

MARCH 2010 Rs 30

harmony

celebrate age

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BEING TAO

“There is nothing you cannot do.” Six simple words that—in her own words—define the spirit of Tao Porchon-Lynch, an inspiring silver I was privileged to meet recently in New York.

She certainly walks her talk. This master yoga teacher, ballroom dancer and wine connoisseur is 91—and continues to live on her own terms, doing the things that sustain her emotionally, spiritually and emotionally. The daughter of an Indian mother and French father, her life has been a journey of discovery and wonder.

Brought together serendipitously by a common friend, I spent one magical evening with her, where she shared with me not just yogic precepts but the story of her astonishing life. She studied yoga in India from revered gurus like Indra Devi in Pondicherry and BKS Iyengar in Mumbai and Pune and went on to teach students in India, France and the US. In fact, in 1982, she established the Westchester Institute of Yoga in Hartsdale, New York, where she has trained and certified hundreds of yoga instructors. In addition, this astonishing lady was a model for French couturiers like Lanvin, Jean Desses, Marcel Rochas and Jean Patou and an actor under contract to Metro Goldwyn Mayer in the 1940s and 1950s. She appeared on popular American TV shows like *Highway Patrol* and *I Married Joan*; wrote screenplays; and made documentaries in the 1960s and 1970s, including an acclaimed one on American philanthropist Dr. Welthy Fisher’s work in Lucknow. Currently a regional vice-president



Donald Woodrow



of the American Wine Society, Tao began ballroom dancing at the age of 83, impelled by an urge to tango.

The most incredible thing about Tao is that her past melds seamlessly into her present; her life is not a series of events but a continuum that reflects her Indian, European and American influences. She still conducts yoga workshops in Manhattan and pilgrimages to India to offer her students insight into “the true spirit of yoga”; she is a wine judge and conducts tours of wineries in the US and Europe; and she takes part in dance competitions in the US, even winning her share of them.

I sat across this lady, her lived-in face creased in a gentle smile as she told me to “harness my inner power”; and marvelled at the fact that she has not just lived life but plundered it, with vigour and verve. We may not have Tao’s life, her opportunities, but we do have that inner power; all of us. Never let life pass you by like a wave that ebbs into the sea—ride the crest.

Pina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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column one

Those who listen to their heart would know what it's like to go on a voyage chasing their life's music, and then to find it embedded in their own passage. Biddu—the only Indian pop composer when we had none and still relevant at a time when we have far too many wannabes—is no exception, except that he had music for company on his journey, and the listeners of a country he first detested but turned back to after self-discovery. The creator of sensational hits like *Aap jaisa koi*, *Disco deewane*, *Boom boom* and *Made in India*, has revealed this and a lot more in his recently released autobiography, *Made in India - Adventures of a Lifetime*. Performing at every book reading for an ever-hungry audience, he looks in complete acceptance of his new avatar as writer. That he is 64 and still jiving is reason enough for everyone to 'celebrate age'.

Indeed, our motto rings more than true in every life story in *Harmony*. The heroes of this month are former inmates (many of them silvers) of Poojapura Jail in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala ("Crime and Redemption"). Seeing the light and deciding to live a life of dignity, the group is paving the way for liberation of other captive souls. To set bodies and minds of convicts and ex-convicts free is the aim of Prison Mission. *Harmony* espouses activism at the levels of social and personal engagement to help alleviate the misery of the self, silvers and society at large. Prime examples of this are silvers in Chandigarh ("Common Cause"). Forerunners of change in Chandigarh, they aspire to change the way we look at social work. Like them, all we need to do is volunteer our time and services and find the music of our lives.

—Meeta Bhatti



I don't just believe in *Harmony's* motto, 'Celebrate Age'—I live it. I am nearly 66 years old and live in Pune with an old friend in her bungalow. I am an animal rights activist and look after nine mongrel dogs. I am also likely to be involved in the Save the Tiger project. I cook my own vegetarian food and my companion and I spend a few hours every day gardening. I read books on physics, quantum theory and astronomy and fiction by Erle Stanley Gardner and Frederick Forsythe as well as magazines like *TIME*, *Newsweek*, *The Week*, *National Geographic*, *Scientific American* and *New Scientist*. I get wonderful reading material and DVDs from the British Library.



I have a weak prostate and am on daily medication for my condition. Until recently I was also plagued by aches and pains for which I would take painkillers. But last August, I read an extensive write-up on Celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder triggered by ingestion of gluten, a major protein found in wheat, oats, rye and barley. The article advised readers to avoid foods containing these ingredients. At first, I didn't take the advice seriously. All the same, my companion decided to change her diet to exclude all wheat products like chapattis, *puri*, breads, biscuits, noodles and so on, and rye—barley and oats were anyway not a part of our regular diet. In empathy, I decided to follow her new diet programme by substituting rice in place of wheat products. To my great surprise, I discovered I could bend much more easily. Today, I have no back pain and my body ache and stiffness have almost disappeared. My mental faculties remain sharp and clear. Gardening and household work are now less tiring, even going on long walks is a real pleasure. And my waistline has reduced from 40 to 38 inches.

I drink lemon-flavoured green tea without milk or sugar every day at 6 am, 5 pm and at bedtime at 10 pm. Now, our diet comprises only rice, *dal*, vegetables, seasonal fruits, curd, cheddar cheese, cashews, almonds, peanuts and chickpeas. For me personally, I can say that eliminating gluten from my diet has worked wonders.

Bharat Gordhandas, Pune

The cover feature "Mr and Mrs Singh" in the February issue of *Harmony* evoked many childhood memories. As children we were regular visitors to the National Stadium in New Delhi where we used to watch Milkha Singh practice. I have spoken to him and taken his autograph. Those were simple times when there was little security

and you could just go up and talk to celebrities. I have even spoken to Jawaharlal Nehru at Children's Park in India Gate; there were hardly one or two security people with him, that too at some distance from us. It was also nice to read about the *Harmony Senior Citizens' Run* at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon. Such events are



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wonderful because they bring cheer to the elderly and unite people from all walks of life.

Mahesh Kapasi, *New Delhi*

For the 5th consecutive year, our group of about 100 silvers, both men and women, from J B Nagar, Andheri (East), Mumbai, participated in the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon. Our participation was successfully organised by Sureshbhai Mehta, vice-president of the Progressive Senior Citizens' Association. The oldest among us



was 91 year-old G L Parab, who completed the entire 4.3-km run along with most of the team. Apart from the run, it was more of a get-together with fellow senior citizens. The arrangements made for the run were superb and we were all grateful to Harmony for Silvers Foundation for the gifts and breakfast provided to one and all.

Manmohan Bagri, *Mumbai*

As my husband and I have been long-time fans of *Harmony* magazine, first in the US and now in India, I would like to make a suggestion. Your article "Superfoods" in the January 2010 issue recommends omega-3 oils from fish for myriad health applications. My suggestion is that perhaps you have an environmental advisor to review these stories, so that *Harmony* does not espouse practices harmful to our planet and its creatures, including

us. The time has long past by when we can ignore the degradation of our earthly home and all its inhabitants. Countless reliable sources of information and studies cite the effects of habitat destruction, over-fishing, ocean warming, increased acidification, and massive nutrient runoff as culprits in a grand transformation of once-complex ocean ecosystems. Areas that had featured intricate marine food webs with large animals are being converted into simplistic ecosystems dominated by microbes, toxic algal blooms, jellyfish, and disease. That same *Harmony* article referred to research underway to genetically modify staple foods with a gene from flaxseed, a plant source of omega-3. GM foods are understandably controversial as there are no studies reflecting the impact not only on humans but on the overall ecosystem within which they are grown. I do know that it is not possible to have a clean organic farm next to GM farm because the GM plant genes get into the bordering crops. When GM farms grow massive amounts of the same plant, humans eventually develop sensitivities to some of those foods.

Carolyn Kelley Gopalan, *Via email*

You have raised some pertinent issues in your letter. However, the article on "Superfoods" was intended as a ready reckoner of nutritionally rich foods—as proven by research—that are easily available and accessible. Consulting an environmental advisor for the same would go beyond the purview of the article and the magazine. With regard to genetic modification, the article merely sought to inform the reader about current research to mimic the benefits of existing foods. Our intention was never to advocate GM foods. Thank you for your letter; and your support for *Harmony* magazine.

Editors

CLARIFICATION

The article "Toys are Us" that appeared in the 'Culture' section in the February 2010 issue of *Harmony* was written by Khursheed Dinshaw. Her name was inadvertently omitted.

—Editors



AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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

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

O»FACE OFF

LIPS THAT LIE

Bee-stung lips aren't just sexy; they also make you look younger. A new study commissioned by global consumer products giant Unilever says **women who have fuller lips tend to look younger than their real age.** As website www.themedguru.com reports, the scientists examined the faces of 102 pairs of Dutch female twins between 59 and 81 years of age as well as 162 British women aged between 45 and 75 years. They found that even when these women displayed signs of ageing like wrinkles, bags under the eye, drooping jowls and greying hair, those with fuller lips looked younger. In addition, they determined that 'lip height' was determined by genetics rather than environmental or lifestyle factors. The lips of both men and women achieve maximum fullness and firmness during early life or adolescence; they tend to shrink after the age of 40. "When we identified people who looked young for their age, we were struck by the difference in their lips," says David Gunn, a member of the research team. "It is a feature that is strongly genetically determined and relatively easy to measure."



O» ANALYSE THIS

CONNECT TO SURVIVE

The stuff of science fiction is now reality. Research by scientists at Harvard Stem Cell Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Joslin Diabetes Centre in Boston has proven that it **may be possible to use the blood of the young to boost the healing powers of cells in silvers**. When they connected the circulatory systems of young mice and older ones, they found the blood-forming stem cells in the older animals functioned better. "What's most exciting is that the changes that occur in blood stem cells during ageing are reversible through signals carried by the blood itself," lead investigator Amy J Wagers writes in journal *Nature*. "This means that the blood system offers a potential therapeutic avenue for age-related stem cell dysfunction. We believe this discovery may lead to treatments for age-related illnesses as well as stem-cell therapies."

RIDE EASY: DELHI TRANSPORT CORPORATION (DTC) HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL RESERVE SEATS FOR SILVERS IN ITS STATE-OF-THE-ART, LOW-FLOOR BUSES. CURRENTLY, THE BUSES ONLY HAVE FOUR SEATS RESERVED FOR WOMEN. BY THE TIME THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES BEGIN THIS YEAR, DTC WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH A FLEET OF 5,000 LOW-FLOOR BUSES.

O» TRENDS

The sex files

In a youth-obsessed world, we tend to forget that **age and intimacy are not mutually exclusive**. Here's some data to remind us. According to the National Social Life, Health and Ageing Project conducted at the National Opinion Research Centre at the University of Chicago, 84 per cent of men and 62 per cent of women between 57 and 64 years, and 38 per cent of men and 17 per cent of women aged 75 to 85, had sex in the past year. Meanwhile, the primary reason for celibacy for men was erectile difficulty (31 to 44 per cent across demographics), while for women, it was lack of interest (38 to 49 per cent). The researchers gathered these facts after



interviewing over 3,000 silvers about their sexual relationships in the past five years. "Individuals with strong, functioning sexual and intimate relationships will have better trajectories of health and well-being than those whose relationships function less well or who lack such relationships," writes lead author Linda J Waite of the University of Chicago in the January issue of *The Journals of Gerontology*.

O»NEWSWORTHY

Making amends?

Since inception, Harmony for Silvers Foundation has lamented the lack of concrete action on the **National Policy for Older Persons (NPOP)**, which was launched with such fanfare in 1999 with an aim to offer financial support, healthcare, shelter, and protection from abuse and exploitation. More than a decade later, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment appears to have acknowledged that the policy still remains largely ineffective.



"The existing policy has virtually seen no implementation on the ground with most states failing to show interest," a spokesperson for the ministry admitted to media in late January. "We

now want to implement it in letter and spirit." The agenda: to tighten monitoring of the policy's provisions in every state; ask states to ensure quick disposal of cases relating to property transfer and property tax involving silvers; require states to provide special identity cards to everyone above 65 years to claim benefits and concessions; and withhold funds to those states who fail to carry out these tasks. What's more, the Centre aims to upgrade NPOP with a special focus on Alzheimer's

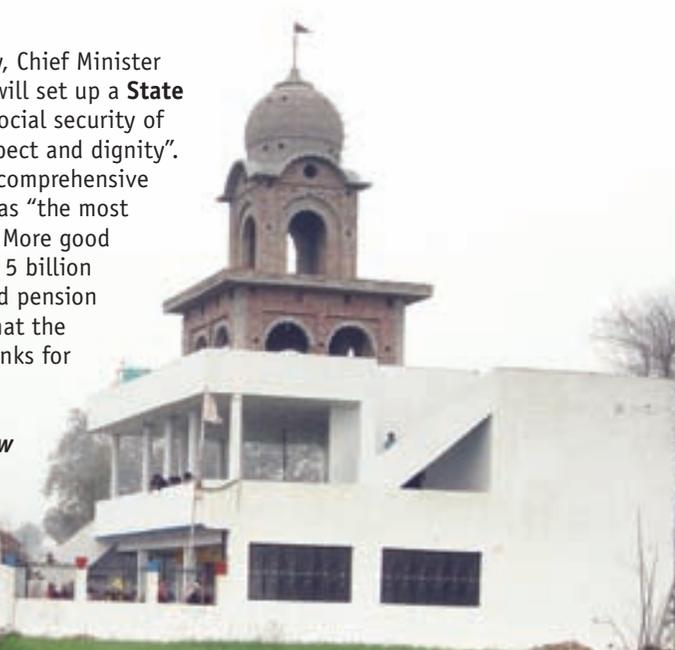
disease and other forms of dementia as part of a National Dementia Strategy. The spokesperson assures us more details will follow. Watch this space.

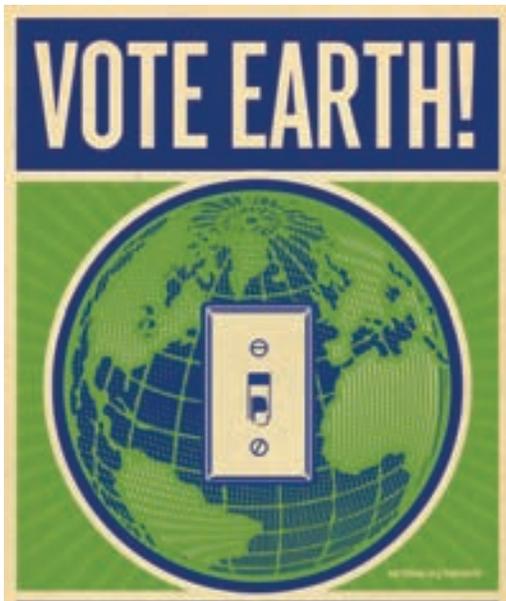
COUNCIL FOR CARE

The Punjab government has silver on its mind. In February, Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal announced to media that the state will set up a **State Senior Citizens' Council in Chandigarh** "to ensure the social security of elders, safeguard their rights and help them live with self-respect and dignity". The proposed council will guide the government to prepare a comprehensive policy for the welfare of senior citizens, who Badal described as "the most respectable section in society, yet often the most neglected". More good news: the government will soon create a dedicated fund of Rs 5 billion to enable beneficiaries to get pension in time; indeed, delayed pension disbursement has been a bugbear in the state. Badal added that the government has already initiated tie-ups with nationalised banks for disbursement of pension at the doorsteps of silvers.



Refer to 'Common Cause' on Page 22 to know how a senior citizens' association in Chandigarh is rooting for empowerment and advocacy





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Skin test

IT'S NOT WRINKLES THAT SCREAM AGE BUT PATCHY SKIN. That's the contention of a research team from Procter & Gamble, which says **skin tone is the most apparent indicator that you are growing older**. The team took high-resolution digital images of 170 women aged between 11 and 76 years and showed them to members of the public. They found that people were accurately able to guess the age of women from their skin colouration alone. "With age, distribution of melanin and haemoglobin in our skin becomes uneven giving us brown age spots, spider veins and shadows owing to lines and wrinkles," Paul Matts of the team tells Reuters. "This contrast gives a major cue to our perception of age. Thus, those in pursuit of a fresh-faced look should concentrate on the condition and colour of their skin, instead of wrinkles."

»»FACE OFF

BLACK VS. SILVER

Black and silver just don't match, proclaims Britain's favourite colourist and colour consultant Jules Standish. In a column in London newspaper *The Daily Mail* that has been syndicated across the world, she writes that although "the colour has long been lauded for its ability to flatter women's figures and suit every occasion, **black ages the face**". In her view, it highlights dark lines under the chin; it can make those who wear it appear to have dark 'spokes', or fissures, in the iris; and it makes wrinkles on the face and sunken areas under the eyes appear

deeper and more pronounced. This is especially true when you wear black scarves, hats, polo neck sweaters and high-collared coats. "Black looks for dark things on the face and highlights them, particularly as women age," she proclaims. "Just one in five older women can actually wear the colour well." To determine if you can, Standish has a test: "Hold the colour up against your face, stand in front of the mirror and look for dark lines under the chin, shadows around the eyes or lines on the face that are highlighted. If you see no dark areas or shadows, you can wear black."

GROUP STUDY: THE UK BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL AND US NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGEING HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WILL JOINTLY FUND SIX NEW TRANSATLANTIC RESEARCH PROJECTS, WORTH £ 4 MILLION, TO UNDERSTAND THE BIOLOGY OF THE AGEING PROCESS. EACH PROJECT WILL INCLUDE LEADING RESEARCHERS FROM UNIVERSITIES FROM BOTH THE UK AND US.



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»» INNOVATION

Talking GADGETS

Communication in today's 'smart homes' that enable independent living for silvers isn't limited to the residents—gadgets too need to interact effectively with each other for optimal functioning.

That's where 'Hydra' comes in. Developed by Fraunhofer FIT Institute in Sankt Augustin, Germany, this is a **software platform, technically called 'middleware,' which lets gadgets in the home talk to each other and share information** despite differences in internal makeup, age and manufacturer. This could include anything from a power meter and TV set to the fridge and air-conditioner.

Hydra's potential for silver care is even more incredible. It can enable



the monitoring of patients in their own homes by networking sensors measuring body weight, blood pressure, blood sugar and oxygen saturation and connecting them through the Internet to a healthcare provider. And all this can be done using ordinary electronic devices to hold the network together. "We aim to reduce the complexity in intelligent homes," Markus Eisenhauer, Hydra's project coordina-

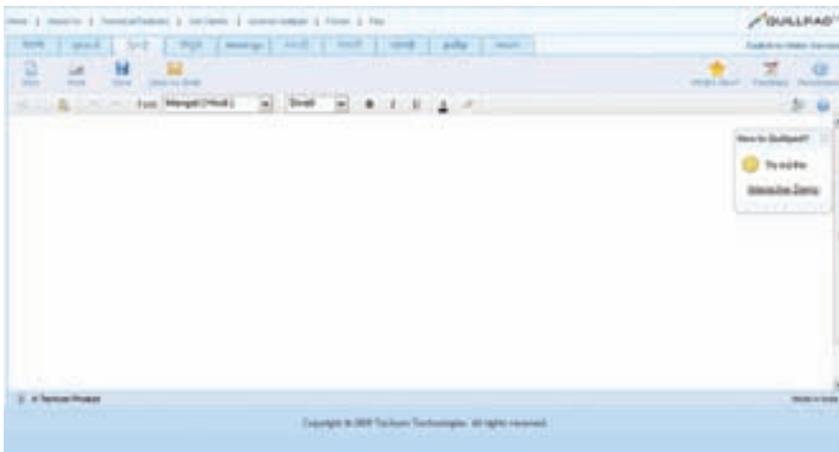
tor, tells news agency AFP. "We have some prototypes running where we have used an ordinary Playstation 3 [a popular gaming device by Sony] as a home control centre. Hydra will help manufacturers, software and systems developers to build devices that can be networked easily and flexibly via Web services to create cost-effective, high-performance solutions to assist independent and intelligent living."

Found in translation

For a multilingual country like India, Quillpad is a boon. And appropriately enough, this **online language typing tool** has

been developed by two Indians: Ramprakash Hanumanthappa and K S Sreeram, graduates from IIT-Madras with a start-up called Tachyon

Technologies. Here's how it works: choose a language and type a phrase in English as you would say it in that language; your options are Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali and Nepali. Quillpad automatically transliterates it for you. It can also predict if multiple words are possible for your input. You can even intersperse your phrases with words in English and Quillpad will transliterate the lot into the language of your choice. The best part is that the software is free. While LG Mobile plans to bundle it into its phones, websites like Rediffmail and Indiatimes have been offering it on their site for many months now. You can use it directly at quillpad.in—check it out.





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O»LOVE THAT

Silver SCREEN



Until last year, Nakwon Arcade in Seoul, South Korea, was like any other seedy mall, populated primarily by young adults and unemployed layabouts. Today, it is an elder hotspot, thanks to **The Silver Theatre**. As online newspaper *JoongAng Daily* reports, it is the only theatre in the city, and country, which caters to the interests of silvers, showing a mix of old Hollywood films and Korean classics, with a few select new releases occasionally thrown in. Tickets cost 2,000 won (about Rs 80) while other theatres charge 8,000 won (about Rs 320). What's more, the theatre offers three consecutive screenings of the same film from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm everyday. One ticket entitles you to sit through all screenings so silvers are free to go outside for chat, snack or bathroom breaks.

The Silver Theatre is the brainchild of 36 year-old Kim Eun-joo (see pic, left), whose father Kim Ik-hwan owns a number of cinema theatres across Seoul. Additional grants from private corporations and the city of Seoul have helped the project sustain itself. "Our senior citizens are part of the generation that survived the Japanese colonial years and the Korean War," she says. "There are also Vietnam War veterans and many construction workers who worked in the Middle East during the 1970s and '80s. These people contributed a great deal to our economic surge but are largely ignored today. They lived through a time when earning a living was more important than cultural activities. We wanted to provide them a chance to watch the films they missed out on and reminisce about the past." The Silver Theatre celebrated its first anniversary on 28 Jan—roughly 70,000 people visited it in its first year. Next on Kim's list: building a deejay booth in the theatre lobby, which will also host art exhibitions by silvers.

