

harmony celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

APRIL 2018 ₹ 40



**COOLING
RECIPES TO
BEAT THE HEAT**

**TENNIS LEGEND
RAMANATHAN
KRISHNAN**

**MEDICLAIM: ARE
FAMILY FLOATERS
BETTER FOR YOU?**

ENCOUNTER
Ghatam queen
Sukanya Ramgopal

CANVAS
Enchanting Nagaland,
through the lens

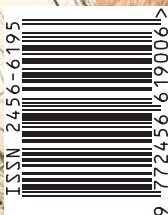
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Determine your DESTINY

Justice may have been delayed—but not denied. Three years ago, after the passing of Aruna Shanbaug, I wrote in this column about the euthanasia debate, the need to allow the terminally ill the dignity to die. And last month, in a landmark judgement, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India proclaimed that “the right to die with dignity is part of the right to life”, sanctioning passive euthanasia through an ‘advance medical directive’ or ‘living will’; with, of course, the necessary safeguards in place to prevent malfeasance or abuse (*see ‘Orbit’, pg 9*).

We welcome this judgement as it goes to the heart of self-determination for silvers, the need to not just breathe but enjoy each breath, to not just live but experience quality of life. And just as the dignity to die must be an unalienable right so should the ability to live life to one’s fullest potential.

I recently read an article about ‘superagers’—a term coined by American neurologist Marsel Mesulam—who live long and productive lives. Scientists are now working overtime to discover why some silvers enjoy great longevity accompanied by good cognitive and physical health, enabling them to not just survive but thrive. Apparently, a recent study by Northwestern University team contends that these active agers have more ‘von Economo neurons’ (brain cells that are believed to increase communication) than their silver peers.

Now, I’m not a scientist, nor do I understand the jargon of neuroscience. But I do know that ‘von Economo neurons’ or not, we all have the ability to become superagers. As I mentioned earlier, it’s not about longevity but quality of



Dabbhoi Ratnani

life, not about the years under your belt but what you do with them. In essence, the mantra is to stay relevant, potent, engaged.

Ageing may be inevitable but apathy is the real danger. It’s far too easy to stop caring about living your best life, even easier to just throw in the towel and give in to the march of time. It’s harder to set your own course, chart a new roadmap for activity and self-discovery, understand your potential and work to realise it. But that is where the rewards lie: the self-actualisation, self-belief and, yes, relevance you will experience will energise your body, mind and soul.

These rewards are your very own; whether your journey touches one life or countless others, it should be meaningful, it must bring you satisfaction. So don’t pass up the fight, never quit, love deeply, rage hard, believe in your power, and live life to the hilt. You owe it to yourself.

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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GUARDIAN OF THE TRUTH

Veteran Assamese journalist and litterateur Kanak Sen Deka has been a pillar of the fourth estate

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Animal companions are a source of unbridled joy and love in silver years

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An Ex-serviceman's Enterprise

column one

It's a story my 72 year-old mother still tells with a sigh and a smile. When she lost her father at the age of 16, the family's rather docile Alsatian underwent a sudden transformation: acutely protective, he would follow her everywhere she went; incredibly fierce, he wouldn't allow any stranger anywhere near the house; and infinitely loving, he would shower my mother and her brother with more devotion than they could physically handle!

Indeed, pets are unconditionally yours. And for elders, in addition to the joy and companionship they bring to life, they are also proven health-boosters. In our delightful cover feature, "Pet Pursuits", we meet silvers across the country who tell us why getting a pet could be the best decision of your life. A bonus: celeb pet parents with their darlings from the Harmony Archives!

Another highlight this month is our encounter with Sukanya Ramgopal, the world's first female ghatam player—having broken into a male-dominated sphere, her battle continues to elevate the status of this percussion instrument and extend its creative reach across continents.

Elsewhere, we unfurl a stunning visual canvas showcasing the primeval beauty of Nagaland and its people; show you the myriad ways in which Ramanathan Krishnan, India's best-ever tennis player, held spectators in thrall; offer some useful advice on choosing a mediclaim policy; and serve up some timely tips and delicious recipes to help you stay healthy and hydrated this summer. It promises to be a long, hot one—stay cool, stay safe.

—Arati Rajan Menon

May I congratulate the entire team for putting together such a readable magazine! I say this as a silver myself and not as your 'cover girl', along with Tina Ambani ("The Time of Their Life", February 2018)! I read several features with a great deal of interest. "Bonding with Ruskin" was fascinating. So was "The Experimenter". I like the mix of articles in *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, especially the ones that offer useful, timely advice to senior citizens, whether it is related to tax matters or health-related issues. Take a bow, Arati Menon. You have set the right tone for a niche publication, and I am certain your readership appreciates the efforts. All the best for equally stimulating future issues!

Shobhaa De
Mumbai

Harmony-Celebrate Age never ceases to amaze me with its increasingly informative and relevant articles each issue. Once I receive a copy, I start waiting for the next issue; I wish it were a fortnightly magazine! The article in the March issue about Dr Mahalaxmi Iyer ("Home Is Where The Heart Is") was superb. I wish there were more centres pan-India. And the creativity of Madhavi Parulekar and Hansa Marivala was inspiring. Keep posting articles that are so different from other magazines available these days.

Renu Singh
Via email

The magazine is a good read with everything you want to know and enjoy. Wishing *Harmony* many years of success.

Veelma D'souza
Bengaluru



Lovely magazine! Makes one feel it's good to be alive at 73.

Daksha Wahal
Via Facebook

The article on Manju Lodha, "Saluting our Bravehearts" (January 2017) was a riveting read and a great tribute to our Indian Army heroes. I thank you and Mrs Lodha for bringing this to people's attention.

Geeta Kapadia
Via www.harmonyindia.org

I gifted subscriptions of *Harmony-Celebrate Age* to my grandmother and mother last year. It is an exceptional magazine bringing moments of companionship to seniors and has the right mix of culture, lifestyle, cuisine... the works. Thank you for its continuity.

Amita Madan
Via email

Greetings! Wish you all the success in all your tasks and may god bless you for the wonderful work you are doing for seniors.

Anthony Simon
Via Facebook



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I write with regard to "A Sage of a Sportsman" by Mr Raju Mukherji in the February 2018 issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*.

I wanted to express my sincerest gratitude to the author for shining such a beautiful light infused with pathos on one of India's sporting giants. The article brilliantly captured the legend, patriot and human Dhyhan Chand was. What it did for me was to push me into doing my own little Internet research on his life to get to know him better. For these are the men, the Muhammad Alis and Roger Federers of our nation, we failed to celebrate and honour the way they deserved, during and after their life. I learnt that only a select group of six Indians accomplished the rare honour of winning three Olympic medals in team competition: Dhyhan Chand, Ranganathan Francis, Randhir Singh Gentle, Balbir Singh Sr, Udham Singh and Leslie Claudius, and all of them were in

field hockey. Even though it is futile to measure such a momentous achievement, to put things in some perspective, the more celebrated athletes on that list includes Usain Bolt, Carl Lewis and Michael Phelps. With that in mind, and not even taking into account the millions of dollars the gentlemen from the forgotten era did not make, we as a nation completely failed when Dhyhan Chand spent his last days in penury and died of liver cancer in the general ward of AIIMS, Delhi.

Is there anything more heartbreaking to hear from a champion and a patriot who repeatedly refused overseas offers throughout his life because his sense of patriotism was bigger than personal success? Just consider his quote two months before he passed away: "When I die, the world will cry but India's people will not shed a tear for me. I know them." It made me wonder, is it also the innate cruelty of team sports,

for therein the sense of the collective, the 'team before self', is drilled into each and every member, and maybe that is why so often there is an individual struggle to take care of themselves after their careers are over, and the world turns a blind eye to them in a blink. When a nation, a generation and a sport fail to celebrate and take care of its Messis, Maradonas and Pelés, the result is a Dhyhan Chand.

Heartfelt thanks to the author once again, I will anxiously wait for your future creations. Such articles are especially inspiring for our generation for they drag us out of the little microcosms we inevitably create and inhabit through 'personalised, related content' in social media and help us to know, celebrate and learn from the true heroes of our nation.

Arka
Sunnyvale, CA

It was good to see *Harmony* magazine for the first time. The moment I saw my story published in the February issue ("The Write Stuff", 'Your Space'), I was so ecstatic that I started promoting the magazine to my friends and relatives. At the evening years of life, getting a magazine absolutely for us is an inspiring thought and would definitely help elderly people like me

live a meaningful life. The stories and features are not only helpful for us, but also for society. Heartfelt thanks to the editor, Tina Ambani, and the editorial team of the magazine for publishing the stories of people from every nook and corner of India.

Anita Baruah
Jorhat, Assam

HITS OF THE MONTH

Our most-read stories in
March 2018 on

 www.harmonyindia.org

1. Heart to hearth
2. Hysterectomy after menopause
3. The seed keeper

AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

We are looking for contributions from our readers. Write to us if...

- You had an experience related to money
- You faced a serious health problem and conquered it
- You know of someone who has done something exceptional after the age of 55
- You have a hobby or an interesting travel experience to share
- You have a funny or insightful anecdote about your grandchildren
- You know about a senior citizens' organisation that is doing commendable work for a social cause or promoting active ageing through its activities... and we'll print it in the column 'Your Space'

Mail us at *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, Lower Basement - Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Four Bungalows, Andheri (W), Mumbai - 400 053. Or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



“The right of a dying man to die with dignity when life is ebbing out, and in the case of a terminally ill patient or a person in a persistent vegetative state, where there is no hope of recovery, accelerating the process of death for reducing the period of suffering, constitutes a right to live with dignity”

—Supreme Court of India



iStock

Living Will

NEWSWORTHY

DYING WITH DIGNITY

The Supreme Court has spoken. In a 538-page verdict, a five-judge bench proclaimed that **“the right to die with dignity is part of the right to life”**, which is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution—this gives **legal sanction to passive euthanasia through an ‘advance medical directive’ or ‘living will’**. In a living will, an ailing adult of sound mind can express the desire in writing to refuse life-prolonging measures if there is no chance of recovery and choose to embrace death naturally. Passive euthanasia is defined as denying

medical treatment to a person who cannot be cured.

“The right to privacy protects autonomy in making decisions related to the intimate domain of death as well as bodily integrity,” goes the judgement. “Recognition of the right to accept or refuse medical treatment is founded upon autonomy.” The Court also laid down procedural guidelines to execute a living will and spelt out safeguards to prevent misuse of the provision. For instance, the advance directive would have to be made before a magistrate, who

would determine whether the person is of sound mind, and two independent witnesses need to be present at the time of execution of the living will. Further, it will take effect after a statutory medical board confirms that the condition is incurable and irreversible.

The bench, led by CJI Dipak Misra, including Justices A K Sikri, A M Kanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Ashok Bhushan, was ruling under a petition filed by NGO Common Cause in 2005, which argued that ‘right to die’ was part of ‘right to life’.

CAPITAL NEWS

The Delhi Cabinet has approved a **scheme that will give 77,000 silvers over the age of 60 free tours by state transport AC buses, with free boarding and lodging, to visit pilgrimage destinations every year.** The elders, who should not have an income of more than ₹ 300,000 per year, can be accompanied by one adult, who will also travel free. The routes are Delhi-Mathura-Vrindavan-Agra-Fatehpur

Sikri-Delhi; Delhi-Haridwar-Rishikesh-Neelkanth-Delhi; Delhi-Ajmer-Pushkar-Delhi; Delhi-Amritsar-Wagah Border-Anandpur Sahib-Delhi; and Delhi-Vaishno Devi-Jammu-Delhi.

Further, the Delhi Government has announced that **silvers will now be able to travel free on all Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses**, including air-conditioned buses. At present, DTC runs around 3,800 buses in the capital.



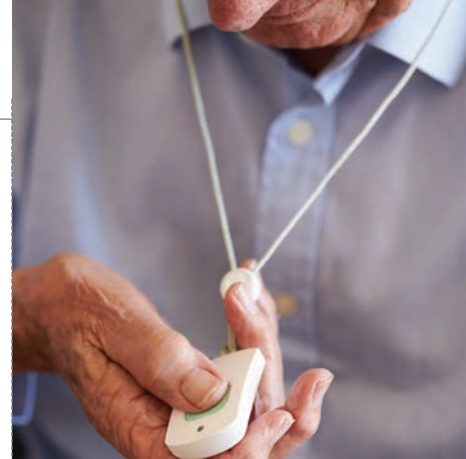
Haresh Patel

ENABLING ACCESS

THE KOCHI DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION HAS SET UP AN INITIATIVE CALLED PRATEEKSHA TO ENSURE THAT SILVERS IN OLD-AGE HOMES RUN BY NGOS ARE GETTING THE WELFARE BENEFITS DUE TO THEM AS WELL AS ACCESSING GOVERNMENT SERVICES. A PRELIMINARY SURVEY HAS REVEALED THAT AMONG THE 96 NGO-RUN OLD-AGE HOMES IN THE DISTRICT, 20 PER CENT OF RESIDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR PENSION WERE NOT RECEIVING IT AND THAT 10 PER CENT HAD NO AADHAAR OR RATION CARDS.

SILVER HUBS

THE 'BAPU KI KUTIYA' PROJECT IN RAIPUR ENVISIONS THE CREATION OF 50 'HUTS' IN GARDENS AND PUBLIC PLACES THAT WILL SERVE AS HUBS FOR SILVERS TO GATHER, INTERACT, WATCH TV AND PLAY BOARD GAMES. UNVEILED RECENTLY, THE FIRST OF THE HUTS, CONSTRUCTED AT A COST OF ₹ 1.5 MILLION, HAS CAPACITY FOR 30-35 SILVERS. THE FUNDING FOR THE HUTS, WHICH WILL BE MAINTAINED AND RUN BY SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS, WILL COME FROM THE ADMINISTRATION'S 'SMART CITY' INITIATIVE.



PRESS FOR HELP

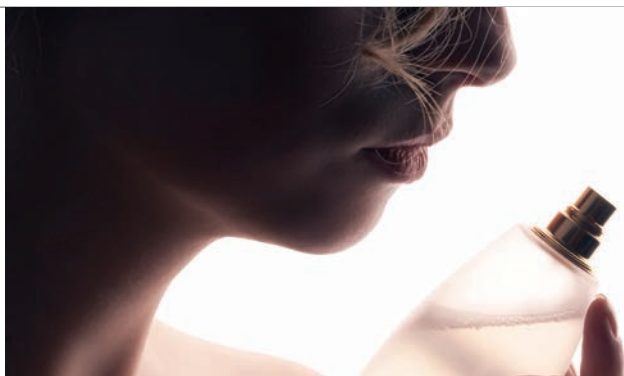
City-based Aathma Foundation has developed the **Aathma Panic Button for silvers who suffer an emergency in Chennai.** The waterproof device is connected to 'Cuckoo Server', a digital platform that converts sound waves into a voicemail; when you press the button, a pre-recorded voicemail is sent to the ambulance service and to a pre-registered neighbour and relative. After confirmation from the neighbour and relative that help is indeed needed, an ambulance will be dispatched to your location. Aathma Foundation has begun rollout of the devices—the poor will receive them free; for others, the cost is ₹ 7,500.

**TO LEARN MORE,
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PARKS AND RECREATION

The Jharkhand government has announced its intent to set up a 'Dada-Dadi' park in every city of the state.



Photographs by iStock

SCENT & SENSIBILITY

THE NEXT TIME you reach for your favourite scent, spritz with care. As the British edition of website www.harpersbazaar.com reports, **your perfume could cause pigmentation and age spots, especially on the neck.** "Sprayed directly onto skin, perfume is so aggressive that it undermines the skin's

SPRAY PERFUME ONLY ON AND AROUND YOUR CLOTHES

ability to protect itself against UV damage," skincare expert Abi Cleeve tells the site. "This means perfume-covered skin becomes more vulnerable to sun damage and ageing pigmentation." According to her, the angle of the décolleté area receives the full onslaught of the sun's rays. What's more, the skin on the neck is closer to the bone and thinner, allowing UV rays to penetrate quickly and deeper. Her recommendations: use broad-

spectrum and high-SPF sunscreen all the way down the neck and décolleté area and spray perfume only on and around your clothes and your wrists (as they are generally less exposed to the sun).

RAZOR BE GONE!

While the jury remains out on whether men look better with them, another verdict is unequivocal: **beards delay skin ageing.** A new study at the University of Queensland in Australia reveals that beards can protect men from 90 to 95 per cent of UV rays. In fact, comparing them to sunscreen, the researchers found that they can carry a UPF (ultraviolet protection factor) of up to 21. The result: less wrinkles and age spots and, even more significant, a lower risk of skin cancer. Now, throw away that razor!

BEARDS GIVE
90%
PROTECTION
FROM UV RAYS

Intimate interventions

Apparently, anti-ageing treatments are now going well beyond (and below) the face. A recent article on website www.jamaicaobserver.com draws attention to **the latest treatments focusing on the female sex organ.** Here are some of them, according to the site:



VAJACIALS This is essentially a 'facial' for the vagina to address skin laxity, hyperpigmentation and razor bumps. It involves a cleanse, exfoliation, steaming with a V-steam machine and a skin-tightening mask to restore the collagen and tissues of the vulva and replenish the natural flora of the vagina. The article claims that the steam session can also reduce the discomfort, bloating and exhaus-

tion associated with menstrual cycles; regulate absent or irregular cycles; and even treat chronic vaginal/yeast infections, uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts and uterine prolapse.

FEMININE REJUVENATION This is a surgical procedure to reduce, reshape or tighten the female genital tissues

for firmer tone and a more symmetrical appearance. Loss of vaginal tone can lead to urinary leakage, dryness, and painful sexual intercourse.

NON-SURGICAL VAGINAL REJUVENATION

This quick procedure (no more than 15 minutes) achieves similar results to surgical rejuvenation. It uses radio frequency or a laser to contract tissues in the vagina and vulva and promote collagen production, with minimal downtime.

VAGINAL TIGHTENING

This procedure uses high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) or laser energy to induce collagen tightening, strengthening vaginal walls and narrowing the diameter of the vaginal cavity. This can help combat vaginal laxity, stress urinary incontinence, loss of vaginal lubrication and a decrease in erotic sensation.

GET ON YOUR BIKE!

