

# harmony

NOVEMBER 2005 Rs 20

celebrate age

## Space cowboy

Vijaypat Singhania

## Photo finish

Delhi Half Marathon



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# SILVER ON FIRE

## THE MOST SPELLBINDING

sight this festive season was not the sky lit up with fireworks, but the sea of silvers surging through New Delhi in a blaze of yellow, making the streets their own in a show of pride and solidarity. The date: 16 October, when over 3,000 silvers took part in the *Harmony*-sponsored 4.3 km Senior Citizen's Run, part of the Hutch Delhi Half-Marathon.

For the silvers who turned out to participate, and the crowds that turned out in thousands to cheer, it was a landmark event. For us at *Harmony*, it was a day that reinforced our belief that India's elderly are a vital force. And a day that the Harmony Initiative spread its wings further, moving a step closer to establish itself as a national voice for silvers.

The event was the culmination of weeks of hectic preparation. When the organisers of the marathon asked us to manage an event for seniors—along the lines of the successful *Harmony*-sponsored 5 km Silver Run at the Standard Chartered Mumbai

Marathon in January—we knew we had a real job on our hands. For an initiative based in Mumbai, organising an event of this magnitude in New Delhi would be no walk in the park. But we also knew we were up to the challenge—that's what the spirit of *Harmony* is all about.

We delivered, and I would like to thank the *Harmony* team for working round the clock; New Delhi's silver Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit for her motivating speech; Vivek Singh of Procam International, the main organiser of the event, and his team; Shri Amar Singh; Dr Naresh Trehan and his team from the Escort Heart Institute & Research Centre; our corporate partners who supported the run by providing accommodation and refreshments; and our volunteers. While Arjuna Award winners and Olympians such as P T Usha, Milkha Singh, Shiny Wilson and Dhanraj Pillai, and actors like Rishi Kapoor, Dimple Kapadia, Jaya Bachchan and Neetu Kapoor whipped up the excitement, the real heroes were the participants,

men and women who turned out in droves to cock a snook at meaningless numbers like age.

They knew that participating in such an event is not about being first across the finish line. It's more about willing your mind to succeed. "Initially, I was scared but now I realise we do more running around at home than here," said 75-year-old Sona Devi, a resident of Shahdara. Greek philosopher Socrates wrote, "Let him that would move the world first move himself." If 16 October was any indication, the world better watch out for silver power!



**Tina Ambani**

RITU NANDA



## A Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust Initiative

### *Harmony*—Celebrate Age—October 2005 Volume 2 Issue 6

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Email: [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org) **Printed and published** by Anthony Jesudasan on behalf of Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust, 505, Dalamal House, 5th Floor, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. **Printed** at Thomson Press India Ltd, 18-35 Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad (Haryana)

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## column one

When Dr Naresh Trehan, our cover person in December 2004, offered to station 50 nurses for silvers at the Delhi Half Marathon, a 65-year-old gentleman in a Harmony moment said, "One for me". From Start to Finish, *Harmony's* stretch of the marathon wasn't about the fittest and the fastest, but about silvers loaded with an attitude, wit and enthusiasm. For photographs and more anecdotes, turn to Page 19.

This 'can-do' stretches to Vijaypat Singhania, on the cover this month. The obsessive flyer loves to eat and drink, losing weight now and then to fit into his microlight. Singhania says he is starving himself to lose 11 kg to go up in a hot air balloon on 20 November to attempt a world record. "Space Cowboy" is this braveheart's 'a-new-challenge-everyday' story. By all means take a leaf from his incredible journey but stay clear of the crash diet.

Heightening the silver achievement is Asha Madan. She suffers from a heart condition and had both her knees replaced recently. Whenever friends and relatives discuss each other's health, she never goes "me too". And for physical support, Madan prefers to hold on to an object rather than a hand.

Read her story of perseverance and grit, and also our monthly regulars—Legal Ease, Second Career, and Food Wise. Keep sending in your queries and we will try to help. And from now, you can even request our columnist Dr Pushpesh Pant for recipes to suit your unique needs. As always, we look forward to hearing from you.

—Meeta Bhatti

## AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY



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

- You had an experience related to money or finance which others can learn from
  - You faced a serious health problem and conquered it
  - You know of someone who has done something exceptional after the age of 55
  - You want to share your hobbies and interesting travel experiences with others
  - You have a funny or insightful anecdote about your grandchildren
- ...and we'll print it in the column 'Your Space'

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During a short sojourn with my son and his family in Hyderabad, I came across *Harmony*. I like the magazine a lot, especially the articles on finance. Seniors must save money and use it wisely as it is as vital as air or water. I say this because of my own experience.

At 65, I had a lucrative career as the deputy general manager for Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi. I had fulfilled my responsibilities towards my children, a son and a daughter, in the best possible manner. I did not have any vices, nor did I indulge in pretentious living. I also had ample opportunities to save money during my working years for a comfortable retired life. However, I didn't pay heed. And soon, I was in for a surprise. The reality about my paucity of funds hit me after I took voluntary retirement from the service. Without my monthly paycheck, I began living the life of a destitute. I didn't discuss my financial state with my children, as I didn't want to burden them. But my son came to know and began supporting me financially.

He also bought me a Mediclaim policy. I am 71 today and feel really guilty. I hold myself responsible for my penurious situation and the additional burden on my son. Though I have some savings, they only generate a nominal monthly income. I was lucky that my son was willing to take care of my needs but others may not be so fortunate. Thus, I want to spread the message: Save while you can.

**K S KARAN**

Hyderabad

*The letter of the month wins a gift from Vimal*

*H*armony is a delightful read with inspiring stories of seniors who continue to work long after retirement age. I want to share my experience with you. In 2002, I retired at the age of 60 as professor in Mumbai University (College of Pharmacy, Colaba) after 36 years. I have two children, both married and settled in the US. I planned to

settle down to a retired life with my wife in our native town near Trissur, Kerala. But God had other plans. As I have a doctorate in Phytochemistry, I was called to guide students for cancer research at Amala Cancer Centre in Trissur. Today, I offer my services to cancer research as an honorary scientist. I am also developing two research centres

for the pharmaceutical industry—one in Mumbai (Charak Pharma) and the other in Kochi (Kerala Ayurveda Pharmacy Ltd). I travel all over India to talk on cancer. I have realised that if you want to bring meaning to your own life, and others, you can find ways to do so.

**DR C I JOLLY**

Trissur



In the August 2005 issue of *Harmony*, Tina Ambani wrote about elder abuse in 'Connect'. After reading it, I spoke to the members of my seniors' group, which I have been part of since 1982. All of us agreed there is an urgent need to revive the tradition of respecting elders. We first need to tackle this issue with children. Parents and teachers must instil in them the virtues of respecting senior citizens. Legal provisions may come to the rescue of silvers facing financial exploitation but emotional problems can't be tackled by framing laws.

Research has proved that rabbits cuddled and talked to while being fed lived longer than those fed silently. I can't help but think of a story I heard somewhere, long ago. A man had lodged his aged and widowed father in the backyard of his house. Every day, he gave him food in an earthen pan. One day, while serving him, the pot slipped and broke into pieces. The man's four-year-old son, who was with him at the time, started crying. When the man asked the child what was wrong, he replied, "Dad, the pot is broken. How will I serve you food when you are old?"

**MADAN MOHAN PRABHAKAR**

*Mumbai*

It is frightening to hear that facilities of the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) to pensioners and other existing employees are being suspended. Pensioners benefit immensely from CGHS. Even if arrangements are made to hand over the responsibility to insurance companies, state governments or municipal

authorities, it is not acceptable. Instead, the Health Ministry should think of starting exclusive hospitals for pensioners and government employees. Of course, it would mean spending crores of rupees, but it would also ease the problems of retirees.

**B C DEY**

*Mumbai*

Your cover feature on Dev Anand ("The Young and the Restless", September 2005) was very informative. It is amazing that the octogenarian, who recently celebrated his 82nd birthday, still finds the energy to be so active. The evergreen hero not only makes movies but also stars in them! To have performed in 115 films and to have produced 36 films is no mean feat. I am waiting to see his latest film, *Mr Prime Minister*. I wish him all the best and good health.

**RANJEET GHOSH**

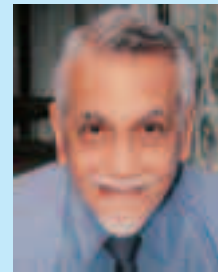
*Kolkata*

I was recently introduced to *Harmony* and immediately got a two-year subscription. The first issue I received had Dev Anand on the cover. It is one of the finest and most useful magazines I have come across. It gives seniors the latest information on issues that matter to us. It is heartening to know there is a medium for silvers to voice their concerns. The magazine is indeed a laudable effort on the part of Tina Ambani. I would appreciate it if you could publish features on income tax in view of the recent changes in the IT Act. Other areas that need to be given prominence are health and investment, with special reference to silvers.

**WING COMMANDER (RETD) S C KALRA**

*Gurgaon*

## CONTRIBUTORS



After clearing the Indian Civil Services examination, when **B K Karanjia** turned down a job in the Supply

Department, he was clear about using his pen as a journalist and not to sign official documents. Later, he became the editor of *Filmfare* magazine, then *Screen* and *Cinema* in India. His interest in films was not restricted to editorial responsibilities as he wrote the story and screenplay of *Pestonjee* that won the National Award for Best Hindi Film in 1989. He also has a series of books to his credit. In this month's 'Body & Soul' he pays a tribute to his late wife, Abad, to whom he was married to for 64 years.



**Dr Varsha Das**, 63, is more than actor Nandita Das's mother. Talent and creativity is not new to the family.

This Delhi-based Sahitya Academi winner has 50 publications to her credit, which include short stories, poems and plays. After working for three decades at National Book Trust as chief editor and director, she retired in 2002. She is this month's At Large writer, plucking from her own experiences of discovering grey hair in her 30s. Her better judgment derives that woman start rejuvenating from the head. She is now chief editor of *The Eye* magazine.

## INNOVATION

### THE HIGH (TECH) ROAD

To help older drivers maintain licences as long as possible, researchers at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, have developed a \$1 million **virtual reality driving simulator**. The machine, housed in the university's engineering building, features a Saturn four-door sedan with its engine removed, surrounded by large, wraparound screens. On the screens, a scenario is played out for drivers, who are immersed in a virtual world and feel as if they are actually driving. Cameras both inside and outside the car allow researchers to watch the driver's actions and response to the system. The machine tracks eye movement, the driver's responses and the vehicle's movement. Further, researchers can manipulate simulated weather conditions such as lightning, rain and snow as well as traffic conditions. "If we can find situations that actually predict when older drivers



are going to get in trouble, we can have education programmes that they can learn from," says Lana Trick, professor of psychology at the university, who partnered with Blair Nonnecke, professor of information science, for the project. The simulator was funded by the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Innovation Trust.

## LOVE THAT!

### PET PLEASURE

Twelve-year-old Solar looks forward to her fortnightly visits to Lillian Martin Home in Mornington Peninsula, near Melbourne in Australia—she gets a lick of ice-cream every time. The senior residents of the home love having the Siberian husky (see picture) over even more; they pat her, play with her, and take her for short



walks. "Solar has got a lovely temperament and I wanted to share her," says her owner Natasha Hartill. Hartill and Solar are part of the Delta Pet Partners programme, which organises **regular visits by pets** and their owners to old-age homes in Mornington. The homes pay a small annual fee to receive regular visits.



# NEWSWORTHY

## GET THE BILL ROLLING



Last month, *Harmony* reported on the formulation of a Bill for the **social security and protection of senior citizens**. There is progress on that front. On 20 September, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Meira Kumar said the proposed 'Central Model Legislation for Older Persons' is expected to be introduced in Parliament during winter session, which begins on 1 December, provided all states send in their suggestions on time. Twelve states have so far expressed their support.

Unfortunately, the first signs of trouble are surfacing. Government sources have indicated to newspapers that Christians and Muslims will be

left out of the ambit of the legislation, on the grounds that their personal laws provide for the protection of the elderly. Babu Joseph, spokesperson of the Catholic Bishop Conference of India (CBCI), says, "The government's excuses are ridiculous. Negligence of the older generation is a universal problem." We agree.

## FROM THE CM

Addressing a meeting of senior citizens, Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit announced that **10 new old-age homes** would soon be set up in the capital. "We need to determine minimum standards of service for senior citizens and spread increasing awareness about their problems so they get social and financial security," she added. Dikshit promised that the Delhi government would provide all possible help to seniors in hospitals and public buses, and soon increase the old-age pension from Rs 350 to Rs 500 per month.



## BANK ON THE JOB



In a bid to confront the issue of an ageing workforce, the ANZ Bank in Australia will now guarantee employees over 55 years of age—with at least five years or more of service—**the right to switch to part-time work**. Of 18,000 ANZ employees across Australia, about 6 per cent are over 55. ANZ spokesperson Kate Gore said negotiations will be conducted between employees and their direct manager, allowing them to remain in their current role or move to another position if their current job couldn't be sustained with part-time hours. Arrangements will be flexible and depend on the particular job of the employee. One possibility is, staff not needed for face-to-face customer service could 'tele-commute', allowing them to work from home.

## HEALTH NEWS

### HEALTH COMES HOME

You don't have to trudge to the hospital for that monthly blood sugar test any more—that is, if you haven't yet bought any of the diagnostic tools *Harmony* featured in its October 2005 cover feature, "55 Plus Ways to Make Silver Sparkle". Just call Metropolis Health Services, a **chain of diagnostic centres across India**, and they will send a team home to collect your sample. When the report is ready, it is delivered to you at home. The company, a referral centre for over 3,300 laboratories, hospitals and research institutions in India, offers 1,200 tests, ranging from oncology and genetics to molecular biology and immunoassays using the latest diagnostic equipment. Its home health services are currently available in Bangalore (080-22183015), Chennai (044-520566660, Delhi (011-26347846), Mumbai (022-5660470) and Trissur (0487-5535071, and will soon begin in Kolkata and Pune. For more details, email [homeservices@metropolisindia.com](mailto:homeservices@metropolisindia.com)



### SCHEME FOR SILVERS

To commemorate World Senior Citizens' Day on 1 October, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has given the green signal to a **health scheme for silvers over 59 years** of age. Senior citizens enrolling in the scheme have to submit identification details and pay a yearly premium of Rs 225, plus Rs 25 for an identity card. Medical services, which will be launched by the first week of November, will be available at the city's Sahyadri Hospital. More details can be obtained from the civic ward offices or PMC on 020-25501000.

## OFFBEAT

### UP FOR GRABS

Here's a man who knows his worth. Malaysian Tommy Hng Joon Hai, a 51-year-old retiree proud to be called a "jack of all trades", is **offering himself for hire** on website eBay Malaysia. The minimum bid: RM50 (about Rs 580) a day, with the money going to an old-age home in the city of Ipoh. What can he do? A heck of a lot. For the successful bidder, Hng is willing to baby-sit, cook, entertain, perform minor car repairs, teach first-aid, give scuba-diving, golf, fishing and table-tennis lessons, and even teach operations management. Previously a mechanical and electronic engineer and a customer service and sales administration manager, Hng is even ready to fill in as temporary manager for companies short of manpower. Whew.





## MEDIA WATCH

### THE WRITE STUFF

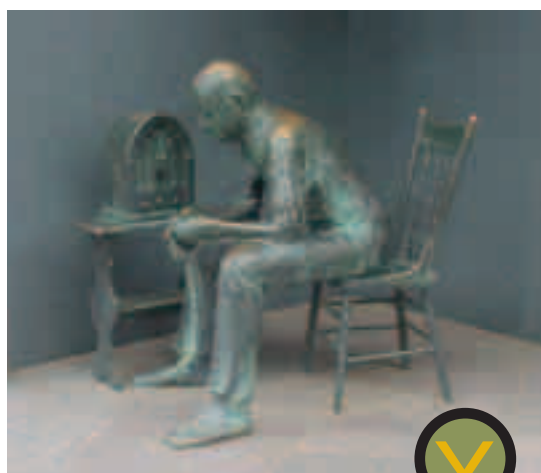
*AgeWise*, a magazine for **silvers** in Michigan in the United States, turned one in September. In one year, the glossy uncluttered monthly, which focuses on the “upside of ageing”, has reached a subscription base of 40,000, with readers as young as 30 and as old as 101. The magazine is also distributed to doctors’ offices, hospitals and senior citizens’ centres across the state of Michigan. “I know my market inside out,” says 61-year-old editor Barbara White, who publishes it from her home in Mason. “Our seniors are so much more active now. So I pepper *AgeWise* with stories about interesting personalities, travel, history, legislative updates and the quirky and whimsical, like poetry.”

### SOUND SUCCESS



SAGA 105.2 FM, a **radio station aimed at people over 50** in Glasgow, Scotland, is singing all the way to the bank. It celebrated its first birthday in September with an increased audience

share and a higher-than-average figure for listening hours. The numbers provided by Radio Joint Audience Research (RAJAR), which monitors all radio listening in the UK, showed the station had a market share of 6.1 per cent in August, up from 5.7 per cent in May. Average listening hours for the station were also well ahead of the industry average at 11.5 hours per week. The station, which offers music from the past six decades along with news, information and talk shows, is part of the Saga Group, which publishes SAGA magazine, and provides insurance, financial services and holidays for people over 50 in the UK. “We listen to what people want and modify our programming accordingly,” says Norman Quirk, managing director of SAGA 105.2 FM. “We may be a station for older people but we realise we’re still in our nappies!”



## TRENDS

### WINDOW SHOPPING

*Harmony's* own Mrs Purohit, who loves shopping online, has been saying it all along. **E-tailers—retailers who sell on the Internet—cannot afford to ignore the silver shopper any more.** “The total number of seniors is growing, the percentage of seniors online is growing, and the percentage of online seniors who shop is growing,” says Jakob Nielsen, a leading US-based Internet usability expert. “In fact, this group of shoppers is increasing more than any other group.” According to him, Internet use is close to saturation among other parts of the population. Research indicates that about 59 per cent of seniors online shop on the Internet—still far less than those who use email (98 per cent) and search engines (90 per cent). In the next 10 years, however, real growth will come only from adding seniors to the Net population. And the

amount of discretionary money controlled by seniors makes them an even more lucrative market. “Unfortunately, there is three times more interest in catering to teenagers, even

though in terms of money there’s probably 10 times more money to be made from seniors.” Nielsen advises e-tailers to optimise commercial appeal for elder users on their websites by offering adjustable fonts and high-contrast backgrounds for better readability and clearer text for legal disclaimers—seniors always tend to read the fine print.



## ANALYSE THIS

### I'M NOT RUDE!

The next time you get yelled at for being rude, don't take it personally—just blame it on your brain. According to a new Australian study published in September in *Psychology and Aging* journal, **old people are not rude, just tactless owing to age-related changes in brain function.** Tests carried out by researchers at the University of New South Wales, in Sydney, found that people aged 65 to 93 were more likely to ask each other personal questions or make personal comments in a public setting than people aged 18 to 25. The ability to inhibit thoughts and actions is critical for socially appropriate discourse but that ability appears to weaken with age, according to Associate Professor Bill von Hippel, one of the authors of the report. "It seems that young adults have a greater ability to hold their tongue in contexts where it is inappropriate to discuss personal issues," he says. This behaviour also seems to have negative consequences for peer relationships, particularly for older people.