280,000. THAT'S HOW MANY BRITONS WILL BE CENTENARIANS BY 2050. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

PREDICTS THAT THE NUMBER OF 100-YEAR-OLDS WILL DOUBLE TO 22,000 BY 2020 FROM THE CURRENT 10,000, DOUBLE AGAIN BY 2030 AND HIT 280,000 IN 2050.

SIX ON A ROLL

IT DOESN'T GET COOLER THAN THIS. Six intrepid silvers on one specially designed cycle, biking for 22 days from Mumbai's Gateway of India to India Gate in New Delhi to promote eco-friendly transport. The road trip, which kicked off in late February, is led by *Harmony* cover girl (January 2006) Dr Bhagwati Oza (see pic), 74, the Vadodara-based athlete, swimmer, mountaineer and cyclist. Joining her are Vadodara residents Varsha Pandya, 56, and Ashok Patel, 58; Kishore Mehta, 62, from Mumbai, a retired wing commander and the main sponsor; Pune cyclist Yashwantrao



Marathe, 78; and 56 year-old Sandhya Soni, a yoga teacher from Dubai. Their slogan: "Ride a cycle to save environment and fuel." As Oza tells *Harmony*, "Nothing is impossible for silvers." As for the cycle, it has been designed by Vadodara-based Jayesh Pandya, who is featured in the *Limca Book of Records* for his unique design of bicycles. He says the 11-ft-long wonder machine, which took him two months to complete, will provide a comfortable ride to anyone from a child to a senior citizen. Our silvers are sure to rock it.

O»OFFBEAT

Authoring a **SCANDAL**

He's 60 now but author Martin Amis seems determined to retain his status as the *enfant terrible* of the British literary world. Both lauded for his brilliant writing and vilified for his controversial views on everything from communism and gender equality to Islamism, Amis has always generated plenty of newsprint. And now, in an interview to *The Sunday Times* of London to promote his latest book *The Pregnant Woman*, he's opened another hornet's nest with his **views on euthanasia,**

or mercy killing. Describing the UK's ageing population as a "silver tsunami", he said, "There'll be a population of demented very old people, like an invasion of terrible immigrants, stinking out the restaurants and cafes and shops.... I can imagine a sort of civil war between the old and the young in 10 or 15 years' time.... There should be a euthanasia booth on every corner where you could get a martini and a medal....There should be a way out for rational people who have decided they're in the negative." Predictably,

anti-euthanasia groups have condemned his words vociferously. Even advocates of euthanasia are disappointed with the nature of Amis's comments. Calling his comments 'insensitive', pro-euthanasia pressure group Dignity in Dying released a statement saying: "Our campaign for a change in the law is not about the introduction of 'euthanasia booths'.... It is about allowing dying adults who have mental capacity a compassionate choice to end their suffering, subject to strict legal safeguards."



SILVERS' DAY OUT

On February 14, Ashiana Housing and Harmony for Silvers Foundation escorted 150 silver couples from Mumbai and Pune on a tour of Ashiana Housing's new retirement resort being built at Lavasa, near Pune. The resort, spread over 30 acres, will have 500 homes—all equipped with exclusive, silver-friendly facilities and services.

O»H PEOPLE

Life after death

"I hope more people could think the way my grandfather did," says 23 year-old Karanvir Singh, the proud grandson of former Olympian and 1966 Asian Games gold medalist **Ajmer Singh** (see pic), who donated his body for medical research to the Department of Anatomy at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research in Chandigarh.



becomes the first Indian Olympian to donate his body for medical research.

He drew nationwide attention when he won two gold medals in athletics—one in the 400 m and the other in 200 m—at the Asian Games held in Jakarta 44 years ago. Singh

also served as Punjab University's director of sports. In 1964, he was honoured with the Arjuna Award for excellence in sports. Singh's commendable gesture was mirrored earlier in January by Marxist veteran Jyoti Basu who had pledged his body to medical research. Basu's death reportedly triggered a mass wave of enquiries on body donation in Kolkata.

Singh, who passed away on 26 January at the age of 70, had already discussed his decision with his family in April 2008. "There was no resistance from anyone in the family, as we all felt it was for a noble cause and knew how resolute he was," says Karanvir. With this gesture, Singh

ACTION PLAN FOR MARCH

Time to tweet. Silvers across the world are tuning into Twitter, the free information network that lets you voice your views and keep track of friends and celebrities alike; from talk show queen Oprah Winfrey and journalists Vir Sanghvi and Barkha Dutt to author Shobhaa De and actor Shah Rukh Khan, everyone's on Twitter. Users send and read messages known as 'tweets'—text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on their profile page and delivered to their 'followers'. Join the movement at twitter.com



IN PASSING

American actress **Jean Simmons**, better known for her biblical roles in *The Robe* and *The Egyptians* died in California on 22 January. She was 80.

American author **J D Salinger** best known for his novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, passed away on 27 January. He was 91.

Senior Congress leader and parliamentarian **Ram Niwas Mirdha** passed away after a brief illness on 29 January in Delhi. He was 85.

Filmmaker **Tahir Hussain** died of a cardiac arrest on 2 February in Mumbai. He was in his early 70s.

Former US representative **Charlie Wilson**, who was alleged to have funded covert US operations in Afghanistan against the Soviets in the '80s, and who inspired the movie, *Charlie Wilson's War*, died of a cardiac arrest on 10 February. He was 70.

BIRTHDAYS

- Actor **Pran** turned 90 on 12 February
- American actor **John Travolta** turned 56 on 18 February
- African-American writer **Toni Morrison** turned 79 on 18 February
- American actor **Elizabeth Taylor** turned 78 on 27 February

VISITOR

Who: President of Nepal **Ram Baran Yadav**

When: 15-19 February

What: President Yadav was in India to meet Indian President Pratibha Patil, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and senior leaders from the Congress party to discuss issues of mutual national interest. He also paid a visit to Haridwar to meet yoga guru Baba Ramdev.

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HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

THIS IS THE PLACE TO DO IT. REACH OUT TO FELLOW READERS WITH INTERESTING ANECDOTES, INSPIRING STORIES AND HEARTWARMING MOMENTS FROM YOUR LIFE. WRITE IN WITH FULL CONTACT DETAILS, AND MAKE THIS SPACE YOUR OWN.

SWEET SYNCHRONY

For me, learning has been a lifelong passion. I did my studies in diverse subjects—graduation in mathematics; diploma in statistics; and post-graduation in economics. I started my career as a statistician at Indian Oil Corporation, then moved to London to work with an insurance company where I also learned the basics of German, French and Spanish. On returning to India, I taught English,



Celebrating life: the Ramanujams

statistics and music at Vidyamandir School, Mylapore, in Chennai.

I did my post-graduation in philosophy just before my retirement and my doctorate soon after. Simultaneously, I also learned Sanskrit and became a 'Shiromani'. These days, I hold discussions on philosophy with different religious societies and online forums. I have written more than 800 articles on different philosophies, religion, *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Ramayana*, *Bhagavatham* and Carnatic music. My posts on *Sribhashya* of Ramanuja, *Raghavayadhaveeyam* of Venkatadhvari, *Yadhavabhyudhaya* and *Virodhaparihara* of Vedanta Desika and the translations of *Sri Lakshmi Narayana Hrudhyam* have been compiled into e-books and are available at sundarasimham.org and ahobilavalli.org. Being a Carnatic music enthusiast, I have also written extensively on the works of Padmabhushan Sangitha Kalanidhi Madurai T N Seshagopalan.

For my husband Ramanujam, who took early retirement from Midland Bank, London, numerology is a passion. He offers free numerology consultations to friends and acquaintances.

I often teasingly call him a 'doctor-maker'. Thanks to his encouragement and support, I could pursue my doctorate without any hassles. And our son too has done his doctorate in astronomy and astrophysics.

As my husband and I have many interests in common, we are perfectly in tune with each other emotionally and mentally. We both enjoy travel, music and literature. Over the years, we have travelled to several places in India, especially shrines. We also have an active presence on the Internet and enjoy blogging. Through various blogging communities, we have made some wonderful friends. Many of them are placed in different parts of India. When we visit the states where they are located, we make it a point to visit them. Very often, they have guided us through our journey and sometimes even joined us.

Whoever said old age is a curse couldn't be more wrong. We are leading contented lives and managing busy schedules. Life is only getting more interesting and fruitful with each passing day.

—Dr Saroja Ramanujam, Mylapore

SURVIVOR'S TALE

I am a 63 year-old retired defence officer. All through my life I have been saved miraculously, from 10 horrifying accidents no less. The first accident happened when I was only two years old. My father had taken me to a nearby river for a bath. I fell into the river and almost drowned. Fortunately he managed to rescue me. A similar incident occurred when I was seven. I was with my aunt at a temple, where again I fell into the temple pond, and thankfully saved by some devotees at the temple.

At 10, during the monsoon when the fields filled up with water, I used to go fishing with my friends. When I shoved my hand into one of the muddy slings to check my catch, I felt something twist around my hand. I pulled 'it' out and realised I was holding a 7-ft-long poisonous snake! I flung it away with all my might and ran away.

Death, however, remained in hot pursuit. The next such incident happened during an Army summer camp held



One up on destiny: Nair with his family

in our village. After the day's tiring activities, all the candidates dove into the nearby river. Only after I jumped in did I realise that I was not used to swimming in such deep waters. My peers saved me from being drowned.

Years later, I was cycling on a steep road during an Army camp in the interiors of Maharashtra. I lost control and rolled down. Though I was badly injured, I survived. My perilous trysts with fate continued for years. Once I was with my peers in Dehradun on a journey through a jungle. About 30 trucks were crossing a dry river with rocks on a high embankment. When my truck was about to cross the embankment, water gushed forth from the cliff. As we held on to the sides of the truck, we felt water pushing our vehicle. When the surge ebbed, we realised that four other vehicles were swept away but our vehicle was safely pushed to the side.

During another camp in Agra, I narrowly escaped being hit by a truck. I was cycling through a narrow lane, walled on both sides, when I saw a truck coming from the opposite direction. I jumped onto the wall, flattening myself against it—just like many action heroes do in the movies! The truck whizzed past me. In 1987, I was one of the passengers aboard the doomed Bangalore-Kanyakumari Express that was derailed over Lake Ashtamudi. More than 100 people lost their lives. I only remember the loud cries and screams as I held onto a ceiling fan. Two days later, I awoke to several fractures and serious injuries. It took me two years to recover fully. Ten years later, I fell from the terrace of my daughter's house. And in 2007, I fractured my left leg when a bike collided with me.

Some would say I'm jinxed but I prefer to think I am blessed. Today, the thought of death does not intimidate me. We cannot banish dangers, but we can banish fears. To all my silver friends, I have just this to say: dream as if you will live forever and live as if you will die today.

—Sundaresan Nair, Thiruvananthapuram

A LITERARY HARVEST

I started *Baliraja*, a monthly Marathi magazine with a focus on agriculture, in 1970. As I look back, it has been a

long journey from my childhood in the village of Solapur to the founder-editor's chair. My parents were illiterate, and I grew up like any other farmer's child, helping my parents on the farm and making occasional forays to the almost non-existent village school. However, as I loved studying, my parents sent me to Solapur to a school exclusively set up for farmers' children. After finishing my studies, I got a job as an agricultural assistant at the Agriculture College at Pune. In the 14 years I spent there, I came across various documents and books that introduced me to the new technologies and legislations that could benefit farmers—of which they knew nothing.

I decided to find a way to pass on all this information to farmers; a magazine seemed the best idea. I arrived upon the name *Baliraja* because in the farmer community Baliraja is revered for his generosity. His lands yield rich harvests. The name struck a chord, and the farmers who read the magazine complimented me for it.

It was very difficult to keep the magazine running on my personal funds, but with my wife and son helping me I somehow managed to stay afloat. Initially, I did a major part of the writing and I had to travel very often to the hinterland. We ploughed all our profits back into the magazine. Today, we have upgraded to computers, and eminent professors and researchers contribute articles to *Baliraja*. The magazine offers information and hope to farmers. We now have 20,000 readers. I have also set up Krushi Granth Bhandar Prakashan that publishes books for farmers. To date, we have launched 116 titles.



Anup Banerjee

Farmer's friend: Bhosale

Baliraja has completed 40 years. I am 75 now. Though I have received various awards, my biggest accomplishment is that I have been able to touch the heart of the farmer.

—Prabhakar Bhosale, Pune



Dr Jane

Barratt

Ageing and technology:

Digital-age tools are the need of the hour

Even as the ageing of the population around the world raises serious concerns about social security, pensions, long-term care, healthcare and family systems, digital-age tools have been proposed as resources to improve outcomes. Many *Harmony* readers would remember the advent of the personal computer in the late 1970s, the emergence of the Internet in the early 1990s, and the adoption of such technology by the public in the two decades after 1990. Then we have had the invention of social media in the 2000s, with Facebook, Twitter and blogs. The 'Information Age' has evolved into what is being referred to as the 'Attention Age' marked by the ability of individuals to create, consume and share information freely and instantly.

But what does this really mean to older people? In the first of a new series of articles in *Harmony*, I will try to explore different aspects of the digital age and how it can support, engage and enable older people in their own community and across the globe.

This month, the focus is on technology that enables people to remain in their homes, sometimes referred to as 'ageing in place' or 'ageing at home.' With advancement in new technologies improving living conditions, only one in every seven people over the

age of 70 in some developed countries will ever require admission to a long-term care facility. Information and communication technology has enabled countries to leapfrog traditional modes of service delivery and make manifold improvement in process effectiveness and efficiency. India is at the fifth position in the ranking of top 20 countries with 3.7 per cent of the world's Internet users.

Monitoring technology

In the US, advanced monitoring technology known as the 'Intel Health

With advancement in new technologies, only one in every seven people over 70 in some developed countries will ever require admission to a long-term care facility

Guide' is on trial to enable people to age gracefully at home. For three months, Ronald Lang was one of the most plugged-in patients in America. Mr Lang, who suffers from congestive heart failure and multiple sclerosis, was pilot-testing the Health Guide, a device that allowed doctors to monitor his health remotely. Each day, he stepped on a scale and strapped on a blood-pressure cuff attached to the contraption. The device relayed vital information to his doctor's office, where a nurse contacted Mr Lang over a videophone if she noticed anything peculiar.

Ageing-in-place equipment is placed in a person's home, monitors symptoms on the spot, and sends reports to doctors and family members in real time. The Health Guide is designed to help older people stay at home where they are most comfortable, rather than a nursing home or assisted-living facility. Companies developing products such as Health Guide believe ageing-in-place technologies can drastically cut the rate of medical complications that force older people into hospitals and other intensive-care facilities. That, in turn, could save millions of dollars a year from healthcare bills.

Enabling smart homes

A home that uses the latest smart technology to give greater independence to people with dementia and other serious conditions is being piloted for two years in Bristol, England. The technology has been designed to help people readjust to living on their own after a stay in hospital, and aims to reduce the risk of users being readmitted to hospital or going into long-term care. It uses special sensors that can wirelessly 'talk' to devices, such as the cooker, taps and light switches, in response to the behaviour of the resident. By monitoring movement, the system is able to respond to many different situations without having to contact care staff, often just using simple voice prompts, which could be recorded by family members.

For example, if occupants were detected opening the main door at inappropriate times, they would be given a prompt to let them know the time and encourage them to go back to bed. Similarly, if an occupant got out of bed



at night, the bedroom lights would gently light up. The system responds quickly and gives residents a greater feeling of control and independence as it doesn't rely on people coming in from outside to resolve problems. Early evidence suggests that by using technology, independence and quality of life for people with dementia are improved and there is also reduction in anxieties of relatives, without increasing the burden on care staff.

Hand-held technology; medication management and reminders

Medication reminder technologies fall into three basic categories: telephone-based medication reminders; reminders integrated as part of home monitoring or safety devices; and electronic pill-dispensing systems.

Phone-based medication reminders: lowest cost and intervention

Telephone calling services require no special phone or equipment. For instance, Database Services Corporation is a provider of automatic dialling services. In use in many communities, it now has an individual medication reminder service that older people or their caregivers can register for and then receive reminders. The cost for the service is \$ 14.95 (approximately

Rs 692) per month. If a person doesn't answer the phone, the system notifies a designated caregiver.

The Pill Phone (www.pillphone.com) is patented mobile medication reminder software. It is available on many wireless phones and costs around \$ 4 (Rs 185) per month (in addition to wireless service costs). It is the mobile version of the 'Pill Book', which provides visual/audible prompts; tracks/stores pill-taking records; shows what most pills look like; confirms the dose was taken; and displays potential side-effects.

Medication management plus personal emergency response systems

There are many personal emergency response services that are built around various wearable products typically sold as pendants or watches, which include programmable medication reminders. Other services, such as Medic Alert, are built on a personal emergency response system and service like Philips Lifeline.

Philips Lifeline now offers a large-button telephone that speaks programmed reminders, called, aptly, 'Care Partner Telephone with Reminders.' It works with the Philips

Lifeline pendant or watch; it has a hearing-aid compatible handset; and includes a voice clock, also speaking numbers as they are being dialled. The cost varies by geographic region, but the Philips site describes it "as little as a dollar per day".

Electronic pill boxes: small yet sophisticated medication reminders

For older people who can organise their own pills or have family nearby, electronic pill boxes with programmable reminders are a good choice. The 'Med-eMonitor' combines a portable pill box and docking station with a Web-based connection to a drug database. It is programmed via the Internet and pre-loaded with medication. And it beeps when it is time to take the pills.

Four empowering steps

Here's how some older people around the world are staying in touch with four easy steps.

1. Yesterday there was no cell phone, Internet, GPS (global positioning system) or satellite reception, and today, they are here. You might be challenged to learn how to use the remote for your TV, but that is not as important as having your grandchild teach you how to use the Internet.
2. If you do buy a computer, go for one with a built-in camera and microphone. Download Skype or another program that allows you to talk to distant loved ones face-to-face for free.
3. Explore technologies such as a GPS. Besides car travel, it's also good for pedestrians in new cities.
4. Get your own iPod. With your ear buds in place, you can shop, walk for exercise, or even visit the library without disturbing anyone.

Dr Jane Barratt is Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing

Common CAUSE



SILVERS IN CHANDIGARH ARE LEADING THE WAY IN ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT,
REPORTS VANDANA SHUKLA



Sanjay Sharma 'Kurl'

Just before the last general elections, 1,300 members of the Chandigarh Senior Citizens' Association (CSCA) approached political leaders to remind them of a reality: 20 per cent of the Union Territory's electorate comprises senior citizens; hence their voice could not be ignored. Helped by the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations (FSCA) of Punjab, the CSCA persuaded Chief Minister of Punjab Parkash Singh Badal to appoint a police official at the level of inspector-general (IG) as the nodal officer to look into all the law and order complaints of senior citizens. "The nodal officer will supervise all district-level work related to senior citizens," says Daljit Singh Grewal, executive president of FSCA and CSCA's general secretary. "This

district-level bodies in Punjab, an umbrella body of 15 senior citizens' associations was created to work as a pressure group. Over the years, FSCA has succeeded in getting the state administration to commit to a budget for seniors and pass the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007), and making the state responsible for protection of seniors and their property. FSCA has also demanded special geriatric care centres in the state—though the state government has only introduced an MD in geriatrics at Mahendra Medical College in Patiala.

As for the latest development, the IG (human rights) of Punjab will now be in charge of nodal officers, who will be officers of the deputy inspector-

Over the years, the silvers of CSCA have become a force to reckon with and have designed a unique model of interdependence for their region

will smoothen our way, as we would know who to approach in case of emergency and not run pillar to post." A similar proposal has been tabled for the health sector—a demand for an official equivalent to a deputy director to liaise with all district-level hospitals for health issues related to the elderly.

The journey from a solitary senior citizens' organisation to a force for advocacy began in 1996, when CSCA's founder-president P H Vaishnav—a retired IAS officer from Gujarat who made Chandigarh his home; he passed away in May 2009—wanted the CSCA model to be replicated in neighbouring states, especially Punjab where the state had no policy for welfare of senior citizens. After working for several years on establishing

general (DIG) level at the range level and superintendents of police (SPs) at the district level. The office of the IG is expected to send the list of names and phone numbers of these officers to FSCA soon. In July 2009, Chandigarh Police also introduced a Community Relations Unit (CRU) for silvers. According to Jaswinder Singh, head of CRU, the unit has records of about 2,100 silvers with addresses and phone numbers, and a special mention of those in need of urgent medical services. The related helpline—1090—is usually dialled for health issues, rarely for crime, as Chandigarh has a relatively lower rate of crime.

Over the years, the silvers of CSCA have become a force to reckon with and have designed a unique model



(Above) Children from a local school gather for a free health check-up; (opposite page) seniors learn new computer skills as Kondal (left) and Grewal (right) watch

of interdependence for their region. The only criterion to join the organisation is a commitment to provide services to less privileged sections of society. "Today, the organisation is equivalent to a movement," says CSCA's current president General M S Kondal, 79, who retired from Army Corps of Engineers and joined the organisation a decade ago. "Irrespective of age, anyone can volunteer time or services." Grewal, 73, also believes time and commitment are the two key requirements to be part of such a social group. After retiring as chairman and managing director of Hindustan Shipyard, Visakhapatnam, he joined the organisation in 2005 and has played an important role in bringing together like-minded organisations into the FSCA fold. Every member of the organisation needs to pay Rs 1,000 as life membership; it's Rs 1,500 for a couple.

