

OCTOBER 2009 Rs 30

# harmony

*celebrate age*



## and the winners are

**Dr Alan Davis Alappat Mukesh Anand**  
**Meenakshi Balasubramanian**

**Dr Ganesh Narayandas Devy Asa Dutta**

**Dr Sister Jude Pradeep Kshetrapal**

**Anupam Mishra Sindhutai Sapakal**

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# Silver spotlight

It's that time of the year again when silver power takes its rightful place.

The third annual Harmony Silver Awards will be held on 1 October at Mumbai's Rabindra Natya Mandir. Our winners will claim the stage so the world can recognise their achievements, laud their commitment and salute their drive. Their incredible stories bring the pages of the magazine alive this month; their lives a testament to the triumph of the human spirit. Read on, and be inspired.

While honouring our silver heroes, the event will underline *Harmony's* motto, 'Celebrate Age'. Our guest of honour is actor and Bharatanatyam dancer Hema Malini, whose beauty, grace and talent have only intensified over the years. And our compere for the evening is the inimitable Farida Jalal, who tackles character roles and comedy with equal dexterity and elegance, whether it is theatre, television or the big screen. We are indeed privileged to have their company at the Awards. Their presence, no doubt, will add some extra sparkle to silver at the event!

Keeping with the tenor of the occasion, the evening's programme has been chosen to not just entertain but also provoke thought. What better vehicle to accomplish this than satire at its best? Ad-man, actor and writer Bharat Dabholkar and his troupe have regaled audiences across the country with *Bottoms Up*, the most performed 'Hinglish' play in the history of Indian theatre, which takes a light-hearted look at urban realities. At Harmony Silver Awards, they present *Best of Bottoms Up*, a customised version of the play that contains highlights from the original as well as special scenes featuring a silver cast that are sure to strike a chord with the audience. Rounding off



Donald Woodrow

the evening will be a musical extravaganza by composer-singer Anu Malik, who will sing his most popular tunes.

To put together such a special evening, my team at Harmony for Silvers Foundation has worked full throttle for several months and I commend them for their dedication and commitment to the silver cause. Further, my sincere thanks to our presenting sponsor S Kumars Nationwide Limited; airline partner Kingfisher; radio partner Big 92.7 FM; retail broadband partner Reliance World; broadband partner Reliance Broadband; DTH partner Reliance Big TV Digital Service; telecom partner Reliance Mobile; and outdoor partner Laqshya Media Private Limited for their support.

Finally, I am delighted to tell you about the best part of this year's show: everyone's invited! Both television channel CNN IBN, part of Network 18, and Big TV DTH will telecast highlights from the show. The date and time will be announced on [www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org). Be sure to tune in—and watch silver sizzle in the spotlight.

*Tina Ambani*

## A Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust Initiative

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# column one

Recently, *Tehelka* magazine released a special issue on ageing gracefully—a glimpse of what India's who's who thinks is the 'elixir of youth'. *Harmony* is proud to have generated the kind of interest mainstream publications are now taking in silvers. Some years ago, focus on elders and their concerns in newspapers and magazines was limited to nostalgia. In the past five years, especially after *Harmony's* launch in June 2004, the focus has shifted to living a new life after retirement. The *Tehelka* issue featured 55-plus citizens from all walks of life and their views on the advantages years bestow on them. Veteran lawyer Ram Jethmalani sums up the essence in one of the features, "I pity people who don't wake up early."

Do take Mr Jethmalani's (and *Harmony's*) advice and top off your day with the best you can give yourself, your family, friends, neighbours and society at large. In other words, live actively and age gracefully. The motto of *Harmony* extends to Harmony Silver Awards, held every year in October since 2007.

We host the third chapter of the Awards this month. Our 10 winners are ordinary silvers with extraordinary will power, dedication and selflessness. They have used their years judiciously and braved the winds of changing times and left an indelible mark on people they have helped. Their work in preserving our culture, sensitivity and sensibility, and a whole generation goes a long way in reinforcing our trust in humanity.

The Award to honour them is just a small token of recognition of their efforts. It's also a gentle reminder to youth (and silvers) to rise and shine.

—Meeta Bhatti

I believe my friend Jugal Kishore Rath reflects *Harmony's* motto—'Celebrate Age'—and I would like to tell you more about him so that he can be an inspiration to many silvers who read your magazine.

This 63 year-old owner of a successful chartered accountancy firm retired so that he could devote more time to society. As a member of the Sajag Nagarik Manch in Pune, he remains alert to injustices caused to the public by the municipal corporation, electrical supply and distribution department, and the transport department. He has successfully used the Right to Information Act to address improprieties by LIC and the income tax department. What's more, he is a fitness enthusiast who has taken part in long-distance cycle rallies all over India. He also regularly participates in the 'enduro' rallies organised by the National Defence Academy in Pune and the 21-km Mumbai Marathon. In fact, he celebrated his birthday by running 63 rounds of the Deccan Gymkhana ground! He is truly an inspiration to us all.

**Wing Commander (retd)**

**Y L Marathe, Pune**

I am the promotions director for two radio stations in Fort McMurray, Alberta, in Canada. I was reading articles online on Indian industrialisation and development when I came across a mention of Harmony for Silvers Foundation. Within a few minutes, I found myself reading all I could about it on the Net.

I believe the issue you have taken up is not an easy one to deal with, especially when our elders are so intertwined with their families and hesitate to step out and live just for themselves. It is an every-day struggle but I am glad you did

not shy away from the enormity of the situation. I would love to be a part of this effort in any way that I possibly can. One way or the other, I know I am going to be an avid follower of Harmony.

**Shivika Sharma, Via email**

I came across *Harmony* magazine and was amazed to see the encouragement you give silvers. I am writing to tell you about my mother, Geeta Kishor Dhuru. She will soon turn 63 but her beauty—inner and outer—would put even a 16 year-old to shame.

She is meticulous in her attire, a great host who can cook for a crowd of 25 in a jiffy; keeps a beautiful home; and is the first on the dance floor at any party. A trained beautician, she also stitches clothes, teaches girls how to drive, and takes orders to make sweets during Diwali. And when I am at work during the week, she looks after my two daughters. Despite all this, she makes enough time for her interests, like playing the synthesiser, learning Hebrew and travelling. She is a perfect example that age cannot stop us from living life to the fullest and achieving our dreams.

**Yogeeta Tate, Via email**

I would like to share some important information with my fellow silvers.

On 4 August, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare communicated in official correspondence that under the National Programme for the Care of the Elderly in the 11th Five-Year Plan, it would develop 30-bed healthcare units for the elderly in 25 medical colleges in India; 10-bed geriatric units at district hospitals in 100 districts; a physiotherapy unit at



community health centres; a weekly OPD for the elderly and 'health mela' at primary health centres. Further, it will develop 200-bed National Institutes of Ageing, with a total allocation of Rs 400 crore. These will be apex referral institutes with a focus on the development of specialised manpower, research in gerontology and patient care.

**M V Ruparelia**, *Via email*

I am writing to tell your readers about our organisation 'BANCH-BO—Healing Touch'. Established in 2007, it provides 24x7 emergency and preventive healthcare for silver citizens in Kolkata. At present, 215 senior members enjoy a healthy, secure life with our support.

For any sort of medical help, elders can call our helpdesk—033-30027304, 65160058, 9903388556—around the clock. Readers who wish to know more about our services can visit our website [www.banchbo.org](http://www.banchbo.org)

**Dr Dhires Kumar Chowdhury**, *Kolkata*

I would like to mention that I found some errors in the puzzle "More or Less" ('Headstart', September 2009) when I attempted to solve it. I hope that you will check your puzzles more carefully before publishing them next time.

**Niranjan Mehta**, *Via email*

I was delighted that *Harmony* featured the sari (and also a very nice picture of me!) but am upset at some of the errors in my profile. First, I am not the chairperson of the Dastkari Haat Samiti, a quite separate organisation headed by Jaya Jaitly. My own organisation is Dastkar. Second, the sari I was pictured wearing was embroidered, not woven in the *kan-*

*tha* tradition of Bengal, and embroidered by Takdira, not Taptira Begum. And the dear girls with whom I share my saris are my Dastkar colleagues, not my assistants!

And, last but not important, though I have nothing against experimentation and contemporary design, I strongly deplore synthetic saris with Swarovski crystals when there are so many exquisite, indigenous handcraft traditions of weaving and ornamentation that remain unexplored.



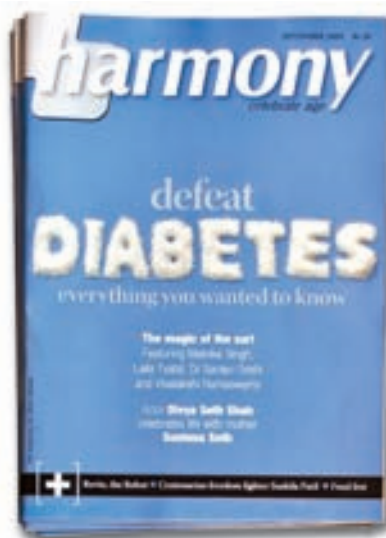
Please do print this letter in the next issue of your magazine, as I am receiving raised eyebrows from friends and fellow handloom sari devotees!

**Laila Tyabji**, *Chairperson, Dastkar Society for Crafts & Craftspeople New Delhi*

#### CLARIFICATION

**We sincerely regret the above mentioned errors.**

—Editors



I helped establish the National Information Centre for Drugs and Pharmaceuticals at the Central Drug Research Institute in Lucknow. I retired as the organisation's head. Currently, I am the convener of CSIR Pensioners' Welfare Association (CPWA) in Mumbai. The association has just completed a year and plans to work for pensioners' health, security and financial planning.

I recently read *Harmony's* September 2009 cover feature on diabetes ("Defeat Diabetes—Silent Killer") and found it to be excellent. Packed with all the information on the disease, it is the most in-depth coverage on diabetes I have ever read. I congratulate the team's efforts made to collect the data and news and present it to readers in a comprehensive capsule.

However, I have a suggestion to make. It would be good if you could, in the next issue of the magazine, include the names and addresses of manufacturers of the different glucometers, insulin pens as well as mention the locations in different parts of the country where diabetic shoes are available. This would be of great help to diabetes patients.

**Dr S S Iyer**, *Mumbai*



THE WOMEN FROM  
GUWAHATI'S SLUMS ARE  
SELF-RELIANT TODAY.  
THEY FOUND THEIR  
SILVER LINING  
IN ASA DUTTA.



## PRESENTING THE WINNERS OF HARMONY SILVER AWARDS 2009.

At a time when women did not have a voice, 80 year-old Asa Dutta gave the women from Guwahati's slums a reason to smile. She empowered them by starting an adult literacy programme and free tailoring lessons. Her firm leadership helped hundreds of women become independent. Asa Dutta, their incandescent beacon of hope, is a winner of Harmony Silver Awards 2009 – an award that pays tribute to silver citizens who have made a difference in the golden years of their lives.

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O» MEDIA WATCH

## Rock 'n' Redemption

**I**t is the most delicious of ironies. Iconic rocker Pete Townshend, who wrote *My Generation*, a song he confesses was "probably the most explicitly ageist song in rock" with the lyrics "I hope I die before I get old", is now taking an introspective look at ageing with *Floss*, a musical that will premiere in 2011. Guitarist with The Who and writer of successful rock operas like *Quadrophenia* and *Tommy*, the 64 year-old will tackle the issues faced by his generation through the plot of his musical: the difficult relationship between a suddenly wealthy ageing rocker and his wife. "I want to take on ageing and mortality using the powerfully angry context of rock 'n' roll," he tells Reuters. "We need to address the uneasy relationships between parents, children and grandchildren and find ways to overcome them."



0»NEWSWORTHY

## Maharashtra ON THE MOVE

**A** draft of the Maharashtra State Policy on Older Persons (MPOP)—prepared by the International Longevity Centre-India, Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development and Administration (Yashada), the Federation of Senior Citizens Organisation, Maharashtra (FESCOM), and various senior citizens' organisations—was recently presented to Chief Minister Ashok Chavan. Its recommendations include a separate directorate for senior citizens; appointment of a secretaries committee; budgetary provisions;

and operationalisation and proper enforcement of existing laws for the welfare of the elderly.

Other issues discussed in the policy include the needs of the rural elderly and the urban poor; the role of civil society; welfare activities; family and community support; housing for the aged by the private sector; mobilising the elderly for productive work; research in gerontology and geriatrics; and media and advocacy. “The aim of this state policy for senior citizens is to empower them to lead a productive, proactive, secure, healthy and participatory life,” V Ramani, director-general of Yashada, tells media. “The policy urges that all government schemes and programmes should be designed while taking the needs of senior citizens into consideration.”



## ACT OF commitment

**A**lthough the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007) is yet to pick up the required momentum, there have been some heartening developments of late. On 23 August, **Madhya Pradesh became the 14th state to notify the Act**, joining Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Tripura. Meanwhile, **silvers in Chandigarh will get legal support in protecting their rights under the Act**, the administration announced. A special state council committee has been formed to address their grievances and decide the maintenance allowance under the supervision of the union territory's social welfare department. The Act entitles silvers to maintenance from their children and heirs, failing which they have the right to legal redress.



**OCTO-IDENTITY:** OCTOGENARIANS IN INDIA CAN NOW USE THEIR VOTER ID CARDS AS PROOF OF AGE FOR AVAILING RETIREMENT AND OTHER AGE-RELATED BENEFITS. THE MOVE FOLLOWS A REALISATION BY GOVERNMENT THAT MANY SILVERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE LIVING IN RURAL AREAS, MAY FIND IT HARD TO PRODUCE TRADITIONALLY USED DOCUMENTS OF PROOF OF AGE, LIKE PAN CARD, MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE, PASSPORT OR DRIVING LICENCE.







## HOMES BY LIC

*On the heels of its Care Homes complex in Bengaluru, LIC Housing Finance will build homes for silvers in Jaipur and Bhubaneswar. The complex will have around 90 dwelling units; the size of the residences and costs are yet to be announced. "We have acquired 7 acre in Jaipur and are waiting for permission to start construction," company chief executive RR Nair tells media.*



For more details, go to [www.lichousing.com](http://www.lichousing.com)

O» FIRST RESORT

## Sun, sand, SILVERS

Goa now has its first retirement village: **Bougainvilla-Hermitage**. Located in the tiny village of Nachinola, 5 km from Mapusa in North Goa, the project has 60 apartments for sale—studio apartments (579 sq ft) for Rs 1.62 million; superior apartments (869 sq ft) for Rs 2.43 million; and executive apartments (1,158 sq ft) for Rs 3.24 million. All apartments are air-conditioned and silver friendly, with wheelchair elevators, modular kitchens, wheelchair-accessible toilets, grab rails, large-sized switches and emergency alarms. Apart from an infirmary and ambulance service, the village, which has been designed in traditional Goan-Portuguese style, will feature amenities such as a restaurant, swimming pool, health club and spa, and prayer and meditation hall. To optimise personal growth, regular entertainment programmes, fitness and cultural activities will be organised by the management and residents. The project also features green technologies like rainwater harvesting, solar water heating, sewage and garbage treatment and solar lighting. Developed by Goa-based real-estate company Homes & Estates, the village is open for booking and is expected to be ready for occupation in 24 months.



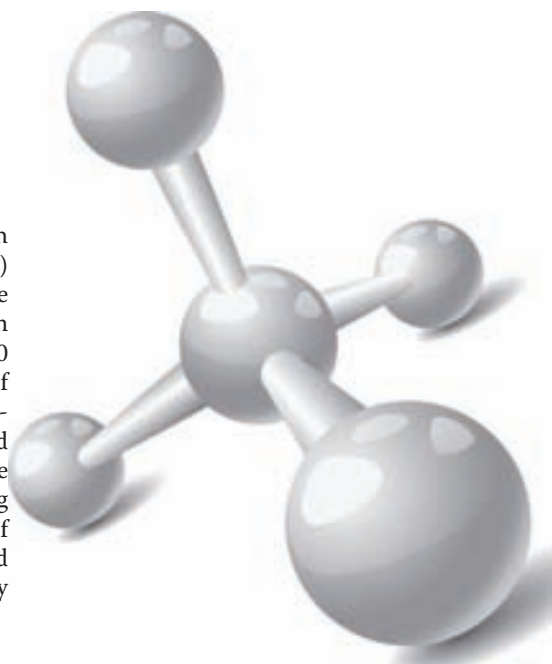
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## O»ANALYSE THIS

## Magic molecule

**D**eactivating a single molecule is all it may take to delay the ageing process in organs like the pancreas. In an experiment using genetically modified mice, scientists from Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*Star) and the University of North Carolina School of Medicine in the US discovered that **reducing the levels of the protein p38MAPK can delay the ageing of multiple tissues**. In the five-year study, the pan-

creas of a two year-old mouse in which the molecule (also found in humans) had been deactivated functioned like that of a three month-old mouse. In human terms, this translates to a 60 year-old man having the pancreas of a 20 year-old. At the same time, forcibly activating the molecule caused insulin resistance, leading to Type 2 diabetes in the mice. "This finding will greatly assist in the prevention of Type 2 diabetes and other age-related disorders," lead researcher Dr Dmitry Bulavin tells *The Straits Times*.



## Appearances matter



**Y**our face could be a mirror to your health. According to psychologists at Edinburgh University, **men with symmetrical faces are less likely to lose their memory and intelligence** in later life. They compared reasoning and reaction time with measurements of facial symmetry in 216 men and women studied since 1932 and found that men with matching left and right sides were less prone to mental decline between the ages of 79 and 83. They believe that facial symmetry may indicate a man

has experienced fewer genetic and environmental disturbances such as diseases, toxins, malnutrition or genetic mutations during his development. Interestingly, the finding does not apply to women—possibly because DNA has a different effect on ageing among women. "Previous research has suggested that cognitive decline is an aspect of body-wide ageing," writes study author Dr Lars Penke in journal *Evolution and Human Behaviour*. "Now it appears facial symmetry can be used as a marker to predict this decline."

**ANTI-AGEING, THE AGENDA:**  
OVER 1,000 ANTI-AGEING EXPERTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD WILL REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS IN ANTI-AGEING AND AESTHETIC MEDICINE AT THE ANTI-AGEING CONGRESS IN DUBAI, TO BE HELD ON 8-9 NOVEMBER 2009. UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF DR ROBERT GOLDMAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD ANTI-AGEING ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, DELEGATES WILL DISCUSS UPGRADATIONS AND ADVANCEMENTS IN COSMETIC, LASER AND PLASTIC SURGERY; AESTHETIC PROCEDURES; BIO-IDENTICAL HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY; MEDICAL WEIGHT LOSS AND NUTRITION; AND MESOTHERAPY AND STEM CELL THERAPIES.





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**ONLINE IN OZ:** RECENTLY AUSTRALIA'S 'MINISTER FOR AGEING' JUSTINE ELLIOT LAUNCHED TWO WEBSITES ON PRODUCTIVE AGEING: [WWW.PRODUCTIVEAGEING.COM.AU](http://WWW.PRODUCTIVEAGEING.COM.AU) AND [WWW.PRODUCTIVEAGEING.PUBLICHEALTH.GOV.AU](http://WWW.PRODUCTIVEAGEING.PUBLICHEALTH.GOV.AU). THE ONLINE TOOLS PROVIDE DATA ON RESEARCH AND EDUCATION AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON REGIONAL ACTIVITIES AND STATE-SPONSORED PROGRAMMES.

## O»EVENT



## Pain prevention

In association with orthopaedic products manufacturer Zimmer India, Harmony for Silvers Foundation organised an **awareness camp on arthritis and knee pain in Vikaspuri, New Delhi**, on 6 September. Over 100 silvers attended the camp with a team of doctors led by orthopaedic and spinal surgeon Dr Neelabh, a consultant with institutions such as Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Kalra Hospital and Primus Super-Speciality Hospital. Silvers who attended the camp received

medical advice and information on age-related orthopaedic problems, the anatomy of the knee and hip, and self-help techniques. Take the case of 74 year-old Mohini Makkar who has suffered severe pain in her left knee for the past two years. "I have been living on painkillers, which have also elevated my blood pressure levels," she says. "Camps like these are valuable because we learn about the various treatment options open to us that can tackle the problem at its root."

## O» MEDIA WATCH

### MODEL RE-RUN

**REAL STYLE NEVER GOES OUT OF FASHION.** One of the best-known models of all time, Twiggy shot to fame in the 1960s as a precocious 16 year-old with a wide-eyed, reed-thin, gamine appearance—she graced magazine covers, advertisements and posters across the world. Now, **the British style icon is back in the glossies, at the age of 60, in a new campaign for Olay Definity**, an anti-ageing range for women between 50 and 65 that promises "to go beyond fighting the appearance of wrinkles", as the media release announces. "We believe in using age-appropriate models to target consumers," says Carla Berry, spokesperson for Procter & Gamble, which owns the Olay brand. "Twiggy is a relevant role model for mature modern women today."





