

harmony celebrate age

The magazine for silver citizens

OCTOBER 2011 ₹ 30

THE WEALTH OF HERITAGE
IN SRI PADMANABHASWAMY
TEMPLE

SHAILI SATHYU ON HER
FATHER M S SATHYU

PRINCESS ESRA RESURRECTS
HYDERABAD'S ROYAL GLORY

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Mahesh Bhatt
on Gandhi's dream and
India's destiny



DANCING THROUGH PARKINSON'S • SOULFOOD: MARRIAGE OF CULTURES

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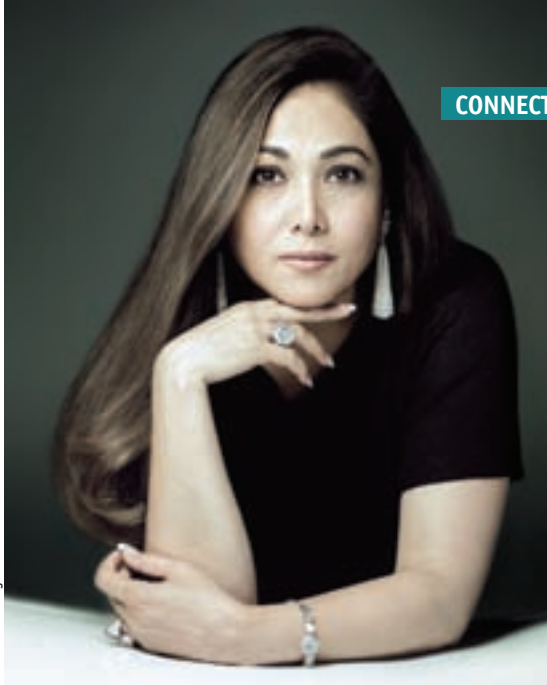
This October on World Elders' Day, it's time to dwell upon the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members."

Let's face it: we just don't measure up. Proof, if you need it, is the spate of murders of silvers in the past month alone in Mumbai. While some of these ghastly acts were committed by strangers, what is truly heartbreaking is that others were committed by trusted people, in one case even a grandson. While we could endlessly ponder over the moral bankruptcy of a society that enables such acts to occur, we just don't have the luxury of hindsight or time—it's far more important to find solutions.

One thing is clear: the state's apparatus is not enough. While law enforcement authorities and NGOs have set up help lines and announced many initiatives in major cities, these have failed to stem the tide of violence. There have also been some news reports suggesting that as people age, they really have little option but to move into old-age homes. Even if you discount the fact that there are simply not enough of these to go around, considering the state of our old-age homes, this actually amounts to trading in your liberty for a new set of dependencies.

I believe there is only one sustainable solution: empowerment. Studies have proven that independent living is the key to longevity. But to live alone, silvers need financial and physical empowerment. One key avenue of financial empowerment is reverse mortgage, a loan that allows silvers to use their home as equity. Learn more from your bank or call our helpline 1800-100-1111 for details. It's time to let go of the shackles of the past—your home need not be a bargaining chip to ensure the affections of

Suresh Natarajan



your heirs; it is yours and you must enjoy the fruits of your lifetime of labour.

As for physical empowerment, it is time to get proactive about your safety. Keep yourself fit; exercise regularly and sign up for a self-defence class. Be alert; trust sparingly, invest in security equipment, vet your domestic help. Form a network with your peers: meet often; be on someone's radar. And most important, shift from a posture of defence to one of offence: form a neighbourhood watch group with like-minded people (young and silver) in your colony; organise regular patrols; work with your local police to garner their support; spread the word and build the momentum to create a safe zone, however small.

It is evident that our neighbourhoods need a systematic, community-based security mechanism that co-opts the police, volunteers and residents themselves. Let's stand up and be counted.

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

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Publisher **Dharmendra Bhandari** Editor **Tina Ambani** Deputy Editor **Meeta Bhatti** Associate Editor **Arati Rajan Menon** Copy Editor **Rajashree Balaram**

Correspondent (Mumbai) **Radhika Raje** Consultant Editor **Malvika Singh**

Creative Director **Jit Ray** Studio Manager **Haresh Patel** Production Manager **Rohidas Adavkar**

Visual Coordinator **Anuradha Joshi** Graphic Designer **Dattaguru Redekar** Editorial Coordinator **Anita Rosario** Website Coordinator **Ajit Nair**

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index

features

30 . Soulfood and Soulmates: A delicious love story from Chennai

34 . Proactive: Hrishikesh Pawar shows how dance can defy Parkinson's

38 . Footsteps: Shaili Sathya on why she will always be a daddy's girl



52 . Destination: Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple reveals its wealth of history and heritage

58 . Nostalgia: Whiling away time at the Indian Coffee House in Delhi

46
cover feature

Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt on Gandhi's legacy and why it allows him the right to dissent

Cover photograph by **Jit Ray**

every issue

7 . ORBIT: News, views, people, research, trends and tips from around the world

20 . YOUR SPACE: Reach out to fellow silvers with your inspiring stories

63 . ETCETERA: Culture, leisure, lifestyle, books, buzz and miscellany

80 . SPEAK: Sudnya Patkar crusades for the rights of her four-legged friends

columns

24 . NUTRITION: Anjali Mukerjee tells you how to get your daily dose of calcium

26 . WEIGHT WATCH: Madhukar Talwalkar shows how to protect your muscles from injury through diabetes

27 . YOGA RX: Learn how to build empathy with yoga guru Shameem Akthar



WEB EXCLUSIVES www.harmonyindia.org



PRINTING DREAMS

Septuagenarian Tutu Taneja tells us why she will never stop designing

SCIENCE WEDS ART

Physicist Dr Joyanti Chutia unwinds with words and violin

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANCE CONTACT: HarmonyCare, Living Media India Ltd, A-61, Sector 57, Noida (Uttar Pradesh) - 201301.

Toll-free: 1800 1800 100 Phones: New Delhi: (95120) 2479900 from Delhi and Faridabad; (0120) 2479900 from Rest of India Fax: (0120) 4078080; **Kolkata:** 033-22827695 Fax: 22828949; **Bengaluru:** 080-2212448, 22213037, Fax: 2218335; **Mumbai:** 022-24444423/4/5/6 Fax: 24444358; **Chennai:** 044-28478525/26/27 Fax: 28472178; Email: harmonyindia@intoday.com



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column one

Reactions to the anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare were for the longest time cautious. No one wanted to tread a path where they were either construed as anti-society or anti-establishment. The few voices of disagreement drowned in the general uproar, but not Mahesh Bhatt's. The filmmaker makes no bones about calling Anna Hazare a fascist for compartmentalising corruption and accusations against Narendra Modi for the state of Muslims in Gujarat. On our cover this month ("Rebel without a Pause"), Bhatt dwells upon his current project—a play titled *The Last Salute* on journalist Muntadaha Al-Zaidi's shoe that landed on Bush's head—Mahatma Gandhi's role in our lives; and the relevance of Gandhiji's idea of peace in today's times. At the same time, he doesn't spare himself the rod for so-called hypocrisy. What he still stands by, though, is the creative license he gave himself to draw from his own and others' lives to make the most celebrated Hindi films. His conviction squarely lies in commercial cinema being equal to pure entertainment and money.

Rights and wrongs are subjective. For reference to context, turn to 'Enlighten' where American satirist P J O'Rourke is quoted saying, "Everybody knows how to raise children, except the people who have them." Some flow with the current and some against it; it's our own lives that dictate individual decisions, rights and wrongs. For landmarks, read *Harmony-Celebrate Age*—each story is a unique journey and its traveller and his pursuits, cues to take. At the end, everyone has to choose one's own beginning and course. What's significant is to put in an effort; not whether you have made a mark.

—Meeta Bhatti

The word pension means 'a regular payment made by the government to people over a certain age to enable them to subsist without having to work'. If so, the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) 1995, introduced by the government with effect from 16 November 1995, repealing the Family Pension Scheme 1971, does not fulfil this condition and must be scrapped or revised.

Take my case, for instance. I had been contributing towards the Employees Pension Scheme 71 since joining ONGC, a Central Government undertaking, till my retirement on 30 November 1994 from an E5 level post. My monthly pension was fixed at a later date at a small amount of ₹ 403 per month though I did not opt for commutation. There was no DA, bonus or any increment thereon in future. Hence, the amount of ₹ 403 fixed as on 16 November 1995 remained the same in September 2011 and will continue to remain the same in future in spite of the fact that the value of ₹ 403 as on 16 November 1995 has come down to less than ₹ 200 in Sept 2011 and will go down further corresponding with galloping inflation. On other schemes of pension in the government, there are additional elements like DA, bonus, revision by pay commission/government, etc. Pension/DA increases with age. Even under the Old Age Pension Scheme granted by the government to senior citizens (for which the pensioners neither served the government nor contributed to the fund) was raised in the meantime from ₹ 200 to ₹ 400, and then to ₹ 1,000. This amount will go up further shortly.

In view of the above, the main purpose of the introduction of the EPS 95 scheme has been defeated. Possibly, pensioners under EPS 95 need somebody like Anna Hazare to compel the government to think about the unfortunate pensioners under EPS 95 and fix a minimum rate of pension under the scheme at a level of above ₹ 1,000 per month with an element of DA and consideration for age.

Arun Chandra Mukhopadhyay Kolkata

In these turbulent days, changes in the social order and family happen in a way that nothing is shocking anymore! The joint family that was India's pride is now a matter of ridicule. Western culture has invaded us in such a devastating way that present-day youngsters feel ashamed about our own culture. Only when the West takes to our traditions of yoga, Ayurveda and meditation do our youngsters take note of them. What a state of affairs! The mental tranquillity our ancestors possessed

has been lost in the face of material advancement. In all this despair, *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, your worthy magazine for seniors, represents a glimmer of hope. There's a joke that goes, "Be nice to your kids, after all they have to put you in a nice old-age home when the time comes"—I hope it remains a joke! As a senior citizen myself, I wish you the very best in your social welfare activities.

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INSIDE

P22: Exclusive job portal for silvers

P26: Protect muscles from injury

NEWS ● VIEWS ● PEOPLE ● RESEARCH ● TRENDS ● TIPS



Can't buy me LOVE

Money can buy many things—but it doesn't always buy time, and care. According to the Kiev Economics Institute, **the richer people become, the less time they care for their elderly parents.** As news agency AFP reports, the researchers studied 2,790 American and European men and women and discovered that an increase in wages led to a significant drop in the amount of time they spent helping their parents with household chores, errands and transport. In fact, for every 10 per cent rise in salary, women spent 36 per cent less time providing care, and men 18 per cent. Having a sibling or other person equipped to help out makes the effect even more severe. "The study is a true revelation that current global policies towards making care affordable are not compatible with each other," says lead researcher Olena Nizalova. "We need new strategies, new prescriptions."



