

harmony celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

MAY 2011 ₹ 30

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JUNGLE BOOK
Billy Arjan Singh's
roaring affair

AFTER LIFE
Why you should
donate your body

CANDID CAMERA
Photographer
Nitin Rai on
father Raghu Rai

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LORD of thrills

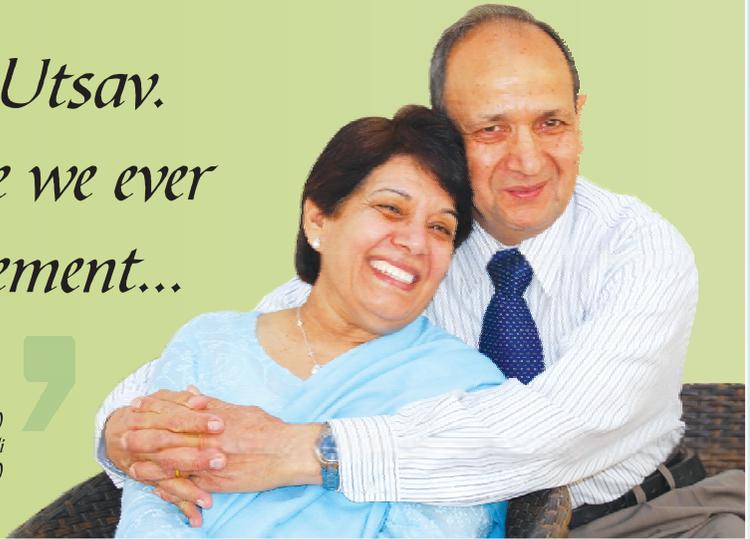
Exclusive interview with
author Jeffrey Archer

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Suresh Natarajan



Aftershock

You, me, the world...we all watched riveted in disbelief as the news from Japan took us by storm. The sheer devastation wrought by the quake-tsunami in March was all too apparent on our television sets. Less visible were the overwhelming casualties of the tragedy: silvers.

Today, news agencies inform us that over half of those killed in nature's rampage were elders. According to figures released by Japanese police, of the nearly 8,000 dead whose ages were known, around 4,400 were 65 or older.

It wasn't merely coincidence. Relief agencies suggest that silvers in tsunami-hit areas could have been disproportionately affected because of their lack of mobility. In fact, as reports suggest, early-warning systems in place among the communities that line Japan's north-eastern coast provided 20 to 30 minutes of warning between the earthquake and the massive wave. But most of those who drowned just weren't 'nimble' or 'fit' enough to get out of the way, which often entailed bounding up flights of stairs in tall buildings, or clambering to the top of hills that bordered the ocean.

The death tolls will continue to rise as entire families and neighbourhoods were wiped out by the towering waves,

leaving no one to report the losses. And for those silvers who survived, the tribulations are just beginning: being uprooted from their homes, physical inability to eke out new financial beginnings, a life of contentment transformed overnight into a litany of uncertainty and despair.

With Japan being a case study for silver longevity, the country's government and civic authorities have long been sensitised to the needs of silvers. Indeed, they have responded as best as they could to the crisis with evacuation centres, temporary shelters, nutritional and health-care backup and other emergency welfare measures for silvers. Yet, they are the first to admit that confronted by the sheer numbers of silver casualties, it's all been woefully insufficient. Even as we say a prayer for the silvers—and indeed all people—of Japan, we must ask ourselves a simple question: How much worse would we fare if nature were to unleash its fury on our coasts? The answer is almost too terrible to contemplate.

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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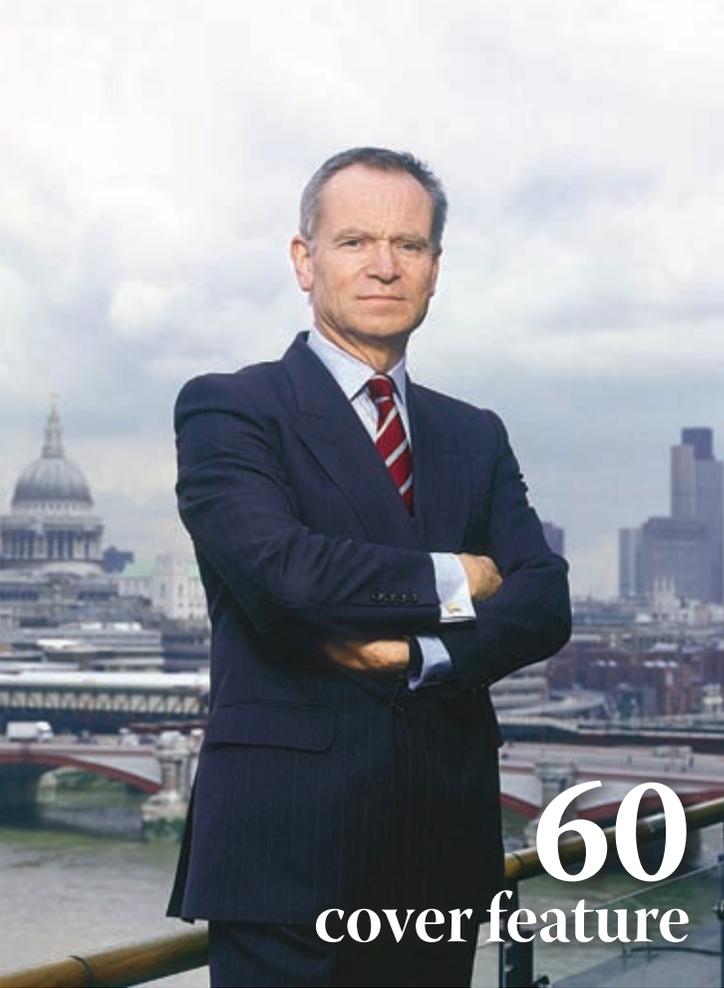
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60 cover feature

Author Jeffrey Archer on why he never tires of living life on the edge

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Bithi Deb Gupta on the joy of reviving an old folk art form

WILD AT HEART
Shaminder Boparai on the inspiration for his book on Billy Arjan Singh

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column one

His prominently chequered forehead—like the longitudinal and latitudinal lines of a world map—prophetically indicates his worldwide popularity; probably there's not a corner of the world unfamiliar with his name. Bestselling author Jeffrey Archer, known for his skilfully crafted sagas, never loosens his grip on logic and therefore claims never to have faced writer's block. An ardent cricket enthusiast, the only time he did forego logic was when he hoped against hope and crossed his fingers for England's victory in the recently concluded World Cup. Last month in India to promote his latest—*Only Time Will Tell*, the first in the five-part *Clifton Chronicles*—he spoke to Dhanya Nair Sankar from *Celebrate Age* ("Archer's Quiver"), and opened up about being a family man, not trudging the beaten path, loving the underdog and being very 'old-world' by continuing to write in long hand. While getting on the computer to write his stories is a tech-block for Archer, in the 'Orbit' section we scoured the Net to present some of the coolest gizmos on the world market. From helping you receive email on your regular phone line to finding your keys by blowing a whistle, these gadgets will nudge you ahead of the times.

Modernity sometimes calls for a shift in traditions as well. As much as our religion and belief insist on a conservative funeral when life ends, the truth is that our bodies, if donated, could save several lives in danger. There's no book that will tell you that but when you step out of your comfortable gear, you will see several organisations stepping up their campaigns for cadaver donation. In "Life, After Life", we list people and NGOs spreading the word. Listen up!

—Meeta Bhatti



I read with interest the articles in *Harmony - Celebrate Age* that are both useful and practical. In the March 2011 issue, you recommend eating nuts in the column "Are You Vegetarian?" ("Eating Right by Anjali Mukerjee"). Please elaborate in a future column which nuts you would recommend for silvers and in what quantity. Also, it would be good to read further columns that give us more information on flax and fenugreek seeds as well as diets to prevent hypertension and diabetes. What's more, in your regular yoga column ("Yoga Rx by Shameem Akthar"), I would like to learn about practices for elders to improve strength and stamina. I hope you will consider these suggestions.

M Pradeep Mumbai

I recently received and read the February 2011 issue of *Harmony - Celebrate Age*. I would like to bring an important issue to the attention of the readers of the magazine. Pensioners of the State Bank of India who retired over 15 years ago—I retired on 31 December 1985, 25 years ago, as assistant general manager—do not get pension on a par with the pensions of their colleagues who retired later. There is a wide gap in the amount of their pensions, so much so that old pensioners in the supervisory grade are getting less than present-day pensioners in

clerical grade. This undermines the status and esteem of old pensioners. The bank management needs to do something tangible immediately to redress this grievance; else, it will be a great injustice. I hope you can help us get justice in this regard.

N P Thareja *Managing Trustee,
Human Care Charitable Trust
New Delhi*

I found the February 2011 issue of *Harmony - Celebrate Age* interesting and various articles especially engrossing. I really enjoyed the article "Wax Works" ("Etcetera"); 81 year-old Gangadhar Tatake's efforts to singularly pursue a wax printing art form are noteworthy. It is indeed interesting that you call yourself a magazine for 'silver citizens'. I would like to know more about the magazine and the work of Harmony for Silvers Foundation.

Murlidhar Oak *Via email*

As Harmony for Silvers Foundation is dedicated to helping and improving the lives of senior citizens, I would like to share some important information with your readers. ExpertEase is a not-for-profit initiative aimed at helping people over the age of 50 to find new jobs and volunteering opportunities as well as encouraging them to mentor young minds/start-up companies. This is the brainchild of Ms Hema Ravichandar (ex-Infosys HR) and Mr Ravichandar (CMD, Feedback Consulting) as an individual social responsibility (ISR) initiative. We urge you and your readers to visit our website, www.seniorexperts.org, and learn more about us. All services are free for all participants, including senior experts, organisations and NGOs.

Radhika Madhavan *ExpertEase
Via email*

Do you know what goes in your Mouth?

Important things one must know before choosing the material for dental restoration.

Before going to a dentist, here are some homework tips to make it easier for you to choose the right dental material for replacement of your teeth, replacement that gives you a natural smile.

“ How many of us know that the radioactive properties of a low-quality ceramic can induce cancer? Sounds alarming? ”

Know your materials for dental restoration

Materials for dental restoration swings around many options based on which your dentist takes a decision. The first option is the popular 'Metal Restorations' evidently made of metals. The very use of metals in its manufacturing gives away the aesthetics and physical properties and 'metal' by its nature is bound to get perforation because of metal erosion or aggravates allergy.

The second option available is called PFM Porcelain Fused on Metal using ceramic and metals otherwise known as partial ceramic replacements. Porcelain Fused on Metal are made of metal from inside and given a ceramic-like finish on its outer surface. Over a period of time when the ceramic coating outside the metal tends to give way or chip off the worries begin and gets worse with time.

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► NEWSWORTHY

Of bees, and beings

If bees do it, why can't we? That appears to be the refrain of Norwegian researcher Gro Amdam, who has succeeded in **reversing the ageing process in the bee brain**, which works surprisingly similarly to the human brain. As *The New York Times* reports, Amdam and a team at Arizona State University in the US first studied the performance of older bees on learning and memory tests and discovered that older bees suffered the same problems as older humans in terms of decline in memory. But when the older bees were given the tasks usually performed by younger bees (who tend to the larvae while their seniors collect food outside the hive), half of them improved in their learning and memory abilities,

showing that social stimulation and learning new skills can have positive effects on health and brain functioning. Further, the bees who improved their skills were found to have higher protein levels of the eight proteins involved in the growth, repair and maintenance of brain cells, several of which are also found in humans. "This is evidence of flexibility in the bee brain and it is conceivable that the brains of other animals and humans could have a similar potential," says Amdam. "If so, the question is whether we can figure out how to tap into this flexibility. Another approach would be to try to learn how the relevant bee proteins work, and then create substances that trigger similar effects."



The path of DISEASE

An old fashioned device has proved to be the catalyst for a brand new discovery. Using a simple test tube to simulate the living body, chemists from The Australian National University (ANU) have discovered a **new way that ageing-related diseases can progress**. It has traditionally been assumed that poor lifestyle choices increase exposure to free radicals that can damage and disease proteins in the body. However, the researchers at ANU were able to observe proteins being made with their building blocks already damaged, thus indicating that a healthy lifestyle alone may not be enough to prevent early onset of age-related disease.

“In our ‘test tube of life,’ we added all the necessary machinery to make proteins, including both damaged and healthy protein building blocks, and a type of biological proof-reader that ensures proteins are made with only

the healthy building blocks,” explains study author Chris Easton, professor at the ARC Centre of Excellence for Free Radical Chemistry and Biotechnology at ANU, in journal *Chemistry Communications*. “We were surprised to find that the damaged building blocks were also able to effectively compete for incorporation into the final protein even when our proof-reader was present. It may seem subtle but from a treatment perspective the difference between preventing a protein from being damaged and dealing with one that is made from damaged goods is vast. This is a significant breakthrough and one we hope will prove revolutionary in terms of tackling age-related diseases.” To this, his co-author and fellow professor Dannon Stigers adds, “Remarkably the good old test tube has given us a fantastic window from which to look into the basic processes necessary for life and it has changed the way we think about how ageing-related diseases develop.



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65 not enough

While it is currently being touted as the ideal age for retirement, **65 will eventually be too young to retire.** That's the conclusion of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an international economic organisation that covers 34 high-income countries, in its report *Pensions at a Glance 2011*. According to the report, by 2050 the average pensionable age in OECD countries will reach 65 for both sexes. This represents an increase of about one-and-a-half years for men and two-and-a-half years for women. But life expectancy is outstripping the increase in pension ages by about two years for men and one-and-a-half years for women. This means the time spent in retirement will continue to grow. Consider this against the fact that pension reforms in OECD countries since the early 1990s have reduced future benefits on average by 20 per cent. "Further reforms are needed that are both fiscally and socially responsible," Angel Gurría, secretary-general of OECD, tells media. "We cannot risk a resurgence of old-age poverty in the future. This risk is heightened by growing earnings inequality in many countries, which will feed through into greater inequality in retirement. Higher pension ages are only part of the answer. Countries need to do more to fight discrimination, provide training opportunities for older workers and improve their working conditions. This would help employers adapt to a greyer workforce."



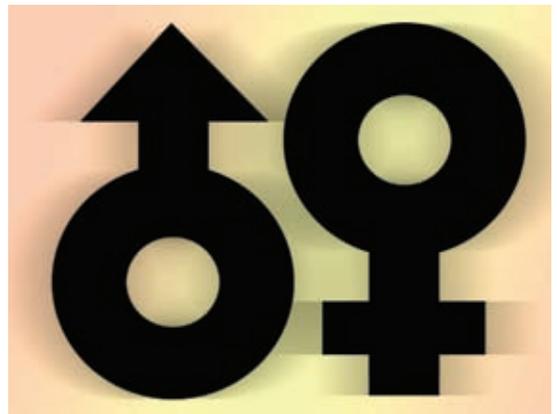
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He says, she says

Women see things differently from men—and that's putting it mildly. According to a new study of over 2,000 men and women conducted at Britain's Lancaster University, **women's perceptions of age vary starkly from those of men.**

Here are some interesting findings:

- Women consider themselves old at 29; men feel the same only when they turn 58.
- About 25 per cent of women first felt 'old' when they spotted their first few grey hairs and 10 per cent when they noticed their skin was sagging—less than 1 per cent of the men polled cite these as signs of ageing.
- About 50 per cent of women say they felt old when their breasts started drooping owing to childbirth or breast feeding.
- About 22 per cent of men admit to having felt old when they realised the music in bars is too loud; while about 75 per cent assert that inability to perform in the bedroom was the first definitive sign of ageing.



"This difference of thinking between the sexes could be because of our social set-up," study leader Cary Cooper tells London newspaper *The Guardian*. "Generally, by the age of 30, women are expected to get married and begin a family while at the same age the majority of men are career-oriented and do not feel old until they reach their retirement age. Nevertheless, it is surprising that in today's day and age, this traditional mindset continues to prevail despite the strides women have made in the workplace and society."

Web watch

What are some of the coolest gizmos for silvers available today? US consumer website www.behindthebuck.com did a market surf; here are some standouts:

● **Presto printing mailbox:** Connected to a regular phone line, this device allows silvers who don't have computers or go online to receive email and digital photos in full



colour. An additional newsstand service enables you to receive articles from newspapers and magazines of your choice. Price: \$ 100 (about ₹ 4,500); the Presto Mail service is either \$ 14.99 (about ₹ 650) per month, or \$ 149.99 (about ₹ 6,500) per year; cancellable at any time. Most newsstand content is \$ 9.99 (about ₹ 450) for a year of deliveries. Go to www.presto.com

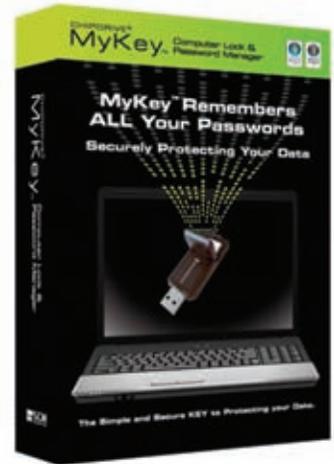
● **Totes whistle key ring:** If you have trouble finding your keys, just whistle and listen for the beep. Further, an LED light blinks to help you see your keys. (It also acts like a mini flashlight.) The large size makes it easy to spot—and accommodates plenty of keys. Price: \$ 10 (about ₹ 450). Go to www.amazon.com



● **MedCenter monthly medication system with reminder alarm:** This e-pill reminder and organiser system has 31 pill boxes; each holds up to four doses per day so you can organise all your medications in one shot, once a month. Indicators and periodic alarms help you stay on track with your meds. Price: \$ 58 (about ₹ 2,600). Go to www.amazon.com



● **Audiovox ECCO keychain GPS location finder:** A handy little keychain GPS that easily helps you find your way back to your car or other spots. The user-friendly device lets you store up to three locked locations. Price: \$ 56 (about ₹ 2,500). Go to www.audiovox.com



● **MyKey Mobile Password Key by TX Systems:** This one's for you if you struggle to remember a long list of passwords. Sensitive information is stored on a smart card in a plug-in format. Plug into a USB port, enter a PIN and read your data; pull it out and your data is locked and secure again. Price: \$ 25 (about ₹ 1,100). Go to www.chipdrive.net



● **Pandigital photo mail digital photo frame:** Again, a device that is capable of wirelessly receiving photos from anywhere in the world without a computer. The frame also acts as a traditional digital photo frame and accepts photos from media cards, digital cameras or PCs—it can store 6,400 photos. Price: \$ 130 (about ₹ 5,790). Go to www.pandigital.net

● **Deluxe plastic swivel cushion:** This orthopaedic support cushion, which lets you turn your body 360° with little effort, supports the hips, protects your back and hips, and makes it a whole lot easier to get in and out of any seat (including the car) without arms. Price: \$ 25 (about ₹ 1,100). Go to www.amazon.com



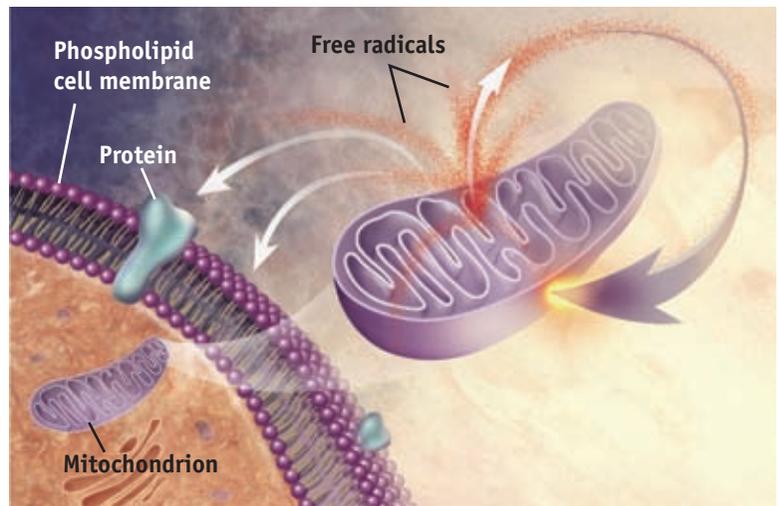
● **Plantronics Clarity D613 loud answering machine/big button cordless phone:** Here's a device that improves the quality of your phone conversations by making words louder, and clearer. Plus, the big buttons aid those with low vision. Price: \$ 61 (about ₹ 2,700). Go to www.officedepot.com or www.plantronics.com



● **DC EZSee large print computer keyboard:** Designed for people with visual impairment or low vision, the keyboard features a bigger and bolder black typeface on yellow keys. Additional 'hot' keys allow access to common commands, such as going online and accessing email. Price: \$ 30 (about ₹ 1,350). Go to www.amazon.com



● **RCA Symphonix Personal Sound Amplifier:** If you don't need a hearing aid but could do with a little help in places like crowded restaurants and movie theatres, this may just do the trick. Convenient to use, the device provides smooth amplification and background noise reduction. Price: \$ 300 (about ₹ 13,500). Go to www.RCASymphonix.com



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To learn more, go to www.more-efficient.co.uk/radical or email info@sciogen.co.uk

Track your face

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Want to learn more? Go to everyday-app.com



RETAIL THERAPY: Go shopping! Really. According to a recent US study, regular shopping trips can actually extend the lives of silvers. Researchers at Stanford University discovered that people over 65 who shopped every day were 27 per cent less likely to die within 10 years compared to people who shopped only once a week.

Then:
Light Bulb
Now:
Flower Vase

Take a fused light bulb and clean it with a soft cloth. Hollow out the bulb and remove the black glass inside carefully with a small screwdriver. Clean the bulb again with a cloth. Get a wooden ring or an old curtain ring and place the bulb on it. Spray-paint the cap of the bulb in black for a cleaner look. Make an outline of a simple design on the outer part of the bulb and paint it with colours of your choice. You can even use sparklers and small sequins to add personality to it. Place some small flowers inside and your nifty flower vase is ready.



FACTS

- » Every year an estimated 600 million fluorescent light bulbs are disposed of in the US landfills amounting to 30,000 pounds of mercury waste.
- » One teaspoon of mercury found in bulbs can contaminate a 20-acre lake forever.
- » It is unlawful to dispose light bulbs as universal waste in Ohio, California, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin in the US.

MORE IDEAS... 1. Convert your bulb into a plant holder. 2. Hollow out the bottom, spray paint the cap, fill the inside of the bulb with some ferns and dried leaves. 3. Take a strong thread or ribbon to tie around the cap—you can now hang your plant holder anywhere.

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Ageing across borders

There is an old Vietnamese saying, ‘The young rely on their father, the elderly on their children’—testament to the fact that the cultural ethos in India and Vietnam has much in common. The recent **visit of an eight-member delegation from the Vietnam National Commission on Ageing (VNCA)** to India, though, brought to light more than the cultural values shared by the two countries. The delegation led by Nguyen Thi Lan, head of VNCA, and comprising members from both the government as well as NGOs working for the elderly, had arrived on the invitation of Sailesh Mishra, founder president of Silver Innings Foundation, for a special forum ‘Transnational Networking: Beyond Boundaries, for Age Care.’



