

harmony

FEBRUARY 2016 ₹ 40

celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens



LEGACY OF LOVE

THE REMARKABLE FAMILIES OF
USTAD AMJAD ALI KHAN
AND OTHER LUMINARIES

BRINDA MILLER
ON FREEDOM
& COLOUR

THE ADVENTURES OF
HUGH & COLLEEN
GANTZER

PROGRESS AGAINST CANCER • MARATHON MOMENTS

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Breakfast se pehle...



**GOOD
HABIT
HAI**

Love's spectrum

There are few words in our lexicon more open to interpretation than love.

As my husband Anil and I embark upon our 25th year of marriage this month, I am impelled to reflect upon the nature of this word. I see love in a spectrum of colour where the fiery reds of ardour and passion merge into the mellow hues of introspection and discovery, creating a work that is reflective of every reality that a relationship experiences. The road is never smooth and there is no map to navigate the crests and troughs of every shared life; it is for the voyagers to hold on, stay the course and keep the dream alive. Along the way, one must steer clear of the traps of complacency and neglect, and work constantly to nourish the bond, to grow and learn, and cherish what has been created together. In fact, this holds true for every shade of love—including bonds across generations, as you will read in our pages this month.

What's more, while we deepen our engagement with the people in our lives, it is also important to look within. Self-love need not be an exercise in egotism; it can be the key to self-actualisation. Understanding what makes you happy and feeding the mind and soul will help you connect to your inner self—and those around you.

Indeed, connection is one of life's fundamentals; the ability to generate oneness with another person (if even for a moment) leaves both richer for the experience. And



Dabboo Ratnani

this feeling is magnified at community events like the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon, where a whole city comes together in a celebration of life. As always, our silvers shone bright at the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run, such an integral part of the event. My thanks to long-time supporter Gulshan Grover, R Madhavan and Priya Dutt for cheering them on, as well as Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Reliance Infrastructure, Reliance Communications, Big 92.7 FM, Baccarose Perfumes & Beauty Products, Procarn International, Disha Direct Marketing Services and SCA Hygiene Products India for their support. And a special mention to the Harmony team for all its hard work!

Every day can be this special; every moment can be a celebration. You don't need an event or a milestone anniversary to generate magic. You don't need flowers and fanfare. All you need is love. It's really that simple.

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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Presenting seven families who keep their craft alive across generations

Cover photograph: Himanshu Kumar

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COVER TO COVER

Meet the Baruahs, the couple behind Assamese magazine Prantik

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Total number of pages in this issue of Harmony-Celebrate Age, including covers: 84

TATA TRUSTS



Uttar Pradesh Government & Tata Trusts

**have joined hands to give new wings to the
development of the state**

An MoU was inked between the
Uttar Pradesh Government
and
Tata Trusts
for overall development
of the state

• in the dignified presence of •

Shri Akhilesh Yadav
Hon'ble Chief Minister, U.P.

&

Shri Ratan Tata
Chairman, Tata Trusts

The Hon'ble Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh, Shri Akhilesh Yadav has taken another historic decision to put the development of the state on a faster trajectory. For this purpose, an MoU was signed between the Uttar Pradesh Government and Tata Trusts. The MoU will pave the road to development in every sphere including **Livelihood, Health, Education, Nutrition, Agriculture and Energy Sectors** on long term basis.

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Ensuring energy security
through diversification



Promoting Agricultural
Sector



Integration of Technology
& Innovation



Promoting Quality
Education



Value Chain Development



Promote Health and
Nutrition

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column one

While genetics may be the seed of every family's legacy, growing it requires nourishment in the form of passion, commitment and love. The families in our cover feature this month, 'Legacy of Love', are proof of this. Our special begins with the family of Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, who so graciously invited us into their home, even allowing us the rare privilege of meeting—and photographing—the youngest members, three-and-a-half-year-old Zohan and Abeer. "Love is a prayer," says Khan *sahib*, while son Ayaan adds, "Music follows from love." The purity of such a love has fuelled the creative impulse, and enabled the art, craft and discipline of all these families to survive and their legacy to thrive.

Brinda Miller understands the power of the creative impulse well. This renowned abstract artist has taken her passion to a whole other dimension, making the city of Mumbai her canvas by beautifying public spaces and directing the much-awaited annual Kala Ghoda Festival. And now, much more spontaneous than she was in her early years, Miller appears ready for her next great adventure.

Indeed, the need for creative expression sometimes impels us to transform our lives. Take the case of Hugh and Colleen Gantzer, who left behind a comfortable life in the Navy to merge their love for travel and the written word. It was a risk that paid off—the two went on to become pioneers in travel writing in India. Much success and many accolades later, the thrill is yet to wear off. As they tell us, "lack of enthusiasm isn't part of the ageing package" and they refuse to accept a socially convenient 'sanyas'. Words to live by.

—Arati Rajan Menon

This is in reference to 'The Sari Saga', which appeared in the 'Etcetera' section in the January 2016 issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. The versatility of the sari is such that it can be worn to appear sensual, yet conservative. It is the most elegant form of attire. I remember when I saw my beloved in a sari for the first time; she looked like a divine being! The saris by Pavithra Muddaya under the tag Vimor are great treasures that must be preserved so future generations can enjoy the beauty and simplicity of the past.

Mahesh Kumar
New Delhi

Many years ago, I used to be an avid reader of *Harmony*, before it became *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. But for some time, I lost track of it and, without my realising, the magazine was no longer on my list of monthly subscriptions. About a year ago, I rediscovered the magazine through a niece who gifted me a one-year subscription. I was so pleased to explore the magazine in its new avatar, with its clean design and engrossing content, a consistent quality since the early days. I delve deep into the food sections looking for tips to refine my cooking. I look forward to more inspirational stories from your magazine in the coming months as I renew my subscription.

Veelma D'Souza
Bengaluru

My wife Kokila, 82, and I (85 years old) took part in the 12th edition of the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run in Mumbai this January. I am happy to see all the different editions of the run—in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai—being featured in the magazine periodically. This is the seventh



year that my wife and I have participated, so we always like to see pictures of our friends heading for the finish line. Maybe, I will see myself there too one day! The marathon is just one such event on our yearly roster. Both of us still work. We also work out every day, take part in various activities and are involved in social service around town.

Mahendra Parikh
Mumbai

The Mumbai edition of the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run, held in January, was thoroughly enjoyable, as always. Many thanks for the cooperation. I was slightly disappointed that I could not meet Mrs Tina Ambani, but there is always next year.

Dr Bhagwati Oza
via email

ERRATUM

In the 'Your Space' section of the January 2016 issue, we inadvertently mentioned that the wife of Mr Adi Crawford is no more ("My 'Second' Wife"). She is, in fact, alive and well. We deeply regret the error.

—Editors

inside

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NEWS ● VIEWS ● PEOPLE ● RESEARCH ● TRENDS ● TIPS



▶ MEDIA WATCH

BOWIE'S BRILLIANCE

His death from cancer at the age of 69 left music lovers across the world stunned—and shattered. Amid all the tributes pouring in for British music-style-gender-bending icon David Bowie, this website (presciently enough, launched last November) stands apart—*supbowie.com*. Developed by Norway-based twentysomethings Duy Nguyen and Joakim Tønnesen, the site asks you the question: 'What did David Bowie do at your age?' Feed in a number and bam comes the answer. Try one number after another and you will be gobsmacked at the virtuosity and frenetic life of a man who reinvented himself constantly and lived life relentlessly. RIP Mr Bowie.

Silvers wanted: Fresh from the success of his 2014 film *Ohm Shanthi Oshaana*, Malayali filmmaker Jude Anthony Joseph has announced to media that he is looking for two 'new' female silver faces between the ages of 60 and 70 for his next venture. The film, set in an old-age home, will be shot primarily in Kochi. While no contact details for Joseph have been officially released, interested silvers could try and connect with Joseph through his Facebook page. web.facebook.com/judeanthanyjoseph

Movie magic: In *Tuesdays with Matthew*, American YouTuber Matthew Hoffman partners with volunteers at his local senior citizens' centre to recreate classic scenes from Hollywood hits with the silvers playing the leads. His most recent masterpiece: *Brokeback Mountain*. Another highlight in the series is *The Notebook*. Watch his entire oeuvre at www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLejXr5MGQrAhRrc5x1E2MbETlwLt4hw7o

COLD REALITY: BRITISH WRITER-DIRECTOR TOM BROWNE'S DEBUT FILM, *RADIATOR*, IS A DRAMA ABOUT A LONELY MIDDLE-AGED TEACHER IN LONDON WHO RUSHES TO HIS PARENTS' COTTAGE IN SCOTLAND AFTER HIS MOTHER INFORMS HIM THAT HIS FATHER HAS BEEN STRICKEN BY IMMOBILITY. THERE, HE CONFRONTS CHAOS AND CONFRONTATION, AND GRAPPLES WITH THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL REALITIES OF THE AGEING EXPERIENCE. MADE ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET, THIS IS A SENSITIVE AND DEEPLY COMPELLING WORK.



Inspired by hit film *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, which chronicled the adventures of three British women who moved to India after retirement, a new three-part reality show now airing on BBC 2 is grabbing plenty of eyeballs. As London newspaper *Daily Mail* reports, *The Real Marigold Hotel* traces the adventures of a group of celebrity pensioners

who come to India to see if they could retire here. The cast, comprising actors Miriam Margolyes and Sylvester McCoy, dancer Wayne Sleep, comedian and TV host Roy Walker, chef Rosemary Shrager, darts player Bobby George, entertainer Patti Boulaye and TV presenter Jan Leeming, lives together in a *haveli* in Jaipur, battling the weather and culture shock

as well as taking in the sights, sounds and flavours. The takeaways? "I would seriously consider spending the winter months in India," 74 year-old Leeming tells the newspaper. The summer temperatures and humidity are just a trifle too much for me. I would spend my time exploring the fascinating history, religion and perhaps helping out with spoken English in a school." To this,

Walker, also 74, adds, "I can understand the appeal of moving to India for later life. First of all your money goes further. The hospitality, humility and friendliness of the people are also to die for. I was humbled." Meanwhile George, 70, had a different take: "There is too much red tape." No word yet on whether the show will air in India.



Game ON

It is one of the most pervasive trends in a rapidly silvering country. But **the jury is still out on whether gambling and gaming in senior citizens' homes in Japan is good or bad for the residents.** As website *cnn.com* reports, one senior centre in Yokohama is actually named Las Vegas, and features mahjong and baccarat as well as an array of slot and pachinko (Japanese pinball) machines. "We believe this casino stimulates the brain and helps prevent or suppress the development of dementia," Kaoru Mori, chairman of Japan Elderly Care Service, which runs the centre, tells the site. His statement is supported by recent studies that suggest possible improvements in frontal and parietal lobe activity and recognition. The flipside is the possibility of gambling addiction, a very real problem in the US, where half of all adult visitors to casinos in 2013 were over the age of 50. According to *cnn.com*, a 2014 study by the Japanese government estimates that 5 per cent of its people (about 5.36 million people) are already addicted to gambling.

Learn and train: With few opportunities to train in gerontology in India, here comes some good news. Pune-based International Longevity Centre India (ILC-I) is the satellite centre for the SAARC region of the United Nations International Institute on Ageing, Malta (UN INIA). From 11-15 April, UN INIA will hold an **in-situ training programme on 'Social Gerontology'** in collaboration with ILC-I and with the support of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). The programme will be conducted at the TISS campus in Mumbai. For application and more information, visit ilcindia.org/un-inia-training-programme/



Photographs by iStock

Ride smart



Ride-sharing transportation services like Uber have become ubiquitous world over, with India being no exception. However, key to their successful use is a smartphone. Realising that a chunk of the silver demographic cannot, consequently, access such services, American ride-sharing company Lyft has announced a partnership with the National MedTrans Network to get silvers in New York City rides to non-emergency medical appointments. As website *techcrunch.com* explains, Lyft has developed a **third-party web application called Concierge that allows the network's partners to book a ride online for someone without a smartphone.**

"Working with Lyft, we're helping patients live healthier lives by providing reliable, enjoyable rides to their appointments," Billy McKee, president of National Medtrans Network, tells media. "Using transportation as a service like this, the health plans and government agencies we partner with are significantly reducing fraud, saving costs, and improving the patient experience. We provide over 25,000 livery trips per week in NYC, and our goal is to push all of those through Lyft." Smart thinking, considering over 25 per cent of Americans over the age of 65 don't own a smartphone. This percentage increases with age.

Mother of longevity

Regular readers of this section will know about the telomere—the protective cap at the end of each chromosome, which protects it from deterioration. As website *biotechn.asia* explains, it was believed that every time a cell replicated, it would reduce the length of the telomere, accelerating the ageing process. However, new research by Pablo Nepomnaschy and Cindy Barha from Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada, contradicts this assumption, asserting that **women who have more children could actually live longer**. Their

13-year study of women in two neighbouring communities in the southwest highlands of Guatemala revealed that women who gave birth to more surviving children had longer telomeres than those who gave birth to fewer children. In fact, each child born resulted in 0.059 more telomere units. They attribute this to an increase in oestrogen, a hormone that functions as an antioxidant. Next up, the team, whose study was published in journal *PLOS One*, will expand their research to women of different cultures and social backgrounds to see if the result still holds true.



Out of context

Find it hard sometimes to get the context—and subtext—of a conversation? You're not alone. Researchers from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland say **silvers often struggle to detect sarcasm** compared to younger and middle-aged people. More significant, this could have an adverse effect on relationships. "We

already know that engaging in social interactions is valuable, particularly as we age, and we were interested in finding out how the normal ageing process might affect our ability to understand subtle social cues such as sarcasm," writes study leader Louise Phillips in journal *Developmental Psychology*. "Until now, no one has

looked at how older adults interpret sarcasm and, specifically, if they can flip the literal meaning to understand the intended meaning. For example, if someone says, 'I see you're on time as usual', this could literally mean what it says. Or, there might be a sarcastic intention, and then the underlying message is, 'You're late, as usual.'"



Photographs by iStock

In less developed countries, such as Nigeria, Mali and Pakistan, risk behaviour is more stable across age and more similar between the sexes

Clock of ages: A study conducted at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine has found that **the circadian rhythm of gene activity in the brain changes as we get older and may lead to a new internal biological clock**. As website *sciencealert.com* tells us, circadian rhythms are mechanisms that control major processes in the body, from sleeping and waking to metabolism and cognition. These rhythms are controlled by certain gene expressions. After examining brain samples from 146 deceased people with no neurological problems, the team identified 235 core genes that constitute the molecular clock in the pre-frontal cortex whose rhythms control our activities. This could explain why silvers tend to perform complex cognitive tasks better in the morning. However, surprisingly, not all genes lose rhythm in the elderly. "A certain set of genes actually gain rhythm, and only in older individuals," the team writes in the online edition of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. "This may represent a compensatory clock that becomes active with the loss of canonical clock function."

RISK AND SURVIVAL

Risk-taking and age are always seen as inversely proportionate. However, this is true only for more developed and affluent countries. **In poor countries with tough living conditions, people continue to take physical, social, legal and financial risks well into their silver years**, according to a study by the University of Basel, Switzerland, and the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. Analysing data from the World Values Survey of people from 77 countries, the researchers compared close to 150,000 responses from people aged 15 to 99, tracing changes in risk propensity for up to 10 years. They found that in most western countries, the willingness to take risks in an everyday context decreases with age, with men more disposed to take risks. However, in less developed countries, such as Nigeria, Mali and Pakistan, risk behaviour is more stable across age and more similar between the sexes. "One reason could be that citizens of countries in which resources are scarce have to compete with each other more fiercely than in wealthier countries," Rui Mata, assistant professor at the university, tells media. The study was published in journal *Psychological Science*.

BIRD BRAINS

Ever wondered why birds don't grey over time? A team from Sheffield University in the UK have been giving it some serious thought. Their study of the jay reveals that its vivid violet, blue and white feathers are the result of controlled changes to its nanostructure, *The Irish*

Examiner tells us. After using an advanced technique called X-ray scattering, they found that the birds use a scientific and sophisticated process to produce their

colours; their feathers are made of a nanostructured spongy keratin material, the same as human hair and fingernails. Jays are able to demonstrate control over the size of the holes in this sponge-like material and fix them at particular sizes, determining the colour seen reflected from the feather. The study, published in journal *Nature Scientific Reports*, is expected to pave the road for the development of paints and fabric colours that do not fade with time.



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The eternal

The potential immortality of the hydra has been confirmed by a two-man research team, Daniel Martinez of Pomona College in Claremont, USA, and James Vaupel of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany. This centimetre-long polyp found in freshwater world over shows no signs of the deterioration or senescence that characterises all species, and displays constant fertility over time. Of course, this requires the maintenance of ideal

conditions, such as the absence of predation, contamination and disease. To arrive at their conclusion, the researchers studied 2,256 hydra from two closely related species over an eight-year period in two separate laboratories. "Most of the hydra's body is made of stem cells with very few fully differentiated cells," writes Martinez in journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. "Stem cells have the ability to continually divide, and so a hydra's body is being constantly renewed."



Food for life

Joe Hollins

The right diet can work wonders. Just ask **Jonathan, the 183 year-old tortoise believed to be the world's oldest animal.** As *nationalgeographic.com* tells us, the Aldabra giant tortoise, who lives on the island of St Helena off the western Africa coast, has seen an improvement in his health after local vet Joe Hollins switched him from a twig-based diet to a nutrition-rich menu, including apples, carrots, cucumbers, bananas, and guava. While age robbed Jonathan of sight and smell many years ago, the new diet appears to have rejuvenated him to some extent, even making his once blunt and crumbly beak sharp and lethal again. Also known as the Seychelles giant tortoise, the Aldabra giant tortoise can grow up to 250 kg. "There is a chance that Jonathan will drop dead tomorrow but he may live until he's 250 and see us all off!" says Hollins.

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Be a birder. There's no time like now to join a birdwatching club—every city has them—and get the grandkids to come along on their winter break. The US Alzheimer's Association has already recognised hobbies such as birding as therapeutic for the brain as they challenge the intellect and memory. A gentle exercise for the body that gives you a chance to get some fresh air and up your Vitamin D levels, birdwatching is also proven to reduce stress levels and banish depression. If that weren't reason enough, it's a fun, social activity that gives you the chance to make new friends!



Lindsey Stevenson

Then: Juice carton Now: Bird feeder

Garbage bags seem to be always loaded with bulky milk and juice cartons. Here is a fun way to reuse them to feed some hungry feathered friends. You will need a 1-litre carton, wax crayons, a pair of scissors, ruler, 12-inch twigs to use as perches, a punching machine, twine or thick thread to make a hanger and, of course, some birdseed. Use the crayons and ruler to draw a square-shaped opening on one side of the carton leaving enough space at the bottom to contain the seed. Cut out the square with the scissors. Poke a twig through the carton, just below the opening in the centre, and make sure it sticks out through the back wall to keep the perch secure. Next, pull up the folds on top of the carton and use the punching machine to puncture two holes in a line. Attach twine or thick thread to hang it. Fill the carton with birdseed and, voila, the bird feeder is ready for use. To make it more attractive, paint the carton with watercolours, or make a collage using other recyclable waste material.



RECYCLING FACTS

- Cartons are mainly made from paper in the form of paperboard, as well as thin layers of polyethylene (plastic) and/or aluminium. A carton contains on average 74 per cent paper, 22 per cent polyethylene and 4 per cent aluminium.
- The high-quality wood fibres in juice cartons are recycled into a wide range of products, including tissues, writing paper and cardboard.

MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...

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R Madhavan, Gulshan Grover, Priya Dutt

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thanks all those who supported the Senior Citizens' Run
at the **Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2016!**

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Standard Chartered
Mumbai Marathon
Jan 17, 2016

 **harmony for Silvers** Foundation | Empowering
India's Senior Citizens



Photographs by Haresh Patel & Datta Redekar



Going the distance

It was an unusually busy Sunday morning in Mumbai on 17 January, as over 1,200 silvers joined 40,000 participants at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon. The silvers came from all over—from Ahmedabad to Ahmednagar and even Alwar—and conquered the 4-km Harmony Senior Citizens' run that was flagged off by R Madhavan, Gulshan Grover and Priya Dutt from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus.

The air was filled with high spirits as the sweaty silvers returned to the Harmony marquee after going the distance. Some were here for the first time, like Jagadish, 65, and Veena Arora, 60, and some for the 12th, like 71 year-old N S Rajan. Veteran marathon runner Dr Bhagwati Oza, 80, face of the January 2006 issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, also made it.

For many it was a test of their year-long endurance. Vibhavari, 64, managed to keep up with her husband Pradeep, 65, a feat she's been working on; while Giri Bala, 67, could not complete

the race owing to her leg and heart problems. But she pushed herself until her body gave way, a winning quality that the runners seemed to share. "I'll be back year after year, even if I'm not able to complete," she assures us.

Others used the opportunity to promote an agenda, primarily related to health. Former president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Dr C M Dharia, 79, and his wife Dr K C Dharia, 76, wore IMA banners over their bibs, while Jayanti Lal Raichada, 76, aka 'Dr Amla', clad in attention-grabbing satin pink, used the morning to promote the benefits of chewing *amla* (Indian gooseberry).

Navnath Rangnath Kamble, 64, who ran in his Nehru *topi* and worn-out sandals, came all the way from Ahmednagar, Maharashtra. Being the third runner to cross the finish line, his only disappointment was that there were no prizes—though many participants received gifts in the lucky dip.

As always, the Harmony Run proved to be a testament to the resilience of the spirit. Far from surrendering to the aches and pains of the body, these silvers are using their retirement to "rediscover and re-fire" themselves, as one happy participant put it.





Media and **silvers**

It was familiar turf for *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. Our mantra, ‘The elderly should not be viewed as sick, frail and isolated; ageing is graceful, constructive and empowering’, struck a chord with editors, media professionals, academicians, faculties of colleges, representatives of senior citizens’ associations and NGOs at a workshop on ‘Media and Ageing’ organised by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in collaboration with Harmony for Silvers Foundation in Mumbai on 29 December 2015. The objective was to discuss the role of media in portraying the silvers and ageing-related issues sensitively and in a positive framework. The workshop was organised as part of a collaborative long-term project between United Nations Population Fund India (UNFPA), TISS, Institute for Social and Economic Change - Bengaluru and Institute for Economic Growth - New Delhi.

