

FREEDOM 69

harmony

AUGUST 2016 ₹ 40

celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

ENCOUNTER

Olympic hero
Gurbux Singh

PHOTO FEATURE

Tale of the
Tricolour

MY INDIA

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE EYES OF
MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN

FLAVIA AGNES

+

Amal Allana | Jahar Das | Dr Prem Shankar Goel
V K B Nair | Dr S Y Quraishi | Dr Himanshi Shelat
Dr Lalji Singh | Shuvaprasanna | Dr L Subramaniam

“After retirement, I’ve taken up socializing as my new job.”

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The CANCER CHALLENGE

It may be the biggest public health challenge of our times. But cancer can be challenged.

For my team at Kokilaben Hospital, this is an imperative. This month, along with the launch of EDGETM, currently the world's most powerful stereotactic radio surgery tool, for the first time in Asia, we will formally announce our initiative to set up 18 cancer care centres in rural Maharashtra. In the first phase, we propose to open centres in Akola, Sholapur and Gondia. This is a critical need in a country like India, where there is such a paucity of treatment facilities beyond our cities. With these centres, we aim to bridge the gulf in availability of cancer care.

Equally significant is the gulf that needs to be bridged when it comes to awareness of cancer. Understanding the spirit behind the phrase, 'cancer is just a word, not a sentence,' we must be proactive, not reactive, about the disease. While age is a definite risk factor—with three out of four cancers found in people over the age of 55—we can do much to reduce our risk, whether we are young or silver.

The cardinal rule, of course, is to live healthy: eat right, exercise often, and empower yourself and those around



Dabboo Ratnani

you to make the right choices to keep the disease at bay. Moreover, periodic medical checkups are essential for early detection—from mammograms and pap smears to prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests, chest x-rays and colonoscopies, a host of diagnostic screenings are now available. In fact, barring a few exceptions, most cancers, if detected early, are treatable. After treatment, too, whether you are cured completely or need to live with cancer, there are now a host of 'come-back-to-life' avenues, from counselling to web forums and support groups where you can get the information you need while sharing your thoughts, experiences, hopes and concerns with others.

Ultimately, it's vital to let go of the fear and dread that the disease summons, to open yourself to hope and revival. While you do not choose cancer, you can definitely choose your response to it. Choose wisely.

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

Harmony Celebrate Age—August 2016 Volume 13 Issue 3

Publisher **Dharmendra Bhandari** Editor **Tina Ambani** Deputy Editor **Arati Rajan Menon** Assistant Editor **Sai Prabha Kamath**
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Editorial & Marketing Offices: Reliance Centre, 1st floor, 19, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai-400001. Tel: 91-22-30327115 (Editorial), 30327102 (Marketing). Email: contact.mag@harmonyindia.org **Printed and published** by Dharmendra Bhandari on behalf of the owners, Harmony for Silvers Foundation. **Printed** at Thomson Press India Ltd, 18-35, Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007 (Haryana). **Published** at Reliance Energy Centre, Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400055. **Disclaimer:** The material provided by *Harmony* is not a substitute for professional opinions. Readers are advised to seek appropriate advice from qualified and licensed professionals in the concerned field. © Harmony for Silvers Foundation. All rights reserved worldwide. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. *Harmony* does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material. www.harmonyindia.org

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Presenting 10 midnight's children and their 'idea of India'

Cover photograph: iStock



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LESS IS MORE

T V Srinivasan is a messiah of the disabled and underprivileged in Bengaluru

GOING, GOING, GONE!

Silvers in Secunderabad raise funds for children with a jumble sale



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

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

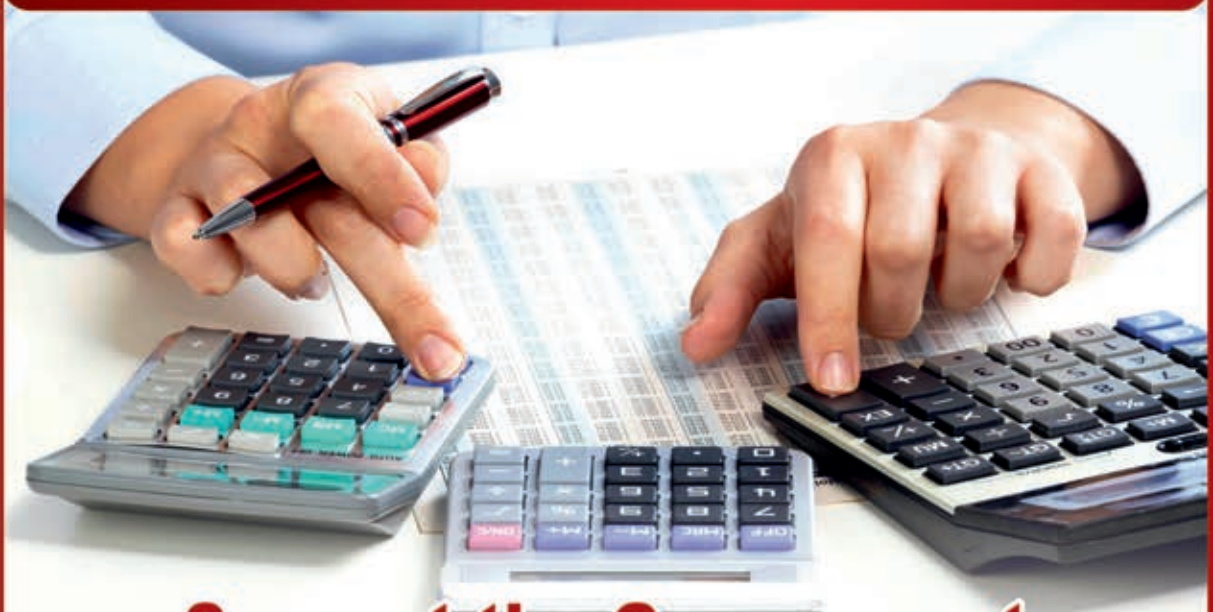
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column one

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions, I should point to India," wrote German scholar Max Mueller. Just one of the many rich tributes to our country you'll find. But how much do we Indians ponder upon the idea of India? And just how far have we come as a nation? There are no simple answers to these questions—only thoughts and perspectives. And who better to share these than our 'Midnight's Children', 10 women and men born the same year as our nation, with diverse backgrounds and stories, united in excellence in their chosen careers and an abiding love for India. Leading this Independence Day special is activist-lawyer Flavia Agnes who overcame a difficult personal history to become one of India's most respected public advocates for the rights of women.

Further, we take you to the Karnataka Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangh in Bengeri, Hubli, to show you the exacting process by which our tricolour is made. You may be surprised to learn that this nondescript unit is the sole producer of the Indian flag since 2006, when it received certification by the Bureau of Indian Standards.

And in the run-up to Rio, we meet former India hockey captain and Olympic gold medallist Gurbux Singh, who looks back at his glory days on the field. Asserting that "good times are in sight", the octogenarian predicts a quarterfinal showing for the national team at Rio. Go India!

—Arati Rajan Menon

Hi there! I just wanted to reach out and thank you for the 'Useful Links' page on your website, www.harmonyindia.org. I'm the community liaison for a senior centre in Olympia, Washington, and currently in the process of putting together a general health and ageing presentation for the members. I stumbled upon your page (thank you, Google), which served as such a great resource for me. I wanted to personally thank you. I also wanted to tell you about another great resource I found, a guide for seniors at dentalsolutionscreatingmiles.com/health-and-wellness-guide-for-seniors. Hopefully, you find it as helpful as I did. Thank you once again!

Linda Williams

Via email

I participated in the *#mystylishtbest* contest conducted by *Harmony-Celebrate Age* for its 12th anniversary issue this June. I was impressed when the magazine was then sent to me, announcing that I was one of the eight winners. I was proud to see my picture artistically printed with a short and sweet write-up about my sense of style. Thank you for this honour.

Pankajam Balasundaram

Chennai

I am a huge fan of the television series *Sarabhai vs. Sarabhai*. The comic timing of all its characters has made me long for a second season. I was delighted when I heard the rumours of a second season; and when the confirmation came, it just made my day. I received your magazine on a day that was not going very well for me and it just lifted my spirits to see Ratna Pathak Shah on the cover. The lady is not only confident of her past but very grounded when it comes to what to expect from the country.



I appreciate you giving us content that is soulful and inspirational.

Satyendra Mirchandani

Pune

Brexit has undoubtedly opened a new can of worms for society at large, and consequently hit the nerve-centre of Europe. However, there is one aspect that is being debated in hushed tones: silvers in Europe feel it is impossible for them to turn a blind eye towards unbridled migration, which has encompassed large swathes of Europe. There is a nagging feeling among elders that the exchequer has blatantly subsidised expenses for migrants. The tide is turning on Britain; the 'Yes' camp is aghast at the refusal of certain sections for a unified block, but from a logical perspective the signs have been there for ages. Although they went to the extent of demanding a second referendum, the anger has already erupted and it will be one of the most tumultuous periods for Britain's citizens. If there is a chance of a second referendum, it may lead to an unpleasant situation. Silvers may feel their voice is being muffled. And with an ageing population, it will be extremely difficult to convince the naysayers.

Kishore Prabhu

Mumbai

inside

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➔ MEDIA WATCH



Photographs by Andria Lo / Chinatown Pretty

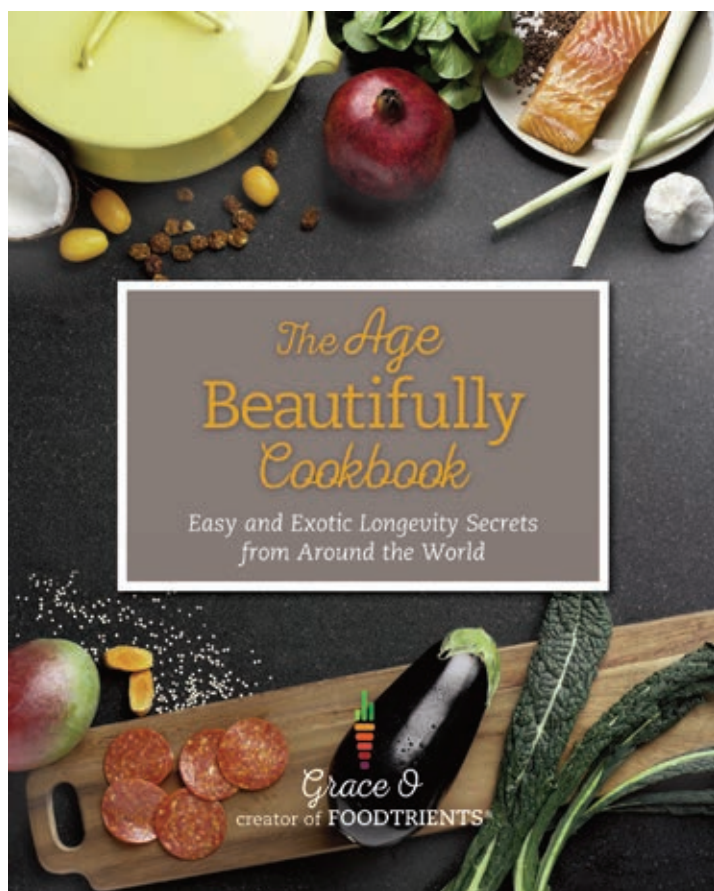


Fabulous in Frisco This June, we featured an exclusive interview with Ari Seth Cohen, whose blog *Advanced Style* has become a rage for its photographs of glamorous silvers in New York. Moving to the West Coast, now take a look at **Chinatown Pretty** (chinatownpretty.com), which "celebrates the street style of seniors living (and grocery shopping) in San Francisco's Chinatown". As website *citylab.com* reports, bloggers Valerie Luu and Andria Lo devote a few days each month to wandering the streets and scouting po-pos, or grandmas. "Chinese seniors make the best of urban life and public space," Luu and Lo tell the website. "They hold exercise classes in Washington Square Park, play Chinese chess and cards in Portsmouth Square. They utilise farmers' markets and neighbourhood grocery stores and walk or take public transportation everywhere. They really make the most of what urban life has to offer."





RECIPE FOR LONGEVITY: Here's a yummy way to live longer. Chef, restaurateur and cookbook author Grace O has served up *The Age Beautifully Cookbook: Easy and Exotic Longevity Secrets From Around the World* (Skyhorse Publishing) with over 100 recipes and useful facts on age-fighting fruits and veggies. You can buy it on amazon.in—the Kindle edition costs ₹ 1,328 while the hardcover version is ₹ 1,398.



LIFE'S LIKE THAT Columnist and former editor Michael Kinsley brings his trademark style and wit to *Old Age: A Beginner's Guide* (Tim Duggan Books). Diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1993, at the age of 43, he concealed his condition for many years—in the book, he wryly describes his experience of coping with the disease (and people's reaction to it) and struggling to retain his quality of life while accepting the inevitability of the progression of the disease. Despite being reflective in nature, Kinsley keeps the book light and witty, even jaunty. With regard to a dip in his scores on a memory test, he quips, "Depending on the condition of my brain, should I be looking for a good nursing home? Or should I try to find a worthwhile but relaxing job teaching journalism somewhere?" A worthy read—insightful yet easy on the soul.

Global resource

Working with NGOs, industry, academia and global agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) has launched a new online portal—www.ifa-fiv.org/Expert-Centre—featuring a directory of top experts in various disciplines related to age-related policy and practice. "The IFA is strengthening its global position as an organisation focused on positively changing age-related policies that improve the lives of older people," Dr Jane Barratt, Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing, tells media. "To do this we need to drive global education, collaboration and innovation with thought leaders across all sectors and disciplines."

Stay on the road

In the belief that silver drivers should not be summarily thrown off the roads but encouraged to drive on, the UK's The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has launched a website, olderdrivers.org. While traffic rules and signs differ world over, the site is worth a look for its information and advice to help silvers adapt to changes in their driving to stay safe.

Are you full of innovative ideas on how to make this world a better place? Or do you know someone who is? Here's your chance to realise your ideas and change the lives of underprivileged and disadvantaged people in India. Announcing the...

6TH ANNUAL ANJANI MASHELKAR INCLUSION INNOVATION AWARD WORTH ₹ 100,000

The International Longevity Centre is seeking entries from individuals or organisations with an idea, prototype or product, service or business, that will address the problems faced by disadvantaged people in India and offer a solution that can be implemented.

Last day for entries is
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Go to
www.award.ilcindia.org
to learn more

INDIA POST AND AADHAR: POST OFFICES ACROSS INDIA WILL SOON BE PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO SILVERS IN LINKING THEIR PENSION ACCOUNTS TO THEIR AADHAAR NUMBERS. THIS WILL BE DONE ON A PRIORITY BASIS. THERE ARE ABOUT 58 LAKH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONERS ACROSS INDIA.



istock

KERALA CARES: IN A PROGRESSIVE AND LAUDABLE MOVE, THE KERALA GOVERNMENT HAS PROPOSED A MONTHLY PENSION FOR TRANSGENDERS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60. AS NEWSPAPER *THE HINDU* REPORTS, STATE FINANCE MINISTER T M THOMAS ISSAC MADE THE PROPOSAL AS PART OF THE BUDGET FOR 2016-17, ADDING, "THIS BUDGET WISHES TO EXPRESS SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE IN THE THIRD GENDER GROUP." THE BUDGET ALSO PROPOSED TO INCREASE ALL WELFARE PENSIONS TO ₹ 1,000.

Silver agenda: In Mumbai, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has announced that it will open dedicated old-age homes and childcare centres in each of its 24 administrative wards. Its new 20-year Development Plan will include reservation of plots for this purpose. According to media reports, old-age homes, to be situated near residential areas, hospitals or gardens, will measure at least 1,000 sq m and feature day-care facilities as well as a dispensary and other recreational facilities.

1,17,00,000 +

25,00,000



80+



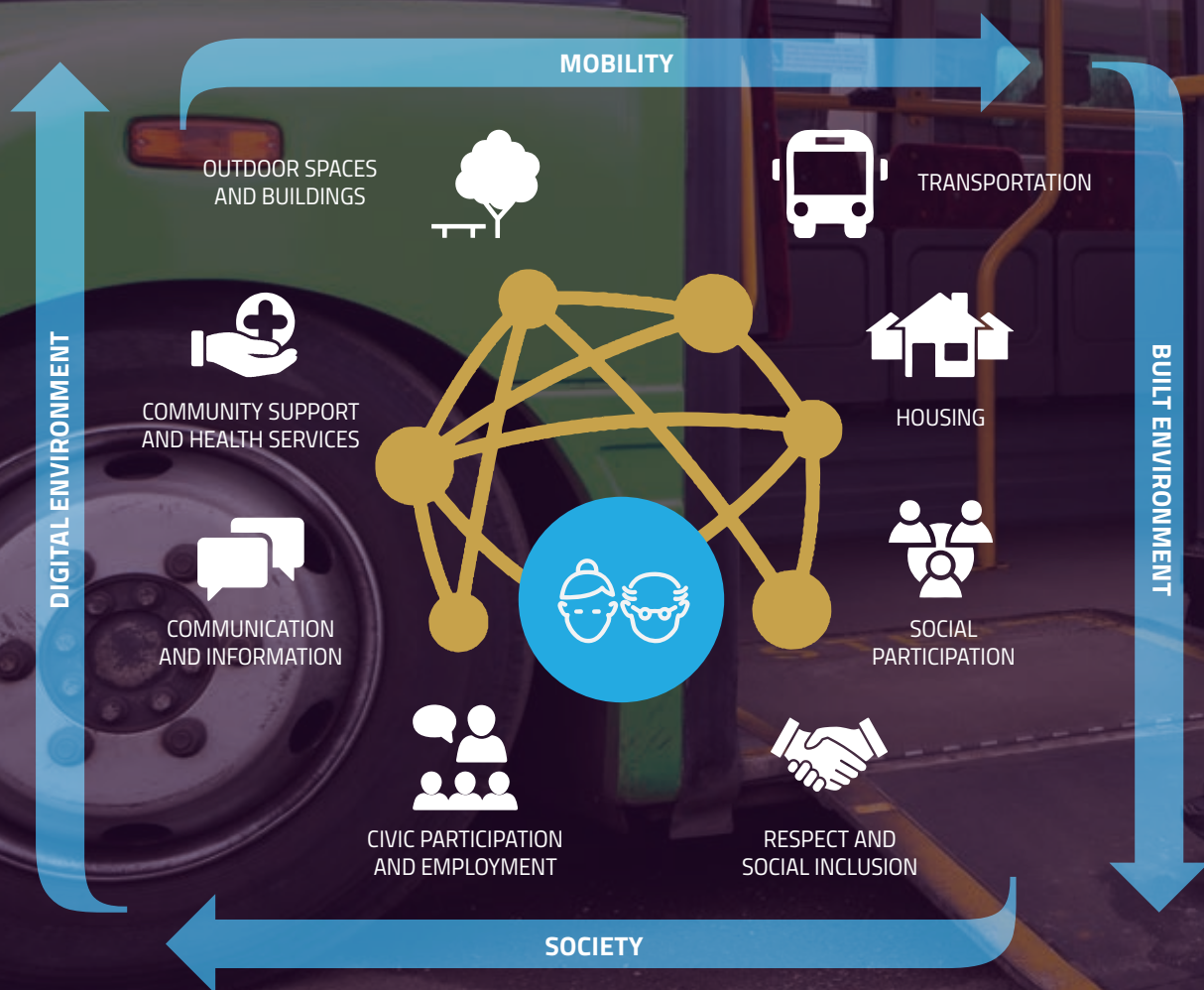
70+

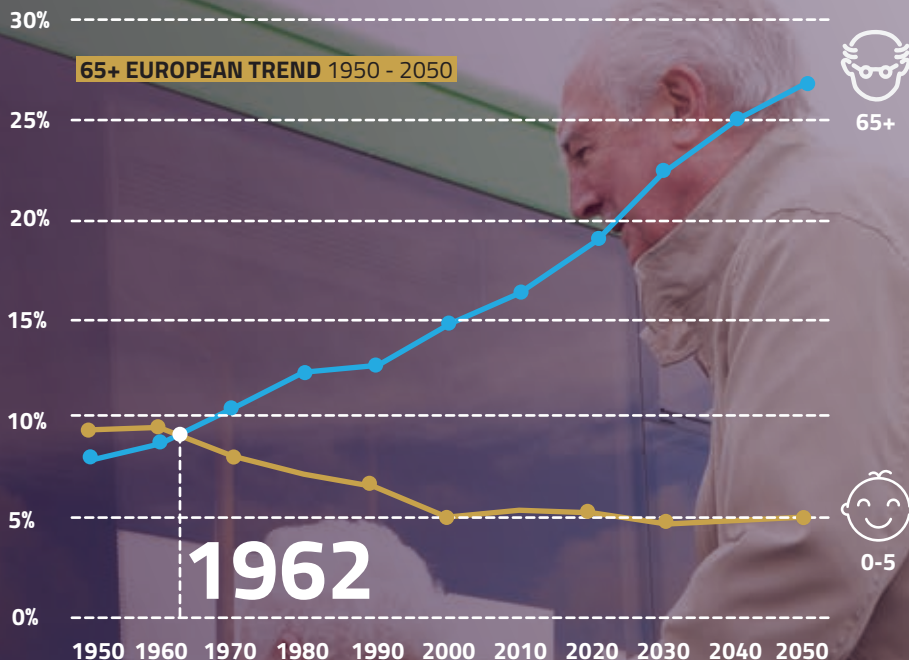
WORK ON

Recently released census data reveals that more than 1.17 crore people over the age of 70 are still working in India; of these 25 lakh (2.5 million) are over the age of 80. This has been attributed to lack of social security as a majority of the older working population is rural and the nature of work is physical labour.

cities for all

Intrinsic to the idea of 'smart cities'—a priority project for the Indian Government—is inclusion. With 70 per cent of the world's population estimated to live in cities by 2050, cities across the world must gear up to accommodate a silvering population. In its report *Shaping Ageing Cities*, global engineering firm Arup studies the performance of 10 European cities—London, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, Lisbon, Madrid, Milan and Paris—"observing them under the lenses of society, mobility, built and digital environment as the basis to further investigate the correlation among politics, planning and ageing".