## IN PASSING

Former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, **Y S R Reddy** passed away on 2 September in a helicopter crash on Rudrakonda Hills in Kurnool. He was 60.

American agronomist and Nobel Laureate **Norman Borlaugh**, globally acclaimed for developing disease-resistant wheat varieties, died of lymphoma in Dallas on 12 September. He was 95.

American actor **Patrick Swayze**, who shot to fame with his roles in *Dirty Dancing* and *Ghost*, died of pancreatic cancer on 14 September. He was 57.

## BIRTHDAYS

- British actor **Jeremy Irons** turned 61 on 19 September
- Italian actor **Sophia Loren** turned 75 on 20 September
- Science-fiction author **Stephen King** turned 62 on 21 September
- Rock star **Bruce Springsteen** turned 60 on 23 September
- Evergreen superstar **Dev Anand** turned 86 on 26 September



**FREE RIDE:** SILVERS IN NEW YORK CITY MAY SOON GET FREE BUS AND CAB RIDES FOR GROCERY RUNS AND DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENTS. THE BRAINCHILD OF MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, THE PROJECT IS UNDERGOING A TEST RUN IN THE SUBURB OF BROOKLYN WITH UNUSED SCHOOL BUSES.

## promotion

## Dental Implants



Dr Gunaseelan Rajan is oral consultant and maxillofacial surgeon at Rajan Dental Institute, Chennai.  
Contact no: 044-284746480

**Q1. I am 58 years old and have been recently diagnosed with osteoporosis. Can I have dental implants?**

**Ans:** Osteoporosis or osteopenia is fairly common today. Implant supported dental prosthesis can be done for such patients. However, precautions should be taken in planning the treatment sequence, especially if you are taking bisphosphonates.

**Q2. I had lost my upper front tooth in an accident. My dentist mentioned about bone graft before doing an implant. Is this absolutely necessary?**

An accurate assessment of bone morphology can be made with the dental CT scan. A software-based guided surgery (NobelGuide) can be used to place the implant accurately even when moderate amount of bone is present. If, however, there is very little bone to place an implant, some form of graft should be used.

**Q3. I am 68 years old and wear complete dentures. I keep hearing about dental implants. Can it be done even at this age for me?**

There is no outer age limit for dental implants. The general health status is important in determining if dental implants are indicated or contraindicated. Your implant dentist can examine and guide you accordingly.

**Q4. I have lost all my upper jaw teeth due to gum disease. My dentist feels that there is very little bone for a fixed denture supported on implants. Are there any new options in such situations?**

Certain implant systems such as Nobel Biocare have very advanced implant systems such as 'Zygoma Implants' and 'All on 4' techniques, which can avoid bone graft in the upper jaw and will give the patient the option of implants and fixed teeth. You should look at such advanced graftless implant options.



Dr Jane

# Barratt

## Older in a foreign land:

A look at the ageing process vis-à-vis migration across continents

**G**lobal ageing is not only about low fertility rates and longer life expectancy; it is also about the migration of people around the world and the impact this has on societies, businesses and cultural practices. When I first travelled to the UK some 30 years ago, I was the first in my family to take a trip overseas. Now for many of us plane travel is sometimes a weekly or monthly occurrence, whether it is to visit family or for business.

Many of us had never thought of living anywhere else but in our homeland. Once, we were bound to the land where our ancestors were buried. But now it's not unusual for children to live in one country, have cousins in another, and grandparents and parents in yet another. Growing old in some countries can mean being isolated from your immediate family, and this is especially difficult for people whose culture reaffirms their strong family and clan ties. In many countries you are defined by your family, by community. When you lose that, you lose a big part of who you are—you lose your identity.

Political, economic, and historical forces play an important role in shaping global migration patterns. Who leaves their country of origin, why

they leave, where they go, and how they get there, all profoundly influence the life experiences of migrants, their originating countries and their communities.

Culture is, and always has been, central to development. As a natural and fundamental dimension of people's lives, culture must be integrated into development policy and programming. A high dependency upon ethno-cultural services has created an unmanageable demand on relatively few professionals and community workers, many of whom are not adequately equipped to respond to the cultural norms of older people. Also many multicultural communities themselves do not fully recognise the value of elements and sources of mainstream programmes. 'Silos' are growing as a consequence of a lack of knowledge, and knowledge transference and exchange. Social exclusion and marginalisation rather than inclusion is a mounting concern.

Often the image of migration focuses on people of working age. However, people migrate at any age during their life, growing older in places far different from their homeland. Currently, around 17 per cent of the total number of migrants are aged 60 years and over (United National Development Programme, UNDP), and this proportion is higher in Europe and Oceania. Central to an understanding of migration is that it is a disruptive life event with short and long-term implications on ageing. Furthermore, international migration poses questions concerning cross-cultural understandings of ageing, national and international

policies about older immigrants, and the best ways to enable active ageing in a multicultural context.

A bridge needs to be built between mainstream and ethno-cultural services so that the cultural determinants of health and wellness and the associated cultural 'norms' of self help, holistic care and the role of families in multicultural communities are incorporated into mainstream programmes. Without such a bridge, globally we will see a continued rise in a lack of tolerance and understanding and a widening of the cultural divide. This climate of change and acute vulnerability raises new challenges to our ongoing pursuit of universal human rights. How can human rights be reconciled with the clash of cultures that has come to characterise our time? Cultural background is one of the primary sources of identity. It is the source for a great deal of self-definition, expression, and sense of group belonging. As cultures interact and intermix, cultural identities change. This process can be enriching, but disorienting. The current insecurity of cultural identity reflects fundamental changes in how we define and express who we are today.

Let us look at some examples of the impact of migration on people as they age.

### ELDERLY IMMIGRANTS IN FINLAND

The number of elderly immigrants coming from the former Soviet Union living in Finland has grown almost threefold over a decade. Yet immigrant grandmothers and grandfathers have not been much discussed so far





ageing. The ageing process emerged as an elusive force that lurked in the background without ever being fully acknowledged or given power in their lives.

### INDIAN IMMIGRANTS GROWING OLDER IN CANADA

In 2000, Professor Neharika Vohra from the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad conducted a study on the life satisfaction of Indian immigrants in Canada. It is a common perception that immigrants face numerous problems and considerable stress in the process of adjustment to a new culture. During the course of the study it was found that Indian immigrants judge their own well-being in comparison to their peers back home, the majority white community in Canada and other Indian immigrants. Satisfaction was also predicted by the discrepancy between what they have in Canada and what they feel they could have had if they had stayed in India, with respect to raising children, freedom in making day-to-day decisions, opportunity to realise personal goals and amount of respect. Life satisfaction was associated with perceived discrimination, guilt over leaving the country of birth and perception of social support, but not with education, socioeconomic status, or perception of everyday comforts.

Migration is now an essential, inevitable and beneficial component of the economic and social life of every country and region. Older migrants today are more visible, active and independent than ever before. However, with the high rate of urban migration across the globe, many countries are now facing the complexity of a rapidly ageing ethno-cultural population. This growth and complexity provides a range of challenges for practitioners and policymakers.

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*Dr Jane Barratt is Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing*

in Finland. Some immigrants are almost illiterate, while others are highly educated. The only factor connecting them all is their migration into a foreign country. The older people take a long time to build a social network as many remain outside working life and schools, and it is particularly difficult for those who do not speak the language of their new home country.

Group activities are organised for ageing immigrants by various organisations and congregations in order to prevent marginalisation and isolation. Municipalities are encouraged to take more responsibility for this immigrant group. For most immigrants, it is difficult to cross the threshold and join pensioner organisations—this is not the norm in their home country.

### IRANIAN WOMEN IN CANADA

Older Iranian women, who immigrated to Canada in later adulthood, experience unique issues as they age. Research (Shemirani and O'Connor, 2006) shows that although there were personal differences and idiosyncrasies, all women highlighted the critical interweaving of the ageing experience and the immigration experience. Neither experience could be understood in isolation of the other; each aspect gave meaning to the other experience. Two interrelated messages dominated the women's stories: first, the importance of immigration in the context of the ageing process. Second, cultural identity (i.e., social class, education, religious affiliation and immigration status) offered a valuable cloak to overshadow the force of



# Mimlu Sen

## Coincidence or contingence:

Life, imaginary and real,  
inspires artist Sakti Burman

**A**n autumn afternoon in Paris, suffused with the colours of a Sakti Burman sky—cobalt blue speckled with russet and gold. The artist cordially welcomed us to his Haussmannian apartment in the 15th arrondissement in Paris where he was just settling back after the summer months spent in India. Paban and I gazed enthralled at his paintings and those of his wife Maite and his daughter Maya, all hung side by side like a holy family, transforming walls into mirrors of infinite divine life. Paban sang, pinching and coaxing soft notes from his *dotara*, and I clicked on my cymbals. Music from our sphere rose to join the music of the sphere we found ourselves in. The figures surrounded us like enchanted witnesses of magical and transformative events.

Sakti Burman was born in 1935, to a warm and loving family. He lived in a land of boats and rivers, shimmering waters and skies, and moved at the age of 16 to study art at Government Art College in Calcutta. In 1956, he chose Paris as his next destination and studied at the Beaux Arts where he was blessed by destiny in the form of the tall and strong Maite Delteil who became his life mate. This early and successful marriage was the real grid on which Sakti built his art and the secret of his great success. Each explored the world of the other. Sakti



Harmony Archives

and Maite went on pilgrimages together; they travelled to Ajanta and Ellora, to Puri and Konark; together they explored the works of the great Italian masters.

Being Indian has given Sakti the faculty of reaching freely into the depths of time to seek inspiration.

India is a unique country in that different epochs of history coexist and interrelate. The versatility and utter freedom of this great painter derives from his mastery over memory and time, and his total liberty in drawing from the imaginary life of wherever he has found himself. This he does with punch and humour, facility and



grace, recalling the frescoes of ancient Buddhist masters as much as those of the Venetian masters Tintoretto, Veronese and Titian, reminding us of the luscious forms of Fragonard, Bonnard and Renoir as well as the tranced heroes and heroines from the *potua* paintings of Bengal where sensuous, westernised couples are surrounded by fabulous heraldic creatures from the folk tales in Komilla district, now in eastern Bangladesh.

Sakti chattered with us like a magpie, telling us a story as he cleaned his easel and wiped his paintbrushes carefully with turpentine. Maite and Maya came and went making sure that we were comfortable. He had drawn the blinds partially in his apartment while he had been away in India. When he returned, he found that a female dove had nested on his balcony wedged between the two blinds, roosting on eggs. So Sakti went out and bought a pigeon coop from a pet shop, installed it on the side of the balcony, carefully placing the pigeon along with her nest of eggs in the coop. The mother dove did not protest. Sakti noticed that her mate sat on the parapet of a building across the road watching him. After flitting about for a while, in short excursions to and from this vantage point to the newly installed nest, the male dove seemed to accept this new hearth. Sakti noticed him visit her from time to time with gifts of food but he mostly remained at a distance, on the mansarded roof of the house across the road, carefully watching over his lady.

The eggs hatched. A single fledgling covered with sheen of fluffy down emerged from one of the eggs. The male pigeon flapped and flew in rap-turous circles, ecstatic.

Sakti, happy that his initiative had worked, settled down to his painting and was soon absorbed in it. Suddenly, a harsh crow call, an explosion of black feathers outside his window and an alarmed cackle from the pigeon signalling danger broke into his medi-

tation. Alas, too late, a wicked crow had descended on to the pigeon's nest and made off with the fledgling. The pigeons, male and female, consoled each other. The mother pigeon, bereft, still sat in her nest.

The male pigeon left the nest and crossed over to his usual perch across the road, waiting for her to compose herself again. The pair who had been his companions for a short while flew off into the heavens.

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### The versatility and utter freedom of this great painter derives from his mastery over memory and time, and his total liberty in drawing from the imaginary life of wherever he has found himself

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We took the Autobus No. 62 to return home to our little apartment in Chinatown in the 13eme arrondissement a few kilometres east in a dream-like state, both of us moved by the mutual devotion of the couple we had left behind us. They had created a rich magnetic field of imaginary life without boundaries of east and west. Hari Kali, the winged horse of Malanchamala, neighing, flapped its wings over our heads. A peacock cried raucously to an enchanted shepherd boy. A fakir accompanied Paban's song on a harmonium. A child balanced on a swing, lost in innocent dreams. A man in a hat held a gun to the head of Krishna who played his flute insouciantly. And Maite's more surrealist paintings of fruitful, luscious trees and birds in flight.

They have successfully transmitted this vast memory to Maya Burman,

their daughter, already a great painter in her own right, heralding the birth of a post-modern, Franco-Indian *gharana*. Maya had the delicate fairy tale imagination of her French mother crossed with the sheer fiery passion of her Bengali father and a distinct playful world of her own.

Next dawn, I was awakened by a loud cooing and gurgling from the balcony outside our window. Paban was asleep so I pulled the blinds halfway to peep out. To my amazement, a pigeon sat on the soil of a rubber plant in our balcony. When Paban awoke later, we stepped into the balcony. Now here was a coincidence; a female dove was there to nest. Opposite us on the mansarded roof of the school building was a male dove watching his mate anxiously.

The next morning, we found that the dove had flown to sit with her mate leaving behind a couple of eggs. Paban smiled from ear to ear. In villages in Bengal, it's believed that a house where pigeons nest and hatch is considered to be blessed by Laxmi. We were aware of the mysterious and profound link, though purely coincidental, between Sakti and us, as if somehow the birds shared our confidences, our meridians.

We telephoned Sakti, in the days that followed, to give him useless bits of news. How the male dove hovered in a meridian that stretched from our balcony to the red-tiled school roof. How every day he brought gifts for his mate—a leafy branch, a bit of bread, a nut, a fruit. Finally, the pearly grey eggs hatched. Two fledglings, all skin and bone, emerged; one stronger than the other. We had to move house then as our tenancy had come to an end and left behind those fledglings. But those doves bonded us with Sakti forever in an invisible meridian of imaginary life.

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Mimlu Sen is an author, musician, and translator. She lives in Paris

# This year's silver lining



**W**e are proud to introduce you to 10 silver achievers whose compassion, commitment and passion for their cause have brought hope and purpose to thousands of lives. Some of them have endured pain to bring happiness to others, some have become a voice to those who have lost their own, and others have overcome every hurdle to pave the way for others. They are the winners of Harmony Silver Awards 2009.

The winners were selected from the 'Hotlist' of achievers we compiled through the year. To ensure a fair, unbiased selection, we commissioned a jury comprising luminaries from different fields: S Sridhar, chairman and managing director, Central Bank of India and chairman, National Housing Bank; artist Manu Parekh; Vir Sanghvi, editorial director of *Hindustan Times*; eminent jurist Fali Nariman; renowned cardiac surgeon Dr Devi Shetty; and award-winning actors Sharmila Tagore and Anupam Kher.

The selection process was anything but easy. There were many silvers who didn't make the final cut, but everyone was worthy of a standing ovation. We salute each one of them and urge silvers everywhere to come forward and follow their dream. Your best is yet to come.

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**Harmony Silver Awards 2009**  
**Venue: Rabindra Natya Mandir, Mumbai**  
**Date: 1 October 2009**

*The programme will be telecast on CNN IBN. For programme schedule, log on to [www.harmonyindia.org](http://www.harmonyindia.org)*



## The Winners



Dr Alan Davis Alappat



Mukesh Anand



Meenakshi  
Balasubramanian



Dr Ganesh  
Narayandas Devy



Asa Dutta



Dr Sister Jude



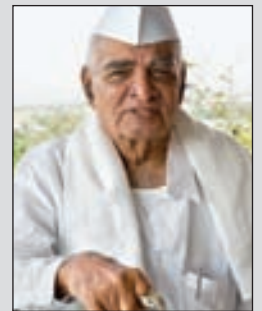
Pradeep Kshetrapal



Anupam Mishra



Sindhutai Sapakal



Bhausahab Santuji Thorat

## The Jury



(Top row) Sharmila Tagore;  
Anupam Kher; Dr Devi Shetty;  
Manu Parekh  
(Bottom row) Fali Nariman;  
Vir Sanghvi; S Sridhar

“I would love to leave the world  
knowing I made a difference”

Dr Alan Davis Alappat . 59 . MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA

✦ Rajashree Balaram  
📷 Jit Ray & Preeti Singh





He offers free treatment to tribals, free polio vaccines to babies and generous time and affection to AIDS-afflicted children. Just some reasons why the people who know Dr Alan Davis Alappat love him so much

**D**r Alan Davis Alappat deeply misses his daughter Lisa, a doctor who is married and settled in Kansas in the US. “When she visits Mumbai on her annual two-week visit, all she does is sleep through jetlag the first three days,” he complains with endearing petulance. For a man who spends 18 hours a day in his clinic—and found a place in the *Limca Book of Records* last year for having administered free polio vaccines to 19,580 children—Alappat may be justified in demanding more time with his family. But last month, the doting father was not there to see off his 26 year-old daughter at the airport when she went back to the US. He was 130 km away from Mumbai in rural Talwada tending to Warli tribals. The 59 year-old doctor drives down to the remote village every alternate Sunday and has been doing so for the past 14 years—without skipping a single visit. Clearly, the workaholic silver leads life at a punishing pace.

Alappat leaves home at 6 am from his residence in Malad, accompanied by his compounder, in a white Maruti Omni that also doubles up as an ambulance. When we reach Talwada on a rain-washed morning, we find a picturesque little village, one whose bucolic beauty is eclipsed by the poverty and misery of its inhabitants. Gaunt faces. Eyes emptied of hope. Clothes threadbare and tattered. And malnourished bodies bearing marks of leprosy, alcoholism, tuberculosis and virulent scabies. Outside his clinic a buzzing throng of men and women wait patiently, many with babies in their arms. As the jovial, gregarious doctor walks in, bleak eyes light up and wide smiles fill the room. In the two hours that follow, Alappat attends to more than 175 patients. And he does not merely diagnose and of-



**Dr Alappat made arrangements for a free corneal transplant from a local eye bank for Madhukar Chavan**

fer free medicines—he chats, jokes, laughs and scolds, while handing out orange-flavoured biscuits to each child. The easy camaraderie is clearly honed over years of patience and perseverance. Though a South Indian, he is perfectly at ease with the local Warli dialect. As he administers injections to infants, he makes gruff animal sounds to distract them. It soon becomes evident why villagers prefer to wait it out for Alappat’s fortnightly

visit, though there is a municipal hospital 12 km away. The cheerful doctor never arrives empty-handed—he brings biscuits, toothbrushes, school uniforms, blankets, slippers, clothes, woollens, pencils, notebooks and even benches for the primary school in the village. On every visit, he spends approximately Rs 5,000 on medicines and fuel—part of the expenses are sponsored by Carmelite of Mary Immaculate (CMI), a missionary body.





In the past two decades, Alappat has spent over Rs 3.5 million on the cause. Though a lot has come from his pocket, a significant sum is also donated by generous friends. Two of his doctor friends in the US send him \$ 1,000 every year. Alappat wryly admits that he could have been in their shoes. But in 1972 when he finished his MBBS from Topiwala National Medical College in Mumbai and decided to go to the US, his father who was a clerk in the railways could not afford to pay for his education abroad. Alappat set up a small clinic in Malad, which soon grew into a flourishing practice. In the early 1990s, on a volunteer mission organised by the CMI, Alappat first came to Talwada. Stumped by the sheer poverty and lack of health-care in the village, he decided to offer free treatment to the villagers every alternate Sunday. For the first six months, his efforts were funded by Germany-based Carl Kubel Foundation. Later, he had to manage funding on his own. Over the years, he has treated over 20,000 villagers in Talwada and cured 400 people of

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Every month, Alappat offers retroviral treatment to HIV-afflicted children in Asangaon at an institution run by Helpers of Mary, a missionary charity body

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leprosy. Somewhere along the way, he also turned friend, counsellor and saviour to the villagers. Over the years, he has installed two bore wells to provide 24-hour water supply to the villagers. Last month, he purchased a milking cow for the village, which delivers eight litres of milk daily that is fed to 40 children everyday.

“He is always thinking up new ways to improve the lives of the villagers and is quick to implement any welfare programme I suggest,” says Father Joy Kalliyath, 38, from CMI. Kalliyath and Alappat are now working on a rain-

water harvesting project that could provide year-long drinking water to the villagers. Just behind the clinic, they have blasted rocks to create a pond that accumulates rainwater and diverts it into a nearby well.

In 2003, Alappat set up Sneha Sadan, an old age home for silvers abandoned by their families. The home is managed by nuns of the Francis Clarist Congregation. On every visit, Alappat offers free treatment and spends time talking to the silvers. “During the three hours he spends with us, we forget all our worries and loneliness,” says 60 year-old Kanchan who lives at Sneha Sadan. Recently, Alappat drove one of the residents to JJ Hospital in Mumbai for a complex intestinal surgery and arranged it free of cost through his contacts in the medical fraternity.

