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ACTS OF FAITH

THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER

was a red-letter day for silvers in India—on that day, Parliament finally passed the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens' Bill, tabled in the Lok Sabha in March 2007.

Under the new law, silvers who are unable to maintain themselves shall have the right to apply to a tribunal seeking monthly allowance from their children or heirs. States may set up maintenance tribunals in every subdivision to decide level of maintenance and appellate tribunals may be established at the district level. Punishment for not paying the monthly allowance shall be Rs 5,000 or up to three months imprisonment, or both. The law also provides for establishing old age homes in every district.

The intentions behind the law are good and Harmony congratulates the government for seeing it through. Indeed, we owe our elders this much. But there is another side to the story—I was strongly reminded of this when I read an article in Mumbai newspaper *Mid-Day* recently.

Titled "Please adopt my mum", the story details the plight of 34 year-old Tasneem Khan, an assistant teacher in a school in Mumbai, who is unable to care for her 64 year-old mother Badrunissa. "I love my mother but I cannot afford her any more," says Tasneem. "My monthly salary of Rs 2,500 is not enough to run the house, care for her and buy her medicines. I tried to look for a good old-age home for her, but our community doesn't have homes for women."

Tasneem's is a dilemma many family caregivers across India are depressingly familiar with. Despite the good intentions of many children, they are just not able to provide what their parents need. Geriatric medicine must be introduced in health services at private and government levels to train doctors, nurses and caregivers to care for elderly. The enabling framework for this is still non-existent in India.

Another crippling problem for the elderly in India has been getting health insurance, with both public and private-sector



MITU NANDA

companies unwilling to insure the elderly. The good news: this may soon change. In May 2007, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) constituted a committee to find solutions to make health insurance for the elderly more viable and transparent. The committee's report was presented on 7 December 2007 and contains some far-reaching measures that could transform insurance as silvers in India know it (see "To Your Health" in 'Money and More' this month). In coming months, IRDA is expected to issue regulations pertaining to each recommendation. What a good start to 2008!

Tina Ambani

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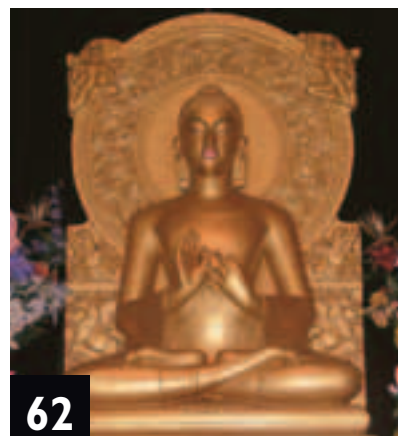
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LOOK FOR



Cover photograph by
ASHOK SALIAN

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column one

When *Harmony* approached lawyers and experts for a perspective on the elderly bearing the brunt of abuse of Section 498 A and Dowry Prohibition Act by young women, our reporter was nearly thrown out of one office. Did we know the statistics? And that such cases were 'rare'?

Harmony respects the need for law in favour of women victimised by their in-laws, but also understands the need to focus on the other side of the story ("Caught in a Vise").

In 2005, 4,744 people over the age of 60 were arrested under Section 498 A and Dowry Prohibition Act of the Indian Penal Code without any verification of the complaints. Such cases may be 'rare', but worth standing up for. The four organisations we have featured in the article are among the few dedicated to the cause.

Standing up for what you believe in is a rare quality our subjects share. Pioneer of contemporary dance in India, Astad Deboo, on the cover this month ("Lord of the Dance"), believes in breaking mental, geographical and cultural barriers with his art, has no qualms in censuring bureaucracy and doesn't believe that the arts should be politicised. Deboo's dance is his only inspiration, and awards a natural progression.

Elsewhere in the magazine there's plenty of inspiration and information to enjoy and imbibe. Good examples and good advice are our promise as well as resolutions. Happy New Year!

—Meeta Bhatti



I am a retired surgeon who recently returned to India with my wife after working in the US for 33 years. Both our children are settled overseas. One of the main problems

I faced on my return was keeping busy—until I discovered *Harmony* last June in the lobby of a dentist's office! I read the magazine cover to cover and enjoyed each article. For the first time, I heard the elderly described in an ennobling way—as silvers—and realised all the ways in which we can remain relevant to society. I immediately subscribed to the magazine and wait eagerly for each issue. The remarkable silvers you feature in each issue are a great inspiration. For example, in "Rough Waters" ['Connect', August 2007] I read about how 80 year-old Bertha Noronha has set about cleaning up her neighbourhood. It inspired me to participate actively in the Residents' Welfare Association of my locality. I have also started visiting a charitable clinic on alternate days to offer my medical services to the poor.

I also enjoyed reading the November 2007 issue, especially the cover feature on Dharmendra and the column "Solitary Silver" by Nandini Sardesai ['At Large']. More important, after reading "The Sunday Network" ['In Focus'], I have started improving my computer skills. Indeed, *Harmony* is a great driving force for me.

DR K S DANG

Gurgaon

The letter of the month wins music CDs from Big Music

I enjoyed reading "Learn to Live" by Robin Sharma ['The Last Word', December 2007]. We must live happily without hurting the feelings of others—accept life as it comes and do not try to change people around you. Accept near and dear ones for what they are. See the good in everyone and try and learn from their strengths. Forget ill feelings and misdeeds. Change with circumstances and situations. Know your limitations and act accordingly. If you do this and respect the young, they too will give you the respect you deserve.

MAHESH KAPASI

New Delhi

I am over 50 years of age and a subscriber to *Harmony*. I find every issue of your magazine very informative and engaging as you consistently showcase positive and constructive approaches to living healthy and longer. For instance, I read with great interest "A Mouthful of Soy" ['Second Careers', November 2007], the story of former bureaucrat Ranjit Singh Pal who manufactures and sells soy products in Pune. I now plan to contact Mr Pal and offer my services to distribute his soy products in Mumbai!

M PRADEEP

Mumbai



I would like to inform all readers of *Harmony* about a guesthouse available to them in Kanyakumari. Constructed by P S R Anjaneyulu Memorial Trust, PSR Bhavan is open to serving and retired central government employees as well as serving and retired BSNL employees. We will be glad to welcome any senior citizen (even someone who is not a former central government or BSNL employee) to the guesthouse. PSR Bhavan has four rooms with attached toilets—each room can accommodate a small family. The tariff is Rs 100 per day for a room. The Bhavan is well located, just 1 km away from Kanyakumari Temple and 500 m from the bus terminus. Quality vegetarian food is available at Gujarat Bhavan, just 100 m away. To make a reservation, write to The Manager, PSR Bhavan, Siluvai Nagar, Kanyakumari-629702 or call (0) 9486955277.

**P S RAMANKUTTY,
MANAGING TRUSTEE,
PSRAM TRUST**

Thiruvananthapuram

I would like to congratulate Tina Ambani and the team of Harmony for organising the Harmony Silver Awards 2007. It illustrated that age need not deter us from reaching for our dreams.

I am a general physician and also a house physician for geriatric patients. In 1995, my friends and I launched BANCHBO (we shall survive), an NGO for underprivileged women and children in Sundarban.

As I work closely with silvers, I am well aware of their loneliness. Prompted by this, in January 2007, we launched BANCHBO Healing Touch, a 24/7 preventive and emergency healthcare support service for silver citizens in South Kolkata. We have five doctors, 30 specialists including physiotherapists and psychiatric counsellors and a team of distinguished medical advisors. We are also associated with 14 hospitals and diagnostic centres where members can avail of discounted services. We have 100 members who regularly participate in the different programmes arranged by BANCHBO Healing Touch. Recently, we published *Jeebak*, a magazine compiled and edited by our members. Though all our services are presently confined to South Kolkata, we hope to reach out to silvers all over Kolkata and some day all over India.

**DR DHIRESH K R
CHOWDHURY
CHAIRMAN, BANCHBO**

Kolkata

CONTRIBUTORS



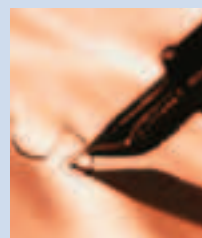
"I merely consider ageing as a progression of my lifespan getting richer in experience and wisdom," says photographer **Gautam Rajadhyaksha** as he tells us how we needn't slow down in our silver years, in 'At Large'. Rajadhyaksha started his career as a management trainee in an advertising agency during which he found his true calling: photography. Today he is counted among the most distinguished photographers in India and has several prestigious assignments in photojournalism to his credit. Apart from scripting a couple of Hindi films, Rajadhyaksha has also authored the first coffee-table book on Indian stars, *Faces*. He lives in Mumbai and is presently working on a Marathi book, *Chehre*.

AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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

- You had an experience related to money or finance
- 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 an 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'



Mail us at 4th Floor, Maker Chambers IV, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. Or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org

NEWSWORTHY



G BOLE TOH

Silvers in Rajasthan are going back to 'Gandhigiri' to bring their concerns to centrestage. On 16 November, **hundreds of senior citizens, accompanied by school-children and young volunteers dressed up like Mahatma Gandhi, took part in a peaceful protest march in Bikaner** organised by NGO HelpAge India to highlight their problems, ranging from lack of security in their homes to poor medical facilities.

"We need the government to take care of our needs and ensure safety and security," Somdutt Shrimali, president of the city's Senior Citizens' Traders Association, tells news agency Asian News International (ANI). "A peaceful protest march seemed the best way to get our message across." District collector Alok Gupta's response: "We can solve some problems at the local level but the rest need the attention of the state government." The silvers have now presented their grievances before Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje. The authorities assured the protestors that requisite steps will be taken to resolve the issue.



GREEN CHANNEL

In November, the Municipal Corporation of Pune announced that it would establish a **'green channel'** to give priority to work related to **silvers and the physically challenged**. The directive is the result of the efforts of right-to-information (RTI) activist Vihar Durve, who successfully petitioned to get priority for appeals filed by silvers under the RTI Act (*see Orbit, August 2007 issue of Harmony*). Now, silvers approaching the Municipal Corporation of Pune only need to submit a photocopy of their identity with their application so their file can be given priority.

MEDIA WATCH

VIDEO STAR

At 107, Australian Olive Riley holds the distinction of being the world's oldest blogger (web logger)—her blog, 'The Life of Riley', at www.allaboutolive.com.au is highly rated on the Net. Now, she's also the **oldest person featured on website YouTube**. In a series of videos, Riley recalls her favourite memories, sings and reads posts from her blog (she calls it 'blob'). For instance, in *Smile, Smile, Smile*, she sings *Pack up your troubles* to show us how people remained cheerful during the Great Depression; *Son Barney's Earache* is about taking her son to the doctor on a bike in 1930; and in *Bye Bye Blackbird*, she sings *Waltzing Matilda* and talks about fishing. To see her in action, search for 'Olive Riley' on www.youtube.com



BOOM TIME



Former American TV news anchor Tom Brokaw is known for asking tough questions and dishing out his opinion without pulling any punches. In *Boom! Voices of the Sixties: Personal Reflections on the '60s and Today* (Random House), he explores **the tumult and the legacy of the Sixties**. From "the heady, sweet aroma of marijuana" to the Vietnam War, the 67 year-old's account of the period is accompanied by anecdotes decrying the nature of present-day politics, according to *The New York Times*. Voices like former US president Bill Clinton, former speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich, feminist Gloria Steinem and one-time student leader Mark Rudd also sound off on race, war, politics and feminism. "I find in my travels and reporting a longing for common cause," writes Brokaw. In paying tribute to a time that had a definitive impact on American life, he may just have found it.

TRENDS

THE EVEREST EFFECT



Every night, Yuichiro Miura sleeps in a low-oxygen chamber. In the morning, after strapping on ankle-weights and a 44-pound backpack, the 74 year-old hikes around Tokyo for several hours. Miura is one of Japan's 'old men of the mountain'. Since 2000, this small group of silvers have been taking turns to become the oldest person to conquer the 29,035-ft Himalayan peak, reports Associated Press. "It's tough but wonderful to get to the peak when you are past 70," says Miura. "I hope to send the message that we have the potential for many things in this ageing society."

The Japanese streak began with Toshio Yamamoto, who scaled the peak in 2000 at the age of 63 years. In 2002, Tomiyasu Ishikawa, then 65, took the honours. Miura, already well-known for having skied down Everest in 1970, won the title in 2003 at the age of 70. But he was overtaken by Takao Arayama in 2006, who was three days older. This year, Katsusuke Yanagisawa made it at the age of 71 years and 63 days. Now, Miura wants to get back up there—he's planning a climb next year, when he'll be 75. The Japanese also hold the record for the oldest woman to climb Everest: Tamae Watanabe in 2002, at the age of 63.

Many attribute this success to good health and longevity, owing to a low-fat diet heavy in vegetables and fish and excellent healthcare. "Overall, the elderly have more vitality than before and their performance in sports is also improving," says Takuji Shirasawa, a specialist on ageing at the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology and Miura's advisor. Genes too may have played an important role in the feat—three years ago, Miura's father skied down Mont Blanc at the age of 99. Another factor is affluence—money gets you world-class equipment, expert assistance on the mountain and state-of-the-art training. For instance, Miura has built a low-oxygen room at home to acclimatise himself to thin air. His climb (including training) is estimated to cost around \$ 1.7 million (about Rs 67.3 million). His effort is being sponsored by Toyota and Toshiba.

FACE OFF



SKIN REHAB

Buy TNS (Tissue Nutrient Solution) Recovery Complex cream and you'll be in august company—talk show queen Oprah Winfrey and actor Jennifer Aniston are fans. Manufacturer US-based Skin Medica claims that the cream, which contains 'NouriCel-MD' (a combination of collagen-producing TGF-Beta and other antioxidants), "enhances skin texture and helps improve ageing and sun-damaged skin". The technology behind the cream was first developed to treat wounds. "I use it on all my liposuction patients," Texas-based dermatologist Greg Nikolaidis tells *International Herald Tribune*. "It does help speed up the healing process." What about daily use? In clinical trials, 82 per cent of subjects saw a 'marked improvement' in skin texture. The cost: \$ 110 (about Rs 4,000) for a 50 ml tube. For details, go to skinmedicaaesthetics.com



KOOL KIWI

Auckland-based company Kiwifruit Extract Ventures (KEVL) claims that **kiwifruit extract** combines high essential fatty acids with impressive antioxidant properties, representing a **perfect anti-ageing ingredient** through topical application and oral use. "We discovered a range of powerful antioxidants that appear to be many times more potent than green tea and equal to the most powerful antioxidant ingredients on the market today," Simon Spratt, CEO of the company, tells website cosmeticsdesign-europe.com. Further, studies have shown that kiwifruit extract improves skin radiance, reduces the appearance of fine lines, and reduces dark circles under the eyes. KEVL is currently developing a range of kiwi extract-based compounds and is in discussions with international cosmetic companies for a licensing agreement.

HOME TOGETHER

Here's a solution for silvers who don't want to give up independent living yet need a helping hand: **group housing**. Pioneering the concept in the US is Mass Home Care, an association of non-profit agencies. In the pilot 'group home' in Peabody, Massachusetts, four silvers live together with an aide who cooks, does the laundry, helps them bathe and dress and keeps track of their medicines. "Here we can do anything we want," 88 year-old Maxine Davis tells *The Boston Globe*. "We stay up very late watching baseball some days. And no one bugs us about bedtime!" Davis, who suffers from osteoporosis, shares a bedroom with her twin sister Irene O'Sullivan, who suffers from dementia. The other residents, 82 year-old Patrick Donagher and Barbara McNutt, 77, have their own rooms. While the silvers pay about \$ 800 (about Rs 31,500) a month each for room, board, television and phone, all services and medicines are covered through government-sponsored Medicare and Medicaid programmes.



MASS HOME CARE

"We're creating a new niche with a more intimate form of care, one that helps seniors maintain neighbourhood ties," says Al Norman, executive director of Mass Home Care. "The model is similar to group homes for the mentally ill that helped thousands move out of institutions. In this case, it is designed to serve seniors too frail or disabled to live safely on their own but who don't need—or want—the round-the-clock nursing of a large facility." Mass Home Care plan to open many more group homes over the next five years across the US.



OVERHEARD

"When you are seen on a huge screen, you can see every single line, no matter the skill of the makeup artist. But that's okay, better than when surgeons take a perfectly lovely woman and turn her into this strange person with amazing breasts who looks like a female impersonator. I actually look forward to getting older; it's a time when looks become less of an issue and who you are is the point."

— American actor Susan Sarandon, 61, in Scottish newspaper *Daily Record*

ANALYSE THIS

THIS OLD HEART

Popular culture has always dwelt on the first blush of love, the rapture and breathlessness of it all. But at a time when people are living—and loving—longer, researchers are now turning their eye to **love in the later years**, reports *International Herald Tribune*. Their conclusion: in many ways, it is more satisfying and complex than young love. “There’s a difference between love as it is presented in movies and music as this sexy thing that involves bikini underwear and what love actually turns out to be,” says psychologist Mary Pipher, whose book *Another Country* examines the emotional life of the elderly. “Young love is about wanting to be happy. Old love is about wanting someone else to be happy. If you stay married, there are riches in store that nobody 25 years old can imagine.”

According to a study conducted by cognitive neuroscientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to understand ageing and emotion, older people may simply be better able to deal with the emotional vicissitudes of love—as it ages, the brain becomes more programmed to be happy in relationships. They performed brain scans on people across a range of ages, gauging their reactions to positive and negative scenes, and found that young people tended to respond to the negative scenes; the

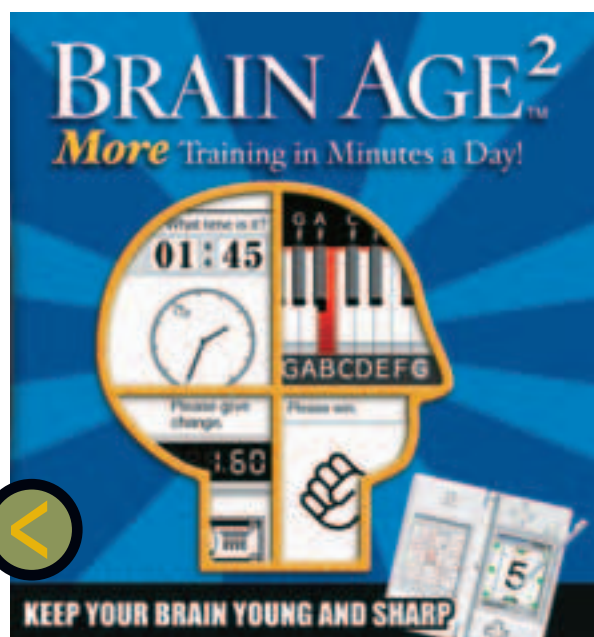
PLUS 10

Ten years. That’s the memory gain you can achieve with **brain training**, according to researchers at the University of Southern California Andrus Gerontology Centre. In the largest study ever conducted on ageing and cognitive training using software available on the market, 524 healthy silvers completed 40 hours of training on the Posit Science Brain Fitness Program (see *Orbit*, August 2007 issue of *Harmony*). Over 85 per cent displayed memory gains of approximately 10 years. And three-quarters said they noticed positive changes in their lives. Benefits ranged from remembering a shopping list without writing it down and hearing conversations in noisy restaurants more clearly, to feeling more confident. “Doing properly designed cognitive activities can actually enhance abilities as you age,” lead researcher Dr Elizabeth Zelinski tells London-based *The Telegraph*. “With such software, we can roll back mental agility at least by a decade.”



middle-aged took in a better balance of the positive; and silvers responded only to the positive scenes. “As people get older, they seem to view the world through positivity and are willing to accept things that when they are young they would find vexing,” says John Gabrieli, part of the research team.

“As you get older you understand that the bad times pass, and that the good times pass,” says Laura L Carstensen, director of the Stanford University Centre on Longevity, who collaborated with Gabrieli on the study. “Of course, you can still have a broken heart when you’re old. But you don’t yell and scream and cry all day long like you might if you were 20.”



