

harmony celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

AUGUST 2011 ₹ 30

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REQUIEM FOR
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FREEDOM 2011

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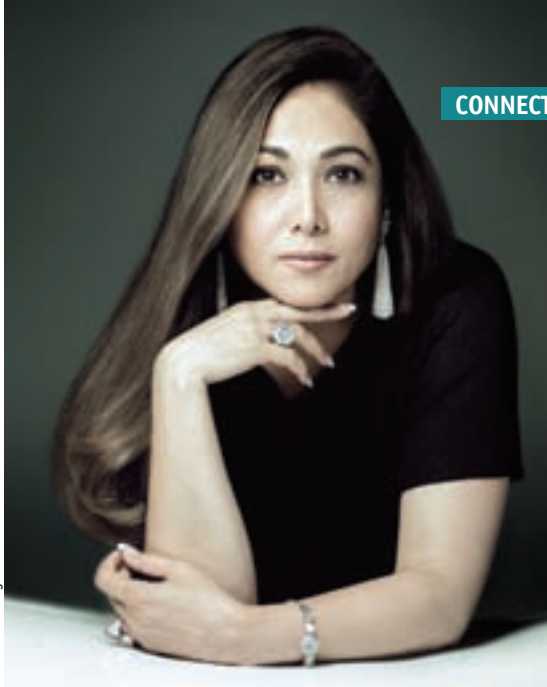
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ACTION IS THE BEST REACTION

Suresh Natarajan



Some truths, however unpleasant, cannot be denied. Amid the sound and fury of the three blasts that rocked Mumbai on 13 July, one truth rang out disturbingly loud: we are not safe. Reams of newsprint have already been consumed by analyses of the attacks, the possible masterminds, even the indefatigable spirit of the maximum city. But looking beyond policy, prescription and politics, we must focus on the social ramifications of such events, our vulnerability as a community.

We can approach this vulnerability in two ways. One is to bury our heads in the sand and plod on—until the next time we are caught by surprise, like deer frozen in the headlights of a truck. But I believe there is a better way that enables us to act rather than merely react, a way that puts a semblance of control back in our hands despite the vagaries of fate, nature and ill-intention.

Rather than waiting for the authorities to rise to the occasion, we need to take charge of our communities. Build networks of communication, information and help that can come together in times of crisis and may even be able to pre-empt a crisis and reduce its magnitude. A neighbourhood that keeps its eyes and ears open can spot inconsistencies, deviations from the norm, and send

out the alarm. Such 'Neighbourhood Watch' initiatives are used in countries around the world for myriad purposes, from deterrence of petty theft and violent crime to earthquake, flood and disaster management. In India, too, observation and awareness should become second nature. And there can be no one better to catalyse these schemes on ground than silvers with expertise, experience and time in their corner.

Disasters and atrocities both natural and manmade are a part of life. But our response to them can go a long way in determining the quality and dignity of that life. It's time to wake up to reality—and act.

Indeed, there's no time like the present for action as we mark the 64th anniversary of Independence. And no one more appropriate for our cover than Lata Mangeshkar, whose voice has evoked the aspirations of the country over generations. Thank you Lataji for being here.

Pina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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DREAMS IN STONE
Septuagenarian Sulochana Haldankar speaks of her lifelong passion for sculpting

IT'S A WOMAN'S WORLD!
Kerala-based silver Thressiamma leads a pack of female masons

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column one

Sixty-four years of Independence and silvers today may well be unaware of social networking beyond public parks, telephones and emails. Words like 'Facebook' and 'Twitter' may not exist in their lexicon, but there's a gamut of technology that has adopted silvers—or should we say silvers have made it their own. On the occasion of Independence Day, *Harmony-Celebrate Age* gives you a glimpse into this new-found freedom ("Freedom 2011") that has—more than forcing its way into the lives of silvers—cast a longing spell. Feeding your card into the nearest ATM machine for quick money; video-chatting to be close to family far away; taking an escalator; travelling alone [as a woman]; and making a bold show of tattooed biceps. Deceptively simple acts of Youngistan's life, it is difficult imagining people cast in the 1940s mould taking the leap into the new millennium. But there are millions who have dared to see change eye-to-eye. What's cool, if this isn't?

Cool gets another definition when you meet the most resonant and patriotic voice of the world: Lata Mangeshkar. From her *namaskar* to her perception of freedom, *Lataji* is traditional to the core—for her, music is worship, not a show. *Harmony-Celebrate Age* is privileged to have her on the cover this month ("The Voice of India").

Silvers have the unique ability to be conformist and adventurous at the same time. Treading the thin line for them is both life and an art, a quality we need to preserve in the generations after. Which is why readers will savour the delicious-lovesome account of Surya and Parmeshwar Natarajan from Chennai. Enjoy!

—Meeta Bhatti

Sometimes I used to ruminate about my childhood days spent happily in the company of my grandmother in a small village in Palghat more than seven decades ago. I was then a child of seven. My grandmother was very religious and equally superstitious. When someone in the family left the house on any important work she would ensure that her friend, who lived nearby, came towards our house when the person was leaving as she believed that her friend would bring good luck. Similarly, if three members of our household left the house together, she believed it would bring ill luck. To get over this dilemma, she would insist that all the three go in a bullock cart driven by our servant. Thus, she would ensure that four people left the house—not three. At other times, when two members of the household left the house in the bullock cart, she would not count the servant driving the cart as the third person. I used to wonder at the mathematical ingenuity of my grandmother—her ability to increase three to four or reduce it to two depending upon the exigencies of the situation!

K A Narayanan Chennai



I read with interest Dr Anjali Mukerjee's column on "Managing Incontinence" in the July 2011 issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age* and her prescription to quit smoking for the same. It is a hard habit to break but I believe our children can help. In fact they can make us more sensitive as individuals. Once, a chain smoker, who tried to quit many times before, finally gave up when his daughter told him, "Daddy, if you continue to smoke, I will smoke too." Sometimes, people realise their mistakes only when their children point them out or make the same ones. Who says men are not as emotional as women, anyway?

Mahesh Kumar New Delhi

for various jobs and most of them appear to be successful at their second innings. As personality counts a lot in today's job market and it is important to be presentable, I believe Harmony for Silvers Foundation can team up with one of the popular fitness companies to customise packages for senior citizens depending upon their age and health. These packages could be offered at discounted rates to attract more people.

J S Bakshi Ahmedabad

ERRATUM

In the feature "Warrior Woman" published in our previous issue ('Reminiscence', July 2011) there were several errors that have been brought to our notice. For an amended version of the story, please go to www.harmonyindia.org. We regret the errors.

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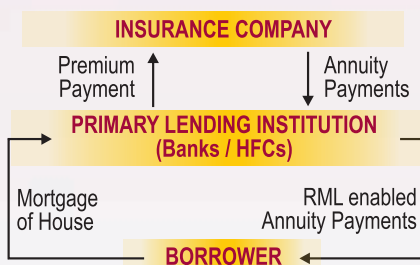
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75	1000000	70%	Rs. 3311 to Rs. 7166

* Net of Servicing Charges subject to detailed terms.

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► **NEWSWORTHY**

Back to school

There may just be something more challenging than teaching a teenager how to drive safely—teaching a silver. According to a report in *The New York Times*, about **15 per cent of clients of driving schools across America are elders** who are polishing up their skills so they can clear their ‘driving re-exams’, which have to be taken at the age of 60, 80, and every two years after that. And teaching them is not always a cakewalk. As Arthur Harris, owner of DriveWise

driving school in Hoboken, New Jersey, says, “A lot of them are still driving like they did back in the 1940s, ‘50s and ‘60s when blind spot checks didn’t exist. There are different road signs, new road signs, there are roundabouts, traffic circles—driving has changed over the past 50 years. And old habits are hard to break.” The solution: longer training hours. Plus, as Harris adds, “You need teachers who are able to connect effectively with the seniors and work with them patiently.”

ALL ABOUT YOU

It appears the Indian Government wants to get to know its silvers better. In June 2011, the Central Statistics Office from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released a report titled *Situational Analysis of the Elderly in India*, a by-product of the decadal Population Census operation. The elderly population has been on a consistent rise—at the turn of millennium, they constituted 7.4 per cent of the total population—revealing that we as a nation are ill-prepared for the considerable pressure this might put on various socioeconomic fronts. In fact, the survey concedes that there will be future inadequacies like pension outlays, healthcare expenditure, fiscal discipline and savings, apart from insufficient healthcare facilities for silvers. S K Das, director general of Central Statistics Office, hopes the report will enhance the understanding of planners, policymakers and social researchers of the problems elders face in India. Here are a few highlights of the study:



- From 5.6 per cent in 1961, elders are projected to rise to 12.4 per cent of the population by 2026.

- The life expectancy at birth in 2002-06 was 64.2 for women as against 62.6 years for men. At the age of 60, the average remaining span of life

was found to be about 18 years (16.7 for men, 18.9 for women); at age 70 it was less than 12 years (10.9 for men and 12.4 for women).

- There is a sharp rise in the age-specific death rate with age from 20 (per 1,000) for people from 60-64 years to 80 among those aged 75-79 years, and 200 for people over 85 years of age.

- About 65 per cent of the aged had to depend on others for their day-to-day maintenance. Less than 20 per cent of elderly women but most elderly men were economically independent.

- Among economically dependent elderly men, 6-7 per cent were supported by their spouses, almost 85 per cent by their own children, 2 per cent by grandchildren and 6 per cent by others. Of elderly women, less than 20 per cent depended on their spouses, more than 70 per cent on their children, 3 per cent on grandchildren and 6 per cent or more on others, including non-relatives.

- In 2002, among the rural elderly, almost 50 per cent had a monthly per capita expenditure level between ₹ 420 and ₹ 775; among urban elderly, almost half had a monthly per capita expenditure between ₹ 665 and ₹ 1,500.

- About 64 per 1,000 elders in rural areas and 55 per 1,000 in urban areas suffer from one or more disabilities. The most common disability among the aged was motor disability.

- Both the 2001 Census and NSSO Survey on Employment-Unemployment (2007-2008) revealed that nearly 40 per cent of persons aged 60 years and above (60 per cent of men and 19 per cent of women) were working. In rural areas, 66 per cent of elderly men and above 23 per cent of aged women still participate in economic activity, while in urban areas only 39 per cent among men and about 7 per cent of women are economically active after 60.

16 AUGUST: LAST YEAR, 26 SENIOR CITIZENS' ORGANISATIONS OBSERVED 15 AUGUST AS PROTEST DAY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL POLICY FOR OLDER PERSONS. THIS YEAR, 16 AUGUST WILL BE OBSERVED AS SENIOR CITIZENS' SOLIDARITY DAY.



Respectfully yours

Mind your manners when it comes to silvers. That's the diktat issued by the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) to all its divisional controllers, conductors, supervisors and officials. The aim is to ensure that **senior citizens riding on state transport are treated with respect and given the 50 per cent concession in ticket charges** intended for them, if they submit the requisite documents to prove their age. A voter card, identity card issued by a *tehsildar*, identity cards issued by the state and union governments, PAN card, passport, driving licence and retirement certificate are all considered valid proof. Further, MSRTC has announced that punitive action will be taken against any conductor, supervisor or official who inconveniences senior citizens or fails to give them concession despite possession of valid documents.

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Oriental Bank of Commerce

Grand network

Silvers aren't as intimidated by technology as they once were. As London newspaper *Daily Mail* reports, a new study of the older generation by British telecom provider O2 reveals that people over 65 are now dubbing technology an 'anti-ageing cream'. Here are some highlights from the study:

77%
of people over the age of 65 have their own computer, iPad, or laptop.

65%
are joining websites to get in touch with old friends.

40%
have experimented with online dating services.

75%
would welcome more assistance as technology changes rapidly; 60 per cent of the elderly would prefer to seek advice from their peers because they would feel more comfortable.

85%
of those who are not yet online plan to rev up their technology skills in the coming years.

A new friend

Silvers in Udaipur have a new friend: **Sangini**, an initiative to make the city more senior-friendly. Launched under the umbrella of the Rotary Club with assistance from the Senior Citizen Clubs

of Udaipur, Aishwarya College, Seva Mandir and Dr Mohan Sinha Mehta Memorial Trust, it includes:



- **Phone-a-friend**, where seniors can call volunteers for assistance with doctor's and bank visits, bill payment, shopping or just companionship.

- **Computer courses** that teach basic computing and Internet skills, to be held at Aishwarya College.

- **Monthly consultations and health lectures** by a team of volunteer doctors.

- **Dedicated senior citizens' hours at select clinics**, where leading doctors will set aside weekly hours at their clinics.

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Silver lining

Property developers just got a **helping hand in building silver homes**. Age Ventures India (AVI), a not-for-profit trust, provides property developers technical expertise in designing facilities and assistance in providing amenities and services. The trust—with knowledge partnership with the UK's Methodist Charity and Housing Association (MHA), which provides a range of care services for older people, and HelpAge India—is already engaged in projects in Gurgaon, Bengaluru, Visakhapatnam and Kolkata.



For more details, please visit www.ageventuresindia.org

Home at last



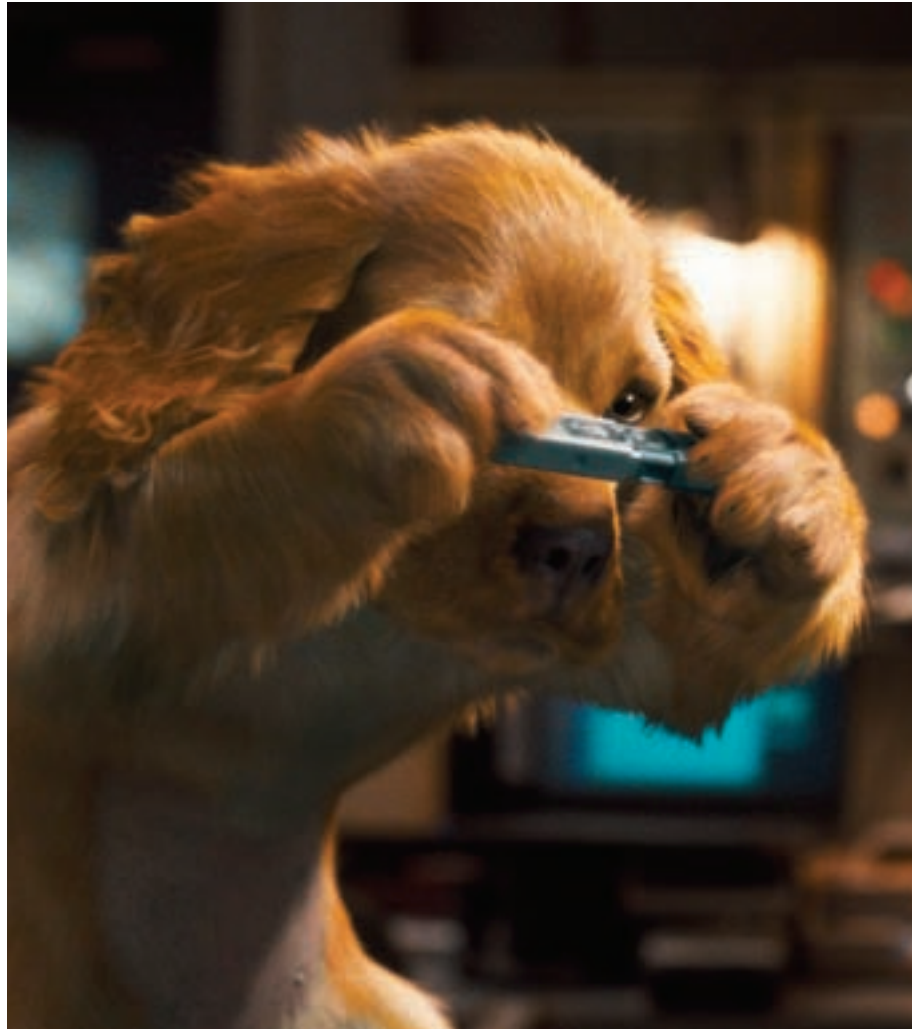
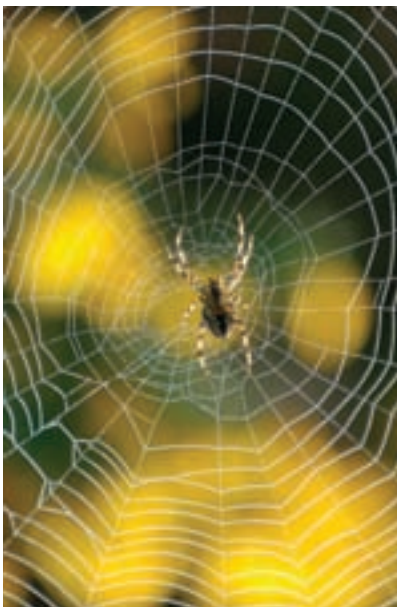
This is what you'd call a groundbreaking project. A recently launched **social housing project in Brunswick, Australia, will cater solely to lesbians over the age of 65**. This makes it the first retirement home in the country—and one of the few in the region—for this demographic, reports newspaper *Moreland Leader*. Developed by the Matrix Guild of Victoria and the Victorian Women's Housing Association, the complex features 36, two-

bedroom, wheelchair-accessible units with silver-friendly amenities.

