

JULY 2010 Rs 30

harmony

celebrate age

IN FOCUS

Mumbai's Powai Lake
finds silver saviours

DESTINATION

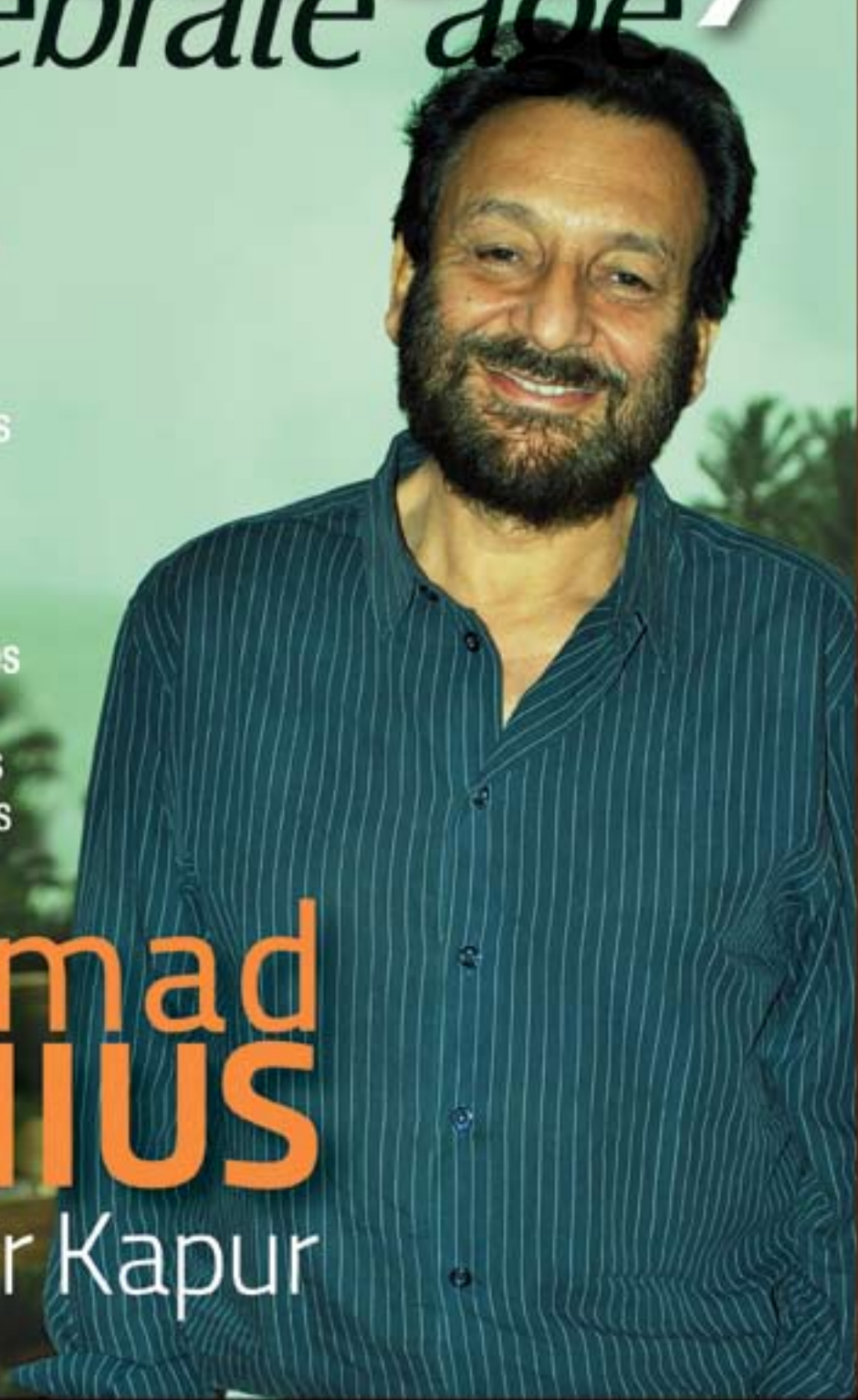
Tom Alter's escapades
in Mussoorie

RETROSPECTIVE

Photographer
Kulwant Roy's archives

Madhukar Talwalkar's
new column on fitness

The mad
GENIUS
Shekhar Kapur



The magazine for silver citizens • Subscriber Copy Not For Resale



A stroke-predicting kit • Vijay Nambisan on active silvering

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WAKA WAKA!

Soccer fever has gripped the globe. United by the love of a sport that cuts across boundaries like class, culture and age, people have been riveted to their TV screens this month, cheering on their favourite teams at the FIFA World Cup in Johannesburg.

My family is no exception! There's something exhilarating about watching the world's finest players compete in epic battles that draw blood, sweat and tears. Even more impressive is the significance of South Africa—a country once riven by hatred and prejudice—hosting an event that has brought the world together.

This is the first World Cup to be held in Africa and the criticism has already begun to emerge about sloppy organisation, problems with crowd control and flash strikes by stadium workers. Despite these stumbling blocks, inevitable in such a tournament, I doff my hat to Johannesburg for its efforts to aid inclusion to make the World Cup a celebration not just for the young and the restless, but for silvers and the differently abled as well.

For starters, tickets have been sold at a discount to elders and a comprehensive, 24-hour health and medical response service has been set up for all visitors. Also, following a plea by NGO South African Disability Alliance Group, Soccer City Stadium (the main stage) and the nine other stadiums have allocated seats for wheelchair-bound spectators. Volunteers have been roped in to provide sign language support for hearing-impaired spectators. What's more, visually impaired fans have access to a 'live-match experience' in six of the stadiums where an entire section has been equipped with headphones, with trained commentators reporting live on the action on the pitch along with sighted guides to help people in and out of their seats. Seen for the first time in Africa, this is an



Donald Woodrow

initiative of the Swiss National Association for the Blind and the South African National Council for the Blind.

It will soon be India's turn to host a world-class event: this October, the Commonwealth Games will come to Delhi. The capital's authorities claim to have it all worked out. However, if media reports are to be believed, the city is scrambling to meet its deadlines; from the Games Village, stadiums and Metro rail to hotels, roads and attendant infrastructure, everything seems to be running behind schedule. In the entire melee, no one is talking about concepts like inclusion, universal design or accessibility.

Today we are an economic power, the cynosure of the world. With this stature comes the need to show maturity and responsibility to society at large. It's time to bring our national events to international standards by catering to every segment of the population, from Generation A to Generation X. We need to break down barriers and give access to all. Let's take a cue from the World Cup—its anthem *Waka waka* urges us to fight the fight and get the job done. They've done it in Africa; it's India's turn.

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

Harmony—Celebrate Age—July 2010 Volume 7 Issue 2

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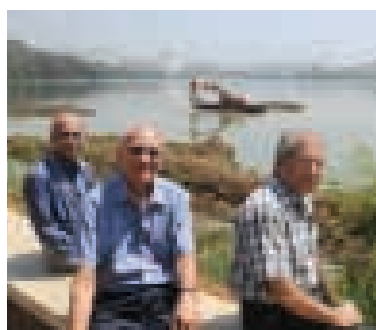
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Editorial & Marketing Offices: Reliance Centre, 1st floor, 19, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai-400001. Tel: 91-22-30327108 (Editorial), 30327102 (Marketing). Email: contact.mag@harmonyindia.org **Printed and published by** Dharmendra Bhandari on behalf of the owners, Harmony for Silvers Foundation **Printed at** Thomson Press India Ltd, Plot No. 5/5A, TTC Ind. Area, Thane-Belapur Road, Airoli, Navi Mumbai-400708 (Maharashtra); Thomson Press India Ltd, 18-35, Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007 (Haryana). **Published at** Reliance Energy Centre, Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400055. **Disclaimer:** The material provided by *Harmony* is not a substitute for professional opinions. Readers are advised to seek appropriate advice from qualified and licensed professionals in the concerned field. © Harmony for Silvers Foundation. All rights reserved worldwide. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. *Harmony* does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material. www.harmonyindia.org

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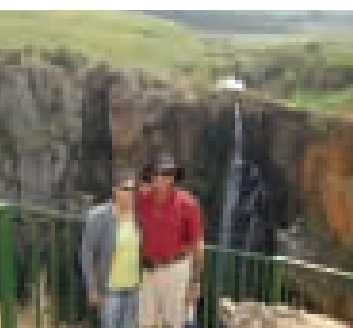
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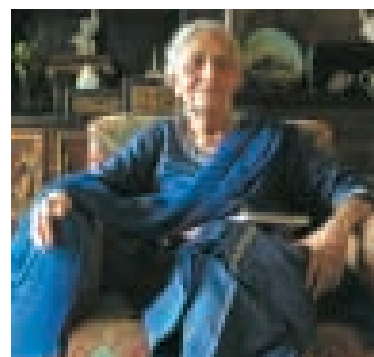
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MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER: Harmony reader Bansi Singh shares moments of love and nostalgia

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column one

I remember interviewing Shekhar Kapur 10 years ago for his proposed magnum opus *Paani*, a film on a millennium city plagued by water wars. With the unprecedented delay in the making of *Paani*, the issue continued to become more relevant by the year and the filmmaker's resolve stronger—a decade later, he sounds as excited about his pet project as he sounded then. Sustaining a dream is not as simple as it sounds. Adorned with as much grit as heartbreak, it can bend the steel the mind and body once were. It takes a person with immense mental strength to hang on to their convictions. Like Shekhar Kapur—on the cover this month ("The Mad Genius")—did. Finally, there will be *Paani*, just the way he dreamt it.

Harmony's subjects' (and, our readers') quiet resolve to see dreams in action is exemplary. This month, setting examples are S K Saksena ("Green Warrior") for fighting against quarrying in Mumbai, and Arnavaz Damania for her compassion towards children with tendencies to suicide. For 100 per cent advice, turn to columnists Anjali Mukerjee and Shameem Akthar. Offering advice on making a 'Living Will' and intimacy with children are Timeri Murari and Vijay Nambisan. We also bring you two new expert columns. Dr Joe Lewis's column on 'Weight Watch' has been replaced by septuagenarian Madhukar Talwalkar's tips on exercise and weight loss; and 'Appearances', where skilled professionals will help you look good—this time Dr Jamuna Pai discusses modern and traditional skincare techniques. If you have a question for them, send it to us at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org. The cherry on the cake: a nostalgic look at Mussoorie by actor-writer Tom Alter. Enjoy!

—Meeta Bhatti



Congratulations to *Harmony* magazine on completing six years! Your anniversary feature "Ticket to Hidden India" (June 2010) was indeed special and very engaging. The feature "Delhi 6" on Chandni Chowk took me back in time to the 1950s. In those days, there was a tram in Chandni Chowk; the famed book bazaar of Daryaganj was at Jama Masjid; and one could watch Bollywood movies at Majestic cinema. I also remember Kabari Bazaar on Sundays at Jama Masjid; I used to spend one Sunday every month at the bazaar. My other memories include eating *puri-choley* at Vig Restaurant; and eating *samosa* and *puri-choley* near Moti Talkies, opposite Lajpat Rai Market. In those days, old Delhi (Chandni Chowk) was better known as '*shahar*' (city). We used to wonder: was New Delhi a village if not a *shahar*?

Mahesh Kapasi, New Delhi

It is wonderful that *Harmony* for Silvers Foundation and Max Healthcare are coming together to organise health camps for senior citizens. I would also like to acknowledge the work done by the *Harmony* team on ground at these camps—they are extremely hardworking and cooperative and deserve special appreciation.

Ved Prakash Verma, Delhi

The story "Comfort Food" ('In Focus'; May 2010) about the food service for silvers instituted by the Kerala Brahmana Sabha in Thrissur was heartening. This is an impressive achievement. I too recently began a computer orientation programme for silvers and am getting a tremendous response. I hope you will assist me in knowing more details of the food service programme and the probability of launching a similar service in Kolkata too.

Mahesh Lodha, Kolkata

I read with interest the article "Match Point" ('Orbit') in the April 2010 issue of *Harmony*. The launch of a Companion Club for elders was indeed a humane and enlightened initiative by Mumbai-based businessman Kumar Deshpande. Such Companion Clubs should be formed in every city across India. I would also suggest that, in addition to widows and widowers, the club should include many men and women in their late 40s and 50s who missed the chance to marry when they were young.

P Saigal, Kanpur

Congratulations on the 6th anniversary of *Harmony* magazine. Our organisation, the Dental Healthcare Awareness Society, provides free treatment to residents of old age homes in Chandigarh and Panchkula. You can read more about our organisation on our website www.sanjaykalradentalclinic.com and you can contact me on (0) 9915299803, or email me at kalrasanjay2000@rediffmail.com. I would like to start an awareness drive so people can enjoy good dental health even in later years of life.

Dr Sanjay Kalra, Via email



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The Varishth Nagarik Hitarth Samiti, which has 595 members, has received a copy of *Harmony* magazine for the past one-and-a-half years. The magazine contains novel experiences and adventurous activities of retired people that serve to inspire others. Members of the Samiti really appreciate the content and design of the magazine. However, we have a suggestion to offer—we feel that a Hindi portion could also be added to the magazine to make it even more accessible for readers who are more comfortable with Hindi. As many silvers enjoy travelling, *Harmony* could organise subsidised tours to Bombay or other countries

for silvers to bring further cheer to their lives.

O P Gupta, *President, Varishth Nagarik Hitarth Samiti, Delhi*

I am 75 years old. I enjoy travelling, writing and reading. I have also published three books on spirituality. I believe that life after post retirement need not be dreary if we fill it with meaning and purpose. Recently, a friend of mine introduced me to *Harmony* magazine. It was the May 2010 issue. I went through the copy and I look forward to reading the next one. *Harmony* is beautifully

designed and has engaging content. I fully support the positive attitude that it represents. Age is not a cause for concern but celebration. I intend to spend my 'silver' years in pursuit of hobbies that are close to my heart. I am happy there is a magazine that is exclusively focused on addressing the concerns of the elderly.

S V V Raghavan, *Mumbai*

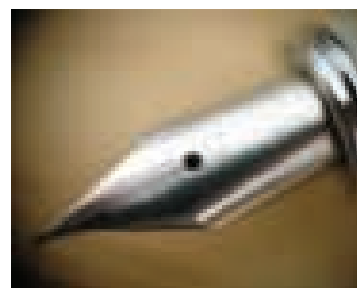
CONTRIBUTORS



Writer and poet **Vijay Nambisan** wants to remind everyone who equates ageing with decline in productivity that "the word 'senile' comes from the same root as 'senior' and 'senator'". In this issue ('Exclusive'; "New Dreams"), he tells us why silvers should take charge of their lives and focus on spending them more constructively. Nambisan has written and worked for journals in many parts of India for 25 years. He has published poetry widely, and is the author of three books, *Language as an Ethic*, *Bihar is in the Eye of the Beholder* and *Three Measures of Bhakti*—all published by Penguin India. The last, which appeared in 2009, has translations from two medieval Kerala poets. Nambisan is 46, lives in Lonavala, and has begun to stave off Alzheimer's by exercising his mind.



Actor **Tom Alter's** feature this issue ('Destination': "Downhill or Uphill?") is a delicate reminiscence of his childhood in Mussoorie. A product of the Film and Television Institute of India, the 60 year-old has acted in both commercial and parallel cinema and enchanted audiences with his delightful command over Urdu. He is also a prolific sports journalist, with a special affinity for cricket. Though he doesn't appear on the big screen as often as his fans would like him to any more, he is active in theatre—his solo play *Maulana* received rave reviews. Winner of the Padmashri, Alter has written three books: *The Longest Race*, *Rerun at Rialto* and *The Best in the World*. He divides his time between Mumbai and Mussoorie.



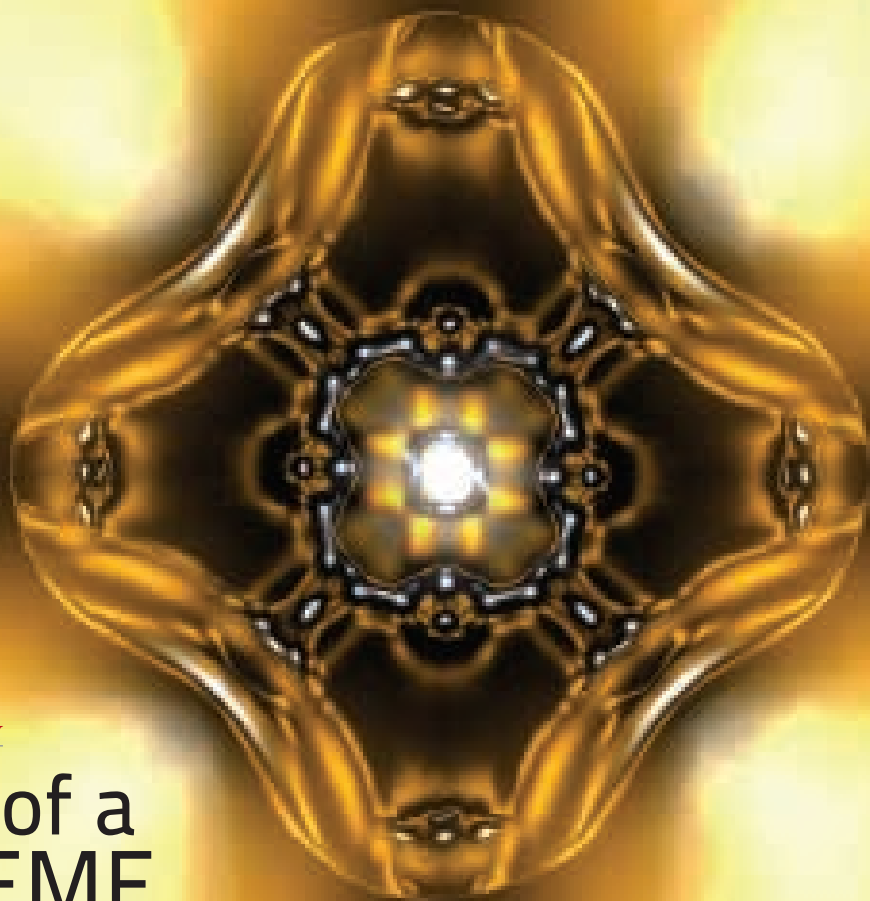
AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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

- You had an experience related to money
- You faced a serious health problem and conquered it
- You know of someone who has done something exceptional after the age of 55
- You have a hobby or an interesting travel experience to share
- You have a funny or insightful anecdote about your grandchildren ...and we'll print it in the column 'Your Space'

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OPEN YOUR EYES TO EVERYTHING
THAT'S NEW IN THE SILVER WORLD

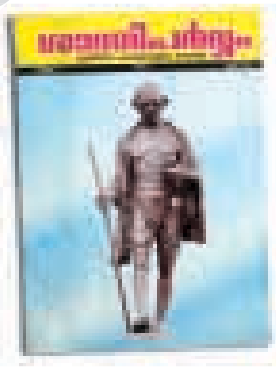


O»NEWSWORTHY

GEM of a SCHEME

It's a precious idea. **Indian Bank has introduced a jewel loan for silvers**—it enables you to get a loan against your jewellery (up to 70 per cent of valuation), at a 10 per cent rate of interest. The bank offers a maximum of Rs 500,000 and a minimum of Rs 15,000 per senior citizen and the loan is repayable in 35 EMIs or in a one-shot bullet repayment, according to your convenience. The icing on the cake: the bank claims in its media release that the loan

will be made available within one hour of making the application. "The Reverse Mortgage scheme is already available for senior citizens," affirms T M Bhasin, chairman and managing director, Indian Bank. "However, considering that procedures such as non-encumbrance certification, appraisal, sanction and documentation take about three to four weeks, we thought of introducing a scheme that would meet their urgent and immediate requirements."



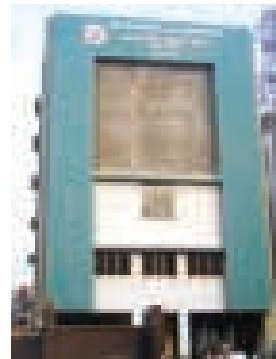
A NEW VOICE: IN JUNE IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, A RETIRED GOVERNMENT SERVANT, N ANANTHAKRISHNAN, LAUNCHED *SANTHIPARVAM*, A MALAYALAM MAGAZINE FOR SILVERS. ANANTHAKRISHNAN, 62, INTENDS "TO ORGANISE ELDERLY CITIZENS AS A PRESSURE GROUP TO MEET THE CHALLENGES POSED BY COMPLEX SOCIETY AND EQUIP THEM TO FIGHT FOR A BETTER LIVING".

O» **NEWSWORTHY**

Course of action

Responding to the needs of India's burgeoning silver population, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Deonar, Mumbai, launched a one-year **diploma course in gerontology** two years ago. This year, two important subjects have been added to the curriculum: media and elderly; and creative arts and fieldwork for elderly. "Owing to urbanisation and migration, the traditional family model is breaking up," Professor Nasreen Rustomfram, chairperson of the Centre for Lifelong Learning and former dean of student affairs at TISS, tells *Harmony*. "Though seniors can sustain themselves through community and family

welfare programmes, we still need to get rid of the stereotypes attached to them. Hence, we started this course with the aim to scientifically train people entering the field of geriatrics." The curriculum, which is divided into two semesters, includes both theory and fieldwork; at the end of the year, TISS helps candidates with placement. The course, which begins on 9 July, will be held only on Fridays and Saturdays. It is open to anyone above the age of 25 years but some seats are reserved for people above the age of 55; the fee is Rs 20,000. For more details, contact Rustomfram at (0) 9223300722 or email cll.tiss@tiss.edu



Almost HOME

SURAT'S SILVERS have cause for cheer. City-based NGO Akhil Hind Mahila Parishad has launched a **'Short Stay Home' for elders when their children go away for work or vacations**. A nominal fee will be charged for admission to the four-storied home, which houses dining and recreational facilities. Volunteer doctors will also be available on call in case of any medical emergencies. "As a growing number of families go out for vacations, we thought it would be a great idea to start this venture," Jayshree Gajiwala, president of the Akhil Hind Mahila Parishad, tells *Harmony*. "Silvers can stay here for a week or even extend their stay up to three months. It's a secure place for the elderly where they will be treated with respect and warmth," she adds. For more details on the home, contact the Parishad at 0261-2593611.