WORTH YOUR WHILE

PAPER PURSUIT

Creativity finds many outflows. At **Surya Ramesh Engineer's** home in Mumbai, it peeps out from the curtain in the living room and the tray used to serve guests—all made from recycled newspaper. The 68 year-old made her first newspaper curtain in 1994 on a visit to her daughter's home in the Seychelles. "I wanted to make something to cover up one of her stairwell windows," she remembers. She glued together cylindrical rolls of used newspaper to form a curtain and hung it from a bamboo stick. Later, Engineer replicated the feat by turning 8 kg worth of used newspapers into a huge blind for her home. She took it a step further by weaving the paper rolls together. Using annual company reports and old newspapers, she went on to make blinds, coasters, spectacle cases, envelopes and bags.

In July 2004, Nature Seychelles, an environmental organisation, organised a demonstration of her techniques. Then, she held an exhibition-cum-sale at her residence in Khar in Mumbai—all her products, priced between Rs 75 and Rs 1,000, sold out. She has also held two demonstrations, including one at the Harmony Interactive Centre in Girgaum, South Mumbai. "I want to impart this art to other women, who can use their time productively," she says. You can contact Engineer on 022 26463284



VILAS KALGUTKER

DO-IT-YOURSELF: COASTER

- Take some used newspaper sheets.
- Take a square piece of cardboard and paint it black on one side. This will be the base of the coaster.
- Start rolling each news sheet into a cylinder and fasten the edge with glue.
- Make as many such rolls as required.
- Cut the newspaper rolls to match the size of the cardboard and paste them on the non-painted side of the cardboard.
- After it dries, your coaster is ready.



Mumbai Marathon 2008:

The countdown is on for the **Harmony Senior Citizens' Run**, to be held as part of the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2008 on **20 January**. Registration closed on 8 December with over 3,000 seniors registering for the **4.3-km** run. A special marquee will be set up for seniors at Azad

Maidan in South Mumbai, where all participants will be served refreshments.

For more information on the event, log onto www.scomm.indiatimes.com

H RECOMMENDS

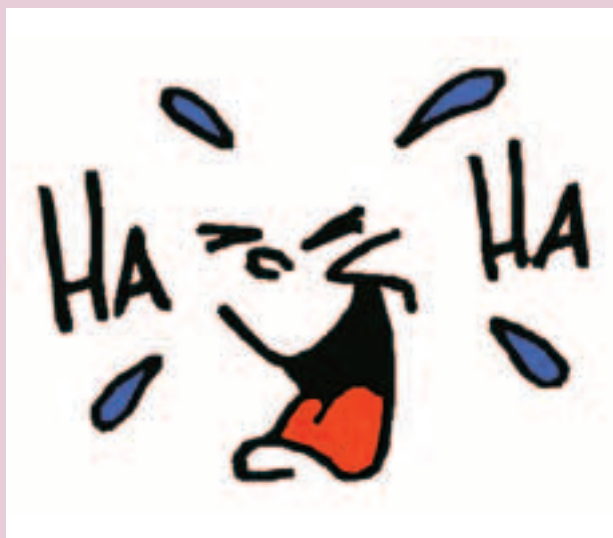
ACTION PLAN FOR JANUARY

As you usher in the New Year 2008, here are **five (lesser known) shortcuts to longevity** from London-based *The Daily Mail*...

Floss without fail. Flossing everyday can help prevent heart attacks and strokes as gum disease (gingivitis), cavities and missing teeth are linked to heart disease. While the link has still not been fully explained, one theory is that bacteria in the mouth stick to the fatty plaques in the bloodstream, directly contributing to blockages. American anti-ageing expert Dr Michael Roizen says keeping oral bacteria at bay could add 6.4 years to a person's life.

Laugh a lot. Looks like laughing does a lot more than make you feel good. Seeing the brighter side of life can extend your life by as much as a decade. According to a Dutch study in 2006, those who were positive about the future and relationships had a 55 per cent less chance of dying early from all causes, and a 23 per cent reduced risk of heart disease. Further, American research suggests that pessimists live an average 12 years less than optimists as negative people are more likely to suffer viral illnesses (thought to be owing to lower immunity as a result of their negative thinking), and less likely to carry out self-checks for diseases. Norwegian researchers even found that those who laugh every day live an average seven years longer than those who are miserable.

Keep tomatoes in the fruit bowl. You might want to think again about stashing your fruits and veggies in the refrigerator. Storing red-coloured fruit such as tomatoes, watermelon, guava and red and pink grapefruit at room temperature doubles their levels of beta carotene, a yellow-red pigment that is converted by the body into the antioxidant vitamin A; it also boosts the food's content of lycopene, another powerful antioxidant, by 20 times. A study from the US Department of Agriculture also found that keeping uncut fully ripe melons at room temperature overnight increased levels of carotenoids (disease-fighting substances) from 11 to 40 per cent, compared with the melons that were put in the fridge.



Pray together. There is more than a grain of truth in the old adage 'the family that prays together stays together'. They live longer too. People who take part in community prayer—no matter what their religion—have greater life expectancy, according to a study by the University of Pittsburgh. Head researcher Dr Daniel Hall attributes this to an enhanced sense of community support that zaps isolation and acts as a powerful stress-buster. The findings also suggest that praying together could be more cost-effective in terms of longevity than popping any pills.



Get out more. Instead of brooding, it pays to stay in touch with friends. According to an Australian study, socialising with people you like can add a decade or so to your life. Findings from the study which included 1,500 people over the age of 70, indicate that those with a good network of friends lived longer than those who didn't socialise. This is perhaps because friends encourage us to look after our health and help reduce depression and anxiety.



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Love speaks volumes



HEMANT PATIL

In Pune, **Manjari Gordhandas** keeps her late husband Arvind's passion for literature alive, writes **Brinda Gill**

If you are looking for rare books in Pune, chances are you'll be directed to Chapter & Verse, a world far removed from today's bright, ritzy book marts. With the old-world ambience of a personal study rather than a bookstore, it is compact and cozy; the walls lined with thematically arranged wooden bookshelves. Business is conducted unhurriedly, with the staff taking their time to interact with every visitor. Here, international bestsellers like *Double Cross* by James Patterson and *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne rub shoulders with old editions of *A History of American Philosophy* by Herbert W Schneider (1946), *Articles and Pamphlets* by Maxim Gorky (1950), *Back to Methuselah* by George Bernard Shaw (1945); *Les Enfants Terribles* by Jean Cocteau (1955), and

Satyagraha in South Africa by Mahatma Gandhi (1950), to name a few.

These books form part of the collection of Arvind Gordhandas. "Wherever he went, he bought books," his wife Manjari recalls with a smile. "To him a bookshop was a temple. I would never insist that he visit a temple and he wouldn't expect me to visit bookshops." Today, though, she has become a convert—in the absence of any children the 73-year-old has been running her husband's bookstore for the past seven years.

MAN OF WORDS

Opening his own bookstore was a dream come true for Arvind Gordhandas, who started collecting

books as a student in Elphinstone College, Mumbai, in the 1940s. He went on to study industrial psychology in London, and returned to Mumbai in 1954. During this time, his love for literature grew. He also started writing poetry. “Books are my life, after my wife,” he would quip to friends after his marriage to Manjari in 1956, and he collected avidly from second-hand bookstores in Bombay and the footpaths near the city’s Flora Fountain, a book lover’s paradise.

In 1962, Arvind left his job at National Machinery Manufacturers at Kalwe, near Thane, and started The System, an independent management consultancy specialising in organisational psychology. The job involved travelling to different cities and enabled Arvind to widen his radar. He visited many bookstores and book fairs across the country and returned home with old, rare and interesting books on literature, poetry and management. Over the years, he collected more than 7,000 books on a variety of subjects—management, literature, poetry, philosophy, travel and history—along with back issues of magazines such as *National Geographic*, *Psychology Today*, *The New York Times Book Review* and *The Times Literary Supplement*. Meanwhile his experience in management led him to publish *Wanted: Employer on Probation*, a satire on the Indian organisational scene and other essays that conveyed his impressions of corporate organisations as well as the nature of Indians—he published it himself, and gave it away to friends.

From the mid-1980s, Arvind found himself increasingly in Pune for work and, over time, the couple decided to shift base to the city. While finally packing to move in 1994, Arvind realised they had too many books—they needed a separate lorry just for them—and the idea of opening a bookstore first occurred to him.

SETTING UP SHOP

“My husband wanted his books to go into the right hands,” says Manjari. Soon enough, he found a home for his books in a shopping complex near their home—‘Chapter & Verse’ opened its doors on 9 July 1995. Arvind designed the store himself, from the open wooden shelves to the ‘Book Walk’ on the mezzanine floor filled with his old books.

“Lots of customers came in to pick up Arvind’s books the first six months after the shop opened,”

remembers Manjari. “The books were priced reasonably. But after some time, as the old books were sold off, the number of walk-in customers declined drastically. This upset him and exacerbated his health problems.” Arvind passed away in April 2000 at the age of 72.

TAKING CONTROL

Despite the grief of losing her husband, Manjari knew she had to keep the store going. “Selling off the books or the store was not an option,” she says. Her elder sister Kusumben also urged her to take over the reins of Chapter & Verse. “My sister was insistent that I go to the store instead of sitting at home moping,” she recalls. “So I was at the store on 1 May 2000.” On hand to help her learn the ropes were the team: Sanjay and Anita, the two “pillars of the shop” who have been there since its inception—“Anita has a super memory and can find books in

“My husband was passionate about his books and wanted them to go into the right hands”

minutes and Sanjay meets with clients”—and Prashant, the rickshaw driver who handles deliveries and running around.

Manjari, a homemaker her entire life, also began to learn new skills. She met prospective clients at institutes, corporate offices and libraries to take orders for books; approached distributors with the orders; transferred the import licence for books from Arvind’s name to hers; established a website www.chapterandverseindia.com to facilitate purchases; and set up a system where buyers in Pune got free home delivery. She also organised talks and readings on interesting subjects—such as traditional Indian playing cards—in an adjoining hall to promote footfalls to the store.

Today, Chapter & Verse is a recognised and respected name. “Everything here speaks about love and devotion for books, learning and growth,” says consultant trainer Kishore Shah, director of Pune-based **ideaz unlimited**. Regular visitors like Shah have helped spread the word. “We may not be wildly successful,” says Manjari Gordhandas. “But we have a good reputation. I had to put in my



Cosy and compact with books piled high on every wall, the store is a book lover's delight

capital to ensure that the distributors and Sanjay and Anita were paid on time. Unless it is a small order, I insist on cheque payment. We work hard and are honest and sincere."

Noted archaeologist Dr Shanti Pappu appreciates this sincerity. "You feel comfortable browsing through books in such an ambience," she says. "Mrs Gordhandas and the staff do their best to source books for you. They procure any professional books I need for me. And they donate a lot of books to libraries for poor children."

A NEW CHAPTER

Manjari has found yet another way to honour her husband. In September 2000, she published *Simmering Feelings*, a collection of Arvind's poems, "written in different moods and places". This was followed in September 2003 by *Lines Inspired by the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, an unfinished work, "in which Arvind tried to recast the thoughts of the

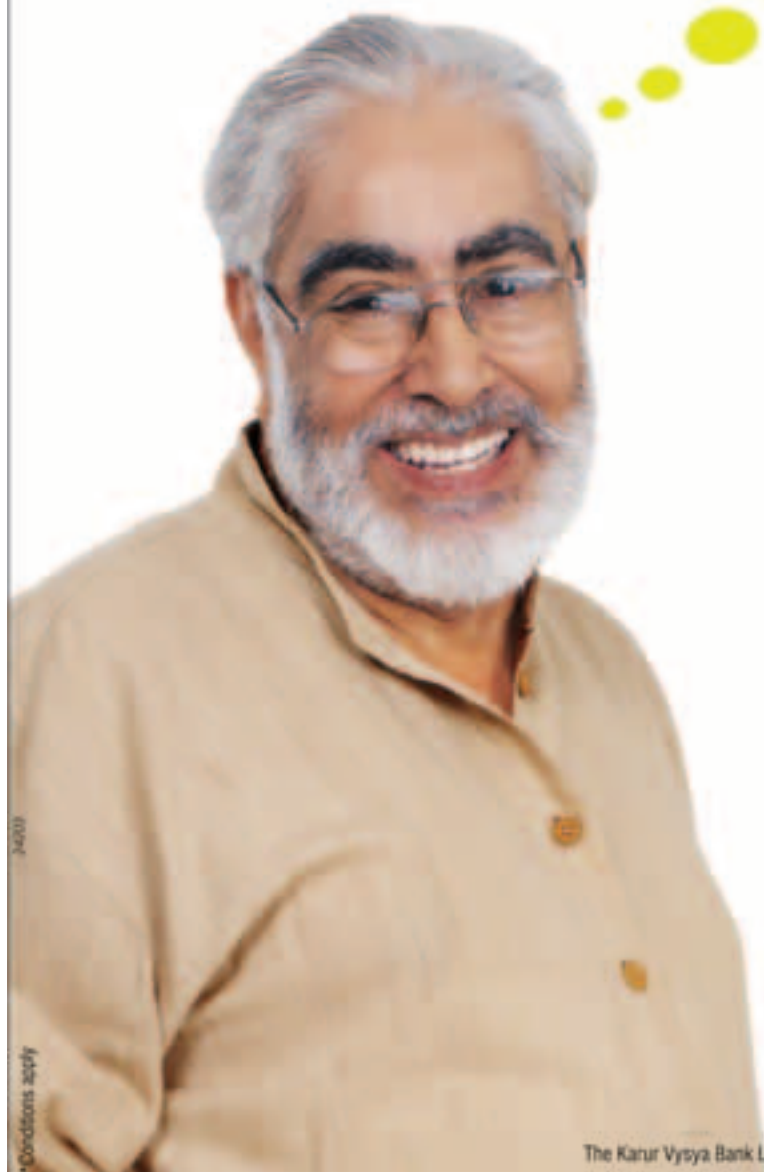
work in the present-day environment". In 2005, Manjari published *Leaf and God*, a collection of poems that reflects the introspective mood of the

"I have no plans for the store's future yet, but I'll ensure Arvind's memory is kept alive"

poet. And in August 2007, she published *Dice*, a collection of Arvind's last poems. "I am very particular about the layout and printing of the books of Arvind's poems," she says. None of these books are sold—Manjari gifts them to family, friends and book lovers to commemorate his love for written word. While she lives in the 'now', saying she hasn't made any plans for the store's future, one thing is clear: "I'll spare no effort to keep Arvind's memory alive." ■

Visit Chapter & Verse at F-10, 1st floor, Gera Plaza, Boat Club Road, Pune-411001; Tel: 020-26167870; Email: candv@pn3.vsnl.net.in; Website: www.chapterandverseindia.com

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Caught in a vise

Just as there are helpless women being tortured for dowry by their in-laws, there are silvers being harassed on false charges of seeking dowry and cruel behaviour.

Rajashree Balaram presents the other side of the story



Just as there are helpless women being tortured for dowry by their in-laws, there are silvers who are being harassed on false charges of seeking dowry, mental harassment and cruel behaviour. Many innocent elderly citizens are being dragged into court unscrupulously by their daughters-in-law and their families under allegations of Section 498A, Section 3 & 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act and Section 406 of the IPC—Breach of Trust, which refers to non-return of the gifts and jewellery given by the woman's parents and relatives during the wedding.

Although preliminary investigation is required after the registration of the First Information Report (FIR), arrest warrants are issued without examining whether family members are actually abusive or have been falsely implicated. What might be merely a case of mutual incompatibility or clash of ego between the couple sometimes ends up being portrayed as collective abuse of a woman by her in-laws. Elderly parents are more vulnerable to being arrested and put in jail even before the trial begins. As most men in India continue to live with their parents even after marriage, parents are often accused of poisoning the minds of their sons against their daughters-in-law,

In March 2003, the Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs, chaired by Justice V S Malimath, suggested amendments to Section 498 A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) on the plea that it was being misused. Section 498 A is a criminal law under which a woman and her parental family can charge the woman's husband and any or all of his family members, including elderly parents and minor-aged siblings of physical or mental cruelty. Anyone charged with Section 498 A is liable to be arrested by the police without any initial investigation.

To analyse whether Section 498 A was actually being misused as indicated in the Malimath Committee Report, the Centre for Social Research (CSR) in Delhi conducted a survey across Delhi, Karnataka, Rajasthan and West Bengal. What emerged out of one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions—involving victims, accused, families of both sides, police, lawyers, judges and NGOs—was a grim picture of oppression and manipulation. On the one hand, nearly 50 million Indian women were found cowering under statistics of domestic violence. On the other, 6.5 per cent of the cases studied were proven to be false.

and are therefore usually held influential in causing mental and physical harassment.

Section 498 A is cognisable (accused can be arrested without warrant), non-compoundable (complaint cannot be withdrawn by the petitioner) and non-bailable (accused must appear in court to request bail). The World Health Organisation has even reported that legal abuse of the elderly in India is among the highest in the world along with Lebanon. Alongside, it states that dowry laws in India are being used as a weapon for ruthless abuse of the elderly (Source: http://www.who.int/ageing/projects/elder_abuse/alc_ea_ind.pdf)

Legal abuse of the elderly is among the highest in India

A Right to Information application directed to the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2005 revealed some shocking figures. In 2005, among the 58,319 dowry cases that were registered, 10,491 cases were not charge-sheeted because they were based on frivolous grounds. In the same year, 134,757 people underwent arrest for 58,319 complaints under Section 498 A and Dowry Prohibition Act. Among these, 4,744 people who were accused were above 60 years of age and arrested without any verification of the veracity of the complaint. (Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, RTI No. 24013/20/2006-SC/ST-W)

The lengthy trials for cases booked under Section 498 A can go beyond seven years and drive

many families to yield to extortion, blackmail and compromise through hefty out-of-court settlements. As most silvers are not aware of the complexities of the legal machinery, they are also vulnerable to being misguided by corrupt elements in the judiciary and end up running from pillar to post. There have been instances where men and their old parents have committed suicide owing to the humiliation and public mudslinging that inevitably follows a single night spent in police custody.



R P Chugh of Man Cell has spent two decades fighting against injustice

Experts cite many reasons as possible triggers for misuse of gender-biased laws: speedy divorce and settlement of alimony; deep-seated insecurity prompting the woman to alienate her spouse from his family; an easy way to dissolve a marriage that was against the woman's wishes. Often, cases are also motivated by financial greed or a desire to settle scores following a clash of ego between the couple. As the menace gains larger proportions, support groups are springing up all over the country to raise their voice against it.

Most of them are led by people who have been victims earlier. *Harmony* meets four such groups.

MAN CELL, Delhi

Even the caller tone of R P Chugh's mobile phone is a loud proclamation of his 25-year long crusade. Try calling this Supreme Court advocate on his mobile phone and it trills the song *Mujhe meri biwi se bachao* (save me from my wife). A man who has suffered badly at the hands of his own wife, Chugh has spent more than two decades defending men from

false claims of domestic violence and dowry harassment. The flamboyant advocate remembers his formative years when he grew up with Marxist ideologies and worked for women's emancipation. Chugh admits to almost turning into a misogynist after he suffered from severe harassment from his wife in his first marriage. "Almost 87 per cent of the women in Tihar jail have been booked under Section 498 A, many of them old women, who have been accused of torture and cruelty without any trial," says Chugh. He agrees that laws

SANJAY ARORA

against dowry harassment and domestic violence are necessary in our society where millions of women do suffer submissively. But he also feels that fair amendments are urgently required otherwise “these laws will be rampantly used to victimise an innocent man for heavy compensation or simply harassment or blackmail.”

SANGYABALYA, Bengaluru

Arun Murthy, 47, a freelance writer, established this forum for harassed husbands and their parents in June 2003. He was driven by his own experience when he was summoned to court in a false dowry harassment case filed by his brother’s wife four years ago. An arrest warrant was issued against Murthy and his family. Later, he wrote an article in a local newspaper venting his anguish and decided to start a help line to reach out to other

two architects—lent him space in their office and telephone accessibility two hours twice a week. Within three months, Sangyabalya was registered as an NGO with its own dedicated 24-hour helpline. Today the group attends to over 25-30 calls every month. A significant number of callers are NRIs. “The notion that NRIs would be more vulnerable to parting with money under duress make them easy targets,” says Murthy. Sangyabalya has 250 members, including an advocate and a counsellor, who meet every fortnight to share grievances, and discuss legal loopholes and ways to overcome them.

