

*harmony*

JANUARY 2016 ₹ 40

# celebrate age

*The magazine for silver citizens*

PUNE'S  
RTI CRUSADER  
VIJAY KUMBHAR

REMEMBERING  
NANI PALKHIVALA

LEGACY OF  
VINTAGE SARIS

SHANGHAI  
SHENANIGANS

HOT SHOT  
**GEET  
SETHI**



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# Beyond boundaries

Human connection can trump every challenge, bridge every chasm. A beautiful article in *The New York Times*, titled "A Culture Gap the Size of an Ocean, Bridged by Facebook", drives home this truth. Writer Lori Ayotte tells us how her father, a 75 year-old Italian-American mail carrier, asked her to set up a Facebook account for him—to keep in contact with a 26 year-old Saudi Arabian woman he had got to know on his mail route. Remarkably, two people with such a generational and cultural chasm between them found common ground, tenuously but irrevocably. And when she had to return to her country, the self-confessed 'digitally challenged' silver turned to technology to keep the connection alive.

In a world so divided where new walls of mistrust and hatred are built by the day, such a story serves as balm to the soul. It reminds us of the power of technology to unite people. In fact, Facebook is helping silvers across the globe find forgotten friends and old flames; reach out to kin and kindred souls; and become citizens of the world beyond boundaries. Even more significant, the story shows us that people, in essence, are the same world over; it is the artificial constructs around us that highlight our differences.

As we embark upon a new year, brimming with new opportunities, this is an important lesson to remember. Loneliness is often an inevitable part of the silver experience. But it is up to each one of us whether we walk the path of further isolation or be proactive and explore new avenues. It doesn't have to be complicated—if the digital divide is too wide for you to bridge, explore your neighbourhood, see what the community has to offer, extend yourself beyond your comfort zone.



Dabboo Ratnani

Indeed, that very idea helped catalyse the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run; its latest edition was held at the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon on 29 November. Over 1,200 silvers blazed bright, claiming the streets in a show of spirit and solidarity that warmed many a heart on a cold morning. Our thanks to S K Roongta, former CEO of Steel Authority of India Ltd, and filmmaker Prakash Jha for flagging them off, and Bikanervala Foods Pvt Ltd, BIG 92.7 Fm, BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd, BSES Yamuna Power Ltd, Health Care At Home India Pvt Ltd, OOH Division Hindustan Unilever, Procarm International, Reliance Communication, VLCC Wellness and Widex India Pvt Ltd for their support.

Run or walk, click the mouse or forge a bond, the choice is yours. The world awaits you—step forward and embrace it. Happy New Year!

## A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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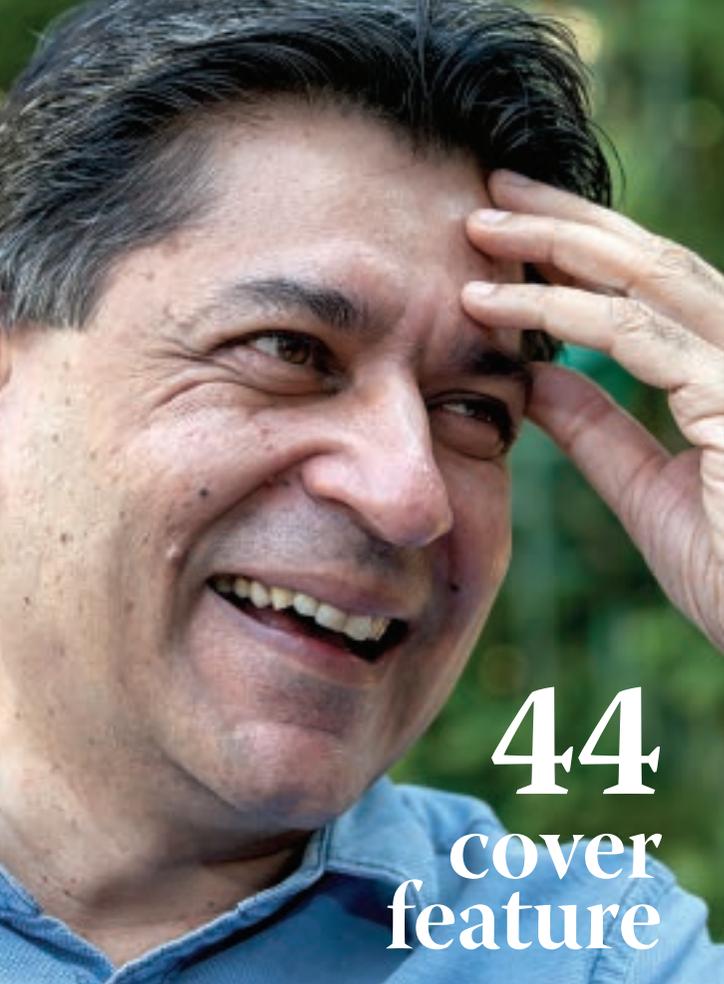
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**WEB EXCLUSIVES** [www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org)



### **GIFT OF GIVING**

*Mita Banerjee in Pune throws a lifeline to people in need*

### **LESSONS FOR LIFE**

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



## **POLICE HELP WILL BE JUST A FEW MINUTES AWAY! UP Government lays foundation for providing the largest Integrated Emergency Response System in the country.**



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# column one

All the people we profile in *Harmony-Celebrate Age* are special. But some bring with them an added element of nostalgia. For many teenagers in the 1980s—I was one—Geet Sethi was nothing short of a rockstar, a dashing Indian who took on the world, and won. To have him on our cover this month is very special. Even more special is the realisation that the one-dimensional sports star we thought we knew has so many layers to him: family man, entrepreneur, thinker and, most significant for India, mentor to our Olympic hopefuls. “I have lived life passionately and with full intensity—and I continue to do so,” he says.

Intensity and commitment are also words that go seamlessly with our legal eagle Vijay Kumbhar who has used the RTI Act to take his crusade against corruption to another level. No matter how powerful his opponent or how tough the fight, he has never shied away.

This issue is indeed an inspiring and exciting one. To herald the new year, we have a bouquet of offerings: a new series of ‘Yoga Rx’ that explores the link between yoga and alternative therapies; silver takeaways on food and family in ‘Heart to Hearth’; financial advice in ‘Money Matters’; informative Q&As with top doctors in ‘Health’; enervating poetry in ‘Free Verse’; and quick bytes on new books in ‘Bookshelf’.

There’s also an invitation to slake your wanderlust in Shanghai, an irresistible blend of the past and future—it’s the first of many wonderful destinations we will take you to this coming year. Happy 2016 from the entire team!

—Arati Rajan Menon

This is in reference to the story titled “On the Road” (‘H People’) in the December 2015 issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. The Delhi government’s announcement to allow odd-even number cars on alternate days from 1 January is impractical. If implemented, it shall lead to several problems, especially for silvers. Transport in Delhi is both expensive and inadequate. There are other ways to curb the infiltration of cars: cars registered after a certain date outside Delhi must not be allowed in; cars over 15 years old should not be allowed to run; and the number of cars a family can have should be restricted to one. The odd-even rule is a violation of Article 19 of the Constitution: “to move freely throughout the territory of India”; it restricts free movement of citizens.

**M Kumar**  
New Delhi

My associates and I run an Mold-generation rejuvenation ashram, an NGO based in Delhi. We work towards enabling silvers to live a joyful and dignified life. We get together weekly and have everyone share their stories, experiences and problems, if there are any, over a cup of chai. The interaction is uplifting, and therefore successful, because it



helps tackle the loneliness that seeps in as age advances.

**Santosh Kaul Ogra**  
New Delhi

Being a silver (I am 70 years old), I run two businesses, travel all over the world and deliver lectures. Reading *Harmony-Celebrate Age* lets me believe there is still space for silvers like us. In addition, the magazine avoids political discourse, which is refreshing.

**P R Ray**  
Kolkata

## CONTRIBUTOR



In ‘Destination’, **Rekha Sarin** writes about the fascinating juxtaposition of history and modernity in Shanghai. A Delhi-based freelance writer and contributing editor, Sarin has been writing for leading Indian magazines and newspapers as well as overseas journals on subjects as varied as travel, culture and interior design. A graduate from the University of Delhi, Sarin qualified with a gold medal from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan School of Journalism, and is the recipient of The Times of India gold medal. An inveterate lover of nature, she is also a professional floral decorator. Her first book, *The Art of Flower Arrangement* (UBS Publishers), was acclaimed. And a more recent book, *Chai: The Experience of Indian Tea* (Niyogi), a large-format book, bagged the prestigious Gourmand World Cookbook Award for the ‘Best Tea Book in the World’. Contact her at [sarinrekha@gmail.com](mailto:sarinrekha@gmail.com).



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NEWSWORTHY

## THE ETERNITY PILL?

A few months ago, we told you in these pages how a common drug used to treat diabetes extended lifespan among rodents. Now, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has green-lighted **a groundbreaking clinical human trial to prove if metformin can extend life up to 120 years**. Set to begin in 2016, the study, titled 'Targeting/Taming Ageing With Metformin (TAME)', will be conducted by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York and supported by the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR). According to media reports, the researchers will recruit older adults in a double-blind, placebo-control test to determine if metformin can delay the onset of multi-morbidities or diseases like cancer, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and cognitive decline—and, consequently, death.

Space is now the final frontier for medicine too.

**A** new expedition to the International Space Station seeks to understand **why astronauts experience conditions usually associated with ageing** in a bid to develop early intervention for all earthlings. The project is led by Professor Richard Hughson from the University of Waterloo in Canada. "We know that astronauts return from space with stiffer arteries and resistance to insulin, conditions affecting many adults as they age," he tells university website *uwaterloo.ca*. "For the first time, we will be able to track exactly how—and why—the body's blood vessels change, and use these findings to potentially improve quality of life and the burden of chronic disease. The International Space Station provides a unique platform to study ageing-related conditions, providing insights that can be used to help understand some of the biggest health issues affecting society." Hughson's research suggests that even though the astronauts remain active in space, the lack of gravity reduces the demands on their body, causing changes in their vascular system. The website reports that for this study, astronauts will provide regular blood samples and undertake ultrasounds while resting and during exercise, before, during and up to one year after flight.

# Star track



**Rapidly silver:** Taiwan has become the world's fastest ageing country this decade, overtaking Japan, the US, Britain and other developed nations. With a total population of 23.4 million, there are 2.86 million people aged 65 and above in the country. This segment is expected to account for over 14 per cent of the population in 2018 and 20 per cent in 2025.

## Bengal moves

Good news from the East—the West Bengal government has announced a host of proposals to enhance the quality of life of silvers. This includes a toll-free helpline to provide assistance to silvers on health, legal issues and security; measures to improve timely pension delivery; possible separate counters at hospitals and ration subsidies; counselling facilities; and training programmes on geriatric care. According to a government spokesperson, a draft has been prepared with all these recommendations and is awaiting a green signal from the state cabinet. We're waiting too.



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## 53

That's the start of middle age according to a survey by about 2,000 Britons by healthcare and insurance company Benenden Health. So much for the notion of midlife crisis striking after 40! The shift in perception has been attributed to better quality of life and a greater emphasis on active and healthier living.



**SILVER ASSETS: A NEW SURVEY BY BRITISH THINK TANK RESOLUTION FOUNDATION REVEALS THAT SILVERS ARE WEALTHIER THAN PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 45. HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY PEOPLE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 65-74 CONTROL OVER 19 PER CENT OF THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH WHILE THE 55-64 AGE BRACKET HOLDS 29 PER CENT. THIS IS DESPITE THE FACT THAT UNDER-45 HOUSEHOLDS COMPRISE THE LARGEST DEMOGRAPHIC.**



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## Longevity, and later

**A**sia's rapid rate of ageing requires urgent action. That's the conclusion of a new World Bank report titled *Live Long and Prosper: Ageing in East Asia and Pacific*, which covers countries across the economic spectrum in the region, from the affluent Japan and South Korea to the poor (and younger) Cambodia and Laos. Here are some highlights:

- Asian countries are ageing faster than has been seen anywhere else in the world.
- By 2040, the ageing populations could shrink the working-age population by over 15 per cent in South Korea and over 10 per cent in China, Japan and Thailand, according to the report. In China, for instance, that would mean a net loss of 90 million workers.
- Countries like China, Thailand and Vietnam should remove incentives in pension systems that have encouraged some workers to retire too early.
- Countries with relatively young populations should not put in place pension systems that will

grow unaffordable in the future.

- More women in the region should be encouraged to join the labour force, particularly through childcare reforms.
- Policymakers in the region must be proactive in shaping responses that increase the chances for healthy and productive ageing.
- The need is to develop societies in which the compact between generations is fair and realises people's potential at all ages.

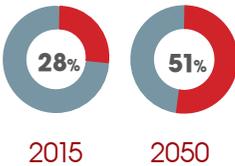
"This region, which has always thought of itself quite rightly as being youthful and dynamic, is now poised to age faster than any other region in history," Sudhir Shetty, the World Bank's East Asia and Pacific chief economist, tells media. "Most middle-income countries in this region will go from being relatively young societies to relatively old ones in a period of 20 to 25 years, which is a transition that took 50 to 100 years in most of the rich countries in the world." Read the entire report at

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23133/9781464804694.pdf>

### Financial sustainability



**Average age of labour market exit in 2014**  
**Definition:** Average age of retirement across OECD countries



**Old age dependency ratio**  
**Definition:** ratio of older dependents (people older than 64) to the working age population (aged 15-64)



**Public spending on old age and survivors benefits**  
 As a percentage of GDP

### Income adequacy

12.6%



**Poverty rate for over 65s**  
**Definition:** share of people below 50% of the median income



87%

**Income of people over 65**  
**Definition:** average income of people over 65 as a share of average population income

### Net replacement rates

Proportion of net income that is maintained after job loss/retirement

74.5%



Low earner

63%



Average earner

95%



Gap of five-year break of unemployment

# The pension PINCH

**SILVERS ACROSS THE WORLD** will inevitably feel the pension pinch. That's the assessment of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in the 2015 edition of *Pensions at a Glance*. Here are some highlights of the report, which covers the pension systems of the 34 OECD states as well as Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and South Africa:

- Today's pensioners have higher standards of living than ever before.
- However, owing to continued uncertainty in the financial markets and increasingly ageing populations, pensions in future will be much less generous than today with pensioner poverty being a real risk.
- Retirement ages have risen substantially, with retirement at 67 becoming the new 65 in many countries. Several countries are planning to move towards 70, including the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom.
- Employment rates of people aged 55 to 64 years have increased sharply in many countries: from 45 per cent to 66 per cent in Germany, from 31 per cent to 46 per cent in Italy, and from 52 per cent to 57 per cent on average across the OECD.
- However, unemployment rates remain very high in many countries, as do long-term unemployment rates among older workers.
- Time out of work means time out of the pension system in some countries. As a result, many more people will receive lower pensions when they retire.
- Some countries need to re-assess their safety nets for pensioners who have not contributed enough for a minimum pension. Across the OECD, these provide 22 per cent of average earnings on average, ranging from 6 per cent in Korea to 40 per cent in New Zealand.
- Some OECD countries, such as Chile, Korea, Mexico, Turkey and the US, combine relatively high risk of pensioner poverty and low benefits, and should consider increasing the value of safety-net payments.
- Pension funds and life insurers may go on to seek higher yields and pursue riskier investment strategies that could ultimately undermine their solvency.

"Most governments have made important efforts to bring public pension systems on a sustainable path; while these are steps in the right direction, there is now a growing risk in some countries that future pensions will not be sufficient," Angel Gurría, secretary-general, OECD, tells media. "The long-term challenge is to design policies today that are flexible enough to adapt to the uncertainties of tomorrow's world of work, while ensuring adequate living standards for retirees." Read the entire report at [www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-pensions-at-a-glance-19991363.htm](http://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-pensions-at-a-glance-19991363.htm)

## FIVE FOR LIFE

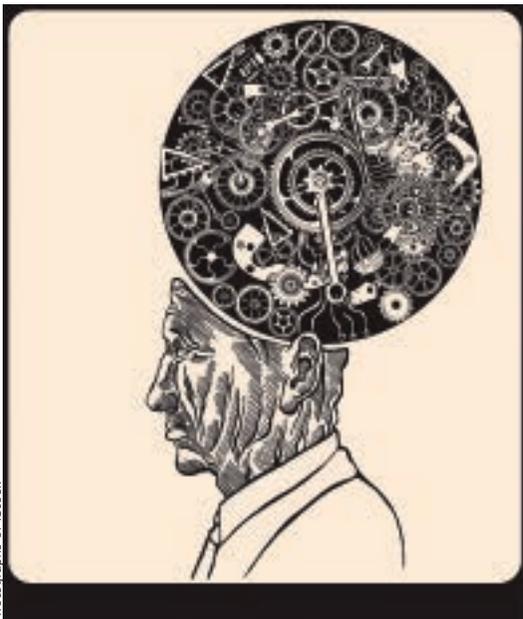
Start counting. Scientists at Stanford University in California have identified five genes that hold the key to longevity. According to their study for journal *PLOS Genetics*, these include the Alzheimer's gene, ApoE, which is related to decreased longevity; a heart disease gene connected to your cells' lifespan; the blood type gene, especially O, which is related to overall better health; the immune system's HLA gene, which is connected to successful transplants; and a gene connected to neurological diseases that has been linked to increased longevity in fruit flies. Team leader Stuart Kim will now perform more tests to figure out the exact role each gene plays in lengthening the human lifespan.

# Fret FACTOR

**W**orrywarts beware—fretting about ageing can actually increase your risk of Alzheimer's. Having established that mental negativity about ageing could actually lead to physical symptoms of dementia, scientists at the Yale School of Public Health recom-

mend that we aggressively combat ageism by demolishing stereotypes and promoting a positive self-image among silvers. Their study of healthy, dementia-free subjects revealed that those who tended to worry about ageing showed a greater decline in the area of the brain crucial to memory and

had a significantly greater number of plaques and tangles, key risk factors for Alzheimer's. "We believe it is the stress generated by negative beliefs about ageing that individuals sometimes internalise from society that can result in pathological brain changes," lead researcher Becca Levy tells university website *news.yale.edu*. "Although the findings are concerning, it is encouraging to realise that these negative beliefs about ageing can be mitigated and positive beliefs about ageing can be reinforced, so that the adverse impact is not inevitable."



Photographs of iStock



## Grey matters

**AMERICANS WANT** a seasoned commander in chief aboard Air Force One. According to the McClatchy-Marist Poll, a national public opinion poll, 71 per cent of US voters prefer older candidates to serve as president. And only 24 per cent believe electing an older president is a risk owing to health factors. These figures hold true regardless of party affiliation, age, race, gender, level of education, income, or place of residence. "People see the age of a candidate that is 65 and older as a benefit based on their experience and wisdom," Lee Miringoff, director of the Marist Institute of Public Opinion, tells website *foxbusiness.com*. "Donald Trump, Carson, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are four of the oldest candidates who are getting the most support at this point so I think that is interesting at a time when we are hearing that the era of the Baby Boomers is coming to an end and the Millennials are taking over. As far as popularity and support right now for these candidates, age doesn't seem to be a hindrance. If anything it seems to be a boost." As the website tells us, if elected president, Hillary Clinton will be 69 years old, Sanders 75, Trump 70 and Carson 65 on inauguration day in 2017.

Breakfast se pehle...



Good Knight  
**GOOD  
HABIT  
HAI**

# A cat's life

**They may not have nine**—but cats live their one life longer than dogs. **The solitary nature of the cat aids longevity as it cuts their odds of catching disease**, according to researchers at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, USA.

Thus, they live an average age of 15 years, compared to 12 for dogs. “There is an evolutionary theory of ageing that suggests that things live longer in safe conditions,” lion trainer turned biologist (and study leader) Dr Steve Austad, tells London newspaper *Daily Mail*. “Think of cats’ solitary ways. Unlike dogs, which are pack animals, they live at low density and that tends to

prevent them from catching infectious diseases. But it’s not just a cat’s independence that gives it an advantage. They also have more weaponry to protect them from attack. While dogs boast a fearsome set of teeth, cats also have sharp claws and tremendous agility. Dogs’ lives may also have been shortened by the creation of exotic breeds, which can be more prone to ill-health. We haven’t changed cats nearly as much as we’ve changed dogs.”



