

harmony celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

JUNE 2011 ₹ 30



THE

7

DEADLY SINS

Find out why you
should embrace

GREED, PRIDE, SLOTH,
GLUTTONY, ENVY,
ANGER AND LUST

7th
ANNIVERSARY
SPECIAL
Win Prizes
see Page 06

Devil's Advocates
FOUR SILVER WRITERS
TELL YOU WHY THEY
WILL NEVER STOP SINNING

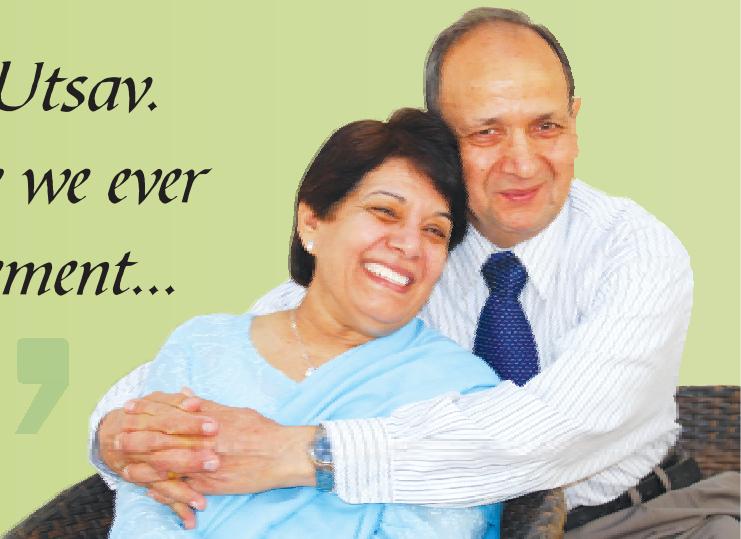
Wicked, wicked Boman Irani



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Sins of omission

Summer is upon us and it just got hotter—and I'm not just referring to the weather. This month, your magazine *Harmony - Celebrate Age* turns seven. And, as always, we're doing it in style, with our inimitable take on The Seven Deadly Sins.

While you enjoy the read (and the ride) that serves as a striking reminder that the line between sin and virtue stands irrevocably blurred, it's worthwhile to spare a thought for the real sins that all of us commit every day. Mind you, these are not Dionysian sins of commission but those of omission that hold us back from leading our best life.

For instance, Ignorance, where we decide to remain immune to all that is new and happening around us, not realising that the adoption of new skill sets and technology could make us more independent and self-reliant. Condescension, where we look down on the younger generation and sometimes even our peers, not realising that everyone has something to teach—and something to learn. Rigidity, where we refuse to let go of old habits and ways of life that prevent us from creating new opportunities and forging new realities. Self-pity, where we choose to dwell upon our miseries rather than

Suresh Natarajan



work proactively towards getting rid of them. Isolation, where we run far away and retire to our own little island to burn our bridges rather than reaching out to others who can bring happiness and meaning to our lives. Neglect, where we let our bodies—and minds—atrophy rather than honing them with exercise and nourishing them with nutrition. And Apathy, where we prefer to turn a blind eye to our communities and society at large rather than using our wisdom and experience to make a change, however small.

In my book, these seven 'sins' are far more deadly and insidious than the Biblical ones; they are shackles that bind us to the past while perpetuating and reinforcing traditional myths and mindsets that keep us from crafting a better future. Moreover, they are harder habits to break. Think about it. And keep reading *Harmony*—we promise to light the way.

Rina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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when he is not
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Cover photograph by **Jit Ray**

Shoot location courtesy: **ITC Grand Central Hotel, Mumbai**

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SUMMER SONG

Six delicious ways to tame the sweltering heat

SPIRITUAL TRAIL

How an English professor turned into a spiritual guru

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46 . The Seven Deadly Sins

Greed: A wanton wish list of luxuries worth coveting

Gluttony: Indulgence for your tastebuds, recipes to nourish your soul...slurp it up

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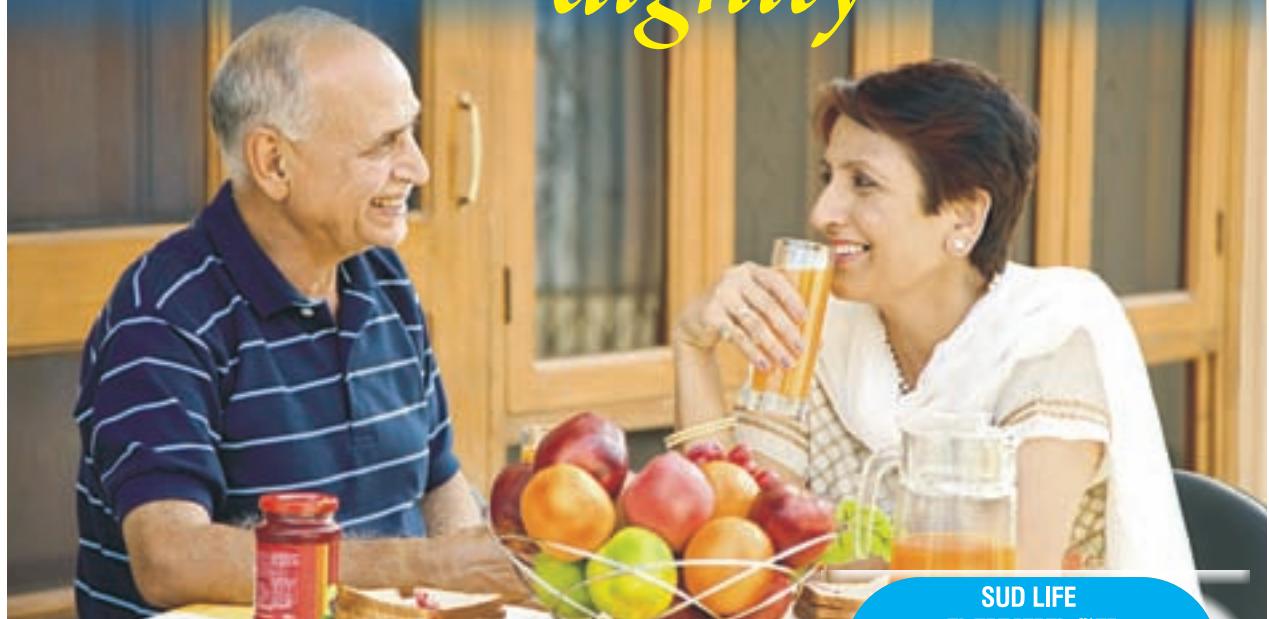
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Sunahra Kal, Suraksha Har Pal

column one

Another cycle is complete and we are back to what we love best—our anniversary special and the celebrations therein. Elated to be on the threshold of *Harmony - Celebrate Age's* eighth year, we look back—and ahead—with pride. It's no mean feat putting our best foot forward always; in fact, our eyes are scanning nothing but the 'century' landmark. We promise that each annual celebration will be bigger and better; each theme closer to your heart. And because the world associates party time with glutinous sinning, we decided to give the other six (sins) some room as well. Seven deadly sins and Silvers in the fold.

This month we take you on a light-hearted (and -headed) rollercoaster ride of shedding propriety and being yourself. Ignite the spark, giving responsibilities a goodbye handshake, and lie back to enjoy life, eating what you conventionally must not, shouting out your accomplishments and angst, coveting the unattainable, and envying your grandchildren for their energy and freedom—all these have synonyms in every language that would make them out to be sins.

As an anticlimax we present funny man Boman Irani in all his seriousness. Breaking with convention and working his way around several artistic vocations (baking as well), for him pride is not a sin and sloth is a blessing—gulmohar trees outside his Parsi colony house in Mumbai only add to his landscape. Painting their own panoramic worldviews are 'devil's advocates' Bunny Suraiya, Randor Guy, Manjula Padmanabhan and Raju Bharatan. Believe them and do as your head says and go where your heart takes you. Sins, after all, are of our own crafting.

—Meeta Bhatti

CONTRIBUTORS



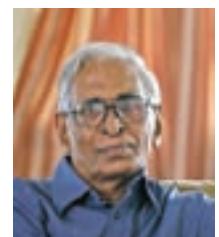
After an award-winning career in advertising, **Bunny Suraiya** took up writing and editing as her profession. She writes on travel as well as social mores and literary subjects. She has contributed to *The Times of India*, *The Hindustan Times*, *India Today*, *India Today Travel Plus*, *Jet Wings*, *Go Now* and *The Economic Times*. She was a columnist with *The Khaleej Times* and *Time Out* (London) and is currently copy editor for *Sommelier India*. Suraiya lives in Gurgaon with her husband Jug and dog Mili. Her first novel *Calcutta Exile* will be published this year.



Randor Guy, 73, has a creative spirit as unusual as his name. After a brief stint as a lawyer and ad professional, in the 1970s Guy switched to writing on—and for—films. His article on filmmaker Frank Capra was purchased by USIA, USA, for use as resource material for the Frank Capra Retrospective in 1977 in many countries. Today Guy is a prolific crime writer, playwright, lyricist, cultural historian, scriptwriter, and documentary filmmaker. At present, he is busy with several book projects on cinema and music. Despite his breathless schedule, he still finds time to blog on www.galatta.com. He lives in Chennai.



Manjula Padmanabhan, 58, is a writer and artist. Her books include *Getting There*, a travel memoir; *Kleptomania*, a short story collection, and *Escape*, a novel set in a dystopian future from which women have been eliminated. *Harvest*, her fifth play, won the first prize in the 1997 Onassis Award for Theatre (in Greece). During the 1980s and 1990s, Padmanabhan published a comic strip, featuring a fuzzy-haired female character called Suki. She has illustrated 25 books for children including her own two novels, *Mouse Attack* and *Mouse Invaders*. Padmanabhan lives in Delhi.



Mumbai-based **Raju Bharatan**, 76, rolls out a list of the seven people who taught him the inestimable value of every sin. Bharatan, whose indefatigable spirit has been honed to perfect devilry by his years as assistant editor at *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, has also authored *Lata Mangeshkar: A Biography* and *A Journey Down Memory Lane*. Till last year, he also invented mind-boggling crosswords for *Harmony*.

ERRATUM

In the May 2011 issue, we omitted to credit Vivek Thakkar for the cover illustration of Lord Jeffrey Archer and Partha Mukherjee for his inputs from Kolkata in the feature 'Life after Life'. The images of K R Gouri Amma and Pappakutty Bhagavathar in 'Orbit - H People' were wrongly credited to HT; the images were sourced from The Hindu photo archives. We regret the omissions.

Do you know what goes in your Mouth?

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

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

Know your materials for dental restoration

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

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

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INSIDE

- P26: From secretary to caterer
P33: The right diet to fight asthma

NEWS ● VIEWS ● PEOPLE ● RESEARCH ● TRENDS ● TIPS



► NEWSWORTHY

Silver science

India appears to have woken up to the fact that policy cannot be made in a knowledge vacuum. Last month, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) announced that it was attempting to study senior citizens "more scientifically". In a media release, it called for research proposals from scientists across the country on the impact of social, economic and family transitions on the lives of silvers and to understand the biology and genetics of ageing. Concept proposals have been invited in the following areas: longevity, brain ageing and neuro-degeneration, effect of age-related diseases and longevity in humans, genetic studies, mental health and neurological disorders, epidemiology and burden of disease in the elderly, ageing and nutritional needs, assessment of nutritional status, under-nutrition and obesity in aged, nutrition and degenerative diseases. "The idea is to explore new areas of research through amalgamation of biomedical and social approaches," ICMR said. "These research initiatives would help to inform policy decisions and address the challenges and opportunities of an ageing world."





Om shanti om!

Eastern meditation techniques like transcendental meditation, where you focus on a repetitive mantra, 'compassion meditation,' which involves extending feelings of love and kindness to fellow living beings, and mindfulness meditation, where you become aware of your own thoughts and surroundings, have already been proven to treat hypertension, psoriasis and depression over the short term. But that's only the tip of the iceberg, according to the Shamatha Project, which suggests that **meditation techniques can actually ward off the effects of ageing by protecting our chromosomes from degenerating.** The project, conducted at Shambhala Mountain Centre, a Buddhist retreat in the mountains of north Colorado, USA, in 2007, used scientific equipment, like brain and heart monitors, video cameras and centrifuges, to find out exactly what happens to people who meditate. Coordinated by neuroscientist Clifford Saron of the Centre for Mind and Brain at the University of California - Davis (UCD) and led

by psychologists Elissa Epel and Elizabeth Blackburn from the University of California - San Francisco (UCSF), the researchers found that meditation actually protects the caps called telomeres on the ends of our chromosomes, thus delaying the ageing process.

As British newspaper *The Daily Mail* reports, meditation affected telomerase by changing the participants' psychological state. In particular, the factors that predicted higher telomerase activity were an increased sense of control, increased sense of purpose in life and lower neuroticism. "If the increase in telomerase is sustained long enough, it's logical to infer that this group will develop more stable and possibly longer telomeres over time," says Epel. "Further, meditation might also trigger pathways of restoration and enhancement in the brain. For those of us who don't have time for retreats, 'mini-meditations'—where you focus on breathing and self-awareness at regular points throughout the day—may yield similar results."



To learn more, go to <http://mindbrain.ucdavis.edu/labs/Saron/shamatha-project/overview>

Green grannies

Silvers don't have the best reputation when it comes to eco-sensitivity—they are seen to be slower off the mark when it comes to investing in green products and embarking on green activities. This perception may be a mistake, according to a new report from Hong Kong-based market research firm Synovate. Following a survey of eco-friendly habits in 28 countries—including India—it came to the conclusion that **older women in Hong Kong are among the most fervent recyclers in the world.**

As *The Wall Street Journal* reports, 61 per cent of women had recycled in the past week (before the survey), compared to 43 per cent of men. And 59 per cent of residents aged 56-65 had recycled, compared to 37 per cent aged 16-25. Overall, 52 per cent of people in Hong Kong said they had recycled waste at home in the past week. India at 15 per cent and Indonesia at 5 per cent, came in last. Canada led the rankings, with 88 per cent, tailed by South Korea, Spain, Belgium and Italy. Interestingly, only Argentina, India and Italy had more men recycling than women. Similarly, youth in Argentina, Indonesia, India and Serbia also recycled more than their older counterparts. "Women and older consumers tend to make the household decisions, giving them more opportunities to engage in green habits," according to a spokesperson for Synovate. "Further, elders are becoming more engaged in community activities, resulting in greater ecological awareness."



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One at a time

Have trouble multitasking? Blame it on ‘interruption recovery failure’. Researchers from the University of California - San Francisco (UCSF) believe that **silvers find it hard to juggle tasks and lose their trains of thought because they have trouble letting go of distraction** and are slow to regain focus. In the study, which was published in the April 2011 issue of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, interruption recovery failure is defined as ‘a deficient ability to dynamically switch between functional brain networks’.

Researchers examined 20 relatively young adults with an average age of 25, and 20 comparatively elderly people with an average age of 69. As their brains were scanned, each subject was shown a landscape picture and asked to keep it in mind. After a few seconds, they were shown a portrait of a face, and had to answer several questions about it. A few seconds after that, they saw another landscape picture, and had to determine if it matched the first. While the average brain activity was the same between both groups when presented with the distracting face, differences emerged afterward. When the portrait was removed, its activity lingered in elderly brains, while quickly dissipating from



younger ones. When the landscape was reintroduced, elderly brains were slow to pick up, and younger brains faster. “If multitasking were to prove age-related, it’s an open question when the decline begins,” writes study author Adam Gazzaley. “Another question is plasticity; whether the neurological connections involved in multitasking can be strengthened or weakened. We would like to figure out how plastic the ability to resolve interference is. With appropriate training and practice, how good can we get at it?” We’re waiting for the answer to that one.

Clone and learn



AS MARINE ANIMALS GO, the ascidian—better known as the sea squirt—is way down in the food chain. But it may hold the key to delaying ageing in humans. Scientists at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden have shown how **marine animals that reproduce asexually by cloning can activate the enzyme telomerase, which protects our chromosomes and DNA**. Many earlier studies have established that this enzyme is very active in humans who have a long lifespan. “Animals that clone themselves, in which part of an individual’s body is passed on to future generations, have particularly interesting conditions related to remaining in good health,” study leader Helen Nilsson Skold tells news agency Reuters. “This makes it useful to study them to understand mechanisms of ageing in humans.”

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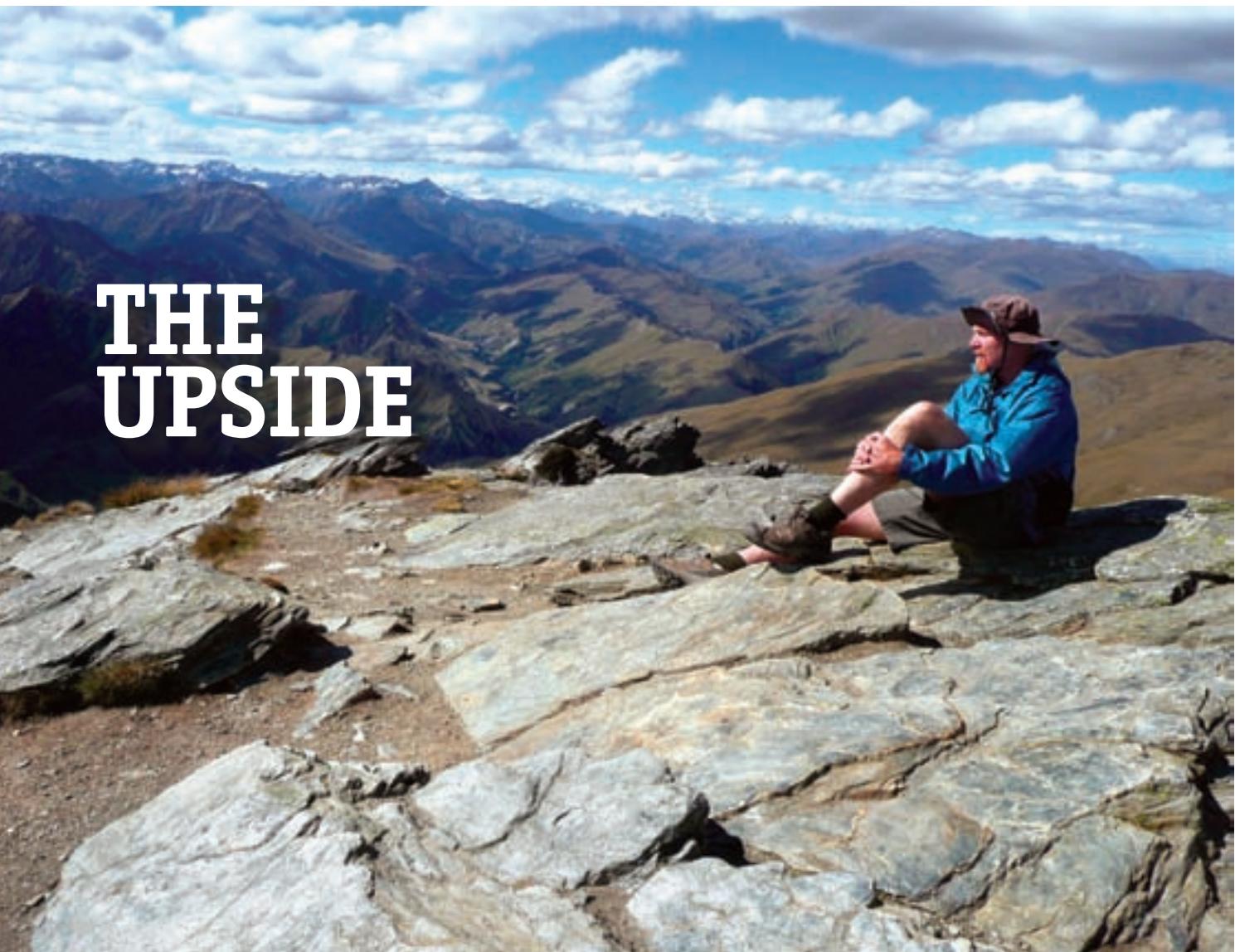
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THE UPSIDE



While many countries across the world are focusing on the downside of a silvering population, one nation is looking at the bright side. In a report titled *The Business of Ageing, Realising the Economic Potential of Older People: 2011-2051*, the **New Zealand government elaborates upon how the skills, knowledge and economic power of silvers will benefit the country's economic competitiveness** in the next 40 years. Some highlights:

- More silvers will participate in the workforce; by 2051, they could account for one in 10 New Zealand workers.
- The economic value of older people's paid and voluntary work will increase; their earnings from employment could rise from just over \$ 1 billion to about \$ 10 billion.
- Older people's contribution to tax revenue will increase from about \$ 200 million today to about \$ 1.8 billion.

- Older people will spend more, from about \$ 11 billion now to more than \$ 45 million.

"In less than 20 years, 1 million people in New Zealand will be over the age of 65, compared to about 560,000 today; and in 40 years, one in four people will be aged over 65, compared to one in eight today," says Senior Citizens Minister John Carter. "We need to recognise the potential of older people....We need to think outside the square to maximise the opportunities that come with an ageing population that is like no other before it."



You can read the entire report at www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/business-of-ageing/index.html

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Get current

How do you level the playing field when competing with younger aspirants for a job? American magazine *AARP* has some tips:

- **Use social media:** Popular social networking sites like Facebook aren't just for finding old friends and making new ones. According to a 2009 US survey, 45 per cent of hiring managers used sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn to research job candidates. So use them as a platform to sell yourself, your accomplishments and personality.
- **Network, network, network:** Get back in touch with old colleagues and friends, join industry associations and job search groups, register your resumé online. Here's a real tip: prepare an 'elevator speech', a 30-second spiel where you highlight your skills and achievements to someone you may just come across.



- **Hone your software skills:** It's not just a bonus but a necessity. Knowing how to use the Internet and work on a word document is no longer enough. Learn spreadsheet programmes like Excel and multimedia presentation programmes like PowerPoint.
- **Don't underestimate temporary/volunteer work:** Besides bringing you the satisfaction of doing something meaningful, your stint as a volunteer can help you pick up new skills, network and pad your resumé, all at the same time. And don't forget, charity work may not pay the bills but considering how fashionable it is, it may just open the right door for you.
- **Update and upgrade your resumé:** Use professional help if

BACKLASH: A STUDY OF OVER 2,000 ADULTS BY BRITISH CARE PROVIDER ANCHOR REVEALS THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BECOMING 'RESENTFUL' TOWARDS SILVER WORKERS. ACCORDING TO THE FINDINGS, 40 PER CENT OF 18 TO 24 YEAR-OLDS DID NOT THINK THERE WERE ENOUGH JOBS FOR OLDER PEOPLE TO STAY IN WORK; 20 PER CENT BELIEVED PEOPLE OVER 60 WERE LESS PRODUCTIVE; AND 5 PER CENT SAID THEY SHOULD BE PAID LESS.

Retire to LUXURY

COME 2012 and well-heeled silvers in the UK will have the opportunity to walk into the most luxurious retirement home the country has ever seen. The 2.2-acre **Abbeyfield accommodation scheme in Girton, Cambridgeshire**, comprises 76 apartments in a complex that includes a clubhouse with swimming pool, gym, and restaurant, a cinema theatre, spa and private hair salon. Each apartment has a patio or balcony, a fully fitted kitchen, bathroom, and security systems. Prices range from £ 220,000 (about ₹ 16 million) for a one-bedroom apartment to a haughty £ 350,000 for three bedrooms (about ₹ 25.5 million).

"We're proud of the first development of its kind in the region that will revolutionise the lives of the elderly," Manuela White, spokeswoman for Abbeyfield, tells British newspaper *The Daily Mail*. "The traditional bedsit model doesn't appeal to the baby boomer generation. It's important that older people live in a nice place with things to do. We're not talking about coffee mornings and bingo but really interesting events and facilities." The Abbeyfield Society is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to make the lives of silvers easier and more fulfilling. At present, they have over 700 houses and 80 care homes across the UK.

Linux for you

There is a growing breed of computer enthusiasts who swear by Linux, a low-cost but high-speed operating system that was designed to provide personal computer users a free or very low-cost operating system comparable to traditional and usually more expensive Unix systems. Now, Kiwi PC, a company that specialises in computers for elders, has launched a **low-end Linux PC for seniors** priced at \$ 500 (about ₹ 22,500). The specs include a 1.66GHz Intel Atom CPU with INTEL GMA 3150 GRAPHICS, 2GB of DDR3, a 19-inch monitor, Ubuntu 10.10, DVDRW drive, one-year of tech support, access to a download store, and lifetime upgrade support from Kiwi PC. Other features include a 'Me Menu' that allows users to easily access their favourite websites and programs straight from the desktop and larger icons and text for visual acuity. "Until now, there has not been an easy way for senior citizens to navigate the Internet and stay connected to friends and family," said Oscar Ferreira, president of Kiwi PC, says in a



media release. "Linux-based Kiwi PC provides the elderly with an easy way to stay in touch, learn and game online."



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Duel with dementia

When we are young, cognitive health rarely receives much thought and consideration in our day-to-day lives. However, it can become one of the major areas of concern as we age. One of the most common mental afflictions of older age is dementia—a progressive brain dysfunction that can interfere with our ability to perform mundane activities and tasks coherently, and in many cases necessitate long term care. Unfortunately, in India our awareness about this ailment is appallingly low, despite an estimated 3.7 million of our population suffering from it. The need for sensitive caregiving is vital as the traditional family support system that had been earlier available for the elderly has withered away. **Harmony for Silvers Foundation, along with Silver Innings Foundation, teamed up with ARDSI Greater Mumbai Chapter to host the Dementia Care Giving Training Programme** from 6-8 May at the Harmony Interactive Centre in Mumbai. It was the first time an exclusive workshop on dementia was held in the city to spread awareness and to sensitise caregivers and physicians to better cope with the ailment.

