bombay Jayashri, Unnikrishnan, Malavikka Sarukkai, Alarmel Valli and Sikkil Gurucharan are both treat for the eyes and ears. After the concert, you can discuss the nuances of the evening's performances over a supper of steaming *rava dosa*, *medu vada* and *upma* at the food joints at the concert hall.

The festival hosts over 1,500 performances at 17 concert halls, from afternoon to late at night, as over 600 Carnatic singers and musicians and Bharatanatyam dancers congregate from across the globe to take part. There's an eclectic mix of aficionados of classical music, senior citizens, and young men and women who hold corporate jobs but switch to traditional mode while performing here.

The December 31st night performances in the many *sabha* are usually reserved for star performances from India. Though the performances come



When the clock strikes 00:00

Head to Marina Beach or Elliot's Beach, south of Chennai. Listen to church bells ring in the New Year



to an end by 10.30 pm, Chennai keeps the night alive. Head for the waterfront or its beaches to ring in the New Year or head south of the city along the East Coast Road whose beachfront is dotted with many resorts like The Fisherman's Cove that throw open their resorts for New Year celebrations.



Package deal

The cost of a ticket ranges from ₹ 500 to ₹ 5,000 per concert. Direct bookings are done at auditorium counters; evening concerts and performances by popular artists may need advance booking. For schedules and venues log on to www.artindia.net/madras12/index.html or www.mylaporetimes.com



Getting there

Chennai's city buses, Pallavan Transport Corporation (PTC), are efficient and connect to all parts of the city but can be overcrowded during the season.



What to pack

Comfortable evening wear, cottons and light silks for the concerts; Chennai's best silks will be on display and you don't want to look underdressed!



Health check

Hypertension and diabetes, as you have a long night ahead.



Active level

For your eyes and ears only





Star STRUCK

Did you know that the age of sunlight that is currently reaching the Earth is about 100,000 years? Or for that matter, were you aware that the large dark patches on the moon's surface are called Maria? Well, you could learn more facts like these; unravel myriad mysteries of the Milky Way; take a peek at the craters on the moon; watch the rings around Saturn; and see for yourself the shift in planetary positions as you glide into the New Year in Tikona (so named as the hill that flanks it looks like a pyramid), an idyllic village 125 km from Mumbai.

At a two-day camp (31 December and 1 January) organised by Mumbai-based Life Away From Life, you will uncover the secrets of the sky under the guidance of an expert from the Nehru Planetarium in Mumbai, who will take you through the different constellations with the help of a

high-quality telescope, setting apart an Aries from a Perseus for you.

The starry spectacle of the winter sky is just one of the highlights of

₹ 4,500
per person

(excluding transportation)





this New Year camp that promises to transplant you in the sylvan surroundings, bereft of the luxuries of electricity and tap water, which we take for granted in our day-to-day life. Old-fashioned lanterns and solar lamps come alive at the camp site as the sun goes down.

During the day, you can experience a slice of rural life by interacting with the villagers, touring paddy fields and savouring the Maharashtrian staple *bhakri* with *pitla*. *Kumbar* (potters) from the village will teach you the intricacies of pottery, as you get your hands dirty, literally, moulding soft clay on the potter's wheel.

Even as temperatures dip to as low as 5° Celsius at night, sit huddled around a warm campfire, listening to Maharashtrian folk music set to the beats of *dholak* and *tasha*. Just as your teeth start chattering, bite into



When the clock strikes 00:00

Get up, close and personal with planets and stars through a telescope

warm *bhajiya* and take gulps of strong *chai* and notice a wave of warmth pass over you.

The New Year dawn will see you enjoying a morning session of yoga, after which you could set off for a trek to Tikona fort, a popular trekking destination, or Tikona lake. The fort, situated 3,500 ft above sea level, offers a panoramic view of Pawna dam and the forts of Tung, Lohagad and Visapur. And yes, if you choose the shorter trek—to Tikona Lake—you can splash around!

Are you game?



Package deal

The two-days/one-night camp is inclusive of pottery session, trekking, stargazing, accommodation in imported tents, blankets, sleeping mats and vegetarian food. Booking only till 15 December.



(022) 66096693

(0)98691 58351



prateekdeo@gmail.com



Getting there

A mini bus or car will take you to Tikona from Sion Circle in Mumbai.



What to pack

Sweater, gloves, monkey caps, jackets, trekking shoes, personal medicines



Health check

Stiff joints



Active level

Moderate





Curtain CALL

₹ 100 onwards
per person

The huge bell at St Paul's Cathedral in Kolkata will chime melodiously to herald the New Year and thousands of revellers will go pub-hopping in the high-energy zone of Park Street, but for every true-blue

theatre enthusiast in and around Kolkata, it'll be the marble steps of Rabindra Sadan, as usual.

Year after year, these steps have been a witness to the rites of passage of

the Gregorian Calendar as theatre lovers at the 'Natyaswapnakalpa', a night-long theatre festival held on 31 December without fail in Kolkata, welcome the New Year to the accompaniment of songs, snapping their fingers and tapping their feet.



Organised by the Anya theatre group, Natyaswapnakalpa is a meeting ground for kindred souls, who flock from all over West Bengal to partake proudly in its rich cultural heritage. Wrapped in woollens that camouflage their long *kurta*, monkey caps perched atop neatly brushed hair, hundreds of connoisseurs brave the winter night to jostle for space on the steps of the Rabindra Sadan for the musical interlude that rings in the New Year.

This year, the traditional Chitpur bands who once performed at the decadent *haveli* of zamindars are set to join the festivities, making it a night to remember.



With over 350 artists participating, it's going to be action on the backstage too—lines being rehearsed over endless cups of *chai*, and costumes changed, getting the green-rooms buzzing with a crazy energy.

