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WAKE-UP CALL

I must confess that words are hard to come by this month. I'm still grappling with shock, horror, sadness and anger at the recent terror attack on Mumbai.

It was a terrible end to what was a tough year, leaving Indians vulnerable like never before. On the one hand, our personal safety stands compromised; on the other, the cascade effect of the global economic meltdown has left us financially uncertain. On both counts, silvers are especially at risk.

This is a wake-up call—it's time to become proactive about our safety and security. In the absence of clearly defined emergency systems in our communities, all silvers must evolve their own. Network actively with your friends; let them know your whereabouts at all times and keep track of theirs. If you haven't done so already, register yourself and your domestic help with your local police station. Work to create a vigilant neighbourhood that protects its residents. And, more sig-

nificantly, get out and vote; whether it's a local, state or national election. Our leaders, at every level, have failed us; let us send them a clear message that it cannot happen again.

Silvers must also take the bull by the horns when it comes to financial security and educate themselves about every option available. With this in mind, on 11 December Harmony launched a toll-free helpline to answer questions on the Reverse Mortgage scheme in association with the National Housing Bank (NHB). Harmony has worked with the NHB for the past two years to spread awareness about this loan, which can be availed by silvers by mortgaging their property while continuing to occupy it, allowing them to unlock the value of their home equity.

Following two seminars in Mumbai and Delhi, the establishment of this toll-free helpline (1800 100 1111), accessible all over India, is the logical next step in our collaboration. The helpline has a

DONALD WOODROW



focused three-point agenda: to generate awareness, provide information, and clear misconceptions. After all, knowledge is power. And we want to vest this power in the hands of silvers so they can make choices that are right for them.

A new year full of promise awaits us. To navigate it with confidence, we must empower ourselves in every way we can. I promise that *Harmony* will always be by your side. On behalf of my entire team, I wish you a safe—and secure—New Year.

Tina Ambani

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MIHIR SINGH

WEB EXCLUSIVES



Riding high

A passion for horses keeps
90 year-old Uttam Singh fit and active

Visit www.harmonyindia.org and check out this month's stories!



Tears of blood

Feminist writer Devaki Jain on
the terror attack in Mumbai

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column one

Any target is as close, or as far, as you think. Good health, emotional strength, financial stability, and the conviction to take sound decisions—all are within reach, if you believe in yourself. This month, we focus on walking and running for good health (“Get on Your Feet”). Coinciding with the Harmony Senior Citizens’ Run, part of the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon on 18 January, the special feature also focuses on motivated walkers and runners, who have pounded the road, each day, for decades. Marathon runner Ashis Roy is collecting medals at 76; Prochy Mehta, 55, organises the Kolkata Marathon; Harinder Gill has secured a new life insurance policy at 70, courtesy her sound health; and Dattatray Balse, at 95, refuses to miss his daily power walk.

While bridging the gap between you and your goal, the only thing in the way is will. It’s willpower that motivated octogenarian Hariprasad Trivedi to use his decades-long experience to start a consultancy in seed certification (“Harvesting Happiness”), and not-yet-silver Wazeer Hayath to design a walking stick with an audio-alert system for the visually challenged (“Leading the Way”).

We also promise to continue adding new flavours to the magazine. We begin the year with a section on reviving crafts and traditions (this month it’s Bidri craft of making jewellery); and a regular column by feminist writer Vrinda Nabar (“View from my Window”). Keep reading *Harmony*!

—Meeta Bhatti



We are a silver couple—my husband is 67 and I am 60. We had to take a stress ECG for medical insurance where both of us were diag-

nosed with stress-induced ischaemia. We had no past history of any chronic ailments such as hypertension or diabetes. However, owing to a ligament tear sustained in a rickshaw accident, I had a knee disorder and often needed a knee support or brace. We were put on heavy medication and advised exercise. We signed up at a local, municipal gym and slowly but steadily began an exercise regimen that included cardiovascular exercises, aerobics, weights, and stretching, balancing and abdominal exercises. Within two months our stress ECG was negative. We have now been taken off our medications (except a daily aspirin) but continue to exercise six days a week between 6 am and 8 am. The bonus is that my knee supports are also off.

At the gym, we have a motley crowd of young and old, rich and middle class, men and women—everyone shares a wonderful camaraderie. Everyday, we begin with some light stretching exercises and then move on to cardio exercise, which is done on equipment such as the treadmill, cross-trainer or stationary bicycle. We alternate this with leg and arm exercises on equipment such as chest press, arm press and leg curls. We have a dedicated trainer who introduced us to aerobics. We alternate between slow, medium and fast movements beginning at the top—the head—right down to the foot. He spices up the exercises with some yoga *asana*. We also do sit-ups, push-ups and a circuit training session which is thoroughly invigorating. Here, we form a circle and each of us is assigned a particular exercise for a minute. These exercises encompass movements of the head, arms, legs and back, and exercises with the aerobic stepper, dumb bells and Swiss ball. I am proud to say that I even skip 100-150 times on most days.

With the peak in our endorphin levels, our outlook on life has changed dramatically. We are totally focused and positive and it has helped ward off our depressive thoughts and kept our memory sharp. We wanted to share our experiences with readers of *Harmony* to motivate them to start exercising for better health, stamina and flexibility of body and mind. Come one and all, let’s just move it!

VANITA K KUMTA

Via email



The letter of the month wins music CDs from Big Music

I am 71 years old and a regular reader of *Harmony* for over three years. I am glad to see that every issue of the magazine addresses some topic or the other that is relevant to my life, whether it is health or lifestyle. I am founder secretary of the Progressive Senior Citizens' Association in Andheri, Mumbai, and will participate in the Senior Citizens' Run at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon on 18 January along with other members of the association. Over the years, I have come to regard the *Harmony* team as part of my friends' circle and hope you continue to work for the benefit of senior citizens. I have just one complaint—the magazine generally focuses on the life and achievements of big personalities whereas the common senior citizen is ignored. I believe each and every senior citizen is equally talented; your reporters should take the time to meet more of them.

MANMOHAN BAGRI

Mumbai

In the November issue you have highlighted veteran stars like Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman ("And They All Shone Silver") but you will feel enthralled as well as elevated to learn that Srila

Prabhupada, the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) established the organisation in 1966, at the age of 70. Even more impressively, he did it in New York, a distant, foreign city. By the time he breathed his last in 1977, ISKCON had become an internationally renowned body. His life is an inspiration to us all and shows us that if we truly believe in ourselves, we can achieve our goals at any age.

R K JAIN

Meerut

Congratulations to *Harmony* for completing 55 issues. We enjoyed "Changes" (December 2008), the special feature where celebrities offered their advice on how we can transform our lives as they have done. We pray that God gives them the energy and drive to continue to live such full and inspiring lives. Another inspiring silver is Bhausaheb Thorat ("Seeds of a Revolution") profiled in your 'In Focus' section. The 84 year-old's campaign to turn a drought-stricken region into a lush forest is truly admirable. Finally, your travel feature on Hampi ("The Lost Empire") was fascinating and seems to be an ideal destination

for those who want to rediscover India's rich heritage. Indeed, this was a great issue. We are now waiting for *Harmony's* century!

HANSA AND GHANSHYAM BHARUCHA

Mumbai

I turn 83 on 19 January but I am not celebrating by cutting a cake. Instead, I will be giving a lecture on eye care to students to commemorate the occasion. I have conducted innumerable eye camps for the government and Lions and Rotary Clubs in Chennai, both before and after my retirement in 1987. I want to ensure that no one loses their sight for lack of knowledge and my son Dr S Natarajan of Aditya Jyot Eye Hospital helps me in this campaign. Many people ask me why I continue to work after retirement. I tell them that it is a pleasure to be with young students and spread awareness. I also teach optometry to 70 BSc students and counsel patients with eye problems. I am sharing this with readers of *Harmony* to stimulate my fellow silvers to play an active role in their respective fields to serve the community.

DR N S SUNDARAM

Via email

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 a hobby or an interesting travel experience to share
- You have a funny or insightful anecdote about your grandchildren

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NEWSWORTHY

CREATING A COMMUNITY

In October 2008, the Tamil Nadu government formally signed up to implement the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. Close on the heels of that decision comes another positive announcement: **establishment of an “eco-friendly, old age village” at Thundalkazhani, near Padappai, on the outskirts of Chennai.** Spread across 10 acres of land, the Rs 40.7 million project will house

160 people in duplex residential blocks and include facilities like a medical clinic and yoga and meditation centre. Priority will be given to abandoned silvers and those living below the poverty line. The physically fit will be engaged on a voluntary basis in productive activities like vegetable farming, organic agriculture and cattle rearing to keep them active and generate income for the community. The project is expected to be ready by 2011.



COURSE OF ACTION

Labelled as a “first-of-its-kind course” in Maharashtra, the **University of Pune** recently launched its first course on gerontology—the science that deals with ageing and problems of the elderly—in association with voluntary organisation **International Longevity Centre (ILC)**. The course is targeted at silvers and prospective caregivers. “This course aims to empower senior citizens through classroom teaching and practical training,” Anjali Raje, deputy executive director of ILC, tells media. According to Dr Narendra Jadhav, vice chancellor of the university, it will enable the university to keep a record of professional caregivers and act as an agency for the same. The three-month course, taught in Marathi, will cover every aspect of ageing—health, hygiene, emotional balance, money man-

agement and laws. The course will also include journal submissions, short assignments, field visits to old age homes and group discussions. The first batch of the course

got underway in December 2008. For admissions to the next batch or more information, call (020) 25601099, 25696061 or email dyracademic@unipune.ernet.in



AGEING IN PLACE

The **International Federation on Ageing (IFA) - Asia-Pacific Region** will organise workshops on ‘Ageing in Place’ to build capacity and knowledge in five Indian cities this month. The workshops will be held in Bengaluru on 18 January in collaboration with Nightingale Medical Trust; Chennai on 19 January with Heritage Foundation; Hyderabad on 20 January with Andhra Pradesh Senior Citizens’ Federation; New Delhi on 21 January with HelpAge India; and 25 January in Mumbai with Harmony for Silvers Foundation. The aim is to facilitate knowledge creation among NGOs and private organisations, seniors and seniors’ organisations on specific issues that affect the lives of older people in India; share an international perspective on ageing trends; learn how effective models of ageing in place can be replicated; and create and collect a knowledge bank to post on the IFA website. To learn more, contact Suma Prasad on 09866078244.

ANALYSE THIS

TRUE AGE

Forget simple chronology. According to researchers from the Buck Institute for Age Research in Novato, California, your true age is defined by **distinct biomarkers that reveal how quickly you have aged**—this explains why some people remain spry and agile well into their silver years while others seem to get old sooner. They came to this conclusion after studying the worm, *Caenorhabditis elegans*. With an average lifespan of three weeks, some worms remain active for much longer than others. Others show signs of premature ageing by having an unsymmetrical appearance, becoming sluggish, and moving in an uncoordinated way. Profiling the genetic makeup of 104 worms and matching the results with age-related behaviour and survival revealed a suite of genes with a major impact on ageing, reveals research leader Dr Simon Melov in online journal *Ageing Cell*. “By



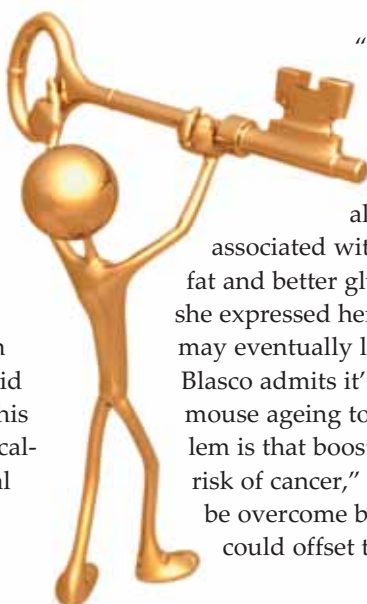
looking at the activity of these genes, it was possible to tell which worms were ageing fast,” he says. “Our results were not perfect, but we were able to predict the ages of the animals 70 per cent of the time. This is the first evidence that physiological age can be predicted non-subjectively.” Melov believes a similar process could be applied to humans, who also have age-related genes.



Students for silvers: Dabur Dhanwantry Ayurvedic College in Sector 46, Chandigarh, will now adopt senior citizens living in the neighbourhood. The college will appoint **one student for each senior citizen** to look after their medical needs. And silvers who live alone and are immobile will be treated in the hospital as indoor patients, whenever required, free of cost.

ENZYME TO ETERNITY

Telomerase, a naturally occurring enzyme in the body, could be the key to an extended lifespan. It helps maintain the protective caps at the ends of chromosomes that stop them from unravelling. As we age and our cells divide, these caps become frayed and damaged. **Boosting the amount of telomerase in the body could prevent cells dying and rejuvenate them**, concludes a team from the Spanish National Cancer Centre in Madrid and Valencia University. When they tested this theory on mice, they found that those genetically engineered to produce 10 times the normal levels of telomerase lived 50 per cent longer than normal.



“The enzyme can turn a normal, mortal cell into an immortal cell,” study leader Maria A Blasco tells journal *New Scientist*. “The mice with the boosted enzyme also saw other health benefits often associated with youth such as less subcutaneous fat and better glucose tolerance.” And although she expressed her optimism that a similar approach may eventually lead to extended human lifespan, Blasco admits it’s hard to extrapolate data from mouse ageing to human ageing. “One major problem is that boosting telomerase can increase the risk of cancer,” she concedes, “although this can be overcome by also issuing cancer drugs that could offset the negative effects.”



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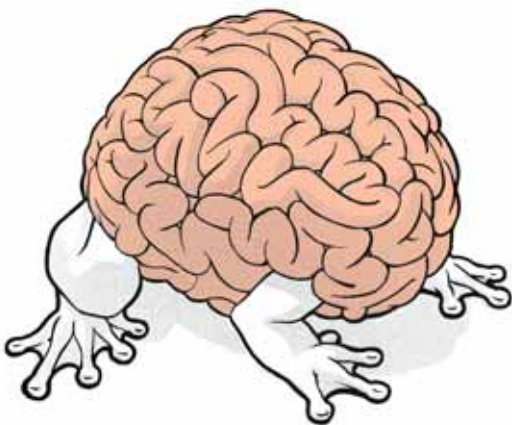
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SUPERBRAINS

How do some silvers remain mentally agile while so many others succumb to Alzheimer's? Scientists from the Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease Centre at Northwestern University, Chicago, say they owe it to a lack of **fibrous protein tangles, or 'tau', which normally make an appearance in the brain late in life and are believed to kill neurons, leading to poor memory.** The research team first recruited volunteers over the age of 80 and subjected them to a series of memory tests. Then, they short-listed silvers who performed very well—they could accurately recall the details of a story 30 minutes after having heard it and memorise a list of 15 words and recall them after 30 minutes. When five of these star performers died, their brains were examined by the team. They were found to contain far fewer tau tangles than the average brain of someone over 80.

"This new finding in super-aged brains is very exciting," team leader Professor Changiz Geula tells London newspaper *The Telegraph*. "We are seeing that some individuals are immune to tangle formation and that the presence of these tangles seems to influence cognitive performance."



TRENDS



EURO-SILVERS

How are silvers faring in Europe? That's the question the **Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)** seeks to answer. The ongoing Euro 5.8-million project has collected data on the life circumstances of around 35,000 Europeans over the age of 50 in 15 countries: Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Israel, Poland, the Czech Republic and Ireland. "Ageing is one of the most challenging trends of the 21st century," says European Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potocnik in a media release. "Enjoying healthy ageing and a comfortable retirement are, sooner or later, major issues for all of us. In that crucial area for the future of Europe, such a large-scale database provides vital information to help define policies and shape actions for the benefit of all Europeans." Here are some of the key findings of the latest results from the study:

- Women live longer especially in southern Europe, but men fall ill less, especially in the north.
- Geriatric care needs improvement in all countries surveyed.
- Preventing ill health pays for itself.
- Pleasant workplace conditions support later retirement.
- There is a big difference between countries on the importance of volunteering.
- The demise of the family is a myth: intergenerational money transfers are a major source of household wealth.

Read the entire survey at www.share-project.org

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WILD SILVER

A DOG'S LIFE

The elixir of youth is here—if you are canine. Professor Lee Sweeney from the University of Pennsylvania in the US will soon market his **canine gene therapy, which promises to transform old dogs into energetic puppies**. Sweeney has pioneered research into gene research technology, where poorly functioning and abnormal genes can be manipulated, switched off or replaced. Under the therapy, dogs would be given an injection into the liver that switches off the gene that produces myostatin, a protein that inhibits muscle growth in animals and humans. “We are now in the final stages of getting approval to offer this through veterinary hospitals to improve strength in pet dogs,” he tells London newspaper *The Telegraph*. “We’re hoping that within the next year, we will begin the era of genetic enhancement in dogs.” Over time, scientists hope the same technology can be used to treat genetic conditions like muscular dystrophy in humans.



FACE OFF

ANTI-CLIMAX



This is jaw-dropping news. According to researchers, **antioxidants may not be a miracle cure after all**. In 1956, American bio-geronologist Denham Harman concluded that ageing was caused by naturally occurring free radicals (reactive forms of oxygen) that caused molecular damage to the skin. In turn, it was believed antioxidants could work against free radicals, which led to them being included in anti-ageing creams and diet supplements. However, a team from University College, London, says their experiments on nematode worms disprove this. In the study, nematode worms, which share many genes with humans and have a lifespan of only a few days, were allowed to absorb extra free radicals, which should have prolonged their lifespan. Instead, they lived for the same duration of time.

“Oxidative damage is clearly not a major driver of the ageing process,” team leader Dr David Gems tells journal *Genes and Development*. Don’t give up those antioxidant-rich foods though—they may not stop the clock but will still do wonders for your overall health.

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WORDAGE

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Harmony calls its constituency 'Silvers'. But what do people over 50 in America really like to be called? To find out, Paul Kleyman, national coordinator of the US-

based Journalists Exchange on Ageing, interviewed 100 journalists who cover ageing-related issues. Their top choice: 'older', followed by 'senior', although they emphasised that it was only appropriate for people over 65. For those at the younger end of

the spectrum, 'middle-aged' and 'midlife' won approval as did age-specific references such as 'those over 50' or 'people 65 and up'.

As for the no-nos, 'elderly' tops the list. "Elderly, if used as an adjective, is acceptable but the phrase 'the elderly' comes under criticism for its impersonal and stigmatising manner of grouping older people together with images of frailty and decline," Kleyman tells magazine *The Christian Science Monitor*. "Elders, on the other hand, can convey respect." He adds that even words such as 'still' — as in 'still driving' or 'still jogging' — can convey negative images by implying that these activities are something out of the ordinary for silvers. "And cloying phrases like '100 years young' represent the worst possible cliché about ageing."



Against ageism:

'See the Person, Not the Age' is the name of a new initiative by the Scottish government to stamp out age-related discrimination. The

£ 640,000 (about

Rs 52.6 million) campaign will feature online, television, radio and press **advertising that urges Scots to think past stereotypes based on age**. It will be supported by an interactive website (www.seetheperson.info) that will encourage the younger generation to think twice before making assumptions based on age. The number of Scots of pensionable age is expected to rise by around 31 per cent from 980,000 in 2006 to 1,290,000 in 2031.



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MEDIA WATCH

REVERSE GEAR

Christmas is traditionally a time for Hollywood to bring out the big guns: the hottest stars, the biggest budgets, and mindless escapism that doesn't tax the grey cells. But while *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett, runs true to type on the first two counts, it bucks the trend when it comes to its central theme: human mortality. Directed by 46 year-old David Fincher, the film is about a boy born on 11 November 1918, the last day of World War I. He "has all the deterioration, the infirmities, not of a new-born, but of a man well in his 80s on the way to his grave", as the doctor attending the birth observes. Abandoned by his father, Benjamin is taken in by an African-American attendant at a New Orleans home for the elderly, where he begins to age in reverse.

The film then tracks him through every stage of his life; from a child in the body of a 70 year-old who meets a little girl, Daisy Fuller, to a 40 year-old young man when he meets Daisy again. As he grows younger, she grows older—they share a brief magical spell when their lives intersect until the relentlessness of time pulls them apart. "At first glance, this is a love story," Fincher tells *The New York Times*. "But it's really about the total frailty of humanity. The entire childhood of Benjamin is defined by the people that die around him. Imagine that you're raised with a bunch of 85 year-olds. They're not sweating the same things teenagers are. And that's where he learns everything."



Babysitting in Bulgaria: Starting 1 January 2009, pensioners in Bulgaria will get paid to babysit their grandchildren. According to a new amendment to the country's Employment Encouragement Law, grandparents who look after a baby during its first three years will get a 240 leva (about Rs 8,000) bonus to their monthly pensions.