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www.bigcinemas.com



The C pill

You may soon be able to walk into a pharmacy and buy a pill that lets you live to 100.

Professor Nir Barzilai of New York's Albert Einstein College of Medicine announced to media in May that intensive research into what makes cells die, and why some people dodge major illnesses such as cancer, diabetes and dementia, has led to the development of life-enhancing drugs that may be available for testing as early as 2012. "Our work at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine has identified genetic variants that mark out people who live to a ripe old age," he tells Reuters. For instance, he referred to Jean Calment, a French woman who died at the age of 122 years without suffering a trace of dementia,



diabetes or cancer. A regular smoker till she turned 100, she took up fencing at 85 and rode a bicycle until a few years before her death. "The new drugs being developed build on these discoveries, which involve biological pathways affecting metabolism,

cell-death, inflammation and cholesterol," adds Barzilai. "To satisfy the requirements of drug regulators and the market, they may well be billed as remedies for specific illnesses but in actual fact they tackle multiple causes of unhealthy ageing."

NOTICE: THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PG & PENSION, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, HAS ENHANCED THE MONTHLY FIXED MEDICAL ALLOWANCE (FMA) FOR ALL ENTITLED RETIRED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES FROM RS 100 TO RS 300

WITH EFFECT FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2008. ALL RETIRED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES MUST ENSURE THAT THE REVISED PENSION PAYMENT ORDER (PPO) INDICATING DATE OF BIRTH OF SELF AND SPOUSE WITH ENDORSEMENT OF

ENHANCED PENSION EVERY FIVE YEARS AFTER ATTAINING THE AGE OF 80 IS ISSUED FROM THE OFFICE OF THEIR RETIREMENT (WITH A COPY WITH THEM) TO AVOID DIFFICULTIES IN FUTURE.



Hello Haryana!



If you live in Haryana, get ready to meet and greet your peers. The state government has announced that it will establish senior citizens' clubs in all towns across Haryana. "We will provide annual assistance of Rs 500,000 to each of these clubs," Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda announced to media. That's not all—the state will also set up 1,000 day-care centres and old age homes in 2010-2011.

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O»FIRST RESORT

Viva(ra) life!

Goa-based real-estate company Acron has got its eye on you. It recently launched **Vivara, a nationwide chain of world-class residential communities for silvers.** The homes, with a range of amenities, will operate on a lease model to spare residents the hassles associated with owning property and dealing with management, maintenance and security. "In our lifelong leasehold model, senior citizens can move in anytime, treat the house like a resort, pay the monthly rent and when they move

out the entire deposit is refunded in full," says Amar Britto, chairman of the group. The minimum amount of lease is Rs 1 million and the maximum is Rs 2.5 million. Acron will kick-start the project in Goa and then move on to Coorg, Kerala, Puducherry, Shirdi, Rishikesh, Vrindavan and the outskirts of Chennai and Bengaluru.

i To learn more about Vivara homes, contact Britto at 0832-25206547/6548



ROLL-N-ROCK: FANS OF THE ROLLING STONES ARE SET TO GET SOME SATISFACTION IN 2012. COLOURFUL FRONT MAN MICK JAGGER, 67, RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE SILVER ROCKERS ARE TOURING THE WORLD—FROM NORTH AMERICA TO EUROPE, AUSTRALIA TO ASIA. (YES, INDIA IS ON THE AGENDA TOO.) WE'LL KEEP YOU POSTED.



O»TRENDS

Forever, and after

THE SEPARATION of former US vice-president and Nobelist Al Gore, 62, and his wife Tipper, 61, who have been married 40 years—and co-authored a mushy book called *Joined at the Heart*—has prompted a collective navel-gazing exercise in the US on **ageing and divorce.** While many commentators are wondering why the parents of four (and grandparents of three) should even bother to separate at 'their age', others are pointing to the fact that it's harder for couples to compromise as they get older. Besides, once the children leave the nest, there's no one to stay together for any more. As *The New York Times* reports, the rate of divorce in the US is actually dropping sharply in every age group except the over-60s; the newspaper also cites the example of Bertie and Jessie Woods, who made history last year by divorcing at the age of 98. And according to a study by AARP, people in their 60s and 70s appreciate life after divorce the most of any of the ages—the silvers interviewed said they were able to forge a new identity. Moreover, with increasing longevity, they see another decade or two of active life ahead of them and wish to make these years more fulfilling and exciting.

O»MEDIA WATCH

Crisis of mortality

“IN THE US, if someone tells a woman she’s going to meet a tall, dark stranger, she thinks she’ll meet Antonio Banderas,” filmmaker Woody Allen tells the BBC. “But it could also refer to the man we’ll all meet, the Grim Reaper.” That’s the subtext of the 74 year-old’s latest romantic comedy-drama *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger*, which opened at the Cannes Film Festival in May to warm reviews. The film follows the life of a silver couple (played by Sir Anthony Hopkins [see pic] and Gemma Jones) in the throes of a midlife crisis who barter their established existence for more immediate passions, only to be



inevitably confronted with the reality of their age and mortality. Allen is very clear about his own views on the subject. “My relationship with ageing and death remains the same—I’m strongly against them,” he quips. “I find it a lousy deal. You don’t get smarter, you don’t get

wiser, you don’t get more mellow, you don’t get more kindly; nothing happens. But your back hurts more, you get more indigestion, your eyesight isn’t as good and you need a hearing aid. It’s a bad business getting older and I would advise you not to do it if you can avoid it.”

O»INNOVATION

TIE-DRIVE

Bondage doesn’t always have to be kinky! For researchers at the Ford Research Centre in Aachen, Germany, it’s a way to discover the effects ageing has on drivers. They have developed a ‘Third Age Suit’ based on ‘bondage techniques’ that adds at least 30 years to the age of a driver. As news website *irishtimes.com* reports, the suit has ankle, knee and elbow pads to restrict joint movement; a corset to impede the torso; a neck brace that makes looking over your shoulder more difficult; and goggles that limit vision. “Our engineers normally design cars that are sporty and fast and older people like sporty cars too,” says Dr Achim Lindner, Ford’s medical researcher. “This suit helps young engineers understand what it’s like to have restricted movement so they can design cars that older people can also use.”



ASIA, AND AGE: SINGAPORE RECENTLY PLAYED HOST TO THE AGEING ASIA INVESTMENT FORUM WHERE BUSINESS LEADERS FROM 16 COUNTRIES AND 26 BUSINESS SECTORS INCLUDING REAL ESTATE, HEALTHCARE, WELLNESS, FINANCE, PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE CAME TOGETHER TO TAP OPPORTUNITIES AND SEEK SOLUTIONS TO ASIA’S IMMINENT ‘AGEING CRISIS’. SINGAPORE, HONG KONG, JAPAN AND KOREA ARE ALL EXPECTED TO BE AMONG THE 10 FASTEST AGEING COUNTRIES GLOBALLY.

O»LOVE THAT

Kung fu grannies

Beset by sexual assaults in a deteriorating neighbourhood, a group of silvers in Nairobi are fighting back. As Associated Press reports, **over 50 women in**



the Korogocho slum of the Kenyan capital between the ages of 50 and 80 have enrolled in kung fu classes at a community centre.

Clad in headscarves, long skirts and petticoats, the women gather twice a week to pound punching bags with their hands and feet. "We are training to target the nose, the solar plexus or the groin to hurt an attacker so it gives us a chance to escape," says the 70 year-old instructor Mary Wangui, a rape survivor. "I also teach the women to shout 'No' repetitively to draw the attention of others." Rape of elder women is rapidly on the rise in the Nairobi—almost 1,500 cases were reported last year—especially because of myths suggesting that intercourse with an elderly woman can cure a person of AIDS or cleanse a person's sins.

From silver to gold

A SMALL COMPANY in the US has proved that you don't have to peddle Blackberries and iPhones to twenty-somethings to rule the telecom roost. As website www.dailyvanguard.com reports, **Consumer Cellular, based in Tigard, Oregon, crossed the \$ 100 million mark this year through**

a simple route: silvers. It specialises in basic cell phones for elders that have large buttons; are hearing-aid compatible; and come with 'emergency buttons' to speed-dial the doctor and police. The company offers monthly plans that are up to 50 per cent cheaper than the contracts offered by major cell phone companies; in many of the plans, the phone comes free. "Senior citizens are now adopting cellular technology in large numbers yet find it frustrating to use phones that are clearly not designed for them," says Jan Hinks, managing director of Consumer Cellular. "Thus, we decided to target this demographic, offering them customised phones they can use with ease and customised schemes that maximise their money. Our customer base is growing rapidly." It's time Indian cell phone companies took a cue.



O»FACE OFF

Choc de!



Here's a guilt-free reason to buy a bar of chocolate: it'll give you a face lift. A study by Switzerland-based Barry Callebaut, the world's largest chocolatier and supplier to companies like Cadbury and Thornton, reveals that **eating 20 g of Acticoa, a chocolate packed with antioxidants, or flavanols, every day will prevent wrinkles, boost elasticity and improve hydration.** Flavanols are said to 'mop up' free radicals caused by smoking, pollution, caffeine and lack of sleep. "We have developed a way of preserving the flavanols found in cocoa beans during the chocolate-making process, allowing us to produce a richer product," Hans Vriens, chief innovation officer, Barry Callebaut, tells London newspaper *The Telegraph*. "We will now market Acticoa in the form of bars, drinks and buttons." To this, Richard Hurrell, professor of human nutrition at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, adds, "There is much evidence that cocoa flavanols have a positive effect on blood flow and can reduce blood pressure. The effect on blood flow is possibly what improves skin health." Dark chocolate has already been linked with lower blood pressure and reducing risk of stroke.



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BENGALURU ON THE RUN!



Silvers proved once again that age is just a number. About 1,600 silvers represented Harmony at the Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru to participate in the **Sunfeast World 10K Marathon on 23 May**. Guest of honour, popular Kannada actor Pooja Gandhi, (see picture below, centre) was accompanied by her sister, actress Radhika Gandhi (see picture below, extreme left).



O»H PEOPLE

Sanitation specialist

While the world struggles with water scarcity and sewage disposal woes, Chennai-based **Sekhar Raghavan** has found a unique way to tackle the problem. The 63 year-old has devised ecological sanitation (ES) toilets that require no water to flush out faecal matter. The dual-vault, twin-pan, urine-diverting, dry composting toilets have a hole in the centre, 12 inches in diameter, through which faecal matter is deposited into a vault underneath. Urine and water used for anal washing are diverted through a separate tube and processed into urea. After every use, ash dumped on the excreta helps turn it into compost in a process that takes six months.

"The toilets are completely odourless," assures Raghavan who was covered in the October 2006 issue of *Harmony* for his rainwater harvesting initiative. A PhD in Physics and former professor of physics at Madras University, he has been working on the project for six years now. "The idea germinated

from a selfish motive. I could not bear thinking about the groundwater that I use being contaminated with faecal matter," says Raghavan. In November 2009, he finished building 66 ES toilets in Kovalam, a fishing hamlet in Tamil Nadu. The project was funded by the Japanese International Coopera-

tion Agency and the toilets cost Rs 14,000 each. To reduce the cost of construction, Raghavan now plans to build toilet walls using blocks made from stone aggregate coated with molten waste plastic. "Water is a rare commodity," he says. "Let's protect it the best way we can."



V Ramesh

IN PASSING

- American actor **Dennis Hopper** succumbed to prostate cancer on 29 May. He was 74.
- Author **Manohar Mulgaonkar** passed away on 15 June in Jabalpet in Karnataka. He was 97.

VISITOR

Who: Sri Lankan President **Mahinda Rajapaksa**

When: 8-11 June

Why: To negotiate agreements on bilateral and cultural cooperation; attract Indian assistance to small development projects in Sri Lanka; and sign the Comprehensive Economic Participation Agreement.

BIRTHDAYS

- American actor **Morgan Freeman** turned 73 on 1 June.
- Libyan leader **Muammar al-Gaddafi** turned 68 on 7 June.
- Beatles singer and composer **Paul McCartney** turned 67 on 18 June.
- India born author **Salman Rushdie** turned 63 on 19 June.
- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **M Karunanidhi** turned 87 on 3 June.
- Former Indian defence minister **George Fernandes** turned 80 on 3 June.

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.

MOTHER, MENTOR

For me my mother, Mai Madivale, was—and will always be—the epitome of grit, determination and independence. She was part of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement and taught me the importance of fighting for my rights and standing up for what I loved and believed in.

Ma came into my life after my biological mother passed away. My father met her while campaigning for the Samyukta Maharashtra movement. Though I have heard many horror stories of stepmothers I was fortunate. Ma was different. She became my teacher and best friend. She was a born leader, and my childhood was spent watching her fight for the city of Mumbai, the city she loved more than anything else. She, along with her peers, spent days picketing and protesting against the government to make sure that Mumbai remained an integral part of Maharashtra.

Ma was a conscientious citizen in every aspect. She made sure we, her

children, also contributed our own bit to society. My two brothers and I were entrusted with the task of keeping the stretch opposite our house—from Gokhale Road to Shivaji Park in Dadar, Mumbai—clean through the day. The road was a significant stretch for Mumbai at that time as it housed several freedom fighters. My



Mai Madivale continues to inspire

brothers and I used to wake up early, pick up brooms and sweep the road. We never sensed any discrimination based on our gender or age. Ma truly believed in a world of equality. In fact, it was with her encouragement that I pursued my education and, eventually, a vocation of my choice.

After my father's death, Ma insisted on being independent. She lived all by herself on my father's pension of Rs 600. I never heard her complain. She sold off her jewellery and made ends meet. Though she was 91, she was young at heart and always participated in community activities. Age, however, caught up with her enthusiasm and in the past few years, she suffered from severe respiratory problems and her mobility was badly affected. On 12 May, she passed away leaving behind an urgent call for action. She wished that our insensitive government would some day wake up to the plight of the elderly in our country and offer them a decent pension.

Ma is no more. But her memories continue to give me the strength to face old age with my head held high.

—Sudha Sridhar, Pune

THREADS OF LOVE

Both my father and husband were in the Army, thanks to which I had the opportunity to travel extensively and meet some wonderful people. But the one consistent thread through all my travels was my passion for stitching and embroidery.

I learnt crochet from my mother when I was in school, and to knit and embroider from an Army officer's wife. My passion grew to include smocking, tatting and various kinds of stitches. I still have a tablecloth that was my

first attempt at a detailed cross-stitch project. We were in Kangra Valley then, 12 km from Nagrota. I had no fabric available with me, so I simply traced the design on an old pair of trousers! Though I could have waited to lay my hands on other more suitable fabric, the lady from whose book I was copying the pattern was moving away and wanted her book back. The place where we lived in those days was a remote area with no photocopying facility.

Over the years, I amassed a sizeable collection of books on patterns and colours. But I didn't know the value of my pursuit till I had a chance encounter with Tiluna,



Murty discovers the power of threads

an organisation in Trichy [Tiruchirappalli], the temple town in Tamil Nadu. Tiluna invited volunteers to embroider pictures of various temples on cloth. The embroidered works were then framed and sold abroad for thousands of rupees. The volunteers got nothing in return though. I worked on several designs for Tiluna. Once when I expressed a desire to

keep one of the finished works for my personal collection, I was told I would have to “book” one and then pay the quoted market price for it, which was an astronomical sum!

Later when I came in contact with Sandipani, an organisation in Hyderabad, it was like a breath of fresh air. The volunteers at Sandipani worked with autistic children whose mothers would sit the day out waiting for the therapy sessions to end. My friend Rajam Shankar, who practiced music therapy at the institute, asked me if I would like to teach the mothers knitting while they waited. Soon the women learnt to knit household woollens, little sweaters and baby sets.

The time I have spent at Sandipani has taught me that the obstacles in our path are nothing compared to the determination in our heart. One day, an autistic child at the institute asked his mother to teach him to knit. I was stumped because he was left-handed. I taught myself to knit left-handed so I could get the boy started. The subsequent interaction with the child will always remain one of the most cherished episodes of my life. Recently, before the institute shut for summer holidays, a young girl asked me, “Aunty, *aap* June mein *aaoge na?*” [Aunty, will you be back in June?] Her eagerness to learn and the warmth in her question reinforce my belief that the most priceless gifts we can give anyone are time and kindness.

—R Meena Murty, Hyderabad

WEAVING INSPIRATION

I inherited the mantle of the Shipini Bharal (Weavers’ Storehouse) from my mother-in-law, who was a pioneer in women’s empowerment in Tezpur. A die-hard Gandhian, she taught over 100 women to weave. I took over the reins after my marriage in 1940 and renamed it the Tezpur District Mahila Samiti. Over the years, we have

spread to every corner of Sonitpur, enrolling members from almost every village in the district. Later, we began offering loans of Rs 300,000 each to provide yarn to the women. Believe me, the women may be poor but when it came to repaying their loans, there was not a single defaulter! Managing a huge Mahila Samiti in a far-flung district in Assam is not easy. Yet I was lucky to find many women—most of them semi-literate—who were dedicated, sincere, hard-working and willing to be independent.

I have received several awards for my work. But whether it was the Janaki Devi Bajaj Award in 1998, Eastern India Women’s Association’s Raushan Phukan Award in 2004 or Amal Prabha Das Award in 2008, the credit goes to every member of the Samiti. As part of our work, we also inculcate awareness among the women about reproductive rights and empowerment.

With over 12,000 members across 200 branches in Sonitpur district, the Tezpur District Mahila Samiti has also partnered with the Ford Foundation, National Rural Health Mission and other reputed organisations to conduct projects for rural women. As we are accredited with the United Nations, we also sent a representative to the Beijing Conference in 1995. I have been lucky to have as my inspiration my mother, who was a teacher and social worker and taught women to stand on their own feet.



Agarwala: autumn in full bloom

I was also closely acquainted with Gandhiji and Nehru, and was lucky to marry into the illustrious family of Jyotiprasad Agarwala, doyen of modern Assamese art and culture. In fact, every visiting dignitary of that time used to stay at our ancestral home. Today, I am 95; my travels across the district over the decades have taken a toll on my health and I am no longer an active member of the Samiti. Yet, it will always remain closely entwined with my life.

—Mina Agarwala, Tezpur



NEWDREAMS

Use your skills, time and expertise wisely, and where they are most needed, urges **Vijay Nambisan**

When we run to our parents for solace as children, and find it, two bonds of need are created. Children need parents to go to for aid; but parents also need to be needed. However, children grow up and learn to manage their lives. They use parents as an emotional crutch, but they usually don't really need them for practical help. This is what parents very often cannot bring themselves to acknowledge. They continue to give advice when it is not sought, and this is naturally resented.

A recent study published in US journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* concluded that older people are better at resolving conflict. The older group (average age 65) scored better on "composite wisdom". Some cognitive skills do decline with age but processes that are honed by experience work better. That is, older does mean wiser. But experience cannot be imparted, it can only be learned. The children—very often with children of their own—must handle their own problems. Why do elders not turn their undoubted skills to good account in other areas?

The Baby Boomers—the generation born in the US after World War II—are now at retirement age. They have had very successful careers, leading the American economy to its heights in the 1980s and '90s. They also have fewer children than their parents did. (The generation of Indian professionals now between 30 and 45 are like them in their ambition and expertise.) I have seen reports that the Boomers are unwilling, in their old age, to depend on their children. Many are

settling in colonies of like-minded people, but they are not planning to grow old and sit back. They do not consider themselves old; they have skills and plan to continue using them. There are social and ecological issues in which they will get involved. This is what we need. India is supposed to be doing so well now, yet our society has

Worrying about children, and brooding over past mistakes and wrongs are wastes of creative energy. We all know it; those who act on it, achieve

more conflicts than ever before. Some of them seem incapable of political solution. And even this material prosperity (in the cities) is not unflawed. Consumers need to fight battles for their rights. The overflow of manufactured goods is causing immense harm to the environment. As for social divisions, they cannot be shrugged off with the remark that poor people are at fault for their laziness. Education and opportunity are still privileges.

Career-minded 40 year-olds have no time for all this—for them, getting on matters. They cannot be blamed for that. After all, they were brought up to aim high. As for their parents, isn't this the time to give back? To achieve something more lasting? My mother, even at this advanced age (mine, not hers), finds the time to worry about me and give me gratuitous advice.

I resent it. She is occupied by her own notions of my happiness, not mine. I ask her why she doesn't use this brain power creatively. She answers, "What to do? I'm too old."

Age is an insidious enemy that creeps up on us in our mid-40s. The nagging pains last longer, the irrational depression doesn't lift. Age is not an excuse for not doing something positive. "Look at Grandma Moses," I tell my mother. This uneducated American countrywoman began painting at the age of 78, in the late 1930s. She soon won a worldwide reputation, and continued painting till her death at 101. She wrote a sprightly autobiography at 92. "Look at Parvathy Pavanan." Pavanan was a well-known Kerala activist and writer. After his death some years ago, his widow wrote a memoir. It was serialised in a magazine, and won her a state Sahitya Akademi Award. She was 73 when she began writing. (I've met her a couple of times. She is the mother of writer C P Surendran. Don't tell my mother, but she also worries about her children.)

