

# harmony celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

MAY 2012 ₹ 30

THE CUSTODIAN

Shriji Arvind  
Singh Mewar

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BIRTHDAY!**  
ZOHRA SEGAL  
TURNS 100

**INTERVIEW**  
PADMA SHRI  
DR V S NATARAJAN

SHIVAJI'S FORT • BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACE FOR QUADRIPLÉGICS

# We SALUTE the SPIRIT of UTSAV Seniors for Celebrating Life



## India's First All-Senior\* Flash Mob

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ACTIVE SENIOR LIVING

by  
ASHIANA  
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On April 6, 2012, history was created in Delhi when 60 residents of UTSAV who toiled for 3000 man hours to demonstrate the world why age is just a number. Our Seniors all aged above 60 years descended on Select Citywalk Mall in South Delhi to participate in country's First All-Senior Flash Mob.

We salute the spirit of UTSAV where residents are perpetually celebrating Life!

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\* From a Single Seniors Community

# Adaptation

It could be a son, a servant or just a stranger. When it comes to perpetrators of heinous crimes against silvers, it appears there are no lines, no boundaries—only murderous intent. And after being buffeted by an almost daily dose of newsprint that chronicles these atrocities, I only have one question: Why?

There's no real answer I suppose, only theories, to what drives people to such depths. One tangible motive, of course, is greed but there are so many intangibles. Ennui or boredom, angst or a sense of disenchantment, alienation, anger, malevolence...it doesn't really matter what you pick. The end result is a travesty that lays bare our claim to be a society that reveres its elders. This, despite the slew of schemes and help lines announced by police forces in state after state in the country—this month, it is Kerala's turn (see 'Orbit'). Yet, the violence continues untrammelled.

Bemoaning the situation is not the answer though, nor is looking back with nostalgia at a kinder way of life. Life exists only in the now—and now is the time to make yours better. That's not just the Harmony way; it's the only way if we are to bring meaning and power to our existence. We need to eschew our blind dependence on the authorities to protect us and take matters into our own hands.

Suresh Natarajan



The answer, as always, is adaptation; to new realities, and to a world that is more harsh, more unforgiving, and infinitely more dangerous than the one we knew before.

Adapt your mind to be more aware and informed about the dangers that lurk around you; be more circumspect; don't share personal and financial information; remember that trust has to be earned, not gifted. Adapt your home to make it safer; install locks, put in latches, use a keyhole, invest in a security system to suit your budget. And adapt your life to widen your network in the community; keep track of your friends and let them keep track of you, register yourself with your local police station, take a self-defence class, form a neighbourhood watch to fill in the gaps of security our authorities are clearly unable to breach.

You can't predict tomorrow, but that's no reason to spend today cowering in fear. Stand proud, stand strong, stand tall—and stay safe.

*Tina Ambani*

## A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

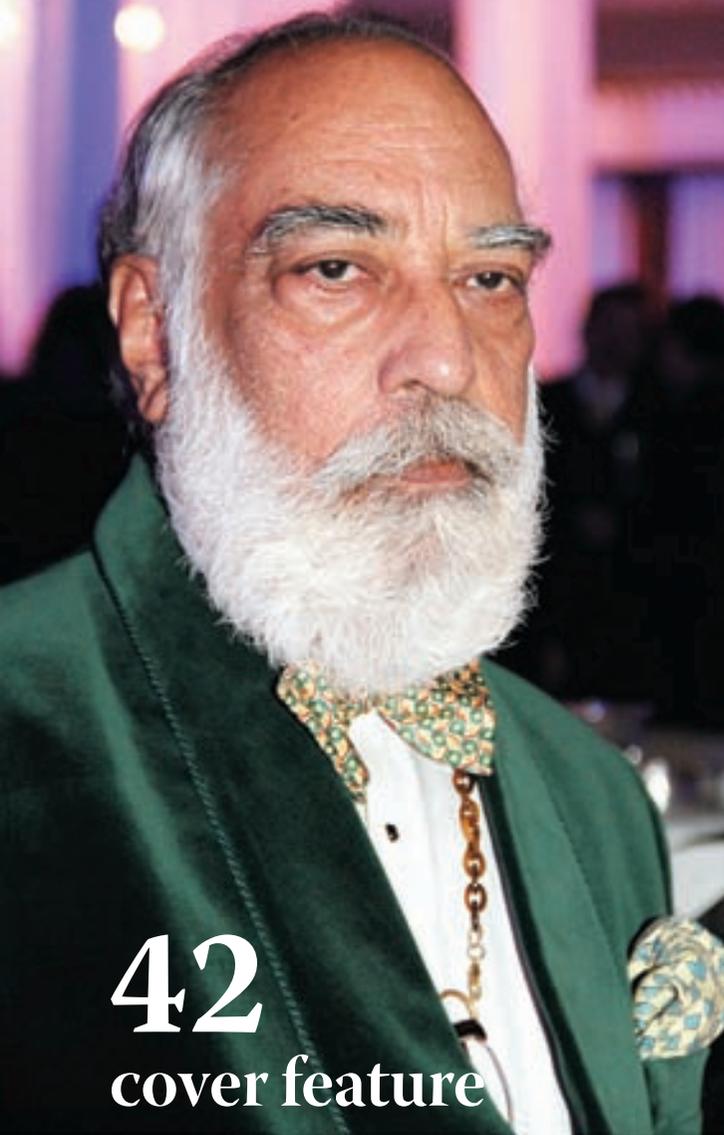
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# 42 cover feature

**Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar**  
seamlessly bridges past, present  
and future

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**IN THE SADDLE**  
*For Risaldar Major Hiram, horse riding is both passion and salvation*

**GREEN FINGERS**  
*Usha Bharat Singh shares her love of Bonsai*

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# column one

The splendour of India's forts and palaces-turned-hotels in Rajasthan, Gwalior and Hyderabad has a deeper connection to a past that resonates of the country's rich heritage. Some of their custodians have worked hard to keep the general acquaintance with the past alive. From maintaining their physical magnificence to being engaged in philanthropic practices, they shoulder the responsibility of their personal—and our collective—legacies. Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar of Udaipur represents the 76<sup>th</sup> generation of the House of Mewar that laid its foundation 1,400 years ago. On the cover this month ("The Custodian"), Shriji as a young man chose Mayo College over an education abroad. With royalty sitting light on his shoulders, he has seamlessly transcended the journey from the past to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From age-old visions of Mewar and its Vedic values to Facebook and Skype; from royal *khana* to modern-day hospitality; and from a royal seat to a setup devoid of superfluous props, he speaks of being a proud Indian, a father and grandfather.

What is that keeps us going back to our origins? Why is it that the modern never seems to match up with the old when silver shines in our hair? Gita and Deepak Banker look at their roots and think of food bonds ('Soulfood and Soulmates'); Y G Krishnamurthy ('A Law Unto Himself') thinks of his family when felicitated on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday by the Bar Association of Hyderabad; and Commodore Lokesh Batra ('Right Turn') conjures visions of the *Brahmashastra* whenever he uses the RTI Act to help others.

Whatever our past or motivation, legacies bring in a power. Here's wishing more power to you!

—Meeta Bhatti

**This letter is addressed to all those who have conceived and designed *Harmony-Celebrate Age*:**

I casually picked up a copy of the magazine today. I had no expectations and just thought I would glance through it during a commercial break while following the news about the earthquake in Indonesia. I was surprised and deeply impressed to find for the first time in this country, a magazine that highlights positives, passion, commitment and, in this particular issue, celebrates the joy of graceful ageing, and rediscovering romance.

This magazine deserves wider circulation. It comes as a breath of fresh air at a time when we are bombarded with all that is going wrong with us and around us. I am not saying that we should pretend that everything is fine all around. While accepting that there are massive problems that need to be addressed on priority, it also helps to celebrate what is good and positive. That will probably give us the energy and insights required to see the problems and explore the solutions with objectivity and compassion.

Good luck and more power to you!

**Paul Mathew** *Via email*

The newspapers are full of articles about the measures announced by the Madhya Pradesh government for the state's elders, beginning with the establishment of a Commission for Senior Citizens. Meanwhile, Maharashtra, the most advanced and richest state, is doing nothing for its elders. The Policy of 1999 is still pending even after 13 full years and no action has been taken on various issues brought out in a large number of representations. What a shameful position we are in! The Maharashtra government should take a page out of the leaf of the Madhya Pradesh government and do something for the more than 10 million seniors of the state.

**M V Ruparelia** *Via email*

I take this opportunity to thank *Harmony-Celebrate Age* and Deepa Karmalkar for dedicating an article to my mother-in-law the late Pushpa Oke [see picture,] in the March 2012 issue ('At Large'; 'Mind over Matter'). The article emphasised the importance of organ dona-



tion and I hope it will encourage others to serve mankind in a similar vein. Indeed, my mother-in-law was a hardcore teacher and always believed in science; she believed in practising what she preached and always led the way for our family. The act of donation imparts the message that nothing goes waste; every bit that comes from nature is useful if we realise its value. Hence, let's all follow the principles of nature and be useful and helpful throughout our life to keep ourselves happy—and society too.

**Vrunda Kishor Oke** *Via email*

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# SALAAM MUMBAI!

**F**or silvers in Mumbai, play time may be just around the corner. The Urban Poverty Eradication Cell of the **Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)** has announced that it will set up senior citizens' clubs to cater to the city's 800,000-odd silvers. The clubs, which will be open from 4 pm to 8 pm, will offer games, health camps and legal advice—at no cost whatsoever. A total of ₹ 50 million has been earmarked for infrastructure, while ₹ 5 million has been sanctioned for games, health checkups, investment and legal guidance.

The clubs will be located at Adhar Kendras across the city; at present, there are three such centres at Vile Parle (East), Andheri (West) and Prabhadevi. Going ahead, eight more Adhar Kendras will be set up at Kandivli, Goregaon, Andheri (West), Vikhroli, Chembur, Jogeshwari and Mulund (two centres). "These clubs will serve as evening care centres for the elders," Jyoti Pandya, chief community development officer of the Urban Poverty Eradication Cell, tells media. "The BMC has approved our plan and we are set to implement it."



# Southern COMFORT

Recognising that safety is a vital prerequisite to active ageing, the Kerala government has announced a ₹ 10 crore project titled CARE (Care, Aid and Relief for Elders). The initiative will enable silvers in the state to register with the local police so they would be under constant surveillance and protection; for its part, the police force will be trained to become more aware of the problems faced by elders and become more sensitive to them. “Increasingly, senior persons are choosing to live in their homes independently well into their old age,” State Home Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan tells media. “While many of them are



able to manage their health, managing their safety often proves to be difficult, with many becoming targets of criminal offences. With CARE, we

hope to provide our seniors security.” The project will be launched this month to coincide with the first anniversary of the UDF government.

# Pilgrim’s progress



**GODSPEED SILVERS!** The Madhya Pradesh government has announced that it will foot your pilgrimage bill. Under the Mukhyamantri Teerth-Darshan Yojana announced in April, people over 65, accompanied by an attendant, can choose from a list of destinations that includes Badrinath, Kedarnath, Puri, Dwarka, Amarnath, Vaishnodevi, Kashi, Tirupati, Shirdi, Gaya, Rameshwaram, Ajmer Sharif, Amritsar and Samed Shikhar (near Parasnath, Jharkhand). The nodal agency for the scheme will be the Department of Religious Trusts. There’s more good news on the anvil: a Commission for Senior Citizens; a training course in elder care; construction of old age homes in every district; free meals to poor silvers in rural areas; day care centres in every city; and a celebration of Senior Citizens’ Day on 1 October each year. We like it.



**BRITAIN COULD FACE PENSION COSTS OF £ 750 BILLION BY 2050 FROM AN AGEING POPULATION THAT IS EXPECTED TO CONSUME A GROWING SHARE OF RESOURCES, ACCORDING TO A REPORT BY THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND.**



# The India perspective

**T**he World Health Organisation has silvering India on its mind. Recently, **Nata Menabde** (above), **country head of the WHO, spoke on ageing in our country** in an interview with Reuters. Here are some takeaways:

- **On the elderly population:** "The percentage of elderly is growing very, very fast, especially in India, and in Southeast Asia also. The projections are that we will have between 12-13 per cent of elderly as part of the entire population by 2025, and that we're going to reach some 17 per cent of the population being elderly by 2050. Now, that is every fifth Indian being elderly."
- **On elderly women:** "The age dependency is very high in India, and especially in women, who are usually unemployed, participating less in the labour market, and more dependent on their spouses. At the same time, women live longer than men; this means that those women who are so dependent on their spouses end up in large numbers living without the spouse to take care of them.... And if the man dies, it's not his spouse who will inherit the property; it will be the next male in the family. So that leaves a lot of disturbances. These kinds of things need to be changed."
- **On India's health expenditure:** "There is a huge need of increasing public expenditure in health. The Prime Minis-

ter of India has publicly made an announcement that it will go up from 1.2 per cent of GDP to 2.5 per cent during the course of the 12th Year Plan. We are strongly supporting that because 80 per cent of healthcare costs are borne by people out of pocket, and that obviously leaves those who do not have money disadvantaged and left behind."

- **On the decline of the joint family:** "We are now moving to the nuclear family model from the joint, large family model, and that will make elderly less attended in the future. So there will be more demand for all kinds of services for the elderly, and community services also. And as they will live longer, there will be longer investment required for maintaining those."
- **On the challenges ahead:** "The bigger the group of elderly becomes for India, the more burden will be put on the population in a productive age to take care of those elderly.... With India's economic growth, obviously there are more resources available to make adequate provision for a number of those issues and challenges that India faces. There are special healthcare-related programmes with geriatric services being secured and more available for elderly, but what that requires is really a look and overhaul of the entire health system that is providing those services."

# Between the lines



**R**ead this carefully: **literacy is linked to longevity.** According to a study conducted at University College, London, silvers with poor literacy skills appear to have a higher chance of dying, compared to others of the same age. The researchers define poor literacy as the inability to successfully read and comprehend straightforward information. More significant to their study was 'poor health literacy', which they linked to less knowledge of chronic illnesses, poorer physical and mental health, less use of preventive services and higher hospitalisation rates. To arrive at their conclusion, lead researchers Sophie Bostock and Andrew Steptoe gathered data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), which studied 7,857 silvers over a 10-year period. "If we assume that the sample population studied is nationally representative, about one-third of older English adults have poor health literacy, and those with the poorest literacy levels have the highest risk of death," writes Bostock in the *British Medical Journal*. "The findings should remind all healthcare professionals that providing information doesn't necessarily equate to understanding; they must adopt effective communication techniques for patients with low health literacy."

## The wrong step

**E**ver gun the gas pedal when you're actually aiming for the brake? It happens, especially in parking lots and garages. And according to a new study commissioned by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in the US, it tends to happen more to silver women. The numbers tell the story: **gas pedal accidents tend to occur more frequently among drivers over age 76 and under age 20; and nearly two-thirds of drivers who have them are female.** "There may be several reasons for this but it's possible that the areas

of the brain that deal with driving aren't as robust in elderly drivers," a spokesperson for the Highway Safety Research Centre at the University of North Carolina, which conducted the study for NHTSA, tells *The Washington Post*. "The areas of the brain that support executive functioning—mental processes such as planning, attention and organising—are the last to develop and don't reach full maturity until early adulthood. On the other end of the age spectrum, older drivers are more likely to perform poorly on tests of executive functioning."

## Culture COUNTS

**I**n your haste to get with the zeitgeist, don't forget your cultural roots. That's the lesson that comes through loud and clear from a recent study of the indigenous Maori community conducted at the University of Auckland, titled *Life and Living in Advanced Age: A Cohort Study in New Zealand*. The researchers found that **older Maoris connected to their community and engaged in cultural practices enjoyed better quality of life and physical and emotional wellbeing.** For instance, the time spent on a



*marae* (the traditional meeting place for the community), frequency of *marae* visits and involvement in activities such as *tangihanga* (funerals) were all seen to be connected to the health of the respondents. Wellbeing was measured through indicators like cognitive functioning, presence/absence of disease and ability to live independently. "Although studies have hinted at the link between the wellbeing of older Maori and their involvement with their community, this is the first study ever to show this correlation through quantitative data," Professor Ngaire Kerse of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Auckland, tells website [www.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.auckland.ac.nz). "These results are extremely useful for policymakers."

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Comfort, care and security amid lavish environs—that’s the promise of DBC Trust’s **Heavenly Palace, a senior citizens’ home in Doraha, Ludhiana**. A 400-room facility set among 14 acre of landscaped lawns and water bodies, the project features centrally air-conditioned common areas; rooms furnished with marble flooring and moulded furniture; attached bathrooms with elder-friendly fittings, 24-hour hot water supply; dining and medical facilities; shuttle services in deluxe buses and private taxis; round-the-clock security; and recreation facilities like a Satsang Bhawan, library, auditorium and entertainment area for indoor games. If you want to know more about the project, go to [www.heavenlypalace.com/home.html](http://www.heavenlypalace.com/home.html)



## Equal opportunity

**I**mpoverished LGBT (lesbian-gay-bisexual-transvestite) silvers in Philadelphia will soon have a place to call home. As *The New York Times* reports, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency recently provided a reservation of ‘Low Income Housing Tax Credits’ for the first-of-its-kind, public-private housing initiative for this community by developers dmhFund and Pennrose Properties; this entitles the project to \$ 11 million in financing, giving it a



further shot in the arm. The six-storey building will include 56 one-bedroom units that will be available to people over 62 who earn less than 60 per cent

of the Philadelphia median income. “LGBT seniors are often forced back into the closet as they get older and must live in environments that are not accepting of who they are. For years, developing a unique facility in the heart of Philadelphia’s gayborhood where our most vulnerable LGBT elders could live out their golden years was our pie-in-the-sky idea,” says dmhFund President Mark Segal. “But today, we can say for certain that this idea will become a reality.”



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# The heat is on

To debunk the myth that silvers are asexual, Dr Narayana Reddy, one of India's premier consultants in sexual medicine, and his team at the Chennai-based Dega Institute recently undertook the first Indian study on sexual behaviour in the elderly. Titled *Sex and the Ageing Indian*, the study was presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference on Men's Health, held in New Delhi from 5-7 April 2012.

For the study, the team interviewed 3,021 heterosexual Indians (2,140 men and 881 women) between the ages of 50 and 91 during a 20-year period, between 1990 and 2010. The subjects, who represent 15 states of the country, are predominantly from the middle and upper socioeconomic strata. Here are some highlights:

- The average monthly frequency of sexual intercourse stands at 10.28 between the ages of 50 and 59; 6.10 between 60 and 69; 2.15 between 70 and 79; and 1.64 between 80 and 89. The figure is steady at once a month even over the age of 90.
- Sexual activity is initiated by either or both partners in a majority of cases (about 61 per cent).
- Most elders prefer to have sex at night—but 13 per cent are ready to make love anytime.
- About 42 per cent indulge in foreplay for an average duration of 5-10 minutes. The most common type of foreplay is hugging (about 26 per cent), followed by a combination of more than one type (about 25 per cent).
- Though the most adopted position is male on top (about 46 per cent), about 35 per cent of respondents



use more than one position during the same session of intercourse.

- 83 per cent of respondents continue to masturbate; men generally out of habit, and women to have an orgasm.
- About 26 per cent of respondents admit to having extra-marital sexual relationships. For men, who cited 'lack of privacy at home' as the most common reason, the figure stands at about 30 per cent; for women, who attributed it to 'lack of emotional bonding with their husband', it is 16 per cent.
- About 64 per cent of subjects have read/seen explicit sexual material.
- Women attributed reduced sexual activity over time to factors like their husband's sexual problems (about 23 per cent); associated illness (about 20 per cent); lack of a partner (about 19 per cent); husband's illness (about 15 per cent); and lack of privacy (about 15 per cent).
- For their part, men attributed it to factors like erectile dysfunction (about 30 per cent); associated illness (about 15 per cent); premature ejaculation (about 12 per cent); lack of privacy (about 12 per cent); and wife's illness/reluctance (about 12 per cent).

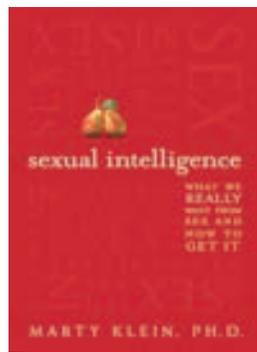
These results clearly establish that the ageing Indian is sexually active. "While ageing affects sexual response, it does not put a full stop to it," emphasises Dr Reddy, who is also chairperson, Council of Sex Education and Parenthood International, patron of the Indian Andropause Society, and a council member of the Asia Oceania Federation for Sexology, as well as being adjunct professor at The Tamil Nadu Dr MGR Medical University, in Chennai.

"It is important to realise that the ability to perform sexually is not affected. What is affected is the pace. And the fact is that for most people, this process is extremely gradual, allowing the couple to adjust to a less intense, less frantic but an enjoyable form of sexual activity."

## NEW PATHS TO PLEASURE

Sex and relationship therapist **Dr Marty Klein** shows us how to develop different models of sexuality as we age in his new book, *Sexual Intelligence — What We Really Want from Sex and How to Get It* (HarperOne). His tips:

- Embrace your wobbly bits
- Don't be fussy about the ideal conditions
- Make a date for sex
- Learn how to say no
- Start talking dirty
- Skip that second glass of wine
- Expand your definitions of sexy
- Value quality over quantity



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# The power of music



A song from our past can transport us to a better place—we all know this intuitively. Now, there's visual proof that confirms, and celebrates, **music's therapeutic effect**. In *Alive Inside*, director Michael Rosato-Bennett films the silver residents of a nursing home after they are given iPods loaded with music from their

youth, testing the 'music and memory' theory of social workers Dan Cohen and neurologist Oliver Sacks, who anchor the documentary. As London newspaper *The Telegraph* reports, the results are astounding. For instance, Henry, who sits hunched and withdrawn on his chair, uncommunicative with the documentary crew, lights up when the music starts

to flow. He also starts to speak, describing the effect the music has on him—"It gives me the feeling of love, of romance—before breaking into song himself, treating us to Cab Calloway's classic *I'll be home for Christmas*. Watch some truly inspiring moments from the documentary at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKDXuCE7LeQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKDXuCE7LeQ)



## Two good!

As acting mileage goes, these guys are frequent fliers. But time hasn't slowed down veterans **Al Pacino, 71**, and **Christopher Walken, 69**, one bit. In their latest flick *Stand Up Guys*, directed by Oscar-winning Fisher Stevens, they play ageing baddies on one last criminal fling—with a twist: one has been hired to bump the other off. As *Variety* magazine reports, the two have been spotted filming on the streets of Los Angeles, clearly enjoying their time on and off the sets. We'll have to wait till the end of the year, though, to see how the chemistry translates on camera.