Alappat does not care to dwell on such “small acts of kindness”. But people who have been touched by his benevolence don’t find it easy to forget. Dharma Maggi, a 62 year-old

**Administering free polio vaccine to an infant at his clinic in Malad; (opposite page) treating patients at his fortnightly clinic at Talwada**

farmer who had developed acute cirrhosis owing to alcoholism, looks upon Alappat with all the reverence assigned to a deity. "For 20 years, I was an alcoholic till he talked me out of it and helped me cope with withdrawal," says Maggi, his leathery face breaking into a toothy smile of gratitude.

The villagers did not always adore Alappat. When he started out in Talwada in a 10 X 10 clinic—which wasn't even fitted with a toilet—the area around his clinic was desolate all around. Over the years, Alappat planted hundreds of teak and fruit-bearing trees in the area. Initially, one of the village elders, Janu, was against the idea of Alappat's clinic as he felt such facilities could only bring in more urban infringements and tempt villagers towards the city. One day, when Alappat came on his fortnightly visit to the clinic, the roof was broken and the furniture damaged. Though he found out that the vandalism was instigated by Janu, Alappat chose to ignore the hostility. Later Janu approached Alappat when his son was struck by tuberculosis. "If I get bogged down by the hurdles I face, I will never get around to doing anything," says Alappat who packs in as much kindness as he can in his busy schedule.

For the past 20 years, he has also administered free polio vaccines at his clinic in Kurar village at Malad in Mumbai every Wednesday—a feat for which he entered the *Limca Book of Records* last year. "Many women who bring in their babies for vaccination were once vaccinated by me," he says with a proud smile. At the clinic, we meet 62 year-old Madhukar Chavan, who took voluntary retirement a few years ago when he lost his eyes in a freak mishap at the factory where he was working. Alappat arranged a free corneal transplant surgery through contacts in the medical fraternity and

goodwill at a local eye bank for which he has performed over 500 free eyeball removal surgeries on corpses.

Though he works from 7.30 to well past midnight on most days, he finds time to spread more sunshine. Every month, Alappat visits HIV-afflicted children in Asangaon at an institution run by Helpers of Mary, a missionary charity body. Besides offering the children free retroviral treatment, he takes them out on picnics and spends time talking and playing with them. "I love children and am recharged by their innocence," says Alappat who cherishes the little time he gets to spend with his grandchildren: six year-old Jasmine and two month-old Alisha from son Dennis and one year-old Aryan, the son of daughter Lisa.

Alappat's wife Shobha—also a doctor—and son Dennis have adjusted to his zealous passion for various causes. "He works tirelessly and rarely gets enough time to spend with us," says Dennis, 35, who, like the rest of the family, is a doctor. "But his selfless passion only makes me more proud of him." Dennis fills in for his father at his clinic in Talwada when Alappat takes a break in January for a 12-day pilgrimage to Shirdi. Though a devout Christian, Alappat respects every faith. He walks all the way to the shrine in an arduous six-day journey. "That's the only free time I have for myself, when I leave all my worries behind," says the doctor. It's likely he uses that time to think up more ways to give back to the world.





**"Work is the best therapy"**

**Mukesh Anand . 59.** GURGAON, HARYANA

◆ Nitika Bajpayee    📷 Mihir Singh





Having transformed the lives of many polio victims and war-wounded soldiers, Mukesh Anand now aims to improve the lot of cycle-rickshaw pullers. Here is a man of many ideas



Anand took the initiative to fit cycle-rickshaws with ice-boxes for selling water and cold beverages

In 1957, among the countless Indians who were entranced by the film *Mother India*, there was an impressionable seven year-old boy from Jabalpur. It was the first film Mukesh Anand had ever seen and he left the theatre awestruck by Sunil Dutt. Today, having helped to successfully rehabilitate polio victims and war-wounded soldiers, Mukesh Anand is no less of a hero. And just as heroes seek new challenges, he has found another battle to wage; this time on behalf of a ubiquitous yet invisible part of society: the cycle-rickshaw *wallah*.

His weapon is a simple, yet ingenious idea: ice-boxes in rickshaws. The genesis lies in a trip to Mumbai he took in November 2008. "I was on an auto-rickshaw but I had to stop the driver continuously to buy drinking water,"

recalls Anand, speaking to us over a cup of coffee at Barista, "his second home". "When I was about to get off the rickshaw, I told him to keep an ice box in his auto to save him frequent stops and earn some extra money." Anand has no idea if the driver took his advice. But even after returning to Gurgaon, where he lives, the idea stayed in his head. A walk through a local slum, where he witnessed the plight of the rickshaw pullers sleeping on the roads, their children studying under lampposts, only strengthened his conviction.

In March this year, he spoke to two cycle-rickshaw pullers in Gurgaon, who directed him to their contractor Sharifudin. After convincing him of the merits of the scheme, on 1 May Anand got five rickshaws fitted with ice-boxes at a cost of Rs 4,000 as an

experiment. "The pullers were game as they realised they had the chance to make some extra money," he recalls. "As I have been associated with beverage company PepsiCo for some time now, I was also able to get water bottles and cold drinks at subsidised rates." The experiment worked—by 30 May, each puller had earned Rs 600 extra. "I was a little sceptical about the idea initially," confesses Sharifudin, who has over 30 pullers working for him. "I wondered why people living in a posh area like Gurgaon would buy water from a rickshaw puller! But the response has been great. The extra money will help us support our children and give us a great moral boost, which is very important for deprived people like us."

Now that the word is out, over 200 cycle contractors want in—and Anand



Anand initiated 'Healing Touch' to help those afflicted with polio; with sepoy Om Prakash, the first beneficiary of Mission Vijay 2

will not disappoint. He has managed to get Corporation Bank to finance ice-boxes for over 8,000 rickshaws. "As winter is now knocking at our doors and the demand for cold water will dip, we will begin full-fledged operations next March," says Anand. "I also want to launch luxury rickshaws with curtains and cushioned seats as well as cold drinks. People will be happy to shell out Rs 5-10 more and each rickshaw puller would be able to take home about Rs 1,000 extra every month."

Just one more success in a life whose trajectory changed one fateful day in 1997. Anand was a distributor for German automotive company Mico-Bosch in Jabalpur when an accident left him on crutches. "The doctors told me I may never be able to walk again without crutches," he remembers, the pain still raw. "I realised the agony of the physically challenged and those afflicted with polio. I swore that if I started walking again, I would dedicate my life to helping the less fortunate."

Anand was back on his feet in a year and made good on his promise. With the help of the local chapter of the Ro-

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"I realised the agony of the physically challenged and those afflicted with polio. I swore I would dedicate my life helping the less fortunate if I started walking again"

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tary Club, he initiated a programme called Healing Touch. Under this scheme, Rotary International provided spark plug cleaning and testing equipment worth Rs 15,000 free of cost to 11 people afflicted with polio. In turn, Bharat Petroleum allowed them to set up kiosks to clean and maintain spark plugs at their outlets in Jabalpur. "I wanted to make them independent so they do not feel ashamed about their disability," says Anand, who is trying to revive the initiative with the help of more corporate houses. "I wanted to change their lives."

Anand's own life changed following the outbreak of the Kargil conflict in 1999. On a visit to Jabalpur, Lt Gen S S Grewal, the Army's adjutant

general who is responsible for the welfare of troops, learned of his work and requested him to undertake a similar project to rehabilitate the war-wounded. It was a heaven-sent opportunity for the man who always wanted to be in the Forces. "I missed the chance when I was 20 but I felt I finally got to serve the Army at the age of 50!" he says, showing us his "unofficial uniform", a white linen shirt and navy blue tie embroidered with the flags of the Indian Armed Forces. In fact, Anand made his presentation at Army Headquarters in New Delhi on his 50th birthday, on 7 March 2000, and his project was given the green light. Punjab National Bank also came on board, agreeing to sanction loans up to Rs 100,000 for ex-servicemen to start up their new ventures.

Once again, the idea behind the aptly titled 'Mission Vijay 2' was simple, but effective. "Many corporate houses were struggling to find a foothold for their products in rural markets because of lack of infrastructure and facilities," explains Anand. "If they employed these disabled soldiers, most of whom come from villages, as their dealers, they could penetrate these markets effectively. And for the



soldiers, it spelt financial and emotional rehabilitation.”

The Army offered him its backing but no money—it was up to Anand to steer his mission. For starters, he had to move to the National Capital Region and operate the project from a one-room unit. “It wasn’t easy initially as I gave up my lucrative dealership and moved to Gurgaon but my wife Ritu supported my decision,” says the proud husband, who calls his wife and sons Siddharth and Pranav his pillars of strength.

Their faith wasn’t misplaced. Anand first approached PepsiCo with his idea; the company agreed and also offered him a small retainer. “We started life from scratch,” he recalls with pride. “My father had predicted that my life would be transformed after the age of 50. And here it was!” On the heels of PepsiCo came an arrangement with engine oil manufacturer Castrol and Mission Vijay 2 was in business. “Mr Anand had to convince me very hard to invest Rs 50,000 in a booth to sell

Castrol products in Pali village in Faridabad, Haryana,” recalls Sepoy Om Prakash, the first ex-serviceman to benefit from the project. “Now, I have a monthly sale of over Rs 100,000 from the products. I also have an agency to sell Pepsi. Today, I earn between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000 as profit every month, more than twice what I earned in the Army. Mr Anand has made me self-sufficient and confident.”

Prakash’s words are echoed by over 1,500 ex-servicemen from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, who are rebuilding their lives, thanks to Anand’s efforts with companies like JK Tyres, Apollo Tyres, Mico-Bosch, Honda, Bharat-Shell, Bajaj and Kelvinator, apart from PepsiCo and Castrol. “It is perfect business sense,” says Anand. “Future growth will come from rural areas that have more than 70 per cent of the Indian population; this calls for a different mindset.”

Anand’s ‘different’ ideas have brought him his share of awards. Now an ad-

visor to both PepsiCo and Castrol, in 2007, Anand received the Harvey Russell Inclusion Award from PepsiCo Chairman and CEO Indira Nooyi for his social initiatives. And this December, he will be honoured by the British House of Lords for his work to rehabilitate soldiers.

But accolades mean little without good health. This April, the avid golfer had a bit of a scare when his blood sugar level shot up to 514. The doctors advised Anand to start insulin injections immediately but he demurred, preferring to focus on his cycle-rickshaw project instead. But here’s the thing: by the end of May, just as the returns started coming in to the five rickshaw pullers, Anand’s blood sugar level dropped, naturally without insulin, to 130. The doctors are calling it a miracle but Anand knows better. “Work is the best therapy,” proclaims the self-confessed “people’s person,” who gains inspiration from Robin Sharma’s *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* and the writings of Deepak Chopra. “We just have to keep working. And living.”

#### Anand helps ex-servicemen rebuild their lives in different ways







"Each one of us has a  
spark inside us"

Meenakshi Balasubramanian  
62. MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA

◆ Anjana Jha 📷 Jit Ray

In Meenakshi Balasubramanian's world, people with physical and mental limitations discover that there are no limits to what they can aspire and achieve. This soft-spoken silver is helping redefine the abilities of the differently abled

**Y**ou cannot look away from the intensity in Meenakshi Balasubramanian's eyes. There is an unwavering quality to her gaze that's almost audacious—'dare me', it says. Look around and you realise this audacity is contagious. At the Mutually Beneficial Activity (MBA) Foundation in Powai, Mumbai, which she established eight years ago, people with cerebral palsy, physical handicap and challenged mental faculties are busy at work—designing greeting cards; monitoring accounts on computers; making paper bags; preparing for college exams; fixing appointments with prospective clients; and putting together PowerPoint presentations. The hectic scenario leaves little room for any preconceived notions about the limitations of the differently abled.

Even the building—aptly named God's Heaven—that houses the MBA Foundation is a picture of quiet defiance. Ensnared in a predominantly residential area in Powai, the four-storied structure is dwarfed by architectural marvels. Washing flutters from balconies while three pups play tag under a parked bus refurbished for wheelchair access. The entire ground floor takes up 1,800 sq ft. When we meet Balasubramanian, she is busy working on the computer in one of the 12 rooms. Her quiet deportment belies her all-consuming passion for her cause. Balasubramanian is now working on a unique idea—an elders' home-cum-vocational centre where parents of the differently abled can live in close proximity to their children. Watching her fingers flying on the computer keyboard, one is reminded of the opportunities she gave up to pursue a cause that defines her identity today.

In 1983, Balasubramanian was one of the first students of NIIT Chennai and



**In conversation with one of her life-care residents**

also a mother to two sons—Anish, 12 and Akhil, 7. After completing her course, she shifted to Delhi where her husband C R Balasubramanian had received a transfer. Soon, she joined Confederation of Indian Industry as a computer trainer. Though Balasubramanian noticed that Akhil's milestones were delayed, she never realised the full implications till he was diagnosed as dyslexic at the age of 11. A perceptive mother, she completed a course in special education from Samadhan, a Delhi-based NGO that works closely with children with intellectual disabilities and their families.

In 1991, she moved to Mumbai along with 15 year-old Akhil to join the Spastics Society of India (SSI) as a volunteer. Her husband and in-laws stayed back in Delhi, while Anish was in Coimbatore pursuing a degree in engineering. Soon, Akhil enrolled in the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to complete Class

X, while Balasubramanian was appointed director of SSI's National Job Development Centre (NJDC). Mother and son forged a special bond—one tested by Akhil's temper tantrums and growing frustration and strengthened by Balasubramanian's refusal to give up on her dream of a meaningful life for her son. "Those years were tough on both of us, as we were both looking for answers and didn't know where to find them," says Balasubramanian. She wondered if channelling Akhil's energy into a vocation would help resurrect his confidence. She also noticed that though NJDC trained youngsters, there was no sheltered workshop. When a survey revealed that 50 per cent of the youngsters trained were sitting idle at home, Balasubramanian realised that maybe it was not enough to be a concerned mother—she needed to be a torchbearer.

Together with husband C R Balasubramanian, she set up the MBA Foun-





dition in December 2001 to ensure that 'every disabled person has access to all required facilities for rehabilitation' with 'a life with self-esteem and dignity for the disabled'. "We realised that lack of employment was resulting in depression," explains C R Balasubramanian, who oversees all administrative and legal matters. He took up voluntary retirement—he was executive director with The Times of India group—and the husband-wife duo set up the first chapter of the Foundation—Godsmiles—in January 2002 in their flat in Chembur. The centre was a sheltered workshop where seven girls, trained at NJDC, made pickles, squash and paper bags. To cover expenses, members who could afford to pay were asked to contribute Rs 1,000. Soon, more parents expressed their interest and, in 2003, the Balasubramanians opened the second chapter—God's Heaven—in Powai.

God's Heaven offers six months' vocational training in skills ranging from making candles, paper bags, table napkins, costume jewellery, liquid detergents, pickles, squashes, chocolates and snacks to packaging incense sticks or painting *diya* (earthen

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She encouraged her wards to approach clients; conduct exhibitions; and follow up on product deliveries marketed under the brand of GODS, an acronym for Groups of Disabled

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lamps). On completion of training, members earn a per-diem stipend of a minimum of Rs 25. Balasubramanian also imparts training in computer basics, photocopying and spiral binding. She encourages her wards to approach clients, conduct exhibitions, and follow up on product deliveries marketed under the brand of GODS, an acronym for Groups of Disabled. "I feel proud when they spend their own hard-earned money," says Balasubramanian. She makes sure that every tiny task they accomplish is rewarded with praise. "I believe each one of us has a spark inside us and it needn't be extinguished just because we are differently abled," insists Balasubrama-

nian, who also set up another daycare centre, God's Gift, in collaboration with Rotary Club, Thane.

While encouraging independence, she is also attuned to the long-term needs of her wards. God's Heaven also provides life-care facilities for 12 persons. At present five girls and five boys are regular residents, and facilities for two more are reserved for anyone requiring temporary care. Neat and functional bedrooms with bath are on opposite sides of a hall that metamorphoses into recreation room, dining room or a classroom as required. Though there is a cook, two of the life-care girls are responsible for buying provisions. Charges for life care are Rs 6,000 per month but 75 per cent of the present group is non-paying. Saroj Suchak, whose 28 year-old daughter Komal lives at the centre, voices a deep-seated concern of parents. "The fact that my child is secure gives me enormous relief," says Suchak. "With so many parents like us, many more homes are needed."

Others in her shoes are also happy that their children are moving away from the margins to join the main-





**A smile says it all; a volunteer imparting vocational training; (opposite page) Balasubramanian with life-care residents**

stream. On World Disability Day in December 2005, MBA organised a job fair with 17 companies, including HSBC, Axis Bank and Essar group. However, despite more than 200 aspirants, only four were placed owing to lack of office skills and their regional background. Balasubramanian initiated GODSCEDAT—an executive training programme in association with the Corporate Social Responsibility wing of National Association of Computer Manufacturers (NASSCOM) in January 2007. The programme offers training targeted towards employment in the corporate world. Focussing on English language coaching, computer operations and soft skills, the six-month course has faculty from corporate houses. With the fourth batch underway, there have already been 54 success stories.

“Not much is being done to encourage formal education for the mentally challenged,” says Balasubramanian. Viewing the hurdle as a challenge, the Foundation introduced education through NIOS last year. Students can appear for one or two papers at a go

within five years. While Akhil who had discontinued his studies completed two Class XII subjects, Manisha Bhurke, 41, who is physically challenged, cleared Class X in one attempt. “I didn’t just continue my studies but also got the confidence to work in a multinational company,” says Bhurke, who is working as administrative assistant with Trans Ocean. Now, 18 others like her are preparing for Class X, and four for Class XII. At present, the Foundation is a beacon to 72 young men and women. Besides vocational training, therapy, and relaxation activities like music and yoga, the severely challenged receive basic self-care training. MBA has carried out more than 500 assessments, referring some to other parallel organisations.

The Balasubramanians are not alone in their mission. Their elder son Anish, now 39 and a marketing manager with a private airline in Delhi, has designed the website of the Foundation and helps with marketing strategies and fundraising. The pride in his voice as he talks about his brother and mother are hard to miss. “She sensitised all of

us towards Akhil’s special needs. As for Akhil, he has ideas on everything from sponsorship to marketing.”

His mother’s efforts have not gone unnoticed. She has received the national Helen Keller Award (2000) from the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, the Sadguru Gynananda Award (2003) from SIS group, the Key to Competitiveness Service Excellence Award (2004) from Institute for Research & Development in Service & Management, and the Samaj Shakti Award (2007) from Harihara Putra Bhajan Samaj.

Recently, a well-wisher donated land in Gorai beach in the western suburbs of Mumbai for a vocational and day-care centre. Next on her agenda is a chain of community-based satellite units and a residential commune where ageing parents can live in proximity to their differently abled children. Though talks with a senior citizens’ trust in Nerul in Navi Mumbai didn’t work out, Balasubramanian is not prepared to give up on her dream. She is still looking life in the eye—and she’s not ready to blink yet.

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“We must give back what we  
borrow from nature”

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**Dr Ganesh Narayandas Devy . 59 .** TEJGARH, GUJARAT

✦ 📷 Jit Ray





## Dr Ganesh Narayandas Devy tells us how it's possible to change the lives of tribal villagers without changing their way of life

As the wind blows around the 12,000 year-old rock painting atop the Koraj hill in Tejgarh—90 km off Vadodara—and undulates down the slope, memories of an ancient way of life murmur into the thatch-roofed houses of the Rathwa tribes. At the base of the hill, the stout red bricks of the Adivasi Centre blend perfectly into the surrounding landscape. The restless wind whispers prehistoric secrets as it slips into the museum housed within the Centre through its perforated outer walls and gives expression to the *Vaachaa* (the voice), as the museum is called locally.



Conferring with medicine men from Andhra Pradesh

At the Bhasha Trust office nearby, Dr Ganesh Narayandas Devy's calm voice echoes the same whispers as he confers with a group of medicine men from Andhra Pradesh. Between discussions on language, identity and the need for India's minority fringe to get organised, Devy explains the workings of a specially designed moon calendar that marks out the days of no moon or *amavasya*—a day off for migrant tribal labourers when they can meet and share their problems. Clearly, Dr Devy understands the unhurried pace of the tribal way of life. Maybe that explains why he could so easily galvanise hundreds of thousands of tribal villagers in rural Gujarat to take charge of their destiny. In May 2009, over 1,000 tribal people from 240 villages walked through Tejgarh, Rajpipla, Vankoda, Vedchi, Naroda and Rangpur to launch the idea of the Green Economic Zone (GEZ). The GEZ is Devy's emphatic rebuttal to the Special Economic Zone (SEZ). GEZ focuses on making villagers self-reliant using local resources and underlines ecological conservation.

Devy's ideas are radical but grounded in grit and grassroots. What sets him apart is his approach to develop-

ment. Over the years, he has instilled a simple but powerful belief in the minds of the tribal villagers: progress does not mean giving up one's indigenous identity, but harnessing it. As founder-trustee of Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, Devy works to conserve and promote minority languages; impart education that moves away from orthodox methods and enables students to recognise and utilise strengths of indigenous resources; empower *adivasi* communities with economic independence; protect the human rights of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs); study and develop *adivasi* arts; and facilitate policy-level interventions in the interest of ecology, human rights and *adivasi* empowerment.