"Reports of discrimination in aged-care facilities led us to establish this project," says Anneke Deutsch, housing convenor of the Matrix Guild. "When older women are vulnerable and reliant on homophobic people handling personal care, they often prefer to stay closeted than be out. We wanted them to be able to live their life with freedom and dignity."

Age creeps up

Here's another proof of the universality of the ageing experience: spiders silver too. According to a study conducted by Mylene Anotaux, a PhD student at the University of Nancy in France, **common house spiders lose the ability to weave neat webs with age.** As London newspaper *The Times* reports, her research suggests that while young spiders produce tidy circles with perfect angles and evenly spaced gaps, older ones struggle comparatively, yielding gaping holes and eccentric patterns. "The older the spider gets, the more chaotic its web becomes," iterates Anotaux. "Spiders' brains degenerate over time in just the same way as humans. In fact, the spider's short lifespan of just 12 months and its simple nervous system make it ideal for experiments into the ageing process. Our next steps will be to understand whether age-induced changes in the central nervous system are behind the differences in behaviour we have found."



Pet pursuits

It's not only the people in Japan that are silvering, it's their pets too. This has sparked a consequent **boom in products and services to allow dogs and cats to live longer and better**, reports news agency AFP. Here are some examples:

- Builder-turned-products supplier Yamahisa Co supplies devices for bedridden large dogs. These include a cart, sling, diapers and a mattress with handles to turn the dog's body and prevent bed sores, as well as hip supports to help the dog stand up and walk.

- Electronics giant Fujitsu Ltd has teamed up with veterinarians to offer 24-hour medical care for pets, including night-time emergency treatment, X-rays, CT and MRI. Results are emailed to owners.

- Jikei University School of Medicine are working on a cure for kidney failure in elderly cats by growing cat kidneys in pig embryos by injecting stem cells from the bone marrow of cats. The procedure is expected to reach the market by 2013. The Japanese keep 22 million dogs and cats—more than kids aged under 15 by about 30 per cent.

Reality check

Can you turn back the clock just by recreating the past? That's the question an extraordinary reality show by BBC TV, *The Young Ones*, seeks to answer. Six celebrities in their 70s and 80s—actor Liz Smith; actor-choreographer Lionel Blair; former cricket umpire Dickie Bird; Kenneth



Kendall, the BBC's first newsreader; actor Sylvia Sims; and 80 year-old Derek Jameson, former media mogul and TV star—all of whom suffer from physical and mental debilities, were put in a house that replicated the environment of their

heydays, the 1970s, from food and clothes to TV shows. Under the supervision of Harvard psychologist Dr Ellen Langer and resident BBC scientist Dr Michael Mosley, they were tested at the beginning and end of their week-long stay to measure any changes in mental and physical capacity—the results were astonishing. As London newspaper *The Guardian* reports, while Smith, Jameson and Sims displayed a marked improvement in mobility and flexibility (all had suffered from strokes), Blair showed improvement in his eyesight, Kendall overcame his terror of falling and Bird was able to banish his depression. "The secret is to cue people into not just recalling but re-inhabiting their old minds, reminding themselves of the potent people they once were, and watching the body follow suit," explains Langer, whose 1979 'Counterclockwise' theory was the inspiration for the show. "For far too long, we have learned helplessness. Now, we need to re-learn the power the mind has over the body. A person's environment can shape the way they think, and how people think definitely shapes how they feel."



B plus!

Wham, bam, slam! That pretty much sums up *Buddah Hoga Tera Baap*, a film crafted as a vehicle for Amitabh Bachchan's immense talents. The Big B plays a retired gangster back in Mumbai, trigger-ready for action, angry, flamboyant, and always riveting. Never you mind the threadbare story and disjointed plot, this is star power at mega wattage, amped up with a medley of his old hits and fast-and-furious action sequences that will have you cheering loudly. *Harmony—Celebrate Age* loved it—he had us at the title.

ROCK ON

Silvers in the US will now have their music on tap. Last month, advocacy group AARP unveiled a **free Internet radio service for elders** that seeks to bring the delights of digital music to a vast, untapped market. Programmed by the Concord Music Group, a record label known for publishing works by legends like Paul Simon, Neil Diamond and Ray Charles,



the unique easy-to-use service boasts 18 channels, ranging from rock, R&B and country to jazz, classical, Latin and gospel. "We've always been trying to reach this audience, because we

know they are so passionate about music," Hugh Delehanty, editor in chief of AARP's publications, tells *The New York Times*. "We also feel that because of changes in format and whatnot, a lot of them have gotten lost in terms of how to find their music." Accessing songs is hassle-free—users just need to go to www.aarp.org/etc/aarp/statics/global/html/slacker-player.html and click on the channel of their choice. The bad news: only silvers in the US and Canada can groove to the service.

LEARN AGAIN! There's no time like the present to pick up a new language or develop a new skill—silvers across the world are doing it. For instance, in Australia, Moonee Valley's University of the Third Age (U3A) has seen a boost in enrolments over the past 12 months, with 453 elderly students enrolled in courses compared to just 180 a year ago. U3A provides people over the age of 50 with learning activities and a range of short-courses to promote healthy ageing—from languages to culinary skills and interior decoration.



Then: Cardboard boxes Now: Coaster

Rip apart a couple of old cardboard boxes. Draw circles of four-and-one-quarter inch and inside circle 5/8 inch smaller. You can also draw rectangle or squares depending on the shape you want. Cut them out. Cut out another piece in the same dimension and glue together two to three cardboard pieces together depending on the thickness you want. Bring out old magazines, wrapping paper and even plain scrapbook paper. Use creatively and glue on the cardboard cut-outs. Leave the outer part of the circle plain for a professional look. You can also spray paint the cut-outs or decorate with glitter and sequin. Your coasters are ready.



FACTS

- » The UK alone produces over 7 million tonnes of cardboard for packaging each year.
- » For every 1 tonne of cardboard recycled and reused, 9 cubic yards of landfill space are saved.
- » Cardboard is the single largest component of municipal solid waste around the world.

MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...

1. Cardboard cut out from notebooks can be used as a nifty picture frame. Simply glue the picture and hang it on your favourite wall.
2. Rip apart the opening panels of a cereal box, glue discarded wrapping paper on the box and use it as a vase.
3. Create efficient dividers for your underwear/sock drawer by cutting and inserting cardboard sections.

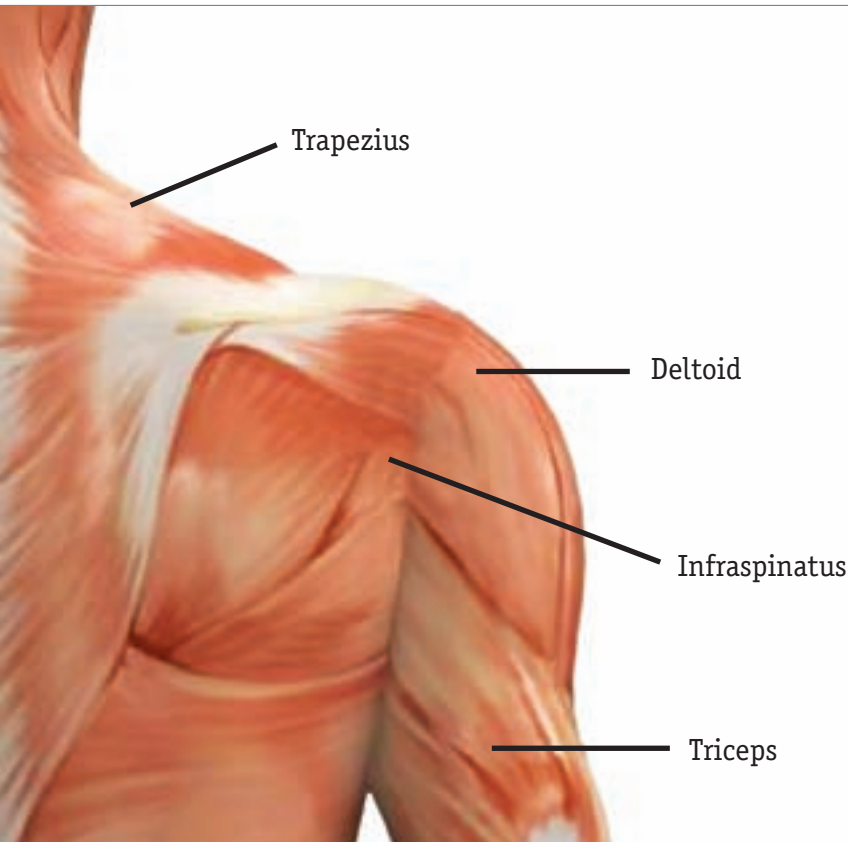


Tread the TREADMILL

Parkinson's, the degenerative disease of the central nervous system affecting mobility, has got an unlikely therapy. Scientists at the American Academy of Neurology say **walking at a reasonable pace for a longer duration on the treadmill is an effective exercise to improve mobility in Parkinson's patients.** Most patients are known to avoid any form of exercise, but doctors now believe taking the middle ground is better. "All those who engage in low-intensity walking, experience gradual and consistent improvement in gait and mobility," Dr Sharat Kumar, head of sports medicine, Apollo Hospital, Hyderabad, tells *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. "Parkinson's patients, however, experience gain in momentum as well. For better results, walking is best combined with gentle stretching exercises." In the American study, 67 people with Parkinson's with walking problems were randomly grouped into three types of exercise programmes: high-intensity treadmill with higher speed for shorter duration; low-intensity treadmill with lower speed for longer duration; and stretching/resistance exercises, which included repetitions of leg presses, extensions and curls. Researchers discovered that low-intensity treadmill training resulted in the most consistent improvement in gait and mobility.

THE GOA HEALTH MINISTRY HAS ANNOUNCED FREE TREATMENT FOR DIABETICS REGISTERED AS PATIENTS WITH THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT. HEALTH MINISTER VISHWAJIT RANE SAYS THE FREE SERVICE WILL ALSO BE EXTENDED TO THOSE GETTING PRIVATE TREATMENT, PROVIDED THEY REGISTER. CURRENTLY, ONLY THOSE WHO VISIT GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS ARE PROVIDED FREE TREATMENT, WHICH INCLUDES FREE MEDICINES AND INSULIN INJECTIONS.





Surgical shoulders

Repairing torn shoulders in silvers is often discouraged but new research proves that **minimally invasive or arthroscopic surgery can remarkably reduce pain and improve function.** Tears in the rotator cuff—the most complex of four muscles that stabilise the back of the shoulder joint—occur in about 20 per cent of the population over the age of 65 and typically result from chronic degenerative changes. These tears cause considerable pain and loss of range of motion, but can be successfully repaired. This conclusion was reached after 39 patients over the age of 70 underwent surgery to repair full-thickness rotator cuff at Rush University Medical Centre in the US. The patients were monitored for two years after the surgery, revealing that

their range of motion improved significantly. Patients were able to raise their arm in front and rotate it to the side—something that for many was difficult or impossible prior to the surgery—and their muscle strength also improved. “Earlier, such surgery was discouraged in elders because of the degenerative changes associated with age,” Dr Dhananjayan, head of physiotherapy and sports medicine at Spectrum Physiology Centre in Bengaluru, tells *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. “But recent studies have proven that arthroscopic surgery can be used for both diagnostic purpose and treatment. For diagnosis, the therapy can picture the exact problem; in treatment, it removes the debris near the shoulders, repairs the torn muscles and brings back movement.”

Double TALK



Being bilingual or learning a second language and speaking it regularly can delay (and sometimes prevent) the onset of dementia and Alzheimer’s. A study conducted at the University of Toronto proved that bilingual speakers can keep these diseases at bay for an extra four years as opposed to monoglots or people who speak only one language. “Being bilingual boosts brain activity and improves cognitive skills,” Dr Hiranmay Saha, senior psychologist at Salt Lake Hospital in Kolkata, tells us. “Though speaking two languages cannot protect you completely, it delays the process. Alzheimer’s in seniors impacts the cognitive system but people who read and speak different languages can stimulate their brain to build up a cognitive reserve.” Doctors studied 211 probable Alzheimer’s patients—102 were bilingual and 109 monolingual—and noted the ages at which their cognitive impairment started. The results showed that bilingual patients were on an average diagnosed 4.3 years later and reported onset of symptoms 5.1 years later. “Bilinguals with their ability to switch over languages can regenerate their skills faster than monoglots,” concluded the study.

HIT LIST

We have always believed that regardless of retirement or impending pensionhood, silvers have a lot more to demand from life and give back to the world than they can imagine. London-based WRVS has gone one step ahead—the charity for elders has released a list to prove the worth and might of silvers who have reached pensionable age.

Lynne Berry, chief executive of WVRS, tells *The Observer*, that the **Gold Age Power List** would open the eyes of the younger generation to the value, wisdom, dedication and

The list of 66 people has achievers from the worlds of arts, sports and adventure, science, public service and business. Here are some of the more luminous ones:

In literature, **Diana Athill**, 95, who won the 2009 Costa biography prize for *Somewhere Towards The End*, a memoir on old age, and who appeared in a BBC documentary on ageing, shares space with **Delia Smith**, 70, UK's bestselling cookery author with 21 million book sales. (Smith's *How to Cook* reportedly led to a 10 per cent rise in egg sales in Britain.)

became president of the Royal Geographic Society in 2009 and is currently making a four-part BBC1 series exploring Brazil. And **Sir Chris Bonington**, 76, was chosen for his unflagging determination—he has made 19 expeditions to the Himalaya.

In music and entertainment, broadcaster and naturalist **Sir David Attenborough**, 85, shone above everyone else. On his 80th birthday in 2006, he was on the Galapagos islands filming giant tortoises, and at present he is writing and presenting *Frozen Planet*, a new series for BBC1 about



(From left to right) Diana Athill; Queen Elizabeth; Michael Palin; David Attenborough; Lord Robert Winston; Doris Long

talents of those aged 66 years or over. The age threshold was pinned at 66 and above as that is the age at which people in the UK can claim state pension and because the country's baby boomers turn 66 this year. "The Gold Age Power List is recognition of the people who are making extraordinary achievements and inspirational contributions in the later decades of their lives," says Berry. "Too often our society writes people off when they get past standard retirement age. Older people are seen as frail, a burden or drain on society's resources. The reality is that older people make a significant economic and social contribution to our society."

In public service, **Queen Elizabeth** drew praise for her tireless service—last year, she executed more than 400 engagements. At 85, she is also the longest-lived British monarch, her reign second in length only to that of Queen Victoria.

In academia, 70 year-old **Lord Robert Winston**, who at 67 was voted 'Peer of the Year' by his fellow parliamentarians for his work on the human fertilisation and embryology bill, was the leading favourite.

In the field of sports and adventure, 68 year-old **Michael Palin** was chosen for his ever-increasing productivity—he

the impact of climate change on the polar regions.

And let's not forget great-great-grandmother **Doris Long**, 96, for completing 18 abseils. Since she started abseiling at the age of 85, her stunts have raised more than £ 15,000 for local charities.

The judging panel included *Gransnet.com* editor Geraldine Bedell, comedian Jenny Eclair and editor of *Good Housekeeping* Lindsay Nicholson. An economic analysis published recently showed that people over 65 made a net contribution of £ 40 billion to the UK economy last year.

BIRTHDAYS

● American actor **Dustin Hoffman** turns 74 on 8 August.

● Cuban leader **Fidel Castro** turns 85 on 13 August



● American author **Danielle Steele** turns 64 on 14 August

● Pop queen **Madonna** turns 53 on 16 August

● American actor **Robert De Niro** turns 68 on 17 August

● Indian filmmaker **Govind Nihalani** turns 61 on 19 August

● Indian IT legend **N R Narayana Murthy** turns 65 on 20 August

● American billionaire **Warren Buffett** turns 81 on 30 August

**OVERHEARD**

● "I am not interested in being a Barbie Doll and turning myself into a sausage in the next 20 years. I want to go the road of actresses like Helen Mirren and Judi Dench who have lines on their face and aren't afraid of playing their age. There aren't enough roles for women over 50. Directors here [in the US] aren't interested in us. We have to go out there and make them for ourselves, which is what I did with Monica Velour."

—American actress **Kim Cattrall**, 54, to *entertainment website* PopEater.com; in her latest release Meet Monica Velour, *Cattrall plays an ageing porn star with disarming confidence*

IN PASSING

● Avant-garde film-maker **Mani Kaul** died on 6 July at his home in Gurgaon.



● Former American first lady and pioneer of alcohol and drug rehabilitation **Betty Ford** died on 8 July in Rancho Mirage in California.



● **Sadhana Amte**, wife of social worker Baba Amte, died on 9 July. She was 85.

● **Terrence Lanni**, former CEO of MGM Studios, died of cancer on 14 July. He was 68.

● Retired police officer **T P Sundara Rajan**, who filed a petition in the Supreme Court that led to the opening of the vaults and discovery of treasure worth billions of dollars in the Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Kerala last month, died on 17 July after a brief illness. He was 70.

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THE STORYTELLER

It is only in the past three years of semi-retired life that I have been able to indulge in my first love: writing fiction. And what sheer pleasure it is! At the age of 84, I recently debuted as an author and released my book, *The Old and The New*, and I am thrilled to say that it has already won the appreciation of readers and critics.

A collection of 23 short stories of no specific genre or ideology, it dwells on varied themes. Laced with subtle humour, my stories are about how technology has changed people's lives; shifting value systems, attitudes and tastes; and the liberalisation of behavioural and sexual norms. I think men and women across three generations will be able to identify with my characters and their follies and foibles.