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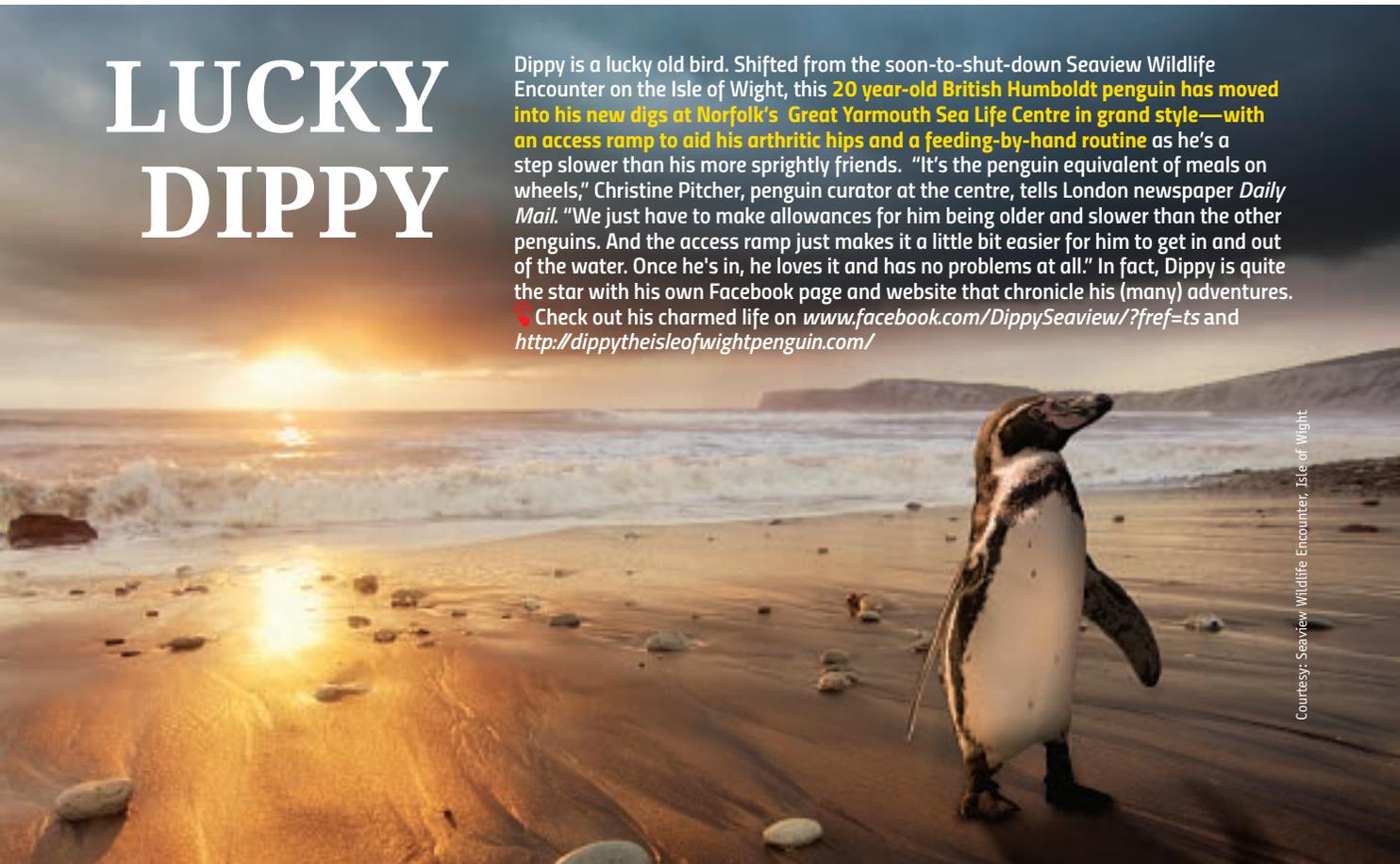
## Big problem

**S**ize can have a flipside. According to a combined team from the University of Glasgow and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, **larger animals among the same species age faster and die sooner because their genes are prone to damage and disease**. Their study of the DNA of house sparrows on the remote Norwegian island of Leka revealed that the larger the bird, the shorter their telomeres—these are the caps found on the end of the chromosomes that protect the genes from degeneration. In

humans, too, shorter telomeres are linked to faster ageing and disease. In their study, published in journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, co-author Pat Monaghan of the University of Glasgow says, “Growing a bigger body means that cells have to divide more. As a result, telomeres become eroded faster and cells and tissues function less well. The reason why the bigger individuals have shorter telomeres might also be related to increased DNA damage owing to growing faster. Being big can have advantages, of course, but this study shows that it can also have costs.”

# LUCKY DIPPY

Dippy is a lucky old bird. Shifted from the soon-to-shut-down Seaview Wildlife Encounter on the Isle of Wight, this **20 year-old British Humboldt penguin has moved into his new digs at Norfolk's Great Yarmouth Sea Life Centre in grand style—with an access ramp to aid his arthritic hips and a feeding-by-hand routine** as he's a step slower than his more sprightly friends. “It's the penguin equivalent of meals on wheels,” Christine Pitcher, penguin curator at the centre, tells London newspaper *Daily Mail*. “We just have to make allowances for him being older and slower than the other penguins. And the access ramp just makes it a little bit easier for him to get in and out of the water. Once he's in, he loves it and has no problems at all.” In fact, Dippy is quite the star with his own Facebook page and website that chronicle his (many) adventures. Check out his charmed life on [www.facebook.com/DippySeaview/?fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/DippySeaview/?fref=ts) and <http://dippytheisleofwightpenguin.com/>



Courtesy: Seaview Wildlife Encounter, Isle of Wight



### IN SHORT

**Available for:** Android 4.0 and up, iOS 7.0 or later

**What it does:** If your day starts with reading the news, this app is a must on your device. It features news from across the globe in 60 words or less. News items are picked up from media houses like *The Hindu*, *Hindustan Times*, *India Today*, *The Economic Times* and Reuters, and featured along with images. In short, now you just need to spend a few minutes to learn what's going on in the world.

**After installation:** You will find the latest news cards with the relevant picture and the headline on top. You can flip the card to read the full article and scroll down for more news. The app also provides the option to read the same type/genre of stories. You can also share news items on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, email and others. The settings option on the top right lets you turn notifications on or off, go to high definition mode or switch the app to night mode. From the left menu you can choose categories of news, such as politics, sports, tech, entertainment, international, business, miscellaneous, and 'hatke', which features offbeat stories. The app also lets you navigate unread stories that you may have missed and bookmark a story. The best part: it is advertisement-free.

Researchers from the University of Notre Dame's Interdisciplinary Centre for Network Science and Applications (iCeNSA) in Indiana, USA, have developed a new app called eSeniorCare to help silvers in independent living communities create a 'personalised socio-ecological construct' around themselves. In essence, it allows silvers to track a variety of health goals and aims to enhance their physical and mental fitness while enabling constant access to a health worker through texts and voice recordings.

### HEALTHIFYME

**Available for:** Varies with device for Android; iOS 7.1 or later

**What it does:** Facing problems with your calorie counting app as it doesn't recognise Indian food? Here is a solution. HealthifyMe is an app that counts the calories in an Indian diet with a comprehensive database of 20,000 Indian food items. It also rewards you points when you complete healthy activities. The app has partnered with organisations like Manipal Hospitals, Apollo Hospitals, Medanta - The Medicity and Unilever to give users expert advice from various regions of the country. However, guidance from trainers and nutritionists is available only when you upgrade to a paid plan.



**After installation:** Once you have downloaded the app, it asks you to set up your profile where you provide basic details like height, weight, age and lifestyle. Once you complete your profile, the app allots you a daily quota of calories to consume. You can track the amount of calories you have already consumed and measure it against the calorie count allotted to you. The app is user-friendly and shows you each subsequent step when you scroll down. The first step to become healthy, according to the app, is to track the last meal you ate—breakfast, lunch or dinner. The second step is to set your weight goal. According to your profile, the app automatically shows you if you are underweight or overweight, tells you what your target weight should be, and lets you decide the time to reach the target weight. It also budgets your calorie intake. The third step in the app is to track your exercise, to see how many calories you've burnt. The fourth and last step connects you with a coach to ensure you reach your goal.



# Our run

Cranking up the heat on a chilly winter morning in the capital, close to 1,200 silvers came out to participate in the 4-km **Harmony Senior Citizens' Run**, one of the five main events at the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon held on 29 November. Flagged off by S K Roongta, former CEO of Steel Authority of India Ltd, and filmmaker Prakash Jha, and cheered by crowds along the route, their determination to go the distance was palpable, their grit admirable, their resolve inspirational.



Photographs by Humayun

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# Mutants vs. malaria

Sounds like a sci-fi movie: Mutant mosquitoes that save the world from the scourge of disease! But, seriously, scientists at the University of California, Irvine, have created **a new breed of mosquitoes that may help eradicate malaria**. As they explain in the online edition of journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the team has used 'gene drive' technology to create a mosquito that can introduce malaria-blocking genes into the insect population, thus eliminating their ability to transmit the disease to humans. What's more, when released into the wild, these mosquitoes will breed with malaria-carrying mosquitoes, passing on the malaria-preventing gene to their offspring. The world is waiting.

The world is waiting



**COCOA RUSH:** On the heels of American chocolate manufacturer Mars Inc announcing a five-year study in collaboration with Harvard University to examine the health benefits of its flavanol-rich cocoa extract CocoaVia (on the shelves since 2010), a host of other chocolate makers, including Barry Callebaut and Mondelez International Inc, are planning to develop cocoa-based capsules and powders.

**OIL ALERT:** Scientists from De Montfort University in Leicester, UK, have warned that vegetable oils such as sunflower or corn can contain toxic chemicals that can increase risk of cancer, dementia and heart disease. They found that cooking in vegetable oil releases a greater quantity of harmful chemicals called aldehydes; meanwhile, using butter, olive oil and lard in the frying pan with coconut oil produced less aldehydes.



# Fighting flu

The India story

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved Fludax, a new flu vaccine with an adjuvant (booster) that helps stimulate the immune system for greater efficacy. The vaccine is aimed at people above 65, who generally have lower immunity and, hence, respond poorly to vaccines. While manufacturer Seqirus gets ready for a rollout in the US market, we speak to Dr Tanu Singh, Consultant—Paediatrics and Infectious Diseases, Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai, on flu vaccine options for silvers in India.

## How prepared is India to deal with flu?

Awareness is much higher now than it was five years ago. After the H1N1 pandemic in 2009, testing has become widespread and the drugs are also more easily available. But more needs to be done; it is important that we put prevention strategies in place.

## What are the target groups for flu vaccination?

There are three target groups: silvers above the age of 65, pregnant women, and children and adults with underlying health problems. People who suffer from lung disease, advanced diabetes, liver disease and cardiac disease or are immune-

compromised can suffer from severe flu and should take the vaccination.

## How is flu vaccination different in India compared to the West?

Countries in the northern or southern hemispheres have a well-defined flu season. For example, in America or Europe, the flu season starts in the month

of October or November and goes on till March. There, the northern hemisphere flu vaccine is marketed in September, based on the strains circulated in the previous six months. In America, everyone above the age of six months is given the vaccine. Meanwhile, in Australia, the flu season is in the summer months and hence patients



Photographs by iStock

# Advantage aspirin

Researchers from Boyce Thompson Institute, Ithaca, New York, and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, say aspirin can also help treat neurodegenerative conditions like dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Huntington's disease. This is owing to the presence of salicylic acid in aspirin; it binds with GAPDH, an enzyme that can cause cell death, and stops it from moving into the nucleus of the cell.

## Prescription for disaster

**Indiscriminately popping pills** can have serious consequences. According to a new study by researchers from Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences, Bengaluru, **overuse of antibiotics can make pneumococci bacteria, which can cause pneumonia, resistant to medicine.**

The team studied 1,504 samples collected over two years from children in seven cities in India with pneumococcal disease and observed resistance to the tune of 13 per cent to penicillin and 70 per cent to co-trimoxazole,

both commonly used antibiotics. This study is significant for silvers, who become increasingly prone to pneumonia. "In the second phase that began in December 2015, the study was extended to 15/20 institutional sites and 150 sentinel centres. The results will provide the serotype distribution, antibiotic sensitivity and resistance pattern of pneumococci causing diseases. It will help us understand the serotype coverage of



vaccines used in India," says Dr K L Ravi Kumar, professor emeritus of microbiology at KIMS Hospital and principal investigator of the study.

are given vaccine in March or April. India is a cusp country; it is technically included in the southern hemisphere but here it's flu season throughout the year not just winters, and especially in the monsoon regions. It is now being realised that in India we give the Southern hemisphere vaccines to the targeted groups in the months of May or June.

**The FDA has recently approved a vaccine with a booster in the US. Is something similar on the cards for India?**

No, right now we do not have anything similar.

I don't even see how these vaccines will be marketed here in the near future because penetration is very low. The awareness to take a flu vaccine is very low among silvers. Thus, the population that should ideally receive the vaccine is not receiving it. In India, the first step should be to increase awareness among the public as well as doctors. The second step should be to take the vaccine at the right time, which would be in the month of June or July. Once these two steps are met, we can think of ways to make the vaccines more effective. Flu vaccination

should be a preventive process rather than a reactive one.

**What about the cost of the vaccine? Is it prohibitive?**

The vaccine is not very expensive; it costs about ₹ 600-800.

**What are other preventive steps that one can take against flu?**

You should have a nutritious diet and proper sleep. You are at greater risk for flu if your immunity is depressed, thus a good diet is very important. Ensure that there is less indoor air pollution in the

house, proper sunlight and that doors and windows are open. Go for a doctor's check-up immediately if you see symptoms of flu so the complications can be recognised early and treatment started promptly.

**Is wearing masks helpful against flu?**

No, randomly wearing masks when you go out cannot prevent flu. In fact, it may be counterproductive. A person who has flu should wear a mask so they don't transmit the infection. Wearing a mask could be helpful only if you are in close contact with a person having flu.

# TOP GLASS

**ONE OF THE MOST TALKED ABOUT** tech developments of our times, Google Glass is defined as 'an optical head-mounted display, worn like a pair of eyeglasses, and developed with the mission of producing a ubiquitous computer'. While tech geeks are discovering new ways to use it, the medical community has already taken it a notch further. According to media reports, **surgeons from the Institute of Cardiology in Warsaw, Poland, used Google Glass to successfully restore a blocked**

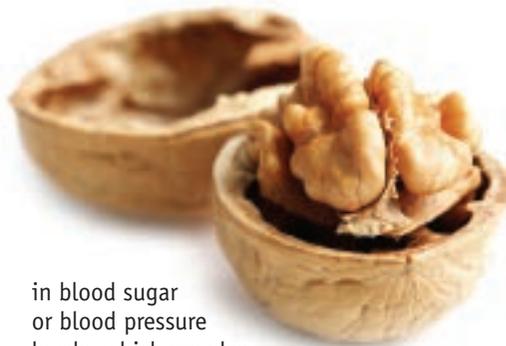
**right coronary artery in a 49 year-old patient.** A complete blockage of the coronary artery presents a major challenge to doctors, requiring percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI). To restore the blood flow in the patient, the team performed computed tomography angiography (CTA) with the assistance of virtual reality (VR) using the Google Glass. The procedure, details of which are published in the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*, could herald a new era in cardiac surgery.



Photographs by iStock

## Go nuts

**N**uts about walnuts? Now, you have even more reason to bite. According to a study by the Yale University Prevention Research Centre in Connecticut, USA, **walnuts can lower risk of diabetes without adding to your weight**, a prevalent concern owing to their high calorie count. As news agency Reuters reports, when people in the study added 56 g of walnuts (about 14 walnuts) to their daily diet for six months, they had improvements in blood vessel function and reductions in LDL (bad) cholesterol, both risk factors for Type 2 diabetes. However, there was no improvement seen



in blood sugar or blood pressure levels, which are also major risk factors for diabetes. "Adding walnuts to your diet will improve your cardio-metabolic health without fear of weight gain because they are very satiating and appear to bump out other calories to make room for themselves," writes study author David L Katz in journal *BMJ Open Diabetes Research and Care*.

- Slows the progression of rheumatoid and osteoarthritis
- Lowers cholesterol levels
- Protects against retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration
- Encourages production of serotonin to help you eat less
- Lowers risk of diabetes
- Fights breast and prostate cancer
- Expands memory retention



Shobhaa De



Javed Akhtar



Eldar Ryazanov



Sharad Joshi

## BIRTHDAYS

Veteran Bollywood actor **Nana Patekar** turned 65 on 1 January.

Former Indian cricketer **Kapil Dev** turned 57 on 6 January.

Columnist and novelist **Shobhaa De** turned 68 on 7 January.

Poet, lyricist and scriptwriter **Javed Akhtar** turns 71 on 17 January.

Playback singer **Kavita Krishnamurthy** turns 58 on 25 January.

## IN PASSING

Renowned sarangi player **Ustad Sabri Khan** died on 30 November owing to breathing problems. He was 88.

**Eldar Ryazanov**, one of the most popular Russian film directors of the Soviet era, died on 30 November following prolonged illness. He was 88.

Industrialist, founder of Chettinad Group and former parliamentarian **M A M Ramaswamy** passed away on 2 December in Chennai. He was 84.

Economist, agriculturist, journalist and farmer leader **Sharad Joshi** passed away on 12 December in Pune. He was 80.

## MILESTONES

- Husband-wife duo **Claude and Norma Alvares** were honoured with the 2015 Lifetime Service Award by *Sanctuary Asia* magazine on 18 December. The social activists are founding members of Goa Foundation, an environmental action group.
- Violin maestro **L Subramaniam** was honoured with the Sangeet Samman at the ITC Sangeet Sammelan 2015 on 4 December. The Padma Bhushan and Sangeet Natak Akademi winner has performed and recorded Carnatic, southern Indian and Western classical music, both orchestral and non-orchestral, composed for and conducted major orchestras, and scored for films like *Mississippi Masala* and *Salaam Bombay*.

## OVERHEARD

**“What am I going to do? Sit around and watch soaps on television all day? That’s why I never retired. I retire mentally every time. I regard myself retired now. I don’t have another script to do, so I’m retired. I always had this phrase that I said many times to reporters: ‘You don’t retire in movies. Movies retire you.’ That’s the point. I retire and they say, ‘Oh, no you’re not.’ As I like to say, you stop getting the girl, but you still get the part.”**

—British actor **Michael Caine**, 82,  
in an interview with Associated Press



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## HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

### MY 'SECOND WIFE'

Like most Parsis, I have a passion for automobiles. And as I live in the Dadar Parsee Colony in Mumbai, I have seen almost every type of car ever made parked in the colony. I will never forget our original Fiat—one of the first-ever Fiat models—and riding in it with my father and brothers. Getting a driver's licence was one of the first things I did when I turned 18.

I am 96 years old today, and I don't venture out without my car. I now own a Tata Nano, which is like a second home for me as I feel cosy, comfortable and secure inside it. My daily routine starts with a trip to the market and then to the Dadar Parsee Colony Gymkhana for my daily quota of billiards.

Apart from driving myself everywhere, I am completely independent and even regularly wash my own car. I have hired a car washer but am not satisfied with the way he keeps my 'second wife'. So I give her the final touch with my own hands!

**At 96, driving is a passion for Crawford**



Haresh Patel

Among my most precious memories involving my car is driving all the way from Lonavala to Khopoli, when I was working with Nyloc, a zipper company. I was an administrator then and when the factory moved from Worli in Mumbai to Khopoli, the company put me up in Lonavala. I remember the beautiful drive from Lonavala to Khopoli every day, and to Mumbai and back on weekends, for four years.

I have been driving since I was a teenager and I faced my first challenge only last year, when a policeman flagged me down and pointed out that my licence had expired. The RTO said they couldn't retrieve my documents to reissue my licence as they had misplaced the records, and advised me to get a new licence issued through an agent.

But the agent I met said I was too old to get a new licence. Although heartbroken, I was not discouraged. I went to the Tardeo RTO on my own and underwent all the formalities and filled out all the necessary forms without any help. The man who was to conduct my driving test was all smiles when he saw me and we even talked about the love that we old Parsis have for our cars. Of course, I passed the test with flying colours!

I have always upgraded my car periodically, and when the 'power-steering' Nano released, I traded my regular Nano for the new one. You see, I love driving an automobile that is technologically up-to-date. We rarely see people over 90 years old driving around town but I firmly believe that if you have the willingness and the confidence, nothing is impossible. Age is just a number and why stop doing the things you have been doing all your life, just because you are older now?

After I retired at the age of 60, I married the love of my life. We spent 35 wonderful years together till she passed away last year. We used to visit the bazaars together in our car, go on short holidays on weekends, and drive to the Dadar Parsee Colony Gymkhana together, in our four-wheeler, power-steering car. Although I am 96 today, I hope to keep my hands on the steering wheel of my 'second wife' till death do us part.

—Adi Crawford, Mumbai

# Harmony-Celebrate Age GOES DIGITAL

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# Style quotient

LILLY KAUSHAL, 64, MUMBAI

I have had a penchant for grooming since a very early age, a talent that saw me through a successful career as a flight attendant. It is also the foundation of my second career, a spa that I own in Mumbai. It all began when I was in Grade IX, when our school arranged an excursion to the airport. More than the aircraft, it was the gorgeous stewardesses wearing stylishly draped silk saris that left an impression on me. I knew, then and there, that this was what I wanted to be!

That journey began in 1972, when I got a job as a flight attendant with Indian Airlines and later with Air India. The training was an eye-opener: we were taught hygiene, skin, hair, makeup, dealing with hot and cold climates for style purposes, what was in vogue, how to carry oneself with style and confidence, speech, use of words, pronunciation, patience, how to sit, stand, walk and talk like a lady.

I retired after 37 years of flying in 2009. By then, I was married twice

and a mother of three daughters. I had always harboured a dream to open a salon or spa and, post-retirement, in October 2009, I set about doing just that. First, I took a three-month, basic hair, beauty and spa course in Mumbai. Next, in early 2010, I enrolled for a three-week course in creative haircuts with Toni & Guy in Singapore, where I stayed with my elder daughter. Then, I took a month-long course at the Aveda School of Hair and Beauty in New York, where my younger daughter lives.

## HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Experts answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement

**As a marketing consultant for over 30 years, I recently retired with a neat amount that guarantees a comfortable retirement. I would like to channel this into establishing a wedding management company. How can I go about it?**

To be a good wedding planner, first and foremost, you should be able to thrive under pressure. When D-day arrives and something inevitably goes wrong, everyone will look to you to solve the impossible. If you still want to go ahead, first make contact with a list of vendors for creative supplies, catering, decorations, lighting, seating arrangements, etcetera. Also contact potential venues and have a diverse list of wedding photographers for pre-wedding, wedding and post-wedding photographs.

Before you take things forward, test out your arrangements. It's fun planning, but not so much the nitty-gritty of execution. To make this an easy ride, hire a few dependable hands to execute your plans. Request one or two family members to let you arrange their weddings at cost price to get a hang of things. Once you figure out what works, create an elaborate folder containing all the available arrangements. At first, stick to the city/town you are most comfortable with. Then, branch out as your network expands.

Having already done a couple of weddings for your relatives, word will spread like wildfire, especially if people like your ideas, and soon-to-be-married couples will come barging through your door. No advertisements required!

—Nima Gupta organises weddings across southern India

the place gets pretty full. Our business does not compare with young entrepreneurs but we are making a decent profit and don't want to expand. We have achieved the perfect balance of enjoying a small business while having time for holidays.

I was not inherently a business-woman but have learnt the tricks of the trade. My first lesson was that just knowing my craft and performing impeccably was not enough. The business aspect was tough. It took me a while to understand that I needed to think a little selfishly and think 'money' every step of the way.

Speaking of a learning curve, here's an interesting anecdote. One day, some of the girls who worked for me suggested some ways to cut costs. They said I should fill regular cream in jars with expensive labels and other such tricks. Apparently, other people were actually doing this because these girls had seen this being done in previous salons but I was not willing to make any compromises. I am so glad I stuck to my principles because I have clients who come to me from very far away, and I know it is for the quality of the services we provide! We score very high on customer satisfaction and our clients tell us that they appreciate our warmth; the ambience; hygienic atmosphere, and even the fact that our staff has been trained to whisper while talking to each other!

For me, running a business didn't come easy but I have learnt to cope and I am still learning. Both Margaret and I do the same things—cutting hair, styling it—while we have a manager who looks after the accounts. We give it our all, and go all out to always do our best.