“What rankles is that no punitive action is taken against a woman, even when her allegations are proved to be false,” says Murthy. He emphasises that even the Supreme Court has labelled the misuse of Section 498 A as “legal terrorism” and admitted that

acquittal of the accused does not wipe out the ignominy suffered during and prior to the trial.”

“Many families turn bitter under the twin assault—loss of employment and unfair allegations,” says Murthy. “The stigma attached to being in police custody can wipe out employment opportunities and can lead the man and his family to severe financial despair.” He has a three-pronged approach to the issue: suggesting correct legal measures to counter the charges; providing a platform where they can share their woes; and campaigning for the rights of the victims. “Sangyabalya offers them a chance to share, learn and heal,” says Murthy.

PROTECT INDIAN FAMILY, Mumbai

These days, M R Gupta, 55, spends most of his time poring through heavy tomes on Indian law. The civil engineer is appearing for his LLB exams because he wants to be fully empowered when he fights his daughter-in-law who has filed false allegations of harassment against Gupta’s family under Section 498 A. He is the director of Protect Indian Family, an offshoot of Save Indian Family—an international network of NGOs and individuals for victims of misuse of gender-biased laws.

Gupta shares his crusade with P R Gokul, 34, the other director of Protect Indian Family forum and a past victim of false charges of dowry harassment. Gupta and Gokul meet coordinators and members every Saturday at Gupta’s cybercafé in Mulund, Mumbai. The forum took shape when Gokul expressed his views in an online chat group while he



Murthy (extreme right) with members of Sangyabalya

people caught in similar situations. Within three days, he received over 600 calls. His friends—

“many complaints are not *bona fide* and have been filed with an oblique motive. In such cases,

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Gokul (second from left) and Gupta of Protect Indian Family (centre) with victims

was fighting the allegations against him. Today Protect Indian Family has 200 members in Mumbai and branches in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bang-

The Supreme Court has labelled 498 A as 'legal terrorism'

alore, Hyderabad and Jaipur. Gokul still remembers the plight of his own parents who were jailed without investigation.

"There are many helpless old couples who approach us," says Gokul. He has observed that silvers feel guilty and responsible about their sons' plight as, often, they have arranged the match. According to him, the couple should have the freedom to explore their emotional and mental compatibility before marriage. As a case study, Gokul points out a case where a man and his widowed mother lost possession of their own house when they were falsely charged with mental harassment and domestic violence.

SAHANA, Hyderabad

At a recent conference on the misuse of gender-biased laws, a young woman confessed that she had framed her husband's family falsely under charges of dowry harassment. When asked for her motive she simply said that she had done it on the behest of her parents who wanted her husband

professional and the president of Sahana, a Hyderabad-based support group that had organised the conference. Sahana has over 100 members. Most of them meet every Sunday to discuss the correct legal action for victims and to offer a sounding board.

In 2005, when Kollu was posted in Switzerland, he was summoned to India on false charges of dowry harassment filed by his sister-in-law against his family. The case still drags on and Kollu says his brother, who was earlier an IT engineer, has become a recluse, drained of all his money. Sahana has help lines in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kerala, Kolkata, Mumbai, Nasik, Pune, and in the US. It receives about four to five calls every week. Almost 55 per



Kollu of Sahana (in black shirt) with group members at Nagarjunasagar Fall

to come and stay with them. "The woman wanted to know how she could extricate her in-laws from the shackles of law but she didn't know that the damage was already done," says Durga Prasad Kollu, a 30 year-old IT

cent of the callers are parents of victims. Besides campaigning for better legislative measures, Kollu likes to try a refreshing approach to reduce their agony. Recently, he took members on a trip to Nagarjunasagar Fall. ■

Sahana: 09848280354, www.sahanaindia.org; Sangyabalya: 09845715737; Protect Indian Family: 09224335577 www.protectindianfamily.org; Man Cell: 011 27491446, www.mancell.i8.com



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| cover feature

Lord of the

Dance



ASHOK SALIAN

Pioneer of contemporary
dance in India, Astad
Deboo's unique vocabulary
continues to hold
audiences in thrall, writes

Arati Rajan Menon

Sometimes, being a journalist has its perks. Like scoring a private performance by Astad Aderbad Deboo. He doesn't merely pose for photographs, he dances—as he did for *Harmony* at photographer Ashok Salian's studio in Mahim in suburban Mumbai. 'Dance', though, is a bit tame to describe what this man can do. As a warm-up, he powers through a fiery guitar track by flamenco artist Jesse Wood with a light step and rapid pace. Then he switches to the lyrical strains of Japanese composer Yoichiro Yoshikawa in a set of controlled movements that challenge his sense of balance. While the limbs speak of intense discipline, the mobile face—eyes, eyebrows, mouth, lips—displays a series of emotions. Through it all, the pace never flags, and Salian, no slouch himself, laughs out loud with the thrill of keeping up with the sheer unpredictability of each move. Deboo ends with a flourish, a flash of feral smile, head held high in arrogance.

There's no trace of this hauteur, though, when we meet him for a chat at a hotel coffee shop. The 60 year-old ambles in wearing a yellow shirt as cheerful as his grin, his salt-and-pepper "hairs-cape" cut in a swirl. He sits down and proceeds to conspiratorially

point out a gaggle of Page 3 ladies lunching on the next table. It's surprising just how accessible Deboo is; he answers his phone, replies to email promptly and works his schedule around to accommodate interviews and photo-shoots.

Not that he has time to burn. This past year, he has held performances and workshops across the world, including the US, Czech Republic, Spain, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and Manila. He has recently returned from Art Summit Indonesia in Jakarta, where he danced with Manipuri martial artists who specialise in a technique called Thang Ta (literally, the sword and the spear)—a collaboration he has fostered over the years. In January, he will be felicitated at the 100th anniversary celebrations of Tata Steel in Jamshedpur. There, he will also

**"I refuse to let age catch up with me.
There's too much fire in my belly"**

premiere *Rhythm Divine*, showcasing another set of Manipuri artists, Pung Cholan drummers (another pet project), who will play the *pung* (drum) while executing acrobatic feats. Deboo will show *Rhythm Divine* in Bengaluru in February and hopes to schedule a performance in Mumbai in March. Later in the year, he will perform at the Festival of Granada in Spain and in Berlin.

Further, he has been commissioned for a work for the Hong Kong Arts Festival 2009, where he will work with friend and collaborator Danny Yung, a renowned multi-artist, and a piece for

Tokyo Wondersite, a foundation funded by the city of Tokyo, for a festival in 2010. He's also in discussions with Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York for a piece to celebrate the opening of its new Islamic gallery.

How does he keep it all straight? "I'm my own manager and secretary and my office runs out of my head," he says. "I focus on taking it one day at a time." Right now, he's excited about Jamshedpur. It will be a sentimental trip; "my father worked for Tata Steel and I grew up there".

He also started dancing there, as a six year-old. "My parents sent me to classes, probably to get me out of their hair!" he says. After years of learning Kathak from gurus like Indra Kumar Mohanty and Prahlad Das, he moved to Bombay for a BCom degree from Poddar College (his father's

idea). That's where he saw a performance by the Murray Louis Dance Company from the US—"I was astounded at their supple bodies, the stagecraft." During the same period, he worked briefly with Uttara Asha Coorlawala, who was studying at the Martha Graham Centre of Contemporary Dance in New York.

Inspired by the possibilities that lay ahead and enchanted by the tales of a school friend who had just returned from a hitchhiking trip in Europe, in 1969 a 22 year-old Deboo boarded a cargo boat at Bombay Port, sat amid goats and vegetables, and set out on a



voyage of discovery across the world—his first stop was Teheran where he slept in a gurdwara.

Over the next eight years, Deboo says he travelled through 45 countries, thinking on his feet, sleeping in parks and youth hostels, relying on people's generosity, and absorbing the cultures of the world. He danced for soldiers in Vietnam and the police in Turkey and sold his blood in Greece. He traversed Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam and Japan. In London, he taught Kathak for classes at the London School of Contemporary Dance. When he finally returned to India, dance critic Sunil Kothari suggested he study Kathakali to learn the use of facial expression. "I started learning from E Krishna Pannikar, the only guru with whom I had a *guru-shishya parampara*."

From everything he saw and learnt, Deboo evolved a distinct vocabulary, characterised, as one critic wrote, "by an economy of movement allied to tremendously impactful narrative". People began to pay attention. Pina Bausch, the famed German choreographer for the Wuppertal Dance Theatre, saw him perform in 1979 and invited him to join her theatre; and designer Pierre Cardin commissioned him to choreograph for the legendary Maia Plisetskaya, prima ballerina of the Bolshoi Ballet. He even jammed with rock icons Pink Floyd at the Chelsea Town Hall in London to one of their early albums, *Meddle*.

Deboo enjoys collaboration—apart from his recent work with

artists from Manipur, he has forged creative partnerships with the Gundecha brothers, exponents of the Dhrupad style of Carnatic music, and puppeteer Dadi Pudumjee. More recently, he choreographed a promotional video for Vishal Bhardwaj's 2006 hit film *Omkara*, featuring the Manipuri martial artists and drummers. It was Deboo's third foray into Bollywood—he had earlier choreographed a piece for Sanjay Khan's *Abdullah* (1980), which "got cut on the editing table", and worked on M F Husain's *Meenaxi* (2004).

Most significant for him, though, is his work with the deaf, which began with the Action Players, a Kolkata-based deaf theatre group and extended to deaf dancers in the US, Hong Kong and Mexico. "I wanted to give them an audience," he says. His association with Action Players was to last 14 years before it "died a natural death". Now, he works with Bharatanatyam dancers from the Clark's School for the Deaf in Chennai. "I am a hard taskmaster and there are lots of crying sessions," he says. "But when they receive all the accolades, they realise it was necessary." In fact, *Contraposition*, a work performed by dancers from the Clark's School, was part of the opening celebrations of the 20th Deaf Olympics in Melbourne, 2005.

Deboo counts that show as one of his most memorable, along with his performances atop the Great Wall of China, and at a festival in Champaner. "In Champaner, I invited the local villagers to come and see the rehearsal as the main show was reserved for the hoi polloi," he recalls. "They came with open minds, unlike so called

seasoned critics, and their comments about the movements were so profound." During the actual show, Deboo performed one of his pieces on a 40 ft high wall—while the elite audience was on the inside, all the villagers and drivers were able to enjoy the show from the outside.

"Astad's construction of images is remarkable," says theatre actor and director M K Raina. "He is so experimental and uses traditional and modern themes to equally

enough overseas—festival directors would urge him to stick to Kathak and Bharatanatyam—in India, he was considered too western. "The post-Independence mindset was to deny anything that came from the colonial power," says theatre director Sunil Shanbagh, Deboo's friend and collaborator since the 1970s. "Unfortunately, contemporary dance was bracketed in that category. Even western classical musicians in India suffered the same fate. But the remarkable

"Despite years of humiliation, I didn't let the cultural bureaucracy defeat me"

good effect. And he's still growing as an artist. While his earlier work was more dramatic and ritualistic, he is now more sublime and avant-garde." Notwithstanding such acclaim, Deboo rues the fact that it is still hard for him to get sponsorship for his work in India. "It's frustrating to be in this position even after performing for 38 years," he says. "Companies with a turnover of Rs 500-600 crore give you a lakh as if they're doing you a favour." His ire extends to the cultural bureaucracy, the "joint secretaries in the Ministry of Culture". "I can write a whole book on the humiliation I've gone through," he says. "In my early days, one of them told me, 'Mr Deboo, you will get recognition posthumously; pioneers have to suffer'. I didn't let it defeat me. Rather, I took it as a challenge."

Another challenge was to get dance purists to accept his unique brand of work. While he was not considered Indian

thing about Astad was that he persevered. It was a lonely battle but he fought it."

Deboo recounts how a famous Kathak guru (who he doesn't name) once scoffed, "He just moves one hand here, one leg there, and calls it dance." Ironically, a few years ago Deboo was asked to dance in a documentary made on the same guru—"they wanted me to do a sequence, likened to a whirling dervish overseas, which actually stems from classic Kathak *chakkar*; it was poetic justice, I guess!" Deboo's own Kathak guru dismissed his work and refused to have anything to do with him; in contrast his Kathakali guru, who encouraged innovation, was extremely supportive.

A breakthrough came in 1990 when he was invited to perform at the Khajuraho Dance Festival in Madhya Pradesh—a first for a non-classical dancer. Winning the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1995 also helped some gurus





acknowledge his work. For Deboo, though, the Padmashri — he received the award in April 2007 from former president Abdul Kalam—was validation that he didn't need to kowtow to achieve recognition. "It was a question of delayed, not denied," he says. "People had told me to lobby for the award in Delhi but I could never play the role of sycophant. Lots of juniors, and of no high merit, received it but I waited. When I finally got the award, so many people sent congratulatory messages saying it was long overdue."

Another bunch of congratulatory messages came in more recently, when he turned down the Gaurav Puraskar conferred upon him by the Gujarat Sangeet Natak Akademi in 2007. "Initially, I accepted it," he says. "And later I found out it was

turning of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalises consensual sexual acts between adults of the same sex. "Astad is a humanist," says Shanbagh. "And as a humanist, you have to take a stand against the polarisation in India today."

"There is all kinds of intolerance prevalent today," says Deboo. "Husain *sahib* is in exile, Tasleema Nasrin is being hounded; one innocuous line in a film song gets a chief minister all riled up." Can art, then, make a statement against intolerance? "Yes, it is a powerful platform," he responds. "But you have to use it wisely, whether you are sending a political message or a social one." In the past, Deboo has used dance to communicate his anguish at the horrors of war (a piece called *Bomb and After* inspired by a trip to Hiroshima) and drug

"Art is a powerful platform to fight intolerance but you must use it wisely"

from the Modi government. I had no choice but to reject the award." In his letter to the Gujarat State Sangeet Natak Akademi, Deboo wrote, "The violence perpetrated upon the people of Gujarat under this government leaves me with no choice except to disassociate myself from all its actions.... I believe in an inclusive India for all Indians irrespective of their caste and faith."

This belief also prompted him to sign—along with hundreds of people across India, including authors, artists and journalists—an open letter by Vikram Seth in September 2006 for the over-

addiction—in *Broken Pain*, he defined an addict's descent into hell, banging his head on the floor and even mainlining on stage (with an empty syringe).

"His style is unique," says Shanbhag. "He remains in a class of his own at a time when even classical dancers are desperately trying new ideas to stay relevant in changing times." In fact, Bharatanatyam dancer Alarmel Valli has spoken out against the 'what's new' syndrome, "a politically fashionable endorsement of experiment for its own sake". Deboo sees her point. "Some dancers think that just by not having Carnatic music they are

being different," he says. "I was shocked by one dancer who put on Bollywood music and made her dancers do Bharatanatyam steps to it."

In Deboo's opinion, the "true" tradition of innovation is being carried on by choreographer-dancers like Daksha Sheth, Aditi Mangaldas, Padmini Chittoor and Navtej Singh Johar. "There is also a young group from Kerala called Samudra; they are doing good work with *kalaripayattu*." However, Deboo believes contemporary dance doesn't get the exposure it deserves. "Only the written media keeps our work alive," he says. "On cable, there's no room for anything meaningful; it's all these Boogie Woogie Shooogie shows where they make little girls do Bollywood moves."

Despite his concerns, Deboo has no plans to open an academy of his own. "It would tie me down," he insists. "I'm still a free spirit that needs to go where my work takes me." He admits this nomadic existence has left him little time for other relationships. "There have been moments I've put dance before other important things," concedes Deboo. "But those closest to me understand."

These include his 'think-tank', which comprises Shanbagh, architect Ratan Batliboi, who has designed many of his stage sets, Raina, and playwright, writer and actor Satyadev Dubey, with whom he did his first stage show in Mumbai, at Prithvi Theatre in 1978. And, of course, his family: his active 91 year-old mother, and his two sisters. His father died three years ago. Deboo lives with his mother, younger sister

and nephew in Shapur Baug, a Parsi colony in Mumbai.

"That's the only 'real' home I have," he says. "When I am travelling, I stay with friends all over the world." Leisure time is spent trekking (Machu Picchu; Alaska; Galapagos), watching alternative cinema (Indian and English), admiring art ("I only look, never buy"); and reading magazines like *Newsweek*, *Esquire* and *The Economist*. "I don't read books as often as I should," he adds. "The last one I read was *The Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini and I loved it."

The one thing Deboo does take time out for is fitness—he works out five days a week. "I do stretches, swim, walk a lot." He eats everything—from *sambar* to sushi—and enjoys a good wine, all in moderation. "You can't take your health for granted," he says. He speaks from experience. In 2000, Deboo's knee gave in after a performance; the doctor told him the cartilage was thinning out and that he may not be able to dance anymore. "Luckily, glucosamine tablets did the trick," he says. "Now, I just do exercises to strengthen my knees. And I refuse to let age catch up with me. There's too much left to do, too much fire in my belly."

Deboo's wish list includes performing in Indian cities like Thiruvananthapuram, Lucknow and Varanasi—"cities with a rich cultural tradition where I have yet to perform"—and hosting an international dance festival. "For me it's always been about using my art to connect to people of different regions, cultures and nationalities," he says. "That battle continues." ■



High on drama

Yet low on sin. **Dr Pushpesh Pant** presents two exotic experiments

Even Spartan dishes can be extremely satisfying and dazzlingly exotic. The recipes I share with you this month fall in this category. The ingredients are healthy (fat is used only sparingly) and so is the method (only boiling or baking)—ultimately it is the

presentation that elevates the commonplace to the sublime. Don't let fancy words like 'zucchini' or 'polenta' stop you. Our *hara kaddu* and corn are as good as identical twins and make fabulous substitutes. Go ahead, drop a few exotic names when you invite friends over next time.



TOASTED OAT MERINGUES

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 2 hours and 30 minutes

Serves: 2-4

INGREDIENTS

- Rolled oats: 50 gm
- Egg whites: 2
- A pinch of salt
- Corn flour: 1 1/2 tsp
- Sugarfree sweetener: 150 gm

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 275° F (140° C). Place the oats on a baking sheet and toast for about 10 minutes till golden. Lower the heat to 250° F (130° C). Beat egg whites till they begin to form soft peaks. Sift flour with salt in egg whites till it begins to hold. Add half the sweetener and continue whisking the mixture till glossy. Fold remaining oats in this mixture with sugar. Gently scoop out blobs onto a greased and floured baking sheet and bake for two hours. When done, turn over, and place elsewhere on the sheet to prevent sticking, and let cool in the oven.



ZUCCHINI POLENTA SLICES

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes, plus 15 minutes for cooling the mixture before it is set and the slices are browned

Serves: 2-4

INGREDIENTS

- Zucchini: 250 gm; grated
- Vegetable/chicken stock made with cubes: 3 cups

- Polenta: 175 gm
- Butter: 15 gm
- Vegetable oil: 3 tbsp
- Low fat cheese: 2 tbsp; grated
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Melt butter in a large pan. Lightly stir-fry zucchini for about three minutes till soft but not brown. Boil the vegetable/chicken stock in a large pan, sprinkle polenta and keep stirring till the broth thickens. Make sure it does not stick to the sides of the pan. Stir in zucchini and salt and pepper to taste. Grease a shallow

roasting pan. Gently tip the zucchini mixture into the roasting pan, sprinkle cheese and allow it to cool and set. Place a cast iron griddle over high heat, cut the set polenta into triangles, brush lightly with oil and cook for two to three minutes on each side until golden brown. ■



Dr Pushpesh Pant, our culinary expert, is a documentary producer, author and die-hard foodie



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safely consumed by more than 300 million people world wide. It is sold under the brand names Sugar Free™ and Equal in India.

Sucralose is the latest international sweetener. Over 110 safety studies have been done on Sucralose and enjoyed in more than 60 countries. It is ideal for cooking and baking. Sucralose based sweeteners like Sugar Free Natura™ and Splenda can be used as a replacement to sugar in virtually every type of food and beverage.

A Celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor, who endorses one of the leading sugar substitute brand in India also claims, "Artificial sweeteners help you avoid risks of cholesterol, excess weight, obesity, diabetes and other health and lifestyle disorders and at the same time helps you enjoy all the sweet delicacies without the harmful calories."

Such low-calorie sweeteners therefore contribute towards consumer choice. So indulge to your hearts content, because guilt is now a thing of the past!

Lemon Tea



Ingredients

- 1 tea bag, flavoured
- 1 teaspoon Lemon juice
- 1 sachet (1 gm) Sugar Free Natura

Calories saved: 40 calories**

Method

1. Boil one and a half cup of water in a pan, add the tea bag and take the pan off the heat. Let the tea brew for five minutes.
2. Pour tea decoction in a teacup. Add a teaspoon of lemon juice into the cup.
3. Add one sachet of Sugar Free Natura into the cup and stir well. Serve immediately.

Mixed Fruit Custard



Ingredients

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 3 tablespoons vanilla custard powder | 10-15 black / green grapes |
| 2 cups milk | ½ orange pieces |
| 6 measures* Sugar Free Natura | 10-12 strawberries, halved |
| 4 bananas, peeled and sliced round | 4 tablespoons pomegranate pearls |
| 1 apple cut in small pieces | |

Calories saved: 120 calories**

Method

1. Whisk custard powder and milk well and cook. Add Sugar Free Natura and cook till mixture thickens. Set aside to cool. Then chill in the refrigerator.
2. Mix all fruits like bananas, apple, grapes, orange, strawberries and pomegranate pearls in a bowl.
3. Pour the cold custard over these fruits and mix well.
4. Decorate with a few strawberries and pomegranate pearls.
5. Serve cold.

Gajar Halwa



Ingredients

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Carrots, grated | 4 cups | Cardamoms, crushed | 3-4 |
| Skimmed milk | 2 cups | Raisins | 1 tablespoon |
| Ghee (optional) | 2 teaspoons | Almonds/cashew nuts | 1 tablespoon |
| Khoya | 3 tablespoons | Sugar Free Natura | 10gms or to taste |

No. of servings: 4
Prep. Time: 10 min
Cooking Time: 30 min

Calories saved: 360 calories**


Method

- Put grated carrots and milk into a non-stick pan and cook on a low heat till almost dry.
- Add the ghee (if using) and stir-fry for a few minutes.
- Crumble khoya and stir into the carrot mixture.
- Add raisins, sliced almonds, cashew nuts, crushed cardamoms and Sugar Free Natura.
- Cook for 5 minutes and serve hot.



*1 measure=0.5 gm (measuring spoon provided with pack). **Calories saved from replacing sugar with Sugar Free Natura.

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Gajar Halwa

Main Ingredients

Carrots, grated	4 cups	Cardamoms, crushed	3-4
Skimmed milk	2 cups	Raisins	1 tablespoon
Ghee (optional)	2 teaspoons	Almonds/cashew nuts	1 tablespoon
Khoya	3 tablespoons	Sugar Free Natura	10gms or to taste

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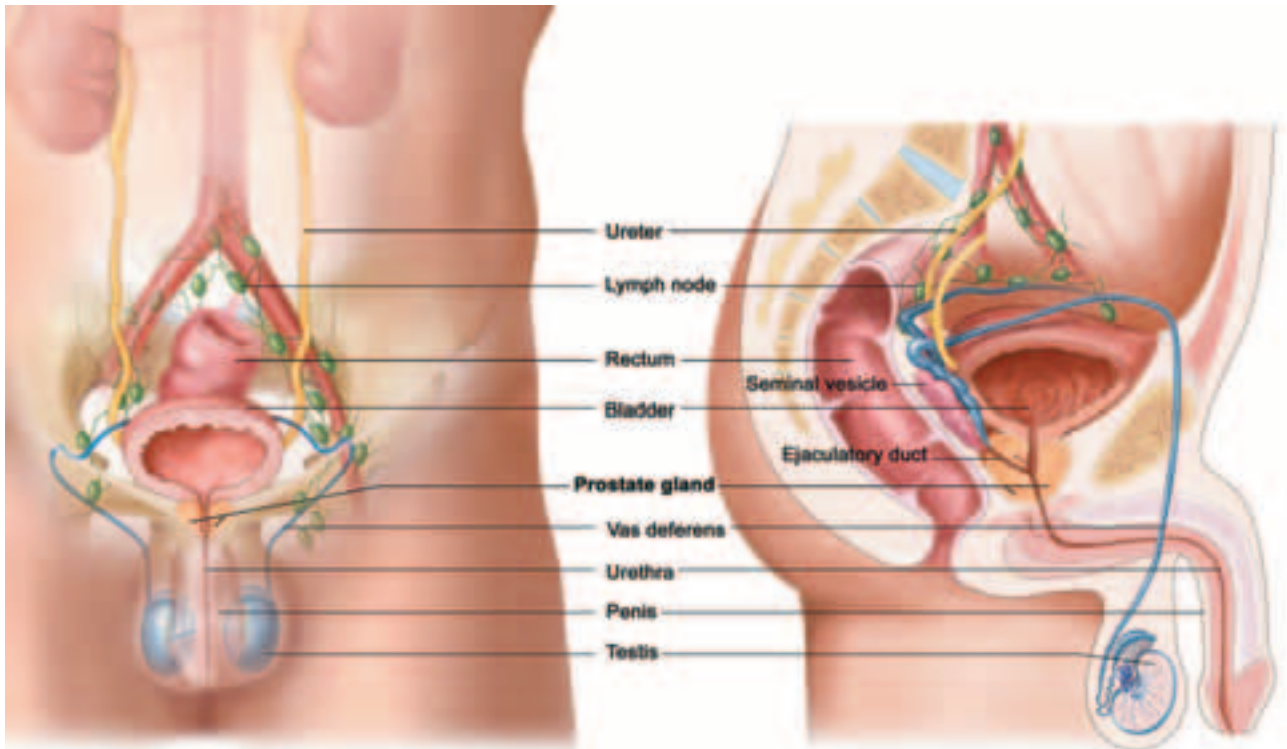
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Prostate health

Problems related to the prostate gland are common among silver men.

Anjana Jha speaks to experts to learn more



A recent study reported in *The Times* of London found that 89 per cent of the men surveyed did not know where the prostate was located. They also didn't know the function of the gland or the problems associated with it. Is the situation any better in our country? According to experts, awareness about the prostate and its problems depends largely on the socio-economic background of the patient in India. Further, many men feel uncomfortable talking about it as the gland plays a role in both sexual life and urination.

KNOW YOUR BODY

Prostate enlargement arising from ageing is a common medical problem among men. Normally of the size of a walnut, the prostate gland is part of the male reproductive system. Enclosed by a layer of tissue, it surrounds the urethra—the canal through which urine passes out—and is located below the bladder. Its major function is to contribute to seminal fluid. Problems related to the prostate gland include:

- Inflammation (prostatitis)
- Enlarged prostate (benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH)
- Prostate cancer

PROSTATITIS

Prostatitis or inflammation of the prostate gland is a common condition in men of all ages. Though the usual cause for prostatitis is bacterial infection, in older men it could be as a result of hormonal changes. Urine retention owing to inflammation can result in infection of the bladder, urethra and kidney. Key symptoms include pain in the area between the scrotum and rectum; difficulty in passing urine; frequent urination usually accompanied by a burning sensation; dribbling after urination; sense of fullness of the bladder; and blood

or pus in the urine. Later, symptoms can also include lower back pain and impotence.

ENLARGED PROSTATE

Enlarged prostate, or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), is the gradual enlargement of the prostate owing to hormonal changes. Overproduction of prostate cells causes enlargement of the gland in over 60 per cent of men over the age of 50, and 75 per cent of men over 70. Over time, the enlarged prostate can cause serious problems.

When the prostate enlarges, the surrounding layer of tissue stops it from expanding, causing it to press against the urethra. As the bladder exerts greater pressure to pass urine through the narrowed urethra, the bladder wall becomes thicker and more sensitive. The bladder begins to contract even when it contains small amounts of urine, creating a need to urinate more frequently.

icantly enlarged glands may have hardly any obstruction and few symptoms, others with less enlarged glands have more blockage and problems. Sometimes the narrowing of the urethra may be so acute that no urine passes at all. But the person may be unaware of any obstruction until he suddenly finds himself unable to pass urine—a condition known as acute urinary retention. This condition becomes a medical emergency.

PROSTATE CANCER

Prostate cancer is the second most prevalent form of cancer, with approximately 80 per cent chances of occurrence in men over the age of 65. Around 20 per cent of the cases of enlarged prostate are cancerous but most of them grow slowly. Symptoms are similar to that of prostatitis and BPH, and it is not unusual for prostate cancer to occur without any warning signs. Although prostate enlargement

Prostate cancer is among the most prevalent form of cancer in men over 65

Eventually the bladder weakens and loses the ability to empty itself completely. Urine retention and strain on the bladder can lead to recurrent urinary tract infection, bladder or renal damage, bladder stone formation, and urinary incontinence (the inability to control urination). Risk of developing such complications is lower when BPH is diagnosed in early stages.

The size of the prostate does not always determine severity of the symptoms or degree of obstruction. While some men with signif-

is neither cancer nor does it increase chances of developing prostate cancer, the patient may have undetected prostate cancer at the same time or may develop it in future. An operation for enlarged prostate does not eliminate the risk of developing prostate cancer.

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

If a doctor finds the prostate enlarged during medical examination, he refers the patient to a urologist (who specialises in problems of the urinary tract and male reproductive system).

SYMPTOMS

- Hesitant or interrupted urine stream
- Decreased force and calibre of urine stream
- Incomplete emptying of the bladder
- Double voiding (need to urinate within two hours)
- Straining to urinate
- Post-void dribbling
- Sudden urgency to urinate
- Frequent urination
- Nocturia (need to pass urine at night)
- Blood in urine

A physical examination, patient history, and evaluation of symptoms help the urologist make a diagnosis and decide whether surgery is required. Tests usually carried out are:

- Digital rectal examination (DRE) to detect size, shape and consistency of prostate
- Uroflow study to measure urine flow
- Ultrasound (USG) of kidney, ureter and prostate to check post void residual urine
- Cystoscopy to determine size of gland and identify location and degree of obstruction
- Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test to detect elevated levels of prostate-specific antigen to rule out cancer as a cause of urinary symptoms
- Transrectal sonography if prostate cancer is suspected
- Biopsy if prostate cancer is suspected
- Upper tract imaging (IVP) recommended only in case of concomitant urinary tract diseases or complications from BPH



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PSA, a protein produced by prostate cells, is frequently present in high levels in the blood of patients who have prostate cancer. Besides a rectal examination, it is advisable to have a PSA test after the age of 55 for early detection of prostate cancer. When PSA level is between four and 10, there are 80 per cent chances of having prostate cancer. With increasing PSA

(beyond 10), the chances also increase. However, in 20 per cent cases of prostate cancer, patients have normal PSA levels. As increased PSA levels also occur in cases of infection of the prostate, you must take care to distinguish between chronic prostate infection and prostate cancer.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Urinary tract infections can be tackled immediately with antibiotics. Even though symptoms of BPH clear up without treatment in as many as one-third of all mild cases, regular checkups

are required to watch for early problems. Patients with mild symptoms associated with BPH may be treated with medical therapy—alpha-blockers, 5-alpha-reductase inhibitors or a combination of both. With improved drugs, there has been a 40 to 50 per cent decrease in surgery for benign prostate.

When symptoms are severe or there are complications, conventional surgical therapy is recommended. Transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) is done for patients who have obstruction

RECOVERING FROM PROSTATE SURGERY

GROUP CAPTAIN (RETD) TREVOR J FERNANDEZ, 67



ANAND K SOMA

On 21 December 2006, Group Captain (retd) Trevor J Fernandez and his wife Elsie were working on making their Christmas party a success. But the couple had to shelve their plans that night as Trevor Fernandez was rushed to Military Hospital, Secunderabad after passing blood in his urine. A diabetic, he had been experiencing problems with urine flow for sometime, but hadn't found it particularly alarming.

At the hospital, Fernandez underwent basic tests like X-ray, ultrasound, and urine test and culture. For the other tests, he had to go to Yashoda, a private hospital. He spent the next few days

shuttling between the two hospitals. Diagnosed with suspected cancerous growth in his prostate gland, he was operated upon on 29 December. During the operation, the surgeon found blood leaking from the prostate into the bladder and therefore had to remove the gland. Biopsy reports cleared doubts about malignancy.

Since then his recovery has been good, and it has been facilitated by lifestyle changes. Fond of carpentry, his role as handyman around the house has reduced, and so has socialising. But he has resumed his 30-minute morning and evening walks and warm-up exercises. However, having lost weight—from 72 kg to 65 kg—after the surgery, he plans to consult his doctor.

—Shyamola Khanna

S P GUPTA, 77

In 1995, two years after S P Gupta retired as an accounts officer from Larsen & Toubro Ltd, he started having trouble passing urine. Despite the pain, Gupta refused to visit the doctor. Instead, he followed advice from friends and started drinking lots of fresh limejuice and a *desi* mixture of jowar or *sattu* and water. He coped for a while. In a few months, though, his urine flow stopped completely and he was compelled to visit a urologist. On his first visit, Gupta underwent a biopsy and was diagnosed with prostate cancer. However, Gupta's

symptoms and do not respond to medical treatment. This procedure is used in 90 per cent of all surgeries and usually offers relief for at least 15 years. Only 10 per cent of cases—usually those who had surgery at an early age—may need a revision surgery. TURP is the benchmark and recommended worldwide. Very few patients require surgery again if proper selection is made. On the other hand, transurethral incision of the prostate (TUIP) is a more limited surgical operation. However, when the prostate gland is greatly enlarged and

weighs over 100 gm, open prostatectomy is required.

There are many minimally invasive procedures that eliminate or reduce symptoms of enlarged prostate:

- Laser therapy
- Transurethral electro vaporization (TUEVAP)
- Hypothermia
- Transurethral needle ablation (TUNA)
- Intra-urethral stents
- Transurethral balloon dilation
- Transurethral microwave thermotherapy (TUMT)

POST-SURGERY DOS AND DON'TS

- Drink a lot of water to flush the bladder
- Avoid straining when having a bowel movement
- Eat a balanced diet to prevent constipation
- Avoid lifting anything heavy

With so many options available, there is no reason why you should tolerate prostate problems any longer.



sons BK, 53, Rajan, 49, and Bipon, 46, decided to keep the news from their father, only telling him he urgently needed surgery. Gupta was immediately wheeled into the operating theatre. After surgery, he stayed in bed for about a month before going in for radiotherapy at Batra Hospital in Delhi. "Everyone around me was a cancer patient," he recalls. "That's when my sons gently broke the news. I was devastated." To make matters worse, the recovery period was excruciatingly painful, especially whenever he had to pass urine. Gupta recovered but had to keep going for routine PSA

scans (a marker for prostate size and bulk). In 1996, his biopsy report indicated cancerous cells in his testicles. Gupta underwent orchiectomy, a procedure where his testicles were surgically removed—testosterone is produced in testicles and ensures the growth of prostate gland. After his recovery, to keep his mind off the problem, he started practicing yoga and took brisk walks for 45 minutes every morning. He also plunged head-on into neighbourhood activism. He took on complaints related to water scarcity, power breakdown, house tax and municipality issues and followed them up with the departments concerned. His work got acknowledged and he became the general secretary of his neighbourhood residents' welfare association in 2004. Later, Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi, honoured him with a letter of recognition.

Powered with a new way of life, Gupta, now 77, is confident he will live to be 100. But the memories of his surgeries still haunt him. "Recently, a neighbour who underwent prostate cancer surgery told me, 'We are survivors'," he says. "It's a strong word, one you'd usually associate with survivors of war or genocide. But he's not far off the mark."

—Teena Baruah

With inputs from Dr Murali Kamat, uro-oncologist, Jaslok Hospital and Breach Candy Hospital, Mumbai; Dr Samir Desai, urologist at Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai; and Dr Satyendra Nath Mehra, surgeon, Jagjivan Ram Western Railway Hospital, Mumbai



Treating acidity

Dr Ajay Kumar Bhalla answers readers' queries on heartburn

Q I think I have acidity. I feel a burning sensation in my throat after meals. Or could it be some other problem?

A Normally, a protective valve called the lower oesophageal sphincter keeps stomach contents from going back into oesophagus (the food pipe). If the valve relaxes and acid rises up into the oesophagus, there's a burning sensation in the throat and food pipe. It's also called heartburn. Medically, it's called reflux oesophagitis or GERD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disease). In such a case, you usually experience a burning sensation. Though unrelated to the heart, it can even cause chest pain similar to angina (pain radiating to arm or jaw). In severe cases, you may experience difficulty in swallowing, food sticking in throat, loss of appetite, and even weight loss.

Q Everyone in my family suffers from acidity. How common is the problem?

A Seven per cent of Indians experience heartburn every day; 14 per cent once a week; and 15 per cent once a month. It's a common problem, certainly the most common gastrointestinal complaint. And there's evidence that GERD is on a rise in tandem with increasing cases of obesity—excessive weight adds pressure on the oesophageal valve.

Q My doctor has asked me to stay away from junk food to prevent acidity. Are certain foods more likely to cause heartburn?

A There's a long list of possible culprits, including spicy foods, chocolate, wine, coffee and fatty foods. But in my own clinical practice, I don't like to dictate dietary dos and don'ts. If someone says he gets heartburn after drinking alcohol or eating chocolates, I tell him to go easy on alcohol or chocolates. The triggers for heartburn are

so different for different people that it's best to individualise lifestyle advice.

Q What are the common lifestyle modifications that can prevent heartburn?

A If you're overweight or obese, losing weight can help, especially if you begin to experience heartburn soon after gaining weight. Dieting isn't easy. But sometimes the discomfort of heartburn and the prospect of having to go on with medications is enough to motivate people. Most people get heartburn in the evening, especially if they eat a big meal and then immediately go to bed. I tell patients to avoid eating anything three hours before bedtime. By that time, food and liquid have passed through the stomach and the possibility of acid reflux diminishes. I give similar advice to those who experience reflux when they exercise. Avoid eating anything two hours before you work out and you are less likely to have a problem. For people who are awakened by heartburn at night, elevating the head of the bed by four to six inches can help.

Q What are the complications arising from heartburn?

A It can lead to sore throat, asthmatic bronchitis, hoarse voice and dental decay. I recommend an upper gastrointestinal endoscopy to diagnose GERD and assess its severity. Other investigations include barium X-ray and pH monitoring.

Q I often take Digene syrup for immediate relief from acidity. How effective are over-the-counter antacids?

A If you have occasional heartburn, antacids like Digene or Gelusil and PPI (proton pump inhibitors) like Omeprazole and Rabepazole and coating agents like Sucralfate can offer quick relief. Those who respond poorly to medicines may require surgery to tighten the lower oesophagus. ■

Dr Ajay Bhalla is senior consultant and coordinator, department of gastroenterology, Fortis Hospital (NOIDA); he is a visiting consultant at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and Max Hospital, Delhi



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Core strength

Shameem Akthar urges you to build a powerful core

The body's core strength is crucial for overall health. When our core strength is strong, our posture is erect and we are full of energy.

Lack of core strength may lead to several aches and pains that are difficult to pinpoint but ruin our daily living. This is because the body has to work extra hard to hold itself against the drag of gravity.

The symptoms of a weak core may lie elsewhere: body stiffness, lethargy, heel pain, difficulty in doing simple chores, unidentified body ache, joint pains and excessive tiredness. Often we try to treat each of these problems by popping pills, caffeine, sleeping at odd hours or avoiding any activity in general—all of which are harmful in the long run.

Instead, introduce some basic yogic changes in your daily life. Start off by correcting a slouch. It will make you look better and also rectify breathing disorders. If you are required to be in the same position for long (watching TV, using a computer, cooking), add a few stretch breaks to ensure blood circulation and muscular relief. Lying down with both feet on a cushion also replicates the 'cardiac pose', offering relief to the legs and relieving swell-

ing at the lower extremities while redirecting blood to the abdomen. When lifting something, keep the load close to the body, feet a little apart, and lower the body in a slight squat. This is a more efficient way to lift a load than bending forward to lift it.

