

harmony

JANUARY 2014 ₹ 30

celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

a
passage
to

india

indophiles who came, saw and stayed

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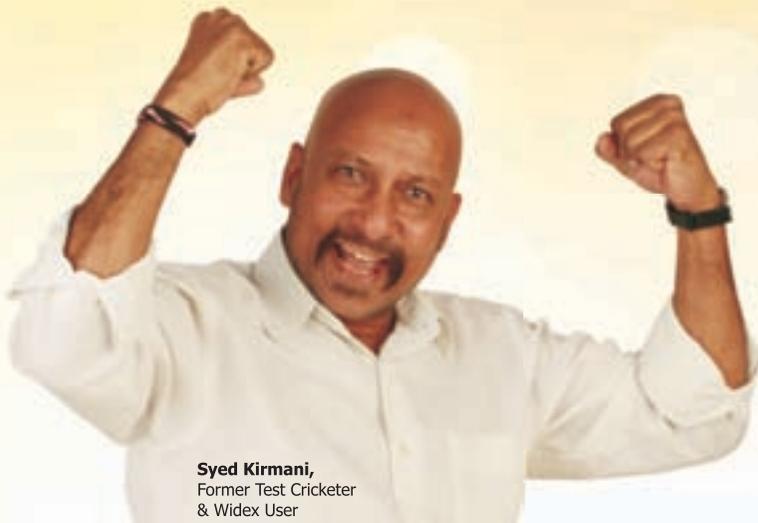


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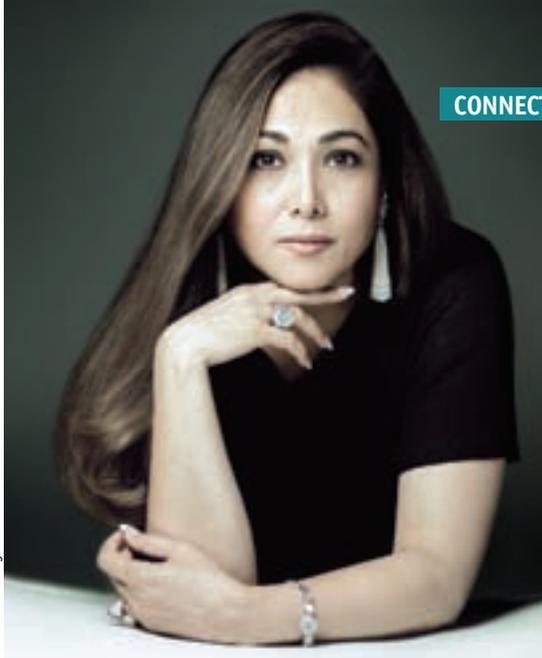
FROM PAUSE TO START

Every pause should be seen as a beginning, not an end. In December, I had the privilege to attend and speak at an international conference on challenges in women's health after midlife, organised under the auspices of the International Menopause Society and the Indian Menopause Society (see 'Orbit' - 'H Event').

It led me to introspect on the particular challenges of midlife. As they say, 45 is when you finally get your head together but your body starts falling apart! Along with self-acceptance and a better understanding of your place in the world, midlife brings physical and emotional challenges, such as menopause, depression, urinary incontinence, sexual dysfunction and loss of memory. Menopause, more than any other event, marks a new phase in every woman's life—it is a journey into uncharted territory that can often be a path fraught with fear, depression and alienation, with every physical manifestation accompanied by an emotional fallout. Compounding the situation is a lack of sensitivity and awareness especially in India, where women's health concerns are often trivialised or dubbed inappropriate for public consumption. Often, women themselves desist from sharing their fears and seeking help—while some choose to be in denial, others shy away from addressing the issue.

It's time for us to cast aside this shroud of silence. The ability to read and speak, question and listen, enhances our knowledge, enables us to learn our options, and empowers us to make the best choices. In her book *The Menopause Makeover*, women's health expert Stanes Jonekos calls on women to view the whole process differently, transforming menopause into a menostart! However, to move from pause to start, women must understand that menopause is no reason to let go of life as you know

Suresh Natarajan



it. Remember, the challenges of midlife are not limited to one gender—men, too, go through andropause, although the physical and emotional repercussions are less pronounced. Women must draw strength from this universality and not shy away from expressing themselves, and leaning on those who can help. Similar to what is seen in the West, we must create peer groups to air feelings and lighten the load. Ultimately, a strong family, social network, and holistic healthcare can support, sustain and see us through. And for its part, the media must offer women a platform to share information, insight and innovative approaches to embrace the future with hope. *Harmony-Celebrate Age* has been delighted to play the vanguard role in this regard.

Indeed, as we enter 2014, we reiterate our gratitude to our silver constituency for keeping the faith with us and allowing us to enter your homes, lives and hearts these past 10 years. Thank you, dear readers, and a Happy New Year to you and yours.

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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cover feature

The incredible allure of India

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THE INDIA STORY FORWARD

every issue

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Ratnamala Nori spreads social messages through puppetry

DREAMWEAVER
Jasvinder Kaur on preserving the handlooms and textiles of Punjab

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C stands for cholesterol. "Bad" cholesterol, or low-density lipoprotein (LDL, for short) cholesterol, builds up and clogs your arteries. The LDL cholesterol goal for people with diabetes is below 100 milligrams per deciliter (100 mg per dL).

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column one

The idea of India is an intriguing one. The enduring global fascination with this idea has inspired countless women and men over the years in myriad ways and given rise to multiple interpretations, both accurate and mythical, about the essence of the country. We have played hosts to a world eager to partake of our many delights, to study our many oddities, to revel in 'their' idea of India. But there are some guests who eschew transiency in favour of a deeper engagement, not just buying into the idea but absorbing and imbibing its complex reality. You'll meet 10 of these Indophiles in our cover feature, "Passage to India". With their chosen metiers, ranging from the arts and activism to hospitality and healthcare, they have actually added to the richness of the country's multihued, multi-layered fabric.

Indeed, moving from idea to reality can be a challenging transition, easier said than done. In a new section, 'Nostalgia', silver couple Arati and M K Murugesh go back in time to share their role in establishing the women's national cricket team at a time when our country's favourite sport was a male preserve. Also new in the 'Orbit' section of the magazine is 'App Alert', where we bring you information on free, silver-oriented apps for your smartphone.

There's all this and more in your favourite magazine this month, including an exclusive interview with dance legend Sonal Mansingh, advice on tax planning by Priya Desai to make your retirement less taxing, and a scenic drive through the Kangra Valley en route to a jewel-like temple in Baijnath as we cruise into 2014.

Happy New Year!

—Arati Rajan Menon

With reference to "The Happiness Principle" ('Orbit', December 2013), money can provide physical comfort but can't buy happiness or peace of mind. Interestingly, according to therapists the world over, being a millionaire is a sure-fire recipe for unhappiness. Everyone loves money; it's the prime mover, so to speak. But, it is a misnomer that money begets happiness. Else, the rich would have been the happiest. Be content in life if your needs are comfortably met. Why be in a rat race to make loads of money and in the process lose your health and happiness. Sleep well with limited money!

Mahesh Kumar
New Delhi

US President Thomas Jefferson once said, "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without the government, I shall not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." The field of mass communication is continually evolving and journalism is one of the strongest tools that can leave a long-lasting impression on a large section of population by hammering the message time and again to get it ingrained in their minds. This is the time for quality information. In today's world, magazines and newspapers have a huge responsibility towards society. They play an im-



portant role in bringing changes by imparting invaluable information on education, health, technology, etc.

Harmony-Celebrate Age has been doing yeoman service for the silvers of India. Being one myself, I can see that the magazine's contribution towards the life of silvers is immense. The magazine is not just a good read for us but a great reservoir of inspiring stories and interesting information for youngsters as well. In this regard, I would like to request you to popularise the magazine among today's youth so that we see a better future for them. With your pool of expert professionals who possess both intellectual and technical rigour of high calibre, you could give youngsters proper direction. I wish you, your team and your readers a very Happy New Year.

R Krishnan
Mumbai

CONTRIBUTOR



Braja Sorensen is an award-winning writer and poet whose book *Lost & Found in India* was published by Hay House International in 2013. Originally from Australia, she has spent most of her adult life living and working in India, London, and the US. Sorensen now lives in the village of Mayapur, on the banks of the Ganges in West Bengal, and writes for several publications internationally, besides practicing *bhakti* and *hatha* yoga, feeding stray cats, visiting

temples, dodging rickshaws and often patting cows. You can find her at www.brajasorensen.com or www.facebook.com/BrajaSorensenMayapur

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The first day at school

The first time you rode the bicycle.

The first crush you had at thirteen

The first drama you got a part in

The first day at college

The first date you went on

The first kiss

The first time you proposed

The first job interview

The first board meeting you addressed

The first day after retirement

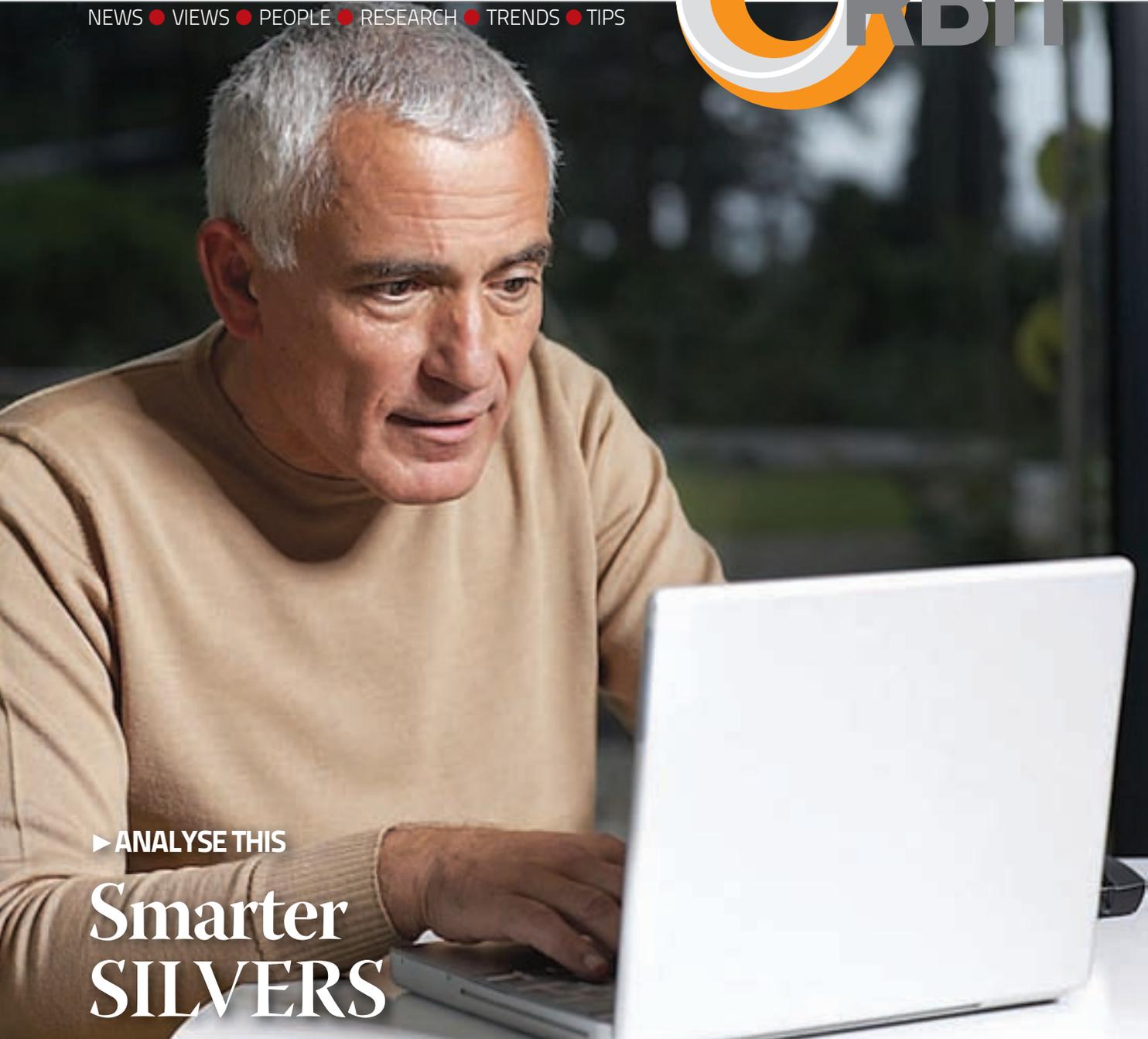
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Smarter SILVERS

Evolution is not just working on our bodies but our memories too. A new study by researchers from Hôpital Broca in Paris has established that **silvers today are mentally more nimble and sharper than their counterparts a decade or two ago.** The team compared the memory skills of 204 elderly French men and women selected from the memory clinic of their hospital between 1991 and 1997 to those from 177 similar people tested in 2008 and 2009. They found that people

in their 80s in the late 2000s performed as those in their 70s tested over a decade earlier. None of the participants had dementia at the time. “The 2000s group as a whole did better than the 1990s group on every parameter, including how well they remembered stories and pictures and their ability to separate objects into different categories,” writes study leader Jocelyne de Rotrou in journal *PROS One*. “We believe this is the result of better healthcare and, of course, natural evolution of the species to a certain extent.”

Capital shame

Despite awareness drives and initiatives aplenty, silvers in the capital remain unsafe. According to figures released recently to the media by the Delhi Police and National Crime Records Bureau, **the number of elders murdered in New Delhi increased nearly 40 per cent in 2012, after a significant dip the previous year.** A total of 521 people, including 131 women, were murdered in the city in 2012 of whom 48 were aged above 50. This is up from 35 in 2011. This comes as an embarrassment for Delhi Police, which has prided itself on its senior registration and safety drive. Figures issued by the police reveal that a total of 15,644 silvers were registered in 2012 and the registration process continues. Of those registered, a security audit had been conducted on 13,180 and, as a part of the audit, identity cards were issued to 12,812 silvers. A significant



cause for concern is that this figure may well go up further with police resources being increasingly allocated towards election rallies and campaigns in the run-up to the recently concluded assembly polls and the upcoming general elections.

Safer in Mysore

In a move to become more proactive, the **Mysore Police is introducing a new scheme, Abhaya, to prevent attacks on silvers.** Recent attacks on silvers, including two murders, have prompted the initiative. First on the agenda is the preparation of a database of silvers in the city by policemen in their respective station jurisdictions, which will identify vulnerable elders,

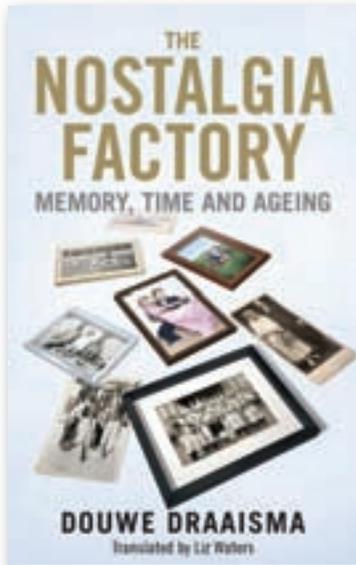
especially those who live alone. "Our focus is now on the safety of senior citizens in the wake of recent back-to-back murders of two septuagenarians in Mysore," Deputy Commissioner of Police (crime) M M Mahadevaiah tells

media. "We will ask constables on beat duty to keep a watch on their houses and help them by paying their bills. We are also planning to increase police presence in neighbourhoods." The police, which observed December as Crime Prevention Month, has also started awareness programmes across the city among the public, which includes distribution of leaflets with safety tips and helpful advice.



The reminiscence effect

Flashbacks can sometimes catch us by surprise, a rush of remembrances flooding us with emotion. Author-researcher Douwe Draaisma believes they happen even more often in the silver years. In fact, in his new book, *The Nostalgia Factory: Memory, Time and Ageing* (Yale University Press), he even gives it a name: the reminiscence effect. This, he writes, is the tendency to be able to retrieve a disproportionately large number of memories from the period between our mid-teenage years and late 20s. And as we grow older, these memories become more



frequent and vivid—creating a ‘nostalgia factory’ of sorts in the brain. As *The New York Times* reports, this book is not so much a dry research study but an engaging discussion of the impact of memory, how we are able to view our past through the prism of time and circumstance, and the ability of the past to give meaning to our present and future. Interviews, case studies and research combine to give heft to a narrative that is both lively and insightful.

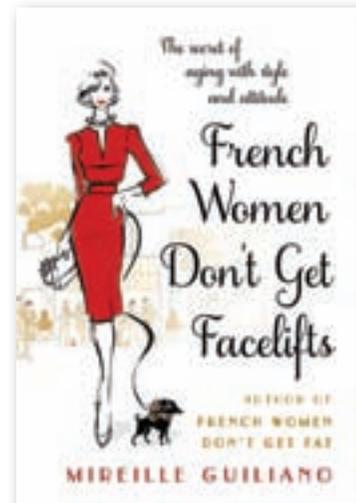


Dame Dench returns

She's back. And Oscar winner Dame Judi Dench is better than ever in her latest film *Philomena*. In the movie, directed by Stephen Frears, she plays real-life Philomena Lee, an Irishwoman searching for the son she gave up as an unwed mother 50 years ago. The film, which is mystery, political drama and character study all rolled into an eminently watchable package, premiered to critical acclaim at the Venice Film Festival. Inevitably, Dench has been hailed for her performance, which is poignant, funny and full of attitude. Equally inevitably, the Oscars are just around the corner.

The French way

Bien dans sa peau, or comfortable in one's skin, is a classic phrase that seems to encapsulate the effortless grace that French women are fabled for. With *French Women Don't Get Facelifts: The Secret of Aging with Style & Attitude* (Grand Central Life & Style), Mireille Guiliano aims to channel this attitude into a prescriptive guide to graceful ageing. From celebrity routines, diets and fashion advice to supplements, potions, exercise and the power of positive thinking, Guiliano offers a



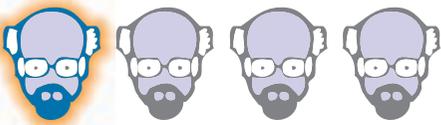
bouquet of advice—delivered with wit and humour—that is being alternatively hailed as delightful or derided as European snobbery by critics. Want to find out for yourself? [It's available on amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

85, AND COUNTING: THERE'S MORE OF THE 'OLDEST OLD' IN BRITAIN. ACCORDING TO THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS (ONS), THE NUMBER OF SILVERS OVER THE AGE OF 85 HAS RISEN BY NEARLY A QUARTER FROM JUST OVER 1 MILLION IN 2001 TO 1.25 MILLION IN 2011.

Behind closed doors



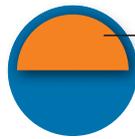
*Silver doesn't mean celibate. We've said it time and again, and a new study by the University of Chicago reinforces the fact that **older people, even those in their 80s, continue to have an active sex life.** Here are some of the highlights of the study, which surveyed over 3,000 men and women across the US:*



A QUARTER OF 75 TO 85 YEAR-OLDS,
THREE-QUARTERS OF 57 TO 64-YEAR-OLDS



AND HALF OF 64 TO 75 YEAR-OLDS HAVE HAD
SEX WITHIN THE LAST YEAR.



HALF OF THOSE OVER 55 WHO ARE SEXUALLY ACTIVE EXPERIENCE SEXUAL PROBLEMS—INCLUDING ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION FOR MEN AND INABILITY TO ORGASM FOR WOMEN—BUT CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE INTIMACY OF THE ACT.



A THIRD OF SEXUALLY ACTIVE 75 TO 85-YEAR-OLDS HAVE GIVEN OR RECEIVED ORAL SEX IN THE LAST YEAR.

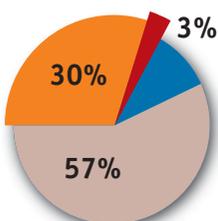
OLD PEOPLE IN GOOD HEALTH ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE SEXUALLY ACTIVE AS THOSE IN POOR HEALTH, AND MEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN TO BE HAVING SEX.

MOST SILVERS WHO CHOOSE TO STOP SEXUAL ACTIVITY DO SO BECAUSE OF POOR HEALTH OR THE LACK OF A PARTNER, NOT BECAUSE THEY WANT TO.



This American study is mirrored by a national survey of sexual attitudes and lifestyles in the UK. Published in journal Lancet, the study analyses over 15,000 Britons aged between 16 and 74. The highlights:

BRITONS ARE HAVING SEX FROM THEIR TEENS UNTIL WELL INTO THEIR 70S AND EXPERIMENTING WITH EXPERIENCES AND TECHNIQUES ONCE DISMISSED AS DEVIANT.



- ORAL SEX
- ANAL SEX
- VAGINAL SEX

A SMALLER PROPORTION OF WOMEN ALSO IN THE AGE GROUP (BETWEEN 65 AND 74) REPORTED HAVING ACTIVE AND VARIED SEX LIVES.

WHILE PEOPLE HAVE EXPANDED THEIR SEXUAL REPERTOIRE, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN WERE HAVING SEX LESS OFTEN—THIS IS ATTRIBUTED TO MORE DEMANDING LIFESTYLES, LONGER WORKING HOURS AND GREATER STRESS.