### ONLY 80 IS OLD

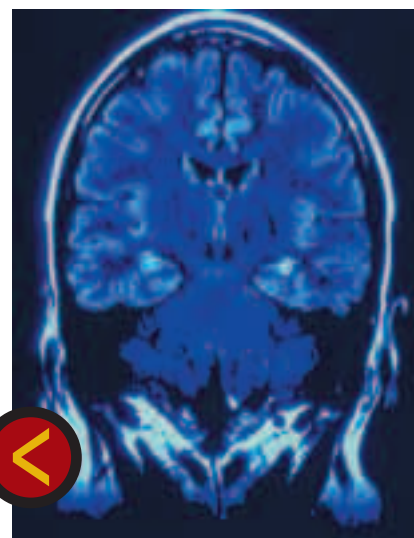
Old age has been postponed. Biologically and psychologically, it now begins at 80, according to Ian Robertson, dean of research at Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience in London. "This leaves 30 years, roughly age 50 to 80, a period much longer than youth, for which we have to invent a whole new way of living," he says. Robertson began to study the effect of age on the brain in 1984. Then, the average age of stroke victims was 72. "By 1999, the average age of my patients was around 82. In just 15 short years, in many senses of the word, people had become younger by roughly 10 years," he says. **Robertson's must-do list: keep fit; stimulate the mind; learn new Things.**



### SENSORY OVERLOAD

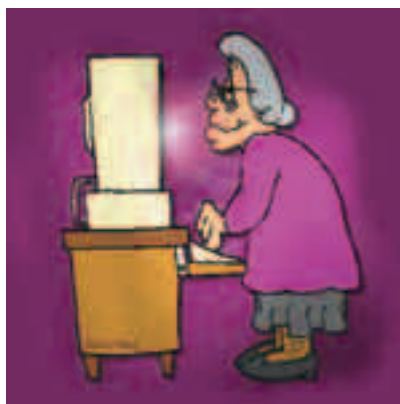
Too much distraction. That's the main reason older people have memory problems, according to new research published in the September issue of journal *Nature Neuroscience*. A team at the University of California, Berkeley, used scans to examine the brain's ability to concentrate in adults aged 19 to 30 and 60 to 77. They found the older group had **no problems focusing on relevant information, but could not effectively shut out competing distractions.** "Difficulty in filtering out distractions affects a wide range of daily activities, such as driving, social interactions and reading, and can greatly influence quality of life," observes lead researcher Dr Adam Gazzaley.

"These results reveal that efficiently focusing on relevant information is not enough to ensure successful memory. It is also necessary to filter distractions. Otherwise, our capacity-limited short-term memory system will be overloaded." Interestingly, six of the 16 older adults participating in the study had well-preserved short-term memory and no problems ignoring irrelevant information. This suggests that some people are able to avoid memory loss as they age. The researchers now hope to find out what makes these people different.





# H RECOMMENDS



## MYGRANDMA @ HOTMAIL.COM

British Telecom (BT) found the perfect way to celebrate Grandparents Day on September 4—it launched **a nationwide campaign urging young people to become 'Internet rangers', helping their grandparents get online.** "By 2025, 23 million adults could be missing out on what the Internet has to offer," says a media release from the company. "Young people are in the best position to prevent their grandparents from becoming digitally excluded." BT plans to launch a special website with tools, advice and activities to assist children to help their grandparents get the most from the Internet. "Our research shows that nearly a third of parents and grandparents had been encouraged to surf the net by a child aged between 13 and 16," says Mike Hughes, head of digital inclusion, BT. "And nearly 20 per cent of those we surveyed had learnt a new skill following help from a five to eight-year-old. It's wonderful to see generations united through technology." Amen.

## ACTION PLAN FOR NOVEMBER

**1. Cook up a storm.** Get your grandkids in the kitchen and teach them a favourite recipe or two. In Scotland, First Minister Jack McConnell has urged the elderly to teach the youngsters how to cook. According to him, weaning kids away from fast food will tackle the growing problem of childhood obesity. "The older generation knows all about hearty, but healthy, meals," he said.



**2. Pilates, anyone?** You may have heard one of your grandkids mention Pilates—the latest exercise craze. It's great for you too. The exercise regimen, which focuses on strengthening the back and abdominal muscles, is a non-impact workout for people of all ages. In Encinitas, California, instructor Heidi Lerner uses it to help silvers at the Encinitas Senior Centre move and feel better. "Pilates gives elders a range of motion that increases their flexibility," she says. "It is also a corrective exercise that facilitates better posture." Ask your neighbourhood gym for details.



**3. Go places.** Form a travel club and see new places with your friends. Pilgrimages, picnics, hill stations, or the latest destination recommended by *Harmony*—they're all much more fun with a group. In Rochester, Michigan, in the US, members of the Rochester Older Persons' Center have formed such a club, and travel together regularly for weekend jaunts and longer vacations. Some places they have visited in the past six months include Niagara Falls, Las Vegas and a Disney on Ice skating show in New York. "The club's travel agent gets great discounts for us as we are seniors," says Ray Billings, 76, a member of the club.



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

## FOR THE LOVE OF WORDS



I am 70 and a member of Vachan Mandal, a club for seniors in Mulund, Mumbai. For the past 10 years, I reach the Mandal at 9.30 am to read for an hour. I read a variety of books and periodicals in Marathi, and sometimes in English. But Vachan Mandal is not a regular library. It's an all-male group of about 22 seniors with an average age of 65 years. We get together to do some 'collective' reading. We pick and choose the book we want to read. Then, one of us reads aloud while the others listen. I was a regular even before I stopped practicing as a lawyer, and I must say that the experience has been enriching.

We meet at the residence of 92-year-old Datta Tamhane, a former MLA. About 15 to 20 pages are read daily from the chosen book, which is either borrowed from nearby libraries or from individual collections. Following that, members comment on the book and discuss it. So far, we have read about 550 books (over 1,50,000 pages). We even maintain the details of each book—its name, price, and the first and last date of reading—for our records. Every year, there's a book prize for the best reader. And we often invite authors and noted personalities for a talk or discussion.

Vachan Mandal began about 27 years ago thanks to two gentlemen, Anna Tamhane and Appa Pandit. Both were deprived of their eyesight owing to ageing, but they loved books. So they got together

and invited a reader to read aloud for them. That's how, on 13 October 1978, the Mandal was formed. Both of them are no more today, but they have left behind a valuable legacy, which continues to survive because of Anna Tamhane's brothers, Datta and Natha.

There is no membership fee for the Mandal. All you need is a passion for the written word. Of course, we occasionally contribute funds to celebrate each other's birthdays. Though it's not a grand celebration—only wishes, a bouquet and some sweets—it's a genuine gesture. On 13 October, this year, we celebrated Vachan Mandal's 27th anniversary with a get-together of members and their families. We also celebrated the birthday of the helper working for the Tamhanes as she serves us water and refreshments during readings.

Thanks to Vachan Mandal, I have rediscovered the joy of reading. Recently, we read a book written by Sureshchandra Warghade about a small town called Hivarebazar in Ahmednagar district, *Hivare Gaonchi Yashogatha*. Hivarebazar was an impoverished town with untapped resources. Pawar, an educated youth, recognised this and helped the village discover its potential. The book helped me think beyond urban life. Many city dwellers like me don't know what life in rural India is like, and how the elderly live there.

The best part about being a member of the Mandal, though, is the friends I have made. If any of us is unwell, the news spreads among all members and we try and help each other out. The love of the written word has brought us all together. And we hope to stay together as long as we live.

—C D Khare  
Mumbai

## TALE OF TWO FATHERS

My father retired from the Indian Foreign Service after a lifetime spent in three-yearly stints in various cities of the world. When we were kids, we were privileged to experience various cultures and societies from up close. Cairo and New York and



Tokyo and Beirut came and went like railway stations along the tracks of life. But at the end of it all, we were somewhat rootless.

My eldest brother and sister stayed back in the US and, today, are citizens of that country. My parents tried to lure my sister back to India at first. They had it all worked out with a knot arranged with a handsome young 'IAS' man. But when my sister ran away one fine day and resurfaced in America with someone else, they bravely reconciled to a new order. Though their hearts are very much Indian, my brother and sister cannot imagine living anywhere else than amid the personal and social freedom that the US offers. I scrambled a few more times between Canada and India before I finally settled in India—more from fateful circumstance than by election.

I think my father looked forward to his retirement as continuing family issues seemed to stretch his years short of fulfilment and into despair. Just before the R-date, he gave himself one more reason. My other brother had a serious road accident, which was short of being fatal but relegated him to cursing God for not completing the job. In all these circumstances, my father kept his cool and reshaped his retirement around a heroic but futile effort to rehabilitate my brother. In all this, he braved his own son's post-accident violence and taunts. Still he found the energy and time to engage his passion in journalism and started a newsletter called *The Diplomatic Courier*. His efforts were well received and he came to be seen as an expert in Middle-Eastern affairs. The high point was a personal invitation from Saddam Hussein to visit Iraq. My father edited the paper to his last and dreamt of the day his injured son would take over from him. I think that's what kept him going.

My father-in-law, on the other hand, spent most of his life—even holidays—in Kashmir. With strong middle-class moorings, he worked his way up and retired as the DG of Police. His only regret, though concealed, was not having a son—he had five daughters. He loved children and would even pick up urchins and bring them home for a feast. Universally liked for his good nature, he continued on assignments after retirement as well, but only in

his beloved Kashmir. Retirement was to be a continuation of his charmed life in his sprawling hillside residence near Dal Lake in Srinagar. He loved the good life—good food, good clothes, good drinks and plenty of friends. His weakness was cards, which got him into trouble every once in a while.

And then it happened, terrorism in Kashmir. Senior bureaucrats, especially Hindus, were targeted. As things got worse, he piled up his family—wife and mother and a live-in daughter—and a few suitcases into his Fiat Padmini and crossed the high peaks of the Pir Panchal into the sweltering, dusty plains. I could see furrows of anxiety and deep depression when they moved in with us in Delhi temporarily.

They moved on, into a small Vasant Kunj flat. My father-in-law refused to lock his doors, as was the practice in his sprawling Kashmir residence. He lived with the anticipation of returning to Kashmir as soon as the situation improved. But hope sieved through his hands.

He had to hand over his house in Srinagar to the security forces to stave off terrorist-fuelled arson. However, the midnight sun dawned through his legion of friends and five passionately devoted daughters. He declined any assignments that were there for the taking and instead indulged himself in his friends, grandchildren and daily regime of morning walks and afternoon cards. Today, I can scarcely find a person more engrossed or happier.

These are but two of many inspiring stories. Whatever our age or circumstances, we have our struggles laid out for us and adversity to confront. Ageing does make special demands on us. But we also have will and deep reserves to see us through. Looking back can only be a brief respite in the fabric of life.



—Vinod Kaul  
Delhi

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# My friend, my alter ego

**FRIENDSHIP MEANS TRUST IN THOSE YOU CALL** friends, an understanding that they will always be there with you, in good times and bad. It also means giving selflessly without expectation. I have never expected anything from my friends as I feel friendship without expectation has maximum value.

Your friend is your alter ego. He is the one you confide in, debate with and seek guidance from. When I am with friends, I am at ease, as I know they are replicas of my own being. I feel as though there's another Amitabh in front of me, and I am talking to him. The association is almost spiritual.

If you ask me what my friend looks for in me, I would say the same things I look for in him — understanding, loyalty and trust. These traits should come naturally, and they should come from affection. However, if these traits are not reciprocated, you shouldn't be disappointed. I would continue to value the friendship, irrespective of the response. After all, friendship should come without any encumbrances.

I have few friends. It's not possible to have many in my profession or with the kind of life I lead. But whenever I am with them, I am free of pressure. I couldn't care less whether I am saying the right things, what clothes I am wearing or if I have put my legs on the chair. That's the magic of friendship.

My friends have become a part of my family, and I treat many of them like younger brothers. However, I do get a lot of free advice from others about my friends. Some people criticise or warn me that I am associating with the wrong people. However, even if I am abused for associating with my friends,

I consider it my privilege. And it will not stop me from believing in them. That is how much I value friendship.

I still meet a lot of my friends from earlier days. Recently, I was in Rajasthan for a month when an old school friend called up. We met and ended up reminiscing about our school days. Whenever I am in Kolkata, I call up people I have worked with. Then, there are certain friendships you don't question. You just do what is required of you. When my friend Romesh Sharma wanted to launch his son Karan, he asked me if I would play a role in the

film. I didn't ask for the script, I didn't discuss money or anything else, I just agreed. If a friend says, "I need you now, drop everything and come," I will do so. And it works both ways. You can't put a name to this kind of relationship; the moment you do so, it takes away the essence of it.

Friends bring cheer to us when we grow older, or else how do you explain the meticulous timing seniors maintain to visit Nana Nani Park? I could relate to this when I had taken a sabbatical from work a few years ago. I would be home, looking after mundane household responsibilities like a faulty bulb or a scurrying rat. And then, one evening, I got together with my friends Romesh (Sharma) and Danny (Denzongpa) and we

decided to meet up for table tennis sessions regularly. I would wait patiently every day for 6 pm—it was a special time, laughing and joking with my buddies. Just two to three hours of interaction with my friends left me totally recharged. It really doesn't take much to exercise our minds. We only use 30 per cent of our grey cells, there's no harm in using 31 or 32 per cent. The company of friends makes it that much easier. ■



DABOO RATNANI

**I have few friends.  
But with them, I  
couldn't care less  
whether I am saying  
the right things**

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

# Power to all

One man's initiative has brought light, and prosperity, to the lives of villagers across the Himalayan hinterland. **Teena Baruah** takes a trip along the bumpy hill roads of Uttaranchal with Anil Joshi to see the magic he has wrought



AJAY GOYAL

Anil Joshi has helped villagers tap local resources

If a film were to be made on his remarkable life, 55-year-old Anil Joshi could probably play himself with ease. With his khadi kurta and red *gamcha*, powerful oratory and strident body language, he looks every inch the social scientist. And he says the right things too—"If you want villagers to prosper, you have to go to them."

It's not a script; he knows it for a fact. For over 20 years, Joshi has helped villagers in the Himalayan hinterland tap local resources and upgrade technologies to achieve self-reliance. Revolution may be a strong word, but not inappropriate to describe what the former botany teacher and his Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO) have brought to over 150 villages in Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Drive into Sahaspur village, 20 km from Dehradun, and you see a row of tree trunks that double up as electric poles. Further ahead are 12 huts, fitted with zero-watt bulbs in the veranda, with television antennae popping out of thatched roofs. Inside, there are air coolers, refrigerators and television sets. Two years ago, when Joshi arrived at Sahaspur, there was no electricity here.

Joshi got down to work, replacing the wooden blades of three water mills with iron, and adding ball bearings and pulleys to increase the rotation speed. The result: three 'micro hydel power units', each generating 2 KW of electricity a day. A single KW (1,000 W) of electricity can light five 100 W bulbs and three fans. The entire process cost about Rs 38,000, including the cost of iron, fabrication and structures around the water mills built to absorb vibration. As Sahaspur shimmered every night, more than 30 neighbouring villages made a

form HESCO to develop technical solutions to rural problems. Finally, in 1993, he decided to work full time in the mountains. "It was a very difficult decision," recalls Joshi. At the time, he was supporting his parents and teenage son Shivam. But with wife Sandhya's encouragement—and an assurance of financial support for five years from the Department of Science and Technology in Delhi—he decided to go ahead. "I saw my parents struggle to bring up my five sisters and two brothers," he says. "We lived without the



## Besides providing electricity to more than 30 villages, the upgraded water mills grind grain five times faster and de-husk them

beeline to do the same, prompting Joshi to develop a technology kit to upgrade water mills.

The effects are obvious in nearby Donkwala village. "The upgraded water mills can grind grain five times faster, and can also be used for de-husking and cotton-combing," says Heera, a 32-year-old farmer who supplies electricity to his neighbours free of cost. "If the mill stops working, everyone pitches in for repair." Other water millers charge between Rs 10 and Rs 20 per month for electricity—far cheaper than what villagers spend every month on kerosene.

Victories like this one justify Joshi's decision to quit his job as lecturer at Kotdwara Government College, in Pauri district of Uttaranchal, after 20 years of teaching. In 1983, he had roped in his colleagues and students to

basics and I haven't forgotten any of it. Villagers need technology and marketing skills to replace the market full of outside merchandise with raw material found locally."

These are the skills he brought to Lantana village, located amid thick forests between Rishikesh and Dehradun. True to its name, lantana weed is omnipresent here. The walls, roofs and partitions of homes and village fences are made of lantana sticks coated with mud or covered with tarpaulin sheets. Even doors, furniture and utensils are made of the same material. A few years ago, this weed was forcing villages to shift out of their homes as it ate up their farmland. Then, in 2000, Joshi's team studied the weed and discovered its pest-resistant nature. Lantana sticks were strong enough to make huts and furniture, the leaves could



(Top to bottom) A villager turns lantana weed into sturdy furniture; Muslim women learn umbrella making; and the pickle and jam unit





Joshi displays squash and jam made in Rudraprayag

provide fodder for goats, and the flowers and leaves could be used to make incense sticks and scented candles. The team developed a tool kit that cost Rs 100—including paint, a brush and clear varnish—and trained men and women to manufacture items from lantana, and market them. Among those who attended the 15-day workshop was Mukesh

mantra of self-reliance. HESCO, which has established its key food processing unit at this village, a half-hour drive away from Rudraprayag, trains women to set up food-processing units. Joshi says the Department of Science and Technology will set up one of India's four Women Technology Parks at Mehuwala. Dr Kiran Rawat, park coordinator, says it

## Joshi's team found pest-resistant lantana weed useful for making furniture and huts

Kumar, 24, from Mehuwala village near Dehradun, who now earns Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,000 a month making furniture out of the weed.

Earlier this year, Joshi convinced the authorities of shrines like Vaishno Devi, Gangotri, Badrinath and Kedarnath to distribute finger-millet and buckwheat *laddoo* in lantana baskets, made by Garhwal's Rudia community. Garhwali women in Gwar-Chauki, too, are chanting Joshi's

teaches women to make file covers and spectacle cases, and offers a two-week training course to make pickles, chutneys, jams and squashes using local fruits.

Intrinsic to HESCO's success is its unique training module. Joshi's team trains villagers for free on the condition they train others, for free. So Mukesh Kumar, who sells lantana furniture in Mehuwala, travels once a month to Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka or Assam to impart his skill to

unemployed youth. Kumar is now part of the Government of India's lantana project—an employment-generation initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2005 inspired by HESCO's work—and gets consultancy fees from the government, but HESCO has refused grant. "Self-motivation is a better catalyst," says Joshi.

HESCO sustains itself through aid from the Department of Science and Technology. The Ministry of Rural Development extended its original five-year financial support and now gives HESCO about Rs 15 lakh annually. Over the years, Joshi has found support from organisations such as Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, which is helping him improve the water harvesting capacity of fresh water springs in the mountains. And the Indian Army, which has taken his technology to the borders. In 2003, Colonel Prakash Tewari, commandant of the 26<sup>th</sup> battalion of Assam Rifles, sent Joshi a congratulatory letter after they electrified 22 houses in Singbir village in Arunachal Pradesh for Rs 45,000. Joshi also received an Ashoka Fellowship in 1992 and a Nehru award in 2001 for his contribution to rural development.