The membership fee, however, isn't enough for CSCA to cover its costs. Funds for activities come from donations and advertisements published in its periodic souvenir. "We get only Rs 20,000 from the government every year, which is not enough," clarifies Grewal. "Our projects are aimed at economically weaker sections of society and require high expenditure. Our annual budget is Rs 1.5 million, with Rs 300,000 going into paying salaries to physiotherapists and assistants at our five physiotherapy centres." Services at these centres are free for members.

FSCA cuts costs by employing the services of volunteers. Shraavanika is one such project where young volunteers look after the daily needs of over 70 silvers. The volunteers spend a couple of hours with adopted silvers, reading out from newspapers, buying

medicines and groceries for them, and running small errands including helping them pay their bills. Shashi Kanta, 73, who retired as joint director of NCC, heads the Shraavanika project. "It strengthens the emotional bond between silvers and volunteers," he says. "Of the 20 volunteers, 14 are youngsters. Most often silvers suffer from emotional isolation, which volunteers can combat by offering them company."

Project Bheeshma Pitamah, on the other hand, calls on silvers to adopt government schools to counsel and guide poor children. The association has also created a forum of retired professionals—doctors, engineers, teachers, legal experts and architects—whose expertise can be utilised without any professional fee. Retired judges and senior lawyers volunteering with CSCA's legal counselling cell

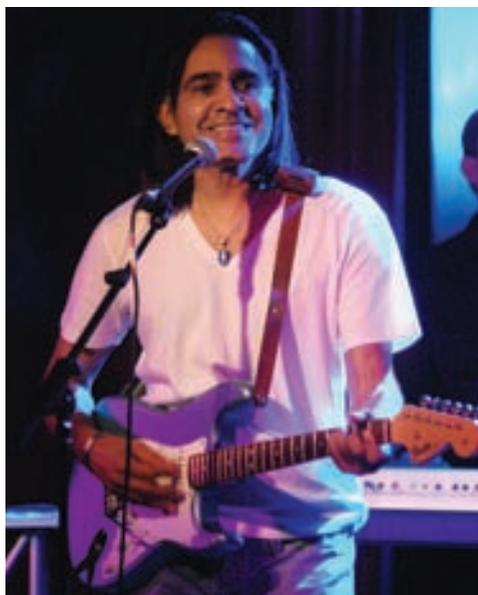
offer free legal help to the poor. The work of each project is divided among two or three senior volunteers and the organisation spreads the message for help through brochures, newsletters, articles in newspapers and magazines, and by holding meetings and seminars.

The beneficiaries of CSCA's projects are mainly silvers. Project Vanita is one such project initiated for elder women. Triggered by the plight of a woman called Ganga Devi who used to sleep in a handcart outside her own home (she died in 2007), the project seeks to help poor destitute women who are hardly ever considered for a share in property and family assets in later years. Further, in 2002, CSCA ran a campaign for their health and social empowerment to help raise their self-esteem. The aim is also to help them maintain proper hygiene by providing basics like soap, shampoo, comb and tooth powder. Surjeet Caur, 65, who looks after the project, is an Army officer's wife with several years' working experience in *jawan* welfare. With help from other volunteers, she helps 40 senior women from the poverty-stricken areas of Indira Colony and Mauli Jagran. "Simple things like receiving a pair of new *chappal* or going on a bus trip out of town mean so much to them," says Caur. Last year, she took many destitute women on a pilgrimage to *gurdwara* of Punjab; and early this year to Kasauli, where she requested a friend to organise lunch for them. In Caur's view, though, what helps them most are the medical camps she sometimes organises.

Ultimately, all these initiatives and projects have a common goal: to bring value and meaning to the lives of silvers. Going forward, the organisation is determined to chart new routes; from dance lessons to computer classes, physiotherapy, reiki, acupuncture and yoga, the horizons are expanding—as is the strength of CSCA and FSCA and their determination to make a difference.

The CSCA persuaded Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal to appoint a police official as a nodal officer to look into the law and order complaints of silvers





Tandem Communications

The TRIPLE X factor

He has spent the past 43 years abroad but music enthusiasts will always remember him as the dashing musician who pioneered pop music in India. Bengaluru-born and world-wise music producer and composer XXX Biddu is in India on his annual three-month sojourn; this time not to launch a talented pop star or album but to release his autobiography. Rajashree Balaram feels his vibe

There is nothing about Biddu that suggests that he is a man who once sold his blood to a hospital in Kuwait to dodge starvation. Or travelled ticketless on a boat from Dubai to Basra in Iraq. Or dished out doughnuts and burgers at a restaurant in London. His recently released autobiography, *Made in India - Adventures of a Lifetime*, reveals his many struggles before he finally found success as a music producer and composer in the UK. But his face, when we meet him, has only charm and humour written all over it. Leave alone the hard knocks of life, it doesn't even reveal the years he has seen. As he saunters to the poolside table at the Sun-n-Sand Hotel in suburban Mumbai, the briny breeze flirting with his blow-dried, shoulder-length hair, women—young, middle-aged and silver—try desperately not to gawk. And fail.

The 64 year-old is dressed in a white T-shirt that has seen better days and dull white calf-length pyjama pants. Not exactly designer threads, but clothes don't make this man. He has the self-assurance of someone who knows he is made of more enduring stuff. A week before his interview with *Harmony*, Biddu was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 5th Rolling Stones Jack Daniels Annual Rock Awards at the Hard Rock Café in Mumbai. Indeed, it has been a lifetime of achievement, spurred by hungry discontent. From being the lead performer in a boys' band in Bengaluru to a tenacious nightclub singer in Mumbai and Kolkata, Biddu's ability was matched by just one thing: his ambition. To date, he has sold 38 million records, including the wildly popular *Kung fu fighting* with Carl Douglas and a string of hits with Tina Charles and Jimmy James. Between composing tracks for two British films, *The Stud* and *The Bitch*, Biddu gave India a song that never really left its lips. Even today, 30 years after he composed it, *Aap*



Haresin Patel

jaisa koi sung by Pakistani-British singer Nazia Hassan for Feroz Khan's *Qurbani* still draws out the shimmy and the sway at discos and pubs all over India. He followed it up with *Disco deewane*, which became the largest selling pop album in Asian history; and the eminently hummable *Made in India* in 1995.

His voice is no less hypnotic than his looks or his success story. Recently, audiences at the Jaipur Literature Festival, held in late January, were lulled into a dreamy stupor when he performed the Elvis classic *I can't help falling in love with you* and his own *Aap jaisa koi*—his voice a shade ten-

know, for an artist the best sound is people clapping and the worst is hearing the sounds of his own footsteps walking away from stage.

Are you planning to do something similar for your book launch at the Blue Frog this year? Sing?

I plan to do a 75-minute show. Each song I am performing has sold 5-6 million copies. *Kung fu fighting, Aap jaisa koi, I can't get no satisfaction, Living la vida loca, La bamba...* all songs are sure to draw crowd participation. I am adding a rap element to it to add a twist. It's like adding a little lemon in your vodka.

I am a private person. I may chat and laugh but I don't like to talk about myself. I make stars out of people. I don't want to be a star. And writing your autobiography is like parading yourself naked

tative but with a delicious twang and charisma to burn. It has the power to rob your breath even when he isn't crooning. "Sorry, I will be speaking softly as I have just been told that I have a performance this evening at the Kala Ghoda festival as part of my book launch," he informs us. The impromptu performance cuts short his plans for the evening; he and his wife Sue were planning to catch the animation flick *Avatar* that night. Biddu doesn't mind, though. He has always gone where his music takes him.

EXCERPTS FROM THE CONVERSATION:

You performed at Mumbai club Blue Frog last year. What was it like?

'Performed' is hardly the right word. It was a reunion of the Jets, the 1960s Mumbai-based band set up by my dear friend Suresh Bhojwani. They were performing after 43 years. Suresh just arm-twisted me and asked me to perform. I sang for about three minutes but the reception was fantastic. You

What made you suddenly want to write your autobiography?

I had approached a few publishers in Delhi last year with the manuscript of a novel. Everyone said, "Sure thing, but we want you to write your autobiography." My first response was "No way!" I am a private person. I may chat and laugh but I don't like to talk about myself. I make stars out of people. I don't want to be a star. I am happy being a backroom boy. Of course, I like to earn the money but without having to go through all the hassles of publicity. Then, my wife reminded me how she has been telling me to write my story for years and how it would make a fascinating read. I still had my inhibitions; it's like parading yourself naked. But when HarperCollins offered me a three-book deal, it suddenly opened my eyes. A three-book deal... hmm? So like the harlot from Harlem, I gave in [laughs]. I realised that writing an autobiography can be both difficult and simple. Difficult, because I had to resist the temptation to cater



to my ego. And easy because all I had to do was retrace my life. I wrote it in four-and-a-half months and sent it to HarperCollins.

In your book, you have mentioned that the business of music can be rather unforgiving and that if you fail to create something inspiring and special, you are put out to grass. Does that sort of uncertainty still torment you?



Jit Ray

Personally, I am very lucky. Even after I die, the royalties on my songs will keep coming in. That's the best thing about working in the West. It's not the same in India. If a film is a success, the music composer does not get to partake of any of the profits. *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* was such a big hit. The album must have sold a million copies. But none of the profits would have made it to the music composer. If I was in that man's shoes, I would have put a gun to my head. I would have wondered, "The producer is making money, the director is making money, the guy who is miming to my songs is making money and making even more money dancing to those same songs at weddings! And all I get

paid are a couple of lakhs?" Isn't that unfair? In the West, at least, you get your pound of flesh.

Yes, I read that in your book.

Did you? So what did you think about the book?

I quite enjoyed the fact that it is so self-deprecating....

That it is [smiles]. That's the only way you can write about yourself. After all it's not like I discovered penicillin; I only made some music. You've got to be disparaging about



"Even today, when I see her I get distracted and forget what I am saying" says Biddu of Sue, his wife of 38 years

yourself so you don't come out sounding pompous. I received the best compliment from a reporter recently, who asked me 'Who is the ghost writer you used?' [laughs].

What's your second book all about?

It's a story of romance, intrigue, murder and adventure set in Darjeeling. It's been edited. I plan to launch it in October. I will probably do a concert to mark the book launch.

Why did you stop at *Qurbani* and not venture into composing more songs for Hindi films?

I have never really been much into Bollywood. Even today I can count the number of Hindi films that I have seen in my whole life. I can name them for you: *Lagaan*, *Black*, *Chak De* and just last week I saw *3 Idiots*.

Would you feel more comfortable composing music for a Hindi movie today?

I probably would. But right now I am focusing on writing. I have not composed music in a long time. The passion needs to be reignited. Maybe if someone comes up with a spectacular film, and asks me to do a couple of songs.... But I am not keen on doing all the six songs for a movie. A couple of numbers should do just fine.

You composed *Made in India* because you wanted to create a song that Indians could be proud of. At the same time it took years for you to accept India for what it is. How did you come to terms with that inner conflict?

The subconscious reason behind my move was that we were going nowhere

as a country. There was tremendous corruption and poverty. I also had to support my mother. I was successful in my own way. But the only way I could have outdone that was by joining films. And films were not such an enticing prospect then like they are now. In those days, parents didn't push their children into the world of glamour. Also my grasp of Hindi was not exactly impeccable [laughs].

Which places in the world are best suited for your performances?

I can perform anywhere. But I like to have a lot of Indians in the audience, because they are my people. When I am singing a purely western song, I have to gear myself and my body language for them. But if I am playing for an Indian audience, I can feed on a banter that springs from a familiar place. And I am totally relaxed.

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You spend time between three countries, Spain, UK and India. Do you still feel stifled by any one place or are you more rooted now?

My spiritual home is in India. My mortgage home is in UK. And I love living in Spain. I love the weather, the infrastructure in Spain. I love India but to spend three months here doing nothing is not easy. You have got to be occupied, because everyone else is. This trip has been good; I have been busy every day. Every year, I am here for three months, because I can't take the cold in the West around this time. Fortunately, my wife Sue, who is English, is crazy about India, unlike a lot of foreigners who can't take the heat and the poverty. We have a home in Ahmednagar near Meher Baba's ashram. Sue is a follower of Meher Baba.

Sue is rather spiritual while you are an atheist. Is that a cause for friction between you two, sometimes?

A religious person can be a bit more dogmatic and bigoted than a non-religious person. My wife, though, has accepted the fact that I don't believe in god. For me, man made god, god didn't make man. So, Sue and I just accept each other for who we are.

Your mother seems to have had a powerful influence over you. And in your book, you have said that Sue walks two paces ahead of you. Would you call yourself a feminist?

My father died when I was very young and the influence in my life—if there was one—comes through my mother. She pampered me totally. We kept moving homes as we didn't have money and the house kept getting

smaller as we shifted homes. So even at that young age, I was aware that I would have to look after my mother some day. That awareness was a subconscious driving force. I saw no point in whining about our condition, just because my father died early. I don't believe in making up excuses. As for that statement on Sue walking two paces ahead of me, it was done entirely in humour. If you are sure about yourself, you don't feel the need to show off how macho you are.

How about your children? Are they also musical by nature?

My son Zak is in the music business. He manages a couple of rap acts. In fact, he is arriving in India shortly and would like to bring along a couple of rap and club acts. My daughter ZaZa works with a public relations firm. Both live and work in the UK. And they live just 300 yards away from me. I am a typical Indian dad that way; I like having my children around me.

Are they able to relate to India?

My daughter loves the vibrancy of India. And both my children love the food. At the same time, they don't watch Indian movies or follow national politics. Let's face it, we live in a very Western atmosphere. But they are drawn to the country. After all, it's in their blood [smiles].

You have been rather reckless in the way you burned your bridges to chase a musical career abroad. Do you encourage your children to pursue their dreams beyond all odds?

I have always told my children that they should do what they want to do.

If I have my reservations about a decision they have taken, I may talk to them but I would never stop them. Indian parents can be quite dogmatic. The fear that's instilled in children and the frequent suicide cases are worrying. When children have access to so many new avenues, you cannot forbid them by saying that this is not how we did it 50 years ago. One has to change with the times.

How different is the India that you left behind all those years ago to the one you return to now?

India has changed and still remains unchanged. The mindset of the nation has not changed. We need to move with the times to see true progress. That can only happen with education. And we need to get rid of rabble-rousing politicians who call themselves patriots, and are busy working to divide the country into various factions.

You have taken enormous risks in your youth, and once even came close to penury. How did you manage to keep your head on your shoulders through the marijuana-propelled '70s?

I must have got a high just inhaling all that smoke around me [laughs]. I think it's to do with the responsibility I had on my shoulders. I wanted to live up to all the promises I had made to my mother. Also, time dulls the intensity of every experience. It washes away everything that it caresses. And I was young then. Young people have the knack to bounce back.

Talking about youth, what do you think about the current generation of pop stars in India?

I don't see any great pop stars in India. Great playback singers, yes. In India, Bollywood film music is pop music as far as I am concerned. I think Sonu Nigam and Shaan are two extraordinary voices we have here. I have worked with both of them. In the rock scene, there is no one who makes me go 'wow'.

You have often said that you abhor the kind of profane rap that goes by the name of anti-establishment music. Do you find yourself getting more conservative with time?

I have always been a rebel as I never conformed to the norm—I gave up everything to establish myself in the West and started my own company there. But there is a side of me that has always been rather conservative. For instance, I never ever swear. I don't do drugs. I believe in treating woman with chivalry and respect.

So why did Biddu Appaiah become XXX Biddu? And is the X factor as cool today as it was four decades ago when you started off?

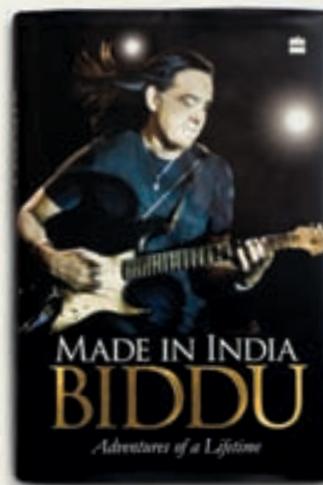
I have stopped using my surname since a long time. I prefer the sole individuality of my name. I lost my birth certificate long back. And while making my passport when they needed to fill the blanks for my surname, the officer at the counter simply filled XXX to move onto the next page and that sort of stayed. I think it's cool. I have never had any problems anywhere. In a way it helps me escape all prejudice of caste and creed.

Why did your book record nothing after 1995?

I am a commercial animal in some ways. I wanted the book to end on a high. In the mid-'90s I was still reeling from the heady popularity of *Made in India*. I did make a few albums after that, some that were successful, others that didn't do too well. Though I did produce songs for Abhijit Sawant [of Indian Idol fame], I didn't want to

Excerpt from the autobiography:

Then one day, towards the end of November, I was performing at a weekend concert when once again, a man came backstage and introduced himself to me. 'My name is Harish and I'm a travel agent,' he said, and before I could tell him to take a long walk off a short pier, he interjected, 'I know what happened to you with a fellow agent, so I want to help you...' Well, three weeks later, Harish appeared with a shiny blue-black passport bearing the emblem of the Indian government with the gold embossed words REPUBLIC OF INDIA on the front and my picture and details on the inside pages. 'Here it is as promised,' he said, beaming broadly. I handled the passport gently, almost nervously, feeling the newness and crispness of its pages with the smell of the printing still vaguely detectable. I wasn't too happy with my photograph, but I couldn't blame Harish for that. There was a page that read 'Countries for which this passport is valid,' and a whole host of countries listed below. It was a mini geography lesson. I noticed the one country not on that list was Israel. Anyway, I was finally holding in my hands my get-out-of-jail card. The passport was absolutely genuine or kosher as they say in the country I was not allowed to visit. 'How did you do it?' I asked, delighted, elated and curious. 'It's part of my job,' he answered modestly. 'Here is your ticket.' He gave me something that did not resemble an airline ticket. 'What is this?' I asked slightly worried. 'It's a ticket to Basra,' he



replied. 'Basra? Where's that?' I said mystified and confused, while a worm of a frown formed on my forehead. 'Thought I was going to London.' The only way I could get you out of India is to tell the authorities you wanted to go to Mecca on Hajj. The boat goes to Basra...' 'But Harish, I'm not a Muslim. I'm not even circumcised!' I said, getting worried and not without reason. I was seeing my dream slip away once more. 'I know that,' he replied, rolling his eyeballs in exasperation. 'But don't worry, no one will bother you. I guarantee that. The airfare to London is much more than what you gave me. Most of the money went on getting you a passport and P Form (the precursor to visas). This was the only fare available with the rest of the money. The Hajj pilgrimage is partly government funded. You're lucky to have this, so get to Basra and then make your way on to London. No problem.'

harp on that as that was his success story. It was not like Nazia Hassan's success where I had an equal hand if not more. So I wanted the book to end on my pinnacle.

I have been working since the age of 13. It has been a great journey whatever the ups and downs. I am okay not being in the news now. Many of my friends often tell me that they can never do what I get to do. I can sit and contemplate by the beach outside my house in Marbella in the southern tip

of Spain. It's a lovely place from where I can see the Rock of Gibraltar and right up to the shores of Morocco. When I see all that, I realise life has been good to me.

So that's where you get your inspiration from? The Rock of Gibraltar?

Oh no, there's no such thing as inspiration. It's all about perspiration. You can't sit and wait for things to happen. You ought to sit, dream and then make them happen.

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Memories in sepia

At 105, Kochi-based Anapuzha Thankamma still walks without a helping hand. Nisary Mahesh meets the steely silver who loves to look back at a time when the world was a simpler place

It has been 90 years since Mahatma Gandhi delivered his inspiring speech on *swarajya* at the sprawling Darbar Hall Grounds in Kochi, Kerala. The two-acre ground, now a popular venue for textile exhibitions and religious processions, was then filled with thousands of Keralites, gathered in a frenzy of patriotism. Many who heard Gandhi's urgings that day gave up their gold ornaments, decided to shun foreign goods and switch over to *khadi*. But for 16 year-old Anapuzha Thankamma who stood quietly in the crowd, patriotism was not a transitory febrile sentiment that would ebb with India's independence. On that blistering summer afternoon, amid vigorous anti-British chants, Thankamma gave up her gold bangles and chain. And stuck to her decision for the next 89 years—even today she wears only *khadi* and refuses to wear any gold.

"When I heard Gandhiji say 'We must become the change we want to see', I felt the words seep into my veins," she tells us when we meet her at her home in Kochi. Clad in a white *mundu* (the traditional Kerala sarong) and blouse, she declines her daughter's offer to walk her to a chair. "I can do it alone," she insists as she adjusts her spectacles. For someone so fragile, her voice is incredibly powerful. Her face bears the ravages of time, her hair is cropped short, and she has trouble hearing. But her smile is warm and welcoming and her memory, as we discover later, is precise when it comes to dates, places and names.

Elamkunnappuzha, near Kochi, where Thankamma was born, is a small

coastal village that has all the makings of a picture postcard: abundant paddy fields; clear ponds with bare-chested children playing at its fringes; and villagers ambling past at an unhurried pace. Thankamma's voice is filled with equal parts of pride for her native village and yearning to revisit her childhood. "I was the second of five daughters and two sons," she says. "We children used to bathe in the pond and run amok on the narrow lanes and bylanes. Those were the good old days."

"When I heard Gandhiji say 'We must become the change we want to see', I felt the words seep into my veins"

Thankamma moved to Kochi 100 years ago when her father Govindan Achan, a Malayalam scholar, got a transfer to the harbour city. She studied in Ernakulam Government Girls High School from where she did her 'fifth form'—the equivalent of today's matriculation—and got a clerical job in the administration department of her own alma mater, from where she retired in 1960.

The Government Girls High School is also the place where she met a young, idealistic freedom fighter, Padinjarekkoot Narayanan Nair, whom she later married. "He was a member of the Hindi Prachar Sabha and taught Hindi," she says. "As we shared many

views in common including a burning patriotism and the desire to fight injustices wrought by the British, our colleagues felt we made a good match." The two families met and not too long after that, both were united in wedlock. "In those days, there was no concept of a boyfriend or a girlfriend," she says with a sheepish smile.