*It's time to get those wheels out. Here's a new study that substantiates **THE BENEFITS OF CYCLING**. According to the University of Birmingham, cycling boosts the immune system, preserves muscle mass and strength, maintains stable levels of body fat and cholesterol, and keeps testosterone levels high. For their research, the team compared 125 amateur cyclists between the ages of 55 and 79 to 130 healthy adults from two age groups (75 people aged 57 to 80 and 55 people aged 20 to 36) who did not exercise regularly. The male cyclists in the study had to be able to cycle 100 km in under 6.5 hours, while the women had to cover 60 km in 5.5 hours. "Our findings debunk the assumption that ageing automatically makes us more frail," writes study leader Janet Lord in journal Ageing Cell. "Our research means we now have strong evidence that encouraging people to commit to regular exercise throughout their lives is a viable solution to the problem that we are living longer but not healthier." Added to this are the proven mental health benefits of cycling and the eco-friendly nature of the activity—another British study estimates that if the country were to reach government targets for walking and cycling, it would save about £ 9.3 billion and reduce deaths from air pollution by more than 13,000 over the next decade. Pedal on!*





Lifting the brake pad could allow the ageing brain access to the gene, facilitating the formation of memories once again

Photographs by iStock

Step off the brake

Forgetfulness need not be synonymous with ageing. Researchers at the University of California-Irvine have identified that a **molecular brake pad, called HDAC3, is a major culprit in the ageing brain's lack of flexibility to house and encode information.**

As Dr Marcelo Wood, senior author of the study, tells website *breakingnews.ie*, the brake pad attempts to compact DNA, resulting in the obstruction of a gene located in the hippocampus that plays a role in programming biological processes in cells. Lifting the brake pad could

allow the ageing brain access to the gene, facilitating the formation of memories once again. The study, presented at the American Association for Advancement Science in Texas, holds promise for drug development and treatment to improve memory formation in ageing brains.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

It's not lack of access but fear of making mistakes when using software and fundamental concerns about the desirability of technology and wider concerns regarding its impact on society that are inhibiting silvers from wholeheartedly adopting technologies, according to researchers from Lancaster



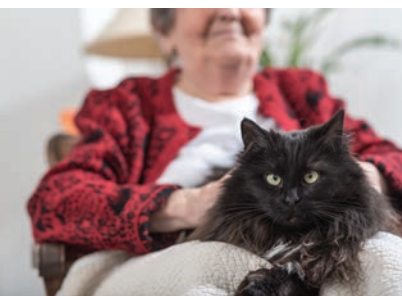
University in the UK. The team recommends that designers of online services work harder to offer better safety nets to protect and reassure elder users.



Silvers safer: Contrary to popular perception, millennials are bigger victims of digital fraud than senior citizens. That's the conclusion of a report from the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC), whose annual report reveals that 40 per cent of people between the ages of 20 and 29 lost money to cyber fraud, while only 18 per cent of people over the age of 70 fell prey to the same fate. The report attributes this to a false sense of comfort and complacency about the digital medium among younger people.

CAT PEOPLE

The University of Liverpool has something of a feline obsession! In conjunction with cat food company Royal Canin, it has embarked upon a **long-term study of mature cats** to assess their health; understand their ageing processes; and try and prolong and improve their quality of life. "We are inviting 300 cats to take part in the Cat Prospective Ageing and Welfare Study (CatPAWS), a five-year study that is the largest of its kind," lead researcher Nathalie Dowgray tells website



www.petgazette.biz. "Cats will visit the practice every six months and we're recruiting as many cats aged seven to 10 years of age as we can. We will carry out a number of diagnostics including retinal examination and photography, blood and urine sampling and orthopaedic—including gait analysis—and dental examinations. The data we collect will enable us to analyse the effects of ageing in more detail than ever before, and on a far larger scale." We'll keep you posted.

Photographs by iStock



It may not be the most glamorous of animals, but in terms of longevity the naked mole rat is a rockstar. As website *www.sciencemag.org* reports, these buck-teethed, bare-skinned rodents can live without oxygen for more than 18 minutes, are resistant to various kinds of pain, and almost never develop cancer. In fact, some naked mole rats have lived over three decades in captivity, about seven times more than average mice! And

new research by comparative biologist Rochelle Buffenstein of Google biotech spinoff Calico in San Francisco contends that unlike other mammalian species, **the risk of death doesn't increase with age among naked mole rats** owing to their ultra-fast DNA repair mechanisms. "To me this is the most exciting data I've ever gotten," she tells the site. "It goes against everything we know in terms of mammalian biology." Her study has been published in journal *eLife*.

DOGGONE IT!



What works for you can work for your best friend too! A recent study as part of the European Union-supported EVOLOR (Cognitive Ageing in Dogs) project has established that **computer interaction through touch-screens and iPads is a good alternative to physical training for older dogs**. As the scientists report on their website, they set up a laptop, a 38-cm computer monitor mounted behind an infrared touch-frame, and a feeding device that distributed treats; 32 holes rotated to release a single treat when the dog touched the correct stimulus. Liver sausage paste was used to attract the dogs to the screens and all the dogs underwent a short training session. Through the project, the team was able to train around 265 dogs and 20 wolves to use the touch-screen, resulting in increased motivation and cognitive improvement in a variety of behavioural tests. Woof!



app alert



CALM

Available for: iOS 9.0 or later and Android 4.1 and up

What it does: A meditation app to bring clarity, comfort and joy to your daily life with unique meditation techniques. Its guided meditating sessions, like '7 days of calm', sleep stories, relaxing music, and breathing programs help you learn self-care, alleviate anxiety, soften conflict and strengthen relationships.

How it works: The app opens up a screen with four simple words on it: 'Take a deep breath'. With the first task already at hand, we wait for the app to ready itself to pull us into a state of trance with its tranquil home screen animated by 'mountain lake', 'a fireplace' and many other sights to calm an anxious mind. With three buttons at the bottom of your screen, we explored the one in the middle, 'meditate', which opens to a list of meditating techniques. Back to the main screen, we clicked on the second option of the three, 'sleep', which lists stories contained in the app. It was also quite extraordinary to find Stephen Fry narrating Blue Gold by author Phoebe Smith. Little wonder Calm was chosen Apple's '2017 App of the Year'! All this and more is part of the unpaid version and is enough to alleviate day-to-day stress, but if your sleep and anxiety disorders are egregious, try the paid version, costing ₹ 2,949 for one year.

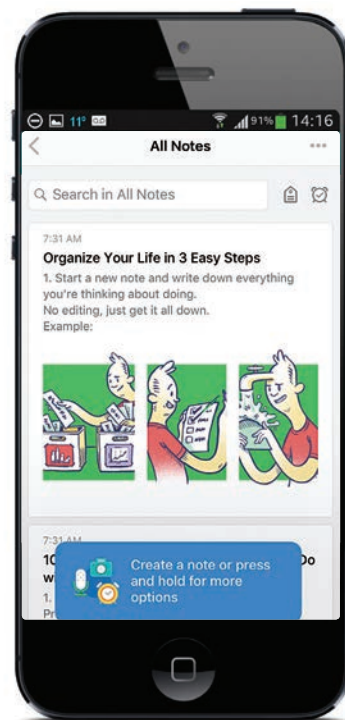
India's mobile wallet market is estimated at \$ 400 billion. And now WhatsApp, with its 200 million active users, is set to make headway in the digital wallet space. It is currently testing the beta version of its payment app with the hard launch set for end of March or early April 2018. Using Indian Unified Payment Interface or UPI, a payment system that allows funds to be transferred directly from sender's bank account to the recipient's, WhatsApp hopes to explore the Indian digital payment market that is still nascent despite mobile payment moguls like Mobikwik and Paytm operating here since 2009 and 2010, respectively.

EVERNOTE

Available for: iOS 10.3 or later and Android (varies with device)

What it does: A leader in note-taking, it organises your work and streamlines your schedule. Take notes, create to-do lists, save pages you find online and let the app sync to all your devices.

How it works: Like many apps, first step is always to sign up; you can do so through your Google account in a jiffy and jump right in to start organising your life. The large 'plus' tab in the bottom of the screen stands out; click on it and start your first note. If you are averse to typing, just hold the 'plus' tab to record voice memos or tap the camera tab for our personal favourite, optical character recognition (OCR), which makes text in photos searchable. You can also clip recipes, articles and shopping links from the web browser directly into your notes. Attach documents, update lists, scan handwritten notes, set reminders on your notes and they will pop right up; add checklists, categorise tasks...the offerings are endless. Other tabs on the app's homepage include 'search' to help you find certain notes with ease; 'shortcuts' to reach the desired note or document quickly; 'notes' that houses all your notes categorically; and 'account', where you can manage your profile among other personal preferences. You could purchase the premium version, with added features like scan and digitise business cards, annotate PDFs, save emails, etc, but for day-to-day activities, the free version is gold.



TAKE BACK CONTROL!



Photographs by Haresh Patel

This March, Harmony for Silvers Foundation, in association with Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital (KDAH), organised a three-edition 'Nocturia & Enuresis Awareness Camp' in Mumbai to inform and enlighten silvers about the debilitating condition, while busting myths about incontinence.

The first edition of the programme was held on 9 March at Karasandas Majithia Charitable Trust, Andheri, and was attended by members associated with Samanvaya, a charitable organisation for senior citizens. Addressing the audience, Dr Sanjay Pandey, head of Urology and Androl-

ogy at KDAH, shared, "It is sad that many silvers choose to live with nocturia and incontinence as they don't think it is a problem." Dr Pandey, who heads India's first Nocturia and Enuresis Clinic at KDAH, further explained the dire effects of irregular sleep patterns caused by nocturia. "With age, our bladder capacity decreases, resulting in frequent trips to the toilet. This results in a fragmented sleep cycle that further affects physical and mental functions and decreases overall quality of life."

Many attendees felt the condition had not been given due attention. "Incontinence is commonly prevalent but we

never knew about its adverse effects on our health. In fact, the condition has been trivialised,” expressed 81 year-old Chandrakant Doshi, president of Samanvaya.

Over 120 silvers attended the second edition of the campaign, held on 20 March at Pioneer Public School in Kandivali, Mumbai. Dr Pandey’s discussion about the disruptive condition and how it can be a symptom of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or an enlarged prostate, grabbed the attention of silvers. “I was aware of nocturia as my aunt suffers from excessive night-time urination,” shared Shrikant Patvardhan, 65. “But I was totally ignorant that it can be a symptom of enlarged prostate.”

Both events were followed up by an interactive session, with Dr Pandey clearing the doubts of the audience and urging them to strive towards positive urinary health. “Nocturia is a problem and now for the first time in India, treatment is also available,” he concluded.



Madhav Purohit, 74, secretary of Arya Chanakya Nagar’s Jyestha Nagrik Sangh at Kandivali, Mumbai, who has a diploma in gerontology from TISS, pointed out that the event was a great hit with his member group. “I have already received queries for our weekly

meetings and the majority of the questions are related to nocturia.”

As we go to print, preparations are underway for the third edition of the campaign—and we are sure it will be equally informative and successful as the first two!



THEY SAID IT

I think the lifecycle is all backwards. You should die first; get it out of the way. Then you live in an old age home. You get kicked out when you’re too young, get a gold watch and go to work. You work forty years until you’re young enough to enjoy your retirement. You drink alcohol, you party, you get ready for high school. You go to grade school, become a kid, play, have no responsibilities, become a little baby, go back into the womb, spend your last nine months floating in spa-like conditions with room service on tap. And then—finish off as an orgasm

—American comedian George Carlin (1937-2008)

Listen up

IF YOU'RE HARD OF HEARING, you may have lost more than your ability to hear; it could be accompanied by mild impairment in comprehension and reasoning too. A study conducted by a team from the National Institute of Health, Maryland in the US, and the University of Bari in Italy, points to a **link between one type of hearing loss and mild cognitive impairment (MCI)**. As part of the Great Age Study presented at the American Academy of Neurology's annual meeting, 1,604 participants aged 75 and above underwent a series of tests for hearing, reasoning and memory. There were three types of participants based on hearing loss: those with peripheral hearing loss, owing to problems with the inner ear and auditory nerves; those with central hearing loss, owing to the brain's ability to process sound; and those who had no hearing loss at all. The results showed that individuals who had central hearing loss were twice as likely to also have MCI vis-à-vis those whose hearing was intact. The researchers believe both conditions result from the loss of function in the same set of brain cells.



Photographs by iStock

URINE DOESN'T LIE

If you spend pots of money covering up any sign of the advancing years, here's something you can really turn your nose up at: **a simple urine test that can tell you exactly how old you are.** The test is the result of research at the National Centre of Gerontology in Beijing, China, and measures a marker for cellular damage that occurs inside our bodies as we age. Researchers analysed urine samples of 1,228 participants aged between two and 90, with ultra-high performance liquid chromatography. The tests showed an age-dependent increase in urinary 8-oxoGsn, a marker of cellular damage, in participants aged 21 and above. The main cause of ageing is oxidative damage, which increases as you grow older, leading to an increase in urinary 8-oxoGsn. The findings were published in journal *Frontiers In Aging Neuroscience*. The test could help assess your risk of age-related illness and mortality.

THE RLS-CVD CONNECTION

A good night's sleep may be more important than you think, especially for senior women. A study conducted at Pennsylvania State University has revealed a link between **restless leg syndrome (RLS)** and **cardiovascular disease (CVD)**. RLS is a neurological sensory disorder accompanied by involuntary sensations such as twitching, tugging or itching of the legs, which usually occurs at night when the legs are at rest. The study checked the data of 57,417 women aged 67, on average, and who did not suffer from problems such as cancer, renal failure, heart disease, etc, at the beginning of the study. After a 10-year follow-up and analysis, they recorded 6,448 deaths and noted that those suffering from RLS were 43 per cent more likely to die from cardiovascular disease than others. According to the researchers, RLS leads to sleep deprivation, which activates inflammatory cytokines such as serum C-reactive proteins, which contribute to CVD, and are linked to high blood pressure and coronary heart disease.



PUMPED WITH PROTEIN

Seniors pumped with protein are less likely to suffer fractures and death from falls. How so? Well, advancing age causes loss of muscle mass and strength, which contributes to falls. But a new study suggests that increasing your protein intake through your diet might just be the best antidote. To check how the protein affects muscle strength, Dr Stephanie Chevalier and her team of doctors at the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, Canada, assessed the protein intake in 827 healthy men and 914 healthy women aged between 67 and 84. A three-year follow-up study showed that those who consumed protein throughout the day had more muscle strength than the ones who had it just for dinner—having more protein per meal leads to an additional boost of amino acids for protein synthesis. The results were published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.



HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO YOU NEED?

ACTIVITY LEVEL	SEDENTARY	0.8g per kg of body weight
	VERY ACTIVE	1.2g per kg of body weight

BEST SOURCES OF PROTEIN



ORGANIC CHICKEN



ORGANIC EGGS



TUNA & SALMON



ORGANIC YOGURT



KIDNEY BEANS



LENTILS



QUINOA

THE CHILL PILL

Electronic bracelets for prisoners on probation... yawn; microchips that keep tabs on the enemy...old hat; but 'digital pills'? Now here's the plot of a futuristic pot-boiler, it would seem. The US Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) has approved a **'trackable pill' that can help doctors track whether or not their patients have taken their medication.** Called Abilify MyCite, it is an aripiprazole (antipsychotic) drug that comes with sensor technology. Manufactured by Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co and Proteus Digital Health, the digital pill communicates with a wearable patch on the patient's skin. So once the pill reaches the stomach fluids, the sensor is activated and transmits information to an app on your smartphone, and then to your family or doctor. The pill-technology combo has been approved for the treatment of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression in adults.



Harmony-Celebrate Age GOES DIGITAL

Harmony-Celebrate Age

www.magzter.com

India's premier magazine for senior citizens, *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, is now available on international digital news stand Magzter



The magazine can now be downloaded and read on a variety of digital platforms such as iPad, iPhone, Android, Windows 8 and tablets.

Download the free Magzter app or log on to <http://www.magzter.com/IN/Harmony-for-Silvers-Foundation/Harmony---Celebrate-Age/Lifestyle/> today to read the latest issue of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*.



BIRTHDAYS

The world's oldest marathoner—and *Harmony-Celebrate Age's* cover boy (April 2013) **Fauja Singh** turns 107 on 1 April.

Hong Kong martial artist, actor and director **Jackie Chan** turns 64 on 7 April.

Actor and Rajya Sabha MP **Jaya Bachchan** turns 70 on 9 April.

Theatre, film and TV actor **Rohini Hattangadi** turns 67 on 11 April.

Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh **N Chandrababu Naidu** turns 68 on 20 April.

American actor and producer **Michelle Pfeiffer** turns 60 on 29 April.

IN PASSING

Noted cardiologist and Padma Vibhushan recipient **Dr B K Goyal** died on 20 February after a cardiac arrest in Mumbai. He was 82.

Renowned actor and Padma Shri recipient **Sridevi** passed away on 24 February in Dubai—her death has been attributed to accidental drowning. She was 54.

Jagadguru **Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal** passed away on 28 February after suffering respiratory distress. He was 82.

Veteran film and TV actor **Shammi Rabadi** died on 6 March after a prolonged illness. She was 89.

Sufi singer and musician **Pyarelal Wadali** passed away on 9 March after a heart attack. He was 75.

British scientist and astrophysicist **Stephen Hawking** died on 14 March after a long battle with motor neuron disease. He was 76.

MILESTONES

➤ Sangeetha Vidushi **Alamelu Mani**, 83, was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Navi Mumbai Tamil Sangam, a cultural organisation, in February.

➤ Social worker (and **Harmony Silver Award** winner) **Dr Sindhutai Sapkal** was felicitated with the prestigious Nari Shakti Puraskar 2018 for fighting the odds and raising orphaned kids by President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan in March in New Delhi. Other women who received the award were environmental crusader **Sabarmatee Tiki** for restoration of forests and regeneration of wasteland; social worker **Urmila Balavant Apte** for her tireless work for women's social and financial empowerment; **Dr C K Durga** for her path-breaking technique in breast cancer surgery; and textile revivalist **Madhu Jain** for promoting ethical processes in fashion.

➤ Indian architect and educator **Balkrishna Doshi**, 90, received the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize for his poetic and functional work by the Hyatt Foundation in March in Chicago.

OVERHEARD

"I was super-surprised when I received a call asking if I would be interested to come back. But they explained that they made a mistake and they wanted to rectify it. I thought the courage to embrace the story and change the chapter to a positive was really great. What I like about fashion and cosmetics is that they give me tools to make me elegant and sophisticated. In the same way we decorate a room, we decorate ourselves in the same gesture. 'Glow' means to me glamour, elegance and sophistication, rather than 'anti-age.' Age is seen as a disease, but I don't see it like that. We all age. Why battle it?"



—Model and actor **Isabella Rossellini**, 65, the face of *Lancôme's Rénergie Multi-Glow*, speaking to media—she was the face of the company in the 1980s and her contract was terminated when she was 42 as she was perceived as 'too old'!