There have been other smaller, but no less significant, victories. But the incident that leaves him with a smile on his face and a tear in his eye: on July 15, 2004, the Army inaugurated the first upgraded watermill in Poonch, near the Line of Control. The moment the bulbs lit up, villagers shot out of their homes, running for shelter. Joshi and his team realised they had mistaken the electric bulbs for RDX bombs. ■

# Photo Finish



Wearing the *Harmony* colour, Silvers matched steps with others at the Delhi Marathon

**I**t was about attitude. Hear this: “We don’t moan and groan as they show on television,” said silver runner A M Dhawan, 65. “We are positive about life.

It was about grit. A sea of over 2,000 silvers in canary yellow *Harmony* T-shirts spread across the Lodi Road area in New Delhi, with the Harmony Run, a 4.3 km edition of the Hutch Delhi Half Marathon. They travelled across the city—some had come from other states—because making a point was worth it.

That morning and through the day, as India watched on live TV and endless replays, silvers formed the definitive post card from Delhi—moving, inspirational, emphatic. And they didn’t care if anyone cared; they were having the time of their lives, keeping pace with cheerleaders, soaking up wolf whistles, moving to marching tunes by an

Army band and Hindi film songs over the PA system. And in case you missed the humour: “Don’t drink so much water, you might need a pit stop”.

They helped each other even as they helped themselves to a slice of life with veteran sports stars and film stars present to urge them on. But you will see from images in the next few pages that silvers are not short of motivation.

So hear this well: “I thought, if he can do it why can’t I?”

“I” is Harold Davey, a 60-year-old former boxing champion. “He” is the 90-plus London marathoner Fauja Singh, featured in the January 2005 issue of *Harmony*. What did Davey do? He practiced for fifty days, and finished right behind Milkha Singh. Did you hear that?





**EVER HIGHER, EVER FASTER, EVER STRONGER**  
'Age is something that doesn't matter, unless you are a cheese'. Silver runners smiled broadly as they read this and other *Harmony* slogans printed on yellow T-shirts they wore for the marathon.





## THE WARM UP

The huddle before the race was animated. Seniors made friends, exchanged neighbourhood gossip, prepared themselves for the run mentally and physically. It wasn't just a spectator sport for them.





#### ALL ABOUT JOSH

Amidst cheers and echoes of *Jai Sri Ram*, silvers walked, wheeled, ran and used their walking sticks to the finish line. By the end of it, the chant changed to *Yeh Dil Maange More*.







### ALL FOR ONE

Members of senior citizens' associations arrived in buses. Among them was the Deer Park Satsang Society, South Delhi, with 95 of its 250 members arriving together to show solidarity.







### IT'S RAINING STARS

Jaya Bachchan and daughter Shweta, Rishi Kapoor, Neetu Kapoor, Dimple Kapadia, Dr Naresh Trehan, Dhanraj Pillai, Milkha Singh, P T Usha, Anju Bobby George and several Olympians ran with silvers. Political leaders like Sheila Dikshit and Amar Singh were there to support the cause of *Harmony*, along with Initiative chairperson Tina Ambani.





## ANOTHER MILESTONE

There will be more. And *Harmony* will be there for the Mumbai Marathon on 15 January 2006. We hope to see you there.

**TEXT: Teena Baruah and Indira Bisht**

**PHOTOS: Ashwani Chopra, Nitin Mehra, Prem Arora and Humayun Khan**

1907

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Vijaypat Singhania, chairman emeritus of the Raymond group and intrepid flyer, plans to again put India on the world map of aviation by attempting a record in a hot-air balloon.

**Anuradha Kumar** finds out what drives him

**A**t an age when going around a park a few times is a test of endurance, Vijaypat Singhania plans to fly to 70,000 feet in a hot-air balloon this month. If he succeeds, it will be a new world record. From that height, in theory, one quarter of India will be visible. "Before I fade into oblivion with old age, I want to put India on the world map of aviation," is the grandiose explanation by the chairman emeritus of the Rs 1,400-crore Raymond group who is looking a bit like a cowboy today. In snug blue jeans, pointy shoes that want to grow up to become boots, and a flashy red silk shirt whose first three buttons have been left open, the 67-year-old has the cocky confidence of a man whose bravery cannot be questioned, and all the superstition that risking life time and again instils in a human heart.

On our way to the Nehru Science Centre in Worli, where he'll be photographed next to the tiny

# Space





# cowboy



Vijaypat Singhania stands by the tiny microlight plane in which he broke a world record

KERRY MONTEEN

microlight plane in which he broke his first world record, he bows to every temple on the road. And the fistful of amulets hanging from a gold chain against his chest, he says, will be the only insurance policy he'll take up on November 20 when his balloon goes up from Azad Maidan in Mumbai. The record that he seeks to break has been held by Per Lindstrand for 17 years who flew a hot air balloon to a height of 64,997 feet over Texas, USA, in 1988.

An improbable aviator, Singhania comes from a family of Marwari *bania* known for their thrift. Despite the traditional parsimony that might have defined his early life when he was a dependent, he has spent crores on becoming one of the most accomplished pilots in the world, a status that simply has no commercial returns in the eyes of his clan. But in the 20 years he led his company, till September 2000, he did his business side proud too—under him the Raymond Group grew a turnover of Rs 40 crore to over Rs 2,000 crore. Now he remains involved, but in a non-executive position, pursuing what is perhaps his greatest love—flying. Singhania will spend over Rs 10

crore to attempt this hot-air balloon record. For the next four hours, he talks of little else besides flying, an obsession that has its roots in a childhood wish to grow wings to escape an unhappy home. In his book, *Angel in the Cockpit*, an account of his 1988 record-breaking microlight flight from England to India in 22 days, he talks about how his love for flying began.

Perhaps in flying I was seeking to escape the reality of the broken home where I was growing up. I felt oppressed by a bitter and vindictive stepmother and the weak spectre of my father... When I was in the air and looking down, what I saw seemed so illusory. [I would grab] at any chance to take off and forget who I was and who, more importantly, I was expected to be, for an hour or two of abandon.

Flying might have remained nothing more than a rich man's hobby for him were it not for an impediment of law. Flipping through a magazine one day in 1988, in his Mumbai office, Singhania saw a picture of a strange looking plane that weighed less than 150 kg, "about

**"Perhaps in flying I was escaping the reality of a broken home"**



On a recent trip to UK, Singhanian practices for his flight on 20 November

the weight of a middle-aged married couple”, as he later described it to JRD Tata in a conversation he is quite fond of recounting. He wanted to add it to his collection, but Indian citizens were banned from importing aircraft by the same Act that also describes kites as aircraft. During a casual conversation with one of his employees, trying to figure out how to get the plane into the country, they reached the

conclusion that he should simply fly it, and create such a big drama around the flight that the bureaucracy would herald it.

So, at 49, Singhanian scalped his first world record. He remembers cursing himself throughout his adventure for the sheer craziness of the idea, sick with worry that his plane would fall into the ocean and the sharks would eat him up (a compulsive fear with him). At the

same time, he also refused to accept every good reason to give up because it would be a dishonourable thing to do, remembers Brian Milton, the British pilot whose record Singhanian smashed by 14 days.

Like all brave men, Singhanian learnt during those tough days that true courage means accomplishing something despite fear, not without it. He says he made it through that flight by constantly looking at the angel in the cockpit, his granddaughter Ananya’s photograph, which he had placed above the pictures of his gods. “She was my soul,” he says. Besides natural fear, family and friends who thought he was crazy was the other obstacle. One of his managers encapsulated the general opinion beautifully: “In India, you only take risks to make money. If you have money, why should you take any risks?”

Milton, who later helped Singhanian plan his flight, wrote that he was horrified at the number of people trying to dissuade him. “Indian culture does not encourage adventurers in their middle age.”

Sixteen years later, age remains a technical figure for Singhanian. “I am still a young person,” he says, slightly miffed about the subject. Then concedes a bit— “It’s all about attitude. The mind can remain young, and keep the body young for longer too.” But he’s not having anyone younger nodding understandingly at him about age. He receives the suggestion that we sit down for the interview with some scorn. “I have no problems with standing. I can stand for hours. But yes, if you want to, we can

**“Before I fade into oblivion, I want to put India on the world map of aviation”**

get a chair for you.” Just then, G S Rautela, director of the Nehru Science Centre, walks in and they both indulge in youth bashing, possibly only half in jest.

“We are the children of the real milk, and this is the powder milk generation.”

“We used to drink ghee, they watch their fat. Ha ha ha.”

And so we stand, and talk some more. The figures that Singhania does like talking about involve the hot-air balloon that will take him up for another record. Constructed in Bristol, England, the volume of its envelope, or the part commonly referred to as balloon, is 1.6 million cubic feet, the second biggest ever built. It will be filled with 80 tonnes of hot air, capable of damaging a building should it collide. Its height will be 145 feet, around 30 storeys, and the diameter 155 feet. The surface area is 14 acre, equivalent to around 17 football fields.

What he is attempting in this huge contraption is fraught with terrible risks, his most dangerous and delicate mission so far. The most dramatic thing that can go wrong is the pressure inside the tiny cabin plunging. If that happens, it would make his blood boil. Singhania says this with a glint in his eye, fully expecting an incredulous reaction from his audience. “But it will be really fast. It will take only 0.6 seconds for the blood to boil,” he offers himself as consolation. Air pressure determines boiling temperatures of liquid, he explains. The higher you go, lower the boiling point.

**“The mind can remain young and keep the body younger for a longer time”**

He also has to lose around 11 kg of weight before he goes up. “I have already lost five. Every ounce matters. We have to minimise the weight in the capsule.” So is he doing anything special, any training? “I am simply starving myself,” he says with a grimace. A bit like the preparation for world record when he had to again lose weight, simply to fit inside the microlight. Singhania loves food (he’s also a good cook) but loves flying even more. So skipping ghee and other delicacies is always an easy choice.

The balloon capsule will also carry several backup systems to keep the air breathable —three oxygen systems, one carbon dioxide system and one lithium oxide filter. But there will be no heating except insulation to keep him warm at that height.

The backup plan here is a bottle of scotch. “I wanted to take two but my planning team won’t let me,” he says with a big grin.

Singhania is in his element as he talks about his mission, boyishly titled MI 70K, or Mission Impossible 70,000. Flying alone does not satisfy him anymore. He has to destroy records. “There is an instinct in everyone to be better than others,” he says. “There is nothing bad or ugly about that.”

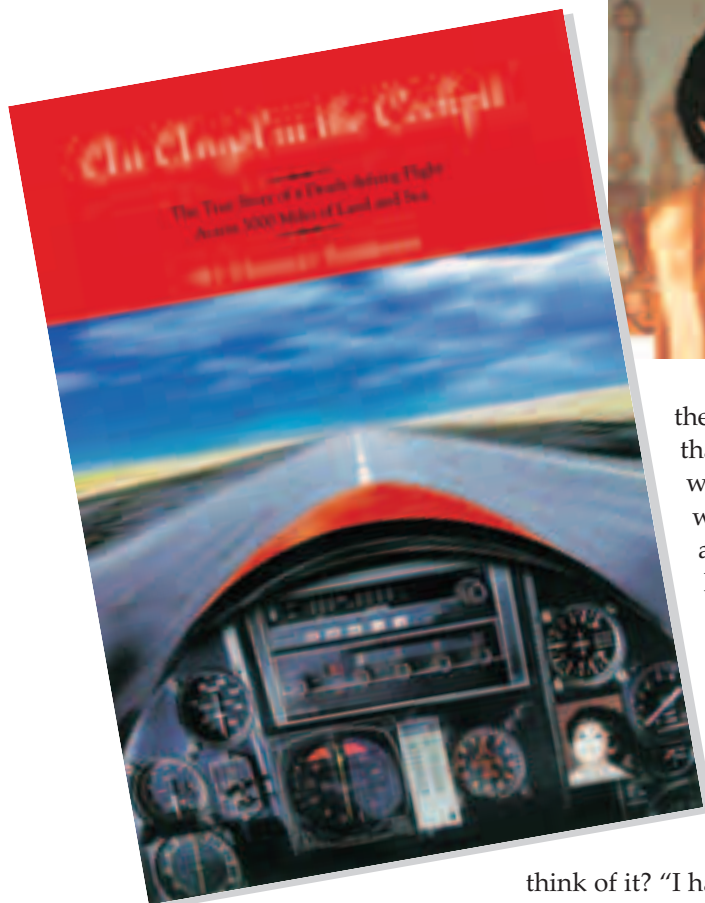
Having flown for 46 years now, he describes himself as a pilot for life. His second world record was a flying race around the world in his turboprop Cessna, in which he beat his nearest competitor by

**Singhania bought this aircraft christened Tiger for a flight in 1994. He poses with it in Wichita, in Kansas City, US**



Photo courtesy: VIJAYPAT SINGHANIA





(Left to right) The cover of Singhania's recently released book *Angel in the Cockpit*; granddaughter and "soul" Ananya; with JRD Tata

there and done that. Which is why, when he was looking for a new challenge, he decided to attempt something new—a hot-air balloon record.

What does his wife Asha

think of it? "I haven't told her yet," he claims. In *Angel in the Cockpit*, Singhania has described her as silent spectator to his whims and fancies. Married when he was 17 and she was 14, he mentions the chasm between two very different people bound together in a conventional relationship and yet hopes for her silent support.

32 minutes in 1994. Rated to fly 43 different kinds of aircraft—pilots have to be certified separately to fly a different kind of plane—Singhania says it's probably the largest number in the world. "Though I have not applied to Guinness to confirm that." So as far as planes go, he has been

Patriarch of a large clan, whose position in the centre of family photographs is sacrosanct, he has three children—Madhupati, Shephali and Gautam—and six grandchildren. He has also adopted two nephews, his younger brother's sons, and from them has four more grandchildren among whom six-year-old Shreyashi is his current favourite. And yet he says he is not really close to anyone. "In the end, one is always alone," he says, preferring to live by himself most of the time in London, a city he calls home now. Or perhaps, as he wrote in his book, "The sky does not misunderstand." ■

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**Urinary Incontinence is loss of bladder control**

# Forbidden flavours

In this new section, **Dr Pushpesh Pant** tells us how to feast without impairing health

**I**t was just a bite of forbidden fruit that cost poor Adam his blissful stay in Eden. Exile and a sense of guilt were his burden ever after. It's true, though, that nothing is more tempting and irresistible than something that is denied to us. This is a fact all of us advancing in years have to cope with every day. If our blood sugar is rising, we are to stay away from sweets. And, if our blood pressure goes up, we must give up salt. But the sweet tooth continues to ache. And if the earth loses its salt, can we really savour life?

However, there is great scope to enjoy culinary life even after diabetes and hypertension. One can, and must learn to, do without

sugar and salt. But this does not mean we have to forgo forbidden flavours. Enjoy the following recipes.

## SEB KA HALWA

- Preparation time: 1 hour
- Cooking time: 10 minutes
- Serves: 4-6

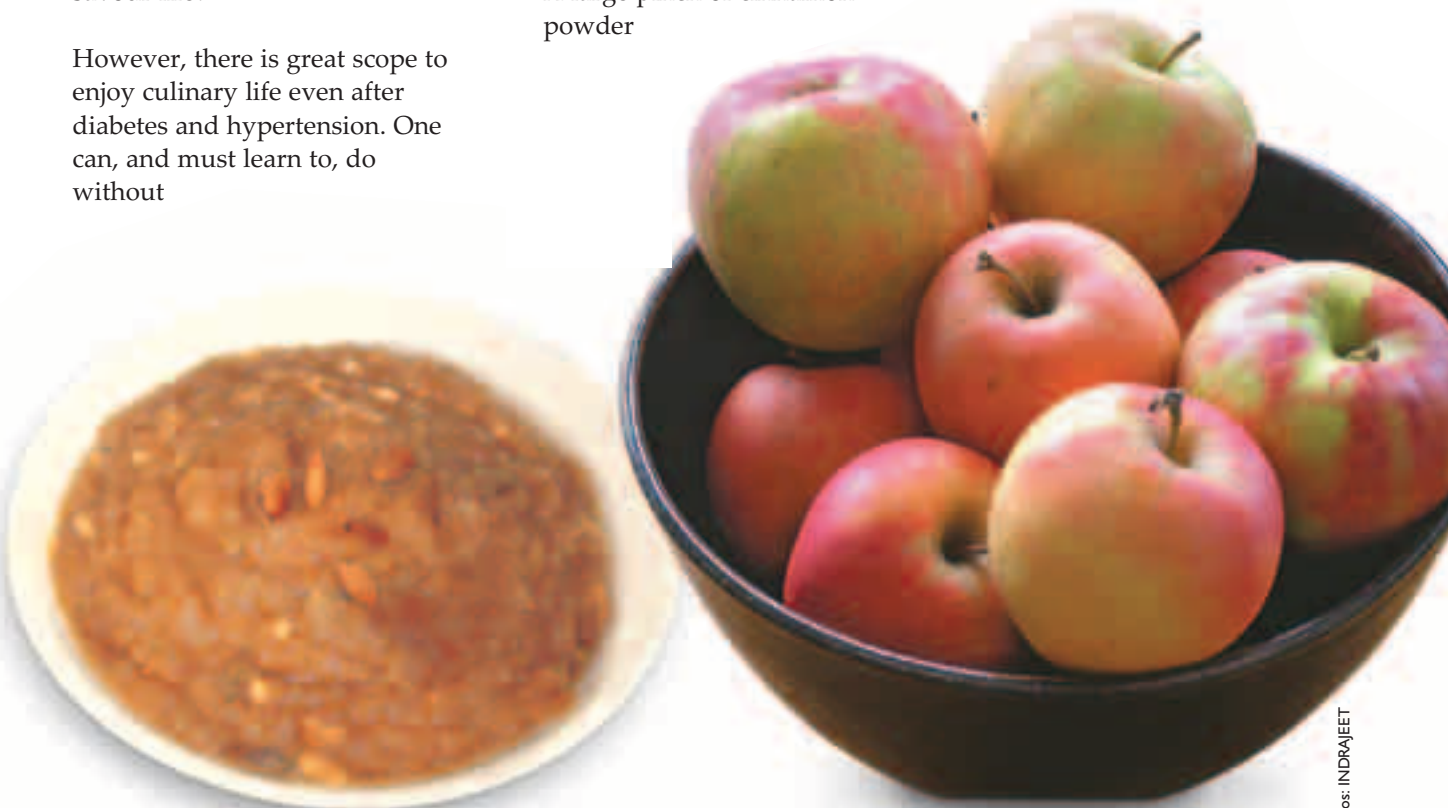
### INGREDIENTS

- Apples: 1 kg
- Wheat bran: 150 gm
- Raisins: 100
- A large pinch of cinnamon powder

### METHOD

Boil sufficient water in a pan and stew the apples. Wait till they are soft enough to mash. Remove from water and reduce to pulp.

Drain the water, add the wheat bran gently, stirring constantly to blend well. Add the raisins and mix. Sprinkle cinnamon powder and garnish with almonds and walnuts before serving.



Photos: INDRAJEET





## 'CHETTINAD STYLE' FISH

- Preparation time: 30 minutes
- Cooking time: 15 minutes
- Serves: 2-3

### INGREDIENTS

- Pomfret or any other fish: 1/2 kg; cut into fillets
- Coconut (grated): 1/2
- Green chillies: 6
- Green pepper corn paste: 1 tsp
- Garlic cloves (ground): 6
- Lemon juice: 2 tbsp

### FOR MASALA

- Black cardamom powder: 1/2 tsp
- Cumin powder: 1/2 tsp
- Cloves (powdered): 6
- Pepper corn (roasted and freshly ground): 1/4 tsp

### METHOD

Clean and wash the fish and pat dry. Prepare the spice paste by grinding all the ingredients listed, except lemon juice, to a smooth consistency. Add the lemon juice to the paste and rub it on the fish. Marinate for about 30 minutes.