"About two per cent of cases start before the age of 60 years," underlined Nilanjana Maulik, expert trainer and director of dementia services, ARDSI Calcutta Chapter. "After 60, the prevalence doubles every five years. Dementia affects each person and family differently, therefore there is no 'one' way to treat a patient. It's important that we have skilled caregivers. As we all are different, we need different skills and strategies. Most caregivers have to learn and practice these new skills."

The three-day intensive programme, which included group exercises,



lecture-cum-discussions, case presentations, and role play, was aimed at educating volunteers and caregivers to identify early warning signs of dementia and its early prevention; to train volunteers and caregivers to disseminate knowledge about dementia to local population and silvers; and to enhance the capacity and skills of caregivers in managing elderly with dementia. Topics covered included the gravity of dementia as a social problem; facilities, resources, and policies related to the ailment; doctors' perspectives on diagnosis: types, causes, diagnosis treatment, stages, memory-screening tools and psychiatric conditions associated with dementia; nursing care of dementia and Alzheimer's; and nutrition and mental exercises for dementia patients. Perspectives were also shared

between family caregivers on practical day-to-day care.

"In India people think it's okay to hide a problem," said Dr Vineeta Sharma, physician in palliative medicine. "But dementia is a serious issue which cannot be pushed under the carpet. It's best to accept and highlight it before going for the treatment." Dhanalaxmi Rao, project coordinator of helpline '1298' reaffirmed the point: "Not many caregivers or families have much knowledge of cognitive health. The elderly also tend to live in a shell, so we need to have a holistic approach towards dementia." The workshop may be the first of its kind. But at least it's reassuring to know that dementia has finally stepped out of the shadows of our mind and claiming the attention it needs.

Haresh Patel

Sit and speak

Being likened to furniture generally implies, well, dumbness. But sometimes even a chair can speak volumes. **Stigmas**, an art show held in London last month, showcased a collection of wooden chairs that prompt reflection on issues of ageing. They were adapted by 40-something Paul Chamberlain, who is a professor at Sheffield Hallam University as well as a furniture maker. British newspaper *The Guardian* reports that each chair reflects problems of mobility and cognitive functioning:

- **The Adjustable Chair** has a saw attached so that its legs can be altered in length; with restricted mobility and dexterity, steps suddenly become too high and chairs can be too low.

- **The Danger Chair** has bright tape on the front and back, signalling where the edges of the chair lie.
- **The Wayfinder** has a small compass in the middle of the seat, because silvers will have to compensate for lost orientation and balance.
- **The Sit Chair** has the word 'Sit' on the seat as a reminder that silvers can become confused and forget where they are going or what they are doing.

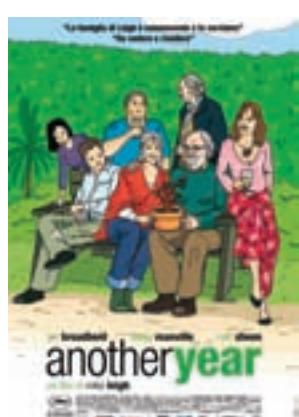
"The show provides an opportunity for older people to participate and help us better understand the issues of ageing that might inform the design of future products and living environments to enhance quality of life in later life," says Chamberlain.



"I plan to go forward and continue working on creative strategies for the development of future living environments where people of all ages and abilities can live with a sense of empowerment and dignity."

THE FOUR SEASONS

Meet Gerri and Tom: an ordinary, if not dull, suburban couple with families, friends, joys and travails much like us all. Ace director Mike Leigh transforms their story into a silver symphony through four seasons of their life in British film *Another Year*. Actors Ruth Sheen and Jim Broadbent play Gerri, a counsellor, and Tom, a geologist, whose own non-dramatic and contented life becomes increasingly complicated as they deal with the idiosyncrasies and unresolved issues



of their friends, who don't seem to be handling the passage of time as adroitly as them. As the shrillness of their pain begins to intrude on the gentle cadence of the couple's life, Gerri and Tom are forced to recalibrate their own realities. Look out for this thoughtful, moving film at your favourite DVD store.

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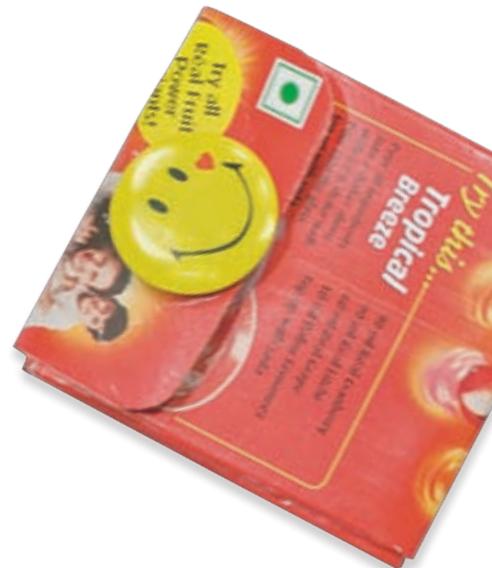
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TEND YOUR GARDEN: Get that patch of green—and care for it. According to a study by University College, London, silvers who indulge in gardening are more likely to feel young and energetic compared to other non-gardeners of the same age. In fact, 20 minutes of gardening in a single week is enough to stimulate energy levels and provide relief from mental stress.



Then: Tetra pack container Now: Coin purse



Pick up an empty juice carton, preferably one that is bright and colourful. Rinse out well and dry. Unfold the corners to flatten the carton. Cut off the top and bottom portions with scissors and fold the carton in half. Cut off one-third of one of the 'half-sides' to make a flap. Now fold the carton in three

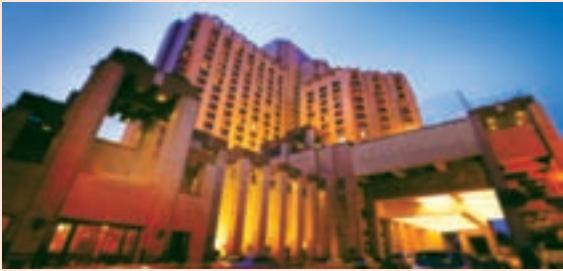
again. Tape or sew the inside edges to make pockets. Decorate the outside edges with coloured tape or ribbon; you can even embroider them. Add two pieces of self-adhesive Velcro to close the purse, remembering to allow for coin thickness. Adorn with a nice showcase button for the finishing touch.

FACTS

- » 20 per cent of Americans have access to carton recycling.
- » In 2010, 25 billion tetra packs were recycled globally.
- » It was earlier believed that tetra packs could not be recycled; however, tetra packs are made from 70-90 per cent paperboard, which is recyclable just like any other paper or card.



MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...1. Remove the top half carefully and use a tetra pack carton as a plant holder.
2. Cut off the top half and cover the body of the other with giftwrapping paper. Use as a note or paper holder.



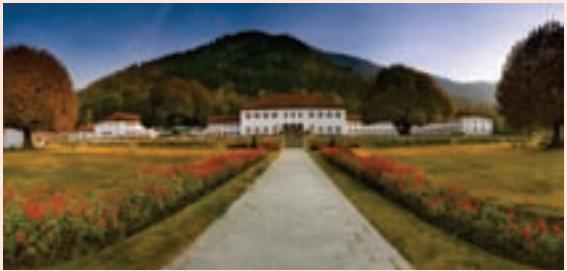
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Virtual CARE

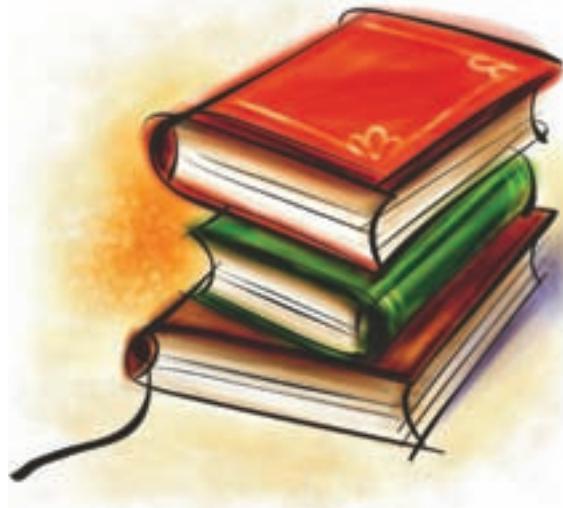
Connecting with doctors to discuss dementia-related issues has become even easier—all you need is an Internet connection. **Bengaluru's Nightingales Centre for Ageing & Alzheimer's (NCAA) has** launched 'Tele Dementia Care' where families, caregivers and patients can discuss the condition and related issues via web-conferencing. "Many dementia patients and their caregivers cannot visit the Centre to attend follow-up consultations after the initial assessment. However, follow-up is integral part of treatment, as dementia care

has to be tailored to the needs of the patients and their caregivers need to be trained to support their loved ones," Dr Radha Murthy, founder of NCAA, tells *Harmony*. 'Tele Dementia Care' proposes to take care of everything from awareness to memory screening camps, with the NCAA outreach team identifying elders who need further assessment. For follow-up, a team, equipped with a web camera-enabled laptop, will visit patients at home and set up a chat between the family and NCAA experts. The institute is hopeful that the approach will support caregivers and help them manage stress.

2-3% The Union Health Ministry has finally admitted to India's growing health burden and announced plans to increase allocation for health to 2-3 per cent of its GDP over the next five years. Between 1986 and 2004, the average expenditure per hospital admission increased three times in government and private hospitals. The sharp rise in prices of drugs has been the main reason for the growing cost of medical care, which more than tripled between 1993-94 and 2006-07.

STORY TIME

The simple art of telling a story can have great impact on the ageing mind. According to a study conducted at the University of Missouri on people diagnosed with Alzheimer's and dementia, **storytelling works better than drugs.** "Alzheimer's and dementia are progressive, degenerative ailments and medicines as well as conventional methods have limited benefit," Dr Sanjoy Mukerji, psychological counsellor from Institute of Behavioural and Management Sciences in Mumbai tells *Harmony*. "However, all forms of storytelling have proven positive effect on patients, as their brains get activated and they can associate memories with what they hear. There are subconscious benefits as well; patients feel someone is talking to them and spending time with them, so healing is faster." Researchers at Missouri experimented with a creative storytelling session and encouraged participants to use their imagination to create short stories as a group. Not relying on factual recall, participants responded verbally to images presented



by facilitators who recorded responses and read narratives to further develop or end the stories. In this therapy, patients also exercise their individual strengths. For those who cannot afford other forms of expensive treatments and drugs, this home-grown therapy is a boon for caregivers.

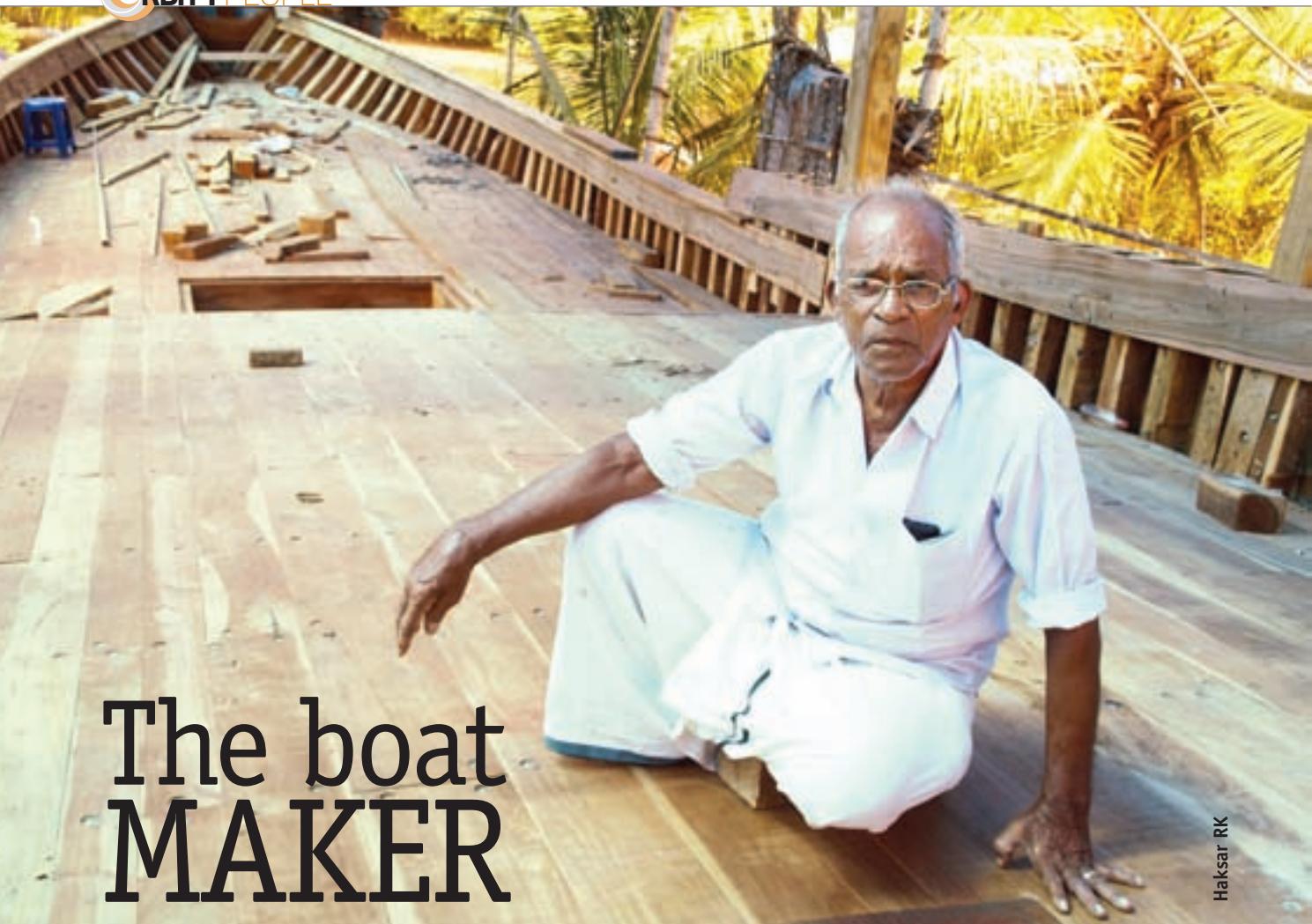
With 1 million Indians having been diagnosed with oral cancer, 17 regional cancer centres have urged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to impose a countrywide ban on tobacco products like *gutka* and *paan masala*; the two products have been directly linked to oral cancer. The Supreme Court will impose the ban if it gets the nod from the PMO.

DOWNSIZE

With knee pain being the most common complaint among obese ageing people suffering from osteoarthritis (OA), doctors have for long recommended weight loss as preventive and, sometimes, curative. This lifestyle change has got another shot in the arm with researchers at the Penn State College of Medicine US suggesting that **the easiest way to control pain related to OA is to lose weight.** "Our first advice to elderly patients with OA is to lose the extra pounds,



as losing weight reduces the load on the knees. There's also increase in muscle mass, which protects the joints and therefore decreases wear and tear," Dr Ashok Desai, head of orthopaedics at Pune Hospital and Research Centre, tells *Harmony*. The Penn study followed 24 adult patients in the 30-67 age group, all diagnosed as obese with clinical and radiographic evidence of knee OA. Those who lost weight and experienced some relief from pain by losing weight were seen to manage their OA condition better.



The boat MAKER

Octogenarian V K Narayanan crafts boats without referring to any blueprints or manuals. His most recent creation—a 180 ft long and 32 ft wide dhow (Arab for wooden sailing vessel)—was shipped out in May to a company in France.

The master-plan in his head, his work-worn hands and sharp eyes are all that Narayanan needs to coax a boat out of wood. The 81 year-old is among the few surviving master boat craftsmen from Beypore in north Kerala who still build dhows based on ancient time-honoured practices. “Most of my customers are from foreign countries, especially the Arabs,” he says. “They tell me the dimensions they need, then I visualise a blueprint in my mind and assign the measurements to a team of carpenters every day.” He dismisses his impressive skills as being “part of our tradition”.

Narayanan sized up the technique as a toddler watching the elders in his family make boats in the sleepy fishing hamlet of Beypore. Though it’s been 60 years since he made his first boat, he confesses to feeling the same tension and passion he felt as a novice every time he starts a new project. “Even the pre-calculated water line marked

around the hull should be precise when the dhow is set to sea,” he says. The process is not without its share of uncertainties—the vessel can be tested only on completion, which takes roughly between six months and three years.

Narayanan, who works with P I Ahamed Koya Haji Boat Builders, has made hundreds of ships over the years, and still vividly remembers the dimensions of each, right from the first one he made for an Arab trader for 7,000 dirham to the most recent one just a few weeks old. His voice is filled with warm pride when he shares with us details of the dhow he made for a Kuwait-based merchant, which also happens to be the largest—275 ft long and 60 ft wide—and costliest in the world. “The interiors were embedded in gold,” he tells us.

The technique of dhow-making is a closely guarded family secret handed across generations. Unfortunately, Narayanan has no one to pass it on to; his son, like many from his generation, is not interested in the trade. The last among the unique clan of boat-makers paints a lonely figure on the horizon.

—Nisary Mahesh



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- Our 4,000 Self-Help Groups have led to the empowerment of 38,000 women.
- Working closely with Habitat for Humanity, we have so far built more than 350 houses as part of our community outreach programme, besides supporting the building of an additional 1,550 houses.
- We are also engaged in creating model villages in rural India. We have chosen 300 villages for this transformation - whereby in a five year timeframe the villages would be self-reliant in every aspect, moving out of the "below the poverty line" status. So far more than 80 villages in India's hinterland have already reached the level of model villages.
- To embed CSR as a way of life in organizations, we have set up the FICCI - Aditya Birla CSR Centre for Excellence, in Delhi.
- In line with our commitment to sustainable development, we have partnered the Columbia University in establishing the Columbia Global Centre's Earth Institute in Mumbai.

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BIRTHDAYS



- Irish actor **Liam Neeson** turns 59 on 7 June

- Former US president **George Bush Sr** turns 87 on 12 June

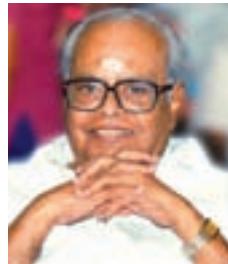


- American billionaire **Donald Trump** turns 65 on 14 June
- Actor **Mithun Chakraborty** turns 64 on 16 June
- Italian actor-model **Isabella Rossellini** turns 59 on 18 June
- Author **Salman Rushdie** turns 64 on 19 June
- Actor **Meryl Streep** turns 62 on 22 June



MILESTONES

- Tamil filmmaker **K Balachander** has been chosen to receive the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the year 2010 by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.



IN PASSING

- Indian spiritual guru **Sathya Sai Baba** died of multiple organ failure on 24 April. He was 86.

- Punk icon and singer **Poly Styrene** of 1970's punk group X-Ray Spex died of breast cancer on 25 April. She was 53.



- Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh **Dorjee Khandu** died in a helicopter crash on 30 April. He was 54.



- Noted Marathi litterateur and lyricist **Jagdish Khebudkar** passed away in Kolhapur on 3 May following a kidney ailment. He was 77.



- **Mala Sen**, writer of critically acclaimed film *Bandit Queen*, died of cancer on 23 May. She was 64.

- Film critic **Chidanand Dasgupta** died in Kolkata after a brief illness on 23 May. He was 89.

OVERHEARD

"I respect my audience. I don't want to go out there looking horrible and I don't want to go out there sounding horrible. I've been true to what I believe in and it's held me in good stead. I plan to live to 100 and I'm reading an anti-ageing bible just to make sure!"

—English pop star Sir Cliff Richard, 70, in an interview to Radio 2. Richard is referring to the new bestseller on longevity, Secrets of Longevity: 100 Ways to Live to be 100 by anti-ageing expert Dr Maoshing Ni

- On 10 April, in a gesture of support and preamble to the upcoming Pune Everest expedition to be held in 2012, five seniors from Pune—**Ushaprabha Page**, 67, **Vishwanath Bhide**, 74, **Dattatraya Deval**, 65, **Nirupama Bhave**, 64, and **Prakash Patil**, 62—climbed Tail Bala, one of the most treacherous peaks in Maharashtra. All five silvers are avid adventurers. While Bhide is a member of Pune Mountaineers, Page and Patil are members of trekking group Giripremi, and Bhave and Deval are active in cycling enthusiasts' forum Pune Cycle Prathishthan.



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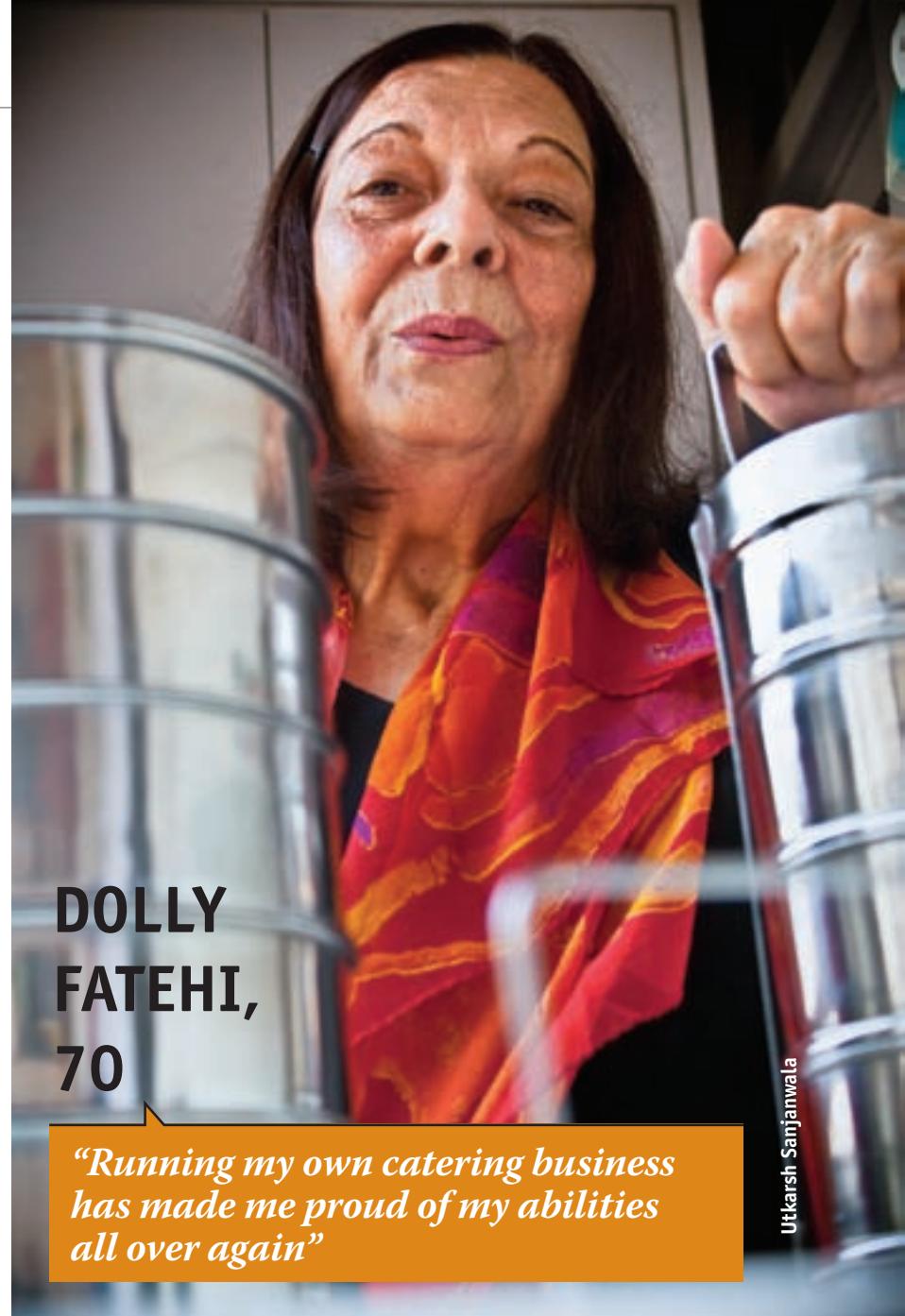
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Kitchen QUEEN

I joined Herdillia Chemicals, fresh out of college, as a confidential secretary to the general manager. I was highly appreciated at my workplace for my efficiency. In 1985, I quit my job to take care of my mother who was suffering from Alzheimer's. A year later, I lost both my husband and mother.

Having been financially independent and busy all my life, I was suddenly left without anything to do. At 53, I could feel time yawning and stretching, and a restlessness to start afresh with something on my own. In 1992, a close friend prodded me to start a catering business as people always enjoyed my cooking. She compelled me to make a couple of dishes and have them sampled by food critic Rashmi Uday Singh, who was her close acquaintance. Singh loved my dishes and mentioned my name in the column she wrote for *The Times of India*. Orders started pouring in the same day for packed lunches and birthday parties. Word spread, and before I could gather my wits I was running a full-fledged catering business from home.