As a former journalist, I have always had an 'itch' to write, and have had short stories published in magazines as far back as 1953. Looking back, I wish I had written some more but the exacting demands of journalism claimed both time and attention. Yes, it's been a long and productive career and it's brought me so much fulfilment. I have held senior positions with prestigious publications such as *The Economic Times* and *Samarambh* (Hindi and English monthlies); and ran a cultural column in *Navbharat Times*. I also specialise in trade journalism and have been associated with *Indian Shipping and Transport News*, *Indian and Eastern Engineer*, *International Textile Monitor* and *Textile India Progress* (1982 to date). My yearning to write took me beyond the print medium and I thoroughly enjoyed scripting documentaries for The Films Division of India. That was in the sepia-tinted 1960s and '70s.

I must confess there are other reasons why my retirement years have been so busy. I have an intense passion for literature and music and am a proficient harmonium player. Seeking a creative outlet, I have built up a vast collection of solo compositions for this musical instrument. Naturally, boredom is something I simply cannot identify with. And thanks to my many interests, I find the days, months and years too short! I often think 'old age' is just an excuse to be laid back and crib about being unable to 'pass the time'. Think about it—these are our bonus years that we can use to shape out talents.

Miraculously, I have found the time to complete my second collection of short stories and am looking forward

to launching it by the end of this year. After all, isn't it all about turning silver years into gold?

—B S Rao, Delhi

POETRY OF LIFE

I am a retired gynaecologist, and have had the wonderful privilege of ushering in 40,000 births in my medical career spanning nearly 50 years. Though life has been generous with me in many ways and I have won accolades on both local and national platforms, there's a joy in watching a tiny human being take its first breath on the planet that's simply unmatched.

When I look back at life, I am amazed at the many things it taught me—through many wonderful people. My relatives and friends tell me I have inherited two things from my grandfather: his eyes and his fondness for poetry. My grandfather Panje Mangesh Rao was a well-known Kannada poet, who also wrote the native anthem for Coorg. Today his poems are a part of the state school syllabus in Karnataka. I developed an interest in poetry at a young age; I used to write for my school magazines and went on to contribute to *Rasamayee*, the journal of the Thyagaraja Gana Sabha. In 1967, I joined the International Association of Poets, Essayists and Novelists, better known as PEN. That was also when my debut book of poems *Sunayana* was first published.

My father Panje Gopal Rao was an able administrator who was consecutively employed with the Nizam, the British and the government of Andhra Pradesh for 10 years each. He was a great lover of music and, like all fathers of yesteryears, he wanted his daughter to learn music and dance. I still remember the fee he paid in 1957 to get me to learn dance, music and typing, just ₹ 28, which of course was a significant amount back then. I didn't want to learn how to type. But my father told me, "If nothing else works for you, at least you will be a good typist!" Fortunately, destiny had a lot in store for me and I could become more than just a good typist. By 1964, I graduated in medicine from Osmania University and married Dr Kishore Taggar, a brilliant paediatric surgeon. I went on to complete my postgraduate degree and then taught in the same university for four years. I grew up speaking five languages: Marathi, Telugu, Konkani, English and Hindi. This fluency in languages helped me deal with women from all the erstwhile



Poetry and social service helped Dr Kishore overcome the loss of her loved ones

dominions of the Nizam, especially the ones veiled by the *burqa*. These women shared a special bond with me as they had finally found a doctor who was both a woman and could speak their language! In my husband, I found a wonderful companion, friend and guide. We shared the same outlook on life and the same dreams—together, we set up a hospital for underprivileged women in Hyderabad.

Life was a picture-perfect postcard till my elder son passed away in a freak burglary accident in 2007. At that time, my husband remained my rock and anchor and helped me cope with the anguish and pain. We drew strength from each other and solace from our younger son and daughter. Then one day in 2007, my husband passed away. I retreated into myself and stayed in my shell for two years. I grieved and cried all day; the tears just wouldn't stop flowing. One day my sister told me to snap out of the gloom or I would be engulfed by chronic depression. I cannot recollect the exact moment but I finally realised that my soulmate would always be by my side in spirit. I began to write spiritual songs in my moments of quiet and tranquillity. Slowly and steadily, I decided to take control of my life. I was a member of the Sarvodaya International Trust (Andhra Pradesh chapter) and decided to immerse myself in its activities. The Trust works to inculcate Gandhian values in children and the youth. I also started the concept of 'Samhita Samiti' to inculcate values of equality, and 'Nishulk Shiksha' for free education in rural schools under the umbrella of

the Sarvodaya Trust. These committees regularly conduct sketching and painting competitions of Gandhian thought and ideals. I have also been involved with the Red Cross chapter of Hyderabad for more than 30 years. Earlier, I used to organise training and teaching courses for nurses under the aegis of the Lionettes Club (the women's wing of the Lion's Club), The St John's Ambulance and the Red Cross. Now I work as a supervisor at the blood bank run by the Red Cross where 1,500 bottles of blood are collected every month. I am also actively involved in the collection and distribution of blood to the Thalassemia Society and the Haripriya Rangarajan Institute of Transfusion Medicine. Till 2010, I worked as an advisor to the Jan Shiksha Sansthan where women and children from the lowest rungs of society were encouraged to learn a skill so they could earn a living. Sadly, the Ministry of Human Resource Development decided to shut it down a few months ago.

Today, most of my waking hours are occupied by poetry. I am working on essays, poems and spiritual couplets in bilingual and trilingual format. After I finish this project, I plan to write on 'divine, eternal and celestial love'. I write poems under the pen name 'Anamika'. I also design CD covers in my free time. Life isn't perfect, and despite the tears I can never forget the many joys it has gifted me. Above all, it has introduced me to the strength in my heart and the poetry in my soul.

—Dr Sudha Kishore, Hyderabad

Writer's BLOC

VIJAY LAXMAN KHER, 69

"I was able to follow my passion for writing after retirement"

After completing my bachelor's in commerce, I started working as accounts officer with the accounts and treasuries department of the Maharashtra government. My work was interesting, not only because I was playing with numbers but because it helped develop my writing skills—I had to draft, interpret and analyse financial situations for my reports. I had the opportunity to work on many internal and external communication assignments, which also helped me improve my writing skills, besides enhancing my analytical levels and overall understanding of finance and economics.



Utkarsh Sanjanwala

In 2000, I retired after serving in many departments across the state. But I knew I wouldn't be happy sitting at home and watching television. My long cherished dream was to write. As a youngster, I had written for newspapers and magazines on various social issues—some of those articles were well received. I also wrote short stories and poems in my free time. Today I stay busy by writing short stories, plays and radio scripts for All India Radio's Ratnagiri radio station. I couldn't have asked for a better way to spend my retirement.

The transition from my core competency to my passion was gradual. It evolved over a period of time. I had

always believed that writing is the best medium to express oneself and connect with others. Writing helps me stay calm, introspect and even gives me mental satisfaction. Today, the challenge is to keep coming up with new, innovative ideas. The need to constantly think out of the box while writing radio scripts stretches my mental limits. Besides writing, I spend a lot of time reading about philosophy and spirituality. I also meditate, and whenever I get a chance I travel. I listen to music and watch quality television programmes as well. Currently, I spend almost eight hours a day developing my scripts for Ratnagiri station.

—As told to Dhanya Nair Sankar

I recently retired from the Army. I have been an avid blogger and would like to join a portal as content writer. How should I go about it?

With the Internet gaining popularity and search engines like Google, MSN and Yahoo becoming almost indispensable, writing content for websites has become a lucrative option. You can also get jobs in Internet magazines (also called e-zines). Information or content on these websites plays a major role in getting the message across. As a Web content writer, your job would be to write content in a precise, simple and intelligent manner. Your responsibilities would include writing, editing, proofreading, writing product



description, checking web pages before making them live, writing web page titles, and writing tags and tag descriptions. Qualifications for the job include a postgraduate degree with a good command over English, an understanding of what works online, good communication and research skills, and the ability to write in a variety of formats or styles for a varied audience. Previous work experience involving writing could be an added benefit. You could earn anywhere between ₹ 20,000 and ₹ 40,000 per month.

—Swathi Narayan works as a content writer in Chennai



Well heeled: Stretching exercises for plantar fasciitis

I am a 59 year-old man. In my younger days I used to exercise regularly. However, as I approached my 40s, I gradually stopped exercising. Now my weight has increased and, of late, I have been experiencing acute heel pain. Is there something that I could do to reduce my weight and deal with the pain at the same time?

Exercise is an important weight loss tool, but how much of it is needed varies from person to person. Guidelines recommend at least 250 minutes per week, which comes to about 50 minutes, five days a week. As you are a beginner, start with three days of cardio for 15-30 minutes, gradually adding time each week to give your body time to adapt. Stretching exercises will be very helpful to reduce heel pain (plantar fasciitis). Stretching should not cause pain, but rather a pulling feeling. Try to do each exercise two or three times during the day, not necessarily in one sitting. Incorporate the exercise into your workout regime.

Exercises for plantar fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis causes many people intense heel pain in the morning at the time of taking their first steps after getting out of bed. This pain comes from the tightening of the plantar fascia that occurs during sleep. Stretching or massaging the plantar fascia before standing up will help reduce heel pain.

- Before sitting up, stretch your foot by flexing it up and down 10 times.
- While seated, roll a rolling pin or tennis ball with the arch of your foot. If you are able to, progress to doing this exercise while you are standing up.
- After these exercises, put on your shoes (with orthotics inside them) or wear supportive sandals. Do not start the day walking barefoot on hard floors or tiles, or your heel pain will return.

Heel pain relief exercises (during the day)

Calf stretch: Stand facing a wall with your hands on the wall at about eye level. Put the leg you want to stretch about a step behind your other leg. Keeping your back heel on the floor, bend your front knee until you feel a stretch in the back leg. Hold the stretch for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat four times.

Achilles tendon stretch: Stand on a step. Slowly let your heels down over the edge of the step as you relax your calf muscles. Hold the stretch for about 15 to 20 seconds, then tighten your calf muscle a little to bring your heel back up to the level of the step. Repeat four times.

Hamstring stretch: Extend one leg in front of you with the foot flexed. Bend your other knee and lean back slightly. Your pelvis should be tilted forward. Keep your upper body upright as you hold the stretch for 10-20 seconds, then switch sides. You should feel the stretch up the back of your extended leg (all the way up your calf and thigh).

Marble lifts: Place marbles on the floor next to a cup. Using your toes, try to lift the marbles up from the floor and deposit them in the cup. Repeat the exercise 15 times.

Towel stretch: Grab a rolled towel at both ends, holding it under the ball of your foot. Gently pull the towel towards you while keeping your knee straight. Hold this position for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat four times.

To burn weight, low-intensity exercises would probably be best even though they don't burn off as much energy as high-intensity activities. The reason is that low-intensity exercises don't upset or stress the body too much when completed and as a result can help regulate the appetite. Activities with lower intensity also tend to burn a greater degree of fat or fuel, even though less total energy is burnt per hour. This can be adjusted by simply increasing the duration of the session. The first step is to commit to your weight-loss programme every day.

No matter what else is going on in your life, remind yourself of your fitness goals and give your workout the priority it deserves. Write it down and treat it just like any other appointment that you wouldn't miss. And if you find yourself falling off the fitness wagon, don't worry, this programme will help you dig deep and find the strength to keep going.

For details on the weight-loss programme, wait for the September 2011 issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*

*Madhukar Talwalkar is chairman of Talwalkar's, one of India's largest chain of fitness centres with 78 branches across major cities.
Website: www.talwalkars.net
If you have a question for Dr Talwalkar write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org*



EATING RIGHT BY ANJALI MUKERJEE

How much is enough?

A quick look at a sodium-balanced diet

I have heard that sodium-rich foods affect nutrition in elderly. What kind of sodium intake is advisable for silvers 70 years and older? Please suggest an appropriate diet plan.

Salt is an essential part of our diet as it adds flavour to food and helps preserve it as well. Our body requires sodium, which is present in salt to maintain blood volume and blood pressure, regulate water balance and perform other vital functions. Primarily, the kidneys balance the amount of sodium stored in the body for optimal health. Sodium can start to accumulate in the blood when kidneys are not able to eliminate enough of it for some reason. This causes water retention in the body. It further leads to increased blood volume that makes our heart push the blood harder to move more blood through blood vessels, thereby increasing the pressure in arteries. If this becomes chronic, it can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and congestive heart failure. Increase in dietary salt also results in increased urinary calcium loss and long-term use can lead to osteoporosis.



It is quite common to have diminished sense of taste and smell with age. As a result, many people eat more salt than required by the body to maintain good health. Five grams or one teaspoon of daily salt intake (2,300 mg of sodium) is the upper recommended limit. Aim for ½ teaspoon or 1,500 mg of sodium in a day. To keep your sodium consumption in check, you need to know the source of sodium. The main sources are:

- **Natural sources:** Some foods contain natural sodium. These include all vegetables and dairy products such as milk, meat and shellfish. They don't contain sodium in abundance, but these foods add to overall sodium intake.
- **Processed foods:** These foods are high in salt, which is a combination of sodium and chloride; they also contain sodium in additives like monosodium glutamate. Processed foods include bread; and ready-to-eat foods like instant noodles, pasta, soups, pizza, cheese, *chivda*, *farsan* and chips.

The taste for salt is acquired, so we can learn to enjoy food with less salt. Decrease your use of salt and your taste buds will adjust. As you use less salt, your preference for it diminishes



● **Table salt:** Many people sprinkle additional salt to food at the table. Be cautious if the dish is made with certain condiments like soy sauce, which already contains plenty of sodium. Foods like pickles, chutneys, sauces and ketch-ups, *papad*, chips and salted biscuits, cheese and salted butter and bakery products are also rich in sodium.

The taste for salt is acquired, so we can learn to enjoy food with less salt. Decrease your use of salt gradually and your taste buds will adjust. As you use less salt, your preference for it diminishes and you can learn to enjoy the taste of the food by itself.



Advisory sodium-balanced diet plan (Approximately ½ teaspoon added salt)

Early morning

Two glasses of lukewarm water with three to four garlic cloves finely chopped

Breakfast

Whole-wheat porridge with milk and two egg whites or brown bread sandwich with paneer or egg white; green tea or orange juice

Midmorning

One fruit like apple/pear/papaya

Lunch

Half a bowl of *chana* curry or *lobia* curry or fish curry; one bowl of beans or capsicum or any desirable green vegetable; cucumber-tomato-onion salad; one barley *chapatti*; one small bowl of brown rice

Evening tea

Green tea with wheat crackers or six to eight almonds or one or two fruits

What's the correct proportion of soybean, barley, *ragi*, *bajra* and wheat flour in multigrain flour for *chapatti*?

No single food is nutritionally perfect. In order to meet the nutritional requirements of the body, we need to combine different grains together. Mixing flours like wheat, soy, *ragi*, barley and *bajra* enhances protein value, vitamin and mineral intake and fibre content. The right proportion is 60 per cent wheat flour, and 10 per cent each of the rest. For diabetics, the wheat content can be 40 per cent, 20 per cent soybean, 20 per cent barley and 10 per cent each of the rest.

What can one eat daily (as food medicine) to contain high blood pressure (to reduce LDL, triglycerides and increase HDL)?

Vegetable juices are thought to be one of the best natural remedies to lower blood pressure and reduce LDL. Simply squeeze juice of tomato and celery to improve your blood pressure reading. Another effective remedy is garlic. Daily intake of garlic helps decrease LDL and total cholesterol level. Also make sure you walk daily for 30-40 minutes. Exercise helps improve HDL and reduces triglycerides. Even flaxseed powder is proven to help.

What kind of diet helps prevent diabetes (Type 2)?

To naturally prevent Type 2 diabetes, you need to eat whole grains and fibre-rich food like oats, barley, lentils, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, spinach and tomatoes. Fruits that help include *jamun*, apple, strawberry, peaches, plum, cherries, sweet lime and pear. Consuming the right kind of oil like olive oil and canola also slows down sugar absorption in blood. You can also take a teaspoon of cinnamon powder and fenugreek (*methi*) seed powder daily. This will help maintain (and lower) your blood glucose.

Dinner

Cabbage vegetable; onion-tomato salad; sprouted *mung dal*; one barley *chapatti*; one cup of fresh yoghurt

Before bed

One cup skimmed milk

Curtailing intake of sodium has proven health benefits, but it should not be cut out entirely. Sodium serves a number of purposes in the body; it just needs to be limited.

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



Be the change: Transform yourself with yoga

In yoga, the centre for transformation is the navel. Postures that engage this centre are said to create the right temper for life transformation. There is no age bar on when we seek transformation. In fact, the four stages discussed in Indian yogic philosophy indicate that we are constantly transforming ourselves and seeking fresh direction, including learning new skills, which give further impetus to our desire for transformation throughout our entire lives. The choice of transformation is invariably accompanied by either anxiety or resistance, sometimes both. Therefore, not surprisingly, the *asana* that work this navel centre are difficult. Also, to deepen them we are invited to leave our comfort zone. Equally, we have to keep striving in these poses, as transformation cannot be confined to some moments but must keep evolving as a work in progress. The poses that take on all these varying aspects are the yogic twists. Even Ayurveda prescribes yogic twists as detoxifying poses. All these elements make yogic twists very exciting investments in our personal goal-setting.