Fry on a non-stick frying pan glazed with a thin film of sunflower or *kardi* oil for about five minutes on each side. Sprinkle the aromatic, dry masala. If you really must, add a pinch of potassium salt. Serve with wedges of lime.

Alternatively, the fish can be put in a greased, fireproof dish and baked at moderate heat (175°C / 350°F) in the oven for 10 minutes. It can also be grilled or steamed in the steamer for the same time, and relished with mustard. ■

# Yes, 'can do'

That's the attitude that keeps Asha Madan going, despite a heart problem and knee replacement surgery, writes **Anjana Jha**



ASHESH SHAH

**Sixty-year-old Asha Madan combats her health problems with a healthy dose of positive outlook**

**R**egular exercise and medication, strong self-esteem, well-meaning relatives, and a hectic social life—in that order—have helped Asha Madan combat a variety of health problems. In the past 15 years, she has suffered from a heart condition, severe

osteoarthritis and a knee replacement surgery. "No one can say I have any problem," the 60-year-old resident of Mumbai proudly announces.

In 1991, while walking down Colaba Causeway in Mumbai, Madan experienced excruciating

chest pain. She chose to ignore the episode completely, until persistent fever and difficulty in breathing forced her to go for a check-up six months later. Alarmed at her condition, doctors promptly admitted her to Babasaheb Ambedkar Hospital. This was followed by



two months of total bed rest. Suffering from left bundle branch blockage, a form of angina, she required long-term medication and precautions. "And imagine, I went all the way to the hospital by bus," she recalls.

What followed was a battery of pills. Though it irked her to be dependent on medication, common sense told her it was a small price to pay for leading a normal life. What also influenced her attitude was a piece of advice given to her father by an eminent cardiologist. He had emphasised the need to take medication regularly rather than discussing one's ailments with everyone

First she attributed it to an old injury, aggravated by age. When the pain persisted, she resorted to painkillers. Within a year, the second knee was affected as well and there was noticeable swelling. A person who never hesitated to use five flights of stairs instead of the lift, now found it painful.


Her X-rays revealed acute osteoarthritis in both knees. Exercise, heat therapy and massage became part of her routine and the doctor advised surgery. Perhaps to deny admitting the seriousness of her condition, she continued to sit on the floor and use the stairs

attitude kept her going. "There was a lurking fear that I would not be able to walk after the surgery," she says, recalling how she took some time off to visit her son in the US. She travelled extensively and did everything possible, barring steep climbs.

Madan finally underwent a total knee replacement surgery on both her knees in March this year. The trepidation of standing on her new joints for the first time is still fresh in her mind. Covering a little more distance with the walker or bending the knees one more degree were important milestones.

Using the toilet posed major problems as an appropriate toilet attachment was not available in the local market. Downloading designs from the Internet, a 22-inch high wooden chair with arms was adapted to fit over the toilet seat. The height was reduced at regular intervals to match her progress.

Enormous will power and regular exercise helped Madan achieve the goals she set for herself. Less than six months after the surgery, this gritty woman not only walks two km comfortably, but flexes her knees a full 120°. She has also resumed her earlier routine with renewed energy. She is back in control not only at home, but also with outdoor chores like paying bills, doing bank work and managing the committee office of her housing society.

"I feel like a new person," she says. "If I need any physical support, I hold an object rather than someone. Only this can make me totally independent." 

## "If I need any physical support, I hold on to an object rather than someone"

around. He said, "Let the medicines do their work and you do yours."

Actively involved in women's organisations run by railway wives, she continued doing welfare work until her husband retired as general manager of the Northeast Frontier Railway in 2002. Now she keeps busy as a managing committee member of her housing society in Thane, and assiduously avoids making her health a topic of conversation.

"When someone else is talking about their health problems, one should never go 'me too'," she says. With a dozen pills, a no-fried-foods-low-salt diet and a strict exercise regimen, Madan's life continued on an even keel, until she experienced nagging pain in her right knee in 2002.

whenever she could. But the time soon came when she could no longer delude herself. Her legs had curved like bows. Standing with her feet together, closing the 4-inch gap between her knees became impossible.

Early last year, she consulted Dr J P Jain, an orthopaedic surgeon at Jagjivan Ram Hospital in Mumbai. He was amazed to see someone in her condition not only standing but also walking around. The rapid degeneration of the joint cartilage and adjacent bones made complete disability imminent. Besides, the prolonged use of painkillers by Madan threatened kidney damage, making surgery essential.

Accepting the inevitability of a knee replacement surgery was not easy. But her positive

# Strong reaction

Dr Pramod V Niphadkar and Dr Madhavi Patil give you the low down on allergies

An allergy can be defined as the body's exaggerated reaction to certain substances, called allergens, which are normally harmless. This is when the immune system mistakes the substance for a dangerous stranger. The immune system produces an antibody called immunoglobulin E or IgE. All of us have some IgE, but people with allergies have too much of it. The IgE attacks the invader as well as the cells in the nose, airways and skin, causing runny nose, eyes, an asthma attack, a rash or swelling.

The elderly are not immune to allergies; in fact, they increase with age. However, it's rare to develop an allergy

for the first time at an older age. While most allergic reactions show up for the first time in childhood, they can also surface as late as the 40s or early 50s. This can be attributed to change in the immune system. As the years add up, seasonal allergies also become common.

## NATURE OF ALLERGIES

Here, we describe the nature of conditions like asthma, allergic rhinitis, food, drug and skin allergy and allergic conjunctivitis:

**Asthma:** This is a chronic (ongoing) lung condition where the airways to the lungs are always swollen or inflamed. Asthma and allergies often coexist. When the airways react to a trigger (irritants like tobacco smoke, a draft of cold air, breeze laden with pollens or

polluted air), they tighten and the lining swells, producing thick mucus. This causes narrowing of the airways, making breathing a laboured affair. Symptoms include wheezing, coughing, or difficulty in breathing

Asthma can frequently go unnoticed in the elderly as symptoms like difficulty in breathing or cough are often attributed to other diseases or old age. Dosage of medicines used for treating asthma needs to be carefully adjusted to a decreasing level of metabolism in the elderly. Medicines like 'B-agonists' can cause palpitations and other cardiac effects. On the other hand, medicines taken for heart disease may provoke asthma. Nocturnal asthma is also very common in later years. Exposure to allergens in the bedroom, particularly dust mites, should be controlled in order to contain asthmatic problems at night. In case of a flare-up, quick-relief inhalers and medicines should be used – with prior consultation with your doctor.





**Allergic rhinitis:** This is a common allergic disorder characterised by inflammation of the inner lining of the nose. It can be seasonal or perennial. Symptoms include congestion, runny nose or sneezing. Symptoms of seasonal rhinitis are aggravated by exposure to seasonal pollens or weeds, whereas perennial rhinitis is caused by reaction to perennial allergens like dust mites, moulds, insect allergens and perennial pollens.

Avoid exposure to allergens, particularly dust mites. If you are allergic to dust mites, cover

because of toxins in food or food intolerance. Food allergy is more common in children than in older people. Sometimes, individuals can outgrow a food allergy with age. The most common foods causing allergic reactions are milk, eggs, peanuts, soy and fish (see box for more details).

Symptoms include rashes, indigestion, trouble in breathing, nausea or diarrhoea. In extreme cases, a life-threatening reaction known as food-induced anaphylaxis may occur, characterised by a dangerous drop in blood pressure and

## It's rare to develop an allergy for the first time at an older age

pillows and mattresses with special, hypoallergenic covers that prevent mites from penetrating them. Avoid areas of high pollen concentration, avoid indoor plants and keep pets out of your bedroom. While dusting or cleaning the house, use a facemask to reduce exposure to dust. The best alternative to dusting would be wet mopping or, if possible, vacuum cleaning. In people aged 65 and above, allergic rhinitis is less common than sinusitis. If you are on medicines for hypertension, ask your doctor if it could cause nasal congestion. Often viewed as trivial, symptoms of allergic rhinitis may cause fatigue, headache and impairment of other physical activities of everyday living.

**Food allergy:** Not all reactions occurring after ingestion of food can be attributed to a food allergy. Many reactions could be

severe difficulty in breathing. For the elderly, a nutritious diet is essential. However, the fear of food allergy can lead people to avoid a long list of foods. Leave suspected foods out only if an allergist confirms an allergy.

**Drug allergy:** Symptoms of drug allergy are manifested soon after intake of the offending drug. The skin, lungs and gastrointestinal system can be affected and symptoms may include fever, joint aches and rashes. Drug allergies are a cause of special concern in older people as they can be on multiple medications for various conditions. Allergies to certain drugs like sulpha, penicillin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin could become life threatening. Allergy to drugs like amoxicillin, quinolones, antibiotics and ointments are of the less serious type. An allergy specialist can also confirm drug

### RELIEF AT HAND

Although allergies might seem difficult to get rid of, understanding the disorder and taking appropriate preventive steps can control them.

- If you have difficulty in breathing, sense a severe drop in blood pressure or get fever accompanied with rashes, cramps or joint aches, seek medical help immediately.
- Take preventive medicines like antihistamines—Avil is one of them. Antihistamines (available either by prescription or over the counter) relieve itching, swelling, rash, runny nose or headache. You can also apply a soothing skin cream for relief from rashes.
- It's better to get a skin allergy test done before seeking medical relief.
- Once you know what you are allergic to, you can keep injections ready in case of an emergency – these include Terbutaline, Avil and Betnesol injections. But the best option is to visit your nearest hospital or clinic.
- Avoid food items or objects you are allergic to.

allergies by skin allergy testing and other sophisticated investigations.

**Allergic conjunctivitis:** The symptoms of allergic conjunctivitis include itching, redness and watery eyes. Triggers are usually similar to those for allergic rhinitis and include airborne allergens. Itchy eyes associated with congestion and headache can cause poor sleep patterns, chronic fatigue and irritability. Once the exact agent is identified, the best remedy is to avoid it. If you are prone to asthma, ask your doctor for written directions.



## WHEN FOOD IS THE ENEMY

Food allergy, an adverse reaction to certain foods, may affect fewer than 2 per cent of adults. At the least, it may result in minor rashes, but the worst-case scenario could be life threatening, the victim gasping for breath, or covered with hives, all because an innocent little peanut. A family history of allergies increases your risk.

## IRKSOME EIGHT

Amazingly, just eight foods are responsible for 90 per cent of all food allergies: milk; eggs (especially the whites); legume peanuts; tree nuts, like walnuts, cashews and almonds; fish; shellfish, like lobsters, crabs, prawns and shrimp; soy; and wheat. While most allergies develop in childhood, your body may begin reacting to a few foods, like fish, shellfish and tree nuts, in the third or fourth decade of life, or even later. We are most likely to react to foods we eat more often. That is the reason food allergies vary from country to country. For example, people are allergic to rice and soy in Japan, to codfish in Scandinavia, while in India, chickpea allergy is common. Peanuts are a more common cause of allergic reactions in the US where peanut consumption is extensive.

## THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS OF A FOOD ALLERGY

- Hives, itching or eczema
- Swelling of the eyelids, lips, face, tongue and throat, or other parts of the body
- Wheezing, nasal congestion or troubled breathing
- Stomach cramps, diarrhoea, nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness, light-headedness or unconsciousness

In a severe allergic reaction to food called anaphylaxis, a person may experience life-threatening symptoms such as constriction of airways, swollen throat, shock with severe drop in blood pressure and rapid pulse.

## BE ON GUARD

The best way to deal with food allergy is to avoid the family of foods that trigger it. An allergy to shrimp may also mean an allergy to crab.

Read food labels carefully and get familiar with the technical or scientific names for foods. For example, milk may be listed as sodium caseinate or milk solids. For a wheat allergy, avoid gluten. For an egg allergy, avoid bakery biscuits, breads, salad dressings like mayonnaise, and baking mixes.

When you are dining out, be careful while choosing from the menu. It's a good idea to tell the waiter, chef or manager beforehand about your allergy. Order simple – then you'll know what you're getting.

Be prepared for emergencies. If you have experienced an anaphylactic reaction, you must carry injectable epinephrine to treat reactions owing to accidental ingestion. People who are usually with you (family, close friends) should also know how to administer it.

Finally, look out for hidden sources of your allergen. Wheat is present in malted beverages like a cocoa drink, beer, whiskey, and gravies and sauces thickened with flour. And milk is present in almost all breads and cakes, butter (avoid everything that may contain butter or cream), ice cream, milk chocolate and cream sauces.

—Payal Khurana

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*The writer is a dietician from Delhi University*





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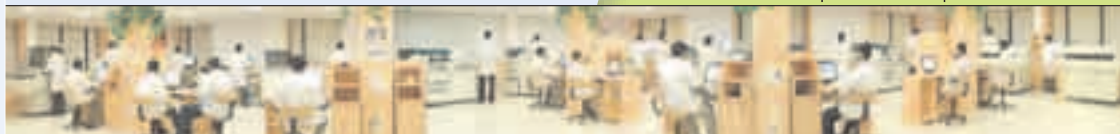
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# A fond farewell



Karanjia with wife Abad in their younger days

In a made-to-order white rosewood coffin, bedecked with roses and orchids, she looked strangely fulfilled. Her features that had crumpled in pain, the crisscross of wrinkles on her face had now smoothed themselves out as if an angel's hand had passed over them. Her eyes, which had been panic-stricken at the sight of the huge machines with their blinking lights trundled into her hospital room to carry out their medical intervention (shades of Hippocrates!), were now closed. She seemed to be fast asleep and, at long last, in absolute peace. Her

ears—of which she had always been proud—stood out now like a deer's. The white embroidered gown she wore had been chosen by her for this day. So also were the mode and site of her passing on—cremation at the Worli Crematorium in Mumbai.

Abad was married to me for 64 years. The Worli Crematorium, unlike others I had seen abroad, though set in an abundance of green, was bare, almost austere, yet elegant with marble flooring. There were no paintings of Paradise Imagined on the walls, no portraits of false gods. The hall

Death is not the end of life, it is life's fulfilment, says

**B K Karanjia** in a tribute to his wife Abad

was big enough to seat about a hundred and there was a raised platform where the coffin was placed for the mourners to pay their last respects. I've come to believe that mourning should not be for the one who has passed away, but for those who have been left behind. As the great visionaries and poets have told us, death is not the end of life; it is life's fulfilment. They sing of the glory and radiance of death.

Now I was the one left behind. When you are married to someone for so many years and have shared so many joys and sorrows, the loved one's pain becomes yours. Particularly in the case of a strong, and hard-headed woman. I began my career as a journalist with *Movie Times*, a film weekly I had founded, where Abad worked with me. Those were the days (1947) of flat-bed printing—rotary and computers were still years away. I recall the occasions when Abad and I had to set headline types, soiling our hands in the process, till 2 o'clock in the morning. We learnt journalism the hard way.

Later, when I came to edit *Filmfare*, Abad was appointed foreign film critic of *The Times of*



*India*. She did the job for 22 years. She was a sharp, even trenchant critic, but scrupulously honest and fair. Once she lambasted a Bruce Lee film that was running to full houses at a cinema in Mumbai. All the distributors of foreign films in India, all of them Abad's close friends—Metro, Paramount, 20th Century Fox and others—were so annoyed that they joined hands and staged a boycott against her. But the then editor of *The Times of India* and the management stood solidly behind their critic. So Abad

frequent quarrels, bitter ones, but we also had an understanding. The fact is that I needed her as much as she needed me. Her mother who, when she was alive, was extremely fond of me had entrusted her to my care “till death do us part”. Abad, as much as I, respected the vows we had made when we got married.

Besides, she was of immense help to me with the several books I have written. I used to be proud of my memory; but at 86, I found her recall better than mine. For

a severe heart attack in 1967, she was an angel of care. Later, in her more frequent illnesses, I did the best I could, but it just wasn't enough.

Over the years, Abad had undergone a hysterectomy, a thyroidectomy, and an abscess in the liver. With the help of physiotherapy, she even survived the paralytic stroke that hit her a year ago, and was able to walk using a walker. But just when she was about to fully recover, she fractured her hip. Once again, the operation was successful, but she reacted to the anaesthetic with a violent allergy and had to be hospitalised. There followed a series of ailments—urinary infection, jaundice and, fatally, a malignant growth in the pancreas. Multiple tests and repeated medical interventions enfeebled and exhausted Abad and broke her spirit. She gave up on life, she who had lived life to the full. She prayed that her life be ended and pleaded with me to let her die with dignity.

## When you are married to someone for years, the loved one's pain becomes yours

bought tickets for the shows and her reviews, in her own inimitable style, kept appearing. Finally, the futility of their boycott made these distributors call an end to it. The day Abad returned to the press shows, she received a hero's welcome!

my latest book *Counting My Blessings*, shortly to be released, she recalled dates and events from the past that had slipped my mind. When she knew that death was nearing, she told all those who came to see her, “My mind will be the last to go.” During my few illnesses, beginning with

Abad was a woman of prayer. After she resigned as critic, she devoted a set time each day for prayer. Even in the course of her fatal illness, she kept murmuring *Yatha Ahu Vairio* (Help us in our daily life) under her breath. She never forgave and seldom forgot. We used to buy Alphonso mangoes from the same dealer for years. Once, he cheated her by passing on substandard mangoes and she never forgave him. He kept coming to the house again and again, begging and pleading, but she never bought mangoes from him again. Her habit of telling people to their face what she thought of them always led to embarrassing situations. As husband and wife, we too had



Abad with her daughters, Delshad (in arms) and Rutton

As a young man, I had been founder member, under the leadership of Minoo Masani, of the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity, founded in India in the early 1950s. Our inspiration was Mahatma Gandhi, who had declared in another context: "I do not want to die of a creeping paralysis of my functions—a defeated man." The Society has pleaded but in vain for a law to provide medical help to terminate life under specific conditions.

**I**n these tragic circumstances, I was about to make a discovery that was perhaps the most wonderful of my life. When doctors failed to insert a stent in Abad's liver to let out the accumulating bile, my children and I

and allow them to end their lives in harmony with themselves. In short, to add life to days and not days to life."

This hospice has the same objective as euthanasia, but it strives to achieve it in a non-violent way. Its motto: "Where there is love, there is no pain." On the evening of her first day there, Abad remarked, "For the first time I feel at peace. I shall die in peace here." There is nothing routine in this hospice, love is manifest everywhere, in the most amazing ways. On Rose Day, handicapped children from the Spastics Society of India came to offer a rose to each patient in the ward. Abad's eyes were moist, but her face aglow as she

## Abad died at Shanti Avedna Ashram, a place that adds life to days, not days to life

decided to stop further medical intervention. Surprisingly, the doctors at the hospital agreed. We shifted her to a remarkable institution, one of three in India, the other two being in Delhi and Goa, the Shanti Avedna Ashram, at the foot of Mount Mary Church in Bandra, Mumbai. It claims to look after terminally ill patients during "the unique period when the long defeat of living can be gradually converted into a positive achievement in dying". From what I saw with my own eyes and the remarkable change that came over my wife, I realised that this claim was fully justified. The Ashram's goal, the same for rich and poor, is "to respect the dying

stretched her hand to accept a rose from a little boy who was so handicapped that he could hardly sit straight in his chair.

