

*harmony*

JUNE 2014 ₹ 40

# celebrate age

*The magazine for silver citizens*

**10th ANNIVERSARY**

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# FACTOR

## WORDS TO LIVE BY

Amita Malik  
Amitabh Bachchan  
B K S Iyengar  
Deepti Naval  
Khushwant Singh  
Kuldip Nayar  
Mallika Sarabhai  
Mark Tully  
Namita Gokhale  
Shashi Deshpande



National Housing Bank was set up under an Act of Parliament in 1988, as the apex development housing finance institution. In its journey of 25 Years, NHB has worked to build up the capacity in the sector to address the housing needs for all segments of the population, with NHB's focus on low and moderate income households.

The Bank has been promoting inclusive expansion and stability in housing finance market. The proactive policy support of NHB has expanded the reach and depth of Housing Finance Industry.

To supplement its regulatory role, NHB is also expanding its client base to reach all regions of the country and serve all segments of the population including in rural areas. Recent initiatives of NHB, including CERSAI (Central Registry supported by the Government of India) and NHB RESIDEX are steps towards sustainable market infrastructure growth that will add to the transparency and robustness of the market.

In order to facilitate credit to the low income households, the Bank has set up the Credit Risk Guarantee Trust Fund for Low Income Housing under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.

As part of its promotional charter, NHB is also supporting the cause of senior citizens through the Reverse Mortgage Loan (RML) product.

NHB is hosting the Secretariat of Asia Pacific Union for Housing Finance (APUHF), a global platform for knowledge sharing and networking among financial institutions, government bodies, central banks and other member institutions in the Asia Pacific region.

NHB has been expanding local presence in the States through its 12 Offices across the Country.

**For details of NHB's initiatives, please refer Website : [www.nhb.org.in](http://www.nhb.org.in)**

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# DECADE

Life, each day in every way, is really about aspiration—whether it comes to love, family or work. And in the pursuit of our goals, propelled by our life choices and driven by our dreams, we barely take the time to stop, take stock and smell the roses.

That's what anniversaries are for.

We turn 10 this month—and this is no ordinary milestone. Ten years of silver advocacy; a sustained and steady flow of news, information and inspiration in equal measure; motivation to thrive and triumph over the odds; pages that speak to you, for you and about you—that's what *Harmony-Celebrate Age* has consistently promised, and delivered. Along the way, most vitally, it has catalysed a national awakening on the needs, concerns and potential of India's



elders, identifying key areas of intervention, forecasting trends, and providing valuable recommendations to government and civil society.

I would be the first to admit that we still have miles to go in transforming the lives of elders across India. But we have made a valuable and committed start as you will read in 'Awareness and Advocacy', which sums up the impact of *Harmony-Celebrate Age* and indeed the Harmony initiative—this includes research and recommendation on the state's silver policies; spreading awareness on the reverse mortgage scheme and the importance of proactive healthcare; instituting the Harmony Run at marathons across the country to promote silver fitness; launching the Harmony Silver Awards to make the world (and silvers themselves) aware of the incredible potential of Generation A; and consistently promoting active, safe, secure and independent ageing. Indeed, that feature and the other highlights of our 10-year journey serve to remind both us



Suresh Natarajan



and our readers of the significance of the Harmony initiative, its necessity to fulfil our social contract as a country.

This journey has not been a simple one. When personal experiences and a growing understanding of the trials and tribulations of Indian silvers impelled me to do something constructive to make a difference, I was walking a lonely road. Ten years ago, silver advocacy was not a 'fashionable' cause (although, due in part to our efforts, that perception is changing today). What's more, it was not seen as a particularly worthy cause. When it came to silver concerns, there was neglect at the government level, apathy at the community level and disinterest at the media level. More disturbing, silvers themselves, scarred by years of marginalisation and negative conditioning, were reluctant to believe in their own potential, the power inherent in them to come out of the shadows and live their best life. Even today, as much as we relentlessly lobby government and civil society to work to make our country more responsive to the needs of our elders, our greatest task is to convince silvers themselves of the need to be proactive, aware and empowered.

Against this backdrop in an increasingly youth-centric era, establishing Harmony for Silvers Foundation, finding the right people to work alongside us, write for us, think with us, was a unique challenge. However, the strength of the idea and the support of the right people to make it come alive helped us set the ball rolling—and keep it in motion.

My early comrades in this journey were my husband Anil, who wholeheartedly endorsed my desire to work for silvers and offered the backing of the Reliance Group; Aroon Purie of the India Today Group who enthusiastically rendered the help of Living Media India, notably Ashish Bagga and Poonam Sangha, to achieve greater visibility and penetration;



and Tony Jesudasan of the Reliance Group, our first publisher, who, along with journalist-author Sudeep Chakravarti and journalist Priya Ramani gave the project form, shape and momentum. Indeed, as our first consultant editor, Sudeep steered the project through its early years, helping us set high editorial benchmarks, a task now ably continued by journalist-columnist Malvika Singh.

Over the years, the magazine has been nurtured by a professional team committed to its evolution and excellence. Following our first editor Anupa Mehta, successive editors Meeta Bhatti and Arati Rajan Menon have broadened its vocabulary and expanded its horizons. Dr S Siva Raju of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, an expert on age-related issues, helped us set up our research division and determine its agenda. Visually, designer Dhun Cordo assisted us with our original template and Elephant Design set the grid, paving the way for a new creative lexicon as expressed by Ritu Nanda and Jit Ray, working with the assistance of imaging head Anuradha Joshi and studio manager Haresh Patel. Our business head Shrenik Mehta has strived to extend the reach of the magazine and forge relationships with advertisers and other stakeholders in the silver world; programme director Hiren Mehta, who manages the activities of the Harmony for Silvers Foundation, has built a strong network comprising fellow advocacy organisations and senior citizens' associations across India; and our director and publisher Dr Dharmendra Bhandari handles the administration of the organisation with flair and care.

My heartfelt gratitude to all of them. I would also like to express my thanks to everyone who has walked the road with us, whether for a while or many a mile. Editors, writers, columnists, contributors, photographers, researchers, reporters, marketing staff and assistants. Like-minded organisations who have joined cause with us. Corporate houses, institutions, organisations and individuals who have partnered with us or supported us in our ventures. The multitude of silvers who have consented to be featured in our pages, sharing their remarkable lives and stories. And, of course, you, our readers, our constituency of vibrant silvers—the lifeblood of *Harmony-Celebrate Age*.

Ten years ago, we invited you to share our aspiration: to build a strong silver community that would strengthen its weakest constituent, maximise its potential, and work to influence policy. Going forward, we wish to deepen our engagement with our constituency by creating a vibrant residential community for silvers in Jaipur—more about that, later! And while we continue to toil towards that endeavour and indeed all our goals, together, this month it is time to pause. And simply celebrate.

*Tina Ambani*

### A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

*Harmony Celebrate Age*—June 2014 Volume 11 Issue 1

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**Editorial & Marketing Offices:** Reliance Centre, 1st floor, 19, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai-400001. Tel: 91-22-30327115 (Editorial), 30327102 (Marketing). Email: [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org) **Printed and published** by Dharmendra Bhandari on behalf of the owners, Harmony for Silvers Foundation

**Printed** at Thomson Press India Ltd, 18-35, Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007 (Haryana). **Published** at Reliance Energy Centre, Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400055. **Disclaimer:** The material provided by *Harmony* is not a substitute for professional opinions. Readers are advised to seek appropriate advice from qualified and licensed professionals in the concerned field. © Harmony for Silvers Foundation. All rights reserved worldwide. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. *Harmony* does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material. [www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org)



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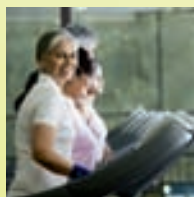
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### GOAN GLORY

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### VINTAGE VIGNETTES

*C S Ananth on his passion for classic wheels*

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**Total number of pages in this issue of Harmony-Celebrate Age, including covers: 84**

## DIABETES - A THREAT TO VISION

According to the ICMR-INDIAB, a National Diabetes Study, India currently has 62.4 million people with diabetes. [1] This is set to increase to over 100 million by 2030. [2] In India, diabetes affects the younger population in the prime of their working lives and thus poses an even greater threat to the health of these individuals. This epidemic of diabetes is unfortunately paralleled by a corresponding increase in the prevalence of its complications. Diabetes can cause blindness, heart disease, kidney failure and lead to limb amputation. It can also adversely affect the eyes. Various eye problems ranging from cataract, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy can affect patients with diabetes.

Nearly half of all people with diabetes will develop some degree of Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) during their lifetime. DR is an increasing cause of blindness in the working age group. Yet, only a very small percentage of the diabetic population gets referred for regular eye check-ups.

## WHAT IS DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

Diabetic retinopathy (DR), the most common diabetic eye disease, occurs when blood vessels in the retina change. Sometimes these vessels swell and leak fluid or even close off completely. In other cases, abnormal new blood vessels grow on the surface of the retina. Often, patients are unaware that a retinal detachment has formed. Patients may have lost significant vision in one eye while retaining good vision in the other. Many patients are unaware of significant vision loss when only one eye is affected, thus delaying timely treatment.

## THE SOONER THE BETTER

In the early stages of the disease the patient does not notice any symptoms and therefore does not visit a retinologist for a screening test. By the time symptoms are noticed, the disease is fairly advanced. Some people, however, notice wavy lines, blurred vision and black spots when looking at objects. Most diabetic patients consult retinologists only when they experience a marked reduction in vision.

**Disclaimer :** The information contained here is not to be used for treatment purpose or for diagnosis of health problems or as a substitute to expert medical advice. Please consult your doctor for any health related problems or queries that you may have. Although great care has been taken in computing and checking the information, Novartis is not responsible or liable in anyway for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies in or otherwise howsoever for any consequences arising there from

## TREATING DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

Diabetic retinopathy can be treated through 4 main treatment options:

- Laser treatment: helps in stabilizing vision and arresting vision loss
- Intravitreal injection: blocks the factor that stimulates the growth of new blood vessels and reduces edema
- Steroids: help reduce edema
- Vitrectomy: a surgical procedure used in advanced stages of disease that helps in clearing non-resolving hemorrhage and managing retinal detachment complications

Your retinologist will advise you on the retinal modality that best suits your medical condition.

## LOOKING AHEAD FOR A HEALTHY VISION

### Monitor your own vision regularly

- Have a detailed eye examination by a retinologist at least once every year
- Monitor your vision at home and inform your doctor if you notice any changes

### Take care of your diabetes

- Keep blood sugar levels in control to maintain vision
- Regularly monitor your blood sugar levels as instructed by your doctor
- Take medication as directed, both for your diabetes and for your DME

### Maintain a healthy lifestyle

- Manage your diet in consultation with your doctor
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight

**ARE YOU A DIABETIC? DO YOU SEE BLACK SPOTS?**

**IT COULD BE DIABETIC RETINOPATHY LEADING TO BLINDNESS.**

If you experience the following symptoms, consult an ophthalmologist, TODAY!

- Blurred vision
- Wavy lines
- Black spots

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Always consult your doctor for medical advice

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# column one

The intense emotion *Harmony-Celebrate Age*'s 10th anniversary evokes in me is akin to what I experienced when my daughter turned 16. It's not surprising. I joined this magazine as copy editor designate, part of the team tasked with birthing this project; over the past decade, we have nurtured the magazine, watched it grow with a blend of pride, joy and trepidation.

This issue is a microcosm of our journey as a team, as a magazine, as the voice of the silver advocacy movement. From our impact as an initiative across various aspects intrinsic to active, independent ageing to the celebrities that have sparkled on our covers, standout photography and our remarkable unsung silver heroes from every walk of life who have made their world—and ours—a better place, we celebrate the silver experience as viewed through our prism.

In these 10 years, our team, like the magazine, has morphed and evolved; as Editor Tina Ambani tells us in 'Connect', the contribution of every editor, designer, writer and photographer over time has enriched the project tremendously. For my part, I would like to acknowledge two colleagues-turned-friends: Sudeep Chakravarti, our founding consulting editor, who wrung the very best from us all, forcing us to raise the bar editorially, intellectually, collectively; and Meeta Bhatti, our deputy editor-turned-consulting editor, who has always led from the front, bringing discipline and diligence to the team, and reminding us that journalism must have a soul.

To them, to our current team, to all the silvers who have featured in our pages and all those who read us, thank you—and cheers!

—Arati Rajan Menon



Thanks for publishing "Game On" ('Orbit', February 2014) featuring our unique badminton club—comprising players aged 63 to 78—in your prestigious magazine. Our team hopes the article will prove inspirational for many silvers like us. It gives me great pleasure in informing you that HelpAge India has called our Senior Citizens' Society 'beacons of active ageing'. Further, we were approached by New Delhi-based NGO Healthy Ageing India in association with All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to participate in a walkathon and Workshop for Senior Citizens 2014—to promote healthy ageing—on 30 March 2014, the National Vaccination Day. About 1,100 seniors participated in the event and about 500 were given free pneumonia vaccinations.

**K D Bhatia**  
Delhi

We are from a very conservative South Indian family; our ancestors were Purohits. When my mother passed away in 1990, my father, who retired after four decades of teaching in Pune, asked us to immediately donate the body to Pune Medical College. My mother's cadaver was shifted from the hospital where she died to the college. In those days, even the procedure for

donation was not clear. Next year, when my father passed away, according to his written instructions to me, we donated his body again to the college. Our immediate and extended family started making adverse comments about how the soul does not depart peacefully when not cremated but these comments died a natural death. Today, even we have given instructions for cadaver donation. It would be nice if Harmony takes up the initiative to raise awareness about cadaver donation for the sake of medical education.

**S N Bhat**  
Mumbai

## AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

We are looking for contributions from our readers.

Write to us if...

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

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## ► CUTTING EDGE

# Bon appétit

**E**mily Luke, a design student from Loughborough University in the UK, has developed ‘inclusive’ cutlery and crockery to enable silvers with Parkinson’s disease to dine with ease. The range includes a plate with vertical sides, a bowl with a lip, a mug with two handles, and a deep-bowled spoon with a bigger handle that is easier to hold. Made of stoneware, the crockery is designed with non-slip bottoms. “There are a lot of prod-

ucts out there already to help people with Parkinson’s but their designs are very different from mine,” says Luke. “The whole point of the project was that the products should be inclusive and look as normal as possible. So although the cutlery and crockery will help people to eat and drink, they still look good and people can use them together as a family.” Right now, she is looking for a manufacturer to produce the range.





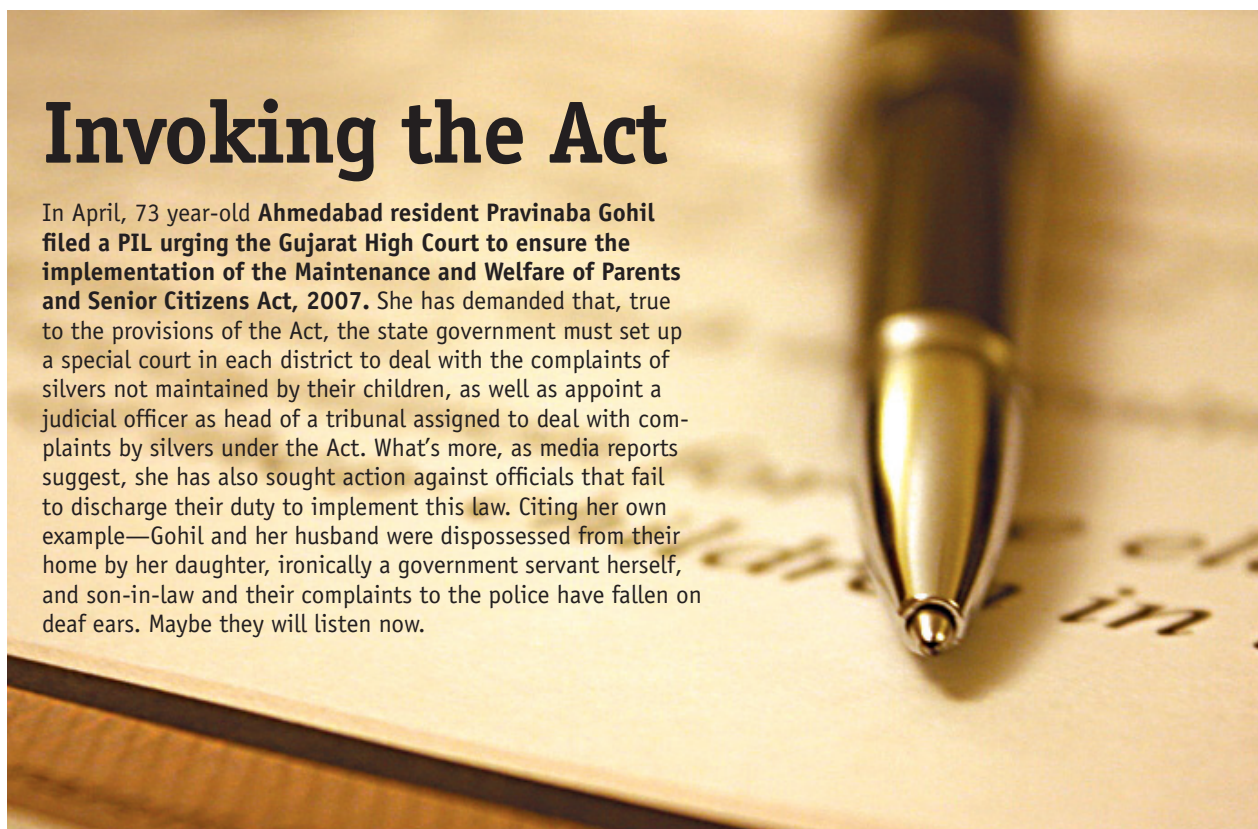
# NO COVER

Universal healthcare is not just an imperative, it is a global clarion call to action. According to new figures released by HelpAge International's campaigning network Age Demands Action, **76 million silvers around the world are being excluded from vital healthcare, with life expectancy at 60 decreasing or static in 38 out of 194 countries.** You can read the entire report at [www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaigns/age-demands-action/](http://www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaigns/age-demands-action/)



## Invoking the Act

In April, 73 year-old **Ahmedabad resident Pravinaba Gohil** filed a **PIL urging the Gujarat High Court to ensure the implementation of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.** She has demanded that, true to the provisions of the Act, the state government must set up a special court in each district to deal with the complaints of silvers not maintained by their children, as well as appoint a judicial officer as head of a tribunal assigned to deal with complaints by silvers under the Act. What's more, as media reports suggest, she has also sought action against officials that fail to discharge their duty to implement this law. Citing her own example—Gohil and her husband were dispossessed from their home by her daughter, ironically a government servant herself, and son-in-law and their complaints to the police have fallen on deaf ears. Maybe they will listen now.