No, age is no excuse. Worrying about children, brooding over past mistakes and wrongs, are wastes of creative energy. We all know it; those who act on it, achieve. Last week in Bengaluru, at her request, I bought my mother a box of oil pastels, and my sister has promised to move the computer downstairs so she can start writing. Time will tell. Time usually has the last word, but it is an error to confuse Time with Age.

Vijay Nambisan, 46, is a journalist, poet and author. He lives in Lonavala



Do you believe,

.... age has nothing to do with our ability to contribute productively,
.... we can use lessons learnt from life to bring smiles on others faces,
.... 'reaching out' and 'staying connected' is an integral part of living?
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Green warrior

S K SAKSENA HAS EXPLORED DENSE FORESTS, PARACHUTED OVER THE PACIFIC AND EVEN MADE IT TO THE NORTH POLE. BUT NOW HE IS BATTLING HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE, SAVING HIS NEIGHBOURHOOD IN MUMBAI, AS **DHANYA NAIR SANKAR** DISCOVERS

Spend a few minutes with Shyam K Saksena and the fire in his eyes will captivate you. Whether it is a trip to the Arctic Circle, exploring the dense forests of Sri Lanka, or parachuting over the Pacific, this adventurer has been there and done that. His latest challenge, though, is tougher than anything he has attempted so far. The 75 year-old is now giving the builders' lobby in Mumbai a run for their money—all for his beloved neighbourhood.

Former director of Siemens Ltd, Saksena is tirelessly campaigning to save the environment in Powai, the once foliage-rich eastern suburb of Mumbai that also houses the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Mumbai. His romance with the suburb began when he moved to the plush Hiranandani Gardens colony after his retirement in 1995. "It used to be a paradise with hills, greenery and, of course, the Powai Lake. However, development has changed all that," says Saksena who insists he is not an activist although he has earned the unflattering tag of being 'notorious'.

His journey began in 2000, when quarrying in Powai was at its peak. The hills were being knocked down to source construction material and trees were indiscriminately hacked. Saksena and a few friends studied the ecology of the area and discovered that the area was part of a 'no-development zone'. "I wrote to the builder requesting him to stop the work," reminisces Saksena. "The next day, I received an

anonymous call threatening me with dire consequences if I didn't stop my efforts." From 2000 to 2005, the determined septuagenarian and his friends spent long hours in dialogue with civic authorities to investigate how the builders had received permission to quarry. They came up with nothing. However, the Right to Information Act (RTI), which was passed in 2005, breathed fresh life into Saksena's crusade. "We filed an RTI enquiry in January 2005 and received some ambiguous answers within a month," says Saksena. "Though we later realised our questions should have been more precise, at least the enquiry uncovered the powerful nexus between builders and the government."

Though any ordinary person would not have persisted faced by such intimidating and all-powerful opponents,

Saksena continued undeterred. He rallied locals from the area to form the Hiranandani Residents' Association (HRA). "By 2005, there was rampant quarrying and over-construction, and open spaces were fast disappearing," affirms 74 year-old J A Shah, a silver activist and member of HRA. "So we got together to take up environmental issues in our neighbourhood." When Saksena started out, he only had the support of 15 housing societies and two friends—Shah and Arun Patil, another silver, and former chief engineer in Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation. "By the time we got answers, quarrying had substantially damaged the area," he says in an aggrieved tone. "Today, of the seven hills here, only five remain. People didn't have the time to devote to our campaign and the group disintegrated."



Quarrying continues at a merciless pace on one of the hills in Powai; Saksena on a photography jaunt

HT





Saksena's close friend Arun Patil shares his concern for the environment

Despite the withdrawal of support, he stuck to his guns—an attitude he attributes to his father: “My father was a professor of philosophy and a non-conformist who encouraged me to never accept anything just because it was tradition.” His fondest memories are of spending his summer holidays with his parents in their home in Hawaii, where he rubbed shoulders with intellectuals, poets and artists. “I had a chance to interact with some radical people like philosophy professor Dr Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, who introduced Buddhism to Westerners; Pakistani orator and poet Josh Malaya Baghi; and my teenage friend, Osho [spiritual guru Rajneesh],” he recalls. “Such exposure widened my perspective and I realised early on that curiosity is an important attribute.”

After graduating from Allahabad in 1952, Saksena joined Siemens and rose up the ranks to become a director in the company's board. “Thanks to

Saksena's active involvement with issues concerning Powai drew like-minded neighbours to him, and saving the famous Powai Lake became a collective mission

my work, I have learnt to never compromise on human values while making corporate decisions.” His thirst for knowledge has seen him wear many hats—voracious reader, prolific writer and photographer. He now dabbles in computer graphics. “I started off with writing travelogues, and then writing letters to newspaper editors became a passion,” he remembers.

Saksena's active involvement with issues concerning Powai drew like-minded neighbours to him and saving the famous Powai Lake became a collective mission. “The brutal destruction of the hills around Powai and the dumping of construction debris have transformed the Powai lake, which

was once a national treasure, into a polluted shallow pond,” says the passionate crusader. The lake is not only one among four major lakes in and around Mumbai, it is also among the 10 included under the National Lake Conservation Plan (1995). Thanks to Saksena's efforts, the HRA has been working on safeguarding the precious water body.

“The lake is over a century old but it still generously provides us greenery and checks flooding during the monsoon,” says Arun Patil, another silver-member of the HRA. Patil and other silvers like him rallied around Saksena when he filed an RTI enquiry against the local municipality



Activist J A Shah took up the cause spurred by the rampant quarrying in his neighbourhood

in November 2009 to investigate the purported expenditure of around Rs 226 million spent on de-silting the area. Though the municipality claimed to have spent the money there was no corresponding improvement to justify the expenditure. “We discovered that the contract had been given to a firm that had no expertise in such specialised work,” says Saksena. The RTI also stated that almost 41 truckloads of silt had been transported out of Powai. However, residents were quick to point out that by this yardstick, 56 trucks of wet silt should have been leaving the lake’s shores every day since October 2007. But residents swear that they had not witnessed any such activity. “The contractors had been merely removing surface silt and weeds,” explains Shah. “The large silt deposits are worrying because they can cause an overflow into the Mithi River which had a major role to play in the deluge in Mumbai in 2005.”

Shah and Saksena, however, are not disillusioned. Along with other residents, they regularly meet municipal officials and local politicians. “The lake is being beautified but the effort will come to naught if the silt is not dredged up. We are keeping a check on things,” says Saksena who is also fighting for another cause—the fast-disappearing trees near the IIT campus and the Powai Lake. When work on a major flyover in the locality began a couple of years ago, 200 trees were hacked. Saksena and his band of green warriors planted 300 saplings to replace them. “Our first RTI to stop quarrying created quite a reputation for us and people still remember us for that,” says Shah, adding that they also have the backing of pro-environment NGOs like AGNI (Action for Good Governance and Networking in India), and Citispace.

Indeed, Saksena has spread a lot of goodwill. Says Nutan Bhalla, 51, a

resident of Powai and local representative of AGNI, and Citispace: “A democracy can work only if the people are actively involved.” S D Mirchandani, 75, a resident of Lake Castle building, shares her perspective: “The face of Powai has changed since development mushroomed here. Saksena has been a leader in championing environmental causes ever since quarrying began back in 2000.”

But with builders hand-in-glove with the official authorities, are they holding on to a lost cause? Residents and activists agree. “We have been meeting all the right authorities but we still cannot halt the rampant construction,” concedes Mirchandani. “But just because it’s a tough fight doesn’t mean we should sit back and do nothing,” Saksena sums it up succinctly. “We have won many battles but are yet to win the war. We haven’t lost hope though and we know that one day we will succeed.”

*In India for research and the shoot of his much-awaited film Paani, and in talks with a Hollywood studio for his next tryst with eyeball-grabbing cinema—a biopic on mountaineer George Mallory—Shekhar Kapur straddles time zones and cultures with insouciance. **Rajashree Balaram** meets the man who answers all our queries and then leaves us with some provocative questions of his own—on life, cinema, karma and conscience*

“I am
mad”

If a man's preference in food is supposed to offer insight into his character, Shekhar Kapur is a man of great extremes. He likes his toast burnt to a crisp. “This is not as charred as I like,” he says, holding up a slice to examine it closely in the subdued daylight filtering through the windows of the banquet room of the JW Marriott Hotel in suburban Mumbai. The room looks into a lotus pond where the quivering lotuses brave the vigorous onslaught of early monsoon. The watery landscape is a fitting backdrop for a man who is making his next movie on water—or the lack of it. *Paani* marks Kapur's return to Indian cinema after 12 years in Hollywood. Indeed, his long years of absence from Indian cinema have only heightened the value of the handful of movies that he made here. No one can quite forget the touching innocence of *Masoom*,

the wild abandon of *Mr India* or the brutal intensity of *Bandit Queen*.

The last shocked audiences all over the world with its gut-wrenching portrayal of female oppression and power, but it was *Elizabeth* (nominated in seven categories for the 1999 Academy Awards) that brought Kapur international glory. And though he has made three other noteworthy films since—*Elizabeth: The Golden Age*, *Four Feathers* and a contribution to the 10-vignette series *New York, I Love You*—Hollywood, clearly, can't get enough of him. The studios are now chasing him to direct a biopic on mountaineer George Mallory.

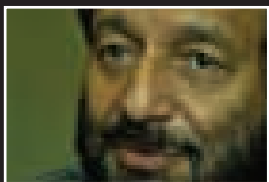
With so much celebrity resting on his shoulders, you'd expect him to talk movies all the time. He doesn't. At 64, Kapur refuses to be defined by his oeuvre. When he is not making movies, he speaks at conferences

on new digital media; writes poetry on love, loss and existence; discusses philosophy with spiritual leaders; builds awareness on environment through his blog www.shekharkapur.com; studies politics; and irons out his next business collaboration for a social media enterprise. And though he is voluble about everything he thinks and does, he also manages to be startlingly detached. The only time you see his heart in his eyes is when he talks about his nine year-old daughter Kaveri.

Most people occupy different points on the continuum of character; Kapur covers the entire continuum: “I am mad,” he says repeatedly through our interview. His body language is restless but his gaze supremely steady. Which one is the real Shekhar Kapur, we wonder? As we talk to him, it becomes evident that it's something he is still trying to figure out.



Jit Ray



"One can deal with criticism only if one thinks, 'I am now separated from that film. I am not the creator. It's just something that evolved with my presence.' Then, and only then, can one deal with it. But then you have to deal with success the same way"



IN HIS OWN WORDS

Paani has been in the making for 12 years. The problem is, I have put too many conditions on myself. "I will do it this way; I won't do it this way; I will approach a studio; I will do it on my own...." For 12 years I couldn't find anyone interested in the project. Now suddenly everywhere I go, people ask me when I am going to make it. People are calling me up and proposing to fund it and distribute it. [Long pause] Or maybe its time has come. The sheer force of the film has

captured me and it's driving me. Even if I tried not to make it now, it will still be made. So the point is, when you lose control things happen [laughs].

The anger that drove me to making Paani was against the exploitation happening in our society. *Paani* is about water being used as a weapon for social control and exploitation. The story is about a city divided into two parts—an upper city that controls water and the lower city that is exploited. Though the movie is set in the future, it mirrors what's happening around us now. And between all

that chaos there lies a love story, of course [smiles].

Hindi cinema has its own culture and it reveals in that culture. The whole world is curious about it; therefore it gets a lot of attention. But I wonder; how far can we go by living in this particular culture? It's all neatly cocooned. People are happy with the kind of returns they get. Stars are happy with the kind of roles they do. And directors are happy with the kind of stories they get to do. If a culture doesn't constantly react to change, it becomes incestuous, which ultimately

brings it down. I think it needs to be thrown into chaos.

Sometimes I do watch movies for fun. I watched *Om Shanti Om* and I enjoyed it. It was pitched to me in a certain way and I didn't bother to dissect it any further. Recently I watched *Rajneeti*. It had an interesting touch of realism. But let's face it—most of our cinema is still rooted

For a while though, I was like an alien from another planet.

There is a different approach to performance in Hollywood. There is much more addiction to the character. In India the problem is the compromises you have to make in what you do. I believe we should not approach work if it's not challenging and provocative. I love working with

caste exploitation and the exploitation of women. Of course, sometimes when I have tried to make a biopic I have failed and given it up. When I wanted to make a film on Buddhism, people expected me to make a movie on Buddha's fairytale. Similarly when I wanted to do a film on Mandela, I didn't want to do a story on apartheid, I wanted to do a modern love story. There was some resistance to it. So I couldn't do it.

I would like to make a film with kids, though I am not too sure if the film I want to make is *Mr India II*. How do you reinvent that film? Science fiction is something else I love. According to me all great science fiction is a world of philosophy. If you see a movie like *Space Odyssey* it's all about conjecture, potential and possibility. If you read Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series, it's fascinating because there is so much philosophy in it. It's also very mythic. And I think that's the greatest advantage of using mythology. It offers a great way to explore our own mind and our own selves.

I cannot say I am unaffected by criticism. If I say I don't care, it only reflects my inability to deal with it. If I say they don't know what they are doing, it's again my inability to deal with it. One can deal with it only if one thinks, 'Okay, here's the film and here's how it's done. I am now separated from that film. I am not the creator. It's just something that evolved with my presence.' Then, and only then, can one deal with it. But then you have to deal with success the same way. You have to tell yourself, 'It's just happened in my presence.'

I often feel I am like a gardener. How do you feel when you water the plants, you water the seeds and then step back and wait for the sun, and the rain? So who are you then? The farmer or the doer? And if you are going to believe that you are the doer and it's completely about you, you are going to suffer. You are not the doer; you are just the conduit.



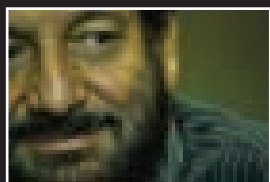
During the shoot of *Four Feathers*

in *nautanki*. And by *nautanki* I don't mean anything derogatory. *Nautanki* is a traditional folk music and dance theme revolving around nine different forms of expression. And it's not so much melodramatic as mythic. Amitabh Bachchan's greatest strength is his ability to perform *nautanki*...to move effortlessly in and out of those nine different expressions. *Mr India* was full of *nautanki*. Of course, when I made *Bandit Queen* I moved away from that completely.

Bandit Queen became quite a rage in the UK and Hollywood, so initially I was treated with a lot of mystery in the West. And I took advantage of that curiosity. But like everywhere else they got used to me.

Cate Blanchett. She challenges you all the time. She knows a lot more about films than you do. She is too bright for me. Normally I can talk my way out of anything. But she will not let me do that. So it's been a fascinating collaboration. Very bright and beautiful and alive. I plan to make *Elizabeth III* with her some day. Similarly, in India, I find Naseer [Naseeruddin Shah] extremely challenging.

I enjoy doing biopics because the story already exists in people's subconscious. And then it becomes even more interesting to be able to take that story and give it a different twist. *Elizabeth* is Indira Gandhi's story. *Bandit Queen* wasn't as much a story of Phoolan Devi as it was about



"When I am not able to express my madness, I am frustrated and ill, and I end up with a headache. Life lies in the unreasonableness. How can we be reasonable when everything by which we define ourselves is completely unreasonable—love, birth, and death?"



I do worry when my movies are approaching release. It eats me up. But I try to overcome it. And the sooner I do that, the easier it becomes to give up the addiction to the result or the addiction to the idea of me being the doer. The stronger the connection between the doing and the done, the more doubt and fear there's going to be. The tighter the connection, the more you invest in terms of ego and bravado. The looser it is, the more vulnerable you are. Then fear and doubt just vanish. Isn't that what the *Bhagavad-Gita* says?

I have evolved into this state of detachment with time. I have been through a lot of ups and downs. I have been hailed as the best director and then I have been criticised as the worst and then again as the next best thing in Hollywood. I have been pushed up and pulled down. Amid all that, if I try and keep my sanity, I would go insane. So I just go mad [laughs].

A lot of people wondered how I could cry on TV while judging *India's Got Talent*. The way I see it, there are two ways to look at it:

you could be manipulative or totally vulnerable. And there is no greater strength than absolute vulnerability. If you are completely vulnerable everything passes through you, you become like the river. I want to be 100 per cent vulnerable. By constantly building walls against the rest of the world, sometimes you end up building walls between you and yourself.

We spend our entire lives proving ourselves to other people. We see ourselves as the way we are reflected in other people's eyes. But that

reflection is not a pure reflection—not unless that person is completely compassionate towards you or there is a great relationship of absolute love there. If there isn't, that reflection is based on that person's insecurities. The day you understand that, you let

I am okay with all that chaos. I believe we could fight a million battles every day if we don't consider it fighting. Often we mistake action for reaction. For a large part of my life I have made that mistake and I am not going to make that mistake again. Action has a



Kapur with Cate Blanchett and actor Geoffrey Rush at the Academy Awards

it all go and stop judging yourself. And the moment you stop judging yourself is when you stop judging others. With the years I have evolved into someone who has nothing to prove. The biggest burden we carry is our own sense of individuality. And when you carry that burden, that's the first thing you want to get rid of.

Life is chaotic with all that I want to do. As I am talking to you, I am doing a hundred things in my mind. But

concept of purity to itself where you detach yourself from what you are doing. What stops you is the hunger for result. I launched Virgin Comics some years ago. I am no longer involved with the company but I did it because I wanted to do it then.

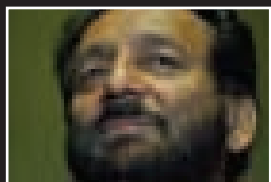
I wake up every day and ask myself, "Am I mad enough to let it all go?" It's not just about being mad, it's about being mad enough; to accept the storm and the waves; and

live beyond a sense of individuality. Rumi said, "I am so madly in love that mad people come to me and ask me to calm down." You could say that it's gradual madness seeping in or you could say it is wisdom creeping in. But isn't it one and the same thing: to let it all go? When I am not able to express my madness, I am frustrated, schizophrenic and ill, and I end up with a headache. Because then I have to be correct and reasonable, and life lies in the unreasonableness. How can we be reasonable when everything by which we define ourselves is completely unreasonable—love, birth, and death?

I don't mind ageing, but I hate being tired. I have always waited for the time when I won't be driven by my hormones [laughs]. But then with time, I realised that that which I thought hormonal is also the spiritual. So it's not till I reached 60 that I realised that the hormonal and the spiritual combination is quite a killer [laughs]. The very thought of mortality is a big driving force.

I have a greater intensity when I fall in love now. The madness only comes with a greater understanding of the wisdom of madness...the understating that if there has to be love, it can only come from finding who you are. Love is not about ownership. What you thought was ownership of love was only your insecurity and your desire to control. People ask me why I am not jealous. I just did a 20-minute film on how true love can only exist when you let each other go. In freedom lies true intimacy. Even in my 40s and 50s, I didn't know that. It was all one big game then.

I don't think the relationships that didn't work out were failures. To define them as failures is tragic; it's as good as denying them. No relationship can be defined in terms of success and failure. The relationships may not continue in the form you expected or intended them to continue...that's all one can say. It always continues in some other form.



"We don't need to scale the mountains to find ourselves. The human race will conquer every space only to discover that all we want to do actually is to go home. And home lies in our hearts. There is no summit, because if there was life would end"

My daughter Kaveri has taught me a lot of things. I see great thought in her paintings. She kept telling me that angels exist in imagination as well as reality. That's what our sages have been telling us for ages. I was amazed she could think like that. She told me that and believed in it till her teachers told her that's not true. She has taught me to see the world through new eyes. And yes, she is teaching me patience all over again [laughs]. Last year, she and I drove all across Kerala. Earlier we used to just take off on holidays overseas in the middle of her term and her school would get upset with me [laughs]. She is a crazy kid; crazier than me. And I don't discourage her from being crazy. I think our education system is such we have to unlearn a lot of what we have learnt.

I became a father rather late in life and that has its advantages and disadvantages. My daughter is just nine. She still expects me to pick her up and drop her down, and wrestle with her. I used to twirl her on my back. Now I might just hurt my back if I do that and may not be able to take my next flight to Europe. So yes, physically, I feel a little tired. Nevertheless, I am glad I am her father now. I don't know what kind of father I would have been in my 20s or 30s. Less compassionate, for sure. I have a greater compassion for everything now—especially for my daughter. Compassion comes out of a process through which you let go of things. At 40, I would not have been ready to let go of anything. Now I believe things come to you and go away because they are supposed to go away.

I started blogging as much for the chance of utter personal expression

that it offers as for my daughter.

I want her to be able to look back and say, "This is my father and this is how he thought." I wish I had that about my parents. I did not know if my father believed in God; he was a doctor. There were so many questions about those experiences that have now become relevant, especially when I travel with people like Deepak Chopra or Dalai Lama. When I talk to them about consciousness and the meaning of death, I wish I had talked to my father about those things. I wonder what he felt when he saw people being born and die, saw my mom die, and then saw death engulfing him slowly. I wish he had kept a blog. I would have learnt so much from it. I write a blog so Kaveri would know what shaped her genetics.

My obsession with predicting the future got me involved pretty early in the Internet space. Where's the human race going? A part of me is constantly eating at that question. I am planning to do a lot in new media in the Internet space. [Kapur is in talks with Nobel prize-winner and economist Muhammad Yunus for collaboration on a social media enterprise.] I think our virtual lives are going to be more important than our real lives. It can create a lot of problems. But a large number of us are going to live, study, explore and entertain ourselves more and more virtually.