TOP DRIVE

Word to car manufacturers: don't underestimate the power of brand recall. A survey of over 200,000 car buyers by American automotive information provider TrueCar reveals that people over 65 "invariably choose vehicles from the brands they grew up with". Other important considerations: spaciousness and ease of entry and exit. Check out the **Top 10 silver wheels in the US:**

89.6%



1. Lincoln Town Car

86.8%



2. Buick Lucerne

84.8%



3. Cadillac DTS

74.2%



4. Cadillac CTS Wagon

71%



5. Cadillac STS

64.7%



6. Hyundai Azera

61.3%



7. Chevrolet Impala

58.9%



8. Buick Lacrosse

53.8%



9. Lincoln MKZ

53.7%



10. Toyota Avalon



Finally!

The long wait appears to have come to an end. In August, the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) announced that it will fund **India's first advanced research centre on ageing** at Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj Medical University (CSMMU), Lucknow. "The centre will be established for both laboratory and research purposes," Dr V M Katoch, Director General, ICMR, told media. "There will be a special focus on the mental health of the elderly." CSMMU was a natural choice to host the centre—its Geriatric Mental Health Department was the first such facility to be dedicated to the mental health of silvers. It is also the first department in the world to offer a doctorate of medicine (DM) degree in geriatric medicine—the first set of students began the course in August.



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RANCHI HAS ESTABLISHED
A 'PLATINUM LOUNGE'
FOR SILVERS, WHERE
THEY CAN BE SERVED
IN COMFORT AND AVAIL
SPECIAL FACILITIES.**

SPEEDO ALERT



If you can get past the fact that people actually conduct research on these things, try this on for size: **men tend to revert to the tight swimwear of their youth as they enter their 50s.** This nugget of information comes to us courtesy a study by British retail giant Debenhams, reported in London newspaper *Daily Mail*. "Older men no longer have the pressure of having

to show off a taut, toned physique and look groomed at all times," says a spokesperson for Debenhams. "So they revert back to their boyhood, where having a great time on the beach and eating ice cream were all that mattered." Celeb culprits identified by the newspaper include rock stars Rod Stewart, 66, and Sting, 59, who have been regularly sighted in their Speedos.

Circle of LIFE

Unwittingly channelling Karl Marx when he proclaimed, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," a pioneering scheme in the London borough of Southwark has restored the faith of the jaded in community living. As London newspaper *Daily Telegraph* reports, **Southwark Circle, established in 2009, aims to improve the lives of silvers socially as well as functionally**—it gets people together doing things they enjoy and provides them with practical help. For an annual fee of £ 20 (about ₹ 1,500), people over the age of 50 get discounted or free access to theatre trips, guided walks and orchestra performances. The fee is only £ 10 (about ₹ 750) for those who receive the newsletter and events



calendar online. Once you are a member (there are 860 now), you buy tokens (£ 10 each) to pay for these trips or get an hour's worth of work from a 'neighbourhood helper'. These helpers, ranging from students and homemakers to the unemployed and even fellow silvers, pitch in with household chores, shopping, gardening...you name it. Some of them get paid the British minimum hourly wage (£ 7.60) while many choose to work for free.

"We've got a welfare state that targets what it perceives to be people's needs rather than their aspirations," says 46 year-old Hilary Cottam, who conceptualised the Circle and partnered with Sky Media and the Department of Work and Pensions to set up the pilot project. "Regardless of wealth, elders want contact and a kind of concierge service." Following the success of the pilot, the Circle is being rolled out on a large scale around Britain.



Women ON TOP

Like us, you may be pleased to learn that age appears to have little to do with sexual satisfaction. A recent study conducted at the Stein Institute for Research on Ageing at the University of California - San Diego established that **many women retain their ability to enjoy sex well into their 70s and 80s.** The team examined 1,235 women enrolled at the San Diego Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study and evaluated their levels of sexual activity and satisfaction and views on how 'successfully' they were ageing. "As expected, a decline in the physical health of women between the ages of 60 and 89 was apparent," writes lead researcher Wesley Thompson in the August issue of the *Journal of the American Geriatric Society*. "But surprisingly, although the levels of sexual activity and functioning did vary significantly depending on age, perceived quality of life, successful ageing and sexual satisfaction remained positive."

GO GOA: THE GOA STATE GOVERNMENT WILL PREPARE A DATABASE OF ITS EMPLOYEES AND PENSIONERS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE 13TH FINANCE COMMISSION. DETAILS OF PAYMENT OF PENSIONS AND FAMILY PENSIONS WILL ALSO BE ADDED.



SINGLE, AND UNPREPARED

Two is clearly better than one—at least when it comes to planning for retirement. **Couples are saving more money for their nest-egg than single Americans** according to 'Economic Preparation for Retirement', a study prepared for the National Bureau of Economic research by RAND Corporation, a non-profit research firm. Researchers Michael Hurd and Susann Rohwedder found that 51 per cent of singles in the group of 66 to 69 year-olds analysed had a strong chance of outliving their savings compared to just 23 per cent of couples. The highest risk group was single women who had not completed a high school education—73 per cent of them were likely to run into a serious financial crisis.



You can read the entire report at
<http://papers.nber.org/papers/w17203#fromrss>

Touch and go!

Quite possibly “the world’s easiest computer”—as its tagline unabashedly screams—this nifty computer has you at start-up. The specs of the **Telikin**, a computer system designed for silvers, are good but unremarkable: a dual-core 1.8GHz processor, 320 GB hard drive, 802.11b/g/n wireless, 1.3MP webcam for video conferencing and a suite of basic connectivity software including a text editor, email client, and weather tracking and news feeds. The real



game-changers are the attractive and incredibly easy-to-use 18-inch touch screen that allows you to instantly access any function, and proprietary software that prevents any third party software from being installed. So, though you may not be able to upgrade the functionality of the computer, it will remain virus-free and safe to use. The cost of all this hassle-free comfort is \$ 700 (about ₹ 33,000). There’s also an ‘Elite’ version, with a 20-inch screen, 500 GB hard drive and HDMI port; that will set you back \$ 1,200 (about ₹ 56,500).



Check out
www.telikin.com



Hot therapies

Orlando, Florida, home to Walt Disney’s Magic Kingdom, could well be the world capital of fantasy. And fittingly, in August, it played host to the 19th Annual World Congress on Anti-Ageing and Aesthetic Medicine, where the stuff of fantasy was translated to reality in the form of **futuristic anti-ageing treatments**. Here are three standouts showcased at the event, as London newspaper *The Times* reports:

● **Cell rejuvenation through telomerase activation theory:** TA-65, a nutritional supplement made with the astragalus root, herb used in Chinese medicine, activates an enzyme called telomerase, which helps protect the telomeres (the tips of our chromosomes that protect cells and maintain the quality of our DNA). A 2010 study by Harvard Medical School on mice established that TA-65 lengthens critically short telomeres, restores the immune system and increases bone density. The cost ranges from £ 120 to £ 404 (about ₹ 9,000 to ₹ 30,000) a month, depending on the age of the patient. Learn more at www.tasciences.com

● **Alpha-Stim Stress Control System (SCS):** Slightly larger than a mobile phone, the compact SCS uses mild battery-powered electrical impulses to stimulate nerve cells that produce neurotransmitters, which are chemicals (like serotonin) responsible for mood. The treatment aims to balance the production of chemicals in the brain, thus warding off anxiety and depression and boosting sleep, mood and memory. The cost is £ 299 (about ₹ 22,000). Go to www.alpha-stim.co.uk

● **The Laser Cap:** Here’s a therapy for hair loss, one of the natural consequences of ageing. Low-level red light through a dome-shaped membrane, powered by a small belt-clip battery, stimulates hair follicles in the scalp. Designed for home use, three quick 10-minute sessions a week will ensure greater quantity and better quality of hair. Though we would suggest waiting for testimonials, manufacturers claim that results will become apparent in two months. The cost of the device is a steep £ 2,000 (about ₹ 149,000). Go to www.lasercap.us

Stemming the tide?

While the use of human stem cells for R&D continues to be an incendiary issue in the West, **stem cells derived from plants are increasingly making their way into skincare products.** Manufacturers claim that these stem cells work on skin cells to work wonders. The London edition of *Marie Claire* magazine gives us three examples:

- **Stem Cell 3D Complex:** Developed by US cosmeceutical company DermaQuest Skin Therapy, this cream is derived from a rare plant in the Amazon and claims to regenerate the skin. Price: \$ 245 (about ₹ 11,000) for 30 ml.

- **Capture XP:** Developed by Christian Dior, this cream is said to work



on skin stem cells to repair wrinkles. Price: \$ 130 (about ₹ 6,000) for 50 ml.

- **Absolue Precious Cells Advanced Regenerating & Reconstructing Cream:** Another cosmetic giant, Lancôme, rolls out this cream that

promises to restore the potential of skin stem cells and bring back “the skin of youth”. Price: \$ 68 (about ₹ 3,000) for 30 ml.

All this begs the pertinent question: do plant stem cells really stimulate human cell growth? Despite this rush of skin-altering products, we still do not definitively have an answer. For her part, though, Tamara Griffiths, consultant dermatologist for the British Skin Foundation, is clear enough: “Coarse wrinkles and loss of elasticity of the skin are because of changes in the collagen and elastic fibres in the dermis and no anti-ageing product can repair damage in the dermis. In my view, the best product for skin health is sunscreen.”

DESERT ROSE

In a delightful touch of irony, it so happens that the arid desert may hold the key to youthful, moisturised skin. Scientists at the National Research Centre for Camel (NRCC) in Bikaner have discovered that **skin cream made from camel milk is an effective moisturiser and reduces wrinkles and fine lines.** Two groups of 50 people each were studied over six months to arrive at

this conclusion. “Skin cream developed from camel milk, which is high in moisture and protein content, has produced excellent results at the experimental stage,” Dr N V Patil, director, NRCC, tells media. “The fat globules found in the milk are scientifically proven to be beneficial to the skin and many rural people already use camel milk as a moisturiser in raw form. Now, we plan to commercially produce the cream.”



Beyond BOTOX

The effects of Botox without a frozen face. That's the promise of **laViv, a new anti-ageing treatment using the patient's own cells** to plump up the skin and reduce lines. For this procedure, as news agency AFP reports, skin cells called fibroblasts are removed from behind the patient's ear. They are then cultured for 90 days,



producing millions of new cells before being re-injected into the patient in three separate sessions, once every five weeks. Despite the temporary side-effects—redness, bruising, bleeding, swelling—the results are said to be noteworthy. Chris Mason, professor of regenerative medicine at University College, London, insists laViv will “blow Botox out of the water because it will be so much better”. The procedure received a licence from the US Food & Drug Administration in August and is expected to become commercially available at the end of the year. **To learn more, go to www.mylaviv.com**



Fruit punch

You would be forgiven if you hadn't heard of the **horned melon**. After all, the chances that this spiky fruit, also referred to as African horned cucumber or kiwano, will pop up in your fruit seller's cart, are next to none. But it's time to learn. As the online edition of Nairobi newspaper *The Standard* reports, **this melon with its sweet-tart, banana-lime flavour packs a rare anti-ageing punch** that has resulted in food cognoscenti phoning in repeat orders to Kenya (where it is available in abundance). The fruit is apparently chock-full of nutrients—the

yellowish-green pigment in the seeds and pulp are a treasure trove of carotenoid and beta-carotene (Vitamin A), lycopene and lutein, all nutrients that help repair and protect DNA; and its high linoleic acid (an omega 6 fatty acid) and oleic acid content can help battle hypertension and bad cholesterol. What's more, the melon has plenty of Vitamin E that works to protect the skin, heart, muscles, nerves and red blood cells as well as Vitamin C, potassium, iron, magnesium, phosphorous, zinc, copper, calcium and sodium. Now, that's a healthy cocktail!