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.



Courtesy: Maj Gen (retd) Naozar B Patel

At the World Moustache and Beard Competition at Berlin in October 2005, where Patel won a medal

HAIR-RAISING TALES

Moustaches have always fascinated me; since I was a boy, I had dreamt of wearing one! Therefore, I was thrilled to be told while undergoing training at the Indian Military Academy that I was being commissioned into the Madras Sappers. Apart from being an elite group in the Indian Army, they were also known to sport the most impressive moustaches!

Historically, moustaches have been worn by military men and the number of nations, regiments and ranks are equalled only by the number of styles and variations. So in April 1976, I decided to sport a full-grown moustache, not a truncated one, little realising what heavy maintenance and care this hobby would entail every day. But then as in life, so in pleasure—no pain, no gain.

So what goes into the upkeep of these long twirls? Well, I spend three hours daily, washing, drying and arranging my curls; often, oiling them too. I have never used artificial gels, styling aids, gadgets, hair clips, snood (hair net) or hair bands. All I have ever used since it all began is a pair of scissors and *thatta* (cloth band). At times, a magnifying glass helps ensure that a bit of the nose or cheek is not snipped off!

I first won a moustache competition at the Desert Festival in Nagore, Rajasthan, in 2001. In 2005, I participated in the '3rd World Beard and Moustache Competition' in Berlin, lasting 12 continuous hours, where 243 participants from across the world pitted their deadly facial locks against one another. I was the sole competitor from Asia. I returned home with a medal and a certificate in the freestyle goatee category. I was a Brigadier then.

My locks have got me into many awkward and even hilarious situations, not least of which was this experience on an early morning Indian Airlines flight from Hyderabad to Delhi. I was late boarding the aircraft, and as soon as I entered, every single passenger looked up at me with great bewilderment. I smiled, took my seat and picked up the newspaper the airlines would keep on each seat those days. To my surprise, the front page headline read, "Notorious Bandit Veerappan Gunned Down in Karnataka Forest". Every Indian was aware of the bandit's enviable moustache and hence the amused look on the passengers' faces!

When I was in service, everyone used to recognise me from the front. After retirement in 2009, I started sporting a Goldilocks-type hairstyle. Now I am recognised from behind too! I am blessed to have such luxuriant hair.

—Maj Gen (retd) Naozar B Patel, Hyderabad

Life's big design

SHUBHADA SHELAR, 65, MUMBAI



Photographs by Haresh Patel

I have always been inclined towards arts and love to add a dash of creativity to beautify things. My artistic skills led me to eventually run a small business in embroidery and stained glass painting; in later years, it has been a source of comfort I am very grateful for.

My tryst with art started in school, in Kolhapur. I was so fascinated with embroidery stitches that I learnt to do them on my own. After I finished school, I moved to Mumbai with my family, and art and embroidery took a backseat for many years. I got a college degree and then took a personal secretary course. At first, I worked as a telephone operator and then as a personal secretary in Tolani Shipping.



It was at work that I met my future husband, who was a mechanical engineer. We got married in 1974 and had a baby girl. We lived in Andheri and I worked at Churchgate; on the long, daily train commute, I started to embroider saris, *dupattas*, cushions, and other stuff. A few years later, my husband's work took us to Kuwait. I had a good job there and had to put embroidery on the backburner again. Two years later, my husband moved to another construction site in Iraq, and my daughter and I returned to India.

Back in Mumbai, I took a basic computer course and some art and hobby courses. I also learnt stitching and Warli painting. Fashion caught my fancy and I signed up for a year-long fashion design course at J D Institute of Fashion Technology. This was a turning point as I began to design clothes and participated in fashion exhibitions. However, the process of buying fabric, designing, embellishing it, beadwork, etc, was getting too tedious for me. So I switched to learning stained glass painting. In the late 1990s, we shifted to Chennai for two years owing to my

CHEERS!

Experts answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement

I am a retired electrical engineer and have recently returned to my hometown Nashik, Maharashtra. I am looking to start a small vineyard in a small farm owned by my family. We have been growing bajra but owing to certain circumstances, our yield has been unsatisfactory in recent years. I am not looking to make a major profit with the vineyard but would like it to be a sustainable phase of my life. Can you help?

To many, wine is just an alcoholic drink but those well-versed with viticulture and oenology will tell you it is a passion.

Setting up a vineyard is a capital-intensive process. Your first step is to prepare your land by removing existing vegetation, procuring production equipment, and setting up a tasting room. You also need to apply for permits in addition to standard business licences and other legalities.

Patience is a virtue here, as the grapes come in three years after the crop has been planted, and good wine comes after the crop is ideally five years old. To maximise the amount of sunlight, you need your warmest, sunniest and most sheltered corner, ideally against a south-facing wall, where the soil is well-drained. If your land is not apt, try finding a spot to place a trellis or a gazebo if you have a very sheltered, sunny spot.

If you need to go commercial, marketing and distribution costs come in. Although alcoholic beverages are not included in GST, the components used in their manufacture come under the ambit of the system. Talking to a wine negotiant (merchant) can also be lucrative. These relationships will go a long way during harvesting and ageing the wine and, finally, when your wine is ready to be bottled.

—Sarong Hassi is a wine sommelier with his own YouTube channel

husband's job. The hot weather forced me to stay indoors and I saw this as my chance to get back to stained glass painting.

I used my time to make wall hangings, bookends, napkin holders, trays and other artefacts. I also created a pair of bookends with carved wood for my own home. One of my friends loved it so much that she placed an order for a similar product. That was my first order for stained glass painting and I earned ₹ 350 for it!

After returning to Mumbai, I revived my love for embroidery. I had contributed to the subscriber's corner of Anchor's *Needle 'N' Thread* 10 times with my original designs. Once, their editor asked if I wanted to sell one of my designs and I agreed. That paved the way for my embroidery business and I created other products such as saris, cushions, bags, clutches, bed-sheets, table runners, bags, etc, in different sizes, for sale. My first order was a three-piece, centre-table cloth set.

I usually don't repeat a design unless there's a special order. I price my products from ₹ 150 to ₹ 6,000, with the price tag depending on the cost of the material and work involved. My love for embroidery helped me win a consolation prize in the All India Embroidery Contest held by Modi Threads and another one by the Pony Crafts Store in Tamil Nadu.

With the passage of time, my daughter grew up and got married and, in 2015, I lost my husband. Suddenly, I was all alone. I continued with my embroidery business and kept creating products, some of which are still waiting to be sold. Even if they do not sell, I will always be grateful that they helped me stay busy in my moments of loneliness. Embroidery is a dying art in today's fast-paced world; I am even ready to teach it for free but there are no takers.

My newest experiments in art are a dream catcher and bangle tea-light holder. I have a flair for languages and to stay busy, I have signed up for a Bengali-speaking class. I also go to the gym and attend *kathakathan* (storytelling) sessions. For me, age is just a number; accept your wrinkles and move on!

—As told to Rachna Viridi



Beat the heat

Eat right to stay hydrated and keep summer ailments at bay



Photographs by iStock

Come summer and the temperature begins to soar. And for many, the sweltering heat can result in heat strokes, skin eruptions like boils and rashes, summer cold, diarrhoea and other ailments. This is more common among silvers who tend to fall ill owing to high internal body temperatures. Besides heat, even the loss of electrolytes can cause weakness and dizziness and lower immunity.

The best weapon to battle heat is food. Traditional Indian physicians have determined that there are

two categories of foods: heating and cooling. Our nutritional needs vary from season to season and nature has provided us with seasonal foods to keep ailments at bay. In summer, your body needs plenty of water. So, as the temperature goes higher, introduce foods containing a high amount of water, natural salt and natural sugar to your daily diet. These foods are easily digestible, soothing and cooling and reduce body temperature. They also help boost immunity, increase energy levels and prevent heat strokes. The focus is to stay hydrated, active and healthy throughout the season!

SUMMER MUST-HAVES

WATER: The one-stop solution to most summer ailments is water. As long as your body is hydrated, you will feel cool and refreshed. The natural vitamins and minerals found in water make you feel alert throughout the day. Water also helps transport nutrients in your body. Keep drinking plenty of water to prevent your body from getting dehydrated.

COCONUT WATER: Another simple solution to stifling summer complaints is coconut water. A natural source of electrolytes, it also counteracts feelings of dizziness.

JAL JEERA: A popular summer drink, it replenishes your body with salt and micronutrients lost owing to



increased perspiration. The cumin seeds it contains provide potassium. This drink boosts energy and serves as an excellent replacement to aerated drinks.

RIPE MANGO: This fruit is sincerely misunderstood. Available exclusively in the summer months, ripe mango is rich in Vitamin C, beta-carotene and natural sugar and contains zero fat. The excessive fibre helps prevent constipation in silvers.



HERBAL INFUSIONS: Gargling with warm water mixed with salt and turmeric helps keep the summer sore throat away. The salt and turmeric kills germs and clears infections.

You can also drink tea infused with flavours like peppermint or lemon—drink plain or sweetened with stevia. These infusions keep summer ailments at bay without unnecessary calories.

RAW MANGO: Eating raw mango daily ensures you do not catch the summer cold. Its high Vitamin C content prevents heat and sun strokes, increases immunity, and even prevents anaemia. Mango *panna* is also a wonderful drink as it serves as an excellent coolant.

YOGHURT: High temperatures tend to cause irritable bowel syndrome. Yoghurt is high in probiotics that can help settle the stomach. Churn it to make buttermilk and add

COOLING RECIPES FOR SUMMER



FAJETO (MANGO-YOGHURT CURRY)

Ingredients

- Fresh mango pulp: $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- Yoghurt: 1 cup
- *Besan* (Bengal gram flour): 1 tbs
- Ginger-green chilli paste: 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp

- Jaggery (*gur*): 1 tbs
- Water: 2 cups
- Salt to taste

For the seasoning

- Cinnamon: 2 sticks

- Cloves: 2-3
- Dried ginger (*soonth*): $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp
- Oil: 1 tbs
- Mustard seeds: $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp
- Cumin seeds: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp
- Red chillies (*boriya mirch*): 2-3; small, round
- Asafoetida: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp
- Curry leaves: 6-8

Method

Add the mango pulp, yoghurt, *besan*, salt, jaggery and water in a pan; mix well and keep aside. Combine the cinnamon, cloves and dried ginger and pound into a coarse powder and keep aside. Heat oil in a deep pan and temper the mustard seeds and cumin seeds. When the seeds crackle, add red chillies, asafoetida, curry leaves and the pounded spices. Sauté on medium flame for 2 minutes. Slowly pour the mango and yoghurt mixture in and add the ginger-chilli paste; mix well and simmer for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve hot with rotis or rice.



TEMPERED BUTTERMILK

Ingredients

- Buttermilk: 2 glasses
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Ginger: ¼ tsp; finely chopped
- Mint leaves: 1 tbsp; finely chopped
- Coriander leaves: 2 tbsp; finely chopped
- Green chillies: 1-2; finely chopped
- Cow's ghee: ½ tsp
- Rock salt to taste

Method

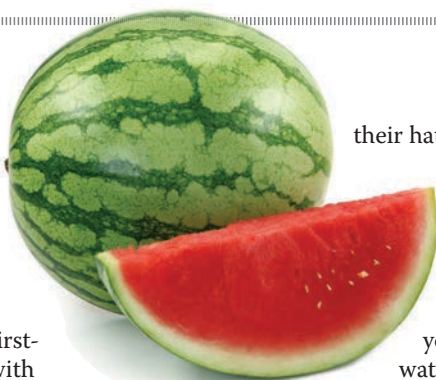
Heat ghee in a pan and add cumin seeds to it. When it starts to splutter, switch off the flame. Add this tempering to the buttermilk along with ginger, mint leaves, coriander leaves, green chillies and rock salt and mix well. Chill for some time and serve.

roasted cumin seeds, salt, mint and coriander. Yoghurt is also an amazing coolant.

WATERMELON:

This is a natural thirst-quencher packed with important antioxidants while its calorie content is negligible. When served chilled, watermelon and muskmelon are ideal ways to beat the summer heat and boost immunity. Melon seeds also help clear phlegm and benefit the intestines.

FRESH VEGETABLES: There is a variety of fresh produce available in summer. Cucumbers contain 90 per cent water and zero fat. Tomatoes are high in water content and natural antioxidants while having zero fat. Onions are known for their cooling properties and their ability to draw out the summer heat from the body. In the Indian desert lands, people are known to keep onions under



their hats and turbans to prevent sunstroke. Add the entire gourd family—white, bitter, snake, pointed—to your table; these water-based vegetables are light on the digestive system. They also serve as excellent coolants and prevent boils and rashes during summer.

LIGHT CURRIES: Avoid heavy and creamy gravies in summer and switch to lighter curries made from bottle gourd, pumpkin and long gourd. Add spices and condiments like garcinia indica (kokum) and cumin seeds to your curries. These power-packed meals are cooling, full of fibre and antioxidants, and boost immunity.

DAHI KADHI: Dahi *kadhi* (curry made of yoghurt) and *fajeto* (a popular Gujarati dish made from mango juice and yoghurt) are lighter and

easier to digest in summer than heavy dals and curries.

LIGHT GRAINS: Many food grains tend to make you feel heavy and lethargic in summer; so ensure your total meals contain no more than 20 per cent of grains. In addition to wheat, include jowar, *jav* (barley) and brown rice to your meals; these are lighter and less heat-producing than bajra and maize. They also help reduce boils and rashes.

FENNEL SEEDS: Popularly known as saunf or *variyali*, fennel seeds work as an excellent mouth freshener. They stimulate intestinal juices, promote digestion and cool the body. Drinking





LAUKI RAITA

Ingredients

- Plain yoghurt: 250 gm; low fat
- Bottle gourd (*lauki*): 150 gm
- Mustard seeds: 1 tsp; pounded
- Green chilli: 1; finely chopped
- Coriander leaves: 1 tbsp; finely chopped
- Salt to taste

Method

Peel and grate the bottle gourd and keep aside. Beat the yoghurt and mix it with the grated gourd. Add salt, pounded mustard seeds, green chilli and coriander leaves to it and mix well. Adjust consistency; chill and serve.



COCONUT AND ROSEWATER PUNCH

Ingredients

- Coconut water: of 1 coconut
- Coconut cream: 1 tsp
- Rosewater: 4 tbsp
- Lemon juice: ½ tsp
- Mint leaves to garnish

Method

Blend the coconut water, coconut cream, lemon juice and rosewater in a blender. Garnish with mint leaves and refrigerate for some time. Serve chilled.



fennel water lowers body heat and keeps the mind and body fresh.

COW'S GHEE: Cow's ghee works well in both summer and winter. Try to cook your meals in cow's ghee or spread a dollop of it on your rotis. Ghee is nutritionally rich, burns fat and strengthens the immune system. Ghee can also be applied on rashes and boils as it absorbs heat and cools down the affected area. Besides ghee, a paste of aloe vera or fuller's earth (*mul-*

tani mitti) can also be applied on external summer ailments.

LEMON: Lemon is an excellent source of Vitamin C. It is also a great taste enhancer; squeeze it on your food to lend it a tangy flavour. Lemon also helps in summer ailments such as heartburn and dehydration. A glass of chilled lemon water refreshes and re-energises your body completely.

FOODS TO AVOID

To survive the summer heat without discomfort, you need to eliminate certain foods from your diet. These include heat-producing oils such as mustard oil and sesame oil. Oily, creamy gravies should also be discounted from any meal. Egg, poultry and red meats also up the body's heat quotient so avoid eating them. The fish available at the end of summer season is not of good quality so refrain from consuming it. Ideally, stay away from non-vegetarian food

and alcohol. Also avoid fried foods that increase disposition to boils and lower immunity.

The soaring summer heat often makes you crave chilled foods such as ice-cream but these are difficult to digest so avoid them as much as possible. Switch to yoghurt or fruit-based yoghurt instead. Avoid mixing mango with food or milk as it tends to increase body heat and leads to boils. Chilled aerated drinks or sherbets are tempting but they increase your chance of throat infections, so stay away from them too. Nuts and seeds also promote heat so minimise them in your summer diet.

Setalvad is an obesity and lifestyle disease consultant who offers diet counselling at Health for You, a wellness clinic in Mumbai, as well as online. Visit www.nainisetalvad.com for more details or write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org if you have any queries for her



YOGA RX BY SHAMEEM AKTHAR

Good night!

A carefully prepared yoga programme can help battle insomnia

Insomnia is a disease for sure, though it may be brushed aside by non-sufferers as a 'problem to do with the mind'. It has biological triggers: hormonal shifts, lack of key nutrients, other chronic diseases that in turn create insomnia as a symptom as happens with apnoea when disruptive breathing patterns ruin sleep. There are also lifestyle triggers: irregular timings for eating or sleeping; eating a heavy

dinner or skipping dinner altogether; the use of smart gadgets whose lights interfere with the pineal gland and its sleep rhythms; reading racy novels or watching disturbing news or films at night; and wrong lighting or furnishing (too much brightness in décor can also interfere with sleep patterns), to name just a few.

You need to first locate your trigger. If it is lifestyle based, you must wean

yourself from the habit. If the trigger is biological, consult a sleep expert (who uses sleep monitors to decide your sleep patterns) and coordinate with medical experts to locate the cause and deal with it accordingly. Simultaneously, you need to start on a carefully prepared yoga programme to help you sleep deeply and well.

There are few factors you need to keep in mind while creating your

YOGIC MOVES

Lizard pose (*prishtasana*)

Sit on your knees. Inhale; raise your arms up. Exhale; lower them to the ground in front. Inhale deeply; exhaling, begin to walk your palms further ahead as if to try to reach your chest to the ground. Extremely flexible people will be able to do this and may find it is easier to place the chin on the ground. Others may try to lower the forehead to the ground. But the upper back sinks in as shown. These micro adjustments must be done gently and breathing should continue normally throughout the process. Once you have reached

the maximum depth in the pose, stay there in a relaxed fashion for as long as is comfortable, slowly increasing the duration over several weeks.

Benefits: This pose removes stress lodged in the shoulders and neck. It sends a gush of blood to the head, calms the brain and removes negative emotions like anger and anxiety. It makes the whole body more flexible, especially the spinal region. It also works on the thyroid and parathyroid powerfully, controlling metabolism and the repairing systems of the body.