The yoga programme for core strengthening starts with the feet. Ankle curls (*goolf chakra*) and toe bends (*padanguli naman*) help the feet become stronger to share load-sharing effectively. The torso is then trimmed and straightened with the palm-tree pose (*tadasana*), stick pose (*yastikasana*), prayer pose (*pranamasana*), and lying hand-to-feet pose (*supta padahastana*) and all its variations. Further, one-legged prayer pose (*ekapadapranamasana*) and all its variations, crescent (*ardha chandrasana*) and flying bird pose (*pashnee*), improve the body's natural sense of orientation. After perfecting these poses, you can advance to the warrior pose (*virabhadrasana*) and its variations. These poses work on the large leg and hip muscles so they become super load-bearers. Alongside you can include abdomen-trimmers and strengtheners like abdominal twists (*udarakarshanasana*) and all its variations, most back-bends including the bow (*dhanu*), fish (*matsyasana*) and locust (*salabhasana*) and all its variations. Remember, a consistent core-powering programme will soon perk up the way you look—and how you feel. ■

Yogic moves

Lying abdominal twist (*shava udarakarshanasana*)

Lie on your back. Keep legs close. Stretch hands out at shoulder level, on the ground. Bend left leg, placing left sole near right knee. Place right hand on top of left knee. Inhale. Exhaling, bend left knee down on right side of the floor, applying pressure with right hand. Now inhale deeply. Exhaling, twist head and torso to the left so you are looking at the left hand stretched

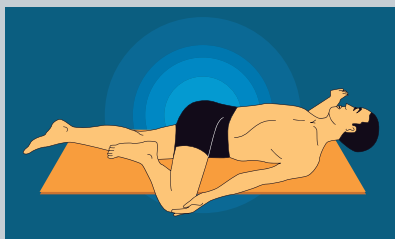


Illustration: MAMTA JADHAV

on the floor. Hold the pose for as long as comfortable. Release and relax on the floor in the corpse position. Repeat on the opposite side. Do it thrice. If you have back-ache, do it in a phased manner.

Benefits: It trims the abdominal area, rejuvenates large muscles,

aids back problems and helps control diabetes. It is a soothing pose yet encourages weight loss. It also rejuvenates the uro-genital system and gives transverse traction to the entire spine.

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)



yoga for silvers

Yoga shiromani and acharya **Shameem Akthar** urges the elderly to heal body, mind and soul with ancient yogic habits that are easy to learn. From the philosophy behind practices and poses to step-by-step instructions with illustrations, this is a comprehensive guide written especially for Silvers.

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HEALTH BYTES

OUTPACE DEATH

Geriatrician Stephanie Studenski of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine studied 500 people over the age of 65 living in Kansas City, Missouri, for about a decade and found that **those who walk faster also live longer**. The study was recently presented at the annual conference of the Gerontological Society of America. Co-research analyst Yazan F Roumani tells *The Washington Post*, "We don't know why, but gait speed may be a good predictor of long-term survival, even in people who otherwise appear basically healthy." During the study, 27 per cent of the fast walkers and 77 per cent of slow walkers died. In a related study that appeared in the November issue of *The Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, researchers also found that people whose walking speed improved reduced their risk of death.



RE-VISION



Age-related macular degeneration (ARMD)—the third leading cause of irreversible blindness in Indians over the age of 50—may soon have a cure.

British scientist Pete Coffey of Institute of Ophthalmology, London, has developed a 45-minute breakthrough surgery where cells derived from human embryonic stem cells are injected into the patient's eye to replace the faulty retinal cells that cause ARMD. Coffey and his team of researchers are also developing a polymer patch of cells that simplify the surgery, and facilitate fast recovery. In the initial clinical trials of the stem cell surgery on 12 people suffering from late stage blindness, 25 per cent recovered completely—eventually, they could all read, ride a cycle and use a computer. Recently Coffey visited Delhi and Mumbai to promote the technology and tie up with Indian ophthalmologists to conduct clinical trials from 2009. "The breakthrough will come as a boon for Indians who don't have access to a cure for ARMD," Coffey said at a talk at India Habitat Centre in Delhi. The surgery is expected to become as commonplace as cataract surgery in a decade.

NEW AND OLD

There's both **good and bad news for Type 2 diabetes patients**. First, the good news. Hyderabad-based pharma company Dr Reddy's anti-diabetes molecule Balaglitazone, which improves glucose and lipid control in patients with Type 2 diabetes, has now entered the final phase of clinical tests and is expected to hit the market by 2011. The bad news: diabetes super drug



Avandia, which has already been linked to cardiac problems, is now found to also cause bone thinning and osteoporosis. Researchers from the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in California have found that the drug boosts the action of cells that break down bone structure. It also interferes with the work of other cells responsible for building new bone.

TOBACCO TABOO



Cigarette smoke contains over 4,800 chemicals and is known to cause cancer, chronic bronchitis, heart disease and strokes, and even impotence, infertility, and peptic ulcer disease. Now we know that it could also make you lose hair. Researcher Lin-hui Su of the Far Eastern Memorial Hospital in Taiwan studied 740 men with an average age of 65 and examined their smoking history, age at which they started losing their hair, and blood samples. He found that **smoking may interfere with the way blood and hormones are distributed in the scalp or may increase estrogen levels, thus destroying hair follicles and causing baldness**. Asian men, who are genetically less likely to go bald than white Caucasian men, are also susceptible, he writes in the journal *Archives of Dermatology*.

BACK TO WORK

All is not lost for people with chronic backache. Rajendra Prasad, a neurosurgeon at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in Delhi, has implanted a **spinal cord stimulator with rechargeable batteries** in a bed-ridden chronic back pain patient, helping him walk again. Somnath Hans, 53, had been suffering from backache since 2003 and had undergone many surgeries without any relief. Dr Prasad implanted a 2.5-inch pulse generator in Hans's back. The generator transmits electrical pulses to the spinal cord that interfere with nerve impulses that cause back pain. According to Prasad, "The benefit of the rechargeable system is that it avoids the need for a revision surgery every five years to change the batteries." The procedure comes at a steep Rs 600,000 but despite the cost and a 45-day recovery period, Hans says "it's worth it".



HEALTH BYTES

PEEL IT

If you suffer from diabetes, enjoy your guava without its skin this winter. Researchers P K Rai, S K Singh, A N Kesari and Geeta Watal from the Medicinal Research Laboratory of the University of Allahabad have found that blood sugar levels of rats injected with guava peel extract shot up by 91 per cent in diabetic rats within two hours of administration and by 27 per cent in normal rats after eight hours of administration. The study is published in the November issue of the *Indian Journal of Medical Research*. But that's no reason to stop eating guavas altogether—the fruit is an excellent source of Vitamin A, B and C, iron, calcium and phosphorus. “We recommended fruits like guava, apple, pear and papaya to diabetics because we believed it had a neutral effect on blood sugar and, in some cases, it even lowered sugar levels,” says Anoop Misra, director, department of diabetes and metabolic diseases at Fortis Hospitals, Delhi. “However, this study confirms that the skin of the guava, high on simple sugars like glucose, increases blood sugar level immediately.”



UNDER PRESSURE

Finding it difficult to climb stairs or to go out to buy groceries? Check your blood pressure. Synonymous with stroke, heart failure, renal failure and coronary artery disease, high BP is



now believed to increase the risk of disabilities later in life, such as the inability to lift objects, taking the steps, or even taking a bath. In a study reported in the November issue of *Hypertension*, a journal of the American Heart Association, Ihab Hajjar of the Harvard Medical School writes, “Our study shows elevated blood pressure also tends to affect our independence and functional abilities.” The research is especially important in India where over 100 million seniors suffer from high blood pressure, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) statistics.

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Humble pie

A little humility can help us go a long way, says **Desmond Tutu**

The ability to forgive others ultimately comes from the humble recognition that we are all flawed and all hum-

an, and if the roles were reversed we could have been the aggressor rather than the victim. Humility is so important for seeing with the eyes of the heart that it bears elaboration. One of the lessons I have learned as I have grown older is that we should be a great deal more modest in claims we make about our prowess and our various capacities. Even more important, we should be generous in our judgements of others, for we can never really know all there is to know about another. This generosity again comes from a degree of humility, recognising that while we work as partners with God, we are not God, and it is not for us ultimately to judge another.

It is important to point out that humility is not pretending you don't have gifts. Sometimes we confuse humility with a false modesty that gives little glory to the One who has given us the gifts. Humility is the recognition that who you are is a gift from God. This lessens the likelihood of arrogance because the recognition that our abilities and talents are gifts reminds us that they are not wholly ours and can be taken away. If we truly exulted in our gifts, we would also celebrate the gifts of other people and the diversity of talents that God has given all of us.

Humour can help us to maintain our humility, and a sense of humour can help us immensely as we struggle for wholeness in our lives and justice in our world. Once, while flying from Durban to Johannesburg and minding my own business as I

always do, one of the air hostesses came up to me. "Excuse me, sir," she said. "One of the passengers would like you to autograph a book for them." I tried to look modest although I was thinking in my heart that there were some people who recognised a good thing when they saw it. As she handed me the book and I took out my pen, she said: "You are Bishop Muzorewa, aren't you?" That certainly helped keep my ego in check. None of us are immune to pride, and the problem is that as our head swells, so it can shrink. Howard University in Washington DC wanted to give me a degree, so they asked for my vital statistics to get a gown of the right size for the graduation ceremony. I said that was easy. Then they asked for the size of my head. I told them that would be more difficult because it changed daily.

Arrogance really comes from insecurity, and in the end our feeling that we are bigger than others is really the flip side of our feeling that we are smaller than others. When we realise we are all children of God and of equal and intrinsic worth to

God, then we do not feel better—or worse—than anyone else.

Sometimes our humility is really timidity, as we hide our gifts or shrink from the boldness that a situation requires. We all need love and affection, but sometimes we become paralysed by the fear that we will be disliked, or ridiculed, or ultimately that others will not love us.

The recognition that our abilities and talents are gifts reminds us that they are not wholly ours

We must remember that what God thinks is more important than what others think. Standing up for what we believe is right can ultimately help us to realise that even when we do not please our parents or our spouse or our friends or others, we may still be pleasing God. God's love can sustain us even when others may hate us. ■

Excerpt from God has a Dream by Desmond Tutu (Image Books; Rs 415; 148 pages). Nobel Laureate and South African cleric Desmond Tutu rose to fame in the 1980s as one of the chief opponents of apartheid. He is known worldwide for his speeches on compassion, peaceful relationships, altruism and forgiveness



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Recommendations for a new health insurance system for silvers bring hope and cheer,

reports **Bindi Mehta**

In the past few years, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA), formed in 1999 to protect the interests of all policyholders and to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the insurance industry, has received several complaints from silvers regarding arbitrary hike of premiums, renewal of existing policies and denial of fresh cover. In India, while there is a plethora of options for the young and healthy, nobody wants to insure the elderly (*"Searching for Cover"*, Harmony, November 2006). Other problems include high premiums (last year, Oriental Insurance hiked Mediclaim premium for seniors by 100 per cent) and refusal of service by agents.

To make health insurance for silvers more viable, in May 2007 IRDA constituted a committee to find solutions. Headed by former National Housing Bank chairman K S Sastry, the committee presented its report to IRDA on 7 December 2007. According to IRDA, in coming months, it will issue regulations pertaining to each recommendation—if implemented, these could change the face of health insurance for silvers in India. For their part, insurers are withholding any comment till IRDA issues the actual guidelines. *Harmony* takes a look at the most striking recommendations....



ENTRY/ACCESS FOR ALL

Every silver citizen seeking health insurance will be granted cover regardless of age, health condition or claim history, except in cases where the person is diagnosed with selected terminal

or incurable illnesses at first entry. There will be no upper age limit for entry or renewal for a period of three years from the date IRDA issues these regulations. After the end of these three years, insurance

companies will be instructed to exercise their discretion in entertaining the first entry for 'deserving' silvers above the age of 65.

Current scenario: The existing upper age limit for insurance offered to silvers is 80 years.

RANGE OF PRODUCTS

Products for seniors will be designed according to their needs and capacity to pay premium.

For the lower income group, there will be a policy with very low premium, which will only cover treatment in a general ward

spectrum will be a package comprising semi-private rooms with moderate sum insured (standard product).

Current scenario: At present, the Mediclaim policy by General Insurance Council of India (GIC), introduced in 1986, is the most popular. However, this is a uniform product with minor differences among insurers. Other health policies like critical illness and hospital cash/benefits policy are not so popular. Also, a lot of seniors cannot afford existing premium rates. A spectrum of products will change all of this. It will help bring the number of uninsured silver population (over 80 million) into the commercial health insurance fold, which will make the industry viable, yet keep premium rates in check.

INSURANCE POOL

Among senior citizens, there will always be individuals whose prevailing medical condition may not make them readily 'insurable' by normal industry standards (for example, people above the age of 80). To meet their needs, an 'insurance pool' will be created, sourced primarily through government funding with participation of all stakeholders. The panel also suggests that if insurance premiums cannot be exempted from service tax (at present, 12.36 per cent including cess), at least 50 per cent of the service tax on premiums should be credited to the above insurance pool.

Current scenario: Currently, most common excuses offered by insurers to avoid silver buyers are 'unprofitable business' and 'adverse selection' (this means risk-prone individuals who expect healthcare expenditure in



RBC

However, a lot of insurers don't promote health insurance policies for seniors, agents are often denied commission for renewal of these policies and most silvers are denied cover on the grounds of age.

and offer core benefits (basic product). There will also be products for high-end consumers, which will provide for upgraded treatment with more facilities and treatment options (enhanced product). In the middle of the

the future are taking health insurance, adding to claim outgo). The recommended 'insurance pool' will change this. "For the elderly, hospitalisation in the last leg of their life becomes inevitable," says K N Bhandari, Secretary General of GIC and former CMD of The New India Assurance Co Ltd. "Global experience has shown that, during this period, 100 per cent of the amount insured often gets exhausted. Let us assume that an individual has been holding a cover of Rs 400,000 for 50 years (since the age of 30), paying an annual premium of Rs 4,000. In case of hospitalisation at 80, the entire sum is likely to be claimed, while collection by way of premium will only be Rs 200,000, making it non-profitable. As the government has expressed concern for silvers, they can provide subsidy for the pool and help insurers bear the risk of citizens above 75."

AFFORDABILITY

Going by current healthcare costs, a cover will be designed with an annual 'base' premium of Rs 3,000 for a healthy individual (if health risks vary, the premium could vary) at age 50 for a sum insured of Rs 100,000. This would be reasonable considering that the average per capita income in India is Rs 29,382 per annum — yearly premium will be about 10 per cent of the average per capita income. Insurers will be given the discretion to add age-based loading (addition) on base premium. They will also have the choice of offering suitable loyalty discount for early entrants.

Current scenario: A progressive premium loading with every passing year (insurers can only load a small percentage each

year) will be better than the current practice of a sudden hike, leading to the exit of many. On 5 December 2007, IRDA issued a directive to insurers that companies cannot load the premium beyond 75 per cent of the amount a consumer paid the previous year for policy renewals.

WELLNESS INSURANCE

Insurers will not decide base premium or load it only on the basis of 'age'. They will also consider an individual's health status, lifestyle and preventive behavior. If health of a customer entails high risk, the premium charged to him may be more than normal. On the other hand, if the insured engages in health promotion and disease prevention behaviour (for example, yoga, quitting smoking), he will be

rewarded with incentives like lower premium.

Current scenario: The present system of underwriting is not based on risk or wellness. However, some intermediaries express concern over implementation. "An agent may not be able to convince individuals to adopt a healthy lifestyle the way a family physician can," says Dr Anil Mehta, medical director, The Clinic, the Indian chapter of an international chain of family healthcare clinics; it has 51 clinics in Mumbai. "If IRDA wishes to promote wellness-oriented insurance, the family doctor will have to play an important role."

PRE-EXISTING DISEASES

The General Insurance Council of India, with representatives from

IN THE NEWS



OLD AGE PENSION

The Centre has launched the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme for elderly above the age of 65 and below the poverty line. The monthly pension of Rs 200 by the Centre will be matched by an equal contribution by the state government.

Under the original old age pension scheme introduced in 1995, each beneficiary was allocated a mere Rs 75 as the Centre's contribution and an equivalent amount by the states. So far 11 states have responded positively to the directive. In the long run, the Finance Minister has asked state governments to ensure that every beneficiary opens an account, either with a nearby bank or a post office, to enable electronic transfer of funds.



SBI TO RETAIL GOLD

The State Bank of India has joined ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank in retailing gold. SBI will sell gold of 999.9 hallmark purity (99.99 per cent pure gold) in the form of coins—the facility will be available at 100 SBI branches. The

all non-life insurance companies, has suggested a common definition of 'pre-existing disease'. According to this, the 'look-back' period for putting a disease in the pre-existing category has been fixed for 48 months or four years. An individual will not be able to claim benefits for any such pre-existing disease diagnosed till 48 months have lapsed after the date of inception of the first policy. Also, the panel has suggested that underwriting in case of pre-existing diseases can be done by methods like defined waiting period (for claims), appropriate premium loading and capping of covered amount, thus reaching out to silvers with ailments.

Current scenario: There is no fixed limitation on 'look-back' period. The new rule of four years will benefit silvers as the

likeliness of the aged having some kind of pre-existing disease is higher. It will have other benefits too. "The definition used until now is not clear," says Bhandari of GIC. "The new definition is more comprehensive and will improve negotiations between the insurer and the insured, reducing disputes." IRDA recently directed insurers that the occurrence of a disease during the period of Mediclaim coverage cannot be treated as a 'pre-existing disease' at the time of policy renewal.

TAX CONCESSION

Tax concession will be given at a uniform rate of Rs 6,000 across income brackets. Unabsorbed tax credit would be carried forward.

Current scenario: Tax concession for paying premiums is regress-

ive. As an effect, a taxpayer in the highest tax bracket gets a rebate of Rs 6,000, while a senior citizen in a lower tax bracket gets less. Generally, with age, income is more likely to remain fixed or reduce rather than increase. So a regressive concession system would never benefit silvers. On the other hand, in a progressive system, even taxpayers in the lower income group would get proportionately higher benefits.

FAMILY CLINICS

The role of family doctor will be revived and enlarged to give rise to a chain of family clinics spread across the country. The family clinic will play the role of 'friend, philosopher and guide' by helping seniors choose the right product, providing administrative support in the application stage and aiding the processing of claims. The doctor associated with the clinic will act as a 'gatekeeper', keeping a check on what and how much specialised medical care they need and the treatment that hospitals shell out. These clinics would also arrange for the required storage and retrieval of medical information pertaining to the insured.

Current scenario: Healthcare providers are not integrated in the insurance framework. "The value of a family doctor seems to have declined," says Dr Mehta of The Clinic. "However, the need for a 'gatekeeper' is more evident today than ever before to guide citizens, especially silvers, in whose case even the duration of hospitalisation can be limited if the family doctor is involved throughout. A network of family clinics across the country will help silvers move away from the mercy of the insurance agent and act in their best self-interest." ■

number is expected to go up in the next two years, according to an SBI official. The gold coins, which will come with the Assay Certificate of purity, will be supplied by PAMP (Products Artistiques Metaux Percieux), a Swiss gold refinery linked with the London bullion market. Though SBI will not buy back gold on a par with industry trends, its wide network will make it possible for a larger number of customers to buy gold from a bank.



HEALTH BONUS

The General Insurance Council is working on a proposal that will help customers transfer their no-claim bonus earned on a health policy when they switch insurers. According to current practice, if a policyholder does not make a claim during a year, the insurer offers bonus in the form of an increase in the sum insured the next year. This bonus gets accumulated for each claim-free year. The Council guidelines would apply to all private and the four public-sector general

insurance companies offering flexibility to consumers to switch insurers while still availing of 'no-claim' advantage.

Defining neglect

Are there legal remedies for victims of medical negligence? Read on for answers

Carelessness is not culpable or ground for legal liability except in those cases where the law has imposed the duty of carefulness. The medical profession is one such section of society on which such a duty has been imposed in the strictest sense. It is not sufficient that the medical professional acts in good faith to the best of his or her judgment.

