

ARMY OF MONKEYS, BEKS AND OTHERS,
VA, SUGREEVA AND HANUMAN ARRIVED

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harmony

MAY 2006

celebrate age

**200 years of
Secunderabad**
Now and then

Summer coolers
Food to beat the heat

**The
Storyteller**

Anant Pai

Subscriber Copy Not For Resale

The magazine for silver citizens

TIME OUT!

THERE'S NOTHING AS refreshing as a holiday to put the brakes on life's hectic pace.

For the past month, I have been surrounded by frenetic action as part of the 11th Harmony Show, which is India's largest private contemporary art show held annually in Mumbai. This year, as always, the show received a tremendous response—it was doubly gratifying as for the first time I directed the show myself in addition to my responsibilities as patron. It was also doubly hectic! Now, with the summer holidays almost around the corner, it's time for a breather.

I'm sure all of you are waiting avidly for the holidays too—it's the time to enjoy the company of your grandchildren. Indeed, American author Gore Vidal couldn't have been more right when he wrote, "Never have children, only grandchildren." There's nothing more rewarding than to see them grow, to see their personalities take shape and, most important, to spend quality time with them. So what are your plans this summer?

If you enjoy playing games with your grandchildren, take a look at a new book, *Folk Games of Tamil Nadu*, by V Balambal, former professor of history at the

University of Madras (published by the C P Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation in Chennai). The book is a delightful look at folk games played with eco-friendly material. You don't need costly gizmos for these strategy-based games—the boards can be fashioned by digging holes in the sand or drawing lines and squares on the floor and the coins are as basic as it gets...shells, seeds and stones. It's a great way for your grandchildren to learn the value of simplicity.



Lata Mangeshkar inaugurating the Harmony Art Show in Mumbai

There's so much you can teach them. Folklore, history, the arts, mythology and family traditions. Add activities to make the process of learning even more interesting. For example, help them make a memory book where they can stick pictures and essays about the places you've taken them, or let them make their own collages using old photographs.



RITU NANDA

But with all this nostalgia, don't forget the present. Take the time to learn what gets them ticking, whether it's the new Mariah Carey CD they are raving about, the latest Narnia film, the hot-off-the-shelf videogame or the website they visit more often than their best friend's house. Explore the future with them, just as you urge them to explore the past with you. After all, there's a lot you can learn from them too!

Ultimately, it's about forging a bond, or strengthening one that is already there. There's no time like the present—make the best of it. Happy holidays!

Tina Ambani

Tina Ambani

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Harmony—Celebrate Age—May 2006 Volume 2 Issue 12

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FREE OFFER

Cover picture of Anant Pai by **Kerry Monteen**

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column one

This issue we feature people who author their own destiny. They add meanings and patterns to their life stories with an ongoing search for a purpose and a cause. Anant Pai, on the cover this month, was a chemical engineer before he decided that his life would make a good book only if he kept the child within him alive, continued to have playtime hours and tell himself bedtime stories. Pai launched the famous *Amar Chitra Katha* comics 30 years ago and *Tinkle*, a children's magazine, 25 years ago. Fondly called 'Uncle Pai', the 76 year-old works hard to revive culture for the Harry Potter generation. But first and foremost, he is an observer, his memory a well of stories that doesn't go dry because it drinks in the world around him. Read "The Storyteller" for more.

Tara Deo led a two-tone life until she added her own colours to it by learning how to make quilts ("Piece by Piece"). She admits that her hobby has added another dimension to her life, and has brought her closer to her family and friends. Dr Surendra Mantgani has a purpose, too. The 81 year-old still practises to support his family (a widowed daughter-in-law and two grandchildren), but he treats senior citizens for free as he considers them his family. Life is a handful of short stories for Lydia Sperlich, who moved continents before she landed in India and fell in love with khadi, the fabric that changed her life forever.

People featured this month have lived their lives from their heart and are sharing the rewards with others. So let that idea not exist only as an idea, develop it and put it into action.

—Meeta Bhatti

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I am a regular reader of *Harmony*. My husband is a retired engineer and I opted for voluntary retirement from teaching to counsel teenage students, their parents and the elderly. I feel you could extend moral support and encouragement to many more people by printing your magazine in regional languages.

I would also like to share an incident that appalled me. Once, I was travelling by train (AC 3-tier) with my husband. A 70 year-old man asked a middle-aged passenger to exchange berths with him as he found it difficult to climb to the topmost berth. To this, the middle-aged man replied: "I can't go up. If you can't climb up, why do you travel?" We were shocked to hear this. It was only a matter of adjustment. In foreign countries, there are separate queues and special reservations for senior citizens. We have separate queues but what about choice of berth?

MEERA VEERARAGHAVAN

Vadodara

The letter of the month wins a gift from Vimal

It was indeed nice to read "Hooked to E-Books" (April 2006) by Dinesh C Sharma in your 'Technology' section. Such articles written by eminent persons in their respective fields enhance the knowledge level of a wide spectrum of readers, both juniors and seniors. However, even though the writer has tried to explain a little about the features of the software Adobe Acrobat Reader, some tips on using the software would have been helpful.

BEENA MENON

New Delhi

I normally enjoy my good friend and colleague Dr Pushpesh Pant's writings on cuisine. But as a Bengali, a reasonably good cook and fellow writer on cuisine, I hope he will not mind my taking up one or two points with him.

Patishapta (featured in 'Food Wise' in the January 2006 issue of *Harmony*) is a classical Bengali sweet, liked for its softness and subtlety. Its traditional fillings are *narkel* (a coconut paste with the same taste as coconut *laddoo*) or

kheer or a combination of both. Even grandmas with dental problems can enjoy it. To suggest a filling of dates, nuts and figs destroys its whole character. While one can have personal variations, I feel changes should not be made for public consumption.

Second, Dr Pant gave a recipe in your February issue for '*Paneer Jhaal Frazie*'. In Bengali it is *Jhaal Phirji* and the original Anglo-Indian term is *Jhaal Freezi*. What is *Jhaal Frazie*? Never heard of it.

AMITA MALIK

New Delhi

Your March 2006 cover story "Forever Young" and the cover photo have absolutely no relevance for silvers. They are expected to grow old gracefully and not resort to anti-ageing treatments and creams. Taking care of one's health is different from trying to conceal grey hair and wrinkles.

Indirectly, you are promoting the products mentioned in your story. Such articles should find

place in women's magazines, not *Harmony*. Also, the last joke in the "Laugh Lines" column in 'Headstart' was a crude one.

K P VENUGOPAL

Bangalore

Thank you for your comments. However, the story was not intended to be an endorsement for anti-ageing products and services. Our aim was to provide a comprehensive survey of the developments made in the anti-ageing field for all readers, men and women, both in terms of medical research to prolong longevity and the latest trends in dermatology and cosmetology.

—Editors

Your cover feature on Vijaypat Singhania ("Space Cowboy") in the November 2005 issue is a rich source of inspiration to all. At 67, his successful attempt to place India on the world map of aviation is remarkable. India is proud of Singhania; he is truly a legend.

MADAN MOHAN PRABHAKAR

New Delhi

Last month, on my 65th birthday, I adopted *Harmony* as my companion. It enlightens the spirit and helps overcome loneliness. On a light note, a friend suggested you add 'South Mumbai' in brackets after *Harmony*! I staunchly differ. Though a class apart in content, quality and utility, the magazine is not for the upper class alone.

My friend's superficial impression, perhaps, arose from some of the articles you carry on achievers in public life. I remain an academician even after retirement. I continue to study and write in Hindi on popular science and consumer protection issues. I also do a fair amount of social work. For me, the sense of fulfilment and pleasure I get from *Harmony* is enormous.

DR RAMCHANDRA MISHRA
Thane

I got addicted to *Harmony* quite by accident! My father bought a Maruti 800 car and got a subscription to the magazine free. I picked it up casually, scanned the pages and got hooked. Now, I wait eagerly for *Harmony* every month and read it cover to cover.

ANU VOHRA
Faridabad

Every now and then, we read news reports about elderly couples living alone being robbed and even mercilessly killed. With our traditional family system splitting up, such incidences are bound to increase. The system is obviously inadequately geared to protect each and every elderly couple.

The way I see it, the only solution to the problem is old-age homes, where the elderly can lead a peaceful life. It would be heartening if the Harmony Initiative helps build such homes with all the basic amenities on the outskirts of major city limits at affordable prices.

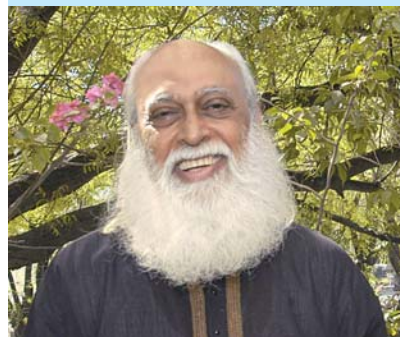
I am sure there will be no dearth of contributions from the corporate sector, builders, promoters and non-governmental organisations.

M M SANJAGIRI
Mumbai

Thank you for your thoughtful suggestion. However, as of now, the *Harmony* Initiative has no plans to build old-age homes. Our aim is to help senior citizens find a footing in society and with their family.

—Editors

CONTRIBUTORS



Muthusamy Varadarajan, 71, retired as Secretary, the Ministry of Culture. He now works as the senior vice-president of Osians art auction house and recently put together the Indian cultural ensemble at the Commonwealth Games, in Melbourne. He is passionate about designing and Carnatic music. He has co-authored books like *Indian Enamel Jewellery* (Roli, 2004) and *Indian Wisdom* (Harry N Abram, NY 2004). Coming up next is a book on Indian rituals and traditions. His two sons are journalists who say he is "mad, running around at this age", but Varadarajan thinks they say this in admiration and despair.

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 which others can learn from
 - You faced a serious health problem and conquered it
 - You know of someone who has done something exceptional after the age of 55
 - You want to share your hobbies and interesting travel experiences with others
 - 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



WOOL, ANYONE?

Here's the **latest anti-ageing cure: wool**. You don't wear it—you eat it. Really. Biotech company Karatec Ltd, based in Lincoln, near Christchurch, New Zealand, which designs and manufactures keratin-based biomaterial from the wool of selected flocks of sheep, claims it will keep your skin looking young. Keratin, a structural protein, is a primary constituent in skin, hair and nails, and is normally not soluble. But Karatec has developed a method of extracting keratin from wool in a soluble, digestible form by separating wool fibres into their constituent parts without destroying the protein strands. It plans to launch this in the form of a dietary supplement across the world in the next few months.

NEWSWORTHY

CENTRES OF ATTRACTION

Now, there's more room for silvers. In March, the Delhi administration announced that it will be mandatory to establish **senior citizens' centres in all new colonies and cooperative group housing societies** in the city. At least 100 sq m of covered area will have to be set aside in every colony for these centres, which will comprise a library, reading room and carom facility. Existing colonies too will be allowed to obtain no-objection certificates from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi for setting up such centres.



POWER SURGE



Talk about silver power. Last month, political analysts in Israel were stunned when the newly formed **Gil Pensioners' Party**, led by 79 year-old Mossad veteran Rafi Eitan, came out of nowhere to win seven seats in the country's parliamentary elections. And surprisingly enough, it wasn't just silvers who voted for the party. It turned out that young Israelis backed Gil in large numbers too. "We might be pensioners too one day," 30-something Tel Aviv resident Dorit Schleissman told UK-based newspaper *The Guardian*.

NEW HOMES

In a heartening move, on 31 March, **the Goa government announced a new scheme, Ummid, to start day-care homes for senior citizens** across the state. The homes will be funded by the government—Rs 30 lakh is the initial allocation—and managed by non-governmental organisations and respective *panchayat*. Each home will have various recreational facilities, including a television and library, and will also provide healthcare facilities, including regular medical checkups.

BRAIN GAME

After conquering the kids' market with games like *Mario* and *Pokemon*, Nintendo is now scoring big with silvers. The Japanese firm's **'Brain Training for Adults', a number and puzzles game for the elderly**, has sold 3.34 million copies since its launch in May 2005. Designed with the help of a neuroscientist, the game is played on the hand-held user-friendly DS console, which is operated with only a plastic pen and touch pad. Many hospitals in Japan are now ordering the game for their elderly patients. On 17 April, Nintendo launched 'Brain Age' in the US for \$ 20 (about Rs 890). "The game, however, won't cure dementia," Dr Takeshi Kihara, neurologist at Kyoto's Uchida Hospital, told *Reuters*.

TRENDS

SILVER WEB

The word is out. *Harmony's* own Mr and Mrs Purohit have company on the Internet—lots of it.

According to a report released by the Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in March, **senior citizens are a fast growing group of online users in India.** With India's Internet population poised to reach 100 million by 2007-08 from the current 38.5 million, the number of 'senior netizens' is expected to rise to 3 million by 2007-2008. "It is encouraging to see senior netizens as enthusiastic as youngsters in a variety of activities that define online life," Preeti Desai, president of IMAI, told media. The study shows that 15 per cent of silvers access the World Wide



Web from cyber cafes and 81 per cent use the Internet for more than five hours a week. While 99 per cent use the Internet for email, 70 per cent for general surfing and 47 per cent for chatting, 60 per cent read news online; 26 per cent trade stocks (compared to 15 per cent of Internet users of all ages); 38 per cent use banking services and 21 per cent shop online. For now, 87 per cent of senior netizens are male. And over 77 per cent of silvers come from nine cities—23 per cent from Delhi; 22 per cent from Mumbai, 12 per cent from Chennai, 4 per cent from Hyderabad and Kolkata; 3 per cent from Bangalore, Lucknow and Cochin; and about 2 per cent from Ahmedabad and Jaipur.

UNDER THE SCALPEL



'Be yourself' is a mantra that still doesn't quite cut it in the US—plastic surgeons continue to thrive in the country. **More than 10.2 million cosmetic plastic surgery procedures were performed in the US in 2005, up 11 per cent from 2004**, according to statistics released by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). "For many, cosmetic plastic surgery is the new take on growing old gracefully," says Dr Bruce Cunningham, president of ASPS, told US-based health website *www.medicalnewstoday*. The top five surgical procedures were liposuction, nose reshaping, breast augmentation, eyelid surgery, and tummy tucks. However, for the first time in six years, facelifts didn't make the top five. This can be attributed to increased consumer demand for minimally invasive cosmetic procedures, like Botox and chemical peels (see "Forever Young" in the March 2006 issue of *Harmony*).

DRY, CLEAN

If you're looking for freedom from wetness, try Mumbai-based Noble Hygiene Pvt Ltd's affordable range of **adult diapers**. You get six hours of protection for Rs 19. The company also offers a higher absorbency range for bed-ridden patients, for Rs 50 to Rs 58. To order, call 022-24366276 or email noble@vsnl.in

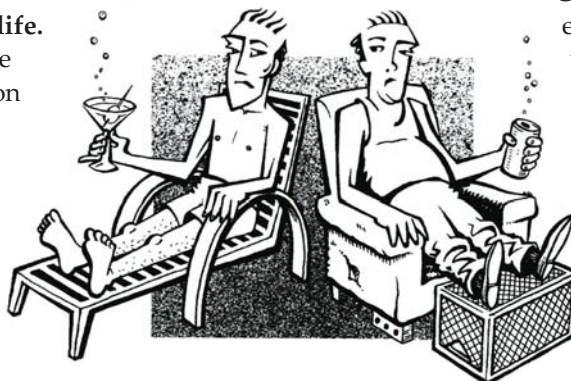
ANALYSE THIS

YOUR BEST LIFE

We've been saying it all along, and now there's research to back us up—**getting older can actually improve quality of life.**

A team from Imperial College and City University in London and Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, suggests that quality of life in the UK is above average for people between the ages of 50 and 84, and in some cases higher compared to earlier years. For the study, published in April in the online issue of *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, the researchers studied the effects

of medical, social and economic factors on quality of life on 12,234 individuals. "Although



many worry that old age and retirement could be a time of hardship, our study shows that for many their quality of life

actually improves as they get older," says lead researcher Dr Gopal Netuveli from Imperial College. "In particular, social engagement such as volunteering can significantly improve quality of life, even in very old age." Trusting relationships with friends and family, frequent contact with friends and living in a good, safe neighbourhood were also found to increase quality of life, while long standing illness, difficulties in mobility, depression and financial difficulties had the opposite effect.

I BELIEVE

You can **retain your memory as you age—if you believe it.** A recent study at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, suggests that people who believe they can control their memory tracks are more likely to employ mnemonic strategies that help keep their memory fit. "The more you believe there are things you can do to remember, the more likely you will be to use strategies and allocate resources effectively, and the less you will worry about forgetting," writes Margie Lachman, psychology professor and director of the university's Lifespan Lab, in the March issue of *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*.



THE IDIOT BOX



If you are addicted to *saas-bahu* soaps, switch channels. A study published in the March issue of *Southern Medical Journal* suggests that **elderly women who watch soaps and talk shows are more likely to suffer from cognitive impairment.** For the study, healthy American women aged 70 to 79 were asked about their favourite types of TV shows. The women also took tests to measure their memory, decision making abilities and cognitive skills. When researchers looked for patterns linking cognitive abilities and the women's favourite TV shows, they found that women who watched talk shows were 7.3 times more likely to have long-term memory problems and those who watched soaps were 13.5 times more likely to have problems with attention.

YOUR MONEY

SCHEME OF THINGS



Under a recent amendment to the Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme, instituted in 2004, **depositors are now permitted to transfer their accounts from one bank or post office to another**, even if there is no change in residence. Earlier, senior citizens could do this only when if there was a change in their residential address. The move is intended to provide greater flexibility to silvers in choosing banks or post offices that are conveniently located and offer good services. There's a small fee, though: silvers will be charged Rs 5 per Rs 1 lakh of deposits for the first transfer and Rs 10 per Rs 1 lakh of deposits for each subsequent transfer.

CASH CARD



ICICI Prudential Life Insurance and ICICI Bank have launched an **'Annuity Card' to enable round-the-clock cash for customers under pension schemes**. With the card, customers can make purchases from over 2 lakh merchant establishments. The card also carries various special discount schemes with

it. "This product is the first of its kind in Asia," Shikha Sharma, MD and CEO, ICICI Prudential, told media. "This is an initiative to make life more comfortable by extending our customer service focus to pay-out stage from accumulation stage."

SAVE TO SPEND



Pensioners in the UK need to **spend more money and have more fun**. According to the Institute of Actuaries, whose members are trusted to supervise every pension fund, if money saved is used in a fun way on retirement, saving for pensions can be seen as a pleasure and not a duty. "First, people must become better educated about finances. Second, providers need to engineer better, more flexible and more effective retirement products that will cater to longer retirements, and changing needs, especially in the early stages of retirement," Michael Pomery, president of the institute, told website myfinances.co.uk

GOOD MOVE



In March, the Kerala State Pay Revision Commission advocated a **'One Rank, One Pension' formula for state pensioners**, to remove the inequality in pension between past and present pensioners. It also raised the monthly medical allowance from Rs 50 to Rs 100 for all pensioners.

MEDIA WATCH



MUM'S THE WORD

British actor and comedian Tony Robinson is on a mission. "Caring for the elderly should be a national priority and it isn't," he says in *Me and My Mum*, a documentary aired on Channel 4 in April. "We live in a world where we shout from the rooftops about the state of school dinners and fox hunting. We've spent billions invading foreign countries. It's unforgivable for us to systematically ignore our old people any longer." *Me and My Mum* is the first part of Channel 4's *The Trouble with Old People* series, which focuses on the concerns of silvers in the UK. The documentary is akin to a home movie, set against a background of video clips, with 59 year-old Robinson recounting the life of his mother Phyllis, who struggled for seven years with dementia in a care home before passing away at the age of 89 just a few months ago. "Maybe I'm guilty," he confesses on camera, "because I'm never going to be entirely happy with the decision I made to put my mum in a care home. What I don't understand is why nobody talks about this stuff. We put the people we love into care homes every day and we treat it like it's our own private tragedy."

OFFBEAT

A HELPING HAND?



In a one-of-a-kind scheme in the German state of North-Rhine Westphalia, **former prostitutes are retraining as care assistants to work with the elderly.** Under the scheme, run by Protestant organisation Diakonie Westfalen and financed by the state and contributions from the European Union's social funds, more than 30 women between the ages of 20 and 40 have swapped a life in the sex industry for two years of training and practical experience in elderly care. "Coming from an industry where intimacy with strangers is the norm, these women do not suffer from the stigma some

may feel when dealing with the personal and physical aspects of the job, such as cleaning and washing," Rita Kühn from Diakonie Westfalen told German magazine *Der Spiegel*. To keep other stigmas at bay, the women work in care homes under the promise that their former professions remain secret. For them, the scheme is a chance to get away from the potentially dangerous sex industry and start over. "I have learnt to listen to people's needs, not just their wishes," 40 year-old Gisela Zohren told *Der Spiegel*. "In the process, I have changed my life."

JOY RIDE



Sometimes **passion can overtake the best of us.** In March, when traffic police in Cologno al Serio, northeast of Milan, Italy, pulled over a vehicle that was zigzagging, they found a naked 70 year-old woman.

Apparently, she had been trying to have sex with the semi-nude driver, 11 years her junior. After demanding the couple get dressed, the police tested the driver for drunk driving—he was three times over the legal limit. "We assume they must have been drinking at lunch and then things got out of control," police commander Angelo D'Anardo told Reuters. D'Anardo didn't believe the couple were married, adding, "Married people wouldn't probably do anything like this."

SHOPPING LIST

**CUT-OFF POINT**

Scared about accidentally using a used needle or syringe? **Hykut, the needle and syringe destroyer**, is the solution. This portable device by Kosmochem Pvt Ltd has a manual chopper mechanism that chops needle tips and syringes. Ideal for insulin users. The cost: Rs 250. To order, call 022-23447833, 23445018 or email enquiry@kosmochem.com.

FOOTLOOSE

Are your shoelaces always tied too tight or too loose? Let Pedder Johnson's 'Shoe Lace Stays' do the trick. Insert your laces into these tiny rubber helpers and their 'pinch-and-pull action' ensures your laces stay tight—but not uncomfortably so. The price: Rs 18.75 (plus 12.5 per cent VAT). Call 022-25228857/59 or email fordham@vsnl.in to order.