Photographs by Hareesh Patel

Avoid sun salutes or surya namaskar at nightfall. Avoid stimulating practices that will make you alert such as the skull-cleansing practice (*kapalabhati*), bellows breathing (*bhastrika*), or overly dynamic flows (jumps or dynamic versions of asanas). Use a chart of calming and grounding poses that will soothe and prepare your mind

yoga programme: Avoid sun salutes or surya namaskar at nightfall. Avoid stimulating practices that will make you alert such as the skull-cleansing practice (*kapalabhati*), bellows breathing (*bhastrika*), or overly dynamic flows (jumps or dynamic versions of asanas). Use a chart of calming and grounding poses that will soothe and prepare your mind. These include most forward bends, gentle inversions (psychic union pose/*viparitakarani* mudra) and lots of leg raises (which work on the root chakra called *mooladhara*). Instead of the sun salute, you can try the moon salute (*chandra* namaskar) and/or earth salute (*prithvi* namaskar), which are flows with more cooling and calming poses. Always wind down your practice with a five to 10 minute sleep of yoga (*yoga nidra*) meditation to remove the lactic acid built up in your body (from any physical exertion). To move too soon out of a yoga practice means the blood lactate levels will remain high; this connects directly to your stress gland and keeps you on alert mode!

It is also very important to have a diet specially suited to your dosha/

KNOW YOUR KRIYA

Trataka (eye-focusing exercises)



There are several *trataka* practices; you can choose a few that help you. Some, like the one with flickering candlelight, may not be done by those with epilepsy. This one is among the safest. Sit in a meditative manner. (You can use a chair too.) Hold your arm out at eye level in front, thumb extended. Slowly begin to take your thumb towards your nose till it touches it; your eyes should shift with the thumb. Then, reach your thumb back to its original position. Do thrice. Then do with the other hand. For beginners, your arms may ache and eyes may strain. Avoid overdoing it. Calm the eyes by doing palming. This may be done before sleep time to calm the mind, preparing it for deep sleep.

Ayurvedic personality type to help create the missing balance in your mind-body complex. Do not make up your own chart but consult an expert. Using aroma oils that help calm the mind in diffusers or as roll-ons can complement your therapy. Again, only an expert can predict the right oils for you. Though meditation is good

for overall calming and control of the mind, it must never be done too close to sleep time because the mind can become alert, if done correctly! It is best practised in the morning. Do include calming breathing practices/ pranayamas to further soothe the mind, such as humming bee (*bhramari*) and victory breath (*ujjayi*).

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



HEART TO HEARTH BY PRATIBHA JAIN

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

A taste of tradition

Vijaya Mehta • JAIPUR



Photographs by Anchit Natha

The serenity and finesse with which she runs her household are truly admirable. Although she grew up in Maharashtra, Vijaya Mehta's love for Rajasthan is palpable; her charming residence at the heart of the Pink City bears testimony to this fact. Sadhana Chordia, who initially introduced us, was right in describing the 64 year-old as a "beautiful lady in a beautiful house".

The comportment of the domestic staff and the hospitality extended towards guests were impeccable. As I learned during our interview, proper grooming and training of the staff is an integral part of the Mehta family tradition. As Vijaya*ji* explains, "As a newlywed, I learnt that treating the cook and other staff with respect and care would help me win their confidence. Only after gaining their trust could I begin to learn the family recipes and the subtle nuances of each household member."

The lentil snack and sweet *cheela* she served us not just tasted authentic but had a timeless quality. Here are some snippets from the conversation, translated into English.

IN HER OWN WORDS

I grew up in Yavatmal in Maharashtra but moved to Beawar in Rajasthan after my marriage at 15 to Virendraji Mehta. There were many differences between our two families but being young, I adapted easily. While most Rajasthani women during those days wore the traditional ghaghra-*odhani*, my husband's family did not follow this tradition. In fact, my mother-in-law used to wear elegant organza and chiffon saris, accessorised with sunglasses.

THE ROYAL INFLUENCE

My mother-in-law was friendly with members of Rajwada royalty. Hence, their lifestyle and influence seeped into our house as well—right from the way we dressed and our cooking

style to how we pampered ourselves. The manner in which the staff was trained to serve the guests and speak with utmost respect in beautiful Marwari dialect was reminiscent of the corporate staff training you see in hotels nowadays. I still remember how my mother-in-law gently groomed me into paying attention to details. She left such a deep impression on me that over the years, even after we moved away from Beawar, I continued to do a lot of things the way I learnt from her.

RITUALS AROUND ETIQUETTE

Traditions of food revolve around recipes as well as mannerisms and etiquette. The working staff at our house commanded as much respect

"For the grandchildren, pastas and pizzas have become a part of their food preferences. Change is inevitable; how graciously we change is all that matters"

from the youngsters as the household elders. For generations, the staff would continue to work in the same households, with their growing loyalty and familiarity becoming a major factor in commanding respect.

FAMILY FAVOURITES

We have a son, two daughters, and four grandchildren. Whenever my son visits, I make it a point to make his favourite *bhindi ki sabzi*. Both my daughters love all varieties of porridge: *ghaat* and *kheech*. *Gatte ki sabzi* and *dal baati churma* are all-time family favourites. For the grandchildren, along with these traditional dishes, pastas and pizzas have become a part of their food preferences.

Change is inevitable; how graciously we change is all that matters.

WHEN GUESTS ARRIVE

Because we maintain a full stock of ingredients, fruits and vegetables, cooking at short notice is never a problem. A range of delicious parathas and *cheela* can be made in no time. We also have a wide variety of homemade pickles and powders that can serve as accompaniments to *upma*, rotis or even bread.

THE JAIPUR MANDI

We stock masalas for the whole year. When fresh masalas arrive in the market, I go and visit the famous Jaipur *mandi* where you find the finest spices. I really like the Jaipuri red chilli powder as it's not very spicy and lends a rich colour when added to a dish. Along with spice vendors, you will also find women who will clean the spices for you and others who will grind the chillies, turmeric or coriander seeds on the spot for you.

LEFTOVER RECIPES

Makki ke parathe: A family favourite is *makki ka ghaat* (corn porridge). With the leftover *ghaat*, we make parathas that are delicious. Simply mix any combination of flours and masalas in the *ghaat* and make into a dough. As these parathas tend to be sticky, wrap the balls in a plastic sheet and roll them out. Roast on a *tava* with oil and serve.

Radish sandwich: Use radish stuffing left over from making parathas to make a sandwich. Simply put the stuffing between two slices of bread and toast until golden. Serve hot with green chutney or tomato sauce.

Bajre ka upma: Transform leftover *bajre ka daliya* (bajra porridge) into delicious *upma*. Sauté chopped onions, green chillies, ginger and tomatoes (optional). Add the *daliya* and garnish with coriander leaves.



MAKKI KA DHOKLA

(Steamed dumplings with maize flour)

In Rajasthan, millets such as bajra, *makki* and jowar are used predominantly in preparing a delicious range of *sogra* (thick rotis), *dhokla* (dumplings) and *ghaat* (porridges). Enjoy this simple and tasty *dhokla* recipe using maize flour.

Ingredients


Maize flour (*makki ka aata*): 3 cups
 Coriander leaves: 1 fistful; finely chopped
 Oil (for kneading): 3 tbsp
Papad khara (seasoning): 1 tsp
 Cumin seeds (*jeera*): 1 tsp
 Salt to taste

Method

Mix together the maize flour, salt, cumin seeds, *papad khara* and coriander leaves. Add enough warm water to make into soft dough. Knead well. Roll into *dhokla* of

2.5 to 3 inches diameter with a hole in the centre and place on a shallow vessel with perforated holes. Line the vessel with a clean muslin cloth, large enough to fold over the *dhokla*. In a pan, add water and bring to a boil. Keep a small base (steel ring) in the centre and place the vessel with the *dhokla* on top. Cover with a lid. Steam for 10 minutes on high flame, then another 20 minutes on medium flame. To check whether the *dhokla* are cooked, insert a knife; if it comes out clean without the batter sticking to it, they are done. Switch off the flame. Serve hot with ghee and sugar, or with *moong ki dal*.

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

A woman with curly brown hair, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt and white pants, is riding a blue duck-shaped water toy on a pond. She is smiling and has her arms outstretched. In the background, a man with white hair, wearing a light green shirt and khaki shorts, is also riding a similar water toy. The background is filled with lush green trees.

Experience

A second childhood

Wouldn't it be great to have a second childhood? To start life afresh?
Because at Harmony, a magazine for people above fifty five, we believe
that age is in the mind. Which is why, you should live young.

Visit us at : www.harmonyindia.org

harmony
celebrate age



Extra cover! Protect yourself with a carefully chosen mediclaim policy

As the adage goes, 'If you have wealth you have something, but if you have health you have everything!' This is especially true for elders. While providing valuable practical information to silvers, I also have a message for our younger readers: Take the onus of securing the well-being and good health of your elders by gifting them a mediclaim plan, even if they resist!

HEALTHCARE COSTS ARE RISING

Two major areas of 'non-discretionary' (unexpected or unavoidable) expenses have seen a sharper rise over the past few years compared to normal day-to-day expenses: the first is education; the second is medical treatment. And I don't expect either of these trends to reverse. In fact, things can get even more difficult if there is a critical or prolonged illness in the silver years. For its part, the Government continuously keeps a close watch on the cost of medicines and has taken some remarkable decisions in the past two years; according to recent newspaper reports, this has resulted in a reduction ranging from 5 per cent to 40 per cent in the cost of more than 851 drugs. Yet, looking at medium to long-term trends, the following developments may keep healthcare costs elevated:

- Improvement in hospital infrastructure
- Upgrade to seek specialised professional consultancy versus OPD
- Newer technologies that will demand a premium
- Import of critical medical devices that will come with the above technologies
- Occurrence of lifestyle diseases at a much earlier age given the rapidly changing, high-stress socio economic environment

HOW DO WE PLAN FOR SUCH A POTENTIAL SCENARIO?

Any uncertainty in life can never be predicted or eliminated fully. However, one can be proactive in anticipating it and, hopefully, planning for it. Indeed, having a well-rounded medical protection plan for your family, including silvers, is the need of the hour. This is even more significant in our country, where, unlike the West, there is hardly any government-sponsored safety net for future medical needs. In this context, it is worth pointing out that in developed countries like

WILL YOU BE ABLE TO AFFORD THE RISING COST OF MEDICAL EXPENSES

TREATMENT COST: HEART DISEASE

₹ 10 lakh Corrective surgery for aorta malfunction	+	₹ 5 lakh Emergency hospitalisation to treat heart attack	=	₹ 15 lakh Total cost including post hospitalisation follow up
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TREATMENT COST: CANCER

₹ 63,500 - ₹ 1,90,500
Chemotherapy per cycle



₹ 20 lakh
Targeted therapy of 56 sessions

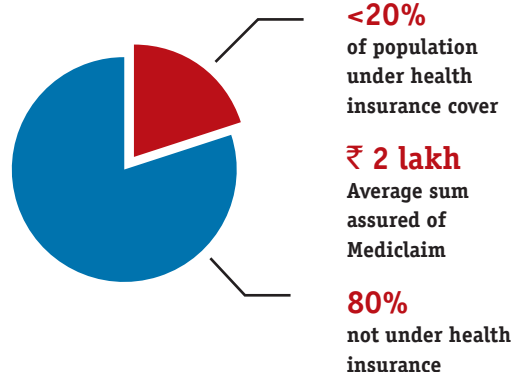


₹ 19,050 - ₹ 28,575
PET CT Scan



₹ 23 lakh
Total costs for cancer treatment

MEDICAL COVER - SERIOUSLY LOW IN INDIA



the US, UK, Norway and Japan, there is increasing debate on cutting back on the medical facilities the government provides to residents. On the other hand, the Government of India has recently announced its intention to start comprehensive mediclaim cover for more than 50 crore Indians in the lower-income group, up to ₹ 5 lakh per family per year. This will take time to implement and everyone may not be eligible. Thus, planning is the key.

MEDICLAIM INSURANCE IS MORE COMPLICATED THAN WE THINK

As a financial consultant for the past 30 years, I have analysed and advised on almost every financial product after careful study. But rarely have I come across a product more difficult to understand than medical insurance. The reason is that there are multiple products with various features/exclusions from scores of insurance companies and a general lack of knowledge-sharing with the customer on the pros and cons. More often than not, when there is an unsettled claim, a partially settled claim or a full rejection, there is a feeling of betrayal at the customer's end. While this article does not intend to deep-dive into the matter, I sincerely advise readers to not go on face value alone—please ask your advisor all the right questions before signing up.

FAMILY FLOATERS SCORE OVER INDIVIDUAL MEDICLAIM PLANS

I always advise families with up to three children to opt for a family floater plan. For instance, instead of going for ₹ 3 lakh of mediclaim per family member, one can choose a ₹ 15 lakh floater, which can be used by one or more persons in the coverage year (*see box on right*).

As you can see, in the event of multiple claims in any year, the family is protected for a much higher amount compared to ₹ 3 lakh each individually. Usually, the premium is also competitive for floaters, so I advice readers to strongly consider floaters issued by leading, new-generation private health insurance companies. Feel free to contact us for more details.

PLANS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR SILVERS AND THOSE WITH PRE-EXISTING AILMENTS

With the advent of private-sector competition in the health insurance sector, consumers have cause for cheer. Several leading private insurance companies offer specific

Mr and Mrs Shah take a family floater of ₹ 15 lakh for their family comprising themselves and their three children A, B & C

Total floater cover available	₹ 15 lakh
Mr Shah's hospital expenses	₹ -5 lakh
Balance cover	₹ 10 lakh
Master A's hospital expenses	₹ -1 lakh
Mrs Shah's hospital expenses	₹ -4 lakh
Balance floater cover left for family	₹ 5 lakh

plans catering to the mediclaim needs of **senior citizens (aged 60 and above), cancer-affected persons, cardiac patients and persons with diabetes.**

Plans for senior citizens must be studied carefully for restrictions, especially with regard to coverage of pre-existing diseases (PED) as some insurance companies have a three to four year wait period before which you cannot claim for PED-related hospitalisation. You must understand the co-payment clauses for PED and all claims before buying a plan as most policies list these in fine print. Also not many policies provide outpatient (OPD) cover, so please be very careful.

We usually advise silvers up to 75 years of age to avail of highly competitive mediclaim plans that have no pre-acceptance medical screening and guaranteed lifelong renewals. These plans can be bought for as much as ₹ 10 lakh per annum cover. In the latest Budget, the limit for deduction under Section 80D for senior citizens' premium on health insurance has been increased from ₹ 30,000 to ₹ 50,000. Also if you are paying for your parent (who is a senior citizen above the age of 60), you can maximise your tax benefit to a total of ₹ 55,000.

CHOOSE WISELY

Select a senior citizens' plan only after consulting a qualified advisor. Avoid the temptation of going online and buying the cheapest cover without fully understanding the features—this will be a penny-wise pound-foolish strategy that may hurt you in the long run when a major claim is triggered. And once you select a plan, stick with it and regularly renew it.

Dick Mody, a 25-year veteran in the Indian equity markets, is the founder-CEO of Ethical Advisers. Write to us with your financial queries at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org and Mody will answer them in this column. You can also reach him directly at dhm@ethicaladvisers.in or visit www.ethicaladvisers.in

Percussion Queen

Bengaluru's Sukanya Ramgopal continues to wage her battle to raise the status of the ghatam and bring recognition to women exponents of this percussion instrument, writes **Chitra Ramaswamy**

A concert of bells rings out as she deftly moves her fingers across the six ghatams carefully arranged in front of her. As hand meets clay, the tones she produces synchronise into Raga Valaji. The effect is electric.

Vidushi Sukanya Ramgopal's prodigious talent was not enough to bring her the prestige she deserves as the world's first female ghatam player. Yet, in a man's world, she holds her own with poise, accompanying leading and veteran musicians on the ghatams in India and across the world.

Smarting from the duality in this realm of Carnatic music, the 60 year-old maestro has consistently broken new ground as she holds her audience spellbound. From

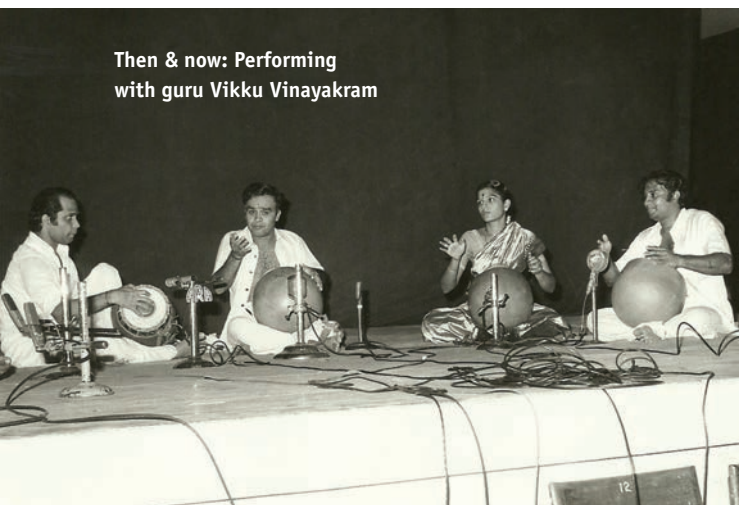
her early years, she has collaborated with international artists of renown; she performed at Germany's annual Tamburi Mundi or Frame Drum Festival in 2013; she regularly conducts workshops and lecture-demos at music venues across continents; and she revels in a special memory: the appreciation for her fusion piece with Flamenco dancer Bettina Castano.

Ramgopal lives in Bengaluru but she grew up in Triplicane in Chennai, in a family of musicians and Tamil scholars. She is the great-granddaughter of well-known scholar Mahamahopadhyaya Dr U V Swaminatha Iyer, fondly known as 'Tamil Thatha', and



J Ramaswamy

Then & now: Performing
with guru Vikku Vinayakram



Rithvik Sastry

“I always fancied challenges from childhood; the more I was told something was not possible to do, the greater my urge to do it”

the grand-niece of music maestro Ghanam Krishna Iyer.

The youngest of five siblings, she began training in vocal music at the age of five. Within a couple of years, the young girl began learning the violin. However, it was the sounds of percussion instruments that moved her. “There was no specific trigger, I just enjoyed percussion very much,” she recalls. “I would get my sister to sing and try to accompany her by tapping on whatever surface was available at hand—a wooden table, a chair... just about any surface.”

The opportunity to train in the mridangam and, later, the ghatam presented itself when she began learning the violin under Shri Gurumurthy, brother of ghatam virtuoso Shri Vikku Vinayakram. The training took place a few buildings away from her residence, at the Shri Jaya Ganesh Talavadya Vidyalaya, a music school established by mridangam maestro Harihara Sarma, father

of Gurumurthy and Vinayakram. The young girl would look wistfully at the mridangam class being held opposite the violin class. The urge to learn the instrument was so strong that she impulsively enrolled herself to be trained under Shri Sarma. Her guru delighted in teaching a student with so much commitment and passion and within three years, at the age of 15, she began to accompany artists during concerts.

