

MARCH 2008 Rs 28

harmony

celebrate age

A close-up portrait of an elderly woman, Anita Desai, with short grey hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a red shawl with a black and gold striped border over a black top. The background is a soft-focus green and white.

Empress of solitude

Anita Desai

The truth about sugar and salt

Bhopal unplugged

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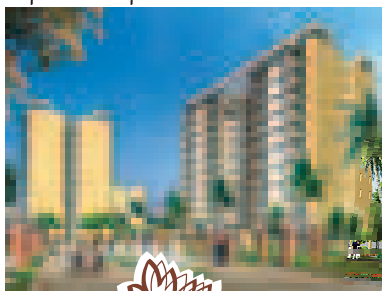
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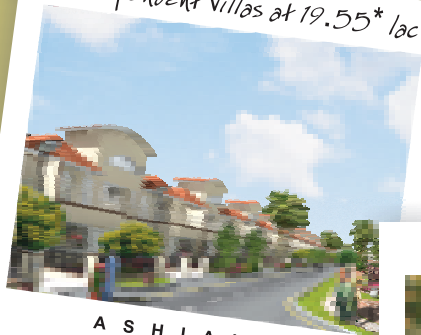
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THE TIME OF MY LIFE

IN FEBRUARY, I CELEBRATED the 20th anniversary of my 30th birthday! I have said time and again in these pages that age is a matter of feeling, not years. And cresting the milestone of 50, I must tell you that I've never felt better.

This is the time of my life. I know myself like I never have—my strengths, abilities, and vulnerabilities. I am comfortable in my skin and resolute in my beliefs. In many ways, I feel like my life is just beginning. I'm filled with energy, I yearn for activity and 24 hours just don't seem enough to accomplish all that I want every day. I am also able to look back on my past with equanimity, the good and otherwise, and am grateful for the many people who have added texture and richness to my life. And while the memories of the wonderful years I have lived—as a daughter, sister, wife, mother, daughter-in-law—provide me a force field of strength and inspiration, today the future beckons invitingly, irresistibly, a brightly wrapped box of new experiences

and opportunities waiting to be opened.

One thing, above all, has made it possible for me to reach this positive space in my mind and my life—the willingness to embrace change. Sometimes it's hard to let go of what you know, whether it's a habit, a belief or a way of life. We can't hold on to the past, to old ways of thinking, living, feeling. We must shed our straitjackets and look at life afresh. Change, in itself, becomes less difficult if we stop shying away from the unknown and allow ourselves to grow. For me, that process of growth led me to explore two different avenues that I am equally passionate about: art, and the cause of the elderly.

Today, I can say with pride that both Harmony for Silvers Foundation and Harmony Art Foundation have carved their own niche, their work is recognised and, most important, they are making a real difference to people's lives. Indeed, I believe Harmony for Silvers Foundation

RITU NANDA



has made tremendous strides in achieving its aim to unite silvers under a common umbrella, bring their concerns to centre-stage and build a national force whose needs, aspirations and potential can no longer be denied.

This work shall continue. I have other resolutions too for the years ahead: to continue to do meaningful work, give back to the world what it has given me, take life head on, live fearlessly. In the words of American poet and educator Maya Angelou, our 50s represent everything we were meant to be.

Tina Ambani

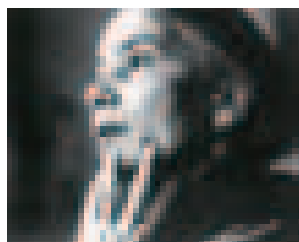
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COVER FEATURE...20

Contents

LINE UP

6 ORBIT

16 IN FOCUS:
Helping hand for silvers

SPECIAL FEATURE

20 COVER FEATURE:
Anita Desai

BODY & SOUL

28 HEALTH:
Balancing salt and sugar

32 DOCTOR'S OPINION

34 SHOWING THE WAY:
Defeating obesity

36 FOOD WISE
Spring recipes

40 COLUMN: Yoga Rx

42 HEALTH BYTES

46 THE LAST WORD:
Sant Rajinder Singh

FIRST AID

49 TECHNOLOGY:
Online games

50 TECHNOLOGY:
Digitising memories

54 LEGALEASE:
Will, rent and trust simplified

56 SECOND CAREERS
From travel to fashion

ETCETERA

58 DESTINATION: Bhopal

67 COLUMN: Amita Malik

68 AT LARGE: Timeri Murari

70 BOOKSHELF

74 H PEOPLE

78 HEADSTART

81 RESOURCES

82 SPEAK



36

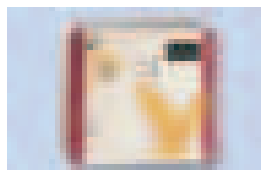


58



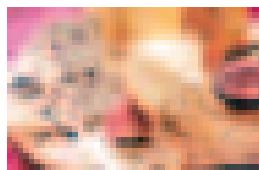
16

WEB EXCLUSIVES



Silver safety

Make your home a safe zone



Say cheese!

The delights of cheese making

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

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VILAS KALGUTKER

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column one

Following established conventions and then breaking loose to chart your own course was a virtue so rare among our silver readers in the 1950s and 1960s that it stood out when someone rewrote the rules. On our cover this month, Anita Desai ("Empress of Solitude") is one such example. At a time when published space accorded to Indian writers in English, especially women, was pitifully low, Desai persevered to keep up her love for writing. Bringing up and caring for her family, she wrote in her spare time; and then gave it all up to go to Cambridge to teach. Now her status in the literary world firmly established, she values family more than ever. Grace personified, Desai speaks about her life and times with guarded optimism.

Optimism, *Harmony's* mantra, has a lot to do with the courage to take life head on. Mumbai's Mandakini Gokhale decided to battle obesity ("Weightless and Free") when her scale hit 88. Over the past five years, she has turned treadmill smart and cut down her weight by over 20 kg. Chennai resident Prabha Narasimhan ("Fashioning a New Life") took voluntary retirement from Singapore Airlines to feed her passion for fashion design—today, she runs a boutique that has become a destination for the city's celebrities. And Dattatraya Mehendale ('Speak') from Pune has made the cause of blood donation his purpose in life. He takes the message far and wide on his bicycle, his other dedication.

Everything is possible. Just set your heart on it. It always pays to keep up the battle!

—Meeta Bhatti



I am a 48 year-old civil engineer.

Over the past 29 years of service, I have handled technical duties for many construction projects in Chandigarh. In 2002, I was assigned to disburse pension to 700 pensioners from Mohali and Panchkula, the two satellite towns of Chandigarh. As we interacted over paperwork for arrears, tax statements and medical reimbursement bills, I developed a close rapport with these silvers who had once held distinguished positions in the organisation where I worked.

Over cups of tea, they would sit at my office and reminisce about the 'good old days'. There were times I ended up listening to their chit-chat and answering their queries even when I was overloaded with work. I went out of my way not out of any exaggerated sense of social courtesy, but simply because they reminded me of my father. I was never able to spare time for my father when he was alive—I was too preoccupied with work and financial responsibilities. After his death, my mother told me that my father always yearned to talk to me. He wanted to share with me his pride over my achievements; memories of days gone past; and sometimes just day-to-day happenings. He never made any demands on my time because he didn't want to bother me. My father died in 1997, longing to spend some time with his son.

I wish I could turn back the clock and offer my father all the attention he deserved but never got. Just like him, the pensioners who came to my office needed attention. By offering them a listening ear, I was trying to reach out to my father and, in some way, asking him for forgiveness. My term in Chandigarh lasted for five years. However, the memories of the time I spent with the pensioners will stay with me for a lifetime. Today, when I see the younger generation around me caught in a whirlpool of work pressure, all I can tell them is to pause and spare a thought for their ageing parents.

JAGVIR GOYAL

Via email

The letter of the month wins music CDs from Big Music

With reference to your article, "Patient as Consumer" ('Legalease', February 2008 issue of *Harmony*), the Supreme Court has rightly placed the services provided by a doctor within the ambit of the Consumer Protection Act. It's no secret that doctors

tend to behave more like businessmen than caregivers. Patients are often compelled to go through many unwanted tests even to treat simple ailments. Worse still is when doctors refuse to take responsibility for their actions. The judgement will



certainly lead to accountability. But patients must also be honest and refrain from misusing the law to further their own gains.

ARVIND K PANDEY

Allahabad

I read "Woman Power" by Amita Malik in your February 2008 issue with interest. Indeed, the most powerful person in every family is always a woman: wife, mother or sister. Apart from succeeding in journalism as Malik points out, women in India have also proved they can do business as well as men. And, of course, they have excelled in the political sphere—the first citizen of the country, the head of the Congress party and many state chief ministers are women. Perhaps it's time for men to now be accepted as the weaker sex!

MAHESH KUMAR

New Delhi

Thank you so much for your wonderful magazine for silvers. It gives us all great encouragement. We must not only look after ourselves but also be ready to help other seniors who need our support. I am a doctor of medicine educated in India who lived in the UK for 40 years. Life has been a struggle, especially when I lost my husba-

nd. However, in the UK I was able to survive as a single mother. I worked part time and educated my three children who are all graduates and able to support themselves. Now, I am happy to be back in India. In fact, I took part in the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run in the Mumbai Marathon this year and enjoyed myself with my fellow seniors. I cannot praise Harmony enough for the great effort.

DR SHAHBANU MUKADAM

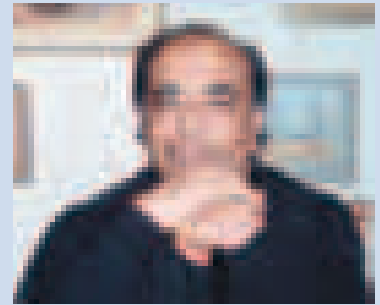
Mumbai

I am an 80 year-old hooked on *Harmony* almost since its inception. I write to draw your attention to the problem of osteoporosis. As you know, this age-related ailment is caused by the wearing down of bones owing to loss of bone density. Periodic tests of bone density can go far to check this menace. Most state and municipal authorities provide land and other facilities to hospitals at concessional rates besides giving them grants. They should make it compulsory for such hospitals to hold free camps for silvers to check their bone density. I welcome Harmony's help in conveying this to the authorities concerned.

DWARKA ANAND

Faridabad

CONTRIBUTOR



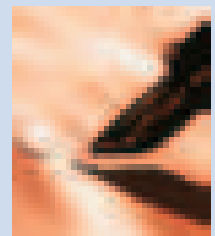
"Old?" says **Timeri Murari, 66**. "I'll always feel and think I'm in my mid-20s." Murari's worldview is reflected in this month's 'At Large' where he shares his perspective on 'new world' morality. Murari's career spans journalism, novels, non-fiction as well as screenplays and stage plays. His film, *The Square Circle*, made *TIME* magazine's list of Top 10 films. He later adapted it for the stage and directed it at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre in the UK. His novels include the international best seller *Taj: A Story of Mughal India*. His latest work of fiction, *The Small House*, was published by Penguin in 2007, while his travelogue on his trek to Mount Kailash, *Limping to the Centre of the World*, will be published by Penguin in April. He lives in Chennai.

AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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

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

...and we'll print it in the column 'Your Space'



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

INNOVATION



DESIGNS FOR YOU

'Greater than 60' —that's the name of a new design centre at Singapore's Temasek Polytechnic that focuses on developing a range of 'age-friendly' products. Funded by the government's Community Development, Youth and Sports Ministry, students at the polytechnic are already working on over 800 products that could improve the lives of silvers, including comfortable clothes, glow-in-the-dark slippers to prevent falls, and even a white bread created especially for diabetics. "The centre plans to bring its new products and ideas to not just the local market, but globally too," Moses Wong, director of Temasek Design School, tells website channelnewsasia.com



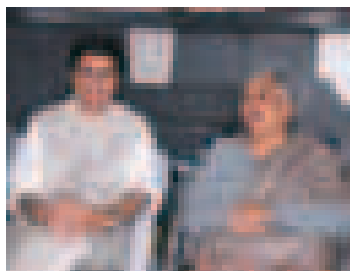
LOGIC TO LIFE

Fuzzy logic, used in washing machines to replicate human decision making, will now be used to help silvers. In January, the University of Missouri in Columbia (USA) and Montfort University, in Leicester, collaborated on an \$87,300 (about Rs 3.5 million) project to improve quality of life. The project uses sensors to monitor movements, sleep patterns and pulse, helping to identify emergencies. Using the information, fuzzy logic will be able to distinguish between disparate events such as someone falling over or a door slamming, thus reducing the number of false alarms. "This technology will allow people to lead more active lives," Professor Robert John, director, Centre for Computational Intelligence at Montfort University tells *Cnet news.com*

NEWSWORTHY

CARE COMES HOME

In a double whammy aimed to help silvers and generate employment in the state, the **Rajasthan government has launched Abhilasha Yojna, a home nursing scheme**. Unemployed women will be trained at government medical colleges in Jaipur, Ajmer, Kota, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Bikaner and made available to care for silvers in their homes. "This will be a boon to senior citizens who live alone or whose children go to work," a spokesperson of the state's medical and health department tells Indo Asian News Service (IANS). "These nurses will work eight hours a day, offering full support to the elderly." At present, 20 women are being trained under the scheme in Jaipur.



Register your complaint: If you have visited a **police station** or police post to file a complaint but your **complaint** remains **unattended**, unacknowledged or unregistered, help is at hand. Go to **www.saferindia.com** and register your complaint. The website will forward your complaint electronically to the concerned State Police Headquarters for **action**. A copy of the mail will also be sent to you. This can be used in future correspondence or interaction with the concerned Police Headquarters. Safer India is an initiative of India Vision Foundation, an NGO founded by Kiran Bedi.

STORY TIME



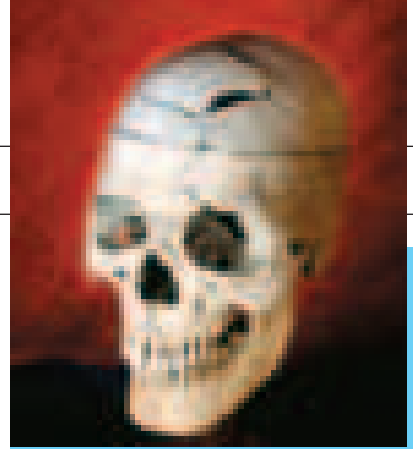
Children at the National Book Trust's pavilion at the World Book Fair, held in New Delhi in February, were in for a treat this year. As part of 'Bridging the Gap', an initiative of NGO Healing Touch, they were treated to a **storytelling session by 'stand-in grandparents'**, or volunteer silvers. J N Chaurasia, 67, and R P Bhatnagar, 65, both from South Delhi, told a captive audience stories about mythical animals and far-away lands, reports *The Indian Express*. This was followed by a discussion on the important role of grandparents in inspiring storytelling and reading. "Children need encouragement to open and read a book for pleasure these days," Manas Mahapatra, coordinator, National Book Trust, tells the newspaper. "Elders can really help in this regard."

SILVER COMMISSIONER



In a first for the United Kingdom, Welsh first minister Rhodri Morgan has appointed **'a commissioner for older people'**. Ruth Marks, director of the Royal National Institute of Blind People in the UK, will take up the post in April 2008. "Wales was the first to appoint a children's commissioner to give children and young people a stronger voice and now we are the first to have a commissioner to champion the interests of older people," Morgan tells

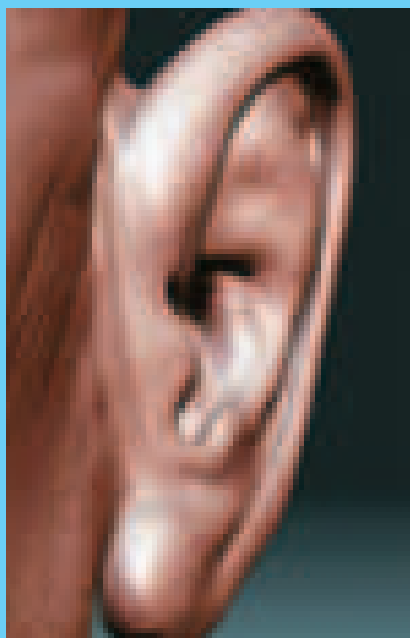
The Times of London. "Wales proportionately has more elderly than other parts of the UK and the numbers are only set to increase." Marks will be independent from government and will have the mandate to challenge government bodies.



FACE OFF

CUT TO THE BONE

Your skin may not be deep enough when it comes to cosmetic surgery. A new study conducted at Duke University in North Carolina in the US says **the future of anti-ageing lies in surgery on facial bone**. According to the researchers, the bones of our face move as we grow older, contributing to the appearance of ageing. And while traditional face-lifts predominantly work on the skin, procedures carried out on the bone structure itself will be more beneficial. "Currently, surgeons use cheek and bone implants to restore bone structure to its youthful proportions," cosmetic surgeon Michael Richard explains to website cosmeticsurgeryanswers.co.uk. "However, future interventions would be aimed at preventing the process that causes the bones to move in the first place. We know that the body sends signals to cells in the bone to synthesise new bone or reabsorb it. If we can figure out the chemical pathways driving this complex process, then it could be possible to inject something to arrest it." According to Richard, a surgeon could pass a needle through the skin and soft tissues of the cheek to reach the bone in a clinical setting with no need for recovery time.



LOBE JOB

They may sag, droop and even sway a little with age. But now there's **help for your earlobes** from the cosmetic surgeon. British newspaper *The Guardian* reports a dramatic increase in earlobe procedures in cities like London, New York and Los Angeles. These include lobe plumping (about £ 400 = Rs 31,000), which involves injecting a cosmetic filler like Restylane in the earlobe, and lobe reduction, which can cost upwards of £ 1,000 (about Rs 77,000). "Such procedures are becoming increasingly popular among ageing women," London-based cosmetic surgeon Rita Rakus tells the newspaper. "They can be part of the total package in making you look a bit younger and, in particular, allow women to wear their hair back with confidence." The effects of the procedure are immediate but can last for six to nine months.

MEDIA WATCH

ALIVE AND KICKING

Despite *The New York Times* calling it a "preposterous, putatively heart-warming buddy comedy that fails its stars" — *The Bucket List* has struck gold at the US box office. The film stars Jack Nicholson as a billionaire who learns he is suffering from terminal cancer. His hospital roommate, played by Morgan Freeman, is an auto mechanic who receives the same diagnosis. When Freeman starts to make his 'bucket list' (a list of things to accomplish before he, well, kicks it), Nicholson decides he wants in. The two men embark on a global adventure, proceeding to ride fast cars, jump off planes and eat exotic food, all the while discovering the world, life, and themselves. American life coach Caroline Adams attributes the film's success to the fact that viewers could identify with the need to fulfil their inner longings. "It's not enough to react to life on a day-to-day basis," she tells USA Today. "People need a roadmap."



ROOM WITH A VIEW



While his friends spent the summer on the beach, 19 year-old Andrew Jenks checked into Harbour Place, an assisted living facility for silvers in Florida, for 30 days. The result: a moving documentary titled *Andrew Jenks, Room 335*. Hailed by *The*

New York Post as "a hilarious, sad, wonderful look at the joy of life, even at the end of it", the film explores the ups and downs of life in a silvers' home. Along the way, Jenks, a student of filmmaking at New York University, develops friendships with the 96 year-old wisecracking Armida "Tammy" Signoriile and Bill Delarm, an 80 year-old who wears a different Hawaiian shirt every day. "There are 35 million senior citizens living in America and in about 25 years, those numbers will more than double," says Jenks. "This led me to wonder, 'How often do we ask questions about their inner most thoughts? That's how this film was made.'" Watch the trailer on www.andrewjenksroom335.com

LOVE THAT

MUSIC FOR THE MIND

Live Music Now (LMN), the UK's largest charity music outreach organisation, is striking a chord with silvers across the UK. Its 'Active Music, Active Minds' project, launched in December 2007, brings the benefits of live music to older people, specifically those with dementia, and gathers evidence on the **impact of live music on the elderly**. "I remember one lady in Newcastle with severe dementia," opera singer Debbie Bennett tells British newspaper *The Guardian*. "She was in her wheelchair, slumped over with her head on the table. I knelt down to eye level and started singing the old song *Daisy, Daisy*. Suddenly, she raised her head and started to sing. It was just incredible." Bennett is among 330 professional musicians who work freelance for LMN. "This is not the TV generation," says Sarah Derbyshire, director of LMN. "These elders had dances and glee clubs and now many of them are isolated. This gives them a chance to get involved in a group activity." Active Music, Active Minds aims to take live, interactive music performances to more than 60,000 older people in care homes across the UK. Sessions can last from one to two hours and range from formal recitals to sing-alongs, music quizzes and percussion workshops. "We also want to capture data that will show in quantifiable terms whether live music will contribute to lower dependence on drugs or fewer visits to the doctor," adds Derbyshire. For more information on Active Music, Active Minds, visit www.livemusicnow.org



FULL HOUSE

If your grandchildren keep you on your toes, spare a thought for British couple Hans and Josie Schaffer: they have 99! The brood is made up of 56 grandchildren (by their 11 kids) and 43 great-grandchildren. Josie, 77, married Hans, 85, in 1948 and they celebrated their 'diamond' wedding anniversary in January, reports British newspaper *The Sun*. "We were told, in the days of feather mattresses, when you have a row with your spouse you shake the bed and get back in it," says Josie. "So the kids just kept coming, and then their kids just kept coming." A spokesperson from the *Guinness Book of World Records* told the newspaper: "The Guinness has no existing record for **the living couple with the most grandchildren**. But this pair may just clinch it."

ANALYSE THIS

HARD TO IMAGINE

Age doesn't just steal away memories of the past; it also makes it hard to imagine the future, according to researchers at Harvard University. Their study supports the 'prospective brain' hypothesis, the idea that imagining the future and remembering the past relies on the same neural machinery. "One implication of this study is that imagining is closely related to and dependent on remembering," study leader Dan Schacter writes in the January issue of journal *Psychological Science*. The researchers asked groups of young and old participants, with average ages of 25 and 72, to recount a personal episode from their past or imagine a personal experience in their future in response to a set of cue words. The responses were recorded as 'internal' and 'external'. While internal memories, like scenes from a movie, contain specific subjects and take place in particular settings, external memories consist of general facts about the world, such as 'the sky is blue'. The results showed that the past accounts of the older participants contained fewer and less detailed internal memories than those of the younger group. This deficit also extended to their future imaginings.



Forum for change: In December 2007, a group of silvers in Srinagar established the **Srinagar City Senior Citizens Forum** to “combat

social evils through peaceful means”, reports www.greaterkashmir.com. “Any senior citizen of Srinagar City can become a member,” said Muzamil Hussain Khan, who was nominated president of the forum. “The forum is not and will not be affiliated with any political or social organisation,” he added.