I specialise in Parsi, Irani and Mangalorean cuisine, based on traditional recipes. My day starts at 6.30 am and ends at 7.30 pm. As my kitchen is a small one, a friend of mine who lives alone has lent out her kitchen to me. In return, I cook her meals for her every day. I have invested in a large refrigerator, several mixer-grinders, extra cutlery, utensils, mincers, and pressure cookers. Initially, till I found my feet in the business, I worked on a slim profit margin; today I am earning a decent profit. Earlier I used to make a daily trip to the market to buy groceries and vegetables; now everything reaches my doorstep on order. While I make the *masala* and marinades on



**DOLLY
FATEHI,
70**

"Running my own catering business has made me proud of my abilities all over again"

my own, and strictly supervise hygiene and taste, I have four assistants who help me with chopping, stirring and packing. I always make it a point to note down my customer's preferences. When I take an order, I ask for the desired spice, salt and oil requirements and call customers a day later for their feedback.

My son, who runs an event management company, helps me with book-keeping and accounts. And I am blessed with a wonderfully supportive daughter-in-law. Each of us

has our own job to keep us busy, and enjoy our own space without getting into each other's hair. I take a day off on Sundays to catch up with friends over a game of cards or lunch, or watch cricket on TV. Life is hectic but I've never had Monday morning blues. My life is filled with the comfortable sounds of pots and pans and the wholesome aromas of herbs and spices. The greatest high, of course, comes from the text messages I receive from customers when they praise me for my efforts.

—Rajashree Balaram

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DARING TO DREAM



Partha Mukherjee

Sarkar accomplished a double master's degree and now provides youngsters the impetus to realise their academic pursuits

When I gaze at my grandchildren, I wonder whether the present generation will ever know the true meaning of adversity and perseverance. At the age of 74, I credit my own journey for the steel in my soul. I retired as headmaster but the road to becoming an upstanding citizen was strewn with thorns. However, it was the sheer foresight and

kindness of the people I met along the way that set me on this path.

Destiny sets us on mysterious pathways that seem meaningful only when we look back at them in retrospect. I was born to be a teacher but my family's economic troubles forced me to run a grocery store in my native village, Kalna, in West Bengal's Hubli district. Then one fine morning, when I was still a teenager, my four brothers left home in search of their fortunes in the 'big city'. It was only on the urging of a local gentleman, Mohammad Sirazool Ahmed, that I decided not to fritter away my time, roaming the village with friends. He advised me to join my brothers in Sheoraphully, a suburb of Kolkata, where I could pursue a career. Mr Ahmed had given me a fresh lease on life. My brothers were reluctant to share their shoestring budget with me but they had no choice—I simply had to earn a master's degree. With my marks in mathematics and science in the matriculation examination, securing admission to intermediate science in Serampore College was a breeze. Two years later, I earned a bachelor's degree. When my brothers could no longer support my postgraduate studies, I met Dr Bimal Chandra Ghosh, eldest son of then famous industrialist-cum-philanthropist Suren-drana Ghosh. He helped me land a job as a chemistry teacher in a local school.

I was a very popular teacher and was, therefore, able to pursue my education. Why, I was even a guest at the Ghosh mansion! But there were no evening classes for postgraduate courses in science. A friend of mine then suggested I switch to humanities and secure the coveted master's degree as a non-collegiate candidate. Presto! I cleared the bachelor of arts examination in the first attempt and, two years later, I earned my long-cherished master's degree—not once but twice—in Bengali and English. After a teaching career of 40 years, of which I was headmaster for 30 years in several schools across the state, I still coach students at home. Also, thanks to my active public and political life, I am able to visit prisons and correctional facilities in the state for inspectional purposes. It is a rare opportunity to meet people trying to reform themselves and start life anew.

The young generation is a pampered lot and I always tell my students, "You have so much to do." It's their time to dream—and strive to make them come true.

—Harendra Nath Sarkar, Sheoraphully

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YOGA RX BY SHAMEEM AKTHAR

Come out to play: Feel youthful with yoga

A sense of playfulness and willingness to learn keep us feeling youthful, alive and vital. Contrary to popular notion, this is not just acquired behaviour but also induced by the hormone oxytocin, which is popularly referred to as the 'cuddle hormone' owing to its close association with social bonding and romance.

The yogic high that attracts avid practitioners comes from activating these neuro-chemical messengers in our blood. This explains why, once a steady yoga practice is achieved, you will find your life enhanced by an ability and interest in learning new things. Yoga also reduces fears towards new things, whatever your age. All this happens through the activation of key acupressure points in the body, plus massage of the master glands. Interestingly, it has been found that oxytocin cells may also be found outside the brain, in the kidneys (lower back), pancreas (abdomen), thymus gland (immune gland in the chest region), adrenal medulla (stress glands, over the kidneys, also at the lower back), and the retina (eye). The fact that yoga lays stress on poses that open or apply pressure on these regions indicates that

they are being prodded into releasing these powerful hormones that give us a high.

In prone poses and forward bends, the pancreas is massaged. In backbends, the thymus is activated and the kidneys and adrenal glands mediated while the yogic rule to focus on a particular spot (*drishti*) while holding each pose prods the retinal nerves. Classic examples of prone poses include the crocodile (*makarasana*) and cobra (*bhujangasana*) and forward bends include the standing forward stretch (*uttanasana*) and the seated knee-to-head pose (*janu sirsasana*). Classic backbends include the bow (*dhanurasana*), wheel (*chakrasana*) and camel (*ushtrasana*). Each pose also has different focal points; you can also practice these separately with yogic eye exercises (*trataka*). Wide-legged postures and pelvic compressing poses also activate the uro-genital system, which stimulate the flow of these neuro-chemicals. Some examples of wide-legged postures are the wide-legged plough (*supta konasana*), wide-legged angle pose (*upavista konasana*) and standing wide-legged forward bend (*prasaritapadottanasana*).

YOGIC MOVES

Side-bending, knee to head pose (*pravritti janusirsasana*)

This is a wide-legged version of the pose. Sit with your feet apart, legs stretched out in front. Bend your left leg at the knee; place left sole into the right thigh. Inhale; exhaling, bend forward to touch your forehead to the right thigh (or reach forward as much as you can, if particularly stiff). This is the first stage of this pose. Practise this for a few weeks before advancing to the next stage. Inhale; exhaling, reach your left hand to hold the left foot or as far as you can reach down your left leg. Inhale; exhaling, raise right hand above, passing it over the head, to place on left arm (or where you can reach the left leg). Practise this for a few weeks before advancing to the next and final stage. At this stage, after having acquired flexibility of the spine, inhale; exhaling, lift your head from under the arm to look towards the ceiling. Hold this pose for a few seconds initially. Practise it thrice. After regular practice, increase duration in the final stage. Repeat the same sequence for the other side.

Benefits: This pose improves flexibility along the spine and on the sides of the body. It activates all the acupressure points by pushing against the pancreas, kidneys, thymus, etc. The chest expands to increase lung capacity. The pose tones the limbs, shaping them; and removes fat



along the waist, hips, thighs and inner arms. Further, it stimulates the mind and uplifts mood.

Model: Ramnath Chiplunkar,
Harmony Interactive Centre
Photographer: Haresh Patel

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

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WEIGHT WATCH BY MADHUKAR TALWALKAR

Joint strength: Knees are the fulcrum of your body

Walking—its merits were discussed in last month's column—is impossible without knee strength. As fatigued muscles cannot adequately support the knee joint and/or absorb shock before it gets to the knee, we need to strengthen the muscles that support our knees. Strengthening exercises help make the muscles tight, so follow them up with stretching exercises. However, when doing stretching knee exercises, go slowly and do not overstretch.

Warning: You need to increase the duration of your knee exercises gradually to avoid overuse injuries and knee pain.

Tips: Walk or ride a stationary bike for five minutes to warm up the muscles. Keep breathing throughout.

Types of knee exercises: Strengthening, balancing and stretching exercises

Strengthening exercises

These exercises should be done thrice a week on non-consecutive days to avoid overuse injury and allow healing. Beginners could start with five repetitions of each exercise, or less if the exercise is difficult. If you do not have post-exercise pain, add a couple of repetitions each week until you reach 10-15 repetitions. After you can handle one set, add a second set of 10-15 repetitions. When two sets become easy, add a third, giving 30 seconds of rest between sets. Pick a different strengthening exercise for every session for a particular muscle group. Mix strengthening exercises as you progress. Do not exercise the same muscle group on consecutive days.

Quadriceps strengthening contractions

Sit on the edge of a chair. Extend your legs and touch heels to the floor. Keep your knees straight as possible. Tighten thigh muscles. Hold for a count of 10. Relax for a count of three. Repeat 10 times. You can do this several times a day. Build up to two or three sets of 10 repetitions at a time.

Quad strengthening leg lifts

Lie flat on your back. Bend left knee at 90°, keeping foot flat on floor. Keeping the right leg straight, lift it until the right foot is as high as the left knee; hold for a count of three. Repeat 10 times. Switch sides. Work up to 10 sets of 10 over several weeks. **Safety tip:** Lift one leg at a time; the opposite leg should be slightly bent with foot on floor.

Quad strengthening short-arc leg extensions

Lie on the floor with a rolled-up towel under your thigh. Keep your leg straight and raise your foot about six inches

off the floor. Hold for five seconds. Slowly lower your foot, bending your knee. Do 10 repetitions. Switch sides.

Quad strengthening knee dips

Stand with knees slightly flexed. Make sure your kneecaps and toes are pointed straight ahead. Lift one leg up and balance on the other leg. Slowly lower yourself up and down *only* a few inches. Keep the knee of the leg you are balancing on slightly flexed. Stand straight. Do 10 dips. Switch sides. If you feel pain in your knees, start with fewer dips.

Quad strengthening partial squats

Stand with back straight, knees hip-width apart and pointing straight ahead. Slowly lower and move your hips backward as if you were sitting in a chair (don't bend your knees beyond 90°; if that's too difficult, bend even less). Hold the position for a count of five. Do 10 squats. Stop if you feel pain in your knees. **Safety tip:** To reduce pressure on the joint, ensure your knees do not extend beyond your toes

Seated hamstring strengthening contractions

Do only one hamstring exercise (if you are doing just one set). If you have progressed to two sets, pick two different exercises or do the same one twice. For this one, sit on a chair with knees bent at 45° and heels on floor (toes up). Without moving heels pull back on them, digging them into the floor. Feel the tension in your hamstrings. Hold for count of 10. Relax for a count of three. Do 10 repetitions.

Lying hamstring strengthening contractions

Lie on your back, knees bent at 45°. Dig heels into the floor. You will feel tension in your hamstrings. Hold for a count of 10 seconds. Relax for a count of three. Do 10 repetitions.

Hamstring strengthening curls

Lie on your stomach. Place your left foot on the back of the right heel. Slowly pull your right heel toward your hips, resisting with the left leg. This contracts the hamstrings. Hold for a count of 10. Relax for count of three. Do 10 repetitions. Walking backwards helps develop hamstrings and results in less strain on your knees.

—Next month, more on knee stability,
hip strengthening and stretching

Madhukar Talwalkar is chairman of Talwalkar's, one of India's largest chain of fitness centres with 78 branches across major cities.

Website: www.talwalkars.net

If you have a question for Dr Talwalkar write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



EATING RIGHT BY ANJALI MUKERJEE

Life support: Manage asthma with a tailored diet plan

I am a 75 year-old man suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Is there a special diet plan for asthma patients?

I understand asthmatics should avoid having milk at night, yoghurt, and spicy food. Is it true?

Only an asthma patient can understand how precious the otherwise simple process of breathing is. According to Ayurveda, asthma is caused and aggravated by improper dietary habits and accumulation of toxins in the body. Besides psychological and hereditary causes, overexposure to heat or cold, change in weather, certain cosmetics, perfumes, cigarettes and pollution are known to trigger asthma.

Strained breathing and/or shortness of breath make it extremely difficult for patients to eat and finish their meal. This can eventually lead to weight loss and undernourishment. There's also a greater need for nutrient-rich food because of effortful breathing and susceptibility to respiratory infections. A good diet and a correct eating pattern not only help fight infections (including chest infection) but reduce the hyperactivity of immune cells and make them less reactive to allergens and air pollutions. Certain foods, more than others, help neutralise the free radicals produced and thus reduce the frequency of asthmatic attacks. These are:

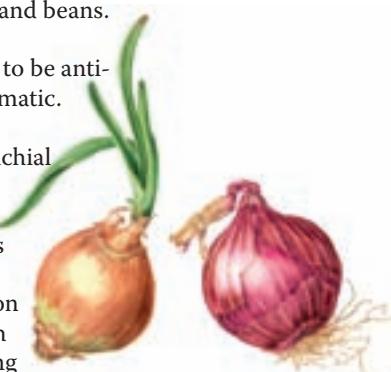


● Salmon: This oil-rich fish is crammed with omega-3 fatty acids, which are recognised for their ability to decrease the production of inflammatory compounds in the body. Walnuts, flaxseeds and canola oil are also rich in omega-3 fatty acids.

- **Spinach:** Spinach is a good source of magnesium, which helps recovery from symptoms of asthma. It is high in B complex vitamins and helps reduce stress-related asthma attacks. Increased magnesium intake over the long run helps reduce the occurrence of attacks. Soft drinks, refined carbohydrates, stress and a diet high on salt use up magnesium in the body. Other good sources of magnesium include almonds, cashews, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, tofu and beans.

- **Onions:** Onions are known to be anti-inflammatory and anti-asthmatic. They hamper the release of histamines and reduce bronchial obstruction. Onions also contain prostaglandins that relax bronchial passageways and provide relief. You can take the juice of half an onion and half a radish mixed with 1 tsp of honey every morning (just push the onions and radish through a juicer to extract the juice). These foods reduce mucus in the body and provide relief from breathing problems.

- **Chickpeas:** Chickpeas are rich in Vitamin B6, which helps lessen wheezing and asthma symptoms. Other good sources of Vitamin B6 include barley, brown rice, sweet potatoes, sunflower seeds and peas.
- **Flaxseeds:** Take 2-3 tbsp of flaxseed powder daily. It has an anti-inflammatory effect and helps reduce frequency of asthma attacks.



A good diet not only helps fight infections, including chest infection, but reduces the hyperactivity of immune cells and make them less reactive to allergens and air pollutions

People suffering from asthma should avoid foods that include additives such as sulphites; these substances can set off an asthma attack. Eliminate caffeine, excessive salt and sugary foods from your diet. Dairy products act as irritants and enable mucus production, so try to keep away from them. A few other foods like banana,



yoghurt, papaya, sugar, rice, pickles, chutneys, ice-cream, iced drinks and refrigerated foods also encourage the production of mucus. Avoid soy flour as it forms mucus. You can mix other flours like barley, *ragi* and *bajra* in a 1:1:1 proportion. However, *jowar roti* are recommended as they are gluten free.

Eat less than your full capacity; overeating can result in fullness and uneasiness. A small breakfast, lunch and dinner with one or two snacks in between help ensure the fulfilment of nutritional needs. It is important to have a lifestyle that does not disturb the body's natural pace. When we follow constantly fluctuating patterns with regard to food, sleep and exercise, the body loses its natural stability and is unable to cleanse or heal itself efficiently. Apart from food, learn yogic breathing from an expert for relief.

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



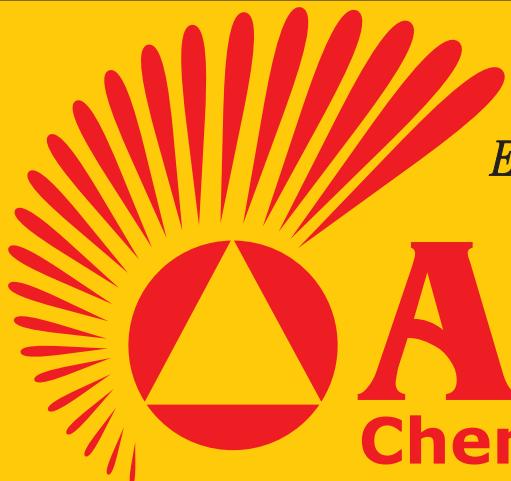
A photograph of a man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a dark t-shirt, sitting on a wooden dock by the water. He is reaching out towards a young girl who is sitting on the dock, looking up at him. The water is dark and rippled. The background is dark, suggesting it might be night or the photo was taken in low light.

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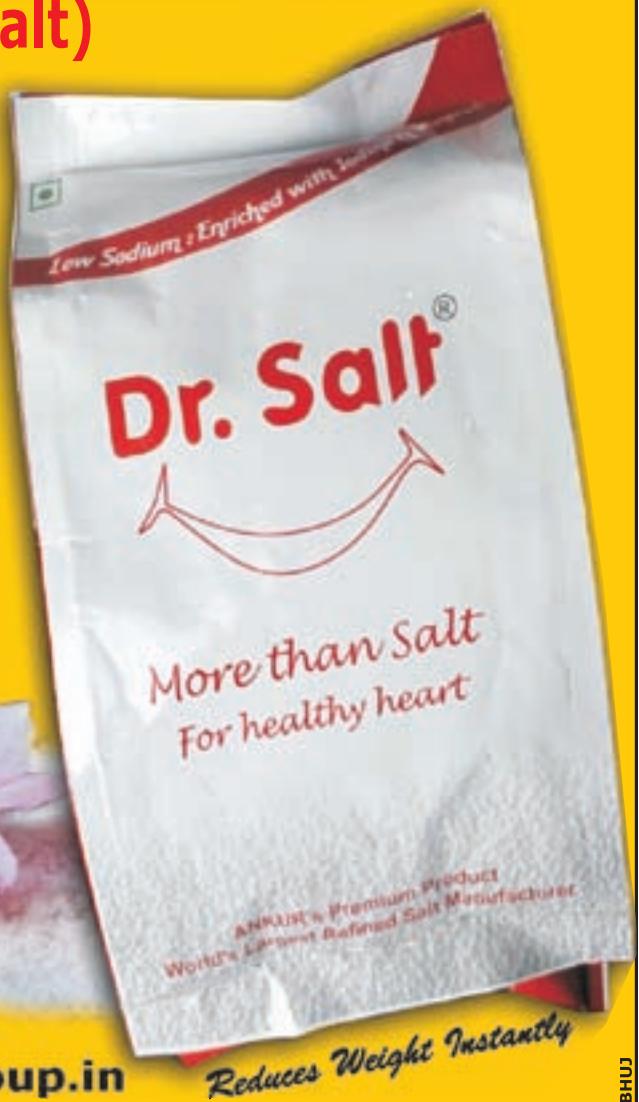
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The voice of AWARENESS

Kolkata's Shefali Choudhuri turned personal tragedy into a social mission: a battle against dementia. At 93, she remains the pivot of the anti-Alzheimer's campaign and its outreach in eastern and north-eastern India. **Partha** and **Priyanka Mukherjee** meet the steely crusader

Shefali Choudhuri recently lost her most personal battle with a debilitating disease. But as the feisty 93 year-old declares, "The cause must go on." She is referring to the passing of her daughter Deepika who, at the age of 73, succumbed to Alzheimer's in March 2011.

But when Deepika was diagnosed with this progressive neuro-psychiatric illness, it was more than the beginning of a gut-wrenching journey for Choudhuri. It also led to the establishment of the only NGO working with dementia patients and their families in eastern and north-eastern India: the Calcutta Chapter of the Alzheimer's & Related Disorders Society of India (ARDSI).

Choudhuri's voice may be feeble today but it's easy to imagine her a decade ago, zealously showing the way to those grappling with this disease. But when speaking of her

daughter, she reveals her vulnerable side. "It was one of Deepika's friends who first warned me that some of her symptoms seemed to match those of Alzheimer's," recalls Choudhuri, her eyes welling up at the painful memory, which goes back 20 years.

As time wore on, Choudhuri noticed that her daughter, then a senior executive with ITC, had become unmindful of her surroundings. She also seemed to have lost interest in her appearance. But when Deepika one day forgot an important official meeting, it was the last straw. After a battery of tests, a diagnosis of Alzheimer's was finally confirmed.

Choudhuri was devastated. Worse still, she had nowhere to turn either for information on Alzheimer's or on how to manage the disease. "The terms 'Alzheimer's' and 'dementia' were alien to most people who didn't know what they were all about," explains Choudhuri.



Shilbhadra Datta

"I used to often wonder what my life was all about. Now, at 93, I am satisfied that my personal agony prompted me to do something for society"

Deepika's diagnosis was thus a turning point in her mother's journey—while caring for her daughter, Choudhuri was struck by the painful lack of training for caregivers. In 1999, she learnt of an international conference on Alzheimer's that was being held in Kochi under the aegis of ARDSI National. Here, she met Dr K Jacob Roy, founder-chairman of the organisation. "I went to Kochi to learn how to take care of my daughter, and how to nurse her," recalls Choudhuri. "I returned enlightened but shocked at how much it cost to hire a trained nurse."

She also returned home with some valuable advice. "Dr Roy encouraged me to start ARDSI in Kolkata and assured me of his help. Some of the doctors treating Deepika too encouraged me and that also gave me strength." Thus, in 1999, Choudhuri embarked on a personal and professional mission when she opened ARDSI in her city. "Like me, there were thousands of mothers in despair who were desperately looking for information on the disease," she remarks.

ARDSI Calcutta began by disseminating information and awareness on dementia. It gradually expanded its activities and services to include mass awareness programmes and sensitisation campaigns, community memory screening and memory clinics to ensure early diagnosis, expert counselling for caregivers, home visits by care assistants and companionship carers and, of course, Ankur, a spacious day-care facility at Regent Estate near Jadhavpur.

At the day centre, trained caregivers engage dementia patients in various activities, including cognitive stimula-

tion, social interaction, yoga, meditation, laughter sessions, massage and indoor and outdoor games. Apart from providing a secure and stimulating environment for patients, the facility provides much-needed relief to caregivers and relatives, who usually fall prey to emotional distress, fatigue and despair.

"The most important part is dealing with behavioural and psychological problems peculiar to each case," explains Dr N N Sarangi, neurologist and president of ARDSI's Calcutta Chapter. "At the daycare centre, patients are engaged in a host of activities that family caregivers might find difficult to pursue at home."

Over the years, more than 3,000 patients and their families have benefited from Choudhuri's missionary zeal. Says an emotional Anjulika Roy, "My husband joined the daycare centre two years ago and I cannot fully express my feelings on how I was counselled and comforted. I felt relieved of stress when I was in distress. In time, the caregivers and other staff at ARDSI became family members."

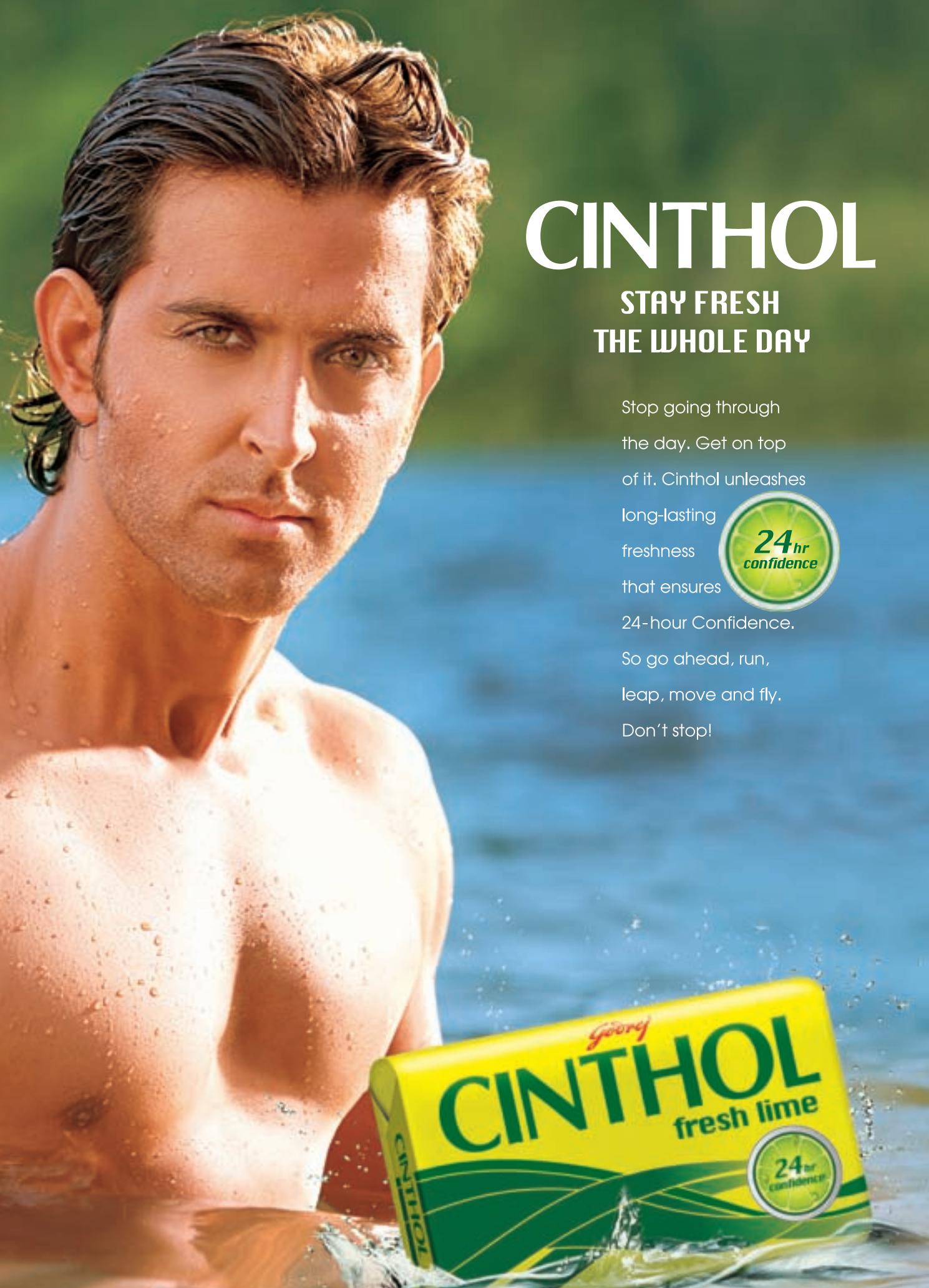
Thanks to Choudhuri's pioneering spirit and unflagging dedication, ARDSI Calcutta Chapter has many leading personalities as patrons who have helped raise awareness levels on dementia, including Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee (former chief justice of Calcutta High Court), Gen Shankar Roychoudhury (former Indian Army chief) and industrialist Russi Mody. The chapter's 'Friends of ARDSI' list includes cricketers Sourav Ganguly and Sunil Gavaskar and actor Naseeruddin Shah, among other VIPs and celebrities who have lent their support to sensitise people to the disease.