**CONNECT TO THIS**

Austrian mobile phone manufacturer Emporia has announced the launch of a **new phone for silvers**. Called EmporiaLife, the company describes it as "the large-print Reader's Digest version of the Razr" in a media release. (The Razr is Motorola's award-winning phone, noted for its sleek looks.) Big buttons and an easy-to-read LCD screen make EmporiaLife easy to operate for people with failing eyesight. No word yet from the company on the cost and how (and where) to order one.



LOVE THAT!

ROCK OF AGES

If you think today's music industry is the preserve of the young, you have another think coming. "**The 'wrinklies' are ruling the airwaves!**" proclaims a recent feature in UK newspaper *The Guardian*. Three new entries in recent weeks in the British album charts came from crooners Neil Diamond, 65, Dolly Parton, 60, and Ray Davies of the Kinks, 61. Singer David Gilmour of Pink Floyd, 60, has released a rare solo album. The Rolling Stones, with 246 years between the four members of the band, have just completed another world tour. And John Cale, 63, has found a new lease of life playing "dirty-ass rock 'n' roll", as he calls it, in sweaty clubs, almost 40 years after changing the course of rock with Velvet Underground. Guitarist Ry Cooder, 58, seeks out musicians far older than himself when making a record. "I always thought you need to find the oldest person," he told the newspaper, "because they can play and sing the beautiful thing that comes from the inside."



PET PROJECT

Taking care of a pet may soon get easier for silvers in the US. Procter & Gamble and the Industrial Designers Society of America have forked out a grant of \$ 40,000 (Rs 18,02,000) to a team at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia, to develop **new products and systems to help the elderly care for their pets better.** The project,



titled 'PAWS: Pet Care Awareness System', will aim to improve communication between the elderly, their families, and medical providers. Ideas include developing a keychain based point-of-purchase encoder to signal a veterinarian that an owner has purchased the wrong animal food and elevated systems to permit seniors to feed their pets without straining their back.

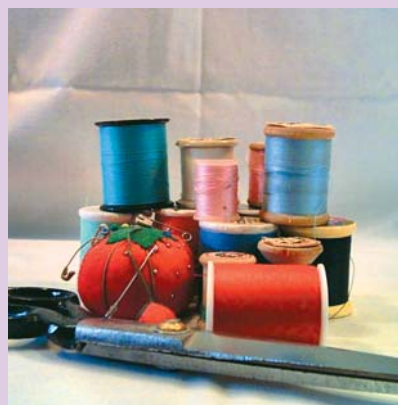
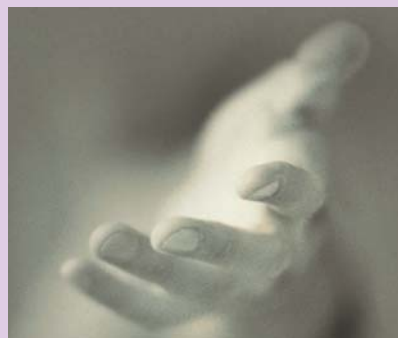
H RECOMMENDS

ACTION PLAN FOR MAY

The community spirit. Take a cue from the Parsi community and preserve your heritage. Since 1999, Parsi NGO Parzor Foundation has been researching and documenting information on ancient Avesta and Pahlavi manuscripts, Parsi textiles and embroidery, and traditional rainwater harvesting modules. Parzor, which recently released a biography of India's first woman photojournalist Homai Vyarawalla (see the March 2006 issue of *Harmony*), is now documenting the life of another Parsi hero, Field Marshal (Retd) Sam Manekshaw. Also on the anvil is a demographic study of the community.

Give your time. Have time on your hands? You could spend it looking after silvers less fortunate than you. In Manila, Philippines, Coalition of Services for the Elderly Inc (Cose), an umbrella of 45 organisations for senior citizens, has trained more than 470 home care assistants to serve their peers. Under the programme, the elderly are trained to check blood pressure and pulse rates, bathe and feed bedridden patients, give first aid and counsel those who are suffering from depression. "We take care of our own," says 65 year-old Ofelia Hispano, a volunteer caregiver in Manila. "And it gives us new purpose in life."

Passion for fashion. Do you design your own clothes? Maybe it's time to come out of the closet and try your hand at designing for others. It could change your life. Ask former teacher 64 year-old Jenny Sheehan. The resident of Yorkshire designed some comfy, easy-to-wear clothes for family and friends—the designs caught the eye of a buyer for clothing brand Pauline May and today Sheehan has her own signature label, exclusively for silvers. Her clothes are also available by mail order for residents of old-age homes in the area. "It's always hard to find practical yet fashionable clothes for the elderly," she says. "My collection fills that gap. And I am my own best model!"



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!

LAUGH THROUGH LIFE



Mathur (seated, right) with his family in Delhi

IN the late 1980s, when I was bureau chief at *Indian Express*, C P Raghavan was editor of Express News Service (ENS), coordinating the news network of more than half-a-dozen editions. Occasionally, he would head straight to my desk, look around to ensure no girls were around and tell me his latest jokes in English, or in his atrocious Hindi. His enthusiasm was infectious. I would also barge into his room to make him the first recipient of my latest collection of jokes.

The joke bug caught me in my school days. We were a big group of friends living in Chira Khana (now known as Har Dayal Street) near Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi. At our annual overnight picnic at Qutab, no one was allowed to sleep. Through the night, we were in splits as the jokes came out, one after the other. We carried the 'virus' to Hindu College in Delhi University. Some of us from college meet even today, and jokes continue to be our binding force. We are all retired but incorrigible.

The joke bug has inflicted my family too. All of us, elders and children, share jokes. It has brought us closer. Once, in the presence of half a dozen of my nephews and nieces, I narrated a joke, carefully sanitising it. My two children, a son and a daughter,

both in college then, exchanged meaningful glances and finally my son whispered, "We have heard the original one." I underestimated the rogues!

The Press Club is like a laughter club to us. There are several evenings when we discuss old ghazal and the great composers. Rajendra Kaul, former joint director of CBI, often breaks into song. And we are all back to our college days. Having known each other for over four decades, there is no pretension. After all, at 66, I realise age is only a number.

The numbers don't add up when it comes to gastronomy. At my age, my taste buds and my stomach are always at loggerheads. But I continue to search for new eateries in Delhi, especially those serving *paapri chaat*. I have even written a full-page guide in my newspaper listing the best *chaatwallah* in the city. My family too is like tangy *paapri chaat*. There have been several inter-caste marriages. We have two sons-in-law, a Bengali and a Gujarati. The daughters-in-law include a Sindhi (my wife), a Maharashtrian, a Kashmiri, a Jain, a Punjabi and an Aggarwal. With each passing day, I pray that we grow grey happily.

—W D Mathur
Delhi

AN INFINITE VISION OF THE MOTHER DIVINE

I sat all alone by the temple wall
As the moon rode high in the cloudless sky.
I was waiting for a glimpse of the Mother Divine
On this holy and sacred night of nights.
How long I had waited, I had lost count,
As the months and years flew by.
And yet I waited day after day
To catch but a glimpse of that vision sublime.

The stars gleamed softly in the inky sky
And the world was hushed by the silence of night,
And then I heard a distant tinkle,
The tinkle of anklet bells coming to my side.
And as I listened the music grew closer,
And I knew for certain She was coming my way.

Then suddenly, the air was pervaded with fragrance,
 A fragrance I'll not forget till my dying day.
 It seemed that all the world's roses, jasmine and incense
 And many other wondrous scents had melded
 Into a matchless fragrance—an essence of all scents sublime.
 As the air was filled with a perfume most glorious
 I knew in my heart She was so near.
 In reverence as I sank to my knees, with my head to the ground
 I felt Her presence wafting the air.
 My eyes were closed shut so they could not see,
 Yet I knew with the eyes of the mind She was there.
 My mind was reeling with a tumult of thoughts without end,
 Could I but dare to open my eyes
 To catch a glimpse of that awesome beauty,
 For which I had waited all of my life.

At last my eyelids lifted a little
 As I lay prostrate at that holy spot.
 And I'll never forget the splendour I witnessed
 As I gazed with wonder at what I saw.
 The feet before me glowed so brightly,
 With the brilliance of a hundred full moons,
 Adorned most richly with sparkling jewels
 Their beauty was beyond compare.
 I could but catch a glimpse of that radiance
 As my eye closed once more in reverence profound
 And the tears then ran in unending rivulets
 As they gushed forth to wash Her feet
 on that holy ground.

How long I lay there I do not remember,
 But when I came to my senses and opened my eyes
 All was empty and silent before me,
 Save on the floor was a vermillion marked leaf,
 To tell me what I saw was not a wishful dream.
 And as a benediction a red rose lay there
 Which I picked up and held to my heart
 And ever since then, I feel Her Presence
 In the innermost chamber of my heart of hearts.
 And a peace most profound fills me forever
 As I know that now She is always with me.
 Glory to the Mother evermore.

—Kiran Dhar, 70,
 Kolkata

HEALED BY WORDS



Dr Gilra (extreme right) with his family

THE right attitude and the right words spoken at the right moment can help us deal with all of life's setbacks. I was born and raised in a middle-class family in Katdwara, Garhwal. At the age of five, I lost sight in my left eye in an accident. As I grew up, the trauma of physical inadequacy gradually began to overwhelm and cloud my mental vision. Without guidance and facilities (we didn't even have electricity), I could feel failure and frustration staring me in the face.

My father R S Maheshwari came to my rescue. He was barely literate but had a compassionate heart. He transformed my outlook towards life one day with these words: "You are not merely a body. Above everything else, you are a mind and a spirit." The words slowly sank into my consciousness, and life began to acquire new purpose. I resolved not to accept defeat or succumb to negativity, ever.

With father's words ringing in my ears, I studied hard. I stood first in all the examinations—from matriculation to post-graduation in English. I got a PhD in English. Soon, I began my career as a lecturer and after 40 years of service retired as principal of a postgraduate college. If you believe in yourself, no infirmity can ever queer the course of life. It only spurs you on. Now, at 69, my newfound passion for yoga has opened new vistas of inner growth for me, unbounded by temporal or spatial limits.

—Dr Shiv K Gilra
 Ghaziabad

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**

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

Face your fears

THE HUMAN BODY IS A WONDERFUL MACHINE.

Time and again I have seen that, though there have been crippling moments when the body has given way, it has recovered remarkably. When your body fails, you leave the problem to people who are well equipped to handle it—medical professionals. If the doctors say it is an impossible situation, you reconcile yourself to the worst. But if they say there are possibilities, tap those possibilities.

At 63, I know my physical capabilities are not as strong as someone who is 24. And knowing that there have been several severe medical episodes in my life that were debilitating, there is always apprehension that another may debilitate me further. There will be fears of hospitals and doctors, fears of operation theatres and medication. I have already maintained a certain level of fitness. But thereafter, when there's a problem, I leave it to the professionals. Whether it is my accounting or my income tax returns or how somebody is going to look after me, it has to be left to people who know it best.

I was fortunate to have recovered from my recent illness. I had an efficient team of doctors who looked after me and I assisted them by cooperating with whatever they asked me to do. If you resist that, you may harm yourself. It's also good for the medical team to see you being positive. Before the doctor smiles at you, you smile. Before the doctor asks you how you are feeling, you ask the doctor how he's feeling. You may be in pain but by saying 'I am fine', psychologically, your system accepts that and responds accordingly. I believe that goes a long way. After having done all that, when you still have a relapse, it is discouraging. And honestly speaking, it does affect you psychologically. You suddenly

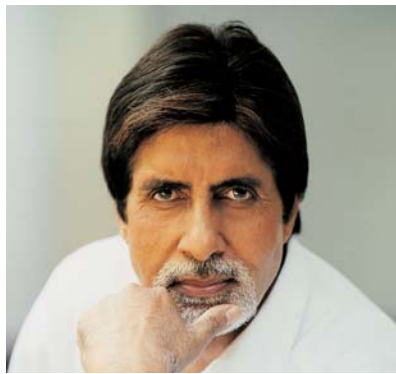
feel all your faculties being taken away from you. And I think the most terrible feeling for any human being is to be physically dependent on others.

Things can go wrong sometimes. If they do, well, you live with it. I would rather live with it than be despondent about it. But once you are back on your feet, to say you're 100 per cent okay is wrong. You will lose a certain percentage. The time after recovery is crucial. Once you are out of the hospital and back home, when the people have left, that's when your actual fight begins. Because you have to deal with what went wrong and ask yourself tough

questions: 'Will I be able to walk?' 'Will I be able to speak perfectly?' You may have recovered physically and medically. What is important is whether you have recovered emotionally and psychologically.

You may realise what you went through only six months or a year later. It may hit you when you are sitting alone. This is the time you need to show positivity. After everything is technically fine, you have to make up your mind about how you receive it all. I have friends who go through similar situations. A couple of months after their illness, I talk to them and tell them: "Your crucial period begins now. You have to reconcile with what has happened and you need to be strong."

One way to become strong is to have faith. When you submit yourself to someone else, you get stronger. You submit yourself to the doctor, he's your god for the moment. You submit yourself to your family to look after you, they are your gods then. And when you believe strongly enough that you will fight this, you are psyching yourself that you will come out just fine. ■



DABOO RATNANI

It's good for the medical team to see you positive. Before the doctor smiles at you, you smile

Amitabh Bachchan, 63, is an actor and goodwill ambassador for UNICEF

200 Years of

The city and its residents gear up to celebrate two centuries of existence

How does one commemorate a city's survival in a worrying new time? By reviving its past glory, of course. As Secunderabad celebrates 200 years in June 2006, artists are drawing vignettes of old Secunderabad for an exhibition, sports enthusiasts are practicing forgotten games like stilt racing. City officials were animated about a rerun of the old bullet train, only to realise that the four-coach train used between Secunderabad and Kazipet until 40 years ago was dismantled in 1986. It would have been an entertaining ride back in time.

What's getting the city abuzz is the historical treasure hunt. Only those who know their city well can do this—few remember that the famous Hanuman Mandir was the only concrete structure in Karkhana area for almost 50 years, before factory outlets of big brands came up around it.

Ask photographer Lenny Emanuel, whose grandfather Mario Francis set up a photo studio, M F Emanuel & Co., in the city in 1840, and he produces an archive for you—photos of St Mary Church, Parklane, Tankbund and Methodist Church. "There were few photographers in those days

and few things to photograph in Secunderabad but its landscape, which has changed drastically only in the past 10 years," says Lenny, 58, who has gone digital.

Vasanta Shobha Turaga, a conservation architect, believes the British forced the city into place. Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jah II, the second official ruler of the Asaf Jahi dynasty, suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the British in early 1798. He had to sign a subsidiary alliance treaty to gain the support of the British troops parked in tents in the open areas of the maidan of the village Ulwul, north-east of Hussain



Secunderabad

Sagar, the lake that separates Hyderabad from its twin city. Later, in 1803, Nizam Sikandar Jah, the third Nizam of Hyderabad, named Ulwul Secunderabad.

Old-timers, however, need no historians to map the city for them. Ratna Manikya is in her 80s and has lived in Marredpally, one of the earliest middle-class residential areas, since she got married. Little has changed inside their homes—Manikya's deceased husband's rocking chair sits in the same place for the past three decades—but everything has changed outside. Several families who lived in Marredpally have moved out into greener and more open suburbs

like Sainikpuri and Vayupuri. Cars jostle for parking space, water is a perennial problem and disposal of waste is a civic issue crying for attention.

Pollution is fast laying siege to one of the world's most treasured sites—both Secunderabad and Hyderabad are built on the Deccan Plateau, one of the oldest rock systems of the world. In 2004, in a survey conducted by newsmagazine *India Today*, Delhi was voted as the city with maximum number of cars on the road, Hyderabad and Secunderabad were voted the cities with maximum number of vehicles ("largest number of two-wheelers and three-wheelers") on the road.

Santosh Muralidhar doesn't really mind this. "Today, people of Secunderabad are more willing to accept outsiders," says the 65 year-old, comparing the scenario with more than 50 years ago when his family had migrated to Marredpally after Partition. Even 75 year-old Roshan Patel is quite upbeat about the enormous changes she has witnessed in her lifetime. "It's true that the city's roads were washed every evening by order of the Nizam, but look at the changes today—the malls and the high rises," she says. "Yet it's a beautiful city and the heritage is preserved. I was happy then and I am happy now."

— Shyamola Khanna



St Mary's Church

This church is adjacent to St Ann's High School, one of the earliest girls schools established in Secunderabad by Christian missionaries. The St Mary's Cathedral was one of the first churches built in Secunderabad in 1850. Over the years, it has seen several changes—and yet, the years have not been able to wither its majesty and splendour



Parklane

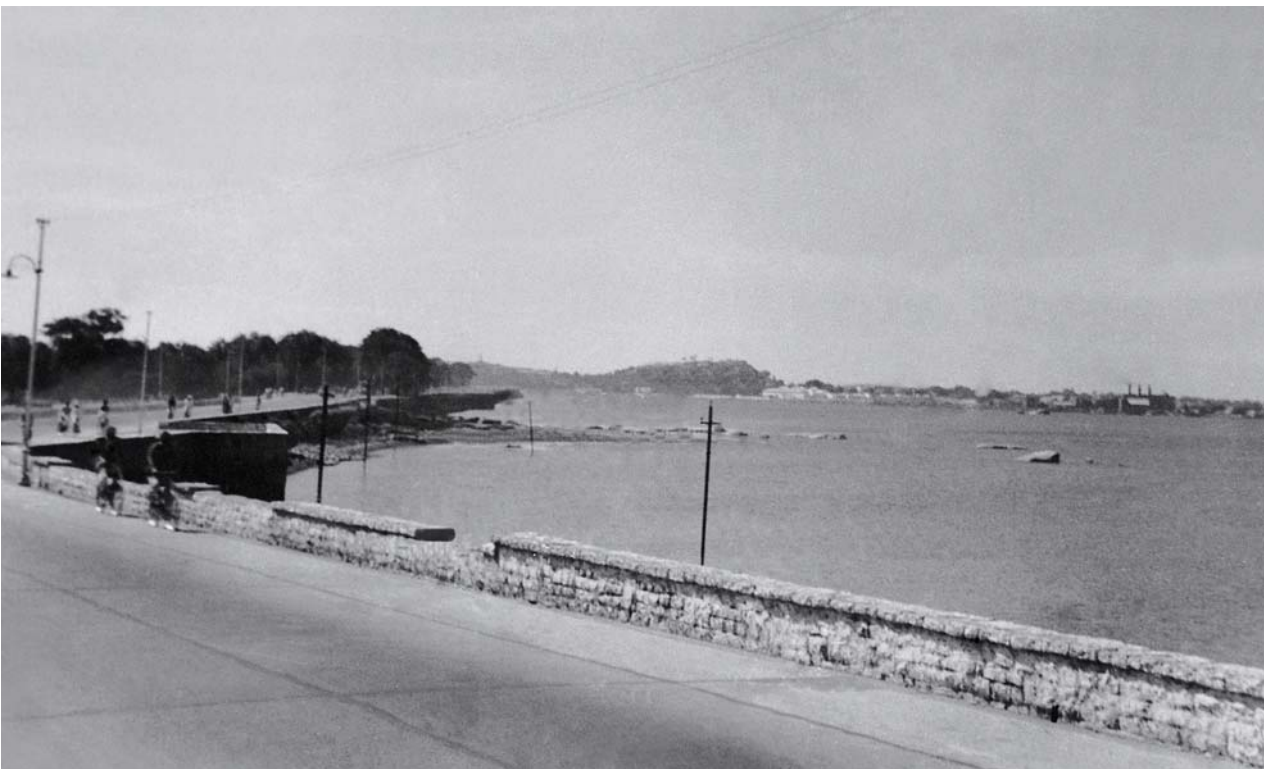
There are no records to say where the name Parklane came from. But old timers say the present day NCC grounds used to be the old race course. In fact, the postal address of the Officers Mess, College of Air Warfare is still 'Bolton Road, Old Race Course'. The race course has moved to Malakpet, nearly 30 years ago



Tankbund

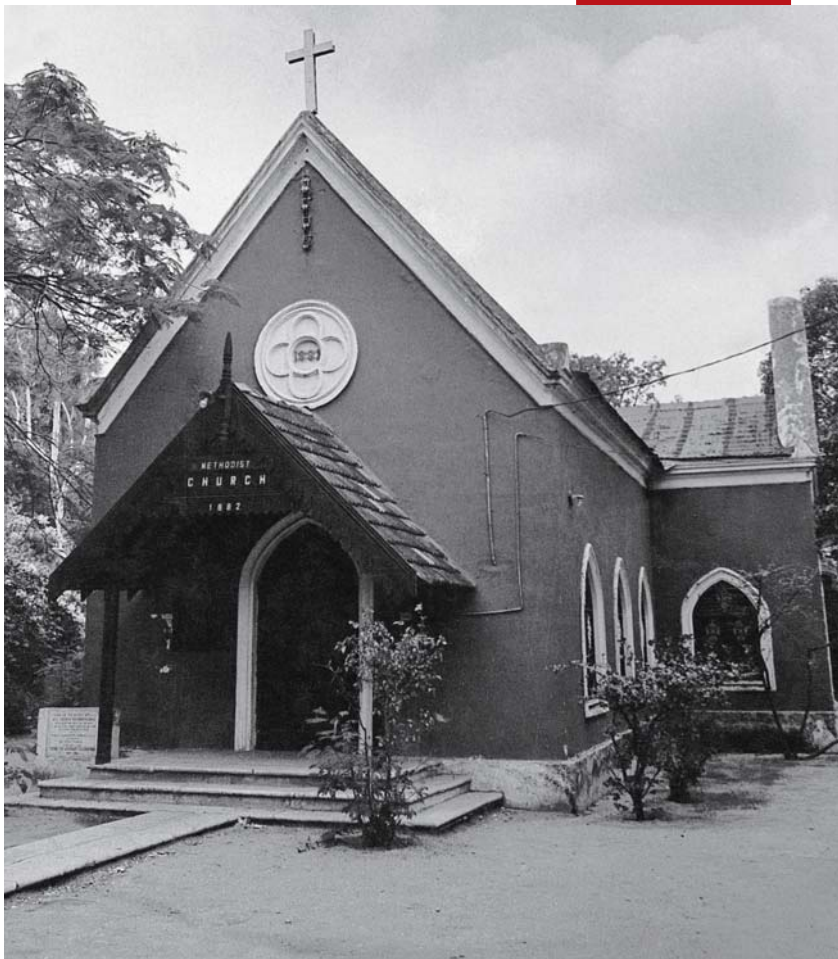
The Hussain Sagar or tankbund is a man-made lake which has supplied drinking water to Hyderabad for a long time. The bund was put up to protect the water from flowing away into the low lying areas. The

road on the top became the connecting link between the twin cities of Secunderabad and Hyderabad. The cool breeze from the lake attracted people for evening walks





200



Methodist Church

The Methodist Church was established in 1882 in a small way. After nearly a 100 years, the building began to leak and crumble. So the parishioners decided to rebuild it. In 2001, it was unveiled in its new avatar—much bigger, roomy, and built with the money and labour contributed by its members

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The story teller

The child within him keeps Anant Pai, the father of Indian comics, in tune with today's generation, discovers Ruchi Shah

Gautam Nyayapati is no stranger to wake-up calls from 'Uncle Pai'. The 32 year-old recounts the latest one. "Hello Gautam! How about narrating all the tales in *The Angry Moon* as rhymes? Kids will love it." Nyayapati looked at his watch. It was 5.30 am. The excited voice on the other end, in an Amitabh Bachchan-like baritone, was already reciting, "*Once there was jackal, proud and very rude...*"

Nyayapati is Pai's marketing manager and *The Angry Moon* (based on Panchtantra) is a 2-D flash animation, the latest from Lalit Media & Education Ltd, a media publishing house that Pai started two years ago. Founder editor of *Amar Chitra Katha* comics published by India Book House in Mumbai and *Tinkle*, a children's magazine, also published by IBH, Pai is better known as the father of Indian comics. Hunched one moment and animated the other, he has never let go of the "child within".