As both were staunch Gandhians, the ceremony was a simple affair conducted at home with just a few friends and close relatives. Keeping the promise she had made to herself, Thankamma did not wear the usual *kasavu* sari (traditional ceremonial cream and gold sari). "Even the sari my husband gave me was a *khadi mundu* and unlike a typical Indian bride I did not wear any ornaments for my wedding."

Narayanan Nair had worked with many freedom fighters in Chennai where he had lived before he moved to Kerala. Thankamma's voice is tinged with both pride and pain as she reminisces about her husband. "My husband took part in several protest marches along with late Sahodaran Ayyappan, who was a social reformer. The two were imprisoned on more than one occasion for hoisting the national flag and participating in protests." Thankamma, though, stood firm as a pillar of strength through the tough times and never dissuaded him from pursuing his ideals. "He believed learning Hindi could unite all Indians," she says.

After India gained independence, Narayanan Nair joined the Sacred Heart College in Thevara as a Hindi professor, and Thankamma continued



With husband freedom-fighter Narayanan Nair; the entire family

working in the school. “Life was simpler and therefore friendships were more genuine back then,” avers Thankamma. “I don’t ever remember taking an auto in my life; I always walked to school.”

As cinema had not yet become a popular form of mass entertainment, Kathakali was the only source of recreation back then. Even today, Thankamma enjoys watching Kathakali performances though she feels sad that few temple courtyards host Kathakali the way they used to earlier. After retirement in 1960, she kept herself occupied with the administration of the Ravipuram and Valanjambalam temples in Kochi; she was an active member of their trusts. These days, though, if she is not praying, she reads. A self-confessed bookworm, she still spends a large part of her day engrossed in books, from *Ramayana* to *Anna Karenina* and *Pavangal* (the Malayalam translation of *Les Misérables*). Even when she suffered from trachoma a few years ago, she continued to lug around hefty tomes.

Age has made her even more disciplined. “I eat small meals and I think that is the secret to my good health,” says the centenarian who still wakes up at 4:30 am, which as she points out is the *brahma muhurtham* (divine hour). She reads the *Vishnu Sahasranamam* every day after her bath and never misses her afternoon nap. “Her discipline has rubbed off on all of us, including my children and grandchildren,” says her daughter Rama, 72, with whom Thankamma lives. Rama, a retired college professor, remembers a childhood devoid of any extravagances: “As children, we were told to use each pencil till it was worn down to a stub.” Simplicity and respect for old values have percolated deep down in Thankamma’s family. “We are very progressive in our outlook, yet at the same time traditional and Indian in our ways,” says Rama,



who feels the “Indianness” is an enduring legacy that has passed down across generations. Though two of Thankamma’s grandchildren and great grandchildren are settled in Canada, she is happy and proud that they can “still converse with their *muttashi* [grandma] in chaste Malayalam.”

Her large family—comprising four daughters, two sons, 10 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren—are always a call away to offer her security. On 24 January, everyone got together

for a traditional *sadya* (feast) at the Ravipuram temple in Kochi to mark her 105th birthday. “It was a simple affair, just the way she has always liked it,” says Rama. Unfortunately, the celebration was followed by a devastating loss. In early February, her 68 year-old son—the fifth in her brood—passed away. The autumn of Thankamma’s life has brought with it tormenting irony; her longevity stands cruelly juxtaposed against her son’s mortality. *Harmony* hopes her quiet strength and resilience will see her through the turmoil.

Holi HIGH

HOST FRIENDS OR PLAN A POTLUCK WITH **DR PUSHPESH PANT'S** RECIPES



Meve ki Gujiya

Nutty pastry crescents

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Serves: 10-12

INGREDIENTS

- Plain flour: 250 gm
- Ghee (clarified butter): 75 ml
- Almonds, blanched: 50 gm
- Pistachio nuts, blanched: 50 gm
- *Chironji*: 25 gm
- Melon seeds: 2 tsp
- Sultanas/raisins: 25 gm
- Sugar-free sweetener: 2 tsp
- Ghee/oil for frying (though baking is a better option): 500 ml

METHOD

Rub ghee into flour and mix in enough cold water. Knead to obtain soft but not sticky dough. Knead for a few minutes, cover

with a damp cloth and keep aside. Blanch and finely sliver almonds and pistachios. Lightly roast *chironji* and melon seeds on a griddle for two to three minutes. Mix with nuts, sultanas and sugar. Divide the dough into equal portions and shape into small balls. Then flatten into patties and roll with a pin into discs of about 3-inch diameter. Place a portion of the filling in the centre and fold over to shape the crescents. Press to seal and crimple edges. Heat ghee in a pan or wok and shallow-fry till golden in colour. If you want the healthier option, bake in an ovenproof dish. In case you have shallow-fried the *gujiya*, remove and place on kitchen towels to drain excess fat.

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Vilas Kalgutiker, FOOD STYLING: Anita Sarin

Meethi Lassi

Sweet yoghurt shake

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Low-fat yoghurt: 2 cups
- Sugar-free sweetener: 2 tbsp
- Cardamom powder: ½ tsp
- Cold water: 4 glasses
- Rose essence: ½ tsp
- A pinch of saffron

METHOD

Blend all the ingredients together in a blender. Serve this thick, foamy drink in tall glasses.



FRESH FACT

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Lukhmi

Vegetable mince pastry

Preparation time: 2 hours

Cooking time: 1 hour

Serves: 6-8

INGREDIENTS

- Button mushrooms: 100 gm
- Half sweet bell pepper (red)
- Half sweet bell pepper (yellow)
- Peas: 100 gm
- *Paneer*: 100 gm
- Carrot: 50 gm
- Ginger: One-inch piece
- Pomegranate seeds: 3 tbsp
- Royal cumin seeds (*kala jeera*): 1 tsp
- Red chilly powder: ½ tsp
- Cumin powder: ½ tsp
- Green chillies: 6-8
- Fresh coriander leaves: ½ cup
- Ginger paste: 2 tsp
- Garlic paste: 2 tsp
- Lemon juice: 2 tbsp
- Oil: 3 tbsp
- Salt to taste

FOR PASTRY DOUGH

- Plain flour: 250 gm
- Ghee: 4 tbsp
- Yogurt: 2 tbsp
- Oil to fry
- A pinch of low sodium salt

METHOD

Wipe clean mushroom and peppers. Remove stalks and mince the mushrooms. Finely chop peppers. Scrape and mince carrots and ginger. Slit and deseed the green chillies. Wash and chop coriander leaves. Crumble the *paneer* and whisk the yogurt. Heat oil, add garlic and ginger paste with red chilli powder, salt, and minced mushrooms. Lightly stir-fry till moisture evaporates. Add carrots, green chillies and *paneer*. Stir-fry for a minute; then add ginger and peas. Sprinkle lemon juice before adding pepper and pomegranate seeds. Stir well and sprinkle royal cumin seeds.

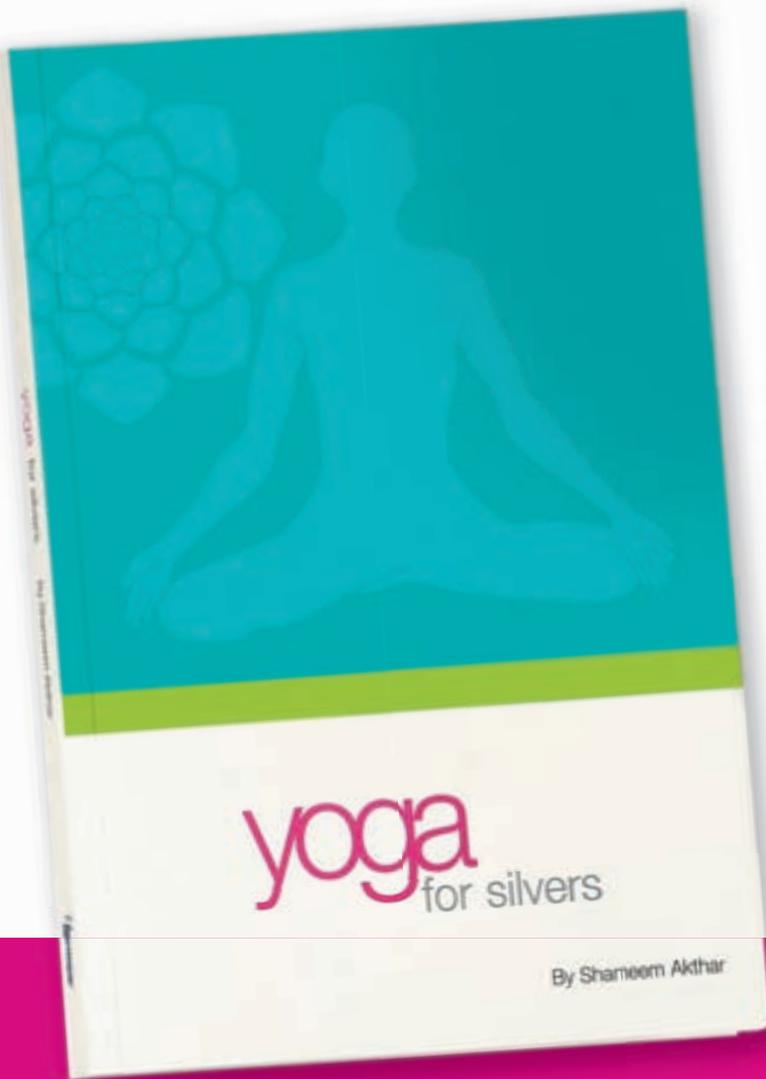
Knead the flour for soft dough by mixing a little salt, ghee and yogurt. Cover and keep aside for half an hour in the refrigerator. Divide the dough into equal portions. Roll each portion into a round ball. Dust with a little flour and shape into ovals. Place a little mince in the centre, fold over to cover the mince and seal the edges. Trim off the uneven sides to make neat circles. Shallow-fry till golden brown.



FRESH FACT

Studies show that pomegranate seeds help eliminate fats from the digestive system. Pomegranate seeds are full of goodness. They help clear up the arteries, reduce bad cholesterol, and help treat urinary and digestive disorders.





yoga for silvers

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

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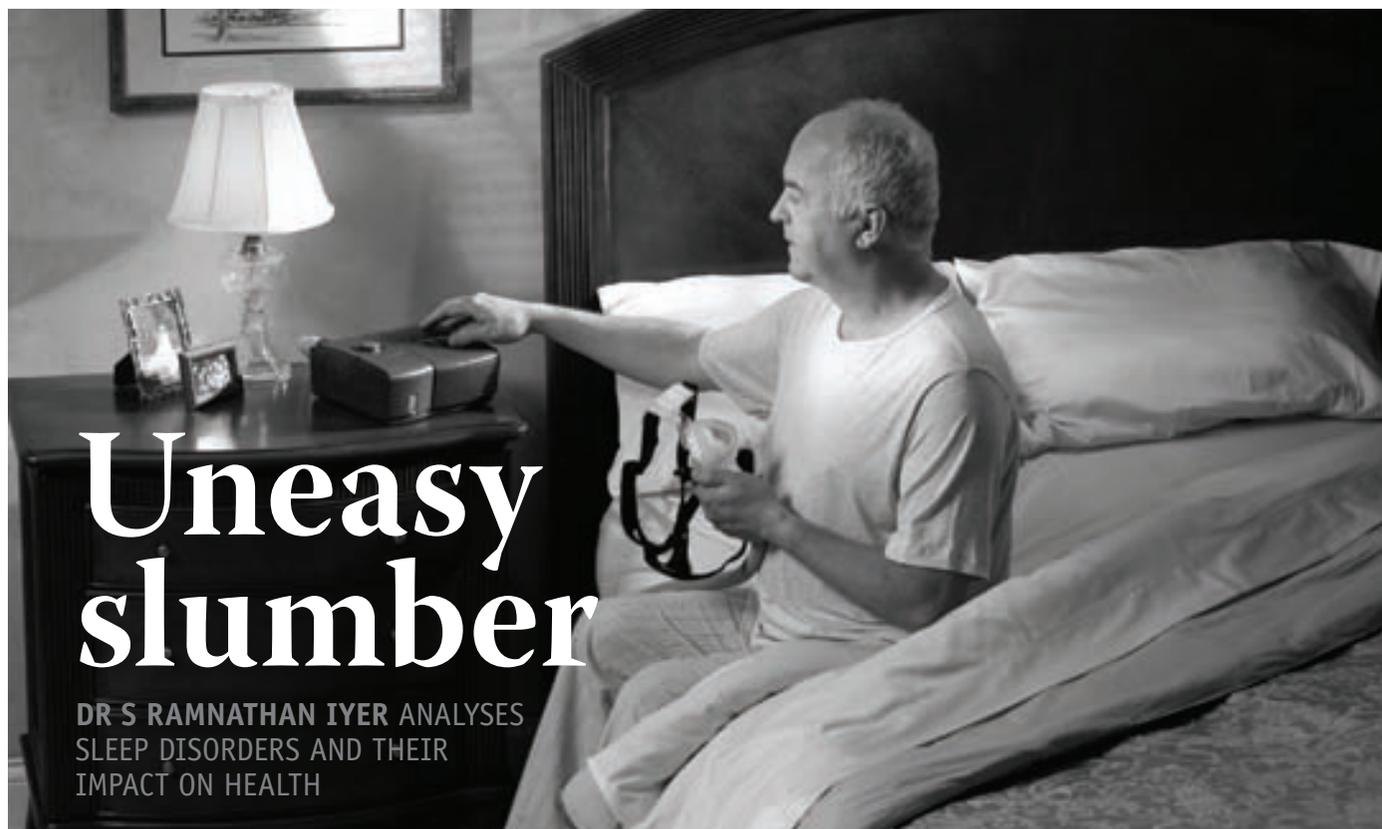
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Uneasy slumber

DR S RAMNATHAN IYER ANALYSES SLEEP DISORDERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON HEALTH

Sleeplessness is a problem everywhere, from Seattle to Shillong. A recent poll by the National Sleep Foundation in the US showed that Americans spend less time sleeping than they did five years ago; today, one in seven Americans suffers from chronic sleep/wake disorders. And though such statistics are not readily available in India, we might not be far behind.

Good quality sleep is essential for physical, mental and emotional well-being—animal trials have demonstrated that sleep deprivation can be fatal. A function of the brain, sleep recharges body and mind. During sleep, the brain secretes the growth hormone and, therefore, its absence adversely affects health. About seven to eight hours of undisturbed sleep is considered optimal. Sleep has several functions, including consolidation of memory and boosting of immunity, but the trend of a '24x7 life' has relegated it to secondary status. While for younger people, sleep deprivation may occur because of late-night shifts, long-distance travel and social engagements, for silvers it may be owing to age and the resultant lack of the growth hormone. Either way, it leads to exhaustion, fatigue and daytime sleepiness.

With advancing age, though, other sleep disorders begin to trail insomnia. One of my elder patients is always uncomfortable about staying overnight with relatives or friends because of his snoring problem. For the same reason he

avoids travelling overnight in trains. The prevalence of snoring and obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) is more likely to occur in post-menopausal women, with the disorder being a risk factor for high blood pressure, heart disease (angina, heart attack), diabetes and stroke in both elderly men and women. There are nearly 88 sleep-related disorders, of which insomnia, snoring and OSA are most common.

INSOMNIA

Insomnia is a condition where it is difficult to induce or maintain sleep. As any physical or emotional ailment can be responsible—backache, diabetes, heart disease, sleep apnoea or anxiety—a thorough evaluation is very important. While sleep diaries can help establish the cause, patients may also require a polysomnography test (sleep study). Management of insomnia depends on the cause.

SNORING AND OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNOEA

Snoring—a prominent symptom of OSA—is a noise produced when the soft part of the oropharynx (part of upper airway) vibrates as a result of airflow obstruction during asleep. Though patients of OSA are often obese, it can also affect normal and low body weight people because of anatomical reasons (large tongue, protruded lower jaw) that result in a narrow upper airway. Sometimes, the muscle that keeps the pharynx open in sleep becomes ineffective owing to loss of tone.

Effects of snoring

- It indicates the development of OSA.
- Obstructed breathing during sleep may lower oxygen levels in blood, which could be harmful.
- It often results in restless sleep exhibited by awakening owing to change of posture or for urination.

UNDERSTANDING OSA

Repetitive collapse of the upper airway in OSA leads to obstruction in breathing, which causes oxygen concentration in the blood to drop. The accompanying struggle to breathe results in arousal from sleep. One may not leave the bed but change sleeping position to start breathing and snoring once again. This cycle, when repeated several times during the night, causes fragmented and disturbed sleep that is reflected in daytime sleepiness.

On awakening, one feels tired and may have a headache. Spending more time to get ready and often taking additional cups of tea or coffee, chewing tobacco, or smoking to keep alert and awake all day, OSA patients can sleep anywhere—in trains, while working and even while talking to another person. Those who drive are at risk of vehicular accidents. Both alcohol and sleep-inducing medicines have a bad effect on muscle tone, and cause OSA patients to suffer further.

OSA symptoms

- Habitual snoring
- Daytime sleepiness
- Lack of energy, fatigue, exhaustion
- Irritable behaviour
- Episodes of loss of memory
- Near-miss or vehicular accidents owing to sleepiness
- High blood pressure
- Frequent urination at night
- Decreased efficiency at workplace
- Increase in bodyweight—obesity also causes OSA
- Impotence
- OSA can coexist with lung diseases like asthma, bronchitis

OSA outcome

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Ischemic heart disease (heart attacks)
- Strokes (paralysis)
- Diabetes mellitus
- Dementia (decline in intellectual function and memory)
- Increase in bodyweight; OSA patients are often unable to lose weight despite diet and exercise. Tiredness and sleepiness also prevents them from exercising
- Impotence
- Hyperacidity (heartburn, gastro-oesophageal reflux disease)



Live Life *Pain Free*

After the age of 50, fitness becomes a challenge. Physical activities and exercise routines that you once found merely challenging may become painful by the time you have crossed 65. Even for those modestly fit, the body will shift and change. If you have been diagnosed with Osteoarthritis, you are not alone. Many aging people discover Osteoarthritis is the reason for their creaking knees, aching backs and sore fingers. It is the most common form of disability and a natural part of aging.

While staying active and exercising regularly are important, the aches and pains make it a very tough task. In such cases, a Knee brace can prove to be highly beneficial. Based on the degree of pain, injury and/or degeneration, the right knee brace can go a long way in restoring normalcy to a person's daily life.

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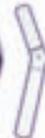
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Enhancing Performance & Mobility for Pain-free, Healthy Living

- Eye problems, including glaucoma, anterior ischemic optic neuropathy, floppy eyelid syndrome, and optic neuropathy
- Sudden death in sleep has also been reported

OSA and heart patients: OSA patients are prone to hypertension and heart attack. It is advisable to evaluate patients of high blood pressure and cardiac problems for OSA. Management of OSA is rewarding in such cases.

OSA and diabetes mellitus: Sleep is a metabolic regulator and sleep debt has harmful effects on metabolism. OSA is closely linked to diabetes. In fact, while OSA patients are prone to develop diabetes owing to release of ‘stress hormones’ in sleep, diabetic patients should be evaluated for underlying OSA. Treatment of OSA has beneficial effects on the overall management of diabetes, including complications like high blood pressure and retinal damage.

OSA and obesity: The majority of overweight people suffer from sleep apnoea. Obesity is both a cause and consequence of OSA. Lack of physical activity in OSA patients results in a vicious obesity-OSA-obesity circle. However, even people who are not overweight can develop OSA because of craniofacial features.

OSA management: Treatment can start once OSA is diagnosed with the help of a polysomnography test. While decreasing body weight, sleeping with the head elevated or on the sides can help, the most effective and accepted mode of treatment is using a continuous positive airway pressure machine while sleeping. It may take a few days for you to get comfortable using the machine. Portable and working on electricity, inverter battery or generator, the device opens the upper airway to facilitate uninterrupted breathing. Snoring stops and oxygen levels can be maintained during sleep. Though other options include surgery, drugs have not been known to help.

SLEEP WELL

- Maintain regular wake and sleep times
- Go to bed when you are drowsy—don’t force sleep
- Use the bedroom for sleeping and don’t watch TV at bedtime
- Exercise regularly
- Avoid tea or coffee at bedtime; drink warm milk instead
- Avoid nicotine (tobacco) in any form at night; it is an alerting agent
- Don’t consume alcohol to induce sleep; it disturbs sleep
- Don’t plan the next day while going to sleep; it induces stress and delays onset of sleep

POWER NAPPING

THE BEST TIME TO GRAB A POWER NAP IS EARLY AFTERNOON—BETWEEN 2 PM AND 4 PM—AFTER LUNCH. IT SHOULD IDEALLY LAST 15 TO 20 MINUTES—AND SHOULD DEFINITELY NOT EXCEED 30 MINUTES.

MEMORY BOOST

ACCORDING TO EXPERTS FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY IN THE US, POWER NAPS WORK ONLY IF THE QUALITY OF SLEEP IS RIGHT! AND EVEN THOUGH BRIEF NAPS MAY GIVE MEMORY A BOOST, A PROPER NIGHT’S SLEEP IS ESSENTIAL FOR MANY VITAL BODY FUNCTIONS.

SIESTA LAW

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN FRANCE IS CONSIDERING ESTABLISHING THE RIGHT TO A 15-MINUTE POWER NAP FOR WORKERS.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

The most common cause of excessive sleepiness is sleep deprivation. Its effective management depends on the underlying cause.