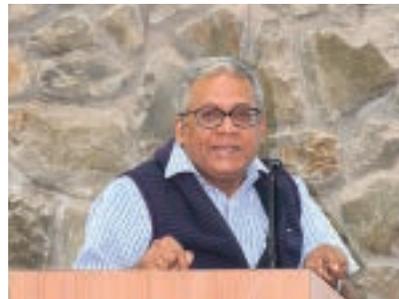
Our motivational posters about ageing set the tone for the event. Inspirational quotes from celebrities who brought our cover features alive were much appreciated. For instance, “Age, gender or responsibility cannot deter you from doing something you want to; if a normal person like me can set out and do the things I did, I believe anybody can,” by Bachendri Pal (61). And “I can morph from

“Stereotypically, women are either objectified as sex objects or housewives, making their representation rare. In fact, elderly women are non-existent in the Indian media”

grandmother to painter, ladle in one hand and a brush in the other,” by Anjolie Ela Menon (75).

In his welcome note, Professor S Parasuraman, director of TISS, underlined the importance of media advocacy in highlighting the issues of the elderly belonging to different socioeconomic strata. Prof S Siva Raju, chairperson of the Centre for Population, Health and Development, School of Development Studies, TISS, provided the background about the ongoing collaborative project on building a knowledge base on population ageing in India, and emphasised the need for a multi-pronged strategy by involving various stakeholders to enhance the quality of life of the elderly. “The elderly are viewed as a vulnerable section of the society and through this project, we aim to address their issues in a more comprehensive way through scientific approaches in the areas of research, teaching, training, advocacy, networking and interventions,” he said. “We have carried out seven state studies and will be opening a web portal on ageing very soon.” Dr Nidhi Gupta, assistant professor, Centre for Population, Health and Development, School of Development Studies, TISS, outlined the objective and structure of the workshop and the expected outcomes of the deliberations.

The list of guest speakers—experts in their respective fields—was handpicked by us keeping in mind the proficiency and experience they would bring to the table.



Clockwise from top left: Prof S Parasuraman, Prof S Siva Raju, Jeroo Mulla, Dheeraj Kumar, R N Bhaskar and Arati Rajan Menon addressing the workshop on 'Media and Ageing' in Mumbai

Calling for positive representation of the elderly, Jeroo Mulla, teacher at Sophia Polytechnic and Xavier's Institute of Communications, Mumbai, drew attention to the negative portrayal of silver women in media. "Stereotypically, women are either objectified as sex objects or housewives, making their representation rare," she said. "In fact, elderly women are non-existent in the Indian media."

Bringing attention to the fact that *Harmony-Celebrate Age* was India's only magazine devoted to the cause of senior citizens, our deputy editor Arati Rajan Menon said, "In a media primarily focused on the youth, we bring out the relevance of silvers and their outstanding contributions that go unseen in society." Sharing the magazine's journey and impact over the past 12 years, she said, "The elderly are generally seen as unproductive and unattractive, but if you see them through our eyes, they are heroes; through our inspiring human-interest stories, we have been advocating active ageing."

While urging silvers to maintain their finances and health for happy ageing, founder-editor, Asia Converge (research, public policy) and consulting editor, *Free Press Journal* and *Business India*, R N Bhaskar, said mentoring and imparting social skills would give the elderly, dignity and relevance in society. "In fact, when the elderly create funds, they will cease to be seen as weak links," he suggested.

Dheeraj Kumar, associate vice-president, Creative Solutions & Services, Reliance Broadcast Network, highlighted

the shift in the portrayal of the elderly in the television industry from being "decision makers to enablers of decision making", in tune with changing times. "However, there are no initiatives on ageing issues on the small screen. While creating entertaining content, we also need to have an emotional engagement," he observed.

Exploring the representation of older adults in print advertisements in India by using content analysis, Anusmita Devi, a PhD scholar from IIT Ahmedabad, said, "Older women are underrepresented compared to older males in print ads." Underscoring the fact that elders have been depicted as being dependent and ill, she had a prescription: "Older adults should play an active role in giving back to society rather than being passive recipients of care and support."

In an interactive session coordinated by Nikhil Titus, assistant professor, School of Media and Cultural Studies, TISS, ideas were shared by participants on improving the living conditions of the elderly, creating self-help groups, building integrated housing, and taking forward the senior advocacy initiatives through resource panels and media collaboration. As an outcome of the workshop deliberation, Prof Siva Raju sought the active involvement of participants in the Media and Ageing Resource Group (MARG) at TISS that acts as a resource and interface among various stakeholders associated in ageing issues. The vote of thanks was proposed by Hiren Mehta from Harmony for Silvers Foundation.



The might of white

Go white to reduce the risk of stomach cancer, urge scientists from Zhejiang University in China. Their research suggests that **white vegetables, such as cauliflower, potatoes and onions, are the new cancer fighters**—these veggies are believed to get their potent anti-cancer properties from the humble Vitamin C, an antioxidant that acts against cellular stress in the stomach. Cabbage, kale and celery have also been found useful in keeping cancer at bay. More good news: Researchers estimate that consuming 100 g of fruit daily can reduce the risk of cancer by 5 per cent while consuming 50 g of vitamins daily can bring the risk down by 8 per cent.

Inheriting cancer

There is new evidence to support **the role of heredity in 12 types of cancers**. While a recent study confirms the role of genes in breast and ovarian cancer, it surprisingly found that genes may play a role in stomach cancer too. The study was conducted by researchers from several US universities, including Washington University, St Louis, Ohio State University, Brown University and Medical College Wisconsin. It found a strong correlation between genes in ovarian (19 per cent) and breast cancers



(9 per cent) as well as in stomach (11 per cent), prostate, one type of lung cancer, and glial and head and neck cancers (all 8 per cent). They also found a genetic component in acute myeloid leukaemia (a common blood cancer) and glioblastoma (a common brain cancer) but the link was weak. Another discovery: the gene usually linked to breast and ovarian cancer in women appears to play a role in other types of cancer too.

Further analysing the heredity link, the scientists found 114 genes linked to the disease. They point out that defects in these genes can increase

the risk of the disease but it was not clear whether the defects arose during the patient's life or whether they were passed on from their parents. "We have known that ovarian and breast cancers have a significant inherited component, and others, such as acute myeloid leukaemia and lung cancer, have a much smaller inherited genetic contribution," senior author Li Ding of the McDonnell Genome Institute at Washington University, tells media. "But this is the first time, on a large scale, that we've been able to pinpoint gene culprits or even the actual mutations responsible for cancer susceptibility."

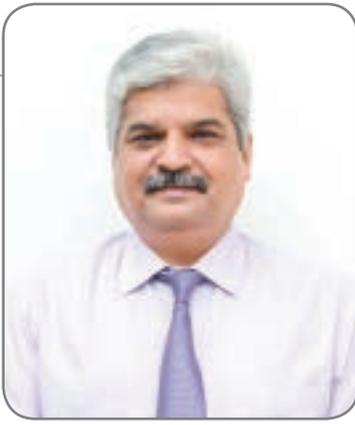
Cancer in India: see opposite page

Bad gums

There is no apparent explanation for this yet but there appears to be a **link between gum disease and breast cancer**. A new study by the University at Buffalo's School of Public Health and Health Professions, New York, has found that women with periodontal disease—chronic inflammation and infection of gum tissue at the base of the teeth—are more prone to developing breast cancer. The researchers arrived at this conclusion after analysing data of 73,000 post-menopausal women under the Women's Health Initiative Observational Study. At the beginning of the study, none of the participants had cancer but a quarter of the participants had periodontal disease. After a follow-up time of six-and-a-half years, 2,100 participants were diagnosed with breast cancer.



Photographs by iStock



Dr Rajesh Mistry, director, Department of Oncology, Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, answers our questions on the role of heredity in cancer and cancer in India

A recent study suggests that genes might play a big part in passing on cancer. Can you interpret these findings for us?

This is not really new. Maybe the evidence has just become a little stronger but it was already known that breast cancer, ovarian cancer and other cancers are linked and that there is some pattern within families too. There was already evidence of the other types of cancers mentioned in the study being linked to heredity and this is now only further strengthened. Now they have a genetic basis to support the findings.

Having said that, one should remember that the role played by heredity in this disease is less than 5 per cent. Generally, cancer is sporadic and is therefore not something one should worry about. There are only some instances when there is cause for concern. So, for example, if two or three members of a family develop breast cancer, there is some cause for worry, and one should get tested to see if one is genetically at a higher risk of carrying cancer than a normal individual.

Why is there an increase in the number of cancer patients in India?

There are multiple factors that contribute to an increasing number of cancer patients. One is the fact that we are living longer, and cancer is a disease of slightly older age. So if a person lives long enough, he has a higher risk of developing cancer. The second most important factor would be changing lifestyles, lack of exercise, intake of tobacco, all of which contribute to the development of cancer. The third factor is awareness. Previously, say 20 years ago, awareness about cancer was not much and, now, more and more people are coming forward for treatment.

What are the most common types of cancers in India?

The most common in women, all over India, is cancer of the cervix, or cervical cancer, but in urban areas, the most

common cancer is breast cancer. Owing to urbanisation, we are all leading a Western lifestyle, especially in metro cities, and hence in these cities breast cancer is placed at the top of the list. In men, the most common cancer is head and neck cancer. When all the sites are clubbed together, 20-25 per cent of cancer is generally in the head and neck region and the habit of tobacco consumption is the main contributor. But if we want to be organ-specific, lung cancer tops the list.

What are the major advances in cancer treatment and technology in India?

Research is continuously taking place in India. There are more academic-oriented hospitals that are doing more research to find a cure for the disease. The focus is now more on targeted therapy. Chemotherapy involves a lot of side-effects as it affects all the cells in the body. Now, more and more specific drugs are being developed. In targeted therapy, only the cancer cells are targeted, which keeps side-effects to a minimum. This also makes treatment more effective. On the surgical and

radiotherapy side, new technology is being developed. We can now do the same operations with robots or use minimally invasive surgery techniques, which make recovery quicker and minimise trauma to the patient. On the radiotherapy front, we have newer machines, making radiotherapy more precise and, again, keeping side-effects to a minimum.

What preventive measures do you recommend?

One must stay away from things that increase the risk of contracting the disease, the topmost being tobacco consumption. If tobacco is taken out completely from India, it would eliminate the prevalence of many types of cancers. Obesity is another risk factor. Eating junk food and not watching what one eats can make one obese, which increases the risk of cancer. One should maintain a healthy body weight and exercise regularly. If all these things are kept in check, one can substantially reduce the risk of cancer.

“In urban India, the most common cancer is breast cancer since we are all leading a Western lifestyle. In men, the most common cancer is head and neck cancer”



Utkarsh Vijay and Abhinav Maurya

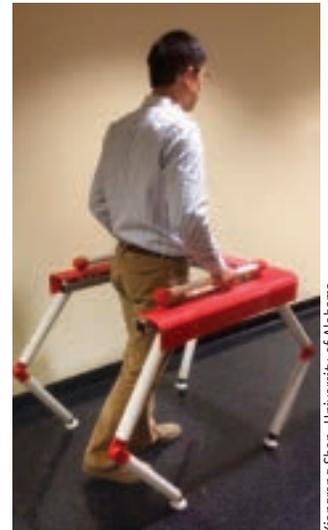
PRINT AND SAVE: Using a 3-D printer to develop a human organ might seem like a bit of a stretch but Bengaluru-based biotechnology startup Pandorum Technologies has done just that. The company has used a **3-D printer to develop artificial liver tissue** that can perform the functions of the human liver. They are hoping to ‘print’ a full-scale transplantable liver in a few years, which could save the lives of patients with liver failure.

INCONTINENCE AND FALLING: Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania have found a **direct correlation between urinary incontinence, bedwetting and the risk of falling in elderly women.** According to the study, which is published in the *Journal of Urology*, women who wet the bed are fragile and in poorer physical and mental health than those who don't and hence are prone to falling.

MUSIC AND MEMORY: Turning up the radio could be cognitively and emotionally beneficial to patients in the early stages of dementia. Researchers from the University of Helsinki, Finland, have found that **singing improves working memory, executive function and orientation.** This could be an important step forward in caregiver-implemented leisure activities for dementia patients.

enhances mobility, decreases dependency

Walk with me



Xiangrong Shen, University of Alabama

Weak end?

Growing weaker means losing the ability to perform simple tasks like picking up objects and requiring assistance while walking and standing up from a chair. Now, researchers from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, US, have created an **antibody to weakness.** Called myostatin, this antibody could treat the decline of muscle mass power associated with ageing. Participants in their study, older than 75, and with low muscle strength, low muscle performance and a history of falling, were injected with the myostatin antibody. This resulted in an increase in lean muscle mass and improved performance in tasks requiring muscle power.

Technology can now help people with disabilities stand on their own feet. The National Robotics Initiative (NRI) in the US has announced a new project to roll out a **four-legged robot—a smart walker—who can enhance mobility and decrease dependency** on caregivers or expensive home renovations. The smart walker robot has two modes. In one mode, ‘smart power-assist

walker’, the user stands within the framework of the robot and can choose the amount of power assistance required. In the second one, ‘mule mode’, the robot walks alongside the user and uses a 3-D vision-based sensing system to detect the user’s motion and the surrounding environment. It can therefore carry a load for the user, like groceries, while walking alongside.



Lucknow: Where the past is ever present

The city of Lucknow moves along at a languid pace almost as though reluctant to elbow its way into the 21st century. Its courtly *pehle aap* (after you) culture, a hangover of the Indo-Persian mores of its former Nawabi rulers, endeared the city to us almost instantly.

Indeed the air of an Arabian Night's fantasy still clings to parts of the city, albeit a trifle faded and frayed, like a once-beautiful *begum* past her prime. Today, many of the palaces are crumbling or have been converted into government offices. The names, however, are evocative and roll off the tongue lyrically—Dilkhusa Palace, Sikander Bagh, Chhatar Manzil, Farah Bukhsh, Kaiserbagh Palace...

A skyline serrated with the contours of those lavish palaces, slender minarets and domes of mosques, graceful *imambaras* that house ornate *tazias* or portable shrines that are borne by the faithful during Moharram... all tell tales of a sumptuous era when the Nawabs lived opulent lives that even the most fervid imagination would find hard to conjure today.

Old Lucknow is mesmerising but a new Lucknow with its broad roads, vast parks, posh hotels, swish restaurants, malls, multiplexes and plush apartment complexes is now emerging. The recently restored Hazratganj, an elegant boulevard and upscale market, is

Lucknow's beating heart... Now awash in a uniform colour scheme of cream with black and white signage, fountains gush, and Victorian style street lamps glow as silvers sit and chat on wrought iron benches.

Our sightseeing blitz started at the Bara Imambara and its adjacent mosque in the old city. The burial place of Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula and his wife, this *imambara*, located in a manicured park, is said to have the largest vaulted roof in Asia without pillars and a thousand windows. The Chhota Imambara lies to the west of its more sombre cousin. It takes your breath away with its burnished golden dome, the fine calligraphy on its exterior and the vast hall, strung with Japanese and Belgian crystal chandeliers and gilt-edged mirrors... The Botanical Gardens, Husainabad Clock Tower, the neighbouring picture gallery with portraits of the Nawabs are other worthwhile stops.

The Nawabs were great builders and were also lovers of the good life which included an unbridled passion for food! It was mandatory for a palace to have several kitchens and a hierarchy of cooks with fat salaries. Even today vestiges of this culinary artistry is evident in the street food of the city. In the course of our visit, we had tucked

factfile

Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh and extends along the Gomti River. Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula shifted the capital of Awadh from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1775.

The city is well-connected by road, rail and air with the rest of the country. October to March is the best period to visit.

Vivanta by Taj, Clarks Avadh, La Place Sarovar Portico and the recently opened Renaissance are some of the hotel options. There is also Gomti Hotel run by the state tourism authorities.

into delectable *qurma* (braised meat in gravy which has often been simmered overnight), *pasinda* (fried slivers of meat in gravy) and some of the city's 70 varieties of *pullao* and sweet confections as well as the luscious *Tunde ke Kebab*. Come evening, we stopped by at the relatively new Janeshwar Mishra Park, a 376-acre sprawl of greenery and water bodies in the heart of the city.

In Lucknow, different worlds and eras telescope into each other so that one feels one has indulged in time travel, swinging happily from one century to the next and back again to the earlier one!

—Gustasp & Jeroo Irani



For more information visit Uttar Pradesh Tourism at <http://uptourism.gov.in>

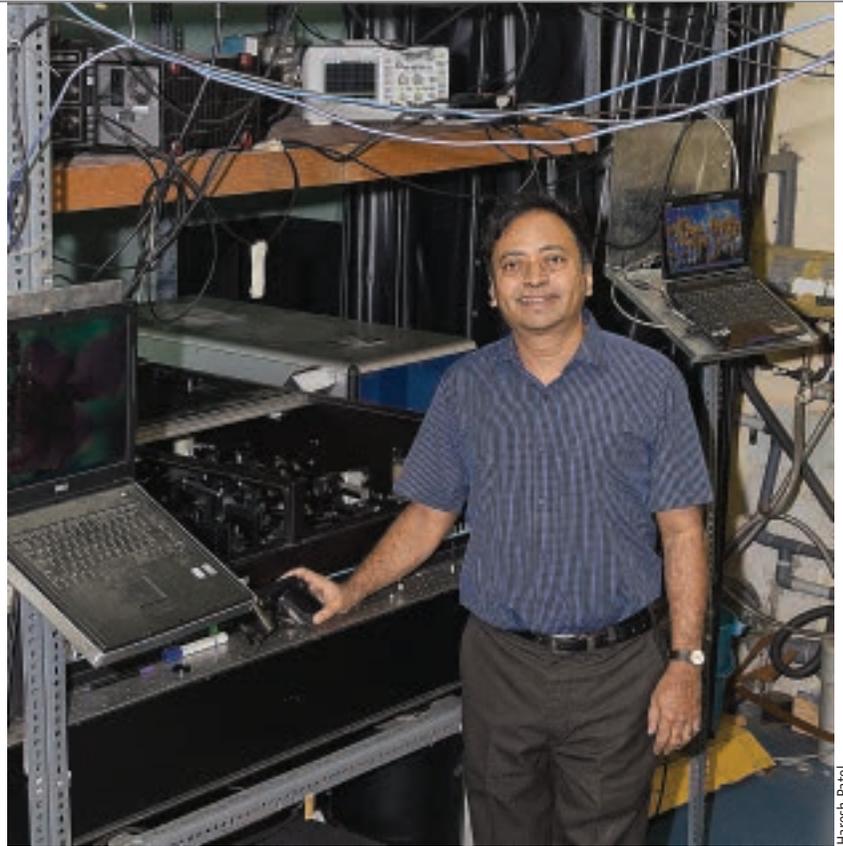
Reaching for the stars

They say life is all about maintaining a balance but going to extremes can be rewarding too. Life would have been pretty dull for **Prof G Ravindra Kumar**, 54, if not for 'extremes'. He was recently awarded the Infosys Prize in Physical Sciences for his experimental contribution to the 'physics of high-intensity laser matter interactions at extreme densities and temperatures'.

Kumar is a senior professor in the Department of Nuclear and Atomic Physics (DNAP) with one of the country's premier research institutes, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Mumbai, so we forgive him for hitting us with jargon like that. In return, he obliges by breaking down his *raison d'être* into bite-size pieces.

"Extreme states are 99 per cent of the universe. Stars are all in extreme conditions compared to earth. The normal temperature on earth is 25° C and can double in summer, where we feel extremely uncomfortable. This is only one millionth of the temperature that exists inside a star, and if stars do not exist, then we won't." He knows he lost you long ago, which is why he jokes, "When I joined TIFR, I was a fundamentalist and now I am an extremist. So the cycle is complete."

The Infosys Science Foundation, set up by India's tech giant, annually honours outstanding scientific research in six categories, with Kumar bagging the honour for his work with lasers. "What may have struck the jury is that we are now able to draw some interesting parallels to astrophysical scenarios in our labs. Somewhat similar conditions and temperatures present in a star can now be reproduced in our labs using ultra-high intensity laser light. I have



Haresh Patel

been working on these problems for about a decade. Earlier too, I worked with powerful lasers, so you could say my entire research career revolves around powerful light," says the professor, who has over 150 publications in international peer-reviewed journals, three review articles and a book chapter to his credit. He has also mentored 10 PhD students.

Kumar acquired a Ph D from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur in 1990, in non-linear optics. He spent another year there doing post-doctoral research and then joined TIFR as a visiting fellow in 1992. In 2000, he and his co-workers were able to precisely measure abnormally large magnetic fields typically found only in stars. This attracted global attention, and the American Institute of Physics featured it in *Physics News Update* in 2002. A few years later, he achieved another breakthrough when his work with lasers found potential application in the area of cancer research and x-rays. "You see, the stars have provided lots of inspiration

to us," he says, cheekily adding that he advises people against drawing any inspiration from 'What the Stars Foretell' columns in popular magazines.

Every bit a philosopher as he is a physicist, Kumar sums up his journey thus: "When you embark on a journey, there are two approaches. One is to look at the whole distance all at once and feel disheartened at how much ground you have to cover. The other is to take baby steps and not be discouraged at the hurdles you encounter. You must always move forward and, instead of falling off a cliff, stroll along, enjoy the view, look around, admire your surroundings and eventually arrive at your destination." Despite what he says about taking baby steps, we ask him where he thinks his research is headed. "If you ask me where I think I will be in five years, all I can say is that I will still be engaged in research; on which problem, I have no idea. But I will continue to do some very interesting research." Undoubtedly!

—Aakanksha Bajpai



Deepti Naval



S H Raza



Geethapriya



Mrinalini Sarabhai

BIRTHDAYS

Veteran actor **Jackie Shroff** turned 59 on 1 February.

Actor **Deepti Naval** turned 59 on 3 February.

American actor and former model **Nick Nolte** turned 75 on 8 February.

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

Poet and filmmaker **Buddhadeb Dasgupta** turns 72 on 11 February.

Actor **Randhir Kapoor** turns 69 on 15 February.