The unretired

The word of the day in the silver lexicon is 'unretired'. It has been coined by the media to describe the **growing number of Americans who continue to work after reaching retirement age**. According to an analysis of the US census data by *The New York Times*, the percentage of workers over the age of 65 who are still in the labour force has risen from 12.1 per cent in 1990 to 16.2 per cent in 2011, primarily owing to the rising cost of living, greater financial responsibilities and longer lifespan. "There is a huge fear of outliving our money," Kerry Hannon, a jobs expert for advocacy group AARP, tells the newspaper. "People are living longer, healthier lives, but their long-term costs are an unknown." Interestingly, across Britain, the situation is much the same. Recent census data suggests that the proportion of people between the ages of 65 and 74 who are still economically active in the country has nearly doubled in a decade, rising from 8.7 per cent in 2001 to 16 per cent in 2011. This is attributed to the pension crisis plaguing the country.

What's your source?

They may be getting net-savvy but silvers draw the line when it comes to their news. A new study from US-based Pew Research Centre establishes that while 71 per cent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29, and 63 per cent between 30 and 49, stay informed through the Internet, **for people over the age of 64, the television and newspaper remain preferred sources of news**. While 84 per cent of silvers proclaim their loyalty to the telly, 54 per cent continue to savour the smell of newsprint. In terms of content too, the generation gap is apparent—while the younger lot is more interested in entertainment and light news, elders display a propensity for politics. However, the most popular news category is the same across all demographics: weather! You can read the entire report at www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/16/12-trends-shaping-digital-news/#tw2



46 That's the age that most British women decide to choose an 'age-appropriate' hairstyle, according to a study by anti-ageing brand Nurture Replenish.



She'll try anything!

To what lengths would you go to turn back the clock? British website *MyVoucherCodes.co.uk* surveyed over 2,000 women over the age of 30 to come up with a list of their 10 most favoured bizarre beauty fixes. The topper was the placenta face mask, which uses stem cells from a sheep's placenta to boost collagen and tighten skin. Here's the complete list—you've read about most of them on these pages already!

Clean and clear

Imagine spending millions of money on anti-ageing products when the secret may have been in your kitchen drawer all along. A new study at Stanford University in the US reveals that **heavily diluted bleach has the potential to treat skin damage** caused by excessive sun exposure, ageing, and radiation therapy. The study was published on Friday in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*. In a trial on mice, a .0005 per solution—much weaker than what is available commercially—reversed inflammation and ageing of the skin, and low doses of bleach blocked a chemical that triggers the inflammatory response. And when they tested the effect of daily, 30-minute baths in bleach

solution on mice with radiation dermatitis, the animals experienced less severe skin damage and better healing and hair re-growth. "It's possible that, in addition to being beneficial to skin ageing, inflammation and radiation dermatitis, bleach could also aid in healing wounds like diabetic ulcers," writes study author Dr Thomas Leung in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*. "This is exciting because there are so few side-effects to dilute bleach. We may have identified other ways to use hypochlorite to really help patients. It could be easy, safe and inexpensive."

A word of warning: Till all the facts are in, don't try this at home.

- 1 Placenta face masks
- 2 Bee venom
- 3 Vampire face masks
- 4 Leeches
- 5 Sperm facial
- 6 Bird poo facial
- 7 Cryotherapy treatment
- 8 Cactus massage
- 9 Urine therapy
- 10 Solid gold facial

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH? FOUNTAIN - THE BEAUTY MOLECULE IS A NEW WONDER DRINK WITH RESVERATROL, AN ANTIOXIDANT FOUND NATURALLY IN RED WINE, RED GRAPES AND PEANUTS. ITS MAKERS CLAIM THAT BY TAKING ONE 5 ML TEASPOON DAILY (40 MG OF RESVERATROL), YOU CAN BATTLE SKIN AGEING AND BOOST HEART HEALTH. IT'S AVAILABLE ONLINE FOR £ 24.99 (ABOUT ₹ 2,500) FOR A 240-ML BOTTLE AT BOOTS.COM



Nu beginning

The hills have come alive for silvers looking for a retirement idyll. With assistance from marketers Disha Direct Group and US design firm Perkins Eastman India, developer Gagan Group has launched **Nulife, a 14-acre residential complex for silvers in picturesque Kamshet, Lonavla.** Promising a holistic approach to wellness, the community will feature independent living apartments as well as flats for assisted living. Set in pollution-free environs, the amenities include a library, security call systems in every apartment, Internet café, a spa and sauna. You can chill with your friends at the swimming pool, find your inner Van Gogh at the art studio, read at the coffee shop or call your family over for a stay at the guest rooms—they can stay for up to 60 days a year. There's even an in-house, world-class, 20-bed hospital with four ICUs, routine



check-up facilities, a gym, yoga hall and physiotherapy room. Indeed, no detail has been overlooked, no matter how minute—there's enough space that a wheelchair can turn 360° at any point in an apartment. The price: ₹ 3.5 million for 1 BHK and ₹ 5 million for 2 BHK, inclusive of up to 15 years of maintenance fees. In November 2013, Santosh Naik,

CEO of Disha Direct, Aaron Schwarz of Perkins Eastman India and Alnesh Somji of Gagan Group announced the project's launch at a press conference in Mumbai where brand ambassador Shobhaa De was also present.

Call (0) 8080675002 for details and booking dates, or visit www.nu-life.in

CAPITAL RUN

In the early hours of a chilly Sunday morning, Delhi's sporty silvers braved the weather and warmed up in their classic yellow tees for the 4-km Senior Citizens' Run at the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon held on 15 December. The race was flagged off at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium at 8:20 am and thousands of people gathered along the route to cheer for them. On hand to motivate and encourage our silver participants were actors Mahima Choudhary and Gulshan Grover. About 1,300 silvers participated in the run, the oldest being 100 years old. The universal takeaway: they'll be back next year.



Combating midlife crisis



For many women in India, midlife is the beginning of a series of ailments. Studies suggest that 96 per cent of menopausal women in the country are affected with at least one cardiovascular risk factor, osteoporosis after menopause threatens the lives of at least 43 million women, and 250,000 women are expected to be affected by breast cancer by 2015. In an effort to address these issues and other challenges in Indian women's menopausal health, an enlightening three-day international conference was hosted by the International Menopause Society and the Indian Menopause Society and organised by Dr Duru Shah, a distinguished gynaecologist and fertility expert who is also a board member of the International Menopause Society. It was attended by gynaecologists, members of the medical fraternity and other delegates who were addressed by renowned experts in the field. Held between 6 and 9 December at the Grand Hyatt, Mumbai, the conference was inaugurated by Tina Ambani, Chairperson, Harmony for Silvers Foundation. She addressed the delegates (see 'Connect') and formally released a film, *The IMS Mantra*, about creating awareness concerning women's health.

At the opening ceremony of the event, a panel discussion highlighted the social, political and legal issues related to

menopausal and post-menopausal women. The panelists reached the consensus that there was a dire need for more action towards awareness and direct influence of the healthcare sector.

The panel included eminent Professor Susan Davis, Director of Women's Health Research Program, Monash University, Melbourne; Dr Arvind Mathur, Medical Officer (South East Asia Region), WHO; and Ujwal Uke, Principal Secretary of Maharashtra Government's Women & Child Development Department; among others. Dr Duru Shah talked about major challenges and how there's been a surge in research and study of women's health of late. While she highlighted the Indian perspective, the wider world's perspective was brought to light by Dr Tobie Johannes de Villiers, president of the International Menopause Society.

The next two days, attended by over 670 delegates from across South Asia, were packed with information and debate about challenges to Indian women's health and best practices and therapies available. There were also a number of workshops to bring attendees up to speed on new surgical techniques, information about breast diseases, customising menopausal hormone therapy and how to remain fit, healthy and strong past midlife.

Get on your bike. Cycling is a low-impact exercise that gives your heart, blood vessels and lungs a good workout and is proven to be therapeutic in a range of ailments, from cardiovascular problems, diabetes and stroke to depression, obesity and arthritis. Now, a £1.4-million study at Oxford Brookes University in the UK will investigate how silvers can be encouraged and supported to cycle into their old age, helping them retain their health, fitness and independence. “It is a common misconception that older people don’t cycle or have no desire to do so,” study head Tim Jones tells media. “Having the option to ride a bicycle is a fantastic way of maintaining independence and community connections and, in so doing, benefiting physical and mental health and wellbeing.”



Then: Old wooden cutting board
Now: Cutlery holder

If you’re a stickler for organising and hate seeing your cutlery all mixed up and messy in the cutlery drawer, here’s something for you. Repurpose your old wooden cutting board into a simple cutlery holder that can hang in your kitchen or dining area. You just need a cutting board, kitchen cloth, wood stapler, super glue and ribbon or coloured paper. First, cut the cloth according to the length and breadth of the cutting board, excluding the top part of the cutting board. Next, flip the cloth, and use the stapler to affix the top end of the cloth to the base of the cutting board. Then flip the cloth back to cover the board so that you have a little pocket and the bottom stapler pins are hidden inside the pocket. Now staple the sides, put glue on them and stick a ribbon or coloured paper—you’re done!



RECYCLING FACTS

- Wood, which is sturdy and mostly in good condition, is ideal for reusing and recycling. Most wooden products thrown in the trash end up in landfill sites and produce methane when they rot.
- Recycled wood has about 20 per cent less moisture content than virgin wood, which makes recycled wood cheaper in terms of weight of purchased wood and more durable.

MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...

1. **WOODEN CUTTING BOARDS CAN ALSO BE USED AS SERVING TRAYS. JUST ATTACH FANCY HANDLES TO THE SIDES, SUCH AS DOOR OR DRAWER PULLS.**
2. **TURN A WOODEN CUTTING BOARD INTO A HANGING CHALKBOARD FOR SHORT NOTES OR GROCERY LISTS.**



CIRCLE OF 6

Available for: Android (v 2.1 and up) and iOS (5.0 and up)

What it does: If you're ever in an emergency, get in touch with your immediate family with one click of a button through this free user-friendly app. While this app has been primarily designed for college students during distressing situations (and is hailed as a great anti-violence app by the media), it works great for anyone who would need to let people know that they need assistance. It comes with an option that will send a distress message to six close friends/relatives along with your location (through GPS)—all through the click of just one button. What's more, this app allows you the option of choosing between English and Hindi.

After installation: Choose 'India', and then your choice of language. On the next page, you can add your six most important contacts by clicking on the plus sign. It's all right if you don't have six people—you can just repeat a contact to fill up the six slots. Once that's filled in, they will notify those chosen contacts that they are part of your distress-call group. Whenever you need to send an SOS message, click on the centre button that says 'Ask My Circle To', and click on the car icon.

50%

OF AVERAGE GLOBAL MOBILE USERS NOW USE THE MOBILE AS EITHER THEIR PRIMARY OR EXCLUSIVE MEANS OF GOING ONLINE

6.5

APPS IS THE AVERAGE A CONSUMER ACTIVELY USES THROUGHOUT A 30-DAY PERIOD

80%

OF MOBILE TIME IS SPENT ON APPS

BIG BUTTONS KEYBOARD

Available for: Android (v 1.6 and up)

What it does: If tiny buttons on your touchscreen keyboard are keeping you from texting and chatting, get this free app. It basically overrides and replaces your phone's existing keyboard software with a more eye-friendly, touch-friendly keyboard that has bigger buttons spaced out comfortably for you so that you don't type 'S' instead of 'A' all the time. Getting used to its non-QWERTY style might take a while, but as long as you've got all the buttons clearly visible and legible, it works wonders. You can toggle between alphabet view and numbers and symbols view through the "?123" button on the bottommost left side.

After installation: Open the app and go through a one-time settings instruction to activate the keyboard. Right at the top on the page, it says 'Installation - Important'. Click on that and follow the two simple instructions that only require you to click a button and allow the software to be your default keypad. As they say, ignore the scary warning your phone might throw you, because this app is completely safe and secure.





BREAST CANCER ALERT

A study by Duke Cancer Institute in Durham in the US has found a link between cholesterol levels and development of breast cancer in older women.

The research also established that anti-cholesterol drugs such as statins reduce the effect of this by-product on tumours. **Scientists have found a molecule, called 27HC, which is a metabolite of cholesterol and mimics oestrogen, the hormone that causes the spread of almost 75 per cent of breast cancer.** Researchers tested the effects of anti-oestrogens on mice with cancer growth and found that this inhibited the activity and aggressiveness of the cholesterol metabolite. They concluded that high levels of cholesterol can lead to a potential increase in tumours that also had the capacity and aggressiveness to spread to other organs, especially in post-menopausal women. Tackling cholesterol is a must, suggest researchers, and more so with drugs such as statins and healthy lifestyle changes. Changing lifestyle can include better diet and exercise, even if it means walking for an hour every day, as the study by the American Cancer Institute suggests. A study of nearly 74,000 women between the ages of 50 and 74 revealed that post-menopausal women who were used to walking for more than an hour a day had 14 per cent lesser chance of contracting the disease than their sedentary counterparts.

The mortality rate from breast cancer is twice as high in India than the US, and is directly affected by a certain by-product of cholesterol that fuels the growth of cancerous cells.

NEW RESEARCH BY DUKE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTRE IN DURHAM HAS FOUND THAT OVER 18 PER CENT OF LUNG CANCERS DETECTED THROUGH THE LOW-DOSE COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY (LDCT, OR CT SCANS) ARE ACTUALLY AN OVER-DIAGNOSIS.



Most tumours detected were slow growing or medically insignificant among the 1,090 patients screened. Researchers compared LDCT with chest radiography and found that besides the 18 per cent general over-diagnosis, 22.5 per cent of non-small cell lung cancers and 78.9 per cent of bronchioalveolar lung cancers were also over-diagnosed.

Better screening measures are being encouraged to avoid unnecessary treatment and cause for worry, especially at large-scale screening programmes for the public.

ANISOMETROPIA,

a medical term for differing levels of visual abnormalities in both eyes, is the most likely cause for falls in elderly. A new study suggests that correcting it is essential to avoid falls and related injuries in silvers. Researchers at University of California examined vision analysis reports of around 120 people aged between 67 and 79 for 12 years and found that anisometropia increased significantly in at least 32 per cent of people aged 80.

SWEET AND SOUR

IN INDIA, nearly 30 per cent of people above the age of 60 are diabetic, a figure that has risen from 20 per cent about a decade ago. Now, a new study posits that **diabetics over the age of 60 are less prone to cardiovascular complications and more prone to hypoglycaemia.** This massive study by scientists at the

University of Chicago studied over 72,300 adults over 60 years of age with

Type 2 diabetes. The conclusion was twofold: one, complications worsened as the patients grew older, especially if they had the disease for longer; and, two, the rate of heart

disease in such people has reduced drastically from 10 years ago. In every 1,000 silvers studied who had diabetes for less than 10 years, about eight of them developed heart diseases when they were not yet 70, while the numbers stood at 11 for those in their 70s, and 15 for those over 80—whereas for every 1,000 silvers who had been suffering from diabetes for more than a decade, about 24 developed heart disease.



FATAL FRACTURES

Weak bone strength and related bone diseases are highly prevalent among Indian silvers, affecting almost one in three people over 50. Australian researchers at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research have found that **most osteoporotic fractures among elderly can lead to potential death.** They developed a 'competing risk model' to assess risk factors for osteoporotic fractures, risk of re-fractures and which one of them may be potentially fatal.

It was noted that once an adult crosses 75, he or she has a high risk of re-fractures that could potentially be a hip or vertebral fracture

The research involved examining data from Dubbo Osteoporosis Epidemiology Study, a study that analyses different kinds of osteoporotic bone fractures in people over the age of 60. It was revealed that hip fractures have a poorer outcome than vertebral fractures and are far more fatal. Non-hip and non-vertebral fractures are less severe but can lead to other complications.

Another group of fractures, called proximal fractures, are those that occur close to the body, such as the rib or pelvis, and have been found to shorten life. Wrist or ankle fractures are not directly involved in increasing mortality rates but are at high risk of re-fracture. It was noted that once an adult crosses 75, he or she has a high risk of re-fractures that could potentially be a hip or vertebral fracture. In the first five years after a fracture, one-third of the observed patients experienced repeated breaks.

One of the most outstanding figures in the study is that men have an 80-90 per cent mortality risk if they have a repeated hip fracture. It was also found that risk of death after initial fracture remains high for the first five years after the accident and decreases thereafter. Owing to the health burden of fractures among the elderly, researchers suggest urgent measures to prevent such incidents, and emphasise the use of bone-strengthening drugs.

DENSITY ALERT

- Recently broke a bone from a minor bump or fall
- Family history (of osteoporosis or broken hip)
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Coeliac disease
- Early menopause
- Taking steroid medications for more than three months
- Overactive thyroid or parathyroid conditions
- Low testosterone (in men)
- Loss of height (3 cm or more)
- Treatment for breast or prostate cancer



Etched FOREVER

NALINI MEHTA, 88, MUMBAI

Neeti Vijaykumar

To the uninitiated, one look at Nalini Mehta's acrylic blocks would give the impression of frozen flowers suspended in a transparent rectangular box. But the 88 year-old artist's work—for which she was conferred the first National Senior Citizen's Award for Creative Art this October by the President of India—requires a bit of explanation, and perhaps live demonstration.

"What I do is internal carving inside an acrylic sheet," she explains. "The design is only engraved." Mehta's method involves using a drilling needle to make a hole in the sheet, and then carving inside from that hole at an angle, gradually making designs. This engraving gives the design its three-dimensional effect. She then adds colours with an eye-dropper into the holes. The whole process takes about a month or two on an average, and sometimes even six if they're bigger and more intricate works.

Mehta stumbled upon this unique and deceptively simple idea when she was in her early 20s. Hopping in and out of five and ten-cent stores in the US, she came upon a piece that looked like crystal but was actually a thick acrylic sheet with a hole drilled into it. What caught her fancy was the impression of the drilled hole on the sheet when seen from the sides. It intrigued her so much that she bought more sheets and a drill. She started experimenting, drilling holes and then carving and filling those holes with

colour. She continued with her hobby even after returning to India.

With tremendous support from her husband, and now children and grandchildren, she has been making acrylic art for the past 60 years, perfecting her work over time. Most of Mehta's art, as seen in her studio at her Mumbai residence, comprises flowers and small birds, to make them look true to size.

At the moment, though, Mehta's concern is lack of opportunities to promote acrylic etching as an art. Until a few years ago, there wasn't even a category for acrylic art in major institutions. "They didn't consider it an art because nothing like this was done before. Acrylic being plastic was rejected outright," says Mehta, who, with this award, hopes for a change.

All Mehta's pieces are like snowflakes, delicate and inimitably beautiful. Her mastery over this art form is evident from the way she sits with the drill every day for two to three hours, coolly carving into a sheet, her eyes and mind deep in focus. "I haven't gone to any art school," she says. "But then, you should know sculpture, design and all kinds of art forms for this. You should have a lot of patience and perseverance, just like *sadhana* [meditation]."

—Neeti Vijaykumar



BIRTHDAYS

- Veteran actor **Nana Patekar** (left) turns 63 on 1 January.
- Australian actor, producer and director **Mel Gibson** turns 58 on 3 January.

- English actor and comedian **Rowan Atkinson** turns 59 on 6 January.
- Former Indian cricketer **Kapil Dev** (right) turns 55 on 6 January.
- Actor **Kabir Bedi** turns 68 on 16 January.



- Filmmaker **Ramesh Sippy**, best known for directing *Sholay*, turns 67 on 23 January.
- Renowned filmmaker and producer **Subhash Ghai** (left) turns 69 on 24 January.



MILESTONES

- **Azim Premji**, 68, chairman of Wipro, was awarded The Economic Times Lifetime Achievement Award 2013 at the ET Awards for Corporate Excellence on 9 December. He was lauded for his philanthropy and his work in making India the world's third largest software exporter.

- The Dayawati Modi Award for Art and Culture and Education was presented to **Anjolie Ela Menon**, 73, by Dayawati Foundation on 19 November.



- Indian classical vocalist **R K Srikantan**, 93, was conferred the Vani Kala Sudhakara Award by Sri Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha on 9 December.



IN PASSING

- **Om Prakash Valmiki** (left), 63, legendary for his Dalit literature and poetry, passed away on 17 November of illness.

- Veteran choreographer for south Indian films **R Raghuram**, 64, died of a heart attack on 30 November.

- Legendary anti-apartheid icon **Nelson Mandela** (right), 95, passed away of illness on 5 December.



- The erstwhile Mysore royal family's last king **Maharaja Srikantadatta Wodeyar** succumbed to a heart attack at the age of 60 on 10 December.



- British actor **Peter O' Toole** (left), most famous for his turn in and as *Lawrence of Arabia*, passed away on 14 December, aged 81.

- Artist and art director **C N Karunakaran** passed away on 14 December. He was 73.

- Head of the Travancore royal family **Uthradom Tirunal Marthanda Varma** passed away on 16 December. He was 91.

OVERHEARD

"It is not uncommon to see heroes in their late 40s romancing women just out of their teens, but the opposite is rarely the case. Scripts are specially written for an Amitabh Bachchan or even an Anupam Kher and Naseeruddin Shah but the same is not true for an ageing actress."



—Actor **Sharmila Tagore**, 68, speaking on the 'Representation of Women in Indian Cinema and Beyond' for the 19th Justice Sunanda Bhandare Memorial Lecture in New Delhi in November 2013

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.

A SPECIAL CALLING

I am a special educator and have worked with the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped (NIMH) in Secunderabad for 22 years. After I took voluntary retirement in 2007, I have continued to work for the mentally challenged, a passion I have inherited from my mother.

I grew up in Coimbatore, watching my mother set up her school, Vidya Vikasini. She integrated the mentally challenged into 'normal' streams way before 'inclusive education' became the norm. Although I graduated in home science, I was fascinated by a chapter I studied on 'deviated development' and it shaped my decision to follow in my mother's footsteps.