### BONANZA

As the products and services get more diverse, the numbers grow by leaps and bounds. According to a report by American agency Transparency Market Research, **the global market for anti-ageing will be worth \$ 191.7 billion by 2019, up from \$ 122.3 billion in 2013.**



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# A wider footprint



**R**iding on the success of its silver living projects in Jaipur, Bhiwadi (NCR) and Lavasa, Delhi-based realty player **Ashiana Housing** will expand its retirement housing segment in the next three years, with one more project in Bhiwadi and one each in Kolkata and Chennai. Like earlier projects, the new developments will comprise a wheelchair-friendly campus, social, recreational and medical amenities, and facilities including

a restaurant, convenience store, library, TV hall, Internet cafe, auditorium and hobby rooms. “This year, we plan to sell around 2.5 million sq ft of area,” says Ankur Gupta, joint managing director of the company in a media release. “Over the next three years, when these projects are expected to come on stream, we expect to sell nearly 30-35 per cent of the total area in this segment.” For more details, go to [www.ashianahousing.com](http://www.ashianahousing.com)

## Southern comfort

**KANCHIPURAM**, well known for its exquisite handloom saris, is in the news for a distinctly silver reason—developer **Covai Senior Care Constructions** has launched **Serene Kshetra**, a 16-acre residential project for silvers here. The project will feature 35 independent houses and 169 row-type villas in the first phase and 176 apartments in the second;



while independent houses (1,510-1,633 sq ft) will cost around ₹ 6.5 million, the villas (513-1,094 sq ft) will begin at ₹ 2.2 million. A maintenance package of about ₹ 15,000 per month is estimated as of now for a retired couple, which covers healthcare services, food and housekeeping facilities. For more details, go to [www.sereneretirement.com](http://www.sereneretirement.com)





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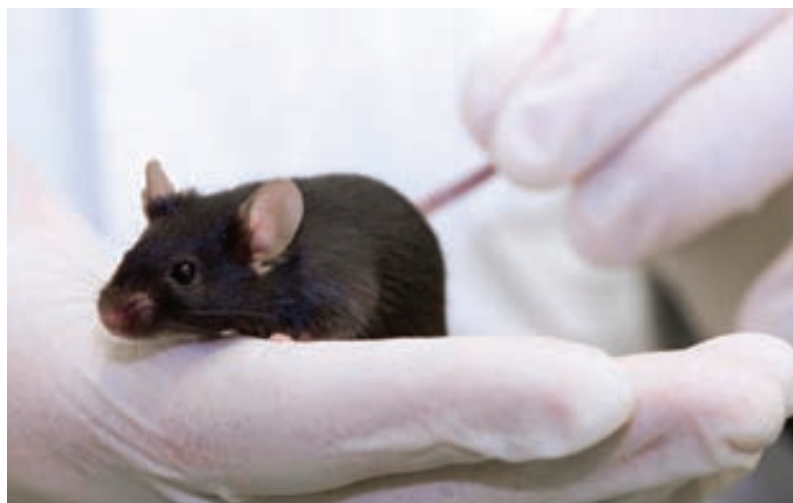
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# Old blood for new



**T**ransfusion equals transformation. That's the conclusion of three separate research reports from the University of California in San Francisco (UCSF) and Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, who have determined that **infusing old mice with the blood of young mice can reverse age-related decline in the brain, muscles, heart and other organs.** As *The New York Times* reports, the three studies (one at UCSF and two at Harvard) used a similar approach, pairing up old (18 month-old) and young (three month-old) mice like conjoined twins—they made an incision along the side of each mouse and let them heal in a way that fused their bodies. To their amazement, they found that the older mice grew stronger and performed better on cognitive and physical tasks. "There's something about young blood that can literally reverse the impairments you see in the older brain," says Saul Villeda from UCSF. "But mice are not humans. I wish our manuscript could come with a big caption that says 'Do not try this at home'. We need a clinical trial to see if this applies to humans, and to see if there are effects that we don't want." Such a trial is expected to begin in the next three to five years.



## Cause for compassion

Wondered why some silvers are more compassionate than others? Well, researchers at the University of California in San Diego have pinpointed three key contributory factors: gender (women are much more compassionate), a recent experience of personal loss (such as a death in the family) and high mental resiliency. Their study was published in the April issue of the *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.



# Granny's limit

**GRANDPARENTING** is therapeutic—but only up to a point. A study conducted by the Australian Women's Healthy Aging Project, which examined 120 grandmothers from the ages of 57 to 68, argues that **looking after the grandchildren once a week increases mental sharpness but doing it more than five days a week can actually be detrimental to the brain.** This was established through a series of tests for working memory and mental processing. Further, as London newspaper *The Guardian* reports, the more time grandmothers spent taking care of the grandchildren, the more they felt their own children had been demanding of them.

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## Run, **Bengaluru**, run

**O**n 18 May, Bengaluru woke up to marathon fever. And this time, too, our yellow-clad silvers took part in the Senior Citizens' 4.2-km Run organized by Harmony for Silvers Foundation and proved their mettle. Cheered on by Kannada film actors Vinayak Joshi and Rishika Singh, the 1,200 determined silvers were flagged off at 7:55 am from Kanteerava Stadium. Lively and full of fun and frolic, the old-timers egged on the first-time runners, while the beautiful weather added to the experience. They'll be back next year—same time, same place.







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## GLUCOSE BUDDY

**Available for:** Android v2.2 and up; iOS 4.0 or later

**What it does:** Ideal for controlling diabetes, Glucose Buddy is a free log-book for recording your blood sugar levels, carb intake, insulin dosage, activity levels, blood pressure and weight. The app also has a calendar that reminds you to check your blood sugar levels.

**After installation:** The app opens to a 'dashboard', through which you can select options to enter your personal information, such as birth date, height, weight, etc. Add logs about blood glucose, medication taken, food, activities; view previous logs in daily or monthly format; view graphs to track your levels; and set reminders. You can also keep a check on your weight and blood pressure and see those in graphs too.

## EASY FACEBOOK

Facebook's interface is always changing; the geeks at this multibillion-dollar social networking site are finding newer ways to design and simplify—or so they say—the site for users. More often than not, though, these changes can be annoying and push you back on the Facebook learning curve. Now, there's help at hand. Easy Facebook for Seniors, developed by Family Communication Suite Inc, is an app designed to minimise confusion with a simple, clear layout. With tabs on the left for news, photos, contacts, messages, games, profile and settings, it makes Facebook much easier to use, without the constant anxiety about whether you're pressing the wrong button. The app is only for tablets on Android, Windows, Mac or the iPad. Go to [www.familyribbon.com](http://www.familyribbon.com) to know more about the EasyFamily range of apps.

## HELPTALK

**Available for:** Android v2.2 and up

**What it does:** An app that aims at making communication easier for the physically disabled and their caretakers, it comes with various helpful tools and a simple, user-friendly interface. By creating custom profiles, you can specify the most relevant needs applicable to you. They are represented through icons with text below. All you have to do is click on the icon and it will read out the text. It also comes with an SOS button that sends out a distress call in three seconds, which you have to enable once installed. The 'talk' icon is much like a paper-and-pen option—if you need to say something more.

**After installation:** Once the application loads fully—it might take up to two minutes to download all the necessary icons for the first time—the page opens to a default profile with several icons. 'Emergencies' takes you to the 'I need' page, where you can choose from getting assistance to the police or an ambulance. Similarly, there are 'I feel', 'Food and drink' and 'I want to go to...' options. Once you create a custom profile by signing in, you can add, delete or modify icons to suit your needs.





## The Aditya Birla Group: Transcending business

A US\$ 40 billion corporation, the Aditya Birla Group is in the League of Fortune 500. It is anchored by an extraordinary force of 120,000 employees, belonging to 42 nationalities. The Group operates in 35 countries. Over 50 per cent of its revenues flow from its overseas operations. The Group has topped the Nielsen's Corporate Image Monitor 2012-13 and emerged as the Number 1 corporate, the 'Best in Class'.

### Beyond Business -

#### The Aditya Birla Group is:

- Working in 3,000 villages globally. Reaching out to 7 million people annually through the Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development, spearheaded by Mrs. Rajashree Birla.
- Focusing on: Health Care, Education, the Girl Child, Sustainable Livelihood, Women Empowerment Projects, Infrastructure and espousing social causes.
- Working closely with Habitat for Humanity, we have so far built more than 400 houses as part of our community outreach programme, besides supporting the building of an additional 3,800 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 90 villages in India's hinterland have already reached the level of model villages.

#### Highlights:

- Over a million patients treated at 4,000 Medical Camps and its 18 hospitals. More than 1,200 children learnt to smile again as they underwent cleft lip surgery. We helped immunise 6 million children against polio as well.
- At our 42 Schools across India we provide quality education to 45,000 children. Of these 18,000 students belong to the underprivileged segment. Merit Scholarships are given to an additional 12,000 children from the interiors.
- Our Vocational Training Centres and the Aditya Birla Rural Technology Park accord training in sustainable livelihood projects to 80,000 people.
- Our 4,500 Self-Help Groups have led to the empowerment of 45,000 women.
- 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.
- Ongoing education, healthcare and sustainable livelihood projects in Philippines, Thailand, Laos, Indonesia, Egypt, Korea and Brazil, lift thousands of people out of poverty.

Transcending the conventional barriers of business because we believe it is our duty.





**Silver insomniacs can now try including tart cherry juice in their diet to catch a full night's sleep,** says a new study by the Pennington Biomedical Research Centre at Louisiana State University. Although the study sample was small (about seven people with the average age of 68), researchers claim that those who drank the juice in the morning and at night were able to sleep more than an hour longer and efficiently each night compared to those who had the placebo. Previous studies have shown that sleep disorders affect nearly 42 per cent of people over 65, with an annual increase of 15 per cent every year.

## MOVE IT!



**A** study by Northwestern Medicine in the US suggests that **even light activity is significant in preventing disability in those who are already at a risk of knee arthritis.** Arthritis is a leading cause of disability in India, affecting over 15 million every year. While it has been established by previous studies that moderate exercise is essential, this study

proves that spending time in light activities can also help people who cannot increase the intensity of their daily activities owing to other health limitations. A group of 1,700 adults between 45 and 79 years of age were identified and tracked for two years with accelerometers. These people were free of any disabilities but were at risk of developing the condition because of knee osteoarthritis or

risk factors such as obesity. It was found that those who spent over four hours a day in light physical activity cut down their risk of developing disability by more than 30 per cent compared to those who spent only three hours a day in light activity. Spending time in moderate or vigorous activities brings in good results, but greater time spent in light activity brought in even better results.



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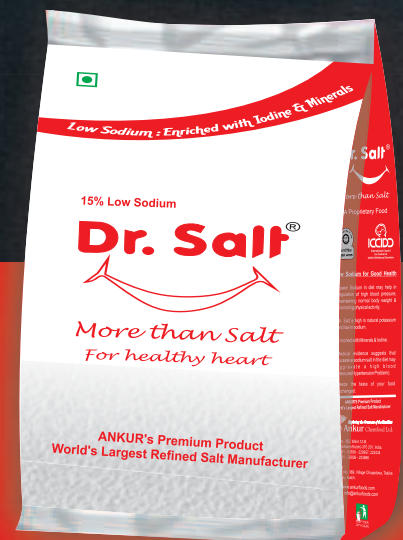
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## BIRTHDAYS

- American actor and director **Morgan Freeman** (left) turned 77 on 1 June.
- Filmmaker **Mani Ratnam** turned 57 on 2 June.

● **S P Balasubramaniam**, singer and music director, turned 68 on 4 June.

● Actor **Dimple Kapadia** (right) turned 57 on 8 June.

● Former US President **George H W Bush** turns 90 on 12 June.



● Film and stage actor **Kirron Kher** (left) turns 59 on 14 June.

● American actor and three-time Oscar winner **Meryl Streep** turns 65 on 22 June.

● Actor **Raj Babbar** turns 62 on 23 June.

## IN PASSING



● Guwahati-based social worker and winner of Harmony Silver Awards in 2009, **Dr Asa Dutta** (left) passed away on 27 April. She was 86.

● Indian painter and sculptor **M V Devan** passed away on 29 April. He was 86.

● Bengali theatre personality **Khaled Choudhury** died on 30 April at the age of 94.

● Former chairman of Tata Steel **Russi Mody** passed away on 16 May. He was 96.

● Leela Hotels founder **C P Krishnan Nair** (right), 92, featured in *Harmony-Celebrate Age* in July 2004, breathed his last on May 17.



## MILESTONES



● **Lalitha Lajmi**, 82, won the Laadli Lifetime Achievement Award for her contribution to art through gender sensitisation.

● Actor **Shatrughan Sinha** (left), 67, won the Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards held between 23 and 26 April in Tampa Bay, Florida.

● On 28 April, environment activist **Ramesh Agarwal** (right), 56, won the Goldman Environmental Prize for the year 2014 for helping control unchecked industrial development throughout India.



## OVERHEARD

"People can say you look 30 or you can lie and say you're 42. But in the end, you're the age you really are. I was initially upset about ageing but I cried and I accepted myself. It wasn't just a sad cry. It was just shedding and accepting that I wasn't the thing I was before. I'm not turning heads the way I used to, but I don't worry about it—it's more important to touch hearts."



—American actor **Sharon Stone**, 56, in *The Huffington Post*

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**Reliance Communications**

**Special mention:**  
**Rishika Singh & Vinayak Joshi**

**Thanks all those who supported the Senior Citizens' Run at the  
TCS World 10K Bangalore 2014 !**



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## HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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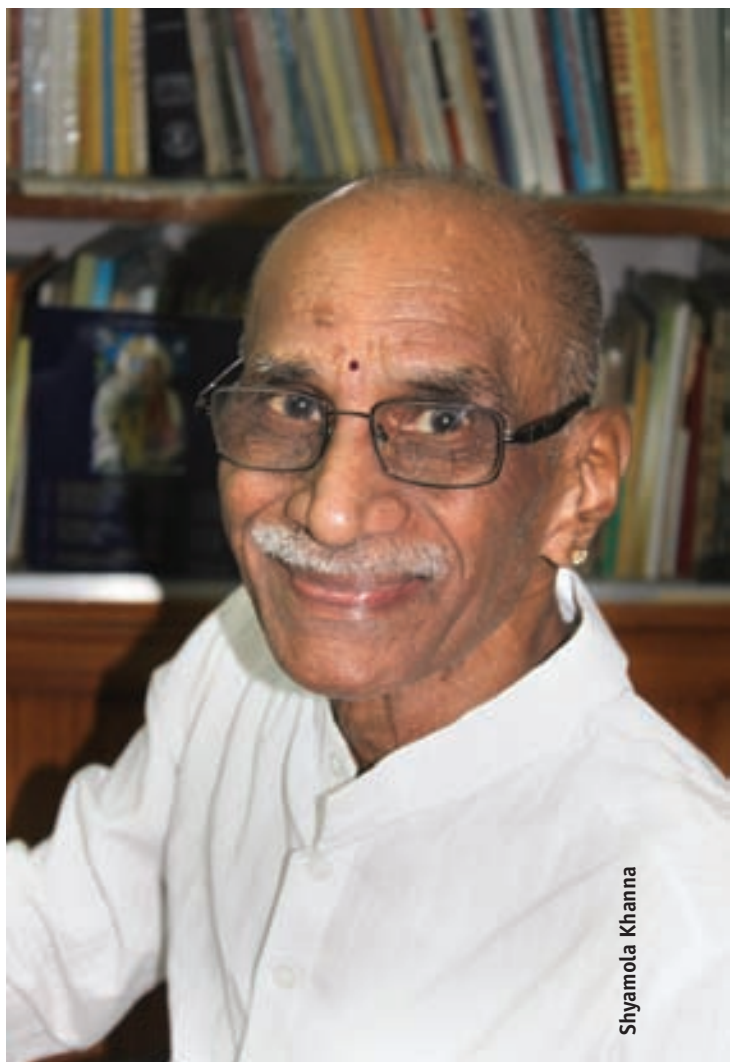
### KEEPING IT SIMPLE

I've led an interesting life, both in and outside the Army, but the pivot has always been a raging quest for the true meaning of life, which I have pursued by researching Hindu spiritual texts. I have always been a voracious reader, and felt that to truly understand the *Bhagavad-Gita* or the *Arthashastra*, one had to know Sanskrit, the original language these epics were written in.