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HERITAGE WATCH

ROYAL RETREAT



Catch a glimpse of the royal way of life on your next visit to Hyderabad. Deep inside the old city, **Chowmahalla Palace has recently been opened to the public** following restoration by Mumbai-based architectural firm RMA Associates. Built over 200 years ago, this was the seat of the Asaf Jahi dynasty where the Nizams entertained their official guests and royal visitors. A massive wooden door at the end of the renowned Laad Bazaar takes you through the whitewashed entry walls of the palace—suddenly the noise and bustle of the market are replaced by a serene silence. Spread over 12 acres, Chowmahalla Palace features graceful minarets and soaring columns, singing fountains and beautifully landscaped spaces. Walk through rooms like the *Khilwat* or durbar hall

where the Nizams held court, their study, sitting room, and a dining room where the table is set to receive visitors. Everywhere, you are greeted by opulence and reminders of a more gracious time. One room even houses mannequins dressed in heavy, gold-embroidered period costumes. Apart from welcoming tourists, the palace will now throw open its doors to music festivals, weddings and other events. To learn more, go to www.chowmahalla.com

TECH TALK WITH PUROHITS



As technology advances, we also seem to be reaching back to an earlier era. According to the Recording Industry Association of America, vinyl LP sales grew slightly from 2000 to 2006 even as overall music sales dropped to \$ 12 billion from \$ 14 billion.

Care in Kolkata: In December 2007, **BP Poddar Hospital** in Kolkata unveiled an integrated **geriatric ward** with a team of specialised geriatricians and trained 'social animators', who will help silvers with problems like loneliness and depression. The hospital is also expected to open a **day care** centre for the elderly in mid-2008.



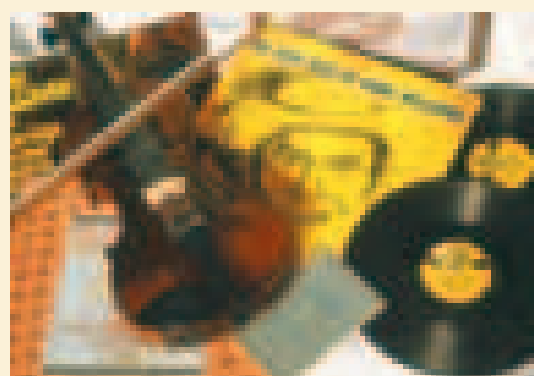
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ACTION PLAN FOR MARCH

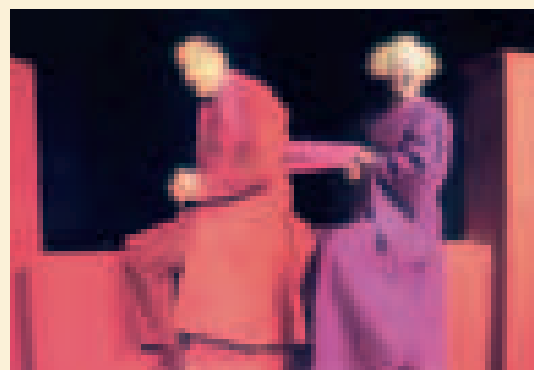
Yoga for two. You read about the health benefits of yoga every month in *Harmony*. Now, use 'Couple Yoga', a hot new trend in India and overseas, to reconnect with your partner physically and spiritually. For instance, Yogalife Studio (www.yogalife.org) in New Delhi holds 'Couple Yoga' workshops—silvers are welcome—where poses like the couple's lotus, turtle and moon triangle help you discover fun ways of stretching, bending and working out with your partner. Contact 09899882880 and 011-41554679 or email info@yogalife.org for details.



Show and tell. Are you an avid collector of coins, LPs, any kind of memorabilia? Organise an exhibition at your local community centre and show it off. In January, 13 silvers, all members of NGO Dignity Foundation, showed off their collections at a three-day exhibition held at the Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai. The rarities on display included old records in LP and EP format (including a Philip Glass opera on Mahatma Gandhi titled *Satyagraha*), coins, matchbox labels, comic books and magazines, and photographs of screen sirens like Greta Garbo.



Act of warning. Form a theatre group with your friends and spread the message of safety among fellow silvers. In Kalamazoo, Michigan in the US, an amateur silver group called Peer Prevention Players stages plays at community centres to warn seniors about dangers like burglars disguised as deliverymen and swindlers on the phone. "This is a great way for seniors to keep busy," says Traci Furman, coordinator of the theatre company. "The bonus is helping their peers to stay on guard and protect themselves."



Welcome to the section where you can share your thoughts and experiences on anything under the sun. Write in with full contact details, and make this space your own!

THE GOOD LIFE



Carefree souls: Mukherjee with wife Bubla

I was, as they say it these days, *'bindaas'* till I met Bubla, my wife, in my late 20s. We were married by the time I was in my mid 30s. I was a social activist passionately involved with labour rights. Although I held a masters degree in English, I was deeply into music and was part of a choir group. When my friends worked their way up the corporate ladder, I was singing in front of factories that had been closed down by ruthless industrialists.

I earned little money by tutoring school kids and writing scripts for aspiring filmmakers. Thankfully Bubla organised a housing loan and bought us a small house in Garia on the outskirts of Kolkata. Back then, Garia was more a village with ponds and

“What we have are memories of living life on our terms”

tall trees. I was job hunting and my wife sold paintings acquired from her artist friends. Finally,

I found a job that brought in just enough money to see the two of us through the month. Soon our daughter Misha was born. Though we couldn't afford a child, life moved on peacefully with a few hiccups along the way. When our friends visited us every weekend, we would sit under the Gulmohar tree on our little patch of green and sing to the music of my synthesiser.

There were families all around us for whom life was a daily grind. From them, we learnt to cherish the small gifts of life. A neighbour's daughter who sold vegetables at the market would baby-sit Misha. A rickshaw driver fixed the plumbing when the pipelines were jammed. Bubla helped out the children who lived in the neighbourhood with their homework. When I bought a computer, some of them would drop in for informal training sessions.

Many years later, we inherited my grandfather's house in Kolkata. Bubla found a job in one of the newer schools in the city. My job also became more demanding. We decided to shift to the city and visit our house in Garia during weekends. Misha feared that we would never find the time for weekends in Garia once we settled down in Kolkata. She was so right! We have only spent half a dozen weekends there. We are working hard to give Misha a good education. We still sing for the cause of the down-trodden but are not yet financially secure. What we have are memories of times spent living life on our terms and a great learning that life balances out the odds for those who find happiness within themselves and spread it to those around them.

—Malay Mukherjee, Kolkata

THE BICYCLE DIARIES

An angioplasty in 1994 forced me to take my health more seriously. Though I had led an active life after retiring from the Air Force in 1984, I decided to take up sport to stay in shape. I joined the Pune Cycle Prasthan, a group of avid cyclists. Over the years I participated in many cycling expeditions including Goa to Cochin, Pune to Bangalore and Mysore to Bangalore. In August 2007, I set out for my most ambitious jaunt ever, from Leh to Srinagar, with 19 other cyclists (including two silvers). More than the length of the route—434 km—the thought of the treacherous trail filled us with excitement.

After landing at Leh on 27 August, we hired mountain cycles and pedalled to our hotel 1.5 km away. Though we had practiced rigorously on the Ghats around Pune for two months, the dizzying altitude



Braving all odds: Marathe on his expedition

left us panting by the time we checked into our hotel. As scheduled, we spent the next four days resting and acclimatising ourselves to the atmosphere. On 31 August, we set out for Khardung-la. Situated 40 km away from Leh at an altitude of 18,300 ft, it is the highest motorable point in India. After eight hours of pedalling, we were greeted by snowy peaks and glaciers. On our return journey, the steep incline made pedalling redundant and had us clutching the handlebars tighter.

The next morning, we embarked on our eight-day circuit across Leh, Alchi, Lamayaru, Kargil and Dras in Ladakh, and Sonmarg and Srinagar in Kashmir. Though the cold winds blowing across Fotu La, Namika La and Zojilla passes made cycling difficult, the stunning hues on the barren peaks—grey, white and brown—offered pleasant distraction. At Alchi we stayed in furnished, carpeted tents. In Lamayaru we sped along lunar-like terrain. On the way to Kargil, we visited the war memorial, while at Dras we camped at the foot of the famed Tiger Hill. From Dras, we moved on to Kashmir. The pine trees on the slopes hinted at friendly terrain ahead, while the deep ravine on one side had us clinging to caution. After covering the picturesque Sonmarg, we cycled another 80 km to conclude our journey at Srinagar on 8 September.

Our expedition ended on a note of exhilaration and pride. Except for a brief bout of initial altitude sickness, none of us suffered from any health problems. At 76, it almost felt like I had conquered all the mountains that I had cycled through.

—Wing Commander (retired) Yashvant Marathe, Pune

WIZARD OF WORDS

I have always loved playing Scrabble. So have my friends Neena Shahani and Manju Pai—both in their

mid-50s. For over a decade, playing Scrabble has become our daily afternoon ritual. In 1998, we started a Scrabble Club in Pune. Today we have over 20 members—ranging between 16 and 70 years of age—who meet every week to match wits, discover new words, outscore opponents and generally have fun, all at the same time. Over the years, we have conducted many local, state and national tournaments. Interestingly, we have got so far only by word



Word power: Thakur (right) with friend Shahani

of mouth. Every week, we have a 50-minute game and see to it that nobody is kept waiting. For our annual tournament, we refer to the Grammar Expert Plus, a computer software, to verify the credibility of words. For our regular games, we use the Collins Scrabble Words. We end up playing Scrabble even when we meet at social gatherings and picnics. Earlier when we played at home, we

“Thanks to Scrabble, today I mentally feel as agile as a teenager”

stuck to normal everyday words. But after we started playing the game seriously using the dictionary, we discovered words that we had never heard of before. We learned that two-letter words like ‘ai’, ‘ou’, ‘fe’, ‘ki’, ‘ja’ and seven-letter words like ‘tzaddiq’ and ‘zootaxy’, and Indian words like *nawab* and *chapati* are valid Scrabble words.

It is a well-known fact that if we keep our brain ticking, we can keep Alzheimer’s disease at bay. Thanks to Scrabble, at the age of 65 I mentally feel as agile as a teenager.

—Romilla Thakur, Pune

We reserve the right to select articles, which will be edited to suit space and editorial considerations. Harmony takes no responsibility for advice offered in this column. For more Your Space letters, log on to www.harmonyindia.org

Helping hand

Ruma Dasgupta meets **Papri Choudhury** and other women from her group, Jana Hitaya, which offers help and happiness to neglected silvers in Kolkata



opens and three women in their mid-60s breeze out, get into a waiting taxi, and speed off like medics on an emergency call.

"Come in," rings out a warm voice from inside. As we enter the tiny room, the comfort that greets us is almost tangible. An ordinary table and a few visitors' chairs populate the modest space. Behind the table sits Papri Choudhury. Though in her 50s, Choudhury's face is radiant. Through an adjoining door, we hear a mobile phone springing to life. A deep male voice answers the call in a polite undertone. "That's my husband Kisor, a wildlife expert and advisor to the state government," explains Choudhury. "This is his office that he has given to Jana Hitaya."

assigned a full-time caregiver who read out to her mother and kept her happily engaged and comforted.

Jana Hitaya expects nothing in return for the chores it does. Most members—24 including the governing body and committee members—are retired women or homemakers who, having fulfilled their familial duties as wives and mothers, are now keen to serve society. Choudhury was inspired to initiate Jana Hitaya with help from her husband and other Kolkatans like Piyali Singh Roy, 40, and Debabrata Ghosh, 55. Roy is a homemaker who provides financial help, while Ghosh is a businessman who volunteers as treasurer.

Having managed a hotel in Betla Forest near Ranchi for 10 years, Choudhury has the requisite experience to handle a service-oriented organisation. Even before Jana Hitaya was formed, she used to take groups of silvers on holidays to Betla at a subsidised cost. As she grew up in a large joint family, she learnt to care for the elderly early in life. She attributes her strong sense of social responsibility to her grandfather who, according to her, was always concerned about the well-being of everyone around him.

Choudhury and her team are acutely aware of the loneliness

On 52, Lake Avenue in South Kolkata is an old, dilapidated building where the main door to a flat on the ground floor is perpetually left ajar. From the road outside, it seems like an empty flat. When we ring the doorbell, no one answers for a long time. We walk around the building to discover an unassuming side door to the same flat. In contrast to the silence that greeted us earlier, there's a bustle on the other side of the door: animated voices; phone ringing; and feet shuffling. Suddenly the door

Though it's been three years since Jana Hitaya (welfare of the masses) opened its doors to helpless silvers, not many people are aware of its existence. Paying the electricity bills, restoring a phone connection, collecting diagnostic reports, accompanying silvers for a check-up, counselling in family disputes, or finding a home nurse, Jana Hitaya gets the job done when the world is too busy. Take the case of 60 year-old Arati Sen of Lake Gardens who needed someone to leave her 90 year-old mother with when she went to visit her daughter in Australia. Jana Hitaya stepped in and

that most silvers face in nuclear families today. Many of them are affluent and supported by children who are non-resident Indians but need help to get on with their lives. Choudhury says that most silvers initially reject help from social service organisations as they feel that asking for 'free' service and assistance does not reflect well on their children. She has five paid volunteers who charge a nominal fee for helping patients (those who have the means to pay). They accompany silvers to hospitals, collect diagnostic test reports and do other odd jobs. The fee is handed over directly by those who need help to those who help out. "Jana Hitaya is only a facilitator and its members are like friends of senior citizens of this city," reiterates Choudhury.

The phone rings almost in testimony. Choudhury answers in her characteristic friendly tone: "Yes ... this is Jana Hitaya. I am so glad you enjoyed the picnic Mrs Mukherjee... How are your knees? When is the next physiotherapy appointment? Suchitradi will take you. Don't forget your eye drops...."

At Jana Hitaya, compassion and caring go hand in hand with fun and gaiety. In December 2007, Choudhury escorted a group of 95 silvers to a nature park owned by Mudiali Fisheries Corporation in Taratolla. She recounts how Urmila Gupta, 66, danced the morning away to the throbbing beat of Indian folk music, and Manjusree Bose, 70, sang *bhajan* and Rabindrasangeet, and read out from her collection of essays. A sumptuous vegetarian lunch was followed by tea, cheese straws and fruits.



SHILBHADRA DATTA

Compassion and gaiety: Jana Hitaya regularly organises free eye check-up camps; silvers enjoy a day out, on a picnic to the nature park in Taratolla

Anyone is free to help out at Jana Hitaya as long as they have the genuine desire and patience required to deal with those less fortunate. Urmila Gupta, a

Recently, Choudhury escorted a group of 95 silvers on a picnic

former teacher and childless widow, teaches street children when she is not accompanying someone close to her own age to the doctor or organising an eye check-up camp. Sushma Palit of Behala, 65, approached Jana Hitaya a couple of years ago out

of mere curiosity. Today she conducts *pranayama* classes in the office for those with breathing trouble and age-related problems.

It is not possible to sustain such altruism without funds. "We have no foreign funding or corporate sponsorship, but we come up with innovative ways to raise funds," says Choudhury. Although Jana Hitaya does not accept payment from its beneficiaries, Choudhury welcomes donations or voluntary service from those who believe in her cause. She cites the case of a cancer patient who donated Rs 10,000 to improve the infrastructure of the organisation. Volunteers make pickles, create embroidered handker-



SHILBHADRA DATTA

Choudhury with committee members of Jana Hitaya

chiefs, and bake cookies and cakes. These contributions are sold at the annual fair, Ananda Jogya, held in vacant houses and other free space offered by well-wishers. Proceeds help meet office expenses, pay for bills and form a kitty for silvers faced with acute financial crises. Recently Choudhury roped in a reputed tea company to donate 10 kg of tea, which is bought by volunteers and friends of Jana Hitaya.

Jana Hitaya not only reaches out to silvers who are lonely but also to those abandoned by their families. In October 2007, when octogenarians Kartik Chandra Dey and his wife Maya took shelter in a bus stop after their children refused to support them, Jana Hitaya arranged permanent shelter and food for the couple in an old age home in Sonarpur. (Now, the Deys can claim maintenance from their children, as is their lawful right, according to the Senior Citizens'

Maintenance Bill.) Though Choudhury knows that NGOs

Silvers contribute poems and essays to the annual magazine

can file cases for aggrieved silvers, she feels that legal hassles will leave her with no time to focus on Jana Hitaya.

She also feels it's important to be unbiased—when she spoke to the children of the Deys, she learnt that the couple always found fault with their children's lifestyle. Choudhury admits that Dey's wife is slightly belligerent at times and hasn't yet fully adjusted to her new surroundings. "Often those belonging to the older generation tend to be rigid and difficult to please," she says. For silvers at odds with the world around them, Choudhury

invites psychiatrists to conduct workshops at Jana Hitaya. The findings are analysed by professionals and imparted to caregivers so that they are better equipped to deal with silvers suffering from depression, fear of death and psychosomatic conditions. At the same time, Choudhury quotes examples of other silvers who are eager to change. Ila Biswas, 68, says her life is again "full of colours" after coming to Jana Hitaya. As a little girl, Biswas was adept at painting *alpana* on the floor during festivals and *puja*. When she decided to volunteer her time at Jana Hitaya, Choudhury and her team encouraged her to get back to her childhood hobby of painting. She now designs greetings cards sold at the Ananda Jogya fair.

Jayanto Majumdar, 84, compares Jana Hitaya to a fairy godmother. Majumdar, who has lost his eyesight lived alone in Santiniketan. All he wanted was to meet his old friends in Kolkata. Jana Hitaya organised a get-together for Majumdar and his friends. Later, he wrote a thank-you note saying, "You gave me light that I thought was gone forever." Just as Jana Hitaya heals emotional scars, it also stokes hidden creativity. Choudhury and her team publish an annual magazine, *Jana Hitaya*, where silvers contribute poems and short stories.

In a fast-paced world, Jana Hitaya offers silvers a refuge, a family that has grown through word of mouth. As more beneficiaries join this band of silvers, the line between the cared for and the caregivers becomes thinner by the day. ■

Jana Hitaya, 52, Lake Avenue, Kolkata-700026. Tel: 033-24646904

Mumbai's most attractive figures.

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MATURITY PERIOD	Interest Rates in Percentage (Per Annum)	
	General Public	Senior Citizens
15 days to 45 days	4.50	4.50
46 days to 90 days	5.50	5.50
91 days to 180 days	6.50	6.50
181 days to 1 Year	7.00	7.00
Above 1 Year to 2 Years	9.00	10.00
Above 2 Years to 3 Years	9.50	10.00
Above 3 Years to 7 years	8.50	9.50
GB Tax Gain Scheme	8.50	9.50
GB Money Multiplier Scheme*	Deposit doubles in 94 Months.	
GB Senior Citizen Money Multiplier Scheme*	Deposit doubles in 87 Months.	

* No additional rate of interest will be applicable for the said deposits.

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Empress of solitude

Writer Anita Desai's life and work have been marked by discipline and attention to detail, writes

Jai Arjun Singh

The world of Indian publishing in English can be intimidating—certainly for the outsider, but occasionally even for someone who works within the industry or is closely associated with it, say as a literary journalist. Twenty-five years after Salman Rushdie won the Booker Prize for *Midnight's Children*, and 20 years after Penguin Books India opened new doors for aspiring writers, there is something of a publishing boom underway, with bright young writers dabbling in genres—science fiction, chick-lit (fiction for young women), fantasy, campus fiction, graphic novels—that were scarcely even heard of a few years ago, and younger, more open-minded editors willing to encourage them on. Hardly a week passes without the high-profile launch (followed by cocktails, or at the very least preceded by high tea) of a book touted as one of the year's most significant publishing events. Fashionable young scribes get featured on the front pages of newspaper supplements even before their first book is out; a select few get large advances. Literary festivals are the rage, and even when they aren't happening the community seems perpetually to be in touch; almost every author, author-in-progress or critic has a website or blog.

This is not how it used to be in the early 1950s when a young girl began writing short stories sitting at a desk in her Delhi home. This is not how it was when, a few years later, while studying in Miranda House college, she submitted her work for publication to niche literary magazines like *Thought*. Or when, a few years later, she sent manuscripts to small companies in England because local publishers were preoccupied with textbooks or reprints of old books. The world of Indian publishing was very different then. It was lonely work being a writer. And yet, Anita Desai made it. Purely by dint of talent and discipline, she became one of the most respected Indian writers of the generation immed-

currently lives, or in India, during her frequent visits here. She has spent most of the past 20 years in the US after leaving India in 1986, which has contributed to her low profile here. And in the past two years, she has happily basked in reflected glory—that of her daughter Kiran, who won the 2006 Booker for *The Inheritance of Loss*. But she has never really been out of the picture. Her name still draws respect from the heavyweights of Indian writing; Rushdie once called her the pre-eminent Indian novelist of her generation and the equal of Jane Austen.

Anita Desai was born Anita Mazumdar in 1937 in Mussoorie, to a German mother and a

Desai has never been a part of the literary party scene—mostly out of choice

ately preceding Rushdie's; the generation that came just before the floodgates began to open for Indian writing in English (or IWE, to use the popular acronym) and hype began to surround every new writer.

Mostly out of choice, Desai has never been a very visible writer—she isn't part of the literary party scene in New York, where she

Bengali father. She grew up speaking German in addition to Bengali and Hindi, and recalls that English entered her life only when she went to school; consequently, she always associated this language with the written word. She grew up with her siblings in an Old Delhi house, an experience she would draw on for one of her most acclaimed books *Clear Light of Day*, about the

lonely childhood of two sisters and the different trajectories of their lives as adults.

In 1958, aged only 21, she married a businessman, Ashvin Desai. Over the next 13 years they had four children (Kiran being the youngest)—one of the most astonishing things about Desai's career is that she managed to balance a rigorous writing life with the responsibilities of being a wife and mother in a traditional society. But write she did, and her explanation of how she found time for this is beguilingly simple. "After

packing the children off to school," she says, "I would sit at my desk and stay there until they returned home." Discipline, the resolve to write daily—these were the keywords; not for her the luxury that many writers have had of being fiercely temperamental, subject to long periods where no work gets done at all followed by long, frenetic sessions of productivity, shut away from the world. For her, that wasn't even an option.

Her first novel was *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), published by Peter Owen, "which was then a small

publishing company with an interest in foreign writers and voices; I got lucky". However, it wasn't until *Fire on the Mountain* (1976), the story of an old woman and her granddaughter living in solitude in the hills of Shimla, that she felt she had turned a corner, finding a voice of her own. Most of her subsequent books were about what she has referred to as "little heroes"—people who lead circumscribed lives, never doing anything obviously grand or world-changing, and yet managing to find dignity within those lives. Like the spinster Bim in *Clear*

LIFE, LONGING AND LITERATURE...