I am 64 and I couldn't have asked for more. After travelling and meeting my children, the second-best thing in the world is waking up and going to Quest every day.

—As told to Shyamola Khanna



Harsh Patel

After this, I began to do the prep to buy a small shop in the residential I C Colony in Borivali, Mumbai. I identified the perfect shop, invested my retirement dues to purchase it and, in June 2010, my sister Margaret and I inaugurated our spa.

We called it Quest, a 400-sq-ft space with a small mezzanine. We were excited but apprehensive about pulling it off. I dare say we did, for on an average day, we have six to eight clients, and during the festive season,



## Breathe easy: A healthy diet can protect and strengthen the lungs

I am an 80 year-old woman recuperating from a severe bout of pneumonia. In winters, I catch cold and flu frequently. Please suggest a few foods to stay away from common respiratory ailments and keep my lungs healthy.

Lungs are a very important organ for human life as they are responsible for breathing, i.e. inhaling oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide as a waste product. The mucus present in the lungs filters the microorganisms that can cause infections and inflammation. A well-balanced diet including all nutrients like calories, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals and fluids should be maintained to strengthen the lungs.

### Calories

Adequate amount of calories are mandatory for lungs to function properly. The amount varies according to parameters like age, weight, height, occupation, etc. Cereals (chapattis, rice, breakfast cereals and breads), pulses, milk products, healthy fats and fresh fruits and vegetables should be included in the diet to gain required calories. If one has fever owing to pneumonia, the amount of calories should be increased (by having small frequent meals and combining calorie-dense foods like sago, semolina, breads, oats with milk, required amount of ghee and sugar) to provide the body and lungs more energy to fight against the infection-causing bacteria and virus.

### Protein

Our body requires proteins for tissue formation and repair. If there is any wear and tear of the tissues owing to any infection in the lungs and respiratory tract, a considerable amount of protein should be consumed. Protein also provides energy. A diet rich in eggs, fish, milk and dairy products, nuts and seeds, pulses and beans and soy products should be consumed on a daily basis to strengthen the lungs.

### Fats

Fats provide calories to the body to perform all vital functions. However, a high-fat diet can cause abnormal activity of the lungs by affecting

the cardiovascular system. Thus, healthy fats should be consumed like monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Include olives, oily fish, avocados, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, walnuts and nuts in your daily diet. Avoid saturated and trans fats like fried snacks, junk food, cakes, pastries, red meat, cheese, cream, etc.

### Vitamins and minerals

Fresh and colourful fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. They fight against infections and build immunity. Antioxidants present in fruits inhibit cancer-causing enzymes and infections. The Vitamin C present in citrus fruits and vegetables helps the lungs to transfer oxygen. Flavonoids and other vitamins present in fruits and vegetables keep the lungs healthier. They can be consumed fresh, cooked, in soups and smoothies.

### Fluids

Being well-hydrated is essential for healthy lungs and recovery from pneumonia. At least eight to 10 cups of liquid, like water, soups and herbal teas, should be included daily. Water keeps the lungs hydrated and helps proper flow of mucus and blood. It also keeps the lungs clean from toxins, pollutants and microorganisms that cause inflammation. Alcoholic and caffeinated beverages should be restricted.



## READERS ASK

**I am 60. I have been suffering from muscle cramps and weakness owing to hypokalemia (potassium deficiency). Please suggest foods that are rich in potassium to counter the deficiency.**

Hypokalemia is deficiency of potassium that may occur owing to conditions such as:

- Deficient intake
- Excessive loss from gastrointestinal tract
- Surgical practices
- Diabetic acidosis (potassium is lost owing to dehydration)
- Administration of diuretics
- Potassium-secreting tumours of the large intestine
- Potassium-losing nephritis

A normal adult requires 60-80 mEq (mmol) of potassium daily, equivalent to 2.5-3.3 g potassium or 4-6 g potassium chloride. Potassium is concerned with cellular excitability. The irritability of the nerves and skeletal and heart muscles is determined by the relative amounts of potassium. Muscular irritability is increased by increase in potassium. Potassium is also necessary for the maintenance of acid-base balance.

Potassium-rich foods to counter deficiency include:

- **Legumes:** dry beans, canned beans, chickpeas, lentils, peas (fresh, frozen)
- **Vegetables:** asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, eggplant, fennel, lettuce, mushrooms, peppers (green), potatoes, spinach, green tomatoes, turnip
- **Fresh fruits:** apples, apricots, bananas, cherries, grapefruit, grapes, oranges, watermelon
- **Other sources:** dried uncooked peaches, dried seeded raisins, dried dates, dried figs, prune juice, watermelon, beef, cantaloupe, roasted turkey, whole milk, coconut water

Almost all foodstuffs contain potassium; cereals, dried fruits, fruit juices, and vegetables are good sources. Fruit juices or vegetable soups should be given during acute illness or surgical convalescence.

Photographs by iStock



### Foods for healthy lungs

To keep the lungs healthy, include these special foods in your diet on a daily basis:

**Garlic, ginger and onion:** These foods lower the risk of infections and reduce cholesterol and inflammation. They can be used in vegetable curries, soups and salad. Garlic contains a compound called allicin that provides anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties to fight against infection and destroy unwanted bacteria. Ginger eliminates pollutants and other infection-causing pathogens from the lungs. It can also be used to prepare ginger tea, which reduces inflammation and builds immunity.

**Turmeric:** A compound called curcumin present in turmeric encourages the self-destruction of cancer cells and reduces inflammation. It can be used in vegetable curries and soups and mixed in milk as an infection-buster.

**Nuts and seeds:** The magnesium present in nuts and seeds contributes to healthy lung functioning and provides essential fatty acids to the cardiovascular system that directly affects the lungs.

**Cruciferous vegetables:** Vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and kale are rich in very effective antioxidants that cut down the risk of development of lung cancer. The chlorophyll present in these cruciferous vegetables cleans and builds blood, which is mandatory for healthy lungs.

**Whole grains:** Other than carbohydrates, whole grains contain Vitamin B that produces energy and controls the temperature of the body. If there is any fatigue or high temperature owing to pneumonia or other infection, whole grains help the body recover. Whole grains also contain selenium in adequate amounts, which improves the functioning of the immune system. Include whole

grains in the form of oats, brown rice, barley, wheat, quinoa, and preparations like whole breads, cereals, pastas, etc.

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



YOGA RX BY SHAMEEM AKTHAR

# Scent and sensibility

The first of a new series that explores yoga's link to alternative therapies

**I**n yoga, though meditation is regarded as a higher limb it must be included as part of your daily practice. In fact, the entire physical aspect of yoga was originally created to prime you for meditation. Research on meditating Tibetan monks established that they could manipulate the electrical brain wave pattern at will. Similar research on *Hatha* yogis like the renowned B K S Iyengar and Himalayan master Swami Rama found that their meditative power could help them redirect blood flow in their body to any part at will. In the rest of humanity, this is an autonomous function and cannot be managed at will. Among many other such feats, it was also found these yogis could slow down or speed up the heartbeat or widen the iris of the eye (all autonomous functions) at will. All of this was achieved through meditative prowess. For the rest of us not in that stellar company,

a regular meditative practice could still mean that we can help heal ourselves. There is plenty of research establishing that meditation increases immune cells in the blood; helps restore the body back to a state of homeostasis, which is the right state for repair; helps with impulse control; manages anxiety and stress; is the best retort to psychosomatic ailments; and helps with pain control.

In this new column, we wish to show how yoga may be related to several other alternative therapies and how you



Photographs by iStock

## Aromatherapy to enhance meditation

You can use many oils for meditation. For cooling an angry mind, use sandalwood. For anxiety control, try tree/bark-based oils like cedar, rosewood, cypress and juniper berry. Resin-based oils, such as frankincense, dammar and benzoin, are powerful to develop a one-point focus. For mood-uplifting meditation, use aphrodisiac oils like jasmine, rose and ylang ylang. And for anger control, you can use marjoram.

You may use incense sticks or candles made with these oils. Often, these are rather expensive. Alternately, you can use ceramic diffusers; add a few drops of the oils to water for a powerful impact. You may want to light them up while sitting down for meditation. Roll-ons with these oils mixed with carrier oils are also available. These can be applied at pulse points for a continuous uplifting effect.

may use one to power the other. Aromatherapy is now a well-established therapeutic science in the West. In ancient India, it was a separate branch of yoga called *sugandhim* yoga (linked also to incense therapy and herbal *dhoop* and healing poultices). Sandalwood paste, for instance, was applied ritually at the forehead. Science has now found that sandalwood oil indeed has a cooling impact on the mind.

Aromatherapy is therapy based on oils extracted from different parts of plants. Naturalists have long known that plants communicate with each other through phytochemicals. More recently, they have made the intriguing discovery that plants too, being passive living organisms, manage their environments through these chemicals. For instance, when plants need to ensure that their population in a given area does not reach proportions to challenge their survival,

they allow a predatory animal population to manage their numbers. But when this animal species over-breeds and becomes a threat to the plant species, the latter creates chemical changes that can induce natural abortions! This is how intricately, yet powerfully, plants manage the ecosystem with their chemicals. Aromatherapy uses this marvellous instinct of plants for healing.

Aromatherapy can be used for healing the skin, preventing or controlling visible signs of ageing and acne. It is also used to control chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes and several respiratory ailments. In fact, it complements conventional treatment for any known ailment. Further, it can be used to control emotional disorders like depression, OCD, anxiety and anger. Because it is so powerful, it is ideal not to self-prescribe. A qualified professional will prescribe the best treatment for specific problems.



## YOGIC MOVES

**Heart mudra (*hridaya mudra*); also called downward-flowing energy hand gesture (*apan vayu mudra*) or immortal nectar hand gesture (*mrit sanjeevani mudra*)**

Sit in any meditative posture. Begin with the right hand. Bend the index finger so it is resting at the base of the thumb. Touch the tip of the thumb to the tips of the middle finger and ring finger. Keep the little finger extended. Now do this for the left hand too. You may use this *mudra* for meditation, and for *pranayama*. It may also be held whenever you wish. **Benefits:** It is used to heal the heart and powers the flow of energy throughout the body. It is said to have a near-miraculous effect in controlling heart incidents, and helping recovery in heart problems. It also relieves emotional spikes like hyper-anxiety and anger.

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## POSSIBLY THE MOST DEFINING VERSE IN ALL YOGIC TEXTS IS THE SECOND ONE IN YOGA SUTRAS BY RISHI PATANJALI: *Yogasch citta*

*vritti nirodah* (Yoga is the movement against the movement of the mind). It explains the *raison d'être* behind your practice. It can be interpreted both in a physical way or a spiritual one. Both do not contradict but rather support each other. On a physical level, this could mean that you could control the movement of the mind that causes diseases. That you use your body to reach the mind, and thus control it. On the spiritual level, it means going beyond the fluctua-

tions and nervous excitement of the mind and thus spot something that shimmers behind the gap between your thoughts. This verse excites long commentaries from masters. Here is a powerful quote by B K S Iyengar in his book, *Light on the Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, which explains this idea best. He ends his commentary on this verse thus: "Restraining the fluctuations of the mind is a process which leads to an end: *Samadhi* (profound meditation). Initially, yoga acts as the means of restraint. When the *sadhaka* has attained a total state of restraint, yogic discipline is accomplished and the end is reached: the consciousness remains pure. Thus yoga is both the means and the end."

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



## HEART TO HEARTH BY PRATIBHA JAIN

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

# Together we stand

## Lalitha & Mahaveerchand Bhandari • CHENNAI

What does it take to keep a joint family together? Is it easy to create a sense of space as well as togetherness? How do you foster interdependence as well as dependability? Is it about sacrifice? Is it about an iron rule or being able to accommodate everyone's needs? As I chatted with 72 year-old Mahaveerchandji Bhandari and his lovely wife Lalitha, 66, an

Oswal Rajsthani couple from Chennai, the clues for a happy and healthy joint family started emerging. As they said, "The idea of a joint family is to foster a sense of 'us' rather than 'me' or 'my family.'" Their love and respect for each other shone through the conversation and I sat there, riveted, enjoying the warm hospitality at their beautiful home in Chennai.

**Namaste.** Is it true that at one time, you have lived with 50 family members under one roof?

**He:** 52, to be exact. All of us lived at our ancestral home in Mint Street, known as the Bhandari Building. My grandfather Mangichandji Bhandari was the head of the family. Actually, there were three houses adjacent to each other that were interconnected and treated as one large house.

**I wonder, how was the housework divided?**

**She:** My mother-in-law as well as my husband's aunt ruled the house. They allotted the work between the daughters-in-law and the other members. It was extremely systematic and all of us abided by it.

**Did the womenfolk do the cooking?**

**She:** We were married in 1965. I was 16 at that time and did not know much cooking. With the help of the elders, I slowly made my way around the kitchen. We always had a cook. In fact, when he went for his annual one-month holiday, my mother-in-law appointed a substitute in his absence.

**He:** Our main cook Hobaji served this family for five generations—from my grandfather up to my own grandchildren. He was like a family member.

**She:** He prepared very delicious food. He made *baatiya*, which are thick *parantha* roasted in ghee. His *besan ki poori*—a thick roti with gram flour filling—was appreciated by guests.

**Lalithaji, do you remember the first time you cooked an independent meal after your marriage?**



Photographs by Chennai Pix

## Pachrangi sabzi

(Mixed vegetable gravy)

A simple, sumptuous and delicious *sabzi* from the Bhandari kitchen. While Lalithaji chops the vegetables, Mahaveer-sa enjoys preparing this dish with his signature flourish. A much-loved dish by the family, this is a perfect meal in itself with plain chapattis.

### Ingredients

- Mixed vegetables (onions, potatoes, carrots, capsicum, beans and peas): 200 gm each
- Ripe tomatoes: 2
- Yoghurt: ½ cup
- Ginger-garlic paste: 1 tsp
- Mint leaves: a few sprigs; chopped fine
- Red chilli powder: ½ tsp to 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder: ¼ tsp
- Coriander powder: 1 tbsp
- Garam masala: a pinch
- Salt to taste

### For tempering

- Ghee: 2-4 tbsp
- Mustard seeds: 1 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Cinnamon: 2 bits



- Cloves: 2
- Asafoetida powder: a pinch

### Method

Wash the vegetables well. Chop the onions, potatoes, carrots, capsicum and beans into pieces length-wise and mix them. Set aside. Shell the peas. Chop the tomatoes finely. Set aside. Beat the yoghurt and set aside. In a heavy-bottomed pan, heat the ghee and add the ingredients for tempering. "Tempering is an art," says Lalithaji. Allow the cumin to turn

colour and the mustard to splutter. Add the onions and sauté for a few minutes until it turns light golden. Add the ginger-garlic paste and sauté for 2 minutes. Add all the vegetables and mix well. Lower the flame, cover and allow to cook. When the potatoes are half-cooked, add salt, chilli powder, turmeric powder and coriander powder. Add the chopped mint and a pinch of garam masala and sauté for a minute. Add half a glass of warm water, chopped tomatoes and allow the vegetables

to cook. Add the beaten yoghurt and allow to simmer, stirring gently for 2-3 minutes. Switch off the flame and serve hot with plain chapattis.

**Tip 1:** You can add cauliflower to this dish. Choose only when it is fresh and in season.

**Tip 2:** Lalithaji says adding a pinch of sugar to ginger paste allows it to retain its fresh colour. You can freeze this ginger paste and use when required. Adding a small pinch to tea revitalises the mood.

**She:** In 1986, I think! That year, when Hobaji went for his vacation, I told my mother-in-law that we could easily manage since we were a smaller family then. The family division had just taken place. As long as we were all together, we helped in the kitchen with the chopping and the serving while Hobaji did the main cooking.

**He:** There was a strict rule about vegetables. All chopping and washing of vegetables was done by the womenfolk only.

**She:** Yes, to this day. My mother-in-law said that it has to be done very carefully. For instance, lady's finger [okra/*bhindi*] and leafy vegetables often have worms. So after cleaning greens, we would sieve them before washing.

### Sieve! Why would you sieve greens?

**She:** So that if there were any worms, they would fall down through the sieve. Also, most of the mud and grit also got sieved. My mother-in-law

really taught all of us how to maintain cleanliness in every aspect of life.

**Asha (daughter):** Attention to detail... my grandma and my mother have this quality. So does my father. He also has a keen sense of taste and is a food expert. He can effortlessly tell who has cooked a certain dish—whether it is cooked by one of my *bhabhi* or my mother or me!

**Mahaveer-sa, from whom did you inherit this penchant for taste?**

**She:** He has always been interested. Coming to think of it, his father was also a very good *paarkhi* [judge] of good food. In this house, there has never been a compromise on taste.

**He:** I think cooking is an art. But it is also intuition. If you are truly interested, you can experiment effortlessly. We have also grown up in a family where good food and taste have always been important. Food definitely binds a family together.

**She:** For us, *maan-manuhaar* [hospitality] is very important. We love it when all our near and dear ones come over for a meal. We manage parties and get-togethers of about 60 people at home itself.

#### **What are the favourite dishes you prepare for guests?**

**Mamta (daughter-in-law):** It depends. If it is a festival such as Bhaidooj or Diwali, we make traditional dishes such as *kheech* and *dal baati*. Otherwise, we enjoy doing *chaat* parties. On other occasions, we like mixed menus such as two salads, tarts and one traditional dish.

#### **Mouth-watering! But tell me, with many people around, who does one turn to for anything?**

**He:** At a personal level, if I wanted something, the link was my mother and grandmother. We never approached father directly. Once I told her, my mother would decide whether she must consult my father. Sometimes, if it was a money issue, she would simply inform the *munimji* [accountant] and he would do the needful.

**She:** This practice has continued. If the children want something, they will not approach their father. They will come and ask me. In fact, let me share a small incident. When my sons

got married, their wives wanted to wear *salwar kameez* at home instead of saris. But my mother-in-law was alive then and hence I refused because I knew she would not like it at all. A couple of months after she passed away, I spoke with my husband about this. He was initially hesitant, but when I explained to him, he agreed. I told him that since my sons and their wives had listened to me previously, I must be broad-minded and grant them their wish.

**He:** Let me tell you honestly. She is the binding force in our family. She is in touch with everyone and is always ready to help. She is from the Marlecha family known for their

"I think cooking is an art. But it is also intuition. If you are truly interested, you can experiment effortlessly. We have also grown up in a family where good food and taste have always been important. Food binds a family together"

warmth and hospitality. Her mother Mangikawar Marlecha is one of the warmest human beings I have ever met. At this time, when Chennai has been badly hit by floods, my wife has ensured help for many of our relatives and friends who are in trouble. Many have come home and stayed with us until the water level in their area receded.

**Asha (daughter):** Mummy really keeps in touch with everyone. Her PR is a class apart.

**He:** I can claim confidently that all the members of our large extended family are just a call away. Sons and daughters and nephews and nieces, and their spouses...we keep in touch.

We meet regularly for family get-togethers and that helps even the youngsters to know each other.

#### **That's wonderful. So apart from caring, is it financial comfort that allows the people of a family to stay together?**

**He:** Wealth is important but it is not the key factor. When I look back, I think the most important quality is impartiality. As long as elders treat youngsters equally, there will be very little reason for friction. My grandparents and my parents never favoured anyone. The same rules applied to everyone.

**She:** Even now, when we get something at home, we get it for everyone. We have two sons, Naveen and Nitesh, and their wives, Mamta and Arpana. Our daughter, Asha, married to Pradeep Chordia, also lives nearby. Whenever we gift something to one of them, such as a jewel, we do the same for others.

**He:** I remember the first time I sought permission to travel to Europe on a holiday with our Rajasthani club in 1983. My grandfather simply said,

'If you want to go, you must go with one of your cousins and their wives from each family.' No partiality! Even though it cost a small fortune, three couples from the family went on that holiday.

#### **Incredible. Now, tell me, to what extent do rules work when there are many people with many views?**

**He:** Let's draw a line between pre-marriage and post-marriage. Before the children get married, they have to abide by some restrictions. We have to watch over them closely—what they are doing, their whereabouts and what kind of friends they are making. But after marriage, they gradually become more responsible. After that,



## Pachrangi achaar (Instant vegetable pickle)

Lalithaji's passion is making pickles. She makes many varieties of pickles, including one with lotus seeds. Her summer pickles stay good for a year. Here is a simple instant pickle that can be prepared every week.

Clean and chop 1 green chilli, 1 carrot, 1 radish, ½ capsicum, 2 florets of cauliflower and 1 onion into length-wise bits. Mix them well. Add 1 tsp mustard powder, 1 heaped tsp *amchur* powder, 1 tsp salt and ¼ tsp turmeric powder to the vegetables. Heat 2 tsp oil and temper with nigella seeds (*kirayata*) and asafoetida powder. Add this tempering to the mixed vegetables. Add juice of 1 lemon and mix everything well. Allow the pickle to soak in the spices for a day. Serve with meals. The pickle stays good for almost a week without refrigeration.

parental supervision continues but in an unspoken way. It is an important passage from adolescent to adulthood. Discipline and freedom have to be balanced.

**Renu Chordia (cousin):** Our relationships and bonds have simply grown stronger over the years. Even though everyone does not live together under the same roof now, we are very close. I think it is wonderful to grow up not knowing the difference between siblings and cousins.

**I want to ask your grandchildren about the advantages of being in a joint family?**

**Akshita (granddaughter):** I am pursuing MBBS in Chennai. In my class, I am perhaps the only one who belongs to a joint family. I think it's the best thing in my life. To have everyone around you, especially grandparents, to know they are all there for you is a great feeling.

**Mamta (daughter-in-law):** I truly believe that the kind of bonding children get within a joint family

makes them better human beings. They learn to share, and truly listen.

**What do you think makes them trust you?**

**He:** I think it is because I first listen to them. Then they are also willing to listen to you. You have your point of view and when you listen to their point of view, you can arrive at the right decision. It helps.

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



## MONEY MATTERS BY PRIYA DESAI

**The FD factor:** With the market offering a bouquet of opportunities, silvers must be wary of where they invest



Photographs by iStock

**T**he year gone by was largely marked by some anxious moments, with a downhill movement in the interest rates of a variety of fixed deposits (FDs). Silvers who prefer to park a major portion of their life savings in FDs—considering the safety and security associated with them—unfortunately end up spending sleepless nights on the eve of the policy review of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), checking which way the interest rates are headed. This apart, as

soon as the prospect of reinvestment of maturing deposits nears, the worry about plummeting earnings on FDs begins to dampen their spirits.