HELP AT HAND

- There are an estimated 35.6 million people suffering from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia worldwide, of which about 3.7 million are estimated to be in India.
- ARDSI was founded in 1992 by Dr K Jacob Roy and is headquartered in Kochi, Kerala.
- In 1993, Alzheimer's Disease International admitted ARDSI as a full member, thus making the Indian organisation the first Afro-Asian NGO to get this distinction.
- ARDSI has 15 chapters across India.
- ARDSI helplines:
(0) 9846198471/73
(0) 9846198786

Nilanjana Maulik, joint secretary general at ARDSI National, and director of dementia services at ARDSI Calcutta, says fondly, "Mrs Choudhuri has shown that nothing can be more courageous than simply living life with passion even in the midst of crisis. In many ways, her life began at 75, when she learned that her daughter had Alzheimer's. But she found a unique and wonderful way to convey hope, optimism, reassurance, dignity and respect for her daughter as well as for all of us."

Choudhuri may have laid down the reins as secretary of ARDSI's Calcutta Chapter in 2002 but she continues to be the focal point in the campaign on dementia. Powering her on is deep empathy. "I used to wonder what my life was about. I would sit with my daughter, who was unable to comprehend anything and communicate with me. What was the point of my being with her? Now, at 93, I am satisfied that my personal agony prompted me to do something for society." *



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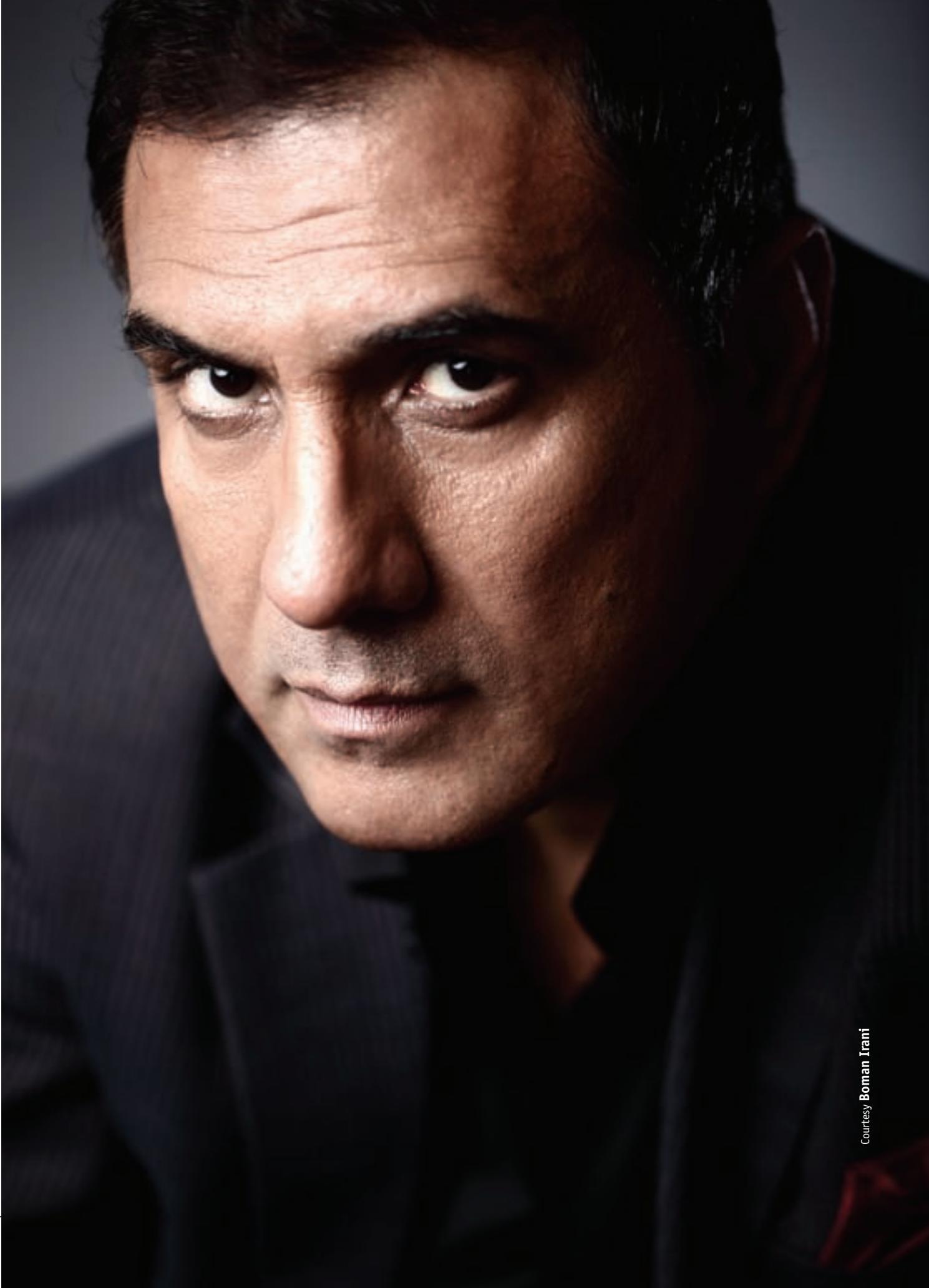
It's sheer irony that the funniest guy in Hindi cinema can't bear to take comedy lightly. Actor Boman Irani can have us in splits with just a twitch of his eyebrow on screen. Yet, off it, he agonises endlessly to get the right measure of hilarity and comic timing in his body language, facial expressions and voice. The versatile performer who launched his movie career eight years ago, at the age of 44, tells **Rajashree Balaram** about the many roles he played in life before he became an actor and why he waited so long to make us laugh

Boman Irani claims he is an open book. As we put him through some idle chatter, we realise he is anything but. Sure, he is volatile, friendly and down-to-earth. But Irani's eyes—when he is not making funny faces—are intense, not twinkling. And when they do light up, there is a devilish mirth there—as if he knows a secret that you don't.

Through the interview, Irani shares only what he wants to and not what you go looking for. Part of the problem is on our side; we expect him to be outrageous. But going through his background, one should have known better, because he never plays to anyone's expectations but his own. After running his family's wafer shop-cum-bakery in Mumbai's sepia corner of Grant Road, and working as a room service executive at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Irani led a dual life for 10 years as photographer and theatre artist. Now he is into movies and he is here to stay. That doesn't stop him, though, from doing what no comedian has: croon for an audience in a big-ticket concert. Last June, Irani teamed up with Shankar Mahadevan for a five-city concert tour across India. Judging by what Mahadevan has

been telling the media, the pair will perform again, soon, in public.

There is a restlessness to Irani that is both bewitching and unsettling. He finds it hard to sit still and moves around constantly. The empty poolside of the ITC Grand Central has the right acoustics to amplify his melodious voice as he hums the old Dev Anand classic *Phoolon ke rang se*. You don't expect him to sing that charming old number—but he does. He claims to have an encyclopaedic grasp of Hindi cinema trivia and is perfectly sure he can beat anyone hollow in a movie quiz. He is also impatient with himself: "I am not happy with that one," he says, pointing to a shot of his frozen on our camera screen. "It's such a stupid, studied pose; it's not natural." His eyes, in the said photograph, are fierce. "If you were offered the role of a dark, brooding, intense lover, would you take it up?" we ask him. "Of course, I would. I would love to do that." There are tentative media reports that he has been chosen to play the romantic lead in director Sanjay Leela Bhansali's next celluloid venture. Somehow, if that were to come true, we know Boman Irani would surprise us all and emerge as one of the most memorable lovers on Indian screen.



Courtesy Boman Irani

IN HIS WORDS

I am glad I started late. I auditioned for Alyque Padamsee's play *Roshni* while I was a photographer and that's what kicked off my tryst with theatre. I spent many years perfecting my technique and craft. Theatre offers you that kind of space and playground. I was surrounded by the best: Paresh Rawal and Naseeruddin Shah. Look at them; they are getting better each day and they are doing the best work. I think we become richer as performers when we have made that arduous journey from point A to point B; that certainly makes a difference to your work.

I miss theatre. Theatre helped me sharpen my craft. I have promised myself that I will make time for theatre again. I didn't get into the movies earlier because I was too busy being a photographer. For 10 years, I worked hard to be a good professional photographer. I couldn't have just dropped my camera and dived in simply because the jump

because I wanted to break the mould I had cast for myself in *Munnabhai*. Many people thought that as I am a Parsi and have done western theatre, I would have trouble doing Hindi films. I worked hard on my Hindi diction.

People expected me to be funny all the time, which can get quite stressful. But being funny can also be sensible sometimes, because the point is driven home stronger when people see the irony of it. Sometimes the most serious things can make me laugh. Sometimes things that are meant to be funny may not make me laugh. I find crabby people—who take the world too seriously—funny. I find people who try to crack a joke at everything unfunny.

An actor spends most of his life not acting but observing. I like observing people everywhere, even at a restaurant. A person waiting at the next table waiting for his order...the way his face lights up when he sees the waiter approaching him with a tray and the way it crumbles



seemed so tempting. Finally when I had done a reasonable amount of theatre to know I was ready for the next step, I did an experimental film with Ram Madhvani called *Let's Talk*. Madhvani showed the film to Vidhu Vinod Chopra. It was a precious little movie, which endorsed my reputation as a performer rather than a struggler.

When I heard the script of *Munnabhai MBBS* for the first time, I was fascinated. I found the simple man—director Raju Hirani—who narrated the story even more fascinating. We did a lot of preparation, months on end. And I love the fact that I had that privilege. *Munnabhai* changed everything for me. No one imagined it would be such a cult film. I remember going to the theatre and seeing people laugh and cry. After *Munnabhai*, people didn't know what to expect of me. I did *Khosla Ka Ghosla* next

when the waiter heads to the next table. That naked greed, that vulnerability is a joy to behold.

When I choose a role it's not merely for what my character gets to do, but what the story has to say. If you can describe what the movie was all about in one line, you have a story that is truly universal. That line could mean different things to different people, but it has to carry a message. The audience can sense when you are living your part of the story. If you are not quite there, you have to pump up the audience and it's a tired effort.

Every comical character I have played on screen is not necessarily comical. I don't think Virus [Veeru Sahasrabuddhe of *3 Idiots*] or Khurana [the land shark from *Khosla Ka Ghosla*] were funny people at all. These are grim,

dark people. But sometimes the funniest things come out of the most serious people. Khurana, especially, I take very seriously. He is a snake. When I chose Khurana I could sense how he could make people uneasy. And people laugh out of that uneasiness. People chose to see the lightness and the pathos in it. In *3 Idiots*, on the other hand, a lot of humour is direct and much of it is subtle. But some audiences cannot appreciate the weight of a long pause. People in smaller towns take longer to understand subtlety. But that's fine, we don't have to make humour subtle simply because the West likes it that way. Of course, there is room for refined comedy, though personally I love slapstick.

Being a performer has got nothing to do with being famous. I was a performer even when I was working in my bakery; people who walked in left with a laugh. Even when I was working at the Taj, I enjoyed a lot of adulation from customers and colleagues. In my mind I was always a celebrity, even when I was nobody. It's just the quantum of

and a performer. Sometimes, deep down we are different people; we just have to peel the layers off like those of an onion, and find ourselves.

I get bored easily. Like right now, I am thoroughly bored waiting for your photographer to start clicking my pictures. I am extremely restless by nature. I need to be entertained all the time. If nothing happens for 10-15 seconds I don't switch off, but switch on. I say, let's turn around and do something about it. I cannot land up on the sets on so-and-so date and display my wares. Especially for movies that are meant to be something. I hate to be part of a deal where I reach the sets and someone thrusts a script in my hand and says, 'Okay, these are your lines.' I ask myself, the writer has written these lines and the director is making the film, what am I doing to make these lines worthy of something? Whenever I have worked months on a film it always turns out better. I have to live with the character for some time. Improvisation doesn't happen on the spur

"I was shy as a child. But I must have had an exhibitionist inside me to finally become such an extrovert and a performer. Sometimes, deep down we are different people; we just have to peel the layers off like those of an onion, and find ourselves"



recognition that has altered. I like it when elderly people walk up to me and say, 'We never felt so free striking a conversation with an actor.' I don't look at myself as a movie star. I still go to the Chinese restaurants that I used to. Or to Khau Galli during Ramzan. And I still stop over at *pani puri* joints. If the crowd bothers me, I leave with a mouthful of *pani puri* and check out some other joint. No way am I going to order it home, or shut myself in.

I was very shy as a child. I even had a lisp for a long time. My father died very early. So I had great trouble dealing with men and would hide the moment I heard a deep male voice. But I think all those women around me—my aunt, my sisters, and my mom—just made me more sensitive. Even when I was shy, I must have had an exhibitionist somewhere inside me to finally become such an extrovert

of the moment; it happens imperceptibly during rehearsal in reflection of the work.

The saddest thing is when you crack a joke and nobody laughs. There is a vicarious pleasure in knowing that your lines can get the whole house down. Before a shot, I am charged with nervous energy. I keep running the lines and the moment in my mind. When you walk on to the stage, you want people to laugh at the first thing you say. It's a great burden, but one that I look forward to. One man I admire for that is Johnny Lever. He just walks into a room and says something and your knees buckle. Calling that a talent is unworthy of the man; it's a rare gift.

It's very difficult to get me irritated. But something that bugs me no end is the state of our country. They took away

our Kohinoor, now we have allowed them to take our human resource. We have the best brains in every sector. I go to the US and act, but my country still has me. But If I go to the US and develop software, they have lost me and it worries me that the government isn't doing much to stop that.

People will never guess that I can be very serious yet extremely childish, or that I am addicted to the Playstation. I am also good at compartmentalising my life. You want me to get into a shirt and look spiffy with makeup on for this interview? Fine, I will. But I know where the game ends. People ask, 'Will Boman Irani scream on a roller coaster ride?' And many say, 'Yes!' I say, 'No,' to start with, 'Boman Irani won't go on a roller-coaster ride.'

I gain my strength from my family, and friends. Happiness is nothing if you don't have people to share it with. I still live in Dadar Parsi Colony. Part of it is because it helps me stay rooted to who I am. Your lifestyle is something you choose and should never be guided by the things that everybody else is doing. If I succumb to that, my life and lifestyle belong to someone else; I will not be leading my life anymore. I lay down the law when it comes to spending time with my family. I tell people when I am not available and want to go on leave. Two months from now, me and my whole family are heading to London for a vacation. I have been there many times; now, I want to share the experience with my loved ones.

I always try to be home for Navroze. Though I am spiritual I am not overly religious. When religion becomes a rulebook, it interferes with the process of finding oneness with God. I wish Zoroastrianism was more egalitarian. If a man marries outside his community and his children can come to the fire temple, a woman who marries someone from another faith should be allowed to do the same. I think someone somewhere has misinterpreted the basic principles and we are lost in translation.

I am 51 years old, and there is so much still left to do. I'd like to make a film someday, and I want to learn to play the guitar really well. Ageing is so much more than wrinkles, loss of hair and creaking bones. Anyone who has aged well has so much to offer—experience and a greater understanding of the flaws in life and people. Ageing makes us aware of our mortality, but we are a day closer to death right from the day we are born anyway. I am happier because of my wrinkles as they remind me of the wonderful journey I have been on. I say, if you wish to cosmetically alter your appearance, go ahead and do it, but only if you're sure it will make you happy inside. If you are doing it to defeat ageing or out of self-pity, you are old already in your heart where it matters. But then that's just me.

I am a very boring guy. Recently, at an awards event for makeup artists, the hostess asked me on stage and asked

"When you walk on to the stage, you want people to laugh at the first thing you say. It's a great burden, but one that I look forward to"

me my views on makeup. I said, 'If you want me to look ugly and ridiculous, it will take you five minutes. You want me to look good? Ah, now that should take three hours.'

BOMAN ON SIN....

Pride is not a sin. It guides everything that you do. It gets nasty only when you bring your ego into it. I am not devoid of ego. I felt bad when I wasn't appreciated enough for my role in *Eklavya*. But then I gathered that too much of pride could only get me a long face, and I would end up looking like a fool.

Greed is a big problem. I am not driven by a price but the contentment I find in my friendships and in my relationship with my family.

Envy can spur you on to do better, or make you self-destructive. When I see another actor delivering a great performance, I feel envious, but I never let it grow into resentment.

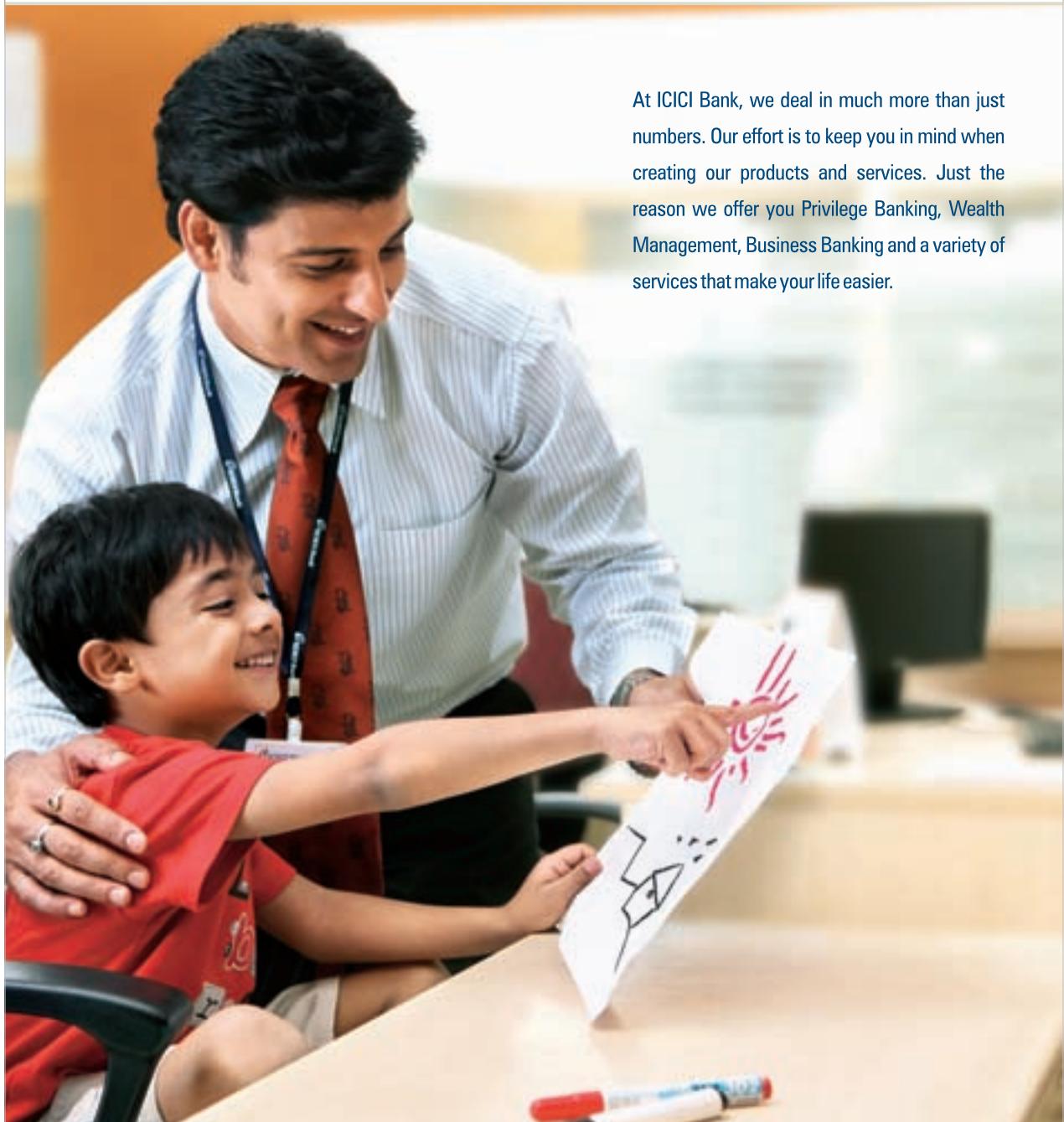
Anger is good or bad depending on how we use it. There should be some responsibility attached to your anger. If something bothers you, say it. If you feel you've been short-changed, ask for what you deserve. Either that or have the poise to grin and bear it. Don't whine.

Gluttony is not just about excess, but losing focus of who you are. If I have that extra drink, my inner personality is magnified, and I need to ask myself whether I really want to surrender control over myself.

Sloth is the one sin I love. I love the days I am sitting at home doing nothing but watching movies, planning vacations, and dreaming. But after some time, I end up pacing around the house. When I do that, my wife Zenobia asks me to shut up and sit down. She has this wonderful sobering influence on me. Sloth worries me only when I am not doing enough for the people for whom I can do so much more.

Lust is the least problematic. I hate it when people accuse old men of being lecherous when they express their desires. You have to be a lecherous guy in your youth to begin with to have grown into a lecherous old man. Lechery is not something that springs out of nowhere in your old age. Lust is a good thing. If there was no lust there would be nobody to talk to. You get that? *

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The seven deadly sins



"When I'm good, I'm very, very good, but when I am bad I'm better." Hollywood libertine Mae West came up with the most delightful lines, because she delighted in every moment of life, and lived exactly as she pleased. Most of us, especially silvers, live the way we are expected to, and not the way we want to. We are so caught up in being good that we forget the thrill—and joy—of being bad. It's okay to sin as long as you are prepared to suffer, we're told. In other words, we are made to feel little for wanting more. While it's true that virtue gives us strength of character, it is sin that endows us with audacity. This anniversary, we take the seven deadly sins that are condemned to shame and celebrate them the way they deserve to be.

Come, sin a little. Live a little.

Illustrations by **Rahul P**

greed

By Dhanya Nair Sankar

You hear about greed all the time disguised in gilded euphemisms like *ambition*, *grandeur*, *success*, depending on the public relations machinery behind the news. Donald Trump's \$ 125 million castle; British baron Richard Branson's 74-acre villa in the Necker Islands; the Sultan of Brunei's 1,932 cars; Lakshmi Mittal's 10-wheel motor-home fitted out like a palace; or even the one that did not make it to the tabloids—your neighbour's new 50-inch plasma TV. Greed is always bigger, brighter, toothier.

As children, we are admonished for being greedy. As young adults, we are told to dream big. As silvers, we are asked to scale down. The world and its assortment of spiritual gurus are out to draw the boundaries on our consumption, especially as we grow old and retire. 'Live within your means' is the oft-heard rebuke. Though living within our means may make us feel morally starched, can we help it if being greedy makes us feel deliciously good? And something that's so good cannot be half as bad as they have you believe. As Wall Street trader Gordon Gecko said, "Greed is good." It gives us a lot to look forward to—the next goalpost so to speak.

Most wanted

Seven things worth every silver's time—and greed

LIVE LUGGAGE PA SERIES MOTORISED SUITCASE

A suitcase with a mind of its own—yet one that's more



obedient than all your children put together. UK-based luggage company Live Luggage rolled out the world's first power-assisted suitcase last year, which literally takes a load off your shoulders when you are travelling. Ergonomically designed, it has an in-built motor that transfers the weight of the luggage to the wheels, when you grip the handle and tilt the suitcase. If you are on a steep incline, its clever sensors kick into action and the flat motor technology—built into its wheels—takes charge of the situation, so the suitcase drags itself without you overworking your muscles. The nifty carrier is built using advanced stress frame technology, so it tolerates a lot of abuse with stoic

calm. Its anti-gravity handle transfers 85 per cent of the suitcase weight to the wheels.

Additional features include TSA-approved combination locks; height-adjustable handle; force sensors; built-in umbrella; and tilt switches. And when powered for five hours, its 12 V battery offers two hours worth of power-assisted poise. Of course all covetous eyes will be on it when you roll it out, which is why it comes with a Live Locator ID to help you locate it just in case you lose it.