REDFI NEWS



Cry, The Peacock (1963)

As much an intense psychological exploration into the darker recesses of a woman's mind as a novel of unfulfilled love and desire.

Voices in the City (1965)

Set in the 1960s, this novel is a depiction of how our identity can never break free from the clutches of our social class.

Bye Bye Blackbird (1968)

Xenophobia forms the core of a plot that revolves around the backlash against migrants in London in the 1950s.

Fire on the Mountain (1976)

Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, this story of three generations of women who discover contentment in isolation was

acclaimed for its rebellious posture.

Clear Light of Day (1980)

Short-listed for the Booker Prize, this domestic drama uncovers the myriad scars and smiles of familial relationships.

In Custody (1984)

A small-town lecturer meets his hero, an Urdu poet, and ends up trading awe for disillusionment. A

Light of Day, a caretaker of memories, unwilling to leave the house she grew up in. Or Hugo Baumgartner in *Baumgartner's Bombay*, a German Jew who escaped the Holocaust as a

domestic circle, writing a book where the two central characters were men: the story is about Deven, a small-town professor who gets the chance to meet and interview his idol Nur, a once-

Desai's writing arises from her deep understanding of human beings

child and lived for decades in Bombay without doing anything really noteworthy.

Later, with *In Custody* (1984), she felt she had broken out of the

great Urdu poet now fallen on bad times. Though Desai had never been an aggressively feminist writer, this was the first time she was writing in the male voice, and she felt refreshed by

the experience. A few years later, she collaborated on Ismail Merchant's film version of *In Custody*, starring Shashi Kapoor, Om Puri and Shabana Azmi, but subsequently admitted that it disturbed her to see the decrepit Old Delhi of her novel presented in vibrant colours in the film.

Desai's writing can occasionally be dense to get through for the casual reader—there are many descriptions of minutiae, and of the interior lives of her principal characters; the same careful attention to detail, in fact, that can also be seen in her daughter's work. But there is also an acute humour running through her books. At times this can be overt in tone—like Deven's pathetic attempts to capture Nur's voice for posterity on a tape recorder, which culminate in the capturing not of a beautiful verse of poetry but something mundane and vulgar. At other times, the humour is more understated, more delicate. But either way, it always arises from her deep understanding of human beings, their foibles and self-delusions, and of the little everyday things that make life worth living even when the larger picture seems unutterably bleak.

In the past two decades, she hasn't been a very prolific writer of books, producing only *The Zigzag Way*, *Fasting, Feasting*, *Journey to Ithaca* and a short-story collection during that time. But she still rigorously maintains her writing routine, doing a fair number of critical pieces and essays for publications such as the *New York Review of Books*. She lives on the outskirts of New York—a place she describes as “a little village”—and travels

pungent commentary on the duel between worldly desires and spiritual concerns.

Baumgartner's Bombay (1988)

Set in the time of the Holocaust, the novel traces the journey of a Jewish man, Hugo Baumgartner, who flees Nazi Germany to escape persecution and settles in India only to meet with a tragic end.

Diamond Dust and Other Stories (2000)

A diverse collection of short stories steeped in the angst and aspirations of people living in three continents.

The Zigzag Way (2004)

A young Harvard student's excursion to Mexico spirals into a journey through the complex history and secrets of his genealogy.



Courtesy: ANITA DESAI'S COLLECTION AT BRITISH COUNCIL LIBRARY

occasionally to Mexico and to India. For the most part, her daily life conforms to the image of the reticent, solitary writer.

In December 2007, Desai was made a fellow of the Sahitya Akademi, only the third Indian writer in English to receive the

honour—the others were Mulk Raj Anand and R K Narayan. Random House India marked the occasion by reissuing three of her finest novels (*Clear Light of Day*, *In Custody* and *Baumgartner's Bombay*) in elegant, minimalist new designs. Soon her other books will also be

collected in this format. It's a concept that closely resembles the Library of America's tradition of reissuing and collecting the works of major American writers, such as Saul Bellow and Philip Roth. It's no less a tribute than this great lady of letters deserves.

“I indulge in reflection with my writing”

Anita Desai tells Meeta Bhatti about her world



Other than you, only two Indian writers in English have been lifetime fellows of the Sahitya Akademi. How does it feel to hold this position?

It is an honour and I am very grateful. With a stroke of luck, it came when Random House announced the re-release of three of my books. It all coincided with the re-release of *In Custody*, for which I wrote the screenplay. My family and friends are happy. And my older publishers, who published an unknown author, are vindicated.

You have described the 1950s and the 1960s as “distinctly discouraging”, a time when making a living as a writer was hopeless business. How are things today, especially for first-time writers?

When I started writing, Indian writers didn't have any sense of fellowship or community. We were working in complete isolation without outer encouragement or inducement. One had no sense of any readership. In a way it was good as there was no sense of pressure either. Young writers today are under pressure to make a success of their work, whereas, at that time, no one was watching you.

What changed?

In the 1980s, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* generated tremendous interest in Indian writing. Indian readers felt they were reading an Indian language even though it was English and that it was addressing their interests. It also energised a younger generation of writers. Publishers sat up

Anita Desai in an unguarded moment, at home in the US

and started looking out for new talent. Thirty to 40 years ago, it was not possible for writers to make a living out of writing—it was unheard of.

Has quality suffered in the process?

As publishing has achieved this kind of popularity, they can afford to put out all kinds of books for a variety of readers, which almost gives the impression of a glut. For young writers it's encouraging. Unfortunately, literature has also been invaded by the cult of the celebrity. To my thinking, celebrity has nothing to do at all with the books one writes. But sadly there's also the pressure to become a celebrity. I know publishers in the UK and US who look for attractive writers rather than the quality of writing. And that's why they have book festivals now. In a way it is fun because you meet your fellow authors, see books, but it also demands that you perform in a public arena and I feel it has nothing to do with writing.

How have you coped with a three-city tour for a fresh release of your books?

I did nothing of the sort when I was young. It's a very recent phenomenon. Perhaps that's why I can look at it with detachment. I am happy to have the books come out with less publicity. But I think it is important for the publisher to present the book to the public. I couldn't do the kinds of tours younger writers do. It takes too much out of you. I have seen it happen to my daughter Kiran. She has spent the past two years launching her book, *The Inheritance of Loss*, in different countries. For two years she hasn't put pen to paper. Now she is waiting to break off and get back to the silent occupation of writing.

Have you enjoyed teaching aspiring writers?

American universities have writing courses that people sign up for to become published writers. But I have never taught at these programmes. I have taught at MIT where students were expecting to be scientists and engineers. They used to come to writing classes to get in touch with themselves and get away from the rigours of science and engineering. So it was really pleasant. These were interesting students because they felt science and engineering weren't enough; that there was something missing from their lives. And although some were very

talented, there was the idea that some would go back to earning a living as scientists. There were students who changed their minds along the way though! I had a law student who was practicing law already; she gave that up and recently brought out a collection of short stories, and is now launching a novel. Part of the reason is that they are following their own inclination. The other part is that they get sponsorships and fellowships along the way and publishers willing to pay advances on books.

You were neighbours with Ruth Prawer Jhabwala and have credited her with keeping up your courage when you felt like a struggling writer....

Ruth lived in my neighbourhood in Old Delhi when I was a child. I used to see her pushing the pram with her babies. I went to her to borrow books. It was wonderful to know that she could live this very domestic life and still be a writer. Although I never showed her my work. it was tremendous encouragement that she was there.

Did you get that support from your family?

Well, they expected me to live a traditional life. They wouldn't have understood if I had thrown away everything and gone off to write. So I married, had children, brought them up and wrote in spare moments. My family (that I was born to) would see me sitting in a corner, writing away. They thought of me as the writer in the family. After I got married, I lived in a setting that had absolutely no regard for writing. That was hard. Maybe it was part of the reason I left it and went to Cambridge and then the US to teach, where I was among other writers and what I was doing was respected.

Apart from Kiran, were you an inspiration for your other children?

It's strange how all of them grew up in the same family, had books on the shelves and saw me reading, but they didn't. My eldest son Rahul lives in Patiala and works for a firm. Three of my children live in the US—my older daughter Tani married an Indian doctor and my younger son Arjun is an architect in Manhattan. Kiran is the youngest and the only other writer in the family. She has inborn talent. But she, like the other three, said she wouldn't want to be a writer. She said, 'You live such a boring life.' She planned to become

an environmental scientist at one time but I used to tell her, 'You write such wonderful letters, why don't you expand them into something.' She wasn't interested. Luckily, there were professors in her arts college who encouraged her to write. She actually attended writing courses in American universities. But she was unhappy; her professors were forcing her to write in a way that didn't come naturally. She used to take a lot of time off and stay with me and write the way she wanted to.

Your work delves a lot into lifelessness and death. How do you see ageing and death?

I think it's got something to do with being Indian and growing up living in India—one is always aware of death, the fact that it can take over quite suddenly, and that it's waiting in the wings. These Indian obsessions find their way into my books too. Personally, I don't think I would be able to simply celebrate life without being aware of the darker side of the shadows. My whole vision of life may not be tragic but is certainly tragic-comic. One has to include both sides of life to truthfully reflect what one feels or knows.

At the centre of your work are family values and the tussle between heart and mind....

People tend to think of the Indian family as being warm and protective. But anyone who has lived in an Indian family knows that there are just as many difficulties, bitterness, resentment, problems, because you have to adjust to so many people. It is pretence when we say, 'Oh, it's all so wonderful.' If only everyone else could discover family life as we know it. I have known a lot of pain and heartbreak especially on the part of women as well as men.

How important is family to you?

If I hadn't had family life and relationships with my children, my life would be so diminished. I don't regret or resent having given up time to their childhood. It was a very happy time for me.

How much of your books is drawn from life?

A lot of my work is based upon memories or witnesses I have heard. At the same time, as a

writer there's a part of yourself that you have to keep separate; a secret you need to protect.

Is there any of your work that you haven't published because it was too real?

Fasting, Feasting was a book I held back for over 10 years. It was based on people very close to me and I did not want to hurt their feelings. As time went on, some of them passed away and others more or less told me to go ahead. Eventually I published it.

Are you working on a book now?

My last book, *The Zigzag Way*, is so small that it's hard to persuade anyone that I spent a long time writing it! I haven't moved on to another subject. I spend a lot of time doing critical work, writing reviews and introductions to other writers' works.

***The Zigzag Way* was about searching for identities. Is coming back to the roots very important?**

In that book, some characters are searching for roots; others for new identities, abandoning old identities and creating new antennae in a new place. I used the metaphor of the mind to show how people dig through depth after depth before they arrive at silver. For some it is the past, and for some it is the future and what they made of themselves. Roots go down so deep that you can't pull them out. You simply transport them wherever you are.

Do you see a change in the Indian middle class, also an important part of your books?

The middle class I was writing about belonged to another world. It was very stable and traditional. At present, though, it is a class in flux, trying hard to become rich. There are two sides to it. One is the ugliness of it, a consumer society that has got crazy with its ability to consume. On the other hand, it has freed a lot of people from tradition. They have made a new life for themselves. In India, no one had the strength in my generation to invent a life. You couldn't give up what you had been born to or raised for, and go into a completely different sphere. Now people in the middle class feel they can do anything if they work and compete hard.

You tend to lead a fairly solitary life, so much so that you are considered a recluse....

I wouldn't have said so earlier in my life when I was certainly considered a recluse because I had these habits—I didn't go out to meet people, I was always at my desk writing. I did enjoy good company; bad company was always upsetting to me. That's why I got this reputation. Now I can choose who I want to meet and who I don't.

Do you have other interests?

I think it's wonderful to be able to do something with your hands. There is nothing physical about writing; it's a mental exercise. I bought a house five years ago for the first time and I spend a lot of time in the garden. I sometimes leave my desk to work in it. In certain seasons when a lot of work is required, it does draw me away from writing. Otherwise, I always enjoy going for walks.

Is it a writer's responsibility to be a social activist?

There are things I feel passionate about. In my case, the channel for that is writing.

But I don't want to use the words 'can' or 'should' for activism because there are some writers who are able to voice their feelings and join a team and work actively towards solutions. It's in your nature whether you are driven to activism or driven to reflection. I indulge in reflection with my writing.

Are there social and political issues today that bother you?

There are always such issues. When I am in America, I am in a constant state of outrage at the government and what has been done to countries like Iraq. I do speak out against it when I have the chance. As I have spent so much time away from India, I am more reluctant to do that because I feel that if you are not a participant in what is happening at present, in a way you have lost the right to speak on it. But there are certainly a lot of issues in India that are outrageous. We are not looking after all our people. For every glittering urban sector, there are acres of garbage that people are living on. And we haven't really achieved social justice. You are sitting in a car and barefoot children in rags come up to you at traffic lights holding up glossy copies of *Vogue* and *Time Out*. What connection do these magazines have with these little children and their lives? It's shocking.



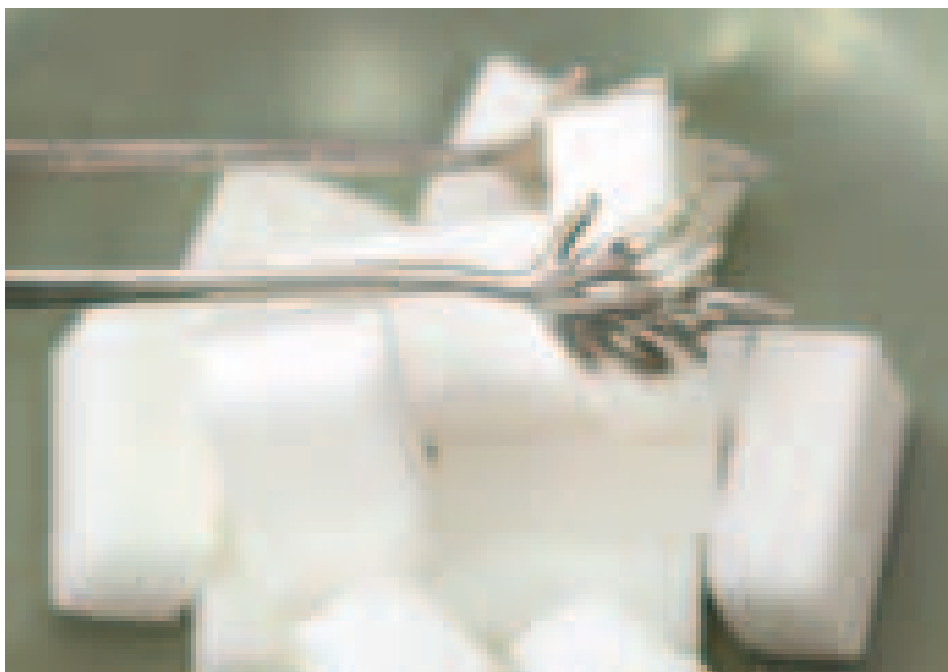
Literary legacy: Desai with daughter Kiran

How do you feel about awards?

(Laughing) A lot of people have asked me, 'You lost the Booker Prize; how do you feel when your daughter won it?' They actually say it like that! And I say that because I lost it I am so happy that she won. I think her book was so marvellous that if she hadn't won it, it would have been so wrong. It was a triumphant moment. She was overgenerous and acknowledged support from me. What do I think about prizes? Well, one can say they don't matter but that's not truthful. They not only make a difference to the book, but also to one's life. They give you support and encouragement and pay you to live the next few years while you are writing your next book. What I think is very difficult is that each prize chooses one book out of hundreds. Who is to say that this is the best book, like the Nobel Prize? How do you pick out the one book published in the whole wide world in all its languages and say this is the best? That's an absurdity. ■

Salt and sugar

Speaking to experts, **Anjana Jha** concludes that a balanced diet should include both



Salt and sugar are the building blocks of diet and nutrition. However, based on our genetic makeup and lifestyles, individual requirements of these two basic ingredients vary enormously. The optimum amount needed every day also depends on a person's health. While over-consumption of salt is linked to high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, sugar is blamed as being one of the three major causes of degenerative diseases.

SALT

Excessive intake of salt can cause health problems, but too little can be detrimental. The body's salt-to-water ratio is critical to metabolism as salt helps maintain the electrolyte balance inside and

outside the cells. Too much or too little salt can lead to cramps, dizziness and electrolyte disturbance, which can further cause severe neurological problems. Consuming sufficient salt is particularly important for seniors.

A common mineral consisting of about 40 per cent sodium, salt is present in small amounts in all foods (fruits and vegetables) and water. A person's risk for disease owing to insufficient or excessive salt intake varies because of biochemical individuality. A certain amount of sodium in our diet is essential to help maintain the concentration of body fluids at correct levels. It also plays a central role in the transmission of electrical impulses in the nerves, and helps cells absorb nutrients.

"Inadequate intake of salt lowers the sodium content in our body," says Pune-based consultant clinical pharmacologist Dr S M Karandikar, a former head of the department of pharmacology at KEM Hospital, Mumbai. "An imbalance can affect different organs, including the brain."

However, experimental studies reveal that most of us, on an average, consume at least two-and-a-half times the quantity we need. The recommended maximum intake of salt a day is 6 gm for adults, with levels being even lower for children. Though 6 gm is one level teaspoonful, it's difficult to measure actual consumption because salt is already present in our food and is not just the amount added while cooking.



Processed foods—bread, breakfast cereals, biscuits and meat—account for around 75 per cent of an average person's salt intake. Sodium is added to aid preservation and improve taste, and is therefore present in additives such as monosodium glutamate and sodium bicarbonate. Small amounts can also be found in eggs and fish. Salt sprinkled on our food accounts for only 10-15 per cent of our intake.

In adults, when sodium levels are too high, the body retains water

tely. The amount should be restricted only on medical advice." Dr Karandikar adds, "A person on diuretic drugs should not reduce salt intake arbitrarily as the increased output of urine causes lack of sodium in the body. Salts like *saindhav* taste like common salt but are less harmful as they contain less sodium." While the risks of consuming too much salt are real, they are also exaggerated. Over-conscientious people might cut down salt intake drastically. The correct advice: a healthy, balanced diet.

only calories but no nutrients is a myth. Sugar is not always consumed alone but as an enhancing ingredient in various foods.

But while foods like fresh fruit and milk contain natural sugar, a source of essential nutrients, many foods and beverages with high levels of added sugar have negligible nutritional value. Diets high in added sugar tend to be low in vital vitamins and minerals. Refined sugars—sucrose, fructose, glucose—are used in many foods such as bread, breakfast cereal, mayonnaise, peanut butter and ketchup. "Using honey and jaggery instead of refined sugar is a much better option," says Dr Jhingan.

Too much or too little salt can cause cramps and lead to neurological problems

and the volume of bodily fluids increases. Many scientists believe this is linked to high blood pressure, which is linked to heart disease and stroke. However, some researchers feel that there are other potential causes to these ailments, and deny that salt plays any significant role at all.

"For people without high blood pressure, history of swelling of feet or kidney problems, 5-6 gm should be the normal daily intake," says Dr Ashok Jhingan, senior consultant diabetologist and chairman of Delhi Diabetes Research Centre. "But no one should stop taking salt comple-

Tips to reduce salt intake

- Use 'light salt' or rock salt (*kala namak*).
- Always eat fresh vegetables, fruits and meats instead of canned and processed foods.
- Substitute salt with lemon juice.
- Watch out for hidden sodium in carbonated drinks, non-dairy creamers, cookies and cakes.
- Avoid salty foods like potato chips, pickles, *papad*, mustard, some cheeses.

SUGAR

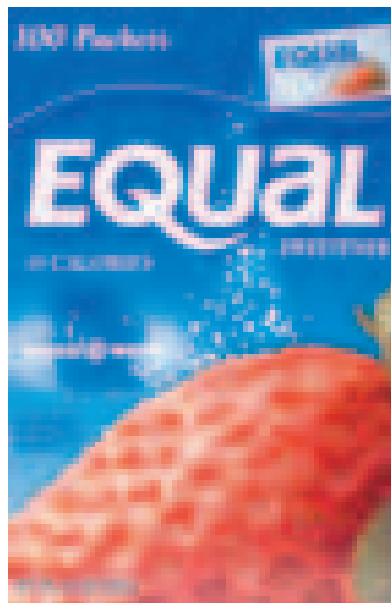
A major form of carbohydrates, sugar occurs in significant amounts in most fruits and vegetables. The complaint that it provides

One of the major drawbacks of sugar is that it raises insulin level. This inhibits the release of growth hormones, which in turn depresses the immune system. An influx of sugar into the bloodstream upsets the body's blood sugar balance, triggering the release of insulin, which the body uses to keep blood sugar at a safe level. "With age, people become more prone to diabetes," says Dr Karandikar. "Regular checkups for blood sugar once every six months or a year is required as the condition can kick in any time. Though it is a source of energy, diabetes necessitates restrictions in sugar intake."

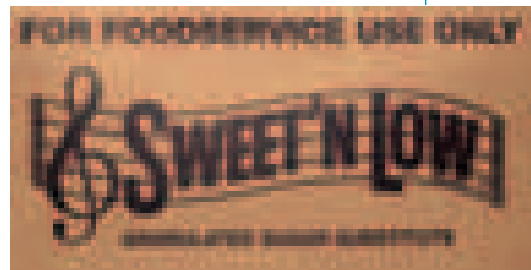
In recent years, the percentage of overweight adults has grown in tandem with the increase in sugar consumption. Insulin promotes the storage of fat and, consequently, eating sugar-rich foods can cause rapid weight gain and elevated triglyceride levels, both of which have been linked to cardiovascular disease. On the other hand, complex carbohydrates (such as wholegrains, beans and lentils) tend to be absorbed more slowly, lessening the impact on blood sugar levels. "By avoiding high concentration sugar products and regular exercise, we can enjoy sweets and desserts yet avoid weight gain," according to Dr Jhingan.

Sugar has also been observed to aggravate asthma, mood swings, nervous disorders and arthritis. Devoid of minerals, vitamins and fibre, sugar has a deteriorating effect on the endocrine system. "Indulging in carbonated and alcoholic drinks and inadequate food can cause symptoms of low blood sugar levels and result in hypoglycaemia," cautions Dr Jhingan. "The resultant disturbed sleep, headache, dizziness and disorientation often lead to falls and fractures. This is particularly

SWEET NOTHINGS



Artificial sweeteners are chemicals that provide the sweetness of sugar without calories and without raising blood sugar level. Considerably sweeter than sugar, smaller quantities of the substitute are required to create the same level of sweetness. Consequently, products made with artificial sweet-



eners have a much lower calorie count than those made with sugar. Artificial sweeteners are often used as part of weight loss plans.