Film actor and television presenter **Annu Kapoor** turns 60 on 20 February.

Artist **S H Raza** turns 94 on 22 February.

IN PASSING

David Bowie, one of the most influential recording artists of all time, passed away on 10 January after a secret battle with throat cancer. He was 69.

Lieutenant General **Jacob-Farj-Rafael Jacob** (ret'd), hero of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and former governor of Goa and Punjab, died on 13 January. He was 92.

Renowned British actor-director **Alan Rickman** died of cancer on 14 January in London. He was 69.

Renowned Kannada lyricist and filmmaker **Geethapriya** died of cardiac arrest on 17 January in Bengaluru. He was 84.

Senior journalist and scholar **Aroon Tikekar** passed away on 19 January. He was 72.

Iconic Indian classical dancer and choreographer **Mrinalini Sarabhai** died in Ahmedabad on 21 January. She was 97.

MILESTONES

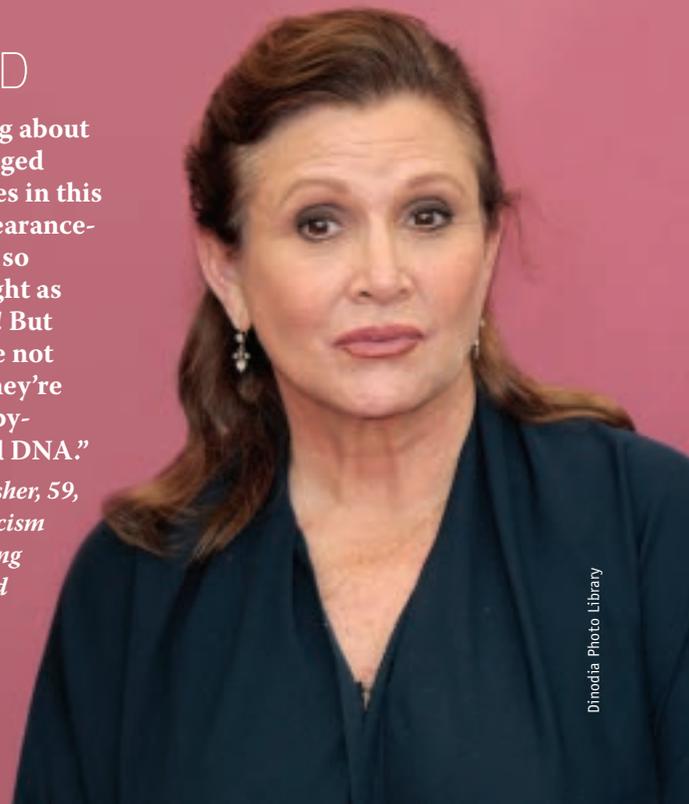
✦ Veteran Hindi poet **Balkrishna Garg** was conferred with the 2015 Harikrishna Devsare Baalsahitya Award in New Delhi on 8 January. He received the award for *Baal Geet*, a collection of poems for children.

✦ Former Indian wicketkeeper **Syed Kirmani** was honoured with the Col C K Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award 2015 for his contribution to cricket on 5 January.

OVERHEARD

“Please stop debating about whether or not I’ve aged well. Nothing changes in this business; it’s an appearance-driven thing. That is so messed up. They might as well say get younger! But youth and beauty are not accomplishments; they’re only the temporary by-products of time and DNA.”

— *Carrie Fisher, 59, addressing the criticism she received for ‘ageing poorly’ as she reprised her role as Leia in The Force Awakens, the latest from the Star Wars franchise*



Dinodia Photo Library

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.

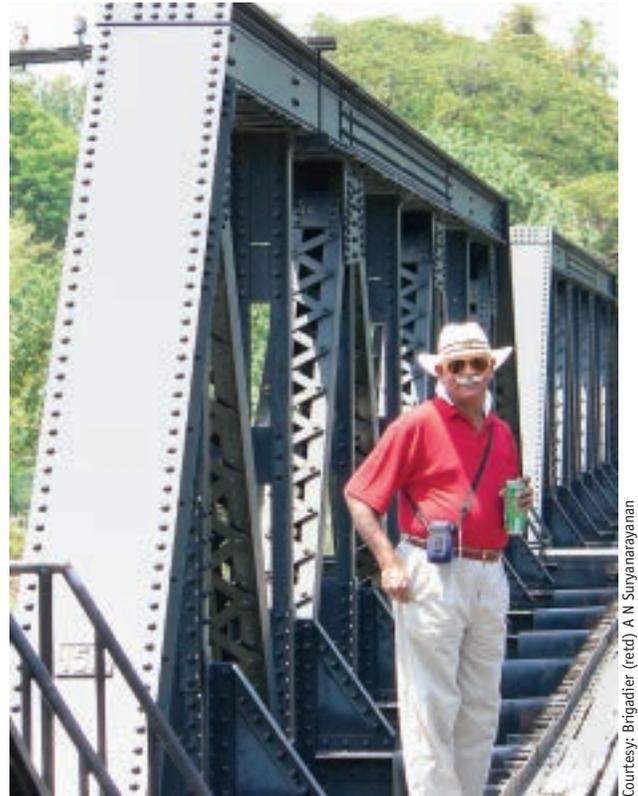
LIFE'S A STORYBOOK

I discovered I was a storyteller in 2004. I had retired from the Indian Army and my younger daughter had recently got married and flown the coop. I found myself remembering how both my daughters had been urging me for many years to write the stories I used to tell them when they were growing up.

So I took their advice and wrote my first story about an unforgettable birthday in Coonoor. I sent it to various magazines and newspapers but nothing seemed to come of it. I was discouraged and gave up. Then, one morning, I received a call from a gentleman who told me he had enjoyed reading about my 'unforgettable birthday'. It had been published in that day's newspaper! It was just what I needed and, since then, I have had more than 100 stories published in newspapers and magazines. These are stories about my life, some sad and poignant, many joyous and, dare I say, many funny as well! Later, when I began to travel the world, I started to write travelogues too.

My first book, self-published in 2009, was *Straight Trees Are Cut First: Army Process vs. Practice*, which focused on the Army's justice system. And my second book, *Many Laughs & A Few Tears*, which I self-published recently, pretty much sums up the story of my life. Let me share some anecdotes with you. First up, how did I, one of six siblings born into a Brahmin family in Tiruchirapalli, get into the Army? Well, when I told my father I wanted to join the Army (I was impressed by the smartly dressed young men of the University Training Corps, now known as the NCC), he said 'No!' So I told him I wanted to become a chartered accountant instead. As I suspected, my father said, 'I don't have the means to pay for that!' I joined the Army after my first attempt in 1961. Smart thinking, huh?

My prized anecdote is about a specially baked birthday cake during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. I had just received word that an enemy tank column had broken through and that it could surround us, when a friend from Udhampur hopped across to my post in his aircraft, to bring me a belated birthday cake his wife had baked for me. I thanked him but asked him to carry a letter back for my wife, which he could post from his HQ. I sent him back in a hurry and turned my attention to the impending threat of the enemy tanks.



Courtesy: Brigadier (retd) A N Suryanarayanan

Suryanarayanan experiences the little pleasures of life through storytelling

The information about the enemy infiltration turned out to be a rumour, the war was over the following week and after a month I landed up in Pathankot, where my wife and I had been living prior to the war. My wife, who had been away, had returned and soon after I did, I received my own letter, posted from Udhampur. I was horrified! I asked my wife not to read the letter but she did—it was a goodbye letter I had written, asking her to put our love marriage behind her and remarry if I didn't make it back from the war! Boy, was I glad I made it back!

A few years later, we had another daughter. But there was tragedy around the corner for I lost my wife in 1983. I raised my two daughters, regaling them with stories and anecdotes whenever I could spend a little time away from the Army. My second book is an expression of gratitude to my daughters, who encouraged me to publish my stories. Over the years, their voices grew louder and more

persistent till I put pen to paper after I retired. The only wound in my heart is that my older daughter is not around to know that I took her advice. I lost her in an accident in Mumbai 21 years ago. But there is a silver lining—my granddaughter will get to hear all those stories from me!

I plan to write at least one more book. I would love to write a novel but that would take too much out of me as I live alone and manage my own affairs, besides making time for daily walks, the occasional game of golf and voracious reading!

—Brigadier (ret'd) A N Suryanarayanan, Bengaluru

SPORTING SPIRIT

I was both shocked and surprised when I received a letter from Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), inviting me to attend the Golden Jubilee Year of Sports in LIC, in 2015. I live in Chennai and even though the event was being held in Pune, I just had to attend. How many organisations remember an employee two decades later? They did.

I felt honoured to have been recognised but I was able to achieve all I did only because of the kind of support I had received. I am also grateful, in no small measure, to my mentor in LIC, Palani K G, with whom I was able to promote many sporting activities among the staff.

My passion for sports goes back to when I graduated from Madras Pachaiyappas College in economics and history. I enjoyed playing football when I found the time as I used my evenings after work to pursue higher education in law and an MBA degree. I began my career in insurance in Chennai, in 1951, when LIC was known as United India Life Insurance before it was nationalised. I played cricket,

Masilamani (centre) at LIC's Golden Jubilee sports meet, 2015



leading the LIC team, and continued to play till my retirement. During this time, I met Palani, premium section head, and he taught me the principles of management, helped me hone my organisational skills, and imparted valuable lessons no textbook can teach. He also organised sporting activities for the staff. He was a perfectionist and would plan every last detail of the sports event, down to the award ceremonies.

It was 1964 when the first all-zonal sports meet took place. There were five zones then, and I was asked to represent the southern zone. The meet was held at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai. We discussed how to ensure sports had a permanent footing in the organisation and, thankfully, our director of accounts, D P Gadhar, believed we should spend money on sports. He believed such initiatives would allow staff across the organisation to meet and engage with each other. I was able to successfully manage five different sports, and although it took up a lot of my time, I successfully juggled my responsibilities with work. In fact, I developed quite a reputation for organising sporting events as I believed sports is integral to any organisation.

We created the Sports Promotion Board to take care of the administrative affairs of all sporting activities in LIC. I played a pivotal role in drafting our own constitution. I was also able to sell the idea of 'sports recruitment' to the management. Accordingly, from each zone, five staff members had to be selected to join the company based on their sporting ability. There were five zones and, every year, the 25 employees thus recruited represented their respective zones at our sports meets.

I also advised that a small portion of the publicity budget be set aside for sports. These small initiatives made a big difference and we were able to see some fine talent. The first zonal round I organised was in February 1964. After the sports recruitment policy was set in motion, the bar was raised. For instance, the 100-m record went from 12.3 seconds to 11.1 seconds. However, during these times, I never participated in any sport; I was happy just organising them. In my opinion, sportsmen behave better and perform better at work and it should not be considered a leisure activity. If you observe them closely, you will realise they are always willing to go the extra mile for the organisation.

Unlike today, when we see celebrities endorsing sporting events, we did not have anyone. Our celebrities were our chairman and the management board. They noticed our outstanding in-house talent and would cheer us on. They came to realise that sports helps create a motivated workforce and supported us all the way—a basic but powerful principle of management.

—S Masilamani, Chennai



FOOD FACTS BY NAMITA JAIN

10 for life: Superfoods that combat cancer

Foods play a vital role in helping fight cancer. Certain foods provide strength to our immune system and support our body. The daily diet should be rich in fruits, vegetables, fibre, and good quality proteins and fats. The way of cooking and preparing food also affects overall health and immunity.

Fresh and colourful fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidants like beta-carotene, selenium, Vitamin C and Vitamin E; these nutrients support the cells of the body to function properly and protect against cancer. Antioxidants present in colourful fruits and vegetables inhibit cancer-causing enzymes. Fruits rich in Vitamin C like oranges and grapefruit protect against oesophageal cancer. A diet rich in fruits can prevent stomach and lung cancer. Including vegetables like carrots, dark green leaves, peas, broccoli, spinach, Brussels sprouts and bell peppers in your daily diet lowers risk of stomach, oesophageal, mouth and larynx cancers. Anti-cancer agents present in corn reduce the risk of breast cancer. Prostate cancer can be prevented by including foods rich in lycopene like guava, tomatoes and watermelon. Fibre keeps our digestive system clean and helps the food keep moving in the tract; it also supports the expulsion of cancer-causing compounds before causing any harm to the body; this helps combat cancers of the digestive system, mouth and pharynx. We can get fibre from whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables. Avoid processed and red meat; add lean meat to the diet occasionally. Make smart choices about fat—avoid saturated and trans fats and include unsaturated fats from plant sources, such as canola oil, olive oil, avocados, etc.

Top 10

Here are 10 superfoods that play an important role in combating cancer by inhibiting the growth of cancer-causing cells or reducing tumour size:



- **Avocados:** The antioxidants present in avocados, including beta carotene, block free radicals in the body. Avocados are believed to be effective against liver cancer.



- **Flaxseeds:** The omega-3 fatty acids present in flaxseeds are believed to prevent cancer of the colon. Flax contains lignans that help block the cancerous changes in the body. These can be added to salads and soups as part of the daily diet.



- **Cruciferous vegetables:** Vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli and kale all have high amounts of zeaxanthin and lutein (antioxidants) that protect against prostate and other cancers. Glucosinolate (a phytochemical) produces protective enzymes that are released when these vegetables are chewed.



Photographs by iStock

- **Garlic:** Garlic is rich in compounds that strengthen the immune system by increasing the activity of cells of the immune system and breaking down the substances that cause cancer. Sulphur present in garlic restricts the formation of cancer-causing compounds and kills cancer cells.



- **Tomatoes:** Lycopene, a powerful antioxidant present in red tomatoes, is believed to reduce the risk of prostate cancer. It also restricts the growth of breast, endometrial and lung cancers by blocking free radicals in the body. The Vitamin C present in tomatoes prevents the damage of cells that can lead to cancer.



- **Spinach:** Spinach contains high amounts of carotenoids like lutein and zeaxanthin that fight cancer-causing cells by restricting their growth and spread. It removes free radicals in the body before they cause any harm. It prevents cancers of the stomach and mouth. Carotenoids present in spinach also reduce the risk of lung, endometrial and ovarian cancers. The fibre present in spinach keeps the digestive system clean and helps food to keep moving through the digestive tract and clear out cancer-causing compounds from the body, hence preventing stomach, larynx, pharynx and oesophageal cancers.



- **Turmeric:** A compound known as curcumin present in turmeric encourages the self-destruction of cancer cells and reduces infections and inflammation.



- **Green tea:** Catechins, a type of antioxidant known to protect against the growth of cancer cells, are present in green tea. It is highly rich in polyphenols, which reduces the risk of cancers of the liver, colon, stomach and lungs. One can drink two to three cups of green tea per day.
- **Tofu:** This soy product contains phytoestrogens that protect against prostate and breast cancer by blocking the cancerous changes.



Isoflavones found in tofu are known to inhibit the growth and spread of cancerous cells. They inhibit the growth of epithelial cells that lower the risk of breast cancer.

- **Berries:** Recent studies suggest that berries, especially strawberries and black raspberries, can slow down the growth of cancer-causing cells. Berries have the greatest impact on colon cancer. Strawberries are a powerhouse of antioxidants and Vitamin C, which is believed to reduce the risk of prostate cancer. They also restrict the growth of breast cancer cells and endometrial and lung cancers by blocking free radicals in the body. The Vitamin C present in berries prevents cell damage that can lead to cancer and protects against oesophageal cancer. Berries contain flavonoids that suppress cancer-causing compounds and slow down the growth of tumours.

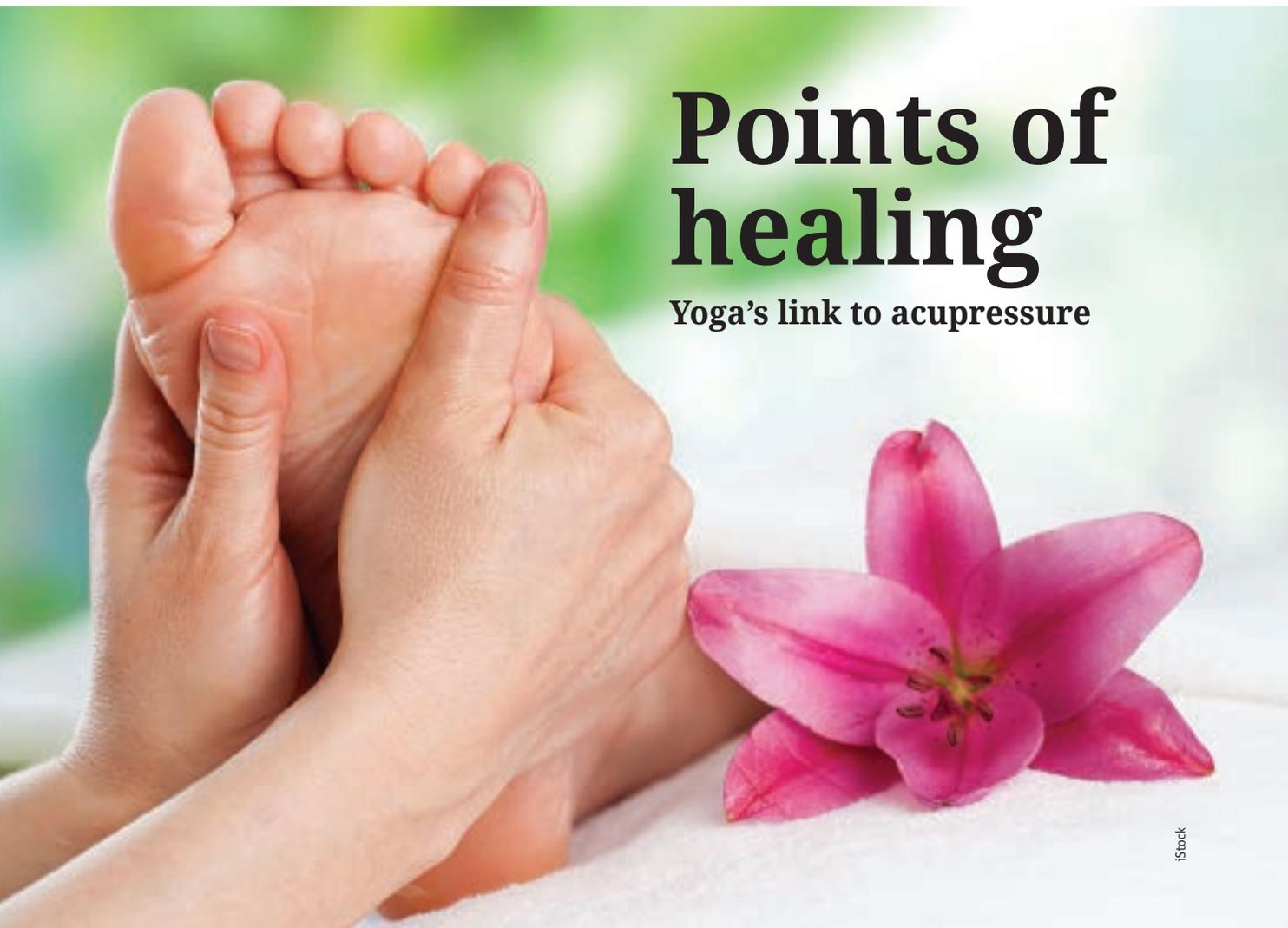


Namita Jain is a wellness specialist and celebrity nutritionist at Diet Mantra and has written bestsellers on diet and fitness. Visit www.dietmantra.in. If you have any questions for Namita Jain, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



Points of healing

Yoga's link to acupressure



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Yoga's beauty is that it is aligned with most alternative therapies. Now, we see each as a separate science. But earlier, a healer would have knowledge of all sciences, from reading your pulse to pinning down your Ayurvedic *dosha* and prescribing a lifestyle overhaul that would cover all complementary healing sciences.

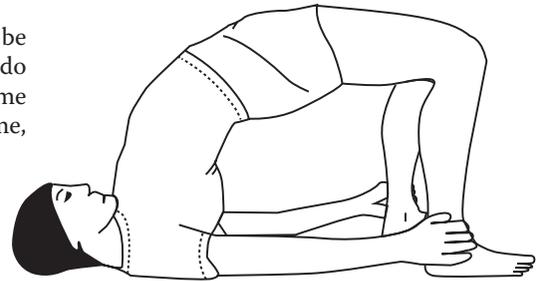
One of the most powerful connections yoga has is with acupressure. In ancient lingo, this would have been referred to as 'marma points'. Every pose works effectively only because these marma points are engaged powerfully. This same principle is what creates the magical prowess of eastern martial arts where a fighter can kill just by

pressing into crucial points. All martial arts are based on this. Equally, a fighter would know how to heal from engaging healing points that may even be far away from the site of injury.

This explains why yogic poses can have exotic or strange execution. Practitioners may often have wondered why some poses are done in a more difficult way when they may be entered more easily. For instance, in the locust pose (*salabhasana*), why does one interlock the fingers and rest the forearms under the belly painfully, when they may be more comfortably placed alongside the body? Similarly, why cannot one just roll into the fish with the chest lifted up instead of placing the forearms under the body

and squeezing them, while creating a painful (for the beginner) arch at the neck? The answer: the acupressure points are serviced owing to this exquisite and exacting pressure. The forearms are full of acupressure points connected with lymphatic drainage. Plus, their placement in both poses pushes into activation even larger lymphatic channels along the armpit. In the locust, the chin pushing into the ground activates the points for anti-ageing and detox. In the fish, the arch places the head just so to hit on acupressure points for bliss at the crown or the back of the head (either of which depend on the flexibility of the practitioner).

So, while initially some easing may be allowed in classic poses to learn to do them, once the practice has become strong after a good period of time, the practitioner must stick to classical execution of the poses to engage these powerful marma points. According to the book *Ayurvedic Massage* by Harish Johari, marmas are junction points for ligaments, vessels, muscles, bones and joints. Vital energy, blood and nourishment enter the body through these points. There are said to be 107 marma points around the body. Yoga works primarily by 'massaging' these points while you execute the practices.