On the purely physical level, yogic twists are used to massage, squeeze, detox and revitalise all major organ systems along the spine. This includes the heart, liver, the entire digestive tract, lungs, uro-genital system and immune system, among others. The squeezing effect pushes blood into parts of the organ or gland that become sluggish. This has

an uplifting effect on the entire mind-body complex. Even a simple twist to either side held for just 10 seconds or half a minute can have an amazing effect in terms of healing, detoxification and mood.

The navel centre is regarded as the ego centre. It expresses itself through strong emotions, primarily fear or anger. Interestingly even modern biology informs us that the humble stomach changes colour when we feel intense emotions. Evolution tells us that primitive cellular structures evolved around the digestive system as the main organ system with the nervous system evolving later, primarily created to cater to digestion! How we feel can reduce or improve blood circulation to this system. Amazingly, the stomach also has one of the largest cluster of nerve endings, indicating how closely it is linked to our mind. Yogic twists thus employ this psychosomatic loop to take us beyond our limitations, including emotions like fear or anger. The twists may be done standing, seated or lying supine. Standing twists include the triangle pose (*trikonasana*), side angle pose (*parivritti konasana*); seated twists include the half spinal twist (*ardha matsyendrasana*) and sage Bharadwaja pose (*bharadwajasana*); while lying twists include versions of the abdomen twist (*jathara parivartanasana*) and hand-to-feet pose (*hastapadasana*) in its side twisting version.

YOGIC MOVES

Lying abdomen twist (*jathara parivartanasana*)

Lie on your back, hands spread out at shoulder level. (Hands may also be interlocked, with palms under the head cushioning them.) Fold legs at knees. Inhale. Exhaling, drop knees to the right as shown. Hold this final pose, breathing normally. Deliberately relax the shoulders. Ensure both knees remain together. Inhale and bring knees back to starting position. Then drop both legs to the left side,

exhaling. Hold, breathing normally. Return your knees back to centre inhaling. This is one round. You can do this three to five times. To finish, relax your legs and lie back to rest.

Benefits: This pose detoxifies and revitalises all major systems. It is a powerful de-stressor and can clear the mind of excessive emotional tensions, especially those of fear or anger owing to its massaging effect on the adrenals/stress glands along the lower back.

Model: Freny Bhada

Harmony Interactive Centre

Photographer: Haresh Patel



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

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SOULFOOD AND SOULMATES JIGYASA GIRI AND PRATIBHA JAIN MEET SURYA AND PARMESHWAR NATARAJAN, CHENNAI

The second in an exclusive series about life, love and food that unites hearts

Surya Natarajan, 73, and **Parameshwar Natarajan**, 75, are silver Tamilians from Chennai. Surya Natarajan's friendly enthusiasm is perfectly balanced by her husband's quiet, dignified warmth. She enjoys experimenting with cooking, craft and mural making, while he surfs the Internet and watches cricket on television. He retired as an industrial radiologist and she a school teacher. Having lived in Mumbai, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the couple now has a permanent house in Chennai.

We have heard from Shobha [their daughter, who heads Karadi Tales] about your love story beginning in a train.

SN: Oh yes...like in the movies [laughs]. It was 1957. I had just finished high school and was travelling by train with my father from Chennai to Bangalore. He was travelling by the same train without a seat and my dad offered to share his seat. In the course of conversation, he was invited home. Later, he would visit us once in a while as he had no friends or family in Bangalore.

PN: I was looking for a job and wanted to settle down financially before thinking about marriage. Subsequently, my uncle got me a job in Bahrain. But despite the distance, I kept in touch with her and her father.

So when you announced your decision to get married, how did the family react?

PN: Her family had no objection, but my family objected because they wanted me to marry a girl of their choice.



Chennai Pix

Did you rebel?

SN: No, we never rebelled. My parents were happy when I announced my choice.

PN: Rebellion was not even an option for either of us. We were just hoping

to convince our elders. I wrote a frank letter to my uncle. He, in turn, wrote to my father and convinced him.

SN: No horoscope matching, no dowry...all in all, a simple marriage. We spent about ₹ 2,000 on the marriage in 1960. Can you believe that!



(Left) *Pahakkai podi*; (right) *orange tholi pachchadi*

Over the years, what is it that you have always admired about each other?

SN: He is not impulsive and thinks before he acts. He has never spent unnecessarily, which is truly admirable.

PN: I admire how she cares for me. And we have never heard raised voices of each other.

One change you would like to see in each other.

SN: He could have spent more time with the children and I wish he had

not had such a hectic work schedule all his life.

PN: Can't really think of anything. When there is no greed or greater expectations, there are no problems.

Mrs Natarajan, your daughter says you never fail to surprise her with the variety of dishes in your kitchen. Is food really a way to the heart?

SN: To some extent [laughs]. If that was true, then eating out should have been the best option. In a restaurant, you can get whatever varieties you desire, but can it win your heart? You

can win another's heart only with your behaviour and by being respectful.

What's your favourite food?

PN: Her orange *tholi pachchadi* is delicious, and so is her *akki roti*. Wherever we went, she became popular because she was a good hostess.

SN: I learnt basic cooking from my mother-in-law. I also learnt new dishes wherever I went and enjoyed that.

PN: Though she learnt cooking from my mother, she added her own ideas and innovated.



Any tips for youngsters about love, marriage, commitment and food?

SN: I believe in 'give and take'. Do not fight for every petty thing and respect your elders. Eat more at home and be healthy as home food has one special ingredient: love.

PN: I will go one step further—these days children are smarter and do things better than us. I am willing to learn from them; in fact, I am learning computer skills from my nephew. But I expect them to show respect to elders and tolerance towards friends.

From Surya Natarajan's kitchen

ORANGE THOLI PACHCHADI

A family favourite, Surya Natarajan learnt this delicious *pachchadi* (chutney) made out of orange peel from her mother-in-law.

Ingredients

- Peel of two large ripe oranges; chopped fine
- Ginger: 1 tbsp; when chopped fine
- Green chillies: 5; deseeded
- Tamarind: One small orange-sized piece
- Jaggery: One lemon-sized piece; grated
- Turmeric powder; a pinch
- Salt to taste

For the powder

- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Fenugreek seeds: ½ tsp
- Mustard seeds: ¼ tsp
- Sesame seeds: 2 tbsp
- Peppercorns: 1 tsp
- Red chillies: 2-3; deseeded

For tempering

- Sesame oil: 2 tbsp
- Bengal gram (*chana dal*): 1 tbsp
- Mustard seeds: 1 tsp
- Asafoetida powder: a pinch
- Curry leaves: a few

Method

To prepare the powder, dry roast the sesame seeds. Add the remaining ingredients of the powder and continue to roast for a couple of minutes. Cool and grind into a fine powder before setting it aside. Soak tamarind in warm water for 10 minutes and extract the pulp. Heat the oil in a wok and add *chana dal*. As it starts turning golden, add the remaining ingredients for tempering. Add chopped orange peel, ginger and chillies. Sauté for two minutes, add salt, turmeric, tamarind pulp, two cups of water and cook for five minutes. Add jaggery and continue to cook for another two minutes. Add the ground powder, mix well and take off the flame.

The *pachchadi* tastes excellent as a side-dish in a meal or mixed into

steaming hot rice. This recipe can serve six to eight people during a meal and can be stored for up to a week in the refrigerator. "You can use the powder in this recipe to make other vegetable *pachchadi* of your choice too," says Surya Natarajan. "For instance, you can substitute orange peel with large onions or capsicum, or use a combination of onions, capsicum and orange peel. It tastes excellent with the greenish peel of oranges as well."

BITTERGOURD POWDER (Pahakkai Podi)

Another favourite in Surya Natarajan's family, this tasty and healthy powder is packed with the goodness of bitter gourd.

Ingredients

- Bitter gourds: ¼ kg; chopped
- Split black gram (*urad dal*) husked: 1 cup
- Black peppercorns: ½ cup
- Asafoetida powder: a pinch
- Curry leaves: a few
- Mango powder (*amchur*): ½ tsp
- Salt to taste

Method

Soak bitter gourds for two to three minutes in hot water and salt. Strain and dry in direct sunlight for a day or two, until well dried. Roast for a few minutes and set aside. Dry roast black gram, peppercorns, asafoetida and curry leaves, each separately, until the aroma rises. Mix everything and grind into a powder along with sun-dried gourds, salt and dry mango powder. Serve with steaming hot rice and a dollop of ghee.

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

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Stony resolve

SCULPTOR B R KHEDKAR TELLS **KHURSHED DINSHAW** HOW A PARALYTIC STROKE CHISELLED HIS DETERMINATION TO GET BACK TO ACTION

The black granite statue of proud Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji in the compound of the SSPMS School in Pune cuts an imposing figure. The students who mill around it in scattered noisy cliques regard it as something that's been part of the school premises for as long as they can remember. The

inanimate figure, however, occupies a key role in Pune-based sculptor B R Khedkar's life. "As a child, I used to leave home with my slate and books just like any school-going kid, but on the way would get distracted by the statue and stare at it for a long time," the 83 year-old tells us. "Then I used to go to the Nava Pul [a heritage bridge near Shivaji Nagar, Pune]

and mould riverside clay into a *murti* [idol] of Shivaji." After many such amateurish attempts, the adolescent Khedkar finally managed to create a figurine bearing Lord Ganesha's head and Chhatrapati Shivaji's body.

"For a long time, my family didn't know what I was up to," he says with a mischievous smile. The cat was out of



Khedkar supervising his assistants as they prepare a cast; (left) a perfectionist, he is known to labour for hours to get the facial expression of his sculptures right

Photographs by Hemant Patil

when he decided to strike out on his own he received his first assignment from a client in Satara: to create an 8-ft statue of Shivaji. When the statue was finished, the notorious 1961 floods in Pune washed away his workshop located near a river. "I had to make it from scratch...which I did," recounts Khedkar.

the time he got back home, he had already decided he would do everything in his power to overcome the setback. "The physiotherapist used to suggest 10 repetitions for each exercise, and I used to do 50."

As the days went by, it became obvious to everyone around him that paralysis may have robbed him of motor control, but it could do nothing to weaken his determination. "Every day I had the same question for my physiotherapist: 'When can I get back to work?'" Seeing his passion for sculpting and his improving fitness levels, the therapist assured him he could get back to his studio in three months. "I used to come in my car and sit on a chair and watch my assistants at work," says the hard-willed silver. "Every day I used to knead a ball of clay, which turned out to be as effective as any physiotherapy exercise." He even worked on his speech, which had become slurred: "I would chant 'Omkar' to regain speech clarity."

His younger daughter Seema Shirke, 44, who is also a sculptor, once joked

the bag when Khedkar's teacher sent home a message complaining about his frequent absence. Once, frustrated by his recalcitrance, the teacher asked him to stretch his hand out to be caned. "I placed one of the pocket-sized idols I had made on my palm and proffered it for torture," remembers Khedkar with a warm smile. "My teacher instantly dropped the cane and congratulated me on my finesse."

After finishing school, Khedkar became a sculptor and assisted other sculptors at their workshops, though he had no formal training sculpting to his credit. For eight years, starting from 1952, he moulded statues and masks for body doubles for the movie *Mughal-e-Azam*. In 1960,

Indeed, even more impressive than his work is his willpower. On 22 December 1998, paralysis struck the entire right side of his body when he was at a public event as guest of honour. "When I stood up to speak, my feet turned leaden and I lost all consciousness," he tells us. "Luckily, the venue where the event was held was very close to KEM Hospital." Though coming to terms with paralysis wasn't easy, it took him just three days to reclaim his former independent, resilient spirit; he refused to use the bedpan and insisted on walking—and stumbling—to the bathroom. "I walked with the support of the hospital helpers and was discharged after six days," says Khedkar, a glimmer of pride underlining his nonchalance. By



Seema can't stop marvelling at the way her father has turned his 'handicap' around

that the paralytic attack was God's way of making him slow down his manic pace. Khedkar, in turn, shot back that he was as stubborn as the Almighty and he would continue to work more tirelessly. "I've never heard him complain about fatigue or hunger when he is at work," says Seema.

The once ambidextrous Khedkar now has motor control only in his left hand; work, therefore, takes longer to finish. Yet clients are willing to trade their time for his finesse. Khedkar continues to be a workaholic—at the end of each day he clicks pictures of his unfinished projects and scrutinises them at home to study areas that need improvement and can be fixed in his studio the next day. The sculpting process involves painstaking labour: he starts by fashioning a model from clay, which, after client approval, is cast in fibre or bronze, the latter being his speciality. With more than 400 statues lined up in his portfolio, he is now working on his 26th, 27th and 28th model of Shivaji simultaneously. (The biggest statue of Shivaji he created is around 18-ft tall and installed at Shivaji University in Kolhapur.)

Much of his strength comes from the punishing exercise regimen. Earlier he lifted weights and did *suryanamaskar* and push-ups; today he does freehand exercises every day. His discipline and punctuality have seen him make 100 statues after his attack without missing a single delivery deadline.

"Paralysis has not hampered his dexterity and creative vision," says elder daughter Pratibha Ovhalé, 63, who

chavanprash, before heading to his studio, where he puts in five hours every day. Fond of mango juice, he eats *dal*, rice, vegetables and *roti* for lunch. In his free time, he likes to compose poetry and stay in touch with all his friends—and the families of those who have passed away. One wouldn't expect any room for regrets in such a busy schedule; surprisingly there is: "I wish I was proficient in computers."

Khedkar's discipline and punctuality have seen him make 100 statues after his paralytic attack without missing a single delivery deadline

has been taking orders from clients and manages all his correspondence ever since her mother died eight years ago. Khedkar, though, insists on doing everything else on his own. He wakes up at 6 am, and spends the next two hours reading four Marathi newspapers. After his daily *pūja*, he conducts telephonic meetings with clients and assistants till 11 am, and then has a breakfast of vegetable soup, milk and

Though the octogenarian sculptor may feel he still has a thing or two to learn from the new generation, there's a lot more they can learn from him—to encourage young talented sculptors, he started the B R Khedkar Foundation in 2010, which felicitates an upcoming sculptor every year with a Ganesha idol and a cheque of ₹ 11,000, along with an eight-day workshop. ✨



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Photographs from *Lata Mangeshkar...in her own voice* (Niyogi Books; 2009)

The Voice of India

Lata Mangeshkar confesses she is not keen on giving interviews. It took days of relentless pursuit by our director and publisher Dharmendra Bhandari before Indian cinema's greatest playback singer finally agreed to give us 15 minutes for an exclusive interview. The allocated time was forgotten when she started talking—shyly at first and candidly later—and the interview lasted for more than an hour. Though the conversation was conducted over the telephone, the wires could do nothing to diminish the vitality of her presence. **Rajashree Balaram** remembers an ordinary day in her life that was made unforgettable by one of the most beautiful voices on earth

IN HER WORDS...

Being chosen to sing *Ae mere watan ke logo* still remains one of the greatest moments of my career. I was in the midst of preparations for my sister's wedding, which was scheduled for February 1963, when the great composer C Ramchandra informed me that I was supposed to sing on Republic Day in the presence of Pandit Nehru in Delhi. I had very little time to rehearse. Initially, Asha and I were supposed to sing it together, but Asha had many work commitments in Mumbai so she couldn't make it. I carried a tape recorder with me and practised on my flight to Delhi. After the song, when I saw Nehruji's eyes moist with tears, I too felt very emotional.

I feel sad that I do not see much patriotism around me today. These days, our pride and faith in our country surfaces only when the Indian cricket team is in a defining match. We cheer loudly for our team—even I do—but all of it is forgotten when the match gets over. How many kids today really know enough about Indian culture and history? Even most parents take great pride if their children can speak English; it doesn't matter if they have no clue about their mother tongue. I have nothing against English; after all, the British ruled over our country for 200 years so we cannot do without their language. And it's a beautiful language. There are so many English words that we have appropriated as part of our vocabulary. For instance, it sounds funny saying, '*Ek pal rukiye*' in conversational



With Dilip Kumar at London's Albert Hall in 1974; (right) with R D Burman in 1961

language; it somehow seems so much natural to say 'Ek minute rukiye'. Yet, it's inexcusable that we are losing touch with our mother tongues. Even in my family, the younger generation seems more comfortable with English. I urge all young parents to instill respect in their children for their mother tongue. *Bachche mitti ke ghadhe jaise hote hain, jaise hum unhe dhaalenge woh waise banenge* [Kids are like clay pots, they become what we make of them].

There's this hilarious incident that happened when I visited Paris with my brother [singer Hridaynath Mangeshkar] and sisters, some years ago. Hridaynath saw this lovely pen at a shop and asked for its price in English. The shopkeeper refused to answer and stared at him stonily. He was so exasperated that he asked him the same question in Marathi: 'Yha penchi kimmatt kaay aahe?' And funnily, the shopkeeper understood and stated the price! In many countries abroad, they have this innate pride in their language and they regard you with respect when you know yours. Internationally, your status as a person is not judged based on your command over English.



You may call me old-fashioned but I belong to a generation where Rama and Krishna were names uttered with great reverence and not as part of jokes. Today, we have crossed all boundaries of propriety on TV shows. We don't even stop at reducing our deities, or legends like Tansen, to caricatures on comedy shows. A similar trend is followed in musical talent shows—which is why I don't watch them. Kids from small towns, when they first enter the show, have this touching innocence when they sing; they have simplicity in their appearance that vanishes when they survive the first round and enter the second. They are made to look

glamorous with heavy makeup and accessories, in clothes in which they look visibly awkward. The focus is more on the ability to look 'smart' than singing correctly. It saddens me. That's also why I don't agree to be a judge on their panel—for which I have been approached many times.