50%

IN 2007, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, 50% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION WAS LIVING IN URBAN AREAS

70%

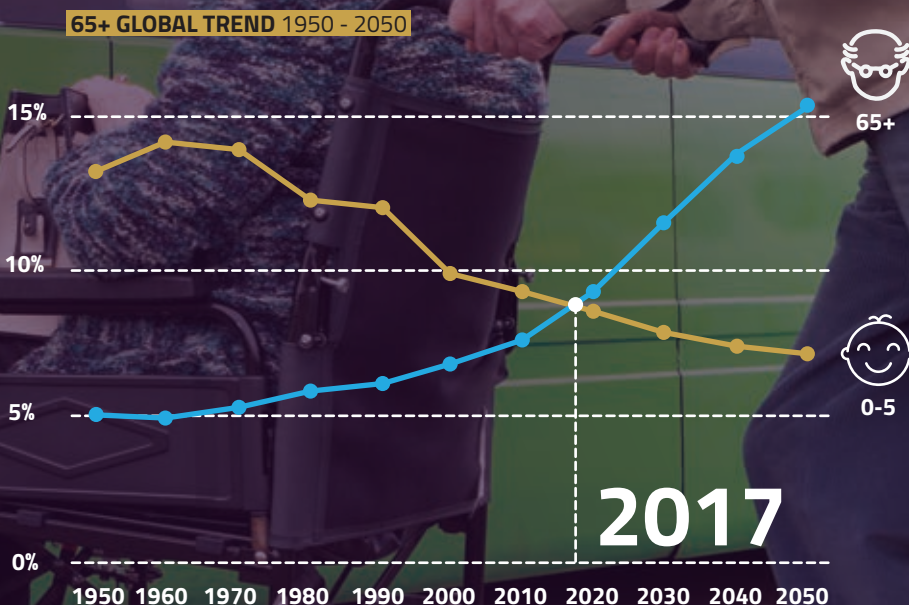
BY 2050, MORE THAN 70% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION IS EXPECTED TO LIVE IN URBAN AREAS

1004%

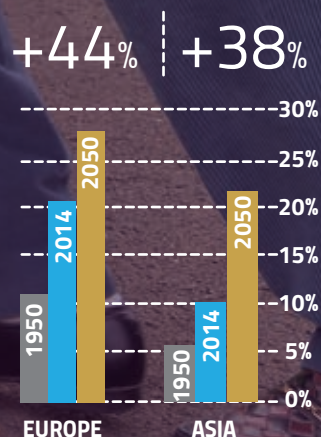
GLOBALLY, THE 100 AND OVER POPULATION IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE 1004% BETWEEN 2010 AND 2050

100 MILLION

BY 2050, CHINA, INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES WILL EACH HAVE OVER 100 MILLION PEOPLE AGED OVER 60



"World cities will need to change to make sure older people continue to play an active role in the community and don't become isolated," project leader Stefano Recalcatti tells London newspaper *The Guardian*. "Isolation has a negative impact on health so tackling that is really important. Small innovations can make a difference. Older people are less likely to drive, favouring public transport and walking. The average person over 65 manages a walking speed of 3 km per hour. At 80, that goes down to 2 km per hour, compared with the average for a working age person of 4.8 km per hour. Reducing the distance between transport stops, shops, benches, trees for shade, public toilets and improving pavements and allowing more time to cross the road all encourage older people to go out." You can read the report at http://publications.arup.com/publications/s/shaping_ageing_cities#



Oh fish!

According to a meta analysis by researcher Manfred Eggersdorfer, head of nutritional science advocacy at DSM Nutritional Products, Switzerland, **every 1-per-cent increase of omega-3 fatty acids in your blood is associated with a 20-per-cent decrease in the risk of mortality.** The analysis included 11 studies, which in turn included 371,965 participants, of which 31,185 deaths occurred.

Adding fish to your diet can help you live longer

Fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, herring, lake trout, sardines and albacore tuna are high in omega-3 fatty acids. These are polyunsaturated fatty acids, which are important for metabolism. The study was published in *Scientific Reports*.

A healthy side-effect

There might be **another advantage to taking medicines for osteoporosis: prevention of breast cancer.** Researchers at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Parkville, Victoria in Melbourne, believe the drug denosumab may play a role in helping to prevent breast cancer. Researchers used samples of breast tissue donated by women carrying the faulty BRCA1 gene, which is linked to breast cancer, to pinpoint the cells that give rise to breast cancer, with the help of a protein called RANK. It was found that RANK inhibition switched off cell growth in breast tissue and reduced breast cancer development in laboratory models. A clinical trial is underway to find out how to combine denosumab and RANK. However, denosumab is already used as an inhibitor to treat osteoporosis and breast cancer that has reached the bone. The research was published in journal *Nature Medicine*.



Photographs by iStock

VIRTUALLY YOURS

It's not only gamers who are revelling in virtual reality. Scientists have created a **virtual heart to help understand the working of this amazing organ and study new drug therapies**. Researchers from the University of California, San Diego, have created a computer model of the heart which, amazingly, mimics the electrophysiology of heart failure. This means the model shows what happens to the heart when the levels and flow of calcium, potassium and sodium ions in the body change. The model simulates subtle changes in cellular and tissue levels of the heart and shows the results via an electrocardiogram. It was also found that ventricular fibrillation—when the heart beats with rapid, erratic electrical impulses—can be caused by a heart failure-related slowdown in the cellular processes in the top region of the heart.

BITTERSWEET TRUTH



A HIGH SUGAR LEVEL ON ANY BLOOD TEST USUALLY THROWS UP RED FLAGS BUT IT NOW TRANSPIRES THAT IT CAN PROTECT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT OF ONE TYPE OF BRAIN TUMOUR. ACCORDING TO RESEARCHERS FROM OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, COLUMBUS, OHIO, **HIGH BLOOD SUGAR CAN REDUCE THE PROBABILITY OF DEVELOPING MENINGIOMAS, NON-CANCEROUS TUMOURS THAT ARISE FROM THE SPINAL CORD AND BRAIN**. RESEARCHERS ANALYSED DATA COLLECTED FROM 1985 TO 2012 AND IDENTIFIED 296 CASES OF MENINGIOMAS, MORE THAN 61 PER CENT OF THEM WOMEN. THEY FOUND THAT WOMEN WITH THE HIGHEST FASTING BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS STOOD A LESS THAN 50-PER-CENT CHANCE OF DEVELOPING MENINGIOMAS THAN THE REST OF THE GROUP. RESEARCHERS SUSPECT A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BLOOD GLUCOSE AND SEX HORMONES. THE STUDY WAS PUBLISHED IN *BRITISH JOURNAL OF CANCER*.

DR. MOZART

We all know music can be very soothing. But what if we told you that **listening to Mozart and Strauss can significantly lower blood pressure and heart rate?** Researchers from Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany, exposed different groups of participants to different types of music for 25 minutes each. All participants' blood pressure, heart rate and cortisol concentration were measured before and after the experiment. They found that the music of classical geniuses Mozart and Strauss lowered blood pressure and heart rate, while the hits of popular 1970s pop band ABBA had no effect at all. The control group or the silent group, which rested in supine position and was not exposed to any music, showed lowered blood pressure but only minimally so. As far as cortisol concentration was concerned, turns out the drop in cortisol concentration was more pronounced in men than women.



FORTIFY WITH FIBRE

Here's another reason to get your fibre in. A study by researchers from Monash University in Australia suggests that a **high-fibre diet can help reduce food allergies**. They found that mice allergic to peanuts did not develop an allergy when fed a high-fibre diet. The researchers say high-fibre food reshapes the gut and colon microbiota (microorganisms that share our body space), which helps fight allergies. They also found that the microbiota break down the fibre into short-chain fatty acids, which help the immune system fight allergies. This finding is expected to open new avenues for drug therapies.

INTERVIEW

Eye-opener

It's not the kind of health issue you would associate with the monsoon but, apart from the flu, eye infections are common during this time. **Dr Anuradha S Rao, Senior Consultant, Ophthalmology, Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, sheds some light on how to be cautious about your eyes**



Sanjhi Shah

What are the common eye infections that arise during the monsoon?

The most common infection during the monsoon is conjunctivitis. The others are corneal ulcer, which can be a flare-up of previous infections like uveitis owing to a decrease in immunity, and sty, which is an infection occurring over the eyelid.

There are three kinds of conjunctivitis: viral, bacterial and allergic. Viral and bacterial conjunctivitis are most common as these are airborne. In bacterial conjunctivitis, there is a purulent discharge and one develops a red eye. In viral conjunctivitis, the discharge is watery. Most patients who develop viral conjunctivitis have a history of some systematic manifestation of viral disease. It takes a week or two to subside but if one's vision is blurred, it can sometimes spread to the cornea, which is called viral keratoconjunctivitis

We often have people coming in with a sty, medically termed as hordeola. The eyelids have many glands that get infected. A sty is basically an inflamed boil; never rub your eyes when you have a sty. All it takes to heal is a hot compress and some antibiotics. Sometimes the pain subsides but the firm swelling remains to form what is called chalazion, which then might require a small surgery.

What are the preventive measures?

Most of these infections are contagious. If you get conjunctivitis in one

eye, there is a chance you will develop it in the other eye too. You are also likely to pass it on to people around you. However, it is only a myth that you can give conjunctivitis to someone by merely looking them in the eye! Conjunctivitis spreads by touch or by being in close proximity with someone who already has it. The best prevention is to keep your surroundings clean, wash your hands regularly, use wet tissues to wipe your eye and then dispose of these carefully rather than use a handkerchief. Do not use other people's toiletries and do not buy any drops over the counter.

When you experience symptoms of conjunctivitis, visit an ophthalmologist and take the medicine prescribed. Do not use eye drops bought over the counter because every red eye need not be indicative of conjunctivitis. If you develop conjunctivitis, always wear dark glasses as this disease is accompanied by photosensitivity, which means the eye cannot adjust to light. Dark glasses will also prevent you from touching the affected eye.

Allergic, bacterial or even viral conjunctivitis need different types of treatment. When you ask a chemist to give you drops to treat a red eye, they will likely sell you drugs that contain steroids, which are a bad thing. Initially, they will ease the inflammation but could later impair your vision.

What do you treat it with?

For bacterial conjunctivitis, we generally prescribe antibiotics. For

viral conjunctivitis, unfortunately, one cannot figure out the different strains of viruses and hence there is no specific treatment. Hence we always tell the patient that it will take its own course, which is about two weeks. But if the patient has some sort of cornea problem, the treatment is different. In allergic conjunctivitis, apart from redness, there isn't much discharge. There will generally be some itching, in which case antihistamines are prescribed. People sometimes use rose water or even breast milk to treat conjunctivitis. This is not a good idea as it can flare up the infection as even normal rose water is not sterile. On the other hand, eye drops prescribed by the doctor are totally sterile.

Why are infections more common during the monsoon?

The basic reasons are heat, humidity and pollution.

Are there any special eye care measures for silvers?

Every silver should have a thorough eye checkup every year. A routine checkup eliminates the possibility of cataract, glaucoma or age-related degeneration. After a certain age, the amount of tears the eye secretes decreases, and silvers develop dry eye. This condition is more common among women owing to menopause. Doctors usually prescribe tear substitutes with varying constituents and viscosity. For every silver, any eye disease needs a thorough investigation, management and follow up, as immunity to fight infection is low.

Magical **MANGO** festival

With 725 varieties of mangoes and a multitude of mango byproducts on display, the two-day Uttar Pradesh Mango Festival in Lucknow left visitors asking for more



It's not without reason that mango is considered the 'king of fruits'. When the 'king' decides to make his presence felt among the masses, people feel obliged to line up and pay obeisance. This is exactly what happened at a recent two-day grand Uttar Pradesh Mango Festival organised jointly by Uttar Pradesh Tourism and Uttar Pradesh State Horticultural Cooperative Marketing Federation. The venue was the majestic Janeshwar Mishra park in Gomtinagar, Lucknow where thousands of mango lovers converged for a glimpse of the fruit in 725 avatars.

Inaugurating the festival-cum-exhibition, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Akhilesh Yadav took time off to chat with mango orchard owners and growers who had come from all over the state and other parts of the country. Also present on the occasion were eminent dignitaries such as state Tourism Minister Om Prakash Singh, filmmaker Muzaffar Ali, mango expert Padma Shri Kalimullah Khan and Navneet Sehgal, DG & Principal Secretary, Uttar Pradesh Tourism.

Thousands queued up to enjoy mango-themed programmes, organised to spread awareness about the different varieties of mangoes on the market. These included 'Aam par shayari', 'Zikar-e-aam', qawwali, folk dance, cooking contest (judged by master chef Pankaj

Bhadouria), storytelling, art and craft and Tiger, the Magician.

Rustic elements such as 'khatiya' (coir-based cots) at the venue added to the charm of the festival, with people enjoying mangoes perched on them. The festival served as a good platform to showcase mangoes and mango byproducts from different districts. Water-proof pandals, LED vans (for live display of the inauguration ceremony) and a team of doctors at the venue highlighted the earnestness of the district administration in ensuring a quality event.

Visitors got to relish mango-based candies, yoghurts, chocolates, panna, kulfi, lassi, and pastries. Contests such as 'Best mango theme dressed kid/family' and 'mango-eating' saw enthusiastic participation from the public. Mango-themed selfie-points set up around the park were a big craze among the click-happy visitors who vied for off-beat selfies.

The best mango exhibits in competing varieties such as commercial, hybrid, exotic, and processing were rewarded with cash prizes. A buyer-seller meet was also organised as part of the event, providing mango growers, sellers and exporters with a unique platform for business and networking.

—Raza Hasnain Naqvi



BIRTHDAYS

Politician and lawyer **Kapil Sibal** turns 68 on 8 August.

Actor-dancer-singer-parliamentarian **Vyjayanthimala Bali** turns 80 on 13 August.

Actor and comedian **Johnny Lever** turns 59 on 14 August.

American singer-songwriter-actor **Madonna** turns 58 on 16 August.

Poet, lyricist and filmmaker **Gulzar** turns 82 on 18 August.

IT industrialist **NR Narayana Murthy** turns 70 on 20 August.

IN PASSING

Romesh Chandra, Indian leader of the Communist Party and President of the World Peace Council, died on 4 July. He was 97.

Amal Dutta, former India player and first professional full-time football coach of the country, died on 10 July following complications owing to old age. He was 86.

Legendary singer **Mubarak Begum** died at her residence in Mumbai on 19 July after prolonged illness. She was 80.

Indian artist **S H Raza**, covered in the September 2010 issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, passed away in Delhi on 23 July, after prolonged illness. He was 94.

MILESTONES

- Gujarati litterateur **Dr Raghuv eer Chaudhari** was honoured with the 51st Bharatiya Jnanpith award for 2015 by President Pranab Mukherjee for his work in Hindi and Gujarati literature.
- **Dr Mammen Chandy**, Director, Tata Medical Centre, Kolkata, was conferred with the prestigious Dr BC Roy Award in the field of Eminent Medical Person by the Medical Council of India for 2008 on 1 July.



OVERHEARD

“As an experienced woman, you have more stories to tell. There are different layers inside you that you can explore. There’s a freedom that is coming with age because your values are changing. You’re more yourself. On the one hand you’re becoming more fragile—because physically, you’re changing—and on the other hand there’s a strength that comes with it. You let go of some things and you have to face other things. You have to overcome certain things: the need of power, the need of possession, the need of enjoyment. These are really the big three things that the human being has to face at a certain point. It’s challenging, it’s very challenging, but I think when you really make a decision to overcome it there’s a freedom that comes with it and it’s quite enjoyable. When you accept it, it’s like ‘Woooo-ahhhh! Freedom! Finally!’ ”

—French actor *Juliette Binoche*, 52,
speaking to website www.smh.com.au on the upside of ageing

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LOOKING SKYWARD

During the 1965 War, we were in one of the flying stations up North. We were a bunch of enthusiastic servicemen, very cool with the idea of going to war, and happy with comrades and flyers from other squadrons. No one was unduly perturbed—till the bombs started falling! That is when we started digging trenches to save ourselves.

Today's water situation in India is like that—the proverbial bombs are falling and we have still not dug our trenches. Every home with an open terrace needs to save rainwater, which we as a country have so much of. More often than not, we let it flow on to the street and down municipal drains.

My wife Enid and I set in motion our plan to save rainwater in 2011, one of the main reasons being my love for my garden. When we moved into our house in Vellapore in 1989, we set up a garden with great care and have nurtured it since. Then, when the water shortages hit, we wanted to save rainwater mainly because we did not want to give up the garden!

We ordered four large pipes and set them up vertically on bases made of brick and mortar. There were our 'tanks'. We laid pipes on all six exit points for rainwater that flowed down from the terrace and joined all of them at one point, where a common pipe connected them to the first of the four 'tanks'. All four tanks were connected at the base, so we could collect as much water as the tanks could hold. With the first rain in 2011, all the tanks filled up. Next year, we added another tank—this time, one of those large black, synthetic water tanks.

Our holding capacity was now up to 8,500 litre. I use this water for gardening and coolers through the lean season of summer when our water supply is curtailed. I do not use this water for personal consumption. If you want to do



Shyamola Khanna

Salin and his wife Enid are advocates of rainwater harvesting

that, you need to set up filters on all the exit points from the terrace. Then, the water can be used in the toilets, in washing machines, etc. A further round of boiling and purifying would probably make it fit for drinking.

Five years ago, the whole project cost me ₹ 70,000. I spent another ₹ 25,000 on repairs of the leaking tanks. My advice to others wanting to copy this model is to straightaway use synthetic water tanks. Better still, if you have the space, embed them in the ground. We could not do that as we did not want to uproot our old mango trees.

My message to all those who have an open terrace: please save water and use it. We keep digging borewells and they keep drying out. In our locality, people have gone down thousands of feet searching for water. How long will the subterranean water last at the rate at which we are digging it up? This is a simpler solution. All said and done, the rain will never stop!

—Air Vice Marshal (retd) Edwin Godfrey Salin, Hyderabad

MY 'SECOND' LIFE

That horrifying dawn of 3 December 1992 seems just like yesterday. My husband and I had driven at dawn to the domestic airport in Jaipur to see my brother off. My brother is a pilot and had started a charter service. As my husband has always been fascinated with machines, he wanted to look at an aircraft at close quarters.

I waited in the car at a little distance from the hangar but found some important papers belonging to my brother in the vehicle. I approached the hangar to give them to him; just as I was about to enter, I was assaulted by the shrill noise of an aircraft that was landing. Dense fog also clouded my vision and I had no idea my brother had started the engine of his aircraft. Then, the inevitable happened. My shawl got stuck in the rotating propellers of my brother's aircraft, and my life changed forever.

The disaster took away my right leg and left arm. I spent 10 days in the ICU and was still struggling for life. I gradually recovered but didn't stop crying for two whole months, day and night. But it suddenly dawned on me that the past was over and I should accept the reality of life in the present. I had to relearn the simplest of tasks, this time minus two limbs, but I took it up as a challenge. I positively hated it when people pitied me.

Thanks to my own determination and my family's massive support, especially my mother-in-law's tender love, I learnt to perform all household chores independently. I also developed a thriving professional life. My husband and my mother never once wept, even on seeing my condition in hospital. As a strong woman, my mother made me feel that everything would eventually be okay—and how right she was!

Before the mishap, I was president of the Lion's Club and worked with a computer firm. After the tragedy, I had to leave my job and the club's presidency too. To get back on my feet, I started tutoring students and housewives. Then, here in Jaipur, I started a programme called Umang for handicapped children in 1993 but shut it down within six months. A year later, my husband and I opened a child guidance and counselling centre, Vatsalya, for children with disabilities. We pioneered the use of art for rehabilitation, among many other initiatives, but we shut the centre in 1999 owing to personal reasons.

My son Ayush is a furniture design graduate from National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, and my daughter Preeti is a doctor. In 1999, I joined my son's design studio in a supervisory role. I have since taken charge of logistics, finance, purchasing, and plan workshops and conduct meetings. I also conduct motivational workshops, deliver inspirational talks, counsel depressed individuals and



Kasliwal tackles life's challenges with grit and grace

mentor parents of disabled children. I am now planning to start a joint venture in social work at the grassroots level. Apart from social service, I spend time gardening, cooking and stitching.

I am 67 years old and the challenges, well, they keep coming. I have been diagnosed with cancer but, thankfully, the disease has been detected in the early stages. Before my accident, I enjoyed life thoroughly. I was socially active, sassy, humorous and full of life. I couldn't imagine living life any other way. The disaster made me believe that when we are no longer able to change a situation, we should change ourselves. That's how I am able to live and enjoy the rest of life with the same enthusiasm as before.