So, soon after I retired from the Army as lieutenant colonel, I enrolled for evening classes at Nizam College in Hyderabad for a junior diploma in Sanskrit. After so many years of wearing the uniform and going to an office, it felt strange to walk into a college and rub shoulders with students who were at least 20 years younger than I. That was only the beginning. I went on to acquire a master's degree in Sanskrit via distance education, then an MPhil degree and finally a PhD. On the encouragement of my guide, I wrote my dissertation on *Military Aspects of Udyog Parva (Mahabharata)* for my MPhil and *Study of Military Strategy in the Arthashastra* for my PhD. I also learnt astrology and earned a postgraduate degree in the subject from Telugu University.

I couldn't have followed my heart if it weren't for my wife Parvati—we will soon celebrate our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. While I was away on Army postings, Parvati took great care of our four sons, making sure they got a sound professional education, the right kind of jobs and, of course, married the right girls! Much in the same way, ever since I re-started my education, she has been there, never complaining, always there for me. In fact, Parvati accompanied me to the contact classes at Osmania University and, although she is my wife, she looked after me like a mother. We are so much in sync that we practice spiritual meditation together at the nearby Krishna Pyramid Spiritual Care Centre and at home. I am proud to say that the senior master there has asked me to look after the centre.

At this age, I realise the importance of keeping busy, so when people approach me for astrological predictions, I am more than willing to help, without any charge. I also help elders sort out pension issues by guiding them with the paperwork. Further, I have had the opportunity to act in a Telugu TV serial. Although it was a five-minute appearance opposite the legendary actor A Nageshwara Rao



Shyamola Khanna

#### There is never an end to learning for Rao

(Nagarjuna's father), I have cherished it all my life. What's more, I am an active participant in the Senior Citizens Forum of Hyderabad, which meets twice a month. I have appeared as Mahatma Gandhi a couple of times at fancy dress functions and, as it has been much appreciated, I don't mind doing it again! In the evening of my life, I am happy with these few simple things, and, I suppose that is the true meaning of life.

—Nudurupati Prakasa Rao, Hyderabad

## THANK YOU, DAD

When we stop to buy something at a shop or a product made by a cottage industry, we rarely stop to think of the story behind it. I owe my modest handloom and sewing business in Guwahati to my late father, whose life story will always remain an inspiration to me.

You see, my father left home in search of work when he was just 11 as my grandfather was blind and my father had to support his parents and two younger brothers. Landing up in Mangaldoi, he first worked as domestic help and later set up a roadside tea stall. That tea stall is today called Repose, the best eating place and bakery in that town. A few years later, he opened a small grocery shop that grew into a business house that traded in paddy. Later, he set up SRD Bakers, which has since expanded to a network across Assam. My father passed away long ago but the businesses he left behind employ over 1,000 people today.

My father—we called him *Deuta*—had always told us one thing: “Your hands will rust if you do not put them to good use.” So I performed all kinds of household chores even as I went to school, as did my 10 siblings. But I also imbibed the spirit of that message, which will play itself out for the rest of my life.

I got married in 1962 to a state civil service officer, who had a transferable job. To keep busy, I would carry my loom and knitting kits wherever we went. I used to weave *mekhela-chador* for my own use and to give away as gifts. However, I did not carry my loom with me when my husband was posted in Shillong, because it was very cold there. Instead, I learnt machine embroidery and started making tablecloths, cushion covers, sofa backs and similar items.

Eventually, we settled in Guwahati and I opened a tailoring shop called Mukta Dress House. By then, I already had a stock of 100 baby frocks and a dozen pairs of *mekhela-chador*. And, believe me, I sold frocks and *mekhela-chador* worth over Rs 800 on the very first day and took some orders too! In time, I hired women to work with me and some of them have since set up independent ventures.



Tapati Baruah Kashyap

### Bhuyan weaves creative passion with compassion

But profit is not my sole intention. I am glad I have been able to provide a dignified livelihood to several poor women and find a sustainable outlet for my creativity. One of the high points in my journey was participating in the India International Trade Fair in New Delhi in 1989 and 1990. Here, my products made of the golden *muga* silk of Assam drew the attention of numerous visitors, including a few from Japan too.

I regularly take time off from my work to visit Amar Ghar, Guwahati's first old-age home, where I am a joint secretary in the managing committee. I am also president of the Panjabari Unnayan Samiti, treasurer of Kamrup Lekhika Samaroh Samiti, and a member of the Guwahati Senior Citizens' Association, apart from being an active member of the local Mahila Samiti and *puja* committee. This not only keeps me busy but abreast of interesting developments in different areas. It also keeps me physically fit and mentally agile.

I firmly believe every woman is a creative being. The only problem is that many like me, who married at an early age, do not get the right opportunities to develop their creative potential. However, it is never too late to discover where one's passion lies.

—Pratibha Bhuyan, Guwahati





## Whole grains: the wholeness and the wellness

Eating plenty of whole grains is an easy way to make your diet healthier. Most of us relate whole grain to whole wheat. Let me correct you here. We all know that all carrots are vegetables but not all vegetables are carrots. It is similar with whole wheat and whole grain: Whole wheat is one kind of whole grain, so all whole wheat is whole grain, but not all whole grain is whole wheat.

Now let us understand what exactly 'whole grain' is. All grains start life as whole grains. But after processing and undergoing different refining methods like cracking, crushing, rolling, extruding, and/or cooking, they lose their stature. Basically whole grains are made up of three key edible parts—the bran, the germ and the endosperm—protected by an inedible husk that guards the kernel from assaults by sunlight, pests, water and disease.

To recognise whole grains, keep this list handy when you go to the supermarket and choose any of the following grains:

- Whole grain corn
- Whole oats/oatmeal
- Popcorn
- Brown rice
- Whole rye
- Wholegrain barley
- Wild rice
- Buckwheat
- Triticale
- Bulgur (cracked wheat)
- Millet
- Quinoa
- Sorghum
- 100 per cent whole wheat flour



### The benefits

Multiple studies point to the health benefits of these whole grains, as follows:

- They reduce the risk of stroke by 30-36 per cent.
- They reduce risk of Type 2 diabetes by 21-30 per cent.
- They reduce risk of heart disease by 25-28 per cent.
- They facilitate weight maintenance.

Other benefits indicated by recent studies include:

- Reduced risk of asthma
- Healthier carotid arteries
- Lower risk of inflammatory disease
- Lower risk of colorectal cancer
- Healthier blood pressure levels
- Less gum disease and tooth loss

### Your choices

Each wholegrain offers different nutrients. In the case of corn, it offers more than 10 times the Vitamin A other grains do. Recent research shows that corn is also high in antioxidants and carotenoids that are associated with eye health, such as lutein and zeaxanthin. As a gluten-free grain, corn is a key ingredient in many gluten-free foods and can be easily consumed by individuals with gluten allergy.

Corn is best during late summer and early fall. It should be eaten as soon as possible after harvesting because the sugars start converting to starches as soon as the corn is picked.

Oats have been found to have powerful multiple health benefits. Studies have shown that oats are very good for weight loss as they stimulate appetite-controlling hormones. They also lower bad cholesterol, improve insulin sensitivity and help control blood pressure. Oats are best for breakfast as they are complex carbohydrates and release sugar slowly into the blood.

Buckwheat is one of the healthiest, nuttiest, most versatile wholegrain. It contains higher levels of zinc, copper and manganese than other cereal grains, and the bioavailability of zinc, copper, and potassium from buckwheat is also quite high. It also provides a very high level of protein, second only to oats. Not only is buckwheat protein well-balanced and rich in lysine, its amino acid score is 100, which is one of the highest amino acid scores among plant sources. Not to forget, it is perfect for a gluten-free diet.



#### READERS ASK

**I am a healthy 65 year-old woman, overweight by 10 kg. Can I go in for a detox diet to reduce weight?**

It is good to see your awareness and consciousness about weight loss at this age. The right weight at the right age is crucial for good health and wellbeing. As far as your query about a detox diet is concerned, I would recommend a more steady and gradual method of weight loss. Detox diets are generally for the purpose of flushing toxins from the body accumulated over a period of time owing to exposure to pollutants in the environment, unhealthy eating habits or any medical reason.

Individuals do achieve weight loss as well with detox diets as an additional benefit. The idea of a good detox diet is to eat pure and natural foods that will aid the function of the lymph, kidneys, and liver. Along with detoxification, these diets also help reboot the digestive system.

Detox diets could be of many types depending on the individual's requirement and tolerance to foods. These include fruit and vegetable based detox, liquid detox, raw food detox, organic detox and many more. Many detox diets have quite severe restrictions, and should be embarked upon with great care.

You can also definitely go in for a detox diet but under the supervision of a qualified nutritionist. However, do not aim to lose weight through it. Instead, use it to accelerate the process of a steady weight loss programme.

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Oats have been found to have powerful multiple health benefits. Studies have shown that oats are very good for weight loss as they stimulate appetite-controlling hormones

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It's not surprising that quinoa supports good health, as it is one of the only plant foods that is a complete protein, offering a healthy balance of all the essential amino acids. Quinoa also has the highest potassium among all whole grains; this helps control blood pressure. What's more, it is gluten-free, which makes it extremely useful to the celiac community and to others who may be sensitive to more common grains such as wheat, or even to all grains in the grass family.

Rye is a rich and versatile source of dietary fibre, especially a type of fibre called arabinoxylan, which is also known for its high antioxidant activity. Research indicates that whole grain rye has many benefits including improved bowel health, better blood sugar control, and reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes. It also helps in overall weight management as it improves satiety (feeling full longer after eating).

#### The flipside

The benefits apart, there is another side of the story as well. Cereal grains are good sources of phosphorous, potassium and magnesium, but are poor sources of sodium and calcium. The high phytate content of wholegrain cereals forms insoluble complexes with calcium, so the net effect is a low calcium-phosphorous ratio. Dietary cereal grains are noted to be causative agents for celiac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis, both autoimmune diseases. So, if you have digestive problems or suffer from some allergies, grains may well be the cause.

**Namita Jain is a wellness specialist and celebrity nutritionist at Diet Mantra and has written bestsellers on diet and fitness. Visit [www.dietmantra.in](http://www.dietmantra.in). If you have any questions for Namita Jain, write to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)**



**SILVER LINING** BY V S NATARAJAN

## Lifestyle and longevity: Along with years, add quality, sobriety and spirituality to your tomorrow

Increasing lifespan has been mankind's constant quest and, therefore, a vital area of research. Primarily, our genes determine our longevity. However, a better lifestyle assures better chances of living longer. In other words, the lower the calories, the longer one's life.

Over the past few decades, researchers exploring nutrition in ageing have shown that excessive calorie intake over the years might accelerate the age-related decline of physiological dysfunctions.

### Landmark study

The National Laboratory of Little Rock, Arkansas, in the US conducted a study to establish a connection between food habits and longevity. This was appreciated by researchers trying to find ways to postpone or delay ageing. They conducted these experiments initially on rats, which were divided into two categories; one group was fed with lesser calories. The other set of rats, which had a sumptuous feed, died around their average life span of 30 months.

It was amazing to note that rats surviving on a lesser calorie intake lived up to 60 months and were much stronger as well. Their sense organs functioned perfectly and their immune system was also very good. Renault Hurt, director of the laboratory, found these results were really amazing. "If we want to live longer, our ageing process should be slowed down," he observed. "To achieve this, we must reduce body heat. This can easily be achieved if we eat low calorie foods."

How do we go about this? It would be extremely difficult to calculate the amount of calories in everything we eat. First, food items that contain high calories (such as butter, ghee, oil and red meat) should be totally avoided. The best way to tackle the problem is to avoid eating after one feels full. We must stop eating when we feel our stomach is three-fourth full. The ideal proportion would be: half the stomach with food, quarter with water and the balance quarter with air. If possible, we can fast once or twice a week. If we follow these simple tips, our ageing process will be healthy and happy.

### Vegetarian food and longevity

Various international studies have revealed that vegetarians generally live longer and are less prone to diseases compared to non-vegetarians. Many people reduce their intake of non-vegetarian food as they age.

The main reasons for this are:

- Vegetarian food is easily chewable. This is especially convenient to those who have lost their teeth.
- Many silvers believe they wouldn't be able to digest non-vegetarian food.
- Vegetarian food is comparatively less expensive.
- Green leafy vegetables are rich in nutrients.
- Generally, non-vegetarian food is rich in fat. This, in turn, increases the risk of hypertension and heart disease.
- Vegetarian food is believed to induce spiritual thoughts.

Harmony Archives





## READERS ASK

Countless studies have been conducted to find ways to postpone ageing and protect ourselves from various diseases. We know that when our tissues are functioning properly, free radicals are released. If these are not removed immediately, we land up with a faster ageing process and conditions like diabetes and cancer

Non-vegetarians are more prone to cholesterol, hypertension and heart problems and are generally on the heavier side. Older people who suffer from all/any of these should definitely avoid non-vegetarian food. The whites of eggs have less fat but higher protein. Similarly, fish has lots of vitamins and minerals and is devoid of fat. Hence, elders who desire non-vegetarian food can take more egg white and fish.

### Healthy life and antioxidants

Countless studies have been conducted to find ways to postpone ageing and protect ourselves from various diseases. We know that when our tissues are functioning properly, free radicals are released. If these are not removed immediately, we land up with a faster ageing process and conditions like cataract, diabetes, joint pains and even certain types of cancer. After many years of research, it has been established that antioxidants are the key. Antioxidants are abundantly present in Vitamins C and E as well as selenium and zinc. If we take these as supplements thrice a day for a long period we can postpone our ageing process. This is the main conclusion of years of research. We can also consume a diet rich in antioxidants.

### Longevity, spiritualism and meditation

Those who have a spiritual bent of mind and meditate regularly lead a healthy, longer life. There is a positive relationship between faith and longevity. According to a report published in *Health Psychology*, people who regularly attend religious services tend to have an edge in physical wellbeing over those who don't. Researchers believe prayer and religious activities offer practitioners a readily available release valve for stress and anxiety. Transcendental meditation, a practice for which there are many adherents in India, has also been found to limit anger and worry and make practitioners experience a deep inner sense of peace. When people are stressed out, their immune and cardiovascular systems don't function well. But when they turn to prayer and meditation, there is a perceptible change for

**About two months ago, I coughed out a small amount of blood without any reason. The same thing happened a few days ago. I am 65 and used to smoke earlier. Are these symptoms an indication of lung cancer?**

Coughing up blood (haemoptysis), irrespective of the amount, is an alarming symptom and you should seek medical advice for it. Many episodes of haemoptysis remain unexplained even after complete investigation. A history of repeated streaking of sputum is highly suggestive of lung cancer. Fever, night sweats and weight loss suggest tuberculosis. Pneumonia often causes rusty-coloured sputum associated with fever and chill. In a majority of cases, haemoptysis itself is not life-threatening and a logical sequence of investigations should be followed, like a chest x-ray, full blood count, CT chest and bronchoscope when necessary. As you are a former smoker, you should not take it lightly. Consult a chest physician without any delay.

the better. Their anxiety is reduced, they easily cope with stress and their immune and cardiovascular systems get back to normal.

### Lifestyle changes and longevity

If we follow these simple rules, we can definitely have a healthy, longer life:

- Drink clean and pure water
- Live in a pollution-free atmosphere
- Eat nutritious food
- Stop smoking
- Take very little quantity of alcohol, or stop altogether
- Have a proper breakfast
- Avoid snacks in between meals
- Sleep seven hours a day
- Exercise regularly
- Keep your body weight under control

It has been proved that those adhering to these practices live about 11 years longer than others of their age. It is crystal clear that all the steps for healthy ageing are well within our reach. Why don't we then start climbing the ladder of longevity from today? Baby steps taken every day will definitely make a difference.

**Padmashri Dr V S Natarajan, a specialist in the field of geriatric medicine, runs Memory Clinic, a service for silvers in Chennai. If you have a question for him, write to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)**



## A spine of steel: Stand tall, proud and elegant with yoga

The human being went against the evolutionary and gravitational demand to be on all fours and stood up erect to break free from the animal kingdom. This evolutionary difference enhanced the brain and its supportive system but put an extra burden on the human spine. This is evident in childbirth, for example; a human delivery is reportedly more exacting on a woman than her counterparts in the rest of the animal kingdom. Other examples are the problems a human spine develops all along one's life—extra effort, whether in sports or just sitting too long, can compromise spinal health. Along the way, as the spine slumps owing to pain or even poor posture, it can compromise one's poise and projection of confidence. Erect without being stiff—that's the

mantra for the spine to reflect real health and vitality. But all of us know just how difficult this can be.