Even TV commercials have become blatantly sleazy. A man sprays a perfume over his body, and eight women can't keep their hands off him, or leave their boyfriend to maul him! Aren't we responsible for the statement we are making to our next generation through mass media? Do

we really want them to grow up thinking everything is okay and acceptable? Am I ranting? [laughs]

I cannot blame contemporary music directors or singers for the music being churned out today. We don't have stories where a mother sings a beautiful *lori* [lullaby] or the heroine sings a classical number. We are living in the times of the item number. Songs today are being composed and sung in a way that they can be danced to, and not necessarily enjoyed for the sentiment they express. There were peppy numbers earlier too but singers got the opportunity to sing many different kinds of songs for a film. For instance, in *Mughal-e-Azam*, I've sung 11 songs, which included a sad one, a romantic number, and a dance number; there were songs for different moods.

Today, songs have a very short shelf life. They don't linger in our minds the way they did earlier. But then, how many movies hit a silver jubilee? In our times, even if the

"I always wanted to be a classical singer. But I had familial responsibilities thrust on me by destiny at a very young age so I ended up pursuing playback singing. I don't believe in dreaming. I prefer to make the best of what life gives me every day. And life has been very kind"

film flopped, the song would survive in public consciousness for years. Many of the films in which the songs were composed by Shankar Jaikishan used to cross silver jubilee. I used to tease them that the 'S' and 'J' in their names stood for 'silver' and 'jubilee'.

I miss all the singers from the past—I regarded many of them as my brothers. I used to tie *rakhi* to Hemant Kumar and Mukesh. Whenever we sang together, we always had a great time in the studios. We rehearsed, discussed, argued, laughed, and ate together. Today when I hear a song sung in the style reminiscent of Mohammad Rafi, I miss him acutely and wish he was around to sing it. Earlier, people could discern between an Asha and a Lata, or a Rafi and a Kishore. Now people cannot instantly zero in on the singer when they hear a song. Among today's playback singers, I like Sonu Nigam, Udit Narayan and Alka Yagnik. Sunidhi Chauhan too has her own unique style. Sadly, many of the good singers now prefer to do stage shows; we don't get to hear them as much as we'd like to on playback.

With Beatles' guitarist George Harrison in 1960

I like listening to old songs. Some of my favourites are *Rasik balma*, *Ajeeb dastan hain yeh*, and *Aayega aayega, aayega aanewala*. It's not that composers earlier didn't experiment with different styles and techniques; they did. But they were not overly influenced by Western music the way composers are today. Our songs now don't always reflect our unique cultural identity and musical heritage. Among the new movies, I liked watching *Munnabhai MBBS*, *Baaghban* and *Lagaan*. I specially loved the songs in *Lagaan*. A R Rahman did a wonderful job. The music and lyrics have a lovely vintage classical touch to them.

I have been fortunate enough to compose songs for a few films. In 1962, noted Marathi film director Balji Pendharkar phoned me during a crisis and told me about a film, *Maratha Tituka Melvava*, that he was making. He wanted Vasant Desai or Sudhir Phadke to compose for the films and they couldn't give him dates as they were very busy. Baba, as I used to call him [Pendharkar], told me worriedly that he would be forced to shelve the film. On an impulse, I volunteered to compose. Initially Baba said, "If you go wrong, the press will lambast you and I don't want that" [laughs]. I suggested that I would compose under a pseudonym 'Anand Ghan'.

In the studio, we got music composer Datta Dajekar to conduct the musicians and tell everyone that the boy Anand Ghan who had composed the songs could not come for the recording and so he, Dajekar, had to conduct the songs. It was funny how we acted our way through the whole episode. Dajekar would even correct me so no one could suspect I had anything to do with it [laughs]. The film was received well and I got several awards for it. I continued that way with two other films. By the third film, the cat was out of the bag and people had figured out it was me. Later, I was approached by Hrishikesh Mukherjee to compose music for *Anand*. I didn't; and I love the beautiful songs Salil Choudhary finally gave us.





Sister Asha Bhosle tying Mangeshkar's wet hair as she prepares for a song at Mehboob Recording Studio, Mumbai, in the early 1960s

I always wanted to be a classical singer. But I had familial responsibilities thrust on me by destiny at a very young age so I ended up pursuing playback singing. My father died when I was just 13. He used to tutor me whenever he found the time. I acted in a couple of films as a child artist and then got into singing full time.

So far, I have sung in 36 languages. No matter which language I am singing in, I write the lyrics in Devnagari script and refer to that. I find singing in Russian and Tamil very difficult. Years ago, I felt very happy when a Tamilian man came and complimented me on the authenticity of my diction. Just as my voice is a gift from the gods, I think my command over language is also a divine benevolence.

Besides singing, I love reading and photography. My eyesight is weakening so I don't read as much as I used to. But I used to devour books, especially all Hindi and Marathi classics. I also enjoyed photography, but with the new digital camera, I feel it's not as challenging any more. The manual camera teaches us how to handle light, colour and shadow sensitively. With the digicam, everything can be achieved by calibrating the camera to a certain degree.

There was a time I even enjoyed cooking a lot. I am known to make very good non-vegetarian food. Even now, my grand nephews and nieces ask me to cook. But I no longer

have the patience to stand in the kitchen and grind *masala* [laughs]. Though I love feeding people, I am not a foodie—probably because I never really had the time to savour food between recordings. Sometimes I used to eat a packet of biscuits at five in the evening after a long day of recording. All those bad food habits have led to colitis. And no, before you ask, I do not follow a special diet to maintain my voice. I eat pickles and have cold water.

Life wasn't easy when I was growing up. In 1942, my father died of an illness in the midst of a curfew. We could not afford to give him the best medical care then. My mother then told me that someday when I had made enough money, I should build a hospital. I did build one in 2001, the Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital in Pune. Some things are non-negotiable there: poor people get heavy concessions; nurses and ward boys are strictly told not to accept any monetary gift from patients; and we do not keep admission formalities on hold for patients categorised as 'police case'. I just feel sad that my mother could not see her dream come true; she died in 1995.

I don't believe in dreaming. I prefer to make the best of what life gives me every day. And life has been very kind. Fame has brought with it a huge responsibility to live up to people's expectations. Even today whenever I sing, I never let myself forget that. Ever. ✨

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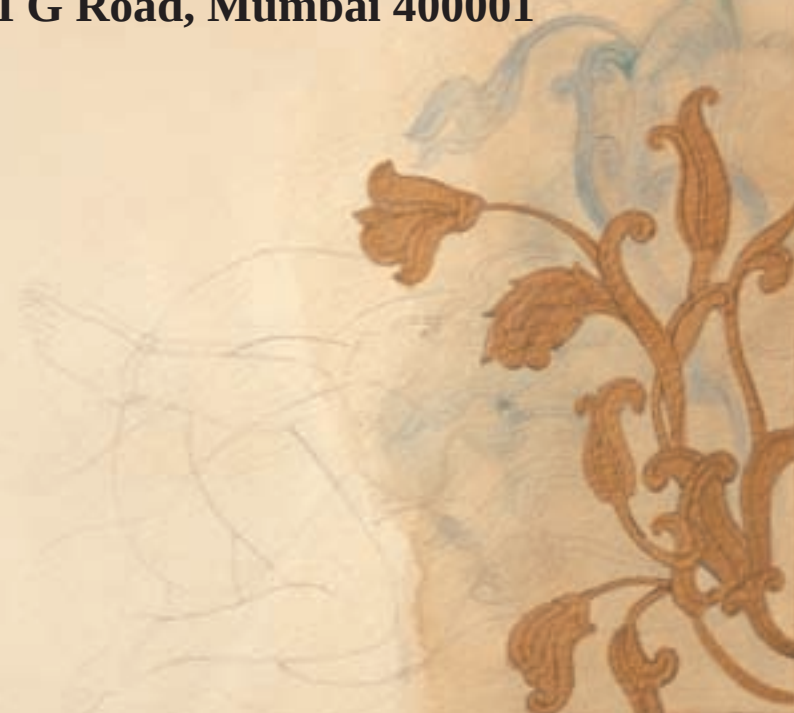
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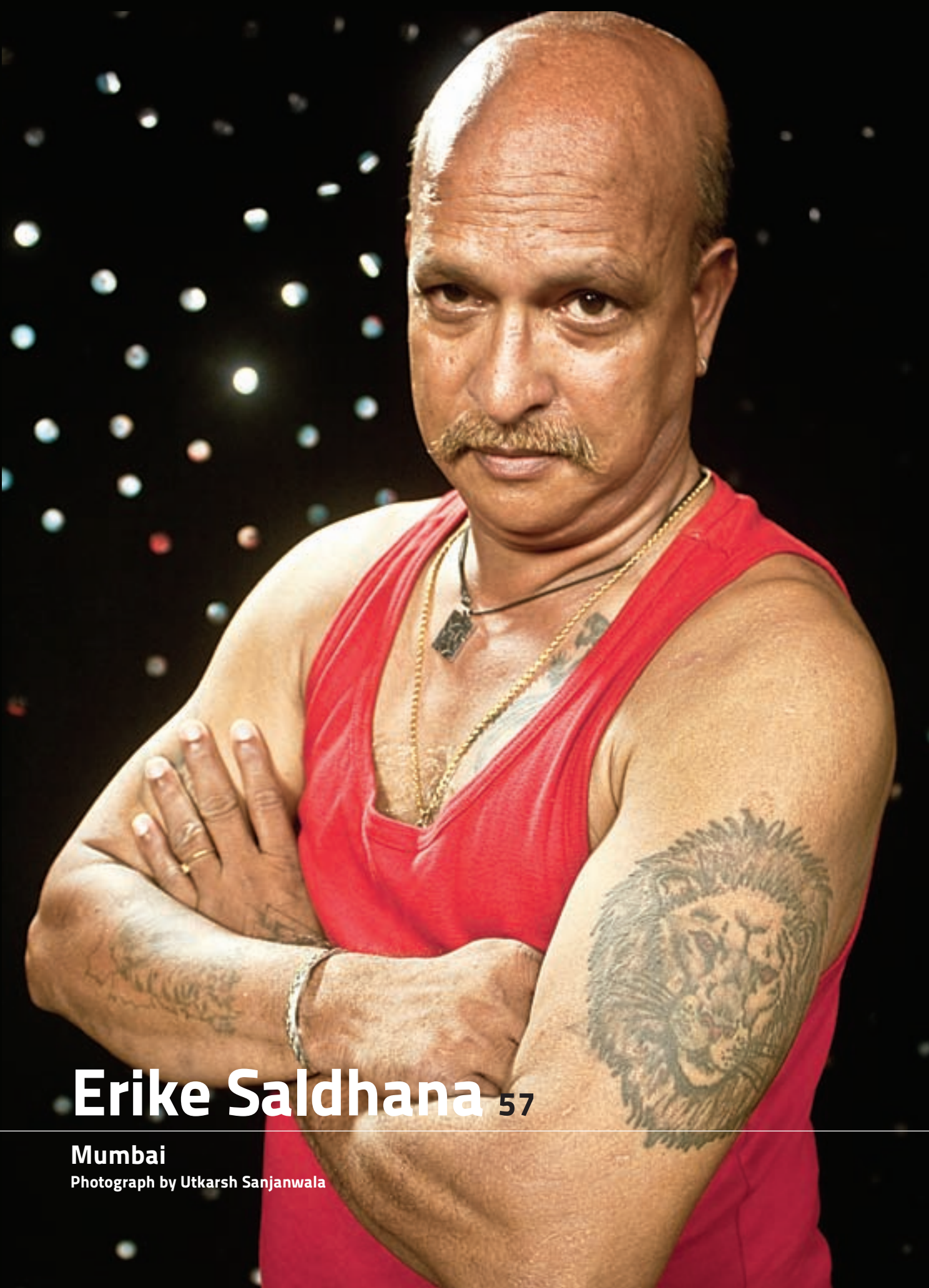
Freedom 2011

The India you grew up in has little in common with the country you are part of today. There has been a paradigm shift in every aspect of our lives and social fabric in the past 64 years—from societal norms and technological sophistication to filial values and gender rights. The symbols of progress and modernism that once defined our childhood and youth now survive only in sepia albums.

A new freedom movement has been unleashed all over again, one that unshackles us from many of the old ways of life. And with it has come the freedom to learn and adopt new technologies; shrug off preconceived notions of individual rights; push the boundaries of social acceptability; and rewrite our goals without worrying if it's too late to chase them.

Indeed, the best part of today's India is that it offers us both the freedom to change, and to be ourselves.

Happy Independence Day!



Erike Saldhana 57

Mumbai

Photograph by Utkarsh Sanjanwala

NEW-FOUND INDEPENDENCE



V Saraswathi 80

Chennai

Photograph by Chennai Pix

(They must often change, who would
be constant in happiness or wisdom.

Confucius



B V Srinivasa Rao 76

Bengaluru
Photograph by Prasad

They say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

Andy Warhol



Col (retd) Gopalakrishna Bhat 70

Puttur

Photograph by Praveen Nair



Amarben Naran Pamakh 65

Mumbai

Photograph by Utkarsh Sanjanwala

Those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.

John F Kennedy



Pranob Bose 70

Kolkata

Photograph by Shilbhadra Datta

Change is the only constant.
Hanging on is the only sin.

Denise McCluggage



Nalini Garg 80

Ahmedabad

Photograph by Samir Pathak

Madhusudhana Rao 64

Hyderabad

Photograph by Anand Soma

(The amount of happiness that you have depends on the amount of freedom you have in your heart.

Thich Nhat Hanh



Meera Gupta 67

Bengaluru

Photograph by Nalini

After celebrating your 25th anniversary, celebrate your first.

The first time your eyes met.

The first time you mustered up the courage.

The first time you bared your heart.

The first time you heard "Yes".

The first date.

The first time you held hands.

The first fight.

The first time you made up.

Shouldn't you be celebrating, that first rush of love
before life

and the babies and the bills intruded?

Because for the first time
you're at an age when
you can fall in love with each other
all over again.





If you're above fifty five, we believe Harmony is just the magazine for you. Filled with human interest stories, exciting features and columns, Harmony encourages you to do just one thing: live young.



Strides against corruption

After being in the pharmaceutical business for most of his working life, retired sexagenarian J S D Pani is now busy unearthing malpractices in the public health sector and bureaucracy through the RTI Act. **Dhanya Nair Sankar** meets the resolute campaigner

It is peak office hour on a rainy Thursday morning and Bengaluru is bustling. The Information Commission office in the central part of the city is slowly waking up to the day's action. As officials trickle in, they can't ignore a regular visitor: J S D Pani. Weather-beaten but armed with a pile of Right to Information Act files, he is determined to get some answers. For this 66 year-old industrialist-turned-activist, this is almost a ritual and the office his daily haunt. "I took interest in the Act when it was passed in 2005," says Pani. "I found that the legislation is people-friendly and helps citizens exercise their rights to bring in transparency."

After retiring from his Ayurvedic drug manufacturing business in 2006, Pani started a RTI forum called Mahiti Hakku Jagruti Vedike. Since inception, it has handled cases from various pockets of the city, helping people file applications as well as making citizens' groups in and around the city aware of the Act. Initially, Pani's focus was the health sector. "Our initial cases were about negligence in medicine procurement, registration of fake doctors in the Ayurveda registration board and charging of exorbitant fees in public health centres and government hospitals," says Pani. The forum filed over 100 applications and was successful in picking out many fake applications from the board. Now quite well-known, Mahiti Hakku Jagruti Vedike is approached for a gamut of wider issues. The forum has filed around 6,000 applications on issues pertaining to civic offices of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM).

Forty year-old Pushpa Vishweshariah was plagued by water woes and unclean surroundings in her residential area of Kollanghate in South Bengaluru. "There was an empty playground near our house that came under BBMP's revenue sites, which meant the body could develop it anytime they wanted," she says. "But this land was nothing short of a dumping ground; it became a breeding ground for mosquitoes and our repeated complaints did not yield any result. Added to this we did not have any supply of Cauvery water and had to survive on bore wells provided by the civic body. But these had dried; in the process, we came across stark corruption around the necessary contract."

Pani's forum has filed 6,000 applications on issues pertaining to civic bodies in Bengaluru

She then approached Pani, who immediately took action. "We filed a RTI application in early 2010 questioning the BBMP about the cleanliness contract of the ground and status of the bore wells. Within days we got our answer, which showed several lacunae. The playground was immediately cleaned and proper bore wells installed," says Vishweshariah, who now dedicates part of her time helping others file RTI applications. "Pani knows the minute details of the RTI Act," she adds. "He is like a one-man encyclopaedia on the subject. His passion to make a wrong right wins all the time."

"Working for a social cause gives me immense satisfaction and no amount of threats can deter me," says determined Pani, whose biggest challenge came in 2006-07 when the forum took on the most powerful man of Karnataka, the chief secretary of the state, P B Mahishi. The stalemate between Pani and him began when the forum unearthed a corruption case against Mahishi. A RTI application got a CBI FIR of 2006 which named Mahishi an accused in a ₹ 80 million scandal in the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. "Our application found that the chief secretary had allotted a government place to a private person without following any procedures, resulting in large-scale corruption and exchange of money," says Pani. Though he received threats, Pani continued unperturbed and was successful in getting the corrupt official transferred. "As taxpayers, we need to know where our hard-earned money is going and there is absolutely no reason to tolerate corrupt bureaucrats," he adds.