These sweeteners are also reported to cause many health hazards, including cancer. According to the US National Cancer Institute, though, there is no evidence that sweeteners approved for use cause cancer. Studies also confirm that sweeteners are safe for the general population. However, Dr Karandikar recommends against prolonged, excessive use of artificial sweeteners as they can cause sleep disturbance, headache and pain in the abdomen.

And even indulging one's sweet tooth doesn't always cause diabetes after all. In fact, diabetics can

seven daily servings of fruits and vegetables is enough."

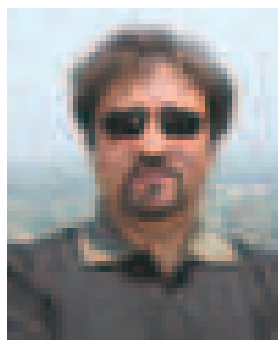
Diabetics can safely eat a sugary snack if it's appropriately factored into their diet

relevant for silvers who live alone and develop erratic food habits." Sugar also nourishes bacteria that causes dental cavities.

However, some of the dietary dangers of sugar have been exaggerated. For instance, many studies have concluded that it doesn't cause hyperactivity.

safely eat a sugary snack if it's appropriately factored into their diet. Nutritional scientists advocate that carbohydrates should provide at least 50 per cent of our energy requirements. "The right amount of calories and proper nutrition are important, particularly after 40," says Dr Jhingan. "As fruits contain sugar, five to

One example of the importance of salt and sugar: oral rehydration therapy (ORT), a solution of sugar and salt, which has been termed "as the most important medical advice of the 20th century" by the *British Medical Journal*. So, rather than excluding sugar and salt arbitrarily, have a balanced diet that includes foods calculated to ensure desired levels of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals. "No fast, no feast, small frequent meals, eat right and exercise," concludes Dr Jhingan. ■



Sleep tight

Dr M S Kanwar answers queries on sleep disorders

sometimes sleep sitting up. I don't feel refreshed in the morning. What could the problem be?

A These seem to be the symptoms of obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). It is common among overweight people who also snore. As you are overweight by about 15 kg, you should consult a specialist immediately. OSA can have serious consequences. Snoring is a result of narrowing of the upper airway passage (on the back of the throat) during sleep. It can lead to partial or complete choking of air passage, which you may have experienced. It can also cause a dramatic fall in oxygen levels in the blood, affecting the heart and brain. You may need an overnight sleep test (polysomnography or PSG) to assess the problem and your risk profile. This is a fully treatable condition and the results in terms of quality of life are very rewarding.

Q I am 62 years old. For the past 10 years, I haven't slept well at night. I usually get up in the middle of the night and it takes me two to three hours to get back to sleep. I am tired and lethargic the whole day. Please advise me.

A This problem is commonly termed as insomnia. If you are not a very anxious person and not taking multiple drugs that could interfere with your sleep, you most likely have what is called psychophysiological or behavioural insomnia when the body's sleep centre behaves abnormally. It is a chronic disorder and can last for years, sometimes even decades. You should follow certain sleep hygiene precautions—stop drinking tea or coffee after 5 pm, exercise regularly, and practice yoga and meditation. Your bedroom should be a quiet zone. Do not work your mind into thinking and planning

after you go to bed. If your sleep gets interrupted, don't start walking around for no reason. If these measures fail, see a sleep specialist.

Q I develop pain, itching and tingling in my legs whenever I lie down. As a result, I sometimes can't sleep for hours. Could there be a medical problem?

A You have symptoms of restless leg syndrome (RLS). The problem occurs only at the time of lying down in bed and disappears the moment you get off the bed or start walking. It can occur without any underlying cause but you must get your blood and kidney profile checked. This condition is more prevalent in those suffering from iron or folate deficiency anemia and uremia (accumulation in blood of constituents normally eliminated by kidneys). It may also occur in those suffering from vascular insufficiency in limbs and also those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (damage to lungs caused by irritants from smoking, pollution and dust). Correction of some underlying factors—quitting smoking and reducing intake of caffeine—helps. Undergo a sleep test to confirm the pattern of RLS and the sleeplessness that it causes. If the problem is significant, there are drugs that can help.

Q I am a 71 year-old, retired IAS officer. I can't stay up beyond 8.30 pm or 9 pm but wake up by 3 am. After that I can't go back to sleep. No one in my family has had this problem.

A You are experiencing advanced sleep phase syndrome. It is common in elderly people and is primarily because of a shift in the sleep-wave rhythm. It is an expression of natural ageing and does not reflect a disease. Phototherapy treatment for this condition (medical exposure to light to delay the time of sleep) does not give good results. I recommend you accept this as a natural phenomenon and readjust your lifestyle accordingly. ■

Dr M S Kanwar is a senior consultant (respiratory medicine, critical care and sleep medicine) at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Delhi, and regarded as a pioneer of sleep medicine in India. He set up India's largest sleep lab at Apollo Hospital in 1995

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Stop arthritis from stopping you

Weightless and free

Mandakini Gokhale defeated obesity with sheer will power, says Runa Chakravorty



VILAS KALGUTKER

Gokhale was only 44 kg when she got married in 1970. Steadily putting on weight after she had her first child in 1973, she was 65 kg by the time her younger son Mahesh was born four years later. The scales continued to tip higher. "I have been obese for the major part of my life, weighing over 80 kg," she says. Weight, though, was never an impediment for running the household or raising three children with practically no help from her husband. But after devoting her life to her children, the realisation that they were old and independent enough to lead their own lives came as a rude shock. "Though I felt proud that I had raised them well, my life lost its sense of purpose," she remembers.

Following the wedding of daughter Rupali in 1998, Gokhale began to feel increasingly lonely. Everything came to a head when six years ago Gokhale underwent menopause and her husband Ramesh a bypass surgery. Suffering from diabetes, hypertension and bouts of depression, her weight spiralled to 88 kg resulting in a severe back problem. Gokhale's weight and ailments aggravated her depression. Medication and physiotherapy prescribed by doctors did little to help, as she never followed their advice. Her back problem kept her bed-ridden for months. "I had to take heavy doses of medicines and, to make it worse, I became addicted to Alprax, an

Faith, hard work and determination can help you achieve any goal no matter how impossible it may seem at first. Mandakini Gokhale, 57, understands this better than many others her age. And that's because age has never

been a hurdle for this homemaker in Thane. In 1992, at the age of 42, Gokhale appeared for her Class XII examination along with her elder son Rohit. And at 56, she decided to gym it out to shed the extra weight that had become the bane of her life.

anti-depressant pill,” she recalls. The dependency on Alprex developed when her doctor son Rohit gave her a tablet from samples kept at home. Without his knowledge, she began helping herself to the pills from his stock. After he discovered what she was doing and removed the medicine from the house, Gokhale started procuring them from chemists. For two years, she lived with depression and addiction.

Then, four years ago, she rediscovered a purpose in life when her daughter-in-law Tanuja became pregnant. “I started dreaming of playing with my grandchild,” she reminisces. But she knew that none of that would have been possible in her condition. She decided to take control of her life.

Her decision to join a gym in December 2003 astonished her family. Advice about joining a gym had been given long ago by her doctor. After overcoming her hesitation about wearing a track-suit, she joined Talwalkars in Thane. “I was enthusiastic about joining the gym but not comfortable about the attire initially!” she admits with a smile.

After the birth of her grandson Mandar, she began exercising

Cardio exercises and weight lifting have now become part of her life

early in the morning so she could return home before he woke up. A balanced diet followed the exercise routine. Though switching from her earlier diet of oily food to non-greasy fare was difficult at first, by July 2004, she succeeded in shedding 16 kg. The

ABOUT OBESITY

- Obesity is accumulation of excess fat in the body leading to body weight of more than 20 per cent of required weight.
- Normal percentage of body fat is 25-30 per cent in women and 18-23 per cent in men. Women with over 30 per cent body fat and men with over 25 per cent body fat are considered obese.
- There are more than 1 billion overweight adults in the world and at least 300 million of them are obese.
- According to a recent study by Nutrition Foundation of India, nearly a third of men and more than half of women belonging to the middle class in India are currently overweight (BMI>25).
- Slow metabolism
- Overeating when depressed, bored, sad, stressed or angry
- Endocrine factors—hyperthyroidism, hypogonadism (a defect of the reproductive system that results in malfunctioning ovaries), Cushing's syndrome (caused by high levels of cortisol in the blood)
- Medications—certain antidepressants, anti-convulsants, diabetes medications, corticosteroids, hormones, blood pressure medications, antihistamines

Health risks associated with obesity

- Insulin resistance
- Type 2 diabetes
- Hypertension
- Stroke
- Cardiovascular disease
- High cholesterol
- Certain forms of cancer
- Degenerative arthritis
- Sleep apnoea

Common causes of obesity

- Genetic factors
- Physical inactivity
- Eating habits—overeating; eating between meals; diets high in fat and simple carbohydrates

problems of diabetes and depression vanished along with her addiction, while her hypertension was under control with normal medication. Her determination

crunches and weight lifting have become a part of her life. “Now I can’t do without exercise even for a single day,” she smiles. Her determination has inspired her daughter and daughter-in-law to lose weight as well.

Today, Gokhale pays a lot of attention to grooming, taking a regular massage to tone her skin. She also enjoys an active social life. And with her grandson starting school, she plans to do some social work. Brimming with confidence, she believes age is no obstacle if you are determined to achieve a goal. “You are only as old as you think,” she asserts. ■

and hard work impressed her trainers immensely. She even won the ‘biggest loser’ competition at the gym for losing 4 kg in one month in December 2005. Now, Gokhale weighs 68 kg and aims to lose another 8 kg this year. Cardio exercises, abdominal

Celebrate life

On the cusp of winter and spring, **Dr Pushpesh Pant** raises a toast

The first two recipes help you savour the last few days of winter. Say goodbye to the cold as you relish them hot from the frying pan.

Make them hotter with chutney of your choice! Holi is around the corner too. Celebrate with bites and beverages devised especially for silvers.



MACCHI KEBAB

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Fish fillets: 500 gm
- Potatoes: 2; medium size
- Spring onions: 4; medium size
- Green chillies: 3-4; deseeded and finely chopped
- Ginger: 2-inch piece; finely chopped
- Eggs: 2
- Breadcrumbs for coating
- Low sodium salt
- Peppercorns: 1 tsp; coarsely pounded

METHOD

Steam the fish in a lightly greased strainer and cook on gentle heat for about 10 minutes. Later, remove the lid and let it cool. Crumble in a bowl, mix with mashed potatoes, and add spring onions, ginger and chillies along with a beaten egg. Sprinkle salt and pepper. Make small balls and flatten, just like *shami kebab*. Dip in the remaining egg (beaten) and coat with breadcrumbs. Fry on a non-stick pan till golden on both sides. Place on kitchen towels to drain off any excess oil. Serve with lemon wedges.

VILAS KALGUTKER, Food styling: BALA



MAKAI MAZEDAAR

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Sweet corn kernels: 250 gm; fresh or frozen
- Rice flour or plain flour: 75 gm
- Garlic cloves: 2; crushed
- Green chilly: 1; chopped

- Spring onion: 1; small, chopped
- A large sprig of fresh coriander; chopped
- Soy sauce: 1 tbsp
- Eggs: 2; lightly beaten
- Black peppercorns: 1 tsp; coarsely pounded
- Low sodium salt to taste
- Oil: 2 tbsp

METHOD

Mix corn kernels with rice flour, crushed garlic, coriander, chillies, and spring onions. Add soy sauce

and beaten eggs. Add a teaspoon or two of water if required. The mixture should be soft, yet retain its shape when poured into the frying pan. Season with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan, spreading a thin layer all over the base. Pour large spoonfuls of corn mixture. Flatten with the back of a spoon and cook for one to two minutes on each side. Place on kitchen towels to drain off excess oil. Serve hot with any chutney of your choice.



CHILLA SABZ BAHAR

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

(For the pancakes)

- Whole meal flour: 75 gm
- Oatmeal: 25 gm
- Skimmed milk: 300 ml
- One egg
- Pinch of salt

(For the filling)

- Eggplant (brinjal): 1; cut in small cubes
- Wax gourd: 1; medium sized
- Bell pepper: 1; red/yellow, medium sized

- Tomatoes: 200 gm; chopped
- Cloves and garlic: 2-3; crushed
- Salt to taste (preferably low sodium)
- Oil: 1 tsp

METHOD

Sift the flour with salt in a bowl. Stir in the oatmeal. Make a hollow in the centre and break the egg into it. Add 150 ml of skimmed milk. Prepare a smooth batter. Slowly beat in the remaining milk. Cover the batter and leave for half an hour.

Sprinkle salt over brinjal cubes and let it stand for about half an hour. Rinse and drain. Take a non-stick frying pan and lightly line it with oil. Place the pan on

medium flame and pour in enough batter to cover the base. Cook for about two minutes until the underside turns golden brown. Flip over and cook for another two minutes. Slide the pancake carefully into a plate. Layer pancakes one over the other, separated with non-stick baking paper.

Add vegetables with crushed garlic in a saucepan and simmer uncovered for about 10 minutes. Add brinjal, cook for another 10 minutes. Blend corn flour with 2 tsp water and stir in. Season to taste. Spoon out small portions of the filling in the centre of each pancake. Fold in half twice to obtain a cone-like shape. Serve with chutney of your choice.



PHIRANGI THANDAI

Preparation time: 20 minutes

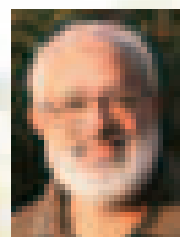
Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Water: 2 1/2 cups
- Cinnamon stick: 1
- Cloves: 4-6
- Teabags: 4 (preferably Earl Grey breakfast)
- Sugarfree sweetener: 3/4th cup
- Apple juice concentrate or any other naturally sweet fruit juice: 500 ml
- Orange kernels: 1 cup
- A large sprig of mint

METHOD

Boil water in a pan with cinnamon stick and cloves. Remove and add tea bags and brew for about five minutes. Discard the tea bags and pour the concoction into a large bowl. Chill. Stir in the sugarfree sweetener, pour in the fruit juice concentrate or juice and mix well. Sprinkle dried ginger powder and garnish with mint leaves. You may place a few pineapple slivers in individual glasses before pouring the *thandai* for guests. ■



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



Abate anxiety

Yoga helps defuse adrenal exhaustion, says **Shameem Akthar**

Anxiety is one of the chief culprits in cardiac troubles. It also causes other chronic conditions, including high blood pressure, diabetes, and adrenal gland exhaustion, which is now linked to the dreaded metabolic syndrome which, in turn, spawns other problems. Though related to stress, anxiety has now gained an unpalatable status of its own. Stress may have external triggers—work pressure, deadlines—but anxiety is a state of mind that churns up emotions of panic, hyper-vigilance, helplessness and loss of control.

Anxiety is often accompanied with obsessive compulsive disorder, such as constantly checking the time even if there is no time-bound commitment, or waking up several times to check doors at nights. Often, an anxious individual has associated problems: insomnia; thyroid problems; hormonal disturbances; inability to withstand the cold; blood pressure fluctuations; sudden dizziness; slow recovery from ailments; weak immunity; fatigue; patchy skin; sensitivity to medications; high reactivity to stress; brittle nails; dry, sparse hair; hypoglycaemia (sudden drop in blood sugar); even heart palpitations.

All this happens because the tiny pair of glands called adrenals (secreting stress hormones) on top of our kidneys become exhausted. This is the result of a pattern of thinking—high anxiety. As controlling a lifetime of habit is difficult, yoga begins to treat adrenal gland exhaustion by helping the glands rejuvenate. Poses that work on the abdomen are an important part of such therapy. These include the cat stretch (*marjariasana*), hare pose (*shashankasana*), cobra (*bhujangasana*), bow (*dhanurasana*), and locust (*salabhasana*). Backbends, where the spine curves, help by massaging the adrenals. They also work on the heart and lungs, which are both affected by our thinking. Such backbends include the half camel (*ardha ushtrasana*), camel (*ushtrasana*), and wheel (*chakrasana*). Forward bends, therapeutic in anger and stress, are also used to treat anxiety. These include the standing forward bend (*uttanasana*), head-to-knee pose (*janu sirsasana*), upward-facing forward bend (*urdhvamukha paschimottanasana*), and seated forward bend (*paschimottanasana*).

Breathing exercises (*pranayama*) like skull cleansing (*kapalabhati*) improve respiratory capacity, with *kriya* and *bandha* that work on the *manipura chakra* at the navel, rejuvenating the adrenals. These include the abdominal fire practice (*agnisara kriya*) and stomach lock (*uddiyana bandha*). ■

Yogic moves

Upward-facing forward bend (*urdhvamukha paschimottanasana*)

Sit down with legs stretched out. Keep a stool (1 ft high). Raise feet, placing the heels on the stool carefully. Inhale. Raise hands overhead. Exhaling, lower hands towards feet, holding legs where you can. Drop your head, so it rests on thighs. You can also place a bolster on the thighs to rest your forehead. Hold this



Illustration: UTKARSH SANJANWALA

pose in a relaxed fashion, breathing normally for a few seconds. After practice, you can hold the final pose longer, half a minute or so. Avoid if you suffer from high blood pressure, cardiac problems or lower backache. **Benefits:** It massages the adrenals, relieves stress, and prevents insomnia. It helps in diabetes, spondylosis and spinal disorders. It improves

respiration; fights fat, keeps the face glowing; and works on the uro-genital system.

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

yoga for silvers

Yoga shiromani and acharya

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

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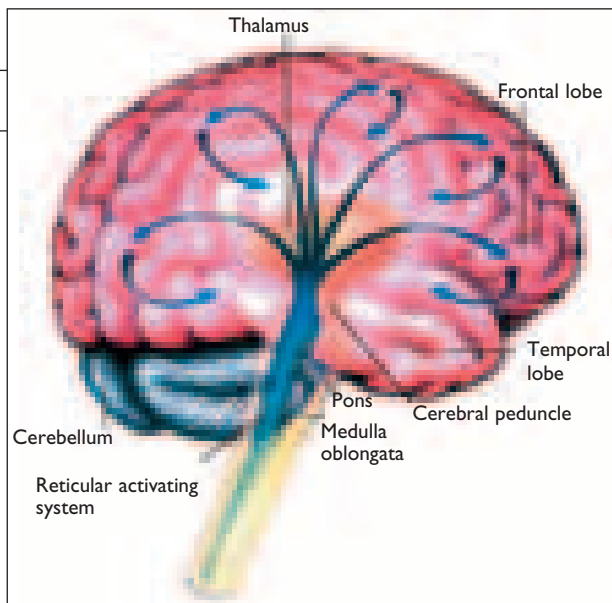
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HEALTH BYTES

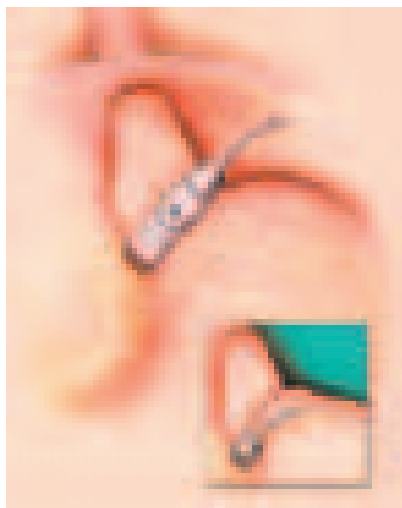
BLAME IT ON THE BRAIN

Some silvers may be more susceptible to fraud because of cerebral changes that affect judgement and decision-making. That's the conclusion of researchers from University of Iowa whose findings have been published in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. "Our research shows that elders who fall prey to fraudulent advertising are not just gullible, depressed or less intelligent," Natalie Denburg, a neuroscientist from the University, tells *Reuters*. "In fact, it is more of a neurological problem." Denburg and her colleagues studied 80 healthy seniors to analyse their decision-making prowess. "Our work may lead to a way to identify people at risk of being deceived," adds Denburg. The study follows a 2006 survey by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), conducted in 53 countries, including India,



which states that what troubles India's elderly, especially in urban areas, are factors like isolation; changing social and economical structure; inadequate understanding of rights; and lack of security.

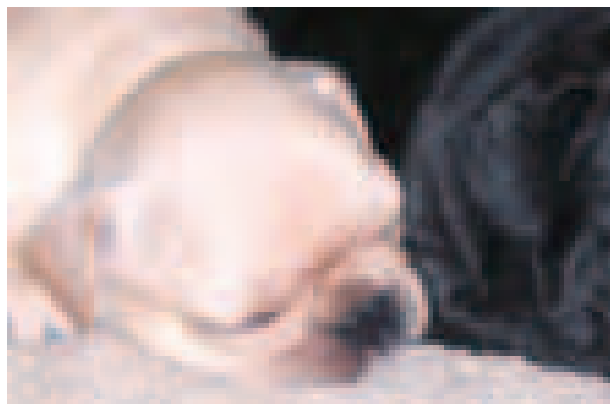
SURGICAL SOLUTION?



A conference held in Mumbai in February highlighted the **division in the medical fraternity on whether metabolic surgery is a good way to treat Type 2 diabetes**. Obesity surgeons debated against endocrinologists, who have traditionally managed diabetes. Metabolic surgery, described as gastric bypass surgery, involves altering

intestine size so it processes sugar better. Type 2 diabetes is caused by a defect in beta cells of the pancreas, leading to insulin mismanagement in the body. The surgery works in two ways—it either reduces the capacity of the stomach so you start feeling full as soon as you start your meal, or it bypasses intestinal capacity so food absorption is affected. "The problem with this surgery is that it can lead to malnutrition," says Dr Ashok Jhingan, senior consultant diabetologist and chairman of Diabetes Research Centre, Delhi. "Obesity reduction may not cure Type 2 diabetes, as it is not directly related to pancreatic deficiency. Instead, silvers should take up exercise and lead active lives."

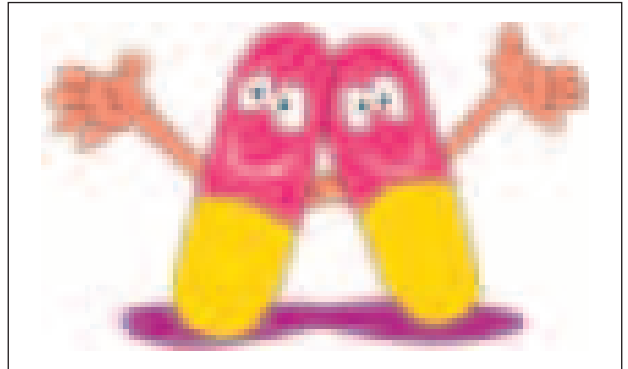
SLEEP WELL



According to a study published in *Sleep*, the official journal of the US-based Associated Professional Sleep Societies, **the frequency of respiratory disturbances during sleep increases with age**, without symptoms of obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome, a sleep-related breathing disorder. The study focused on breathing irregularities during sleep in 163 healthy people. The results show that breathing irregularities during sleep are common among older adults. About half the participants over the age of 65, had a respiratory disturbance index (RDI) of more than 15 events per hour, while only around 5 per cent of those under 50 years of age fitted this index. Steven A Shea, a senior author of the study, tells *Sleep*, "If people with high RDI are left untreated, they develop path-physiologic consequences, including increased risk of cardiovascular disease."