Devy could have chosen to be just another discursive intellectual—he's qualified for it. Born in Maharashtra in 1950, he studied English literature at Shivaji University in Kolhapur and completed his PhD at the University of Leeds. It was his PhD dissertation on the works of reformer Aurobindo Ghosh that altered his worldview irrevocably. Like Ghosh, Devy returned

to India to teach English at Maharaja Sayajirao University in Baroda. But on the heels of a comfortable career came monotony. "At 40, I had a premonition that my days were numbered," says Devy. "I knew I needed to follow my passion." Devy's wife Prof Surekha Devy and daughter Rashmi Sawhney agreed he should continue working as a professor only till his daughter turned 20 and then pursue his dream. Meanwhile his frequent visits to the tribal settlements around Tejgarh awakened a fascination in vanishing minority languages. (By then, according to the 1971 census, 12 tribal languages had already disappeared.)

In 1996, Devy quit his job and decided to follow his heart. His close interaction with the tribes in Tejgarh offered him a ringside view of the violation of tribal identity owing to mainstream developmental processes, usurpation of tribal land and the rapid erosion of tribal culture. Devy realised he had to act fast. In 1996, he set up the Bhasha Research and Publications Centre (BRPC). The BRPC sought to free tribal languages out of the aphasia imposed on them by the existing



Pitthora paintings line the walls of the tribal museum; Devy leads the march during the launch of GEZ

to the outskirts of Ahmedabad in Chharanagar, and started the Budhan Theatre Group—named after Budhan, a member of a DNT who was killed without trial while in police custody—which performs plays all over India on issues related to DNTs. Later Bhasha also started a library for children and youth in Chharanagar.



Adivasi Centre

Youth has always been the nucleus of Bhasha. In 1999, Bhasha acquired a 10-acre plot of land—where the Adivasi Centre stands today—from the Gujarat Government on a 30-year lease. The Centre had a modest bookshelf which drew many young *adivasi* students—some who were graduates and undecided about their future. “It’s unfortunate how the country perceives the *adivasi* as an economic burden,” says Devy. “A doctor from a scheduled tribe, for example, is hardly ever trusted. Actually, the *adivasi* teaches us how to lead a need-based life instead of a greed-based one.”

Recognising the vast potential of young *adivasi*, Devy initiated a two-year diploma programme in Tribal Studies in 2000. The programme was totally interactive—by the end, the first batch of 15 students, along with Bhasha associates, drew up a five-point agenda for an ideal *adivasi* village, which included freedom from indebtedness, illiteracy, diseases, hunger and migration. After completing the programme, students went back to their villages and started small Development Service Centres (DSC), locally known as Gram Vikas Kendra. “Our initial interaction with the students revealed that they had no access to any credit facility,” says Vipul Kapadia, programme officer with Bhasha. “Most of them had pledged their land and jewellery to moneylenders and were forced to migrate to the city. This prompted us to start microcredit groups along with a library and computer classes.”

social system. In the past 13 years, BRPC has been working hard to gain constitutional recognition for tribal languages and seeks to re-energise the culture and language of two marginalised groups: the *adivasi*, whose national population today stands at 87 million, and the 60 million people belonging to nomadic and de-notified communities.

The struggle has resulted in the creation of a series of publications in *adivasi* languages that voice the ideas and aspirations of various tribal communities. *Dhol*, published in 10 tribal languages besides Hindi and Marathi, has grown to become a powerful voice for *adivasi* spiritual, cultural and agricultural practices. Those who are literate read out the magazine, and

become the medium for intellectual and cultural exchange. *Bol*, launched in 2004, is a children’s magazine distributed by the government in 10,000 schools in 11 districts of Gujarat. Other publications include *Budhan*, a newsletter in English for the human rights of DNT, and *Sangharsh Shatak* (a century of struggle), a set of 100 books that highlight the concerns of *adivasi*, nomadic communities, migrant labourers, and discriminated women and children. All *adivasi* languages that existed in the oral form have been given scripts based on the Gujarati alphabet.

Along with literature, Devy believes art can also be employed an agent of social change. In 1998, he met a youth group of Chharas, a DNT ostracised



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"The *adivasi* teaches us how to lead a need-based life instead of a greed-based one"

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Today there are 30 DSCs across 2,200 tribal villages in Gujarat. The microcredit programme has now flourished to an annual turnover of Rs 100 million and has 300,000 members. The programme is managed by villagers through district level federations and is also utilised to aid micro enterprises such as seed banks and vermin-compost.

In 2005, spurred by the success story, when more youth enrolled at the Adivasi Centre, Bhasha started one-year certificate courses in subjects like rural health care, museology, sustainable agriculture, women's empowerment, forest land rights, rural organisation management and accounting. Of the 550 students who have passed out of the academy, 300 now work with Bhasha and the Adivasi Centre. Following in Devy's footsteps, in 2002, students started a non-formal school project for children of migrant labourers who miss out on schooling owing to the flux in their lives. The programme includes residential unorthodox schooling where 60 children live at the Adivasi Centre in close proximity to their



Children at the non-formal school; (below) the library at the Adivasi Centre

art, culture and language and learn from daily interactions with the museum, theatre, health centre and other facets of *adivasi* life development.

The Bhasha Trust has also set up a free health clinic in 2001 and a crafts cooperative, Tribals First, in 2003, which works on a fair-trade arrangement. But for Devy there was still one more dragon to slay; one that millions of tribal villagers all over India dread and live with every day—hunger. Many years ago, some tribals in Chhattisgarh, after having gone hungry for days, died after eating a dead animal. The incident prompted Devy and writer and activist Mahasweta Devi—also a trustee of Bhasha—to fast for a day. The small sacrifice became a large movement and culminated in the formation of food banks. Today, around 10,000 tribal women manage food banks in 150 tribal villages. Surplus food grain is stored

in large cane basket-like structures, called *mosetti*. The banks loan grains during drought, and the 'loans' are repaid when the crop yield improves.

While Devy's path is marked with many such milestones, his most definitive is the GEZ. Till now, 130 villages in Gujarat have already signed up for it. As expected, the concept has raised quite a few eyebrows and interest. "When we meet villagers to explain how the GEZ could bring in economic uplift, we emphasise that we do not belong to any political party or religious sect," says Vipul Kapadia. After the Godhra riots, Devy decentralised the entire operations of Bhasha.

"I want to bring about a non-violent struggle," says Devy who teaches at the Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology (DA-IICT). "Change will come at its own pace in keeping with the *adivasi* way of life." He has won several awards: the Sahitya Akademi Award (1994), the SAARC Writers Foundation Award (2001) and the Prince Claus Fund (2003). But what makes him happiest are the ripples he has created. Today, he has replicated the Bhasha model in Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh through Himlok, an institution that works to conserve the rich heritage of almost 90 Himalayan tribes and communities. Social welfare groups from other countries too visit Bhasha to study the development model. "It's a long and lonely fight," says the crusader. "But I know there's a good chance of success."



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“Every woman has the power  
to change the world”

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Asa Dutta . 80 . GUWAHATI, ASSAM

✦ Tapati Baruah Kashyap  
📷 Subhamoy Bhattacharjee





Asa Datta's quiet determination and unwavering mission to educate women has given hundreds of disadvantaged people in Guwahati a second lease on life. This is the story of an extraordinary woman

**F**or 60 year-old Maya Chaudhury, bringing up three children would have been next to impossible after her husband passed away more than 20 years ago, had it not been for a guardian angel: Asa Dutta. "I think Asa *mahi* [*mausi* or aunt] was my real mother in a previous birth," says Maya, recalling how she gave them a home, and her children an education. Dutta's intervention didn't end there. Years later, she encouraged Maya's daughter Anu to join a nursing and midwife school in Guwahati and even helped her with money for the fees.

A resident of Rehabari in Guwahati, Dutta is 80 today but the years have not dimmed her passion to help others, nor her thirst for learning. One of the pioneers of adult literacy for women in the Northeast, in 2008, she recently completed a basic course in counselling. A move completely in character, considering that this sprightly woman has reached out to hundreds of women all through her colourful and varied life.

The daughter of a schoolteacher in what was then East Bengal (now Bangladesh), hers is a journey through history; a story of grit and gumption, and an abiding faith in the women

she inspires. "There was no school for girls in and around Bhadeswar but my father, who was headmaster in the village school, obtained special permission to take in girls," recalls Dutta. "I became the first girl to join that school in Class III in 1936."

In April 1943, she took the matriculation examination and then graduated from Calcutta University in 1947. She was soon appointed assistant headmistress in the Habibganj Girls' Middle School, which her father Suresh Chandra Hom Choudhury had opened in Sylhet district in East Bengal. "I was 19 years old then," she recalls. "But India became two independent countries then and we suddenly became citizens of East Pakistan." Because of her involvement in community work, Dutta was appointed secretary of the eastern chapter of the Pakistan Women's National Guards (PWNG) between 1947 and 1949.

Destiny struck then, in the form of a meeting with Miss Andrews, head of PWNG. A teacher herself, she drew Dutta into the world of social work. But soon after Partition, Dutta and her family moved to Tinsukia in Upper Assam in 1949. Like her father, she took up a teaching position at

the Railway High School in Tinsukia, where she joined the Mahila Samiti and started working for literacy and education among poor women.

Friends who have been associated with Dutta and her father speak of the family with extreme fondness. "The most amazing thing about her achievements is that she was a private candidate from her matriculation till her Master's and she emerged with flying colours in all the examinations," says Kamona Krishna Bhattacharjee, a retired professor of history in St Edmund's College, Shillong, and a former student of Dutta's father. "She has unparalleled determination and exceptional talent."

The gritty young woman was married in 1954 and her husband, a bank officer, was not keen that she work. But despite the responsibilities of home, hearth and two children, Dutta kept up her association with the local Mahila Samiti. She also wanted to pursue higher education "but somehow my husband did not like the idea very much". After he passed away in 1970, there was no looking back. Dutta completed her Bachelor's in teaching from Karimganj College with a first class; she worked for two years as a teacher at the Malogram

Asa Dutta with villagers at Amingaon; attending a Rabindra Jayanti function organised by Sreemoye Sangha at Rehabari





## The government's adult literacy programme gave a new lease on life to more than a hundred women in Guwahati's slums

Girls' High School on the outskirts of Karimganj, and enrolled for a Master's degree in Bengali literature at Guwahati University.

After completing her Master's in 1972, Dutta went on to lecture at the university before securing a PhD, also in Bengali literature. Through her own education and teaching career, she kept in touch with the local Mahila Samiti. She finally retired in 1988 and moved to Guwahati, where she joined the Sarada Sangha, the women's arm of the Ramakrishna Mission. Not surprisingly, Dutta was soon appointed vice-president of its national body. She gave the Guwahati branch of the Sarada Sangha a major boost and immersed herself in several projects, especially the government's adult literacy programme that was closest to her heart.

"Asa *mahi* not only put a pencil in my hand, she also taught me how to write and keep the household accounts in order," remembers 50 year-old Basanti Mahato. This programme gave a new lease on life to more than a hundred women in Guwahati's slums. But Dutta wanted to do more. She opened a sewing school in 1993 for the women who benefited from the adult literacy programme. "I was lucky

to find two sincere instructors but for whom the school would not have been successful," says Dutta with characteristic humility.

Today, the Sarada Sangha's sewing school is affiliated to the Usha Sewing Schools run by sewing machine company Usha. "It is one of the finest schools in the Northeast," says Sadhana Sarma, inspector of Usha Sewing Schools for the Northeast region. "Most of the trainees from this school either have their own tailoring shops or work as instructors in other schools." Sunita Mandal, 25, an alumna of the school, considers Asa *mahi* nothing short of an angel. "It is only because of Asa *mahi* that I am alive today and I hope my daughter will one day grow up to become a successful and educated person like her," says the resident of Birubari in Guwahati, who makes a living sewing *churidar* and dresses in the neighbourhood.

Along with her involvement in the Sarada Sangha and the sewing school, Dutta's quest for learning has continued to power her on. Last year, she completed her basic training in counselling at the Peace Centre in the Guwahati Archbishop's campus. "I found in her a very strong, determined personality,"

says Sister Christine, joint director at the Peace Centre. "She was definitely the oldest student we have ever had, but she had no problem mixing, even with young collegians. She probably had the best attendance record!"

Today, Dutta has all the time to work for women in need. Her daughter and son are well-settled; Dipika is a doctor in Jharkhand while Hiranmoy works as a management consultant in Guwahati. "I was only 10 when my father died," says Hiranmoy. "My mother became both father and mother for me. Even during times of difficulty, she never once compromised. She is always calm and unperturbed."

This calm extends to every facet of her life. Dutta is up at 5 am everyday to practise yoga. She continues to read avidly, visits her projects regularly and spends time at the Sreemoye Sangha at Rehabari, where she counsels women in distress. "I first allow them to open up and air their grievances, which provides them with a lot of relief," explains Dutta. "Later, I try to provide solutions by looking at problems and opportunities."

Indeed, for all those who know her, Dutta is a rock of support. "For all us members of Sreemoye Sangha, Asa *baideu* [elder sister] is a source of inspiration and solace," says Bharati Kakoti, a retired assistant teacher at DAV School, Guwahati. Sumita Dutta, a 58 year-old member of Sarada Sangha echoes this sentiment, saying, "Though she is no longer vice-president of the Sangha, we often approach her for guidance and valuable suggestions on all kinds of issues."

Dutta has her own source of inspiration, former president A P J Abdul Kalam's *Ignited Minds*, a book she has read thrice. And she is now writing her own autobiography. "I have completed about one-third of the book," she says with a gentle smile. "The best part is that my children have promised to bear the printing cost of it."



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“I treat, and God heals”

**Dr Sister Jude . 68 .** MAU, UTTAR PRADESH

📍 Nitika Bajpayee 📷 Utkarsh Sanjanwala



The magic touch of Dr Jude has extended to over 70,000 women—and the papayas in her beloved garden. A close encounter with the pride of Mau

**M**au in Uttar Pradesh, 120 km from Varanasi, is a microcosm of the lawless innards of the country we often see in the ‘expanded reality’ of real cinema. In Mau, one doesn’t step out unaccompanied or look anyone in the eye. *Harmony* was forewarned, too. So, from a humid and cattle-thronged railway station we headed straight to Fatima Hospital to meet ‘Dr Sister Jude’, one person who will never come to harm here. Harbinger of compassion in a crime-infested town, she came here in 1976 for a three-month stint as gynaecological help at a missionary dispensary—and stayed on.

A recipient of the ‘Karamveer Samman’ for her contribution to health-care by the Gorakhpur-based Yuva Chetna Samiti, today Dr Jude is also variously known as Mother Teresa of Mau, Mau Gaurav (Mau’s pride) and Jude *saab* (Sir), an address traditionally reserved for men in power. The only power Dr Jude understands, though, is the one that keeps the lights and the table fan functioning in the operation theatre at Fatima Hospital. With no other medical facility available in a 40-km radius, this is the institution around 2 million people in the district turn to during a medical crisis, with expectant mothers coming under Dr Jude’s scalpel, her wings. With an ever-present mischievous smile on her face, she has performed over 70,000 caesarean operations at Fatima, even setting a record of sorts by attending to 382 patients in a single day. On an average, Jude attends to 21 normal deliveries and 10-12 caesarean operations every day.

“Jude *saab* is the most dedicated Sister,” says Sister Roselet, one of the founders of Fatima Hospital. “She used to attend OPD in the morning and performed surgeries in the

evening. Three years ago, she fainted in the operation theatre. That’s when we charted some rules for her,” adds the 59 year-old. “Now, Dr Jude operates on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and attends to outpatients on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. She must get five hours of sleep and her outpatients have been restricted to 200, though she wishes to attend to thousands every day.”

A calling to serve others came early to Dr Jude, who was born as Emmyrose VD in the mid-1950s. The 12th child of Dr Devassy Vellanikaren of Mayaloor, in Ernakulam district, Kerala, Emmyrose was an avid reader of spiritual books and stories of saints who wanted to walk the holy path and dedicate her life to god and humanity. Although her father was against the idea, her desire to join a convent became stronger by the day. “My decision was made after completing my higher secondary,” she recalls. “He asked me to think it through as it wasn’t a matter of a day

or two. I was told to stay at home. After a year of assisting my mother with household work, gardening and embroidery, I left.”

In 1958, she joined the Congregation of Medical Sisters of St Joseph (MSJ) in Kothamangalam, Kerala. On 8 September 1960, at the age of 17, Emmyrose made her pledge and was rechristened Sister Jude. “As the congregation’s main profession is medicine, I decided to take it up professionally,” says Dr Jude. A good student, she was sent to Lady Harding Medical College, New Delhi, to pursue medicine. After completing her MBBS, she worked for two years at Fatima Hospital in Lucknow. She completed her post-graduation in gynaecology and obstetrics from Lady Harding College and later joined Poliganj Hospital in Majhola, Pilibhit.

On 28 December 1975, three patrons of MSJ—Sister Roselet, Sister Amy and Sister Elizabeth—set up Fatima Dispensary in Mau district, 400 km





**Thousands of women flock to Fatima's Hospital; Dr Jude brings another new life into this world**

east of Lucknow. Safety was a major concern as the town was almost always thronged by dacoits. Centrally located between two major districts in Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi and Gorakhpur, Mau also attracted a lot of female patients. "As there was no full-time gynaecologist, we had to turn them away," recalls Sister Roselet. "We requested the congregation to send us a temporary gynaecologist for three months. A day before the one-room dispensary was turned into a hospital, Dr Jude arrived as our saviour. We thought we would be able to find a full-time doctor but nothing happened. The months turned into years and Dr Jude decided not to leave."

Inaugurated on 31 May 1977, Fatima Hospital has been built brick by brick over the years. In these decades, Dr Jude has brought smiles to thousands of women, who until her arrival were vulnerable and at the mercy of the traditional ways of midwives. With a warm smile, she tells us what the birth of a new life means to her. "Whenever I hear the heartbeat of an unborn baby from her mother's womb, I shudder and get goose pimples. Not out of fear but divine pleasure of seeing new

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"Whenever I hear the heartbeat of an unborn baby, I shudder and get goose pimples. Not out of fear but divine pleasure of seeing new life coming into this world"

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life coming into this world. This thrill overrode the teething troubles Fatima Hospital faced."

Illiterate natives, a language problem, and shortage of funds and facilities made things difficult for Dr Jude and her team. "For 10 years, I worked without a break and without assistance—my work and my patients were my only solace," she remembers. "When we began, there were several other constraints, mostly of language as we were from Kerala and not so fluent in Hindi. However, over the years, we have become proficient. The other concern was safety. Our dispensary was surrounded by thick

jungles, so thefts and robberies were common." Illiteracy, she says, is still a hindrance. "Rural people still call for midwives and rush their women to us when there's a complication. They come with great hope and I just have to take care of them."

In May 1979, Dr Jude attended to a case that changed her life. A contractor from Ballia arrived with his pregnant wife in critical condition. She had suffered a ruptured uterus. Dr Jude treated her and saved her life. Word travelled and brought thousands to Fatima Hospital's doorstep. "Over these decades, we have tried to raise awareness about health but even today women who come here are poor and in poorer health," says Dr Jude. "They require immediate medical aid. As every minute is precious, I never go back to my room." It humbles her when her patients believe she is bestowed with a miraculous healing touch. "I am just a simple person living for my patients," she says. "I treat and God heals."

Dr Jude has also inspired others to treat—and heal. After training several doctors during her practice, she has





**Dr Jude's papayas are her pride and joy; a time for prayer**

now started a course called DAWN DGO, under which two medical students from North India, primarily from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, will train with her at Fatima Hospital for two years. The students will assist her in the OPD and with surgery and post-natal procedures. After completing their training, they will secure a diploma in gynaecology and obstetrics. Dr Jude also holds meetings with obstetricians and gynaecologists from other medical institutions. In fact, she served as the president of the Mau Chapter of Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) for over a decade and retired in 2006. It required her to travel a couple of times a year to attend meetings and conferences but she insists that her patients in Mau remained her prime focus.

There are no greater goals for Dr Jude. "I don't intend to leave Fatima in this life," she says. "I don't need any money. My convent provides me everything I need. I have my extended family to look after me. I don't wish to go anywhere else." There's another reason she won't leave Mau: her garden. Her papayas—known in town as 'Dr Jude's

papayas'—are as famous as her healing touch. "I think I grow the best papayas in town," says Dr Jude with pride. "My colleagues believe that whenever someone compliments a beautiful, healthy papaya on my trees, it falls down the next day." A look at her garden and you know she loves her vegetable patch. "I love growing beans, too. As for the papayas, I collect their seeds, preserve them in ash and put them in little bottles to give away as gifts."