Pai was a chemical engineer before he found his voice as storyteller. In 1961, he joined *Times of India* to write their *Indrajal* comics for a fee, but no credit. In 1967, he moved to IBH—for a credit but no fee—to script *Amar Chitra Katha*, comics that humanised larger-than-life figures from mythology and history. Soon, he found his mailbox overflowing with letters to 'Uncle Pai'. Among the 'thank you' notes were big questions plaguing young minds. 'Where did we come from?' 'Where is the universe going?'

The result: replying to over a hundred letters every day, interspersed by phone calls (he

KERRY MONTEEN

even sings rhymes to unknown callers) and school visits for personality development workshops and quiz contests—on the way, he attracted awards and accolades. Pai loved being around kids as he and wife Lalita didn't have any of their own. Soon, he decided to pack comics, science and stories in one magazine and launched *Tinkle* in 1980.

After 25 years (a time that also witnessed the closure of *Indrajal*), several million copies sold, probably as many of them borrowed and (as is the fate of most books) several stolen, *Tinkle* is still going strong. So is Pai, consulting the child in him and relying heavily on research on the life of historical and mythological characters—his office at IBH in Mahalaxmi has soft boards and shelves stacked with copies of his work, also translated

in many regional languages. Reference for research occupies the shelves at home—Perry Mason mysteries that he read as a child, Harivanshrai Bachchan, Vedas and Deepak Chopra, his favourite author.

Pai has never really
let go of the "child
within"

Uncle Pai to children, their parents and grandparents, he continues to appeal to kids today. He says it's not easy to champion cultural and traditional values, yet appeal to an image-conscious generation—there's no scope for complacency in something even as simple as a bedtime story.

"Today 'Internet' is one of the first few words a child speaks," says Pai. "So I have to keep up with the times."

So Pai has made friends with technology. Lalit Media & Education Ltd—Pai is its managing editor—recently released his book *Uncle Pai on the Secret of Success* as a VCD, and animated the *Storytime With Uncle Pai* series. On the anvil is a website, www.unclepai.com. "My readers have a mind of their own," says Pai. "I want to help them balance their laptops with their values and sense of moral upbringing." The *Storytime With Uncle Pai* series is now also available as an application on Tata Indicom mobile, enabling users to download them. This, he says, is to encourage parents to instill cultural values in their children through *Tinkle*.



Pai at India Book House office in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai

Today, Pai is proficient with surfing the Internet, email and Microsoft Office—but he can't remember the extension numbers of his staff without his assistant. He fumbles with the phone, his thoughts (often going back in time) and statistics and can't keep a '17 hours a day, seven days a week' schedule. But his focus continues to be his work, his readers and the market.

"Every five years or so, they are born with sharper minds and challenge my grey cells. What's more, they are no longer satisfied with happy endings," he says wryly. "Why should they if they have a Harry Potter?" Pai admits that adventure in *Tinkle* is quite recent, but he introduced Janoo the magician and Wooly Woo the dragon even before Harry Potter mesmerised children.

Then, there's Supandi, based on Tamil folklore, a madcap, non-achiever, introduced in *Tinkle* 25 years ago. "Supandi's success speaks volumes about the pressure that is on children to perform," says Pai, whose own favourite is Pyarelal, a lovable village bum. "I even love Kalia crow," he adds. Kalia is based on the crow that visited the window-sill of his apartment in Mumbai's Prabhadevi, when he started the magazine. Pai's pen feeds on real life, including the din of the traffic that shrouds his modest house. You can even spy Pai and his staff as cronies in his strips.

It's not just about humour. Pai also tackles subjects like mindless hunting in *Tinkle*. His positive approach, non-preachy tone and 'first-person narrative' are among the reasons children find the magazine addictive.



Wife Lalita oversees finance and administration for Pai

"They love him first as a storyteller, then as a teacher," says Nyayapati, who participated in Pai's quiz contest 20 years ago. But first and foremost, Pai is an observer. Every idea is a seed, every moment exciting, fascinating and provoking. It's

"My aim is to revive the lost culture in children," says Pai

also hard work—12 hours a day, working at two offices, on three simple meals cooked by his wife, taking dozens of calls, and answering numerous emails.

"My aim is to revive the lost culture in children. And I want parents to feel safe in my hands."

Ironically, his wife doesn't like him getting close to any child. Pai says it's her way of guarding him from "unknown pain". He does get many phone calls from children who want to spend their vacations with him, but these houseguests never arrive.

Pai quickly turns the page, and credits his wife for her support in their 46 years of marriage. She travels with him and maintains all albums, records and accounts, giving him his space. "This is the only thing I will do till I live," says Pai, ending with words of American author Edward Everett Hale that motivate him: *I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do. What I can do, I should do. And what I should do, by the grace of God, I will do.*

—with Hariharan Balakrishnan

Summer soothers

Dr Pushpesh Pant serves up recipes to help you beat the heat

Back in Mughal times, the slightest whiff of summer in the breeze sent the delicate *nawab* of Awadh into a tizzy. The royal *bawarchi* (chef) was summoned to prepare seasonal delicacies to beat the heat. *Baoli handi*, a coolant, belongs to that repertoire.

Legend has it that this light non-vegetarian delicacy was rustled up for regal picnics in well-shaded step

wells. Meanwhile, the southern riposte to the summer has traditionally been *thair sadam*, or curd rice. Bottled fizz can never really quench thirst and is unhealthy too. Try *aam ka panna*, a traditional cold drink that revitalises the body that is not as cloyingly sweet as sherbet. It is also great for oral rehydration. For those who want to avoid sugar, there's nothing better than *desi chaas* (buttermilk). According to mythology, Lord Krishna loved it!

CHAAS

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 5 minutes

Serves: 2-3

INGREDIENTS

- Yoghurt: 250 gm
- Chilled water: 1 litre
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Ginger: 1", peeled and chopped fine
- Green chilli: 1", seeded and chopped
- Red chilli powder: 1/2 tsp
- Fresh coriander: 2 tbsp, cleaned and chopped
- Crushed ice
- Salt: to taste

METHOD

Put the yoghurt in a food processor. Add ginger, salt, green chillies, chilled water and mix at high speed for about two minutes. Now, pour this mixture into individual glasses along with crushed ice. Serve it immediately, garnished with chopped coriander, red chilli powder and freshly ground cumin powder.



foodphotography.in; Food styling: SHUBHANGI DHAMADE



AAM KA PANNA

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes plus cooling time

Serves: 2-4 (depending on degree of dilution and sweetness)

INGREDIENTS

- Unripe mangoes: 2
- Salt: 1/2-1 tsp

- Sugar: 1 tsp
- Cumin seed: 1/2 tsp, roasted and ground
- Black salt (*kala namak*): a pinch
- Red chillies: Powdered, a pinch
- Fresh mint: a few sprigs

METHOD

Cook mangoes in boiling water for 10-15 minutes till tender. Peel and scrape off mango flesh. Mash and stir in remaining ingredients. To serve, dilute with water and adjust seasoning to taste.

THAIR SADAM

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2-3

INGREDIENTS

- Rice: Boiled, 2 cups
- Curd: 1 cup
- Milk: 1 cup
- Curry leaves: 10-12

- Green chillies: 2 or 3, slit
- Ginger: 1/2 inch piece, chopped very fine
- Oil: 2 tsp

METHOD

Crumble a few curry leaves with salt (using your palm) and add to rice. Mix the rice well, using a spoon. The rice must be kneaded into a pulp. Add curd and milk. Mix well. Fry 1 tsp of mustard in 2 tsp of oil. Chop 2 or 3 green chillies, a bit of ginger and add to the seasoned mustard. Fry again and add to the rice and mix.



BAOLI HANDI

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Serves: 2-4

INGREDIENTS

- Mutton: Boneless, 200 gm, cut into cubes
- Baby potatoes: 4
- Carrots: 50 gm, in 3/4" diamonds
- Turnips: 50 gm, in 3/4" diamonds

- Squash: 50 gm, in 3/4" diamonds
- Beans: 4, in 3/4" diamonds
- Clarified butter (*ghee*): 50 gm
- Green cardamom: 4
- Cloves: 4
- Cinnamon: 1 stick, 1"
- Bay leaf: 2
- Onions: 50 gm, chopped
- Garlic paste: 1 tsp
- Ginger paste: 1 tsp
- Yoghurt: 1/2 cup
- Coriander powder: 1/2 tbsp

- Kashmiri *degchi mirch* powder: 1/2 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/4 tsp
- Salt: to taste
- Black pepper: 1/4 tsp , freshly roasted and coarsely ground
- Cardamom powder: a pinch
- Lemon juice: 1 tbsp

For the stock

Lamb (or chicken) stock: 4 cups

Khus ki jarh/root: 1

Black peppercorns: 6

Green cardamom seeds: 3

Cloves: 2

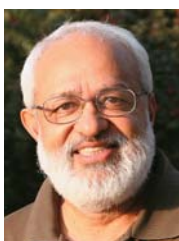
Bay leaf: 1

METHOD

Put the stock in a large pot, add *khus ki jarh* and the spices and bring to a boil. Reduce to low heat and simmer till reduced by a third. Remove and keep aside. Whisk yoghurt with red chillies, turmeric and salt. Blanch the carrots, turnips and beans in salted boiling water for about three minutes, squash for about two minutes, then drain and refresh in iced water.

Heat ghee in a *handi*, add cardamom, cloves, cinnamon and bay leaves, and stir over medium heat until the cardamom begins to change colour. Add onions, sauté until translucent, add garlic and ginger pastes and stir-fry until onions are light golden. Then add meat and increase to high heat. Stir-fry for 3-4 minutes to sear. Remove *handi* from heat, stir in the yoghurt mixture, return to stove and stir-fry until specks of fat begin to appear on the surface. Then add stock, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the gravy is reduced by a third.

Remove the cubes of meat and strain the gravy into a separate *handi*. Return gravy to heat, add potatoes and the blanched vegetables, bring to a boil, reduce to low heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the gravy is of a thin sauce-like consistency. Sprinkle pepper and cardamom powders, stir, remove and adjust the seasoning. Finally, stir in lemon juice. ■



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



Strokes of grit

Ten years after a massive cerebral attack, painter Kartick Chandra Pyne picks up his brush again, says **Anjana Jha**

“Painting is my passion, not just my livelihood,” says Kolkata artist Kartick Chandra Pyne. In December 1994, that passion suffered a setback when a massive cerebral attack left his left side paralysed and affected his speech. The artist was bed-ridden for months but one thing kept him going: the determination to paint again. Eventually, he won the battle.

Pyne is no stranger to struggle. Cousin of renowned painter Ganesh Pyne, his first water-colour sold for a paltry Rs 40 at a *khola mela* (open-air fair) in Kolkata in 1956. He finally found ‘fame’ only after his work *Bird with Cage*, painted and sold by Pyne in the 1970s for merely a couple of thousand rupees, fetched \$10,200 (Rs 4.70 lakh) at a Sotheby’s auction in New York last September.

Now, the media considers him ‘arrived’. But Pyne refuses to be swept off his feet by the sudden interest from art dealers and gallery owners—he knows all too well how unpredictable life can be. And he says that he will never take it for granted again.

He’s learnt that lesson the hard way. In September 1994, Pyne discontinued his post-breakfast medication for high blood



SHILBHADRA DATTA

Kartick Pyne with his family and his paintings

pressure after taking it for two decades, without asking his doctor. Pyne claims it made him drowsy, which meant wasting the most creative part of the day. Three months later, he faced the

the advice of his neurologist, Dr Narayan Banerjee, he was moved to Mayfair Nursing Home.

The road to recovery was long and exhausting. His treatment threatened to be long and expensive. Pyne returned to his modest flat in north Kolkata on a stretcher after 25 days of hospitalisation. He underwent intensive physiotherapy just to be able to sit up. The day he sat up, he decided to paint again. "My left side is paralysed, but my right side is okay," the artist optimistically told his wife and children—a son and two daughters.

Pyne's family was doubtful. But spurring him on, he says, were the words of his favourite Tagore song, "*Kothao aamar hariyeh jabar nei mana... monay monay*" (No place is forbidden for me to roam... in my imagination). Three months later, he took his first few painful steps.

"If you are mentally strong, any physical problem can be overcome," he now says. "But if you are weak in the mind, you can collapse and fail." Then the day

the crook of his left hand, and rest it against his hip. He could barely paint for 15 minutes. But with each stroke, his confidence grew. Slowly, surreal images of landscapes, fauna and birds began to emerge. Pyne's work channels the sylvan surroundings of Sodepur where he grew up, and memories of his years in a *bagan bari* (farmhouse) on the banks of the Ganga. Any doubts regarding his ability to revive his art were set to rest when, less than a year later, in November 1995, he had a well-received solo exhibition at Kolkata's Chitrakoot Art Gallery. All the 25 oils were painted after his illness.

Today, Pyne continues to paint for about three hours every morning. The size of his canvas has increased from 1 1/2 ft x 2 ft to 3 ft x 3 1/2 ft and he is determined to go back to the original size again. When he is not working, he listens to Rabindra *sangeet* or watches *Discovery*, *National Geographic* and *Animal Planet* on television. He is also an ardent football fan and says he's looking forward to the next World Cup.

Meanwhile, physiotherapy and a walking stick remain essential parts of Pyne's life. The mundane chore of opening and closing the windows of his flat every morning and evening has now become a part of his therapy. Occasionally, he accompanies wife Jaya and youngest daughter Mousona to social engagements. Pyne is also confident enough to stay alone at home now, answering doorbells and phone calls. Although traces of indistinctness still remain in his speech, it does not bother him anymore—he knows he can speak eloquently again through his work. ■

"If you are mentally strong, any physical problem can be overcome," believes Pyne

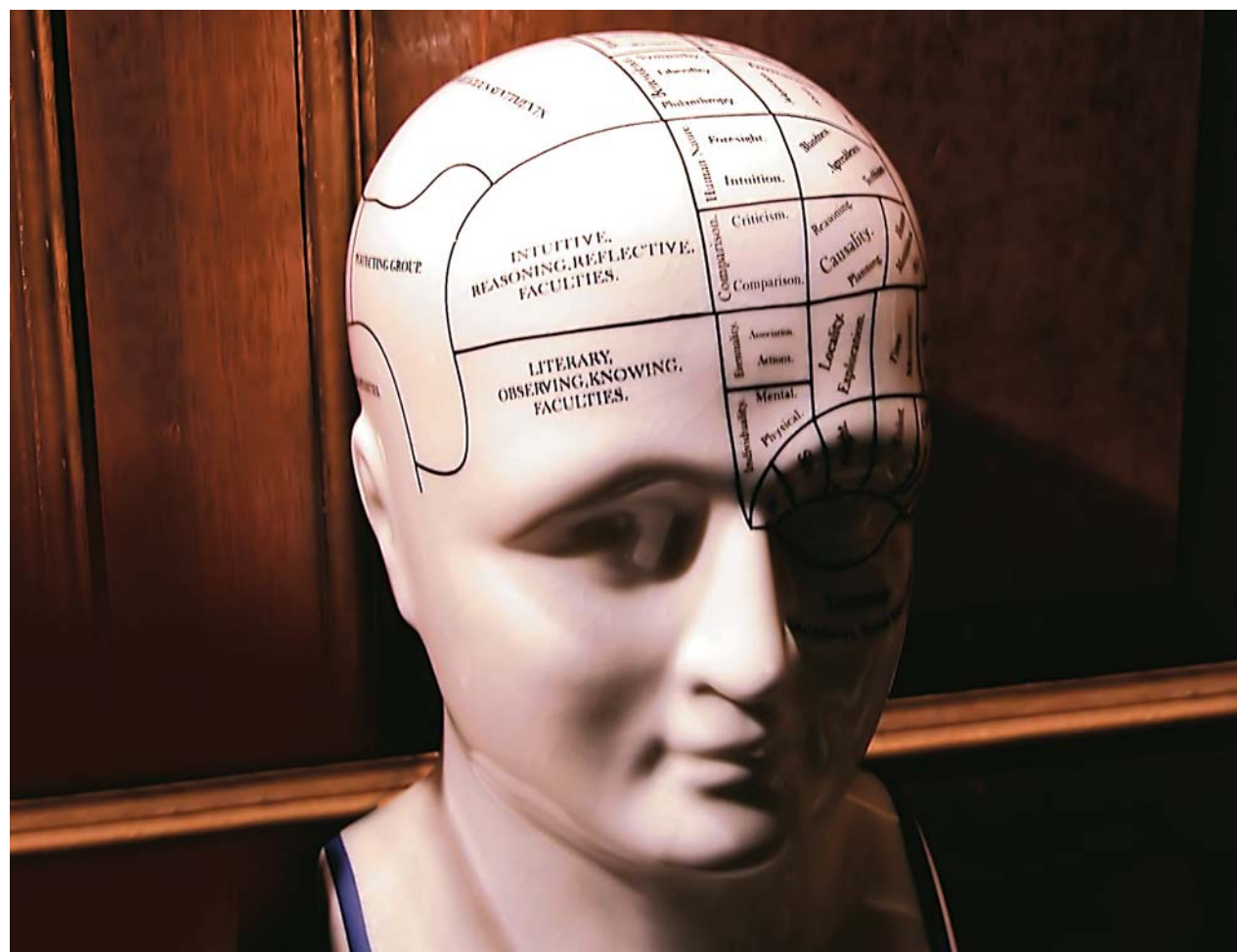
consequences. It started with a severe headache followed by an uneasy sensation in his left arm. The painter was shocked at not being able to control the movement of his left hand. He lost consciousness. When Pyne regained consciousness at Kolkata's R G Kar Hospital, his left side was paralysed, his speech was slurred and his blood pressure dangerously high. On

came when Pyne sat up on his bed and picked up his brush. "Just that I could paint again gave me tremendous joy," the artist recalls. But his illness had robbed him of his stamina.

There were other changes too. He started using a smaller easel for his canvas, which was cut to half its original size of 3 1/2 ft x 4 ft. Pyne had to balance the palette in

Fight brain drain

Dr Charles Pinto advises silvers to keep their brain active and watch out for warning signs to keep dementia at bay



Forgetfulness or loss of memory is often accepted as normal part of ageing. But it becomes a serious matter when it starts interfering with the daily functioning—then, it is referred to as **dementia**.

First described by German neurologist and psychiatrist Alois Alzheimer in 1906, dementia is “like looking inside of your mind and seeing nothing but black”. However, rapid advances in neurosciences and therapy in the

past few years have led to optimism in both diagnosis and management of this disorder.

THE EFFECTS

Dementia literally means ‘loss of mental functions’ and pre-

dominantly affects cognition or intellectual function in areas like general intelligence (which appears to deteriorate); learning (inability to learn new things or skills); and memory, especially immediate and recent memory (past memory is generally preserved in the early phase of the disorder).

Also affected are language (difficulty in finding the right word or repeating certain words or sentences) and problem-solving skills. People may also suffer from a lack of orientation in identifying time, places and people and undergo a worsening of confusion towards evening (sunset), including hallucinations. Dementia also plays havoc with a person's span of attention and ability to concentrate (including an inability to perform simple calculations). It negatively influences judgement and social abilities as the patient may act withdrawn or disinterested in company. Eventually, dementia leads to behavioural problems like insomnia, wandering, apathy or aggression, and depression.

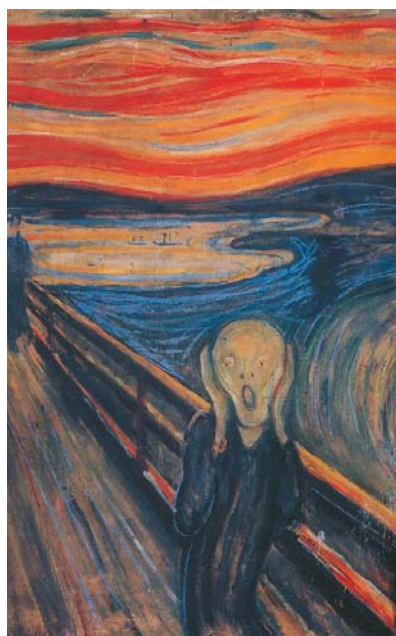
WHAT LIES BENEATH

Earlier, dementia was often linked with associated disorders or resulting conditions like Alzheimer's. But now, the causes of dementia have been more clearly defined.