PUCKER UP: HERE'S AN ANTI-AGEING FIX FOR YOUR LIPS. L'OREAL COLOUR RICHE ANTI-AGE SERUM, LOADED WITH OMEGA 3 AND VITAMIN E, CLAIMS TO NOT ONLY MOISTURISE LIPS BUT RESHAPE THEM TOO. THE MARKED PRICE IS \$ 26.95 (ABOUT ₹ 1,200)—IT'S NOT AVAILABLE IN INDIA YET—BUT SOME ONLINE RETAILERS ARE SELLING IT AS LOW AS \$ 9.99 (ABOUT ₹ 450).

Meet your e-Doc

From tingling toes to protein supplements for elders and, get this, tips on 'The Chemistry of Cooking'. It's all happening on a lively new portal called www.letstalkdoc.com or LTD. Launched six months ago by Chennai-based Dr Jyotsna Codaty, 61 (*see photo*), this health initiative has created an e-community where the public can source medical advice and information, and connect online with a wide spectrum of medical professionals globally. And with features such as a forum, blog, videos, 'Ask A Doctor', news and events, LTD is already buzzing.

"The basic idea is to take away the fear of visiting a doctor and exchange ideas, and to do it in a way that is interactive. For instance, a query from an elderly gentleman with allergies and a deviated septum drew replies from a pulmonologist and two ENT specialists as well as a general physician. It's like getting a second opin-

ion!" smiles Dr Codaty, a senior consultant in transfusion medicine with Fortis Malar Hospital in Chennai.

LTD already has 200 members, of which 60 per cent are silvers. "Many doctors are willing to give their time to social initiatives. But answering queries online takes just five minutes," she says, quickly adding that her portal is not a treatment avenue. "We are also careful not to promote drugs."

With 40 years' experience, Dr Codaty says she is convinced the future lies in e-medicine. "People change their medicines because 'a friend told them they were feeling better with another brand' or a prescription from an earlier episode is repeated just because 'it worked the last time around'. Thanks to my forum, elders are realising that ignoring 'mild symptoms' may escalate into serious ailments. My aim is to bridge the gap between perception and fact," she underlines.



Dr Codaty's common-sense approach comes from her colourful career and varied experience. She has served with the Ministry of Defence as a civilian doctor for a decade. She also opened a private practice for a few years for the economically challenged and helped her mother run a nursing home for women. "I have learnt from every experience. I hated my tenure in Libya and I loved my stay in the US. The Ministry of Labour [ESIC Hospital] was a great place to work. Here, along with obstetrics, I ventured into blood banking and found it very satisfying," the doctor recounts.

She has also authored three books and was part of Hyderabad-based magazine *House Calls*, which required her to tour the length and breadth of the country to report on hospitals. "All this travelling told me one simple fact: that there's no dearth of treatment but communication between doctors and the public is the Achilles' heel of the medical profession. So I wanted to create an avenue where patients could equip themselves with information without wasting the consultant's time."

It appears she's hit the bull's eye. Check out the portal—now which dental consultant would explain 'The Wisdom Behind Wisdom Teeth Extraction'? And would a radiologist tell you that a CT scan could be harmful?

—Srinivas Chari





Defeating DIABETES

Hheavy showers failed to discourage members of the Worli Senior Citizens' Association from arriving—and participating enthusiastically—at the **Diabetes Health Talk** organised in Mumbai on 27 August by **Harmony for Silvers Foundation** in association with diversified global healthcare provider **sanofi-aventis**. Titled **Meethi Baatein (Sweet Talk)**, the talk began with a collage of images depicting the happy memories of diabetic silvers indulging in their favourite sweet treats. Acknowledging the importance of eating sweets for us all, the talk aimed to educate people with diabetes on how far to go, and when to stop.

A general overview by Dr Asim Kathawala of sanofi-aventis gauged the audience's understanding of diabetes and offered a detailed analysis of symptoms, causes, myths and dietary modifications. "People detected with diabetes should not stop sugar intake completely but can consume it in moderation according to their doctor's advice," he said, bringing a smile on the face of many silvers.

Despite the data and analysis shared, the interactive nature of the proceedings made the evening fun for everyone present. The discussions and Q&A sessions were interspersed with quizzes and games, where silvers vied with each other for on-the-spot prizes. The highlight of the event, however, was the narration of the success stories—the 'Champs' who conquered diabetes with ease and refused to let it affect their lives in any way.



Photographs by **Haresh Patel**

Take for instance, Gangadhar, 86, who overcame diabetes with the support of his family. "We changed our diet for my father so he wouldn't feel any different or left out," his son Suresh shared. "We were always there for him. Family acceptance is very important; you should never let the person feel he is a patient." For his part, Chintaman Ghaisa, 61, was able to triumph over the disease because of his fitness regimen. "I walk daily and strictly follow the diet prescribed by my doctor," he announced with pride. "I feel fit." The biggest applause came for the oldest Champ present: 89 year-old Somu Kelaskar, who had to cut down on his favourite food to win his battle. The event concluded on a merry note with silvers singing along to classic songs.

"I am very happy that people enjoyed the Health Talk so much," said Cyrus Aibara, director of the Diabetes Business Unit of sanofi-aventis. "I hope the success stories we have shown today will encourage others who are suffering from diabetes. We also look forward to meeting seniors from Chennai, Bengaluru, Delhi and Hyderabad where we have planned similar events."

**To be a part of events in these cities,
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Of sleep and memory

According to a recent study conducted at the University of California - San Francisco, **older women suffering from sleep apnoea are more likely to develop memory problems and dementia.** Sleep apnoea is a disorder characterised by abnormal pauses in breathing or abnormal low breathing while asleep. Study leader Dr Kristine Yaffe and her team gave an overnight sleep apnoea test to over 250 women without dementia. The average age of these women was 82. The test looked for changes in breathing and oxygen flow during the night as well as short, recurrent breaks in sleeping. One-third of participants were diagnosed with sleep apnoea, which is common in silvers who are overweight. Five years later, researchers brought in the same women for thinking and memory tests. After evaluation, a little over a third of them were diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment or dementia. Dr P N Renjen, neurologist at Delhi's Apollo Hospital, agrees with the study. "People going through sleep apnoea snore a lot and wake up short of breath," he says. "They are likely to suffer from dementia, cerebral stroke and cardinal health issues, although people with diabetes are prone to the condition."



JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY IN KOLKATA AND RESEARCHERS FROM LONDON'S KING'S COLLEGE ARE EXAMINING ANCIENT INDIAN AYURVEDIC MEDICINE FOR POSSIBLE USE IN DRUGS TO TREAT ALZHEIMER'S.



RED ALERT

A study concluded at Harvard University this year has established that **swapping just one serving of meat per day with nuts or low-fat dairy products can lower the risk of Type 2 diabetes.** Eating red meat (especially processed) like bacon and hot dogs contributes to risk factors. Researchers analysed the health and food habits of about 300,000 people as old as 75 and as young as 25, dating back to 1976. The conclusion: eating a daily serving of just 50 gm of processed meat increases the risk of Type 2 diabetes by 51 per cent. "We Indians don't consume a lot of red meat; we consume a greater amount of carbohydrates," says Dr Dipankar Debnath, visiting consultant for B P Poddar Hospital in Kolkata and a diabetes management specialist. "Even replacing carbohydrates with nuts will prove beneficial." For his part, Dr Frank Hu, a professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health and author of the study, says this outcome is a result of gaining weight from eating red meat; obesity and Type 2 diabetes are intertwined.

It's not an attack

Severe chest pains no longer mean a 'heart attack'. A study conducted at the University of Pennsylvania hospital observed over 3,000 patients and concluded that **severe chest pain was not a**



good indicator of someone actually having a heart attack. It wasn't even good enough to conclude who was more prone to having one over the next few months. Dr Ashok Mehta, a renowned cardiologist at Mumbai's Asian Heart Institute, confirms the study. "It is very important to understand that a heart attack starts with mild discomfort and gradually increases. And women usually neglect mild pains by assuming it to be indigestion or nausea." One of the authors of the Pennsylvania study, Anna Marie Chang says the opposite can also be true as mild chest pain could be termed as a heart attack. "However, any kind of discomfort should not be neglected," concludes Dr Mehta.



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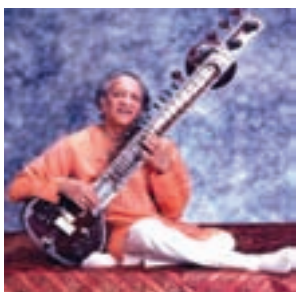
Meet three iconic silver performers who recently stunned us with their energy and brilliance

Pandit Birju Maharaj



The Kathak guru performed effortlessly for two hours before a rapt audience at Nehru Centre in Mumbai on 27 August at the Kala Virasat Festival organised by cultural group Banyan Tree. Coming at the end of a long hiatus, the performance left audiences feeling more than a little privileged. As echoes of the applause settle down, the 73 year-old is already gearing up for his next performance in London on 30 October.

Pandit Ravi Shankar



Though the 91 year-old has been ailing for some time, his frail health

went unnoticed, thanks to his stellar strumming at Symphony Hall in Birmingham on 1 September. The sitar maestro, who had vowed to get back on stage for his one year-old grandson Zubin, stood by his promise in a way that reminds us all over again why he is a national treasure.

Leela Samson



The 60 year-old has always been a woman of many strengths; Bharatanatyam dancer, teacher, mentor, choreographer, director of Kalakshetra, cultural advisor to the prime minister; chairperson of Sangeet Natak Akademi; and now chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification. On 27 August, Samson showed the world why she is a league apart with her rare solo recital, *Reflections of My Journey*, at the National Centre for Performing Arts, Mumbai. We know there is more where that came from. And we are waiting.



Channel champ

Retired British breast cancer surgeon **Roger Allsopp** made quite a splash recently when he entered *Guinness World Records* as the oldest person to swim the English Channel. The 70 year-old entered the record books after swimming from Dover to northern France, a distance of 21 nautical miles, in 17 hours and 51 minutes. Toasting his record, Allsopp told the media, "The alternative to fail would have been very sad. It was very hard work and I had to work all the way." A grandfather of three, the spry silver remembers being impelled to take up the challenge when he read an inscription at a pub in Dover marking previous record holder Brunstad's cross-Channel achievement. Brunstad was 70 years and four days old when he claimed the same fame; in August Allsopp performed the feat when he was past 70 years and four months.



VISITOR

WHO: Lord David Howell, FCO Minister of State for the Commonwealth, UK

WHEN: 27-31 August

WHY: In the run up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Perth in October, Howell arrived in Delhi to speak on the UK's vision for the Com-

monwealth at the Indian Council of World Affairs. He also discussed how the UK and India could work together on the challenge of burgeoning demand for energy, and attended a roundtable discussion on 'Global Governance, Commonwealth and Economics' at Vivekananda International Foundation on 30 August.