Many of us—whom we call the bottom of the pyramid—in India will also have the opportunity to connect through this space. If they connect, they will add up to tremendous power. Connectivity is a great driver—and a highly democratic one at that. I think India's rise, if it has to come, will come

through connectivity. So I will try and invest very heavily in that space.

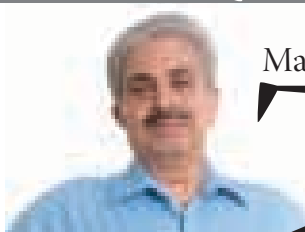
I think our summits exist within us.

We don't need to scale the mountains to find ourselves. The human race will conquer every space only to discover that all we want to do actually is go home. And home lies in our own hearts. There is no summit, because if there was life would end. We often think, 'This is where I got to reach in life.' But then when we reach the destination, can we define where we started from? We always start with a question and end with one.

Not winning the Oscar was certainly disappointing.

When you make a film you hope someone will give you the money to make it; that you will complete it; that people won't laugh at it; that it will release and critics will like it; that it will do well commercially; and now that all that is done you will be nominated and win the award. There's no end to it. Instead of whining about racial discrimination, I can be happy that my film was nominated as one of the five best films that year. What else could I want?

My favourite line to my agent is, as long as you see that tramp sitting on Hollywood Boulevard and he doesn't remind you of me and my future, we are fine. Whenever I see this tramp sitting on the road outside a restaurant with his long beard, I always thank myself that I am better off. I am sitting inside the restaurant and someone is happily paying for my lunch, and he is sitting outside, begging for lunch, hoping someone will pay for his. And all that separates us is a glass window. I am happy I am on this side of the glass.



Madhukar

Talwalkar

Weight management: Sure-shots tips on the right diet and exercise

I used to work out regularly—run, weight-train and perform cardio exercises every alternate day. I am now in my mid-50s and finding it increasingly difficult to maintain my weight. What can I do?

It's easier to gain weight than lose it. As we age, it also seems to take twice as long to lose a few kilos. Being a woman over the age of 50, you may wonder if there are any easy ways to lose weight without burning yourself out. At any age, diet and exercise are the best. However, there are specific ways of eating and exercising that can help you reap maximum benefits. I have suggested some tips below that will help you jumpstart the weight loss programme. Please get a 'go ahead' from your doctor before you start the new regimen. Then, keep a watch on your weight and body measurements.

Tip 1: Eating for weight loss

Though you may feel that you eat relatively healthy, it is still important to know what foods can slow your progress and keep you overweight. These include refined sugar, processed foods, and simple carbohydrates. You should avoid or significantly go slow on foods such as white bread, rice, pasta, cereal and baked goods (cake, cookies, pies).

The easiest way to make healthy eating simple is to purchase food that is as close to its natural state as possible. Think fresh when buying vegetables, fruit, and meat. Food in packages is typically highly processed and full of sugar. Eat according to portions, not calories. Each time you take a serving, eat by measurements of fist and palm size. By eating well at least 80 per cent of the time, you won't need to stress yourself out with calorie counts or weighing food. Proteins, carbohydrates and vegetables are very essential in your meal. Eat less at a time but frequently—between four and six meals per day. Vegetables should be included at least twice with your meals. Water is a very essential component; you should have at least eight to 10 glasses a day.

Tip 2: Exercising to burn fat

It is good that you were into weight training. If you re-start resistance training again, it will be easy to get results as they are some of the best exercises to burn fat. Make an effort to lift free weights—they should be comfortable and challenging at the same time. The more muscle you have, the more fat you can burn as well as calories. One kilo of muscle burns more calories than 1 kg of fat. Muscles burn calories even at rest. Free weights are a much better option and usually a set of dumbbells will be more than enough. You don't have to spend hours doing cardio. If you enjoy long cardio sessions, you can still continue to do them between strength training exercises.

ESTABLISH YOUR FITNESS GOALS

The intensity and schedule of weight training for people over the age of 50 should be based on very personal, specific and fundamental goals.

- Two to three days resistance training (20 to 40 minutes), two to three days cardio (20 to 40 minutes); preferably cardio and resistance training on alternate days
- Variations in exercise are very important for better weight loss
- Balanced diet
- Supplementing diet with multivitamins and calcium will aid weight loss
- Consistency in all suggestions mentioned above will give better results.

There is a lot of scientific evidence that suggests that we can slow down and even reverse the symptoms of ageing. In fact, many of us can be in better health in our 70s than we were in our 50s. Regular exercise can improve heart and respiratory function; lower blood pressure; increase strength; improve bone density; improve flexibility; quicken reaction time; reduce body fat; increase muscle mass; and reduce susceptibility to depression and disease.

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



Dr Anjali

Mukerjee

Chew on this: A good digestive system is integral to good health

My recurring problems with diarrhoea and constipation have been recently diagnosed as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). I have been told that diet can play a crucial role in controlling this condition. Please advise me.

Our ability to digest food varies with age—in youth, one can eat without worrying about the consequences. But with advancing age, the intestines tend to become sluggish. Physiological changes of the intestine and motor neurons bring about an alteration in the functional capacity of the digestive system; bowel motility is affected and we can no longer eat indiscriminately. We are plagued with problems of gas, bloating, nausea, abdominal cramps, foul smelling stool, lack of appetite, and constipation alternating with diarrhoea—symptoms that collectively indicate irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Nearly 70 per cent of those suffering from IBS are women.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms vary but usually recur for years with little hope of cure. The main symptoms include:

- Abdominal bloating combined with excessive flatulence
- Abdominal pain that may be relieved by passing stool or wind
- Diarrhoea alternating with bouts of constipation that may produce 'rabbit pellet' stools
- A feeling that bowel movement is not complete
- Passing mucous or blood with stool
- Nausea and vomiting
- Feeling of fullness, discomfort and difficulty in finishing meals

The disorder is also associated with sexual dysfunction, chest pain, generalised muscular pain, migraine and depression.

FOODS THAT AGGRAVATE IBS

- Whole milk
- Alcohol
- Most *dal*, peas, peanuts
- Sugar
- White flour-based baked dishes
- Red meat
- Fried food and oily curries
- Coffee
- Wheat

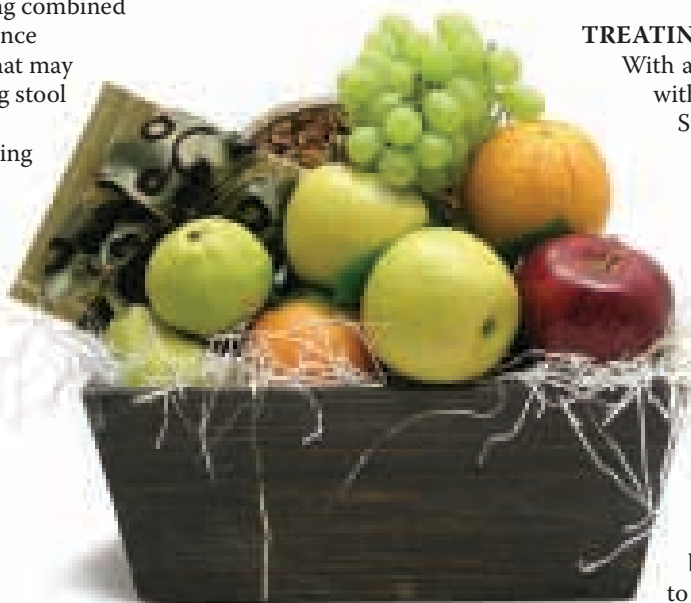
Avoid the above foods if you suffer from severe spasms, pain and bloating. Gradually add different foods in small quantities to your diet to find out what your system can tolerate. For instance, if milk is the trigger, see how you feel after skipping it for a week. Then start having a small amount in the form of low-fat curd and watch if the symptoms return.

TREATING IBS

With age, we are often required to cope with various medical complaints.

Suffering from IBS adds to the woes. IBS cannot be treated but a proper diet plan can certainly help manage the problem.

- Maintain a food diary to eliminate any food or drink that triggers an attack.
- To begin with, avoid milk and milk products. Most people with IBS have lactase [enzyme that digests lactose (sugar) in milk] deficiency. If the body is unable to digest the lactose in milk, it becomes fermented by bacteria present in the gut leading to bloating, pain and cramps.



Gradually add different foods in small quantities to your diet to find out what your system can tolerate. For instance, if milk is the trigger, see how you feel after skipping it for a week. Then start having a small amount in the form of low-fat curd and watch if the symptoms return

- Slowly increase the fibre content in your diet. This makes the stool bulky and waterlogged so it can pass easily. If diarrhoea is one of your symptoms, eat a lot of soluble fibre in the form of fruits and vegetables. The fibre present in apple, orange, guava and dates has stool-binding properties. On the other hand, if you are constipated, include insoluble fibre found in *jowar*, *bajari*, *ragi*, *makai atta*, brown rice and wheat bran to your diet.
- Eat slowly and chew food thoroughly to decrease symptoms of discomfort.
- Avoid sipping water or any other fluids with meals as it aggravates symptoms.
- Eat foods rich in gut-friendly bacteria like yoghurt and buttermilk and fermented foods like *idli* and *dhokla* to colonise the colon and prevent recurrent bouts of symptoms associated with IBS.
- Eat smaller and more frequent meals and avoid spicy and fat-laden foods.
- Avoiding wheat and wheat products can help reduce symptoms of indigestion and bloating. Wheat contains gluten, which can disturb the mobility of the gastrointestinal tract.
- Avoiding gas-producing foods like lentils, beans and peas can provide relief from flatulence.

LIFESTYLE TIPS

Try relaxation exercises to alleviate stress, which is often a contributing factor to this condition. Meditation, exercise or counselling can help. Diagnosing IBS correctly and managing it well with dietary and lifestyle intervention can help avoid the functional deterioration of the digestive tract associated with ageing.

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

Dental Implants



Dr Gunaseelan Rajan is oral consultant and maxillofacial surgeon at Rajan Dental Institute, Chennai.
Contact: 044-284746480

Q1. I am 58 years old and have been recently diagnosed with osteoporosis. Can I have dental implants?

Osteoporosis or osteopenia is fairly common today. Implant supported dental prosthesis can be done for such patients. However, precautions should be taken in planning the treatment sequence, especially if you are taking bisphosphonates.

Q2. I had lost my upper front tooth in an accident. My dentist mentioned about bone graft before doing an implant. Is this absolutely necessary?

An accurate assessment of bone morphology can be made with the dental CT scan. A software-based guided surgery (NobelGuide) can be used to place the implant accurately even when moderate amount of bone is present. If, however, there is very little bone to place an implant, some form of graft should be used.

Q3. I am 68 years old and wear complete dentures. I keep hearing about dental implants. Can it be done even at this age for me?

There is no outer age limit for dental implants. The general health status is important in determining if dental implants are indicated or contraindicated. Your implant dentist can examine and guide you accordingly.

Q4. I have lost all my upper jaw teeth due to gum disease. My dentist feels that there is very little bone for a fixed denture supported on implants. Are there any new options in such situations?

Certain implant systems such as Nobel Biocare have very advanced implant systems such as 'Zygoma Implants' and 'All on 4' techniques, which can avoid bone graft in the upper jaw and will give the patient the option of implants and fixed teeth. You should look at such advanced graftless implant options.



Dr Jamuna

Pai

Skin sense: An easy regime to keep your skin healthy, supple and glowing

With age, the skin turns rough, loses elasticity and becomes slack. In this continuous process that normally begins in our mid-20s, the production of collagen in the skin begins to slow down and elastin, the substance that causes the skin to snap back into place, loses some of its power. Dead cells don't shed as quickly and the turnover of new cells also slows down. However, the effects of these changes are not visible for decades. Lifestyle choices such as smoking, what we eat and other personal habits influence the health of our skin. Heredity, photo ageing owing to sun exposure, stress, gravity and facial movements also contribute to ageing. Texture also changes, and the skin tends to become more transparent with the years, because of thinning of the epidermis. Cheeks look hollow and eye sockets appear pronounced owing to loss of underlying fat. Bone loss also causes sagging.

SKIN AGEING FACTORS

Sun exposure

Long-term exposure to sun makes our skin lose the ability to repair itself by breaking down collagen and further impairing its production. Clinically called photo ageing, it occurs over a period of years. In the process, the skin's elastin is also damaged, causing it to sag. Even a few minutes of daily exposure can cause noticeable changes: freckles, age spots, spider veins, rough and leathery skin, fine wrinkles, blotchy complexion and, in more severe cases, skin cancer. While it's impossible

to completely undo sun damage, its effects can be minimised by wearing good quality sunscreen of any SPF. Studies have shown that it is necessary to reapply sunscreen every few hours.

Gravity

Gravity is constantly acting on us. However, changes in our skin because of it become more obvious as we grow older. As we enter our 50s and our skin's elasticity declines, the effects of gravity start to show. Gravity causes the nose to droop, the earlobes to elongate, the eyelids to fall and jowls to form.

Smoking

Smoking is one of the leading contributors to ageing and bad health. Nicotine causes biochemical changes in our body that accelerate ageing. It causes an increase in free radicals that are detrimental to health in a number of ways.

Though it is not possible to halt the ageing process completely, science and technology can help slow it down considerably

Heredity

Our genes control how quickly the ageing process unfolds within our bodies. Some may notice the first grey strands or the first few wrinkles in their 20s, while others do not see any signs till their 40s.

SKINCARE AT HOME

Though it is not possible to halt the ageing process completely, science and technology can help slow it down considerably. A few obvious steps include avoiding exposure to sun, controlling diet and not smoking or consuming alcohol excessively. Follow a skincare regime suited to your skin. Consult a dermatologist in case of any doubts. It is important to cleanse, tone and moisturise regularly. Taking nutraceuticals will help maintain a healthy complexion, good hair and nails. Evening primrose, flaxseed oil, calcium, Vitamin D and a good antioxidant should all be part of your regular diet. When body cells use oxygen, damage-causing free radicals are produced naturally. External factors like pollution and stress increase these free radicals. Antioxidants act as 'free radical scavengers' and prevent and repair the damage caused. They also enhance the body's immune system. So, it makes perfect sense to take antioxidants as early as in your 30s.

PROFESSIONAL OPTIONS

Sometimes these measures are not enough. With the help of technology, we can fool time and look years younger than our chronological age. Dermal fillers and Botox are the two most popular options. Popularly referred to as 'liquid facelifts', dermal fillers are by far the best and quickest way to restore lost volume to the face or even rectify problems such as a drooping forehead, disproportionate chin or ageing hands. The main premise of ageing is that the skin loses volume and hence begins to droop



Jit Ray

and sag, making you look tired and older. Dermal fillers are effective in smoothing the texture of the skin and removing lines, as well as adding shape and contour to sunken areas. These fillers consist of hyaluronic acid, which is found naturally in the skin. Botox is extremely effective in ridding the face of unwanted lines and wrinkles. It can rectify crow's feet, laugh lines, nasolabial lines, worry lines on the forehead and sagging bands on the neck. In addition, certain radiofrequencies are extremely effective in firming the skin. Thermage, the gold standard in anti-ageing lasers, shows excellent results that last up to six months. Micro dermabrasion, laser resurfacing, chemical peels and regular facials can restore the skin and make it look smooth and fresh.

SKINCARE TIPS FOR SILVERS

- **Sunscreen:** Regardless of the SPF, using a good sunscreen lotion or cream can further delay the ageing process even if the sun has already caused irreversible damage.

- **Moisturiser:** Deep moisturise dry skin and hardened skin areas such as elbows, knees, ankles. Certain safe Vaseline-based moisturisers contain urea and lactic acid. Available at chemists, they enable easy penetration of moisture to the deeper layers of the skin.

- **Exfoliation:** Exfoliation is the key to great looking and 'fresh feeling' skin even in silver years. Using home products like a mixture of sugar granules with lime juice is a good idea. Do

not stop at the face. Exfoliate your body too.

- **Oil massage:** Ageing, along with hormonal changes, causes the skin to dehydrate, leading to wrinkles and sagging skin accompanied by dryness, pigmentation and itching. A simple oil massage, preferably with coconut oil—not just applied but rubbed into the skin for at least 45 minutes—helps remove dead skin cells, make the skin look lighter and softer, and reduce dryness and itching.

- **Hygiene:** Frequent showers, loose cotton clothing, open footwear wherever possible, antifungal powder in body folds, all go a long way in preventing accumulation of sweat, fungal infections and body odour.

Known as the pioneer of cosmetology in India, cosmetic physician Dr Jamuna Pai is also the country's single largest injector of Botox & dermal fillers. If you have a question for her, write to skincare@blushworld.com



Shameem

Akthar

Slow and steady: Control hyperventilation syndrome with yoga

A sense of breathlessness—and rapid breathing to compensate for it—common to those who call themselves ‘hyper’, is now acknowledged as a problem that needs to be addressed. There can be several critical physiological causes for this distressing condition, such as a heart problem, blood loss or head injury. However, these require emergency treatment. This column deals with the more common psychosomatic causes, like anxiety/panic attacks and inability to handle stress, for which yogic practices can complement conventional medical treatment.

Even conventional medical intervention for the latter involves a breathing technique very much like yoga: it is called 7-11 breathing, where you breathe in for seven seconds and breathe out for 11, looking at a clock. A few minutes of this deliberate breathing technique, similar to alternate nostril breathing (*anulom vilom*) helps calm the physiological yo-yo that actually turns around blood chemistry so it becomes alkaline, which in turn leads to constriction of blood vessels. This limits blood flow to the brain, causing dizziness and tingling at the extremities and exacerbates the condition further as a person hyperventilates, with the mistaken hope of shifting this blood and breath imbalance. Some may also experience cramps, dry mouth (that also causes bad breath), flatulence (when hyperventilation has become a habitual response to stress), abdominal bloating, and even hallucination.

Yogic breathing techniques (*pranayama*) such as belly breathing (*apanasana*), practice of the subtle sound (*na-danusadhanasana*), *anulom vilom*, victory breath (*ujjayi*) and humming bee (*bhramari*) will all help. Just 10 to 15 minutes of disciplined practice at a time, twice a day, could control hyperventilation long-term. All ancient yogic treatises assure us that slow breathing can empower us with longevity and vitality. It also acts as a natural de-stressor, affecting the body’s homeostasis so that our internal system discards misplaced emergency triggers that can worsen hyperventilation.

Apart from *pranayama*, a few poses that remove stress lodged in the body must be practised. These also rectify the damage done to blood vessels owing to this stress-induced state and encourage a deeper flow of blood to the brain, affecting the master glands. Such yogic poses include the mountain pose (*parvatasana*); different variations of the standing forward bend (*uttanasana*); inversions including the headstand (*sirsasana*); and relaxing and healing poses like the lying leg-locked pose (*supta baddhakonasana*). Learning to do the practice slowly and calmly, with several breaks for rest in between, will help the body recover. Holding the poses will bolster stamina and lung capacity. What’s more, in the long run, you will also develop emotional stamina that will help control symptoms of hyperventilation and future outbreaks.



Haresh Patel

YOGIC MOVES**Lying leg-locked pose
(*supta baddhakonasana*)**

Lie on your back. Fold both legs at the knees, placing soles together. Bring feet closer to the groin region. Place your hands, palm upwards, on either thigh. Close your eyes to relax

in this pose for three to five minutes. Keep the knees pressed down to create a gentle muscular tension around the groin region. **Benefits:** This is a powerful de-stressor that works the uro-genital region, which is also involved with emotional balance and mental harmony. Breathing becomes naturally deeper and more relaxed.

Shameem Akthar is a Mumbai-based yoga acharya



If you have any queries for her, mail us or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org
(Please consult your physician before following advice given here)

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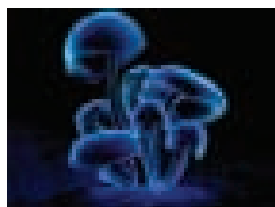




NOSE JOB

Pune-based pharmaceutical company Serum Institute of India (SII) has developed the first indigenous vaccine against swine flu. Samples were tested by SII in collaboration with the National Institute of Virology in Pune; clinical trials conducted in five institutes in Pune, Indore and Ahmedabad proved it to be safe and effective. An alternative to the injection that is available, this H1N1 vaccine comes in the form of a nasal spray and has no side-effects other than sneezing and a runny nose. Earlier, side-effects like fever, swelling and convulsions were reported following the inoculation. Similar to the strain

accepted by the WHO worldwide, the vaccine sprayed into the nostrils through a syringe-like device generates protective antibodies in the nose and pharynx. Except pregnant women, the drug—a major advancement in influenza vaccines—can be prescribed to anyone over three years old. “The intranasal vaccine is the first indigenous vaccine against swine flu developed in India,” confirms Dr Rajeev Dhere, senior director at Serum Institute of India, speaking to *Harmony*. “Scheduled to be launched commercially next week, the nasal spray will be priced at below Rs 200 compared to the injection that costs close to Rs 400.”



Figures projected by the WHO predict a **45 per cent increase in global cancer deaths**. From 7.9 million in 2007, the figure is expected to touch 11.5 million by 2030. The increasing ageing population is one of the factors that have made cancer the foremost cause of death worldwide.