The curtains will go up on this year's Natyaswapnakalpa with a full-length production of a translation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Utpal Dutt. The festival will also pay tribute to literary legends Bimal Mitra, Jyotirindra Nandi and Sunil Gangopadhyaya, whose birth centenary



When the clock strikes 00:00

Treat yourself to *gana sangeet* by the traditional Chitpur bands on the steps of the Rabindra Sadan, in the heart of Kolkata's cultural hub

is being celebrated this year. With soulful renderings by Baul singers and hilarious mime shows interspersed in between the acts, this could well be your ticket to making a dramatic entry into the New Year!



Package deal

Spread over 11 hours (6.30 pm to 5.30 am), Natyaswapnakalpa is a comprehensive package with plays, mimes, musical programmes and oration by eminent speakers thrown in.



(0) 98300 07620



krishnamoon@gmail.com



Getting there

Rabindra Sadan on A J C Bose Road in South Kolkata is easily accessible from any part of the city.



What to pack

Jackets, pullovers, sweaters, monkey caps



Health check

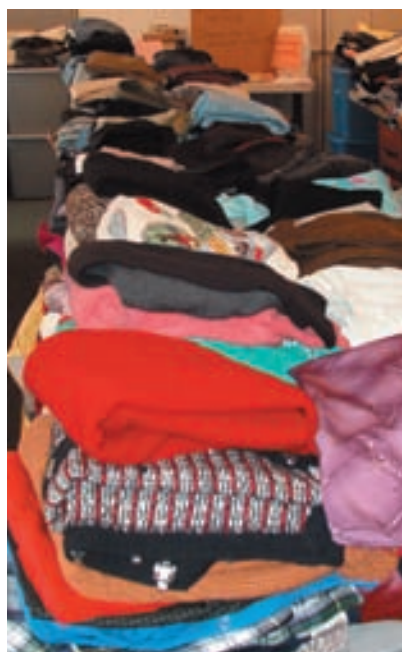
Hypertension and diabetes, as you have to stay awake throughout the night.



Active level

Exercise for your grey cells alone!





**Love
ME DO**

**Absolutely free!
But it'll ensure
rich dividends
for your soul**

When they hummed *Love me do*, the Beatles gave vent to the collective human need to be loved. After all, a little love never hurts. Get into the mood of the season; spread a little sunshine this New Year's Eve. Even as the countdown begins, reach out to your fellow brethren at the neighbouring street corner with a smile and a warm hug. You'll be surprised to see the warmth and goodwill it generates, and invariably passes on.

The **free hugs campaign** could just be the pinnacle of your 'Make a Differ-

ence Day', which could get rolling with your friends coming over for your unique house party, over an 'organic' pot lunch. After all, you want to make all the right statements and earn some good karma.

Rummage your cupboards for old toys, books and warm clothing (all in good shape), which you have been stacking up for purely sentimental reasons. You can also spread the word among your friends circle, so they also bring in spare stuff that can make a world of difference to someone else's life. **Head to the nearest orphanage or**



slum; you'll be amazed at the smile and happiness your grandchild's unused toys and books bring to umpteen tiny faces.

Evening could be your rewind time when you revisit the past, embarking on a **cycle rally** with your friends. Not only will it be fun, but an environment-friendly activity, sending out the message loud and clear about the need to reduce our carbon footprint and leaving behind a better world. This could also be a big bonding time with grandparents, children and grandchildren cycling alongside, humming old tunes, sharing old stories and jokes.

Continue the camaraderie in the kitchen or lawn with everybody chip-



When the clock strikes 00:00

Give free hugs to whomever you come across (within reason!) at the neighbourhood street corner

ping in to arrange light refreshments, before heading for the free hugs campaign. Don't be surprised if you find complete strangers feeling 'touched' by this simple gesture and passing it on to the next person on the street. Soon your one hug could trickle into a ripple effect with total strangers basking in the warmth of the circle of love that you have set afloat.

Nothing could be more cathartic this New Year's Eve!



Package deal

Spanning 12 hours (12.30 pm to 12.30 am), all activities are geared towards fostering togetherness, warmth and oneness. Tons of fun and goodwill guaranteed.



Getting there

It's just a hop, skip and jump to the nearest street corner.



What to pack

A pearly white smile!



Health check

Body and mouth odour



Active level

Low-intensity activity. But the result is priceless!



House in order

Dr Shriram Pande hopes to make Pune a law-abiding city with the help of RTI, reports **Khursheed Dinshaw**

When a newly constructed, though illegal, building in Sangvi, Pune, collapsed on 1 August 2002, it prompted Dr Shriram Pande to investigate the malaise of illegal construction in the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) area. He filed an RTI application, his first. Even though he hit a dead end when it came to securing information from the office bearers, he pursued the matter. "As a result of those efforts, the PCMC is demolishing illegal structures today," says Pande, whose dedication towards RTI has not waned even after being struck by Parkinson's disease.

The same year, there were four road accidents, the result of wrongly designed speed breakers. Dr Pande's crusade to get information about the number of illegal speed breakers hit a roadblock as well. "After I put up my query, I was informed that there were 1,170 speed breakers of which 760 were illegal, which, with my persuasion, were demolished," he says.

A veterinary surgeon, Dr Pande was joint director of Animal Husbandry of Pune till 1995. In 1997, he founded the Right to Information Forum of Senior Citizens in Sangvi and the Senior Citizens Mahasangh for Pimpri-Chinchwad in 2001—an association of seven senior citizen organisations, its strength had gone up to 52 till his resignation four years ago. Since 2005, he has been running a free RTI guidance centre at his residence in Sangvi and provides free forms to applicants. "I also assist in writing applications," he adds. Inspired by Anna Hazare, Dr Pande worked with him for two years after retirement; he says he would much rather make a difference to society than relax in his silver years.