ANTIBIOTIC RESTRAINT

Britain's National Health Service (NHS) has asked doctors not to unnecessarily prescribe antibiotics to patients for minor illnesses. According to the health body, **bacteria are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics**. "The more we take antibiotics when they are not necessary, the more bacteria will become resistant to them," Liam Donaldson, chief medical officer for England, tells BBC News. "Patients can take other remedies to help relieve the symptoms of a cough or cold."



APPLE VS. ALZHEIMER'S

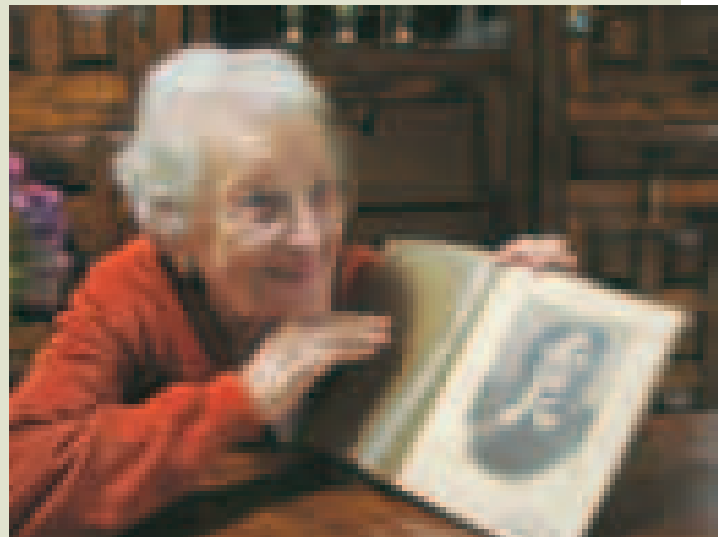
An apple doesn't just keep the doctor away—it can help keep Alzheimer's at bay too. A study by researchers at Cornell University in New York and a group of South Korean scientists suggests that **apples contain protective antioxidants that help in reducing the risk of dementia**. Even oranges and bananas have similar antioxidants and regular consumption can help improve memory, the study claims. At present, 20 per cent of Indians over the age of 80 suffer from Alzheimer's.

BRAIN POLISH

Scientists at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, have found that **reduced supply of new nerve cells in the adult brain apparently triggers short-term memory loss typically associated with ageing**. Neurogenesis (nerve cell production) goes down with age and so do memory and learning," says genetics professor Ronald Evans who led the research team. "We now know that by heightening the production of new nerve cells, we can work on memory and learning in older adults."

This study, specialists believe, may lead to the development of therapies designed to maintain a steady supply of fresh neurons to keep the mind sharp. "Ageing usually means passage of time, whereas senescence implies actual loss of function," says Dr Roop Gursahani, consultant neurologist, P D Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai.

"What separate ageing from senescence are the variable reserve capacity of neurons and at least some regenerative capacity. In normal ageing, the number of neurons in the brain remains largely intact, while in Alzheimer's disease this count drops substantially. Our concepts of learning, memory, ageing, senescence and Alzheimer's disease are a massive jigsaw puzzle, large parts of which are still blank." This new study is only one of the pieces in that puzzle, albeit a rather significant one. "It makes an explicit connection [which until now was only implied] between neurogenesis owing to multiplication of stem cells and new learning and memory," adds Dr Gursahani.



HEALTH BYTES

STAY ACTIVE

No anti-ageing, wrinkle-free cream can prevent couch potatoes from ageing faster, claims a report published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, USA, which studied physical activity level, smoking habits and socioeconomic status of 2,401 twins. The research reveals that those who exercise regularly have lower rates of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, obesity and osteoporosis. **Physical inactivity, on the other hand, diminishes life expectancy not only by predisposing the person to age-related diseases but also by influencing the ageing process.** Less physically active people also have shorter leukocyte telomere—leukocyte length that determines oxidative damage and age-related diseases—than active people. “A general look at the Indian elderly reveals that people who had sedentary job profiles like those employed in government offices or urban corporate settings have more age-related problems than rural people working in the fields or having



more physically active profiles,” says Dr Laji Mohan, a Mumbai-based physiotherapist. “With sedentary lifestyles, problems like diabetes, cardiac complications, osteoarthritis and similar joint problems find easy gateways. Silvers should walk daily and engage in some sort of physical activity as this will help them ward off age-related stress and make them feel young.”

GENDER OUTLOOK



Whether a woman receives radiation treatment after breast cancer surgery may depend on the gender of her surgeon, according to a report published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, USA. The study conducted at Columbia University to determine why **breast cancer treatment varies among similar patients**, looked at radiation

treatment following lumpectomy. Focusing on the doctors behind treatment decisions, the researchers analysed data on nearly 30,000 women aged 65 and older who received lumpectomy. They also analysed data on the 4,453 surgeons who operated on these women. About one in four women were not treated with radiation after surgery. The report suggests that women who received radiation were more likely to have a female surgeon. According to Dr Vani Parmar, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, “In India, the difference in treatment is based on accessibility to advanced treatment facilities and patient compliance during follow-up.”

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What lies within

To change the world first change yourself, says **Rajinder Singh**

People everywhere want peace in the world. They want peace in their continents, their countries, their cities, and their homes. Most of all, they want peace within themselves. The question is: How to achieve this universal dream? This past century has seen numerous conferences, peace marches, and conventions for peace. Yet, we have also lived through a century of two world wars and numerous smaller wars. Even today, there are terrible atrocities, violence and crimes committed throughout the world. What can we do to build a peaceful world?

I propose a solution so simple we may wonder how we overlooked it. Building a peaceful world begins with the first foundation stone—ourselves. We must first find peace ourselves to contribute a key building block to world peace. You may ask: What can I—a single individual—do for world peace by attaining personal inner peace? We can make a difference to all humanity and for posterity by the actions we take. Let us begin with our own transformation and pursuit of peace. If you find inner peace, it will have a snowballing effect: it will motivate and help me to find inner peace; the person on our right will find inner peace; the person on our left will find inner peace—one by one, brick by brick, we can build a world of peace.

Modern psychology points out that nobody wants to be told by someone else what to do. No one appreciates being changed by another person. We resist when someone tries to make us do something in a new way. In spite of knowing this, we persist in trying to change others. We try to change our spouse, children and relations. We propose that everyone else in our community be

peaceful. We want to make all other cities and countries peaceful. However, just as we do not want anyone to change us, others too dislike being changed. Efforts to change others will not make them peaceful. We can only change ourselves.

When Benjamin Franklin realised the need for street-lights in Philadelphia, he did not try to convince and persuade others to use them by preaching. Instead, he hung a large lantern from a bracket in front of his house. Each day he polished and cleaned the lamp so that at night, when he lit it, it shone brightly for all to see. People walking down the dark lanes at night would marvel at how bright and luminous Franklin's lamp was. The light and warmth of the light was comforting as they walked by. One by one, each of Franklin's neighbours hung lamps in front of their homes. Soon, the entire city was illuminated with light. If we find peace, our lives will be transformed and others will be curious to know the secret of our joy and happiness. Example is the greatest teacher.

The greatest teachers of world peace throughout history were Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Moses, Mahavira, Guru Nanak, Kabir and many other saints from different religions. They all had the same message: peace, love and unity can be found within through prayer and meditation. All religions refer to our spiritual side as the soul, a spark of the Creator. Most are unaware of the soul because our attention is focused on the world

We can make a difference to all humanity and for posterity by the actions we take

outside, the body and the mind. But there are moments in life when we become aware of some higher power working within. That power is the soul, a drop of the Creator. By inverting our attention within through prayer and meditation, we can contact our true self, our soul. When we identify with this true nature, we find that we are one with God. ■

Excerpt from Discover the Divine within You (Penguin Enterprise; Rs 200; 143 pages). Rajinder Singh is a renowned expert on meditation. He heads the Science of Spirituality, a global non-profit spirituality organisation that has members from all nationalities, races and faiths

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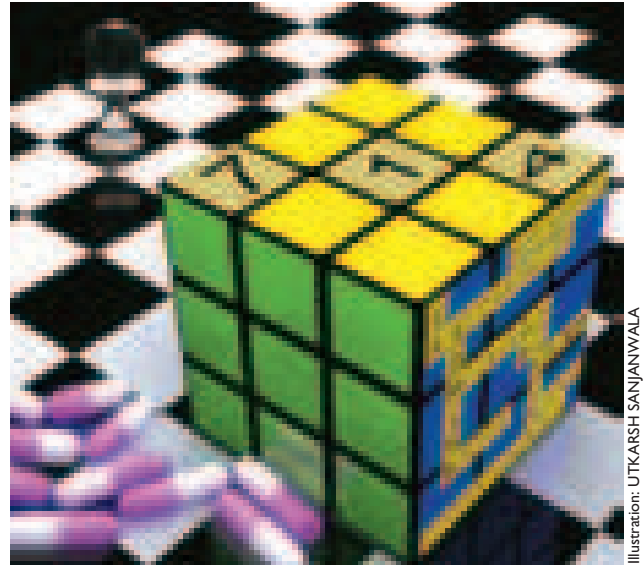
Mind games

Harmony presents websites that work out your grey cells—for free

You already know—through *Harmony* and others—that training your brain can keep Alzheimer's and dementia at bay. In fact, new research suggests it can help you achieve memory gain of 10 years (see *Orbit*, January 2008). But while premium brain training software is available on the Net, it comes at a cost—Posit Science Brain Fitness Program 2.0 (www.positscience.com) costs \$ 395 (about Rs 15,500); MindFit™ (www.cognifit.com) costs \$ 129 (about Rs 5,000); and Dakim [m] Power (www.dakim.com) costs \$ 1,995 (about Rs 80,000). The good news: you don't need to splash out for expensive software to kickstart your grey cells. Here are the best—and free—online brain gyms.

Sharpbrains.com: This resource centre aims to become “the one-stop source of trusted information and guidance for cognitive and emotional training”, read brain fitness. From the latest international research on the benefits of brain training to a wide variety of exercises, and an information and assessment programme customised for each user, this site will keep you engaged for hours. The ‘Brain Teasers’ section includes logic puzzles, visual work-outs and tests for pattern recognition, attention and planning. We loved the ‘Traveller IQ Challenge’ that tests your knowledge of the world and the ‘Stroop Test’ that uses colour recognition to measure mental flexibility—can you quickly say aloud what colour you see in a word, NOT the word you read?

Brainwaves.com: “Putting research to work”—that's the credo of this website, which provides visitors with practical applications of current research in the form of puzzles. So once you go through the comprehensive tutorial on the brain, you get going on exercises to stimulate each part. For instance, ‘Addlocks’ stimulates the prefrontal circuits, thus sharpening working memory; ‘Alphabetics’ builds vocabulary and word-recall, processed in the temporal area above the left ear; and ‘Anasearches’, a blend of anagrams, cross-words, and word-searches, strengthens the frontal regions of the brain (where meaning of language is processed), the temporal region above your ear (where physical formation of words is processed),



and the prefrontal regions behind your forehead where executive planning skills and concentration are processed.

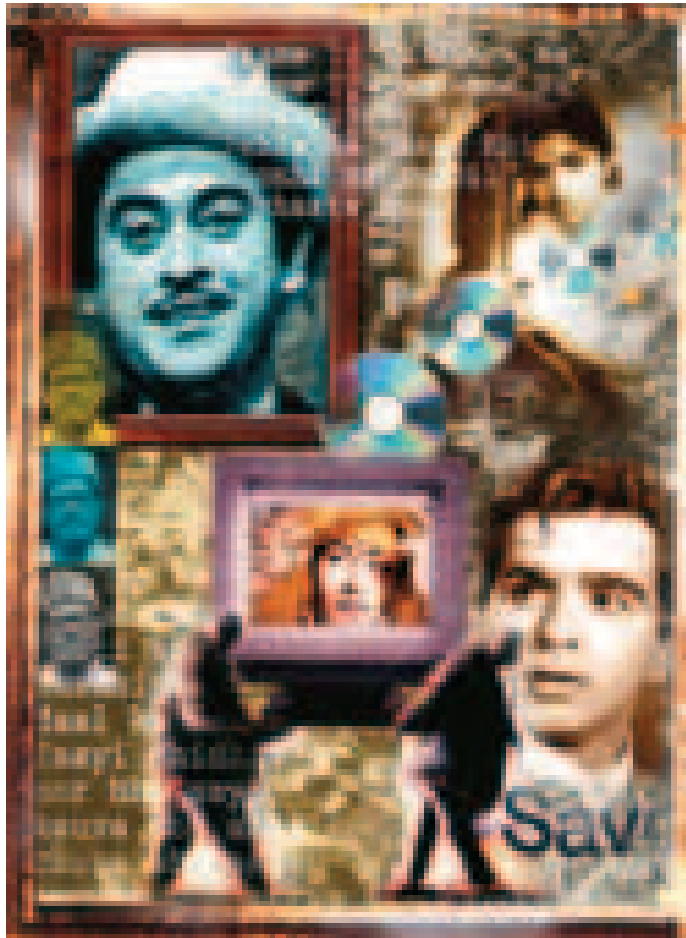
Brainarena.com: If you thrive on competition, this one's for you. You get to compete online against thousands of people at this “massive multiplayer online brain-training programme”. Here's how it works. Once you register, you're placed in a league where you take part in a series of ‘challenges’—each challenge is a collection of 30 tests of mental ability that lasts for 90 seconds. When you finish a test, the next one begins. If you fail, you wait for the start of the next challenge before you play. To calculate your ranking, the system uses your best time for all the challenges you've completed. The tests themselves are completely unpredictable—and fun!

Braingle.com: Claiming to have the Net's largest collection of brain teasers, this site has over 12,000 puzzles. Updated everyday, the ‘Mentalrobics’ section features exercises and tips for improving memory, creativity, vocabulary and stress management and the ‘Trivia’ channel offers interesting quizzes on a wide range of topics. The highlight of the site: you can create your own puzzles to give your brain a super workout.

—Arati Rajan Menon

Digital nostalgia

Rajashree Balaram shows you ways to keep your memories alive



FARZANA COOPER

SAVING SEPIA

Old black-and-white photographs have a unique, innocent charm that remind us of times when life was simpler. Besides, there is nothing better than those sepia albums to show our grandchildren what we looked like 'back then'. All those photographs lying in the attic can be a valuable legacy to pass on to your future generation. A year ago, Madhuri Latha Menon, 68, rescued her great-grandmother's photograph from near ruin. For Kochi-based Menon, all it took to salvage the relic from her ancestral past was a visit to the nearest photo studio. While the original photograph, shot in the 1930s, was in black and white, the renovated version shows the matriarch sitting against a lush green backdrop—her jewellery and traditional Kerala attire redone in colour with astonishing authenticity and accuracy.

It doesn't take much to give your old photographs a fresh digital lease on life; an all-in-one printer is all you need. All-in-one printers are used to print, scan and fax documents. They are not exactly cheap though—a basic all-in-one printer costs upwards of Rs 4,000. So if you don't have a printer at home, the best thing to do is approach your nearby photo studio. These days, almost all good photo studios offer to resurrect old, faded photographs and slides. Photographs are placed on the scanning tray and scanned onto a computer in 'JPEG' format. (JPEG is a standard for compressing still images.) For sharp images, the resolution needs to be set between 400 to 1,200 dpi (dots per inch) depending on the size of the photograph. Of course, it's not as simple as it sounds. Photographs that are badly damaged need expert attention. Studios use advanced high-quality scanners. "After photographs are scanned onto a computer, we use special image correction software such as Picassa and Adobe Photoshop Elements to erase blemishes and restore them to their original glory," says Vijay Krishnamurthy of Bangalore Photo Service in Vidyanapura, Bengaluru.

Most magazines and newspapers use such software to enhance images of celebrities. These tools come

In 2004, the classic film *Mughal-e-Azam* was reinvented in colour. Though many people felt a sentimental yearning for the original black-and-white version, everyone was amazed that something from the distant past could be renovated with such finesse.

We cling to past memories because they provide a barometer to how far we have progressed in life, both physically and emotionally. All of us have piles of photographs, slides and videotapes with cherished recordings of birthdays, weddings and family get-togethers—probably lying in a dark corner collecting moisture and dust. Thankfully, the digital world we are living in offers more than one way to preserve our past.

equipped with amazing powers—you can alter the focus of the shot to the left or right, ‘warm up’ skin tone, fix contrast, remove red eye, erase blemishes and chisel facial features.

While scanning can cost between Rs 5 and Rs 6 per photograph, retouching costs can swing between Rs 150 to Rs 700 depending on how badly the photographs are damaged. The images can be saved onto a CD or you could ask for a fresh set of prints.

AUDIO IN A NEW AVATAR

So what do you do with your vast collection of rare concert recordings? As the world is increasingly swaying to MP3 and CDs (both digital formats), audio cassettes and vinyl LP records are esteemed only for their sentimental value—even old favourites like Kundan Lal Saigal are easily available in a digital format. Though cassettes and vinyl records are particularly vulnerable to the ravages of time, you needn’t junk them. There are many studios in your city (*see box*) where you can get your collection converted into a CD.

The audio output from the amplifier of a tape player is plugged into the ‘mic’ port of a computer. After starting the player, sound processing software such as Nero 7 Ultra Edition is used to record and save the sound on the computer disk. The song can later be burned on a CD or you can choose an MP3 format that you can transfer onto a digital music player.

“Earlier, people never knew such a service exists,” says Keshav Trivedi of Delhi Photo Company at Janpath in New Delhi. “When we started this service three years ago, we were flooded with audio cassettes.” Delhi Photo Company converts songs from cassettes to CDs for Rs 150 to Rs 200, while Sarvodaya Video Centre in Bandra, Mumbai, charges Rs 250 for cassette to CD conversion and Rs 600 for cassette to MP3.

PRESERVING VIDEO

Video tapes converted into a CD or a DVD can make a wonderful gift for your children. Recently London-based Barath Rajgopaul, 62, converted home videos of his son’s childhood into a VCD and gave it to him as a wedding present. During the wedding reception, when the VCD was played on a projector screen the sweet nostalgia evoked by the images made the occasion even more memorable

and unique. As for Rajgopaul’s son, he feels the CD is the best wedding present he received.

The once popular video cassette recorder (VCR), a staple gadget in almost every middle-class household in the 1980s, has now been relegated to the status of a relic. So what do you do with all the videotapes you have stashed in a carton? Give them a makeover—get them converted into a CD or, even better, into a DVD (for better picture quality). Many technology buffs prefer to do the conversion themselves at home. Besides your VCR and videotape, you need a computer, a video capture card (which enables a computer to accept television signals, record video, and/or playback video content), a DVD writer and special cables to connect the VCR to the computer. Video capture cards are easily available at most shops that sell computer accessories. Of course, as not all of us are proficient at using such specialised hardware and software, it’s best to refer to our box where you will find contact details of a host of studios that offer such conversion services.

Video tapes converted into a CD or DVD can make a wonderful gift for your children

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“Many of our customers are senior citizens who approach us with videotapes of their son’s or daughter’s wedding,” says Bakul Chandaria of Sarvodaya Video Centre, which has offered video conversion services for the past eight years. Sarvodaya charges Rs 300 for converting a videotape into a CD and Rs 600 for converting a tape into a DVD.

At the other end of the price continuum, Bengaluru-based Magna Multimedia Solutions charges Rs 2,500 for a video cassette to DVD conversion. “We guarantee high-quality conversion, so what the customer gets on DVD is a lot more enhanced than what appeared on the original cassette,” says Rajesh V U, business development executive at Magna, located on Mission Road. Rajesh even offers to make DVDs ritzier with additional razzmatazz: better background score, visual and sound effects, and name tags to identify wedding guests on screen.