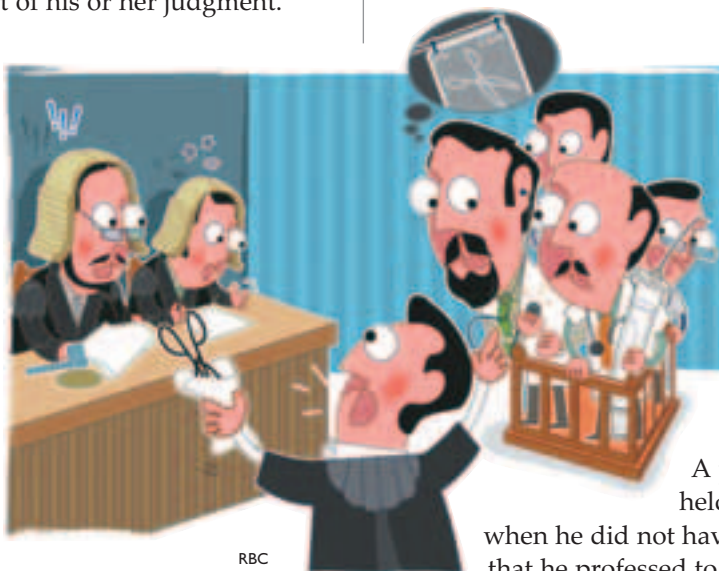
A medical professional is expected to have the requisite degree of skill and knowledge. The question in every case is whether the medical practitioner, in fact, attained the degree of care established by law.

There are three basic components of medical negligence:

- The existence of a duty to take care, which is owed by the doctor to the complainant
- The failure to attain that standard of care, prescribed by the law, thereby committing the breach of duty
- The consequent damage (suffered by the complainant), which is casually connected with such breach and recognised by the law.

Is there a difference between how civil law and criminal law define negligence? Till 2004, it was generally believed that though civil law and criminal law provided for different remedies, what constituted negligence under both these laws was the same. However, recent decisions of the Supreme Court have taken a different view. In the case of *Jacob Mathew vs. State of Punjab* in 2004, the Supreme Court observed that the standard of care, when assessing the practice as adopted, is judged in the

light of the knowledge available at the time (of the incident), and not the date of the trial. The Supreme Court also observed that when the charge of negligence arises out of failure to use some particular equipment, the charge would fail if the equipment were not generally available at the time.



In this decision, it was observed that for inferring negligence on part of a doctor additional considerations apply. Simple lack of care, an error of judgment or an accident is not proof of negligence.

A professional may be held liable for negligence when he did not have the requisite skill that he professed to have possessed and/or he did not exercise, with reasonable

competence in the given case, the skill that he did possess. With regard to criminal liability of medical negligence, the Supreme Court (in a 2004 judgement in the case of *Dr Suresh Gupta vs. Government of Delhi*) curtailed criminal proceedings against medical negligence to incidents of gross negligence. In this case, the patient died while he was being operated upon for nasal deformity, an operation without complexity. The medical experts of the prosecution testified that the cause of death was the failure of the Appellant to introduce a cuffed endotracheal tube of proper size to prevent aspiration of blood from the wound in the respiratory passage. The Supreme Court held that even if it was assumed that the Appellant was negligent, he would not be criminally liable as the alleged act was not grossly negligent. ■

Next month: Jurisdiction of consumer courts

Extracted from Healthcare Case Law in India by Advocate Mihir Desai and Advocate Kamayani Mali Mahabal (for India Centre for Human Rights & Law, and Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes)

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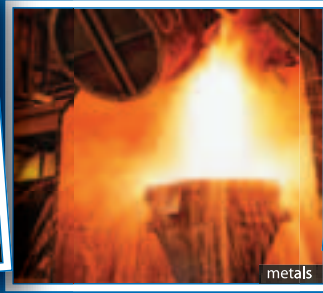
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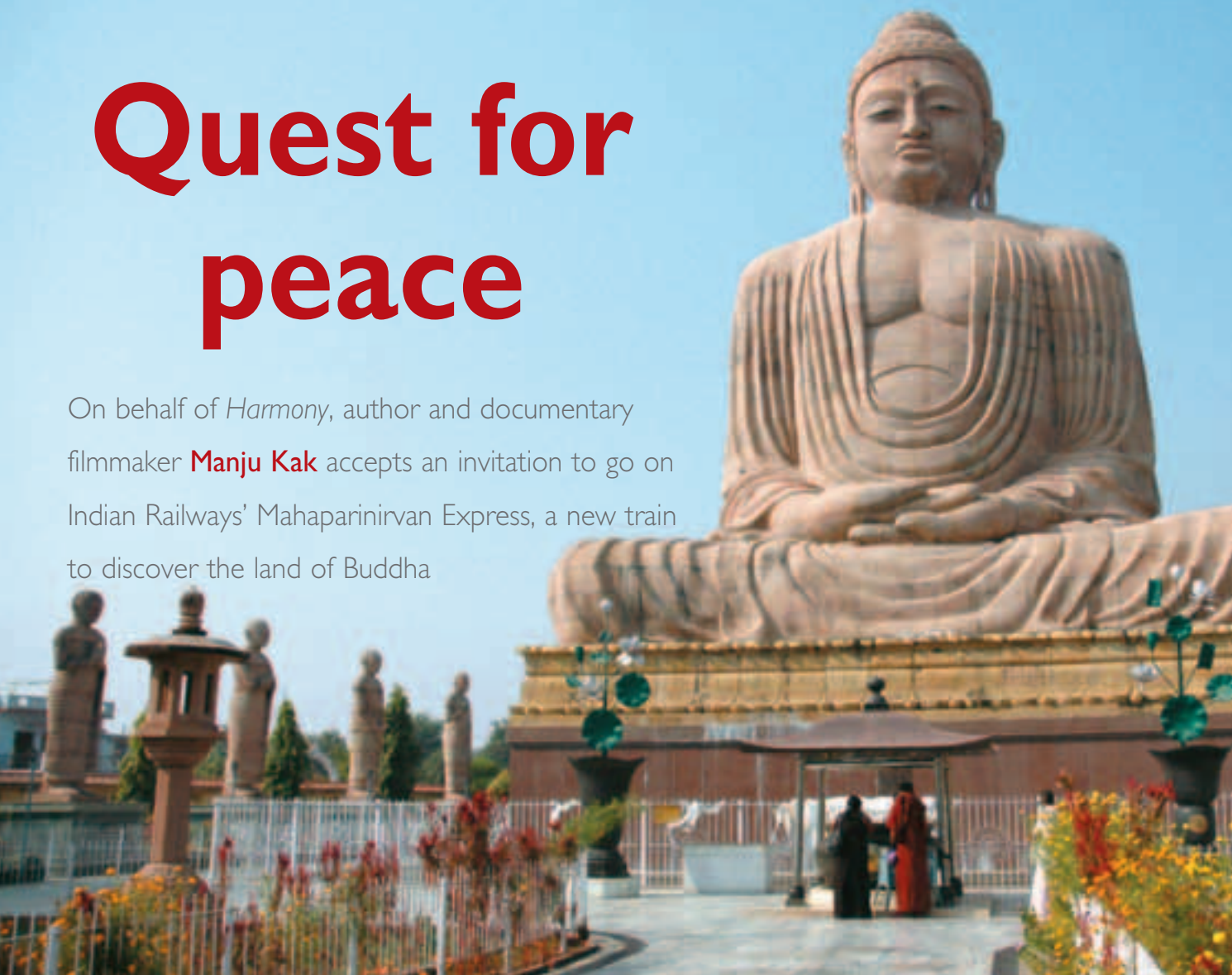
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Quest for peace

On behalf of *Harmony*, author and documentary filmmaker **Manju Kak** accepts an invitation to go on Indian Railways' Mahaparinirvan Express, a new train to discover the land of Buddha



So is it about finding my own path, asks my travel partner Bharti on our first evening together on Mahaparinirvan Special, a week-long train journey along the Buddhist Circuit covering Bodh Gaya, Nalanda, Rajgir, Varanasi, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Lumbini, Saravasti and Agra. We are two of 35 passengers—Japanese, Singaporeans, Australians, Indians, some tour operators, academics, and travel writers. I have been invited by *Harmony* to go on this journey, launched in October 2007 by the Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation with its partner Lotus

Travels. On 17 November, after a traditional marigold garland welcome at Safdarjung railway station in New Delhi we are ensconced in Cabin B of the First Class AC section. We have already checked out the pantry and toilets. The toilets could be better, but the pantry is shining steel. And a Japanese chef will join us, we are told.

As the train pulls out of Delhi at 4 pm, Bharti and I talk about life, love, and finding one's path. In Lucknow, she says, if you weren't married at 19 you were on the shelf and then came the yearning to break free—my town,

same college, and same story. We settle down with recorded chants of *Buddham Sharanam Gachami* as the train speeds up, only to stop at Gaya in Bihar.

We reach Gaya at 5.30 am, our 'wakeup call'. The schedule for the day is packed. Bodh Gaya is just 10 km away. You are struck by the lushness of the land. Here, 2,500 years ago, Licchavi prince Gautama Siddharth tortured his body, did penance, meditated for six years on nearby Dongeshwari hill and became the 'Buddha'. We have breakfast at the hotel in Bodh Gaya, where we return for lunch and dinner.



Disappointed with the ways of the world, he crossed the Nairanjana River where he rested under a banyan tree. Here a local chief's daughter, the childless Sujata, sent the young ascetic some *kheer*, which he ate under the Praj

Path to happiness lay in the middle. The remnants of a stupa marks this spot, though at the entrance, inappropriately, lies a popular 'English liquor shop'. Besides, the Maoists have called a *bandh*, lanes and sewers are choked; there is a literal stink in the land of Buddha.

At Bodh Gaya, five-colour prayer flags flutter on the magnificent 52-m-high Mahabodhi Temple against a cobalt sky. In 1891, a Sri Lankan monk Anagarika Dharmapala founded the Mahabodhi Society of India to reclaim the temple from Hindu priests. Seven spots in the temple's precincts are hallowed because here the Buddha spent a week each—49 days in all—meditating after 'enlightenment'. The first week was at the Bodhi tree, a peepul, our local guide explains. Suddenly a ceremonial procession of the members of a Thailand-based Buddhist Society arrives. It is a presentation of 40 volumes of the *Tripitakas*—the Buddhist *Sutras*—to the Sri Lanka Bodhi Society. The Thai ambassador is in attendance. In 1890, Sri Lanka had gifted the *Tripitakas* to Thailand a gesture that binds the two Buddhist countries. We return to the hotel to the mosque's evening *azaan*.

At Bodh Gaya, prayer flags flutter on the Mahabodhi Temple against a cobalt sky

Bodhi tree. His five *bhikshu* companions sneered, thinking he had forsaken the path. But "do not stretch the *veena* string till it breaks, nor leave it so loose that no sound comes", is the voice Siddharth heard. He knew the

On the third day, en route by a coach to Nalanda (home of Nalanda University) and then to Rajgir, we have a new guide. "I, me, your guide," says Mr Singh, "PhD failed. Mind you, from Nalanda University. The same



Journey to nirvana: (from top) attendants poised to greet passengers; our cabin; the pantry in gleaming steel; (opposite page) the 80-ft Buddha statue at Bodh Gaya

system, except now no free food. I repeat, no free food." Mr Singh introduces us to the magnificent Mahavihara of the 5th century AD, before we actually see it.

Nalanda, the ancient seat of learning, is a scenic 80 km from Bodh Gaya. Gun-toting policemen escort us and drive ahead of our coach, a refurbished Tata vehicle. Guns in the land of Buddha? Someone speaks of a hold-up, a kidnapping. Bihar is the biggest industry for *katta*, country-made revolvers. Ironically, beleaguered Bihar translates into *vihar*, a monastery.



Ruins of the Buddhist vihara at Saravasti where Buddha spent 19 seasons; the writer outside the Mahabodhi Temple

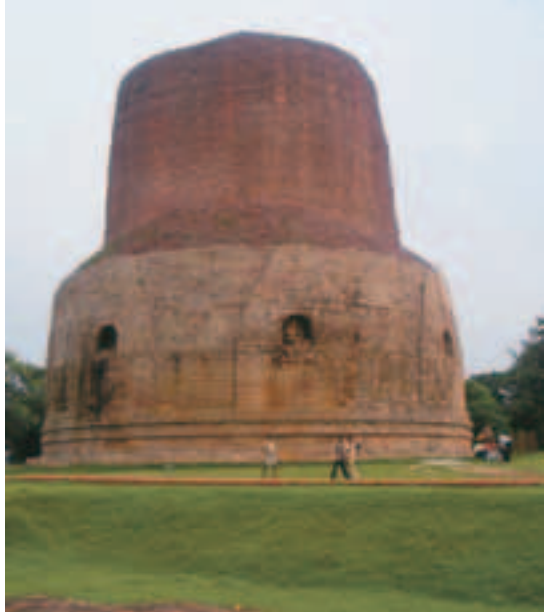
As we race another 11 km towards Rajgir, scenic paddy fields and hillocks fly past. We stop at Venu Van, a bamboo grove where Buddha spent five monsoons. Close by are the sulphur springs, crowded, dirty and uninviting. But a ride in a caparisoned horse-drawn *tonga* is fun. Further at the Griddhakutta Hill in Rajgir, Buddha meditated. Rajgir was the capital of prosperous Magadha state ruled by Bimbisara, a disciple of Buddha. The gradual climb uphill takes half an hour. Below is a vista of green jungle and above the golden dome of the Japanese-built

Shanti Stupa. At the peak, the chants of Malaysian pilgrims fill the air. Buddha came to Nalanda and Rajgir often. Two of his chief disciples, Sariputra and Maudgalyana, lived close by. Spread over 14 hectares with the ruins of 11 monasteries and five temples, Mahavihara was first established in the 5th century in the reign of Emperor Kumargupta and developed by the Gupta Dynasty. During the reign of Devapala, it reached its zenith. A few centuries later, in 1205, Turkish general Bakhtiyar Khilji, who brought Muslim rule in Bengal by conquering its northwestern

part, wiped it off the map. Intolerance is as old as humanity. I jam my toe walking to the stupa of Sariputra. The guard warns me, but it is too late. The toe begins to swell. Sports shoes would have been a better idea than my sandals. We catch our train from Gaya, where it's waiting to take us to Varanasi. At night, a railway doctor is on call and my toe is bandaged. Bharti has a hot-water bottle and another companion is ready with an ice pack.

Day 4, 20 November, morning call at 5.30 am. We take a set of clothes and leave the rest of our luggage behind. The ride to the comforts of Clarks Hotel is a quick trip—Buddha did the 250 km in 8 days. Eighteen years later, Thai disciple Mahaupasika Siti Pol's group, whose descendants we had met at Bodh Gaya, came with 300 followers and took the same path. Buddha, astounded at what he had discovered, remembered the five *bhikshu* who had deserted him. But they were at Deer Park in Sarnath, 10 km from Varanasi. He crossed Ganga by ferry to the *ghat*. There, he preached his first sermon, the *Dharamchakraparivartana*, or Turning of the Wheel of Law, the pivotal Buddhist doctrine. We gorge on a Clarks' buffet breakfast—sausages, *idli*, hot *jalebi*, and *kachori*, before we take the coach to Sarnath.

At Sarnath, our next road stop the same day, Buddha founded the *Sangha* with the same five ascetics as his first disciples. Thereafter, for 45 years he walked the plains, preaching. The magnificent Sarnath Buddha stands proud in the museum, his beatific smile bestowing grace. In the evening, back at Varanasi,



The stupa at Sarnath; Buddhist monks gathered for a sermon at Nalanda

we witness a grand *aarti* on Dashwamedh *ghat*, a celebration of the spirit of the Ganges, with a clash of cymbals, song and incense. We take the boat to cross over to Raj *ghat* where our coach is parked. It takes us back to the train, which by now is our refuge. It welcomes us with clean sheets and towels, and a smiling manager with his crew. For dinner, we sample the Japanese cuisine, chicken teriyaki, and smoked salmon. Yasuki Hashiba of Tokyo's Cox & Kings approves.

Varanasi behind us, the train heads for Gorakhpur. From Gorakhpur, we take the coach to our three-star Lotus Hotel in the dusty town of Kushinagar or

Practically walking distance away is the Mahaparinirvan Temple. The spectacular Buddha lies six metres long, in black stone. His expression changes at every angle. Chunda, a metal smith, offered Buddha his last meal here, and he died of food poisoning. But Buddha consoled him: the one who serves him his last meal would acquire great merit. The *bhiku* Mahakashyap lit Buddha's pyre at the Mukutbandha *Vihara*, where the Rambhar Stupa is. Then, the relics were divided and encased in eight stupas across the country.

Around the temple there are several monasteries built by Buddhists from Sri Lanka, Burma

border. We enter another land through the bazaar of Bhairawha heaped with acrylic blankets and Chinese goods. Vendors surround our coach with offers of lace doilies and velvet mats. The Lumbini grove, the site of Buddha's birth, is 27 km from Sonauli. Here, Buddha was born to Mayadevi under a Sal tree in 565 BC. Three centuries later, Asoka visited Lumbini and erected the Rummendei Pillar. Most of the area, also comprising the Mayadevi Temple and tank, remains unexplored.

It has been a gruelling two days and we have to travel 150 km back to Gorakhpur station. The roads are bad and the air-conditioning fails. The toilets are alfresco. A hot cup of tea at the *dhaba* makes us forget we are in the Gorakhpur badlands. We reach the station at about 10 pm. "On the first day I had thought the cabins could do with some cosmetic makeup, but today I feel I've come home," says dapper Japanese artist Tsuyoshi Ozuma, dust in his ears, his hair, his face. Some, however, complain they wanted more time in Lumbini. As for me, I missed my Twinings Darjeeling. Bharti is mean and says I should have put some bags in my hot water bottle.

Owing to the small Buddhist population in India, most monasteries are run down

Kasia, which is 58 km away from Gorakhpur. The coach driver is the same—he has driven all night from Varanasi to receive us. The hotel looks like an old colonial bungalow. It's the peak season and bookings are heavy. Some of us have to wait for our rooms and there is general grumbling all around, but I have a tummy bug and my *khichri* is just right.

and Thailand. With the Buddhist population in India being miniscule (2 million), there isn't enough activism to maintain them. Day 5 is coming to an end and all of us are exhausted. At night, we get a much-needed break for washing hair, gossiping and catching up.

The next day (22 November), we drive to Sonauli on the Nepal



At the entrance to a temple
at Lumbini

FACT FILE

WHEN TO GO

Mahaparinirvan Express has a bi-monthly run until March 2008

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Day 3: Bodh Gaya-Rajgir-

Nalanda-Gaya-Varanasi

Day 4: Varanasi-Sarnath

Day 5: Gorakhpur-Kushinagar

Day 6: Kushinagar-Lumbini-

Gorakhpur

Day 7: Gonda-Saravasti-

Gonda-Agra

Day 8: Agra-Delhi

TRAVEL TIPS

- ❑ Besides a medicine kit, pack walking shoes; balm; sun protection cream; padded socks for barefoot walking in temples; a muffler, shawl and sweater; and a parasol if you are sensitive to sunlight.
- ❑ As the train is your home, you can pack all the things you may need, like a hot water bottle.
- ❑ Pack a smaller bag for daily changes; those with bigger bags can avail of the dedicated porter service

Buddha and began to look for a place to build a *vihara*—it came to be known as Jetavahana *vihara* after a donation from Prince Jeta, son of Saravasti's king Presanajit. Here too is the Ananda Bodhi tree. It was brought as a cutting from the Bodhi tree at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka, grown from a sapling of the original tree at Bodh Gaya. At the tree, our Sri Lankan friends have a priest perform a *pūja*.

At a short distance is the site of the only miracle Buddha performed. He is said to have levitated on a lotus with a thousand petals causing fire and water to leap out of his body. A Thai-built golden Buddha smiles upon us as we take photos.