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CYBOOK OPUS-5"

On your next vacation, you plan to devour all the 10 books you've lined up for reading—all at the same time. Trouble is, your travel bag and your shoulder won't tolerate the punishing weight of those hard covers. The Cybook Opus 5" e-book reader, weighing just 150 gm, allows you to behave like a spoilt brat and be as fickle as you want with your reading material. It can store up to 1,000 titles in its 1 GB built-in flash memory and has a digital card slot for expanded storage. Memory apart, it packs a dizzy stack of user-friendly features in its 0.4" thick compact body: user interface supporting 23 international languages; 4.2" x 6" screen; 200 dpi display; a wide choice of font sizes; page turning buttons; an accelerometer that enables you to switch between portrait and landscape mode; ultra-fast pagination capabilities; rechargeable battery that lasts for 8,000 flips on each run;



(Left) Carry your library wherever you go with the Cybook Opus-5; (below centre) Neato XV-1 moves around the house all on its own vacuuming and even recharging itself; (bottom left) Live Luggage PA Series puts the pleasure back in travelling by taking the load off your shoulders; (bottom right) Toto Neorest even holds up the lid by itself

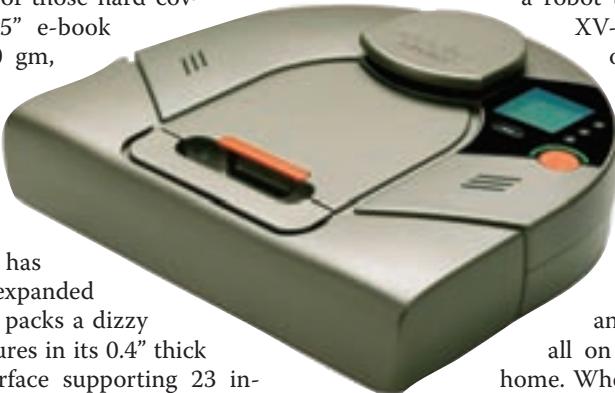
and the option to return to the page you last read when you switch it on. You can download a book from any computer without using a special driver. Claim this pocket-sized gadget and find yourself right up in the league of coolest silvers.



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NEATO XV-11

Vacuum cleaners are dime a dozen; how about enlisting a robot to clean up after you? The Neato XV-11 is a robotic cleaner that uses onboard laser mapping to find the fastest and most efficient route to suck up all the dust in your house. Its Room Positioning System empowers it with a 360° view of your room, using which it moves around walls, doorways, furniture and obstacles. Schedule it to clean with just a 'press' button and it will clean up room after room, all on its own, even when you are not home. When it runs low on power, it returns to the charging base in your house, charges itself and resumes cleaning. It's no slacker, not this one. It cleans up every corner—under sofas, tables and beds—and works well on all kinds of flooring including carpet, wood, granite, marble, stone. Even when you add new furniture,





it negotiates a new path for itself around the furniture. Go kick up a (dust) storm in your neighbourhood.



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TOTO NEOREST

Who says you cannot take a leak in style? An ultimate convergence of style and technology, the Toto Neorest is the haughtiest porcelain throne to greet your fundament. Neorest comes with three cleansing modules; hands-free automatic flush; temperature-controlled seats; built-in air purifying system; front and rear cleanser; adjustable water temperature; tank-less flush; and a night light. Its inbuilt motion detector even gets the toilet lid open as you approach it. Talk about not having to lift a finger or bend your back. Indeed, here's a commode that knows how to kiss your ass good morning.



[Go to www.totousa.com](http://www.totousa.com)

JAMES BOND BED

Think James Bond and the mind spews out an endless reel of high-octane action and effortless style. Naturally, a bed inspired by the world's coolest spy (who turns 58 this year, by the way), is anything but ordinary. The James Bond Bed—or In Bed With Love as its label proclaims—thought up by French furniture designer Nicolas Melan, oozes luxury from head to toe, quite literally. The headboard has special 'luminotherapeutic' LED lights that change colours at the touch of a remote button. And no, that's not a frivolous imitation of the mind-numbing special effects of a 007 movie; the play of light is scientifically engineered to induce sound sleep for those who have snooze issues. On the other end, the bed's footboard props up a plasma screen, DVD player, and 5.1 surround THX system if you wish to be lulled to sleep by your favourite tunes. Even the integrated silent alarm clock wakes you up with gentle vibrations, so the person sleeping next to you is not disturbed. Go ahead, bond with the best.



[Go to www.bornrich.com](http://www.bornrich.com)

(Left) The James Bond Bed has everything to entertain and keep you awake, as well as soothe and put you to sleep; (below) the Model One MP3 player and radio is retro in appearance and futuristic when it comes to features

MODEL ONE MP3 PLAYER AND RADIO



Going back in time was never so futuristic. Model One, a limited edition music player from US-based radio company Tivoli Audio, is a classic mixture of nostalgia and modernity. It's an MP3 player and radio rolled into one. The body, blown in crystal by Swedish glass artist Per B Sundberg, is home to 3" full range speakers, 5:1 ratio analogue radio dial, amber-tuning LED, and a tuner that dredges up clarity from the weakest stations. In terms of snob value, it's an imperious celeb in the audio world—last year, the Model One made it to *PC World's* list of 'Most Extravagant Technology Products'.



[Go to www.tivoliaudio.com](http://www.tivoliaudio.com)

DRY WATER JET MASSAGER

Don't we all wish we had a 24-hour masseur on call? If that sounds decadent, how about a full-body massager at the push of a button? The geeks who spend all day thinking of ways to spoil us silly have come up with a shiatsu massager with a twist. The Dry Water Jet Massager is designed to provide a full-body water jet massage without getting you wet. Yes, you heard it right. The massager has 28 water jet nozzles that deliver precise, invigorating streams of water replicating the principles of shiatsu. The water, though, doesn't land on a single inch of your body. A pliable polymer sheet provides a waterproof barrier between the user and the nozzles. Designed like a capsule-shaped spacecraft, once you get in, the experience—users claim—is pure bliss. The capsule enclosure comes equipped with a Bose speaker system with iPod hook-ups, aroma diffuser, 7" LCD television and DVD player. There is a whole world of pleasant lassitude inside that capsule. You may never want to get out.



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| Blood Pressure (mmHg) | 130/90 | 110/70 |

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gluttony

By Arati Rajan Menon

The flesh endures the storms of the present alone; the mind, those of the past and future as well as the present. Gluttony is a lust of the mind.

—Thomas Hobbes

The ancient Roman Mithraic sect, from whose beliefs the Christians are said to have derived The Seven Deadly Sins, originally had Ambition on their shortlist of very bad things to do. But over time, as Ambition came to be seen as a virtue, Gluttony took its place. And those who indulged copiously in food or drink were threatened with a diet of rats, toads and snakes in Hell. Today, of course, gourmands perched on damask-covered tables in the world's finest restaurants (as far away from Hell as it gets) may rhapsodise over the aforementioned reptiles, but other than that little has changed in our approach to the sin of gluttony. Food continues to be equated with guilt, and our relationship to it remains more complex than the plotline of the most convoluted soap opera.

It's time to free your mind—and your thesaurus—from the shackles of the past. Food that delights your senses can also nourish body, mind and soul; the two are not mutually exclusive. All it takes is awareness, and the ability to stop when you need to. It's about a change of perspective. Gluttony need not be a dirty word but a sensory prescription for all your malaise. Whisper it to yourself, roll the word around your tongue. Now let your epiglottis take a crack at it, say it out loud. And yes, bon appétit.

Yes, you can

Five 'indulgent' Indian favourites with secrets to share

Basic Instinct: Considered an ultimate no-no by the new-age food police worried about expanding waistlines, rice



is really as good as it gets: easy on the system (and the pocket), loaded with vitamins, fibre and minerals and free of harmful fats, cholesterol or sodium that could harm your heart. What's more, whole grain rice may just protect your brain from Alzheimer's and your body from cancerous cells. So dig into that serving of steamed rice or curl up with a nutritious bowl of *kanji*, the soothing rice gruel that has spelled comfort food since way before anyone used the term.

Southern Comfort: Vilified for long as being bad for the heart, the **coconut** is being gradually rehabilitated as a carrier of heart-friendly fat. That apart, it is antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal, can stabilise weight, light up your skin and rev the immune system—so spoon over some of that chutney on your plate. And don't even get us started on coconut water; power packed with proteins, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, it is one of the highest

sources of rehydrating and energy-boosting electrolytes known to man. We drink to that.

Gold Rush: The jury is still out on whether **clarified butter** or **ghee** is bad for the heart—the latest is that it's not although too much of a good thing is clearly a bad thing. But there's little debate that this anti-viral and (possibly) anti-cancer marvel is good for the brain, oils your joints and can help with a whole laundry list of ailments, from irate digestive tracts to skin troubles and even a failing libido. Go ahead and dip your (tea)spoon into that tin of liquid gold—sparingly but with feeling.

The Beloved: It's probably the best example of bad love in our lives; young or old, we ache for this tuber, but berate ourselves for it. The misunderstood **potato** can actually come out of the closet now. A rich source of vitamins (especially Vitamin C) and minerals, its low-sodium, high-potassium double whammy prevents inflammation and guards the heart. Easy to digest, it also soothes the stomach, sharpens the brain and boosts immunity. Just don't deep-fry it—bake steam, boil and grill, and quit the guilt.

Forbidden Fruit: Diabetics should probably stop reading right about now. If you're still here, forget the calories of the **mango** for a moment and focus on the good stuff. Chock-full of vitamins, minerals, enzymes and flavonoids like beta carotene, this is what they call a superfruit. From vision protection and heart health (courtesy all that potassium) to an anti-cancer shield thanks to the rush of antioxidants, this little slice of heaven does it all. And you'll have a lot of fun in the process.

In love, as in gluttony, pleasure is a matter of the utmost precision.

—Italo Calvino

The sensual platter

A well thought-out dinner forms a crescendo beginning with the pianissimo of the soup, passing through the delicate arpeggios of the appetiser, culminating with the fanfare of the main course, which is followed, finally, by the dulcet chords of the dessert. The process is comparable to that of making love with style, beginning with insinuations, savouring erotic juices, reaching the climax with the usual crash of cymbals, and finally sinking into a pleasureful and well-deserved repose. Haste in lovemaking leaves an angry itch in one's soul, and haste in eating alters the basic humours of the digestion. Temperature is as important as texture and colour; everything has its role in the sensual experience of a meal."

Thus writes Chilean-born Isabelle Allende, whose magic realism and vivid characters in books like *The House of the Spirits* and *Eva Luna* have won her acclaim world over, in *Aphrodite* (HarperCollins; 357 pages), which she describes as a "divagation about lust and gluttony, the only deadly sins that are worth the trouble." A hot pot seething with recipes and stories exploring the connections between food and sensuality, the book evokes myriad tastes and tactile sensations, in the process celebrating food as a metaphor for the very marrow of life. In Allende's world, gluttony is no vice but a virtue; a toast to the primal and fecund in and around us all. Proof of the pudding, literally, is this recipe she serves up "saturated with aphrodisiacs: chocolate, nuts, coffee, liqueur, eggs!"

CHARLOTTE FOR LOVERS

Ingredients: 1 square (1 ounce) bittersweet/dark chocolate; 2 tbsp water; 2 tbsp sugar; 2 tbsp butter; 2 eggs, separated; 2 tbsp ground walnuts; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup strong black coffee; 1 tbsp brandy; 4 small biscuits or cookies; crème Chantilly (whipped cream with a touch of powdered sugar and vanilla)

Method: Break up the chocolate and melt it with the water in a double boiler. Add the sugar and butter; beat well. Add the egg yolks one by one, continuing to beat well. Cook for 5 minutes and remove from the heat. Beat the egg whites until stiff and fold with the walnuts. Gently add the coffee, cognac, and cookies to the mixture. Spoon into 2 goblets and top with crème Chantilly.



Psst...

The ingredients of the sinful Charlotte for Lovers can be good for you—in moderation

- **DARK CHOCOLATE:** This antioxidant can decrease risk of stroke; lower blood pressure; protect the heart; boost ‘good’ cholesterol; improve blood flow to the brain; and reduce cell damage. It also makes you, well, happy—it’s packed with the hormones the brain triggers when you fall in love (or lust).
- **WALNUTS:** Packed with omega-3 fatty acids, fibre, plant sterols and vitamins, these antioxidants can rein-

in bad cholesterol; reduce risk of blood clots; boost artery health; and protect the brain. Walnuts work on the outside too—they help minimise wrinkles and sun damage.

- **COFFEE:** Moderate consumption of this antioxidant has been linked to lower risk of Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, gallbladder disease, gout, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and oral, oesophageal and pharyngeal cancer. It also increases effectiveness of painkillers and boosts liver and dental protection. And in a snap, there’s no better pick-me-up for instant cognitive recall.

- **BRANDY:** Did you know that a shot (30 ml) of this grape-based spirit

gives you the equivalent antioxidant potential as the daily recommended intake of Vitamin C? Researchers recently established that Armagnac brandy from the southwest of France actually helps prevent heart disease and battles obesity.

- **EGGS:** Low on calories and loaded with vitamins A and B, protein, calcium and minerals, they are high on nutrition; aid weight management; improve memory; and keep diseases like Alzheimer’s at bay. The yolks too are watching out for you—they protect your eyes by reducing risk of cataracts and preventing macular degeneration.

Gluttony is not a secret vice.

—Orson Welles

Wine, woman, and song

Over a chilled glass of Chenin Blanc, a light, semi-dry wine with high notes of fruit from her son Rajeev’s vineyard, 72 year-old piano teacher, chorist and bon vivant Sulabha (popularly known as Sulu) Samant talks about her life and loves. And then, while we admire the view from her expansive, sunlit apartment in tony south Mumbai, she plays a delicate Bach prelude for us.

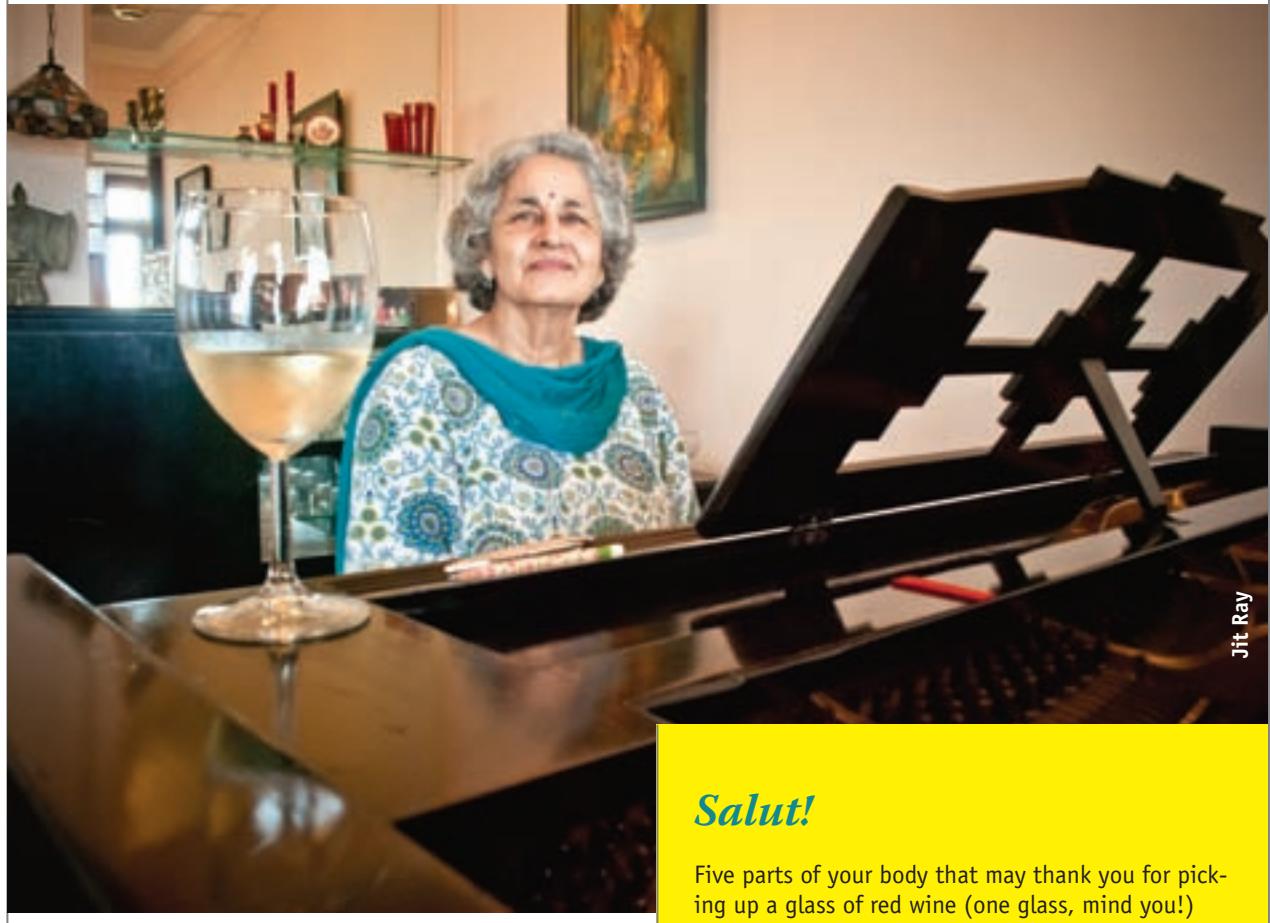
The sound of music: “I teach piano five days a week, mornings and afternoons. My students are mostly children although I get a few adults as well. I am a member of Mumbai’s Cantata Choir but I am on a break right now. I used to sing soprano but switched to alto with the passage of time. [The acclaimed Choir holds periodic shows at the National Centre for Performing Arts.] I’m also an active member of Indus, a private organisation that brings together expatriate and Indian women to foster cultural exchange and share diversity. I sing in their choir too. When it comes to music, I’m not a purist; apart from western classical and church music, I enjoy jazz and show tunes as well. Do you know that I also play tennis and swim three day a week? I am always on the go!”

Past perfect: “I’m the daughter of a police officer, one of three sisters. I grew up in Madhya Pradesh. My father was a disciplinarian but a man ahead of his time. He wanted

us to be independent. I went horse riding, learnt to drive when I was 16. I also started playing the piano but the one we had access to was horrible, so I stopped! After marriage, I did my masters in social work from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. I also did a diploma in journalism. Still, music continued to hold me in its thrall and I began to pursue it assiduously. I started teaching music, first in nursery schools and then at a couple of schools for street children and physically challenged children. It was a wonderful opportunity to meld my training with my passion. I was never interested in kitty parties and lunches; I always wanted to be productive. I’ve been teaching piano from home for the past 15 years.”

Family ties: “My husband runs a company that does underwater salvage operations for ships. He has always been a rock of support, no matter what I chose to do. We have three sons and four lovely grandchildren—two grandsons and two granddaughters. Our youngest son Rajeev is still a bachelor. In the early 1990s, he returned from California, where he had been studying and subsequently working. We had a 20-acre plot of land in Nasik and he started farming mangoes there. This was followed by various crops like roses, teakwood, and grapes. Then, inspired by his Californian experience, he established Sula Vineyards in 1999; it was Nasik’s first winery. The family had shortlisted a few names for the company but Rajeev chose the name ‘Sula’, derived from my name. It was sweet of him.”

Cheers: I have always enjoyed good wine but you never really got good wine in India earlier. I had tasted fine wines at places like Sonoma Valley and Napa Valley in the US but I wasn’t that savvy about it. Now, of course, I know



much more! I really enjoy drinking wine so I'm careful that I don't drink too much! Typically, I have a glass about three times a week. I prefer white wine. I love the Dindori Reserve Viognier and Riesling. Other favourites include Late Harvest Chenin Blanc, which has a sweet touch to it, the Rose Zinfandel and Sula Brut sparkling wine. Everyone drinks wine now. Many of the men in our friends' circle have abandoned their hard drinks for red wine; the ladies seem to prefer white. One important reason, of course, is the awareness of the health benefits. But, above all, there is so much good wine available now—and it tastes very good!"

85

**the number of calories in
a four-ounce (113.6 ml)
glass of red wine**



Salut!

Five parts of your body that may thank you for picking up a glass of red wine (one glass, mind you!)

Your heart: Studies suggest that red wine raises 'good' cholesterol; helps prevent artery damage caused by 'bad' cholesterol; lowers blood pressure; and inhibits the formation of blood clots.

2. Your brain: Silvers who drank wine scored better on memory quizzes. Also, researchers believe that owing to its anti-clot and anti-inflammatory properties, it can combat cognitive decline.

3. Your tummy: According to recent studies, people who drink wine every day have lower body mass than those who indulge occasionally; moderate wine drinkers have narrower waists and less abdominal fat than people who drink liquor.

4. Your ovaries: Researchers have discovered that a glass of red wine a day has the potential to reduce the risk of ovarian cancer, sometimes even by as much as 50 per cent.

5. Your bones: Women who drink moderately have been found to have higher bone mass than abstainers. Studies point to the fact that alcohol may boost levels of oestrogen, which slows destruction of old bone.

lust

By Rajashree Balaram

Lthough all sins are forbidden to us, there's none that runs the risk of more chastisement and censure than that sibilant four-letter word: lust.

In India, marriage yields us the social license to perfect our lustful moves legitimately, but we are tacitly expected to quell our amorous urges when we cross the gates of silverdom. Even when silvers engage in a relationship, our society desperately wants to believe that such union is only motivated by the sublime need for companionship, and never by the body's primal scream for intimacy. Ageing and eroticism are forever held apart as mutually exclusive concepts. Many of us buy into and join the chorus of sexual prohibition as we age. We may share our beds with our partners but we may have stopped sharing our bodies with each other. On the other hand, there are as many silvers—in their 70s and 80s—who are pushing their sexual boundaries and finding new ways of foreplay, discovering sexual toys on the Internet and new erogenous zones on each other's bodies. They are no more exceptionally endowed with stamina or pheromones than you. Your body may have altered with time, but it still retains the memory of every caress that ever landed on your skin.

So, should we deride a feeling that's brought us such pleasure? Or celebrate and revive it in full splendour? Think—and act—over it tonight. Because love may make the world go round, but it's lust that fuels the ride.

Action replay

We went looking for movies that show silvers in hot bedroom action. And came up with a handful worth your sweat and sigh....

DAMAGE

This one is sinful in more ways than one. It's not just about a man coveting another man's woman; it's also about the



woman being his son's beloved. Dr Stephen Fleming (Jeremy Irons) is a British cabinet minister whose slumberous eyes light up with barely banked yearning when his son's new girlfriend Anne Barton (Juliet Binoche) is introduced to him at a soiree. Fleming's lust gains impetus when his desire is reciprocated in full throttle and surprising urgency by the object of his obsession. The story

TOP PICK

tapers to a tragic end, but the road to destruction and disillusionment is lit with many scenes of sexual fervour in which the pair devour each other every way they can—they kiss, bite, gasp and scream—against open doorways, beds, window ledges, and cold floors. Sex between the two never lets up on savage eagerness or unabashed nudity. Watching Irons reduced to an animal in heat, one knows instinctively that he wouldn't be half as sexy if he had been any younger.

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE

Harry Sanborn (Jack Nicholson), a sexagenarian music tycoon and an inveterate ladies' man, has a heart attack while making love to his 29 year-old girlfriend at her mother Erica's house. When Sanborn is rushed to the hospital, Erica (the delicious Diane Keaton), a successful playwright in her late 50s, finds her insides melting at the sight of the

Two for foreplay...

36 year-old debonair doctor treating her daughter's ageing boyfriend. Amid all the mush and mania that ensue, Sanborn and Erica struggle to leash their mutual dislike when they are thrown together in the same house for a week. Chemistry conquers prejudice, as eyes meet, heartbeats rise, towels drop, and the two sexy silvers-lined face, thickening waist, sagging arms—drag each other to the satin sheets. The movie has delicious action and sparkling dialogues. Our favourite scene: when Keaton, mewling after a rapacious kiss, can't wait to get out of her turtleneck sweater, Nicholson slashes it apart with scissors.

THE MOTHER

May (Anne Reid) is a demure grandmother from the North England countryside, whose life and identity have always been circumscribed by the needs of her children and spouse. After her husband's death, May moves in to her daughter's apartment in London, lurking around the fringes of complicated urban life. Emotionally needy, the sexagenarian also rediscovers her sexually starved self in another tormented soul, Darren (whistle-worthy Daniel Craig), her son's carpenter friend, half her age. One feels grateful that the sex scenes between Craig and Reid are not a clever play of light and shadow, but explicit, raunchy and real. Watching the movie, one will certainly want to applaud Reid for courageously baring her emotions and her mature curves with such wild abandon.

ELEGY

He was only 39 when he played the rectitudinous father of India's freedom movement in *Gandhi*. At 65, Ben Kingsley cranks up his sex appeal for a bolder, more nuanced role of an unapologetic hedonist. Sophisticated and commitment-phobic culture critic David Kepesh (Kingsley) falls for one of his students, Consuela Castillo (the voluptuous earth goddess Penelope Cruz). The two embark on a torrid affair, in which Kepesh learns that he is not as invulnerable and jaded as he thought. The growing chemistry between the

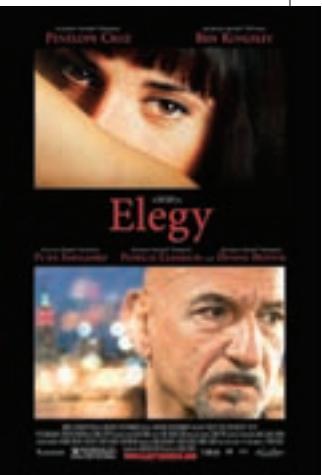
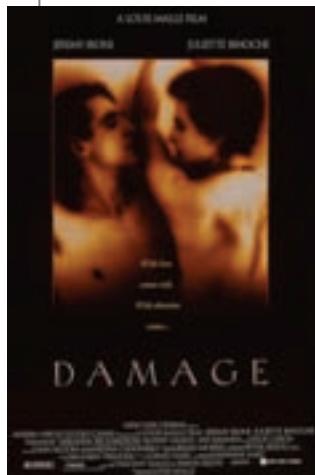
ENTRAPMENT: He is an art thief. She is an insurance crime investigator. He is 70. She is 30. He is virile. She is seductive. The rest is played out not too far from your imagination. Watch Catherine Zeta-Jones gasping and blushing at Sean Connery's salted-and-peppered sex appeal in this 1999 movie that set tongues wagging over their age difference—and pulses racing from their chemistry.