Causes

- Not allowing adequate time for sleep
- Sleep disorders
- Excessive worry, depression
- Repeated awakenings during early morning hours
- Working at night
- Travelling across time zones
- Disorders like backaches and asthma that disturb sleep

Consequences

- Chronic mood disturbances, anxiety
- Sleepiness results in vehicular and industrial accidents
- Lower work performance
- Overeating and/or consuming tea, coffee, tobacco, smoking to remain awake
- Obesity
- Disruption of social functioning
- Hypertension, diabetes, ischemic heart disease
- Snoring and obstructive sleep apnoea
- Marital discord

The fact that new age Indian cities never sleep may not be a matter of pride after all. I believe it’s a matter of concern and sleep disorders should be evaluated and treated in time to provide better quality of life and promote health and happiness.

Dr S Ramnathan Iyer is consultant physician and consultant sleep medicine at Ambika Clinic, East Dombivli, Thane and Dr L H Hiranandani Hospital, Powai, Mumbai



Shameem

Akthar



YOGIC MOVES

Hand gesture for the head (*mahasirs mudra*)

Sit in any meditative posture. The tips of your thumb, index finger and middle finger must touch each other in both hands. Now bend your ring finger towards the bottom of the thumb. Keep your little fingers extended. You can do this *mudra* around thrice daily, each time holding for 15 minutes at a time. You can also do this during your daily commute or while meditating and doing breathing practices (*pranayama*). **Benefits:** This *mudra* offers relief from migraines. It also de-stresses you, relieves mucous congestion and flushes you with a sense of rare stillness.

Heads up:

Yoga can cure almost every type of headache

Much like the common cold, headaches are endured as inevitable. The usual pills are swallowed in vain to suppress the symptoms, while the victim is resigned to future attacks. However, like all illnesses, headaches are actually external manifestations of an existing internal physical or emotional problem. Lack of rest, stress at work, attempting to juggle loyalties at work and home, even something as mundane as the ennui a housewife experiences through lack of intellectual stimulation can trigger a headache. A stressed person is a sitting duck for stray infections, any passing emotional provocation of fear, anger or irritation, while succumbing even to routine hormonal fluctuations. A disciplined yoga regime helps by unscrambling such garbled message the body receives.

Unlike conventional medicine, holistic medicine seeks to empower by removing the causes rather than suppressing the symptoms. According to the Bihar School of Yoga, which is among the foremost institutes in yogic therapy, most headaches such as psychogenic headaches (caused by tension), vascular headaches (throbbing aches caused by dilation of blood vessels inside the skull accompanied by fever), migraines, hypertension headaches (owing to dilation of blood

vessels outside the skull) and muscle spasms may be completely cured by yogic therapy. This includes cleansing the nostril (*neti*) and the digestive tract (*kunjal*).

Other headache-relieving yogic practices include the wind release series (*pawanmuktasana*), sun salutation (*surya namaskar*) and bellows breath (*bhastrika*), all of which need the guidance of a yoga therapist. Yogic relaxation techniques encourage the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the healing part inside us. The soothing practice of yoga of sleep (*yoga nidra*) also has an almost miraculous impact on injuries and pain, especially headaches.

Yogic stretches and forward bends help by releasing tension and pushing blood to the head, respectively. Initially, you may have to perform some of these poses with props or reach into them only partially till your body gradually gets accustomed to the new boost in blood circulation. Some complete and gentle stretches include the palm tree pose (*tadasana*) and stick pose (*yastikasana*). Forward bends include the hare (*shashankasana*) and double angle pose (*dwikonasana*). Yogic eye exercises or *trataka* are known stress-busters. They also gently exercise the delicate area around the eyes, as well as the muscles of the eyes themselves, to offer relief in cases where the headache is caused by strained eyes.

Shameem Akthar is a Mumbai-based yoga acharya



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



Dr Anjali

Mukerjee

Flour power: The pros and cons of whole grains

Of late, I have read a lot about multigrain flour. What are its advantages? Is it worth switching over to the far-more expensive multigrain bread? Is there an economical way to include its benefits in our daily diet?

Multigrain bread is nothing but bread that contains a combination of unrefined flours from different grains. The word 'unrefined' denotes flour that has the bran, fibre, vitamins and minerals (as nature meant it to be), unlike the refined, white and shelf-stable version minus all the nutrients that add up to a multitude of health benefits. Compared to whole-wheat flour, *maida* (white or refined flour) has only 25 per cent of the fibre and nutrients. With advancing age, a person becomes susceptible to various ailments. Though the problems cannot be remedied altogether by diet, consuming fibre-rich whole grains will definitely help in managing some issues.

Here are the health benefits of whole grains:

- They prevent constipation and promote growth of healthy bacteria in the colon by improving overall bowel health.
- Consumption of more than three daily servings reduces the likelihood of weight gain.
- They're the best bet to lose belly fat.
- They help reduce blood pressure in people suffering from hypertension.
- They reduce risk of coronary heart disease by bringing down LDL (bad cholesterol).
- They are a rich source of B vitamins, especially thiamine, zinc, chromium, selenium, magnesium and several antioxidants that prevent several forms of cancer, especially those associated with the digestive tract.

Considering the many health benefits that whole grains are credited with, switching from white to multigrain bread or even whole-wheat bread can be definitely



beneficial. However, it is advisable to keep the following facts in mind:

- The list of ingredients on the pack should indicate that the bread labelled 'whole wheat' contains 100 per cent whole wheat.
- Any bread that appears darker than the normal *roti* is sure to contain colouring agents like caramel or artificial colour.
- Unless *maida* is the main ingredient with very little wholegrain flour, pure whole wheat or multigrain bread is less likely to be as soft as white bread.
- Beware of marketing words like 'enriched' or 'added nutrients'; in such cases, a few nutrients shaved off from the actual grain have probably been added to enhance customer appeal.

You can enjoy the health benefits of multigrain breads in various other ways too. Stock flours like whole wheat,

With advancing age, a person becomes susceptible to various ailments. Though the problems cannot be remedied altogether by diet, consuming fibre-rich whole grains will definitely help to manage some issues

ragi, bajra, barley, oats, soy, *moong, urad* and maize and use them to prepare different Indian delicacies.

- Combine soybean, barley, *ragi* and *bajra* with regular *atta* to make *roti* or *paratha*.
- Besides making *dhokla* with rice and *urad dal*, innovate and prepare with *moong, chana* or *rajma* flour.
- Make the regular *kurmura* (puffed rice) *bhel* more nutritious by mixing sprouts, roasted *chana* and peanuts.
- Dish out unique *chilla* or *handvo* by combining different *atta*. Perk it up further by adding finely chopped vegetables like onion, capsicum, carrot, cabbage and tomato.
- Make *puri, khakhra* or *sev* using a combination of flours like *ragi, nachni, bajra, jowar, besan* or soy. Flavour with different spices and *masala* like *pav bhaji masala, chaat masala* or garlic to add zing. Bake to retain goodness.
- Prepare *idli, dosa* or *uttapam* with unique batter mixtures of *ragi, poha, rawa* or whole-wheat flour mixed with several veggies.
- Use unpolished brown rice (and not polished white rice) to make *pulao, biryani* or *khichdi*. Improve the nutrient density further by adding sprouts or beans like *moong, rajma* or *chana*.

Be 'bread wise' when you go shopping and read the fine print carefully. Those who wish to avoid bread or prefer more economical options can get the same health advantages by following the above mentioned suggestions. It's never too late to inculcate healthy eating habits.

Nutritionist Dr Anjali Mukerjee is the founder of Health Total, a nutrition counselling centre
Website: www.health-total.com



If you have a question for Dr Mukerjee or Dr Lewis, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



WEIGHT WATCH

DR JOE LEWIS ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ON DIET, WEIGHT AND EXERCISE

Q ♦ **Though I have been playing tennis for several years, I stopped recently as my problem of varicose veins has aggravated. Please suggest a suitable exercise routine that I can follow.**

A ♦ As excessive weight is one of the causes of varicose veins, it would be advisable to lose weight if you are overweight.

While aerobic exercises that work the legs (walking or jogging) are generally beneficial, avoid workouts with weights. Doctors caution against high-impact sports such as tennis. But if your doctor regards tennis as a harmless activity, I would advise you to do some pre-tennis preparation. There are several simple exercises that may relieve your condition. While sitting, rotate your feet at the ankles in a circular motion, turning them first clockwise, then counter-clockwise. Next, extend your legs forward and point your toes to the ceiling, then to the floor. Another exercise is to lift your feet off the floor and gently bend your legs back and forth at the knees.

If your work requires sitting for long hours, take a break every 45 minutes. Go for a stroll, climb stairs or do zigzag hops. Sometimes use of compression bandages before and during an activity is helpful. This requires you to roll the bandage on your legs from feet to upper thighs, with each layer overlapping the previous one.

Playing tennis requires short bursts of activity with prolonged endurance. Begin with playing doubles for three to four weeks and then progress to singles. Take frequent breaks between sets. Do one or two sets of the ankle pumps and calf raises during breaks.

Reduce salt, tea and coffee intake, and remain well hydrated by drinking eight to 10 glasses of water.



Dr Joe Lewis is head of research and development at Kaya Life, a chain of professional weight-control centres (SMS Life to 54646)

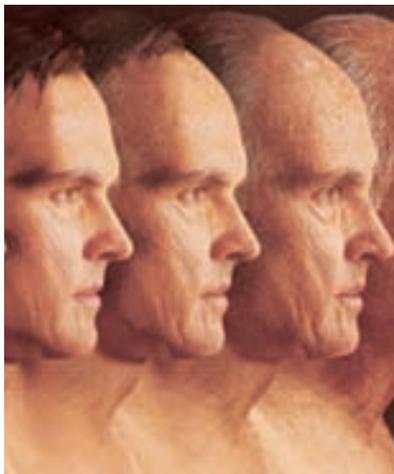


Reclaim control

A recently designed aid for men suffering from urinary incontinence will soon make products like diapers, catheters and penile clamps passé. Conceived by Dr Rakesh Kapoor, head of the urology department at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow, and manufactured by Creative Consultants (a Gurgaon-based company), the aid is a contraption designed to avoid any direct contact with the male organ. It comprises a soft cuff and a pipe to take urine to a collection device strapped to the upper thigh. The aid can be attached to normal underwear and washed every day—after all, urine is sterile. Current solutions require contact with the male organ that often causes ulceration, irritation and pain. Urinary incontinence not only causes frequent urination but also lack of control. Estimated to affect one in every 10 people above the age of 60, the condition can severely limit quality of life. It took more than a year to design the aid and the team will continue its research for further improvement based on user feedback.

The age factor

While identifying certain genetic variants that appear to cause biological ageing in humans, researchers at the University of Leicester in UK have established the **existence of two forms of ageing: chronological and biological**. While the former is a measure in years, the latter reveals that cells of some individuals are older or younger than their actual age. The variants located near a gene called TERC were discovered after analysing more than 500,000 genetic variations across the entire human genome. During the study, the length of telomeres—repetitive DNA sequences



located at the end of chromosomes—was found to be a marker of biological ageing. In people with a particular genetic variant, the telomeres shorten as the cells divide and age, making them look biologically older. Recently published in journal *Nature Genetics*, the study suggests that individuals with the variant are genetically programmed to age three to four years faster than biological age. Increasing evidence also indicates that the risk of age-related conditions like cardiac problems and certain cancers are more closely linked to biological rather than chronological age.

HAPPY FEET

Orthaheel Footcare has launched a range of scientifically designed footwear that promises to help realign your feet. Lightweight and attractive, Orthaheel's flip flops, sandals and x-trainers (walking/jogging shoes) offer support and walking comfort. By constantly standing, walking or running on hard surfaces instead of soft natural surfaces like soil or sand for which nature has designed our feet, we exert excessive pressure to achieve ground contact. This flattens arches and disrupts normal knee function and hip alignment, increasing pressure on the lower back. The resultant weakening of the arch, tilting of the heel or rotation of the leg leads to heel, back heel or knee pain in about 70 per cent of people worldwide. The success of Orthaheel shoe inserts prompted SSL-TTK Ltd to introduce the range of orthotic footwear. "The Orthaheel range of footwear for men and women are available in different colours including black, brown, tan, camel, white, navy, blue and pink," Lavi Pal Singh, senior product manager of Orthaheel & Scholl Footwear at SSL-TTK Ltd in Chennai tells *Harmony*. The price range varies from Rs 1,499 to Rs 3,799. Check them out at retail outlets across India like Metro, Mochi, Reliance Footprint, Lifestyle, Central (Pantaloon), Centro (Hyderabad) and Koblerr (Chennai).



Breach Candy Hospital brings good news for thousands of cardiac patients in Mumbai. Doctors at the 24-hour catheterisation lab will now perform **primary angioplasty on patients who have suffered a heart attack within 90 minutes of their arrival at the hospital.** The life-saving emergency procedure will significantly decrease damage to heart muscles and mortality.

promotion

Dental Implants



Dr Dhaval Pandya
MDS
Maintains a consulting perio and implantology practice at Mumbai and at Baroda
Mobile: (0) 9930998282
Email: drdhavalpandya@yahoo.com

Q1) I am 47 years old and I have multiple teeth missing. What are the advantages of implant-supported prosthesis over conventional prosthesis?

Advantages of implant supported prosthesis:

- Maintains bone over a period of time
- Reduced size of prosthesis
- No need to alter adjacent teeth
- Maintain facial aesthetics (muscle tone)
- Psychological advantage
- Improves chewing performance
- Increases survival times of prosthesis

Q2) I was advised to replace my front single tooth with an implant supported prosthesis. What are the advantages of single tooth implant restoration?

Advantages of single tooth implant restoration:

- High success rates (above 97 per cent for 10 years)
- Decreased rate of decay (caries) of adjacent tooth
- Decreased risk of root canal procedures on adjacent tooth
- Improved aesthetics of adjacent teeth
- Improved maintenance of bone
- Decreased sensitivity of adjacent teeth
- Psychological advantage

LEG ALERT



According to researchers from the University of Michigan in the US, **silvers who experience difficulty in stooping, crouching or kneeling (SCK) have decreased leg muscle strength.** Problems with performing functional activities involving the lower body like lifting and prolonged standing also usually increase among adults with SCK difficulty. Strength measurement of the trunk and lower-extremity muscles (extending between knee and ankle) can predict functional impairments. It also helps to investigate the efficacy of training specific muscle groups to improve functional performance and reduce the number of falls. “The results of this study will have implications for clinicians working to reduce the risk of falls in older adults,” says researcher Allon Goldberg, from the Department of Health Care Sciences at the Wayne State University in Detroit.

This observational study compared feedback from 48 participants over the age of 65 who graded their SCK abilities on a five-point difficulty scale. The data was analysed and actions related to strength, balance and tendency to fall were evaluated. “Muscle weakness is only one of the factors that cause falls,” says Dr Sujata Malik, head of rehabilitation medicine & physiotherapy at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi, speaking to *Harmony*. “Other important determinants in this age group are neurological and vestibular causes, and degenerative changes in the joints, spine, hip and knee. Unlike the West, many of our daily activities involve sitting postures on the floor level. Hence, the findings may not be entirely applicable in the Indian scenario.”

Fortis Group of Hospitals plans to invest Rs 2.5 billion in three metro cities in the next financial year. Besides setting up a separate oncology division in Mumbai in 2010, plans include multi-speciality hospital projects in Kolkata and Bengaluru where the healthcare chain is headquartered.



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Immortal remains

The world is just a shell; break through it, urges **Rabindranath Tagore**

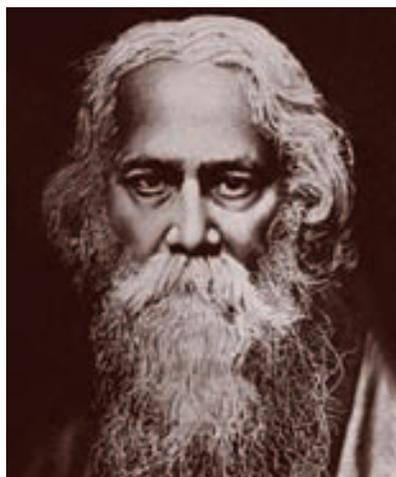
There are men whose idea of life is static, who long for its continuation after death only because of their wish for permanence and not perfection; they love to imagine that the things to which they are accustomed will persist forever. They completely identify themselves in their minds with their fixed surroundings and with whatever they have gathered, and to have to leave these is death for them. They forget that the true meaning of living is outliving....

The fruit clings to its stem; its skin clings to the pulp and the pulp to the seed so long as the fruit is immature, so long as it is not ready for its course of further life. Its outer covering and its inner core are not yet differentiated and it only proves its life by its strength of tenacity. But when the seed is ripe, its hold upon its surrounding is loosened; its pulp attains fragrance, sweetness and detachment, and is dedicated to all who need it. Birds peck at it and it is not hurt, the storm plucks it and flings it to the dust and it is not destroyed. It proves its immortality by its renunciation.

In Hindu scriptures this world is considered to be an egg. If that be true, then this egg must have for its content a living being whose fulfillment is to break through its shell into a freer existence. While our world feeds us, gives us shelter, it encloses us all around. The limitedness of our narrow sensibility and range of thought build the shell of our world egg, within which our consciousness is confined. If we could widen its boundaries even by a small fraction, if some of the invisible rays could come within our sphere of perception, if few more of the dance rhythms of creation could find response in some added strings of our senses, then the whole

aspect of our world would be completely changed.

To come out of the bounds of our sensibility and mental vision into a wider freedom is the meaning of our immortality. Can we imagine



While the spirit of life in man seeks continuance, the spirit of immortality seeks emancipation

in our present stage of confinement what that sphere of freedom is like? The passivity which is the predominant fact of the shell life is secretly contradicted by the rudimentary wings. Likewise in the confinement of our present state, in spite of the fact that a great part of our life is passively obedient to circumstances, there struggles in us our aspiration for freedom against impediments that appear to be ultimate. This is our spiritual pair of wings which have their significance in a full opportunity to soar. Had immortality only meant an

endless persistence of our shell itself then we should admit that these impotent wings were cursed by an evil power with an eternity of hindrance. But this we cannot admit. Man has ever talked of emancipation from what is present.... While the spirit of life in him seeks continuance, the spirit of immortality seeks emancipation.

The life of the seed within the fruit is absolutely different from its life of growth as a tree. The life which is bound on all sides within the environment of our self, within the limited range of our senses must be so fundamentally different from the life of an emancipated soul that it is impossible to imagine the latter while we are immured in the sheath of self. And therefore in our desire for eternal life we pray for an eternity of our habit and comfort, forgetting that immortality is in repeatedly transcending the definite forms of life in order to pursue the infinite truth of life. Those who think that life's true meaning is in the persistence of its particular forms which are familiar to us are like misers who have not the power to know that the meaning of money can only be found by spending it, by changing the symbol into truth.

Those who build their vision of a life after death upon the foundation of desires belonging to the present life merely show their want of faith in Eternal life. They cling to what they have because they cannot believe that their love for the present is only an indication that this love will persist through their growth, stimulating it, and not that it will retard their growth altogether.

Excerpt from Thought Relics (Macmillan Company; 1921) by Rabindranath Tagore

“Meeting different kinds of people keeps me mentally agile and gives me something to look forward to.”

V K KAPOOR, 68



Sanjay Sharma /Kurt

Stress buster

I retired as additional director-general of police (ADGP), Haryana, in 2002. My 32 years as a police officer and a decade-long stint with the Intelligence Bureau (IB) gave me enviable opportunities such as commanding security arrangements for visiting foreign dignitaries and working in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Israel and Africa. My contribution was recognised with two medals for distinguished service and meritorious service.

The IB trained me to look at things at a deeper level. Interacting with a wide spectrum of people—from top politicians to underworld goons—helped me realise that everyone has to work under considerable stress. This got me thinking about how stress is a major cause of both failure and success. While still in service I began writing about stress in *The Tribune* and *Indian Express*. After retirement, I decided to start an institute focusing on stress management. Space, fortunately, posed no problem as I had a vacant house in Panchkula near Chandigarh where I live. Deciding against a bank loan, I invested some of my savings in the project. In July 2002, I established the Institute of Stress Management and Research. As work began to pour in, I employed the best senior professors and psychiatrists as resource persons. Gradually, I got invitations to deliver lectures at various organisations like Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie; IB, New Delhi; National Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics, Faridabad; Maharaja Ranjit Singh Police Academy, Phillaur; and Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi.

I have categorised my programmes into corporate stress, workplace stress, police stress, marital stress, stress among children, middle age and retirement stress. I also started my own consultancy to address the growing menace of suicide among youth. I also deal with under-trials and juvenile delinquents. Besides schools and financial institutions, I have conducted workshops for the Child Welfare Council, Punjab; Army Institute of Law, Mohali; Indian Airlines Management Training Centre, Hyderabad; IPS probationers at IB headquarters and even Alcoholics Anonymous. At present, my team and I are training Delhi police personnel for the 2010 Commonwealth Games on attitude change, communication skills, and interpersonal relations.

—As told to Vandana Shukla

LOCAL VOICE

EXPERTS ANSWER YOUR QUERIES AND CONCERNS ON JOBS AFTER RETIREMENT

The concept of neighbourhood newspapers has always interested me. Now that I have retired, I am considering starting one. Please advise me.

You should first study the potential market and check out the content of existing newspapers. The area you are targeting should be a good mix of residential, commercial and service industry. Survey the potential for both readership and advertising. It's advisable to do a test run by floating and distributing two or three dummy issues after getting the title approved with the Registrar of Newspapers. Get some advertising as well and see the response. Once you are convinced it can be sustained, get it registered. Purchasing computers, newsprint and tying up with a printing house will require about Rs 1 million. Though you should be prepared for initial losses, breaking even in about six months is feasible because of advertising. You will need at least six people for editing, page makeup, field reporters and assistants to maintain reports and accounts.

—S P Ambrose

Ambrose is managing editor and founder of Adyar Times, one of the oldest neighbourhood newspapers in Chennai

I retired as a librarian recently. I would like to do something to-tally different, like taking cookery



classes at home. Please suggest how I should go about it.

