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THE COST OF LIVING

INFLATION HAS HIT INDIA

hard. The index has risen to a three-year high of 7.41 per cent owing to higher food and commodities prices. We're talking about fruits, vegetables, pulses, cereals, condiments—essentials of life. Attributing it to the global rise in food and commodities prices, RBI governor Y V Reddy admits that inflation "is far more intense than anticipated".

Nobody feels this intensity as hard as silvers. Even at the best of times economically, silvers have to play catch-up, stretching their pensions and savings to last them through their retirement. Now, they are reeling. "It's breaking our back," 64 year-old Anwar Sheikh, a retired sub-inspector in Mumbai tells one newspaper. "Earlier, our money would last for 25 days a month. Now it gets exhausted in 20 days. We have been forced to reduce our food consumption."

Sheikh's plight is mirrored by millions of silvers across India. It brings us back to our refrain: the need for financial security. This is

indeed the bare minimum our society owes its elderly. And that's why Harmony continues to relentlessly advocate avenues like reverse mortgage (a loan that can be availed by unlocking the value of your home equity) considering the paucity of options open to silvers. Despite the clarification in this year's Budget that the loan is not taxable, the response to this scheme has still been slow owing to concerns on the part of banks, and silvers and their families. But, as we report this month in "Challenges Ahead" ('Money and More'), these are surmountable—with better understanding of the product and change in mindset.

Another road to financial security is a second career. The heartening news is that companies across the world (and slowly in India), realising the potential of silvers, are trying to woo them back to work with flexible working hours. However, to achieve optimal productivity in today's world, it is important for silvers to be tech-savvy. In fact, this was the theme of 'Ageing and ICT (information and communication technology)',

RITU NANDA



a panel discussion organised by eSangathan in April in Mumbai (see 'Orbit'), and attended by members of the Harmony team. Under eSangathan, a project funded by the European Union, a pilot is running in India in Mahindra & Mahindra Corporation to test how exposure to digital tools can facilitate the work of older workers.

With a long, hot (and expensive) summer ahead, take a cue and update your skill sets. 'E-inclusion' could be the first step to financial independence—so empower yourself.

Tina Ambani

Tina Ambani

A Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust Initiative

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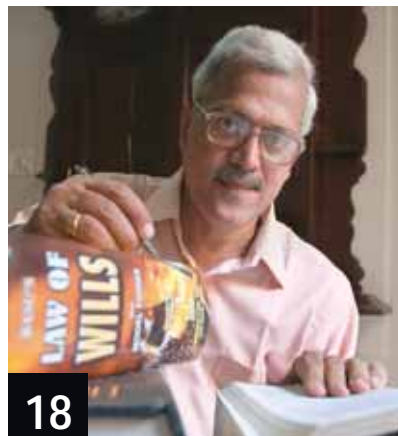
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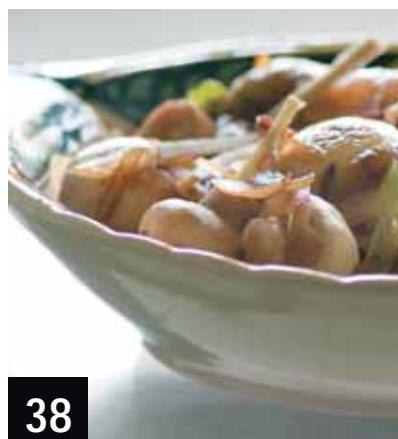
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WEB EXCLUSIVES



Green fingers

Cacti and succulents give
Prof Sampat Singh enormous joy



My Uncle Dalu

Golf keeps war veteran
Col (retd) M Bellappa fighting fit

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Stop arthritis from stopping you

column one

Usha Uthup's style is inimitable. Forever young, her voice warms the heart and her music infuses the air with life. As much in control at 60 as at 26 when she first performed, Uthup has no inclination to reinvent her realities—she thrives on popular music. But when the opportunity arose, she wasn't nervous to compose her own. With *Love Songs*, a recent film starring Jaya Bachchan and Om Puri, Uthup—on the cover this month ("Usha Rocks")—made her debut as music director. Making the most of life is what fashions Harmony people.

There are other examples this issue. After voluntary retirement from Dena Bank, Mumbai-based Shankar Pai couldn't spend hours with his morning newspaper only to have crime against silvers screaming from the headlines. He decided to make use of his degree in law and raise awareness about making a will ("Where There's a Will..."). Former Air Force pilot Hari Ram Kohli, a resident of Pune, braved paralysis after a near-fatal accident and learnt how to paint with his mouth ("Different Strokes"). He even earns a living by working for the International Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists.

Elsewhere in this issue, we feature the issue of cadaver organ donation, your rights as a patient, and medical complexities arising out of menopause. There's also information on Bluetooth (the technology that connects devices). And should you wish to take a break, there's always Kalimpong, *Harmony's* travel recommendation this month. Remember, information empowers.

—Meeta Bhatti



I am a regular reader of *Harmony* magazine and note that 70 per cent of the contributors who write in to 'One-on-One', your classifieds column, show an interest in travel.



Indeed, we humans are like migratory birds who like to go to warm areas like the seashore in the winter and spend our summers in cooler climes like the mountains. In our case, though, we have to shell out exorbitant sums of money as room rent to hotels. In fact, when I went to Shimla last year with my wife for 20 days, 80 per cent of our expenditure went towards room rent.

In the US and Europe, there are many websites now where people can exchange their spare room at home with someone in another destination—this way, both people stand to save a considerable amount when they go on vacation. Taking a cue from 'Column One' in the April 2008 issue of the magazine, where you urge silvers to be silver and earnest—"It's time to be *Harmony* people"—I herewith offer a self-contained double room at picturesque Kashid, just 100 m from the seashore, to my fellow silvers. Kashid is about three-and-a-half-hours from Mumbai and the nearest railway station, Roha, is an hour away. Peak season is between October and February. In exchange, I would like a double room at any Indian hill station between 1 May and 30 June 2009. Anyone interested can email me at haribhaukarande@yahoo.co.in

HARIBHAU KARANDE

Via email

The letter of the month wins music CDs from Big Music

In "Budget Boost" (Connect, April 2008), you have rightly thanked Finance Minister P Chidambaram for giving some sops to silvers in this year's Budget. But, as you pointed out in your 'Money & More' section ("Checks and Balances"), the age for income-tax exemption has not been lowered from 65 to 60 years. This is a huge disappointment to silvers like me caught between the ages of 60 and 65. I request Harmony for Silvers Foundation to lobby on behalf of all silvers to enable us to live better.

A P JUVEKAR

Mumbai

Despite the concessions offered to senior citizens by the Railways ("Budget Boost", Connect, April 2008), there are other concerns that I would like to bring to your attention. First, there is no senior citizens' concession under the Tatkal scheme. Second, if senior citizens decide to upgrade to a higher class, the ticket collector/examiner is not empowered to give them a concession. I request Harmony for Silvers Foundation to bring such anomalies to the attention of the railway minister.

A SUNDARESWARAN

Mumbai

The interest rate of 9 per cent per annum for the Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme has remained unchanged from its inception even though some banks offer 10 per cent or more interest for a short period. I feel Harmony for Silvers Foundation should ask for a benefit of 12 per cent per annum. I also wanted to request that Mumbai Police's 'Elder Line' (1090), which is open to senior citizens residing in Mumbai and its suburbs, be extended to silvers in Thane and its districts too so that they can register with the police in their area for their protection.

DIODO A RODRIGUES

Thane

I would like to thank *Harmony* for publishing my submission on kidney health awareness in the April 2008 issue ("Body Wise", Your Space). However, I noticed that my contact details were not mentioned. Readers or organisations that are interested in conducting a free seminar on kidney health awareness can contact me at 8, Happy Home Apartment, 10, Sampatrao Colony, Vadodara-390007.

Tel: 0265-2354926;

Mobile: (0) 9376218626.

ANIL B POPAT

Vadodara

Two hundred silvers came together on 9 March to celebrate the 12th Annual Function of the Senior Citizens' Forum in the auditorium of Balwant Rai Mehta School in Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash, in New Delhi. Rakesh Gullaiya, municipal councillor of Delhi, was the chief guest and social activist J N Kaul of the SOS Villages was guest of honour. The special focus of the confer-

ence was the relationship between civic services and senior citizens. Many delegates expressed that the civic authorities can do plenty to make life better for senior citizens and requested the municipal councillor to bring about a change of attitude on the part of municipal authorities. Gullaiya assured the audience that he would always be available to solve any difficulties and problems. Further, this year Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav announced a concession of 50 per cent in fares for senior women. The conference passed a resolution requesting the minister to extend this increase in concession to men too.

G M CHOPRA
CHAIRMAN, SENIOR
CITIZENS' FORUM

New Delhi

I am 56 years old. From the time *Harmony* was launched, I have been fascinated by the editorial contents, which have the potential to change the lives of silvers. Seven years ago, I founded an organisation called Healing Touch to make the lives of ex-servicemen, wounded soldiers and war widows secure. I have helped over 1,400 such brave men and women. My interaction with them and other silvers has convinced me that they are invaluable repositories of expertise. These banks should be tapped by society. I would like silvers to volunteer to make the lives of the poorest in India better by educating them. This will enable them to earn a living, and eradicate poverty. We could do this by opening 'Harmony Knowledge Banks' in all our cities.

MUKESH ANAND

New Delhi

CONTRIBUTORS



"My parents encouraged me to develop an interest in music, cinema, sports, reading, dancing, cooking and sewing," says writer **Shanta Gokhale**, 68. "Except sports, I continue to take pleasure in all of them!" In this issue, she tells us how we can continue to shine in our silver years. Mumbai-based Gokhale worked as a lecturer and public-relations executive before joining *The Times of India*. In 1992, she wrote a book on Marathi theatre. She has also written many poems and novels. Gokhale maintains that the elixir of her life comprises her grandsons—"I am more myself with them than with anybody else."

Errata

In the April 2008 issue, the article "Checks and Balances" ('Money and More') was written by Relax with Tax, a Mumbai-based accountancy firm. We regret the omission of their name. In "First Hand" ('Bookshelf'), *Ammi: Letter to a Democratic Mother* was wrongly mentioned as *Ammi: Letters to a Democratic Mother* while the film *Salim Langde Pe Mat Ro* was wrongly mentioned as *Salim Langde Pe Ro*. We regret the errors.

—Editors

NEWSWORTHY



HIGHER GROUND

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has taken the high road to make **homes more accessible to silvers**—it has cleared a proposal from resident welfare associations (RWAs) to install lifts in buildings with more than three floors. “According to the earlier bylaws, only flats above 15 m in height (four floors and above) were allowed this facility,” an official from the DDA tells *The Indian Express*. “But we are now taking into account the necessity to make mobility easier for senior citizens.” Now, any RWA that wishes to install a lift will have to contact the DDA’s Architecture Department for clearance. “Once they have been granted permission, the RWAs will have to carry out the installation of lifts and maintenance at their own cost,” says chief architect V D Diwan. “They will also have to get clearances from other relevant authorities like the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.”

ONE VOICE



K R GANGADHARAN

Harmony for Silvers Foundation firmly believes that silvers across India should speak with a common voice. Thus, we are delighted to announce the formation of a **National Coordination Committee to advocate the cause of senior citizens in India**. A declaration to this effect—known as the Hyderabad Declaration—was issued at the National Summit of All India and State Level Senior Citizens' Federations, held in Hyderabad on 4-5 April 2008. The Committee will comprise national and state-level organisations along with retired insurance and pensioners' associations, NGOs, and private organisations working for the elderly.

The Committee's mandate includes the following:

- ❑ Promote, establish and foster senior citizens' groups throughout India.
- ❑ Ensure that member organisations reach out to elderly who are lonely, isolated or at risk.
- ❑ Assist in developing knowledge that senior citizens' associations must learn to remain strong advocates of the elderly.
- ❑ Research on ageing, and using the knowledge gathered to educate seniors and other people who are interested in these concerns.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for seniors to use their volunteering and leadership skills for the benefit of society.

- ❑ Assist member organisations and others to apply for grants and other funds.
- ❑ Facilitate resource sharing among seniors' organisations.
- ❑ Act as an advocate on behalf of member organisations on request.
- ❑ Build bridges of understanding among seniors' organisations and among generations.

The declaration was signed by representatives of senior citizens' associations from Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal; the Bharat Pensioners' Samaj; General Insurance Pensioners' Association; Girish Gupta of Respectage International; Raman Bhai Shah, Member, National Council for Older Persons (NCOP); All India Senior Citizens' Confederation (AISCCON); Indian Federation of Ageing (InFA); All India Pensioners' Association; All Indian Retired Insurance Employees' Association; and Harmony for Silvers Foundation. K R Gangadharan, Director, Heritage Hospital, Hyderabad, and Vice President-Asia, International Federation on Ageing, has been nominated as the National Coordinator to put together the First National Coordination Committee. For further developments, watch this space.

CALL FOR ACTION

In 2002, 159 countries across the world—including India—agreed to promote the opportunities and confront the challenges posed by ageing populations as part of the United Nations-sponsored **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing**. Now, the UN is calling on governments to step up their efforts following the first review of the plan in New York this March. According to the review, progress on the plan has been mixed, differing from region to region and country to country. “While European nations have advanced towards social services for dependent people, states in other regions have focused on improving and amplifying health and social security coverage, and reducing poverty for older people,” says the UN in a media release. “And in developing countries, ageing issues appear to be only recently included in national policy planning.”



The review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan was concluded during the latest session of the Commission for Social Development. It was a year-long worldwide assessment that involved civil society groups, NGOs, government officials and silvers. It takes stock of the progress made since 2002 and identifies priorities till 2012—these include reinforcing institutions that work for the elderly; research, data collection and analysis; and training of necessary personnel in the field of ageing. To read the entire review of the Madrid Plan, go to www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id_article=198#2

BACK ON CAMPUS



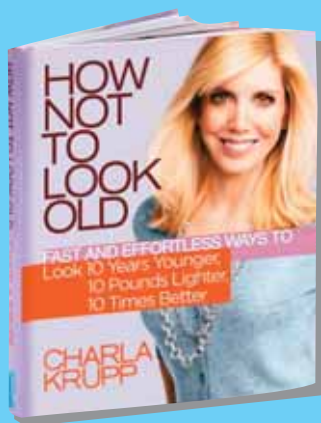
The University of Pune is bringing silver back with its new ‘**Senior Citizens’ Centre**’, which opened in March. For starters, the centre will offer two-day workshops on health and personal finance, and four-month courses in Indian history, culture and spirituality.

“The centre is not only for learning but also provides a platform for sharing experience,” Vice-Chancellor Narendra Jadhav tells *The Indian Express*. “Senior citizens at the centre will also be invited to share their views with other students. Their experience can be a great help to society.” Further, silvers who are degree holders can now apply for a PhD in any subject of their choice—91 year-old Prakash Mohadikar has already signed up for a PhD.



Robot care: Robots may help human caregivers tend to silvers in Norway, according to Olav Ulleren, head of a Norwegian municipal group. Robots could wash clothes, clean the floor and give silvers diagnostic tests. “The aim is to provide help in situations where more healthcare workers are not available,” says Ulleren.

MEDIA WATCH



THE LOOK BOOK

In *How Not to Look Old: Fast and Effortless Ways to Look 10 Years Younger, 10 Pounds Lighter, 10 Times Better* (Grand Central Publishing), Charla Krupp tells older women to get a makeover to be taken more seriously. And despite criticism for her political incorrectness—“there’s no reason to look like an ‘OL’ or old lady when you can look ‘Y&H’ (younger and hipper)—the book has become a smash hit in the US and UK. A former editor at fashion magazines like *Glamour* and *InStyle*, she urges readers to know their body type and address it appropriately, and offers non-surgical tips on how to look younger. For instance, throw out out-of-date styles, such as ‘mom jeans’; abandon dark lipstick for more flattering lighter shades; invest in Lycra innerwear; and never step out without high heels. “Until age becomes a non-issue,” she writes, “I don’t think it’s smart for women to advertise how old they are.” Krupp refuses to reveal her own age.

ANALYSE THIS

KEY TO LONGEVITY

Here’s the latest plan of attack in the battle against ageing: target ‘longevity genes’. Scientists at the University of Washington in Seattle have identified 25 genes that regulate lifespan in yeast and the tiny roundworm *Caenorhabditis elegans*—two organisms separated by 1.5 billion years of evolution—and believe at least 15 of these genes are likely to have similar versions in humans. “Now that we know what many of these genes actually are, we have potential targets to go after in humans,” Dr Brian Kennedy of the research team tells news agency Reuters. “We hope that in future we can affect those targets and improve the ‘health span’ or the period of a person’s life when they can be healthy and not suffer from age-related illnesses.”



Many of the genes that have been identified are also linked to a key nutrient pathway called ‘Target of Rapamycin’, or TOR. Calorie intake and nutrient response are believed to affect lifespan through TOR activity. Previous research has established that caloric restriction in animals, ranging from worms to monkeys, can prolong lifespan and prevent age-related diseases.

PET PLEASURES



Research has established that pets are great for silvers—they help combat loneliness and depression, and keep you on your toes. And now a study suggests this holds true even for a ‘robot pet’. Researchers in St. Louis, Missouri, in the US, conducted a study of 38 silvers in nursing homes. According to *news.aol.com*, the residents were divided into three groups: one group was regularly visited by Sparky, a golden retriever; the second group spent time with ‘AIBO’, a robot dog from Sony; and the third group had no visits from any pet. After two months, the researchers found that the silvers who received visits from the pets reported less depression than those that didn’t. What’s more, AIBO was shown to be just as effective at alleviating loneliness. The team stated that as robot pets require less attention than real ones, they are ideal for silvers who crave companionship but are too frail to care for a pet.

FACE OFF

NO WARTS HERE

It may not turn into a handsome prince, but the humble frog could still make your dreams come true. Scientists from Pukyong University in Busan, South Korea, have isolated a **peptide with antioxidant properties in bullfrog skin** that removes free radicals—molecules that hasten the ageing process of human cells. Team leader Professor Kim Se-kwon suggests the new substance could prove to be an economical alternative to popular antioxidant alpha-tocopherol (Vitamin E), whose price keeps rising because of surging world demand. “The newly found material is also 10 per cent more efficient than alpha-tocopherol in curbing oxidation,” he adds.

“And as it is water-soluble, the substance may be consumed in more diverse ways than the oil-soluble alpha-tocopherol. You can put it in soft drinks, for example.”



AND PIGS WILL FLY...

Hakata Tonton is a new culinary hotspot in New York City that serves up **the latest anti-ageing food to hit the headlines: pigs' trotters**.

Thirty-three of the restaurant's 39 dishes contain *tonsoku* or pigs' feet, which are rich in collagen, the protein responsible for skin and muscle tone.

“Collagen helps your body retain moisture,” owner Himi Okajima tells *The New York Times*.

“Your hair and skin will look better, but it's not just for looking beautiful now. If you begin eating collagen in your 30s, you will look younger in your 40s.” Okajima has already introduced a chain of restaurants specialising in ‘collagen cuisine’ in Japan.

Anorexia among silvers: Doctors at the British Dietetic Association say 10 per cent of all patients treated at clinics in the UK for **eating disorders** are now **women over 40**. “For many older women, something has happened to them, an event such as divorce or their children leaving home, which has triggered their disorder,” says chairman Ursula Philpot. “Also, the desire to look like the celebrities in the tabloids makes them feel bad and may worsen their disorder.”



EVENTS

A NEW INNINGS

April saw the launch of www.silverinnings.com, a **website for the elderly**, in Mumbai. The site is the brainchild of 42 year-old Sailesh Mishra, a marketing professional who quit his job to work for senior citizens. "As a marketing professional, I was chasing sales targets all the time," he tells *Harmony*. "At the end of the day, I was not satisfied. I constantly questioned my personal contribution towards society." Three years ago, Mishra started working with organisations helping the elderly, such as Dignity Foundation, Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India, Manav Sewa Sangh and Family Welfare Agency and, in time, decided to host a dedicated website for silvers. The result, according to Mishra, is a "one-stop destination and resource centre for the elderly", featuring health and fitness, finance, elder law, relationships, directories of services for silvers, and advice for silvers who write in. John Thattil, regional director (west), HelpAge India, was guest of honour, while the site was inaugurated by RTI activist Shailesh Gandhi. In his address, Gandhi urged the over 100 silvers present to come forward and work towards improving society in whatever way they could. "Why should someone else do something for us?" he asked. "Why don't we do something for ourselves?" Initiatives like this one are indeed a step in that direction.



E-INCLUSION



Courtesy: eSANGATHAN

The need to build an 'e-inclusive society' where older workers can remain productive in today's technology-driven workplaces—that was the theme of '**Ageing and ICT (information and communication technology)**', a panel discussion organised by eSangathan on 17 April in Mumbai. eSangathan is a project funded by the European Union and dedicated to the inclusion of the ageing workforce in the information society. Under eSangathan, a pilot is running in India in Mahindra & Mahindra Corporation to test how the implementation of a collaborative working environment can facilitate the work of older knowledge workers—nine retired workers were brought back to the workplace and given digital tools (such as enterprise software) to enable them to work with their (younger) teams.

At the discussion, representatives of the European Union and NGOs from Sweden, Denmark, France and Germany, and Indian industry and government spoke of the socioeconomic aspects of ageing, strategies to promote a knowledge-based economy, and the need to bridge the divide between the digital 'haves' and have-nots'. The highlight of the event, though, was the presentation of the preliminary findings of the Mahindra pilot, which has completed one year of its two-year term. Five of the nine knowledge workers have already adopted the new technology wholeheartedly and are using it to share data, drawings and plans with their teams. To learn more, go to www.esangathan-conference.in



OFFBEAT

GROUNDING!

Discounts at chiropractors, reduced entry fees at parks, free home delivery of goods from leading department stores, and free side dishes when ordering pizza are just some of the perks Japanese silvers can get—if they surrender their driver's license. Tokyo Police launched this novel campaign in April to reduce the number of **elderly motorists** on the road. Japan has seen the number of casualties in traffic accidents decline in recent years thanks to a nationwide campaign against drunk driving, reports news agency AFP. But the number of crashes involving drivers aged 70 or older has jumped by 30 per cent in Tokyo over the past six years, according to the police.