I believe that everything happens for a reason. The catastrophe has made me strong, understand myself better, and realise the true meaning of the love that I get from my family. Now, I also understand the true meaning of life. My journey has taught me that life is like a lemon—we can either complain that it's sour or make lemonade out of it.

—Jyoti Kasliwal, Jaipur

A life transformed

MAJOR VEMBALATH SREEDHARAN, 66, HYDERABAD

When I joined the Indian Army as a soldier back in 1971, I never dreamt I would be teaching generals and their wives how to breathe and practice yoga. I must be doing something right, otherwise they wouldn't continue to take my classes. More important, when older people are willing to follow the changes advocated by the yogic system, they don't really need a teacher to spur them on; they realise the benefits themselves.

I teach yoga at the Rajendra Sinhji Institute (RSI), an institute for retired and serving defence officers in Secunderabad, and have taught nearly 100 people, perhaps more, in the past two years. It's a far cry from what I did in the Services, from which I retired as a Major in 2002. For the next five years, I worked as an administrative officer at Army Public School in Secunderabad and then spent another five years in a telecom company where I was responsible for the computer cell.

During those 10 years after retirement, I kept reading about yoga and its health benefits. I met some yoga teachers too, always admiring their physical fitness. Slowly, I found myself wondering whether I too could do all those asanas, as tough as they seemed to be. I wanted to gain those health benefits! Then, in December 2012, RSI announced yoga classes for all, conducted by Dr Sudheer Rao. I trained under him, did a few certifications at the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIIT) and The Yoga Institute (TYI) in Mumbai. Finally, in October 2014, I became a certified yoga instructor



and, later that year, started conducting classes. I periodically visit the TYI for refresher courses and advanced courses.

I guess I chose yoga because it provides a holistic approach to health. As I have always been a fitness addict, it appealed to my innate senses. Yoga changes you physiologically, mentally and physically. It provides balance in one's life. Physically, I find I am more

balanced—I can stand on one leg for a long time; I can hold my breath and I can suspend my breath and yet not feel tired. I firmly believe that because of my yoga practice, I am free of all ailments that seem to plague other people my age. I find I am more flexible and can do the asanas freely.

The four pillars of yoga are A-V-A-V: *aahar* (food), *vihaar* (exercise), *achar* (behaviour), *vichar* (thoughts). So, if one can change one's thoughts, dietary habits, make sure to get regular exercise and get into a positive frame of mind, one can change one's entire lifestyle for the better.

I recommend that everyone over the age of 50 start practising yoga seriously, follow the tenets of AVAV and discover for themselves how transformative the process is. My life has changed dramatically and I firmly believe that age need not be a barrier to taking up this discipline. There are two retired generals, both in their late 60s who come to my class regularly with their wives. All of them do the asanas according to my instructions. My oldest student has been an 80-plus lady, Janaki Venugopal, mother of a brigadier, who was a practitioner of homeopathy. She was very flexible and did all the asanas very comfortably and continues to do them in Chennai, where she lives.

Personally, I am a much calmer person today than I was a few years ago. Yoga helps you de-stress and balance your emotions. It can even help you lose weight, provided you make the necessary dietary changes. Yoga brings a sense of mindfulness to everything you do. Yoga is a way of life.

—As told to Shyamola Khanna

The first day at school

The first time you rode the bicycle.

The first crush you had at thirteen

The first drama you got a part in

The first day at college

The first date you went on

The first kiss

The first time you proposed

The first job interview

The first board meeting you addressed

The first day after retirement

BUTTERFLIES *never retire*

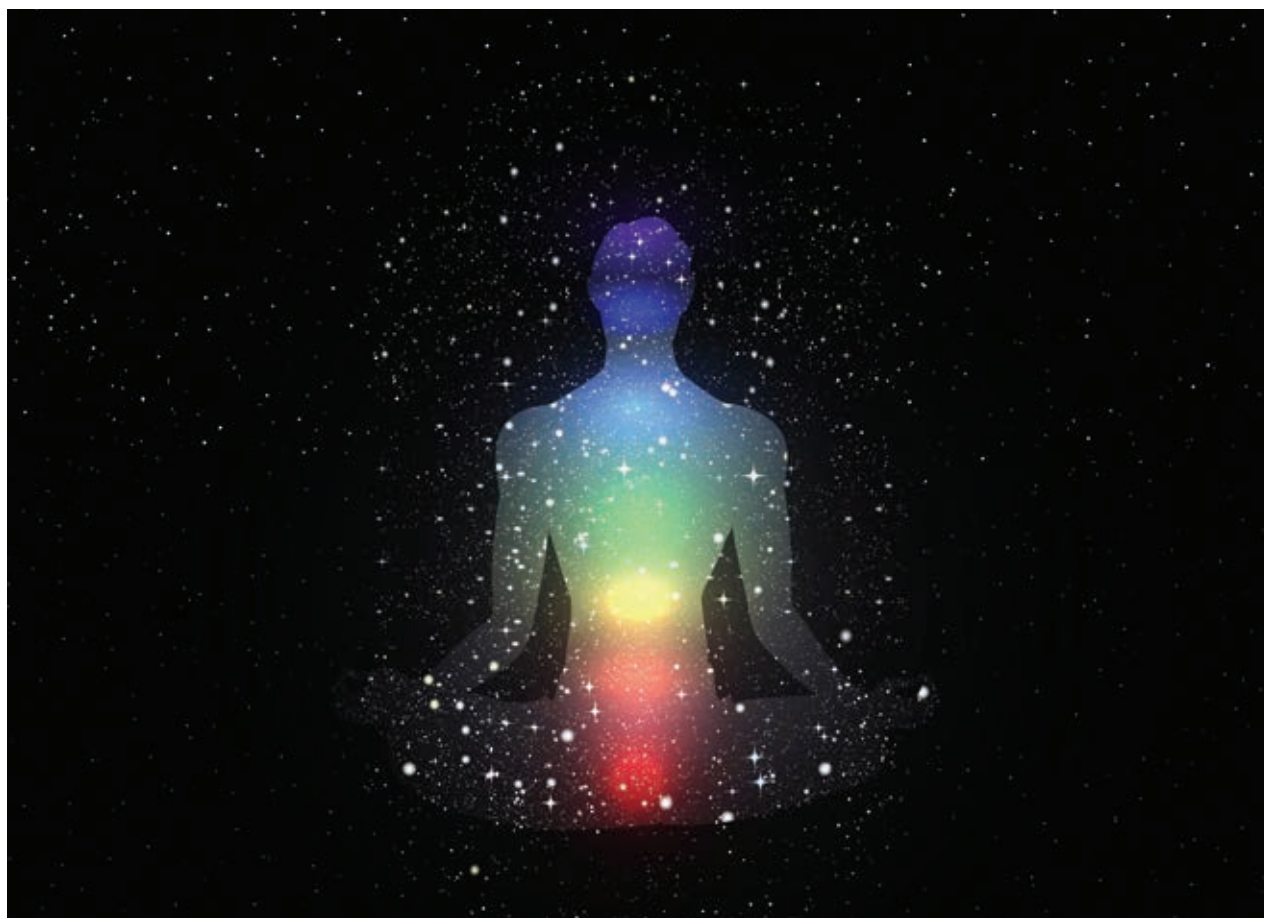
The first click of the mouse.

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Marma mia! The link between yoga and the ancient science of marma



When Bodhidharma, the founder of the Shaolin style of martial arts left India for China, he carried with him the secret wisdom of Kalaripayattu and Mar-makalai (the art of marma). He also is said to have carried the herbal healing traditions of southern India. In fact, the ancient science of marma rediscovers itself in all Eastern sciences with various other names that are locally inspired.

The marmas are special points or energy zones of the body. These are said to get blocked by our way of thinking, from anxieties, fears and negativities, collecting emotional and physical toxins. These block the movement of energy,

causing pain and, later on, chronic diseases. By palpating these points—through eastern healing practices such as acupressure, acupuncture, reflexology, meditation (focusing on these points or using *beej* mantras specific to the chakras/psychic centres) and specific oils that may release the blockages—healing may be facilitated.

As mentioned in an earlier column (*Feb 2016*) of this series, every yoga pose is created with marma points in mind. To undertake yoga practice is to give oneself a massage and treatment in acupressure and reflexology. The points are repeatedly pressed and activated to release their tension and heal. This explains why some poses are complicated and emphasises why the traditional method of yoga must

be done without watering it down. Lately, thanks to the efforts of enlightened Ayurvedic scholars like Dr David Frawley and Dr Vasant Lad, more connections and parallels have been drawn between yoga and Ayurveda too, to explain how they complement each other in exploiting the marma map of the body.

In this column, we give you the example of the simple one-legged plough (*ekapada halasana*) to explain the marma connections to yoga. At the base of the skull, where the scalp meets the neck, are two marma points. Hitting them—with either a kick or a punch in martial arts—can

even cause immediate death. This is where the subconscious mind is also said to be reactive. According to Marmakalai, it controls nervous energy and maintains posture. And when the energy flows, it generates positive emotions such as contentment and enthusiasm. In yoga, the plough pose and its variations apply an enormous amount of pressure at these points. Because it is related to the subconscious fear centres, there is always a lot of resistance towards this pose, even in regular or intermediate level practitioners. The pose requires a lot of commitment towards practice because of the intensity of experience it inspires.

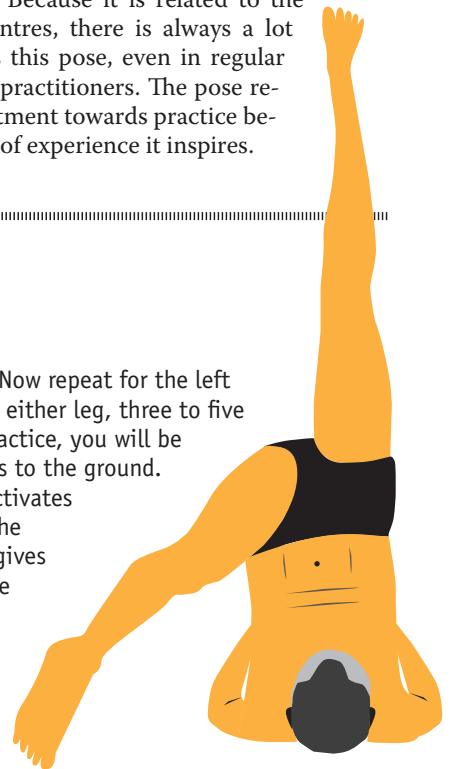
YOGIC MOVES

One-legged plough pose (*ekapada halasana*)

First, master the basic/classic shoulder stand (*sarvangasana*). To do this, lie on your back, legs stretched out. Beginners may keep legs lightly bent till mastery is achieved. Arms must be stretched out and palms flat on the ground beside the body. Push the palms down, hoist the hips up and then fold arms at elbows to hold hips with palms. Newcomers need to be initiated into this pose with an expert. After a few weeks of practice in this, you may proceed to the one-legged plough. Inhale; exhaling drop your right leg behind the head, towards the ground. Flexible people may be able to reach their toes to the ground. Others can use a prop (a wall behind or stool) on which to place the foot. Inhale; lift the right leg back to

the original position. Now repeat for the left leg. Do alternately for either leg, three to five times. With regular practice, you will be able to reach your legs to the ground.

Benefits: This pose activates the marma points at the base of the skull and gives emotional control. Like other inversions, it is anti-ageing, promotes metabolism, and tones the spine and legs.



Sri Ramana Maharishi's *atma vichara*

One of the most revered *jnana* yogis in India is Ramana Maharishi. Most of his wisdom is compiled by his devotees from talks and lectures. Even today, his ashram offers free food and lodging to visitors from around the world, and carries his tradition of simplicity forward. He was marked on the world spiritual map by his devoted disciple Paul Brunton, who wrote *A Search in Secret India*, exploring the spirituality of India and explaining Ramana Maharishi's impact on him. This was followed by Somerset Maugham's *Razor's Edge* whose protagonist, it

is believed, was based on Brunton. Maugham also had met Sri Ramana.

Sri Ramana's explanations of the esoteric aspects of the spiritual journey are simple and accessible. There are several compilations of his talks and all are freely available on the website of his ashram Sri Ramanasramam (www.sriramanamaharshi.org) at Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu. He is most famous for the Vedantic query, "Who am I?" This is the most essential spiritual quest; if we learn to keep our mind fixed on this question, the *atma vichara* (search of the soul), all our other philosophical questions will

be answered. His brilliant razor-sharp rationale cuts through spiritual dross.

Here is a classic from the book, *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharishi*: "Certainly help yourself and that is itself according to God's will. Every action is prompted by him only. As for prayer for the sake of others, it looks so unselfish on the surface of it. But analyse the feeling and you will detect selfishness there also. You desire others' happiness so that you may be happy. Or you want the credit for having interceded on others' behalf. God does not require an intermediary. Mind your business and all will be well."

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



HEART TO HEARTH BY PRATIBHA JAIN

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

Family first

Chandra and Mahavir Kataria • BENGALURU

Ever since I have known them, the Kataria family has been an exemplary model of togetherness. Despite having moved into independent homes, they are still bound by a common thread of love and affection. Indeed a rarity in today's day and age, to find a family that is woven together with a strong value system and honest bonding.

Family holidays see a bunch of family members packing in lots of fun,

adventure and laughter. Meeting 57 year-old Chandraji and Mahavirji, 63, a Rajasthani couple from Bengaluru, I was deeply touched by their mutual love and respect, as well as their common approach to life. Their warmth coupled with their engaging hospitality shines right through, making people feel special and cherished.

As we chatted at their beautiful home, time stood still. It also gave me an insight into their secret mantra for

happiness. The Kataria edifice is built on the foundation of strong family values, unity, love, mutual respect and conforming to change without compromising on the essence of what binds a family together.

Your family has always been known for its traditional values and lifestyle. Do you notice any changes over the years?

Mahavir: Change is gradual and yet a constant; it is bound to happen. Yes, our lifestyle has changed but at the core, our values remain the same.

Chandra: I think some change is inevitable with each generation.



Photographs by Srivatsa Shandilya

"I firmly believe that food cooked on the mud *chulha* is tastier and more aromatic than food cooked on gas... Food has always been an important and integral part of our lives. Eating together is not just sharing and nurturing; it also plays an important role in building family bonds"

Today's youngsters are more aware. When I got married, I did what I was told. It never occurred to me to do otherwise.

Paint a picture for us of what it was like back then.

She: I will give you the larger picture. I had four mothers-in-law at home: my husband's mother, his grandmother, and two of his grandfather's aunts. You can imagine how daunting that must have been.

Was your mother-in-law strict?

She: No, she wasn't; but even through her silent communication, all the *bahu* knew exactly what was expected of them.

He: Yes that's true. She never scolded anyone and, in fact, tended to be a little on the meek side. Yet we all understood what was expected of us.

Chandraji, was it very different from your parents' house?

She: My family was also traditional, but I was brought up amid a lot of *laad* [pampering]. So after marriage it all seemed very different. We were expected to wear only *ghaghra-odhani* and observe a long *ghunghat*. We never spoke to our elders; all communication happened with *ishara* [sign language]. What was common between the two homes was hospitality. For Rajsthani, *manuhaar* [hospitality] is an integral part of life.

He: At any given time, there would be guests at home. Hence hospitality, caring, good food and warmth were a part of our life.

I still remember the mud *chulha* in your kitchen. I think it continued there long after your other relatives transformed their kitchens.

She: It is still there, though barely used now. But I firmly believe that food cooked on it, especially in mud pots and brass vessels, is tastier and more aromatic than food cooked on gas and other modern-day appliances.

Mahavirji, did you join the family business?

He: Yes I did, as after school hours we used to help in the family business. My father, Fatehchandji Kataria, also had a keen interest in education. I did my schooling in Rishi Valley and my higher studies at Central College, Bengaluru. Apart from that, being involved in the family business at a young age gave my brothers and me a better capacity to understand the business. My grandfather Hirachandji Kataria was not educated, but was fluent in six languages on account of his vast business experience.

Your have been president of the Bangalore Stock Exchange. Tell us more....

He: Yes, it was during my tenure that we undertook the computerisation of the Bangalore Stock Exchange; overnight, that changed the exchange ranking to 5th in India.

And how did the great dream of Agastya happen?

A few like-minded visionaries—the late Dr P K Iyengar (former chairman

of the Atomic Energy Commission), late Dr S Balasundaram (former principal of Rishi Valley School), late Sri K V Raghavan (former chairman of Engineers India Ltd), Ramji Raghavan (then a London-based banker and consultant), industrialist Prabhakara Rao—and myself got together to create Agastya International Foundation. It is an NGO and has grown into one of the largest hands-on science education programmes for children and teachers. Today, we offer over 180 mobile science labs, night village education programmes for children and the community and run over 60 science centres. With more than 900 employees, Agastya spans 16 states reaching out to 1.5 million children every year. I have been one of the founders and have served as managing trustee of Agastya since inception.

Such commendable work! Are your family members involved?

Chandra helped us initially with hospitality, housekeeping and the kitchen. My daughter Sheetal helps with branding and design and is in charge of the art centre. I had also received a lot of encouragement from my father to devote my full energy to this endeavour. He used to keep a daily tab on the activities and programmes.

Whether it is work, society or family, one can see your keen interest and attention to detail.

He: I think I inherited this trait from my elders. My father and grandfather were active members of society and involved in social work. And more than anything, my wife makes it all



possible for me, with her understanding and generosity. She makes life an easy journey.

What's on your bucket list, Chandraji?

She: I am happy with the way things are. However I often wish I had the drive to start a beauty clinic as I am interested in grooming, skin and hair.

I am well aware that the family admires you for that. You always seem to have beauty tips to share.

She: I needed the push to do it professionally, but never had the awareness earlier.

Do you think this is one major difference between your generation and gen-next?

She: Certainly! Earlier, relationships were based on obedience and compliance. Now, relationships are based on understanding and mutual respect. Even in my relationship with my daughter-in-law Monica, I treat her as an individual in her own right. My son and she are both chartered accountants and work together. She knows what she wants to do. I appreciate that.



And where is the confluence of all these streams for your entire family?

She: At the dining table! Food has always been an important and integral part of our lives. Eating together is not just sharing and nurturing; it also plays an important role in building family bonds.

RAJASTHANI PITLA

A quick side-dish made with gram flour, this is a popular Rajasthani recipe and the ultimate comfort food.

*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*

Traditionally, it was made without onions, tomatoes and garlic in Jain homes, and tasted equally delicious. Often, it would be made just as dinner was being served, and eaten hot and fresh! When kept for a few hours, it tends to thicken. In that case, simply add some hot water, mix well and cook for a few minutes before serving.

Ingredients

- Gram flour (*besan*): 1 cup
- Onion: 1; chopped fine
- Mustard seeds: ½ tsp
- Asafoetida powder: a pinch
- Garlic: 3 cloves; chopped fine
- Green chillies: 2; chopped fine
- Curry leaves: 10-12
- Tomato: 1; chopped fine
- Chilli powder: ½ tsp
- Turmeric powder: ¼ tsp
- Salt to taste
- Coriander leaves for garnishing
- Oil: 2 tbsps

Method

Churn the *besan* in 2 cups of water using a hand blender. Heat the oil in a thick-bottomed (or non-stick) pan. Add the mustard; as it starts popping, lower the flame and add the asafoetida powder. Add the chopped onions and sauté for 2-3 minutes. Add the finely chopped garlic, green chillies and curry leaves. Sauté for a minute. Add the chopped tomatoes, chilli powder, turmeric powder and salt. Cook for 2 minutes. Add the gram-flour liquid and cook for 10-15 minutes, stirring continuously so no lumps are formed. (You may need to add another half cup of water if the mixture is too thick. Its consistency should be like cake batter.) When the mixture leaves the sides of the pan, switch off the flame. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves. Serve hot with puris.

GLORY DAYS

Former India hockey captain and
Olympian Gurbux Singh walks down
memory lane with Partha Mukherjee

It's only a few days before the 2016 Olympic Games kick off in Rio de Janeiro and there is one person we just had to visit. Age may have slowed his pace but nothing else seems to have changed for the tall, turbaned octogenarian.

Conversation flows easily for Gurbux Singh, former India hockey captain and Olympic gold medallist. Singh adjusts his spectacles gingerly but he minces no words. "Sure, I am hopeful of our hockey team's chances. We reached the finals at the Champion's Cup very recently, after three or four decades. We are now at No. 5 from No. 12 in the international rankings, where we had been languishing for ages. Good times are in sight."

For a man who was a member of the Indian hockey team when it was the best in the world—with eight gold medals—Singh's opinion on the Indian squad's chances are not to be taken lightly. He says he is hopeful they will reach at least the quarterfinals at the Rio Olympics.

"I have been to the Olympics six times; twice as a player [in Tokyo, where the team won a gold medal in 1964, and Mexico, a team he captained jointly with Prithipal Singh that won the bronze in 1968]; once as coach in Montreal; then in Munich as the hockey correspondent of a leading Indian daily newspaper; once as a hockey commentator for national broadcaster Doordarshan; and once as an observer for the Indian Hockey Federation," says the legendary defender, who also led the squad to gold at the Bangkok Asian Games in 1966.