First, make a folder of all your recipes and categorise them. Invite about 20 friends and relatives for a demo cookery session. Prepare and serve two or three items and distribute pamphlets giving details of your next class. You would require a complete range of appliances like a gas stove, oven, grill and microwave. Utensils should include non-stick woks and pans. Stock various cooking ingredients necessary for recipes that you plan to teach. Allocate different days for different kinds of food; for instance, Indian, continental, vegetarian, non-vegetarian, soups, salads, starters. This information could be emailed to friends living in the city with a request to forward it to five of their acquaintances. Two-hour classes can be conducted twice or thrice a week. The fee per class would depend on the number of items being taught—Rs 400 per head is reasonable. An assistant to help is necessary. Distribute photocopies of the dishes you'll make so they can be referred to as you demonstrate each step. Make healthy cookery your USP.

—Komal Taneja

Chef and nutritionist Taneja has authored several cookbooks and conducts culinary classes in New Delhi

My husband retired recently. We are planning to use a part of his settlement benefits to start a fitness centre. Do you think it is advisable?

A modest-sized gym would need about 800-1,000 sq ft space, preferably air-conditioned, with separate rooms for aerobics and yoga. You could start it at your residence, provided there is enough space and the location is good; upmarket residential areas ensure regular clientele. Start with two treadmills and two elliptical cross trainers—prices start from Rs 100,000—besides other equipment like stationary bicycles, steppers and weights, which are quite inexpensive. Your investment would be about Rs 1 million. Choose good equipment and sign on an annual maintenance contract. Hire a dietician, and yoga and aerobic instructors, all with specific time slots. Ideally, start the gym around 6 am. It can be closed between noon and 3 pm or run continuously depending on your support system. Staying open till about 9 pm attracts working people. If managed efficiently, you can earn around Rs 25,000 a month after meeting expenses and recover your investment within a year.

—Poornima Kumar

Kumar's Virgo Fitness and Beauty Centre is one of the oldest fitness centres in Chennai

C REVIVAL

THE TIMEKEEPER

Textile revivalist Bela Shangvi brims with ideas and idealism, observes Anjali Rego

A childhood fascination can sometimes turn into a lifelong passion—as it did with Bela Shangvi. As Shangvi's father was a manufacturer of textile machinery, she grew up with a keen appreciation of the intricate workings of the warp and the weft. As much as she got entranced by India's rich textile heritage, she also became aware of its steady erosion. Mumbai-based Shangvi travelled to the interiors of rural India in her quest to understand why some weaving techniques were fading into obsolescence. "It saddens me that a complex skill that has been perfected over generations meets a swift death when weavers from the younger generation are forced to abandon the craft because of dwindling income," she

rued. In the past 27 years, she has documented over 400 weaving techniques and contributed in the resuscitation of about 40 including Patola, Ashaval, Leheriya, Dharmawaram, Bandhini, Banarasi and Paithani, and Kashmiri embroidery, as well as time-tested dyeing techniques. She has conducted dozens of workshops with weavers all over the country.

Through her design studio Avartan, she offers technical support and design inputs to weavers, besides a platform to reach out to buyers. She also constantly works on ways to help them cut production time and costs. Her other initiative, Purnakala, markets handicrafts. To date, she has reached out to over 2,000 craftsmen through

Purnakala. "I think we need to help weavers and artisans with the same urgency as farmers," says Shangvi with a crusader's zeal.

Her words carry weight and wisdom. The 46 year-old is counted among the foremost revivalist of handloom weaving and textile techniques in India. She was the former president of the Crafts Council of Maharashtra and is now a textile design consultant to the Government of India as well as an honorary member of the World Craft Council. At present, she is working on a book on traditional textile techniques. Contentment still eludes her though. "I am not doing enough," she says. Thankfully her voice only hints at determination—not defeat.



Critic as artist

Richard Bartholomew will always be remembered as a multifaceted creative genius. Though he shone brightest as an art critic, Bartholomew was also a passionate poet, painter and photographer. Some of his photographs are now on display at Chatterjee and Lal in Mumbai till 6 March.

Bartholomew, who was secretary of Lalit Kala Akademi, shared a close association with renowned artists like F N Souza, V S Gaitonde, Jehangir Sabawala and M F Husain—

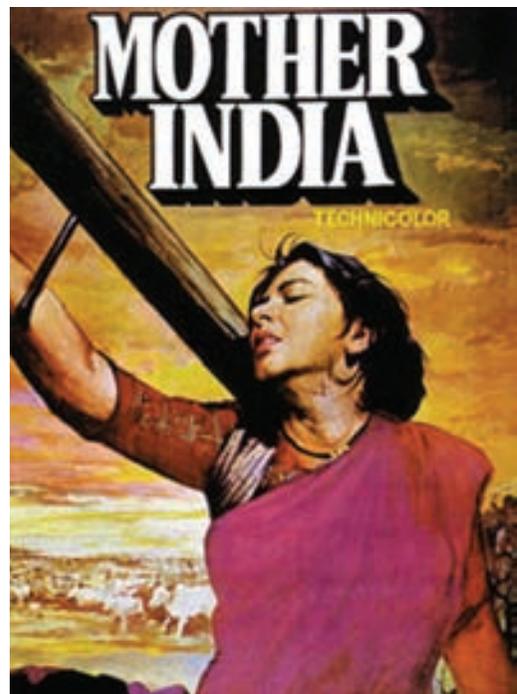
C NOSTALGIA

people who occupy significant space in his works. Though he encouraged bold artistic exploration, his pictures are captured from an unobtrusive stance and reveal the beginnings of modernism in India. His works reflect a peculiar ‘watchful’ quality—an artist staring pensively at his work; the private space of an artist’s studio that somehow accentuates the open space of his mind; artists in introspection as well as vivacity; and Bartholomew’s own tender moments with his family that are captured with impressive detachment. In an interview to newspaper *DNA*, his son Pablo—a famed photographer himself—said: “My dad told people outside what is happening in the art world. And he told artists what people in the outside world like and how they think. The critique today is based on cultural theories and I don’t think that is stimulating at all.” In some ways, the exhibition invites us to that narrow bridge between the world of art and the world outside. This is the first major exhibition of Bartholomew’s works.



MOTHER INDIA’S WORDS

AFTER WRITING A BOOK ON THE DIALOGUES OF AWAARA (SEE JANUARY 2010 ISSUE OF HARMONY), DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER AND WRITER NASREEN MUNNI KABIR IS BACK WITH ANOTHER OFFERING: THE DIALOGUE OF MOTHER INDIA - MEHBOOB KHAN’S IMMORTAL CLASSIC (NIYOGI BOOKS; RS 1,250; 320 PAGES). THE DIALOGUES PENNED BY VAJAHAT MIRZA AND S ALI RAZA, AND SONGS BY SHAKEEL BADAYUNI, ARE PRESENTED IN URDU, HINDI AND ENGLISH. THE BOOK ALSO INCLUDES AN ENGAGING COMMENTARY (IN ENGLISH) ON THE MAKING OF THE CLASSIC. ONE MORE BOOK WORTH ADDING TO YOUR COLLECTION.



The reluctant doctor

Dr Shiram Lagoo, who received the lifetime achievement award at the Pune International Film Festival held in January, on his journey and one true passion

C CINEMA

“I FIRST STARTED PRACTISING ACTING IN THE BATHROOM as I didn’t want to anger my parents. My father, a respected doctor and Congress leader, never appreciated my theatrical inclination. Opting for a medical education was a forced choice and even while in college I always devoted more time to theatre than academics. In fact, I often coaxed female students to organise traditional functions so that I could get a chance to act.

I acquired a degree in medicine from B J Medical College in Pune. After completing my medical studies, I moved to Mumbai to specialise in ENT and then lived in the UK, Canada and Tanzania. Even when I was abroad, I concentrated more on theatre and even had a chance to meet Ingrid Bergman. That still remains the high point of my life.

After completing my degree, I started the Progressive Dramatic Association with like-minded friends to showcase avant-garde theatre. I quit medicine for good in 1969 and became a full-time actor, making my debut with the play *Ithe Oshalala Mrityu* written by Vasant Kanetkar. Of course it was *Natasamrat* that helped me clinch lasting acclaim.

In 1971, director V Shantaram called me one day and said I was his choice for his film *Pinjra*. The film, a poignant tale of a nautch girl and a school teacher, went on to become a hit and is now considered a classic.

I have always had a keen interest and involvement in social development. In 1999, along with social activist



FACTS OF LIFE

- Acted in over 100 Hindi and Marathi films, and over 40 Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati plays; directed over 20 Marathi plays
- Considered one of the greatest actors in Marathi theatre. Last performance: *Surya Pahilela Manus* (The man who saw the sun) in 1997
- Movie magic: *Saamna*, *Des Pardes*, *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar* and *Gharonda* (which won him the 1978 Filmfare Award for Best Supporting Actor)

G P Pradhan, I fasted in support of anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare. I have always advocated a corruption-free society; one in which rationalism drives the nation and its people forward. Wrong beliefs, superstitious values and moral degradation destroy the social fabric.

I have not been following the contemporary movie scenario. But I am aware that there is a new breed of

theatre directors and filmmakers that is experimenting with fresh concepts and approaches. This is an encouraging sign because it implies that innovation and path-breaking creativity will continue to flourish irrespective of the times we live in.

I don’t act anymore because I am unable to withstand the rigours of travel and long hours on stage. But there is just one role I would love to do all over again: *Natasamrat*.”

—As told to Huned Contractor



RETURN OF THE MASTER

Change is the only constant in Satish Gujral's works. The artist, whose long absences from the art scene only serve as pregnant pauses before his breathtaking outputs, is holding an exhibition of his works

at Cymroza Art Gallery in Mumbai till 31 March.

C **ART** Titled *Tryst with Modernity and Tradition*, it comprises

sculptures, paintings and drawings that explore the tenuous equation between technology and tradition. Though Gujral admits to liking the new wave of experimental art, he also believes any art not rooted in traditional ethos is denied a universal appeal. At 84, he still approaches his work with the same vigour he did when he started 62 years ago. And he doesn't believe in being prolific for the sake of it: "If I have nothing new to say, I won't say anything. I won't hold a show for years."



RETRO RETURNS

AAHAT - EK AJIB KAHANI, a movie made in 1974, was finally screened in theatres in Mumbai on 26 February after being in the cans for 36 years. Starring Jaya Bachchan, Vinod Mehra and Amrish Puri, and directed by Kishore Rege, the movie ran into 'undisclosed' trouble as claimed by distributor Salim Jaffer. Bachchan plays a blind girl and Mehra, a cameraman. Puri wears his signature villainous sneer. Catch it if you can for sheer nostalgia.



TOTALLY TAGORE

AS PART OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S 150TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS, THE SOCIETY FOR NATURAL LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY IN COLLABORATION WITH THE BENGAL ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE UNIVERSITY (BESU) AND IIT- KHARAGPUR HAS PUT UP AN ONLINE VERSION OF ALL OF TAGORE'S WORKS. IT WILL ENABLE YOU TO VIEW ALL HIS WORKS ONLINE, INCLUDING NUMEROUS LETTERS AND NOTATIONS OF 2,200 SONGS. LOG ON TO WWW.RABINDRA-RACHANABALI.NLTR.ORG AND JUST TYPE ANY OF THE KEYWORDS OF HIS WORKS. YOU NEED TO INSTALL BENGALI FONTS ON YOUR COMPUTER THOUGH.

The first day at school
The first time you rode the bicycle.
The first crush you had at thirteen
The first drama you got a part in
The first day at college
The first date you went on
The first kiss
The first time you proposed
The first job interview
The first board meeting you addressed
The first day after retirement

BUTTERFLIES never retire

The first click of the mouse.

The all new

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*the website
celebrate age*

Crime and redemption

Prison Mission is a unique initiative that seeks to rewrite the lives of prisoners, reports Nisary Mahesh

Each of us has a beast inside us; a beast that can kill, maim, steal or cause irreparable damage to humanity. When such beasts congregate together they often form blood-hungry mobs. Alone, they can drive us to become murderers, rapists, embezzlers, burglars and thieves. Indeed, there is a very thin line between the ones who commit crimes and those who don't. But there is a world of hostility and contempt that often separates the two.

In a world that rarely allows you to forget your tainted past, the dark, unrelenting confines of a prison can sometime offer refuge. For it was in prison that a group of ex-convicts—inmates of the Poojapura Jail in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala—found the courage to rewrite their lives. While behind bars, they pledged to lead a life of dignity and purpose; to reach out to others who were similarly condemned by society. They started in 1996 by forming a prayer group inside the jail. In 1999, when five of them were released, they formed the Prison Mission, a unique initiative that's now steadily gaining respect, support and encouragement among the state citizenry. In the past 11 years, they have held several public gatherings and prayer group meetings to inform the world about their objectives, which include arranging financial security for families of prisoners; counselling prisoners; and finding ways to bring them back into the fold of social respectability and dignity. Today, Prison Mission has 27 members, many of them silvers. Their task ahead isn't easy. But together they are determined to find that elusive silver lining.

(Top row, from left): Upachandran, 50, convicted of 350 cases of fraudulence, theft and burglary; Radhakrishnan, 45, convicted of murder; Jose Vallapadam, 50, a former hired goon and scamster; Christal Fernandes, 50, jailed for murder committed in the throes of political violence; Thomas George, 58, for illegal drug trade; Second row (from left): Antony, 50,

for passport and visa fraud; Sadasivan, 55, for murder; K D Mathai, 55, for murdering a neighbour in an inebriated state; Babu, 47 (standing), for petty cases; Sarasan (seated in the foreground), 50, for petty cases of theft, burglary and fraud. The red building in the background is the Prison Mission Children's Home set up by members of the mission.







(Opposite page, top) A former hired goon and scamster, 50 year-old Jose Vallapadam was imprisoned for five years at Poojapura Jail. The brain behind Prison Mission, Vallapadam vividly remembers the guilt and the aimlessness of life in prison. "When you are in there, you are constantly haunted by the fear of rejection once you step out," he says. He is seen here with 55 year-old Nelson outside the Sub Jail in Ernakulam. Nelson was jailed for 12 years at the jail for his alleged involvement in political violence, drug trade and petty fraud.

(Opposite page, bottom) Jose Maneed, 52, spent 14 years in jail after being convicted of charges of murdering his wife. "She committed suicide as she was tired of my alcoholism," clarifies Maneed who was released from Poojapura Jail recently. He is seen here distributing Prison Mission leaflets at the busy Vytilla Junction in Kochi. "It doesn't take long for a released

prisoner to find his way back into prison, because very often society won't let go of the stigma attached to his reputation," says Maneed reminiscing over the helplessness that all ex-convicts, both innocent and otherwise, face. "Some ex-convicts become rebels, some waste away with battered self-esteem."

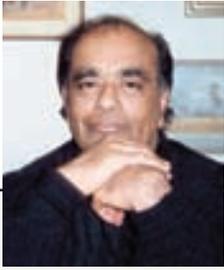
(Above) Ashokan S Nair is on parole. He is serving time for murdering a policeman. "When I am released, I would love to join Prison Mission," says the 47 year-old. Nair's family is being supported by Prison Mission. He is seen here standing outside the Prison Mission Children's Home. Members of the Mission are now coordinating with welfare agencies and private companies to find jobs for released prisoners. Though acceptance didn't come by easily, today Prison Mission's well-wishers and supporters include public personalities, police officers, doctors, prayer groups and volunteers.



(Above) Families of prisoners go through their own personal hell. Maneed is seen here with children of men who are spending time behind bars. The children—10 of them—live in a two-storied community home built by Prison Mission members in Chottanikara near Ernakulam. Members of the Mission pooled their savings—earned while doing menial jobs in jail—and applied for a bank loan. The EMI for the loan is being repaid through donation offered by donors. Insulated from alienation and ridicule, the children grow up with a stronger sense of identity. Vallapadam's teenage son and daughter too live at the home to reassure younger children through their moments of loneliness and anguish.

(Below) The Prison Mission rally has been on the move since December 2009, starting from Kasarakode in northern Kerala and scheduled to end in Thiruvananthapuram on 19 April 2010, halting at 38 jails on the way. Shared empathy helps break the ice when members reach out to hardened criminals and offenders. Seeing members of the Mission living a life of renewed dignity and purpose, convicted prisoners feel motivated to look forward to a new lease of life when they are released. "We inspire those who are about to step out from prison to join us, so they don't end up repeating the offences," says Vallapadam. He plans to extend the rally to the rest of India in the next few years.





THE END OF ELEGANCE

Timeri Murari wonders why style has been reduced to stubble

I miss Elegance. No doubt, I do come from another age in which how you looked and behaved mattered. It wasn't so much to impress others but for one's own self-esteem. My father always wore a suit when he was going out, whether to a dinner, a wedding or afternoon tea. Our weather failed to deter his idea of looking elegant. The suit was immaculately pressed, along with his shirt and tie. His shoes were highly polished and he enjoyed performing that chore himself. If he had an evening appointment, he would shave again as he did not want to look scruffy, even with a few hours' growth. But it was also a time when men made an effort to make themselves presentable in public. If my father wore suits, my grandfather was immaculate in his dhoti, a pale cream silk *jibba* [tunic] and a silk turban precisely tied and placed on his head. And so attired, he would leave the house in the morning to conduct his daily business.

We live now in the age of jeans, a working man's garb that has, over time, been elevated to haute couture. They have become the uniform of men and turn up at dinner parties, wedding receptions, cocktails and wherever the so-called fashionable people gather to celebrate their importance. Recently, a few men wore jeans even at the funeral of my relative, and I did frown upon such a casual dress for a solemn occasion. I'm only grateful that, so far, Indian women still keep their elegance in their stunning saris and *salwar kameez* for going out.

Of course, today there's no such thing as just a pair of ordinary jeans. No one

will be seen dead in them. Jeans come with very visible labels on the behinds of their wearer. You have to show off the brand names—Gucci, Armani, Yves Saint Laurent—and those privileged little leather patches cost you a small fortune. Jeans actually began very humbly. 'Jeans' comes from the French phrase 'blue de Genes', mean-

Elegance is defined by the age in which we live. We're in the fast food, Twitter age where time flies too fast. We're in the age of equality, where the prince and the peasant can wear the same clothes

ing blue of Geneva. And the denim came from India. Denim was first worn by the sailors of Dhunga, which became known locally as dungarees. Back then, the world was already a global marketplace and the dungarees ended up in California during the 1850s gold rush. A tailor called Levi Strauss used the Indian denim to make trousers for the workers. Owing to the hard work, the jeans he made came apart at the pockets and around the waist band and the fly. A tailor called Jacob Davis hit upon the idea of using copper rivets in these strategic positions. He formed a partnership with Strauss and modern

jeans were born. Today, you can buy jeans artfully torn at the knees (proof that you're labouring on your knees) for a few thousand rupees, and jeans that cover only half your bottom. I'm not certain what those imply; maybe they're quicker to get off when you jump into bed.

Further, while a woman would not be seen out of the bedroom without her makeup, and hair immaculately coiffed, men now emerge into daylight as if they've been woken from a very long, drugged sleep and not had time to shave. This is a recent fashion statement by young males. Movies have a great influence on how we look and what we wear. I don't know which male movie star began the unshaven look but every male now sports a three to four-day growth. Is that a sign of virility? Or a sign that they are so busy that they just hadn't the time to run a razor over their faces? I admire trimmed moustaches, full beards and clean-shaven faces but I itch to shave off these three-day growths. It is possible though that a three-day growth has women falling over themselves to caress the prickly cheeks and jaw.

Elegance is defined by the age in which we live. We're in the fast food, Twitter age where time flies too fast. We're in the age of equality, where the prince and the peasant can wear the same clothes—jeans—and look unshaven. We can only tell them apart by the labels on their backsides, and those can be faked too.

Timeri Murari, 61, is an author and screenplay writer living in Chennai

PASSAGES

ODE TO MOTHER EARTH

EXTRACTS FROM *THE HYMN TO THE EARTH, ATHARVA VEDA XII.1*

Truth, External Order that is great and stern, Consecration, Austerity, Prayer and Ritual—these uphold the Earth. May she, Queen of what has been and will be, make a wide world for us.

Earth which has many heights, and slopes and the unconfined plain that bind men together, Earth that bears plants of various healing powers, may she spread wide for us and thrive.

Earth, in which lie the sea, the river and other waters, in which food and cornfields have come to be, in which live all that breathes and that moves, may she confer on us the finest of her yield.

Mistress of four quarters, in whom food and cornfields have come to be, who bears in many forms the breathing and moving life, may she give us cattle and crops.

Earth, in which men of old before us performed their various work, where Devas overwhelmed the Asuras, Earth, the home of kine, horses, birds, may she give us magnificence and lustre.

All-sustaining, treasure-bearing, firm staying-place, gold-breasted, home of all moving life, Earth bears the sacred universal fire. May Indra and Rishava give us wealth.

Earth, whom unsleeping Devas protect for ever without erring, may she pour on us delicious sweets, and endow us with lustre.

Earth, which at first was in the water of the ocean, and which sages sought with wondrous powers, Earth whose heart was in Eternal Heaven, wrapped in Truth, immortal, may she give us lustre and strength in a most exalted State.

Earth, in which the waters common to all, moving on all sides, flow unailing, day and night, may she pour on us milk in many streams, and endow us with lustre.

Earth, in which the Asvins measured out and Vishnu strode, which Indra, Lord of might, made free from foes for himself, may she pour out milk for me—a mother to her son.

Pleasant be thy hills, O Earth, the snow-clad mountains and thy woods! On Earth—the brown, black, ruddy and multicoloured—the firm Earth

protected by Indra, on this Earth I stand, unvanquished, unslain, unhurt.

Set me, O Earth, amidst what is thy centre and thy naval, and vitalising forces that emanated from thy body. Purify us from all sides. Earth is my mother, her son am I; and Parjanya my father: may he fill us with plenty....