YOGIC MOVES

Shoulder pose (*kandharasana*)

Classically referred to as the pelvic tilt, this is executed by lying on your back. Bend legs at the knees, keep feet flat as close to the hips as you can. If possible, hold each ankle with either hand. Otherwise, place palms along the hips. Keep knees aligned and not flared out when lifting up. Inhale; raise hips up, pressing the buttocks and pushing the chest up so the chin naturally locks. Exhale; lower hips. Do a few times. Later, extend time in the final pose. This may be done dynamically or statically. **Acupressure impact:** The pose is said to work on the liver meridian, which is an extensive energy channel serviced by 14 points, from the ribcage, waist and groin to the legs and feet. It is related to the health of your nervous system and helps with allergies and negative emotions such as anger and depression. It is also involved with decision-making and goal-setting. So, all these are tackled when you execute this pose.

RISHI ASTAVAKRA ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE SELF-ATTAINED YOGI

One of the finest books on yogic philosophy I have costs only ₹ 35. It is the translation of the *Astavakra Samhita* by Swami Nityaswarupananda, published by Advaita Ashrama. It is the conversation between the wise king Janaka and his guru Astavakra. Most well-known yogic texts, including the *Gita*, describe how to perfect the *sadhana* and become the perfect *sadhak* (practitioner or aspirant for truth). Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* describe the different states and levels through which the rowdy mind may be tamed. Both these texts need interpretations by different gurus so their message comes closer to us. But this tiny *Samhita* is exciting because it describes in simple terms the final state of attainment (called *mumukshutva*). This text presents the final yogic state as uncomplicated, attainable; a yogic attainment that is not esoteric, otherworldly or impossible in this life. It

does not intimidate, as may happen when you read other scholarly texts that describe very fine levels that have to be transcended before the mind annihilates itself in a state of cosmic oneness.

Here are some verses from this amazing text:

- **Chapter 10, Verse 8:**
For how many births have you not done hard and painful work with body, with mind, and with speech! Therefore cease at least today.
- **Chapter 18, Verse 32:**
A dull-witted person becomes bewildered on hearing the real truth, but some sharp-witted man withdraws within himself like a dull person.
- **Chapter 18, Verse 100:**
The tranquil-minded one seeks neither the crowded place nor the wilderness. He remains the same under any conditions and in any place.

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



HEART TO HEARTH BY PRATIBHA JAIN

A new series about silvers who believe nurturing the body and mind is the key to joy

A song of flavours

Nalini Deshpande • PUNE

I first heard her singing at her daughter's *mehendi* ceremony. Her voice had that perfect harmony of melody and mood. The listeners had no choice but to shout 'once more', again and again. Later, I was surprised to find out that she was an educationist, not a professional singer. Meeting 60 year-old Nalini Deshpande, a Maharashtrian from Pune, is seeing a world of myriad possibilities, each one as beautifully vibrant as the other. That's how creative and multidimensional she is. Her voice is as melodious as a koyal's, her cooking is the epitome of comfort food and, at school, she is firm, yet compassionate. Above all, her zest for life is unparalleled.

Namaste Nalini. First of all, with such a melodious voice, how come you are not in Bollywood?

[Laughs] I always wanted to be a singer. Back then, going to Mumbai and trying my luck was not an acceptable option in the family. But I was crazy about singing, so I joined an orchestra when we were in Lucknow and continued singing for 15 years.

Did you grow up in Lucknow?

I was born in Ranchi but we moved to Lucknow and then Delhi and later to Pune. My father was in the Army. We moved to Srinagar twice and that is where I did my schooling and, later, graduation.

Was it easy to cope with so much shifting?

Yes, because the home environment was really stable. Simple values and simple lifestyle, including typical Maharashtrian food. The childhood flavours continued through it all!

Even now?

Yes, the midday meal is a typical Maharashtrian meal: chapatti or *poli*, *bhaji*, rice and a dal. Evenings we prepare something different, like a soup and a salad.

"Cooking is a creative process. I love thinking and innovating on my feet. I find it a creative pursuit, like music. Music, of course, is my jaan"

Did you learn how to cook after marriage?

I began to cook from a young age, as is common with Maharashtrians from Kolhapur. My mother was very particular that I should learn to cook, perhaps because she would hear her friends complain about their daughters-in-law who were not adept at it! Most of my friends did not cook until they got married, but I enjoyed cooking. I find it a creative pursuit, like music. Music, of course, is my *jaan*.

What happened next in your music career?

I joined The Entertainers in Pune, a live orchestra headed by Mohan Bhandari. It was a great opportunity for me as they performed extensively in India and abroad. That is also how I met my husband.

Tell me about the two of you.

Anil is a percussionist and was part of The Entertainers. As you can see, music is an integral part of our life. Over time, we found out we had much in common and decided to get married. Actually, three prospective grooms came to see me but none of them liked music. To me, that was non-negotiable.

How did the families react to your decision to marry each other?

One or two small hitches, but all in all, they agreed. I was very close to my father. So one morning, I woke up early and sat beside him while he was doing yoga. He asked me what was on my mind and I told him about Anil. He just wanted to know if Anil's parents would consent as they are Brahmins while we are Marathas.

What was your reply?

I simply said that I can change myself for music.

Was the environment at your new home very different?

There were differences, yet I managed quite easily. But I never got used to the sweetish flavour in their cuisine. Being Brahmins, their dishes always



Hemant Patil

included a dash of sugar or jaggery. In fact, my father-in-law also preferred spicy food and enjoyed some of the dishes I prepared.

When did you start teaching?

A few years after my daughter was born! When Antara was a baby, we continued travelling with the music group. My parents were very sup-

portive and took care of her during our travels. There was one incident that propelled me to change my mind. Once when we returned after a 10-day tour, Antara did not recognise us. When her schooling began, I decided to give up singing so she could have a stable childhood.

That must have been quite a tough decision.

It was. But I was lucky. One of my closest friends and mentors, eminent educationist Meena Chandavarkar, was a director at Abhinav Vidyalaya in Pune. When I discussed my decision with her, she asked me to join her school. That was in 1989. I taught as a kindergarten teacher for nine years. Then they shifted me to primary school. In 2007, I joined the New Indian School whose chair-

man was Shashikant Sutar, former education minister. I worked there as a supervisor until I retired in 2013. Now I am 'In Charge' at the National Pride School.

Your future plans?

I don't think we must make too many plans. It's better to take life as it comes. If life was about plans alone, I would have continued as a singer.

How do you maintain your voice?

By eating chillies [laughs]! I discovered that I sing well when I have eaten something spicy. One or two *batata vada* with fried chillies and I am ready to sing. I have been so fortunate; not once through all my performances have I had a sore throat or any trouble.

Dependable is the word! I have interacted with your daughter Antara and must compliment you on how responsible and unspoil she is, even though she is an only child.

Thank you for saying that. It means a lot to me. I believe in freedom. Antara grew up in a very free environment. We never imposed our expectations on her. We never told her that she must win or stand first. We let her be. Honestly, the three of us are like friends. I don't feel I have been married for 30 years or that I have such a grown-up daughter. We just have an open and honest relationship.

Does the same formula apply at school?

Yes it does. I don't like it when parents dump their expectations on children. I always tell them: 'Don't decide for the child.' A child may not excel at studies, but he may sing or paint beautifully.

Very true. In the midst of all this, how do you make time for cooking?

VIDYACHYA PAANACHE MASALE BHAAT (Spiced pulav with betel leaf)

Flavoured with betel leaf, this rice recipe from Nalini Deshpande's kitchen is a simple dish with an interesting twist. The betel leaf is roasted and crushed to add an aroma that is subtle yet distinct.

Ingredients

- Rice (not basmati): 1 cup
- Chopped vegetables (brinjals, peas, cauliflower or mixed): 1 cup
- Mustard seeds: 1 tsp
- Asafoetida powder: 1 pinch
- Jaggery: 1-2 tsp
- Fresh coconut: 1 tbsp; grated
- Coriander leaves: 1 tbsp
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt to taste

For the powder

- Betel leaves: 4
- Coriander seeds: 1 tbsp
- Cloves: 4-5
- Cinnamon: 1 inch
- Grated dry coconut (*khopra*): ½ cup
- Red chillies: 3

Method

Wash and soak the rice for 10 minutes. Strain and set aside. Roast the ingredients for the powder in ½ tsp oil until the aroma rises. Grind into a coarse powder and set aside. Alongside, heat 2½ cups of water. Heat the remaining oil in a pan and add the mustard seeds. As they splutter, add the asafoetida powder and the chopped vegetables. Sauté for a couple of minutes. Add the rice and the prepared powder. Mix well and add the boiling water. Add the salt and lemon juice. Cover and cook on a low flame, mixing now and then. Alternately, you can pressure-cook for up to 1 whistle. Before serving, garnish with chopped coriander and freshly scraped coconut.

That is part of everyday life. I credit my mother for encouraging me to cook from a very young age. I was further inspired by my father's praises. I remember how my school friends loved coming home and I would cook for them. Now, on weekends, we call our friends over for a meal.

Eating out?

Not much. We do it once in a while. I like home-cooked food. My daughter and now my son-in-law, Puneet Kothari, are also foodies. Food discussions are an integral part of our conversations and meetings.

Favourite dishes?

Too many to name. I still remember my mother's *amti*, a preparation with *toor dal* in which she added drumsticks. Among the ones I cook, my *methi* toast is much liked. At home, *paan pulav* is also a favourite.

Sounds interesting. Never heard of betel leaf in pulav!

I just concocted it. Betel leaf is so tasty, so I thought why not add it to *pulav*! Cooking is a creative process. I love thinking and innovating on my feet. You will love the flavours.

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

Enlightenment in Sarnath

factfile

Sarnath is 13 km away from Varanasi which is well-connected with the rest of the country by air, rail and road.

The pilgrim town has a handful of hotels, home stays and lodges including a small three-room facility run by UP Tourism. Tourists can also stay in Varanasi which has a wide selection of accommodation from five-star hotels to budget lodges and home-stays.

We felt like trapeze artists vaulting from the high voltage hype of Varanasi into the serene embrace of Sarnath, just 13 km away. One of the four most important Buddhist pilgrim destinations, the city was enveloped in a cocoon of peace and tranquillity.

Often when the intensity of the ghats of Varanasi overwhelms its silver residents who wait patiently to be welcomed into Lord Shiva's eternal abode, they go to the oasis town of Sarnath to regain their sanity and sense of purpose. Prince Siddhartha did so millenniums ago after years of intense sacrifice and penance which culminated in his attaining Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya. Reincarnated as the Buddha—without enduring the passage of death—he walked 250 km to seek out and share his message with the five companions who had accompanied him through the six long years of penance and fasting in the hope of unlocking the mysteries of life and human suffering. Weighed down by the disappointment of knowing that their spiritual journey had yielded no answers, the five had deserted the Buddha and sought refuge in Sarnath.

Now that the Buddha had re-united with his five companions, the most significant discourse in the annals of Buddhism took place. For it was here, in Sarnath, that the Enlightened One set the Wheel of Dharma / Life in mo-

tion. The moment is frozen forever in a composite sculpture of the six men sitting inside a pavilion. Standing around it was a group of silver pilgrims from the Far East in grey robes, acknowledging the moment that took place thousands of years ago. We had seen the same group earlier, meditating in front of an enormous brick stupa on the lawns of the adjoining Deer Park. The Buddha had spent many moons there, sharing his Gospel of the Middle Path with his growing band of followers.

Beyond the stupa are the excavations of what was once a thriving settlement and it was in these ruins that we stumbled upon an Ashoka Pillar. Sadly, the sandstone column was in three pieces and encased in glass to protect it from further vandalism. The legendary four-lion emblem or Lion Capital that crowned the monument, built by the emperor around 250 BC, is now the centrepiece of the Sarnath Museum which has the distinction of being the oldest site museum in India.

We gazed at the exhibit that has become the emblem of India in awe; the minute attention to detail, the flawless smooth finish, the glow of the sandstone... It's the original, our guide assured us. The five galleries within the museum are studded with sculptures

found in the neighbouring excavation. At the far corner of one was an exquisitely carved image of the Buddha, meditating in the lotus pose.

A copy of the sculpture graced the central altar of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara or Sri Lankan Temple. However, this one was gilded and we found ourselves wrestling with the paradox that man has showered the Buddha with the earthly treasures that He had renounced in his lifetime. We lowered our cameras to half mast and for a brief moment were cocooned from the milling crowd of devotees and tourists around us. Indeed, the world seemed to go into a prolonged spasm as we felt the Buddha reach out through the centuries and envelope us in the reassuring grace of His embrace. The moment of infinity was brief before we were dragged back to reality.

—Gustasp & Jeroo Irani



For more information visit Uttar Pradesh Tourism at <http://uptourism.gov.in>



Photographs by Natasha Rego

A fresh canvas

Life has come full circle for Brinda Miller, who has coloured her name into the annals of Mumbai's artistic heritage, writes **Natasha Rego**

On the first Saturday of February, there's an explosion of colour and sound in South Mumbai. Over nine days, the streets of Kala Ghoda erupt in music and dance, street plays, book readings and art workshops, larger-than-life installations and stalls serving up food and handicrafts from across India.

A cultural festival as mammoth as this is a mindboggling feat to pull off and needs to be impeccably curated. Seventeen years old this February, the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival has become an integral part of Mumbai's identity, as much as it is now a part of the identity of 56 year-old Brinda Miller, the woman at the helm of the event.

But Miller is a lot more than the director of the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival. She is a widely recognised abstract artist and well-known for her contribution to beautifying public spaces in Mumbai.

Her deep fondness for the city perhaps stems from her lineage; her father is Nana Chudasama, a former mayor and sheriff of Mumbai. Along with her husband, architect Alfaz Miller, and other collaborators, Miller has worked on several public and institutional walls around the city—the mosaic wall of the Colaba Police Chowky at Fashion Street, a mural at the Prince Aly Khan Hospital in Mazgaon, the enormous mural at Lion Gate at the Naval Dockyard and giant public installations.

“There are many people who want to do things for the city, develop it and make it a safer place,” says Miller. “I want to be creative with it and make it look beautiful. Public art serves two purposes: it is a way of exposing people, especially children, to art so you learn about aesthetics; and it inspires people to keep those surroundings clean. For me, the city is like my home and I want to make it look like my home.”

Take away the festival and public art, and we have Brinda Miller, the artist. She has conducted 14 solo exhibitions in galleries across the country and has been a part of many group shows. Her most recent exhibition in 2013, titled *Adrenaline Rush*, is an expression of the state of her life. “The only time of day when I am seated is in the morning, with my cup of tea. Once I leave the house, I’m on the go, throughout the year.”

INSPIRATION EVERYWHERE

On stretched canvas, Miller renounces all order and symmetry as she applies multiple layers of paint, embellished by textures and patterns. She demonstrates great control over textile and printing techniques that she uses to cut through those layers of paint. She uses lots of paper—corrugated sheets being her favourite—that are painted on and pasted. Dried paint is often detached from the bottle and given a place on her canvas. And she uses bubble wrap, packaging material and stencils—what may be a plastic tray with holes for you could easily be an improvised stencil for Miller.

“That’s the thing about multidimensional layering,” she reasons. “I tend to collect a lot of stuff. I could be in Crawford market, or just walking on the street. If I like the material of the fruit *wallah’s* basket, I ask him and pick it up to add to the junk pile in my studio.”

Miller’s paintings are heavily influenced by the weaves, texture and tactile nature of textiles, a subject she studied when she acquired a bachelor’s degree at the Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai. “My work represents me, my kind of life and what I see—it is a very purposeful statement,” says the artist. “And as I travel a lot, I am influenced by the various things I see. When I returned from Africa, I was doing a lot of reds and browns. From Dubai, I got the sand and buildings. When I was in New York, I used to see the sky in the colour of crushed grapes. I remember telling my professor that the New York sky is purple and the Bombay sky is a dirty blue. You could say a lot of my work is landscape.”

THE EARLY ARTIST

Brinda Chudasama discovered she was an artist at seven when her school gave her the space to put up her very first art show. “I was in the second standard. I made a drawing of four faces,” she recalls. “The topic was something to do with expressions. I didn’t think anything of it, but the teacher said it was a lovely drawing. I don’t think even my parents knew I was artistic. By the third standard, I started becoming really good. So, on Open Day, they displayed my work. I think I decided then that when I grew up, I’d be an artist.”

With not a single artist in the family, her parents assumed their daughter would eventually change her mind, as children often do when they grow up. But when the time came to pick a college, she said she wanted to go straight to art school. At the JJ School of Art, Miller studied textile design. With a booming textile industry in Mumbai, textile design was the ‘engineering and medicine of art.’ “But I enjoyed it,” she says with a smile.

“Growing up, I was a very shy kid. So whatever came out, emerged through my art at that time...and it still does. But now, suddenly, my work is bright and colourful”

Far from being the extrovert she is today, Miller was reserved and lived a sheltered life as a kid. Her parents separated when she was only four and she grew up primarily with her mother. “Growing up, it was just my mother and me in one space and I was a very shy kid. I would hardly speak. So whatever came out, emerged through my art at that time...and it still does. But now, suddenly, my work is bright and colourful.”

She shares a close relationship with her half-brother Akshay and half-sister Shaina from her father’s second marriage, but with a 10-year gap between her and her siblings, deciding vacation spots became a point of contention when growing up. “We would visit a lot of amusement parks and we had a lot of fun...but when you’re 20, you don’t want to do those things. So we’d end up in places like New York and London where there’d be something to suit everyone’s tastes. In a way it has influenced me to be who I am because now, whether it is organising a festival or planning a trip, I look for everything. I like to cover all the bases.”

After she graduated, Miller joined the famous Khatau Mills and aspired to be chief textile designer one day. But the regimented nature of her work did not gel with her artistic sensibilities and so she quit. Her first break as an artist came soon after, when an aunt who ran the Urja Art Gallery in Baroda offered to put on a show of her niece’s paintings. She painted landscapes for the show and priced them between ₹ 300 and ₹ 700 apiece. They all sold out. “That was more than I earned in a year at Khatau Mills!”



Mural commissioned by the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai

At the age of 29, Miller enrolled at the Parsons School of Design in New York, an experience that directly influenced the artist she is today. “It changed my life because I came back a freer person. At Parsons, there were no rules. We were told, ‘If you want to paint this chair, paint it. Do you want to paint the floor? Paint it! If you don’t like what you’ve painted on paper, cut it off. Compose it.’ There was so much freedom in that.”

She was having the time of her life. A year into her course (and a year to go), she returned to Mumbai to collect some transcripts from her old alma mater. Little did she know that she would never return to Parsons, for life had other plans for her. While waiting for the dean to sign her papers, she decided to put on an exhibition. A charming young architect named Alfaz Miller, who was on the lookout for a painting for a client, walked into the exhibition. But all the paintings he liked had already been sold. As she was going to be in the city a little while longer, she offered to make one on commission. “While I was doing the painting, we’d meet every now and then and talk. Then, one day, he proposed to me. I said, ‘No!’ I wanted to go back and study. So he said, ‘Go back, finish, do whatever you want to do.’” It was an offer she could not refuse.

Just then, she got her first big assignment, to paint the walls of a restaurant called Tandoor in New York. She eventually got busy with her career, putting on exhibitions in India and abroad, and organising art workshops. As she was now in her 30s, she decided it was the right time to have children. Too much had changed and there was no chance of going back to New York to complete her course. “I never returned. But that’s the other great thing about studying there—I can return if I want to even now.”

There may just be time yet. After over a decade as the honorary director of the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, Miller says she is finally ready to hand over the reins if the right person comes along.

WIELDING THE BATON

The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival was started by the Kala Ghoda Association in 1999 as a three-day festival to bring

attention to Mumbai’s art district. “It was nice and sweet back then, and I went as a visitor. I told the organiser I wanted to volunteer and help in some way. So I was on the periphery, getting things done. As the years went by, I started doing more and more.”

Organising a festival of this magnitude—a total of over 500 performing acts, installations and stalls spread across a 1-km radius for nine days—takes the working of many hands. Today, social media guarantees those hands with students and young professionals taking time off to volunteer but it was not always this easy. “I remember, in those years, I would go up on stage during the festival and ask people if they would like to help us.”

Stretching all the way from Cross Maidan to Horniman Circle and spreading over K Dubash Marg, the festival is perfectly timed to fill an ambitious itinerary. “Participants [theatre groups, dance companies, etc] start writing in almost immediately for the next edition after the festival closes,” she says. “We tell them to only write to us in August or September, because we no longer serve the first-comers like we used to in the beginning. Now each section is curated and only the good ones get in.”

WORLD AT HER FEET

At the age of 56, it’s time for Miller to go on to new adventures or perhaps take over where she left off on old ones. She has always dreamt of living in New York as an artist and with her two daughters (Aahana, 25, and Aashti, 22) all grown up and pursuing higher studies in architecture, she once again has the world at her feet.

“I’m not looking for riches or fame but for fulfilment. There are many things that I’ve cut out that don’t contribute to my life. Housekeeping is one. I just hate it. Making Excel sheets is another,” she says with a laugh. Like her art, her life is a collage of events that in the end form an abstract, yet coherent, image.

“After I graduated, I used to draw on canvas and plan my work. Now, spontaneity works better for me. Somehow, everything seems to fall into place.” ✨

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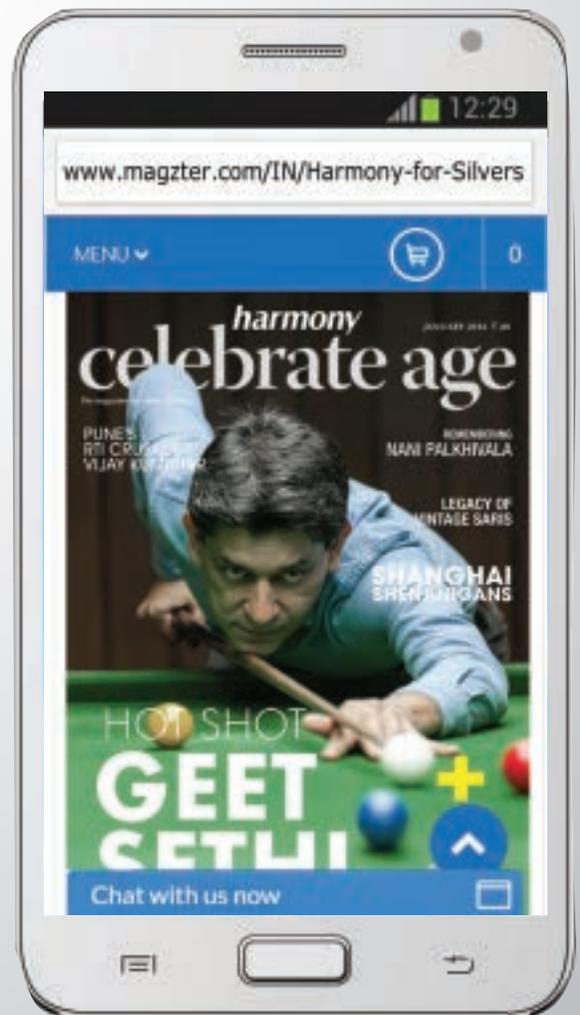
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The first time you rode the bicycle.