Non-reversible causes include Alzheimer's disease (AD), which is most common (35 per cent) and is a degenerative condition progressing over the course of five to 10 years. It is marked by the degeneration of neurons in the brain. Vascular dementia (VD) owing to cerebrovascular (involving the cerebrum or the

upper part of the brain and blood vessels) disease (10 per cent). This is related to hypertension (high blood pressure) and strokes in the brain leading to Ischemic Brain Injury (IBI). And Mixed, which is a combination of AD and VD (15 per cent).

There are some other causes like Dementia Lewy Body (DLB), which is characterised by vivid delusions and hallucinations



(15 per cent). Parkinson's disease, which is a chronic progressive neurological disease, marked by tremor of resting muscles, rigidity, and slow or impaired movements and movement disorders (6 per cent). Frontotemporal Lobe Dementia (FTLD), which is manifested as personality changes (5 per cent). Infections like HIV leading to AIDS dementia complex with memory and mood changes (3 per cent). Miscellaneous, including head trauma, alcohol, drug toxicity, tumours and epilepsy, which is just one per cent.

Reversible conditions can be caused by NPH (Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus) or vitamin deficiency and problems with the thyroid gland, or a minor head injury (5-10 per cent). Psychiatric disorders because of emotional problems can be mistaken for dementia. Feeling sad, lonely, worried or bored may be more common for older people facing retirement or coping with the death of a spouse, relative or friend. Adapting to these changes leaves some people feeling confused or forgetful. This is also known as pseudo-dementia (4 per cent).

CATCH IT EARLY

Dementia is a clinical diagnosis, but **you may need certain tests to rule out reversible causes.**

Diagnosing the disorder in the early stages helps prevent pain and suffering to patients and their families. A thorough physical, neurological, and psychiatric evaluation is recommended. Here, you must take into account factors like family history, drug abuse, medicines taken over the counter, and any past medical, surgical and psychiatry history.

The most important investigation is neuropsychological testing, where memory, language function, executive function, attention and calculation skills are tested. Other tests include blood tests urine examination and imaging—either a CT Scan or MRI—of the brain. Imaging may show normal changes of ageing, blockages of vessels (infarcts) or shrinkage of the hippocampus (located in each lateral ventricle of the brain, it is involved in forming, storing, and processing memory) in the brain but the

process needs to be repeated after a few months to track further changes in the brain.

THE PROGRESSION

The disorder may be progressive with gradual or rapid worsening (described as mild, moderate and severe stages), where the patient deteriorates from suffering simple memory loss and disorientation to loss of activities of daily living and finally to the stage of requiring complete care.

The condition could be static if it is because of an infection, which has been effectively treated, or a head injury. It can also be reversible if it is due to NPH or deficiency of thyroid hormone or Vitamin B12. In almost 10-15 per cent of people with dementia, the condition is reversible.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Medical: Once diagnosed, the disorder, depending upon the cause, can be treated with drugs. These 'anti-dementia drugs' do not cure the disorder but decrease its progression by delaying deterioration and helping the transmission of neurotransmitter acetylcholine—shortage of acetylcholine in the brain has been associated with AD.

Many people with dementia need no medication for behavioural problems. But for some, psychotropic drugs may be prescribed to reduce agitation, anxiety, depression or trouble with sleeping. Adequate treatment of medical conditions like hypertension, diabetes and hypothyroidism are

essential as they not only act as contributory factors to dementia but may complicate treatment if not managed properly.

Exercise and diet: Although no special foods or nutritional supplements have been proven to prevent or reverse the illness, a balanced diet can help maintain overall good health (*see box*). Physical exercise is necessary to keep patients active, and activities that stimulate the brain like simple tasks, puzzles, reading stories and music are important. Mental aerobics like tongue twisters, mnemonics,



reading upside down, remembering details of small daily events or recalling little details help in keeping the brain active.

Care giving: Help and assistance from family and friends go a long way in assisting people with dementia. Patients should be kept updated about details of their lives, whether it is their daily

lives, immediate environment or happenings in their home and outside. In the early stage, memory aids may help in day-to-day living.

A big calendar, a list of daily plans, notes about simple safety measures and written directions describing how to use common household items can work as useful aids. Caregivers must seek adequate support from all family members and friends. For their part, they need to take some time off from their wards to recharge themselves (majority of Indian patients of dementia live with their families).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Extensive research in preventive strategies has been contradictory and confusing with many claims and counter claims and a lack of scientific evidence to back them up. Herbal remedies like *Ginkgo Biloba*, antioxidants like NSAIDS and Vitamin E and Hormonal Replacement Therapy with oestrogen showed some initial promise. However, later studies have shown side-effects and lack of specific benefits.

DEMENTIA CARE

Some daycare centres and homes specifically for patients of dementia have come up in recent times in India. You can find hospital and specialty clinics offering care and treatment for dementia patients in Mumbai, Lucknow, Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi, Kochi and other cities. (*For addresses, see Resources on page 81*).

Dr Charles Pinto is professor at the Department of Psychiatry, Topiwala National Medical College, Mumbai and psychiatrist at the B Y L Nair Hospital and Holy Family Hospital, Mumbai. He was awarded a grant by the National Institute of Health, Mumbai, for research in brain disorders for the project 'Cognitive Loss in Ageing' with Mt Sinai Hospital, New York, for 2004-2005. He is chairperson of the 'Geriatric Section' of the Indian Psychiatric Society.



Food for the brain

Payal Khurana tells you how to fight dementia with diet and exercise

Age is an important risk factor for dementia, but if you choose your food well, exercise right and stay active, you can fight it.

DIET

Eating plenty of **dark coloured fruits and vegetables** slows ageing of the brain. News from overseas is that **blueberries** slow dementia. Research done at the Human Nutrition Research Centre on Ageing in 1999 in the US suggests that eating 1/2 to 1 cup of this wonder berry every day results in better coordination and balance. A Harvard Medical School study suggests that eating **leafy green and cruciferous** (from the mustard family) **vegetables** (cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, *knol khol* or *gaanth gobi*, and assorted cousins) helps us perform better on cognitive tests. The phytochemicals present in these vegetables mop up the free radicals that cause degenerative ageing reactions in the brain. Eating **fish** once a week or more reduces the risk of AD by 65 per cent. Omega-3 fats present in fish are crucial components of membranes in brain cells, and aid normal brain functioning. A good vegetarian source of Omega-3 fats is olive or canola oil. Other sources are walnuts, soybean, flaxseed and wheat germ.

Eating fresh foods rich in **Vitamin E and C** may help too. Munch on a handful of nuts for Vitamin E. Nuts are high in calories, so be sure to cut your fat intake elsewhere. Get Vitamin C from citrus fruits, guavas, *amla* and pineapple. Eating foods rich in **B-complex vitamins and folic acid** prevents high levels of homocysteine in the body—a chemical that appears to increase the risk for Alzheimer's and heart disease. Eat whole grains, *dalia*, yoghurt and

vegetables, especially spinach and pumpkin. Recent studies also indicate that high cholesterol levels increase the production of amyloid—a gummy substance that accumulates in the brain, leading to dementia. Eating soybean with its oestrogen-like properties lowers blood cholesterol by 10 per cent.

EXERCISE

Check your Body Mass Index (BMI) using this simple calculation: weight (kg)/ height (inch) x height (inch). Multiply your height in inches with itself. Now divide your weight in kilograms with your height squared. A range between 20 and 25 is considered normal. If your BMI is more than 25, you are obese. Obese people have an increased risk of developing dementia, more so in women.

A regular, supervised exercise program (15 to 20 minutes a day of walking) is recommended. Exercise can reduce restlessness, improve balance, maintain cardiovascular health, help you sleep, and reduce severity of behavioural disorders. A dementia patient should participate in both group and individual outdoor activities, like gardening, cycling and a group exercise regimen, to counter dementia.

Indoor activities should include mind games like puzzles, crosswords or other board games to exercise the brain. Even unconventional activities like dancing, babysitting, playing musical instruments or doing light household chores are a good way to be mentally active. Occupational therapy helps maintain fine motor control; music therapy provides non-verbal stimulation; and group therapy maintains social and conversational skills. ■

The author is a dietician and nutrition consultant

Gut grief

Shameem Akthar shows you how yoga can help ease constipation

BOWEL MOVEMENT FEWER THAN THREE TIMES a week is one of the most common problems faced by silvers. Defined as constipation, it's a symptom, not a disease. If it persists, it can cause diseases.

Understanding the cause of every problem helps prevent and treat it. A sedentary lifestyle is the most common cause of constipation. Our bowels move because a muscular squeeze-and-release movement called peristalsis propels the entire gut. But this chugs to 'go-slow' mode in sedentary people and leads to indigestion, flatulence, headaches, bad skin, a weak immune system and propensity to falling ill.

Another cause is a bad diet. Just a few generations ago, we ate healthy food, practically off the field, with all the fibre intact. Now we eat food 'refined' for a longer shelf life. This food is robbed of its natural nutrients and fibre. Even erratic meal timings confuse natural body signals and mess up our system. While we drink water with our meals—which is actually unhealthy as it dilutes the digestive enzymes—we do not heed the body's signals for fluids the rest of the day. This makes the passage of waste difficult. Another major cause of constipation is stress. Whenever we are anxious, angry or nervous (and all

the other emotional variations of stress), our digestive system goes into go-slow mode. And the first symptom is constipation.

Many poses provide immediate relief from constipation by activating acupressure points that trigger bowel movement (at the navel, and on the chin). The pressure applied on the abdomen from various angles triggers peristalsis. The *asana* that achieve this

include the transverse spine pose (*ardha matysendra asana*), some forward bends like the seated forward bend (*paschimottasana*) and back-bends like cobra pose (*bhujangasana*), bow pose (*dhanu*) and locust pose (*salabhasana*).

Indian-style toilets help put pressure on the gut and naturally set off peristalsis. *Asana* that replicate this squat are the chair squat (*utkatasana*), dynamic squat (*druta utkatasana*) and dancing Shiva pose (*natrajasana*).

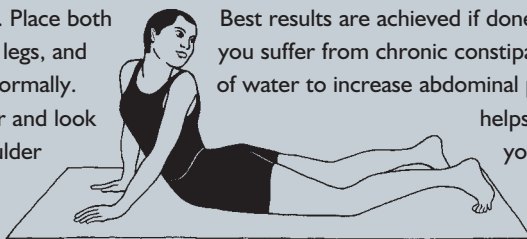
Four specific *asana* used by therapists to trigger bowel movement are tree pose (*tadasana*), swaying tree pose (*trikaya tadananasana*), abdominal twist (*udarakarshana asana*) and crow walking pose (*kawa chalanasana*). Other poses are swaying cobra (*trikaya bhujangasana*), stick pose (*yastikasana*), and lying energy release (*supta pawanmuktasana*). ■



Yogic moves

Swaying cobra pose (*trikaya bhujangasana*)

Lie on your stomach, chin touching the floor. Place both palms on the sides of the chest. Spread your legs, and let the toes touch the floor lightly. Breathe normally. When you inhale, raise your chin off the floor and look up. While exhaling, look over your right shoulder as if to see the left heel. Inhale and look in front. When you exhale next, look over



your left shoulder as if to look at the right heel. Inhale and look in front. This is one round. Do this five to 10 times.

Best results are achieved if done early in the morning. If you suffer from chronic constipation, have a glass or two of water to increase abdominal pressure. This pose also

helps tone the spine, uplifts your mood, boosts metabolism and helps with weight loss.

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

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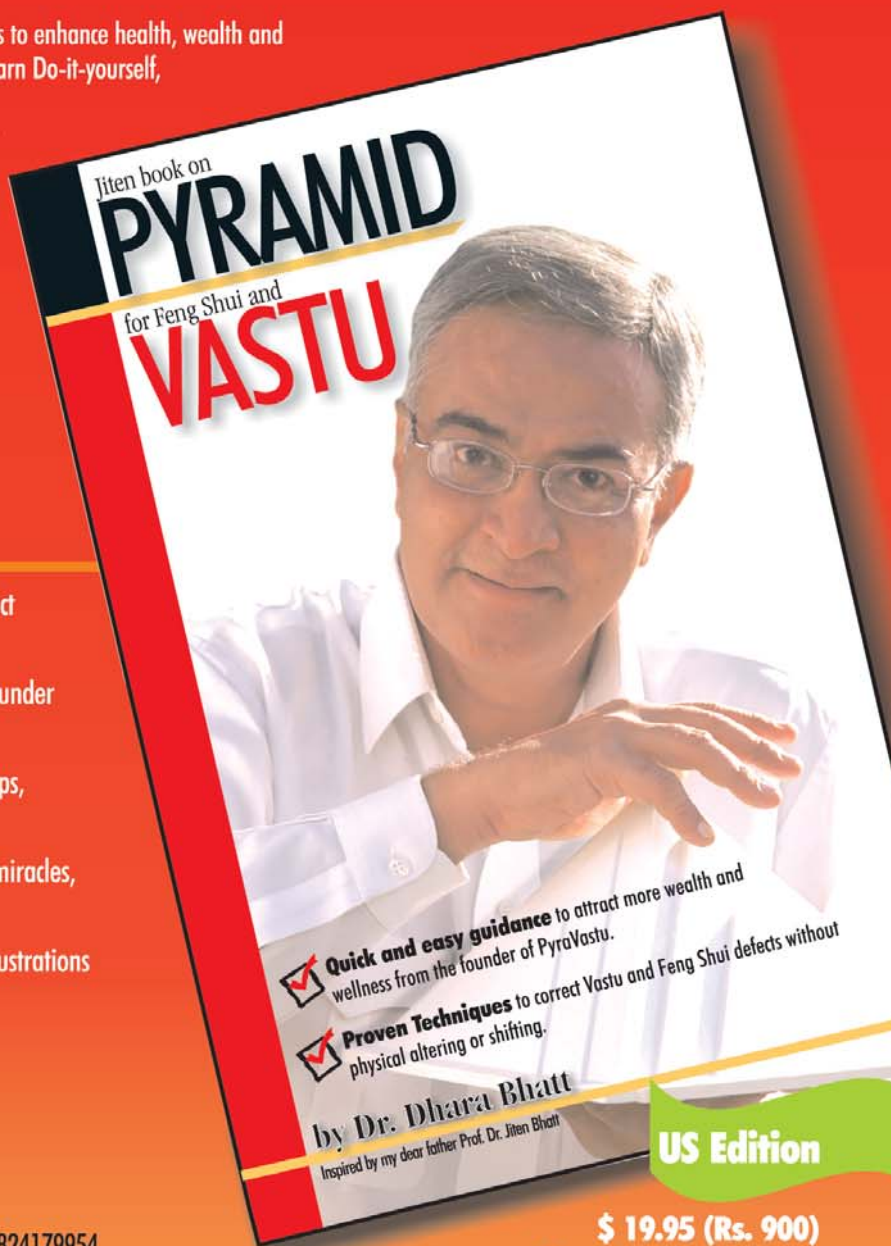
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HEALTH BYTES

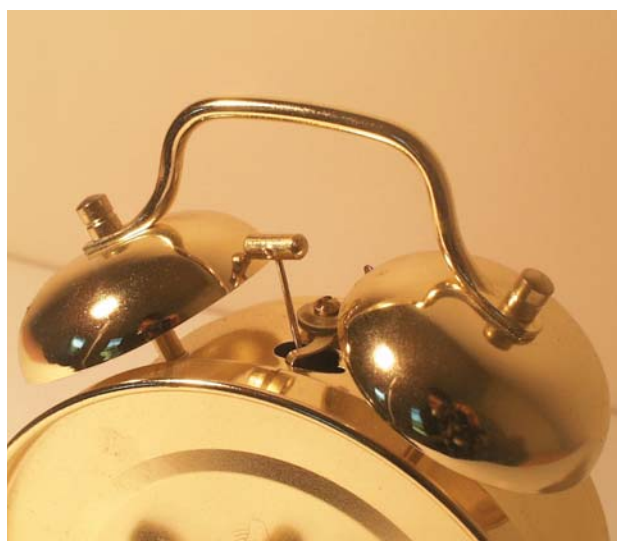
UP TO SPEED



Ashwani Chopra

Here's a thought: speed doesn't always hurt. A new scanner installed at **Batra Hospital and Medical Research Centre, Delhi**, can **diagnose heart ailments in five heartbeats** (just four seconds). Called LightSpeed Volume CT, it is non-invasive and can capture images of the heart (or any other organ) and perform a whole body trauma scan in less than 10 seconds. And at Rs 10,000 per session, it is a lot cheaper than conventional coronary angiography (Rs 17,000 to Rs 20,000, plus additional hospital expenses). "With LightSpeed Volume CT, doctors can now help patients stop a heart attack even before it happens," says A L Batra, president of Batra Hospital. That's good news, considering coronary heart disease is the No. 1 killer disease in India, causing 15 lakh deaths every year.

BEDTIME STORY

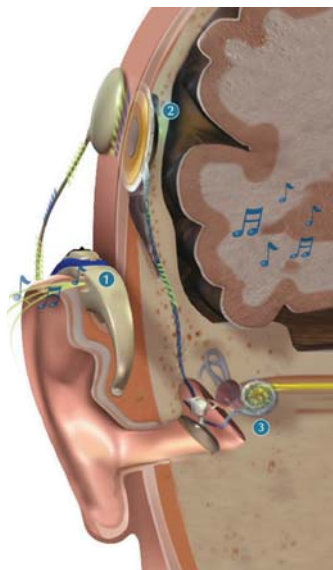


Make sure you get your forty winks—no less or more. Experts from the New England Research Institutes and Yale School of Medical Research in the US, who studied 1,709 men aged 40 to 70 over a period of 15 years, discovered that those who sleep too much or too little are at an increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. Previous research from the Nurses Health Study in the US has yielded similar results in women. "Too little sleep can also trigger decreased carbohydrate tolerance, insulin resistance and obesity," cautions Professor H Klar Yaggi of Yale's Department of Internal Medicine in *Diabetes Care*, a medical journal. What's ideal? Six to eight hours of sleep daily.

WARNING!

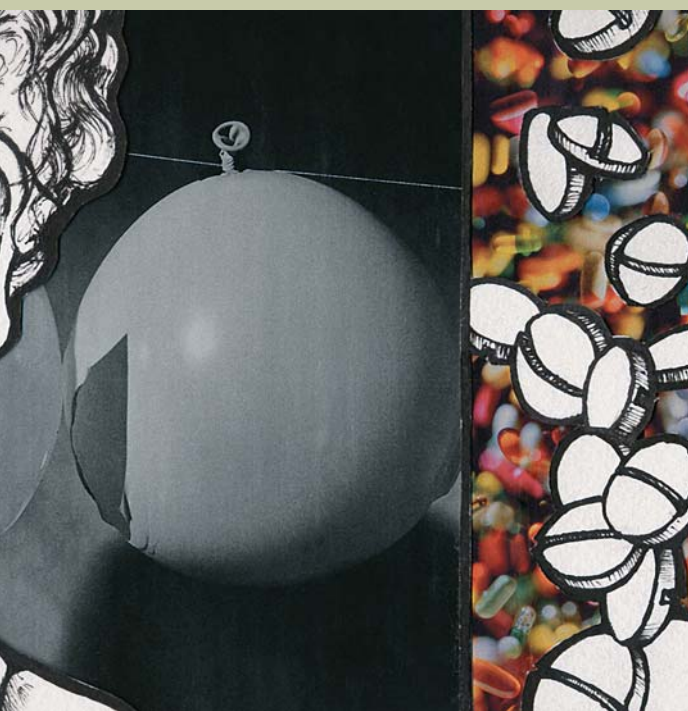


Gatifloxacin, one of India's most popularly prescribed antibiotics for typhoid and respiratory and throat infections, can dangerously increase or decrease blood sugar in the elderly according to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. **Canada has already issued a warning against Gatifloxacin's use by diabetics**



SURROUND SOUND

Cochlear implants (surgically implanted hearing aids that turn sound into electronic signals, *see photo*) may not be just for the severely hearing impaired anymore. **Dr Bruce Gantz from University of Iowa is developing a hybrid implant to combine the best of bionics (biological principals to study electronic systems) with regular hearing aids for age-related hearing loss.** If it works—and early study results are promising—it could help thousands of senior citizens suffering from fading hearing. Gantz claims the implant will let you appreciate birdsong, concert music and dialogues in movies—with existing hearing aids, people can barely distinguish sentences from background noise. “Most people in my situation smile a lot, faking what they hear,” says Gordon Gross, a 74 year-old participant in the trials, with a chuckle, in newspaper *Miami Herald*. Gross’ hearing has already improved by 70 per cent with the implant and continues to improve as the brain rewires itself to appreciate the electronic signals. The implant is currently being tested at 26 medical centres in the US and is expected to be available for public use next year.



and is considering a ban for people over 70. But in India, the Drug Controller General still allows it to be sold openly. Anoop Mishra, professor of medicine at All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, says, “Indian doctors who commonly use this drug in OPDs should now be warned.”

GOOD PILL, BAD PILL

First, the good. **Crestor, a powerful cholesterol-lowering drug, not only keeps your heart condition from getting worse, but also cures it.** Following a study of 349 silvers in Cleveland, US, American cardiologist Dr Steven Nissen concluded in the *Journal of American Medical Association* that Crestor caused their cholesterol count to dip and artery blockages to shrink. Now for the bad. The Plavix-aspirin drug combo prescribed by cardiologists to ward off a heart attack can cause fatal internal bleeding. Plavix, which helps prevent blood clots, is one of the world’s top-selling drugs. A trial of the Plavix-aspirin combo by Dr Matthew Wolff of the University of Wisconsin (with 15,000 high-risk cardiac patients) concluded that mixing these drugs could be life threatening. The study was printed in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. To know more, log on to www.nejm.org



HEALTH BYTES

TREAD SOFTLY

Scientists are working overtime to help you cross streets, safely. Dr Roe Holtzer of New York's Albert Einstein College of Medicine studied 186 people aged 70 and above and found they need attention and memory to walk safely on a busy street. The findings, published in the current issue of Neuropsychology, may explain why cognitive disorders like dementia are often linked with falls. These tests could help doctors assess the risk factors in falls. Holtzer says, "Cognitive rehabilitation and medication reduce the risk of falling."