Earth in which Night and Day—the black and the bright in union—are settled, which is covered and canopied over by rain: may she establish us with bliss in every dear home.

Heaven, Earth and Mid-Air have given me this wide space, and Agni, Surya, Apas and All-Gods have together endowed me with the intellect.

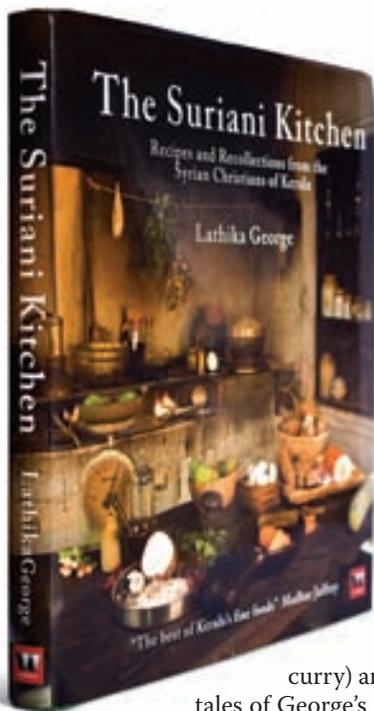
I am victorious, I am called the most exalted on the earth, a conqueror everywhere, a conqueror over everything, I am a victor on every side.

When, O Goddess, proceeding forward, and extolled by Devas, thou hadst spread thy renown, then a great glory entered into thee, and made for thyself the four quarters.

In villages, in the forest, and in the assemblies on the earth, in congregations and in councils, we shall speak of thee in lovely terms.

As a horse scatters dust, so did Earth, since she was born, scatter the people who dwelt on the land, and she joyously sped on, the world's protectress, supporter of forest trees and plants.





KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

THE SURIANI KITCHEN

BY LATHIKA GEORGE

WESTLAND; RS 450; 240 PAGES

For food lovers the world over, Isabel Allende's *Aphrodite* will remain a landmark; a sensual odyssey that blends recipe, memory, intimacy and emotion. Landscape designer Lathika George's paean to Kerala's traditional Syrian Christian—or Suriani—cuisine is redolent of the same delightful flavours. Like the beloved Malabar *parotta*, this book has many delicate layers waiting to be savoured. The history of the Syrian Christian community, believed to be established by Saint Thomas the Apostle in AD 52. Their customs; births, weddings, deaths; rites and rituals. And of course their food: the myriad techniques of cooking, each one with vessel to match; from *oliathiathu* (sautéed preparation) in a *cheena chatti* (round-bottomed 'Chinese pot') to *pollichathu* (broiled or roasted) in an *urali* (a wide-mouthed, squat vessel of bell metal), a smorgasbord of seafood and spices, meats and leaves, vegetables and herbs laid out in clear and uncomplicated recipes. The *kuromolagu chertha kozhi* (pepper chicken) roast, *kallumekka olathiathu* (spicy mussel fry), *olan* (red beans and pumpkin in coconut milk) and *kaalen* (mango and yogurt

curry) are just some of the stand-outs that will vie for your attention. Interspersed with the food are tales of George's family. Their adventures are aplenty, duck-shoots and action-packed holidays. So are their secrets, from the aunt who died of a broken heart to Missy, the travelling cook who lived at convents and had all the nuns fooled—to say any more would be telling! A delicious pot-boiler in every sense of the word.

—Arati Rajan Menon

TASTE OF NOSTALGIA

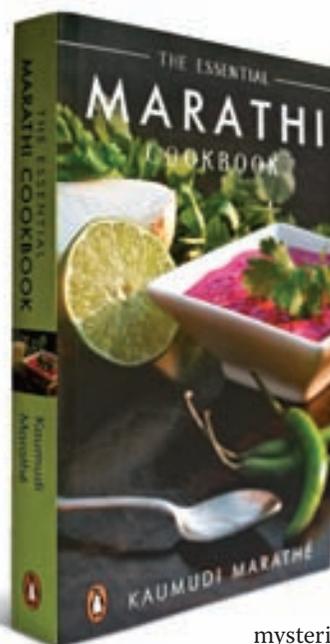
THE ESSENTIAL MARATHI COOKBOOK

BY KAUMUDI MARATHE

PENGUIN; RS 350; 398 PAGES

"Change is inevitable and often welcome. However, remembering the past is to honour it and to learn from it," says Kaumudi Marathe in the preface to her sumptuous book on Maharashtrian cuisine. This must-have book brings alive long-forgotten sounds and secrets from the kitchens of our childhood: the staccato pounding of pestle and mortar; the rhythmic heave of rice on the winnowing fan; the hierarchy of spices sitting in rustic teakwood shelves; and the delicate equations between vegetables and pulses that were once monitored with fastidious concern. Marathe, who lives in the US, has dedicated her book to her daughter for she fears she will not learn cooking by 'osmosis' the way she did while watching her mother and grandmother cook back home in India.

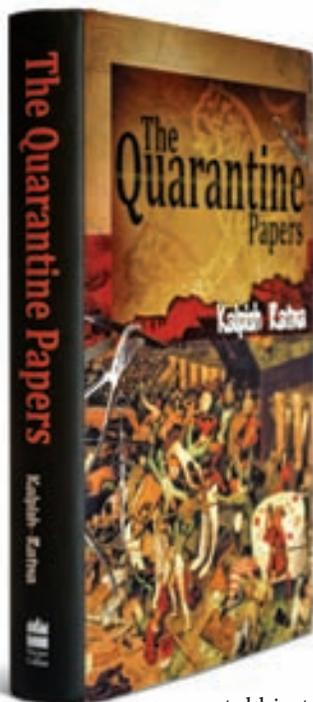
The recipes are contributed by her father, mother, aunts, grandaunts and family friends. Reading the book is like



being in the kitchen with all of them surrounded by friendly banter, amazing tips and, above all, delightful food. Recipes, both elaborate and simple, come with history, regional nuances and wonderful advice. We bump into the oft-quoted Marathi delicacies, like *mugachi usal* or green gram stew, *masale bhat* (spicy rice served at weddings), *sabudanyache vade* (sago cakes), and the downright unusual—*sheng sola* (winter solstice stew), *shengola* (indigenous pasta), *pandra rassa* (white chicken curry), and *kharvas* (a rich dessert made from cow's colostrum). The recipes in the book knock over our one-dimensional assumption of the

mysteriously low profile Maharashtrian cuisine. We learn to discern the differences in food served by Maharashtrians in Kolhapur, Pune, and Nagpur from that served in Goa, Mumbai and Beed. So many worlds living in one state. Just like the rest of India.

—Rajashree Balaram



ONE BY TWO

THE QUARANTINE PAPERS

BY KALPISH RATNA

HARPERCOLLINS; RS 499; 404 PAGES

Duality is a concept that 'Kalpish Ratna' is uniquely qualified to explore—it's not one author but two surgeons, Kalpana Swaminathan and Ishrat Syed, writing under a pseudonym that melds their names in a rather fetching way. *The Quarantine Papers* is also a reflection of duality on many levels; it flits between two Bombays at two different times of tumult and two men who inhabit these times; their tale

told in two different fonts so you can tell

them apart. So you go back and forth from the churn in the city following the demolition of Babri Masjid in December 1992 to a Bombay stricken by bubonic plague—

and communal hatred—in 1896. Our protagonist in 1992 is microbiologist Ratan Oak; the man living through the plague is his great-grandfather Ramratan Oak, a mortician. And if that doesn't sound confusing enough, Ratan soon realises that he's not just himself but Ramratan too and his mission is to stamp out hate from his city. Thrown into the mix are forbidden love, betrayal, cruelty and violence. Eventually, though, it all starts to make sense. Truth be told, Ratan and Ramratan are the only fictional devices in a book that draws heavily from archival material and newspaper reports to chronicle the development of medicine in India as well as the march of religious fanaticism, the bubonic plague of the past juxtaposed with the modern-day communal plague. The authors' worry for their Bombay is palpable—they rue its physical transformation without mental adjustment. Another dichotomy in a book that intrigues even as it informs.

—Arati Rajan Menon

CITY OF LOVE

MUSEUM OF INNOCENCE

BY ORHAN PAMUK

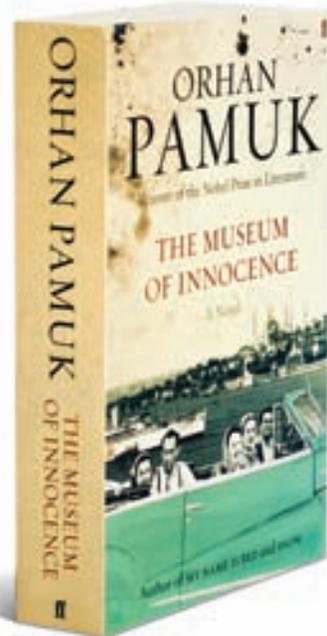
FABER AND FABER; RS 599; 532 PAGES

"When we lose people we love, we should never disturb their souls, whether living or dead. Instead, we should find consolation in an object that reminds you of them, something... I don't know... even an earring." And as if on cue from his lover Fusun's words, begins Kemal's obsession with all things and memories that remind him of her years after she leaves him to be happy with, and marry, his fiancée Sibel. Fusun's earring that came free during one of their passionate rendezvous only to be found much later, the cup she drinks from at Merhamet Apartments where they meet afternoons, the things she has touched and looked at, adding to it remembrances of an Istanbul in transition they both knew, form Kemal's museum of love. On the way, a novel becomes a social study of a city that Pamuk so loves, it's part of almost each of his work of fiction and non-fiction. The city's old money, its fixation with European brands, the preoccupation with virginity defining class, the weddings, funerals, the rift between tradition and modernism,

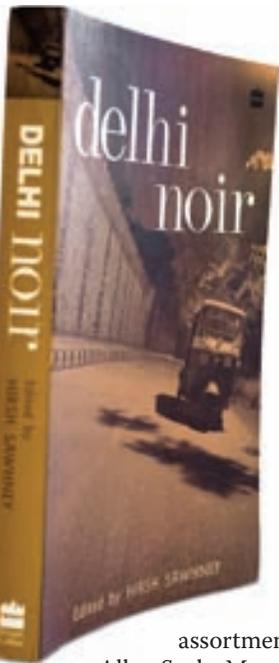
its journalism, and military coups come alive in Eastman Colour, though camouflaged in tears and jealousy, and stories of cousins and distant cousins. And at the centre of an evolving cityscape (and its throbbing museum) are Kemal and his playboy fancies. The younger son of one of the wealthiest businessmen in Istanbul, he can't choose between Sibel and Fusun.

By the time he does, it's too late. And it takes him years of supper visits to his now-married sweetheart to trace his life back to the days at Merhamet Apartments. A sweet love story told with artistry and technique like only a bard can.

—Meeta Bhatti



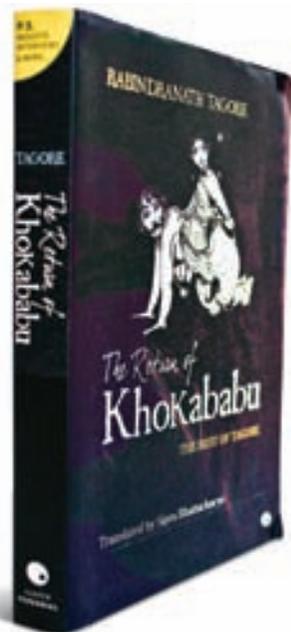
BRIEFLY



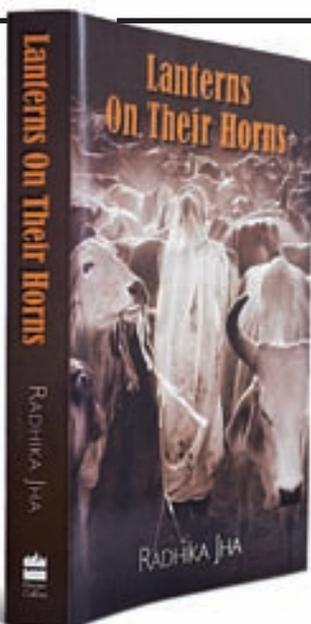
Delhi. A city of extreme seasons and landscapes; a city of wide roads and narrow minds; a city you either hate or love so much that you could go for the critic's throat. Modern, historic, high-tech and archaic, all at once, Delhi lends itself to a multitude of emotions—a perfect notion for an anthology. Little wonder then that **Hirsh Sawhney's DELHI NOIR** (HarperCollins; Rs 399; 289 pages) raises hopes and expectations. The regret, therefore, is greater. The collection fails to be the lighthouse it should have been for a city that ought not to be rendered soulless and forceless, especially by an

assortment of authors of repute: Irwin Allan Sealy, Meera Nair, Tabish Khair and Ruchir Joshi. Without being tied down by a theme, some of the stories are readable, with unexpected surprises lurking around every ending. In Omair Ahmad's "Yesterday Man", a 'victim' of Sikh riots has his revenge turned on its head; Meera Nair's Ramu in "Small Fry" turns to fake Nikes for a facelift; and time stands still around Jantar Mantar in Tabish Khair's "The Scam". Sadly, signboards like R K Puram, Lodi Road, Inter State Bus Terminus and Rohini remain just that, without evoking the charm of a sometimes pulsating and sometimes sleepy city.

Preserving the essence of the original stories, **Sipra Bhattacharya** transports readers to the timeless world of one of India's greatest writers in **THE RETURN OF KHOKABABU – THE BEST OF TAGORE** (Harper-Perennial; Rs 350; 384 pages). The translations faithfully recapture the pervading aura of male domination and conservatism in Rabindranath Tagore's 19th century Bengal, an era of social transition when women struggled to escape the confines of tradition and find their own voice. Emerging from the shadows of the past, the characters from different strata of urban and rural society never fail to strike an empathic chord with the reader: a young widow who obeys a monk's command to forget him by walking into the waters of the river in "The Bathing Ghat's Tale"; a young man who supports widow remarriage yet is unable to marry the widow he secretly worships in "The Girl Next Door"; a neglected wife who rebels against her husband's love for the theatre and discovers her own talent as actor in "Giribala and Gopinath"; a woman who finds the courage to question her role as daughter-in-law and finds her own identity and freedom in "A Wife's Letter". Universal themes that remain relevant decades after these stories were first written.

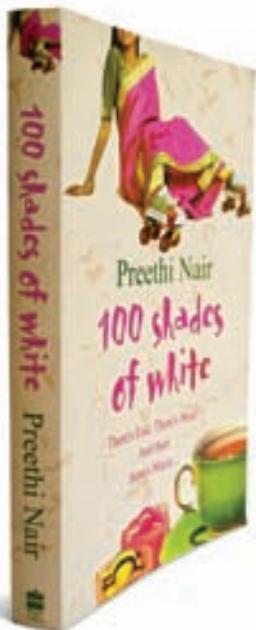


"But he was a brave man and obviously poor, and so the survival instinct in him was strong." These words form the core of **Radhika Jha's** second work of fiction (after the much acclaimed *Smell*) **LANTERNS ON THEIR HORNS** (HarperCollins; Rs 399; 471 pages). And the fact that the setting for these words is a poor man's duel with a wrathful hybrid bull for his semen signifies a clever and jocular take on the changing rural landscape in India—one driven by BT brinjals and artificial insemination of cattle. Convinced that our "villages, like temples, are part of the eternal order of things", Jha sets out on a promising journey to the dusty, sun-baked interiors. Manoj is an idealist



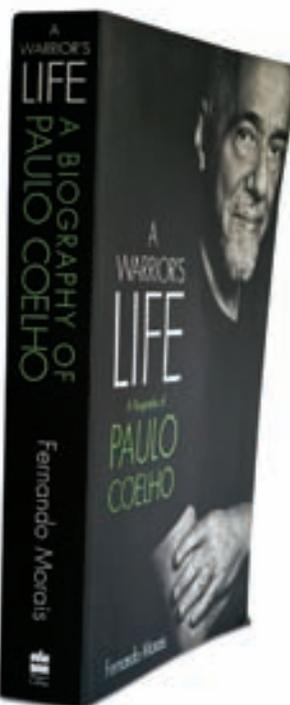
aspiring to change the face of Indian villages. Trained at Kamdhenu Institute for Rural Development and besotted with the institute's artificial impregnator Govinda, Manoj itches to inseminate at least one cow as part of his education. His Enfield takes him to Nandgaon to Ramu's house and his breed-less cow. Lurking on the fringes of the story are Ramu's wife Laxmi (educated daughter of a 'suicide farmer') and the village's benevolent headman Gopal Mundkar. Unfortunately, on the road to Nandgaon, the village without a road, Jha loses her way. Then on, it's a struggle—in vain—to bring the reader back to the fascinating idea of an Incredible Revolution.

“It was like being taken from bright Technicolor into a silent black-and-white film,” says Maya when she first comes to England from India. **100 SHADES OF WHITE** (HarperCollins; Rs 299; 294 pages) is her story, and that of her mother Nalini and brother Satchin. **Preethi Nair** takes on the Diaspora genre much trod-

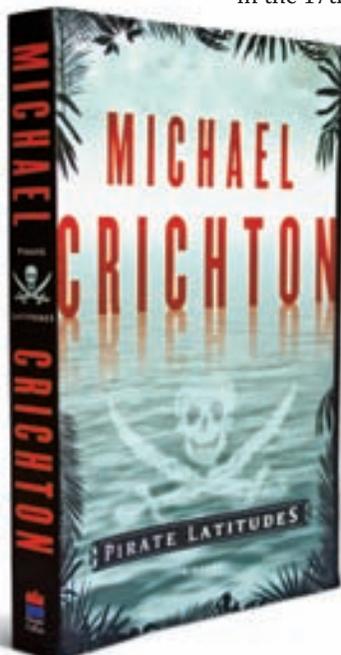


den by the likes of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Jhumpa Lahiri and still emerges a winner with this sensitive tale of a family riven by a lie but reunited by love. When her husband moves the family to England from Kerala via Maharashtra and then abandons them for another, Nalini resorts to deception to preserve family pride. She rebuilds her life by turning her talent in the kitchen to a flourishing business bottling spices. But when the truth resurfaces, her life—and the children’s—changes irrevocably. There’s nothing very new about any of this (*The Mistress of Spices* does come to mind more than once). What makes this book remarkable, though, is the evocative nature of Nair’s storytelling; the emotion she imbues in her words. And the fact that the telling of the Diaspora experience never defines, undermines or overwhelms her characters and the dilemmas they grapple with.

Paulo Coelho is one of the world’s most popular authors—and one of the most intriguing. In **A WARRIOR’S LIFE: A BIOGRAPHY OF PAULO COELHO** (HarperCollins; 470 pages; Rs 599), award-winning Brazilian writer and journalist **Fernando Morais** traces the varied—and often fascinating—strands of Coelho’s life, like the rebellious adolescent; the 13 year-old who, despite a total lack of interest in education, “showed the first signs of an undying *idée fixe*... to be a writer”; and the traumatised 18 year-old who was committed to an asylum by his parents and subjected to electroconvulsive therapy. Delving into diaries spanning 40 years, Morais gives a candid depiction of Coelho’s experiment with drugs; his obsession with “the hermetic and dangerous universe of Satanism”; his incarceration for alleged subversion against the Brazilian dictatorship; and his ultimate rediscovery of the faith imparted during his school years by Jesuit fathers. Read it for a better understanding of a man whose books have sold over 100 million copies worldwide—you won’t be disappointed.



The draft of **PIRATE LATITUDES** (HarperCollins; Rs 250; 312 pages) was discovered on hugely popular author Michael Crichton’s computer after his death in late 2008 by his assistant; predictably a bonanza for his publishers. Was it a boon for readers too? Well, an old-fashioned buccaneer swashbuckler is certainly a departure for the techno-friendly, thriller ace Crichton. Set in the 17th century in the Crown colony of Port Royal



in Jamaica, the hero is privateer (not pirate) Charles Hunter who sets out with a ragtag band to capture a treasure ship from the Spanish port of Matanceros, putting him on a collision course with Spaniard Cazalla. Hunter is an honourable sort of rake; a man loved by men and lusted after by women while his Spanish foe is evil, sadistic and completely loathsome. And here’s where the trouble starts. This is all very black and white, a value-ed class converted to a book, where you cheer for the good guys and boo the baddies. With no trace of nuance, you get a lively romp through sand, surf and sailing ships that leaves you a wee bit exhausted—and more than a little let down. Still, Steven Spielberg liked it enough to buy the movie rights so Hunter will soon sail into a cinema near you. Our money is on Johnny Depp.

WHERE ELSE
WOULD YOU FIND
SOMEONE ABOVE
55 YEARS
WHO'S PERFECTLY
IN TUNE WITH YOU?

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FRUGAL FATIGUE

n. Mental exhaustion caused by constant frugality during hard economic times.

Also: frugality fatigue

Example: It seems that after a year of watching our wallets, bank accounts, and 401(k) plans with the tenacity of a wheelchair-bound Jimmy Stewart in an Alfred Hitchcock thriller, some are throwing up their hands, taking out their credit cards, and wading back into pre-recession spending habits. The official term for this behaviour is **frugal fatigue**. It started creeping into the lexicon last spring, and now frugal fatigue—the idea that we're getting worn down and stressed out by constantly watching our budgets—may as well be an officially diagnosed psychiatric disorder.

—Christopher Muther, "Fighting frugal fatigue", *The Boston Globe*, 19 November 2009

robocall *n.* An automated phone call that plays a recorded message.

Also: robo-call

Example: Obama also recorded an automated **robocall** to urge Massachusetts' voters to support the Democrat, and he cut a Web video with the same message.

—Janet Hook, "Healthcare overhaul may depend on Massachusetts senate race", *Los Angeles Times*, 16 January 2010

email apnoea *n.* The unconscious and temporary suspension of regular breathing while checking and reading email.