The delegation from Vietnam at the Harmony Interactive Centre

The forum, which was primarily conducted to facilitate an exchange of knowledge between various NGOs working with the elderly in both countries, also showcased the status of the elderly in the social and economic fabric of Vietnam. According to a 2009 estimate, in Vietnam 9 per cent of the country’s population is above the age of 60; about 7.5 million. And going by the forecast presented by the UN Population Programme, owing to a decrease in the birth rate and an increase in lifespan, by 2025 the elder population in Vietnam will be about 17 per cent of the total population and 25 per cent by 2050.

As stated by Thi Lan, “The elderly in Vietnam play a key role in developing cultural values, preventing social vices such as drug addiction, and social welfare programmes such as eradication of prostitution in residential areas. Policymakers need good outlines to make decisions, based on research and good practice. This in turn requires that the ‘bridge’ between research and public policy is

open and constructive. NGOs and senior citizens play a major role in helping policymakers make an elder-friendly policy.”

Most of the elderly in Vietnam rely on farming for their income, and don’t receive pension. Just like in India, while some are financially prepared for later years, a majority still depend on their children for emotional and financial security. The talks also revealed that there is an increasing trend of nuclear families. As the youth migrate to urban areas in search of lucrative employment opportunities, many silvers in Vietnam are left adrift. Social organisations like Women’s Union, Vietnam Red Cross and international NGOs in Vietnam are attempting to develop care services for the elderly, of which there are very few. The country’s government is also in the process of formulating more elder-friendly policies and programmes.

During their stay in India between 4 and 8 April, the delegation visited HelpAge India in New Delhi and

Athashri Retirement Township in Pune. At their meeting with HelpAge, CEO Mathew Cherian and his team shared information about their activities and their new vision for age care. Members from both countries felt that there has been an increase in neglect and abuse of the elderly. In Mumbai, the delegation met with members of the geriatric psychiatry department at BYL Nair Charitable Municipal Hospital, and participated in networking meetings with NGOs and organisations at Centre for Life Long Learning, Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) Mumbai. In a meeting attended by gerontologists and key members of AISCCON, FESCOM, GIC Pensioners Association, All India Bank Retirees Federation, YWCA, and HelpAge India, Sailesh Mishra presented an overview of ageing in India, and Professor Siva Raju of TISS shared a ‘situation analysis of Indian ageing’. The team concluded their stay in India with a visit to the Harmony Interactive Centre managed by Harmony for Silvers Foundation in Girgaum, Mumbai.

***ENERGIZE YOURSELF
WITH THE SENSATIONAL
MUSK FRAGRANCE.***

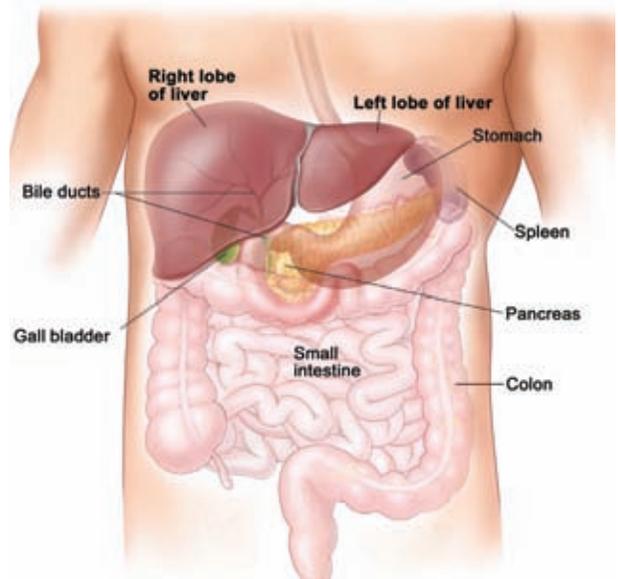


***NEW CINTHOL
DEO MUSK.***

Liver care

A fatty liver can be bad news for both drinkers and non-drinkers. According to a new UK study conducted at the London Science Centre, **those suffering from a fatty liver are more prone to potential stroke and cardiovascular disease** than those free from liver issues. "Fatty liver disease is characterised by accumulation of fat in the liver," Dr K Dilip, senior consultant hepatologist, Columbia Asia and M S Ramaiah Hospital in Bengaluru, explains to *Harmony*. "People who have fatty liver condition have a high amount of lipids and triglycerides. Such people are at greater risk of developing conditions like hypertension, cardiac diseases and stroke. Those who are diagnosed should take immediate steps."

Drinkers and non-drinkers are both at risk of developing this condition. It has no symptoms or complications, though risk factors include diabetes, high cholesterol and insulin resistance. Experts also say high levels of enzymes, which can be easily found on conducting an MRI, are a



great marker of fatty liver condition. "People over 40 years of age should take good care of their food and drinking habits," Dr Dilip concludes.

SAD FOOD

A ccording to a study conducted at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in Spain, **adults who eat food high in trans-fat and**

saturated fat are at an increased risk of developing depression as they grow older. "Trans-fat and saturated fat increase the circulation of

fatty acids in the body and cause arteriosclerosis or thickening of the arteries," Dr Smita Joshi, senior dietician at Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital in Pune, tells *Harmony*. "This leads to less blood supply to the brain and therefore dementia, delirium and depression in ageing people. It also reduces certain chemicals in the body responsible for general well-being. In older people, arteries are already thick, so a diet rich in trans-fat makes them more vulnerable to depression."

For this specific study, researchers checked the diet, lifestyle and medical factors of 12,059 people for six years. None of the participants were diagnosed with symptoms of depression at the start but by the end there were 657 new cases. Those who ate the most amount of trans-fat or saturated fat had a 48 per cent increased chance of depression than those who stayed clear. Meanwhile, it was found that polysaturated fats found in fish, olive oil and nuts reduced this risk.





THE UNION HEALTH MINISTRY HAS ISSUED A BAN ON THE MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF TWO WELL-KNOWN DRUGS: GATIFLOXACIN, AN ANTIBIOTIC; AND TEGASEROD, A MEDICINE USED TO TREAT IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS) AND CONSTIPATION. GATIFLOXACIN IS FOUND TO CAUSE A SURGE IN BLOOD SUGAR AMONG ELDERLY PATIENTS, WHILE THE USE OF TEGASEROD HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH AN INCREASED RISK OF HEART ATTACK AND STROKE.

On the occasion of World Health Day, the World Health Organisation has warned that drug resistance, partly caused by misuse of antibiotics, is killing hundreds of thousands of people every year. What's worse, the use of antibiotics in livestock production—to promote growth and prevent diseases as well as to treat sick animals—also contributes to increased drug resistance as any drug-resistant microbes developed in livestock can be transferred to humans through the food chain.

Cool flash

They are regarded as the biggest nuisance associated with menopause. But a new US study suggests that **women who experience hot flashes are at a lower risk of cardiovascular diseases, stroke and eventual death.** Endocrinology researchers at Pittsburg University reviewed medical information from 60,000 women and followed them for 10 years to analyse the relationship between menopausal symptoms and cardiovascular events. “Cardiac conditions and strokes happen when there is an increase in high frequency-heart rate variability (HF-HRV),” Dr Gandhali Deorukhar, consultant OBGYN at Gynaecworld in Mumbai, tells *Harmony*. “According to newer studies, peri-menopausal, menopausal and post menopausal women who experience frequent episodes of hot flashes have a decreased HF-HRV, which reduces the risk of cardiac arrests; those who have four or more flashes a day are therefore at a lower risk.” Participants for the American study were grouped into four categories: women who experienced hot flashes at the onset of menopause, later in menopause, during both time periods, and those who never experienced anything. The results are significant, as there are several misconceptions regarding menopausal symptoms and their effect on cardiovascular health. However, as this study is still in a nascent stage, the subject needs to be explored further for any substantial conclusion.



GRITTY GEISHA

On 11 March, when the tsunami struck Kamaishi in Japan, 84 year-old **Tsuyako Ito** was at home, getting ready to sing a song about a young samurai on his way to fight his first battle. Kamaishi's oldest geisha, Ito has been singing for seven decades at the 117 year-old Saiwairo, an exclusive restaurant known for its fine food and entertainment. Once a famous beauty, the octogenarian has already endured three earlier tsunamis and is confident she will sing at Saiwairo again, after the city reclaims its spirit and strength. Though the raging waters took away her shamisen, a three-stringed musical instrument, and kimono, and knocked down a wall of her house, her only regret, as she told media, was that she couldn't sing the song she had practised the previous night.



TEACHING GENEROSITY

Kolhapur-based **Namdeo Dattatrey Kadam** redefines philanthropy. The 88 year-old retired school teacher donated ₹ 500,000 to Shivaji University. Kadam, whose father and grandfather were also teachers, comes from a family that belonged to the underprivileged community of cobblers. His donation also has a sentimental thought behind it—Kadam gave the money in memory of his late wife Shrimanti, who passed away on 15 February. The doughty lady had always been very uncompromising about their six

children's education even though she had only studied till grade IV. And though her loving husband was earning just ₹ 300 when he retired in 1971, today he gets a pension of ₹ 7,000. "I wonder how she managed to run the household with the money I had earned then," says an emotional Kadam, who had decided early on that instead of making any donations to a charitable institute or temple, he would spend a part of his savings for the greater good of education. The money will be used by Shivaji University as a corpus to give prizes to meritorious students.



HT

PARTY QUEEN

It's never too late to work for a better world. **K R Gouri Amma** from Cherthala in Kerala has made history in Kerala's electoral politics, by becoming the only candidate to contest in all assembly elections since the state first announced polls in 1957. A minister in the first Communist government in Kerala, Gouri Amma has lost elections only twice—in 1997 and 2006. Leader of the Janathipathiya Samrakshana Samiti (JSS), she will contest against CPI legislator P Thilothiman.

TIRELESS VOICE

Nonagenarian Malayali actor and singer **Pappukutty Bhagavathar** is nowhere near ready to call it a day. The Kochi-based 97 year-old still walks long distances every day to tutor his disciples in classical music, and in February performed to loud applause at a Carnatic music concert in Trichur. Bhagavathar also teamed up with two young playback singers to lend his voice for a peppy number in recently released Malayalam movie *Marykundoru Kunyaaadu*.



HT

MILESTONES



- Patna-born computer scientist **Satish Tripathy**, 60, has been chosen to head University of Buffalo, the largest public educational institute in the US. Tripathy was earlier dean of Bourns College of Engineering, after which he joined the University of Buffalo as chief academic officer.

BIRTHDAYS



● Former prime minister of the UK **Tony Blair** turns 58 on 6 May.

● British filmmaker and naturalist **David Attenborough** turns 85 on 8 May.

● Indian actor **Waheeda Rehman** turns 75 on 14 May.



● Irish actor **Pierce Brosnan** turns 58 on 16 May.



● Indian playwright-director-actor **Girish Karnad** turns 73 on 19 May.

● American singer and songwriter **Bob Dylan** turns 70 on 24 May.

OVERHEARD

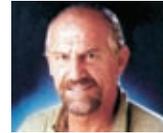
"I used to feel shy. But then I thought if I don't change, I will be left behind."

—*Babu Ram, 82, one of the 45 farmers—all above the age of 60—from Jhinder Mallu village in Jammu who have enrolled themselves in school last year. The oldest in the class is a 90 year-old*

IN PASSING

● **Ramesh Grover**, founder of CMS Group, and one of the first to establish India as an IT hub, passed away on 5 March. He was 66.

● Yesteryear Hindi filmstar **Navin Nischol** died of a heart attack on 19 March. He was 65.



● Australia-born **Bob Christo**, who played villain in many Hindi films, died of cardiac rupture on 20 March. He was 70.

● American actor **Elizabeth Taylor** died of heart failure on 23 March. She was 79.

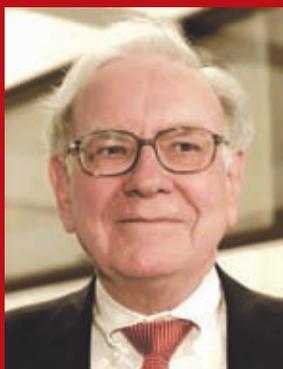


● American director **Sidney Lumet** died of lymphoma on 9 April. He was 86.

● Retail industry stalwart **Raghu Pillai** died of a cardiac arrest on 10 April. He was 53.

● Noted mathematician and winner of 2010 Harmony Silver Award, **Prof. Annaswamy Ranganatha Rao** died on 12 April. He was 103.

VISITORS



WHO: American billionaire investor **Warren Buffett** and Chairman of Microsoft **Bill Gates**

WHEN: 23-30 March

WHERE: Bengaluru, Delhi

WHY: Though Buffett was in India to launch his insurance selling portal, both he and Gates teamed up to push the wealthy set in India to participate in the global philanthropic drive, The Giving Pledge



WHO: Western classical music conductor **Zubin Mehta**

WHEN: 30 March

WHERE: Mumbai

WHY: To perform with the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino at Jamshed Bhabha Theatre, National Centre of the Performing Arts

SHALAN DERE, 64

*"Clay made my life good.
I want others to recognise
the artist in them"*

Photographs by **Utkarsh Sanjanwala**

TAP INTO YOUR ASSETS

Experts answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement

I have been an avid yoga practitioner most of my adult life. Now, I'd like to become a yoga teacher. How can I go about it?

Start with a year's training in a yoga school like Sivananda or Bikram Yoga. Then enrol for a teachers' training course (TTC), which usually involves one month rigorous training. It's best to assist a senior teacher for two years. Then, target cultural hubs or start a class in your own home, if you have enough space. You could also rent a place or make personal visits. Having your own website or blog will help, though word-of-mouth publicity will get you more students. It could take you a year to establish yourself. Be forewarned, even the best teachers don't earn a fat pay check.

—C K Joshy runs *Ayuryoga*, a yoga centre in Bengaluru

I am a retired bank manager and would like a job where I can put my skills into use. But I don't want to spend all my days working. What are the available options?

If you have experience with auditing, you could work as a part-time auditor in a non-banking finance company. Your job would be to verify various assets of the company. Most non-finance companies have assets like cash, gold and bank accounts. Your job would be to visit their branches, inspect and audit the various assets. You will get a target for each month, and you will need to spend a minimum 18 days at work. Your remuneration would range from ₹ 20,000 to ₹ 25, 000.

—Ramkumar Meempat is a part-time auditor at Manapurram Finance in Malappuram, Kerala



Shaping an idea

After completing my MBA from Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management in 1968, I joined a marketing and research company as a research executive in Mumbai. For a year I learnt the nitty-gritty of running a business; the job helped me hone my business skills. After that I joined my family's business. We have a textile manufacturing business in Mumbai. I worked here for almost three decades and realised I have the natural acumen of running a business. In 2000, at 54, I retired from the company as director.

I have never believed in retirement. I think as long as your faculties are sound, you should be working for your own satisfaction and independence. I was learning the art of pottery while I was working. Right from the start I was mesmerised by the tenacity of clay; it responds beautifully to the subtlest touch and the final product has been known to be proof of an entire civilisation. After retirement, I took up the challenge of setting up my own studio. I started Potter's Place in 2001. It has been a journey filled with experimentation, trials and errors. I started by learning how to use

the wheel. Though I had very little formal training, it allowed me free rein on my creativity. I soon dabbled in hand-building techniques and trained myself to use my hands to give a new meaning to clay. I began to draw inspiration from contemporary artists. It was also a pleasure to meet other pottery enthusiasts during exhibitions. I now work mostly in stoneware, with temperatures ranging from 1170° C to 1260° C. I like working with terracotta as well and love to create abstract art, vases and small figurines. I find hand-building more creative than working on the wheel, but there is an old-world charm in wheel throwing.

I also conduct weekly pottery classes. Pottery can be a very lonely art; you tend to engage only with your art. As I love meeting people and exchanging ideas, I thought of starting classes in my studio. Being a teacher has definitely made me a better craftsman as there is a healthy exchange of ideas with students. Also, for any art form to develop and survive, it needs new talent. Obviously, the thrill of doing so is very gratifying.

As told to Dhanya Nair Sankar

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.

SON OF THE SOIL

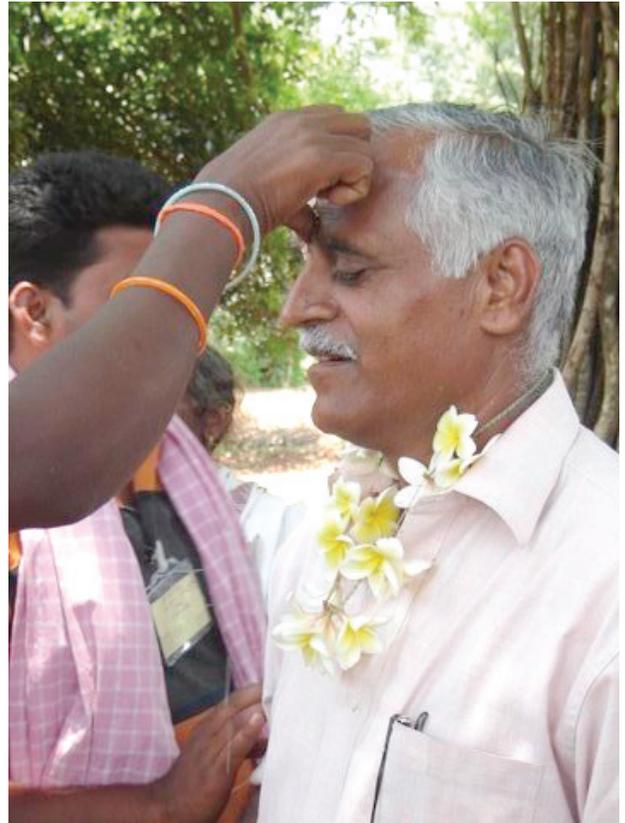
For 35 years, I had been travelling the length and breadth of the country while working on weapons and armaments for the Indian Army. A few years ago, just before I hung up my uniform I came across Padmashri Prof. Anil Gupta's Honeybee Network, which lifts the veil of obscurity from rural innovations and introduces them to the rest of the country. Surprisingly, making missiles and torpedoes for the Indian Army is not very different from ferreting out innovations in the rural hinterland. Both involve some creativity and some out-of-the-box thinking—the first is planned and organised, while the second stems out of necessity.

After retirement when I came back to my home in Hyderabad, I was all set to carry forward the Honeybee Network in Andhra Pradesh as I noticed that though there were many innovations brewing in different states, my state had nothing much to show. Within six months of my retirement, I set up the Honeybee Network in the state. The initiative helped me shed a lot of baggage besides my uniform; I learnt to do away with the trappings of rank and hierarchy (and pomposity), which I was used to while in the defence.

I walked for miles on village roads. I spoke to the old and the young and discovered many innovations, which have made people sit up and take notice. When I spoke to kids, I told them to treat their grandparents with a lot more reverence than they were doing—a rude dismissal of the elderly was a dismissal of all their experience and cumulative wisdom gathered over so many years. When I asked girls at a rural college to give me all they could gather on healthcare from their grandparents and other elders in their village, I received an amazing response. Within 30 days, I got nearly 300 handwritten papers on healthcare tips and ideas—right from how they treated skin lesions to pain in the ears or knees and stomach ailments. It was an amazing collection; after some research and validation, we documented everything.

Honeybee works as a catalyst, multiplying and disseminating rural knowledge and traditional wisdom after validating and protecting the ownership rights of the knowledge.

All rewards and benefits earned go back to the owners. I have seen and known the arrogance of the educated class towards the illiterate and humble farmer. We forget easily



that the farmer has eons of traditional knowledge behind him, which, given his milieu, weather conditions and traditional upbringing, will support him and provide help when he needs it. He is a weatherman; a soil specialist; a manager of water resources; and he knows all that he needs to know about animal husbandry. And he also knows how to use local resources in the best possible way. I have listened in rapt attention while a farmer told me that he asks the plant what is wrong with it if it was not growing or bearing fruit. He and others of his ilk seek answers from nowhere but nature. Honeybee seeks this knowledge so that it can be disseminated to other rural societies.

It's a virtual organisation of volunteers with no registration. No money exchanges hands, and anyone can be a volunteer. After five years of the formation of this network, the number of volunteers has grown to nearly a hundred with ages ranging between 16 and 80. I have been fortunate enough to have been trusted and accepted as a part of



(Opposite page) Being honoured by villagers after he conducted a biodiversity programme awareness programme; (above) with innovator Narasimhan who created the labour-saving hyacinth cutter; (left) explaining an innovation to the regional head of Food and Agriculture Organisation, an arm of the UN

nearly a hundred families in rural Andhra. As a result, we have been able to bring out many interesting and unique labour-saving devices such as the *iyothi chulha* (which uses waste gas to preserve seeds and meats, and separate chaff from grain) and the *asu* machine (a labour-saving device for weavers). These two unique concepts have been patented and their owners recognised and felicitated. In fact, in the last two consecutive years, President Pratibha Patil held a special forum to facilitate grassroots innovators. Lakshman, the young man who made the *asu* machine, was given due recognition at one such event. When he spoke at the gathering, people were seen wiping their moist eyes.

My 100 families bring me hope and joy and I have learnt to spend my money, time and effort for them. This, in turn, gives me unparalleled happiness. Every day I learn and grow, as I think up ways and means of promoting traditional knowledge and grassroots creativity. This then is my life and like the McDonald's ad goes, "I'm lovin' it!"

—Brig (retd) P Ganesham, Hyderabad



An even keel: Cultivate stability with yoga

Stability of the mind and emotions is one of the biggest gifts yoga gives us. A stable mind is able to view life's inevitable problems objectively, and is able to bounce back from adversities without too much damage, and faster.

Emotional stability also helps control and prevent the onset of many physical ailments such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), migraines, asthma (and other respiratory problems), hypertension, clinical depression and osteoarthritis, which are today seen as having psychosomatic triggers. When the mind overreacts to problems or is unable to bounce back to a state of inner balance, disease can target us. Of all qualities, inner stability and balance are the most difficult to cultivate and nurture. As controlling the mind is difficult, it is best to tackle the problem at the more palpable part of ourselves: our body.

Specific yoga *asana* can help us achieve inner balance and harmony. These include balancing poses, both seated and standing; all forward bends in their seated and standing variations; twists; poses that work the pelvic region (where the lowest *chakra* called *mooladhara*, dealing with animal instincts and reactivity, is based); and last, though not the least, leg raises in all their variations. Equally important

are inversions like the headstand (*sirsasana*) and shoulder stand (*sarvangasana*).

An example of the seated balancing pose is the boat pose (*naukasana*), while a standing balance could be the warrior pose (*virabhadrasana*). Twists could be supine like the abdominal twist (*udarakarshanasana*) and standing ones like the triangle pose (*trikonasana*); poses that work the pelvic region could include the butterfly (*titali*); and a good example of a leg raise is the infinity pose (*anantasana*).