### Preference for FDs

The rationale for investing in FDs is pretty simple: the top priority is an assured income for a particular period at a predetermined frequency. It is premised on the safety and security of the capital invested and a fixed rate of interest during a fixed period of

maturity. Absence of fluctuations is the key factor, making it a preferred financial instrument, particularly for silvers.

The flipside of this bias towards low risk and security is low liquidity and returns compared to some other financial instruments. The interest rates have remained at an attractive level during the past couple of years. However, with a fall in the inflation rates, the RBI brought about changes in the interest rate policy. In common

parlance, declining rates of interests were set, both on deposits and loans. Now the downtrend in interest rates appears to be a confirmed trend and a grave matter of concern for silvers.

### Be cautious

Most silvers are fairly conversant with the general features of FDs, though at times they ignore the nitty-gritty and fine print.

Recently, I came across a case wherein a silver investor forgot the maturity date of the FD she had invested in, remembering it only after a few months. What was shocking was that the bank did not bother to inform her, though it had her telephone number. Though the amount was lying with the bank, she did not get the interest of 4 per cent per annum for the extra period it was there. The moral of the story is that customer care gets mere lip service in India. Silvers have to be watchdogs of their own FD investments.

Most silvers prefer to invest in nationalised or private-sector banks. However, with the financial landscape having widened and deepened over the past decade, there are ample opportunities for investing through other financial institutions. It's to be noted here that despite increased vigilance by the RBI, the economic situation in the country has undergone rapid changes, not necessarily in a favourable direction.

A number of leading nationalised banks have been found to have built large non-performing assets (NPAs) in the form of loans extended to prime corporate clients, leading to weaker balance sheets for themselves. This has, obviously, made silvers apprehensive about the safety of their FDs.

### Different avenues

One should be clear about the differences in the various avenues available for investing in FDs. Though banks are permitted to determine the interest rates they offer, the rates also differ as per the maturity period of investment. I recollect that in 2011, Canara Bank offered an FD investment scheme at an attractive rate of 10.25 per cent for a period of eight years. In retrospect, it was a wise decision to invest for such a long period when other banks limited the

Most silvers prefer to invest in nationalised or private-sector banks. However, a number of cooperative banks are very active in garnering FDs from silvers by offering higher interest rates than nationalised banks. An investor should choose cooperative banks with sound balance sheets and professionally managed boards with a high reputation for financial probity

maturity period to a maximum of five years. A number of cooperative banks are very active in garnering FDs from silvers by offering higher interest rates than nationalised banks.

An investor shared his experiences with the Rupee Cooperative Bank and CKP Cooperative Bank. With these banks having gone bust, they aren't permitting account holders to withdraw the amounts either from savings accounts or FDs. During the past two years, this investor could withdraw only ₹ 1,000 every six months. The caveat of

₹ 100,000 insurance of FDs does not work in this case. A provision is available, however, wherein the investor can approach the RBI through the bank for a partial payment of bills such as medical or wedding expenditure directly to the service vendor. Given the delays in the system, this is just a palliative measure. It only serves to underline the fact that as a matter of abundant precaution, an investor should choose cooperative banks with sound balance sheets and professionally managed boards with a high reputation for financial probity.

### Vigilance, the buzzword

Investors need to be vigilant as it is their money at stake. Large corporate houses and non-bank financial companies (NBFCs) net investors with their attractive FD schemes through agents. Till a couple of months ago, when banks were offering 9-9.5 per cent for three years, corporate deposits were quoting rates of 10.50-11 per cent.

Now, with the dive in bank FD rates, there has been a significant drop in corporate FD rates too. The key factor to weigh in while investing in FDs is to look for a sound company with high ethical standards of governance.

Mahindra and Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Sriram Transport and Finance, Tata, Dewan Housing Finance, etc, are some reputed corporate houses offering attractive rates for FDs. The differences in FD investment in nationalised banks—where the Government is the guarantor in the background—and a corporate house, where only the reputation of a company and the investors' assessment are the key factors, are shown in the table. Company deposits are rated by CRISIL and ICRA, the leading rating institutions in the country, and these ratings are mentioned against the FD information.

## FD schemes of banks and institutions: A COMPARISON

	Bank FD	NBFC FD, HFC FD	Corporate FD
Safety	Highest	Typically lower than banks	Typically lower than banks
Credit rating	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
Interest rates	Market-linked, lower than other FDs	Typically higher than banks but linked to credit rating	Typically higher than banks but linked to credit rating
FD tenure	A few days to 10 years	1 year to 5 years	1 year to 5 years
Options available	Non-cumulative and cumulative	Non-cumulative and cumulative	Non-cumulative and cumulative
Coverage under DCGCI	Yes	No	No
Security	None	None	None
Loan against FD	Available at 0.5-1% over FD rate	May be available	Not available
Flexi/sweep facility	Offered by many banks	Not available	Not available
Frequency of interest compounding	Quarterly	May vary	May vary
Tax deduction at source (TDS)	On interest income of more than ₹ 10,000 for a PAN in one bank across branches	On interest income of more than ₹ 5,000 for a PAN	On interest income of more than ₹ 5,000 for a PAN
Tax benefit	Available on principal amount for long term deposits under Section 80-C	None	None
Availability	Always on tap	From time to time	From time to time
Renewal	Always possible at then interest rates	From time to time	From time to time
Nomination facility	Available	Available	Available
Employee FDs	Available; slightly higher interest (up to 0.5%) may be offered	Available; slightly higher interest (up to 0.5%) may be offered	Available; slightly higher interest (up to 0.5%) may be offered
Special schemes for senior citizens	0.25% to 1% higher interest rates	0.25% to 1% higher interest rates	0.25% to 1% higher interest rates
Shareholder FDs	No extra benefit	Slightly higher interest may be offered in some cases	Slightly higher interest may be offered in some cases

Source: [www.myloancare.in/fixed-deposit](http://www.myloancare.in/fixed-deposit)

A watchful investor should consider these ratings as indicators of risk and reward before finalising the selection. It is also desirable to opt for a medium-term deposit rather than a longer tenure.

The Senior Citizen Credit Scheme (SCCS) is one of the attractive schemes where ₹ 1.5 million (₹ 15 lakh) can be parked at 9.3 per cent for a period of five years. While liquidity without penalty is not a feature of this FD, a low risk factor and a reasonably good return under the present circumstances make it score over other FD schemes.

The Public Provident Fund with a 15-year lock-in period is also a good avenue for investing spare funds if there is no immediate cash flow requirement. The rate of interest so far, announced annually, exceeds 8 per cent, and interest on interest cumulatively increases the sum invested.

### Windows of opportunity

Identification of investment opportunities needs to precede the FD maturity date. Based upon safety, liquidity, and the risk profile of the investor, a variety of mutual funds, arbitrage funds, tax-free bonds, etc, are available. If the decision takes time, money can always be parked in savings accounts with a switch-in and switch-out facility or a Max-Saving account in banks such as the HDFC. This account offers the facility to invest the excess cash in the savings account in an FD with the benefit of liquidity through switch-in and switch out. This type of FD earns a higher interest rate than a savings bank rate. HDFC Bank's website provides details about how the account works. Some other banks also offer similar facilities. An investor will be required to do a quick survey of some of the leading banks to maximise the benefits from money credited to their



takes time, money can always be parked in savings accounts with a switch-in and switch-out facility

Identification of investment opportunities needs to precede the FD maturity date. Based upon safety, liquidity, and the risk profile of the investor, a variety of mutual funds, arbitrage funds, tax-free bond are available. If the decision

savings bank account. You can visit the following websites to scan updated information on FDs of varying durations and interest rates of various banks and make an informed choice.

explore the option of tax-free bonds like IREFC that hit the market recently, with a maturity of up to 15 years or more, with a coupon in the range of 7.53-7.5 per cent.

***apnaplan.com:*** Provides a monthly update on FDs of banks

***www.bankbazaar.com:*** Provides facility to view individual bank rates on FD

***www.myloancare.in/ fixed-deposit***

In case of company and NBFC FDs, agents and brokers have updated data sheets and forms, indicating details about duration, interest rates, etc. However, do not forget to read the fine print.

### A major dilemma

The list of banks, corporates and other FDs keeps expanding, making the task of monitoring more tedious and hunting for new avenues more agonising. Investors can, therefore,

If interest rates decline in coming years, such bonds entail capital gains. On the anvil are similar offerings. Over the past two years, there has been a decline from 9 per cent to 7.5 per cent in interest rates. Those who invested in these bonds two years ago continue to receive 9 per cent interest rate and enjoy capital gains, as the price of the bonds has increased, being related inversely to interest rates. These bonds are listed on the secondary market and can be sold at current market price.

### Eyes wide open

Savers need to keep their eyes wide open, widen their horizons and maximise the gains from their funds. The future is not promising in terms of offering a stable rate of interest, thus negatively impacting their incomes from FDs. The option is to search for a ray of hope that makes the financial kitty shine brighter than ever.

*The author is an economist based in Mumbai*

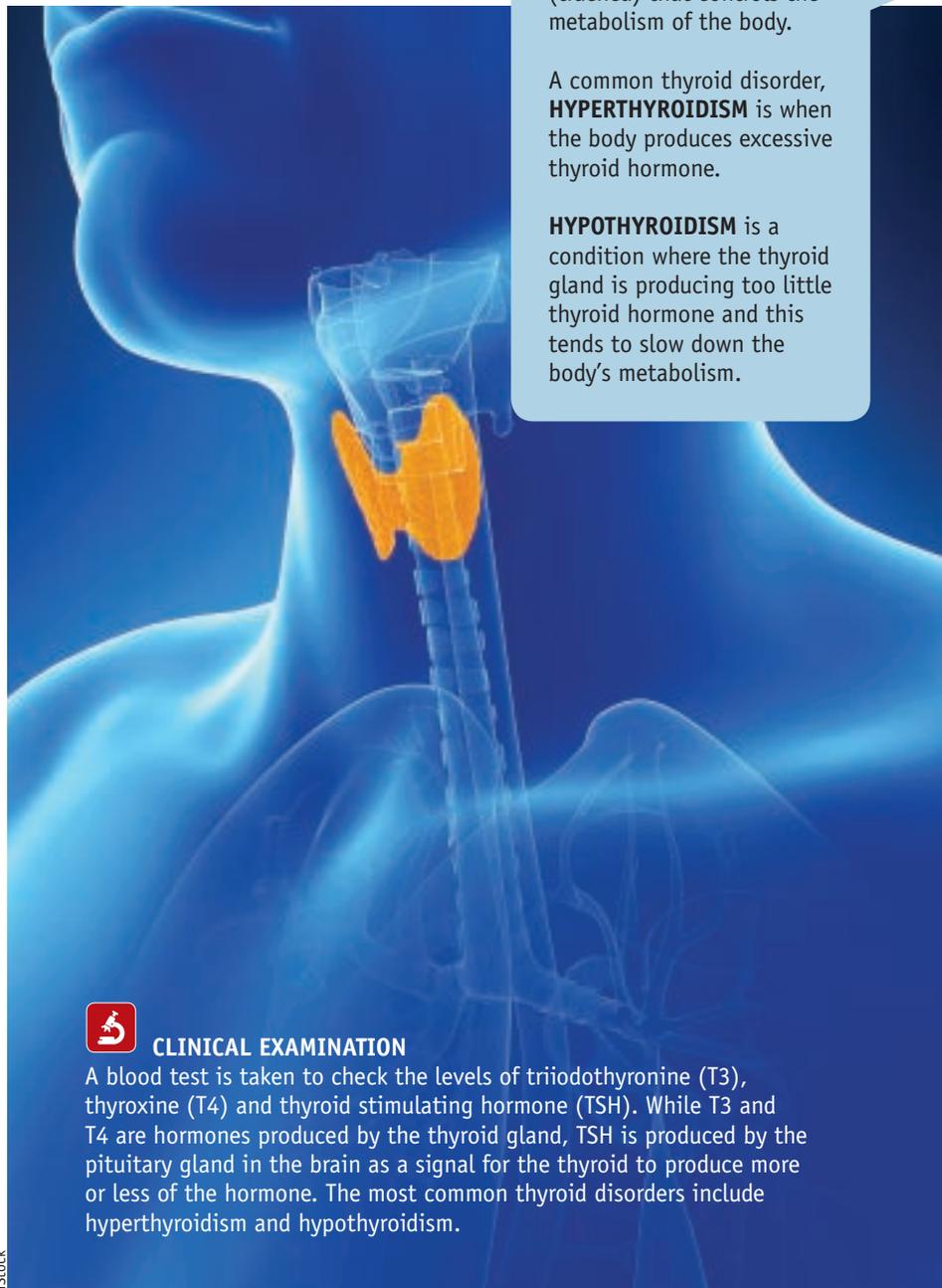
# WATCH YOUR THYROID

Awareness and timely diagnosis hold the key to successful treatment of thyroid disorders, writes **Shivani Arora**

**F**atigue, heart flutter, loss of appetite and dry skin are usually symptoms linked to ageing. But often overlooked is the fact that these warning signals could signal a thyroid disorder. **Dr Usha Sriram, senior endocrinologist and director of Associates of Clinical Endocrinology Education and Research (ACEER), Chennai,** answers our questions on thyroid disorders and their impact on elders.

## How common are thyroid problems?

Thyroid problems are a lot more common in women than in men. According to the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, an estimated 20 per cent of women over the age of 60 have some form of thyroid disorder. The symptoms vary and indicate whether the patient is suffering from hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism.



The **THYROID** is a butterfly-shaped gland located in front of the windpipe (trachea) that controls the metabolism of the body.

A common thyroid disorder, **HYPERTHYROIDISM** is when the body produces excessive thyroid hormone.

**HYPOTHYROIDISM** is a condition where the thyroid gland is producing too little thyroid hormone and this tends to slow down the body's metabolism.



## CLINICAL EXAMINATION

A blood test is taken to check the levels of triiodothyronine (T3), thyroxine (T4) and thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH). While T3 and T4 are hormones produced by the thyroid gland, TSH is produced by the pituitary gland in the brain as a signal for the thyroid to produce more or less of the hormone. The most common thyroid disorders include hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism.



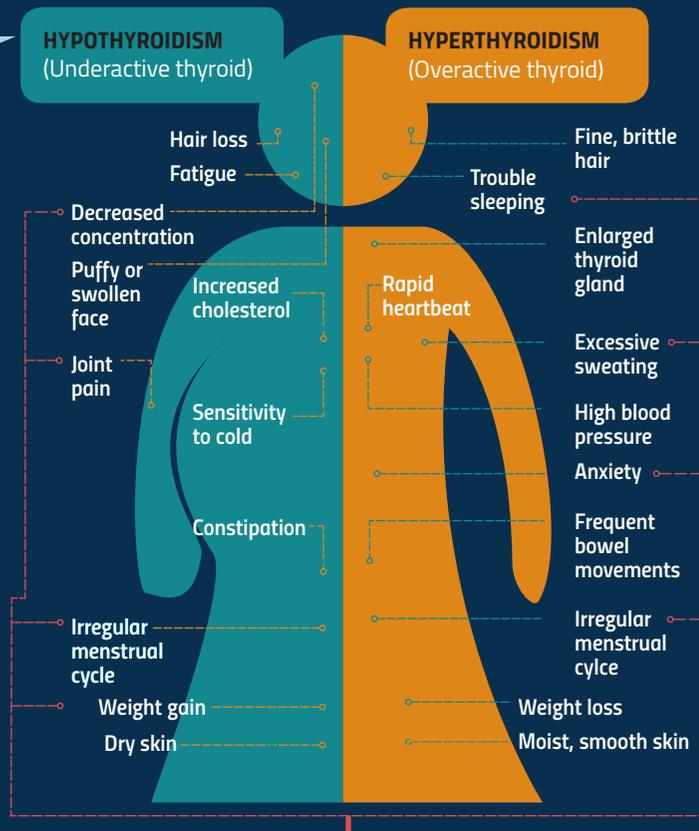
of women over the age of 60 have some form of thyroid disorder



of all patients diagnosed with hyperthyroidism are over the age of 60



women over the age of 65 has a higher than normal level of TSH



**LADIES, BEWARE**  
Many symptoms for thyroid disorders mirror menopause symptoms. If in doubt, ask your doctor

**What are the tests required to diagnose thyroid malfunction? How is it treated?**

The tests to diagnose thyroid malfunction include testing TSH, T3 and T4 levels. As such with increasing age, there is a slight increase in TSH levels in some patients, which is known as sub-clinical hypothyroidism. According to some studies, one out of every five women over the age of 65 has a higher than normal level of TSH. In such cases, the physician has to look into the symptoms the patient is experiencing. If the patient is not experiencing any major symptoms, the physician may choose not to treat the patient for a thyroid disorder.

**Any other advice you would like to give silver readers?**

Awareness of the symptoms and timely diagnosis hold the key to good thyroid treatment. With increasing age, silvers sometimes tend to forget timely medication. I recommend their family members take the time out to remind them about their medication regularly.

**How do thyroid problems affect the elderly?**

The elderly are predisposed to thyroid problems. Many of the symptoms such as tiredness, loss of appetite, memory loss, constipation, excessive sleeping and depression are mistaken to be part of the ageing process and tend to get overlooked. These are also the indicators of thyroid problems but as the symptoms overlap the diagnosis in older people, treatment is often delayed.

**What impact does thyroid disorder have on existing health issues?**

The elderly tend to have other health issues like high blood pressure, heart disease, cholesterol, diabetes, etc. If they are diagnosed with a thyroid problem, it can aggravate existing health issues. It is important to carefully look into the symptoms a patient

is experiencing, make a diagnosis and decide the line of treatment accordingly.

**Is hyperthyroidism different in the elderly?**

Yes. In fact, the symptoms of an overactive thyroid in the elderly are exactly opposite to what a younger person experiences. For example, a young person with hyperthyroidism tends to eat more and is more active while an older person with hyperthyroidism tends to feel low, eats less, loses weight and has constipation. The symptoms are usually apathetic and should be looked into carefully. Also, hyperthyroidism is more common in post-menopausal women and can lead to bone loss, causing osteoporosis. Research shows that about 15 per cent of patients diagnosed with hyperthyroidism are over the age of 60.

With the age expectancy in our country having gone up and people living longer, thyroid problems are becoming increasingly common in the elderly. Silvers should note that hypothyroidism is a risk factor for high cholesterol and heart disease. As a lot of elders remain undiagnosed for years, it is important to check cholesterol levels if they have been diagnosed with hypothyroidism. On the other hand, elderly patients with persistently increased cholesterol levels should check their thyroid to make sure that thyroid disease is not the cause for their high cholesterol levels. Also, hyperthyroidism could be the cause of osteoporosis or brittle bones, a very common condition in the elderly. It is indeed very important not to ignore any symptom related to thyroid disorders and get yourself checked at the earliest.

# “Information is power”

Pune’s RTI crusader Vijay Kumbhar urges public-spirited citizens to band together in the battle against errant public servants, reports **Suchismita Pai**



When it was enacted around a decade ago, the Right to Information Act (RTI) gave public-spirited crusaders like Vijay Kumbhar the legal backing they had craved all along. But, by then, Kumbhar had already taken on the establishment, including former Maharashtra chief minister Manohar Joshi and the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), in cases of major land grab and large-scale misuse of public resources. The Act merely took his battle for citizens’ rights to another level.

“Information is power,” says Kumbhar, “and like all power, it must be used judiciously for the common good.” From starting his career as a journalist to educating the public on the Act and now helping everyone with the intricacies

of the legislation, it’s been a long and eventful journey for this 54 year-old from Pune.

Born in Karad town in Satara district in Maharashtra, Kumbhar grew up watching his father, who worked in the Government Fisheries School in Satpati village, Thane district, fighting for the rights of teachers. “His attitude must have laid the groundwork for everything I do. We learnt by observing our parents how important it was to fight for your rights.” After graduating from Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil College in Islampur, Thane district, Kumbhar joined the newspaper *Swaraj*, then the largest circulated Marathi weekly. He also wrote for other newspapers and eventually met Prakash Kardaley, reputed journalist and RTI pioneer in Maharashtra. “I was lucky to learn



Photographs by Hemant Patil

Kumbhar's toughest battle to date predates the RTI Act. In his capacity as a journalist at the time, he had uncovered a case of land grab in Pune

under Mr Kardaley, who was respected among activists all over India," he shares. "When the Maharashtra RTI took effect, he recognised its potential and started promoting it. He formed an online group called 'Hum Janenge', where activists like Aruna Roy, Shekhar Singh, Arvind Kejriwal, Shailesh Gandhi and Veeresh Malik would engage in meaningful discussions. I was also part of that group. Mr Kardaley compelled me to organise the first RTI convention in Pune, which was attended by 130 activists from 24 states."

In fact, Kumbhar's toughest battle to date—where he took on Manohar Joshi—predates the RTI Act. In his capacity as a journalist at the time, he had uncovered a case of land grab in a prime locality in Pune. He found that a plot reserved for a public garden and, later, a municipal school, had been de-reserved almost overnight by the PMC and given to Girish Vyas, a builder and son-in-law of Joshi. This was a couple of years before the RTI Act took effect and Kumbhar filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Bombay High Court against the powers-that-be in the

PMC. The court ordered the PMC to allow Kumbhar to inspect all the relevant files, and eventually ordered that the building be demolished. Vyas appealed in the Supreme Court, which also ruled against him.

“Cases involving public property are very important for me. Owing to my efforts in this area, the PMC was compelled to frame a land allotment policy,” says Kumbhar, who was soon to uncover an even bigger scam in the PMC. Thanks to his relentless efforts, again predating the RTI Act, Kumbhar was able to stymie the PMC from leasing prime properties to all and sundry, by bypassing the tendering process. It took six long years, and a PIL, to get the municipal corporation to clean up its act. Not only was the PMC forced to frame a land lease policy, it also had to formally list the 4,500-odd properties it owned. “The citizenry does not even know that it is being robbed blind. Most PMC-owned properties were given at nominal monthly rents of ₹ 1 to powerful people and their cronies,” says Kumbhar. “When information is kept under wraps, it aids those with mala-fide intentions so they fight you every inch of the way. The RTI Act empowers the average citizen to uncover these wrongdoings but it is up to you to follow through, no matter how long it takes.”