A weak spine at the upper back makes us look timid, while an over-curved lower back makes us look paunchy, with our stomach muscles protruding up front. It can ruin the way we walk, mess up our breathing to create all sorts of health problems, sometimes affect the quality of our voice, and even make us feel dizzy (as vertigo happens often to those with upper back or neck weakness). A properly aligned spine also

keeps the heart healthy, maintains healthy metabolism and positively affects mood simply by creating a natural state of contentment and confidence.

To preserve the integrity of the spine through a regular yoga practice is rather easy. In fact, all poses work in some way or the other to align the spine. However, some poses work more in this direction: all standing poses and balancers; backbends in the supine, prone and on fours and standing variations; leg raises in all their variations; seated meditative postures that keep the spine erect; all twists, in their seated, supine and standing versions; as well as all poses that challenge either side of the body.

### YOGIC MOVES

#### Eagle pose (*garudasana*)

Stand up erect. Bend lightly at the left knee passing the right leg over the left knee. But do not lift immediately into the pose if you are a first-timer. Get the hands organised, as instructed, before doing the final balancing aspect of the pose. Bend right hand at elbow, passing it over a bent left arm, to rest it on top of the left arm. Twist the arms around as shown. Initially, you may not be able to completely twist the arms together as shown or desired. It takes flexibility, which must be slowly cultivated through daily practice. Now shift awareness to the legs, twisting the right leg firmly around the left leg, as shown, so the right foot is off the ground. Here, too, it may take a few weeks for a real grip and twist to happen at the legs. Continue normal breathing throughout. Hold the pose for as long as you can. Remember it is a very wobbly, challenging pose



because each part of the body is fighting the other. But all the benefits of this pose come from this challenge. Release. Repeat for the other side.

**Benefits:** This pose is said to make your posture perfect, aligning the spine. The challenge makes the body poised and confident. It fights all uro-genital problems and aligns the left-right brain hemispheres, creating a balanced state of harmony in mind and body.

**Model:** Jayshree Gemani,  
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](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org). (Please consult your physician before following the advice given here)*

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MKTG/Online-Print/Eng/V1/May 2014





## THE GREAT GRANNY DIARIES BY PRATIBHA JAIN SMT SUSHILA GAJANAN KULKARNI, NASHIK

### An engaging series about the wisdom of love, nurturing and culinary bonding across generations

At 85, her skin is as radiant as that of a young girl. Her serene gaze misses nothing and her warm demeanour draws people to her instantly. It is later in the conversation that one also realises the willpower and clarity of thought with which she has lived her life. Mother of three daughters and a son, grandmother to seven, and great-grandmother to eight, Smt Sushila Kulkarni is a unique mix of gentleness and determination. Marrying a person of her own choice against many odds, embracing his family as her own in the face of indifference, and not compromising on her inner sense of duty as well as rights...I was mesmerised listening to this beautiful great-grandmother during my recent visit to Nashik in Maharashtra. She replied to my endless questions fluently in both English and Hindi.

The icing on the cake was the affection and admiration in the eyes of her daughter-in-law Kanchan. Both of them shared the easy rapport that comes from years of living together in harmony.

**Namaste. Tell me about your childhood.**

I was born in September 1929 in a village called Kashil near Satara on the Pune-Bangalore highway. My maternal family belonged to the sect of Kokanastha Brahmins. I grew up with three sisters and one brother. My father was a forest ranger during the British rule. We had lots of land in the village where I remember the mango trees and acres of wheat, *jowar* and groundnuts. I studied up to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade after which I worked in the fields; I used to supervise the farmers.



Yash Photos

**Did you enjoy the village life?**

Yes, I remember how all of us drew water from the well, helped in housework and walked to the riverside for our bath. Our village was at the confluence of the rivers Krishna and Urmodi. We easily walked a couple of miles every day to reach the riverside.

**Did you complete your studies?**

Yes, in the village school where Marathi was the main language. My father passed away when I was just two years old. My mother was quite strict and taught us the importance of discipline. She sent me to Satara district to stay with my sister when

I was in my 4<sup>th</sup> grade. This is where I learnt to speak English. I stayed there for two years, came back to Kashil for a couple of years, and then went on to stay with my second sister in Pune for three years. I also stayed with my eldest sister in Mumbai for a year. Thus, I did my schooling at different places.

**And then you married a man of your choice. Was it acceptable in those days?**

Not at all! Both the families were against it. If we had not been determined, it might not have happened.

**Where did you both meet?**

We had a large house and we had rented a portion of it to Mr Laxman Mahadeo Kulkarni, who was the headmaster of the village school. He stayed there with his family. His son, Gajanan, and I took a liking to each other and decided to get married. My mother did not approve of it because they were Deshastha Brahmins and also not as well-to-do as my own family. I appealed to my brother but he did not relent. My mother refused to attend the wedding but my eldest sister stood by my side and helped us get married in Bombay in 1951.

**I can imagine the courage it must have taken. Did you live with his family after the wedding?**

Initially, we both stayed in Mumbai for six years. After that, my husband moved to Koyana Nagar for the dam project. Around that time, my father-in-law started working in Satara for the government for evacuating property. He fell quite unwell, so both of us moved to Satara. That was a new phase in my life. There was a large joint family and because of my father-in-law's failing health, they were facing a difficult time financially. My husband was the eldest, so we had many responsibilities. But we decided to manage, come what

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**"My husband and I believed that education was important; we helped the younger siblings to construct their lives. I think that won me much appreciation in the long run"**

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may. We stayed there for seven years. When my father-in-law passed away in 1968, we moved to Bhor.

**What was the mantra that kept you going through this period?**

More than anything, my husband and I believed that education was important and would help the younger siblings to construct their lives. I think that won me much appreciation in the long run.

**Kanchan:** She has always been very patient and caring. The family now speaks much about her sacrifice and adjustments and believes that it has made the family bond stronger.

**Sushilaji, then you must share with us your views on changing times and family values!**

I think one good thing earlier was that we could make do with less money. Now we have more wealth but the value has fallen. Youngsters are not able to make the adjustments we could make for harmonious living. But what I do appreciate now is that everyone is learning to value education, and that really adds to the quality of life.

**How do you keep yourself occupied?**

I follow a simple routine of helping with breakfast in the mornings. After that, I bathe and get busy with my prayers. I read the scriptures and enjoy writing some religious examinations. Apart from this, I have always done some amount of social work. I have been actively involved in the Rashtra Sevika Samiti [RSS] for decades. I am now a life mem-

ber and stay active in the Rani Lakshmi Smarak Samiti. I am a member of their governing council. I help with the activities and accounts of their trust, and help in raising funds. During festivals like Diwali, I stay back and supervise the making of sweets and savouries in their premises.

**Kanchan:** She has always been very focused and determined. What I really admire is that she is unafraid to follow what she believes in.

**I am intrigued by the bond and simple affection you both share!**

**Kanchan:** She is quite straightforward, so that makes things easy. She never talks ill of anyone, never gets angry and practices what she advises. What one must learn from her is control over speech. She has been a positive influence over her children, and now over the next generations.

**Sushilaji:** [Laughs] I also shared a lovely relationship with my mother-in-law. My father-in-law was quite strict, but she was very adjusting.

**Kanchan:** And it is easy to take care of her because she takes good care of her own health. If ever she is unwell, she tells us not to worry and never to take her to the hospital. And of course, most important, I love her cooking. We all do.

**What are your special delicacies?**

I am a pure vegetarian and have always enjoyed cooking. The children love my sweets such as *puran poli* and *aalyachi wadi*. Let me share one of these recipes with you.





Yamini V

## FROM SMT SUSHILA GAJANAN KULKARNI'S KITCHEN

### Ginger burfi (*Aalyachi wadi*)

This is a simple and sumptuous sweet prepared in the winter months using ginger, known as *aalye* in Marathi. A piece consumed before breakfast is much recommended as it aids digestion and helps control acidity.

#### Ingredients:

- Ginger pulp: 1 cup (see step 1)
- Sugar: 2 cups
- Fresh cream: 1 tbsp

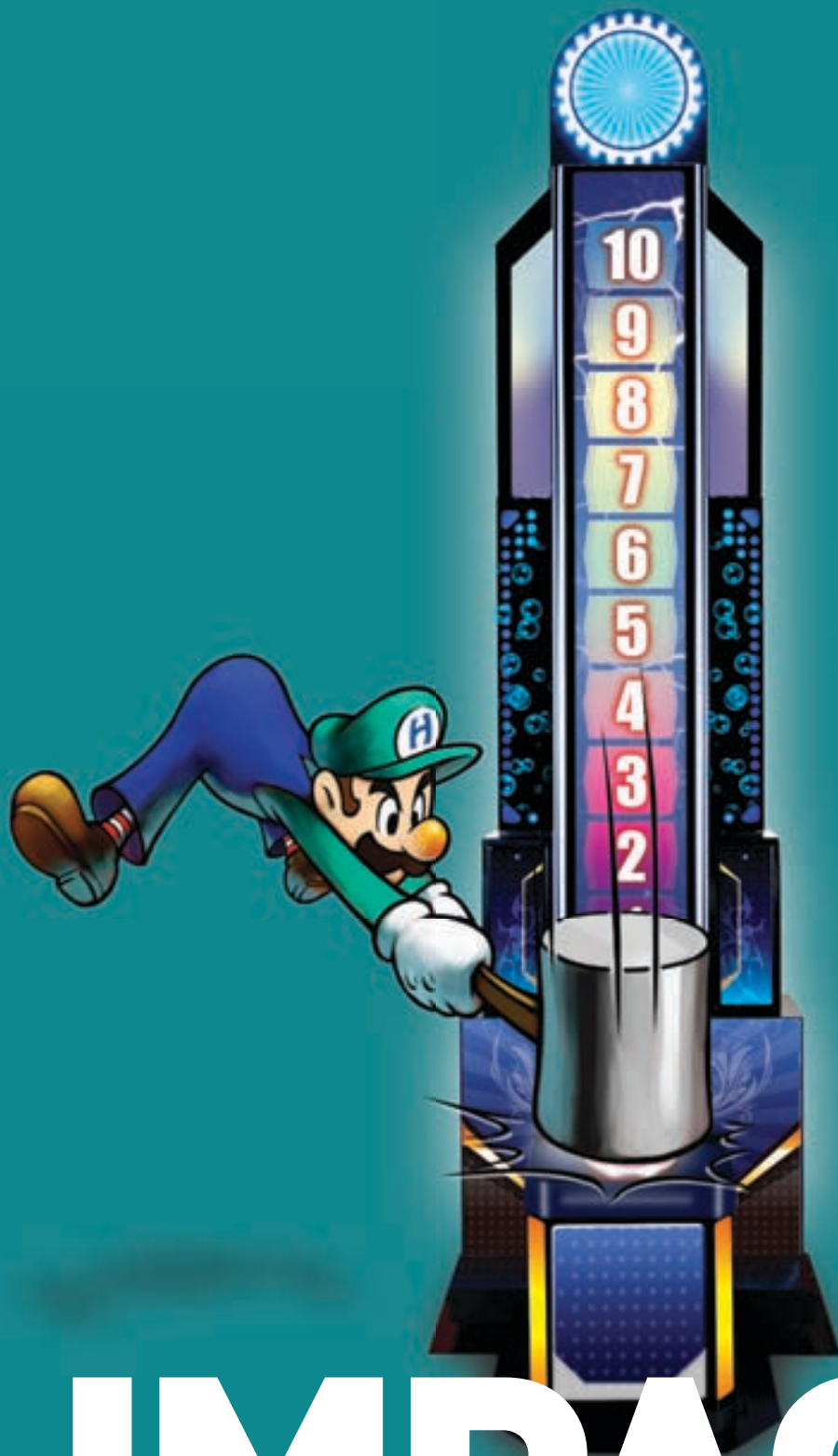
#### Method

Peel the ginger and chop into thin rounds. Grind into a fine paste without adding any water. Mix the ginger pulp and sugar in a thick bottomed pan and simmer on medium flame. Stir continuously to avoid sticking to the bottom. Add fresh cream and continue to cook. Within 10 minutes, the mixture will become a thick pulp and start leaving the sides of the pan. Switch off the flame. Alongside, smear a dot of ghee in a plate and transfer the cooked mixture on to the plate. Flatten it with your palm or a flat spoon. You may need to cover your palm with plastic so the mixture spreads evenly without sticking to the palm. Cut into one-inch squares with a sharp knife.

Sushilaji says no other spices such as cardamom or cloves are needed as ginger has such a sharp flavour that it overpowers everything else. She also explains that when ginger is grated, it tends to become fibrous. Hence, it should be chopped and pulped rather than grated.

*Pratibha Jain, an author and translator from Chennai, is the co-author of two award-winning books **Cooking at Home with Pedatha and Sukham Ayu**. Her area of specialisation is documenting Indian traditions through research, translation and writing*





# IMPACT

HIGHLIGHTS FROM A DECADE

## WOMAN POWER

I am always proud of the fact that my first television interview was with Alfred Hitchcock, and that I not only survived it but it gave me a lot of confidence. My first press interviews, however, were totally different and offered challenges of a completely different kind. I had just started freelancing for *The Statesman*. Its resident editor in Delhi, Evan Charlton—an Englishman—was very encouraging to young beginners like me. One evening when I had gone to the office to hand in my film reviews, Evan in his usual informal style, patted me affectionately on my back and said, "Amita, why don't you interview the three most important Indian women?" Before I was rash enough to ask him who they were, he disappeared as suddenly as he had entered. After pondering over the choice for a while, I told him I would like to interview the wife of the President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Violet Alva, the deputy home minister, and Lakshmi Menon, deputy external affairs minister. "If one of them refuses," said Evan Charlton, "try Indira Gandhi. She is Nehru's daughter and his official hostess."

Being totally inexperienced I rang up the secretary to the President. An irate voice at the other end



said: "Don't you know you have to ring up the PRO for such appointments?" Chastened, I rang up that gentleman to ask for an appointment with Mrs Rajendra Prasad and he duly promised me a date. "But remember, she does not speak English and her Hindi is more like *Braj Bhasha*," he cautioned. Refusing to get scared, I turned up at Rashtrapati Bhavan exactly on time. I was ushered into a small room that looked like any room from a middleclass Indian household. Madam was sitting on a chair that had a towel draped at the back so as not to retain any stains from oily hair. Seeing the *sindoor* on my forehead as I was newly married, Madam President asked me how many children I had as any married Indian lady would. I confessed I had just got married. "You have my *aashirvad*," said the gracious lady. "And may you have many sons." The rest of the interview proceeded along similar lines and when carried it gave the correct picture of a simple lady who refused to be awed by Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Violet Alva was quite different. Warm and friendly, she gave me a wonderful interview about how

she managed her home and her office comfortably. In fact, we became friends and, later, neighbours. She had an official bungalow on Ashoka Road just behind Constitution House, the MP's hostel where my husband and I had a suite. In fact, I attended the wedding reception of her son and Margaret Alva, who always remembers that and treats me with great courtesy as a friend of her mother-in-law.

Lakshmi Menon refused as she hated publicity. So I took Charlton's advice and tried Indira Gandhi. She lived in the Prime Minister's House to look after her father and act as official hostess. I immediately got an interview through her secretary, Usha Bhagat who was a personal friend. Indira Gandhi was not yet in politics. When I asked for a photograph, she gave me a lovely one of herself playing with two tiger cubs. When the article came out in *The Statesman*, *TIME* magazine reproduced the photograph with the caption: "Already playing with tigers." Anyway, after that I never found it difficult to interview her. I am also proud to say I am the only journalist who got an exclusive interview with her the day she was selected leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party and prime minister next day. In fact, I was the first woman to be accommodated in the PM's press party on her first visit to Japan and Indonesia as PM. Quite a feat in those days when there were not many women in journalism.

words to live by

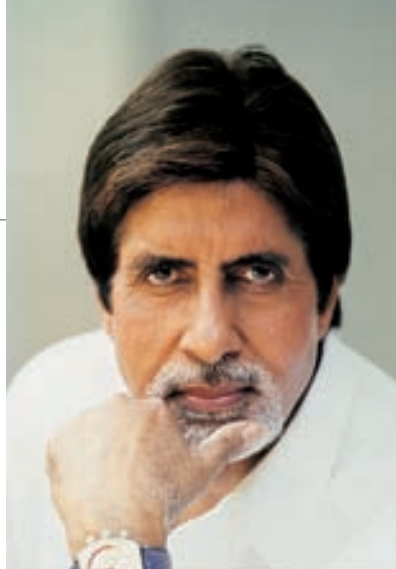
I am also proud to say I am the only journalist who got an exclusive interview with Indira Gandhi the day she was selected leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party and prime minister next day

## IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

**A** marriage is not about rituals and legalities—it is about the desire to be together. I have been married over 32 years and I think what's really important is for a couple to accept each other for what they are. It's a strength of conviction, an unspoken bond. Respecting that bond will allow you to continue together.

It would be wonderful if marriage were Utopia but the reality is that it is a continuous process of adjustment between two people. With each passing year, there are difficult times to negotiate, moments that challenge domestic peace. When children come along, there is an added dimension. The couple has to agree on how best to nurture them. And once they are grown up, their choices also become topics of debate at home.