There are delightful surprises every day—the colourful hospital gowns, the surprise menu, the changing view of the sea...When conventional medicine is untrained and sometimes even unwilling to deal with death, this hospice steps in. I murmured to myself, if there is God on earth, He is here, He is here, He is here.

Nothing touched me more than the treatment meted out to Abad after she breathed her last. Six sisters surrounded the bed and in



On their 60th wedding anniversary

a low voice recited the Lord's prayer. They cleaned her up, put on her *sudra*, tied the *kusti* round her waist and put on the white embroidered gown Abad had chosen. As they carried her to the special room for relatives to be with her, sit and pray, I gazed at the familiar face whose beauty seemed to have been recaptured. I thought I saw, perhaps imagined, the faintest trace of a smile on her lips.

At the Worli crematorium, some of our friends were present to share our grief. It was a simple, dignified ceremony such as she would have liked. They put the coffin on the rails, put on the switch and the coffin rolled into the fiery red furnace and the door shut with a loud bang. A stifled sob escaped me. Heartbreak. It is difficult to be brave under circumstances such as these.

Sixty-four years! ■

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*Abad Karanjia, 84, passed away on 28 September 2005. B K Karanjia, a former journalist, now works as a consultant with the Godrej group. The 86-year-old has written several books on the Godrej family. His own biography Counting My Blessings (Viking, Rs 495) will be released in November 2005*





*"Conquering the world was easy;  
taking care of my men was not!  
How I wish they were all  
covered by  
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# Winter blues

Shameem Akthar tells you how to keep colds and respiratory trouble at bay this winter

**SOON IT WILL BE WINTER, TIME FOR COUGHS** and sniffles. It's also a time you'll be grateful to yoga, which shields you from infection. According to the book *Yogic Management of Common Diseases*, flu is precipitated by an unsuitable diet, sedentary lifestyle and sluggish blood circulation.

A dynamic *sadhana* or yoga practice can help you tackle winter with robust health. Sun salutation, a practice that generates heat, helps keep the lymphatic system clean. The lymphatic system strengthens immunity. If it is lethargic, your body will be sluggish, an open invitation to disease. You can rev up the lymphatic system and your blood circulation with a brisk walk.

The entire *vajrasana* series—camel pose (*ushtrasana*), lying thunderbolt (*supta vajrasana*), cat stretch (*marjari*), lion pose (*vyagharasana*), lion-roaring (*simhagarjasa*), and cow-face (*gomukh*)—strengthens the immune system. Some *asana* may be difficult for those who have led sedentary lives. They can focus instead on chest-expanding *asana* like easy bow (*saral dhanu*), cobra (*bhujangasana*), swaying snake (*trikaya bhujangasana*), snake pose (*sarpasana*), and half-crescent (*ardha chandrasana*). *Ardha chandrasana* may be done sitting down or standing up.

Most of these are back-bends that apply pressure on the thymus, the immune gland in the chest. They also open up the lungs, improving their tone and efficiency, making the entire respiratory mechanism smooth. The rib cage opens up and the cartilage between expands and contracts with every breath. Other muscles that get a workout in the process include the diaphragm or the large muscle that pumps the lungs, the back muscles and the sinuses.

Breathing practices or *pranayama* also lubricate, clean and massage the entire respiratory system.

Even 10 minutes of *pranayama* is sufficient to keep you free of ailments, particularly those that attack us every winter. Some natural strengtheners are skull-cleansing (*kapalabhati*) and bellows breath (*bhastrika*).

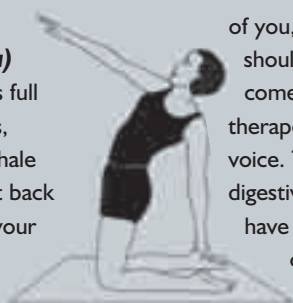
Recent medical research has established what our sages taught us a long time ago—humming can clear the sinuses of blockages, promote air flow, facilitate exchange of gases and increase levels of nitric oxide. Nitric oxide causes dilation of blood vessels, which, in turn, encourages better exchange of gases. One *pranayama* that combines all these benefits is the simple humming bee or *bhramari*. About six rounds a day will keep you robust. ■



## Yogic moves

### Half-camel pose (*ardha ushtrasana*)

This prepares you for the more strenuous full camel pose (*ushtrasana*). Sit on your heels, kneeling. Keep the knees slightly apart. Inhale and exhale a few times. While inhaling, tilt back lightly, reaching your right hand to grasp your right heel. Keep breathing normally while holding your left hand straight in front



of you, keeping your eyes fixed on the left thumb. The chest should open up if the tilt is smooth and natural. Exhale and come back forward. Repeat with the left side. This pose is therapeutic for respiratory ailments and improves your voice. The stretch at the abdomen also massages the digestive system. The thyroid gland gets a massage. If you have a knee problem, stretch your leg out in front instead of tucking them under you. Keep your hand behind, on the floor beside you instead of grasping the heel.

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)



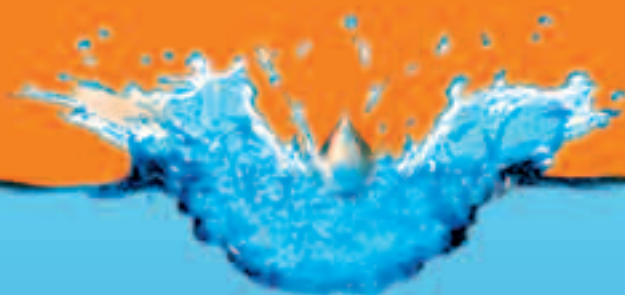
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by



little...



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Date	Period	Returns of RVF	BSE 100 Returns
Oct. 01, 2004	Last 1 year	62.93 %	58.52 %
Oct. 01, 2002	Last 3 years	64.22 %	45.63 %
Oct. 01, 2000	Last 5 years	59.41 %	32.59 %
Oct. 08, 1995	Since Inception	35.24 %	17.20 %

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**Inception Date:** October 8, 1995. Whenever the returns are unrealistically high it is due to market conditions. **# Assumptions:** a) SIP happens on 10<sup>th</sup> of every month. b) Entry load of 2% till Oct 04 & 2.25% from Nov 04 is considered. c) Each SIP is of Rs.1000 (which also includes the first instalment). \*You can open an account by putting in a minimum of 6 cheques of Rs.1000/- each or 12 cheques of Rs.500/- each or 4 cheques of Rs.1500/- each (in multiples of Rs.1/- thereafter) **Sponsor:** Reliance Capital Limited. **Trustee:** Reliance Capital Trustee Co. Limited. **Investment Manager:** Reliance Capital Asset Management Limited. **Statutory Details:** The Sponsor, the Trustee and the Investment Manager are incorporated under the Companies Act 1956. **Investment Objective:** The primary investment objective of the Scheme is to achieve long-term growth of capital by investment in equity & equity related securities through a research based investment approach. **Entry Load:** For Subscription below Rs.2 crore - 2.25%, For Subscription of Rs.2 crore & above but below Rs.5 crore - 1.25%, For Subscriptions of Rs.5 crore & above - Nil. **Exit Load:** Nil. **General Risk Factors:** Mutual Funds and securities investments are subject to market risks and there is no assurance or guarantee that the objectives of the Scheme will be achieved. As with any investment in securities, the NAV of the Units issued under the Scheme can go up or down depending on the factors and forces affecting the capital markets. Past performance of the Sponsor/AMC/Mutual Fund is not indicative of the future performance of the Scheme. Reliance Vision Fund, is only the name of the Scheme and does not in any manner indicate either the quality of the Scheme; its future prospects or returns. The Sponsor is not responsible or liable for any loss resulting from the operation of the Scheme beyond their initial contribution of Rs.1 lakh towards the setting up of the Mutual Fund and such other accretions and additions to the corpus. The Mutual Fund is not guaranteeing or assuring any dividend/bonus. The Mutual Fund is also not assuring that it will make periodical dividend/bonus distributions, though it has every intention of doing so. All dividend/bonus distributions are subject to the investment performance of the Scheme. For details of scheme features apart from those mentioned above and scheme specific risk factors, please refer to the provisions of the offer document. Offer Document and Key Information Memorandum our Application Forms are available at AMC office/investor service centres/AMC website/Distributors. Please read the offer document carefully before investing.



## HEALTH BYTES

## ZAP AGE



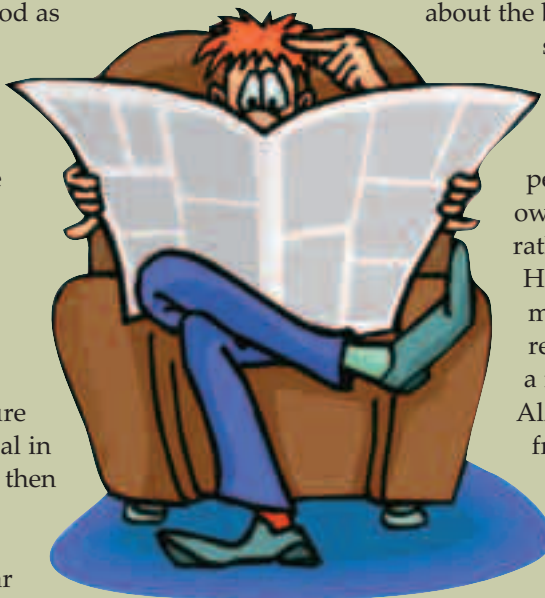
A British research team has found that a virus that infects chalk-covered marine algae contains compounds that could be used in **anti-ageing treatments**. After unravelling its genetic code—it has 474 genes compared to nine in most viruses—researchers at the Plymouth Marine Laboratory and the Sanger Institute in Cambridge unearthed a cluster of genes responsible for making ceramide, a key component of anti-wrinkle and anti-ageing creams. Normally seen only in animal and plant cells, the genes have never been found in a virus before. This is how it works: the virus hijacks the cell and slows down the ageing process by keeping the cell healthy for as long as it wishes. Then, it uses the cell as a factory to replicate itself and eventually takes over completely, killing the cell. Scientists hope the discovery will help industries look for new sources of compounds for use in medicines and cosmetics.

Closer home, Tata Consultancy Services has tied up with Congenia, an Italian biotech company, to identify molecules that block a protein named P66 in the genetic makeup of mice. It is believed that suppression of the protein helps the mice live longer. The protein forces cells subjected to oxidative stress to undergo apoptosis, or cell suicide. Normally, 'stressed' cells are more likely to die in elderly individuals, probably because of P66 action. Dr M Vidyasagar, head of TCS' Advanced Technology Centre in Hyderabad says that suppressing the protein's function may keep more cells alive in humans, and thus **retard the ageing process**. Once scientists at TCS identify these molecules, Congenia will take up animal testing and human trials.



## UNFORGETTABLE

The **power of recall** of healthy septuagenarians can be as good as teenagers. Really. Laura Haynes, a research student in psychology at the University of New South Wales in Australia, tested the memory of 32 young people and 32 seniors (recruited by Haynes' 84-year-old grandmother) by making them read a familiar newspaper report of the 9/11 attacks and a relatively obscure report about political upheaval in the Japanese parliament, and then asking them what they remembered. Surprisingly, the silvers performed on a par



with the young. However, some elderly participants displayed a sense of complacency while reading about the better-known 9/11 report, spending less time reading it than the young. This suggested that some poor performances by elderly people on memory tests could be owing to "cognitive laziness" rather than cognitive decline. Haynes says the idea that memory declines with age is reinforced by news reports about a rise in dementia and Alzheimer's disease. "If you are free of neurological conditions associated with ageing, you shouldn't assume you will lose your cognitive abilities as you get older," she says.

## ENCAPSULATED

## A GOOD MOVE

Researchers at Imperial College in Hammer-smith, West London, have developed **inflatable stockings** for senior citizens who suffer problems with mobility. They can be used as an alternative to physiotherapy for patients with conditions that affect blood flow to the legs. The stockings are wrapped around the leg and inflated three times a minute, squeezing blood out of the veins.



## BITE INTO THIS

Here's progress for you. Twenty years ago, about 46 per cent of Americans aged 65 and above lacked teeth. Today, owing to advances in **dental care**, only about 30 per cent don't have their natural teeth.

## FEAR OF FAT

Seven years ago, the Netherlands was the first country to impose a ban on 'trans fats', which include hydrogenated oils and Vanaspati ghee. Used for repeated frying and increasing the shelf life of certain edibles, they can lead to heart ailments and even diabetes, by interfering with the action of insulin in the body. Now, the Delhi Medical Association has written to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi urging it to **ban restaurants from serving food that**



**contain trans fats.** Meanwhile, the US has also asked its food industry to list it as an ingredient on labels and menus, mentioning the percentage used. Strangely though, while the McDonald's website in the US lists it as an ingredient in some of its foods, there is no mention on its Indian website.



## GENE EFFECT

Scientists at the University of Texas have discovered a **gene that keeps mice** alive for 30 per cent longer than usual. The gene *Clotho*, named after a Greek goddess who spun life's thread and was the youngest of the three 'Fates', plays a key role in many of the ageing processes, and a version of it is found in humans too. The researchers believe that mice, and people, with defective forms of the gene age prematurely and hope further study will reveal the causes of ageing and ways to improve our later years.

# The infinite reality

Truth should be discovered, experienced and lived, says **Swami Tejomayananda**

**SATYAM (TRUTH) CAN BE DEFINED AND** experienced at various levels. It is only when we are ready to experience truth in our lives that we benefit from it. Here's an example: A student attended a discourse by a master. The master was saying, "Speak the truth..." On hearing this, the student immediately left the discourse. After a few weeks, the master met his student in a marketplace and inquired why he had left the discourse midway. The student replied, "I am trying to follow your instructions in my life. Once I gain mastery in speaking the truth, I will come for the second lesson!"

Some people are sceptics or have only a scholastic interest in matters of spirituality. Some people without trying hard enough say, "It is good to listen, but it is not practical to live." Yet others opine, "Such knowledge is useless and has no practical application. Even if it is practical, I cannot practice it. Even if I can, I will not! Without knowing the truth, my life is going on comfortably. I am considered successful and I am reasonably happy. What is the use of this knowledge? Why should I know the truth? Why should I initiate this inquiry?"

The knowledge of the Absolute Truth has immense scope. It transforms the finite individual into Infinite Reality. It puts an end not only to our immediate sorrow, but destroys sorrows for all times to come. We are somehow more interested in the utility of truth than the truth itself. This is because we have more value for material and worldly achievements than for the truth itself.

Truth should be known for the very joy of discovering it, experiencing it as well as living it. When truth is not known, untruth is mistaken for the truth, unreal for the real. We remain immersed in illusions, false notions, the unreal and the untruth. Such ignorance is not at all bliss; it is the root cause of all our misery. When the Absolute Truth is known, it removes our misery forever (*atyantika dukha nivrtti*) and we attain supreme bliss (*paramananda prapti*).



We have to be  
ready to experience  
truth in our lives,  
only then we  
benefit from it

In Biblical times, the earth was considered flat. It was believed that the sun moved around the earth. It was considered blasphemy to oppose this erroneous notion of the majority and the church. Yet, the truth was proven to be different.

We perceive the rising and setting of the sun every day, the waning and waxing of the moon every month, water's mirage in the desert, and conduct ourselves accordingly based on these outlook and perceptions. We wake up when the sun rises, paint the sky blue while painting because that's how we see it. Yet we know that the sun never rises or sets and that the sky is not blue. So what we may perceive as true may not be true.

In an effort to determine the Absolute Truth, which is beyond the mind and senses, the Vedas (*sruti*) are the authentic means. They are the declarations of the Absolute Truth, realised by the great seers in their seat of meditation. This can be arrived at through logic (*yukti*) and confirmed by our own discovery of the truth (*anubhuti*). ■

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*Excerpts from Satyam Shivam Sundaram (Central Chinmaya Mission Trust) by Swami Tejomayananda (born 1950), who heads the Chinmaya Mission worldwide and has translated Swami Chinmayananda's writings to Hindi*





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# Radio Gaga

When **Dinesh C Sharma** tells the Purohits about satellite radio, it's music to their ears

“**T**his is All India Radio...” the voice sputtered as I entered the Purohit household one fine Sunday morning. Mr Purohit was fiddling with the tuner of his two-band vintage radio set. “Hello there,” he called out. “I am trying to get the national channel of AIR. They have a good classical music programme on today.”

“He’s been trying to tune that thing for the past 15 minutes,” said Mrs Purohit acerbically. “As if it will help! This old *dabba* can play only a couple of stations. Even if he gets the signal, the sound quality is so poor you can’t enjoy the music.”

Mr Purohit, as is his wont sometimes, ignored this completely. But undeterred, his wife went on, “Mrs Gupta has an FM (frequency modulation) radio in her music system. It has many channels and you can even call up the radio stations and request them to play your favourite songs. And the sound is fantastic.”

Mr Purohit could not stay silent any longer. “Yes, the sound of Mrs Gupta’s FM radio is fantastic,” he said sarcastically. “So fantastic it drowns out the sound of my early morning *bhajan* with cheap Bollywood remixes and non-stop



nonsensical chatter.” I realised then that the Purohits both loved music, just not the same kind. “Aren’t there any FM stations that play only classical music or old Hindi film songs?” Mr Purohit asked me. “Not yet,” I acknowledged, “Most FM channels generally have one-hour shows for old film songs or ghazal. But why limit yourself to FM? You can go in for a satellite radio.”

That got them going. “We know satellite television, but what is satellite radio?” asked Mr Purohit. “Well, it’s simple, really,” I replied. You get radio

signals from a satellite in the sky instead of a radio tower. As you receive the signals directly to your radio receiver, the audio quality is much better. The best part: satellite radio channels are completely free of commercials and available round the clock.

“Do you need a huge antenna or a dish, like we have for the cable TV, to receive the signals?” asked Mrs Purohit. “You need an antenna but not such a large one,” I answered. “It’s a small, compact antenna, barely the size of a landline telephone.” You also need to buy a special radio set to decode satellite signals,



and subscribe to the service. "You have to pay for the service too?" asked Mr Purohit, his enthusiasm dimming a little. "Of course, you do. Nothing good comes for free," his wife chided him. Then, she turned to me, a little apprehensive. "But how much do you pay? And what do you get for your money?"

**Y**ou pay an annual subscription fee to get a set of radio channels, I told them. In the US, satellite radio companies offer about 70 channels for \$10-\$13 (around Rs 450- 585) per month. A company called WorldSpace has recently launched its satellite radio services in India. The prices for radio receivers range from Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000, while subscription for a bouquet of 40 channels is Rs 1,800 a year. "Don't we have any other

what this WorldSpace offers." I explained that the service covers different genres like Carnatic, Hindustani and Western classical music, Hindi film songs, pop, jazz, news channels like *NDTV*, *BBC Asia* and *CNN*, spiritual programming, and regional channels in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Bengali. For example, there is a channel called *Gandharv* dedicated to Hindustani classical music while another, *Shruti*, plays only Carnatic music. You can also log onto the website [www.worldspaceasia.com](http://www.worldspaceasia.com) to get detailed listings and transcripts of programmes, and participate in contests.

In fact, WorldSpace is offering its entry-level set, *Diva*, for Rs 2,000 for a period of three months (from 10 October 2005) with free subscription for three months.