HERE AND NOW



Nostalgia comes naturally with age, but don't dwell much on your past. Psychologist Jochen Tenter of the Central Institute of Mental Health, Germany, claims it could mean dissatisfaction with the present. People who are unhappy might find it easier to retreat back in time, while those with a positive self-image enjoy the present. The study adds that society contributes to the problem by marginalising silvers. Researchers say silvers must keep busy with games, dance or crossword puzzles.

I am a 75 year-old woman based in Bandra, Mumbai. I give French tuitions for Standard VIII. My fee is Rs 1,500 per month.

Contact Mrs Dubash on (022) 26428990

I am a 79 year-old ex-serviceman from Mumbai. I am an avid reader. I wish to guide youngsters searching for jobs in India and abroad.

Contact V C Srinivasan at
srinivasanve@satyam.net.in

I am a 66 year-old from Karnal. I surf the Net extensively and would like to supply information on varied subjects to those who are interested.

Contact Sudhir Gupta on (0184) 2285278/4035278;
email: sudhirjee@yahoo.com; mobile: 09896159009

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Contact Dr Arun Kumar Sethi on (011) 27044226;
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I am a 69-year-old management author, self-publisher and motivational speaker and attitudinal trainer from New Delhi. I require a journalist who can help me in writing and editing my management books, preferably from Delhi.

Contact Promod Batra on (011) 24356464; email:
thinkinc@vsnl.com; Mobile: 09810515257

I am 61 years old and live in Bangalore. I would like to start a J Krishnamurti study center preferably in Karnataka. Please contact me if you are interested in participating.

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Self-discovery

J Krishnamurti tells you to look again at the world around you, and yourself

IF YOU ARE NOT IN COMMUNION WITH ANY thing, you are a dead human being. You have to be in communion with the river, the birds, the trees, the extraordinary light of the evening. You have to be in communion with your neighbour, with your wife, with your children, with your husband. By communion I mean non-interference of the past, so that you look at everything afresh, anew—and that's the only way to be in communion with something, so that you die to everything of yesterday. And is it possible? One has to find out, not ask "how am I to do it?"

So I am asking you if you are ever in contact with anything, and if you are ever in contact with yourself—not with your higher self and lower self and all the innumerable divisions that man created to escape from the fact. And you have to find out—not be told how to come to this total action. There is no "how", there is no method, there is no system; you cannot be told. You have to work for it.

So ask yourself, if I may request you, to find out for yourself whether you are in communion with anything—say, whether you are in communion with a tree. Have you ever been in communion with a tree? Do you know what it means to look at a tree, to have no memory interfering with your observation, with your sensibility, with your nervous state of attention, so that there is only the tree, not you who are looking at that tree?

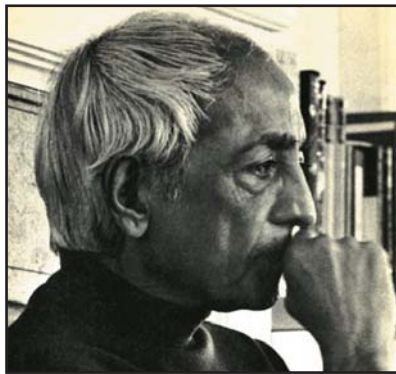
Probably you have never done this because for you the tree has no meaning. The beauty of a tree has no significance at all, for to you beauty means

sexuality. So you have shut out the tree, nature, the river and the people. And you are not in contact with anything, even with yourself. You are in contact with your own words, like a human being in contact with ashes? You are burnt out.

So the first thing you have to realise is that you must find out what the total action is that will create contradiction at any level of your existence. What it is to be in communion with yourself, not with the higher self, not with God, but with your greed, envy, ambition, brutality, deception, and

then from there on move. Then you will find out for yourself—find out not be told—that there is a total action only when there is complete silence of the mind from which there is action.

You know, in the case of most of us, the mind is noisy, constantly chattering with itself. Trying to talk to itself, trying to convince itself of something. And from that noise, we act. Any action born of noise produces more noise. But if you have observed and learned what it means to communicate, then as life is a movement, you will move on naturally, freely, and easily. And in that state of communion if you inquire more deeply, you will find that you are not only in communion with nature, with the world, with everything about you, but also in communion with yourself.



**The mind is noisy,
always chattering.
From that noise, we
act. Any action born
of noise produces
more noise**

To be in communion with yourself means complete silence, so that the mind can be silently in communion with itself about everything. From there, there is a total action. It is only out of emptiness that there is action that is total and creative. ■

Excerpt from On Nature and the Environment (Penguin Books; Rs 175). Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) travelled the world as a speaker and educator on the workings of the human mind.

Play to win

Dinesh C Sharma introduces the Purohits to online games that keep the brain active

The Purohits' apartment was unusually quiet when I walked in one balmy evening. "Is Mr Purohit out for a walk?" I asked his wife. "He's sitting in the balcony playing with numbers again." Mr Purohit entered the living room, sporting a big smile. "She's talking about Sudoku," he explained. "I finished today's puzzle in 10 minutes flat."

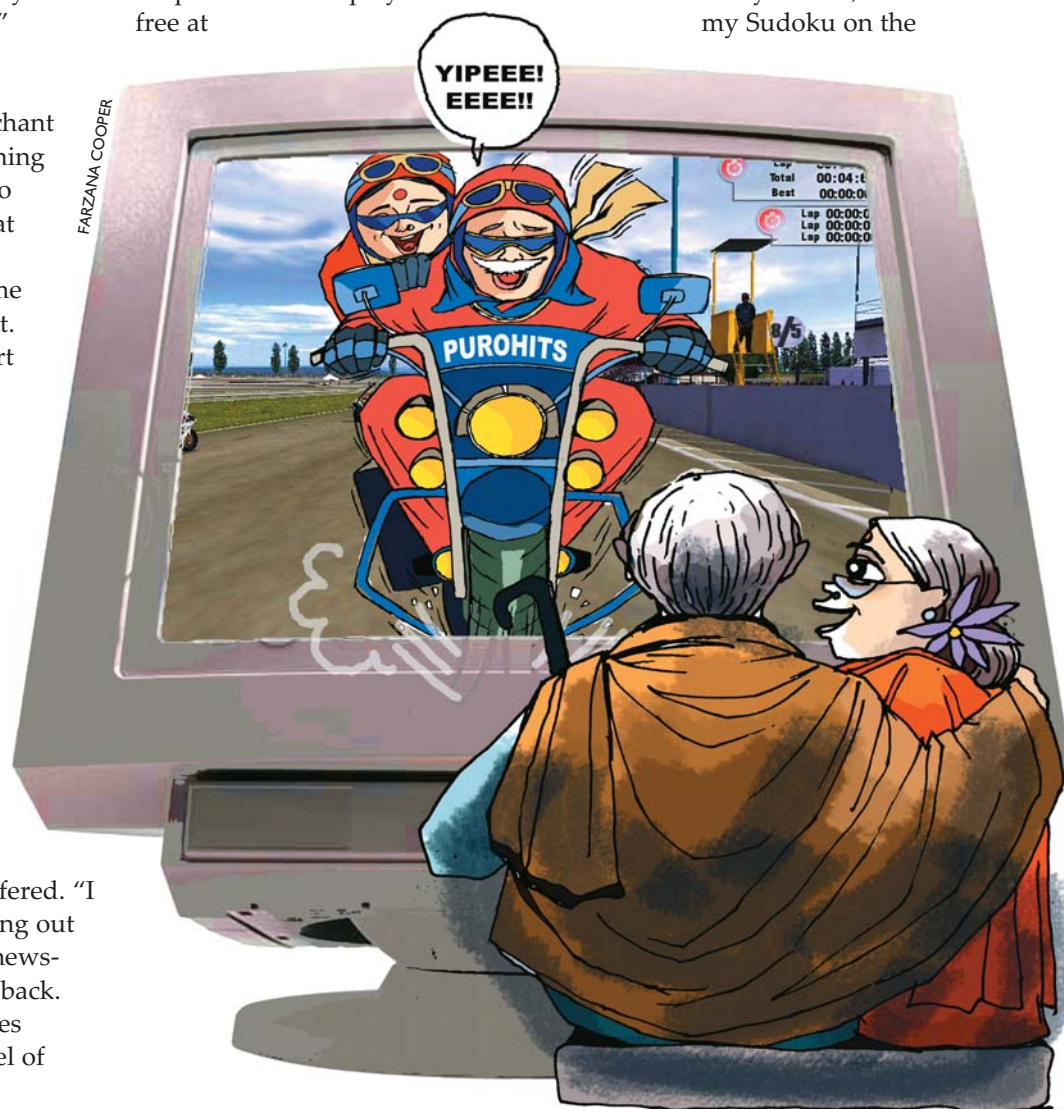
It didn't surprise me that Mr Purohit, with his penchant for learning about everything 'current', had caught on to the logic-based puzzle that has become a fad world over. What did surprise me was his apparent skill at it. "You must be a real expert to crack the puzzle so quickly," I told Mr Purohit. "It takes me at least a half-hour." He liked that. "Yes, I'm quite good. But the Sudoku my newspaper carries is not challenging enough," Mr Purohit said.

I had a suggestion for him. "You could try the Internet for more challenging puzzles," I offered. "I already thought of checking out the websites of different newspapers," Mr Purohit shot back. "But I figured their puzzles would be of the same level of

difficulty." I explained I was not referring to newspaper sites but dedicated Sudoku websites—there are hundreds of them on the Net where you can choose your level of play.

"But don't you have to pay for playing games online?" Mrs Purohit asked. Not always, I replied. You can play free at

websites such as *websudoku.com*; *dailysudoku.com*; *sudokufun.com* and *sudoku-puzzles.net*. You can download puzzles from them on your PC and print them out. You can even download some puzzles on your mobile phone for a fee, but this depends on the type of phone you have and service provider. "This is great," said Mr Purohit excitedly. "Now, I can do my Sudoku on the



Net and leave the newspaper free for my wife to do her crossword."

It was probably asking for trouble. But I couldn't help but tell them that there are plenty of crossword sites on the Net too. Sites like *crosswordsite.com*, *crosswordpuzzlegames.com* and *bestcrosswords.com* offer free puzzles in varying themes and degrees of difficulty. You can either solve them online or download them for printing. While Mr Purohit shot a disapproving look in my direction, his wife was happy. "That's good to know," she said. "And it will teach my husband how to share the computer."

I thought it was time to defuse the tension. "Isn't there a game you both love playing?" I asked cheerily. In unison, they replied,

games to test your visual and vocabulary skills (*aarp.org/fun/puzzles*). Another good site is *thirddage.com/living/games/sbt1*, which customises games according to gender, age and educational backgrounds.

I could see Mr Purohit was itching to get online now. Mrs Purohit realised it too—and was none too pleased. "Now, he will always be glued to the computer," she complained. "That's not good." Her husband was ready with his riposte. "Didn't you read in *Harmony* magazine recently that mental activities like puzzles, crosswords and scrabble can help the brain stay active and ward off cognitive disorders like dementia?" he asked.

You cannot just argue with that. In fact, a recent study in the UK suggests that senior citizens who

pathways in the brain, acting as a buffer against age-related loss and diseases.

While brainteasers like Sudoku and crosswords are available free, many companies have joined the bandwagon with hi-tech gizmos too. For instance, gaming giant Nintendo has recently launched its 'Brain Training' game for adults (*see Orbit, this issue*). This 'virtual treadmill for the mind' is a handheld device with a screen that opens like a book. You play on the system's touch-sensitive screen or using a built-in microphone. After each game, players are assigned a 'brain age'. This can be higher or lower than your chronological age depending on your alertness, speed and problem-solving abilities, and you are motivated to keep improving it.

Publishers overseas and sites like *idyllarbor.com* and *seniorstore.com* also sell books with activities that focus on people and places of a particular time, say the 1940s or 1950s. The sites carry all the details like mode of payment and how the books can be ordered online. These books help elders recall and relive moments from bygone days. For now, though, they mainly focus on themes and eras familiar to silvers in the West. "What a pity," said Mr Purohit. "Imagine how wonderful it would be to replay the action of the Sepoy Mutiny or play soldier in Netaji's INA!" Mrs Purohit was excited too. "I could play Indira Gandhi," she said. Pat came the response to that one from her husband: "Hitler, more like it." ■

There are hundreds of dedicated Sudoku websites where you can choose levels

"Chess." I was thrilled they agreed on something! "Well, you can take turns playing chess online on websites such as *freetchess.org*," I gamely suggested. Thankfully, my idea was well received. "That sounds like fun," allowed Mr Purohit. "It's nice to know there are games out there for people like us too."

"Much more than you can imagine," I replied. In fact, these days, games are being specifically designed for silvers. For instance, the website of advocacy group American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has a variety of

engage in mentally challenging puzzles and games appear to stave off the normal process of mental deterioration associated with ageing.

And in the US, the Alzheimer's Association has launched a campaign. 'Maintain Your Brain', to get people to regularly engage in mentally stimulating activities, like solving logic-based puzzles, reading an entire newspaper daily, attending lectures and plays, and trying out memory games. The idea is that engaging in activities beyond your usual range of thinking builds neural

Dinesh C Sharma is a science and technology columnist based in New Delhi. He is a regular contributor to Cnet News.com (US) and The Lancet (UK)

Read the fine print

Consult your tenancy agreement before you sublet your property, says **Legal Pundits**

Q Can a retired couple or senior citizen living in a rented house sublet the property?

A Subletting is illegal. The three earlier Maharashtra Rent Control (MRC) Acts have been consolidated into one, and there is no confusion about this. Under Section 16 (e), MRC Act 2000, no one can sublet without informing or taking permission of the landlord. Else, it is ground for eviction. However, if there's a contract between the tenant and the landlord allowing the tenant to sublet, transfer or license, the tenant can do so. For any such transfer of premises—for rent, trade, business or storage—the state government must be notified in the *Official Gazette* (a government publication that notifies the public of any amendment to an Act by the concerned ministry).

If your tenancy agreement was drawn up before MRC Act 2000 (31 March 2000), you cannot sublet without the written permission of the landlord, who is entitled to file a suit for eviction. But if subletting is done legally, the sub-tenant becomes a tenant after the tenant's agreement with the owner lapses or when the tenant dies (Section 25 of the MRC Act).

Rent control acts in other states also provide similar legal provisions. The Delhi Rent Control Act, under Section 14 (b), and Karnataka Rent Control Act 1966, Section 27 (2), do not allow subletting without the written permission of the landlord. Both Acts specify that defaulters can be evicted by a decree of the court. Section 10 of the Tamil Nadu Buildings (Lease and Rent Control) Act 1960 offers

similar stipulations. So before you decide to sublet your premises, do read the Rent Act of your state as renting property is a subject controlled by the state legislature and varies from state to state.

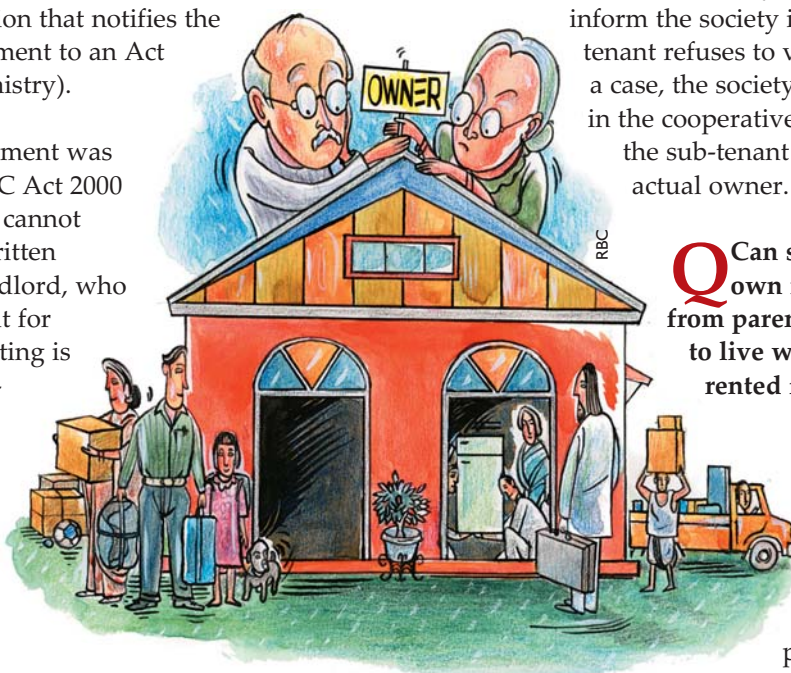
Q If a senior or senior couple owns an apartment, can they sublet their premises without informing the housing/building society in question?

A Generally, all cooperative societies insist under their bylaws that leasing and renting should not be done without informing them. Some societies even insist that the tenant is made a nominal member in the society. It is advisable to inform the society in case the sub-tenant refuses to vacate—in such a case, the society can file a lawsuit in the cooperative court against the sub-tenant along with the actual owner.

Q Can seniors allow their own relatives (apart from parents and children) to live with them in a rented flat?

A Yes. Also, there is no provision to prevent retired couples, staying in rented premises, from keeping paying guests.

However, your tenancy agreement must specifically permit you to do so or your landlord should give you written permission to keep paying guests. Of course, you should not have too many people staying with you. In such a case, the owner may raise an objection because of extra consumption of resources like water and electricity. ■



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CATEGORY: MUTUAL FUND RANKING. Rating Methodology: Derived from Brand Equity supplement published in The Economic Times on February 15, 2006. The Most Trusted Brands Survey aims to identify the brands that bond the best with consumers. Conducted by A C Nielsen ORG-MARG, with a sample of over 7000 distributed across socio-economic class, age, income and geography. Each brand was evaluated on relatedness, perceived popularity, quality connotation, distinctiveness and repurchase intent. For mutual funds, the total business generated and assets under management were used. These were then further subject to scrutiny to ensure that due to influence of public sector in these sectors, private sector players were not pushed out merely because of size. The final brand rating is arrived at in four steps. First a familiarity weight is attached to each brand for every respondent. Then the brand score is calculated based on the familiarity score, the overall rating of the brand, and the rating of the brand on each of the various parameters. After this, the brand score is multiplied by the familiarity weight and then is averaged across all respondents to get the final overall brand score. Sorting the numbers for all brands in ascending order yields the Most Trusted Brands list. Source: www.economictimes.com. The information contained herein has been obtained from sources published by the third parties. While such publications are believed to be reliable, however, neither the AMC, the Trustees, the Fund nor any of their affiliates or representatives assume any responsibility for the accuracy of such information.

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Tend to the future

Experts at www.monster.com answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement



Q I have always wanted to study nursing but my conservative background held me back from pursuing it as a career. Now, with my children grown up, I would like to do so. I just turned 50 but I am in good health. Am I too old to begin a nursing career?

Beginning a career as a nurse at 50 may not be possible as there is an age limit to enrol in nursing studies. But there is no need to lose heart. You can still help people by becoming a caregiver. Go to district hospitals or health centres near you. You can also visit nearby *anganwadi* centres. These are rural community centres under the aegis of the Central Government that help villages set up schools, offer free lunch to children, run food-for-work programmes, and look after implementation of programmes such as the National Rural Employment Programme, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Indira Rozgar Yojana. For more details, go to www.expresshealthcaremgmt.com/20040131/nursingspecial.shtml; learning.indiatimes.com/career/car_options/medicine/nurse_jobs.html, and www.manage.gov.in/RRSites/Ghatkesar/anganwadi_worker_health.htm

Q I am a 67 year-old retired Army man. For the past four years, I have been working in a company as security manager but I am tired of it and want a change. What are my options?

Most people who retire from the Army usually work in security agencies and jobs in this sector are always easily available. Thus, it would be wise to opt for something similar. As you want a change and challenge, you can try your hand at starting a consultancy business where you can advise clients on the kind of security they need in their residences, shops or office premises. You can also recommend the right security gadgets for them to use. For this, of course, you will need to do your homework on

the latest security gadgets available in the market. You can begin your search by reading *Harmony's* October 2005 issue on products and services. All the best!

Q Recently, after the settlement of a property dispute case, I inherited some money. I would like to use it to start a new business. I am well placed at 56 and have my own garments business in Surat. Please suggest what kind of business I can start.

Besides its diamond industry, Surat is also known for its textile industry. As you are based in Surat, there are various options to expand your business further instead of starting something totally new. One option is to diversify your present business by opening another outlet, this time a boutique. Contact local designers about displaying their work at your boutique. Take it from there. Another route is to approach NGOs working with rural women. Tell them you would like to display rural artefacts and handmade embroidered garments by rural artisans. It would be a new avenue for you and would also help a social cause.

Q I recently retired from a bank after 32 years in service. Now, I am looking for a second career. Where can I apply for a part-time or full-time job?

It's best to cash in on your banking skills. Instead of being employed with a firm, you can start your own consultancy business for accounting or work as an advisor with an online company involved in stocks and shares or investment. The third option is to approach private tutorials that take up banking classes in your city for a teaching job. These days, many youngsters take this class. Your rich experience will be of great value to students.

Building a business

The real-estate sector has given Iqbal Singh a new lease on life

“When I told my wife I was taking voluntary retirement, she thought I was joking,” says Iqbal Singh Luthra, 51. Head cashier at Punjab and Sind Bank, Amritsar, where he had worked for 25 years, Luthra dreamed of bigger things. So, in 2001, he gave up his secure income and started his own property and construction firm.