STEAMY WINDOWS

As part of an online initiative for silvers with satellite broadcaster Sky, the Women's Institute (WI) of Northamptonshire county in the East Midlands, UK, recently uploaded *Sex, Myths and Spicy Tips*, a video that serves up sexual advice. The film is part of a series that covers a number of topics, including computers, green gardening and home management. The video shows 66 year-old retired nurse and sex therapist Janice Langley reclining on a bed surrounded by sexual aids, DVDs and magazines



discussing safe sex and ways to enjoy intimacy even if you have suffered a heart attack, stroke or any other debilitating illness.

"This gives people a way to get information and advice from people their own age, with no smuttiness or embarrassment," Diana Birch, president of the WI, tells newspaper *Northampton Chronicle*. To see any of the videos online, go to www.sky.com/w-icon

H RECOMMENDS

Write it down. Let your memories be a legacy to the generations to come. In Bermuda, silvers are being encouraged to pen their experiences by NGO Age Concern to mark the island's 400th birthday. The 'Write It Down' project aims to gather people's stories on what it means to be a senior, with plans to publish such reflections in 2010. "People can write about their families, politics, or express their profoundest joys and fears of life and ageing," says Fred Hassell, director of the Bermuda Senior Islanders' Centre. "Stories about making nets for fishing boats and seeing the first car on the road, extraordinary things which, if we don't capture them now, will disappear forever."



Have something to say? This is the place to do it. Reach out to fellow readers with interesting anecdotes, inspiring stories and heartwarming moments from your life. Write in with full contact details, and make this space your own!

DAD'S DIARY

My father S K Nagia was an engineer in the Indian Army. Like the families of most soldiers, my mother, my sister, my brother and I often had to change cities according to father's postings. My childhood was filled with exciting tales of his World War II exploits and experiences. As the years went by, his rapt audi-



Looking back in time: Chaddah's parents

ence grew to include his grandchildren. In 1985, on my daughter's insistence, my father started recording the memories of his army years in a journal. Though age and weakening eyesight soon hindered the flow of thought, with characteristic dedication he refused to give up. Whenever I visited him in Mumbai, he dictated his experiences to me and I noted everything down in a diary. His narrative included the agonising

days of India's partition; his postings to Cairo, Basra, Jerusalem and Alexandria; and the disastrous earthquake in Quetta in

"I did not want my father's journal to end up in a dust-filled attic"

1935. I was amazed by his vivid recollection of events—his detailed narration brought history alive in a way that no book or documentary film could.

Though I had started keeping the diary with the intention of preserving my father's memories, I didn't want it to end up in a dust-filled attic. My husband

agreed to type out the memoirs and even found a printer to have it published. We published 100 copies in a booklet form, titled *Diary of a Venturer: S K Nagia*. And on 3 October 2008—my parents' 62nd wedding anniversary—I presented it to my father. It was an emotional moment for him as well as my mother, my siblings and me. According to my father, the modest pocket-sized booklet, devoid of any pictures, is the most beautiful gift he has ever received.

Today my beloved father is 93 years old. Age has affected his sight and hearing. My mother reads out the newspaper to him every morning. And the two still enjoy listening to old Hindi songs everyday. I am happy that my small gift takes him back to the rich life he has lived. As for me, it's a small way to keep the past alive and inspiring for the generation ahead.

—Manju Chaddah, Chandigarh

SISTER ACT

My husband was in the army. After his death in 1991, I found myself alone as my son had moved to New Zealand and my daughter was living in Mumbai. In the ensuing loneliness that engulfed me, I turned to paper craft—a long-cherished hobby. My paper envelopes and gift bags had always won compliments from friends. So I bought reams of handmade paper and started designing envelopes, sari bags, file folders, bottle bags and gift bags.



Jaywant: pool of creativity

ANAND K SOMA

As the days went by, the daughters and wives of other army men and the domestic maids who worked in our colony expressed an interest in learning the craft. Within no time, my house was filled with the happy chatter of women charged up by the prospect of learning a new creative pursuit. Soon, I realised that the handcrafted goods could open up new avenues of economic empowerment for the women. We got in touch with army clubs and defence welfare associations where we could display our creations during the Diwali *mela* and other annual events. Alongside, I spread the word among friends. It didn't take long for the orders to pour in.

Today the envelopes and gift bags we create from handmade paper and ethnic fabrics have travelled as far as the US and Europe. I share the profits with the women—many of them have now signed up for college education and computer classes. Like almost every year in the past, our stall was adjudged the 'best decorated stall' in the Diwali Mela held at Secunderabad Club in October 2008.

I am very content with what I have achieved. It is a fulfilling symbiotic relationship—one where the girls fill my empty hours and where I have the chance to make a difference to their lives. Alongside, I am also the founder and advisor of a bonsai club. Though I still live alone, I am no longer lonely. My life is infused with new goals and aspirations. I have realised that when life seems meaningless and dark, the flame of purpose and happiness can only be found within us. And very often it can light up the world around us.

—Pushpa Jaywant, Hyderabad

SPRIGHTLY SILVER

I am 61 going on 45. I have been a certified fitness instructor for the past 35 years during which I have also worked as a secretary in an export firm for 25 years. Two years ago, I gave up my job to pursue a full-time career as a fitness instructor. At present, I am a member of the women's commission of the Archdiocese of Mumbai and I head a women's group in my parish, where I counsel and guide women—helping them to empower themselves and recognise their hidden worth.

A lot of people who know me often remark how lucky I am to be so fit at my age. Being healthy is no accident. A lot depends on good genes, but it's as important to stick to healthy food habits, proper exercise and, above all, a positive attitude towards life. I write poems, short stories and articles on social issues—some of which have also been published.

I have been a single mother for a long time now. But I have never allowed my singularity to stop me from doing what I want to. I gave my children the best education and set them free to pursue their dreams—just like my dreams have always been mine to pursue. I love music, dancing and making friends.

In our country, we allow age to decide everything for us. I have never understood why we need to restrain ourselves just because we have turned 50. If I hear good music, I dance. If I look good in a particular dress, I enjoy wearing it. I dare to do what I fear.

At the age of 45

I learnt to swim, only because I have always been scared of the water. I dare to confront any person who breaks the law. And I even dare to fall in love at the age of 61.

To me, age is just a number; it's our mind, body and soul that need to be fit and young.

I urge all my silver friends to learn

something new, and to stay healthy with proper exercise and food. Love yourself; only then will you receive love from others. Spend quality time nurturing yourself. Have a healthy zest for life—it's the only one you have.

—Josephine Fernandes, Mumbai



Fernandes: full of life

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Strength within

Times are tough but so is the spirit, says Vrinda Nabar

Growing older makes one no stranger to loss. We move from mourning the deaths of parents to those of contempo-

raries, and with time we learn that it is possible to laugh again. But the shared paralysis of the last week of November contained another dimension, leading to what is now being termed a 'collective nervous breakdown'.

I went for a walk the evening after the nightmare began—I had to get away from the vivid horror on my TV screen. We all have tangible symbols, familiar landmarks that give us a kind of safety we hold on to especially as we grow older. For me it is my neighbourhood—a melting-pot of languages and communities, green parks, tall trees, wide streets and the ubiquitous koel. Not a plush neighbourhood but an ordinary middle-class one, a reminder of what cosmopolitanism and development once meant in my city. The wide streets were deserted, the parks empty. It drizzled at night, almost as if the heavens were mourning the dead. Over the next few days I knew I had to step outside the *danse macabre*, not because I had ceased caring but because I still did. Transcending this kind of collective paralysis is never easy but I find it always helps to home in on happier memories and gain strength from them. To think of people one has known and the inner resources they drew on in difficult times. Sitting in my silent living room I smiled in spite of myself as I remembered my maternal grandmother's no-nonsense "Hey, who's the old woman here, you or me?" whenever she found me comatose at the end of the day. Her story was not unlike that of many recently bereaved in Mumbai. She was scarcely past

her teens when she lost her husband during World War I. She and her two children had awaited his return the year the war ended but received news of his death in action. I know now what I didn't when I was growing up—that in the thick of her trauma my grandmother had resisted her own mother's pressure to have her head tonsured, refused to return to the family, stayed on in Mumbai and survived on her war widow's pension. I know that in her heart she grieved all her life. But I also remember her as the most positive individual I knew, loving, compassionate, hospitable, witty, always eager to seize the day. She had taught herself four languages (Marathi, Kannada, English and Telugu) and was learning a fifth (Bengali) when she died at the age of 78. "At your age I was a widow with two young children," she had matter-of-factly told me once. "I made myself think positive for their sake."

I believe we all have something positive to find if we look deep enough within ourselves—love, companionship, remembered kindness, something that offers a measure of solace. Byron had remarked that

a solitary flower adorned even the much-reviled Roman tyrant Nero's coffin, suggesting that at least one person had mourned his death and that no one is ever wholly alone.

It is a point well taken because many of us have moved from our childhood or teenage haunts. Other neighbourhoods may have claimed us for their own, leading us to find new symbols, to reinvent them if need be. While there's comfort in the

familiar, the larger truth we have to hold on to is what the poet Cavafy once said—that the city with all its joys and heartbreaks is within each one of us. It is not easy to find our inner strengths after the foundations of our lives seem ripped apart, but with determination it is not impossible either. ■

I believe we all have something positive to find if we look deep enough within ourselves

Vrinda Nabar, 60, is a feminist writer based in Mumbai

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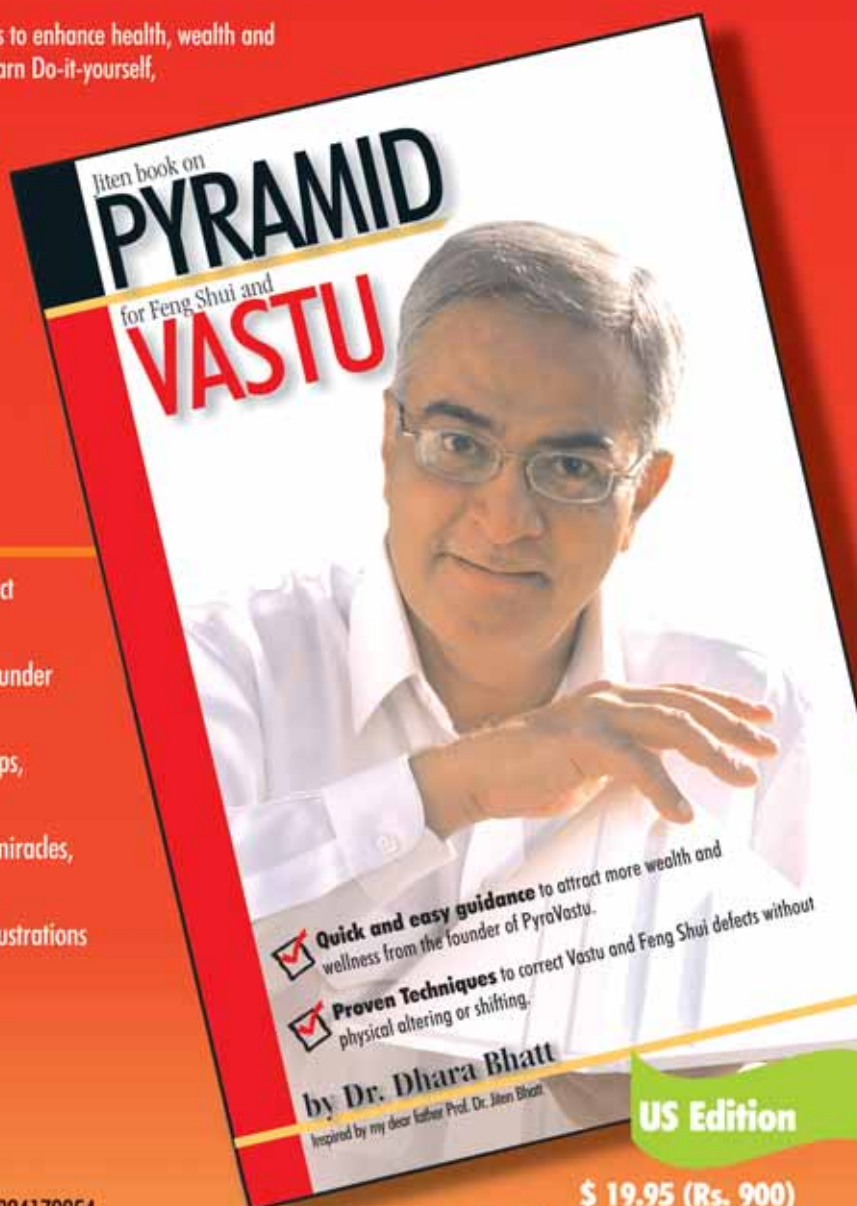
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| legacy

A shared MUSIC

Nitika Bajpayee meets the Sabris, who are making sure the *sarangi* doesn't lose its voice





Kamal Sabri (see image: extreme left) has just returned from Oslo where he was invited to play the *sarangi* at the Nobel Prize ceremony. Next on the 33 year-old's agenda is to promote the *sarangi*, one of India's oldest musical instruments, among India's youth, with his new album *The Sarangi Funk*. "I want to carry forward the rich legacy of my *gharana*," says the gifted musician.

Kamal's pride in his *gharana* is understandable when you consider his lineage. He is the son of *sarangi* maestro Ustad Sabri Khan (centre), winner of the Padmashri and Padmabhushan. Hailing from the Sainia Moradabad *gharana*, Khan learnt to play the instrument from his father Ustad Chajju Khan. "I played *sarangi* for All India Radio for 46 years," recalls the 80 year-old. His passion is mirrored in his grandson Suhail (right)—Ustad's daughter Farzana Yusuf (Suhail's mother) also plays the *sarangi*. Part of music band Advaita, Suhail has even shared the stage with 'guitar god' Steve Vai and percussionist Talvin Singh. Though the 20 year-old has been tutored by his grandfather, he often teams up with Kamal to experiment with compositions.

In November 2008, the Sabris launched an album, *The Generation Series—The Sabri Family*. Earlier, in May, they also opened The Sabri Khan Academy of South Asian Music in Toronto. Soon they are planning to start a music school in Oslo—together. The family indeed takes tradition very seriously. All the men wear a turquoise ring, just like generations of Sabris before them. ■

*It's time again for the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run, a part of the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon. On 18 January, over 2,000 silvers will set their own pace to good health. **Anjana Jha** seizes the opportunity to bring you the best of both worlds—walking and running—and speaks to some inspiring men and women who have made fitness their mantra*



GET ON YOUR

The countdown to the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run, an integral part of the annual Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon, is on. First held in January 2004, the event's popularity has soared in the past four years. In 2007, we witnessed more than 2,000 silvers dressed in familiar sunshine-yellow Harmony T-shirts walking among the 33,000 participants—their enthusiasm in perfect sync with the spirit of the city.

This tremendous response enthused Talwalkars, a popular chain of gymnasiums, to introduce a marathon-training module for silvers in 15 of its centres across Mumbai. "Running for health is excellent," says 76 year-old chairman Madhukar Talwalkar, for

whom physical fitness is a passion ("In Pursuit of Happiness", June 2007 issue of *Harmony*). "For me, though, winning is more important than participating, which is possible only through training."

For the programme, Talwalkars invited Ian Ladbrooke (with more than 15 marathons, 50 half marathons and countless dream runs to his credit) and Zachary Kihara (winner of the Edinburgh Marathon in 2005) to train a team of 16 trainers who were national or international runners themselves. "These 'elite' trainers personally coached people for the 2008 Mumbai Marathon, including four sexagenarians," says Kalindi Mehta, project manager at the health centre.



FEET!

This year's training programme comprised modules varying in duration from one to four months. Designed to include both indoor and outdoor sessions, it dealt with various aspects of distance running—endurance training, diet, injury prevention and treatment, and health concerns. "We plan the schedule after checking individual fitness," explains Mehta. "While indoor gym training strengthens muscles, outdoor training on soft ground prepares a person for running on the road. Ground running is very different from training on a treadmill."

The treadmill can be an excellent option, if set at an incline of 1 per cent. This way, it uses as much energy as walking on the road and puts less strain on the

joints. Treadmill walking helps tone the muscles, ensuring overall fitness. A slow treadmill workout for an hour burns about 200 calories and a workout of medium intensity would burn about 700 calories.

ROADRUNNERS

Let alone going to the gym, **Dr Ashok G Kale** never believed in any form of exercise until he started walking 15 years ago. "My wife Neela, 66, has been a regular walker for 25 years," says the 68 year-old. "A doctor herself, she would insist I walk as well, but I always had some excuse ready. It was only in 1993 after my blood pressure and blood sugar levels shot up that I finally started." Since then, he walks 10 to 15 km every day. >>

>> The exercise has helped keep Dr Kale off medication for almost a decade and motivated him to participate in the Dream Run of the first Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon in 2004. "I felt lost in the huge crowd," he says with a chuckle, "so I decided to participate in the Senior Citizens' Run the following year and secured the third position." In 2007, he decided to join the Talwalkars' training programme. "Though I dislike the idea of spending money at a gym, I joined hoping to get some position," he admits candidly. "I didn't. However, the shaping up, as well as the correct methodology of running, helped improve my personal timing." Ready to compete in the 21-km run this year, Kale has enrolled for the training programme again.

THE AMERICAN PODIATRIC ASSOCIATION ADVOCATES SHOES PROVIDING **STABILITY, SUPPORT AND CUSHIONING** BASED ON FOOT TYPE. FLAT-FOOTED RUNNERS SHOULD BUY SHOES THAT GIVE SUPPORT

Partab Ahuja also joined the training programme at Talwalkars last year. "However, I decided not to enrol this year and practise on my own," says the Mumbai resident. A regular walker for more than 20 years, Ahuja covers at least 5 km every day. Last year, he participated in four events—the Mumbai Marathon, the Nasik Run, the Bengaluru Marathon and the World Arthritis Day Walk. To get off the blocks in 2009, he has registered to participate in the Senior Citizens' Run for the third time. "I am eagerly waiting for this year's event," he says. Walking extensively even as a child, Ahuja still recalls his 7-km walk to school. Lithe and active, he looks and feels much younger than his 71 years. "Walking has helped me remain fit—physically and mentally."

WALK THE DISTANCE

Indeed, people across India are cottoning on to the fact that walking is as effective—if not more—than other weight-loss or body toning exercises. And the number of people who walk to stay healthy or pound the treadmill in gyms has increased steadily. >>

Marathon man

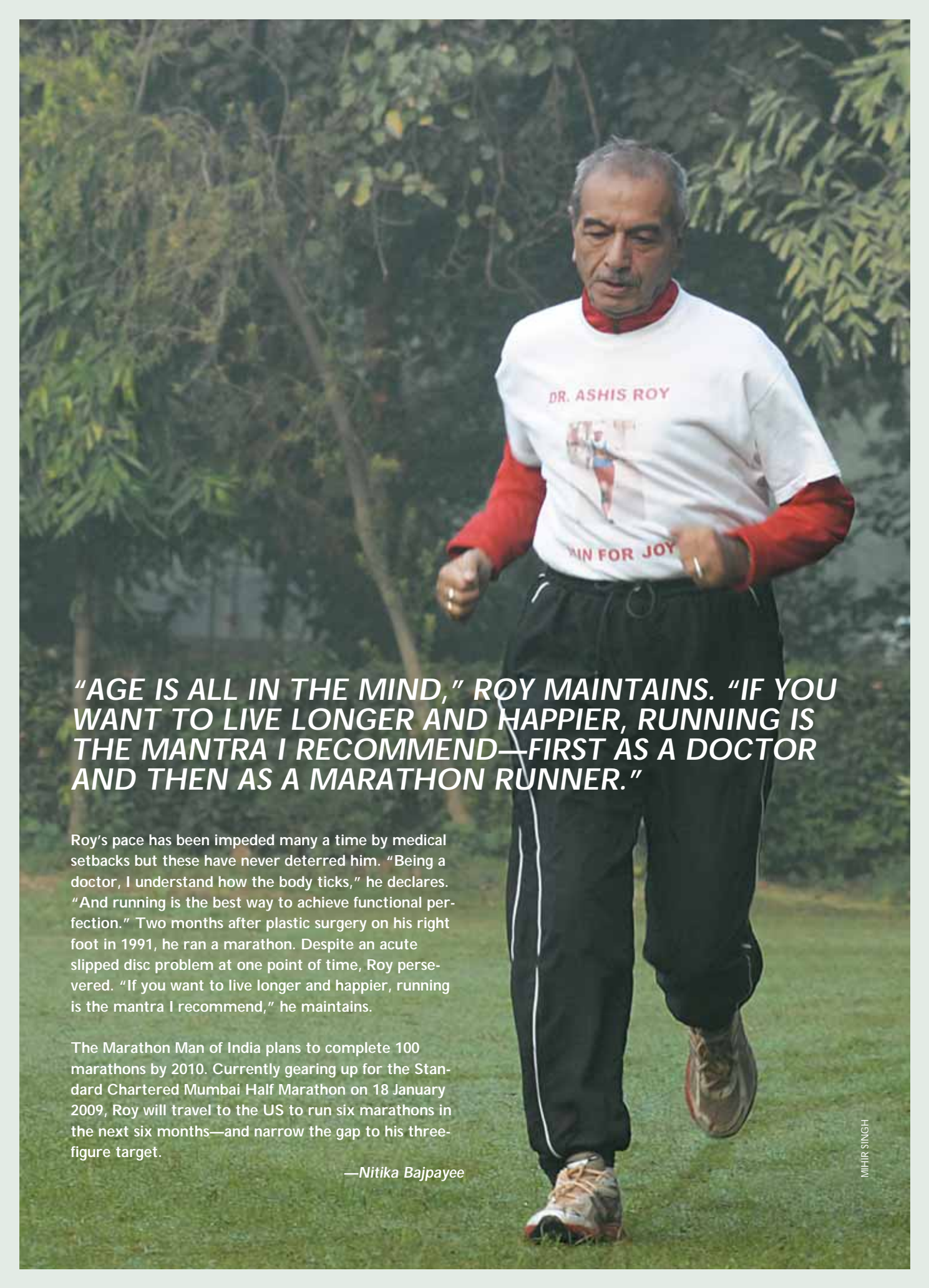
ASHIS ROY, 76, New Delhi

At an age when most people think of slowing down, Delhi-based cardiologist Ashis Roy (on the cover this month) revived his passion for running after voluntary retirement in 1978. Participating in a 42-km marathon for the first time at the age of 52, the septuagenarian has completed 86 marathon races till date—a national record for men in India. Born and brought up in Shillong, Roy became a devoted runner while walking 10 km to his school every day. Hoping to represent India in the Olympics, he continued running through his college days. But joining the Indian Air Force as a physician in 1957 thwarted his ambition and the best he managed during his 21 years of service was playing cricket and football. Practising as a cardiologist after his return to Delhi in 1982, he took up jogging and running to counter his growing weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Roy's daily engagements include running 18-24 km followed by an exercise programme. Monday is meant for rest, but "I do not feel complete if I skip running for even a day," he insists, looking at least 15 years younger than his age.