## Audio quality is much clearer as you receive signals directly from the satellite

options to choose from?" wondered Mrs Purohit. "Not yet," I said. As the market grows, though, more players will appear. It's an elaborate set-up; you need satellites beaming over India and tie-ups with local channels. In the US, car satellite radios are extremely popular and some radio models are even designed for plug-and-play in both car and home. That may well happen soon in India.

"We'll see," said Mr Purohit, anxious to move on. "In the meantime, tell us more about

After that, you need to buy a year's subscription for Rs 1,800. The cost of speakers is additional, and begins at Rs 500—to save on the cost of speakers, you can connect the radio receiver to your existing music system.

Higher-end models are lighter and offer a better liquid crystal display (LCD) screen and additional features like AM/FM receiver, graphic equaliser, cassette player, and built-in speakers. The LCD display shows the name of the channel

that is playing, while some models also display the song title and artist's name.

Mrs Purohit had a very practical concern. "Is it easy to install?" she asked. I assured her it was. You just have to position the antenna towards the southeast when you fix it in your balcony or near a window. It should also be in the line of sight of the satellite—this essentially means the antenna should not be blocked by any buildings or other obstacles. "That's no problem," she said happily. "We can see the sky clearly from our balcony."

Then, Mr Purohit, a die-hard AIR loyalist, had one more question for me. "What about AIR channels; aren't they available on satellite radio?" Initially, some AIR channels were part of the WorldSpace package, I explained, but later AIR withdrew from the service. Now, it offers about a dozen of its popular national and regional channels as part of its DTH (direct to home) package, which is generally for television channels. You can listen to these channels on your TV sets. "DTH!" he exclaimed. "Now, that sounds interesting."

I would have loved to stay and answer the barrage of questions I knew was coming, but I was running late for an appointment. So I promised to visit the Purohits again soon to tell them all about DTH services. "Yes, come soon," urged Mr Purohit. "We need to give Mrs Gupta's FM radio a run for its money with some real music." ■



# Staking a claim—II

**Legalpundits** on the thin line between a nominee and legal heir for an insurance policy

Last month, this column concluded that in the event of death of the policyholder, a nominee only has the right to receive the amount from the insurance company. A nominee is a trustee and should hand over the amount to the legal beneficiaries of the deceased. Here are some more legal provisions:

**Q** What is the procedure for a nominee to receive money from the insurance company?

**A** First, the nominee must inform the insurance company about the policyholder's death. The documents needed include the original death certificate and a certified true copy, the original receipts (insurance), and a letter signed by legal heirs mentioning the details of the death and requesting that the proceeds are issued to the nominee.

**Q** Can married daughters stake a claim on the insurance money left by either parent even if they have not been mentioned as nominees?

**A** The nominee is not the owner of the money. However, there are personal laws defining rights of daughters as heirs. Under Muslim law, a daughter, married or single, is entitled to half her father's property if she has no brother. If she has brothers, she will get half of what her brother gets. A Muslim widow has inheritance rights to her parental home just like Hindu daughters. Hindu law gives equal rights to daughters for joint ownership of property along with their brothers. But in actual practice, this is often not followed. Under Christian law, a man's widow and children (male or female, married or single) inherit an equal amount.

**Q** If the policyholder had transferred nomination rights from one person to another (say, from his mother to wife), can the previous nominee still stake a claim?

**A** If the policyholder had transferred the nomination, the new nominee is entitled to receive the amount on his death. The new nominee would be a trustee for the legal heirs of the deceased. The previous nominee's claim to a share would depend on the personal

law of the deceased, if he had not made a will. Otherwise, the will would specify how the assets are to be distributed. Under Hindu law, if a person dies without making a will, the legal heirs include his mother and his wife. So, a change of nomination in favour of the wife would not by itself disqualify the mother in claiming a share of the estate.

Under Muslim law, a man can only will away one-third of his property. A widow is entitled to the eighth portion of her husband's property if they have children, and to one-fourth if they do not. If a man has two widows, they would inherit one-eighth or one-fourth, depending on whether or not they have children. A daughter is entitled

to half her father's property if she has no brother. If she has brothers, she will get half of what the brother gets. And the mother is entitled to one-third of her son's property if the son has no children and one-sixth if he does. In Christian law, the Indian Succession Act determines all types of succession. So a man's widow and children (male or female) inherit an equal amount. However, a man may, by will, bequeath his property to anyone, totally disinheriting his heirs. ■





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# New beginnings

Experts at [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com) answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement



**I have been toying with the idea of opening a playschool for toddlers for a long time. After reading “Open House” in *Harmony*’s September issue, that desire has only deepened.**

**I would like to follow in the footsteps of 72-year-old Bim Bissell, who has been running a preschool in Delhi for 50 years. The only hitch is, she started young, and I won’t! I am 62 years old and have a Master’s degree in English literature. I live in Gurgaon. Money is not a problem as my husband is a businessman. Can you guide me?**

Age is no barrier to fulfilling your dreams. Only about half the people with successful start-ups began when they were young. It’s all about how well you balance the resources you have at your disposal. Here are few tips you must keep in mind:

- Look for a place that is big enough for the children to play.
- If there are a couple of big firms in the vicinity, it means good business for you as it would be easy for working parents to leave their children there.
- Ensure you are able to give personal attention to each and every child.

A new trend that has emerged among playschools is franchisee outlets, where the initial study material and training are provided by the source company. This is an avenue worth exploring since it requires less initial investment. You could later apply your own creative initiative to establish a preschool. Meanwhile, browse through websites such as [www.shemrock.com](http://www.shemrock.com), [www.franchise-chat.com](http://www.franchise-chat.com), [www.indianchild.com](http://www.indianchild.com) and [www.pratham.org](http://www.pratham.org) for more information on preschools with franchisee options and discussion forums. Other well-established playschool sites worth a look include: [www.hawthornefamilyplayschool.org](http://www.hawthornefamilyplayschool.org), [www.childrengooperativeplayschool.com](http://www.childrengooperativeplayschool.com), and [kildare.ie/education/playgroup/Ballitore/default.htm](http://kildare.ie/education/playgroup/Ballitore/default.htm).



**I am 59-year-old retired colonel living in Bhubaneswar. I am interested in starting a recruitment agency, especially for seniors on the lookout for jobs. How do I go about it? Are there any quotas for retired Army personnel?**

The intention of starting a recruitment firm for silvers is a noble one. As this kind of firm does not require huge investment, it is easy to start and maintain. Though, I must add, there are no quotas applicable to you as this would be an independent establishment. Keep in mind certain prerequisites:

- You need good contacts in the human resources fraternity and in the job market.
- You can get paid access to jobseeker databases from reputed websites but you need basic infrastructure like computer and Internet access.
- You will also need to get the business registered with local authorities.



**I have a diploma in beauty therapy and hair-styling, and want to start a personality and grooming centre. Are my qualifications enough or is there a specialised course for personality grooming? If so, is such a course available in Pune and open for people over 50?**

As a beautician with a hair-styling diploma, you are equipped with certain skills required for personality development, but there’s still a lot more you can learn. Developing a personality is also about image management—how to remain affable and appear confident and articulate. Various personality development courses offer insight into public speaking too. It is always a good idea to get the requisite training. Some sites that will guide you about courses offered and training ideas include [www.mit.com](http://www.mit.com) (Pune), [www.saviiodsilva.net](http://www.saviiodsilva.net) (Mumbai) and [www.komark.net](http://www.komark.net) (Delhi).



# Word wizard

Madhuchhanda Sen quit a career in network marketing to teach English to CAT students

**I**n the past five years, Madhuchhanda Sen has helped 3,000 students crack the Reading Comprehension and Verbal Section for the Common Admission Test (CAT) exams for management-institute hopefuls. 'Madhu Ma'am', as her students call her, is enjoying her stint as a teacher as much as she enjoyed her corporate success at Tupperware. She quit her job as a distributor in Kolkata when she was 49 years old. Since then, she is the head of the department at Erudite Educational Centre in the city. She also conducts the personality development class at the end of each session.

A major in behavioural psychology (with specialisation in marketing) from Sussex Univer-



SHILBHADRA DATTA

Sen says she enjoys helping youngsters chase their dreams

## "I enjoy helping youngsters get into reputed management institutes"

sity, UK, Sen first worked as a marketing manager for a reputed firm in London. She was then shifted to the human resources department where she tutored new recruits. After living in the UK for 13 years, Sen returned to India in 1980, got married, and started working for the Entrepreneurship Development Institute in Ahmedabad. "I get bored easily and am always looking out for new challenges," says Sen, who quit her job and shifted to network marketing for Tupper-

ware in the mid-1990s. The job was in Kolkata, her husband Lt Col Ranjan Sen's hometown, where he wanted to settle after his retirement.

"I am an ambitious person and enjoyed my stint as a corporate woman. But I also enjoy helping youngsters chase their dreams of making it to good management institutes. I feel I am equally good at this job," says the 54-year-old. Sen attributes much of her success to her husband. "I came from a

conservative family and married early. I could have easily led the quiet life of a contented homemaker, but my husband always encouraged me take up new assignments," says Sen, whose family—her husband, son Indraneel and daughter Nilanjana—is justifiably proud of her.

A few years down the line, Sen wants to do write a textbook for her students. "And then maybe start my own classes to train people to crack interviews or presentations," she adds. "There is no end to my plans, as life is full of possibilities."

—Ritusmita Biswas

Readers are requested to send in their queries to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)

# Changing silver

A critical review of over 200 studies by *Harmony* focuses on 'productive ageing'



ASHESH SHAH

**IN INDIA, WHERE THE ELDERLY ARE REGARDED** as passive receivers, largely relying on children for financial and emotional support, the term 'productive ageing' might sound somewhat farfetched. Surprisingly, it is not. Today, silvers in India form an active resource group, opting for 'dynamic' ageing. That's the conclusion of 'Ageing in India, 21st Century: Priority Areas and Methodological Issues', a critical review of about 200 major existing studies on ageing in India, by Professor S Siva Raju, Vice-President (Research & Training), *Harmony*.

The review focuses on different facets of ageing that include 'productive' and 'successful ageing'. While happiness is relative, productivity can be gauged, and success implies a bit of both. The best way to understand these terms is to meet seniors at interactive centres such as the Harmony Interactive Centre in Girgaum, in South Mumbai.

Several members at the centre still actively contribute to society. They remain productive, having led successful lives, working till they retired, sometimes even opting for a second career after retirement. For instance, Jaikumar Kapoor, 61, a

chartered accountant and member of the centre, gives lectures on financial management, plays table tennis and still has time for his family and two dogs—a poster boy for 'productive ageing'. Is 'successful ageing', then, just another way to define 'productive ageing'? Not really, says Professor Siva Raju. He says, "A sense of self-worth, an independent spirit, ability to connect with the changing social set-up, and adapting to its changing requirements comprise successful ageing."

Mahabaleshwar Nachinolkar, a 71-year-old centre member, was a fire fighter in Mumbai Port Trust for 35 years. "My wife passed away recently. The loss hurts. But as long as you breathe, you live." At the centre, Nachinolkar practices yoga, plays carom, reads newspapers, and is learning how to use a computer. He says he is "happy and satisfied" with life. That's successful ageing for you.

—Trina Mukherjee

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November 30. 4 pm onwards.

Programmes are subject to last-minute change

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# Distant drums

Sheila Kumar visits the Santiniketan of the South, the Kerala  
Kalamandalam in Cheruthuruthy





Photo courtesy: RAVISHANKAR

(Left) Cheruthuruthy is on the banks of Nila, a tributary of Bharatapuzha river; ubiquitous at all major temple festivals is the incessant beating of *chenda* drums

As we drive into the green hamlet of Cheruthuruthy, the first sound that wafts over the air, over the rippling waters of the river Bharatapuzha, is the rhythmic pulse of the *chenda* drums. A sound ubiquitous to all major temple festivals in ‘God’s Own Country’, the drums beat incessantly and before I know it, my fingers have taken up the drill. Where is the sound coming from, I ask a local and receive a dumbfounded look. “Why, from the Kalamandalam, of course,” he says. That’s when I realise that Cheruthuruthy is Kalamandalam, the crucible of traditional music and dance forms of Kerala.

Cheruthuruthy is about 50 km south of Palakkad and a decent drive along a long and winding

road. Here, tea stalls are aplenty. Along with the glass tumblers of piping hot and sweet *chai*, one can munch on one of Kerala’s treasures—the long, golden bananas called *nendrepazhams* (indeed, a taste of heaven)—or choose from a variety of locally baked delicious biscuits. Part of Shoranur town, Cheruthuruthy sits on the banks of the swift, deceptively docile Nila, a tributary of Bharatapuzha. Its waters flow in a straight line here, lazy loops there, sometimes turning treacherous.

We are staying at River Retreat, Cheruthuruthy’s only hotel. A delightful red-brick building, it was once the summer residence of the Maharaja of Cochin. The rooms are cozy, all modern conveniences in place, heavy old-world furniture polished to a

high gleam and the service extremely friendly. We discover a common balcony that overlooks the river. Once the heat of the day has lessened, all hotel residents sit there, feet up on the fret-worked iron railing, staring at the ebb and flow, the little islets now glimpsed, now run over by the river. To the far side, men balance on their haunches, fishing lines sunk in the water, chatting desultorily; on the bank opposite, a rusted red chimney of some mill protrudes, rising from the shrubbery.

We have saved the main event—the visit to the Kalamandalam—for the last. So we enquire if there are any more attractions in Cheruthuruthy. Locals tell us in devout tones about the Irunilamkodu Temple. Curiously, no one is too sure of the identity



A student strikes a pose at Kalamandalam, Kerala's premier art academy

of the deity worshipped at the shrine. It could be Lord Shiva, it could be his son Subramaniam. The legend goes, that when a *cheruman* logger woman sharpened her sickle on a big rock, a small part of the rock fell off and the remaining portion bled. The rock was an idol and the woman had chipped off its nose. The idol was consecrated at that spot and sandalwood paste is the most important offering here, to complete the idol's nose.

I head there, on one side of the shrine, I see a 75-foot-high boulder. As I make my obeisance and turn to leave, the guide tells me that worship at the shrine will be incomplete if I don't climb the steep boulder and touch the

*shivling* of unknown antiquity on top of the crest. I decide to go. Halfway up, I turn to look over my shoulder and nearly swoon—it's a sharp vertical drop. When I finally reach the crest after a half-hour trek, it offers a magnificent view: the lush Agamala forests, the paddy fields and coconut groves. I take a long breather before I make my way down the rough path.

I'm told there is a traditional pot-making centre in the small potters' colony. The pottery made here is for local use; *matka* for water, shallow dishes used as plates, deep *kadai* for cooking rice and fish stew. For the Ayurved-aphiles, there is the Nilayoram Resort tucked way inside the

winding lanes. I'll confess that I am less than impressed by its landscaped gardens, the rooms that reek of *kozhambu* (herbal oil) and the staff that knew almost nothing about the place.

There is no getting away from the fact that Cheruthuruthy, while great for a couple of days, is actually a transit stop for those visiting Kalamandalam. So we head for Kerala's premier art academy. As we drive in through its dusty gates, the first impression is of total serenity. Palms wave their fronds, splotches of seasonal flowers add colour, and over the air wafts the sound of drums. As clear is the sharp click of the baton the dance teachers use to keep *taal*.

**View from Irunilamkodu Temple's crest top is that of lush Agamala**





(Top) Kalamandalam holds Kathakali, Koodiyattam and Mohiniattam recitals for tourists; the River Retreat is a delightful red-brick building

Kalamandalam was founded by the famous poet Vallathol Narayana Menon in 1930. Today, it's run by the state government. Over 300 students take courses in theatre, dance and music that will equip them with a Bachelor of Performing Arts degree.

The administrative buildings and the *kalari* (classrooms) look like a mass of numbing concrete. Just inside the gates, though, is a new building housing the art gallery and museum. The stunning *koothambalam* (theatre) is an ornate, pillared and regal sprawl. Most evenings, it's the performance area. Kathakali, Mohiniattam, Kuchipudi, Bharatanatyam are taught at the Kalamandalam, as are the *chenda*, *maddalam* and *mridangam* (types of drums) and the dance forms special to the state like Koodiyattam and Tullal.

This 30-acre campus is a self-contained township. It has a *natyagraha*, a regular high school, hostel, a college library, a room for archives, recording studio,

staff quarters and an employees' cooperative society. As befits a university, apart from the performing arts, scholastic studies are also undertaken.

The really interested tourist would not feel left out. The Kalamandalam holds three-month crash courses in select disciplines and holds Kathakali, Koodiyattam, Mohiniattam recitals for tourists, under a 'Day with the Masters' offer; the fee to watch it ranges from Rs 1,500 to Rs 6,500.

As we leave, we take with us some montages: a Kathakali classroom full of boys practising their eye movements without moving their heads; supple and incredibly graceful young girls in blue and red saris doing the Mohiniattam; boys dressed alike in starched off-white *dhoti* and *mundu* with gold zari at the hem, heading for a *mridangam* class; and, of course, the compelling, addictive beat of the *chenda*. The drumbeats, in fact, see us out of Cheruthuruthy. ■



## FACT FILE

### When to go

The best season to visit Cheruthuruthy is from August to March

### How to get there

**Air:** The nearest airport is Nedumbassery Airport, Kochi (85 km). Indian Airlines, Jet Airways and Air Deccan fly in and out from here

**Rail:** The nearest railhead is Shoranur Junction (3 km)

**Road:** Two hours from Palakkad

### Where to stay

**Nilayoram Resort:** Rs 3,583 for double occupancy (Best time for Ayurveda therapy is June to September)

**The River Retreat:** Rs 1,050 to Rs 1,950

For contact details, see page 79

forests, paddy fields and coconut groves

# Pen doctor

Fountain pens are 59-year-old Pratap Rai Dewan's passion. He tells **Teena Baruah** how he is doing his part to battle the ballpoint fad

## WRITING ON THE WALL

In 1968, when my father Dewan Mengh Raj handed me the keys to his little pen shop called Coronation Store in Delhi's bustling Chandni Chowk, I wasn't too excited. It meant I had to let go of my dreams of becoming a doctor. In the beginning, I simply sold pens like my father did for over three decades. Soon, I realised I was turning away customers who came to get their pens repaired. I started fixing pens. Today, after 37 years, I have earned the reputation of fixing battered pens. Mine is the only pen clinic in the city.

## MAKING A DIAGNOSIS

Every faulty pen suffers from a feeder (The feeder is the black part under the nib which controls the ink flow from the reservoir to the nib) blockage. This happens when it is not used for a long time. When a pen stops writing, we make the common mistake of pressing it hard and that causes further damage. Try dipping it in water overnight. And if that doesn't work, come to me. Usually,

I can tell what's wrong with the pen just by looking at it. I also observe how the user holds the pen to assess what could have gone wrong.

Sometimes there's a challenging case, like the one where the owner walked into a glass door with a raised pen in his hand; and a young man who drove over his pen—that was a tough one to fix. There are emergencies too, like a 'lucky' pen that stops working a day before a job interview or examination. I prefer to work on such pens at home as it requires a lot of concentration.

The tools are very basic. A file, pliers, cutter, candle and matchsticks. What makes the difference is how I use them. I have to know how much heat can open



Pratap Rai Dewan, 59, has been repairing pens for 37 years in Delhi





a jammed pen, and whether to use a candle or a matchstick to generate that heat. One has to strike a delicate balance.