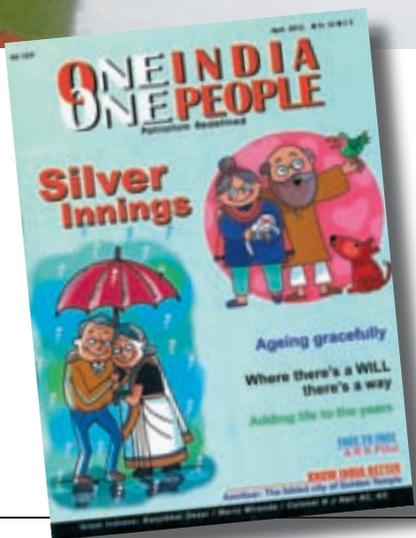
# The 10 Secrets of Healthy Ageing

Psychologist, nutritional therapist and prolific author (30 books and counting), 50-something Patrick Holford is a common sight on British TV shows and radio programmes, not to mention a familiar by-line in broadsheets and tabloids alike as he dispenses his own brand of wisdom on successful ageing. Much of that has now been coalesced into his latest book, *The 10 Secrets of Healthy Ageing* (Piatkus), which aims to teach you “how to live longer, look younger and feel great”. Here are his ‘secrets’:

- Secret 1: Stay smart as you age—and forget about Alzheimer’s
- Secret 2: Keep your joints mobile and your bones strong
- Secret 3: Beat the bulge, prevent

- diabetes and boost your energy
- Secret 4: Switch off the stress factor and sleep for seven hours straight
- Secret 5: Keep your skin youthful
- Secret 6: Stay free from cancer
- Secret 7: Keep your heart healthy and your blood pressure low
- Secret 8: Improve your digestion without drugs
- Secret 9: Stop your eyesight deteriorating
- Secret 10: Discover the natural anti-ageing hormones that perk you up

If, like us, these precepts come as no real secret to you, don’t snigger. Holford promises to back up his 10-step programme with a doable nutrition and lifestyle boot camp that is flexible enough to suit your realities while being rigid enough to get the job done.



## THUMBS UP!

IN ITS APRIL 2012 EDITION, *ONE INDIA ONE PEOPLE* MAGAZINE FOCUSED ON A THEME DEAR TO OUR HEART: SILVERS. THE ISSUE, WITH THE COVER LINE ‘SILVER INNINGS’, FEATURED A RANGE OF ARTICLES TARGETED AT OUR CONSTITUENCY, FROM AGEING GRACEFULLY TO THE NEED TO WRITE A WILL.

# Sure support!

A 'PERS' may be just what you need in your purse. Short for Personal Emergency Response System, it is a tiny device that enables silvers to call for help at the push of a button. One such product is the lightweight **SurePod 250EA**, which combines two-way talk and GPS in a small pod for ease of use and mobility. Unlike earlier versions of PERS, silvers are not tied to a base station; they can leave their homes and go where they please while remaining part of the network. And unlike most cell phones, SurePod has a one-push emergency button that is far simpler than having to dial a number in case of a crisis. "SurePod helps seniors live



independently, while giving their families peace of mind when they are not physically available to care for them," says Julia Ko, co-founder of SurePod in a media release. "Our built-in

GPS can reduce the time needed to locate seniors and dispatch assistance. Faster response times mean better outcomes." To learn more, go to [surepod.com](http://surepod.com)

## INDEPENDENCE TODAY



For silvers looking for care without cloying, LivHOME Inc, one of America's largest providers of professionally led at-home care, has a solution: **LivIndependa**. Developed in collaboration with tech company Independa Inc, this **tablet-computer based remote care service** offers a range of features, such as a PERS (personal emergency response system), check-in calls for activities of daily living; monitoring by professional care managers; medication reminders; appointment and social reminders; and Internet services such as email, browsing, video chat, social networking and games. When clients sign up for the LivIndependa service, a LivHOME care manager works with them to customise the system to suit their particular needs and then provide ongoing support, both at home and remotely through 24/7 monitoring that is effective but never intrusive. "We've designed LivIndependa for seniors who could benefit from some level of home monitoring but do not yet need a caregiver in their homes," says Mike Nicholson, CEO of LivHOME, in a media release. "The new service remotely delivers our care managers' expertise and oversight via an easy-to-use interface, extending care to a whole new generation of seniors. And on the social side, LivIndependa helps older adults enjoy an entire new, easy way to communicate with others." Check out the service at [www.livindependa.com/](http://www.livindependa.com/)



**Spell it out.** The Spelling Bee may be a uniquely American concept but there's something great about a competition that works the mind and tests the vocabulary. Try to set up one in your community centre. Take a cue from the East Alabama Commission Area Agency on Ageing in the US, which organised a Senior Citizen Spelling Bee in March this year. Forty participants vied for top prize; after 17 rounds, with a total of 500 different words spelled, a winner was declared: 82 year-old Rodney Petty!



Haresh Patel

## Then: Umbrella Now: Clothes Dryer

Carefully strip off the fabric from an old umbrella. Use an umbrella with strong spikes. Turn it inside out forming a curve on the top of the holding rod. Dig it into a muddy patch of earth to make a small and handy clothes drying rack. If you don't have the space (or land) to dig it in, you can hang it upside down on a hook without turning it inside out. Use clothes pins to hang your wet clothes so they don't fly away after drying!



### FACTS

- » The energy saved by recycling steel can power about 18 million households for a year.
- » Steel can be recycled as many times as required without losing its strength.

### MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...

1. STICK OR STITCH THE STRIPPED OFF FABRIC OF AN UMBRELLA TOGETHER TO MAKE A COLOURFUL SUN SHADE. HANG IT ABOVE YOUR LAWN OR BALCONY.
2. OPEN AN OLD UMBRELLA AND HANG IT TO THE FIXTURE OF YOUR CHANDELIER THE NEXT TIME YOU CLEAN IT. THIS WILL PREVENT ANY DUST OR DRIPS COMING DOWN.
3. USE A STRIPPED UMBRELLA IN YOUR GARDEN; PUSH THE HANDLE DEEP INTO THE SOIL AND LET YOUR CREEPERS CLIMB ON IT.



# Sound BEATS

**T**o upgrade current medical skills and technology, Mumbai doctors have brought home a device that uses ultrasound waves to increase the flow of blood to an ailing heart: **Extracorporeal Shockwaves Myocardial Revascularisation**, better known as ESMR. ESMR is known to use high-intensity shock waves, especially ultrasound (for short duration), to develop new blood vessels and capillaries in the heart as well as to break down kidney stones. "This long yet successful procedure targets the affected areas of the heart and creates new blood vessels," confirms the operative representative

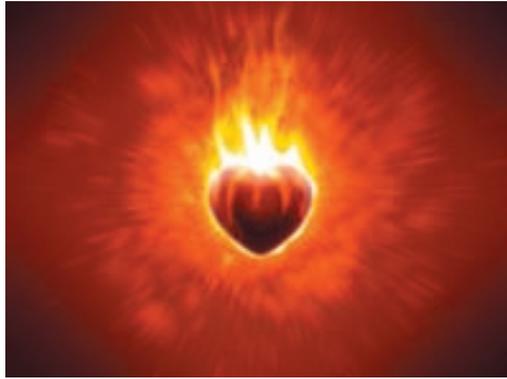
of Dr Hamdulay's Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre in Mumbai. In fact, Mumbai is the second Indian city to use the device after Chennai. Dr Hamdulay's Centre has so far successfully treated over 30 heart patients; about 15 patients are currently undergoing this pain-free therapy. "It is perfect for people who for fear refuse surgery," the representative tells *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. A better substitute for surgery, it takes about three months for complete recovery and needs at least nine sittings. Patients are required to visit the doctor thrice a week and then need about a month for new capillaries to develop.



**THE RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE OF CHEST DISEASES (RGICD) IN BENGALURU IS PLANNING TO SET UP A SPECIALISED GERIATRIC CARE UNIT ON 2,000 SQ M OF SPACE. OTHER THAN GERIATRIC CARE, THIS 30-BED FACILITY WILL ALSO ENGAGE IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAS SANCTIONED AN ESTIMATED ₹ 50 MILLION FOR THE PROJECT.**

# Heart and heat

According to a recent study conducted at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts, **it is very important for people above the age of 60-65 to keep their bodies cool in summer.** The study, valid for elders across the world, reveals that variations in heat waves during extreme summers can be fatal, especially for those with heart diseases, those who have survived heart attacks and people with chronic lung diseases and diabetes. The research—conducted between 1985 and 2006—followed Medicare data of 3.5 million 60-plus chronically ill people from cities with varied climates and temperatures. It evaluated the patterns of illnesses



and their connection with fluctuating summer temperatures, not leaving out other possible risk factors and ozone levels. The data was pooled for final conclusions. It was revealed that in each city, during the years when the heat wave was stronger, the

elderly suffered more compared to when the heat wave was milder. Cities with more greenery had less problems than urban centres. “As we age, immunity tends to decrease and so does dietary intake,” says Dr Tanuj Garg, geriatrician at Life Line, a physiotherapy and geriatric care centre in Ghaziabad. “These are the main reasons why people over 60 cannot take extreme climatic changes, especially when it’s hot, because they decrease the capacity of the body to stay calm. High temperatures also increase the chance of heat strokes, which can prove fatal for weak people.” In his view, chronic diseases are the major contributors of decrease in immunity levels.

## Save your skin

Most of us adapt to the idea of irreversible ageing but skin damage at any age can, and should, be prevented. Diversified technology company 3M and skincare products company Cavilon have launched a brand new product called **No Sting Barrier Film (NSBF)** that can be used by both clinicians and patients. With years, skin undergoes various changes and can become susceptible to harmful external factors such as moisture, friction, adhesive trauma and harmful UV rays. The makers claim NSBF acts as a barrier against these extraneous elements.

Launched after extensive research with the promise to help prevent skin damage, this fast-drying and non-sticky liquid creates a transparent, breathable, waterproof film after it has been sprayed. Non-alcoholic in nature, it has no side effects and is widely appreciated because its transparent application allows lasts 72 hours without stinging even if applied on wounds. Being pitched for extreme climates, it can be used anywhere across the world.



NEW YEAR GREETINGS

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**BIRTHDAYS**

● Actor and dancer **Aruna Irani** (right) turns 60 on 3 May.



● Indian author of English fiction **Kunal Basu**, of *The Japanese Wife* fame, turns 56 on 4 May.



● Golden Globe and Oscar winner **George Clooney** (left) turns 50 on 6 May.

● Veteran actor and peerless beauty **Waheeda Rehman** turns 76 on 14 May.

● Iconic singer-songwriter **Bob Dylan**, who has influenced musical culture for five decades, turns 70 on 24 May.

● Malayalam music director and two-time National Award winner **M G Sreekumar** turns 55 on 25 May.

● Actor **Paresh Rawal** turns 62 on 30 May.

● American actor turned political activist **Clint Eastwood** turns 82 on 31 May.

**MILESTONES**

● **Ajit Pal Singh**, 65, former captain of the Indian hockey team and three-time Olympian, was named India's Chef-de-Mission for the London Olympic Games this summer.

A seven-member committee selected him unanimously to lead the Indian contingent.



● **K J Yesudas**, 71, (right) completed 50 years of his singing career; to celebrate his golden jubilee, he was felicitated by the Kerala assembly. Chief Minister Oommen Chandy inaugurated the function.



**OVERHEARD**

"I have all my teeth. So far, so good. But really, one shouldn't linger too long in front of the mirror. I tried Botox one time and was permanently surprised for a couple of months, and it was not a cute look for me. My feeling is, I have three children who should know what emotion I'm feeling at the exact moment I'm feeling it. Like, that is critical. The best way to stave off wrinkles is happiness, and the love of a good man."

—*Oscar-winning actor Julia Roberts, 44, who plays the evil queen in her new film Mirror Mirror (a retelling of the Snow White story); in the film, her character tries everything from snails and scorpion stings to bird droppings as part of a frenetic anti-ageing regimen*

**IN PASSING**

● Tamil actor and comedienne **M Saroja** passed away on 2 April owing to cardiac arrest at the age of 79.

● Bengali screenwriter, dramatist and poet **Mohit Chattopadhyay** passed away from cancer on 12 April. He was 78.

● Eminent litterateur, freedom fighter and journalist **Nityananda Mohapatra** passed away after respiratory failure on 17 April at the age of 100.

● American showman and cultural giant **Dick Clark** died of a heart attack on 18 April. He was 82.

● Rock multi-instrumentalist and lead vocalist of The Band, **Levon Helm** (right) passed away after fighting a long battle with throat cancer on 19 April at the age of 71.



## ADMIN ALERT

Experts answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement

**I have always worked in the field of administration. Now, I wish to work freelance. Is it possible?**

It actually depends on your job experience thus far. It is a fact that very few companies offer part-time or freelancing work where administration is concerned, but anything is possible if you have the will. Start by targeting small companies with a small clientele and shorter working hours. If you are active on the Internet, you can look for companies or organisations that operate online. Websites often need administrators to keep a check on their clients and dealings. Online shopping sites, especially, are worth a try.

Another option is to log into career services websites to get a broader perspective of the kind of jobs you can take up. If you are good at communication, you can apply to bigger brands that have administrators in shifts for part-time jobs. There are also many work-from-home job options. Further, companies that operate on an 'occasion' basis (wedding and event management, for instance) often hire administrators just for the duration of their event. Whatever you choose to do, remember that your remuneration may not be too high—it will depend on how many assignments you take. Best of luck!

—Umansh Garodia retired as an administration officer from Adicon Pvt Ltd, Kanpur, and now works part-time



Anju Mohan

## Hand of law

**H D KOHLI, 82, DELHI**

**T**o be a winner, one has to use each obstacle as a stepping stone. Every time life handed me lemons, I made lemonade.

Armed with a master's in history and a degree in teaching, I started my career in 1953 in Andhra Pradesh. Eight years into my profession, I decided to quit. At most, I could have been a headmaster; I wanted to achieve much more. I joined a construction company as stores officer, working with them for 20 years; I expanded my profile to include arbitration. I became their functional director in 1980. An upheaval in the hierarchy brought a change. The new chief wanted me to engage in immoral and illegal activities, so I decided to resign. Instead of accepting my resignation, he suspended me and filed a criminal case against me for cheating, criminal breach of trust and misappropriation of funds.

I won the case, as lower courts did not find any criminality. But the company persisted. Even the district-level court ruled that the case had been framed to malign me. An appeal in higher court was the company's response to each verdict. However, even the High Court didn't interfere with the decision of the lower court and ruled in my favour. After talks with the firm

failed over granting me premature retirement at 55, I filed two cases against them for malicious persecution and recovery of back wages. Instead of depending on others, I started studying law at the age of 58. I went on to finish my LLB, LLM and then PhD.

Although the case is still on, I managed to get a favourable decree in the High Court and got 50 per cent of my dues. My new profession not only prepared me to fight my own battle, it has allowed me to assist others. I fight matrimonial cases for women free of cost. As I see a shadow of death in every parting, I try to bring the couple together. If separation is inevitable, I try and get victims the best compensation. I also conduct lectures for students appearing for the judges' exam.

I brought out my first book in 2002 and have authored 12 books of my own; these include *Hindus and Divorce*; *Law and the Illegitimate Child*; *Conciliation and Arbitration Act*; *Muslim Law in India*; *Juvenile Justice Act*; and *Dowry Prohibition Act* among others. I think the law is the best mode of self-employment. It should be especially easy for silvers whose mental faculties are well-developed because of their experiences in life.

—As told to Anju Mohan

## HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

### JOURNEY INTO THE SELF

They say that behind every successful man, there's a woman; but what they forget to mention is that behind every successful woman, there's hardship, pain and sacrifice. Despite my challenges, I've had plenty of precious moments too. But the most important lesson I've learnt is one of self-reliance.

I come from Bihar, from a traditional family with a modern outlook, and I have always aimed for the top. So I attended Banaras Hindu University and earned a master's degree in Law. But there was something else I learnt that no degree could ever teach. As my father once said, "Whatever you do in life, you must always be self-dependent because your future depends on it."

I went on to marry a lawyer and continued practising law. My husband and I worked in the same place and this drove a wedge in our marriage. I had always dreamt of being a lawyer but I gave up that dream to save my marriage. So I enrolled as a teacher in a local school and I gave it all I had.

I didn't realise the irony then but as I had given up my own sense of self-dependence, I was determined to inculcate that quality in my own children. So even during the summer vacations, I sent them to hobby classes so they could develop new skills that would help them through life.

Then, one day, my world was shattered. I was diagnosed with cancer of the gall bladder. The news devastated my family too. But, gradually, the pain of my family gave me strength and I resolved to fight the disease. I went to

Mumbai for treatment and I underwent surgery there. I returned to Bihar and underwent chemotherapy.

I continued to teach but as the chemotherapy had weakened me, my family convinced me to quit my job. It wasn't long before I plunged into depression; for once again, I was robbed of my sense of self-reliance. When my family realised what they had done, they encouraged me to get a new job but age was not on my side.

I managed to drag myself out of depression and decided to become self-reliant again. Only, this time, I took up a full-time job as a grandmother. But I still feel there's something missing in my career. Life is a learning process and I want to continue to explore it because I need to feel that precious sense of self-dependence once again.

—Savita Singh, Patna



Singh with her husband and granddaughter in Goa

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## Skin deep: For radiant skin, watch what you eat

A doctor advised me to take a multivitamin capsule with Omega-3 to help overcome skin diseases. Though it helped me in the course of four months, I want to know the food-related cause of skin diseases. What nutritional changes should I make to purify the blood and eliminate vitamin deficiency?

Our skin is one of the most dynamic organs; it protects the body from environmental influences and has a tremendous capacity to rejuvenate itself. With age, though, crow's feet and laugh lines begin to appear and, over time, wrinkles make their impressions. Discolouration, thinning and drying also occur over time and the ability of skin to rejuvenate itself reduces. Stress and poor dietary habits can have an adverse effect on our skin as well.

### Skin-nourishing nutrients

A healthy diet can slow down age-related changes:

**Vitamin A:** Lack of Vitamin A makes skin lose its moisture easily. It thereby peels off and the rate of cell renewal declines. Cod liver oil, broccoli, mangoes, papayas, carrots, yam, parsley, green leafy vegetables, pumpkin, cherries and egg yolk are good sources of Vitamin A.

**Vitamin C:** It is the first line of defence against free radical damage. Vitamin C aids in the production of skin proteins, elastin and collagen. Adequate supply of Vitamin C aids in the repair of damaged skin proteins and prevents cell damage induced by free radicals. Guavas, blackcurrants, parsley, kiwi fruit, strawberries, spinach, oranges, cabbage, papaya and bean sprouts are rich sources of Vitamin C.

**B-complex vitamins:** Deficiency of B complex vitamins induces the formation of fine lines and wrinkles and makes the skin rough, dry and scaly. Whole grains, nuts and sprouts are good sources of B complex vitamins.

**Vitamin E:** Present in foods such as wheat germ, safflower seeds, *til* oil, sunflower seeds, walnuts, extra virgin olive oil, and soy, it is known to prevent stress-induced wrinkles. It protects the membrane of skin cells against free radical damage and thereby maintains the youthfulness of skin.

**Zinc:** It is needed for the production of new healthy skin cells. Zinc also helps in the generation of anti-oxidant

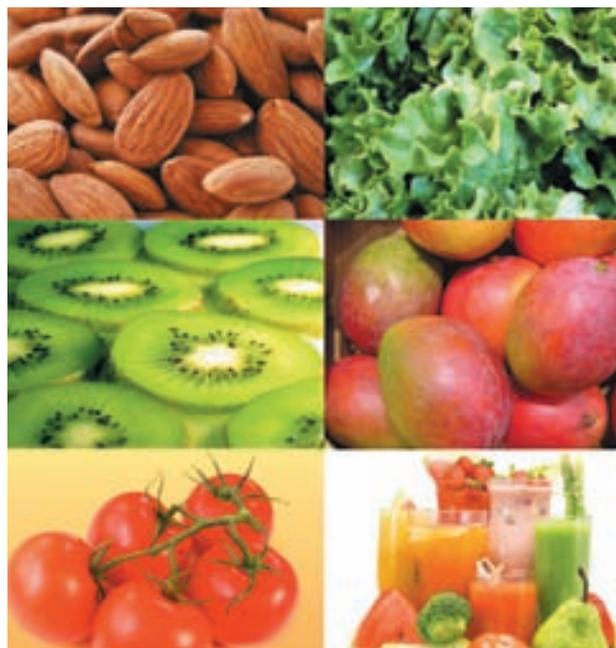
enzymes that inactivate free radicals and prevent them from causing damage to skin cells. Nuts and seeds are a good source of zinc.

**Gama Linoleic Acid (GLA):** An essential fatty acid, it is responsible for making our skin smooth and supple. As the body ages, its ability to synthesise GLA decreases and the skin gets drier and undernourished. Therefore, it is wise to take GLA supplements after the age of 40. GLA is found in evening primrose oil.

**Water:** Water is essential for hydrating the body and eliminating toxins from the system. Ideally, one must have at least 8 to 10 glasses of water daily, excluding water ingested through soups, juices and drinks.

### The following changes are required in your diet to purify your blood and prevent vitamin deficiency:

- Drink at least one glass of vegetable juice daily. A mixture of carrot, tomato and beetroot is a great cleanser of skin and liver toxins. Plant foods provide vitamins C, E and selenium that retard ageing and assist cell renewal.
- Avoid smoking—the worst enemy of the body, it leaches Vitamin C and builds up toxins in the system.
- Avoid fried and spicy foods; they contribute to toxin load.



Present in wheat germ, safflower seeds, *til* oil, sunflower seeds, walnuts, extra virgin olive oil, and soy, Vitamin E is known to prevent stress-induced wrinkles. It protects the membrane of skin cells against free radical damage and maintains the youthfulness of skin

- Restrict intake of fat; incorporate foods rich in healthy fats, especially monounsaturated fatty acids and omega fatty acids such as fish oils, olive oil, canola oil and walnuts.
- Increase intake of fibre and complex carbohydrates with fruits, vegetables and whole grains that provide roughage and detoxify the system.
- Minimise intake of processed foods containing high amounts of additives and preservatives and opt for fresh, home-cooked foods.

**Top five nutrients to improve your skin texture:**

Apart from dietary modifications and other lifestyle measures, there are many herbs and nutrients that help heal your skin.