When Pani is not filing applications, he travels around the country for work and pleasure. "Our forum conducts awareness camps in rural Karnataka, and sometimes I listen to my family and go out for vacations," he says with a chuckle. "My father-in-law is the busiest retired person I know," says Shubha Jaikumar, Pani's daughter-in-law. "He is out before 9 am and comes at night. At home as well he is busy reading and attending calls." Pani's take is simple: "Have you heard of any social worker having an active social life? These are sacrifices one has to make." His next challenge: "I might write a book about the various RTI cases we have handled." 🌸

Experience

A second childhood

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Song of dignity

Veteran performing artists in Kerala are no longer leading impoverished lives on the fringes. Nisary Mahesh meets the woman who has ushered in the change

Kalamandalam Narayanankutty Maraar, 77, who served as a *chenda* artiste for more than 50 years at an art institute in Patna is now back home in Irinjalakuda, Kerala. Maraar's failing health means he can no longer work. He could have ended up as one of the many gifted veteran folk artists languishing in penury, but life took a fortuitous turn when well-wishers enrolled him at the Nrithyadhara Charitable Trust. "I consider this a reward from God for my devotion to my art," smiles the percussionist. For the last X years Maraar has been receiving a monthly honorarium.

"The travails in the life of an artist can be understood only by another artist," says Dr Radhika, whose philosophical bent steered her on a special mission 11 years ago. Today, life is a little less challenging for senior artists, thanks to this celebrated Mohiniyattom dancer and founder of Nrithyadhara Charitable Trust.

Set up in 2000, the Bengaluru-based trust throws silver artists struggling in their twilight a lifeline. Among its many acts of generosity is a monthly honorarium of ₹ 500 offered to those who have little or no other means of livelihood. "Their remuneration was paltry even in their heyday. And the government welfare schemes for ageing artists involve a lot of bureaucratic interferences," explains Dr Radhika, who is called the 'ambassador' of Mohiniyattom (a dance form practiced only by women) and is the only dancer to present this classical South Indian dance form in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Tulu and even Hindi.



Photographs by Sivaram V

Apart from the honorarium, the trust provides medical aid, and donates money and clothes to homes for silvers and orphaned children, whose education it also sponsors.

An ardent researcher and recipient of a doctoral degree from the prestigious Trinity College, London, Bengaluru-based Dr Radhika is in her 60s now. She has travelled the world



A seniors' home in Thrissur that Dr Radhika often visits and contributes to

many times over, delivering performances and teaching Mohiniyattom. She is also the author of two books, *Mohiniyattom – The Lyrical Dance of Kerala* and *Mudra*. However, it's her desire to give back to the community that nurtured and fuelled her passion to dance that brings special fulfilment. It is with this sentiment that she says her trust—which began by offering the honorarium to just four artists (two from Kerala and two from Karnataka)—has 19 beneficiaries now.

Revealing the inspiration behind her mission, Dr Radhika says she was at her alma mater, the Kerala Kalamandalam in Thrissur, Kerala, when the superintendent introduced her to a senior artist seeking monetary

assistance. "I gave him what I had with me without thinking twice but I was stunned when he bowed to touch my feet in gratitude," she tells us. "I was taken aback that someone who I once looked upon with reverence wanted to touch my feet because I had helped him with money. The incident haunted me. That's when I decided to set up a trust to help senior artists."

Among the trust's beneficiaries are Mannur V Krishnan, credited with bringing Pullavanpattu (Kerala's traditional ritual songs) national recognition; Kalamandalam Rajendran Vellodi, a Kathakali singer who is now a chronic diabetic; and Chacko Kuriakose, a clarinet artist who calls Dr Radhika a "blessing from heaven".

Braving pressures and pulls on the home front, Dr Radhika takes time out to raise funds for her trust from overseas performances, workshops and lectures. However, she ardently believes in the old adage that insists 'one hand should not be aware of what's going out of the other'; therefore she still remains an 'anonymous' helping hand to the trust's senior artists.

And, no, her zeal hasn't dimmed over the years. The dancer wanted to open a home for silvers many years ago but the plan did not materialise, as her work commitments left her with little time to focus on the project. Now she visits homes for senior citizens in Kerala and Bengaluru and performs



At her dance school where she helps homemakers, office-goers and young girls beat the drudgery of domesticity

along with the residents. "They spend so much time sitting alone in their armchairs, walking along the corridors, sleeping, reading or just staring blankly. Silvers need to be in touch, intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially," says Dr Radhika, obviously moved. "Dancing may be one of the best things for them. It is satisfying, provides rhythmic movement, and it is social."

experiences. Growing up in an orthodox family, she had no one to encourage her except her father. After spending years at Kalamandalam, she returned to Bengaluru to pursue her education in dance, then got married and had children. "There was no one to support me in what I was doing so I looked for motivation within myself." Her experiences thus turned her into a "selfless, caring and loving human

every housewife complains about the drudgery of domestic work," says Dr Radhika, who dances despite an orthopaedic collar she needs to wear because of spondylitis. "Their talents have been neglected after marriage. Here, they regain their confidence."

Students range from five years to 55 years. Nirmala, 55, says, "I started learning dance along with my daughter as a pastime and to get some exercise. I felt I would not be able to learn the steps but now..." Adds Smita, another student, "This place is a home away from home for us and Radhika teacher is like our mother with whom we discuss all our problems."

"Their remuneration was paltry even in their heyday. And the government welfare schemes for ageing artists involve a lot of bureaucratic interferences"

The objective, she adds, is not to teach seniors traditional dance but to help them relax, stay agile and healthy. "Dance is an expression of the human spirit and can be expressed by people of all abilities. They learn a few steps and laugh together," she smiles. Mission accomplished!

Still, reaching out to the less fortunate is second nature to Dr Radhika, something perhaps born of her own

being", as described by Eliza, one of Dr Radhika's students in Europe. "What a woman! I have seen her work with destitutes, orphans and the disabled. She is always there for anyone in need."

Proof of that is her School of Dance in Thrissur, where she teaches Mohiniyattam to homemakers, office-goers and young girls, who sign up simply because they love to dance. "Almost

You don't really need further testament to her generous spirit. Still, Kerala-based writer and art critic, George S Paul, remarks, "There are many trusts and social workers who help people in different ways. But she's the only artist helping other artists. She is truly a role model to her fraternity." For Dr Radhika, being an acclaimed dancer is not enough. It's opening her heart to those in need that makes the picture complete. ✨

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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

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Heads & tails

As the 25 paise or *char anna* takes its place in currency museums and personal coin collections, **Carol Lobo** looks at how Indian history left an indelible stamp on our 'loose change'



It was born in the 16th century, a thumbnail-size piece of silver weighing 11 gm that would later shape and unite an entire nation. Four hundred years later, you could still do so much with it—buy an evening of entertainment, snacks to munch on and yet return home with change.

Now one of the offspring of the first *rūpaya* has been phased out—the 25-paise coin, which ceased to be legal tender on 30 June 2011. Inflation, the RBI said, had rendered the *char anna* useless because its metal value was more than its face value. In other words, the 25-paise coin was worth more than, yes, 25 paise. People were hoarding it to sell as scrap and ending up with a small fortune!

But on that fateful day, the *chavanni* lost more than just its metallic ring. The announcement was sacrilege for an entire generation that savours memories of long, swirly *pudi* of warm *channa-sing* that the princely 25 paise once fetched. Add to that 'pepsi' (frozen coloured water in a long, plastic sachet), bubble gum and 'stick ice-cream', and you're struck by waves of nostalgia and sheer indignation. Why, back in the day, the not-so-humble *pachees paise* secured admission to Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai.

This was about the time the government introduced the first coinage of the Republic of India on 15 August 1950. The one-rupee coin and all its denominations now bore

the Lion Capital of the Ashoka Pillar instead of the British monarch's portrait while a sheaf of corn replaced the tiger motif. The change in emblems was more than cosmetic; it represented a symbolic shift from colonialism to progress and prosperity. But the rupee's value remained unchanged; it still added up to 16 *anna* or 64 *pice* (*paise*) or 192 *pies*.

Seven years later, the government threw us a mathematical googly when it switched to the metric system of coinage. Yes, 1957 was a difficult year—out went the *anna* and in came the '*naye paise*' or 'new paise'. Thus, while it was still called the 'rupee', this unit of currency now comprised not 64 *paise* but 100 '*naye paise*'. Imagine the confusion this wrought! A populace that had been carefully counting their pennies—oops *anna*, *pice* and *pies*—was suddenly pulling out conversion tables at the local *kirana* store in keeping with the *naya* monetary system.



Inflation, the RBI said, had rendered the *char anna* useless because its metal value was more than its face value. People were hoarding the coin to sell as scrap

But our precious 25-paise *sikka* remained stoic amid the chaos. Because while the entire nation grappled with adding, dropping and rounding off fractions, the new *char anna* was the only lower-denomination coin that was an exact substitute in value for the old quarter-rupee or four-*anna* coin.

Mirroring the spirit of the times was the following Asian Paints advertisement in *The Times of India*: "Old coins or *naye paise*, you'll get best value for your money with Asian Paints." Another for Burmah-Shell quipped: "An *anna* for

KNOW YOUR MONEY

- The rupee and its subsidiary coinage were current at various times in **British colonies** outside India in East Africa, Arabia and Mesopotamia.
- The term **paisa** has Persian origins. In East African languages such as Swahili, the word *pesa* meaning 'money' dates from the medieval period when trade flourished between India, Arabia and East Africa. Today, Kenyan mobile-phone based money transfer service is called M-Pesa or mobile *pesa* or 'mobile money'. In Somalia, '*paisa*' was called *besa*.
- The **dam** was a small copper coin introduced by Sher Shah Suri in the 16th century. It is believed to have given rise to the English phrase "I don't give a dam(n)," owing to its small worth.
- Other interesting old coins included the **pagoda** made of gold or half-gold minted by Indian dynasties as well as the British, French and Dutch. It was issued by various medieval dynasties in southern India. Another popular currency was the **fanam** issued by the Madras Presidency till 1815. A small silver coin, it was concurrent with the Indian rupee also issued by the Presidency.
- In the 17th and early 18th centuries, British coins had **intriguing names**. Gold coins were called Carolina, silver coins Anglina, copper coins Copper-oon and tin coins Tinny.
- In 1825, India survived an attempt to introduce British **sterling coinage** to the British colonies. British India was then controlled by the East India Company, which persisted with the silver rupee which was used during the entire period of the British Raj and beyond.
- As the rupee was a silver-based currency, its value crashed because of the 'great silver crisis' of 1873. Vast quantities of silver were discovered in Europe and the US and, suddenly, Indian currency could not buy as much from the outside world. This was called the '**fall of the rupee**'.
- Did you know that '**cash**' was a unit of currency used in China, Vietnam and Madras in British India?
- For a few months after Independence in 1947, **Pakistan** used Indian coins and notes with 'Pakistan' stamped on them. New coins and notes were issued in 1948 and followed the same subdivision as India, into *anna*, *pice* and *pies*. Pakistan decimalised its currency in 1961.
- Coins are **minted** at the Government Mints in Mumbai, Alipore (Kolkata), Saifabad (Hyderabad), Cherlapally (Hyderabad) and NOIDA (Uttar Pradesh).
- The **New Rupee Symbol** has been challenged by RTI activist Rakesh Kumar Singh. On 1 June 2011, the Delhi High Court allowed Singh to file a PIL against the selection process, which Singh claims was biased.



In 1988, the 25-paise coin finally began to succumb to inflation. Instead of being made of nickel, it was fashioned out of ferritic stainless steel

your thoughts?" It will cost you 6 NP now." The novelty of *naye* was to last just seven years, when on 1 June 1964, the term '*naye*' was officially dropped and we were left with just 'paise'. Phew!

Old is *not* gold

In many ways 'old is gold', but bucking the adage was India, arguably the earliest issuer of coins in the world along with ancient China and Greece. Leaving their individual stamp on coinage in ancient and medieval times were numerous dynasties and empires that ruled this vast subcontinent. As a result, there was a bewildering variety of coins that wove legend, religion, culture, politics and simple everyday life

into their motifs. For instance, coins of the Satavahana Dynasty (1st century BC to 3rd century AD), which ruled the Deccan and Central India, bore emblems of their rulers as well as simple motifs of animals. Later, coins of the Gupta era (4th to 6th century AD) depicted the king on the face and a deity on the reverse. Others represented dynastic succession as well as significant events like marriage alliances and animal sacrifices, while still others bore effigies of Greek, Iranian, Buddhist and Brahmanical gods and goddesses like Durga and Lakshmi.

Birth of the *rūpaya* and 25 p

History has it that the *rūpaya* (derived from the Sanskrit *rupyakam* meaning 'coin of silver') was introduced by

"My country is better off since the time I started earning five sovereigns of gold as a lawyer in 1952"



Charuhasan, actor and lawyer, 80

At eight, I used to steal a copper quarter of an *anna*, or *kalana* in Tamil—which was 1/64 of the rupee—from home and go to the nearest bunk shop to buy *sharbat* for my gang of four friends. One day I had stolen a coin and stashed it in my pocket to be used later when my mother's youngest sister, Vasantha Kokilam, asked me to show off my somersaulting abilities.

The coin fell and rolled out on the red cement floor of our house. Till today, I taunt her for exposing my thievery 72 years ago [laughs]. Then came the Second World War. All the mines stopped working, and as copper was being used in all electrical gadgets, the government decided to punch a hole in the one quarter *anna* to save metal. I remember we started using it as a washer between bolts and nuts as the usual iron washer cost four times as much. Illiterate villagers identified the one *anna* coin based on its special wavy rims, till the square-shaped two *anna* coins rolled in. All said and done, my country is better off since the time I started earning five sovereigns of gold as a lawyer in 1952. I could not buy a new motorcycle then for it cost 80 sovereigns!

Shammi, 82, veteran actor

"It's a good thing that the 25 paise coin got decommissioned. Today I can't even buy *chana* [grams] for 25 paise. Earlier, even 5 paise and 10 paise meant a lot. In our times, if we used to give beggars 5 paise they used to get so excited. Today if you

give beggars 25 paise, they think you are crazy! We used to get a whole loaf of bread for 20 paise. I remember an incident when I was a young girl and my mother had left for work. My sister and I were cooking and ended up burning the food. We were petrified of my mum's impending wrath and decided to cook the dish all over again. I remember running to the corner of the street and buying a whole kilo of

"I remember running to the corner of the street and buying a whole kilo of meat for 50 paise!"



Pashtun emperor Sher Shah Suri during his reign in northern India from 1540 to 1545 AD. Unlike the first coins in many other countries, the *rūpaya* was fashioned out of silver and survived into British India.

Sher Shah Suri also introduced copper coins called *dam* and gold coins called *mo-hur*. Shortly thereafter, the Mughal emperors elaborated on this coinage with a rich array of motifs and also largely consolidated the monetary system in the country.

Colourful Indian coinage continued well into British colonial rule, with settlements in western India, southern India and the eastern province of Bengal developing different coinages in sync with the local flavour. It was only in 1835 that the East India Company introduced a uniform coinage across India, marking the introduction of the *anna*, *pice* and *pie* monetary system.

But the *char anna* was not to make its debut until much, much later. Interestingly, although the 'quarter-rupee' was



around since 1835, it first acquired the name '4 *anna*' only in 1919. The denomination did not gain popularity and the 'quarter-rupee' was reintroduced a few years later. It was only in 1950, when the Government of India introduced the country's first post-Independence coinage, that the quarter rupee was embossed with the text '*char anna*' in the Devnagri script.

In 1959, the *char anna* morphed into the '25 *naye paise*', with the text '*rupaiye ka chautha bhag*' (one-fourth of a rupee) also embossed on it. In the 1960s, this wordy legend as well as the '*naye*' were dropped and it was simply '25 paise'. The coin didn't change otherwise and, unlike other denominations, it even survived the switch to aluminium.

In 1988, the 25-paise coin finally began to succumb to inflation. Instead of being made of nickel, it was fashioned out of ferritic stainless steel, which is corrosion resistant. The last batch was minted in 2002 and the rest is, quite literally, history. ✨

meat for 50 paise! [sighs.] When I went shopping for groceries, I could buy so much for just 1 paise. Money was precious when I was a child. Today a child will treat a 25 paise coin as if it's a rare collectible. You can't blame them—one can't even buy a cheap toffee at that price."

Sudha Murty, 61, author and social worker

When I was young, I graduated from *anna* to paise hence 25 paise meant a quarter rupee. It was big money for someone coming from a middleclass family, so we were eager to receive this amount from our elderly relatives. We used to buy nylon ribbons, plastic clips and bangles. Now, I rarely get to see the 25 paise coin. Recently, I accidentally gave one to a person in need in front of a temple and, to my surprise, he asked me what this coin was; he could not identify it.