"The hospital and her garden are her life," says Sister Blessy, the administrative head at Fatima. "I have never heard her saying that she is tired or stressed out. At some point, we all complain about being overburdened but Dr Jude is just unstoppable." Once a year, the doctor takes a week off to see her siblings in Kerala but is eager to return. "I am not attached to them," confesses Dr Jude. "After a week, I become restless and look for excuses to return to the hospital."

That's where the challenges lie. At Fatima, Dr Jude has performed surgeries on two patients where the heads of the babies had been severed.

She has aided deliveries in HIV-positive women who were later referred to Banaras Hindu University Hospital in Varanasi. And she has handled some of the trickiest cases of birth defects like anencephaly (a fatal neural tube defect), conjoined twins, cystic hygroma (a sac-like structure that occurs in the head and neck area), and foetal ascities (abnormal accumulation of fluid in the abdomen).

She has also treated complex gynaecological problems such as fibroids, polyps, eclampsia (seizures associated with hypertension), placenta previa (when the placenta grows over the cervix), post-partum haemorrhage (excessive bleeding after delivery), ante-partum haemorrhage (placental abruption), ruptured uterus, breached deliveries and headless babies. "I ask patients who are suffering from post-partum haemorrhage if they have ever seen the Taj Mahal," recounts Dr Jude. "When they say no, I tell them the story of Mughal queen Mumtaz who died while giving birth to her 14th child. The Taj was built in her memory or, we can say, in memory of post-partum haemorrhage."





“Special children have equal  
right to education”

**Pradeep Kshetrapal . 56 .** Korba, CHHATTISGARH

◆ Chitra Ramaswamy ◆ Pradeep Dadsena



Pradeep Kshetrapal has overcome enormous hurdles to establish a school for differently abled children. A look at one remarkable man who has touched hundreds of lives

The sky is overcast and the air is redolent with the smell of imminent rain. Pradeep Kshetrapal is poring over the day's newspaper in the garden of his two-storied house in the Jamnipali area of Korba, in Chhattisgarh. Uncomfortable at being congratulated for winning the Harmony Silver Award, the 56 year-old prefers to talk about his role in establishing a school for special children in Korba—the reputation of which has gone beyond the borders of the city to include the entire state. He is equally delighted to discuss his latest project: raising awareness about autism. In 2008, for the first time in Chhattisgarh, Kshetrapal organised a week-long workshop on the condition. The programme evoked a lot of interest, with resource personnel converging from other parts of India.

In 1998, Kshetrapal set up the Rotary School for Deaf, Blind and Autistic. Besides basic education up to Class X, the school provides vocational training for functional and economic independence. About 80 per cent of the children come from poor families.

Born in Bilaspur, Kshetrapal was a good student. A gold medallist in mathematics at the high school level, he pursued undergraduate and post-graduate studies in physics from Government Science College in Raipur. He wanted to study at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. However, he had to sacrifice this aspiration to join his father's refrigeration and air conditioning spares business in 1974 in Korba.

A math whiz, he faulted on the basic business principles: thrift and profit-making. "I wasn't aggressive and was not good at recovering money," he recalls. "The companies for which we were dealers went out of business."



Unable to justify his father's dream, 20 years later he shut shop and went back to his first love—teaching physics. Kshetrapal conducts classes at his residence for students aspiring to admission in engineering colleges. He also takes classes at two other centres, one in Korba and the other in Kusmunda 12 km away.

Kshetrapal's attitude towards money remains unchanged, though. "I do not have any form of savings," he says, chuckling. "All I have is a life insurance policy which I took to give business to an agent who approached me. I'm happy my wife Rita supports me on this. Money is a powerful tool but I believe it's for spending on a good cause. If you have faith in God, he will take care of the rainy day."

Kshetrapal's austerity also results from his respect for Swami Vivekanand's philosophy. "I am a follower on two counts—the accommodative nature of the Hindu religion and its belief that the globe is one family."

Kshetrapal's involvement in community service began in 1975 when, as a Rotary volunteer, he involved himself in camps for the disabled. He felt a strong urge to do something that would have a lasting impact. "At one of these camps in the 1990s, I met five year-old Nomesch Rajput. Deaf and speech impaired, he bowled me over with his keen observation. I was looking around for my pen to write something. Observing my body language, he located it for me. It made me realise that they are as sharp as able-bodied children and donating hearing aids is not sufficient to improve the quality of their lives," narrates Kshetrapal, who feels that the right training will help them communicate better.

With his business falling apart, he felt it was the right time to listen to his heart. Supported by the ladies wing of Rotary Club called the Inner Wheel Education Society, Kshetrapal founded the Rotary School for the Deaf and Dumb in 1998. Starting with two teachers and two five year-



old students, the school's objective was four-fold: to provide training to the physically challenged; to develop their personality and skills; to provide vocational training; and to provide formal education up to Class XII in accordance with the Chhattisgarh State Board syllabus—with government concessions and scholarships for formal education.

Kshetrapal faced hurdles establishing the school and getting accreditation from the state board. "Dealing with corruption was the biggest handicap," he reveals, refusing to elaborate further. Not trained in the field of special education, he had to familiarise himself with the infrastructural needs of the school. He visited special schools in Bilaspur, Raipur and Delhi. "It is still the most daunting challenge because every year we take on new students, including blind and mentally challenged children. Though Korba is formally a city, it does not have enough avenues for special-ists to advance their careers," rues

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"Children earlier chained to windows or cots are now confident individuals, independent to the extent possible"

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Kshetrapal, who recruits teachers and sends them for special education training to Mumbai and Bhilai.

Another challenge was convincing parents to send their children to a special school. Many were hesitant to admit the disabilities of their children; some even believed it's a punishment from God. Unaware that they could make their children independent, they refused to believe that someone could lend a selfless helping hand. "It needed perseverance to influence them," says Kshetrapal, happy that he has been able to touch hundreds of lives. "Children earlier chained to windows or cots now walk freely. They are con-

fident individuals, independent to the extent possible. They have developed their skills and, above all, can earn a livelihood." Akash, a deaf and speech impaired student is now employed as a computer teacher at the school; and Mariyam, trained in cooking and hospitality, also works with Kshetrapal.

Bearing testimony to his efforts is Munna Ram Prajapathi, a potter who runs several jobs to keep his hearth burning. "God bless this man who has opened a window of opportunity for my deaf children, 13 year-old twins Sita and Gita and seven year-old son Sukhdev," he says. "My daughters live in the hostel and don't want to come home. Besides enjoying themselves, they get good food." Abdul Jabbar, a labourer in Pali village, 70 km from Korba, echoes Prajapathi's sentiments. Three of his six children were born deaf—including 17 year-old Mariyam. His sons Saddam, 15, and eight year-old Javed also live at the hostel. "I pray Allah showers his blessings on Pradeep *sahib* and his family."





**Convincing a parent of a differently-abled child; (opposite page) Kshetrapal doing what he enjoys the most—teaching**

Kshetrapal's sons—27 year-old Anirudh and 23 year-old Sahil—are proud of their father. "When someone asks me the secret of my success, I tell them about my father," says Anirudh, manager in a Mumbai-based company. Even Sahil, who once regretted not having weekend holidays with his parents, is now inspired to do meaningful work like them. For her part, Rita, Kshetrapal's wife of 28 years, says, "Where relationships are healthy, the best side of human nature is brought out. Pradeep has made this possible in our relationship, and in all those with whom he is closely associated."

Today, the school houses 120 children and 22 staff—17 at the school and five female teachers at the newly inaugurated hostel. In its initial years, sourcing funding was also a major hurdle. Registering the school with various departments like the Registrar of Society, Social Welfare Department, and local bodies under PWD Act helped

Kshetrapal obtain a state government grant to meet 50 per cent of running expenses.

In 2003, Kshetrapal included a residential facility, Divya Jyoti Hostel with provision for blind and mentally challenged children. The school functions in the underbelly of Korba's Indira Gandhi Stadium. Spread over 6,000 sq ft, classes are cramped in 14 rooms. Though the Korba Municipal Corporation has allocated a plot to build a school next to Divya Jyoti, paucity of funds has hampered construction. Kshetrapal is dependent on philanthropists, companies like Sterlite, Coal India and NTPC, and government grants. The reputation the school and hostel have earned for being the best maintained in Chhattisgarh compensates for the struggles.

With a sense of pride Kshetrapal reveals that only his school hoists the Indian national flag everyday. Another

source of pride has been the school's participation in the Abilympics for the physically challenged, an exhibition and competition in 17 disciplines like drawing, painting, puzzles, typing and accuracy, greeting card making, waste reuse, chess and tailoring. The children of his school participated in the central zone, national and international Abilympics in 2001, 2003 and 2004. Held in Chhattisgarh in 2003, parents of other challenged and neglected children were encouraged. In 2004, hearing-impaired Avinash Pasetel and Tikaram Sahu won the gold in the International Abilympics in New Delhi for Lego assembly and puzzle fixing. The students are now looking forward to the Chhattisgarh Abilympics to be held in Korba in January 2010. "We fail to realise that it is not charity or pity these children need," he avers. "They need acceptance. Like every child, they have an absolute right to education—it is we who are impaired if we fail to impart it."





**“Mother Nature has always  
provided us enough water”**

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**Anupam Mishra . 60 .** NEW DELHI

❖ Nitika Bajpayee ❖ Mihir Singh



A Gandhian environmentalist, Anupam Mishra has dedicated his life to reviving traditional methods of water harvesting. And along the way, he has created a legion of water warriors

**I**n the heart of New Delhi's bustle on Hailey Road near Connaught Place lies a slice of yesterday. Agrasen ki Baoli is a 60-m-long, 15-m wide step well with red stone walls punctuated by tiny *jharokha*. Thought to be originally built during the days of the *Mahabharata* by Maharaja Agrasen and renovated in the 14th century, the *baoli* has 103 steps, all of which were once immersed with water. Today, it stands dry, a protected monument. For tourists and wayfarers who stop here and tarry awhile, it is a quaint throwback, a remnant of the past. But for environmentalists like Anupam Mishra, it holds the key to the future.

Simply clad in khadi *kurta-pyjama*, his weathered face is animated as he takes us on a tour of the step well. "This is one of the ancient water harvesting systems of Delhi," says Mishra, head of the environmental cell of the Gandhi Peace Foundation (GPF). "The basic concept was to collect and store rainwater. There are stairs on all four corners so that even if the water level decreases, you can take the water out. Delhi once had 300 big and small ponds; today only five to six are left. These are examples of fine engineering that we lack today, which we have forgotten."

Mishra's mission is to make us remember. Thirty years of studying India's driest regions has convinced him that traditional systems like step wells, tanks, ponds and bunds are the best way to tackle water shortage. And this recipient of the Indira Gandhi National Environment Award has left no stone unturned to convince the world of this—through two acclaimed books, correspondence with

over 3,000 readers, and participation in national and international events to spread the word.

Mishra's engagement with the environment came early—his father Bhawani Prasad Mishra, a Gandhian poet-author and environmentalist, was associated with the GPF since its inception in 1964. After completing his Master's in Hindi literature from Delhi University in 1969, Mishra decided to follow in his father's footsteps and joined the GPF as a researcher at a salary of Rs 350 a month.

His mandate to study water shortage in India's driest areas led Mishra to crisscross the country—he travelled to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and discovered that over 200,000 tanks were dug across India before British rule. "These man-made ways to store water have been around

for centuries," he says. "People built and maintained them well. In times of scarcity, these structures helped them take care of their daily needs."

Rajasthan especially was a mine of information for Mishra. In the 1980s, he met Surendramal Mohnot, director of the School of Desert Sciences in Jodhpur, who made Mishra aware that *talab* (ponds) could be built in towns. Water harvesters such as Jethusingh Bhatti, Bhagwandas Maheshwari and Dindayal Ojha gave him great insight into the water bodies of Jaisalmer. And in 1988, Mishra saw a *kuin*, which provides sweet water, for the first time in Taranagar in the state's Churu district—it was more than 100 years old. "A 'water securer' called Kishan Varma shared with me the intricacies of a *kuin* and how it works," says Mishra, explaining that a *kuin* is quite distinct from a *kuan* or a well.



**Explaining the methods and virtues of water harvesting**



#### Mishra believes in training villagers to build their own water harvesting system

A *kuan* can be dug anywhere to obtain groundwater. With a normal depth of 300 ft, it can provide water collected on the water table for years. But although rainwater seeps into the water table, it becomes undrinkable when mixed with other minerals of the soil. On the other hand, a *kuin* primarily collects rainwater and normally has a depth of not more than 30–40 ft. It can only be dug in areas where a gypsum belt is naturally present—the gypsum acts as barrier, preventing the water from turning saline. Essentially, a *kuin* traps moisture between the sand and gypsum layer and protects water from percolating into the water table and mixing with soil minerals. Thus, the water obtained from it is sweet and safe for drinking. Mishra has seen

*kuin* in the Churu, Badmer, Bikaner, and Jaisalmer districts of Rajasthan, all areas where there is a gypsum belt.

“My travels made me aware that our forefathers were far more aware and educated than we are,” exclaims Mishra. “Just imagine; the enormous water tank of Jaigarh fort in Jaipur can contain several hundred million litres of water! Look at Gadasisar in the heart of the Jaisalmer desert or the three-century old Toda Rai Singh Tank. Now, students from IIT are studying the engineering of these old water tanks and ponds.” We are now in his office at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, surrounded by paper—books, files, pamphlets, reports, all testaments to years of research, study,

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“I take forward Gandhian thinking and reach out to people so that they can make themselves independent as far as water is concerned. When people build their own systems, they have a sense of ownership that leads to proper maintenance”

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analysis and fieldwork. In 1993, this body of knowledge was coalesced into a groundbreaking book: *Aaj Bhi Khare Hain Talab* (The ponds are still as good as gold). This was followed in 1995 by *Rajasthan ki Rajat Boondein* (The radiant raindrops of Rajasthan).

The books, which are veritable DIY handbooks on water harvesting with drawings and rich examples, have gone on to sell nearly 100,000 copies and been translated into five languages, including French. Most significant, they have spawned a legion of water warriors. These include not just well-known examples like NGO Tarun Bhagat Sangh, which received the Magsaysay Award in 2001, and last year’s Harmony Silver Award winner Laxman Singh (see *Harmony*, October 2008), but thousands of unsung Indians who have built their own reservoirs. “I wrote the books in Hindi so the maximum number of people could benefit from them,” he says. “Around 25,000 small and big traditional rainwater harvesting systems have been built in recent times.”

Many more have been restored. For instance, Nirupama Adhikari, a freelance journalist from Purulia, West Bengal, who translated his first book into Bengali, is now actively helping to restore *pukur* (ponds) in Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. Similarly,





Mishra at Agrasen ki Baoli, a 60-m-long step well dating back to the 14th century

journalist Surendra Bhansal, who translated the book into Punjabi, has turned water harvester. “I was amazed when I read the book,” he says. “I now inform people in Punjab about traditional rainwater harvesting methods. The water obtained through these techniques is fresh and sweet, which is good for crops and lives.”

To date, Mishra hasn’t taken a rupee as royalty for his books, which do not even have a copyright. In fact, he shuns the limelight and dislikes interviews, content in the Gandhian life he leads with wife Madhu and son Shubham. After completing his education in remote sensing from CEPT University, Ahmedabad, Shubham is now visiting faculty at the School of Architecture in Delhi but makes time to help his father with his work. Mishra is also something of an ‘eco-artist’—he takes old cartons, sticks pictures on them and revamps them into shelves for his office. And he’s also made an intricate mosaic from pictures of Gandhi on a broken wooden cabinet.

Not that he wants to talk about it. He would rather speak about his work and communicate his message to people—the readers of his books, the fellow environmentalists he meets in India and overseas, and the countless villagers he meets on his travels. “I have worked in different parts of India, but the prime focus has always been Rajasthan, as it receives the lowest rainfall,” he says. “I take forward Gandhian thinking and reach out to people so that they can make themselves independent as far as water is concerned. When people build their own systems, they have a sense of ownership of them that leads to proper maintenance.”

When asked about the role of the state, Mishra is diplomatic but candid. “The government tries to do its job but there are areas in Rajasthan, close to Pakistan, where elections are not even conducted,” he says. “What would these people do to get fresh water? In many areas, the water provided by the state government is saline. On the other hand, harvested rainwater

lasts the whole season. One rainfall and the tanks and *kuin* are filled with fresh water that doesn’t stagnate for a long time. So we help people build such systems themselves.” Mishra and his team of committed volunteers at GPF also work to promote the environmental campaigns of various rural development agencies and prepare survey reports on distressed areas that need guidance.

One precept he shares with anybody who’s ready to listen: heed the cues of nature. “There can be water scarcity in a high rainfall region like Cherrapunji and hilly regions like Uttarakhand and there can be sufficient water available in low rainfall regions like Rajasthan—it all depends on how we follow the directions provided by nature,” he says. “Mother Nature has always provided us enough water to survive. But in the past few decades, our country’s water management system has totally collapsed. The root of the problem is that we give more importance to land than water. It’s time to put water first.”



“If someone needs a mother, I am there”

Sindhutai Sapkal . 61 . HADAPSAR, MAHARASHTRA

📷 Brinda Gill 📷 Hemant Patil







Sindhutai Sapakal overcame social ostracism, poverty and gut-wrenching hardship to transform the lives of over 1,000 orphans. We chart her incredible journey

I have 1,042 children, 199 sons-in-law and 36 daughters-in-law," says Sindhutai Sapakal with a soft chuckle. The 61 year-old, clad in a plain sari, has just walked into her home-office in Hadapsar, Pune. You take in a simple sofa, table, computer, and awards aplenty, before your attention is arrested by a gaggle of adoring girls. They rush in, calling for *Mai* (mother). One carries an infant, who reaches out to Sindhutai. She cuddles the baby, prompting a giggle from the cherub. It is an idyllic portrait of maternal love, one that conceals the gut-wrenching hardships Sindhutai has endured to forge a life that has brought her peace—and over 1,000 orphans and unwanted children a new life.

Just ask 38 year-old Shyam Randive, a lecturer at Shreemant Bhaiyyasaheb Rajemane College in Mhaswad, Maharashtra—he was just eight when Sindhutai rescued him from the streets. Today, he is paying tribute to his saviour by writing a PhD thesis on her life, under the aegis of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. "I would have a broom in my hand had it not been for her," he says. "What she has done for people like me, who had no future, is nothing short of a miracle. So, instead of doing research on some historical figure, I thought I should

write about someone who has transformed lives before my very eyes."

Before changing the lives of others, though, she had to contend with her own realities. Born on 14 November 1948 in a shepherd's family near Wardha, Maharashtra, Sindhutai was married at the age of 10 to a man over 20 years older. While she was pregnant with her fourth child, Sindhutai, then in her 20s, demanded that women be paid for the dung that they collected from the fields of their landlords, which would then be sold by the forest department. Incensed by her interference, one landlord alleged she was carrying his child. Soon, she was ostracised by her in-laws and parents. Homeless and separated from her three sons, she delivered a baby girl in a cowshed, cutting the umbilical cord herself with a stone. Things got worse before they could get better. After struggling for food in temples and trains, Sindhutai decided to give up. But as she stood on a cliff, she saw red liquid oozing out of a tree cut by an axe. "Despite being hurt, the tree was still offering shade to people," recalls Sindhutai. "That day, on 14h May 1975, I was reborn. Today all my children celebrate that day!"

To feed her daughter, aptly named Mamata (mother's love), she would

sing for money in trains during the day, sleeping at railway platforms at night. A sliver of something indefinable enters her eyes as she adds, "I have even slept at a crematorium as I knew that no one would venture there and I would be safe. Once I was so hungry that I took the wheat flour offered at the pyre, made a *roti* with my hand and roasted it on the pyre."

Sindhutai's journey took her to Chikhaldara, a town in Amravati district, where she began to live with adivasis. She looked after the young orphans in the community and soon became a comrade in arms in their struggles with the forest department for rights to land and forest produce. In 1984, she left Mamata at Seva Sadan, a charitable trust in Pune. "If she had stayed with me I would have given her more love than the other children in my care," she says almost dispassionately as her daughter, now 35, looks on. "With her in good care, I could ask for alms for other children, and look after many more orphans."

For her part, Mamata insists she bears no resentment towards Sindhutai, only admiration for her grit. "I was completely secure being left at Seva Sadan," she says. "I would meet my mother whenever she came to Pune. She was very concerned that I study."



And she did, acquiring a Bachelor's in psychology and a Master's in social work. Today, Mamata, married with a six year-old daughter, helps her mother with her activities, looking after the needs of the children, from their education, health and cultural awareness to arranging their weddings when they grow up.