Considered an activist's tool, the RTI Act draws multiple responses from beneficiaries and the government; the response from officials has not always been cordial to those fighting for society's rights. However, Dr Pande has had a positive experience. "The officials I meet are confident that I use the information for the benefit of society," says the septuagenarian, who has been invited twice by the PCMC commissioner to train officials in the use of the Act.





Photographs by Hemant Patil



The bureaucracy, though, has not always been kind to Dr Pande's quest. Once when he put up an application in 'question form' to the public information officer of PCMC for property tax arrears for educational institutions, the officer said he would provide the records/papers but not in an 'answer format'. Pande approached the first appellate authority, which ruled against him. He then approached the state information commissioner, who ruled in his favour; it's considered a historic decision and now public information officers have been given guidelines to provide information, even if the information is requested in 'question form'.

As part of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), it is compulsory for every corporation to supply water via water meters for judicious use of the resource. This proposal was opposed by organisations and individuals alike. Dr Pande studied the problem and wrote a public article to convince people to adopt water meters, citing the benefits to small families who were currently using less water but paying more for it. Members from ruling and opposition parties criticised him. Dilip Band, commissioner of PCMC, called Dr Pande to address a meeting where the ruling and opposition party members and the mayor with his associates were present. "I put forth my financial and technical implications; by the end of the meeting, water meters were adopted for the town," he says with pride.

Dr Pande has filed 106 applications at public information offices, 71 at first appellate authority and four at second appellate authority

To date, Dr Pande has filed 106 applications at public information offices, 71 at first appellate authority and four at second appellate authority (the state information commissioner's office). Designated 'Senior Citizen of the Year' in 2007, he was also awarded the Sajag Nagrik Mahiti Adhikar Award. Author of *Mahiticha Adhikar Adhiniyam* (2005)

and *Mahiti Adhikarachi Kimaya Section 4*, Dr Pande's efforts to save his hometown residents money and angst over water connections are famous. When Sangvi residents were charged an extra amount for their water connection by contractors of PCMC, the activist asked the authority to come to the spot for inspection with relevant records. They were reluctant, but when the additional commissioner directed them to conduct a spot inspection according to the rule, they

agreed. "It was revealed from the records that Rs 695 was to be paid by PCMC for each domestic water connection," recalls Dr Pande. "This meant the contractor's workers were collecting extra from the citizens. After my enquiry, the contractor was forced to refund all the money."

His work, evidently, is never done. It's Monday morning and the RTI activist is ready with a barrage of queries and complaints that he needs to pose to the authorities. "Pranayama at 4 am, morning walk and my dose of the daily newspaper set the pace for a hectic day, week, month and year ahead," says Dr Pande. The fact that he is 75, of course, is irrelevant! 🌸

Here is where it **BEGINS**

Legendary abstract painter Ram Kumar looks back at his artistic journey through an exhibition of his unseen pen and ink drawings, reports **Ambica Gulati**



ART

Old-world charm surrounds us as we walk into artist Ram Kumar's home in Delhi. Two of his landscapes, along with two Husains, grace his living room walls. A whole era unfolds as Kumar begins to talk about his latest exhibition of pen and ink drawings at Vadehra Art Gallery in Delhi. "These drawings have been in the making for 60 years," he explains. "Way back in the 1950s, someone said that the paper used for *bahi-khata* [hand-bound accounting books] is of good quality; so I got myself some of this paper and started making these drawings. All art is an evolution. The lines kept evolving to take shapes and forms."

Most of these drawings depict the holy city of Benaras with its crammed houses. One can, in fact, sense the hopelessness of the human condition in this city of *moksha*. "Everyone insisted that this collection was worth exhibiting as no one had seen it till date," says Kumar. He calls these drawings a phase of transformation as they made him shift from figurative art to abstract landscapes. This transformation can be traced between 1961 and 1963 after he went to Benaras with artist-friend M F Husain. The 60 'never-before-seen' drawings compel one to look deeper to find hidden places, animals, ideas and objects. The exhibition also includes 17 black-and-white acrylics curated by Kumar's close associate Prayag Shukla.

Indeed, the human condition has always been the main concern in the artist's works. Since the 1960s, strokes and sweeps of ochres, greens, rusts have dominated his creations. With



Varanasi: Oil on canvas

a long list of awards, including the Padma Bhushan in 2010, Kumar, who was born in 1924 in Shimla, has been associated with the Progressive Artist's Group along with legends such as Husain, Tyeb Mehta and S H Raza. His works command high prices—his 1952 painting *The Vagabond* fetched \$ 1.1 million at Christie's, New York in 2008—but as a person he continues to be infinitely humble.

Ram Kumar also writes in Hindi; he has published eight collections of stories, two novels and a travelogue. However, art remains his abiding passion—a romance that began during his student days. The artist recollects that he was walking around Connaught Place and wandered into an art gallery; he was besotted with the colours and forms he saw. Kumar

then joined the Sharda Ukil School of Art under Sailoz Mukherjee. He convinced his father to send him to Paris to study art under Andre Lhote and Fernand Leger. It was there that he was exposed to an artist's world that shaped him fully as an artist.

Today, the 88 year-old continues to thrive on his eye for colour and form. "I don't have a favourite painting or master but have just been painting. All my works are my favourites. I feel that only after 10 weak paintings does a strong painting emerge," he says with a smile, leading us down to his studio in the basement. He takes out an old figurative painting. But our eye catches the vibrant and refreshing shades of rust, yellow and green of a yet-to-be-finished landscape. Each one is a new beginning.