It has been a hectic few days. We are headed for our final destination, Agra, as our foreign companions wanted to see the Taj. Meanwhile I mull over the journey I undertook. It's amazing that Buddha walked just these few hundred kilometres in his life and yet what he imbibed influenced the minds of men down centuries. Even Al Gore in his documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, says that coexistence with nature is a philosophy derived from Buddha's teachings, which are now relevant to a nuclear world.

It is 24 November. We return to the train, Delhi-bound, replenished and cleansed, to take on the lives we've left behind. As the train slips out of Agra station, we look at Ozuma's sketches of our motley bunch. He has given me a flattering look, another reason to remember the journey. ■

At 5.30 on Day 7 we reach Gonda station and groan to an otherwise soothing morning call of *Sangham Sharanam Gachami*, hoping to sleep more. From there, a two-hour bus ride takes us to Saravasti where Buddha spent 19 rainy seasons. He took his begging bowl and preached, but when it rained he stayed. Nearby is Sankisa, where he is said to have performed some miracles. Buddhism, however, scorns at miracles.

The day gets warmer, and at the Lotus Hotel in Saravasti I ask to tour the vegetable gardens. Can I have some fresh radish with some rock salt sprinkled? The obliging staff fetches it, with some homegrown yellow limes.

Saravasti, or Sahet Mahet, is where a rich merchant Sudatta, later known as Anathapindika (incomparable alms giver) lived. On a visit to Rajgir he heard Buddha's sermon. He invited

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Modern manners

Amita Malik urges television anchors to show respect

By and large we are a polite nation with an endearing habit of making everyone our relatives or members of the family. For instance,

in the North, a woman is called *behnji* (sister) or *mataji*, depending on what the person thinks is the right term for the right age. In the South, women are addressed in shops and bazaars as *ma* or *amma*. In Bengal, it seems the term *mashima* (maternal aunt) is almost as common as *ma*. And it is used by domestic helpers to address the lady of the house. I was once in the Metro in Kolkata when an elderly gentleman absentmindedly threw his used ticket on the floor. Now, Kolkattans are very proud of how clean they keep their Metro and immediately the whole compartment, consisting mainly of young men, addressed him as *dadu* (grandpa). Now of course, everyone from the domestic help to the shopkeeper has become very Westernised and commonly calls one Aunty, or they are extra polite with an Auntiji, just as they call their children Lovely or Sunny or Bobby.

However, the point I am trying to make is that there is an element of respect, and even affection, in the term used. But all that is changing, at least on television, where a new tribe of brash anchors has evolved a new form of address. New in the sense that it is very un-Indian and it is not only my generation that squirms when a particular sports anchor on Headlines Today says:

"So Kapil, what do you think of Dhoni?" The anchor has the option of using terms that give Kapil Dev the dignity and status he deserves. He can call him Mr Kapil Dev, or, as the BBC does, Kapil Dev (the full name does away with title and makes it easier) or, being a North Indian, the anchor can call him 'Kapilji'. But nothing of the sort is followed. Listen to distinguished commentators like Ravi Shastri or Vijay Amritraj; they never trip up on forms of

address. They address their equals by their first names, they call youngsters the same way and when it is someone distinguished, they address them as 'Mr' or by their full names. As for our TV anchors, they should certainly throw in a 'Sir' or two when interviewing the likes of Kapil Dev. But they hardly use the term for anybody. This is in marked contrast to the viewers who are invited by the same arrogant anchors to ask questions. They invariably use the term 'Sir' or 'Kapilji' when asking the question.

So what makes the anchor behave in such an un-Indian manner? It is because television appearances make stars of the most ordinary people. I remember after my first TV interview, I went to the counter at the bank to cash my cheque. To my amazement and horror, they made place for me in the queue, and the bank clerk handing me my cash did it much more quickly than usual. Now, if one TV appearance can do that, imagine what a daily appearance can do to the ego of an anchor.

Except that the real professionals do not lose their balance. You never catch Prannoy Roy or Karan Thapar get familiar on the screen with the people they are addressing. Though I must say I flinch when I hear Barkha Dutt address Soli Sorabjee as 'Soli'. Even if she knows him very well, on screen, first names are best avoided so that the viewer also looks on them with respect.

There is a misguided notion that it is modern to call even distinguished people by their first name

There is a misguided notion that it is modern to call everyone by their first name. I would like to point out that even in New York when I have asked a young man or woman for directions I have always been addressed as Madam or Ma'am. And in London, when I asked a gentleman something, he doffed his hat and put it back only after he had answered my questions. So it seems that when it comes to misplaced over-familiarity, "we are like that only", to use the popular saying. ■

Amita Malik, often referred to as 'the first lady of Indian media', is a columnist and film critic

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Passion for life

Pursuing a hobby can make life richer, says **Gautam Rajadhyaksha**

I was in my 20s and working for Lintas—a reputed advertising agency—when the global creative head of the agency, Plante, visited

India. It fell upon me to take him on a tour of South India. The trip was a delight for not only did this gentleman enjoy the sights but he truly relished Indian delicacies. Plante was close to retirement age but led a very active life. He had an independent reputation as a painter. Among the things he told me, there was one that truly had a lasting impact. He spoke of his colleagues (some his age, others older) who had so immersed their entire existence in their profession that, over a long period, they had lost interest in any recreation or passionate hobby. Many had retired having scaled the top slot in their jobs. However, after retirement, they faced a startling question: “Now what?” These corporate czars had worn themselves out so much that they could not drum up an interest in anything but work. Many went into deep depression and developed a host of diseases—psychosomatic and real. A couple of them passed away in their 60s. Actually they faded away.

Plante laid stress on the importance of a hobby that could run parallel with my young career-years. Though I was barely 25 then, his remarks had an indelible effect on me. If we enjoy a quick pace of work and crowd each day with several activities, even the idea of a vacuous future with nothing to do is a daunting thought. I have been an enthusiastic amateur photographer with a passion for both western and Indian classical music. History fascinates me and world cinema intrigues me—enough hobbies to keep me going well into old age. Add to that a penchant for writing. The past 20 years have been an idyllic journey photographing ad campaigns, faces of personalities and illustrating

many of the articles I wrote, first as a freelancer and later as editor of a Marathi fortnightly.

For some time now, my weekend hobby of taking portraits spills over my weekdays, providing me with an escape from the demanding tensions of corporate life. However, I have decided to explore as many artistic interests that I can and make my life increasingly more varied and exciting. About 15 years ago, in the thick of photographic assignments, as a compulsory diversion and discipline, I took it upon myself to learn Hindustani vocal music. As I discovered the beauty of *raga*, I also gained a great insight into the diverse sphere of western opera. At no stage did I ever want to be a performer but I wanted to understand the grammar of music to deepen my enjoyment. As if a new world had opened itself up to me, several *raga* and compositions became more fascinating until quite, recently I decided to experiment with my accumulated knowledge and come up with something that will make both Indian and western classical music easy to understand and more approachable. Just the

thought of immersing myself in this ambitious project is joy enough. Last week, a Marathi film I wrote was released. I am thrilled at yet another avenue that has opened.

To many, youth is wasted on the young, but to me, a youthful mind is a blessing for the aged

I don’t foresee leaving any of the things I have done, but I certainly like to add to the ones I have. At 57, I am glad that I am blessed with so many options. By delving into various interests and by keep-

ing my mind occupied, I am only trying to make the passage down the coming years engaging and happy. Ageing merely deepens my intellect and personal philosophy to be able to experience and enjoy the many wonders of the world, to savour, to read, to listen, to watch and write about life and people. To many, youth is wasted on the young, but I see it differently: a youthful mind is a blessing for the aged. ■

Gautam Rajadhyaksha, 57, is a Mumbai-based photographer and writer

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Women of substance

Memory's Daughter and *Tohellwithyou Mitro* By Krishna Sobti
Katha Asia Library; Rs 200 each; 125 pages and 117 pages

Krishna Sobti's women are simple, yet defiant and unremorseful—qualities rare for the 1950s and the '60s. Her candid portrayal of shackled women earned Sobti the reputation of being one of the most bold and brazen writers of her time. In *Memory's Daughter*, the English translation of her first novel *Daar Se Bichhudi*, a young Pasho longs to slip away to the magnificent Khoja *haveli*, where her mother lives with the man from a tribe that turned to Islam. And when she finally forsakes the pride of her family and escapes to the Khojas, it's the beginning of a long journey to Afghanistan. She has a new life and a new name, Malan. And then neither childhood remains nor innocence. From behind the veil, she witnesses the wars within a family and on the foreign land.

Sobti's unabashed *Mitro Marjani* threw the literary world off balance. It's the story of Mitro, the most audacious of the three daughters-in-law in a household of modest means. Vocal about her sexual



needs, she is embittered with life and raises hell when provoked even slightly by her sisters-in-law. Then she's sent back to her mother, an even more intrepid Bibo whose "hearth has neither heir nor owner now; not even the name of a dead man to call its own". It's when Mitro realises her mother's plan to use her to entice old admirers that her world comes falling down, only to rise up again as belief in family and life with her husband. A commentary on politics and the inadequacies of families, *Tohellwithyou Mitro* remains relevant today.

—Meeta Bhatti

Tale of two continents

What You Call Winter By Nalini Jones
HarperCollins; Rs 295; 233 pages

Once in a while comes a book in which we find ourselves—leading a life that we have lived before or facing a dilemma similar to the one that looms in our future. Nalini Jones' book is one such experience. Through nine stories that revolve around characters hailing from a cosy settlement in Bandra, Mumbai, Jones tiptoes through childhood and adulthood.

In *The Garden*, Marion Almeida, on the verge of her 10th birthday, succumbs to childish impetuosity even as she grapples with adolescent tension. In *The Crow and the Monkey*, a little boy is witness to adult defiance when his godmother leaves home. In *The Bold and the Beautiful*, two sisters struggle with their choices while tending to their ailing mother. The stories are interconnected and span three decades

during which characters emerge with new layers. In *Half the Story*, Marion returns as the mother of a teenage daughter who has her own grim secrets. Though all the stories are haunting, *What You Call Winter*—in which 77 year-old Roddy D'Souza reconciles with his own loneliness when he confronts his father's ghost—touches a deep chord.

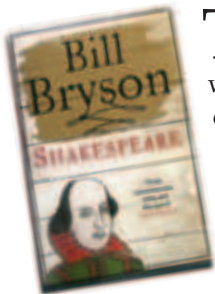
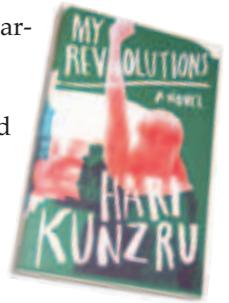
Over a telephone call, when Roddy discusses the weather in Mumbai with his son based in the US, his son says, "What you call winter is nothing to us! It's like our summer." And Roddy wonders, "When had their seasons become his?"

—Rajashree Balaram



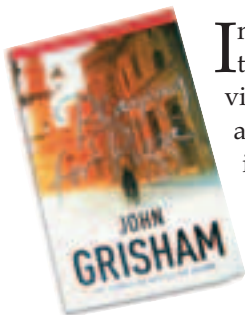
BRIEFLY

At first glance **MY REVOLUTIONS** (Hamish Hamilton; Rs 385; 278 pages) seems like a departure for **Hari Kunzru**—both *The Impressionist* and *Transmission* had race and identity as central themes. This one doesn't feature a single Asian character and is ostensibly about politics. It's the late 1990s and Mike Frame is leading a quiet life with his partner Miranda and stepdaughter Sam. They don't know Frame is actually Chris Carver, a violent revolutionary in the 1970s. But now Miles, a figure from his past, appears and wants to spill the beans. However, as Kunzru shifts effortlessly between past and present, you realise that politics is just a vehicle for his plot—the underlying theme remains the crisis of identity that suffused his earlier work and now consumes Mike. Intelligent and thought-provoking.



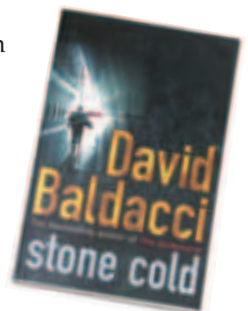
The Library of Congress in Washington contains about 7,000 works on Shakespeare while the British Library has 16,092 tomes on the Bard. Enough reason to agree with **Bill Bryson** when he proclaims, "Shakespeare, it seems, is not so much a historical figure as an academic obsession," in **SHAKESPEARE - THE WORLD AS A STAGE** (HarperCollins; Rs 325; 200 pages). Bryson's Shakespeare is an attempt to demystify the man with painstaking research. We learn much about Shakespeare—that he never signed his name the same way twice; that a significant bulk of his work was 'inspired' by many other great works; and that he had a tendency to create new words by attaching the 'un-' prefix to existing words—'unmask', 'unhand', 'unlock'. We also learn about the era that made him the man he was.

Reclaiming a character who has been immortalised in history books and verse is no easy task. But that's what **Jaishree Misra** attempts to do with Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi in **RANI** (Penguin; Rs 350; 411 pages). Misra writes about the woman behind the legend, the young Manikarnika who becomes queen and struggles to consummate her marriage with a sexually disinterested husband; her deepening feelings for Robert Ellis of the East India Company; and her involvement in the 1857 Mutiny. The problem: Misra is too much in awe of her subject to make her real. So her romance with Ellis reads like a Mills & Boon novel while her analysis of the politics of the time doesn't go too deep. A wasted opportunity.



In **PLAYING FOR PIZZA** (Arrow; Rs 250; 262 pages), **John Grisham** takes a vacation from his trademark legal thriller. After football player Rick Dockery snatches defeat from the jaws of victory for the Cleveland Browns, he becomes a pariah in the National Football League. His agent finds him a stop-gap assignment playing American football in Parma, Italy, where he is hailed as a hero. Between learning how to drive a stick-shift Fiat, learning the finer points of Italian cuisine and developing a taste for opera, Dockery starts having fun on the field again. Think *Under the Tuscan Sun* (where a jaded writer rediscovers life on a vacation to Italy) written by a jock and you'll get a sense of what to expect. Fun, breezy, and completely forgettable once you're done.

David Baldacci's 'Camel Club'—a group of former CIA operatives and soldiers that search for conspiracy in government, and find it—is back in **STONE COLD** (Rs 515; Macmillan; 388 pages). In this one, Oliver Stone, the leader of club is trying to protect 'honorary member' and con artist Annabelle Conroy from mobster Jerry Bagger whom she has swindled out of a fortune. Meanwhile, super assassin Harry Finn is killing Stone's friends off one at a time; it's only time before Finn comes for him. Involved in the violent mix is a senator making a run for the presidency. It's convoluted at first but gradually Baldacci draws coherence out of it all and ends up passing an acerbic judgement on corruption in Washington.



All titles are available at Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata, Bangalore, Mumbai, Goa and New Delhi, and on www.oxfordbookstore.com

H PEOPLE

MONEY BACK

Mangesh Gopal Dalvi, 93, is a messiah for desperate investors who lost money when Lloyds Finance, a non-banking finance company, went bust a few years ago. In 2003, Dalvi retired as a secretary from the Maharashtra State Farming Corporation and invested Rs 52,000 in Lloyds. But the company soon faced a major financial crisis. In desperation, Dalvi wrote a letter to the editor of a vernacular newspaper requesting help. The paper published his phone number and, within a week, Dalvi received over 70 calls. Most were from other investors, while some conveyed support. Soon, Dalvi's one-room house along SV Road near Malad in suburban Mumbai had become the unofficial headquarters for a forum of 626 investors who had lost their money. Recently, Llyod's took cognisance of his letters and paid back 300 investors who are part of the Association of Depositors (of Lloyds Finance Ltd); the others are in the process of getting their money. "I receive about 20 calls and 15 visitors a day," says Dalvi. "It can be exhausting but I recharge myself with meditation." His daughter Neela Navar, 55, and granddaughter Vidya, 26, assist him in receiving calls, typing and posting letters. "It's public service," says Dalvi about his battle.



BIG BIBI



SUKHDEV

A bangle hawker from Bihar, **Hakiman Bibi**, 58, will star in a 30-minute film commissioned by the National Literacy Mission. Actor-director M K Raina, who made the TV serial *Tamas*, will shoot the film. Bibi started reading and writing lessons at BBM College in Baliapur (300 km from Patna) under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 1994.

She was then 45. She completed her course in less than three years and taught women and children in Baliapur for 10 years for free; she even fought with her husband to let their two daughters study beyond Class X. Her motivation: "I feared being cheated by moneylenders, bangle dealers and grocers. Also, educated women get more respect." According to Mumtaz Alam, 44, head of Dhanbad District Literacy Mission, "She inspired more than 500 children and women in her village to become literate and is an icon to more than 100,000 women and children in her block."

TELL TALE



ANJUMUKTI

Son of Mahatma Gandhi's personal secretary Mahadev Desai, **Narayan Bhai Desai**, 82, brings Gandhi to life with his storytelling sessions. Desai, who has spent the past 20 years in Sabarmati and Sevagram, spreads his ideas in cities and small

towns of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. Recently, he visited Delhi to participate in a five-day storytelling festival organised at Gandhi Smriti. His performance, blending songs and stories, lasted three hours. The idea of popularising Gandhi-an ideology through stories came to Desai in 2003 when the well-known Gujarati writer released a four-volume biography of the Mahatma in Gujarati. The set ran to 2,300 pages and was priced at Rs 1,500. "I wondered whether anybody would have the time or money to read it. So I began looking for an alternative medium to take Gandhi's ideas to common people," says Desai, adding that he is happy to try and bring about a change in today's volatile world.

MILESTONES



Honoured. Bidyut K Goswami, 56, with the establishment of a \$ 2 million endowment in his name at Columbia University, where he has been coaching tennis aspirants for 26 years. Born in Guwahati, Goswami began

playing tennis at the Nehru Stadium Tennis Complex in the city, before moving on to South Club, Kolkata. He represented India in the Tehran Asiad in 1974 and was the national singles champion in 1979 before moving to New York in 1980. The endowment is part of the \$ 100 million *Columbia Campaign for Athletics: Achieving Excellence*. Philip Milstein, vice-chairman of the University Trustees, says, "I'm thrilled to be able to support the dedication and excellence that Bid has personified during his tenure at Columbia."



Felicitated. Bharatanatyam dancer **Yamini Krishnamurti**, by Renaissance Artists and Writers Association for her contribution to classical dance in the past four decades. One of the most dominant personalities in Indian classical dance in the post-independence era, Krishnamurti

comes from a family of scholars. Trained at Kalakshetra in Chennai, she debuted in 1957 creating an instant impact with her charisma and style. The inimitable dancer (who says she is in her 60s) is also credited for reviving Kuchipudi and giving a new dimension to Odissi. Krishnamurti was awarded the Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1977.



HARMONY

PUNJ LLOYD

Awarded. The Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2007 award to **Ramalinga Raju**, 53, chairman and founder of Satyam Computer Services. A jury chaired by K V Kamath, managing director and CEO of ICICI Bank, selected Raju. There were two new award categories this year. **Ela Ramesh Bhatt**, 73, founder of Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), won the prize for social entrepreneurship, while recognition for infrastructure and construction went to **Atul Punj**, 50, chairman and managing director of Punj Lloyd.

BIRTHDAYS



Bollywood's original 'He Man' and on the cover of *Harmony* (November 2007) **Dharmendra** celebrated his 72nd birthday on 8 December. Seen most recently in the song *Deewangi Deewangi* in Farah Khan's *Om Shanti Om*, the actor enjoyed three successful releases this year—*Metro*, *Apne* and *Johnny Gaddar*. He celebrated with a private party.



The world's "sixth most powerful woman" (according to *Forbes*) Congress president **Sonia Gandhi** turned 62 on 9 December. Party workers gathered early in the morning at 10 Janpath. The entire road was dotted with life-size cut-outs tagged with birthday wishes. Gandhi came out at noon and waved at her cheering followers.



Author **Alexander Solzhenitsyn** released a new edition of *The Gulag Archipelago*, which exposed the horrors of Stalinist labour camps; on his 89th birthday on 11 December. The book won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1970. Solzhenitsyn says the new edition is supplemented by new archival data about the lives of characters in the Soviet era.