But her true calling was the ghatam. Mesmerised by Vinayakram’s playing, she approached him to teach her. He tried to dissuade her from learning an instrument that was too ‘manly’ for ladies to play. Ramgopal laughs as she recalls, “When I persisted, he tried to put me off by saying that it was a difficult and rough instrument for women to learn, that it would make my hands sore and bleed.” She was not deterred, however. “I always fancied challenges from childhood; the more I was told something was not possible to do, the greater my urge to do it. Even in matters as simple

WHAT IS A GHATAM?

The ghatam or ‘pot’ is an ancient percussion instrument in South India. The *madga* of Rajasthan, *matka* of Gujarat and *ghara* of Punjab are variants of the ghatam, used in the folk traditions in these states. While essentially an earthenware pot, it is made sturdy by mixing the clay with small amounts of brass, iron or copper filings. The addition of these small metallic shards produces the distinct metallic sound associated with the instrument.

While the pitch of a ghatam varies directly with its size, it can be altered by applying water to its neck. To ensure good tonal quality, the walls of the pot must be of even thickness. The player usually places the ghatam on his/her lap, with its mouth facing his/her belly. Performers use their fingers, thumbs, palms and wrists to strike its belly, neck and rim, to produce the different sounds. In fact, by continuously pressing and opening the ghatam’s mouth against the player’s belly, a range of sound modulations can be produced. However, there are variations in the way the instrument is placed, with several players, especially women, keeping it on a ring or a stand in an upright position.



Rithvik Sastry

as taking the name of my school, when asked, I would rattle it in full: 'N K Tirumalachariar National Girls High School', whereas all the other students would simply say 'National School'. I felt I had to be different from the others, do things others felt were difficult or impossible."

Her firm stand clinched the matter. She had the support of Vinayakram's father and her mridangam guru. In fact, he undertook to train the 12 year-old himself, saying it would be a matter of pride for his school that a girl was learning and playing the ghatam. He told Vinayakram he would make her proficient in the *ghatam* and prepare her for concert-level playing within the one-year period when Vinayakram was visiting Berkeley on a teaching assignment.

Thus began her tryst with the ghatam. Whatever her guru Sarma would play on the mridangam, she would translate on the clay instrument. "His training was so perfect and rigorous that within six months, I had completed the lessons and even begun

to perform concerts within the year," remembers Ramgopal. And as Sarma predicted, she began training with Vinayakram promptly a year later.

Learning to play the ghatam was actually the easier part of her musical journey. The real struggle began when she stepped into the world of *kutchery* or concerts with its rigid hierarchy and prejudices. She faced double marginalisation. First, because the ghatam is treated as *upapak-kavadhyam* or secondary to the mridangam as a percussion instrument; second, as a woman artist. The change in Ramgopal's body language is palpable as she says vehemently, "I would say the word 'accompaniment' itself is wrong—rather, it is teamwork that makes for a concert's success or otherwise. As for the gender bias, I feel it is no better today than in earlier times, when I began learning the instrument. Renowned musicians would often question Vikku sir on why he was teaching me the ghatam. They would argue that as a lady, I should confine myself to the mridangam! Even today, co-artists

heartily applaud male ghatam artistes when they receive a standing ovation, but are not ready to accept it when I receive such applause!"

In her 40 years of experience as a ghatam exponent, Ramgopal has trained over 25 students; only one of them was a girl. Still, the iconoclast is in it for the long haul. And her battle isn't just against the gender bias—she also wants to get the instrument the respect it deserves.

Her struggle began in the early 1970s, when she addressed a strong letter to All India Radio, Delhi, questioning the step-motherly treatment meted out to players of the ghatam, *kanjira* and *morsing*, vis-à-vis mridangam players. Competitions to select and grade artistes did not have separate categories for each percussion instrument and the mridangam invariably ruled the roost. Ramgopal sought separate categories for each of these instruments, and for them to be acknowledged as part of mainstream concerts. Her request bore fruit in subsequent years.

In her 40 years of experience as a ghatam exponent, Ramgopal has trained over 25 students; only one of them was a girl



THE GHATAM MAKERS

Manamadurai, a small village near Madurai in Tamil Nadu, is the most important centre for the manufacture of ghatams. There are smaller centres where the instrument is made, in Chennai and near Bengaluru. In Manamadurai, four generations of a single family have been making the instruments for over a century, with the fifth generation only just beginning to shoulder the mantle. A third-generation veteran, 67 year-old Meenakshi Amma passed away in November 2017 and is perhaps the only instrument-maker to receive the Sangeet Natak Akademi award.

Ghatam-making is an arduous task that takes several days. It is only after the pot is baked that one can know whether it is 'music-worthy'. The outer surface of the pot requires hours of tapping with a flat wooden hammer while the other hand remains inside the pot, holding on to a specially made, heavy stone. Only roughly 40 per cent of pots that are fired turn into usable ghatams with good tonal quality. As much as 16 kg of raw clay is beaten and fired, resulting in one ghatam, which is eventually half this weight.

Meenakshi learnt the art of ghatam making from her husband and father-in-law, at the age of 15. Her son Ramesh, who has taken over the business, has already initiated the fifth generation of Manamadurai's ghatam-makers by training his daughters, niece and nephew. The family turns out about 400 ghatams per year, only half of which are sold because the rest fail the tone test.

In 1992, Ramgopal conceptualised Ghata Tharang, a musical ensemble with six ghatams of different pitches, occupying centre-stage for the first time in the history of the instrument. The very next year, her Sthree Thaal Tharang, another innovative venture that involved an all-women's instrumental ensemble, created waves in musical circles in India and overseas. The ensemble performs extensively at festivals and universities across continents.

Despite her several innovations in the field, Ramgopal continued to face animosity from male musicians. In 2000, she encountered one of her most bitter moments when she was to accompany flautist N Ramani during his concert in Bengaluru. When she reached the venue, she was told that the accompanying mridangam artist had refused to share the stage with a female ghatam artiste. "The organisers profusely apologised, hailed a taxi and sent me back. Even upon the deaths of my parents I had not wept as much as I did on that day. The sorrow I felt was indescribable! It was then that I decided I must do something out of the box, something nobody had ventured to do before, to prove women were second to none in any field. I was determined to showcase my talents in a different way. It became almost an obsession."

In 2014, Ramgopal established the Vikku Vinayakram School for Ghatam in Bengaluru with the sole aim to take the instrument places. And in 2016, she released *Sunaadham: The Vikku Bani of Ghatam Playing*, a guide to learning the ghatam. In addition, Ramgopal also advocated on behalf of the ghatam with the Sangeet Natak

Akademi. With the recent demise of Meenakshi Amma, the leading ghatam-maker from Manamadurai (*see box*), she impressed upon the Akademi the need to encourage the younger generation in the village to keep the art and skill of ghatam-making from decline, signs of which have been evident for some time. Her efforts have paid off; "the Akademi has now given a grant for training people in ghatam-making," she reveals.

The recipient of several awards and titles, Ramgopal prefers to mark her musical journey with emotional milestones. One such moment came in 1996-97, when she accompanied vocalist M S Sheila on a three-month concert tour in the US. Following a concert at Cincinnati, a certain Mr Natarajan who spoke at the end of the concert lauded Ramgopal on her performance and said that, through her, U V Swaminatha Iyer had been reborn to pick up the strands of music from where he had left off. "That was a moment of great pride for me and I felt humbled to be compared to such an illustrious person as my great-grandfather," she remarks, her eyes welling at the memory even after all these years.

Gratitude can be expressed in many ways; for Ramgopal, paying a rich and grand tribute to her guru Vinayakram was her way of saying 'thank you'. On 10 December last year in Bengaluru, she marked his 75th birthday with a percussion ensemble involving—hold your breath—75 percussionists from all over India! The concert, a first of its kind, lasted three-and-a-half hours and, not surprisingly, received rave reviews. ✨

:: cover feature ::

Pet PURSUITS



Animal companions are not just a source of unbridled joy and love, but have therapeutic value in silver years, writes **IRFAN SYED**



ADVANTAGE PET PARENTS

- Silvers with heart conditions who own pets tend to outlive those who don't
- Walking a dog provides much-needed physical exercise, which leads to improved mobility and a healthier lifestyle overall
- The ability to have something to pet or touch can result in lower blood pressure, normal heart rate and reduced stress
- Pets provide emotional stability during stressful situations, helping to reduce anxiety and depression
- Caring for a pet helps increase the self-confidence and self-esteem of silvers, providing them a way to feel useful and responsible for something
- Animals can be soothing to those who have difficulty using language
- Feeding and grooming can help increase the physical skills of silvers and help them become more active
- Animals can help improve socialisation: they listen without judgement and give unbiased affection, especially when silvers may desire to share the thoughts they may not be comfortable telling family or friends

They got us bonding again," says Benedict Gnaniah aka Benny, pointing to Indies Mulan and Leia, aged 2.5 years and 1 year respectively, adopted from the streets. "Thanks to voracious reading, we are a strong-headed family," explains the 59 year-old, whose duplex in Chennai is a bibliophile's delight. Even the pets, named after strong mythical/fictional women characters, are testament to the family's literary inclinations. "Before they entered our lives, heated discussions at the dining table stressed us out," reveals Benny. Now, the canines are the centre of attention, featuring in dining table conversations daily. "Oh, she did this today...", "She doesn't look good to me...", "Man, they are becoming a handful..." The dogs, quite simply, got them warmed up again as a family.

Whether it is a lofty purpose as in the case of Benny, or everyday benefits such as companionship, security and unconditional love, pets can add a lot—physically, emotionally and mentally—to a silver's life.

Though the benefits of the human-animal bond have been documented for years, emerging research suggests that pets have the ability to boost general health and well-being, especially in silvers. Studies show that just 15 minutes spent bonding with an animal promotes hormonal changes within the brain. Stress levels drop as the brain produces serotonin—the 'feel-good' hormone—along with prolactin and oxytocin. It has also been established that silvers who are active and always around others, or who own a pet, decline in health far less rapidly than those who are isolated or depressed (see *'Advantage Pet Parents'*; pg 43).

Affirming this is the American Heart Association, which observes that when it comes to healthcare, going to the dogs is indeed beneficial. The association claims that time spent with man's best friend by hospitalised heart failure patients improves heart and lung functions by lowering pressure, diminishing release of harmful hormones and decreasing anxiety. Interestingly, the benefits in these cases exceeded those that resulted from a visit by a human volunteer or from the patient being left alone.


Researchers are also digging up evidence that pets can boost the mental health of people suffering from challenging disorders. Subsequently, clinics are opening their doors to animal-assisted intervention or pet therapy alongside conventional treatment. The rise of animal therapy is backed by scientific study showing that social support can indeed come on four legs. The profound acceptance and love of pets, along with non-verbal communication, can be soothing for those having difficulty in using language such as dementia patients. To quote writer George Eliot, "Animals are such agreeable friends—they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms." No wonder, pets are considered all-weather friends.

HAVE PET, WILL NOT FRET

Pune resident Shilpa Mahajani, 50, thinks back to the time when her bungalow was undergoing renovation and didn't have a front door for almost six months. No intruder could dare come in, thanks to the family's full-grown Dobermans. Since then, the male, Raja, passed away, while the female, Rani, remains, and the door has been reinstated. Rani now roams the compound, each stride an intimidating one to any newcomer at the gate.

For pet parents, the animals are an endless loop of love. Deanne Menon, 59, Mumbai, finds it de-stressing to get back home after a hard day's work: waiting for her is Lakshmibai aka Lakshmi aka Laku, an Indie adopted from the road as a pup 14 years ago, who jumps all over Menon, smothering her with love.





TURBO ENGINES! THEY ARE SO FULL OF ENERGY—AND FILL ME WITH ENERGY TOO

- BENEDICT GNANIAH aka BENNY

Studies show that just 15 minutes spent bonding with an animal promotes hormonal changes within the brain. Stress levels drop as the brain produces serotonin, the feel-good hormone, along with prolactin and oxytocin

When Bhupinder Singh Bagga, 63, too gets back to his three-floored house in Kanpur, he is greeted by Caddie, who runs around unable to contain her excitement; she comes up to him, licks his hand and face and runs back, repeating the run-lick routine till she is satiated.

Bagga, however, holds that you don't bring home an animal only for the love they give; you do so for the love you can give them as well. The Bagga household has two Indies. Along with Caddie, who stays more at home, there is Buddy, who is more of a visitor. Bagga describes the situation Bollywood style, "*Caddie hai ghar ki rani* [queen of home], *Buddy hai sadkon ka raja* [king of roads]." The two canines came in courtesy his elder son Kamaldeep, who is vegan and works for animal welfare.

Another vegan activist, Malvika Kalra, 54, based in Jammu Tawi, puts it succinctly: "Dogs or any other kind of animal companions are about one simple thing: unconditional love." When asked to express in one word or line what their animal companions mean to them, we had our silvers gushing.

Meanwhile, Nicole Rego, veterinarian of 14 years, attests to the joy pets infuse in silvers. She has had quite a few clients coming to her Mumbai clinic over the years, and has witnessed at close quarters the amiable companionship quadrupeds offer bipeds. Pets also help silvers get over the empty-nest syndrome, common in these times of nuclear families and urbanisation.

With her husband having passed away and children settled in Bengaluru, Selma Pinto, a spry 63, lives by herself in Mysuru, along with four cats and one dog. Apart from tending to her pets, she also feeds the crows and monkeys that



“If your heart is really set on a dog, bring home a small breed. With silvers having enough anxieties of losing balance in a bathroom, the last thing they want is to handle a 25-kg, four-footed, adolescent animal jumping on them in unshackled excitement”

- DR NICOLE REGO, VETERINARIAN

come near her kitchen and kites that hover above her house. Empty nest? No, more like a full house brimming with fuzzy bodies and fuzzier feelings.

Now, these warm moments can be captured and framed for posterity, thanks to photographers such as Bhavesh Karia, who specialise in pet portraits (see ‘Click Happy’; pg 52).

BEYOND PETTING

Incidentally, having a pet around could be quite demanding with the need for regular walks and exercise, doctor visits, food, etc. Facing some of these challenges themselves, are silvers up to the task of tending to their four-legged companions?

Benny says his dogs have taught him discipline. Now he needs to rise on time, take them for a walk and be back from work on time. Moreover, as Leia can’t handle carbohydrates, he has to make special food for her on Sundays, which he stores in the fridge for the week ahead. “Our fridge belongs to the dogs,” he adds, matter of fact.

MY BABY DOLL; I TALK GIBBERISH WITH HER

- DEANNE MENON



BEHAVIOURAL TRAITS

Dog behaviour can be puzzling to both new and experienced dog owners. Our canine friends don't operate with the same motivations as we do, so their actions don't always make sense to us. Here are some common dog behaviour issues and how to resolve them in your own home.

- **CHEWING:** Puppies love to chew, especially while they're teething. That's because the pressure feels good on raw, sore gums. Also, very young puppies use their mouths to explore their world, tasting as they go. This is natural and unavoidable, so prevention is the best cure for chewing. First, dog-proof your home by moving harmful items—like wires, power cords, cleaning supplies and other small objects—out of your dog's reach. Then give your puppy or dog acceptable objects to chew. For example, keep plenty of acceptable chew toys on hand.
- **BITING:** Biting is a natural part of healthy, friendly puppy play. Puppies learn when and how hard to bite by playing with their littermates. But it's not a healthy part of puppy play with an owner. Never put up with a puppy biting you. When a biting puppy becomes an adult, her behavioural problems will only become more severe. If your puppy bites you, mimic puppy play by whining pitifully. Then replace your hand with a chew toy. Lavish praise on your puppy when it bites the toy. If your puppy keeps biting you, stand up and stop playing with it.
- **JUMPING:** Jumping is a dog's natural expression of happiness. But it's not pleasant for guests entering your home. Train your dog to jump only when you permit, via a signal that you give your dog. Correct dogs immediately when they are about to jump. Praise them when all four paws are back on the ground.
- **SOILING IN THE HOUSE:** Even dogs that are housebroken make mistakes occasionally. It can happen for a variety of reasons. For example, if dogs have a physical problem, like a urinary tract or parasite infection, they'll lose control of their bladder. Some dogs temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited, feel threatened or are scared. Dogs also mark their territory with urine. So if they believe their territory has been invaded, they may incite territorial marking. Dogs may also make mistakes in the house because of separation anxiety. If they're left alone in the house for long periods, and soiling is accompanied by other destructive behaviour, separation anxiety is a likely cause. To fix soiling in the house, first identify the cause of the behaviour and then alter the environment so that your dog won't repeat the behaviour.
- **WHINING OR CRYING:** Whining is another form of canine communication. Dogs are trying to communicate that they need something; perhaps they want to go outside or they're hungry. If dogs get what they want by whining, they'll learn that whining produces a favoured response from the owner. If dogs see that if they whine, they get a nice long walk, they will whine to get one every time. To break the cycle, ignore whining for superfluous attention at all costs. Reward them when the whining has stopped for over three seconds.

Source: www.everydayhealth.com

DE-STRESSORS

- SELMA PINTO



Almost everybody *Harmony-Celebrate Age* spoke to said vet visits are scheduled and regular. Mahajani provided sagely advice: "Go to a good vet. It might cost more, but the diagnosis will be right the first time, costing you less time, energy and effort in the long run."

Once you bring home a companion animal, taking off on your own becomes a bit challenging. For instance, Pinto hasn't really taken a vacation since the menagerie of animals took up residence at her place. At the most, she has gone away for a day or two, with a neighbour checking in on the animals while she was away.

The reluctance of pet parents to leave their babies alone comes from the separation anxiety the latter face when left on their own. They can get worried and irritable, triggering off their notorious rip-and-tear sessions. The Baggas and the Mahajanis have had their share of dog nipping, while Benny has had his older dog, Mulan, biting his shoes, in anxiety (see '*Behavioural Traits*'; see box on left).