Luthra’s interest in construction began when he built his own house in 1988. “I went all around Amritsar, looking at several houses,” he recalls. “I studied the front elevations, floorings and grills.” The result was a beautiful house in Medical Colony, which Luthra claims has “the best cross-ventilation in the city”. He also regularly advised his friends and associates on property transactions. “I had visitors almost every morning coming to me for guidance even when I was still working with the bank,” Luthra says.

In 2000, Luthra got an offer of partnership from a local property dealer. He wanted to enter the real-estate business but was bound by his contract as a government employee. A few months later, he decided to quit his job and invest his money in property. Initially, his wife Pawan, a mathematics teacher in a government school, was sceptical about the move, but she



Iqbal Singh Luthra at a construction site in Amritsar

realised he meant business when he set up his own office, Luthra Enterprises. One of Luthra’s first moves was to lease out some land to the Food and Agriculture Department of the Punjab

to settle in Canada and his son Newton, who lives up to his name, dreams of joining the IIT. The father wanted an unusual name for his son as his own name ‘Iqbal’ is common. For his part,

Before starting his business, Luthra helped friends in property transactions

Government for storing grain. He also began building houses for sale, including a 150-house colony on the rather crowded Majitha Road.

Today, Luthra is a successful property dealer and builder. His daughters Aman and Esha want

Luthra is content—with his life, and thriving business. “The sign of a mature mind is astute planning,” says Rajinder Singh Bhandari, manager of Punjab and Sind Bank, and Luthra’s former boss. “Luthra planned his career very well.”

—Payal Khurana

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

Say no to abuse!

Harmony co-hosts a three-day workshop on elder abuse in Pune



Tina Ambani with delegates in Pune

The Harmony Initiative, an initiative of the Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust, led by Tina Ambani, was founded to improve the life of every elder person across income, class and region. Unwavering dedication and research led the way. From government policies and data collection to social awareness, we found serious gaps. We also realised that to spur the elderly into greater self-reliance, we needed to convince them that it's their right to live life with dignity.

The one worrying factor is elder abuse as it largely goes unreported. A study conducted in 1995 in Andhra Pradesh found that 40 out of 1,000 seniors were physically abused, while a study in Pune, conducted in 1997, reported instances of social, religious and economic abuse in 47 per cent elderly women. The numbers relate an unpleasant tale of elder neglect and exploitation. Harmony's first monograph, *Ageing in India in the 21st Century: A Research Agenda*, launched in March 2006 by Prof Siva Raju, Vice-president (Research and Training), Harmony, highlights the state of silvers in India.

The movement gained further momentum a month after the launch, when the International Longevity Centre (ILC), Pune, invited us to co-host a three-day workshop on 'International perspectives on elder abuse'. Over 100 participants—including experts from Australia, Singapore, Israel, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia and India—attended the workshop, held from 20-22 April. The

workshop began with a speech by ILC vice-president B G Deshmukh, who hoped that "deliberations would help highlight" the issue.

Tina Ambani, in her keynote address, said, "Elder neglect and abuse is an unpleasant malady of modern day society. Since it is often hidden under the shroud of family secrecy, it is grossly under-reported." Abuse, she said, can happen anywhere and it can be physical or mental, in the form of psychological, financial or medical neglect.

Speaking about seniors in South-East Asia, Osama Raj Khan—United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's—defined elder abuse as "any harmful or hurtful conduct that is wilfully inflicted on older persons". ILC president Dr S D Gokhale and Dr Siva Raju blamed poor family ties and wrong attitude of caregivers for the problem.

Elder abuse knows no boundary. Stephan Boylen of Australia said, "Elderly women are two-and-a-half times more likely to experience abuse than men." Singapore reports 100 such cases every year.

The National Centre on Elder Abuse, Washington DC, in its 2004 Survey of State Adult Protective Services, found a 19.7 per cent increase in reports of mistreatment since the last survey in 2000. The need of the hour is to raise awareness, get the government to draft policies and maintain data. The only way to curb elder abuse is to be on a lookout for signs:

- Physical abuse includes unexplained bruises, broken eye-glasses/frames, sudden change in behaviour or a caregiver refusing to allow visitors.
- Psychological abuse includes verbal assaults, and the signs are poor eye contact by the victim, depression and, in extreme cases, suicidal tendency.
- Financial abuse includes being denied access to ones own possessions or money. It can force a senior to ask for financial aid from strangers.
- Neglect includes consistent hunger, unexplained weight loss, poor personal hygiene, and unwashed and soiled clothing.

It's time to speak up and bring about a revolution. ■

—Amita Amin-Shinde and S Rangarajan



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Scotland of the East

Harmony reader **Proloy Bagchi**, 67, is bowled over by the bracing climate, natural beauty and friendly and colourful people of Shillong

Hostile clouds suddenly blocked out the sun and everything turned grey and bleak. We were on our way up from Guwahati to Shillong. Rain came down like a blanket just when we were labouring up a steep hill in an ancient Ambassador. Through the thick shroud of falling rain, the forest on both sides looked menacing. The car came to a screeching halt, nearly avoiding an accident. The driver, a Mizo, unlocked the bonnet and got out unperturbed in the blinding rain to investigate. The dead engine was miraculously revived after a little tinkering. Thanking God for saving us from

a soggy night out in the wilderness, we moved on, reaching Shillong around 9 pm, somewhat late by Northeast standards.

Waking up to a glorious morning, we forgot the mishap of the previous evening. Set off against the turquoise sky, the 'thick-with-pines' hills of Oakland, the neighbourhood we stayed in, were bathed in gorgeous sunshine. The bracing mountain air blew across the trough that once was a polo ground. Beyond, as the hesitant rays painted the view bright, we espied range after range of Khasi Hills, part of the Garo-Khasi range in Meghalaya. Simply bowled over in the first

few minutes that we spent out in the open, we realised what everyone said was really true. Shillong, often called 'the Scotland of the East', is, indeed, incredibly beautiful.

The ubiquitous tartan that the Khasi men and women wrap themselves with, Tudor houses with heavy chimneys and decorative timbering, the gardens, all reinforce the striking resemblance with the Scottish Highlands. Tucked away in the remote hills of the Northeast hills, untouched by hordes of enthusiastic tourists, it has also been branded the country's 'Shangri-la'.



(Clockwise from bottom left) The Ward Lake; a local sieves rice; Police Bazaar, a shopper's delight; (Opposite page) The Tripura Heritage Castle



sights to feast on. The town's attractions are its peaks, falls, lakes and gardens. Laitkor Peak, commonly known as the Shillong Peak, is the highest point of the town, and the state, at about 6,000 ft. An Air Force station maintains vigil with its radar scanning over 400 km. Nearby are Gunners' Falls and Elephant Falls, beautiful places for a day

it. With about 800 inches of rain per annum, we had imagined a dense tropical forest. At the end of our 55-km trip, we were amazed to see a bald plateau, bereft of all vegetation. All that rain simply runs over the rocky surface and down the precipices into Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the trip was made memorable by a few remarkable wayside

Perched 5,000 ft above sea level, the city is all about peaks, falls, lakes and gardens

Drawing its name from the Khasi god 'Leyshyllong', Shillong was a small village until 1864 when it became the civil station for Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The British used it for rest and recuperation. Shillong remained the summer capital of eastern Bengal and Assam for many years. On 21 January 1972, it became the capital of Meghalaya, which comprises Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills.

Perched on Khasi Hills at an elevation of about 5,000 ft above sea level, Shillong has an equable climate, though winters can get cold. Perennially dressed in green because of substantial rainfall, the city offers crisp, clean air and

out, more so during the monsoons. Just beyond are the Upper and Lower Elysium, two more spectacular falls. We didn't venture close enough as coming back over the steep, rough pathway could have posed some problems.

There are few places to visit in Shillong and they can all be seen in two to three days. So, like most visitors, my wife Vandana and I went to Cherapunji for a day—it wasn't stressful at all.

Though Cherapunji has yielded its place to neighbouring Mawsynram as the wettest place on earth, its earlier reputation drew us to

waterfalls and the view of the plains of Bangladesh a few thousand feet below Cherapunji.

Back in Shillong, other attractions we visited included Ward Lake, a serene water body surrounded by green hills, and Umiam Lake, locally known as Barra Paani. Ward Lake is beautifully maintained and has a cafeteria and botanical garden. We strolled around on its winding paved pathways lined with flower beds, stood on its picturesque bridge feeding fish and then had snacks and coffee at the cafeteria that serves sugar separately even though locals like their beverages highly sweetened.



A pathway in Liken Shou village, Cherapunji; The road to Elephant Falls through Pine Trees Avenue; The Tudor House, the oldest church in Shillong is about 200 years old



SHILBHADRA DATTA

Umiam is a much bigger lake, 17 km away from the main town. With picture postcard-like scenic beauty, it is fringed by green hills and offers water sports for younger and sprightlier visitors.

Overlooking it is Orchid Lake Resort. Run by Meghalaya Tourism, the resort has well-appointed rooms and a restaurant. We sat in the open, taking in what nature so generously offered—orchids.

population of butterflies in Shillong and the Museum of Butterflies is a must-see.

Ideally, you should set aside a day for shopping, which is generally done in what is known as Police Bazaar and the more sophisticated and sedate Laitumukhrah. While Police Bazaar, located on both sides of the Guwahati-Shillong Highway, is like any Indian market, Barra Bazaar—locals call it Lewduh—is

At lewduh, people shop, haggle or simply chat in the midst of a sea of humanity

Meghalaya is home to 600 of the 800 species of orchids found in India. I found a few blooming on wayside trees, which I promptly captured on film.

The Orchidarium, run by the Botanical Survey of India, offers a large variety under one roof. We were lucky to see several species in bloom. We also saw for the first time the carnivorous pitcher plants that the Botanical Survey grows in its extensive gardens. Some of the pitchers were of impressive proportions and had blood-red lips. With so much greenery, there's also a generous

a six-tiered ethnic mall on a hill slope 2 km from Police Bazaar. Here, you find shoes, cane products, local foods and fabric. Khasi women in traditional aprons and colourful chequered shawls can be seen selling fish or khowai (betel-nuts chewed on incessantly by the locals). We never tried it.

At Lewduh, while porters carry loaded baskets suspended on their heads, people shop, haggle or simply chat in the midst of this relentless sea of humanity. Although not for the squeamish, the USP is its uniqueness. We spent quite some time here,



FACT FILE

WHEN TO GO

Any time is good, though Shillong is at its best from September-April

HOW TO GET THERE

By rail: The nearest station is Guwahati, 110 km from Shillong. From here, you can take a Meghalaya Transport Corporation bus or a taxi (full/shared). The journey takes four hours

By air: The nearest airport is Guwahati. There's also a helicopter service (landing at Upper Shillong/Umroi, 35 km from Shillong). Meghalaya Tourism helps with bookings

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Centre Point, Centre Point, offers offers Standard Rooms for Rs 1,300 (double occupancy) and Rs 1,000 (single occupancy). For details log on to centrepont@nivalink.com; Tel: 0364-225210/220480/229839

Hotel Pinewood, run by Meghalaya Tourism, near Ward Lake, offers Standard Room for Rs 900 (single occupancy) to Rs 1,100; Presidential Room Rs 2,700 (double occupancy); Tel: 0364-2223116/2223146/2223263

Hotel Polo Towers near Polo Ground Standard Double Room costs Rs 1,450 (double occupancy) and Presidential Suites Rs 4,000 (double occupancy). For details contact: 033-236-4736/ 9277

TRAVEL TIPS

Pack a pair of good walking shoes or sneakers

If you suffer from a cardiac problem, refrain from walking uphill

Shillong is always cool and may become much cooler if it rains. Hence, take some warm clothes. Heavy woollens are necessary for those visiting between October and April.

For contact details, see Resources on page 81

negotiating its tiers with care. For diversion, there is the 18-hole Shillong Golf Course, once listed among the world's 100 most beautiful 1 golf courses by *Readers' Digest*.

Close to town, its picturesque fairways and greens attract even non-golfers. Close by is the Polo Ground, where archery contests are held every afternoon—a famous pastime in Shillong. Betting and imbibing fiery local brews go hand in hand here. We were persuaded to try our hand but our arrows missed the target by miles.

Football is another craze. On the day of a supposedly important match, our compound in Oakland, overlooking the Polo Ground, suddenly became overpopulated with people scrambling for a 'grandstand view'. For those more able-bodied than us, Shillong also offers opportunities for good treks. Dingee Hill, near Umiam Lake, has two tracks leading up to it—reportedly both offer splendid views of the surrounding country. A melting pot of several ethnic groups—Northeast tribes, Nepalese, Bengalis and other non-tribals—Shillong is perhaps the most cosmopolitan of towns in the Northeast.

Therefore, throughout our four-day stay, we never felt out of place or faced any problems with food. In fact, Shillong's bracing climate, natural beauty, hanging mist, flowers and, above all, friendly and colourful people made it a memorable experience. Despite the absence of spectacular views of snow-capped mountains, it is a hill station with character. ■

Designing her life

Following a stormy childhood and successful career in the European and Canadian fashion industries, Lydia Sperlich found tranquility and khadi in India, finds **Charu Bahri**

STORMY CHILDHOOD

Many people who had to flee their homes during India's Partition may connect with my story. I was born in 1926 in Leitmeritz, Czechoslovakia. My parents were of Austrian-Hungarian descent, and managed a flourishing garments business. I vividly recall Hitler's troops storming into Czechoslovakia in 1938 before World War II and the Russian domination that followed the war. The biggest setback my family faced at the time was my eldest brother (we were eight siblings) being sent to prison in Russia. After the war, the Red Cross reunited us but by then he was suffering from tuberculosis.

Every train from Russia came loaded with ammunition and went back with loot from countries where communist troops had a significant presence. My accordion, my jewellery box, personal prized possessions were taken away. My family's country home, our orchards were taken over. And one day, my father's communist secretary said to him, "Mr Sperlich, give me your



Sperlich keeps herself busy with painting, sculpting and gardening

BK SUBHASH

factory's keys." With the Russian backing, even this was possible. Our family fled to West Germany. The secretary, an old woman today, still runs our factory.

A WAY OF LIFE

I made good use of our years in Europe, rotating through fashion academies in Dresden, Berlin and Vienna. I trace my later success as a fashion designer to my knowledge of the European fashion scene. The highest success of a fashion designer is not to be able to design well but to translate those designs into readymade clothing. You have to know what will work, what fabrics to use. That is what I learnt in Europe. My exposure to well-established fashion houses and the fact that I was eager to wear what I designed stood me in good stead.

Then, my family immigrated to Canada—because my father didn't want my brothers to be conscripted into the West German army—where I continued to work with garments at a factory in Montreal. The garment industry was just emerging in Canada. I concentrated on my job and put my heart and soul into it.

THE INDIAN CONNECTION

In 1972, I travelled to India with a delegation visiting the India International Trade Fair. In the whirlwind of diplomatic functions, I met Dr Kantilal H Mehta, a Gujarati ophthalmic surgeon who had spent the major part of his working life in the UK and returned to India two years earlier. Several dates later, we decided to tie the knot.

But our partnership lasted only eight years, as he succumbed to ill health in 1980. After Mehta's

death, I spent my time learning ceramics and sculpture, which led to several exhibitions in Delhi's Lalit Kala Academy and other places. But I was alone once again, in a foreign land.

A LOVE OF KHADI

The natural fabrics and textiles of rural India inspired me and I developed a love of khadi. With its connection to Mahatma Gandhi and the freedom struggle, it is a symbol of independence and self-reliance of the weaver. When people wear khadi, they are endorsing this connection and encouraging the weavers.

Khadi has its own importance—it is a great, healthy fabric, allowing your skin to breathe, and very stylish. The use of khadi will

more than six years, I felt the need to give something back to this remarkable young man.

In 1988, I started a garment-manufacturing factory, specialising in khadi. The idea was to establish an inexpensive manufacturing base for overseas sellers. My brother in Canada helped us bag a few early contracts. I slogged it out accepting fabric samples and working to replicate the same from lower cost raw material available in India. I was successful because I knew what blends, in what quantities, would produce the same feel and fall of the fabric. In time, I got fabric samples and design templates to be mass-produced for clients in Canada and the US. Shaji gradually took

I would like to see more children's wear made of khadi, says Sperlich

grow when it is recognised for its own utility. I myself wear only khadi and gift pieces of the fabric to friends on special occasions.

NEW BONDS

My husband and I had enjoyed playing golf together, a pastime I stuck to even after he died. In 1982, I met Shaji Matthew, a young man from Kerala, on the golf course. A student, he was working as a golf caddie in his free time. He gradually began helping me with my ceramic work. Alone, with only a dog and a watchman for company, I asked Shaji to move into my house. We mutually adopted each other! Shaji looked after me as though I were his mother. He graduated and started working with a Japanese businessman. After

over the reins. In 1996, I relocated to Mount Abu to meditate. Shaji married and settled down.

STILL IN FASHION

Today, at 79, I live alone. I often visit Shaji, his wife and children in Delhi. Sometimes I help him with ideas at work. The unit still specialises in khadi and is moving ahead. Though it is nice to associate khadi with memories, I support its use for practical reasons. I would like to see more children's wear made of khadi.

I am content with my own life and I am at home in the place I love most, India. I don't miss my work because I keep myself busy with my second-best loves—painting, sculpture and gardening. ■



HEMANT PATIL

Piece by piece

The art of quilting has patched up 62 year-old Tara Deo's life with vibrancy. It has also helped her bond better with the family, writes **Monisha Naik Singh**

Chemical engineer Tara Deo's life was akin to a piece of monochromatic cloth—until she added texture and colour to it after learning how to make quilts. Always fascinated with the world of colours and fabrics, Deo grew up in Pune watching her domestic help stitch pieces of leftover cloth to make *godhadi* (traditional quilts). Later, she saw friends, neighbours and relatives fashioning their free time around quilting. The art caught her eye but she wasn't motivated enough to actually start doing it herself.

Until she visited daughter Arati in California six years ago. "There were several television programmes on quilting and 'how to' books lying around in her house," recalls Deo. She decided to take the plunge. In the six months she spent in the US, Deo learnt quilting patterns by watching TV shows, reading and surfing the Internet. Her very first quilt was an amalgamation of all the techniques that she had learnt. Called a 'Sampler's Quilt' in quilting jargon, it was rich in colour—yellow, orange, black and maroon on a khadi background. She still cherishes it, and hasn't gifted or sold it to anyone.

Back home in Pune, Deo adapted the techniques she had learnt to designs and forms that were more Indian. "I had saved patches from the clothes I stitched for my daughter when she was young," she

remembers. "They were very colourful but irregular in shape. So I tried to work interesting patterns in stitches around them. Gradually, the quilt began to take shape." It took her more than a month to make as she was working full time. "It was worth every minute though," she says. "The process was almost therapeutic, quite like meditation."

The passion took hold. Though Deo, now 62, continues to work in a filter manufacturing unit in Pune, she never fails to find time for her craft. She has made over 25 quilts and added cushion and bolster

Deo learnt quilting patterns by watching TV, surfing the Net

covers, bedspreads and divan covers to her repertoire. At first, Deo gifted her quilts to friends and relatives but soon the word spread and people starting coming to buy her work. Deo's products are moderately priced considering how much time they take her to make. While cushion covers take a week, a quilt takes two-and-a-half months.

"I work on a quilt for almost three hours every day and most of the time I end up just gifting them to friends and family," she says. According to Deo, her



Uptil now, Deo (bottom, extreme right) has made over 25 quilts and added cushion and bolster covers, bedspreads and divan covers to her repertoire. Her patterns range from colourful animal motifs to geometrical designs

best work includes a quilt in the greens and blues of the ocean for her son Chintanya when he was leaving for the US, a quilt themed ‘celebration’ for his wedding and one for her grandchildren with motifs of alphabets and their drawings, personalised further with photographs. But her favourite is the one she created five years ago for husband Suresh’s 60th birthday in warm tones of green and amber. “It’s a special reminder of all the golden moments that we have shared,” she says with pride. “My husband was touched.”

Indeed, family means everything to Deo and she sees quilting as a way to bring hers together. “My grandchildren love the times we spend together huddled over a quilt, sharing all our stories and anecdotes,” she says. “These days, we lead such stressful lives and families hardly get to spend any time together. Involving the whole family in an activity like quilting is a wonderful way to overcome stress.”

She has a point. Traditionally, across the world,

quilt making has been a community activity. In many countries, young girls were encouraged to make quilts for their own trousseau. And in others, it has been a tradition for friends to sit together and create a ‘Friendship Quilt’. Here, each friend creates a block and later all these blocks are joined together to form a quilt, which is gifted to a friend who is either moving away or getting married. Even generations can bond through this craft.

Deo’s aim is to bond similarly with women across India. “I have no plans to expand my work on a larger scale,” she says. “Instead, I would like to be associated with a self-help organisation. I would use it as a platform to initiate other women into this dying art form, which will financially empower them.” Deo also hopes it will bring colour to their lives—as it did to hers.



The art of quilt making

A way of stitching together several layers of fabric for warmth and durability, quilting is called *trapunto* in Italy and *sashiko* in Japan. In the US, quilting is combined with patchwork, which is similar to what we call appliqué. These patches are sewn independently into various blocks and, in the end, joined together to form a part of a design or theme.

YOUR TOOLS

- A basket to store your tools
- Strips of colourful cotton fabrics at least four inches wide
- A spool of quilting thread; this is heavier than
- Regular thread
- A fabric pencil
- A thimble
- A 1/2 inch by 6 inch—a wooden marker
- A quilter's needle
- A pair of fabric scissors
- Quilt frames

HOW TO QUILT

- Make sure the strips are clean and pressed. There is no need to buy new fabric; old cotton clothes make good quilt strips.
- Cut the cotton strips into any shape you wish—squares, rectangles, circles or traditional patterns. For beginners, squares or rectangles work best. With experience, you can even create landscapes or wildlife quilts.
- Lay the strips in piles and decide how you want them laid out.
- Lay the wooden marker along the edge of the fabric.
- All quilt pieces should lie face down.
- With a fabric pencil, mark a 1/2 inch seam allowance from the edge of the fabric.
- Use fabric pins to pin the two pieces of fabric together with the lines opposite each other.
- Sew along the lines. Sew straight or the quilt

will be crooked.