We never had the concept of pocket money in our family; we used to get a rupee for our birthday, a rupee during Diwali and a rupee on Ugadi, the Kan-nada New Year. As children, we never



"We never had the concept of pocket money in our family; we used to get a rupee for our birthday"

went out and bought anything on our own—we were always accompanied by elders. I used to write out a list of items I wanted to buy but could rarely buy everything on the list. Yet I remember being happy with whatever I received, and never grumbled. It was not the money;

it was the relationship we shared with the person who had gifted us the coin, and even the warmth of a relationship we shared with the local shopkeeper who knew almost everything about us. Whenever we did well in school, the shopkeeper gave us a peppermint.



Courtesy Frauke Quader

Rock around the clock

Frauke Quader is of German descent but she is doing everything she can to save a long-neglected part of Indian heritage. **Shyamola Khanna** meets the woman on a rocky mission

Before Frauke Quader became the rock activist of Hyderabad, she was Frauke Offermann, a young adventurous German woman from Bonn who loved to explore the world and understand the diversity of different cultures.

In 1967, Frauke got a job with the German Embassy in New Delhi.

HERITAGE

Her first round of trips around India brought her to Hyderabad, a city that bowled her over with its rich cuisine, vintage charm and delicate etiquette. "I couldn't quite get over my fascination for Golconda Fort and the old bazaars and *mohallah* though I never really cared much for the Abids [the upmarket shopping area]," she tells us. Soon, Frauke met Fiaz

Quader, an engineer and businessman from Delhi. The two fell in love, married in 1975 and moved to Hyderabad. After changing homes across different quarters of the city for a decade, in 1986, the couple finally built a place of their own in the tony Jubilee Hills.

Back then, Hyderabad was still years away from its glitzy makeover into an IT paradise. Unlike today, when an

evening out for most urban families means bonding at the nearest shopping mall, the Quaders and their two sons spent their weekends doing what families did when life was simpler and consumerism was frowned at. “We rode on bicycles around the Charminar or in the suburbs and climbed rocks nearby,” she tells us. Very often, they were accompanied on such expeditions by foreign friends travelling to India.

However, as the population in the city exploded with the IT boom, housing became a critical issue and land sharks and builders started demolishing rocks indiscriminately to make way for concrete blocks. As the rocks were brought down to their knees, many lakes in different parts of the city were also filled up alongside. The 2,500 million-year-old rocks that all Hyderabadis had taken for granted suddenly became part of dinner table conversation and would have remained there if it weren't for a group of artists and environmental activists who came together in 1992 to campaign against the destruction. Laxma Goud, a well-known artist from Hyderabad, set the ball rolling by writing an article in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* on the rocks of the Deccan plateau. From 1992 to 1996, the citizens' group rallied around a vigorous campaign to raise awareness about the rocks. Through photography and art competitions, they urged children and youth to look after the rocks, protect them, and help preserve them as part of their heritage.

Finally in 1996, the Society to Save Rocks was formally put together with Laxma Goud as founder-president, Quader as secretary, and a number of eminent artists, activists, and photographers as committee members. At the inaugural event, the group went up to Durgam Cheruvu (Secret Lake), a hilly area near Golconda, and performed a ‘cradle ceremony’—a tiny doll's crib, cradling a tiny rock in it, was slung between two boulders and a sacred fire was lit under it. The

gesture was a symbol of the society's commitment to protect the rocks of Hyderabad. Along the rocks that line the Durgam Cheruvu, they laid out a message, ‘Save the Rocks’, in coloured stones. Over the years, the group has organised several cultural programmes around the rock—music concerts, plays, rock walks and artists' workshops. All the events are held in the rock formations so visitors can appreciate the natural beauty of the rocks and the environment.



Fifteen years since, Quader feels proud that the Society has been able to successfully convince the Andhra Pradesh government to list 25 such rock sites as ‘heritage precincts’. “It took a lot of patience and persistence before the slow government machinery could accept our proposals,” she says. “But today Andhra Pradesh is the only state in India where heritage rocks have protected status.”

Unfortunately, much has already been lost. “Had the government been quicker to act on the mindless indiscriminate destruction of rocks, we would not have lost so many of them,” Quader rues. Nevertheless, she prefers to look at the brighter side: Jayesh Ranjan, the current tourism secretary

of the state, has already announced his plans for a rock park at Fakhruddinghutta and the government also plans to publish some literature on the history and inestimable value of the rocks to generate more awareness and appreciation.

As an ongoing part of the awareness programme, Quader's ‘rock walks’ are very popular with the youth in the city. On the third Sunday of every month, people gather at pre-designated sights such as the boulder-strewn hills of the Osmania University campus, Shamirpet, Moula Ali, Pahar-e-Shareef, Gachibowli, Golconda, Asifnagar and Sitarambagh. Excursionists are told to wear comfortable shoes and bring along a bottle of water along with something light to eat; and then the adventure begins.

Though her enthusiasm is boundless, Quader is also worried. “I am beginning to feel my age and want to hand over the reins to a younger person who has the time and energy to dedicate to the cause,” she frets. “None of the young people who join me on my rock walks are willing to take over from me and run the organisation.”

On the upside, as an offshoot of her awareness programme, many architects and rock lovers are now making these rocks an integral part of their homes and offices. Narendra Luther, the current president of the Save the Rocks Society and a keen history buff of all things Hyderabadi, has a rock in his living room. In her own home in one of the quiet lanes of Jubilee Hills, Quader has kept some old rocks in their natural form all around her garden. More and more people building in these areas are letting the rocks be where they belong or even incorporating them as an organic part of their homes.

Meanwhile, the Save the Rocks Society, which started off with 26 members, now has 280 members on board. Looks like Frauqe Quader has enough reason to hold on to hope.



God's own sculptures

Visit Idar and you will know why there will never be a greater artist than Mother Nature
Text and photographs: **Gangadharan Menon**

Though many people may not have heard of Idar, most of us have had a glimpse of the place already—parts of the 2007 Abhishek Bachchan-Aishwarya Rai starrer *Guru* were shot here.

The place can be best described as an open air art gallery where God decided to display his exotic sculptures. Indeed, it's nothing less than an exhibition that was inaugurated many millennia ago and one that's still going on. Not content with the form the sculptures have evolved into, God continues to work on them, using the tools of the sun, the rain and the wind.

Idar is a two-hour drive from Ahmedabad via Gandhinagar and Himmatnagar. The breathtaking display of natural sculptures carved out of volcanic stone starts a little before you reach Idar, at a place called Sapawada, which means Abode of Snakes. As you drive into this sleepy village, you

will see the sculpted hills in the distance towards your right. Among them you will find forms that are uncannily serpent-like, with raised hoods.

The name 'Idar' has an interesting origin. This place, situated on the foothills of the southern end of the Aravalli mountain range, is said to be the abode of two *rakshasa*, or demons, Elva and Durg. These demons were

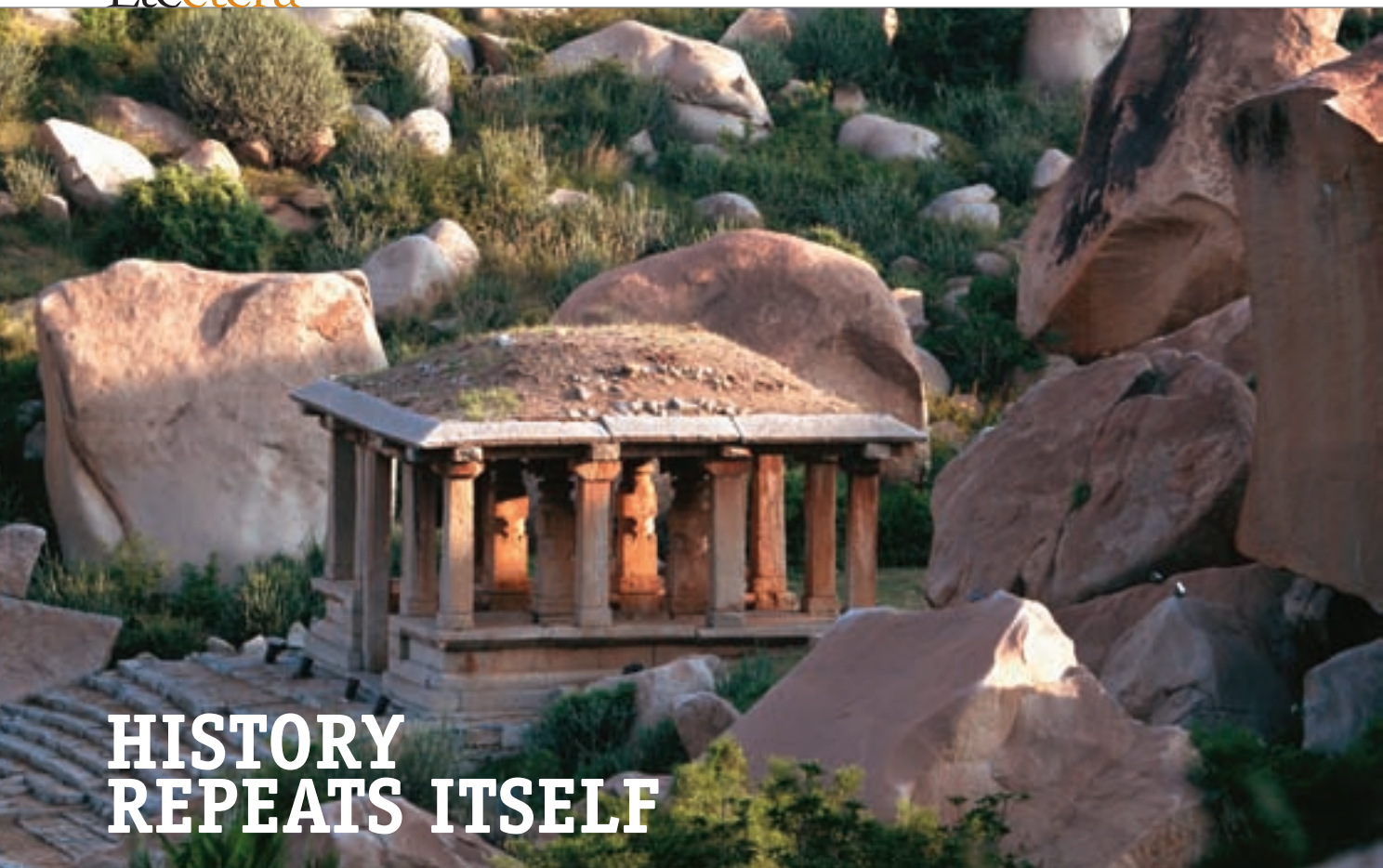
THE OUTDOORS

so fearsome that the villagers used to say with a tremor '*I dar che!*' which meant 'There's fear!'

As you see the awesome abstract figures of Idar, gigantic in form and spirit, looming over the hamlet, it almost seems as if they are still guarding the village folk from the two fearsome demons, Elva and Durg.

The stillness in Idar seems filled with many such myths and legends. But the quietude isn't unsettling—instead, it seeps into our heart and stays there long after we have left this 'wonder of the world'.





HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

The spiritual gurus may go on about how futile it is to dwell in the past. But the past is where history is made, and factors that influence our lives today took shape. The Mahabharata Research Foundation, in collaboration with the India Innovation Labs, has worked out a 3D application software E3IT (engage, educate, entertain, immerse

and transform) that enables users to recreate history as it existed 500 years ago and witness it in real-time today. To execute the application, users need to wear a pair of 3D glasses fitted with a camera. As the user sees through the 3D glasses, hand gestures are captured by the camera on the console and transmitted wirelessly to the computer where the program is

stored. The program inserts artificial information in real time and presents it to users as an information layer on top of the realworld view. The makers have already created Digital Hampi, a public private non-profit project, where the application has been employed to not only help users see the ruins, but monuments that were present then and were broken later.

A CITY LOOKS BACK...

Though Mumbai is more renowned for its chaotic urban sprawl than towering colonial structures, it's hard to think of the city without conjuring up vintage postcards of Rajabhai Clock Towers, the Old Secretariat Building, or Mumbai University. The man who designed them, renowned British architect Sir Gilbert Scott, was as brilliant as the edifices he built. As the world celebrates his 200th birth anniversary, Mumbai too pays a touching homage: a month-long exhibition on Scott's works and life are



on at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalaya. The exhibition, which will end on 12 August, is hosted by the museum authorities in collaboration with the descendants of Premchand Roychand, a stockbroker who funded the construction of the Rajabhai Towers. Archival information reveals that Scott, who designed over 800 structures in Britain including the Albert Memorial, never visited Mumbai and worked on the blueprints at his London office.



River of faith

We may have rendered her brown with our grime and disregard, but the River Ganga will remain an undiminished symbol of purity for generations to come. We found a gem of a poem dedicated to India's most sacred river in *Hymns to the Goddess* (1913), translated by British Orientalist John Woodroffe (who often wrote under the pseudonym Arthur Avalon)

O Mother Ganga! Co-wife with the daughter of Himalaya,
Thou art the necklace on the dress of the Earth,
and the banner staff whereby one ascends to Heaven.

O Bhāgīrathī! I pray to Thee.
May my body perish after it has lived on Thy banks,
after it has drunk Thy pure water
and swung on Thy waves.
And has remembered Thy name and cast looks on Thee.

O Mother Gangā! O deliverer from Hell!
Even a bird living in the hollow of a tree growing
on Thy bank, even a fish or a tortoise living in Thy waters
are greater than a King worshipped by
his enemies' wives,
made afraid by the sound of the bells
on the necks of his maddened
elephants.

Not even a bull or a bird or a horse,
nor a serpent nor an elephant,
suffer the pains of rebirth and re-death
If they live at Kāśī on Thy holy banks.
Better off are they than even a Raja liv-
ing elsewhere,
fanned though he be with the *couris* of
courtezans,
Whose ever moving golden wristlets
sweetly tinkle.

O our Supreme Lady Bhāgīrathī!
O wanderer in the three regions!
When shall it be that I shall be fanned
by the hands of heavenly women with their beautiful *couris*?
When, too, shall I be happy enough to see my body
pecked by crows, devoured by dogs,
drawn along the earth by jackals.

Carried by Thy currents, tossed upon Thy banks,
and borne by Thy waters to and fro!

May the daughter of Jahnu be ever victorious
and protect us,
She who is like the fresh fibrous stem

of the lotus-like feet of Visnu
like a garland of jasmine flowers on the head of Śiva,
like the banner of victory of Laksmi
presiding over liberation,
She who cleanses us of the stain of sin
arising from the Kaliyuga.

May Thy sacred water be pure for my daily bathing,
Thy water covered with leaves of palm and *tamāla*,
of *Sāla* and pine, with all their creepers
on which play no rays of the Sun.
White and brilliant, like the conch,
the Moon, and the water-lily,

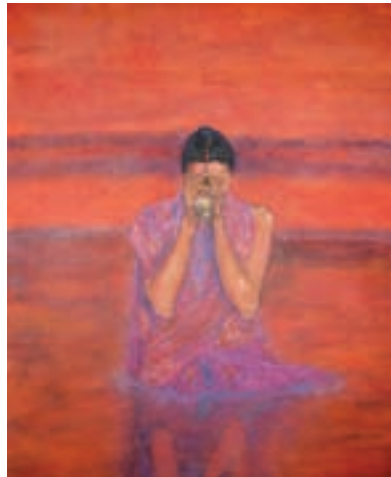
stirred by the rising breasts of the
wives
of the Gandharvas, Devas, Siddhas,
and Kinnaras,
what time they bathe therein.

May the water of Gangā, who ever
charms, sanctify us;
She who has fallen from the feet of the
enemy of Mura,
Who wanders upon the head of the
enemy of Tripurā,
The Destructress of sins.

May the auspicious water of Gangā
ever purify us;
The Destructress of sins, the great en-
emy of sins,
adorned with waves, wandering in the
mountains,

piercing through the caverns of the Lord of mountains
with roaring sounds.
stealer of the dust from the feet of Lord Hari.

Whosoever at early dawn,
having cleansed his body
And purified his mind
of all uncleanness arising from the sinful Kaliyuga,
reads this hymn to Gangā composed of eight verses,
shall never fall into the ocean of the world again,
but shall attain liberation.



Firmly grounded

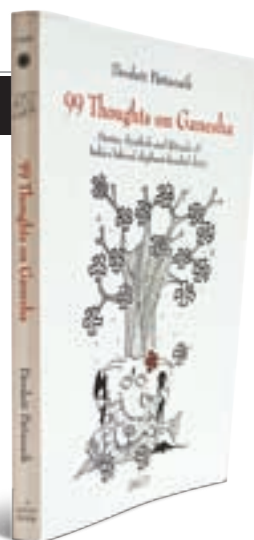
In the pursuit of being human, we have our brain to thank. It makes us different from animals in the way that we can imagine a better world and, as reality reflects today, a world lot worse. But to fight our animal instincts, it takes immense intellectual means. So are we humans after all, or are we animals still? By creating a half-human-half-animal child, Shiva and Parvati draw our attention to our human as well as animal side. Ganesha, Ganapati, Lambodra, Ekdanta, Gajanana, Vikata, Vakratunda, Mahodra, Vighnaraja. He has many names. And He “alone allows His form to be reshaped, re-imagined and recreated as devotees will it,” as **Devdutt Pattanaik** tells us in **99 THOUGHTS ON GANESHA** (Jaico Books; ₹ 195; 221 pages). His elephant head signifies harnessing of the raw animal power, his pot-belly affluence and repose, and the curved trunk the material world if turned to the left (where the heart is) and spirituality if turned to the right (even Shiva who signifies renunciation,

stands on his right foot). The *parshu* (axe) and the *pasha* (noose) He holds in his hands signify analysis (breaking things into fundamentals before crediting them for what they are) and synthesis (binding them back into substance of relevance). Like the symbols, there are a million theories and tales of His origin, His family and places of worship. What stays unchanged is why everyone across the country doesn’t start anything new without Ganapati. With these tales from the *Rig Veda*, the *Purana* and the *Upanishad*, Pattanaik also acquaints us with words we take for granted: Shri, Brahman, Swastika and Omkar. This book will deepen every devotee’s sentiment for the God.