Once you bring home a companion animal, taking off on your own becomes a bit challenging

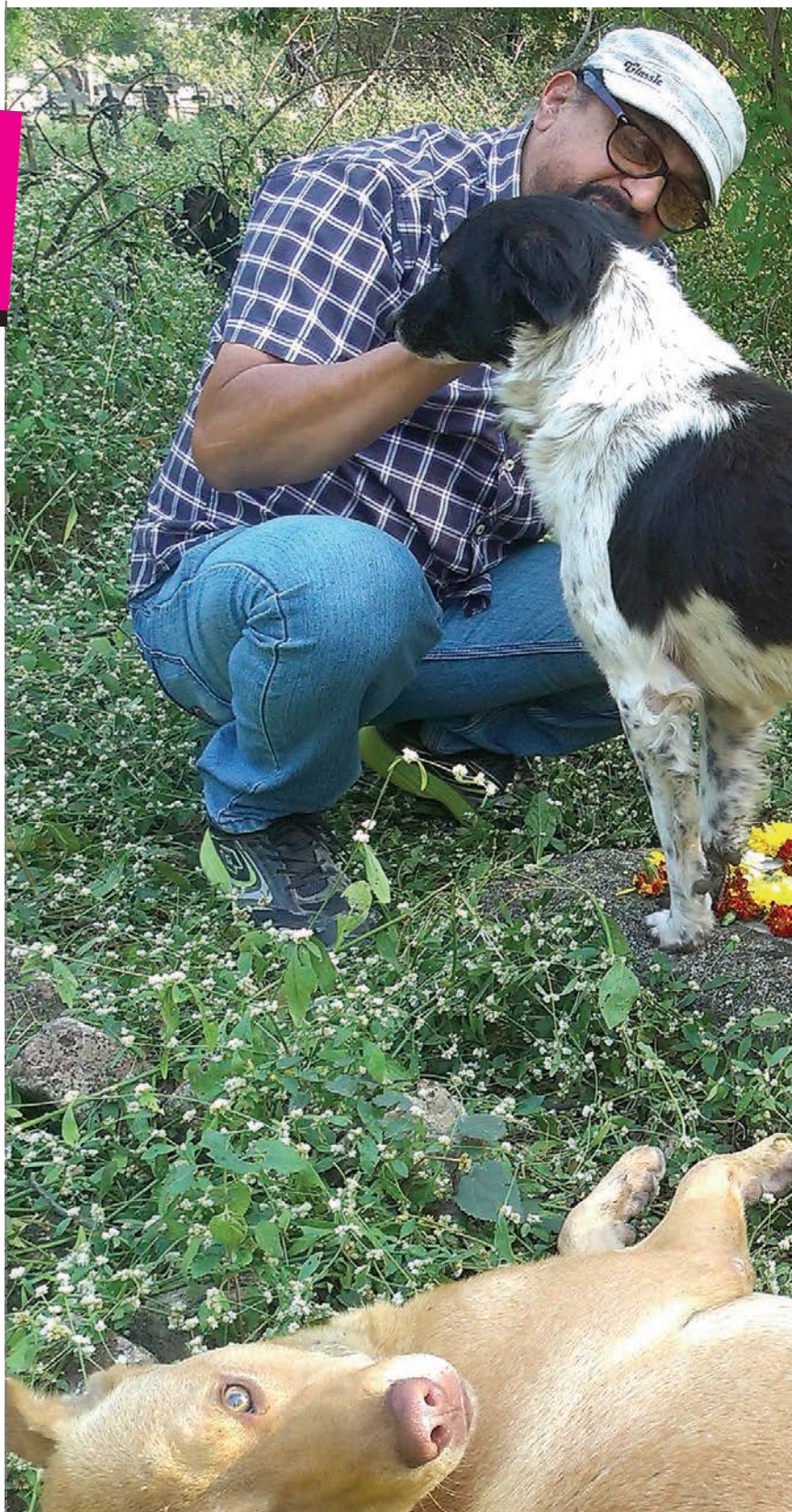
The Mitras—Ashoke, 63 and Madhavi, 53—earlier based in Mumbai but now spending more time in their house on the outskirts of Pune, recount the time they left their beloved Sweetie, a Lhasa-Poodle mix, in the care of Ashoke's mother for a short holiday to Mahabaleshwar. The matriarch had insisted they do so, to allow for some level of detachment between the dog and the couple. When they called up home, they were told Sweetie hadn't eaten anything since they left. The distraught couple asked Sweetie to be put on speaker-phone and were able to pacify her to some extent. The following afternoon, they took the first bus home.

So, do pets limit your movement? Our pet parents vouch that the boundless love they bring in more than makes up for the rest.

CHOOSE WITH CARE

Should you head out to the nearest pet shop or breeder and bring home a furry bundle of joy? Rego bats in favour of cats as ideal pets for silvers, as they are highly independent and are low on maintenance. "But if your heart is really set on a dog, bring home a small breed," she says. "With silvers having enough anxieties of losing balance in a bathroom, the last thing they want is to handle a 25-kg, four-footed, adolescent animal jumping on them in unshackled excitement."

The Mahajanis and Mitras both have small breeds now, Min Pins (Miniature Pinschers) and Spritzes respectively. Benny, Pinto, Kalra





MY KIDS
- MADHAVI MITRA

and the Baggas have Indies, better suited to Indian conditions and independent by nature.

Kalra's Indie Razia stays put in her husband's office. In the past, Kalra has had four home dogs at various times in her life, with all of them eventually passing on. The last, a Lab named Ralph, developed problems walking, thanks to doing so on a concrete floor, which isn't the animal's natural terrain. Besides that, years of consuming cow's milk gave Ralph diabetes.

If you are keen on a pet, get one from a shelter, advocates Kalra, who also works for animal liberation. "This way you get to give a loving home to a homeless animal and avoid contributing to the animal breeding industry," she emphasises.

The Mitras go one step further. While they would be the first to recommend getting home a pet, having had all manner of species from birds to dogs over the years, they urge you to keep in mind your situation in life. If you can't devote all your time and effort, but still wish to experience the joy of animal company, you could visit an animal shelter off and on. Just a few hours or even minutes with an assortment of homeless and abandoned animals—from dogs and cats to chicken, cows, horses and turkeys—can bring a smile to your face and do wonders for those serotonin levels.

SILVER PETS

What if the animals you bring home to add joy and years to your sunset years end up heading into the sunset themselves? When you have ailing pets, it's never easy either to witness their suffering or to make the decision to put them down.

CANINE CAREGIVING

Hot springs, meals served in private rooms, therapeutic massages and chauffeur services—these are just examples of the care on offer at nursing homes for pets that are springing up across Japan. "The reality is that good nutrition and better healthcare are extending the lifespan of not just Japan's elderly folk, but their pets as well," Akira Watanabe of Tokyo Pet Home, set up in 2015, tells website www.straitstimes.com.

And as of last October, over 560 dogs and cats were enrolled in pet homes in the country, which number over 150 now. As the website reports, around 40 per cent of the cases Tokyo Pet Home handles are pets in need of extra care because of age or illness. The remainder are there because their owners are in poor health or unable to cope with caring for them. There's another notable category: 'disaster victim pets', pets separated from their owners after natural disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis. Other reasons for the rising need for pet homes, according to the website, are relocation of owners overseas or to an apartment where pets are not allowed, as well as behavioural issues that lead to complaints from neighbours.



**SOMEONE YOU
CAN SHOWER
YOUR LOVE
UPON AND GET
UNCONDITIONAL
LOVE FROM**
- MALVIKA KALRA

**BACHCHON
SE ZYAADA
[MORE
THAN MY
KIDS]**

**- BHUPINDER
SINGH BAGGA**





FRIENDS, AS I HAVE A SMALL FRIENDS' CIRCLE

- SHILPA MAHAJANI

The Mitras lost Sweety to a host of complications: pyometra (a disease of the uterus), diabetes, arthritis, and finally kidney failure. Seeing Sweety in misery and being told she had only five more days, the Mitras took the tough call. However, they ensured she had dignity in death, burying her in Pune's upmarket Salisbury Park, which has a pet cemetery. As if all of dogkind knew, the street dogs of the area communed around Sweety's grave, commiserating with the couple.

SUCCESSION PLAN

Raja and Rani came into the Mahajanis' lives and household when the patriarch of the family passed away. Initially disturbed, yet knowing that their silver parent would not return, Raja and Rani slowly began settling into the Mahajani household, as they sensed that it was an extension of their original parent's family.

Taking the reality of ageing pets and pet owners seriously, pet homes around the world offer not just accommodation and caregiving but luxury services as well. In Japan, for instance, nursing homes for ageing pets offer services such as hot spring baths and therapeutic massages (see *'Canine Caregiving'*; pg 50). A few retirement communities also have rooms for pet parents who want to move in with their babies. In India though, these are still alien concepts.

If you are not sure who will take care of the pets after you, it's important to have a succession plan in place. In such an eventuality, Rego points out that it is also vital to set aside money for your pet's upkeep. Until then though, you and your golden companion can enjoy many golden sunsets together. Woofs and meows to that!



Courtesy: Nareni PR

CLICK HAPPY

"You don't get to choose the animal; they choose you!" says **BHAVESH KARIA**, a pet photographer based in Mumbai, whose studio is named Pawtraits. Excerpts from a conversation:

Describe your work as a pet photographer....

I shoot portraits of pets or babies, as I call them, either with their parents or alone. I shoot indoor as well as outdoors. Indoors is much easier as outside the distractions for them are many.

How long does a shoot take? Also, how do you get them to pose?

It takes about an hour to three. My set-up is minimal. Posing? I typically manage with a treat or a ball. I usually check with the parent beforehand to know what will work with the baby. I try to capture the eyes of the animal, as they are the windows to the soul.

Do you have silver clients?

Not yet. Pet photography is still a growing field. It's a great way for silvers to capture their special moments with their precious baby or babies.

Photographs by Bhavesh Karia



DIY PET ACCESSORIES

ROPE LEASH

There is something rustic and earthen about ropes; their anachronistic style will lend a certain poise and sophistication to your fluff puff. You need a dye bath (a packet of powder dye, hot and cold water), white cotton rope (3 feet-plus length you want for your leash), rope clamps, fabric and a snap hook from an old leash. Start by making a dye bath and dipping your rope into it, try dipping only parts of the rope for a multicoloured pattern. Once dry, thread one end through the snap hook of your previously owned leash, loop it back around and secure it with a rope clamp. A similar process at the other end of the leash will require you to make a bigger loop fastened with another rope clamp. Cover the metallic rope clamps by neatly wrapping the fabric around, tied and glued for added strength. Hook it onto your pet's collar and let him show off!

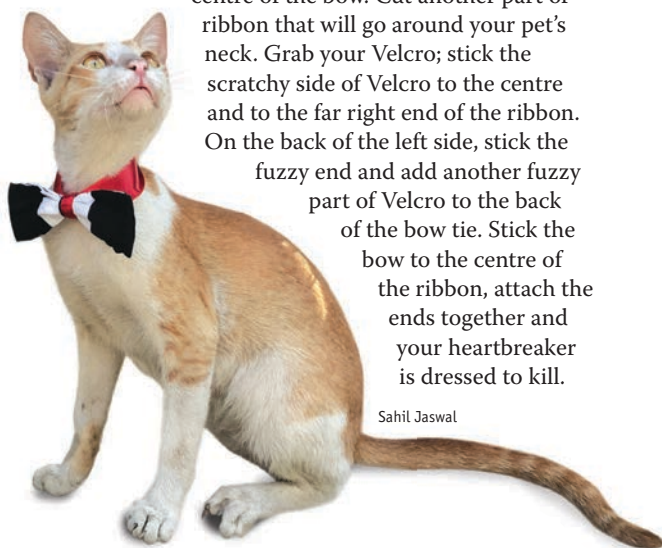


Haresh Patel

NO-SEW BOW TIE

Notice the spring in your fuzz's each step, deliberate and charming, with the addition of a snazzy bow tie. You need fabric, scissors, ribbon and Velcro. Cut your fabric to about 4x9 inches (the standard size for a bow tie; beef up the size for a larger pet). Fold the top and the bottom of the fabric in, so they overlap slightly, do the same with the sides, keeping the overlap minimal. Pinch the centre of the fabric to get the bow-tie shape and tie a thin strip of ribbon, around 2x5 cm, to the

centre of the bow. Cut another part of ribbon that will go around your pet's neck. Grab your Velcro; stick the scratchy side of Velcro to the centre and to the far right end of the ribbon. On the back of the left side, stick the fuzzy end and add another fuzzy part of Velcro to the back of the bow tie. Stick the bow to the centre of the ribbon, attach the ends together and your heartbreaker is dressed to kill.



Sahil Jaswal

UPCYCLED PET BED

Turn an old drawer, side table, wooden crate, old television console, suitcase, picnic basket or a wine crate into a cosy repurposed bed for your darling. The least cumbersome is to turn your old bedside table upside down so the legs point up. Get an old, favourite pillow of your dog and stuff it into the space between the legs. Pin the cushion sides into the table or glue the cushion to the table to keep it fastened. You could even cut the cushion into a size that will fit perfectly into the space; we leave it to you.

MORE IDEAS...

1. If you have an old shirt lying about, you can dress your pet up for work! Just sever the collar from the top of the shirt; make sure the button of the collar is right at the top and that it has a collar stand.
2. You could also fasten a tie around your pet's neck and go the dapper way. Definitely a pick-me-up for those dreary Monday mornings.

:: cover feature :: rewind

We dug through the Harmony Archives to pull out images of these adorable pets that brought our cover features alive

PET PIN-UPS



1. SIR WILLIAM MARK TULLY
JOURNALIST
JANUARY 2012

2. HARIHARAN
SINGER
FEBRUARY 2015

3. ANJOLIE ELA MENON
ARTIST
APRIL 2007

4. YUSUF ARAKKAL
ARTIST
OCTOBER 2006







5. KALPANA LAJMI
FILMMAKER
MARCH 2014

6. MRINAL PANDE
MEDIA PROFESSIONAL & AUTHOR
NOVEMBER 2015

7. PAVAN KUMAR VARMA
DIPLOMAT & WRITER
JULY 2013

8. HONEY IRANI
SCRIPTWRITER & FILMMAKER
APRIL 2011



9. SHUBHA MUDGAL
SINGER
MARCH 2018

CANVAS

UNITED COLOURS OF NAGALAND



Endowed with primeval beauty, Nagaland is home to diverse indigenous tribes and unique traditional practices and beliefs. Bordering Myanmar, this lush mountainous state is a land of vibrant cultures and joyous festivals. On a backpacking trip, **Devesh Joshi** captures the myriad strains that make up this colourful state




There are 16 recognised tribes in Nagaland and a few minority tribes. The most popular among them are the Konyaks, better known as the headhunters. Until as recently as 1969, the Konyaks attacked villages of other tribes and took great pride in taking the heads of opposing warriors as trophies to hang outside their house. With each head a Konyak takes, his wife will carve a tattoo on his body and gift him some jewellery. The more the tattoos and jewellery, the better the reputation




This quaint village of Khonoma in Kohima district is popular as Asia's first Green Village. Hunting and logging in the forests here are strictly prohibited. Moreover, it is a no-plastic and pollution-free zone—giving a new definition to sustainable tourism in rural India



Architecture in Nagaland is one of its kind, strongly influenced by people's beliefs. One can see wooden carvings of deceased family members on doors and windows; the dead are buried just outside homes. The belief is that you keep your dear ones close to you during life as well as death. Seen here is a traditional *morung* (bachelors' dormitory) of the Angami tribe, which once used to be a thriving educational centre but is now abandoned. Many Naga cultures and customs have been transmitted down generations through folk music and dance, folk tales and oral traditions and carvings of figures on stones and wood. During times of war, *morung* were also used as guard houses



A tribesman from Khiamniungan tribe fixes his helmet as he gets ready for his performance during the Hornbill Festival. The traditional attire is in bright red and deep blue, and the ornaments are made of cowries and conch shells. All Naga tribes come together to exhibit their wares at the Hornbill Festival, celebrated every December



From weaving to embroidery to wood carving, you name it and a Naga can do it well. Here, at the Longwa village in Mon district, a group of craftswomen were busy selling things I barely had any idea about. From wood material to conch shells, home decoration to personal jewellery—there was something for everyone, for as little as ₹ 20



Contrary to how it is generally perceived—as the Wild West of India—I found Nagaland a rather hospitable and friendly place. Locals invite you into their house, give directions if you're lost, and walk with you if you have the time. For instance, this lady from Khonoma village came to me on her own, smiling and asking for “one photo”

Food is another highlight in Nagaland. Some of the dishes served reminded me of Burmese cuisine, while others tasted like Thai; yet all the dishes were uniquely Naga. This, for example, was a traditional Naga meal I ate in a village in Mon district. It comprised smoked and dried meat and some local vegetables, served with the staple diet of sticky rice and a host of homemade spicy sauces





The town of Longwa is also well known for being an 'opium den'. One can see locals cooking the opium and sucking it through bamboo pipes with tribal engravings

The first day at school

The first time you rode the bicycle.

The first crush you had at thirteen

The first drama you got a part in

The first day at college

The first date you went on

The first kiss

The first time you proposed

The first job interview

The first board meeting you addressed

The first day after retirement

BUTTERFLIES *never retire*

The first click of the mouse.

www.harmonyindia.org

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celebrate age

MAN OF STEEL

If versatility was a person, it could be called Balan Nambiar—the 80-year-old artist's repertoire of work includes his trademark stainless steel and mild steel sculptures, enamel works on copper and silver, oil paintings, sketches and watercolours, as well as his research and photographic documentation on the ritual arts of Kerala and Karnataka done over

five decades. But, "If people ask me what I do, I say I am a welder. It's true, I do the welding myself!"

SCULPTURE

he said, speaking to *Deccan Chronicle* at a month-long retrospective of his work, titled *Sculpting in Time*. Celebrating Nambiar's six decades of engagement with materiality, the show took place at National Gallery of Modern Art in Bengaluru, the city he's called home since 1971. "I also included photographs of lost and vandalised sculptures to highlight the apathy of the government and other institutions," he told us. As homage to their teacher, the exhibition was inaugurated by the students of his free art class since 1971—the oldest being 57 years and the youngest, seven.

‘Actors never age; they merely mature’

Bengali actor Lolita Chatterjee recently made a comeback with her moving performance in *Jonaki*. **Partha Mukherjee** believes her best is yet to come

Well into her 80s and on her 23rd film, Lolita Chatterjee’s acting career seems to be taking off like never before. She recently starred in *Jonaki*, which premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival in the Netherlands this January. Film-maker Aditya Vikram Sengupta’s ode to his late grandmother, it reflects on her tragic life as she lay in a coma for four days before she passed on.

“An actor doesn’t age; rather, she matures with time,” she told us when we visited her sparsely decorated home in South Kolkata’s Regent Park area. “Yet, in this case, it helped to be an octogenarian.”

Chatterjee has more in common with the subject of the film than just her age. She too belongs to an old, affluent family—her mother, the late Sikhar Basini Devi, was a descendant of the famous Mukherjee clan of Serampore, and her father was the late Kali Charan Chatterjee, an erudite scholar.