IN PASSING



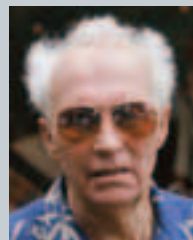
A former Republican member of the US House of Representatives, **Henry Hyde** helped enable civil

nuclear cooperation between India and the US. As the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Hyde led the panel's efforts to write the Henry Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act, allowing the Bush administration to carry out an agreement to supply India nuclear fuel and technology. Hyde passed away on 2 December. He was 83.



Vladimir Kruchkov, one of the last chiefs of the KGB, former Soviet Union's feared intelligence agency,

spearheaded the failed coup against then President Mikhail Gorbachev. Kruchkov led the KGB from 1988 until August 1991, just months before the collapse of the Soviet Union. He had recently published his memoirs and given interviews where he accused the West of a conspiracy against the Soviet Union and Russia. He died in Moscow on 25 November. He was 84.



Evel Knievel, the iconic American motorcycle stunt rider, appealed to America's love of excess in the

1970s. Among the several world records he held, one was for the most bones broken by one person (433), and he is said to have spent an equivalent of three years in hospital. A film, *Evel Knievel*, was made on his life in 1971; it starred George Hamilton. A perennial favourite on late-night talk shows in the US, the daredevil passed away on 2 December at the age of 69.



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ONE
-on-
ONE
Personal Classifieds



I am 79 years old and have retired as materials manager from Ramon & Denim Ltd. I would like to advise companies on inventory-related issues. Interested parties can contact me.

Dahyalal Sakalchand Shah

4B, Kamal Kunj

P No. 143, V B Lane

Ghatkopar East, Mumbai-400077

Tel: 022 25160621

I am a financial advisor dealing in life insurance, mutual funds, share IPOs, RBI Bonds, capital gain bonds and company fixed deposits. Anyone interested in investing in these financial instruments can contact me.

Mohini Batra

27-L, Model Town, Ambala City,

Haryana-134003

Tel: 0171-2520171, 2520706

Mobile: (0) 9416295307

I am 72 years old. I have over 200 CDs that offer comprehensive information on different aspects of computer technology. I would like to share my collection with interested *Harmony* readers.

Vinod Mehta

2, Ashish, North South Road No 5

Plot No 6, Suvarna Nagar Society

Vile Parle (West)

Mumbai-400056

Tel: 022 26252110/11/12

I am 77 years old. I have travelled extensively to Kedarnath, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Mussoorie, Shimla and Nainital and would like to guide people who are interested in exploring any of these places (including Delhi).

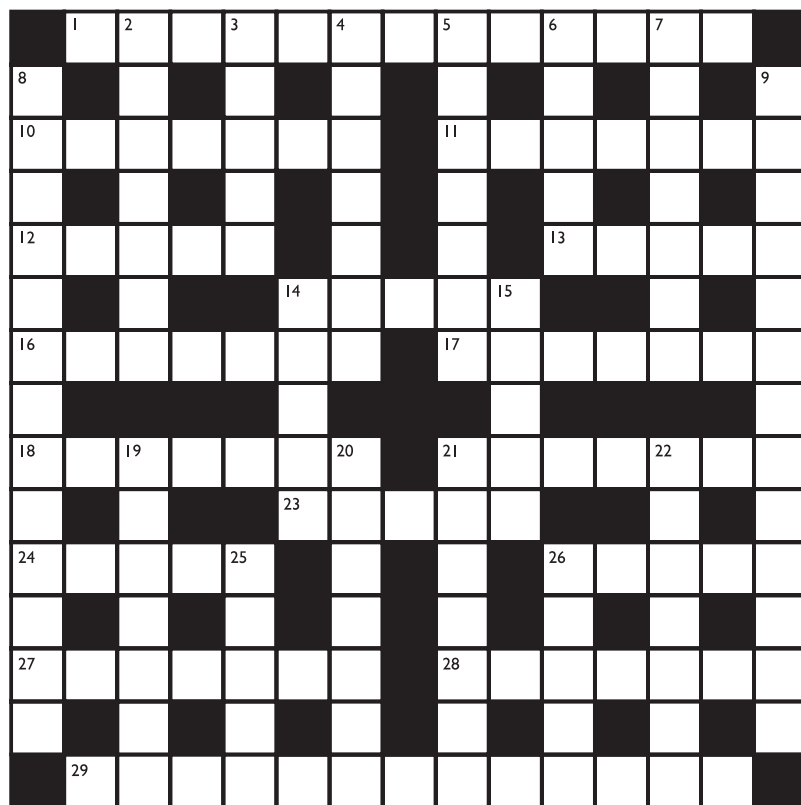
Y P Duggal

F-106, Lajpat Nagar-1

New Delhi-110024

Tel: 011 29812326

HEADSTART



EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 39

By Raju Bharatan

ACROSS

- 1 How versatily well-endowed
B Saroja Devi looked as one who
could really act on the Southern
Screen (1 5 2 5)
- 10 Up her so, you mythical
musician! (7)
- 11 Opposite Meena Kumari in this
role, Raj Kapoor alone would
agree to perform, from among
our topmost leading men of the
time (7)
- 12 Name *Arth* love (5)
- 13 Apt prefix to Musharraaf
today (5)
- 14 Anil Biswas almost forgot how
to tune a song, once he did the

Raju Bharatan is the originator of the 'Sunday Cryptic' crossword in *The Times of India*, where he set the first 1,500 puzzles

background score for this
songless 1954 path-breaking film
of K A Abbas! (5)

- 16 Don't let a single ball thrown
into the air touch the ground!
(5 2)
- 17 So as to begin work? Begin work
on the ball Anil Kumble
wouldn't, until the Final Test vs
Pakistan reached this stage (7)
- 18 One presumptuous enough to
think he's as good at taking off
as any other high-jumper? (7)
- 21 The new and not so new *sur* in
Hindustani Cinema (7)
- 23 What the heroine as an' Arabian'
dancer was supposed to look in
a J B H Wadia show! (1 4)

- 24 Part of Raj Kapoor? (5)
- 26 Summing up the 'Here this moment,
gone the next!' saga of the Bengaluru
Test (2 3)
- 27 A cold-blooded murder tale? (7)
- 28 A blaze all right? "Nothing of the
kind!" don't you interpret it as (7)
- 29 India's spinner without peer (7 6)

DOWN

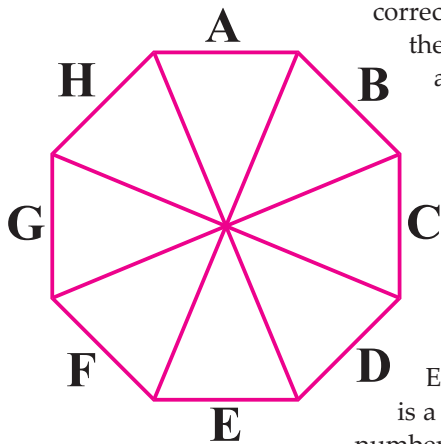
- 2 Sweeping all before one? (7)
- 3 Gulzar film in which Vani-Hema
Malini's *Mere toh Girdhar Gopal* came
set in Raag Khamaj by Pt Ravi
Shankar (5)
- 4 Pet remedy for a Ravi Shankar not
inclined to pick up the sitar? (7)
- 5 Pulling this is no joke even for a V V
S Laxman getting after Brett Lee (4 3)
- 6 Put on guard Capone's right-hand
man? (5)
- 7 Farewell the nation bid to Meena
Kumari as *Pakeezah* (7)
- 8 Portia in the case of Shylock: "The
quality of mercy is not strain'd" (6 7)
- 9 *Blonde With The Best* (7 6)
- 14 Raj follower (5)
- 15 One whom Mohammad Yousuf
(Yohanna) upholds as his mentor (5)
- 19 *Hoon abhee main jawaan ae dil* (7)
- 20 Ore going into them isn't
self-evident (7)
- 21 How striking: the capital of Poland
on the capital of Tanzania in the
capital of Ghana (7)
- 22 Core-war Prime Minister no
longer (7)
- 25 All-rounder skipper of Parsis in the
Bombay Pentangular (5)
- 26 Vintage kite-flying agency! (5)

For answers, see Page 81

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS: A whole variety of clues goes into framing a cryptic puzzle. For instance, the anagram. The clue here could be: *Unresting opponent of authority* (*Unresting* being the 9 letters of *insurgent* rearranged). Another variety of clue is the palindrome—*DEIFIED*, when viewed backward or when viewed up in a Down clue, reads *DEIFIED* all the way. Next, there could be the clue (8-letter answer) reading: *Complete view of daughter sandwiched between parents*—*PANORAMA* (*PA/NORA/MA*). The 8-letter solution to the clue, *The framework of our constitution*, is *SKELETON*. At times, what looks straight could prove tricky. For example, the clue, *How we stand*—has *UNITED* for its 6-letter answer. The clue, *How we fall*, has *DIVIDED* for its 7-letter answer.

BRAIN GYM

OCTA-RAGEOUS



Can you enter eight correct numbers in the octagon according to the clues given below?

Note: No two numbers are the same. Each number is a whole number and no number is less than 1 or greater than 30.

Clues:

1. B minus D is either 5 or 6.
2. F is half of C.
3. C is a quarter of D
4. G is a third of B.
5. H is a third of C.
6. B is an even number.
7. E is a sixth of D.
8. A is equal to 100 minus the sum of the other seven numbers.

BON APPETIT

The following anagrams contain items of food and drink. Can you identify them?

- RAW INERT MEAL (7,5)
- AWFUL RECOIL (11)
- IN REAL EGG (6,3)
- A MOTTO (6)
- RICH EAT OK (9)
- CHANGE MAP (9)
- A SUGAR SAP (9)
- RE A JUG ON ICE (6,5)
- COOL CHEAT (9)
- REGAL (5)
- PUB TUNE TREAT (6,6)
- CAR DUST (7)
- ORDER PIG (8)

SO SYMBOL!

Each symbol has a different value and is a whole number. No shape has a value less than 1. Can you work out the values of each symbol?

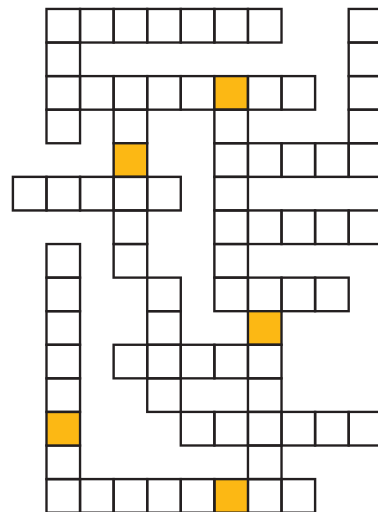
$$\frac{\triangle}{3} + \blacksquare = 22$$

$$\blacksquare - \star = \frac{\triangle}{5}$$

$$\frac{\blacksquare}{3} + \frac{\star}{2} = \hexagon$$

MUSIC BOX

Enter the given words correctly in the grid below so that the letters in the shaded boxes spell out the mystery word.



4 letter words: HARP, OBOE, TUBA

5 letter words: BANJO, CELLO, DRUMS, FLUTE, ORGAN

6 letter words: GUITAR, VIOLIN

7 letter words: BASSOON, PICCOLO, TRUMPET

8 letter words: BAGPIPES, CLARINET, TROMBONE

HEADSTART

LAUGH LINES

American poet **Billy Collins**, 66, served two terms as the Poet Laureate (appointed by the government and often expected to compose poems for government events) of the United States from 2001 to 2003. Collins's style is often compared to that of Robert Frost. He writes simply and honestly, with a disregard for meter. Here is a gem on ageing by Collins.

FORGETFULNESS

The name of the author is the first to go followed obediently by the title, the plot, the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel which suddenly becomes one you have never read, never even heard of.

As if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain, to a little fishing village where there are no phones.

Long ago you kissed the names of the nine Muses goodbye and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag, and even now as you memorize the order of the planets, something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps, the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay.

Whatever it is you are struggling to remember, it is not poised on the tip of your tongue, not even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen.

It has floated away down a dark mythological river whose name begins with an L as far as you can recall, well on your own way to oblivion where you will join those who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a bicycle.

No wonder you rise in the middle of the night to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war.

No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drifted out of a love poem that you used to know by heart.

—Billy Collins

SUDOKU FOR YOU

1		2				4		
	6			1	9	8		
	8			6	4			1
9		1	4		6			
	4			5			6	
			9		8	7		4
3			1	4			5	
		5	8	7			4	
		4				1		7

Choose a number from 1 to 9, and place it in the grid. Every digit from 1 to 9 must appear once, and only once, in each of the columns, rows and in each of the sets of nine boxes.

KOFFEE WITH KAKURO

			45	12		12	22	27	5	45	
	13				23						
	27			16							
45											26
5				28					8		
9						10			6		
10				20		19	23			9	
4				9					5		
15				16			20	6			
				6					14		
	45										
	19							6			

The object of a Kakuro is to insert digits from 1 to 9 into the white cells to total the clue associated with it. However, no digit can be duplicated in an entry. For example, to total 6, you could have 1 and 5, 2 and 4 but not 3 and 3. You may, however, use a number again in the same row or column.

SOLUTIONS TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 39

ACROSS:

1 a woman of parts; 10 Orpheus (*Up her so*, 7 letters of *Orpheus* rearranged); 11 *Sharada*; 12 Thora: *Arth/o*(love), the 5 letters of *Thora* rearranged is *Arth/o*; 13 Mufti; 14 *Munna*; 16 Catch 'em; 17 endplay (bridge jargon: you *end/play* so as to begin work); 18 upstart; 21 Pancham; 23 a *hoor*; 24 tramp; 26 no win (*now/in*); 27 chiller; 28 inferno (*infer/no*); 29 Mahatma Gandhi (*charkha* spinner!)

DOWN:

2 wipeout; 3 *Meera*; 4 nostrum (*no/strum*); 5 fast one; 6 alarm (*All/arm*); 7 tearful; 8 poetic justice; 9 Marilyn Monroe; 14 (Raj) Mehra; 15 (Saeed) Anwar; 19 Shakila (O P Nayyar's *Geeta Roy-sung Hoon abhee main jawaan ae dil* is pictured on her in *Guru Dutt's Aar Paar*); 20 theorem (*the/ore/m: ore* going into *them*); 21 PONTING (*P/on/T/ in/G: P, T, G* as capitals of Poland, Tanzania, Ghana); 22 Howarth: *Ho/war/th* (*war* as core); 25 (P F) Palia; 26 NAFEN

SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

Octa-rageous

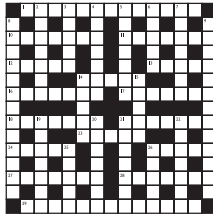
All the numbers are whole numbers. B is an even number (clue 6). F is half of C (clue 2), so C is an even number. C is a quarter of D (3), so D is an even number (3 and above), so B minus D is 6 (1). No number is greater than 30 (intro). D is divisible by both 4 and 6 (3 and 7), so is either 12 or 24. C is a quarter of D and even (above), C is 6, F is 3, D is 24 and B is 30. G is 10 (4). H is 2 (5). E is 4 (7). A is 21 (8).

Bon appetit

MINERAL WATER
CAULIFLOWER
GINGER ALE
TOMATO
ARTICHOKE
CHAMPAGNE
ASPARAGUS
ORANGE JUICE

CHOCOLATE
LAGER
PEANUT BUTTER
CUSTARD
PORRIDGE

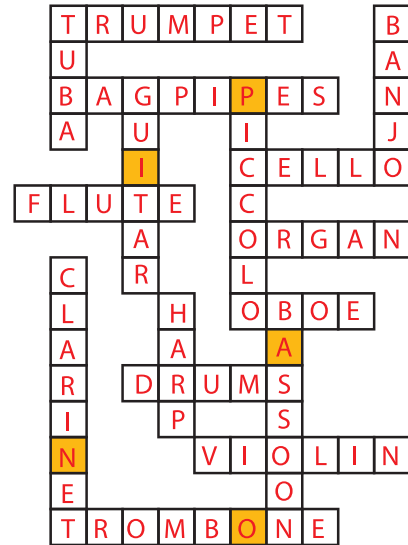
78



So symbol

▲ = 30 ■ = 12 ◆ = 7 ★ = 6

Music box



SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

1	5	2	3	8	7	4	9	6
4	6	3	2	1	9	8	7	5
7	8	9	5	6	4	3	2	1
9	7	1	4	3	6	5	8	2
2	4	8	7	5	1	9	6	3
5	3	6	9	2	8	7	1	4
3	9	7	1	4	2	6	5	8
6	1	5	8	7	3	2	4	9
8	2	4	6	9	5	1	3	7

SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

		45	12		12	22	27	5	45	
	13	5	8	23	1	2	8	3	9	
	27			16						
45	6	9	4	7	3	8	1	2	5	
										26
5	2	3		28	9	8	5	6	8	
9	5	4						6		
				19	23	3	7		2	4
10	4	6		20	8	3	4	5	9	
4	3	1	9	2	7			5	3	2
						20	6			
15	7	8	16	5	6	3	2	14	8	6
	45	7	5	1	2	9	4	3	6	8
	19	2	1	3	5	8	6	5	1	



“The medicines we don’t use can help save someone’s life. I wish more people would realise this and start donating unused medicines. I want to spread this movement across cities and villages to benefit the needy and poor.”

Kishin Thakur, 72, a resident of Thane in suburban Mumbai, collects unused medicines from people, discards those that have expired, sorts the rest according to the disease they are intended to treat, and distributes them to the poor and needy with the help of NGOs, government hospitals and local doctors. Thakur was an executive at an automobile company—he took voluntary retirement in 1991. In 1997, he established the Hari Om Charitable Trust, which runs a free dispensary three evenings a week in Thane—doctors volunteer their time to the clinic. To run his clinic, Thakur has placed 20 donation boxes with contact details at various nationalised banks, chemists, grocery shops and other points of contact in Thane, and Ulhasnagar and Kalyan, also in suburban Mumbai. His trust also rents out mobility aids such as walkers, walking sticks and crutches at nominal rates. When floods hit Mumbai in 2005, Thakur’s medicines came to the aid of hundreds of people. If you would like to help his cause, contact Kishin Thakur at (0) 9820884469.

TEXT: BINDI MEHTA; PHOTO: SUHAS RELEKAR

HELP FOR KNEE PAIN IN WOMEN

How does the knee work?

Essentially, the knee is a hinge that joins your thigh bone (femur) to your shin bone (tibia). Cartilage provides a cushion between the bones, preventing them from grinding directly against one another when you bend and extend your leg. Muscles and tendons connect the bones and keep the joint stable. When the knee is healthy, all of these things work together unnoticed – gliding smoothly and without pain.

What is osteoarthritis?

There are more than 100 different types of arthritis. Osteoarthritis, often called “wear-and-tear” arthritis, is the most common type. Osteoarthritis is a noninflammatory degenerative joint disease characterized by the breakdown of the joint’s cartilage. As the largest joint in your body, knees are a prime target for the disease. The cartilage that cushions the bones of the knee starts to erode, eventually allowing the bones to grind or rub directly against each other, causing pain and stiffness.

While the exact causes of the various types of arthritis are unknown, researchers have found that genetics may play a role in approximately 40 to 65 percent of knee osteoarthritis cases, according to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases.

Women are different, and so are their knees

Knee replacements have been a highly successful surgery for more than 30 years. Women account for nearly two thirds of the more than half a million people who undergo knee replacement in worldwide each year, and that number continues to grow. For the first time, there is a knee implant designed especially for women. The new *Gender Solutions* Knee is the first and only knee replacement shaped to fit Women.

Women and men are different in many respects, including their knees. Traditional knee replacements are sized and shaped to fit an average of men’s and women’s knees. As more and more women have knee replacement surgery, it’s become apparent that traditional knee replacements, while highly successful in alleviating pain, may not feel or move like your natural knee. Woman knees tend to be narrower than a man’s, and their hips are wider, women knees move differently. The *Gender Solutions* Knee is designed to accommodate those differences and is the only knee replacement shaped to fit a woman’s anatomy.

For more information on Gender specific knee please contact your nearest Orthopaedic surgeon.



Surender Sharma, Age 58 yrs.
One of the first patients to
receive LDH

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