Singh has been associated with the sport for almost four decades. After he retired from the game in 1968, hockey "refused to let him go". The veteran went on to become a coach and national selector, apart from being published in the sports pages of several national publications. He also had a successful stint as commentator and continues to spend his retired years routing pensions to retired sportspersons.

Across these decades, Singh has never taken his eye off the ball and is happy to explain why Indian hockey fell from glory. In a word, he says: Astroturf. "With time, the rules of the game have changed; more significantly for us, the turf has changed," says Singh. "Hockey is now played on a synthetic surface, Astroturf. The balls are swifter and the players' reflexes have to keep up. While, initially, the Indian

subcontinent couldn't afford to set up these fields all over the country, Australia and European countries began to practise all year long. This became one of the major contributing factors to our decline."

Dribbling back the years, Singh says, "Hockey is in my genes," crediting his passion for the sport to his father Major Kartar Singh, a hockey enthusiast who set up the Army Medical Corps hockey team in Rawalpindi. "I grew up greatly influenced by my father's passion for hockey. He recruited boys to play from Sansarpur in Jalandhar district—the cradle of Indian hockey—and adjoining Mithapur. These two villages have produced a number of hockey Olympians. He continued scouting talent even when he was posted in Lucknow," recalls the former India captain, who was born in Peshawar, now in Pakistan.

"I am hopeful of our hockey team's chances. We reached the finals at the Champion's Cup very recently, after three or four decades. Good times are in sight"

Like many others who later went on to become hockey stars, Singh was greatly inspired by Dhyan Chand, the legendary Indian hockey captain who led his team to India's first Olympic gold in the 1928 games in Amsterdam. "As a child, I used to visit the grounds with my father who was then playing for the Army Medical Corps. Dhyan Chand used to play for the Punjab Regiment," he recalls.

These were times when cricket was not popular among commoners. "By 1928, India became the first non-European team to be a part of the International Hockey Federation. We had become unbeaten champions in the Olympics, garnering six gold medals in a row from 1928 to 1956!" says Singh, his eyes sparkling. "Hockey was the one sport in which India was a world leader. By the mid-50s—I was a teenager then—I had a strong inclination to pursue the sport. I was just not sure in what direction I was headed."

The lad soon found a place in the school hockey team in Lucknow. It was the only sport at the time with an international presence. "The cricket World Cup began in 1975 and India won it in 1983—three years after the Indian hockey team won its last gold at the Moscow Olympics."

Milestones

1964

Member of the gold-winning hockey team in the Tokyo Olympics

1966

Arjuna Award

1968

Co-captain of the bronze-winning hockey team in the Mexico Olympics

1976

Coached the Indian hockey team for the Montreal Olympics

2013

Conferred the Banga Bibhushan Award by the West Bengal government



Photographs courtesy: Gurbux Singh

Singh's father was transferred to Mhow in 1953 where the 18 year-old got to play hockey with Army officers and serious hockey players. Later, he moved with his family to Gwalior, where he was selected for the Madhya Bharat team and played in the National Hockey Championships. This was when Singh got a tremendous opportunity to be coached by Roop Singh, brother of the great Dhyan Chand. And when he played for the country in the '50s and '60s, he had the privilege of being coached by the great Dhyan Chand himself. "He had put India on the world hockey map. Yet, as coach, his simplicity was his asset. He could connect with the players easily. I still remember his pep talk when we were on tour in Berlin; 'Boys, we won the Olympic gold here in 1936...let's go out there and retain our winning spree, 27 years later.'"

Singh's career took a turn in 1956, when he was denied admission to the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, owing to a perforated eardrum. So, he decided to join his brother-in-law's automobile spare parts business in Kolkata. But that was never his destiny. At the time, a friend who had earlier played for East Bengal, recommended Singh to the club's officials. "The club signed me and we went to the finals of the three major tournaments in Calcutta," he recalls. After that, there was no looking back. The 21 year-old's stick-work caught the attention of the national selectors and he soon found a place in the Bengal squad and headed for the National Hockey Championships again, in 1957.

Five years later, Singh was on a flight to Tokyo for the Olympics. He recalls, "I had never seen a flyover before..."



Singh (standing, centre) with the 1964 gold-winning Indian Olympic hockey team

can you imagine, arriving at the Olympic village straight from the airport without once touching the road!" He shares another precious memory from that trip. "We had brought a few Indian cooks with us and our food was relished by players from other countries, and they would gather around our tents to eat."

Singh's tone changes as he prepares to relive his moment of glory. In the final match at the Tokyo Olympics, India faced Pakistan, a day he has never forgotten. "It was a high-strung match as Pakistan had beaten us at the Jakarta Asian Games in 1962. Tension ran so high that our team manager Mohan Mahajan went off the field as he couldn't bear to watch. Prithipal Singh emerged as the real hero in Tokyo, with his cunning stick-work that contributed largely to fetch us the victory. Mohinder Lal scored a goal in the 41st minute to give India a 1-0 lead. Though Pakistan fought back valiantly, our goalkeeper Shankar Lakshman guarded his post like a rock till the very end of play," remembers Singh, proving that age hasn't robbed him of his photographic memory. "After the match

the Indian high commissioner threw a party in honour of the country's 7th Olympics victory."

Singh finally hung up his stick after the Mexico Olympics in 1968 and went on to become coach, first of the French national team and then the Indian team. "Hockey has given me everything; otherwise, a bespectacled player like me would never have reached where I am today," says Singh, who is honorary vice-president of the Hockey Association of West Bengal.

On youngsters in India seeking a career in sports, he believes. "All sportspersons don't come from rich families; rather, they come mainly from middle-class, even lower middle-class, families with big dreams. But how many can really make it, that too by sacrificing an education? Let's accept the reality... our country is not the best place for a youngster to build a career in sports."

Singh should know, considering he has gone to great lengths to arrange financial aid for sports personalities of yesteryear. Apart from his great sporting spirit, Singh is also a businessman at heart, and is the director of a company involved in automobile spares. He also spends his time visiting his children, who now live overseas. And even at the age of 80, he is invited by local publications to write columns on hockey.

Above all, Gurbux Singh is still trying to serve Indian hockey and is often spotted at the Sports Authority of India complex at Salt Lake in Kolkata, offering advice to the curator of the grounds. He smiles and says, "Hockey is like oxygen to my soul." ❀

“Sportspersons come mainly from middle-class families with big dreams. But how many can really make it by sacrificing an education? Our country is not the best place for a career in sports



Illustrations by Sanjhi Shah

Midnight's children...

and their idea of India

In 1947, when we broke free from British rule, we were to be united as one country for the first time in the history of our land. And for the first time, many millions of us were going to share a common identity—of being Indian. Together, while preserving all that made us gloriously different, we built a nation.

We've come a long way since.

To commemorate India entering her 70th year as an independent state, we asked 10 Indians born in 1947 about their 'idea of India'. As individuals who share her birth year and have practised their chosen professions at the highest level, their careers

are among the yardsticks by which we can measure the progress of the nation. They grew up in a symbiotic system where their every stumble or achievement has been a reflection of the nation's progress, even while a growing nation nurtured them.

Seventy years on, as they point out, they are in their silver years—but India is just coming of age. While growth has been slow on various fronts and things far from ideal, our 'midnight's children' remain optimistic, believing in the foundation they have laid down. With hard work and harmony, by embracing our differences instead of fearing them, they believe we can march to greatness.

—Natasha Rego



FLAVIA AGNES

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS
LAWYER**

Born: 30 November 1947

Birthplace: Mazagaon, Mumbai

Rise and shine

From a survivor of domestic violence to a women's rights activist and legal luminary, Flavia Agnes shares her journey of becoming the voice of oppressed women with **Sai Prabha Kamath**

On the busy Kalina market road in Mumbai, one could almost miss the headquarters of Majlis—a forum for women's rights discourse and legal initiatives—but for the perfect directions given to us by its head, women's rights lawyer-activist Flavia Agnes. As we enter the ground-floor flat turned office, a group of bright, young women are engaged in an animated discussion about laws concerning 'live-in relationships'. As promised, Agnes arrives sharp at 12 pm. Dressed smartly in a chic, light turquoise blue sari with matching jewellery, she leads us into a room where huge shelves with heavy legal books set the mood for our interview.

Later, we continue our discussion at her nearby home where the 69 year-old lives alone. The living room mirrors the fascinating personality of its owner: an antique photo of old Bombay; exquisite showpieces decorating the hall interspersed with books on gender equality and women's rights; an adjoining monsoon-happy, green balcony-garden.

A survivor of domestic violence, Agnes walked out of her marriage and, later, transitioned into a self-made legal luminary through sheer hard work and determination. She not just survived to tell the gory story of her traumatic marriage but was determined to help other battered women lead a life of dignity. Late in her 40s, she pursued a postgraduate degree in personal law and constitutional law from the University of Mumbai and received an MPhil degree from the National Law School - Bengaluru at 50. Through her various public campaigns and PILs, she brought the issues of women's abuse and domestic violence to the fore at a time when such subjects were rarely addressed.

"Even today, a woman has to struggle to find her own liberation. That task is as daunting today as it was when I set out to find my own path. It is still not easy for a woman to live her life as a single woman and raise her children. The social and infra-structural support is lacking. Despite these odds, the struggle must go on," she writes in her autobiography *My Story ... Our Story of Re-building Broken*

Lives which has been translated in more than eight languages and widely circulated to women in violent marriages around the world. "The strength lies in knowing there is light at the end of the tunnel. Each small step taken is a step forward and leads towards a meaningful new life—a life free of violence, and beyond it, a life free from the fear of violence."

In 1990, along with like-minded professionals, she co-founded Majlis, a legal and cultural resource centre, where a group of dynamic women lawyers and social activists are committed to informing, educating and empowering women on their legal rights. In Maharashtra, the centre has touched the lives of over 50,000 women, litigating on their behalf. A prolific writer, Agnes has published several articles on subjects such as domestic violence, minority law reforms, secularism and human rights, and authored books such as *Law and Gender Inequality*, *Family Law* (two volumes) and *Defending Muslim Women Rights: Bridging Muslim Personal Law and Court Judgements*.

On International Women's Day this year, a tree was dedicated in her name in the Garden of the Righteous in Milan, Italy, recognising her role in combating violence against women in India. A recipient of the prestigious Neerja Bhanot Award (1992) for her contribution to women's rights, Agnes has worked on issues of gender and law reforms and continues to provide legal services to women and children. A feminist legal academician, she mentors lawyers and is invited to universities across the world for guest lectures. The feisty lawyer opened up to us on her inspiring life, fight for women's rights and her 'idea of India'.

EXCERPTS FROM THE CONVERSATION

The early phase of your life was not pleasant. From where did you derive strength in the face of adversity?

I grew up in the peaceful surroundings of Mangalore in coastal Karnataka in my aunt's place as my parents were living abroad. I had an arranged marriage and became part of a nuclear household.

I had three children in quick succession and throughout my married life, I was a victim of acute physical abuse. I had learnt to cope with oppression as part and parcel of marriage. In 1980, I got involved in an anti-rape movement; it was almost accidental. Someone told me about this group—Forum Against Rape (later renamed Forum Against the Oppression of Women)—which was meeting every week in a library and since I was interested, she accompanied me to this place. From there, there was no looking back as I met a group of dynamic women whose thoughts matched mine on subjects such as rape, oppression and violence. With their help, I was able to leave my home with my daughters after suffering 13 years of an abusive marriage.

What made you fight legal cases for women?

Owing to my own personal struggle, fighting for women's rights became the mission of my life.

I acquired professional degrees in my later years to carry on with the work and represent women in litigation.

Has Majlis achieved what it set out to?

Yes, to a certain extent. Apart from active litigation and public campaigns, through a convergence model involving the judiciary, police, hospitals, and the Department of Women and Child Development of the Maharashtra government, we provide socio-legal support to women on issues such as sexual abuse, domestic violence and matrimonial rights.

We are monitoring Manodhairya, a scheme in Maharashtra that provides financial assistance and support services to survivors of sexual violence and acid attacks. We also impart legal skills and strategies to lawyers and social workers. Yet, there is so much more to do.

The prevalence of domestic violence in our society has not diminished in spite of legal reforms. Strong sentiments hold women back from speaking up



Agnes with her firebrand, all-woman team of lawyers and social activists

milestones

BA in Sociology (1984); LLB (1988); LLM (1992); MPhil (1997)

1984: Published *My Story ... Our Story of Re-building Broken Lives*, an autobiography on domestic violence

1990: Formed Majlis, a legal and cultural resource centre

1992: Received Neerja Bhanot Award

1997: Oxford University Press published *Law and Gender Inequality*, a book Agnes wrote countering the demand for a Uniform Civil Code

1997: Secured the right of divorce on the grounds of cruelty for Christian women through a landmark ruling of the Bombay HC

2001: Helped to bring about legislative reform in the law of divorce applicable to Christians

2002: Initiated a legal advocacy programme for sexually violated women in relief camps after the communal carnage in Gujarat and subsequently published the book, *Of Lofty Claims and Muffled Voices, A Perspective of the Gujarat Carnage*

2004: Started a campaign defending the rights of bar dancers and represented them through a PIL in the Bombay High Court

2007: Majlis started actively working on implementation of the Domestic Violence Act and helped women (including Muslim women) to avail of the remedies provided under it

2011: Published *Family Law* (two volumes), used as a popular textbook in many law universities

2012: Majlis started a programme for providing socio-legal support to victims of sexual violence and reached out to more than 600 victims

2016: A tree dedicated in the name of Agnes in the Garden of the Righteous in Italy; the legal centre of Majlis completes 25 years

.....

ment. After meeting her and explaining our victim support programme, she gained confidence and deposed again and narrated the true story and the father was given two years' imprisonment. Her family abandoned her and we have taken it upon ourselves to ensure that she achieves her dream of becoming an engineer. With the help of donations from individuals and private trusts, we have taken care of her accommodation and fees this year. However, there are two more years to go and we are seeking support from well-wishers to continue our mission. Where the law has failed her is that when the father filed an appeal, the High Court immediately granted him bail and he is back home; the case has now gone into cold storage. This is a travesty of justice and the price a girl has to pay for deposing against her own father.

According to a study conducted by Agewell Foundation, older women in India are more prone to suffering abuse

Despite women having proven their mettle in every field, they are still subjected to bias, oppression and exploitation. How old is gender inequality in India and how can we change it?

From time immemorial, women have been subjects of gender bias and oppression—the image of Eve being the temptress, the character of Sita being subservient to Lord Rama, the *Adarsh Purush*, despite the injustice meted out to her, and so many other stories form our thinking and have become part of our psyche. Challenges from women like Draupadi, who defied Bhishma in an open court and refused to tie her hair till the insult against her was avenged, are very few; strong women are always projected in a negative light. However, times have changed considerably. Today, many women are opting out of oppressive marriages and demanding their rights in court. More women are educated today compared to the pre-Independence era. There is one-third reservation in local bodies and jobs. Also, many women are doing untraditional tasks. Still, there is scope for progress.

According to a United Nation Population Fund Report, around two-third of married Indian women are victims of domestic violence. How do we deal with this?

The prevalence of domestic violence in our society has not diminished in spite of public campaigns and legal reforms. Some strong sentiments that hold women back from speaking up are 'You are creating the problem', 'You are not adjusting', or 'You should not break the family'. Through my research and study of the lives of several battered women, I have come to a conclusion that it is not just a 'personal' problem or a psychological 'behavioural' issue, but a far more complex social problem. To deal with it, first, the legal system should work. Second, awareness of women's rights should be created not just at the ground level but all levels of society.

Is Indian law sensitive towards women? Can you cite a case where the law has worked effectively to protect women?

Indian law is sensitive. However, the way it is implemented is not. Sometimes the authorities involved—for instance, the police or judges—have patriarchal values and beliefs. The purpose of the law needs to be explained in different ways to different people. For our part, Majlis is training public prosecutors, judges, police and magistrates by sensitising them about the law without challenging their beliefs. As for a case where the law has worked effectively, there was a case of a father raping his own daughter. The girl was a bright, 1st year engineering student. Though she filed a police complaint, family members put pressure on her to retract. During the trial, the public prosecutor showed a report wherein the girl was contradicting her own state-



owing to factors like gender discrimination, longer lifespan than older men and absence of a source of income. Common issues affecting them are destitution, alienation and isolation, and financial and social insecurity. What do you think is the need of the hour—institution building, institution strengthening or institutional transformation?

We need to build institutions as there are hardly any to take care of our women and silvers. Owing to rapid urbanisation, we are at a crossroads. Women—more so mothers—have invested so much of their time and energy raising their children and supporting their families. But as they have grown older, the values have changed. The earlier generation used to have a sense of duty towards parents. However, these days, children seeking brighter prospects live abroad and, in many cases, there seems to be a lack of responsibility towards caring for parents. In this scenario, elderly women are left high and dry and considered a burden. They could opt to live in

a community setup, but this is not feasible in all cases. Elders also need to change their mindset, else they will find it difficult to bridge the gap between their expectations and the ground reality which results in heartache and bitterness.

As seen in many countries, we need a community setup for the elderly and must create awareness about the advantages of living in communities. For their part, silvers can keep themselves busy by engaging in activities of their interest, social work, travel, etc.

In your view, what is 'the idea of India'—that which makes our country unique?

Our multidimensional culture is our strength; we observe different festivals; our food patterns are varied and rich; people belonging to many identities flourish here, living harmoniously as a composite culture. We should not flatten it out by pushing somebody out because their culture or food habits are different from the mainstream majority—all of us have space here as everyone has contributed to making India what it is today. And we need to cherish and strengthen this culture as our greatest asset.

How has India fed your professional and personal ambitions?

Many people ask me, 'Is India a good country to live in?', 'Is the country safe for women?' I would not think of living anywhere else in the world where you are a second-class citizen. For me, India is my country and Bombay is my place. I just love the dynamism of the city. People here are not bothered about who you are or what your status is; only your work matters. I could have gone back to my native place and survived with the support of my friends and relatives. But I chose to live in Bombay and made my career where I contributed and was not slotted or stigmatised.

Have there been any limitations to your growth?

It is important to convert limitations to advantages and grow from there. I have always tried to see every challenge as an opportunity and have tried to surmount it. This is the only way I could advance.

Research is my passion and my work has only multiplied. With communication advancement, one is not clamped down by living in India. I have travelled to different countries and taught at universities. In fact, even when I got offers to teach abroad, I have



Just as the country progresses amid setbacks and successes, I have also moved on and looked ahead with a positive attitude

not accepted them because I prefer to live and work in India. This is my choice.

Considering your birth coincided with the birth of our nation, what parallels can you draw between India's advancement and your own life?

The birth coincidence is something I am proud of. As the country was celebrating its 10th Independence Day, I remember laddoos being distributed in all schools. I recollect reading newspaper articles about the country getting into its teens and reaching middle age, etc, keeping company with my age! I always connect with the growth of the nation as it has marked my growth too. The milestones the country has had at various periods can be linked to various stages of my life. Just as the country progresses amid setbacks and successes, I have also moved on and looked ahead with a positive attitude.

What best practices from other countries should we emulate?

Two things that go with development are disabled-friendly infrastructure and support mechanisms for the elderly, including healthcare for the terminally ill. Unfortunately, India hasn't progressed much there. We still look at family as a support system. We need community setups like other countries. Also, healthcare is beyond the reach of most people and the public healthcare system is failing due to neglect while five-star types of hospitals are on the increase.

Where do you see our nation heading now?

It's a difficult question to answer; I am not a politician or policy planner. But I can see a lot of negative things happening, leading to public discontent. Marginalised people are getting pushed out; development has not taken place among them. At another level, I am amazed at the amount of money people make and yet their families are so unhappy. Making money doesn't lead to happiness.

As I'm involved in movements like minority identity, civil liberty, rights of disadvantaged people, and women's rights, I don't see much progress happening there. On one side, we are talking about economic development but it is not filtering down to the next level. Every political party has come to power with an anti-corruption ticket. But corruption is ingrained in the system. Incentives and allocations by the

Government rarely reach the needy as a lot of leakages take place in the middle. Year after year, the country is seeing farmer suicides, children dying of malnutrition, drought, etc. This indicates that something is wrong with our development policies. At one level, we say we are poised to take off as an important force globally and at another, people are dying because there is no drinking water. And we are playing religious and caste politics with the grief and miseries of these people. It is indeed ironic.

What role can silvers play in nation-building?

Today we see a lot of elders—along with the youth—contributing to social change in different ways. In fact, many are venturing into new careers after retirement. While the youth has the energy, the older generation can impart skills, experience and values to youngsters. I see the elderly as an asset as they have a vital role in strengthening the nation.

How do you unwind? Do you follow any exercise regime?