There are several reasons why these poses work. The inversions gush blood to the brain, immediately cooling it down. Under stress, blood flow to the brain is known to be reduced as it gets redirected to the limbs (in the fight-or-flight adrenaline mode). This reverses the message inside the body, creating a ripple effect that passes along the body, restoring homeostasis. The pelvic poses work on the uro-genital system where major hormones that deal with our sense of well-being are produced: these include dopamine, serotonin (which are also relaxing), and others like oxytocin (also called the 'hug' hormone). These restore the sense of self-control. When the uro-genital system is not disturbed, the erratic flow of aggressive or self-destructive hormonal flows is controlled.

YOGIC MOVES

Infinity pose (*anantasana*)

Lie on your right side. Place your right hand under your head. You may also place your head on the ground; that is less demanding. Place your left hand in front of the body, palm down, to support your body, as lying on your side can challenge your balance. Inhale and raise the left leg up, as high as you can. Keep the knee straight. Hold for a few seconds, breathing normally. Inhale. Exhaling, drop leg back to starting position. Repeat thrice. Now, shift to the left side and repeat the pose for the opposite side. **Benefits:** This is a restful pose, both simple and difficult, thus converging different strengths to stabilise mind and body. Balance is challenged and improved. The pelvic region is worked, boosting the flow of hormones that promote self-esteem and well-being.



This pose boosts mood and tones the load-bearers of the body like the legs, knees and hips, creating physical stability.

Model: Anita Namole, Harmony Interactive Centre
Photographer: Haresh Patel

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



WEIGHT WATCH BY MADHUKAR TALWALKAR

Easy go, easy win: Walking can help you regain strength

I am a 60 year-old woman and have always led an active life. I used to run regularly, but stopped at the age of 55 because I started suffering from pain in my knees. I want to go back to running but I am a borderline diabetic and have been advised against it. Can you suggest an exercise plan that will be easy on my knees and make me active?

Running is generally too taxing for the body. Instead, start with exercises you are already comfortable with. Don't rush into it; if you start slowly, you are less likely to injure yourself. Starting slowly also helps prevent soreness. High-intensity exercise is not proportional to health benefits. For example, walking—a seemingly simple and boring activity—is excellent for good health and can be gradually intensified for consistent benefits. It doesn't tax the body, increases overall blood circulation, and is fantastic for overall health.

If at all you intend to run, consult a physician or a personal trainer to make sure it is suitable for your age and level of fitness.

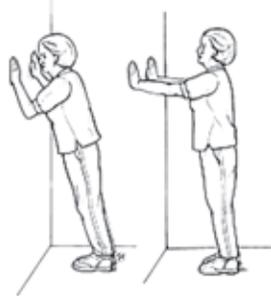
Tips to keep you going

- Choose activities you enjoy.
- Make exercise part of your daily routine.
- Exercise with a group for social interaction as well as physical fitness.
- Keep a written record of progress.
- Exercise to music.
- Set realistic goals for what you want to accomplish.
- Select loose, comfortable clothes. Dress for warmth in the winter and coolness in the summer.
- Wear shoes with firm soles and good arch support.
- Pay attention to your body. Forget the saying: No pain no gain.

Simple strength exercises

Each exercise should be done eight to 10 times for two sets. Remember:

- Complete all movements in a slow, controlled fashion.
- Don't hold your breath.
- Stop if you feel pain.
- Stretch each muscle after your workout.

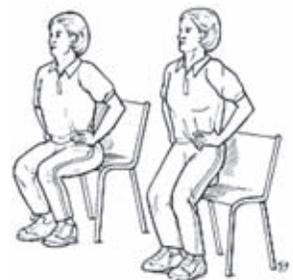


Wall push-ups

Place both hands flat against the wall; slowly, lower the body and push away from the wall to return to starting position.

Chair squats

Begin by sitting on the chair. Lean slightly forward and stand up from the chair. Try not to favour one side or use your hands to help you.

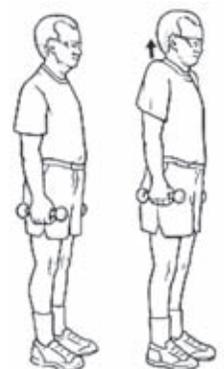


Bicep curls

Hold a weight in each hand with your arms at your sides. Bending your arms at the elbows, lift the weights to your shoulders and then lower them to your sides.

Shoulder shrugs

Hold a weight in each hand with your arms at your side. Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears and then lower them back down.



Next week, I will illustrate some knee exercises.

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



Raw advantage:

Eat naturally to feel better, but with caution

I am a 55 year-old woman on the heavier side. Two months ago I read about the raw food diet and started following it regularly. However, I am acutely constipated now and suffer from mood swings and sluggishness. The weighing scale hasn't shown any improvement either. I don't lead a sedentary life, but there isn't enough time for exercise as well. What changes should I make in my present diet to feel better and lighter?

The raw food diet promotes consumption of raw fruits and vegetables; whole grain in sprouted form; whole food instead of processed food; raisins, dates, raw nuts; seeds like pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds; and lean protein. In raw form, these contain a whole lot of biologically active components called enzymes, which play a more active metabolic role: digestion, releasing energy from the food we eat, stimulating brain function and repairing tissues, cells and organs. Even if we consume sufficient vitamins and minerals, we won't be able to experience optimum health if our body does not have a good supply of enzymes. Enzymes help erase scars, dissolve clots, cleanse the adverse effects of drugs, promote oxygenation of blood and affect all bodily processes. They are extremely sensitive to heat and destroyed during cooking. In order to obtain enzymes—which help us look and feel better—from our diet, it is essential to eat some food in raw form.

The best plant enzyme with proven beneficial effects is bromelain, found in pineapple. Known to have a variety of health benefits, bromelain helps digest food better, and



Though a raw food diet can make you look and feel better, those who are not used to eating food in this form may initially experience some digestive problems such as gas and bloating

therefore prevents gas and bloating. It improves wound healing, reduces inflammation in the case of arthritis, relieves sinusitis and normalises appetite. Unripe papaya contains an enzyme known as papain, which aids digestion as well. Sprouts are known to be a rich source of enzymes. You can sprout most whole grains such as green *moong*, *moth*, whole wheat, black *channa*, green *channa*, etc. Bananas, mangoes and most fruits, berries, vegetables, nuts and seeds are rich in enzymes.

In the raw food diet, you can eat one cooked meal in the day (preferably dinner). The reason you experienced acute constipation, mood swings and sluggishness could be because you suddenly switched from a normal diet to a raw food diet. A sudden transition initiates intense detoxification, which will make you experience uncomfortable symptoms. If you do wish to follow the raw food lifestyle, as a first step, you can eat 50 per cent raw and 50 per cent cooked food. Do this for six months before switching to 60 per cent raw and 40 per cent cooked food for another six months. Later you could further increase the intake of raw food till you are comfortable eating about 80 to 90 per cent raw food. If followed the right way, it could help with your weight issues as well.

CAUTION

It's important to know that a raw food diet can cause digestive problems in those who are not used to eating food in this form. Eating lots of fibre-filled fruits and vegetables can cause gas and bloating. Also, this kind of diet tends to be restrictive in nature—mainly fruits, vegetables and sprouted grains—as most of us like variety.

It takes some discipline to keep your home stocked with raw produce and condition your mind for a new lifestyle. But after you have done it for at least a month (**of course, in consultation with your doctor**) you will feel better, look better and your mirror will appreciate the effort.

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

promotion

The implant route



Dr. Yazad Gandhi,
MDS, FICOI (USA)

What are the consequences of tooth loss?

Tooth loss results in loss of bone and the covering gum tissue over a period of time. This is a universally prevalent phenomenon and would occur even if the lost tooth is replaced by a bridge fixed onto the neighbouring teeth. Implants are the only solution to prevent hard and soft tissue from shrinking.

What is the protocol for getting all the teeth replaced on implants?

This involves diagnostic radiographs (x-rays) and models on which the dentist plans the type of prosthesis (artificial teeth) followed by the number, position and type of implants.

There are two ways the implants could be placed:

- Through a CAD-CAM (CT-guided) stent with no stitches at all
- The conventional way with stitches.

The teeth are inserted either the same day (temporarily) or after a wait of a week (again temporarily).

When do the permanent teeth come in?

These are prepared after the implants integrate with the bone, that is two to three months or longer if there are any additional tissue augmentation procedures required.

What happens if the dentist tells you there isn't sufficient bone to put in the implants?

Usually, in cases of insufficient bone, grafting is suggested, which is mainly increasing or building up additional bone to facilitate implant placement. However, today there are different types of implants available, namely Zygoma implants, which give patients a good option in such scenarios. These bypass the long waiting period for implant integration into built-up bone.

How long would implants last?

There is no such benchmark. But once integrated, every implant loses vertical bone at the rate of 0.2 mm per year, which means an average 12-mm-long implant would last 60 years. Clinically integrated implants hardly ever fail if hygiene standards are adhered to.



DEFEAT DECEIT: We must combat financial exploitation of silvers

Savitatai (*name changed*) is an 85 year-old woman and mother of six children. I want to begin with her story. She lives in a well-appointed 500 sq-ft flat located on the outskirts of Pune, Maharashtra. Her flat is part of a senior citizens' complex with various facilities including meals, household help, medical aid, garden, clubhouse and temple. All in all, not a bad deal at all. But that's only how things appear from the outside. Savitatai is often unhappy and frequently distressed by what got her to the senior citizens' home. Her son, she claims, cheated her out of her own lawful home, which she inherited on her husband's death. The dispossession occurred because Savitatai signed away her property to her son without fully understanding the documents to which she put her name. Savitatai says she misses "home". Her other children do not lack sympathy, but saddled with their own constraints—age, space, and time—are unable to accommodate her in their homes. Memories of deception and dispossession at the hand of her own flesh and blood gnaw at her, and keep her from sinking roots in her new home.

Cases like Savitatai's are growing ubiquitous. Yasmin, 78, and her physically challenged husband Rustom, 86 (*names changed*) were washed clean of their stock investments by a lawyer friend with whom they shared a joint bank account and in whom they vested power of attorney. On being unable to book him for financial fraud—as they lacked the necessary hard evidence—Yasmin and Rustom have resigned to suffering silently without hope for redress.

What constitutes financial abuse?

Dependence, physical and emotional, on others for financial transactions provides abusers ample opportunity to take away all that you have. As indicated by the examples of Savitatai, and Yasmin and Rustom, the 'criminals' are sometimes homegrown and confidantes, or household help and employed caregivers. The typical means used to financially abuse the elderly is to divest them of their bank accounts, appropriate stored wealth in their homes, and transfer or sell their property. Indeed, a study conducted by HelpAge India in 2010 indicates that real estate is the No.1 means through which the elderly undergo financial abuse.

Further, financial abuse is growing versatile in the face of new technologies. The fraudulent use of ATM debit cards and credit cards towards unauthorised purchases is only one example. Telemarketing frauds and identity theft count

for a close second. Not least among the elders' worries are predatory lending services, home improvement scammers, and swindlers disguised as estate planners. Other methods include opening bank accounts in the name of elderly and creating and/or altering a will.

The field of the elderly is ripe for picking, and don't the pickers know it. It begs the question: how does one grow alert to the symptoms of financial abuse in progress, or pick up signals that a strategy to commit it is underway? While no indicator constitutes a decisive proof of abuse, some clues should set off alarm bells.

The elderly that are subjected to financial abuse are generally a frightened lot. Their behavioural changes are both distinctive and noticeable. Secrecy; reluctance to share information and speak freely with familiar visitors; growing withdrawn; getting angry without reason; crying; talking to themselves—these symptoms are typical among elderly who sense a predator among them. If someone elderly in your life, otherwise in good health of mind and body, is displaying such behaviour, you should consider probing the problem.

Below are a few examples of financial activities that, if probed, might reveal abuse underway.

1. Unusual activity in the bank account of a holder who is not known to make personal visits to the bank
2. Mismatch between the elderly person's recorded signature and signatures on cheques and legal documents
3. Frequent signing of cheques or documents by an elderly person too infirm or unable to read and grasp the details
4. Unprecedented spikes in an elderly person's spending
5. Unusually high medical or nursing home charges
6. Switching lawyers or bank accounts without reasonable cause and/or necessity
7. An elderly person vesting his/her power of attorney in a new individual without good reason

Abusers are not just individuals. Sometimes, institutions cannot resist their share of the meat, and it is not unknown

for reputable financial institutions to have ripped off the elderly. One successful and legally underwritten means occurs in the sale of insurance policies with little bearing on an elderly person's needs and desires. Sometimes, this is followed by persuading the client to switch policies without reason. This earns the swindler a fair brokerage, the profits of which are so great to have set off a rash of fly-by-night insurance agents. Yet another bureaucratically protected means of abusing the elderly comes in the way of insurance policy loopholes. This includes doing away with cashless facility in Mediclaim policies (public-sector institutions are big culprits here), followed by pronounced delays, sometimes running into months, in reimbursing clients. To rectify the situation, some enterprising elderly clients feel compelled to follow-up with the company, insurance agents, and third party agents. This process of chase-the-devil-who-has-my-money exacts a severe cost—unwieldy telephone bills, months' worth of time, and psychological stress. Not least, the elderly must beware of portfolio management services offered by brokerage houses. Specifically, repeated changes made to a portfolio could decapitalise it, though the brokerage company would receive substantial service and brokerage commissions.

Are there solutions?

The financial exploitation of elderly is an offence that leaves no physical scars but can destroy lives by robbing them of their valuable assets and peace of mind. Unfortunately, the offence typically goes unreported by victims and is poorly exposed by media. The reason behind not reporting such crimes transcends the classic Indian feature of 'What will people say?', or public shame. It includes ignorance about the true nature of the abuse, fearing ill-treatment at the hand of the abuser, a crippling sense of filial loyalty, the fear of being branded unfit for independent living, and the latent dread of being sectioned off into a lunatic bin. Futility, or the feeling of it, is another reason why some elders do not report financial abuse. Finally, isolation, loneliness, physical/mental handicaps, financial ignorance, and the sense of life's brevity vis-à-vis death's closeness, are cumulatively enough to convince the elderly to prefer indignities of financial abuse to the hardships of fighting it.

Financial abuse is also steadily increasing in the West. According to the National Centre on Elder Abuse in the US, each year nearly 2 million American senior citizens are financially abused, making it the No. 1 crime committed against them and projected to achieve epidemic proportions. To combat the problem, many states in the US have passed legislation requiring bank employees to report all suspected cases of elder financial abuse. The premise is that bank personnel who deal directly with the public are best equipped to identify such abuse. Indian banks should take a leaf from this paradigm, and train bank employees to identify abuse and help book abusers.

The reason behind not reporting such crimes transcends public shame. It includes ignorance about the true nature of the abuse, fearing ill-treatment at the hand of the abuser, a crippling sense of filial loyalty, the fear of being branded unfit for independent living, and the latent dread of being sectioned off into a lunatic bin

Notwithstanding help from others, senior citizens should make a personal effort to check abuse when they face it. This is in fact necessary as institutional mechanisms to address complaints are either so weak they may as well not exist, or, like The Maintenance of Parents Act 2007, suffer from poor implementation. Compare this to Singapore's Maintenance of Parents Act, backed by state-run pension programmes and healthcare for the elderly. As the Indian state cannot and will not help, vigilance and prevention must become the onus of the elderly person who is at risk of being abused.

In addition to the above, feel passionate about independent living and keep abreast of your legal rights. When lending money to anyone, including relatives, insist on a signed plan of repayment. Track all financial transactions regularly, and frequently review bank statements, other financial records, and property papers where applicable. Always, always, read and digest information in any document you sign. If you don't grasp the fine print, ask someone dependable and uninvolved in your finances to break things down. Educate yourself and your spouse, if possible, in the ins and outs of your finances. Stay alert and be suspicious of the untoward in your financial records.

This part is hard but absolutely essential—rid yourself of the dangerous fiction that children are insurance for old age. If I can't convince you, maybe Amitabh Bachchan and Hema Malini will. Watch the film *Baghban*. It will show you the severity of how much children can abuse their parents. The climax is heady because the newly wealthy parents ultimately resolve to disown their selfish children. Very few among us would follow their example if faced by financial abuse at the hands of a child. In that event, all you can do is to protect your finances, your health, and your independence as long as you are able to.

Dr Priya Mutalik-Desai, 70, is a Mumbai-based economist and writer

Beyond survival

A former colonel and his doctor-wife reach out with compassion to ease the agony of terminally ill cancer patients in Pune. **Khursheed Dinshaw** discovers the inspiration behind India's first pain-management outreach programme for patients of this often-fatal disease



Twenty-three year-old Hemant holds up a sketch of himself that says 'He-Man-T' as he gazes out of a window to a future that looks less than bleak. He is a picture of dignity despite the melancholy that dogs him. Hemant is not expecting much from life; the best he can hope for is a painless end as cancer will inevitably claim his body.

Hemant is among 15 patients at Vishranti Hospital in Pune's Bhawani Peth, a free, pain-management facility for cancer patients that opened in 2007. Often described by patients as a 'five-star hospital' for its comfort and hygiene levels and caring attitude, the modest hospital was set up by Col (ret'd) N S Nyayapathi and his wife, Dr Madhuri, under their Care India Medical Society, India's first pain-

management outreach programme for terminally ill cancer patients.

Apart from Vishranti Hospital, the couple also set up Matruseva, a free health-maintenance programme for economically backward mothers in need of gynaecological treatment and antenatal advice, in 1998. Four years earlier, the couple had launched Satseva, a free, homecare programme



Photographs by Hemant Patil

Colonel Nyayapathi with 23 year-old Hemant, a terminally ill cancer patient

in Hyderabad, on leave to attend to my mother who was then living with my brother,” he recalls. “One night, she was in unbearable pain. But when we went from one doctor to another asking them to help relieve her agony, they slammed the door on us. I will never forget that night. As adequate pain management was not available, my mother finally slipped into a coma and passed away peacefully. I was sitting alone by her side, praying for her.”

A little over a year later, Col Nyayapathi left the Army after taking premature retirement and went to the US to seek solutions to mitigate the suffering of cancer patients back home. Practically every American oncologist he met had advised him to opt for preventive oncology, early detection of cancer and palliative care. But all he could see was the image of his mother in excruciating pain being turned away mercilessly. “Besides, there were already many doctors and institutions in the business of therapeutic oncology,” the colonel explains.

Running such a massive network is a huge challenge, especially when you’re not a doctor. But Col Nyayapathi’s wife, Dr Madhuri, had been an anaesthesiologist with the Army Medical Corps for 10 years. After that, she had not taken up a fresh assignment in order to raise their two sons. So when her husband wanted to pioneer the free, pain-management programme for cancer patients, they naturally teamed up. Today, Col Nyayapathi and Dr Madhuri lead a highly motivated team of 45 trained staff, including two doctors trained in cancer pain management, who run Satseva, their flagship programme, and Vishranti Hospital. For both programmes, patients are mainly referred by doctors and hospitals while some come via word of mouth.

“Most oncologists do not have the time to attend to ‘treatment failures’;

for cancer patients in need of palliative care. Though Care India Medical Society is a charitable trust funded by philanthropic donations, the reason it was set up is much more personal.

“My mother’s death in 1989 made me decide to help alleviate the pain of cancer patients,” says the tough-as-nails army officer, talking about the most sensitive issue in his life. “She

had cancer of the kidney. I remember when she was flown to attend the Maha Kumbh Mela at Prayag in Allahabad where I was then serving. Wearing my uniform, I carried my mother to be blessed by a saint, who asked me what I wanted. All I said was, ‘Bless my mother so that she may have a peaceful end.’ His mother’s death was naturally a turning point for Col Nyayapathi. “I was

Nyayapathi reassures a patient with wife Dr Madhuri (left)

doctors from Satseva visit patients not 'every other day' but every day," says Dr Madhuri emphatically. She says the type of care they extend is tailored to each patients. "These home visits are carefully managed. If a nurse is required, the doctor takes a nurse along when he or she visits the homecare patient," she adds. Col Nyayapathi found a celebrity mascot for his homecare programme when actor Shashi Kapoor joined as a patron in 1998. "He visited patients at least four times a year. Unfortunately, he stopped in 2009 owing to his own indifferent health," reveals Col Nyayapathi.

As for Matruseva, their gynaecological and ante-natal programme, it is a well-entrenched network that operates along with other institutions working for the welfare of women, mother-and-child care, destitute women and female prisoners in Pune's Yerwada Central Prison. "The mother is the most important person in maintaining family bonds. Caring for the mother means caring for families and the community in its entirety," he adds. Three qualified gynaecologists are employed with the programme that provides free treatment for common health disorders, to befriend and screen women for early detection of cancer and in women who are sexually active. Women are also screened for cervical cancer with a pap smear, a colposcopic examination and a breast examination. Women who use tobacco are screened for cancer of the oral cavity.

When cancer is detected in the early stages, patients are asked to pay a fraction of the expenditure for treatment procedures, with the bulk of the expense borne by the Care India Medical Society. When early symptoms of cancer lesions are detected, women are put through simple surgical procedures as advised by the World Health Organisation. These



"At Vishranti, I experienced a whole new world of cleanliness, attention and unceasing care that was not dependent on one's time or pocket"

Natalie Fernandes, a breast cancer patient

procedures are simple and inexpensive. Usually, the cost is borne by the Care India Medical Society.

With both programmes—Satseva and Matruseva—well underway, Col Nyayapathi opened the third facility, Vishranti Hospital, to complement the trust's homecare programme. This is a 15-bed, inpatient facility that provides free palliative care to terminally ill cancer patients. In some cases, where the disease is still responsive to treatment, Vishranti Hospital sponsors limited treatment that is carried out at an external medical facility.

Simple testimony to Vishranti's caring ways comes from Hemant, who was admitted here 18 months ago. "I like it here as I can watch TV and draw," he smiles feebly, revealing his own rendition of himself as a 'superhero'. For her part, Natalie Fernandes, a breast cancer patient, wrote a touching 'thank you' in her feedback form: "At Vishranti, I experienced a whole new world of cleanliness, attention

and unceasing care for the cancer patient—none of which is dependent on time or your pocket. After receiving more than two months of dedicated care here, we can sense the godliness of the purpose of this hospital." Led by Dr Madhuri, the senior doctors here counsel patients as and when required. "Our patients already know what stage of cancer they are in. They are mainly looking for respite and pain relief while their families are looking for respite from draining finances," Dr Madhuri explains, adding that most patients are economically backward. The recreational facilities at Vishranti Hospital may be modest—television, newspapers and magazines—but the most sensitive touch is that there's a window for every single patient.

What motivates Col Nyayapathi to keep going, year after challenging year? His response is moving indeed: "Unremitting service without expectations to relieve the pain and suffering of the needy makes one truly experience God." ✨

Experience

A second childhood

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LIFE, AFTER LIFE

It's one of the most selfless acts a human being can perform: donating one's body so that someone else can live. And although government apathy has kept cadaver donation on ice as a policy programme, **Carol Lobo** found stories of hope emerge from a handful of private initiatives across the country

I don't understand why we weep and get hysterical when someone passes away," says Laxman Tikar, a former labour activist who was recently at Mumbai's Azad Maidan to express his solidarity with anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare. "Grief should be respected but we feel we need to make a public display of it to 'legitimise' it."