### FOR THE LOVE OF IT

There's no money in this job. I do it only for sentimental reasons. A fountain pen, for me, is an object of style and utility at the same time. It is both a writing tool and a fashion accessory. As author Marilyn Brown argues, you don't go out on an interview with a throwaway pen. Or sign a multi-million-dollar deal with a Bic—the famous ballpoint pen from the world's largest manufacturer of stationery, and also the most notorious for being used to pick locks, from bicycles to laptops.

My toughest times were in the early 1990s when ballpoint pens and gel pens flooded the market and students became weaned off their ink pens. The *desi* fountain pen manufacturers like Wilson, Doric and Plato vanished and most of my contemporaries switched to selling eyewear, mobile phones and watches. But I refused to change.

### THE REWARDS

My wife Amrit, 55, is generally indifferent to pens. But like a doctor's wife she is accommodating. When I am trying to sort out a particularly difficult pen, she doesn't venture near my work station-cum-study room.

**“Some students call me their lucky mascot and use only my pens to write exams”**

When I solve the problem, I run up to her to tell her, and get rewarded with a proud smile. Otherwise, there are very few rewards for a job like mine—my fee is rarely over Rs 100. The bright aspect is that I get to sample some of the finest contemporary poetry, first hand. A couple of

months back, a poet wrote a piece on me as he waited patiently at the counter. His poem totally flattered me.

### MEET MY CLIENTS

Among the regulars is a retired professor from Miranda House, Delhi University, who comes to my store with a briefcase full of Mont Blanc, Waterman and Parker pens. She often asks me, ‘Who will take care of them after I die? My son doesn't even know how much each of these is worth.’ Another customer with an interesting collection works in public relations and has a pen for every occasion. A Cross fountain pen with a fine nib for letters; a Philippe Chariol in 18k matte gold worth Rs 12,000 for signing cheques; a collection of Mont Blanc commemorative pens; a beautiful Cross from its Churchill collection and a Cartier de Blanc. They range anywhere between Rs 20,000 and Rs 2.5 lakh. Once in six months, he brings them to me for a polish and full-body test.

I largely survive because of a bunch of patrons, mainly bureaucrats (who use thick-nibbed fountain pens and turquoise ink for added impact and style), writers, retired professors and students. Students are by far my most difficult customers. They will choose a pen, test it and then return after 10 minutes to exchange it with another for no apparent reason. In fact, some students call me their ‘lucky mascot’ and use only my pens to write exam papers.

### MAKING A COMEBACK

Defying the rules of modernity, the fountain pen is making a comeback, appealing not only to those who want a pen that complements an elegant suit, but also the increasing number of people who appreciate the impression a handwritten note or a letter makes. Schoolchildren will contribute a lot to this change. Already Queen Mary School in New Delhi has made it compulsory for its students to use ink pens in certain classes. And I am hoping more schools will take a cue from this. As for me, I am planning to keep the latest edition of *Pen World* magazine on the counter to pique the interest of these beginners. ■





## BOOKSHELF

## Skein of love

*On Beauty*

By Zadie Smith

Hamish Hamilton;

Rs 345; 445 pages

Were Zadie Smith a weaver, she would have woven carpets of fine silk with hundreds of knots every square inch. A work of patience, skill and beauty, *On Beauty* is a complex, profound and densely woven tale of families of the world. Smith takes you from the sunshine and joy of everyday living into the darkest corners of marriage, revealing amazing secrets of otherwise concealed family values—the many layers of emotions manifesting themselves on the book cover, also a work of art.

Howard Belsy is an Englishman living in America married to Kiki, an African American rock of a woman. A powerful wife to her eccentric, university academician husband (who has recently strayed after 30 years of marriage), Kiki is a wise and patient mother, capable of handling and understanding her three alarmingly different children; each child with their very own take on their parents, each other and on being of mixed race, living in America. Their eldest son Jerome goes to London to live with and work for a Trinidadian



right-wing guru, Monty Kipps. His father's worst cultural and intellectual fears come alive when he falls in love with Kipps' daughter, thus connecting the lives of two families at many levels.

Smith herself is of mixed racial parentage, with an English father and Jamaican mother, which gives the 30-year-old the extraordinary

facility to observe her world from within and outside. She moves gently from political and social references to deeply personal and emotional human patterns; none are disconnected from one another. With clarity and boldness, Smith bares to her reader the deceptions and realities of middle-class black people; of growing up in this new liberal world of freedom and equality that is not so free and equal after all.

Short-listed for the Booker Prize this year, *On Beauty* will remain a work of wholesome understanding of our world as it is today. Having already written three important novels—the other two being *White Teeth* and *The Autograph Man*—Smith has a lot to say and plenty of time to say it in. There will be more shots at the Booker.

—Ritu Nanda

## The joke's on them

Four funny guys pen their laugh lines



He's a stand-up comedian, actor, producer, writer, composer and director. And 68-year-old **Bill Cosby**, who anchored the wildly funny TV show, *Kids Say the Darndest Things*, is also a father of five. **FATHERHOOD** is all about his first-hand experience. Parenting, according to Cosby, comes with zero privacy (even in the bathroom) and at a price—"It takes three-and-a-half-million-dollars worth of toys to distract your kids for about 10 minutes."

Why did he have kids? "I guess the real reason that

my wife and I had children is the same reason that Napoleon had for invading Russia: it seemed like a good idea at the time."

**Berkley Books; Rs 311; 177 pages**

**DAVE BARRY IS NOT MAKING THIS UP** is a collection of columns by, well, **Dave Barry**, Pulitzer prize-winner and humour columnist for the *Miami Herald*. Welcome to life in America, unplugged. Meet his teenage son, who rarely leaves his room except to demand new sneakers; his two dogs Earnest and Zippy; and a bunch of 'UFOlogists' from Florida. Enjoy his take on left-handedness and the hazards of air travel. And savour his column on 'The Worst Songs Ever Recorded', which drew 10,000 responses

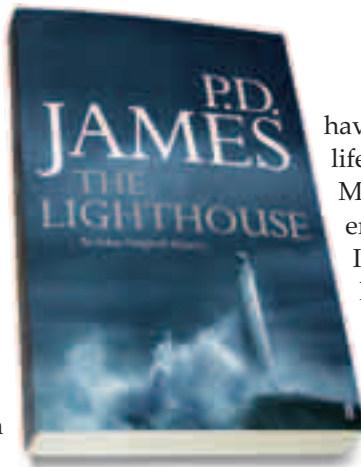


## The plot thickens

*The Lighthouse*  
By P D James  
Faber & Faber  
Rs 595; 323 pages

"All fiction is an attempt to create order out of disorder and to make sense of personal experience," writes P D James. However, she adds, the classical detective story does this within its own established conventions, which includes a central mystery (usually but not necessarily a murder), a closed circle of suspects, a professional or amateur detective who comes in like an avenging deity to solve the crime, and a final solution which the reader should be able to arrive at by logical deduction from the clues. Within the formal constraints of the detective novel, P D James tries to reveal the true nature of men and women under the stress of the ultimate crime.

*The Lighthouse* brings us old favourites Commander Adam Dalgliesh and his team. Set on a secluded island off the Cornish coast, with a history of gore and piracy, the lighthouse of the title has become a retreat for a select powerful group of people from the upper echelons of society. However, when one of them is murdered, Dalgliesh is brought in. The time is not a good one for him or his team—he is



having problems with the woman in his life, Emma Lavenham, while DI Kate Miskin is struggling with similar emotional upheavals, and their Anglo-Indian associate Francis Benton-Smith has tied himself into knots about working with Kate. Yet the team makes headway, until a second savage murder threatens to plunge all their hard work into chaos.

At 85, Baroness James confesses she is unsettled by the speed of passing years but has still managed to find the energy to produce another Dalgliesh mystery. She says she keeps her mind honed with cerebral exercise—the results are visible. This eagerly awaited successor to *The Murder Room* has everything her fans expect of her books: sensitive characterisation, a superb plot and vivid sense of place. And there is a pleasure in seeing familiar themes orchestrated with such finesse: the difficult, aggressive individual who alienates almost everyone around (and thereby sets himself up as a candidate for murder) and the cloistered evocative setting that has been given an imaginative slant freeing it from any sense of cliché. However, *The Lighthouse* is shorter than her normal books, more a piece of chamber music than a symphony.

— Anjana Basu

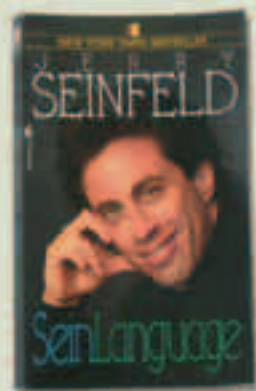


when published. This is insane stuff—but wht the hell, it makes you laugh.  
Ballantine Books; Rs 447; 244 pages

After his starring role in TV comedy *Mad about You*, a send-up of the man-woman dynamic, **COUPLEHOOD** seems an apt choice of subject for comedian **Paul Reiser**. This one's about him and his real-life wife. If you fight with your partner on what to eat, comparative driving skills, shower rights, and her/his (mostly her) capability to start a fight out of nowhere, Reiser's got your number. *Couplehood* is like your favourite movie. Even if you've seen it before, the jokes make you chuckle.  
Bantam Books; Rs 175; 348 pages

Comedian **Jerry Seinfeld**, best known for his Emmy Award winning sitcom *Seinfeld*, has compiled the funniest lines of the show in **SEIN LANGUAGE**. The show ended in 1998, but there's no expiry date on humour. Check out this one: "When I want to avoid people on the street, I would want to become a phone machine and go, 'Excuse me, I am not here right now. If you leave a message, I can walk away.'" Find that funny? Then you'll like the book. And, you may want to catch reruns of *Seinfeld* on *Star World*.

Bantam Books; Rs 335; 180 pages



—Ruchi Shah

# Festive treat or threat?

Hazards of firecrackers far outweigh the joy of bursting them, says **Amita Malik**

**DIWALI WOULD HAVE COME AND GONE BY THE** time you read this. But the situation repeats itself year after year. I stay in a sedate neighbourhood, no *jhuggi* nearby, mostly buildings where working people reside. But it's difficult to read, write, sleep or even rest because of the loud bangs throughout the day and night—courtesy firecrackers. Courts may lay down laws on no noise after 10 pm but no one observes these laws, as under the excuse of religious festivities one can get away with murder.

Conceding that festival noises are the prerogative of the young, there are others who get upset by these loud bangs. Elderly people, small children and animals are the ones to suffer. I know grandmothers who shut themselves up in rooms while their grandchildren light dangerous *pataka*, which go off with ear-shattering bangs. Little children cling to their mothers in terror. And those who have dogs know that even the most spirited of them cower under beds and refuse to go out. Did you read the recent report about a little girl somewhere in southern India who had a heart attack and died on the spot after some loud bangs?

So if the youngsters must have their share of fun and the others must presumably put up with them, what is the solution? It does not lie with the law courts but with better civic sense, which, alas, is lacking in most cities and towns.

According to tradition, even during a boisterous festival like Holi, the elders must be treated with respect. In Bengal, and I am sure in most Indian cities, youngsters apply a little token *abir*, or coloured powder, on the forehead of family elders,

and then do a formal *pranam* either by actually touching the feet or bending low in a gesture seeking blessings. They then go their merry way. Of course, hooligans on the streets still misbehave in most areas, throwing dirty water on trains, cars and other vehicles, but increasingly the police step in and try to keep things as much under control as possible.

One can understand the din while Ravana goes up in flames during Ram Lila, but then Dussehra is celebrated by well-organised public bodies and not by little boys creating a racket in building compounds long before and long after the festival.

I found a remedy for teenagers making a racket under my windows. "Children, I am ill and can't sleep. Could you please go to the park? Thank you," I told them politely. The "please" and "thank you" did the trick. They left with a chorus of "Sorry aunty". I suppose even boisterous youngsters respond to politeness.

As for dangers of handling firecrackers during Diwali, one still gets to read horror stories of young children being blown to pieces while working in fireworks factories. Here laws on fire hazards and the illegality of child labour should come into force and courts as well as civic authorities should be on the alert, which is

not always the case.

Only good civic sense will see us through. Schools, parents, neighbours and the police must step in to keep things under control. Otherwise, the statistics on firecracker accidents will continue to grow, and innocent lives will be ruined forever. ■



**The solution to noise pollution does not lie with the law courts, but with better civic sense**

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



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# Silver crown

For **Dr Varsha Das**, her salt-and-pepper hair is a security blanket, and male magnet

**I NOTICED MY FIRST GREY HAIR WHEN I WAS IN** my early 30s. I was shocked. I wanted to pluck it out quickly before anyone noticed. I managed to do so discretely. No one came to know. But, the next day, another grey hair appeared, and yet another one the day after! But the secret remained a secret.

A couple of days later, when I was standing in front of the mirror, I noticed a few more silver strands standing proud. I was aghast. I quickly looked around. There was no one. I took one grey hair in the grip of my thumb and index finger, managed to hold it at the base and, like an expert, gently pulled it out. The operation was successful. While I was concentrating on the second one, my aunt suddenly popped into the room. "Stop it!" she yelled at me. "Are you mad? When you pluck one grey hair, three black ones turn grey. Don't you know this simple truth?"

Her warning really scared me. I guess she was right. By uprooting the first one, I had sown the seed of multiplicity. From that day, I no longer plucked my greys. Months and years passed by. The grey clan began to breed. I stopped counting. My limited arithmetic could not cope with the bounty.

One fine day, I noticed two silver strips spreading their wings on both sides of my head. I liked them. I thought they made me look distinguished. Anyone above 50 must possess this display of wisdom; else, people don't take you seriously. If it does not happen naturally, fake it. In my case, the narrow bands soon became broad bands. Once I was busy editing a manuscript at my desk. An old friend dropped in without intimation. We were meeting

after more than seven years. Forget any words of endearment or greeting, the first thing she said, rather screamed, was, "You must dye your hair." "What?" I responded in disbelief.

"Dye your hair," she repeated.

"But why should I? I think it looks nice." I was cool.

"Well, because it does not go with your face. Your skin is young and your head is growing old!"

My friend's argument sounded logical but my concerns were different. "Look," I told her, "It's

tough enough keeping men in their 40s and 50s away. If I dye my hair black, a whole new crop of guys in their 20s and 30s will emerge. Have a heart!"

She burst into laughter and said, "I guess you are right." I was right. The men I attract range from ages 50 to 80. Those in their 50s find my face young, and are ready to ignore the grey hair. And those in their 80s find my silver head compatible!

I have to admit that growing old has been fun, and it makes me feel more secure. The 60s are the most beautiful years of your life. There is time to pause, almost no liabilities and, most important, you can lead a life without stress. When I try to understand why I feel so light and cheerful all the time, I realise it is because I have grown wiser. I no longer yell when

someone lies. I do not fume when someone is late. I accept the fact that they are 'like that'. Let them be, and let me remain myself. And as for my hair, I am reminded of the proverb, "Fish starts rotting from the head." My take: (Wo)men start rejuvenating from the head. ■



**The 60s are the most beautiful years of your life. It's time to pause, almost no liabilities and a life without stress**



I am a 61-year-old man based in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. I like working with blind students and try to help and advise them on their education, job opportunities and marriage. I would like to interact with like-minded silvers.  
**Contact Sisodia Inder Singh at (342001) 2708490.**

---

I am 50 years old and can provide accommodation at Goa for a week between December 24 and December 31, 2005, for six persons at Royal Goan Beach Resorts in Benaulim, Salcette, Goa.  
**Contact Alok Tholiya at (022) 26125699; Email: tholiya@yahoo.com**

---

I am a 67-year-old psychological counsellor living in Gurgaon, Haryana. I counsel young people as well as seniors on mental health and emotional well-being. I also suggest career options to teenagers. All are welcome to get in touch.  
**Contact S C Kalra, Wing Commander (Retd) at (0124) 2380287; Mobile: 09313066711.**

---

I am 77 years 'young' and spending my silver days at Meher Retreat. I read books on spirituality, listen to *bhajan* and *ghazal*. Anyone who is interested in interacting with me can call or meet me with prior appointment.  
**Contact Vadrevu Ramarao at 0241-2548797; mobile: 09423166785**

---



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## HEIGHT OF SUCCESS



**Yuichiro Miura**, 72, believes in living life on the edge. The Japanese mountaineer has climbed Mount Everest twice, and is planning a third trip soon. In 1970, Miura became the first person to ski Mount Everest, hurtling more than a mile down the peak's icy flank in less than two minutes. In 2003, Miura (then 70) became the oldest person to reach the roof of the world. In 2008, at 75, he plans to take on Everest again. "If I have to die, I might as well die on Everest," Miura told *Time* magazine. When he's not climbing, he runs an alpine training centre in Tokyo, and works out daily by strapping 20 kg weight to his back and ankles.

## PENSION PEEVES

Twenty-nine years after her husband's death, **Shernaz Gandhi** is yet to receive his pension from the Uttar Pradesh government. Her Gandhi ties didn't help either—her husband Dorab was Feroze Gandhi's elder brother. After the death of Dorab Gandhi, an agricultural scientist, Shernaz shifted from Allahabad to Mumbai and then to Pune. Today, at 86, her financial state is unstable. According to a report in *The Indian Express*, she had to shift to a cheaper Satyanand Hospital in Kondhwa, near Pune, to recover from a hip operation. "My Mediclaim wasn't renewed after I turned 75. I need to be able to look after myself financially." Things may change. A day after the newspaper report, a government official called on her, apparently sent on Centre's behest, to inquire about her state.



## FOOTLOOSE AT 70



On 9 October, **R P A Narayanan's** Indian Gymkhana team won a first division football match against Tata Power, held in Mumbai, 4-1. Narayanan didn't score but was happy to be in the defending wing half position. And why not? At 70, he's apparently the oldest man in first division football. "The credit goes to my wife Shanta for letting me play at my age. I have to equally thank my coach K P Krishnan of South India Welfare Society High School (in central Matunga, Mumbai)," he stresses. "I represented Bombay State from 1961 to 1962 and also participated in Tokyo Olympics in 1964. But a few years later, I was disappointed when I wasn't picked to play for Bombay State," he says. But that didn't deter him. "It's my enthusiasm that keeps me going," he says.

## VISITORS



### SEPT 28-OCT 2

**Who:** **Sheikh Hasina**, 59, leader of the Awami League, Bangladesh's top opposition party

**Agenda:** Officially, a pilgrimage to the dargah of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at Ajmer Sharif. She went to the dargah on 29 September, day after her 59th birthday. "When you come here you find some kind of spiritual peace," she said.

**Extracurricular activities:** She also had a string of high-profile engagements with top Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

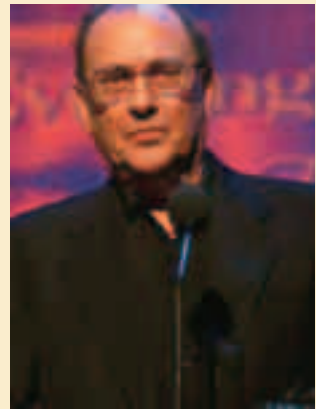
## MILESTONES



**Launched.** 'Oprah's Child Predator Watch List' by chat show queen **Oprah Winfrey**, 51. Just 48 hours after the show was aired on 7 October, Federal Bureau of Investigation agents picked up two paedophiles—William Carl Davis, 33, from North Dakota was held following a tip-off from a couple of viewers, while Niles Scott, 50, was trapped in Belize City. Oprah will feature one paedophile every week with a \$100,000 reward (over Rs 45 lakh) for the informer.