Roy has innumerable milestones to his credit. He is the only man above 70 years in the world to have run two marathon races on two consecutive Sundays and three marathon races within a span of six weeks. He is the only man in the world above 75 years to run eight marathons in a span of eight months. In 1999, he became the only Asian to have run three marathons in the US on three consecutive Sundays and, in his age group (65-69 years), stood first in all the three. The only Indian to run a marathon in 21 countries, Roy's tally of 86 comprises 54 in foreign countries, with 25 in the US, 10 in Canada, two in the UK, and 32 in India, including the Delhi Half Marathon in November 2008. After securing third position in the Friendly Massey Marathon in Canada in 2008, his medal count in international marathons has reached 19.

Though the veteran runner promotes running among the youth and silvers alike, he is disappointed because, in India, "sports is only limited to the youth and no one bothers about silvers". He rues that traffic during marathons in the country is not re-routed for more than three hours, making it difficult for elders to participate. "The organisers do not care about older runners," he says. "In other countries, proper facilities allow increased participation in all age groups."

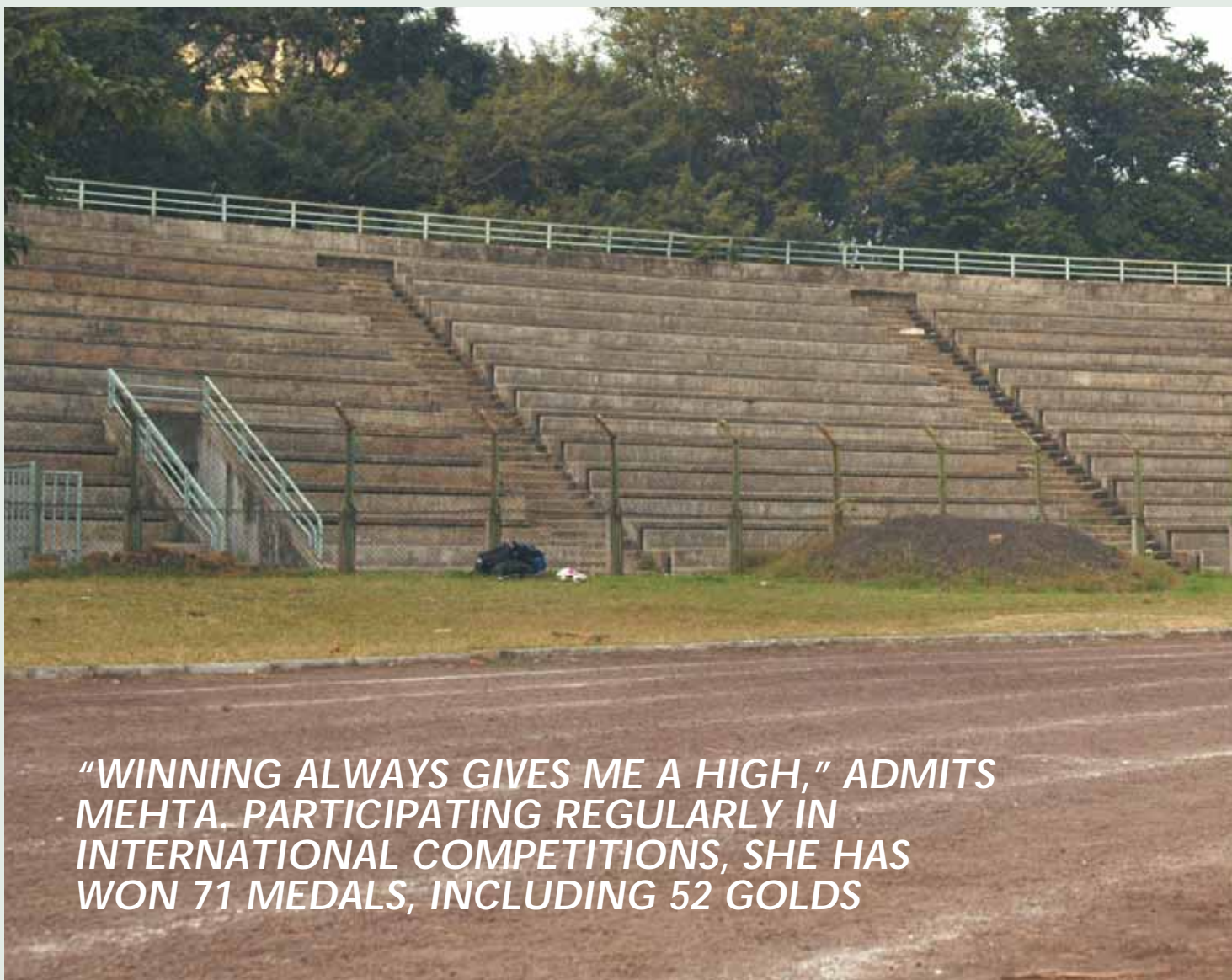
A full-page photograph of Dr. Ashis Roy, an elderly man with grey hair and a mustache, running on a green lawn. He is wearing a white t-shirt with red sleeves, black track pants with a white stripe, and running shoes. The t-shirt has "DR. ASHIS ROY" and "WIN FOR JOY" printed on it, along with a small graphic. The background is a lush green park with trees.

"AGE IS ALL IN THE MIND," ROY MAINTAINS. "IF YOU WANT TO LIVE LONGER AND HAPPIER, RUNNING IS THE MANTRA I RECOMMEND—FIRST AS A DOCTOR AND THEN AS A MARATHON RUNNER."

Roy's pace has been impeded many a time by medical setbacks but these have never deterred him. "Being a doctor, I understand how the body ticks," he declares. "And running is the best way to achieve functional perfection." Two months after plastic surgery on his right foot in 1991, he ran a marathon. Despite an acute slipped disc problem at one point of time, Roy persevered. "If you want to live longer and happier, running is the mantra I recommend," he maintains.

The Marathon Man of India plans to complete 100 marathons by 2010. Currently gearing up for the Standard Chartered Mumbai Half Marathon on 18 January 2009, Roy will travel to the US to run six marathons in the next six months—and narrow the gap to his three-figure target.

—Nitika Bajpayee



"WINNING ALWAYS GIVES ME A HIGH," ADMITS MEHTA. PARTICIPATING REGULARLY IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS, SHE HAS WON 71 MEDALS, INCLUDING 52 GOLDS

Gold collector

PROCHY MEHTA, 55, Kolkata

The love of the run inspired veteran athlete Prochy Mehta to take the initiative to organise the annual Kolkata Marathon in 2005. The city's first, it was sponsored by Airtel and Mehta has been the organiser ever since. With support from her husband, Noomi, she does everything from organising funds to supervising last-minute details. The event is now a regular feature of the Kolkata sporting circuit, with more than 20,000 people participating last year. Mehta, however, hasn't taken part yet. "I don't have the kind of muscle strength required for such a run," she says with candour.

Don't let that statement mislead you though. "Obsessively health conscious" for as long as she can remember, Mehta, now director of Selvel Advertising and One Ad Display Pvt Ltd, has represented India in several national athletic events—100 m, 200 m and 400 m races, relay race, and long jump.

Participating regularly in international competitions like the Asian Veterans Championship, World Veterans Championship, and Malaysian Open Masters Athletic Championship till 2004, she has won 71 medals, including 52 golds. "Winning always gives me a high," she admits. "But I could never have achieved so much without my husband's support."

During her school and college years, Mehta was more interested in basketball. As the captain of her team, she won many inter-school championships from 1967 to 1969. In 1971, her school bagged the runner's up position in the All India Inter-University Tournament. Marriage in 1976 and, later, bringing up her children—Sanaya and Jahan—put a brake on her sporting activities for a while, but it was difficult staying away for too long. In 1987, Mehta started training in athletics at the West Bengal State Sports Council. "Running has always been a passion and I wanted to improve my performance," she says. "At that time, the thought of competing professionally was not on my mind." But at the selection trials for the Asian Veterans Athletic Championships at Bangalore in 1988, she set new



SHILBHADRA DATTA

records in the 100 m, 200 m and 400 m races for women (35-39 years), which she continued to do regularly for almost a decade.

With her family actively involved in sports—Noomi plays hockey, football, cricket and rugby; Jahan plays super division football; and Sanaya is an aerobics teacher—Mehta believes self-discipline and a strict exercise and diet regimen is mandatory for every sportsperson. As for injuries, she feels they are a part of the package. “I had a back injury and developed spondylosis but I learnt to tackle it with yoga,” she says. Mehta devotes three hours to exercise daily—knee exercises every morning, yoga in the afternoon, and two hours of running in the evening. “I never miss out on my routine, even if I have social commitments,” she says. Her diet comprises toast and cheese for breakfast, fruits for lunch and *roti, dal, sabzi* and fish or chicken for dinner. “The diet and exercise has kept me fit and instilled the confidence to face life head on.”

—Sonali Majumder

>> “The number of gym-goers in the past five years has increased by more than 100 per cent,” says Althea Shah, general manager - operations and fitness expert at Gold’s Gym India. “Even the number of senior citizens who join gyms has increased owing to awareness of the benefits of exercise for problems like diabetes, cardiac disease and arthritis.”

But while people are known to drop out of gyms (for reasons like time and money) after attaining decent fitness levels, outdoor walking has the lowest dropout rate. It’s also the only form of exercise where the percentage of participation does not decrease with the corresponding increase in age, a fact validated by a survey published in the July 2008 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. The survey reveals that even occasional physical activity can increase life expectancy of people aged 65 and over. The study tracked over 3,000 people above the age of 65 for 12 years and found that those who exercised just once a week reduced their risk of early mortality by up to 40 per cent.

“As the major risk factors of heart attack and stroke include excessive weight and high blood pressure, walking is an insurance against both,” says Dr Sanjay Agarwala, chief of surgery and head of orthopaedics, P D Hinduja National Hospital & Medical Research Centre, Mumbai. “To lose weight, though, one must cover distances long enough to ensure that adequate calories are burnt.” However, Dr Agarwala says that it’s a common misconception that extra walking means losing weight. “It can’t be, unless you are a regular marathon runner.” >>

BRISK WALKING AND RUNNING CAN...

- Control weight, if enough calories are burnt
- Lower blood pressure over an extended period
- Decrease risk of heart attack and stroke, unless already ischemic
- Manage diabetes
- Reduce bad cholesterol
- (low-density lipoproteins)
- Relieve arthritis and back pain in early stages
- Strengthen muscles, bones, and joints
- Check constipation
- Lengthen lifespan
- Lower stress levels
- Improve sleep
- Elevate overall mood and sense of well-being

>> Also, no form of exercise can have the desired effect if it is not combined with a balanced diet. Besides a variety of fruits, vegetables and nuts, foods in the dairy group (milk, yogurt, cheese) should be included, especially in a vegetarian's diet. Go slow on sweets, oils and processed foods but consume the appropriate number of calories (1,500 to 2,000 for women, and 2,000 to 2,500 for men, depending on age, weight and activity level). Cutting calories while starting a new walking or running regimen results in lack of energy and motivation. Plenty of water and fruit juices play an important role here, helping to negate any risk of dehydration.

Regular brisk walking can boost the body's ability to inhale oxygen during the action, reduce the >>

ASSOCIATED INJURIES

"Follow the RICE (rest, ice, compression, elevation) method before you consult a doctor," advises Dr Siddhartha Gupta, consultant orthopaedic surgeon, Peerless Hospital & B K Roy Research Centre, Kolkata. According to him, common injuries include:

Ankle sprain: Owing to twisting of ligaments around the ankle.

Achilles tendinitis: Pain in the back of heel that may lead to tendon rupture.

Plantar fasciitis: Pain in the heel, especially with the first step in the morning.

Blisters

Arch pain: Along the inner aspect of the feet.

Shin splints: Pain along the front of lower tibia (shin bone) owing to cumulative injuries to the muscle, bone or tendon.

Muscle cramps/muscle

pull/tear/strains: Mainly affecting gastro-soleus (the

calf muscles), hamstrings at the back of the thigh, adductor muscles on the medial side of the thigh and the ilio-tibial band along the outer side of the knee.

Knee pain: Owing to patello-femoral pain affecting the kneecap or affection of patellar ligament (runner's knee).

Delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS): Occurs 24-48 hours after a new or intensive exercise regimen.

Piriformis syndrome: Inflammation of the piriformis muscle in the pelvic region leading to pressure on sciatic nerve, with pain along the back of the leg.

Stress fractures: Can affect the metatarsals (foot bones), shin or the hips especially in long-distance runners with osteoporosis.

Side stitches: Abdominal cramps that occur when you start running within a few hours after a heavy meal. Weak abdominal muscles could cause them.

Model client

HARINDER GILL, 70, Panchkula, Haryana

Harinder Gill could not have received a better birthday present. A day before she turned 70, Birla Sun Life made a new life insurance policy for her. After passing rigorous health tests to evaluate her heart, sugar level, kidneys and other body functions, Gill was declared perfectly fit for insurance. Not that the fitness certificate came as any surprise. Her health insurance policy of Rs 100,000 with New India Assurance Company has earned her a bonus of Rs 75,000 since 2002 for not making a single claim during the past 10 years—the kind of client insurance companies dream of!

"You are as good as your health; age is immaterial," insists Gill. Slim and swift on her feet, she dislikes the image of silvers being bracketed as weak or dependent. Always a keen sportsperson, walking is now a passion for her. During her days at Sanawar Public School, she remained a winner at the game of netball and the 200 m race for almost 10 years. Athletics had become a habit with her. After leaving for the US for further studies in 1959, Gill discovered tennis and swimming. Following her marriage to Michel Parlier, an American of French origin, Gill continued to work as an interior designer in Washington till 1980. After the birth of her children—son Gui and daughter Geeta—she switched to teaching art and craft in a school until they grew up. Joining the US social services department as a contractor, she began helping elderly Punjabi women claim the relief amount given by the government, which would often be usurped by relatives. "My bilingual background helped me interact with them," says Gill. "I supervised their welfare, visited their families and took them to the community centre."

After retiring 10 years ago, Gill came back to India but could not find a team sport for people her age. So she took to walking—she clocks 5-6 km at least five days a week. Once in a while, she plays golf. Her fitness routine also includes yogic breathing learnt during an Art of Living course. Gill eats eggs twice a week and porridge or *paratha* made with little oil for breakfast; *chappatti* with plenty of salads, lentils, fruits and curd for lunch; and soup, some meat or cheese, fruits and salad for dinner.

"I believe negativity is an energy that overpowers you if you don't pluck it out," she says. "Whenever I feel low or negative thoughts cross my mind, I do yogic breathing. Injecting positive energy, it uplifts me instantly."

—Vandana Shukla

A woman with short dark hair is captured in a dynamic pose, running or jogging across a grassy field. She is wearing a light blue jacket over a white turtleneck sweater, bright blue trousers, and red sneakers with white stripes. Her expression is one of focus and determination. In the background, a red brick wall and a white goalpost are visible, suggesting a park or sports field setting.

"YOU ARE AS GOOD AS YOUR HEALTH; AGE IS IMMATERIAL," SAYS GILL. AFTER PASSING RIGOROUS HEALTH TESTS RECENTLY, SHE WAS DECLARED FIT FOR A NEW LIFE INSURANCE POLICY

Walking machine

DATTATRAY BALSE, 95, Mumbai

Dattatray Balse is set to participate in the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run for the third time in a row. For someone who walks 10 km every morning—"I give it a miss only when it's raining"—the event is more about running for a cause than facing any challenge.

Leaving his hometown Karwar in Karnataka in 1936, young Balse joined Lloyd's Bank as a clerk in Bombay. Hard work earned him the officers' grade by the time he retired in 1974. Superannuation was certainly not an option for someone who gave fitness priority. "As I was always very health conscious, I never felt any strain working long hours," recalls the 95 year-old. That's exactly what he continued to do for the next 25 years—10 years in Corporation Bank and 15 years in an import-export firm—before calling it a day. "My children felt a career spanning 63 years was adequate," he says with a smile.

MAINTAINING A STRICT ROUTINE HAS BEEN BALSE'S MANTRA FOR GOOD HEALTH. HIS DIET HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED ALL THESE YEARS. "I JUST HAVE SMALLER PORTIONS NOW," HE EXPLAINS

Balse started walking and jogging in the early 1940s. After jogging for 5 km from his home in Tardeo to Nariman Point, he would return walking—a habit that continued till he was nearly 70. “I only stopped jogging on my doctor’s advice,” he admits. “Not that I ever had to go to a hospital,” he has-tens to add. Perfectly fit even today, routine health checkups are Balse’s only contact with the medical fraternity. Balse was in his mid-40s when he decided to join Bal Vyayam Mandir, a neighbourhood athletics institution. Evenings were soon devoted to exercise, and he began participating in local competitions and winning them. His fitness level could be gauged by the fact that he performed 1,001 *suryana-maskar*—each sequence has twelve *asana*—in a session.

Maintaining a strict routine has been Balse’s mantra for good health. His diet—“a fish-eating vegetarian”—has remained unchanged all these years. “I just have smaller portions now,” he explains. He indulges in an afternoon siesta as he wakes up early for his 10 km walk. “I leave the house for Nariman Point by 4 am and return by 6.30 am, stopping in between to chat with friends I have made on the way,” he says.

He is disappointed that his wife Meera, 83, never developed the habit of walking. “She says her responsibilities as a homemaker came in the way,” he says with regret. “And now arthritis comes in her way.” In his view, walking is the best route to good health. “It not only ensures physical fitness but helps nurture emotional well-being.”

—Anjana Jha

SHOE SMART

- Don’t use a new pair to walk/run on the day of the marathon. If you must buy a new pair, try on both the shoes as the size of feet may differ. Sometimes the feet swell so buy shoes in the evening.
- There must be a half-inch gap between your big toe and the shoe. After wearing the shoe, put your finger inside. For a snug fit, your finger should stop at the heel (instep). If it can

travel around the shoe, it’s a loose fit.

- The forefoot portion of the shoe should be flexible when bent. The mid sole near the heel must be compressible when pressed.
- The heel should be rigid to prevent unnecessary movement of the foot, especially the ankle.

—Dr Kannan Pugazhendi,
director (sports medicine),
Fitness Foundation
Academy, Chennai

>> resting heart rate, lower blood pressure, and improve efficiency of heart and lungs. And though the pace doesn’t mean a significant rise in the number of calories burnt, it results in improved fitness. Besides helping to burn cholesterol faster, walking burns glucose and helps improve glucose metabolism in diabetics. It also calms the mind and thereby reduces resting tone and pulse rate. According to a University of Georgia study published in the latest issue of the *Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy*, walking programmes for silvers decrease the risk of disability and increase the chances of remaining independent by 41 per cent.