**Aloe vera:** The aloe vera gel (from inside the aloe leaf) is probably the most effective remedy against dry skin and minor cuts and wounds. Aloe contains a healing enzyme (brady kininase) that helps decrease itching, dryness, redness and swelling. Apply the gel directly to your skin and experience the benefits.

**Evening primrose oil:** It contains essential fatty acid (GAMMA linolenic acid), which helps improve skin tone, dryness, eczema and redness. You can take the capsules orally or cut them open and apply the oil to your skin.

**Turmeric:** It is a potent anti-inflammatory that reduces itching and dryness. Apply a paste of turmeric (mixed with water) to the affected area. *Haridra khand* (an Ayurvedic preparation made from turmeric) is very useful in treating skin conditions like itching, redness and inflammation.

**Flaxseeds:** Consuming powdered flaxseeds (flax meal) helps reduce dryness of skin, eczema and acne. In addition, it helps reduce joint pain and improves heart health (by reducing triglycerides).

As our skin gets drier with each passing year, we need to make the right food choices coupled with a good skincare regimen for radiant skin that defies time.

**I am an active 70 year-old and eat out often. How can I avoid food-borne illnesses?**

Food-borne illness is caused by eating food that contains certain bacteria or viruses. After the food is eaten, microorganisms continue to multiply in the digestive tract, causing infection. When you eat out, be careful with potentially hazardous foods like foods of animal origin such as meat, milk, cheese, poultry, eggs, fish, and other seafood, sprouts, cut fruits and vegetables like melons, carrots, onions and other peeled vegetables and fruits. These can support the rapid growth of bacteria. Watch for the following:

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water before handling any food. Rewash hands after using the bathroom, touching your face or hair, or sneezing.
- Avoid tap water and beverages with ice.
- Be careful with buffet-style food. Check to see that hot food is being kept hot and not just lukewarm. Rice can be a source of food contamination if it has been left out for too long. Salads are also a possible problem if they are not fresh.
- Above all, if the food doesn't taste right, stop eating immediately.

**Owing to my inactive lifestyle, I don't cook often; instead, I prefer to cook once in larger quantities to last for three days. How safe is leftover food?**

It is always best to eat freshly cooked meals as food loses many nutrients from the time it is cut to the time it is cooked because of oxidation. When food is in contact with the air for a long time (as leftovers are), it loses many nutrients. There is additional loss during reheating. Further, leftover food needs to be refrigerated within two to four hours of cooking. Generally, by the time food is refrigerated, it already starts deteriorating. Bacteria start acting and multiplying when it is out for long. In case it is not possible to cook every day, take the following precautions:

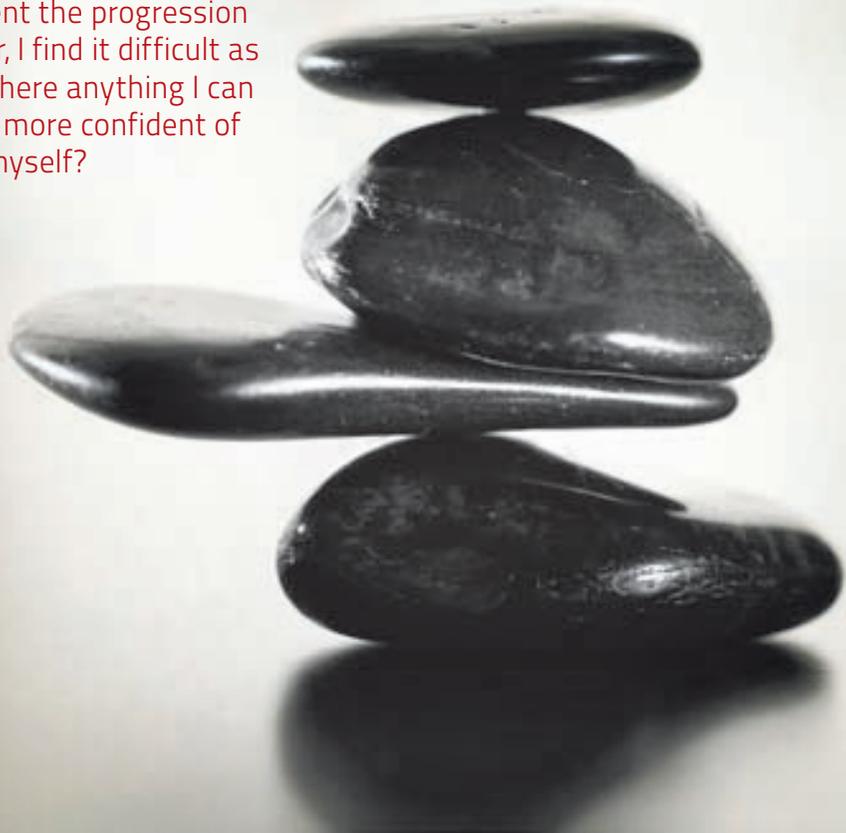
- Keep the refrigerator at a temperature between 00 C to 40 C or 380 F to 400 F while storing leftovers. To freeze food, the temperature must be at 00 F or -180 C. Remember, cooling only makes bacteria dormant. It does not kill them.
- Heating kills bacteria, so make sure you heat food adequately after defrosting.
- Meat and dairy products need to be refrigerated as soon as possible to delay bacterial growth.
- Food must be eaten within three days of preparation; thereafter, it spoils and can cause food poisoning.

*Dr Anjali Mukerjee is a nutritionist and founder of Health Total, which has 15 centres in Mumbai to treat obesity and other health related disorders. Visit [www.health-total.com](http://www.health-total.com) If you have a question for Dr Mukerjee write to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)*



## Even footing: Get your balance together

I am 67 and have been diagnosed with balance disorder. Doctors have advised regular exercise to prevent the progression of the problem. However, I find it difficult as I am afraid of falling. Is there anything I can do at home to make me more confident of not falling and injuring myself?



Balance exercises help you develop strong leg muscles and prevent falls. To begin with, follow these simple safety guidelines:

- Balance exercises are intended for normal imbalance and unsteadiness owing to inactivity and disuse.
- Make sure you check with your doctor if you suspect a more serious balance problem involving vertigo, ear infection, Meniere's disease, chronic dizziness or drug interactions.
- If you are exercising for poor balance and have a frail physique, make sure you are closely supervised at all times.
- Progress to the next exercise when the preceding one can be done safely or if you have enough assistance.
- Be aware of your posture; try to maintain your weight over your ankles.

- Avoid fast movements including quick turns or changes in position.
- Always get up slowly when rising from a chair.
- Don't close your eyes when exercising or standing near your chair.
- If you are taking medication, ask your doctor if there are any side-effects that may cause light-headedness or decreased balance.

### **Balancing exercises are challenging**

If you are uncomfortable about these exercises or are unsure of your ability to complete them, don't try them alone.

Start slowly with the first exercise; it will take you time to get used to the new experience of stressing your balance system.

It is not a race to the finish. You may be comfortable only performing the first few balance exercises and not comfortable with the moving and walking exercises. That is okay.

Never do something you are nervous about.

It's better to have a helpful, stable person around to make you more confident and secure.

### **Side leg raise**

Stand behind a table or chair, with feet as wide apart as shoulders. Hold on to the table or chair for balance. Lift your right leg to the side about 12 inches (or as far as is comfortable) while keeping your back and both legs straight. Hold for several seconds. Repeat with your left leg and continue until you have done 10 reps (or repetitions) with each leg.

### **Hip flexion**

Stand behind a chair or table and hold on for balance. Bend one knee slowly toward your chest. Hold for a second and then lower slowly. Repeat with the other leg and continue until you have done 12 lifts with each leg.

### **Standing on one foot**

Stand behind a chair without wheels. Place one or both hands on the chair for support, if you need it. Shift all your weight to the right leg and lift the left foot off the ground. Hold this position for 15-30 seconds; switch and perform the exercise using the left leg and right foot. Try this exercise with open and closed eyes. Work to increase the time you are able to stand on one leg with and without support.

### **Heel toe walking**

Stand with your feet hip-distance apart and toes pointed forward. Step one foot forward in front of the other, leading with the heel. Follow through by rolling on to the ball of your foot. Perform the same movement using the other leg. Complete this movement, walking across the room for five to six complete steps.

### **Side steps over an object**

Place a large rolled-up towel on the floor. Stand with your feet parallel to the towel and hip-distance apart. Step sideways over the towel with slow and controlled movements, placing your foot on the ground and on the opposite side of the towel. Step back over the towel, placing the feet side by side. Complete this stepping over and back movement 10-12 times; then switch and perform the movement using the opposite foot.

### **Stability ball sit**

Place a 55-75 cm stability ball up against a wall for support and stability. Sit on it. With your feet hip-distance apart, place your hands on both sides of the ball. Lift both arms up to shoulder height and hold them out to the side for 15-30 seconds before placing them back on the ball. Repeat this exercise two to three times. If you find this exercise easy, attempt it with eyes closed, or with one foot off the floor.

### **Heel lifts**

Strengthen the muscles of the feet, the plantar fascia, which run the length of the soles of each foot and provide a springboard of muscle to support your ankle, knee and hip joints. Stand barefoot on a slip-proof surface and place one hand on the wall if your balance is tenuous. With your feet hip-wide, lift the heels and come onto the balls of the feet, imagining you are grasping a bar below. Pause for a moment before lowering your heels. Repeat 10-15 more times. If it is too difficult raising both heels, alternate one foot with the other.

### **Modified squats**

Build your thigh muscles, quadriceps on the front and hamstrings at the back, along with the gluteus maximus on the back of the hips, with modified squats. To prevent falling, use a stable table set against a wall that will not move or slide or use a kitchen countertop that doesn't move. Place your palms flat on the table or countertop so your arms are extended straight. Lower your hips as if you are sitting in an invisible chair, until your hips are almost at the level of your bent knees. Pause before standing again. Repeat 10-15 times. These muscles enable you to squat, sit on a chair, get up, and walk the stairs.

### **Standing single leg lift**

Exercise the muscles at the sides of the hips, the gluteus medius, which help contribute to balance. A classic physical therapy exercise is to stand with feet hip-distance apart, placing the right hand on a table or on a wall for balance, lifting the left foot and extending the leg to the side about 30° for 10-30 seconds before lowering the foot. Repeat on the right side. Do once more on each side. This strengthens the hips if you tend to sway to one side.

*Madhukar Talwalkar is chairman of Talwalkar's, one of India's largest chain of fitness centres with 78 branches across major cities.  
Website: [www.talwalkars.net](http://www.talwalkars.net)  
If you have a question for him write to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)*



## Cultivate compassion: It's essential for the mind, and the body

In the book *Yoga for Your Spiritual Muscles*, author Rachel Schaffer offers the view that compassion is very essential for our health and that it may be cultivated by poses that work on the higher heart centre and lower psychic centres at the hips and lower back. This would involve poses that apply a gentle pressure at the chest, such as the lying thunderbolt (*supta vajrasana*), fish (*matysasana*) and lizard (*pristhasana*), and leg raises that involve bending the knees and drawing them up closer to the chest, such as the lying energy release pose (*supta pawan muktasana*). Others include forward bends such as the hare pose (*shashankasana*) and head-to-knee pose (*janu sirsasana*). Most of these poses also help culture a state of surrender.

Schaffer believes stress is a result of a state of conflict between wanting to give and our resistance to it. Often lack

of compassion could just mean lack of self-love. The latter is where all ills, on the physical level, actually start. Ideally, if you wish for such poses to work for you on an emotional plane, you need to involve the breath, keeping it strong yet flowing (not jerky or struggling, as most beginners tend to do while trying a new pose). This comes with regular practice and a meditative state of awareness. Then, you need to build them into a strong practice where you are able to hold each pose for long, such as a minute or even more; for instance, the hare pose is best experienced if held for two to three minutes at least. All this requires sustained and daily practice. You may also include affirmations of love and compassion while holding these poses or while meditating after finishing the practice. Images of being cherished or nurtured will make visualisation and meditation easier.

### YOGIC MOVES

#### Full-stretch lizard pose (*uttan pristhasana*)



Kneel on your fours, as in the basic cat stretch, with palms under either shoulder and on your knees. Place elbows on the ground, with forearms parallel to each other and palms flat on the ground. Draw the left leg back. Drop the knee down, or hold it up, as shown. Then slowly ease the right foot around the right elbow. The right leg is bent for this purpose. Hold for a few breaths. Look ahead while in the final position. Though it looks complicated, it really is a rather simple pose. However, it is best attempted after

some warm-up, like the sun salute or the joint-releasing series. Do it with normal breathing throughout. Release and repeat for the opposite leg, with the left leg going ahead and the right leg stretching back.

**Benefits:** The pose gives a powerful stretch to the pelvic region and works on the urogenital system. It also works the arms and legs gently, stretching to tone them. Emotionally, it helps us deal with feelings of anxiety, irritability and stress and develops steadiness and focus.

**Model:** Jayshree Gemani,  
Harmony Interactive Centre  
**Photographer:** Haresh Patel

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



## 'Our aim is to retain the trust of customers'

The Greater Bombay Co-operative Bank Ltd. was founded five decades ago in 1952 and achieved the status of a Scheduled Bank in 1996. With service to the community as its sole motto, the Bank attracts customers across all strata—low, middle and high income groups. An interview with **Narendrakumar A Baldota, Chairman, Greater Bank.**

### **Today, all banks attract niche senior customers by re-establishing specialised credentials. How has Greater Bank maintained a loyal clientele?**

The Greater Bombay Co-operative Bank Ltd. has built its reputation for customer service, trust and innovation over the last six decades. Our customers straddle all groups and segments and this includes senior customers who feel very comfortable dealing with us. Our service-levels, products, courteous staff and the general homely ambience of our branches make it very easy for senior customers to bank with us.

Senior customers comprise around 30 per cent of our depositors and, hence, are a very important constituency for us. Our branches have become a part of the community in their respective locations. We go beyond just offering a higher rate of interest to them. All banks do that but we thought we should do something extra which will be of real benefit to senior citizens.

For example, our research revealed that there is very little awareness about financial planning among senior customers, and hence, to remove this lacuna, we conducted a series of seminars for this age-group with an emphasis on creating awareness about financial planning, taking help from senior citizens' associations for this. We also invited mutual fund and insurance experts to explain the concept of financial planning to our senior customers and non-customers. By inviting even non-customers, we took a big step towards reaching out to the community in the vicinity of our branches. Our aim was to tell our senior customers to look beyond fixed deposits.

Another important thing we noticed is that many senior citizens are well-settled but want some sort of recognition and want to do something even if it is not financially rewarding. So we did a programme called 'Spot Your Talent' in which they participated enthusiastically. We took some senior citizens, their families and even some non-customers for a day's picnic. In this way, we have managed to generate goodwill and become a part of the society wherever the bank is operating.

### **The low and middle income groups come to Greater Bank because they get intimidated by the new-age private sector banks and may not get adequate attention in public sector banks. What role does Greater Bank play in securing its customers?**

In truth, there is very little difference between a cooperative bank and a private bank—only the scale is smaller in the case of the former. Greater Bank is at par with private sector banks in terms of service and quality. But what distinguishes us from others, is that we provide the personal touch that customers so dearly want. We enjoy trust, which is so very important in banking business.

Not only is there a commonality in products and services offered, but, many a time, our products are available with less stringent conditions. Cooperative banks enjoy a certain amount of flexibility which comes in handy to deal with the groups you are talking about. Decision-making is easier and faster because we know

our customers and also because, geographically, they are in close proximity to our branches.

### **With centralised banking services in place, the Bank lays emphasis on small branches with an informal ambience. What are the bank's products and services that make the experience much more personal?**

At present, our branch network stands at 22 and as, I have mentioned before, we are fully ISO-compliant. Our branches integrate with the local community and offer a personal touch—we know most of our customers personally and this enables us to respond to their requirements quickly and sympathetically.

Apart from individual retail customers and senior citizens, we also cater to a large base of MSMEs. Timely credit is more important for them than the cost of credit. We have the expertise to cater to them and around 90 per cent of loan proposals are cleared within just one month. We do not have any lending through branches—everything is centralised. There are no layers through which a proposal has to pass through, as in the case of other banks.

The initial scrutiny is done at very senior levels followed by a one-on-one discussion with the customer in which all issues are addressed. If everything is found okay, the loan is given; if not, it is clearly explained to the customer why the loan is being denied to him. Typically, customers in cooperative banks look for access to management and we facilitate that.

I would also like to highlight one important facility we provide to senior customers—we have an exclusive two-hour window in all branches for them, as they look for personal service. In this way, we make the experience more personal for all our customers, be it retail, senior citizens or businesses.

### **What's your vision for the Bank in the coming years?**

Our bank provides services that all commercial banks do, but at a lesser cost, which is our greatest selling point. We would like to build on this. Our corporate governance standards are of the highest order and customers trust us. We have evolved over the years into a strong bank with robust systems in place. This year, as we celebrate the bank's Diamond Jubilee year of service and as the banking environment becomes competitive, we are well-gearred to become a bank of choice for customers. We give the maximum dividends permitted—15 per cent. Further, we have state-of-the-art e-lobbies that cater to our customers.

I strongly believe that there is no need to chase numbers; instead we aim to be an efficient bank with customer-centricity top on our priority list. The bank has four strong pillars: shareholders, depositors, borrowers and staff. If we look after their interests, everything will fall into place.

### **What's the satisfaction quotient of senior citizens banking with you and how do you measure it?**

Senior citizens are more than satisfied with our products and services.



## SOULFOOD AND SOULMATES JIGYASA GIRI AND PRATIBHA JAIN MEET GITA AND DEEPAK BANKER, CHENNAI

### An exclusive series about life, love and food that unites hearts

A successful industrialist and former president of FICCI, Deepak Banker, 77, is well-known in Chennai business and social circles. His wife Gita, 72, soft-spoken and striking, is the perfect partner for this handsome man. Together, they have carved a perfect niche in life among family, friends and colleagues. Sitting in their spacious, tastefully appointed beach house on the East Coast Road in Chennai, we enjoyed talking to them over a delicious and authentic Gujarati meal—*panchkuti dal, sambhariyu nu shaak*, piping hot *poori* and steamed rice. When asked about their family, they proudly tell us they have two daughters, a son, a daughter-in-law, a son-in-law and two beautiful granddaughters.

**Jigyasa Giri and Pratibha Jain:** Tell us how you met.

**Deepak Banker:** I used to live in Mumbai and Gita had come there for her summer vacation. We met through family friends and I think we liked each other instantly. We met a few more times and decided we would like to tie the knot. I would call ours an introductory love marriage.

**Gita Banker:** [Laughs heartily] We were engaged and married within five to six months of meeting. That was December 1961.

**So you have just celebrated your golden anniversary! What was it that attracted each of you to the other?**

**She:** Frankly, I found him more open-minded than the conservative Ahmedabadi Gujaratis of my time. And, of course, we shared a good

chemistry...he is handsome after all, isn't he?

**He:** Her eyes attracted me first. She had such an innocent face; please put that word 'innocent' in inverted commas [winks]. She was well-educated, cultured and from a family that was very much in tune with the times and the world. In fact, she continued to study after marriage and completed her master's in English literature.

**Together you have made a beautiful family. What are your views on marriage and togetherness?**

**She:** Marriage is certainly not a bed of roses all the time. There have been times when give and take really made all the difference. I read somewhere: 'There never was a cloud that the sun's rays have not pierced.' There is a solution to every problem if one is strong enough to persist. A relationship of love and marriage has to be based on faith, trust, and tolerance.

**He:** It is nice to know that youngsters have the freedom to choose their own partners these days. However, divorce rates are rising at an alarming pace. Our old tradition of arranged marriages resulted in a more committed and everlasting togetherness. But times have changed and we cannot continue putting restrictions on youngsters. I believe that in many arranged marriages these days, the situation gets aggravated because the young couple has no idea what married life is about. Evolutionary social change is happening in our country, and we really need to ask ourselves if our commitments are in place. Live-in relationships are also catching on in urban India. I don't see any reason

for living together and yet not committing oneself. It shows you are unsure of yourself.

The foundation for a strong marriage is respect for each other. Without respect you cannot communicate, and without communication you cannot balance life. I understand that marriage today is a difficult proposition. Both partners are working professionals, often in different cities and meeting only over weekends. How does one foster commitment and a sense of family in such cases?

**She:** It requires grit and determination to forge ahead to build a long-lasting relationship. If you want it, you will work at it.

**Do you have many disagreements?**

**He:** Oh plenty! We are always disagreeing; some tangible disagreements and some imaginary. But we have been married for 50 years, so obviously we get over them.

**She:** We agree to disagree and respect each other's opinions. If there are no arguments and disagreements, it would be very fake and boring. We enjoy our fireworks [laughs aloud as she pats his shoulder].

**He:** She [being an MA in English literature] works her words on me, and I, a *baniya*, a businessman, cannot battle words.