Sindhutai was there for many, many others though. In 1992, she established a centre for orphans and destitute women in Chikhaldara in a bungalow donated by Christian missionaries. All children whose last names were unknown were given the middle name Sindhutai and the surname Sapakal—a practice that continues till today! Over the years, with the help of land given by government and private donations, she set up more centres: Mamata Bal Sadan in Saswad, near Pune; Savitribhari Phule Girl's Hostel in Amravati; Abhiman Bal Bhavan in Wardha for young boys; and Gopika Vanaushadhi Prakalapa in Wardha where destitute women look after orphans. She even established the Gopika Gairakshan Kendra in Wardha—for abandoned cows. Now, at Manjari about 5 km



Recently when Sindhutai read about a man who killed his wife, leaving behind his devastated mother-in-law and two small girls, she set out for their village, found the girls and their grandmother and brought them home

from Hadapsar, Sindhutai is building her dream project: Sanmati Bal Niketan, a five-floor structure across 9,000 sq ft. Apart from residential and recreational areas for children and women, it will also house the office of her trust, Saptasindhu Mahila Adhar Bal Sangopan & Shikshan Sanstha. "People tell me the building will last 200 years," she says. "I want it that way as I plan to be reborn as Sindhutai Sapakal and return here!"

At present, boys and girls live in two separate rented apartments near the building under construction and pursue their education in nearby institutions. Those children who are not academically inclined are assisted with vocational courses. "I have been with *Mai* since I was one-and-a-half years old," says Vinay, a soft-spoken 20 year-old, who is pursuing an LLB degree. "I never missed having my own parents. She is everything to me." To this, bright-eyed Abhay, 14, is quick to add that he has been with *Mai* for eight years, comes first in class and received a scholarship for his academics. And Kirti Jadhav, a 15 year-old, Class X student, informs you that 'the





With her 'first batch of children'; (opposite page) Sindhutai, surrounded by her devoted wards, exudes serenity and love

girls' have an organised routine that involves studying and helping around. "They all learn to handle responsibility early in life," says Sindhutai. "And they know that they are part of a large family." This family extends to the Saswad centre, which is run by Deepak Gaikwad, 46, her 'first son'. Now, along with his wife Puja, Gaikwad manages the centre, which offers vocational training with accommodation for boys and girls; a computer room; a mill to grind grain; a vegetable patch; and a play area for children.

Sindhutai has received more than 175 awards. The prize purse of some—such as the Sat Paul Mittal National Award (2001) and the Anandmayi Award (2001)—have enabled the construction of Sanmati Bal Niketan.

Apart from supervising the construction and visiting her centres, Sindhutai travels across the country to raise awareness—and funds—for her work. "Our earlier Ambassador clocked 1.1 million km in three years," she says with a laugh. The money is

paramount to keep the centres running; only the girl's hostel in Amravati and Mamata Bal Sadan in Saswad receive state government grants. There too, the grant is only for 20 children while about 70 live there.

Sindhutai sets a blistering pace, travelling at night so the days are more fruitful. On her trips, she also seeks out orphan children to add to her brood. Recently, when she read about a man who killed his wife, leaving behind his devastated mother-in-law and two small girls, she set out for the village in question, found the grandmother and girls, and brought them home. Sindhutai's travels have even taken her overseas. This February, she visited San Jose, California, to address the Pahile Vishwa Marathi Sahitya Sammelan—she was greeted by an appreciative audience who donated to the cause, in dollars. Back home too, people drop by her centres with contributions of money, food and clothes. At the time of our visit to Hadapsar, Colonel Ashok Mago, a member of the Lions Club, arrives with tins of

baby food for the newest addition to the family, a two-week old infant. The baby came to the centre when she was just three days old and very fragile and was subsequently treated—free of charge—at Noble Hospital, Magarpatta, "by Dr Pote, another well-wisher". "*Tee vachli* [she survived]," whispers Sindhutai, as she holds the baby close. This empathy serves her well when she is speaking to people to raise funds. She intersperses her experiences with verses from poets like Bahinabai and Sant Gadge Baba Maharaj. "While picking up scraps of paper lying around, I came across the works of great poets," she says wryly. "Their words wiped away my tears."

Sindhutai has also made her peace with her family. One of her sons helps out at the centre at Chikhaldara while the other two work as farmers in Wardha. Her husband has found shelter at the Abhiman Bal Bhavan. "I am grateful to my husband for turning me out," she says. "At home, I would have only looked after my family. Now I have been able to look after so many."



“There will be plenty of trees one day”

**Bhausaheb Thorat . 85 .** SANGAMNER, MAHARASHTRA

◆ Huned Contractor    📷 Vilas Kalgutker





Some call it reforestation. But Bhausaheb Thorat, a simple farmer from Maharashtra, has turned a tree-planting drive into a social revolution. We examine what motivates this inspirational octogenarian

**I**t's a long way from the Alps to the Sahyadri Hills in western Maharashtra's Sangamner *tehsil*. But that's where the seeds of the Dandakaranya Movement were sown, as a legacy passed from a French naturalist to a simple farmer with a fire in his belly.

A little frail today and laid low by a prostate condition, Bhausaheb Thorat's eyes sparkle when he talks about the green revolution he started three years ago in and around his home town in Ahmednagar district, 200 km from Mumbai. That's three years of sowing and planting 125 million seeds and saplings on the hills and plains of Sangamner; saplings that now cover the once-arid region with a rich carpet of green. But this is more than just another mass tree-planting drive. Bhausaheb Thorat has awakened the collective social conscience of an entire *tehsil*. "It is not the quantum alone," says Bhausaheb, or *Dada*, as he's fondly called. "It's about collective participation so that every farmer, woman and child is sensitised to the need to plant trees."

The Dandakaranya Movement is an inspirational mission that has been cited by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). A feature on Bhausaheb has been uploaded on the UNEP website ([www.unep.org / billiontreecampaign/CampaignNews/Dandakaranya.asp](http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/CampaignNews/Dandakaranya.asp)) as an example of how sheer grit and determination can work magic in the face of seemingly impossible odds.

Bhausaheb's face lights up as he peels back the years and returns to where it all began—on the Sayakhindi hill in Sangamner *tehsil*. It was 23 June 2006, and the hill was swarming with 50,000 men, women and children armed with lunchboxes and farm implements. The volunteers had assembled there, eyes cast heavenwards. Soon, the skies obliged and as a light drizzle descended, the villagers went to work to the sound of temple bells ringing in the distance.

Bhausaheb sowed the first seed and his foot soldiers followed suit. In seven days, they had covered the slopes of Khaneshwar Tambkada, Waryachi





Mal, Talyache Ran and Ramgad. The target: 10 million seeds. But on 2 July 2006, the Green Army returned to the barracks after planting—hold your breath—45 million seeds across 28,000 acre. It was a classic example of how organised people power, when inspired and channelled, can work wonders. Indeed it was a miracle. Because the next year, the volunteers repeated the feat, sowing another 45 million seeds across 21,700 acres. In its third year, the movement targeted 25 million seeds and 450,000 saplings while the 2009 monsoon saw another 10 million seeds and saplings being sowed. That's just over one-tenth of his ultimate target: 1 billion.

"Unfortunately, there has been a shortfall of rain and a lot of the seeds will not germinate. But that doesn't matter. We'll do it again the next year, and the next. And one day, Sangamner will be a lush forest," says the

gutsy Gandhian, whose movement has thus far covered 170 villages. A dark shadow flits across Bhausaheb's face when he talks about the march of development and how it has left its footprint on global warming and climate change. His answer to that is the hope that his Dandakaranya Movement will spread to the national level.

Bhausaheb is clearly no ordinary man—it takes gumption and a special kind of self-belief to turn a storybook into a life's mission. The 85 year-old farmer says his plan to transform barren land into a green landscape took root when he read *The Man Who Planted Trees*, an allegorical tale by French author Jean Giono about Elzeard Bouffier, a naturalist who dedicated his life to reforesting the Alps between 1910 and 1945. Thorat would like to believe that Bouffier was a real person and not a figment of a novelist's imagination. "And so I set

for myself a target of planting 10 million trees in one month," he says with a smile. "I knew I couldn't do it alone. So I decided to rally the residents of Sangamner. That's how I overshot the target four-and-a-half times."

Leadership comes naturally to Bhausaheb. He was a freedom fighter, an able Congress legislator, an active promoter of the cooperative movement, founder of the Sangamner Cooperative Sugar Mill, and former president of the Sangamner District and State Cooperative Bank. Born in Jorve village in Sangamner, Bhausaheb's work took him to the major metros in India and Japan and Switzerland. But he is passionate about home and hearth, turning down several senior political posts to stay in Sangamner and work towards its development. Bhausaheb's health may not always cooperate but his spirit never flags. "This year, owing to my prostate problem and dia-



betes, I wondered whether I would be able to accomplish our target," he says. "Then I thought about Bouffier who had done it on his own. I am fortunate to have the backing of the entire *tehsil*. My mind was thus made up. And I am sure that there will be plenty of trees one day."

Bhausahab was always determined that "the revolution" he started would be a mass movement, one that would go beyond the act of sowing seeds. But first he needed the cooperation of various government departments. "As trees would be planted on common land, it was inevitable that the Forest Department, the Social Forestry Department and the Mamledar Office [local civic council] would have to be roped in," he recalls. "But I wanted nothing more than their cooperation. I did not want any government funds as this inevitably gives way to corruption. I wanted this to be a freedom struggle of sorts."

But why call it the 'Dandakaranya' movement? "It has its origins in Indian mythology. In the epic *Ramayana*, the sage Agastya turned the arid Dandakaranya forest into a green haven through a massive tree-planting drive," explains Ulhas Latkar, who has published *Dandakaranya: The Story of A Green Movement*, originally authored in Marathi by Aruna Antarkar and translated into English by Nandu Dange. Latkar has published the book under his banner Ameya Prakashan.

If Bhausahab's 'Green Revolution' had a storybook beginning, it took a year to actually plan and execute. Our spunky tiller first rallied together a core group of people who were experienced in organising mass movements. The core group decided that the green army would comprise 5,000 volunteers who would rally the villagers in the *tehsil*. The army was assigned divisions and responsibilities such as digging pits,




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"I wanted nothing more than the farmers' cooperation. I did not want any government funds as this gives way to corruption. I wanted this to be a freedom struggle"

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planting the seeds and covering the pits with earth. Special, lighter implements were made for women. Once the seeds had been collected, Bhausahab drew up a map of each road and rivulet of the *tehsil*. He then sent out the volunteers into the villages, where they enlisted support for the movement that would mirror the spirit of the freedom struggle.

Roving music squads were also sent out to drum up support. "I didn't want the volunteers to make speeches; no one listens to them. Instead, we wanted folk songs to stir the enthusiasm and participation required for such a project," explains Bhausahab, adding that the performing squads also entertain villagers as they work on the hills. "We also decided that we

should preserve the seeds of every fruit we eat. We were thus able to collect seeds from whole town as well as from faraway places." Soon, much to the amazement of everyone, seeds quite literally started pouring in. "They came from schoolchildren, social and educational organisations, and the Forest, Agriculture, Social Forestation and other government departments," he adds. "The Cooperative Sugar Mill was entrusted with the job of collecting, storing and preserving them scientifically. Soon, we had collected 11,000 kg. Now, seeds are collected round the year."

Each participant is expected to contribute at least 5 kg of seeds. Also, it is not mandatory that everyone climbs the hills to sow the seeds or saplings. "One can even plant a seed in one's backyard," says Bhausahab. "That is how we have sustained the project." Any obstacles the revolution has encountered have come from fickle weather and a moody monsoon. This, in turn, brings down the survival rate of the seeds and saplings to a meagre 10 to 12 per cent. "Considering that rural Maharashtra is reeling under a power crisis, there's no way we can use pumps to channel water supply into areas where seeds have been planted," he rues.

The main challenge is sufficient rainfall. "It will take a long time before the green carpet turns into strong trees but I believe this movement will continue on its own steam," says Bhausahab with firm conviction, adding that it will take at least a decade for his movement to show tangible and visible results. But patience is second nature to the man, who continues to look at the bigger picture. "I will not gauge the success of this project by the number of seeds and saplings planted," he says. "What is important is that people spontaneously join the movement in large numbers."

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## Pleasure the palate

AN INNOVATIVE FESTIVAL MENU WILL HAVE YOUR GUESTS COMING BACK FOR MORE, SAYS **DR PUSHPESH PANT**

### Paneer Rogan Josh

*Cottage cheese in a spicy gravy*

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** 4

#### INGREDIENTS

- *Paneer* (cottage cheese): 250 gm; cut into cubes
- Oil: 3 tbsp
- Cloves: 4
- Green cardamoms: 4
- Black pepper powder: ¼ tsp
- Turmeric: ¼ tsp
- Onion paste: 1 tsp; fried
- Garlic paste: ½ tsp
- Red chilly: ½ tsp; dissolved in 3 tsp water
- Water
- Low sodium salt to taste (if absolutely necessary)

#### METHOD

Heat the oil in a pan and fry *paneer* cubes until light brown. Remove and drain the excess oil and place the cubes on absorbent kitchen towels. Heat the remaining oil in the pan, add cloves and stir them till they crackle. Remove the pan from the heat and add half a litre of water. Add *paneer* cubes, salt, garlic paste, green cardamom, turmeric powder, and onion paste. Bring the mixture to a boil. Add red chilly powder, black pepper and mix well. Cook on medium heat for about seven minutes.



#### FRESH FACT

A rich source of protein and calcium, *paneer* helps prevent osteoporosis, stomach disorders and joint pain. In moderation, it is also associated with lower body weight and reduced risk of developing insulin resistance syndrome.



# Shahi Pulao Noodlewala

*Noodles with a melange of vegetables*

**Preparation time:** 20-25 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** 4

## INGREDIENTS

- Noodles: 1 cup
- Sesame oil: ½ tbsp
- Groundnut oil: 1 ½ tbsp
- Garlic clove: 1; thinly sliced
- Fresh root ginger: ½ inch piece; finely chopped
- Fresh red chilly: 1; seeded and sliced
- Broccoli florets: ½ cup
- Baby sweet corn: 2 tbsp
- Shiitake or oyster mushrooms: 2; medium-sized, sliced
- Small spring onions: 2; sliced
- Red cabbage: 50 gm; shredded
- Bean sprouts: ½ cup
- Dark soya sauce: 1 tbsp
- Black pepper powder: ¼ tsp; freshly ground

## METHOD

Bring a saucepan of salted water to a boil and cook noodles according to the instructions on the packet. Drain and toss in sesame oil. Set aside. Heat groundnut oil in a frying pan and stir-fry garlic and ginger for about a minute. Add chilly, broccoli, baby sweet corn and mushrooms and stir-fry for about two minutes. Add spring onion, shredded red cabbage and bean sprouts and stir-fry for another two minutes. Toss in the drained noodles with the soy sauce and pepper. Continue to cook over high heat, stirring for two to three minutes, until the ingredients are well mixed and warmed. Serve at once.



## FRESH FACT

Broccoli is one of the richest sources of calcium, iron and magnesium. Besides being rich in Vitamin A, its Vitamin C content exceeds even that of oranges.







Vilas Kalgutkar; FOOD STYLING: Anita Sarin

## Fruity Dosa

*Dosa with a fruity twist*

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes  
(for readymade batter)

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

**Serves:** 4

### INGREDIENTS

- Dosa batter (fresh or readymade; follow instructions on the pack): 1 cup
- Fresh fruits of choice: 1 cup
- Canned pineapple: A couple of slices; drained well to remove excess sugar; chopped
- Dried fig: 1; soaked in skimmed milk overnight and chopped
- Dried apricots/prunes: 2-3; stones removed; chopped
- Thick, naturally sweet curd: 2 tbsp; whisked well
- Green cardamom (pods only): 2 tbsp
- Almonds: 6-8; skinned and slivered for garnish
- Honey: ½ tsp

- A pinch of sugar free powder for taste
- A tbsp of oil

### METHOD

Apply a thin layer of oil on a non-stick pan. Heat on high flame and reduce heat. Pour a ladleful of batter on it and spread with the back of the ladle or half an onion bound in a piece of cloth so that it covers the surface. As the *dosa* blisters and changes colour, moisten the edges with a few drops of oil or by sprinkling very little water. Using a spatula turn the *dosa* and cook for a few seconds more. Remove and repeat the process till the batter is exhausted. Put a dosa on a plate and line it with the whisked *dahi* thinned with skimmed milk in which the fig was soaked. Then place a portion of fresh and canned or dried fruits. Garnish with almonds and sprinkle a few green cardamom pods. Top with just a drop of honey. Fold and enjoy either hot or cold.



### FRESH FACT

An excellent source of vitamins and minerals, pineapple is beneficial in any form—fresh, canned or as juice. The nutrients include calcium, potassium, fibre and Vitamin C.

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Shameem

# Akthar

## Help for varicose veins:

Yoga can offer much needed respite

While many people believe that varicose veins are a cosmetic problem, medical opinion today suggests that they may be an indication of deeper circulatory or cardiac problems. People who suffer from varicose veins also experience considerable pain while standing for long hours, ulcers, as well as discoloration and itching near the affected area. Varicose veins can be the result of genetic predisposition, age, pregnancy or obesity.

To put it simply, weak veins act like slack water pipes; instead of sending up blood, they let it slide down, burdening tired and bloated veins further. Imagine this long column of blood, fighting gravity, trying to make its way up, unable to complete its journey as its pathway has become damaged, weakened. In fact, this section is also called the secondary heart because of its important role in pumping blood up the body.

Yoga prevents the problem from deteriorating further through inverted poses that keep the legs up, giving overworked veins much-needed respite. While the damage done may not be wished away with yoga practice, it may help contain the problem while

you deal with it through conventional medical treatment.

Some poses that help are the boat pose (*naukasana*), shoulder stand (*sarvangasana*) and inverted psychic union pose (*viparitarakani mudra*); all inversions like the headstand (*sirsasana*) and its variations; and all leg raises (*padahastasana*) and leg cycling. Inversions are particularly powerful for their anti-gravity effect. Further, poses that work the leg subtly but surely, like ankle rolls (*goolf chakra*), toe scrunches (*padanguli naman*), half butterfly (*ardha titali*) and full butterfly (*poorna titali*) also help by boosting blood circulation in the legs.

In fact, leg-kicking exercises can help you prepare for *asana* like the inverted psychic union pose. Here's an example. Lie down on your back, stretch your right hand behind you, inhaling. Lift the right leg and bring right hand, exhaling, to touch the foot. Repeat the routine with the left leg. Initially, you may find it difficult to touch the foot but your leg muscles and tendons will stretch to accommodate this. Repeat this exercise with both legs together. Try to do this as slowly as you can. The slower you are, the greater the impact. This will tone the abdominal and leg muscles and flatten your stomach. Start with a few rounds, increasing the number up to 10 slowly.



Haresh Patel

### Yogic moves

**Inverted psychic union pose**  
(*viparitarakani mudra*)

Lie on your back. Inhale, lifting your legs up together. Now push your hips up, supporting your waist on your palms. Initially, your wrists will hurt, so hold the pose only for a short time. But you can gradually increase the time up to 10 minutes over several weeks and months.

**Benefits:** This is an excellent anti-ageing pose. Apart from helping with varicose veins, it halts greying of hair and wrinkles; fights oedema; improves body metabolism and voice quality; and tones the leg and abdominal muscles.

Shameem Akthar is a Mumbai-based yoga acharya



If you have any queries for her,  
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Dr Anjali

# Mukerjee

## Skin care: Tips to revive glow and suppleness

**I've always had good skin but since my mid-50s the glow and suppleness have gone. Can a diet rich in certain minerals and vitamins help? Please suggest an ideal revitalisation plan.**

One of the most dynamic organs that protect the body, the skin has tremendous capacity to rejuvenate. However, changes in appearance and texture occur as we age. Crow's feet and laugh lines appear initially; with time, wrinkles mark their impressions and the ageing face shows discoloration. Noticeable changes in texture include thinning and drying of the skin. Years reduce the skin's ability to rejuvenate and taking extra care becomes important.

The layer beneath the skin comprises a network of proteins called elastin and collagen. These maintain its suppleness and elasticity. Several factors—dietary pattern, emotional state of mind, stress, hormonal changes, skin-care regimen, excessive exposure to sun, lack of exercise, and natural ageing—cause reduced production of these proteins. Toxins, built up owing to unhealthy lifestyle, generate free radicals causing damage to skin proteins, which fail to repair themselves as time passes. Excessive exposure to sunlight without applying lotions that block UV further accelerates age-related changes.

Realistically speaking, damage caused over a period of time cannot be reversed but adequate care can slow down the progression of these changes. One of the easiest ways to arrest these changes is to lead a healthy lifestyle that includes dietary modification and exercise.

### SKIN-NOURISHING NUTRIENTS

A diet rich in vitamins and minerals definitely helps slow down the progression of age-related changes in skin. Lack of **Vitamin A** makes skin lose moisture and peel off easily. Good sources of Vitamin A are cod-liver oil, broccoli, carrot, yam, parsley, green leafy vegetables, pumpkin, papaya, mango, cherries and egg yolk.

The first line of defence against free radical damage, **Vitamin C** aids in the production and repair of skin pro-



A daily glass of carrot, tomato and beetroot juice is a great cleanser of skin and liver toxins

teins elastin and collagen. Guava, kiwifruit, strawberries, orange, black currants, spinach, parsley, cabbage, papaya and bean sprouts are rich sources of Vitamin C.