CINEMA

She too had suffered a loss early in life. “My mother passed away when I was only five. I learnt later that she was the pivot of our family as my father did not look after the nitty-gritty, everyday affairs of the family,” she reveals.

As for Sengupta’s grandmother, he writes in his ‘director’s note’: “She grew up in an aristocratic and Anglicised family. However, her life was marked with pain and suffering. Her father passed away when she was six. Her mother was authoritarian. Despite being in love with a Christian boy, she was forcefully married at the age of 16 and, understandably, my



Soumya Sankar Bose

grandfather and she never got along. Chronicles of her life became my bedtime stories. Before she passed away, she lay in a coma for four days, with her eyes slightly open.... I wondered what she was thinking.”

Chatterjee’s first film, *Bibhas*, was opposite West Bengal’s beloved Uttam Kumar, of whom she was in awe. He had first spotted her at a social gathering where she charmed him with her rendition of Ranbindra Sangeet, a talent she had honed during her school days. Although she acted in a few more Bengali films, she moved to Mumbai, hoping she could fulfil her potential there. “But they only offered me roles of vamps and seductresses considering my height, complexion and, above all, my Westernised mannerisms.” Chatterjee played small roles in movies like *Raat Andheri Thi*, *Aap Ki Kasam*, *Talaash*, *Victoria No 203* and *Pushpanjali*, before she returned to Kolkata and dabbled in Jatra (Bengali folk theatre). While her sporadic performances have caught the attention of the public across the decades, of late a group of filmmakers have found her to be just what they were looking for.

Goutam Ghose cast her in *Shunyo Awnko* in 2013; Arindam Sil recently cast her in *Aaschhe Abar Shabor*; and Aditya Vikram Sengupta chose her to embody his grandmother. It was a fantastic choice—Chatterjee has delivered an almost Zen-like performance. Excerpts from an interview with the veteran actor:

Tell us about the character you portrayed in *Jonaki*.

It is all about an 80 year-old woman in a coma. Though she shows no sign of consciousness, there’s a flicker in her mind and memory, where she goes through the events in her life as an old woman. Aditya tackled the subject with maturity. I had watched

his previous film, *Jaoa Asar Majhe*. It was not only well-crafted but thought-provoking.

What was it like being a part of a full-length feature film in your 80, as an actor and as an octogenarian?

An actor doesn’t age; rather, she matures with time. You will realise this if you observe the craft of Promode Ganguly, Dame Judi Dench or Zohra Sehgal. But, in this case, I agree that it would never have been possible to seamlessly enter the skin of the character, as the director had envisaged, unless I was an octogenarian

“I reinvented myself with *Jonaki* when people had almost forgotten about my presence in the industry. But I do believe I am yet to get a role that will prove my acting prowess”

myself. As for me, I think I reinvented myself with *Jonaki* at a time when people had almost forgotten about my presence in the industry.

How do you think filmmaking has changed since the 1960s and ’70s?

Directors today are experimenting, which was not possible in the ’60s and ’70s. Filmmaking has changed content-wise, form-wise, and in the style of acting. There are new challenges all around and new filmmakers are leveraging this. However, I think we are missing good, classic storytellers like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Rahen Tarafdar or Tarun Mazumder, even Goutam Ghose. The same can be said of acting. A few talented actors arrive on the scene but they cannot retain their class for long.

Can you tell us a little about your work in Jatra?

Yes, Jatra gave me the satisfaction film never could. I think the productions I got to be a part of—including *Tin Poysar Pala* by Ajitesh Bannerjee, *Hamlet*, *Indira Gandhi Banhisikha*, *Ulka* and *Sonar Khonje*—were worth the viewers’ hard-earned money.

How did you get your first break?

I was visiting my sister-in-law Kaveri Basu, who was shooting *Suryasikha* at Technician Studio in the 1960s. She was a well-known actor and I was teaching at South Point School then. That’s where I met Uttam [Kumar]. He asked if I would be interested in playing Padma in *Bibhas*, an upcoming film by Binu Bardhan. The film, if my memory serves me right, featured many eminent actors of the time including Uttam Kumar, Kamal Mitra, Pahadi Sanyal, Bikash Roy, Tarun Kumar, Anubha Gupta, Chhaya Devi and Gita Dey. It was 1964. Thus it all began and it went beyond expectations.

When did ‘Runu’ become ‘Lolita’?

I was reading *Lolita* by Vladimir Nobokov when the producer of *Kaal Shroat*, a New Theatre production I was shooting for along with *Bibhas*, asked me about the name I would prefer in the credit title. Without giving it much thought, I said ‘Lolita’. They accepted it and I became ‘Lolita’. I wanted to change it later but that didn’t happen.

What does the future have in store for you?

Shunyo Awnko was a great break that revived the actor in me. I don’t know whether a better role will come my way. But I do believe I am yet to get a role that will prove my acting prowess.



Shyamola Khanna

Sahnaz Arni is the go-to person for new and struggling artists. Now in its 24th year, her studio-gallery, Minaaz, is located on a lower level from the 72 year-old's home and set back from the chaos of daily life in Hyderabad.

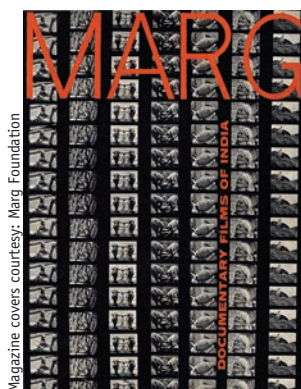
Minaaz was the second gallery in the city when it opened in 1994. The first one, started by the now well-known artist, Surya Prakash, catered to only high-end artists. But Arni was very clear. "I told Surya Prakash that I would not clash with him. My space was for younger, struggling artists who needed to exhibit their work much more than the high-end ones did," says the retired art teacher of 40 years. Minaaz's first exhibition was a group show where many local artists were happy to exhibit their works. "Fawad, L N V Srinivas, Anjani Reddy—my college

mate and a great supporter through the years—Asha Radhika, Stanley Suresh and, above all, Kavita Deuskar, who had been my teacher...they all came to exhibit at Minaaz," she recalls happily. Arni's favourite artist is Aarti Vir, an old student of hers, a ceramic potter and artist who, at first, was very reluctant to show her work—she went on to gain fame over the years and remains Arni's favourite artist. "Aarti comes to the gallery with great goodwill and sets up everything by herself. I don't have to do anything and she needs no guidance." Two years after retirement, Arni is returning to teaching art, with classes on sketching, drawing and painting for students above 14 years, even as she puts together a solo show for Anjani Reddy, titled *Small is Beautiful*. A beautiful way, indeed, to come full circle.

—Shyamola Khanna

“ How do you create a building that will adjust itself over time? A building without constraints? When you build an idea around a space, the client gets excited about the space and is more flexible to design ideas. Spaces begin to flow, structures begin to flow, walls begin to flow. How do you make materials speak? How do materials sing with you? How can materials become alive? Between inhaling and exhaling, there is a gap. That gap is what we're looking for in a building.

—2018 Pritzker Prize-winner
Balkrishna V Doshi,
speaking to *The Hindu* after
winning what is dubbed the
Nobel Prize of architecture



Magazine covers courtesy: Marg Foundation



Online treasure trove

India's oldest art journal, *Marg*, published for over seven decades, has been archived online to attract new patrons, including scholars, students, artists, designers and art connoisseurs. It comprises 270 editions in 69 volumes, published over 71 years, and covering a range of themes, topics and pioneering research from scholars across the world. The quarterly magazine, which was once difficult to obtain owing to its limited print run, is now accessible to everyone. Rare back issues on Indian traditional, modern and contemporary sculpture, painting, architecture, design, performing arts, photography, and cinema can be found at www.marg-art.org for a fee of ₹ 175 per issue and ₹ 75 per article.



I am a seenager
I have everything I wanted
as a teenager, only 60 years later.
I don't have to go to school or work.
I get an allowance every month.
I have my own pad.
I don't have a curfew.
I have a driving licence and my own car.
I have ID that gets me into bars & off-licences.
I like the off-licences best.
The people I hang around with
are not scared of getting pregnant.
They aren't scared of anything.
They have been blessed to live
this long, so why be scared?
And I don't have acne.
Life is great!
I have more friends that I should tell this to,
but right now I can't remember their names.



OFF THE CUFF BY RAJU MUKHERJI

THE SORCERER: A gentleman on and off court, Ramanathan Krishnan, India's best-ever tennis player, held audiences in thrall with his subtle touch, deft placement and consummate artistry

In the 1960s, the distinction between the amateurs and professionals in tennis was thoroughly followed. The professional players would go around the world playing in their own circuit, which was unofficially known as the 'Jack Kramer Circus'. Top professional tennis players of the period were Pancho Gonsalves, Lew Hoad and Ken Rosewall. On the other hand, the doors to Wimbledon and Davis Cup as well as other prominent tennis championships were the exclusive prerogative of the amateurs.

The top amateurs of the time were not inferior to the professionals in playing ability. In fact, the best of amateurs, when they converted themselves to 'professional' status, were invariably among the best of pros as well. Men like Rod Laver, Roy Emerson, Manuel Santana, Alex Olmedo and Neale Fraser dominated the amateur tennis scenario in the 1960s. In such a heady atmosphere, India, too, had a representative, Ramanathan Krishnan, a tennis player of exceptional artistry from Chennai (then Madras). He was deservedly ranked World No. 4 at the time by virtue of recording regular victories against the best of oppositions in international championships on various playing surfaces all over the world. No other Indian has ever been ranked as high as maestro 'Krish'.

Krishnan's strength lay in his court craft and temperament. With a tennis racquet in hand, he gave the impression of being a sorcerer with a magic wand. He never seemed to hurt the ball, merely caress it.

At a time when players were concentrating hard on a booming service and power play, Krishnan was an outstanding exception relying on subtle touches and deft placement. His approach was not of an aggressive 'killer' but a silent saint out to prove everybody wrong by his sacred touch. Even his physique defied accepted norms. He was not lean and athletic. Nor did he possess the tough appearance of a champion sportsman. No bulging muscles protruded, nor did the jaws square up to size up an opponent. No furrowed eyebrows were displayed: he was perennially relaxed and smiling.

Rather Ramanathan Krishnan's big, burly figure created an impression of a contented man in retirement. Content he certainly was with his craft and confidence, with his skill and strategy. But he was in no kind of retirement. On the

contrary, he would be active enough to send others into a dizzy form of reverie.

Amazing shots from improbable angles and miraculous turnarounds from almost lost causes were his forte. From 2 sets down, the way he defeated Thomas Koch of Brazil in a Davis Cup encounter at Calcutta's South Club lawns in 1966 is still spoken of with awe by all those who were fortunate to get a seat in the packed stands at Woodburn Park that winter afternoon.

India and Brazil had won two matches each. Now in the crucial fifth match for India, Krishnan, after trailing 1-2 sets, was down 2-5 on points and 15-30 in the 8th game. How he manoeuvred that certain defeat into an improbable victory is beyond words. At the end of the match, no one moved. Still silence prevailed till his opponent Thomas Koch began to applaud. As a 16 year-old in the stands, I realised I had just seen a miracle. As we left the venue drenched in emotion and sweat, Krishnan happened to be the only one in the arena who displayed no trace of emotion; no sign of sweat!

Born in Madras on 11 April 1937, he learnt the fundamentals and nuances of the game from his tennis-player father 'TK', who was the runner-up to Ghaus Mohammad in the national tennis championship in 1939. Early in life, young Ramanathan exhibited remarkable dexterity and combined it with exceptional consistency. Soon his name and fame spread all over the tennis globe.

While a student at Loyola College in 1954, at the age of 17, he won the Junior Wimbledon title by beating talented American Ashley Cooper. In 1958, Ashley Cooper went on to win the Senior Wimbledon crown. Surprisingly, despite his prolific victories around the world, this was one crown at the centre court of Wimbledon that Krishnan could never conquer.

Krishnan had the habit of defeating the very best of international players in almost all major championships. But the All-England title at Wimbledon eluded him forever. Twice, he reached the semi-final at Wimbledon, only to lose to the ultimate winner on both occasions. Ironically, he had defeated both the winners, Fraser and Laver, at Queen's Club just days prior to the respective Wimbledon championships.



Cool and composed, his laidback approach was distinctively different from the rest. The execution of his shots had a remarkable ring of beauty attached to it. The beauty of simplicity

No Indian player, before or since, has been ranked higher than he was in the international rankings. Unfortunately, in his time, tennis had not become an Olympic sport; if it had been, Krishnan would have walked away with Olympic medals galore. Initially with Naresh Kumar and later with the highly talented Jaidip Mukherjea, both from Calcutta, he formed a deadly doubles combination that did wonders for India, particularly in Davis Cup encounters. At the time, in the 1960s, India was a major tennis power in the Asian context.

Krishnan and Mukherjea were magnificent in their doubles victory in 1966 over the highly fancied World No. 1 pair of John Newcombe and Tony Roche in their own den in Australia in the challenge round (the final) of the Davis Cup. This win against all odds has gone into the annals of tennis history. That day, the Melbourne tennis fraternity gave the duo a standing ovation. The Australian media went haywire describing the artistry and sportsmanship of Krishnan and Mukherjea. This was indeed a rare, unusual gesture from the highly partisan Australian media and crowd.

Krishnan, Naresh Kumar, Jaidip Mukherjea and Premjit Lall were model-sportsmen in court craft and conduct

on and off the field. They were impeccable sports ambassadors of the country. "With Krishnan around, one felt proud to be an Indian," wrote Subroto Sirkar, India's leading tennis correspondent at the time. "We were always treated very well around the tennis world." Even the media got the benefit of Krishnan's presence!

Apart from the man's superb court skills, it was his bearing that left a permanent imprint in the minds of tennis followers, world over. Cool and composed, his laidback approach was distinctively different from the rest. The execution of his shots had a remarkable ring of beauty attached to it. The beauty of simplicity.

And such was Krishnan's sense of sportsmanship that he would never dispute a line call. In fact, at Calcutta South Club during the Brazil-India tie in 1966, a disputed line call went in Krishnan's favour. In the next point, believe it or not, he purposely put the ball out of court to give a point to his opponent! Writing on Krishnan, senior sports journalist K R Wadhwaney wrote, "Off the court he spoke softly. Even after winning a match, he would gently say something to the opponent giving the impression that he was sorry for winning the match!"

Krishnan, the gentle giant, would never force his opinion on others. He would speak softly and slowly. Would not advise unless asked for. Respectful to seniors, he was very courteous to juniors as well. He had no sense of ego; no sense of vanity. Such was his popularity that people would come to meet him in Chennai from all over the world just to say 'hello'. Tennis legend Harry Hopman's wife flew in from the US—almost 30 years after Krish's retirement—to wish him on his 60th birthday in 1997.

The Arjuna Award in 1961 was followed by the Padma Shri in 1962 and the Padma Bhushan in 1967. International awards, too, came in profusion. But nothing could alter the man's exceptional equanimity. Whatever he did, he did with an innate sense of ease. Nothing and nobody could disrupt his unique style, intelligent approach, strategic planning, remarkable artistry, and constantly evolving tactics. He never needed publicity agents, influential parents, support systems or physical trainers.

Indeed, Ramanathan Krishnan proved to the world of sports that even the softest of gentlemen can overcome the gamesmanship of sly opponents; that a vegetarian diet was no impediment to sporting success; that one does not need media support to become a champion. He was a rare sportsman, a rare human being. Shall we see his like again?

Kolkata-based Mukherji is a former cricket player, coach, selector, talent scout, match referee and writer

For the love of Urdu

Known for her prolific writing, **Rakshanda Jalil** is a litterateur of eminence. As a critic and literary historian, her body of work, particularly on Urdu literature, is impressive. Her doctoral thesis on 'Progressive Writers' Movement as Reflected in Urdu Literature', published by Oxford University Press as *Liking Progress, Loving Change*, is acknowledged as seminal research. Best known for her book on Delhi's lesser-known monuments, *Invisible City: The Hidden Monuments of India*, Jalil was honoured with the Kaifi Azmi Award for her contribution to Urdu literature in 2016 and the First Jawad Memorial Urdu-English Translation Award in 2017.

It's apparent where her love of books stems from. "My father was a doctor; my mother retired as the librarian of the school I studied in. She still reads more books than I do!" says Jalil, who has authored more than 20 books. "Books figured prominently in our lives. My brother and two sisters are all avid readers; what's more, all of them write and are published authors."

Jalil was also co-editor of *Third Frame*, a journal devoted to literature, culture and society brought out by Cambridge University Press from 2007 to 2009. Her biography of feminist Urdu writer Rashid Jahan, *A Rebel and Her Cause*, is a bestseller. Among Jalil's translations are *The Temple and the Mosque*, based on the short stories of Premchand, and *Naked Voices and other Stories*, based on Saadat Hasan Manto's works. And her translation of Intizar Husain's novel *Aage Samandar Hai* as *The Sea Lies Ahead* won the German Embassy-Karachi Lit Fest Pakistan Peace Prize in 2016.

Jalil's recent works include *Footprints on the Zero Line: Writings on the Partition*, a translation of short stories and poems by Gulzar; *The Traitor*, a translation of Krishan Chandar's novel *Ghaddar*; and *An Uncivil Woman: Writings on Ismat Chughtai*. At present, she is working

on a critical biography of Urdu poet Shahryar. In an email interview with **Suparna-Saraswati Puri**, the 55 year-old, who is the founder of Hindustani Awaaz, a platform that promotes Hindi-Urdu *tehzeeb*, talks about her passion for Urdu. Excerpts:

authorspeak

What drew you to Ismat Chughtai?

I had read Ismat in dribs and drabs over the years, both in Urdu and in excellent English translations by Tahira Naqvi. More than anything else, I was drawn by Ismat's clever use of language. Here was a language I had heard being used by my grandmother and an assortment of older female relatives in towns and hamlets across western Uttar Pradesh; it was a living language for me. To read it in a book, coming from the mouth of characters who seemed real and believable, made the stories come alive in a very special way. The language—idiomatic, flavoursome, pungent, vigorous—and those characters, so lifelike and rooted in reality, combined to create a world I could identify with. At the same time, even though her stories seemed located in a certain time and place, they spoke of universal concerns. No matter how whimsical she painted her characters, her concern seemed to be with those values that transcend time and space.

As one writer to another, has Chughtai been intimidating or intriguing?

I must be honest here: Ismat is not a terribly nuanced writer. In many ways, she is an open book; you can read her at a gallop or you can read her slowly but it isn't as though you will derive more from her from subsequent or leisurely readings. She is what she is; she calls a spade a spade. So, frankly, while I may enjoy reading and re-reading a particular story again after a gap of many years, it isn't as though the story will reveal itself to me in a new light each time.