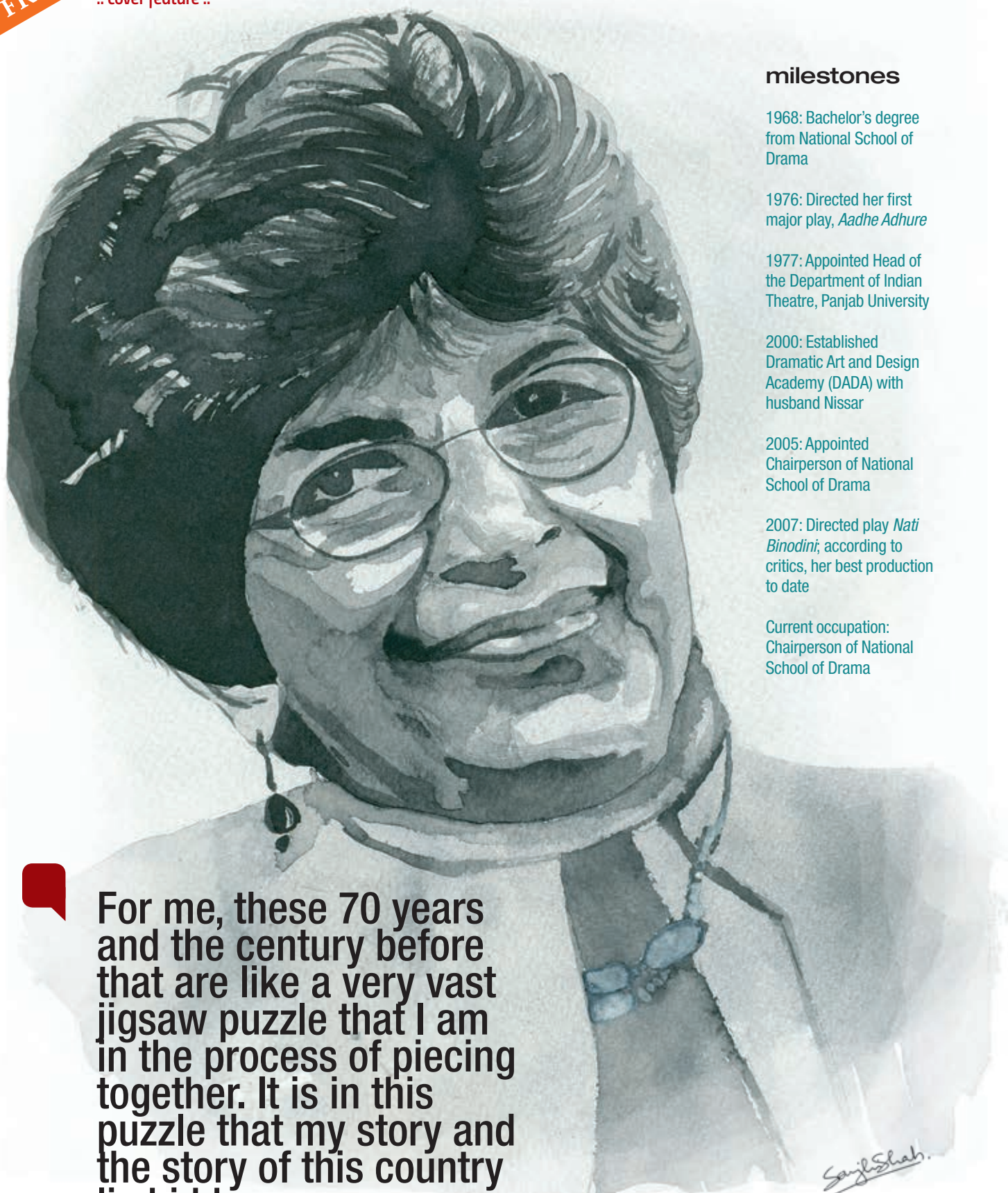
I love gardening and tending to the plants in my balcony. I often tell people who visit me that my plants, my cotton saris and silver earrings [she has an exquisite collection of ethnic saris and silver jewellery from destinations across India] are the only inheritance I will be leaving behind [laughs]. And though I don't follow a strict exercise regime, I love walking. I read, but rarely fiction.

What do your children do now?

My children are doing well today; one of my daughters is working with Majlis. They are independent and have made conventional choices of marriage to partners of their choice. Each of them has a little daughter to love and cherish. They are supportive of my work.

What keeps you busy today? What plans going forward?

My work, which involves writing, mentoring the younger people in the organisation, occasional court appearances, travelling to cities where I am invited for lectures, etc, keeps me busy. I have many pending writing assignments. I really have no time for anything else. I enjoy writing for publications where my articles reflecting my thoughts and concerns on various issues are valued. I just hope I can continue this way till the end. ✨



For me, these 70 years and the century before that are like a very vast jigsaw puzzle that I am in the process of piecing together. It is in this puzzle that my story and the story of this country lie hidden

milestones

1968: Bachelor's degree from National School of Drama

1976: Directed her first major play, *Aadhe Adhure*

1977: Appointed Head of the Department of Indian Theatre, Panjab University

2000: Established Dramatic Art and Design Academy (DADA) with husband Nissar

2005: Appointed Chairperson of National School of Drama

2007: Directed play *Nati Binodini*; according to critics, her best production to date

Current occupation: Chairperson of National School of Drama

AMAL ALLANA

CHAIRPERSON, NSD

Born: 14 September 1947

Birthplace: Mumbai

We have a great and rich past, a heritage that is unsurpassed in all the arts. In thought, too, we have inherited the values and philosophies of the world's greatest religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. In terms of building an equitable society, throughout history we have had rulers with wide vision who have shaped and refined an organic, syncretic, social structure that allows for flexibility, adaptability and interdependence. Closer to modern times, we could not have asked for a greater legacy of politicians who were primarily thinkers and intellectuals and shaped our modern democratic ideas. We have evolved into a civilisation where differences are celebrated, not frowned upon. All this has allowed Indians to enter the 21st century with relative ease and hold their own in a complex global world. We are spiritually strong and resistant from within.

That our country is constantly evolving and changing has always excited me. There are major opportunities to make your mark. In a large number of fields, especially in the area of art and culture in which I work, the field is still open, is still in the making, has not as yet got standardised or over-specialised. This has allowed me to not be slotted into a single area. I relish the idea that I have the freedom to direct plays, teach, run art galleries, design costumes and even make TV serials! The entire field of art is my arena and I can roam through it, picking and choosing my projects with a flexibility that would have been unheard of in the West. There I would have had to select one field and specialise in it!

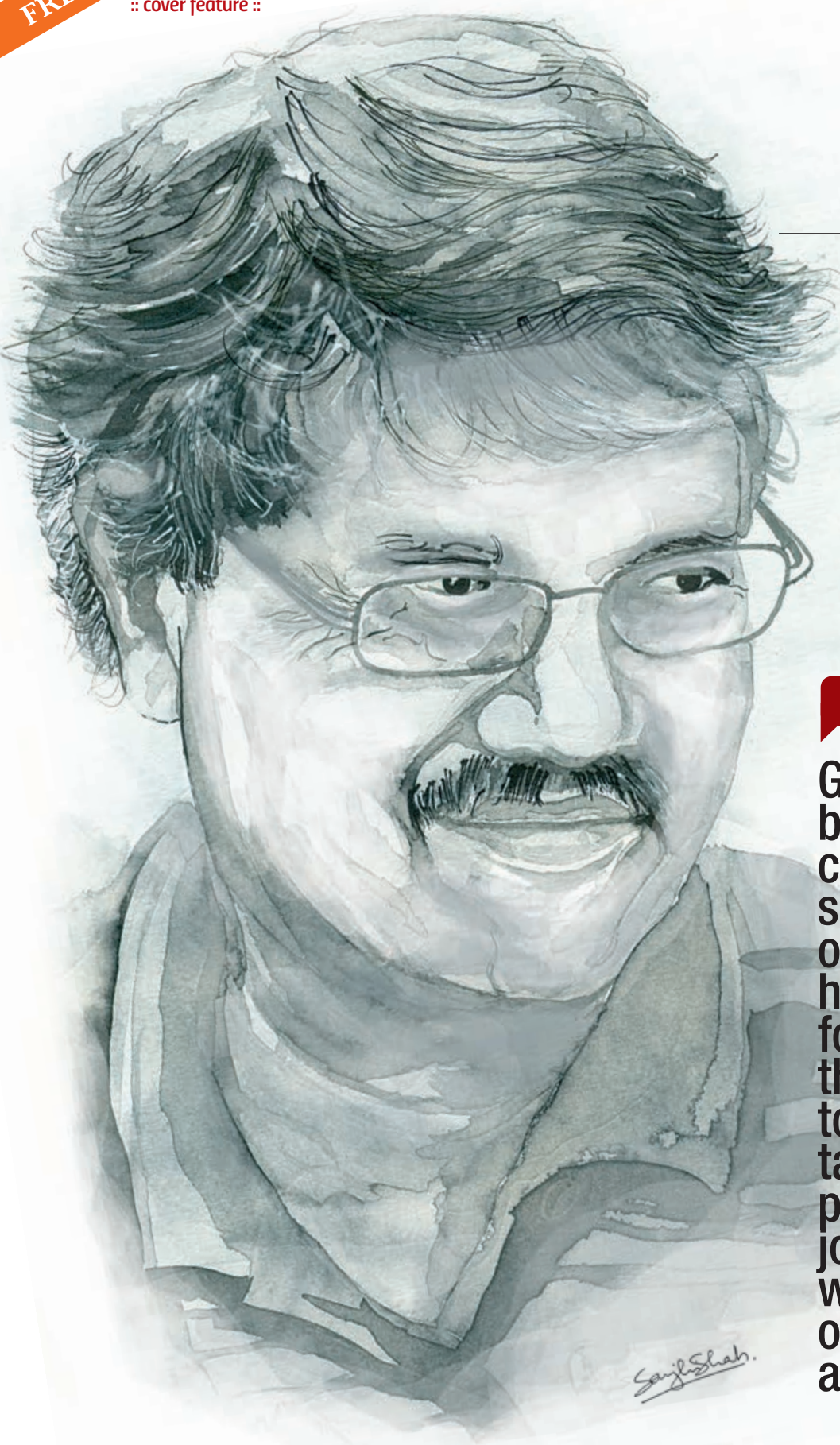
I think the happiest coincidence is that I was born a month after Independence. All my work and interest lies in what came immediately before or after my birth! I am not only a 'Midnight's Child' as Rushdie would have described, but all my milestones occur co-terminus with those of the nation. Sometimes I feel I am ahead of much that is happening, at times

I feel the nation is rushing forward and leaving me behind!

Today, at the age of 70, I feel compelled to tell my story—the story of my parents, the story of my country. When my husband Nissar and I worked on Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*, we launched into a fascinating journey of discovering the country's recent history. This encouraged us to say something of our own through the television series, *Raj se Swaraj*, based on famous trials from the Independence movement. Thereafter, our creative work began to draw on the related history of Indian theatre, with productions like *Begum Barve* and *Nati Binodini*. This led us to the related history of contemporary art, which we imbibed while we helped my father Ebrahim Alkazi mount a TV series called *Indian Art and Modernism*. Our country's vicissitudes through the struggle for Independence, towards arriving at modern art forms, whether in theatre or the visual arts, relate closely to my own family's journey towards finding more contemporary means of expression.

All these histories—personal, national, cultural—feed my creativity. In understanding this period, from say 1857 to the present, questions like why are we the way we are, why I am like this, why my parents have a particular way of thinking, why has art evolved the way it has, are answered. So, for me, these 70 years and the century before that are like a very vast jigsaw puzzle that I am in the process of piecing together. It is in this puzzle that my story and the story of this country lie hidden. That is what I should like to leave for my children—some thoughts on how we were, on what happened to our country and our families when I was around. As I regard myself a storyteller, I believe it is my job to tell true and meaningful stories.

What I cannot bear today is the blatant way in which the history of our country is being distorted for political ends. This is ominous and cannot bode well for the future.



JAHAR
DAS

**FOOTBALL
COACH**

Born: 5 April 1947
Birthplace: Basudevpur in
Howrah district, West Bengal



Government
bodies in
charge of
sports should
open up new
horizons for
football in
the country
to attract
talented
people to
join the fray
without fear
of being
abandoned

My idea of an 'incredible India' is a country free from bureaucratic apathy, dishonesty and, above all, greed, lust, envy and malice towards mankind. We must be prepared to go all the way to protect our motherland, no matter the rigours of the journey.

As a son of the soil, I always wish that the sacred image of the land is not tarnished by murky politics. But as a sportsperson, my dream is much more grounded—I wish for people at the helm of sporting organisations to set up well-equipped nurseries for upcoming talent, provide modern infrastructure and nurture their abilities to the fullest extent. Coaches, especially, should be of high integrity and, above all, prejudice.

I would never have become a footballer if not for Ashoke Nag, a local football coach, who spotted me on a local ground in Howrah, West Bengal. When I was a boy, all I wanted to be was an athlete—a short distance runner—and I trained regularly at the ground. Nag honed my talent on the football ground; with the passage of time, I donned the different colours of clubs in and out of West Bengal.

The All India Football Federation has contributed to my success by giving me the opportunity to play for the nation, even up to the pre-Olympics level. Under its aegis, I was selected to coach junior teams such as the U-16, U-17 and U-21. However, I was shocked when the Federation decided to withdraw my coaching position after qualifying for the U-17 World Cup in 2004 from the southeast zone. It was a move I did not anticipate. Perhaps they didn't like my suggestion to escalate my daily allowance of ₹ 150 per day by ₹ 1. I was disappointed when the responsibility was then given to an inexperienced and technically less-qualified person.

I remember a radio interview in Germany in 1985 when I was taking an international coaching course. They asked me whether my country would benefit from such a course or if it would be a waste of money by the German

government who was sponsoring the course under its cultural exchange programme. My answer: "We believe that the ultimate truth for coming to earth is to cleanse the inner self, not by projecting ourselves as the victor in a competition, but by gathering knowledge from wherever possible. We believe in developing strength. Swami Vivekananda once said, 'You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the *Gita*.'" It is the principal by which I live.

As a professional footballer and coach, I think India has the talent. We need not import players and coaches from other countries; that is, if we place more value on standards and not the razzmatazz of football. I believe in corporate sponsorship but not to retain the service of foreign players. In the past 15 years, so many foreign-bred footballers have played in different clubs in the country. They are undoubtedly talented, skilled and dedicated to the game, but has this process of foreign recruitment helped Indian football in any way, except maybe creating momentary euphoria in domestic football?

Sometimes I stop to wonder, whatever happened to Indian hockey? Once the country to beat in events like the Olympics and Asian Games, the Indian field hockey team now struggles in international arenas. Sixty-nine years have passed since the British handed over the baton to us and we seem to be basking in the glory of yesteryears without chasing our dreams.

Being born the same year when India was set free from British reign is a rare fortune that I possess. In a country where hundreds of crores of people live, the development of football and the attitude of those in charge are yet to come of age. I think government bodies in charge of sports should open up new horizons for football in the country to attract talented and knowledgeable people to join the fray without fear of being abandoned. We now pass the ball on to the next generation of Indians, in the hope that they will score the winning goal.

—As told to Partha Mukherjee

milestones

1971: Signed to Port Commissioner Club

1972: Signed to Tata Sports Club

1972: Member of team India at the pre-Olympics

1975: Signed to Mohun Bagan as a striker, with a career record of 24 goals

1977: Signed to East Bengal

1985: Selected for a coaching training programme in Bonn, Germany, sponsored by the Government of West Germany

1999: Qualified as India's first A-licence coach

2015: Appointed manager of I-League Team Aizawl FC

Current occupation: Head coach at Aizawl FC and Chief of Youth Development

DR PREM SHANKAR GOEL

PADMA SHRI, SCIENTIST

Born: 20 April 1947

Birthplace: Dhabarsi, a village near Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

milestones

1968: Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering from MBM College, Jodhpur

1970: Master's in Electrical Engineering from IISc

1997: Appointed Director of ISRO Satellite Centre and led studies on the first Indian mission to the moon, Chandrayaan-1

2006: Appointed Secretary of the Department of Ocean Development, Ministry of Earth Sciences

2008: Appointed First Chairman of the Earth Commission, a global forum for scientists

2011: Appointed to the DRDO Chair, RCI, Hyderabad

Current occupation: Dr Raja Ramanna Chair Professor at National Institute of Advanced Studies; Honorary Distinguished Professor at ISRO HQ; Chairman of Technology Advisory Board, Ministry of Earth Sciences; and advisor to Indian National Academy of Engineering

For me, India's is a culture nurtured over thousands of years, much beyond the physical boundaries we see on the map. It is capable of assimilating different ways of life, forms of worship and ideologies while preserving the core values found in our ancient books, such as the common good of mankind and uplift of the self for inner peace.

I left my home early on and went to Jodhpur for my secondary education and BE, to IISc-Bengaluru for my master's, joined ISRO in Thiruvananthapuram and returned to Bengaluru to work on satellites. It was all so smooth that every place became home. I think it was that cultural integrity in diversity that made me look at India as a large home.

I had practically no ambitions to begin with; they just kept unfolding at every step. While studying at IISc, I developed a desire to work on rockets and was appointed to work on satellites at ISRO. Each new satellite required new technology to be developed and my R&D was part of this.

Each project was a challenge and opportunity to grow. Coming from a small village in UP, without any contacts, I became director of the Satellite Centre and member of the Space Commission at the age of 50. Then, I moved to Delhi as a secretary and transformed the Department of Ocean Development into the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Had the Rajasthan government not given me a scholarship as a young man, I could not have got my degree in electrical engineer-

ing. My ME was also because of a scholarship. This country has given me everything. Sometimes I wonder whether I have given enough back. Perhaps this sentiment keeps me going and give me a desire to do more. I have been very lucky to join ISRO and work with leaders like Prof U R Rao and Prof Dhawan. If certain opportunities evaded me, there might have been good reasons. I do not attribute it to limitations of the system or the country.

Being associated with national security, I believe we are not making full use of our capabilities in space, cyber and technology. We as engineers and scientists have not given enough to our security apparatus. That is the only regret I have, though I believe I have contributed significantly. I hope to focus on this for next few years. For so long I played executive roles but now my contribution is in the form of advisory and policy inputs. I look deeper into societal issues and routinely interact with the Indian National Academy of Engineering, ISRO, DRDO, Ministry of Earth Sciences and National Institute of Advanced Studies.

Having been born the same year as India, I have made interesting observations growing up. I saw a bus at the age of eight, an electric bulb glowing at the age of nine and went to hostel in another village without electricity at the age of 10. We studied vacuum tube transistors in our BE and started using SSI (single system imaging) devices in the Aryabhata satellite (1975). When we launched Aryabhata, even the pins

Sanjiv Shah

were imported. Introduction of the television before the Asian Games in 1982 was revolutionary. We were the first to get a hybrid computer for the APPLE spacecraft project that was a combination of analog and digital computer for simulations. Now, we are in the era of smartphones and wearable devices. I think our generation has seen the greatest evolution of technology.

However, India's growth in human indices, GDP, infrastructure and general happiness has been slow compared to countries with similar parameters elsewhere. The world is competitive and nuanced, and absolute numbers tend to make no sense. We need faster growth in economy, infrastructure and employment generation, and as an ethical society.

What pains me sometimes is when I see alienation for minor differences in day-to-day practices in some sections of society or a divide on the basis of caste and religion. Though this is all owing to silly political play and will perhaps vanish as the democracy matures, the process is too slow.

So far we, the country and I, have grown together; while I have reached my plateau, the country must journey ahead at greater speed. The young generation is smart and with a little commitment, we have the potential to match the developed world. I am an optimist and believe that we will once again reach the highest GDP—India had the highest GDP in

the world around the 7th century—in the next two to three decades.

While India marches ahead, the Government has to take a few crucial steps: weed out corruption at all levels; reduce its own role in running the country and eliminate the Licence Raj; and work on a long-term strategy to tackle external threats. The rest can be left to the people. The people in India are innovative and can take care of themselves. I believe India will regain its past glory as the 'Golden Bird'.