LOVE THAT

TICKET TO RIDE

When the British government announced the 'National Travel Pass', which offers silvers **free bus journeys** and half-price local rail trips, 66 year-old Christine Jackson and Manju Ghosh, 61, decided to cash in. The friends embarked upon a 12-day, 700-mile bus voyage across the UK, from Berwick-upon-Tweed on the Scottish border to Cornwall in the south—without paying a penny. "We stayed with friends along the way," Jackson, a retired management consultant, tells newspaper *The Daily Mirror*. "My sons think we are completely crazy," adds Ghosh, a retired doctor. "But it was a lot of fun."



OVERHEARD

"I actually think there's an incredible amount of self-knowledge that comes with getting older. I feel way better now than I did when I was 20. I'm stronger and smarter in every way. Getting older means paring down to an essential version of yourself."

- American actor *Jamie Lee Curtis*, 50, who has posed **topless** on the May-June 2008 issue of *AARP* magazine

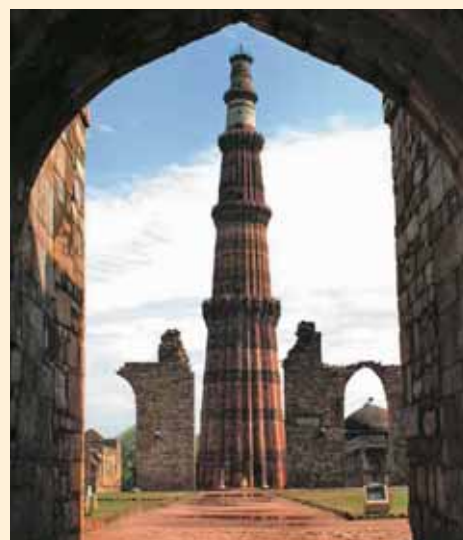


Vision Harmony: Fifty-five silvers participated in an **eye camp** held on 10 April at the **Harmony Interactive Centre** in Girgaum, Mumbai—44 of them were members of the centre. Dr Nikhil Sardar, head, Department of Ophthalmology, BSES M G Hospital, presided over the camp. Four of the patients were diagnosed with cataract. This was the first in a series of free eye camps organised by Harmony in coordination with Federation of Senior Citizens' Organisations (FESCOM), Maharashtra. The second camp was held at Punarwas, Goregaon. Out of the 80 participants, 12 were diagnosed with cataract. The camp will continue till 29 May.

H RECOMMENDS

ACTION PLAN FOR MAY

Preserve the past. Take the initiative to protect heritage sites in your area. For instance, a group of eight silvers from Thane, a far-flung suburb of Mumbai, have taken it upon themselves to clean up Lonar Caves, a 1,500-year old historical site located on the Mumbai-Agra highway. Armed with buckets, ropes and dusters, the silvers have already removed the graffiti scribbled by youngsters on the walls of the caves and plan to make regular visits to the caves to ensure they remain pristine. "We decided to clean up these sites ourselves as the government and the archaeological departments do not pay any attention to their maintenance," says Kaka Hardas, 71. And Bhaskar Ghatnekar, 83, adds, "We will help clean up as many historical sites as we can possibly cover."



Be a mentor. Help a child in your neighbourhood realise her potential. That has been the goal of the 'Big Brother' and 'Big Sister' programmes, community initiatives that have been running successfully across the US for decades now. And age is no barrier—Dallas resident Iva Broadus is the oldest mentor in the Big Sister programme, at the age of 98. Her charge: 10 year-old DeAngela Williams, a fourth grader. "I see her every week and play card games with her that help her learn numbers, addition, subtraction, division," says Broadus, still a keen bridge player, to Associated Press. "I also teach her social etiquette, how to behave with different kinds of people. That's why I'm there, to tell her little things she doesn't know."





VILAS KALGUTKER

Be true, to you

Put yourself first and do your own thing, urges Shanta Gokhale

One day last month 75 year-old Mrs Purohit came for her morning walk in a *salwar-kameez*. "You look good," I said. She blush-

ed, looking pleased. The following day she came in another *salwar-kameez*, still looking very pleased with herself. On the third day, she was back in a sari. "Where are your new outfits?" I asked. She grinned and said, "They've gone for a wash." Somehow I knew from her tone that they were never going to come back from that wash. Sure enough, Mrs Purohit now walks in saris again.

The question, however, is not the merits and demerits of the sari, but whether Mrs Purohit returned to them of her own accord. Or did her family have something to do with it, making her wonder whether she was right in giving in to convenience at her age? This is a small instance of how we bow to the roles that society assigns us depending on our caste, gender, age and family relationships. And yet, when we look at these roles rationally, we begin to wonder why, having done our duty towards everybody all our lives, we cannot let go now and fulfil our duty to ourselves.

Mrs Rau, my neighbour who is now 92, started taking lessons in classical music after she turned 80. Her talent, willingly suppressed for all the years that she reared her children and grandchildren, would not be suppressed any longer. Her relatives said, "Why do you want to sing at your age?" Her answer stumped them. "What's my age? I am as young as my voice allows me to be." By the end of three years, she was entertaining her family with music recitals!

An actress was telling me the other day about a woman who played her mother-in-law in an ad film.

The woman's husband had been teasing her, saying, "You do so much *natak* [histrionics] at home; why don't you go out and act?" So she had her portfolio done, dropped it off at ad agencies and sat back to receive offers. They came and haven't stopped. She still baby-sits her grandchildren; but she is no longer taken for granted.

Being taken for granted is an occupational hazard with silvers. A retired couple I know is paying the price of having brought up their daughter to believe they owe her all the love and care in the world while she owes them nothing. As a result, she doesn't think twice before calling them all the way from Pune to look after her boisterous children while she takes regular days off from mothering.

Retirement is a life-changing situation, which spells freedom for some and a vacuum for others. We save money to be financially sound in the autumn of our lives. What we don't always save is dreams. As a public relations executive in a corporate house, I once interviewed many prospective retirees for the company's house journal. The responses were very revealing. All the men except one asserted that they would continue working as consultants. One exceptional man said he wanted to learn painting. The women wanted to travel, bake cakes, spend time with their grandchildren and learn languages. One woman was planning an expedition to the Antarctic!

The barriers to being yourself and doing your own thing are not always external

The barriers to being yourself and doing your own thing aren't always external. Either we have not invested sufficiently in ourselves to reap the rewards when the time comes, or we have internalised the roles that society has assigned us and don't believe in ourselves as individuals. It is easier to fight obstacles outside of ourselves. Fighting the ones within is tougher. But it's never too late to take up arms against both. ■

Shanta Gokhale, 68, is a writer and theatre critic



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HIGH SPIRITS



Shankaranarayan (in blue T-shirt) at a wine tasting session

I moved from Pune to Dubai in 1975 to work for an international trading firm. After 20 years of number crunching, I quit my job at the age of 42 and started a music records label specialising in Carnatic classical music. Today it has evolved into an online music store, www.musicplusvideo.com. What keeps me busy these days, though, is neither music nor numbers—it's food and wine.

Two years ago, my friends and I noticed that wine appreciation and gourmet cooking were being

"I am happy that my life, like fine wine, has aged well"

portrayed as the exclusive preserve of Page 3 glitterati. To make such refinements accessible to the

middle-class aspiring gourmet and wine enthusiast, we started the Pune Gourmet Club (PGC). Today we have 180 members, between the age group of 25 to 70—most of them are in their late 40s to mid-50s. Though there is no membership fee, we insist on three conditions: members should be residents of Pune; they should enjoy cooking; and they should have an abiding interest in wine. Our meetings are informal gatherings held at a member's house or in restaurants owned by members. Last year I conducted eight such gatherings.

We invite winemakers from all over Pune to educate us about the nuances of red and white wines. Though I started out without much knowledge on wines, in just over a year I can tell the difference between a Zinfandel, a Shiraz and a Cabernet Sauvignon. As I also read about wine, I am able to guide other members on wine tasting procedures. We rate every wine according to renowned wine advocate Robert Parker's wine-scoring system [where a wine is rated according to aroma, intensity of flavour and purity] so that we have a ready reference when choosing wine in future. In our gourmet cooking sessions, we choose cuisine that's not easily available in restaurants. So far, we have held Far Eastern, Greek, Spanish, Arabic, European, Cajun, *biryani* and barbeque food festivals.

Today, the members of PGC enjoy plenty of social interaction and our friendships have expanded beyond our common hobby. At 55, I am happy that my life—like fine wine—has aged well.

—B Shankaranarayan, Pune

PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPE

A turbulent sea voyage I embarked on during my childhood remains one of the most disturbing memories of my life. I was schooled in Malvan, a small town in Sindhudurg district in Konkan. In 1931, when my school closed for the annual Diwali holidays, I visited my hometown Vengurla along with my mother. Back then public transport was restricted to the sea route as there was no bus service to distant places. Passenger steamers operated between Goa and Mumbai with halts at intermediate ports en route.

Passengers spread mats on open decks during their journey from Panjim to Mumbai—a distance that used to be covered in 24 hours. While returning from Malvan, the steamer departed Vengurla at 10 am. Just after an hour, our ship was caught in the grip of an intense cyclone. Gigantic waves lashed the open decks. The captain tried his best to control the rudder but failed. In the ensuing panic, women and children started weeping and throwing up. In



Parab: living life to the fullest

the meantime, the captain diverted the ship away from the coast to avoid crashing into the rocks jutting out of the shallow shores. To add to our misery, unseasonal showers broke out.

Fortunately, the rains ebbed in half an hour and our ship continued its journey ahead. However, as the weather department predicted, the cyclone persisted along the coastal area and our captain was forced to anchor at Ratnagiri port. Food and provisions were arranged for our overnight halt at Ratnagiri. Finally, the storm subsided by dawn. As we neared our destination the next day, everyone expressed their gratitude to the captain for his expert navigation in the face of disaster. Throughout the turmoil, my mother remained calm—probably because she knew I depended on her for her courage and optimism.

Today at 88, when I look back I feel I managed to survive the ordeal through sheer providence. The terrifying journey made me realise at a very young age that the tenuous thread of our lives can snap anytime. We live on a planet that is constantly besieged by floods, wars and terrorism. All we can do is live every moment to its fullest. That's one reason why I have been participating in the Mumbai Marathon for the past four years. To me, the marathon is a celebration not just of stamina but life.

—G L Parab, Mumbai

DREAM COME TRUE

I first saw the temples of Angkor Wat in Cambodia on the pages of *National Geographic* magazine in the 1970s. In 1979, on a trip to Bangkok with my family, I almost decided to make a trip to Cambodia. Unfortunately, Cambodia was under military rule and tourists were forbidden from exploring the area. I returned disappointed, just a whisper away from my dream.

Three years ago, my son Ravi, who was working in Singapore, sent me a ticket to visit him. As I had already been there twice in the same year, I was taken aback. When I reached Singapore, Ravi thrust two air tickets in my hand. He had booked a trip for

the two of us to Angkor Wat. To say that I was stunned is an understatement. The next day, we flew to Siem Reap international airport in Cambodia and checked into a mid-priced hotel. After freshening up, we hired a taxi that deposited us 6 km away to my long-awaited dream.

Standing on the main entrance of Angkor Wat, the long causeway looked formidable to me because of my age—74 years then—and an ischemic heart [caused by deficiency of blood supply or obstruction to the arterial flow].

The temple complex—dedicated to both Vishnu and Buddha—appears like a celestial bird with its wings spread out. On approaching the second causeway, I saw portals guarded by two giant stone lions; the magnitude of the whole structure was breathtaking. As you enter you realise the plan is difficult to grasp because of the enormity of the structure—225 m x 185 m of sandstone blocks. It's a marvelous visual feast of towers, covered libraries, galleries, chambers, porches, courtyards and *gopura* (dome) on three levels linked by stairways and balustrades. All this is enclosed in a rectangular area of 500 acres with a moat around it. I avoided climbing too many stairways and asked my son to go ahead while I strolled around

to have a closer look at the artwork on the lintels above the doors and win-

dows. All Angkor temples depict stories of Indian epics, mythological stories or warfare of the 9th to 12th century Angkor period.

It will take me a travelogue to cover the magnificence and history of the Angkor Wat. Suffice to say that my trip was more than a visit to the world's most fascinating ruins. It was a long-awaited dream, finally come true. I urge all silvers to never give up on their dreams. Just like I never did on mine.

—Parvathy Sundaram, Coimbatore



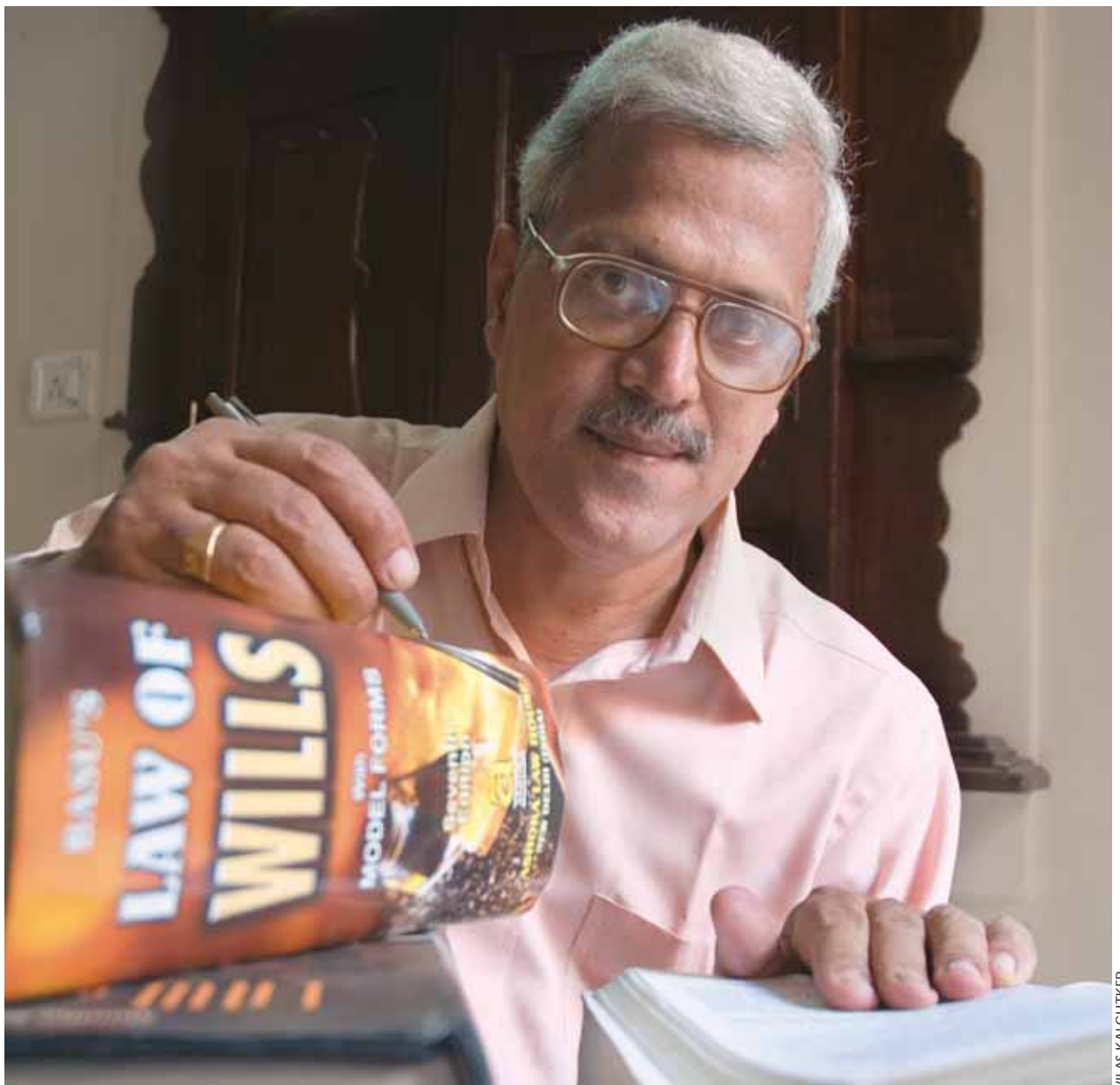
Travel diaries: Sundaram at Angkor Wat

"I urge all silvers to never give up on their dreams, like I never did on mine"

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Where there's a will...

Shankar Pai spends life after retirement spreading awareness on the importance of making a will, writes **Rajashree Balaram**



VILAS KALGUTKER

Among the many disturbing headlines that assail us every morning, significant newsprint is allotted to bring home the ruthlessness and greed brimming over property inheritance disputes across our country: “Family killed over alleged property dispute”; “68 year-old killed following bitter property squabble”; “Businessman shot dead due to property problems”. Most of us dwell upon such news only till we finish our second cup of tea every morning. But for Shankar Pai, 54, it impelled him to discover a new mission in life.

Pai was branch manager of Dena Bank when he opted for voluntary retirement in 2001. “Suddenly I had more time to read the newspapers,” he recalls. “I realised that there were so many property disputes happening all around me, in large business families as well as ordinary middle-class households.” As he had a degree in law, Pai decided to renew his practice and spread awareness on the importance of making a will. Along with his friends, Adolf D’souza, a retired company secretary, Pai started Make-a-Will Foundation.

The foundation held its first seminar in 2002 amid the lush foliage of Almeida Park in Bandra, Mumbai—30 silvers attended the session. Over the past six years, Pai has held over 50 seminars across Mumbai, including talks at Dignity Foundation, Indian Merchants Chamber and HELP Library.

“Most people I know have either not made a will or have a poorly drafted one,” says Pai. “We never stop to think that such careless-

ness can cause a lot of animosity and turmoil among our legal heirs.” He admits that people are not initially comfortable discussing a will because of the air of fatality and gloom that surrounds it. But all such apprehensions disappear when he lists out the consequences of *not* making a will. During the question and answer session that follows Pai’s seminars, people first ask legal questions related to the procedure of making a will—cost, time, and documentation. As the ice thaws, though, they go on to voice personal doubts and fears. For instance, one man wanted to bequeath 30 per cent of his property to his daughter, but was not too sure whether his son would be amenable to his

Registration is a safe way to prevent tampering of the will

decision. Pai recommended that he make the will discreetly and withhold the details from his children to alleviate any tensions that might fracture familial peace. Another septuagenarian who lived with his youngest son was worried about the papers his son had forced him to sign while he was bedridden some time ago. The man suspected that the papers he had signed in a delirious state assigned power of attorney to his son and wanted to make a fresh will.

Today Pai’s seminars have struck a chord among the middle class and even the poor. Recently he was approached by a slum dweller who wanted to set up a will for his hut measuring 80 sq ft.

Pai was impressed with his foresight. “Though the middle-class man works hard all his life he rarely spares a thought for how his assets will be distributed among his family members after his demise,” points out Pai.

He has read almost every worthwhile book on property and succession planning. Perhaps that’s why the procedure of making a will sounds even simpler when Pai explains it. To register your will, all you need to pay is Rs 200. Contrary to popular knowledge, stamp paper is not mandatory; plain paper is enough. While it is not necessary that a will has to be registered in court, registration is a safe way to prevent tampering as a copy of the will is also kept with the advocate. Recently, a 68 year-old Mumbai-based unmarried man had willed his flat and fortune to his three siblings. Later, he changed his mind and bequeathed his entire fortune and property to a charity mission. However, he did not register the will. After his death, his younger brother implemented the earlier registered will according to which he inherited his brother’s wealth and property along with the other siblings. Pai points out that it’s not enough to merely register a will but urges people to keep a copy of their will with their spouse or a close friend.

A will doesn’t just prevent lengthy property disputes; it can also be an instrument of philanthropy. For instance, according to Pai, a Mumbai-based businessman bequeathed Rs 100,000 to a neighbour’s visually impaired child last year. Though the child was gifted with a melodious voice, his music tuitions were a weighty



Courtesy: SHANKAR PAI

Pai at a seminar organised by Indian Merchants Chamber

extravagance for his humble family. To bolster the child's musical talent, the businessman decided to offer him a helping hand. After the man's demise, his son offered the neighbouring family a cheque of Rs 100,000 as stated in his father's will.

Through his seminars, Pai urges business houses to exhibit similar magnanimity while writing their asset succession documents. He cites the example of Alfred Nobel, who left a large bulk of his fortune towards instituting the Nobel Prize. "While I inform people about the legal requirements of making a will, I also lay emphasis on the social aspect of how they can shape society long after they are gone," he says. He feels that, like Nobel, if business houses in India too would take a deeper interest in public causes and education for the needy, our country can indeed become a superpower not just in terms of economic empowerment but individual growth as well. In your will, you can request a specific amount from your estate

to be donated to an orphanage every year or towards any other charity of your choice. Pai tells us how five people, after attending his seminars, pledged to donate their organs in their will. In fact, he even collaborated on a seminar on skin tissue donation with Dr Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, head of the dermatology department

A will can also be an instrument of philanthropy

at Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai.

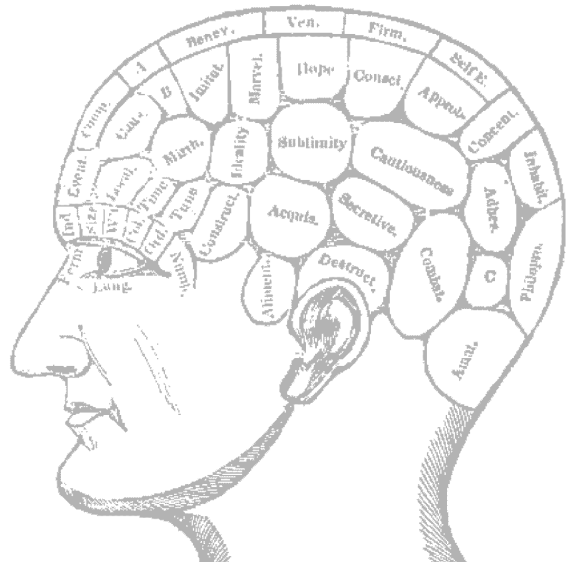
Pai was one of the key speakers at a workshop on will making and reverse mortgage jointly organised by IL&FS and Money-life on 5 April 2008, at Nehru Centre in Mumbai. Reverse mortgage is a facility that allows homeowners to earn from their property while still living in it. (Refer to "Challenges Ahead" on page 52 in this issue where our

experts analyse the pros and cons of reverse mortgage.)