MASTERSTROKE

When *Harmony-Celebrate Age* last met legendary 90 year-old artist Syed Haider Raza in Delhi for our February 2011 cover feature, the Paris-returned artist was in the midst of creating fresh acrylic works. Two years later, these works were exhibited at Mumbai's Jehangir Art Gallery for a week in the end of November. Now open at South Mumbai's Art Musings



Harmony Archives

Gallery in Colaba, this is Raza's first exhibition since 2006. Titled *Vistaar*, it's a reflection of the artist's discovery and rediscovery of vital forms since he moved to Paris in the 1950s. After experimentation with Western modernism, leaning more towards abstractionism, this exhibition closes the 'circle' (the *bindu*) he is famously known for.

REKHA RETURNS: NO ONE CAN MATCH THE LIFE JANE FONDA OR CATE BLANCHETT EXUDE IN THEIR PRIME. THOUGH INDIAN FEMALE ACTORS LOSE THEIR CAST APPEAL IN THEIR SENIOR DECADES, THEY SURE ARE TREND-SETTING BY STEPPING OUT OF THE HACKNEYED FRAME. HOT ON THE HEELS OF SRIDEVI'S 'COMING-INTO-HER-OWN' ROLE IN *ENGLISH VINGLISH*, THE GRAPEVINE HAS IT THAT **REKHA** WILL PLAY THE LEAD IN A FILM BASED ON FAMOUS GUJARATI PLAY *BAA AE MARI BOUNDARY*, ABOUT A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN NEGLECTED BY HER FAMILY. THE FILM WILL BE PRODUCED BY INDRA KUMAR. LAST SEEN WITH RISHI KAPOOR AND HEMA MALINI IN *SADIYAAN*, REKHA IS CURRENTLY SAID TO BE TAKING HER TIME PLAYING A PARLIAMENTARIAN.

WHEELS for company

Subhash Inamdar tells **Radhika Raje** that his recent motorbike tour of European countries was a dream come true



As a young boy, Subhash Inamdar would travel to far off places on his bicycle and soak in every colour of nature. He would randomly kick his bicycle off the stand and cycle along the roads; turn when the roads turned and stop to decide the direc-

WANDERLUST

tion. "I have seen so many places in Maharashtra on a bicycle," reminisces Inamdar. "I would cycle to unknown destinations and pause only if I liked the place." Later in his teens, he bought himself another set of wheels—a motorbike, MH 48L 2312—on which

he continued his expeditions to places such as Leh and Ladakh.

On his 60th birthday this year, Inamdar knew he had to accomplish a dream from several years ago; of travelling across boundaries on his bike. Thus, plans were made and prepara-

tions began for his 100-day motorbike tour of Europe. "There was so much to do," he recalls. "The visa was the most difficult. I didn't want to book any hotels, considering it was a road trip. But the Schengen visa application needs to have prior hotel bookings." However, he worked his charms and was granted the visa. "The visa interviewer must have liked me," says the sexagenarian with a chuckle. What followed was a frenzy of paperwork, complete with bike papers, minimal luggage and lots of happy dreams.

Inamdar's journey spanning 14,000 km began in Istanbul and ended in Athens. Crossing the borders of 16 countries in three months was not an easy ride, but he came back with unforgettable experiences, many of which he will cherish forever. Making a good friend in Germany was his best memory. "I pulled over my bike to change the servicing oil," he recalls. "There I bonded with the serviceman over my bike. Later he invited me over for dinner and drinks and we ended up spending too much time just talking about bikes."

Inamdar also had it rough when he was confined to a police station on the border of Austria and Prague for a few hours. "There was some issue with the PUC paper of my bike and the cops were giving me a difficult time. They let me go after I pretended to be a well-known face in India." He thanks



Inamdar at Colosseum Arena in Rome

the regional newspapers that had covered him prior to the expedition, of which he had saved clippings.

The Europe trip being his first international journey, Inamdar loved every bit of it but maintains there is not much difference in the way things work in these countries. He compares the thinking, superstitions as well as the hospitable behaviour of the European countries to his own and feels that these similarities made it easier for him to connect with new people. "Opposite the Eiffel Tower in Paris, there is a fence where couples put a key in a lock and throw the key in the river," he points out. "They claim it will make them stay with each other

forever. Such things are often done in India too; such as tying a cloth to a sacred tree, etc."

In his view, he understands the value of humanity better now. "But my wife and children say that I haven't changed at all after the trip," he says. He is often seen waving and speaking to people around his hardware shop based in Thane near Mumbai. He hopes his next trip will be more adventurous and exciting. He plans to take his bike with 'London Rome Mumbai' printed on it to the US or Australia. "Europe is easy for a road trip; other countries are far more difficult," he adds. "Let's hope I get the opportunity to enjoy the rest of the world as well."



ON A SONG

HINDI CINEMA IS CELEBRATING YET ANOTHER RETURN. ON THE EVE OF 50 YEARS OF THE 'LAXMIKANT-PYARELAL' TITLE, PYARELAL SHARMA LAUNCHED AN ALBUM COMPRISING HIS AND HIS MUSICAL PARTNER'S 50 FILM HITS. A RAGE FOR OVER THREE DECADES FROM THE 1960S, THE LATE LAXMIKANT SHANTARAM KUDALKAR AND PYARELAL SHARMA COMPOSED MUSIC FOR CLOSE TO 700 SONGS FILMED ON THE BEST OF STARS. COMBINED WITH THE LAUNCH OF DEBUTANT SINGER PANKAJ CHATURVEDI'S ALBUM AAWAZ DIL SE AND A LARGE-FORMAT BOOK, THE EVENING SAW THE WHO'S WHO OF THE MUMBAI FILM INDUSTRY OFFERING A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO LEGENDS YASH CHOPRA AND RAJESH KHANNA.

STRENGTHEN YOUR BODY FEED YOUR MIND

SUNOVA®
The joy of healthy living



**FREE SUNOVA PRODUCTS AVAILABLE WITH EVERY
SUBSCRIPTION TO HARMONY.**

Now there's even more reason to subscribe to Harmony - celebrate age, the magazine specially for people above 55. Where you'll find relevant articles on health, cooking, fitness and even fashion. Meet people like yourself.