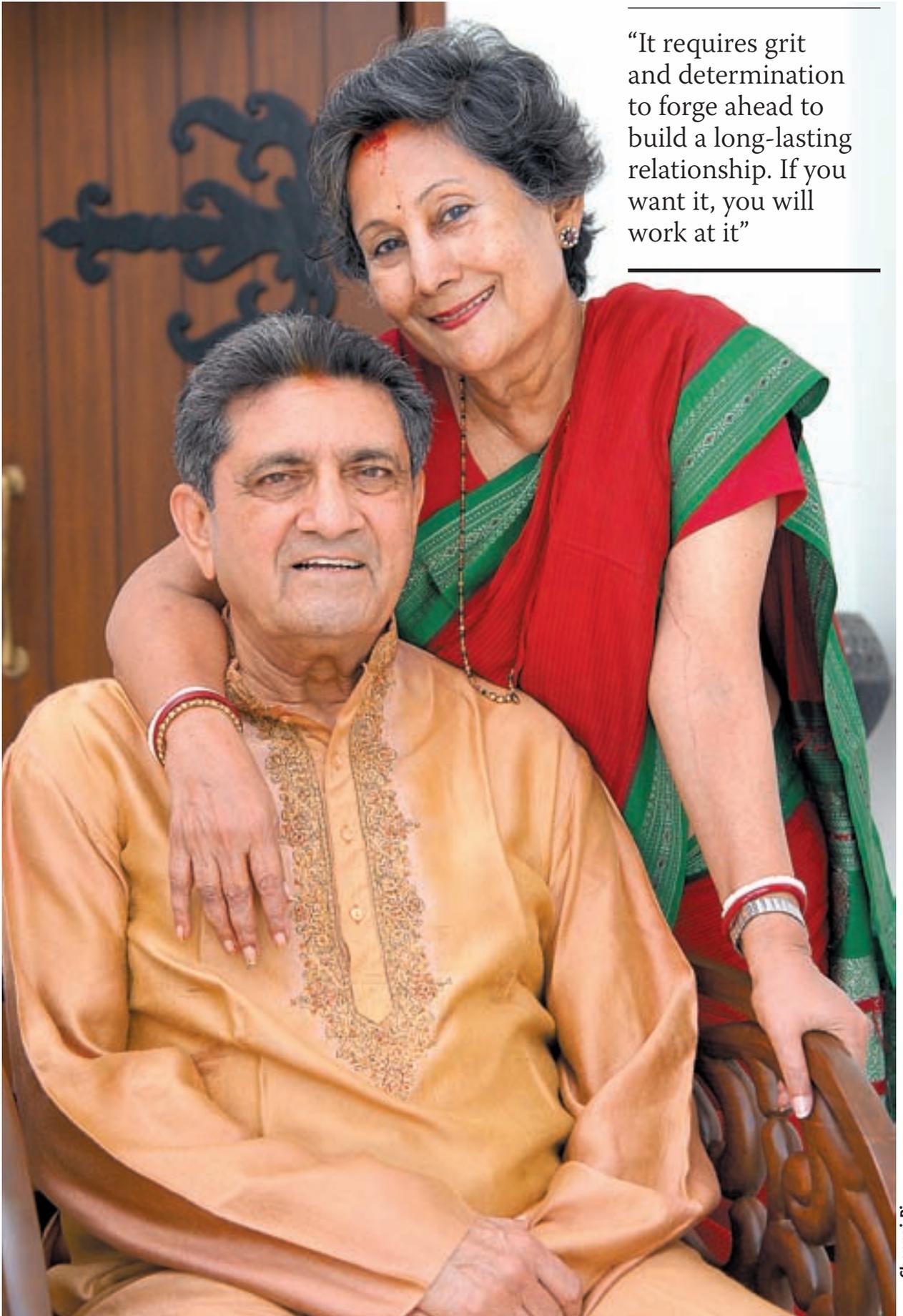
**She:** We just let love take over—right! On a serious note, never go to bed without resolving your fights.

**One change you would like to see in each other?**

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“It requires grit  
and determination  
to forge ahead to  
build a long-lasting  
relationship. If you  
want it, you will  
work at it”

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**He:** I would definitely like her to be less rigid in her thoughts and become more flexible.

**She:** I wish he would argue less. But after 50 years of togetherness, we have a peaceful life. We give each other less chances for confrontation.

**He:** [Playing along with her light-hearted banter] Oh yes! We meet for breakfast, lunch and tea for a span of half an hour each time at the most. We have dinner in our own separate rooms now. But what we enjoy doing together is listening to old Hindi songs and meeting our many wonderful friends.

**She:** It took us 50 years to learn to find our recipe for peace—just stay out of each other's way. [The couple's hearty laughter is infectious, and we laugh along.]

**On a serious note, what is your advice on love and commitment to the younger generation?**

**He:** Very simple—definitely try to have independence within the home. Give each other space and let your children be the main ingredient around everything else, while pursuing your own independent careers.

**She:** I agree wholeheartedly. Family bonding is the key factor.

**Any words of wisdom on home-cooked food as against eating out?**

**He:** No matter how much of the best food you eat out, you eventually want to have a bite of your home food.

**She:** There is no doubt that home-cooked food is wholesome and nutritious. I do like to eat out for a change and I admit home food gets boring sometimes.

**He:** I am a no-fuss eater. I always prefer my Ahmedabad food. I have 30 precious recipes of my mother tucked away.

**She:** I sometimes use her recipes and also my mother's. But I must confess that I don't enjoy cooking. Fortunately, we have cooks who are well-trained now to cook our style of food.

[By now our lunch is over and the table cleared. We end the meal with Deepak Banker slicing sweet guavas plucked from the tree in their garden as Gita Banker passes around some chocolates.]

**He:** She may not like to cook, but she is a good cook. Whenever our cook takes a holiday, she cooks excellent *rotli, dal...subzi*.

**She:** No! I'm a hopeless cook!

**He:** Let me be the judge of that [and a fresh argument ensues].

**Do you think a way to a man's heart is through the stomach?**

**She:** If you have a foodie for a husband, then yes.

**He:** Food acts as a catalyst.

**She:** I don't think food is important.

**He:** Girls had to learn to cook in the olden days. Nowadays...

**She:** Thank God, times have changed [rolls her eyes].

**[By now we are adept at nipping the next argument.] Please give us a favourite recipe.**

**She:** I think Deepak would love to share one of his mother's recipes [she says this tenderly].

Walking up to a shelf of books, he pulls out an old note book. He opens each page fondly, gently moving his palm over his mother's withered handwriting in Gujarati. Together they choose a recipe and tell us that his mother used to prepare this authentic Gujarati dish so well that he can still smell the aroma of it every

time he remembers her cooking. Gita Banker translates it for us.

## *Methi Bhaji Ane Kela Nu Shaak*

*A side dish with ripe bananas and fenugreek leaves*

**Ingredients:**

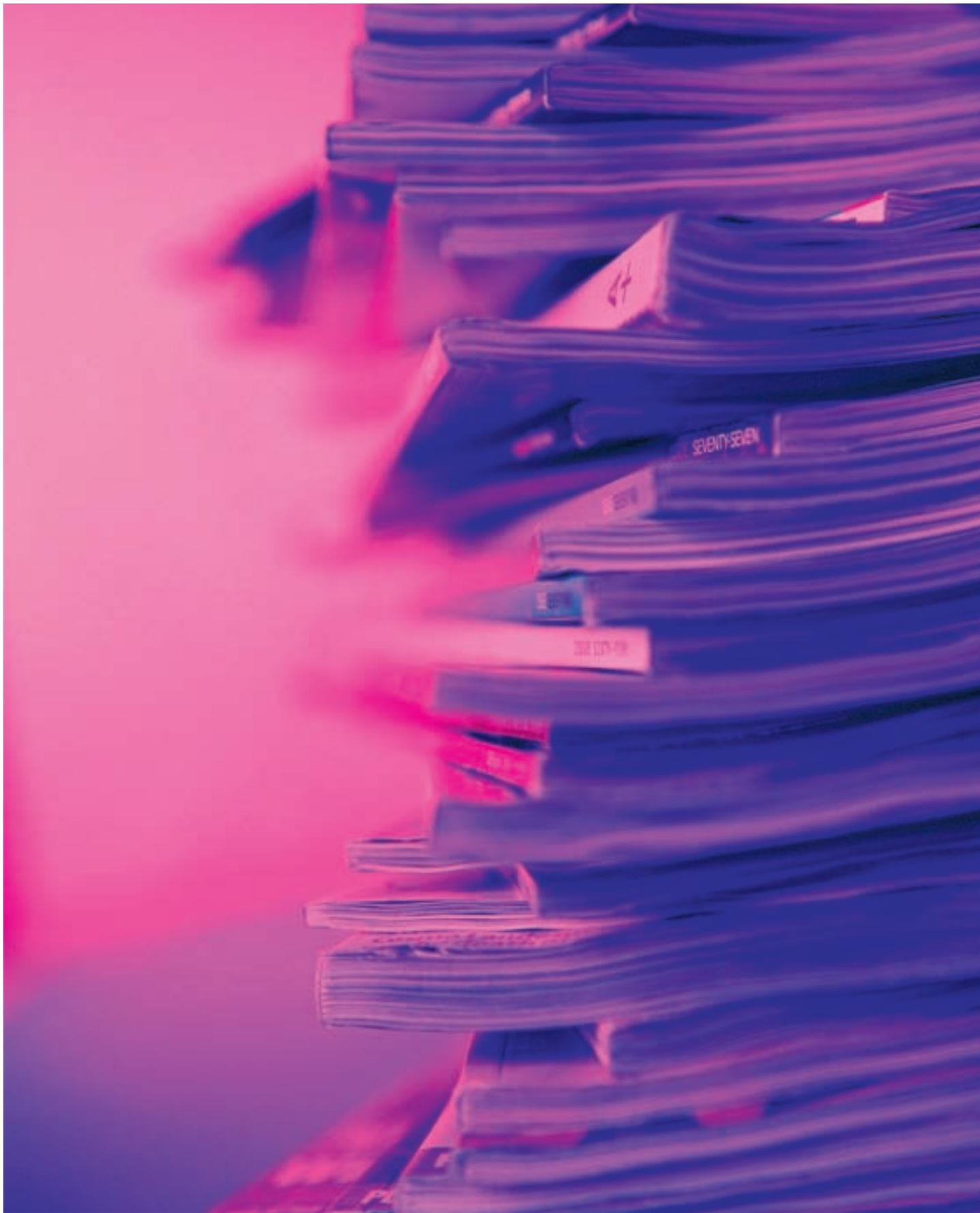
- Fenugreek leaves: 2 large bunches
- Ripe bananas (a special kind of banana called *shaak na kela* available in Mumbai): 4-6
- Chilli powder: 1 tsp
- Coriander powder: 1 tsp
- Cumin powder: ½ tsp
- Turmeric powder: ¼ tsp
- Jaggery: 1 tsp (grated)
- Cooking soda: A pinch
- Salt to taste

**For tempering:**

- Cooking oil: 2 tbsp
- Asafoetida powder: ½ tsp

**Method:** Wash the fenugreek leaves well. Squeeze out all the water, chop finely and set aside. In a wok, heat oil for tempering. Add asafoetida powder and pour one cup of water. Add a pinch of cooking soda and bring to boil. Add fenugreek leaves, reduce flame and allow simmering for 5-7 minutes. Peel the bananas. Make a slit through three-quarter of the length of the bananas without breaking them. Now place the bananas in the wok and stir gently into the fenugreek leaves. Add jaggery, chilli powder, coriander powder, cumin powder, turmeric powder and salt. Allow to simmer for 5-7 minutes. Serve with hot *poori* or steamed rice.

*Jigyasa and Pratibha are authors and publishers of two award winning books Cooking at Home with Pedatha and Sukham Ayu. They specialise in documenting culinary traditions. Visit them at [www.pritya.com](http://www.pritya.com)*



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# A law unto himself

He's a formidable adversary in the courtroom and still enjoys the occasional legal joust. But the secret to this centenarian's spotless bill of health lies in his Gandhian philosophy. Y G Krishnamurthy tells **Shyamola Khanna** what keeps him ticking

Property disputes are dime a dozen in any High Court but not every litigant has the privilege of a centenarian arguing their case—and winning hands down! Perhaps it was his disarming preface to his arguments in the Andhra Pradesh High Court a few weeks ago that worked in his favour. “I asked the judge to fix my fee and date of payment even before I opened my arguments. I was sure the hearing would go my way. I argued that my client, a Muslim family, lived like a Hindu joint family. As they followed the same patterns of living, the laws applying to a Hindu Undivided Family applied in this case too,” explains the distinguished advocate. “My fee arrived by post six weeks later!”

It is this calm assurance and overriding sense of justice that has seen Yellamraju Gopala Krishnamurthy through an illustrious career spanning 76 years. Thus, it was only befitting that the Bar Association of Hyderabad celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with much fanfare in February. The event, held at the city's Bar Association Hall, saw 300 people in attendance including three retired judges.

YGK, as he's fondly called, is sharp-witted and still revels in the cut-and-thrust of legal battle. And, even at the age of 100, he's working on a pending case load. “My toughest and most unique case concerned the *dargah* matters of Elluru,” he tells us. “It has been going on since 1952. Although the judgement has always been delivered in my favour, future generations of the family are still battling it out.” If he's a legal eagle in the courtroom,

on the personal front, YGK is a simple man. Barefoot and wearing a *mundu* and shirt, he settles into an ample couch at his home at Himayath Nagar in Hyderabad. As he prepares to roll back the years, his son Dr Ramanna Murthy, 80, an acclaimed scientist, and daughter-in-law Satyavati, 70, hover nearby. But YGK needs no help telling his story. His voice is steady and his English impeccable.

## NATIONALIST FAMILY

“I was born into a family of successful lawyers in Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh. Those were heady times. The Nationalist movement was gathering momentum and the Yellamraju clan took part in the movement,” he begins. “My father owned some land near the sea, about 50 km away from Tenali, where we used to spend our summer holidays. During the Salt Satyagraha in 1930, my father handed over his land so the protestors could make their own salt in disobedience of British laws. When Gandhiji came to our home to meet our family, my mother handed over all the gold ornaments she was wearing to the Mahatma.”

The Nationalist movement also left an indelible mark on Dr Ramanna, who was barely nine years old during the Quit India Movement of 1942. “The citizens of Tenali brought the Railways to a halt in protest,” he recalls. “They did not want to vandalise anything but a group of troublemakers set fire to a bogey and the train went up in flames. Our home was a stone's throw away and my grandfather brought as many passengers as he could to the house and offered

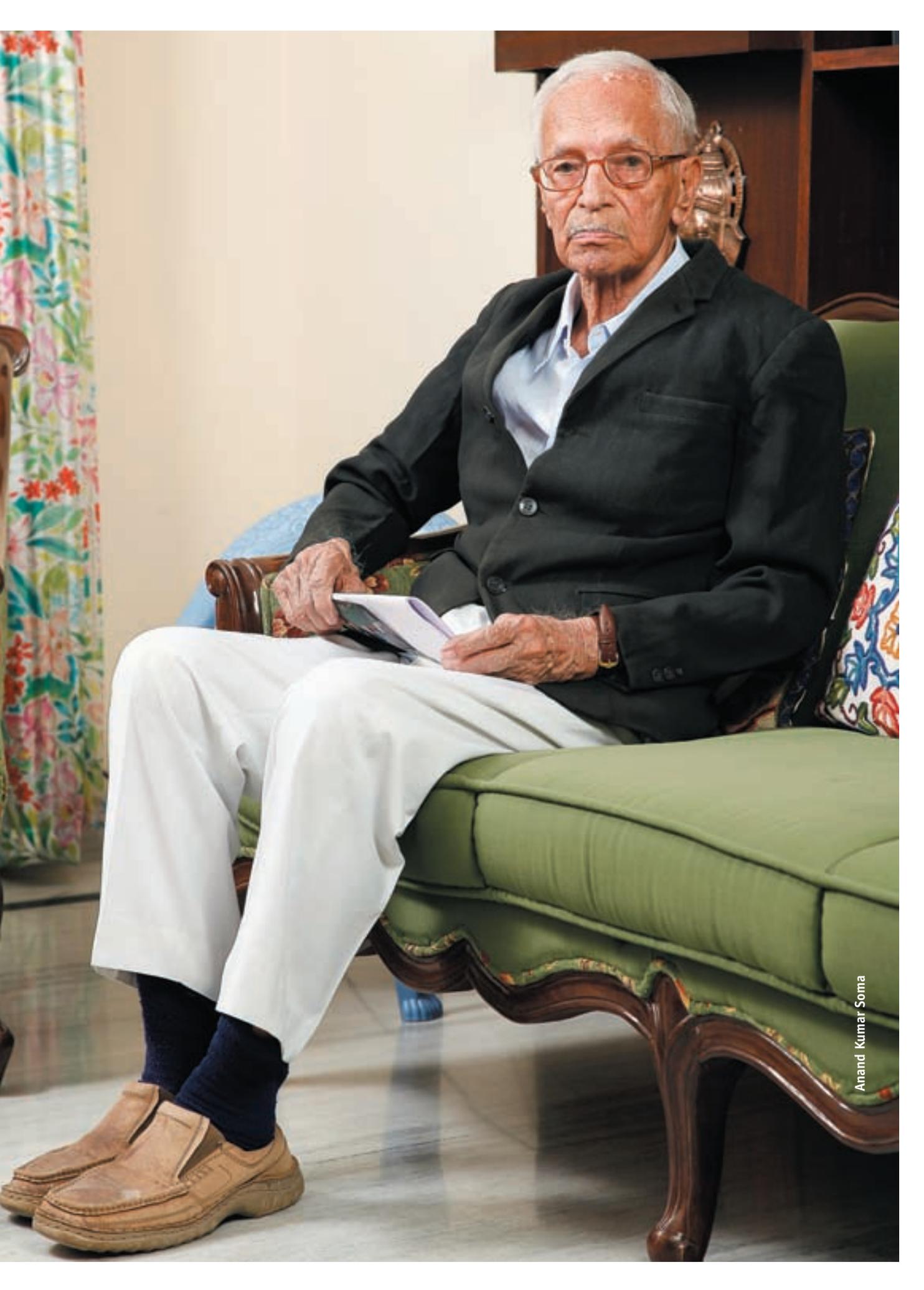
them food and shelter even though his own home was partially burnt by the blaze.”

YGK was also hugely influenced by Gandhi's philosophy, and for more than 20 years, he used to spin his own yarn and then give it to a weaver. For him, it was akin to a spiritual experience. “I used to spin yarn for an hour daily, sometimes more. It was meditation and also a prayer for my nation.” He was a Congress loyalist but no longer. “Our present-day politicians are all rogues!” he remarks vehemently.

## EARLY YEARS

YGK attended the Tenali Taluka High School, which was founded by his father Y V Subba Rao, “but my siblings and I received no special treatment”. He later attended Kakinada P R College, and since he hailed from a family of lawyers, it was natural that he follow suit. So he studied law at the Madras Christian College, then the only college in the Madras Presidency that offered an education in law. “I remember with great fondness R Venkataraman, the late President of India, who was a classmate,” he says.

Before he donned his robes, YGK had to undergo one more rite of passage. It was 1929; at the tender age of 16, he tied the knot with Rukmini. “She was all of 12 years old and hailed from a family of eminent lawyers. My parents asked me for my consent and I approved because she came from a good family. Although she had studied only up to Class V, she was well-read and had been trained in music, cooking and general housekeeping,



Anand Kumar Soma

which was good for me," reminisces our centenarian.

In 1936, YGK began his career practising civil law at Madras High Court, which then covered the entire southern region. It was a time when Partition, the Indian Constitution and the formation of the Indian states were still many years away. In 1954, the Andhra Pradesh High Court was established in Guntur, where YGK practised before moving to Hyderabad in 1956, when the High Court moved to the state's capital.

### JUDGE, ANYONE?

Did he ever dream of what most advocates consider the 'pinnacle' of their career: becoming a judge? YGK replies emphatically, "I never wanted to be a judge although I was asked many times. I pity those who choose to become judges and I also sympathise with them. I don't know how they keep it up. They cannot move around freely; they have too many restrictions; and the income is limited and fixed!"

YGK always steered clear of a political career, nor was pursuing a career in the highest court of the land on his agenda. "I was a registered advocate at the Federal Court [Supreme Court] and I was asked to argue in Delhi," he says. "I went there a couple of times in the 1960s but I went back."

Among the first members to join the Bar Council of Andhra Pradesh, YGK has been a model advocate for future generations. His advice for lawyers today: "Please be honest to yourself and think of your client with sympathy. Treat him well; don't plan to squeeze money from him." In the same breath, he adds, "Today, lawyers want to make money and foment trouble. They do not take the time to solve the issue at hand." YGK is as outspoken as he is upright. And, on the golden jubilee of the Andhra Pradesh High Court in 2006, he was felicitated by no less than Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, who was President of India at the time.

### FAVOURITE MEMORY

Considering the breadth of his experience, YGK undoubtedly has a treasure trove of memories. Can he name his most precious one? Satyavati chips in. "His favourite memory is about getting his five daughters married to very good grooms. He often tells me he is really happy and proud that all his sons and sons-in-law are well-educated and his grandsons are doing so well. He has always paid more attention to education than money," smiles the doting daughter-in-law.

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**"I never wanted to be a judge. I pity those who choose to become judges and sympathise with them. They cannot move around freely and their income is limited.... My advice to lawyers is to be honest to yourself. Don't plan to squeeze money from your client. Today, lawyers want to make money and foment trouble"**

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YGK chimes in, "Of my five daughters, three have studied up to Class X and the other two went up to graduation. My sons and sons-in-law are all postgraduates and so are most of my grandchildren. Most of them are living abroad. I have visited the US once and I do not want to go there ever again."

### HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Being a lawyer is stressful but keeping this centenarian in the best of health is perhaps his balanced perspective on life. Satyavati shares an anecdote. "I have never heard him complain

about anything. But the other day, he seemed a little sad. When I asked him what was worrying him, he said he regretted he had no change in his pocket to give a beggar." Dr Ramanna cuts in and says with deep reverence, "My father is deeply religious. We have all imbibed our values from him."

YGK has an enviable medical report card and he proclaims, "No diabetes, no cholesterol, no blood pressure problems, no aches and pains." He lives near Hussain Sagar Lake, which connects the twin cities of Secunderabad and Hyderabad. Although there were once wide, open spaces here, the urban sprawl has now closed in.

"I used to walk 4-5 km a day till a few years ago," he tells us nonchalantly. "Now I have reduced it to two to three." And just so there's no misunderstanding, he quickly adds, "I do not use a stick. My friend comes and picks me up and drops me back every day."

K K Chakravarthy, 75, a retired judicial officer, member of the Bar Association, and YGK's senior-most "junior" says, "I am very proud of my association with him. He has a very sharp memory and I cannot compete with him. He is physically so fit that I find it difficult to keep pace with him." He adds with a smile, "He is dynamic and bold and always speaks his mind. At a memorial lecture on the late Koka Subba Rao [retired Chief Justice of India] and late D Narsaraju [retired Attorney General of India], YGK shared his memories of these two stalwarts even though he had not been invited to speak!"

If YGK made his legal career his *raison d'être*, he also takes the time to reflect on a life of happiness, and nothing means more to him than his family. Thus, when his wife Rukmini, who had been ailing with asthma, passed away 23 years ago, it was a shock to him. "We know he misses her a lot when he dwells on the past," says Dr Ramanna. ✨



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# THE CUSTODIAN

With the clarion call of 'Eternal Mewar' on his lips, Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar has contemporised the rich cultural legacy and heritage of his 1,400 year-old House, even as he monitors and implements a host of charitable, philanthropic, educational and spiritual activities through his Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation (MMCF). *Harmony-Celebrate Age* presents an exclusive interview with the suave royal who has seamlessly bridged past, present and future



No two days are alike in the life of Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar of Udaipur—but yes, every day is a working day! The 76th Custodian of the 1,400 year-old House of Mewar is a multifaceted personality. Passionate about preserving a vibrant cultural heritage enshrined in The City Palace Complex, Udaipur, in Rajasthan, he is chairman and managing trustee of the Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation (MMCF), which monitors and implements a spectrum of philanthropic, educational and charitable activities. Several non-profit and commercial organisations are seamlessly networked to exemplify 'Eternal Mewar' for global and Indian audiences.