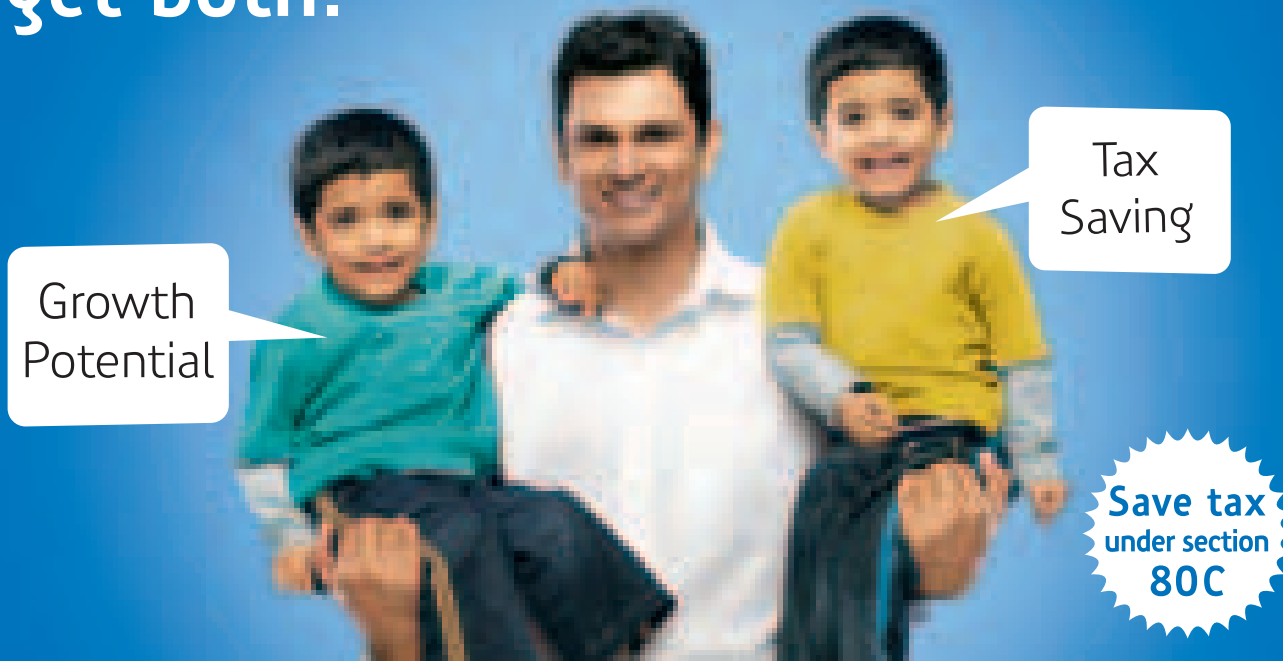
Though conversion of wedding videos are quite a rage, most shops shy away from converting video cassettes of old movies into VCDs and DVDs as

this is a violation of video and piracy laws. With so many options to hold onto our memories, there is really no reason to let go of our past. 📺

CONVERSION SERVICES

CITY/SERVICE	CONTACT DETAILS
BENGALURU ■ Photographs to CD ■ Audio cassettes and vinyl LPs to CD and MP3, and video tapes to CD and DVD	Bangalore Photo Service, Doddabommasandra; 080-28385098, 0984220248 Prabhu Digitals, Brigade Road; 080-25582233 Magna Multimedia Solutions, Mission Road; 080-22483027, 51248589 Chitrakar, Malleswaram; 080-23365102, 09845190365 Santosh Creations, Airport Main Road; 09844518075
CHENNAI ■ Photographs to CD ■ Audio cassettes and vinyl LPs to CD and MP3, and video tapes to CD and DVD	Deepam Color Lab, Anna Salai; 044-28594187 VM Computerised Colour Lab, Anna Salai; 044-28529270 M S Videos, Kottur; 044-24415054 Sekar Photo Studio, MTH Road, Padi; 044-26257746 Magesh Digital Studio, Adyar; 044-24913770
DELHI ■ Photographs to CD ■ Audio cassettes to CD and MP3, and video tapes to CD and DVD	Kinsey Brothers, Connaught Place; 011-23324446 Shivam Digital Photo, Connaught Place; 011-41561071 Delhi Photo Company, Janpath; 011-23320577 Foto Palace East, East Punjabi Bagh; 011-42460441, 64159556 Shilpkar, Safdarjung Development Area; 011-41758770
HYDERABAD ■ Photographs to CD ■ Audio cassettes and vinyl LPs to CD and MP3, and video tapes to CD and DVD	Janata Digital Labs, Ameerpet; 040-66732004, 09849988875 Raghavendra Digital Photo, Basheerbagh; 040-24618322 Videolines, Banjara Hills; 040-65502937, 65593414 Koneru DVD & VCD, Ameerpet; 040-23740220/22 Edit Point, Secunderabad; 040-66498649
KOLKATA ■ Photographs to CD ■ Audio cassettes and vinyl LPs to CD and MP3, and video tapes to CD and DVD	Kodak India Ltd, Park Street; 033-30286269 Savoy Photographics, Salt Lake City; 033-23595326 Manchanda Digital Studio, Ramesh Mitra Road; 033-64579975 D P Studios, Ballygunge; 033-32915353 Purnima Agencies, Regent Park; 033-30953180
MUMBAI ■ Photographs to CD ■ Audio cassettes and vinyl LPs to CD and MP3, and video tapes to CD and DVD	Indian Art Studio, Kalbadevi Road; 022-22063315 Elite Images, Bandra (W); 022-67305819 Sarvodaya Video Centre, Khar; 022-26480066, 26487287 Kets Grafix Digital Studio, Andheri (W); 022-67689628 Kumar, Vile Parle (W); 022-26141873
PUNE ■ Photographs to CD ■ Audio cassettes and vinyl LPs to CD and MP3, and video tapes to CD and DVD	Foto Plaza, Sadhu Vaswani Circle; 020-26113826 Fotofast, Moledina Road; 020-26130727/8227 Jagdish N Dabi, Kothrud Depot; 020-25467526, 09422008200 Mimo Productions, Shivaji Nagar; 020-25511972 Cassette Depot, Budhwar Peth; 020-24461642

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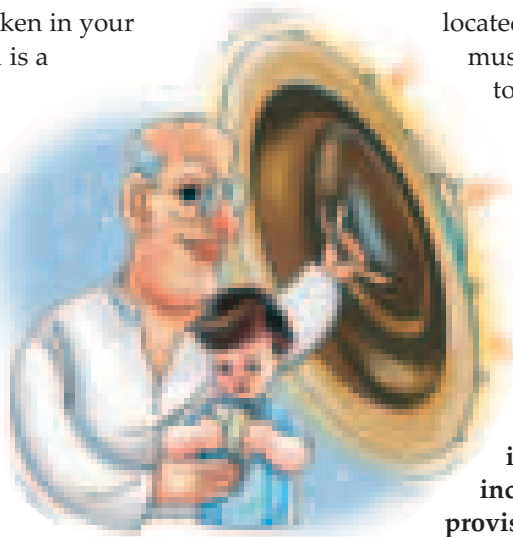
Q I have lived in a rented flat for the past 21 years. The complex is being redeveloped and the builder is paying me compensation to vacate the flat. I am 55 years old and want to buy two smaller flats for my sons. Please advise me on taxation and drawing up my will.

A The compensation must be taken in your name. As the money received is a settlement, there will be no tax applicable on it. You can buy property with the amount. To transfer the property to your sons in an unbiased manner, the will needs to be executed by a testator and attested by two witnesses other than your sons. If a dispute is anticipated you can even record the event on a VCD. And though it's not mandatory, it's always preferable to register your will with the sub-registrar. It can also be sealed and kept in safe custody.

Q Two years ago, my father rented his house out to a lawyer friend. He himself shifted into a smaller house on lower rent. My father didn't make an agreement document. Now as my father's landlord has asked him to vacate the house, my father has asked his friend to vacate his house. However, the lawyer refuses to do so. He says my father's decision is an excuse for hiking the rent. What can he do?

A It is apparent that your father's lawyer friend would claim tenancy with respect to the premises. Your father should file a suit for eviction in the Court of Small Causes u/s 16 (10) (g) of the Maharashtra Rent Control Act (1999) on the ground that the premises are reasonably required by your father for himself. Your father can state in the suit

that the house where he is currently residing is rented and the landlord has issued him an eviction suit. Further, you may cite any health problems your father may be facing. Do mention the income of your father and that of your father's friend at the evidence stage. Also try to find out the market rent in the area where your father's house is located. Being a senior citizen, he must apply to the fast track court, too, so his case can be expedited and thus avoid delays.



RBC

Q We have one grandson. He is five years old and his parents died in an accident. To secure his future, we started making investments in his name. Will these get clubbed with my income for the purpose of income tax? Is there a legal provision to avoid this?

A Investments made in the name of a minor do get clubbed with the adult's income. According to Section 64 of the Income Tax Act (1961), the income of a minor child, from investments, could be included with the income of the father, mother or guardian, as the case may be. If you set up a trust in the minor's name, the investment in his name will not be included in your income. But the income cannot be tapped while the child is still a minor. In a landmark judgement, the Orissa High Court (in the case of the Commissioner of Income Tax vs. Shri Abhayananda Rath Family Benefit Trust) deferred benefits during the period when the child was still a minor from a trust. The trust money can therefore be given to the person on adulthood and that monetary benefit may not be included in the total income of the parent or guardian. This ensures that the immediate or deferred benefit of a trust is for the benefit of the minor. ■

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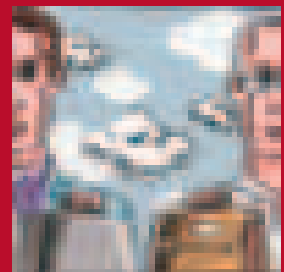


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I live with my daughter and her family in Pune. I have loved animals since childhood and would like to spend my spare time with them while I continue to teach. What should be my approach?

It's wonderful that you want to share some of your free time with animals in need. Organisations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) offer many opportunities to help animals. You can volunteer for PETA or a local group. Two organisations that help animals in Pune are People for Animals Pune and the Jeev Raksha Animal Welfare Trust, which works with dogs and cats. You can also get involved in your neighbourhood. If you see a dog chained or locked in a small cage, offer to take it along on your daily walk. If you see a sick or injured animal, offer care. Provide relief to an animal suffering on a hot day by offering a bowl of fresh water. If someone is mistreating an animal, ask him to stop and report him to authorities if he doesn't. For more ideas, check out websites of animal welfare organisations on the Internet.

—*Jayasimha N G*

Jayasimha is Campaigns Manager for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), India



I am a 60 year-old homemaker. My husband and I used to live in London but we have now shifted to Bengaluru. I enjoy baking and would like to sell my products to supplement our income. How should I go about it?

Your first target group should be children. If you have friends with school-going grandchildren, use their help to contact the headperson of the school (or the canteen in-charge) and ask if you could sell your products there. While negotiating, emphasise the 'homemade' nature of your products. This will appeal to parents. School fetes are another good

platform to sell your goodies. You can also try and cater to birthday parties in your neighbourhood. Always tag your contact details with your offerings so people can find you. Though food columnists can be approached for publicity, word-of-mouth works best for food. You can also approach church groups and NGOs working for the poor in Bengaluru to try your products. Work out an arrangement where you can claim the cost and leave them some benefits. Local bakeries and department stores can also be approached to sell your products. You may have to decide a brand name for your products. Vendors can test-sell these items. If people pick your items, you can enter into a commercial agreement with the vendor to further your venture.

—*Rita Saldanha*

Saldanha sells homemade baked products in Chennai



I am an electronics engineer retired from the Delhi office of a consumer durables firm. I wish to settle down in Mumbai with my son. I have always enjoyed cooking and keep trying new recipes. I wish to start my own restaurant in Mumbai. Please advise me.

What kind of restaurant do you want to open? If you are looking at a turnover-based restaurant, you need to select a densely populated location, so you can generate business for lunch and dinner. Also the cuisine must be selected keeping in mind the area, the kind of restaurant and the skill-sets you and your employees possess. If you wish to open a fine dining restaurant, pick an elite area and market yourself as a place where people can dine in luxury. While working out the cost and other details, keep in mind the sales and overheads. However, with increasing real estate costs, it is now becoming difficult to open new restaurants in metros.

—*Aditya Gupta*

Gupta owns Samrat and Relish restaurants in South Mumbai

Fashioning a new life

Travel professional **Prabha Narasimhan** redesigned her life after retirement

After a 30-year career in the travel industry, it was quite natural for Prabha Narasimhan, 55, to seek new horizons after retirement. This former sales manager from Singapore Airlines is now the owner of a well-known boutique in Chennai.

A graduate of Stella Maris College in Chennai, she married V K Narasimhan after graduating in 1971. In 1973, after playing homemaker for two years, Narasimhan decided to test her wings. She found a job at SITA Travels where she spent the next 16 years honing her public relation skills. In 1988, Narasimhan moved to Singapore Airlines as passenger sales manager.

“Even when I had a full-time career, I loved unwinding by fashioning new clothes out of old ones,” says Narasimhan. In her free time, she experimented with abandon—the brocade border of an old silk sari ended up as the sleeve of a *choli*; a patch from a bedspread would be resurrected as the bodice of a *kurta*. Though Narasimhan enjoyed recycling and designing, she never took her hobby seriously at first. But when her friends praised her casual sartorial experiments, she decided to take fashion design seriously. In 2003, she opted for voluntary retirement. She held an exhibition of unstitched *choli* and *salwar* suits at a friend’s home in Hyderabad. All 135 items were sold out on the first day and on



Narasimhan supervising a design at her studio

the same day, she received a year’s worth of orders.

Soon, with nine tailors, 10 embroiderers and an investment of Rs 25,000, she opened Amrita—

“I can take anything and make it a part of something else”

her little boutique at Nungambakkam. Though the boutique is a modest 600 sq ft, her clientele includes top models, actresses and socialites.

Narasimhan starts designing only after an extended dialogue with her clients so she can understand their personality and preferences.

She sketches out designs in clear detail, so clients have a clear idea of the end product. She also designs trousseaus—her *choli* are priced between Rs 750 and Rs 5,000 while her saris range from Rs 2,000 to Rs 25,000. Narasimhan just takes a couple of days to whip up designer wear. She continues to recycle and refuses to throw away unusual swatches and trimmings. So far she has never advertised—she gets enough customers through word of mouth.

Narasimhan’s designs are a reflection of her own character and career: adapted, recycled and reinvented. As she puts it best, “I can take anything and make it an integral part of something else altogether.”

—Padmini Natarajan

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Bhopal unplugged

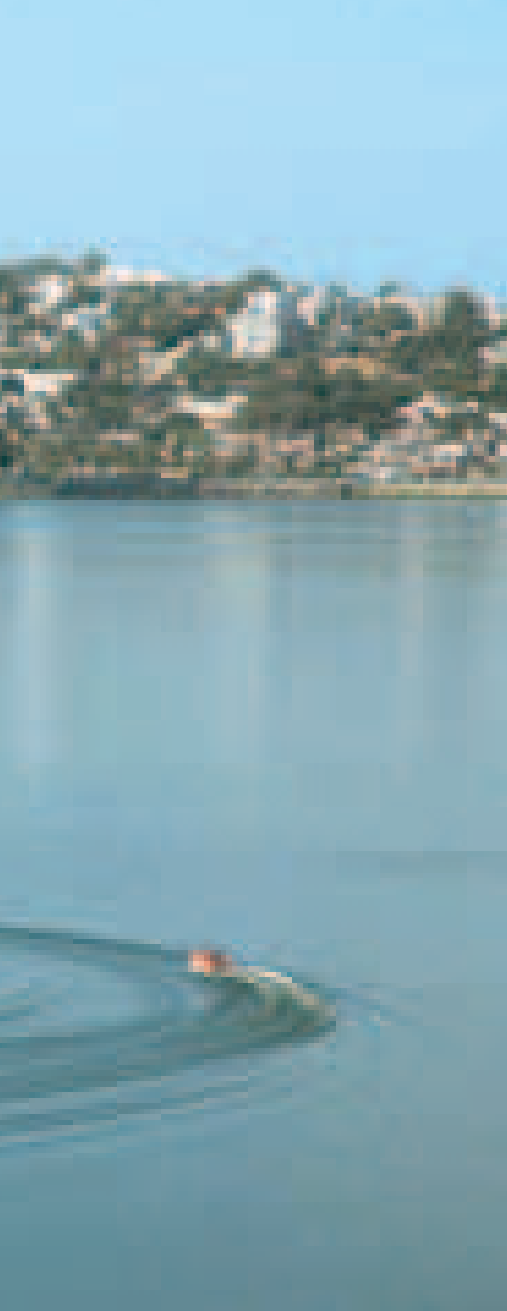
Harmony reader **Proloy Bagchi** explores the little-known secrets of the city

After superannuation, I found living in Delhi both insufferable and unaffordable. Having spent a part of my early years in Bhopal, I thought it was the perfect place to spend my remaining years—like numerous other men from the forces. I have still not found a reason to regret my decision. After securing a flat on Idgah Hills that offers a captivating view of the *Bada Talaab*—the Upper Lake that changes hues with the seasons—my wife and

I have settled down to a peaceful, quiet life.

Bhopal is a tertiary town with a history that goes back thousands of years. Founded by and named Bhojapal after Parmar King Bhoj (1000 AD-1055 AD), it faded into obscurity with the decline of the Parmars. In the early 18th century, it rose to prominence again as a principality established by an Afghan soldier, Dost Mohammed Khan (1708 AD-1740 AD). Eventually, it became the second large-

st Muslim princely state before Independence. Of course, that was not its only claim to fame—long before the bugle was sounded for women's empowerment in the country, the state was ruled in succession by four *begum* (ladies); Qudsia, Sikander, Shahjehan and Sultan Jahan. In 1926, Hamidullah Khan took over the reins of Bhopal and remained Nawab until Independence. In 1956, Bhopal was crowned the capital of the newly established state of Madhya Pradesh.



(Left) The Upper Lake is a favourite hangout of water-sports enthusiasts; the Birla Temple, atop the Arera Hills, has an attached museum of sculpture

environmental disaster. Living down that avoidable notoriety has been tough for the town. That explains its urgent quest for morphing into a 'global environment city'. In 2006, the Madhya Pradesh government submitted a proposal for an eco-friendly, cleaner Bhopal to the Indian government.

Fortunately, nature and history have been kind to Bhopal. Located as it is on the fringes of the Vindhyas, it is largely made up of hilly terrain. Though the hills have been colonised, they still wear their green mantle. On Arera Hill sits the Secretariat, surrounded by urban forests, presumably to keep the movers and shakers of the government

from here) it offers a grand view of the sprawling town around the blue lakes. The famous, but architecturally dull Birla Temple is also located on the Arera Hill. Built by the Birlas, India's leading family of industrialists, the temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and goddess Lakshmi.

Similarly, Mahavir Giri, the tallest hill, has a Jain temple on its peak that can be approached by cable cars and motorised vehicles. Breaking away from divine pursuits, Shamla Hills, on the other side of Upper Lake, is home to upmarket hotels and the spectacular Van Vihar, a naturally regenerated green patch of hillside. Designated as a National Park, it is actually a zoo with animals roaming around in natural surroundings, a veritable jungle in the heart of town.

Bhopal is also known as the 'city of lakes' — a well-deserved sobriquet. Upper Lake was created by Raja Bhoj after damming the Kolans and Kujhamam rivers. Once a huge body of water spread over several square miles,

Bhopal also gained international fame, but for the wrong reasons. On a wintry December night, 23 years ago, a lethal gas leak from the Union Carbide pesticide factory killed as many as 20,000 people and maimed many more.

Environmental disaster apart, nature and history have still been kind to Bhopal

Those who survived the horror are still struggling to pick up the pieces of their broken lives. Today the world knows Bhopal as the scene of the planet's worst

cool. Behind it, to its north, is the Charles Correa-designed Vidhan Sabha. Shaped like a sea-faring vessel (perhaps, to suggest that the ship of the state is steered

MUJEEB FARUQUI



The Taj-ul Masjid (centre), a majestic landmark in Bhopal's cityscape

today the lake is emaciated to about 30 odd sq km. Upper Lake virtually divides the city into two—the new and the old. The locals are enormously proud of this water body as it presents an incredible view of colourful sunsets. The promenade and the VIP Road that skirt it are picturesque at night, a modest imitation of Mumbai's 'Queen's Necklace' along Marine Drive. People throng the Boat Club on the Promenade every evening as much to enjoy boating as to savour the fast food. Even a floating restaurant takes off from here every evening. Recently, the Lake was the venue of the National Water Sports Championship—an adrenalin-driven schedule of canoeing, sailing and water-skiing. Along with Lower Lake, Upper Lake is recognised as a 'wetland of international

importance' under the Ramsar Convention—an international treaty signed in 1971 for conservation of wetlands.

The rich influence of the Afghan dynasty, which reigned over the city for more

around right in the heart of the town. Motia Talaab, built in the late 19th century to capture the run-off from the Idgah Hills and surrounded by fine Islamic and Indo-Saracenic architecture, still exists. Two other lakes, in two descending tiers, built to harvest

The rich influence of the Afghan dynasty is reflected in the stunning landscape

than 300 years, is reflected in the stunning landscape they have left behind. Bhopal is dotted with 'talaab' (lakes), 'baagh' (parks) and an opulent skyline of domes and 'minaar'. Unfortunately, not many parks have survived the ravages of time. Among the lakes, Lower Lake, created in 1777, which receives the overflow from the massive Upper Lake, is still

the overflows from Motia Talaab have been lost to encroachments.

Adding to the architectural heritage of the town are its mosques. Among them, the most distinguished are Jama Masjid built by Qudsia Begum in 1837 and Moti Masjid—akin to Delhi's Jama Masjid—built by Sikandar Jehan Begum in 1860. Also significant

are Dhai Sidi ki Masjid, the smallest mosque in Asia, and the Taj-ul-Masjid, reputedly the biggest one in the continent, inspired by Shahjehan Begum.

The old part of the town is flush with palaces and heritage buildings—the most notable being the Taj Mahal, the palace built by Shahjehan Begum, who ruled from 1868 to 1901. Currently under restoration, it was described as “one of the best palaces in the world” by Serge Santelli, dean of the School of Architecture of Paris while conducting a workshop in Bhopal in 2006. Being passionate about architecture, the Begum built several palaces while constructing the suburb of Shahjehanabad.

Not far from Taj Mahal is the Royal Ensemble, a group of palaces—*manzil* and *mahal*—contributed by various *begum* over a period of a 100 years, starting from the early 19th century. The most enchanting among them are Gohar Mahal, Sadar Manzil and Shaukat Mahal. While Gohar Mahal, built in 1820 by Qudsia Begum, exhibits a beautiful fusion of Hindu and Islamic architecture, others built by Sikander Jehan and Shahjehan Begum display a French influence with ornate murals, painted ceilings and fountains. Gohar Mahal and Shaukat Mahal are occupied by members of the royal family, and the local municipal corporation operates out of Sadar Manzil. The *chowk* or the old marketplace is among the town’s most interesting inheritances. Situated a kilometre away from the Royal Ensemble, its origins are shrouded in the mists of time but evidence suggests that the market was laid before



City of many moods: (from top) Vidhan Sabha decked up for a special evening; locals enjoying a walk around the Boat Club; a perfumery at the chowk

Tabla maestro Zakir Husain performing at Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal's art and cultural hotspot

its centrepiece, the Jama Masjid, came up in 1837. Its narrow lanes form a maze of closely packed shops that sell everything from local beadwork and silver jewellery to fine embroidered fabrics. The *chowk* is always full of milling crowds jostling for space. On festivals like Diwali and Ramzan, the shops remain open till the early hours.

One of the most notable post-Independence contributions to Bhopal's architecture is Bharat Bhavan, a prestigious centre of art and culture. It holds performances of renowned artists—Sharon Lowen, Shubha Mudgal and Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia have performed there lately. Also designed by Charles Correa in the 1980s, it has an art gallery, an indoor auditorium and an open-air auditorium next to Uppar Lake with the Taj-ul Masjid gleaming in the distance. A recent addition to the horizontal structure is the Archaeological Museum that has the finest collection of artefacts from the region. It also has 16 galleries full of sculptural masterpieces and prehistoric fossils. Another must-see is the Museum of Man—an open-air exhibition sprawled on the Shamla Hills displaying tribal habitat from all over India.

Indeed, Bhopal's pluralistic culture and its natural beauty enthrall visitors to the city. And let's not forget the *biryani* and kebabs dished out at the *chowk*. There's more to Bhopal than you could imagine—an unprejudiced view and an unhurried visit will enable you to enjoy all its wonders. ■



FACT FILE

GETTING THERE

Bhopal is on the main railway track and approachable directly from all metros and major cities. All major high-speed trains stop here. Jet Airways, Indian and Air Deccan connect it to Delhi, Mumbai and Jabalpur by daily flights. It is also well-connected by roads to all parts of the country.