My father used to say, "When you get married, love flies out of the window. After that, it is all about *aloo, dal ka daam kya hai, atta ka price kya hai*." It's real life. Silly issues crop up all the time: 'Where are my clothes?' 'The food is served and you are not at the table.' 'You didn't notice my new sari.' Only if



you address them openly do you realise how trivial they are. Otherwise, the tension festers and builds up into acrimony.

It's important to respect the sanctity of the home—the man should realise that for the woman, the home is her nest. She has built it with love and care and she will fight to preserve it. Everything can happen. You can fight, you can be living in different rooms. Do whatever you want - but do it within the confines of the understanding that, this home is ours and we won't let it be destroyed.

If you happen to be a celebrity, you also need to project the fact that you want to be together. You can have your differences inside the house but don't wash your dirty linen in public. If they get even a whiff of trouble, the media writes about it. It can test a marriage. And if you are both celebrities, it's even harder. You can have different viewpoints on an issue and the media goes to town with it. It is horrible to see a husband and a wife sleeping on the same bed yet communicating through a newspaper. So it's essential that the couple sits down together, arrives at a resolu-

tion and puts on a common front. Paradoxically, this can help a marriage because you are forced to deal with issues; it opens up lines of communication.

If a couple has irrevocable differences, they can go their separate ways. But if there are children involved, they need to reconsider their decision. Having brought our children into the world, we owe it to them to provide happiness in which to flourish. It is an unpardonable crime when they suffer because of our mistakes. In fact, I even think it is fine to put up a front for the sake of your children. If it means giving up on something, give it up, but protect the children at all costs, especially if they are young and impressionable. By the time they are older, you are usually reconciled to your differences. Very few people start thinking of divorce at 60 anyway. It may happen in the West, but it seldom happens here.

What does happen when you're older, though, is the arrival of grandchildren. It can rekindle the bond between a husband and wife. Grandchildren give you something in common again and there's more communication. When they visit, the house lights up and there is so much activity. And once they leave, you look at each other and say: 'Why can't we repeat the same atmosphere of joy even when they're not there? How wonderful would it be?' So you decide to order flowers, watch a movie, go for a drive, just the two of you. It brings the spark back.

words to live by

If you happen to be a celebrity, you need to project the fact that you want to be together. You can have your differences inside the house but don't wash your dirty linen in public



## SILVERS AND THE STATE

As India's only lifestyle and empowerment magazine for silver citizens, we have made it our mission to be the voice of silvers across the country. One of our earliest cover stories "Silvers and the State" (July 2004) revealed the lacunae in well-intended existing policies and made recommendations for a better framework. Indeed, each and every issue of the magazine has taken a holistic look at silver-specific issues and concerns—from health, trends and nutrition to fitness, lifestyle and finance. Identifying the challenges that face the elderly in India, our monographs—*Ageing in India in the 21st century: A Research Agenda (Priority Areas and Methodological Issues)*, March 2006; *Promoting Successful Ageing in India: Issues and Challenges*, Septem-



ber 2006; and *National Policy on Older Persons: Taking it Forward*, January 2007—have been instrumental in precipitating change at various levels, including the landmark Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. Harmony for Silvers Foundation's manifesto, presented to the finance minister in August 2010, covered the entire gamut from financial security, health-care and barrier-free environ-

ment to safety and shelter, and made recommendations on what needs to be done, across the board, for silvers. On the ground level, we have conducted seminars to address silver issues and created a special competitive section, 'Celebrate Age', at the Mumbai International Film Festival, beginning August 2010, to enable filmmakers to look at the positive side of ageing. We have also encouraged an active pursuance of one's passion through 'Second Careers', for both pleasure and profit. Whether it is our reports or features, the underlying thread has always been silver advocacy.

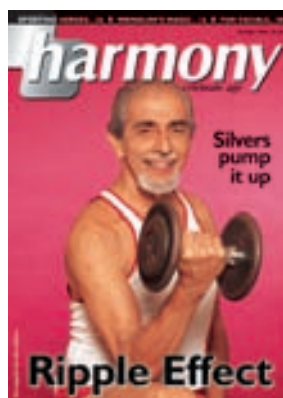
## MONOGRAPHS ■ SILVER MANIFESTO ■ SEMINARS ■ SUCCESSFUL AGEING ■ SECOND CAREERS

## FITNESS AND THE SILVER RUN

Fitness is at the core of active ageing and we constantly and consistently lay stress on physical activity and exercise to stay healthy, energetic and independent in the silver years. Our cover feature "Silvers Pump It Up: Ripple Effect" (October 2004) identified the trend of silvers taking fitness seriously and drove home the point that it is never too late to begin an exercise regimen. Through our successive cover stories "Silver Sunday" (February 2007), "Get On Your Feet" (January 2009) and "Dream Run" (featuring the oldest marathon runner Sardar Fauja Singh in April 2013), we have reinforced the



need for physical fitness. We took our preoccupation with fitness to a logical conclusion with our silvers' run at the Mumbai Marathon in January 2005. By making the Harmony Silver Run an annual event and taking it to Delhi and Bengaluru, besides Mumbai, we have made it clear that we mean busi-



ness when it comes to empowering silvers and bringing their needs, concerns and potentials to centre-stage. One of our longest-running columns, YogaRX by yogacharya Shameem Akthar, suggests ways and methods to improve flexibility while reducing aches and pains, and refreshing the mind and spirit.

## NEVER TOO LATE ■ MARATHON ■ YOGA ■ FLEXIBILITY

## PROACTIVE HEALTHCARE

We espouse a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to healthcare. We generate awareness and emphasise the need for periodic checkups, not only through our cover features on diabetes ("Defeat Diabetes", September 2009; "Diabetes in India", November 2011), breast cancer ("The Fight against Breast Cancer", September 2008), cardiac problems ("Unlocking the Human Heart"; September 2013) and eye care ("All Eyes"; May 2014), but regular sections like 'Health Bytes', and columns by doctors and nutritionists. Our health stories cover a



wide spectrum from thyroid to arthritis, menopause to andropause. We have also advocated organ donation through "Donating Lives" (May 2008) and "Life, After Life" (May 2011). Further, we take healthcare to the grassroots by organising eye camps and hearing camps.

## PERIODIC CHECKUP ■ ORGAN DONATION ■ NUTRITION ■ HEALTH CAMPS

## INTIMACY AND COMPANIONSHIP

Recent surveys and studies have only reinforced what we consistently advocate: intimacy in later years can be physically and emotionally rewarding. In fact, thousands of single silvers regardless of their previous marital status are looking anew for partners to share their lives with, and the incidence of marriage and cohabitation among people over 50 in India is on the rise. We discussed the trend in one of



our earliest issues with a cover feature, "Just Married" (November 2004), emphasising that marriage could be meaningful at any age. Through reports in 'Orbit', we cite international studies and surveys that reinforce the

prevalence and benefits of sex and intimacy at every age. Incidentally, many marriage bureaus have sprung up all over India encouraging silvers to look for love and companionship. Our Valentine's Day special photo essays have consistently illuminated the rediscovery and renewal of relationships through sharing passions and developing new interests together.



## LOVE ■ COHABITATION ■ SEX ■ SHARING LIVES

## BARRIER-FREE LIVING



We advocate Universal Design to make buildings and spaces safer and accessible for our silvers. In November 2004, through our feature "Is India Barrier-Free?", we made a case for public initiatives for easy mobility for silvers, including grab bars, better signage, sidewalk ramps, anti-skid floors and uncluttered rooms. From proper lighting and hazard-free bathrooms to a kitchen makeover, our 'Wall to Wall' series has looked at an entire array of budget-friendly ways to make homes safe.

## MOBILITY ■ ACCESSIBILITY ■ UNIVERSAL DESIGN

## FINANCIAL ADVICE

Recognising the need for sound financial advice to combat rising inflation, we constantly strive to enlighten our readers about different investment options on the market. Our cover feature, "Money Matters" (March 2009) ran expert advice on asset allocation while comparing and contrasting different schemes. Through our subsequent column, 'Money Matters', we continue to bring you advice on matters as diverse as planning your taxes to inflation-indexed bonds and choosing the right mediclaim policy. We are also



pioneers in spreading awareness about Reverse Mortgage, a scheme that allows silvers to unlock the value of their home equity. On the ground level, we have organised two seminars on Reverse Mortgage in Mumbai and Delhi in association with the National Housing Bank (NHB). Later, in December 2009, along with NHB, we launched a toll-free helpline, acces-

sible across India, to answer queries on the Reverse Mortgage scheme.

INVESTMENT ■ ASSET ALLOCATION ■ TAX PLANNING  
■ REVERSE MORTGAGE ■ WEALTH MANAGEMENT

## EMBRACING INNOVATION

Our effort is to keep you tuned in to the latest innovations in medical, lifestyle, technology, anti-ageing and cosmetics. Whether it is our cover feature "55 Must-Haves for Silvers" (October 2005) or test-drives of products and services with silvers, we believe in keeping our readers abreast of the latest gadgets and trends. While our cover feature "Face-Off" (March 2006) shed light on the latest developments in research, products and procedures to peel the years away,



through 'Orbit' we bring you the latest on the market, from anti-ageing treatments ('Face Off') or cutting-edge technological innovations ('Cutting Edge', 'App Alert'). Our cover features "Joint Services: Hip and Knee Replacement Surgery" (August 2007), "Flexible

Strategies: Latest Advancements in Joint Replacement Surgery" (May 2010), and "Pain Management: On the Cutting Edge" (September 2012) have all shed light on medical advancements.

CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY ■ TRENDS ■ GADGETS  
■ TEST DRIVES ■ ANTI-AGEING



## RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

The growth of life-care retirement communities is a trend that has triggered urban Indian consciousness in recent times.

However, we spoke about the potential for these way back in December 2006 in our cover feature "First Resort: Retirement Communities, A New Trend", which included a detailed report and guide to retirement resorts as a viable



option to live in companionship and security. We keep readers informed and updated about all new retirement communities through our section 'First Resort' in 'Orbit' and publish studies about the latest trends in this sector. In 2011, echoing our sentiments, global real-estate services firm Jones Lang

LaSalle remarked that the concept of senior or assisted living and retirement communities is "an idea whose time has come" in India. Going forward, we hope to leverage our expertise in this area at the project level.

## SECURITY ■ COMPANIONSHIP ■ LIFECARE



## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Urban life is a potential health hazard for Indian silvers who are exposed to threats to life and property from strangers, and physical and emotional abuse from their own immediate and extended families.

We have been consistently voicing our concern on this through 'Connect' and other reports. We raised an alarm over safety issues and laid stress on the need for community efforts to ensure security through 'Concern' in August 2004. We followed this up with a cover feature, "How Safe Are You?" in August 2009, an in-depth report on crimes against silvers, with a safety checklist and helpline numbers.



## CONCERN ■ COMMUNITY EFFORTS ■ HELPLINES

## HARMONY SILVER AWARDS

We constantly strive to motivate silvers to go beyond their comfort zones and explore new possibilities. Harmony Silver Awards, initiated in October 2007, was the culmination of a process that began with our 'Hotlist' of silver achievers, featured in three subsequent January issues. The awards were an



effort to honour our unsung heroes, ordinary people doing extraordinary things who exemplify our motto: Celebrate Age. For over four years, we honoured over 40 silvers from diverse fields from education and environment to special education and science. The awards were born out of the realisation that silver achievers who have set benchmarks for themselves and society need to be recognised and

honoured. Interestingly, many of our silver awardees have gone on to win other awards.

## UNSUNG HEROES ■ EXTRAORDINARY FEATS

## SUPREME SECRET

**H**appiness and health are hard to define in totality as both are interwoven. Health is not just a state of being free from illness or injury, and happiness is not just momentary pleasure or contentment. From my experience (I wasn't a healthy person until my youth), I can say that health and happiness go together though they have different dimensions. Harmony, balance and rhythm are just expressive words for health and happiness whereas both are experiential states.

As nature has qualities of dullness (*tamas*), vibrancy (*rajas*) and illumination (*sattva*), health and happiness too have these characteristics as well as dimensions. These dimensions in health and happiness are ethical, physical, mental, intellectual, conscious, conscientious, and divine. So, it is hard for anyone to restrict the meaning and feeling of health and happiness in words.

Health is contentment in one's total well being of life from the layer of the skin to the layer of the soul. On one hand, owing to its sensitivity, it can be compared to a live electrical wire or hot coal; on the other hand, it's like a river. Having said that, it's also not something you can buy. It has to be earned with



100 per cent sweat and inspiration. It's here that yoga comes in.

The science of yoga first brings out a person's instinctive mental and intellectual weakness and educates him to build up ethical health, which is the foundation of health, in the form of restraint (*yama*) and discipline (*niyama*). Then, it deals with poses (*asana*) and breathing (*pranayama*) for controlling muscles, joints, ligaments and tissues, so the energy we draw in and release is prolonged and held in store for right use and distribution. The respiratory and circulatory systems are the gates of health. *Asana* and *pranayama* keep the anatomical bodies (*anamaya kosha*) and physiological bodies (*pranayama kosha*) in a state of purity and sanctity.

From overall health of the body, yoga moves to culture the senses of perception (*indriya kosha*), mind (*manomaya kosha*) and intelligence (*vijnanamaya kosha*), building emotional health in the form of stability and intellectual health through *pratyahara* (to restrain or to withdraw), which is the fifth element

in the eight stages of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga and belief (*dharna*).

The penultimate stage of yoga, meditation (*dhyana*) helps you experience the conscious and the conscientious state of health. The last stage is *samadhi*, when you develop a profound state of attentive awareness from the skin to the soul and from the soul to the skin. This is divine health or supreme state of well-being.

Through these various aspects of yogic *sadhana*, a dull body becomes vibrant and then both body and mind are lifted and transformed to an exalted state of health illuminating the body, mind and soul as one without division. This, for me, is divine health.

Patanjali, the compiler of *Yoga Sutra*, speaks of seven states of mind or consciousness—emerging, restraining, individualised, tranquil, attentive, fissured and pure or divine consciousnesses. These seven states represent knowledge of the body, knowledge of energy, knowledge of the mind, knowledge of intelligence, experiential knowledge, absorption of the flavours of life's knowledge, and knowledge of self-cleansing. If you reach all these states of knowledge, and awareness, you savour the flavour of profound health and happiness that remains ever fresh, like a river.

words to live by

Health and contentment in one's total well being of life from the layer of the skin to the layer of the soul are not something you can buy. It has to be earned with 100 per cent sweat and inspiration. It's here that yoga comes in

## SOLO SONG

I met a dear friend recently who has separated from her husband. Her son had gone away to stay with his father for a couple of months. "I don't know what to do with all the free time," she told me as we drove to a theatre nearby. As I heard the despair in her voice, I was reminded of all the times in the past when I had told her to try her hand at scriptwriting—she had a wonderful way with words and a rich, imaginative mind. However, she was always busy being a devoted mother and thought it would be an unnecessary deviation from her neatly structured life.

What my friend is going through is nothing new. Many of us are so busy playing multiple roles all our lives—child, spouse, parent, grandparent—that we forget to be ourselves when we are finally free to do so. Instead of looking at solitude as an opportunity to enhance our life, we choose to view it through the lens of loneliness and end up feeling left out and left alone.

Our twilight years needn't be such a monochromatic journey if we welcome them in a positive light. In fact, this can be the best time to recapture opportunities that we gave up while juggling familial



responsibilities—after all, we have nothing to prove to anyone any more. So now that your children have flown the nest, maybe you should view the void for what it is—the space to be yourself; to do things that you enjoy.

Of course, another trap that we invariably fall into is to allow ourselves to be defined by our profession: "Who are you?"... "Oh, I am a doctor, a banker, an engineer..." Rarely does it occur to us that we are more than what we have been paid to do all our life. Okay, so you have been a banker or an engineer or a civil servant. But now that you have retired maybe it's time to set free the musician or painter within you who has been clamouring for recognition all these years.

I draw inspiration from two wonderful silvers—my parents. My mother, at 75, continues to be a prolific artist. My father, with his sheer restless energy, spurs me on to demand the best from myself. He did his PhD in linguistics at the age of 65 and published a book at 80. Today he is busy working on another book.

My parents have also inculcated in me a sense of adventure. I had been trekking alone all these years till Vinod, my fiancé, came along and inspired me to feel less guilty for 'wandering off' every now and then. In the pristine solitude of the Himalaya, I found a connection with myself that I have yet to find elsewhere. Two years ago, Vinod passed away. Today, I trek alone. I did not give up my yearly expedition only because I want to honour the connection that I have found—that Vinod would have wanted me to find. The snowy silence of the mountains has enabled me to settle the inner disquiet within.

I admit there are times when I introspect over my inadequacies or some residual resentment from the past, but I also try to utilise the stillness to make peace with myself... with the years that have gone by. I know I can no longer play a 20 year-old, but I can still learn to sing and fly. And I am now in the throes of directing my first feature film.