Also: e-mail apnoea

Example: Researchers say the stress of not being able to process information as fast as it arrives, combined with the personal and social expectation that, say, you will answer every email message, can deplete and demoralise you. Author Linda Stone, who coined the term 'continuous partial attention' to describe the mental state of today's knowledge workers, says she's now noticing, get this, **email apnoea**: the unconscious suspension of regular and steady breathing when people tackle their email.

—Paul Hemp, "Death by information overload", *Harvard Business Review*, 1 September 2009

“ It is a mistake to regard age as a downhill grade toward dissolution. The reverse is true. As one grows older, one climbs with surprising strides.

—French novelist George Sand

COSMOPHOBIA *n.* The strong and irrational fear that the earth will be destroyed by some cosmic event in the near future.

Example: There are 19 million '2012'-related Google hits and a vast number of those are concerned with the real world and not the Roland Emmerich film that cashes in on rampant fear and the tastes of those who enjoyed the way he destroyed the world in *Independence Day* and *The Day after Tomorrow*.... This latest bit of **cosmophobia** is based on the Maya or Mesoamerican Long Count calendar, which, set up to run for 5,125 years, appears to terminate on or about December 21, 2012, thus wrecking the key holiday shopping season.

—John Bogert, "Here comes the end of the world—again", *Daily Breeze*, 22 October 2009

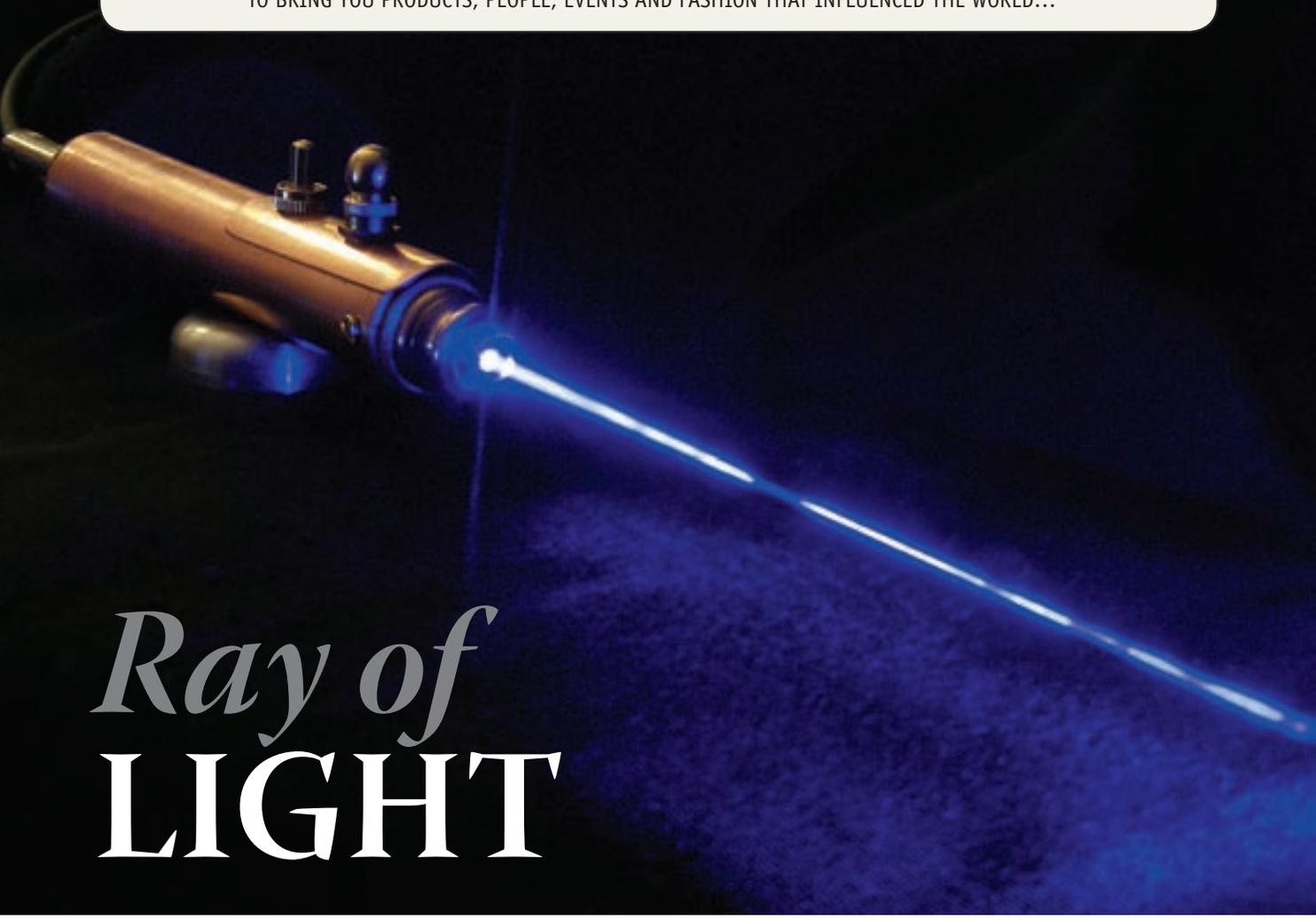


A PI FOR THE EYE

Now you don't have to request your cousins or friends abroad to get you the Kindle, the e-reading device. The Pi, India's first indigenous e-reading device, is here. It enables you to readily access over a hundred thousand books and a host of newspapers and magazines. Its manufacturers, *Infibeam.com*, claim Pi will provide an exceptional reading experience and support for local Indian languages. Priced at Rs 9,999, the technological marvel promises to make reading a pleasure. You can avoid the strain of peering at small types and the glare of a computer screen. It comes with a storage capacity of up to 350 books that can be expanded to accommodate an additional 2,000 books. Even better, you can download over 100,000 digital books from the parent site *Infibeam.com* initially. Happy reading.

WE GO 50 YEARS BACK IN TIME

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



Ray of LIGHT

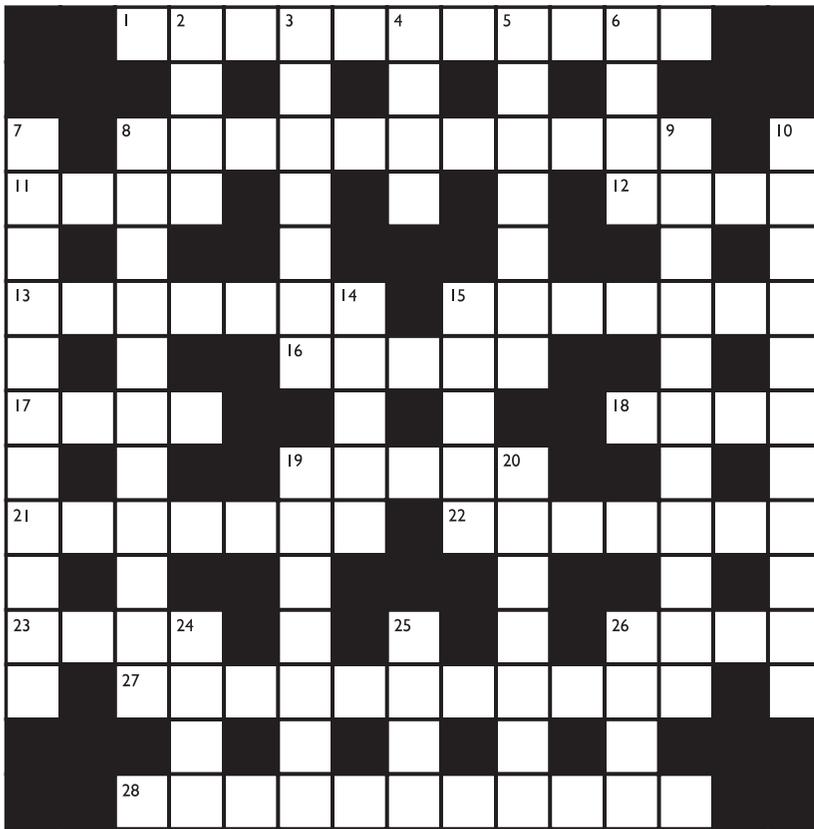
Life in the 21st century would be unimaginable without laser technology. From DVD players, scanners and printers to precision surgical and industrial tools and state-of-the-art weapons, the laser—an acronym for ‘light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation’—is ubiquitous. The first functioning laser was demonstrated on 16 May 1960 by American physicist Theodore Maiman in

California. To celebrate its 50th anniversary, the American Physical Society and Optical Society have launched Laserfest (www.laserfest.org), a yearlong celebration of the technology. Events and activities in the US, Europe and Japan will showcase how the laser works, the history of the technology, its impact on society and the laser’s potential for the future.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: **MARCH 1960**

- On 4 March 1960, French freighter La Coubre exploded in Havana—killing 100 people.
- On 5 March 1960, Elvis Presley returned to civilian life after two years in the US Army. He resumed music by recording *It’s now or never* and *Are you lonesome tonight?*
- On 6 March 1960, the canton of Geneva in Switzerland gave women the right to vote.
- On 15 March 1960, Key Largo Coral Reef Preserve, the first underwater park in the US, was established in Florida.

EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 65



BY RAJU BHARATAN
ACROSS

- 1 Monicapitalise on the office he held did he and how! (4 7)
- 8 *Ae husn zaraa jaag tujhe ishq jagaaye* in Naushadian Yaman is (4 7)
- 11 Single item symbolising sex appeal needed to attract attention in the world forum? (4)
- 12 The 5th letter on the 19th for a long long time (4)
- 13 Titled baron's son continues to be a force at cricket headquarters (5 2)
- 15 Bug Allan Border pair as object of fear? (7)
- 16 A couple of them go into the plate you order (5)

- 17 Stylish batsman discovering that the limousine he's won comes with a learner's licence! (4)
- 18 One not inclined to keep his hair on? (1 3)
- 19 Name Aru in Tamil Nadu (5)
- 21 Cot accommodating Member of Parliament on identifying cricket's pride and joy (7)
- 22 What you need to Govinda-score, *Bluff Master* Shammi Kapoor style (3 4)
- 23 It's Rajasthani *Maand* in the case of Ghulam Mohammed's *Thhade rahiy o baanke yaar re* filmed on Meena Kumari as *Pakeezah* (4)
- 26 Popular performer a Kishore Kumar first? (4)

- 27 Client score in subject (11)
- 28 Spent by you and me even in those days when we read the magazine from cover to cover? (7 4)

DOWN

- 2 This compiler's 'profession' (1 3)
- 3 What the one on the run does right through the night under the lower berth (4 3)
- 4 Look full of desire (4)
- 5 Suggesting a bar on Beauty Queen Naseem and her star daughter? (2 5)
- 6 Played with a double reed and having an incisive tone (4)
- 7 In which Raj Kapoor 'sang' so memorably to Waheeda Rehman (7 4)
- 8 Any actress playing her role, has she to look so Christine Keeler identical? (6 5)
- 9 Fishes Madhav Mantri and Vijay Manjrekar appeared as Vijay Hazare's India crashed to '0 for 4' vs Len Hutton's England during the Saturday afternoon of 7 June 1952 in the famous Headingley Test (6 5)
- 10 Shakespeare the way you fancy (2 3 4 2)
- 14 The 1951 P L Santoshi show having Dev Anand singing, about Madhubala, *Aa teree tasveer bana loon main apnee taqdeer banaa loon* in the velvety voice of Talat Mahmood (5)
- 15 Urging Mahendra Singh Dhoni to perform (3 2)
- 19 As current as old hat? (7)
- 20 Empty upon opening, looking out of the reckoning (3 2 2)
- 24 One fitting the vintage comedian bill (1 3)
- 25 True follower Preity Zinta is redolent of (4)
- 26 Assistant Commissioner introducing himself as rotating part of machinery (1 3)

For answers, see Page 79

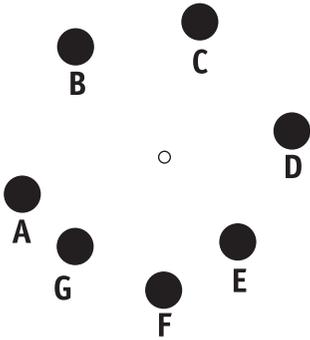
RAJU BHARATAN is the originator of the 'Sunday Cryptic' crossword in *The Times of India*, where he set the first 1,500 puzzles

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

BRAIN GYM

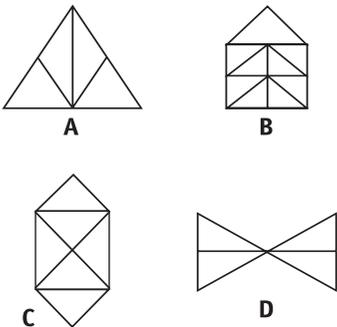
ON THE BALL

Which ball is nearest to the jack (the white ball) and which is furthest away from it?



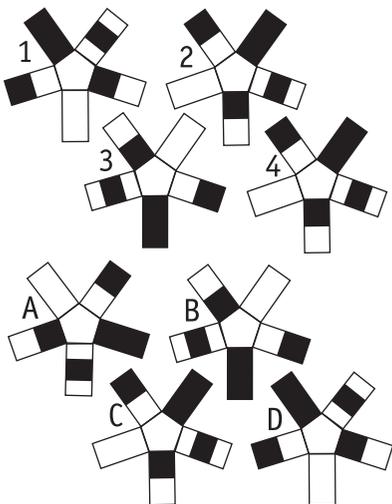
TRIANGLE MANIA

Which of these contains the most triangles?



FANTASTIC FOUR

Which of the figures at the bottom—A, B, C or D—follows number 4?



CRAZY FRIDAYS

How many Friday the 13ths can we have in a year? Many people would think Friday the 13th will be an unlucky day. Is it possible that there is no Friday on 13th through the whole year? Can you figure it out?

SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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

KOFFEE WITH KAKURO

	14	18	12	9		28	8	10
19					18			
38					8			
11			19	7			14	
	13			8	13			18
		9				7		
	8	9			3	11		
37								
7				18				

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

SOLUTIONS TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 65

ACROSS: 1 Bill Clinton (*Monicaptalise* being a reference to *Monica*); 8 *Mere Mehboob*; 11 Unit (*UN it*: sex appeal needed to attract attention in the world forum); 12 Eons (*E/on/S*); 12 Lords on (*Lord/son*: Lord's on); 15 Bugaboo (means *object of fear*: *Bug/AB/OO*: Bug Allan Border pair); 16 *Wadas*; 17 Carl (*Car/L*): reference to Carl Hooper; 18 A Yul (Brynner); 19 Tarun (*T/Aru/N*: Aru in Tamil Nadu); 21 (*Denis*) Compton: *Co/MP/t/on*: *Cot accommodating MP* (Member of Parliament) *on*; 22 Pot luck (reference to *Govinda aalaa re aalaa* in *Bluff Master*); 23 Raga; 26 Akki (*A/KK/I*: A Kishore Kumar first): Akki is Akshay Kumar; 27 Electronics (*subject*, 11 letters of Electronics *re-arrange into* Client score); 28 Quality time (quality *TIME*)

DOWN: 2 I set; 3 Lies low; 4 Leer; 5 No Banus; 6 Oboe; 7 Bullock cart (reference to *Teesri Kasam*); 8 Mirror image; 9 Bombay ducks (Madhav Mantri and Vijay Manjrekar played for Bombay and then India, *Bombay ducks* are *fishes*); 10 *As you like it*; 14 *Nadan*; 15 Bat up; 19 Topical (*Topi/cal*: *old hat* is *Topi*); 20 Not in it; 24 A Lou (*Costello*); 25 (*True*) Grit; 26 A cam (meaning *rotating part of machinery*): A cam: AC/am: Assistant Commissioner am

SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

ON THE BALL

E is nearest; A is furthest away.

TRIANGLE MANIA

B has the maximum number of triangles.

A contains 7 triangles

B contains 11 triangles

C contains 10 triangles

D contains 6 triangles

FANTASTIC FOUR

D. They all rotate clockwise, first to the next vane, then missing one, then two and so on.

CRAZY FRIDAYS

We can calculate how many days there will be for the 13th on each month if we count from the beginning of the year (1 January). Then we divide the total number of days by 7 to get the remainders. We also need to consider the leap year. Through the whole year, we had all kinds of remainders from 0 to 6. The minimum occurrence for all the unique remainders was 1. It means that we have at least one Friday on the 13th. In a regular year, on the maximum side, you can get three Fridays on the 13th—in February, March and December as the remainders of these three months are 2. In a leap year, on the maximum side, you can also get three Fridays on the 13th, which are in January, April and July because the remainders of these three months are 6.

SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

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

SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

	14	18	12	9		28	8	10
19	9	1	4	5	18	7	2	9
38	3	2	8	4	5	9	6	1
11	2	9		7	3	4		
	13	6	7		13	8	5	
		9	2	7		7	2	5
37	6	5	9	1	2	3	4	7
7	2	4	1	18	1	8	3	6

“I had experienced the benefits of yoga and wanted others to enjoy it too.”

Colonel (retd) Sewa Singh, 55, Jalandhar, for simplifying yoga and spreading awareness about its benefits



Sanjay Sharma /Kurt

A medical downgrade in the Army is no less than a punishment for a dedicated officer. A few years ago, Colonel Sewa Singh, 55, had to suffer such a setback when his right foot was injured during a gruelling exercise session as part of his commando training. Singh was advised against taking up any activity that involved vigorous movement. As a result, he put on weight. When light exercises didn't help, Singh started reading books on yoga. Gradually, as he applied the theories into practice, he regained flexibility and started losing weight. As a result, the Army upgraded his fitness status. Singh resumed work and starting spreading the benefits of yoga to his colleagues including fighter pilots, air crew, doctors and senior officers. Over the past 12 years, he has trained over 5,000 men and women from the armed forces. Soldiers posted at the high-altitude Zuluk area in Sikkim have learned to cope with stressful climatic conditions using moves taught by Singh.

And recently, he shared his perspectives on yoga with the Metropolitan Police in London. After his retirement in February 2009, Singh met the district collector of Kapurthala and conducted a yoga workshop at the district headquarters. The workshop turned out to be a huge success. However, after observing that many silvers were unable to practise complicated moves, Singh devised three sets of simple yogic exercises that can be performed even at a very advanced age. The first set aims to enhance the quality of life; the second helps prevent a variety of ailments; and the third strengthens vital organs. In 2009, Singh formed the National Health and Happiness Society to spread the benefits of simplified yoga. He has also written a pocketbook titled *Yoga Made Simple*. Among his ardent disciples: a 90 year-old woman who got rid of her backache and stiff arm through yoga and a 54 year-old man who has been cured of chronic snoring.

—Vandana Shukla

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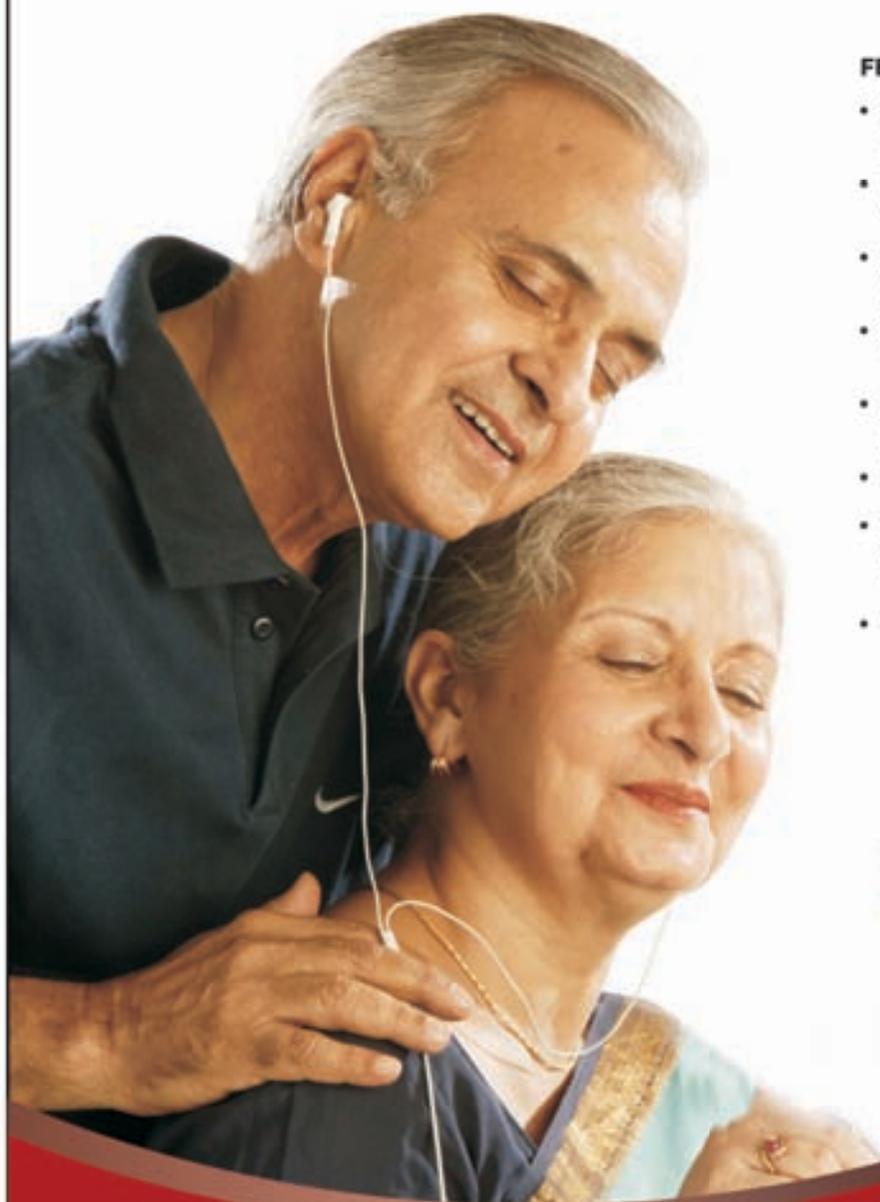
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