Besides outlining the steps required to make a will and avoiding common blunders, Pai's seminars dispel wrong notions. For instance, a will is not irrevocable—it can be revised as many times as you choose. However, each time you revise it, ensure you sign a new declaration stating that the revised will is the final one. Also, each will is unique; there is no predetermined format that you need to follow. Remember to mention the exact details of the willed property and ensure that your will bears your signature. You also need to arrange for two witnesses. In case the witnesses are a doctor and lawyer, the will is less likely to face legal hurdles. The doctor can certify that you were in complete control of your mental faculties while making the will and the lawyer can counter any legal queries that may arise.

Though people call Pai at all hours for answers to their queries, he charges nothing for his advice. All expenses for stationery and materials required for presentations and seminars are borne by him. His modest legal practice continues to be the only source of income for Pai, whose wife Vasanti works with a bank. His son is pursuing his graduation, while his daughter is doing her master's in business administration. Pai's future plans include setting up an educational institution to impart knowledge on property and succession planning. For now, he is busy telling people to wake up before it's too late. ■

You can contact Shankar Pai at Make-A-Will Foundation on (0) 9819215578



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SHILBHADRA DATTA

Usha rocks!

Singer **Usha Uthup** recently forayed into music direction and proved that even with silver in your hair, your dreams can be in Technicolor. **Rajashree Balaram** feels the vibe

The lady sitting at the corner table muttered, "What's this *amma* doing here?" Usha Uthup heard the jeer, all right. But she had a song to sing and hardly any time to take offence. She approached the dance floor at Trinca's pub on Kolkata's Park Street—mound of jasmine in her plaited hair, large red *bindi* on her forehead, bright silk sari draped around her buxom frame—and belted out a sizzling cabaret number. It was 1969.

Trinca's is no longer the swish hangout it once was but Uthup's romance with Kolkata has stood the test of time—she has lived and sung there for the past 35 years. Along the way, she graduated from being a nightclub singer to singing playback for Hindi films; opened her own multi-track recording studio in Kolkata; and performed across the world. In 2007, she acted in Malayalam film *Pothan Vava*, where she plays a fiery advocate. Until recently, she was on the jury of television channel Asia-net's Idea Star Singer, a talent hunt show for young Malayalee singers. And in March 2008, Uthup—often dismissed by hardcore music critics as the lady who sings other people's songs—made her debut as music director

for *Love Songs*, featuring Jaya Bachchan and Om Puri, at the age of 60. "It was a challenging experience and I love challenges," she says. "I'm always ready to try new things."

Some things, though, remain the same—she still turns out in traditional Indian garb while she sings jazz and country western numbers. When *Harmony* meets the singer in Bata Nagar on the dusty fringes of Kolkata, she is wearing a bottle-green Kanjeevaram sari and a large crimson *bindi*, getting ready to perform with her sisters Maya Sami, 54, and Indira Srinivasan, 71, for a show organised by the United

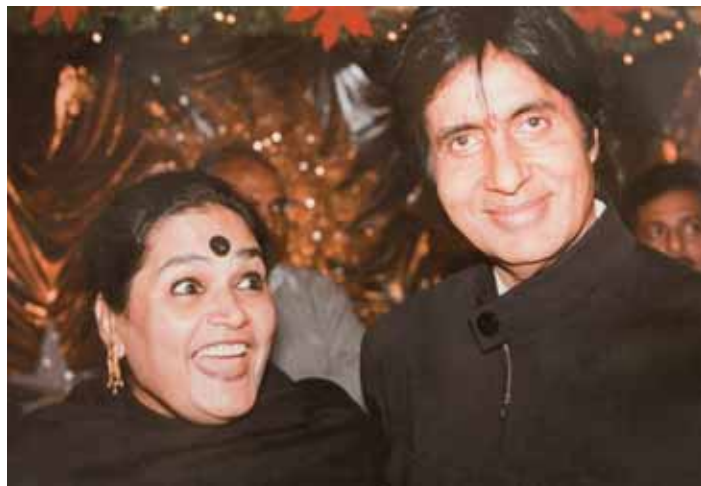
comfortable bringing their wives to the club as the women had no reason to feel threatened by me," she says.

On stage too, she pokes fun at herself, her weight, and ribs her sisters—clad like her, in resplendent saris—as she interacts with the audience. There isn't much of a crowd, just about 250 people or so. But Uthup's on-stage verve somehow makes the gathering seem larger. She refuses to let the empty seats deflate her enthusiasm. Instead she is delighted to see auto-rickshaw drivers and passers-by gathered outside the gate. "See that crowd outside the gate," she bellows into the microphone. "Now, that's what makes me really happy!" She waves out to them, greeting them loudly in Bangla as she sways to the beats of the synthesiser.

"I feel the greatest satisfaction when people clap at my songs... I live for that"

Credit Belani Group who are developing a riverside residential complex in the area. Coming from a traditional middle-class Tamil Brahmin family, Uthup claims she always felt more at ease in saris and *salwar kameez* than jeans. "I'm comfortable in my own skin," she insists. In a world of slinky, sequined gowns and flamboyant wigs, she—unwittingly—stood apart as the girl next door. "Men felt

"Usha *didi* has this incredible ability to adapt to the age and profile of her audience," says event manager Oindrilla Dutt, who has organised more than 40 shows for Uthup in the past 18 years. "She is informal and irreverent with the younger generation and surprisingly genteel while performing for the older crowd." On stage, as Uthup's voice flits from the Latin beat of *Copa cabana* to the folksy



Courtesy: USHA UTHUP

Star moments: (clockwise from top left) with actor Amitabh Bachchan; with former prime minister Indira Gandhi; with close friend and music director late R D Burman; with singer Lata Mangeshkar

Lemon tree and pop staple *We are the world*, her energy is infectious. She has just returned from a three-day marathon show in Doha in Qatar, and the day after meeting *Harmony* she will be on a 6 am flight to Mumbai to record for the promotional album for Shah Rukh Khan's newly minted cricket team, *Knight Riders*. From Mumbai, she will fly to Delhi to perform at Siri Fort auditorium and then to Nagpur.

Her knees hurt and her voice is gravely with fatigue but she remains chatty as we head to her house in Ballygunje in central Kolkata in her Toyota Innova. When she speaks about her upbringing, a clear picture emerges of a non-conformist. While elder sisters Indira and Uma (who

comprised the 1950s singing duo, 'Sami Sisters') learnt Carnatic music, Uthup has no formal training in any kind of music. Her parents—a police officer and a traditional Tamil Brahmin housewife—were ardent music enthusiasts. Besides Radio Ceylon, Beethoven, Mozart, M S Subbalakshmi, Bach, Harry Belafonte and Sinatra wafted through the household all day. When she was 12 years old, Uthup auditioned for her school choir—she went to Jesus and Mary Convent in Mumbai. She was rejected. "Years later, when I bumped into my music teacher at the Ashoka Hotel in Delhi, I sang *To sir, with love* for her," she remembers. "She wept through the song, and by the end of it so did I."

In the summer of 1967, while vacationing with her aunt in Chennai, she sang an impromptu number at a club. Impressed with her voice, the manager asked her to sing at the club through the length of her vacation. "I suddenly discovered that I found the greatest satisfaction when people clapped at my songs... even now, I live for that," admits Uthup.

After stints at Savera Hotel in Chennai and Hotel Ritz in Mumbai, she ended up becoming one of the most popular night-club singers in Kolkata. She went to record pop albums in English like *Scotch and Soda*, *Beautiful Sundays*, *You Set My Heart on Fire*, *Love Story* and *Ding a Ling* to name a few, apart from devotional songs in Malayalam and an



At her recording studio in Kolkata

album of *Rabindra Sangeet*. While singing at the Gazebo restaurant in Mumbai, during one of her occasional visits to the city, she befriended music composer R D Burman who recommended her voice for the 1971 cult hippie flick *Hare Ram Hare Krishna*. The song *Dum maro dum* reverberated with the rebellion of a generation that yearned to break free from established norms. The film became a mega hit and Bollywood opened its doors to Uthup, resulting in hits such as *One two, cha cha cha* (1978) in *Shalimar*; *Doston se pyar kiya* in *Shaan* (1980); *Hari om hari* in *Pyara Dushman* (1980); and *Ramba ho* in *Armaan* (1981).

She was nominated thrice for the Filmfare Award for Best Female Playback Singer—but didn't win. "Back then, they were not willing to experiment with unusual voices like they do now," says Uthup, who has sung in more than 13 Indian and eight foreign languages including Swahili, Russian and Creole. "At the same time," her voice rising a notch, "I feel I survived this long because of my stage presence. My image is all my own. For instance, when

people watch Madhuri Dixit sing on screen, they see Madhuri not Lata Mangeshkar... with all due respect to Lataji." Of the new generation, she admires composers like A R Rehman and Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy—Illaiyaraaja is her all-time favourite—and singers Sunidhi Chauhan, Sonu Nigam and Shreya Goshal. Despite the influx of newcomers, though, she has held onto her

"I have a unique relationship with God. I talk to him and even yell at him"

fan following. One among them is composer Bappi Lahiri, who calls her "the original pop diva of India".

But there are many who disagree. For instance, in 1983, the late RSP leader Jatin Chakraborty, PWD minister in chief minister Jyoti Basu's ministry, disrupted many of Uthup's shows across Kolkata alleging that her music was *apasanskriti* (decadent). Uthup filed and won a case against the government. "When I get upset by such episodes, I always ask myself three questions: 'Who am

I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?'" says Uthup. In her subsequent Bangla album, Uthup dedicated a song, *Ami shilpi*, to her resolve to continue singing against all odds.

According to sister Maya Sami, if there is anything bigger than Uthup's voice, it's her heart. "She is extremely generous to a fault," says Sami. Uthup has sung for many charitable causes—The Red Cross, The Spastic Society of India, government charity drives, drought and flood relief funds, old age homes, and schools for the blind—without charging a rupee. "Most people think I am very rich because I am doing so many shows," she says wryly. "What they fail to realise is that a lot of those shows are done free for charity and we are not flooded with money."

Her simple apartment, located on the ground floor of an old building, attests to this. It's

10.30 pm by the time we get there. A power cut in the area has cast an eerie gloom around us. Uthup's cosy two-bedroom apartment, though, is illuminated with battery-charged lamps. A large bronze Ganesha sculpture dominates the living room. "I am not much into religious rituals or *puja*, but I have my own unique relationship with God. I talk to him, yell at him, and sometimes even blackmail him," Uthup says with a chuckle.

Photographs of her children and grandchildren are perched



SHILBHADRA DATTA

Band of sisters: Flanked by elder sister Indira Srinivasan (left) and younger sister Maya Sami (right)

prominently on the shelves of a large wooden showcase. Married to Jani Uthup, who used to work with a tea plantation—now a businessman—Uthup has lived in Kolkata for the past 35 years. The couple have two children: Anjali, 35, a former radio jockey now a

Uthup's nephew Adi Pocha, a filmmaker and writer, shares similar feelings. "I have learnt a lot about showbiz from Usha aunty," he says. "She told me that it's more important to first win the trust of the audience by giving them what they want, so

wine but I can hardly tell the difference!" she confesses. "Although I have recently developed a taste for Bailey's Irish Cream liqueur."

As she lounges on the sofa, she shows off her curious footwear—Reebok sneakers with golden *zari* straps. "Cool, aren't they?" she asks impishly. She has given up high heels recently to placate her aching knees. But she has no plans to retire or take a break. These days, she is providing the finishing touches to a multi-lingual album tentatively titled *Kashmir to Kanyakumari*, which will feature songs in different Indian dialects. After her recent foray into music direction, she is also keen to compose more actively for films. The secret of her vitality? "I have befriended time," she responds. "At times, even if I feel I am slowing down slightly, I tell time to wait so I can catch up." ■

"Even if I feel I am slowing down slightly, I tell time to wait so I can catch up"

housewife, and Sunny, 34, who works with an event management firm. Daughter Anjali is full of praise for her mother. "I remember days when she would return from a concert at five in the morning, then cook our breakfast and lunch, stitch a dress for me and would be waiting when I got home at night." She feels Uthup is the most indulgent grandmother her eight year-old daughter and three year-old son could have asked for.

they are finally able to accept what you want to offer."

Family means a lot to Uthup, who enjoys regular get-togethers with her sisters Maya, Indira and Uma (Adi Pocha's mother) that comprise good food, long conversations and great wine. Off stage, Indira is a housewife and Maya is a consultant with an event management firm. "My sisters understand things like good



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Donating lives

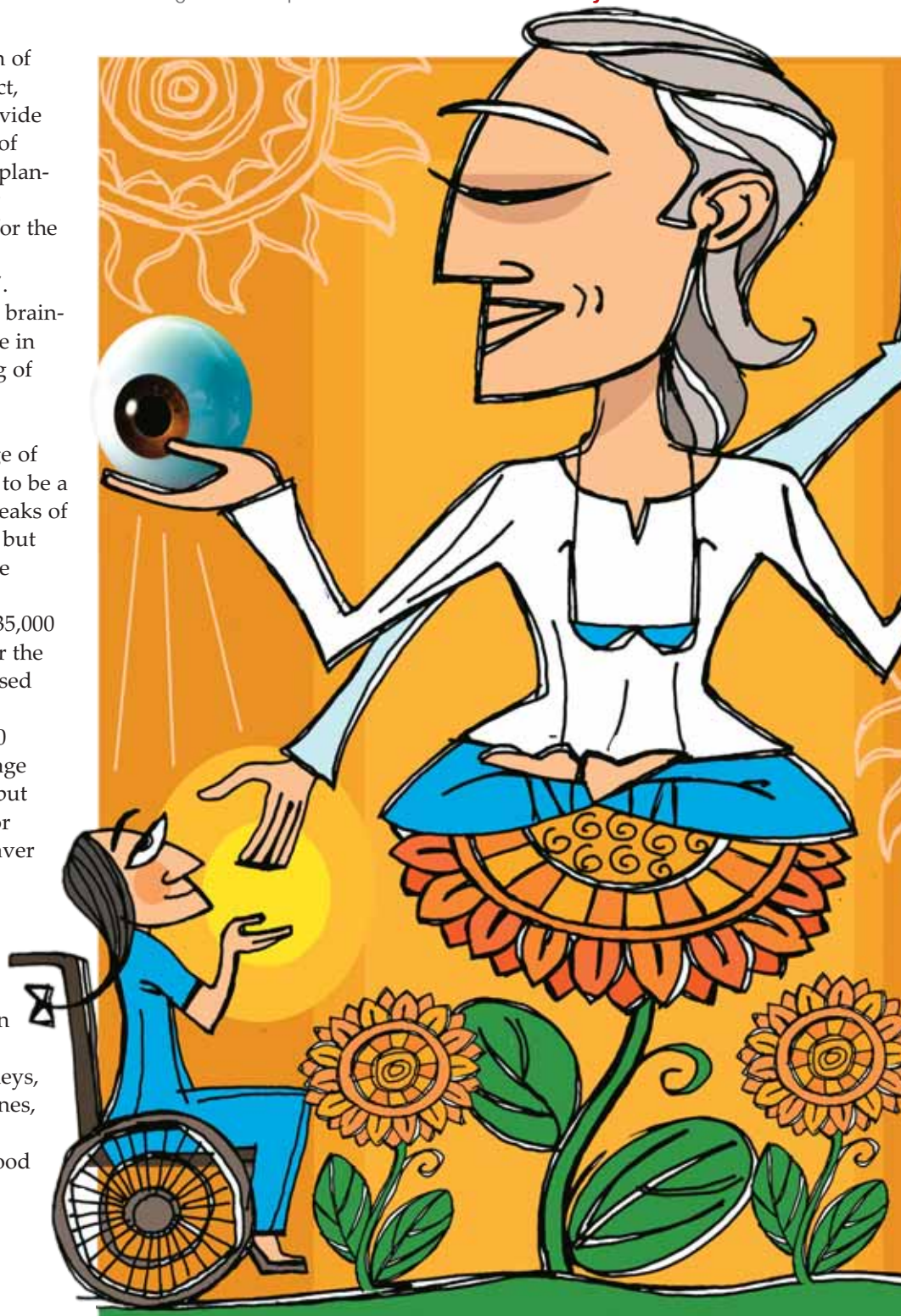
Lack of awareness and dearth of organ donors are the major hurdles in making the most of the Transplantation of Human Organs Act passed in 1995, learns **Anjana Jha**

The Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994, aims “to provide for the regulation of removal, storage and transplantation of human organs for therapeutic purposes and for the prevention of commercial dealings in human organs”. Recognising the concept of brain-stem death for the first time in India, it allowed harvesting of organs from cadavers.

However, a critical shortage of available organs continues to be a major problem. The Act speaks of transplants from cadavers, but according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), only 1,000 of the 35,000 transplants performed after the Act came into force have used organs from cadavers. For instance, more than 100,000 Indians suffer from end-stage kidney failure every year, but barely 3,000 receive a donor kidney. The figure for cadaver organs is abysmally small.

LAST RESORT

Doctors worldwide view organ transplant as the final line of treatment when a vital organ fails. Heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, kidneys, eyes, heart valves, skin, bones, bone marrow, connective tissues, middle ear, and blood vessels are major donor organs and tissues. Multi-organ transplant, which



involves bone marrow, heart, kidney, kidney-pancreas, liver and multi-visceral transplantation, enables a single donor to give a new lease on life to several terminally ill patients.

Regardless of age or gender, anyone can donate organs. The consent of a parent or legal guardian is essential if the donor is under the age of 18 years, with medical suitability for donation being determined at the time of death.

Cadaver donors:

Organs can be donated by a living person, or after a natural death or 'brain death'. Whereas only a few tissues like cornea, bone, skin and blood vessels can be donated after natural death, almost 37 different organs and tissues (including critical organs such as kidneys, heart, liver and lungs) can be donated after brain death.

Live donors: The Act allows only immediate blood relations—siblings, parents, children—to donate. A living donor is permitted to give one kidney (one kidney is capable of maintaining body functions), a portion of pancreas (half the pancreas is adequate for sustaining pancreatic functions), and part of the liver (the donated segments will regenerate after a period of time).

CADAVERIC TRANSPLANT PROGRAMME

One of the objectives of the Transplantation of Human

Organs Act was to legally develop a cadaver-based organ transplantation programme, but commerce in human organs has discouraged investment for setting up necessary infrastructure by competent medical institutions. According to Dr J V Thachil, chief urologist at Apollo Hospital, Chennai, "For a cadaver-based programme, a hospital needs a 24-hour laboratory for cross-matching as soon as an organ is harvested. It must also have the infrastructure for transplants—doctors, theatres and nurses in a constant state of preparedness."

Several organisations are now working with the objective of developing an effective cadaveric transplant programme, creating better awareness and changing social attitudes.

Hospitals also need counsellors to convince relatives of the brain-dead to donate organs. Once a brain-dead person's relatives agree, the transplant team has to act fast as delays affect the success rate. The shelf life of different organs varies. A kidney can be preserved for 48 hours, liver for 12 hours, heart for four hours, lung for six hours, eyes for several months and bones and skin for an indefinite period.

The Organ Retrieval Banking Organisation (ORBO) is a Delhi-based nodal centre at AIIMS for facilitating organ transplant. ORBO outlines two ways to donate organs—either by pledging organs after death while still alive, for which it issues a registration card with a number, or by consent of the family after death. But even when a person has pledged organs, it is difficult

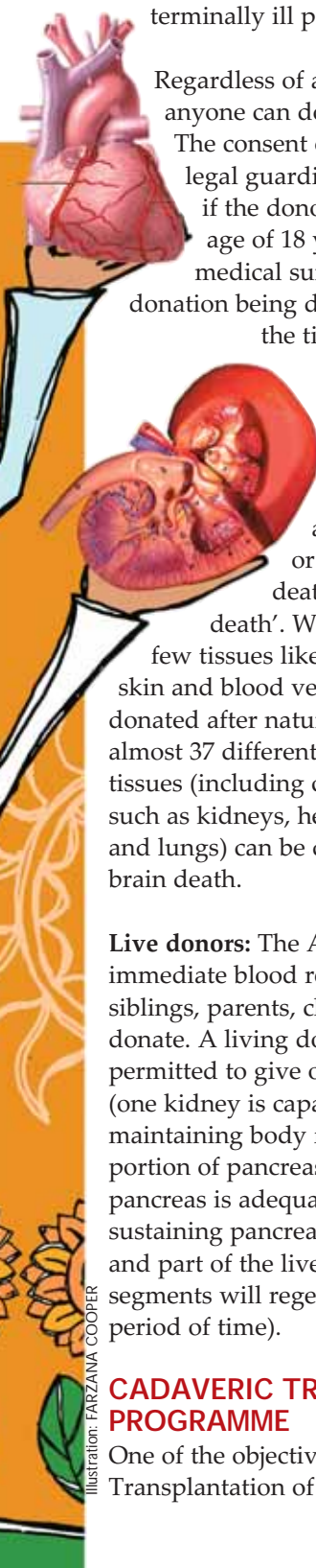
to persuade relatives who refuse to allow organs of the deceased to be removed. Hence the organisation conducts awareness programmes and holds camps to make people understand the need to donate organs.

Maintaining a database of registered donors and patients awaiting organ transplant, ORBO has an office in almost every major private and government hospital in Delhi. There are also offices in Kailash Hospital in Noida, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh, Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI) in Lucknow, and Care Hospital in Hyderabad.

Regardless of age or gender, anyone can donate organs

In Tamil Nadu, credit for better awareness and change in social attitudes about organ donation goes largely to the Multiple Organ Harvesting Aid Network (MOHAN), launched in January 1997 by Dr Sunil Shroff, a transplant surgeon who heads the department of urology and renal transplantation at Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute (SRMC&RI), Chennai. SRMC&RI has performed 57 kidney transplants (including 14 cadaveric kidney transplants) since 1995.

Besides the inception of a donor card scheme where a person agrees to his organs being harvested after his death,



MOHAN launched the Initiative for Organ Sharing (INOS) programme in December 1999 so that organs harvested in one hospital are available to another. The five linked hospitals—SRMC&RI, Apollo Hospitals, Sundaram Medical Foundation and Madras Medical Mission (MMM) in Chennai and Christian Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) in Vellore—not only shared more than 50 organs including three hearts and one liver, but also sent harvested organs to Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

“If we do not find a match in the five hospitals under MOHAN or in other hospitals in the state, we send them outside Tamil Nadu,” says Dr Shroff. Though MMM opted out in mid-2001, it received two hearts from the organisation. MOHAN has also tied up with TANKER (Tamil Nadu Kidney Research) Foundation, which helps patients suffering from kidney failure to make use of subsidised dialysis. Over 170 patients are waiting for an organ in the four hospitals linked to INOS.