I took a diploma course in mental retardation (MR) at Bal Vikas Training School in Chennai and worked at the



Shyamola Khanna

Working with special children brings a sense of fulfilment to Narayan's life

Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre there. After marriage, I moved to Bangalore, where my husband and mother-in-law encouraged me to follow my vocation at a time when young women usually give up their careers after they get married. I won a scholarship to acquire a master of science in education degree in learning disabilities. Soon after I returned, my husband was posted to the Philippines, where the Indian ambassador kindly offered my services to the state. I couldn't have been happier.

After we returned to India in 1984, my husband was posted to Arunachal Pradesh but I stayed back in Hyderabad and joined NIMH. My husband was very supportive and whole-heartedly backed me.

My career had already taken off but there was so much more in store. I earned a PhD degree and got a Fulbright scholarship for a post-doctorate. I also did a six-week course in London, where I worked with children who were deaf and blind. Among the experiences I treasure most is the one where a vegetable vendor came to see us at NIMH, with six mentally retarded boys in tow. He had a genetic condition and was told that he could never have a normal child.

With the help of sponsors, we set up a vegetable shop at their home and trained the boys to weigh, pick up heavy bags and use their muscle power. Although there is no cure for MR, with stories like this, we were able to help many families with children who were challenged. Being able to do that is its own reward.

After I took voluntary retirement, I became a consultant to governments, international NGOs and developing countries like Indonesia and Cambodia, where I trained their special educators and children for their community-based rehabilitation programmes.

Working in this field in other countries has been a humbling experience. They are culturally, socially and economically very different from us but the plight of parents and teachers of special children is just the same. Parents of special children everywhere have the same worries, concerns and love for their children. And although I worked with interpreters, I felt at home with them. At the age of 61, I have come to realise that despite all our differences, we are all exactly the same.

—Jayanthi Narayan, Secunderabad



THE 'ABILITY' IN DISABILITY

All the major civilisations in the world once considered disabled people evil demons suffering divine punishment. They were mistreated and sent to institutions for the rest of their lives. It was only at the end of the 18th century that attitudes changed and disabled people began to be considered normal. Alas, it seems, we haven't come a long way since then, and society still largely treats them badly.

My niece was born deaf but, over the years, I realised that despite her disability, she performed exceptionally well in her vocational training classes and at office. I realised there was so much 'ability within disability' and we were not adequately using the potential of differently abled people and granting them the right to be self-dependent.

I own a company in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, which produces specialised and customised plastic fasteners, clips and clamps. After observing my niece's abilities, I started employing people who were challenged in different ways—deaf, mute, physically challenged and mildly mentally retarded. I assigned deaf employees to operate noisy machines, physically challenged people to sedentary tasks and mentally retarded employees to perform simple tasks like sorting, packing and assembly jobs. I am proud to say that, today, 50 per cent of my company's staff comprise differently abled people.

There are many benefits to employing the differently abled. They are more committed and focused on their jobs. They

Employing the physically challenged is Mehta's success mantra

do not leave their posts to needlessly fraternise and waste time and their output and quality of work are superior to those of 'normal' people. These employees never complain of their jobs being boring or of other issues that 'normal' people crib and carp about. And, amazingly, there's always a smile on their faces! I suppose they value what they have. Their only goal is to be gainfully employed in a place that treats them fairly.

I must add that my company has won many awards for quality and I hope my experience debunks the myth that employing physically challenged people compromises quality of work. Of course, I could not have achieved this without the cooperation of the rest of my workforce, who has played an important role in the integration of the differently abled in the company. They believe in my ideology: 'Bring out ability within disability and equal opportunities to all.' They treat them like brothers and guide them every step of the way.

Employing the differently abled has not just benefited me professionally. It has helped me become empathetic, tolerant, sensitive and caring towards people. Many companies employ the physically challenged and call it 'corporate social responsibility'. I think of it as a moral responsibility. In the words of Scott Hamilton, the American figure skater who overcame a cancer diagnosis and kept winning medals, "The only disability in life is a bad attitude."

—Nisheeth Mehta, Bhavnagar



Act against arthritis: See what works best for you

I am 63 years old and have suffered from chronic arthritis for the past 15 years. In winters, I experience severe pain in my joints. My friends advise me to stay away from foods like rice and yogurt in winters as a precautionary measure but I am not sure whether it really helps. Please guide me.

Arthritis is a condition of inflammation and pain in the joints and bones. There are over 100 types of arthritis—osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile arthritis and gout, to name a few. There is no established arthritis diet plan, except in case of gout, when specific restrictions and recommendations are required to control uric acid levels. In other cases, what works for one person may not work for another. Trial and error will determine which foods you need to eliminate.

Find out your individual allergies and sensitivities. Some people with arthritis have been found to be sensitive to dairy products, resulting in increased pain after consumption. Although a lot of studies have been done to ascertain the role of dairy products, no concrete results have been seen so far. So if you feel relief on curtailing dairy products, go ahead and eliminate them from your diet.

Here are some guidelines that may help:



● Include foods rich in natural anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and joint-supporting nutrients. These include fruits such as cherries, cranberries, blueberries, blackberries, pears and prunes (cooked or dried).

Eat cooked green, yellow and orange vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, asparagus, lettuce, spinach, chard, collards, string beans, carrot, pumpkin, sweet potatoes and squash. Include legumes such as black beans, chickpeas, kidney beans, peas and soybean. Avoid if there is doubt about gout.

● Include sources of Vitamin E in your diet, as some studies have showed that Vitamin E supplements reduce joint destruction and pain. Rich sources include flaxseeds, almonds, sunflower seeds, etc.

● Brown rice is good for individuals with arthritis.

● Eat sources of omega-3 fatty acids as they have been found to reduce inflammation in arthritis.

● Monitor salt intake. Many foods contain excessive salt and other preservatives to promote longer shelf life. For some people, excessive consumption of salt may result in inflammation of the joints.

● Cutting back on the consumption of fried and processed foods, such as fried meats and ready frozen meals, can reduce inflammation and actually help restore the body's natural defences.





READERS ASK

I try to cook well for my family. But some vegetables that my family likes—such as bottle gourd and pumpkin—are not readily available these days. Even if they are available, they don't taste the same as in summers. I am not sure whether I should buy non-seasonal vegetables just because they are our favourites. Please advise me.

One has to be smart and intelligent in buying the most nutritious food for the family. Seasonal fruits and vegetables should always be the first preference while selecting the menu. Not only are they economical and readily available, they are also rich in high quality nutrients. Some important points to remember:

- Foods grown out of season are often sprayed with chemicals of all sorts because it requires a little bending of nature's rules for them to survive in the wrong season.
- One should follow nature's cycle for a very good reason. The foods that appear in winter produce heat and keep you warm. Likewise, in summer you have cooling foods. Reversing this natural order will deny us nature's benefits.
- The storage process for vegetables during non-season reduces nutritional value.
- Eating seasonal food is not only good for your health but also for the environment.
- Non-seasonal vegetables consume more gas while cooking compared to fresh and seasonal vegetables.
- Remember, no one food contains all essential nutrients. Therefore, it is very important to include a wide variety of vegetables and fruits in your daily diet for maximum health benefits.

Include foods rich in natural anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and joint-supporting nutrients. These include fruits such as cherries, cranberries, blueberries, blackberries, pears and prunes. Also consume cooked green, yellow and orange vegetables such as broccoli, pumpkin and carrot

- Watch your weight. If you're overweight, losing some of it may take the pressure off your joints.

Lifestyle prescriptions

- Most significant, regular active exercise is important in any type of arthritis. Focus on stretching, a range of motion exercises and gradual progressive strength training. Include low-impact aerobic exercises such as walking, cycling or water exercises to improve mood and help control weight.
- Avoid smoking! Smoking causes stress on connective tissues, which leads to more arthritic pain.
- Keep yourself warm and wrapped during winters. It is important to layer yourself against the biting cold and freezing wind. Conserving your body heat is essential to

prevent joint stiffness and pain exacerbation. Be sure to keep your head, hands and feet covered as most of the body heat is lost from these regions. Indulging in a warm bath every now and then will also help prevent stiff and painful joints.

In general, one should maintain a healthy body weight and eat a balanced diet in arthritis. A diet drawn from fruits, vegetables, grains and beans appears to be helpful in preventing and, in some cases, ameliorating arthritis.

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



Stroke awareness: Avoid fatal consequences

Though Indians are increasingly becoming aware of cardiac disorders, our knowledge about stroke is still rudimentary. Without proper precautions, a stroke can be fearfully fatal.

A stroke, or 'cerebro-vascular accident', occurs when blood vessels supplying to the brain get blocked. This interrupts blood flow to brain cells, leading to cell death. The blockage could be owing to a clot (ischemic stroke) or the rupture of a blood vessel (haemorrhagic stroke). Depending on the area of the brain involved and the extent of damage, specific body functions such as speech, movement or memory may be affected.

Stroke is a life-threatening event requiring emergency medical attention. The faster the medical treatment, the higher the chances of surviving or limiting physical damage. The first step towards seeking medical help is knowing that you have had a stroke.

Symptoms

General symptoms of stroke include sudden onset of:

- Severe headache with no known cause.
- Numbness, weakness or paralysis of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Trouble in seeing with one or both eyes manifested as blurring, double vision or loss of vision
- Confusion, trouble in speaking or understanding.
- Trouble in walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

The symptoms of a stroke can progress gradually over hours or even days. But a sudden clot or bleeding causes some strokes to occur within seconds.

Mini-stroke

In some patients, there is an early warning signal, called transient ischemic attack, a TIA, or a mini-stroke. Its symptoms are similar to a stroke but are temporary, lasting for a few minutes. About one-third of those hit by a mini-stroke are likely to suffer from a stroke within a few months. It is easier to stay alert and watch out for a stroke if one knows who is at risk.

Risk factors

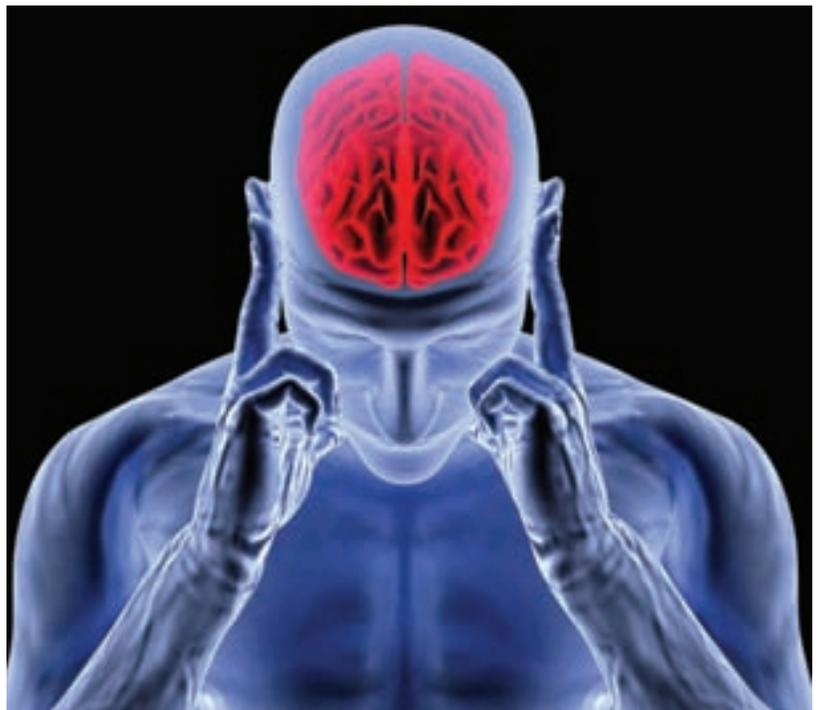
- Age: The risk doubles with every decade for people over 55 years of age.
- Gender: Men have a 30 per cent higher risk until the age of 55. After that, men and women are equally at risk.
- Family history: The risk is far higher if a parent or a sibling has had a stroke.
- Prior history: Suffering either a mini-stroke or a stroke multiplies risk.

There are also some health conditions that make the patient more vulnerable to stroke:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Coronary artery disease

Some risk factors are manageable, so controlling these will greatly minimise the risks:

- Smoking, including passive smoking
- Heavy drinking
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Physical inactivity



READERS ASK

The treatment for stroke has seen huge advances. The critical time is the hour or two immediately after the stroke. If treated properly during this period, mortality and disability rates can fall by as much as 20 per cent. Strokes are preventable; they are, in fact, treatable

As doctors emphasise repeatedly, the key factors in limiting damage from a stroke are awareness and speed. Don't ignore any warning signals, even if they later turn out to be false alarms. Even if you suspect a stroke, it's no time to wait and watch. "People run to the hospital if they have a pain anywhere in the chest," says a neurologist I know. "But they hardly ever visit their neurologist if they have transient symptoms such as a general weakness in one half of the body or tingling/numbness, a temporary loss of speech or blurring of vision. These symptoms are modifiable, they are treatable. If you notice them, do rush immediately to a doctor."

Treatment

The treatment for stroke has seen huge advances. The critical time is the hour or two immediately after the stroke. If treated properly during this period, mortality and disability rates can fall by as much as 20 per cent.

Abandon a negative approach towards treating strokes. Do not treat strokes with traditional modes like massages and oils. Strokes are preventable; they are, in fact, treatable—modern medicine has excellent methods of treatment for all types of strokes. The first step in diagnosing and identifying the nature of a stroke is usually a CT scan of the brain. This instantly identifies a haemorrhagic stroke. To detect ischemic strokes, procedures like magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) or doppler scanning may be required.

Treatment would typically begin with anti-coagulants and thrombolysis (medication to dissolve clots) for ischemic strokes. In haemorrhagic strokes, medication controls blood pressure and manages body temperature. Surgical measures such as angioplasty may be required for severe cases. Long-term treatment involves secondary prevention and rehabilitation, including occupational, speech and physical therapy. Will power is also very important for recovery from stroke.

Roughly three-fourth of all strokes are ischemic in nature. Doctors have found that while the mortality rate is higher in haemorrhagic strokes, disability rates are higher for

I am a 71 year-old man. Recently, I have noticed enlargement of both my breasts, more on the right side. There is no pain or any other discomfort. I do not suffer from any major ailments like heart disease, hypertension or diabetes and I am also not on any medication. Is this enlargement because of ageing or an indication of any ailment? Please help.

The enlargement of breast tissue in men is called gynaecomastia. Normal breast development in women is oestrogen-dependent, while androgens oppose this effect. Gynaecomastia results from the imbalance between androgen and oestrogen activity, which may reflect androgen deficiency or oestrogen excess. In old age, the main causes for gynaecomastia could be ageing; drugs like Cimetidine, Digoxin and some anabolic steroids; oestrogen excess owing to liver failure; testicular tumour; and leprosy (secondary to testicular atrophy that occurs in leprosy).

In your case, the enlargement of breasts may be because of ageing. Simply ignore it. If the enlargement is rapid or if there is pain or swelling, consult a doctor.

ischemic strokes. Either way, prevention is critical, and is possible.

Prevention

Have regular medical checkups. Work with your doctor to control conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

- If you smoke, quit. Daily smoking multiplies the risk of stroke.
- Exercise regularly. A sedentary lifestyle is a standing invitation to stroke.
- Take steps to reduce stress.
- Eat a well-balanced diet, low in cholesterol, saturated fats and salt. Eat more fruits and vegetables to increase your intake of potassium and vitamins. Add whole grain to your diet.
- Lower your alcohol consumption.

We can prevent the occurrence of stroke. If at all it occurs, it is possible to limit the damages, provided we are alert and seek medical attention at once.

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



Hair tomorrow: Yoga could well be the hair fall treatment you never heard about

Though yoga cannot rectify hair fall caused by genetic reasons, it can help you control it where it is caused by lifestyle causes, including stress, pollution and nutrient deficiency. In fact, in certain hair fall treatments for hereditary balding, it has been found that post-treatment results are sustainable and more enduring in those with a regular yoga practice.

The reason for this is clear: yogic forward bends and inversions help send more blood gushing to the head and scalp, promoting blood circulation, passage of nutrients and oxygen to help nourish the area. Inversions have a particularly dramatic result on hair, for obvious reasons: the anti-gravity effect and more intense blood gush to the scalp. Even more dramatic is the impact of this on blood flow to the major axis of master glands in the brain—the pineal, pituitary and the hypothalamus. Going beyond hair, this can help heal and repair the rest of the body too.

Some poses that work in this fashion are classical inversions such as the headstand (*sirsasana*), shoulder stand (*sarvangasana*), the more easily negotiated inverted psychic union pose (*viparitakarani mudra*), and the plough

(*halasana*). The forward bends also similarly impact the head and scalp. This category includes the seated forward bend (*paschimottanasana*), inverted V (*parvatasana*), child pose (*balasana*) and the hare pose (*shashankasana*). Having one from each of the above sets as part of a sequence that includes other poses is sufficient. However, the inversion and forward bend must be held for longer duration. If using these poses for such 'cosmetic' reasons, simple poses should suffice. These could be the *viparita karani mudra*, which is the safest inversion, and the child pose (with props if required) as a forward bend. Breathing practices (*pranayama*) and meditation (*dhyana*) should also be an integral part of the practice as they have a de-stressing impact that is equally important for hair health.

The ideal *pranayama* would be the skull cleanser (*kapalabhati*) and alternative nostril breathing (*anulom vilom*). For tissue health, *pranayama* such as victory breath (*ujjayi*) and humming bee (*bhramari*) are equally important. The meditation that works best is yoga *nidra* (sleep of yoga). It should be done for a minimum of 10 minutes. A 30-minute daily meditation period would be an absolutely wonderful way to heal and improve vitality in other spheres of life too.

YOGIC MOVES

Metabolic fire practice (*agnisara kriya*)

Sit in the classic, cross-legged lotus pose (*padmasana*). If you cannot execute it, attempt the simple cross-legged pose, appropriately called *sukhasana* (easy pose). Place your hands behind, interlocking the fingers lightly. Inhale. Exhaling, lower your forehead to the ground. If unable to reach the ground, hang your head loose or place a cushion or tiny stool (depending on the distance between head and ground) to rest your head. Continue holding the pose for 30 seconds or so, breathing normally. If you are comfortable, try to hold the pose longer over time, increasing the



duration. Being static in a pose like this is more important if you want it to have an impact on hair growth. **Benefits:** This pose rushes blood to the master glands of the brain, creating the ideal conditions for hair

health. It reduces stress and makes the skin glow. It is therapeutic for diabetes, digestive problems and upper back problems. Avoid if you suffer from lower back pain or knee problems.

Model: Dattaram Vaidya,
Harmony Interactive Centre
Photographer: Haresh Patel

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



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THE GREAT GRANNY DIARIES BY PRATIBHA JAIN
SMT HASUMATI MANILAL SHAH, CHENNAI

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

The road down memory lane with this great-grandma is about coexistence and togetherness. At 88, more than anything else, she misses her sisters-in-law (*jethani*) with whom she lived after marriage. She does not think that they compromised on happiness in adjusting with each other; for them, the joy of sharing made every sacrifice worthwhile. Little wonder then, that Smt Hasumati Manilal Shah's residence in the heart of Chennai is named 'Punya Nivaas' (blessed home), because such a large-hearted understanding of life is in itself a *punya*. A mother of two, grandmother to four and great-grandmother to three, Hasumatiji enjoys living with the next three generations under one roof.

"She neither compromises on what she wants, nor does she impose any restrictions on what others want," says her niece Kirtida Shah, an Ashtamangal meditator, who speaks of this mother-like aunt all the time. It was her description of her aunt that made me visit this sprightly and cheerful great-grandmother and pay her a tribute by featuring her in this column. We meet up for a lively chat at her residence.

Namaste Hasumatiji. Tell us about your childhood.

I was born in Bhavnagar in 1925 in a Gujarati family. I studied up to eighth standard. At that time, my *maama* [mother's brother] passed away. My mother had to visit her maternal family for a while. In her absence, I started taking care of the house and discontinued my studies.

Did housework keep you very busy at that tender age?



Aditi Jain

Not really! I also engaged in many extra-curricular activities with my friends. I enjoyed running, yoga and *lathi-khel* [stick fighting]. There was no running water in our area and I learnt to fill water from the well and balance one pot on top of another.

Your son told me that you were involved in India's freedom movement.

In 1942, many of us became involved in our own small ways with the freedom movement inspired by Gandhiji.

I even remember how we were arrested for one night because of a *morcha* [picketing]. At that time, there was a wave of malaria in Bhavnagar, so many of us went about distributing bottles of quinine within the locality. We also learnt to spin khadi. In fact, I gave up wearing silk. Over the years, I didn't even like wearing jewellery. Whatever I had, I distributed among the children.

Those years around 1942 sound like precious memories. When did you move to Chennai?

A few years after my marriage to Shri Manilalji Shah in 1947, we first moved from Bhavnagar to Bangalore. But I did not keep well and suffered from asthma. Therefore in 1961, we moved to Chennai.

In your experience, what is the difference in family structure over the years?

Deesha (grandniece): She finds it strange that these days children in the house have their own set of toys. Back then, children were happy to play with hand-me-down toys and clothes. I don't even think they had a notion of 'my toy' or 'my things'.

Hasumatiji: This is true of how our children grew up. We shared everything, including the children. Between me and the other daughters-in-law at home, whoever was free would breast-feed not just her baby, but the other baby as well. Once when a *jethani* of mine became unwell and was in a critical state, I went in to see her. I remember weeping and telling her not to worry about the children. I can never forget the look of gratitude and solace on her face. She passed away soon after, leaving behind seven children whom I brought up as my own. I think we treated family members as our own in those days.