Our social crusader has since filed roughly 200 RTI applications, ranging from getting the PMC to allot funds to construct public toilets, to calling the PMC’s bluff in the allotment of contracts for school uniforms and school supplies and many pertaining to misuse of the PMC’s properties.

Taking on corrupt politicians and public servants is dangerous and Kumbhar knows this only too well; his family was especially apprehensive when he took on the CM’s son-in-law. Kumbhar was threatened and even knocked off his scooter but luckily lost only a tooth. “They will fight you tooth and nail,” laughs Kumbhar, whose RTI *katta* or workshops are well-known across Pune. Conducted every Sunday in a public space, each workshop attracts 30-35 people, from rookie journalists and activists to frustrated professionals and poor workers thwarted by lack of information. His workshops have emboldened many a citizen to file RTI applications and have helped scores get over their initial apprehensions.

Citing his own example, Kumbhar says, “It took me a few months to get acclimated to the idea that we, as citizens,

have the absolute right to be fully informed about what public servants do with our money.” He points to the Sai Service Station case, where former MP Suresh Kalmadi was running a car dealership out of a PMC property in return for a pittance in rent. “I was hesitant back then and it was only after several brainstorming sessions with like-minded people that I demanded the files for inspection.”

Kumbhar is arguably the first Indian citizen to invoke Section (4) of the RTI Act, in 2006. (This section gives citizens the right to inspect files in a government office and procure photocopies of documents.) As a result, the PMC is the only municipal corporation in the country that keeps all its records open for scrutiny, under Section (4) of the RTI Act, every Monday between 3 pm and 5 pm. “Often citizens feel intimidated about approaching government officers with all their trappings of power and belligerent attitude. We forget that we are the ones with the power and can use the RTI Act to extract any information.”

Mindful of the burden on the public information officers appointed under the act, Kumbhar initiated the idea of an RTI Library at the PMC. Located on the PMC premises, the library is a repository of all the municipality’s activities, which are open to public scrutiny. Citizens can, therefore, directly access information about the PMC’s

budgets, promotions, transfers, etc. This also leaves information officers free to answer more detailed queries. According to PMC Public Relations Officer Sanjay More, the library attracts 10-15 information seekers on average, every day. “Many do their basic research there and file more queries if needed while others get all the information they need in the library itself,” he says. “It certainly saves time and paperwork.”

Thinking big for the greater good comes naturally to Kumbhar, but the small problems that can be sorted out through RTI applications are not lost on him. Chandrashekhar Kulkarni will vouch for this. Working with a small transport company, Kulkarni had to undergo surgery that cost him over ₹ 100,000, which he raised from friends and family, confident that the government’s Employees State Insurance Scheme (ESIS) would cover him.

When the Mumbai ESIS office refused to cooperate, Kulkarni approached Kumbhar for help to file an

“When information is kept under wraps, it aids those with mala-fide intentions so they fight you every inch of the way. The RTI Act empowers the average citizen to uncover these wrongdoings but it is up to you to follow through, no matter how long it takes”



**Kumbhar at the Sunday *katta* to sort out RTI issues**

RTI query. Not only were Kulkarni's expenses reimbursed, he also received an apology for the delay! "I could not believe that raising a question could accomplish what several visits could not. I was able to repay my debts and hold my head high," he says.

An average day for Kumbhar involves meeting and sorting out RTI issues for at least 10 people. In addition, he meets people at his Sunday *katta*, of which he has completed 99. He blogs about RTI issues regularly and is a columnist for leading publications. "The threats come in equally regularly," says Kumbhar, who has authored a book titled *Pailu Mahitichya Adhikarache* (Aspects of the RTI Act). And, at any given point, he is in the midst of one or more RTI battles of his own. He is currently busy with a campaign against an allegedly wrongful transfer of an information commissioner from Amravati to Pune.

"He is a walking, talking encyclopaedia on RTI," says Rahul Kadam, a lawyer on one of Kumbhar's cases. "He can even point out loopholes in the law that might escape many a lawyer." Major General (retd) SCN Jatar, also an RTI activist in Pune, too vouches for Kumbhar's tenacity. "He is extremely passionate about RTI and never takes anything lightly. Whether action or advice, he is very meticulous and thoroughly studies the problem at hand. Also, his RTI *katta* groom the next generation of activists and

information-seekers." Jatar met Kumbhar over a decade ago when they were both being mentored by Kardaley.

Vijay Kuvalekar, retired state information commissioner, Maharashtra (2007-12), says Kumbhar has that very rare quality that allows him to put public good over private gain. "All his queries and inspections are about the public good," he points out. "I have observed him for a long time and, as information commissioner, heard many of his cases. He never gripes if the ruling goes against him and almost every query is in the public interest. They are never vindictive nor are they against just one group of people. He cuts across parties and interest groups. He also keeps it very professional."

Our crusader is an optimist at heart but he is also pragmatic. "Over 68 years after Independence, we are far from the dream of good governance. The need of the hour is a band of strong and spirited individuals who have the guts to take the government to task for its inefficiency and corruption," says Kumbhar, who has earned the right to harbour this lofty dream. For somewhere in Pune is a municipal school on a plot that would have housed illegally built luxury apartments had Kumbhar not taken on a senior politician and his kin. "Education and information are the way to an empowered citizenry," he emphasises. "And I am happy to do my bit." ✨

:: cover feature ::

After conquering the world with his cue, Geet Sethi is helping India's best and brightest sporting talent take a shot at Olympic glory, writes Neil Joshi

**AN INCREDIBLY SUCCESSFUL** 30-year international career in billiards and snooker is reason enough to lie back and rest on one's laurels. But nine-time world champion cueist Geet Sethi has a greater mission: to take Indian sporting talent to the global stage. While Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ), the non-profit he cofounded with badminton legend Prakash Padukone to help Indian athletes across disciplines win Olympic gold medals, makes definitive strides, he also assists wife Kiran in the running of her Riverside School, a transformative educational experiment in student wellbeing that has gained accolades aplenty. A sporting pinup in his heyday and the third Indian to be crowned world champion after the great Wilson Jones and Michael Ferreira, his readiness to switch roles to support his wife's career, willingness to wear new hats, from becoming an entrepreneur to an author, and thirst to read and learn, especially in the field of world economics, make the 54 year-old both intriguing and inspirational. Lounging in the comfort of the lawns of Ahmedabad's Ellisbridge Gymkhana, Sethi tells us how self-belief lies at the heart of his success and affirms that given another shot, he would live his life "exactly the same way". Excerpts from the conversation.

# BR ON

# GHT CUE



"In 1988, I made a break of 147 points at the Snooker Nationals and that was the high point; thereafter, my game dropped. In those three years, I had to unlearn the technique I had played with for 14 years. It was extremely frustrating and I hope no sportsperson has to go through that. I was working 14-15 hours a day on my game.... The positivity was always there"

## PAST PERFECT

**Your first big win was against the legendary Michael Ferreira in 1982 in the Nationals. Looking back, was it a big dream come true?**

It was January 1982 at the Nationals in Chennai. Michael had won his third World Billiards Title in Malta and he came straight for the Nationals—I beat him in the final. It gave me the belief that I could beat a world champion. That was also when I realised I could devote my whole life to this game as I was also pursuing my MBA then.

**Having started off early, who motivated or inspired you to take up this sport?**

There was no outside inspiration or stimulus. As a 12 year-old, I used to play every sport. I was a state-level swimmer, I played badminton, table tennis, and in school I used to play basketball. I used to go to the club and peep into the billiards room. You were not allowed to enter that room till you were 18; it was a spectacle for a child with the grand table and those lovely coloured balls. Just when I turned 12, the club relaxed the rules and brought down the age to 12 years as they had got a circular from the Billiards and Snooker Federation of India [BSFI]. As the government had directed the BSFI to host a Junior Nationals tournament, the age limit was relaxed. Within two months, I stopped playing every other sport. It was so addictive—it still is.

**In 1992, you broke a five-decade record while painstakingly composing a break [total scored in an inning] of 1,276 in just 80 minutes against Australian Bob Marshall at the World Professional Billiards Championship and went on to win the title. Did you feel like ruler of your domain?**

I had already won two world titles in 1985 and 1987 but then encountered a bad patch. So the year 1992 signified emerging from a three-year slump. Coming out of it and playing at that level, I was more relieved rather than feeling I ruled the world! But, I felt I was playing better than 1985-87. That match gave me the justification that I could consistently beat the best in the world.

**Did you ever need a change of technique?**

The bad patch wasn't easy. In 1988, I made a break of 147 points at the Snooker Nationals and that was the high point; thereafter, my game dropped. My technique crumbled as I never had played with an authentic copybook technique. I was orthodox in my game; a lot of faults crept in and I just couldn't perform. In those three years, I had to unlearn the technique I had played with for 14 years. I had to let go of everything. I went to coaches and spoke to [Britons] Steve Davis and Frank Callan; they gave me directions and I used to come back and practise. It was extremely frustrating and I hope no sportsperson has to go through that. I was working 14-15 hours a day



Darshit Ringwala

## TITLES

**World Professional Billiards Champion:** 1992, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2006

**World Amateur Billiards Champion:** 1985, 1987, 2001

**Gold Medallist:** 13th Asian Games, Bangkok 1998

**Asian Billiards Champion:** 1987

**National Billiards Champion:** 1982, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1997, 1998

**National Snooker Champion:** 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1988



on my game. And when you don't get results, you start getting despondent and going crazy.

**What kind of mental state can a player experience during a drought?**

If you are sliding down when you are around 45-50 years, you know your mind and body are giving way. But when you are 25 or 30 and your game starts going down, you need self-belief and conviction. Negative thoughts never came into my mind and the positivity was always there.

**You have had the greatest battles with Englishman Mike Russell. Can that be considered your greatest rivalry?**

My rivalry was in two stages: first it was with Michael Ferreira and then Mike Russell, both Mikes! Ferreira's game started going down by the late 1980s but the Russell story and rivalry were

phenomenal. We won 16 world titles between the two of us from 1990 to 2006; it was just us.

**What were your takeaways playing Russell?**

I learned that you need to consistently perform and that once you get a chance, you have to take it. On the other hand, there was a strategy aspect too. I used to play 'the postman's knock' and he developed a technique called 'the floating white' that was sublime and finally differentiated both of us. We mastered both these strategies but I could never master the floating white the way he did.

**What about the rivalry in this generation?**

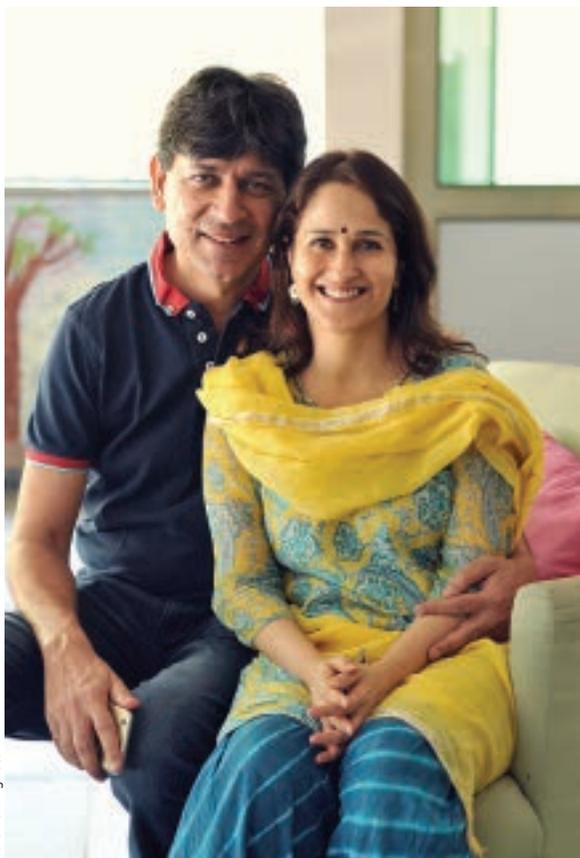
The current generation is dominated by Pankaj Advani; he is the man to beat. He has a rivalry with Mike Russell who still continues to play. He is ageing but still very dominant. The other is Peter Gilchrist. These two players were seven to eight years younger than me and then there's the 'young' Advani. Very recently, they were in Australia playing the World Championship where Peter beat Pankaj in the 'points format' and Pankaj beat him in the 'time format'.

**Cue sports are not considered a common man's game. Would you agree?**

It's an accurate statement. For a common man to play, he needs access to a billiards table, which is available only in clubs or institutes. Other than hockey, cricket and football, not every sport is a common man's game. Where can you play badminton? Look at tennis; it is even more difficult

**With Olympic Gold Quest co-founder and veteran badminton player Prakash Padukone (to his right) and Indian chess Grandmaster Vishwanathan Anand; (bottom) Sethi and Padukone with shooter Gagan Narang**

"The mission of Olympic Gold Quest is to support athletes with the potential to win a medal. While the Government is doing 90 per cent of the work in terms of money, infrastructure and facilities, there is a 10 per cent gap. That's where we come in. If Saina Nehwal needs a 24x7 physiotherapist, a decision is taken immediately. Because we are small and can take decisions quickly, we can be effective"



Darshit Ringwala

to get access to a tennis court than a billiards table. Each municipal corporation and government should have large facilities for all sports, so children and people have access.

### **Do you feel the Government has done enough for the promotion of cue sports in India?**

Frankly, billiards and snooker have been recognised very well, as have the players and their achievements. Ever since billiards and snooker made their entry into the Asian Games, there has been a positive change.

### **What is the reason for the longevity of cueists?**

This sport doesn't require physical strength. If you play for 10 days continuously, the stamina quotient does come in.

But if you see [Britons] Norman Dagle and Bob Close, they played till around the age of 65. I stopped playing at the age of 53. Sport is a youth thing; after 45, I was reaching the quarters and semi-finals but wasn't winning titles. It is quite comparable to golf. But finally your body will start failing and so will your eyesight.

### **What was the rationale behind your decision to retire?**

As your skill and effectiveness start going down, you start getting frustrated, not because you aren't winning but because your hand and eye coordination gets diminished and you can't perform consistently. When you perform 20 per cent less than before, your frustration reaches a level where, one day, you say, 'The game is giving me more frustration than joy and it's time to call it a day.' Also the first 20 years of your life are so blinkered that you remove every other emotion from your being. As you grow older, there is so much more that comes in to your life...your family, your children, your parents grow older. So it is a combination of all this. It was a very easy decision for me to stop playing. I had my time and achieved whatever I had to. In 2013, I lost in the quarterfinals of the World Championship; I kept my cue and never went to the club.

## **THE SECOND ESSAY**

### **How did OGQ come about?**

The mission was to support Indian athletes with the potential to win an Olympic medal. The Olympic medal signifies pride—for the winning athlete and the entire nation. Owing to the large size of our contingents, the Government is not in a position to support 100 per cent of each athlete's needs. Large organisations have to look after the entire gamut and can't focus on just the 10 people who are potential winners. So while the Government is doing 90 per cent of the work in terms of money, infrastructure and facilities, there is a 10 per cent gap. That 10 per cent can result in a performance uptake of 10-15 per cent. That's where we come in. Because we are small and can take decisions quickly, we can be effective. If Saina Nehwal needs a 24x7 physiotherapist, a decision is taken immediately. For a government to do that, it becomes very difficult. If they are giving one to Saina, other athletes will ask for them too. So there are genuine problems for the bureaucracy and the Government. I am not blaming the



Government; we just complement and finish the job. We have a very small team but that small team is available for all of my 76 athletes all day. So if Mary Kom is troubled by something, she doesn't call her husband. She calls the OGQ office and says, 'This is what I am going through and I need help.'

**Do the athletes supported by OGQ also undergo mentorship programmes?**

Prior to the London Olympics, Prakash Padukone and I gave a session to all the athletes who were leaving. Recently, Vishwanathan Anand and I spoke to our athletes. So this is an area where one can add value. We can tell them how to focus and what they need to do right. We have mental trainers with us on a consultancy basis.

**Have you encountered roadblocks during the OGQ journey?**

No. On the contrary, the whole journey has been positive. In fact, CSR becoming law has helped us with large companies contributing.

**Would you like to see more such organisations come up in India?**

I would be happy if more and more OGQs come in to the fray. We have such a vast pool of athletes and they need different kinds of support at different levels.

**The London Olympics proved to be a big success for your organisation...**

That was a proven concept. We started the organisation before the Beijing Olympics. We signed [shooter] Gagan Narang and [discus thrower and shot putter] Vikas Gowda six months before going to Beijing. However, the first serious Olympics were the London Games, where four of the six medal winners were supported by OGQ.

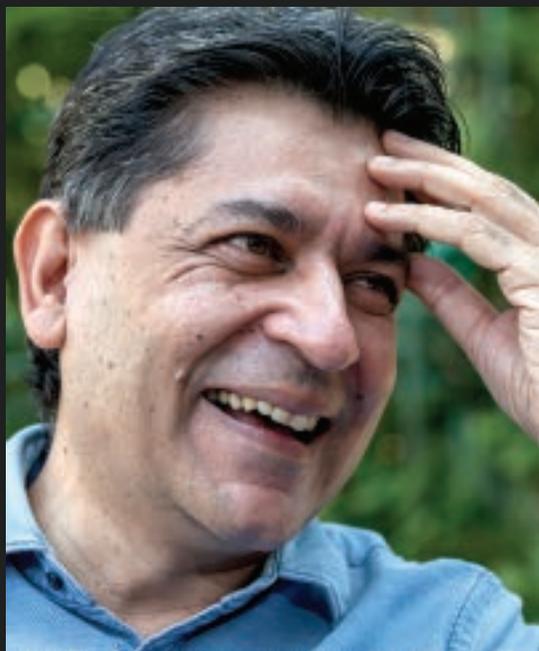
**The bar has been raised for the Rio Games of 2016, not just for OGQ but the entire contingent. What is a realistic tally for us?**

I think India shall double its medal tally. We got six in London and my assessment tells me we should get 12. These will come from five to six sports: shooting (two), boxing (two), wrestling (two), archery (one) and badminton (two). We are supporting 20 shooters as well as six-seven shuttlers and grapplers. Olympic medallists Sushil Kumar and Yogeshwar Dutt are with us now.

**Why have you refrained from supporting team sports like hockey?**

We are a small organisation. In individual sports, the benchmark and selection are objective. If you shoot 600/600, you will be selected for the team and you will win. In team sports, selection is a big problem and there are other factors. A player may play well but the team may not. You

**Support system: with wife Kiran, son Raag and daughter Jazz**



Samir Pathak

## MILESTONES

**1985:** Won the IBSF World Amateur Billiards Championships vs. Bob Marshall in an eight-hour-long final round

**1986:** Received the Padma Shri and Arjuna Award

**1987:** Won the IBSF event, as well as the ACBS Asian Billiards Championship. He won another World Amateur Billiards title in 2001, despite having previously played as a pro

**1989:** Achieved the world's first amateur maximum break of 147 in an official competition in snooker at Guntur, Andhra Pradesh

**1992:** In the World Professional Billiards Championship, he constructed a world-record English billiards break of 1,276 in 80 minutes under the three-pot rule, also the highest break in five decades, and won first place

**1992–1993:** Received the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, India's highest sporting honour

**2005:** Released autobiographical motivational book, *Success Versus Joy*

**2006:** Last won a World Professional Billiards Championship, overcoming England's Lee Lagan

**2013:** Retired from the sport

cannot just support one person. We don't have the financial wherewithal for teams. We took this decision in the beginning. Maybe we will support them but that's four to five years away.

### What is your opinion on sportspersons running sporting organisations?

OGQ is not only about sportspersons. It is a wonderful mix of sportspeople and individuals who run a large business. So the funding, marketing and organisational structure is looked after by Neeraj Bajaj, R Ramrajan and Shitin Desai. For pure sporting decisions, it comes down to Prakash Padukone; so both are important.

### Has administration come naturally to you?

Administration doesn't come naturally to a sportsperson. That's why we have people who run large organisations—they look after the process and legalities, which helps create a credible and transparent organisation.

## THE OTHER SIDE

### Who is Geet Sethi when he is not at the billiards table?

I think I am quiet and reclusive. I have only a few friends, but very close friends. My world

revolves around my family and friends. I read a lot. I want to know how world economics functions. I did my honours in economics and it is a fascinating subject.

### Considering you and your wife Kiran have named your kids Raag and Jazz, do you also have a deep affinity for music?

My wife is more into music—she was a singer—and my mother was a musician so she named me Geet. I personally have no musical talent and skills. Kiran was very keen that our children's names be associated with music. We both thought Raag was a beautiful name for our firstborn. Five years before Jazz was born, my wife read a book where the central character was named Jazz. One day she told me, 'If we ever have a daughter, I'll call her Jazz.'

### How did you and Kiran meet?

I won my world title in August 1985 and Kiran was studying at the National Institute of Design [NID] in Ahmedabad. In September, my cousin had come over from Chandigarh; he was in a relationship with Kiran's roommate in NID. One of Kiran's seniors wanted to create a video for a graphic design project on Indian sport. Thus, Kiran asked her roommate to find out from my cousin if they could shoot me. The shoot took

"I don't think an MBA can bring out the entrepreneur in you. That is an inborn thing where you can take risks and playing sports was very risky. It wasn't the education in me that made me an entrepreneur but the sportsperson in me"

place in Ahmedabad Gymkhana, where she assisted her senior—that's when we first met. At the end, I asked her, 'Can I come and see you tomorrow?' She agreed. I spoke to her every day after that. I proposed to her in eight months' time; we will finish 30 years of marriage in 2016.

**Your wife has redefined the way education is imparted with the opening of Riverside School in Ahmedabad. How did that come about?**

She started the school because she became a mother. She was a totally devoted mother; when Raag was born, she had decided to work from home. Raag started at the same school I went to. When he was in kindergarten, she went to school to check on his progress. When she asked how Raag was doing, the teacher asked for his roll number. That very day, she took him out of the school, saying, 'My son cannot be just a roll number.' She started reading up on education. At the time, a few IIM-Ahmedabad graduates had started a school, so she enrolled Raag over there as she found they had new ideas. She then travelled around the world and visited every good school. She started doing workshops with this school and they made her a vice-principal. In two years' time, she started her own school. By then our daughter was born. She started a school with only 20 students, starting from kindergarten. Jazz was Kiran's first student so her involvement was very intense. The school wasn't intended to change the world but to make an impact on her child. Now, she has reached the stage where she wants to reach out to the world. Her 'Design for Change' project [which endeavours to cultivate the 'I Can' mindset in every child] has spread to 35 countries.