Tikar, whose radical outlook to life—and death—saw him through 25 years with the Bombay Labour Union, visited the government-run J J Hospital with his wife six months ago to sign over their bodies to medical science. Summing up perhaps the greatest obstacle to what now goes by the less jarring term of 'body bequest,' Tikar adds, "It is a widely held belief that if we are not committed to the funeral pyre, we won't attain salvation. I don't believe in that." Tikar first heard about cadaver donation on television. Convinced that offering one's body to medical science was a useful way to serve society, he coaxed his wife, son, daughter and even two septuagenarian friends to join him.



PRESUMED CONSENT

According to the 'presumed consent' concept, which has been made into a law in many countries, the state presumes that a deceased citizen has said yes to organ donation unless she/he has stated otherwise, in a legally accepted document.

Spain was the first country to pass the law back in 1989. Till then, the country had one of the lowest organ donation rates in the world. Now it has the best organ procurement programme globally—34 per million persons—even though it boasts one of the lowest road mishap rates in the European Union. "Other countries like Belgium, Austria, Finland, France and Norway also adopted a similar 'presumed consent' law while Singapore and the UK may pass the legislation soon," says Dr H L Trivedi of the Institute of Kidney Disease and Research Centre, Ahmedabad, adding that the law had led to a dramatic increase in donations in all these countries. Other countries have made it mandatory for their citizens to choose whether they wish to donate their bodies or not. Among these are Sweden and Denmark, which passed laws to this effect in 1996. Thanks to this, Sweden's national donor registry has swelled by 600,000 and Denmark's by 150,000.

Encouraging citizens to declare their choice can be done by offering a choice to register with a national body or stating the choice during the issue of important documents such as a driver's licence, national identity card or passport, according to experts. However, even this 'mandatory declaration' requires high levels of awareness on cadaver donation and the dire need for it.

One in every five million Indians pledges their body or donates the cadaver of a loved one. Compare that to 20 cadaver donors per million in developed countries

Sadly, there are not enough Laxman Tikars. As a result, hundreds of thousands of healthy organs are buried, burnt on funeral pyres or otherwise destroyed as critically ill patients continue to hang on to life, praying for a miracle. That's because most people are not aware of the difference that pledging a body can make—a single donated cadaver can yield 37 organs and tissues, giving a new lease of life to as many as seven people.

Another major obstacle is the superstitious belief that donating organs or a cadaver amounts to desecration of the body, preventing the soul from attaining salvation. The result: with hundreds of thousands of ailing people on waiting lists across the country, only one in every 5 million Indians pledges their body or donates the cadaver of a loved one. Compare that to 20 cadaver donors per million citizens in most developed countries.

AS YOU SOW...

It doesn't help that India's legislation on the matter was vague and circuitous till as recently as 1994, when Parliament finally passed the Transplantation of Human Organs Act. The Act accepted 'brain death' as a definition of death, thus allowing relatives to pledge the cadaver organs of a brain-dead person.

Even so, the numbers have not gone up significantly. "We have facilitated only 1,700 cadaver organ transplants in the 17 years since the Act was passed," says Dr Sunil Shroff, managing trustee and founder of Chennai-based MOHAN (Multi-Organ Harvesting Aid Network) Foundation. That works out to some rather uninspiring statistics—hundred a year, from an average population of about 1 billion people.

The Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh has set up a lane in its premises in memory of people who pledged their bodies. Known as Teachers Forever, it's a corridor lined with photographs of the donors.

It's not easy to think of your body being diced and distributed among total strangers, your loved ones left to mourn over patched-up remains. But that's why organ donation is considered one of the most selfless acts a soul can commit. Perhaps that is why a small but growing number of people are overcoming their own hesitation and deep-rooted religious beliefs to set an example, spread the word and urge others to pitch in too.

"I believe you reap what you sow," says B R Kohli, a retired Defence officer who has pledged his body and is now vice-president of Delhi-based NGO Dadhichi Dehdan Samiti, which urges others to do the same. "During my service, I never took any bribes, never did anything wrong and always came forward to help people," he adds. "I believe it is these deeds that will be taken into account by the Almighty; not whether my ceremonial rites were performed or not."

The Samiti holds annual awareness programmes on cadaver donation and has encouraged 75 families to donate the bodies of relatives to medical colleges; another 2,500 people have registered as future cadaver donors. "The tide is definitely turning," says Kohli. "Earlier, we would get about 50 people to pledge their bodies every year. Now, every event brings in about 150 new cadaver donors."

Similarly, in Bengaluru, Foundation for Organ Retrieval and Transplant Education has counselled 22 families to donate the cadaver organs of their brain-dead kin. These 22 cadavers transformed the lives of 42 critically ill kidney patients, two liver patients and two heart patients. In Tirupati, the Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences (SVIMS) also conducts regular awareness programmes. "Seventeen people in India forfeit the opportunity to live every day owing to non-availability of organs, while four patients are added to the waiting list every hour," says B Vengamma, director of SVIMS.

On the upside, things can only get better, says G Bhagya Rao, principal of Andhra Medical College. "Initially, people understood the need to donate blood, then corneas and now organs and bodies. This is a positive development. In the past, our college used to receive just one or two bodies a year. Now, as many as 125 people from all

over Visakhapatnam have pledged their cadavers." There has been a similar spurt in Mumbai, which received its third cadaver organ donation of the year in February—a record high this early in the year. Once again, numerous critically ill patients across three hospitals benefited.

THE GOVERNMENT CAN HELP

Most hospitals undertaking cadaver transplants are either private or trust-run hospitals; there are very few government hospitals involved. There are a number of Zonal Transplant Coordination Committees, which coordinate the sharing of organs among various city hospitals. But, in typical bureaucratic fashion, the focus is on procedures rather than results. In the same spirit, generating awareness is not even on the agenda. Instead, the Union Health Ministry has an ambitious plan for a National Organ Transplant Programme and has already set up an Organ Retrieval Banking Organisation (ORBO) at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). The ORBO has performed all of 780 transplants since it was established in 2003. With no push for greater awareness, there have been no more donors. There is no government plan to generate awareness even with the medical community, with the result that certified hospitals have all the necessary infrastructure ready, including trained medical and paramedical staff, but do not have the medical and social workers to counsel relatives of brain-dead patients. So all that equipment and manpower continues to stand idle as hundreds of families, willing but perhaps unable to think of this vital donation amid their grief, proceed to destroy healthy organs that could have saved numerous lives.

PASSING IT ON

Even so, there are many who, having heard of cadaver donation, are coming forward to do "give back to society." Like T Rajendran and S R Krishnakumari from Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu. While Krishnakumari



HISTORY OF DONATION

According to some papers unearthed in the Calcutta Medical College and Hospital's anatomy department, the first human dissection on a corpse in India was carried out 175 years ago by a Bengali *vaidya* Madhusudhan Gupta. Though Hindu pundits always kept a vigil on the college premises to make sure no corpse was brought in for dissection, Prince Dwarkanath Tagore rebelliously smuggled one into the campus nevertheless. Every step of the dissection was documented. The papers are now being studied by experts of the anatomy department to see if findings can be incorporated into modern medicine. NGO Ganadarpan, working for the cause of body donation, had recently exhibited the documents for public viewing.

has barely completed her school education and Rajendran hasn't, they run a bookshop, selling books on leading lights and revolutionaries such as Karl Marx, Dr B R Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru. Both of them have donated their bodies to K A P Viswanathan Medical College, which is attached to the Mahatma Gandhi General Hospital in Tiruchirapalli.

GUIDELINES

PGIMER in Chandigarh has created a helpline for those interested in body donation. According to the department, those interested in pledging their bodies can express it in their will or even write a letter, sign it and hand it over to the nearest kin. Forms can be downloaded from the PGIMER website www.pgimer.nic.in

Procedure:

The body along with the death certificate or declaration of death certificate should be handed over to the department within three to five hours of demise. In case of difficulty in transportation, PGIMER will arrange for one. If the body is brought in on a non-working day, then it can be stored in the cold chamber of the PGIMER mortuary.

"As we are not moneyed people, we cannot be philanthropists. So we decided to take this decision so that we can be useful to society after our death. We have also taught our children to think beyond themselves," says Rajendran, who along with his wife has convinced six other people to follow suit.

Equally touching is the example set by Sumitra Padmanabhan, general secretary of the Humanists Association in Kolkata. Padmanabhan and over 50 members of the association have pledged their bodies for donation. "My mother died at the age of 79 in 2006," she says. "I personally made the arrangements to donate her eyes to the Calcutta Medical College eye bank. On her death, their representatives came to the house and did the needful at 2 am. Mother looked normal and peaceful even afterwards. The following day, we took her body to the Anatomy Department of National Medical College, Kolkata, instead of taking her body to the crematorium. It was quick, hassle-free and well-managed. We received her death certificate within a week. The eye bank has since told us that two blind people are seeing with the help of my mother's corneas. Thus my mother remains immortal to us."

SCIENCE ON HOLD

Lack of sufficient cadavers has also hit medical students, who need to study anatomy hands-on. They depend largely on unclaimed bodies turned in by municipal authorities. Dr Dalwinder Singh, cadaver coordinator and reader, Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Dentistry, Jamia Millia Islamia Medical University, offers a perspective on the dire need for cadavers. "It depends purely on the medical course being conducted," he says. "Nursing students don't need to do cadaver studies. For physiotherapy students, one body per batch is sufficient; for dental students, one for every 25 students; whereas for MBBS students, one body is sufficient for 12-13 students."

"If we're enamoured of the idea of being immortal, isn't it more meaningful to be useful even after your death?"

Laxman Tikar, 74, who recently pledged his body

The dearth of cadavers would not have been so grave had there been better coordination with civic agencies. "A recent newspaper report claimed that nine to 10 bodies are found unclaimed every day in Delhi," reveals Dr Singh. "It would be best if the municipal authorities coordinated with medical colleges and donated these bodies instead of dumping them."

Belgaum-based Dr Mahantesh Ramannavar, assistant professor of anatomy, KLE University's Ayurvedic Medical College, says dissection classes are being aborted in many medical courses for want of cadavers. He says after motivating people to donate their eyes, the trust set up in his father's name, Dr Ramannavar Charitable Trust Bailhongal, is now motivating people to pledge their bodies to medical research. "My father was a freedom fighter and had signed his body over for research after being inspired by former West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu," shares Dr Ramannavar. "All 14 members of our family have now registered our bodies for medical research. Also, around 100 people of the district have pledged their bodies."

Inspiration for Prakash and Vijayalakshmi Mulkunte, a couple who work at M S Ramaiah Hospital in Bengaluru, came from closer home. "I have seen it all...accidents, suicides and miscarriages. I have seen patients literally taking the last breath. All this has convinced me that life is worthwhile only if we help others. So why stop at death?" philosophises Prakash, whose son, a management student, pledged his body when he turned 18. "I am too young to think about God, religion and salvation. But I think we all must do our bit for scientific improvement," avers young Naresh.

LEADING THE WAY

In January 2010, within two days of the death of West Bengal CM Jyoti Basu, who had pledged his body for donation, NGO Ganadarpan received calls and visits from 300 people wanting to donate their bodies.

Others who have pledged:

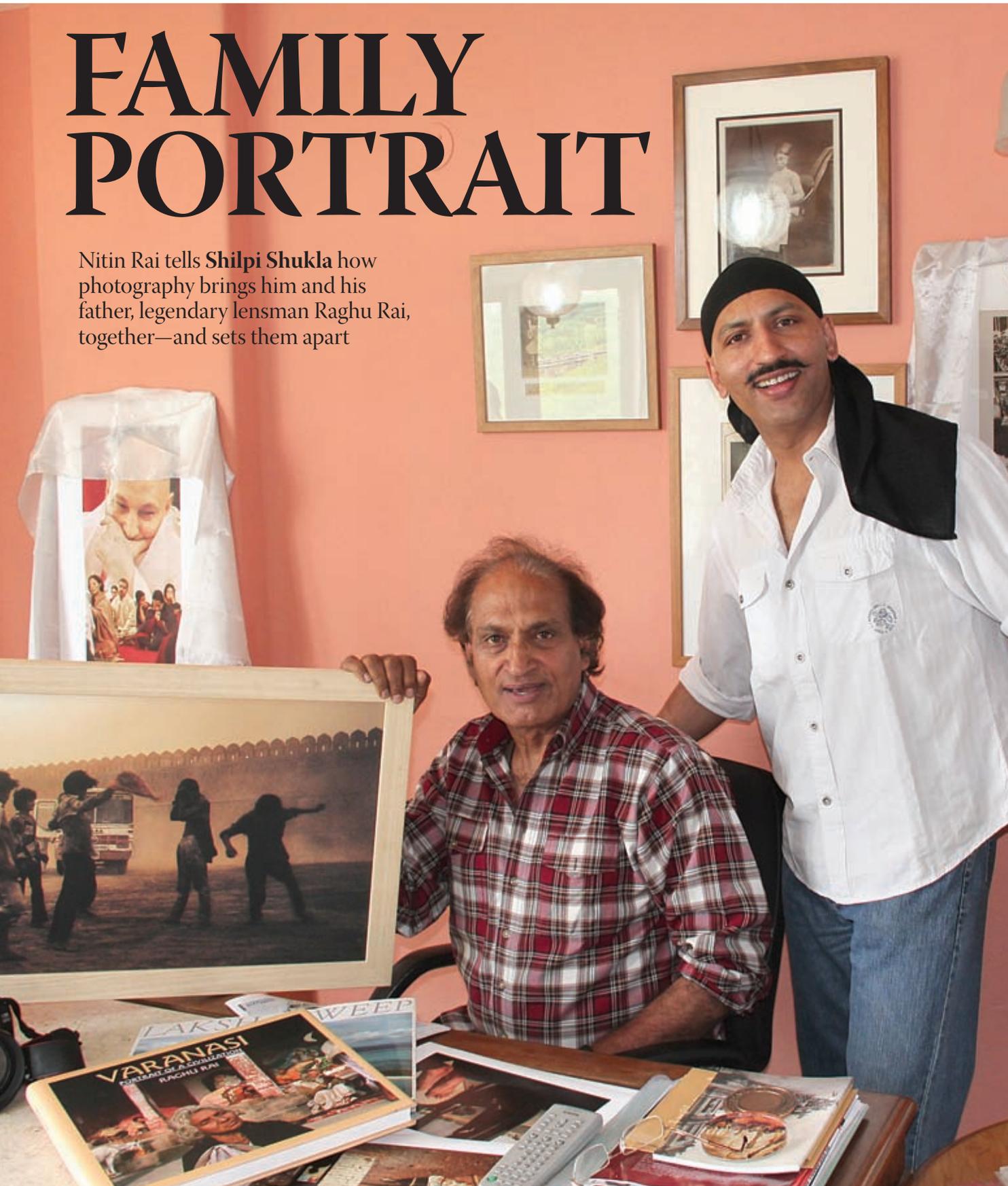
- West Bengal CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharya
- Actor Rupa Ganguly
- Author Sunil Gangopadhyay
- Writer Syed Mustafa Siraj
- Tamil actor-director Partheban
- Lyricist (late) Gulshan Bawra
- Former chief justice of Karnataka D M Chandrashekar
- Punjabi litterateur Santokh Singh Dhir
- Asian Games gold medalist and athlete (late) Ajmer Singh

Except for a handful of private initiatives and the progressive thinking of some inspired individuals, cadaver donation continues to linger in limbo in India. So, till the powers-that-be decide to get their act together, it seems the onus is on every citizen to leave a legacy. It's true that transcending our core beliefs may not be easy. But here's some food for thought from Laxman Tikar, who has a way of lending a practical hue to even the philosophical. "Our karma lies in our actions in the here and now. If we are enamoured of the idea of being immortal, isn't it more meaningful to be useful even after you are dead? Isn't that good karma?"

With inputs from Dhanya Nair Sankar in Bengaluru, Srinivas Chari in Chennai, Shilpi Shukla in Delhi, and Rajashree Balaram in Mumbai

FAMILY PORTRAIT

Nitin Rai tells **Shilpi Shukla** how photography brings him and his father, legendary lensman Raghu Rai, together—and sets them apart





Photographs by Lovejeet Alexander

When I was a kid, my father was my hero. He often took me along for shoots and I would watch him at work for hours on end. It was very inspiring. I admired his deep passion for photography.

Over the years, it was enthralling to see him win so many awards and accolades. Though I really missed his presence at home when I was growing up, I later understood that his work demanded it of him and stopped complaining.

I haven't grown up to be a photographer; rather, I have grown up with photography. Photography was an integral part of my formative years. Being the son of an ace photographer, I never had to make a conscious effort to become a photographer. I was keen on the art even as a child, more so because I drew inspiration from my father and wanted to become like him. When I was eight years old, I was quite impressed with some of the pictures I had clicked of my younger sister on a swing and proudly shared them with Dad. Soon after, I did a photo shoot of a few ministers coming out of Parliament House in Delhi for my journalist mom's Sunday feature in *The Times of India*. At 13, I clicked then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi when my aunt, who was also a journalist, took me and my cousins to meet him.

Dad and I have very different styles when it comes to work. My work is generally very colourful and happy—except if I am doing a photo shoot on AIDS or war victims. Dad's work is sombre, serious and, at times, even melancholic. We have our disagreements regarding frames and angles. He often mocks my work saying, "Seeing your work is like watching a Karan Johar movie!" [Laughs.] But as he's my guru and my best critic, his guidance helps me understand photography better.

Dad has given me the right vision. With an expensive camera in his hands, any person can claim to be a photographer these days. But vision and the ability to make your images touch the hearts of viewers and convey a message very powerfully set a good photographer apart. For instance, even if there are 20 photographers at a given place, only one may be able to truly see and capture the beauty of three seemingly ordinary little objects lying in a corner. Dad, who has an unequalled ability to convey feelings through his images, has helped me improve on these two important skills of a photographer.

Dad is my best buddy. Even while I was growing up, Dad was always very patient, indulgent and loving. Disciplining us kids was our mom's job. Dad used to be lost in his creative world; he was involved with us, but was never strict or demanding. I remember having shared just about everything with him as a teenager and even later. He's always been a great confidant.



“Through his art, he has taught me to respond to life and situations at the spur of the moment. He believes that if we are good human beings, our goodness will reflect in our work. His teachings help me face the odds of life with grit and courage”

Through photography, Dad taught me a lot about life. He has always maintained that photography teaches us a lot about life—especially the art of dealing with people. A good photographer should have the ability to put people at ease in front of the camera. Through his art, he has taught me to respond to life and situations at the spur of the moment. He believes that if we are good human beings, our goodness will reflect in our work. His teachings help me face the odds of life with grit and courage.

Photography has strengthened our bond. Our language of love is photography. People often ask me if there’s anything about him I envy or any habit I dislike. I just smile whenever I am asked these questions. All I can say is that being a photographer has helped me understand him better over the years. With time, our understanding of each other and our respect for each other’s personal zone and creative space have only grown deeper.

We love travelling together on assignments three or four times a year. I look forward to these travels. In fact, we’ve had some of our best bonding moments while having long, serious discussions on photography. I remember sharing such special moments with him even as a child. He has always had the time and patience to see my pictures, gently guide me and help me hone my skills.

We are very similar, yet dissimilar, in many ways. Both of us are affectionate, childlike, grounded and warm by temperament. We let go of things easily and don’t hold grudges. Being so similar in nature leaves little room for arguments or disagreements. However, whenever we reach a point of disagreement, we just agree to disagree. For instance, for my first photo exhibition, I had selected 32 photographs. Dad wasn’t too happy with two of these pictures. However, I still went ahead with the two as I quite liked them. He didn’t take offence. The best thing about him is that he never forces his decisions and viewpoints on me.

Being Raghu Rai’s son has only worked to my advantage. I probably wouldn’t be a photographer had I not been Raghu Rai’s son. However, because our work is so different, I never had to live under his shadow. I am known in the world of photography for my own work and not as his son. Had it not been so, I would have had to face the disadvantages of being a celebrity’s son.

He will always be my best critic. Though it’s been so many years since I became a photographer, I still love to share my favourite images with him. It’s always nice to have his feedback on my clicks. His feedback and praise mean the world to me. That spark of appreciation for my work in his eyes is very heartening.*

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A ROARING AFFAIR



WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST BILLY ARJAN SINGH WENT ON LONG MORNING WALKS WITH TIGERS, CUDDLED AND WRESTLED WITH LEOPARDS, AND WEPT AT THE GRAVE OF HIS PET DOG. SINGH, WHO DIED LAST YEAR AT THE AGE OF 92, WAS AMONG THE RARE FEW WHO RESPECTED AND REVELLED IN THE SACRED BOND BETWEEN MAN AND BEAST. HE HELPED SET UP DUDHWA NATIONAL PARK NEAR THE HIMALAYA, AND WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO DRAW ATTENTION TO OUR RAPIDLY DIMINISHING WILDLIFE. SHAMINDER BOPARAI'S BOOK, *BILLY ARJAN SINGH: TIGER OF DUDHWA* (COLLINS; ₹ 799; 197 PAGES), TAKES US THROUGH THE LIFE OF A MAN WHO STARTED OUT AS A KEEN HUNTER AND THEN CHANGED COURSE TO BECOME GUARDIAN. GLIMPSES FROM THE BOOK....