Kirtida (niece): Yes, that's how she has been—a mother to all of us. She has imparted excellent values to her children. Her son is an embodiment of Shraavan Kumar [the epic character from the *Ramayana* who was notable for his devotion towards his parents]. All of them share a relationship of affection and mutual respect.

That sounds like a good set of family values. How do you keep yourself busy now?

Hasumatiji: I wake up at six every morning, filter my water pot and make an *ukkala* [hot beverage made with spices and water] for myself. I then have a bath and start my puja.

I enjoy reading religious books and chanting. It keeps me busy as well as happy from inside. I clean my room and keep it the way I like it. I also enjoy reading the newspaper.

Sanskruiti (granddaughter-in-law): She likes to be aware of current market and political updates. She is very disciplined and follows her routine every day. But she does not impose it on us.

Perhaps she has the serenity to explain values rather than impose them as rules. Tell me, what is the secret of such equanimity?

Hasumatiji: I truly feel 'let go' is the mantra of happiness in a family. Give them your opinion but also give them the freedom to do what they think is right.

"I have always enjoyed cooking. I have some beautiful memories of cooking with my *jethani*. I believe that there is nothing as tasty as a home-cooked meal"

Pradip Shah (son): Yes, she will inform us about the religious days. But she allows us to decide if we wish to observe them. One quality I truly admire about her is that she never corrects any of us in front of each other. She talks to each of us separately. And then, she lets go.

Sanskruiti: She is really broad-minded and accepting. As a family, they have a cosmopolitan outlook and have easily accepted changing times. In fact, my mother-in-law, Mrs Sona Shah, breaks the monotony of the typical Indian homemaker. She is her own person and allows us the same freedom.

Hasumatiji, your family is full of praise for your culinary skills. They just took me to the pantry where I saw some delicious pickles prepared by you.

Ami (granddaughter-in-law): Oh yes, even today she closely supervises the making of pickles. She makes a mango pickle which is rich with the flavour of *jeera*. It is known as *jeera kairi* and is a family favourite.

Hasumatiji: I have always enjoyed cooking. I have some beautiful memories of cooking with my *jethani*. As soon as the mango season began, we would make so many varieties of mango pickle—sweet, spicy, mixed flavours. I also believe that there is nothing as tasty as a home-cooked meal. We are Jains, so I don't use root vegetables such as onion, potatoes and garlic.

Kirtida: There is no compromise in taste when she prepares something. I still remember when we used to make Diwali sweets at home. I learnt to make *ghugra* from her. It is a sweet dish with a perforated edge made by twisting the dough. She taught me to make the perfect edging. Even if it was a little imperfect, she would say *na chaale* [that won't work] and make us repeat until it looked like a piece of art.

It was an invigorating meeting. Hasumatiji saw us off at the gate, defying her age, standing straight and tall, waving us a warm good-bye.

FROM HASUMATI SHAH'S KITCHEN

Lila pulav

A cherished childhood memory of Smt Hasumati's family, this rice dish is rich with the flavour of coriander leaves and coriander seeds. The Jains are known for their food restrictions. On certain days of the month, many observe abstinence of even vegetables



Yamini V

and greens. This is known as *sukha khana* and its opposite is *lila khana*. Hence *lila pulav* means a rice dish with vegetables.

Ingredients

- Basmati rice: 1 cup
- French beans: 7-8; chopped
- Peas: 1 cup; shelled
- Ghee: 2 tbsp (you may substitute ghee with oil, or a mixture of both, as you like)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Few sprigs of coriander leaves, chopped fine
- Salt to taste

Paste

- Cinnamon: 1
- Cumin seeds: 1 heaped tsp

- Coriander seeds: 1 tsp
- Dry coconut (*copra*): ½ cup; grated
- Coriander leaves: 1 cup
- Green chillies: 2

Tempering

- Cinnamon stick: 1 inch
- Cloves: 2
- Cumin seeds: ½ tsp
- Cashews to garnish

Method

Wash and soak the rice for 10 minutes. Now boil it until each grain of the cooked rice is separate yet soft. Strain and set aside. Steam the beans and peas until cooked. Strain and set aside. For the paste, add 1 tsp oil in a shallow pan. Add cloves, cumin and coriander seeds and roast on a low flame. After 1-2 minutes, add the grated *copra* and

continue to roast for two more minutes. Remove from flame and grind the roasted ingredients with coriander leaves and green chillies into a thick paste, adding very little water. In a pressure pan, heat the remaining ghee and add the ingredients for tempering. When they begin to crackle and let out their aroma, add the paste and lower the flame. Sauté for 3-4 minutes. Add salt, steamed vegetables and rice and sauté for two more minutes. Add lemon juice and garnish with chopped coriander leaves.

Gently fluff the rice with a fork and serve fresh with *raita*.

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

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Plan your taxes

Choose your tax-saving instrument wisely to make retirement less taxing, says **Priya Desai**

The amount you contribute today to your retirement account makes a huge difference over a period of time. When you are young and retirement is decades away, the one big asset you have is time. Even if you do not have very deep pockets, it's important to stash away enough. Unfortunately, years just fly past and before you know it, you will be tapping those retirement funds. And just when you feel you have everything under control, the tax axe comes crashing down on you.

If this is what has happened to you, find some solace in the fact that there are millions of people out there who are sailing in the same boat. For silvers, income is more or less like a stubborn mule that does not budge an inch and expenditures can seem to be like an unbridled horse. Adding fuel to the fire is a government that turns a blind eye to the inferno of inflation as its flames rage high, leaving a large part of the population irrevocably scathed and singed.

It's important that you do not take any rash decisions and get influenced by volatile markets. If you have already stepped over the retirement threshold, ensure your risk level is appropriate for a shorter time horizon. As a silver, taxes can bog you down and using tax-saving instruments is the light at the end of the tunnel. There are some sops for tax saving that can save you some heartburn. Let's take a look at how and why they work and what their blemishes are.

The mysterious 80s

We all have been acquainted with the famous tax clauses prefixed with the magic number 80: 80C, 80CCG, 80TTA, 80D, etc. You can invest a

maximum of ₹ 100,000 under 80C, 80CCC, and 80CCD, as also obtain some additional deductions under others. Smart investment is about finding a tax recipe that suits your retirement palate the best. *Apnaplan.com* provides an excellent slide presentation titled 'How to Save Tax for 2013-14'.



Allocate funds for tax saving a minimum of five years before retirement. With that chunk in your hand, just keep rotating it on an annual basis once you have retired

Senior citizens can claim a deduction of up to ₹ 20,000 for their health insurance payment and more for critical diseases. This falls under the 80D category and includes ₹ 5,000 worth of expenses on those preventive health checkups that become a necessary part of life at that age. Donations under 80G for charities, scientific research, political parties mentioned in the IT Act are also tax-deductible.

Seniors wanting to enter the stock market for the first time can invest up to ₹ 50,000 in shares and get 50 per cent as a tax deduction under 80CCG. Savings account deposit interest up to ₹ 10,000 is tax free under 80TTA.

What are tax-saving instruments?

I like to look at tax-saving schemes as a group of siblings. They all belong to the same brood but can be as unlike each other as can possibly be. The major tax-saving schemes can be divided into different categories such as public provident fund (PPF), life insurance, fixed deposits, tax-free bonds and equity linked saving schemes (ELSS). I have mapped these schemes in the following table, highlighting their features and risk-reward levels.

PPF is the steady kid. The cautious one; you can deposit up to ₹ 60,000 annually (though you can invest up to ₹ 100,000 annually in PPF, only up to ₹ 60,000 is non-taxable; the rest being taxable); however, withdrawals can be made only after 15 years. This saving is very stable; it earns compounded interest and is tax free. The fly in the ointment of this risk-free investment is its moderate 8.7 per cent interest rate (for the 2013-2014 fiscal year). Sowing the seed of an operative PPF account as you enter middle age is one way of reaping the ripest fruit 15 years down the line.

Life insurance is the naughty kid. The premium from a life insurance policy covers you and your spouse under the 80C, so long as the premium is less than 10 per cent of the assured sum. Personally, I would not recommend this as a suitable tax-saving instrument for a majority of senior citizens.

TAX-SAVING INSTRUMENTS—A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Scheme/ IT Act	Institution	Amount	Tenure (years)	Interest (per annum%)	Remarks
Fixed deposits/80C	Public-sector banks, private-sector banks, cooperative banks, National Housing Bank	Up to ₹ 100,000	5	9 to 9.75	Nil or low risk
Fixed deposit/80C	Senior Citizen Credit Scheme, National Savings Certificates	Up to ₹ 100,000	5 5-10	9.3 8.5-8.8	Risk-free
PPF/80C	Government of India	Minimum ₹ 500 Maximum ₹ 60,000	15	Varies annually; 8.7% for 2013-14	Safe, withdrawals permitted after 15 years
Tax-free bonds*/80C	HUDCO, NTPC, etc	Minimum ₹ 1,000 Maximum ₹ 100,000	10-15-20	8.66 to 9.01	Low risk
ELSS/80C	Various mutual funds like SBI, HDFC, Reliance, Kotak, ING	Up to ₹ 100,000	3 years lock-in period	Dividend if declared	High risk, fluctuating NAV
Rajiv Gandhi Equity Savings Scheme (RGESS)/80CCG	Brokerage houses	Up to ₹ 50,000	1 year	Dividend if declared	High risk, appreciation or depreciation of investment

*Closure date for some bonds is in December 2013

Many banks aggressively market **insurance-linked mutual fund schemes** for seniors (up to the age of 65). It is important to scrutinise these with a magnifying glass, as they are typically mutual fund-related (net asset value-based) schemes. No assured returns piggyback them; they are complicated and riddled with risks.

A **fixed deposit scheme** is the precocious kid. Your capital investment stays intact, you earn interest and the risk factor is a little subdued and mellow. Fixed deposit schemes are stable and sit on a lower rung of the risk ladder when compared to other instruments. You can invest up to ₹ 100,000 in these deposits.

The **Senior Citizen Saving Scheme** is the prudish one. These deposits can help you save a minimum of ₹ 10,000

in terms of the tax payment for the 1st year of investment (if you fall in the 10 per cent tax payment bracket). However, you continue to pay tax on the interest earned on this amount for a lock-in period of five years.

As you cruise through progressive years, the tax you pay will eat into the interest you earn and less comes your way. Heads, you get modest returns at nominal terms; tails, with inflationary trends in perspective, in real terms, the returns are negative. Having said that, this is a lesser evil in comparison to its siblings.

One way of staying ahead of the game is to keep your eyes peeled for opportunities where the interest rate is relatively attractive. For example, currently, the National Housing Bank (NHB) offers 9.75 per cent per annum

for its tax-saving fixed deposit (five-year tenure). As the NHB is backed by the Government, these deposits carry minimal risk and score over Senior Citizen Saving Schemes that offer an interest rate of 9.3 per cent per annum. Well-established cooperative banks are a good bet when it comes to gaining higher interest rates.

The **tax-free bond** is the cloying kid. You can choose from tax-free bonds like NTPC, NHB, HUDCO and opt for coupons of 8.66-9.01 for 10-20 years. This is a risk-free investment with a lower reward and is available in the secondary market. Each bond has a credit rating that indicates the safety level.

I call **ELSS** the risky kid. In the finance world, the motto is 'higher the risk, higher the reward'. Seniors

who have an adventurous and experimental streak can test this by placing their money in ELSS that mutual fund houses float. The SBI Magnum Tax Gain Scheme, Reliance Tax Saver, ING Vysya Tax saver, etc, are avenues with a three-year lock-in period.

Any dividend they offer is tax-free but capital appreciation is not guaranteed. Analysts have observed that very few of these schemes actually have dividend payouts. In comparison to returns on fixed deposits, these schemes have fallen short of investor expectations as their value is dependent on share market currents.

The **unit-linked insurance plan (ULIP)** can safely be called the black sheep. As you advance in age, you need to ensure some form of investment. There are times when fly-by-

wire agents tout financial products like ULIP that are market-linked. Unscrupulous agents rarely ever reveal all the unsavoury downsides of the scheme and ensnare gullible seniors.

In a case wherein a silver has been peddled ULIPs in the guise of mutual funds, the only recourse the investor is left with is to approach the company concerned and ask them to return the money. In the event this does not take place, the aggrieved party can approach the insurance ombudsman.

Getting it right

You need to make a concerted decision about which one of these tax siblings you will be able to deal with. Tax savings are built on a foundation of financial literacy and pillars of financial planning and management.

It's difficult to beef up on disposable income once you are past retirement. Even as you traipse through your 30s, 40s and 50s, do not forget that they are the stepping stones to the 60s and 70s and use them as such. Allocate funds for tax saving a minimum of five years before retirement.

With that chunk in your hand, just keep rotating it on an annual basis once you have retired. Whether you like it or not, taxes will have to be paid. The trouble is that you need more than a genius mind to truly understand taxation.

As a new year dawns and the dilemma comes full circle, equip yourself with some of these tax-saving instruments and make retirement less taxing. The best way to prevent yourself from sinking is to learn how to swim!

The writer is a Mumbai-based economist



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Photographs courtesy Arati and M K Murugesh

The game changers

Arati and her husband M K Murugesh played an instrumental role in nurturing women's cricket in India, as **Deepa Ramakrishnan** discovers

Today, Indian women's cricket is on a par with the top teams in the world. But there may never have been a national team if not for the continued efforts of a couple, Arati Murugesh, 78, and M K Murugesh, 80. To find out how they helped level the playing field of what was considered an exclusively gentlemen's game, we catch up with them in Mumbai at their son's home. They are on a visit from California, where they live with another son—the couple has four children. Relaxed and eager to share their travel plans—they are just back from a visit to Chennai and off to a wildlife resort the next day—the Murugeshs are happy to go into flashback mode to discuss their romance with cricket.

Bowled over

But first their own romance. "I had decided that she'd be my wife the moment I saw a flash of her white dress rushing into a room in college," reminisces Murugesh. Although their meeting had nothing to do with cricket, their marriage surely did. Arati was a passionate follower of cricket and Murugesh represented Madras State in the 1954-55 Ranji Trophy. With a haul of 24 wickets, including that of great batsmen like Mushtaq Ali, he had helped the team lift its first-ever trophy. Murugesh went on to represent the South Zone against New Zealand in 1956 and the Indian University IX against New Zealand.

Arati, who was always keenly interested in cricket, never missed a

single match Murugesh played. And the duo got closer. "He always hit the headlines for his game," she says. "And I was drawn to him for the respect he commanded from fellow cricketers." They married in 1957, three years after they first met. In 1961, following an injury to his bowling finger, Murugesh left first-class cricket. And in 1964, he took to cricket commentary. Among others, he covered the first-ever Duleep Trophy, the first Irani Trophy matches played in Madras, and many Ranji matches. Murugesh also covered the women's Test series between India and West Indies played in Madras in November 1976.

A league of their own

Indeed, it was in the 1970s that Arati and Murugesh's lives together

acquired a new dimension with the addition of women's cricket to the equation. "Women's cricket in India had already found patronage under Premila Bai Chavan, an MP from Maharashtra and mother of Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, who formed the Women's Cricket Association in Lucknow in 1973," recalls Murugesh, talking about the early days. "There was already some women's cricket happening in northern India, Mumbai and Chennai before we entered the scene. Girls formed teams and played without any training. But the matches never went past five or 10 runs."

Around the same time, in southern India, some women who loved to play the game got together to form the Madras women's cricket team. Though Arati held a regular job as a teacher, going on to become the principal of another school, with her keen interest and love for the game, she was made one of the vice-presidents of the Madras women's cricket association. When the team played against other zones, she took on the role of the team's manager.

In 1974, with the news that an Australian women's team was touring India, attempts were made to marshal the talent available. The secretary of the Madras Women's Cricket Association approached Murugesh to coach the women. "He took it up as a challenge and began coaching the girls from Kerala, Madras and Mysore for a South Zone match against Australia in Bangalore," remembers Arati. With her experience, Arati, who was 40 at the time, was asked to manage the national women's team, a position she held until 1977 by which time she had managed the team through their matches against England and the West Indies' women's teams. "I had to ensure the girls were comfortable and showed up for practice," she explains.

In the meantime, Murugesh began preparing the girls for their first big match against Australia—against the South Zone—starting from the very

basics of cricket, including how to hold a bat, run between the wickets and face the ball at leg stump. "The girls were terrified of the ball coming their way," remembers Murugesh with a chuckle. The girls lost the first match, but they made a total of 105 runs before they got out. "We knew it was a matter of time before they would shine," adds Murugesh, who went on to become the first coach and mentor of the Indian women's national team.

After that came the Test series against Australia. As a national selector, Murugesh was one among four, including senior cricketers like M M Jagdale from Madhya Pradesh, S Guha from Bengal and J Augustine from Maharashtra, who chose the best players from across the country from the four zones. This was a dedicated lot. "Unlike the men's cricket team who came for a 6.30 am training session at 6.45, these girls would be at the nets at 6.15 am," explains Murugesh. Yet, cricket was still primarily a male preserve and there were naysayers aplenty. "Some parents simply didn't understand why their daughters wanted to play a 'man's game,'" remembers Arati. And Murugesh adds, "Even my colleagues ridiculed me, asking me why I was coaching girls."

The game turner

But a change was in the making. Though they lost the first test in Pune, the Indian girls gave the Australians a run for their money in Delhi and Calcutta, ending both games in an exciting draw! In fact, in Eden Gardens, the girls transformed into fighters, pushing Australia to make 60 runs with just three wickets left in the last over. The stadium was filled to capacity with a large chunk of the crowd there only to boo the girls. "But as the match progressed, they shrieked in delight, watching players like Diana Edulji bowling and Shanta Rangaswamy batting," recalls Arati.

Having won not only the hearts of cricket lovers but the respect of the Australian team, the Indian women's cricket team had finally arrived. In fact, with their improved techniques and confidence, the girls went on to beat England in one of the matches in the series they played against the country in 1977.

Battling a mindset

Nevertheless, discrimination dogged the women at every turn. And the callous attitude of the local cricket associations didn't help. "While the Australian team flew from one place to another, our girls travelled by train, in third-class compartments,"



Sweet memories: Arati and Murugesh with Sachin Tendulkar

A long innings: Arati Murugesh (circled) and her team at Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's residence in 1975

remembers Arati, her voice tinged with sadness. "They were not given kits, let alone a blazer," Murugesh adds, "It was just one night before their final match at Eden Gardens that we managed to convince the authorities concerned to give the members a crest each. The girls, Arati and I sat together through the night sewing them onto their shirts."

One incident was particularly outrageous. "We were staying at Ranjit Hotel for the Delhi Test. But the night before the final day, all of us and our luggage were thrown out of the hotel unceremoniously," Arati remembers angrily. Murugesh, who had returned to his kids in Chennai after selecting the team, had to rush back to Delhi. "The local association that was supposed to pay for the accommodation had backed out stating lack of funds," she narrates. "We called up Chandra Tripathi, vice-president of the Lucknow women's cricket association, whose father-in-law, Kamalapati Tripathi, was then railway minister. He sent his PA to clear the dues while arranging for the girls to be taken to Calcutta the next day for their last match in the series, on first-class train tickets."

Such consistent dereliction of duty and abandonment by local associations left Murugesh frustrated. He soon resigned from his post as chairman of the selection committee of the women's cricket team, while he remained a commentator for men's and women's matches. After the 1977 women's Test series against England, Arati, too, hung up her boots. "It was getting difficult to manage both my job as a teacher and the hectic managerial duties," she explains.

The home team

The parents' love for cricket, naturally, rubbed off on the couple's four children—Gautam, Meenakshi, Kes-



Having won not only the hearts of cricket lovers but the respect of the Australian team, the Indian women's cricket team had finally arrived. With their improved techniques and confidence, the girls went on to beat England in one of the matches in the series they played against the country in 1977

hav Ram and Laxman—with three of them taking to the sport at a state or national level. Meenakshi, who was also an India handball team player, played for the Madras women's junior team in 1975 and went on to play in the Nationals. Keshav Ram captained the district and zone teams and played at the Under 19, Under 22 and Under 25 levels, while Laxman Murugesh played for district matches and was selected for the State Under 15 team. Interestingly, Murugesh and Meenakshi entered the *Limca Book of Records* as a father-daughter team who gave cricket commentary together, from the same box, at a first-class cricket tournament—a Ranji Trophy match between Andhra Pradesh and Kerala in December 1986.

This family has always had each other's back. "Our oldest son Gautam was 15 years old those days while the

youngest, Laxman, was nine," recalls Arati fondly. "He took good care of his siblings when we were not around."

Life today

Today, although their involvement with cricket has considerably reduced, Murugesh still coaches a group of Indians in California for their T20 private league matches. Both Arati and he still follow cricket matches—both men's and women's—at every opportunity they get.

Having left India 14 years ago, they're also keen to catch up with their first team. For Murugesh, there's an abiding regret as well. "I sometimes wonder if after ending it with the women's cricket, closing my shipping business and moving to the US, I should have trusted my cricket potential," he wonders. "I may have definitely become a national selector for men's cricket." ❁

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India CALLING

In a world increasingly demarcated and distinguished by borders, boundaries, race and religion, India reinforces the genuine identity of the soul, writes **Braja Sorensen**

It is after all so easy to shatter a story... to ruin a fragment of a dream being carried around carefully like a piece of porcelain. To let it be, to travel with it, is much the harder thing to do.