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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

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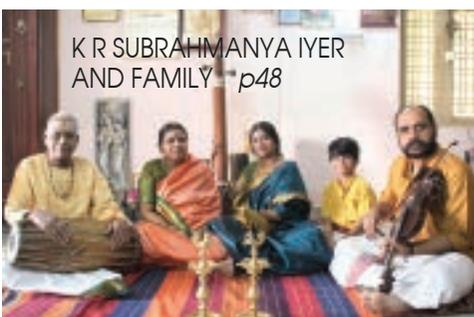
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LEGACY OF LOVE

We present seven Indian families who have dedicated themselves to their craft across generations



USTAD AMJAD ALI
KHAN AND FAMILY
p42



K R SUBRAHMANYA IYER
AND FAMILY p48



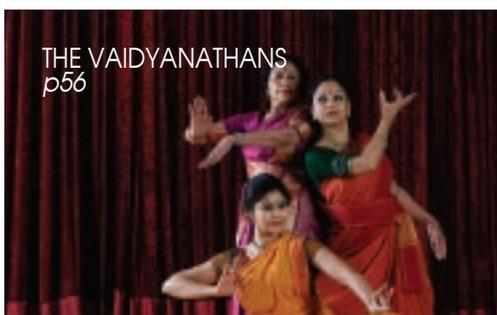
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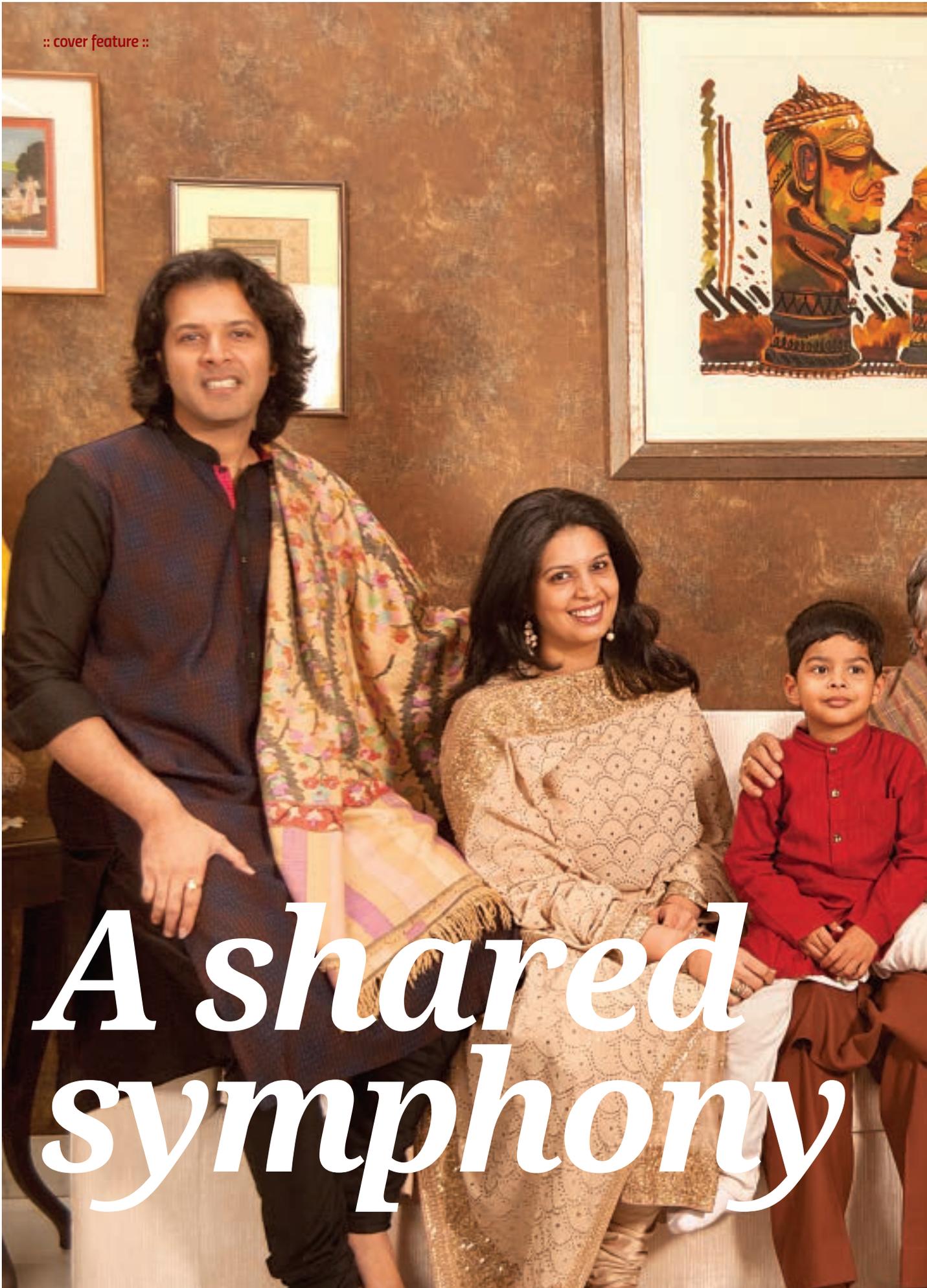


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:: cover feature ::



A shared symphony

EVEN AS THEY BLAZE NEW TRAILS WITH THE SAROD, USTAD AMJAD ALI KHAN AND HIS FAMILY CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADITION AND THE POWER OF LOVE, DISCOVERS ARATI RAJAN MENON



Photographs by Himanshu Kumar

It is a beautiful, tastefully appointed house, like many in south Delhi. However, amid the minutiae of life and the requisite banter, there is a deeper purpose here—you sense it almost immediately. This is the home of Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Padma Vibhushan. And life here is almost symphonic in nature; myriad chords, voices both strident and mellow, climbs, dips and runs, all melding into a resonant, uplifting composition that begins and culminates in a simple word: love.

“*Mohabbat ibadat hai,*” says the 69-year-old sarod maestro. Love is a prayer. “And it is the purpose of life.” There is a catch in his voice when he adds, “Unfortunately, human beings world over have not understood this. Despite the teachings of so many prophets from different faiths, we are still killing each other on account of religion. It has made people insecure, confining us to our homes, our cocoons. We talk so much about educa-

tion but it has not been able to create kindness in humans. I can't understand how a PhD becomes radical or communal. So what's the contribution of education? We need more compassion in this world. Our country is known most for its diversity and interdependence between faiths and people. We need to spread the message of love."

Love is the mantra

For his family, it's more than a message—it's a mantra. "Technical prowess apart, my father has always taught us that once people start loving you, everything falls into place," says 36 year-old Ayaan, his younger son. "Of course, you have to deliver as a musician, but the battle of life is all about love. And music follows from love. That's the teaching of the family:"



Genes do matter; they do speak. I have often seen the soul of my forefathers in Amaan and Ayaan; now, I see it in my grandchildren
—Amjad Ali Khan

As if on cue, his mother Subhalakshmi joins us, wishing us a happy Bihu. It is an auspicious day, variously celebrated as Bihu, Pongal and Sankranti. "Today is a special day on the calendar but every day should be a day of love and celebration," she asserts. "When you generate love, you get love back. That is the life we believe in." An Indian classical dancer from Assam who trained in Kalakshetra under the tutelage of the legendary Rukmini Devi Arundale, she was happy to "take the

backstage" after marriage. And it was not a sacrifice, she insists. "Dance was my passion," she says. "But I realised that Khan *sahib* has much more to give the world; he is a greater artist. Just as his music moved me, it has the power to move so many people. I see the love of people, young and old, for him. That's what he has truly gained in his journey."

It has been a momentous one. Along the way, this 6th generation torchbearer of the Bangash lineage, rooted in the Senia gharana under the tutelage of his father Ustad Hafeez Ali Khan, has expanded the vocabulary of the sarod and reinvented its technique, taking it to an entirely new dimension and introducing it to the world. Following in his footsteps, sons Amaan, 38, and Ayaan started performing early and, over the years, have come

into their own as sarod players and innovators. Now, the trio play and tour together, and individually, across the world; recent highlights include the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Oslo in December 2014 and the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday celebrations in New Delhi last month.

The Ustad gives the credit for their artistic development to his wife. "More than me, she has been their guru. I think mother is the first guru of every child. Still, our society and the world have not given women the respect they are due."

This mother clearly realised the responsibility that came with such an artistic legacy. "It is always at the back of your mind that, as a mother, you should ensure the 7th generation continues," she confesses. "It's all about the ambience in which they grew up. Life is like water; it takes the shape of the vessel in which you keep it." Amaan, is quick to highlight their mother's role in their father's career, too. "Ma was a true companion to *Abba*," he says. "Being from the arts, she played a pivotal role in nurturing him into a musician." As for their career, Ayaan calls his mother's contribution "unparalleled."

Early learnings

For his part, the proud father says, "There is no book that tells you how to present Indian classical music; no rigid rules on how to play sarod. Only God would know the 'right way' to play sarod or sing or perform on stage. We are just mortals. By His grace, I found Amaan and Ayaan connected with music right from their childhood. They have their own distinct character; you know who's playing when you listen. They are different human beings and their approach to music is different; while Amaan is very adventurous, Ayaan is more introspective. I am just grateful that people have accepted both of them."

Meanwhile, both sons are keenly aware that such a legacy is not a mantle to slip on with nonchalance. "Being from a certain family can bring you recognition but it is important to work hard," points out Amaan. "You get something from the past but you have to take it forward. We started playing at an early age when we were unaware of what we were doing. It was only after a certain stage that the seriousness of our responsibility set in. The day you become responsible and know what the world expects from you is when you are born as a musician."

The process, as they would be the first to admit, has been far from seamless—there has been doubt,



You walk in the direction shown by the guru; on the road, you may find many new avenues and tributaries

—Ayaan Ali Khan

introspection and struggle along the way. “At some level, music was looked at more as a way of life than a profession; no one asked us if we’d like to become musicians; it was just understood,” shares Ayaan. “Having said that, Amaan *bhai* was more questioning, and he would often ask *Abba* if this was the right path for him. *Abba* would tell him, ‘I don’t know. But you are blessed to have a gift and if you work in that direction, perhaps you will see light some day.’ That was my concern too, because our father has taken sarod to great heights; it’s a real challenge to see a life for sarod beyond what he’s done. But by God’s grace, as Ramakrishna Paramhansa said, ‘*Joto mot, toto poth*’ [As there are a number of beliefs, there are a number of ways].”

“As they say in relationships also, if you haven’t seen them all, you don’t know who the real one is,” says Amaan. “I tried my hand at a lot of things and finally realised this is what I was born to do. This is the only profession that embraces me with love and accepts me with all my bads.” Ayaan adds, “There’s always some kind of universal interference; whenever we’ve tried to do any project that deviated from music, it never worked out!” His elder brother is quick to agree. “It’s like there is a plan; and the

moment you try and walk away from it, everything starts going wrong,” he says. “So it’s basically a give and take with the universe; the moment you start doing what you are supposed to, it starts rewarding you. If you’re focusing with a very pure heart, it comes back to you. When you get a gift, you have to respect it. We have learnt to put the sarod before ourselves.”

Both the boys remember—all too painfully—a concert in London over 25 years ago when they were less than respectful to their craft. “We were out of synch and it was a bad show,” reveals Amaan. “*Abba* was so upset that it affected him on a physical level. He actually got fever. He never scolded us; that was never his way. He just reminded us that we had to be serious with whatever we did in life. I don’t ever want to see a day like that again.”

New directions

With their doubts evidently behind them, Amaan and Ayaan have gone on to make the sarod a crossover instrument. But they dismiss any talk of creating ‘a style of their own.’ “It’s a realisation others have that you are different;



you cannot say it yourself,” reasons Amaan. “It’s like calling yourself ‘Ustad’ or ‘Pandit’. When you are born to a man like Ustad Amjad Ali Khan *sahib*, you cannot be bigger than that. The bigger concern is that you should not be the reason for his embarrassment. The first thing is to embrace and play everything he has played. First, read the book he’s written and then write a book of your own.”

Ayaan couldn’t agree more. “You walk in the direction shown by the guru; on the road, you may find many new avenues and tributaries. We have done thematic albums, electronic albums with the sarod; things that haven’t been done with the instrument. It is something we constantly learn from *Abba*. Despite being an artist of his calibre, he is open to anything new.” To this Amaan adds, “What *Abba* has done for the sarod is unparalleled; now, we are trying to get the instrument into newer sections. In fact, we are

making our own father do new things. For instance, Ayaan *bhai* got *Abba* to shoot a video playing *Jingle bells* for Christmas; it went viral. On his own, he would have never done this! You see, the only thing constant in this world is change and movement. If you don’t change, you become obsolete. My grandfather never recorded albums and CDs because he thought they would play at weddings or a paan shop. He thought it would be disrespectful to the instrument. But he paid the price for that. He could not reach the masses. When you limit yourself from doing things, you also limit people’s access to you. So my father broke that barrier and we are following suit.”

Yesterday, today and tomorrow

Today, the arrival of twins Zohaar and Abeer, born to Ayaan and his wife Neema three-and-a-half years ago, has



The day you become responsible and know what the world expects from you is when you are born as a musician

—Amaan Ali Khan



made the flame of music—and love—burn even brighter in the home. “Genes do matter; they do speak,” says their dotting grandfather. “I have often seen the soul of my forefathers in Amaan and Ayaan; now, I see it in my grandchildren.” And music is inevitably woven into their life’s fabric.

“Music already has a magical effect on them,” says Ayaan. “It has happened in the most natural way,” adds Neema, who has blended harmoniously into the family since she married Ayaan eight years ago. Coming from a film family in Mumbai “who shares similar values about keeping the family together”, she understands her husband’s need for creative space and insists legacy and love go hand in hand. “Zohaar and Abeer spend quality time each day in the music room with *Abba*; it’s their favourite time of day—and his,” she says. “He has taught them to play the *sargam* on their sarods.” The family’s music room, large and

sparse, is evidently a comfort zone for the tots; they are effortless with the instruments, flitting from the sarod—they have customised mini instruments already—to the guitar (dragged in from the library nearby), and take their seats behind the tablas with an ease born of familiarity. “In fact, if you give them a football, they start playing on it like a tabla!” adds Neema with a chuckle.

“Today, my father will never say that he wants the grandkids to play the sarod,” says Amaan. “But heart of heart, it is our duty to offer everything to these boys and leave it to God’s will.” “This is our greatest wealth,” agrees Ayaan. “But they are free to do what they wish. Rather than worrying about the future, which I tend to do, we should celebrate what we have. Neema constantly reminds me that we have so much to be grateful for.”

The big picture is also on Amaan’s mind when he says, “Right now, we are sitting and talking. But there are 93 million movements happening around us. That’s how insignificant we are. You can become arrogant as a musician but if you pull even one nerve in your hand, it’ll all be over. We must live in gratitude. And we must live in each day, for each day. The only truth is you, standing here right now. Every other thing is fleeting.” Here, Ayaan takes us back to where we began: love. “The source of every truth is love,” he says. “This and the 12 notes of music are our reality. They are life.” Indeed. ✨



On song

FOUR GENERATIONS OF SOUL-STIRRING CARNATIC VOCALISTS LOOK TO AN EIGHT YEAR-OLD TO TAKE THE FAMILY TRADITION FORWARD

When 61 year-old Bhanumathi and her daughter Srividya, 39, sing together, they create soul-stirring music. When Prof V Gopalakrishnan, 77, Srividya's father, plays the mridangam, and her 39 year-old husband Janakiraman the violin, her son Chandru, eight, listens in rapt attention to the concert unfold. Will he carry the family tradition forward? At this tender age, it's hard to tell but Chandru is being trained in Carnatic vocals by his mother and learning to play the violin from his father and teachers in school.

In this family, music goes back many generations. The current living patriarch is 88 year-old Kollegal R Subrahmanya Iyer, renowned vocalist from Hyderabad, father of G Bhanumathi and grandfather of G Srividya. "My grandmother Abhita Kuchamba used to sing lullabies to me when I was four years old; that was my motivation to learn music," says Subrahmanya Iyer, who trained under Belkavadi Varadaraja Iyengar, third-generation disciple of Saint Thyagaraja, the poet-mystic-saint revered in southern India. Both Bhanumathi and her husband, Gopalkrishnan, a retired mridangam player with All India

LEFT TO RIGHT
 Prof V Gopalkrishnan,
 Bhanumati, Srividya,
 Chandru, Janakiraman
RIGHT Kollegal
 R Subrahmanya Iyer



Courtesy: Srividya

Will eight year-old Chandru carry the family tradition forward? He is being trained by his mother, father and teachers in school

Radio, teach music. “At 11 pm, when I switch off the TV, I start playing the violin and start singing. When I get into the mood I can sing till late in the night. My husband just goes to sleep when I start singing.”

Srividya, an accomplished Carnatic singer, grew up with her two brothers in Delhi as their father was working with All India Radio. During the summer holidays, she would visit Hyderabad and learn music with her grandfather. “I initially learnt from my mother, starting at the age of nine. I had a good teacher in school too. I spent most of my summer holidays working on creative presentations, a skill my grandfather taught me. Regular teachers do not teach you these things. I also learnt some of the songs he composed.” Later, Srividya moved to Chennai to complete her graduation and post-graduation in music.

She studied under the late Suguna Purushottamam, a descendant of Musri Subramaniam Iyer, another great Carnatic vocal artist, who also happens to be her paternal great-grandfather!

Today, Srividya, who performs regularly on stage across cities, runs her own music school and is visiting faculty and examiner at the Potti Sriramulu University in Hyderabad. Janakiraman, her husband, is a freelance violinist and performs on stage when called to do so. He is also a skilled artist, who paints with oil on canvas. As we talk about the great musical tradition in this family, halting strains of the violin float across the room. Deftly drawing the bow across his father’s violin, little Chandru is keeping the dream alive.

—Shyamola Khanna

Strings *attached*



**PADMA BHUSHAN DR N RAJAM
PASSES ON HER PRODIGIOUS TALENT
TO TWO GENERATIONS AND SAYS SHE
WOULD LOVE TO BE REBORN AS A
MUSICIAN EVERY SINGLE TIME**

Shouldering a legacy of six generations, music came naturally to legendary Hindustani violinist Dr N Rajam, pioneer of the *gayaki ang* (to sing with one's instrument). "In any birth, I would want to be a musician," she says with a smile, conspiring with the universe to play to her tune.

Dr Rajam, 78, started learning the violin at the age of three along with her older brother T N Krishnan, the famous Carnatic violinist, under the tutelage of their father Vidvan A Narayan Iyer. She was raised in a home adjacent to a Krishna temple in Ernakulam in Kerala, from where the lilting sounds of the nadhaswaram would float through. "Growing up in an atmosphere charged with music, I had

not known anything else in life." She spent 40 years in Benaras, where she was first professor and later dean of the faculty of Performing Arts at Benaras Hindu University. It was there that her daughter Sangeeta was born.

"Apart from being a musician, I want to help people find happiness by learning values through Indian classical music and dance," says daughter Dr Sangeeta Shankar, 50, who dons many hats—violinist, motivational speaker, educator, composer, filmmaker, entrepreneur, author and mother to two daughters, Ragini and Nandini. Like their mother, the girls too started training at the age of three under their grandmother. "It has been our tradition to pass down the *vidya*," says Shankar. "So after retiring from BHU, my mother had something very purposeful to do.

LEFT TO RIGHT
Ragini Shankar,
Dr N Rajam,
Dr Sangeeta
Shankar and
Nandini Shankar



Courtesy: Dr N Rajam

The communication is subtle, the performance definitive. And as Ragini and Nandini come into their own, the legacy lives on

And she was the best teacher around.” She was also strict. “When Ragini was very small, I told her the pigeons were there to listen to her,” recalls Dr Rajam. “She took it very seriously and played carefully.”

It paid off. Today, both Ragini, 26, and 22 year-old Nandini—one a mechanical engineer and the other studying chartered accountancy—are experienced violinists. “When I play, I feel a divine connection,” says Ragini. “Music is in everything. It’s almost as if life can’t exist without it.” Nandini agrees. “We can’t see life minus music,” she

affirms. “Whether a career blossoms or not, music will always have the power to make me happy.”

The ultimate expression of their talent is when the quartet performs on stage together. “Even the audience notices that everyone is in synch,” says Dr Rajam. “And the children understand what I want them to play by just looking at me.” The communication is subtle, the performance definitive. And as Ragini and Nandini come into their own, the legacy lives on.

—Natasha Rego

:: cover feature ::

The palette as muse



LEFT TO RIGHT Shail and Surjeet Choyal, Mana, Charul and Akash Choyal
INSET P N Choyal



Vonitya Amit and Shahid Parvez

THE CHOYAL LEGACY MIGHT NOT HAVE EXISTED HAD A SON NOT IGNORED HIS FATHER'S ATTEMPTS TO DISCOURAGE HIM FROM BECOMING AN ARTIST

The 1940s was not a flourishing decade for painters. With royal patronage a thing of the past, the only work of commercial value was painting portraits of British overlords. So when celebrated painter P N Choyal graduated from Jaipur School of Art in 1945, he returned to his hometown, Udaipur, to become a teacher as he had a family to raise.

“Even as a teacher, it bothered him that he was never able to convert his department into a faculty of fine arts owing to internal constraints and a stagnant syllabus,” says his son, Udaipur-based Shail, in his 70s. “So he went to the chief minister with a proposal to upgrade his department but they rejected it, saying the country needed more engineers, doctors and architects.”