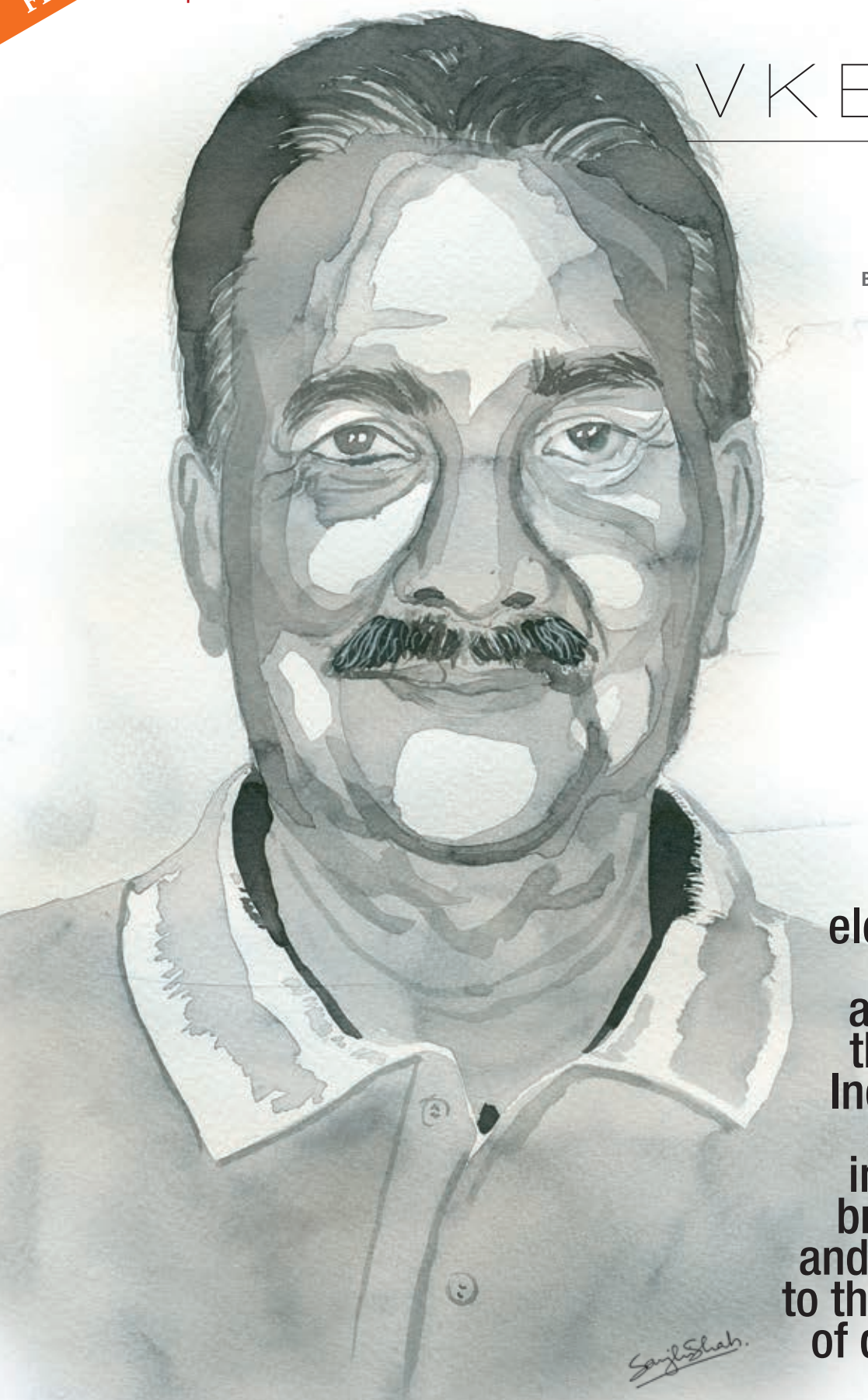
What pains me sometimes is when I see alienation for minor differences in day-to-day practices or a divide on the basis of caste and religion



V K B NAIR

**FORMER
DGP, UP**

Born: 3 June 1947
Birthplace: Kollam district,
Kerala



The most important element that deserves adulation is the modern Indian polity, conceived in universal brotherhood and dedicated to the principle of democracy

With my birth being almost coterminous with Indian independence, it has been a forward journey together for the country and me all these years. I was born in a remote village in Kerala (then Travancore state). As a child and in my later years, I was electrified with the hopes and aspirations free India held for her citizens. I can still distinctly visualise the pomp and pageantry with which we celebrated Independence Day. Now, when I look back on that after all these years, I have mixed feelings—part fulfilment and part frustration—for both me and the country.

India is unique in many ways. Although hackneyed through overuse, the oft-repeated phrase 'unity in diversity' still holds true. But the most important element that deserves adulation is the modern Indian polity, conceived in universal brotherhood and dedicated to the principle of democracy. It is nothing short of a wonder that a vast multitude of humanity, comprising almost one-fifth of the world's population, mired in abject poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, disease and superstition, adopted for itself a somewhat unfamiliar form of governance, which they have sustained all these years.

Yet, it is not all hunky-dory. There are serious fissures in the edifice of Indian democracy. The professionalisation of politics is the greatest bane of present-day public life. In the past, politics was tantamount to sacrifice in the line of public service. Now, in most states, political power is vested with a few families and has become hereditary.

Although much of my hope was belied in my later years, this country has given me almost everything I wished for—above all, a level playing field in my career. During the early years, I remember how merit was honoured; honesty and integrity were appreciated by the department, general public and politicians too. Now, things have changed. Though I was a rank outsider to the state to which I was allotted (Uttar Pradesh), the government and the people there treated me with utmost regard. As a

matter of fact, I think I received preferential treatment at times. That is one of the reasons why I was elevated to the post of Director-General of Police for the state of Uttar Pradesh, despite the fact that there were many senior officers waiting in line.

However, when we draw up the balance sheet for the country after 70 years, the debit far outweighs the credit. We have wasted many opportunities to advance to the front ranks of the world's nations. Although we have made great strides in science and technology, space exploration, nuclear physics and atomic energy, the average Indian's quality of life, particularly in rural areas, continues to be pathetic. The areas that need immediate attention are clean drinking water, sanitation, universal literacy, healthcare and human rights. One thing that surprises me is the absence of scientific temperament even among the educated class, even though science is being taught in our schools and colleges for more than 200 years.

It has been a long journey together for this country and I. Great changes have taken place in both our lives. The standard of living of the people of India, including my own, has undergone a sea change. This simple village boy reaped the benefits of the nation's progress to the fullest extent. I got a decent education and grew up to become a senior civil servant. I have had the good fortune to dedicate the best 36 years of my life to the service of the country and its people.

I have almost come to the end of the road, while the country marches forward. But I see dark clouds on the horizon. Tough challenges await us: terrorism, fissiparous tendencies, professionalisation and criminalisation of politics, corruption in high places, communalism and the rise of religious fundamentalism. Yet, I have faith in the tenacity of the Indian masses and the resilience of the democratic system. If this country could weather many a storm in the past, including countless aggressions, annexations and conquests, and still survive, why should there be any apprehension for the future?

milestones

1971: Joined the Indian Police Service, allotted UP cadre

1975: Appointed Superintendent of Police

1991: Awarded the Indian Police Medal for Meritorious Service

1994: Appointed Inspector-General

1997: Awarded the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service

2003: Appointed Director-General of Police of Uttar Pradesh Police, the largest police force in the world under a single command

Current occupation: Basking in the glow of the silver years

DR S Y QURAISHI

FORMER CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER

Born: 11 June 1947

Birthplace: Delhi

I was not born free. However, my birth on 11 June 1947 ensured that I did not have to suffer the indignity of living in a slave country for more than two months. Being one of midnight's children, I am conscious that my personal history coincides with the history of free India.

The only difference is that while 69 years is a whole lifetime for a human, the country has merely reached adolescence, desperate to shed the 'child' tag and be recognised in the world of grownups, i.e. the developed nations of the West whom we idealise, and idolise, even at the risk of shedding our own historical and unique identity.

But we are superior in many ways. For instance, we gave equal voting rights to women in our very first shot at democracy in 1950, whereas it took the US 144 years and UK, the mother of modern democracy, 100 years. We had a woman prime minister—a powerful one at that—within 19 years of democracy, and the first woman president of the Indian National Congress as early as 1925. Who has to learn from whom, I still wonder? I was privately amused when an enterprising Indian businessman recently bought the notorious, and now defunct, East India Company. History has come full circle, indeed!



milestones

1971: Passed IAS

1991: Completed his PhD on the topic, "Role of

communication and social marketing in development of women and children"

2005: Appointed Secretary in the Ministry of Youth Affairs

2010: Appointed Chief Election Commissioner

2014: *An Undocumented Wonder: the Making of the Great Indian Election* released

Current occupation: Enjoying his permanent job of being the 'Former' Chief Election Commissioner of India; is a Distinguished Fellow at Ashoka University

While India introduced the concept of the world being one family (*Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*), globalisation has made the world conscious of it. But communal hostility has no boundaries. Racists abroad and casteists in India are siblings separated at birth. Forces of hatred are raising their ugly heads. And technology seems to have increased their destructive potential a million times over.

The uniqueness of India lies in its 3,000 years of harmony and intermingling of races. The resultant birth of a composite culture has been India's abiding identity. India is the most diverse country in the world, the original megapolis. But we are becoming a violent and intolerant society. From road rage to lynch mobs, everyone seems to have their own definition of rights and freedoms. We think in terms of narrow caste, communal, parochial and political interests. For short-term gains we are doing long-term damage to the 'idea of India'.

Our problems are enormous and real freedom will only be achieved when we banish them. Yet our potential is huge if we take right initiatives. I suggest an employment mis-

Max Mueller Bhavan. He ensured we got the best possible education despite financial challenges. I pray for his soul.

We grew up in the syncretic culture of the walled city of Delhi. The population then was a good mix of Hindus and Muslims living in harmony despite the trauma of post-Partition riots. But sadly, we started seeing gradual polarisation.

We only had teachers in our family. I was the first to enter the civil service, thereby becoming the first Muslim IAS officer in old Delhi after Independence in 1971 which led to a *Hindustan Times* editorial. My younger sister Rasheda Husain followed in my footsteps to set a similar record for her gender by joining the central services.

Thanks to the liberal atmosphere in my family, two of my brothers did well in theatre, one of whom played football for India. I played bass guitar in a beat group (while being a lecturer) that featured Sharon Prabhakar, who rose to become a pop star, while I went on to join the ranks of babus! Not to lag behind, I founded a rock band while in



Our problems are enormous and real freedom will only be achieved when we banish them. Yet our potential is huge

sion, a national gender education drive, a new population policy, an integrated adolescent development programme and a national reconciliation mission. Our human resource of young men and women, a vibrant economy and democratic culture can propel India to the first world if we keep our people united and focused.

That is the story of India, my twin sibling, through 69 years of history. And what happened to me?

I was born to a family of Islamic scholars and writers of great eminence. However, my father Zubair Quraishi was the first to get a modern education. When he joined St Stephen's 'mission' College in 1923 there was a social uproar; this was considered a radical departure from tradition. He proved to be a bridge between conservative Islam and modern thought.

A great lover of education, my father spent his life running an English grammar school. It was touching to see him go to Max Mueller Bhavan with his walking stick every day at the age of 60 to attend German classes. Years later, I followed suit and the German grammar formulae he had evolved made me a hero when I topped my class in

the IAS Academy which has survived till today! We gave it a rather queer name, 'Garibaldi and His Three Hairs'! We still play regularly at private home functions.

Some official memories I cherish are my power reforms under Chaudhary Bansi Lal and postings as DG Doordarshan and DG National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO). The Election Commission gave me an enviable opportunity to preside over the electoral management of the world's largest democracy. I introduced many innovations of which I am particularly proud of setting up a voters' education division and starting National Voters' Day. An institute—India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM)—I set up in the face of full-throttle hostility from many official sections has turned to be a landmark of India's soft power. Representatives of almost 70 countries have received training there.

Being the largest is not good enough; my dream is for India to become the greatest democracy in the world. I am optimistic. We have great political leadership and an intelligent and hardworking nation that can do it. And we will, Insha Allah. What we need is integrity, determination and, of course, harmony.

DR HIMANSHI SHELAT

GUJARATI WRITER

Born: 8 January 1947

Birthplace: Surat, Gujarat

milestones

1980: Completed her PhD on the topic, "Theme and technique of V S Naipaul novels"

1987: Released her debut book, a collection of short stories, *Antara*

1992: Appointed chairperson of Juvenile Welfare Board, Surat

1996: Sahitya Akademi Award for *Andhari Galima Safed Tapakan*

2013: Appointed to the advisory board of Sahitya Akademi, Gujarati

Current occupation: Having retired from active work, she is happily engaged in her favourite activities—reading and writing





In the 70s and 80s, leaving this country to settle down away from this problematic place was a craze. This desire remains even to this day. How many of us aspire to build a powerful nation and spend our time and energy towards this goal?

The intoxicating fragrance of jasmine flowers and incense, the musical notes of shehnai and sitar, the vigorous beats of the bhangra, the henna on a bride's palm, a broken temple idol preserved in a museum somewhere across the world, the colours of the national flag, a peacock feather or an image of majestic lions basking in the sun any of these sights, sounds or smells can awaken powerful vibrations within and remind us of our cultural, regional biosphere wealth. This experience in itself is unique.

The uniqueness, however, lies in the people of India. Despite chaos, deprivation, social injustice and countless other problems, the Indian people have confidence in their democratic powers. Every election has proved what the people of this nation are capable of. They can shrink the mightiest to their actual size and stun the world. They are the most ordinary and often illiterate masses of this vast country.

For those of us born with the nation, the euphoria lasted almost 15 to 20 years. Our professional and personal ambitions during those formative years were woven around the concept of building a strong and beautiful nation.

I chose to teach and my personal ambition was to excel in my field. I loved to spend time with my students and had a fascination for books. To be in touch with literary masters and their creativity has been a passion and my profession gave me ample time and opportunity to fulfil this dream. It also inspired me to write.

Later, when I started working for underprivileged children, I received full support from a few sensitive students who shared my concern for the deprived sections of society. These efforts were rewarding as it shaped all of us into caring and responsible citizens.

My city, my state and my people have helped me in my endeavours, to be sure; but I was and I am, even today, conscious of the fact that a majority remain indifferent to many of the social problems, while I do not see a change in our social pattern. It is painful to notice signboards that say, 'Do not spit' or 'Do not litter' or 'Save the girl child' in all corners of the country. They were absent in 1960 or 1970.

In the '70s and '80s, leaving this country to settle down elsewhere and enjoy a luxurious life away from this problematic place was a craze. It is a pity that this desire remains even to this day. How many of us aspire to build a powerful nation and spend our time and energy towards this goal? If our educational system has failed to nurture this ambition in our children, if it has failed to produce sensitive and thoughtful, fearless and honest human beings, how should we evaluate our educational institutions and their system? Are we prepared to ask or answer the uncomfortable questions that our system presents?

No society or nation can boast of progress wherein the women, children and elderly are the worst victims of injustice. We need many more strong-willed citizens who can fight relentlessly against injustice and violence. We need uncompromising, broad-minded people at the helm of affairs, who would appreciate and understand the voice of dissent.

Those of us born in 1947 are often disillusioned and frustrated. I do not pretend to be optimistic, but our people are capable of performing miracles—the next generation may perform one, who knows! They could create a nation where the mind is without fear and the head is held high. Or let them find their own vision of this nation that is relevant to them. We can just do our duty by requesting them to keep away from the sycophants and the fanatics, and breathe our last with a dream of India in which the happiest people on this earth live.

DR LALJI SINGH

PADMA SHRI SCIENTIST

Born: 7 July 1947

Birthplace: Kalwari, Uttar Pradesh

milestones

1974: Awarded the Commonwealth Fellowship to carry out research at Edinburgh University, UK

1995: Founded the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics under the Ministry of Science and Technology, Hyderabad

1998: Served as Director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad

2001: Appointed Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University

2004: Set up the Genome Foundation

Current occupation: Managing Director, Genome Foundation



India has one of the largest human biodiversities in the world. There are 4,635 well-defined populations representing various ethnic groups, castes and tribes. There is diversity in our language, social structure, clothing, food habits, wedding practices, physical appearance and genetic architecture. The diversity in the plant, animal and microbial kingdoms, as well as geography and climate, is unique. It may be freezing in one region

while it is flooding in another, and almost boiling in yet another part of the country.

I was born to a farmer's family from a village in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh. I did my primary education in the local government school and walked 7 km (each way) to reach my high school and intermediate college. Eventually I got the opportunity to do a BSc in Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, where I had a freeship. I also got



Had it not been for democracy, it would not have been possible for me, having been born in a poor family in a small village, to reach where I am today

a scholarship for a PhD at the same university. My entire education, therefore, was almost free. This speaks volumes about our country.

After my PhD from BHU, I went on a Commonwealth Fellowship to the UK, initially for nine months, which then got extended over 13 years. I was invited by Dr P M Bhargava, founder and former director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, to join as a senior scientist. I was provided with every piece of equipment and any number of PhD students I needed to begin my work. Thus I can say, considering India is a poor country, she gave me everything I deserved.

For a scientist, the facilities and grants to carry out research matter most. At CCMB, I was able to establish facilities and conduct research that was published in top-ranking scientific journals, like *Nature*. My work has even been put on the cover of *Nature*. It was very satisfying to achieve this.

The greatest drawback in our country is that our system does not work. If the top person in an organisation is outstanding, things work well. But if the next person is appointed owing to considerations other than merit, things start to crumble. This is true for our governments too. We take one step forward and one step backward because of which we oscillate in the same place and progress is very slow.

I hope in future we will see a system that works, one through which only deserving people reach the top. I hope we can create a conducive atmosphere for innovation so the genes for innovation are expressed in India itself and not Silicon Valley in the US where fresh talents go to prove their worth.

Perhaps people like me are good examples to compare with India's progress since Independence. Democracy and equal opportunity for all are our biggest assets. Had this not been so, it would not have been possible for me, having been born in a poor family in a small village having the least education, to reach where I am today. Today, the

widening gap between rich and poor, rural and urban populations makes me very sad. Despite technological breakthroughs, our rural population is not only becoming poorer but regressing in knowledge owing to the lack of electricity, Internet connectivity and good schools, colleges and teachers.

This is a big concern for me. I say this with a heavy heart because I am still connected to my village. To promote education and skills, I have established a degree college in the village, which is very difficult to sustain because the people don't have the income to pay the fees. Similarly, healthcare facilities are very poor. If we do not overcome this disparity, we will create two Indias: one that lives in villages and urban slums, which will be riddled with genetic disorders and be knowledge-backward; and the other India that lives in the cities, which has everything available, and will be knowledge-rich and relatively free from genetic disorders because of genetic screening.

I have some hope because the present Government has recognised this problem and started taking steps to create these facilities in rural India. However, I am also concerned about the commercial exploitation of education and health. These are harmful to the unity of the rural and urban populations and their peaceful coexistence.

In 2004, I established the non-profit, Genome Foundation, to take genomic, precision, and individualised medicine based on individual genotypes to rural populations. Owing to its high cost, such treatment would otherwise never reach our villages. The dream of Bapuji, the father of our nation, is also my dream. He said: "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it's their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony." We should all participate in this sacred endeavour of building our nation and secure for it the well-deserved encomium of being a unique place in the world: a caring nation.

SHUVAPRASANNA

PAINTER

Born: 20 October 1947

Birthplace: Kolkata

India has led the way through its multifarious plurality—a wealth of thoughts, ideologies, faith, cultural diversities, social movements and history. The heritage of our country is defined by the harmonious coexistence of diverse groups. There exists a system that promotes the democracy of thought, secularism in practice and respect for individual freedom. The coexistence of tradition and modernity and a wealth of diversity are what I recognise as an integral part of the Indian ethos as a practising artist in India.

When I was a kid of about four or five, I enjoyed watching the people at my father's dispensary. He was a physician. I observed and drew their features instinctively. As sports and games never appealed to me, drawing occupied me completely. As I grew, this turned into more than a hobby—it became my passion, the source of my confidence.

After school, I joined the Indian College of Art in Calcutta. My family was against it, so I fled my home and sought uncertain shelter wherever I could. My earnings then came from designing book covers and doing illustrations for newspapers. My first group exhibition was at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1969. Two of my works from that exhibition, *Travail* and *The Ruler*, were picked up by the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi. Following this feat, I was spotted by the renowned Calcutta Painters, who invited me to join them. This catapulted me overnight from a promising neophyte to an artist who had come into his own.

In the early years, although the practice of art continued in its own small and scattered way, the number of galleries in India was few and far between. The only form of governmental support for the arts was through the Lalit Kala Akademi which has since gone on to support various groups and individual artists in the country. Because the art market was limited, I depended mostly on foreign patrons and sales for sustenance. A German couple who had bought two of my paintings from my studio invited me to bring my paintings to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1974. That was my first overseas

exhibition. It laid the foundation for a number of exhibitions around Europe during that time.

The history of a structured market for art in our country is only a few decades old. While demand and appreciation for folk art were ever-present, it has taken a long time for modern and urban art to get the same acceptance. It was only in the '60s, against the backdrop of a nascent independent nation, that modern art developed, and India slowly got a special place in the global modern art scene.

My visits to various art colleges abroad instilled in me a wish to establish an art college in India; this was realised in the founding of the College of Visual Arts in 1975. In 1984, I established Arts Acre – Village of Visual Arts. The late sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar laid the foundation stone and Nobel laureate author Gunter Grass later inaugurated the institution. Artists stayed in cottages here, practised art and exhibited their works.

In the meantime, an art market developed in India marked by a proliferation of private art galleries across the country. There was no longer a need to lug artworks abroad in search of patrons. The period between 1995 and 2005 witnessed a meteoric rise in the Indian art market.

As the market grew, so did my dream to build a large art institution. I started work on expanding Arts Acre in 2008, and inaugurated it as an international centre for creativity and cultural vision spread over several acres of land in 2014. It also houses the Museum of Bengal Modern Art, which depicts the evolution of modern art from colonial times to the present day. This is a self-sufficient art institute, what I recognise to be the pinnacle of all that I have achieved in a life devoted to the practice, dissemination and development of art.

Going forward, unless the patronage and understanding of fine arts is encouraged among the common people, the appreciation of painting and sculpture will continue to remain within the confines of the elite.



The representation of art is independent of one's immediate environment, one's society and one's nation

milestones

1969: Graduated from the Indian College of Art


1969: First group exhibition at Academy of Fine Arts, by the Society of Arts and Artists

1974: First exhibition overseas at Gallery Denburg in Geneva

1984: Established Arts Acre – Village of Visual Arts

2014: Expanded Arts Acre Foundation over several acres of land and set up the Museum of Bengal Modern Art

Current occupation: Devoted to painting and managing Arts Acre



Art is an expression of the deepest sensations of an artist's mind, the reflection of his innermost self, a revelation that must be exposed to the common man. Just as beauty, peace, joy and harmony can vibrate a creative mind, so can anarchy, hatred, disharmony, and conflict move it to action.

These feelings of hurt, sorrow and desperation can inspire art. Amid disturbances, to create beauty. Amid anarchy, to create harmony. This representation is independent of one's immediate environment, one's society and one's nation. For freedom is a quintessential gift for a creative mind.