In Kolkata, Ganadarpan has been campaigning relentlessly to create awareness. Established in 1977, the organisation started its body donation programme in 1985. A person who pledges to donate his body fills the *angikar* donor form, and receives a donor card after completion of the necessary formalities. Success has been gradual. “However, mindsets are changing and we are getting more voluntary donors than before,” says Brojo Roy, general secretary of Ganadarpan. “During 2007-08, over 105 cadavers have been

donated in Kolkata.”

This marginal success has not been replicated in terms of actual transplantation—no cadaver donation has been carried out in the city till date. “This is because of technical reasons,” says Roy. “It is difficult keeping a person ready and then waiting endlessly. There are several bureaucratic hassles that often contribute to the delay in handing over of the body. As a result, the organs cannot be used. However, we hope to surmount these hurdles soon and implement cadaver donation by next year.”

Political leaders and celebrities pledging to donate their organs

Liver transplant activity is still in its infancy in India

after death have enthused the common man. So far about 500,000 people in the state have signed an undertaking with Ganadarpan to donate their bodies for medical research and around 1,200 bodies have already been handed over to different medical colleges for research.

In Karnataka the cadaver organ programme appears to be making little progress despite starting in Bengaluru in 1998. Till April 2005, the Foundation for Organ Retrieval and Transplant Education (FORTE) facilitated the harvest of 40 kidneys, two livers and one heart. FORTE’s initiative paved the way for setting up of the Zonal Coordination Committee of Karnataka for Transplantation (ZCCK) by the government to promote cadaver

organ transplant. Though there are over 80 patients waiting for organs—mostly kidneys—ZCCK coordinated just one kidney transplant from a brain-dead accident victim in 2007. However, last year, the organisation—headed by D Nagaraja, director, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru—initiated the creation of a network of hospitals committed to cadaver organ transplant.

Liver transplant activity is still in its infancy in India. According to statistics, the number of transplants till May 2007 was just 342 in the entire country. But recently, terminally ill Suman Kapoor received a new lease on life after what is claimed to be the country’s first successful re-transplant using a living donor liver. With both sons each donating half a liver, the 54 year-old lawyer is now leading a normal life after doctors at Gangaram Hospital in Delhi conducted the second liver transplant on him, a year-and-a-half after the first.

SHOWING THE WAY

Leading the way in kidney transplants from brain-dead patients, Apollo Hospital in Chennai performed the country’s first cadaver renal transplant in October 1995. The Madras Medical Mission performed the country’s first successful heart transplant in 1995 and heart-lung transplant in 1998.

Mumbai has 23 approved transplant centres/hospitals to facilitate organ transplant. The Zonal Transplant Coordination Centre (ZTCC), set up in 2000 by a government resolution, has



Ashok Shah lives on a donated kidney

been the chief facilitator of organ transplant in the city. ZTCC has about 850 registered patients waiting for a kidney transplant, and over 50 patients waiting for liver transplant. However, not more than 20 kidney patients every year are successful in getting a cadaver transplant, with the number being far less for liver transplant. "The fact that only half the organs donated in the city come from cadavers illustrates the disappointing response the cadaver transplant programme has evoked," says Dr Vatsala Trivedi, general secretary, ZTCC and consultant, Sir H N Hospital, Mumbai.

Ashok Shah was fortunate to receive a kidney through ZTCC in April 2002; he had to wait for three years. The transplant was successful and though medicines are a lifelong requirement, Shah, 65, leads a normal and healthy retired life. Priti and Swapan Laskar, registered with ZTCC for kidney transplant, have not been that fortunate. Priti, a 50 year-old homemaker is waiting for the past four-and-a-half years and



VILAS KALGUTKER

Khamrunissa Khan, 71, has regained her vision after corneal transplant in one eye

has to undergo dialysis thrice a week. Her 55 year-old engineer husband, who suffers from diabetic nephropathy, underwent renal failure in February 2008.

Ranjit Singh, 52, who runs a dairy business in Ludhiana, was

Only 20 kidney patients get cadaver donations every year

diagnosed with renal failure in 2001. After eight months of dialysis, his doctor advised him that a transplant was the only option for survival. With that began a frantic search for a donor. The only person in the family whose blood group matched Singh's was his elder brother. However, complications—like being struck by jaundice twice before—made him unsuitable. This was also the time

when organ trafficking had been unearthed in Punjab. His friends suggested going to another city to look for a donor. Singh chose Kolkata and found one for Rs 200,000. He spent another Rs 150,000 on various tests and Rs 200,000 for the surgery. The transplant was a success, but Singh could not get good post-operative care owing to the clandestine nature of the deal. Singh returned to Ludhiana in September 2003. Though taking precautions has become second nature, Singh continues to supervise his business regularly.

THE HEART TO SHARE

Waiting to get a matching donor for organ transplant remains a long, painful, and at times frustrating experience for patients and their families. "From about 2005, the number of transplants has come down considerably," says Dr Vatsala Trivedi of ZTCC. "Though the number of hospitals has increased from 13 to 23, their

ORGAN DONATION

- A person can pledge for organ donation by filling a donor form in the presence of two witnesses, one being a near relative. The hospital gives the person an organ donor card bearing a registration number. The person should convey the decision to the family.
- Family members can donate the organs of an unregistered person who has passed away by signing a consent form provided at that time. Organs are harvested within a few hours.
- The entire process is carried out by the transplant coordination team. It ensures that the body of the deceased is returned to the family without any disfigurement. Funeral arrangements are not delayed.

concerted effort has perhaps come down." Only 160 cadaver kidney transplants and 12 liver transplants have been performed since Dr Trivedi performed the first cadaver kidney transplant on 27 March 1997.

Unfortunately, not a single heart transplant has been conducted in Maharashtra in the 14 years since the Act permitted it. In Mumbai, Lilavati Hospital, Jaslok Hospital, Hinduja Hospital, Wockhardt Hospital, the Asian Heart Institute, Kothari Hospital and Nanavati Hospital are permitted to conduct heart transplants. "In 2003, four people registered for the surgery but we couldn't find donors," says Dr Trivedi.

Though Mumbai has advanced medical infrastructure, nothing can be done without donor hearts. The heart must come from someone who has been declared brain dead and whose family agrees to donate the organ. "Most of our patients' relatives are not ready to donate the brain dead patient's heart," says Dr Anil Kumar, president of the Asia Pacific Society of Cardiology. "They think there is hope of recovery as long as the heart beats." Dr Gustad Davar, vice-president of ZTCC, agrees with him, saying, "It is not very easy

for someone to donate a brain dead patient's heart that is beating." It's also expensive—it costs more than Rs 4 million, which not everyone can afford.

NEW VISION

The fact that the percentage of people willing to donate eyes is substantially higher than those willing to donate solid organs after death is significant. Despite drawing a blank in cadaver organ donation, Ganadarpan in Kolkata boasts of quite a few successful eye transplants. "As soon as the kin of the deceased inform us, a team of doctors rushes to the spot to retrieve the cornea; surgery is done soon after," says Roy.

Though there are several eye banks in Mumbai, only the Eye Bank Coordination & Research Centre (EBCRC) and Ramakrishna Bajaj Eye Bank have the facility to evaluate corneal quality and pay about 70 per cent of the costs for poor recipients. At present, the waiting list at EBCRC is 450, with the average waiting period being one to six months. In 2007, the eye bank received 2,057 eyes. Matching depends on the count of cells in the eye, with age match being the rule. Blind in both eyes, Khamrunissa Khan, 71, paid Rs 13,000 for a transplant in one

eye in January this year. An emergency case, she had to wait only one-and-a-half months. Khan is now contemplating a second eye transplant.

FUTURE WATCH

An effective programme requires the government to link its hospitals with private facilities for developing a common organ pool. As a step towards checking the rampant illegal trade, it is contemplating amending the Human Organs Act. Besides the establishment of 10 Organ Retrieval and Banking Organisations in the next couple of months, there would be separate centres to brief counsellors. It would be mandatory for intensive care units to announce brainstem dead patients. Trauma centres set up along the highway would facilitate harvest of cadaver organs. According to the draft of the amendments being framed, a separate National Accredited Board for Laboratories would be set up for undertaking assessment and accreditation of testing and calibration of laboratories in accordance with the international standard. ■

—With Padmini Natarajan in Chennai; Vandana Shukla in Chandigarh; Ritusmita Biswas; and Runa Mukherjee in Mumbai

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The change

Dr Sonia Malik clarifies doubts about menopause

Q I am 49. If my periods stopped for three months and started again, am I approaching menopause?

A You are passing through perimenopause. Different patterns of menstruation can occur before actual menopause:

- Periods occur irregularly, then occasionally one is missed and finally they cease altogether.
- Menstrual flow gradually lessens and occasionally periods are completely missed.
- Normal periods are followed by several months of no periods until the gap amounts to a complete halt.
- Often the cycle length shortens and periods become more frequent—every 21-25 days.
- Menstruation stops suddenly.

Q What are hot flashes? What do I do when I get them?

A Hot flashes (or hot flushes) occur when blood vessels expand and give free access to blood on the skin surface. The body temperature rises, the heartbeat goes up and you sweat. Night sweats are simply hot sweats that happen at night. The following home remedies may be tried. If these do not work, consult your doctor for medication.

- Drink cold/ice water
- Use a hand fan for instant cooling
- A cool bath at night can prevent night sweats
- Use cotton sheets and clothes, as synthetics may make you feel warmer
- Wear loose clothes

Q Can I have joint pains because of menopause?

A Many women undergo joint pains and body aches. Though often mistaken for arthritis, these are actually caused by muscle weakness resulting from hormonal changes.

Q Will it be difficult for me to hold urine as I grow older?

A Urinary incontinence can be one of the most distressing symptoms of menopause. Bladder muscles weaken owing to childbirth in many women and this gets aggravated after menopause. Initially, incontinence occurs while coughing and sneezing, but later even changing posture may cause it. Consult your doctor for options regarding medicine or surgery. Do not take any over-the-counter drugs without consultation.

Q Are medical checks mandatory in menopause?

A Most deaths or suffering can be prevented with a regular check-up. Most cancers can now be detected very early and cured completely. A timely bone density test can prevent osteoporosis. Heart disease can be prevented with tests to check the status of the heart and taking adequate medicine and exercise.

Q What is the recommended protocol for medical checks?

A The Indian Menopause Society has issued guidelines for medical check-up of menopausal women. A doctor must examine every woman who has attained menopause. This must include a general examination and examination of the breasts and genitals.

Some special tests must also be carried out:

- Cervical/PAP smear (detects cervical cancer): Recommended every year after the age of 35.
- Vaginal ultrasonography of uterus and ovaries (detects uterine and ovarian cancer) every year after menopause.
- Mammography is recommended every two years after 40 years and every year after the age of 50. Should be done every year if there is family history of breast cancer.
- Lipid profile (assesses risk of heart disease) every year.

- Other tests like bone densitometry for detection of osteoporosis and hormonal testing should be done only on indication.

Q Will I be able to enjoy sex after menopause?

A Sexual desire varies from person to person. Some women consider menopause as an age of greater freedom, as there is no risk of getting

pregnant. However, most women feel they must retire as they grow older. It is normal to experience loss of interest in sex—temporary or long-term—after menopause. On the other hand, it is best to follow your own desire because sexual desires in later years is also not an abnormal phenomenon, though many women experience increasing difficulty in intercourse because of vaginal dryness. This can be overcome by using lubricants or an oestrogen cream after consulting your doctor. ■

Dr Sonia Malik is president of Indian Menopause Society; consultant (Infertility & IVF); director of Southend Fertility & IVF Centre, Holy Angels Hospital, New Delhi; and head of department of IVF, Maxhealthcare, New Delhi

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I am 70 years old. I am the vice-president of All India Non-Pensioned cum Senior Citizen Retirees' Association, Bengaluru. The association espouses the cause of non-pensioned senior citizen retirees, mainly from the public sector. For more information, please visit our website www.allindia.nonpensioned.retirees.org or e-mail ainp.cum.scra@gmail.com

B S Das
19 (old 511), 1st Cross, 'B' Block,
4 in Main, Vinayak Nagar,
Airport Road, Bengaluru-560017.

I am 63 years old. I love travelling all over the country; reading fiction and detective novels; listening to Hindustani classical and old Hindi film songs; and cooking vegetarian food. People who share similar hobbies can contact me at the following address:

Nirmal Lingappaji
D-2, Belavadi Apartments,
13th Cross, 8th Main, Malleswaram,
Bengaluru-5600003. Tel: 080-23465252

I am 59 years old. I am a voracious reader and I am very keen on setting up a club for book lovers, where readers can exchange books, magazines, ideas and views. I am looking for

people with whom I can collaborate on this venture. You can contact me at the following address:

M R Sethi
275/5, Gandhi Nagar, Jind,
Haryana-126102.
Mobile: (0) 9416990275
Email: profmrsethi@gmail.com

I am 77 years old. I have travelled extensively to Kedarnath, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Mussoorie, Shimla and Nainital and would like to guide people who are interested in exploring any of these places (including Delhi).

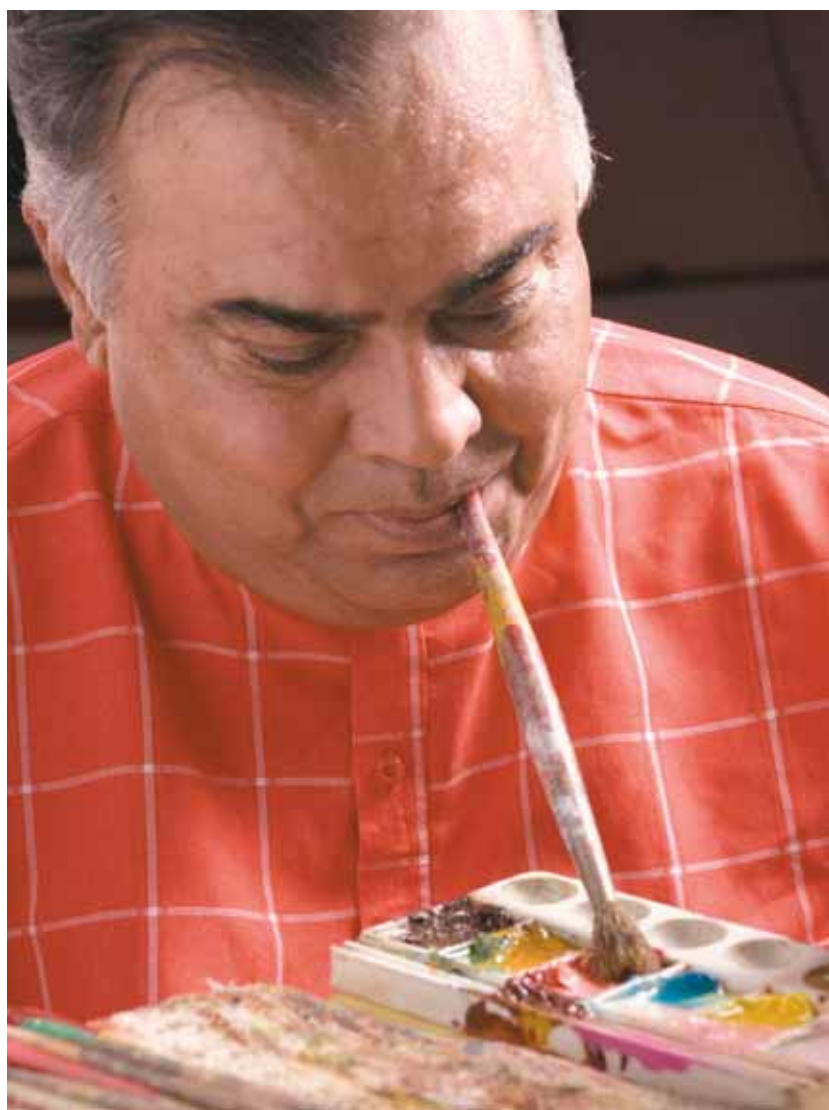
Y P Duggal
F-106, Lajpat Nagar-I
New Delhi-110024.
Tel: 011-29812326

I am 56 years old. I would like to meet like-minded silvers who are interested in travel, music, Hindi movies and Indian culture. You can contact me at the following address:

Ghansham H Bharucha
59, Magan Baug, Sun Mill Road,
Mumbai-400 013. Tel: 022-29984028
Mobile: (0) 9323910881

Different strokes

Hari Ram Kohli tells **Khursheed Dinshaw** how he defied paralysis with a paintbrush in his mouth and courage in his heart



VIKRAM PATWARDHAN AND MAYURESH MOGHE

Belgaum in Karnataka. Being a keen sportsman, he had already won several awards of excellence. In 1972, while demonstrating a somersault during a sports event, Kohli slipped and hurt his neck. The injury left him paralysed neck down. It took him more than six months to make his way through tears, denial and anger to accept that he would never be able to use his arms and legs.

In 1978, while resting at the Paraplegic Rehabilitation Centre in Pune, he noticed the adjustable table attached to his bed. "I requested an attendant to give me a pen and paper and attempted to write my name holding the pen in my mouth," recalls Kohli. After he managed to write his name, he tried to draw flowers and leaves. A few months later, he came across a greeting card painted by a mouth artist. He immediately found out the address of the International Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists based in Liechtenstein in Europe. Kohli stayed at the centre till 1998 and feels the time he spent there was a turning point in his life. He even taught other patients to paint and write their own letters.

In his desire to paint, he forgot everything else. "I spent a lot of time watching birds, flowers and my surroundings," says the mouth painter, who has painted more than 10,000 greeting cards.

When Hari Ram Kohli paints, onlookers are awed not just by the precision of his work but also his spirit. Seated in a wheelchair, he fills the taut white canvas in front of him with deft, colourful strokes with a paintbrush held

firmly between his lips. The 55 year-old became a mouth painter after he was brutally injured during his tenure in the Indian Air Force.

In 1971, Kohli joined the Air Force as ground training instructor and was posted at

He is the only person from Pune to be a member of the International Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists. The association comprises over 700 artists worldwide—most of them afflicted by paraplegia.

Kohli cherishes the recognition he received in China where he participated in an international mouth and foot-painting exhibition in 1992. “I interacted with many artists, some of them in condition worse than mine,” he recounts. Some artists that he met couldn’t even be helped into a sitting position—they painted lying down. In 1986, he held an exhibition at Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai where renowned

Despite being constrained by his condition, Kohli continues to retain a positive outlook on life

Every year, he sends 10-15 paintings to the Mumbai office of the International Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists where digital prints of his paintings are adapted into cards, calendars and gift sets and then sold to corporate houses and individual buyers. “Irrespective of whether my painting is selected for reproduction or not, the association pays me a monthly salary,” he explains.

For the past three years, he has lived in a rented flat with four attendants who cook for him,

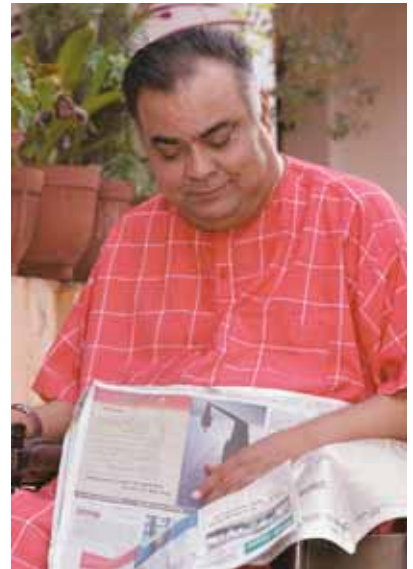
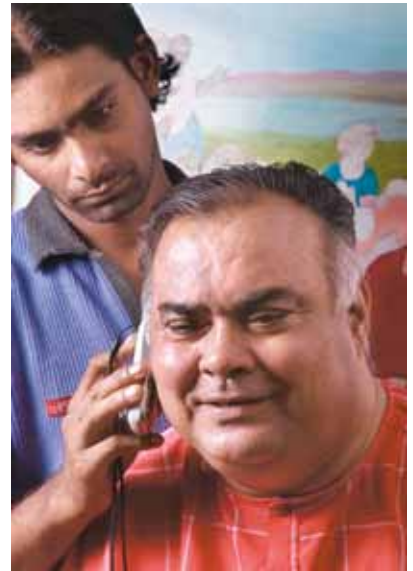
Kohli believes everyone has latent talents that need to be discovered

artist M F Husain praised his work. “I enjoy the praise as well as the suggestions on how to improve my work,” says Kohli. Over the years, he has progressed from pencil sketches to oil colours. His oil paints, canvas, drawing board and brushes are of the standard variety available in the market—none of these are modified to his needs. Even the pen he uses to write letters with is a standard ink pen.

Kohli starts painting at 6 am every day and takes 10-15 days to complete a 2 ft x 18 inches canvas. Though creatively fulfilling, the process is also painstaking. The first coat of paint has to be allowed to dry for a couple of days before he can move onto the second. Flowers and birds are his favourite subjects as they offer ample scope for shading.

feed him and help him bathe. “I tried living with my relatives but it didn’t work out,” he says. The eldest among four brothers and a sister, his mother is a housewife and his father passed away in 1985. Though his family visits him occasionally, he has come this far solely with determination.

When he is not painting, Kohli visits the local market to admire the riot of colours. Besides watching movies, he loves listening to old Hindi songs. He has earned a fair share of fame—people from his locality drop in regularly to watch him work. His belief that everyone has latent talents that simply need to be discovered has kept him going. He sums up his journey as an artist succinctly, “My paintings did not just help me financially but saved me from dying of depression.” ■



Have a cool summer!

Dr Pushpesh Pant's recipes for the season

Seemingly pale and insipid, button mushrooms are high on nutrition and moisture content. So is cheese. Add yogurt, and the effect is all the

more cooling. Throw in a few whole red and green chillies to preserve the original flavour of mushrooms and cheese.

KHUMB DOPYAZA

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Button mushrooms (large): 400 gm
- Onions (medium): 250 gm; finely sliced
- Green chillies: 2; deseeded and slit lengthwise
- Whole red chillies: 2-3; wiped clean with moist cloth
- Ginger: 2-inch piece; washed

and cut as matchsticks

- Butter: 1 tbsp
- Salt to taste

METHOD

Wash the mushrooms well and wipe dry. Trim stalks but do not cut or slice. Melt some butter in a pan. Glaze the whole red chillies in it, remove and reserve; then put the sliced onions in. Stir the onions continuously till they are translucent. Now add mushrooms and sprinkle salt. Stir-fry

over high heat for about three minutes, then add green chillies. Add whole red chillies and garnish with ginger. Resist the temptation to add any other spices or herbs.