- Repeat this procedure until your quilt section is one foot square.
- Make as many of these as you need and join to make a quilt top.
- To stretch the quilt onto the frame, you will do well with an extra pair of hands. Pull the back of the quilt on the frames as tight as possible using tacks, pushpins or wood clamps.
- When the back is secure, place your choice of weight over the entire back. Make sure it comes right to the edge. Stretch the quilt top over the weight as tight as possible and fasten it to the frames just like the quilt back. Pin it with large safety pins.
- Now the fun begins. Draw your desired pattern on the quilt top with chalk. Thread your needle and place a small knot at the end of the thread. Insert your needle into the quilt top and pull your thread through the material. When you get to the knot, give a sharp jerk, pulling the knot through the fabric. It will catch the weight. Never leave knots on the outside of a quilt.
- Run your needle through the fabric using a running stitch that is uniform all through out. Quilt along the marked chalk lines of the pattern.
- If the thread runs out, do not knot it. Run your needle under the quilt top as far as you can. Push your needle back through the top, stretch the thread and cut just above the top. The end will slide back into the centre of the quilt where it will not show.
- When you have quilted as far as you can reach, unfasten the wood clamps and roll the quilt until you come to the area that hasn't been quilted. Enjoy the process by involving friends.
- When the quilting is finished, remove the quilt from the frames and bind the edges either with a sewing machine or by hand.
- Do not wash quilts any more than is absolutely necessary. When you do, use cold water and mild detergent. ■

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HM1/May 06/Mag

Understanding madness

God's Little Soldier

By Kiran Nagarkar

Harper Collins;

Rs 595; 556 pages

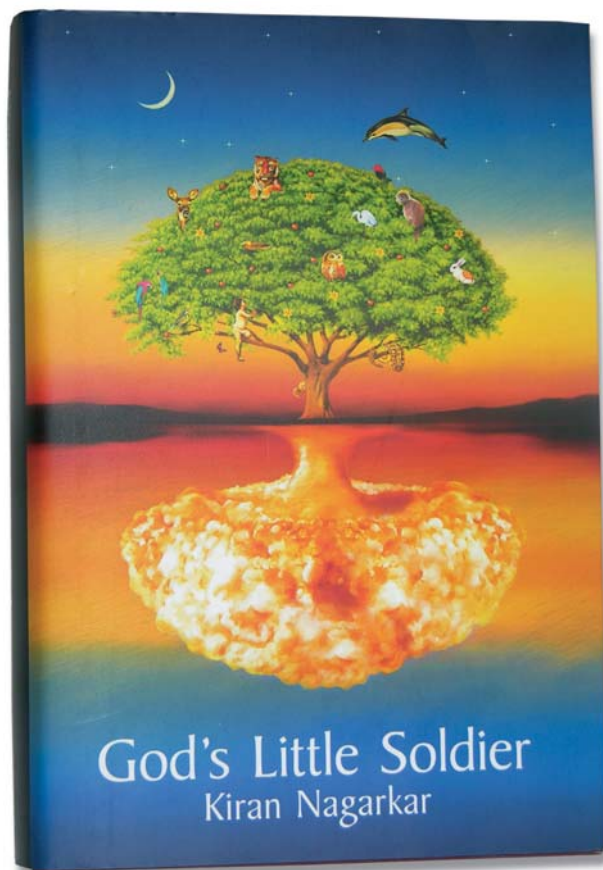


A lot of people have been waiting for *God's Little Soldier*. Kiran Nagarkar's last book *Cuckold* was a masterpiece—but it never got the popular acclaim it deserved. Both Nagarkar and Arundhati Roy came out with two good books at the same time and the prettier one walked away with all the attention. Soon though, through word of mouth *Cuckold* became a modern classic but Nagarkar remained his reclusive self. In the past nine years, there have been no planted headlines about him receiving huge advances, he has made no rude statements about other authors and printed no vitriolic articles about the state of the world.

For such a brilliant talent living in such hyperbolic times, Nagarkar's life is almost a subterranean movement. His chosen role seems to be that of a silent observer who tries to understand the world through his writing. And if *God's Little Soldier* is anything to go by, Nagarkar has been living with the suspicion that the world is going mad. His latest book tries to understand this madness.

The book follows the life of Zia, a little boy living in a rich, happy Muslim family where musical evenings, races, good food and love are plenty to go around. There is no trace of religious edginess in Zia's parents or elder brother but Zia, brilliant though he is, has been born to be a fanatic.

Always leaning to the extreme, Nagarkar traces his passage from a life of leisure and love to a life of a terrorist. Zia's life is set against real events and real people. As a young boy, he beats a pompous travelling math showwoman (based on Shakuntala Devi) at her own game. Then he tries to kill 'Essar', or Salman Rushdie, to fulfil the *fatwa* and then knives his own brother who foils the attempt. Other events like the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane and the Gateway of India bombing in Mumbai also



crop up, all somehow linked to Zia whose search for God and benediction lead him from despair to despair, from religion to religion.

Given to hallucinations, he converts to Christianity convinced that Jesus has beckoned to him. And then, towards the end as a multimillionaire arms dealer, he is in the clutches of Hinduism. Nagarkar's unsaid conclusion is that, it's not Islam that is mad or bad but every religion in the mind of a fanatic can become cancerous. Except he says it with no coherence.

The book tries to be a multi-layered fable of these intense times but is a confused slush instead. Zia's story starts out simply and beautifully but is a massacre towards the end, almost unreadable. The writer has acknowledged that he rewrote the book seven times over, finding it difficult to work with a protagonist he disliked. Fundamentalism is difficult even to read about morning after morning. Nagarkar lived it for seven years as the book took shape. For that itself, he deserves a medal for courage.

—Anuradha Kumar

BOOKSHELF

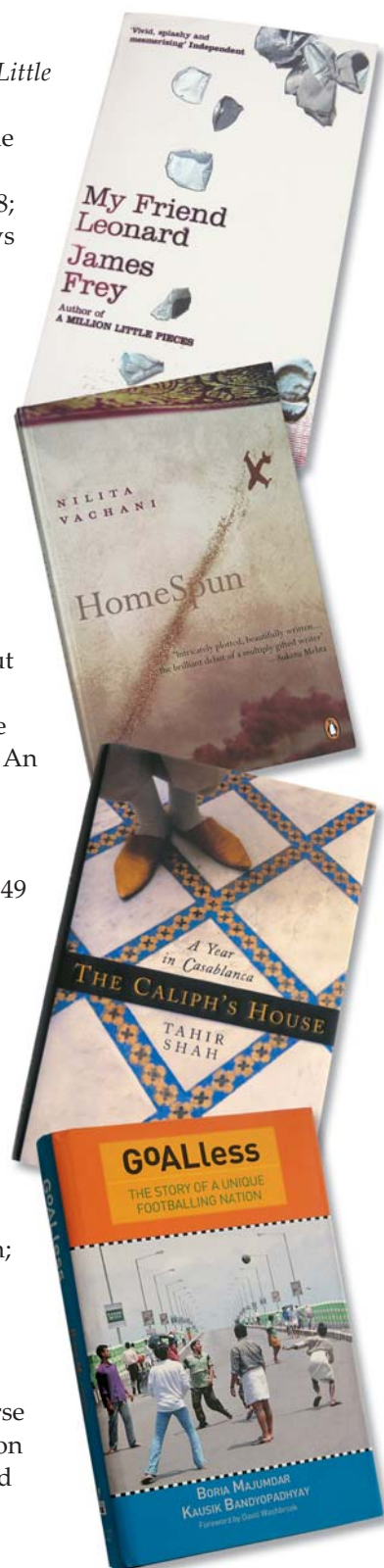
BRIEFLY

Oprah Winfrey's recommendation made **James Frey's** debut novel *A Million Little Pieces*, which documents his time in prison and his fight against drug and alcohol addiction, a bestseller. She later rejected the author and the book when he admitted he had fudged many of the "real-life" instances narrated in the book. Now, Frey is back with the sequel, **MY FRIEND LEONARD** (John Murray; Rs 288; 375 pages). In this one, Frey is on the mend from his substance abuse and is days away from release. At this time, his friend from rehab Leonard, a Las Vegas underworld king, becomes a surrogate father to Frey, helping him resist the bottle. Frey takes you along for the ride as he rebuilds the pieces of his life—it's excruciatingly intense, and heart-rending. You can't help but wonder, though, how much of it is true this time around.

There are some stories that cannot be told—when they are, they shake you senseless. **Nilita Vachani's HOMESPUN** (Penguin; Rs 295; 279 pages) is one of them. Nanaji is a freedom fighter, yet lives in terror of Naneeji who will not forgive her father for pushing her into penury. Their lies run parallel to a five year-old child artist Ronu's fanciful tale, meeting only briefly. History isn't kind to Ronu—neither at five, nor at 25. Completing the jigsaw are the narrator and Ronu's first love, Anamika Reza. Besides dark, personal secrets, the book is about what people worry about right before they die, about media censorship during war and the Emergency ("He said that the only blessing of his career was that he has reached the age of retirement before Nehru's daughter went and got mad"). An arresting story of modern India that will grab you by the throat.

Tahir Shah dares to break free from the grey and boring skies of London, shifting base to the eponymous **CALIPH'S HOUSE** (Bantam Books; Rs 819; 349 pages) in Morocco. At *Dar Khalifa* (in Arabic), Shah, his wife Rachana and two kids encounter courtyards, gardens, swimming pools, tennis court and exotic fauna—as well as burst pipes, insect infestation and mould-covered walls. And let's not forget the Djinnns, magical spirits occupying empty houses. The house also comes with three eccentric guardians who blame the Djinnns for all unexplained problems. In this great dive into modern-day Islamic culture, Shah finally finds his happy ending and reconnects with his late grandfather's life. Although you wonder why he puts up with all the grief, you enjoy the read as it is Shah on the receiving end, not you!

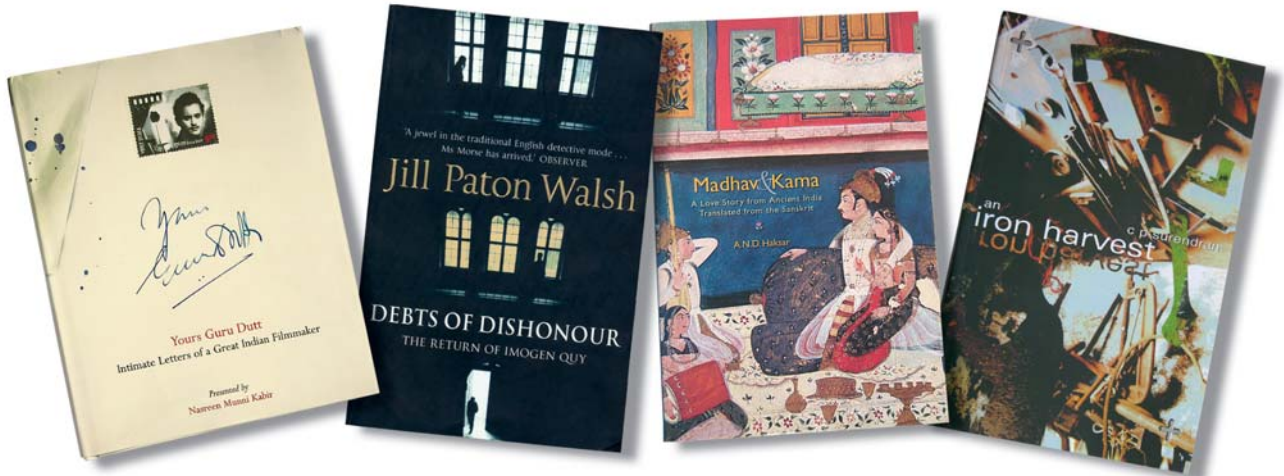
GOALLESS: THE STORY OF A UNIQUE FOOTBALLING NATION (Penguin; Rs 595; 295 pages) by **Boria Majumdar and Kaushik Bandyopadhyay** is a textbook on the football history of India, beginning from the time a little boy kicked a football back to a group of British soldiers in 1877 to present day. The authors deserve a lot of credit for their extensive research. They dig up a host of previously unavailable facts about the game, and tell you how it provoked diverse political responses across the country. You learn more about the Bengali obsession with soccer—"it flourished in Bengal due to its 'terrorist' resistance nature"—and about India's position amid the changing realities of the global game, and much more. If you are not really into football, quite frankly, this may be just too much information. Die-hards, though, will find it 'unputdownable'.



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Disclosure

Anjana Basu uncovers secrets of love and loss



When you hear the word love, you can't help thinking riveting passion. Especially when a tall, dark and poetic hero called Guru Dutt is involved. **YOURS GURU DUTT: THE INTIMATE LETTERS OF A GREAT INDIAN FILMMAKER**, presented by **Nasreen Munni Kabir**, is a collection of the actor-filmmaker's intimate letters, a fact that should be enough to get fans of *Pyaasa* all in a tizzy. The love letters were written to his wife Geeta Roy with whom he had a turbulent relationship tainted with whispers of scandal and Waheeda Rehman. Fans will delight in the secrets that this book reveals—especially the fact that despite all the rumours, Guru Dutt really loved his wife. A fitting tribute to Geeta Dutt on her 75th anniversary.

Roli Books; Rs 395; 168 pages

DEBTS OF DISHONOUR by Jill Paton Walsh is a book a lot of crime fans were looking forward to because it marks the reappearance of amateur sleuth Imogen Quay. The story begins with a college dinner and the return of an old boy who has made good—Julius Farren is a magnate with a reputation that reeks like dead fish. With her emphasis fairly and squarely on plot rather than character, Walsh goes on to unravel family secrets in the best traditions of crime fiction. The story is beautifully told and you are quite content to turn the pages in Imogen Quay's wake, disclosure by disclosure. No wonder these books are known in the US as 'cosies', crime novels you can curl up comfortably with.

Hodder & Stoughton; Rs 878; 264 pages

MADHAV & KAMA: A LOVE STORY FROM ANCIENT INDIA is the first time a 12th century classic has been translated from Sanskrit to English. Translated by **A N D Haksar**, the book tells the classic story of Madhavanala and Kamakandala, at first glance a tale of love at first sight. But it goes deeper than that old cliché because the secret of the overwhelming passion that Madhav feels for the beautiful courtesan Kama lies deep in time. Part of the later King Vikram and the Vampire story cycles, *Madhav & Kama* is like a trip through Vatsyayana territory for readers unfamiliar with Sanskrit literature, with a glance at Tagore's *Shapmochan*. Haksar's translation vividly brings out the subtleties of the original story.

Roli Books; Rs 195; 95 pages

A return to Arundhati Roy territory, **C P Surendran's AN IRON HARVEST** traverses Kerala during the Emergency in this tale of terrorism, idealism and disappearances. One of Kerala's leading poets takes a true story of loss as the core of his narrative. At the heart of the story of the Naxalite rebellion lies the truth of a father's search for justice for his murdered son. Sebastian's son Abe is not a member of the Red Earth group, but is friends with one of the young leaders, John. Tarnished by the association, he is arrested and never heard of again. What is the secret behind his disappearance? Only the police know. And they have their secrets to hide. Read it to uncover them all.

Roli Books; Rs 350; 326 pages

Keep the faith

Age can never wither you if you retain your zest for life, says **Muthusamy Varadarajan**

AT 71, I AM FOREVER SURPRISED BY PEOPLE who exclaim, "We haven't seen you in 20 years but you haven't changed one bit!" I know I have changed. Maybe what they see is my white beard (it started changing colour when I was 30) and my unchanging garb, white *kurta pajama*. Even my son-in-law once exclaimed, "I get tired just looking at you!" I knew he was (along with his wife, who calls her father "a party animal") cocking a snook at me. While I try to fob them off with a light-hearted, "I was born like that," I know that is not the truth.

Nor can I say that troubles and sorrows have not beset me. When the darkest tunnel seemed utterly interminable, I emerged from it, not totally unscathed, but enriched beyond measure. It is not religion but a sense of humble acceptance of the existence of a power that is beyond our comprehension. Take the parable where a man complains, "God, you have abandoned me; look a hundred paces behind you, there are your footsteps and mine, side by side but now, in my times of trouble, there is only one set!" God replies, "In your trouble, my child, I am carrying you on my shoulders!" It is as simple as that.

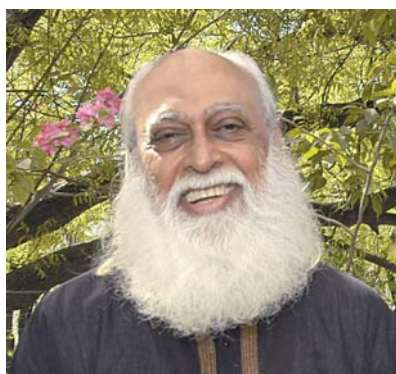
You must have faith, but it does not come overnight. An erudite Maulana recently said on television: "You cannot teach love and compassion, tolerance and true religion through books and discourses. You have to learn it through experience". And yet how many of us age overnight, tormented by the conviction that we have been abandoned in the hour of our direst need? Have we learnt to forgive our wrongs, bury our petty hatreds and conquer petulant jealousies? At least we would have remained young!

Why do people fight shy of ageing? Primarily, it is the fear of death. Paulo Coelho said in an interview: "Death is going to kiss me; every single day I know she's by my side... Most people think only the neighbour dies, not them. From the moment that you know you are going to die, you respect every single moment of your life."

That's the key. You have to respect every moment, treat it as if it were your last. Thinking thus, you have no time to worry about age. Like the droves of aged men and women (mostly from the West

and above 70), some on crutches, most leaning on their walking sticks, trooping around Konark and Sunderbans, Jaisalmer and Fatehpur Sikri. What is it that drives them to such frenetic activity except an undying zest for life? I took my mother when she was 70 plus to museums and galleries in India and in Europe. An exhausted 50 year-old son was all too willing to call it a day, but not her. At the Louvre, she would peer round a corner and say, "What's out there? Let us see it too!"

Here was a person who had lived on the banks of the Ganga at Varanasi for four decades. She had had her heartaches, but she was young at heart. And she wasn't afraid of death. A devout Hindu, she believed her Rama would come to fetch her when her time came, and so he did, when she was 82.



Respect every moment, treat it as if it were your last. Thinking thus, you have no time to worry about age

Who says anyone is old! If there is 'harmony' pervading your relationship to the external world and, more important, suffusing your own inner being like the tranquilising tone of the tanpura, age can never wither you. ■

Muthusamy Varadarajan, 71, works as the senior vice-president of Osians art auction house, Delhi

Save water. Save lives.



Mudra:RE:6090

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Go with the flow

Amita Malik says it is important to move ahead with the times

I WAS ABLE, UNINTENTIONALLY, TO BE PRESENT when an interesting struggle was going on about how to bring up a baby. This was between a father-in-law, who had retired as a senior executive, and his daughter-in-law, an Indian, but brought up in England and who had also been a top professional woman.

The argument was all about the six month-old grandchild, a son and the mother's first baby. The grandfather complained to me that they hardly get to see the baby (who lived in the flat upstairs).

"That is not really so," I reminded him gently. "I have seen that every morning he is sent down to you and his grandmother for one or two hours." "Why should it be a routine?" grumbled the grandfather. "Surely we can see our grandson whenever we want to?"

Before I could answer that one, he went on angrily, "She knows nothing about Indian culture. Last night we had a dinner here and all the aunts and uncles and cousins came. They naturally wanted the baby to be brought down and passed around to be admired, he said adding, "But his mother said he was fast asleep. He could not be woken up, but everyone was welcome to come upstairs and look at him sleeping, if they promised to do so quietly. Is this Indian culture?" he snapped.

I tried to explain that babies have to stick to a routine, that as there are no *ayah* in England, his daughter-in-law was learning to cope with the baby when she took him to England for a visit to his maternal grandparents. Babies must have their milk and their sleep in time, no matter where they were. But the granddad was adamant. He felt his

grandchild would become a '*firangi*' with no knowledge of Indian culture. Nothing I could say could make him change his mind.

This reminded me of a BBC correspondent and his wife. Two of their three children were born in India and they never got over the wonder of how much children are loved in India.

Servants, neighbours, visitors, everybody would pick up and fondle their children, give them sweets and ice-cream, take them for rides on their bicycles,

to the park for games—in other words, everyone in India became their children's family; everything was done for them by someone or other.

Alas, the time came for them to go back to England. On their first day there, the older boy, who was 12 years old, asked: "Where is the bearer to clean my shoes?" His mother replied, "No bearers here, you will have to clean your shoes yourself." She said she has never forgotten the look on her son's face: he did eventually accept that he had to clean his own shoes.

There are no major gaps in culture any more. With domestic servants becoming a fast vanishing breed, even the little grandson of this

story will, in all probability, have to learn to clean his shoes even in India. It is not a culture gap, more of a generation gap. And everyone has to adapt with the times, of course without losing one's cool or suspecting motives.

To use a cliché, life has to move on. It is not for the better when good traditions and the feelings of the older generation are hurt. But they too have to move with the times. ■



The little grandson may have to learn to clean his shoes even in India

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

A BRUSH WITH MEHTA

Artist **Tyeb Mehta** used to paint about 10 works a year. Now, at 81, his health restricts him to just two. But his enthusiasm is intact—he recently unveiled his monograph *Tyeb Mehta Ideas Images Exchanges*. Published by Delhi's Vadehra Art Gallery, Mehta tells the story of his artistic life through poems, speeches and reproduced plates. The book, which is the gallery's second publication on Mehta after *Svaraj, A Journey with Tyeb Mehta*, was 10 years in the making. Mehta, whose work *Mahisasura* sold last year for \$ 1.58 million, the highest price for any living Indian artist, at Christie's, has also dabbled with cinema. He directed *Koodal*, a 16-minute film that won the Filmfare Critics Award in 1970.