**Awarded.** The Booker Prize for 2005 to Irish writer **John Banville**, 59, for *The Sea*. The award carries with it prize money of £50,000 (about Rs 40 lakh). The story of *The Sea* revolves around the protagonist's efforts to deal with his past in a town where he spent a childhood holiday. In 1989, Banville was short-listed for *The Book of Evidence*, but didn't make it. He is the second Irish author to win the prize, after Roddy Doyle in 1993 for *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*.



**Awarded.** The Nobel Prize in literature to British playwright **Harold Pinter**, 75. The citation read: "Pinter restored theatre to its basic elements: an enclosed space and unpredictable dialogue where people are at the mercy of each other and pretence crumbles." Originally an actor in provincial theatre, Pinter has written 29 plays so far. He wrote his first play, *The Birthday Party*, in 1957. His other works include *The Room*, *The Dumb Waiter*, *The Caretaker* and *Betrayal*.

## IN PASSING

Holocaust survivor **Simon Wiesenthal** dedicated his life to tracking down Nazi war criminals and bringing them to justice. With no background in intelligence or investigation, sheer determination drove him to trace and help capture over 1,100 Nazi war criminals, including mass murderers. Wiesenthal, 96, died on 20 September in Vienna, Austria.



Carnatic vocalist **Madurai N Krishnan** received several awards, including the UNESCO award (1970), Sangeet Natak Akademi award (1988), Padmashri (1992) and Padma Bhushan (2003). Krishnan was trained by his father, Hari-katha exponent Narayana Iyengar. He passed away on 10 October. He was 76.



## BIRTHDAYS



*Harmony's* cover boy **Dev Anand** turned 82 on 26 September. On his birthday, he was busy shooting a rap song for his latest film *Mr Prime Minister* at Gateway of India, Mumbai. After a whole day's shooting, he spent time with his fans, who had come to wish him. His response to his age: "I'm full of energy. It's the love of my fans and friends that keeps me going."



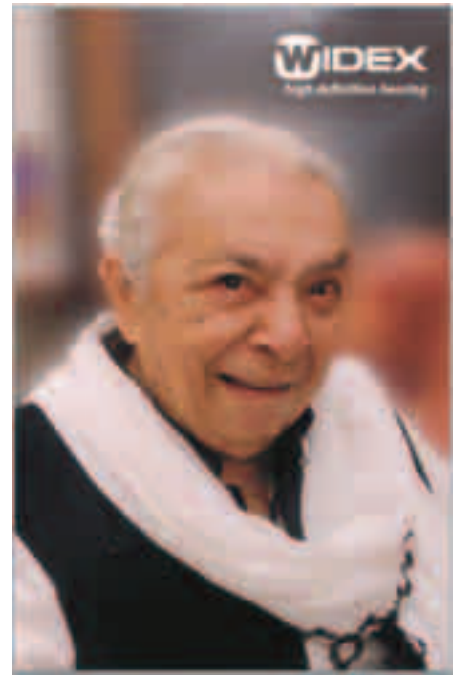
Melody queen **Lata Mangeshkar** celebrated a quiet 76th birthday on 28 September with family members at Khandala, near Pune. Did you know that between 1942 and 1948, she acted in eight Hindi and Marathi films? Along side, she made her debut as playback singer in the Marathi film *Kiti Hasaal* (1942), but the song was edited out!



Former British prime minister **Margaret Thatcher** turned 80 on 13 October. Her birthday celebration was attended by Queen Elizabeth, Tony Blair and other dignitaries in London. Interestingly, Thatcher wasn't able to open her birthday presents until a day later as they were not delivered directly to her for security reasons.



**Amitabh Bachchan** celebrated his 63rd birthday on 11 October with fans queuing up outside his bungalow *Jalsa* in Juhu, Mumbai, to wish him. Among them was Rajan Soni, a car mechanic, who had cycled 1,400 km from Delhi to personally wish his hero. He got his wish. He returned home with a promise that he will surely be back next year to wish his idol.



### At 92, how's my Hearing doing? First Class!

#### Thanks to Senso Hearing Centre

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— Zohra Segal, 92, Actress & Theatre Personality

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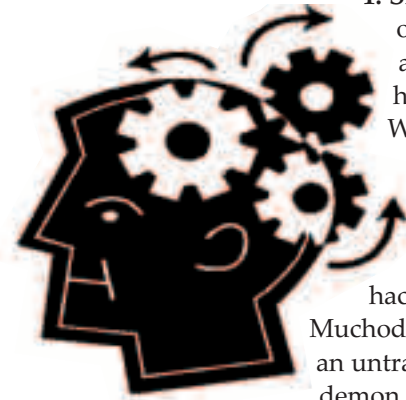
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## HEADSTART

## BRAIN GYM

## FIGURE IT OUT



**1. Shopping at Tommart:** While Thomas is shopping at Tommart, he picks out six items that he wishes to purchase. He has a magazine, an orange, a hose, a television, and an apple. Which of the following six items did he also buy? BELT, KAZOO, LANTERN, SANDWICH, CHAIR, WATERMELON.

**2. What's the password?:** Linda, a private eye who never ceases to astound everyone by how quickly she can wrap up a case, is out to solve yet another crime. It seems that someone has mischievously hacked into the online database maintained by the Manydollar Muchodinero Corporation, and changed their password. The hacker then sent an untraceable email that reads: "Doctors divine dominion darts doom dealing demon devotees 55244522." Within a few minutes, Linda has found the new password, allowing the company to get back on track. Our super sleuth makes a few suggestions about how to protect against this type of problem in the future before leaving, but only after collecting her fee for another job well done. What was the password? Hint: It is an actual word.

**3. Math test:** Five students take a calculus test on which the lowest possible score is 0 and the highest possible score is 100. The five students, Mary, Erik, Tawana, Josh and Leslie, each got different scores. Tawana outscores Erik by eight points; Josh scored 1? times what Mary scored and 10 points higher than Leslie, who scored two points higher than Erik. The second highest score was 89. What score did each student achieve on the test?

Courtesy: [www.puzz.com](http://www.puzz.com)

## MEMORISE IT

## THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

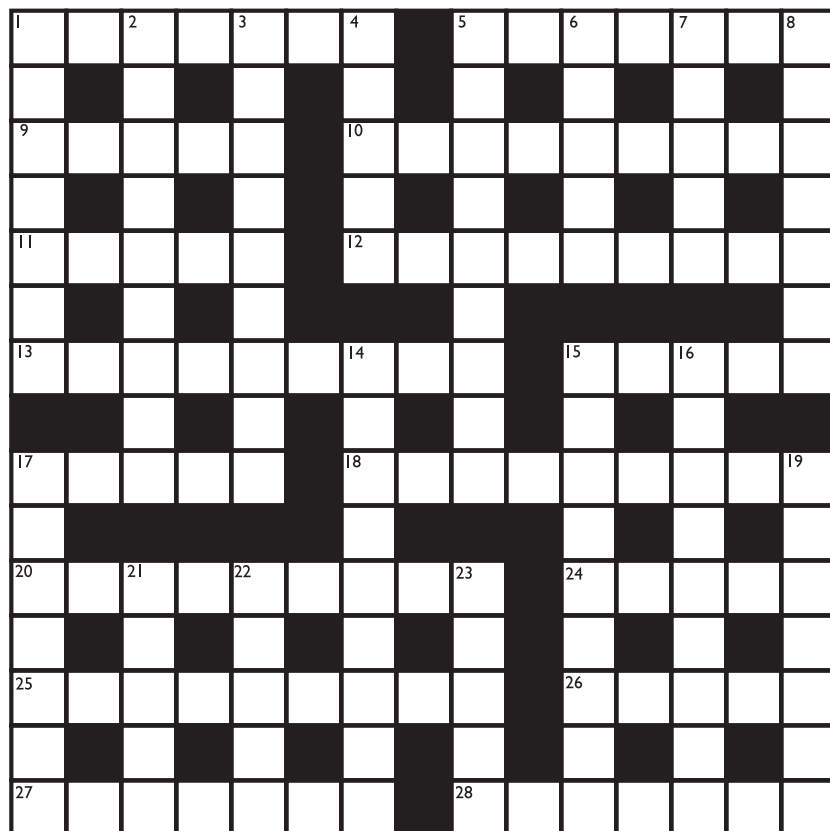
Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
 Who never to himself hath said,  
 This is my own, my native land!  
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,  
 As home his footsteps he hath turn'd  
 From wandering on a foreign strand!  
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well;  
 For him no Minstrel raptures swell;  
 High though his titles, proud his name,  
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;  
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
 The wretch, concentred all in self,  
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
 And, doubly dying, shall go down  
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,  
 Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

By Sir Walter Scott

This is Canto VI, Stanza 1 of one of Sir Walter Scott's (1771-1832) best known poems. The Scottish writer and poet is widely believed to be the originator of the historic novel beginning with *Waverley* in 1814. This poem, written in 1805, deals with a 16th-century border feud.

The story is told, over a century and a half later, by an ageing minstrel who receives hospitality at Newark Castle from Ann, Duchess of Buccleuch. In return, he recites a tale concerning the Duchess's family. It's a magical story of passion, devotion, longing and, above all, love of the land.





## EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 14

**By Raju Bharatan**

### ACROSS

- 1 Pic last viewed within ban taking some enforcing? (7)
- 5 Reflecting the Navratri spirit and having *diya* going around (7)
- 9 Ridicule Tsar return carrying nothing (5)
- 10 Smooth driving Arif turning at pet inside (4, 5)
- 11 As return due before 10, this meter used for chemical analysis (5)
- 12 The Sandra falling just before Divali (9)
- 13 School House Bharata Natyam exponent Ratna retreating to

- confront Accountant Officer (6, 3)
- 15 March Past witnessing Al accommodating badminton ace Svend (5)
- 17 All that Umpire David Shepherd needed to have with the player acting funny? (1, 4)
- 18 In Shah all in-between, God willing (9)
- 20 No fluke, that six pulled off by Salim Durani going whizzing past Tony Greig at silly point? (1, 4, 4)
- 24 Even more 'man to man' than you think? (5)
- 25 Employing it time and again, firm hand with which the football referee supervised the game (4-5)

- 26 Lairs changing Spanish money (5)
- 27 Ready for the knockout punch? (7)
- 28 Word-play specialist keenly touching the mind (7)

### DOWN

- 1 Asperse the truly gentle community? (7)
- 2 The 1952 Hemen Gupta-crafted Bankimchandra classic in which Geeta Bali-Pradeep Kumar, Lata-Hemant gave such rousing expression to Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram! (5, 4)
- 3 Jane Russell comeback suggesting her playing the bosomy tart? (3, 3, 3)
- 4 How many of them have in the case of the fodder scam! (2-3)
- 5 The Marilyn Monroe That Never Was? (5, 4)
- 6 Something you daren't suggest in the case of Rin Tin Tin (2, 3)
- 7 Class in which we senior citizens once travelled to save middle-class face? (5)
- 8 As answer old city (7)
- 14 Gets chair for the German Parliament (9)
- 15 Some sticker is the status-symbolic suit in your wardrobe! (1, 6-2)
- 16 Contest spelling out time for one to hand on the baton? (5, 4)
- 17 What you had to be to preside over the 1960 Filmfare Awards show at Bombay's Regal Cinema (1, 6)
- 19 How hungry Sania looks, for all her looks (4, 3)
- 21 Suggests Ajit Agarkar's having, at last, at least broken his duck (2, 3)
- 22 What odds on Madhur Bhandarkar's making a film centring upon him? (5)
- 23 The Kangaroos still can get any opposition in the world... (2, 3)

For answers, see page 79

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

**NEW TIPS FOR BEGINNERS:** A whole variety of clues goes into framing a cryptic puzzle. For instance, the anagram. The clue here could be: *Unresting opponent of authority* (*Unresting* being the 9 letters of *insurgent* rearranged). Another variety of clue is the palindrome—*DEIFIED*, when viewed backward or when viewed up in a Down clue, reads *DEIFIED* all the way. Next, there could be the clue (8-letter answer) reading: *Complete view of daughter sandwiched between parents*—*PANORAMA* (*PA/NORA/MA*). The 8-letter solution to the clue, *The framework of our constitution*, is *SKELETON*. At times, what looks straight could prove tricky. For example, the clue, *How we stand*—has *UNITED* for its 6-letter answer. The clue, *How we fall*, has *DIVIDED* for its 7-letter answer. The clue, *Walls have them yet they hear not*, has *EARS* for its answer. Next, *pertinacity* could split into *Pert* in a city, *face* to *face* into *facet* of *ace*. For *ANISEED*, the clue could be: *Carminative I see inside and outside*—*AN(I SEE)D*. The possibilities are endless.

## LAUGH LINES



Three sons left home, went out on their own and prospered. Getting back together, they discussed the gifts they were able to give their elderly mother. The first said, "I built her a big house." The second said, "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver." The third smiled and said, "You remember how mom enjoyed reading the Bible? And you know she can't see very well. So I sent her a remarkable parrot that recites the entire Bible. It took elders in the church 12 years to teach him. Mama just has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot recites it."

Soon thereafter, mom sent out her letters of thanks: "Chris," she wrote to one son, "The house you built is so huge. I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house."

"John," she wrote to another, "I am too old to travel. I stay most of the time at home, so I rarely use the Mercedes. And the driver is so rude!"

"Dearest Michael," she wrote to her third son, "You have the good sense to know what your mother likes. The chicken was delicious."

An 80-year-old man's golf game was hampered by poor eyesight. He could hit the ball well but he couldn't see where it went. So his doctor teamed him up with a 90-year-old man who had perfect eyesight and was willing to go along to serve as a spotter. The 80-year-old man hit the first ball and asked his companion if he saw where it landed.

"Yes," said the 90-year-old. "Where did it go?" the 80-year-old demanded. The 90-year old replied, "I don't remember."

Mrs Nair went into the doctor's office. When the doctor asked why she was there, she replied, "I'd like to have some birth-control pills." Quite surprised, the doctor thought for a minute and then said, "Excuse me, Mrs Nair, but you're 75 years old. What possible use could you have for birth control pills?" The woman responded, "They help me sleep better." The doctor thought some more and continued, "How in the world do birth-control pills help you sleep?" Mrs Nair said, "I put them in my granddaughter's orange juice and I sleep better at night."

An old man was wondering if his wife had a hearing problem. So one night, he stood behind her while she was sitting in her chair. He spoke softly to her, "Honey, can you hear me?" There was no response. He moved a little closer and said again, "Honey, can you hear me?" Still, there was no response. Finally, he moved right behind her and said, "Honey, can you hear me?" She replied, "For the third time, yes!"

## SAY IT OUT LOUD

When ideas fail, words come in very handy.

— German writer, philosopher and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

There is nothing that can be said by mathematical symbols and relations which cannot also be said by words. The converse, however, is false.

— American mathematician C Truesdell

For I am a bear of very little brain and long words bother me...

— Winnie the Pooh, character from author A A Milne

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.

— Austrian philosopher and writer Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)



## STRONG REACTIONS

**Asthma Allergy Centre**  
Gurukripa, 1st Floor,  
66, Hindu Colony Lane-1  
Dadar (East), Mumbai: 400014  
Tel: 022- 24105656/6969

**Allergy Research Institute,**  
Sinhagad Road, N R Canal  
Bridge, Vadgaon Budruk,  
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## SPEAK

**Dr K Khurana**  
Vishwas, 291, sector 22, HUDA,  
Gurgaon: 122015, Haryana.  
Tel: 0124-2369148

36



58



80



## EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 14

### ACROSS:

1 plastic: p(last)ic—last viewed  
within pic; 5 dandiya: d(and)iya  
—diya going around and; 9  
ROAST—R(O)AST: TSAR  
return carrying O (nothing); 10  
FIAT PETRA: FI(AT PET)RA —  
Arif turning at pet inside; 11  
eudio—eud/io (reference to  
eudiometer—eudio is due, as  
return, before 10); 12 Dhanteras (The Sandra, 9 letters  
of Dhanteras rearranged); 13 (Bharata Natyam  
exponent) SHANTA RAO: SH(ANTAR)AO—SH,  
short for School House, ANTAR, Ratna retreating, to  
confront AO (Accountant Officer); 15 APRIL—  
(A/Pri/l), Al accommodating Pri (Svend), the  
badminton ace; 17 a chat; 18 Inshallah—Insh(all)ah: In  
Shah with all in-between; 20 a long shot; 24 gayer; 25  
stop-watch (held inside left palm, while running, by  
football referee); 26 rials (5 letters of lairs changed);  
27 reeling; 28 pungent (means 'keenly touching the  
mind', pun/gent is word-play specialist)

### DOWN:

1 Parsees (7 letters of asperse rearranged); 2 Anand  
Math; 3 tit for tat; 4 co-fed; 5 Diana Dors; 6 no pet; 7  
Inter (rail class once there); 8 Asansol—As/ans/ol'—  
As answer old; 14 Reichstag (gets chair, 9 letters of  
Reichstag rearranged); 15 a hanger-on; 16 relay race;  
17 A Nasser (President Nasser was the VVIP  
attraction at the 1960 Filmfare Awards); 19 hard set;  
21 on one; 22 Gawli; 23 to hop

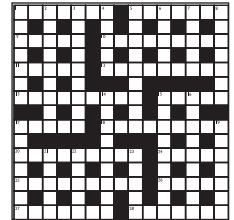
## SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

1. The sandwich. The first letter of  
this word, along with the first  
letters of the other products  
picked by Thomas, spell out his  
name. The store name is a hint.

2. Ointment. Reverse the order  
of the numbers given, then  
from beginning to end, it is the  
number of the letter in each  
word that forms the password.

3. The scores are: Josh—93; Tawana—89; Leslie—83;  
Erik—81; Mary—62.

77



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PHOTO: AJAY GOYAL; TEXT: TEENA BARUAH

**“It was heartbreaking for my wife Kalpana and I to watch our daughter Leena gradually slipping into insanity. For years, we didn’t notice it. In fact, my wife has never forgiven me for it and she lives on her own in London. That’s why I founded Vishwas. It is not a dumping ground for unwanted relatives, but a place of hope. Families should act promptly after they detect the symptoms of schizophrenia in a loved one. Any delay only complicates matters.”**

*When radiologist Dr Krishan Khurana (second from left), 72, returned to India in 1996 after 35 years of practice in London, he couldn’t find a suitable institute to help his 28-year-old daughter Leena, who suffers from schizophrenia—a psychotic disorder characterised by withdrawal from reality, delusion and hallucination, accompanied in varying degrees by emotional, behavioural or intellectual disturbances. In 2000, with funding by the UK-based Richmond Fellowship Society, Dr Khurana established Vishwas, a home that offers day-care facilities and accommodation for a period of 12-18 months, for a monthly fee of Rs 10,000, in Gurgaon. It follows a ‘therapeutic community approach’ of encouraging members to take care of themselves with minimal supervision. Vishwas, which has housed 150 patients since 2000, has contributed to around 30 successful recoveries. However, Dr Khurana warns that chances of relapse are as high as 70 per cent. Unfortunately, he can’t help his own daughter, who now lives in an asylum in Bangalore.*

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