WHEN TO GO

The best time to visit is between October and February. Summers can be hot. Monsoons are beautiful with copious rain.

HOW TO GET AROUND

Buses and auto-rickshaws are available all around town. Hotels usually arrange taxis for guests. The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC) organises local sight-seeing tours in its colourful buses.

WHERE TO STAY

There are many medium-sized hotels near Bhopal Junction Railway Station, close to Habibgunj Railway Station, and elsewhere in the town. Some good hotels include:

- **Jehan Numa Hotel**, 157, Shamla Hill, Bhopal-462013; Tel: 0755-2661115, 423501-05; Email: reservation@hoteljehanumapalace.com; Tariff: Rs 2,600 to Rs 10,000
- **Lakeview Ashok Hotel**, Shamla Hills, Bhopal-462013;

Tel: 0755-2660090-95, 2661976, 2661964; Email: hlvashok@sancharnet.in; Tariff: Rs 3,200 to Rs 6,000

■ **Noor-Us Sabah Palace**, V I P Road, Koh-e-Fiza, Bhopal-462001; Tel: 0755-4223333; Email: holidays@welcomheritagehotels.com; Tariff: Rs 3,500 to Rs 14,000

■ **Palaash Residency Hotel**, 45 Bungalows, Near Dashera Maidan, New Market, T T Nagar, Bhopal-462003; Tel: 0755-2778383; Tariff: Rs 1,790 to Rs 4,990

■ **The Shagun Hotel**, Peergate, Near Marine Drive, Bhopal; Tel: 0755-2544250, 2542105; Email: www.hoteltheshagun.com; Tariff: Rs 450 to Rs 850

DAY EXCURSIONS FROM BHOPAL:

■ **Sanchi**, a World Heritage Site, famous for its Buddhist stupa, monasteries and temples dating from 3rd century BC, is about 46 km away.

■ **Bhimbetika**, known for its Stone Age paintings in rock shelters, is located 46 km away near the Ratapani forests (see 'Rock Stars', *Harmony* March 2005).

■ **Bhojpur Temple**, the 11th century temple built by Raja Bhoj about 28 km away from Bhopal, is famous for its 8-ft-tall lingam.

■ **Islamnagar**, about 11 km away, is known for its palaces and gardens built by Dost Mohammed Khan, the first Nawab of Bhopal.

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Number game

Age is more an attitude of the mind, says **Amita Malik**

There is an old joke that you should never ask a woman her age. And an equally old joke about the actress who has been 20 years

old for the past five years. Somehow, no one makes similar jokes about men, although I know at least three men (not actors) who lie about their age. And when you see someone like actress Zohra Sehgal so proud of being 93, you wonder what all the fuss is about. In fact, it is amazing how a person's attitude towards someone changes when they find out their age. When my age was announced at my 70th birthday party, the reactions were amusing. One friend remarked: "Are you really 70? I thought all this time that you were 50." I didn't tell her that I still felt like 50 and thought like a 30 year-old, according to my young readers. The reaction from another friend was vastly different: "Are you still writing?" she asked patronisingly, although the week before she got to know my age she had been telling me how much she enjoyed my writing. This proves that age is more an attitude of mind.

For instance, how one longs to be 18, if one is keen on voting. Or 21, to be truly "independent". Usually the keen 18 year-olds do not make the effort to go in the cold or the heat to stand in a queue to vote. As for being 21, it counts only when you want to marry against your parents' wishes. While I am writing this, the age for men to marry has been brought down from 21 to 18 again, marriage at 16 being declared illegal. I for one am not happy about a man's age for marriage coming down to 18. It will certainly increase India's population beyond control, which it already is.

In fact, this whole question of hiding or flaunting one's age can lead to strange disguises, if I may call it that. To turn all-white (not even grey) in one's hair

overnight can be found startling by friends. As is finding a contemporary's head turning very black at the sign of the first grey hair. If you are as young as you feel, you should not bother too much, I think.

I know a lady who married a man 20 years younger. She did not want to tell him her age and resorted to all sorts of devices in the effort, such as foregoing a senior citizen's fare on airlines and railways. It was all in vain. When they travelled abroad, she had to show her passport on which, she had stated her correct date of birth. So at last her husband got to know her real age, but it did not make any difference in his respect towards her. Which is as it should be. Strange, nobody thinks it odd when an older man marries a young girl. But when an older woman marries a young man there are sniggers all round. Unfair to say the least and proving all over again that it is a man's world.

In fact, fudging your age is so common now in India that no one was surprised recently when two birth-dates appeared on the file of an impending chief of staff of the Indian army. Of course he was eligible age-wise under both dates, but that did not make one feel better. Indeed, government employees, especially in the higher echelons, are constantly involved in controversies about their age or date of birth when the time comes for promotion. This has even happened at the highest levels of the Indian Foreign Service and Indian Administrative Service. School and

college dates do not always tally with service dates, leading to prolonged controversy.

I was not sorry when my age was announced at my birthday party. It showed me where I stood with my friends, those who accept me as I am no matter my age, and others who changed their attitude when they realised I was 70, not 50. And here I am still thinking as if I am 30! Let's raise a toast to that. ■

It's amazing how people's attitudes towards you change when they come to know your age

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



Learn to let go

Let's not make choices for our children, says **Timeri Murari**

A friend proudly told me about his daughter, an only child. She's a lawyer working for an American firm in India and is very highly paid.

But she's 28 years old, and unmarried. Naturally, he's concerned and wants her to be 'settled', the word we use for the married state. However, he has to face modern day reality—he can't persuade her into an arranged marriage and prays she'll find someone herself. "If we force her with our choice and she's unhappily married, she'll walk out of the marriage after a year," he confessed to me. "Young couples today don't hesitate to break up, unlike us who remained in our marriages." He believes young couples don't have the patience to work on their marriages. I think that women walk out of unhappy marriages today because they are economically independent. Prior to this, they remained in them with gritted teeth and great unhappiness.

What was most important for my friend was to preserve the relationship with the daughter he loves. Imposing his traditions on her would have broken that bond. We both knew parents who have been so opposed to their child's choice in marriage or lifestyle that they preferred to cut all ties with the child rather than tolerate the usurpation of their authority or their definition of morality. Though the child may suffer from this break, in the end it's the parents who have lost their child forever.

India is changing rapidly and, to paraphrase Nehru, 'when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, the soul of a nation long suppressed, finds utterance'. It's not only our nation but also its people who have to find their own way of utterance. We are still waking from the long years of suppression and loosening the straitjacket of tradition. Over the

past two decades, India has been racing to catch up with the rest of the world, even if we read the world as 'western'. Our children travel abroad to study, experience new lifestyles, make new friends and discover themselves after years of childhood and adolescence in their parent's homes.

The changes in Indian relationships are being led by women. They are bright, ambitious, talented and have money. They are now enjoying the freedom to make choices instead of following old patterns. Often, among their choices is the choice to either marry or not, to fall in love and find their own husbands, to live with a partner out of marriage or to become a single parent. This emancipation is the most exciting expression of modern India but sadly only applies to urban women.

The word 'closet' no longer means a cupboard but a sexual suppression. Men, and women, have long hidden their homosexual nature. Being gay is not a modern phenomenon—it's as old as mankind.

For centuries, homosexuals have been persecuted, reviled, imprisoned and, as in Nazi Germany, killed in concentration camps. Indian men and women are cautiously opening the closet doors to step out into modern India, though homosexuality is still a punishable offence in our country.

For the older generation, all this is baffling and painful. We can react rigidly, damning our children for their choices of lifestyle. I think a

part of this anger would be envy—they have choices we never had. But if we want to hold on to the love we have for our child, we have to accept my friend's decision: learn to live with whatever his daughter chooses to do with her life. And that's the crux: it's their life, not ours. We have had our lives, made our choices, whether happy or not. Now it's their turn to live their lives. And our choice to continue with our love for them. ■

We have lived our lives and we should learn to accept the way they want to lead theirs

Timeri Murari, 66, is a Chennai-based author. Learn more about him at www.timerimurari.com



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BOOKSHELF

Beauty amid misery

Senaka by Harsha Bhatkal

Popular Prakashan; Rs 1,995; 177 pages



At the age of six, Senaka Senanayke put up a 20-ft-long painting in school. By nine, he held his first solo exhibition in the National Gallery of Art, Colombo, and by 15 he had found a mention in *National Geographic* magazine. Today his paintings adorn the walls of the White House, the office of the United Nations, the Berlin State Museum and other bastions of power. Despite being the most prolific Sri Lankan artist—he has held 103 solo exhibitions—Senaka Senanayke is not a name that rings a bell.

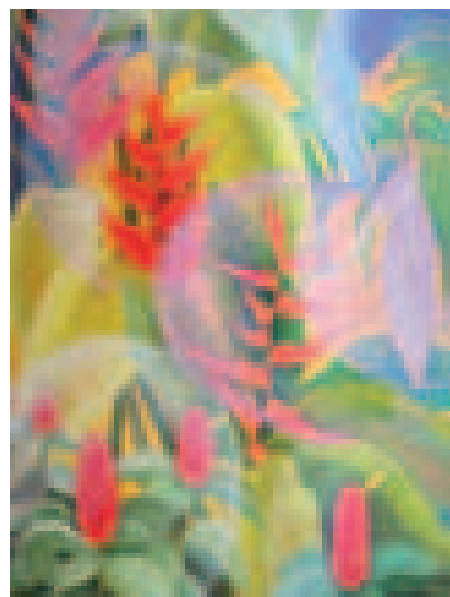
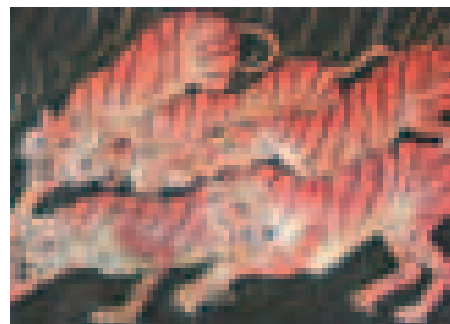
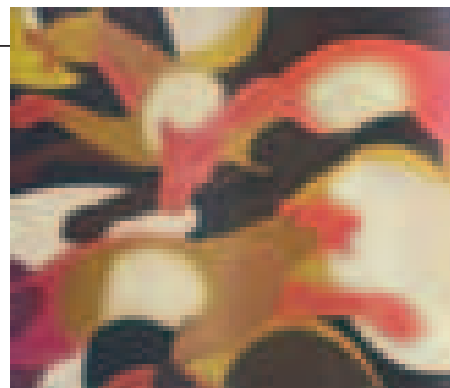
Senaka is an attempt to tell us more about the most towering figure in the contemporary Sri Lankan art scene—it ends up as a coffee-table dedication that showcases his work but throws little light on the 57 year-old's life. The sparse text by art enthusiast Harsha Bhatkal, who has made it his mission to promote South Asian art, offers superfluous details of the artist's

Senanayake has always dwelled on environmental crisis, especially the destruction of rainforests: *Leopard*, 1973; *Tiger*, 1962; *Elephants at Sunset*, 1992; *In Full Bloom*, 2006

background; that he comes from an illustrious family, which produced two prime ministers; he once aspired to be a plastic surgeon; and he was educated at Yale. Even his journey as an artist is presented only as a dry profile of artistic style and achievements. Ultimately, it's the exquisite images—more than 500—that reveal the issues and emotions that drive Senanayke.

His works profile his journey as an artist more evocatively than any words can—from early gouaches on village scenes and zoos, and teenage musings on anatomical metaphors to recent scenes of tropical enchantment. Hedonism, nudes and animals linger long in our mind after we have closed the book, but his sensuality is softened by a converse innocence of thought. Similarly, though the strong influences of Manet and Rousseau are hard to ignore, the artist's personal style still eludes classification. His only leitmotif is the transparent bubble—suspended over lotus ponds, floating through mystical tableaux, and hovering around rainforests. The serenity in Senanayke's works gains more meaning when viewed against the strife that has tortured his native land. Another example of beauty born out of misery.

—Rajashree Balaram



Heroes among us

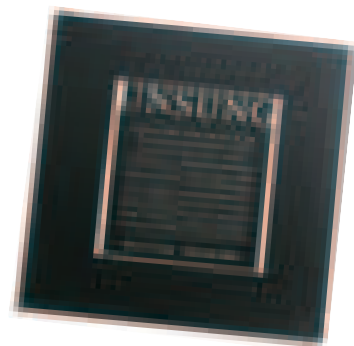
Unsung by Anita Pratap and Mahesh Bhat; Mahesh Bhat Publishing; Rs 950; 97 pages

Honour ordinary people who have done extraordinary things—that's the aim behind the Harmony Silver Awards. Journalist Anita Pratap and photojournalist Mahesh Bhat are thinking along the same lines in *Unsung*, which honours nine people who have dedicated themselves to improve the lives of others. (The proceeds go to the causes they espouse.) In fact, Chewang Norphel—a winner at Harmony Silver Awards 2007 for creating artificial glaciers that changed the face of a parched Ladakh—makes *Unsung's* cut too. Like him, the other heroes (all silvers) in the book have triumphed over their own realities to make their dreams come true, including Subhashini Mistry, who overcame poverty to establish Humanity Hospital in Hanspukur, near Kolkata; and illiterate Tulasi Munda in Serenda, Orissa, who helped educate over 20,000 people for free. In Kerala, priest and lawyer George Pulikuthiyil provides justice to the poor, while Bengaluru-based educationist Hasnat Mansur has improved the lives of countless Muslim women.

Rangaswamy Elango has made Kuthambakam village in Tamil Nadu self-sufficient; and Vijayanath Shenoy built a heritage village near Manipal, Karnataka, translocating houses on the verge of destruction. Also featured are forest ranger K M Chinappa who single-handedly revived Nagarhole National Park in Karnataka, and Laxman Singh, whose water-harvesting technique made Latoria village in Rajasthan drought-free.

These are extraordinary lives. Unfortunately, Pratap's dry biographies, dotted with errors, fail to do justice to their vision. Bhat's stark photographs more than compensate though. They capture each subject's world-view—you see them in unguarded moments among the people they are committed to serve, their motivation palpable. And come away humbled.

—Arati Rajan Menon



Social order

Bombay Tiger by Kamala Markandaya; Penguin Viking; Rs 495; 327 pages

Though Kamala Markandaya, author of the classic *Nectar in the Sieve* and *Shalimar*, had an illustrious literary career, when she died at the age of 80 (in 2004) royalties from her books had plummeted abysmally and most of her books were out of print. After she passed on, her daughter found the manuscript of the unpublished *Bombay Tiger*. Known for arousing interest in India, Markandaya's depiction of the nation is lauded as among the definitive. *Bombay Tiger* stays true to the core.

About two friends (Ganguli and Rao), with opposite polarities sometimes attracting each other and sometimes repelling, the novel moves on to chart their road to Bombay and ahead, each trying to show up the other. Rao, as if in revenge, is the first to come to the city; he becomes a banker. Ganguli follows, only to become an industrialist who defines the city more than the city defines him.

Sometimes called Bombay Tiger and sometimes Cement Sardar, "He saw what Bombay needed: bricks and steel, cement and glass." Amid this the only humour Markandaya can summon is dark, to stay with the city's life, problems and terrors (a place where "restless humanity sprouted and mushroomed out of every crack and crevice"). Ganguli and Rao, both basking in people's envy, cross each other's path now and then, rising and falling on the social status graph, before the final penance. Read this one for the ringside view of market free play against mere moral ethics, if not the plot.

—Meeta Bhatti



BOOKSHELF

BRIEFLY

In **THE AGE OF SHIVA** (Bloomsbury; Rs 495; 453 pages), **Manil Suri** attempts the 'epic' route, a departure from the restrained classicism of his debut *The Death of Vishnu*. Set in Delhi and Bombay and spanning over three decades, this is the story of Meera, a rebellious daughter and unhappy wife who finally finds meaning in life with the birth of her son Ashvin. Slowly, though, her love turns to an oppressive obsession. To finesse his psychodrama, Suri draws upon ancient myths—the story of Ganesha, created by Parvati for herself, a relationship that excluded and angered Shiva; and that of Andhaka, the deformed child of Shiva and Parvati who is given away and unknowingly falls in love with his own mother when he is older. Unfortunately Suri overdoes it—Meera's passionate ramblings soon get cloying, lending an almost queasy feel to what could have been a sensitive look at the various dimensions of a woman's life.




Kolkata-born **Kunal Basu**, who now teaches at Oxford University, says he is an avid traveller. It shows in **THE JAPANESE WIFE** (HarperCollins; Rs 395; 202 pages), a collection of 12 delicately crafted short stories set in places as varied as Shonai, a sleepy village in Bengal, Kolkata, Delhi, Beijing, Hong Kong, Yogyakarta (Indonesia) and Zurich. The cream of the crop is the tender title story, soon to be released as a film by Aparna Sen. An unlikely romance develops between two pen-friends—a Bengali village schoolteacher and a Japanese woman—and they exchange wedding vows through their letters. Though they never meet, their 'marriage' weathers every storm. Other gems include "Long Live Imelda Marcos", the tale of a Filipino housekeeper who falls in love with a Gujarati Muslim tailor; and "The Last Dalang", a Chinese shopkeeper struggling to hold onto his roots in Indonesia. Basu never overwrites—his characters come alive gently on the pages and seep into your consciousness, making reading an experience to be savoured.

John Grisham is a smart guy. Barely six months after the release of *Playing for Pizza*, his jock-lit, feel-good tale about an American quarterback who discovers the good life in Italy, he's back on home turf—legal and political intrigue—to reassure die-hard fans that he never went away. **THE APPEAL** (Arrow Books; Rs 245; 501 pages) is vintage Grisham. A jury in Mississippi returns a multi-million dollar verdict against a chemical company that has dumped toxic waste into a town's water supply. But the boss of the company Carl Trudeau (a delightful villain) will go to any length to ensure his appeal to overturn the verdict is successful, even purchasing a seat on the Mississippi Supreme Court for a rookie candidate who is handpicked and groomed by his henchmen. Hard-hitting, well-plotted and immensely entertaining, with an audacious ending.



Here's something to help you plan your next holiday. **EXPERIENCE INDIA** (Times Group Books; Rs 295; 590 pages) is loosely modelled on the internationally popular Lonely Planet series of country-specific travel guides; the difference is that it is lighter in terms of information and price. This is a no-frills endeavour—basic descriptions of each destination and information on hotels, food and shopping; dull photographs; and uninspired design. Still, as a ready reckoner this will come in handy—it covers each state and its tourist hotspots comprehensively, with add-ons like 'the top 25 travel circuits' and useful information on each city.

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



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. www.harmonyindia.org

H PEOPLE

MISSION MEXICO

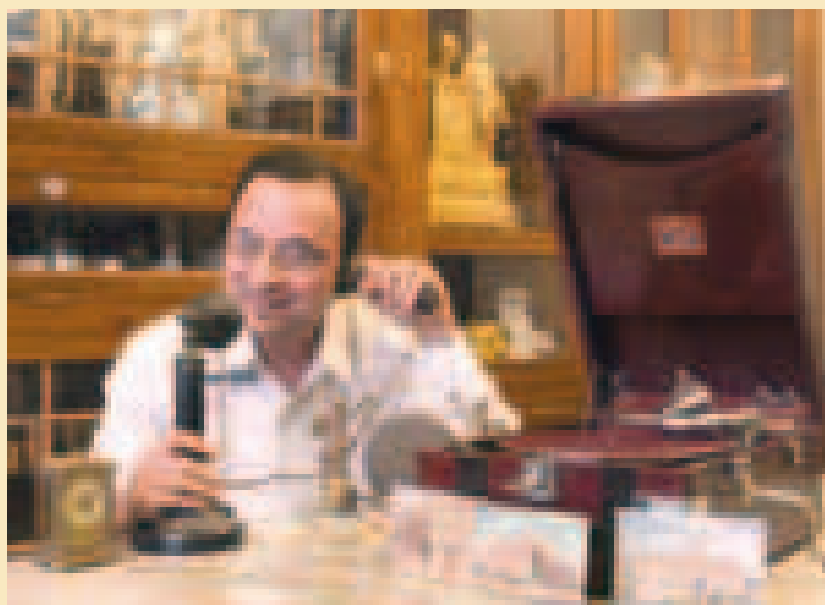
Tech guru **Satyanarayan**—‘Sam’—**Pitroda**, widely credited for India's communications revolution, has a new mission: help Mexico City achieve the status of ‘knowledge capital of Latin America’. The 66 year-old Pitroda currently serves as chairman of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC), a high-level advisory body to the Prime Minister of India, functioning with the objective of transforming India into a knowledge society. He was chosen by the Mexico government following a visit by Mexican officials to New Delhi and Bengaluru in late 2007.

Pitroda's plan for the city involves building dedicated blocks for various disciplines like law, medicine and technology. Each block will house students, professors, researchers and affiliated entities, giving residents better opportunities to build secure futures. “We have made 160 recommendations on 20 subjects ranging from languages to higher education and innovation to intellectual property rights,” says Pitroda. India is the first country ever to have set up a knowledge commission. The unique initiative seems poised to gather momentum and become a worldwide movement. Countries like Sri Lanka and Japan have already approached Pitroda, expressing an interest in the working of the NKC in India.



WHAT I LOVE

BOMBAY BUFF

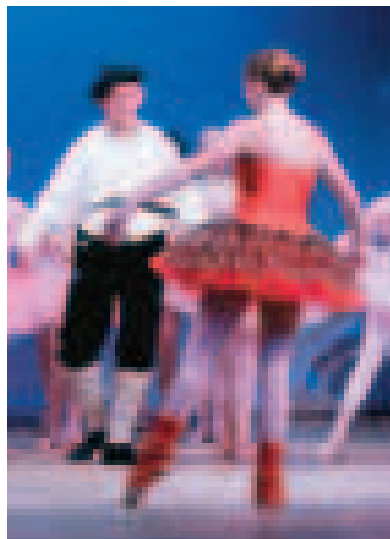


“I am a fan of Bombay!” proclaims Rajan Jayakar. So much so that over the years, the 60 year-old solicitor has built a remarkable collection of picture postcards, prints, lithographs, engravings, etchings, photographs, maps, even tram tickets and crockery, that pay tribute to the ‘maximum city’.