The HRH Group of Hotels, Udaipur, is the flagship commercial venture of the House of Mewar and is India's largest and only chain of heritage palace-hotels and resorts under private ownership. As chairman of the HRH Group, Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar has been instrumental in preserving and developing palace-hotels and sanctuary-resorts across Rajasthan. Offering regal experiences in island-palaces, museums, galleries, car collections, desert safaris and wildlife sanctuaries, Shiv Niwas Palace and Fateh Prakash Palace in Udaipur, and Gajner Palace in Gajner (near Bikaner) are classified Grand Heritage Palaces. An "honest" Custodian of the legacy of House of Mewar, Shriji is also an avid technology buff, a microlite pilot, classical Indian music aficionado and food connoisseur and cook. Despite the profusion of activities, his work table is always clean—with no outstanding papers or letters unless, of course, he is travelling. Even then, Facebook and Skype keep him abreast with the times, as do his children and grandchildren. In fact, email was his method of choice for this exclusive—and extensive—interview with *Harmony-Celebrate Age*. Excerpts:

**Being born in a family of city-builders and community leaders must have put a lot of pressure on you as a child. How was it growing up with a royal legacy?**

Every legacy is a responsibility. And every responsibility has to be handled with a degree of sensitivity and respect; one must inculcate passionate preservation for one's past. In our case, in the House of Mewar, it is not just the legacy and reputation of my ancestors. We go back a long way to 75 generations! Yes, every generation of Maharanas have taken pride in being 'Custodians' of the legacy they have inherited. I would not say there is pressure on us, but the

expectations from us are very high, at every stage in life, not just in childhood or as young adults. One lives, one learns, and one imbibes from the family's core values.

Mewar was neither the richest nor the largest of the Princely States of India. In terms of wealth and power, Hyderabad, Mysore, Gwalior and Kashmir were far greater. Yet, Mewar was acknowledged as the 'most respected' among all Princely States. The respect for Mewar, over the centuries, was the respect for the values and principles it stood for: honour, independence, self-reliance, and respect for mankind. These values go back to Vedic times; they

are not 'Indian' values, as we understand the word Indian today, they are ancient Vedic values and principles.

**"We are extremely down-to-earth people. Our upbringing has been devoid of any superfluous props. Today, I am as proud to be a citizen of democratic India as I am of my ancestry"**

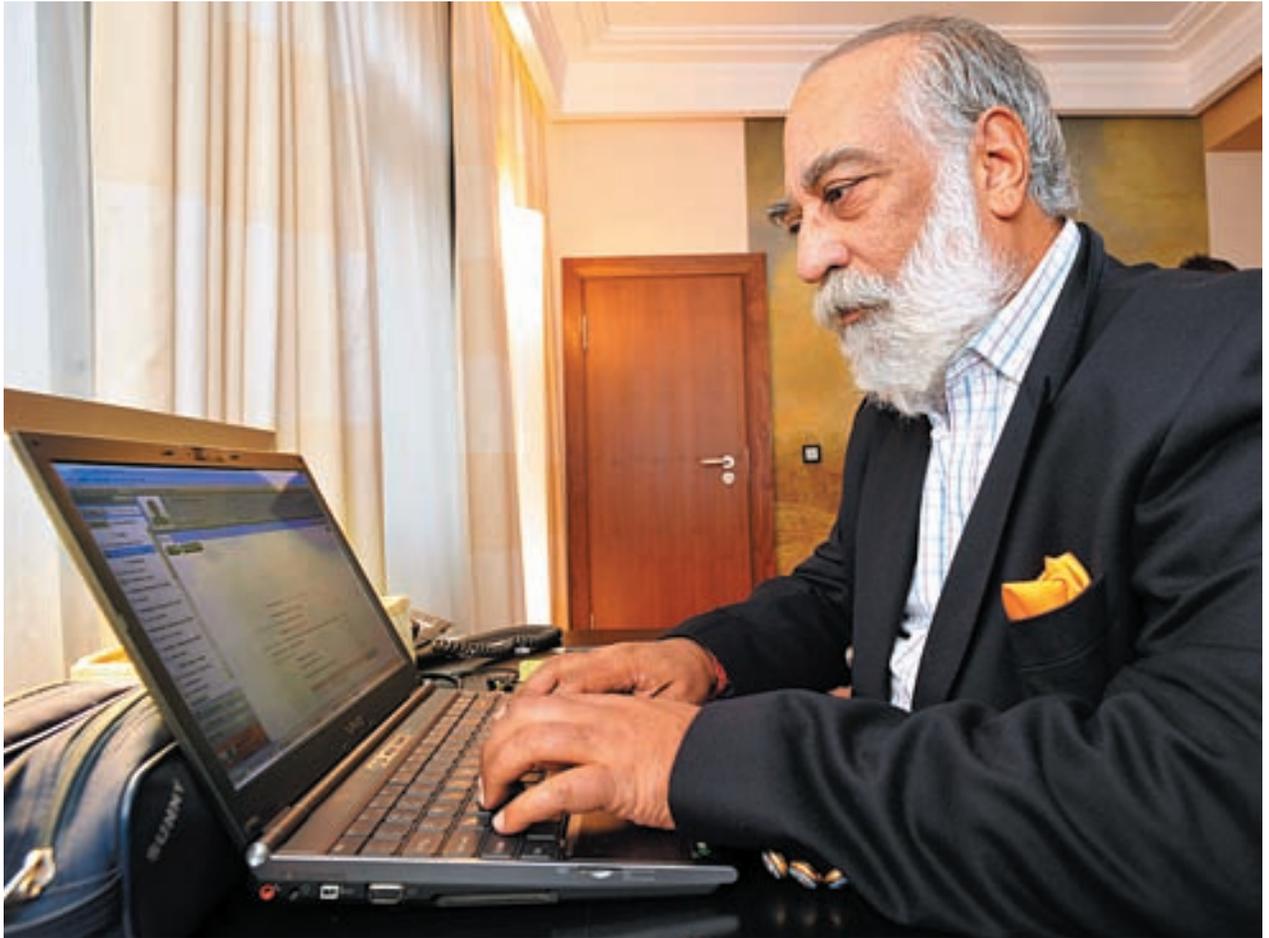
Eternal Mewar, the vision that guides our House today, is the sum and substance of these values and principles. We need to protect, develop and enhance these values, make them relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and not carry them as a burden or baggage of the past. This is the responsibility of a Custodian. I hope, over the past three decades, I have been able to do an honest job.

**Although you had so much to fall back on, you chose to continue your studies in Ajmer and also went for a course abroad? Was it difficult to be a 'commoner' overseas, compared to the kind of attention you received in your own country?**

Education at Mayo College is a tradition within the House of Mewar. The last three generations—my father, myself and my son, Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar—have imbibed the ethos of Mayo College and are extremely proud of our association with the alma mater. When I was in London, it was a great learning experience to be exposed to hotel management and interacting with the British royalty and gentry, whenever the occasion arose. We are extremely down-to-earth people. Our upbringing has been devoid of any superfluous props. Today, I am as proud to be a citizen of Democratic India as I am of my ancestry.

**Our country has come a long way from kings and rulers to democracy. Could you outline this journey for us?**

To go through 1,400 years of the history of Mewar would take a lot of time and space. Just the history of Udaipur, or even of the spectacular City Palace here, built by my forefathers, goes back 450 years. And it could also get a bit tiring for readers as well—so many Maharanas and their heroic



Once self-confessedly "ignorant" of the IT world, today Shriji uses the Internet to connect to people with links to Udaipur and Mewar

and not-so-heroic deeds. Most spent their lives fighting off the Mughal rulers and then they had to face the Marathas, who made life even more difficult for them. Yes, those were terrible times but I must say, most of my forefathers knew how to survive the bad times, plan and get ahead of the financial troubles they often had to face. They were fiercely independent. This is the reason they did not pick up the crumbs the British Imperial rulers were offering.

In fact, the story that is most often told is that of Maharana Fateh Singhji, my great-grandfather, who 'refused' to be a part of the Delhi Durbar in 1903 and 1911. In his own quiet and unassuming way, he made the British realise that Mewar could not, and would not, be equated with any of the other subservient Princely States. He knew how to make his point of independence and honour without creating conflict or controversy. Maharana Fateh Singhji remains such an inspiration for all of us till date. I recounted this story during several events last year, commemorating the 100 years of the Delhi Durbar of 1911. It struck a chord with many 21<sup>st</sup> century Indians and foreigners who realised what a demonstration it was of Mewar's inherent strength and sense of nationalism. In every way, he was an honourable Custodian, upholding the flame of freedom of Free India, just as his forefathers had done.

**You studied hotel management in the UK and worked at an international hotel in the US; this apparently even entailed washing dishes and changing linen in the hotel. How was the experience?**

I believe in doing a good job...whether it is cleaning dishes then or looking after our palace-hotels now. I do not cut corners. Yes, it was a wonderful experience working and living in the US. The people I met, the friends I made have lasted a lifetime. Chicago was a great city to live in. I have fond memories of those days. At HRH Group of Hotels, I was able to put into practise many things I learnt there.

**Even before you assumed office as chairman and managing trustee of the Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation (MMCF), it had done a lot to serve society. How has the foundation evolved under your guidance? What are your future plans for it?**

MMCF was born from the visionary plans of my father, His late Highness Maharana Bhagwat Singhji, in 1969. He was determined to ensure the continuity and perpetuity of the House of Mewar and its principle of governance, Custodianship, for the future. He knew that the years ahead would bring tremendous change and turmoil. And sure enough,

in 1971, the Abolition of Princely Privileges witnessed the dissolution of thousands of years of tradition. Being the parent foundation, MMCF has been able to weather the storm and provide the umbrella under which the duties of a Maharana can continue to be discharged, such as charitable, philanthropic, educational and spiritual activities.

Since the 1980s, I have been building on the platforms created by my father. Today, MMCF spearheads the revitalisation of the City Palace Museum. Our plans are to make it a world-class institution that would be the centre of attention for visitors now and in the years ahead. The MMCF Annual Awards have grown from strength to strength and are our way of honouring those who have served and contributed to society and preserved the core values of our nation.

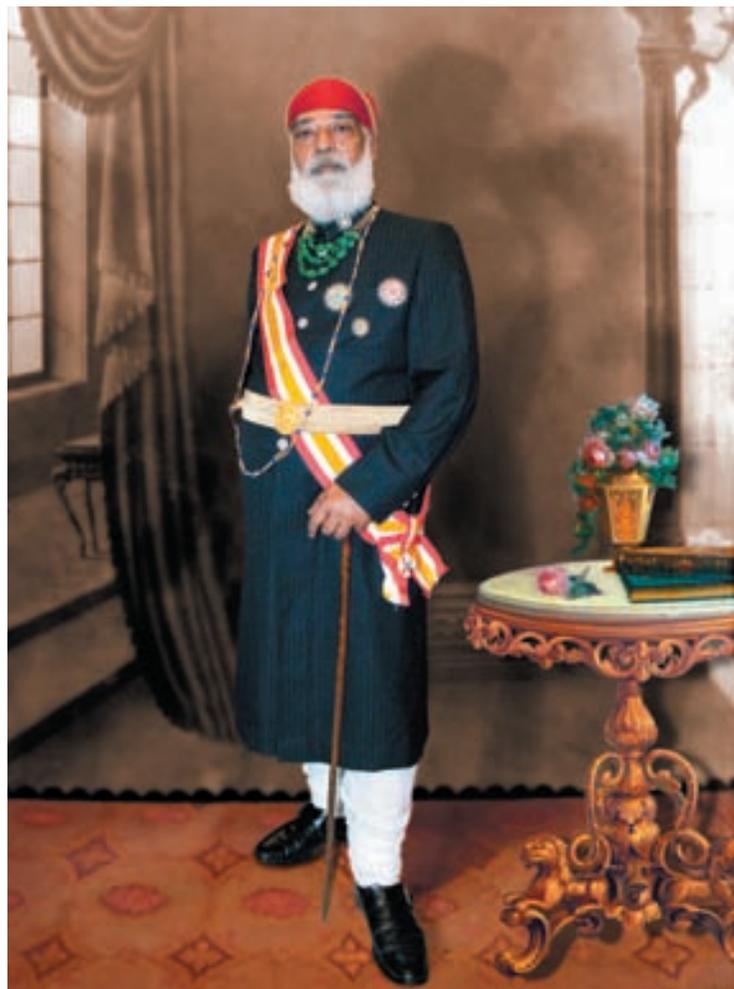
**The HRH Group of Hotels is unique as a heritage hospitality chain. You have thrown open your palaces to the public. What do you plan ahead for the HRH Group?**

The HRH Group of Hotels, as you may be aware, is the flagship commercial venture of the House of Mewar, Udaipur. It is a matter of historical fact, not any hype, that the House has made one of the most successful transitions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from its earlier status as a Royal House. We have comprehensively preserved the heritage of Mewar under the laws of our democratic republic.

This transition, which began in the lifetime of my father, continues till date. I recall when my father took the decision to 'convert' Jag Niwas into Lake Palace Hotel in the early 1960s; there were many people, and many within the family, who were against his decision. They felt it was wrong. They were unable to realise the depth of his vision. He was able to gauge the potential of heritage tourism way back in the 1960s; and he showed almost every royal house in India the ways and means of how to preserve heritage and generate personal revenues through tourism. I don't have to drive home the point, but Lake Palace Hotel is today one of the 'most recognised' hotels of the world. What he achieved can be construed as a lesson for many former royal houses, not just in India but across the world.

Since 2005-06, we have been unfolding the vision of Eternal Mewar, which is becoming a critical lesson on holistic living, heritage management and its perpetuation in our globalised world. I have always maintained that it is not the perpetuation of the family name that is paramount; it is equally important to perpetuate the values of the House so that people can internalise them. In our palace-hotels and retreats, through our museums and collections, we are continuing with the traditions of the royal past yet contemporising them to be relevant for a global audience.

A simple example would be of how Fateh Prakash Palace has been transformed into the Fateh Prakash Palace Con-



**In full regalia**

vention Centre in 2011. During this transformation, we were very conscious of seamlessly blending the old with the new—whether it was the soft furnishings or the modern conference facilities, it had to retain the character of the past, while offering world-class amenities that conference delegates are comfortable with. I think this challenge will continue to remain with us. We have to find the right answers and keep on innovating within the paradigm of our own heritage. I call it the challenge of 'living heritage'.

**You have contributed a great deal to the beautification of Udaipur. Can you share how the city has changed and what more needs to be done?**

Udaipur, surrounded by hills and built on the lake-shore, is a beautiful man-made city; it is a city of peace. In the 1950s, it had a population not exceeding 50,000; today, it is almost 700,000. Naturally, the city's resources are stretched and it is showing. We are working to make it even more beautiful and sustainable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Much needs to be done. We are engaged in various efforts for saving the Lake Pichola, in greater afforestation and anti-pollution measures, and safety of tourists with rigorous laws. MMCF has a joint

operation programme with the Udaipur Municipal Council and the Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation, an NGO of the UNESCO India office, to develop sustainable heritage-based activities and projects in Udaipur.

You would be happy to know that in July 2009, *Travel+Leisure* magazine voted Udaipur the 'best city in the world to visit', clearly a landmark achievement for all stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry. It was also a testimony to the holistic, comprehensive development of the city, growth and enrichment of its local economy and generation of greater pride in traditional professions, crafts and culture. Tourism has made Udaipur's economy more robust than it ever was.

**With regard to inbound tourism, what is your specific wish list? Say, if you were the deciding authority, what would be the top five items on your agenda?**

- Speedy development of aviation infrastructure
- Development of city airports with visa on arrival
- Value for money, accommodation facilities for all segments
- New tourism circuits developed with a focus on eco-heritage
- Safety and security of tourists

Each item, in itself, has a tremendous multiplier effect on the local economy and the economy of the country as a whole. The challenge is to develop each item and make it world-class. No compromises on any front. Are we ready for it?

**You are an ardent pilot. When did you learn to fly?**

I am an amateur pilot; I got my flying licence for microlite aircraft in 2004. I have thoroughly enjoyed learning to fly and every detail of aviation. We built a private airstrip at Shikarbadi Hotel, with its own hangar, control tower and storage space. I was involved in building this infrastructure on a daily basis. The microlite aircraft is like a Maruti 800 of the skies, a little toy so to speak; it's easy to control but one has to be disciplined and follow instructions. I was fortunate to have strict instructors. Yes, I was very nervous when I went for the flying tests, more nervous than my granddaughter was in her class V exams. But I passed the theory and practical tests at the young age of 55.

**Classical Indian music has been one of your passions. Who are your favourite singers and musicians? You**

**have even digitally restored classical music as a restoration project. Do you think this can spread awareness of classical music today to maintain old traditions?**

Music and musical patronage has been one of the oldest traditions of Mewar. We are committed to upholding those traditions in today's time and age. The Maharana Kumbha Sangeet Kala Trust is primarily responsible for all the key activities—maintaining collections, digitising projects, patronage to young musicians and maestros. Music is a passion for me and I am always ready to step in with ideas to do more. Every year during Kartik Poornima, we celebrate the festival with musical soirees, inviting some of the finest talent from India and overseas to perform at the City

Palace venues, whether it is Manek Chowk or Jagmandir island palace. Hindustani classical music in India is going through a new phase of development; such an old and rich culture can never die, it will only reincarnate itself in different ways for newer audiences.

**You are on Facebook and your son and both your married daughters are also on social networking sites. How does it help to be in sync with the people?**

We have to move with the times, we have to think ahead of the times. It is all about remaining contemporary. There was a time I needed help to start a desktop computer; I was so ignorant of the IT world. Today, my iPhone, iPad 3 and the laptop are part and parcel of my life. For business and social networking, the Internet is essential. Through Facebook and the Eternal Mewar website, we have been in touch with thousands of people who have familial, professional, academic or emotional ties with Udaipur and Mewar. It is so heartening to hear their stories and how much they want to be in touch with Mewar. This is what 'living heritage' is all about. It is my duty as a Custodian to ensure that all these non-resident people of Mewar are able to keep alive their memories and associations with their homeland.

**Your tailored and customised suits are much talked about. Who is your favourite designer? Where do you get your suits tailored from?**

Thank you for your compliments! I am comfortable in both Indian and western wear. For western suits, I believe none can surpass the bespoke tailoring services from the UK. I patronise the services of Pakeman Catto & Carter, Cirencester, in Gloucestershire, UK. For Indian wear and our



ceremonial attire, our in-house tailoring talent in Udaipur understands and knows what is best. I have no complaints.

#### Your son is successfully following your footsteps....

Lakshyaraj is shaping up well and slowly taking on the responsibilities for different activities. He is totally involved in the development of Maharana Mewar Public School. It is a great experience for him to be dealing with students and teachers alike, understanding their aspirations. He graduated in hospitality management from Blue Mountain School in Australia and went through rigorous training. At Jagmandir Island Palace, as executive general manager, he was in charge of the renovation and proved to be a good team leader. He is also overseeing the security operations in Udaipur and across Rajasthan at all our properties.

#### And your daughters?

Bhargavi Kumari Mewar, my eldest daughter, has the can-do spirit of an entrepreneur. She spent many years conceptualising and working on Aashka, the lifestyle boutique she

launched in 2006 in Udaipur's City Palace complex. Bhargavi is a talented designer and works with master-craftsmen and artisans directly. Aashka showcases handicrafts in wood, metal, mirror-work, marble, silver and gold; each rooted in the region of Mewar. Bhargavi lives in Jaipur and is married to Thakur Lokendra Singh Rathore of Kotri, one of India's finest polo professionals. Their two children, Lokavia and Bhuvika, are adorable and I have the grandfather's licence to spoil them. They spend a lot of their holidays with us in Udaipur and they are absorbing our ways of life and values as they grow up to be fine young ladies.

Padmaja Kumari Mewar, my second daughter, has now relocated to Boston, US, after her marriage to Dr Kush Singh Parmar. She had studied and worked in the US before she spent almost five years with us in Udaipur as joint managing director of HRH Group. It was good to have her as my boss! We worked well together and she demonstrated her capability as a team person and leader. Padmaja is now engaged in marketing and promotions for Eternal Mewar in the US and has recently been appointed a member on the Advisory Board of Bulgari Hotels and Residences, London.



Addressing delegates at the CII-ET Dialogue on Luxury; receiving the 'Royal of the Year' award at the Hello! Hall of Fame Award Ceremony



Self-willed and self-regulated, Shriji believes in cutting through the jargon and focusing on the job at hand

**You and your wife, Vijayaraj Kumari Mewar, have enjoyed a successful and long-lasting marriage. What advice can you give your children to have the same?**

Be yourself, be true to each other and understand that marriage is a constant understanding and evolving together in a relationship. My wife has been the pillar of strength and encouragement for me and the children.

**We have heard of your fondness for food as connoisseur and cook. Please share some memories and anecdotes.**

I am not a fussy eater. I love both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. I prefer South Indian food for breakfast, lunch is usually soup and steamed fish, dinner may be elaborate, especially if we have guests over. Mewar's culinary traditions cover both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. *Dal* is as important as the *lal maas*. I enjoy cooking for family and friends; it keeps me happy and engrossed in the smallest and finest details. I recommend slow-fire cooking and, mind you, I use only *desi* ghee. It gives the right flavour and aroma to the food which is so marvellously Indian and I never use non-stick cookware for Indian cooking.

**Even today, food and beverages are the biggest draws in every hospitality endeavour....**

True, they are the biggest draws and the most profitable ones. Restaurants and bars are what make or break a hotel.

Look around you and you see the same trend all over the world. A talented chef is worth his or her weight in gold!

**How do you manage to stay so fit at the age of 67?**

I wish I was more fit. Having been a sportsman—cricketer and polo player—I know how to take care of myself and keep increasing my endurance levels. My morning workout rejuvenates me; I enjoy what I do and that gives me the energy to face the days full of work and social commitments.

**What are the most important lessons you have learnt in your journey of life?**

The list would be fairly long. One important lesson is to remain focused on the job at hand and have the ability to quickly switch to the next one. Yes, I have learnt to voluntarily shoulder my moral responsibilities. It is very important to be calmly self-willed and self-regulated.

**What is your success mantra?**

Focus on the doable and achievable. Plan every project down to the smallest detail. As a professional, I am convinced that we do not need to be lost in jargon or complexities of ideas that sometimes seem so glamorous. It pays to be simply focused and keep evolving with time. Most important, never stop dreaming, however eccentric it might seem at the time. It is always eccentrics who achieve. ✨

# Right turn

Conscience-keeper and whistleblower are only two of the many monikers Cmde Lokesh Batra has earned for his high-profile work as an RTI activist, discovers **Anju Mohan**

The national flag fluttering in his garden, Commodore Lokesh Batra is the personification of patriotism. Armed with the maxim 'information is the primary agent of change', Batra's is a familiar name in the higher echelons of power ever since he retired from the Indian Navy in 2002.