There is arguably no more exquisitely accurate description of the essence of India than these few words, tiny literary jewels made all the more poignant because they're written by India's own Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things*. Though not written specifically about India, they fit her beautiful form like a silken, hand-stitched gown, tailored to highlight the beauty and cleverly conceal the faults.

Millions come here annually, lured by the shake of India's come-hither tail, carrying in their heart-luggage the timeworn images of a mystical and magic land they've seen in movies, read about in historical accounts, and dreamt of for years, desperate to find the magic in person. What a brave thing to do, to forego the dream that lives in the heart and land on foreign soil in search of it, knowing that exposure to the elements might very well destroy its gossamer existence. *To travel with it is much the harder thing to do.* Welcome to India....

Every day, tens of thousands of tourists drag their story-filled hearts towards India and its palaces, temples, sky-high snow-capped mountains, deep dark jungles, panoramic swelling rivers, and beautiful sunrises and sunsets...tourists, pilgrims, and visitors whose minds are stuffed with trinkets and memories, trudging through an often weather-weary country as heavy with promise as fat monsoon clouds tantalisingly full of rain like travellers' suitcases rolling off the luggage belt. Yet there are beautiful places all over the world, places so much easier than India, with less traffic, less chaos, less people, and more...well, order. India might appear to so many as a third-world country: a chaotic, loud, thumping, fast-moving

hologram of modern hell that 99 per cent of the world can't figure out. But its real personality is something else, something you can never read about, something that manages to draw millions from all over the globe and keep some of them permanently, never to return to their own shores.

The question is always the same: how does she do it?

I visited in the early 1990s, but within a few hours I realised I belonged in India. The first time I smelled it in Delhi airport at 1 am on a cold December morning, a torrid cocktail of scents that seeped in through my pores; the first time I slid into the back-seat of an Ambassador taxi, sipped *chai* from a roadside stall, got gut-wrenching dysentery, laughed with a crazy local villager who insisted he was Krishna and dressed like him every day, put my back out on a rickshaw ride from hell, slid into the purifying waters of a holy pond at Govardhan Hill, and bent down and touched the soft, powder-like dust on the ground of the spiritual centre of the universe, Radha-kunda—all these things claimed me and made me their own. Those holy towns left images in my memory; as I paid my obeisance in temples, the ancient floors left impressions in my body that leaked into my heart and remain there still.

It wasn't geographical, for me. I had never experienced a desire to see India, buy Indian, wear anything slightly Indian (not even in the seventies), or fill my home with incense, Buddhas, silk cushions, Madras throws, or any other westernised form of Indiandom that was trendy from the late sixties right through to London High Street, Tuesday this week. India is the most sustainable fashion trend the 20th century ever saw, and it crossed centuries and rages on. But I wasn't interested.

In truth, India would have been the last place I'd have chosen, but I returned several times, and then my husband and I decided to move here. We weren't sure how long we might stay, but nearly 13 years later, we're still here, and unlikely to ever leave. The reasons are many-layered. We live in Mayapur, West Bengal: a lush, peaceful, green



Photo courtesy Braja Sorensen

village on the Ganges. It's not like the tourist destinations that India is famous for: Rishikesh, Varanasi, Vrindavan, Udaipur, to name a few. All of them are busy, thumping, loud, vibrant, overpopulated, over-noisy Meccas for the meditators, the chanters, the *Om-wallah*, the *ganja-wallah*, or the ordinary, curious tourist. The millions who visit India annually scratch their heads in bewilderment, wondering where all the elements are that they found on an 'Incredible India' ad on cable, in a magazine, at the travel agents. The cities that people flock to—Delhi, Jaipur, and the Kerala assortment—are often far removed from what those who brave the distance to come here are seeking.

But Mayapur bought and owns the '*shanti* factor'. It's peaceful, it's a spiritual land, a holy site, a meditational Mecca, a chanter's dream, a peace-lover's heaven. *Om shanti, shanti, shanti!* You're in Mayapur. At the moment there's a slight chill in the weather. As I'm writing, an unseasonal rain shower is falling softly, and a cool breeze is lifting the curtains. It's fresh-smelling, picturesque, tranquil. Birds are singing, and that's the only noise besides the gentle whirring of the fan and an occasional distant train horn from across Jalangi River, which intersects with the Ganges at the end of our street. I can't believe anyone who comes here would not walk away with a stunningly beautiful impression forever embedded in their mind, in their heart. I'm from Australia, where white sandy beaches and turquoise water are the norm, especially in the northwest corner of the country, where the Indian Ocean rolls gently into remote,

still-untouched coastal towns. So many places on this planet capture the mind, enchant the senses, bury themselves in the heart.

But India seems to uniquely attract not just the tourism bodies, but their hearts and souls. How many places can make that claim? The state of the world is another factor contributing to India's attractiveness, despite her external chaos. The world, in general, is struggling—it's hell out there. I haven't always lived in a peaceful village. London, Sydney, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Stockholm, the Gold Coast, you name it: I may not have seen it all, but I've certainly seen enough, at least. None of those cities have the answers. They may be cool places; they may even temporarily satisfy, be exciting, exotic, picturesque. But they don't exactly contribute to the eternal benefit of mankind.

Yet India has that unique element: it exists to reinforce the genuine identity of the soul amid a world intent on borders, boundaries and bodily designations. Everyone is searching for peace—within themselves and their environment. As a stone thrown into the middle of a pool creates concentric circles, so a rock-solid centre, with its attention focussed on the spiritual, can create an international environment of harmony. That centre is the essence of spirituality.

And that is, or should be, India: because that's its heritage. Not its 'religion'. That comes in many flavours, but the culture and heritage in India are shared. And I found it in Mayapur: it's that simple. Everyone has a mantra, but unless we're consciously aware of life, most of us don't speak it, some don't even hear it. Some do and don't know it's their mantra: it's the inner dialogue, the voice of our conscience, our heart speaking, whatever you want to call it. Some will find it in India. Some will find it in Jerusalem, Rome, Tibet or Mecca. But we all need to find it. It's not an option: it's the call of the soul. And it's where our mantra is driving us. All of us. When I stopped to listen to my mantra, it was the heart and voice of India that were speaking: it was ancient spiritual dialogue, timeless transcendence, poetry in prayer, the meaning of life, the soul's home. Ask anyone in India: they have it.

Do you really want to meet this secret of India? That's something only revealed to those who love it, and whom it loves in return; to those who serve it, and whom it serves in return; to those who want it, and whom it wants in return. Like any relationship. Like any person.

Braja Sorensen is an award-winning writer and poet, and the author of *Lost & Found in India (2013, Hay House International)*

"I don't think I will ever go back to Italy. Odisha is my home now. Here I'm able to overcome the anxiety of human existence and be at peace"

Odissi dancer

Ileana Citaristi

Today, Citaristi is a cultural ambassador of Odisha in more ways than one; she is known for her innovative choreographic productions in Odissi and Chhau that bring together styles from the West and East

I was in search of a land where I could express in a total and unrestricted way those inner questions of the soul." It was this strange stirring of the soul that brought Padma Shri Ileana Citaristi all the way from Italy to India in 1979. It was not her first trip to India though; she had done a short road trip back in 1975. After earning a doctorate in psychoanalysis and eastern mythology and dabbling in experimental and traditional theatre for five years in Italy, Citaristi was feeling restless when the colour and rhythm of a visiting Kathakali troupe caught her eye. She headed straight to Kerala and underwent rigorous training for three months. On the advice of her guru Krishnan Namboodari, she decided to learn Odissi under Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. "My aim was to refine the body language and then fly back home," she says.

But fate willed otherwise. As she set about picking up the nuances of Odissi from Mohapatra, her interest in Indian history, mythology, and the language and literature of Odisha was piqued.

Putting the return trip on the backburner, she set about satiating the hunger of her soul, doing research work for a documentary film on Odissi and UGC-sponsored research on the martial art forms of Odisha, learning Mayurbhanj Chhau for six years from Guru Hari Nayak and, in the process, setting up home in Bhubaneswar, thousands of miles away from her hometown Bergamo. Crisscrossing the city on a moped dressed in *salwar kameez*, mouthing fluent Oriya and relishing rice, *dal* and fish curry, Citaristi soon blended into the culturescape of the city.

Along with a group of like-minded artists, she set up Art Vision in Bhubaneswar in 1996, to share experiences and creative ideas and the lessons she had picked up from Mohapatra over 20 years with the next generation. Currently, she has over 56 students, whose learning integrates lessons on Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* and the temple architecture of Odisha, along with regular lessons in Odissi and Chhau. Though her heart lies in Odissi, Citaristi confesses that Chhau, with its



Photo courtesy Ileana Citaristi

grammar of movement, has helped bring her creativity to the fore, as seen in her productions *Echo and Narcissus*, *The Journey* and *Images of Change*.

Today, Citaristi is known for her innovative choreographic productions in Odissi and Chhau that bring together styles from both the West and the East. Some of her notable offerings in Odissi include *Karuna*, based on the life of Mother Teresa, and *Maya Darpan*, rooted in the culture of Odisha.

A cultural ambassador of Odisha in more ways than one, Citaristi believes that art cannot be studied or taught in seclusion. “To understand an art form properly and appreciate it, one has to be conversant with the culture and tradition from which it has sprung.”

Citaristi, who has just finished giving the final touches to her autobiography, was earlier granted a senior fellowship by the Indian Government’s Department of Culture for penning Mohapatra’s biography. Titled *The Making of a Guru*, it was published in 2001. “Meeting guruji was the end of a journey and beginning of a new one for me,” she shares. “I do not believe in mechanically mugging up any craft. Guruji had questions to all my answers, commanding my absolute faith.” In 2012, she published another book, *Traditional Martial Practices in Odisha*. She has also choreographed for movies, including M F Husain’s *Meenaxi: A Tale of Three Cities*, Gautam Ghose’s *Abar Aranye* and Aparna Sen’s *Yugantar*, for which she won a national award in 1995.

Citaristi, who was conferred with the Padma Shri in 2006 for her contributions to Odissi, says dance has always remained the centre of all her activities. “I was in a serious relationship in Italy but my partner died before I came to India,” she reveals. “Although never a conscious decision, dance kept me so engrossed that I did not have time for any serious relationship.” Gardening is another passion, with Citaristi being able to rattle off the history of all the plants in her garden.

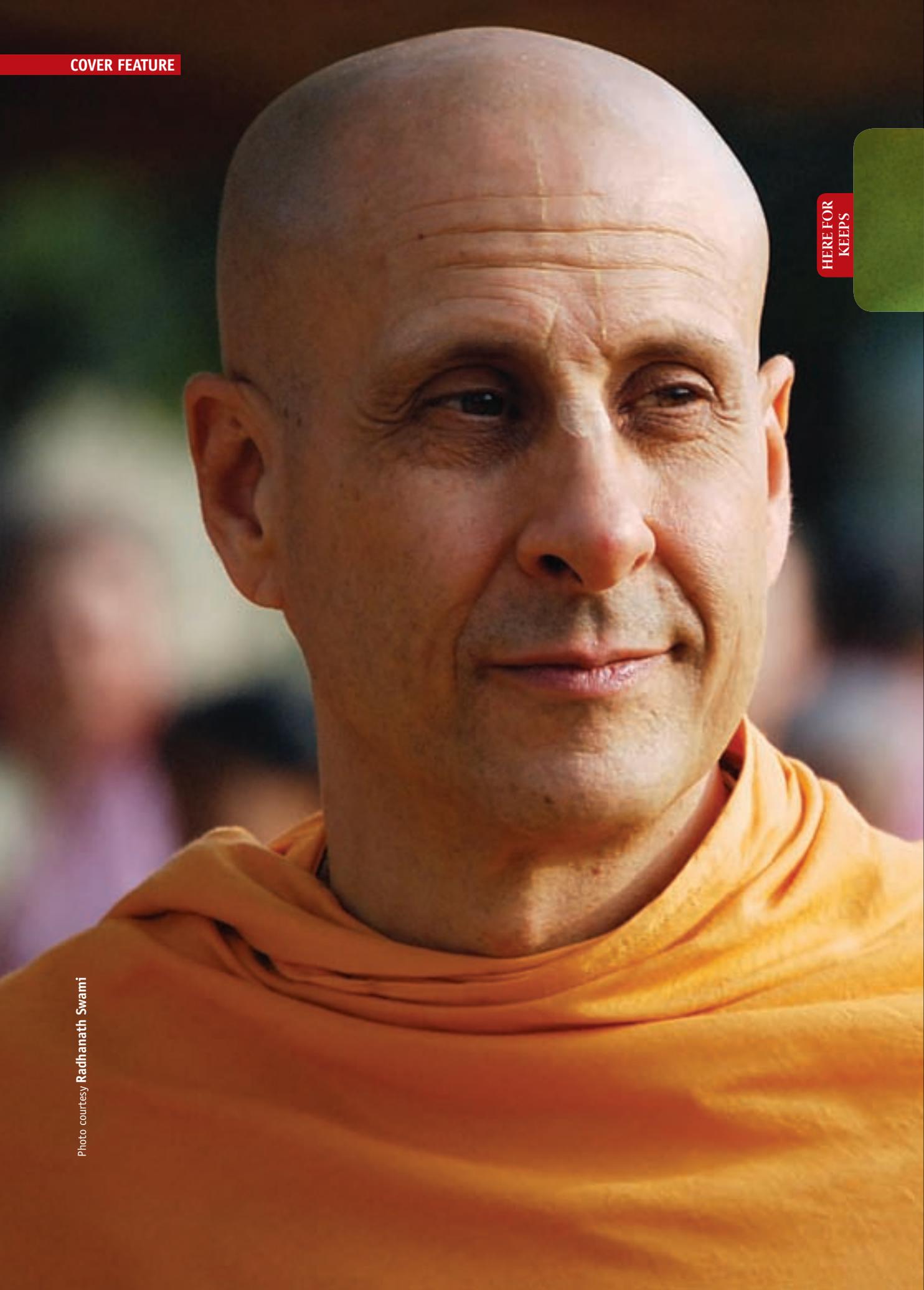
Even as she juggles multiple roles effortlessly, she is completely at ease in her adopted land. “My parents are no more,” she says. “My brother and his family visit me sometimes. I don’t think I will ever go back to Italy. Odisha is my home now. I consider my students and my late guru my family in India. Moreover, here I’m able to overcome the anxiety of human existence and be at peace.”

—Ruby Nanda

COVER FEATURE

HERE FOR
KEEPS

Photo courtesy Radhanath Swami



“Indian philosophy is so deep, scientific and broad that it addresses the problems of the world, it touches the deepest level of God and the soul—beyond sectarianism”

Radhanath Swami

Spiritual leader

His story is a colourful tapestry of adventure, mysticism, spirituality and compassion. Richard Slavin, an American Jew born in 1950 in the suburbs of Chicago, was ‘spiritually reborn’ three decades later as Radhanath Swami, a Vaishnava *sanyasin* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in Vrindavan. The journey that set him on the path to rebirth started in 1969, when the 19 year-old Slavin, feeling a deep sense of alienation at the American way of life, set off on a summer trip to Europe. According to him, when he was meditating on the Isle of Crete, he heard an inner voice, telling him to go to India. “Why India? I thought. It was another world so far away, and I knew so little about it,” says Swami. “I had next to no money and little idea of what to expect, but I believed this was the voice of my Lord calling for me.” So he set off on his journey towards the East in a bid to reclaim what he calls his “eternal identity”.

After six months of travel on a path hitchhiking from Europe through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, he reached India. Surviving on fruits and berries and with one white cloth to wash and wear, he tells us how the journey in 1970 took him through apprenticeships with advanced yogis who could levitate, shut down their body systems to be clinically dead and return to life after a while, and near-death encounters in the Himalayan foothills. But, it was a year later in Vrindavan that he found his path amongst the Bhakti yogis and his true calling in life. He wrote to his parents in Chicago, “The way India is affecting me is beyond words.”

“Here was a culture deeply entrenched in spirituality and compassion,” says Swami, recalling his meeting with Mother Teresa decades ago when she told him that though she had been to different parts of the world and met powerful and successful people, she saw no hope when she looked in their eyes. “Mother told me that India is such a spiritually awakened country that when she holds people on the streets of Calcutta dying of starvation and disease in her arms, she sees hope there. They are thanking God even in that state.” That

succinctly sums up India for Swami who believes that Indian philosophy is “so deep, scientific and broad that it addresses the problems of the world, it touches the deepest level of God and the soul—beyond sectarianism”.

Swami has made India his permanent home since 1986, residing mostly at the Radha Gopinath Ashram in Mumbai. He also travels throughout India, Europe and North America, living in ashrams, feasting on Vraja *roti* and jaggery, sharing the teachings of Bhakti Yoga. He tells us how he has guided the community’s development and directed social projects including midday meals for schoolchildren, the Bhaktivedanta Hospital in Mumbai, eye camps and free health camps and the eco-friendly Govardhan farm in Maharashtra, among others. On his pet project, the Govardhan farm, Swami says, “The village is based on the principle of ‘Simple Living and High Thinking’, which is enshrined in timeless Vedic scriptures like *Srimad Bhagavatam* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*.”

Playing down his contribution, Swami says self-effacingly, “I must confess that this is all but an insufficient token in comparison to the treasures I have received from the people of India. They have blessed my life with Krishna and my beloved guru Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.” Though Swami’s parents were heartbroken at his decision initially, a visit to India in 1989 was “a life-changing experience for them. They finally understood my reason for staying back in India and took a lot of pride in what I was doing. When my mother passed away in 2004, my father and brothers requested that I immerse her ashes in the Ganges.” His autobiography, titled *The Journey Home: Autobiography of An American Swami*, recounts an American teenager’s search for meaning and fulfilment and his epic quest through spiritual India. Summing up the human journey, Swami says, “We are all searching and seeking the pleasures without. When we recognise what we are really looking for and begin searching for the lost love within, the real journey of human life begins.”

—Srirekha Pillai

The journey that set him on the path to rebirth started in 1969, when he felt a deep sense of alienation at the American way of life. When he was meditating on the Isle of Crete, he heard an inner voice, telling him to go to India

“India is less about places and more about the warm-hearted people I have met. I find Indians open-minded and very sympathetic to the needs of others”

Satoko Chatterjee

Green warrior

For ‘eco-holic’ Satoko Chatterjee, a Buddhist who grew up in Niigata, a beautiful city facing the Sea of Japan, her green links paved the way for an evergreen link in her life. Chatterjee, who first came to India in 1985 to study the ecological impact of dams bordering villages, met a kindred green soul, Ardhendu Chatterjee, who was involved in rural development projects. “I found a man who shared my ideals,” she says. “That set the tempo for our relationship and my engagement with India.” With their passion for ecological issues, the couple travelled to the interiors of not just West Bengal, but across the length and breadth of India. “I crisscrossed India with Ardhendu in three months flat, visiting farms and different NGOs to understand the work they were doing.” Her work and Ardhendu kept her rooted to India.

Along with her children, Chatterjee has formed a home-based eco-group, Green Sprout, to create ecological awareness and train people to adapt green practices in day-to-day life

In 1987, she had a simple Hindu wedding with Ardhendu in the presence of their parents. With Ardhendu spearheading two NGOs that work for social justice for indigenous communities and marginal farmers, and sustainable agriculture and food security for the poor, the couple plunged headlong into work. With work taking them to Allahabad, Auroville and Cambodia, Satoko became Chatterjee’s professional partner too, contributing to her husband’s rural development activities even while raising their children Shantou and Manosi.

In 1989 in Auroville, while her husband worked on creating green communities by encouraging local agricultural practices, bio fertilisers and harnessing rain water, Satoko became a hands-on compatriot, helping set up waste management plants, getting involved in organic farming and planting trees. She even encouraged rural women to start their own home gardens for growing vegetables and medicinal herbs. Seeing their work in Auroville, in 1993 a Japan-based NGO sought their help in training young field workers in Cambodia in sustainable agriculture methods.

In 1997 on their return to India, the couple settled down in Chandannagar in West Bengal, as they wanted to live in a pollution-free environment. Since then, the 54 year-old has been actively involved in an environmental education project, ENRE (Ecology and Natural Resources Education), for training children in green methods. She drafts lesson plans on natural resources to educate children about the vegetation, medicinal plants and other ecological aspects of West Bengal, and holds regular sessions to sensitise local teachers to environmental issues. “It’s appalling that most schools don’t keep children abreast of ecological practices or give them practical training on maintaining a healthy relationship with our environment,” she says. “I wanted to do my bit in creating a better tomorrow.”



Shilbhadra Datta

Along with her children, Chatterjee has also formed a home-based eco-group, Green Sprout, to create ecological awareness and train people to adapt green practices in day-to-day life. Galvanised by her, the women in most households of Chandannagar observe the four Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle and rot (making one's own compost by rotting kitchen waste). "Word is catching on," she says with pride. She also organises '4R mela' in Kolkata with local NGOs and groups of friends.

Surprisingly, Chatterjee, who wears Indian clothes and has mastered Bengali cuisine, has been to some of the remotest villages of India but is yet to see the Taj Mahal! For her, India is less about places and more about "the warm-hearted

people" she has met. "I find Indians open-minded and very sympathetic to the needs of others," she says.

Chatterjee still manages to visit her parents in Japan at least once every two years. "Initially, my parents didn't approve of my decision to come to India and get married to an Indian but they came around after some time and have been frequently visiting me here in India," she shares. "My work in India is one way of expressing my thanks to them for allowing me to pursue my own path." So who does she root for while watching hockey matches between India and Japan on television? There's no hesitation here. "Of course it is India, my home!"