Mushrooms have a delicate flavour of their own that should not be smothered. If you like a little sauce-like gravy, don't evaporate all the moisture while stir-frying. Another thing: don't pair them with tomatoes!





THANDA ACHARI PANEER

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Paneer/cottage cheese: 500 gm; cut into 2-inch chunks
- Mustard oil: 3 tbsp
- Coriander powder: 1 tsp
- Yellow or Kashmiri chilli powder: 1 tsp
- A pinch of turmeric powder
- Fennel seeds (*saunf*): 1 tsp
- Dried raw mango powder

(*amchur*): 1/2 tsp

- Nigella seeds (*kalonji*): 1/2 tsp
- Mustard seeds: 1/2 tsp
- Whole red chillies: 2; wiped with moist cloth and pat dried
- Green chillies: 3-4; deseeded
- Yogurt: 2 cups; whisked
- Salt to taste

METHOD

To the yogurt, add coriander, turmeric, Kashmiri chilli powder and salt. Whisk the yogurt and

keep aside. Heat two tablespoons of oil in a pan; add mustard, nigella and fennel seeds. Wait till the seeds begin to splutter, then add whole red chillies and stir-fry until the chillies change colour. Now add *paneer* along with powdered spices and stir-fry until the moisture evaporates. Add salt to taste. Remove the pan from heat and stir in the yogurt mixture. Pour the remaining mustard oil on top and garnish with slit green chillies.



KHUMB SHABNAM

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Button mushrooms: 200 gm
- Curd: 200 ml
- Oil: 1 tbsp
- Kashmiri chillies: 1 tsp
- Cumin powder: 1 tsp
- Aromatic Kashmiri *garam masala* (optional): 1 tsp
- Green chillies: 2; slit lengthwise

- A pinch of turmeric

- Salt to taste

METHOD

Wash the mushrooms well, pat dry and slice or quarter (as you prefer). Beat the curd with cumin powder, *garam masala*, turmeric and chilli powder, and keep aside. Coat a non-stick frying pan with a thin film of oil and heat. Add the mushrooms and stir-fry on high heat. Take care, though, that the mushrooms do not

scorch and lose moisture. Take off the flame and allow to cool. Pour in the spiced beaten curd and mix well. Garnish the gravy with slit green chillies and serve with rice or *roti*. ■



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



Hips that hurt?

Shameem Akthar tells you how yoga can help

Nature has given our hip joints a limited range of motion as they are key load-bearers.

This strategy of bio-engineering was meant

to make our posture steady. However, we have further cramped the hip joint by overuse—running, cycling or engaging in activity that overextends it—or under-working it with a sedentary lifestyle that clamps down blood supply to the joints, thus creating stiffness.

Further, weak and flaccid leg and back muscles add to hip problems. Here, lack of right exercise is the major culprit. Sitting or standing for long on hard surfaces is said to cause painful hip bursitis. Ill-fitting footwear and bad posture also aggravate pain. Obesity is another burden on the overloaded hip. And a diet that slams the body with excessive uric acid waste (seen with non-vegetarian fare) or foods that lack key repairing nutrients and calcium degenerate the joint further. A sensible combination of rest (when the pain is acute) and regular, monitored exercise is actually the right way to manage hip pain.

A well-designed exercise regimen with isometric movements and stretches works out the hip joint gently without compromising healing. It also helps to strengthen the supporting back, leg, thigh, and calf muscles—when these are elastic and supple, they help the hip by taking the load off it. Yogic workouts not only work on the muscles, but also corresponding tendons and cartilage. These include poses like ankle crank (*goolf ghoornan*), ankle circle (*goolf chakra*), ankle bend (*goolf naman*), toe bend (*padanguli naman*), and modified versions of the hip circle (*shroni chakra*), leg circle (*pada sanchalanasana*), the groin-stretching half butterfly (*ardha titali*) and full butterfly (*poorna titali*).

Sustained weight loss also helps take the pressure off the hips. Several yogic practices aid the process by controlling hunger and hiking metabolism. These include the sun hand gesture (*surya mudra*) and cooling breath control practice (*seetali pranayama*). Similarly, all-curing breathing practices like victory breath (*ujjayi*) and humming bee (*bhramari*) help with endurance and healing. Yoga *nidra* (sleep) meditation rounds off this healing superbly by triggering the rejuvenating parasympathetic nervous system. ■

Yogic moves

Lying bound angle pose (*supta baddhakonasana*)

Lie on your back. Fold legs at knees, place feet flat on ground. Inhale. Exhale; drop the knees gently to either side. Inhale; bring knees back to the centre. While bringing knees back to the centre, squeeze them together. Simultaneously squeeze the hip muscles tightly. This is one round. Repeat this six times.

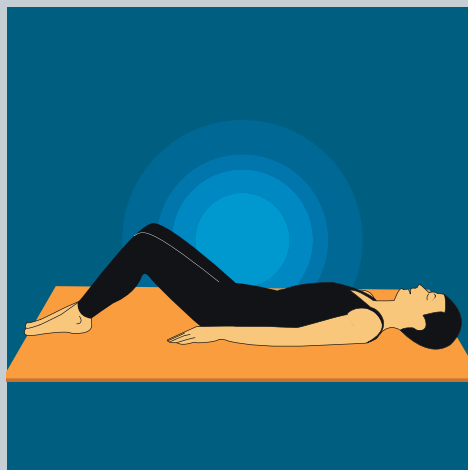


Illustration: UTKARSH SANJANWALA

Benefits: This pose works gently on the hip joint and makes the hips and groin more supple. It strengthens and stretches the inner thigh muscles. The hip muscles enjoy an isometric exercise that firms and strengthens them without too much exertion. The pose is also a mood elevator and stress-buster if you hold it gently for a few seconds longer each time before dropping the knees on either side.

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)

HEALTH BYTES

BREATH OF LIFE

You can now give CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) even if you are not trained for it. CPR can help double the survival rate in case of cardiac arrest, but only about a third of victims who collapse get CPR from bystanders. According to the recommendations published in the April issue of *Circulation*, the journal of the American Heart Association, numerous studies in animals, and five others in humans, have convinced experts that **hands-only CPR from an untrained bystander is usually as effective as CPR with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation performed by a person trained in the technique.** This does not apply to cardiac arrest in children or that owing to drowning or drug overdose, which usually require rescue breathing.

"We want people to act, as administering chest compressions alone in these situations is better than doing nothing," says Dr Michael R Sayre, lead author of the recommendations and an associate



professor of emergency medicine at Ohio State University. According to figures from CADI (Coronary Artery Disease among Asian Indians) Research Foundation, California, India will have 62 million patients with heart disease by 2015, compared to 16 million in the US. Time for Indians to equip themselves with CPR skills.

HEARTBREAK



A new study says that to lose a partner to death can increase the chances of death for the surviving partner, especially among men. A British team of researchers has found that **bereft people face the risk of death in the first year of being widowed**, and men are six times more likely to die of a broken heart. The team reached the conclusion after analysing 11,454 life annuity policies. In 1,048 cases, the men died and the wives survived, and in 255 cases, women died and the men survived. "This suggests that the broken heart syndrome has a stronger impact on men than on women; and the effect is stronger on older people who have been married longer," confirms lead researcher Dr Jaap Spreeuw.

SHELTER AND CARE

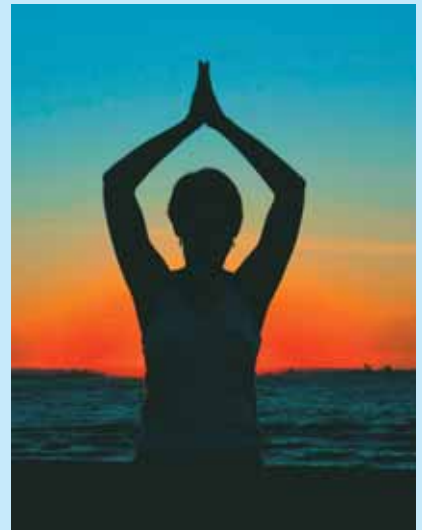
On 13 April, J J Hospital in Mumbai inaugurated a **shelter for patients' relatives.** Built by Jeevan Jyot Care Trust—the NGO has spent Rs 1.2 million on the project—it offers boarding and lodging. There's even a kitchen for those who want to cook their own meals. "At any point of time, our hospital has about 1,300 patients accompanied by their relatives," hospital dean Dr Pravin Shingare tells *Harmony*. "Everyone can't afford accommodation in the city; others may not wish to leave the patient and go elsewhere. So they end up sleeping in corridors and eat wherever they can. We had approached several organisations with the proposal of a shelter. Jeevan Jyot was the quickest to respond." Patients' kin who wish to avail of these facilities only have to get a letter and identity card from the J J administration.



VILAS KALGUTKER

YOGA = BALANCE

A preliminary study conducted at Temple University's Gait Study Center in the US reports that **yoga may help prevent falls in women over age 65** by improving stability and balance. After nine weeks of participating in an Iyengar Yoga programme designed for silvers, 24 elderly women had a faster stride, increased flexibility in the lower extremities, improved single-leg stance and increased confidence in balance, according to the study. "There was also a pronounced difference in how pressure was distributed on the bottom of the foot, which helps to maintain balance," says principal investigator Dr Jinsup Song, director of the Gait Study Center. "We were very impressed at the progress our participants made." The regimen was developed with the assistance of yoga guru B K S Iyengar and implemented by certified Iyengar Yoga instructor Marian Garfinkel. The programme was crafted specifically for elderly people with little or no yoga experience.



DRUG ALERT

A study published in the journal *Public Library of Science Medicine*, UK, claims that **anti-psychotic drugs given to advanced Alzheimer's patients with mild behavioural problems cause a significant deterioration in verbal and cognitive skills** within six months of use. The study involved 165 people with advanced Alzheimer's living in nursing homes in Oxfordshire, Newcastle, Edinburgh and London and focused on the effects of 'neuroleptics'—drugs used to manage neuropsychiatric symptoms of Alzheimer's. "Even six months of treatment would harm patients with mild behavioural problems," Clive Ballard, a professor of age-related disorders and lead author of the study, tells the BBC.

EPIDEMIC!

Diabetes is on the rise worldwide, with India and China in the lead. According to figures released by researcher Paul Zimmet at the International Diabetes Federation's Western Pacific Region Congress held in New Zealand, in April, the numbers are expected to grow by more than 50 per cent by 2025. People with Type 2 diabetes are expected to increase from 250 million in 2007 to 380 million by 2025. Zimmet, who serves as foundation director of the International Diabetes Institute in Melbourne, Australia, says about two-thirds of cases worldwide are found in the Asia-Pacific region. "I would get governments to focus on creating an environment that's conducive for people to do things they should do to prevent not only diabetes, but obesity and heart disease," he says. An independent paper



brought out by India's industry chamber Assocham in 2007, titled *Epidemic of New Millennium—Diabetes*, reveals that **India is expected to have 57 million diabetics by 2025** owing to lifestyle choices.

HEALTH BYTES



SEEING RED

Anger isn't always a bad thing, according to researchers. A new study published in the April issue of journal *Psychological Science* claims that **people like to temper their emotions to the task at hand and it can help them succeed**, even if the emotions are not pleasurable. Psychologists from Boston College and Stanford University told participants that they would either play a computer game that is confrontational (a shooter game involving killing enemies is the primary goal) or one that is not confrontational (where players guide a waitress serving customers). Participants then rated the extent to which they would like to engage in different activities before playing the game. Participants ended up preferring activities that were likely to make them angry (e.g., listening to anger-inducing music) and the angry participants performed better than others in the confrontational game whereas their performance dipped in the non-confrontational game. "Such findings," the authors say, "prove that what people prefer to feel at any given moment may depend on what they might get out of it." This means that we can effectively use our feelings to help us get emotionally tuned to the task at hand.



CLIMB WITH CARE

Next time you need help on an escalator, don't hesitate to ask. Based on an analysis of data collected by US-based Consumer Product Safety Commission, a study has shown that from 1991 to 2005, nearly 40,000 Americans older than 65 were injured while taking an

escalator. That's an average of 2,660 people a year. In that period, rate of injury more than doubled—from 4.9 for 100,000 people in 1991 to 11 for 100,000 people in 2005. The report was published in the March issue of *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, a US journal for advanced understanding of causes of accidents and ways of prevention. There were no fatalities but over 2,500 people were hospitalised for broken bones. "Overall, **escalators are safe. But there are chances for injuries to occur, and older adults need to be cautious**," says Dr Joseph O'Neil, associate professor at Indiana University.

INSULIN EFFECT

Insulin can now help non-diabetics, too. A study conducted at the Joslin Diabetes Center, Boston, USA, says **insulin has a previously unknown effect that plays a role in ageing and lifespan**. The report, published in the 21 March issue of *Cell*, a journal for novel research in experimental biology, explains that insulin inhibits a master

gene regulator protein known as SKN-1. This protein controls a network of genes that prevents cells and tissue from damage caused by high levels of free radicals (byproducts of metabolism) and various environmental toxins. Increased activity of SKN-1 promotes longevity.

This new finding was demonstrated in experiments on the digestive system of *C. elegans*, a microscopic worm often used as a model organism. These experiments will be replicated in mammals, confirms T Keith Blackwell, senior investigator at Joslin and author of the study.



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



Mindspeak

Your mind defines your world, says Swami Sukhabodhananda

Your mind is a learning system. It learns what you teach it through your communication with yourself.

If you keep telling yourself, "I am unhappy, I am frustrated, I am miserable," you will find yourself unhappy, frustrated and miserable. We focus on what we communicate with others, but not on what we communicate to ourselves. More than the incident, the way we interpret an incident mentally decides our experience of it.

Suppose someone scolds you for breaking a valuable vase. You consider the scolding as unjustified, disproportionate to the offence, and humiliating to you personally. Soon the contextual features disappear from your mind, and you carry only the feeling of hurt and humiliation occasioned by your subjective reaction to the act of scolding. If you hold one's scolding not as a sorrow, but as an understanding that the person is releasing his or her tensions, you will be more compassionate.

The average mind expends itself on the trivial and the inessential. If you look around, you will see a lot of people engaged in trivial pursuits. Huge amounts of time and money are spent on breaking world records in activities that are absolutely pointless. Who eats the most number of worms in the quickest time? Who spits the farthest? We have lost our ability to tell the significant from the insignificant. Our mind has been manipulated from accepting the non-distinction as natural.

A life lived under the control of a mind given to trivialities is a life spent in the dark regions of hell. A person went to the seventh heaven after hard but useful work on earth. An angel told him that what-

ever he wished for would be fulfilled at the moment of wishing without having to do anything for its fulfilment. He enjoyed the magical phenomenon for about a week. However, after the novelty wore off, he felt bored as there was no challenge involved in the realisation of his desires. An angel appeared to him and asked, "What can I do for you?" "I need to do something towards fulfilling my desires. There is no fun if desires are fulfilled without any effort from my part." The angel replied, "There is no provision for effort in the seventh heaven."

Absence of effort and exertion made life in heaven a hellish ordeal for this man. Another person with a mind given to lethargy and ease would find the same place, the same experience, heavenly. What accounts for the difference between heaven and hell now? Is it the same place perceived by two different minds? Let us get very clear. Heaven and hell are not geographical or cosmological entities. Rather, they are categories of thought arrived at by human minds in accordance with patterns of perception they are used to or trained in. Differences in training

and perception can lead to the categorisation of the same life experience as constituting heaven in one case and hell in another. Let us not be a victim to our definition. Only then will we experience heaven as heaven and not as hell.

Is it not better to be useful than to be happy? Usefulness comes into its own only in an environment of

happiness, which is a state of harmony between our inner being and the external world. A terrorist feels that terrorism is useful to accomplish a purpose, but terrorism can never be useful because it runs counter to happiness. Let happiness be the primary characteristic of your life. Then being useful will be an extension of your happiness, i.e. part of your endeavour to make others happy. ■

More than the incident, the way we interpret an incident mentally decides our experience of it

Excerpt from Celebrating Success & Failure by Swami Sukhabodhananda (Jaico Publishing House; Rs 250; 224 pages). Swami Sukhabodhananda's teachings are based on Vedantic philosophies and Zen Buddhism

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Challenges ahead

Despite the tax clarifications, reverse mortgage is riddled with significant hurdles.

But these are surmountable, says **Devangshu Datta**



any, to heirs. Or, the heirs can redeem the mortgage directly.

Until last fiscal year, the tax treatment of this transaction was unclear. The Budget for 2008-09 has made some clarifications. A key point is that silvers will not be taxed on mortgage income—the reverse mortgage will be treated as a loan. It's still not clear if redemption by the heir would be tax-deductible just like a normal property purchase. This should logically be the case. If anyone redeems a mortgage of a stranger and takes possession, the associated transactions are tax-deductible.

But the major tax barrier that prevented the product taking off has been resolved. Now the biggest barrier to reverse mortgage is psychological. Indian parents are conditioned to sacrifice to create assets to leave to their children. Vice-versa, Indian children assume they will receive inheritances, regardless of how they treat their parents. That is an emotional double-whammy for silvers. Before committing to a reverse mortgage, silvers must overcome their own guilt and maybe cope with moral pressure, even violent resistance, from their children.

We all know of cases where children have sat and watched their parents die in penury while

There are few institutional structures to accommodate the special needs of silvers. The problems of daily life are compounded because many retirees are cash-poor. Inflation has eroded the value of their savings. Most expected that their children would care for them. It is painful for them to realise after retirement that this won't happen.

A new financial instrument—the reverse mortgage—could make matters a little more comfortable for some. Those who own the house they occupy can leverage

that asset into extra income and lead a more comfortable life.

The concept, as we know it: A retiree who owns a self-occupied house mortgages it to a lender. In return, the lender makes a monthly or quarterly payment and the owner continues to occupy his or her home during his lifetime. When the owner dies, the spouse continues to live there. After the spouse also passes away, the mortgage holder takes possession. The mortgage holder may sell the property and recover the loan amount, handing surpluses, if

waiting to inherit. A reverse mortgage provides an escape route for retirees in such sad circumstances. It's a route that children may try to block through fair means or foul.

Apart from the need to overcome social conditioning, lenders might be hesitant to step forward on account of lengthy property lawsuits. Taking possession of a reverse mortgaged house with the heir squatting on the premises may mean an extra decade of legal hassle for a lender.

Despite these hurdles, reverse mortgage is likely to catch on out of sheer economic necessity. A silver who has acquired a home has usually put a very large chunk of savings into it. In the process, he or she has usually become cash-poor. A reverse mortgage is a relatively painless

So far, the off-take of reverse mortgages has been very low but the tax treatment only improved from April 2008. Many lenders like State Bank of India, Canara Bank, Punjab National Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of Baroda, Allahabad Bank, Indian Bank, Axis Bank, Union Bank of India, Central Bank of India and LIC Housing Finance are offering the product. The devil in such cases is the fine print that needs to be worked out. The mortgagor should consult legal and tax experts before signing a deal.

Here are some key points where clarifications may be required by customers:

How much of the property value will the mortgage holder offer as a loan? The lender will not offer as much loan as the assessed value of the property.

most offers are at fixed rates ranging between 10 and 11 per cent with a rate reset occurring after every five years. It's up to the individual to try and figure out the criteria employed in rate resets. Redemption value may jump if rates are hiked.

There is also the matter of **cold-blooded assessment of life expectancy**. Reverse mortgages are on offer only to silvers over 60. The older the owner, the shorter the likely loan period will be in practice. As of now, most reverse mortgages last 15 years. Once the mortgage period is over, the payments stop. However the mortgagor (and spouse) can continue to occupy the house until demise. In case a mortgagor is older, it would be more sensible to front-load payments and compress the time period.

Creating, customising and marketing successful reverse mortgage products will require smart thinking and targeted selling from the financial industry. Initially lenders will concentrate on childless owners where less psychological resistance exists. Banks and lenders will also have to build good real-estate sales networks, so they can dispose of a steady stream of such properties as these are possessed.

The incentive for lenders to figure out optimal ways to offer reverse mortgages is high. With the given 15-year period there will be significant gains by the time of redemption. In the context of the current socioeconomic situation, the reverse mortgage fits a genuine economic need. It flies in the face of tradition. But it is likely that need will win out over tradition. It always does. ■

Despite hurdles, reverse mortgage is likely to catch on out of economic necessity

way to leverage that home for more income. The quality of life improves for the mortgagor and there is no obligation to redeem the loan.

The way reverse mortgages are structured, heirs have the option of redeeming after the mortgagor's demise. If they do so, in effect they will have looked after their parents by underwriting the extra income their parents received. We could think of a reverse mortgage as a long-term loan taken by the parents secured by property, with the children standing guarantor. Quite possibly, the product can be marketed as such.

How realistic will the valuation be? Many real-estate transactions involve a 'cash component' in order to evade stamp duty. In reverse mortgage valuation, this 'black' component is ignored. So, the valuation could be artificially low. That means a reverse mortgage could raise an amount that is much lower than the market value. It also means redemption is on a lower principal. Incidentally, the valuer fees are deducted from the mortgagors' account. This fee could range between Rs 1,500 and Rs 20,000.

What sort of interest rate structures are likely to be offered for reverse mortgages? Right now,

Bluetruths

Bluetooth technology enables a range of electronic devices to communicate without the use of cords and cables. **Bindi Mehta** tells you how

Legendary Danish king Harald was known as *Blatand*, or 'Bluetooth', a result of his passion for blueberries. And when he set out to unite warring factions in Denmark and Norway in the 10th century, little did he know that his name would inspire cutting-edge technology that seeks to—aptly enough—unite disparate electronic devices.

WHAT IS BLUETOOTH?

Bluetooth is formally defined as 'networking technology that helps to build a wireless network within a designated range in the user's environment'. Simply put, it seeks to connect and exchange information between various devices such as desktop computers, laptop computers, printers, digital cameras, cell phones, car music systems, headsets, wireless speakers and gaming consoles—without any cords and cables.

Bluetooth works with the help of a small, inexpensive radio chip, which can be plugged into the concerned electronic device to establish a connection with another device. (Alternatively, the device may be pre-equipped with the chip.) The chip transfers the information, which would otherwise have been carried by a cable, over a special frequency to a receiver Bluetooth chip, which in turn hands over the information to the other device.