When Shail came of age, Choyal gifted him a copy of *Lust for Life*, a biographical book on the struggles of Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh. It was an attempt to discourage his only son from becoming an artist. “But it served only to encourage me,” says Shail with a chuckle.

He went on to carve a niche for himself in the field of miniature paintings. “I have adopted the aesthetics of miniatures, but the treatment is contemporary.” His wife Surjeet, 67, was a classmate at Udaipur University, where they did their master’s in fine arts. With oil as her medium, Surjeet addresses social injustices through her works.

As painters, they understood the importance of developing an individual style.

So when he came of age, the Choyals sent their son out on his own.

Akash, 42, studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts in M S University, Vadodara, but for this quiet and shy lad, the beginnings were difficult. “Everyone else seemed to be creating these masterpieces. People even questioned my eligibility to be there. Similarly, in school, when everyone was competing in studies and sports, I would sketch in my notebooks. One of my drawings was of a mouse lifting an elephant. It was then that I began expressing myself through art,” says Akash, who is known for his pioneering and evocative art in 3D illusion and fibreglass sculpting as well as triographics.



As painters, they understood the importance of developing an individual style

His wife Charul, 35, who has a background in theatre, picked up painting after marriage. With a family of artists to guide her, she attempts to transfer the emotions of theatre onto canvas. Says Akash of their four year-old daughter Mana, “If I had the power to make anything happen in this world, I would make everyone an artist. As that is not possible, I want to give my daughter all the freedom she needs. We will give her good values. Following that, she can be anybody she wants to be.”

—Natasha Rego

Healing touch



YOGA RUBS SHOULDERS WITH LAW IN MUMBAI'S FAMOUS PALKHIVALA FAMILY

If not for an unusual turn of events in the late 1950s, the legacy of the Palkhivalas of Mumbai would have been recorded only in the annals of law. Not many are aware of the 'other Palkhivalas', a branch of this famous family that took a different path.

We are referring to Dhan Patel, who married Behram Palkhivala, brother of legal luminary Nani Palkhivala. Behram and Dhan were both young and ambitious lawyers, fresh out of college and practicing in legal firms in the city. But life changed irrevocably for Dhan, who suffered from severe pain in her stomach and back. "My uterus was in a bad condition and the doctors were at a loss. The only thing they had to offer were painkillers," says Dhan, now 83 years old.

The doctors said she had only one recourse: yoga. And Dhan approached none but the best, BKS Iyengar, under whose guidance her pain miraculously eased. A few years later, when Dhan and Behram decided to have a child, doctors advised against it because of a problem with Dhan's uterus. But her unshakeable faith in Iyengar saw her through her pregnancy and Aadil, the first of her three sons, was born. She gave up her law practice. Such was Dhan's faith in Iyengar that she had two more sons, each one under the yoga guru's personal supervision.

Naturally, Iyengar's teachings had a great impact on the entire family. Aadil and his younger brother Jehangir started training under 'Iyengar uncle' at the age of seven. As adults, like their mother, they too gave up their legal

LEFT TO RIGHT
Rishaya, Dhan
and Jehangir



Hareesh Patel

Dhan's unshakeable faith in Iyengar saw her through her pregnancy and Aadil, the first of her three sons, was born

practices to pursue yoga full time but their youngest brother, Phiroze, pursued a career in law.

The Palkhivalas specialise in therapeutic yoga. While Aadil, 57, teaches in the US, 52 year-old Jehangir treats patients at his home in South Mumbai. "I worked for nine months as an advocate assistant in a solicitor's firm," he shares. "But I loved to help people get well. So before leaving for work, I would teach an early morning yoga class. When one of my students got off his medication for high blood pressure and headaches, the joy I felt was immense." Jehangir put in his papers and took up yoga full time.

Now all of 22 years old and applying to design schools in India, Jehangir's daughter Rishaya teaches an evening yoga class accompanied by her father. Is this a legacy she would like to pursue? "I'm still in a place where I'm confused about what I want to do," she confesses. "There are so many exciting possibilities out there. However, it will be heartbreaking to see the 'legacy' of yoga dissolve, just as the legacy of law has [in the Palkhivala family]. But being part of this legacy is too much pressure and I doubt I can live up to what my father and grandmother have achieved."

—Natasha Rego

:: cover feature ::

Poetry in motion



TOP TO BOTTOM
Dr Saroja Vaidyanathan,
Rama and Dakshina

WHEN THE TRIO PERFORMS AS ONE, THE EXPERIENCE ELEVATES BHARATANATAYAM TO ANOTHER LEVEL, BELIEVES PADMA BHUSHAN DR SAROJA VAIDYANATHAN

Three generations of women bound together by the poetry of dance is how one can best describe this family of Bharatanatayam exponents in Delhi. The matriarch, Dr Saroja Vaidyanathan, set up the famous dance academy Ganesa Natalaya in the 1970s. “Coming from a family with a strong emphasis on academics, I had never imagined that I would one day be the recipient of the Padma Bhushan or have a family of Bharatanatayam exponents,” says the 78 year-old, who was inspired to become a dancer at the tender age of seven.

“I had gone to watch a performance by a dancer, Kamla Lakshman, with my grandparents in Chennai and fell in love with dance,” she recalls. “I began learning dance but was married at the age of 16.” She completed her graduation after marriage and moved to Bihar as her husband was with the civil services. There, she learnt the piano and taught dance to children. And although her guru Lalithamma lived in Chennai, she kept in touch with her and it kept her passion for Bharatanatayam alive.

Dr Vaidyanathan’s engagement with dance, already strengthened through performing and teaching, took on a new dimension when she found a passionate disciple—her daughter-in-law Rama Vaidyanathan, who started learning Bharatanatayam at the age of six. “I always wanted to learn from a good dancer,” says the 48 year-old. “But dance was not the reason I got married into this family. I began to learn under my mother-in-law even as I studied for my

bachelor’s degree.” After that, there was no looking back.

When her granddaughter Dakshina, 26, showed an interest in Bharatanatayam, Dr Vaidyanathan’s joy knew no bounds. Coming from a family where academics are important, Dakshina studied engineering but her heart lay in Bharatanatayam. “I have two gurus although handling my grandmother is easier than handling my mother,” she says with a laugh.

“I had never imagined that I would have a family of Bharatanatayam exponents”

Initially, both Rama and Dakshina did group shows but they now perform solo. Over the years, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law also performed together but divergent personal schedules put an end to that. The three dancers delivered a rare performance together, titled *Trinayan* or ‘three perspectives’, in Delhi, in 2012.

It’s been a rich and eventful journey for this family and it appears a fourth member is eager to add to their legacy—soon, Dakshina’s sister, 20 year-old Sannidhi, will be ready to join them on stage with the mridangam. “She will add rhythm to the performance,” says Dr Vaidyanathan.

—Ambica Gulati

The power of one



**A TEENAGER IS THE SOLE TORCHBEARER
OF AN ANCIENT ARTISTIC TRADITION IN
GUJARAT'S KUTCH REGION**

Sahil Khatri is like any other teenager but with one important difference. Poring over a piece of maroon cloth and creating incredibly beautiful motifs on it with a viscous blob at the end of a stick, the 19 year-old shoulders the legacy of an entire village. He is the sole inheritor of the art of Rogan, a 300 year-old

tradition that once flourished in Gujarat's Kutch region. Today, one family—the Khatri of Nirona village—practices Rogan, the preserve of men-folk for generations. Sahil is the only member of the current generation who has chosen to embrace Nirona's great artistic tradition. "I have studied only till Std VIII as I had already found my passion," says the youngster.

RIGHT TO LEFT
(FRONT ROW)
Sahil, Abdul Gaffoor,
Arab Hasham



The Khatriis are the only family that practice Rogan art, the preserve of men-folk for generations

His father, Abdul Gaffoor Khatri, 50, says the term *rogan* means 'oil-based' in Persian and refers to the thick residue formed when castor oil is heated and cast into cold water. After it is mixed with natural colours, the residue is drawn out into a fine 'thread' with a wooden stick and then applied to cloth. "Rogan motifs once graced mainly *ghaagra-choli*, bridal trousseaus, bed sheets and tablecloths but they now adorn more contemporary items," adds Abdul Gaffoor, whose initiation to the craft was ridden with much angst.

Lack of awareness took the craft to the brink of extinction and entire villages that practised it switched to other trades. A young Abdul Gaffoor followed suit, and went to Ahmedabad and even Mumbai to find work. "At that time, there were no tourists [visiting Gujarat] and our art was not selling. It was only later that the government gave us a project and started helping us. That's when my grandfather and my father asked me to return."

It was 1983 and Abdul Gaffoor became so enchanted with Rogan that he promised his father he would take it to the international level. "I fulfilled my promise when Rogan art was presented to [US President] Barack Obama on Narendra Modi's visit to the US in 2014," says Abdul Gaffoor, recipient of a State Award (1988) and a National Award (1997).

Seated nearby is his uncle, 58 year-old Arab Hasham Khatri, whose voice is filled with both pride and sadness. "I have been practicing Rogan for 46 years. If we don't do this, no one else will and the art will be lost." He turns to his grandnephew. "I never dreamt of doing anything else. It is my responsibility to take our age-old tradition forward, make changes and improve the designs as much as I can," says Sahil.

In a dramatic departure from tradition, Abdul Gaffoor is now teaching Rogan to women in collaboration with a non-profit organisation. But as far as tradition goes, Sahil is the only individual who can preserve the purity of the Rogan bloodline.

—Aakanksha Bajpai

Courtesy: Abdul Gaffoor Khatri



Meet the Gantzers

The enviable romance of Hugh and Colleen Gantzer as co-travellers and chroniclers for life was sealed 55 years ago. But their chemistry sizzles even today, discovers **Suparna-Saraswati Puri**

A great deal can be imbibed from the pioneers of travel writing in India, **Hugh**, 85, and **Colleen Gantzer**, 81. The towering frame of Hugh alongside the petite Colleen may give the impression of an odd couple, but nothing could be farther from the truth as the Gantzers are infectiously warm and friendly people. Honoured with national and international accolades including the Government of India's Lifetime Achievement Award as part of the National Tourism Awards in 2014, the Gantzers are thorough professionals when it comes to their work—writing and travel—whether it is print, online or television media. Even a brief unassuming meeting leaves you amazed at their remarkable trait to inculcate rather effortlessly the gift to listen and learn. The Gantzers are indeed a rare twosome. Both are single children. Colleen lost her father when she was all of five and grew up in Bombay. Meanwhile, Hugh's father was a civil servant based in Bihar who retired in the 1940s and subsequently settled with his family in Mussourie.

The enviable romance of the Anglo-Indian Gantzers as travellers for life was strengthened by matrimony in the Roman Catholic Pro-Cathedral, Wodehouse Road, Bombay, on 12 November 1960, while Hugh was a lieutenant in the Indian



Suparna-Saraswati Puri

HIGH

5

The Gantzers' list of revitalising destinations

Hugh and Colleen Gantzer



1

Home of the unicorns

Navy. “He wore his ceremonial white uniform with a sword and we walked under an archway of swords as we left the church,” recounts Colleen. “We also used the sword to cut our wedding cake.”

Nurturing an insatiable appetite for travel and writing, the couple’s writings constitute a wide spectrum, from scripts for dot-coms to novels, travel resource surveys, destination guides, travel critiques, a fortnightly op-ed column in *The Indian Express* and television series, *Looking Beyond* and *Take a Break with Hugh & Colleen Gantzer*. Their four-volume, 96-destination *Intriguing India* series won the National Award in 2013. Other books include *Capital Icon* and *Spicestory*, coffee-table books, and historical fiction, *The Lynsdale Raj*.

Fond of collecting melodies across genres from all over the world, music is a constant in the lives of this couple that resides in “a 175 year-old Victorian-era cottage in the Himalaya with a goldfish pond and an aviary of lively budgerigars”. Excerpts from an interview....

Did you know each other prior to marriage? Are you temperamentally different?

He: Yes, we knew each other as we believe that every couple should be responsible for the choice of partners. Temperamentally, we were very different when we met. I tended to soar; Colleen was far more pragmatic and down to earth.

We opted for a jeep safari to cover more of Kaziranga’s 430 sq km. The park is crossed by four rivers nurturing dense forests, creating lush grasslands, filling lakes. On the other side of a lake, browsing in the grasslands, was a herd of swamp deer. These beautiful animals are an endangered species and their spread of horns might extend to 12 times, giving them their alternative name of Barasingha. After this, the sightings came thick and fast. A family of elephants, almost concealed by the tall grass, was obviously not very happy with us. They ambled away, shielding their calves protectively. We ticked off the second animal in our list of Kaziranga’s Big Ones. Then, in the last half hour of our morning round, we spotted a massive male wild water buffalo glaring at us out of the sedges, ready to vent his rage on us! We didn’t have time to dwell on that line of thought because there, on the road in front of us, blocking the passage of another jeep driving towards us, was a rhinoceros. He was followed by another, and yet another; their bodies and single horns glinting in the soft light. They paused, looked at us as if speculating whether we were worthy of an attack, decided we weren’t; lumbered like living tanks down the other side and got lost in the shimmering silver sands and wetlands of their ancient home. So we’re happy to report that the unicorn, the legendary single-horned and seemingly silver-plated animal, is alive and thriving in its sanctuary in Kaziranga.



2

Penang

Penang in Malaysia is an idyllic escape. Almost 600 years before we visited it, Queen Elizabeth I had set up a company to engage in the lucrative spice trade. It became The East India Company and 'acquired' Penang. Later, the canny British encouraged Indian and Chinese families to bring in their entrepreneurial skills. There's a unique village built on a jetty, where the descendants of the Chinese Chew clan live. At the fringes of the ethnic groups there was an intermingling of bloodlines and cuisines. We relished a variation known ubiquitously as *roti-prata*. "But a paratha is a bread, as is roti," we argued. "Why is it called *roti-prata*?" The Sino-Indian-Malay hawker grinned benignly, flashing gold teeth. "But this is Penang!" he said and proceeded to break an egg onto the sizzling *roti-prata*. We marvelled at gold-green-blue-red decorations of the Thai Temple enshrining the enormous reclining Buddha in a gold robe and pink features. We took a trip on the funicular railway to the peak. Penang island spread at our feet, a cobweb stretch of steel bridge linked it to the mainland; all around was the Andaman Sea. It was cool and misty at this height, and as we buzzed around in a sight-seeing hill buggy, we spotted cottages like the ones the Brits had built in the hill stations at home. Our driver remarked: "Old British houses. Very expense (sic). Now no British, only local." The spice trade might have brought prosperity to this land six centuries ago. But today, tourism is Malaysia's new sunrise industry.

Both: We've had a moderating influence on each other but we still have occasional differences of opinion that we either sort out or incorporate into our writing as 'the other point of view'!

What drew you to the Indian Navy, Hugh? And was there a career choice that you considered, Colleen?

He: I wanted to travel; and as my uncle, the greatly revered Ron Pereira, was a naval officer, it seemed the most natural thing to do. As a student, however, I wanted to be a doctor like my grandfather, but on reconsideration that did not seem the best option.

She: I wanted to fly, but my mother did not feel it was a safe career for her only child. I opted for a secretarial career in multinationals instead.

He: The skills she acquired then have stood us in good stead. After we became travel writers, Colleen did 'fly' in a Boeing simulator in an Indian Airlines training facility in Hyderabad. Then, later, in Switzerland, our young Swiss pilot asked her to take over the controls in a small aircraft flying through the Alps. She earned a formal certificate for that.

3

Lucerne

The Swiss know how to market their past, and their many other intriguing home-grown products. Lucerne has bound its history of wars and intrigues in its unique zigzag bridge with beautiful old paintings on its inner gables. Later, we learnt that another age ago, a kilometre-thick glacier had covered Lucerne and ice-melt whirlpools had carved great wells in the hard rock, still preserved in the Glacier Museum. An audio-visual captured that age of mastodons and woolly mammoths. Carved on a cliff outside, another legend had been entombed. The great Lion of Lucerne lay stabbed and dead but still protecting the shield of the last king of France. The famed Swiss Guards had died to the last man, defending the cosseted Louis XVI against the wrath of his own civic society. The only Swiss Guards now left protect the Pope, and they still wear unreal medieval uniforms. That evening, the past and the present melded seamlessly again. In the Stadthauskeller we let our hair down, yodelling, dancing and dining at a Swiss folklore evening. In Lucerne, experiences flow timelessly together in a gentle celebratory way.

Lucerne has bound its history of wars and intrigues in its unique zigzag bridge with beautiful old paintings on its inner gables.... Experiences flow timelessly together in a gentle celebratory way



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She: Hugh sat in the back saying his rosary and is convinced that we survived because of heavenly intervention!

How was life as a young naval couple?

Both: We enjoyed every minute of our life in the Navy. It was a clean, uncorrupted life full of warm friends and largely insulated from the shenanigans of civilian existence. But it did impose a curb on creativity. Increasingly, we wanted to spread our wings. An opportunity presented itself, and we decided to seize it and leave, though the process was traumatic. We left the Navy on the midnight of 31 December 1973 after 20 unforgettable years and a bit.

Hugh, you were the judge advocate of the Southern Naval Command when you took voluntary retirement. Tell us about your role in the Navy.

The title judge advocate (JA) has been used by many of the world's navies for centuries. A JA handles all legal matters in a command. This is his role as a lawyer or advocate and a naval JA has to be legally qualified to apply for registration to practise as a civilian advocate. As a judge, he sits in all court-martials and ensures that the proceedings are strictly in accordance with the law of the land. On one occasion, in the trial of an officer who had behaved in an unstable way, we had summoned a specialist from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). His opinion was that the accused was a schizophrenic. In an informal conversation out of court, when the doctor learnt that I liked amateur dramatics and writing, he frowned and said, "Those could be the early indications of schizophrenia!" Back home, when I related this to Colleen, I did not appreciate her wholehearted agreement with the diagnosis!

Being a mountain man, what kept you well-heeled in Kerala for 19 years, Hugh?

In a word, travel. When the Navy transferred us to Cochin, and we thought that we'd never return to the South, we decided to see as much of it as we could. We got on our Vespa scooter and scooted, photographed and interviewed people. Kerala is a small, fascinating state with remarkably varied terrain; diverse communities maintain their distinct customs and traditions, yet have evolved into an extraordinarily well-adjusted people. Kerala was the matrix that gave birth to our travel writing



Hugh and Colleen Gamtzer

4

Backwaters of Kerala

We boarded our houseboat from a jetty in the cool backwater resort of Coconut Lagoon. We had checked out that the bedroom in our boat had all the mod-cons including a shower, then relaxed in our woven-bamboo lounge and allowed the life on the backwaters to drift past. On both banks of the backwaters, the world was a busy place. In the small teashops—the *chai kada*—the argumentative Indian was in his multi-syllabic element. But, for us in our boat, this was all like an entertaining giant screen projection: fascinating, but part of another world. We unwound and drowsed the afternoon away. The sun gentled on one of the great backwater lakes. Three patch-sailed boats streamed past in a brisk wind that backcombed the heads of the palms on the far bank. White egrets flew on silent wings heading for their roosting trees. We sat sipping a sundowner while the sky flared crimson in a magnificent Kerala sunset. Our floating home tied up alongside and drew an electric line from an obliging cottage on the banks. The moon rose and hung like a burnished gong over the dark backwaters, resting on the silver spear of its reflections. Frogs sang a soft guttural chorus, and on the opposite shore, a flute wove a filigree of sound while a plopping fish left silver circles of light. But we were asleep before the bright ripples could break on our gently rocking boat. Humans are soothed by this motion, which resembles the self-renewing beat of the ancient sea from which all life emerged.

instincts. Eventually, we got to know so much about Kerala that our friends would refer enquiring strangers to us! This is what prompted Khushwant Singh to ask us to write the first essay for *The Illustrated Weekly* series, 'The India You Do Not Know'. It was on Kerala, and it appeared on 17 August 1975.

Colleen, were you always keen on photography?

Not always; in fact, I took to photography because of Hugh. He bought his first camera just before his first trip to South Asia as a naval officer. I bought my first camera in the mid-'70s. Initially, it was a backup for our travel diaries and then I began to realise that my perspectives were quite different from those of Hugh. His forte is nature, mine is people, particularly women and children. Besides, the difference in our heights makes for different angles and trigger individual memories that we blend into our writing.

Given your pheasant shooting record of two birds a day during season, Hugh, what dissuaded you from hunting for good?

“We’ve had a moderating influence on each other but we still have occasional differences of opinion that we either sort out or incorporate into our writing as ‘the other point of view!’”

There wasn’t any single incident that put me off *shikar*. It was the attitude of the new hunters. I used a shotgun with just two cartridges in the double barrels. I had to reload before firing. I was dismayed to find that hunters were using pump action guns, which, like revolvers, allow shot after shot to be fired and you don’t have to be skilled. Besides, I began to realise that upsetting the balance of nature endangers all life. It was a gradual realisation than a sudden revelation. This led to our first book, *The Man-eater of Nunihat*, based largely on my father’s experiences in the jungles of Bihar. In it we tried to bring out our belief that animals prey on man only after humans have injured them or threatened their survival in some way. Colleen and I now ‘shoot’ with our cameras!

In the absence of any precedent in travel writing in India, tell us about your first piece with details of who took care of what?

Both: The flippant answer we give to the frequently asked question, ‘Why did you choose travel writing?’ is, “Because Colleen wanted to travel and Hugh wanted to write, and becoming travel writers was the obvious solution”. In fact, there is a large amount of truth in that reply.

He: I had visited many countries as a naval officer; Colleen hadn’t. Then, we noticed groups of foreigners being given the ‘full *aarti* and garlands’ treatment and being shepherded around our land by tourism officials. We were told that they were foreign travel writers. When we probed further and read what they had written, we realised that we wrote better English. So when we were still dating each other, we discussed possible subjects during our evening walks. We sent articles to *Eve’s Weekly*, *The Mirror* and *Cocktail Magazine*. To our delight, they were accepted. To our greater delight, we received cheques. It was Colleen who picked out the most promising travellers’ tales from my sailors’ stories, which were suitably spiced to impress her! It would have been quite unacceptable for us to write as the unmarried Hugh Gantzer and Colleen Adie. We published those articles under a ‘Hugh Gantzer’ byline. How times have changed!