—Partha Mukherjee

COVER FEATURE



HERE FOR
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Photo courtesy Bill Marchetti

Chef

Bill Marchetti

“India has its good, bad and in-betweens, but this place has more humanity per square kilometre than any other country in the world”

Half-Italian, half-German Bill Marchetti, who grew up in Australia, claims his heart is Indian. “I’ve had a karmic connect with India since I was seven. My mother used to tell me how I was spouting wisdom about India all the time, much to their surprise.” But it wasn’t until 1981 that he made his first trip to India with his first wife Cheryl and children. Stepping out of his midnight flight, taking the first whiff of post-monsoon Mumbai, he said ecstatically, “I’m home!”

Now settled in New Delhi, Marchetti’s love affair with India brought him back many times over the next decade, with brief spiritual sojourns at the Ganeshpuri ashram in Maharashtra. In 2001, after a food promotion drive at ITC Maratha Sheraton, Mumbai, he decided to stay back for good. “It was an on-the-spur decision. I had come with just two suitcases, and I never went back.”

The 60 year-old chef loves everything about the Indian cuisine; his innate love for spicy food makes him an ardent fan of Indian food

After a five-year stint with Maurya Sheraton in Delhi, when he took charge of the West View Restaurant, and a year in Goa, he got a call from Blue Foods in 2007 to open Spaghetti Kitchen in New Delhi, an Italian cuisine chain that took his celebrity chef status to new heights with innovative dishes like mushroom cappuccino soup and vodka penne. “Though spirituality had been a constant pull, in the end it was food that anchored me here forever,” he says. He is also candid enough to admit that a publicly scrutinised divorce with his second wife Fiona Snedden made it easier for him to accept the offer to renegotiate and reshape life all over again.

In fact, food and India have been two constants in his life. As a kid, Marchetti says he would hang around his mom, grandmom and aunts while they were cooking. “One day, my mom said, if you love food so much, why don’t you learn to cook?” There was no looking back. In the 1970s when Swami Muktananda was touring Australia, Marchetti joined his ashram and started working in the kitchen. “Working there, I realised that cooking was like meditation; it requires complete focus.

In the ashram, we were not allowed to talk while cooking. That taught me how to respect food.”

Part of the great Indian draw is also his Delhi-based girlfriend and the hospitable nature of Indians. “India has its good, bad and in-betweens, but this place has more humanity per square kilometre than any other country in the world,” he says. “I had an offer from Japan, which would’ve been more profitable. But I couldn’t think of warming up to the people there.” With branches in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Pune, Chandigarh, and plans for further expansion, Marchetti has his hands full. The 60 year-old chef’s innate love for spicy food makes him an ardent fan of Indian food as well. Though he loves everything about the Indian cuisine, his absolute favourites are *gosht biryani*, Bengali food and the South Indian varieties of fish dishes.

However, Marchetti, who loves to rustle up the rustic flavours of Italy, says he had a tough time when he initially tried to source fresh Italian herbs during his stint with Sheraton. “Nobody knew about Rucola leaves then. So, the next time I went to Italy, I brought a carton of seeds and contracted farmers to grow them for us.” Marchetti has now contracted farmers in Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh and the outskirts of Delhi to organically grow a range of culinary herbs like basil, rosemary and thyme for his restaurants. Spaghetti Kitchen has also tied up with vendors in Pune for vegetables and sources in Odisha for fresh prawns from Chilka Lake. During his travels to procure them, Marchetti also gets to sample the local cuisine, an exercise he looks forward to. Though he spends his time evenly between Delhi and Mumbai, the chef considers Delhi home as his girlfriend and her extended family stay there. In Delhi, he has mundane errands to run and things to do, including picking up and dropping his girlfriend’s relatives at airports and attending family functions and weddings. “A place becomes home because of its people,” he says, simply. “And for me, it’s undoubtedly Delhi.”

—Neeti Vijaykumar

“Though I find poverty, sanitary conditions and corruption in the country disturbing, I find the open-mindedness and warmth of Indians heart-warming”

Medical activist

Gerda H Unnithan

It was love that brought Gerda H Unnithan to India all the way from the Netherlands in 1957. She was excited to meet T K N Unnithan, who was doing his PhD at the University of Utrecht. “He was from a totally different culture and opened a new window to the world. He introduced me to new thoughts and philosophies,” she says, recalling how Gandhi’s principles of non-violence and selfless service struck a chord with her. “Having lived through the horror and violence of World War II, I became a convert when I was exposed to Gandhian philosophy.”

For Gerda, her husband Unnithan opened a new window to the world; Gandhi’s principles of non-violence and selfless service struck a chord with her

Gerda and Unnithan had a traditional Nair wedding in Kerala, after which they moved to Delhi where Gerda started working at the Netherlands Embassy, while her husband taught at the Delhi School of Economics. In 1962 they moved to Jaipur, with Unnithan joining the University of Rajasthan, where he later went on to become the Vice Chancellor, even as Gerda became the director of the Students Advisory Bureau, which was set up to counsel and guide students on career choices. However, Gerda found her true calling when the couple moved in 1996 to Jagatpura on

the outskirts of Jaipur, after retirement. “When we shifted here, there was absolutely no medical facility in the vicinity,” she recalls. “People had to travel all the way to Jaipur for medical emergencies. The village headman requested us to set up a health centre.” Though the couple kept a functional medical unit running from their garage initially, they finally managed to open Khejri Sarvodaya General Health and Eye Care Centre with generous donations from a German family friend.

The centre now has an eye care centre and an operation theatre for eye surgery, a gynaecologist to provide antenatal and reproductive health services, and a physician. “We get close to 100 people daily, including people from nearby villages,” says the 77 year-old, soft-spoken Gerda, whose latest initiative is a haemoglobin rating system for women, keeping in view the high infant and maternal mortality rates in the area. The health centre also organises medical camps in neighbouring schools year round. Further, the centre has a Special Treatment Fund, set up in 2004, to support expensive treatment for cancer, heart disease and other serious ailments. So far, 65 patients have availed



HERE FOR
KEEPS

Photo courtesy Gerda Unnithan

of this service. Recently, the centre also shared the expenses of a hip location surgery a young girl underwent in a Jaipur hospital. “When I met her first, she was on a stretcher and in terrible pain,” says Gerda. “I was so happy to see her walk.”

While Gerda’s daughter Maya is a professor at the University of Sussex, her son Vikram is a geophysicist based in Germany. Having spent 55 years in India, Gerda says, “Though I find poverty, sanitary conditions and corruption in the country disturbing, I find the open-mindedness and warmth of Indians heart-warming.” Though she occasionally wears Sangneri printed cotton or silk saris, Gerda is generally seen at the medical

centre in her work gear, a simple *salwar kameez*, comforting patients and gently talking to them in Hindi.

Knighted by the Queen of Netherlands, Gerda has won other awards too for her medical activism. Recently, she received the Rajmata Gayatri Devi Award for Women’s Excellence. “I remember looking through my window to see a German soldier pointing a gun at my father. I have lived through bitter winters without any food and heat,” she says. “But life has been good to me and I’m happy that now I have a chance to give back to society.”

—Abha Sharma

"I have a lifelong engagement with India... a whole new world has opened up before me. I am fascinated with the history, culture and tradition of this ancient land"

Textile designer and artist

Andrée Pouliot

When Andrée Pouliot came to India for the first time in 1978 from Ottawa, Canada, she did not have the slightest inkling that the trip would turn out to be a turning point in her life. In India to assist her mother Sarah, a fashion designer with a keen interest in Indian fabrics, Pouliot found all the right reasons for a lifelong engagement with India. "It was as if a whole new world had opened up before me," she says. "I was instantly fascinated with the history, culture and tradition of this ancient land and went backpacking from the North to the South."

Pouliot is a link between the Orient and the Occident, creating Indian narratives in miniatures and textiles with traditional Indian motifs and techniques and popularising them abroad with exhibitions

On one such trip, she came across miniature paintings at a friend's studio in Jaipur. "The technique just blew me away. I found it the perfect way to tell stories," she says. "Noticing my keen interest, my friend asked her painters to help me out." With an honours degree in commercial art from Ottawa, she found it easy to navigate her way through the painstaking technique and was soon able to devise her own technique, materials and style. Today, Pouliot is a link between the Orient and the Occident, creating Indian narratives in miniatures and textiles with traditional Indian motifs and techniques and popularising them abroad with exhibitions. One of her major col-

laborations was the widely appreciated exhibition on the bouquet of Indian art forms, *India-The Living Arts*, at the Canadian Museum of Civilisation in 2000.

The Indian influence in her life is not limited to her profession. Pouliot is married to Radhakrishnan Nair, whom she met in 1983 while learning hand block printing in Jaipur. They had a simple Hindu wedding at home and a court marriage thereafter. "Our honeymoon was a five day-and-night camel safari in Jaisalmer, visiting remote desert villages," she says with a smile.

With their common interest in traditional Indian crafts, setting up Soma Blockprints in 1984 was a natural progression for the couple. Though set up on a shoestring budget, today Soma has 12 stores in India and is a major exporter of hand block printed textiles. "It was my master woodblock maker who taught me the intricacies of the craft," says Pouliot. "I used to come up with these wild designs to put in woodblock and he would veto them all!"

Featured in *Forbes'* 'World's Top Shops' list in 2005, Soma employs over 300 printers and



HERE FOR
KEEPS

Photo courtesy Andréa Pouliot

artisans and many village women who supplement their family income through hand quilting, embroidery and attaching beads and tassels to garments.

Pouliot, who calls herself ‘a visual storyteller,’ has also illustrated the book *Guru Nanak: The First Sikh Guru* by Rina Singh in 2011. Having spent over three decades in India, she considers herself more Indian than Canadian. “Hindi is now my second language. Ever since I decided to settle down here, French has become my third language.” Being mostly on her own in the print

workshops and desperate to communicate on the job, she picked up Hindi in a rush. “I carried a little journal to note new words and phrases. That became my Bible,” she chuckles.

Today, Pouliot takes in the best of both worlds, spending her summers in her small studio apartment in Ottawa, working on new paintings and travelling to meet her daughter, who lives in Vancouver, and winters in a restored 18th century *haveli*, a hillside property spread over 2 acre near Jaipur, which the couple bought in 1991.

—Ambica Gulati

Father Detienne

“Quotes from Rabindranath Tagore's Noukadubi and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's Mejdidi resonated with me and I decided to decipher the Bengali language”

Writer

In 1970, when readers of *Desh*, a Bengali literary magazine, read a new column, *Saheber Diaryr Chenra Pata*, by a certain Father Detienne on life in general and his experiences in the villages of Bengal, they found it hard to believe that it was written by a non-Bengali, and a foreigner to boot. Many thought Father Detienne was the pseudonym of a Bengali writer. The editor of the magazine got laudatory letters demanding serialisation of the column. Such was its success that the column continued an uninterrupted run of 200 episodes and Father Detienne was awarded the prestigious Narasingha Das Puraskar in 1972.

The childlike enthusiasm and joie de vivre evident in his columns is on full display as one meets the 89 year-old Jesuit padre from Belgium at Lord Jesus Church in Kolkata. As we enter his room, his full-throated baritone greets us with *Dhayè jeno mor sokol bhalobasa, parbhu tomar pane* (May all my love emanate and extend to you). Bengali titles line the shelf behind him.

Father Detienne, who was inducted into the religious order in 1942 in Belgium, set about studying Sanskrit as he wanted to come to India for missionary work. However, his love for Bengali literature developed when, browsing through a local library in Belgium, he came across *A Manual of the Bengali Language* by Dr James Drummond Anderson, which had quotes from *Noukadubi* by Rabindranath Tagore and *Mejdidi* by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, among others. “Those quotes resonated with me and I decided to decipher the language,” he tells us in fluent Bengali. Luckily, Father Detienne was sent to the Catholic Church in Serampore for training in 1949. Within a year he learnt the basics and went to St Xavier’s College in Kolkata to polish it further. In 1952, the Church sent him as a teacher to Basanti, a village in 24 Parganas in West Bengal, where he taught

all subjects, except mathematics and handwriting, for a princely sum of ₹ 150.

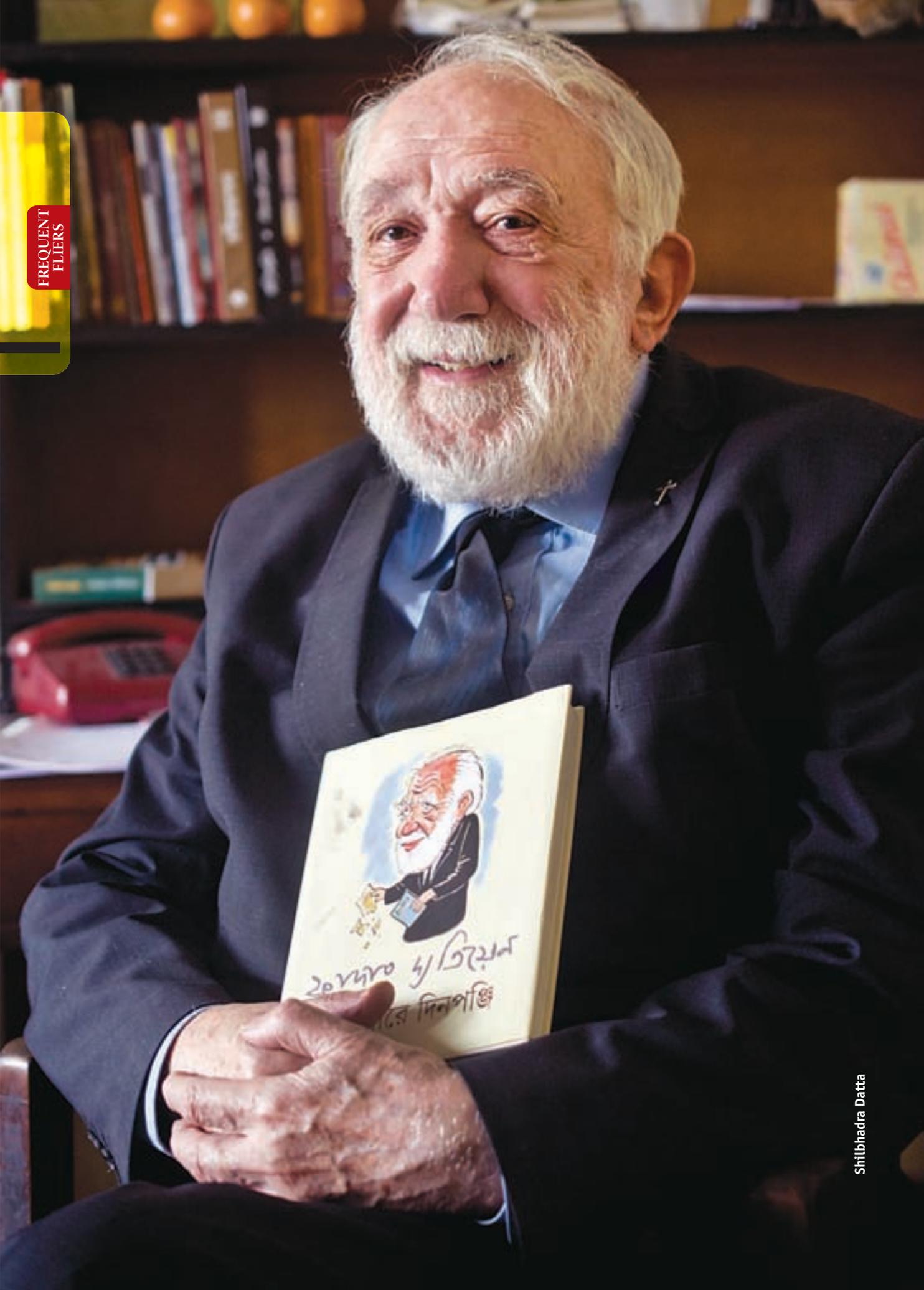
Continuing his engagement with Bengali, he decided to pursue postgraduate studies at Santiniketan. “In 1957, while I was there, I met Pratima Devi, Gurudeb’s daughter-in-law, and Indira Devichowdhurani, his niece, from whom I learnt a lot about Rabi *kaka* and read up most of his work,” he says. However, the reason Father took to reading most authors in the language was because of a Bengali writer who accosted him, saying that while Bengali readers lapped up his writings, Father Detienne didn’t read other writers. Father took the criticism seriously and read Bengali literature extensively, which ultimately led to the compilation of an anthology of 500 articles, *Godyo Parampara* (The lineage of Bengali prose).

Father Detienne’s contribution to Bengali literature won him the Rabindra Smriti Purashkar in 2010. He is credited with salvaging the Bengali *Itihasmala* by William Carey, which was forgotten and relegated to history. Father organised for it to be translated into English by Sukumar Sen and wrote the foreword. Besides editing a monthly magazine, *Jivan*, brought out by the Church, Father has also published books like *Choto Rajkumar*, *Atpoure Dinpanjee*, *Diaryr Chenrapata*, *Rojnamcha* and *Godyo Songraha*.

With his passion for Bengali language, literature and culture, it is not surprising that the Father, who returned to Brussels in 1977, has kept his connection with his favourite city intact, visiting when he can to renew his engagement. “Being a padre, I was meant to propagate the word of Jesus Christ. I have done it in a very specific way, by becoming a writer and reaching out to people in their own language,” the Father says with a chuckle.

—Partha Mukherjee

Father Detienne's contribution to Bengali literature won him the Rabindra Smriti Purashkar in 2010. He is credited with salvaging the Bengali *Itihasmala* by William Carey, which was long forgotten



“My first visit laid the foundation for two important relationships; with my life partner and my guru, under whom I imbibed the rich nuances of Hindustani music”

George Brooks

Saxophonist and music composer

Known for his compositions that combine the harmonies of jazz and classical Indian rhythms, the Indian odyssey of 57-year-old George Brooks hasn't been about music alone. In fact, the American and his wife of over 30 years, Emily Klion, tied the knot at Nizamuddin, at the *dargah* of Sufi saint Hazrat Inayat Khan. Recollecting his Indian wedding, Brooks says, “The wedding was a small affair, with a disciple of the Sufi saint performing the rituals, reading out our marriage oaths from the holy books of five religions: Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism.” With the vows taken in the presence of Brooks's guru Pandit Pran Nath and a small group of friends, the couple proceeded to Connaught Place to get their marriage certificate.

In fact, when Brooks and Klion had arrived in India for the first time in 1980-81, the couple had introduced each other as husband and wife, understanding the sensitivity of the ‘living-in’ concept in India back then. Klion had received a fellowship to study music in India and Brooks was keen to figure out Hindustani music after listening to the recitals of Dagar Brothers, V G Jog, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, as part of his course at the prestigious New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. “At 23, armed with a six-month course in Hindi, I came with her to India for 10 months, and first started studying music under Sri Karunamayee, Pandit Pran Nath's student, and soon after when Guruji came to India from California, I started studying under him.” That visit laid the foundation for two important relationships in his life, with his life

partner, which is still going strong, and his guru, under whom he imbibed the rich nuances of Hindustani music both in India and California, until Nath's demise in 1996.

Brooks calls his meeting with Nath the turning point in his career. “I was initiated into the *guru-shishya parampara* and *guru seva*. For 10 months hence, my day began with Guruji waking me up at 4 am, saying, ‘*Bhai, chai laao*’ or ‘*Chalo, gaao, gaao*,” says Brooks, chuckling at the memory, his accented Hindi still clear in its intonations. “Guruji had a heart condition. Having gone to a pre-med school before I joined the musical school, I had some understanding of the situation. I would give him a good *maalish* and make excellent *bhindi fry*. Guruji took an instant liking to me.”

Today, Brooks' compositions are renditions of a unique musical journey with a rich juxtaposition of Hindustani music and Afro-American Jazz, with him rendering the intonations of the Indian classical *raga* on his saxophone. He has performed at key festivals across India with maestros like Hariprasad Chaurasia, Trilok Gurtu, Louiz Banks and Ustad Zakir Hussain, having performed at Hussain's father's first memorial concert in 2001. Each year hence, he has been visiting India for about two to six weeks in January and sometimes in the monsoons, when most concerts are usually held. He has also collaborated on the soundtracks of many Indian films, including *Everybody Says, I'm Fine*, *Perzania* and the 2001 Merchant Ivory film, *The Mystic Masseur*. In India right now, he has been performing along with Ustad Zakir Hus-

Today, Brooks' compositions are renditions of a unique musical journey with a rich juxtaposition of Hindustani music and Afro-American Jazz, with him rendering the intonations of the Indian classical *raga* on his saxophone



Photo courtesy George Brooks

Kirwani Quartet (with Dutch harpist Gwyneth Wentink and Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia), experimenting with rhythms and melodies.

Having been in and out of India innumerable times, Brooks' palate has also acquired a liking for Indian curries. "I rustle up some authentic Indian food without heavy sauces. I splutter mustard seeds, add spices and grow my own curry leaves back home in California," he adds proudly. Brooks still has some fond memories of his first stint in India, when he and Klion encountered some life-transforming experiences like travelling from Uttar Kashi to Jamunotri up the mountains and getting lost on the way. "When it became dark, we were forced to stay in a *yatra* hut where we shared the room with a sadhu. Then at daybreak, we headed to Gangotri and from there to Gomukh, the terminus of the Gangotri glacier. It has been one of the most incredibly liberating experiences of my life yet." The couple travelled extensively through northern India then, once even on a bike from Delhi to Vrindavan for Drupad Mela, a music festival. Talking about the country then and now, Brooks says, "It looks like India has all but skipped the 20th century and zoomed into the 21st century, at least in terms of telecommunication and transportation. Everyone carries cell phones and there is a metro station in Delhi, right outside my Gurujī's home. It is unbelievable!"

sain and Kai Eckhart at 'Aadi Anant', a travelling musical festival organised by the Mumbai-based NCPA, which will continue until the end of January. Brooks has also founded Indian fusion groups like Summit (with Fareed Haque, Kai Eckhardt, Zakir Hussain and Steve Smith), Bombay Jazz (with Larry Coryell and Ronu Majumdar), and the

Now with his primary parenting responsibilities ending as the last of his three children leaves home for college, Brooks hopes to focus more on what he wants to do next, musically. And that might just mean another 10 months in this country that has offered him myriad soul-stirring moments, and his music a unique flavour.