Kick-starting the circulatory system, running burns calories at double the rate of walking, with a heavier person burning more calories than his thinner counterpart. “You don’t burn as many calories >>

TREATING INJURIES

If minor niggles are ignored and left untended, they have a way of developing into major injuries. According to Dr Himanshu Gupta, pain and spine specialist, Doctor Kares Hospital, Gurgaon, the first thing to do when you experience pain while walking or running is to stop and resume only after the pain disappears completely. If it persists, the following four-stage process helps rehabilitate the body:

- Reduce initial inflammation using the RICE principle. Use of an elastic bandage will help support the ankle. If swelling persists for more than three days, get an X-ray done to rule out a fracture.
- Restore normal joint movement. The healed

body part should be able to move the full range of motion.

- Reintroduce movement and exercise gradually. While resting your foot, which is imperative for complete healing, the body works to restore normal strength.
 - Restore functional capacity. Reintroduce stress of regular physical activity (in this case, jogging or walking) gradually. Before returning to full intensity, there should be no pain, complete range of motion, normal strength and balance in the muscles, normal coordinated patterns of movement, and no injury compensation movements like limping.
- If pain continues, consult an orthopaedist.

ACUPRESSURE

An ancient healing art developed in Asia over 5,000 years ago, acupressure uses fingers to press key points (energy centres) on the surface of the skin to stimulate the body's natural self-curative abilities. When these acupressure points are touched, held, pressed or massaged, the energy flows to release muscular tension and promote blood circulation. Acupressure stimulates and activates the body's life forces to help fight illness, aid healing and restore harmony.

Stimulation of various points on the body neutralises and mobilises toxic build-up in the muscle tissue that causes stiffness in the body. Besides the nerves, stiffness in muscles puts abnormal pressure on blood and lymph vessels, which affects both the skeletal and organ systems. This disturbs the normal rhythm and creates imbalance in the body.

"We can use acupressure in our daily lives to improve fitness," says Dr Kannan Pugazhendi, director (sports medicine), Fitness Foundation Academy, Chennai. "For instance, after a workout outdoors, people should walk barefoot inside the house or in a garden where there are no stones, thorns or other irritants. However, diabetics must be careful not to hurt themselves." Walking bare-



TOE RINGS ARE SAID TO INFLUENCE THE POINTS THAT CONTROL ANGER AND EMOTION IN WOMEN!

foot gives the effects of acupressure and stimulates the points of the sole effectively. It is advisable for people who use acupressure slippers not to use them for more than 15 minutes a day. "Wearing them throughout the day can give rise to acupressure impulses that may not be conducive to healing," he says. "Acupressure mats are also beneficial in stimulating the pressure points and can be used regularly."

>> walking briskly as you do while running, but both are equal in terms of exercise; and walking causes significantly less damage," says Dr Agarwala. "This is because the pounding effect of running on cement roads that wears out the knees and hips is avoided."

STEP UP THE FITNESS

For someone who has never exercised before or is resuming walking after a considerable interval, it's best to start slow. Initially, walk for 10 minutes or as long as you are comfortable with. Speed and duration should be increased gradually, as overdoing it could result in injuries. Maintaining a constant speed and tempo helps build rhythmic breathing patterns. The ideal target for silvers walking to exercise for the first time should be 20-45 minutes a day, seven days a week, at a speed of 4-5 km an hour. "Regular and >>

BAREFOOT RUNNING

Barefoot running involves pushing the ground with the ball of the foot rather than the heel, with the foot landing directly under the hips—a natural motion that running shoes impede. Gaining a fol-

lowing on the fringe of the running community, US barefoot marathoner Ken Bob Saxton is the leader of the movement. Other champions who have blazed a trail—without their shoes—include Ethiopian runner Abebe

Bikila, world-record holder at the 1960 Olympics in Rome; South African Zola Budd, world record holder in the early 1980s; Great Britain's Bruce Tulloh, barefoot champion at the 1962 Europeans; Kenyan Tegla Loroupe,

another Olympic marathon world-record holder; and current world-record holder from the US, Rick Roeber. However, while some runners advocate barefoot running, others consider it a shortcut to potential injury.

>> active walkers can set their own limits—the higher the better,” says Dr P Suryanarayan, consultant joint replacement surgeon of Apollo Hospitals, Chennai. “But if there is any pre-existing cardiac problem, the exertion permissible should be clarified with the physician.” Sometimes a stress test may be suggested to assess if there are any cardiac issues.

“Walking is proven to improve overall circulation and reduction in cardiac mortality from all causes,” says Dr Suryanarayan. “Maintaining this level of activity in the long term, therefore, improves cardiac reserves.” Mohali-based **Gurdev Singh Pander**, 78, exemplifies the point. Even after an open-heart surgery 15 years ago, Pander finds no reason to visit a doctor. A former employee of the customs department of the British Civil Services in London, Pander took voluntary retirement to return home in 1975. Walking has been a habit for many years now. “Even during my stay in England, I would walk regularly,” he recalls. Resuming his walking gradually after surgery, he returned to the old routine. “I go for a 5 km walk first thing every morning; it keeps me fit and full of beans,” he says with a smile, insisting he doesn’t experience any fatigue after the daily exercise.

“Walking is the most natural form of exercise that doesn’t strain any part of the body,” reiterates **Vidya Gajapati Raj Singh**. “It is suitable for people of any age and at any level of fitness.” Belonging to the royal family of Vijayanagaram (in Andhra Pradesh), she learnt how to swim and ride horses as a young child. Today, at 55, this fitness expert divides six days of the week between brisk walks, the treadmill and swimming. Apart from this, she does weight training and abdominal exercises about four times and yoga thrice a week. In fact, Singh’s mother, who is 78, also walks one hour every day—her routine for the past four

decades. “Until the mid-1970s, my mother ran 5 km every day,” says Singh with pride. “Nothing can beat the feel-good factor that exercise gives.”

Motion is also ‘lotion for the joints’, a credo Dr Suryanarayan believes in. Walking helps maintain mobility and tone the muscles, specifically the legs; and free-hand movements of other joints while walking help keep them supple. “It is proven that regular walking reorients muscle fibres, thereby improving efficiency,” he says. Patients with arthritis should walk within their tolerance limits, as prolonged rest wastes muscles. If walking induces leg pain or heaviness, it may be advisable to consult an orthopaedic surgeon to rule out spinal problems. For people with back problems, a lumbosacral belt (that provides lumbar and abdominal support) is advisable during walking or prolonged standing.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Irrespective of whether walking or running is included in an exercise programme or is part of your daily routine, it contributes to longevity. An online study in the April 2008 edition of *British Journal of Sports Medicine* gives more good news: according to physical education experts at the University of Toronto in Canada, regular exercise—with walking or running included—can put ageing on hold for 12 years!

It’s better to realise it early before the ill-effects of a sedentary lifestyle strike, as was the case with 61 year-old **Zul Hirji**. Hirji moved to Kolkata from Mumbai in 1968 to set up his distributor agency business. His work (from 9 am to 8.30 pm) kept him busy but he continued to exercise at home with weights and sporadic cardio exercises. Unlike him, his wife Parveen was very particular about walking 4 km every day and exercising in the gym. Hirji thought >>

>> that his exercise regimen at home combined with some walking and climbing the stairs related to his work were adequate. It came as a rude shock when a blood test eight years ago revealed his triglyceride level to be almost 700 (the normal level is 150 or less). "It was so unbelievable that the blood test was repeated thrice," recalls Hirji. Uncontrollable binging on sweets and carbohydrates combined with a family history of diabetes negated the effects of his workouts. "The doctor advised immediate diet control and extensive walking." It was then that walking became a part of Hirji's routine. He now starts his day at 4 am and walks 6 km thrice a week. On other days, he does freehand exercises and works out for 45 minutes like before. The new regimen has helped him bring down his triglyceride count to 200 and boosted his HDL (good cholesterol level) from 50 to 60.

Improvement is faster when you walk more often. Though walking thrice a week is considered to be the 'maintenance level', 30 minutes at least five times a week is generally recommended. An individual's capacity for exercise can vary widely even in someone of the same age and physique. It is more important to improve your own performance gradually than attempting to walk farther or faster than someone else. The pace should allow you to maintain conversation comfortably. Speed can be accelerated if breathing is light, or reduced if there is a tendency to become breathless. However, a doctor should be consulted for advice regarding the level of exercise most suitable for you. It is possible for symptoms like dizziness, pain or nausea to surface when you are unaccustomed to walking.

RUN FOR IT

Once regular walking sets your fitness graph on an upward curve, running is just steps away. And it's never too late to begin. A case in point is **Dr Bhagwati Oza** (January 2006 issue of *Harmony*). Her training in the National Cadet Corps (NCC) during college days led her to nurture ambitions of joining the army. But when as a young doctor, the dream failed to materialise, she did everything from mountaineering to flying to satisfy her adventurous spirit. To fulfil her mission to spread the word about safe motherhood practices, she opted to cycle across the length and breadth of India. Though she walked a few miles visiting villages in Gujarat, she picked up her habit of walking regularly only at the age of 50 in 1986.



REFLEXOLOGY

An ancient form of therapy, reflexology is a technique of massaging various points on the feet, hands and head, to relieve tension and stress and treat illnesses. Relaxing and revitalising, this alternative healing method should be practised twice or thrice a week initially and increased to four to five times a week after a few months. Each massage session can vary between 10 and 30 minutes.

In reflexology, different pressure points on the feet affect different parts of the body. For example, while pressure is applied to the toe tips for headaches, the reflexologist applies pressure on the heel and ankle for back-related

problems. Medical practitioners believe the pressure applied to a specific area of the feet generates biochemical signals through the peripheral nervous system. Travelling to the central nervous system, these signals processed in different parts of the brain transmit information to various organs to make adjustments. The relaxing effect decreases the tension that working organs have on the body.

Besides relieving pain and stiffness caused by too much exercise or using muscles for too long, foot reflexology can help prevent and cure symptoms like headache, stress, asthma, constipation, sinusitis and migraine. It also boosts the blood circulation system.

"I was 60 when I learnt tennis," she remembers. "Impressed with my speed on the court, the coach suggested I start running seriously." And that's what she did, getting gold in her first attempt in 1999, in Goa, where she picked up the medal for a fast walk race. Retirement gave her more time to compete professionally, and win medals with remarkable ease. In 2008, besides bagging five gold medals at the Gujarat State Veterans Athletic Meet in Rajkot, >>

9 WEEKS

COUCH POTATOES CAN NOW DREAM OF RUNNING 5 KM OR 30 MINUTES IN JUST NINE WEEKS! DESIGNED TO EASE A PERSON INTO THE RUNNING PROGRAMME GRADUALLY, THIS BEGINNER'S SCHEDULE OUTLINES A WALKING AND JOGGING PLAN RATHER THAN A RUNNING REGIMEN AS STARTING OFF TOO FAST MAKES THE BODY REBEL.

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>> two silvers for sprinting at the National Veterans Athletic Championship in Mumbai, and six gold medals in swimming at the Masters National Swimming Championships in Indore, the 73 year-old swam 3.5 km in the Narmada River as part of an open-water swimming challenge.

This intrepid gynaecologist is now gearing up for a four-month walk along the Narmada in October 2009 to promote health awareness among women in villages. Discovering the surge of physical energy and spiritual boost that exercise gives, there's no stopping Dr Oza. "My physical fitness and feeling of overall well-being make me feel younger by the day. I feel confident competing with people much younger than me."


Interestingly, regular running actually slows the effects of ageing, according to a new study by the Stanford University School of Medicine. Elderly runners have fewer disabilities, longer span of active life and are 50 per cent less likely to die early deaths compared to non-runners of their age. Published in the 11 August issue of the journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*, the findings show that onset of disability starts later for runners.

"Running is one of the secrets of dodging old age," affirms Dr Siddhartha Gupta, consultant orthopaedic surgeon, Peerless Hospital & B K Roy Research Centre, Kolkata. "You are never too old to start or continue a running programme. It helps maintain and improve cardiovascular health and tone muscles as you age." Not only does it help reduce a host of medical conditions brought on by inactivity, it is beneficial for back pain, varicose veins, cholesterol, arthritis and osteoporosis. "Research has proved that the age-related loss of fitness is largely owing to inactivity rather

than ageing alone," he says. "And though it takes time for beginners to build up stamina to run even for a short period of time, you can come out trumps if you stay motivated and follow proper guidelines." Needless to say, any person with medical problems should consult the doctor before getting started.

Retired CBI officer **John Devasir** started exercising when he was 75. A diabetic whose sugar level was proving hard to control, he started playing volleyball and moved on to athletics on his doctor's insistence. Today at 85, he is an international veteran athlete who runs 100 m and 200 m and does the long jump, triple jump and high jump. He recently won four gold medals and one silver medal at an athletics meet in Malaysia. "Success at this age has given me happiness and a feeling of being wanted," says the Chennai resident.

Though running is one of the most popular methods of staying fit, it is also an easy way to develop injuries. "You should modify your training routine according to the physical changes that come with ageing," warns Dr Gupta. Most running injuries are overuse injuries sustained without any history of a traumatic event. But the right precautions (see box on 'Training and injury prevention') can minimise the risk.

Whether you run or walk—the choice is yours—the payback is immense, physically and mentally. Indeed, if good health is the insurance you want, exercise is an easy premium to pay. An informed plan of action backed by a proper diet is all you need to get started. Just lace up! 

With Nitika Bajpayee in Delhi, Swati Amar in Chennai, Sonali Majumder in Kolkata and Vandana Shukla in Chandigarh

Rich repast

Dr Pushpesh Pant resurrects Rajasthani splendour with a royal menu

There are various ways that boneless chicken can be enjoyed. One of our favourites is the *mokul*. The recipe is purloined from the royal Rajput kitchens of Rajasthan. The kings fought and played with their heart. Energy drained was replenished

with restorative delicacies. *Pachmel daal* belongs to the same Rajasthani repertoire and should appeal to vegetarian gourmands. Both lend themselves to an ideal winter menu. *Methi kishmish* completes the trio, its bitterness beautifully balanced by the raisins.

MURGH KA MOKUL (MILDLY SPICED BONELESS CHICKEN)



- Coriander powder: 1 1/2 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/2 tsp
- Red chilli powder: 1 tsp
- Boiled onion paste: 150 gm
- A cup of yogurt (whisked)
- Salt to taste

METHOD

Heat oil in a pan; add cloves, green cardamom, pepper, bay leaves and mace. Stir over medium heat until the cardamom changes colour. Remove the whole spices. Add onions and fry lightly until translucent. Add garlic and ginger paste; stir-fry until onions turn golden. Add coriander, turmeric and red chilli powder (dissolved in 1/4 cup of water); stir-fry until specks of fat appear on the surface. Add boiled onion paste and stir-fry until specks of fat reappear. Add chicken; stir-fry for 4-5 minutes, add two cups of water and bring to a boil. Remove from heat, stir in yogurt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and let it simmer until the chicken is cooked and the gravy reaches a sauce-like consistency. Adjust the seasoning and serve hot.

Preparation time: 1 hour

Cooking time: 1 hour

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Chicken breast (boneless and cut into 1/2" strips)
- Refined oil: 3 tbsp
- Cloves: 5
- Green cardamom: 4
- Black peppercorns: 10
- Bay leaves: 2
- Mace: 2 blades
- Onions: 150 gm; chopped
- Garlic paste: 2 tbsp
- Ginger paste: 3 tsp



METHI KISHMISH (FENUGREEK SEEDS WITH RAISINS)

Preparation time: 45 minutes
(excluding soaking time)

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- Fenugreek seeds: 200 gm;
soaked overnight in milk
in the refrigerator
- Coriander powder: 5 tsp
- *Kaer* (raw mango reserve in
water): 45 gm
- Red chilli powder: 2 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 2 tsp

- Milk: 2 cups
- *Amchoor* (dried raw mango
powder): 30 gm
- Cooking oil: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- Raisins: 100 gm
- A generous pinch of
asafoetida
- Salt to taste

METHOD

Boil water in a pan and add soaked fenugreek seeds. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce to low heat and simmer, stirring

occasionally, until the milk is fully absorbed. Remove and wash the boiled fenugreek in running cold water, drain and keep aside. Heat oil in a deep pan, add asafoetida, stir until it puffs up, add coriander, red chilli and turmeric (dissolved in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water) and stir-fry until the moisture evaporates. Then add fenugreek seeds and *kaer*; stir for 4-5 minutes, add raisins, *amchoor* and salt, and stir for about two minutes. Adjust the seasoning before serving hot.

DALCHA GOSHT (MEAT WITH LENTILS)

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour

Serves: 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- Mutton: 300 gm; small, bite-sized pieces
- Channa dal: 150 gm; soaked in water for 30 minutes
- Refined oil to cook
- Green cardamom: 4
- Black cardamom: 1
- Cloves: 4
- Cinnamon stick: 1" piece
- Bay leaf: 1
- A pinch of mace
- Onions: 75 gm; sliced
- Ginger paste: 1 tbsp
- Garlic paste: 1 tbsp
- Green chillies: 3; chopped
- Red chilli powder: 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/4 tsp
- Coriander powder: 1 tsp
- Yogurt: 300 ml
- Coriander seeds: 1 tbsp

- Curry leaves: 10

- Lemon juice: 1/4 cup

- Salt to taste

FOR THE TEMPERING

- Ghee: 1 tbsp

- Garlic cloves: 3

- Whole red chillies: 2

METHOD

Boil lentils in a pan of water till cooked; transfer to a blender and puree. Tie coriander seeds and curry leaves in a *potli* (muslin pouch). Heat oil in a pan, add the bay leaf, cardamom (green and black), cloves and cinnamon. Lightly fry over medium heat until the spices begin to crackle. Add onions and lightly fry until golden brown. Then add ginger and garlic pastes and green chillies; stir for 15 seconds, add mutton and fry for 3-4 minutes. Add red chillies, turmeric and coriander powder

and stir. Now add water (approximately 4 1/4 cups) and bring to a boil. Remove the pan from flame, add yogurt, return to heat. Bring to a boil again, suspend the *potli* in the pot, cover and simmer until the mutton is tender. Add lentil puree, bring to a boil, and simmer for about 15 minutes. Remove the *potli*, sprinkle lemon juice and stir. Adjust the seasoning. Heat ghee in a pan, add garlic and lightly fry over medium heat until golden brown. Add red chillies and stir. Remove and pour over the mutton stew. Serve with steamed rice. 🍽️



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



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Citrus punch

Oranges and gooseberries pack in a wealth of benefits, says **Dr Vijaya Venkat**

ORANGE

Juicy and mostly sweet, the orange is the most widespread of citrus fruits. A native of south China, it is said to have been introduced first to southern India. Vasco da Gama is believed to have taken it from there to the rest of the world. However, the present cultivated species in India is from the west.

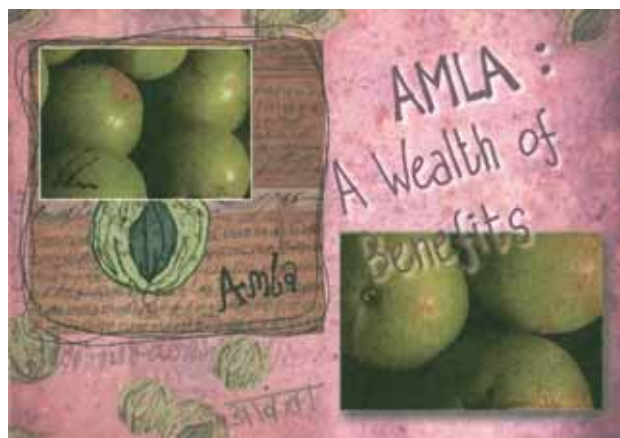
Every cell in our body is located in a protective bed of jelly—the connective tissue. Cell walls are generally

- Peel can be used (fresh, dried) as a facemask or bath powder
- Chopped/grated peel can be used to garnish salads/juices/cold soups

thin enough to invite poisons, virus, toxins, allergens and foreign materials. Inadequate Vitamin C in our diet allows connective tissue to break open and lack of calcium makes it weaker, thereby inviting disease. The orange is a unique combination of Vitamin C, calcium and 60 bioflavonoids, which help make Vitamin C even more effective. Just one orange has an astounding 116.2 per cent of the body's daily requirement of Vitamin C. Abundant in the white rind of the fruit,

INDIAN GOOSEBERRY (AMLA)

A popular belief equates all the wealth in the world with one *amla* (*amla/amalaki*/Indian gooseberry). Considered to be the most potent, nourishing and rejuvenating of all plants, this easy-to-grow medicinal plant provides real wealth by purifying the blood, increasing the appetite, quenching thirst, embellishing beauty, extending the lifespan, keeping away diseases and rejuvenating us from within.