How did the travel column in *The Indian Express* get initiated in 1977?

Both: By sheer audacity! We saw an op-ed column in the paper written by KGG Nambiar. We had, by that time, travelled quite a lot and felt that the column had left

much unsaid. We wrote to the editor Malgaonkar, who was then the doyen of the Indian press, and offered him a 2,500-word article. We even suggested that he could, if necessary, delete the crossword to fit in our article! When our friends learnt what we had done, they were shocked; they felt it was wrong to have the temerity to write such a letter to the most powerful editor in India. To their surprise, and ours, he wrote back to us and said he could not carry an article of 2,500 words but would we consider reducing it to two articles of 1,200 words each? This is what we did, though our friends said that this was just a polite way of fobbing us off. Ten days or so later, ‘The Two Faces of Tourism’ appeared on the last two columns of the editorial page of all editions of *The Indian Express*, with an announcement that our column would be appearing every fortnight. It continued for a number of years and through many changes of editors, with a brief hiatus during the Emergency because Indira Gandhi choked the supply of newsprint to the paper. It resumed afterwards and ran till we discontinued it when we were asked to reduce it to 500 words because the paper had been redesigned.

What is important while pursuing a niche genre like travel writing?

Both: Take nothing for granted, particularly glossy brochures. Question, cross-check, research, be original. We don’t restrict ourselves to asking ‘where’ and ‘when’. Our most insightful inputs come when we ask ‘why’ and ‘how’. A travel writer’s greatest asset is credibility. Don’t allow this to be compromised by silky-smooth, gift-bearing PR folk. Their job is to create alluring pies in the sky. Your job is to present magical reality because, ultimately, at the heart of all reality lies magic.

Do you think the genre has matured in India?

Both: It has certainly evolved, as access to information has expanded exponentially. For one thing, it has branched into three main streams. There is brochure writing, which is rah-rah-rah about all the sponsors’ products. Few people believe all that such writing promotes. But like campaign promises, they make people aware of the product. Then there is the purely experiential chronicler who relies on the inputs of her five senses. If done skilfully, it hooks the reader and is very popular with many backpackers. Finally, there is travel writing for the informed traveller, many of whom are senior executives,

“Take nothing for granted. Our most insightful inputs come when we ask ‘why’ and ‘how’. A travel writer’s greatest asset is credibility. Don’t allow this to be compromised.... Your job is to present magical reality because, ultimately, at the heart of all reality lies magic”

opinion makers and silvers, but they also include an increasing number of young Netizens who see more in travel than a need to just be there, do that. These readers are interested in all facets of their destination, particularly its history and what has made its environment and its people into what they are today. We prefer writing for such travellers. They are questioning and challenging but once they like your writing, they’re loyal. We also play a role as advisors to the travel and hospitality industry. At the start of our writing career, we were the first to state that Kerala’s backwaters are a high potential tourism resource. The state minister of tourism at the time scoffed at our idea. Today, the backwaters have become a prime tourism product of the state.

How did *Looking Beyond with Hugh and Colleen Gantzer* for Doordarshan come about?

Both: Because of our late mother, the very perceptive and persuasive Maisie Gantzer. She saw an interview with the former DG of Doordarshan, Bhaskar Ghose, on television. At dinner, she remarked “I like him. He seems level-headed, clean and creative. Why don’t you offer him your own TV travel programme?” Mum managed to convince us. So we contacted Ghose, and were frank about our lack of TV knowhow. To compensate for our technical ignorance, he introduced us to four registered Doordarshan producers: K Bikram Singh for the six northern episodes, K Hariharan for the South, Robeen Ghosh for the East and Ronnie Screwvala for the West. They were hardcore professionals in their field, so were we in ours. Conflicts were inevitable. But as we had virtual *carte blanche* to make the series our way, and we oversaw every bit of the process from location shooting through rough-cuts, script writing, delivering the voice over and approving the final version, we had the last word. We broke a number of TV shibboleths, structured the episodes as we did our travel articles and produced travel documentaries that are still remembered, decades later.

From Rudyard Kipling and Somerset Maugham to Isaac Asimov and Arthur C Clarke, the range of your favourite writers is expansive. What draws you to them?

Both: We like to be challenged by new ideas, which is why tourism drew us. Science fiction, for instance,

has predicted a number of innovations, including geo-stationary communication satellites. Our personal library has various encyclopaedias and authoritative thought-provoking books ranging from anthropology and archaeology through mysticism, mythology and religion to Zen and zoology. For relaxation, now, we’re dipping into a book on Sikh traditions, the *Tirukkural* and *The First Firangis*. On Christmas 2015, we gave ourselves Stephen Hawking’s *The Universe in a Nutshell*, the sequel to his *A Brief History of Time*. We share his view that ‘Our quest for discovery fuels our creativity in all fields’.

While working on other titles, was the departure from travel writing creatively challenging?

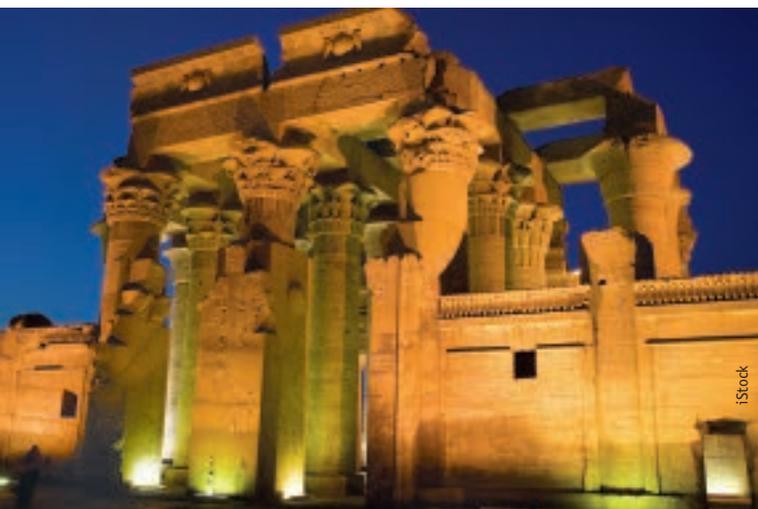
Both: Conversations form a very important part of our lives. Our writing grows out of our conversations with each other, possibly triggered by a news item, a piece of music we might have heard over breakfast because we collect music from all over the world, something that had caught our attention in a telecast like the recent discovery of *Homo naledi*, a new species of human ancestors from an African cave. We have no difficulty in switching genres. We have authored histories, thrillers, science fiction, fantasies, hunting tales, a book on tantra, a coffee-table book on the iconic Hotel Ashok in Delhi and historical novels, besides travel-based books. We’ve also written thousands of articles for over 40 national and international newspapers and magazines and have won two international, two national, two state and two city awards, plus a number of professional awards for our writings. Every year adds experiences, which in turn enhance the matrix, the mother lode of our creativity.

Tell us about your historical novels.

Both: Historical novels are challenging because your characters have to live in documented times and interact with reasonably well-researched characters and yet weave their own tales in this established tapestry. *The Year Before Sunset* is a sequel to *The Raj*, though we’ve not written about the Lynsdales in between. *The Alluring North* is one of a set of four books of our *Intriguing India* series describing 96 provocative destinations in our land, 24 each in the north, south, east and west. We’ve seen, photographed and written about more places in India than anyone else in its history because we entered travel

The Nile cruise

The multi-decked Marquis II was one of about 300 Nile cruise ships that cosset tourists down this surprisingly clean river. We boarded at Aswan in Upper Egypt's region of Nubia and swung gently into the stream to begin our voyage north. Sunset blinked into night with bright stars above as we headed for a blaze of golden radiance on the left bank. We joined our disembarking companions when we reached the impressive floodlit ruins of Kom Ombo. This was an unusual twin temple dating back to 1,500 BC. The left one was dedicated to Horus the Elder, personification of the Sun, the right to a primitive crocodile god, Sobek. Most Europeans had opted for the cruise to relax. Our few fellow Indians were friendly in a quiet and reserved way when we disembarked to visit what is, reputedly, the best preserved ancient temple in Egypt. Edfu temple is impressive with its two huge trapezium blocks rising on both sides of the entrance. Both blocks are decorated with large bas-reliefs glorifying its principle deity: Horus. Two enormous and superbly sculpted granite images of the emblem of Horus, the falcon, stand guard on either side of the entrance. But not all Egyptian art forms are so static. After dinner, on the last evening, we were entertained by a belly dancer with formidably gyrating assets. We disembarked, rather reluctantly, for the last time at Luxor. We got snatches of the guides' patter "...for centuries the capital of the empire... avenue of the sphinxes..." Even in its present ruined form, it dwarfs visitors with its enormous statues of Pharaoh Ramses II and pillars with papyrus-bud capitals. There are also faded Christian paintings on the walls from the time that the ruins were taken over by the Egyptian Christian Copts. The Copts claim that they are the descendants of the original Pharaonic people, who were here before the Arabs arrived, driven by the irresistible human urge to travel!



writing at the right time just when airlines had webbed India and state governments had discovered the benefits of inviting travel writers.

Niyogi has been your publisher for a long time now. How has the relationship evolved with time?

Both: Over the years Bikash and Tultul Niyogi have become our friends. Realistically, both sides realise that we do not need to have our work published. For their part, the Niyogis will publish a book only if it makes sound business sense. But if they do publish it, they will produce a book of the highest professional standards. They have never compromised on quality. Nor, for that matter, have we. Our relationship is based on warm, professional prudence and we'd like to keep it on such secure foundations.

Is ageing interfering with your multifaceted and hectic lives? What does ageing mean to you?

Both: Ageing does not interfere, it only enhances. We love dancing. We've jived and jitterbugged and rocked and rolled when that was appropriate. Now we feel that the slow fox trot and the waltz are more fitting. Ageing brings an increase of knowledge, a widening of experience, growing insights and a great burgeoning of empathy.

Is there a secret to the Gantzers' never diminishing adrenaline rush for travel and writing about it?

Both: Yes, we're never bored. We don't want to rust out; we want to wear out. Everyone starts ageing from the day they are born. If we have handled the trauma of birth, weaning and cutting our first teeth, we can handle silvering hair, arthritis, cataract and the rest of the ageing package. But a lack of enthusiasm is not part of the ageing package, it's a self-induced disability based on social prejudices—the way society expects you to act. We will not accept a socially convenient *sanyas*.

Do your child and grandchild complain about the two of you being on the move incessantly?

Both: No, they don't; they can't. We don't live in a joint family, not even in the same state. They lead their lives, we lead ours. In spite of that, or probably because of that, we're a close 21st century nuclear family. And that's the way we'd like to keep it! ✨

Experience

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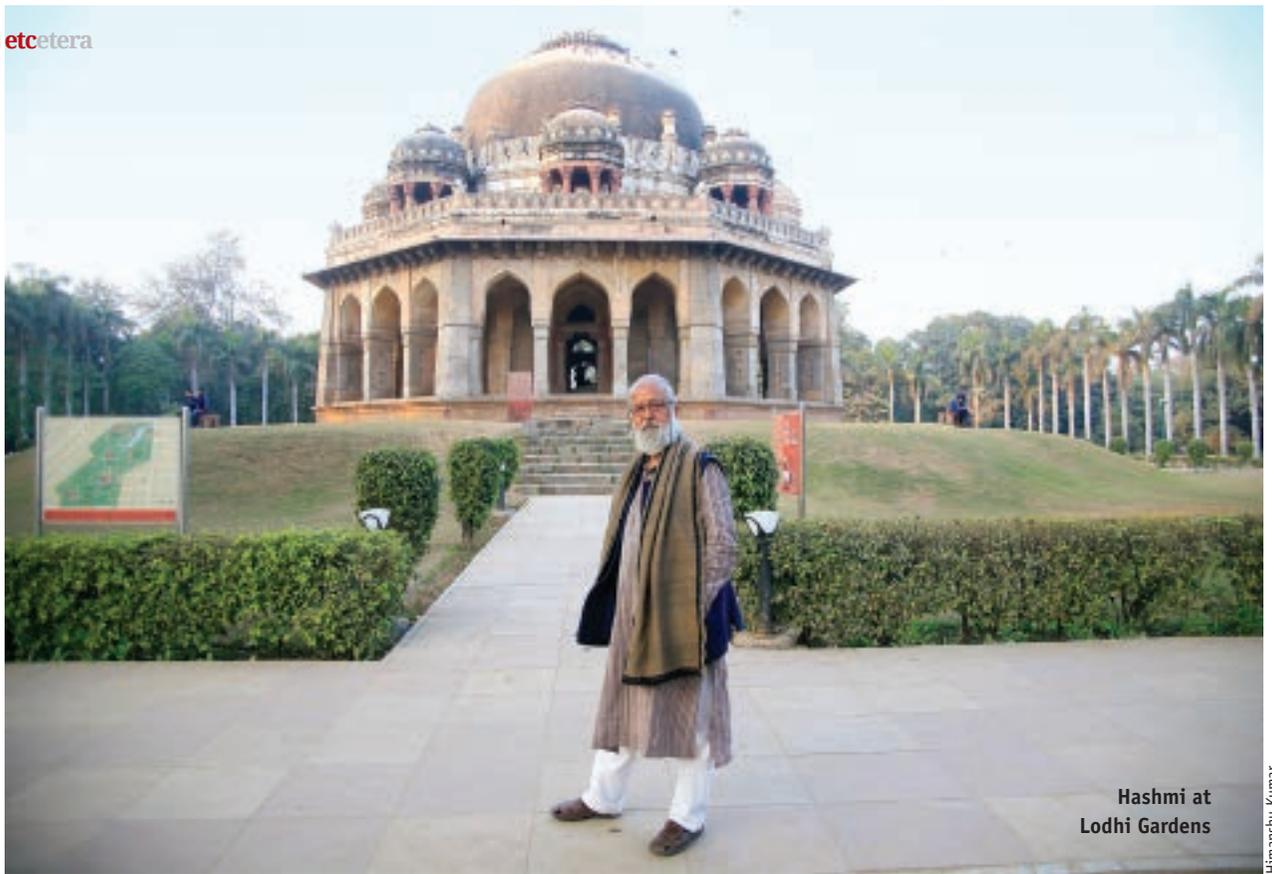
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THE DUNES COME ALIVE

The calming sand dunes of Jaisalmer will once again glitter as the Jaisalmer Desert Festival commences on 20 February. Organised by the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation, the festival has a quirky line-up of competitions such as longest moustache and fastest turban-tying, along with entertainment

festival

by snake charmers and folk musicians. There are multiple events featuring the 'ship of the desert'—camel polo, camel racing, camel dance. The festival concludes on the full moon night of 22 February, restoring the sand dunes to the quiet winds that govern it through the rest of the year.



Hashmi at
Lodhi Gardens

Himanshu Kumar

“Delhi is many cities rolled into one”

Delhi has strategic importance, the reason why successive regimes have chosen it as their capital. “Perhaps it was thought that the narrow fertile plain located between the arc of the Aravalli extending from the northwest to the southwest and by the Jamuna from the northeast to the southeast irrigated by numerous streams provided a measure of security from invading armies,” shares **Sohail Hashmi**, founder of ‘Heritage Walks with Sohail Hashmi’, who takes people on a historical journey through sites such as Shahjahanabad, Mehrauli and Tughlaqabad. Hashmi has been conducting these guided walks for over a decade, putting each monument, sculpture and carving in context. An MPhil in geography and regional development, he has worked with shop hands, unorganised youth, slum dwellers and head-load workers. He has also worked for several TV channels before starting off as a freelancer, conceptualising, researching, scripting and producing documentaries on literacy, the history of Urdu and forgotten freedom fighters. “Each of my heritage walks, lasting about three hours, is different because one continues to notice or read about newer details of these places—for instance, the old markets are constantly changing—and the more you know about an area, the more enriched your walk becomes,” Hashmi tells *Harmony-Celebrate Age* in an exclusive interview. Excerpts:

How did you get interested in history?

My interest in history dates back to the time my father, who apart from doing a lot of other things, dabbled in archaeology. He used to take us to the Purana Quila excavations in the mid-1960s and also showed us the seven cities of Delhi in chronological order, explaining how the true arch, the dome and the minaret gradually evolved. Some of this stayed with me and I began to wander around the many ruins in Delhi. Many years later, while working with schoolchildren as the director of Leap Years, a creative activity centre for children started by Rahul Bhandare, I realised that children growing up in Delhi knew nothing of its history and traditions. I began to read up and started The Discover Delhi Walks for kids. Over time, parents began to ask me to show them the city they too hadn’t seen.

heritage

How are your walks different from conventional tours by guides?

I try to show how the techniques of buildings and available building materials contribute to the look and feel of the architecture of different periods. I also show how different styles did not appear suddenly but evolved as part of a process of adaptation, assimilation and appropriation

of diverse resources. I try to place major architectural movements as part of larger political, social and cultural processes and separate myth from history. In these many years, I have realised that people really want to understand our history and perhaps my walks give them a perspective that appears to be unprejudiced.

In an age of development, why is it important to preserve heritage structures?

In order to find out how much you have 'progressed', it is always good to know the path you took. The past is a benchmark; it is also your heritage. We would not be where we are today if we had not taken this path. There is much in the past that we can learn from. For instance, none of the seven cities of Delhi drew water from the Jamuna for drinking. They relied on wells, step-wells, *kund* and reservoirs. In other words, they stored rainwater and tapped into the subsoil for more than a thousand years. This is almost 80 per cent of the time that this city has existed. The British began to tap into the river in 1880 and in the past 125 years, we have killed the Jamuna because we have refused to learn from the past.

There are 2,000 listed structures in Delhi. Only 22 per cent are protected. The development versus conservation argument has been created by land sharks, real-estate developers and those who only see land as a commodity. All over India, there are a little over 3,000 centrally protected monuments. Compare this with the UK, where the figure is 20,000. During the period between January and June 2014, while we had 7.5 million foreign visitors, Great Britain attracted 16.4 million foreign visitors. Doesn't this show how progress and heritage conservation can not only coexist, but help each other as well?

What do you miss most about the old days?

What I miss is the uninterrupted view of the skyline that has ceased to be. It has been replaced by ugly skyscrapers, standing next to each other in complete and absolute disharmony with no effort to represent a continuum of architectural tradition and failing to represent a new architectural style. The metro and the mobile towers are a mere extension of non-aesthetic obtrusions that the skyscrapers represent. All over the world, the metro is run underground with stations looking like subway entries and even these are so designed that they merge with the dominant architecture of the surroundings. But this is not

the case of the metro in Delhi; amid sweeping corridors formed with white Corinthian pillars, the granite surfaces of the metro station and connected facilities stick out as sore thumbs.

You have also been conducting special street food tours. How does the food define the city?

The tradition of eating out is not very old. Most old Delhi restaurants, like Karim's, came up at the time of the Dilli Durbar of 1911 and the shifting of the colonial capital from Calcutta in 1912. Eating out was considered *infra dig* and even if you favoured a dish, you bought it and took it home to eat with the family. The shopkeepers who spent their entire day in the market and their clients who came from all over were the people who patronised these eating joints. The cult of eating out has slowly evolved in the post-Independence period and the biggest patrons of non-vegetarian street food are those people who love to eat kebabs and

other char-grilled items but come from families that are traditionally vegetarian. The increasing influx of tourists, both internal and external, and the ease of access to the old city thanks to the metro have led to increasing demand for the traditional delicacies. If food defines the city, Delhi is many cities rolled into one. You only need to know where to go. With the Delhiwallahs exploring international cuisine and varied Indian flavours, the food scene is beginning to enter an extremely exciting phase.

Delhi was pulled out of the race for the UNESCO Heritage List fearing that the tag would obstruct infrastructure work. What are your views on this?

The argument that a heritage label for Shahjahanabad in old Delhi and Lutyens' Bungalow Zone in New Delhi would be detrimental for infrastructural development is a facetious one. The area that was to come under the heritage city zone is under 6 per cent of the total area of Delhi as it exists today. In any case, no new building activity is permitted in this area primarily because there is no space and existing laws prevent new construction in both zones. In fact, if the overhanging wires and encroachments of the past 100 years were to be removed from Shahjahanabad and all wholesale traders were moved out, Shahjahanabad could be developed into a living heritage city like Venice. Unfortunately, those who sit in judgement and take such hasty decisions fail to understand that heritage because it cannot be divided along religious lines. They also fail to see how heritage tourism can become one of the biggest sources of employment in India and evolve into a major source for earning precious foreign exchange.

"In order to find out how much you have 'progressed', it is always good to know the path you took. The past is a benchmark; it is also your heritage"



Courtesy: Bhau Daji Lad Museum

A stitch in time

Like many dying traditional handicraft, an intricate form of needlework known as the Chamba Rumal (embroidered squares of cloth from the Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh) was on the verge of extinction. In 1995, the Delhi Crafts Council (DCC) took it upon itself to revive this craft. Using the inherited skill of Chamba women, the DCC recreated original Pahari miniature designs collected from museums across the country smooth hand-woven muslin. These exquisite *rumal* were on display at an exhibition titled *Chamba Rumal: Life to a Dying Art* at the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum in Mumbai last month. “The objective of our work is to spread awareness that Chamba Rumal is more than just embroidery that you see on clothes or bags,” says Anjana Somany who heads the Chamba Rumal project at DCC. “We sell a limited collection to fund the project.”

When the rhythm stops

A haven for music aficionados since 1948, South Mumbai’s cultural icon Rhythm House will down its shutters on 28 February. A one-stop-shop for everything musical, Rhythm House kept evolving and expanding as the decades demanded, stocking vinyls, cassette tapes and compact discs. It satisfied the city’s thirst for Western music at a time when foreign imports were tightly controlled, and always had an eclectic collection of Indian music on

its stands. When the digital age kicked in and standalone music and bookstores around the country started shutting shop, Rhythm House stood alone with pride—setting up its own Internet portal where loyalists from the world over and new-age music lovers could order to suit their taste. But now with reduced footfall owing to changing technology and piracy, it’s time to bid adieu. Goodbye Rhythm House, and thank you for the music.