Deficiency of **B complex vitamins** induces formation of fine lines and wrinkles and makes the skin rough, dry and



scaly. Whole grains, nuts and sprouts are good sources of B complex vitamins. Known to prevent stress-induced wrinkles, **Vitamin E** present in foods like wheat germ, safflower seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts, til oil, extra virgin olive oil and soy protects the skin from free radical damage and maintains its youthfulness.

Besides production of new healthy cells, **zinc** helps generate antioxidant enzymes that deactivate free radicals and prevent them from causing damage. Nuts and seeds are a good source of zinc.

**Gamma-linoleic acid** (GLA), an essential fatty acid, makes skin smooth and supple. The ability to synthesise GLA decreases with age, making skin dry and undernourished. Taking GLA supplements (evening primrose oil) after the age of 40 is a good idea.

**Water** is essential to hydrate the body and eliminate toxins from the system. Ideally, you must drink at least eight to 10 glasses every day—this includes soups, juices and fresh drinks.

#### Follow these tips to revive the glow and suppleness of your skin:

- Drink at least one glass of vegetable juice every day. A mixture of carrot, tomato and beetroot is a great cleanser of skin and liver toxins. Plant foods provide Vitamin C, E and selenium, retarding ageing and assisting cell renewal.
- Avoid smoking. It leaches out Vitamin C and builds up toxins in the system.
- Avoid fried and spicy foods that contribute to your body's toxin load.
- Restrict fat intake. Incorporate foods rich in healthy fats, especially monounsaturated fatty acids and omega fatty acids like fish oils, olive oil, canola oil and walnuts.
- Increase intake of fibre and complex carbohydrates with fruits, vegetables and whole grains that provide roughage and detoxify the system.
- Minimise intake of processed foods containing additives and preservatives. Always opt for fresh, home-cooked foods instead.
- A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and pulses with proper rest and exercise can give you radiant, youthful skin.

Nutritionist Dr Anjali Mukerjee is the founder of Health Total, a nutrition counselling centre.  
Website: [www.health-total.com](http://www.health-total.com)



## WEIGHT WATCH

DR JOE LEWIS ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ON DIET, WEIGHT AND EXERCISE

**Q:** I have recently put on a lot of weight. I would like to exercise but I suffer from cervical spondylosis. What can I do?

**A:** Cervical spondylosis is a common degenerative condition of the cervical spine, often experienced as stiffness or pain in the shoulders or neck region. A joint consultation with a dietitian and physiotherapist will help determine the calories to be cut from diet and expended through exercise. As high-impact aerobics like jogging or running are not advisable, your diet plan becomes critical. Consult your physician, caregiver or physiotherapist before starting any physical activity. Your exercise plan will comprise neck and shoulder strengthening, low-impact aerobics, increasing range of motion, improving balance and flexibility, and resistance training.

Begin with neck and shoulder strengthening exercises twice or thrice a week. Simple exercises include 'half circles' where you drop your chin onto your chest and move it to the right shoulder and back; alternate with the left shoulder and repeat. A variation is, reaching an arm over the head and placing the palm on the back to create resistance while pushing against it. Stretching, the next basic step, is needed daily because tissue stretches best when it has been 'pre-heated'.

Aerobic exercises should be based on tolerability and cardiovascular status. If high-impact exercises are contraindicated, engage in low-impact activity like walking or swimming. Aerobic exercises three to four times a week will improve blood circulation and endurance.

Invest in a low-cost home 'gym' with resistance bands, Swiss ball and other accessories. Review your posture while watching TV or working on the computer and take frequent breaks. Losing weight is vital. Make sure you do it swiftly but sensibly.



Dr Joe Lewis is head of research and development at Kaya Life, a chain of professional weight-control centres (SMS Life to 54646)



If you have a question for Dr Mukerjee or Dr Lewis, write to [contact.mag@harmonyindia.org](mailto:contact.mag@harmonyindia.org)

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**PRAKASH DUBEY, 60**

## ACE SHOOTER

Mihir Singh

After 35 years in the Income Tax Department, I retired in 2006 as chief commissioner from Mumbai. Working in a job that involves long, tedious hours is not easy, particularly if one has a creative bent of mind. Despite the demands of my bureaucratic career, I successfully sustained my love for photography and refused to allow circumstances to dull my interest.

I am peace-loving and sensitive by nature. I turned to photography for a release from the tensions and pressures of everyday life; the medium also helps me express my creativity. What slowly evolved into a passion began almost casually in 1963 when I was still a high-school student. For over a couple of decades, I pursued it as a hobby. It was only in 1983-84 while on a trip to Belgium that I ventured beyond

family photographs. I gave the film to a studio and was surprised to receive a letter from them—they wanted to buy my photographs. Deciding not to sell, I returned to Delhi with my slides. One of my friends who saw the pictures convinced me that they were worth exhibiting. I held my first show in Mumbai in 1987. The first step to convert my passion into an alternate career was made then.

Over the years, I have held four more exhibitions and also published a few books. In 1989, an assignment to put together a picture profile of Omar Khayyam metamorphosed into my first coffee-table book, titled *Omar and I*. Three more books were published subsequently—each very different from the other. In 1992, I published *Mahakumbha at Prayag* about the Kumbh mela in Prayag. This book has been acclaimed by *National Geographic* magazine. *India: Images of Nature* (1997)—where I tried to capture the different moods of nature through my lens—is my tribute to our country’s mesmerising beauty. My first book on Indian wildlife, *Birds of India*, was released in Westminster, London, in 2005. This is a book where my wife Katie, a freelance writer, has helped me communicate the essence of what I wish to express through my photography. Currently, I’m working on a coffee-table book on Mumbai, which is planned for release next year.

My travels and exhibitions give me the opportunity to mingle and communicate with people. In the past, it helped me collect taxes! My work during my career may have gone unnoticed by my employers, but my contribution to highlighting India’s environment and wildlife was rewarded with the Padmashri earlier this year.

—As told to Sanghita Roychoudhury

## WRITE CHOICE

EXPERTS ANSWER YOUR QUERIES AND CONCERNS ON JOBS AFTER RETIREMENT

**I am a voracious reader and want to translate good regional writing into English. How do I go about it?**

Though translation has become a fashionable hobby horse today, making a breakthrough for newcomers is difficult unless you have personal contacts with editors and publishers. More than real interest in literature, there is a lot of nepotism in the business. Even if you identify a book you would like to translate, it is pointless to proceed without obtaining the approval of both author and publisher. Frankly, translating literature is not financially rewarding. Some publishing houses do give you an advance but the amount is later deducted from royalty payments—which is usually just 5 per cent of sales. The creativity of the translator is as important as that of the original writer. Hence becoming a translator is not advisable unless you are creatively inclined and dedicated to the work at hand. You should also have another source of income and not be dependent on the remuneration. Translating medical, technical or scientific journals is financially more rewarding. However, this gives no creative satisfaction.

—Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan

*Sankaranarayanan is a writer and translator based in Chennai*

**I recently retired from an insurance company in Jaipur. I would like to use my contacts and start a business that can be run from home. Please advise me.**



I congratulate you for wanting to work after retirement. An easy option to work from home is to acquire a franchise or become a distributor of a standard consumer product. Companies like Tupperware, Avon and Oriflame are into direct selling. You can make use of your contacts and create a customer base. Operating this kind of home-based business is very popular and brings in a regular income. No initial investment is required to register. Once you contact the company of your choice, the area manager will not only give guidance but also help chart out a comprehensive business plan. All brands have attractive catalogues and brochures that advertise their products.

—Poonam Bhatia

*Bhatia has a Tupperware franchise in Jaipur*

**Do you think starting a cab service in West Delhi is a good idea for a retired person? Please indicate the kind of investment involved and the returns I can expect.**

Starting a full-fledged cab service is a very expensive proposition as it

requires a huge amount of investment. Taxis require permits to cross the borders of a particular city, for which taxes have to be paid. Acquiring a permit to travel to other cities would require time as well as much more investment. It would be best to start a local cab service for office goers and students. To provide a cab service, you have to first register as a company, projecting it as an agency for travel and tourism. Once registered, start operations with two cars initially—Tata Indica is a good choice as it gives good mileage. Drivers should be hired from a good placement agency to ensure that they are properly trained. You can start with a minimum investment of Rs 300,000. The cars can be bought through a bank loan repaid by monthly instalments. Publicising your business and getting it listed on local search engines will add value. Returns may be low during the first two months but money will start coming in with time. It is a good business idea as a lot of demand exists nowadays for hired cabs.

—Dharampal Singh Sharma

*Sharma runs Rainbow Travel and Tourism, a cab agency in South Delhi*



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## Where FRANCE meets INDIA

Gallic chic and spiritual serenity blend to provide some delightful contradictions in Pondicherry.

Text and photographs:  
**SUSHEELA NAIR**

**S**aundering down the streets of Pondicherry, we could see myriad signs of its French colonial heritage: neatly spaced out, geometrically parallel streets; houses with tall, shuttered windows; ornamented Catholic churches; policemen in red *kepi*—French military caps with horizontal peaks—elegant mansions with colonnaded balconies; and high garden walls adorned by archways overflowing with bougainvillea. Indeed, with its seafront promenade, enduring pockets of French culture and architecture, and even statues of French saint Joan of Arc and former governor general

(Joseph Francois) Dupleix, the French outpost exudes an aura of Gallic chic juxtaposed with Indian spiritual serenity. Streets with French names like Rue des Bassyins de Richemont, Rue St Louis and Rue Brellecombe nestle alongside Muthumariamman Koil Street, Chettiar Street and Sri Aurobindo Street.

There is plenty to see in this delightful destination which has heritage, beaches and, above all, the renowned Aurobindo Ashram. Sri Aurobindo established the Ashram in 1926 in collaboration with his French disciple, Mirra Alfassa, who became universally known as the Mother. We began our sojourn at the marble *samadhi*

that entombs their mortal remains in the Ashram on Rue de la Marine. We meditated at the flower-festooned *samadhi* under the frangipani tree in the central courtyard. Opposite the main building, in the educational centre, you can catch a film, slideshow, play or lecture on the Ashram's forthcoming activities. Life here revolves around the *ashram*. Its commercial activities cover cottage industries for furniture, footwear, garments, textile, coir and toys. It has a small library and an active publishing programme.

Armed with map in hand, we strolled around to experience the spirit of Pondicherry. We embarked on our Heritage Walk from Goubert Salai





(Clockwise from top left) Matrimandir, the soul of Auroville; Aayee Mandapam in Government Park; Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception

(Beach Road), the windswept 1.5-km-long seafront promenade, pausing at the Gandhi Memorial, where a statue of Mahatma Gandhi is surrounded by an arc of eight lofty granite columns said to be brought from Gingee fort, 160 km from Chennai, one of the few surviving forts in Tamil Nadu. To the north of the statue is the War Memorial in honour of martyrs of World War I. The centrepiece displays a soldier with his head bent in reverence.

The 29-m-high, 19th century lighthouse and the circular Customs Office are other reminiscences of ancient maritime glory. Lit for the first time on 1 July 1836, the beacon from the lighthouse could be seen

30 km into the sea. A modern light replaced the original beacon in 1931, but the old lighthouse was abandoned in 1979 and a new one built and commissioned. In the 1940s, the Customs House still had its 20-m high mast. For the Europeans, the flagpole was a symbol of their sovereignty. We could imagine the jubilation of the Indians when the Indian tricolour was hoisted here for the first time on 1 November 1950. We fortified ourselves with a cup of coffee at the renovated Le Café next door. One of Pondicherry's oldest buildings, it was the Harbour Office and the city's oldest post office during the French period. Bicycles can be hired by the hour to explore the city at a leisurely pace.

A short walk away is the Bharathi Park. Its tree-lined paths fan out from the Aayee Mandapam, a central pavilion with pedimented facades crowned by an urn located in the centre of the park. The dome offers respite to tourists from the scorching noon heat. The park boasts of a number of sculptures and a few fountains. The north side of the park is occupied by the gleaming white Raj Nivas, built on the site of Dupleix's residence, where the ceremonial bugle dress-parade changes guard every evening at 6 pm sharp.

The former Government Library, opposite Raj Nivas, is now the Pondicherry Museum, where we stopped by to have a peek at sculptures from

## THE AUROVILLE EXPERIENCE



Drive 10 km north of Pondicherry along the main Chennai Road. A dust tract leads to Auroville, a commune where individuals from 30 nations live. From a desolate countryside without any facilities, Auroville has traversed a long way since it was established in 1968. Inspired by The Mother, the spiritual successor of Sri Aurobindo, it was designed by French architect Roger Anger. During the opening ceremony in February 1968, representatives of 121 countries poured earth from their lands into an urn to symbolise universal oneness. Auroville is an extension of The Mother's dream to create 'an experiment in international living where men and women could live in peace and progressive harmony with each other, above all creeds, politics and nationalities.' It is part of a world community, where mortals are not judged by colour, caste, creed and occupation but their contribution to making society more amenable to better living. It is an experimental township where spirituality, not religion, forms the basis of daily life and individual merit is more valued than material wealth.

It is a visual treat with myriad trees. A huge banyan tree holds court on the approach to Matrimandir, the soul of Auroville. The golden dome-like structure is dedicated to the universal Mother, its universality symbolised by the urn in its amphitheatre containing earth from different countries and

states of India. A luminescent crystal ball in the centre of the meditation chamber lends an ethereal look. Sunrays are beamed into it from a tracking mirror located in the roof. It is not a temple. There is no idol, no jostling and pushing and incantation by loud-voiced priests. All festivals are celebrated with gusto by the residents, some making Auroville their permanent abode.

Living in settlements spread across the area, Aurovillians engage in activities that include pesticide-free farming, medicinal plant conservation, afforestation, sports, computer research, alternate technology, education and healthcare. Other than religious pursuits, the community has revived traditional industries: its workshops produce fine woven textiles, marble-dyed silks, handmade paper, perfume and incense sticks. An active press disseminates the writings of Aurobindo and the Mother. At Auroville, you can see the use of renewable energy resources everywhere—wind pumps, biogas plants and solar flat collectors. The community kitchen churns over a thousand meals a day using solar energy. The names of the units too are evocative of idealism: Hope, Promise, Discipline, Aspiration. The Information Centre, with its restaurant and gift shop, is worth a visit as are the many boutiques where you can buy products made by the craftspeople in the community.

the Pallava and Chola periods, as well as arts, crafts, arms and even small shells. There is a striking collection of artefacts recovered from excavations at Arikamedu, a nearby archaeological site located on the south bank of a lagoon formed by the Ariyankuppam River. The French Gallery in the Museum has attempted to recreate a French ambience in one section where the rooms are furnished in French style, and decorated with paintings, marbles, mirrors and clocks. Its prize exhibit is the four-poster bed that Duplex slept on when he was the governor. Also on display is bric-a-brac from local houses, including a velvet S-shaped 'conversation seat' and writing table. Antique armaments and weapons make another interesting section. The museum is an adjunct to the Romain Rolland Library.

Wandering around the French Quarter, we stumbled upon some children playing the traditional French game of petanque, a game similar to English lawn bowling where the goal is to throw hollow metal balls as close as possible to a small wooden ball called a *cochonnet* (jack), while standing with the feet together in a small circle. The French presence is also discernible in several Catholic places of worship that dot the city. The crimson-and-white Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ Church on South Boulevard is striking with its Gothic spires and stained glass windows. Equally impressive is the elegant Romanesque Church of Our Lady of the Angels with carved statues and an oil painting of Our Lady in the altar presented by Napoleon III. The Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception has an imposing façade with columns. Besides churches, there are temples built by the Chola kings between the 10th and 12th centuries. At the Manakula Vinayagar Temple, on Rue d'Orleans in the French quarter, we saw devotees seeking divine blessings.

On the second day, we hired a scooter and zipped off to Chunnambar, 8 km from the town, and the spectac-



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## Some houses have the ground floor done in Tamil style with masonry bench for visitors, louvered French windows and wrought-iron balconies

---

ular backwater front. At Chunnambar lies a stretch of tropical paradise, flanked by a creek on one side, known for recreational facilities like boating, kayaking, swimming, hydro planes and beach volleyball. A boat ferried us down the Chunnambar River up to Paradise Beach, a giant sandbar between the river and the sea. The pristine beach is a romantic hideaway offering privacy and solitude. We watched fishermen cast their nets. Tempted to venture out for a catamaran ride with them, we chose to continue our journey instead.

We set off on a Roman treasure trail to Arikamedu. Excavations in the 1940s revealed traces of a port that flourished in the 1st to 2nd century and suggestions of early Roman settlements. We saw many of the Roman artefacts discovered here in the Pondicherry Museum. Pottering around, all we could discover were some architectural remains, including vestiges of brick structures.

Back in Pondicherry, we rambled down Vysial Street, a popular Franco-

Tamil architectural streetscape in the Tamil Quarter of Pondicherry. We could sense the new pride among the community, especially after having bagged the 'Award of Merit 2008' from UNESCO's Asia-Pacific cultural heritage conservation programme in February 2009. Some houses sport a fusion of French architectural style and Tamil heritage living—two-storied buildings where the ground floor is usually in Tamil style with *thinnai* (masonry bench for visitors and pilgrims), *thalavaram* (street veranda) and carved doors; the first floor displays French influences like protruding, wrought-iron balcony, high ceiling, louvered windows and arched doorways.

The Tamil-inspired houses sport a *thalavaram* providing shelter for pedestrians and a *thinnai*. In the evening, residents congregate on their *thinnai* and indulge in interactive community bonding, discussing topics from politics to cinema. Returning to our heritage hotel, we continued to feel the camaraderie of the inhabitants of a city of fascinating layers.

**French heritage still wields an influence on Pondicherry's architecture and the names of the streets; the sea-facing statue of the Mahatma on Goubert Avenue is a famous landmark**

### FACT FILE

**When to go:** Between September and March

**Getting there:**

**By air:** From Chennai, 162 km away

**By rail:** Connected to Chennai's Egmore Station and Villupuram, 36 km away

**By road:** Well-connected with services from state transport buses and private buses.

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# NEW HORIZONS

Open your mind to change, says Vrinda Nabar

A few days before my daughter returned to university last month, she picked up a book I hadn't looked at in ages. *I Ching* was a favoured companion once, something I dipped into every now and again to try and find something I could mull over and learn from. *I Ching*, roughly translated as the 'book of changes', dates back to ancient China and its 64 hexagrams offer commonsensical advice in virtually every kind of human situation. I hate to confess it but I'm a sucker for books and articles that offer 'philosophical' fundas about life. I'm picky, mind you, which is probably one reason I stay away from certain books (and why, though not entirely friend-less, I cannot claim to score an A when it comes to winning friends and influencing people). All the same, I find that even the littlest column tucked away in the inner pages of a newspaper supplement can often shade in and transform something I hadn't quite seen that way.

The *I Ching* I valued all my life is a no-frills version that cuts through the ritual surrounding the real thing. The ancients in China believed it should be kept wrapped in silk and had various caveats concerning its place in your home and the ceremonial way in which it had to be used. My *I Ching*, on the other hand, came with a snazzy red cover, was small enough to fit into my handbag, and allowed me to use it with the idiosyncratic irreverence that is my litmus test of acceptability. When I forgot about it, it sat obligingly on my shelves and waited for me to notice it again. Maybe it was karma that made my daughter pick up this book at random and say "What's *this*,

Ma?" with gratifying amazement, as if only just noticing that her mother was a woman of many ambiguities, some of which she had yet to uncover.

In the days since she left I've battled mixed emotions—pride in the changes (sharper somehow than the many milestones of adulthood she had effortlessly crossed while still here) I sense in her on each consecutive visit mingled with sadness at having to once again acknowledge that she has flown the nest for good, that when and if she returns to what she still considers the "best city in the world" it will be to a

**We could, every one of us, see experience like the ageing Ulysses did: an arch through which a whole untravelled world waits to be discovered**

different life from the shared one I remember with so much nostalgia. I had wanted her to take the *I Ching* with her, for in our weeks together the intervening years seemed inconsequential as we pored over its uncanny ability to go to the root of our individual anxieties. But the morning after she left I found it carefully put back above shoulder height on the bookshelf I use most—almost as if she was telling me in a reversal of roles that I ought to read it more often.

Is there ever a time we stop learning about real-life situations, relation-

ships, and our own innate failings? It would be arrogant to presume we ever reach a stage when we no longer feel the need to feed our minds in what the poet Wordsworth described as "a wise passiveness". I'm an agnostic and so the *I Ching* is no holy cow in my scheme of things, just one of the many handrails that have made my passage through life less bumptious, one of several reminders that my knowledge and experience are finite, even fallible. It has taught me that "inactivity should not disturb you, for you can use the time to contemplate who and where you are". It is the same sense I get in the company of others, or in reading a good book or watching a fine movie—the sense that there are indeed more possibilities than I'd dreamed of in my philosophy.