This technology was conceived by Swedish telecommunications company Ericsson. One of their first concept products, developed in 1994, was a wireless headset that links to a Bluetooth-enabled cellular phone. This allows users to receive calls while keeping their hands free. The technology was soon adopted by other companies like Intel, Lenovo, Microsoft, Motorola, Nokia, and Toshiba. Together with Ericsson these companies formed the 'Bluetooth Special Interest Group' (SIG) as 'promoter member companies' in 1998 to develop, implement and market products using the technology. SIG is a privately held, not-for-profit trade association with



Illustration: FARZANA COOPER

over 9,000 members—apart from the promoter member companies, there are thousands of associate and adopter member companies.

HOW BLUETOOTH WORKS

If two people have to communicate, they use either words for verbal communication or gestures for physical communication. If two devices need to communicate, they have to agree at two levels—

physical and protocol—before a conversation can begin. At the physical level, devices have to determine their medium of communication; this could be through wires or wireless signals. At the protocol level, they have to understand a mutual set of commands and responses. Bluetooth provides coordination at both these levels, enabling devices to effectively exchange information.

The technology works through low-power radio waves, at a frequency of 2.45 gigahertz. Devices equipped with Bluetooth send out very weak signals of about 1 milliwatt. This ensures there is no interference with other powerful transmission systems operating within the same periphery. However, this low power limits the range of a Bluetooth-enabled device to about 10 m (32 ft). Any two Bluetooth capable devices can communicate with each other within this range.

In fact, Bluetooth requires no user intervention—Bluetooth-enabled devices within the specified range establish a link automatically. Once the conversation has been initiated, linked Bluetooth devices form a personal area network (PAN) or 'piconet'. This piconet may fill the whole room or could only occupy the space between your cell phone and your friend's cell phone, who may be sitting right next to you. Another piconet could exist between your desktop computer and printer in the same room. Devices will not accept signals from outside their established piconet, allowing multiple piconets to share the same space.

A Bluetooth device within a piconet can be either a 'master' or a 'slave'. A master device can synchronise as many as seven slaves in a single piconet. Many independent piconets can be linked together to form what's called a 'scatternet', so long as they share at least one Bluetooth device in common.

BLUETOOTH AND YOU

Bluetooth can make an amazing difference to your life. *(The basic assumption is that all devices are*

Bluetooth-enabled.) Here's how:



Phone fun

- Talk wirelessly through a headset; you can talk to your children while enjoying a walk without a hassle. Your hands will be free, letting your body comfortably adjust to the rhythm of movement.
- If you are working on your computer at home or work, you can still attend to those important calls, whether it's your children trying to reach you from abroad or a work-related call.
- Share photos with your family and friends instantly via a phone-to-phone connection.
- Transfer files conveniently between your computer and your phone. If you are going away for work, you can transfer important information from your computer to your phone in a jiffy.
- Give copies of pictures from your camera phone to your friends as 'take-away' memories if they come to your house for a get-together. All you have to do is send the images to the printer.

Music moves

- Use wireless stereo headphones and enjoy your music without having to sort out entangled cords, making your next walk or exercise session that much simpler.
- If you live alone, the wireless headphones allow you to enjoy your music while attending to all your domestic tasks.
- Use wireless speakers in your living room and stream (select which files to transfer and implement the transfer) music from your entertainment system to these speakers. In a living room with fewer connecting cables, you can move around without tripping over wires.
- Transfer music from your phone or MP3 player to your car music system.

Desk space

- Connect your keyboard and mouse wirelessly to your desktop; sit at a level you are comfortable in and work.

According to a new study conducted by Allied Business Intelligence, a global research firm, **Bluetooth-enabled equipment shipments in Asia** will reach **982 million** units in 2013, representing a compound annual growth rate of 39 per cent over shipments in 2006.

HOW BLUETOOTH COMPARES

Bluetooth is not the only wireless technology available today. Other popular wireless technologies include Wi-Fi and Infrared (IR). Wi-Fi, short for 'Wireless Fidelity', creates wireless local area networks (or LANs) through radio waves. Wi-Fi works with the help of a router, a connecting device that receives signals from the computer and transfers them to the Internet and vice-versa. All computers in the range of Wi-Fi can connect wirelessly to the Internet with the help of this router. Today, a lot of airports, coffee shops and malls offer Wi-Fi connectivity allowing consumers to work and stay connected in their premises. While Wi-Fi has only been around for a decade, IR has been woven into our lives for many years now—for instance, our TV remote controls use IR. IR refers to light waves of a lower frequency than the human eye can receive and interpret.

Let's look at how Bluetooth measures up against these technologies:

Parameters	Bluetooth	Wi-fi	IR
Set-up	External adapter and internal Bluetooth chip	External router and internal chip	No external set-up; only internal chip or tool
Automation	Enabled devices automatically connect	User intervention required	User intervention necessary
Power consumption	Low	Low	Low
Range	10 m (32 ft)	30.5 m (100 ft)	Devices have to be in line-of-sight
Cost	Inexpensive	Inexpensive once set-up is in place	Inexpensive but limited usage

- With Bluetooth, your desk will be free of clutter and easier to organise.
- A wireless travel mouse enables you to use your laptop in any kind of space without compromising on comfort.
- Print important documents and images from your PC or laptop without any cables connecting the printer.

Photo shuffle

- Transfer photos from your computer or mobile phone to the printer without cords, while you go about other work.
- Pictures on your digital camera can be sent directly to the printer or computer or mobile phone as required. Basically, all your photos are transferable between devices, so they are always within reach.



If you are now wondering how much a decent Blue-tooth enabled device would cost, we give you a round-up here. A Bluetooth-enabled basic phone from Nokia would cost you around Rs 3,500;

meanwhile, one from competitor Sony Ericsson comes for around Rs 7,500. If you wish to make your computer Bluetooth-enabled, you have to invest in an adapter, which costs Rs 200. And if you wish to holiday with a Bluetooth-enabled digital camera, one from Nikon would set you back around Rs 11,500.

PLAY IT SAFE

With Bluetooth, users need to be careful about sending sensitive information as the signals can be intercepted while in transit. Another concern is unauthorised data transmission or the reception of an infected file. To avoid this, make sure you recognise the device that is transmitting data to your device. If you don't, simply don't accept the data received from it. If you are in a public place and the Bluetooth connectivity option on your cell phone is 'on', your phone is accessible to all other users who have their Bluetooth 'on'. Such devices will connect automatically. This increases the chances of strangers sending you unwanted information. Keep your Bluetooth 'off' while in public gatherings or commuting via public transport. ■

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BIG
Home Video

Health first

Harmony lists your rights as a patient



Most of us are unaware of our rights as patients—the right to privacy, the right to refuse treatment and/or seek redress. Twenty organisations under the Jan Swasthya Abhiyaan (JSA; the Indian circle of the People's Health Movement, which consists of over 20 networks and 1,000 organisations) launched a 10-day long statewide campaign on patients' rights in Mumbai on 7 April to mark World Health Day. Abhiyaan distributed pamphlets at three civic hospitals in the city on the inaugural day and performed street plays to raise awareness. The group has sent a draft of rules under the 'Bombay Nursing Home Registration Act' to the state to advocate for patients' rights and related issues. "These rules have been drafted keeping in mind issues like minimum standards for treatment, quality of care and patients' rights," Leni Chaudhuri, senior research officer of NGO Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT), tells *Harmony*. "We want to gather people's support to ensure the rules are finalised and implemented." CEHAT was officially chosen by the Department of Health, Government of Maharashtra, to initiate a consultative process to draft these rules. These are the rights we need to be aware of:

RIGHT TO HEALTHCARE

Every patient has a right to equal access to health-

care services without any discrimination with regard to socioeconomic background, caste, gender or HIV status.

RIGHT TO EMERGENCY TREATMENT

According to a Supreme Court directive, a patient should get emergency treatment irrespective of any legal or financial considerations.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

The patient or the designated representative should be provided with the necessary information about the likely cause of the illness; the investigations and treatment being planned; its cost; expected outcomes, including likely complications; alternatives available; and consequences of not taking treatment. The patient should have access to his or her clinical records at all times.

On admission, the patient should be informed about the treating doctor, rules and regulations of the nursing home, and approximate expenses that would be incurred. At the time of discharge, the patient should get a discharge card with the summary of clinical findings, investigations, diagnosis, treatment, state of his/her health at the time of discharge, and follow-up advice.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

All examination should be carried out in a private environment with a person present on the request of the patient. In case of a woman, a female attendant must be present at the time of examination.

RIGHT TO CONFIDENTIALITY

All records of patients must be kept restricted to only the team treating the patient. This information should be disclosed to anyone only with the patient's consent.

RIGHT TO AUTONOMY AND DECISION MAKING

Informed consent should be taken before giving anaesthesia, blood or blood product transfusions, and any invasive or high-risk procedures or treatment. In case of a minor or unconscious patient,

consent should be obtained from a close relative. The patient has a right to refuse treatment, and to a second opinion. The current physician should cooperate by providing necessary information to the second physician. The second opinion should be in writing.

RIGHT TO QUALITY CARE

Every patient should receive good quality care that reflects satisfactory levels of technical performance, and care and regard for personal values and beliefs.

RIGHT TO SEEK REDRESSAL

Every patient has the right to complain about any aspect of service provided and call for investigation by a competent authority. Every nursing home should display the information on such competent authority prominently.

IN CASE OF NURSING HOME UNDERTAKING CLINICAL RESEARCH

Documented policies and procedures should guide all research activities in compliance with national and international guidelines.

IN CASE OF AN HIV +VE PATIENT

No person suffering from HIV should be denied care on the basis of HIV status. Not having a Voluntary Testing and Counselling Centre cannot become grounds to refuse care. For management of a patient who is HIV positive, the nursing home would follow guidelines circulated by NACO (National AIDS Control Organisation).

Every patient has the following responsibilities:

- Provide personal and family health information
- Participate in decision-making about treatment, and comply with the plan of care
- Enquire about the related costs of treatment and arrange for payment.

Source: *Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT)*

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Q I am a Gujarati homemaker. My family enjoys the food I cook. Over the years, I have learnt how to make various types of dry Gujarati snacks. I would like to sell them. What is the best way to do this?

Today, more and more people choose to work full-time. It leaves them with little time to cook for themselves and family. Commercial food retail is a growing sector. The first step for you would be to approach snack outlets in your area with your products. Let them test the items if they wish and strike a deal with them, wherein they would agree to sell your products. However, before starting out, you should have an administrative set-up in place. While supplying to retailers, you have to be careful about meeting delivery schedules. You could either have a daily or alternate-day supply routine. You may need to hire help to prepare the snacks at home or to deliver it to the outlets. Today's consumer is health-conscious and highly alert about what he eats. So if your products have an attached 'nutritional value'—restricted use of oil, salt and sugar—it could help you tap this segment. Word of mouth will help you get orders for group gatherings.

—**Rahul Chheda**

Chheda is director of Garden Fresh, a food arcade in suburban Mumbai

Q I retired as production manager from a consumer durables company. I have invested in many rare and classic editions. I would love to share my books with young readers. Is it a feasible idea to start a home-based library?

You mention that you possess rare and classic books. This could be your USP, setting you apart from other libraries. To start a library, you should first identify the category of books you have so you can define your readers. You could tap into the

children's segment with educational and children's books; the youth segment with fiction and travel books; the retired with leisure reading and hobby books, etc. Then identify locations near your area where you can advertise. Distribute pamphlets in schools and colleges. You could also get in touch with Rotary clubs and gymkhanas to promote your venture.

—**Hiten Turakhia**

Turakhia is managing director of librarywala.com, a library portal operational in Mumbai and Bengaluru

Q I live in Chennai. In my house I have a small garage in which I wish to start a computer centre. I can employ a professional teacher for the same. What are the factors to be kept in mind?

If you have any experience in IT, it would be easy for you to make statutory arrangements. Else, start with some homework. Decide the number of machines that could be installed. Then think about whether you would like to set it up as a cyber café or conduct fixed curriculum training. Decide the configuration of the PCs and software you will need to purchase. Start with basic courses like MS Office applications for which it will be easy to find a trainer. Define time slots for batches. In case you want Internet connectivity, define the number of machines you want with this facility and identify a vendor, such as BSNL, Tata or Reliance. Ask for quotations from three to four vendors before finalising a purchase agreement. Weigh quality and not just monetary benefits while comparing the quotes. Advertise your centre initially in newspapers and magazines popular among students. Good planning with the right set of people will help your venture.

—**Pradnya Chonkar**

Chonkar is course coordinator at Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan's Academy of Information Technology in south Mumbai

A new chapter

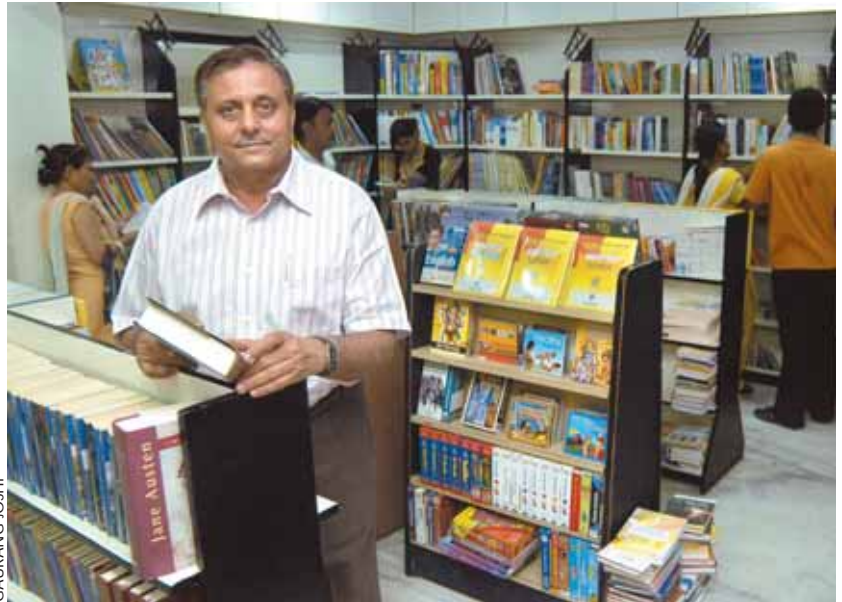
Bhupatsinh Sarvaiya has given Surat its first—and only—comprehensive book store

The residents of Surat owe Bhupatsinh N Sarvaiya a considerable debt. The 61 year-old former police officer has given them Book World, the first and only general-interest bookstore in the city.

Hailing from a small village in Saurashtra, Gujarat, Sarvaiya's love for books started early. "I used to visit the local library in Chittal while carrying agricultural produce from the fields to the markets every day," he recalls. After completing his master's in political science, he decided to join the police. "My father was a World War II veteran and wanted me to follow in his footsteps," says Sarvaiya.

During his posting in Ahmedabad back in 1971, he was a regular at almost all the bookshops. But when Sarvaiya was transferred to Surat in 1990 as police inspector at Umra police station, he was in for a rude shock. "Here was a city whose economy was booming but it didn't have a single bookstore," he says. "So whenever I went to Ahmedabad or to Mumbai, I would bring back bagful of books for myself and friends." The idea to set up a book shop first came up during a discussion with a journalist friend.

In 1997, Sarvaiya prompted his eldest son Abhijeet—who now lives in the US—to set up Book World, with the intent to procure books for interested readers



GAURANG JOSHI

Sarvaiya has won himself many admirers in Surat for his venture

directly from publishers. "Our challenge was, 'Give us the oddest title and we will procure it for you in three days'," he says with a chuckle. Over time, the shop located in the Kanaknidhi complex opposite the town hall

"We can procure the oddest title for you in three days"

in Timaliyawad in central Surat has blossomed into a full-fledged store that offers titles in Gujarati, Hindi and English. On offer are books in every category: fiction and non-fiction, religion to biographies, management to encyclopedias, sports, science and entertainment. The clientele too has grown—working women,

housewives, students, professors, doctors, bankers and textile magnates all flock to Book World.

Sarvaiya has won himself many admirers. "Full marks to him for rendering such yeoman service," says Ghanshyam Prasad Sanadhya, former principal of the MTB Arts College. This service includes employing jobless youth to work in the store.

He retired from the police three years ago and now spends his entire day in the store. Profits are ploughed back into the store, says Sarvaiya, who doesn't think twice about incurring a courier expense of Rs 35 to procure a book worth Rs 100 from Delhi. "I get my pension, which is enough for my sustenance," he adds. ■

—Nayeem Quadri, Surat

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

Fragrant hills

Chitralkha Basu discovers the allure of Kalimpong



This is Kiran Desai country. Early on a wintry morning in Kalimpong, if you manage to drag yourself out from under layers of duvets, blankets, and quilts and stand beside the bay window (most hotels, either refurbished old-style colonial bungalows, or modelled on them, have a room with a view), you would get a feel of what Desai meant when she described the Himalayan range as bathed in “pornographic pink”. The sprinkling of fuchsia on the contours of the mighty Kanchendzonga at daybreak might well make a silver citizen feel like a young colt, eager to explore what lies beyond the next range.

Although no travel agent seems to have thought of starting an *Inheritance of Loss*-inspired theme tour across Kalimpong yet, you could customise your own itinerary around Desai’s Booker-winning project. The English cottage with an unkempt garden where the Afghan princesses who came holidaying got stuck forever when their father went back home to find that he had been dethroned is easy to locate at a turning, as you go up East Main Road. And if you are looking for relics from insurgency-induced skirmishes in the 1980s, walk down Atisha Road to stop at the now-defunct art school established by Rathindranath, the elder son of Rabindranath

Tagore. On your left, on a patch of growing sunburnt grass stands the skeletal remains of a cottage that was completely charred by the activists demanding a separate homeland. Every resident, in fact, seems to have an opinion about *Inheritance*... more critical than charitable, but that’s a different story.

Kalimpong is a morning person’s city. You could spend an entire day looking at the play of light and shadow on Mount Kanchendzonga and its sibling peaks. Little wonder, that Buddhist monks, English missionaries and Hindu spiritual gurus, who set up institutes of learning, retreat and meditation, favoured the



PRAKASH ISRANI

town. And they came quite early. As sepia images displayed in the photographer's studio on Main Road reveal, the McFarlane Church, the oldest and largest in town with typical Gothic turrets, was the only concrete structure on that road about a century ago. The now congested

The best way to soak in the quiet beauty of Kalimpong is to walk along its winding roads

road in which buildings seem to be falling over each other—had it not been for the steep flights of stairs in between them—was no more than a footpath through a meadow.



D GHOSH AND ANKE LENSSES



D GHOSH AND ANKE LENSSES

(Top) Road snaking towards Lava dotted by Buddhist prayer flags; the rustic simplicity of Loleygaon; (opposite) a close-up of Kanchendzonga

Dr Graham's Homes on top of Deolo Hills—once again a marvellous specimen of colonial architecture—was started as an

Tibetan-Chinese influence, and the spare Kali Mandir are located within 50 yards of each other. The Durga Mandir on the 13th Mile comes with a mind-calming view of pine forests and the Teesta River. In quiet mornings, the sound of the choir from Dr Graham's Homes waft down to mingle with the sound of bells and chanting of young monks at the Tharpa Choling Monastery, about 1.5 km below.

orphanage-cum-school by the Scottish missionary in 1900.

St. Teresa's Church, where images of Christ's disciples carved on wood show a distinct

The best way to soak in the quiet beauty and serene ambience of



A slice of heaven in the mountains: panoramic view of Kalimpong town

PRAKASH ISRANI

this town is to walk along its winding roads, spiralling up the hills. Doubtless, the curio and confectionery shops in the bazaar area have their own charm.

In a town that seems to be perennially suffering from a water crisis (don't worry, a decent hotel would have running water round the clock), hundreds of aluminium pipes screwed together at different angles near

The Kalimpong bazaar, spread out in three levels, is a great place to dig for local handicrafts. While Himalayan Stores on the Main Road is the obvious choice for antiques, old Bhutanese fabrics, masks, musical instruments, silver and turquoise jewellery, move one level down to RC Mintri Lane to buy wall hangings, Tibetan Buddhist charms, carpets, fabric in local and Chinese design, incense, scarves,

sawing through them like flashes of a sword. Shops (shacks really) selling Wai-Wai noodles, biscuits, hot 'Darjeeling *chana* mix' and mineral water get scarce. After a while it's just you and the road, with maybe an occasional squirrel running across it or a Lhasa Apso with unkempt hair determined to keep you company.

You could trek uphill to Deolo in the north (3.5 km from central town) or Durpin Dara (2 km from town) for splendid views. If the height seems daunting, you could always draw inspiration from the locals whistling tunes from Hindi film songs as they trot uphill. As one of them told me, "You have come sightseeing after all, so why not do that on foot?" But if it proves too tiresome, flag a taxi. You can hire a taxi for the uphill journey and walk downhill. Only remember to get back home before sundown, as the streetlights beyond the bazaar don't seem to be functional.

Also place your order for dinner well in advance if you plan to eat outside the hotel you are staying

As you tread uphill, sunbeams flash through the dense trees like swords

the water points indicate urban squalor. But look at them with a glad heart and they take the shape of installations, resembling futuristic park benches, set off by the bright prayer flags and other Buddhist paraphernalia laid out inside the shops in the back ground. Soft pipes run along the roads, rising up to form half-hearted arches across gates, water seeping out of them at all times. One might be tempted to hang flowerpots from these!

bags, jackets and caps made in coarse silk, at an affordable rate. For hand-knit woollens and bomber jackets and nuggets of rye (if you want to make your own brew of the local drink Chhang), go down by another level to the market on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

As you step beyond the hubbub of central town and tread uphill, the coniferous trees on either side grow denser, the sunbeams



D GHOSH AND ANKE LENSSES



D GHOSH AND ANKE LENSSES

Tourists sipping coffee in the spacious lawns of Crookety House; evening descends on Upper Cart Road

in. Most hotels in Kalimpong serve Continental food such as pizza and pasta, and Indian and Chinese meals to their guests against orders. Hotel Thai King, at the centre of Kalimpong Bazaar, serves delicious Thai and Chinese meals. To sample local specialities such as *thukpa* and wonton soup, try some of the small eateries along Upper Cart Road. And don't miss the bakeries on Reshi Road on the way to McFarlane Church. They make superb buns and chocolates. All eateries in the area tend to shut down by 7 pm though, especially in winter. Didn't I tell you earlier Kalimpong is a morning person's haven?