Haresh Patel





Sahil Sachdev

CENTRE STAGE

After a two decade-long hiatus, veteran actors Pankaj Kapur, 61, and Supriya Pathak Kapur, 54, are back to theatre. With Kapur on stage and Pathak working behind the scenes, the couple staged their first production—a dramatic reading of *Dopehri*, a novella by Kapur—at the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai, on 17 January. Essaying the character of Amma Bi, a lonely lady who lives alone in her haveli in Lucknow, Pankaj carried the audience along from fear and loneliness to her self-discovery at 65. “When Pankaj conceived the idea for the story 20 years ago, he just went into his room and started writing,” says Pathak. “Four days later, he came out with the novella, which is a very special story.” Fittingly, this is the first production by their new theatre production company Theatreon which, she says, “is something we’ve always wanted to do. And with our whole family interested in stage acting, we’re hoping this will be a good opportunity for us all to work together.”

A LARGE CANVAS

From painting canvases and large-scale murals to setting up a successful practice as an architect, legendary artist Satish Gujral, 90, is showcasing his diverse artistic career a solo show *A Brush with Life*, presented by The Gujral Foundation. “Crucially, memory as metaphor shadows his work, with characters appearing as leitmotifs across the many mediums he was to work with over the succeeding six decades: sketches to collages, abstract paintings to narrative depictions of the human condition,” shares curator Pramod K G. Juxtaposed with rare archival images, primarily by photographer Madan Mahatta, one can view works in progress, architectural models being drawn up and vintage images that will recall works that have long left public memory. The show opened on 21 January and runs till 20 February at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.



Painting by Satish Gujral, self-portrait, 1956

The fine print



Jogen Chowdhary



Jyoti Bhatt



K G Subramanyan

In a campaign to accord the overlooked art of printmaking its due status, veteran artist-printmaker Kashinath Salve presented an exhibition titled *111 Platographic Expressions* at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, last month. On display were the platographic prints of paintings by 111 eminent Indian artists. “We conducted this exhibition to educate galleries and art connoisseurs on printmaking as an art,” says Salve, 71, former head of painting and drawing at Mumbai’s J J School of Art. Plate lithography or platography is a new technique where an artist’s drawing or painting is transferred onto a metal plate that can be used to reproduce fine and valuable prints. “It is a fairly new technique carried out by specialised platographic artists and must be recognised as such,” adds Salve, who travelled the country over four years, meeting legendary artists such as K G Subramanyan, Akbar Padamsee and Krishna Reddy, whose works feature in the exhibition.



istock

A red, red rose



A timeless proclamation of love, this ballad by **Robert Burns** (1759-1796) is a form of verse adapted for singing in the days when poetry existed mainly in spoken rather than written form

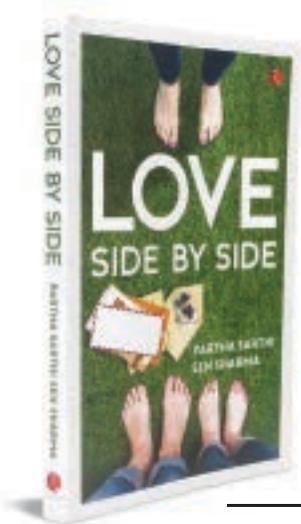
*O my Luv'e like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luv'e like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.*

*As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luv'e am I;
And I will luv'e thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.*

*Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luv'e thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.*

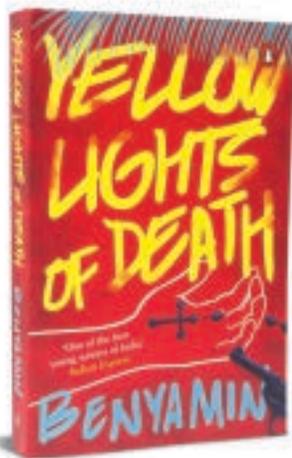
*And fare thee weel, my only Luv'e,
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my Luv'e,
Tho' it ware ten thousand mile.*

Widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland, Burns was also the pioneer of the Romantic movement in literature



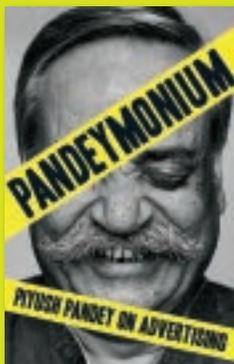
If there is one emotion that is the most written, discussed and read about, it is love. Not surprisingly, **Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma**, an Indian Administrative Service officer currently based in Lucknow, dwells upon it for his debut fiction **LOVE SIDE BY SIDE (Rupa Publications; ₹ 295, 216 pages)**. The narrative, told from Pankaj's perspective, not just speaks of his love for Riya, and later Kajal, but discusses his journey from college to finding a job, and finally his calling in life. The writing is simple, graceful and matter of fact. Without getting preachy, the author manages to convey that you can never plan your life; it always has a plan of its own. Rather than giving readers a happy ever after, the writer keeps the ending open, reminding us once again that life has a way of surprising us.

Malayalam writer **Benyamin** attempts to traverse new frontiers with his whodunit **YELLOW LIGHTS OF DEATH (Penguin; ₹ 399; 385 pages)**, translated by **Sajeev Kumarapuram**. Akin to a Dan Brown thriller, this is a murder mystery woven around the Chaldean Syrian Christian community of Kerala with a secret room filled with the Gospels of Thomas, Magdalene and Judas. Meticulously structured, the novel has a story within a story, with two writers, two mysteries and two churches in Diego Garcia and Udayamperoor (Kerala), mir-

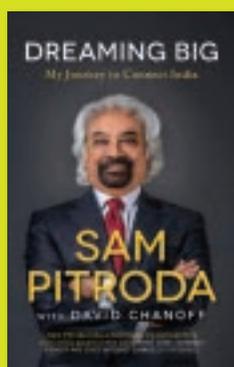


roring each other. The protagonist Christy Andrapp is an aspiring writer on the island of Diego Garcia. Traumatized at the death of two of his friends, he mails Benyamin the first part of his story with details of the murders. Benyamin and his friends must rely on the clues embedded in that part, and on their ingenuity and imagination alone, to secure the remaining part of the story. Though fast-paced, it pales in comparison to the author's heartwrenching debut *Aadujeevitham (Goat's Day)*, which was not just a huge bestseller but a watershed moment in Malayalam literature.

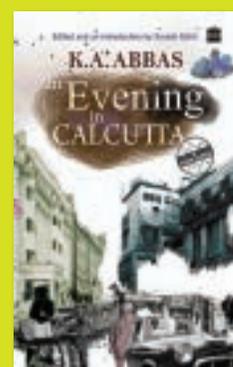
Also on stands



Pandeymonium
Piyush Pandey
Penguin; ₹ 799; 384 pages
Termed the holy grail of advertising, it gives a peek into the mind and creative genius of the master storyteller and ad guru.



Dreaming Big: My Journey to Connect India
Sam Pitroda
Penguin; ₹ 699; 304 pages
A heartwarming story of how Pitroda, synonymous with the telecommunication revolution in India under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi, hit rock bottom, only to rise again and make his fortune twice over.



An Evening in Calcutta - Stories
K A Abbas
HarperCollins; ₹ 299; 200 pages
An assortment of memorable stories by celebrated writer and award-winning filmmaker K A Abbas, it takes you through familiar territory to come up with startling truths.

Love at 60



The need to fall in love and be truly appreciated for what we are has nothing to do with age, says **Polly Young-Eisendrath**

I'm old by the standards of today's youth culture: I am over 60. And the love of my life, my husband and best friend of 26 years, has lost his mind as a result of early-onset Alzheimer's. At 63, he lives in a serene and comfortable residential care centre about an hour away. I live alone—with a big dog—in the Vermont countryside. Ed and I are divorced for financial and psychological reasons, but I go out to see him twice a week, a drive that takes me through the mountains at night, sometimes in the snow or rain. And yes, he recognises me and reaches out with warmth and need. He's a lovely soul, but our relationship is not fulfilling in any other way—except that I am happy for his happiness. Ironically, Ed is happier now than he has ever been in his life. He feels secure, his needs are taken care of, nothing is demanded of him, and he is busy with the daily activities of the centre.

I wouldn't say that I am lonely; my life is full. I have lots of fascinating things to do (largely because I still need to earn a living and my work is interesting) and two wonderfully feisty grown children and a grandchild. I travel a lot and have a busy schedule. I am vital and healthy and full of ideas about life and love. But I would like to see the world through someone else's eyes again. I would like to fall in love again.

It goes without saying that in many ways 'falling in love' is different after 55. There is more pressure to take the initiative in seeking out a long-term relationship. And finally, there is the time-consuming and always bedevilling task of coming to know ourselves before we can truly know someone else, a task which, in spite of all of our efforts and the increasing wisdom of age, seems to get more difficult and complex rather than easier as time passes.

My acquaintance with a love-candidate would always begin with a telephone conversation. Quite quickly,

I could tell if I liked the energy and intelligence of the speaker on the other end. If I liked what I heard, I would try to find a way to meet him in person. When we would finally meet—and in spite of our often extensive time on the phone—I always had the same first impression: This is a very OLD man.

None of us feels old inside; we have within us a vein of youth that never dies. In spite of those wrinkles I see in the mirror, I never picture myself as old. Thus, faced with a man my age (or older), he'd seem really old to me. I would have to slow down and remind myself that I also am in 'later life'. I would caution myself about the 'chemistry' thing, tell myself not to judge too quickly, and remember that conversation adds the real spice to life. I would settle into getting to know the guy.



Paradoxically and unexpectedly, what I discovered in this comprehensive inquiry into the lives of strangers was less about them than about me. When all is said and done, I value generosity, kindness, humour and optimism more than anything else. I have also learned something deeply touching about men: they are vulnerable, caring and want pretty much what I want, at least the ones who make it through the initial interview. 'They' aren't really 'they', but are truly 'we'—and I have come to embrace that in a new way. In our ageing bodies we really know how precious life is and how remarkable it is to meet a stranger who becomes an intimate friend. And it also becomes clear that falling in love is something we feel as keenly as ever. There is a vein of agelessness that runs through our being that refuses to feel 'old' in relation to a new love. Fluttering hearts, sweaty palms, laughing too hard and worries about being misunderstood or unattractive don't go away with age. Nor does the desire to be truly known and seen and accepted as we are, just as we are.

A Jungian analyst, psychologist and the author of many books, Young is clinical associate professor of psychiatry and psychology at the University of Vermont



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Garam Dharam

At a time when heroines were sexed up and heroes preferred to go fully clothed, his rugged brawn appeal charmed an entire generation of moviegoers. In fact, Dharmendra's shirtless swagger around a sleep-feigning Meena Kumari in *Phool Aur Patthar* in 1966 ranks high among the sexually charged scenes in Hindi cinema. The movie went to become a golden jubilee hit, catapulting the actor to instant stardom.

Born in a Jat Sikh family in Punjab, Dharam Singh Deol arrived in Mumbai after winning the Filmfare New Talent Award. He made his debut with *Dil Bhi Tera Hum Bhi Tere*. Though he worked in a spate of movies after that, Lady Luck shined on him only with *Phool Aur Patthar*. With a bevy of films thereafter that showcased his range, including *Anupama*, *Bandini*, *Dil Ne Phir Yaad Kiya*, *Anpadh*, *Aaye Din Bahar Ke*, *Shikar*, *Yaadon Ki Baaraat*, *Resham Ki Dori*, *Mere Hamdam Mere Dost*, *Mera Gaon Mera Desh* and *Aaya Sawan Jhoom Ke*, Dharmendra showed signs of coming into his own. However, the best was yet to be. His collaborations with Hrishikesh Mukherjee in *Satyakam*, where he played an idealist torn between his ideals and the changing world, and his comic turn as Dr Parimal Tripathi



Courtesy: Dharmendra

in *Chupke Chupke* easily rate as the finest in his oeuvre. Though he was paired with leading ladies of his time, including Meena Kumari, Saira Banu, Nutan, Sharmila Tagore, Mumtaz, Asha Parekh and Zeenat Aman, Dharmendra's most successful screen outings were with Hema Malini, who went on to become his second wife. They were seen in films such as *Seeta Aur Geeta*, *Raja Jani*, *Sharafat*, *Naya Haseen Main Jawaan*, *Jugnu*, *Dost*, *Chacha Bhatija*, *Azaad* and *Sholay*.

After a long hiatus, Dharmendra made a comeback in films with *Life In A Metro*, *Apne*, *Johnny Gaddaar*, *Yamla Pagla Deewana* and *Tell Me o Khuda*. His production company

Vijayta Films launched his sons Sunny and Bobby Deol—from his first marriage to Parkash Kaur—in *Betaab* and *Barsaat* respectively, and nephew Abhay Deol in *Socha Na Tha*. Considered Bollywood's original He-Man, Dharmendra's bloodthirsty refrain 'kutte kaminey...' is so ubiquitous that it's hard to fathom which film it appeared in first. Voted among the top seven best-looking men in the world in the mid-1970s, he remained pin-up material for many decades. In an essay, author and critic Mukul Kesavan observes that Dharmendra's towering talent got overlooked because the industry didn't know how to deal with his Greek god looks. Indeed, they don't make them like him anymore.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: FEBRUARY 1966

- On 2 February, *Go-Set*, Australia's first pop music newspaper, was launched in Melbourne.
- On 12 February, the Chinese Communist Party politburo issued recommendations for drastic reforms that led to the Cultural Revolution.
- On 15 February, 17 people were killed in a tunnel near Locarno in Switzerland, when a drilling crew pierced a pocket of poisonous underground gas.
- On 22 February, the Soviet Union launched two dogs into orbit around the Earth on board satellite Kosmos 110.

“ To all, I would say how mistaken they are when they think that they stop falling in love when they grow old, without knowing that they grow old when they stop falling in love

—Columbian novelist Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014)

CONDESPLAINING

pp. Explaining in a condescending way, particularly from a point of view of power or privilege.

Example. 'splaining (whitesplaining, mansplaining, etcetera, known more generally as privsplaining or **condesplaining**) is a thing privileged people often do as a result of a culturally ingrained expectation that their opinion is inherently valuable regardless of actual expertise.

—Xenologer, "Oppression Olympics", Dissent of a Woman, 17 January 2014

Legacyquel

n. A movie that continues a long-running franchise, but with a younger actor taking over the lead role.

Example. Considering how well *Creed*, a movie that passes the torch from one '80s action icon to a new generation, is being received by everyone, I wonder if the producers of *Kickboxer: Vengeance* are regretting making it a remake instead of a **legacyquel**.

—Peter Hall, "Quick 'Kickboxer: Vengeance' trailer gets sweaty with Dave Bautista, Gina Carano, and Jean-Claude Van Damme", Movies.com, 2 December 2015

Oystertecture

n. The practice of encouraging the growth of oyster reefs to help filter impurities from water and reduce the intensity of onshore waves.

Example. It's an eco-friendly solution, for sure, but restoring oyster habitat isn't the easiest or cheapest thing to do. New York architect and Columbia University professor Kate Orff floated this idea years ago, coining the term **oystertecture** in a lauded TED talk.

—Svati Kirsten Narula, "How oysters can protect houses from hurricanes", The Atlantic, 5 May 2014

Offline

v. To disconnect, temporarily or permanently, from all online activities.

Example. It is part of a burgeoning movement known as **offlining** in which white-collar workers shut down smartphones and Kindles for weeks, days or at least hours in the battle against the eye twitch and dry mouth that psychologists identify as an early sign of net addiction.

—"Digital detox' offers time out for net addicts", The Australian, 10 July 2013

iHunch

n. The forward curve of the upper back caused by constantly looking down at a smartphone or similar device.

Example. If you're in a public place, look around: How many people are hunching over a phone? Technology is transforming how we hold ourselves, contorting our bodies into what the New Zealand physiotherapist Steve August calls the **iHunch**.... How else might iHunching influence our feelings and behaviours?

—Amy Cuddy, "Your iPhone is ruining your posture—and your mood", The New York Times, 12 December 2015

Oven-ready

adj. Capable of starting or being implemented immediately.

Example. The 500 pages that make up this draft bill will form part of what Labour hope will be an **oven-ready** plan to dramatically change councils if political agreement can be reached after the election.

—Nick Servini, "Councils shake-up could save £ 650 m, Andrews says", BBC News, 24 November 2015

Google dorking

pp. Using advanced Google search commands to gain unauthorised access to sensitive or private information on a web server.

Example. Google dorking, or Google hacking, is one way malicious hackers can gain access to valuable information about a company. It involves using advanced commands in Google to find specific data sets that companies, as well as government agencies, have unwittingly made accessible by storing them on public-facing web servers.

—Chris Hadnagy, "How dorkable is your business?", *Entrepreneur*, 4 May 2015

FOGO

n. The dread of going out, particularly if one is tired from previous socialising; the desire to not attend a popular event that is over-hyped or over-commercialised.

Example. I believe that I have developed the opposite of FOMO, in fact: I have a case of **FOGO**, or Fear of Going Out. Okay, well not literally a fear of going out. I still love a party. Always have and always will. But I have an active non-desire to attend the mass-Instagrammed events that clog up all my social-media feeds on several-week-long intervals throughout the year.

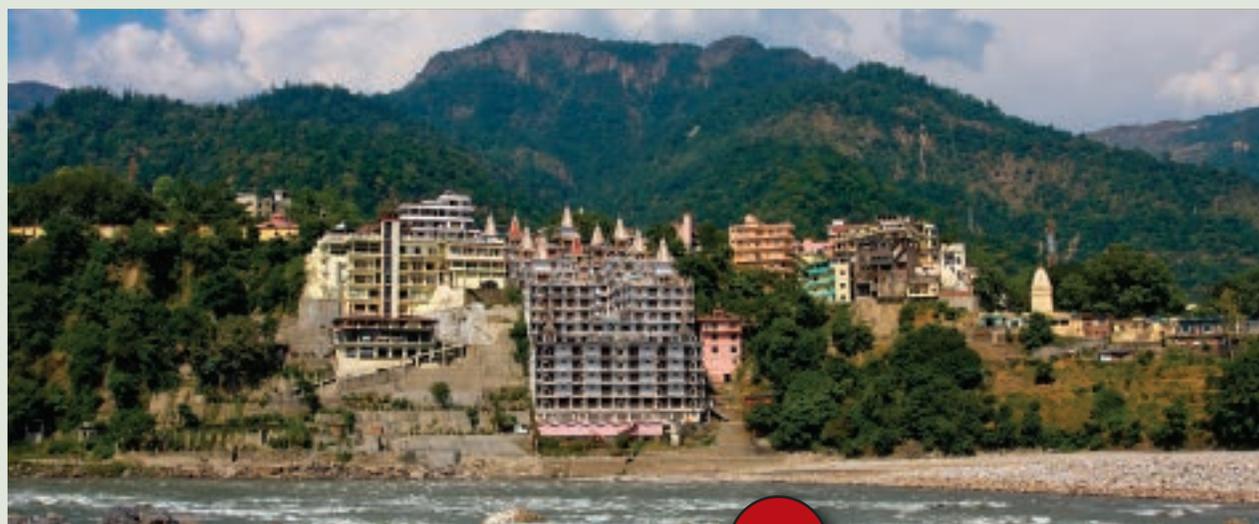
—Alexis Swerdloff, "FOGO is the new FOMO", *New York Magazine*, 17 April 2015

Biononymity

n. The quality or state of having one's biological data anonymous or private.

Example. Biononymity. It's not just cameras, ID-card scanners in buildings, and license-plate readers that are tracking our every move. As DNA analysis gets better and cheaper, our lack of 'biological anonymity' is coming to the forefront.

—Lucy Bernholz, "Philanthropy's 2015 buzzwords: From 'Effective Altruism' to 'Worm Wars'", *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 9 December 2015



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BUZZ

The great outdoors

Calling all nature lovers—here's a great chance for you to embrace the outdoors. A Mumbai-based organisation established by Divya Pai and Sherwin Rebello, The Land Out There plans laidback trips that give travellers plenty of time to rest and enjoy nature on their own terms—on a budget of ₹ 1,000 per day. To get the 'local' experience, travelling

is done on public transport. Previous destinations include Rann of Kutch, Kasol, Leh, Ladakh, Manali, Hampi, Gokarna, the Andamans, Goa, Uttarakhand and Kerala as well as weekly open-air camps near Mumbai. For more information, contact Sherwin Rebello on (0) 9833494963 or visit thelandoutthere.com/destinations/

“I want to avoid mishaps and save lives”

Gangadhar Tilak Katnam, 67, Hyderabad, fixes potholes in the city

In the course of a normal day, **Gangadhar Tilak Katnam** gets many calls from concerned citizens across Hyderabad when they spot potholes on city roads. Over the past six years, this 67 year-old retired railway employee has filled up nearly 1,500 potholes in various parts of the city. The moment of realisation, Katnam says, dawned when his car went into a pothole in 2010, splashing muddy rainwater on schoolchildren. “Pained at the incident, the very next day I purchased six truckloads of material at ₹ 5,000 and personally filled up about 60 to 70 potholes on the 300-m Hydershakote Village Road,” he shares. Katnam decided to walk further down that path by fixing potholes he came across while crisscrossing the city. Initially a one-man army, he soldiered alone for nearly two-and-a-half years, filling up 550 potholes, before registering *Shramadaan* as an NGO and non-profit organisation in June 2013. Funds are sourced from his pension; Katnam retired as senior section engineer (signal) of South Central Railway in October 2008. Today, his reputation is such that volunteers step in to help when they find him at work. “I never call anyone,” he says. “Observing me, people come forward to participate in *shramadaan*.” He buys material from road contractors and keeps spare gunny bags in his car to fill with tar lumps that he comes across while travelling. Though he joined Infotech Enterprises in Manikonda as consultant software design engineer in January 2010, Katnam left the job, as he was disturbed reading about the spate of accidents caused by potholes in the city. He decided to make fixing potholes his sole mission in life. It wasn’t an easy decision to make as his wife wasn’t particularly happy. Even his son, Ravi Kiran, who works in the US, rushed home to stop his father from spending all his money, time and energy. Kiran changed his mind, however, after witnessing an accident caused by a pothole. He is now extremely supportive of Katnam’s work and even backs him financially. “I want to see ‘pothole-free’ roads across the country,” says Katnam, hoping to surmount every roadblock on his way to making our roads safer.

—Shyamola Khanna

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