"With every bar of soap we buy, we are paying the government taxes. Through our taxes, we are paying every government servant. When we are so particular about monitoring our servants at home, why hesitate to monitor the working of government employees, whom we are paying to serve us?" reasons the 65 year-old NOIDA-based social activist, who uses the Right to Information Act (RTI) to keep a watchful eye on all sorts of public agencies, from the NOIDA administration to the apex court.

According to Batra, governance is not the sole prerogative of the government. "Abraham Lincoln said, 'A government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the Earth.' But in India today, where is the participation of the people? We have become servants of the system because we forget to keep an eye on our public servants."

Batra has always been concerned with good governance and initially used 'Letters to the Editor' columns to highlight issues. But then, the RTI Act took effect three years after he retired, and the former Naval officer seized this action-oriented legislation as an ideal tool. His journey into "the system" began in June 2006, when he

filed his first RTI to get the NOIDA administration to improve the quality of water in the township. Six months later, the agencies concerned started monitoring the water more closely.

Buoyed by this early success, Batra went straight to the top; he began to monitor the functioning of government bodies such as Union and state ministries, the judiciary, the Prime Minister's Office and the National Commission for Women (NCW). Thanks to his RTI queries in the high-profile Nithari case of 2006, he found that the government's notification had failed to direct the CBI to fix alleged lapses on the part of government officers. Nor had the CBI investigated the role of the NOIDA administration in the gruesome goings-on at Nithari. His RTI queries also exposed the failure of the NCW to adequately deal with the issue.

Batra has filed 500 RTIs to date, ironically many of them to simply navigate bottlenecks in the RTIs he files! Still, he has an interesting take on the legislation. "I do not view the Act as a weapon or *Brahmashastra* as the media calls it. We do not use a weapon to attack our own people. It is a bitter medicine that a mother gives a child to recover from an illness. It is used to correct a malady that has afflicted our system."

Our social crusader is nothing if not tenacious. "I hound the authorities till I get the information I want. I follow up not only with more RTIs but emails, phone calls and personal visits. I also circulate newspaper clippings that mention the issue to the



Anju Mohan

authorities concerned to let them know what kind of coverage the issue is receiving in the media. These are pressure tactics," he says with a laugh.



“His energy and perseverance is amazing, especially at his age and with his health issues,” says Venkatesh Nayak, coordinator of the

Access to Information Programme, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and co-convenor of the National Campaign for People’s Right

to Information. “During a Central Information Commission [CIC] hearing, Cmde Batra was actually responding to issues from his hospi-

tal bed while hooked to a laptop. He is one of the few people in the country who is using the RTI Act to bring the local police under the lens and hold them accountable for their lapses.”

Batra’s involvement in social outreach began 20 years ago, when he was posted in Goa. “My family ran a centre for literacy there and we taught three generations of household help.” This bent of mind extended to his career in the Armed Forces. “I had a file named ‘HRD’ where I recorded new ideas I offered my bosses. After all, I believe that if one feels strongly about something, one must act on one’s ideas,” says Batra. As community development officer in the Navy, he authored a book titled *Outreach*, in 1998. It still serves as a reference point for CEOs handling corporate social responsibility. He also started the Information Resource and Facilitation Centre in the Navy.

The Navy’s relief work in the aftermath of the 1999 super-cyclone in Orissa and the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat left a deep impact on Batra, whose social conscience was greatly aroused owing to the corruption that was rife even during these desperate times. “Corruption has made our people cynical. The beneficiaries doubted each provider and it took a long time to build confidence,” he muses. Once out of the system, after his retirement, Batra was able to take on corrupt and negligent government employees on his own terms. So he made a decisive move to work independently and build a society he could be proud of.

In 2008, Batra embarked on a four-year battle and used the RTI Act to get the RTI Act corrected! A mission that is still his most passionate to date, he sought to get 34 errors in the Hindi version of the Act corrected. Among them is the definition of ‘public authority’, which, according to the Hindi version, excluded public agencies under the state government. “There is one error that will be amended in the next print version,” he says.

#### Some of Cmde Batra’s high-profile RTI campaigns:

- Water supply in NOIDA (2006)
- Lapses in Nithari investigation (2007)
- Correcting errors in RTI Act (2008)
- Helping NRIs use RTI in India (2008)
- Judgements pending in court (2009)

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“When we are particular about monitoring our servants at home, why hesitate to monitor the working of government employees who are paid to serve us?”

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After breaking the language barrier, Batra decided to give geographical barriers a go.

So, in 2008, while visiting his daughter in Boston, he decided to join a campaign initiated by NRIs in the US who wanted to file RTI queries back home. At the time, NRIs were not allowed to deposit the RTI application fee in foreign currency, which stonewalled any effort to access information from Indian government agencies. Batra tapped into his network, which extended to the Indian Embassy in the US. He also addressed RTI queries to various government ministries. When that failed, he approached the CIC and, finally, after an online campaign, the RBI gave its nod in March this year so that Indians overseas can pay the RTI fee via ePost.

Emboldened by his success, our social crusader decided to test the transparency of the judiciary, no less. Thus, in 2009, through the RTI Act, Batra asked both the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court to state how many cases were pending a judgement since

2007. While he received the relevant information from the High Court, he was surprised with the reply from the apex court. The information officer had replied, “I write to inform you that the data is not maintained by the registry in the manner sought for by you.”

Lest one forget, Batra reminds you that filing RTI queries is much more than mere paperwork. He makes sure he follows up with phone calls and meetings, and coaxes the powers-that-be to build a system of governance that is effective and transparent.

In a dual approach, Batra makes sure he rouses the public conscience as well. So he answers queries fielded by viewers on television programmes and educates and guides people through workshops on the invitation of the Delhi government, National Thermal Power Corporation, and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. He has even made a presentation on RTI and the Nithari case at Harvard University.

Just as RTI activists keep public agencies on their toes, the activists themselves must always be on guard. Many have received threats and been harassed for taking up cudgels against those who walk the corridors of power. Our whistleblower would like to change all that and is currently working on securing legal protection for the conscience-keepers of our nation. To build pressure among politicians, Batra has filed RTI queries not only with the government but with Opposition leaders too.

Recognition for his work comes from no less than Wajahat Habibullah, former chief information commissioner of India and incumbent chairman of the Minority Commission of India. “Cmde Batra is gifted with an uncanny perception in putting his finger on issues that are of utmost importance for common citizens,” he says. “In my view, his biggest achievement is helping to procure access to the RTI for his fellow Indians abroad.” ❁

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# Light of life

Professor Prabhat Ranjan demonstrates the uses of brain-computer interface to help quadriplegic patients in India

Suresh Karat, who had a brilliant career after receiving an MBA from IIM-Ahmedabad, suffered a brainstem stroke at the very young age of 32, in 1999. This left him severely disabled; he became a quadriplegic (no limb movements) with no speech. He could read and hear but could not communicate. He could communicate with his wife Jaya only through eye blinks.

Suresh loved to read and go through information available on the Internet but always needed a person to be with him. He wanted to share his thoughts and started writing a blog (<http://kesuresh.blogspot.in/>). However, this wasn't easy. He had to tell Jaya what to write using eye blinks. For Jaya, who now had to shoulder all responsibilities (including looking after their son), this was never easy. It helped that Suresh's batch-mates had formed a trust to financially support him and his family. Many of them were also looking for solutions around the world to help improve his quality of life.

I had a chance meeting with journalist Rashmi Bansal at an event where we were co-speakers. I discussed my work on assistive devices to help patients with cerebral palsy. She wanted to write about it to raise awareness. Though it never happened, she contacted me a year later to tell me about her classmate Suresh whom she had just met in Coimbatore. She described his situation and asked me to get in touch with Jaya for more details. After speaking with Jaya and going through Suresh's blog, I realised a brain-computer interface—using which I had developed a brainwave-operated Environment Control System—may prove useful.

In the second week of March 2012, my engineers Ajay and Hiren visited Suresh in Coimbatore and tried using a system based on brainwave monitoring. This was a historic moment; after a gap of 13 years, for the first time, Suresh typed himself. It took nearly two minutes to type four letters 'JAYA', but a beginning had been made.

The way we did this was to provide Suresh with a neuro-headset, mainly developed for playing computer games. Using this, we could recognise his facial expressions through brainwaves and his eye and head movements. By recognising even slight head movements, we could map the com-

puter cursor movement. We mapped his eye blinks to get the correct mouse clicks. In other words, the cursor could be moved on a virtual keyboard on the screen and letters could be typed by blinking. Now, Suresh can also browse the Internet and use a computer. While his first use was slow as he couldn't keep his head stable while trying to position the mouse, he has improved over a month. He can now focus better, especially when he is alone.

Subsequently, we demonstrated to him how he could control other systems around him (TV, light, fan, etc) by simply controlling a light bulb by blinking. We are now customising this system to suit his needs so that he can be much more self-reliant. Suresh is getting better at typing. He wrote a mail to Rashmi that brought tears to her eyes.

*Dear Rashmi,  
Thanks a million for enabling me to type. I never thought I would start crowing about typing an email but stranger things under heaven and earth.... When my typing speed improves, I will write a post about this and send the link to our batch.  
Kesu [Suresh]*

This news spread through media, social networking and mailing groups. I have been flooded by calls from Suresh's friends expressing their happiness and emotional outburst. It's a spark of hope for thousands of others who have been suffering in silence. As the word spreads, more and more people in a similar situation have been approaching me for help. Two days back, I got a call from a person whose 59 year-old sister-in-law has motor neuron disease and has lost her limb movements and voice. Her children are abroad and she has no means to communicate with them. He requested me to provide her with a similar system.

As we age, our physical abilities tend to weaken and I hope we will be able to provide such assistive devices to improve quality of life of many of them. I would also like to mention that we are in the process of developing many more assistive devices through the latest developments in information and communication technology. Please do get in touch with us if you or your loved ones need any help in this regard.

*The author is a professor at the Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Gandhinagar. Currently, he is working to apply embedded systems and sensor networks to planetary exploration (moon mission), wildlife tracking, nuclear fusion, healthcare and agriculture. Earlier, he was a full-time scientist working on nuclear fusion in India and the US*

# Age of grace

For over 40 years, his pioneering work in geriatric medicine has changed lives. So, when Dr V S Natarajan received the Padma Shri recently, it was a red-letter day for every elder in India. **Inara Hasanali** speaks to the groundbreaker

In the 1970s, Dr V S Natarajan cut a lone but groundbreaking path in the field of geriatrics. The results are now evident for all to see. But rather than corner the spotlight, this Chennai-based doctor insists the Padma Shri is an honour for every senior citizen in India.

Seated in the portico of his modest bungalow at Anna Nagar in Chennai, a butterfly floats by, as if to listen in on the conversation. A summer sun streams in on a pleasant breeze, which is laced with the joy in Dr Natarajan's voice as phone calls and congratulatory messages continue to pour in.

Dr Natarajan has accumulated a formidable body of work and, at the age of 72, he is actively engaged in social work for the elderly. He has also authored four books on geriatrics: *Goodbye to Old Age*, *Everything You Want to Know After 60*, *Healthy Nutrition for Healthy Ageing* and *Healthy Ageing*. Despite his eminence, he remains affable and down-to-earth with an endearing simplicity. Excerpts from an exclusive interview:

## Seniors are largely neglected in India. Why did you choose geriatrics?

Back in 1974, when I pursued higher medical certification in the UK, there was barely any awareness about geriatrics, even worldwide. When I was at Madras Medical College in Chennai, Dr A L Annamalai suggested that I opt for higher qualifications in this field. Geriatrics sounded like a new and exciting area of research. I trained in Southampton and returned to my country.



Chennai Pix

## What is the one thing you would like to change about this field?

The field has changed a lot in four decades as have the lives of seniors. From the 1970s to the 1990s, patients would come to the OPD accompanied by a family member as they lived in joint families. From the 1990s, most elderly people have been coming alone or with their spouses as their children have migrated.

Longevity has increased but so have expenses. I advise people to continue working after retirement, even if only part-time. Seniors must plan for financial security. They should also keep some of their property or assets and not sign away everything to their children or charities. They should have a few close friends and not socialise only with relatives. In my experience, I have seen their friends being more proactive in helping them.

## What challenges did you face when you chose to specialise in geriatrics?

After getting accredited as a specialist in Geriatric Certification in the UK, I returned to the same ward in Government General Hospital (GH) in Chennai. In the late 1970s, I began a two-hour OPD. Despite the unfriendly hours, from 12 noon to 2 pm, there was a heavy rush of patients. This was the first time there was a separate time to see elderly patients. In 1988, the first Geriatrics Ward was opened at the hospital. It had taken 10 years to create awareness and fulfil the need for a separate Geriatrics Ward.

This was when geriatrics came into its own. Research was being done on nutrition, infectious diseases, and communicable and non-communicable diseases. Rural camps were also held to identify skin diseases and tuberculosis. Owing to widespread malnutri-

tion, many of the elderly in rural areas were, and still are, underweight.

**Are medical students today willing to specialise in geriatrics? What changes have taken place since you started teaching?**

I retired from GH in 1977. A year before that, two seats were allotted for an MD in geriatrics. Now, there are three. Many youngsters are willing to apply for these seats although it is not necessarily their first choice.

**Who has been your inspiration?**

Dr A L Annamalai of Chennai and Dr M R P Hall of Southampton have been my greatest inspirations. I still receive Christmas greetings from Dr Hall every year and am looking forward to getting a card in 2012 as well! The book that led me to a career in geriatrics is called *Practical Management of the Elderly* by the first professor of geriatrics in the world, William Ferguson Anderson.

**Tell us about your Memory Clinic and other special programmes.**

As longevity increases, it is accompanied by memory disturbances. I have my Memory Clinic in Flowers Road, Chennai. I have analysed 150 patients for nine months. Around 40-50 per cent had treatable dementia. Also, 10 per cent had memory loss owing to anxiety. Depression was the cause of memory loss in 10 per cent. Only 3-5 per cent suffered from Alzheimer's.

Secondary dementia may be caused by hypothyroidism, Vitamin B12 deficiency, excessive consumption of alcohol, sleeping tablets, uncontrolled blood pressure, head injury and blood clots. Psychiatric causes including depression may also cause treatable dementia. If dementia is identified in its early stages, it is treatable. I advise all seniors aged 70 to undergo a memory assessment test, which assesses any abnormality. It is a useful tool to assess mild cognitive impairment.

**DR NATARAJAN'S TIPS ON HEALTHY AGEING**

- Undergo health checkups once a year.
- Cut down on starchy foods and include whole grains as far as possible. Take a large amount of protein by consuming mushrooms, soya or egg white.
- The best tonic for good health is walking in the open air.
- Meditate, practice *pranayama* and yoga. Avoid loneliness. Join associations and clubs. Go on tours, if possible. Take part in spiritual activities.



**FIRST THINGS FIRST**

- India's first professor in geriatric medicine at Madras Medical College
- Set up the country's first Geriatrics Ward at Government General Hospital in Chennai (1988)
- Established the country's first MD programme in geriatrics at MGR University (1996)

**Another pet project of yours is the Senior Citizens' Bureau. Tell us more about it.**

I joined the Senior Citizens' Bureau as a member and was chairman for eight years. The bureau, which currently has 400 members, conducts health camps and lectures. It also holds camps to spread awareness along with city colleges. One of its successful programmes is the Geriatric House Call project, a helpline

that brings doctors and nurses to the doorstep of the elderly. There are 800 registered patients, 57 doctors, 33 physiotherapists, seven psychologists, one dietician and one dentist. These people have even saved lives providing timely care in emergencies. House calls are made in cities like Madurai, Coimbatore, Vellore and Viluppuram.

**How has medicine progressed in the past 50 years? How will it improve the lives of seniors?**

Today, so many heart conditions are treatable, blood clots can be dissolved and fractures are set right in just weeks. There is treatment for arthritis, knee/hip replacements for the elderly. People live longer simply because so many diseases are curable and treatable. There is also preventive medicine that has improved the quality of life of seniors. It is important that seniors remain physically independent to be happy. If they are bed-ridden, they feel isolated and lonely. The condition of their lives depends on their activities of daily life. If they are able to perform these adequately, their lives will be comfortable.

**What should senior citizens keep in mind about ageing?**

One, financial stability; two, independence; and three, proper nutrition.

**You are silver yourself. What is the one thing you have been teaching but find it difficult to practice?**

I used to say I was too busy to exercise. However, after I turned 60, I have a daily routine that includes walking, *pranayama*, yoga and back exercises.

**Who, according to you, has aged beautifully?**

I think all the elderly are beautiful. Women age better than men. They care for their appearance even in their 80s and 90s. Men are a little lazy when they reach 80. Personally, I believe my wife Hamsavani has aged the best. ✨

DESTINATION

# Rockfort

**Carol Lobo** turns back the pages of history and experiences the mystique of the king of all Maratha kings at Raigad Fort





The thunder of approaching hooves heralds the arrival of a messenger on a royal mission. The residents of the surrounding villages hold their collective breath as the armed horseman arrives at his destination—the double-arched Maha Darwaja of a fortress that rises 2,850 ft above sea level in Maharashtra's Sahyadri range. The year is 1675 and the air is heavy with anticipation. What message does the royal horseman carry for the king of Maratha kings?

Over 350 years later, the splendour of Raigad Fort (King's Fort) has paled but its ruins are still a tourist draw. Built on Rairi Hill, this is the capital city of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, founder of the great Maratha Empire. Dubbed the 'Gibraltar of the East' by European historians, this mammoth fort-city greets visitors with a sheer and defiant rock face, a frozen symbol of Shivaji's valour and might.

However, it's not only the fortress that brings tourists here but the mystique of Maharashtra's most-revered warrior king and tales of his exploits. It was at Raigad Fort that Shivaji was coronated in 1674, just six years before he died at the age of 38, also at the fort. This diminutive king was a master strategist and a progressive ruler who freed the Maratha people from Mughal rule to establish a 'Hindavi Swarajya' (self rule of Hindu people). Today, his fort is a handsome reminder of an empire that flourished for 150 years, stretching across Maharashtra and all the way down to the Deccan.

Not just a fort, Raigad Fort is actually a mini city comprising 350-odd structures atop the 'tripod hill', many of which are still in fairly good shape. As they are scattered across the hill, it takes two full days to complete the tour, guide in tow. Seated in a watchtower overlooking the valley below, it was here that the Dongrcha Chuha (Mouse of the Mountains), as Shivaji was nicknamed, pondered his vast empire and planned

future conquests. The tower bears the typical scallops and notches where lamps were once placed. "The tower was lit up by a thousand *diya* that cast an eerie glow across the hillside at night," says the guide, conjuring up an image straight out of a fairytale.

To the west of Raigad is Fort Lingana, where traitors and the enemy were imprisoned; to the east is Fort Torna, which the young Shivaji conquered when still a teenager; and also nearby is Rajgad, the Maratha capital before it moved to Raigad. Adding a contemporary feel to the tour, the guide announces, "This is Mantralaya." He points to the Ashtapradhan, where Shivaji's eight ministers strategised war and discussed administrative matters. "And this is the Rani Vasa or the living quarters of Shivaji's eight queens." Then, indicating a large window in the outer wall of each chamber, he smiles, "Did you know they had 'air-conditioning' even in those days?"



#### A PEEP INTO THE PAST

- Did Chhatri-Nizampur, a village in the distance, really receive its name from a pall-bearer who parachuted off the hill while carrying the *chhatri* of the *maharaj*?
- On 5 April 1689, when Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's son Zulfikar Khan attacked Raigad, did the Maratha capital actually burn for 11 days and 11 nights, as the legend goes?
- According to the history books, Shivaji died after he took ill. But was the invincible emperor invincible at all?

As the scent of baking mud wafts by on a light breeze, you arrive at the Nagar Khana, where the royal band once played. There were no loudspeakers then but that didn't matter. The bandstand has its own built-in microphone—acoustics that magnify the slightest whisper. After you're done testing this natural microphone, your gaze is drawn to the Meghdambari at the far end of the rectangular open space. This is the iconic umbrella-shaped enclosure that once housed Shivaji's diamond-studded golden throne.

Outside the Balle Killa, the epicentre of the fortress, is Bazaar Peth. The marketplace is among the best-preserved ruins at Raigad Fort. Flanking a 40 ft-wide aisle are stalls on a raised stone plinth so purchases could be made on horseback. The stalls are empty now but they transport you back to an era when it was a bustling bazaar. Every morning, the denizens of the 2,000-strong city bought their provisions here and helped themselves to a free and juicy serving of



local gossip! “Make no mistake,” your guide adds, “in the midst of the hustle and bustle, coded messages were exchanged as the market provided perfect camouflage.”

The next stop is Takmak Tok but the catchy alliteration belies its sinister purpose. A rocky precipice overlooking the valley, this is where criminals were tossed to their death. As they begged for mercy, they prayed for their hands to be cut off as punishment instead.

Fiction mingles with fact at Hirvani Bhuruj, whose story is the stuff of folklore. An ugly projection from the mountain, this point gets its name from a humble milkmaid. The story goes that Hirvani, who was inside the fort to deliver milk supplies, found herself locked inside one evening, after the Maha Darwaja was shut. A nursing mother desperate to get to her baby, Hirvani scaled a rocky promontory and found a way out. The outcrop was promptly blown up to secure the ramparts and was never breached again.

It's circa 1675 again and, as the sun moves across the evening sky, an amber glow envelopes the fort as torches light up various quarters. The Maha Darwaja has been pulled shut. Outside, the surrounding hills watch over Rairi and its royal resident. Stretching as far as the eye can see, they jealously guard the secrets of the raj. Then, as clouds rush up from the valley below, mist and vapour, fact and fiction slowly become one. ✨



## FACT FILE

### GETTING THERE

**By road:** Raigad Fort is located 150 km from Pune and 190 km from Mumbai. **Note:** There's a signboard on the NH17 for the diversion to Raigad; the base of the fort is 23 km off the highway.

**By rail:** Vir Dasgaon station on the Konkan Railway is the nearest railhead to Raigad. There are regular trains from Mumbai and Pune.