VENUS: We never thought he could outdo his 1962 outing as Lawrence of Arabia. But 74 year-old Peter O'Toole returned to the big screen in 2006 in *Venus*, not to play a wizened grandfather, but an ageing actor seducing his friend's young grandniece (Jody Whittaker) with patience, compassion and Shakespearean suavity. No sex between the sheets here, but loads between the lines.

two characters crackles with wit and undercurrents. The scene you will want to rewind: a lush Cruz riding Kingsley's pelvis in sensuous undulations—and him giving back in full, vigorous tempo.

LOVE RANCH

Helen Mirren has appeared nude in several films. And you will be glad she has no plans to stop now that she is 65. But it's not just her stunning body that will get your motor running—it's what she does with it. In *Love Ranch*, a film based on the real story of Nevada's first licensed whorehouse Mustang Ranch, Mirren plays a tough-talking brothel madam, Grace Bontempo, who constitutes one half of a marriage of convenience. Her self-centred, egotistical husband Charlie (Joe Pesci) sleeps wilfully with many girls from the bordello, yet Grace continues to hold a torch for him. In walks young beefy Armando Bruza (Sergio Peris Manchita), a stony Argentinean prize-fighter brought to the US by Charlie, and Grace's much-deprived heart and body finds emotional fulfilment and sexual release. What starts out as manipulation and deception between the





young man and the silver woman soon segues into a riveting conflagration of love and lust.

Silver on fire

Delicious confessions, news, and views straight out of our XXX files

STING BITES

You think waking up next to the same face and body has dimmed your sexual appetite? American singer Sting, 59, and his wife Trudie Styler, 56, will get you to haul yourself out of that rut. While shooting for a titillating six-page spread for *Harper's Bazaar* (see pictures above), the couple, who have been married for 30 years, cooed that they keep their vibe alive with loads of sex. "I don't think pedestrian sex is very interesting," insists Sting. "There's a playfulness we have; I like the theatre of sex. I like to look good. I like her to dress up. I like to dress her up." The ever-tactile duo cheekily confessed that they don't care much for the old-fashioned romance of rose petals and ballads, but preferred aggressive, tawdry sex. Feel inspired to talk dirty? Now is the time to let the animal out. Try www.dirtytalkingguide.com

OH, OZZY!

"He's like a rabbit, he's terrible. Every song gets him in the mood for love," says Sharon Osbourne, wife of former Black Sabbath rock star Ozzy Osbourne. At 62, Ozzy apparently can't get enough of nookie; he can go on for hours. "He's just like that battery-powered bunny; instead

of that little rabbit they should have Ozzy's willy banging the drum," says Sharon, 54, to *BANG Showbiz*. And what does her sexually insatiable partner have to share? "I firmly believe that the only time you'll ever get any peace from down below is when you're in the ground," says Ozzy. "I'm almost 62 and I still love a good old game of 'Where's the salami?'"

HUFFING HEFF

In a candid confessional to *The New York Times Magazine*, Hugh Heffner, the 84 year-old owner of the Playboy empire, spoke of his indefatigable ardour and the 'little' help he takes along the way to keep it that way. When asked if he took Viagra, the irrepressible rake said, "I make love a couple of times of the week, and I take the Viagra when I am going to be making love." We are proud of Heff because he was honest enough to admit he needed help and didn't give up on his baser urges simply because he was ageing: "I would say, at 84 it [Viagra] helps. It's God's little helper."

SEXHIBIT!

Isobel Vorley is the world's most tattooed silver woman. There is not a single inch of her body that hasn't been inked; the gutsy, whacky UK-based 70 year-old has intricate tattoos even on her private parts. But our attention is forever riveted by the ones on her head—swirls and swirls of penises. What's inside that head is equally bold and salacious: "I do like porn, good old straight porn. I've always enjoyed sex and will continue to do so as long as my health is good. I am not bored yet and if Mac [her husband] doesn't feel like it, I've always got my dildo!"

HARD TALK

Canadian septuagenarian Sue Johanson won't bat an eyelid as she discusses erections, G-spots, lubricants, penis pumps, threesomes and oral sex in graphic detail—all on television talk shows *Talk Sex* and *Sunday Night Sex Show*. The chatty grandmother happily fields questions on sex from anyone who has hit a glitch in the sack. For her earnest efforts to perpetuate and celebrate sexual freedom, the saucy silver has been recently made a member of the Order of Canada, the country's equivalent of knighthood.

PORN INTENDED

Shigeo Tokuda looks like any other respectable, handsome 74 year-old in Tokyo. However, no one—not even his wife and children—are aware that he has played the main lead in 350 Japanese porn films made in the past 14 years. His moves on screen sure work; there is an exclusive 'Shigeo Tokuda' series



Thumbs up

Artemis, Germany's largest luxury 'wellness' brothel, in the Berlin district of Charlottenburg, has introduced sex-for-the-elderly facilities: seats in showers and larger changing rooms to accommodate wheelchairs. One retirement home in Berlin is even planning to offer a "room for intimate encounters". That aside, registered prostitutes are already focusing on providing sex for senior citizens in retirement homes.

that portrays him as a tactful elderly gentleman guiding women of different ages in the erotic arts. "People of my age generally have shame, so they are very hesitant to show their private parts," Tokuda tells *TIME*. "But I am proud of myself doing something they cannot." The veteran porn king plans to continue to heat up TV and cinema screens with horizontal action till he is 80—or as long as there is a demand for him. He has reason to believe his popularity won't wane anytime soon: Japan's elder porn market has doubled over the past decade.

Bedside secrets

Sometimes, all of us need a catalyst to spur us into action. We list seven aids to get you in the mood

GINSENG

Ginseng, the much studied root of a plant, has long been used to perk up things in bed by eager couples around the world. Available in capsule and powder form, it's a healing agent that's commonly used to help treat fatigue, stress, infection and reportedly even impotence. Though its herbal origins make it more readily accessible and innocuous, it would be wise to consult your physician to check if it will interfere with any other medication that you may be taking.

WEDGE PILLOW

Shaped like a wedge, the wedge pillow makes sex a more comfortable experience if you have a delicate back or hip. It props up the upper body at a more comfortable angle and gets you from 'ouch!' to 'wow'. There are



many brands available abroad. Check out the one listed on www.liberator.com

VIAGRA

When pharmaceutical giant Pfizer launched performance-enhancing pill Viagra in 2005 in India, the tablet created a sensation in the market as well as bedrooms across the country. All of a sudden, erectile dysfunction, which affects 25 per cent of men over 50, no longer seemed like a road-block to roaring sex. Of course, it's absolutely necessary to speak to your doctor before you head to the chemist.

AROMATHERAPY

Our sense of smell can both stir our fire, and extinguish it. Aromatherapy can work wonders on our desire and set the mood for intimacy. Oils extracted from sandalwood, jasmine, ylang ylang, and rose have been used to dispel frigidity, impotence, nervousness, and anxiety for thousands of years all across the world. Light up an aromatic candle or buy massage oil with the subtle fragrant aphrodisiacs.

ENHANCING HER LIBIDO

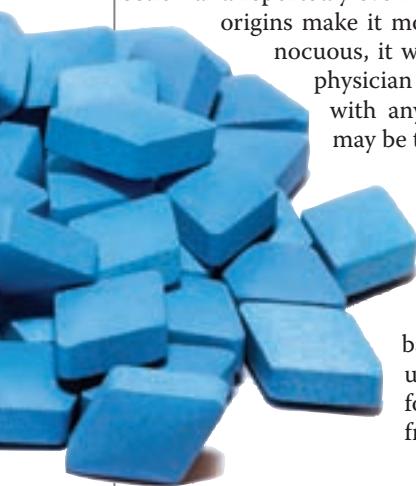
Thankfully the world of lust is getting more egalitarian. The Thanda Libido Enhancer is specially meant to arouse women. The tablets contain a range of select herbs picked from Africa and the Orient, which encourage a healthy sexual appetite, rev up circulation and enhance vitality. Check with your doctor before you order a bottle. Refer to www.nativemedicines.com

EROTICA

The mind is the most powerful sex organ. Feed it, tantalise it and it will launch you on the road to bodily bliss. The *Kamasutra*, with its seemingly endless gallery of complicated sexual positions, can be daunting, but there is a whole planet of sexy literature available on the shelves. Feel awkward checking out intimate stuff with curious onlookers around you? The Internet is an even better source of erotica—visuals, text and audio. Surf with your partner and choose what gets you both going.

BEDROOM TOYS

Some wise soul once remarked that nothing you do in bed is a sin if it brings you pleasure. Sex toys may seem like an alien concept, but they offer a wonderful way to recharge dormant chemistry. There are thousands of sites online that sell them with assured transaction privacy. We checked out www.sex-toys-for-love.com



sloth

By Meeta Bhatti

To define what's slothful, we liked French author and philosopher Jules Renard's version the best: "Laziness is nothing more than the habit of resting before you get tired." If you have the penchant for doing nothing, 'Sloth' is probably the easiest sin to commit of all seven and the one that requires greater skill than others. In retrospect, why paint a wrong picture of deservedly lazy years? For, sloth needn't be disarray and delay. It could mean comfort, convenience and hands-free freedom (we would like you to believe). If not, then consider that it's sometimes good to pretend for your own good.

On one hand, 'Lazy' has spawned a whole new industry, making products that help you become one with your furniture. On the other, it's also classy to take to activities disguised as 'work-shy' when they aren't—well, you can't have your children calling for baby-sitting sessions while they are on holiday when it's you who deserves to be on one.

Sloth furniture

After all, it's lifestyle, not sin, silly

GROUND SLOTH

This is not for those who want to sit straight. **La-z-boy**, the granddad of recliners, came to power(nap) in 1929; today, it is a bestseller in 70 countries, including India. Unrivalled in support, relaxation and comfortable cushioning (special finish Italian leather), La-z-boy's patented design comes with 18 reclining angles, three locking footrest positions independent of backrest and a trademark lever that will never fail you (it has a 10-year warranty). Exotically named 'Cardinal', 'Pinnacle', 'Branson', 'Grand Canyon', and 'Dreamtime', you can also opt for two and three-seat options in case you have company. Keep it in your office, TV room, study room or a quiet corner of your own choice and just be.



Available at UGF-12, Bestech Central Square, Sector 57, Gurgaon, Haryana; call (0) 9650053504, 0124-4209452

TELLY-FUSION

Have you taken the hands-free oath? Which means you even need help to push arrows on your remote control. How about not making it obvious by employing someone to do the job? Get a headrest that will do it for you, instead. The All-Sounds Catch Cubic Pillow absorbs the television/CD player's ambient sound and diverts it directly to your ears. Be a couch potato.



Go to www.strapya-world.com

LOUNGE ACCESS

German designer Nils Holger Moormann understands the rightful need for some to fuse with their furniture. His Easy Reader portable bookshelf that resembles a charming wheelcart blends in one piece the shelf and a lounger with wheels that take you anywhere you will (provided you occupy big spaces). Made of birch plywood and designed like a balancing wheelbarrow with a window-ledge seat, it's also a whole new way to take your books into the real world outside (balcony or verandah; the road is what we don't recommend) and vice-versa.



Go to www.moormann.de/en/furniture/seating



Primal pleasure

Seven ways to soothe your nerves

Sometimes the body shouts out for special treatment. And there's nothing that can be as soothing and relaxing as a good massage. Look around for experts and give it a try (but not without medical advice).

1. Swedish massage therapy: Long, smooth and circular strokes with lotion or oil on superficial muscles for those who have never had a massage before.

2. Aromatherapy: Massage therapy with carefully chosen scented plant oils, each with its own emotional component.

3. Hot stone massage: Smooth, heated stones are placed at key points on the body to warm and loosen tight muscles; if applied with gentle pressure, they can relieve tension.

4. Shiatsu: A Japanese form of massage, Shiatsu involves deft finger-work in which important acupuncture points are held for a few seconds to help regain balance and improve energy flow in the body.

5. Thai massage: Comprising compressions and stretches, this is probably the most energising type of massage to improve flexibility and reduce stress.

6. Reflexology: It's more than a simple foot massage and comprises applying pressure on key points that relate to vital body and organ functions.



**What's the alternative for recliners?
Non-recliner chairs.**

Tip of Sin

Hands-free toilet unclogging: No need to get your hands dirty with a toilet plunger. You just need a bucket of hot water (not boiling as it can cause the porcelain to crack), lots of detergent and time. Pour the water in slowly. Squirt some dishwashing detergent in the bowl. This will settle on the base and its enzymes will attack the organic matter. Call a plumber if it needs more work than sitting around and waiting.

7 Ayurvedic massage: A recent European study concludes that human beings can be divided into three categories based on bacteria in the gut. No different really from the Ayurvedic philosophy of dividing us into *kapha*, *pitta* and *vata dosha*. Most Ayurvedic treatments and massages are based on this age-old doctrine. Here are some worth trying:

- **Abhyanga:** A full body massage with warm herb oil (based on your *dosha*), it's said to bring the body back into balance by improving blood circulation, and strengthening/toning muscles and joints. It also releases deep-seated toxins, therefore relieving stress and increasing energy flow. For Abhyanga, you might be asked to change seven positions—upright seated, flat on the back, right turn, flat on the back, left turn, flat on the back and sitting upright again. You might want to choose the face-down position as well. Abhyanga also includes a simple head massage and a massage to facilitate better sleep.
- **Garshana:** Comprising light and swift strokes, Garshana is done without oil and with raw silk gloves. By increasing blood and lym-

phatic circulation, it facilitates the breakdown of fat in the body and helps cleanse and exfoliate the skin, which later makes an oil massage even more effective.

- **Udvartana:** This uses powders and ointments that remove excessive oil from the body. After the massage, therapists use *mung* flour or horse gram as the final touch.
- **Utsadana:** A harsher version of Udvartana, it uses bricks, cuttlefish bones and wooden sticks to scrape skin and remove excessive oil.
- **Udgharshana:** Uses dry powder of herbs to heat the body and open pores of sweat glands. It's also done by using sand, but powders of *shikakai* (acacia), *lodhra* (from lodh tree) and *bach* (calamus) to reduce excess *kapha*. Said to be a natural treatment for obesity.
- **Pizhichili:** A type of massage practiced originally in Kerala, it comprises application of thick, warm herb oils in a rhythmic fashion for 60 minutes. Traditionally done for five to 21 days on a special hardwood table made from the cherry tree, it is proven to be effective for arthritis, low back stress and nervous exhaustion.
- **Annalepna:** Done with medicated boiled rice. Cooked rice (with husk) is blended with special herbal milk and put in a cloth bag with which the body is massaged after a regular oil massage. Rice bags are massaged in a downward direction, followed again by an oil massage.

Are you a SLUG?

There are other ways to be lazy; choose your type

TRUST SLUG

A person who has grown lazy and unmotivated from living off a trust fund; in the West (and we are sure more and more in India) people want their wealth to give their children what they didn't have themselves when they were young; but they also fear their children will turn into 'trust slugs,' depending only on family money, and no will to follow a career of their own.

MONOTASKER

Someone who performs one task at a time, doggedly pursuing one thing and only one thing at a time. Not because you could be a bad juggler, but because monotasking is efficient. It's trendy too with new-age philosophy



now pitching multitasking as impolite and a sign of failure of focus.

KIPPER

That's not you but your 30-something son/daughter too lazy to live alone; you are being lazy in not showing them the door. Kipper is an acronym for Kids in Parents' Pockets Eroding Retirement Savings.

Getaways with a drift

If 'hands-free' is not how you prefer to define Sloth

We agree that you might like the dignified option of going out and taking in the greens at a golfing holiday, if not just

smelling the roses. **Golfing** is not strictly lazy as you will end up gripping the club all along. Yes, it will also make you walk, think, and sometimes angry.

Book yourself for three nights and four days at **Ootacamund Gymkhana** and club your golfing sessions with a visit to the Botanical Gardens and boating at the lake.

Madras Gymkhana Golf Club is another option; there's better sightseeing in Chennai: the vegetable and fruit market, Fort Museum, Marina Beach, Snake Park and Art and Bronze Gallery. There's more golfing at **Guindy Links Golf Club** and **Cosmopolitan Golf Club**.

Transindiaholidays (www.transindiaholidays.com) plans a nine-night and 10-day golfing holiday on the Delhi-Agra-Jaipur-Goa route. Tee for a sum at **Jaypee Greens Golf**



Catch!

An otherwise languid activity becomes adventurous at Cauvery Fishing Camp in Bheemeshwari, 100 km from Bengaluru; and Sarayu River Camp ahead of Pithoragarh in the Himalaya (from February to May and September to mid-November). Some holiday designers also combine these with a luxurious tenting and floating experience.

Slow down

German father-daughter duo Dr Peter Axt and Dr Michaela Axt-Gadermann are crusading for the cause of laziness. The two authored a book, *The Joy of Laziness* which informs us how sloth, in regular spells, can increase our lifespan. Pick up the book and head for the nearest hammock. Enough said.

Resort in Delhi (88 bunkers, nine lakes and five wetlands); **Rambagh Golf Club** in Jaipur; and **Goa Greens** at Intercontinental Lalit Resort.

You can also check out Uday Tours and Travels' www.indiagolfcourses.com for a seven to 10 day golf holiday at any of their 30 courses across the country. Innovatively combined with yoga and meditation to facilitate an excellent golfing experience, this trip is best taken with a group.

Fishing is a sport fit for kings, proclaimed Jim Corbett and famously recounted his travails catching freshwater *mahseer* in Ramganga River, now called **Corbett National Park** in Uttarakhand. So if you want to do something that makes it look like you're taking it easy (but you are not), head to the national park for the *mahseer* experience (anglers have devised many a strategy to make a go for it). Ironically, before the *mahseer* bites the bait, you really shouldn't do anything to disturb the waters—it can hear every disturbance.

Time to fish: October to June



For customised fishing trips, go to
www.corbetthideaway.com/fishing-safari.html

anger

By Carol Lobo

W

hat happens when the twilight years turn into a twilight zone? Yes, turning 60 can sometimes be adequate cause to fly into a sinful rage.

Take Shalini, for instance. She had tried her best to dissuade her granddaughter from throwing her a 60th birthday party and she had only three days left to picket against the grand event. "I'm damned if I'll let the brat bestow on me the title of 'Senior Citizen,'" she muttered, as she conjured up ways to sabotage the occasion.

The 59-year-old was fighting a losing battle. But it wasn't really her generous granddaughter she was railing against. If only she could veto the entire ageing process, uncheck it from the choices presented by life itself.

Shalini is a Silver Sinner, guilty of the Deadly Sin of Wrath, not because she is short-tempered or a wrathful person. She's merely turning 60, which gives her so many reasons to be angry. It's a time when your body is changing, and not for the better. Your mind is not what it used to be. People are treating you like you're invisible, in the way, or just plain boring. You've finally retired, only to find you have too much time on your hands. Your children are busy, your friends look shockingly old and your sex life is dwindling, or non-existent. But most of all, it's all those people who will insist on telling you that these are your best years, your golden years. They keep telling you how lucky you are to be 'growing old' in a time of medical marvels. But isn't that exactly what's wrong with the world? Quick fixes! And uh-oh, before you know it, you're a stereotype. The grumpy old person who's never happy.

Of course, that begs the question: How many people can be happy when everything around them seems designed to make them mad? Every TV programme and movie seems



to cater to a pre-teen bimbo or promiscuous corporate boss. Every music video is more graphic than the last. And songs you once loved are being remixed by groups of women with names like Pussycat Dolls and JL! You try to entertain yourself and keep busy but you can barely get on to a bus or railway platform because everywhere you go, you are faced with mountains of steps. You feel out of place at the cafés but all your old haunts are gone. And no one seems to have the time to explain exactly what is going on in cinema halls that now have seven screens! Sometimes, a young 'un will come to you for advice. But you can't really help. Often, you don't even understand the problem. Her almost-boyfriend is in an open relationship with a girl he's been seeing since the third standard!?!

Keeping your head

Cool suggestions to take you from Code Red to a calm and peaceful place

Activism: Sometimes, the best way to help yourself is to help others. If you're getting angry or moody once too often, reach out to someone else and use all the wisdom and experience you have accumulated over the years to help them. Maybe spend a little time with someone who needs a friend—perhaps a parent, neighbour or old friend. Volunteer at a local orphanage or tutor the driver's kids. Join a church outreach group or an animal shelter. Or take up cudgels against the local civic body for better amenities and directly vent!

Yoga: Just a few stretches a day will help you relax and keep you feeling fit and energised. Recommended yoga poses for silvers include *sukhasana*, the basic yoga pose with palms on your knees and deep breathing; the cat pose (or *bidalasana*); the half-spinal twist (*ardha matsyendrasana*); locust pose (*salabhasana*); wind-relieving pose (*pavanamuktasana*) and the classic relaxation exercise called the corpse pose (*shavasana*).



Mandala: A Sanskrit term for 'sacred circle', it's the drawing of a freestyle, symmetrical or concentric pattern. This technique was used in ancient times by Hindus, Tibetan Buddhists and Native Americans for divining, healing and meditation. Psychoanalyst Carl Jung also used *mandala* to help his patients relax and reveal their inner thoughts.

Checkout-line rage

n. Extreme anger caused by a perceived wrongdoing or a lengthy wait in the supermarket checkout line.
Also: checkout lane rage

Example: The sin of anger has splintered into so many sub-sections (think road rage, supermarket **checkout-line rage** and the righteous indignation you rightly feel when standing behind someone at a convenience store who is buying lottery tickets) it's hard to pinpoint exactly what it is any longer.

—Lisa Fitterman, "Lust? Sloth? These seven sins are far worse", The Montreal Gazette, 21 March 2005

If you thought road rage was the only kind of rage, here are other varieties:

- Air rage
- Dotcom rage
- Gallery rage
- IT rage
- Road rage
- Trade rage
- Web rage
- Work rage
- Zoo rage (which is extreme anger or aggression of zoo animals towards visitors; clearly why we become animal-like while exhibiting the emotion)

Visual imagery: Visualisation therapy helps you use your imagination to restore emotional balance and ease your stress levels. For instance, you can imagine yourself in a beautiful place every time an anger trigger occurs. Visualise every tiny detail. As you walk through your happy place in your head, your breathing will slow. Relax each part of your body and your anger will fade, allowing you to process your emotions with more control—most of the time.

Or find your happy place as above and then visualise your anger triggers entering the scene. Welcome them into the picture and relive your encounter, but this time with you handling the situation in the most patient manner possible. Do this day after day, and see your self-control improve.

Count to 10: It may sound annoyingly simplistic but if you remember to breathe in rather than vent, chances are you will feel calmer and respond better, rather than merely reacting. As you breathe, you might want to count to 10—it helps you examine the situation and decide more rationally. That anger management tip has worked for thousands of years! As the Roman poet Horace said: "When angry, count 10 before you speak; if very angry, 100!"

Walk it off: Go for a walk even if it is just around your building. The fresh air will do you good, physically and mentally. If you spend most of your time in a particular spot, change it and get a different view (metaphor intend-

You know what would be really nice? A silver superhero. I mean, we're the ones who know what's what... and a few superpowers wouldn't hurt at this stage.

So I mixed up my grandchildren's names, again. Why is that so funny?

What's with all the endless steps to every museum and library? We're the only ones who care about what's in there—and we can't get in.

Why do people talk to us like we were born old? We were once wild and witty, young and in love. Why is that such a surprise?

We used to be the repository of knowledge and experience. Apparently, we've been replaced by Google.

Golden years? What golden years? The only gold is in my teeth.

They laugh indulgently and call it the second childhood. But at least the first one was fun—and you couldn't understand what the patronising adults were saying.

Would it really kill today's youngsters to have one conversation that was not interrupted by a BlackBerry ping or a Facebook update?

Some days, I don't want to go to the park or play a card game or chat with the neighbours. That's a hint to leave me alone. Take it.

Sometimes complaining makes us feel better. Live with it.

I'm sitting right here, so why is my doctor talking to everyone else and not me?

How is it that babies are always adorable on TV, but we're always a burden or an annoyance, or both?

Every time another friend of mine passes on, it makes me wonder how much longer I have. Stop telling me there's no connection.

Children! You put your life on hold for them, but they can't make it to dinner once a week.

ed!). Also, if you are in the habit of staying inert for long periods, try some gentle exercise. Stretch, cycle, or jog.

Tone down: Give yourself some quiet time every day. Invest in a CD (or cassette) of ocean sounds or bird calls. Pour yourself a (healthy) drink. Clear your head. And relax.

Anger management clinics *Help is just a phone call away*

BENGALURU

DR ANAND A RAO

Techniques used include cognitive therapy and relaxation therapy called Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation (JPMR). Tel: 080-26692888, (0) 9448083787.



Go to www.psychoresource.in

VEENA CHAKRAVARTHY

Psychotherapy, counselling, visual imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, and change in perspective, unrealistic perceptions and behaviour, and exploring alternative ways to respond. Tel: 080-41525437, (0) 9036573115.



Go to www.psychotherapyclinic.co.in

CHENNAI

CHENNAI COUNSELLING SERVICES

They use two separate approaches here, depending on whether anger is the primary issue or a symptom of depression, bipolar disorders, childhood memories, etc. One approach is JPMR; the other includes client-centered therapy, reality therapy, logo therapy and transactional analysis. Contact: Karthik Lakshmanan RM. Tel: (0) 9362994035.



Go to www.counselingchennai.com

URCLINIC

Did you know that anger may arise out of poor self-esteem, lack of confidence and poor interpersonal skills? This clinic addresses the causes of anger with various types of therapy, mainly FCDA: Freeze, Cool, Delay and Act. Contact: Ravi Samuel. Tel: (0) 914424337439.