**How inspiring is it for you have a wife like her and how do you support her?**

We draw on each other. In the first 20 years of our married life, I was totally consumed by my profession. She is at that stage now and I totally understand. There is no question of not being supportive; that is how human beings excel. I help her in her accounts and finance and seeing that the building is maintained well. It's been a terrific journey and in January she will finish 15 years of the school.

**Tell us more about yourself as a father.**

I am their support system; whenever they want, I'm there. Now I am 54 and it will be my children who will always be

there for me. Neither Kiran nor I have any ambitions for our children. We have grown up and realised that we need to let them be and find their own calling. Raag teaches at the school. He is a musician who plays the guitar and runs a jazz band. Jazz is a dancer. She is an instructor in a dance school called Spin.

**How important was it for you to balance your education and sport and get a job?**

Being well-educated is all about removing risks. Parents ask children to study to eliminate risk. My father was from a middle-class background and said, 'Play how much ever you want but get 60 per cent in your exams!' So two months before my board exams, I would keep my cue aside and start studying. I did my BA and MBA but I was totally focussed on my sport. On a flight back from Bangalore to Bombay, I was interviewed by Mr V K Bali from Tomco [Tata Oil Mills Company] who offered me a job on the flight. He was a sports buff.

**Do you credit your education for bringing out the entrepreneur in you?**

I don't think an MBA can bring out the entrepreneur in you. That is an inborn thing where you can take risks and playing sports was very risky. An entrepreneur goes with his gut instinct and takes risks. It wasn't the education in me that made me an entrepreneur but the sportsperson in me because I could take risks.

**What about Geet Sethi, the author?**

The idea behind the book *Success Versus Joy* wasn't mine; it was Sunil Agarwal's, who is the co-author and was following my career. He was a big billiards fan and he said, 'I will come up with questions and you just answer.' I will give all the credit to Sunil—the story and thoughts are mine but he brought out the author in me.

**Do you feel you need to achieve more?**

It is an ongoing process. At present, I am reading a lot and am intrigued by the economy and what is happening around the world with large corporations. I've had the opportunity to meet some brilliant minds; through Kiran, I have met professors from Harvard University. I have lived life passionately and with full intensity—and I continue to do so. I have no regrets. ✨





Photographs by iStock

# Shanghai shenanigans

Crisscrossing through 'The Paris of the East,' **Rekha Sarin** discovers that this Chinese city is a charming juxtaposition of history and modernity

**O**n our very first evening in Shanghai, we decide to head to the Bund. This waterfront promenade is much celebrated and we are eager to check it out. Besides, we are not overly fatigued by the six hours-and-odd flight from Delhi. Remnants of travel weariness are in any case swept away by the gentle breeze over Huangpu River, a tributary of the famous Yangtze, which makes its way to the East China Sea. We join the cascade of visitors along the sweeping curve of its embankment, wonder-struck by the orchestra of sky-touching buildings of the Business District of Pudong that creates a nocturnal symphony of flashing neon signs and multihued lights across the river.

This is the face of contemporary Shanghai set on the wings of high-tech development: an economic powerhouse significant enough to cause tremors across the world if its stock markets lose ground. The Shanghai Stock Exchange, the Shanghai World Financial Centre, the Oriental Pearl TV Tower with droplets of changing lights on its circular orbs that hold restaurants and observation decks... these are but some of the architectural marvels that glitter from afar. Adding to this fraternity of soaring heights is the soon-to-be-ready, 632-m-high Shanghai Tower, a semi-transparent spiral artfully designed to combat forceful wind loads during typhoons.

However, modernity is not the only scoring point for the Bund. What really fascinates is the charming juxtaposition of history; those grand,

The Shanghai Maglev—magnetic levitating train—that silently whisks passengers from the airport into the city at an incredible 430 kmph

Opposite page: a diorama of Shanghai in the 1930s



old, colonial-style buildings looking on along the west side of the river, illuminating Shanghai's past even as the city showcases its present.

Over the ages, Shanghai as a port has always been a magnet for trade and commerce. It was here that the British, from their colonial empire in India, brought their cargo of opium to exchange for tea, a drink that only China could provide. This monopoly eventually led to the Opium Wars and, with the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, the British moved into Shanghai. Other Western powers followed suit, each creating their own enclaves or concessions. By the 1930s, the Huangpo riverside, where only reeds once grew, began to see transformation as magnificent commercial buildings, banks and consulates came up with an increasing population of foreigners who partook of the economic boom. The footprints of this phase of Shanghai's history are still evident along the Bund in the form of an impressive medley of European styles with domes, spires and clock towers.

The floodlit pyramidal patina roof of the Peace Hotel tempts us to stroll in. Known then as the Cathay Hotel, it was built in 1929 by Sir Victor Sassoon, a British Jew who came to Shanghai to

inherit the family business. As the first luxury hotel of its kind, it hosted many momentous events and visiting dignitaries. We spend considerable time gazing at the picture gallery while admiring its beautifully restored Art Deco interiors. The roof terrace restaurant enriches the fine dining experience with spectacular views of the Pudong.

After refreshing ourselves with a drink at its atmospheric Jazz Bar, we are ready to resume our walk along the Bund, pausing to admire the sprinkling of commemorative pieces of sculpture that the Shanghai government installed when it restored this area in the late 1990s. At the northern end, the abstract white structure of the Monument to the People's Heroes—built by the Shanghai municipal government in the 1990s to commemorate revolutionary martyrs—compels attention. From the nearby Waibaidu Bridge, we head further to the picturesque Suzhou Creek. Once this used to be a muddy canal where barges offloaded sacks of rice and other produce as they plied upstream for domestic trade. What we witness now is inviting pathways and public parks. Add to this the charm of old European-style bridges spawning waters made iridescent by the reflecting lights of the surrounding buildings.



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We cross the grand old General Post Office building, its classic style topped with a baroque clock tower. Our search, however, is for a particular landmark that holds emotional value—Embankment Building—where Deepak, my husband was born, his father being posted in Shanghai as part of the delegation of diplomats led by then ambassador Krishna Menon to set up the first Indian consulate in China, after Independence, in 1947.

The locals are friendly and ready to help, but we have a language problem. The few Chinese who do speak English are mostly young. Some whisk out their iPhones to use their translator application. This is, in fact, how we'll get helpful guidance in the days to follow as we explore the city.

We finally find the Embankment Building. There it stands, Sassoon's intrepid vision to create the largest apartment complex in Asia. Completed in 1934, it unwinds as a curvilinear form to extend almost a quarter of a mile. As a heritage landmark, structurally, the building remains the same. We enter the hallway and find EB engraved on its original mosaic flooring. Up the elevator and through a long, weathered corridor, we press the doorbell of the apartment registered on Deepak's

Over the ages, Shanghai as a port has been a magnet for trade and commerce. It was here that the British, from their colonial empire in India, brought their cargo of opium to exchange for tea, a drink that only China could provide. This monopoly eventually led to the Opium Wars

birth certificate. A young man answers, allowing us to peep in. Not surprisingly, it wears a newly refurbished look. Nevertheless, our communion with Deepak's birthplace has left us moved, akin to looking through a sepia-tinted picture album.

The Embankment Building has had its share of history, with bullets flying in through the windows during the exchange of fire between the Nationalists and the Communists in the 1940s. Some of the drama of the country's domestic politics was played against the backdrop of these Western pockets of governance. It was a short civil war, with the Communist Party taking over in 1949.



The city's heart beats vigorously within the precincts of Shanghai Old Street, which grew as a marketplace during the reign of the Song Dynasty in the 11th century. Here, insulated within ancient walls, local life continued to exist unaffected

The site of the first National Congress of the Communist Party of China is to be found in Xintiandi, an irony, as this was then the domain of the French Concession. Choosing their enclave a little away from the Bund, the French transplanted their culture on Shanghai's soil, complete with mixed Gothic-Chinese style cathedrals like Xujiahui and tree-lined boulevards. The area is often dubbed as The Paris of the East. The neighbourhood still endures with luxury apartments, office towers and a glossy shopping mall—all signposts of affluence. Named after developer Xin Tian Di, the South Block is made up of trendy boutiques, galleries, bakeries and indoor-outdoor restaurants on cobbled paving, where you sit under umbrellas a la Parisienne style and watch the world drift by. At night, this is a lively hotspot with a choice of international fare.

It needs a look at the antique Shikumen buildings within the folds of the narrow lanes of the North Block to realise the underlying layer of Chinese culture. These are low, flat-roofed row houses built during the 1860s to house the victims of outlying rebel areas who poured into the settlements. In the contemporary recast, these tenements with their inner courtyards and rooms have been beautifully redesigned in keeping with the old-world ambience to accommodate upscale shopping and restaurants.

There is a slick varnish, therefore, even in the manner in which Shanghai preserves its past. So far, we have been flooded with images of glamour since our arrival. The airport Maglev—magnetic levitating train—that silently whisked us into the city; those eight-lane expressways; the Porsches, Audis and BMWs whizzing by; West Nanjing Road with showrooms of international brands such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton and more for the asking; massive department stores on the lively East Nanjing Road Pedestrian Mall that ends near the Bund; and those ritzy hotels around the orderly green of People's Park. Where then is the real pulse of Shanghai?

The city's heart beats vigorously within the precincts of Shanghai Old Street, which grew as a



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marketplace during the reign of the Song Dynasty in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Here, insulated within ancient walls, local life continued to exist unaffected. The place is abuzz with tourists and the city walls have long been demolished. Deep inside, the bustling bazaars are replete with indigenous history. In the northeast is the City God Temple, and next to it Yuyuan garden, known for its landscaping with pavilions, jagged rockeries and serene water bodies. We are struck by the charming antiquity of the buildings around this area. They have sloped, tiled roofs with eaves that are upturned at the edges that hark to the later years of Qing Dynasty. Around here are the larger stores selling gold jewellery, pearls that are China's fame, huge Buddha jade statues, silks and antiques that make for opulent shopping. At the western end, along Guanyu Street, the buildings with their red pillars and latticed windows are even older. As the evening sky darkens, the streets and lanes come ablaze with lights, embellished in places with typical red Chinese lanterns. Our preconceived image of 'China Town' finally materialises.

The narrower lanes are a colourful chaos of little shops, with rows that sell the same sort of products. This, we realise, is a peculiarity of the Chinese way of commerce. Rather than being wary of competition, they believe in attracting

customers by selling similar wares in one space. As a result, local 'speciality' malls and markets abound in several parts of the city. For instance, there's Fabric Market with three floors of only clothes and tailors, Shanghai Optical and Glasses Market, Antique Market with floors crammed with curios, even a Flower, Bird, Fish and Insect Market, and of course, the inevitable Souvenir Market in West Nanjing Road with clothes, bags, shoes and Apple accessories, besides traditional Chinese fans, chopsticks and stuffed pandas.

In the Yu Garden bazaar too one encounters this mindboggling abundance of goods, where a shopper can fulfil any wish list, even a nice wig! Always be prepared for hard bargaining, as an astronomical margin of profit would be built into the quoted price. A few shopkeepers haggle with good humour in broken English. "Go on Madam, you say your price. I make low...this is China," a vendor cajoles, much to our amusement. We are especially attracted to the row of shops that sell Chinese scroll paintings and traditional herbal medicinal shops that have an intriguing display of ginseng roots and even dried animal skins that are used as remedies.

A well-known herbalist was the Emperor Shen Nong, who is said to have discovered tea in the

**Clockwise from left: Roasted pork ribs, a main item on the Shanghai street food menu; shops and restaurants line the narrow lanes of Shanghai Old Town; colourful mementos for sale**

**Opposite page: Traditional Chinese pagoda by the Sozhou Creek**



Rekha Sarin

year 2737 BC. The story goes that some dried leaves fell into the boiled water he had kept; the emperor was fascinated by the delicate aroma and colour that emanated from the infusion. The rest is history! It would be sacrilegious then not to experience one of the many tea houses that have been home to these streets over the centuries. Among them is the Hu Xin Ting teahouse that sits in an artificial lake setting. We spend hours experiencing the Chinese tea ceremony and trying to select from the huge variety of teas that bear exotic names such as 'Silver Needle' and 'Iron Goddess of Mercy'!

As a contrast, there is a Starbucks to remind us of our day and age. A group of teenage girls in skimpy shorts go by, Häagen-Dazs ice-cream cones in hand. Like its limitless shopping variety, there is no dearth of places to eat. For savouring Shanghai cuisine, Lu Bo Lang is a time-honoured restaurant near Yuyuan Garden. They serve specialties such as crab-filled steam buns, *dim sum* with all sorts of fillings—including a preparation

## factfile

### WHEN TO GO

As Shanghai has a subtropical maritime climate, making it generally mild and moist, it would be a good idea to pack an umbrella, regardless of when you visit. A pleasant time to visit would be from March to May, during spring, when you can enjoy the city's well-tended gardens and trees in bloom.

### VISA & CURRENCY

A Tourist L-Visa is usually single entry and for 30 days only; you can apply for one at any VFS Global Centre either in person or through a travel agent. A single-entry visa fee costs ₹ 3,900. China uses Renminbi (RMB), which translates to 'the People's Money'. Chinese currency is also commonly referred to as yuan (pronounced 'you-on'), or kuai, pronounced 'kwhy'. Foreign exchange bureaus and banks usually refer to it as 'CNY' while quoting exchange rates. The Indian exchange rate hovers around ₹ 10.45 = ¥ 1.

### TIPS

- There is an infinite range of hotels in Shanghai to suit your budget. Rates shoot up during the high season and public holidays, as there is a lot of domestic tourism besides business and foreign travellers. If you plan in advance, you can manage good bargains. Chinese New Year, usually during January end or beginning of February, is prime festive time, but very expensive and heavy on crowds. Be prepared for queues on weekends and public holidays.
- Moving around Shanghai is fairly easy. Taxis are readily available and the flag-down fare is ¥ 14 and, after 3 km, ¥ 2.50 for every kilometre. To surmount the language problem, as your cabbie may not speak English, carry the hotel card with the address written in Chinese. Similarly, you can ask your hotel concierge to write your destination in Chinese. The metro

system is easy to use; the metro map is in Chinese and English. Station announcements are also made in both languages. It is a good idea to download the metro map on your iPad or tablet.

- Remember, however, that Google is blocked in China. So are YouTube, Facebook or Twitter. Bing and Yahoo search engines are available, and WhatsApp is not filtered. If you want to use Internet on the move, it is best to buy a local SIM card from a domestic provider like China Telecom, China Unicom or China Mobile. For instance, China Telecom uses a CDMA network that is incompatible with GSM-phones purchased outside the country. Only China Unicom's 3G network is compatible with any unlocked phone that supports 2,100 MHz 3G, which covers most smart-phones. There are also many places in the city with Wi-Fi hotspots as well as a lot of buses and trains.



in which you insert a straw to first suck out the soup encased inside the *dim sum*—that are a huge draw for tourists.

Nonetheless, elsewhere, we prefer to drift into small eating joints and mingle with Chinese families to absorb all that is local. The language hurdle is surmounted as the menus show pictures of the available dishes. You never go wrong with seafood. There are grilled oysters, crabs, and catfish dunked in chilli oil. Spare ribs, glazed pork belly or minced pork; roasted duck and chicken, stir-fried with peppers—such are the ever popular dishes. For the veggies, Chinese greens, succulent lotus stem, broccoli and tofu in different versions are all readily available. Wash your meal down with local beer—we loved Tsingtao—and you are refuelled to hit the streets once again.

But true street food, we realise, is to be found in the labyrinth of narrow lanes of Qibao or 'Seven Treasures Town' that belongs to the Song Dynasty era. Like most ancient habitations, it is set along the waterside, by the Puhuitang River canal. All it takes is a longish ride on Subway Line 9 to reach there. The Old Town is a few blocks from the station, but is easily identified by an ornate entry gate with red lanterns and guardian lions that beckon us to start our wanderings. This could be a set from a Chinese epic film, especially the ancient Bell Tower with its upturned tiered roofs. We join the milling tourists on North Street to browse through its pearl shops, and the inevitable souvenirs and knickknacks. The lane opens out to cafés and restaurants and then on to the scenic curved Puhui bridge over the som-

nolent canal. Along both sides of the waters are rows of quintessentially Chinese village homes belonging to yesteryears.

Crossing over to South Street, we find the real local flavours. Food stalls are stacked with country cuisine such as red braised pork and baked rice cakes and mounds of tiny quail eggs that are a local delicacy. The crowds enjoy sizzling roast meats on bamboo skewers served with soy sauce; anything that moves may be roasted here—frogs' legs and who-knows-what!

There are other water towns around Shanghai. Ours has been a quick half-day trip and we are back in time to spend our last evening dining in the revolving restaurant in one of Shanghai's swish hotels. The eagle's-eye view of the necklace of car headlights stringing the expressway below us gives us a surreal feeling of being time travellers. You float in and out of different zones; the world of temples like Jade Buddha, Jing'An and Longhua, and ancient marketplaces melts into the slick lifestyle of a burgeoning city.

We cannot resist making a last visit to the Bund. It seems livelier now. Handsome young Chinese men in formal suits with their brides-to-be in flowing red gowns strike amorous poses for professional cameramen. They follow the norm of prenuptial photo sessions taking place against significant outdoor backgrounds. The Bund, where reality merges with history, probably lends these young couples a special sense of romance. It also sums up the charisma of this remarkable city. ✨

**The Puhui River Bridge in Qibao town**

**Opposite page: As the evening arrives, the streets light up with glowing dragons and neon lights**

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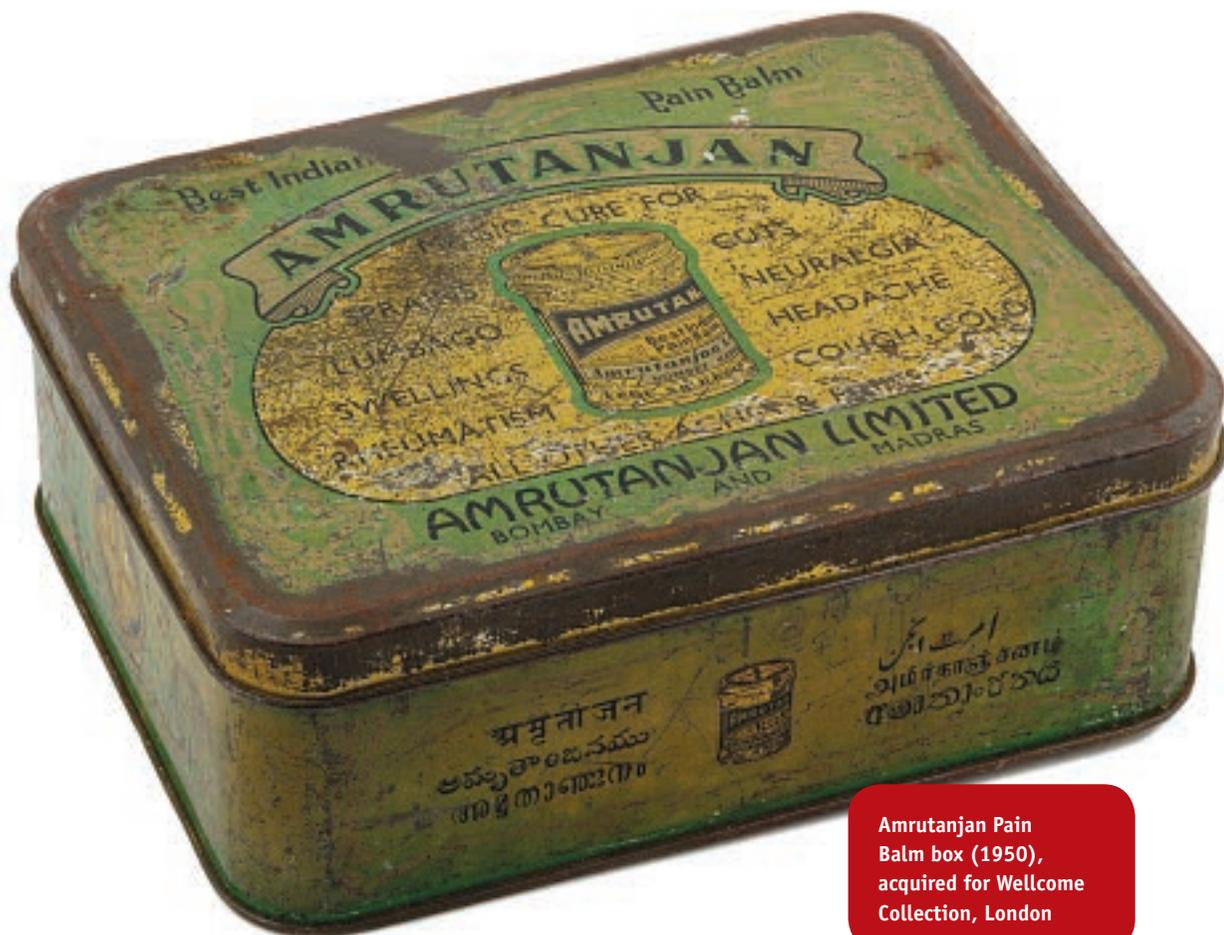
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Amrutanjan Pain Balm box (1950), acquired for Wellcome Collection, London

## MAN AND MEDICINE

With the sophisticated technology and advanced procedures that define postmodern medicine, it is difficult to imagine how ancient civilisations sustained human health. *Tabiyat – Medicine and Healing in India*, an exhibition of medical antiquities and contemporary material culture at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in Mumbai, aims to shed light on the history of medical practices in India. Curated by Medicine Corner, an activity programme of the Wellcome Collection, London, the exhibits, which are displayed under four sections—shrine, home,

miscellany

street and clinic—include ancient medical instruments, sculptures, clothing, manuscripts, and personal items such as combs and foot scrubbers. The star exhibit is *Ayurvedic Man*, an 18th century illustration of the interiors of the human body as understood by Ayurveda. “Each object tells a story,” says Lina Vincent, a curator of *Tabiyat*. “It provides glimpses of the multi-layered nature of India’s healing cultures and breaks hierarchies between what is considered traditional and what is accepted as modern.” The exhibition will be open from 12 January to 28 March 2016.