For an exclusive interview with Shaminder Boparai, go to www.harmonyindia.org

(Opposite page) Billy and Tara went on long walks every morning. These walks were the most important part of the acclimatisation that Billy has planned for Tara, and would last for about two hours covering 12 km; (below) Harriet atop Billy's jeep. To help her advertise that she was receptive, Billy used to take Harriet around the forest to lure Prince to Tiger Haven





EXCERPT

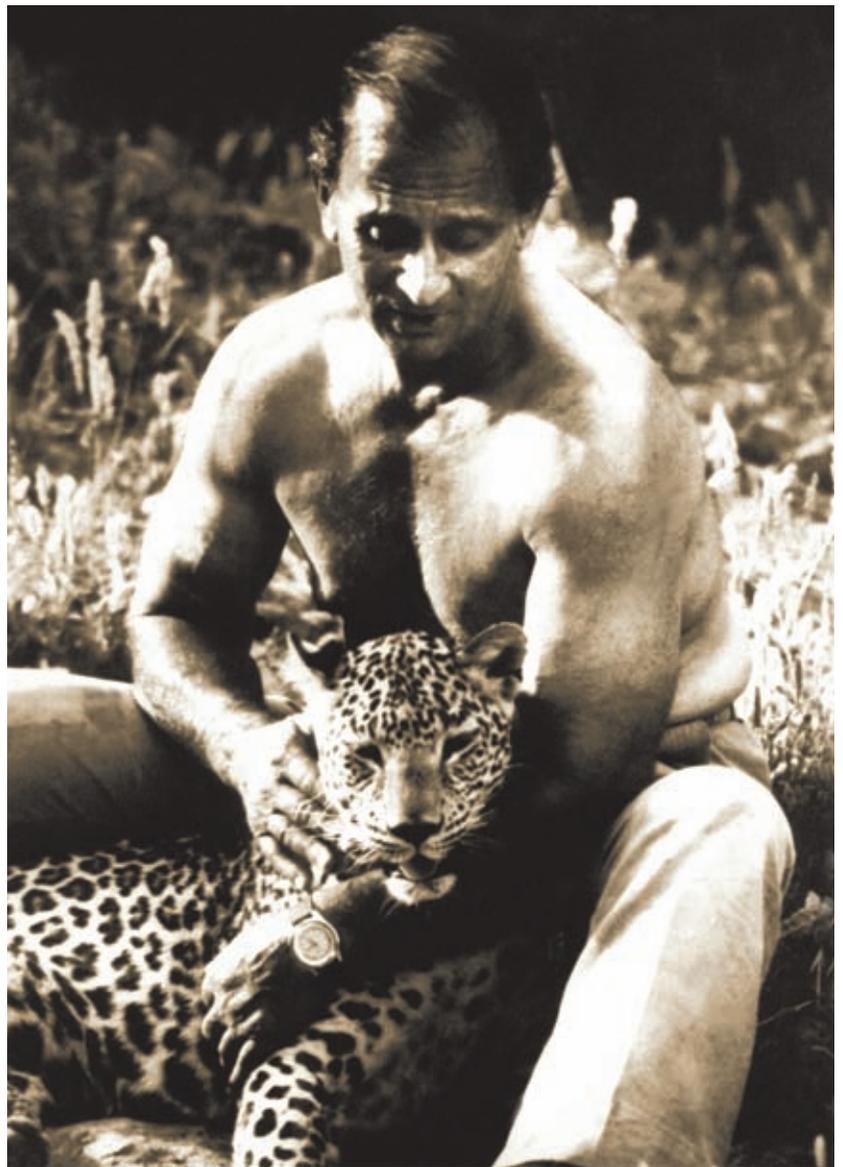
Having no prior knowledge of handling a young leopard, he was left to improvise and experiment. The cub was a bundle of energy and a delight to watch. He would run around a lot, as cubs do, especially in the cool hours of the morning and evening. His favourite routine was to run or climb trees after the two resident rhesus monkeys, called Elizabeth Taylor and Sister Guptara, and chase them around the house. Eelie, Billy's female dog, formed a bond with him and

they would both play endlessly. Their antics were a treat to watch as they jumped, attacked, ambushed, stalked and rolled over each other. Billy noticed the mock exercises and believed that these would be helpful in preparing Prince for the jungle where he would go one day.

As the leopard grew and started developing its instincts, Billy moved it closer to the forest in Tiger Haven, with Eelie in tow. He had expected the leopard to take to the surroundings, but on the contrary, it rejected

the idea and seemed to be wary of the jungle. He preferred the open area of Tiger Haven, but the dark world of the forest that formed the backdrop of the farm did not entice him.

Billy did not believe in caging the young leopard. He wanted him to experience life on his own, so that he could learn and eventually return to the wild. During the daytime, the cub was left loose to wander about in the farm. At night, during the summers, Billy would sleep outside on the veranda with the leopard cub on



(Right) With his beauties: Harriet and Juliette indulge in some chewing practice on Billy in the open space in front of the veranda at Tiger Haven; (above) Billy with Harriet, showing off his biceps. She was gentler, composed and more mature than her sister

one side and Eelie on the other. He did not even want him to be named, but eventually succumbed to calling him Prince, for he did not like the name Cheetla. Prince tended to be naughty in those days and caused a lot of damage at Tiger Haven. 'One morning I could not find him and a suspicious silence reigned. Eventually I discovered him in my room; which he had reduced to chaos.' There was a hole in Billy's quilt and the pillow had been ripped apart. His favourite overcoat was in shreds. 'He spat at me as I came into the room, but I was so

enraged by his wanton destruction that I seized him by the scruff and flung him out.' Billy felt remorseful about his angry act, but Prince came and rubbed against him, as if nothing had happened.

When Billy went around the farm, Prince would come down from his favourite perch, which was an open-air bar counter under the *jamun* tree by the Junction Pool. As soon as they left the safety of the farm and headed for the path leading to the forest, Prince would hesitate to follow further.

'No doubt his suburban upbringing contributed to his inhibitions, for he never had a mother to teach him the smells and sounds of the jungle and as a result everything was strange to him.' The jungle around Tiger Haven had a fair share of wild tigers. So, as Prince headed for it and smelled their presence, his instincts told him to avoid the area. Billy thus had to improvise by feeding Prince on the path leading to the jungle. Every day he would move the dish further towards the forest. The move paid off and he slowly and steadily lost his fear of the jungle.

(Clockwise) Billy holding Harriet aloft. Weightlifting was a part of his daily exercise routine and perhaps the physical activity helped him to withstand the pressures exerted by his wild friends; The Delhi Zoo vet giving Tara a check-up. It took Billy 15 days to complete the necessary formalities before she could be moved to Tiger Haven. "Looking at Tara all locked up, I wished Tara and I could exchange places," said Billy; Billy was quick to notice Tara's innate skills as she went about stalking a buffalo in the open areas of the farm. In the process, she used every blade of grass to camouflage herself. Billy placed regular baits around the farm



In the wake of A WARRIOR

Tiger conservationist **Valmik Thapar** urges us to keep Billy Arjan Singh's dream alive

When I was growing up in the 1970s with tigers, one of the most legendary characters of the times was Billy Arjan Singh. I think my first meeting with him in the early 1980s was something I will always cherish. I realised almost immediately that I had met someone who loved tigers. It did not matter whether you agreed or disagreed, or if you wanted to relocate animals or not—Billy's basis was that any intervention must protect and enhance wildlife because wildlife never had a vote. In this mission Billy was ready for any sacrifice.

As I worked with Ranthambhore's tigers Billy was busy bringing up the young tigress Tara and trying to introduce her into Dudhwa—no easy task. His efforts were marked with much controversy and many believed he failed, but Billy believed in his success and refuted all claims that because of Tara there had been a spurt in man-eating around Dudhwa.

Billy was a tough man, both physically and temperamentally. He had a very focussed and forceful nature. Indira Gandhi had enormous respect for him and supported all his endeavours. This linkage with the prime minister was vital for both Billy and Dudhwa and their success. I remember in the early 1990s when I went to visit him in Dudhwa he was totally disheartened, and—like many of us—believed that Indira's and Rajiv's death had sounded the death knell for the tiger. He thought that all Dudhwa's tigers would be extinct by 2000; luckily he was proven wrong and even today there are a handful of tigers in Dudhwa and the area around. He was famous across the world for his exploits to introduce leopards and

tigers into Dudhwa and authored several books on this. But very few of us knew of his early life, and how he grew to be a legend in his quest to save tigers.

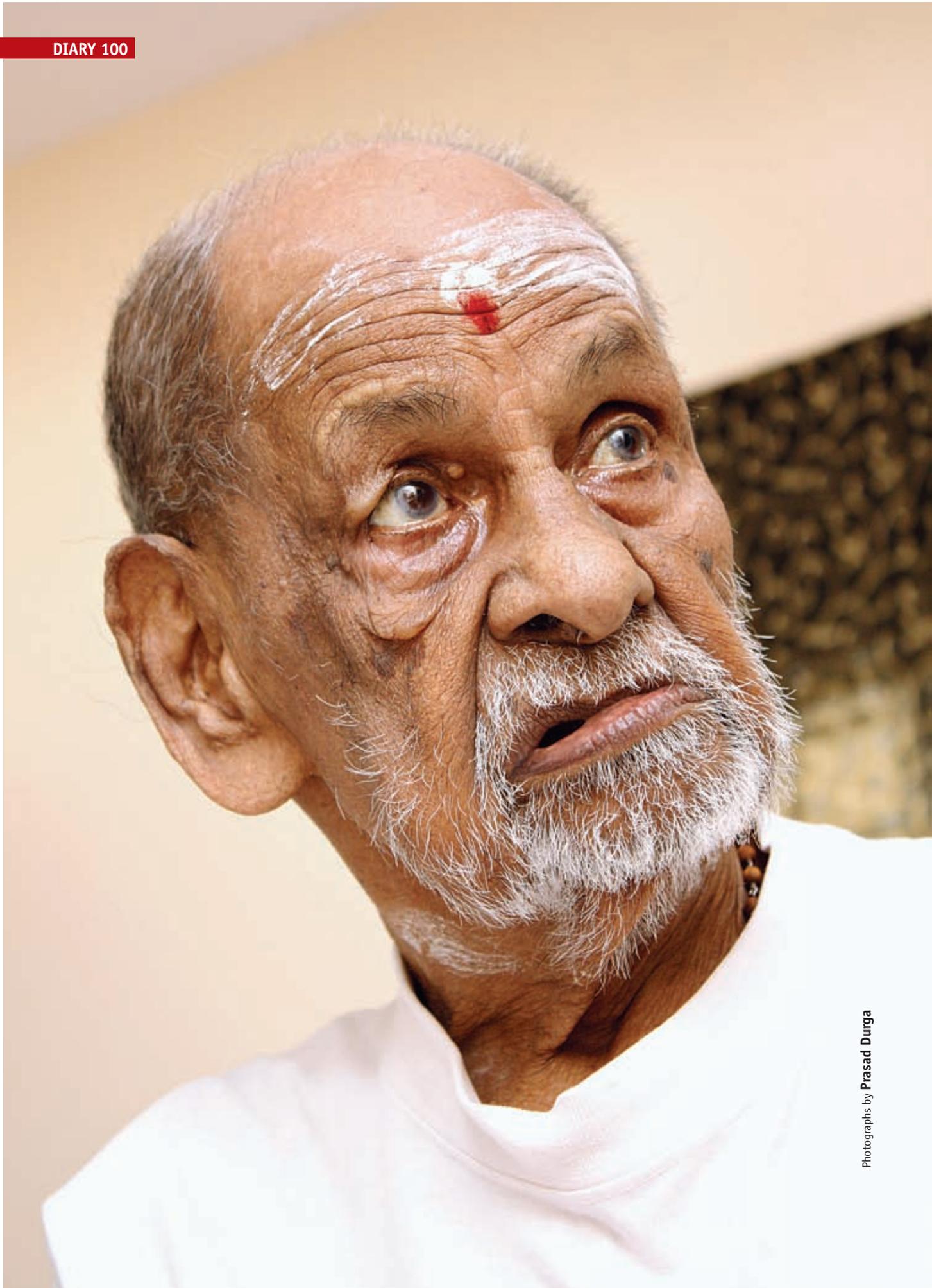
This gap in our knowledge has been well filled by Shaminder Boparai in his book *Billy Arjan Singh - Tiger of Dudhwa*. I loved looking at the early years and the pictures of a time gone by. It is fascinating to learn about the slow transformation of Billy from hunter to naturalist. I would have liked to read more about the man and his engagement with wild tigers, and his future vision for Dudhwa. Billy had strong views on the changing status of tigers and it would have been good to have got more detail on his pet subject: the creation of a new wildlife service for India. This was Billy's obsession in the early 1970s and he nearly persuaded Indira Gandhi to create this service, but at the last minute the bureaucratic machinery sabotaged it. Billy was convinced this was the primary need of the day. None of us conservationists were sure about this even in the 1990s. But by the time the century turned many of us agreed with Billy that this service would be essential if we were to save anything in the future.

Sadly there was no Indira Gandhi to take such decisions—the prevailing prime ministers did not have the will to change—and today some of us have made this our primary objective in any intervention with government. Billy died with many of his dreams unfulfilled. His vital mission was to create a special wildlife service with a perfectly trained cadre (and with a brain on their head). I believe if we wish to salute him, it must be our collective endeavour, as a tribute to him, to force the government of the day to create this service.

It did not matter whether you agreed or disagreed, or if you wanted to relocate animals or not—Billy's basis was that any intervention must protect and enhance wildlife because wildlife never had a vote. In this mission Billy was ready for any sacrifice



Valmik Thapar, 59, is a writer and tiger conservationist. He lives in New Delhi



To Sir, with love

Centenarian Harihara Sastry has dedicated his life to learning, teaching and exploring the nuances of Sanskrit. **Dhanya Nair Sankar** listens to the congenial professor spin a tale of his love affair with the language of the gods

Suburban Malleswaram in Bengaluru is home to many educational institutions. So it is perhaps only fitting that Professor M Harihara Sastry, an institution in himself, chose to live here after retirement. Wearing a starched white shirt and *veshti-mundu*, Sastry, nationally renowned Sanskrit grammarian and teacher, welcomes you with a polite *namaskaram* and a gentle smile. The mere mention of Sanskrit makes the 101 year-old's luminous eyes dance with joy; as if on cue, he breaks into a Sanskrit poem!

Sastry's presence virtually fills the room and you know you're in the presence of a great master. The verse is from *Narayaniyam*, a medieval Sanskrit text composed by poet-devotee Melapathur Narayana Bhattathiri in the 16th century, the professor reveals. Taking on the daunting task of popularising Sanskrit and the philosophy of the *Vedanta* among the masses, Sastry has written critical commentaries on various Sanskrit classics and challenged the religious superiority of certain communities like the Brahmins.

"I began learning Sanskrit when I was in class four even though we spoke Malayalam at home," he recalls, his speech not always distinct but emphatic. "I got hooked to it immediately. It is such a beautiful language. No

wonder it is the language of the gods." Born in 1911 in Kilimanoor near Thiruvananthapuram to an eclectic Brahmin family, Sastry's forefathers were from Benaras. They moved to Kerala more than 200 years ago at the invitation of the King of Travancore. "Kerala was always home. I was brought up entirely in Trivandrum. I went to Shivagiri Brahma Vidyalaya, one of the best schools there. Later, I had the privilege to teach at my alma mater. Shivagiri is not just any school; it was a monastery set up by reformer-saint Sri Narayana Guru," he explains.

He secured admission to the school by a pure quirk of fate. "My grandmother was a cook at the principal's house. One day, I accompanied her to work. I had just completed my fourth grade. He [the principal] quizzed me on some things relating to Malayalam literature. He later asked me to join his school. I was lucky to be hand-picked," says the professor, who has a special fondness for the tale and never tires of recounting it.

At school, Sastry immersed himself in Sanskrit literature. He also wrote commentaries on difficult Sanskrit texts, which went on to become his speciality. "We had to specialise in two subjects, from *vyakarna* [grammar], *tarkam* [logic] and *jyotisham* [astronomy] to *vedanta* [philosophy].

I chose *vyakarna* and *Vedanta*." At the tender age of 15, he cleared the Sanskrit Sastry Pariksha, a challenging exam, with flying colours, thus earning the title 'Sastry'.

Soon, the professor grows tired and lets his son G Mahadevan, 51, do the talking. "Even before my father's career took off, he made a profound impression on Kerala's biggest academicians as a commentator of literary works," recounts the proud son. "He used to sit up till dawn, reading and writing. He had a special knack of simplifying complex philosophies and drawing simple values for children from Sanskrit texts. Almost magically, people started taking to Sanskrit and that's how my father popularised the language."

Naturally, accolades came thick and fast. In 1943, when Sastry published a commentary on *Nalacharitham* of Unnayi Warriar, a Malayalam classic, the foreword was penned by no less than Ulloor S Parameswara Iyer, one of Kerala's most notable poets, who helped revive classical poetry in the state. The latter wrote: "Sastry is a pundit who combines industry with illustrious scholarship. His commentary will be a boon to both students and teachers of the classic." The professor participated actively in debates on grammar and came to be known as a purist in academic circles.

“He was a stickler for rules and sometimes took things a little too far,” remembers Mahadevan with a smile. “We were once near a temple, where a blind beggar was crying out, ‘Dear God, I am blind with no eyes, please do something for me.’ My father went up to him and gently reprimanded him, saying, ‘Either say you are blind or say you have no eyes; using both in the same sentence is wrong!’”

Grammar aside, Sastry is also regarded as a symbol of Kerala’s renaissance. “I never believed in casteism, that a certain section of people was meant to do certain things,” he says emphatically. “In any case, it is a false assertion that the Sudras originated from the feet of the Lord and were meant for slavery.” And looking to the future, he adds, “In our concept of nationhood, the numerical superiority or inferiority of any religion should not count. The ruling classes in the past had an affinity for a particular religion either by birth or faith. But in our renewed national consciousness, differences on account of religion have no place. Our only caste and religion should be humanity.” If there’s one thing that can break through the professor’s stern armour, it’s the mention of his wife. He smiles benevolently and recalls, “I was married to Thangama when I was 24 and she was 12. Once we were visiting someone’s house and I saw her playing in the courtyard. I knew she was the one,” reminisces Sastry, lost in thought.

They married in 1935. “I think my father was a closet romantic. I mean, even his favourite Sanskrit literature is full of love stories,” laughs Mahadevan, the second of three children. “*Achan* [father] was always consumed by his work, his writing, reading and teaching. It was *Amma* who ran the household and our daily lives. *Achan* was always stoic, never expressing his emotions in a blatant display. Nothing ever ruffled him.”

Evidently, Mahadevan has imbibed his father’s deep love for Sanskrit and



“In our renewed national consciousness, differences on account of religion have no place. Our only caste and religion should be humanity”

philosophy. A manager with a private firm, he says, “Most modern management books that are so popular today are drawn from our ancient texts. *Achan* often read them to me. One very important thing I learnt from my father was never to impose our wishes and aspirations on others. I never had the talent or discipline to master a language but *Achan* never imposed it on me. He wanted me to become my own person.”

Winner of the President’s Award for Sanskrit, the Amrita Keerthi Puraskaram of Amritanandamayi Math and the Kerala Brahmana Sabha’s Dharma Sreshta Award, Professor Sastry now spends the evening of his life with his son, daughter-in-law and grandson. And although he cannot read, with his eyesight failing him, he makes sure someone reads to him regularly. His mantra is succinct: “Language should be pure, so should life.” ❁

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Leading by example

After dedicating his life to the welfare of labourers in Chennai, V Santhanam used the Right to Information (RTI) Act to report the anomalies in various public offices, discovers Radhika Mohan



Photographs by Chennai Pix

V Santhanam starts his day very early. He goes for a walk, comes back, reads the newspaper and looks forward to a fruitful day. But here's where his life stops resembling other septuagenarians. In the newspaper he reads, he looks for information that can aid him in putting the Right to Information (RTI) Act to good use.

Santhanam, 73, completed his schooling and moved to Mumbai in 1956 for employment. His father was a priest and also cooked for the temples, while his mother stitched plantain leaves to ensure the family had two square meals each day. He was 16 when he started working as an assistant in a store in suburban Matunga that specialised in products for South Indian

families. He moved on to a clerical job at the Atomic Energy Commission, Trombay, and then to Jenson & Nicholson as an assistant to the chief executive. In 1962, when his chief moved to Chennai to start his own company, he asked Santhanam to move with him. He returned to Chennai and joined British Oxygen India Ltd, working as a sales representative. Simultaneously, he gained ground as a trade unionist, working tirelessly for the welfare of workers.

Largely self-taught, Santhanam was inspired by his brother V Mani, who goaded him to read newspapers and expand his knowledge, and motivated him to take up social service. Santhanam also drew inspiration from Mahakavi Subramania Bharati and

Santhanam urging citizens to support Anna Hazare's crusade against corruption

Mahatma Gandhi. In 1969, he bought a plot of land in Chromepet, on the outskirts of Chennai. With this began his crusade (by writing letters and filing petitions) for civic issues around the area. He held street-corner meetings and mass demonstrations, his protests always non-violent. Today, he proudly displays his letters compiled in 12 volumes. His novel methods of protest—presenting his petition to a buffalo or placing it in a *puja thali* and offering it to the local deity—caught the attention of the media and earned him the title of 'Petition Santhanam'.

He continued to play the role of a crusader but it was not always

easy. "In 2003, Santhanam's activism nearly cost him his life," reveals Ananthkrishnan, a journalist and Santhanam's friend. "He was attacked in his house by hired thugs. He survived miraculously and returned to conscience-keeping, devoting 12-14 hours every day to social work. He is our hero and unlikely to ever give up." The attack left Santhanam with a permanent limp. His wife and three children (now settled in the Middle East) attempted to stop him initially, but Santhanam's grit overpowered their protests, as they gradually saw him win hearts and social respect.

Santhanam believes the RTI Act has given teeth to a lot of people like him and is empowering in every sense. "It's a strong weapon and people must utilise it," says the crusader, who has filed over 500 RTI petitions on a variety of issues related to the zoo, railway station, schools, traffic, hospitals, Sethusamudram canal project, ambulance service, repair of sluice gates for the Veeraraghavan lake, and liquor shops, to name just a few. His toughest was the National Highway case where a potholed road made life hell for people, in the process killing a young boy and his father who tried to save his child. Fought under RTI, the case took over a year and the accused civil engineer was fined ₹ 25,000. The committed stalwart periodically organises meets and symposiums to create awareness about the RTI Act.

Santhanam's neighbours and friends idolise him. "After the attack, he was still in the hospital when he took a pledge to dedicate his life to society," says Venkatasubramaniam, vice-president of New Colony Residents Welfare Association. To this, his son Sridhar, on a visit home from the Middle East, adds, "Dad has changed so many lives in his own quiet way, using his own resources. He has never ever spoken to anyone about those he has helped. He always tells me, 'It's your aptitude, not just your attitude, that determines your ultimate altitude.'" His good work has also won him



"There are many good people around us, but it's the silence of the majority that can ruin the country. Instead of blaming the darkness, light a candle"

several awards and accolades. Exnora presented him the 'Seva Ratna Award' while he was still in hospital in 2003. *The Indian Express* honoured him with the 'Civic Crusader Award' in 2004. Radio channel 98.4 FM awarded him the title of 'Local Hero', and the PWD bestowed him with the title of 'Water Warrior'. But Santhanam's real rewards and awards lie in the love, respect and faith people shower on him. "He has infinite belief in change," says his now Chennai-based son-in-law S Lakshmi Kumar. "He is well-respected by the police and media; they often seek his validation of incidents. He has also inculcated his selfless values in his children."

"Santhanam is an indefatigable fighter," adds his friend Ananthkrishnan. "He routinely challenges author-

ity and corruption, and has done remarkable work to check the abuse of authority. In his individual capacity, he has been using the RTI to get first hand information and serve as a steady source for news articles." Santhanam's advice to the younger generation is extremely simple and straightforward, quite like the man himself. "Society has done so much for you; how are you repaying it?" he says with passion. "Inculcate the spirit of patriotism and spend a few minutes everyday to contemplate upon the sacrifices our elders made to give us a free India. Be alert, be aware, be useful to the country and take care of your surroundings. There are many good people around us, but it is the apathy and silence of the majority that can ruin the country. Instead of blaming the darkness, light a candle." ✨

On cloud nine

From the tallest hills in Karnataka to the jade wilderness of Bhadra Sanctuary, Chikmagalur offers a soulful respite to the adventurous traveller

◆ 📷 Arun Bhat



As the mercury climbs higher with summer's onward march, stepping outside an air-conditioned environment is almost unbearable. So here's a brilliant option for the adventurous soul in search of cooler climes and beautiful vistas: Chikmagalur in southwestern Karnataka.