While compiling *An Uncivil Woman*, what was of crucial significance to you as an editor?

I wanted to go beyond hagiographical accounts. I wanted a warts-and-all critical study of a writer who is an important contemporary writer, one who has cast a long shadow and influenced many younger writers. Such a critical reading of Ismat seemed to be woefully lacking. Now that Ismat is being taught at the undergraduate level in many universities and colleges—both in departments of modern Indian languages and centres of gender studies—it seemed imperative that we provide students with some reference material. A brief translator's introduction can no longer suffice. In Urdu, too, serious, scholarly studies on Ismat are virtually absent. Most literary commentators agree that Ismat is an important writer; no one tells us why and how. *An Uncivil Woman* was put together as a tribute to Ismat in her centenary year and to fill a gap.

Do you feel Chughtai's voice as a writer needs to be heard today more than ever before?

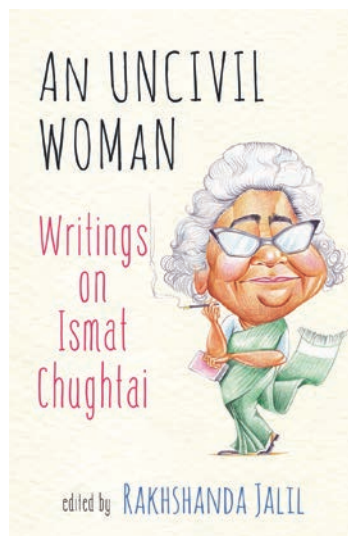
Clearly, Ismat's voice needs to be heard because the values she stands for are still important and relevant: gender justice, anti-fascism, democratic values, secularism, etc.

How was the experience of putting together *An Uncivil Woman vis-à-vis A Rebel and Her Cause*, which is on the life and work of Rashid Jahan?

My biography of Rashid Jahan was a labour of love; it was a book I needed to write. I wanted to share my great joy and admiration for such an exceptional human being with a wider audience. The book was a biography that included translations of some of her stories and plays. In the biographical part, I wanted to trace her family background, her exceptional, visionary parents who founded a girls' school at Aligarh, her attraction towards communism and decision to join the Communist Party of India, her work as a doctor and later as a founder-member of the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) and the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). The Ismat book, in a sense, came from this. All through *A Rebel and Her Cause* I was referring to Ismat and her many anecdotes about Rashid Jahan, about how the latter influenced Ismat. But I must point out, *An Uncivil Woman* is an edited volume; I have commissioned essays and translations from different contributors. In that sense, it is not my work alone.

Tell us about Hindustani Awaaz. How do you balance your time between organisational work and writing?

Like many other things in my life, Hindustani Awaaz is a labour of love. The impulse behind it is sheer *jazba*, the desire to make a difference, no matter how small. Hindustani Awaaz is about content, not numbers. Launched in



"I wanted a warts-and-all critical study of a writer who is an important contemporary writer, one who has cast a long shadow and influenced many younger writers"

2003, it is an organisation dedicated to the promotion of Hindustani literature and its rich oral tradition. It seeks to publish, position and popularise various elements culled from the different genres of Urdu and Hindi language and literature. In the broadest sense, it endeavours to provide a platform for scholarly and non-scholarly views and voices in Hindustani on Hindustani. In doing so, it also seeks to showcase the rich pluralistic heritage of India that is also known as Ganga-Jamuni *tehzeeb*.

Yes, it is a challenge to find a balance between running Hindustani Awaaz, which incidentally I do all on my own—from conceptualising events, finding venues/partners, designing e-invites and posters, sending invites on email, WhatsApp and Facebook, handling media and publicity. So, yes, I am proud to say I am a one-woman army and it does take its toll. But then one learns to multitask!

What do you like to do when not writing?

I love gardening; I enjoy growing my own vegetables. And travelling, for work or pleasure, is a great stimulus.

Tell us about your family.

My grandfather was a poet, a literary critic and teacher. I am happy to say I am passing on the same 'germs' to my two daughters—both love to read and write, so much so that the younger one has turned the walls of her room into a huge scrapbook covered with handwritten lines of poetry and quotations from all her favourite writers.

PHILOSOPHY

**Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) reflects
on life, the world and the unknown**

There is a place to which I often go,
Not by planning to, but by a flow
Away from all existence, to a cold
Lucidity, whose will is uncontrolled.
Here, the mills of God are never slow.

The landscape in its geological prime
Dissolves to show its quintessential slime.
A million stars are blotted out. I think
Of each historic passion as a blink
That happened to the sad eye of Time.

But residues of meaning still remain,
As darkest myths meander through the pain
Towards a final formula of light.
I, too, reject this clarity of sight.
What cannot be explained, do not explain.

The mundane language of the senses sings
Its own interpretations. Common things
Become, by virtue of their commonness,
An argument against their nakedness
That dies of cold to find the truth it brings.

After celebrating your 25th anniversary, celebrate your first.

The first time your eyes met.
The first time you mustered up the courage.
The first time you bared your heart.
The first time you heard "Yes".
The first date.
The first time you held hands.
The first fight.
The first time you made up.
Shouldn't you be celebrating, that first rush of love
before life
and the babies and the bills intruded?
Because for the first time
you're at an age when
you can fall in love with each other
all over again.



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harmony
celebrate age

INDIAN SUMMER

Modern science is embracing ancient Vedic wisdom in more ways than one

The embrace of Eastern philosophy and mysticism in the West has a long history, from the writings of 'the first American yogi' Henry David Thoreau, to 'The Beatles' famous 1968 pilgrimage to India, to the current scientific interest in ancient contemplative practices like meditation and yoga.

The dissemination of Indian ideas and practices has shaped the way we view spirituality in the West. But ancient Indian ideas have also influenced a more unlikely domain: modern science, medicine and psychotherapy.

In many ways, modern science is just catching up with the wisdom of early Indian teachings, rooted in ancient Vedic texts. Today, many concepts in early Vedic philosophy have been backed up with empirical evidence.

YOGA CAN HEAL THE MIND AND BODY

While Western yoga bears only a partial resemblance to the traditional Indian meditative practice and school of philosophy, yoga is arguably the most widespread and influential Eastern spiritual practice to spread outside the Indian subcontinent....

Created for the purpose of stilling the mind and achieving eventual oneness with the divine, yoga has long been believed to bring health to the mind, body and spirit.

While evidence of the positive spiritual benefits of yoga remains mostly anecdotal, a growing body of research has linked an asana-based

yoga practice with a slew of positive physical and mental health impacts.

Scientists now know why. Almost immediately upon starting a practice, yoga's positive impact extends all the way down to the cellular level, according to a 2013 Norwegian study.

BREATHING AFFECTS OUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

According to the 15th century yoga manual *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, one must learn to control the breath in



order to achieve good health, longevity and peace of mind. The yogic practice of breath work known as pranayama—which is Sanskrit for 'extension of the life-force'—has been used for centuries as a means of healing the mind and body.

The way we breathe can have a significant impact on our well-being and stress levels, and can even create physical changes in the body, including lowering blood pressure levels. Practising controlled breathing during meditation can increase the size of the brain, according to a 2005 Harvard study.

TURMERIC REALLY IS A MIRACLE CURE

The use of turmeric in the Vedic tradition dates back at least 4,000 years. Historically, turmeric was used not only as a seasoning element but played a role in religious ceremonies and was used within the Ayurveda holistic health tradition.

Modern nutritional science has confirmed that turmeric does have powerful healing properties. Clinical trials have found turmeric to ward off indigestion and heartburn, lower risk of heart attack, repair stem cells in the brain, and possibly even fight off cancer cells.


It may be particularly beneficial for an ageing population. According to recent research, adding just a gram of turmeric to breakfast can help improve the memory of those at risk for cognitive impairment.

EVERYTHING REALLY MAY BE INTERCONNECTED

We might think of physics and spirituality as being completely antithetical to one another but, recently, some research in theoretical and quantum physics has lent scientific support to the basic tenets of Eastern mysticism.

Noted theoretical physicist David Bohm concludes that there is an underlying unity to the elements that, to our limited perception, appear to be separate. "Mind and matter are not separate substances," Bohm wrote in *The Undivided Universe*. "Rather, they are different aspects of our whole and unbroken movement."

Extracted from a 2014 article by Carolyn Gregoire in Huffington Post

A photograph of an elderly man with a grey beard and a young girl with dark hair, both smiling and playing in a pond. The man is in the water, and the girl is sitting on a wooden dock. The water is dark blue, and the dock is made of wooden planks.

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We go 50 years back in time to bring you products, people, events and fashion that have influenced the world

He had a DREAM



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movements in the 1950s and 1960s including the boycott of city buses in Montgomery, which stipulated that African-Americans could only ride in the back seats. The boycott soon spread outside Montgomery, forcing bus companies to revise their rules. Inspired by our own apostle of non-violence Mahatma Gandhi, King staged peaceful protests leading to the passing of the Civil Rights Act—ending segregation in public places and banning employment discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex and national origin—and the Voting Rights Act for African-Americans.

King's vision changed America and the world in a major way, advancing the civil rights movement and giving minorities a voice. Since then, an African-American has served two terms as president of the United States. An eloquent orator, King was also known for his impassioned speeches, including the iconic "I have a dream" speech. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously in 1978. Currently, the 50th anniversary of King's death is being recognised with a variety of events in the US, with projects, tributes and products collectively identified by the rubric 'MLK50'. Indeed, 50 years after his death, King continues to provide hope and inspiration to those working towards a better world.

One of the tallest leaders of the 20th century, Martin Luther King Jr was the most eloquent voice and public face of the American civil rights movement. Maintaining that racial justice was a cornerstone of democracy, he helped re-imagine America's collective moral and political reality. King was shot on 4 April 1968, while he stood on the balcony of a motel in Memphis. To control

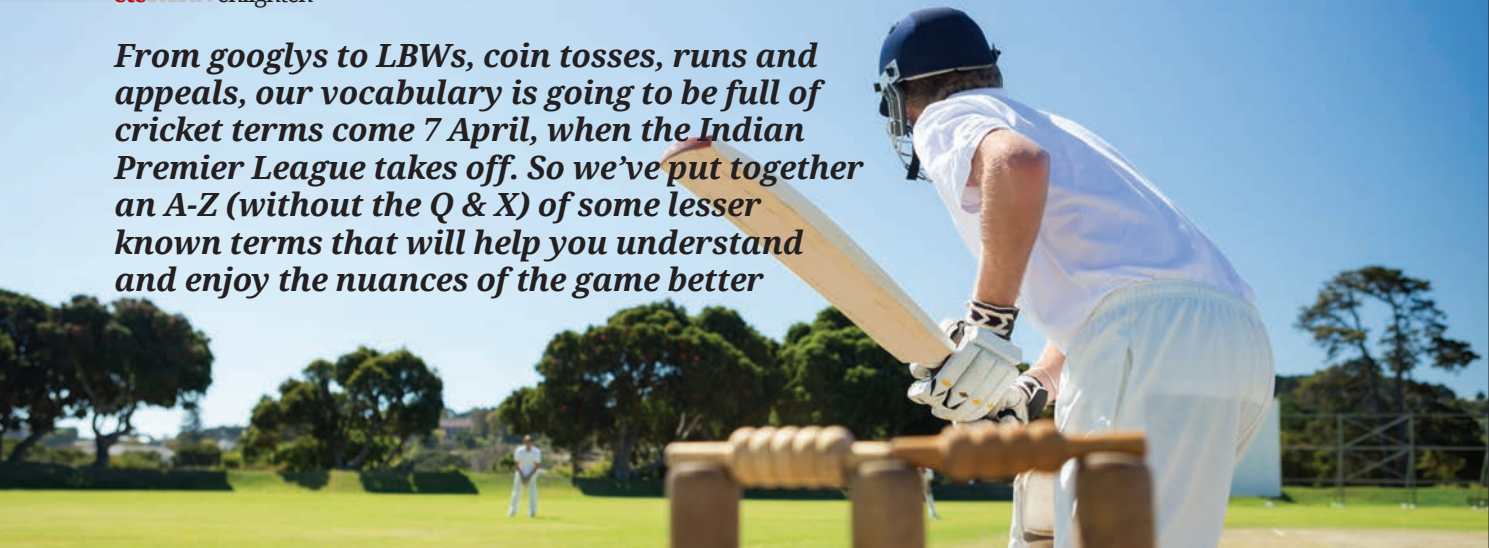
the mindless violence that erupted following his assassination, US president Lyndon B Johnson hastily passed the civil rights legislation, also known as the Fair Housing Act, providing for equal housing opportunities regardless of race, religion and national origin.

King dreamt of a society in which race was not an issue in how people were treated or allowed to lead their lives. He helmed many civil rights

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: APRIL 1968

- On 2 April, Stanley Kubrick's classic film *2001: A Space Odyssey* premiered at Uptown Theatre in Washington DC.
- On 13 April, Singapore held its first parliamentary elections since becoming independent from Malaysia.
- On 18 April, London Bridge was sold to an American entrepreneur, who rebuilt and inaugurated it in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, in 1971.
- On 26 April, the largest hydrogen bomb ever tested by the US was detonated underground at the Nevada test site.

From googlys to LBWs, coin tosses, runs and appeals, our vocabulary is going to be full of cricket terms come 7 April, when the Indian Premier League takes off. So we've put together an A-Z (without the Q & X) of some lesser known terms that will help you understand and enjoy the nuances of the game better



Photographs by iStock

Bunsen

A term used by commentators to describe a pitch heavily favouring slow bowlers. From Cockney rhyming slang (Bunsen Burner = turner)

Cow corner

An unconventional fielding position, more commonly found in the lower reaches of the game, on the midwicket/long-on boundary. The term is thought to have originated at London's Dulwich College where there was the corner of a field containing livestock on that edge of the playing area. Fielders were dispatched to the "cow corner"

ASKING RATE

The runs required per over for a team to win; mostly relevant in a one-dayer

DIBBLY-DOBBLY BOWLERS

Bowlers who are of medium pace, and are effective in the one-day scenario in choking the runs

ZOOTER

A spin bowling variation, first devised by Shane Warne. This is a delivery that snakes out of the hand with little or no spin imparted, and so deceives through its very ordinariness. Some question whether the delivery has ever existed, for it could be another of Warne's mind games to keep his opponents on their toes

In-ducker

An inswinging delivery that moves into the batsman very late. Wasim Akram produced deadly versions with the older ball

GARDENING

The act of the batsman repairing indentations in the pitch, made by the ball or studs, with his bat. More likely to happen when a ball has just whistled past his nose or scooted by his ankle

V - IN THE

The arc between mid-off and mid-on in which batsmen who play straight (in accordance with the MCC Coaching Manual) tend to score the majority of their runs

Retire

To postpone or end one's innings, either voluntarily through boredom when you're simply too good for the opposition, or involuntarily and in agony, when a nasty fast bowler has taken his pound of flesh

SHIRTFRONT A flat, lifeless, soul-destroying wicket that is beloved of batsmen the world over, and loathed by bowlers of all varieties

NIGHTWATCHMAN A non-batsman promoted up the order towards the end of a day's play with the idea of shielding a recognised batsman in the final overs

MINEFIELD A difficult batting track. The pitch is in such a state of disrepair that it is almost impossible to play 'proper' shots as the ball is popping up everywhere

UNCOVERED PITCHES

Pitches that were left open to the elements for the duration of a match, and so developed a variety of characteristics. The failings of a generation of English batsmen were attributed to the decision, in the 1970s, to bring on the covers at the slightest hint of rain

ON THE UP

Making contact with the ball before it reaches the top of the bounce—hitting it on the rise

WAGON-WHEEL

A circular graph or line drawing depicting the region in which a batsman has scored his runs

YIPS A mental affliction that affects many sportsmen, particularly golfers and spin bowlers. It is a mind block that can cause a player to forget the basics of his game, and in the most serious cases can force that player into early retirement



PLUMB

When the batsman is clearly LBW, even at full speed, he is said to be plumb in front

King pair

Hardly worth turning up if you get one of these... out first ball for zero in both innings

Hawk-Eye

A tracking technology which helps to explain the intricacies of the sport, Hawk-Eye can be helpful in judging LBWs

Jaffa

A delivery that is too good for the batsman, and leaves him groping hopelessly at thin air or (as the bowler will hope) dismisses him

FEATHERBED

A batsmen-friendly pitch with little life for the bowlers

LOLLIPOP

A REALLY EASY BALL TO HIT—A 'GIFT'

ECONOMY RATE

The average number of runs a bowler concedes per over

Trundler Slow, laborious type of bowler who thinks he's quick, once was quick, or is simply old, fat and unfit and needs to be put out to pasture

Extracted from 'A Glossary of Cricket Terms' on www.espnccricinfo.com

“I want to share in their happiness”

Neeti Kaikini, 53, teaches poor kids, and distributes blankets and food to the homeless in Pune



Courtesy: Neeti Kaikini

Come Saturday, **Neeti Kaikini** is on a mission. She rides her two-wheeler through the busy lanes and by-lanes of Pune, looking out for the unfed. “There is no predetermined destination,” she says. “I just say a little prayer asking to be led to someone who could do with a hot meal.” For the past eight years, Kaikini has been doling out meals without fail on every Saturday. Her goodie box comprises two rotis, a vegetable dish and a sweet. Doesn’t she worry it may reach the wrong hands? “I can sense who is genuine,” she tells us. “Moreover, I avoid intersections where beggars ply.” In 2008, Kaikini, who was head of IT at Tata Management Training Centre, decided to listen to her heart and quit her job to pursue a “more meaningful life”. She elaborates, “It wasn’t an impulsive decision. I was fed up of the inane rat race and wanted to do something that would bring me genuine happiness.” She set out on her new journey

by volunteering at Akanksha Foundation to teach spoken English to poor children. Later, she joined Team Miracle, a support group for cancer patients, paraplegic soldiers, orphans and destitute women, which visits cancer wards of hospitals to cheer up patients by performing for them. Mita Banerjee, founder of the group, says, “Neeti has the kindest of hearts and the voice of a nightingale. She can sing any song with ease.” Kaikini recalls how her parents, whom she lost to cancer, were proud of her social service. Incidentally, she brought in her 50th birthday three years ago with a bang—incorporating a new routine in her dog-good list. Since then, every birthday has been spent in the company of the homeless. On her 53rd birthday on 13 November last year, she distributed 53 blankets. “Life is short. I want to touch as many hearts as possible,” she says before darting off on her two-wheeler.

—Suchismita Pai

Good



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