FIRST SILVER



Vietnam **Prime Minister Phan Van Khai** has set an example—of standing by his country's elders. At a Vietnam Elderly Association meeting held in Hanoi last month, the 72 year-old said he recognised the need for more productive lives for silvers. He also announced 6 June as Elder's Day in Vietnam. "We need elderly associations to promote policies aimed at bringing their role into full play," he told media. Phan plans to develop a mechanism where members of senior citizens' associations can borrow money from social policy banks to alleviate poverty and help them make a living. Currently, Vietnam has about 1.5 million silvers—nearly 100,000 of them live alone and have no source of income. If Khai makes good on his promises, elders in Vietnam will soon have a dedicated fund for their health, and new care centres and housing. Is India listening?

DIRECTOR AT 59

Chitra Palekar, former wife of actor-director Amol Palekar, is donning the director's hat at 59. Her directorial debut film *Maati Maay*, in Marathi, is adapted from Mahashweta Devi's story *Baayen* (Witch), which is a story of a woman gravedigger. Actor Nandita Das plays the protagonist. "I have nothing to lose," Chitra was quoted as saying in a recent interview with *DNA*. After failing to find a financier, Chitra decided to produce the film herself. She's been a producer for the last 25 years—*Akriet* was her first film in 1981. *Maati Maay* is slated for release in May.



OVERHEARD

"My vision is that the Metro network spreads all over the Capital as fast as possible. We are 20 years behind the rest of the world, but we will catch up."

—*E Sreedharan, 73, Managing Director, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd*

MILESTONES



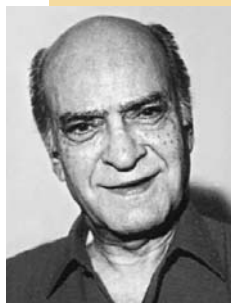
Awarded. The 2006 Stockholm Water Prize to Indian-born Canadian citizen **Prof-essor Asit K Biswas**, 67, for

his 'multi-faceted contributions to global water resource issues, including research, education and awareness, water management, and human and international relations in both developed and developing countries'.



Appointed. Former attorney general of India **Soli Sorabjee**, 76, as honorary member in the general

division of the Order of Australia for outstanding contribution to the development of closer links between Australia and India in the legal field.



Awarded. The Padma Bhushan to **A K Hangal**, 89, for his contribution to the world of cinema.

Hangal, who was a freedom fighter in the 1930s, entered the film industry with *Teesri Kasam* in 1966. He has over 200 films to his credit, and still counting.

VISITORS

26-31 MARCH

Who: Heir to the British throne **Prince Charles**, 58, and his wife Duchess of Cornwall **Camilla Parker**, 58.

Agenda: It was a private visit. They met farmers and artisans in Punjab and Rajasthan and interacted with business leaders.

Extra-curricular activities:

They travelled to Bhattmajra village in Punjab's Fatehgarh to meet farmers who have opted for organic farming. Two activists from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals followed the couple at all their engagements with a signboard that read 'Save My Skin'. This was to encourage Prince Charles to convince mother Queen Elizabeth II to stop the slaughter of Canada's black bears for the ceremonial bearskin hats her guards wear and use faux fur instead.



20-22 MARCH

Who: **Khaleda Zia**, Bangladesh Prime Minister

Agenda: To boost friendly ties between Bangladesh and India and to strengthen bilateral cooperation. To discuss the issue of fencing the entire border, 4,000 km long, to keep out tens of thousands of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants

Extra-curricular activities: Zia invited Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to visit Bangladesh. The offer was accepted.



9-15 APRIL

Who: Afghanistan President **Hamid Karzai**, 48

Agenda: To discuss the resurgence of Taliban-fuelled violence and India's substantial assistance for Afghanistan's reconstruction. Met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to discuss a wide range of bilateral and regional issues, including security for nearly 2,000 Indian workers in Afghanistan.

Extra-curricular activities: Karzai visited his alma mater, Himachal Pradesh University, in Shimla—he did his postgraduate degree in political science there in the early 1980s.



BIRTHDAY



A birthday bash (fit for a queen) was held for Britain's **Queen Elizabeth**, who turned 80 on 21 April. In March, an official website, www.royal.gov.uk/queen80 documenting the Queen's life was launched. As part of the celebrations, a photographic exhibition was opened to the public at Windsor Castle charting the life of the Queen and her family—from her first-ever picture as a five week old baby to a regal black-and-white portrait.

FAST ACTION

She has been fighting a two decade-long battle to ensure rehabilitation for those displaced by the Narmada dam project. On 17 March, leader of Narmada Bachao Andolan, **Medha Patkar**, 52, went on an indefinite fast at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, demanding that work on the Sardar Sarovar Dam be halted immediately. She stood her ground for 20 days until the Supreme Court decided to hear NBA's rehabilitation plea on May 1. Her next plan of action: A Yatra in the Capital and the Narmada Valley to expose the rehabilitation claims of the three states—Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.



IN PASSING

Communist leader **Anil Biswas**, 61, was widely credited for the gradual liberalisation of Communist Party of India (Marxist) from its earlier hard line approach in West Bengal. He died in Kolkata on 26 March.



Four-time Haryana chief minister and senior Congress leader **Bansi Lal's** health deteriorated after the tragic death of his son Surender Singh in a chopper crash on 31 March last year. The 79 year-old leader passed away on 27 March in New Delhi.



Manohar Shyam Joshi introduced Indian viewers to television soap operas with his popular *Hum Log* and *Buniyaad*. A Hindi litterateur, Joshi also had a long stint as journalist, both in the broadcast and the print media. He passed away on 30 March. He was 73.



Kannada screen legend **Rajkumar**, 76, was Veerappan's most famous hostage—the actor was finally rescued after 100 days. His death on 12 April due to cardiac arrest led to rioting in Bangalore—fans demanded a posthumous Bharat Ratna title for him.



Bus maintenance attendant **Arthur Winston**, 100, who set a remarkable record by missing only a single day in 72 years of work (the day his wife died), died of congestive heart failure on 13 April his home in Los Angeles. He passed away 21 days after his retirement.



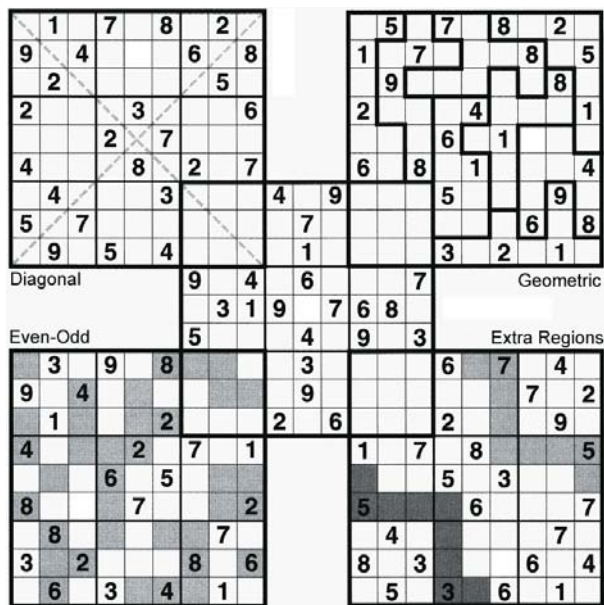
HEADSTART

THE SOURCE OF SUDOKU

If you've been reading *Harmony* lately, you've seen Sudoku, the logic-based puzzle that has become a fad world over. But where did it really come from?

Well, Sudoku began as a game called 'Number Place' in puzzle books published by Dell in the US in the 1970s. It was actually adapted from a mathematical concept called 'Latin squares', which can be traced back to medieval times but was first written about by Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler in the 1700s. Number Place was not very popular in the US, but in 1984 it landed in Japan and was an immediate success. Nobuhiko Kanamoto, editor of *Nikoli*, a Japanese puzzle magazine, called it *Suuji Wa Dokushin Ni Kagiru* (The numbers must be single). It was later shortened to Sudoku, meaning single number.

In 1997, New Zealander Wayne Gould discovered Sudoku on a trip to Japan and tried to bring it to the US. He spent years writing a computer program to generate Sudoku puzzles. Gould pitched it to magazine *USA Today*, who declined, but *New York Post* picked it up in April 2005. Now, Sudoku is found in newspapers all over the world—and in *Harmony*!



SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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.

SAY IT OUT LOUD

For a successful technology, reality must take precedence over public relations, for Nature cannot be fooled.

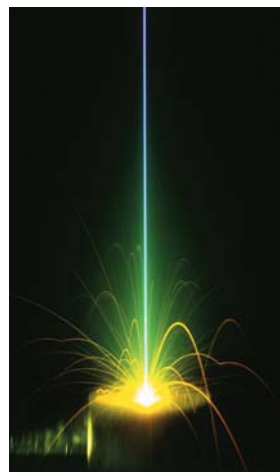
—American physicist and musician
Richard Feynman (1918-1988)

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

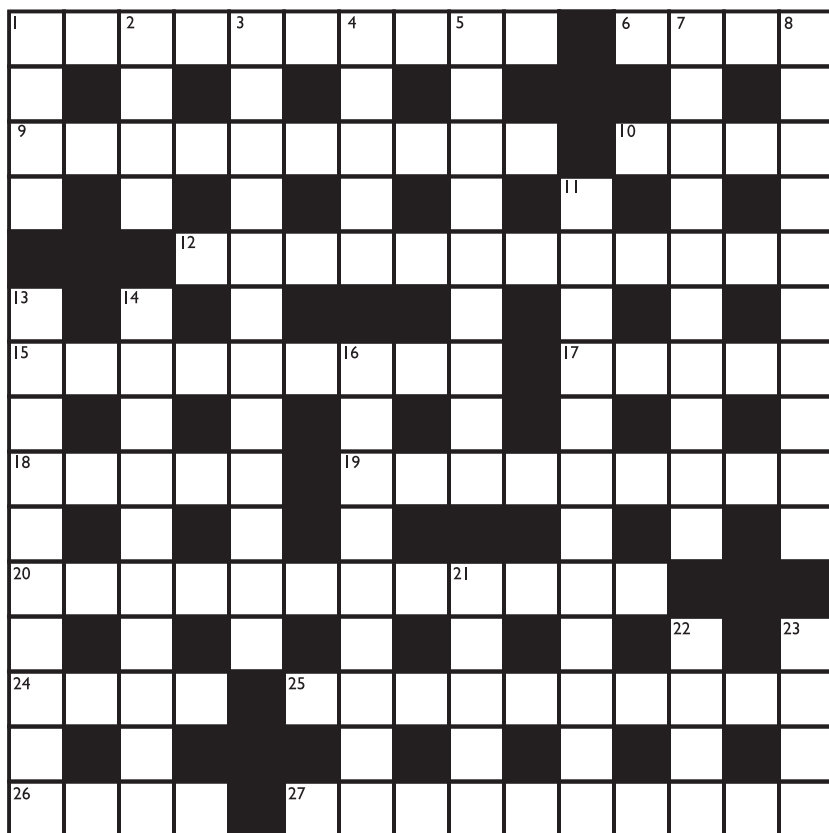
—British science fiction writer and
inventor Arthur C Clarke

For a list of all the ways technology has failed to improve the quality of life, please press three.

—American author and columnist Alice Kahn



BACK TO SCHOOL



EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 20

By Raju Bharatan

ACROSS

- 1 Like Rekha, the least that any lady, on two shapely legs, had to be to play the foil to Amitabh Bachchan in his superheroic prime (1 3 2-4)
- 6 All that Manmohan Singh sought as Arjun Singh ventured to be The Neo V P Singh (1 3)
- 9 Eminently equipped to sex-appeal on a point of no return? (5 5)
- 10 Venom is something you do (4)
- 12 Atom is Hydrogen war Ray turned All India for this nova (9 3)

- 15 The other way it should gender-read here, if only because Prudence Kirby was the moderating influence in Gary's life (6-3)
- 17 Ron disturbing Paying Guest fork (5)
- 18 Bohea witchcraft (5)
- 19 Idiot-box into which Marilyn Monroe would have slipped, just like that, showing viewers a clean pair of heels! (4 5)
- 20 So flyover-positioned is Peddar Road to pass Lata Mangeshkar by (2 3 7)
- 24 What's in a name, Sanjay? (4)

- 25 A Nilu limit for the enlightened (10)
- 26 'Yahoo'-style call of Shammi Kapoor to any colour-era heroine ranging from Saira to Sharmila, Sadhana to Babita, Kalpana to Leena (4)
- 27 Mahindra Singh Dhoni, until recently, in the India Chasing Order (1 4-5)

DOWN

- 1 After Saira Who? (4)
- 2 Man-eater in no great hurry (4)
- 3 Sanjeev Kumar, eponymously, in Shakti Samanta's 1974 filmisation of the Saratchandra novel (12)
- 4 Kind of spot hit Gautam Divan was (5)
- 5 *Jai Santoshi Maa* (5 4)
- 7 Bush's America continues to be what Gorbachev's Russia was (10)
- 8 Something there habitually is between Sehwaag's bat and pad, without Viru's ever making wearisome viewing (7 3)
- 11 Man 'Hi' company for lady just not able to hold herself? (12)
- 13 Asher embracing OP before own man meaning business (1 4 5)
- 14 Pinpoints of concentration, Rahul Dravid's eyes, like Michael Ferreira's in billiards (4-6)
- 16 A call to Western Railway's and All India's ace winger Kishan to centre the ball (4 2 3)
- 21 Back in 1961, Kanika Majumdar, as Monimalika, did the viewer in Satyajit Ray's Monihara (5)
- 22 Something soothing Bal Marathe (4)
- 23 Othello: "She's like a --- gone to burning hell;" 'Twas I that kill'd her." (4)

For answer, 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

NEW 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. The clue, *Walls have them yet they hear not*, has *EARS* for its answer. Next, *pertinacity* could split into *Pert in a city, face to face* into *facet of ace*. For *ANISEED*, the clue could be: *Carminative I see inside and outside*—*AN(I SEE)D*. The possibilities are endless.

LAUGH LINES



"I'm worried," the elderly patient said as the nurse plumped up his pillows. "I read about a man who was in the hospital because of heart trouble, and he died of malaria." "Relax," the nurse said smiling. "This is a first-rate hospital. When we treat someone for heart trouble, he dies of heart trouble."



An elderly lady called 100 from a public phone to report that her car has been broken into. She was hysterical as she explained her situation to the policeman. "They've stolen the stereo, the steering wheel, the brake pedal and even the accelerator!" she cried. The policeman said, "Stay calm. An officer is on the way." A few minutes later, the officer radioed in. "Disregard," he told the control room. "She got into the backseat by mistake."



Two ladies had been friends for many decades. Over the years, they had shared all kinds of activities and adventures. Lately, their activities had been limited to meeting a few times a week to play cards. One day, they were playing cards when one looked at the other and said, "Now, don't get mad at me. I know we've been friends for a long time but I just can't think of your name! I've thought and thought but I can't remember it. Please tell me what your name is." Her friend stared at her. For at least three minutes, she just stared. Finally, she said, "How soon do you need to know?"

Courtesy www.seniorresource.com

CRYPTOGRAMS!

A cryptogram is a code made by substituting a different letter for each letter of the alphabet. For example, the 'l's might be replaced by 'j's, and the 'j's by 'b's. Every letter is usually changed and a different code is used for each problem. Many of these are famous sayings, proverbs and adages.

AaBbCcDdEeFf
GgHhIiJjKkLl
MmNnOoPpQqRr
SsTtUuVvWwXx
Yy&Zz?!

1. Hsen owsj sud, zq't erkvezkwztj; hsen owsj qas, zq't wtdkwhp.
2. Y zyufa cbhvxa cw rna oawr uahcqa ivu nyqqcbaww C alau nayuj vi.
3. Jk cwjv sqzhe, kqcwjpk jv lozcmjk txc eomcw mke cmfov.
4. Kqozy kfq vzzx hq rz zmius kahf ozy sulx uorahaqy.
5. Oltp wsfy qsp wfypdsz ef, ethfy ef ypdsqmf.
6. Ugsxqxi xi qez wzyqsz pvq gj wzqqxyw fgqzi jvgl qez uggv pyh aplupxwy jdyhi jvgl qez vxae om uvglxixyw qg uvgqzaq zpaie jvgl qez gqezv.
7. Tfble snowpnywzv, vnf lgoykwpz vnf. Tfble skvvtfwzv, wp'z utzp prl kookzwpl.
8. Ugcivyl fmce vi kzie hcdji emj ghjhogcyaj wjcg.
9. Brwqlfkx hjk qibwk qicedw zbg wkk mike zbg qhsk zbgj kzkw buu zbgj dbhfw.
10. Rka pbrgsgxr rkgjnx rkgx gx rka zaxr pt uii ypfiey. Rka baxxgsgxr taulx rkgx gx rfa.

BRAIN GYM

WORD PUZZLE

FRAME A GAME

Can you figure out what these signs are saying? Go ahead; give it your best shot!

1.

put 12" other

2.

LOVED
I'M
FED

3.

i XM

4.

I
A
DUMP DUMP DUMP

5.

DNIMIND

6.

better, better,
better, better,
or
WORSE

Courtesy: www.puzz.com

SOLUTIONS:

1. Put one foot in front of the other
3. Eye exam
5. A meeting of the minds

2. I'm under fed and over loved
4. I am down in the dumps
6. For better or worse

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At Reliance General Insurance, we understand what your ambitions mean to you. That's why we make sure worries stay out of the way. A subsidiary of Reliance Capital Limited, which has a **net worth of over Rs. 4300 crores**, Reliance General Insurance has over **72 products and customised plans** to suit your needs. So all you need to do now is to give us a call and let us in on your plans.

Our product range includes: • Standard Fire And Special Perils Policy • Industrial All Risks Insurance Policy • Marine Cargo Insurance Policy • Projects Insurance Policy • Workmen's Compensation Insurance Policy • Machinery Breakdown Policy and much more.

Note: Net worth upon conversion of outstanding equity warrants

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Insurance is the subject matter of solicitation.

GET WELL SOON

Alzheimer's & Related Disorders Society of India (ARDSI), Delhi Chapter
Address: PBC, 8 Community Centre, Ground Floor, East of Kailash, New Delhi — 110065
Helpline: 2643-5922, 2642-3300
Email: ardsidc@hotmail.com
Website: www.alzheimersdelhi.org

Department of Geriatric Mental

Health; Address: King George's Medical University, Chowk, Lucknow; UP, India-226003
Tel of Vice-Chancellor: 91-522-2257540/450/451, 2257452, 2257453; Email: contact@kgmcindia.edu

Heritage Hospital

Tel: 040-23379999/9201-5

TRAVEL

Orchid Lake Resort

Deluxe Room costs Rs 750 (double); Regular costs Rs 650 to Rs 550; **Address:** Umiam, Ri Bhoi District, Meghalaya-793103; Tel: 0364-2570258/2570296

Shillong Club

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For **adventure tours** contact: Meghalaya Adventurers Association, Tel: 0364-2225210

SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

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

34



54



76

EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 20

ACROSS:

1 a top co-star; 6 a say; 9 Mirza Sania; 10 spew; 12 AISHWARYA RAI: A/is/H/war/yaR/AI: A for Atom, H for Hydrogen; yaR (Ray turns), AI for All India; 15 Sobers-Pru; 17 PRONG (P/Ron/G): Ron disturbing *Paying Guest*; 18 Obeah: 5 letters of *bohea* rearranged, *Obeah* is *witchcraft*; 19 soap opera; 20 on the highway; 24 *Naam* (the Sanjay Dutt starrer); 25 *illuminati* (A *Nilu limit*, 10 letters of *illuminati*, meaning 'the enlightened', rearranged); 26 roll; 27 a late-comer

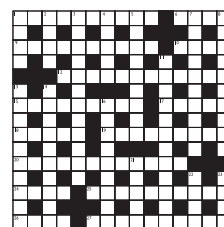
DOWN:

1 Asma; 2 ogre (means *man-eater*, ogre you spot in 'no great hurry'; 3 *Charitraheen*; 4 smash; 5 Anita Guha; 7 superpower; 8 yawning gap; 11 nymphomaniac (*Man 'Hi' company*, 12 letters of *nymphomaniac* rearranged); 13 A SHOP-OWNER: *Ash(OP own)er*: *Asher* embracing *OP* before *own*; 14 object-ball (billiards' term); 16 Pass it Lal: reference to 1948 London Olympics winger (Kishan) Lal; 21 haunt ; 22 BALM: Bal/M (Bal Marathe); 23 liar

SOLUTIONS TO CRYPTOGRAMS

- Copy from one, it's plagiarism; copy from two, it's research.
- A large income is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of.
- In this world, nothing is certain but death and taxes.
- Women who seek to be equal with men lack ambition.
- What does not destroy me, makes me stronger.
- Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich by promising to protect each from the other.
- Under capitalism, man exploits man. Under communism, it's just the opposite.
- Praising what is lost makes the remembrance dear.
- Obstacles are those things you see when you take your eyes off your goals.
- The optimist thinks this is the best of all worlds. The pessimist fears this is true.

77



78

AaBbCcDdEeFf
GgHhIiJjKkLl
MmNnOoPpQqRr
SsTtUuVvWwXx
Yy&Zz?!



PHOTO: KETAN POMAL; TEXT: RUCHI SHAH

“Although I treat and counsel senior citizens for free, I don’t consider myself a philanthropist. This is my duty towards the people of Sangli who have become family in the past 50 years.”

Dr Surendra Mantgani, 81, is a well-known family physician in Sangli, Maharashtra, with a practice spanning 55 years. He treated patients during the 1956 Asian flu outbreak and later, as founder-member of Lions Club of Sangli, provided relief supplies to the victims of the 1967 Koyna earthquake. Ten years ago, Mantgani joined Swami Vivekananda Senior Citizens’ Forum, an organisation that provides social and medical support to the elderly. Mantgani attends to patients at his clinic for three hours every morning and evening, giving free treatment and medication to seniors. He also organises lectures on coping with age and counsels distressed seniors. His work has earned him the title ‘Pitamaha’ (grandfather). Mantgani charges his ‘non-senior’ patients, as his widowed daughter-in-law and college-going grandson and granddaughter live with him.



Some people stay young forever...

...keep celebrating !



SAHARA
INDIA PARIWAR