Amid the tallest hills of this southern state, a continuous breeze caresses the skin and brings relief from the heat and dust of the plains. And the pretty, green and undulating landscape uplifts the spirit like nothing else can.

Driving past the dusty one-road town of Chikmagalur, you can take a small road that steadily climbs towards the hills of Mullayanagiri. Nestling in the heart of the Western Ghats, where the grass remains green and the trees do not shed their leaves even in the harshest of summers, you're nearly 2,000 m above sea level.

As the road slowly leaves the Deccan Plateau, the stagnant air is refreshed by a gentle breeze, while the brown earth gives way to a verdant landscape. Highways and traffic are replaced by small country roads, where you find yourself cruising alone most of the time. The road cuts through coffee estates and thick forests, where blackbirds sing happily and small brooks occasionally splash across the road on their way down.

After you climb higher along the winding road, you begin to leave the tree line behind. Now the slopes are filled with knee-high grass and each turn opens up new vistas of the plains below. Pause every now and then and you can see the places you've driven past to get here—Chikmagalur town,

(Opposite) Even a few minutes at the serene Hirekolale Lake is enough to soothe your soul; (right) the Mullayanagiri range bears the distinction of being the highest point in Karnataka

several small villages with red-tile houses leaving a bright mark on the landscape, glistening lakes and tall, silver oak trees on the estates that shelter the coffee plants beneath their canopy.

Mullayanagiri, the highest point in Karnataka, gifts you an uninterrupted view of rolling hills in every direction. It's almost too much to take in at first. A small shrine at the peak dedicated to the sage Mullappa Swamy is high enough to kiss the clouds and merges with the heavens. Seated on the edge of a rock just below the peak, you can watch the strong winds carry these clouds away and bring in new ones by the minute. Below the clouds, waves of ridges line up one after other as far as the eye can see, their colours changing from lush green to a gentle blue until they blend completely with the horizon.

The hills of Mullayanagiri are flanked by the plains of Chikmagalur on one side and the thick evergreen forests of Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary on the other. When you return from the peak, you descend in another direction, taking small roads that can barely ac-

commodate a car. Tall grass on either side almost threatens to consume the tarred surface! These roads crisscross coffee plantations along the slopes, where the coffee flowers bloom in the early summer months, spreading their fragrance across the slopes. Miles and miles of coffee plants adorned with bright white flowers invade the senses with sight and smell of the blossom.

Past the plantations downhill is the jade green Bhadra wilderness, covering a wide basin with hills rising once again at the far end. As you descend into the sanctuary, trees take over from the coffee estates, the foliage barely allowing any sunshine onto the road.

Birdlife is plentiful here and the avian denizens of the forest put on a splendid show. On the drive to the sanctuary, you can spot restless babblers, flocks of oriental white-eyes in search of flowers and scarlet minivets whose crimson plumage stands out brightly amid the greenery. Beaters scout for dragonflies, suddenly darting to catch them midflight and then returning to their perches with their prized catch trapped in their beaks.





A gurgling stream makes its way through a plantation redolent with the fragrance of coffee blooms

Malabar parakeets fly between gaps in the canopy, squawking loudly. Red-whiskered bulbuls sing continuously as they inspect the bushes, in search of worms. Unmindful of the frenzied activity all around, a hawk cuckoo sits graciously on a branch snootily watching the proceedings.

At Muthodi village in the heart of the sanctuary, wild animals once walked freely in an area that used to be a small settlement before the re-

serve was commissioned. Wild grass thrived in places that were once paddy fields, where gaurs and spotted deer now graze undisturbed. And maroon Malabar giant squirrels play on the custard apple trees next to abandoned houses, relishing unripe fruit growing in abundance.

The wildlife reserve, once dotted with villages along the road running through the forest, has done a good job of rehabilitating people who lived

within the protected area. When the sanctuary was notified, every family was given arable land elsewhere in the district, leaving no one complaining.

Aravind, a coffee planter who was once a Forest Department official, comments on the visible changes in the wildlife population thanks to this rehabilitation process. "Some villages were located deep in the forest," he says. "They had to walk for two hours to get to the nearest shop. So if they



FACT FILE

BEST TIME TO GO

October to June, before the monsoon begins

GETTING THERE

By air: The nearest airport is at Mangalore, about 150 km away. Bangalore International Airport, 240 km from Chikmagalur, offers better connectivity from major cities.

By train: The nearest railway station to Chikmagalur is at Kadur (40 km), located on the line connecting Bengaluru with Hubli.

By road: Chikmagalur is 240 km away and a five-hour drive from Bengaluru. Regular buses connect Chikmagalur with Bengaluru throughout the day.

WHERE TO STAY

- **Gateway Hotel, Chikmagalur:**

Tel: 08262 660660;

₹ 5,000 onwards

- **Nature Nirvana:**

Tel: (0)98440 42152;

₹ 2,200 onwards

- **Planter's Court:**

Tel: 08262 235882;

₹1,040 onwards

Gateway Hotel and Planter's Court are located in Chikmagalur Town. Nature Nirvana is a homestay in the coffee estates adjoining the hills of Mullyyanagiri.

wanted to eat chicken for dinner, they would rather hunt for fowl in the jungle than walk four long hours. Now wild animals roam freely in the areas where they once ran the risk of being hunted." Carippa, his estate manager, chips in, saying that everyone who visits the estate now usually spots some wildlife along the way.

When you're visiting Chikmagalur, you simply must stop by the beautiful lake just below the Mully-

anagiri peak. The lake, which adjoins Hirekolale village, is a 10-minute drive from town and catches the flow from the nearby hills to form a large reservoir. Its deep, placid waters reflect the greenery of the surroundings in surprisingly vivid detail, its beauty further enhanced by the last golden rays of the sun as it goes over the undulating hills. You can spend a quiet, meditative evening at this picturesque lake, a perfect antidote to the day's exploration.

Back in town after dark, you can look forward to downing a bracing cup of filter coffee in one of the small restaurants situated away from the main road. In a region that grows nearly all the coffee produced in India, the people have perfected the art of brewing the world's most popular drink using freshly ground beans. No matter where you go in Chikmagalur, every cup of coffee is so delectable, you can scarcely stop after the first cup—just one more delightful reason to visit. ✨



Archer's quiver!

In India, as part of a five-country tour to promote his latest book *Only Time Will Tell*, Jeffrey Archer straddles time zones and cultures with aplomb. The bestselling author who champions the underdog in his work speaks to **Dhanya Nair Sankar** about challenges, rewards, regrets and the joys of imperfection

First things first: Lord Jeffrey Archer does not like to be addressed as Lord. Second, it is very difficult to get his attention when a cricket match is on. If you manage to do so, you are seriously lucky. Archer is in Bengaluru, a pit stop on his five-country, 16-city tour to promote his latest book, *Only Time Will Tell*. Defying time zones seems to come as easily as writing popular fiction to the Briton, who is more prolific than ever before. With nary a trace of jet lag or exhaustion, he seems overdosed on energy, buoyed by the launch of his new book, the first instalment of a five-part epic.

Walking towards Villa 1516 at Taj West End in Bengaluru, you hear guffaws and incessant cricket commentary. Archer's baritone is engaged in friendly repartee with the bellboys, his publicist and PR people, and the scribes thronging to get a slice of his time. He spots me lurking at the door, too intimidated to come inside; he comes outside and welcomes me as if we are long-lost friends. Inside, the lights are dim but Archer's vivacity brightens the room. At 70, there is not a trace of age—in his physical demeanour or spirit. Later, he is equally ebullient at a reader interaction in a city bookstore as he works the overcapacity crowd. Following a friendly war of words with a young girl, he sounds a warning to Indian men to get ready to play second fiddle to the women of the country. "Dear Indian men," he roars, "You are really done here!"

Entertaining an audience has always come easy to Archer. Beginning with his first book, *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less*, a semi-autobiographical caper published in 1975, he has dominated the bestseller charts with a series of novels, short stories, plays and even children's books, not to mention his own diaries of his days in prison, where he served a sentence for perjury. Indeed, his own life has been as colourful as those of his characters. A Member of Parliament at the age of 29 (the youngest ever at the time), a poor investment led him to the brink of bankruptcy; he wrote his first book to put himself back in the black. He has continued to land on his feet from every adversity (political, personal, financial), using his words to keep him on top of the game. "I am flawed to the core," he admits, adding that it makes him "interesting". It's just one of the many insights into the prolific author in an exclusive conversation.

IN HIS OWN WORDS:

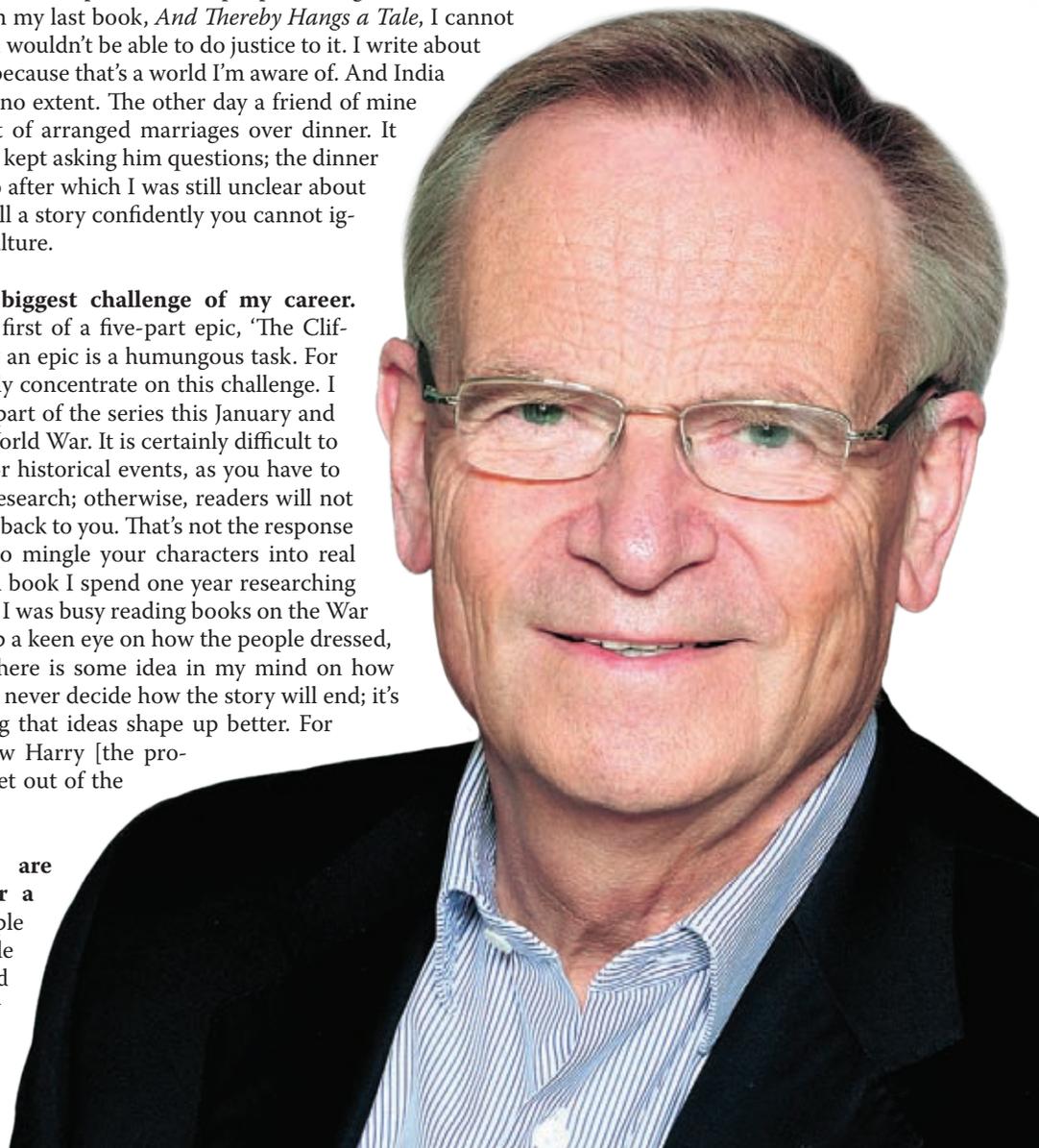
India with all its paradoxes is a fascinating country. I certainly feel loved here and look forward to coming back. But sometimes that love comes with a price. I was in Chennai having dinner in my hotel when a man came up to me and asked, 'Are you Jeffrey Archer?' Like a dimwit, I said 'Yes' and, next thing, he was there with his whole family. I had to say goodbye to having a silent dinner. Once, I was driving through a busy junction in Kolkata. A little lad came up to my car and asked, 'Sir, do you want the latest Jeffrey Archer?' I was bemused; I blinked and replied, 'My dear boy, I am the latest Jeffrey Archer!' My journey to India is filled with such amusing experiences. India for me is like the many underdog characters I etch; despite so many odds it has shown to the world that you simply cannot ignore this growing, vibrant country. And that's endearing. The adulation I get here only motivates me to write better.

All said and done, though, I can never write an Indian story. I couldn't do it simply because to spin a story about a country you need to be attuned to the culture, character and psyche of the place and the people. Though I have done a short story based in India in my last book, *And Thereby Hangs a Tale*, I cannot write a full-length novel as I wouldn't be able to do justice to it. I write about politics and big businesses because that's a world I'm aware of. And India as a country puzzles me to no extent. The other day a friend of mine was explaining the concept of arranged marriages over dinner. It completely baffled me and I kept asking him questions; the dinner went on for two hours or so after which I was still unclear about the subject. To be able to tell a story confidently you cannot ignore the finer nuances of culture.

My newest book is the biggest challenge of my career. *Only Time Will Tell* is the first of a five-part epic, 'The Clifton Chronicles', and writing an epic is a humungous task. For the next five years I will only concentrate on this challenge. I started writing the second part of the series this January and it is based on the Second World War. It is certainly difficult to write fiction based on major historical events, as you have to be very accurate with the research; otherwise, readers will not accept it and they will write back to you. That's not the response I want. But it is also fun to mingle your characters into real events. Before starting each book I spend one year researching the period. So the past year, I was busy reading books on the War and watching movies. I keep a keen eye on how the people dressed, spoke, lived, etc. Though there is some idea in my mind on how the plot will shape up, I can never decide how the story will end; it's only when you start writing that ideas shape up better. For instance, I had no idea how Harry [the protagonist of the book] will get out of the problem in the end.

Most of my characters are underdogs and that's for a good reason. I think people are fascinated by people coming from nothing and achieving something. They probably see themselves in such people because

There is a big difference between good writers and good storytellers. Good writing is something you can develop over a period of time with proper education but storytelling is God's gift—I'm happy to have the latter



they also want to achieve something. Some of my characters are stamped in my mind forever. I really loved Miss Tredgold from *The Prodigal Daughter*; she was supposed to be there for only a few pages but ended up throughout the book. I also love Old Jack Tar's character from the new book; he is a very sensitive, endearing grandfather figure. Yes, I am fascinated by the underdog.

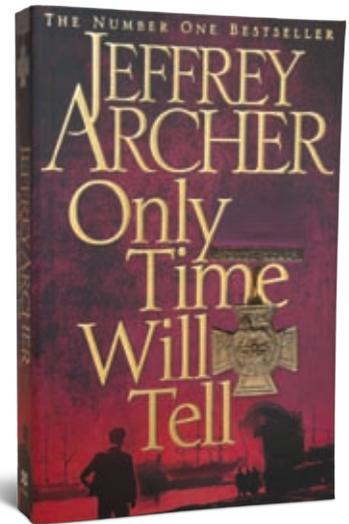
Though *Kane and Abel* was very well received worldwide, my favourite remains my first book. To this day, I am sentimental about *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less*. It was a semi-autobiographical work that came at a time when I was going through a bad phase. But the idea of coming up with my first novel at the age of 34 was a thrilling prospect. As a writer, you are bound to take inferences from your own life and though it can be very vulnerable to put oneself out there, it can also be liberating. I started my writing career with that book, so obviously it remains close to my heart.

Each kind of writing requires a different craft. I have written novels, short stories and plays. Each requires a different kind of technique; it is a challenge to keep changing your writing style every now and then. I love writing short stories simply because it requires a lot of bite and humour. Writing humour certainly is a definitive test of my skills as a storyteller. But I also love writing and even reading the great novels; there is a lot of research and reading up required that I enjoy.

Writing the biography of [English mountaineer] George Mallory in *Paths of Glory* was a thrilling experience. When I first came to know about Mallory through a friend, I was convinced I had to write about him. Here was a 'real' hero who came from nothing and reached such staggering heights, literally and figuratively. While it is a tale about the triumph of human perseverance, at the heart is a love story of a woman who stood by her man no matter what the odds were, not ever getting discouraged about her husband's long absences. It also remains close to my heart because it is my first book to be critically acclaimed. But the real compliment came from Mallory's son. After reading the love letter between the man and the wife, he told me, "I wish my father had really written those letters."

Many people are baffled by the amount of work I put in. To this day and despite writing many books, my daily schedule remains unchanged. I get up at 5:30 in the morning. Start writing from 6 to 8 am, take a two-hour break, start again at 10 am till 12 pm, take another break, start writing from 2 pm to 4 pm, take another break, and write again from 6 pm to 8 pm. By 9:30 pm I am back to bed. I put in around 500 hours for the first draft; by the time the final draft comes out I would have put in 1,000 hours on the same piece. To achieve success in any art, one needs to practise endlessly, it is that simple. Now arguably Sachin Tendulkar is the greatest batsman the world has ever seen but even he practises religiously. Talent is good, it is useful; but talent without energy is useless.

I still write with pen and paper in my back garden. Not many people know this but I cannot even switch on a computer so I prefer the traditional style of writing with pen and paper—I feel it is romantic. But I am embracing new technology. I have a blog and I am even on Facebook and Twitter. I regularly update my blog with the help of my secretary to whom I dictate; she types and I edit. When I am too busy my sons look after my blog. All my serious writing is still restricted to my books. But I have promised myself to learn how to operate the computer.



The first instalment of Jeffrey Archer's five-part epic, **ONLY TIME WILL TELL** (Pan Macmillan; ₹ 325, 388 pages) is a gripping drama about two families, the Cliftons and Barringtons, and a portrait of a nation in churn. In this sweeping saga, Archer's protagonist Harry Clifton is—unsurprisingly—the quintessential underdog who rises to meet every challenge life, and his nemesis Hugo Barrington, throws his way. Harry's weapons: determination, perseverance, and a devoted mother. Memorable supporting characters like Old Jack Tar and Harry's best friend Giles Barrington add zest to this simply written, yet enormously engrossing and entertaining tale. Archer devotees will remember *Kane and Abel* with nostalgia. And wait with bated breath for the next instalment.

—Dhanya Nair Sankar

Mark Twain was right when he said, 'A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read.' I never fret about the fact that I am called a popular writer and not a critically acclaimed one. Readers want to be entertained first and foremost and some of the classics don't do that to you. I mean I myself have never come to the end of *Ulysses*. I also feel there is a big difference between good writers and good storytellers. Good writing is something you can develop over a period of time with proper education but storytelling is God's gift—I'm happy to have the latter. I don't even want to defend my place as a good storyteller. I mean if you have sold more than 250 million copies of your book, why would you need to? That said, I am very happy to be 'critically acclaimed' for *Paths of Glory* and the fact that the *Daily Mail* has called *Kane and Abel* a modern classic.

Shakespeare, a classical writer, remains my favourite. I love storytellers and he was the greatest of them all. Even now when you read *Romeo and Juliet* you are gripped by an excitement to know how the story ends. I also like storytellers like F Scott Fitzgerald, John Steinbeck and even Charles Dickens. Some of my favourite books include Fitzgerald's *A Diamond as Big as the Ritz*; *A Tale of Two Cities* by Dickens; *Of Mice and Men* by Steinbeck; to name a few. Among short story writers I love O Henry and Maupassant. India has given to the world some wonderful writers like V S Naipaul and Salman Rushdie but my favourite is R K Narayan. Not only was he a good writer but a great storyteller. His stories keep you at the edge of your seat. I love the man and have great respect for his craft.

My biggest achievement as a writer was winning a literary award in France. French people are not known to give awards to an Englishman! So my biggest achievement was winning the Prix Polar International Award in France in 2009 for my book *A Prisoner of Birth*.

Ageing has certainly made me a better storyteller. I have always stood up for the rights of the elderly. In fact in 1993, I had started a movement called 'Stand Up and Deliver,' urging then home secretary Michael Howard to look after the burgeoning elderly population of my home country. With age I have only become all the more sensitive to aged people. But ageing is something I don't dread because it has only made me a better craftsman.

My family is my strength. I have been married to a remarkable, independent woman, Mary Archer, for over 40 years. Not only is she a beauty but the cleverest woman from her generation. She is really the pillar of my strength. She is her own person; she is a doctor and chairman of the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. I also have two sons, William and James.

I have one big regret in life. I don't have any daughters. I love girls and at one point wanted as many as six daughters. I think daughters just make a father a better man in all spheres of life.

I am flawed to the core. I once said that the genius of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was that he was a flawed man; a great man but a flawed man. I certainly see myself as a flawed man. All of us are—I am flawed and you are flawed. But not many of us are seen regularly in the public eye so we are lucky as our flaws are not noticed. I have never met a perfect person, but I feel the perfect person would be a rather boring one; after all, imperfections are endearing. I would rather be flawed and interesting than perfect and boring.

I will never write an autobiography. Simply because I don't think I am interesting or important enough to write one. ✨

CONTROVERSY'S CHILD

1967 The United Nations Association, for which Archer worked, alleged discrepancies in his expense claims. Archer filed a defamation case which was settled out of court.

1974 He lost a huge fortune in a fraudulent investment scheme. Fearing bankruptcy, he stood down as MP in the general elections that year.

1987 British tabloid *Daily Star* released a story alleging Archer had paid sex with Monica Coughlan, a commercial sex worker. He won the case after he proved that he had dispensed the money as philanthropy than for any services rendered.

1994 Archer ruffled more than a few feathers when he stated that 18 should be the age of consent for homosexuality as against 21 at that time. In the same year, he was harrassed by rumours of insider trading (for shares bought in Anglia Television where his wife Mary Archer was director.

1999 His personal assistant Angela Peppiatt provided evidence that Archer had committed perjury by fabricating an alibi in the 1987 libel trial. In 2001 Archer was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

2001 Scotland Yard started investigations into the allegations that millions of pounds had disappeared from Archer's Kurdish charity.

2004 Archer was accused of being one of the financiers who funded the coup attempt against the government of Equatorial Guinea.