Half a kilometre below the Phodang monastery, just after you have stopped by to catch your breath at a patch overlooking the golf course, you enter Army area. Walk past the men in uniform practising their drill till you arrive at the top. The Zang Dhok Palri Phodang monastery is not just gorgeous to look at; it's also a library of rare Buddhist texts. The Dalai Lama, while consecrating the monastery in 1976, donated 108 volumes of *The Kangyur* (the translation of the pronouncements of Gautama Buddha), now kept behind the glass panes of a gilded showcase. Three huge figures of the Buddha painted in gold keep a vigil as

the monks offer prayers, tea and snacks to the deities, chanting *Om manipadme hum*.

If you still haven't had your fill of spiritualism, stop at Crookety House on your way down. This lovely red-tiled bungalow, surrounded by a well-kept garden, is dedicated to the memory of the painter Svetoslav Roerich who painted the Himalaya extensively, giving the ranges a blue, mystical connotation. Run by the Community of Living Ethics in Italy, the house is a centre for creative meditation and spiritual quest, realised primarily through artistic practices. Participation in workshops towards self-realisation

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

Zang Dhok Palri Phodang: The largest Buddhist monastery in Kalimpong, consecrated by the Dalai Lama.

Jelepala View Point: Located below the monastery, this offers an excellent view of Mount Kanchendzonga.

Durpin Dara View Point: Slightly off the monastery on the same route, this viewpoint is good for viewing Teesta River and Teesta Valley.

Ecological Museum: This Forest Department-maintained museum has photographs and samples of local wildlife, flora and fauna.

St. Teresa's Church: The largest Roman Catholic Church in Kalimpong where images of Christ and his disciples carved on wood have a distinct Tibetan touch.

Dr Graham's Homes: Originally started as an orphanage-cum-school for Anglo-Indian children in 1900 by a Scottish missionary, the school,

which now admits children across all communities, is replete with Raj nostalgia. High up on the Deolo hill, it offers fantastic views of Teesta Valley. Check out the old colonial-style architecture and if you are lucky you might get to hear the school choir sing.

Deolo Lake: At the height of 5,500 ft, Deolo is the highest point in Kalimpong. It offers a bird's eye view of the town and beyond. The lake connects to two reservoirs that supply water to Kalimpong.



FACT FILE

WHEN TO GO

Mid-February to June; October to mid-December. For those who enjoy the chill, Christmas week till New Year is a good option. The temperature hovers around 5°C during the daytime in December-January and the weather is extremely pleasant and sunny, unless there is a cloud cover.

GETTING THERE

By air: Different airlines fly between Delhi/Kolkata and Bagdogra (airport nearest to Kalimpong) every day. The Kolkata-Bagdogra flight takes 55 minutes; New Delhi-Bagdogra takes 2 hours. If you book early enough and watch out for special discount schemes, it's possible to buy a return ticket for about Rs 5,000. From Bagdogra, you can travel by road.

By train: Several trains ply between Howrah/Sealdah in Kolkata and New Jalpaiguri (NJP) every day. The journey takes about 10 hours and an AC III tier berth will set you back by Rs 800. It makes sense to travel overnight so that you reach New Jalpaiguri refreshed for the onward journey.

By road: Siliguri, 18 km off Bagdogra, is the hub of road transport in the hills. Travelling by bus is more comfortable than squeezing into share taxis. Hop on to a bus at the Tenzing Norgay Bus Terminal for the two-and-a-half-hour journey to Kalimpong. The fare is around Rs 70. Alternately, you can hire an SUV all to yourself for Rs 1,200. Long-distance buses (including comfortable Volvo coaches) ply everyday between

Esplanade in Kolkata and NJP. The journey takes about 12 hours. The tariff varies between Rs 400 and Rs 1,200 (one-way).

WHERE TO STAY

Among the high-end hotels, the Himalayan Hotel (Rs 1,650 to Rs 4,300; Tel: 03552 55248), is designed like Japanese bungalows with hanging balconies and offers wonderful views of the Himalayan range. Others in the same range include Hotel Silver Oak (Tel: 03552 55296) and Kalimpong Park Hotel (Tel: 03552 55304). More modest accommodation may be found on Reshi Road (around Rs 2,000). If you prefer peace, The Orchid Retreat (Rs 1,400 to Rs 2,000; Tel: 03552 55217) and Hotel Mountain Hut (around Rs 500; Tel: 03552 70837) are good options.

ation conducted from time to time are solely by invitation, but there is usually someone to show you around the portrait galleries and the library if you are keen. Those willing to pack in some social service can check out Gandhi Ashram. This school for poor and orphaned children sees a perpetual flow of volunteers from around the world helping with teaching and other fun activities. Have an exhilarating time with the kids and take back an experience to cherish.

It's a crime to return from Kalimpong without visiting Lava and

Loleygaon/Kaffer. The drive to Lava, a picturesque town 35 km from Kalimpong, is through a path gently zigzagging between tall pine forests, the shadows of the trees casting a zebra pattern on the dew-drenched slopes. The children hanging out at the monastery will try to scare you with stories about the wolves waiting for prey in the Neora Valley nearby. If you are still not impressed, they will be more direct and ask for money.

Loleygaon, located on a range directly opposite Kalimpong, offers some great views of the

north-eastern Himalaya. There is a lovely heritage garden and a hanging bridge nearby, but the best thing about Loleygaon is its pure, clean air and the sense of tranquil calm it seems to inspire. This is an ideal spot to take a picnic and watch the movement of the sun across the sky as the day wears on.

Often regarded as just a stopover by tourists headed towards popular destinations like Darjeeling, or Gangtok, quaint and charming Kalimpong is a better option for those who believe in doing things at their own pace. ■



Better half

Behind every successful sportsman is a woman, says **Amita Malik**

There is an old saying that behind every successful man there is a woman. I would narrow it down further and say that behind every successful cricketer there is a woman.

When Virendra Sehwag scored his second triple century, the media rushed down to the Nawab of Najafgarh's castle in Delhi to get sound bites from his family. They found that Viru's mother was in the kitchen making *puri*, *halwa* and *kheer* in celebration. When the media pointed out that Sehwag was thousands of miles away in Chennai and would hardly be able to taste the *mithai*, his mother said that did not matter. They always celebrated this way, no matter where he was. And she certainly had a point. After all, the family cannot chase him all over the world with goodies every time he does something spectacular. We must also remember that, besides the nation, the family has first pick about celebrating, particularly the proud mothers.

Then, who can forget that worrying period when bowler Harbhajan Singh was facing more than his fair share of troubles and even an accusation of racism, which is alien to Indian sportspersons. Every few hours, interviewers from different channels would converge on the home of Bhaji's family in Jalandhar and ask for their comments. His mother and sisters would stand stoutly behind him. His mother kept on saying she had known her son since birth and simply refused to believe that he could do something that wasn't right. And as it happened, he was cleared at the end. Nothing like a mother's faith.

It helps sportsmen a lot if their family is around when they are playing difficult events. One remembers Rahul Dravid carrying his little son Sumit out

of the hotel and his wife holding up the little boy to clap for his father when Rahul reached his 12,000-run summit. And those of us who watch television cannot help noticing how world chess master Vishwanathan Anand's wife Aruna is always by his side, wherever he plays. In fact, the other day he mentioned in an interview that she often helps him clear his thoughts and go ahead when he reaches a difficult stage. Also, the Amritraj brothers constantly mention their mother when asked who encouraged them to play tennis.

On the converse side, former athletics queen P T Usha's main source of support is her husband. And many of our women athletes and sportspersons often comment that they would not have been able to even pursue their careers, let alone reach the top, but for their spouses. Of course there are also women who sometimes find it difficult to cope with home and career, especially if they are stars. Tennis world No. 1 Justine Henin has had her share of family problems. There is also continued speculation about whether former tennis champion Steffi Graf

would have given up the game so early in her career if she had not married Andre Agassi. She participated in an exhibition match the other day and it was plainly evident that in spite of two babies (whom she always brings to tennis matches whenever their father is playing), Steffi has a lot of tennis still left in her.

There is also the recent case of Lindsay Davenport, who has returned to tennis just six months after having her baby. Davenport has taken a little time to get back to form. There, I think men have the physical advantage just as one must admit that women are coping bravely and successfully with whatever disadvantages they might have. And while people often refer to them as 'the weaker sex', I frankly think they are the stronger sex, all things considered. ■

It helps sportsmen a lot if their family is around when they are playing difficult events

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

FIRST HAND



Courtesy: PENGUIN

After spending long years in the corporate world, **Ashvin Desai**, 75, sought answers to some fundamental cosmic questions that were nagging him for years. Desai tells *Harmony* about the result of his lifelong quest—his debut book, *Between Eternities: Ideas on Life and the*

Cosmos (Penguin; Rs 250; 233 pages).

What prompted you to write your debut book at the age of 74?

I am the third writer in the immediate family. My wife Anita Desai occupied our literary space for years, solo. Kiran, our daughter, joined her a few years ago. The rest of us have been watching happenings and soon found that all was not well—we were losing our identity, becoming known as so-and-so's husband/father/son/daughter/sibling, not as Ashvin or Tani or Arjun or Rahul. One day I decided to write my own book and recover my identity. Voila! *Between Eternities* happened.

Could you offer our readers a broad overview of the book?

The book covers four disciplines: science, philosophy, religion and mysticism. It offers answers to the 'great issues' that underlie the universe and life. The book brings together different assertions in a systematic format so that the reader can get a comprehensive view of the fundamental enigmas and the answers offered by some of the greatest minds that attempted to make sense of it all.

Your book is as much about cosmic theories and scientific thought as it is about religion and mysticism. How challenging was it for you to balance such contrasting subjects in the same book?

Very challenging indeed. The book took 15 years to write and a lot of time was spent in getting the architecture right. It is aimed at dispelling what Socrates called the 'curse of ignorance': basing life on satisfying purely material needs with no desire

for higher knowledge. And yet it could well be that it is this very 'higher knowledge' that is of crucial importance in the ultimate scenario.

After the book, do you think you are armed with better answers for the cosmic puzzles?

Answers there are none...there is no certainty whatsoever of what has gone on. But now the uncertainty is based on knowledge, whereas when I started it was out of ignorance. Now, I have a meaning for life that is not baseless, and I don't live life without reason.

While writing this book, you were diagnosed with cancer. How did you stay focused on the task of completing the book?

No, no. The cancer is just four months old; the book was 15 years in the writing.

What are your other interests?

Classical music, both Western and Indian, reading, dance and theatre. I also love to travel around the world to see places and monuments of antiquity, and to learn about other cultures. Also, good food, single malt whiskey and fun.

Are you planning to write another book in the near future? If so, on what subject?

While writing *Between Eternities* I also wrote three other books, all awaiting final edits. The first is *A Tale of the Two Truths*. It is a fable about a parrot and a monkey who try to convert a donkey to their respective religions. The parrot is an atheist. The monkey is a Hindu and utterly theistic. The second book, called *Snakes and Ladders*, is a satire on the way the world runs its affairs. Third, I have a film script in Hindi that explores the growing intolerance in India through music. I have also just started a new book, called *The Enigma of Reality*. It is based on the ultimate truth behind the cosmos and life.

—Rajashree Balaram





Moving on

Unaccustomed Earth, by Jhumpa Lahiri
Random House; Rs 450; 333 pages

While the Indian Diaspora continues to provide Jhumpa Lahiri a canvas for her work, *Unaccustomed Earth*, her new collection of short

stories, marks a definite progression from her Pulitzer prize-winning *Interpreter of Maladies*. While issues of cultural identity and alienation still lurk in the background of every story, the characters grapple with even more pressing (and universal) concerns—ageing, dependence, desire, bereavement, infatuation, addiction, yearning, abuse—lending a sense of elegiac darkness to this introspective collection. A woman who worries about taking care of her elderly father only to find the tables turned on her; the daughter who

discovers her mother's lifelong infatuation for a family friend; the woman torn between her alcoholic brother and her family—all of them are brought to vivid life as they feel, love, laugh, cry, and live.

Lahiri's talent for making you inhabit her characters is nowhere more apparent than in the second half of this volume—three connected works about two people who meet as teenagers, go their different ways and come together again as adults. In the hands of a lesser writer, this triptych with its rather predictable plot devices could have fallen apart, but Lahiri, with her almost obsessive attention to detail and intimacy with her characters, makes it soar.

— Arati Rajan Menon

Of human hearts

Séance on a Sunday Afternoon by Shinie Antony; Rupa; Rs 195; 180 pages

With this, her fourth book, former journalist Shinie Antony returns to what many would say is her métier: short stories. *Séance...* contains 22 stories that the author, with self-deprecating wit, says chronicles things that go bump in the mind. The characters deal with everything life throws at them, in radically different ways. Sometimes they tackle problems head-on, at others they run away.

The stories largely deal with people coming to terms with something or the other. A woman dealing with a mastectomy; a man with his impending divorce, another with a departed spouse. Some are in denial, using the refuge of delusion. One woman trapped in a unhappy marriage envisages her husband's death as she goes about her chores. Others adopt a wry acceptance, like the man who is ageing, slowly relinquishing his self-reliance but holding onto his sense of humour and self-worth, while living with his son and daughter-in-law.

All the stories run dark but all of them also hold a thin vein of humour. That humour becomes

pronounced in some tales, like the one of Senthil B A, a boy yet to make any kind of mark on life, who becomes the victim of a hold-up. Senthil is beginning to enjoy the spotlight, even under the circumstances. When the clerk at the check-out counter starts to intone 'Appa, Amma', his first reaction is annoyance—was this just a family dispute, he wonders in irritation, before he realises she is calling for God and her parents to rescue her. And Senthil is happy again!

Senthil's account apart, Antony's stories mostly deal with ageing, illness, loss of dignity, love and companionship. This, the author conveys, is our lot and we must step up to the plate. The tone she adopts is deliberately level. She has a story to tell and she does it without a smidgen of partisanship, sympathy or even untoward emotion. Yet, such is Antony's way with words that all of it, the pain, ache, desolation, joy, comes through loud and clear.

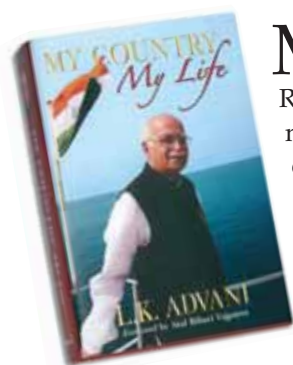
— Sheila Kumar



BOOKSHELF

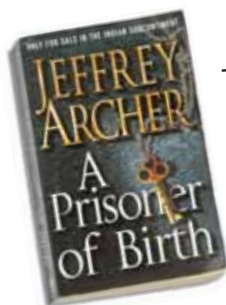
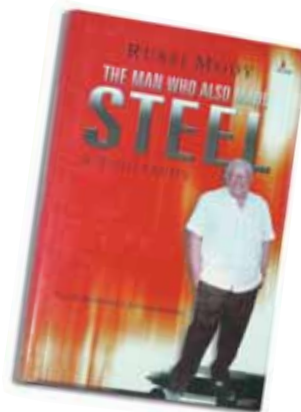
BRIEFLY

In **THE SILENT RAGA** (HarperCollins; Rs 395; 452 pages), **Ameen Merchant**—“born in Bombay, raised in Madras and currently living in Vancouver”—shows a remarkable ability to get into the head of two Tamil Brahmin sisters. In the stifling confines of an *agraharam* (a cluster of houses where Brahmins live), Janaki Venkataraman tends to her home, widowed father and young sister Mallika stoically—her mind takes flight only when she plays her beloved veena. Then one day, she disappears, only to wind up in the gossip rags as the second wife of a Muslim Bollywood star. Over two decades later, she seeks a reunion with the embittered Mallika. As they both recall what led them to this point, family truths, lies and secrets come tumbling forth. Classical Carnatic ragas form the chapters of this family saga with evocative prose that is—aptly—almost musical in its cadence. Most remarkable: this is Merchant’s debut novel.



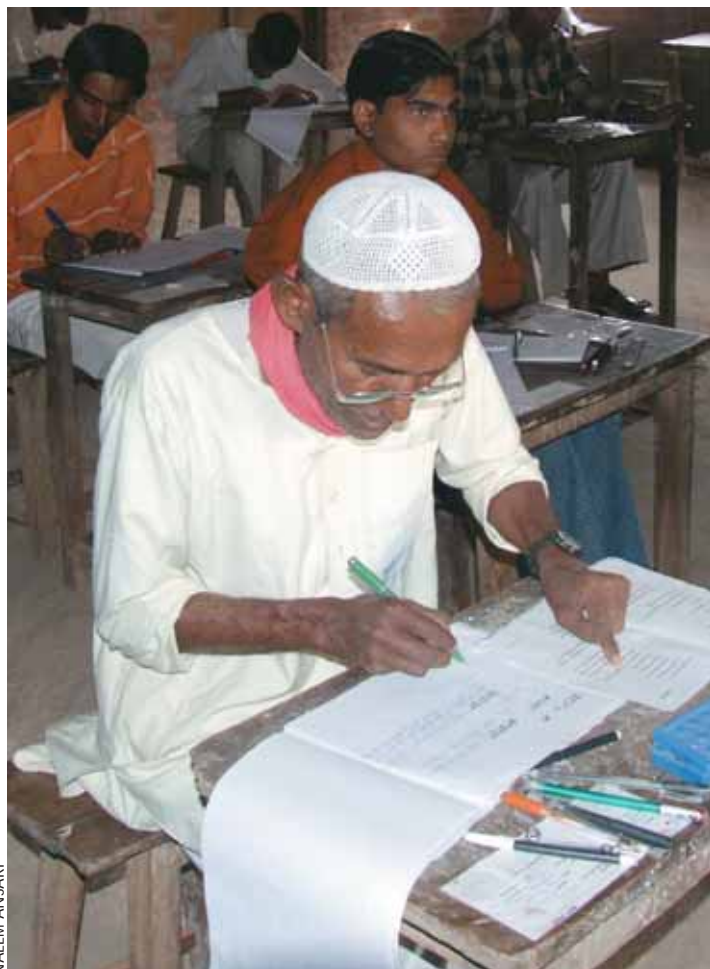
Much has already been written in the media about the factual errors in BJP leader **L K Advani**’s autobiography **MY COUNTRY MY LIFE** (Rupa; Rs 595; 986 pages). These include referring to a Punjab CPI leader as dead when he’s not, getting two US ambassadors to New Delhi mixed up and, most significantly, emphatically denying that he was consulted on the Kandahar exchange despite being at the Cabinet meeting in question. Put these—and the blatant self-promotion—aside (if you can) and you get a surprisingly easy-to-read book, a ringside view on India’s journey as a democracy. Also worth a mention is the production quality—the book is beautifully designed with lavish photographs. Ultimately, though, how you feel about Advani will probably determine your take on this book.

The flamboyant Rustomji Hormusji Mody spent 53 years with the Tata empire, moving up from an apprentice manual worker as part of his training to the position of chairman. **RUSSI MODY - THE MAN WHO ALSO MADE STEEL** (Stellar; 251 pages; Rs 495) is his story, told by **Partha Mukherjee** and **Jyoti Sabharwal**. An unabashed bon vivant, Mody courted success and controversy in his corporate career, culminating in his bitter ouster from office and an unseemly fracas over his severance package. Unfortunately, this is a one-sided view of what could have been a fascinating chronicle of Indian business. Having based most of their book on Modi’s side of the story, the authors are content to gush and eulogise aimlessly (and ungrammatically) through most of the 500 pages. What a wasted opportunity.



After a series of forgettable prison diaries, **Jeffrey Archer** is back to doing what he does best: telling a darned good story. **A PRISONER OF BIRTH** (Pan Macmillan; Rs 395; 530 pages) is the tale of London lad Danny Cartwright who is framed for the murder of his best friend. With a barrister, a popular actor, an aristocrat and a legal luminary testifying against him, Danny doesn’t stand a chance at trial and is thrown in the highest security prison in England. But Danny refuses to go gently into the night. How he sets out to win his freedom and seek revenge is vintage Archer—a clever, even devious, plan to bring each man to his knees. And the well-etched characters add to the fun of it all.

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



NAAEM ANSARI

LEARNING FOREVER

For **Jabbar Hussain**, a 62 year-old farmer and vegetable vendor from Bindiki village in Fatehpur district of Uttar Pradesh, there's no difference between school and life—both are grounds to learn and call for complete commitment. In March, Hussain appeared for the Uttar Pradesh State Board Examination for the 42nd time. It doesn't bother this spirited silver that he failed 41 earlier attempts. In 2007, Hussain cleared his Hindi exam but got stuck in four other subjects, including English and Mathematics, which he claims are "the toughest subjects". "One learns from failures, too," he tells *Harmony*. In his thatched home, Hussain has decorated the wall of the room where he sleeps with all his previous mark-sheets. "They bear proof of my efforts and tell me that I still have a lot to achieve," he says. His family comprises his four sons, who help him till his 16 acres of land and his wife Fatima, who accompanies him to the Fatehpur market every morning and evening to sell produce. "My sons and my wife never stand in the way of my goal," claims a soft-spoken Hussain. "I will continue to sit for the exams till I clear them," he adds, courage and sincerity shining through his eyes.

MEMORY TRIP

Here's an autobiography where pictures speak a thousand words. Oscar-winning British actor **Helen Mirren**, 63, has released *In the Frame: My Life in Words and Pictures*, her memoirs with a twist. "Over the past 10 years, various publishers had approached me to write an autobiography but I was rather intimidated by the idea," Mirren tells online news and opinion website *The Huffington Post*. "I knew I wanted to write it myself. And I had been mulling over how I would do it. And then my friend suggested the idea of a scrapbook and writing around the pictures. That was an easy way for me." The book starts with the contents (papers and photographs) of a trunk belonging to Mirren's Russian grandfather, who brought it with him to London after being sent there by the Czar. Mirren then goes on to talk about her journey as a multi-faceted theatre, cinema and television actor; the variety of roles she has portrayed; the many men and women she encountered along the way; and her married life with American film director Taylor Hackford. "Once I started, I really loved it," she says. "It came incredibly easy. I really didn't edit it at all."