—Meeta Bhatti

FROM THE BOOK

Ganapati is a title that appears in the *Rig Veda*, the oldest and most sacred of the Hindu scriptures. By the most conservative estimate, *Rig Veda* was composed around 1500 BC, around the time the pyramids were being built in Egypt. Ganapati means the chief of the ganas. The word *gana* has many meanings. It can mean a tribe, a community, or a committee. It can also mean followers or companions. It also refers to a specific sound composed of three syllables. Ganapati thus means a leader, as well as a master of sounds. Ganapati means the same as Ganesha, but the title Ganesha is not found in Vedic literature. It is not even found in the epic *Mahabharata*, which reached its final form around 300 AD. In fact, the word Ganesha appears only in Pranic texts, which started being written 2,000 years after the *Rig Veda*, around 500 AD. Thus the original Ganapati was not quite the elephant-headed Ganesha we know today; it was a highly revered idea associated with a wise leader or a great teacher.



Out of the closet

Grappling with the infidelity of your spouse is painful enough. Making it harder for Pooja Kapoor, a successful caterer, is the fact that Rahul, a high-flying banker, has given his heart to a young Muslim man, Atif. This forces the entire family, including their son Ajay, to recalibrate their definitions of right, wrong, morality, acceptability,

sin and redemption. An intriguing premise by author-columnist-filmmaker **Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla**, made even more magnetic by his lyrical

prose inspired by Sufi poetry, Hindu culture and mythology. Indeed, **THE EXILES** (HarperCollins; ₹ 350; 406 pages) is the kind of book you engage with on so many levels—the plot itself, with its arresting characters; the deeper questions it throws up about our own fragile truths, sexual politics and gender orientation; and, most of all, the remarkable telling of it all. Sensitive, searing, sensual and always compassionate, Dhalla transports us to the crossroads of faith and fealty, duty and desire—and then shows us the way home, to the heart.

—Arati Rajan Menon



DID YOU KNOW?

The *Exiles* has been released in the US under the name, *The Two Krishnas*.



Silent scream

For her debut novel, **Nayana Currimbhoj** tries to meld three classic genres—coming of age, romance and murder—into one juicy pot-boiler with **MISS TIMMINS' SCHOOL FOR GIRLS** (HarperCollins; ₹ 399; 496 pages). When conservative Brahmin girl Charu Apte takes up a teaching assignment at the missionary school, nestled in a mountain town, she discovers a parallel universe: the British Colonial zeitgeist; the 70s triple whammy of rock-n-roll-drugs-free love; and the secrets that come part and

YOU
MAY
ALSO
LIKE

True Murder by **Yaba Badoe** (Jonathon Cape; 272 pages): This British-Ghanaian writer's debut novel tells of a dark childhood in a boarding school in seaside Devon.

parcel with such an institution. Even as she dabbles in delights both licit and otherwise, with fellow teacher Moira Prince, murder strikes, transforming the cadence of the book from a slow and lazy rhythm to a strident beat. Mood is Currimbhoj's forte as a writer and she uses it to great effect. Unfortunately, there are times when her penchant for description gets in the way of the progression of the plot. Still, Currimbhoj's fine character development ensures that we stay the course.

—Arati Rajan Menon

Woman in arms

Dis trust and discord were not the only legacies of the bitter Hundred Years' War fought between the British and French in the 15th century. From the crucible of that conflict emerged an unlikely icon, Maid of Orleans Jeanne D'Arc—her name commonly anglicised to Joan of Arc—who went on to be canonised as a Catholic saint and French national heroine. **THE MAID** (Bloomsbury; ₹ 599; 383 pages) by **Kimberly Cutter** traces the seven-year journey of the young 'Jehanne' (the spelling in local dialect) from an introverted 12 year-old schoolgirl who heard divine voices impelling her to recover her homeland to the virgin-warrior who led the French army through a series of battles and was finally burned at the

OTHER TAKES

- *The Maid of Orleans*, a poem by Voltaire
- *Giovanna d'Arco*, an opera by Verdi
- *Saint Joan*, a play by George Bernard Shaw
- *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, a book by Mark Twain
- *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, a play by Bertolt Brecht
- *The Maid of Orleans*, an opera by Tchaikovsky

stake at the age of 19 by the English. Despite the vivid accounts of each battle, Cutter never lets us forget the girl inside the armour fighting demons both within and without; a brave girl who dared to escape from her violent father and convince thousands of battle-weary warriors to follow her; a lonely girl trying to reconcile her spiritual and national calling with the demands of adolescence. The first-person snippets interwoven with the main narrative only serve to heighten our understanding of this fragile child-woman and intensify our empathy towards her. This is an absorbing insight into an extraordinary life. And it comes as little surprise that it will soon be made into a major motion picture. But who will play Jehanne?

—Arati Rajan Menon



HOT OFF THE PRESS

The woman who with her debut novel *Fear of Flying* encouraged women of the 1970s to ride their sexual desires with pride and passion, is now back with another scorcher of a book. At 69, Erica Jong is ruffling more than a few prudish feathers again with an anthology that examines contemporary feminine sexuality. Edited by Jong, *Sugar in My Bowl: Real Women Write About Real Sex* has voices of writers from the age of 30 (including her daughter Molly Jong-Fast) to 80. An interesting sidelight—while putting the book together, Jong stumbled onto a precious observation: "Older women are much raunchier than young women today."

Happy endings

There's much to rejoice in death, says Tao

When Lao Tzū [6th century BC Chinese philosopher] died, emperor Ch'in Shih went to mourn. He uttered three yells and departed. A disciple asked him, saying: "Were you not our Master's friend?"

"I was," replied Ch'in Shih. "And if so, do you consider that a sufficient expression of grief at his loss?" added the disciple. "I do," said Ch'in Shih. "I had believed him to be the man of all men, but now I know that he was not. When I went in to mourn, I found old persons weeping as if for their children, young ones wailing as if for their mothers. And for him to have gained the attachment of those people in this way, he too must have uttered words which should not have been spoken, and dropped tears which should not have been shed, thus violating eternal principles, increasing the sum of human emotion, and forgetting the source from which his own life was received. The ancients called such emotions the trammels of mortality. The Master came, because it was his time to be born; he went, because it was his time to die. For those who accept the phenomenon of birth and death in this sense, lamentation and sorrow have no place. The ancients spoke of death as of God cutting down a man suspended in the air. The fuel is consumed, but the fire may be transmitted, and we know not that it comes to an end. To have attained the human form must be always a source of joy. And then, to undergo countless transitions, with only the infinite to look forward to—what incomparable bliss is that! Therefore it is that the truly wise rejoice in that which can never be lost, but endures always."



To have attained the
human form must be
always a source of joy.
To undergo countless
transitions, with only the
infinite to look forward
to—what incomparable
bliss is that!

A son must go whithersoever his parents bid him. Nature is no other than a man's parents. If she bid me die quickly, and I demur, then I am an unfilial son. She can do me no wrong. Tao gives me this form, this toil in manhood, this repose in old age, this rest in death. And surely that which is such a kind arbiter of my life is the best arbiter of my death. The universe is the smelting-pot, and God is the caster. I shall go whithersoever I am sent, to wake unconscious of the past, as a man wakes from a dreamless sleep.

Chuang Tzū [4th century BC Chinese philosopher] one day saw an empty skull, bleached, but still preserving its shape. Striking it with his riding-whip, he said: "Wert thou once some ambitious citizen whose inordinate yearnings brought him to this pass? Some statesman who plunged his country into ruin and perished in the fray? Some wretch who left behind him a legacy of shame? Some beggar who died in the pangs of hunger and cold? Or didst thou reach this state by the natural course of old age?"

When he had finished speaking, he took the skull and, placing it under his head as a pillow, went to sleep. In the night he dreamt that the skull appeared to him and said: "You speak well, sir; but all you say has reference to the life of mortals, and to mortal troubles. In death there are none of these. Would you like to hear about death? Chuang Tzū having replied in the affirmative, the skull began: "In death there is no sovereign above, and no subject below. The workings of the four seasons are unknown. Our existences are bounded only by eternity. The happiness of a king among men cannot exceed that which we enjoy."

Chuang Tzū, however, was not convinced, and said: "Were I to prevail upon God to allow your body to be born again, and your bones and flesh to be renewed, so that you could return to your parents, to your wife, and to the friends of your youth, would you be willing?" At this the skull opened its eyes wide and knitted its brows and said: "How should I cast aside happiness greater than that of a king, and mingle once again in the toils and troubles of mortality?"

Excerpted from Musings of a Chinese Mystic. Published in 1906, the book is a compilation of texts featuring the Taoist sage Chuang Tzu. It was authored by Lionel Giles, an eminent Victorian scholar

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Though countless films have been inspired by Shakespeare's great tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, one has always played more vividly on our minds than the others: 1961 cult classic *Westside Story*. A musical adaptation of a Broadway show with the same name, the movie, directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, is set in the bustling streets of New York in 1957. The plot draws its palpitations from the bristling tension between a white American gang, the Jets, led by Riff Lorton (Russ Tamblyn), and a rival clutch of Puerto Rican immigrants, the Sharks, shepherded by Bernano Nunez (George Chakiris). As the gangs try to outdo each other in their respective discharge of menace and mayhem, the resultant bloodfest plays out on the streets of Manhattan. Their friction runs parallel

to a poignant love story—that of Lorton's best friend and Man Friday Tony Wycek (Richard Beymer) and Bernando's sister Maria (Natalie Wood). Sadly, all good things come to an end; some more tragic than we are prepared for. The series of casualties in the second half of the movie builds to a bullet-riddled climax in which Wycek dies in Maria's arms. *Westside Story* triggered exclamatory reviews when it was released—mainly for its similarity with the bard's noted work and for its songs, *I feel pretty*, *Maria* and *The rumble*. The film won 10 Academy Awards including one for Best Picture. More highbrow praise rolled in when the United States Library of Congress anointed it the best “culturally significant” film of the year for its gut-wrenching portrayal of gang wars in America.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: AUGUST 1961

- On 4 August, Barack Obama, the 44th and current president of the United States, was born.
- On 6 August, Soviet cosmonaut Gherman Titov achieved the distinction of being the second human to spend more than one day in space.
- On 15 August, Conrad Schuman, an East German border guard, defected to the West by jumping over the barbed-wire fence that soon went on to become the Berlin Wall.
- On 21 August, the Indian Institute of Technology inaugurated its Delhi chapter.

alpha boomer

n. A person who belongs to the oldest segment of the baby boom generation and has significant disposable income.

Example: While the 18-34 demographic remains the most coveted among advertisers—get a consumer young, goes the thinking, and you get them for life—it is actually the 55-64 year-old demo, the so-called **alpha boomers**, that are the most dominant. Consider: alpha boomers are the fastest-growing demographic in the nation. They make up half the population and spend more money on goods and services—nearly \$ 2 trillion—than any other age group.

—Maureen Callahan, “Don’t trust anyone over 50”,
New York Post, 22 January 2011

SoHo effect

n. When the artists who made a neighbourhood cool and exciting are forced to move out because they cannot afford the rents after the area becomes gentrified.

Example: Mr. Jones explained that this cycle of gentrification has become known as the **SoHo effect**. “It’s when artists move into a neighbourhood and they start to stage events and street performances. Before you know it they’ve enlivened neighbourhoods to the extent that property values rise and, invariably, because they’re renters rather than owners, they get priced out of the places that they’ve helped to create.”

—Tim Alamenciak, “Building the business of art”,
The Globe and Mail, 3 June 2011

champagne problem

n. A choice between two positive or ideal things; a problem that actually demonstrates one’s good fortune.

Example: Mr. Whannell said: “I call it our Hollywood trial by fire. I used to read all those books where directors are complaining about the studios, and I remember thinking, ‘That’s a **champagne problem** to have.’ Then you live through it, and you say, ‘Okay, now I know what they were talking about.’”

—Charles McGrath in The New York Times, 20 March 2011

“Any man who reads too much and uses his own brain too little falls into lazy habits of thinking.”

—Albert Einstein

QUADDING

pp. Riding a four-wheel all-terrain vehicle (a.k.a. a quad or a quad bike).

Example: “Debris gets piled up on their engines or exhaust systems and it heats up then falls off and causes wild fires. We’re asking individuals, as they’re **quadding**, to check their vehicles and keep them clean and clear of debris.”

—Dave Dormer, “Officials try to head off ATV tragedies”, Calgary Sun,
13 May 2011

TWIMMOLATION

n. The destruction of a person’s career or reputation caused by lewd or insensitive Twitter posts.

Example: **Twimmolation** is suicide by Twitter. Shashi Tharoor and Lalit Modi are its leading practitioners. Its latest was comedian Gilbert Gottfried who got fired by an insurance company for making insensitive jokes about Japan where it does 75 per cent of its business.

—Priyanka Sood and Nishat Bari,
“Twimmolation”,
India Today, 19 March 2011

nocturnist

n. A physician who cares for other doctors’ patients overnight.

Example: To bridge the chasm between the day and night shifts, hospitals from Syracuse to Seattle are hiring a new breed of subspecialist called a **nocturnist**—an experienced doctor who works overnight taking care of patients outside the emergency room.

—Sandra G Boodman,
“Shifting the risks at night”,
The Washington Post, 7 June 2011

“ In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true.

—Buddha

chartjunk

n. Chart elements that serve no purpose or hinder understanding of the chart's data. Also: chart junk.

Example: The classic example is the use of dot-headed figures to convey quantities; this clutters up the chart without adding any information, and is often used to convey an impression that turns out to be false when you look behind the data. So my immediate reaction whenever I see a publication with a lot of **chartjunk** is to assume that the author is trying to put something over on us.

—Paul Krugman, “Chartjunk,” The New York Times, 12 May 2011

INTACTIVIST

n. An activist who supports or lobbies for laws that ban infant circumcisions.

Example: Perhaps it's easier for these so-called **intactivists** to get attention at the local level. Hey, City Hall spent months talking about Happy Meal toys so why not? Both the San Francisco and Santa Monica measures would make circumcising any male under the age of 18 illegal, even for religious reasons.

—Heather Knight, “San Francisco circumcision ban replicated in Santa Monica,” San Francisco Chronicle, 29 May 2011

BUZZ

WATER WORKS

As we age, we feel a little more dismayed each day at our body's waning mobility, all thanks to our diminishing muscle strength and stiffening joints. Fitness experts now recommend aqua exercises to counter elderly mobility problems. Aqua exercise programmes have a wide range of advantages: the water takes the pressure off the joints; there is no risk of injuries; it's easier to monitor heart rate in a pool; and the natural buoyancy of water does wonders for your respiratory system. As the concept is still new in India, there aren't too many fitness centres that offer aqua exercise programmes. If you are in Bengaluru, however, you could check out Super Curves. On its list are aqualates (a mix of water exercise and Pilates), aqua tai-chi, aqua kickboxing and more. There are certified trainers to put you through the paces, or you could ask for a personal trainer to customise programmes to match your special requirements. Check out www.supercurves.in; email info.supercurves@gmail.com; or call (0) 9845539297.



“Every time you help someone, you end up helping yourself more”

Indira Gulati, 76, for starting a school for special children



Her second-born brought turmoil in **Indira Gulati's** life. When she was three months old, Sonia (*left, in pic above*) had a fall that affected her physical and mental growth. The retina of her eye was damaged and she had to undergo brain surgery at the age of five months. It was this life experience and the journey of bringing up her daughter and trying to educate her that helped Gulati understand the difficulties special children and their parents face. The paucity of schools for them and the difficulty of getting them admission in public schools inspired her to find a solution. “Some teachers are rude to handicapped children,” she says recalling how Sonia was frightened of the idea of going to school because kids used to tease her and there was no one to control their behaviour. After changing various schools, at the age of 12, Sonia went to Balwant Rai Mehta Vidya Bhawan, an

integrated school in Delhi. Gulati started helping out in the school. She found the experience so enriching that at 50 she pursued a course in teaching severely handicapped children. Later, as she worked with Sahan, a model school for severely challenged children and adults, from 1989 to 1995, she believes she became more aware of the pleasure of ‘giving’ and ‘sharing’. Along with teaching these children new skills, she even taught them positivity and perseverance. The desire to foster their physical, intellectual and creative growth made Gulati start Manzil, a non-government organisation for underprivileged children, in 1996. To save parents running from pillar to post, she enrolled both special children and their siblings in the same school at a slum dwelling in Kotlamubarakpur in the capital city, where Sonia also teaches—she is 48 now.

—Text & photograph by Anju Mohan

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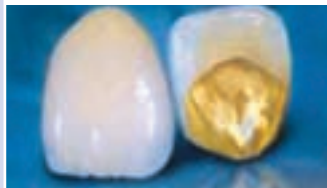
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