Grow a HEART

A technique to alter ordinary cells of the human skin into heart cells has been devised by Robert Schwartz, a biomedical scientist at the University of Houston in the US. Similar to embryonic stem cells, the implanted cells mature into fully developed early-stage heart cells. Replacing damaged tissues that impair the heart's rhythm and its ability to pump, they negate the impairment caused by heart attack. This pioneering method of reprogramming skin cells can pave the way to produce new tissues for the treatment of diseases like Alzheimer's, diabetes and muscular dystrophy. Clinical trials using these cells on patients are expected to start in one to two years. Schwartz and his team are working towards the possibility of every individual having a personal store of stem cells for regeneration of



different tissues throughout life—the possibility of growing a new heart or another organ is not ruled out. “Any embryonic cell can be converted to an organ cell,” Dr Rajneesh Malhotra, associate director (cardiac surgery), Heart Institute - Division of Cardio Thoracic and Vascular Surgery in Gurgaon, tells *Harmony*. “However,

experience has shown that bone marrow stem cells are totipotent, with the potential to develop into different type of cells. Stem cells processed from bone marrow from the hip bone and injected in the heart have shown improved cardiac function. The future will prove the success of skin cells.”

Cancer scanner

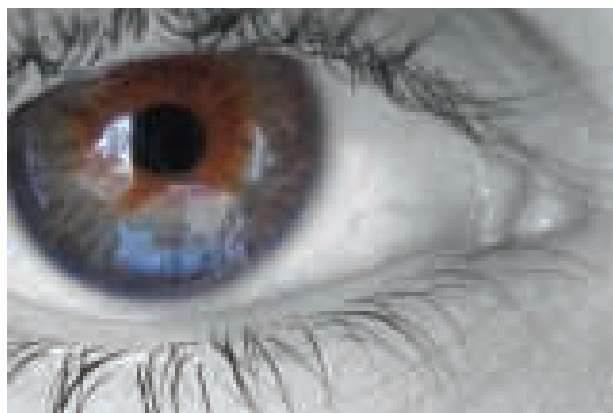
Recent research at the Society of Nuclear Medicine - India (SNMI) in Chandigarh has revealed that **nuclear medicine therapy or radio-immunotherapy is more successful in treating cancer, compared to conventional radiation therapy.** The first step in this procedure necessitates the intravenous or oral administration of very low-level radioactive chemicals called radiopharmaceuticals. The chemicals are developed keeping in mind the organ's absorption pattern, so the chemicals can easily travel to the part of the body being examined. The nuclear medicine scan identifies the



cancerous site, deciphers the localisation of the tumour and the stage, and judges the response to therapy. “The administered radiopharmaceutical kills or blocks the diseased cell in the body,” Dr Prasanta K Pradhan, associate professor of the department of nuclear medicine at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medicine Sciences in Lucknow and president-elect of SNMI, tells *Harmony*. “This therapy is especially effective for older patients as it increases lifespan by years and not months. They also don't experience the weakness and hair loss usually associated with chemotherapy.” Doctors have started using this therapy to detect blockages in heart arteries as well as brain injuries.

Ray of hope

An artificial plastic cornea fabricated by German researchers brings hope for patients suffering from corneal blindness. The second most common type of blindness in the world, there are approximately 4.9 million patients of this condition according to the WHO; corneal transplant can restore eyesight. It took three years for scientists to develop the material and technique to produce the new cornea. A thoroughly modified hydrophobic polymer—material commonly used in ophthalmologic procedures—is used to ensure that the implant merges with surrounding tissues without cells growing into the centre of the cornea and impairing the ability to see. The edge of the implant is coated with special polymers and a protein is added to the implant to stimulate propagation and growth in adjoining natural cells to stabilise the prosthesis. Currently undergoing testing, the artificial cornea will particularly help patients who are unable to tolerate donor corneas. “Keratoplasty [corneal grafting] is commonly performed to combat blindness but has its limitations,”



Dr Abhiyan Kumar Pattnaik, Delhi-based consultant ophthalmologist and Lasik and refractive surgeon, tells *Harmony*. “Different devices have been developed and used over the years, but keratoprosthesis [artificial cornea] has been found to be a better alternative. Currently, the options range from totally synthetic devices like Boston KPro to totally biological tissue-engineered artificial corneas. Though there is visual improvement, clinically used keratoprosthesis devices have significant limitations.”

US-based biotech company Inviragen has announced the initiation of clinical trials for **DENVax, the first dengue vaccine to be developed in the world**. Poised to become a medical breakthrough, the vaccine will offer protection against dengue, a mosquito-borne virus that affects between 50 million and 100 million people globally every year.

SUTURES VS. STAPLES

A recent compilation of studies conducted in the UK to compare the options of closing wounds found the **chances of infection higher if the incision was stapled rather than sutured**. Analysing skin closure of 683 wounds, the researchers revealed that the risk of infection increased from 0.9 per cent in wounds closed with sutures to 4.85 per cent in wounds closed with staples. The relative risk was higher with hip surgery incisions. However, the probability of inflammation, discharge, necrosis (death of localised cells), dehiscence



(reopening of wound) or allergic reaction was assessed to be similar. Major methodological limitations of

the research preclude any decisive recommendation. “In India, we now prefer using staples to sutures,” Dr Rajiv Pandya, chief anaesthetist and critical care specialist at Samved Orthopaedic Hospital in Ahmedabad, tells *Harmony*. “Contrary to the study, there is practically no infection with staples, whereas it is common with sutured incisions. Bleeding or discharge can occur for about 24 hours after removal of sutures, while removal of staples is painless. Sutures are more popular in India because they are much cheaper but staples are preferable any day.”

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Basic instinct

Don't ignore your sexuality in your quest for spirituality, says **Subhana Barzaghi Sensei**

Most of us have arrived at this particular point in our spiritual journey with a little extra baggage about passion, love and sex, and I have noticed that many people on the spiritual path have a tendency in the mind to create a polarisation or separation between the spiritual path and sexual life. There are a number of ways in which this polarisation and confusion are reinforced. One of those ways is that we continue to subscribe to a collective cultural belief and myth perpetuated through Christianity, which is the predominant source of myth in our culture, about the fall of Eve. As you know, in the story, Eve touched and ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and gave it to Adam, a symbolic gesture. Eve was portrayed as a temptress, a seducer, and she has been held responsible for the fall from heavenly grace; her sacred flesh has been falsely blamed for the evils of mankind for generations.

Another factor that contributes to the disconnectedness of spirituality and sexuality is the notion of a body/mind/spirit split. It is as if this kind of thinking, this compartmentalising of life, in some way perpetuates the notion that the body and passions of the flesh belong to the lower realms, and the flesh needs to be transcended to realise the spirit. This kind of thinking is very dualistic and hierarchical in nature. The orthodox religious mind has separated the physical from the spiritual, the sensual from the soul. Rejection of the body became a common article of faith among the world's religions, and orthodox religion has never managed to enjoy the innocence and delight of physical beauty



We do not need to block our sexual energies, nor do we need to be a slave to them

and sensuality. This repressed rejection of physical beauty and attraction by orthodox religious authorities has contributed to religions' obsession with celibacy and its condemnation of enjoying and beautifying the body. At the other end of the spectrum from the religious orthodox attitude is our Western consumer culture's attitude to the flesh and the body, which has made a devotional practice of adorning the body. From these two extremes we are not modelled very healthy ways of relating to the physical, sensual nature of the body. On one side, the religious view of transcending the flesh and treating it as sinful, and on the other side the endless adoring of

the body, fussing over its appearances in order to prolong life, which denies the natural ageing process.

One of my teachers, Christopher Titmuss, who is of the Red Thread school, said, "Religion has been unwilling to see the sensual forces and the spirit as interconnected. Those who are obsessed with preserving their looks and sexual attraction cannot see past their breasts and genitals, while others cannot see the relationship between their genitals and spirituality. Both miss a marriage of the flesh and spirit. Whatever emerges from our lives has its roots in Buddha-nature. So let us be grateful for our sexuality, the creative energies that it releases to our receptive heart and mind. We do not need to block our sexual energies, nor do we need to be a slave to them."

Sexual energy in a loving, committed relationship with its fusion of love, play, magic, ecstasy, is life celebrating life. This respectful communion of the sexual act may reveal the divine mystery rather than just simply be pleasurable, entertaining sensations. What makes the difference are our intentions, our love, our faith, and the attitudes that we bring to this experience. If we hold a reverence for life, an awareness of our interconnectedness and oneness, and we experience the other as none other than our very selves, the shared joy of lovemaking is a spiritual meeting of the flesh and spirit. The boundaries of a separate self can fall away and life is making love with life. The Buddha-tao is to be discovered in our daily lives, the sacred is to be found in the ordinary, and the ordinary in the sacred.

Extracted from a speech delivered in 1994 by Subhana Barzaghi Sensei on 'Red Thread Zen - The Tao of Love, Passion and Sex' at Kuan Yin Meditation Center in Australia. Barzaghi is a teacher in both Zen and Vipassana traditions

“Providing positive energy through Feng Shui gives me satisfaction”

MOHAN DEEP, 62

FAITH HEALER



Utkarsh Sanjanwala

Right through my school and college days, I have enjoyed writing. After graduating in literature in 1973 from Mumbai's National College, I decided to become a journalist. *Free Press Journal* gave me my first break and freelancing gave me the chance to work at my own pace. I also wrote for *Sunday Observer*, *The Asian Age*, *Afternoon*, *Evening News* and some regional newspapers, besides contributing to magazines like *Stardust*, *Health* and *Society*. However, gradually the novelty wore out and a sense of negativity set in. I realised that while 'bad news' always had to be reported with great drama, positive stories merited less prominence. Sensational reporting and 'scoops' (exclusive news) were most important.

I decided to become a full-fledged writer. Besides a couple of biographies,

a novel and a quiz book, I wrote some books in my mother tongue Sindhi. My life took an unexpected turn when I saw a Chinese painting of a sage and mule. The sage looked content despite owning just a piece of cloth. I learnt that Chinese paintings, especially landscapes, depict the relationship between man and his universe. Developing an interest in Feng Shui, I studied Xuan Kong Feng Shui from Geomancy University in Singapore in 1998. I did a second course in Applied Feng Shui to understand the theory behind this concept. Each course was of one-year duration.

Feng Shui is about the nine life corners: wealth and good fortune; fame and glory; marriage and relationships; family and elders; health; children and creativity; knowledge; career and opportunities; and helpful friends and

patronage. Different objects—bells, fountains, wind chimes, candles—energise these corners in a building and generate positive vibes. Paintings depicting symbols like the Chinese dragon or the Arowana fish also bring prosperity and good fortune.

Feng Shui changed me from a cynic to an optimist. I started painting images depicting positive energy for close friends to help deal with personal and professional problems. Their positive response encouraged me to become a fulltime Feng Shui consultant about seven years ago. Now I charge Rs 5,000 for a day's consultation. My paintings cost between Rs 10,000 and Rs 50,000, though the rate can increase if the client has special requirements. Helping people stay positive through Feng Shui gives me great pleasure.

—As told to Dhanya Nair Sankar

Harmony does not endorse the writer's books or the Feng Shui science mentioned in the article

PET TALK

EXPERTS ANSWER YOUR QUERIES AND CONCERNS ON JOBS AFTER RETIREMENT

I am a retired schoolteacher. I love animals, especially dogs. I have always wanted to start an exclusive salon for dogs. Do you think it's a good idea?

An increasing number of people treat their pet dogs as family and spend lavishly on them. Greater spending power has also resulted in a boom in the pet market. Starting a parlour for dogs would be a good business venture if you genuinely love dogs, have the ability to understand canine psychology, and possess a great deal of patience. The salon will need to offer a range of services like shampoo, blow dry, haircut and styling, nail trimming, ear and teeth cleaning, flea and tick treatment. Add-on services like doggy nail-polish, bubblebaths and aromatherapy massages could be included. This would require an initial investment of about Rs 400,000. You will need a minimum of 200 sq ft space. Besides investing in a bathtub, dryer, combs and brushes, you'll need to stock grooming products and accessories. Hiring one or two assistants will depend on the scale of business. Cut initial advertising costs by listing your salon with pet websites and spreading the news through word of mouth. The returns will depend on the quality of service and reputation you build.

—Anchal Malhi

Malhi owns and manages 'It's A Dog's Life', a salon for dogs in Mumbai



I occasionally wrote for newspapers during my banking career. Recently I posted a travelogue on my daughter's blog; the feedback has encouraged me to try freelance writing. How should I proceed?

The increasing popularity of the Internet has made writing for websites an attractive option for all age groups. It is particularly advantageous for those who prefer to work from home. There are websites where you can create your profile stating qualifications and interest areas; this indicates your choice of topics for writing. Most websites list a category of subjects. You have to 'bid' for a project you would like to do by explaining why you are the best candidate to write on that subject. Some websites want to know the number of hours you can work per week. Send a sample of your writing along with your CV to websites like *naukri.com* and *monster.com*. Check out websites like *suite101.com*, *journalismjobs.com* and *academia-research.com*. Payments are made according to

assignments and you can start off earning about Rs 500 to Rs 700 per assignment. To be successful, you should have an original writing style and the ability to adapt to the client's needs. And don't plagiarise from the Net—you'll instantly lose credibility.

—Anisha Banerjee

Bengaluru-based Banerjee has been a freelance writer for websites for the past three years

I retired as liaison officer from a public-sector undertaking. Considering my flair for writing and my network of media contacts, I would like to venture into media consultancy. Is it mandatory to have a degree in mass media? Please advise me.

There is a difference between having media contacts and being able to obtain media coverage for clients. The job of a media consultant is to ensure publication of client-relevant news. The media has become extremely commercial and clients demand 100 per cent success for event coverage. In the corporate sector, a considerable budget is usually allocated for media coverage. In turn, companies demand guaranteed coverage in national-level English dailies and on reputed television channels. To start a media consultancy firm, therefore, you need a good background in either media or public relations. Considering your lack of experience in this field, I think it would be advisable to avoid media consultancy and take on liaison work. If you are very confident of being successful, you can always give it a try. The rewards are high.

—G L Mahajan

Delhi-based Mahajan is press liaison officer, department of public relations, Himachal Pradesh government

Stroke of GENIUS

Dr Dilip Shrinivas Velaskar is making waves with his stroke-predicting kit. **Dhanya Nair Sankar** meets the silver innovator

As matters of the heart go, this one is quite a breakthrough. A silver doctor in Mumbai and a practising pathologist for almost 30 years, 68 year-old Dr Dilip Shrinivas Velaskar has devised a tool to anticipate cardiovascular ailments: a 'rapid thrombocheck test kit' that measures the hyperactivity of platelets in blood and indicates the risk of a stroke. "We tend to blame heart disease on excess lipids [fats]," he says. "But as my interest in studying the role of platelets grew, I discovered a direct relationship between hyperactive platelets and a stroke."

Dr Velaskar graduated from the Faculty of Ayurvedic Medicine of the University of Mumbai in 1968 and studied both Ayurveda and allopathy. He then trained under senior pathologist Dr V H Salaskar. "Dr Salaskar is like a founding father of pathology in Mumbai," says Dr Velaskar. He began studying platelets in the early 1980s and his first paper, which suggested a connection between heart disease and platelets, was published in the *American Journal of Clinical Pathology* in 1982.

It was Dr Velaskar's dream to devise an economical and easy-to-use aggregometry test to measure platelet aggressiveness. "To date, an aggregometry test could only be performed in research clinics," he explains. "It was a lengthy process and cost up to Rs 3,000." By contrast, Dr Velaskar's procedure can be carried out in small clinical laboratories



Vilas Kalgutkar

and costs 10 times less: between Rs 250 and Rs 300. "People at risk of stroke can thus be identified easily and put on anti-platelet medicine or blood-thinners such as aspirin," he adds. "This can significantly reduce their chances of suffering a heart attack." Small laboratories can purchase the kit for Rs 600; each kit can be used up to 10 times.

Dr Velaskar started putting his kit together back in 2000. Not surprisingly, funds were a constraint. "Help came last year through a government programme known as the Technopreneur Promotion Program (TEPP) and I got around Rs 800,000," he reveals. Dr Velaskar believes his kit is especially valuable for silvers. "As most people age, they experience an increase in hyperactivity in their platelets," he tells us. "Around 4 billion senior citizens in India are known to take aspirin without knowing its effects. One of my aims now is to study a small population of silvers and the hyperactivity of platelets in this segment of the population and make sure they have a healthier future."

At present, the rapid thrombocheck kit is awaiting an international patent and both national and international

pharmaceutical companies are lining up to buy the product. "The prototype is ready and we have got clearance from all the quality control agencies," says Dr Velaskar. "We hope to see the product in the market within the next six months."

ANOTHER WARNING SIGN

In Israel, a new blood test called the PLAC test is making waves as an early warning system for heart attack or stroke. The blood test, which is not connected to platelets, measures the level of an enzyme associated with the swelling of the arteries in a condition called atherosclerosis. Increased levels of this enzyme increase the risk of heart disease or stroke. Atherosclerosis is caused by fatty deposits that accumulate on the walls of the arteries over time. These deposits, called plaque, cause the arteries to get inflamed, which releases the enzyme in question. High levels of the enzyme suggest that the artery could rupture. The blood released is likely to clot and result in a heart attack or stroke.



Extra cover

From sultry summers to relentless monsoons, here is a gadget that has you covered—literally. Kolkata-based Mohendra Dutt Umbrella Manufacturers has launched a special range of umbrellas to arm you against all kinds of weather. Equipped with a small three-blade plastic fan fitted inside the canopy and covered with a safety mesh, they are guaranteed to help you keep your cool, and dry, in the days ahead. Some models are also fitted with LED lights on the ribs and tip of the handle ensuring that you find your way in the dark. Made from nylon, the umbrellas

are available in a variety of colours and are light to carry. Gear up.

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Nomination and inheritance

Legalpundits explains a High Court order on a nominee inheriting shares

On 20 April 2010, the Bombay High Court passed an order that a nominee of a shareholder in a public company would inherit the shares upon the death of the shareholder, after due legal course.

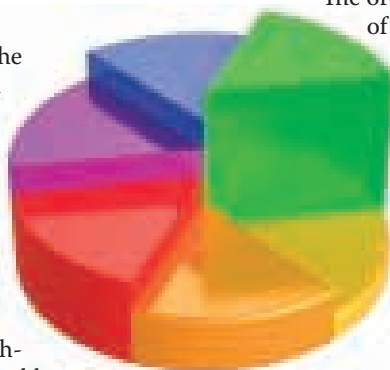
There is no specific statute that deals with nomination and the consequential rights and duties of a nominee. Nomination is defined and applied differently in various aspects of the law. Insurance and banking law takes the view that “nomination [is] merely for the payment of the amount under the life insurance policy without confirming any ownership rights in the nominee” as stated in the judgement order in the present case. The Companies Act (1956), in Section 109A and 109B, defines nomination as applicable to shares of a company. These definitions clearly state that, irrespective of any law in force, the nominee (on death of the shareholder or shareholders) will be ‘vested’ with all the rights in the shares.

What seems to have led to a dispute is the term ‘vested,’ along with interpretation of the term ‘nomination’ as defined in insurance and banking sector laws and cases decided under these laws. Usually ‘vesting’ indicates custody and not ownership in all cases where the term is used, as observed by the honourable judge in the case order. The order clearly distinguishes the meanings as applied to each case from insurance to the Maharashtra Cooperative Societies Act and as applicable in case of the Companies Act. The meanings under these other Acts are more in nature of custodial function, while in case of the Companies Act it is in nature of ‘holder’ of all rights—in other words, in nature of ownership rights.

Another concept in the present case is ‘due process.’ This essentially means completion of all procedures with respect to something. The order states that if due process of nomination was completed by the shareholder, and upon death of the shareholder the nominee completed the processes required to establish himself as the nominee, he would be vested with the shares and all rights therein. In the event that ‘due process’ is not followed, the legal heirs may stand in place of the nominee. But this is only legal conjecture and there are no precedents.

The order is quite explicit in its meaning that the interpretation of company law and Depositories Act shall be applied to these terms while deciding the extent of rights and duties acquired by the nominee with respect to these shares upon the death of the shareholder(s).

There are two issues here. Having mostly dealt with banks and insurance companies, an ordinary citizen is usually under the impression that the term ‘nomination’ means the same thing under the Companies Act as under insurance and banking laws. This clearly points to lack of awareness among shareholders regarding the nomination provisions of the Companies Act and its implications in the event of death. Investor education is the responsibility of SEBI—the case highlights the shortcomings of investor education programmes in operation at present.



The order, in as much as it implements the word of the law, appears to be unjust to legal heirs of a deceased shareholder if the nominee is different from the legal heirs. Such a situation may arise where the nomination was made before the legal heirs were designated as legal heirs, and subsequently the nomination to the shares was not changed to the name of the legal heirs.

This further raises the critical issue of updating nominations. Change of nomination is necessary irrespective of testate or intestate status of the deceased. In other words, irrespective of the fact that there is a Will made or not, nominations should be updated, especially after major life events like marriage or illness, to factor in the effects of such events and adequately provide clarity to legal heirs.

Also, as a matter of sound legislation, the subject of nomination should be adequately addressed, preferably through a separate legislation that defines nomination clearly as applicable in all cases, bringing uniformity in the matter and reducing possibilities for disputes. As far as shares of a company deposited with a depository in Demat form are concerned, the present case provides a clear message to all shareholders: Update the nomination on all your Demat accounts with respect to all shareholdings and ensure that nominees are legal heirs.

This article has been written by Prachi V Manekar, a Bombay High Court advocate



Sushil Jhangiani

Once upon a time...

TWO MAVERICKS ARE REVIVING A MOVEMENT IN URDU STORYTELLING THAT JUST MIGHT INTRODUCE A NEW GENRE IN INDIAN THEATRE. **RAJASHREE BALARAM** IS ALL EARS

Few languages on earth bear the refinement and sensuality of sounds that define Urdu.