Photographs by Sumukh Bharadwaj

# The sari saga

Ramya Srinivasan discovers a treasure trove at Bengaluru's Vimor, a store that revives the prints and patterns of vintage handloom textiles

**I**n a quaint room in the heart of Bengaluru, an incredible burst of hues welcomes you into a rich world of textiles; saris and apparel of myriad varieties and textures find pride of place on the shelves. We are at Vimor ('pure' in Indonesian), a classic boutique in Victoria Layout that breathes new life into ancient temple saris and specialises in designer Indian handlooms. "We create replicas of the unique designs and bright shades from saris that belonged to the older generation. Our aim is to preserve the rich textile heritage of the country," says Pavithra Muddaya,

57, who runs Vimor. "We work in close collaboration with the weavers who toil tirelessly in the background."

The tradition began when Muddaya's mother, known as the grand old lady of Indian handloom, the **legacy** late Chimy Nanjappa, set up Vimor in 1974 in the guestroom of her modest home—where the store is housed even today. Beginning her career at the Cauvery Handicrafts Emporium in Bengaluru as its first manager, her close association with Pupul Jayakar, cultural activist and Indian textile industry virtuoso, gave her the opportunity to travel

across the globe presenting and selling Indian handlooms. She also worked with an elite clientele that included prominent leaders such as Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and Indira Gandhi.

At Vimor, Nanjappa and Muddaya worked on ancient temple saris and reconstructed them, apart from designing and selling them. "These auctioned antique pieces were clothes of temple deities; so they had to be cleaned of their oil, steel and iron marks. In some cases, my mother and I had to redesign the saris. We made alterations and did customised work



Vimor has revived different styles and textures of saris from various regions including Benaras, Raidurga, Ramdurga, Bagalkot, Adikegini, Chettinad and Anekal. All-time favourites remain Puja saris. The replicas are then made into silk, cotton or a hybrid of both. **Prices:** Cotton saris range between ₹ 900 and ₹ 2,000; silk saris range between ₹ 3,500 and ₹ 50,000

Have an heirloom sari and want to preserve or recreate it? Email [vimorsarees@gmail.com](mailto:vimorsarees@gmail.com) or visit the store at No 49 (28 new), 3rd Cross, Victoria Layout, Bengaluru - 560047

such as embroidery and painting,” recalls Muddaya. “Our goal was simple: we wanted to make the sari pretty and wearable for our clients.”

As the mother-daughter duo worked on the design replicas, the weavers created the final product. “We mentored and handheld our weavers,” she adds. “During mum’s time, her appreciation and acknowledgement of a good product meant everything to the weavers. She would say that if the sari is not good, she wouldn’t even take it for free. The weavers never wanted to hear her negative comments, ever. So, they worked hard with a sense of pride.”

In the process, the weavers have also built a family legacy. “They have grown over the years and passed on their heritage to their children. We are only happy to mentor the next generation.”

Now, Muddaya’s daughter Vipra and son Arup are active participants of the business, bringing in their own fresh ideas. “The next generation resisted getting into this for a while,” she shares. “But having grown up peering into apparel cabinets, their aesthetics are strong. They are incredibly creative and it was a natural choice for them to be engaged with Vimor. I let them pick my brains for a while, but now they have a say in the colour and design of each piece. Their business acumen is quite strong too.”

At the recently held Rajasthan Fashion Week, while Vipra designed the accessories, Arup showcased his novel line of funky *lungi* with dashing colours and patterns. His collection of unisex *lungi* and sarongs received a fantastic response from the motley young crowd and sold out in no time.

Continuing the revivalist tradition, Vimor now focuses on family heirloom saris. “Grandchildren who aspire to retain the link with the previous generation come to us with their grandmother’s sari. We use the design elements from the original and recreate newer pieces

that can be worn by the younger generation. We also honour the person who owned the sari by naming it after her,” shares Muddaya. “As a concept, we love doing this because it gives us an opportunity to be a part of the customer’s emotional journey.”

Today, Vimor’s clients include Sonia and Priyanka Gandhi, among other celebrities such as Shabana Azmi and Nandita Das. In an age of brand building and digital marketing, Vimor has always been rather subtle with minimal efforts to advertise or promote, choosing not to label their ‘designer’ wear. Their products are modestly priced, affordable to the common man. “People have always wondered about our unconventional choice to not label our products,” says Vipra. “But customers have always come to us through word of mouth. Even though our weavers have earned a name for themselves, they still like to work with us because of the special bond we share. My grandmother always used to tell us not to be avaricious.”

Indeed, it appears Nanjappa’s textile legacy will be carried forward with pride by the women of the family. Walk into Vimor today and you’re likely to see a fourth generation member—Vidushi, Muddaya’s two year-old granddaughter—welcome you with a smile and earnestly describe how “pretty” a sari on display is.





Haresh Patel

# Clinical precision

**M**outh-watering dishes are scattered around the room—fried fish and grilled chicken with chutney here, a plateful of *bhel* and hot *aloo bhajia* there. Your hand almost reaches out to grab a bite, but you stop short when you realise that they are indeed paintings.

“I specialise in hyper-realistic painting,” says **Dr Hemant Bhansali**, a laparoscopic surgeon based in Mumbai who paints objects with such fine details that they look real. “The viewer should feel like having a grab of the painted food.”

A pioneer in his field, Dr Bhansali has trained over 18,000 surgeons, set up laparoscopy units in almost every state and practises at top hospitals in Mumbai. And he wields the paintbrush with equal ease. Dr Bhansali’s paintings were on sale recently at the India Art Festival in Mumbai.

“I’ve been dabbling with painting on and off since childhood; my sketch of a Coca-Cola bottle with hands holding a gun was a big hit among my classmates in school,” says the 61 year-old. “After my PhD in 2012, I took to painting seriously.”

**art** At his wife Shailaja’s suggestion, he settled for painting food, a rare specialisation among painters.

He first learned the wet-on-wet technique of oil painting from instructional videos on the Internet. Very soon, he realised that the Flemish technique—where every layer is added after the previous layer dries up—was more suitable for the odd hours he kept. “I start four or five canvases at a time as I have to wait for each layer to dry, which takes about a week,” he explains. “It takes me a month to complete a work, depending on the intensity of the painting and the number of layers on a canvas.”

Indeed, the stability of his hands as a surgeon helps him portray the finer details of a hyper-realistic painting with minute accuracy. “The precision of my work helps when I’m illustrating the crispness of the dosa or the shine of the sambhar,” shares Dr Bhansali, adding that painting has a meditative effect on him. “It helps relax my senses and calms me after my surgeries.”

Despite a tight schedule that includes surgery, consultation, conferences and pursuing a course in Medico Law, Dr Bhansali dedicates two hours a day to his passion. “I hardly found time for painting earlier. But now, with diligent students under my care who share my workload, I get to spend more time in my studio at home discovering my inner self,” he says, adding that his next goal is to master the 3D technique. “I never want to stop learning.”

—Delaveen Tarapore



## ON THE MENU

With the fast food culture gaining ground in India, gastronomic preferences have changed across regions and many traditional delicacies are on the verge of endangerment. Recognising the threat to their native Rajasthani cuisine, home science experts and childhood friends Dr Suman Bhatnagar, 69, and Dr Pushpa Gupta, 70, have co-authored *Rajasthan on a Platter: Healthy. Tasty. Easy* (152 pages; ₹ 650; Niyogi), a cookbook that explores the region's exquisite cuisine. "Unlike some regional fare, Rajasthani cuisine has not travelled much into the kitchens of other states. We wanted to popularise these dishes and, at the same time, document them for future generations," says Dr Bhatnagar. Dr Gupta adds, "We contacted many older relatives and friends who prepare these dishes regularly. We tried out each recipe two to three times to calculate and bring out the most nutritious



combination of ingredients." The book serves up simple yet delectable homemade recipes such as *mangodi ki sabzi*, *besan gatte*, *laal mans*, *makki ka dhokla* and *rabdi ke malpua*, based on the crops growing in Rajasthan's different agro-climatic zones. Bon appétit.

## RAISING THE BAR

'CINE-STILL PHOTOGRAPHER' AHMED PATNI, 75, WHO WORKS OUT OF HIS OFFICE IN ONE OF THE NARROW BY-LANES OF FORAS STREET IN MUMBAI'S GRANT ROAD, HAS THE DISTINCTION OF BEING A PHOTOGRAPHER OF BAR DANCERS. WITH UNIQUE ACCESS TO THE INNARDS OF BOMBAY'S DANCE BARS FOR OVER 40 YEARS, HE MADE A "FACTORY-LOAD" OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR DANCERS AND THE ESTABLISHMENTS—UNTIL THE MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT IMPOSED ITS INFAMOUS BAN IN 2005. "THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE BEEN QUITE HARD ON ME," HE SHARES. BUT THINGS ARE LOOKING UP FOR PATNI AS THE SUPREME COURT SUSPENDED THE BAN RECENTLY. "THE BAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED, BUT WE NEVER KNOW WHEN THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT FIND SOME PROVISION TO IMPOSE IT AGAIN," HE SAYS WARILY. MEANWHILE, HE HOPES THAT HIS OLD CONTACTS FROM DANCE BARS AND RESTAURANTS INVITE HIM BACK TO SHOOT PICTURES. "I AM ALWAYS READY TO GET BACK TO THE REAL WORK," HE SMILES.



Natasha Rego

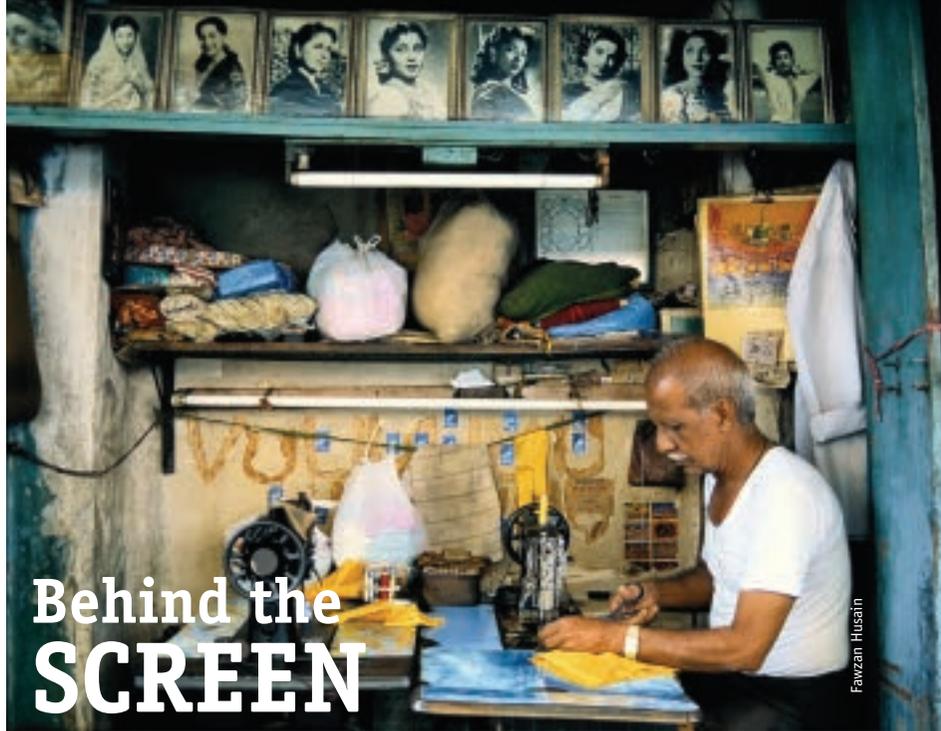


Courtesy: S Shankar

Mysore K Vasudevacharya

### A musical tribute

On the occasion of renowned Carnatic musician Mysore K Vasudevacharya's 150th birth anniversary in November 2015, his grandson S Krishnamurthy released the English transliteration of *Vasudeva Kirthana Manjari*, a masterpiece containing his grandfather's compositions in Telugu and Sanskrit. Complete with *swara* notations and lyrics of each *kriti* in English, along with the original Sanskrit and Telugu verses, the book serves as an authentic version of his original compositions for connoisseurs of music. S Shankar, founder of the Shankarabharanam Kala Mandiram that published the transliteration in association with Prism Books, says, "Out of Vasudevacharya's 200-odd compositions, only 10 are well-known. For the genius to have a wider audience, I collected likeminded people, including Krishnamurthy, to produce this transliteration." For nonagenarian Krishnamurthy, an expert in Carnatic and Western classical music, this was a timely tribute to his legendary grandfather shortly before his own demise on 5 December.



## Behind the SCREEN

Fawzan Husain

After capturing the moods of Mumbai in visual tribute *Between Bombay & Mumbai* in 2013, veteran photographer Fawzan Husain is now back with *The Silver Screen and Beyond*, a self-published photobook that explores Bollywood beyond the sets. The book—12 years in the making—is divided into three sections: 'Silver Screen' about life on the sets; 'Beyond' which captures the presence of Bollywood in daily life; and a small third section, 'Archives', which contains portraits of yesteryear Bollywood stars. The idea for the book struck Husain in 2004 on the sets of Govind Nihalani's *Dev*, when he was called in to consult on a riot scene. "The people on the sets had a story of their own," he recalls. "I wanted to capture their candid movements, quirks and emotions, without letting them know that I was even there." Now, "with Bollywood down and dusted", Husain says it's time for his next big project, *Faces: Indian Women* (a working title). We look forward to it.

### INSIDE THE MIND OF AN ARTIST

Renowned artist Arpita Singh recently offered art connoisseurs a rare view of her sketches, drawings and watercolours at a solo exhibition titled *Arpita Singh: Works from 1990-2015* at Vadehra Art Gallery, Delhi. A sharp contrast from her highly finished works, for the first time, 45 sketch books, and about 60 drawings and watercolour paintings—both works-in-progress and finished works made over the last decade—were on display, offering a glimpse into her artistic process.

"I am motivated by the life I see around me. It could be an object or a situation... I transform and incorporate it into my artworks," the 78 year-old told *Verve* magazine. "The social and political environment of the world, the feelings of insecurity and arrogance that people have creep into my art in some way or the other."



Courtesy: Vadehra Art Gallery

***The first day at school***

*The first time you rode the bicycle.*

***The first crush you had at thirteen***

*The first drama you got a part in*

***The first day at college***

*The first date you went on*

***The first kiss***

*The first time you proposed*

***The first job interview***

*The first board meeting you addressed*

***The first day after retirement***

***BUTTERFLIES*** never retire

**The first click of the mouse.**

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# Notable Nani

On Nani Palkhivala's 96th birth anniversary, Raj Kanwar remembers him not just as an intellectual giant but a man of integrity with impeccable human qualities

**N**ani Palkhivala was not only an intellectual giant but also one of the greatest legal luminaries who strode like a colossus across India's judicial domain for close to five decades. As a legal wizard, Nani had no peers; he left his intellectual stamp on every important constitutional case that ever entered the portals of India's Supreme Court.

I had been his ardent admirer for many long years and, like millions of fellow Indians, eagerly looked forward every year to his post-Budget analysis that was sharp, incisive and precise. He had a razor-sharp memory and would comment without referring to notes. His grasp of the budgetary proposals was so thorough that he could instantly answer any question that was posed. He could reel out facts and figures from memory and continue to speak extempore for hours together. He once said that he learnt the value of memory from a story about the great lawyer Bhulabhai Desai. Desai was taking notes in the library when a senior walked in and tore up his notes, telling him, "Lawyers make notes in their memory, not on paper." Nani followed the adage in letter and spirit. In a way, Nani had become a legend in his own lifetime.

Our first meeting took place in 1996 when he visited Dehra Dun to be honoured with the 'Pride of the Nation' award by the Doon Citizens Council. One of our members, Arvind Singh, took the responsibility of escorting Nani and his wife Nargesh on the night train from Delhi to Dehra Dun. Nani had known Arvind's family for some years and was naturally comfortable with him. The reception party at the Dehra Dun railway station to receive the Palkhivala couple included Lt Gen Mohindar Singh,

Arvind's father, and some of our office bearers. Arvind made the formal introductions.

At Hotel Madhuban, I found myself overawed in his presence. However, his easy manner made me somewhat comfortable and I soon regained my equanimity. The lunch at the Madhuban was joined by other luminaries such as Lt Gen F N Bilimoria, author Nergis Dalal, Chief of the Air Force S K Sareen and a former chief Dilbagh Singh. Seasoned publisher Ashok Chopra also took the opportunity to visit Dehra Dun to promote Palkhivala's latest book, *We the Nation*. Thus, the lunch became an occasion for bonhomie and casual banter. Nani, naturally,

was the cynosure of all eyes; he was at his brilliant best, and we all listened to his words with admiration and awe. Like a good host, I refrained from proffering any opinion on the topics that were discussed and let the guests have their say. Though Nargesh Palkhivala mostly remained quiet, she was both attentive and interested. All in all, it was an enjoyable afternoon that got lengthened beyond its schedule.

Doon Citizens Council annually presented the 'Pride of the Nation' award to those citizens who had distinguished themselves in any field or endeavour. It had honoured T N Seshan, the iconic chief election commissioner,

the year before and ace cricketer Sunil Gavaskar a year later. Some other luminaries presented with the coveted award were Dr R Chidambaram, chairman, Atomic Energy Commission, veteran actress Shabana Azmi, and many others. In fact, Doon Citizens Council was my humble contribution to enlivening the city's socio-cultural life.

The awards function that evening at ONGC's AMN Ghosh Auditorium was a glittering affair. The city's crème de la crème had packed the auditorium to listen to the legendary lawyer and financial wizard. Nani did not disappoint us. He was humble in accepting our award and effusive

Nani had a razor-sharp memory and would comment without referring to notes. His grasp of the budgetary proposals was so thorough that he could instantly answer any question that was posed

Nani was both large-hearted and kind-hearted. Simplicity and modesty were his credos; innate courtesy his calling card. His politeness would extend to everyone irrespective of his rank or station in life

in praising our venture. He was given a standing ovation when he concluded his acceptance speech. Nani was generous in giving his autograph to one and all at the refreshments that followed. For me personally, it was an enjoyable and satisfying evening.

We all had known of his incredibly impeccable professional credentials, and his qualities of head and heart. Nani was both large-hearted and kind-hearted. Simplicity and modesty were his credos; innate courtesy his calling card. His politeness was all embracing; he would extend it to everyone irrespective of his rank or station in life. During his final years, when he was not keeping good health, the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court expressed a desire to call on him to pay his respects. But, instead, Nani went to the High Court in a wheelchair to call on him. He felt that as an advocate it was his duty to call on the Chief Justice, notwithstanding the physical difficulties involved.

His wife Nargesh carried her humility as if it were a badge of honour. I was to have a taste of her hospitality when I later visited them in their spacious apartment in Commonwealth Building in Mumbai's Nariman Point. The next time I visited, she had passed away, and the house gave the impression of bleak emptiness, and Nani a lonely, heartbroken and desolate man, as if he had lost his will to live. My condolences and sympathy were largely unspoken but equally eloquent. I left after a few minutes, promising to come back soon.

When I next visited Commonwealth Building, Nani had been bedridden for quite some time and looked feeble. A nurse on duty guided me to a chair by Nani's bedside and I quietly sat there, not knowing what to say. He had lost his speech; I shed a few unseen tears, feeling sad at the travesty of fate. A man whose voice once used to thunder across the country was that day lying helpless and vulnerable. The nurse too appeared equally powerless. I noticed signs of recognition in his face; encouraged, I took his hand in my hand and pressed it softly and tenderly. His eyes seemed to say 'thank you'. I sat there for a



Courtesy: Forum of Free Enterprise

few minutes. When I got up to leave, Nani glanced at me, even as the nurse held the door open, bidding goodbye. Nani quietly passed away on 11 December 2002, leaving his countless admirers in utter shock.

Though of medium height, Nani stood head and shoulders above most of his peers in the legal and judicial arena. He was held in high esteem by lawyers and judges alike and accorded great respect. His opinion was often sought by the high and mighty in the corporate and political domains. He showed great courage of conviction and integrity by refusing to accept Indira Gandhi's brief in June 1975. He had voiced in no uncertain terms his opposition to the Emergency. He spent much of his life arguing finer constitutional points in several landmark cases. In the Kesavananda Bharati case, his arguments in the Supreme Court lasted 33 days—a record of sorts in the history of jurisprudence from which emerged the sacramental aspect that 'the basic structure of the Constitution' is unalterable and Parliament could not tamper with it. He was truly a man of great integrity, the likes of which come rarely.

---

*The writer is a veteran journalist based in Dehradun*



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# *The year's awakening*

A slice of sylvan charm, this poem by **Thomas Hardy** (1840-1928) captures his bewilderment at the natural cycle of life

*How do you know that the pilgrim track  
Along the belting zodiac  
Swept by the sun in his seeming rounds  
Is traced by now to the Fishes' bounds  
And into the Ram, when weeks of cloud  
Have wrapt the sky in a clammy shroud,  
And never as yet a tinct of spring  
Has shown in the Earth's apparelling;  
O vespering bird, how do you know,  
How do you know?*

*How do you know, deep underground,  
Hid in your bed from sight and sound,  
Without a turn in temperature,  
With weather life can scarce endure,  
That light has won a fraction's strength,  
And day put on some moments' length,  
Whereof in merest rote will come,  
Weeks hence, mild airs that do not numb;  
O crocus root, how do you know,  
How do you know?*

---

*One of the greatest 20th-century poets, Hardy was a profound influence on later poets such as Robert Frost, W H Auden, Dylan Thomas and Philip Larkin*



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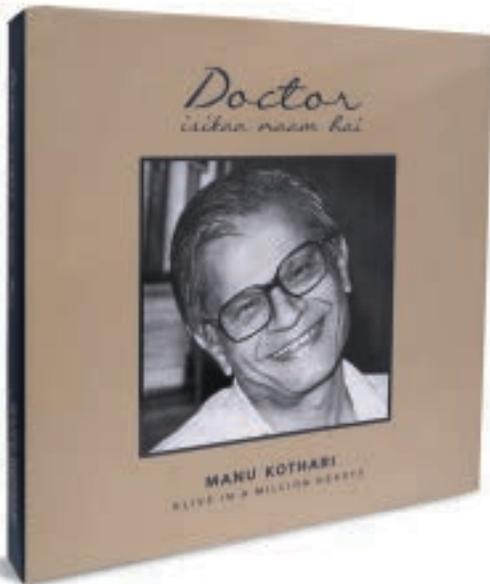
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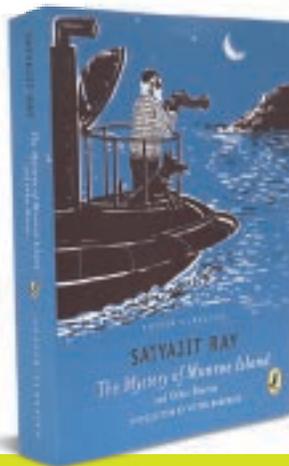
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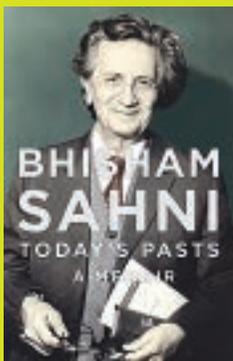
**DOCTOR ISIKAA NAAM HAI: MANU KOTHARI ALIVE IN A MILLION HEARTS** (self-published; 334 pages) is the loving tribute of a wife to her late husband, an extraordinary soul. When **Jyoti Manu Kothari** decided to honour the memory of the doctor who was the professor emeritus of anatomy in Mumbai's KEM Hospital by bringing out a memoir, she didn't have to look far for the people whose lives he had touched; more than 50 of them—students, colleagues, patients and relatives of patients—wrote in with stories and notes of gratitude. The book is a compilation of these letters in English and Gujarati, along with extracts from the books that Kothari published with long-time associate Dr Lopa Mehta. Kothari believed the human body has the power to self-heal and most ailments are just occurrences in the natural progression of a human life. That he had a radical mind and was a dissenter of the very profession he practised come across clearly in the book, as does his spiritual approach to healing. For more information, email [drjyotikothari@gmail.com](mailto:drjyotikothari@gmail.com).