Fill in the enclosed form today.

And enjoy this magazine for a long time to come.



**Subscribe to Harmony Magazine
now and get Sanat Products free**

SUNOVA®
The joy of healthy living

Subscription Card

(Please tick below for your choice of subscription)

☐ I would like to gift a subscription **OR**

☐ I want to subscribe to HARMONY

Subscription	You Pay	You Get
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years (24 issues)	₹ 576	Sanat Products Gift Hamper approx. worth ₹ 225
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year (12 issues)	₹ 324	Sanat Products Gift Hamper approx. worth ₹ 100

Please fill in CAPITAL LETTERS and mail the form below with your Cheque / DD to Harmony Care, Living Media India Limited, A-61, Sector, 57, Nodia (U.P.) - 201301. In case of Credit Card payment you may fax the form to : 0120-4078080.

Personal details: Mr/Mrs. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

I wish to pay by: ☐ Cheque ☐ Demand Draft

I am enclosing Cheque / DD No. _____ dated _____ drawn on (specify bank) _____

made payable to **M/s LMIL-A/C Harmony** for ₹ _____

(Add ₹ 10/- for non-Delhi cheques) or please charge to my Credit Card.

☐ Amex ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Diners

Card Number

Card Member's Name

Card Expiry Date _____ Month Year

Card Member's Signature _____

Date of Birth _____ Date Month Year

I want to gift the subscription to (Please do not fill if subscribing for yourself):

Mr/Mrs/Ms _____ First Name _____

Last Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone (Off.) _____ (Res.) _____

E-mail: _____

Website: www.harmonyindia.org For queries e-mail us at: harmonycare@intoday.com



SUBSCRIPTION TERMS & CONDITIONS: Rates and offer valid in India only. Allow 3-4 weeks for processing of your subscription. Free subscription gift will reach you within 8-10 weeks of commencement of your subscription. It will not be possible to entertain any request for cancellation of your subscription once your free gift has been despatched. The free subscription gifts are covered by guarantee for manufacturing defect / quality / damage in transit as per standards laid down by the manufacturer. Add ₹ 10 for non-Delhi cheques. Please write your name and address on the reverse of the Cheque / DD. Do not send cash. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi / New Delhi only. The publisher reserves the right to terminate or extend this offer or any part thereof at any time, or to accept or reject any or all forms received at their absolute discretion without assigning any reason. Information regarding such cancellation / extension / discontinuance will however be published subsequently in the magazine. For further details, please contact our Customer Care Department: Write in to: **Harmony Care, Living Media India Limited, A-61, Sector-57, Noida (U.P.)- 201301**; Call: (95120) 2479900 from Delhi & Fbd; (0120) 2479900 from Rest of India, Fax: (0120) 4078080; E-mail: harmonycare@intoday.com

NOTE: The Harmony collects and processes personal information for the purposes of customer analysis, market research and to provide you with any further details from our organisation. Steps have been taken to ensure that consistently high standards of data protection are in place.

Resident Ruskin

A simple man with a soft face, Ruskin Bond is indisputably one of India's most widely read writers. His lucid style, thoughtful expression and remarkable imagery of the routine and regular have captivated a dedicated readership of adults and children alike for over four decades. From short stories to poetry to literature to fiction, Bond has contributed immensely to each genre with his creative genius. His debut work *The Room on the Roof*, written when he was 17, received the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Award (the highest award in Britain at the time). His latest novella *Maharani*, released at age 78, continues to surprise and entertain book lovers at home and abroad.

On a warm winter afternoon, at the Cambridge Book Depot in Mussoorie, Ruskin Bond spoke to **Suparna-Saraswati Puri** with the patience and humility of a thorough gentleman. Here are excerpts of the conversation:

Having written extensively for children, how do you manage to keep the child inside you intact?

I don't know [laughs]. It's just there. I guess it has always been there. It's certainly not a conscious effort on my part.

Your writings bear emphatic mention of nature and animals. Is it because you belong to the habitat or are you a nature person intrinsically?

Living close to nature certainly helps. Even as a boy I remember being fairly receptive and responsive to the natural world. I lived near the sea in Jamnagar. Dehradun being a small town, I used to go to the forest a lot. I think it is a combination of both—it's partly intrinsic and the more I saw or experienced the natural world, the more I appreciated it.

In times driven by technology, authors and writers use social media to connect with their readers. On the other hand, you have been coming to this particular shop every Saturday afternoon and spending time with people for the past 12 years. Why?

I do not use social media at all. In fact, I am almost an 18th century person! But I certainly like meeting readers and young people on a personal basis.

Does this influence your writing?

Yes, definitely. Writing is all about people. The reason I never run out of stories is because I am always interested

in people and if I run out of people, I write ghost stories [begins to laugh]. I want to pick up something to fall back on. But the ghosts I make up, I am afraid I can't make you meet any!

Recent trends in fiction writing have seen India being used as a backdrop of sorts, whether it is the country's economic growth, poverty, social complexities or ethnic issues. In addition to being home, what is India to you?

Well all those things you mentioned are important. But if your writing is going to focus on contemporary affairs and concerns, it dates very quickly. I think it is safest for a writer to write about human aspects, people, their problems, their conflicts, their joys and sorrows. That doesn't date because we all are alike and have been for centuries and hopefully will remain so for more. These daily concerns like the economic problems, politics change so quickly.

Wisdom and experience are usually associated with age. Has it aided you in your writing over the years, particularly with regard to your latest book *Maharani*?

Wisdom has never come to me, certainly not with age! As far as slowing down is concerned, well, I write as much as ever. I have a good memory. In fact, the longer you live, the more you have to fall back on and remember. I sometimes forget someone's name or tend to get time sequences a little out of order, but I don't think there is a great difference in my writing now than what it used to be. In fact, I write better now, definitely!