Go to www.urclinic.com

HYDERABAD

GENESIS PSYSPA PSYCHOLOGY & WELLNESS CENTRE

Their Rejuvenating Mind & Simplifying Life Programme, relies on cognitive behaviour therapy, coping strategies, strike-out therapy to enhance attention and concentra-

tion, relaxation therapy, assertiveness communication and stress management. Tel: (0) 9849574265.



Go to www.genesispsyspa.webs.com

KERALA

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE, ST THOMAS HOSPITAL, CHANGANACHERRY.

Contact: Dr Shahul Ameen. Tel: (0481) 2721797, (0) 9961893693.



Go to www.mind.in

MUMBAI

LIGHT SIDE UP

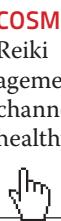
No, we can't change our circumstances but we can change the way we look at them. This clinic will help you work through negative behaviour patterns that keep you stuck in an unhealthy groove. Contact: Trisha. Tel: (0) 9820200780.



Go to www.lightsideup.net

KUNJAL SHAH

Psycho-dynamic therapy helps you work through painful memories and difficult issues. It helps increase self-awareness, identify anger triggers and understand the influence of the past on present behaviour. Tel: (0) 9869395782



Go to www.cosmicrhythm.org

ANJANA JAISINGH

Psychological counselling using Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy or ABC of anger management: A: activating event; B: irrational beliefs that provoke anger; C: the consequences to angry behaviour. Tel: 022-26202666, (0) 9004332229

NEW DELHI

DR KUMAR'S HOMEOPATHY & MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

Apart from counselling and psychotherapy, relaxation techniques and hypnosis, this clinic also addresses anger issues with homeopathy and Bach flower medicines. Tel: (0) 9350209029, 9999675791.



Go to www.psychicsolutionsindia.com

Harmony offers no guarantee for the efficacy of the above recommendations

envy

By Dhanya Nair Sankar

Our green-eyed friend is sitting rather smugly on the sixth spot of the traditional list of Seven Deadly Sins, so powerful he even has a colour associated with him. So common one might confuse it to be a virtue, Envy is the most socially driven and yet least accepted of all vices—if taxed all of us would pay rather heavily. As British philosopher Bertrand Russell said, “If you desire glory, you may envy Napoleon. But Napoleon envied Caesar, Caesar envied Alexander, and Alexander, I dare say, envied Hercules, who never existed.” If historical legends could not break the shackles, what’s left for us ordinary mortals?

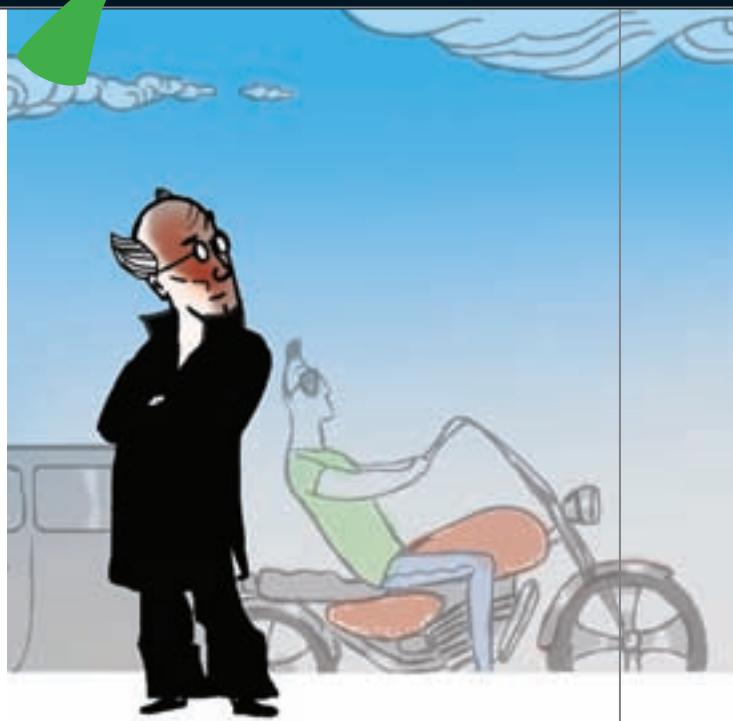
If correctly used, even vices could become virtues. The state of being envied constitutes glamour. It is solitary and sometimes the greatest form of reassurance. It inspires us to challenge our limitations. It brings out the phoenix in us and helps us emerge better, stronger. Envy tells us it’s not okay to be second; our place is on top.

The green monster

Examples of envy through history

The vain queen from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs experienced it, as did Shakespeare’s favourite hero Othello. Closer home, Lord Krishna’s love Radha evoked great envy in other girls and two of our biggest mythological clans, the Kaurava and the Pandava, were wiped out without a trace because of it. History, mythology and literature are full of grand tales of underdogs who have risen for being objects of envy, and greats who have fallen from a pedestal for going green!

We may try to resist it earnestly. But envy is everywhere; in its many hues resides a powerful, universal emotion. And as much as we hate the truth, we’ve all been there and done that.



CAIN AND ABEL

This popular Biblical legend about the sons of Adam and Eve is perhaps the oldest example. Cain is a cultivator of land; Abel a shepherd. Both make offerings to God—He accepts Abel’s flock’s firstborns and rejects Cain’s produce. Cain kills Abel in a fit of envy, becoming the first murderer and the biggest symbol of Envy.

OTHELLO

Othello, the protagonist of the Bard’s famous work, is hands down the alpha and omega of Envy. Iago, the antagonist, slyly tells Othello that his wife Desdemona is having an affair with his best friend Cassio. Iago, envious of Othello’s rise to power, agrees with Roderigo to bring him down; Roderigo is envious of Othello, for he is husband of the beautiful Desdemona whom he fancies; and Othello, envious of his wife’s beauty, kills her before killing himself.

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

The Mughal dynasty dominated the Indian sub-continent between the mid-16th and early 18th century. It was a time when India flourished rapidly making it an object of envy for Afghanistan. While the subcontinent developed immensely under Akbar's rule—thanks to some decisions like inclusion of non-Muslims, efficient bureaucracy and religious tolerance—the legacy continued with Jehangir, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb, making even superpower Britain go green and knock on India's door for business. It's another story that the British took their time leaving.

PANDAVA VS. KAURAVA

Mahabharata is a classic example of envy wrecking many a generation. Duryodhana, the polar opposite of Yudhishthira, is its epitome. Envious of Pandu, younger brother of his blind father Dhritarashtra, for becoming the king, he is jealous of his five cousins for getting the beautiful Draupadi, half the kingdom, and building the grand capital Indraprastha. In its wake, he destroys a legacy.

EAST OF EDEN

In his book *East of Eden*, John Steinbeck deals with the theme of good and bad, and the resulting Envy. He borrows heavily from the Cain and Abel legend when one son, who is the object of his brother's jealousy because their father loves him more, expresses guilt to a wise older friend, only to be told that even God has a preference.

SAUL AND DAVID

Here's another Biblical tale of Envy colouring our lives. Intended to be king of Israel for a much longer period, King Saul was all set for his days of glory when a young boy named David brought his dream crashing down. At first Saul admired David for destroying the daunting giant Goliath and let him live in his palace. David ate with the king and his court. Many enemies were killed because of his courage and leadership. All was well until one day, during a victory parade, Saul overheard a song sung by some women: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Driven by Envy, he seeks to kill his friend.

SALIERI AND MOZART

Italian classical composer, conductor and teacher Antonio Salieri played a pivotal role in the rise of opera in the late 18th century. Salieri's awe of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was equalled by the intense Envy he felt towards the prolific composer. Mozart wrote in every major genre, including symphony, opera, the solo concerto, chamber music and piano sonata. His fame spread so much that he came to be known as the father of classical music. His career



graph didn't go down too well with Salieri. In 1979, their relationship was turned into a play called *Amadeus*, which was later made into a film by the same name in 1984.

Colour truths

Ever wondered why you only go green with envy, and not red, blue or yellow? The Hebrew word for envy, *Qinah*, referred to the burning colour in the face produced by a deep emotion. The Greeks believed the feeling was accompanied by an overproduction of bile, lending the victim a sickly yellow-green pallor. But it took a broken heart to make green the colour of envy—in 7th century BC, poetess Sapho used the word 'green' to describe the face of an envious, stricken lover. The association seems to have stuck.



Envy

There will always be those who have more than you
There will always be gaps
between our dreams and our reality
between aspiration and achievement
between our desires and our relationships

The gaps of shortage can deepen and grow and expand
to permanently place you on the wrong side
of the great divide between life and death
or you may experience a kind of death on both sides
never truly enjoying the sensation of being truly alive.
And one by one the gaps appear on your face as
wrinkles, furrows, frown lines
and your landscape surrenders to the enemy
that is called by many names
helplessness
hopelessness
frustration
anger
rage
tragedy
prescriptions for Prozac Alprax Valium

There will always be those who have more than you
But with a little effort you can manage to deal with the urge
of owning things
before it becomes a self consuming madness
You can learn to share in the pleasures of others
Even borrow their smiles to embellish your tired features
You can learn to reflect lightly in their moments of
achievement
happiness
pleasure
reach out and compliment, congratulate,
endorse anyone's moment of success
and a small part of it becomes yours too to celebrate
You do not have to surrender to that great enemy
of equanimity—Envy.

Envy thrives on your insides and loneliness;
it cannot bear the bright light of day
The open air
The shared moment
The full throated laughter of friendship
So praise, admire, share, express pleasure to let the envy out
before it takes root
And smile while envy withers and dies discarded in the open
while the sweetness of the smile prevails

—Amit Dahiyanbadshah
Delhi-based poet and
founder of DelhiPoetree

Angry kya?

*Silvers on why they envy the young
and the restless*

“I envy the fact that girls today look at a world beyond the four walls of their home, and more. When I was growing up, education, work and travel were unheard of choices for women. I had to give up education owing to financial conditions and settle for a domestic life. If I were born a few years ago, I would have been a modern ‘superwoman.’”

—Saraswati Menon, 80, homemaker, Palakkad

“Youth is irrevocable but we never realise that when we are young. I would have done so many things differently with that kind of self-awareness—learnt to dance, for instance, if I hadn't been so inhibited. I still am. What I also love about them is that they are natural and can strike up a genuine friendship with the opposite sex; and I don't mean casual relationships.”

—Ram Narayan, 64, corporate communications advisor, Chennai

“Youngsters today have more opportunities to showcase their talent. All you need is willingness to work hard and confidence in yourself, all of which the young have. Hats off to them!”

—Jayashree Rairathil, 56, banker, Mumbai

“Today's youngsters are confident, aggressive and have a zealous approach towards life. Everyone is a go-getter. When we were young, we certainly did not have this confidence or passionate approach towards life—it's certainly worth being envious of.”

—V P S Menon, 58, homemaker, Mumbai

“As a sexagenarian, I envy youngsters for their age and energy. They have a force of energy that lets them to do anything they want. They are always raring for a new challenge.”

—C S Mishra, 63, management consultant, Noida

pride

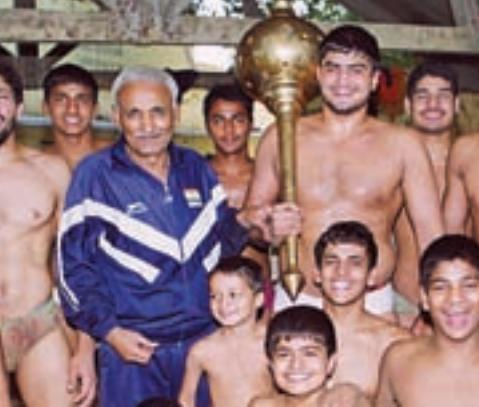
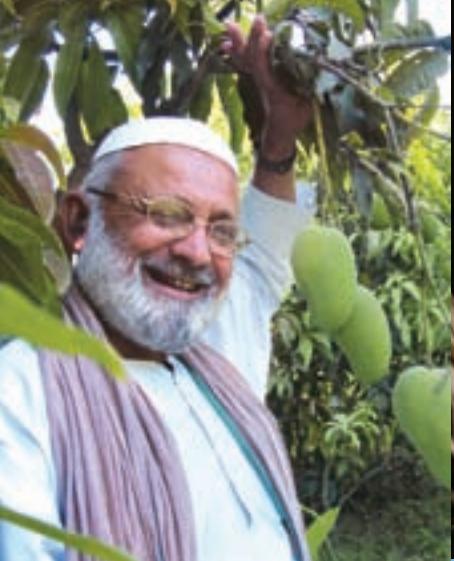


Show off!

When we think of pride, we are instantly reminded of the hundreds of silvers who have been featured in our pages in the past seven years. Silvers who overcame setbacks; held on to hope; didn't let go of their dreams; and stood up for the rights of others—and their own. Nothing and no one deserves to be here more than them. You, our readers, make us equally proud, because we know you have your own stories of grit and resilience, of the many achievements that made you who you are, and the great losses that could never be greater than your spirit.

This space belongs to you.





Devil's advocates

Four silvers tell us why sin is not a dirty word



Bunny Suraiya

The virtues of sin

With the world's moral compass reversing itself, the Deadly Sins are now desirable merits

Having been educated at an elitist Roman Catholic missionary school, I learnt next to nothing about square roots, gerunds or how, or even whether, Peruvian llamas were distinct from Tibetan lamas. But on two subjects my grounding was solid. One was deodorants ("Get a pot of Mum and smear some in your armpits every day, dearies") and the other was Sin. The word always had a capital initial, whether written or spoken—and there is a way of saying it that makes the hearer aware of the capital 's', I kid you not—and its varieties were wondrous and numerous.

Lowest down on the scale were the Venial Sins. These encompassed almost any activity a schoolgirl could be counted on to enjoy. Eating *churan* was a Venial Sin. So was reading a comic. Or digging your nose. Or refusing to snitch on the girl who had lopped the heads off Mother Superior's prized dahlias. The Devil—another word with a mandatory capital initial—must have been as busy as a blue-bottomed fly, running around totting up all the thousands of Venial Sins committed by the average schoolgirl in the course of just one day.

Topping the Sin Scale were the Mortal Sins, which included Murder, Fornication or Adultery, and other such weighty matters. But even convinced as they were that their wards were a bunch of savages, the rigorous instructresses at my school could not bring themselves to believe that Mortal Sins were the norm among us.

So they fell back on yet another list of Sins with which to caution and censure us: the Deadly Sins, which were as

capable of sending their perpetrators to hell as the Mortal variety. These were, in order of magnitude, Pride ("Yippee! I'm so smart, I came first in class again!"), Envy ("I wish my hair was curly like Annie's"), Gluttony ("I want more chocolate cake! I want! I want! I want!"), Lust ("We don't want to dance with each other at the social; we want boys"), Anger ("I hate you till the day I die!"), Greed ("Why can't our family have two cars like Neera's?") and Sloth ("Please can I be excused from PT today? I have a tummy ache").

We should learn to call the sins by their proper name: the Seven Lively Virtues. Celebrate them. Make them yours

Armed with holy pictures, a hyperactive conscience and a healthy dread of the Devil, I struggled mightily to avoid committing the Deadly Sins, but to what extent I was successful I really can't tell. What I do know, however, is that today when I look back on those sinful days, it all seems such a lot of humbug. In fact, the moral compass of the modern world seems to have reversed itself and all those Deadly Sins have now become desirable merits.

Think about Pride, for starters. Workers in every field of industry are constantly being exhorted to take pride in what they do. Self-improvement books—that fly off the shelves even faster than porn, I'm told—emphasise that taking pride in one's abilities is the cornerstone of the self-confidence that leads to success.

Envy, likewise, leads to the achievement of corporate goals. Remember the iconic Avis tagline: 'We're No 2, so we try harder'? It puts envy to work for the corporate good, and simultaneously pushes yet another Deadly Sin into its coffin.

And what about Gluttony? It too is right up there among the list of merits. Every head-hunter of talent, every company floating its public issue lays stress on the importance of 'hunger' as a desirable attribute. More growth, more clout, more money. That's what attracts prospective bosses; that's what attracts shareholders. And close siblings of this kind of hunger are Anger and Greed. How often have we seen recruitment ads demanding candidates with 'fire in the belly'? No fire, no hire. The passive guys get passed

over, the angry guys burn like comets as they streak into the boardroom. As for Greed, we all now believe it's the old word for Aspiration. And in today's highly competitive, market-driven economy, if you're not aspirational, you're nobody. You're not the target consumer for the new, improved car or TV or toothpaste or *chaddi-banyaan* set.

So what does that leave us with? Sloth? Come on, everyone knows that stress is bad and being chillaxed is good. Gurus are making big bucks teaching us relaxation mantras, and cardiologists are minting money dealing with the consequences of hyperactivity of mind and body. So lie down, chill out, take it easy and avert the bypass surgery. Prozac, anyone?

And then there's Lust. Last, but oh so far from least. Ah, Lust. What would we do without it? The fashion industry, the beauty industry, the advertising industry—and even the IPL industry—would grind to a halt without a generous dollop of good, old-fashioned lust. Does anyone really believe I turned on the IPL every day for the past two months to study the niceties of the googly or the *doosra*, the lofted shot or the cover drive? Give me a break, folks. It's the hot bodes running around on the field that drew my eye. And it's only natural. Because the simple truth is that where there is lust there's life. And the opposite of lust is non-life.

So what Deadly Sins are we talking about? There aren't no such things. Instead, we should learn to call them by their proper name: The Seven Lively Virtues. Celebrate them. Make them yours. Just do it!

The author is a feature writer and copy editor. Her debut novel, *Calcutta Exile*, is to be published by HarperCollins this year



Randor Guy

Mea culpa! If lust for life is a sin, I am happy to be an irrepressible sinner

Whoever said that there were only seven sins in this world obviously knew very little about sinning. There is

just one: lust. But for the sake of convenience, some not-so-wise guy divided them into seven. Well, let's leave it at that. I've always found that to err is human, but it feels, oh, so divine!

Of the seven sins, what fascinated most of us guys in the good old days when we had sparkling red blood in our veins—and elsewhere—was lust. Indeed, we coined a new slogan, "Lust thou art and to lust thou returnest!" We followed it to a T, and then some more. We lusted after everything that wore skirts and did not play bagpipes! Talking of bagpipes, once I went to Scotland and wore a kilt for fun. I took a dame for a stroll on a moonlit night, out on a spree, damned from here to eternity, as a poet put it. As our shoulders touched and fingers clasped, I asked, "My dear, are you afraid of the gleam in my eye?" She smiled

In our youth, we never believed in sloth because we were always flying around to collect the nectar from every available flower. In those days, there were plenty in our neighbourhood, which consisted of more widows than you could shake a stick at, to use a Wodehousian expression

sweetly and whispered, "No, my dear man from Madras, I'm only scared of the tilt in your kilt!"

Lust to me meant committing adultery to which I took like fish to water. As somebody said, "What the gods call gallantry, humans call adultery, which is much more common where the climate is sultry!" I used to drive around in a tiny two-seater with a date after I received the best advice about dating from a pal: "Always keep abreast, if not, you have every reason to feel low down." Very smart, my pals.

As a broad-minded person (my friends used to say, "We know you are, for we have seen quite a few of them broads!"), I never felt envy in my heart in those days, except when I had a neighbour with a good-looking, curve-rich wife. As they say in Telugu, "*Poruginti pulla koora ruchi!*" It means the sour, rancid neighbour's curry is always tastier! After some effort, I did succeed in tasting the neighbour's curvy curry—believe me, it was so tinglingly tasty that I realised that whoever coined the proverb was a dumb cluck.

Gluttony never worried me ever since I flew out of my childhood and it was my constant companion. I loved

eating and so did my close pals. I had a friend whose idea of light' tiffin' (short eats) was fabulous. Whenever he went to any restaurant, he would tell the waiter, "*Sada dosai, masala dosai*, four *bondas, sambar*, all at once—and now!" I loved *idli* and *sambar*. My order was always "two idli with two buckets of *sambar*!" And it was always served in moments. It cost me six paise; a vegetarian unlimited meal was only four *anna* or 25 paise! Whatever happened to those good ole days and why did they vanish? Who is responsible?

I have always found that to err is human, but it feels, oh, so divine!
Of the seven sins, what fascinated most of us guys in the good old days when we had red blood in our veins, and elsewhere, was lust. Indeed, we coined a new slogan, "Lust thou art and to lust thou returnest!"

Of course we were all greedy, mostly for things the other man seemed to be enjoying all the time. We went on a picnic in a small town while in college and some of us wanted to visit a popular brothel nearby. A couple of my classmates were already married. When we tried to enter the sanctum sanctorum, the elderly lady at the door told my married friends that she would not allow them inside. When asked why she replied, "My establishment is only for the needy, not the greedy!"

We never believed in sloth because we were always flying around to collect the nectar from every available flower. In those days, there were plenty in our neighbourhood, which consisted of more widows than you could shake a stick at, to use a Wodehousian expression.

We felt very proud of ourselves, of our youth and whatever went with it. In those days, we believed in sailing along the silvery moon standing in the boat, throwing our chests out with pride, and advising our female companions to do likewise. Some of them did not need our advice because they had chests out with purring pride round the clock.

We were all peace-loving and so never bothered about keeping it!

Sins never bothered me, then and now. Talking of sins, a friend with a pregnant girlfriend went to confession on a Sunday and the kind priest told him, "Go thou and sin no

more." My friend shook hands with the kind priest and replied, "How can I, Father, not for some more months!" The poor priest, dedicated to celibacy, did not understand what my friend was hinting at.

As the years rolled over the horizon, my idea of sin remained unchanged. One day an old pal told me, "Whatever you do after you've crossed 40, it is either illegal, immoral or fattening, or all three!" That guy was obviously talking utter nonsense and two years later, when I met him again, he was walking with a walker and could barely see beyond his nose. "I did not follow my own advice and see what happened to me, Randor" I said to him, "Look at me... what I am today is because I never believed in sins and still do not."

Randor Guy, 73, is a Chennai-based journalist, television writer, crime writer, playwright, lyricist, filmmaker and social and cultural historian



Raju Bharatan

The Weekly and the deadly

My long and wonderful years at The Illustrated Weekly of India taught me all I know about sins today

I studiedly depart from the straight and narrow to discover the seven deadlies in seven personalities manning *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. All 40 years of my professional life I spent in *The Weekly*, starting out under its last British editor in C R ('Gallimaufry') Mandy. The five letters of Mandy were the five letters of anger. The staff literally shivered in CRM's martinet presence.

The year was 1955 and I was the junior most in *The Weekly* galaxy. To my lowly lot fell such 'prestige' jobs as Comics, the Jokes Page, What the Stars Foretell and the section featuring just-wed couples titled They Were Married. Genuinely wondering how a particular couple, here, was going to stay married, I spelt *Rukmini Devi* as *Rukmini Devil*. That this Rukmini looked a devil in no way mitigated my offence. As C R Mandy sent for me, I knew I faced the axe, obviously his anger would know no bounds.

But I found CRM smiling, almost as if he were resting his face. How do we get out of this, young man," he sportively queried, "Rukmini Devi printing as Rukmini Devil?"

"Printer's Devil?" I said, venturesome in the face of CRM's famous temper not manifesting itself.

"Printer's Devil? I like that—carry it as a box item on the wedding page!" directed CRM.

CRM was succeeded by A S Raman, his pride in becoming the first Indian to wear the mantle soon coming home to us humble staffers. Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan's personal handpick for the post, remember, was ASR. An ASR out to illustrate *The Weekly's* niche of being 'Asia's Finest Pictorial Magazine'. Verily did A S Raman turn *The Weekly* into a cultural causerie, Indianising it so tellingly that it became almost the antithesis of what it was under CRM.

ASR contemptuously rejected a picture of Vyjayanthimala sent by General Manager J C Jain, dismissing her as "a mere film dancer". Balasaraswati, Yamini Krishnamurti, Indrani Rahman, the Jhaveri Sisters featured regularly in his art-aware lexicon. The finest painters in India led by Hebbar passed my table as they sought a meeting with ASR. The UN issue ASR pioneered (with a message from US President John F Kennedy) took the journal's circulation to a whopping 95,000 copies.

Such note did the management take of his advance that, at the board meeting to which top editors got summoned, The Times Group's Chairman Shanti Prasad Jain took A S Raman's name first; even *The Times of India* editor came after. ASR's contributing litany extended from Nirad C Chaudhary to G V Desani to Thakazhi. Editing *The Weekly* with a rare flair for nine years, his petulant pride it was that proved A S ('Chiaroscuro') Raman's undoing. Yet ASR was the one to spot the sporting spark in me, insisting upon my holding charge of the cinema page too.

No editor exploited my cricketing and cinematic credentials the way Khushwant Singh did through the nine years in which he metamorphosed the face of magazine journalism in India. As representing his boundless appetite for circulation, gluttony is the attribute I pick to single out KS as the journal's most successful editor ever. Khushwant it was who got me to put cricket on the cover to take *The Weekly's* circulation soaring from 60,000 to 225,000 ("I have done it with two balls!"). We now counted rises and falls in circulation by the 10,000. Such was his gluttony for marketing the paper that KS got Mario to create a circulation graph, plonked above what he called his Peacock Throne, its legend reading: The Editor's Answer to His Critics.

As the chairman wrote to commend him when his Bangladesh War Special touched a neo-high of 398,400 cop-

ies, Khushwant Singh, in pique, pointed out how meanly the circulation people had halted him from touching the 400,000 mark. Working with Khushwant—the first editor to send us all out—was like being on a picnic. As KS promoted me to assistant editor, he pointedly told me that he had done so wanting still higher circulations on the Cricket Special and Film Special fronts.