### WHERE TO STAY

MTDC has accommodation inside the fort. Reservations can be made at: [www.maharashtratourism.gov.in](http://www.maharashtratourism.gov.in)

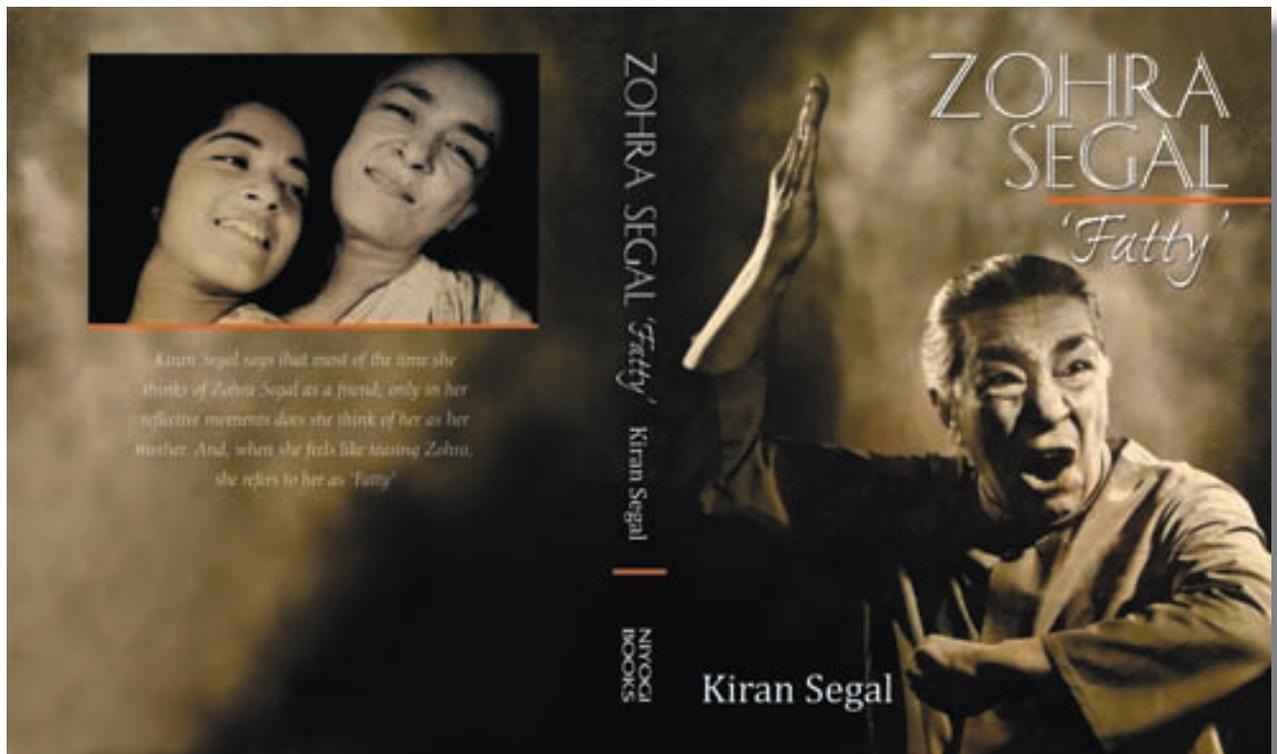
### RAIGAD ROPEWAY

Once you reach the base of the fort, you have two options: A gruelling climb up 1,400 ancient steps or a cable car ride on the Raigad Ropeway: [www.raigadropeway.com](http://www.raigadropeway.com)



**Happy Birthday  
ZOHRA SEGAL!**

# High spirits



TO CELEBRATE PADMA VIBHUSHAN ZOHRA SEGAL'S 100TH BIRTHDAY, HER DAUGHTER KIRAN HAS RELEASED *ZOHRA SEGAL - 'FATTY'* (NIYOGI BOOKS; ₹ 1,250), A LOVING ODE TO THE ACTOR-DANCER'S LIFE AND JOURNEY. WE PRESENT A CHAPTER FROM THE BOOK, AND SOME IMAGES

**A**mmi has unbelievable inner strength. The year 1994 was a bad one for her—a lump in her right calf turned out to be a tumour and she had to undergo surgery. She put up a very brave front all through the tests, examinations and biopsies. I would hear her screaming from pain and there was nothing I could do standing outside except feel the same pain. Pavan [Segal, Zohra's son] told me that if the tumour touched the bone then she would be bed-ridden for life—I was devastated and just could not hide my feelings. Pavan was stronger than me; I was to leave for a performance, which I was going to cancel but he insisted that I carry on with my dance tour, or else she would know that something was seriously wrong with her. But she knew.

She tells me now, “The moment I saw the expression on your face, I could tell that I was seriously ill.”

I was performing in Udaipur; waiting for my call to start the performance, I have never prayed to God as I prayed that night and asked Him to save my mother's life.

However, it was just her strength and only her strength that made us see her through the illness. At Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital she was under the able supervision of Dr A K Banerjee who was then chief of surgery. I was so relieved to have such a wonderful doctor take care of her. For, not only was he such a good doctor, he was also very

caring and humane in all his dealings with his patient. My two disciples, Anuradha and Sudha, stayed at the hospital with Ammi, while I shunted back and forth between home and hospital, cooking and bringing whatever she felt like eating. She hated the hospital food! Pavan stayed in the hospital with her for a couple of nights as I had a pain in my back. Satyanarayan, my vocalist/friend, was also of great help in this period and so was another friend of mine—Bela Singh.

Dr Banerjee was so taken up by my mother that one day he brought his entire family to meet her in hospital and till today we have all remained friends. Here I must mention SPIC MACAY. It was owing to my meeting Mukulika, Dr Banerjee's second daughter, that all this treatment and surgery was possible. (She was the SPIC MACAY representative on one of my lecture-demonstration tours—I think it was in Madhya Pradesh.) My mother was full of laughter, jokes and funny comments. At times she would tease the

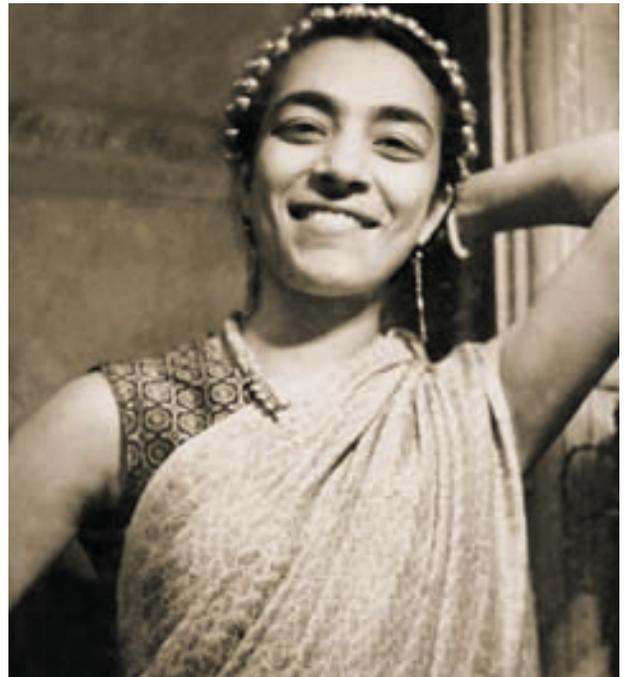


(Clockwise from top) Enjoying ice-cream with Preity Zinta and Divya Dutta in *Veer-Zaara*, 2004, copyright: Yash Raj Films Pvt Ltd; festive moments with Aishwarya Rai and others in *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, 1999; another delightful performance in TV series *Amma and Family*, 1996, in Sanawar





(Clockwise from left) Segal (seated bottom left) as part of the Uday Shankar Ballet Troupe, circa 1935-37; with Dolly Thakore at the 'Ladli of the Century' award, 2008; a radiant Segal in the early days; with Kiran, Pavan and Prithviraj Kapoor in the 1960s, in London



young doctors and the nurses who took some time in seeing the funny side of the comments. All this went on throughout the day and I sometimes wondered what my mother's last thoughts were before she fell asleep. When she was discharged and brought home, she still had to go to Batra Hospital for radiology sittings. I think it was almost every day or every other day. Seeing all the other

cancer patients was very painful but even there she kept her spirits high and was full of fun. All along her illness, I felt it was she who was giving strength to us rather than the other way around. She had almost lost sensation in the right leg and yet she walked for one hour every day with a zeal that was quite unbelievable! I am sure she's got a 'self-charging' battery inside her. ✨

INSIDE  
p72: Celebrating Beltane  
p76: The Fab Four!

# Etcetera

CULTURE ● LEISURE ● LIFESTYLE ● BOOKS ● MISCELLANY

## Building with *rasa*

“Housing for senior citizens is a neglected concern,” asserts architect Raj Rewal in conversation with Suparna-Saraswati Puri

### ARCHITECTURE

There are those who design buildings; and then there are a rare few who imbue concrete with emotive spirit (*rasa*). Delhi-based architect Raj Rewal, 77, is one of India's celebrated design artists with a portfolio that includes some of the world's finest structures like the Ismaili Centre in Lisbon, and the Pragati Maidan Exhibition Complex, French Embassy Staff Quarters, Asian Games Village, British High Commission Housing, World Bank Regional Mission, International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biology, and the Parliament Library Complex, all located in Delhi. Hoshiarpur-born Rewal was educated in Delhi and London, before working with the legendary Michel Ecochard in Paris. Later, he chose to return to India and establish himself independently.

Rewal's signature displays a combination of technology and design—one that uses traditional materials to evoke a sense of history and context. Bestowed with the prestigious Chevalier des Art des Lettres by the French Government in 2005, Rewal's body of work has won him accolades and awards aplenty. In an exclusive interview with *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, he shares his views on 'building with love' for Indian silvers.





### To you, what is the essence of architecture?

Architecture deals with many aspects. One is, of course, the functional use of a building. But its core values are light, space and structure. I think this isn't enough. There has to be pleasure too, so I use the term *rasa*, which I'd translate into spirit. A building has to have a certain spirit that connects people to it; no wonder we have buildings that exude power, exuberance, dynamism, serenity and gentleness.

### How is India different from the West?

When one returns home after studying abroad, a few immediate differences emerge that one has to be mindful of. For instance, the light in India is in contrast to the West/Europe. Similarly, lifestyles are different and so are cultures. In my opinion, architects learn from traditional Indian architecture. The *haveli* had an inbuilt system of providing effective cooling in places where the sun was scorching; even the Indian bazaar, though not the most hygienic environ, pulsates with vibrancy unique to India.

### What annoys you with regard to the existing building and architecture in India?

Some buildings here are so badly maintained. That is the only thing that upsets me. I get very angry when I see neglect caused by an insensitive attitude. No wonder a vast volume of our heritage is languishing. Perhaps, stricter laws need to be implemented for those spewing *paan* juice; maybe a year in jail would be an effective deterrent!

### What is most important to you while at work?

I think sometimes one is fired by an idea and that is the time for celebration. It can come anytime, when one is reading or taking a bath. While working on the Parliament Library, I had my own perceptions that may/may not have matched with those around me; yet I pursued them with conviction. I have recently completed projects in Beijing, Portugal and Paris. There is a regional flavour to them and also a universal flavour; one has to respond to both. Sometimes an outsider can also capture the spirit of a place

where he has lived only for a short period of time compared to native settlers. I have a very open mind in this aspect, which has aided my work of over three decades.

### Is India architecturally equipped for its senior citizens?

I think there are additional concerns, such as the issue of a very large number who want to live with dignity followed closely by the question of poverty and insufficient housing, which is why there is a sort of mushrooming of slums. In that sense, housing for senior citizens is a neglected concern. It should not be so. Just as there are rules for providing facilities for the physically challenged like toilets and ramps for easy mobility in public spaces, the government should provide for the elderly as well.

### Have you ever had the opportunity to work on a project for the elderly, say a retirement resort?

It just never happened. But if it were to happen, it would be nice to design something with all the facilities of comfort and care. Architecture can also play a role in providing solace by working towards a holistic environment with fresh air, a place for them to be together. It is easy to provide nursing and medical facilities, but what older people need is affection. I think the later years have a lot to do with serenity, so I would want to do a building with very serene surroundings where they can reflect and think. For me, humane architecture, ethics of a structure, values of architecture and sustainability are very important.

I think we are lucky that in India, older people are not discarded like in the West. I say this after having travelled around a great deal. I also have a cross-cultural family; my wife is French and my two sons and two granddaughters speak Hindi, English and French. In India, it is such a pleasure to see everyone together, rather than separated or away from their children and grandchildren. However, nuclear families are on the rise; the WHO predicts that by 2025, India will have 17 per cent of its total population as seniors. Then, should the focus not be a changed one?

# New awakening

FOR MANY, NEW THEATRES STUDIO IN KOLKATA IS JUST A GRAND OLD STUDIO. FOR SILVERS, THOUGH, THE NAME CONJURES UP A THOUSAND IMAGES. PARTHA AND PRIYANKA MUKHERJEE ATTEMPT A RETELLING OF THE GLORIOUS PAST OF A FILM STUDIO THAT HAS NOW BECOME A MYTH

After much fanfare in Mumbai in 1896, the craze for the bioscope reached Calcutta in the 1930s. Soon the 'silent' became a 'talkie' and the love for it grew to a feverish pitch. One evening, a young man on his way home noticed a serpentine queue in front of a cinema hall at Madan Street for tickets to a 'new release'. Birendra Nath Sircar, scion of an eminent family in south Calcutta, began mulling over the prospect of film production in the city. The entrepreneur in him could smell profit. He also wished to change the prejudice against the medium, which, despite its popularity, hadn't been accepted as a noble profession. He finally made art of something considered rather plebeian.

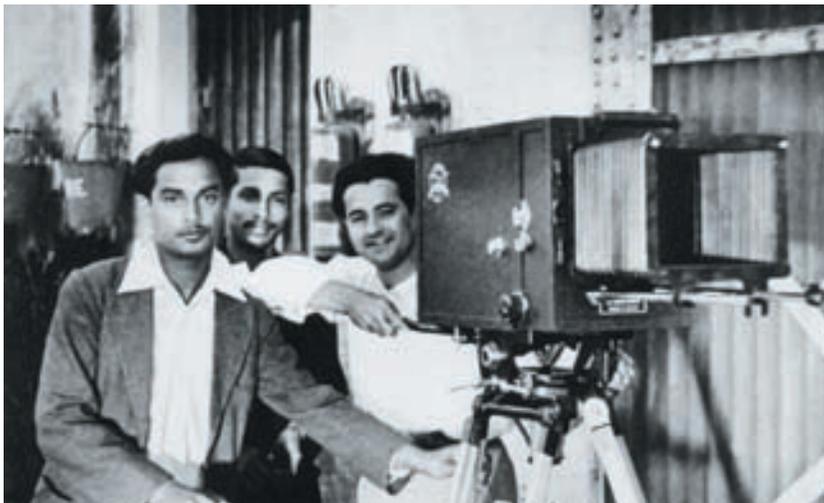
That dream found a habitat in New Theatres Studio (NT). In 1930, it was built on 10 *bigha* of land leased from the owner of Basanti Cotton Mill. The address was 10 Chandi Ghosh Road, near Tollygunge in Kolkata. Insistent

that NT must not be run only as a film-producing centre, Birendra Nath wanted it to be an institution where every true artist could hone one's skills and contribute to the art of filmmaking. Inspired by his ideology, stalwarts like Nitin Bose, Bimal Roy, Hemchander, K L Saigal, Pahari Sanyal, K C Dey, Pankaj Mullick, Timir Baran, Phani Mazumdar, Jagdish Sethi, Uma Shashi, Leela Desai, Jamuna, Kananbala, Seeta Devi, Asit Sen, and luminaries like Prithviraj Kapoor and Durga Khote joined NT.

*Ab initio*, Birendra Nath wanted to acquaint cinemagoers with classics, an idea he followed till he breathed his last. The first film he chose to produce was *Dena Paona*, a novel by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay. Premankor Atarshi directed the film, while Nitin Bose handled the camera. The film was released in December 1931 at Chitra (now known as Mitra), the cinema hall Sircar fashioned in

north Calcutta. The second and the third films under the banner of NT, *Mohabbat Ki Ansu* and *Zinda Lash*, were made in Urdu. In *Mohabbat Ki Ansu*, Sircar introduced a new face, Kundan Lal Saigal, a shy, reticent salesman of Remington Typewriter, whose only other identity was as an amateur singer. K L Saigal, of course, went on to become a matinee idol.

New Theatres touched yet another milestone when Rabindranath Tagore was invited to film *Natir Puja* (the worshipping of the danseuse) in 1932. Shot for three consecutive sultry summer days, it was directed by Tagore from the newly made canopy of straw, the 'Golghar', which is still preserved at NT. Tagore is said to have found NT as homely as Santiniketan. The same year, six films—*Punarjanma*, *Chirakumarsabha*, *Pallisamaj*, *Subha Ka Sitare*, *Chandidas* and *Josh-E-Mohabbat*—were released under the NT banner with the proverbial logo of a trumpeting elephant.



Sudhi Majumder, Amullya Mukherji and Usuf Mulji with 'Debri' camera; K L Saigal and Kanan in *Lagan*

Sircar's love for literature translated into celluloid and reflected social issues. He went on to produce films based on the storylines of popular novels that talked about the life of common people in a simple way. The year 1934 held special significance as NT introduced a new genre of animation film and set the trend of cartoon films in India.

Over time, New Theatres Studio became a hub of art and culture. It played host to eminent visitors such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Rabindranath Tagore, poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and Lord Linlithgow (the then Governor General of India), besides international film personalities like Frank Capra, Pudovkin and Jean Renoir. Sircar wanted his works to speak of his social commitments. *Jiban Maran* (Bengali, 1939), with its Hindi version *Dushman*, was meant to spread awareness about tuberculosis at the behest of the wife of Lord Linlithgow. The zeal of patriotism was also obvious in some works. *Udayar Pathe* (Bengali, 1944), later remade in Hindi as *Hamrahi*, had such strong patriotic fervour that the song sequence *Jana gana mana* was withdrawn by the then British censor.

Almost overnight, the Partition in 1947 made a dent in the market, resulting in a considerable loss of revenue. Adding fuel to the fire were the communal riots of 1946-1947. By the beginning of the 1950s, the halcyon days of NT were over. It ran into financial crisis. These, apart from certain legal difficulties, led the company to close production after *Bakul* in 1955.

Dilip Sircar, son of B N Sircar, tried to revive NT's lost glory and ran NT-1 studio from 1957 to 1961. It was only after about 30 years that he and his daughter Romita Bose began to reorganise the company. This comprised the preservation of available NT films with the help of Pune Archives and making a television



(Top) Ahin Choudhury and Pankaj Mullick in *Doctor*; NT-1 Studio in 1931



serial on the history of New Theatres, titled *The Story of New Theatres*, with the help of Doordarshan, which also helped with the telecast of NT classics. With Romita Bose at the helm of this resuscitation, NT produced *Ami Aadu*, a Bengali feature film that released in February last year. Directed by Sri Somnath Gupta, it's a love story of a simple Hindu Brahmin girl and an ambitious Muslim boy in rural Bengal set against the backdrop of the Iraq war.

"I'm happy to revamp the banner, a dream of my late father and grandfather," says Bose, admitting that doing justice to NT's history is difficult. With the promise of producing one feature film a year, NT executive producer Pinaki Chakraborty says, "The banner still enjoys unparalleled respect among cinema lovers. We want to revive its good old days of making socially relevant and well-scripted films with a focus on rural Bengal." (Information courtesy: Pinaki Chakraborty, New Theatres Studio)

# CASTING A SPELL

Distinguished sculptor Latika Katt invites **Suparna-Saraswati Puri** to discover her as an artist whose vast body of work stands—literally—tall

**P**lace: Chandigarh. A chance rendezvous with artist Latika Katt, 62, leaves us awestruck. She is here as an eminent participant at a sculptor camp organised by the Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademi.

Famous for making the tallest bronze sculptures in the country—a massive 20-ft Nehru statue at Jawahar Bhawan, installed in New Delhi in 1967; and her current project, another 20-ft bronze statue of Indira Gandhi being readied for an undisclosed location in Hyderabad—Katt’s art speaks of a lifetime of dedication.

“I have always believed that you need to be detached to be immersed in your passion,” says the unassuming Katt. “When I do portraits in my house and if the radio is playing in the next room, I immediately switch it off because listening to it is bound to create a set of images and thoughts that will conflict with the ideas surfacing from sculpting the model’s portrait. For that matter, even the model cannot afford to be involved with anything else but me, irrespective of who he or she is. For instance, when I did Swami Chinmayananda’s portrait, he comprehended the need to have a one-on-one and, as a result, we became good friends.”

It is the magnificence of Katt’s artistic detailing (in a range of media such as clay, wood, plaster of Paris, stone, metal and cow dung) that makes her creations so special. “Your sensibilities are through your hand,” she explains.



“It is the experience generated by your fingers that have gone through extensive hard practice as a student.

Fortunately, I inherited from my mother a great sense of feel for materials; it was in the environs of Doon School where I acquired an instinctive spontaneity towards matter. I loved playing with soil.”

Katt’s ability to create forms began rather early. “I recollect an incident

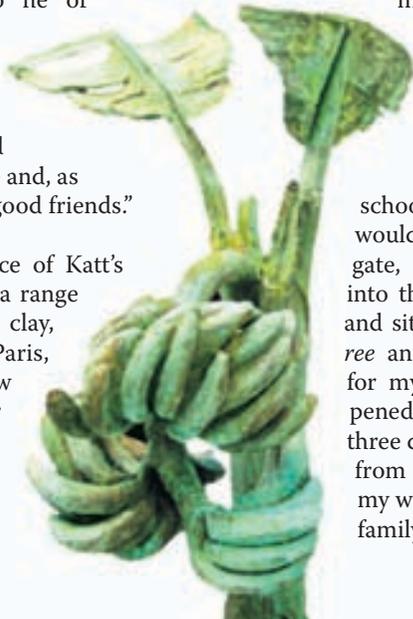
my father would narrate about my days at the Montessori. My elder brother and I

would walk to school and just as we would approach the gate, I would sidestep into the school’s garden and sit next to the *kiya-ree* and make tiny pots for my dolls. This happened successively for three days till an enquiry from the school about my well-being made my family realise what was

actually happening,” reminisces the sculptor with a twinkle in her eye.

Katt’s first piece of sculpture was a wooden mask carved from a bulky *sheesham* block that she made during her second year at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi. “Doing that piece brought back memories of my Doon carpentry classes, which I really enjoyed, to the extent that I would do my classmate Kamal Nath’s [Union minister] share of work as well,” she recollects. “*Mujhe randaa chalaana acchaa lagta thaa.*” (I liked working with wood.)

Having aced her graduation in fine arts with a gold medal in 1971, Katt went on to pursue her master’s degree in indigenous metal casting and the specialised technique of Italian casting at MS University, Vadodara, followed by a certificate course at Slade School of Art, London. “My education took place at the right place at the right time,” avers Katt. She thinks today’s young and aspiring students of sculpture “don’t feel sufficiently while sculpting because they want quick results”.