Featuring the indomitable Professor Trilokeshwar Shonku and a bunch of madcap characters, **THE MYSTERY OF MUNROE ISLAND AND OTHER STORIES** (Puffin; ₹ 250; 381 pages) is a clever translation by **Indrani Majumdar**, bringing alive the magic and charm of **Satyajit Ray's** imaginative world. Ray mesmerises you with extraterrestrial beings, potions, magic and inventions that are creations of a mind that dwelt in

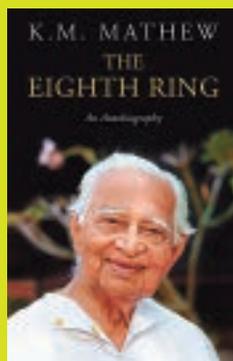


fantasies and romance. Shonku's worlds are an enthralling escape into an eccentric place where he confronts a daring doppelganger, undertakes an experiment to create pure gold, unravels the mystery of a scientist's loss of memory, and visits an unknown island to look for an amazing fruit. With interesting trivia about the author and a wacky list of the professor's idiosyncratic but innovative inventions as an add-on, this is a little gem of a book that brings back the wild fantasies of childhood.

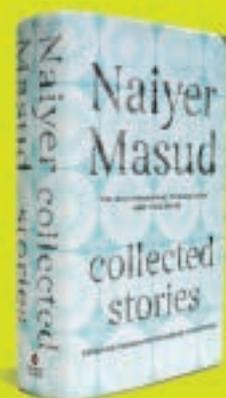
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# Fears and tears

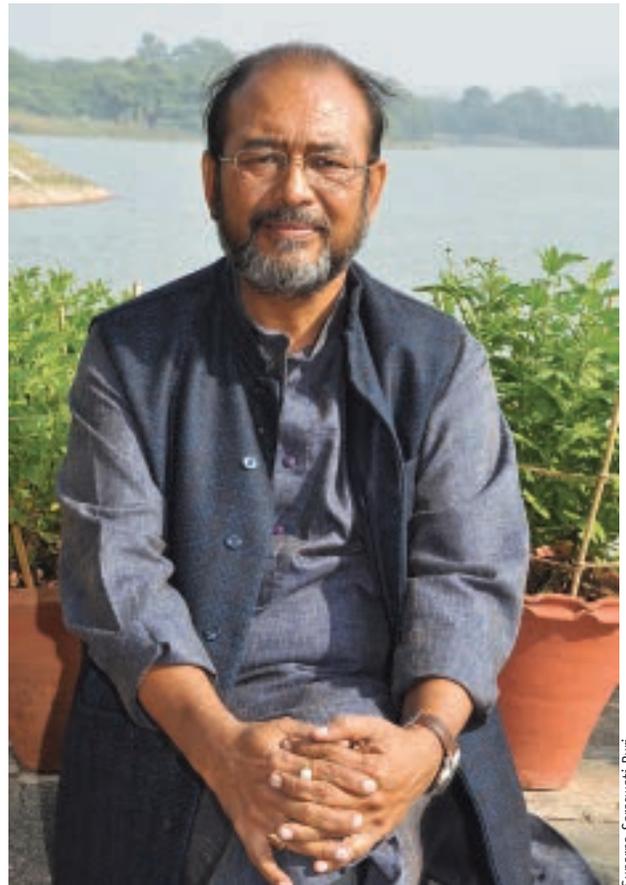
It is a string of human interest stories," says **Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay** about his latest book *Sikhs: The Untold Agony of 1984* (Westland; ₹ 399; 192 pages), an explicit account of one of the most tragic and unsettling episodes of independent India. The book goes way beyond reviving memories of the event; it questions the validity of administrative machinery meant for public safety and justice as well as addresses serious concerns about India's so-called secular fabric. The book is a compelling read for anyone who wishes to understand the 'behind-the-scenes' narrative of sociopolitical events that led to the pogrom of 1984.

Despite dropping out of college because he had "an ideological distaste for formal academics", Mukhopadhyay published his first book, *The Demolition: India at the Crossroads*, in 1994. Almost 10 years later, in 2013, he wrote the critically acclaimed *Narendra Modi: The Man, the Times*, published by Westland. Mukhopadhyay, who has worked as a journalist with several news publications such as *The Economic Times*, *Hindustan Times*, *Outlook* and *The Statesman*, is also a playwright and familiar face, presenting the weekly show *A Page From History* on Lok Sabha Television. At the launch of his recent book at Chandigarh Literary Society's Literati 2015, **Suparna-Saraswati Puri** caught up with the 54 year-old, Delhi-based author.

**The title of your latest book is both poignant and revealing.**

The title evolved on its own. I was keen that it represent three elements: the Sikhs, because they were the targeted community in the events that are central to the book; their pain and suffering, and the drama that had to be situated in 1984. The title, like any good headline, had to communicate what the book was all about. I wanted to delink the events after Indira Gandhi's assassination with preceding events, where the main trauma centered on Operation Blue Star and the Golden Temple. The main action of my book takes place among Sikhs outside Punjab. Because the 1984 referred to in this case related to events after the assassination, the picture had to depict personal pain and loss and not symbolise the affront to the community by an event such as Operation Blue Star. I consciously chose not to use gory images. I believe in understatement.

**How is your book different from other writings on 1984?**



Suparna-Saraswati Puri

*authorspeak*

This is not a book of what happened and how. It is also not a book that traces the commissions and omissions of different governments. It is a book about what happened in the lives of people who were sucked into the maelstrom of 1984, how they coped or could not overcome that tragedy, how the events impacted the lives of others who were otherwise spared attacks.

**What kind of research went into it?**

I am fortunate to be blessed with an elephantine memory. I also reached out to others, asking them to share their own treasure of memories. Most were willing to open up, though a few said they would rather let the ghosts stay buried. In 1984, I was too young and preoccupied with the immediacy of events and necessity of assisting the survivors to be bothered about maintaining a diary. The

days began early and ended late. I met people, survivors or others like me who had been involved in relief and rehabilitation, and found that they remembered every bit of their experience. Besides standard sources, oral testimonies formed the basis of my information capsules.

### **Given the nature of the content, was the writing tiring or liberating emotionally?**

Writing is always physically and mentally challenging. Long hours of sitting on the computer table, travelling for interviews, transcribing them, and poring over books and reports form just the physical side of the task. Mentally, it is draining, and demands high levels of concentration. This gets accentuated for authors like me who have to continue with other writings to earn a livelihood. There was no sense of elation or happiness after completing the book, but there was certainly an immense sense of relief. Writing about the agony and suffering of others is a painful exercise.

### **Was the book on Modi a trigger for penning this?**

I had wanted to write a book on the 1984 violence for long, from the time I was sucked into this gory episode as a character. Back then, I did not have the confidence. I wrote my first book, *The Demolition*, soon after Babri Masjid was razed. There was a long gap of two decades. When I eventually reached a now-or-never-situation in 2011-12, the Modi biography was the most natural project because of my strong belief that the political wind was in his favour and that he had a realistic chance of becoming the prime minister. But even before the Modi book was over, I was keen to do the 1984 book because of the constant juxtaposition of the 2002 Gujarat riots with the anti-Sikh violence. I found it perverse to justify 2002 because of previous episodes of mass violence.

### **What determines your choice of subject vis-à-vis your journalistic writings?**

As a journalist, I react to events as they happen and to moving human interest stories that require documentation. As an author, when I write non-fiction, I extend these boundaries. As a writer of fiction, I let my imagination run wild and write what commitment to truth and events don't allow. For instance, the protagonist of my play, *Everything Personal*, directed by Bhaskar Ghose and essayed by Sunit

Tandon on stage in Delhi, was a person who was not himself and lived under an assumed identity.

### **With whom do you share the first draft of every book?**

I have always maintained that my wife Varsha is my first reader. Even for my journalistic pieces, whenever I write something sensitive, I ask her to take a look and incorporate her suggestions.

### **What were the challenges involved in writing this book?**

The biggest challenge was to ensure that the book did not become endless. For every line in the book, there were five others that were deleted and 20 that were never written. All characters, barring one who passed away in the course of writing the book, are alive. Their stories are unique to them but simultaneously representative of the times.

### **What were the emotional challenges you faced?**

A big challenge for all writers is to remain sensitive as a person while the writer is exploring the dehumanisation of others. I shed tears even now in the silence of the night for many of my characters. For instance, the elderly Sikh gentleman who could never ever save enough money to buy a scooter again after it was burnt to cinders. He

would watch the iconic Bajaj scooter ad, *Buland Bharat ki buland tasveer*, every night. Similarly, I keep thinking about how cruel it must have been for a young girl to grow up with the nickname *Bahen Chaurasi* (sister 84).

### **Why did you drop out of college?**

I had an ideological distaste for formal academics. I also had an academic ace as a father. Being the only child, he wished that I did better, but in his discipline. I wished to study genetic engineering when its potential was still unknown in our small-town campuses. I rebelled, ran away from home, came back, enrolled in JNU but dropped out and became a journalist.

### **What can the readers look forward to next?**

I am working on a book on RSS and its iconic leaders. *Insha'allah*, it should be ready next year.

"A big challenge for all writers is to remain sensitive as a person while the writer is exploring the dehumanisation of others. I shed tears even now in the silence of the night for many of my characters"

# Priceless moments

Commitment to momentary changes is more significant than drawing up New Year resolutions, remarks **Bodhipaksa**

There's a 50/50 chance that you have already made some New Year resolutions. Or perhaps you're one of the people who never make New Year resolutions because you've learned through experience that they're forgotten almost as soon as they're created.

Whether we make resolutions or not, we see each new year as an opportunity for new beginnings: not just new years, but new months, new weeks, and new days. Our lives are full of new beginnings. But the most significant new beginnings take place at a much finer scale.

When we meditate, for example, we're forever catching the mind having gone off and become distracted. We find, for example, that we've been mulling over some old hurt, or worrying about some upcoming event, or telling ourselves stories about how we think other people feel about us.

Those moments in which we've realised that the mind has become distracted are important new beginnings. Each time we notice that we've been caught up in a spiritually unprofitable train of thought, we have a crucial opportunity to let go of it, to reconnect with our present moment experience, to start over.

Sometimes there are so many of these new beginnings that it seems like we're making little progress. But each time we let go of an unskilful train of thought, returning mindfully and compassionately to our present moment experience, we're changing who we are. We're changing our habits, weakening unskilful patterns and strengthening skilful ones. We're even, at a cellular level, rewiring the brain.

Each new beginning may not change us very much, but, as the Buddha said, "Drop by drop, a water pot fills."

An ongoing commitment to moment to moment change such as this is more powerful than any number of New Year resolutions, precisely because they involve such small steps. We can't climb a mountain in one bound—thousands of small steps over time are what's needed.

Sometimes we might feel that our practice is repetitive. You realise you're distracted, let go and return to the breathing, realise you're distracted and return to the

breathing. You breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out, repeat. But, in fact, each experience we have is a new beginning. No two breaths are the same.

Try noticing your next in-breath. See how it comes into existence, is present in your experience, and then comes to an end. Try that again with the next out-breath. Now follow each in-breath and out-breath with an awareness that you'll meet this breath only once in your entire existence. Follow the whole cycle of your breathing: beginnings and endings, endings and beginnings. See how precious each breath, each moment, is.

Now as you observe your in-breaths and out-breaths coming into existence and passing away, notice how each breath is composed of a series of moments. There's this moment, then this moment, then this moment—no two the same, and none ever returning. There's just this endless series of new beginnings and new endings, intersecting in time, each one precious and deserving of our full attention.



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*A member of the Triratna Buddhist order, Bodhipaksa (4 January 1961) is a Buddhist practitioner, teacher, and author with a blog on meditation, [www.wildmind.org](http://www.wildmind.org)*

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# People's premier

**H**is pithy slogan during India's 22-day war with Pakistan—*Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*—enthused the Armed Forces and the farmers at a time when the nation was grappling with external aggression and a severe food crunch. A true blue people's prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri did not just share his birthday with the Father of the Nation on 2 October but cherished the Mahatma's ideals of truth and non-violence. However, Shastri, who succeeded Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as prime minister in June 1964, died under mysterious circumstances in Tashkent on 11 January 1966, a day after inking the Tashkent peace pact with Pakistan. Though his family alleged foul play, citing dark blue spots and marks on his body, the official line was that Shastri had died of cardiac arrest.

Mild mannered and soft spoken, Shastri—meaning 'learned in the scriptures', a title he won after graduating from Kashi Vidyapitha—was a Nehruvian socialist. During his brief tenure, he became popular for the firmness with which he dealt with Pakistan's aggression; for promoting the Green Revolution; setting up the Food Corporation of India to oversee food grain control; furthering the White Revolution by creating the National



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Dairy Development Board; and successfully handling the anti-Hindi agitation of 1965. The response to his call for skipping one meal a week in solidarity with the hungry millions in the country was also phenomenal, with restaurants and eateries downing shutters on Monday

evenings and families across the country observing the 'Shastri Vrat'. Leading by example, Shastri motivated farmers by ploughing the lawns of his official residence himself.

Earlier, as union minister for railways and transport in Nehru's cabinet, in an exemplary gesture of constitutional propriety, Shastri resigned, owning moral responsibility for a train accident in Tamil Nadu. He also implemented welfare measures such as introducing fans in third-class compartments and appointing women conductors in state-run buses for the first time. As minister in charge of the police department, he ordered that jets of water be used instead of *lathi* to disperse unruly crowds. During his tenure as home minister, he earned the epithet the 'Homeless Home Minister', as he didn't have a house of his own. At the time of his death, Shastri's only movable asset was an old car he had bought by taking a loan, a few instalments of which

were still pending. Known for his honesty, humility and humaneness, Shastri was the first person to be posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna. His memorial in New Delhi is named Vijay Ghat in memory of his leading India to victory in the 1965 war against Pakistan.

## THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: JANUARY 1966

- On 12 January, the *Batman* television series was broadcast for the first time on the ABC channel in the US.
- On 19 January, Swedish tennis great Stefan Edberg was born in Västervik in Sweden.
- On 29 January, the first of 608 performances of *Sweet Charity* opened at the Palace Theatre in New York City.
- On 31 January, the US resumed Operation Rolling Thunder over North Vietnam.

# Walkscore

*n.* A measure of how amenable a neighbourhood is to walking.

**Example.** 62: The site's current **walkscore**, out of 100, which is categorised as "somewhat walkable". The number will undoubtedly improve once tenants and retail users continue to fill in the neighbourhood.

—Katie Burke, "Numbers to know for Alamo Manhattan's new River Walk residential development", San Antonio Business Journal, 29 October 2015

“ Just because you're grown up and then some doesn't mean settling into the doldrums of predictability. Surprise people. Surprise yourself.

—American writer and speaker Victoria Moran

# PED SHED

*n.* The walkable area that surrounds a particular location, such as a retail centre or transportation hub.

**Example.** A High Activity Zone should serve a walkable **ped shed** with a 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius. If your downtown or other urban district is larger than that, you should have a series of High Activity Zones spaced 1/2 to 1 mile apart, each of which serve the surrounding area that is within a 5-10 minute walk.

—Dan Zack, "Strategies for good urban retail", Smart Growth, 17 July 2015

# Mom-shaming

*n.* The public reproach of a mother for actions or opinions that are perceived to be inappropriate or harmful to her children.

**Example.** I'll take an honest expression of disapproval any day over the smug, passive-aggressive **mom-shaming** that goes on every day on the playground and in the comments sections of every parenting blog.

—Emily Flake, "Emily Flake's Mama Tried lambasts modern parenting, in all its passive-aggressive, smug glory", The Globe and Mail, 29 October 2015

# Stealth dorm

*n.* A home zoned as a single-family residence but rented by a group of unrelated individuals, particularly college students.

**Example.** There is a darkness moving over Texas, a creeping dread passing over its most comfortable neighborhoods: the **stealth dorm**. This shadow represents a threat to the families that call college towns like Austin home. The stealth dorm—say it like this, stealth dorm—is a barrow of Millennials looking to save money by living together as roommates. The horror.

—Kriston Capps, "Are millennial 'stealth dorms' ruining Texas cities?", CityLab, 11 November 2015

# Shehemoth

*n.* A large and imposing woman.

**Example.** The audience listened as something even larger than Keira approached, the ground shuddered slightly as an enormous figure stepped from behind the curtain, the announcers lip trembled as this **shehemoth** emerged, easily two feet taller than Keira.

—Jderil, "A new dawn begins", DeviantArt, 16 September 2013

# Droneport

*n.* An airport or hub designed for or dedicated to drones.

**Example.** A futuristic network of **droneports** that will help distribute pharmaceuticals and other crucial goods is set to open soon in the small African republic of Rwanda.

—Jacopo Prisco, "Star architect designs the world's first airport for drones", CNN, 5 October 2015



# Go golf

Dreamed of playing golf but never had the means? Now, silvers in the National Capital Region can live out their dreams at Noida Golf Course—without being members.

**BUZZ**

To promote the game, the course is offering a pay-and-play scheme; charges are ₹ 600 on weekdays and ₹ 1,200 on weekends. The course is open from 6 am to 10 pm; there's even a coffee shop to recharge the batteries. For more details, call (0120) 4222111, 4222942 or email [info@noidagolfcourse.com](mailto:info@noidagolfcourse.com)



Courtesy: Noida Golf Course

## Reducetarian

*n.* A person who purposefully reduces the amount of meat in their diet.

**Example.** But if the term **reducetarian** hasn't taken widespread hold quite yet, it's still great timing: Periodic meatlessness is trendy enough that Beyonce publicly goes without sometimes.

—Arin Greenwood, "Love bacon AND animals? 'Reducetarianism' may be for you", The Huffington Post, 6 March 2015

## Franzenesque

*adj.* In the manner or style of novelist Jonathan Franzen.

**Example.** The Wolfe characters who lack a roman à clef provenance, the more generic figures in his page-turning plot, have washed away with time. By contrast, Hallberg often dispenses with the dictates of journalism to burrow into the psychic and familial underpinnings of his characters in a **Franzenesque**, if not Dickensian, manner.

—Frank Rich, "Garth Risk Hallberg's City on Fire", The New York Times, 8 October 2015

## “We hope to touch many more lives in the years to come”

Damyanti Tanna, 51, and Pradeep Tanna, 54, Mumbai, provide free meals to silvers



Photographs by Shail Desai

Life changed dramatically for the Tannas, a middle-class couple in Mulund, a suburb of Mumbai, when they lost their only son Nimesh in a train accident on 1 July 2011. Having picked up the pieces of their lives, **Damyanti**, 51, and **Pradeep Tanna**, 54, are today enriching the lives of many silvers in the Bhandup-Mulund-Thane belt by providing them free meals. But it was not easy. For almost a year, Damyanti refused to step out of their home and the couple mulled over disposing of the house—filled with their son’s memories—and shifting elsewhere. But it dawned on them that Nimesh, who often used to treat poor children to meals, would be happier if they fed others. The Tannas printed advertisements in newspapers and put up brochures, asking people to identify homebound silvers. After scrutinising 200-odd applications, on 26 January 2013 the first set of tiffins rolled out for 27 silvers from the Shri Nimesh Tanna Charitable Trust. Today, the number of tiffins has gone up to 60, as have other numbers: the quantity of vegetables per meal has gone up from 5 kg to 14 kg, while the cooks have increased from four to eight. Damyanti avers that help is rolling in from various sources in various forms. While the local vegetable seller has taken a cut in his profit to offer a healthy bargain, a wholesale grocer in Vashi sends food grains without charging transportation cost.

Sometimes, Nimesh’s friends would chip in by delivering the meals when the *dabbawala* couldn’t. “Though we would like to thank each donor personally, many a time we have no clue who they are!” says Damyanti, overseeing the lunch preparations on in full swing in the kitchen. The trust spends an average of ₹ 200,000 per month on tiffins. The seamless workflow is aided by a crisp database; each household has a tiffin number with a code to understand how many seniors live there, and the meals are customised based on their needs and preferences. The tiffin comprises chapattis, vegetables, dal and rice. On certain days there are fried treats like *pakoda*, and sometimes even *pav bhaji* and *misal pav*. The feedback from silvers is tremendous, says Damyanti, adding that once they received a *rakhi* for ‘Nimeshbhai’! Whether it is distributing a month’s supply of grains to adivasis, doling out packets of *farsan* and *laddoo* to hamlets in Karjat during Diwali, and clothes, food and bed-sheets during Christmas, life for the Tannas revolves around the trust. “Our only prayer is that we continue to help as many people as possible,” they sign off.

—Shail Desai

**You can reach the Shri Nimesh Tanna Charitable Trust at [sntctrust@gmail.com](mailto:sntctrust@gmail.com); or call Damyanti Tanna at (0) 9004135858**

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