In Ayurveda, where almost every elixir and cure contains the *amla*, it is said to maintain the balance between all the five elements: air, wind, fire, water and earth. Such is its power that it is considered a 'complete food', containing all the six *rasa* or principles of life: sweet, sour, salt, pungent, bitter and astringent. All parts of the plant—fruit, seeds, leaves, root, bark and flowers—are extremely beneficial for health.

Recently, antioxidants and free radical scavengers have been discovered in *amla*. These help reduce the effects of disease and slow ageing. *Amla* is one of the richest known sources of Vitamin C, which is a primary water-soluble antioxidant. In fact, Vitamin C in *amla* is preserved even at high temperature. It disarms free radicals and prevents damage in the aqueous environment both inside and outside body cells. Inside the cells, free radical damage can result in inflammation and DNA mutations. Vitamin C, found in *amla*, strengthens digestion and helps the liver to detoxify better, reducing the severity of asthma, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, colon cancer, constipation, hyperacidity and infertility. *Amla* cleanses



Vitamin C helps to strengthen capillary walls, reduce inflammation and decrease the seepage of protein and blood cells into tissues.

An orange also provides natural fruit sugar (fructose) and fibre, which help control blood sugar levels. Its fibre 'grabs' cancer-causing chemicals from cells in the colon and helps reduce constipation. It's also rich in phyto-nutrients which contribute to its antioxidant properties and are a good source of 170 bodybuilding, protective ingredients like thiamine, folate, Vitamin A and potassium.

Interestingly, an orange segment is a replica of the body tissues. The fibrous rind is like the collagen and collective tissue and its globular particles resemble the cells embedded in the collagen. Low in calories, the orange is high on health—eat it fresh, chew it whole.

- Ground with ginger and dates (*khajur*), *amla* is an excellent thirst quencher
- Whole twigs/branches can be dropped into water sources (wells/tanks/lakes) to get rid of pollutants and foul smell

the blood and micro channels of our body, eliminates fatigue, supports regeneration of cells and boosts energy levels.

Unfortunately, it's mostly consumed as *murabba* (sweet pickle) or sherbet—these forms disguise its original acidic taste. This is the season for *amla*—go get it fresh.



Dr Vijaya Venkat, Mumbai-based nutritionist and health activist, is founder and head of the Health Awareness Centre. If you have any questions for her, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org

2 Weight WATCH

Dr Joe Lewis answers your questions on diet, weight and exercise

Q Though I have gained considerable weight after menopause, I have no health problems other than occasional aches and pains. Do you think it is necessary for me to lose weight?

A Most of us, especially women, gain weight with age. In fact, Indians tend to accumulate fat more readily than most ethnic groups—health professionals now consider Indians to be obese at BMI (Body Mass Index) 25, instead of 30.

As a result of hormonal changes during perimenopause (the years leading to menopause), women have the tendency to add several inches around the abdomen. Fat in the abdominal region is proven to increase risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Being overweight puts extra pressure on joints. As a result, the cartilage that protects them wears off, leading to stiffness. Excessive fat also affects blood circulation, causing high blood pressure. Get a body composition analysis (a measure of body fat vs. lean muscle) and take action to lose weight.

Fitness depends on four factors: strength, balance, flexibility and endurance. At Kaya Life, there is a dedicated programme that measures your fitness and offers a plan for improvement.

Fitness brings a dramatic improvement in quality of life, which is not only the absence of illness, but about being fit. When health is compromised, people experience diminished emotional fulfilment. Even losing 5-10 per cent of your weight can benefit you. So ask yourself, 'Is my body fit for living an enjoyable and independent life?'



Dr Joe Lewis is head of research and development at Kaya Life, a chain of professional weight-control centres (SMS Life to 54646). If you have a question for him, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org

2 ASK THE EXPERT

Dr Anjali Mukerjee answers your questions on nutrition, fitness and health

Q There are a number of cooking oils on the market—olive, rice bran, corn, sesame, coconut, groundnut, soybean and mustard. Which of these should one use?

A With so many brands flooding the market today, making the right choice could prove difficult. While the right medium can help our hearts pump better, our joints supple and improve the texture of our skin, the wrong one could lead to the development of plaque in our arteries and increase risk of coronary heart disease.

Unrefined oils are best suited for cooking on medium heat. Regardless of which oil you use, it should preferably be unrefined. If it is monounsaturated (olive, rice bran, canola, sesame seed, mustard oil) as well as unrefined, it is even better. Refined oils, on the other hand, are extracted from oilseed or oil cakes and further refined to produce clear cooking oil (free from rancidity and foreign matter). Here are a few readily available cooking oils with their nutritional properties:

Canola oil: This light, golden coloured oil is one of the most balanced cooking oils. It is therapeutically used to protect the vascular system against blood clots. Recent strains of the plant contain less erucic acid (a fatty acid that can prove unhealthy when consumed in large amounts) than its ancestors. Studies claim that this oil promotes good health because of its very low saturated fat content and high monounsaturated fatty acid (MUFA) content, along with a beneficial omega-3 fatty acid profile. Its mild flavour and relatively high smoke point (around 450°) make cold-press canola oil excellent all-purpose oil. Of all the commercially available oils, it has the least amount of saturated fat.

Olive oil: Although more expensive than other oils, olive oil has many health benefits and is the preferred choice in Mediterranean countries. Olive oil contains

monounsaturated fat, which can lower the risk of heart disease by reducing the total and low-density lipoprotein (LDL or 'bad') cholesterol levels in the blood. You can get maximum benefit by substituting saturated fats with olive oil, rather than adding more olive oil to your diet. When buying olive oil, it's best to select the extra virgin variety. In order to get maximum benefits, it should be used to prepare salad dressings, as seasoning for soups, and for sautéing vegetables on low flame.

Groundnut oil: It's the most commonly consumed oil in India, particularly in rural areas. This oil contains a good percentage of heart-friendly MUFA, which has been shown to lower the levels of bad cholesterol in our body without lowering the levels of good cholesterol. It's available in refined as well as filtered form. Although filtered oils are nutritionally superior, they may contain toxic compounds or adulterants.

Mustard oil: This oil has a higher proportion of MUFA and also of polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA). However, it also contains erucic acid. Mustard oil is suitable for all types of cooking, including frying, but should ideally be used along with other cooking oils to reduce the erucic acid content.

Rice bran oil: Extracted from rice bran, this oil is not only rich in MUFA but also has cholesterol-lowering properties owing to the presence of oryzanol. It contains natural Vitamin E (an antioxidant). It does not decompose at high temperatures to form toxic compounds and is, therefore, suitable for deep-frying.

Coconut oil: Coconut oil contains a high percentage of saturated fat, but this is different from what's present in animal fat. It is rich in medium chain fatty acids (MCFAs) like lauric acid that have anti-bacterial properties. MCFAs are easily digested and absorbed. Coconut oil possesses anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that protect arteries from atherosclerosis and from heart disease.



Nutritionist Dr Anjali Mukerjee is the founder of Health Total, a nutritional counselling centre. If you have a question for her, write to query@health-total.com Website: www.health-total.com Tel: 022-26732883, 56044001

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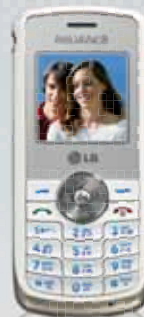
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Snap out of it

Shameem Akthar tells us how to beat the winter blues with yoga

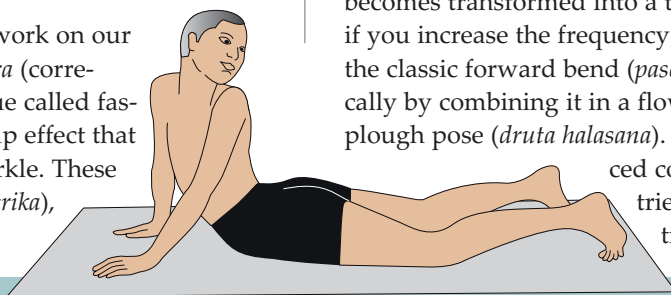
In the chill of winter, we find ourselves run aground by grogginess. The lethargy in the air matches the sluggishness in our body. But not all of us have the luxury to plop back into bed—doing yoga in the morning can give us the impetus to meet the day head-on.

There are some convincing reasons for this. Leg stretches and movements perk up the heart; this in turn sends more blood to the brain, which means more nutrients and oxygen that sharpen our thinking. Brain circuits dealing with emotions are flushed with more neuro-hormones, enabling you to zap the blues. Yogic exercise pumps up the flow of the growth hormone; this generates more brain cells making us smarter and more upbeat. In fact, exercise even affects insulin that affects blood sugar, which is involved with our hunger levels. A well-designed yoga practice can control hunger pangs.

Certain yogic practices that work on our subtle body or *sukshma sharira* (corresponding to soft muscle tissue called fascia) have a similar pick-me-up effect that re-infuses our lives with sparkle. These include bellows breath (*bhastrika*), skull cleanser (*kapalabhati*),

nostril cleanser (*neti*), sun salutation (*surya namaskar*) and the lion pose (*simhasana*). You can also add punch to your practice by including the dynamic (*druta*) variations of these poses—they pump you up with a vigorous energy. They are also weight-busters, trimming the fat that gets layered during cold seasons. These variations also spike the metabolism that becomes sluggish during winter.

Yoga's fast-paced variations fight lethargy by causing a mental turnaround towards life in general. And though some of the *druta* variations appear simple at first attempt, they can become tough by just tweaking the number of times you do each. Begin modestly, by doing each *druta asana* five times or so. Then increase the number so you are doing it 10 to 30 times in a few weeks. If you already practise yoga, request your teacher to provide you with the *druta* variations of all the poses. For instance, for the classic cobra (*bhujangasana*), the swaying cobra (*trikaya bhujangasana*) is a simple variation that becomes transformed into a tough aerobic workout if you increase the frequency. Similarly, you can do the classic forward bend (*paschimottasana*) dynamically by combining it in a flow with the dynamic plough pose (*druta halasana*). This is a rather advanced combination but can be tried by any regular practitioner of yoga. ■



Yogic moves

Swaying cobra, dynamic variation of the classic pose (*Trikaya bhujangasana*)

Lie on your stomach, chin on ground. Place palms flat on ground on either side. Spread out legs behind, about one-and-a-half feet apart. Inhale, raise your head, lifting stomach off the floor, pressing down palms, and tilting head behind. Exhale, looking over your right shoulder to gaze at left heel. Hold for a few seconds.

Inhale, return torso to centre. Exhale, turn to left, gazing over left shoulder at the right heel. Return to centre. Do up to 10 rounds. Rest on stomach.

Benefits: This is the easier version of the classic cobra pose as there is less pressure on the lower back and chest. It is fat-busting and prevents and treats constipation, especially if done first thing in the morning. It tones the spine, upper and lower limbs; spikes mood; and helps treat diabetes and stress.

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

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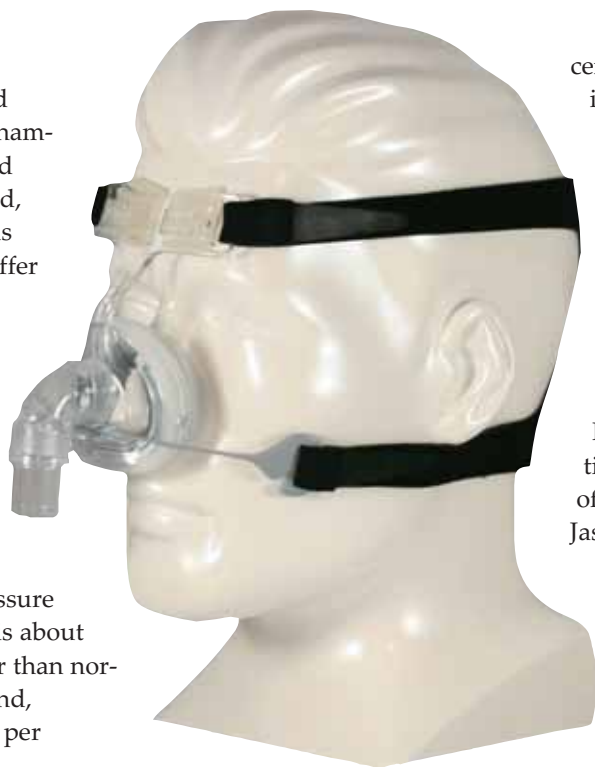


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OXYGEN THERAPY

Next time a festering wound refuses to heal, an oxygen chamber may do the trick. Offered by few hospitals in the world, Jaslok Hospital in Mumbai is the first Indian hospital to offer **hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT)**. In conjunction with regular treatment, HBOT—comprising five to 20 sessions of 90 minutes each in an oxygen chamber—can help treat acute traumatic wounds, gas gangrene, diabetic foot and varicose veins. Pressure inside the oxygen chamber is about two-and-a-half times greater than normal atmospheric pressure and, therefore, contains about 20 per



cent more oxygen. This increased (and pure) oxygen level enhances growth of new blood vessels, ability of white blood cells to destroy bacteria and remove toxins, and growth of cells that help heal wounds. "HBOT is an ancillary therapy that accelerates the healing of various wounds," Dr Shoaib Padaria, consultant interventional cardiologist and director of the HBOT department at Jaslok, tells *Harmony*. "We get an average of eight to 12 patients every day and about 90 per cent are being treated for diabetic ulcers, diabetic gangrene and diabetic foot."



NUTTY SOLUTION

Have you become health-conscious and started working on your abdominal flab, cholesterol levels and blood pressure? If so, remember to include a handful of nuts in your diet for a year as part of your new regime. Spanish researchers have found that, taken in combination with a typical Mediterranean diet rich in fruits, vegetables and fish, **nuts cut heart risks known as metabolic syndrome** in more people than a low-fat diet. Rich in anti-inflammatory substances (fibre and antioxidants), high unsaturated fat in nuts lowers triglycerides and increases good cholesterol. Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Health and government of Valencia, Spain, the conclusions were published in the November 2008 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*. According to the study, people showing maximum improvement didn't lose weight but succeeded in decreasing belly fat and improving cholesterol and blood pressure. Naini Setalvad, nutritionist and health consultant, Health for You Foundation, Mumbai, affirms this, saying, "A mixture of unsalted walnuts, pistachios, almonds and cashews in raw form can be added to the daily diet without worrying about cholesterol."



SUPER BONDING

Perhaps a decade down the line, **all it would take to mend a shattered bone would be some glue.**

Inspired by sea-based sandcastle worms that build homes using their natural glue, bioengineers from University of Utah in the US are working on a synthetic version. Gluing small bone fragments in fractured knees, wrists, elbows, ankles and other joints, as well as the face and skull—not larger bones, though—will help the broken bone to align precisely. The synthetic glue will also deliver pain-killers, antibiotics or even stem cells to affected areas. To test its strength, bonded pieces of bone were kept warm and wet for 24 hours, revealing that the first-generation prototype glue performed 37 per cent better than commercial superglue.

“Considering the ongoing research, it’s achievable,” Dr Shreedhar Archik, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai, tells *Harmony*. “And when it happens, it will be a boon to orthopaedic surgeons as it will solve 20 per cent of the problems we face in treating complex fractures.” Animal testing is expected in a year or two and human trials in five to 10 years, according to the study, which will soon be published in the journal *Macromolecular Biosciences*.

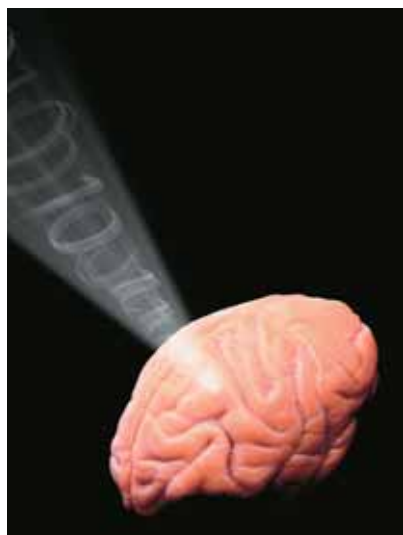
LOOKING GOOD

Forget those old-fashioned bifocals or juggling constantly with your distance and reading glasses. Excellent for correcting presbyopia—a condition that causes trouble reading fine print, constant headaches, eye strain and tiredness for people over 40—**Varilux progressive lenses enable you to see near, far and intermediate distances clearly.** Claiming to be the most technologically advanced lenses in the world, the Essilor product is the outcome of extensive research. “Launched in 1959, Varilux was the first progressive lens in the world,” Pradeep Narayan, chief operating officer of Essilor India Pvt Ltd, tells *Harmony*. “It continues to be the most popular progressive lenses prescribed by eye care professionals worldwide. In fact, we get a new customer every six seconds!” Available in a variety of materials, designs and coating options, the cost of a pair of lenses ranges from Rs 3,760 to Rs 62,500. The choice is yours.



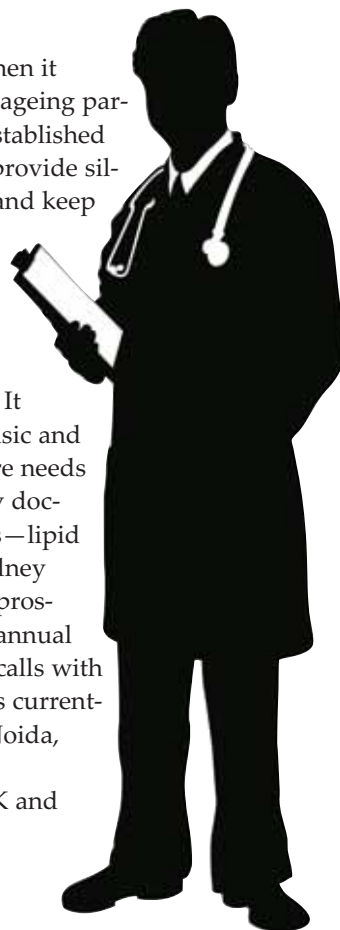
QUICK REMEDY

Surgery for epilepsy is affordable now. Costing about Rs 100,000 in private hospitals, KEM Hospital in Mumbai will now charge a modest Rs 15,000 for the complete procedure—inclusive of video EEG, MRI and neuro-psychology test. With a success rate of 80-85 per cent, surgery is a far better option than controlling epilepsy with drugs. "However, surgery is only possible if the MRI shows the abnormal part of the brain that sparks seizures," Dr Sangeeta Ravat, epileptologist and head of neurology at KEM, tells *Harmony*. "The focal abnormality has to be identified for it to be removed." A neurological disorder, epilepsy is believed to affect one in 100 people, with about 30 per cent being silvers. Though the condition can be inherited or occur because of congenital malfunction, it can develop at any age owing to trauma, tumour or infection in the head, or stroke. Since its first surgery for epilepsy in 2001, KEM recently crossed the 100 mark. The hospital will celebrate the milestone on 17 January 2009 at KEM's main lecture theatre at 2 pm.



DOCTOR AT HAND

NRIs have less reason to feel guilty when it comes to the healthcare needs of their ageing parents. Delhi-based Doorstep Doctors, established six months ago, organises its team to provide silvers with medical assistance at home and keep their children living abroad informed. Claiming to be **India's first home healthcare service for the parents of NRIs**, the organisation has qualified medical professionals who are experienced at treating age-related ailments. It offers two modules to choose from (basic and advanced) depending on the healthcare needs of the patient. Besides regular visits by doctors and comprehensive investigations—lipid profile, blood sugar tests, liver and kidney function tests, ECG and screening for prostate cancer, arthritis and others—the annual subscription includes two emergency calls with free ambulance facilities. The service is currently available in Delhi, Noida, Greater Noida, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad and Chandigarh, with clients in the US, UK and Malaysia. For more information, call 09953678687 or log on to www.doorstepdoc.com



DIAGNOSING EPILEPSY

Neurological examination to test reflexes, muscle tone, muscle strength, sensory function, gait, posture, coordination and balance.

Blood tests to check for infections, anaemia and diabetes that could cause seizures.

Electroencephalogram (EEG) to record electrical activity of the brain; in some cases, video-EEG monitoring might be required.

Computerised tomography (CT) to obtain images from different angles to show cross-sections of the brain.

tional images of the brain and skull to reveal cerebral abnormalities like tumours, cysts, strokes or tangled blood vessels.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) for detailed images of the brain to reveal abnormalities that could cause seizures.

Positron emission tomography (PET) to help visualise active areas of the brain using injected radioactive material and to evaluate patients for epilepsy surgery when the area of seizure onset is unclear on MRIs or EEGs.