Once the favoured language of Hindi movie lyricists, today it is slowly receding to the fringes in theatre and films. Hardly surprising then that few people are aware of Dastangoi, an ancient art of narration in Urdu. Theatre artists Mahmood Farooqui, 37, and Danish Husain, 39, however, are all set to resuscitate the glory and adulation that Dastangoi [*dastan* (story) + *goi* (to tell)] once enjoyed in the courts of emperor Akbar.

"I decided to become a *dastangoi*

C REVIVAL [performer] when I studied the *Dastan-e-Hamza* six years ago while assisting someone with research on a film," says Farooqui (see pic above, right) who has studied at Oxford University. Farooqui roped in Husain, and together the duo has held over 150 shows all over the world in the past five years. Dressed in *anghrakha* and *topi*, the two narrate tales of valour, courage, romance and sensuality drawn from Arabic and Persian literature. Their camaraderie is punctuated with dramatic gestures, expressions and voices. "We improvise as we perform," says Farooqui. Their

recent performance at the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Film and Television Institute of India was a huge success. To promote the art, they now conduct workshops. "We look for participants who are faithful to the aural nuances of the language," says Husain (see pic above, left). Gauging by their blog www.dastangoi.blogspot.com, they have already attracted many followers. At present, there are 20 *dastangoi* who are honing their skill through weekly meetings and rehearsals in Delhi. Here's one tale that's not about happy endings but fresh beginnings.

WOOD WORKS

"Wood carries a timeless poetry in its soul written by air, sunshine, insects and the quiet of the forests," says Ramesh Ghone. Though Ghone's words may sound romantic and dreamy, one only needs to visit his house in Kolad to know why Ghone is so bewitched by wood. Situated 120 km away from Mumbai on the Mumbai-Goa highway—amid thickets, many of them cultivated by him—Ghone's house is also the location for Kashta-Shilpa museum, India's only museum dedicated to wooden sculpture. The 2,000 sculptures on display, including shoes, birds, dolls, human figures, deities and delightful abstractions, have been lovingly chiselled by Ghone over many years of patience, brooding and passion. Born and brought up in Mumbai, Ghone and his family moved to Kolad when he was in his teens. The discarded coconut shells in the coconut store owned by his brother were the first to yield to his imagination. Later, a stint at a saw mill helped him sharpen his perception of the resilience and grain of different kinds of wood. The 54 year-old is now aiming for space in *Guinness World Records*. Though he designs household accessories and furniture to earn a living, none of his creations in the museum are on sale. "I just want people to know that wood is not as lifeless as they think," he says.





Courtesy: Ramesh Ghone

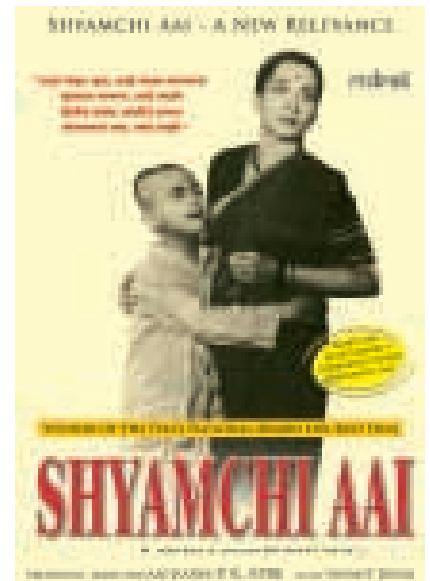
FILM FLAIR

RECENTLY, WHEN DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER NEELKANTI PATEKAR ANNOUNCED A FILMMAKING COURSE FOR CHILDREN, MANY SILVERS RANG HER UP—MIFFED WITH THE AGE CRITERIA. PATEKAR IS NOW INVITING SILVERS TO GO BEHIND THE LENS. HER FIVE-DAY FILMMAKING COURSE IN MUMBAI COVERS STORY DEVELOPMENT, CHARACTERISATION, SCRIPT EDITING, MUSIC, COMMENTARY AND EFFECTS. THE COURSE FEE IS RS 11,000, INCLUSIVE OF ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD. YOUR SHORT FILM MAY EVEN BE SCREENED AT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS. CALL AMOL ARKADE OR AWISHKAR ON 022-24445871 BETWEEN 6.30 PM AND 8.30 PM, OR EMAIL MALHARADS@GMAIL.COM

Yesterday once more

C NOSTALGIA

Fifty-seven years after it was first released, *Shyamchi Aai* still remains one of the most widely watched movies in Maharashtra. Based on a novel written by social reformer Sane Guruji while in prison during the freedom movement, the movie is about a young boy Shyam and the values he imbibes from his mother. Endearingly simple in treatment and plot, the movie earned the halo of iconic cinema, mainly because of its honesty, ethics, integrity and idealism. Though such virtues are often nonchalantly compromised in the times we live in, efforts are now on to keep the message alive—especially since this Mother's Day celebrated on 8 May. Pune-based distributor Subhash Chedda, who bought the rights to the movie in 2003, is now planning to show it to 100,000 educational institutions all over Maharashtra, including schools, junior colleges and universities. In the past two months, no-



nagenarian Prakash Mohadikar has conducted discussions around the movie in public spaces and schools across 34 districts of Maharashtra. (Mohadikar has already sold more than 200,000 copies of the book.) Another silver, Pune-based Datta Puranik has also promoted the movie tirelessly—the 85 year-old has sold more than 40,000 copies of the book and 10,000 copies of the movie in DVD and VCD formats over the past couple of decades. Quite simply, old is truly gold.

Reluctant legends

Documentary filmmaker **Partha Mukherjee** shifts the spotlight on two unsung heroes who wrought magic in Satyajit Ray's masterpieces: Dulal Dutta and Soumendu Roy



C CINEMA

Soumendu Roy: Ray's cherished cinematographer

A towering tree captures attention, but those beneath its shade go unnoticed. This analogy bears a resemblance to Dulal Dutta, the man who edited every film Satyajit Ray ever made, and Soumendu Roy, Ray's most cherished cinematographer. Dutta worked with Ray for four decades (*Pather Panchali*, 1952, to *Agantuk*, 1991) and was admired by the film fraternity—both nationally and internationally—for his sensitive editing. Roy worked with the maestro on 14 films. The two rarely made headlines, letting their work speak for them. Dutta, now 84, lives in a nondescript by-lane of Kolkata. Aspiring filmmakers and established directors still seek his advice when perfection eludes them. Roy, now a septuagenarian, has won the National Award for Best Cinematography thrice. Like Dutta, he chooses not to dwell on his accomplishments. Both, however, are more than willing to spend an entire day talking about Satyajit Ray and his genius.

Dulalda, the day you met Ray on a rain-bathed evening in 1952 must be vivid in your memory.

Yes, it will remain so until I breathe my last. Banshi Chandragupta—art director and a close friend of Manik-

da—took me to Manikda's residence at 31 Lake Avenue, Kolkata. Ray briefed me over tea about his maiden cinematic venture, *Pather Panchali*. He wanted me to edit the film. Though I had read the story on which the film was based, frankly, I couldn't ever imagine its cinematic version. But I was so bowled over by Manikda's personality that I immediately accepted the offer. In fact, I was so awestruck that I didn't even ask him his name. Somehow my instinct told me right then that he'd be a person I would be associated with forever. Today I feel so proud that I've edited each and every film that he made. Although I have edited some films made by other directors, he will always remain a class apart to me.

Soumenduda, how did you get in touch with Satyajit Ray?

Though I was part of his unit as a camera apprentice when he was shooting at the Technician Studio for some indoor sequences of *Pather Panchali*, I joined his unit as a cinematographer in 1960 when he decided to film *Teen Kanya*, a three-in-one story based on Rabindranath Tagore's *Samapti*, *Monihara* and *Postmaster*. I still remember the initial trepidation when

I interacted with him. He had an imposing personality, yet he never made me feel nervous. The day he came to see the rushes of *Postmaster*, I was extremely nervous—especially when he arrived in the studio and then left the room without any remark. I followed him to the gate. Then he turned round and said "*Thik hai*" (it's all right). Those two words from him were enough to make me joyous.

Don't you think that unsparing ruthlessness of famine as depicted in *Ashani Sanket* deserves the charge of 'glorifying poverty'? Ray had often been criticised for a rather beautiful portrayal of the gruesome reality of imminent death, especially where Moti, the untouchable village belle, is dying of starvation with deep anguish writ large in her eyes.

Any shot is justified if it meets the realistic demands of the screenplay. The critics perhaps failed to discern that a touch of beauty would heighten the cruelty of the circumstances. Chitra Bannerjee left us bewildered with her acting prowess. Two dead eyes devoid of sight and yet staring at the sun could not have been possible without her exceptional ability to cast

her steadfast look at the sun with eyes that would not even water.

Soumenduda, we've heard that Chunibala who played the role of Apu's grandmother in the trilogy did not get up from where she was lying down on the floor, long after the shot of Indir's death was taken, leaving Ray nervous....

Yes, everyone was taken aback for a while. When the crew started getting nervous, she got up at last to ask whether the shot had been taken or not. We were stunned by her dedication as an actor that day; even Manikda was mesmerised. He was always sensitive towards his artists' sentiments. In the scene of Chunibala's

When he started out making *Pather Panchali*, Ray sold a lot of valuables, including his wife's jewellery and his precious musical records. Thankfully, midway through the movie, the West Bengal government came forward to help him with funds. But he was always resourceful. For instance, in *Aparajito* we had an evening scene with many fireflies where Apu's arrival was eagerly awaited by Sarbojaya. He created the 'fireflies' out of nothing but beams of light from a dry-cell torch, the glass of which was painted black except for a pin-hole at the centre. We hopped in black aprons covering the whole body before the camera with those torches held haphazardly by each of us to give the effect of swarms of fireflies flying in the dark.

As far as the arrangement of light is concerned, I think *Devi* deserves a special mention....

It's one of my [Soumendu Roy] personal favourites and I guess so it is for Dulalida [Dutta gives an affirmative nod]. Despite not being behind the lens in person, this is one film, I have learnt a lot from. The sequence where Umapati [played by Soumitra Chatterjee] and Doyamoyee [played by Sharmila Tagore] are on the bed is any cine buff's delight. Diffused lighting was filtered through the mosquito net in a way that the characters seemed illuminated by their bedside lamp to exude the warmth of intimacy between the couple.

The shooting of any film by Satyajit Ray must be full of anecdotes. Any funny moments?

During the shoot of *Goopie Gyne Bagha Byne* we had a shot with Uma, a tigress. The moment I went close to her to measure the light in my exposure meter, she turned around on her hind legs towards me. Somehow I managed to jump out of her enclosure—of course, I was drenched in sweat by then. Later I learnt that Uma was tamed and aggravated according to the requirement of the

situation by a South Indian couple. The woman would be present in front of the tigress to calm her down; while every time the tiger saw the man she would get infuriated. I came to know that he hadn't brushed his teeth for 30 years—his bad breath irritated the cat no end.

Dulalida, when you met Ray, he was a young director with no prior experience in filmmaking; even you were new to the industry at that time. Looking back, do you think it was a prudent decision as far as your careers were concerned?

Maybe it was not exactly a practical professional move; but we have always followed our heart, and creative satisfaction ruled over every other concern. Manikda's personality, his love for cinema and immense appetite for knowledge conquered our hearts. Besides, we were aware of his association with the Cine Society, his being a part of Renoir's crew for *The River*. All these factors perhaps encouraged us to make an association with the promising young man.

If you talk about the acceptance of his films, well, I've heard people deriding *Goopie Gyne Bagha Byne* as a cock-and-bull story and leaving the hall after the first show. Later, I was pleasantly amazed to see it running in the theatres for a year.

Dulalida, it was rumoured that Merchant Ivory productions made you a fabulous offer.

Yes, they did. But money never mattered much to us. There were times, when even days after signing our expense vouchers, we remained unpaid. Yet, Manikda's company and brilliance would compensate for every loss. Money could never have lured me to join Merchant Ivory Productions, because being away from Manikda was not even an option. We would give it all up to be with him. For us Satyajit Ray is the only icon after Rabindranath Tagore.



Hrishita Majumdar

Dutta continues to inspire filmmakers

funeral, he decided to use a dummy instead of Chunibala herself. But the lady simply said, "Raymoshai, my days are numbered; I would rather take my last ride on your shoulder."

I am sure there were instances when Ray had to overcome budgetary constraints while shooting a film?



Downhill or uphill?

On a trip to Mussoorie, **Tom Alter** discovers the joys of going back in time

I grew up—or rather tried to—in Mussoorie. Was born there, studied there, and very reluctantly left the place at the age of 18 to grow up even further, an endeavour in which I have been totally unsuccessful. For I have neither grown up any further—I still insist I am 18—nor have I have ever truly left Mussoorie. As my *chachaji* so wisely says, and he should know, as what he says is even more true for him than for me, “You never leave Mussoorie; wherever you go, you take it with you.”

While I was studying at Woodstock School in Mussoorie, my parents were living and working in Rajpur, running a Christian ashram. Rajpur is at the base of the Mussoorie hill, at an altitude of about 2,500 ft (Woodstock perches at a height of about 6,500 ft), and every chance we got, my brother

and I, or my friends and I, would head for Rajpur and good food and rest and the love of father and mother. These journeys were usually legal—with the permission of the school and knowledge of my parents—but there were several that were not, including such adventures in the middle of the night.

You see, to reach Rajpur from Mussoorie did not require four wheels, or even two. Although four-wheeled and two-wheeled adventures were many, the journey required only two legs, and sometimes two hands, and enough energy to propel you downhill for about 10 miles from the Woodstock campus to the gate of the Christian Retreat and Study Centre in Rajpur.

If you knew shortcuts, you could reduce those 10 miles to about seven,

and the time required from about two-and-a-half hours to less than an hour—as I did, one early summer evening, when I had to play a basketball game at school, and reach Rajpur by 6 pm. The game ended at 5:15 pm and I just ran off the court and kept running, by those beloved shortcuts, all the way to Rajpur. I was there by six, with my lovely girlfriend waiting for me at the gate. Yes, 45 minutes...down into the valley below Woodstock, down through beautiful forest, across the stream, up the steep slope to Allen School, and then down the walking road to Rajpur, sprinting past St. George's College, Oak Grove School, and then the final, much steeper descent, along old mining roads and much fresher landslides, leading to a half-mile dash along level ground to the gate; a dash that starts at the ancient *chungi*, and ends at the welcom-

ing red and white of the 'Christian Retreat and Study Centre' sign—not to mention, that day, the equally welcoming arms of my girlfriend.

I mention these details on purpose, for on that descent—whether one did it in 45 minutes or two hours and forty-five minutes—those places and those gates became such good friends, welcoming you and yet urging you onwards; Allen School, with its gate of rounded ease, where we would always arrive for sporting competitions; St. George's College at Barlowganj, whose gate was much grander, and yet equally welcoming, followed by the suspension-bridge high above, as if connecting fact and fantasy; and then Oak Grove, in its tiny valley, halfway down the hill, where level ground begins to appear like the first truths of young adulthood.

But it is the descent below Oak Grove and Jharipani that really tests the traveller. The sun is much warmer and trees fewer, and mining has taken its toll. My friend Paul and I used to take another shortcut here, down through nettles and fields that we used to call 'Vietnam'. This shortcut would cut off another half mile, and lead us on to the teashop, where a quick cup would give us energy for the final two miles of really steep descent, along a landslide that we lovingly called the 'Stone River'. Ah! Forty-five years. I had made that dash down the hill in 1967; so, to be precise, 43 years, but I will stick to 45, or even more, because I first made that descent when I was not even 10 years old. And I am still making it, and loving it.

About six months ago, I tried to repeat the shortcut below Woodstock and then across the stream and up to the Allen School gate to test myself, to see how things have changed, to see how I have changed. The path leading down to the stream is now paved for more than half the distance, as the school has set up a water-pumping station on the stream, but the forest is still full and fine, and the silence as sweet

I felt, after too long a time, the call of fatigue and strength in my body, the joy of a journey, the pull of the past that always guides you into the future

as it was 43 years ago. I descended in solitude, with only the ghosts of memories as companions. The pumping station took me by surprise, and more surprises were in store as I tried to find the path up the hill on the other side of the stream. It no longer exists, and for two good reasons: a new road was built between Allen and Woodstock in the early 1970s, and the construction destroyed the path and, thus, also destroyed the need to dash from one school to another.

But did this discourage me? Not at all! I headed into the undergrowth where I thought the path used to be, and got totally and joyfully lost in the shrubs and rocks, and the steep challenge of the slope, and emerged on the new road—scratched and struggling—but very happy. My knees began to ache as I began the descent to Barlowganj. *Paani* and *chai* at the beloved teashop there kept me alive, and another

round of juice at Jharipani gave more energy not only to continue my journey but answer all the queries as to why I was walking to Rajpur when much more convenient means of travel were available. When I reached the dry area below Barlowganj, the truth of those questions struck home—I saw no other walker, and the condition of the road was proof that very few people had used the road in the past several years. Of the teashop, not even the ruins were left. My knees and my back were giving out as I made my way—often with the support of my hands and arms—down the edge of the Stone River. One section was actually dangerous, and would have been even when I was 18.

The sun was striking me like an anvil as I neared the *chungi*. A recently constructed teashop rescued me, and with that sustenance I read the 'toll rates' at the *chungi*—still in Hindi and

Children playing in the sunlit basketball court of Woodstock School





The past and present coexist peacefully in Mussoorie: (clockwise from top left) the 202 year-old St. George's College; one of the many churches that dot the landscape; the ropeway ride to Gunhill; the Mall Road, Mussoorie's bustling shopping area

Urdu and English—telling of an age of horses and mules and *dandi* and *memsahib* that had disappeared like the original teashop. When I reached the gate of the Centre four hours after leaving Woodstock—yes, four hours—the scent of my girlfriend was still there, as was a welcome inside of more tea and water and much talk of the past and of the future, and then a bed for the afternoon nap that my body and soul were crying out for. As I plunged into sleep, my mind kept telling me, as my weary soul nodded in agreement, “It was worth it, it was worth it, it was worth it...” And ‘worth it’ it was—and not only as a weary walk down memory lane. It was worth it because I felt, after too long a

time, the call of fatigue and strength in my body, the joy of a journey, the need to complete a task from which there was no obvious gain, the pull of the past that always guides you into the future.

And that evening at a school in Rajpur, we talked of the need to repair and re-establish that walking path from Mussoorie to Rajpur, both as a historical necessity and an alternate source of adventure for tourists, far beyond the Mall Road and hotels and restaurants that now provide all the adventure tourists to hill stations seem to seek.

No, the teashop is gone forever, but maybe—just maybe—the *chungi*

could function again and a minimal toll could be charged from those adventurous tourists who would wish to walk up to, or descend from, Mussoorie. I know I will keep on making that journey and my knees and back will keep on supporting me. We must keep on making these journeys—our own special journeys—for as the *chungi* of the years take their toll, the *chungi* of our hearts will also charge us; not for making these journeys, but for not making them.



Tom Alter, 60, is an actor and writer who divides his time between Mumbai and Mussoorie

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The India that was

Released in June, *History in the Making* (HarperCollins; Rs 5,000; 336 pages) introduces us to the oeuvre of late photojournalist Kulwant Roy. Here's a glimpse into its pages and the moments that shaped India's destiny



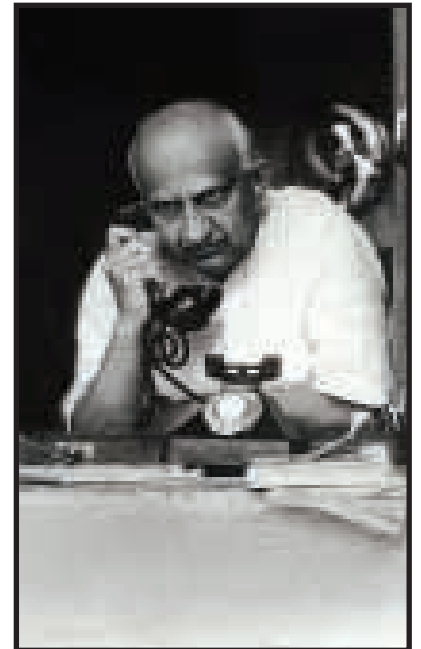
All of us have our own unique mental album of images drawn from Indian political history—most of them solemn and consequential, representing an important milestone in the trajectory of our nation. However, there have been moments in the corridors of power that were not necessarily eventful but were nevertheless rich because of the banter, camaraderie, jest, emotion and lightness imbued in them. Late Kulwant Roy was one of the few photojournalists in India whose camera captured thousands of such moments before and after Independence. When Roy passed away in 1984, he left behind a wealth of archival negatives and prints that remained forgotten till his nephew Aditya Arya found them, and restored, catalogued and compiled them into a book in collaboration with historian Indivar Kamtekar. The project also spawned the formation of the India Photo Archive Foundation.



(Above) Jawaharlal Nehru with Maulana Azad in Simla, 1945; Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Vallabh Pant celebrating Holi, 1956;
(below) Captain Ram Singh, who had composed the patriotic song *Kadam kadam badhaye ja*, plays the violin for Mahatma Gandhi at the Harijan Colony, 1945







(Above) Vinobha Bhave performing the opening ceremony of the Sarvodaya Exhibition in Gandhinagar, Jaipur, by spinning khadi, with Shankar Rao Deo on his right (undated); Bhulabhai Desai in a serious phone conversation at Birla House during the Congress Working Committee meeting, 1947; (below) Edwina Mountbatten greets Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, 1948; (opposite page, above) Nehru with Khan Abdul Gaffur Khan in Simla during Cabinet Mission deliberations, with Sardar Patel riding a rickshaw; (opposite page, below) Mahatma Gandhi meeting M A Jinnah at his Delhi residence, also seen is Shaukat Ali on the left (undated)





(Left) Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at the Indo-Pak talks during the Simla Summit, 1972; (above) former president Dr Radhakrishnan receiving the Dalai Lama on his arrival at Palam Airport in Delhi to attend the 2,500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations, 1956; (below) Sardar Patel with the Maharaja of Jaipur on the formation of the Matsya Union of the Rajasthan princely states, 1948



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WILL DO!