HEMANT PATIL

IN SELF-DEFENCE

How would you react if your life were threatened? Your first reaction would probably be to approach the police. That's exactly what **Prakash Hundraj Hingorani**, a 65 year-old resident of Wanavdi, Pune, did when one of his relatives threatened him in a property-related matter. However, after consistent apathy from the police—Hingorani claims he has given more than 10 applications to the city police in the past 18 months—he decided to take matters in his own hand and sought an arms license for self-protection. Hingorani lives with his wife, son and daughter-in-law and has filed a criminal suit against his relative. "The police are not interested," he rues. "I also approached the senior citizens' help line at the police commissionerate. But nothing has been done." He points to a study on crime against senior citizens in Pune and Delhi conducted by Pune-based International Longevity Centre. "About 60 per cent of the crimes against seniors in Pune are property-related," says Hingorani, who awaits his license and urges other silvers to be more proactive about their safety.

MISSION FOR VISION



ASHISH GOYAL

Mumbai-based ophthalmologist Dr **Vinod Goyal** is launching a website addressing electronic strain (or 'e-strain') and its effects on the eyes. The official launch of www.estrain.org, which Goyal says will help people combat e-strain, is scheduled in May.

Meanwhile, this 55 year-old is dedicating his time and energy to his pet project 'Care4vision'. Launched in October 2006, the project is an effective and low-cost mass vision testing system. "An aspiring young pilot came to me for an eye check-up in 2002 and burst into tears," Goyal tells *Harmony*. "He said that despite clearing all tests, non-clearance of the mandatory eye examination had shattered his dreams. This was the trigger for Care4vision." After working on a simple set of questions that could help categorise youngsters with normal or abnormal vision, Goyal elevated his project into an IT-enabled 'Quality Eye Check-up System', which was administered to over 100,000 students (aged five to 15) in the city's central suburbs in 2006 by his team at Surya Eye Hospital. Results showed that 26,000 of these children had abnormal vision. Goyal will present a paper on this at the WHO General Assembly of International Association for Prevention of Blindness to be held in August in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

BIRTHDAYS

- Sitar maestro **Pandit Ravi Shankar** turned 88 on 7 April
- Hollywood actor and martial arts expert **Jackie Chan** turned 54 on 7 April
- A member of Global Elders and former UN Secretary General **Kofi Annan** turned 70 on 8 April
- Actor **Jaya Bachchan** turned 60 on 9 April
- Queen **Elizabeth II** turned 82 on 21 April

MILESTONES



Awarded. An honorary Pulitzer prize to singer and songwriter **Bob Dylan**, 67, for his “profound impact on popular music and American culture, marked by lyrical compositions of extraordinary poetic power”. This was the first time that Pulitzer judges, known to favour classical music and more recently jazz, awarded rock-n-roll as a category of art. Bob Dylan continues to tour regularly and release critically acclaimed music albums, his most recent being *Modern Times*.

IN PASSING



Cambodian-born photojournalist **Dith Pran** coined the term ‘killing fields’ for the horrifying clusters of corpses he encountered during the Cambodian civil war—his story inspired the 1984 film *The Killing Fields*. Pran worked as

an interpreter and photojournalist with *The New York Times* during the war and assisted Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Sydney Schanberg and saved his life when they were arrested by the Khmer Rouge. Pran passed away in the US from pancreatic cancer on 30 March. He was 65.



Credited for popularising yoga among women, **Sitadevi Yogendra** was introduced to the discipline by her husband Yogendra, whom she married in 1927. He had founded the Yoga Institute in Santacruz in suburban Mumbai in 1918, one of the oldest organised centres of

yoga in the world. Sitadevi helped him to establish the institute—she taught there and served as its secretary. She also wrote a book titled *Yoga - Physical Education for Women*, which has been published in several languages. She passed away at the age of 96.



Somdev Mukherjee, known widely as Shomu, produced and directed seven Hindi films starting from *Ek Baar Muskura Do* (1972) to *Sangdil Sanam* (1994). He married actor Tanuja in 1973. Mukherjee passed away on 10 April after a heart attack. He was 65. His film legacy is carried forward by his daughters, actors Kajol and Tanisha.



Hindustani classical musician **Sharan Rani** was the first woman to take up the *sarod* as a musical instrument. A disciple of maestros Ustad Allauddin Khan and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, she was affiliated to the Maihar Senia *gharana*

and went on to create many new ragas. Popularly known as ‘Sarod Rani’, she recorded with major record labels in the US and Britain; was hailed by former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru as the ‘cultural ambassador of India’; and was felicitated with several awards including the Padma Bhushan. A collector of rare classical music instruments, she had set up the Sharan Rani Backliwal gallery in New Delhi, which boasts of 450 instruments—four instruments from her gallery were featured on a set of postage stamps released in 1998. She passed away on 7 April in New Delhi. She was 80.

SAY IT OUT LOUD



The love of one's country is a splendid thing. But why should love stop at the border?

—Spanish cellist Pablo Casals (1876-1973)

I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.

—American spy Nathan Hale (1755-1776)

You'll never have a quiet world till you knock the patriotism out of the human race.

—Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

Patriotism is often an arbitrary veneration of real estate above principles.

—American drama critic George Jean Nathan (1882-1958)

A nation is a society united by a delusion about its ancestry and by common hatred of its neighbours.

—English author William Ralph Inge (1854-1960)

To me, it seems a dreadful indignity to have a soul controlled by geography.

—American philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952)

THE WORD IS OUT

New terms that have made their appearance in newspapers, magazines, books, websites and other recorded sources

elder-proof *v.* To make something safe for the elderly to use. Also: **elderproof**. —**elder-proof**, *adj.*

Example: Safe Home Scheme: The scheme gives the elderly poor and the disabled subsidies of up to \$ 1,000 per household to **elder-proof** their homes, by adding features like grab bars and slip-proof tiles to ensure the elderly don't hurt themselves at home.

—Radha Basu, "More relief at 'local' level", *The Straits Times*, 12 January 2008

videophilia *n.* A sedentary lifestyle focused on screen-based activities, particularly television, the Internet, and video games.

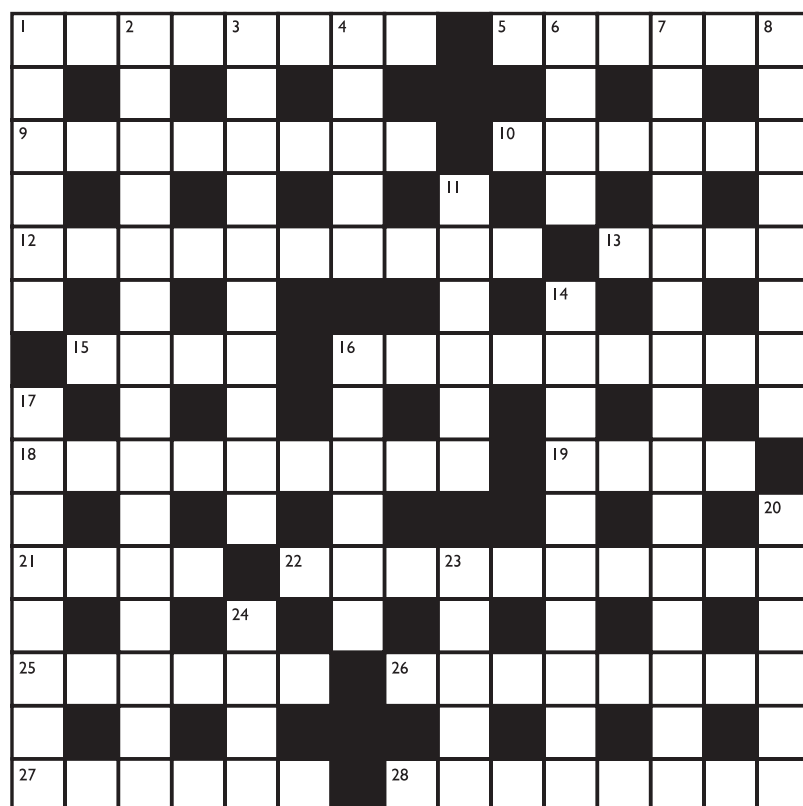
Example: Numbers tell us people don't participate in outdoor activities the way they once did. Visits to national parks are down, as are fishing, hunting and even watching wildlife. Only 25 per cent of the population—down 18 per cent—participates in an outdoor activity. Scientists call it **videophilia**—a way of life connected to computers, video games and TV.

—"Encroaching spring bids us head outdoors", *Grand Rapid Press*, 16 March 2008

Gotcha Day *n.* The anniversary of the day on which a child was adopted. Also: **gotcha day**.

Example: They reach out empty arms. Children from another land move into them, and people who waited months or even years for these moments think, "Gotcha!" That memory inspires many of these parents to informally celebrate **Gotcha Day**—the anniversary of their child's arrival, celebrated much like a second birthday. But this year, Chicago's Spectrum Press, publishers of *The Pumpkin Patch: A Single Woman's International Adoption Journey* by Margaret L. Schwartz (\$ 19.95), declared 15 September as the first annual international **Gotcha Day** celebrating all adoptions, overseas and domestic.

—Sandra Pesmen, "Gotcha for good", *Chicago Sun-Times*, 29 August 2005
Courtesy www.wordspy.com



EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 43

By Raju Bharatan

ACROSS

- 1 What's made so many cricket superstars warm to the IPL idea -- whoever said the game is not worth the candle burning at both ends right now? (4 4)
- 5 Roshni you now view in an altogether different DD light (6)
- 9 'Unplayable IPL deliveries'? Pregnant with possibilities they could make this IPL tourney (8)
- 10 Ajit Agarkar's Bombay Duck-edge message to Matthew Hayden? (2 4)
- 12 The V V S Laxman-Dinesh Mongia selection face-off on the eve of the 2003 World Cup (5-5)
- 13 Take your pick of any four in the India Test pack from Viru, Rahul, Sachin, Sourav, Laxman and Mahi (4)

- 15 Like them do Shane and Murali still spin the ball (4)
- 16 'Time' for Yuvraj climbdown in the matter of which pet shot of his follows which? (3 2 4)
- 18 Who so matches The Don even today: from just 80 innings, in 52 Tests, came his 29 centuries – 2 of them 300-plus, one of them 299 not out, 2 of them 250-plus, 7 of them 200-plus, 6 of them 150-plus, only 11 of them 100-plus? (3 3 3)
- 19 Style of palindromic den for match-fixing a couple of international cricket captains' hotel rooms became (4)
- 21 That which the so-nasty-towards-India Andy Symonds came to IPL-command makes "What Price 'Cricket, Bikini Cricket?' a legitimate query (4)

- 22 Dhoni-Lorna Brazilian link? (10)
- 25 Anju-Gary could have from the Brabourne Stadium! (6)
- 26 Mankad match portraying Amin turning to embrace Rupa (8)
- 27 If only this Jhaveri had been living, a resonant radio narrative would he have turned IPL English commentary into! (6)
- 28 Enough to change the very complexion of the game? (4 4)

DOWN

- 1 In such Bedi-tandem did Pras impress Ian Chappell as the best off-spinner in the world (2-4)
- 2 Jagmohan Dalmiya, if still in the saddle, could have gone on, conceivably, to seek UN sanction for a tournament labelled 'IP...' (6 2 7)
- 3 How Inzamam still closes well-rounded hands on them! (7 3)
- 4 Wonder if such an Imran Khan lady assistant ever appealed to the dictator in Pakistan's super captain (5)
- 6 Deepika did Yuvy only for that big shot to sail beyond her Bollywooden reach (4)
- 7 The one without whom you cannot play 'Hamlet' Laxman? (6 2 7)
- 8 'Bhosle woman' standing for what you have to be to lift 6 sixes off 6 balls? (1 7)
- 11 Antigen directed at Andy Symonds batting? (1 5)
- 14 Eric Hollies' captive watch? (6 4)
- 16 So delays delivering the Third Umpire verdict as to leave the IPL crowd breathlessly standing? (4 2)
- 17 Preity is, she has 'it', that's what makes the zingy Zinta symbolic of *Parsi When 'It' Sizzles* (4 4)
- 20 Skyhigh expectation, in the case of each match, of IPL organisers? (2 4)
- 23 What you have to be for telewatchers not to mind the LIRIL spot's coming on afresh (1 4)
- 24 Kapil wondering if he's his own World Cup self? Writing on the Haryana Hurricane's Sarika connection, a field-day she had (4)

For answers, see Page 81

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

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

HEADSTART

BRAIN GYM

LETTEROLOGY

Alphabets A through R are printed above the box, in the box, and beneath the box. Can you continue on for S to Z and place them correctly according to the scheme?

A		E	F		H	I		K	L	M	N	
B	D		G		J					P	Q	R
C											O	

LIAR LIAR

A horse, a donkey and a camel were stolen. Three suspects got caught: Robert, Scott and Tommy. Each has stolen one animal, but we do not know who stole what. Here are the investigation statements.

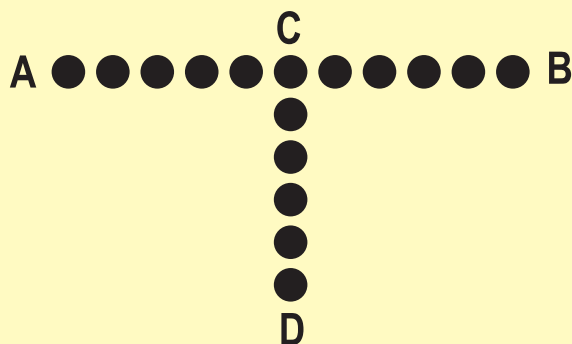
Robert said: Tommy stole the horse.

Scott said: Tommy stole the donkey.

Tommy said: They both were lying. I did not steal the horse or the donkey.

Later on, the police found out the man who stole the camel told a lie. The man who stole the horse told the truth. Can you find out who stole what?

CHIP TRICK



There are 16 chips laid out as a 'T' shape as shown in the figure. If we count from A to C then to D we have 11 chips. If we count from B to C then to D we

also have 11 chips. Now, we want to remove two chips and use the remaining 14 to make another 'T' so that we still have 11 chips no matter which way we count from.

ACROSS THE RIVER

A farmer is standing on one side of the river and with him are a wolf, a goat and a box of cabbages. There is a small boat on the river. The farmer wants to cross the river with all three items. There are no bridges and there is only room for the farmer and one item in the boat. If he leaves the goat with the cabbages alone on one side of the river the goat will eat the cabbages. If he leaves the wolf and the goat on one side the wolf will eat the goat. Only the farmer can separate the wolf from the goat and the goat from the cabbage. How can the farmer cross the river with all three items, without one eating the other?

MISSION 100

Plug in +, - or x to make the resulting number 100. You cannot change the order of the digits. You can also combine two digits or more into one number without a mathematical operator—+, - or x. The target resulting number is 100. There is more than one way to make this equation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 = 100

LAUGH LINES

QUESTIONS TO HAUNT YOU

Here are some questions that arrived in our email box recently—we think they're worth thinking over.

1. Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They're both dogs!
2. How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?

3. Why does a round pizza come in a square box?
4. What disease did cured ham actually have?
5. Why is it that people say they 'slept like a baby' when babies wake up every two hours?
6. If a deaf person has to go to court, is it still called a hearing?
7. Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?
8. Can you cry under water?
9. If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, then what is baby oil made from?
10. If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?
11. Do the *Alphabet song* and *Twinkle, twinkle little star* have the same tune?
12. Why did you just try singing the songs above?
13. Why do they call it an asteroid when it's outside the hemisphere, but call it a hemorrhoid when it's in your backside?
14. How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?
15. Once you're in heaven, do you get stuck wearing the clothes you were buried in for eternity?
16. Why do you have to "put your two cents in..." but it's only a "penny for your thoughts"? Where is that extra penny going?
17. Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride he loves to stick his head out the window?

I AM A SENIOR CITIZEN

There's nothing like a good sense of humour to cope with the trials of the silver years. Here's a sparkling piece of silver wit we found on the Internet.

I'm usually interested in going home before I get to where I'm going.

I'm the first one to find the bathroom wherever I go.

I'm awake many hours before my body allows me to get up.

I'm smiling all the time because I can't hear a word you're saying.

I'm very good at telling stories... over and over and over and over.

I'm aware that other people's grandchildren are not as bright as mine.

I'm so cared for: long-term care, eye care, private care, dental care.

I'm wrinkled, saggy and lumpy, and that's just my left leg.

I'm having trouble remembering simple words like... uh....

I'm walking more (to the bathroom) and enjoying it less.

I'm sure they are making adults much younger these days.

I'm anti-everything now: anti-fat, anti-smoke, anti-noise, anti-inflammatory.

I'm a walking storeroom of facts... I've just lost the key to the storeroom.

I'm a senior citizen and I think I am having the time of my life... aren't I?

HEADSTART

WORTH A CHUCKLE

A young man was walking through a supermarket to pick up a few things when he noticed an old lady following him around. Thinking nothing of it, he ignored her and continued on. Finally he went to the checkout line, but she got in front of him. "Pardon me," she said, "I'm sorry if my staring at you has made you feel uncomfortable. It's just that you look just like my son, who died recently. 'I'm very sorry,'" replied the young man, "is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes, as I'm leaving, can you say 'Good bye, Mother'? It would make me feel so much better," she said. "Sure," answered the young man. As the woman was leaving, he called out, "Goodbye, Mother!"

At the checkout counter, he saw that his total was £127.50. "How can that be? 'I only purchased a few things!'" he asked. "Your mother said that you would pay for her," said the clerk.

A kind-hearted fellow was walking through Central Park in New York and was astonished to see an old man, fishing rod in hand, fishing over a beautiful bed of red roses.

"Tsk Tsk!" said the passerby to himself. "What a sad sight. That poor old man is fishing over a bed of flowers. I'll see if I can help." So the kind fellow walked up to the old man and asked, "What are you doing, my friend?"

"Fishin', sir."

"Well, would you like to have a drink with me?"

The old man put his rod away and followed the stranger to the corner bar. He ordered a large glass of vodka and a fine cigar. His host felt good about helping the old man, and he asked, "Tell me, old friend, how many did you catch today?" The old fellow took a long drag on the cigar and replied, "You are the sixth today."

SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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

KOFFEE WITH KAKURO

	3	36			3	36		
10				7				
				3				
5				7				
				4				6
	11					5		
7								
8						8		
						5		
3					9			
				3				
7				11				
				5				3
	11					3		
	3					6		

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

SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

Letterology

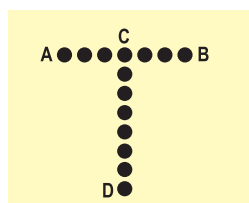
Each alphabet on the top has only straight lines. Each alphabet in the box has mixed straight lines and curves. Each alphabet at the bottom has only curves. Therefore, S goes to the bottom, T, V, W, X, Y, Z go to the top, and U goes into the box.

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Liar liar

The man who stole the horse told the truth. We only need to find out who that was. If Robert had stolen the horse he would not have said: Tommy stole the horse. He should have said: I stole the horse or Tommy did not steal the horse. If Tommy had stolen the horse, he would not have said: I did not steal the horse. So Scott stole the horse. What he said was true: Tommy stole the donkey. Then Robert stole the camel and told a lie.

Chip trick



Remove two chips to make another 'T'

Across the river

1. First, the farmer takes the goat across the river.
2. He goes back to pick up the wolf.
3. When he is across, he leaves the wolf and takes back the goat.
4. Back on the other side he leaves the goat and takes the cabbages with him.
5. Then he picks up the goat and all three items are on the other side.

Mission 100

$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 \times 9 = 100$$

or

$$1 + 2 \times 3 + 4 \times 5 + 6 + 7 \times 8 + 9 = 100$$

SOLUTIONS TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 43

ACROSS:

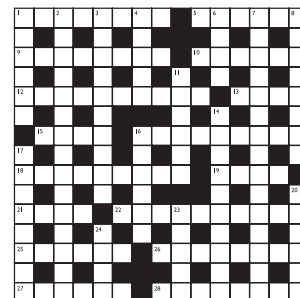
1 cold cash; 5 (Roshni) Chopra; 9 beauties (*deliveries unplayable*); 10

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Go fish; 12 South-North; 13 Aces; 15 tops: 16 six to four; 18 ton for ton; 19 *adda* (palindromic, reading the same backwards); 21 rate; 22 Ronaldinho (10 letters rearranging into *Dhoni-Lorna*); 25 eloped; 26

Nirupama:

Ni(Rupa)mA, Amin *turning to embrace* Rupa, a reference to Nirupama Vasant-Mankad; 27 Sushil (Jhaveri); 28 dark skin



DOWN:

1 co-Bish; 2 IPLLeague of Nations; 3 catches low; 4 steno, 6 hook; 7 (The) Prince of Denmark; 8 A Shastri: *Asha/stri* (*Bhosle woman*); 11 a toxin: *at/ox/in*; 14 Donald Duck; 16 sits on; 17 *Star News*; 20 No rain; 23 A Lisa; 24 Devi (Dev I?)

SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

80

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

SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

	3	36			3	36	
10	2	8		7	1	6	
5	1	4	7	1	2	4	6
	11	6	3	2	5	2	3
8	2	5	1		8	7	1
3	1	2		9	4	3	2
7	4	3	11	2	1	8	3
	11	7	3	1	3	1	2
	3	1	2		6	5	1



TEXT & PHOTO: CHITRA RAMASWAMY

“I believe education is the only input in life that does not diminish with giving.”

For the 40 tribal children at the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram in Korba, Chhattisgarh, **Roshanlal Arora**, 66, is ‘dadaji’, ‘sirji’ or ‘babuji’. The ashram tends to the educational, nutritional and health needs of the children and sustains itself without any government aid. At present, it accommodates children studying from IV grade to graduation. Though the children belong to different tribal communities, most are from the Korva tribe—one of the most marginalised communities in India. As president of the ashram for the past four years, Arora approaches prospective donors for funds and organises medical camps. For the tribal children, the ashram has opened a new world of learning. Recently, one of them even gained admission to Bilaspur Engineering College. Born in West Pakistan, Arora migrated to Haryana during Partition. Though he completed his schooling aided by a government scholarship, financial constraints forced him to work in a coal mine in Bihar. He went on to become a mines manager and retired from Indo Burma Petroleum in 1982. In the next two years, Arora plans to expand the ashram to accommodate at least 200 students and construct a middle school in the 1.5-acre sprawl.

From HOPES to HOMES

A small change levers a paradigm shift.



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NHB's current focus is the unserved and underserved. NHB is striving to catalyse the flow of institutional funds into housing for lower income groups.

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