Ear to the earth

Listen, and you will learn, urges Mark Nepo

I remember the first time I was forced to listen, not by adults or teachers, but by running as a boy in the playground so fast and free that I fell and scraped my knee. After the cut reduced to a throb, I couldn't get up. It was then that I saw my blood sprinkled in the dirt. It was then I first realised that this great thing we ran on was the earth. I had never paid attention to it. I was just a boy. I put my ear to the ground and listened. I don't know what I thought I would hear. But it was summer and the ground was warm. So I thought I heard warmth. I told my teacher, but she said you can't hear warmth. Yet some 45 years later, I think you can. When lost, we simply have to remember to put our ear to the earth, or to our heart, and we will hear a warmth that guides.

The next time, I was more drawn to listen than forced. It was a few years later on my father's sailboat. Once out to sea, I remember being pulled forward by the water till the family noises faded. I found myself sitting in the bow of the boat, legs over the side, staring into the endless waves parting around us. I didn't have the words or concepts for it, but it felt like God's voice murmuring in the waves. At a very early age, both the earth and the sea opened me to something deep inside that has carried me ever since. After years of study in many spiritual traditions, I believe it is the simple, mysterious pulse of what is sacred.

In these small childhood experiences of listening, I discovered a spiritual law: that we are both forced and drawn by everything larger than us to hear

what is essential. Repeatedly, we are given chance after chance to stop and listen to all that is fundamental. When forced to our knees, we are offered the chance to hear the warmth in all that holds us up. When drawn into the rhythms of vastness that surround us, we are offered the chance to hear the waves of God's voice, of which we are one, if we can leave the noise of others behind. When we can listen deeply, we are strengthened to feel that everything around us lives within us and that everything within us lives as part of the world. When we experience both the circumference and centre of the circle of life at once, we are then in the larger Self, the Universal Self, as Carl Jung describes it.

Imagine a 19 year-old in the chaos of war, running through mud and explosions, seeing others fall around him. Imagine him slipping into a ditch, a small pocket of stillness that seems out of reach, for the moment, from all the destruction. And in that small empty space between the mud and his frightened mouth, he is forced to listen to his breath. In that small cloud emitting from his lungs, he is

forced to hear the breath of everything that ever lived. The conflicts change and the ditches change, but sometimes listening to that small breath is all we have. And sometimes it opens up everything.

This falling down and emptying ourselves of noise, so that we can hear the sacred pulse of things, is at the heart of all the meditation practices invoked throughout the ages.

Sooner or later, if we want to feel what it is to be alive in a Universe that is alive, we will have to empty ourselves, open our hearts, and listen. This emptying and opening and listening is the practice that allows us to hear that voice of God—whatever name you give to it—that resides in each of us. ■

*When we can
listen deeply, we
are strengthened
to feel that
everything around
us lives within us*

Excerpt from The Exquisite Risk by Mark Nepo (Three Rivers Press; Rs 699). Mark Nepo is an American poet and philosopher

STEAM'n'TRIM

Make your home a safer, brighter, better place with *Harmony's* new series

You may have often heard doctors and dieticians extol the virtues of steamed food, especially if you are keeping an eye on your cholesterol. Steam cooking is not just good for your heart though. It also helps you retain up to 60 per cent of Vitamin C found in vegetables—ordinary boiling kills 70 per cent of the precious vitamin from your veggies. A new study conducted by the BBC suggests that Vitamin C might just reinforce your body's defence against cancer and osteoporosis. So when we noticed the Glen Steam Cooker on the shelves we decided to take a closer look.

Launched by Glen Appliances Pvt Ltd, the cooker has a light and elegant plastic body with three compartments, a rice bowl and separate slots for eggs. You can steam several items without using different cookware. Set the timer to the required cooking time and get ready to serve your meal when the alarm goes off. You can also use it to blanch vegetables, thaw frozen food and reheat food. It works on electricity and the auto cut-off facility ensures you don't waste unnecessary power.

Available at all major home appliance stores

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■ The compartments of an old ice cube tray can be used to store screws, paper pins, safety pins, rubber bands and buttons for easy reach.

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LEADING THE WAY

Wazeer Hayath's invention helps the visually challenged move without fear

Ten years ago, Wazeer Hayath, a bore-well repair mechanic in Tumkur, Karnataka, watched helplessly as a visually challenged man slipped and fell into a slushy pothole. He was too far away to be of assistance but vowed to himself that he would find a way to help the visually challenged move without fear. Wazeer kept his promise with the invention of the 'Blind Man's Stick' in 2005.

With the help of moisture and depth sensors at its tip, this lightweight, 48-inch stick alerts users if they are stepping into water or into a pit, or if any vehicle is approaching. A battery charge of just one hour offers a power backup of 50 hours. Apart from the basic model, which beeps to sound the alert, Wazeer has developed an advanced model with a multilingual voice-recorded system, giving users a choice of 28 Indian languages. The alerts (such as 'water/mud careful' and 'excuse me') are intended for the user as well as people nearby. For the hearing impaired, the stick is available with a vibrating alert system as well as voice function.

The invention, which has been certified by Indian Institute of Technology - Delhi and Electronic Test and Development Centre, Bengaluru, received a patent from



PRASAD DURGA



The Blind Man's Stick operates on a simple yet clever mechanism of moisture and depth sensors

the National Innovation Foundation in Ahmedabad in April 2008. What makes this achievement even more remarkable is that Wazeer, the son of a farmer from Timakunddalo village in Bengaluru district, has only studied up to primary school. Today, the 48 year-old has established his own company, Waz Technology, which is in talks with Red Cross Society, Tumkur, to market the stick across the country and internationally if possible. For now, the

The stick alerts users if they are stepping into water or a pit

stick is available directly from Waz Technology—the price ranges from Rs 700 to Rs 2,200 depending on the model.

Next, Wazeer plans to add more languages like Japanese, German

and French to the voice system and develop more variations of the stick, like a location-specific stick (to move inside a house) and a traffic signal stick that will 'read' traffic signals and tell the user when to move. That apart, he's also developing a DC generator that runs without any fuel. ■

To order a stick or for more information, contact Waz Technology at (0) 9964232518 and 9844941812, or email waz.tech.tumkur@gmail.com



WORLD VIEW

A leg up

Better known in the rest of the world for its cars, Japanese giant Honda is emerging as one of the world's leading manufacturer of robots and other assistive devices. In November 2008, it unveiled its latest offering: a walking assist machine. The 6.5-kg device—consisting of a saddle, leg-like frames and shoes—can reduce the load on users' legs while walking or climbing and descending stairs by supporting bodyweight. As with a unicycle, users ride on the seat sustained by frames that can bend and extend like knees, with two motors controlled by signals from sensors inside the shoes. "Our target is older people and people undergoing rehabilitation who need support for their leg muscles and joints," Masato Hirose, a senior engineer at Honda Research and Development, tells media. No word yet on when it'll hit the market, and what it'll cost.

Harvesting happiness

HARIPRASAD TRIVEDI, 81

WAS: Director, Department of Agriculture, Gujarat

IS: Seed certification consultant

I was born in the pre-Independence era to a simple, upright schoolteacher in a small village. As I excelled in academics I was able to pursue my education through scholarships. In 1953, I graduated from the Anand Agriculture College in Gujarat and joined the Department of Agriculture in Gujarat.

I retired as director (seeds) from the agriculture department 22 years ago. For four years after retirement in 1986, life was quite restful. It was not entirely cheerful, though—I missed my wife

who had passed away in 1983. Besides loneliness, I was nagged by an urge to accomplish something more. As my job had offered me insight into the hardships faced by farmers, I wanted to do something to help them. In 1990, I met Dilipsinh Jhala, an old college batch-mate and then managing director of Gujarat State Grain Federation. He encouraged me to start a business in fertilisers and seed quality certification. As I had a vast network of contacts in the agricultural field, it didn't take me long to start a distributorship in fertilisers. I converted the house where I lived earlier into my office. Today, I also offer consultancy to village cooperative societies on improving the quality of paddy seeds.



Trivedi: pursuing his field all over again



Potential to grow

Experts answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement



I am a retired schoolteacher. I have been a keen gardener all my life and would like to start a business. I have been reading about plant rental services. Do I need to be a certified horticulturist to start such a venture?

Through a plant rental service you can offer potted plants to offices on a monthly hire basis. As even indoor plants need a fair amount of sunshine to thrive, they tend to wilt in the air-conditioned confines of an office after a month. Plant rental services offer companies an opportunity to replace the plants every month with a new variety. As part of maintenance, you will need to visit these offices on alternate days to spray fungicide and water the plants. The plants that have served their month-long term in the

office can be nurtured in your balcony, terrace or garden with sunlight and fertilisers, and then sent to the other offices. You could approach small companies in and around your area and offer your services.

You don't have to be a certified horticulturist to start such a business. Start small with about 20-30 plants, ideally drascena or areca palms as they are easy to maintain. You could charge up to Rs 200 per plant. Distribute pamphlets and posters advertising your service in commercial areas. Word-of-mouth also works wonders. Initially you can visit offices on your own. When the business flourishes you may need to hire helpers and a van to transport the plants.

—Nishant Vora

Vora owns Silver Foliage, a landscape design and development company based in Mumbai



SAMIR PATHAK

My daily schedule involves extensive fieldwork. I travel to the interiors of Gujarat thrice a week to meet farmers and officials at the village cooperative societies. In the past nine months, my car has covered 19,000 km. I work from 9 am to 1 pm every day, and after a three-hour break, resume work till nine in the evening. Sundays are mostly spent evaluating performance, doing paperwork and planning targets and deadlines for the coming week.

I believe that any endeavour based on truth, honesty and sincerity can only lead to success. I lead an active life, follow a strict and healthy diet, and suffer from no ailments. Though my two sons often encourage me to 'take it easy', I think I have just begun and have a long way to go.

—Rafat Nayeem Quadri



I have a large social network. I would like to start a business that will help me stay occupied and be financially independent. My friends suggest I open a marriage bureau. Do you think it's a good idea?

Yes. And the best part of it is that this idea needs very little investment. You can operate from home. All you need is a computer to maintain the records of clients' personal details. Before you put up a signboard outside your door, look out for prospective grooms and brides in your circle; ask for details on their age, professional background and temperament. Ask for references and investigate backgrounds thoroughly before recommending them to anyone. Ensure people pay their registration fee before you start looking for prospective brides or grooms.

—Harry Sumitra

Sumitra owns Rhea Marriage Bureau in suburban Mumbai



I am 56. I was an airhostess with a leading airline. Now that I have retired, I would like to put my skills to use. I am keen on starting a finishing school. Is it a feasible idea?

Earlier, finishing schools were focused on table etiquette, deportment and conversation skills; today many of them even offer specialised courses for brides, professionals and children. You could start by investing in good books on local and international etiquette. You could also sign up for a course in a finishing school to keep pace with the latest trends. Approach beauty parlours and kitty party groups through which you can reach out to women. You can start off with a workshop for children where you can teach them dining etiquette and the appropriate language to use in a social gathering. Do invest in fine cutlery, crockery, table linen and appropriate food.

—Harleen Sekhon

Sekhon runs Grace, a finishing school in Chandigarh

Send queries to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org; for second career options, go to www.harmonyindia.org



HASTA LA VISTA

Find out why *Harmony* reader Gilbert Menezes, 65, was not quite ready to say goodbye to Andalusia

Though the travel bug has nagged me all my life, it was only after retirement that I was well and truly bitten. My wife Maria and I have been exploring Europe after I retired in 2000. We have visited the Tuscany region of Italy, driven from the south to the north of Portugal, and spent a week in Barcelona. Of course, it took years of judicious financial planning to indulge in such wanderlust. What also helps is our shared passion for adventure. We believe in enjoying life to the fullest, regard-

less of the aches and pains of our silver years.

In September 2007, we took a long-desired trip to Andalusia in southern Spain, the most populous of the country's 17 autonomous communities. Part of the reason for choosing this exotic destination was our love for everything Mediterranean—culture, food and wine. It took us four months to plan the whole trip. After years of waiting to explore the world, we didn't want to settle for the blink-and-miss sightseeing that package

tours offer. More important, independent travel offered us the flexibility to plan our own itinerary. So, after much Net surfing and debating, we chiselled our itinerary down to 10 days in Madrid, Seville (the capital of Andalusia), Cordoba and Granada. (These places form a circular route through southern Spain that starts and ends in Madrid.)

We flew Swiss Air from Mumbai to Madrid via Zurich—the return trip cost us Rs 35,000 each. The one-hour wait at Zurich airport for



Part of our reason for choosing this destination was our love for everything Mediterranean—culture, food and wine

equivalent to a two-star hotel) that offers simple, clean accommodation. The hotel staff is friendly without being intrusive and rooms are small but spotlessly clean—some even have small balconies looking out onto charming Spanish lanes. On a practical note, it is located right in the heart of the city centre near Plaza Mayor. This large, beautiful square was built in 1620 by the Hapsburg rulers, a great European dynasty that reigned over Spain and Austria for more than six centuries. The Plaza is a perpetually vibrant hub pulsating with live music and flamenco dance performances. (Flamenco is a Spanish art form that melds dance, folk music, singing, chanting, dancing and staccato hand-clapping.) Students, artists and tourists throng the open-air cafes, bars and *bodegas* (wine shops) near the square. As it was our first day in Madrid, we decided to relax and simply soak in the good times—*Madridenos* (as the inhabitants of Madrid are popularly known) never seem to sleep!

The next morning, we boarded the metro, which halts at all key tourist spots in Madrid. The first halt on our route was Prado Museum, renowned as the largest art gallery in the world. Apart from sculptures, coins and other works of art, the museum has a collection of 8,600 paintings, including 16th century compositions by Renaissance artist El Greco; the realist canvases of Velazquez; and 18th century masterpieces by Goya, the

‘father of modern art’. A hop away is Reina Sofia Museum that showcases Picasso’s famous *Guernica*—an intense depiction of the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. Maria and I were awestruck at the artistic splendour spread before us.

A convenient way to enjoy a tour of Madrid is by special double-decker buses. For a tidy Euro 15 (Euro 1= Rs 63), you can enjoy the best of Madrid. The buses stop at around 20 locations, including the 20-acre Royal Botanical Garden; Puerta del Sol, the centre of Spain, which has the zero kilometre marker where all the roads of Spain are measured from; and Palacio Real, an enormous palace that has two floors full of medieval weapons. The best part of the bus ride is that you are free to hop on and off to grab a snack or beer en route. A dinner for two in one of the plush restaurants, including a quality Rioja or Ribiera Duero wine, could set you back about 70 Euro, so be prepared.

After spending three days in Madrid, our itinerary pointed to Seville. The super-fast bullet trains that operate between Madrid and Seville ate up 470 km in just two-and-a-half hours and cost Euro 75 a ticket. We booked into a small hotel in Barrio de Santa Cruz. The old houses and narrow winding streets make this former Jewish quarter a popular tourist attraction. After some much needed rest and relaxation, we set out on our jaunt around Seville.

our connecting flight was in itself memorable. I still can’t get over the sheer size and capacity of the place—the airport reportedly handled over 19 million passengers last year. Despite the heavy traffic, airport staff treats passengers with efficiency and courtesy.

When we stepped out of Madrid airport at the end of the 10-hour flight (including the connection from Zurich), Maria and I were nodding off under severe jet lag. We booked into Hostal Cruz-Sol, a *pensione* (family-run guesthouse,

Seville is a beautiful medieval town with strong Moorish undertones in its architecture, music and food. Seville Cathedral is the biggest Gothic church in the world with a huge bell tower called the Giralda. The magnificent church took over a century to build and contains the tomb of Christopher Columbus. The coffin containing the remains of Columbus is carried by four pallbearers carved out of bronze. Two pallbearers look ahead at the new world, while the two in the rear look downwards, as if mourning the death of the great explorer. Close to the cathedral is Alcazar, an eclectic complex of palaces and gardens built by Muslim and Christian rulers.

We spent three days lapping up Seville's visual delights—the Museum of Fine Arts, the Plaza de Torros or bull ring, and the Torre del Oro, a 12-sided gold tower built by the Almohads, a monotheistic Muslim dynasty, in 1200 AD. All these sights are huddled together and the best way to explore them is by foot. Besides, the quaint cobble-stoned streets are a pleasure to walk on.

Like all tourists who visit Seville, I could not resist the lure of sangria—the famous cocktail of watered-down red wine, brandy and fruit served with *tapas*. *Tapas* is a rich platter of appetisers, such as tortillas filled with olives, assorted cheese, seafood, and meat patties laced with a generous drizzle of olive oil—the signature ingredient in Spanish cuisine. Along the way, we stopped at one of the many cheerful cafes that invite you to sit back and watch life pass by. Nothing, no matter how delicious, however, could distract me from Andalusia's famous Jerez

FACT FILE

GETTING THERE

All major airlines like Air France, British Airways, Jet Airways and Lufthansa Airlines offer flights to Madrid. Surf the Net for the best airfares, affordable hotels and convenient train and bus seats. Buy guidebooks like *Lonely Planet*, *Let's Go* or *Frommers* to plan your trip.



TRAVEL TIPS

- Spring and autumn are the best time to visit Andalusia as the weather remains pleasant between 18° and 28° C. Avoid travelling in June, July and August to steer clear of the swarm of tourists.
- Travel light with wheeled baggage for ease of travel in trains, coaches and metros. Carry a photocopy of your passport to avoid any legal problems.
- Never carry cash or cumbersome travellers' cheques. All the cash you require can be drawn

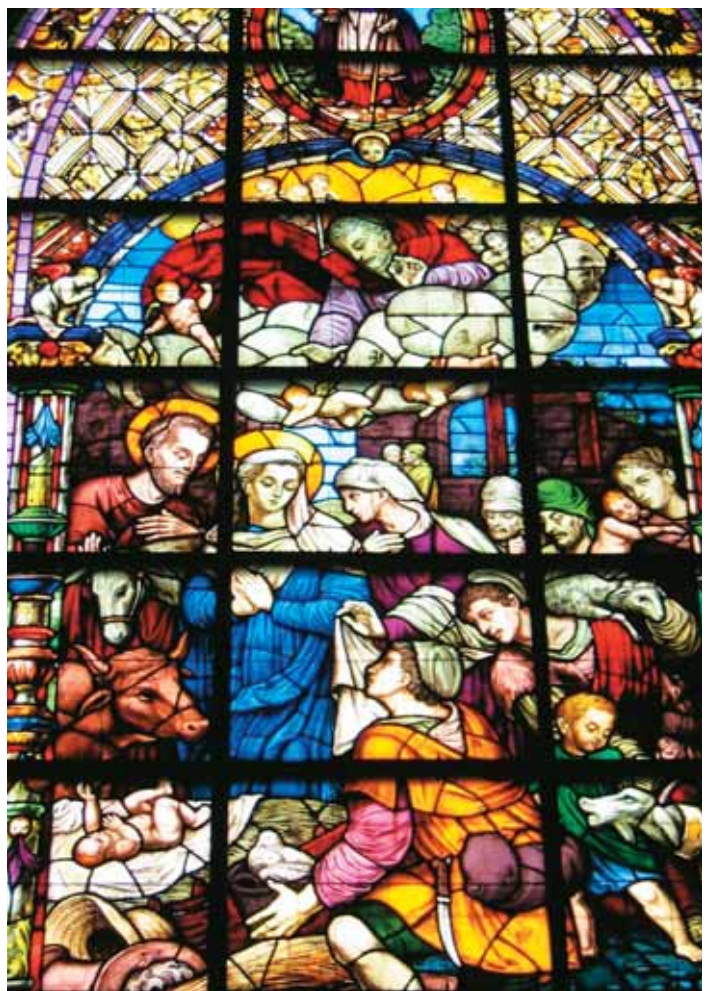
from ATMs using an international credit or debit card. The same goes for hotel and restaurant bills. Invest in travel medical insurance.

- Check whether breakfast and tax are included in the quoted tariff because this could make a difference of up to 10 per cent to your bill.
- Most *pensione* or hostels in all the four cities are located in downtown areas. They cost about Euro 60 a night on average and come with comfortable beds and clean bathrooms.

(pronounced 'herez') sherry. The most famous *bodegas* producing fine sherry are located at Jerez de la Frontera, an hour's drive from Seville. Jerez, unlike red or white table wine, has a higher alcoholic content and is classified as a dessert wine. A bottle of Jerez costs about Euro 6, but a glass in a bar or café comes at a steep Euro 2. Like port wine, it owes its existence to great sea explorers

who wanted a wine that would last through sea voyages. Of course, I needed no such excuse to stock up on the full-bodied brew.