“The nature of marriage should change”

Fourteen years ago, Manju Kapur arrived on the Indian literary scene with her debut novel *Difficult Daughters*. The book won her the Commonwealth Writers Prize and a growing legion of readers. Since then, the Delhi-based author has written four novels. Her works can be best described as an unwavering gaze at the lives of middleclass India, penetrating realities that are uncomfortably close to those we shy away from in our own lives. Last year, after taking voluntary retirement from Miranda House in Delhi University where she taught English literature, Kapur, 62, penned her latest literary offering *Custody*, centred on the fragile foundations of the modern Indian marriage. **Rajashree Balaram** speaks to the writer who never really aspired to be one

Do you see a bit of yourself in each woman who occupies the central role in your books? Which character do you identify with the most?

I see a bit of myself in every character I write; I don't think I would be able to write them otherwise. As far as the women characters are concerned, empathy comes more easily; it is with my male characters that I have to struggle. I think I am getting better at this now. *Custody* has more of a hero than a heroine. Raman is the main character, the one who is there from start to finish.

***Difficult Daughters* was written 13 years ago. How has age influenced the way you look at life as a woman and author?**

Well I was pretty old to start with. I started writing only in my 40s and *Difficult Daughters* was published when I was 49. It is not so much that getting older has influenced my writing, but that turning 40 pushed me into trying something new and challenging. Ambition, perhaps? The desire to leave something behind me with mortality staring me in the face? I already had a home, husband, children, and a teaching job. However, though these things were of immense value—I would be lost without them—I did feel that I wanted to leave a more permanent mark. I didn't know if I would succeed, but I wanted to try.

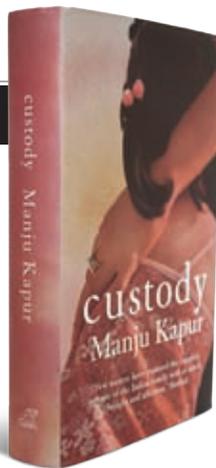
***Custody* addresses the delicate issues of divorce, custody battles, infertility, adoption, and the many issues that threaten the foundation of marriage in modern India. Do you think the institution of marriage will be redundant in future? And is that in some way linked to the growing empowerment of women?**

Marriage shows no signs of becoming redundant. It answers a basic human need, the need for companionship, and I don't see that changing with any kind of empowerment. Yes, the nature of marriage might—and perhaps

should—change. The breakup of some marriages may have to do with the woman being more economically and socially independent, but then surely that is a good thing. Should women remain married just because they have nowhere to go? That is not the basis of a good relationship, surely? The empowerment of women should lead to more equal relationships; a shift that is less patriarchal, to men and society in general becoming more sensitive to women's needs.

The women in your books have always been strong characters. But the central character in *Custody*, Shagun, behaves in wild abandon that borders on





the reckless. Do you think women are getting more reckless now? And if yes, does that disturb you as a woman?

Are women getting more reckless? There are certainly more options open to them, more choices, but that doesn't make women necessarily more reckless. What does disturb me today are the increasing incidents of crime against women. I almost can't bear to read the papers; and these are not incidents that have been provoked by reckless female behaviour but by the perception that it is all right to commit crimes against women, that somehow it will not be punished.

Do you think women from the older generation were courageous in their own ways for having endured a dull marriage gracefully, just as women now have the courage to walk out of a bad one?

Absolutely. Women are often the unsung heroines of the age. I don't really look at women as older versus younger even though, of course, every generation has different lifestyles and circumstances. Throughout history women have shown huge amounts of adaptability; because when it comes to men and women, it is women who generally have a rougher deal.

You have stated earlier that you work on multiple story ideas simultaneously. Do you see that happening more often now that you have retired?

I worked on several ideas simultaneously because I was teaching and writing at the same time. During term time I would work on a novel in the first draft stage. Just write 500 to 1,000 words to push the story forward, never mind how good or bad they were, that would be seen to later. During the holidays I used to do the editing, which I find much more challenging—working on the craft of writing; keeping the whole book in your mind; paring it down to its essentials; and making sure there are no repetitions and that everything works. Now that I have left my job I don't have those compulsions. Though I do have several ideas sketched out, I work on one of them at a time.

What do you plan to tackle in your next novel?

It's too early to talk about it. Anyway, my books always come out differently from the ways in which I had first visualised them.

Has retirement brought greater freedom to you as an author?

Yes, of course. Writers need time to think and mull over ideas. A book is a very demanding thing; it demands that it be first in your life; and if it is not, it withdraws totally. For 14 years I did manage to teach and write, but it was done by juggling teaching, studying, correcting, through the year. Then the system changed, internal assessment came

in, our administrative duties increased, classes became larger, and the kind of juggling I was doing was no longer possible. That was when I resigned.

What are your tastes in reading?

I read most anything literary, international and national, plus essays and biographies. The fact I love reading so much also meant paradoxically that throughout my youth,

I never had any ambition to be a writer. The writers I read and admired convinced me that I could never write anything remotely comparable. I still feel this—but I do write, battling the negative impulses every time I open my computer.

More and more books are being made into movies. Which one of your written works would you be excited to see as a movie?

If anything gets a book read that can only be a good thing. I always read the book after I have seen the movie. And read it all over again, if I have already read it. As for any of my works being made into a movie, I have no favourites! Soni Razdan is working on making *Difficult Daughters*; Hitesh Sharma is trying to make a serial out of *Home*.

We hear about ugly divorces all the time. But then anything that represents destruction can never be beautiful anyway, can it? **CUSTODY** (Random House India; Rs 450; 415 pages) shows us that love and hatred are closer than we thought. Shagun and Raman are a Delhi-based yuppie couple riding the tide of instant gratification that the first deluge of foreign investments brought into India in the 1990s. A hard-working marketing manager, Raman has little time for Shagun though he loves her deeply and lusts for her passionately. Shagun, who traded a tentative modelling career for marital bliss and postpartum blues, is no longer content with her husband's dotting affection. She falls recklessly for his suave boss, Ashok, who heads the Indian operations of a US-based soft drinks manufacturing company (Coca Cola?). The deception and heartbreak that follow leave no room for reconciliation. With their divorce, Shagun and Raman change many lives—most significantly that of their two little children as they snarl at each other for their custody. Thankfully, there's hope and renewal too: Ishita, an infertile divorcee, finds a second chance at love and motherhood with Raman and his daughter Roohi. *Custody* finds a room in our heart because it won't let us take sides. The characters are flawed. They are endearing. They are us.

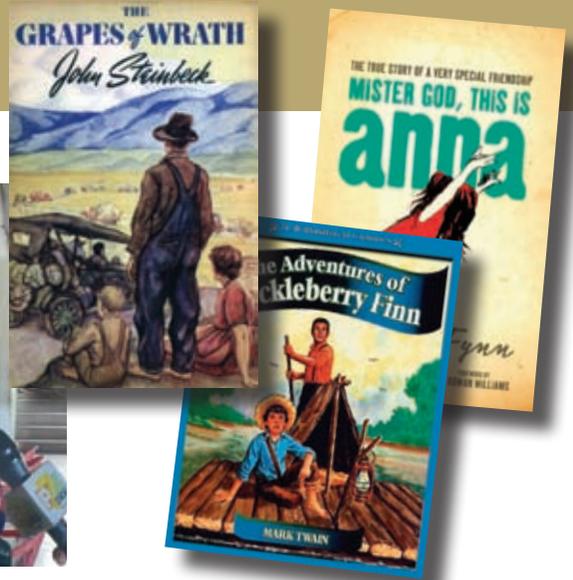
—Rajashree Balaram

I love to read...

Satinath Sarangi

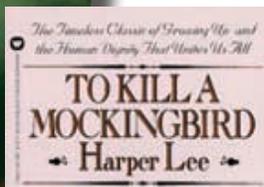
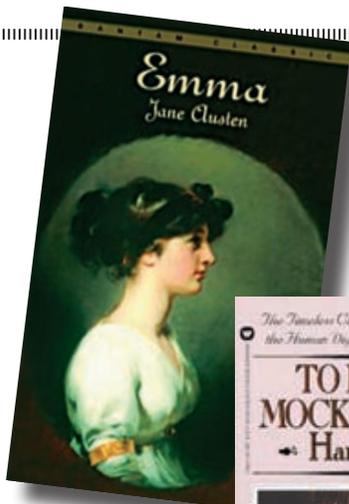
Social activist

My all-time favourite books are John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Sydney Hopkins's *Mister God, This is Anna*. In *Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck shows the power in so-called powerless people so poignantly. The passionate description of the plight of the poor always warms your heart. I like *Huckleberry Finn* for the child in me; also in a simple language it talks about the burning social issue in America post the Civil War: the rise of racism. *Mister God, This is Anna* is also a sweet story of friendship and curiosity of little children. I also like Premchand because in simple Hindi he chose to talk about important social issues that were



prevalent in his times. And I like Sadat Hasan Manto because through his stories he stood up for the marginalised in society. I also like reading biographies on Bhagat Singh; reading about him has definitely shaped me as a person and as an activist. I love

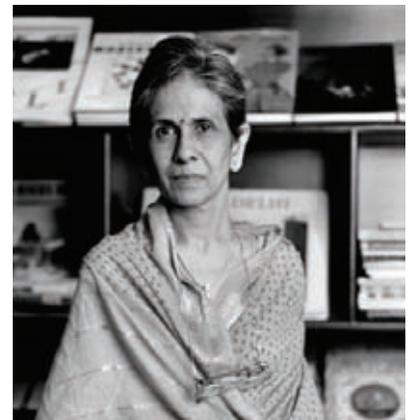
reading all kinds of books but crime thrillers and children's books are my favourites. Though I am too busy to read anything right now; the last book I thoroughly enjoyed reading was the Swedish thriller *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson.



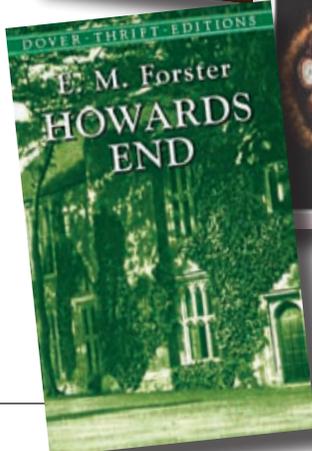
Shashi Deshpande

Author

I love reading fiction and Jane Austen is my undisputed favourite author. I love the way she tells a story; her acute observation of people, the humour and language and, above all, her view of life and the world, something with which even I agree. My all-time favourites are Austen's *Emma* and *Persuasion*, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* and *Bleak House*, E M Forster's *Howard's End*, Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, and many more. All these wonderful books have helped me understand something of life, of people, to ask questions of



myself, maybe to find answers sometimes. But more than anything else they have made me marvel at what human beings are capable of. I think writing itself, that is, books, language and literature, has shaped my life to a great extent. Books have made me what I am, made my life richer and more meaningful. I am currently reading *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

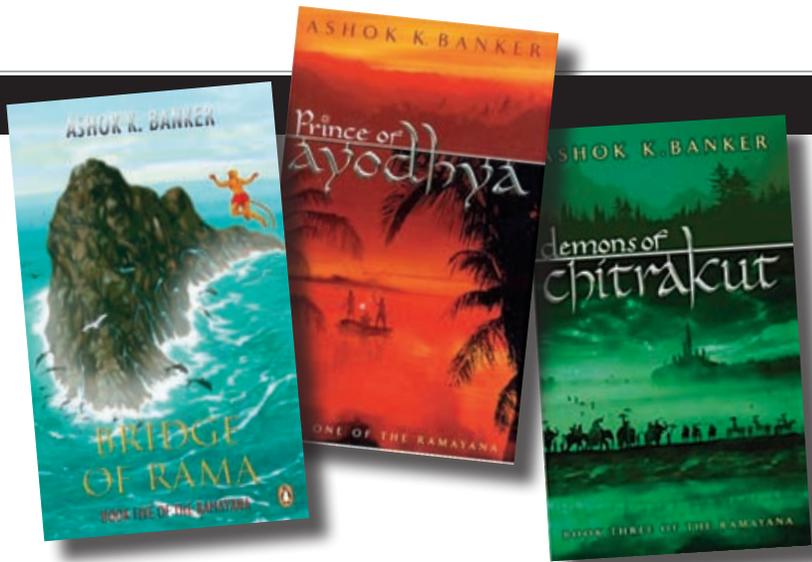


Kalpana Lajmi

Filmmaker



I think I fell in love with books and the world of literature when I was a kid. In my teens and early adulthood I would mostly read romantic books but after the age of 30, I started reading serious literature, both fiction and non-fiction. Recently, I finished reading the six-volume *Ramayana* by Ashok Banker: *Prince of Ayodhya*, *Siege of Mithila*, *Demons of Chitrakut*, *Armies of Hanuman*, *Bridge of Rama* and *King of Ayodhya*. The series was



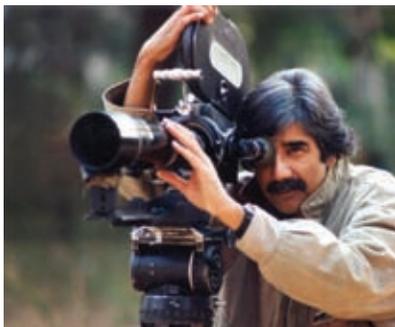
so fascinating that I finished the entire set in two months. As a child I was exposed to *Ramayana* through the oral tradition via my grandmother. The series is a refreshing take on the epic where the author hasn't tried to elongate the epic; rather, the emphasis is on every small and big character that enters Lord Ram's life. It is not confined to the Brahmanical order. Written in simple Hinglish, the book takes you into the world of magic and fantasy. I felt it was akin to J K Rowling's Harry Potter series. And while Banker gives us a fresh perspective and has embellished the tale in

his own style; he has also stayed true to the legendary works of Valmiki and C Rajagopalachari, which is a mammoth task in itself. The book made a profound impact on me because as a woman I have always questioned Lord Ram's virtue when he chose to send his wife away. However, reading this book has given me a different outlook to the whole debate. I am currently reading *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold; it's profound and sad at the same time. In a single sweep it describes the beauty of the spirit world as against the stark ugliness and horrors of the living world.

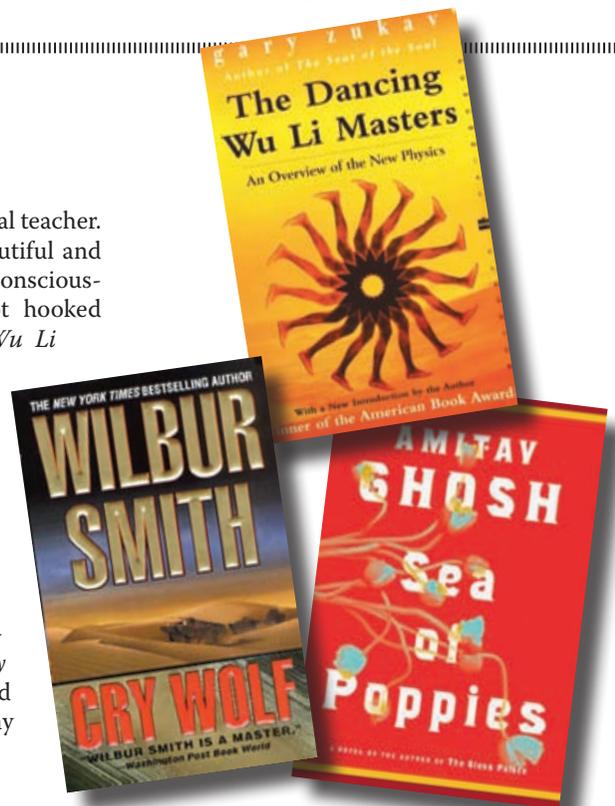
Mike Pandey

Filmmaker and conservationist

I am a voracious reader and love to read anything I can get my hands on. There are so many different genres that I enjoy reading. So it's indeed very difficult to pick one single book or even an author as a favourite. However, I must say that I love books by



Gary Zukav, who is a spiritual teacher. His works are achingly beautiful and very descriptive of human consciousness. From the start I got hooked to Zukov's *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* and *The Seat of the Soul*. The former, especially, shaped me as a person because it is profound and makes you take a different approach to self-discovery. I also like contemporary authors like Amitav Ghosh; I liked his *Sea of Poppies*. Writer Wilbur Smith's books like *Cry Wolf*, *A Sparrow Falls* and *Wild Justice* are some of my other favourites.





Sharada Dwivedi

Historian and researcher

I am a voracious reader and love reading both fiction and non-fiction. I particularly love reading legal and detective stories by John Grisham and Ruth Rendell because they provide a wonderful break from the heavy and serious reading I have to do for my work. One book I simply love is Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I first read it as a kid and keep going back to it even now. It is a wonderful portrayal of human values, spirit and the breaking of the barriers of colour. Mark Twain is another favourite; his sense of humour is impeccable. He also

has a knack of discussing serious issues like racism in a light-hearted but powerful way. That's why I love both *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. But I also find him a wonderful travel writer; done simply it can transform you to another world completely. That's why I loved his *Following the Equator* and *Life in Mississippi*. Indeed, books have been part of my life right from childhood and I think they elevate you as a person and change your mood. I recently finished reading Nayantara Sehgal's *Civilising a Savage World* and found it an uncritical but thought-provoking biography of Jawaharlal Nehru. I am currently reading *From the Brink of Bankruptcy* by Vinay Bharat-Ram and find it to be an excellent testimony of the corporate history of India.



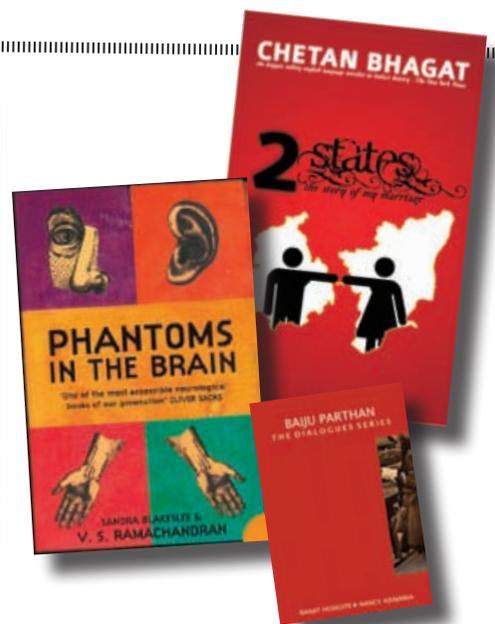
Lalita Lajmi

Artist

I love reading non-fiction, especially biographies of painters and actors. I thoroughly enjoyed reading *The Dialogue Series* by Popular Prakashan. In this series, I particularly loved the ones on Atul Dodiya, Manu Parekh and Baiju Parthan, all written wonderfully by Ranjit Hoskote. The books are about the journey of each artist, their transition as a person and the challenges they faced. One book that made a great difference to me was *Phantoms in the Brain* by V S Ramachandran. It is a book about amputees and how they feel pain and movement in their non-existent limbs. It was a fascinating read because in simple language he tells us about the phenomenon of phantom limbs; but most important, it is a positive approach as the author says disorders help us gain insight into the working



of the normal brain. Though I don't read fiction much, I read Chetan Bhagat's *Two States*; I enjoyed reading it because it was light-hearted, fun and gave me a break from my usual reading. I am currently reading Nasreen Munnai Kabir's *A R Rahman: The Spirit of Music*; the book wonderfully captures Rahman the man, the musician and his journey to international



stardom and beyond. As it is about a shy but extremely talented composer, it is doubly entertaining. I also loved Kabir's bio of my brother Guru Dutt called *Movie Mahal - In Search of Guru Dutt*. Her research is thorough and her writing poignant.



Copper age

Being the owner of one of the oldest metal utensil shops in Mumbai is a matter of both pride and sadness, discovers Rajashree Balaram

Photographs by Jit Ray

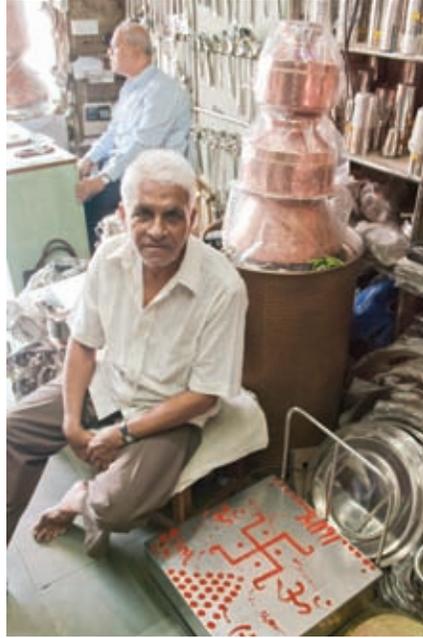
Afternoon is a rather dazzling affair in the Tamba Kaanta lane in Mumbai's Pydhonie area. Utensils and *puja* accessories in copper, bronze and steel trap the early morning sun and glint teasingly to compete for your attention from the row of shops on both sides of the lane. Everything about the area is reminiscent of a time when Bombay was still long years away from being rechristened as Mumbai. Sandwiched between the Pydhonie Jain temple on one end and the chaotic Buleshwar

market on the other, Taamba Kaanta is a 200 year-old metal market.

NOSTALGIA

Even Pankaj Shah, the 55 year-old owner of Shah Jagjivan Baldevdas, dealers in metalware, has an endearing old-world simplicity and courtesy when he speaks. Shah's shop is the oldest in the lane. "My great great-grandfather set it up 150 years ago when he came from Vadnagar in Gujarat," he says. Shah still sits at the same place where his forefathers sat in lotus pose, negotiating patients with haggling customers. "The large

balancing scale used to be made of *taamba*, which is how this place got its name," explains Shah. The scale has now been replaced with a swish new automated one that speaks in digital tones. Some things have not changed though. Shah and his assistants still treat the scale with sacred reverence every morning, when they perform *puja*. The *Om* scrawled in bold red vermilion on its shiny steel surface is proof enough. For all his earnestness, customers have dwindled steadily over the years. Shah, who has been managing the business for the past 35 years, remembers a



time when even people from distant suburbs, like Kalyan and Virar, would flock to the shop.

“Now, copper costs four times as much as steel and brass thrice as much; how do you expect people to buy these utensils anymore?” he questions aloud. Today, his customers comprise temples, film production units and a few traditionalists who still favour the old ways of life.

Cooking in copper and brass can be prohibitive as the vessels need to be regularly coated with a protective

powder that can be only done by skilled men through a process called ‘tinning’. “Even the *kalaiwallah* who used to earlier roam around the streets offering to do it are not to be seen now,” says Shah. There is a rare charm to his shop, which has none of the glitzy façade that most departmental shops brag about today. The exclusivity may not last too long though. “My two sons are not interested in taking over from me,” rues Shah. “They are preparing for a professional high-flying career in finance.” The past is slowly losing its shine, indeed.