So today while you are sitting all by yourself, why not catch a movie at the theatre? Or join up for salsa? Or go on the Internet and meet people who share your hobbies? Cultivate a passion that you can look forward to each day. After all, it's not over till you say it is.

words to live by

Our twilight years needn't be such a monochromatic journey if we welcome them in a positive light. In fact, this can be the best time to recapture opportunities that we gave up while juggling familial responsibilities



# starspeak



Jun  
2004

**Asha Bhosle** b. 1933

"IN LONDON, I WAS REFERRED TO AS MADONNA IN A SARI! I LIKE THE WAY SHE CONSTANTLY CHANGES HER PERSONA. ARTISTS MUST KEEP REINVENTING THEMSELVES"



Mar  
2005

**Amjad Ali Khan** b. 1945

"I WANT TO MAKE THE SAROD AS POPULAR AS THE GUITAR"



Feb  
2005

"GURU DUTTJI KNEW YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BE BLATANT TO CONVEY EMOTION, THAT YOU COULD DO WONDERS WITH YOUR EYES"

**Waheeda Rehman** b. 1938



Sep  
2005

**Dev Anand** 1923-2011

"YOU ARE NOBODY IF YOU ARE NOT CREATIVE"



Aug  
2005

**Kiran Bedi** b. 1949

"THE HUMAN MIND IS LIKE A HUGE TRAFFIC JUNCTION. THOUGHTS ARE BOUND TO CLASH OR GET JAMMED. MEDITATION HELPS TO UNTANGLE THESE THOUGHTS"



Apr  
2005

**M F Husain** 1915-2011

"I CREATED THE LABEL M F HUSAIN, THE MOST HIGHLY PAID ARTIST IN INDIA"



# starspeak



Dec  
2005

**Tarla Dalal** 1936-2013

"COOKING IS A SCIENCE. A GOOD DISH IS ABOUT THE RIGHT PROPORTIONS, NOT WHO HAS MADE IT"



May  
2006

**Anant Pai** 1929-2011

"EVERY FIVE YEARS OR SO, MY READERS ARE BORN WITH SHARPER MINDS AND CHALLENGE MY GREY CELLS. WHAT'S MORE, THEY ARE NO LONGER SATISFIED WITH HAPPY ENDINGS"

"WE ONLY KNEW THE WORDS SEVA KARO, WHICH GANDHIJI TAUGHT US"

**Ela Ben Bhatt** b. 1933



Feb  
2006





Nov  
2006

**Ilaiyaraaja** b. 1943

"IF A SONG CANNOT STAY  
IN YOUR HEAD AND HEART,  
WHAT KIND OF A SONG IS IT?"

**Anjolie Ela Menon** b. 1940

"I CAN MORPH FROM  
GRANDMOTHER TO PAINTER,  
LADLE IN ONE HAND AND  
BRUSH IN THE OTHER"



Apr  
2007



May  
2007

**Ebrahim Alkazi** b. 1925

"THERE'S A LOT OF RUBBISH  
BEING PRODUCED IN THE  
NAME OF ART"

**Ritu Kumar** b. 1944

"DON'T TRY TO LOOK LIKE AISHWARYA RAI...JUST ENJOY YOURSELF THE WAY YOU ARE, THE SIZE YOU ARE AND THE AGE YOU ARE"

Jul  
2008



**Dharmendra** b. 1935

"PRANAYAMA HAS THE SAME EFFECT ON ME THAT ALCOHOL DID"

Nov  
2007



Mar  
2008

**Anita Desai** b. 1937

"IT'S IN YOUR NATURE WHETHER YOU ARE DRIVEN TO ACTIVISM OR REFLECTION. I INDULGE IN REFLECTION WITH MY WRITING"





Aug  
2008

**Girish Karnad** b. 1938

"I'M NOT ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO THINK THE WORLD IS GOING TO THE DOGS. I PREFER TO LOOK AT THE YOUNGER GENERATION AS MY RIVALS—THAT SPURS ME ON"

"POOR PEOPLE NEED TO BE THE AGENTS OF THEIR OWN IMPROVEMENT. PUBLIC HEARING PLATFORMS HAVE PROVED THE POTENTIAL OF THE RIGHT TO KNOW"

**Aruna Roy** b. 1946



Dec  
2007



Feb  
2011

**S H Raza** b. 1922

"A PERSON LIVES ON IF HE IS ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT. THAT IS THE *BINDU* OF OUR LIFE AND WORK"



# starspeak



May  
2009

**Sharmila Tagore** b. 1944

"AS YOU GET OLDER, THE PRICE TAG ON YOUR MISTAKES GETS STEEPER"

"IN THOSE DAYS, THERE WAS NO MONEY IN SPORTS. IZZAT WAS EVERYTHING"

**Milkha Singh** b. 1935



Feb  
2010



Nov  
2009

**Pandit Jasraj** b. 1930

"WHEN I PERFORM ON STAGE, I MAY BE ACCOMPANIED BY A MUSLIM ON THE TABLA, A SIKH ON THE TANPURA AND A BRAHMIN PLAYING THE HARMONIUM. HOWEVER, ON STAGE WE ARE NOT KNOWN FOR OUR CASTE BUT THE MUSIC WE CREATE"



Jan  
2011

**Shobhaa De** b. 1948

"RECKLESSNESS CAN ADD COLOUR TO LIFE EVEN IN OLD AGE. DO A FEW MAD THINGS BEFORE YOU CALL IT QUILTS!"



Jul  
2010

**Shekhar Kapur** b. 1945

"LIFE LIES IN UNREASONABLENESS. HOW CAN WE BE REASONABLE WHEN EVERYTHING BY WHICH WE DEFINE OURSELVES IS COMPLETELY UNREASONABLE—LOVE, BIRTH AND DEATH?"



Apr  
2009

**Mrinalini Sarabhai** b. 1918

"I'M HAPPY THAT THE FIRE STILL BURNS BRIGHT IN MY SOUL AND KEEPS ME GOING. I BELIEVE IN NOT LEAVING FOR TOMORROW WHAT CAN BE DONE TODAY"



# starspeak



Jun  
2012

**Bachendri Pal** b. 1954

"AGE, GENDER OR RESPONSIBILITY CANNOT DETER YOU FROM DOING SOMETHING YOU WANT TO. IF A NORMAL PERSON LIKE ME CAN DO THE THINGS I DID, ANYBODY CAN"



Mar  
2011

**Shyam Benegal** b. 1934

"PEOPLE GO TO THE CINEMA NOT TO BE PERSUADED BUT ENTERTAINED. IT IS FOOLHARDY TO EXPECT A SINGLE FILM TO BRING IN SOCIAL CHANGE"

**Jeffrey Archer** b. 1940

May  
2011







Mar  
2012

**Yoko Ono** b. 1933

"MEN ARE STARTING TO REALISE THAT IT IS GETTING HARDER AND HARDER TO CONTROL WOMEN...IT IS SIMPLER TO JOIN WOMEN AND BRING IN A PEACEFUL WORLD TOGETHER"

**Lata Mangeshkar** b. 1929

"THESE DAYS, OUR PRIDE AND FAITH IN OUR COUNTRY SURFACE ONLY WHEN THE INDIAN CRICKET TEAM IS IN A DEFINING MATCH"

Aug  
2011



Jul  
2011

**Adoor Gopalakrishnan** b. 1941

"I NEVER GIVE MY ACTORS A SCRIPT BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO INVITE THE DANGER OF MISINTERPRETATION"

## LEARNING TO LIVE ALONE

**M**y wife died three years ago. She was in her mid-80s. We had been married for 62 years. She was stricken by Alzheimer's for five years before she gave up the fight. She had completely lost her memory and ability to perform bodily functions. I had to hire a day and night nurse to help my daughter look after her. Though we were prepared for her death, when it came we were shattered.

I could not talk to relatives and friends who came to condole with me. I could not bring myself to light her funeral pyre. In the absence of my son, my daughter lit it on our behalf. Since we did not subscribe to any faith and my wife had wished that no ceremony be performed, we had no prayers said, no *kirtan* sung or *chautha* observed. I had to cope with my loss with whatever inner resources I could muster.

The first night was the longest in my living memory. I sat in my armchair, switched off all the lights, and talked silently to myself. I had to teach myself how to live alone in an empty home.



I broke down many times. By morning I was exhausted. I took myself off to Goa for 10 days to be by myself and work out a routine of life without my life partner. I went over our years together. We had been to the same school as children. We met again as grown-ups in England, where I had gone earlier to study law and she had come a couple of years later to be trained as a teacher. Her parents had other boys in mind for their daughter. However, when we decided to get engaged, they readily gave their consent. We returned to Delhi and got married in 1939. Ours was described as a love marriage. It had its ups and downs and more than once we thought of calling it quits. But we hung on to it largely because we had two children to bring up and were gradually adjusting ourselves to each other. We lived in Lahore for seven years till Partition forced us to return to Delhi. Thereafter it was a peripatetic life in different countries—England, Canada, the US and France with long stays in Germany and Japan. When we returned to India, we had evolved a routine of life that suited both of us.

My wife was very houseproud. She taught our cook how to prepare gourmet quality dishes—Punjabi, Chinese, French, Italian. I had to be left alone for many hours every day to write. We met at mealtimes and took our evening walks together in Lodhi Park. We cut down on our social life and maintained strict hours for people we invited for meals.

Within a fortnight of her death, though, I had made terms with my having to live alone. I am fortunate in having a daughter living next door who makes sure my health remains stable. A couple of young ladies volunteer to take me to see doctors and dentists whenever I need help. I am now over 90 and have become dependent on my children and friends. But so far I have not detected the slightest sign of any of them resenting the demands I occasionally make on them. I decided earlier on not to owe anyone any debts. Shedding one's material belongings is not very hard if you keep reminding yourself you will not be able to take anything with you. Shedding emotional baggage is much harder.

Do I miss my wife? Of course. She had an overwhelming personality and I sense her presence everywhere. I am also aware that I will never see her again. I leave it at that and immerse myself in work. It leaves me no time to brood and feel sorry for myself.

words to live by

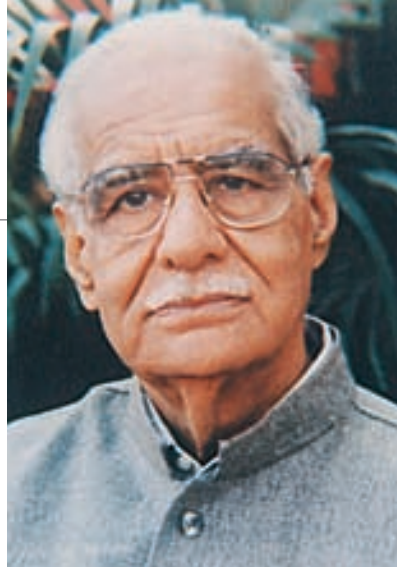
The first night after my wife died was the longest in my living memory. I sat in my armchair, switched off all the lights, and talked silently to myself. I had to teach myself how to live alone in an empty home

## FIRE OF CONVICTION

**A**s I add years to my age, I am increasingly convinced that life is not adequate to complete the work you have taken up. Before you map out its contours and begin to figure out what it entails, you are over the hump. Age catches up with you. Your energy lessens and optimism slackens. You calculate, more often than before, how far you still have to go. The distance you have covered looks small and the efforts you have put in seem trivial. You feel overwhelmed.

I think it is not the enormity of task that daunts you; it is the dying fire within you. That you feel tired or that your stamina decreases are the excuses you seek. The fact is that, your commitment lessens. When faced with similar situations in the past, you did not diminish in your determination. Your unshaken confidence made you overcome those unsure moments. In life, what matters is unflinching resolve and how much you are willing to sacrifice for it. It boils down to your relentless pursuit for ideals and values you cherish.

Doubts arise when determination falters. The fear to fail overpower-



ers you. When you are young, you never allow any difficulty to deter you; you jump into the fray without giving it a thought. The fire of conviction consumes every straw of misgiving. Later, you are not sure of yourself.

The goals you once sought have not receded; but your own doubt makes them look further away. The day you begin to calculate the chances of success or failure is the day your commitment vacillates. You fall from higher ground and grope in the darkness of compromise and convenience.

I am in the throes of a similar situation. The thought of failure torments me. I started lighting candles on the Wagah border nearly 12 years ago on the night of August 14-15 to celebrate the independence of India and Pakistan. The first time, there were 15 people with me, from Delhi, Jalandhar and Amritsar. It was a unilateral step in the hope that the Pakistanis would reciprocate by lighting candles on their side. However, only darkness greets me on the other end every year. They are

probably afraid of the military and the mullah.

I have begun inviting members of Pakistan's National Assembly and academicians to participate in the event. They have promised to have a similar function at the border next year. Why should I worry even if they do not have it? Is it not enough that the number of people on our side has increased to half a million, coming together under one slogan: 'Hindi-Pak Dosti Friendship Zindabad'?

I think it isn't the response from across the border that bothers me—my ego has been hurt! Why should I think that I alone could bring about people-to-people contact? Let it happen when it happens. It is not incumbent on my generation to do everything.

Even when I am gone, people will pick up the thread. I may carry on for a little longer but my day is nearly over. I must give way to others. They will live their life and carry their burdens to the next stage of the journey—the burden of normalising relations not only between India and Pakistan but among all South Asian countries to constitute a South Asian Economic Union. The new generation should come in to make this dream come true. The sun has to disappear over the horizon for it to rise again.

words to live by

The goals you once sought have not receded; but your own doubt makes them look further away. The day you begin to calculate the chances of success or failure is the day your commitment vacillates





## Lieutenant Colonel Suresh Patil

works on eco-restoration projects in and around Pune and Kolhapur. After his retirement, in 1993 Patil set up Green Thumbs, which has created bird sanctuaries in Kolhapur and Pune and turned garbage dumps and sewage drains into green spaces. The group, with over 2,000 members, also organises awareness camps and anti-plastic drives.

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

JUL 2010  
lifesaver

## Arnavaz Damania

of Pune helps avert suicides. Former president of the Indian Women's Hockey Federation, Damania established Connecting, a helpline and support group, in 2005. She has 35 mental health experts and volunteers on her team, and conducts workshops and programmes on anger management and life enrichment at various institutions and community organisations.



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



MAR2008

blood donor

“Let the bond of blood teach us to forget race, religion, creed and greed”

## Dattatraya Mehendale

of Pune is a blood donation activist. A keen cyclist as well, he donated blood over 180 times till the age of 60 and on his way to a donation camp, he would always encourage at least one other person to donate with him. After 60, he has taken to dispelling myths and spreading awareness about blood donation.

## Armene Mody

of Pune has enabled village girls to get an education. Mody set up a women's literacy project, Ashta No Kai (For a Better Tomorrow), in Shirur village near Pune. She has also gathered bicycles for girl children so they don't have to cover long distances to school on foot.

MAR2009

literacy activist

“Today's educated girl child is the empowered woman of tomorrow”







Commodore

## Lokesh Batra

of Noida is on a mission to ensure good governance. Success came early for this retired naval officer, who began filing RTI applications in 2006. His first RTI to get the NOIDA administration to improve the quality of water in the township resulted in the authorities monitoring the water more closely. Since then, he has filed close to 500 RTI applications and has taken up cases related to government functioning at the highest level.

“When we are so particular about monitoring domestic help at home, why hesitate to monitor the working of government employees, whom we are paying to serve us?”

NOV 2013  
matchmaker

## Prabha Panse

of Mumbai launched a marriage bureau for the physically challenged. After decades of teaching at the Lions School of Deaf, Mumbai, Panse wanted to do something more for the disabled; she started conducting social gatherings for them to interact and find a potential life partner. In 1999, this led to the establishment of Jeevan Saathi Marriage Bureau, which has had a number of success stories ever since.



“Physically challenged people are normal people who deserve to be happily married”





OCT2011

animal  
rights  
activist

“I cannot sit back and keep quiet if I see an act of cruelty against an animal”

## Sudnya Patkar

of Mumbai is on an animal rights' crusade. After witnessing the horrific treatment of street dogs, Patkar started In Defense of Animals in 1997. After a shaky start, 14 years later the NGO boasted over 50 helpers and animal welfare officers, two large shelters and ambulances and rescue vans, besides sterilisation and awareness camps.

NOV2013

undertaker

## Mohammed Sharif

from Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh conducts rites for unclaimed bodies. It all started when his 15 year-old son was murdered and his body was found in a sack, declared unclaimed by the police, which made him resolve to perform the last rites for the unclaimed dead, whether Hindu or Muslim. Calling up police stations for unclaimed bodies, he collects and takes them to a burial site or a burning *ghat*.



“I get a lot of strength from God to do this work”

OCT 2012

life  
coach



## Anuradha Gore

of Mumbai motivates children to join the Armed Forces. After losing her only son in Kashmir where he fought insurgents, she made it her mission to educate children by conducting workshops on personality development, leadership skills and life in the Services, including accounts of how soldiers fight terrorism.

“Without security, the progress and development of our country are meaningless”

JUL 2010

green  
crusader

“We have won many battles but are yet to win the war. We haven't lost hope though, and we know that one day we will succeed”

## S K Saksena

has used RTI to uncover the nexus between government and builders. His efforts include trying to save the environment in Powai, Mumbai, where hills were being knocked down to source construction material and trees were indiscriminately hacked, in spite of being a no-development-zone. Threatening calls did not stop this crusader from stopping unwarranted quarrying in his area.