—Deepa Ramakrishnan

"I love India; it's a mosaic of cultures, religions, art and language"

Artist

Olaf Van Cleef

By day he sells diamonds to fashionable women in Paris; by dusk, he retires to his Indian reverie to imagine and recreate Hindu gods and goddesses, royal families, elephants and palaces of an era gone by. Olaf Van Cleef, the 63 year-old scion of the iconic Van Cleef family, synonymous with haute jewellery, has been in a long-distance relationship with India, recreating her grandeur and magic with a mix of candy wrappers, Swarovski crystals and gold paper. Working as a counsellor on high-range jewellery at Cartier, it was easy for this Frenchman to be impressed and inspired by the precious stones and colours adorning the images of Hindu gods during one of his numerous trips to India. He was also impressed with the beautiful jewellery that men were seen sporting in Raja Ravi Varma's paintings, a concept alien to his European sensibilities. That was the 'aha' moment!

Van Cleef's fascination with India began when, as a frail eight year-old boy, he came to India with his grandmother on a holiday. The sounds and colours of Crawford Market in Mumbai made a lasting impression on his young mind. Numerous visits followed, with each trip unveiling a different dimension of India. "Palm trees and elephants had always been a part of my universe since I grew up with Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*," he says. "So it didn't take me long to fall in love with this incredible land."

His series of sparkling artwork in diamonds and chocolate wrappers were set in motion with a painting of Krishna in 2004. Subsequently, night after night he would painstakingly cut gold wrappers into very small squares and paste a thousand pieces together to form one magnificent piece. "For me, each work is like creating a monument;



Photo courtesy Olaf Van Cleef

as I don't have a family of my own, I consider my paintings my legacy," says the artist, who spends 150-200 hours on average on each of them. What makes his paintings, valued at over ₹ 100,000 per piece, distinct from Tanjore paintings is the use of pastel shades. It's his self-confessed interest in Indian mythology that drives Cleef, whose paintings often find their way to the puja rooms of the well-heeled!

Though he works out of his home in Paris, Cleef owns a house in Puducherry, where his art is stored, and from where the Olaf Van Cleef Trust operates. The trust promotes young village artists by leasing out the premises to them at a nominal price for exhibiting their artwork. "Indian painters are geniuses and appreciated across the globe," he comments. "While they are sending their work abroad, I work from Paris and send my work to India." The premises of the foundation are also given free to local doctors for holding vaccination camps in a sterile environment and other humanitarian activities, and for yoga camps.

Cleef, who has made over a hundred visits to the country, would like to live here someday, painting in his studio and driving around in his white Ambassador car. But that's a dream that will have to wait till his retirement at 70.

—Jayanthi Somasundaram

It's Cleef's self-confessed interest in Indian mythology that drives him; his paintings often find their way to Indian puja rooms of the well-heeled!

What is 60?

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

The number of movies you have to catch up on.

The number of bad jokes you cracked last month.

The number of times you told your grandson

to get away from the TV set and get a life.

The number of places you have to travel to.

What it's not, is your age.

At least not in your head.

Or in your heart.



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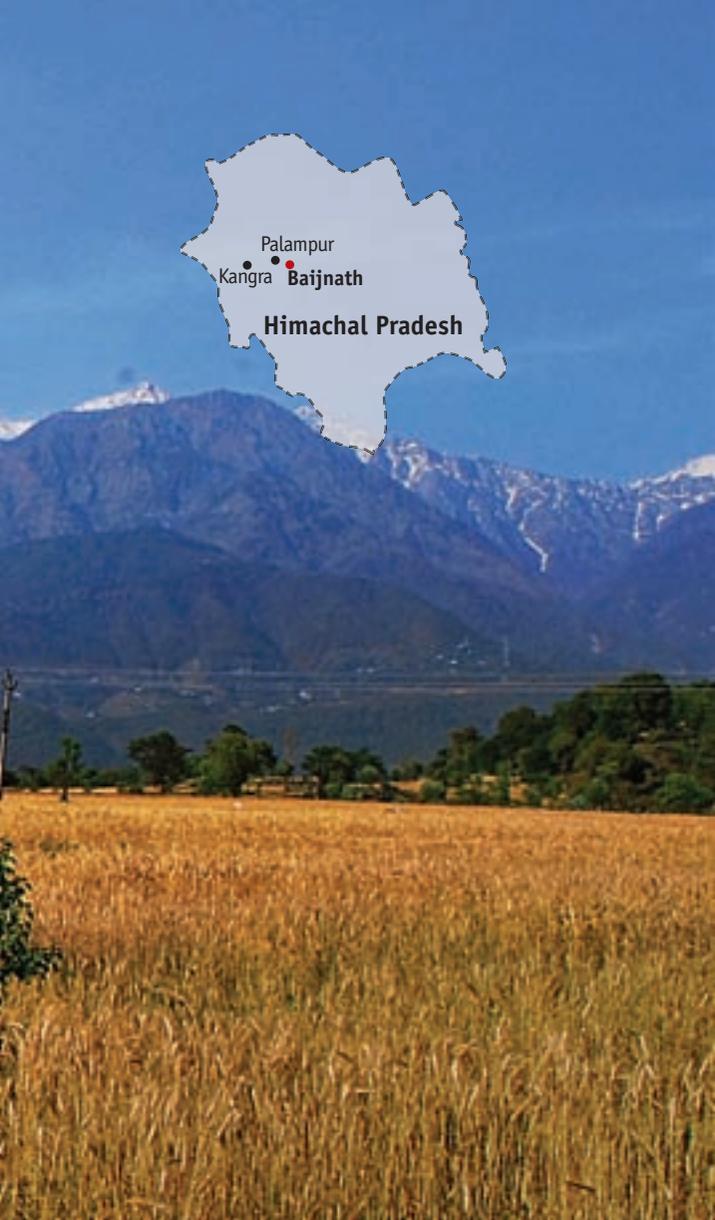
A valley, a temple and some tales

A drive through the breathtaking Kangra Valley reveals a whole new world and the ancient temple of Baijnath

✦ 📷 Shivani Dasmahapatra

Patience is a virtue they say and if you're driving from Chandigarh to Baijnath, a small town in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, you need to be at your virtuous best. Well, don't despair—it is only until you start the climb up the hill road

and the insanely chaotic city traffic has disappeared. Once you cross the state border into Himachal Pradesh, the traffic thins down. And after a couple of hours of driving, when you emerge out of the small dark tunnel cut into the mountainside, it is as though the world has opened up.



Terraced fields and green pine forests spread for miles together reach out to the mighty snow-clad Dhauladhar Range of the Himalayas. The route is lined with bountiful streams flowing down at every turn and rhododendrons, the state flower, bloom on mountainsides dotted with small clusters of houses with slated roofs. The landscape of the Kangra valley in Himachal Pradesh is perhaps one of the finest in India and manoeuvring through the twist and turns of the mountain roads breathing in the fresh Himalayan air is manna for the city soul.

The five-hour, 300-km drive from Chandigarh is soon forgotten as I reach Palampur en route to Baijnath. Here, acres of farmland with golden wheat fields swaying in the gentle breeze and trees laden with fruit greet me. Nestled in the lap of the valley on the foothills of the Shivalik ranges of the Dhauladhar, at an altitude of 1,220 m (roughly 4,000 ft) above sea level, Palampur is a popular hill station famous for its clean air, fresh water streams, beautiful tea gardens and a magnificent unobstructed view of the Dhauladhar.



The golden fields of Palampur reach out to the snow-clad Dhauladhar; the ancient Vaidyanath Shiva temple in Baijnath

The road lined with houses with colourful slanted roofs winds into the town's main market area. Bustling with activity, the market caters to Palampur as well as the smaller villages around it. The diversity of traditional and modern cultures is evident from the shops here. There are local wares from woollen shoes to foodstuff along with swanky showrooms selling the latest electronic equipment and branded clothes. A stop for refreshments at the popular café aptly named Joy is highly recommended. The fresh-off-the-tawa aloo tikki are sumptuous and I can swear I have never had a better cold coffee! I was impressed to learn that there is a complete ban on the use of plastic bags in the state of Himachal Pradesh. It is no surprise, then, to see shoppers and shopkeepers carry and provide paper or cloth bags in the market.

The drive from Palampur to Baijnath is all of about 16 km. I cross the Holta military camp and the CSK Himachal Pradesh Agriculture University. The CSIR Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology is also located in Palampur and conducts research leading to value-added plants, products and processes for industrial and environmental benefit. Rice and tea research farms stretch for miles on this route.

A few kilometres ahead is Taragarh Palace. Built during the 1930s by Nawab Sadiq Mohammed Khan Bahadur of

Bahawalpur, it was named Al Hilal (the land of the crescent moon) and bought by the royal family of Jammu & Kashmir in 1951 for the Maharani who lived there for several years. It is now run as a heritage hotel by the members of the royal family.

The approach to Baijnath is a steep climb; it lies at an altitude of 1,314 m (about 4,300 ft). The ancient Vaidyanath Shiva Temple is visible from kilometres before and the view of the temple standing atop a cliff overlooking a river below and the snow-capped mountains behind is simply magnificent. The temple complex has large, well-maintained gardens and ample parking space and the air is suffused by a serene stillness.

Built in the early 13th century, the Vaidyanath Shiva temple is an outstanding example of the Nagara style of architecture teamed with unique sculptures and distinctive mouldings. Many stories abound about the origin of the temple.



factfile

GETTING THERE

- By road: Baijnath is 550 km from New Delhi and 300 km from Chandigarh and lies on the Pathankot-Chakki-Manali National Highway 20, halfway between Kangra and Mandi. The Himachal Tourism Development Corporation runs busses to Kangra, Dharamsala and Palampur daily. Details are available at himachaltourism.gov.in and www.hptdc.nic.in
- By air: The nearest airport is at Gaggal, 50 km from Baijnath and 8 km from Kangra Town. There are daily flights from New Delhi. Taxis are readily available at the airport.

WHERE TO STAY

There are many hotels in and round Baijnath. Recommended ones include:

- Taragarh Palace Hotel: 01894-242034, 243077, 209209
- The Himachal Tourism Development Corporation-run Hotel Tea Bud: 01894-231298.

TIP: Carry heavy woollens in winter.

If legend is to be believed, Ravana worshiped Lord Shiva in Kailasha and offered his head 10 times in a *havana kund* to gain invincible powers. Impressed with this deed, Lord Shiva not only restored all his heads but bestowed upon him powers of invincibility and immortality. On attaining the boon, Ravana requested Lord Shiva to accompany him to Lanka. Shiva consented to the request; he transformed himself into a *Shivalingam* and asked Ravana to carry it, strictly instructing him never to place it on the ground. Ravana started moving south towards Lanka and reached Baijnath where he felt the need to answer nature's call. Spotting a shepherd, Ravana handed over the *lingam* to him and went to relieve himself. It was too heavy for the frail shepherd to hold so he kept it on the ground—the *Shivalingam* rooted itself there.

Inscriptions on the temple wall tell of its construction in 1204 AD by two merchants, Ahuka and Manyuka. In the porch of the main temple, the two long inscriptions authenticate that Shiva (the *Shivalingam*) existed at the same spot before the temple was built. The *adytum* or sanctum of the temple is about 8 sq ft inside and about 18 sq ft outside. The *svayambhu* (self-manifested) form of the *Shivalingam* is present in the sanctum and it has five projections



A welcoming Ganesha idol at the entrance; Nandi with a small human figure holding on to its tail; a local plays a drum in the temple premises; (facing page) the tower's beautiful Nagara style of architecture

on each side with a tall curved *shikhara*. The entrance to the sanctum is from the vestibule that has a large square *mandap* in front with two massive balconies, one each in the north and south, offering majestic views of the Dhauladhars and the Binduka, a tributary of Beas River.

Apart from the main deity, the outer walls of the temple have many niches that house sculptures of Goddess Chamunda, Surya (the Sun God) and Kartikeya (son of Lord Shiva). There are also two Nandi bulls (Lord Shiva's mount) in front of the temple. One is a large, standing bull and the other a crouching one. This one has a rather peculiar feature—a small human figure holding the bull's tail, something I haven't seen on any other Nandi statue.

Devotees have immense faith in the temple and believe that as Vaidyanath, 'Lord of Physicians', Shiva frees people from all kinds of ailments and diseases. The water of the temple premises is also considered curative by the people of the state. Interestingly, while a large number of devotees celebrate the festivals of Maha Shivaratri, Makara Sankranti and Vaisakha Sankranti with pomp and flair, the festival

of Dussehra, in which traditionally the effigy of Ravana is burnt, is not celebrated here as a mark of respect to the devotion of Ravana towards Lord Shiva. So much so that the people of Baijnath do not even buy sweets on the occasion. They believe that Shiva's wrath would fall on them if they burnt effigies of Ravana, his brother Kumbhakarna or his son Meghnath.

Sipping tea in a small shop outside the temple, I hear stories from a grand old man of how a few people in the town tried to celebrate Dussehra about a decade ago. They burned the effigy of Ravana according to tradition. However, all of them died before the next Dussehra. The people interpreted it as Lord Shiva's wrath and nobody dared to celebrate the festival again. Another strange fact narrated over hot *samosa* and tea is that there are no goldsmiths in Baijnath. This is because of the belief that Lord Shiva detests gold; and as Ravana's Lanka was made of gold, it reflected a disagreement between God and his devotee. I walk back to take one last look at the temple; as the sun sets over the Dhauladhars, the temple bells toll and I surrender to the peace and serenity of this ancient splendour. ✨

Window to the past



European art had a number of stylistic periods, baroque being a significant one. It was the period when genres like landscape, still-life and daily life emerged; the paintings were elaborate, emotional and dramatic in nature. It was the time that Flemish art (relating to Flanders, in parts of Netherlands, Belgium and France) flourished between the 15th and 17th centuries. It was also the golden age when master painters and craftsmen like Peter Paul Rubens,

Anthony van Dyck, Jacob Jordaen, Peeter Van Bredael, Jan Brueghel il Vecchio and Frans Snijders produced amazing artwork from Antwerp, a major European art hub. Indeed, Rubens' works dominated the period and he was unrivalled in successfully renewing existing image formulas. With rich colours, true-to-nature details and fine accuracy, Flemish art almost always conveyed a political theme or a deeper spiritual message.

ART



(Clockwise from left) *The Old Ox Market in Antwerp* by Peeter Van Bredael; *The Lamentation of Christ* and *Neptune Abates the Storming Waters* by Peter Paul Rubens

A typical Flemish painting had an enormous sense of detailing and luminosity. As there was a huge demand for visual arts by the churches and affluent bourgeoisie, the art of printing on a mass scale was introduced.

Now, you can catch a glimpse of this extravagant baroque artwork. For the first time in India, a unique exhibition presenting an overview of Flemish masterpieces will be on at the Premchand Roychand Exhibition Gallery in the

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai. Twenty-eight exclusive and magnificent paintings of the collection of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, along with 25 engravings of the print room of the Plantin-Moretus Museum are open for public viewing till 9 February 2014, providing a rare opportunity for art connoisseurs to study and appreciate 17th century art. What's more, the Sangrahalaya has organised workshops, interactions and lectures on Flemish paintings. Check it out!

Spring in her step

She contemporises the classical and adds new dimensions to her art every time she performs. Odissi maestro Padma Vibhushan **Sonal Mansingh** is known as much for her innovative repertoire encompassing multiple Indian dance forms as for her indefatigable participation in seminars, writings and teachings concerning women, environment and prison reforms. The recipient of the Padma Bhushan (1992) and Padma Vibhushan (2003), she is the only classical dancer to have performed on Mount Kailash. The founder of Delhi-based Centre for Indian Classical Dances, she has choreographed unforgettable productions like *Draupadi*, *Samana-vaya*, *Manavata*, *Mukti* and *Naayika*. The multifaceted dancer has now assumed a new role as Guru Shreshtha or the supreme judge of a dance reality show, *Bharat Ki Shaan—Rum Jhum*, a first again by a classical dancer. **Sai Prabha Kamath** spoke to the icon to get an insight into her evolution. Excerpts from the interview:

You made your first TV appearance as Guru Shreshtha on dance reality show *Bharat Ki Shaan—Rum Jhum*, which juxtaposes Indian dance forms with non-Indian ones. What are the commonalities and differences between these?

Every dancer is gifted with the same bodily features—legs, arms, torso, face, etc. But how the dancer uses them gives a unique dimension to

each form. The technique, music, theme and costume only make the difference between various dance forms evident.

DANCE



What needs to be done to promote Indian folk and ritual dance forms among new-generation dancers?

Folk and ritual dance forms have to get the right platform to bring them to the fore; *Rum Jhum* is doing just that by encouraging dancers to showcase their special talent. Thanks to the show, even a hugely popular form like Sattriya of Assam was seen for the first time on a reality show.

You are resurrecting the ancient cultural tradition of *Katha* through a series of interactive *Natya-Katha* performances. How relevant are these stories today?

Natya-Katha is an ancient form of story-telling embellished with singing, narration and *abhinaya*, reflecting myriad emotions. It has given new dimensions to known repertoires. Our legends and myths, which are called *Purana*, are perennially valuable because of the life-sustaining messages contained in them. These are communicated through pan-Indian characters; gods, goddess and *asura* are used as metaphors to convey larger visions. Our *katha* also address social issues that emerge in every phase of history and, therefore, have remained vibrant, popular and invaluable.

You are also well-known for your novel interpretation of traditional themes and choreography based on contemporary issues, like women and the environment. How did your art evolve?

Art evolves with personal evolution. Every stage in life brings its own experiences and wisdom. As responsible citizens, we are concerned with everything that happens around us. Art and artists do not evolve or live in a vacuum but are reflections of their time.

What are you working on currently?

I am working on making *Rum Jhum* a richer, more expansive reality show with a difference. I am also preparing lectures on today's burning issues, besides training students and trying to gauge if a disciple will emerge.

TRACING THE MUGHAL ERA

The Mughal Dynasty was a period of great cultural and educational enlightenment for India. Delhi got a unique opportunity to view a part of its history last month. *The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture*, an exhibition showcasing the British Library's extensive collection of illustrated manuscripts and paintings, depicted the splendour and vibrancy of Mughal life. From extraordinary portraits of Mughal emperors to dramatic panoramas of Indian landscape, the exhibition traced the evolution of Mughal art and empire between the 16th and 19th centuries. Many of these works have never been published until now. Rare exhibits on display included Shah Jahan's recipe book, *Book of Affairs of Love* by Rai Anand Ram Mukhlis and a route map from Delhi to Qandahar.

A new dawn

New Year's Morning, written by **Helen Hunt Jackson** in 1892, is an ode to new beginnings that resonate with hope and happiness

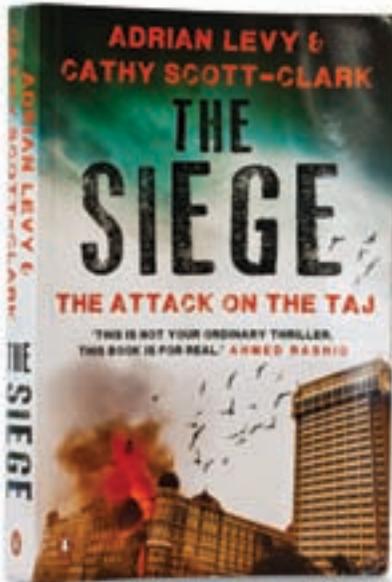


Only a night from old to new!
Only a night, and so much wrought!
The Old Year's heart all weary grew,
But said: "The New Year rest has brought."
The Old Year's hopes its heart laid down,
As in a grave; but trusting, said:
"The blossoms of the New Year's crown
Bloom from the ashes of the dead."
The Old Year's heart was full of greed;
With selfishness it longed and ached,
And cried: "I have not half I need.
My thirst is bitter and unslaked.
But to the New Year's generous hand
All gifts in plenty shall return;
True love it shall understand;
By all my failures it shall learn.
I have been reckless; it shall be
Quiet and calm and pure of life.
I was a slave; it shall go free,
And find sweet peace where I leave strife."

Only a night from old to new!
Never a night such changes brought.
The Old Year had its work to do;
No New Year miracles are wrought.
Always a night from old to new!
Night and the healing balm of sleep!
Each morn is New Year's morn come true,
Morn of a festival to keep.
All nights are sacred nights to make
Confession and resolve and prayer;
All days are sacred days to wake
New gladness in the sunny air.
Only a night from old to new;
Only a sleep from night to morn.
The new is but the old come true;
Each sunrise sees a new year born."

BETWEEN THE LINES

On 26 November 2008, four terrorists entered the Taj, Mumbai, and took over the hotel. What followed was nearly three days of terror as the world watched the iconic hotel go up



in flames. Investigative journalists **Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark** bring to the table forensic investigative skills as they reconstruct the tragedy in **THE SIEGE: THE ATTACK ON THE TAJ** (Penguin; ₹ 499; 319 pages), taking the reader right into the war zone.