MADE IN INDIA

THE FAMILY THAT MADE INDIA'S FIRST SWADESHI PEN, AN EBONITE INK PEN WITH A GOLD NIB, STILL MAKES PENS THE OLD WAY. K V RAMANA MURTHY IS A PROUD CUSTODIAN OF HIS FATHER'S LEGACY. HIS HOUSE IN RAJAHMUNDHRY, ANDHRA PRADESH, IS ADORNED WITH PICTURES OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHO VISITED HIS FATHER'S MANUFACTURING UNIT IN 1932—MAHATMA GANDHI WAS A LOYAL PATRON. THOUGH TIMES HAVE CHANGED, MURTHY PREFERS TRADITION OVER TECHNOLOGY. ASSISTED BY HIS TWO SONS, MURTHY PATIENTLY SLAVES OVER EACH PEN—IT TAKES A DAY TO MAKE THREE PENS. WHILE THE ORDINARY SWADESHI PENS COST ₹ 250, THE ONES WITH 14-CARAT GOLD NIBS ARE PRICED ₹ 1,500 UPWARDS. TO ORDER A RATNAMSON SWADESHI PEN, CALL 0883-2498782.

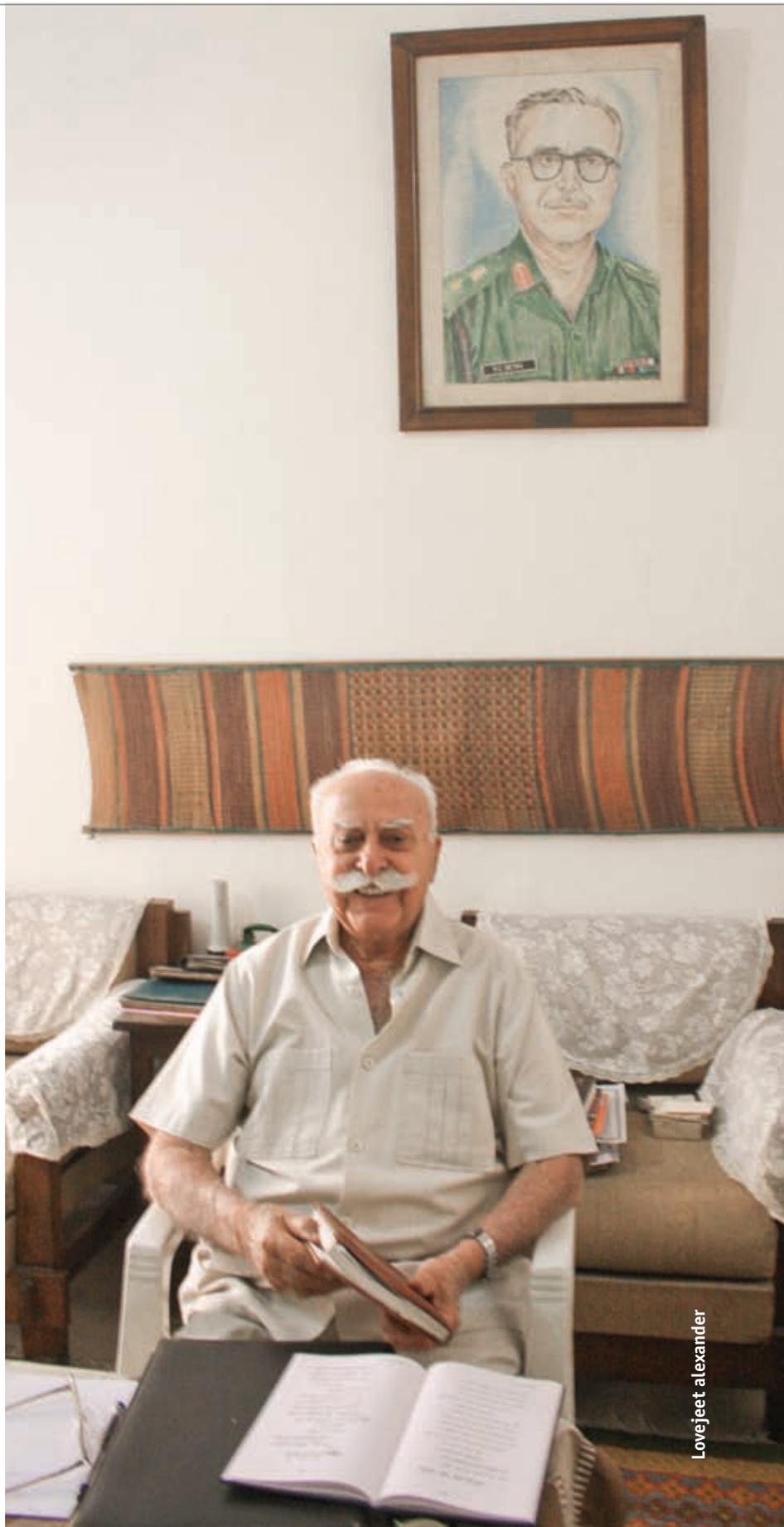
Precious POETRY

RETIRED COLONEL PURAN
CHAND SETHI GETS POETIC
WITH SHILPI SHUKLA IN
A LANGUAGE THAT WE
HAVE ABANDONED ACROSS
THE BORDER

REVIVAL

India has between 400 and 700 tongues, of which nearly 200 are dying—so claims a UNESCO study. It is sad to note that languages, the most powerful creation of the human mind, are dying such unspoken deaths (see *“Vulnerable Voices,”* August 2010). However, there are a few people, like Delhi-based Colonel Puran Chand Sethi, who are doing their bit towards saving endangered languages. A popular figure in the Delhi Poetree circuit, the 89 year-old is loved for his mellifluous Saraiki recitals. Saraiki, which sounds much like Punjabi, is a Pakistani language. “I have grown up speaking Saraiki in the Dera Ismail Khan district of the Northwest Frontier,” says the retired Army officer. “The language is still widely spoken in almost eight to 10 districts of Pakistan.”

Sethi has had a flair for writing poetry since his school days. Little did he know that the language that he’d grown up with would be left with hardly any speakers someday. “I used to converse with my wife in Saraiki,” he shares with us. “But after her death, I rarely get to speak my mother tongue with anyone.” Today, in India, the language is spoken only by a handful of those who came from Pakistan and settled here after Partition. You don’t get to hear youngsters



Lovejeet alexander

speaking it, though Bahawalpur University in Pakistan has introduced courses in Saraiki using Urdu script.

“Saraiki is based on a group of vernacular, historically unwritten dialects,” clarifies Sethi. “As it has no written script, it’s difficult to pass it over to younger generations. So while my three sons understand Saraiki, they don’t speak the language, and, therefore, family conversations are now confined to Hindi, Urdu and English.”

The octogenarian loves to write on any topic that interests him. He has written almost 50 compositions in different languages including Urdu and Saraiki. His book *Mukhtasar-Dastan* (short stories) has a few Saraiki poems. “I particularly like writing *ghazal* and *sehra* [marriage songs],” he says. He remembers his Army days when his colleagues looked forward to his poetic renditions on bravery and valour. “Today, poetry helps me fight my loneliness,” says Sethi. “Whenever I feel low, I pick up a notebook and start scribbling on paper.” While one of his sons is settled abroad, the other two stay in the same apartment on separate floors. “Technically speaking, I neither have company nor am I alone,” he adds wryly.

Do poets and other listeners understand Saraiki? “Generally they do, or I translate in Hindi or English,” he answers with a smile. It’s evident that, for Sethi, Saraiki is not just a string of beautiful words. “It exposes different kinds of society and worldviews that not only need to be protected and preserved, but revered and drawn inspiration from,” he says. “We should not let the language die. We need more efforts to restore the language in other scripts and promote it.”

And what about life when he is not writing? “I like helping my octogenarian friends fill official forms, and everything else they need my support for. I consider myself at least 20 years younger than them, physically and mentally,” he says with a hearty laugh.

WEDDING WALLAH

SHASHIKANT N DHONE WAS ON HIS USUAL DAILY *DARSHAN* OF KASBA GANPATI TEMPLE IN PUNE WHEN HE NOTICED A PILE OF WEDDING CARDS LYING IN THE PRECINCT—INVITATIONS TRADITIONALLY OFFERED TO LORD GANAPATI BY FAMILIES TO SEEK BLESSINGS FOR THE BRIDAL COUPLE. “WHEN THE PRIEST TOLD ME THE CARDS WOULD BE SOLD LATER AS *RADDI* [TRASH], I FELT BAD,” RECOUNTS THE 53 YEAR-OLD. “THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF MY WEDDING CARD COLLECTION IN 1975.” TODAY, DHONE HAS OVER 4,000 CARDS IN HIS COLLECTION, INCLUDING ONE AS SMALL AS A VISITING CARD, ANOTHER MADE FROM SANDALWOOD BARK, AND ONE WITH A 3D IMAGE OF LORD PANDURANG. “I STORE MY COLLECTION IN CARDBOARD BOXES AND DUST THE CARDS ONCE A MONTH,” SAYS DHONE.



DROP AROUND THE CLOCK

A family in Chikmagalur in Karnataka still observes time using an ancient water clock, locally known as ‘Ghatika Pathre’. The instrument, found in Shankaranarayan Jois’s house in Halmuttur village, is a bowl-shaped water clock 10” wide and 10” high and can store 0.75 litre of water that drips through a hole at the bottom into an empty bowl. The time taken to empty the water is marked as one unit equalling 24 minutes. The bowl is then refilled again and again to mark successive units till sunset. The water clock has now inspired fresh studies of ancient ways of life.

After celebrating your 25th anniversary, celebrate your first.

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





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

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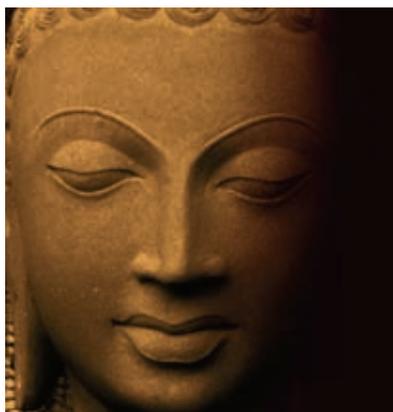
celebrate age

Wise eyes

Look deep inside yourself to understand the world outside, says **Samdhong Rinpoche**

We casually think about 'I', but we do not know in which reality the image of 'I' exists. We take 'I' for granted and think that it exists and is not dependent on anything else. But when we begin to investigate the matter further what do we find? We say: I am here and this is my mind, but the mind is not 'I'; this is my name, but the name is not 'I'. And by probing deeper and deeper we learn that there is nothing in particular which can be pointed to as being the 'I'. This is possible because the 'I' is only apparently in coexistence with other phenomenon such as the body, the mind, one's name, one's actions and thoughts. Moreover, the 'I' is related to and dependent on all these phenomena. So the 'I' exists in an interdependent way in time, space, thought and so on. On analysing the matter, one finds that while outwardly no 'I' can be pinpointed, there is something of that nature in the realm of interdependence and that this fact is not realised or comprehended by the present, ordinary mind. But when a meditator has achieved the power of concentration (*samatha*), he can investigate every object of phenomenon with a powerful one-pointedness of mind which enables him to penetrate into absolute reality.

Absolute reality, or Voidness, or Thatness, is called *sunyata* in Sanskrit. Even renowned scholars of both ancient and modern times have not understood correctly what Nagarjuna meant by his exposition of the doctrine of Voidness and they mistakenly interpreted *sunyata* as annihilation. However, to establish truth, or even a relative truth, by negation, is quite a different matter. This system is equiv-



An untrained person is in no position to perceive accurately or precisely the inner realms; it is very difficult to see any phenomenon without distorting it

alent to reaching the positive through the negative. For instance, there is a pot. We look at it and perceive it in a distorted way, as usual. What we have to do now is to negate our distorted interpretation—all our conceptions about it—and then, washed clean of our superimposed distortions, the reality of the pot as it is will appear. In a similar way, we shall perceive reality when we develop insight and wisdom. We are always full of thoughts and words because we work through them constantly, and without them we would not be able to do anything at all. For whatever we talk and think about, we make use of images. These images are usually negative and have

a distorting effect on our action as well as on our comprehension and perception. Therefore, because we are conditioned, we never see anything as it really is. An untrained person is in no position to perceive accurately or precisely the inner realms; it is very difficult to see any phenomenon without distorting it. But as we have mentioned before, for a serious and advanced meditator, insight into the reality of things can be obtained through *prajna* because it negates all the distorting forces which appertain to the imagination of 'I' and 'mine'. Thus he succeeds in his investigation of phenomena as they really are.

So the meditator in the state of meditation divides phenomena also in two parts: one part contains all that belongs to the 'I' and the 'mine' and the other part all the other things. Thus a division is made between the *padgala* (which is the individual) and the *dharma* (which is everything else which does not belong to the individual) and then *prajna* investigates them. If the meditator has realised these two truths, he will keep on investigating everything and thus learn to know the Truth.... He will discover that things are not as solid, as independent or as unchangeable as they appear to be. In this way the meditator acquires a knowledge or insight into the voidness of the phenomenon.

And as he continues with this sort of meditation he comes to a state where he can perceive reality without thought or distortion, with a direct vision of *nairatmya* or *atma*-lessness. This is *prajna*, the wisdom of insight which knows the Truth, or *vipassana*, the special vision into reality.

Excerpted from *Buddhist Meditation (Wisdom Tree; Rs 145; 113 pages)* by *Samdhong Rinpoche, a Tibetan scholar*

A fuller life



Not too long ago, a voluptuous Indian starlet made a cheeky—though meaningful—comment on the joys of cosmetic surgery on a popular Indian TV show: “Your doctor can give you what God won’t.” With her ample assets on display, there was hardly any speculation over what she was hinting at.

Ever since Dow Corning Corporation in the US introduced silicone implants to the world in 1961, millions of us have been able to strike peace with our bodies and self-image. It’s fascinating what elastomeric silicone shells filled with viscous silicone gel slipped between muscular tissues can do to attention-seeking body parts. And though the first woman to have undergone silicone breast surgery under the able hands of doctors Thomas Cronin and Frank Gerow may have faced intense trepidation, today more and more women don’t agonise much over breast enhancement. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, it’s the third most common cosmetic surgery in the US.

Apart from its key role in breast augmentation, silicone implants have other uses unmotivated by vanity: reconstruction of breasts after mastectomies; construction of heart valves and other cardiovascular prostheses; in ophthalmology; in the ear, nose, throat, and respiratory tract as a cosmetic agent for treatment of scars and wrinkles; and in the urogenital tract as penile prostheses. To be sure, silicone has lifted medical science to new heights.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: MAY 1961

- On 15 May, Heinrich Matthaei performed the Poly-U experiment and became the first person to recognise and understand the genetic code.
- On 20 May, the Dowry Prohibition Act was passed by the Government of India.
- On 27 May, English lawyer Peter Benenson’s article “The Forgotten Prisoners” appeared in *The Observer* and triggered the making of Amnesty International.
- On 31 May, South Africa officially announced its departure from the Commonwealth of Nations.

SWEDOW

Unnecessary or inappropriate items donated to a charity organisation or relief effort.

Example: In Indonesia, 4,000 tonnes of donated drugs arrived after the tsunami, well beyond local needs, said Jason Nickerson, a University of Ottawa PhD candidate studying healthcare in humanitarian crises. Most of those drugs weren't required, were labelled in foreign languages or were close to expiry. They overwhelmed the capacity of local incinerators to dispose of them. The problem is known by the acronym **SWEDOW**: Stuff We Don't Want.

—Tu Thanh Ha, “Thanks all the same, but we're okay for socks”, *The Globe and Mail*, 18 March 2011

reno coach

An advisor who helps people make decisions about or avoid the pitfalls of a home renovation.

Noun: reno coaching.

Example: She figured she needed help from someone knowledgeable and impartial, who understood how the industry worked. Then she heard about **reno coaching**, a relatively new service where, for \$ 75-\$ 100 an hour, a project manager would come to her house and help her draw up a budget and advise her whether her project was practical and affordable.

—Dianne Nice, “Reno coach keeps projects in the ballpark”, *The Globe and Mail*, 1 March 2011

“Common sense and a sense of humour are the same thing, moving at different speeds. A sense of humour is just common sense, dancing.

—American philosopher William James

racial battle fatigue

Stress and anxiety caused by constantly dealing with both overtly racist actions and subtle references to one's race.

Example: “The results of our study suggest that the notion of **racial battle fatigue** could be a very real phenomenon that might explain how individuals can go from the experience of racism to the experience of a serious mental health disorder,” said Soto. “While the term is certainly not trying to say that the conditions are exactly what soldiers face on a battlefield, it borrows from the idea that stress is created in chronically unsafe or hostile environments.”

—“Discrimination creates racial battle fatigue for African-Americans”, *Penn State Live*, 3 March 2011

HINT FICTION

An extremely short literary work, typically no more than 25 words, that hints at a longer, more complex story.

Example: Excited by the possibilities of the hint fiction form, the staff of *Any Other Word*, Penn State York's online literary magazine, is running its own **hint fiction** contest now through the end of March 2011.

—“Any Other Word hosts 2011 Hint Fiction Contest,” *Penn State York*, 8 March 2011

writeprint

The set of writing style characteristics that uniquely identify the author of a text. Also: **write-print**.

Example: However, there may exist an alternative method for ‘unmasking’ anonymous bloggers, cyber-stalkers, etc, using public information. Everyone has a unique **writeprint** (basically a written fingerprint that can be used to identify him or her). This technique has traditionally been used to identify the true author of a text (e.g. a book) where authorship is disputed or unknown. Forensics linguistics has been used to provide evidence in trademark disputes cases, identifying the author of anonymous texts (such as threat or harassment letters), and identifying cases of plagiarism.

—Robert Hudock, “Fingerprinting (write-printing) text using stylistic features can be used to accurately identify the authorship of anonymous emails, blog entries and IRC chat sessions”, *Law Blog 2.0*, 20 June 2009

pajamahadeen

Bloggers who expose errors made by the traditional media; people whose activism consists solely of emails and online posts. [*pajama* + *Mujahadeen*]
Example: Rather has made clear he believes that those clad in pajamas and typing on computers are in no position to judge him. Our role, in his vision, is to passively imbibe his disinformative propaganda the way geese receive cornmeal to make *fois grae* [sic]. He sits behind his anchor desk, confident that his status is impenetrable and that any attack made by the **Pajamahadeen** against his position would be a useless gesture, no matter what technical errors we may have proved.

—Ed Driscoll, “Sixth Avenue bloodbath”, *Ed Driscoll.com*, 24 September 2010

NEUROCINEMATICS

The neurological study of a person's mental state and reactions while being exposed to different film styles. Also: **neuro-cinematics**.

Example: Princeton University psychology professor Uri Hasson coined the term **neurocinematics** based on an fMRI study, in which he concluded that certain types of films (e.g. horror, action, sci-fi) produced high activation scores in the amygdala region of viewer subjects' brains, the part that controls disgust, anger, lust, and fear. Hasson asserted that horror filmmakers can potentially control viewers' brains by precisely editing their films to maximise amygdalic excitement and thus ‘control for’ buzz and success at the theatre.

—Kevin Randall, “Rise of Neurocinema: how Hollywood studios harness your brainwaves to win Oscars”, *Fast Company*, 25 February 2011



RECLAIM YOUR ROOTS

None of us are born with green thumbs, but all of us can cultivate one. Don't believe us? **Urban Leaves**, a unique NGO established by Mumbai-based Preeti Patil, might just change your mind. Patil started the initiative eight years ago to promote the concept

of terrace and balcony farms by employing natural agricultural processes. Assisted by 60 volunteers, she conducts workshops at public spaces such as Maharashtra Nature Park in Mahim. More than 100 amateurs signed up in the past six months. Patil demonstrates how bio-waste, such as used tea leaves and vegetable and fruit peels, that we trash carelessly everyday can be used to make soil nutrient-rich. The people who sign up for lessons come from diverse backgrounds: doctors, MNC executives, lawyers and MBA students, and retired government servants. You can register for classes at www.urbanleavesinindia.com

browsewrap

Describes a legal agreement that the user accepts indirectly by browsing an online site. Also: **browse-wrap**, **browse wrap**.

Example: Even Cory Doctorow, the digital rights activist and online champion of all things weird, includes a lengthy legal warning at the bottom of his emails. He uses the space to ‘require’ recipients to free him from their companies’ ‘non-negotiated agreements, licenses, terms-of-service, shrinkwrap, clickwrap, **browsewrap**, confidentiality, non-disclosure, non-compete and acceptable use policies’.

—Ryan Singel, “Burning question: why do emails contain legal warnings?”, *Wired*, 27 December 2010

“Faith is a passionate intuition.”

—English poet William Wordsworth

PRECARIAT

People whose lives are precarious because they have little or no job security.

Example: This is echoed by the handful of other academics who are dipping their toes into the murky psychological depths where liberal values and baser instincts collide. The economist Professor Guy Standing, for example, who has charted the slide away from altruism and tolerance among that large group of stressed, job-insecure Britons he dubs the **precariat**.

—Bill Tuckey, “Liberals: The secret elitists”, *The Independent*, 13 December 2010

“I want to set up 100 schools before I leave this world”

Sandeep Desai, 52, Mumbai, for setting up schools by seeking alms in local trains



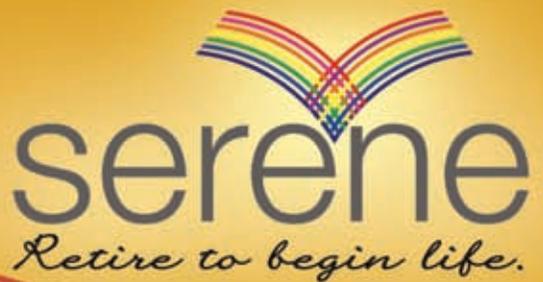
Jit Ray

One does not expect a qualified marine engineer and management professor to ‘beg’ in trains. But Sandeep Desai does just that. In 1997, he set up a trust, Shloka Missionaries, to launch educational reforms, funded by donations and part of his earnings from lecturing stints at S P Jain College of Management in Mumbai and workshops on advertising, management and business communication. After setting up a school for slum children in Goregaon in Mumbai, Desai realised that his mission to set up 100 schools for poor children could not be achieved without stepping on the accelerator. Instead of approaching corporate donors, he decided to get in touch directly with the common man. For the past year, he has been spending seven hours every day in local trains between Goregaon and Churchgate, asking people to donate whatever they can. Desai had to bypass ridicule and cynicism before he could finally

get urban, hardened citizens to open the doors to their hearts. His perseverance worked—in just one year, he has collected about ₹ 2.2 million, (averaging around ₹ 5,000 a day). As soon as he gets into a train, he goes around each compartment with his collection box, and distributes a small visiting card stating his professional background and contact details. Depending on the passenger profile, he strikes a conversation in fluent English or Hindi. “When I started, I used to get mostly coins,” he tells us. Desai is now already in the midst of paperwork to set up schools in Washind in Ratnagiri; Doniwade in Rajapur; and a management college and seniors home in Karjat. Many former students from the management college where he taught earlier have offered to help him with his dream. But Desai has no plans to slow down. “I will keep travelling in trains till I have achieved my dream of 100 schools.”

—Rajashree Balaram

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