Belonging to the Pathare Prabhu community—one of the first communities to migrate from Patan in Gujarat during the 13th century and settle in Bombay—Jayakar's curiosity about his ancestors evoked his interest in the city's history from the time

VILAS KALGUTKER

A NEW TURN



For **John Lowe**, taking part in his first ballet production was a personal milestone—he did it at the age of 88. The native of Witchford, Cambridgeshire, UK, and grandfather to 11 started learning dance nine years ago after he watched his daughter Alison, a professional dancer, wow audiences. Lowe, a retired teacher, appeared in January in Sergei Prokofiev's

The Stone Flower, held by the Lantern Dance Theatre Company in Ely, 120 km north of London. "I have been amazed at his flexibility and strength," his dance teacher Helen Pettitt, tells London newspaper *The Telegraph*. For his part, the surprisingly agile Lowe only wishes he'd begun earlier. "It's a wonderful thing to do and I don't understand why more men don't do it," he says.

AUTO DREAMS

He can convert the most basic set of wheels into a dream machine. And now automobile designer

Dilip Chhabria is offering others a chance to do the same. The 54 year-old has announced the establishment of an auto design institute in Pune, which will offer undergraduate and two-year postgraduate programs on automotive styling, transportation design and engineering. The DC College of Automotive Studies will accommodate 1,500 students, who will pay between \$4,650 and \$7,000 a year (about Rs 185,000 to Rs 275,000) in tuition. According to Chhabria, the auto industry is expected to quadruple in the next seven years. "I wish to leverage my experience by translating it into knowledge that can be passed on and, maybe, absorbed in our own company in the future," says the design guru.



he was in college. Today, his collection of around 3,000 prints and picture postcards, dating back to 1899, forms a rich archive tracing the growth of the metropolis, from the withdrawal of horse-drawn carriages and introduction of automobiles and electric trams. "I even have a rare postcard with the plaster of Paris gateway built to welcome King George V and Queen Mary of England during the royal visit of 1911," he says. "The Gateway of India, built to commemorate their visit, was only erected in 1924. Other precious finds include postcards of the earlier visit of the king, when he was

Prince of Wales, in 1905." He also has an enviable collection of maps that trace the evolution of a successful port city from a chain of seven islands linked through reclamations, revealing the development of cartography from early pictorial representation to detailed, scientific maps of the 20th century. In fact, Jayakar's many architect friends have drawn upon his vast collection of postcards and maps for restoration work in the city.

TV channel CNBC recently made a short film on Jayakar's collections, with shots of his visits to Mumbai's Chor Bazaar and

Bermondsey Market in London. He also travels extensively to meet dealers in prints, photographs, postcards and stamps in New Delhi, Kolkata, London and New Zealand.

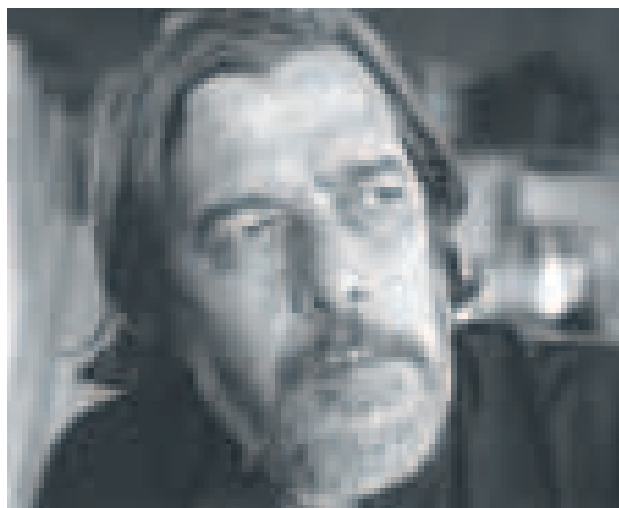
Jayakar has held exhibitions of his postcards at the Asiatic Society in Mumbai. His postcards have also appeared in *Taj* and *Marg* magazines. "Given some space, I would love to set up a museum related to Bombay," he says. Meanwhile, he plans to take time off to write a book on the history of judiciary on the Island of Bombay from 1294 to 1947.

—Brinda Gill

H PEOPLE

THE WORLD'S HIS STAGE

Actor and producer **Anupam Kher**, who runs acting schools in Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh, is opening another one Down Under. The 53 year-old announced in February that 'Actor Prepares Australia' will be operational at Fox Studios in Sydney by October 2008. Kher started the Mumbai branch of Actor Prepares in 2005 after touring the best acting schools in the world—stars such as Hrithik Roshan and Abhishek Bachchan count among its alumni. "Our school is not Bollywood-centric, which is why we can cater to the global entertainment industry," says Kher with pride to *Harmony*. He also plans to open schools in London and Durban.

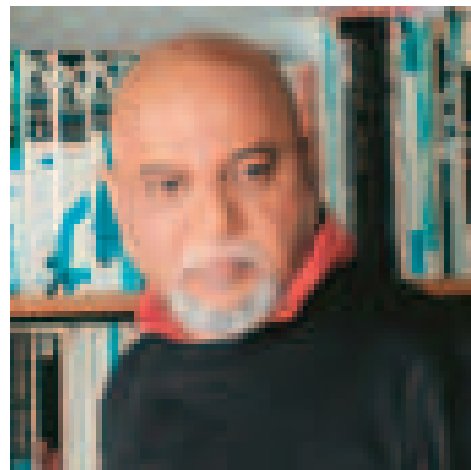


FOR AMMI

After showcasing his filmmaking skills in movies like *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Ata Hai* and *Salim Langde Pe Mat Ro*, Saeed Akhtar Mirza launched his first book, *Ammi: Letter to a Democratic Mother*, in February. In this tribute to his mother—"the most democratic person I have ever met in my life"—the 64 year-old Mirza interweaves fact and fiction as he writes about the romance that blossomed between his parents. "*Ammi* is a love story yet talks about politics, history and philosophy," he tells *Harmony*. "Words like democracy have been misused. We have to redefine them." Though Mirza will soon start work on *Savdhan Meri Jaan*, a film on the perils of life in Mumbai, he doesn't plan to stop writing.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Of late, **Pritish Nandy** is letting his brush do the talking for him. The 57 year-old journalist, poet and CEO of Pritish Nandy Communications, has been travelling the country (Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi) with his mixed media art show, *Bored*. In the show, Nandy melds his painting skills with digital technology to give shape to 37 large works that resemble book jackets. "I do a lot of things; I write, make movies and yet I feel bored at times," he says with a chuckle. "The origin of this show lies in one such point of time!" In the past, Nandy has shown independently and in partnership with renowned artists Manjit Bawa and Samir Mondal. "This time around, my work is completely different though," he says. In 2008, he plans to take the show to Singapore and New York, hold another art exhibition, and make six films.



BIRTHDAYS

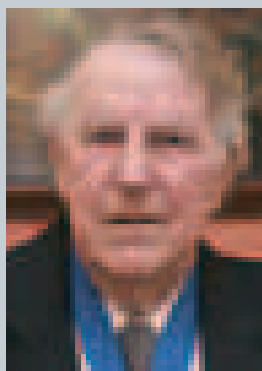
- Actor **Pran** turned 88 on 12 February
- Actor **Randhir Kapoor** turned 61 on 15 February
- Actor **Danny Denzongpa** turned 60 on 25 February

IN PASSING



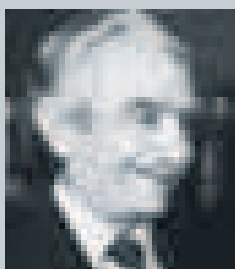
Promoter of the Jaipur Foot and orthopaedic surgeon **P K Sethi** began his career with the Sawai Man Singh Medical College and Hospital in Rajasthan. He won the Padmashri in 1981. After retirement, Sethi worked with Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata

Samiti in Jaipur, an NGO that makes the foot available free of cost to the physically challenged. His collaborator—and inventor of the prosthesis—Ram Chander Sharma, 87, was among the winners of the first annual Harmony Silver Awards in 2007 (see October 2007 issue of *Harmony*). Sethi passed away on 10 January in Jaipur. He was 80.



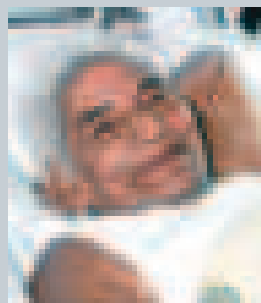
Edmund Hillary conquered Mount Everest on 29 May 1953 with Tenzing Norgay, fighting unpredictable winds and sub-zero temperatures. He was 33 years old at the time. In his autobiography, *Nothing Venture, Nothing Win*, he wrote: “Everest represented the ultimate in achievement, the supreme challenge....”

He passed away in Auckland, New Zealand on 11 January. He was 88.



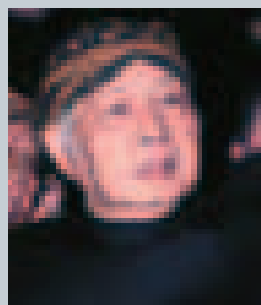
Russi Khurshedji Karanjia, editor of former weekly tabloid *Blitz*, set up after Independence, was instrumental in driving the tabloid journalism movement in India. He was admired for his fearless style and acumen.

Karanjia began his career with *The Times of India* and gave journalists like late satirist Behram Contractor, Magsaysay winner P Sainath, and cartoonist R K Laxman their break in journalism. He passed away on 1 February at his residence in Mumbai. He was 95.



Devidas Murlidhar Amte, better known as Baba Amte, dedicated his life to the rehabilitation and development of leprosy patients and the physically challenged. He established *Anandwan* or the ‘forest of joy’ at Warora in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra to

house these ostracised sections of society. Today, this 3,000-strong community has emerged as an exemplary model of self-reliance. A recipient of the Magsaysay Award, he also launched the *Bharat Jodo* movements all over the country, to establish peace and raise environmental consciousness. Baba passed away on 8 February. He was 94.



Suharto was a military leader and the second president of Indonesia, holding the office from 1967 to 1998 until he was forced to resign. Although his regime was characterised by corruption and brutality, many laud him as the father of Indonesia’s

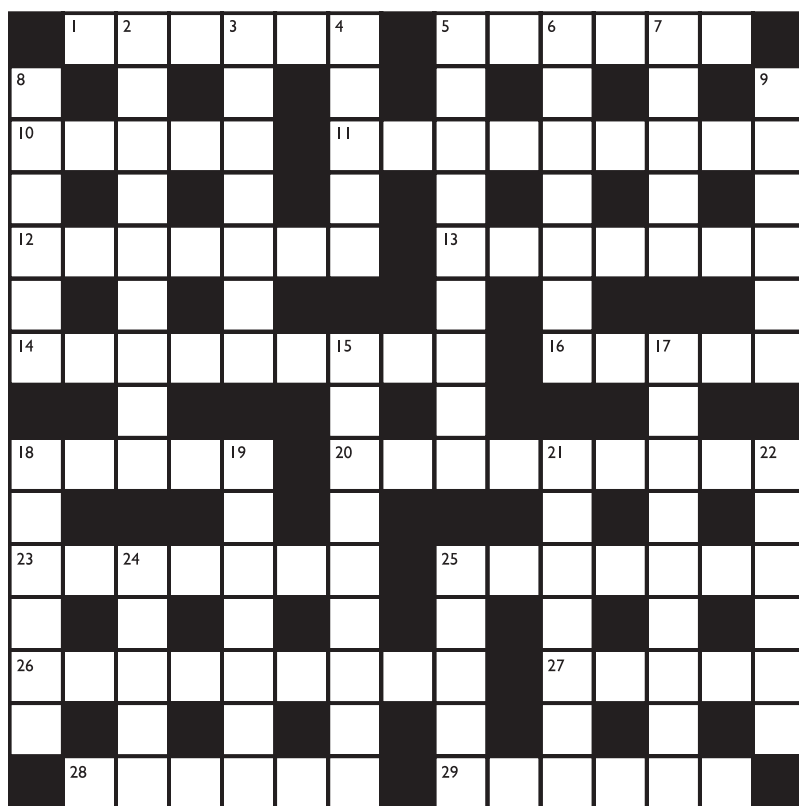
development and credit him for its economic growth. He passed away on 27 January in Jakarta at the age of 86.



Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, born Mahesh Prasad Varma, in Madhya Pradesh, India, achieved international recognition after the Beatles visited his *ashram* in Rishikesh in 1968. Credited with the concept of transcendental meditation (TM) to ward off anger, stress,

fear and such other negative emotions, he kept himself up to date with changing times and used voice conferencing, the Internet and a 24-hour television channel to reach out to his followers. He died in the Netherlands on 5 February at the age of 91.

HEADSTART



EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 41

By Raju Bharatan

ACROSS

- 1 Patnam retreat for wedding (6)
 5 Figure of speech at centre or on either side (6)
 10 Mime a brand (5)
 11 'Pop Goes The Iyer' ran Bachi Kanga-Karkaria's *Illustrated Weekly Of India* heading introducing her to the world (4 5)
 12 Car cosy enough for Theo embracing Nan (3 4)
 13 Authors no more (7)
 14 Game of Throw Ball in which the two teams pool ideas? (5-4)
 16 Lake Bambai-ites once cherished as a picnic spot (5)
 18 One lampooning 'The Mother Of Nightclubs'? (5)

- 20 The kind of shot attempted when this is called at the nets, trust Viru Sehwag to play it from the word go (4 5)
 23 Could Hemant Kumar possibly have composed for her something better than *Kuchch dil ne kahaan?* (7)
 25 Was character actor Rehman the ideal match for her in name? (7)
 26 Game to which Shah Rukh Khan should be diverting his frozen assets (3-6)
 27 Brian Lara is and yet isn't Sachin's (5)
 28 Would-be Sardar Of Dance? (1 5)
 29 Granted on the promise of good behaviour while playing the father? (6)

DOWN

- 2 Game enough to relish a full-grown woman? (1 3-5)
 3 Into which any idea of winning the toss could vanish (3 4)
 4 Doggie ninth in order from the sun? (5)
 5 What Anil Kumble as a batsman has got to be to escape the yorker's landing so stingingly (2 3 4)
 6 The Experience Of Being Basu Bhattacharya? (7)
 7 The kind of woman Mumtaz as heroine gamely was for the hero none too happily married? (5)
 8 When they did in the case of Asha Bhosle, nothing less than the Padmavibhushan would do (6)
 9 What there was from the crowd when the catch took its own time to land in the ultra-safe hands of a Dilip Vengsarkar fielding in the deep (6)
 15 The slippery trail it leaves behind even the daredevil motor-cyclist ignores at his peril (3 6)
 17 'Lok Sabha TV' being watched as never before? (5 4)
 18 The sex-kitty with talking eyes did (4 2)
 19 Harbhajan Singh was in the notorious Sydney Test when Ricky Ponting got a leading edge to be caught by V V S Laxman at silly mid-off (2 1 4)
 21 The title-role in which the vocals of Hemant Kumar sat so pat on Biswajeet in tones of *Janam se banjaaraa hoon bandhu janam janam banjaaraa* (7)
 22 T20 Cricket 'Live' could be (6)
 24 Section of pipe suggesting a hairpin in the offing for the motorist? (1-4)
 25 By no means near or winding down (3 2)

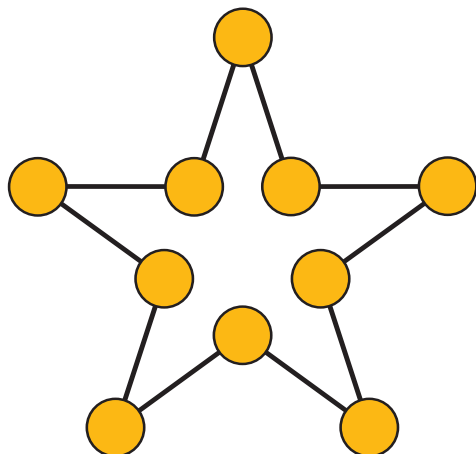
For answers, see Page 81

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

STARGAZING



The numbers 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 28, 32 and 36 need to be filled in the circles of the figure in such a way that the sum of numbers of each line amounts to 100. How can you do this?

LETTER BOX



Place the alphabets A to I into the 3 x 3 box. E is to the right of C. A is to the right of G which is above B, which is to the left of F. I is above D, which is to the left of G.

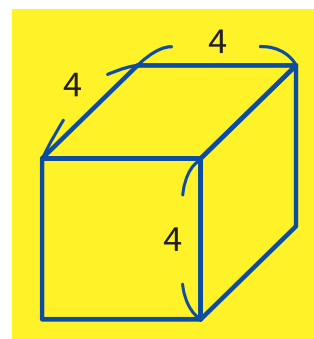
TRIBE VIBES

Victor Dey visited an island. There were two tribes living on this island. The tribe living on the east always told a lie. The tribe on the west always told the truth.

Victor saw a guy passing him. He asked the tour guide to ask that guy where he lives. The tour guide asked the guy and came back with the answer: he lives over west. Did the tour guide tell the truth or tell a lie?

CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK

If we paint each face of the 4 ft cube with the colour red and cut the cube into 64 one-foot small cubes, how many small cubes will have no red colour on any side? How many small cubes will have one red side? How many small cubes will have three sides in red?



LAUGH LINES

Here's a letter—sent by an 86 year-old lady to her bank—that's been circulating on the Internet. Apparently the bank manager found it amusing enough to send it to the *New York Times* who later published it.

Dear Sir,

I wish to thank you for bouncing my check with which I endeavoured to pay my plumber.

By my calculations, three nanoseconds must have elapsed between his presenting the check and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honour it. I commend you for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account \$ 30 by way of penalty. This has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways.

I noticed that whereas I personally answer your telephone calls, when I try to contact you, I am greeted by the pre-recorded, faceless entity, that your bank has become. From now on, I, like you,

HEADSTART

choose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person. My mortgage and loan repayments will hereafter arrive at your bank, by check, addressed to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate. Please find attached an Application Contact, which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but I need to know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me. In due course, I will issue your employee with a 28-digit PIN number, which he/she must quote in dealings with me. When you call me, press buttons as follows:

1. To make an appointment to see me
2. To query a missing payment
3. To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there
4. To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping
5. To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature
6. To transfer the call to my mobile phone if I am not at home
7. To return to the main menu and to listen to options 1 through 7
8. To make a general complaint or inquiry. The contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my answering service.
9. This is a second reminder to press* for English. While this may involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call.

May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous New Year.

Your Humble Client

PS: Don't make old ladies mad. They don't like being old, so it doesn't take much to set them off.

SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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.

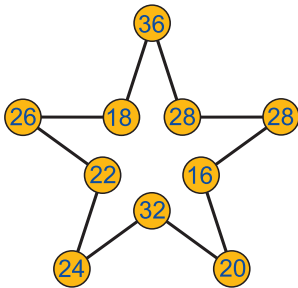
KOFFEE WITH KAKURO

			38	8			41	17
	11					10		
6				11				
11						8		
14			20					
	6			17				
				10				
	13			12				
13				10			10	
19						9		
					9			
10			21					
9				13				

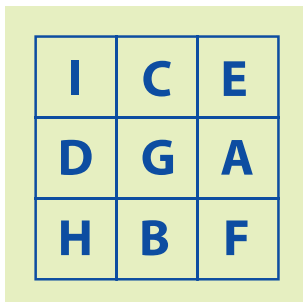
The object of a Kakuro is to insert digits from 1 to 9 into the white cells to total the clue associated with it. However, no digit can be duplicated in an entry. For example, to total 6, you could have 1 and 5, 2 and 4 but not 3 and 3. You may, however, use a number again in the same row or column.

SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

Star gazing



Letter box



Tribe vibes

If the guy was from the west, he should answer the truth: I am from the west. If the guy was from the east, he also should tell a lie: I am from the west. The answer will always be: I am from the west. So we know the tour guide was telling the truth.

Chip of the old block

If you cut out 2 ft from each side (one foot from each end), the remaining cubes will have $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$. Only eight cubes have no colour.

For each side, the middle four cubes have one face with colour. There are only six sides for a cube. Therefore there are $4 \times 6 = 24$ cubes with one red face. Only the corner cube will have three red faces. As there are eight corners, eight cubes have three red faces.

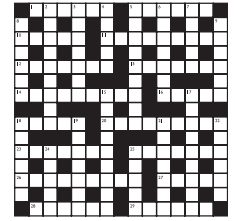
SOLUTIONS TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 41

ACROSS:

1 mantap (Patnam in reverse (retreat)); 5 orator (or/at/or: at

79

centre or on either side); 10 EMAMI (mime a, the 5 letters of EMAMI rearranged); 11 Usha Uthup; 12 The Nano (The/Nan/o: Theo embracing Nan); 13 Suharto (the 7 letters of authors rearranged); 14 water-polo; 16 Vihar (Lake); 18 MARIO (MA/RIO: 'The Mother Of Nightclubs'); 20 Last round; 23 Anupama; 25 Waheeda (Rehman); 26 ice-hockey; 27 equal; 28 A Daler (Mehndi); Sardar Of Dance; 29 parole (pa/role)



DOWN:

2 a man-eater; 3 thin air; 4 Pluto (name of dog); 5 on his toes; 6 Anubhav; 7 (The) Other (Woman); 8 bestow; 9 uproar; 15 oil tanker; 17 House Full; 18 mean it (it meaning sex-appeal); 19 on a roll; 21 Rahgeer; 22 deadly; 24 U-bend; 25 way up

SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

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

80

SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

		38	8			41	17
	11	5	6		10	1	9
	6			11			
11	1	3	2	5	8	3	5
					16		
14	5	9	20	6	9	2	3
			17				
	6	4	2	10	2	8	
	13	6	7	12	5	7	
	13			10			10
19	3	2	8	6	9	5	4
					9		
10	9	1	21	4	2	9	6
9	1	8		13	7	6	


78



“We have all been blessed with energies by nature. We just need to utilise them properly. Let the bond of blood teach us to forget race, religion, creed and greed.”

Dattatraya Mehendale, 68, is a cyclist and blood donation activist. In the past four decades, he has donated blood 180 times. The total donation, he claims, amounts to 54,000 cc. When the Pune resident donated blood for the 10th time, he promised himself that he would get at least one additional blood donor each time he volunteered—he has kept the promise. He is also happy that, of these blood donors more than 100 donate blood regularly. In 2000, at the age of 60, he stopped donating blood but is still deeply involved in blood donation drives. He says there are many misconceptions about blood donation and he helps dispel these with diligence, intellectual reasoning and, sometimes, religious and moral arguments and emotional appeals. He couples the cause with his passion for cycling. An avid cyclist, Mehendale has travelled about 8,000 km on his bicycle. In September 2007, he cycled from Leh to Srinagar via Khardung-la, the highest motorable road in the world, with a group of 20 people.

TEXT: KHURSHED DINSHAW; PHOTO: HEMANT PATIL



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[illegible]

TRANSLATIONS



SAHARA
GLOBAL

Reprints : were authorized in Fall 1990 : 1 000-100-0000 (July for 1990, 1 0000, and 1 0000 742 in 1990)