Read *Maharani* review: Page 75

AUTHORSPEAK



"Wisdom has never come to me, certainly not with age! As far as slowing down is concerned, well, I write as much as ever. I have a good memory"

Season's spirit

We bring you an extract from Charles Dickens's *The Christmas Carol* (1843), a classic that celebrates the generosity and goodwill synonymous with Christmas

Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already—it had not been light all day—and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal.

But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

'A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!' cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

'Bah!' said Scrooge, 'Humbug!'

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

'Christmas a humbug, uncle!' said Scrooge's nephew. 'You don't mean that, I am sure?'

'I do,' said Scrooge. 'Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.'

'Come, then,' returned the nephew gaily. 'What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.'



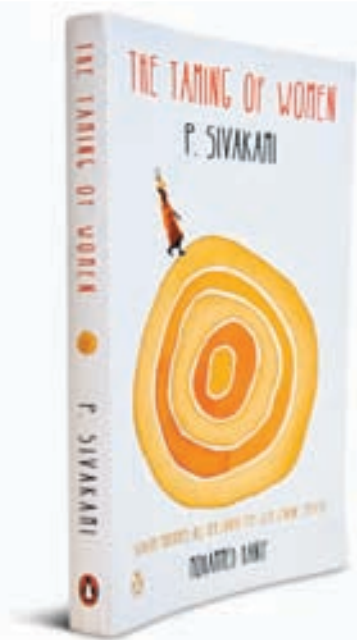
'What else can I be,' returned the uncle, 'when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon Merry Christmas. What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in them through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will,' said Scrooge indignantly, 'every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding,

and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!'

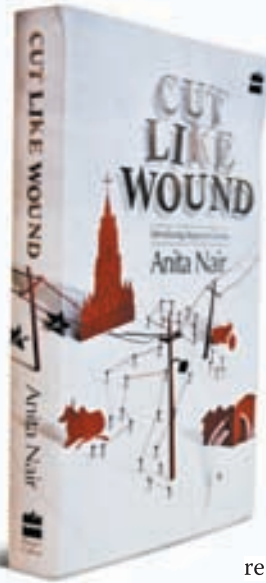
'There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say,' returned the nephew. 'Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!'

Between the lines

A touching story set in Tamil Nadu, **THE TAMING OF WOMEN** (Penguin; ₹ 299; 254 pages), by the first Tamil Dalit woman writer **P Sivakami**, holds a mirror to 'the changing face' of rural India in the name of development. **Pritam K Chakravarthy** has ably translated the novel by keeping it as close to the original and maintaining the tempo with his choice of words and usage of lingo. The names, expressions and dialects ooze regional flavour, which adds strength and originality to this work. The book narrates the tenacious protagonist Anandhayi's tribulations in bringing



up six children in a house where her husband brings in new women to bed every night. Equations change when he brings home beautiful Lakshmi as his second wife and simultaneously tries to have a tight grip on the entire family through his violent ways. With a befitting ending for a novel of this genre, the author brings home issues like gender inequality, exploitation of women and survival strategies across generations with great conviction.



With **CUT LIKE WOUND** (HarperCollins, ₹ 299; 358 pages), **Anita Nair** of *Ladies Coupé* and *The Better Man* fame comes up with a riveting psychological thriller that keeps you guessing till the end. Maybe it's her familiarity with literary fiction that enables Nair to flesh out detective Inspector Borei Gowda in an engaging manner, anointing him with a dysfunctional family. Stumbling through a midlife crisis and tottering with a slightly bulging belly, Inspector Gowda, who enjoys his shots of Old Monk as much as his lines of inquiry, is irresistibly drawn to his college sweetheart Lady Deviah, who is separated from her husband. That's just the periphery. Inspector Gowda and his rookie sidekick Santosh, on the lookout for a serial murderer, cut through the underbelly of Bangalore, which could have been any other metropolitan city in India, reeking of illegal activities, drugs, sex, transgenders and underhand deals. Having never attempted a thriller before, Nair surprises with the ease with which she builds the plot and suspense. Having said that, this is more than a whodunit with a journey that takes you through the mental landscapes of the main players.

This book is a delight, whether you have read **Ruskin Bond** before or not. Using his characteristically elegant yet simple prose, Bond recreates a bygone era of rambling palaces, faithful servants, lonely foreign diplomats and imperious nobles in **MAHARANI** (Penguin; ₹ 299; 180 pages). Equally characteristically, he draws vivid portraits of the changing seasons and nostalgic beauty of India's mountain towns during a simpler, more gracious age. The engaging first-person narrative is peppered with typically keen observations and gentle but delightful humour, tracing both the charms and absurdities of upper-class life in post-Independence India. And then, as his characters are effortlessly fleshed out, beneath the surface emerges a dramatic, meandering tale of suspense, pathos and palace intrigue. This is coupled with a soft yearning for childhood lost and an all-pervasive love of a time when autumn afternoons were spent trudging through forested hills, sustained only by boiled eggs, crisp buns and biscuits. The plot moves ever forward, aided by suggestive silences, a shadowy nun and eerie scenes that seem straight out of a nightmare. An enjoyable read overall, and with its large print and pleasant typeface, the reader's journey is over almost too soon.



The art of giving

Lama Ole Nydahl deliberates on the timeless wisdom of love for fellow beings

Generosity starts the moment one deliberately engages with the world and expresses one's enjoyment of it. Every personal encounter starts with this openness on some level: whether it is shaking hands, smiling at each other, or exchanging compliments or gifts. Even today, many cultures have elaborate rituals to properly welcome gods, as well as strangers, with various offerings. Always and everywhere, generosity blesses and affirms contact.