DR L SUBRAMANIAM

PADMA BHUSHAN, VIOLINIST

Born: 23 July 1947

Birthplace: Chennai



milestones

Early 70s: Completed MBBS and registered as a medical practitioner; completed master's in Western classical music from Cal Arts

1985: Orchestral composition and performance in USA

1992: Founded the Lakshminarayana Global Music Festival

1999: Released the critically acclaimed album, *Global Fusion*

1991: Received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for 'The Most Creative Artist'

2014: Established Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts (SaPa)

Currently working on a number of orchestral commissions, recordings of rare ragas

Sajid Shah.

What I love most about India is its cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity and how everything manages to coexist so beautifully. For the most part, I see tolerance and Gandhi's vision of peace wherever I go. Sometimes we should also take a second to focus on the greatness that surrounds us, which we are fortunate to experience every day.

India has been the best country for me. It was not my choice to be born here but I'm grateful that I was. As a child, my parents, who belonged to a long line of classical musicians, trained me in Carnatic music. It was my father's dream for the violin to be a solo instrument in India and he worked hard towards that goal in the 1930s. My parents also exposed me to Western classical music and culture.

that it was important to work hard and make something of ourselves, that a little struggle isn't a bad thing.

We slowly gained the ability to travel, to spread Indian music and culture to the world. The idea of growing along with India was not lost on me. For me, in a sense, the highlight of India taking her place on the world stage was when Prime Minister Modi made his speech at Madison Square Garden in New York, in 2014. I had the privilege of being there, watching as India captivated the world, and heard 20,000 people sing our national anthem led by my wife Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam and I.

My mission is to continue to propagate Indian and global music. When I first started travelling around the world in the early 1970s, there was a misconception that only

 **In India, I think it comes naturally to us to be respectful of other cultures, to accept differences, to appreciate the beauty in them**

In India, I think it comes naturally to us to be respectful of other cultures, to accept differences, to appreciate the beauty in them. From the 1970s, I have been experimenting with northern Indian *jugalbandi*, Western classical, jazz and global collaborations. For the past 25 years, through the Lakshminarayana Global Music Festival, we have seen audiences lining up to hear musicians that have never been heard in the country before. They are ready and willing to experience and respect something new.

For the past few years, I have observed through SaPa (Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts) and the SaPa in Schools programme that young Indian parents are keen to expose their children to traditional Indian music and culture, and global music too. At the start of our third year, we already have over 7,000 students. These are examples of what makes India great—an open-mindedness and forward vision that respects culture and tradition.

I was born just a few days before Independence. At birth, my parents thought of naming me Swatantra (meaning freedom) Balasubramaniam, but later settled on Subramaniam. In the early days, people slowly started putting down their roots and adapting modern sophistication to the Indian scenario. There were many social and economic heroes at that time who worked hard to establish India and the post-Independence Indian dream.

I think the limitations I have faced in India have only helped me grow stronger. We learned, from a young age,

Western classical music was classical music. Everything else was considered ethnic or folk music. It was very important to me that people know that India has classical music too. We have folk and devotional, and many other styles of music in India—but also classical music.

Carnatic music, or southern Indian classical music, is perhaps the most methodical, scientific form of music. I have studied music from around the world, but have never found one as systematically organised and complex, both rhythmically and melodically. Millions of scales can be derived from the Carnatic raga system and many still haven't been explored. Some of the most complex rhythmic patterns are Carnatic, and nowadays I can see drummers from around the world incorporating them.

Indian music is now getting the respect it deserves. I have been commissioned to write many orchestral works with Indian influences for Western classical orchestras. I have collaborated with great musicians from different backgrounds and I see people becoming more aware of Indian music and culture, and more receptive to it as something substantial, and not just a fad. They are beginning to want to understand it in depth, not just superficially.

My dream is for India to lead a revolution of peace around the world. Like Gandhi influenced Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr, the hope of a modern-day India can emerge, one that can influence the world and spread culture, peace and harmony.

What is 60?

The number of push-ups you have to do this week.

The number of movies you have to catch up on.

The number of bad jokes you cracked last month.

The number of times you told your grandson
to get away from the TV set and get a life.

The number of places you have to travel to.

What it's not, is your age.

At least not in your head.

Or in your heart.






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Tale of the TRICOLOUR



The greatest symbol of our national identity is produced in a single unit in Hubli

📷 Sumukh Bharadwaj

On 15 August, when the tricolour soars proudly over Red Fort in New Delhi and at flag-hoisting ceremonies across the country, we owe a salute to a simple but dedicated band of patriots in Karnataka's Hubli district. These are men and women, around 90 of them, who make our national flag, at the Karnataka Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangh (KKGSS), in Bengeri, a small town in Hubli.

The sole producer of the tricolour since 2006—before that, the flag was made at units scattered across India—KKGSS was initially set up to promote khadi. It was founded in 1957 by a group of

passionate freedom fighters from Karnataka, and manufactured khadi clothes, carpets, bags, bed sheets, soaps, handmade paper and processed honey while providing employment to rural youth.

Now, KKGSS's focus is on manufacturing the national flag, something it has been doing since it received certification by the Bureau of Indian Standards in 2006. "Sales peak around June, July, August and December-January, closer to Independence Day and Republic Day. In the last financial year, we had a turnover of ₹ 1.6 crore," says KKGSS secretary Basavraj Hiremat.



The tricolour looks simple and elegant but the process that leads up to this final product is very exacting. Any defects in the flags thus produced, in colour, size and thread count, are considered an offence punishable with—hold your breath—a fine or even imprisonment under the Flag Code of India 2002.

At the Bengeri factory, a majority of the employees are women. Aparna Koti (*in above pic*), a supervisor who teaches new recruits to work with high-speed Japanese sewing machines, began working here as a daily-wage worker 13 years ago. “When this unit started 10 years ago, we had 30 tailors. Slowly, the number decreased. The workers found it hard to keep up with the stringent standards we maintain.”



Each flag that comes out of the Bengeri unit is checked 18 times during different steps in the process. The raw material is sourced from cotton farmers in North Karnataka and processed at a handful of units in Bagalkot district, 150 km from the Bengeri factory. At these units, the cotton is spun into two-ply and three-ply threads that are then handwoven into thick, strong sheets with a 33-thread count—stronger even than denim, they say.





This cloth is bundled off to Bengeri, where it is checked closely. A bundle can be rejected if a single thread is out of place, but not hastily so. "This is because one loose thread indicates that the strength of the cloth has been weakened during the weaving process," explains Hiremat. "It is not a chance we like to take."

The cloth is then bleached, dyed, cut to specified dimensions and stitched together. But before that, the Ashoka Chakra is screen-printed onto both sides of the white strip in total synchronicity. It is cured at 140° Celsius so the colour stays strong and bright, even in changing weather conditions. "From cotton to carton, it takes three months," he says.



FLAG FACTS

- The tricolour was the 22nd design proposed for the Indian flag and was adopted on 22 July 1947
- The ratio of height to width is 2:3
- There are nine standard sizes of the tricolour; the largest being 6.3 m × 4.2 m while the smallest is the table flag that measures 150 mm × 100 mm
- In 2002, citizens of India were finally allowed to hoist the tricolour over their homes, offices and factories, on any day
- A damaged flag no longer fit for display must be disposed with a ceremony fit for humans—by burning or burying it



Hiremat says the number of flags produced annually varies. “There are nine different sizes of flags and we receive orders from various sources such as the government, retail outlets, online and organisations. The smaller sizes are more popular. We sometimes make over 100 of the small flags a day.”

Thus, in the nondescript town of Bengeri, hidden in the vast plains of northern Karnataka, is a

group of people who form an integral part of our national fibre. Ironically, they will probably never experience the heights at which their flags will one day fly. “When we celebrate good things for our country and when we participate at international sporting meets, there is one element that binds these events together—the tricolour,” says Aparna Koti. “It feels great to know that that flag was made here, by our hands.”



Experience

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Artist with a cause

The India International Centre in Delhi recently hosted the first exhibition and release of a 192-page monograph on late artist Brij Mohan Anand. Titled *Narratives for Indian Modernity: The Aesthetic of Brij Mohan Anand*, the book—co-authored by writer-biographer Aditi Anand and art historian Grant Pooke Brij—offers insights into the life of one of India's

art most outspoken artists of the 1960s and '70s. Anand was an anti-establishment artist who used art as a tool to comment on the political dispensation of his time, so much so that he once had his passport revoked and was placed under police surveillance. Still, "never did the artist work for the market nor did he believe in the 'art for the sake of art' school," points out Dr Alka Pande, curator of the exhibition. Eighty select works in the form of paintings, scratchboards, watercolours, drawings, sketches, book covers and posters were on display at the exhibition.

Photographs courtesy: Aditi Anand

**Man Is Still Primitive;
(inset) The
Consequence
Of Nuclear War**



Aakanksha Bajpai

Classical vocalist Nageen Tanvir has gone from a 'reluctant heiress' to all-guns-blazing mode to keep her father's legacy—Naya Theatre—alive, writes Aakanksha Bajpai

To commemorate the 104th birth anniversary of late actor Zohra Sehgal, the Zohra Sehgal Festival of Arts was held at India International Centre of Arts in Delhi recently. The last act of the event was *Charandas Chor*, a play staged by Nageen Tanvir, daughter of late legendary playwright, poet, director and actor Habib Tanvir, who founded the theatre, company Naya Theatre, in 1959 in Bhopal. In 1975, Habib had adapted the story that was originally penned by Vijaydan Detha, a noted writer from Rajasthan; since then, around 2,000 shows of the play have been staged without revising the script.

"The plot of *Charandas Chor* deals with corruption and dishonesty. A folk story turned classic, the subjects it examines remain relevant to our society even today," says Nageen, adding that the play was considered her father's

masterpiece. Interestingly, the play was also adapted into a children's movie by noted filmmaker Shyam Benegal.

theatre

Along with *Charandas Chor*, Nageen has managed to mount quite a few of her father's plays—under the banner of Naya Theatre—since he passed away seven years ago. Indeed, the 52 year-old has breathed new life into the theatre company, founded by her father and mother Moneeka Misra, a dramatist in her own right. "We did a play called *Konark* based on the Sun Temple in 2011, and *Vaishali Ki Nagar Vadhu* in 2013, based on Acharya Chaturseen's novel on Amrapali."

Drawing mainly on the talents of folk artists from Chhattisgarh, Naya Theatre thrived for 50 years. A unique performing art that uses folk artists in their truest form, the artists perform in Chhattisgarhi and Nacha style, a Chhattisgarhi

"My father was an institution in himself and when he died, we had so many questions and so many doubts. However, since the past two years, things have been falling into place"

style of secular drama. With this approach, Habib got them to perform Shakespeare and Brecht as well as Sanskrit classics and his own plays.

"Naya Theatre is considered the brainchild of my father. But the truth is, it was founded by my mother, and it was my father who left Hindustani theatre and joined my mother. Initially, my parents met six folk artists who had come to Delhi and they launched the theatre troupe in a garage in Connaught Place. The history of Naya Theatre is, therefore, closely linked to my parents' courtship as it all happened at the same time," reminisces Nageen, whose first play was *Agra Bazaar*, where she played the role of a monkey.

Interestingly, Nageen is an accomplished Hindustani classical vocalist, who has trained since the age of eight. Singing rather than theatre is admittedly her primary passion, so inheriting her father's legacy put her on the horns of a dilemma. "After my father passed away, the theatre company automatically came to me. There was a big question as to what would happen to Naya Theatre as I was not really interested in carrying the legacy forward," confesses Nageen, an exponent of the *dhrupad* who performs regularly both in the classical and folk music genres.

Despite her initial reluctance, Nageen decided to give Naya Theatre her best shot. "My father was an institution in himself and when he died, we [Nageen and the actors] had so many questions and so many doubts. I was ridiculed and many people in my group thought I was being dominant; it was difficult to step into my father's



Nageen with her father Habib Tanvir

shoes," she shares. "However, since the past two years, things have been falling into place."

There are other challenges, not least of which is recruiting fresh and young talent. Nageen realises she may have to reinvent the craft. "My old actors have died, four have retired and now I am looking for at least seven to eight actors. I am looking for talented actors who can be moulded and who are versatile. I am looking for actors who can sing, dance and act. I will train them, not only in the drama style of Naya Theatre but in the musical aspect."

Of course, this is easier said than done, as she readily admits. "Culture is a language and I am not happy with Chhattisgarh becoming a separate state. Also, technology has reached the remotest corners of India and language and the arts are the first to get corrupted. Everything is changing and there are very few people left who know their culture." Still, Nageen remains resolute. "I am determined to revive as many of my father's plays as I possibly can," she affirms. "I might even ask theatre people to direct new plays for us."



Courtesy: Jhaveri Contemporary

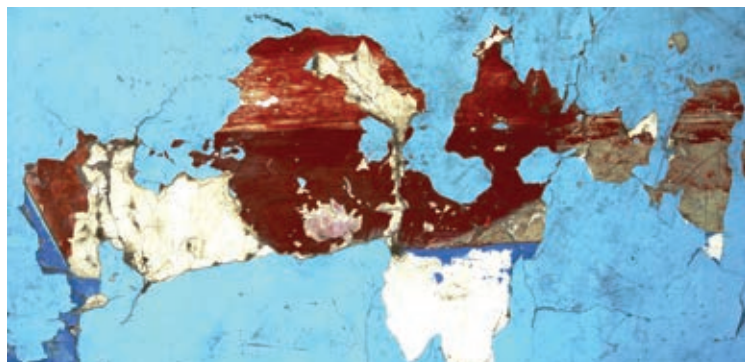
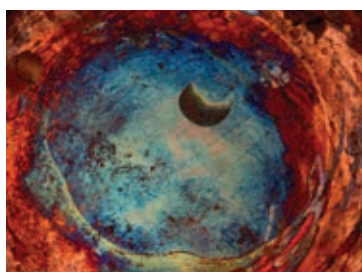
BODY LANGUAGE

Vadodara-based sculptor Dhruva Mistry is recognised in the West for his eclectic collections—fibreglass sculptures, pastel drawings, gilded plaster reliefs and bronze statuettes—influenced by various traditions with references to Indian, Assyrian and Egyptian cultures. But the 60 year-old has seldom been seen in India. In a rare showing, Jhaveri Contemporary in Mumbai recently held an exhibition titled *The Human Abstract*, which explored Mistry's approach to the human figure across the decades. Prominent among them were works from the series *Bad Infinite: Delight of the Reason; Seated Figure* and *Spatial Diagram 3*, both sculptures of the female body; *Walking Man* and *Sitting Man*—life-size sculptures in fibreglass, his earliest works on display from 1981; and *Dialectal Images*, a series of assemblages or collages, where disparate objects come together to form a whole, often the human figure.



Race to the finish

On 13 August, the still backwaters of Punnamada Lake near Allapuzha, Kerala, will come alive with tens of thousands of locals and tourists thronging to watch the 64th annual Nehru Trophy Boat Race. Sixty-five boats are expected to participate in various categories. Yet, the coveted Chundan Vallom (snake boat) race, with about 100 rowers in each elongated canoe, which 'snakes' through the waters, is bound to steal the show. "The people of Allapuzha are very emotional about the race. The development of rowers is very rich in this area owing to its low water levels... it is in their genes. Every village has rowers who dedicate 30-45 days training for this event because if they win, they are heroes of their town for the next year," D Balamurali, secretary of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race committee, tells us.



Worldview

There are two types of people: those who see clouds as clouds, and those for whom the sky is a fantasy world, full of creatures, landscapes and exciting plots. Through artist Ashok Roy's eyes, cracks in the wall, shadows on the streets, clouds and waves, the ephemeral nature of smoke and even *paan* stains can assume the shape of animals and humans. In his new book *Art of Seeing*, Roy, now in his late 60s, gives us a glimpse into his world. Across 18 chapters, his abstract photographs bring to life inanimate elements of our daily life. "These are un-retouched, single-click images with no technical wizardry or manipulation," says Roy. "This book intends to help the most common person bring his sketchy idea of art and aesthetics into sharper focus, by gently opening his eyes to the gallery of beauty and intrigue unfolding all around, all the time." The book, waiting for a publisher, will hit stands soon.

In search of meaning

DR GOBINDA PRASAD SARMA occupies a special place in the world of contemporary Indian literature for his scholarly pursuits, especially those focused on feminism, biographical criticism and Indo-Anglian literature. A prolific storyteller and former head of the department of English at Gauhati University, his literary genius is evident in his complete works of short stories and novels, which map his remarkable contribution to Assamese literature. Most recently, the 76 year-old finished editing *The Pronouncing Contemporary English Assamese Dictionary*, a project that took a decade to complete. In a free-wheeling chat with **Tapati Baruah Kashyap**, Dr Sarma discusses his early inspiration, literary leanings and what prompted him to take up the gargantuan bilingual dictionary editing project. Excerpts:

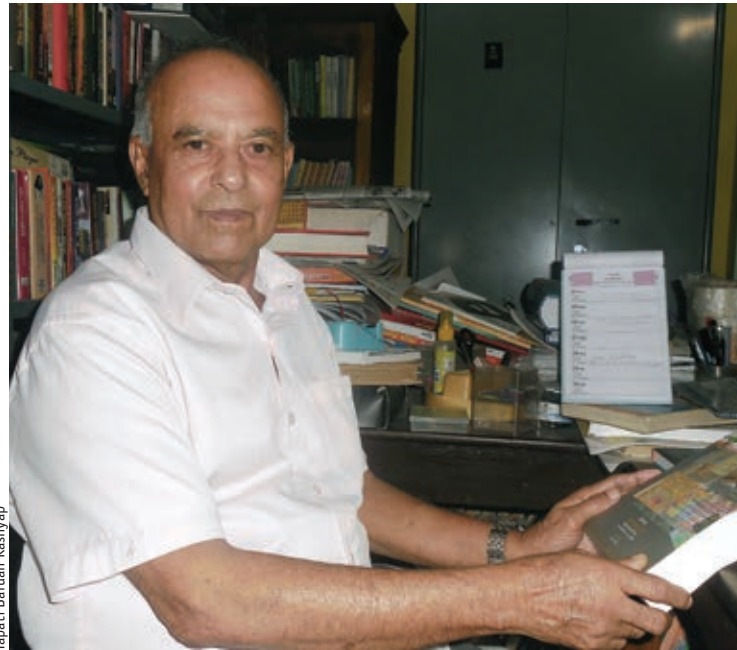
Can you tell us a little about the dictionary that you recently edited?

Editing the Anglo-Assamese dictionary took 10 years of hard labour. This dictionary reminds me of my school headmaster whose knowledge of Assamese, English and Sanskrit was amazing. He had a deep understanding of culture and was, therefore, able to give us a fabulous cultural and historical perspective to the poetry he taught. He always carried either an encyclopaedia or a dictionary with him, and this inspired me to inquire into the origin, background, etc, of anything new I learnt. I carried out my dictionary project with the same zeal my high school headmaster had infused in me decades ago.

As for the dictionary, it is the first of its kind in Assamese, providing not just meanings but incorporating a wide range of idioms and phrases, illustrative examples, pronunciation, instructions for transitive and intransitive verbs and a wide range of Assamese meanings.

You manage to write short stories, novels and critical works with equal ease. What impact did your childhood have on your writing career?

I started writing short stories when I was in Class VII, and I titled my first story *Sandhya Sendur*. A year later, I wrote another story called *Sunlight*, and when I was promoted to Class XI, I wrote a love poem. My first creative piece was a poem I wrote when I was in middle school, titled *Padum* (Lotus). Thus, I continued my creative pursuits along with my student life, sending poems and stories to the children's sections of newspapers and magazines. My most memorable moment was when the editor of *Saptahik Asomiya's* children section appreciated my writing and said I would turn into a good writer if I kept it up.



Tapati Baruah Kashyap

Which is your most favourite genre?

My readers and critics are better placed to judge me in this regard. Left to myself, I would say fiction.

While in college, I was known as a short story writer, and although I did my PhD on 'Nationalism in Indian English Fiction', I still feel I am more comfortable with short stories, which I continue to write.

What kinds of books do you like reading?

I am a voracious reader of fiction. During my school days, I used to read European and American novels. I taught Western literature for six years in the Assamese department of Gauhati University. My favourite novelists include Gustave Flaubert, Emile Zola, Ivan Turgenev and Leo Tolstoy. So strong was their influence on me that I dreamt of travelling to the places to which they belonged. Thus, when I visited Europe and the US after my retirement, I was enthralled to see those places. It felt as if my knowledge had suddenly come alive! Although I am a fiction writer, reading poetry is my first love. I love the works of Robert Browning and T S Eliot, apart from Assamese poetry.

What is your next project?

I plan to write a sequel to my book on feminism, this one looking at the works of new and upcoming Assamese novelists.



A slice of history

Boverianda Nanjamma and Chinnappa recollect the efforts of their late grandfather in documenting the folklore and songs of the Kodava community

Much as we admire him and are inspired by him, we have never seen our grandfather Nadikerianda Chinnappa; he died before we were born. We—Nanjamma and Chinnappa—are cross cousins. The narrative of our grandfather that follows is based on the recollections of our parents, aunts and elder cousins, gleaned from casual conversations over the years.