Empower yourself for an uncertain tomorrow, says **Timeri Murari**

Everyone makes a Will, well aware that dying awaits us all. Some leave millions to be divided among heirs, others leave behind them nothing at all. The Will is our final statement. But often the end does not come as we expect it. We remain alive but have lost touch with the living world, and we all fear the attack of Alzheimer's or dementia before we die, physically. Until then, we're alive and our lives are beyond our control. While visiting family in Australia, my brother-in-law Kevin told us he wanted to make a Living Will before he left for a holiday in London. Kevin is a few years younger than me, and a diabetic. He's also unmarried.

"Why do you need this Living Will?" I asked. I'd heard of such legal instruments but hadn't met anyone who planned to make one. It sounded like a prenuptial agreement, which never works anyway as both parties end up in divorce court. "All you need is health insurance for London." "If I die that's the end," he said cheerfully. "But I may end up in a coma after an accident and someone will have to look after me and take care of my affairs. You're married so you have each other but who'll look after me?" He noticed my doubts on the whole affair. "In a Living Will I am leaving my living body, which I have no control over, for someone to care for until I die."

"Who will be your caregiver?" I asked. He had four elder sisters and two younger brothers. "I decided on someone younger. I've asked Ann." She was his 30 year-old niece, the mother of two children. I knew her

quite well, a lovely woman. "Has she agreed? It's quite a responsibility," I asked. Ann had agreed. I asked her why. "He's my favourite uncle and this is the least I can do for him if that's what he wants."

"We've discussed all the details on the Living Will and Ann knows what she will have to do," Kevin said. I went along with them to pick up the paperwork from the office of the Public

The Will is our final statement. But often the end does not come as we expect it. We remain alive but have lost touch with the living world

Advocate. We came out with a 67-page brochure. Living Wills obviously have a lot more documentation than Kevin expected. It was filled with advice, suggestions, warnings and eight forms to be filled in, signed by Kevin and Ann, and witnessed by a legal person for each signing. Basically, the document advised that Kevin should make a power of attorney to 'give a person the right legal authority to make decisions for you that take into account your wishes'. He had choices to make. He could give Ann a 'temporary power-of-attorney (financial and medical)' that could be cancelled when he returned from London. He could have an 'enduring power of attorney (financial)' to appoint someone to make legal and financial

decisions if he's unable to make them for himself. Or he could even have an 'enduring power of attorney (medical treatment)' for Ann to make medical decisions on his behalf such as agreeing to or refusing surgery, pulling the plug (to put it bluntly) if he did not have the capacity to make that decision. And finally, he could set up 'an enduring power of guardianship' for Ann to make day-to-day lifestyle decisions on his behalf, as he had lost the capacity. This would include financial and healthcare issues. The brochure defined 'capacity' as 'having the ability to reason things out. You can understand, retain, believe, evaluate (that is, process) and weigh relevant information'.

Whichever Kevin's choice, Ann 'must act in his best interests, whenever possible make the same decisions that he would make, keep accurate records of dealings and transactions, avoid situations where there is a conflict of interests and keep his property and money separately from her own.' Kevin and Ann filled in the forms and I went along as a witness when they signed. They also had to certify 'that the appointer has signed the instrument freely and voluntarily and that he or she appeared to understand the effect of the instrument.'

Aware of the frailty of life, I picked up a brochure too. I thought it was such a good template for my own life, and will follow its advice before I lose my 'capacity'.

Timeri Murari, 65, is an author and screenplay writer living in Chennai

PASSAGES

Memories of MALABAR

AN EXTRACT FROM THE
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF
*RELATION D'UN VOYAGE FAIT
AU LEVANT* (PARIS;
L BILLAINE, 1665), AN
ACCOUNT OF WRITER JEAN
DE THEVENOT'S TRAVELS



Calecut was the first place of the Indies, which the Portuguese discovered in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety eight, under the conduct of Vasco de Gama. The King of Calecut, who at first received them friendly, would at length have destroyed them, at the instigation of Arabian merchants, and the greatest wars they had in the Indies was against that King. The King of Cochin made alliance with them, and the Kings of Cananor and Coulam invited them to come and trade with them.

Malabar (which is the Countrey of all these Kings) begins at Cananor, and ends at the Cape Comory; the most powerful of all these Princes was the King of Calecut, who took the Quality of Samorin or Emperour. The Port of Calecut, lying in the latitude of 11^o and 22 minutes, is at some distance from the town; before the coming of the Portuguese, it was the most considerable port of the Indies for commerce, and ships came thither from all parts. The town has no walls, because there is no ground for laying a foundation upon, for water appears as soon as they begin to dig. There are no good buildings in Calecut, but the King's palace and some pagodas; the houses joyn not, they have lovely gardens, and of all things necessary for life, there is aplenty in that town.

The King of Cochin was a most faithful friend to the Portuguese; for, for their sake he was deprived of his Kingdom by the King of Calecut; but they restored him, and gained so much up on him, that he gave them leave to build a fort in that part of the Town, which is called Lower Cochin upon the Seaside, to distinguish it from the Higher Cochin where the King resides, and from which it is distant a quarter of a league. The Portuguese have held fort a long time; but three or four years since, it was taken from them by the Dutch.

The Port of Cochin is very good; there is six fathom water close by the shoar, and upon a plane one may easily come from on board the vessels. The town of Cochin is about thirty six leagues from Calecut; it is watered by a river, and there is plenty of pepper in the Countrey about it, which is fruitful in nothing else. There are people in that Countrey who have legs like an Elephant, and I saw a man at Cochin with such a Leg; the son inherits not after his Father, because a woman is allowed by the custom to lye with several men, so that it cannot be known who is the father of the child she brings forth; and for successions, the child of the sister is preferred, because there is no doubt of the line by the female.

The sisters have liberty to chuse such Naires or gentlemen as they please to lye with; and when a Naire is in a ladies' chamber, he leaves his stick or sword at the door, that others (who have a mind to come) should know that the place is taken up, nobody offers to come in then. And this custom is established all over Malabar.

Heretofore the King of Cochin was crowned upon the coast, though it was possessed by the Portuguese; but he who ought now to be King, would not be crowned there, because it is in the power of the Dutch: And he made them answer, when they invited him to follow the custom, that he would have nothing to do with them; and that when the Portuguese were restored to the possession of that coast, he would be crowned there. In the meantime the Dutch have crowned another Prince, who is the King's Kinsman, and have given him the title of Samorin or Emperour, which the King of Calecut pretends to.

The true King of Cochin is retired to Tanor, which is the first principality of his house, to the Prince of Tanor, his uncle, eight leagues from Cochin. They sail from one town to the other in little barks, upon a pretty pleasant river.

FLAVOURS OF LIFE

Enter the kitchens of a tribe where the aromatic air is rarefied...," writes octogenarian Hajra Mohammed in the introduction to her book *Hajra's Recipes of Life, for Life* (Westland; Rs 350; 113 pages). Admitting that Cutchi Memon recipes "are considered sacred and guarded zealously", she generously proceeds to share the culinary secrets of her family in an attractive volume. Cutchi Memon food is Muslim food—a generic term to describe rich food—with a difference. A fervent believer that no restaurant can reproduce the perfectly harmonised chemistry of spices in the korma or *sukha gosht* prepared in a Cutchi Memon home, she details recipes that are a lesson in how delicious meals can be served without an overdose of oil and spices—from *biryani* and teatime snacks to one-dish wonders, powders, pastes and pickles. Space for personal notes after every recipe allows readers to jot down their observations. Most of these recipes will ring familiar: *shami kabab*, *kofté ka salan*, *khatti dal gosht*, *sukha khekda*. However, each of the 65-odd recipes has a special ingredient or touch that adds to its unique flavour like *khichda*, the Cutchi Memon version of *haleem*—just one delicious little secret from a book that overflows with them.



KHICHDA

Meat, lentil and broken wheat broth

Ingredients: 500 gm *dalia*; ½ cup *chana dal*; ½ cup *arhar dal*; ½ cup *moong dal*; ½ cup *masoor dal*; 1 kg onion, finely sliced; 2½ tbsp ginger paste; 2½ tbsp garlic paste; 2 kg mutton, cut in 2" pieces; 4 tbsp red chilli powder; 2 tbsp cumin powder; 1 tbsp coriander powder; 1 tsp turmeric powder; 1 tsp *garam masala* powder; 2 tbsp salt; 2 large tomatoes, finely chopped; 2 cups yoghurt; 10 green chillies, slit lengthwise; juice of 4 limes

Seasoning: 1 cup oil; 3 one-inch cinnamon sticks; 6 green cardamom pods; 6 cloves

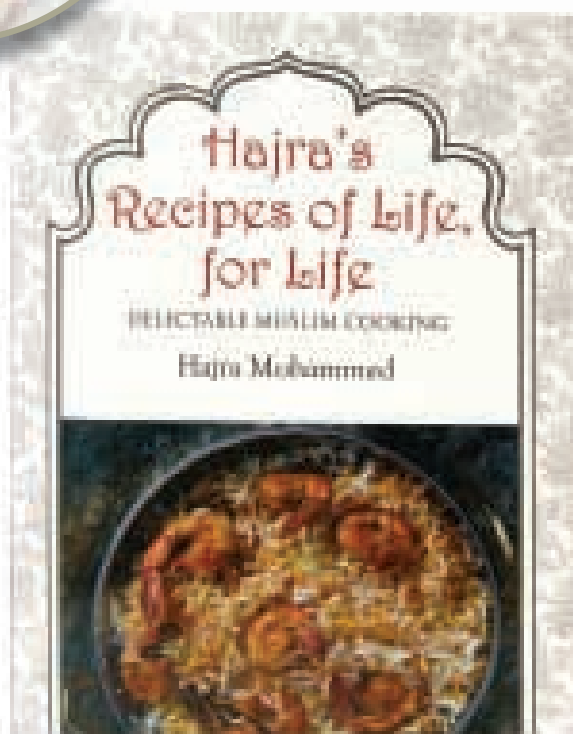
Garnish: ½ cup coriander leaves, finely chopped; 12-15 mint leaves, finely chopped

Method: Soak *dalia* in 1½ litre water for 12-15 hrs; pressure-cook with its soaking liquid for 10 min; when

cool, grind *dalia* till grainy; set aside. Wash *chana* and *arhar dal* and soak in water for 15 min; drain; pressure-cook *dal* in 3 cups water for 10 min; when cool, grind with remaining liquid till grainy; set aside. Soak *moong* and *masoor dal* for 15 min; drain; pressure-cook the *dal* in 3 cups water for 5 min; when cool, grind with remaining liquid till grainy; set aside. Heat oil in pressure cooker and season with whole spices; add onions and fry to a golden brown; remove half and set aside for garnish. Add ginger and garlic and fry for 10 min, sprinkling water as required.

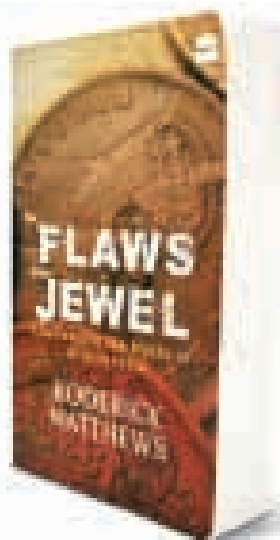
Introduce the meat and fry for about 7 min. Mix spice powders and salt and fry till spices mature. Add tomatoes and cook on high heat, stirring vigorously. Stir in yoghurt and green chillies and fry till oil separates. Pour 2 cups water and pressure-cook the meat for 15 min. Transfer contents to heavy-based pan. Add *dalia* and *dal* and cook on moderate heat for 10-15 min, stirring constantly. Simmer for 10 min. Add lime juice before serving. Garnish with reserved fried onions and coriander and mint leaves.

—Anjana Jha



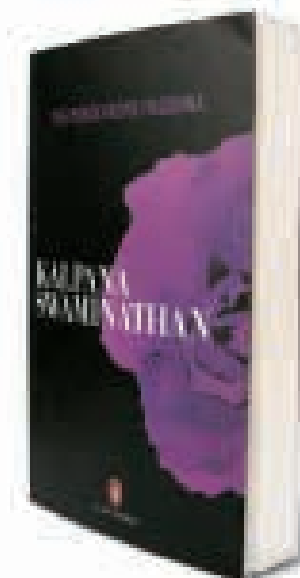
BRIEFLY

Was the Raj the best thing that happened to a fractured Indian subcontinent? Did the benevolent British hand aid the development of the modern Indian polity, as it has been long held? **Roderick Matthews** isn't too sure. In **THE FLAWS IN THE JEWEL** (HarperCollins; Rs 350; 312 pages), the freelance writer re-examines British rule in India and the "myth factory" it had become. Through his meticulous research, he seeks to explain just how a group of traders from a faraway country wrested control of India and managed to hold on to it; and what exactly India got out of the entire deal. Matthews's account is scholarly, devoid of any romance, yet astonishingly readable; his approach even-handed and just, making his arguments even more persuasive. As he writes, "The telling of Indian history doesn't need to praise or to parade



villains for our contempt. Good history must not be afraid to examine failures, and British rule in India provides ample examples." There's a personal subtext to this book: in 1914, in London, Matthews's great grandfather advised a young barrister called Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to return to India. The rest, of course, is history.

"An anonymous body, deflating slowly, leaking out its juices" is found in an apocryphal apartment in Mumbai called 4 Kalina Sputnik, inhabited by S Shah and V Dasgupta. Shah (the S stands for Sitara) is alive

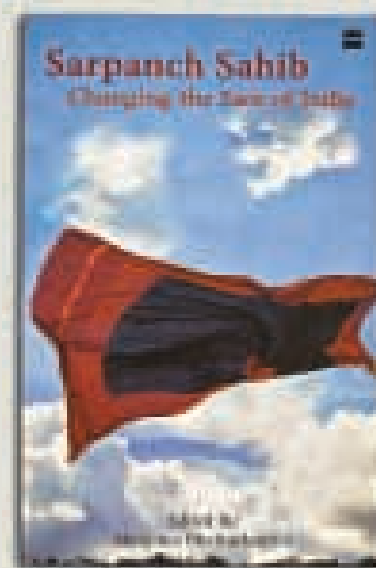


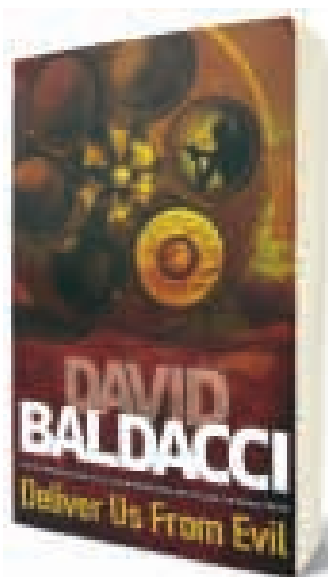
but drugged. An intriguing start to **Kalpana Swaminathan's THE MONOCHROME MADONNA** (Penguin; Rs 250; 246 pages), her third mystery starring the Indian Miss Marple, 60-something Lalli, a former police inspector and the last resort of the homicide department. As the plot thickens, a bizarre set of mementos tumbles out—nail clippings, broken bangles, a stick-on bindi, a shred of a *dupatta* and a bottle of cheap scent. The scene is set and the language racy, but somewhere down the line the narrative falters, the story loses steam and the reader tires of the idea of a murder without motive. Still, the publishers are determined to push the Lalli experience to the max—they've launched an online detection game where you help the detective solve a mystery. If you're in the mood, check it out at www.penguinbook-sindia.com/games/detectivelalli/detective-lalli.aspx

To all of us ensconced in our city cocoon, this book is nothing less than a rude jolt. **SARPANCH SAHIB** (HarperCollins; Rs 175; 152 pages) takes us to villages in rural India where a quiet revolution is being led by women armed with nothing but dreams, perseverance and ambition. The tiny book packs a startlingly powerful punch with essays profiling seven women panchayat heads, written by seven women writers. It reviews the effects of the 73rd constitutional amendment that took place in 1993, according to which elections were mandated for membership to the Panchayati Raj and one-third of the seats were reserved for women.

In Tarikarle in rural Karnataka, Kenchamma, a Dalit woman president, is striving hard to pave roads,

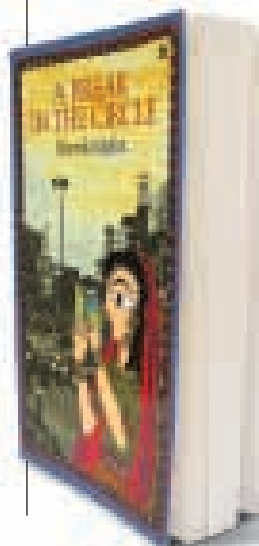
organise cleanliness drives and build awareness on hygiene; in Kalahandi





Thriller writer **David Baldacci** likes his characters—he etches them with care and compassion, gives them some rum plot twists to negotiate, and tends to bring them back to star in yet another caper. In **DELIVER US FROM EVIL** (Macmillan; Rs 405; 406 pages), it's the turn of Shaw (from *The Whole Truth*) to reprise his role as shadowy operative who works for an equally shadowy handler to bring down the bad guys. This time, their target is Evan

Waller, an evil human trafficker who's now about to supply nuclear material to Islamic fundamentalists. But there's someone else gunning for Waller: gorgeous Reggie Champion, who works for a maverick group that's targeting him for past atrocities about which Shaw and company haven't a clue. Against the bucolic backdrop of Provence, where Waller is on holiday, the action is furious; the casualties mount alarmingly and the suspense and intrigue intensify. Baldacci addicts will leave this book satisfied—and assured in the knowledge that Shaw (and Champion) will be back.

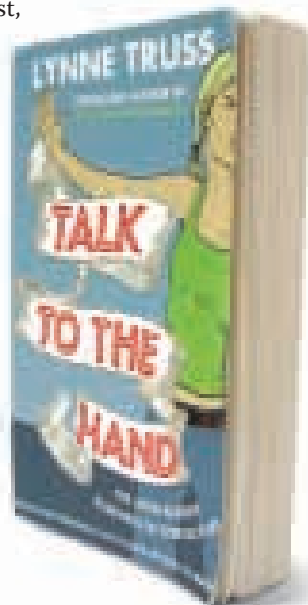


In chapters named after days of the week, readers follow protagonist Anuradha as she goes through daily life in **Sharmila Kantha's** second novel **A BREAK IN THE CIRCLE** (HarperCollins; Rs 250; 195 pages). There is little excitement in her routine—managing her home with a pregnant maid; cooking for her demanding family; making dutiful calls to her overbearing mother; dealing with gossipy relatives. The unheralded arrival of Kallu chacha from Ranchi with his wife and daughter Pinky to check out a marriage proposal adds another dimension to her work—and results in “Pinky's Beautification”, one

of the theme-based sections in the book. “Interlude”, interposed between chapters, revolves around yet another character Srijana who, empowered by a self-help group, gets a loan to buy a goat. Set in Patna, small-town attitudes saturate the narration. Though just 40 years old with a postgraduate degree in psychology, Anuradha admits, “I don't know how to email”. An induction by her nine year-old son and online communication with Girish, a US-based professor, change her view of life and her identity. As Kantha juggles with the numerous characters, readers run the risk of getting lost in the crowd. Disappointing.

in Orissa, Deepanjali, a young *adivasi* graduate *sarpanch* is empowering villagers by promoting pisciculture and employment schemes in the midst of stiff inter-caste rivalry and male oppression; in Tamil Nadu, non-literate Chinappa is working to make education more accessible for outcast children; in Madhya Pradesh, Sunita refuses to bow down to a corrupt male-dominated system; in Assam, Maloti has built hundreds of houses for families below the poverty line and is now struggling to raise salaries of tea estate workers; and in Uttarakhand former *sarpanch* Maya has lost the last election but remains triumphant in spirit by attending all panchayat meetings and resolving the issues of villagers. All the stories are stark and unadorned, very much like the women themselves. Sarpanch sahib, *salaam!*

Eats, Shoots and Leaves, Lynne Truss's laugh-a-minute ‘zero-tolerance’ guide to punctuation that sold millions world over, is a hard act to follow. You realise this almost immediately after you begin **TALK TO THE HAND** (Fourth Estate; Rs 199; 214 pages), her latest, which runs with the baseline, ‘The Utter Bloody Rudeness of Everyday Life’. After urging us all to be more grammatical, Truss now wants us to be more polite. And rather than telling us how to behave, she defines and analyses six areas where “our dealings with strangers seem to be getting more unpleasant and inhuman, day by day”, in the belief that understanding this may—in the long run—make us less rude. To list these six would be telling; suffice to say Truss adeptly defines the “incivilities of modern life”. Unfortunately, as good as all this is, this book doesn't grab you, shake you and make you guffaw like *Eats...*; not even close. At best, you remain engaged, turning over pages rapidly searching for the same spark. Saying any more would be, well, rude.