BIRTHDAYS

● Former US president **Jimmy Carter** turns 86 on 1 October.

● British actor **Dame Julie Andrews** turns 76 on 1 October.

● American writer and futurist **Alvin Toffler** turns 83 on 4 October.



● Prime Minister of Russia **Vladimir Putin** turns 59 on 7 October.

● Actor **Amitabh Bachchan** turns 69 on 11 October

● Former British prime minister **Margaret Thatcher** turns 86 on 13 October.

● Actor **Hema Malini** turns 63 on 16 October.



MILESTONES

● Kashmiri writer and poet **Gulam Nabi Atish**, has bagged the Sahitya Akademi Award in the best children's category for his book *Novo Kehtsha Mentsha*.

● Assamese novelist and children's author **Bandita Phukan**, 62, has won the Kendriya Sahitya Akademi Award for Children's Literature.

● **Jagdish Malnad** received the Karnataka Nataka Academy Award for his contribution to Kannada theatre. Malnad is an actor, production controller and administrator at Rangashankara in Bengaluru.

● Noted singer **P Susheela**, 75, was conferred with the Viswavidyalya Sangeetha Kala Saraswathi Award by the T Subbarami Reddy Lalithakala Parishat here. The award was presented to mark the singer's diamond jubilee in the music industry.

● American science fiction author **Connie Willis**, 65, has won the Hugo Award. The award, which is regarded as science fiction's most prestigious prize, was conferred by members of the World Science Fiction Society.

IN PASSING

● One of the owners of Kamalistan Studios, **Shandar Amrohi**, died on 21 August. He was 68.

● Legendary rock-n-roll songwriter **Jerry Lieber** died of cardiac failure on 22 August. He was 78.

● Artist **Jehangir Sabavala** died of lung cancer on 2 September. He was 89.

● Veteran music composer and director **Shrinivas Khale** passed away on 2 September. He was 85.



● Photographer **Gautam Rajadhyaksha** passed away on 13 September following a cardiac failure. He was 60.

● Veteran cricketer **Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi** died of a lung ailment on 22 September. He was 70.



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REDESIGNING LIFE

I learnt my biggest lesson in faith and gratitude after my husband and I took a heavy blow about 10 years ago. Until then, I ran a bakery that I had opened five years earlier. I had always enjoyed baking and had hired a master baker to handle the orders. My husband had retired from the Indian Navy and joined the Merchant Navy; this had given me the funds to start my own venture.

We had carved a solid reputation in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Why, we even had the time to experiment with various breads and soufflés, and strive for perfection. It was very satisfying. But owing to circumstances beyond our control, we were forced to shut down. We had to sell everything, including our beautiful home in Vayupuri. We moved to the adjacent colony of Sainikpuri and went into hibernation. It was a huge struggle. We were left with only my husband's pension, nothing else.

But God was there for me and I managed to keep my spirits up. Not a day went by when I didn't wonder how I could use my creativity, feel useful and earn a little pin

money! Then, out of the blue, I got a call from an NGO in Kadappa. As I always had a knack for mixing and matching colours and prints, along with a keen understanding of fabrics and weaves, a family friend had recommended my name to them. They wanted to know if I could take an order to block-print saris for the Andhra Pradesh Cooperative Organisation (APCO), which deals with the state's textiles. I instantly took up the offer! I roped in a designer from NIFT and a couple of other youngsters and we put the order together. APCO also set up a huge showroom in Abids, the shopping artery of Hyderabad, and my work was exhibited for sale. That was another turning point. It gave me the confidence to start a new venture. So, with barely Rs 8,000, I built a shed behind my house and started working again, this time just for myself. Word spread and now I employ 12 families: dyers, printers, rollers and some youngsters who embroider.

I am 65 now and feel great. I have the support and love of my husband and son. And I look forward to orders from across the country and even from the US. I have moved on to designing furnishings and linen. I can't describe the feeling when someone invites me into their home and asks me

Reddy chose to ride the lows in life as gracefully as the highs



Shyamola Khanna

to create their furnishings for them. It is a challenge and I love it! To further diversify, I have begun to stock fabric so my customers can have the pleasure of designing their products with me. I love what I do and am hoping to take my work to the next level.

—Malti Reddy, Hyderabad

MY FRIEND, MY PHILOSOPHER

If you've read *A Pearl of Water on a Lotus Leaf & Other Memories*, you would have got a glimpse into the rich and colourful life and times of T S Nagarajan, noted photo-journalist and former director, Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. Nagarajan and I were desk-mates in school in Mysore, and I had no idea then that he would rise to such heights.

Nagarajan will soon celebrate his 80th birthday and I asked him how he was spending his retirement at home in Bengaluru. "I did not experience any post-retirement blues because I had taken voluntary retirement when I was 45," he replied. "Perhaps, I did my most worthwhile work as a freelancer."

After his daughters married and moved away, Nagarajan and his wife Meenakshi moved from Delhi to Bengaluru. He lives near Magadi Road, among "his people" who originally belonged to eight villages near Kolar. This is his dream house, the ideal of Tamil poet Subramanya Bharati: a piece of land, a pillared home, a nook to light the lamp, a well, a coconut tree next to it, and a palm grove filled with the light of the moon.

Nagarajan's major work is his documentation of the interiors of century-old homes in India—or the 'Indianness' of homes—and is a valuable sociological document. "I foresaw the digital era coming so I digitised all my work," he says. "My grandson Mrityunjay is a computer software specialist and he came to my rescue. He knew intimately all that I had done as a professional because of his intense interest in his grandfather's life."

Then the inevitable happened. Meenakshi survived a heart attack but succumbed to cancer a few years later. "Life without her is a mirage. I feel like I was pushed off a cliff. I know leaves have their time to fall and stars to set but she made me believe she would live forever. I realise there is no sun without a shadow and all of us are, in fact, terminal cases. I am now experiencing an emotional territory I had never explored—a landscape of grief, loss and longing," wrote Nagarajan, in a moving tribute to his wife.

Thanks to his work, he had travelled widely and met people from all walks of life, including Indira Gandhi, M S Subbulakshmi, the senior Shankaracharya and R K Narayan. His



Prasad Durga

Nagarajan discovers strength and hope through writing

experiences and anecdotes, penned in honest and straightforward style, were finally published in *A Pearl of Water....*

After Meenakshi passed away, Nagarajan stayed with his daughter in Chennai before returning to his Bengaluru home. He says: "I returned to my nest like an injured bird, to live through the dull days and dark nights ahead in the company of my familiar possessions, and breathe the air that kept me sane, serene and alive. I told myself that I should learn to live keeping my peace and cheer. The first requirement for this was that I should accept death in the same manner I accepted life. But the trouble with death is its finality as opposed to life, which seems continuous. But, truly, it is the irreversible nature of death that enables one to come to terms with it. I knew I was not a spiritual person. I rarely prayed. The present requirement was meditation and some sort of asceticism."

Today, Nagarajan lives alone and is writing the "story of my life", due for publication by year end. I have no doubt, knowing my friend, that it will be a worthy sequel to his very popular first book.

—M P V Shenoi, Bengaluru

Click work

All you need to do to look for another job is log on to www.seniorexperts.com. Radhika Raje gauges the satisfaction level

It's like living a brand new life," says Bengaluru-based Prabhakar Banerjee, excited about the job offers he has received of late. In times when even youngsters think of how soon they can retire, the sexagenarian's words are a welcome change. "I have always worked in the textile industry and today I have offers to be a consultant to textile houses and garment stores." He loves the flexibility that his job offers and enjoys his evening walks without having to worry about anything at work. Banerjee owes his rebirth to ExpertEase (www.seniorexperts.com).

ExpertEase is a free job portal that connects senior professionals with Indian firms and NGOs that require expertise that can only come from experience. Since its launch in 2009 as an ISR (individual social responsibility) initiative by V Ravichandar and his wife Hema, both post-graduates from IIM Ahmedabad and now based in Bengaluru, ExpertEase is close to achieving what it set out to do.

At present, there are nearly 1,000 senior experts registered with ExpertEase. With professional backgrounds ranging from accounting, engineering and marketing to technology, communication/media and administration, most of these individuals have over 25 years of experi-

ence and the capability to contribute to small and medium-sized enterprises. "Some even wish to volunteer their services to NGOs," says Radhika Madhavan, programme director at ExpertEase. With 150 firms and 13 NGOs registered, ExpertEase claims to give silvers a wide range to select from. "Mostly people stick to their own field but some do attempt to try something different; something they always wanted to do but couldn't because they kept chasing good pay," Madhavan says, adding, "NGOs look to expand their volunteer base and firms utilise the wisdom by hiring these registered senior experts."

The portal taps an astonishingly wide talent pool. V Ravichandar, the chairman of Feedback Consulting and founder of ExpertEase, realised that "in India, people retire too early and there is at least another decade of productive work in them. Everyone talks of the country's demographic dividend and says things like 'over half the population is below 25 years', but nobody notices the need to match the wisdom and maturity of senior professionals with the vitality of youth." ExpertEase was born to address this need. "The benefits of working with seniors are extensive—from their knowledge base, strong skill sets and unbeatable work ethic to access to their professional network," says

Hema Ravichandar. "However, the strongest benefit might be flexibility."

Though the initiative is gaining momentum, it did face obstacles initially. In a country where Internet and niche portals revolve around the youth, ExpertEase found it difficult to persuade silvers to log on. Lack of familiarity with the Internet was a hurdle, but the solution came on its own, "We found many people got their grandchildren to help out; today, however, senior professionals are less challenged by the digital world," says Ravichandar. Another obstacle was spreading the word, but the media helped there.

V Ravichandar and Hema believe ExpertEase is a minuscule effort in the context of how much is needed. "It gives seniors a sense of purpose," says Ravichandar. "Someone once told me that he commands greater respect at home after he started working again." There's also a renewed sense of pride. Bengaluru-based Balakrishnan Kunath, 59, took voluntary retirement from Axis Bank at 51. He planned to look for another job after some time. "But wherever I went, I felt people sniggering at my age." Three years ago, he came across ExpertEase; he registered and within a few months started working with a feedback business as consultant. "I like that I don't have to depend on anybody today," he says. ✨



V Ravichandar, who founded ExpertEase as an ISR initiative

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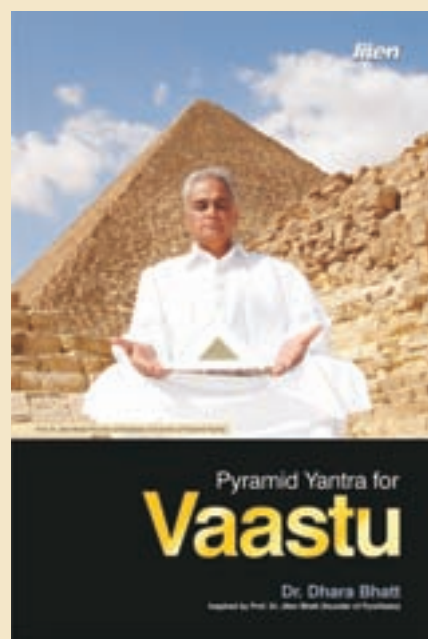
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EATING RIGHT BY ANJALI MUKERJEE

Your calcium fix: Find the best of it in food and with regular exercise

I am a 57 year-old active woman. I was recently diagnosed with osteoporosis. Although I take calcium supplements, my pains resurface unannounced. Can you suggest a calcium-rich diet? I have also been gaining weight after menopause, but exercises and walks are not my cup of tea.