OCT2004  
special  
learning

## Jaya & V Krishnaswamy

of Chennai are pioneers in special education. After retiring from their respective jobs as school headmistress and air vice-marshal, the couple set up Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children (MNC) in 1989. The centre works on early intervention programmes for children with developmental problems and mental disabilities.



“We always tell people that if they want to keep fit as they grow older, they should look at community service. It stops your ageing process by at least 40 per cent. Besides, you do something worthwhile”



APR2012  
citizen  
activist

## Ved Prakash

of Haryana pursues justice for his fellow villagers through the legal route. His journey as an activist began in 2006, when he underwent RTI training through the society for Participatory Research in Asia. From enquiring about budget allocations for development in gram panchayats to revealing unethical caste discriminations in politics and expenditure on the construction of a non-existent community centre, he has filed nearly 100 cases.

“As citizens of a free country, is it inappropriate to enquire about our entitled amenities and facilities?”



MAR 2005

pension  
messiah



“Pensioners should not be treated as files”

## Vidya Sagar Jolly

of Jalandhar helps elders resolve pension-related problems. Starting by helping friends who faced problems in receiving their pension, within two years he was flooded with cases from everyone, from villagers to widows. His knowledge of the law and how to use it have worked in his favour.

JUN 2011

health  
activist

## Shefali Choudhuri

of Kolkata has run a successful anti-Alzheimer's campaign in eastern and north-eastern India. Even as her daughter battled the disease, Choudhuri established the Calcutta Chapter of the Alzheimer's & Related Disorders Society of India (ARDSI) in 1999, when she realised that there was a vacuum of awareness and knowledge about Alzheimer's in our society.



“I would sit with my daughter, who was unable to comprehend anything and communicate with me. Now, at 93, I am satisfied that my personal agony prompted me to do something for society”



DEC2006

cleanup  
activist

## Prabha Chaturvedi

of Lucknow wages war against garbage to make her city cleaner. After seeing the deplorable condition of her neighbourhood park and other areas, she joined hands with a few other volunteers to not just grow and water plants but try eco-friendly techniques like digging pits in the park for vermin composting as well as raise awareness.

“We should all take responsibility for our own garbage”

JUL2010

anti-bribe  
crusader

## J S D Pani

of Bengaluru uses RTI to unearth malpractices in the public health sector. After retiring from his Ayurvedic drug manufacturing business in 2006, Pani started a RTI forum called Mahiti Hakku Jagruti Vedike, and has handled cases from various pockets of the city, helping people file applications. He has also helped raise awareness about the RTI Act among citizens' groups in and around the city.



“As taxpayers, we need to know where our hard-earned money is going. And there is no reason to tolerate corrupt bureaucrats”



DEC 2006

water  
activist



## Suryakant Jog

of Amravati in Maharashtra espouses rainwater harvesting. Retiring as Director General of Police, Maharashtra, he started a school in Chikaldara, Vidharbha. To cope with the water crisis during summer, he installed six water storage tanks in the school. He has also revived old tanks, provided hand pumps, and built bunds across *nullah* in nearby villages.

“From being tanker-fed, I want to make villages tanker-free”

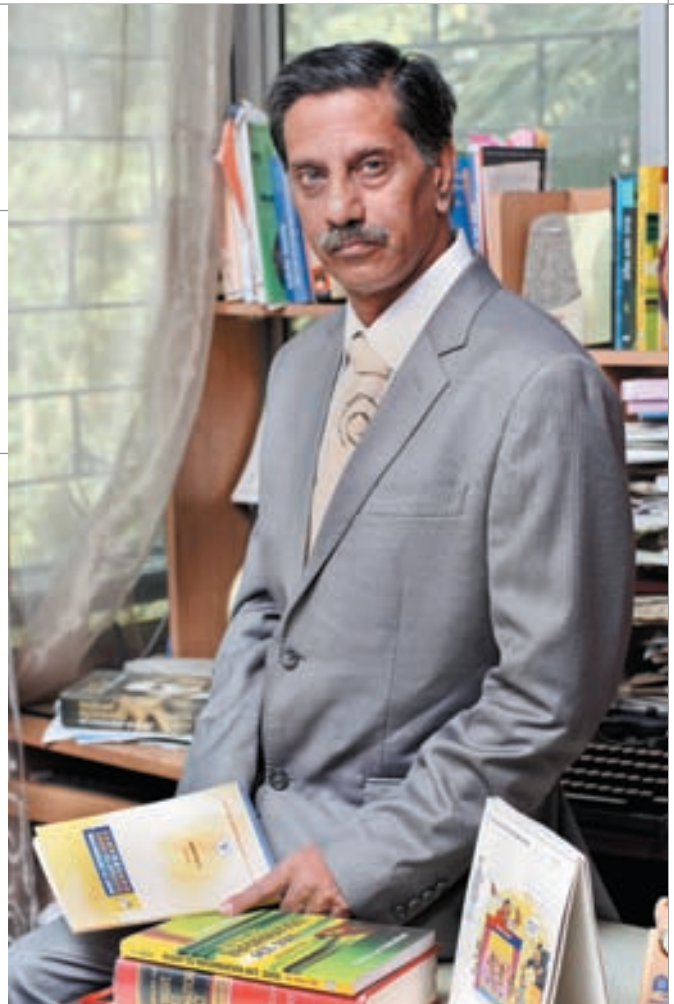
MAR 2012

RTI  
crusader

“RTI is a subject of drawing room discussion because that's where it stays! We want to teach people how to file an RTI inquiry”

## Vikram Simha

of Bengaluru fights to build awareness about RTI. He has worked on implementing the Police Complaints Authority and the sexual harassment act. As a trustee at Mahiti Hakku Ahdyayana Kendra (Right to Information Research Centre) and an active member of the forum of Karnataka Right to Information Act users and activists, he educates people on filing an RTI enquiry and has brought out a complete guide to the RTI Act 2005 in English and Kannada.







JUN 2009  
self-help  
promoter

“We are not here to make revolutionaries out of women. We intend to create a pool that can look within itself for solutions and decisions”

## Saraswathy Ganapathy

empowers women in rural Karnataka. The Belaku Trust, which she helped establish, makes village women self-reliant by engaging them in learning embroidery, and making recycled paper products and block-printed materials such as scarves. The trust works with various women's groups, income-generation groups, women from the community and youngsters.

SEP 2010  
medicine  
man

## K V Aboobacker

of Ponnani in Kerala distributes free medicines to the poor. Aboobacker's Self Service, the pharmacy he started after he quit his hardware business, stays open late in the night catering to hordes of people who come from nearby and distant towns. He sources his medicines by asking doctors and hospitals for medical samples or buying them with contributions from his family and donations from well-wishers.



“Our motto is to try to meet every patient's need and alleviate suffering”

## BEAUTY TRUTHS

A few weeks ago my son carried a magazine to his acting class—one which had me on the cover and inside an elaborate six-page fashion spread that I had posed for. He called me late in the day and said, "My friends refuse to believe you are my mother. They say you look no older than 25." His remark took me back many years to the early 1980s when I was dancing in New York with my mother. Invariably we were introduced as the Sarabhai sisters. And I remember being both pleased and amused.

My adventures with being fit started young. At 13, I was a fat and lazy youngster. One day, my mother—slim and upright—asked me if I always wanted to walk like a duck. The remark rattled me enough to give up my diet of rice, butter and sugar. I started paying more attention to my gait and started walking straighter. And before I knew it I fell in love with salads.

It wasn't only, or even primarily, about looking good. It was about feeling great. Ready to go; to take anything on; to set off; and be on a buzz. However, slowly, as the



years went by, my body started telling me things—what it wanted and what I was depriving it of. For many years I struggled with what I thought were wrong messages from my body, till I finally realised that it had a counter and a mind of its own and I should trust it. Of course, that didn't mean indulging when my mind told me I needed to splurge; it simply meant being discerning in really listening to my body's needs rather than to sight or smell temptations and assume they were signals that my body wanted me to respond to.

For me, the first signs of ageing were the stiffening of my knees a few years ago. Though my joints had not started protesting loudly enough, the slight stiffening was a reminder that the aches and pains were slowly occupying a place in my body. Then again, I noticed dancers half my age in the group complaining of the same thing. "Oh," I reassured myself, "perhaps that is not age catching up."

With years, as the aches became a common phenomenon, I thought I wasn't strict enough and redou-

bled my efforts at staying agile. Besides yoga and long hours of dancing, I started avoiding the elevator, took the stairs, and fetched things myself instead of asking it to be handed over to me (all learnt from my mother). And last but not the least, I also started going to the gym.

As I made these lifestyle changes, I saw friends and colleagues letting go; they were prosperous, but unwell and unwieldy. They didn't understand that our body is our only real temple and it is in our hands to keep it pristine. It is not about vanity. It is about valuing our temple, the amazing mystery that is our body, the only one we have. It is about keeping ourselves in tip top condition so that we can be of use to others; to do the tasks we have set for ourselves; to make changes in the world around us and in the lives of people around us. It is to ensure that we hold the sunshine in ourselves even when the world outside gets dark, so that we can lead the way.

Today, I am strict with myself. At the same time I pamper myself, my face, my skin and my body. I feel good. I look good. Both are very important. If I look good it is but a reflection of how I feel. I have realised that beauty has nothing to do with age. Age, after all, is only a number—not our destiny.

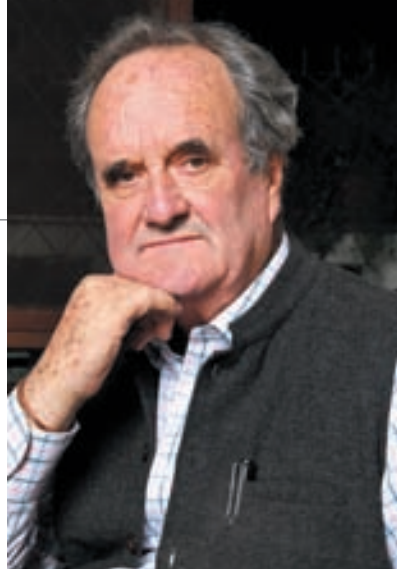
words to live by

It is about valuing our temple, the amazing mystery that is our body, the only one we have. It is about keeping ourselves in tip top condition so that we can be of use to others; to do the tasks we have set for ourselves; to make changes in the world around us and in the lives of people around us

## FREEDOM SONG

**I** love my freedom. There is the freedom from family responsibilities, being a grandfather is much more enjoyable than being a father—no responsibilities and lots of fun. There's the freedom from worrying about your future—most of it has passed! I still have two unfulfilled ambitions. One is very much a return to childhood occupation having a miniature railway of my own. The other is less childish, relearning the tuba, which I used to play in my school's military band; or the piano, but my fingers are a bit arthritic for that.

Much of this freedom arises from no longer having a job—mind you, that's no freedom if you are not also free from financial worries; if, unlike me, you don't have a good pension. I had little freedom during the 22 years I was based in Delhi for the BBC. Being a foreign correspondent is a 24-hour job. It occupies your whole life. It can be boring—standing around for hours outside meetings waiting for a briefing, arguing with petty bureaucrats who want to stop you from doing your job (and there are plenty of them in India), hanging around airports when flights are delayed which used to happen a lot in my time, and listening to some pretty pointless questions and even more pointless answers at press meets.



I can't say I had a dull life when I look back on covering almost every major event in South Asia, from the Bangladesh War to the destruction of the Mosque in Ayodhya. So it's not surprising that when I was coming to the end of my 30 years with the BBC, I didn't believe my colleagues who had already retired who said to me, "You will wonder why you stayed at work so long." The first freedom I revelled in was the freedom to have a bath in the evening, put on my *kurta* and pyjamas, open a bottle of beer and know that no one could disturb me. There could be no calls from London, saying, "There's been an earthquake, an air crash, an assassination. Get there as fast as you can." I no longer had to check the UNI file after returning from a dinner party. I could go to bed and wait for the next day's papers.

But before I could start to wonder what to do with my time, it was filled for me. I found myself returning to my university days. A BBC television producer asked me to present a series called the *Lives of Jesus*. I protested that the theology I had read at university was far too rusty but the producer, a distinguished theologian herself,

promised to help me rub off some of the rust. Then I got another telephone call asking me to present a regular radio programme on the BBC which was to be suitable for transmission early on Sunday morning, to be repeated late at night. That required some theology too. The television series led to a book and the radio programme is still running, so I am now a better theologian than I was at university—that is not saying much because as a student I believed in only doing the amount of work required to scrape through my exams.

I have enjoyed reading theology much more second time round and I am still enjoying that, building up my knowledge for a book I have been asked to write, comparing Indian religious traditions with Semitic religions—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

So 12 years on from retirement, I still enjoy myself by writing and broadcasting, and I will have to put off the miniature railway and the music at least until I finish the book. But there are two differences now, and both are to do with freedoms. I am free to reject any work I don't want to do, and I am free to pursue subjects in depth. As a foreign correspondent I could have been accused of knowing an awful little about an awful lot.

words to live by

I still have two unfulfilled ambitions. One is very much a return to childhood occupation having a miniature railway of my own. The other is less childish, relearning the tuba



# the big picture







**Samir Pathak** catches Bhagwati Oza, scuba diver-athlete-swimmer-cyclist, manoeuvring the handle bars through the lush by-lanes of Vadodara; May 2009

**Anand K Soma** seizes Iona and Trevor D'Cunha in a moment of camaraderie on the golf grounds of Secunderabad for a Valentine Special; February 2010











CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Shot by **Utkarsh Sanjanwala** for an Independence Day Special, fish vendor Amarben Naran Pamakh of Mumbai enjoys the benefits of the telecom revolution sweeping the country; August 2011

**Ashok Koshy** captures veteran Kathakali artist Gopinathan Pillah in Kochi as he dons elaborate makeup to transform into Brihannala, Arjuna's exiled avatar, in *The Mahabharata*; September 2006

**Utkarsh Sanjanwala** encapsulates the spirit of Mumbai-based flautist Urmila Vaidya, who took to learning the instrument in her 80s; March 2011

**Hareesh Patel** espies adrenalin junkies Sarita and Shyam Nihalani ropewalking on Kundalika river in Kolad for a Valentine Special; February 2013

◀ **Ranjit Singh** shoots lone ranger Maghar Singh's balancing act on two horses at the same time at the Rural Olympics held near Ludhiana; March 2007



**Haresh Patel** gets Yakshagana artist Pejavara Sathyananda Rao of Mumbai to emote *haasya*, one of the *navarasa* or nine intrinsic emotions that form the bedrock of Indian performing arts, for our 9th anniversary; June 2013

For our special issue on fitness, **Shilbhadra Datta** finds award-winning athlete Prochy Mehta practising for the annual Kolkata marathon; January 2009





## WHY FEAR AGEING?

I don't understand the fuss about age. It's a linear obsession, while our actual mental, emotional and physical ages are in constant conflict. Somewhere within I'm always a 17-year-old girl with a wild streak in her. My grandmother, at 90, is the same, while there are people I know who have been middle-aged all their lives.

The real wisdom of age comes from that rare confluence of experience and flexibility that few of us manage to achieve. Our passage through time is marked by individual responses to the crises we encounter along the way. Our courage and generosity, or lack of it, mark the quality we give to our life. The inability to invest in faith and hope, the receding ability to commit, are among my personal definitions of the ageing process.

Until not so long ago, before the age of gymnasiums, women tended to age faster than men. Their shelf life in the desirability bracket and their resultant self-esteem was often lower than that of powerful and wealthy men. The gender bias is being eroded. One encounters more and more people



of both sexes bending barriers of age with ease and grace. Think old women, and magnificent creatures from history like Catherine the Great come to mind, as well as Katherine Hepburn from the more recent past. All stiff competition for Dev Anand's eternal youth.

There are societies, not necessarily gerontocracies, which venerate age. Such cultures usually have definitions of wisdom in their racial memory and vocabulary. India and most eastern countries were traditionally in this mould, but the Cultural Revolution, and one-child families, may have altered perceptions in China. Increasingly, post-industrial consumer societies devalue age. This leads to a loss in the emotional links between different age groups, and a pervading immaturity in all of them. The dread of ageing and the denial of death lead to icons gone wrong, like the case of Michael Jackson.

The quest for eternal youth has long been a favourite of literature, folklore and films. The myth of

Yayati, from the *Mahabharata*, explicates on the dangers and attendant tragedies of perpetual youth. Life is never static, and each rite of passage has its attendant realities. The four ashrams of Hinduism are an example, where the Vanasth Ashram means a mental attitude of detachment. And Shashti-purti, celebrating the 60th birthday, sends positive reinforcement to the family to respect elders.

Even as science and technology extend well being, arresting biology can lead to retardation. In the face-lifted societies of the West, and increasingly India, the salmon pout of artificially tautened skin is a subject of scorn to everybody except the victims of the scalpel. The figure of the crone was not a decrepit image but a radical one. But the anxieties of a Botoxed youth, sandwiched by a shortened adolescence at one end and clinging on to cosmetic immortality on the other, are a recipe for flat disaster.

You do not have to succumb to your age, merely celebrate it. To quote my favourite poet, Yeats: 'An aged man is but a paltry thing, A tattered coat upon a hat, unless, Soul claps its hands and sing, and louder sing, For every tatter in its mortal dress.'

words to live by

In the face-lifted societies of the West, and increasingly India, the salmon pout of artificially tautened skin is a subject of scorn to everybody except the victims of the scalpel. The figure of the crone was not a decrepit image but a radical one



## ONE UP!

I don't feel old; inside me, I feel like a young girl," a much older friend once confided in me. I now understand what she meant. All of us have a child nestling inside us; a child who we feel is our real self. And therefore the shock when you meet a contemporary and think, 'My God! Am I also that old?'