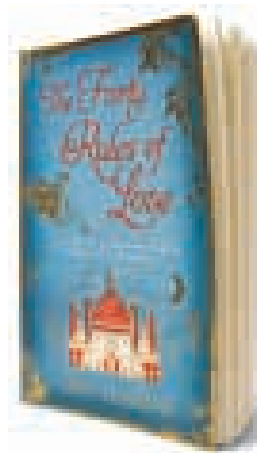


LOVE RETOLD

THE FORTY RULES OF LOVE

BY ELIF SHAFAK

PENGUIN VIKING; RS 499; 350 PAGES

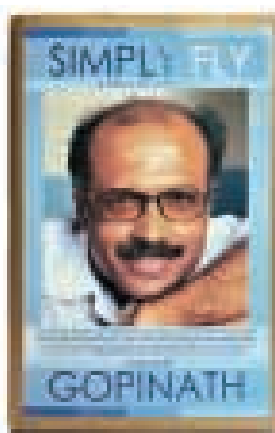


With *The Forty Rules of Love*, Elif Shafak steps into a different land (Baghdad) and style of narrative after her much-acclaimed *Bastard of Istanbul*. This effortless book-within-a-book further establishes her as a writer of distinguished skill and prose. Ella is happy with her life as homemaker, refusing to admit that she might have fallen out of love with her husband David. It is only when Aziz Z Zahara comes into her life as a manuscript that she realises, “No matter who we are or where we live, deep inside we all feel incomplete. It’s like we have lost something and need to get it back. Just what that something is, most of us never find out. And of those who do, even fewer manage to go out and

look for it.” And Ella does, through Aziz’s book on wandering dervish Shams-i-Tabrizi, who sets out to fill his incompleteness with an intellectual companion and finds Rumi—the saint of love, the one who turned poet after Shams was killed by the loveless. As Ella turns 40 and battles with indecisiveness, Shams enlightens her with his 40 rules, on reading which forgiveness, love, selflessness and sacrifice become first instincts. How and when did we all change? And when did we change the world around us, making it seem a dangerous place to be? The questions come and go as Shams walks the streets of his beloved Rumi’s land. Forty, “the symbol of (in mystic thought) ascent from one level

to higher one and spiritual awakening... when we mourn we mourn for forty days; when a baby is born it takes forty days for him to get ready to start life on earth...; in Islamic mysticism there are forty degrees between man and God; Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days and nights; Buddha meditated under a linden tree for forty days.” Read this to soak in Shams’s 40 rules to live (and love) by.

—Meeta Bhatti



FARMER, SOLDIER, DREAMER

SIMPLY FLY

BY CAPTAIN GOPINATH

COLLINS BUSINESS; RS 495; 380 PAGES

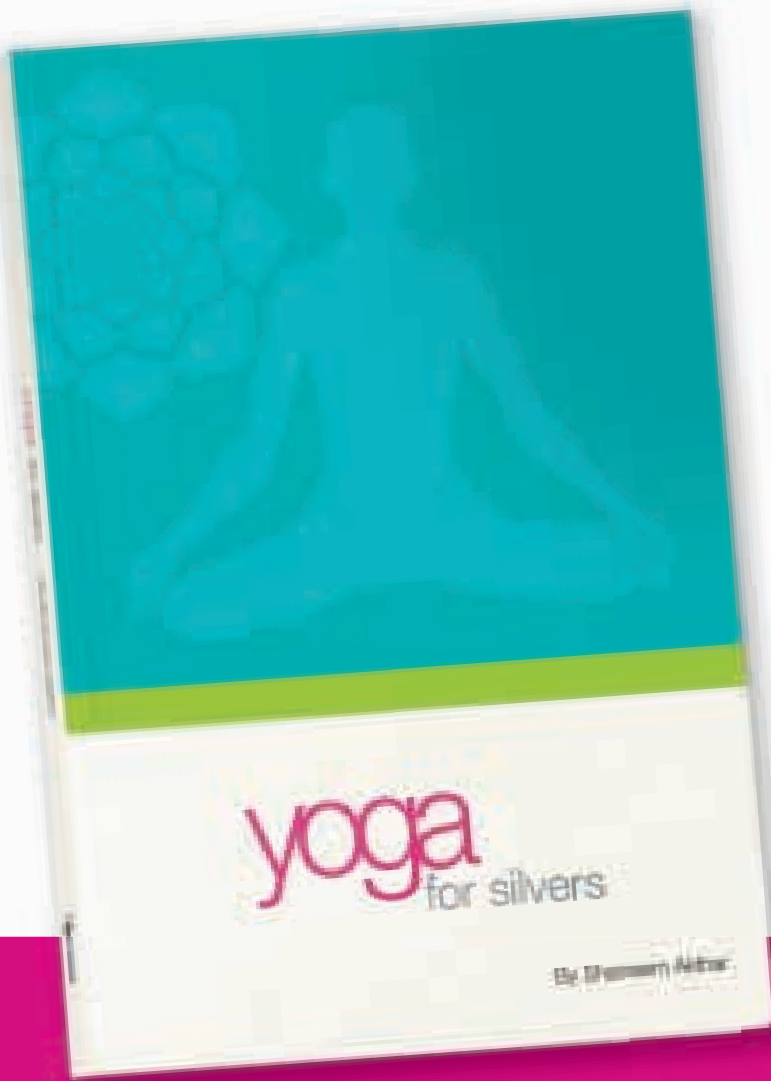
When Air Deccan was launched as India’s first low-cost air carrier, it elicited delight from the common man and sniggers from the haughty set. However, much like the runt who outruns the bully on the school playground, within two years of its

launch Air Deccan left many airlines seething in the clouds. For Captain Gorur Ramaswamy Gopinath, the airline is not the first or last of his feats. The title might lead one to presume that the book would be dedicated to the challenges that he conquered on his way to starting the airline, but it’s a rollercoaster read about the delightful enterprises that he launched before he aimed for the skies.

Simply Fly pulls you in from the very beginning where Gopinath talks about his humble childhood in remote vil-

lage in Karnataka; his life as a cadet in the National Defence Academy; and his observations as a soldier during the 1971 Indo-Pak war. Made restless by the suffocating discipline and protocol of the forces, Gopinath quit the Army to bike around India and backpack around the world, before finally returning to his village to shape an award-winning silk-rearing farm out of neglected ancestral land. And it’s this role of a farmer that presides over all his subsequent others: a bike dealer; agricultural consultant; stockbroker, restaurateur; owner of a helicopter service; and finally the chairman of an aviation company. Through rise and fall and rise, the author returns frequently to his farm to draw solace from the diligent munching of termites on dead leaves, the scent of wet earth and cow dung, and the soothing taste of tender coconut mixed with rum. Gopinath’s story is fascinating—not because he touched the skies but because he did it while being firmly rooted to the earth.

—Rajashree Balaram



yoga for silvers

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“Live out
of your
imagination,
not your history.

—American self-help guru
and author Stephen Covey

Charticle

n. A news article that consists of a chart or similar graphic with a small amount of explanatory text. [Blend of chart and article.]

Example: The pugilist was one Henry Allen, a renowned writer and an editor with the Style section. On the other end of Allen's ire (something between a clenched fist and a slap, say eyewitnesses) was Style writer Manuel Roig-Franzia, co-author of a **charticle** (an appetizer-sized combination of words, images and graphics) that Allen called the second-worst story he'd seen in 43 years.

—Kathleen Parker, “A spark of passion in the newsroom,” The Washington Post, 8 November 2009

HENRY

n. A person with a substantial income, but who is not yet wealthy. [From the phrase *High Earner, Not Rich Yet*.]

Example: “All these luxury brands are extremely vulnerable, unless they have been selling only to the truly rich who are always going to be rich,” Danziger said. But all of the luxury brands depend on the \$ 250,000 to \$ 500,000 income group, a cohort Danziger said has been dubbed “**HENRYs**: High Earners, Not Rich Yet”.

—Joan Verdon, “Well-heeled shoppers having second thoughts,” The Record, 21 November 2008

Chimerica

(CHY.mer.uh.kuh) *n.* The interrelated elements of the economies of China and America, particularly the Chinese supply of credit to America and the American purchase of cheap Chinese goods. [Blend of China and America.]

Example: Americans are born with the consumption gene, and borrow, not earn, their way to the American dream of home and business ownership. Chinese, on the other hand, have the thrift ethos drummed into them from birth. Their government has continued to pour money into investment in infrastructure and industry for export to drive growth and raise living standards. But the Chinese government has not built the kind of social safety net and retail financial system that would lead its citizens to save less, consume more and build a vibrant and sustainable domestic market-led model of economic development. Whether they like it or not, China and the US will be stuck with **Chimerica** for a long time.

—Geoffrey Garrett, “The challenge of Chimerica”, Sydney Morning Herald, 31 October 2009

Manufactroversy

n. A contrived or non-existent controversy, manufactured by political ideologies or interest groups who use deception and specious arguments to make their case.

Example: During a question and answer session after a talk I recently gave, I was asked for my opinion about the vaccine/autism controversy. That was easy: my opinion is that there is no controversy. The evidence is in. The scientific community has reached a clear consensus that vaccines don't cause autism. There is no controversy. There is, however, a **manufactroversy**—a manufactured controversy—created by junk science, dishonest researchers, professional misconduct, outright fraud, lies, misrepresentations, irresponsible reporting, unfortunate media publicity, poor judgement, celebrities who think they are wiser than the whole of medical science, and a few maverick doctors who ought to know better.

—Harriet Hall, “Vaccines & autism: A deadly manufactroversy,” Skeptic, 3 June 2009

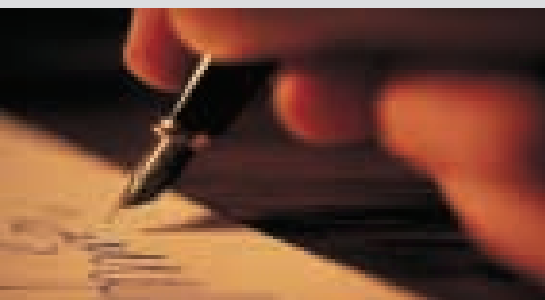
GREEN MOVEMENT

Silvers have an added reason to look forward to the upcoming Commonwealth Games in the capital. As New Delhi gears up to host the mega-event in October, the civic body has decided to offer silvers free rides on its newly introduced **e-rickshaws**, hybrids between auto-rickshaws and cycle-rickshaws, which come fitted with

GPS systems. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) hopes to launch 4,000 battery-operated, eco-friendly rickshaws before the Games. Spacious enough to accommodate two to three people, they will work as feeder services for Metro stations in central, north and east Delhi. A private firm will operate and maintain these rickshaws, which will run at a maximum speed of 25 km per hour and can be easily recharged at any of the MCD parking lots in the city.



WORDS WORTH



If you have penned verse or prose and dreamt of sharing it with the world, here's the place to send it in: www.indianruminations.com. A group of writers from all over India launched the e-magazine as a platform to Indian English writers—especially those who have not yet had a chance to publish their work. Around 45 writers from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Delhi have already registered on the website. Soon, Indian Ruminations will also make space for Indian painters. Log in and contribute essays, poetry, stories, book reviews or interviews.

dysrationalia

n. The tendency to think or act irrationally in certain situations, despite having sufficient intelligence.

—*dysrational adj.*

Example: In 1994, Stanovich began comparing people's scores on rationality tests with their scores on conventional intelligence tests. What he found is that they don't have a lot to do with one another. On some tasks, there is almost a complete dissociation between rational thinking and intelligence. You might, for example, think more rationally than someone much smarter than you. Likewise, a person with **dysrationalia** is almost as likely to have higher than average intelligence as he or she is to have lower than average intelligence.

—Kurt Kleiner, "Why smart people do stupid things", University of Toronto Magazine, 1 June 2009

“How can a society that exists on instant mashed potatoes, packaged cake mixes, frozen dinners and instant cameras teach patience to its young?”

—American management expert and author Paul Sweeney

Group coupon

n. A consumer discount that only applies if a minimum number of people sign up for the deal.

Example: The recession has bred a new type of coupon: the **group coupon**. In recent months, several websites have launched in the District and nationwide giving customers discounts on restaurant meals, sporting events, spa treatments, golf outings—pretty much any expenditure that many people give up during economic downturns. The catch is that the coupon only applies if a certain number of people use it.

—Nancy Trejos, "The humble coupon joins social-media Web", The Washington Post, 1 September 2009

PUMP AND DUMP

v. When a stockbroker, analyst, or shareholder encourages investors to buy a particular stock in an effort to raise its share price, and then to sell what he owns of the stock at the higher price.

Example: "Some of the promoters charged Wednesday allegedly engaged in **pump-and-dump** schemes in which they spread falsely positive information about stocks. As small investors piled into the stocks, sending the prices up, the promoters sold the shares they owned."

—Walter Hamilton, "SEC cracks down on Internet stock fraud", Los Angeles Times

brickor mortis

n. A real-estate market in which very few houses are being sold.

Also: *brickormortis*.

Example: Mister, this market wouldn't go vroom if you put 50,000 volts through it. The property market has passed on. It's demised. Bereft of buyers, it has shuffled off this mortal coil and gone to meet the great auctioneer in the sky. It's so dead that **brickor mortis** has set in. This is an ex-housing market!

—Kevin Courtney, "Con text brickor mortis", The Irish Times, 29 July 2008

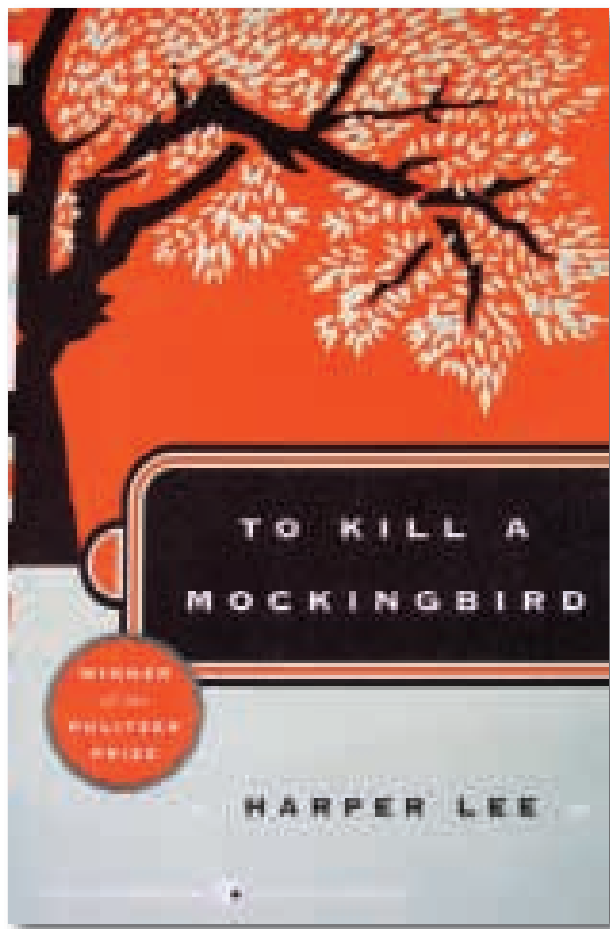
WE GO 50 YEARS BACK IN TIME

TO BRING YOU PRODUCTS, PEOPLE, EVENTS AND FASHION THAT INFLUENCED THE WORLD...

Of birds and bias

Harper Lee's 1960 novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* laid bare the racial prejudice and discrimination that plagued America in the 1930s. The book went on to become one of the greatest classics of modern American literature and was even rated by British librarians as the book that "every adult must read before they die". At the centre of the tale is a brave, upright lawyer, Atticus Finch, fearlessly butting heads against a race-obsessed society to save an innocent African-American man from lynching and imprisonment. The book won Lee the Pulitzer Prize, and in 1962 was made into a film with the same name starring Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch.

This year, to mark the golden jubilee celebrations of the book, more than 50 events are scheduled all over the US. Lee's hometown Monroeville will host a four-day jubilation including silent auctions, a walking tour of downtown, marathon reading session in the county courthouse and a birthday party on the courthouse lawn. Publisher HarperCollins plans to release four new editions of the novel, each with a different cover, and all to be placed on special *Mockingbird*-themed floor displays in bookstores.



In a world coming apart over colour, caste and religion, it's heartening to know the voice of humanity hasn't dimmed with time.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: JULY 1960

- On 1 July 1960, Ghana became a republic; Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom ceased to be the head of state.
- On 4 July 1960, the 50-star flag of the United States of America was debuted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- On 13 July 1960, Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy was nominated to be the 35th president of the United States at the Democratic National Convention held in Los Angeles, California.
- On 20 July 1960, Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) elected Sirimavo Bandaranaike as prime minister, who simultaneously gained the distinction of being the world's first elected female head of government.

Then: Shoebox

Now: Photo organiser

Though we keep an album for momentous occasions such as weddings and birthdays, sundry photographs related to childhood, visits from cousins living abroad, housewarming, or candid group shots taken in office are usually scattered in different corners of the cupboard or attic. An empty shoebox can make a great photo organiser for such priceless and oft-neglected memories.

Arrange photos in a series compartmentalised with convenient file cards indicating the category of the occasion. Label the lid of the shoebox with the title of all the occasions covered in the photographs.

In ancient Egypt, shoes denoted the rank and station of their wearer. Pointed-toe shoes were worn only by the elite. The middleclass wore flat sandals fashioned out of papyrus, and the slaves walked either barefoot or shod in crude palm leaf sandals.

Not too long ago, former Phillipines first lady Imelda Marcos's fetish for shoes made headlines all over the world. The Footwear Museum of Marikina in Philippines houses 800 pairs from her collection of 3,000 shoes.



Haresh Patel

MORE RECYCLE IDEAS...

Need a place to keep your loose change? Keep an empty shoebox on the study table in your bedroom or a corner of your kitchen. Stash change away every time you have some.

Shoeboxes also offer compact storage space for your socks, handkerchieves or underwear. Pile boxes on top of each other in a corner of your wardrobe.

“The trigger that leads a person to commit suicide is a sense of utter worthlessness. I believe every human life is precious.”

Arnavaz Damania, 72, for helping avert suicides



Arnavaz Damania spends the better part of her day making people feel worthy and valued. The sprightly septuagenarian is the founder of Connecting, a Pune-based NGO that provides counselling and support to those who suffer from depression and suicidal tendencies. Damania started the helpline and support group in 2005, after noticing an alarming rise in the number of suicides in the city. Today, members of Connecting meet every week to share anxieties and problems. The toll-free helpline, **18002094353**, sponsored by the Dastur Girls School, receives four to five distress calls every day. Damania has 35 mental health experts and volunteers on her team who help participants cope with stress, trauma, deep-seated insecurities and low

self-esteem—factors that could precipitate fatal consequences. (Her oldest volunteer is an 80 year-old.) Along with her team of volunteers, psychologists, counsellors and social workers, she conducts capacity-building workshops, discussions and programmes on parenting, anger management and life enrichment at schools, colleges, housing societies, companies, community groups and NGOs. Former president of the Indian Women's Hockey Federation and former vice-president of the All India Council of Sports, Damania believes in exploring new ways to help members come to terms with life. Besides a compassionate listening ear, her therapy also includes music and drama.

—Khursheed Dinshaw

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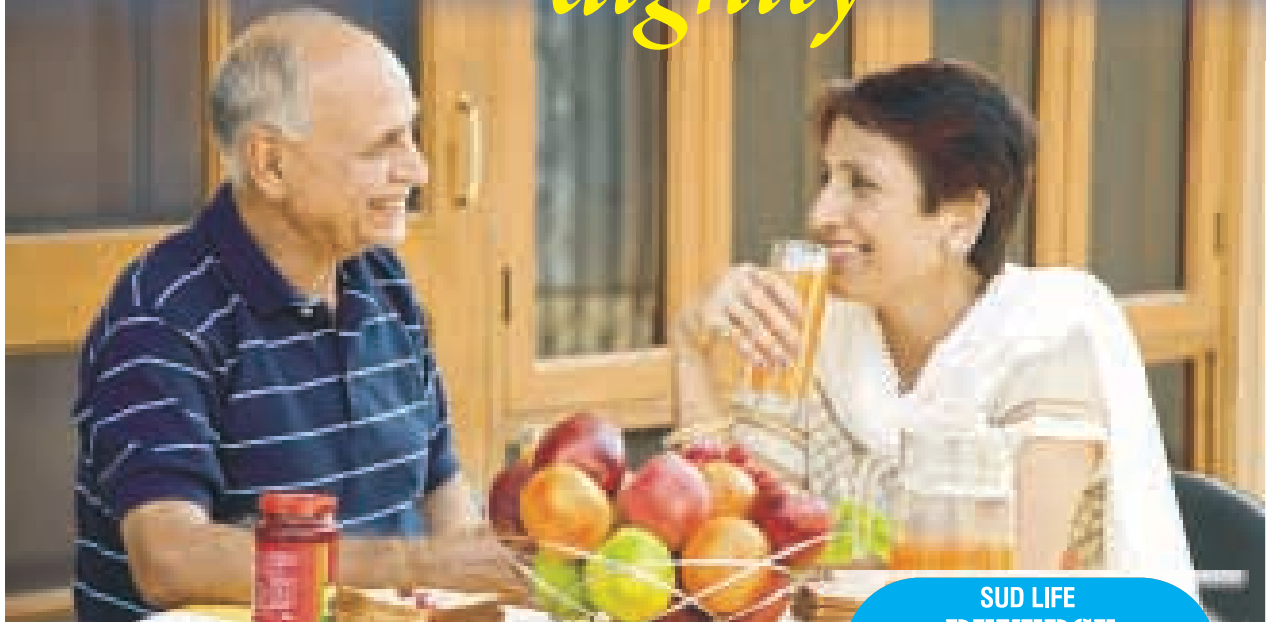
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