After a certain age, the body's calcium reserves are depleted and this makes the bones fragile, a condition called osteoporosis—'osteo' means bone, and 'porosis' means porous. Simple actions like lifting a grandchild, taking a bumpy car ride or even having a hearty laugh can result in a visit to the orthopaedist. The best way to prevent the condition is to build up adequate calcium reserves and improve absorption and retention by the body. The ideal period to build calcium reserves is in early childhood and teens. However, though nature has placed calcium in almost every food, it is a fussy mineral and does not get absorbed easily. Getting it in adequate quantities isn't as easy as drinking a couple of glasses of milk. As we age, digestion becomes less efficient. Most people develop a lot of gas when they increase their milk intake. What's worse, excessive intake of non-vegetarian food, caffeine and alcohol interfere with its uptake.

AVOID CALCIUM DEPLETERS

Animal protein depletes calcium. Western countries that consume maximum dairy products are on diets rich in animal protein like mutton, beef, pork and chicken. Researchers found that the more meat they eat the more

fractures they have. The problem is something in the meat that even a high intake of milk can't curtail. Meat is also rich in phosphorus which encourages calcium loss. On the other hand, whole grains and pulses provide your body with sufficient protein.

Take that salt shaker off the table! Eating too much salt can cause your bones to lose calcium. The recommended salt limit is 1 tsp spread through the day in all your food. A vegetarian diet of *jowar*, *bajra*, *nachani*, black *chana*, *moth*, *rajma*, *masoor*, whole *mung*, fruits and vegetables is loaded with potassium, and is low in sodium, which helps keep calcium in your bones. Further, drinking milk makes more sense if you follow vegetarian guidelines as it is only then that calcium can be absorbed and retained better.

UP YOUR CALCIUM INTAKE

- Drink a glass of raw carrot (six carrots) and spinach (50 gm) juice everyday. It contains about 300 mg of calcium as against 240 mg in 200 ml of cow's milk. Additionally, it is packed with antioxidants, which have a beneficial effect on the skin. It helps to improve eyesight, purifies blood, and relieves constipation.
- Most whole pulses like *rajma*, *kabuli chana*, black *dal*, *kuleeth*, have between 200 and 250 mg of calcium per 100 gm of raw dal. Besides fulfilling your calcium needs, these pulses control blood sugar, cholesterol and triglycerides.
- Eat 2-4 tbsp white and black sesame seeds daily if you wish to avoid milk. About 100 gm of sesame seeds contain 1,400 mg of calcium. You can even dry-grind them with a bit of fresh coconut, salt and jaggery and have it as chutney.

- Drinking two glasses of soy milk a day will not only give you adequate calcium but much-needed isoflavones that help prevent osteoporosis. Snacking on soy nuts helps the calcium trickle in through the day as 100 gm of these nuts contain 240 mg of calcium. Besides being good for your bones, these tasty nuts are great for your waistline as well.

LOSE WEIGHT NATURALLY

It is natural to gain weight after menopause. Consult an obesity specialist for your problem. Meanwhile, here are some tips that you may find helpful in losing weight:

- Fibre provides a sense of fullness and prevents unnecessary hunger pangs. It is found in whole grains, wheat germ,





Though nature has placed calcium in almost every food, it's a fussy mineral and does not get absorbed easily

wheat bran, brown rice, oat bran, *guar gum* (endosperm of *guar* beans), *isabgol*, whole fruits and vegetables. Consume 1-2 tbsp of *isabgol* if you find it difficult to organise fibre through your diet.

- Zinc sensitises the tissues to insulin and helps minimise sugar cravings. Consuming zinc supplements is helpful. Natural sources of zinc include black-and-white sesame seeds. Zinc also helps to rev immunity.

- Chromium picolinate is another mineral required to balance blood sugar. Our soils are getting increasingly deficient in chromium; therefore we need to take supplements. Brewers yeast contains large amounts of chromium. It is also rich in B vitamins and beneficial in preventing hair loss. Have tablets of brewers yeast everyday.

- Exercise also sensitises the cells to insulin. Therefore diabetics are encouraged to walk regularly. Those who have a metabolic disorder may not lose weight with exercise alone. However, it helps promote blood circulation and detoxification, improves muscle tone, and it does make a few people lose weight.

- Avoid all forms of sugar, *maida*, fried snacks while trying to lose weight. Snack on fruits and high-fibre biscuits made from millet, whole wheat or soybean. This will take care of hunger pangs in between meals.

- Some herbs and spices like fennel (*saunf*) seeds, fenu-greek (*methi*) powder, and cloves help balance blood sugar and control hunger. Have a teaspoon of *methi* powder in

READERS ASK

What is the best nutritional diet for my 85 year-old aunt suffering from Alzheimer's?

A diet of fruits, vegetables, nuts, Vitamin C and E, and small amount of grains and pulses is advisable—fruits and vegetables are full of flavonoids, which have a positive effect on cognitive functions. Avoid excessive non-vegetarian intake; restrict fish or chicken to about 150 gm thrice a week. Cut down on food rich in sugar and salt and stay hydrated. Eat foods rich in Vitamin B12 like yeast and fermented foods as they lower the levels of homocysteine and reduce the risk of dementia. You can also take a Vitamin B12 supplement. Have green, white, and oolong tea to improve alertness and reduce free radical damage to brain cells.

I am 72 and cannot chew properly. Through my diet, how can I meet my vitamin requirement?

Chop, steam, stew, grind or grate fruits and vegetables that are hard to chew. It may help to eat small pieces to allow extra time to chew at a comfortable pace. Have soft foods like oatmeal porridge, *dalia*, *idli*, *dhokla*, *dal*, soft rice, soft cooked vegetables like bottle gourd (*dudhi*), ridge gourd (*turai*), ground spinach and brinjal and eat smaller meals every three hours. Drink smoothies made with fresh fruit, curd and protein powder. Drink a glass of wheatgrass juice everyday. It is exceptionally dense in nutrients and provides most vitamin and mineral requirements.

I am 60 and have heard a lot about the Atkins diet. Will it suit me?

You could try doing it for a short while with some changes. For instance, reduce the amount of animal proteins and increase the amount of cooked vegetables in your diet. Also make sure you drink adequate water. Add some nuts and seeds to your diet like almonds, peanuts and sesame (*til*) seeds. Also make sure you drink a glass of raw vegetable juice like tomato with mint or mint with coriander for its antioxidant value.

the morning and green *saunf* between meals. These spices are also a good source of flavonoids, which are antioxidants, and they protect the liver from free radical damage.

A proper diet is half the battle won against osteoporosis. The other half is through exercise. Either walk or do mild weights to help build bone. A disciplined exercise routine coupled with balanced nutrition can keep your bones in shape and strong.

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



WEIGHT WATCH BY MADHUKAR TALWALKAR

Sweet gain: Protect muscles from injury despite diabetes

I am a 55 year-old diabetes patient. Though I walk regularly, my muscles become sore quite easily. I have heard that regular exercise helps older adults protect their muscles from soreness and injury. Please suggest exercises that could help.

Muscle soreness is described as muscle pain, soreness or stiffness that occurs during the day or after exercise. It's also felt upon the start of a new exercise programme; change of exercise routine; or dramatically increasing the duration or intensity of a routine. Although it can be alarming for beginners, delayed onset is a normal response to unusual exertion and is part of an adaptation process that leads to greater stamina and strength as the muscles recover and strengthen.

ABDOMINAL EXERCISES

You can have toned abdominal muscles (also called abs) at the age of 55. Toned abs not only look good, they lend good posture and support the lower back. Consider your current physical fitness and any chronic conditions or limitations before choosing abdominal exercises. Here are some you can safely and effectively perform.

Bicycle manoeuvre

To start, lie down with your lower back pressed to the floor. Put your hands behind your head to support your neck and lift your head and shoulders off the ground. Lift your legs to a 45° angle. Now move your legs as though you are riding a bicycle but bring your left knee to your right elbow and then your right knee to your left elbow. Do 10 to 25 repetitions (or reps).

Vertical leg crunch

Lie down and press your back to the floor. Raise both legs until your feet are pointing to the ceiling. Cross your legs at your ankles and bend the knees slightly. Put your hands behind your head. Now use the abdominal muscles to lift your shoulders and head off the ground, as if you were doing a regular abdominal crunch. Slowly, lower your head and shoulders back down. Do 10 to 25 reps.

Reverse crunch

Lie on your back and press your lower back to the floor. Raise your feet up until your knees are bent at a 90° angle. Cross your ankles. Put your arms out to your sides to stabilise your body. Now lift your hips off the floor, while keeping your lower back on the ground. Slowly lower your hips back down. Repeat 10 to 25 times.



Plank

Lie down on your stomach. Move up into a push-up position with your hands directly under your shoulders. Make sure your body is in line from your head to your hips, torso and legs. Rest your knees on the floor if necessary. Hold for 30 seconds and build up to one minute.

Tips

Do one to three sets of these exercises at least twice a week. Allow for two days in between each abdominal exercise routine.

When using your hands to support your head and neck, press your head back into your hands so you don't strain your neck.

Warning

Consult your doctor before starting this routine, especially if you have back problems. Stop if anything hurts or you feel uncomfortable.

Next week: How to build muscle

You can gain muscle and get into shape. Unfortunately, nature throws you a few obstacles because your metabolic rate slows with age. Moreover, your body's production of anabolic hormones also declines. To top it all, recovery happens more slowly. By adapting your training and diet to these obstacles, you can overcome them and build muscle at 55 years old and beyond. Read more next time.

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



YOGA RX BY SHAMEEM AKTHAR

Evoke empathy: Open your heart with yogic stretches to invite a state of compassion

Empathy is a healthy emotion to cultivate. Even in industry or financial circles where it was once scoffed upon as a defeatist's choice, empathy is now prized as a valuable tool that can be used to expand and grow. But going beyond financial or corporate benefits, today there is a belief that this emotion can help heal chronic ailments. Often, those who feel anger at others have a high level of adrenal hormones in their blood, a precursor to circulatory problems, including the fatal stroke. People who could defuse this anger with empathy fared better in health-based, scientific studies. The benefits were found to percolate into the nervous system too. In schools, for instance, empathetic students had greater reading skills. Empathy was also found to be an important ingredient in creative thinking and problem-solving. For all these reasons, empathy is the new buzzword in leadership programmes.

Louise L Hay, the renowned American alternative therapist-healer, has claimed to cure herself of cancer by

forgiving her childhood abuser. Her core belief, arising from this miraculous cure, that certain emotions are healing has made her books international bestsellers. Of all emotions the most healing, she believes, are compassion and empathy.