Our grandfather, who worked with the police, had gone to a remote village, riding his horse across a stream and through a forest path to investigate a quarrel over the ownership of a strip of land. On his way back, he stopped by the stream to eat the *akki* (rice) roti sweetened with jaggery his wife had packed for him. The sun was setting behind the hills and had painted the skies in brilliant hues of red and gold. Captivated by the scene, Nadikerianda Chinnappa sat lost in thoughts, when he heard the distant sound of Kodava *dudi* (small handheld, hourglass-shaped drums). Mounting his horse, he set out to locate the origin of the drumbeats. He found four men seated around a bonfire singing Kodava folk songs, practising for Puthari, the harvest festival. It was getting dark but he waited for them to finish. Recognising that our grandfather was in the police, the singers touched his feet respectfully. Our grandfather took the leader of the team home on his horse.

This was not uncommon; his wife Nanjavva knew he had brought a

singer home for the night. She made a bed for the visitor in the attic and served them a hot meal with a drink of frothing toddy. Refreshed, grandfather and the singer sat in the hall; while the singer sang a ballad, Chinnappa transcribed the words late into the night. After many such sessions with various singers, he had a good collection of Kodava songs sung during weddings, funerals and festivals, and ballads in praise of deities and heroes.

Late in the evenings, after work, our grandfather neatly wrote down all the songs, proverbs and riddles by the dim light of a kerosene lamp, while smoking his favourite cigars. Meanwhile, his wife would read the draft first to ensure that it was clear to a layperson. If there were parts she did not understand, Chinnappa rewrote them

Himself a good singer, Chinnappa's passion for Kodava songs and ballads prompted him to transcribe them. During his travels around Kodagu as a police officer in the early 1920s, he observed that the unique customs and traditions of the Kodava community were being forgotten or altered. Chinnappa feared that Kodava traditions and songs that had been handed down orally over generations would

be lost because of the dominance of English, and the influence of the cultures of neighbouring areas. So, he decided to document them.

Late in the evenings, after work, he neatly wrote down all the songs, proverbs and riddles by the dim light of a kerosene lamp, while smoking his favourite cigars. When he started documenting the customs and traditions, he consulted his mother Ponnava who was well-versed in them. Meanwhile, his wife

would read the draft first to ensure that it was clear to a layperson. If there were parts she did not understand, Chinnappa rewrote them. It used to be said that the waste paper basket would always be full in the morning.

British officials in Coorg—as Kodagu was called by them—got his draft reviewed by some prominent Kodavas. On their recommendation, C S Sooter, commissioner of Coorg, authorised financial assistance to publish it. Chinnappa chose the name *Pattole Palame*, meaning 'silken lore', for his book, which was first published in 1924. The 6th edition was printed in 2012.

Pattole Palame is a precious document of the heritage of the Kodava community. In the second edition published by the University of Mysore in 1975, the editor describes it as "one of the earliest, if not the earliest, extensive collection of folklore of any Indian community written in an Indian language by an Indian".

The text of *Pattole Palame* is in Kannada and the folk songs, proverbs, etc, in it are in Kodava *thakk*, the language of the Kodavas, an oral language written using the Kannada script. Nearly two-thirds of the book consists of folk songs transmitted orally down generations, which are sung even today. Traditionally known as *Balo Pat*, these songs are sung by four men beating *dudi*. The songs have haunting melodies and evoke memories of times long past. Kodava folk dances are performed to the beat of many of these songs, which are a rich source of information on the culture, language and history of the Kodava people.

Chinnappa himself began translating *Pattole Palame* into English but could not complete it, as he died of cancer in 1931 at the age of 56, a few months after his retirement. It was in 2003, nearly 75 years after *Pattole Palame* was first published, that we, his grandchildren, translated it into English and published it.

Although he was best known for *Pattole Palame*, Chinnappa's major literary work as a poet was *Bhagavantanda Paat*, his translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* into the Kodava language, composed in the style of Kodava folk songs, published in 1929.

When Grierson, a British linguist, embarked on the first Linguistic Survey of India (1913 to 1920), he looked for knowledgeable representatives of the various Indian languages. Chinnappa, who was fluent in both English and Kodava *thakk*, was chosen for the Kodava language. As

required, he translated the parable of the 'Prodigal Son' into Kodava *thakk* and narrated it, and sang his own poem, *Sri Moola Kanniye*, an ode to river Kaveri. These were recorded in 1922 on gramophone records; copies of the recordings were kept in the British Library in London and the Madras Museum. They were digitised recently by the Linguistics Department of the University of Chicago.



Born in 1875, Chinnappa was the fifth of eight children. After matriculating in Madikeri, he went to Mangalore for further studies. But when his elder brother Subbayya died suddenly, Chinnappa returned to Kodagu to take on family responsibilities. In accordance with Kodava tradition, he married Subbayya's widow, Nanjavva.

His career took many twists and turns. A teacher at first, then a revenue inspector, and then an officer

in the Coorg Regiment of the Army, he joined the police department when the regiment was disbanded in 1904, and rose to the rank of a prosecuting inspector.

Our grandfather was fond of sports. He was a bowler in the All Coorg XI Cricket team, which in those days consisted mainly of Englishmen. When he played billiards at Victoria Club in Virajpet, his British opponents would often swear under their breath on losing a game to him. On one such occasion, Chinnappa lost his patience, broke the billiards stick on his knee and threw it on the floor. This was a very daring act for an Indian in those days.

Chinnappa was also involved in establishing the Police Officers' Cooperative Society, Coorg Cooperative Society, Coorg Central Bank and the Coorg Education Fund. He was fond of children and always carried peppermints in his pockets. He was a caring father to his own three children, the two stepchildren by his elder brother, and to his deceased sister's daughter, whom he and Nanjavva adopted. He sponsored the

education of many poor children, and there were always a few students boarding in his residence, free of cost.

Our grandfather was a man of vision and talent, and was self-driven. He was a folklorist, poet, police officer, sportsman, historian, singer, philanthropist, and caring householder. Above all, he was a man who lived life to the fullest and left a lasting and invaluable legacy for his people in his writings.



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The road not taken

In this poem, **Robert Lee Frost** (1874-1963) deals with the dilemma of making the right choices

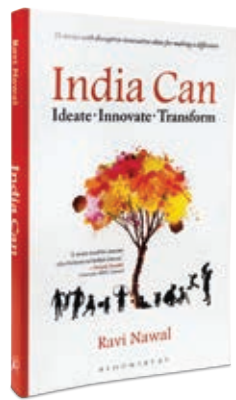
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

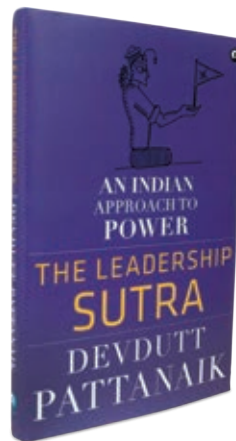
One of the most celebrated American poets of the 20th century and a four-time Pulitzer Prize winner, Frost's poems reflect universal themes

INDIA CAN (Bloomsbury; ₹ 202; 176 pages) is a timely book with its heart in the right place. **Ravi Nawal** questions fundamental problems facing the nation and explores opportunities to improve the economic situation. He presents ideas not as theoretical concepts or facts but instead as a collection of 21 short stories, with each story weaving an idea within. The format allows a level of simplicity, making it easy to comprehend both the problem and solution. Using multiple characters, the author skilfully demonstrates the economic and social effects of an idea across different strata of society. However, the execution appears formulaic, making it monotonous to get through the list. The ideas themselves are an eclectic mix—a doctor distressed by increasing health issues in his patients promotes organic farming on rooftops; a villager uses pisciculture to increase average rural household income; a Japanese businesswoman sets up geriatric care in McLeod Ganj; a doctor recognises the need for rural medics to provide better accessibility to healthcare; and many more. Most of the ideas are interesting enough to act as triggers to a more well-rounded debate. Ultimately, the book succeeds in its core objective of getting the reader to think deeper.

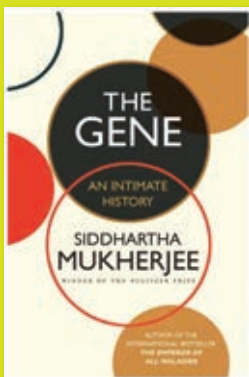


In **THE LEADERSHIP SUTRA: AN INDIAN APPROACH TO POWER** (Aleph; ₹ 310; 131 pages), **Devdutt Pattanaik** delves deep into Indian mythology for leadership lessons. Derived from his bestseller *Business Sutra: A Very Indian Approach to Management*, the book presents sutras or aphorisms to understand human behaviour and mindset, a key ingredient to being a good leader. The author explains every concept with a story and then extends the learning to the corporate world. Even if you are not interested in the business side of it, this is a great book to read, with its deep insights into human psyche. The book is split into four segments exploring the ideas of significance, property, rules and stability.

There are numerous interesting snippets here. For instance, in 'Rules', he talks about the pros and cons of a rules-based system. Watch out for some amazing 2X2 matrices here—there is one with 'I break rules' and 'I follow rules' in the X and Y axes, explaining how Ram, Krishna, Ravana and Duryodhana approached rules. It's hard to forget such powerful visual representations. With a simple, anecdotal approach, business lessons have never been more appealing.



Also on stands



The Gene: An Intimate History
Siddhartha Mukherjee
Penguin; ₹ 699; 608 pages

The Pulitzer prize-winning author of *The Emperor of All Maladies* is back with a definitive account of the gene—the master-code that makes and defines humans—and a vision of both humanity's past and future.



Gangamma's Gharial
Shalini Srinivasan
Puffin Books; ₹ 199; 202 pages

This is an unusual tale featuring a world-travelling 79 year-old gardener, a gharial that doubles up as a teleporter, and oodles of good old magic.



Understanding the Founding Fathers
Rajmohan Gandhi
Aleph; ₹ 299; 160 pages

Take a close look at the equation between the founding fathers of the nation, including Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Jinnah, Ambedkar and Subhash Chandra Bose.

The power of love

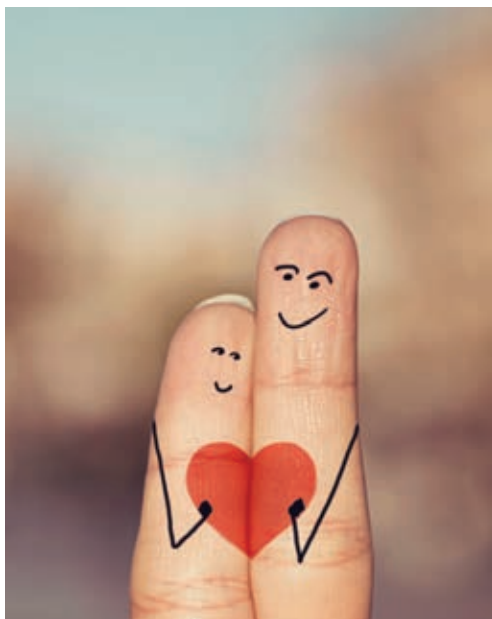
The most potent of all emotions, love needs to be shared with the world,
writes **Radhanath Swami**

People are willing to go to war, even sacrifice their lives, for the sake of love. It is so deeply ingrained in us that it is the basic theme of almost every movie and TV show. Every living being feels the need to love and be loved. We see it manifest between friends, family, paramours and so on.

One great example of the power of love is found in the case of the Civil War's hidden soldiers. Nineteenth century America tore into two opposing sides, resulting in gruesome combat for years on end. Hundreds of thousands of young men were slain in battle. There was no time for training. The government would recruit them, put a cold pistol in their hands, and send them off to battlefield. The thought of the husband being gone and possibly never returning was unbearable for many young brides. In separation from their husbands, many women tied up their hair, threw on a baggy uniform and joined their husbands on the front line. The couple would stay side by side and die together. That is the power of love.

Another instance of love's potency is that between a parent and child. What austerities a woman will endure for her child! You practically can't even pay someone to do what a mother does for her baby. A mother is willing to sacrifice her life out of love for her child. And a father, out of his love for his children, sometimes works all day long, six or even seven

days a week. Parents sacrifice so much of their own pleasure and comfort for the sake of their beloved child. That is the power of love. Perhaps the instance in which love exhibits its influence most powerfully is in the form of a broken heart. People sing about it, write books and plays about it.



The nature of the soul is *sat-chit-ananda*: eternal, full of knowledge and full of bliss. Because our very nature is *ananda*, blissful, we cannot live without bliss. That is why everyone, whether Indian, American or Eskimo, is looking for pleasure. And the most fulfilling pleasure is love. Thus, the soul is always striving to love and be loved.


Some strive to fulfill this need for love through impersonal liberation, merging into the oneness of the all pervading spiritual light. This liberation is a genuine spiritual level of transcendental experience, but it is partial. The Vedic scriptures explain that from this non-dual, peaceful state, eventually one falls down into material consciousness.

Why? Because although there is complete relief from all sufferings, we have not fulfilled the essential need of the soul to reciprocate pure love. *Brahmeti paramatmeti bhagavan iti shabyate*. Therefore, the great Vedic texts and acharyas declare the highest, most complete realisation of the absolute truth as *Bhagavan*, the supreme personality of Godhead. For it is only through connection to the source of all love that the soul's longings may be perfectly fulfilled.

There is no greater power in all creation than the power of love. Even one particle of a drop of pure love can drive us to sacrifice everything for the sake of our beloved.

This love is within all of us. It is the greatest of all powers because it grants realisation of the highest truths and simultaneously provides the deepest inner fulfillment in our lives. By imbibing a loving consciousness through association and service, we experience this power of love and obtain the ability to share it with the world.

For more articles by Swami, a community builder, spiritual teacher and author, visit www.radhanathswami.com

A photograph of an elderly man with a grey beard and a young girl with dark hair, both smiling and playing in a pond. The man is in the water, and the girl is sitting on a wooden dock, splashing water towards him. The background is a calm body of water with some distant structures.

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Tiger's roar

On a cool rainy day 50 years ago, a frail, young, political cartoonist with fiery eyes—Bal Thackeray—gave an impassioned speech at Mumbai's Shivaji Park, assembling an 'Army of Shivaji' while launching a new movement for espousing the cause of the Marathi *manos*. Christened 'Shiv Sena' by his father Keshav Thackeray in memory of the late warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj—a Marathi icon—the Sena was formed to reclaim job opportunities in Mumbai for sons of the soil. At a time when Maharashtrians formed just 43 per cent of Mumbai's population, the right-wing party mooted the idea that Maharashtra belonged to Marathi speakers, whose financial and cultural interests had to be upheld against what it saw as an onslaught of 'outsiders'.

Southern Indians, who occupied most white-collar jobs in Mumbai, were naturally the first to bear the brunt of Thackeray's nativism. Subsequently, over the years, trade unionists, Bangladeshis and migrant workers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh faced the Sena's ire. With aggression being its signature statement, the party didn't shy away from vandalising theatres screening south Indian films, attacking trade union leaders, north Indians and Muslims, all in its bid to retrieve Mumbai for



Dinodia Photo Library

Marathis. Such was Thackeray's sway over the party and the metropolis that Mumbai would down shutters on his command, going into a self-imposed curfew mode. Under him, Sena mouthpiece *Saamna* became a tool to hold forth on the party's views vis-à-vis personalities and issues, and to make strategic announcements. Similarly, the annual Dussehra rally held at Shivaji Park right from its inception has become an important state event.

Thackeray's aggressive personality, spitfire speeches and bold diatribes

in *Marmik* and *Saamna* managed to hold the party together for decades while terrorising the opposition. But, with nephew Raj Thackeray walking out to form the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, erstwhile loyalists such as Chhagan Bhujbal, Narayan Rane and Sanjay Nirupam quitting the party, and Thackeray's death in 2012, many people believe the party has lost its teeth and sheen. The baton now rests with Thackeray's son Uddhav and grandson Aditya. That said, it can't be disputed that the Shiv Sena has changed the character of Mumbai forever.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: AUGUST 1966

- On 4 August, the British Empire and Commonwealth Games opened in Kingston, Jamaica, making it the first time the Games were held outside 'White Dominions'.
- On 11 August, The Beatles held a press conference in Chicago, wherein John Lennon apologised for his "Beatles is more popular than Jesus" remark.
- On 15 August, the first 'JFK conspiracy' book, *Rush to Judgment*, authored by lawyer Mark Lane, questioning the conclusions of the Warren Commission, was published.
- On 26 August, the NASA released the first photograph of the Earth as seen from the moon, after Lunar Orbiter 1 transmitted it.

SUBNIVIUM

n. The layer above the soil and below the snowpack that serves as a winter refuge for many species.

Examples: With the heavy snow starting in mid-January, I predicted the critters of the **subnivium** would have an easy time of munching on the garden shrubbery, and that certainly came true, at least in our area.

—Fred Gralenski, “Quoddy nature notes (4/20/15)”, *The Middleton Stream Team*, 20 April 2015

Dark social

n. Online social interactions that are not public and cannot be directly tracked or traced.

Example: Although many brands are looking to tap into the power of influencers on public social networks, for example, savvy marketers are beginning to explore the opportunity of reaching consumers through private social channels such as messaging apps, sometimes referred to as **dark social**.

—Charlotte Rogers, “What’s next for influencer marketing?”, *Marketing Week*, 16 June 2016

Placekeeping

n. The long-term maintenance and management of public and private open spaces.

Example: For Tom DeCaigny, the SFAC’s director of cultural affairs, the Treasure Island development project isn’t just about ‘placemaking’—a buzzword in the world of urban planning—but, rather, **placekeeping**. That is, honouring Treasure Island’s past and the communities that have shaped it, while recognising the incredible alterations it will undergo in the years ahead.

—Sarah Hotchkiss, “City plans to transform Treasure Island with \$ 50 million for public art”, *KQED*, 21 July 2015

Binge learning

pp. Compulsively or obsessively watching online lectures or taking online courses.

Examples: Khan Academy founder Salman Khan explains why **binge-learning** doesn’t work....To learn something, you need to make a commitment and hold yourself to that commitment....You can’t binge learn something for three hours the first day and then taper off.

—“Consistency is the key to learning”, *Money*, 29 February 2016

SLASHIE

n. A person who holds down two or more jobs.

Example: Climbing the career ladder could soon be a thing of the past as ‘generation **slashie**’ emerges with a focus on moving sideways, upwards and outwards to create portfolio careers.... And slashies are not always generation Y or Z but also older workers who are looking to diversify or work part time as they stay in the workforce longer and make the transition to retirement.

—Verity Edwards, “Generation slashie: career fulfilment through greater diversity”, *The Australian*, 30 April 2016

“Two things you discover when you’re older and wiser: you’re not actually any wiser, and behind the wrinkles, you’re not any older, either.

—American operatic tenor Robert Brault



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BULLY WALLET

n. The use of money to wield unfair or unethical influence.

Example: The battle between Gawker and tech titan Peter Thiel has made him look like a spiteful manipulator with a **bully wallet**.

—Tom Clynes, "Peter Thiel's dropout army", *The New York Times*, 4 June 2016

Nerdku

n. A haiku that has a scientific or technical theme or relates to a work of science fiction or fantasy.

Example: Time for some nerd haiku (**nerdku**?):
Watching the big sky looking for the Perseids on a starry night.

—Amy Mainzer, "Time for some...", Twitter, 13 August 2015

“We want to empower them for a better life”

Sharda Gadde, 77, Delhi, imparts life skills to poor women and teaches children



Himanshu Kumar

Come late afternoon and Mahila Chaupal at the Freedom Fighters' Enclave in Delhi comes alive with the chatter of children and women. While children seek help for homework, women are trained in stitching and beautician courses.

The woman behind the buzz, 77 year-old **Sharda Gadde**, smiles, “The aim is to make them self-sufficient so they fit into mainstream society.” Run under the banner of the Sadhbhavna Stree Seva Samiti, Gadde and her friends have been teaching and training poor women and children since 2011. The beginnings were humble though. They started off as a *kirtan mandli* in 1996; in 2007, they got a hall from the government, which became a place to empower the poorer sections of society. “The parents of these children work as labourers or in households,” says Gadde. “Our vocational courses will help them earn more, while the kids also get help with their studies.” Though the journey began with just 50 children, today close to 150 children are regulars. Pointing out that over 20 women are learning tailoring now, ‘Dadi’, as Gadde is popularly referred to, says, “We are trying to get more space to introduce computers.” Besides vocational courses,

the samiti, comprising 52 members, conducts monthly lectures on subjects such as naturopathy, acupressure, health and nutrition. Seema, a 16 year-old, mentions how tailoring is going to help her augment her family income. Another young lady, Asha, whose marriage is on the rocks, comes daily with her toddler to learn tailoring, and plans to set up shop in her native village near Agra. Suresh, who has joined an Industrial Training Institute (ITI), says Gadde has mentored not just him but his siblings. “Dadi has been doing so much for us,” he acknowledges gratefully. With donations pouring in from the neighbourhood, clothes and books are distributed to these children twice a year. The samiti also helps them with admissions in schools, and reaches out to cancer patients and senior citizens’ homes on a regular basis. Renu Kakkar, 53, who has been associated with the samiti for a long time and teaches stitching and handicraft, says she has seen a distinct change in the children’s attitude. “They are more confident, cleaner and enthusiastic.” However, Gadde and the rest are quick to point out that work has just begun and they have “many more miles to go”.

—Ambica Gulati



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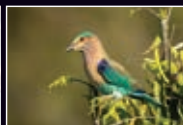
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