If his preoccupation with figures saw editorial standards go for a toss, Khushwant gave a damn. What he now wanted to celebrate was his publishing a lady reader's shock letter, demanding to know why KS was obsessed with the female form ("Do we young Indian women, too, not have 'desire'? Shouldn't you be catering to us too?"). That 1969 letter led to enraged questions being asked in Parliament. Only Mario could put the genie in the bottle—the Sardar in that bulb (on The Editor's Page). To think that each naughty piece by KS was religiously handwritten on foolscap paper. The first time I glimpsed Khushwant on the 4th floor, he had his legs at full stretch, right across the editorial table!

As representing his boundless appetite for circulation, gluttony is the attribute I pick to single out Khushwant Singh as *The Illustrated Weekly's* most successful editor ever. Khushwant it was who got me to put cricket on the cover to take the journal's circulation soaring from 60,000 to 225,000

Going up like a rocket, we had to come down like a stick. Even as we began averaging just 300,000 copies each week, it was under M V Kamath as editor that we attained the two highest-ever *Weekly* circulations of 405,000 (World Cup Special) and 425,000 (Pak Cricket Special). Envy is the 'deadly' category in which I slot M V Kamath. MVK verily came to be envied for the genuinely brave effort he made to raise the editorial bar. "No more Shakila Bano Bhopali on the cover!" he inveighed.

Pritish Nandy, later, just would not write the Editor's Page, arguing that, given Khushwant Singh's ceaseless ability to charm while ensconced in that bulb, anyone else would be a disaster here. That is why we had reason to admire M V Kamath as he produced an 'All Things Considered' editor's page to almost rival Khushwant's in popularity. MVK was not amused when I suggested he should be calling it 'All *Thighs* Considered', if he hoped to follow in the Khushwant-blazed trail. Recurring labour strikes hit him

Such was Pritish Nandy's passion for star-spangled journalism that I wondered if his real objective was not to edit *Filmfare* via *The Weekly*. His open mind matched his open heart. Pritish was a giant zero in politics when he came, yet how he learnt on the job. Never ever did Pritish aim low

hard, yet do remember that M V Kamath, as the fastest and cleanest writer I saw on the typewriter, started out as a liberal with an editorial on Easter.

As the nine-years-to-abide Pritish Nandy arrived, full of lust for carrying on from where KS had signed off, Pandit Ravi Shankar asked me: "You mean to say they have appointed Pritish as editor? Well, he has a photographic mind." Pritish Nandy was the first editor to bring genuine meaning to the *Illustrated* part of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. Sailing against the mid-1983 *Weekly* wind, Pritish straightaway put Rekha and Parveen Babi on the cover, featuring, no less prominently, the southern stars (Sridevi and Jaya Prada). His hook-up with *Paroma Raakhee* created a major embarrassment for me, seeing how close I was to Gulzar. As you thought you were hearing Pritish cosying up on the phone to Dimple, you discovered there was no one on the line at the other end!

Such was Pritish's passion for star-spangled journalism that I wondered if his real objective was not to edit *Filmfare* via *The Weekly*. His open mind matched his open heart. Pritish was a giant zero in politics when he came, yet how he learnt on the job! His influence in the corridors of power only saw Pritish Nandy, startlingly, aiming to displace Girilal Jain as editor of *The Times Of India* one day. Never ever did Pritish aim low.

M J Akbar I associate with covetousness as far as *The Weekly* goes. While with us under Khushwant, M J Akbar—secretly, I felt—marvelled at the circulations Khushwant produced with no high-flown editorial content. Pritish Nandy, in fact, envied M J Akbar's SUNDAY achievement even more than he did Khushwant as the pathfinder. How much M J Akbar valued *The Weekly* for its marquee appeal came to be underscored as, while Pritish Nandy lost ground, MJ grandly announced that his SUNDAY magazine had crossed the 100,000 Rubicon.

MJ as a fresher coveted the space I allotted to cricket in *The Weekly*—he insisted football far transcended my game

in popularity. M J Akbar's being briefly in *The Weekly* I treat as an accident of editorial history. Like Bachi Kangarkaria, he looked set for the big league even then. As a song connoisseur, MJ was generous enough to note that mine was a position to treasure. "Cricket and vintage music have a rare populist readership in this country, so yours is a constituency to covet," he observed.

No one coveted Raju Bharatan for the 'deadly' sloth that finally overtook him in *The Weekly*. As Pritish Nandy dug in his heels, the features I did for his issues took up but a fraction of my time. For the rest, I went compulsively idle. "The respite is well earned," my well-wishers in the organisation tried, patronisingly, to reassure me. "You saw so much action in your peak years with Raman, Khushwant and Kamath, such was your personality profile, that they were bound to try and marginalise you."

I did pull myself together to write *Lata Mangeshkar: A Biography* in 22 days. Yet, after that, it took me 16 years to undertake *A Journey Down Melody Lane*. Something that exemplifies the sloth in which I revel, now that my *Weekly* is no more, having lived to be a ripe old 113.

Raju Bharatan, 76, is a Mumbai-based film and music enthusiast, crossword inventor, magazine columnist and author



Manjula Padmanabhan

New sins for old We need to reconsider our definition of sin all over again

Whenever I think of the Seven Deadly Sins—which isn't often—the first reference that comes to mind is the movie, *Bedazzled*. Starring Dudley Moore as a hapless young man who wants to commit suicide and Peter Cooke as the suave, smooth-talking Devil, the Sins are introduced one by one as the Devil's employees.

The context of the movie and the underlying discourse were of course clearly rooted in Christianity. My eight years in convent schools had left me with certain notions

about the identity and appearance of 'God' and the concepts connected with that specific Christian entity. Even though I grew up in different countries and was exposed to many religions—Christianity in Europe, Islam in Pakistan and Iran, Buddhism in Thailand, Hinduism at home and in India—by the time I was a young adult, I had come to think of myself (and continue to think of myself now) as an agnostic with a Catholic accent. I was and am interested in religion as an abstract subject but I don't have faith.

One of the views I had when I was in college was that the use of words in English that were linked to the Christian faith resulted in distortions of understandings about other religions. For instance, I believe it's inappropriate to use the word 'God' in the context of non-Christian deities. As far as I am concerned, the word is so absolutely bound up with monotheism and the Christian ethos that it simply cannot do double duty as a multipurpose divine entity.

Similarly, I'd like to make the point that, for me, the concept of sin is inextricably connected to monotheism and my early exposure to Christianity. I think of sin in the context of Judeo-Christian concepts of absolute right and wrong—very comforting in its clarity, like a clear, white light—but also somewhat simplistic. So the main difference between my understanding of sin between my childhood and what is now my middle age is the discarding of rigid definitions, including any conception of gods, devils or an afterlife.

However, I certainly do believe that we exist within an orderly universe, where apples fall to the earth from trees and where the sun rises and sets on a fixed schedule. In this way, I could claim that I regard the laws of physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics as a form of God-free religion. They help us organise the phenomena we perceive with our senses into a series of intelligible laws.

Anyone with the inclination to follow the path of science can sign up for and belong to this 'faith', in which there are no 'sins' in a strictly moral, God-derived sense. Nevertheless, I believe most sentient beings can recognise that some events are offensive and disruptive in a way that others might be called attractive or constructive. I include many animals within my definition of 'sentient beings'. It's easy to see a reflection of human notions of propriety in their behaviour. Dogs and dolphins, horses and cats and a host of other creatures are all able to demonstrate that they distinguish between right and wrong, particularly when it comes to cruelty and abuse. By contrast, there are human beings who have psychological disorders that make them incapable of even an ant's level of morality.

When one is young, one accepts rules as if all of life is a board game, with a printed set of limitations. We don't realise that such lists are quite often arbitrary, and based

entirely on some individual's personal preferences, rather than any carefully researched universal principles. I can remember the time my family went out on a picnic with an elderly couple who had been given the task of bringing the soft drinks. They brought a giant flask of limejuice that was, however, salted rather than sweet. In those days, the idea of salted limejuice was bizarre, especially in the context of a picnic. Yet for them it had clearly been the obvious choice and they didn't think it was necessary to even discuss it with us!

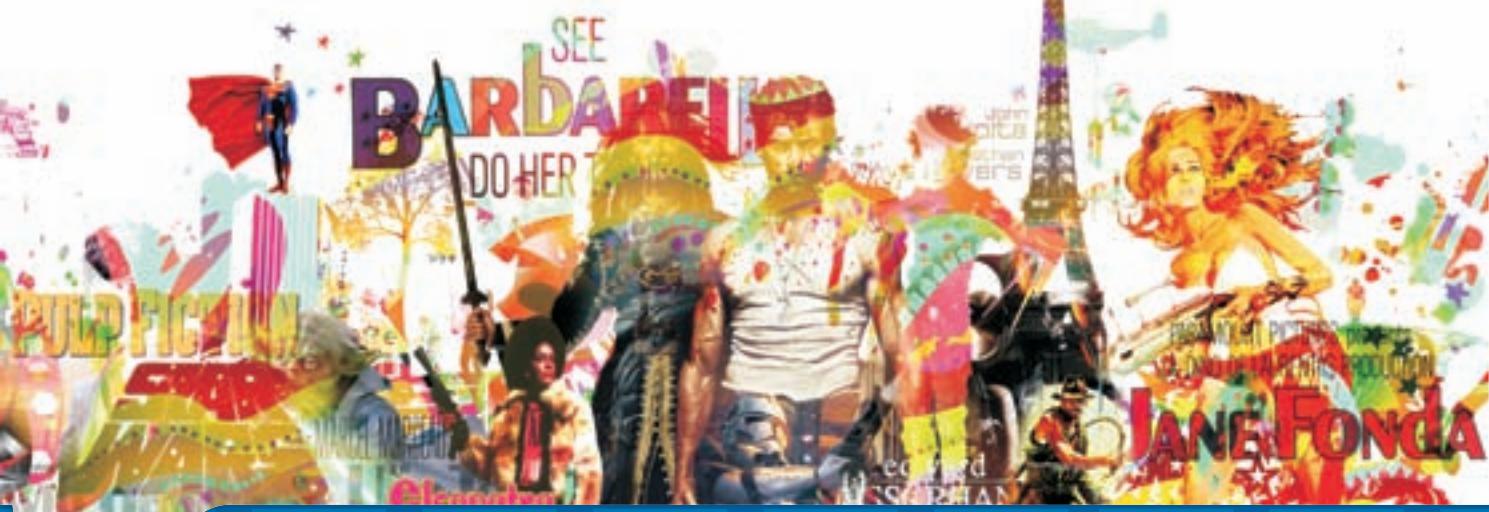
Similarly with the seven deadly sins: I realise now that in childhood I just accepted the list without asking myself whether I would agree with the choice. Anger, Pride/Vanity and Sloth—okay, they're distinct from one another. But Envy? Gluttony? Greed? Lust? It seems to me these are all variations on the general theme of impoverishment, of both the emotional and material kind. People who are reasonably secure in what they possess and who they are, will be less inclined to succumb to these failings.

I think the main advantage that age has given me is the ability to pick my way through the options handed to me by other people. If I were to compile a set of avoidable 'sins', I would add Cruelty, Ignorance, Insincerity, Dishonesty, Irrationality and Wastefulness to Anger, Sloth and Vanity

I think the main advantage that age has given me is the ability to pick my way through the options handed to me by other people. I feel enabled to accept, reject and look beyond what's offered to me. For instance, if I were to compile a set of avoidable 'sins', I would add Cruelty, Ignorance, Insincerity, Dishonesty, Irrationality and Wastefulness to Anger, Sloth and Vanity.

I realise now that people are highly variable: murderers can feel real repentance and saints can degenerate into drunks and slobs. I am far more willing to forgive others for their failings and be understanding of their—and my own!—weaknesses. I think in terms of crimes, not sins. And I believe that any sane person can be cured of mean behaviour through discussion and compassion.

Manjula Padmanabhan, 58, is a Delhi-based cartoonist and writer



i matter

hollywood club card

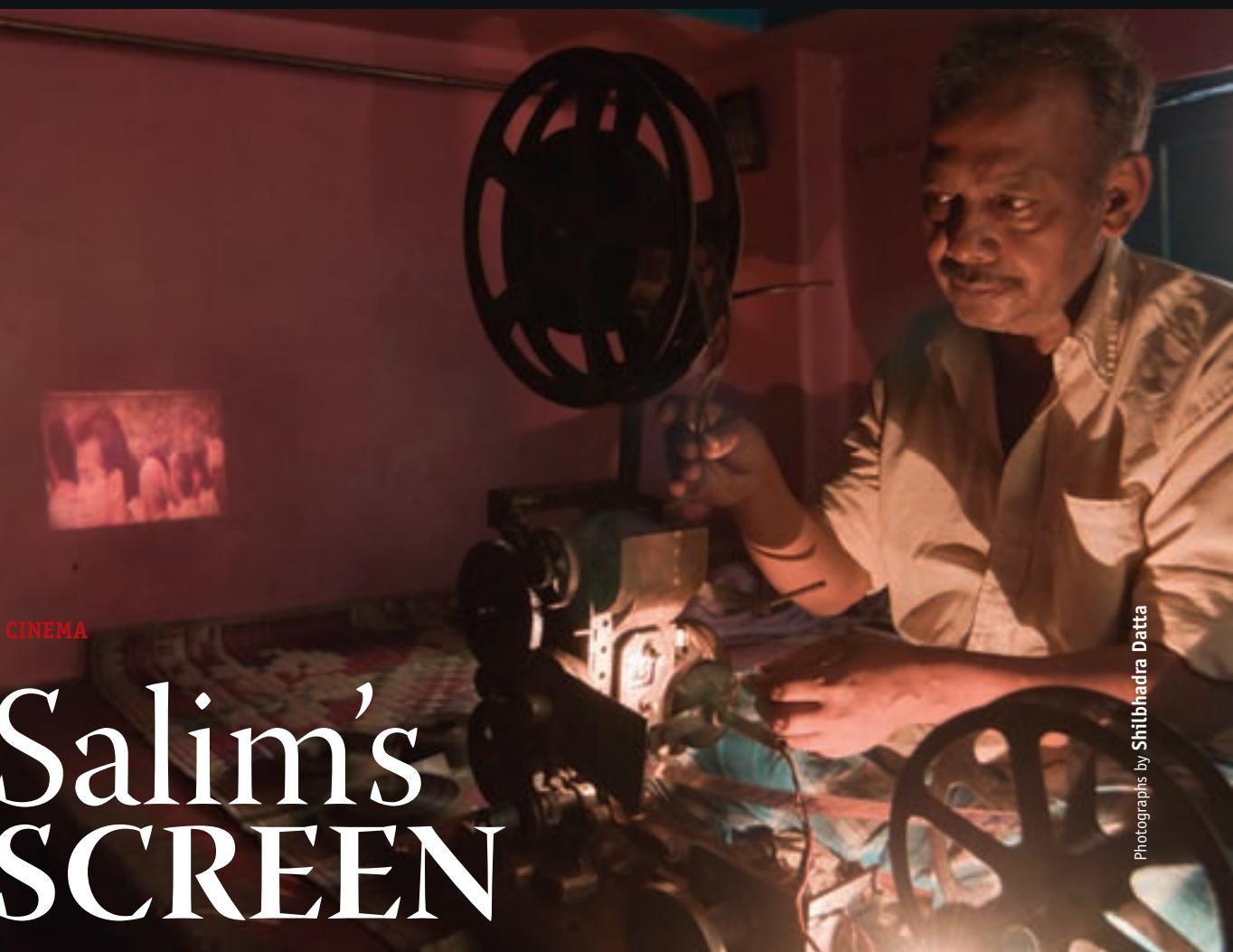
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CINEMA

Salim's SCREEN

Photographs by Shilphadra Datta

Partha and Priyanka Mukherjee meet an impoverished movie hawker in Kolkata who shares invaluable riches with the city every day

On a sultry afternoon in Kolkata, you may bump into a man lugging around a coffin-shaped cart and a boisterous group of urchins following him as the sound boxes on his cart hum old film music. The spare gaunt man is Kolkata's Salim Moviewallah. Unruffled by his ubiquitous fan following, he strides on till he reaches a slummy street-side, where he cranks up his ramshackle projector and sets it into motion with hisses, squeaks, purrs, and rattles, before grainy clips

of old movies come to life on a 2.5" wide screen. Urchins huddle under the black cloth around the projector, and for the next 10 minutes wander around a dreamland. Salim cannot afford to show a full length film; his audience doesn't expect it either. "These kids cannot afford to go to air-conditioned theatres, nor do they have a TV set at home. So all my shows run houseful," says the 63 year-old. The kids shell out ₹ 1 each to enjoy the 10-minute trailer, which comprises hit songs and key action scenes.

Salim buys discarded footage from the wholesale market at Chandni Chowk or Murgihata in Kolkata at ₹ 15 per kilo. Like a savvy filmmaker, he is aware of the dangers of monotony. "I mix and match items from my stock of 50 cans of film scraps, which includes footages of new releases," he informs us. "I also regularly edit existing footage to bring out a new one by adding footage with fight sequences on one side of the track and songs on the other." And he does it all with scissors and cello tape! The ease with



(Clockwise from top right) Salim is happiest posing with his beloved projector; fixing the nuts and bolts on the machine; serving customers a hot cuppa with a smile at his tea stall, which he opened last year to supplement his dwindling income; setting out for his daily jaunt; kids huddle to watch the trailer as Salim plays the machine in a crowded neighbourhood





which he snips and clips comes from seasoned experience. "In 1965, my father handed me this 1897 model of a projector made in Japan, which he had bought from a local theatre," he recounts. "I was only 15 then and accepted it as my friend. Since then, my machine and I have been inseparable."

Salim is keenly attuned to his 'friend's' moods. "I can sense the days when it will give me no trouble and the times it will refuse to carry out my com-

mand, so I treat it accordingly," he says with a smile. "During the monsoon, I may not have an umbrella over my head but my machine remains perfectly wrapped." No one, except his two sons, is allowed to tinker with it. Salim even mends the mercurial projector himself—often with charming ingenuity. "When the original lens of the projector was too powerful to focus images on the small screen, I replaced it with a lens commonly used by palmists, and it worked per-

fectly," he says with pride. Similarly when the discarded stock of old movies didn't have any sound, he added a circuit for sound effects.

Though he lives in a dingy hovel at 13A Marquis Square, Salim has had his moment of fame. He has met chief ministers and filmmakers, and was even felicitated by a local TV channel for merging the silent and talkie era together. Nine years ago, American filmmaker Tim Sternberg made a documentary on him that was nominated for the Academy Awards. "Sahib gave me some money, which I spent on the renovation of my home and the marriage of my first daughter," he shares with us. "But I'd be happier if the film could confirm that my family would not have to starve when I die."

Last year, Salim set up a tea stall; he runs it every morning for five hours while his two teenage sons cart the projector around the city. In the afternoon, between 1 pm and 3 pm, he takes charge of his mobile movie hall. Together, the family earns around ₹ 100-150 a day. "I've been given many offers to part with my projector, but I flatly refuse," he says, a tear in his eye. "How can I live without my friend?"

The ladies' man

Ramesh Shelar uses traditional art forms to fight for the rights of women, discovers Khursheed Dinshaw

As a 12 year-old boy, Ramesh Devram Shelar often saw his mother Dhondabai being ill-treated by his family. "My mother was forced to do all the physical labour in the farm, then made to do all the housework single-handedly and, at the end of the day, was given a few morsels of stale food," says Shelar who grew up in Lohare, a small village in Wai taluka in Maharashtra. Today, the Pune-based 60 year-old says he can never forget the moments when his mother held him in her lap and cried her heart out. Her emotional wounds left a deep scar on him and Shelar promised himself he would ensure that no other woman suffered a similar plight.

He never lost focus of his mission; after completing matriculation, he became a women's activist and remained one even after he found a job as a mechanic at Kirloskar Pneumatics in Hadapsar. His travels as an activist took him to the remote interiors of Maharashtra where he saw women being ill-treated in slums and tribal colonies. Ironically, his campaign for women's empowerment is rooted in his mother's voice. "My mother used to wake up at five in the morning to grind flour and sing *ovi* to forget her misery," says Shelar. *Ovi* is a form of verse introduced by 13th century Marathi poet-philosopher Sant Dnyaneshwar, who wrote a poetic commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where the first line of each verse rhymed with the next two, making it immensely hummable and lyrical.

HERITAGE



Hemant Patil

Shelar's interest in folk culture had also informed him about the tradition of Maratha *shahir*, males who wrote and sang *powada*—tales about the glory and valour of kings, mostly based on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and his fearless warriors, the Peshwas. Shelar strung social messages through every *powada*. And not too long after that he also delved into *bharud*, a performing art form started by Sant Eknath that blends drama and elocution with music with a social and spiritual message at its core.

Shelar has created 700 such compositions that he performs at street plays and on stage. While he always performs solo on stage, in street plays he is accompanied by a troupe of seven to 10 men and women who perform with *dholak*, *dholki*, tabla, harmonium and *zaanz*. Since 1972 he has been associated with Stree Adhar Kendra, an NGO that works for women's empowerment. Widely regarded as a crusader against female infanticide, gender discrimination, illiteracy, superstition, rape, molestation and trafficking, 'Shelar Guruji', as he is fondly called, has rescued over 2,000 women, and rehabilitated many more. "I have accompanied teenage girls, rescued

from prostitution rackets in Pune, to their homes in Delhi and Nepal," he tells us. While women consider him their elder brother, many men believe that he is corrupting their womenfolk and cynically refer to him as Krishna or Kanha (as he is the only man among women workers). Unaffected by such taunts, he is happy that women are now coming forward and lodging FIRs with the police against atrocities and abuse.

He feels traditional performing arts are most effective in his campaign as they strike a chord with his audience and offer them food for thought. Having retired from Kirloskar five years ago, he is now a full-time activist. In every village he visits, at least four to five young girls express an interest in learning these art forms. He hopes men too will come forward. "It's a constructive way to keep traditional art forms alive and spread awareness," he says. However, Shelar is not ready to give up hope. "When I see an uneducated woman come on stage, speak about her life and sing a *powada*, it makes me proud," he says. "From being someone who rarely had a chance to utter her name, she has now ventured out of her house. That change is commendable."

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Rocket sings

Fifty years ago, one of the most dramatic battles for one-upmanship between two nations was played out—not on earth but in space. The erstwhile Soviet Union landed its mightiest blow to arch Cold War rival, the US, when it

launched the first human spaceflight Vostok 1 on 12 April 1961. Since then, though many human spaceflights have explored the mysterious realm around the earth, none have quite outshone the celebrity that was endowed on Soviet air force pilot Yuri Gagarin,



the first cosmonaut to be part of “humanity’s giant step”—as the episode was dubbed by the world press. For mankind, it was a legitimate reason for vigorous chest-thumping, as till then, space had only been surveyed and studied by robotic space probes and remote-controlled satellites. For the Soviet Union, it was a bombastic statement of its technological bravura as well as the power and will of the Communist regime, which was known more for its political idealism than scientific initiative.

So far, human space flight missions have been conducted by Russia, the US, China and private California-based spaceflight company Scaled Composites; other countries that have joined the race in defying the earth’s gravity include India, Ecuador, Japan, Iran and Malaysia.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: JUNE 1961

- On 3 June, Clarence Gideon was arrested and charged for breaking into a poolroom in Florida. His sustained perseverance for legal help managed to introduce a key egalitarian principle in the American criminal justice system: every criminal suspect since then has been entitled to representation by a lawyer.
- On 23 June, the Antarctic Treaty came into effect, signed by the 12 countries active in Antarctica.
- On 30 June, Ernest Hemmingway returned to his home in Idaho after treatment from Mayo Clinic; two days later, he committed suicide.

“Girls should be educated and trained to be independent. There is no way a society can progress otherwise.”

Sam Singh, 72, for helping girls in Bulandshahr claim their right to education



Courtesy Sam Singh

Situated in the heart of Uttar Pradesh, Bulandshahr has the distinction of being among the state's largest grain producing centres. The district also has a thriving small-scale industry in pottery, textile and handicrafts. The obvious prosperity hides some grim development statistics: low literacy rates (42 per cent); skewed sex ratio (102 girls for every 1,000 boys); and high incidence of child marriage. For the past five years, however, girls in Bulandshahr are out to rewrite their destiny, thanks to **Sam Singh**. The determined 72 year-old started the Pardada Pardadi Educational Society in 2005 to emancipate the poor girl child. After quitting his high-profile job as head of marketing, Dupont, Asia-Pacific, more than a decade ago, Singh moved to his hometown to fulfil his dream. “When you are outside, you are acutely aware of the problems of your culture and society,” he says when asked what motivated him. To ensure that the project stays on course, Singh offers many

incentives. Besides three meals a day, he has opened a savings account for each girl where he deposits Rs 10 for each day the student attends class; the cumulative amount can be redeemed during graduation. A free bicycle is also given to every student when she completes two years in school, and a toilet built in her house when she completes three. Students split their time each day between academic learning and vocational training. They are coached in embroidery, tailoring, pottery and home furnishing. “My aim is to make girls financially and socially independent,” says Singh. “The vocational training helps them get a suitable job when they complete 10th grade.” Initially, Singh dug into his savings to fund his dream; now he has companies as well as individuals contributing their might to it. “When I started out, I managed to get just 45 students of which 14 dropped out in a few days,” he says. “Today, there are hundreds of little girls vying for each seat.”

—Dhanya Nair Sankar

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