(Clockwise from top left) The Alhambra stands serene despite the perpetual throng of tourists; biblical scenes wrought in stained glass inside the Seville Cathedral; a quiet winding lane in Seville; an exquisite line-up of Spanish pottery in Cordoba





The Cathedral of Seville is the largest Gothic cathedral and the fourth largest Christian church in the world

If there is anything more potent than Spanish wine, it's flamenco. Seville is home to the most wonderful flamenco shows. The fiery spirit of the Spanish gypsies can best be enjoyed in Los Gallos and El Arenal—clubs that are highly recommended for their two-hour flamenco performances. The melodramatic songs sung in a high-pitched plaintive tone are set to the dramatic gestures of the dancers in traditional costumes. Long before the dancers took a bow, we were clapping and shimmying in our seats just like the rest of the audience!

The next day we headed westwards to Granada. The three-hour bus ride took us through miles of olive plantations. In Granada, just as in Seville, we chose a small, simple hotel. We had reserved two days to explore Granada as it is famous for its rich legacy of Islamic and Christian antiquity and architecture. It's home to one of the magnificent wonders of the world, Alhambra, a large complex of palaces and gardens built by the Muslim Nasrid rulers in 1340 AD. Legend has it that when Moorish ruler Boabdil fled Granada, the last Muslim

stronghold in Spain, his mother berated him for casting a last longing look at the Alhambra saying, "You do well to weep as a woman for what you could not defend as a man." It is open every day between 8 am and 2 pm; however, tourists are only allowed to spend 30 minutes in the Nasrid palaces. Make sure you book a visit through www.alhambra-patronato.es in advance.

The last halt on our circuit was Cordoba, home to the Mezquita, a massive mosque built in the 8th century on top of a Visigoth (East Germanic tribe) cathedral, upheld by 850 columns. Inside, there are many Christian chapels and artefacts. I have never seen a more stunning example of secularism and harmony.

From Cordoba, we returned to Madrid for a mandatory shopping trip. The city offers a wide choice of leather goods and exquisite Spanish pottery. Being food lovers, we couldn't resist splurging on some lovely hand-painted ceramic crockery. For food and wine, I would recommend the supermarket chain El Corte Ingles. While fashion wear is plentiful in Spain, it's also prohibitively expensive.

It was tough saying *hasta la vista* (until we meet again) to Andalusia. I would recommend this little-known jewel of a region to all silvers. If you are hesitant to go alone, get together with other like-minded couples and plan a holiday. After having worked hard all your life, a trip to Andalusia is a perfect way to reward yourself. 🇪🇸

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SILVER SONG

In Aurangabad, **Rajashree Balaram** meets Madhukar Gawai, a shy, studious craftsman persevering to keep the art of Bidri alive

As the morning sun shuffles its feet on the horizon, Madhukar Gawai enters the shed attached to his modest house in the Chawni area in Aurangabad. Under the warm glow of a sodium lamp, Gawai gathers his array of tools and settles into a corner with a metallic bangle in hand. He stares pensively at the bangle, fixes it to a caliper, then picks up his *kalam* (a metal stylus) and starts engraving. The delicate tapping is barely audible in the morning quiet, but the sacred intensity with which Gawai works with the stylus speaks volumes about his passion. A couple of hours later, the 55 year-old craftsman blows softly on the bangle to dispel the metallic dust and reveal an enchanting vine of lines, swirls, rosettes and curlicues. Then, in the same rapt silence, Gawai proceeds to beat a thin wire of silver into the engraved motif.

If it weren't for artisans like Gawai the art of Bidri would have faded long ago. Bidri originated in Bidar in Karnataka 800 years ago. Characterised by silver inlay work on black metal—an alloy of copper



NITIN MAHAJAN

Gawai fashioned a kiln out of a terracota pot used to hold plants

and zinc—it has a muted appeal unlike any other ornamental art. “Only people who are subtle in their taste are connoisseurs of Bidri,” says Gawai. Although soft-spoken, his voice thrums with his passion for the art.

The craft is traditionally handed down over generations of Bidri artists. Gawai, though, has no such legacy to speak of. Born in a poor farmer’s family in Jawakheda, a small village near Aurangabad, he was orphaned at the age of seven. For some time, he tried to eke out a living for himself and his younger brother by working as a cowherd. Later, a distant relative enrolled him at the Little Flower Missionary School in Aurangabad, where a nun Noeleen Pinto, an art connoisseur, introduced him to a local Bidri artist Mohammad Hassan. Gawai joined Hassan as an apprentice in the mid-1970s and was instantly mesmerised by the art. “You need a lot of passion and patience to pursue it,” he says. “A bangle can take up to two days.”

Though the art was struggling on the brink of extinction until a few years ago, institutions like Paramparik Karigar and Bhau Daji Lad Museum in Mumbai are working hard to revive it. “I don’t feel as hopeless now as I did earlier,” says Gawai who was often cheated by middlemen.



“Only people who are subtle in their taste are connoisseurs of Bidri”

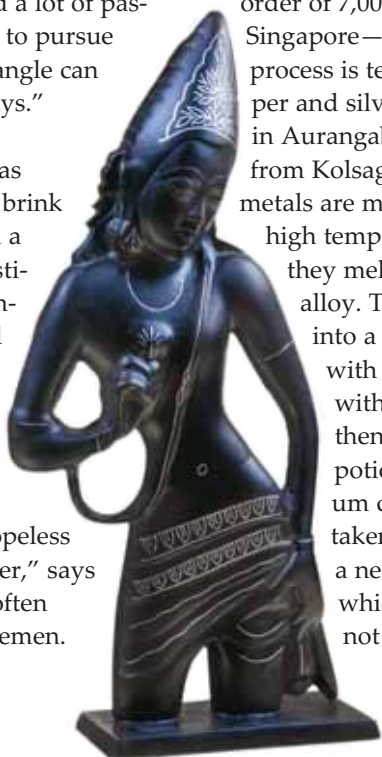
Today Gawai’s sons Vijay, 29, and Mukesh, 25, pursue the art with the same passion. “I was hoping to take up a regular job, but then I noticed the resurgent interest in Bidri and decided to continue with what my father had started,” says Vijay, who is a graduate. Mukesh and Vijay dream of setting up a larger workshop. They travel to handicraft exhibitions all over India with their father and are often invited to conduct workshops and deliver lectures at the Indian Institute of Jewellery Design in Mumbai.

Last year, the Gawaiis shipped an order of 7,000 Bidri earrings to Singapore—all handcrafted. The process is tedious. Though copper and silver are easily available in Aurangabad, they source zinc from Kolsagali in Mumbai. The metals are mixed and heated to a high temperature on a kiln till they melt and fuse to form an alloy. The alloy is poured into a mould and engraved with the design and inlaid with silver. The item is then treated to a unique potion—water, ammonium chloride and soil taken from the bottom of a nearby fort. “The soil, which for centuries has not been exposed to sun-

light or rain, lends the metal the striking black finish so characteristic of Bidri ware,” says Gawai, who uses soil from the Daulatabad fort.

Gawai was one of the three craftsmen to be felicitated at the recent Paramparik Karigar exhibition held in September 2008 in Mumbai. He says he would love to teach the art to people who are willing to learn, “but there aren’t too many who have the patience to learn the intricacies”. Tasneem Mehta, managing trustee of the Bhau Daji Lad Museum in Mumbai that showcases Bidri ware, is doing her bit to promote the art. “Many foreigners visit the museum so it’s a great place to market the product,” she says. “The museum hardly draws any profit from the sale; the money is directly handed over to the artists.”

Though money is slowly trickling in, the income is not consistent. An electric kiln will speed up the firing process, but comes at a steep Rs 300,000. Still, Gawai’s sons continue to be hopeful. While their father is partial to classic motifs, Vijay and Mukesh experiment with abstract designs. Gawai is not complaining though: “I am happy that the art will not die with me.”



From Dilli, with love

Delhi: India in One City, Text: Malvika Singh

Photo Editor: Uday Sahay, Academic Foundation; Rs 3,750; 246 pages



There's no sitting on the fence when it comes to Delhi. Most Indians who have lived in the capital—or even visited it—are unambiguous in their feelings: they love it or hate it. For their part, writer Malvika Singh and photo editor Uday Sahay are proud to wear their heart on their sleeve; the result is *Delhi: India in One City*, a lavish pictorial tribute to India's capital.

Calling it “the heart of India...that has, without hesitation, embraced the diverse, multilayered and dynamic reality of all Indians”, Singh walks you through her “Dilli”, its marriage of the old and new—its river, the Jamuna; the changing seasons; myriad places of worship; the shopping, food and fashion; arts and culture; luxury and hospitality; and a new urban landscape, heralded by flyovers, malls and, of course, a spanking, state-of-the-art metro rail system. The publisher-editor-columnist writes with palpable pride about a city she calls her own, a sentiment echoed by chief minister Sheila Dikshit in “First City”, her wistful introduction to the book. Other

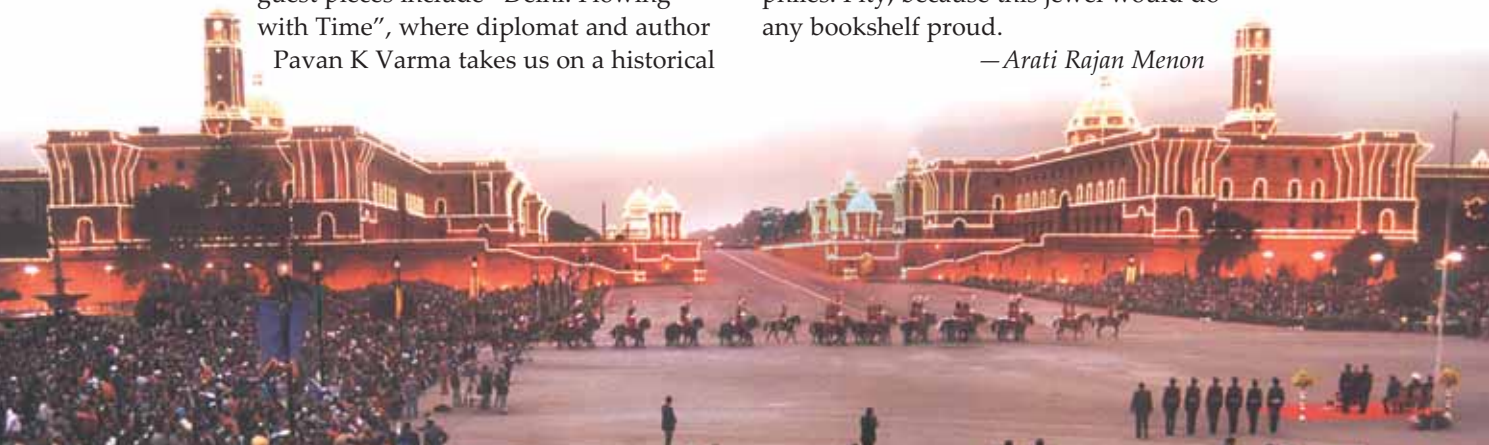
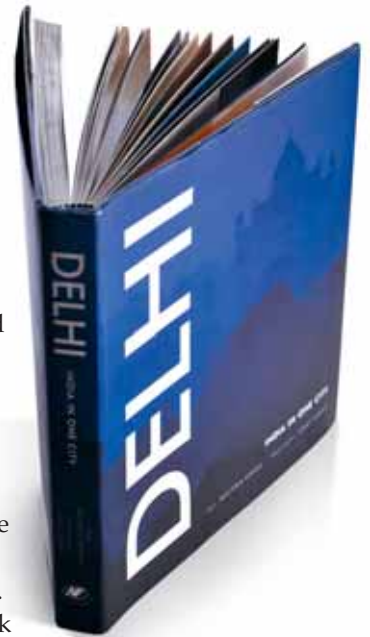
guest pieces include “Delhi: Flowing with Time”, where diplomat and author Pavan K Varma takes us on a historical

tour from 8th century AD to New Delhi, which “has emerged from the discarded chrysalis of the past, indeed in rebellion against its confining limits”. And author William Dalrymple's short and stunning “The Jewel in the Crown”—his view of the silhouette of domes, towers and cupolas on Raisina Hill. “In the dusk, as the sun sank behind the great dome of the Viceroy's House, the whole vista would turn the colour of attar of roses.”

Such evocative writing, though, is a mere foil to the breathtaking pictures that jump off the pages. Every image tells a story; from haunting, surreal silhouettes of Delhi's magnificent monuments to images that crackle with activity—a cocky young lad in a metro train, a *qawalli* taking place at a *dargah*, two silvers sharing a snack in front of a billboard. IPS officer turned communications analyst Sahay, who doubles up as photographer and photo-editor, outdoes himself in composing a visual symphony on all that is remarkable about the city.

All that is not so special—the seamy underbelly of Delhi, the menace and dark edges that no metropolis is immune from—is ignored. Though it could have added more nuance and texture, the omission is understandable considering the feel-good nature of the book. Less justifiable is the steep price tag, which would limit ownership to libraries and avid Indo-philosophes. Pity, because this jewel would do any bookshelf proud.

—Arati Rajan Menon



BRIEFLY

Inspired by his friend, filmmaker and foodie Ismail Merchant ("the master of leftovers"), journalist **Richard C Morais** of *Forbes* magazine chronicles chef Hassan Haji's journey from Mumbai to Paris in **THE HUNDRED-FOOT JOURNEY** (HarperCollins; Rs 295; 180 pages). Following a tragedy at home, his family is forced to sell their modest restaurant in Mumbai and move overseas—they settle down in the remote French town of Lumiere opposite famous French chef Madame Mallory, who reluctantly discovers that the young lad has "the touch" and makes him her apprentice. Then begins Hassan's introduction to French cuisine and his induction into the rarefied ranks of haute 'chefdom' in Paris where your worth is defined by the Michelin stars you hold. From Icelandic ptarmigans (pheasants for the uninitiated) to *macchhi ka salan*, chicken curry to bouillabaisse, Morais throws in every kind of food—and some equally piquant characters—to tell this startlingly original story that is sure to appeal to gastronomes and non-epicures alike. Delicious.

Geo-political implications aside, 9/11 affected New Yorkers in individual, searing ways. In **NETHERLAND** (Fourth Estate; Rs 295; 248 pages), **Joseph O'Neill** examines its impact on Dutch-born equities analyst Hans van den Broek and his family: British wife Rachel and their young son. After the attack, Rachel wants to return to London while Hans is determined to stay on. As their marriage crumbles, Hans finds refuge in—would you believe it—cricket, specifically the variety played in public parks across the city by West Indian teams. One of the few white

You might expect melodrama when a famous, dying author writes his autobiography. But British novelist and short story writer **James Graham Ballard**, whose work includes seminal works such as *Crash* and *Empire of the Sun*, takes a more refined route in **MIRACLES OF LIFE** (HarperCollins; Rs 399; 278

pages). With studied nonchalance, the 78 year-old shows you glimpses of his uncommon life—birth and childhood in Shanghai; struggle in a Japanese internment camp; boarding school in England; life with his "bloodless" grandparents; abandoned degrees in medicine and English; his discovery of science fiction ("here was a form of fiction that was actually about the present day"); and battle with prostate cancer.

The emotional quotient really spikes only when he speaks of the death of his wife, after which he was left alone to raise his three young children ("I still think my children brought me up, perhaps as an incidental activity to rearing themselves. We emerged from the childhood together."). They are the "miracles" of the title and this elegant book is a paean to them.

men in a whole new world, Hans relies on Trinidadian Chuck Ramkissoo for navigation—this modern-day visionary believes cricket can bridge any barrier. As he tells Hans once, "All people, Americans, whoever, are at their most civilised when they're playing cricket." These are the conversations that play through Hans's mind—many years on—when he is told that Chuck is dead. O'Neill writes with a brutal force that leaves the reader breathless; his anger at the moral bankruptcy of our lives draws you in and leaves you raging too. This is a tale for our times.





WIZARD OF WORDS

For most of us, solving crosswords is play. But for **Kanta Vora**, it's a job. In December 2008, the Mumbai-based 74 year-old completed 25 years of creating crosswords for Gujarati daily *Mumbai Samachar*. She remembers devouring crosswords that appeared in the Gujarati newspapers when she was very young.

Back then, the prize for solving a crossword was a free trip to Shirdi. Needless to say, Vora was a regular pilgrim. Noticing her genius at word play, *Mumbai Samachar* asked her to become its crossword designer. "I never break rules like exceeding the number of black squares in a crossword," says Vora, who shares her passion with her husband. In fact, the couple enjoy whipping up theme-based crosswords together. The creator of two Gujarati books on crosswords—*Shabda Khel* and *Shabda Lalitya*—Vora designed her 5,000th crossword in June 2008. Three years ago, she found a place in the *Limca Book of Records* for "innovative crossword making".

INDIAN SAMURAI

World peace and amity may not be a distant dream if we have more people like **Ramesh-chandra Divekar**. The 69 year-old Pune-based electronics engineer has strengthened Indo-Japanese relations for over 35 years now. At a ceremony held at the office of the Consulate General of Japan in Mumbai in December 2008, Divekar was conferred with the Order of the Rising Sun. The Japanese order, established in 1875 by Emperor Meiji, is the second most prestigious Japanese decoration after the Order of Chrysanthemum. Every year, since 1981, the Order is conferred on five non-Japanese individuals around the globe. Divekar is the chairman of the Indo-Japanese Association, which he founded in 1973. The association conducts Japanese language and origami classes. In 1993, Divekar also initiated an student exchange programme with a Mumbai-based Japanese school through which Japanese children interact with Indian students. Divekar, who speaks fluent Japanese, believes, "We should always nurture a curiosity in other cultures."



HEMANT PATIL

MUSIC THERAPY

Music has the power to heal. And Grammy winner **Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt** believes that, now more than ever, mankind needs that soothing touch. The 56 year-old, who is also regarded as the creator of the 'Mohan Veena', has composed a new *raga* along with his son Salil Bhatt. The father-son duo performed the *raga* at Satya Sai Auditorium in Delhi in mid-December as a tribute to all the civilians and officers who lost their lives in the recent



terrorist attack in Mumbai. The new *raga*, 'Vishwa Ranjini' is an amalgamation of two different *raga*—'Shivaranjini' and 'Madhuvanti'. "The two *raga* have their own unique beauty, yet intertwined they continue to be distinctive without one overpowering the other," he tells *Harmony*. The *raga* begins with an '*alaap*' and '*jod*' and graduates into '*jod jhala*'. "With this *raga*, we want to showcase the suffering of those killed and the courage of the service personnel," adds Salil.

MILESTONES



Awarded. The Right Livelihood Award to land rights activist **Krishnammal Jagannathan**. The 83 year-old activist and her husband Sankaralingam Jagannathan have been striving to redistribute land to the landless for the past 58 years. In 1981, the couple started Land for the Tillers' Freedom (LATFI), which helps the landless poor to obtain loans and runs a range of village industries such as mat-weaving, rope-making, masonry and fisheries. By 2007, LATFI had transferred 13,000 acres to 13,000 families in rural India. The Right Livelihood Award, also known as the 'alternative Nobel Prize', was presented to Jagannathan by founder of the Award, Jakob von Uexkull, in the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm on 8 December.

BIRTHDAYS

Director **Woody Allen** turned 73 on 1 December

President of the Indian National Congress Party **Sonia Gandhi** turned 62 on 9 December

Actor **Dilip Kumar** turned 86 on 11 December

Actor **Rajinikant** turned 58 on 12 December

President of the Nationalist Congress Party **Sharad Pawar** turned 68 on 12 December

Industrialist and Rajya Sabha MP **Vijay Mallya** turned 53 on 18 December

IN PASSING



HT

Former prime minister **Vishwanath Pratap Singh's** decision to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendation—that a fixed quota of all jobs in the public sector be reserved for the historically disadvantaged classes of the society—provoked nationwide public wrath

in 1990. Controversy apart, people remember Singh as much for his moral rectitude. As chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, he cracked down hard on banditry in the state. Singh breathed his last on 27 November 2008, in Delhi, after a long battle with blood cancer and chronic renal failure. He was 77.

Bettie Page, who rose to prominence as the ultimate pin-up girl of the World War II era, upped the sales of many a men's magazine with her sultry splendour—thick bangs, spike heels and barely-there bikinis. Page died in Los Angeles on 11 December 2008 after a bout of pneumonia followed by a heart attack. She was 85.



She wore backless blouses with admirable nonchalance at a time when Bollywood heroines were at their demure best. Remembered for her slinky siren act in films like *Lootera* (1965), *Neel Kamal* (1947), *Naya Ghar* (1953), *Ustad Pedro* (1953), and *Shahzada* (1955), **Begum**

Para shrugged away the tinsel for marriage and motherhood in the 1960s. In 2007, she made a comeback in director Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Saawariya*. Begum Para passed away in her sleep in Mumbai on 12 December 2008. She was 82.