I am beginning to realise more than ever with each passing year that circumstances change, that bereavements, separations and one's own diminishing stamina can often make for isolation. There is the very real danger that we begin to close our minds to the virtues of change as we grow older, becoming fixed in our opinions, rigid and unforgiving of trivial lapses. Yet we could, every one of us, see experience like the ageing Ulysses did: an arch through which a whole untravelled world waits to be discovered. Its margin recedes farther and farther as you move forward, and in trying to touch it you take the first step from apathy to involvement.

Vrinda Nabar, 61, is a Mumbai-based feminist writer



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## A CAPITAL IDEA

### NEW DELHI: MAKING OF A CAPITAL

BY MALVIKA SINGH, RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE

CONCEPT & VISUAL RESEARCH: PRAMOD KAPOOR

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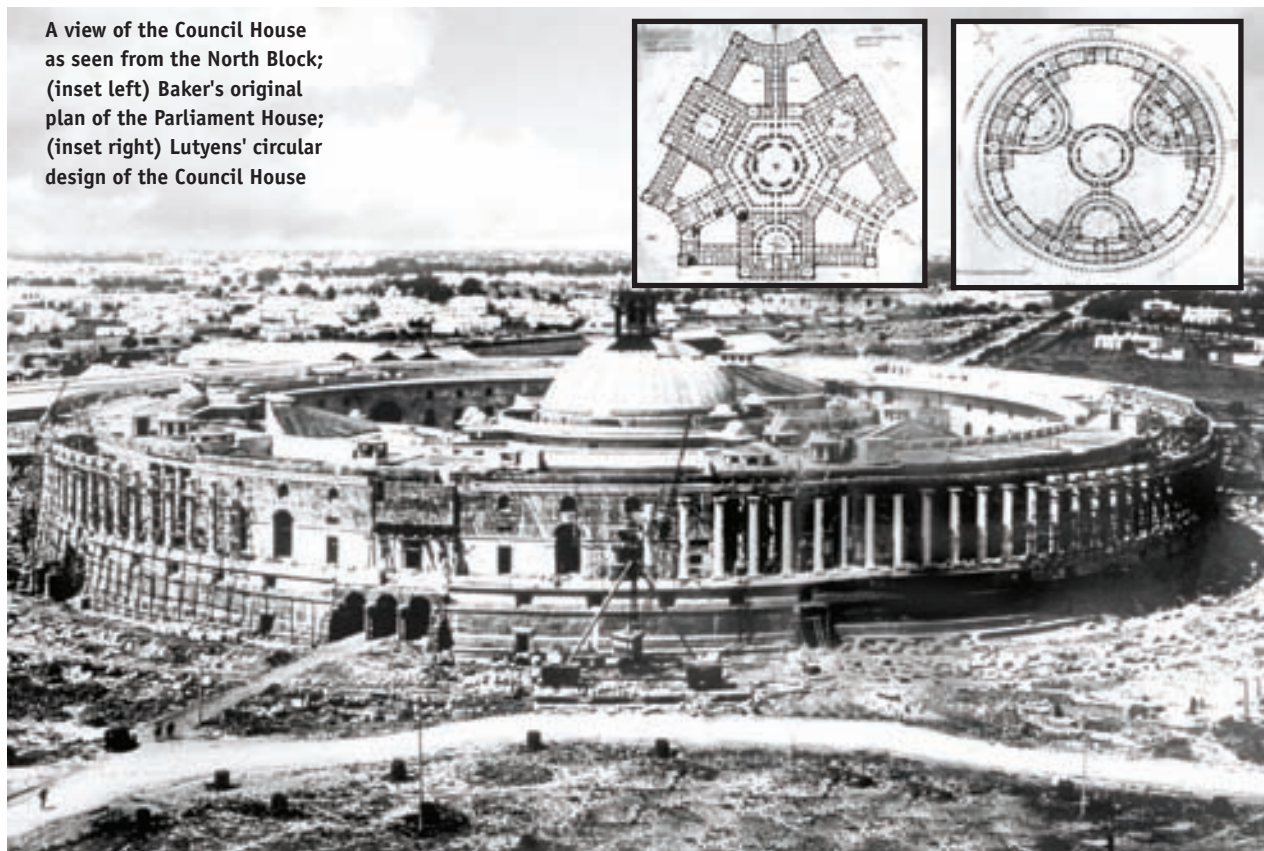
Writer and columnist Malvika Singh calls this lavish book a “personal expression of the making of a capital”. The ‘personal’ in that statement is significant—her husband’s great-grandfather was Sobha Singh, the most prominent builder of Delhi; the family’s history inextricably linked to the city’s. Thus, as Singh confesses, though this large-format book is by no means the definitive last word on India’s capital, it is a labour of love, one she takes on with vigour and flair. The grand tour includes the architecture and planning behind landmarks such as Council House (later Parliament House), Government House (Rashtrapati Bhavan), North and South Blocks, Connaught Place and Hydera-

bad House. Further, in his essay “Old Seat for a New Empire”, historian and editor Rudrangshu Mukherjee explains the rationale behind moving the capital from Kolkata to Delhi. But while their words set the scene, it is the archival material that steals the show. Blueprints and memos by architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, newspaper articles from Indian and British newspapers, aerial images, on-site pictures taken during construction, inauguration pictures of various buildings, even an insert of the agreement between the Secretary of State and the two architects, all painstakingly sourced by publisher Pramod Kapoor from institutions around the world. In fact, bemoaning

the fact that our National Archives are in a mess, Singh reiterates that it was easier to access and acquire much of the material for the book overseas. Something to mull over even as you admire these enduring symbols of national pride and temporal power.

—Arati Rajan Menon

A view of the Council House as seen from the North Block; (inset left) Baker's original plan of the Parliament House; (inset right) Lutyens' circular design of the Council House







(Top row) View of the secretariat buildings from the Great Place; a nearly completed dome over the Royal Stone Chamber in the North Block tower wing; a unique dome styled in two differently coloured stones; (middle row) Britannic lions in the forecourt veranda; an aerial view of the All-India War Memorial; third century BC Nandi bull in Government House; (above) panoramic view of North and South blocks



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“Laughter is an instant vacation.  
— American comedian Milton Berle

**YIMBY** *n.* A person who favours a project that would add a dangerous or unpleasant feature to his or her neighbourhood. [Acronym from the phrase yes in my backyard.]

—YIMBYist *n.* —YIMBYism *n.*

**Example:** When is a NIMBY not a NIMBY? When the NIMBY is actually a YIMBY: Yes in My Backyard. The YIMBY movement in Toronto is considered a positive antidote to the negative image that stalks many neighbourhood activist and resident groups better known for what they oppose than the ideas they favour.

—Tess Kalinowski,  
“YIMBYists seek positive solutions”,  
The Toronto Star, 14 February 2009



## FELUDA, ENCORE

It's the second coming of Feluda, aka Pradosh Chandra Mitter. The idiosyncratic and oh-so brainy private detective created by Satyajit Ray will now be seen in a comic-book avatar, thanks to Penguin Books. The first two editions of *The Feluda Mysteries* are already out—*Beware in the Graveyard* and *A Bagful of Mystery* are available in bookstores at Rs 99.

**DIGITAL NOMAD** *n.* A person who uses technology, particularly wireless networking, to work without requiring an office or other fixed address.

—digital nomadism *n.*

**Example:** Gruber and Consalvo are **digital nomads**. They work—clad in shorts, T-shirts and sandals—wherever they find a wireless Web connection to reach their colleagues via instant messaging, Twitter, Facebook, email and occasionally by voice on their iPhones or Skype. As digital nomads, experts say, they represent a natural evolution in teleworking. The Internet let millions of wired people work from home; now, with widespread WiFi, many have cut the wires and left home (or the dreary office) to work where they please—and especially around other people, even total strangers.

—Michael S Rosenwald, “Digital nomads choose their tribes”,  
The Washington Post, 26 July 2009

## frequency illusion

*n.* The tendency to notice instances of a particular phenomenon once one starts to look for it, and to therefore believe erroneously that the phenomenon occurs frequently.

**Example:** The word issues bothers a fair number of people, including reader David Devore, who recently sent me a link to a language complaint in *The Times* of London—along with the warning, “watch out for escaping steam”. And indeed, the *Times* letter writer was at the boiling point. “In the media, in the pub, at the bus stop,” fulminated GB, “no one ever refers to their ‘problems’; they only have ‘issues’.” Mr B is a victim of the **frequency illusion**, to use the term coined by linguist Arnold Zwicky. He's listening for issues, so he hears the word often, and imagines that it's everywhere.

—Jan Freeman, “The issue with issues”, The Boston Globe, 28 June 2009

## SPF CREEP

*n.* The gradual increase in sun protection factor (SPF) numbers in sunscreens and some cosmetic products.

**Example:** SPF 50. SPF 70. Even SPF 100! Whatever happened to good ol' SPF 30? Clinique has new SPF 50 Face Cream. Dermaglow offers SPF 70 Cream. And Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Dry Touch Sunblock SPF 100 was introduced to the US market this season. What's up with the new crop of through-the-roof-SPF sunscreens? Is **SPF creep** about advanced protection... or advanced hype?

—Yuki Hayashi, “Mega sunscreens”,  
Elle Canada, 10 July 2009

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Jit Ray

### THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: OCTOBER 1959

- On 2 October 1959, the iconic American TV show *The Twilight Zone* made its debut on CBS Television.
- On 4 October 1959, Lunik 3, the first automatic space station, was launched by the Soviet Union.
- On 5 October 1959, the IBM 1401, a variable word length decimal computer and data processing system, was introduced in the US—the first computer intended for business use.
- On 7 October 1959, the far side of the Moon was seen for the first time though USSR's Lunik 3.
- On 8 October 1959, the Conservative Party in UK won a third term led by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan.



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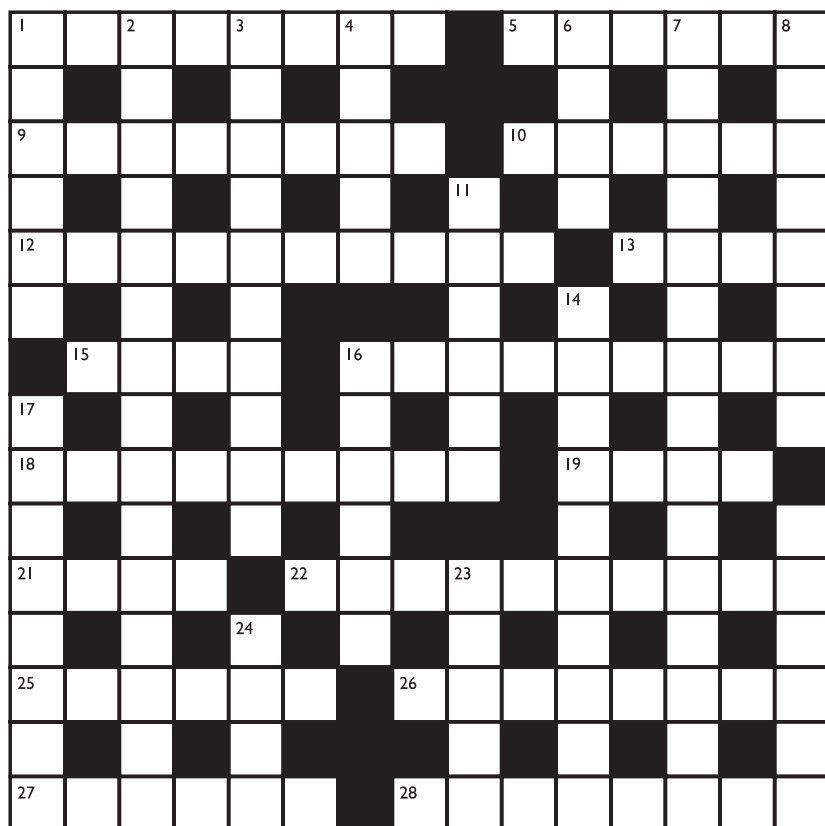


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## EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 60



BY RAJU BHARATAN

### ACROSS

- 1 How pessimistic O P Nayyar never ever grew about his style of music running its 'Rhythm King' course (8)
- 5 Tough time making you hesitant in the matter of defining C Rajago-palachari? (6)
- 9 Hawaiian term for dorado aptly hailing arrival of Team India captain? (8)
- 10 Brown Bradman? Not our Rakesh surely (6)
- 12 Mumbai location at which you heard composer Chitragupta's *Dekho mausam kya bahaar hai saaraa*

*aalam beqaraar hai* (5 5)

- 13 Come clean about its no longer being the 8th letter of the alphabet! (4)
- 15 Is the Big B man enough, still, to suffer himself in this norm of show? (4)
- 16 Not someone you easily beat in a game of cards (2 3 4)
- 18 South Africa's national bird ideal for lifting the Indian colours? (4 5)
- 19 Sunil Gavaskar in his writing? (4)
- 21 Brand name of Gujarat (4)
- 22 Amitabh Bachchan as a basketball player would have been (1 4 5)
- 25 The Night of The Follower (6)

- 26 Call for a shot they could make no longer in the case of bowler-batsman Andy Flintoff as far as Test Cricket goes (1 3 4)
- 27 By no means a low hanger-on still to be dismissed (3 3)
- 28 'Allowance making ruled out' for doing role? (2 6)

### DOWN

- 1 Small dark-purple plum suggesting overflow danger? (6)
- 2 *Tum jo huey mere humsafar raste badal gaye laakhon deeye mere pyaar kee raahon mein jal gaye* (7 8)
- 3 Ajit Agarkar's favourite fish dish? (6 4)
- 4 Roosevelt was the splitter of two vowels (1 4)
- 6 Viewed after Matunga as you are travelling by train (4)
- 7 Reason enough for *Abhee na jaao chhod kar kee dil abhee bharaa nahein* to slip, ever so smoothly, into Raag Khamaj (7 3 5)
- 8 Use hands for parasol (8)
- 11 Going downhill (6)
- 14 The bumbling performer failing to land a punch on TV is in effect (5 5)
- 16 Is the BJP still something you hold? (1 5)
- 17 Not Bali love offering to God (8)
- 20 Don't cross! (4 2)
- 23 Cowboy's lady-love? (5)
- 24 Prudence came after in Gary Sobers' life and times (4)

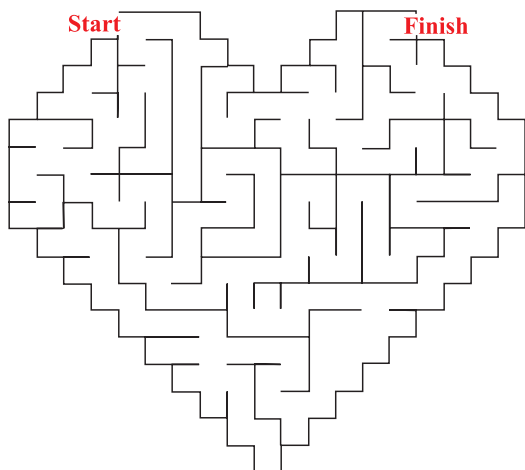
For answers, see Page 87

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

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

## BRAIN GYM

### VALENTINE'S MAZE



### WORDS' WORTH

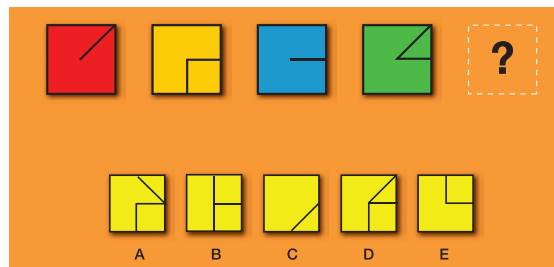
Each image translates into a well-known phrase. Establish the answers.

C  
O  
U  
N  
T  
R  
Y  
C  
O  
U  
N  
T  
R  
Y

S  
A  
I  
N  
S  
P  
A  
I  
N  
S  
V  
I  
O  
L  
E  
T  
S

C R 😊 W D

### THE NEXT SQUARE



Which shape from the options A-E should be placed instead of the question mark to complete the sequence?

### SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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

### KOFFEE WITH KAKURO

	6	9		14	6	14	28	12
8			9				17	
			19				16	
45								
	13				14			
				9	21			
		16				9		
5		27		8		7		
			18			11		
15				8			9	
							18	
	9			19				
				15				15
	14					10		
45	17			7	12			12
14			15				11	

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



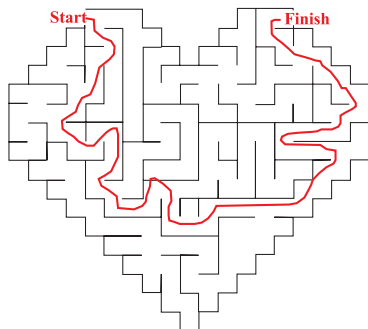
## SOLUTIONS TO EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 60

**ACROSS:** 1 Downbeat (beat part of it suggesting 'Rhythm King'); 5 Crisis (CR/is/is...); 9 mahimahi (Mahi/Mahi); 10 Tandon (Tan/Don); 12 Opera House (name of theatre, also name of 1961 B Saroja Devi film); 13 Wash (Was/H); 15 Mard; 16 An old hand; 18 Blue Crane; 19 Open; 21 Amul; 22 A tall brain; 25 (The Night of The) Iguana (Follower standing for Iguana; 26 A six, fast; 27 Not out (No/tout); 28 No credit

**DOWN:** 1 Damson (Dam's/on, damson is Small dark-purple plum); 2 Waheeda-Guru Dutt; 3 Bombay duck; 4 A Theo (a/the/o: the splitter of A & o, reference to Theodore Roosevelt: A Theo); 6 (Matunga) Road; 7 Sadhana-Dev Anand; 8 Sunshade (Use hands, the 8 letters of sunshade rearranged); 11 Aslope; 14 Idiot boxer (idea developed from idiot box); 16 A party; 17 Oblation (O stands for love, blation, its 7 letters rearrange as Not Bali, hence, Not Bali love, Oblation is offering to God); 20 Knot it; 23 Lasso (lass/o: lady-love); 24 Anju

## SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN GYM

### VALENTINE'S MAZE



### WORDS' WORTH

C  
O  
U  
N  
T  
R  
Y  
C  
O  
U  
N  
T  
R  
Y

Cross country

V  
I  
O  
L  
E  
T  
S

Shrinking violets

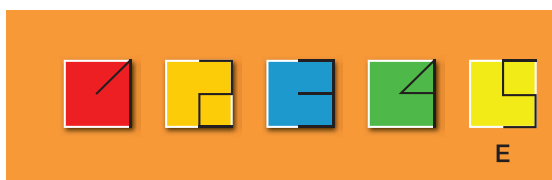
C R ☺ W D

Face in a crowd

A  
I  
N  
S  
P

Growing pains

### THE NEXT SQUARE



### SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

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

### SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

	6	9		14	6	14		28	12
8	5	3	9	5	1	3	17	8	9
45	1	2	8	9	5	6	4	7	3
	13	4	9	9	21	5	7	2	
	5	27	2	6	8	9	3	6	9
5	2	3	8	3	5	7	2	1	4
15	3	8	4	8	6	2	18	4	5
	9	2	7	19	2	9	8		
	14	7	5	2	7	12	3	7	12
45	9	1	2	8	5	4	7	6	3
14	8	6	15	5	2	8	11	2	9

“Without security, the progress and development of our country are meaningless.”

Anuradha Gore, 60, for motivating children to join the armed forces



Vilas Kalutker

**F**ourteen years ago, Captain Vinayak Gore laid down his life fighting insurgents at his post near Kupwara in Jammu & Kashmir, during Operation Rakshak. Since then, his mother **Anuradha Gore** has drawn up a battle plan of her own—the 60 year-old motivates young children to join the armed forces. Gore, former principal of R N Podar School in Mumbai, conducts workshops during school vacations on personality development, leadership skills, and life in the armed forces including accounts of how soldiers fight terrorism. Her workshops are peppered with tales of valour and courage of war heroes like Shivaji, Veer Savarkar and Mangal Pandey. At the same time, she never forgets to underline not just the perks but the glory that is

attached to a career in the forces. Gore also tutors students at Paranjpe Vidyalaya in self-study techniques. She has a team of 12 housewives in her neighbourhood in Vile Parle who help her in her mission. Besides writing a column for Marathi newspapers like *Sakal* and *Saamna*, she has also written a book on the lives of 19 slain soldiers—*Vaaras Hovu Abhimanyuche*. The stoic silver admits that it is her busy schedule that has helped her to cope with the death of her only son. “I still remember the day when the principal of Parle Tilak High School sent me a letter stating that there are more than 100 Vinayaks waiting for me in school and there will be many more,” she says, the emotion in her voice palpable.

—Anjali Rego



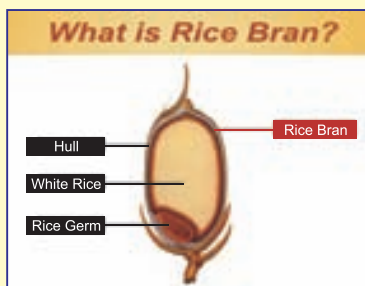
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