In yoga, empathy can be cultivated by working on poses that work the heart centre, at your chest. However, unlike backbends, which also stimulate and excite the chest, empathy poses require a steady massage at the heart or chest. Further, most empathy poses combine this chest massage with the gesture of surrender. Some specific poses that combine surrender with the quality of compassion are the eight-limbed pose (*ashtanga namaskarasana*) in sun salutation or *surya namaskar*, the lizard pose (*pristhasana*) and child pose (*balasana*). These poses stoke open-heartedness; to intensify their impact, learn to hold them longer. As they are also soothing and stress-relieving, it is not difficult to hold them for long without discomfort.

YOGIC MOVES

Lizard pose (*pristhasana*)

Go on your fours, as in a classic yogic cat stretch, with palms flat on the ground under both shoulders and legs bent at the knees. Walk the knees back a little, inhale deeply. Exhaling, begin to bend the hands at the elbows, cupping them. Then place elbows on the ground. Continuing to breathe, lower your chest to the ground behind the hands. The hips should remain up while the forehead (or chin, if you are flexible) is also lowered to the ground. At this point, the chest should touch the ground. If you are holding this

Benefits: This is a safe, releasing pose even used during menstruation for women to relieve body ache and cramps. It opens up the upper back; facilitates breathing; and boosts immunity. What's more, it is very soothing and relaxing and relieves stress.

Model: Rajaneekant P Karia

Harmony Interactive Centre

Photographer: Dattaguru Redekar



pose right, the upper back will feel an intense, releasing stretch. Settle into the pose more deeply, breathing normally. Hold for a few seconds initially. Extend the duration with regular practice. Avoid if you have chronic neck pain.

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

CHAMPIONS AGAINST DIABETES.

Diabetes, a progressive disease affecting over 50 million Indians is gaining epidemic proportions. The commonly held belief regarding Diabetes is that, it is a life-altering disease which takes complete control over a patient. Our Patient Champions have proved the contrary.

These spirited individuals have not only demonstrated that Diabetes can be controlled and life can continue to be fulfilling, but are 'exceptional Champs' because they have also inspired and motivated others to manage their Diabetes well.

From the state of Kolkata, we bring to you Mrs. Shilpi Roy, Mr. Asoke Kumar Nandy, Mr. Mritunjoy Paoli, Mr. Sumohan Mukherjee and Ms. Neela Ram. Their 'Never Say Die' motto in their fight against Diabetes has earned them the title of a '**Champ**' at the '**I Am A Champ**' Awards - India's first National Diabetes Awards instituted by Sanofi, to celebrate Diabetes control.



Mrs. Shilpi Roy (extreme left) with her family

Mrs. Shilpi Roy was diagnosed with Diabetes when she was just 23 years old and had gone in for a routine blood sugar test. Being a young mother at the time of her diagnosis, her initial reaction, like any other diabetic patient, was sheer panic and shock. She recollects, "My son and daughter were very young at the time of my diagnosis and taking care of them was my priority. However, taking care of children is a round-the-clock job, and Diabetes was proving to be a hindrance to my daily schedule."



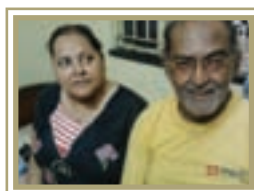
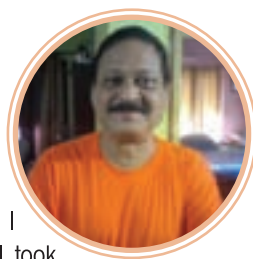
It took Mrs. Roy a long time to come to terms with her Diabetes. However her husband and her family gave her the much needed support and love that got her through some very tough times. "I learnt that Diabetes can be a deadly disease if it is not controlled well and can lead to Multi-Organ failure. I therefore took all the necessary steps to ensure a proper blood sugar level." She says that an early morning session of yoga, regular exercise, a balanced diet and a well timed medication schedule has helped her take charge of her Diabetes and lead a healthy and active life.

Today, as a 'Champ' who has proved that Diabetes can be controlled, she says,

"To me, Diabetes is no longer a disease. If I can take control of it, I believe that anyone can."

Born with a sweet tooth, Mr. Asoke Kumar Nandy was diagnosed with Diabetes nearly two and half decades ago. He recalls, "I couldn't imagine what I would have to face when I received my diagnosis."

Being a lover of life, Mr. Nandy decided that his health was his first priority. "I wanted to lead an active, long and healthy life. I also wanted to live on my own terms and so I decided that 'enough is enough'. I took the first step of watching my diet and it just went on from there. My wife, Samita has been an immense support and she never made me feel like a diabetic." He believes that doctor's advice should be strictly followed to guarantee a cheerful life. His very balanced diet gives him the liberty to also indulge a little in his favourite desserts.



Unlike the other 'Champs' Mr. Mritunjoy Paoli tells us that he took his initial Diabetes report with a pinch of salt. He confesses that the fear and stress built in when his life changed post the diagnosis.

"I had lost weight drastically, couldn't control my bladder, had a tremendous increase in appetite, which was unexplainable and felt less energetic during the peak hours of the day."

Feeling like he was missing out on his life, he decided to take charge of his health. He says, "Today, after 36 years of living with diabetes, I am very grateful to my doctor and counselor for helping me. I can proudly say that even though it does get tough at times, I am leading a fit and much needed healthier life. In fact, my diet control and regular cycling has helped me lead a happy life with my family."

"The key is actually finding activities that you enjoy so you'll be more likely to do them. For me it is cycling."

Mr. Sumohan Mukherjee, a senior citizen, never thought that he would be detected with diabetes. "At the time of my diagnosis, which was about 6 years ago, my limited knowledge of diabetes led me to think that it wasn't a chronic disease and that I would



be ok in a few months. But after two months, my physician broke the news to me that I had to control my diabetes on a very regular basis."

Mr. Mukherjee praises his counselor Mr. Bhattacharya for motivating him to participate in the 'I Am A Champ' initiative and is even more grateful to him for helping him take charge of his diabetes without facing any major troubles.

An avid sports lover and hardcore athlete, 29 year old Ms. Neela Ram, was diagnosed with Diabetes when she was barely a teenager. She was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes (Juvenile Diabetes) at the age of 14. As a child who adored chocolates and sweets, she had to face the tough decision to refrain from the things she loved the most.

"The major challenge was that I had to prove myself in a completely new situation, because I had lost my earlier identity of a good athlete. I was jeered at by my classmates and my relatives refused to speak to me, because they were under the impression that Diabetes is a contagious disease and that they might contract it."

The turning point in her life came about when she met late Mr. Tapobrata Roy, a Juvenile Diabetic. Late Mr. Roy belonged to an organisation named 'Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation'.

Neela was touched with the fact that many other kids of her age were leading an active and complete life with the same condition.

"Today I am responsible member of this organisation and try to help others. Understanding the problems of other children helps me also take better care of myself." Neela's strategy of controlling Diabetes involves maintaining her diet regimen even during a celebration, interacting with her doctor and other diabetics, clearing doubts as soon as they come, participating in various diabetes awareness programmes and undertaking physical exercise as prescribed by her doctor.



She strongly believes that a diabetic is no less than any other normal person and has the power to do anything that any other normal person can.

"I am greatly appreciative towards my doctor who motivated me to participate and Mr. Debadidev Bhattacharya and Gunjan Taneja from Sanofi who gave me the confidence that I could emerge as a winner, which I am today."

Managing Diabetes is hard work. From our 'Champs' we see that a successful and healthy life with Diabetes comes only from being dedicated and fully committed to goals like eating well, exercising and following a disciplined lifestyle.

Our 'Champs' truly demonstrate that anyone can be affected with Diabetes and that the power lies within oneself. Sanofi is proud of its 'Champs' for being an inspiration to those who think that Diabetes cannot be controlled and for showing the world that it is possible to live a normal and healthy life with Diabetes.



SOULFOOD AND SOULMATES JIGYASA GIRI AND PRATIBHA JAIN MEET MERLE AND KUMAR DODHIA, CHENNAI

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

Merle and Kumar Dodhia broke traditional norms to be together. He is a Gujarati Jain whose parents are from Kenya, she an Anglo-Indian from Chennai. They found each other in their 30s and discovered love, security and spirituality in their togetherness. Now settled in Chennai, they enjoy sharing the housework, eating out on weekends, attending Sunday church, reading books on health and, above all, talking about their children. He is an idealist and influenced by his readings of Ayn Rand, while she is more practical and level-headed. They both work in different capacities at the fashion design house of their son Sidney Sladen.

Jigyasa Giri and Pratibha Jain:

How did you meet?

Merle Dodhia: I took up a job in his family business, Dodhia Group of Companies, in Kenya in 1982. Both of us met there and instantly took a liking to each other. But I was not very keen to settle down as I had been married earlier and had two children.

How did your families react?

She: My family is quite liberal; many of my cousins have married in different cultures. But his family was not very happy with the decision.

Kumar Dodhia: My family was quite disapproving for many reasons—inter-caste marriage, my decision to adopt both her children, and my religious conversion.

She: We shifted to India in 1989 and had a simple marriage in 1996. Once our daughter Damara was born, his



Chennai Pix

family became more accepting. In fact, now things have changed; within my own family, there have been many marriages outside the community.

Why did you convert?

He: I studied at Millfield School, one of the finest schools in England, from the age of 14 to 19. It shaped me and made me who I am. My housemaster was a reverend and his religiosity had a great influence on me. Though my father was a Gujarati Jain, I felt drawn towards the church. After I met her, I embraced Christianity.

She: After we met, his interest in the Bible deepened and we started reading it more seriously.

What made you move to India?

He: When I was 12, I came to India for a two-month visit. That time

I promised myself I would come here and settle down as soon as I could.

Did marriage affect your careers?

He: I left my family business, came to India and started a STD/PCO booth. I did that for a decade; the past four years were very successful and I was declared the second-best collector in north Chennai. But with Internet connectivity, I had to shut down.

She: I am trained in Montessori education. So we decided to start a play school in Aminjikarai. We even educated children from the nearby slums. Around 2001, both of us started helping our son Sidney as his fashion designing was expanding well.

What attracted you to each other?

He: She is a beautiful and immensely caring person.



“When a relationship begins, each one tries to impress the other. But with time you become so comfortable that there is no pretence”

She: He has always been very understanding. But I must tell you that when we met, he really pursued me. Because of my first marriage, I was hesitant. He never pushed me, but convinced me in his calm and patient manner.

He: Love is a very fragile emotion and one must learn to be patient. I remember my excitement when we got married. Everything seemed new—a new life and new land. I felt I was ready to start anew.

She: And he is very fond of both my children.

He: When I met her, I wanted to marry her, but more than anything, I wanted to be a true father to Sidney and Vivien.

Do you share responsibilities?

She: Oh yes, even now if the domestic help doesn't turn up, he vacuums, irons and cleans the vessels, even though this has not been the trend in his family. Because he has travelled extensively and grew up in a boarding school, he is not conventional in his outlook. Our routines are fairly simple and we are not fussy eaters; we keep mealtimes a simple affair.

He: In fact, we have healthy eating habits. Every day she includes an assortment of vegetables in our meals. Her mother used to do that.

We can see some interesting health books on the table. And your refrigerator has many health food packets. Are the children health-conscious too?

He: Oh yes, our elder daughter Vivien who lives in Australia keeps sending us health foods. Last week, she sent

us a packet of detox tablets that we are quite excited about.