WHAT I LOVE

SUBHAMOY BHATTACHARJEE

MY WORD

Ninety-five year-old Siva Prasad Barooah lovingly nurtures *Bordoichila*, an annual literary magazine started by his father

Siva Prasad Barooah candidly admits that his magazine *Bordoichila* is not a very successful commercial venture, but feels proud that all those who matter in Assamese literature subscribe to it. *Bordoichila* was established in 1931 by Barooah's father, Kamal Chandra, a head clerk in a tea plantation. According to legend, *Bordoichila* is the name of the angry daughter of Assam, who arrives as a storm a few days ahead of Bihu (in mid-April) and sows seeds of hope in the minds of the Assamese.

In 1938, after his father's death, Barooah took on the responsibility of running the magazine. Before he took on *Bordoichila*, Barooah ran his own tea estate near Sapekhati. Later he sold off his estate and shifted to Guwahati. The magazine was a monthly till 1990, after which fatigue forced Barooah to convert it into an annual publication. "Most of Assam's leading writers and poets began their literary journey with *Bordoichila*," says Barooah. The active nonagenarian oversees every aspect of the magazine—coordinating with writers; assigning topics; going to the printing press; and proofing text. He only wishes it was easier to get advertisements.

Barooah was once a freedom fighter and proudly admits to having been jailed more than once. He was also the member of the Congress (O) party and later the Janata Party in the post-Emergency years. For now, however, he is busy putting together the next issue of *Bordoichila*. "I go over personally to deliver the copy to my writers," says Barooah. And he does it all, travelling by bus.

—Tapati Baruah Kashyap

VISITORS**21-22 NOV**

Who: Lawyer and former first lady of the UK **Cherie Blair**, 54

Agenda: To promote her autobiography *Speaking for Myself* at an event organised by Oxford Bookstore and Hachette India in New Delhi. Blair candidly fielded questions on women's empowerment; her life as a first lady; and her love for India. In her book, she speaks about her childhood in working class Liverpool; her career as a barrister; and her life as the spouse of former UK prime minister Tony Blair.

Extra-curricular activities: She accompanied her husband to the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit 2008, where he was a speaker, and found time to shop for books and silver jewellery in the capital's trendy Khan Market.



H

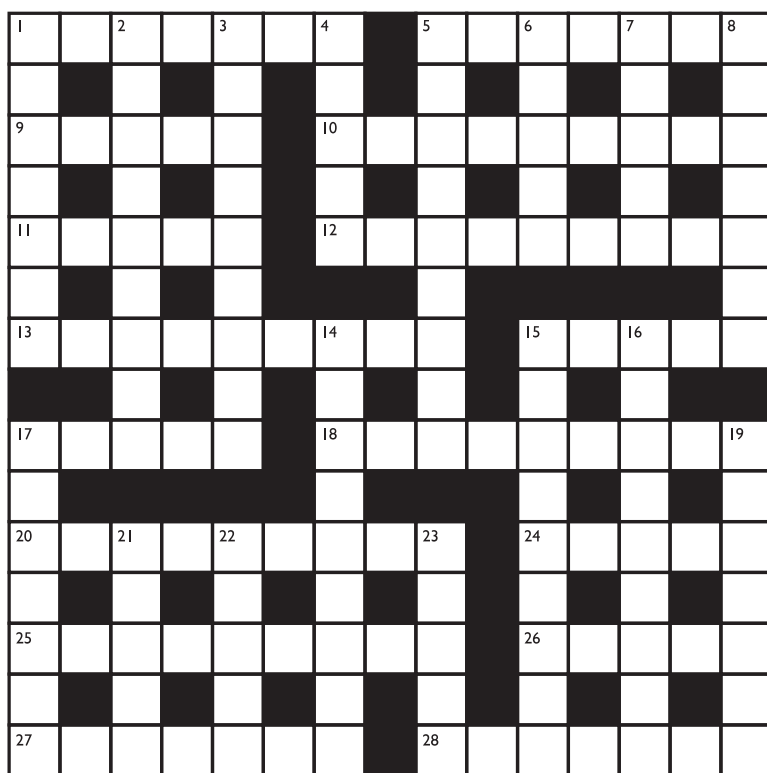
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EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 51

By **Raju Bharatan**

ACROSS

- 1 & 5** Face to face with the tragedy of the Taj's being positioned where it is (7 2 5)
9 Atmosphere in which Ramgopal Varma 'appeared' to accompany Vilasrao Deshmukh to where he did (5)
10 Momentarily making far from appetising viewing, as a mounted spectacle, inside the five-star hotel (1 3-5)
11 Our motor-cycling security forgot all about guarding even this superstar for a while, such was All India's trauma in the aftermath of 26-28 November (5)
12 Standing testimony to Nariman Point's separation from the Marine Drive seafront (3 6)
13 What that candlelight evening shed on 'An India Numbingly Awakened', forget all about the 1967 Mala Sinha-Raaj Kumar starrer witnessing Ravi having Rafi resonating

Kis tarah jeete hain yeh log bataa do yaaron (3 6)

- 15** The same candlelight evening came as a revelation in the matter of how, Ilie style, our youth could get so worked up with our leaders (5)
17 Not a call, let's hope, to precision-time the bomb's going off (3 2)
18 The CBN-IBN-identified 'Let It Ride' attitude that cost South Bombay heavy? (6 3)
20 How spontaneously instant were Mumbaikars in uniting and insisting upon 'Action, Not Words' (3 2 4)
24 Here's a Chief Minister who had, amidst it all, to deal with his wedded deputy's runaway marriage, to a lady of the law, in Jaipur! (5)
25 What overnight, in a sense, they turned the s.s. *KUBER* into (9)
26 Just one of 32 names IMPPA-registered (by 12 December) for cinema-tising 'The 26-28 November Theme' (5)
27 How exemplarily open its owners remained to the daunting concept of

getting their 'Serving Mumbai' act together inside a week (7)

- 28** Live Wire capturing shock wave after shock wave, on TV, as a Colaba boy who grew up in the 'Jupiter' highrise at Cuffe Parade (7)

DOWN

- 1** Undergo recompense, recompense that could be, mind-stuntingly, spirited away by near relations, 26-28 November or no 26-28 November (7)
2 TT hiding error is a far from soft target (9)
3 Only way for the ones irretrievably affected to get 26-28 Nov out of their system (4 2 3)
4 Yet to hold as something obtained from fermented beer, beer bottles represented but one of the items lying shatteringly strewn in those hotels under siege (5)
5 What mattered, in the grand sum, was the impact that Pranab and his India so made through the ultra-tough persona of Condoleezza Rice (2 7)
6 Sir, be so shaken by the rush of events as to wonder if native of a particular country still? (1 4)
7 Which parent, who lost a son or daughter in the Mumbai mayhem, wasn't and isn't? (5)
8 What you need to be to shed showbiz vacuity and demand action, Here and Now, as an Indian citizen carrying total taxpaying conviction (1 6)
14 Key Neha CD indicating the approach of the 'lipstick-and-powder' political brigade (9)
15 'Expression' of terror as a target beyond our imagination (3 3 3)
16 What saw the Cathedral & John Connon Middle Section staying closed on the Monday following those three horror nights so gut-wrenchingly unfolding on Spot TV (6 3)
17 What the dogged idea of sullyng Sandeep Unnikrishnan's martyr memory must remain (7)
19 How Indian wickets, for once, hadn't fallen as South Bombay's 'First Night Without End' began (2 1 4)
21 The commando plan obviously was to so encircle Nariman House and its surrounding buildings (5)
22 Part of the police person that those so-called bullet-proof vests proved too corrupted to protect (5)
23 One of commission was it in the test case of Indian TV, eye-rivetingly as it otherwise 'captured' certain truly Breaking News developments (5)

For answers, see Page 79

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

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.

SAY IT OUT LOUD



We have to believe that even the briefest of human connections can heal. Otherwise, life is unbearable.

—Latvian author Agate Nesaule

THE BUZZ

NATURE TRAIL

The window of opportunity for those seeking a glimpse of Rashtrapati Bhavan's magnificent gardens just opened—wide. Now, every Saturday, all year round, the presidential gardens in the capital will be open to visitors. Until now, the public could gain access to one section—the Mughal Gardens—in the last two weeks of February every year. This 'Nature Trail', as billed by the Delhi government, includes a walk through the larger gardens, including the pond ecosystem, butterfly corner, peacock point, and orchards of berries, mangoes, jackfruits, oranges, guavas and pomegranates. Visitors will be escorted by guides from Delhi University. To take the free tour, just register yourself a day before your proposed visit. Call (011) 2301 4570 or email dmsp@rb.nic



THE WORD IS OUT

New terms that have made their appearance in newspapers, magazines, books, websites and other recorded sources

silent run. *n.* The mass transfer of funds out of a troubled bank by online users.

Example: The widespread use of online banking services is putting banks under threat of **silent runs**. Customers removing cash from troubled banks leave no clear signs that money is being withdrawn, according to a report from Reuters.

—Karl Flinders, "Online bank runs deepen financial sector's problems", *Computer Weekly*, 21 October 2008

philanthrocapitalism. *n.* Philanthropy that uses the principles, models and techniques of capitalism. Also: **philanthro-capitalism** [Blend of *philanthropy* and *capitalism*.] and **philanthrocapitalist**.

Example: Much of the strength of the **philanthrocapitalism** movement lies in the effort to remodel the philanthropic paradigm, and to offer a new vocabulary, a new mindset, and new mechanisms for approaching traditional work. Reform of the philanthropic sector was no doubt long overdue. But the risk of advocating **philanthrocapitalism** without scepticism is that the movement could devolve into something like Tom Lehrer's old joke about the new math: that it could become more important to "understand what you're doing rather than to get the right answer".

—Richard Tofel, "The New Face of Philanthropy", *The New York Sun*, 26 September 2008

punditariat. *n.* The collection of pundits.

Example: The Bradley Effect—a possible misleading of pollsters by voters explored in this space in September—was a phrase that received much thumbsucking among the **punditariat** during October and will either enter or permanently depart the political language this week.

—William Safire, "On Language: '08-isms", *The New York Times*, 2 November 2008

liquor-cycle. *n.* A moped or scooter that does not require the rider to have a license, and so can be used

BRAIN GYM

by a person who has a suspended license due to a drunken driving conviction. Also: **liquorcycle**.

Example: Cyclists aren't the only ones slowing down cars along rural roads with 45 mph limits. **Liquor-cycles**, those two-wheelers that don't require a drivers' license, also encourage motorists to dart in and out to pass.

—Gerald McLin, "DWIs aren't only problem these highway users cause", *Charlotte Observer* (North Carolina), 19 August 2008

reverse Bradley effect. *n.*

Example: When polls showed Obama leading in the weeks before the election, the same pundits crowed about how Obama could still lose because of the Bradley effect. That is the unproven hypothesis contesting that white voters will lie and say they are voting for a black candidate, then really support a white opponent. Again, because they supposedly hold unfavourable views of blacks but don't want to appear racist. Instead, if anything, we may have had a **reverse Bradley effect**. Obama's support among white voters across a broad socioeconomic spectrum was stunning.

—Tammerlin Drummond, "Myths disproven on the way to victory", *Contra Costa Times*, 9 November 2008

renoviction. *n.* The mass eviction of an apartment building's tenants because the building's owner plans a large renovation. [Blend of *renovation* and *eviction*]

Example: Forty-seven years later, Mr McFall and his surviving sister, Mary, 91, still share a second-floor suite, which is adorned with framed family photos and mementos. If evicted, the elderly siblings say they will likely have to go to a seniors' home. So the tenants of the Seafeld apartment building have banded together with the McFalls and refused to leave. They say they are victims of a new trend in British Columbia—nicknamed "**renoviction**"—in which landlords evict tenants by announcing big renovation plans.

—Jane Armstrong, "Joining forces in face of 'renoviction'", *The Globe and Mail*, 11 November 2008

WEIGH THIS

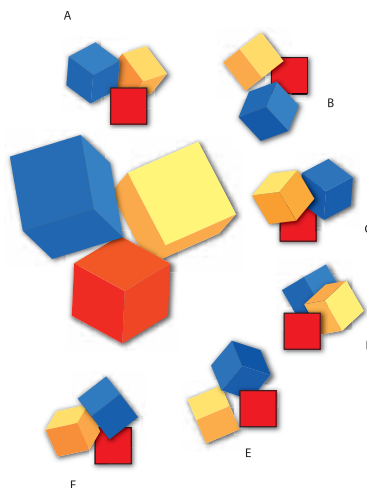
You have a pile of 24 coins. Twenty-three of these coins have the same weight but one is heavier. Your task is to determine which coin is heavier by weighing them as few times as possible. You are given a beam balance (scale), which will compare the weight of any two sets of coins out of the total set of 24. How many times do you have to weigh to identify the heavier coin?

PICTURE THIS

1. There is a perfect star in the illustration below. Can you discover where this star is hidden?

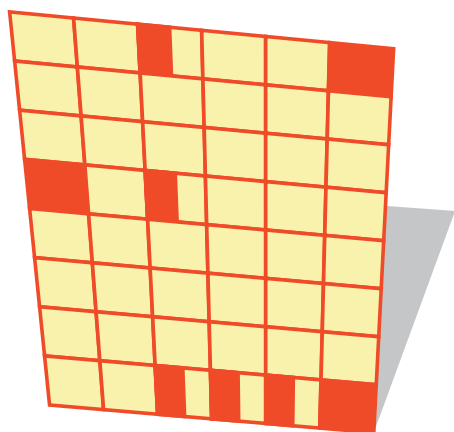


2. Six different snapshots are scattered around the composition of three cubes, as shown in the illustration.



tion. All snapshots except one are taken from the three cubes. Can you figure out which snapshot from the following doesn't belong to the set?

3. Several cells or halves of them in a 6 × 8 grid are shaded as shown in the illustration. Discover the message hidden in the grid.



LAUGH LINES

Three old timers get chatting at a restaurant. They sit down at a table while waiting to be served. One of them said, "Hey Jake! Isn't this your 50th anniversary?"

Jake replied, "Yes."

"Well," the old timer asked, "what are you planning on doing?" Jake replied, "Well! I remember taking my wife to Arizona on our 25th anniversary."

The other old timer asked, "Oh yeah, so what are your plans for your 50th anniversary?"

Jake replied, "I'm going back to pick her up."

An old man is afraid that his wife is losing her hearing. So he walks up right to her ear and asks, "Can you hear me?" She doesn't answer. He walks up closer and asks again. But there is no answer. Finally he asks her one more time, really loud, and his wife says, "For the third time YES!"

SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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

	18	45	6	14			45	13
17						11		
16					5	16		
12			19					
28			16					
	6			8				
	39			8	21			22
	19					10		
	10					7		
9				14				
12				16				

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.

THE WAY WE WERE

WE GO 50 YEARS BACK IN TIME TO BRING YOU PRODUCTS, PEOPLE, EVENTS AND FASHION THAT INFLUENCED THE WORLD...

What a DOLL!

A girl's dream—and every feminist's nightmare—Barbara Millicent Roberts (aka Barbie), hailing from the fictional town of Willows in Wisconsin, first hit stores in the US in 1959 wearing a chic zebra-striped swimsuit. Produced by Mattel Inc and created by American businesswoman Ruth Handler, her design was inspired by German doll Bild Lilli. Barbie and her huge variety of pets and other accessories—including boyfriend Ken—went on to conquer the market, and the world. In 2001, Mattel released the first 'Indian Barbie' clad in traditional saris and *salwar-kameez*. This was followed by the 'Diwali Festival Doll' in 2006, part of the company's 'Dolls of the World' collection. And it's not just her wardrobe that's evolved—from a hold-in-the-hand doll, Barbie now comes in a remote-controlled avatar. 'Ice Skater' and 'Roller Skater' Barbie can spin, turn, glide, and jump.



THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: JANUARY 1959

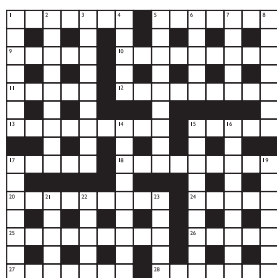
- On 4 January 1959, the USSR's Luna 1 (E-1 series) was identified as the first spacecraft to reach the vicinity of the moon.
- On 29 January 1959, *Sleeping Beauty*, the last animated feature produced by Walt Disney based upon a fairy tale, was released.
- On 7 January 1959, the US recognised the new Cuban government formed by revolutionary Cuban leader Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz, widely known as Fidel Castro.
- The Nerja Caves in Spain were excavated on 12 January, 1959. Today it is ranked among the major tourist attractions in Spain. The cave houses remains that are more than 40,000 years old.

SOLUTIONS TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 51

74

ACROSS:

1 & 5 Gateway of India; 9 Eerie; 10 A man-eater; 11 Dhoni; 12 The Oberoi; 13 *Nai Roshni*; 15 Nasty (tennis ace Ilie Nastase was known as such); 17 Set it; 18 *Chalta Hai*; 20 All at once; 24 (*Bhupinder Singh*) Hooda; 25 Destroyer; 26 Title; 27 (*The*) Leopold; 28 Rajdeep (*Sardesai*)



DOWN:

1 Guerdon (the 7 letters of *undergo* rearranged; *guer-don* means *recompense*); 2 Terrorist (T/error/is/T: TT hiding *error is*); 3 Weep it out; 4 Yeast (Ye/as/t: Yet to hold as); 5 On America; 6 *I Serb(?)*: *Sir be*, the 5 letters of *I Serb* rearranged; 7 Doter; 8 A Preity (*Zinta*); 14 *Hackneyed* (Key *Neha CD* do the 9 letters of *hackneyed* rearrange into); 15 Not The Taj; 16 School Tie; 17 Scandal; 19 In a heap; 21 Lasso; 22 Torso; 23 Error

SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

76

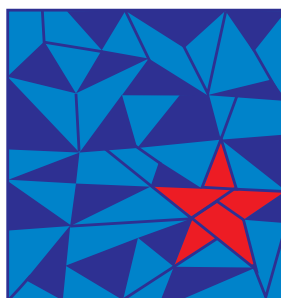
Weigh this

You only need to weigh thrice:

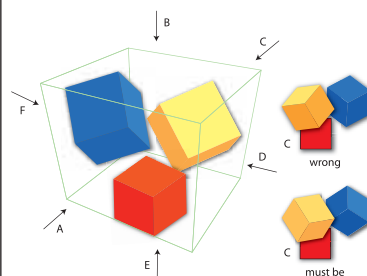
1. Break the coins into three piles of eight. Weigh one group of eight against another group of eight. If the scale balances, the group that hasn't been weighed has the heavier coin. If the scale tips, then that group contains the heavier coin.
2. Break the group of eight that has the heavier coin into three groups (three coins, three coins, and two coins). Weigh one set of three against the other set of three. If it balances, the group of two has the heavier coin. If the scale tips, that group has the heavier coin.
3. If the heavier coin is in the group of two, just weigh one coin against the other to determine the heaviest coin. If the heavier coin is in a group of three, then take two of those coins and weigh them against each other. If the scale balances, the coin that hasn't been weighed is the heavier coin. If the scale tips, that is the heavier coin.

Picture this

1.



2. The wrong snapshot is C. The illustration shows what it should be instead



3. To read the message, turn the grid as shown in the illustration. The message can then be read easily: HELLO

77



SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

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

SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

		18	45	6	14			45	13
17	2	8	1	6			11	6	5
16	3	7	5	1		5	10	2	8
12	9	3		19	5	2	3	9	
28	4	1	5	2	3	6	7		
	6	5	1		8	5	3		
	39	6	8	3	7	2	4	9	
	19	4	2	5	8		10	8	2
9	7	2			14	4	2	5	3
12	3	9			16	2	5	1	8

Lieutenant Colonel Suresh Patil, 60, has launched a movement to save the environment



“If local authorities and the public join hands, a lot of environmental issues can be resolved. As senior citizens, we have both the time and experience to devote to such causes.”

*After spending a lifetime protecting the country, **Lieutenant Colonel Suresh Patil, 60**, has now fixed his keen eye on the environment. Green Thumbs—the organisation he set up after retirement in 1993—works on eco-restoration projects in and around Pune and Kolhapur. Recently, Green Thumbs created a bird sanctuary, Tamali Pakshi Teerth (named after the local deity Tamali), in Kolhapur. By the end of the three-year project, 150,000 trees had taken root there. Later, Patil and his team executed a similar project in Ramwadi in Pune, where they planted 200,000 trees. Recently he converted a sewage-ridden nalla (drain) into a landscaped garden. To attract butterflies and birds, Green Thumbs planted 50,000 trees in the area. Similarly when he noticed residents in the area selling off their flats because of a garbage dump nearby, he converted the stretch into a garden with date palms and bamboo thickets. Today, Green Thumbs has 2,000 members who come together to organise awareness campaigns; anti-plastic drive; and nature photography. The organisation is funded by membership fees and donations.*

TEXT: KHURSHIED DINSHAW; PHOTO: HEMANT PATIL

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