The gripping tick-tock account, telling the stories of the guests, staff, police and the National Security Guard (NSG) and piecing together transcripts of calls between the terrorists and their handlers is as palpably close as one can get to the tension that enveloped the hotel those fateful days. The authors delve into minute details through scores of interviews with the survivors, serving and retired intelligence agents, the text messages sent by the guests, transcripts of wiretaps of the gunmen's phones and unpublished documents of the trial of Ajmal Kasab, the sole gunman of the *fidayeen*, manipulated from a control

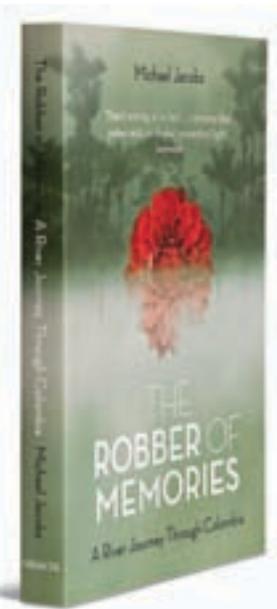
room in Karachi by Lashkar-e-Taiba, to be captured alive.

We discover how militants used technology like Google Earth and GPS to plan the strikes and used live television coverage to gain real-time information about the whereabouts of guests. Serious questions are also raised over the battle readiness of the Mumbai police, who are left to battle AK57s with outdated machine guns, rusty carbines and plastic chairs. By exposing the double game of David Headly and the FBI, which allow him a free run in the hope of gaining crucial information about the militant group, the authors do a good job of showing how terror is interconnected with law enforcement and international politics.

The eclectic cast stays with you long after you have finished the book. Written in easily digestible fragments, *The Siege* is fast paced and cinematic.

Echoes of Gabriel Garcia Marquez ripple through travel writer **Michael Jacobs's** account of his journey to the source of Colombia's Magdalena River, **THE ROBBER OF MEMORIES: A RIVER JOURNEY THROUGH COLOMBIA** (Granta Books; ₹ 499; 273 pages). The great Colombian writer presaged his own loss of memory in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a twist of fate that Jacobs frequently harks back to as he makes his journey up Marquez's beloved river.

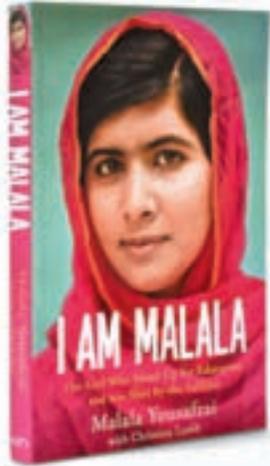
Jacobs's tale is an evocative, entrancing one, with a foggy sense of travelling not just through place but time, myth and imagination, with oblivion always hovering just around the next bend. As the son of parents battling Alzheimer's and dementia, Jacobs is drawn up the river by stories about a town near its source where Alzheimer's claims one in every three people, sometimes as early as in their 40s. The journey to this village and beyond, to the source of the river said to contain all memories of Colombia, is surreal,



halting and unpredictable, with the deep, wide river as the only constant.

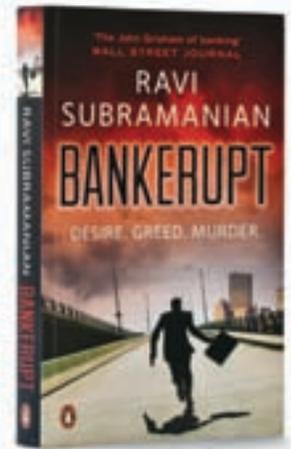
Along the way, Jacobs and his alter ego-like companion, Julio, encounter strange pockets where memory and forgetting become a community exercise, practiced steadfastly through carefully selected silences. Jacobs steepes himself in the local culture, offering glimpses of wild carnivals, surreal boat rides, strange local delicacies and rural camps still run by revolutionary outlaws.

His evocative imagery and often-lyrical prose make the book unputdownable in parts, leaving you, eventually, with a sense of having been on the river yourself—although a better map than the one in the book would have helped you remember the journey better.



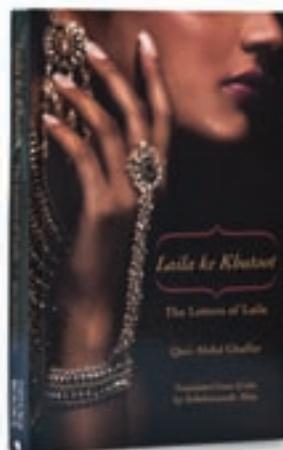
At 16, **Malala Yousafzai** is already a global icon for education, the youngest nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize. Despite being shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school on 9 October 2012, Malala has refused to be silenced and kept her fight for the right to education for girls. **I AM MALALA** (Hachette; ₹ 399; 276 pages) is her story told along with journalist **Christina Lamb**. The book illuminates the influences that shaped her character, her father Ziauddin in particular. Theirs is the closest bond, even to the exclusion of her mother. It's his role as a socialist education activist, love for knowledge and anti-Taliban stance that shape Malala's personality. It is their tale, set against the shifting geopolitical reality of Pakistan and the rise of Taliban in the Swat Valley and in other parts of Pakistan. The problem with the book is that as the biography of a 16 year-old is limited in scope, much of the pages are filled with the religious tension and political turmoil that have defined Pakistan. That aside, this is a valuable reminder of the rights we all take for granted—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to education regardless of gender.

Set in a volatile period for both the US and India, **BANKERUPT** (Penguin; ₹ 299; 319 pages) is a thrilling read by **Ravi Subramanian**. Straddling almost a decade, it begins in India in the 2000s, when protagonists Cirisha Narayanan and Aditya Raisinghania meet and marry. Cirisha, an academician and professor at MIT, Boston, has to divide her time between Mumbai and Boston. Meanwhile, Aditya gets involved in a multi-million dollar scam in Mumbai and Coimbatore; being the top executive in Greater Boston Global Bank gives him the power to get away with it. Little does he know that his morally upright wife will be his undoing. At a time when gun-related crimes are on the rise in the US, Cirisha gets unwittingly pulled into the gun control debate raging in MIT. Meanwhile, Aditya loses his job in Mumbai and moves to Boston. Soon enough, he too gets enmeshed into the gun debate while getting the opportunity to repent for his sins. Subramanian's simple writing keeps us hooked, as he explains financial concepts, academic procedures and loopholes with ease in a tale that combines politics, economics and everyday lives.



If **Qazi Abdul Ghaffar's** book, a feminist entreaty in poetic prose, was a favourite among Urdu readers, its essence is probably lost when translated to English, but still manages to hit the mark. **LAILA KE KHUTOOT** (Niyogi; ₹ 395; 252 pages), translated by Scheherazade Alim, features a collection of letters by Laila, a street woman in early 20th century India. Written to one of her many admirers, these are scornful and accuse men, religion and society. They bring to light their hypocrisy and present arguments against the injustice faced by women at their hands. Though at first her letters are defensively patronising, there's a sense of frustration, a silent cry for help

that goes unnoticed and weakening of her will, as she strives to fight the double standards she faces everyday—of those men who call her trade a sin by day and yet fall to her feet with riches by night. The debate echoes exactly what feminists fight for even today. In the next section 'Majnun ki Diary', a man attempts to justify why he does not adhere to religion and yet does not want the women of his society to have the same rights as him. The diary coincides with Laila's letters, as we learn of his interaction with the feisty Laila. The book leaves us aghast with the impression that there were—and still are—people whose mindsets are tuned to this kind of discrimination and sense of false superiority.



Here and now

Age is irrelevant; wherever you are in your journey is a starting point, says **Mark Hermann**

Birthdays. They're supposed to be a joyous celebration, right? That one special day each year when we throw a party and reflect on the day our amazing journey began. The starting point. I've had quite a colourful journey and certainly enjoyed many wonderful birthdays in my life. Turning 50 this past year wasn't one of them. Here's why.

When we're little, every birthday marks a major accomplishment. We learn to walk. Then we learn to talk. Then we go to school and learn our ABCs. Everything is brand new. When we graduate high school they tell us we have our whole lives in front of us. Whether we're off to college, exploring the world, or entering the workforce, we begin a whole new chapter. Independence. A starting point.

In my twenties, I was a freewheeling single young man touring the world with rock stars. How bad can that be, right? Turning 30 was awesome too! I was living in sunny Southern California, playing music, and making records in recording studios. Life was good. Even 40 was great. I had moved back to New York to play in my own band and got married. Our life together had just begun. Then came children. I became Dad. A starting point.

But 50? You're supposed to have accomplished your greatest life's work by now, right? Achieved all your major goals. Changed the world. But what if you're still working on that? What if you're just now starting to figure out what you're really supposed to be doing with your life? You can say many things about turning 50, but one thing you can't say with a straight face is that you still have your whole life in front of you. At this point in the journey, life has shown you many of its cards. Not all, mind you, but you've got a pretty good grasp on how the world turns. If there are still any surprises, they have mostly to do with learning to change the way you see things. But something else happened that was very difficult to escape. Much as I hated to admit it, I found that I was looking around and comparing myself to my peers. When you view life this way, there's always going to be someone who you feel is ahead of you by your own estimate. And

you'll never catch up with them. So that leaves you feeling behind in some imaginary race that can't be won.

You believe that if you can just obtain that (figure of money in the bank, job title, certain car), you will have arrived at your destination and will find happiness there. But you won't. Because it's not out there. Not in any material things you can obtain. Whatever it is will begin to lose its lustre the moment you acquire it. Then you'll have to look for something new to replace it and give you another fix. And the cycle never ends. So how do you break out of this destructive cycle?

I found the answer in meditation. Through meditation you learn how to become present. Most of us never learn to appreciate where we are at this very moment because we're so focused on what happened (or didn't happen) in a past

that no longer exists and worried about a future that hasn't happened yet. Meditation taught me that to compare ourselves to others is the root of human suffering, or *samsara*. Because it creates a separation between ourselves and someone else. A duality. A them and an us.

And so at age 50, I am only now seeing the light. Only after allowing the hidden writer within to finally emerge did I realise that I have been telling stories my whole life. With that came the realisation that each of us has a unique story we're supposed to tell. That's why we're here. And I'm supposed to help people to tell theirs. The epiphany was that as a music producer and a songwriter, I had been doing this

already for many years helping artists realise their vision. Suddenly everything felt different. Like I had steered the boat back on course. Like a new chapter. A starting point.

Age is irrelevant. Wherever you are in your journey is a starting point. Whether you're 20 or 50 or 80, if you never stop seeking you'll never cease to be amazed by what you might find. And if every point is a starting point then every day can be your birthday!

How will you celebrate today?



Mark Hermann is a music producer, songwriter, and blogger with the occasional whimsy to create mosaic art. Read more of his stories about how to discover your own personal legend at rockandrollzen.com

A photograph of an elderly man with a grey beard and a young girl sitting on a wooden dock in a pool of water. The man is in the water, smiling and gesturing with his hands. The girl is sitting on the dock, looking at him and smiling. The water is dark blue and rippling. The dock is made of dark wood planks.

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“I am prepared to die”

It was a speech which outlined the ideals he cherished the most—democracy and free society—and formed a catalyst for the anti-apartheid movement that he spearheaded to lead his continent into a new era of social justice. Indeed, despite having faced his share of criticism, civil rights icon Nelson Mandela will always be remembered for his inspiring words that fired the imagination of a population discriminated against on the basis of their colour. Mandela held the audience spellbound, when he declared, “I am prepared to die” from the dock of the Pretoria courtroom in 1964 during the opening of the Rivonia Trial, referring to the principles that were dear to him, and for which he was willing to lay down his life.

Announcing his commitment to the fight against apartheid, Mandela made an impassioned speech in his defence at the trial. “I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities,” he said. “It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to see realised. But, My Lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.” The trial, which lasted for four hours, ended with Mandela and other leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) being convicted of sabotage, treason and conspiracy against the white majority regime and being sentenced to jail for 27 years, an imprisonment that proved to be a turning



point in the anti-apartheid movement. As the struggle garnered support around the world, Mandela became a global icon and household name.

Mandela served his time initially on Robben Island, and later in Pollsmoor prison. Amid escalating violence, civil strife and international pressure, Mandela was released in 1990, following which he opened negotiations with President F W de Klerk, culminating in the abolition of apartheid.

During the country’s first multiracial elections in 1994, the ANC swept to power, with Mandela becoming the first black man to occupy the office of the president from 1994 to 1999. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, the US Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Soviet Order of Lenin and the Bharat Ratna, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918-2013) will always remain a symbol of hope for those fighting oppression and injustice.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: JANUARY 1964

- On 13 January, communal riots broke out in Kolkata, leaving more than a hundred dead and over 400 injured.
- On 16 January, John Glenn, one of the Original Seven Mercury astronauts and the first American to orbit the earth, resigned from the Manned Spacecraft Center of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
- On 23 January, Arthur Miller’s controversial play *After the Fall*, based on his failed marriage with Marilyn Monroe, opened in Broadway.
- On 30 January, General Nguyen Khanh led a bloodless military coup to replace the prime minister of South Vietnam Duong Van Minh.

Pank

n. A woman without children who dotes on her nieces and nephews.

Example. Breaking acronym alert! The world's sociologists have been at it again. All hail the **pank**, or 'professional aunt, no kids,' a species defined by the spoiling, confidence-sharing and general nurturing of other people's nippers.

—Hannah Betts, "Why this devoted 'professional aunt, no kids' is proud to be a **pank**,"
The Telegraph,
11 November 2013

PIG'S EAR

n. A raised metal strip added to the edge of a bench or low wall as a skateboarding deterrent.

Example. San Francisco, the birthplace of street skateboarding, was also the first city to design solutions such as **pig's ears**—metal flanges added to the corner edges of pavements and low walls to deter skateboarders.

—Frank Swain, "Secret city design tricks manipulate your behaviour",
BBC, 2 December 2013

PHYTONUGGET

n. A small filament of gold that collects in the leaf of a tree that grows over a gold deposit.

Example. Here's a new word for you: **phytonugget**. It's a tiny bit of gold, the dimensions of which are roughly half the thickness of a human hair. It doesn't sound particularly interesting until you hear that it grows on trees.

—Michael Brooks, "A market that won't go pop: why helium balloons could one day cost £100 each", New Statesman,
7 November 2013

School sprawl

n. The placement of schools away from the communities they serve, especially beyond walking distance of those communities.

Example. **School sprawl** has been part of the pattern, too, with large campuses placed at a distance from most students and their families. Check out the locations of three Loudoun County schools on the satellite map above: they have all been placed on former farmland just beyond the reach of sprawling new subdivisions.

—Kaid Benfield, "How sprawl makes fighting childhood obesity so much harder", The Atlantic Cities, 25 July 2013

STREETED

v. To release a dangerous or helpless mentally ill person from a hospital because there are no private or public psychiatric beds available.

Example. A 2010 report found that 200 individuals in Virginia who were psychotic and either dangerous or incapable of caring for themselves were **streeted**—slang coined by emergency room doctors for when hospitals knowingly put a psychotic patient on the sidewalk.

—Pete Earley, "Deeds attack shows that our system is a mess: Column",
USA Today, 21 November 2013

Shmeat

n. Meat grown in vitro from a tissue culture.

Example. Chances are you will have seen or read about science's latest ground-breaking effort: producing meat in a test tube. It got its first showing last week in the form of a hamburger pattie. **Shmeat**, they call it, and the taste testers gave it a resounding thumbs down.

—Ed Gannon, "**Shmeat** argument is very hard to swallow", Herald Sun, 16 August 2013

“ Birthdays are good for you. Statistics show that the people who have the most live the longest.

—American priest Larry Lorenzoni



DIY, with help

We've been telling you about various DIY recycle projects in our 'Orbit - Try It' section to reuse and upcycle things in your home for more economical and eco-friendly living. If you find certain projects tough, or need someone to show you how to turn one broken thing into something useful and pretty, Rohima Sequeira in Mumbai is your go-to person. This self-made DIY fan has been helping people out with DIY projects and revamps for a year now, with requests ranging from dressing up old coffee tables into something chic and making side benches to ideas to brighten up a dull room. From conceptualisation and design to final production, she takes care of everything, sometimes even hiring her own team of people on a project basis. Just give her a call, have her look at that old table desperately in need of a pick-me-up and she will bounce ideas off you depending on your budget. Then, sit back and watch her magically transform it into something out of an urban hippie fairy tale or the Victorian era; whatever tickles your fancy! Call her at (0) 9820613844 or email rohima_sequeira@hotmail.com

BUZZ

“By the time you're 80 years old, you've learned everything. You only have to remember it.

—American actor and comedian
George Burns

Vanity height

n. Unusable space at the top of a tall building created by a spire or similar extension added only to give the building extra height.

Example. Dubai's Burj Khalifa—currently the world's tallest building at 2,717 ft—is topped by 800 ft of unusable ornamentation. That means almost 30 per cent of the world's tallest building is **vanity height**.

—“Editorial: 'America's tallest building' goes to New York”,
Chicago Tribune, 13 November 2013

Kid credentialing

pp. Having a child participate in activities, programs, and experiences that will look good on the child's future college application.

Example. Middle-class parents are understandably anxious to give their kids the best chance possible in life. That's why they are willing to invest more in **kid credentialing** than ever. That's why the word “parent” has turned from a noun into a verb.

—Margaret Wente, “The kids don't play any more”,
The Globe and Mail, 16 November 2013

First-world problem

n. A trivial frustration or petty concern, particularly one that contrasts sharply with serious problems such as those faced by developing nations.

Example. Dear Wined Out: First, let me thank you for outlining the very essence of the phrase **first-world problem** in this space.

—Amy Dickinson, “Pre-party makes guests less charitable”, Chicago Tribune,
13 September 2013

“Educational privileges are nothing if not shared”

Shabnam Ramaswamy, 59, Murshidabad, runs a school for poor children



Photo courtesy Shabnam Ramaswamy

When Delhi Development Authority bulldozers demolished her 10 year-old school-cum-night-shelter for slum children in the Paha-ganj area of New Delhi in 2000, social worker **Shabnam Ramaswamy** and her journalist husband Jugnu Ramaswamy quietly swore to recreate the school on their own land. Jagriti Public School in Ramaswamy's ancestral village, Katna in West Bengal, stands testimony to their resolve. "In 2005 we sold our house and left the comforts of Delhi to make our dream come true," she says with pride. A remote, backward area, Katna then had a soaring crime rate. The couple realised the need for a quality English medium school for improving the lot of the villagers. "I went to the elite La Martiniere school in Kolkata. Why should not my villagers get a similar education?" she asks. Unfortunately, Ramaswamy lost her husband two weeks before the inauguration of the school, their pet project. Today, Jagriti Public School is affiliated to CBSE and has over 532 children, many of them first-generation learners, filling up classes up to Grade 11. "With the current batch set to get promoted in

a couple of months, we will soon get our Class 12," she says. Not a mean achievement, considering the odds the couple had to surmount in the orthodox local community, which viewed them with suspicion when they bought 3.5 acre of land to set up the school. "We had to contend with lumpen elements who tried to hurl handmade bombs at our house," she says. "Today, reformed, they work with me, with one of them employed as a driver to ferry children to school and drop them back home." Getting and retaining quality teachers in this remote corner of rural Bengal is a challenge Ramaswamy is still grappling with. Her NGO, Street Survivor India, also works for the employment and empowerment of rural women by teaching village women kantha stitch work and selling their work through shops in Delhi and Kolkata. Ramaswamy is also planning to open a restaurant-cum-lodge, Tumi Asbe Bolei (Because you will come), to promote tourism in the area. "We are just 60 km from Tagore's famed Santiniketan," she says. "I want to emulate his example and make a change here."

—Sudipto Roy

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long lasting shades

*20g+20ml

Based on third party evaluation data on conditioning properties & retention of hair strength, measured as per standard lab protocols versus ammonia containing crème hair colour.



**Sahara Hospital Offers Round-the-clock
Superspeciality Services of**

Advanced Heart Care Centre

Sahara hospital is a leader in providing advance healthcare in this part of the country. Complete solution available for all heart ailments supported by expert doctors, intensive cardiac care unit, high end cath lab and advance operation theaters. Our CTVS Unit has performed more than five hundred cardiac surgeries till date with good results. We are providing dedicated Mobile Coronary Care ambulances with all the essential monitoring and resuscitative equipments to shift any serious heart patient.

FACILITIES IN CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY

- Beating heart Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (OPCABG)
- Heart Valve Surgery
- Congenital Cardiac Surgery
- Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery (Key Hole Surgery)
- Thoracic and Vascular surgery

FACILITIES IN CARDIOLOGY

- Coronary Angiography
- Angioplasty (PTCA) for Coronary Diseases
- Peripheral Angiography & Interventions
- Permanent pacemaker implantation
- 2D Echocardiography and Doppler Studies
- Trans esophageal Echocardiography
- 24 hours Holter Monitoring
- Tread mill stress test
- Cardiac CT and MRI

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES AVAILABLE ROUND-THE-CLOCK

- MRI (16 Channel 1.5 Tesla)
- 64 Slices CT Scan
- Cardiac Cath Lab
- Portable CT Scan
- Mamography
- Digital X-Ray
- Ultrasound Voluson with 4D with Colour Doppler
- Urodynamics Study Lab
- Endoscopy Suite
- Automated Lab Medicine
- Ultra Modern Blood Bank
- Audiometry
- Respiratory Lab
- Colposcopy