She: It is a one-week programme, so we will do that when we are sure there won't be a break. In fact, Damara asked us the other day why home food is considered healthier than eating out. We had an interesting conversation about cleanliness, fresh food and health benefits. Even though she is young she is quite health-conscious.

Name one change you would like to see in each other.

He: That's a difficult question; there are more things I like in her than a few minor ones that I don't. Maybe her habit of buying things for the children...she could be more disciplined in that.

She: He keeps telling me the same thing and then spoils them rotten when he goes shopping. When a relationship begins, each one tries to impress the other. But with time you become so comfortable that there is no pretence. You start knowing and understanding the other completely.

He: At whatever stage, life provides everything else if there is love.

Coconut Dal Rice

This Goan rice dish is a family favourite with the family. Merle Dodhia learnt it from her mother.

Ingredients

- Basmati rice: 2 cups
- Bengal gram (*chana dal*): ½ cup
- Coconut milk: Extracted from one medium-sized coconut
- Milk: 1 cup
- Cinnamon: 2 small sticks
- Cloves: 2-3
- Cardamom: 2

- Sugar: ½ tsp
- Oil: 2 tbsp
- Ghee: 2 tbsp
- Salt to taste

Method

Heat oil in a pressure pan or cooker; add cinnamon, cloves and cardamom. Add sugar and immediately add washed *chana dal*. Add coconut milk, milk, and four cups of water. To this, add salt and bring to a boil. Now toss in the rice, close the lid of the pressure pan and steam over low flame for 15 minutes without the whistle. Open the lid, drizzle ghee over the aromatic rice, switch off the flame and transfer to a serving dish. Serve hot with devil chutney and any curry of your choice.

Devil Chutney

When Merle Dodhia saw our raised eyebrows and grins at the name of this chutney, she laughed and told us it is a popular preparation in most Anglo-Indian homes.

Ingredients

- Onion: 1½ (large)
- Tomato: 1 (medium)
- Red chilli powder: 1 tsp
- Garlic: 1 clove
- Salt to taste
- Sugar: 2 tsp
- Lemon juice: 2 tsp

Method

Grind all the ingredients together into a thick paste without adding water. Serve with coconut *dal* rice.

Jigyasa and Pratibha are authors and publishers of two award winning books Cooking at Home with Pedatha and Sukham Ayu. They specialise in documenting culinary traditions. Visit them at www.pritya.com

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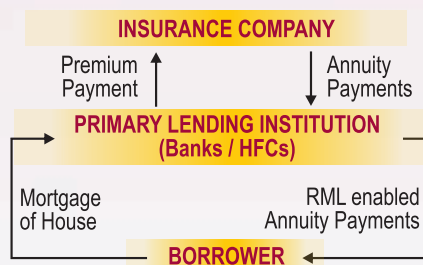
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70	1000000	60%	Rs. 2419 to Rs. 4816
75	1000000	70%	Rs. 3311 to Rs. 7166

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let's dance!

Hrishikesh Pawar redefines physical rehabilitation for Parkinson's patients by transporting them into a terpsichorean world. **Khursheed Dinshaw** meets the young exponent of contemporary dance and finds medical miracles unfolding in an idyllic bungalow in Pune

📷 Rachita Saraogi



Inside a sunny bungalow in Erandwane, Pune, a group of silvers takes a few tentative dance steps, furtively checking to see how the others are doing. They are all struggling, some with nerves, others shyness, their confidence waxing and waning as Tina Turner eggs them on.

However, our participants face a challenge much larger than perfecting a

few tricky moves—this dance therapy class is a step forward in their struggle with Parkinson's disease (PD). And it has given them some precious moments of triumph. Why, Vilas Joshi, 62, is back to driving his car and 54 year-old Pradnya Joshi can lift her grocery bag without help once more!

Making this possible is their young instructor, Hrishikesh Pawar, 28, whose Dance for Parkinson's Disease

programme is one of a kind in India. For 60 minutes, three times a week, he puts his silver students through their paces to shake them free from the shackles of this debilitating disease. He has 16 students in Pune and four in Mumbai, and still counting.

Dance therapy for Parkinson's is an idea that took root when Pawar was in London in 2004. He had read about the Mark Morris Dance Company



and its work with PD patients in *The Dance Magazine*. Six years later, while conducting Pune's Prayatna Film and Dance Festival, a five-day film festival to mark the International Day of Dance, Pawar was struck by a film showcased at the festival. Called *Why Dance for PD?*, it was a gentle reminder of the path he wished to follow.

"Two elderly members of the Parkinson's Mitra Mandal, Pune, attended the festival and they loved the movie. So we decided that I would work on a dance module for PD and they would bring in patients. We decided to run it as a pilot programme for three months and, based on the results, take it further," reveals the young dancer and choreographer, who also runs the Centre of Contemporary Dance in Pune.

The inaugural module was conducted with three patients at the Sancheti Institute of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation in June 2010. The doctors monitored 'quality of life sheets' that

gauge and rate PD on a scale of one to 10. The assessment is conducted for patients who have undergone a minimum three months of continuous therapy. When the first three participants were evaluated, even orthopaedic specialists were amazed at the results. Dance therapy alone had led to a reduction in medication, and their gait and stability had improved perceptibly.

Convinced of the rehabilitative power of his dance module, Pawar decided to expand it by using the *Natya Shashtra* as the base and incorporated the vocabulary of classical movement. "The biggest challenge was getting the patients to dance as this type of therapy is not proven in India," he recalls. "Second, I was asking people with Parkinson's to dance. That wasn't easy! For instance, simply making it to class is a chore for some patients as logistic support in the form of transport is inadequate. Then, there was also the challenge of convincing doctors about the benefits of alternative

dance therapy. It took six months of preparation before we actually started the programme."

Offering valuable insight and assistance was Maithily Bhupatkar, who has been with the programme since inception. With over 15 years' experience in Bharatanatyam and over two years' training in contemporary dance, Bhupatkar has also taken a 'Dance for PD' teacher training course at the Mark Morris Dance Group in New York.

For his part, Pawar's love affair with dance began with Kathak before he moved to contemporary dance years later. "I was the first Indian to be invited as a guest student in the Dance Teacher Training Programme at the Palucca Schule Dresden, Germany. After travelling across the world, I formed my own institute to promote contemporary dance in India."

His journey aside, today Pawar is amazed at how far his students have



Silvers start their session with warm-up exercises; (opposite page) Pawar guides one of his students through the moves



come. Like Vilas Joshi, mentioned earlier, who is back behind the wheel after attending Pawar's classes for 14 months. "I have reduced my medicine dose by 25 per cent, my tremors have ceased, my concentration has improved, and my confidence has grown so much!" he exclaims. Hearing this, Surekha Rokade, 61, nods vigorously. "The dance classes have brought relief from my rigid movements. I feel fresh, I have made friends and I feel confident now."

Now, Pawar's students are spreading the word. Take Pradnya Joshi, for instance. "I had asked a PD friend to join our class two months ago,"

recounts the exuberant silver. "But she was very depressed and apprehensive of joining in. Today, she phones me and asks me to pick her up as she doesn't want to miss a single class!"

The dance programme goes beyond loosening stiff muscles and joints. "PD patients have a deficiency of dopamine that facilitates movements directed by the brain," explains Dr Rajas Deshpande, head of the Department of Neurology, Sancheti Hospital. "In PD, if the pattern of activity is changed, it will facilitate dopamine production and lead to better performance. In dance therapy, activities that are performed to a tune

or rhythm become easier, more fluent and normal. This helps improve functionality, owing to which depression vanishes and PD patients feel more confident." To this, Dr Parag Sancheti, chairman of the Sancheti Institute, adds, "This therapy works as physical rehabilitation with entertainment value as it provides a release for patients who tend to become anxious and depressed. This combination of treatment, physiotherapy, rehabilitation and dance is a fantastic concept."

A typical 60-minute dance session starts with participants engaging in warm-up exercises while seated. This is followed by standing up and practising movements especially designed for PD patients. The fun part is the dancing itself, where participants experience a cathartic release of emotions while their fluid movements heal the brain. As for the music, Pawar uses a mix of ballet, Marathi folk, Bach and Beethoven, opera, jazz and even Abba. Silvers are also guided through vocal exercises taken from Kathak, to reduce the rigidity of the vocal chords. For Pawar, what started as an experiment has turned into a personal gift. "These are people who have experienced the entire spectrum of life. Naturally, they inspire me. When they narrate their life's experiences, I look up to them and say, 'Wow, you have lived through that?' Meeting them has made me aware of the cycle of life and I realise there really is no time to hold grudges," he says on a philosophical note.

Bhupatkar adds, "As I watch our students brave the effects of Parkinson's and take joy in simple movements, it humbles me. It makes me realise just how much we take our health and so many other things for granted. The programme has brought me a sense of happiness I cannot measure. Perhaps it has healed me more than it has healed them." ❀



Family theatre

Shaili Sathyu speaks to **Radhika Raje** about growing up with her liberal father, M S Sathyu, who home-schooled her in theatre. Her most valuable lesson was the right to be wrong

I was a part of theatre even before I was born. My mother was pregnant with me when she was directing a play. That's how far back it goes. I acted in my first play at the age of nine but I didn't pursue acting as I don't like to face an audience. So I haven't acted apart from being part of a background crowd in a village or market scene. Today I am one of the youngest honorary vice-presidents of IPTA [Indian People's Theatre Association], which babysat me when my father was busy directing. I started helping my dad with production since I was in ninth standard. He taught me that no work was too small or too big, and cleaning up the stage was nothing to look down upon. I majorly assisted him with production work till the second year of college. It was slow progress.

He tells people, "Shaili doesn't give me any work in her play." As he is not directing any play right now, I haven't been working with him. The last play he directed in Mumbai was *Girija Ke Sapne*, where I assisted him from direction to casting. Now I direct my own plays, which are mainly for children. Dad keeps complaining that I don't let him help me with my play. He does not crib to me but he complains to other people, who tell me!

At first, theatre wasn't a career prospect; it was a way of life. I used to just tag along with my father. I am almost sure I wouldn't have taken up theatre if I hadn't grown up in this atmosphere. I took it up by default. In school and college, theatre was just a hobby. I was studying architecture and I was interested in teaching. But theatre was always around and it just stayed with me.

I usually want to surprise him. I didn't want my father to even watch the rehearsals of my last play. I simply wanted him to see the final product. He was a little miffed. There was this time he found out we were rehearsing, and by the time he reached the venue, we had finished and were relaxing over a *chai*. He was very upset. After that, he wasn't able to make it to any of our rehearsals but thought I was deliberately thwarting him. It all worked out nicely because he was pleasantly surprised.

Stage design is important to me, just like it is to dad. He influenced me a lot when it comes to the visual aspect of theatre. We both look for visually appealing stage design when it comes to direction or production. But the way I think, the way I look at content and my approach have come to me from my writer-mother.

He is a silent observer. My father doesn't say very much. He doesn't analyse and theorise on things. I do that with my mother. He just watches. But you can tell from his expression how he's going to react. Then, he makes a seemingly random comment, which usually makes a lot of difference to everything. He is a silent but very keen observer.