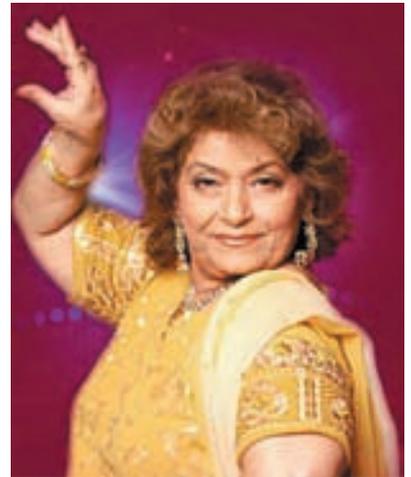
In addition to contributing to the arts as a sculptor, Katt also lends her creativity through academics. Since 1981, she has taught at Delhi's Jamia Millia University as well as at her alma mater, BHU. As a member of several advisory forums on art, Katt has organised symposia and workshops for students and artists. Besides solo exhibitions and group shows at home, she has exhibited in countries like the UK, the US, Australia, Kenya, France, Turkey, Japan, Sweden and Cuba. Further, she has executed commissioned work in India as well as abroad; her work can be seen in the collections of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Lalit Kala Akademi (Delhi), National Gallery of Modern Art (Mumbai), Tata Tea, and in the aesthetic avenues of Hong Kong, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Nairobi, Finland and the UK.

Still, Katt, who was chosen one of the 'Five Distinguished Women of Baroda', wears her laurels lightly. Her humility echoes in her work, particularly in the context of her popular series *Decay & Growth*. "I view death or decay not as an eventuality but a continuation of form. When I saw the fridge full of insects and fungus, it was intriguing beyond expression how food had decayed as fungus grew. I called my husband and said, 'Now, that's art!'"

From a journey that began on the grounds of Doon School, meandered through the ghats of Varanasi, and continues on wondrous landscapes of the sky and the earth, this sculptor is free-spirited and irreverent towards aging. "Age has its own sense of fulfilment," she says. "At 62, I feel younger than a 20-something and have never considered myself old. I only register it when my friends are addressed as *saas!* Whether I am working in the furnace or standing and sculpting a bronze on a customised pedestal of 25 ft, I am oblivious to physical discomfort because I am engrossed in work. For me, retirement will not be a consequence of the body's slow-down. I will continue working till my last breath."

## HER STORY

The woman who made male hearts go *dhak dhak* in time with Madhuri Dixit, Saroj Khan has much more to her than choreography. She danced with the shadows on the wall as a toddler; played actor Shyama's younger version at the age of three; worked as assistant to choreographer Sohanlal for *Geeta Mera Naam* and, later, relinquished her name 'Nirmala' to make Bollywood her first family. After a gruelling 14 months of behind-the-scenes shooting, Mumbai-based Nidhi Tuli is ready with *The Saroj Khan Story*, a one-hour tribute. Sponsored by



PSBT and Film Division of India, the idea stemmed from Tuli's impressions of the 'dancer master' in television reality show *Nach Baliye*. A dialogue writer and documentary filmmaker, Tuli decided to make a film on this "living legend who has given 50 years of her life to Bollywood". One day, she turned up at Khan's dance academy in Mumbai's suburban Goregaon and asked for permission, which she got immediately. The film also features the voices of Vyjayantimala Bali, N Chandra, Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Subhash Ghai.

## RE-BIRTH

**IT'S A DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE WORK BUT ONE WITH A STORY THAT TAKES YOU ON THE ROAD TO LIFE, LEGENDS AND EXPERIENCES. CALLED *BIRTH OF A UNICORN*, IT IS ONE OF LEGENDARY ARTIST BADRI NARAYAN'S LATEST AND FINDS PRIDE OF PLACE IN A MONTH-LONG SOLO SHOW AT THE VIEWING ROOM IN MUMBAI'S SOUTHERN HUB OF COLABA. BADRI NARAYAN, 89, HAS A LIFETIME OF STORYTELLING BEHIND HIM. WITH 50 SOLO SHOWS AND HUNDREDS OF PAINTINGS, PRINTS, MOSAICS, ENGRAVINGS, CERAMIC TILES AND WOODCUTS, HE DECIDED THIS TIME TO ENGAGE HIMSELF IN PRESENTING HIS PAPER WORKS FROM 2006 TO 2011. TALES HEARD LONG AGO REVEAL THEMSELVES IN HIS MASTERPIECES WITH FRESH NARRATIONS, INSPIRATIONS AND PROVOCATIONS. WHAT REMAINS CONSTANT ARE THE PROTAGONISTS: TREES, BIRDS, RIVERS, MOUNTAINS AND ELEPHANTS, LARGER THAN LIFE AND DREAMS.**

***BADRI NARAYAN: A SOLO EXHIBITION, AT THE VIEWING ROOM, COLABA CAUSEWAY, MUMBAI; UNTIL 20 MAY 2012; 11 AM TO 7 PM***

## The Beltane fires

Here's proof—if you needed it—that 'May Day' has traditionally meant different things to different cultures

In the Central Highlands of Scotland, bonfires, known as the Beltane fires, were formerly kindled with great ceremony on the first of May, and the traces of human sacrifices at them were particularly clear and unequivocal. The custom of lighting the bonfires lasted in various places far into the eighteenth century, and the descriptions of the ceremony by writers of that period present such a curious and interesting picture of ancient heathendom surviving in our own country that I will reproduce them in the words of their authors. The fullest of the descriptions is the one bequeathed to us by John Ramsay, laird of Ochertyre, near Crieff.... He says: "But the most considerable of the Druidical festivals is that of Beltane, or May-day, which was lately observed in some parts of the Highlands with extraordinary ceremonies.... Like the other public worship of the Druids, the Beltane feast seems to have been performed on hills or eminences. They thought it degrading to him whose temple is the universe, to suppose that he would dwell in any house made with hands. Their sacrifices were therefore offered in the open air, frequently upon the tops of hills, where they were presented with the grandest views of nature, and were nearest the seat of warmth and order. And, according to tradition, such was the manner of celebrating this festival in the Highlands within the last hundred years. But since the decline of superstition, it has been celebrated by the people of each hamlet on some hill or rising ground around which their cattle were pasturing. Thither the young folks repaired in the morning, and cut a trench, on the summit of which a seat of turf was formed for the company. And in the middle a pile of wood or other fuel was placed, which of old they kindled with *tein-eigin*—i.e., forced-fire or *need-fire*....

"The night before, all the fires in the country were carefully extinguished and next morning the materials for exciting this sacred fire were prepared. The most primitive method seems to be that which was used in the islands of Skye, Mull, and Tiree. A well-seasoned plank of oak was procured, in

the midst of which a hole was bored. A wimble of the same timber was then applied, the end of which they fitted to the hole. But in some parts of the mainland the machinery was different. They used a frame of green wood, of a square form, in the centre of which was an axle-tree. In some places three times three persons, in others three times nine, were required for turning round by turns the axle-tree or wimble. If any of them had been guilty of murder, adultery, theft, or other atrocious crime, it was imagined either that the fire would not kindle, or that it would be devoid of its usual virtue. So soon as any sparks were emitted by means of the violent friction, they applied a species of agaric which grows on old birch-trees, and is very combustible. This fire had the appearance of being immediately derived from heaven, and manifold were the virtues ascribed to it. They esteemed it a preservative against witchcraft and a sovereign remedy against malignant diseases, both in the

human species and in cattle; and by it the strongest poisons were supposed to have their nature changed.



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This excerpt from *The Golden Bough* (1922), by Scottish anthropologist Sir James George Frazer, tells us about the Celtic festival of Beltane

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"After kindling the bonfire with the *tein-eigin* the company prepared their victuals. And as soon as they had finished their meal, they amused themselves a while in singing and dancing round the fire. Towards the close of the entertainment, the person who officiated as master of the feast produced a large cake baked with eggs and scalloped round the edge, called *am bonnach bea-tine*—i.e., the Beltane cake. It was divided into a number of pieces, and distributed in great form to the company. There was one

particular piece which whoever got was called *cailleach beal-tine*—i.e., the Beltane *carline*, a term of great reproach. Upon his being known, part of the company laid hold of him and made a show of putting him into the fire; but the majority interposing, he was rescued. And in some places they laid him flat on the ground, making as if they would quarter him. Afterwards, he was pelted with egg-shells, and retained the odious appellation during the whole year. And while the feast was fresh in people's memory, they affected to speak of the *cailleach beal-tine* as dead."

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# The Karma Yoga

In the third chapter of Swami Chinmayananda's translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, we learn about the significance—and consequences—of our actions

**Arjuna said:** If it be thought by you that knowledge is superior to action, O Janardana, why then, do you, O Keshava, engage me in this terrible action? With this apparently perplexing speech you confuse, as it were, my understanding; therefore, tell me that one way by which, I, for certain, may attain the Highest.

**The Blessed Lord said:** In this world there is a two-fold path, as I said before, O sinless one; the Path of Knowledge of the Sankhyans and the Path of Action of the Yogins. Not by non-performance of actions does man reach actionlessness; nor by mere renunciation does he attain Perfection. Verily, none can ever remain, even for a moment, without performing action; for, everyone is made to act helplessly, indeed, by the qualities born of Prakriti. He who, restraining the organs of action, sits thinking in his mind of the sense-objects, he, of deluded understanding, is called a hypocrite. But, whosoever, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, engages his organs of action in Karma Yoga, without attachment, he excels.

You perform [your] bounden duty; for, action is superior to inaction. Even the maintenance of the body would not be possible for you by inaction. The World is bound by action other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice; do thou, therefore, O son of Kunti, perform action of that sake [for Yajna] alone, free from all attachments.

The Prajapati [Creator], having in the beginning created mankind, together with sacrifices, said, By this shall you

prosper; let this be the milch-cow of your desire—Kamadhuk. With this, you do nourish the gods and may those Devas nourish you; thus nourishing one another, you shall, attain



“You must always perform actions which should be done, without attachment; for, by performing action without attachment, man attains the Supreme”

the Highest Good. The Devas, nourished by the sacrifice, will give you the desired objects. Indeed he who enjoys objects, given by the Devas, without offering [in return] to them, is verily a thief.... Know you that action comes from Brahmaji [the Creator] and Brahmaji comes from the Imperishable. Therefore, the all-pervading Brahman [God-principle] ever rests in sacrifice. He who does not follow here the wheel thus set revolving, is of a sinful life, rejoicing in the senses. He lives in vain, O Son of Pritha. But the man who rejoices only in the Self,

who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone, for Him verily there is nothing (more) to be done. For him there is here no interest whatever in what is done, or what is not done; nor does he depend upon any being for any object.

Therefore, always perform actions which should be done, without attachment; for, by performing action without attachment, man attains the Supreme.... Whatever a great man does, that other men also do; whatever he sets up as the standard, that the world follows. There is nothing in the three worlds, O Partha, that has to be done by Me, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained by Me; yet, I engage Myself in action.... These worlds would perish if I did not perform action; I would be the author of confusion of castes, and would destroy these beings. As the ignorant men act from attachment to action, O Bharata, so should the wise men act without attachment, wishing the welfare of the world. Let no wise-man unsettle the minds of ignorant-people, who are attached to action; he should engage them in all actions, himself fulfilling them with devotion....

Renouncing all actions in Me, with the mind centred on the Self, free from hope and egoism, free from fever, do fight! Those men who constantly practise this teaching of Mine, full of faith and without cavilling, they too are freed from actions. But those who carp at My teaching and do not practice it, deluded in all knowledge, and devoid of discrimination, know them to be doomed to destruction.

Swami Chinmayananda (1916-1993) was a spiritual leader and teacher who inspired the formation of Chinmaya Mission in 1953 to spread the message of Vedanta. Extracts courtesy [www.chinmayauk.org](http://www.chinmayauk.org)



**I**n my mind there's no sorrow, don't you know that it's so.  
There'll be no sad tomorrow, don't you know that it's so.  
So sang The Beatles after they signed their first contract in 1962 as a band. Their first hit single *Love me do* paved the way for their unprecedented success and cult stardom.

While most people know the band as the Fab Four—Paul McCartney (bass guitar, vocals), George Harrison (lead guitar, vocals), Ringo Starr (drums, vocals) and John Lennon (rhythm guitar, vocals)—that wasn't the band's original line-up. Stuart Sutcliffe (bass) and Pete Best (drums) were part of the band when it was taking its baby steps. Sutcliffe, though, chose a career in art, a dream that ended when he succumbed to a brain haemorrhage; and Best was replaced by drummer Starr under the recommendations of band

manager Brian Epstein, but continues to be known even today as the 'fifth Beatle'.

In 1963, The Beatles released their first album called *Please Please Me*; it remained No 1 on the UK album charts for 30 weeks. They followed that up the same year with another hit album, *With The Beatles*, cementing their place in music history and went on to become a global phenomenon, performing to packed stadia in every country they visited.

The band broke up in 1970 and the tragedy only intensified when a deranged fan went on to shoot and kill Lennon in 1980. Still, the band lives on through its music, which continues to inspire musicians across generations, as well as its memorabilia, which still sells like hotcakes world over.

#### THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: **MAY 1962**

- On 3 May, the infamous triple train disaster, the Mikawashima train crash, occurred in Tokyo, killing 160 people.
- On 13 May, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was sworn in as the second President of India.
- On 19 May, American actor and sex symbol Marilyn Monroe sang *Happy birthday, Mr. President* for US President John F Kennedy; her last significant public appearance before she was found dead on 5 August.
- On 24 May, M Scott Carpenter became the second astronaut to orbit the earth three times in US Aurora 7.

# Experience

## A second childhood

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## Nomophobia

*n.* The fear of being without your mobile phone or a cellular signal.

**Example:** Your heart rate accelerates, you feel short of breath, and you reach quickly to your pocket and feel a wave of relief as you find your phone is still there. There's a name for the overwhelming fear of losing your mobile phone and with it, contact with friends and family, **nomophobia**, and the findings of a recent survey suggests it's on the rise.

—Heather Yundt, "Nomophobia—the fear of losing one's phone—is on the rise," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 21 February 2012

## Workamper

*n.* A person who uses a recreational vehicle (RV) to travel from one temporary job to another.

**Example:** **Workampers** are people who drive RVs around the country, from temporary job to temporary job, docking in trailer camps. "We're retired but we can't" another explains to me about himself and his wife, shrugging, "make it. And there's no job, so we go where the jobs are." Amalgamated advertises positions on websites workampers frequent. In this warehouse alone, there are hundreds of them.

—Mac McClelland, "I was a warehouse wage slave", *Mother Jones*, 1 March 2012

## 100-Foot Diet

*n.* A diet that consists mostly or exclusively of food grown in one's garden.

**Example:** Customers may even choose to purchase free-range chicken meat direct from the farm for their dinner menu, along with the vegetables they may collect from the farm garden, in what can only be described as a **100-foot diet!**

—Catherine Frechette, "Fall RV vacations in Kelowna", *Ripe with Surprises*, 19 September 2011

## Placenta Pill

*n.* A pill made from a woman's placenta and taken by that woman to treat certain postpartum conditions.

**Example:** Anne Ferguson, mother of two, is one of those women. She prepares **placenta pills** by boiling, slicing and dehydrating the placenta and then pureeing what's left into a fine powder. The powder is capped in a small pill. This entire process is known as placenta encapsulation.

—"More mothers using placenta pill to combat postpartum depression", *CBS Miami*, 1 March 2012

## Brogrammer

*n.* A male programmer who eschews the stereotypical nerdy characteristics associated with programming culture.

**Example:** Tech's latest boom has generated a new, more testosterone-fueled breed of coder... At some startups, the pendulum has swung so far in the other direction that it's given rise to a new title: **brogrammer**.

—Douglas Macmillan, "Brogrammers' challenge coders' nerdy image", *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 March 2012

## PIEM

*n.* A poem in which the length of each word corresponds to a digit in the decimal expansion of the mathematical constant pi.

**Example:** People have devised any number of methods to help them remember well more than ten digits. There is a form of poetry known as a **piem**, in which pi's digits are represented by the number of letters in each word. The best-known **piem** renders the first fifteen digits of pi as "How I want a drink, alcoholic of course, after the heavy chapters involving quantum mechanics."

—Calvin Trillin, "Try to remember", *The New Yorker*, 4 April 2011

“ If you  
can  
dream it, you  
can do it.

—American animator and  
filmmaker Walt Disney  
(1901-1966)

“Everyone thinks of changing the world,  
but no one thinks of changing himself.”  
—Russian writer and social reformer Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

## MARCHUARY

*n.* A January or February with March-like weather.

**Example:** No doubt, the weather has been pretty weird lately. Someone's even coined a genius label for it: **Marchuary**. We won't get into any prospective causes here; instead, let's talk about how to react when it's technically February but feels like March.

—Kate Krader, “Meatball mania across America”, CNN Eatocracy, 27 February 2012



### BUZZ Idea!

If ennui is your constant companion, check out [www.bluebulb.in](http://www.bluebulb.in) for new ideas—and avenues—of activity. From couple's pottery workshops to glow poi, a tribal workout, you'll find some weird and wonderful stuff on the site, which is divided into categories like 'adventure', 'lifestyle', 'sports' and 'arts'. Prices depend on the number of people opting for each package and suit every budget. So what are you waiting for?

## Vacationary

*n.* A person who performs short-term missionary work, particularly as part of a vacation.

**Example:** His accusations, now pouring forth with considerable force, were directed at the naive **vacationaries** spending millions of dollars traveling to his country, creating a welfare economy that deprives people of the pride of their own accomplishments.

—Robert D Lupton, “Toxic charity”, HarperOne, 11 October 2011

## Hackathon

*n.* A collaborative programming session, particularly one lasting several days.

**Example:** Hacking Health, taking place at McGill University's Thompson House, is a health-oriented **hackathon**, an increasingly popular event where people gather to build software that addresses current needs.

—Roberto Rocha, “Tech geeks, doctors unite in hackathon at McGill”, Montreal Gazette, 23 February 2012

## Cisgender

*adj.* Identifying with one's physical gender.

**Example:** “We don't call being **cisgender**, which is when our bodies match up with our internal sense of gender, a personal choice. Both are about being who you are,” she said.

—Lauren La Rose, “Dancing star Bono carries transgender flag”, The Hamilton Spectator, 21 September 2011

## “Mobile companies boast of network in Wayanad, but the simple needs of the common man remain unattended”

*Dr K Jithendranath, 58, Wayanad, for being a good doctor to tribal villagers*



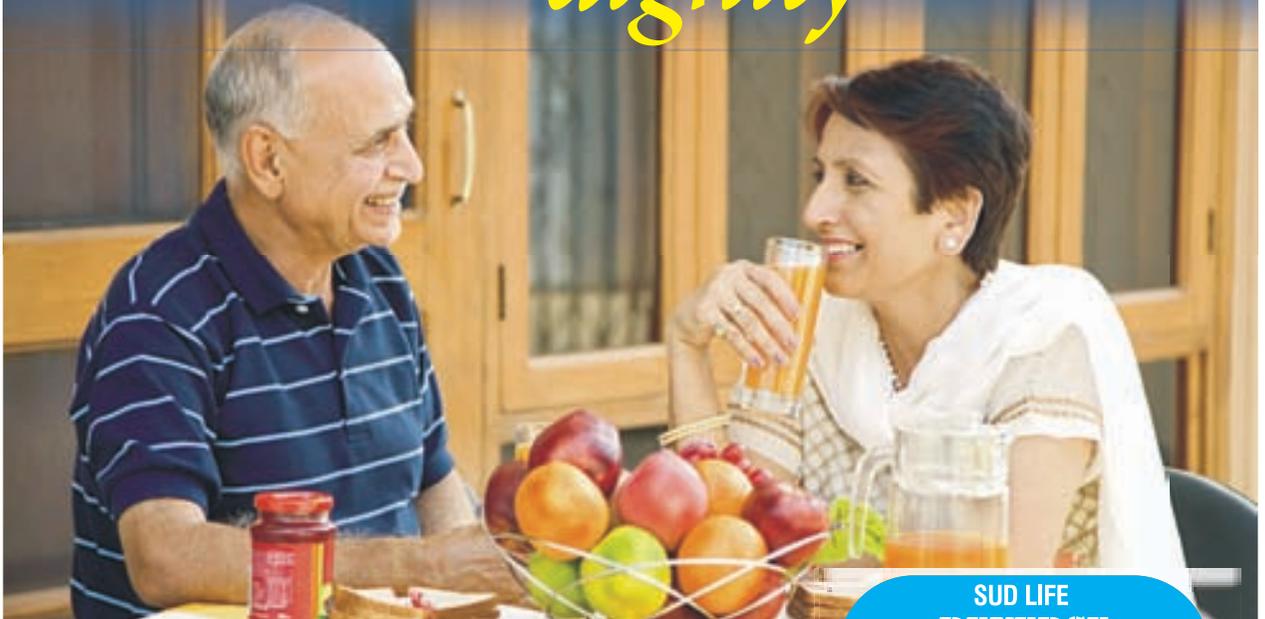
Haksar RK

Doctors should not distance themselves from patients and should be aware that everyone needs the 3 Cs—Care, Comfort and Cure,” says **Dr K Jithendranath**, who has introduced a unique telemedicine system for the tribal population in Wayanad district, Kerala. A resident of Sulthan Batherly in Wayanad, Jithendranath attends to the health of 580 natives from 108 houses in four jungle villages: Kooloor, Amnavayal, Ambathekkar and Kurichiad. Hampered by a hostile climate, wild animals and inaccessibility, villagers would approach a physician only when a health problem was unbearable. Now they can consult Jithendranath the same day. When the government’s telemedicine project didn’t take off after being launched in 2006, the good doctor installed a solar-powered wireless phone at a small school in Kurichiad. As he was already popular among them, it was easy for him to create awareness. Realising they needed to be empowered, he trained

two literate women from among them—Chithra and Vasantha—to run the booth. Around 60 types of medicines are kept at this school-clinic and are available for free. Jithendranath can make the diagnosis on the phone and prescribe medicines because he knows everyone personally. “Mobile companies boast of network in Wayanad. But come and see the place and you will not stay there even for a day, as the simple needs of the common man remain unattended here,” says Jithendranath, who visits the villages whenever he gets the time. The private hospital at Sulthan Betherly where he works was his first posting; but he was so passionate about serving the villagers that he never looked for opportunities elsewhere. The service costs him ₹ 3,000 every month. For that, he thanks the few donations he gets. Jithendranath is now looking at a video call project. “But that needs more money and technology,” he says.

—Nisary Mahesh

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