But has anyone noticed how steadily we are pushing back the boundaries of age? In my childhood, the women I thought of as old must have been in their 40s. Much childbearing, endless chores and shabby clothes, which were then the norm for daily wear, made them look much older than what they were. Today, a woman of 50 looks in her prime; a woman of 40 seems a young woman. The concept of looking good no longer applies only to the young. Of course, medical science has helped and there are our genes as well.

My father, who came from a longlived family, used to say that if someone died before the age of 80, they would bemoan the fact that he was too young to die. My father, a writer, lived till 80 and was physically and mentally spry until almost the end. He translated the *Natya Shastra* into Kannada



and English in his last few years, working six to eight hours every day until, finally, his failing body no longer allowed him to go on at that pace.

This is the fear that haunts me now, that my body will let me down. But I take inspiration from a friend who is on dialysis three days a week, yet continues to work, and has her theatre and music activities. I look at the 95 year-old scholar-lexicographer who walks 3 km, writes articles, and responds personally to dozens of letters he gets every day.

My husband and I feel lucky that we belong to professions where age does not matter. He is a doctor and I am a writer. His patients trust him more because of his age. And I wake up every morning at five, eager to get to my table. Our days are full, the weeks and months race past. In fact, we work with a new freedom.

No one told me age was so liberating until I experienced it myself. I am free of the pressures of ambi-

tion and achievement. Free of the straitjacket of gender. Free of so many fears, like, 'What will people say?' Free to do what I want to, not what I ought to. I do the crossword and Sudoku in the newspaper, read comic strips and skip heavy political news.

Of course, I often forget names and dates, but it no longer bothers me too much. Recently some friends visited me and our conversations about books and writers was peppered with 'What's the title of that book?' and 'Who's that writer?' Ultimately we decided we would leave names alone; do they matter, we asked, and laughed at ourselves.

I enjoy thrillers and ignore award-winning 'must-reads' without any guilt. I no longer put away my glass of wine when an unexpected visitor drops in and openly admit my dislike of cooking and house-keeping. There are other things I want to do. The world seems to have opened out differently from the way it did when I was 20.

But I can't let it slip. I know it is important to keep going, to stay connected to the world. And this day is enough for me. Today, in spite of having pain, I managed to work, I read a book, I enjoyed music, I conversed with friends, spent time with my husband, chatted with my grandson on the phone. I think it was a good day. Tomorrow? Let's see.

words to live by

No one told me age was so liberating until I experienced it myself. I am free of the pressures of ambition and achievement. Free of the straitjacket of gender. Free of so many fears, like, "What will people say?"

## RETRO RIDE



Capturing the true character and the quirkiness of Bengaluru, noted cartoonist Paul Fernandes has recently self-published a coffee table book, *Bangalore - Swinging in the 70s*. The book—comprising 70 watercolour illustrations—is nothing short of time travel to the city of yesteryears that went about at an idyllic pace; the paintings charmingly capture random and treasured moments from the lives of ordinary people. While for the old-timers, the book is a chance to relive memories, for newbies it is an opportunity to discover what the city had to offer before the IT boom. It's fun spotting favourite hangouts such as Koshy's Restaurant, Plaza Theatre and the Bangalore Club—every sketch packs a story with a humorous twist.

For 56 year-old Paul, the book was a natural progression to the exhibits in his gallery, aPaulogy, that he set up in Bengaluru in December 2011. "Looking at my illustrations, visitors would spontaneously break into nostalgic stories, and interesting anecdotes emerged in the process," he reveals. "The book blends my illustrations with these lingering experiences." His cosy gallery also carries **ART** his art in the form of knickknacks like coasters, coffee mugs, bookmarks and shine boards—a new stream of funny street signage art. "The process of coming up with a print that matches the look and shades of the original is a long, tiresome and technical process," he explains.

Paul's background as a cartoonist is evident as his colourful sketches are packed with comical characters and situations. He cites Mario Miranda as one of his key inspirations for "his general sense of spreading happiness around". Acknowledging that Bengaluru is no longer a pensioner's paradise, he quips, "Change is natural; we need to grow along. But I hope we also avoid things like cutting trees."

—Ramya Srinivasan



# When reel meets **rhythm**

Suparna-Saraswati Puri meets Sumantra Ghosal, an explorer of Bharatanatyam through the art of dancer Malavika Sarukkai

**W**hile conversing with adman and filmmaker Sumantra Ghosal, one is reminded of Plato's maxim: "You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation." Ghosal was in Chandigarh recently for the screening of his 98-minute docufeature, *The Unseen Sequence*, on renowned Bharatanatyam exponent Malavika Sarukkai.

For a person who wanted to make feature films but "got trapped" instead in a life of advertising, Ghosal has managed to communicate the expansive and deeply traditional art form with remarkable finesse despite being a stranger to Bharatanatyam. "*The Unseen Sequence* came out after I had vegetated for a long time. A casual attendance at a concert at Kala Ghoda in Mumbai led me to first witness Sarukkai's performance," says the 57 year-old. "By the end of it, my mind was made up to document the incredible talent she so eloquently displayed."

Sarukkai had created a bridge with her effortless movements and Ghosal was stunned by her ability to communicate. "Of course, there was a fortress beyond it as I discovered while filming her, but the realisation that I was not up against a wall prompted my decision to film her." The fact that Ghosal and Sarukkai shared similar ideas on creative art facilitated the making of the documentary. "While for me it was a daring act, for Sarukkai it was a leap of faith. I had to acquaint myself with Bharatanatyam; I immersed myself in reading about the sociocultural milieu of Tamil Nadu and the traditions of the Devadasi clan. The film took 18 months to complete and was shot without retakes!"

**FILM** This earnest labour is evident in the film, which features interviews with scholars of the classical dance and rare archival footage of legendary dancer Balasaraswati's recitals. In addition, Ghosal's voiceover lends an unparalleled poignancy to the work and makes *The Unseen Sequence* a unique cinematic experience.



Sanjay Kurt



"I did not have Sarukkai dance for me. She danced and I was there. Her performances in the film are organic"

Sumantra Ghosal,  
filmmaker

In fact, Ghosal's repertoire includes *The Speaking Hand/Zakir*, a film on tabla maestro Zakir Hussain; and *The Everlasting Light*, on Amitabh Bachchan, though he candidly says of the latter, "It was not my film but my partner, Ram Madwani's. I just shot it."

Ghosal carries with him an assured sense of confidence—evident in his work and conversation. Does it stem from the fact that he is the grandnephew of legendary Bengali director Satyajit Ray? "I would be on cloud nine were I to make anything that remotely touches a *Pather Panchali* or *Apur Sansar*," says the Mumbai-based filmmaker. "I grew up watching world cinema. Many areas of life and art have inspired me; rarely have I been inspired by individuals." But aspiration and inspiration entwined when he saw his granduncle work. "He [Ray] conned me into filmmaking!" he jokes.

So how does the filmmaker choose his subjects? "I don't; subjects choose me. It is my *wajood* [being] that gives me the ability to conduct a one-on-one with celebrities without indulging in sycophancy or being in awe of them. It allows them to open up and have a normal conversation."

To imagine the kind of subjects Ghosal has shot, it would be instructive to know of the dos and don'ts he observes while filming. "With [Zakir] Hussain, at the very outset I had laid the condition that he would take care of the schedules of his concert and I would do the legwork of shooting him wherever, whenever. Similarly, for *The Unseen Sequence*, I did not have Sarukkai dance for me. She danced and I was there. Which is why all her performances in the film are organic, so emotionally rooted that they connect with the audience instantly. I have always wanted to subtract the labour of the craft that filmmaking pivots around."

Can age affect such creative refinement? Ghosal pauses briefly before sharing, "I get up every morning with an expiry date feeling... as if on a deadline. I feel I should not mispend time, as there is so much to be done and enjoyed."

### GOLDEN VILLAIN

HE IS ONE OF THE MOST-FEARED BADDIES OF HINDI CINEMA; HIS ONSCREEN AVATAR IN MOVIES SUCH AS *DO ANJAAANE*, *KATTI PATANG*, *PHOOL BANE ANGAAREY* AND *BOBBY* SPELT TERROR FOR AUDIENCES DESPITE HIS SOFT-SPOKEN DICTION. MASTER OF NEGATIVE ROLES, VETERAN ACTOR PREM CHOPRA HAS UNVEILED HIS BIOGRAPHY, *PREM NAAM HAI MERA—PREM CHOPRA*, TO MARK HIS COMPLETION OF 50 YEARS IN BOLLYWOOD. THE FASCINATING MEMOIR, PENNED BY HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER RAKITA NANDA AND RETOLD IN CHOPRA'S WORDS, IS AN INTIMATE LOOK AT THE LIFE BEHIND THE MAN PEOPLE LOVED TO HATE. "DESPITE THE NEGATIVE IMAGE HE CREATED ON 70 MM, HE WAS AN EASY PARENT," SAYS NANDA. "WHEN I TOLD DAD I WANTED TO WORK ON HIS BIOGRAPHY, HE WAS GAME. I DID A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH LEGENDARY ACTORS LIKE AMITABH BACHCHAN AND RISHI KAPOOR WHO HAVE WORKED WITH HIM. MY MOTHER UMA'S COLLECTION OF PRESS CLIPPINGS ABOUT HIM SINCE 1969 WAS MY RESEARCH MATERIAL." SPEAKING OF HIS LONGEVITY IN THE INDUSTRY, NANDA SAYS, "HIS ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGE MADE HIM ENDURING EVEN DURING THE 1990S AND THE NEW MILLENNIUM. LIKE VETERAN SCREENWRITER SALIM KHAN HAS MENTIONED IN THE BOOK, HE HAS WORKED WITH FIVE GENERATIONS OF ACTORS, AN ACCOMPLISHMENT IN ITSELF." HERE'S WISHING CHOPRA MANY MORE YEARS OF SUCCESS.

### THREE CHEERS!

IT'S TIME TO UP YOUR HAPPINESS QUOTIENT! FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR, MUMBAI'S NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS (NCPA) WILL HOST *CHEER!*, A CELEBRATION OF COMEDY, WIT AND LAUGHTER, FEATURING PLAYS, WORKSHOPS AND STAND-UP ACTS. THE THREE-DAY COMEDY FESTIVAL, FROM 6-8 JUNE 2014, WILL EXPLORE WAYS OF SPREADING CHEER BY BRINGING TOGETHER A SELECTION OF WRITERS, DIRECTORS, ACTORS AND COMEDIANS IN THE COUNTRY.

# The unnatural world

As World Environment Day dawns on 5 June, we present an extract from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) that set in motion the global environmental movement

The history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings. To a large extent, the physical form and the habits of the earth's vegetation and its animal life have been moulded by the environment. Considering the whole span of earthly time, the opposite effect, in which life actually modifies its surroundings, has been relatively slight. Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species—man—acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world.

During the past quarter century, this power has not only increased to one of disturbing magnitude but it has also changed things irrevocably. The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible.

In this now universal contamination of the environment, chemicals are the sinister and little-recognised partners of radiation in changing the very nature of the world and life. Strontium 90, released through nuclear explosions into the air, comes to earth in rain or drifts down as fallout, lodges in soil, enters into the grass or corn or wheat grown there, and in time takes up its abode in the bones of a human being, there to remain until his death. Similarly, chemicals sprayed on croplands or forests or gardens lie long in soil, entering into living organisms, passing from one to another in a chain of poisoning and death. Or they pass mysteriously by underground streams until they emerge




and, through the alchemy of air and sunlight, combine into new forms that kill vegetation, sicken cattle, and work unknown harm on those who drink from the once-pure wells. As Albert Schweitzer has said, "Man can hardly even recognise the devils of his own creation."

It took hundreds of millions of years to produce the life that now inhabits the earth. The rapidity of change and the speed with which new situations are created follow the impetuous and heedless pace of man rather than the deliberate pace of nature. Radiation is no longer merely the background radiation of rocks, the bombardment of cosmic rays, the ultraviolet of the sun that have existed before there was any life on earth; radiation is now the unnatural creation of man's tampering with the atom. The chemicals to which life is asked to make its adjustment are no longer merely the

calcium and silica and copper and all the rest of the minerals washed out of the rocks and carried in rivers to the sea; they are the synthetic creations of man's inventive mind, brewed in his laboratories, and having no counterparts in nature.

To adjust to these chemicals would require time on the scale that is nature's; it would require not merely the years of a man's life but the life of generations. And even this, were it by some miracle possible, would be futile, for the new chemicals come from our laboratories in an endless stream; almost five hundred annually find their way into actual use in the United States alone. The figure is staggering and its implications are not easily grasped; 500 new chemicals to which the bodies of men and animals are required somehow to adapt each year, chemicals totally outside the limits of biologic experience.



A photograph of an elderly man with a grey beard and a young girl with dark hair, both smiling and playing in a pond. The man is in the water, and the girl is sitting on a wooden dock, splashing water towards him. The water is dark blue, and the dock is made of wooden planks.

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# THE LOVABLE TRAMP

If there is one defining comic image of the silent era of cinema, it is that of 'The Tramp' in baggy trousers, bowler hat, cane, with a toothbrush moustache and a funny gait. One of the most endearing and enduring images ever, Sir Charles 'Charlie' Chaplin's slapstick makeover as the lovable tramp who sympathises with social outcasts has evolved into the most copied comic vocabulary in cinema the world over, successfully enacted by many, including our own Raj Kapoor. Idolised and demonised at the same time for his leftist leanings, Chaplin came out with a vivid account of his life, *My Autobiography*, published by Simon & Schuster in 1964. In it, he spoke about a difficult childhood spent in grinding poverty in south London slums following his father's death from drinking and his mother's frequent bouts of insanity.

Making his professional debut at the age of eight as a member of dance troupe The Eight Lancashire Lads, he went on to become an outstanding tap dancer. When he was 18, Chaplin went on to travel with a vaudeville troupe, but had difficulty in finding leading roles due to his small build and Cockney accent. By his own admission, he used the memories of his mother's mimicking antics and his father's drunken mishaps to form his own comic act, which he mastered with slapstick precision. By combining pity and humour, Chaplin scripted the luckless clown who still features in comedies and circuses around the world. Soon he made his appearance in Keystone Studios's *Making a Living*; the rest is history. Among his notable titles were *The Vagabond*, *The Kid*, *The Gold Rush*, *The Circus*, *A Woman of Paris*, *City Lights* and *The*



He mimicked his mother's antics and his father's drunken mishaps to form his own comic act; by combining pity and humour, Chaplin scripted the luckless clown who still features in comedies and circuses

*Great Dictator*, his first talkie, a satirical take on Adolf Hitler.

Though a comic visionary, Chaplin's life was enmeshed in controversies over his fierce temper, accusations that he fathered children with underage girls, and his being a Communist. The hullabaloo continued even after his death with Chaplin's coffin being stolen two months after burial. However, Sir Charles Chaplin was finally laid to rest at the original site with police tracing the kidnappers. And now, even today, Chaplin's comic turn elicits smiles world over, bringing to life his famous quote: "You'll find that life is still worthwhile, if you just smile."

## THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: JUNE 1964

- On 11 June, Greece rejected direct talks with Turkey over Cyprus.
- On 12 June, Nelson Mandela and seven others were sentenced to life imprisonment in South Africa, and sent to the Robben Island prison.
- On 19 June, former US president John F Kennedy's brother, senator Edward Kennedy, was seriously hurt in a private plane crash in Massachusetts.
- On 25 June, the Catholic Church condemned the use of the female oral contraceptive pill.

The Ten Commandments in *The Bible* are a set of principles relating to ethics and worship that play a fundamental role in Judaism and Christianity



*Sikhism was established by 10 gurus or spiritual teachers*



*Dashavatar refers to the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu in Hinduism*



The number of wickets required to be taken for the batting side to be bowled out

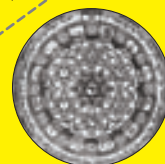


The completeness of an order or cycle, and the beginning of another

The 10 heads of Ravana represent his scholarly attributes, signifying a complete knowledge of the six *Shastra* and four *Veda* of Hinduism



**THE BASE OF THE DECIMAL NUMERAL SYSTEM**



Jewish Kabbalah believes in 10 fundamental forces or sefirot that flow from God to His creations

**THE 'PERFECT' NUMBER ON A RANKING SCALE**

THE ROMAN SYMBOL 'X' REPRESENTS TWO CROSSED HANDS, SYMBOLISING 10 HUMAN FINGERS



A 'triangular number' that can be aligned as a triangle (4, 3, 2, 1)—that's why 10 pins in a bowling alley are arranged as a triangle

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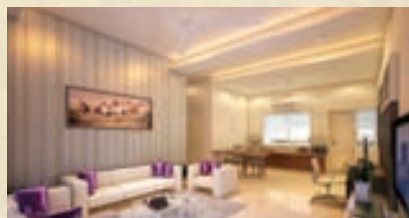
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