From a classic Buddhist perspective there are three kinds of generosity. The first—and material—kind is admittedly less important in countries where people die from too much fat around their hearts and are busy with finding a parking space for their second car. However in poor countries, the sharing of food and money saves lives.

Giving someone an education is another realm of generosity. This initially enables the elite in a society to become self-reliant and, after some time and many laws, able to carry along the rest of their countrymen. While in poorer countries nourishment and education are the main focal points of work, in the rich, fast-paced, and socially secure societies, generous

behaviour is more often expressed between people rather than on a governmental level. In this case, one enriches life through trust, good feelings, and making time for one another. Being overly busy, all too often one forgets to protect the values of our free societies or to enjoy moments of direct contact with others. This makes human encounters poor and may eventually take its toll. This can also be seen throughout history in the decline of high cultures, as well as relationships.

The most beautiful gift one can give to people is to connect them with liberating knowledge. This gives them a growing clarity and power not only in this life, but also in death,

the ensuing in-between states, and future lives. These days, even people with a healthy sense of critical judgment far too seldom consider the potential and greatness of the gift of learning about one's mind. Immense happiness lies in the discovery of what only the Eastern 'experience' religions teach—that at the time of death the brain is disintegrating from a lack of oxygen, but the mind is still aware without functioning bodily senses. And that this awareness is, in its essence, like timeless space and transfers from one state or body to the next, since beginningless time. Such realisations make peoples' lives profoundly meaningful. Among all acts of generosity, there is nothing more beautiful than sharing liberating knowledge. Also, providing others the insight that in the case of senile decay, all programs—meaning the whole human experience—are still

present and will move on to another rebirth, despite the fact that the receiver, i.e. the brain, is shutting down and relaying less and less, gives the process dignity during the last stages of life.

In every way, the most important gift in a relationship is one's sharing and mutual support during spiritual development. One should strengthen one's partner's confi-

dence in all precious qualities and meaningful accomplishments, inspiring them to trust their potential ever more until they can independently expand their capabilities and stand increasingly more secure in their own power. Because every moment is the beginning of the rest of one's life and everyone is continuously creating their own world, it is simply wise to build up those around one and keep the exchange of love on a high level. Over time, signs of trust and attraction develop mature human beings and create a surplus of positive feelings that benefit others as well. The more one is able to be generous, to share, and to let go of fixed ideas, then the more joy will unfold and life's richness will unfold.



Extract from Buddha & Love (Jaico Books; ₹ 295; 314 pages), a prescription for modern relationships. Tibetan Buddhist master Lama Ole Nydahl traverses the world, introducing Diamond Way Buddhism and meditation to thousands



When he showed up for duty at Her Majesty's Service in 1962 with *Dr No*, James Bond aka Agent 007 became the unofficial ambassador of suave. Since then, the super spy has captured the public imagination—more than half the world's population has seen at least one Bond flick—with his killer moves, buxom babes and high-octane thrills. Generations of men have wanted to be him; women, to be with him.

Wearing tailored Savile Row suits, sipping martinis (shaken, not stirred) and chasing the baddies in Aston Martins, Ian Fleming's suave, sophisticated secret agent's onscreen avatar has collected legions of fans along the way, the most prominent being former US President John F Kennedy. Indeed, Bond has become as much of an iconic Brit as The Beatles, who made their debut in 1962 as well. No wonder everything connected with the franchise—watches, phones, sunglasses, theme songs—have aroused curiosity.

Selling dreams of the thrilling kind, the Bond movies have defined the careers of actors like Sean Connery, Roger Moore, Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Craig, the latest Bond. And, loaded with glamour and oomph, the Bond girl has been as much of a reason to watch the films as the flamboyant super spy—from Ursula Andress to Halle Berry, these women have become instant icons. In fact, 50 years after she emerged from the sea with a dagger strapped to her bikini in *Dr No*, Andress is still considered the sexiest Bond girl ever.

Besides *Dr No*, other memorable Bond movies include *Goldfinger*, *Licence to Kill*, *Diamonds Are Forever*, *The Spy who Loved Me*, *Octopussy*, *Golden Eye* and *Casino Royale*. Half-a-century after his first onscreen adventure, Bond shows no signs of ageing. With his latest outing, *Skyfall*, creating ripples at the box office, this formula of stunts, sex and suspense continues to bond with fans across the globe.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: DECEMBER 1962

- On 7 December, Atlas, the most powerful supercomputer in the world with multiprogramming facilities, was commissioned.
- On 10 December, David Lean's epic film *Lawrence of Arabia* had its worldwide premiere with a special show for Queen Elizabeth II and her guests.
- On 14 December, *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo Da Vinci was assessed for insurance purposes at \$ 100 million, the highest ever for a painting.
- On 22 December, the 'Big Freeze', which lasted till 5 March 1963, with temperatures plummeting and rivers and lakes freezing, began in Britain.

Baby-lag

n. Extreme fatigue and disorientation owing to the sleep deprivation associated with parenting a baby.

Example. Meantime, Angelina Jolie just can't help giving interviews when she's tired. She has many children now (six, and rarin' for seven), so she probably is always tired....Was Jolie suffering from jet-lag? **Baby-lag**?

—John Timpane, "SideShow",
The Philadelphia Inquirer,
21 October 2008

Digital dualism

n. The belief that online and offline are largely distinct and independent realities.

Example. I agree with most everything he says in the column because, besides the last paragraph, his column is an antidote to **digital dualism**—the idea that online and offline worlds are somehow separate entities, one 'virtual' and the other 'real'. But his column brings back digital dualism at the end—and does a disservice, in my opinion, to the rest of his points.

—Zeynep Tufekci, "Breaking bread,
breaking **digital dualism**",
Technosociology, 8 February 2012

Flirtationship

n. A relationship that consists mostly of flirting.

Example. I think the average high-school relationship probably lasts two weeks. Raging hormones and a desire to be the centre of attention keep most teenagers moving on quickly, having mostly **flirtationships** and never really settling down.

—Courtney Phelan, "Phelan: High-school relationships not always easy",
Kane County Chronicle, 2 August 2012

HIGHLESS

adj. Relating to a drug that has had its psychoactive properties removed.

Example. "The difference is huge. Before, I would only smoke at the end of the day and stay in pain." Now, she said, with the **highless** marijuana, "my life is so much better." Despite Avidel's highless benefit, Klein does not see regular marijuana disappearing any time soon. THC has its own unique effects that alleviate illness symptoms.

—Maayan Lubell, "What a drag, Israeli firm grows **highless** marijuana",
Reuters, 3 July 2012

Patchwriting

n. A restatement of another writer's text that uses too much of the original vocabulary and syntax.

Example. These days, it feels like hardly a week goes by without a professional journalist being exposed for plagiarism, fabrication or **patchwriting**, which is a failed attempt at paraphrasing that over-relies on the original writer's syntax and vocabulary. That last transgression is likely today's most common sin, according to Rebecca Moore Howard, the Syracuse University professor of writing and rhetoric who coined the term.

—Kelly McBride, "Journalism's problem is a failure of originality",
The Globe and Mail, 28 September 2012

“To make mistakes is human; to stumble is commonplace; to be able to laugh at yourself is maturity.

— William Arthur Ward (1921-1994), American author and motivational speaker

BUZZ

Awesome adventures

This winter, how about chasing a butterfly to take its photograph? Or listening to a *ghazal* on your earphones while you paddle gently in a kayak? If you have a yen for such fun pursuits, there are more wonderful ideas waiting for you at the Great Hyderabad Adventure Club. Established by former NCC member Diyanat Ali in May 2008, the club redefines the term 'adventure' with a variety of fitness and nature activities, including exploration of forests, bird and butterfly watching, treks, horse-riding, cycling, and lectures on nature conservation. Check out www.ghac.in for more information. Or call Diyanat (9885039230) and Suresh (9849011006) to customise your own trip!

Tech-life balance

n. The use of technology in such a way that it does not interfere with or reduce the quality of one's personal life or relationships.

Example. A few weeks earlier, we had been chatting as a family about our **tech-life balance** and seeing if we could have some non-screen time (NST)—albeit in units of hours rather than days. No screens before school, all mobiles on the landing at night, no calls at meal-times-type agreements.

—Stephen Carrick-Davies, "Can our family escape the tyranny of the screen?", *The Guardian*, 31 December 2011

Zombee

n. A bee that is forced to abandon its hive and kill itself after being infected by a parasitic fly.

Example. To learn more about a bizarre, zombie-like behaviour recently discovered in honeybees, researchers are now tagging the **zombees** with tiny radio trackers.

—Charles Q Choi, "Zombie bees electronically enhanced to help solve die-off mystery", *National Geographic News*, 12 September 2012

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.

—Helen Keller (1880-1968), American deaf-blind author and political activist

Uncumbent

n. A defeated incumbent politician.

Example. The Conservative Reader is doing a District of the Day kinda thing on the hot Senate races. Here's two, both with Republican **uncumbents**—hey! That was a typo but it's a great new word to describe a defeated incumbent.

—John Deeth, "Legislative links", John Deeth Blog, 10 October 2012

“I believe that if primary education is strengthened, higher education improves”

Madanlal Baldevraj Ghai, 70, Rajpura, Punjab, for making math fun



Anshuman Akash Jha

You could call him the ‘Ramanujan of Punjab’. Inspired by the great Indian mathematician, Madanlal Baldevraj Ghai began teaching mathematics after leaving the Army in 1972, disillusioned with the bloodshed. After his retirement in 2003 as the head of mathematics from PMN College in Rajpura, Punjab, he has shared his love for the subject by popularising it among schoolchildren in his hometown, taking free classes for kids, accommodating about 20 per batch. “I want to remove all fears connected to math. My teachings are interactive; I use a whiteboard, cite examples from daily life and include a lot of geometry,” says Ghai, whose love for the subject prompted him to sign up for a doctorate in mathematics from Punjabi University, Patiala. With 2012 being declared the ‘Year of Mathematics’, Ghai undertook a self-funded, 10-city tour of the country, which saw him visiting Kanpur, Bhopal, Kolkata, Visakhapatnam, Raipur, Surat, Jaipur, Delhi, Noida and Rohtak, approaching educational institutes to promote the numerical science. “I tell students to meditate upon each step—to find out the why, when, what and how,” he elaborates. “That will automatically make it easier for them when they are faced with a similar problem the next time.” And he ensures teachers also attend his classes, so that they can take a page from his book. His desire to facilitate a change in the educational system also has him visiting heads of educational institutions and policymakers. “I feel teachers should be selected through an ITS, or Indian Teaching Service, much like the IAS,” he avers.

—Ambica Gulati

60 YEARS OF TRUST AND BONDING



GREATER BANK

GOLD LOAN

- Avail a min. amount of ₹ 10,000/- upto ₹ 25 lakhs.
- Attractive interest rate of 13% on daily reducing balance.
- Instant loan disbursal. • No processing fee.



GREATER BANK

The Greater Bombay Co-operative Bank Limited (Scheduled Bank)

Corporate Office: Baldota Bhavan, 3rd Floor, 117, Maharshi Karve Marg, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400 020.

Tel.: 91-22-61285900 | Fax: 91-22-22076989 | info@greaterbank.com | www.greaterbank.com

Visit your nearest Branch or Call: 8692050008 / 8692050009



expert
advanced

Hair colour that won't drip

With Advanced Gel Formula
& Triple Conditioners



₹15/-* only



no ammonia
100% grey coverage
silky soft hair

available shades



*5g