My father is proud that he taught us to make our own decisions. My first play as a director was *Barsoram Dhade Se*. He had made some suggestions and I decided I didn't want to take his advice. He was absolutely all right with that. He has a very open mind. He has never made me feel I have to take his suggestions. And he doesn't take umbrage when I don't take his advice. He has never made me feel that I should follow his advice rather than trust my own instincts simply because he has more experience. He has given me a thorough grounding and I will always be indebted to him.

"I don't call him father or dad. We just call him by his name. Our neighbours and relatives didn't like this at all and would think my sister and I were badly brought up. But my father insisted we call him by name. He was always like a friend. He taught me that everybody is equal"

He has never felt that new actors are a risk. He gives his actors a lot of space. He is not a method director. He explains the scene, gives the dialogue and just asks them to execute on their own. He gives actors a lot of freedom. He makes them bring their

own creativity into their roles and allows them to give their roles the shades they want. He doesn't instruct a lot. So when I started out as a director, he kept telling me I give too many instructions. As I am a teacher, I obviously instruct but he doesn't like it. I now give instructions only if asked. A lot of young and new actors have got their breaks solely because of him. Yet you will never hear him say they might ruin his play. He is very good at channelling the positive in people.

My father has worked on more movies than he can remember. Although *Garam Hawa* was very famous, many people in Mumbai do not know that he has made a lot of award-winning Kannada movies. He chose to work in his own language. In the past 30 years, he has probably designed at least 100 plays, most of which he doesn't even remember! I am still trying to gather all the details on his work.

I speak to him regularly to seek his opinions. We don't live in the same city any more but I bug him with every decision I make, whether technical, creative or managerial. I call him even when I am stuck with too many choices. I just blabber on over the phone, hoping he will understand everything I say without any background information. Amazingly, he usually does. He guides me over the phone almost every week.

We have a few traits in common. We get upset with people who lack common sense or produce shoddy work. We both feel we can do things better than anybody else so we end up doing most of the work ourselves. We hate the idea of explaining work to other people. We both can't delegate work properly, although I am sure he won't agree. And we love cooking. He is a fantastic host and a good cook. Before every play, he calls everyone home and cooks for them. It creates positive energy. My mother isn't like that. He and I love to feed people and we both also love homemade food. My mind connects with my mother and my actions connect with my father.

We usually react in opposite ways when we watch a play together. Whenever he visits me or I visit him, we watch a lot of plays. But we react so differently. When I think a play is all right and good in parts, he says it's horrid. He looks for a political stance in every play. He looks for things like the director's attitude or what the play wants to depict. He believes politics colours everything. These issues are far more important to him than to me.

My favourite ritual is no longer a part of our lives. We used to drive down to Bangalore every Diwali when I was a child. He had a Fiat converted into a Station Wagon. We used to travel for two days and take a break at Belgaum. It was a ritual. We would drive really slowly. We would relax, pull over if we saw a nice tree and take a nap underneath it. I remember the time he had gifted me a camera and I wanted to take really funny pictures of him. So I clicked really random pictures of him sleeping but he didn't find them funny. We used to eat watermelon by the riverside. These are memories of him that I cherish. We haven't done things like this in a long time.



My father thinks he is an engineer. He tries to fix everything. When something needs to be mended at home, he pulls out his screwdriver and opens it up. Sometimes the device will stay that way for weeks. If you ask him about it, he'll say he is still looking for this part or that part, and you're left without the equipment for a long time. And this happens with things like the grinder, which you regularly need in the kitchen. He won't put it back together; nor will he let you buy a new one and "waste money". Sometimes, it is very irritating. Now my sister and I speak up. It upsets him but he does listen. He still says things like, "I would have fixed it; why call a technician?"

He doesn't like the fact that I shout a lot. I am a pretty angry person and I don't think he likes that. Even though I am more patient now, I still shout at people at the drop of a hat. I am usually patient with children but I am horrible with adults. I have quite a bad reputation. People run away when they see me. He always asks me why I have to shout so much.

My father is an extreme case of liberalism. I don't call him father or dad. We just call him by his name. Our neighbours and relatives didn't like this at all and would think my sister and I were badly brought up. But my father insisted we call him by name. He was always like a friend. He taught me that everybody is equal.

For him, divisions of class don't make any sense. I have seen him live his life that way so I know it's not something he just preaches. Even my niece, his granddaughter, calls him by name. My parents have been so liberal that we never needed to take permission for anything. We were allowed to do whatever we wanted and were held responsible for our actions. That's an important lesson in life. ✨

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celebrate age

Competition for Filmmakers



HARMONY FOR SILVERS FOUNDATION IS PROUD TO PRESENT "CELEBRATE AGE" COMPETITION SECTION AS PART OF THE 13TH MUMBAI FILM FESTIVAL. IT WILL SHOWCASE AD-FILMS, SHORT FICTION FILMS, DOCUMENTARIES AND FEATURE LENGTH FILMS ON THE SPICE, FUN AND ADVENTURE OF GROWING OLDER.



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Results: Results of "Celebrate Age" will be announced at the closing ceremony of the 13th Mumbai Film Festival, to be held from Oct 13th - 20th, 2011.

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Second Prize: Rs 25,000

Screening of the films: A selection of films from the entries received for "Celebrate Age" will be showcased during the 13th Mumbai Film Festival.

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A study in commitment

Satara-based educator Shivaji Raut tells **Radhika Raje** how he battles corruption every day with the help of the RTI ACT

A day in Shivaji Raut's life shifts seamlessly between two occupations: education and RTI activism. While he gets paid for the first, the second earns him endless brickbats. Vice-principal in Anant High School for the first half of the day, the 56 year-old spends the second half following up on RTI cases. Even his long evening walks are dedicated to raising awareness about the Act.

"My father was a farmer and my mother took care of farm animals; so it was natural for me to take to rural development," says Raut, a one-man grievance cell for the underprivileged in Maharashtra's Satara district. "My neighbours and the parents of my students come to me for guidance, often wanting to know what is right and wrong." In the process, Raut says he has gained courage. Despite threats and attempts to bribe him, he continues to fight for human rights. "Every case makes my resolve stronger as there's satisfaction in knowing that our political system is designed to look after us, even though our politicians are not doing their duty."

It wasn't a cakewalk for Raut. In the early 1980s, three years of unemployment taught him what his master's degree in education and one year teaching *adivasi* children didn't. "Those years were tough," he recalls. "I realised the enormity of lack of discipline in our system. I decided that I would do something to make it transparent." When he was unemployed, he engaged himself in several causes—from helping people quit alcohol and tobacco to making people environmentally aware and responsible through personal interactions. In the 1990s, he heard of the National Campaign for People's Right

to Information (NCPRI) and later, in 2003, worked under the guidance of activists Arvind Kejriwal and Aruna Roy. He began writing about NCPRI in Marathi newspaper *Loksatta* asking people to support the legislation. After the Act was passed, he began his crusade to help wronged people file RTI applications.

Raut has an impressive 207 success stories to his credit. In the beginning, his contribution included small-time RTI cases such as property lease issues or land acquisition felony. He gradually moved on to bigger cases and dared to take on larger scams. "To solve a problem at its root, it's important to make changes right from the top." With this as his motto, Raut filed RTI applications to get information

"To solve a problem at its root, it's important to make changes right from the top"

about ration offices in Satara, where food grains and kerosene were being sold at higher prices by manipulating the measuring equipment. "They were deceiving innocent people," he says. "It went unnoticed for long." Another victory: after noticing the rise in poaching at Koyna valley near Satara, Raut filed an RTI application to get a list of firearms holders, and revealed that most licences were issued on the basis of fake certificates.

His most recent success story is that of 70 year-old P L Khamkar Satara. "I was working as a teacher, but after my retirement I didn't receive my pension regularly," shares Khamkar.

"Raut asked me to file an application asking for the school's expenditure and list of pensioners. He also helped me file a case against the school as I couldn't sustain myself without the pension money. With Raut's guidance, I now get my pension on time."

Although Raut has unravelled many scandals, one case surfaced repeatedly during this interview: bauxite mining in Satara. In the Sahyadri range of Satara, windmills were installed by four companies that mined the region for bauxite, a base mineral used to manufacture aluminium. "Usually mining companies pay a fee to the government but when I filed an application to know the amount collected, we found these companies were not paying anything." Following Raut's complaint, the district collector notified one of the four companies (a large and 'reputed' one at that), demanding about Rs 30.5 million for the 86 million tonne of mined bauxite. The case is still pending in court as the company in question is arguing over the money demanded, and the other three are yet to respond.

The next on Raut's agenda is the education system. "Our children need informal education too. We must include topics such as brotherhood and secularism. More cultural activities are needed to upgrade their cultural knowledge." With so much on his plate, Raut has made sure that he never really retires. In times where an honest man can be "bought or broken", this Gandhian—his house is named 'Priy Babu' (Dear Babu)—is firm in his beliefs. "I just want to follow the path of truth. Many people are selfish; ultimately, they are pacified with bribes and change their stance. But I want to be systematic about what I do." ✨





Rebel without a pause

His films are controversial; his political views strident; and the choices he has made in his personal life anything but conventional. Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt now introduces his signature brand of dissent to the theatre with the decidedly anti-establishment play *The Last Salute*. **Rajashree Balaram** hears out the rebel and understands why Gandhi's India needs to make room for more men like him

Four out of five doctors around the world recommend Anacin,” announced a popular advertisement of the 1950s. Ten year-old Mahesh Nanabhai Bhatt was not quite ready to stomach the recommendation though, and shared his misgivings with his mother: “Ma, let’s ask the fifth doctor why he doesn’t recommend Anacin. Maybe he has something important to say.”

The precocious dissenter grew up to become one of the most controversial filmmakers of our times who posed a question at every answer. Mahesh Bhatt has an opinion on everything and refuses to keep it to himself—like most of us. But most of us also cannot claim the courage—or arrogance—to speak our mind. When we meet Bhatt at his office in suburban Mumbai, there are no murmured requests on the side to keep things off the record or word things ‘appropriately’. He calls Anna Hazare a fascist; the Congress spokesperson a moron; and India an aspiring democracy that is not quite secular. He also admits to flinging idols of

deities in the ocean; making movies purely for commercial gain; and being a hypocrite when he resorted to Islam to marry his second wife because he didn’t want to divorce his first one.

For all the undiluted harshness he directs towards the world around him, it’s reassuring to know that he has never been lenient towards himself either. The 63 year-old admits to roaming the streets of Mumbai in the predawn hours and hanging out with beggars huddled around a tremulous bonfire: “They are happy to be with me when they find out who I am. What they don’t know is that I was out at that hour because I wasn’t feeling too happy with myself.”

Many people often wonder if he gives controversial statements because he likes the sound of his own voice. There are as many who want him to shut up for a change. Maybe Bhatt needs to be more measured with his comments. Or maybe his is the voice we fear to hear because it reminds us of our own voice that we have lost.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

When I produced *The Last Salute*, people asked me why I was dignifying a reprehensible deed. The play is about Muntadhar Al-Zaidi, the journalist who flung a shoe at President Bush at a press meet. To me, Muntadhar's action stands alongside the actions of Gandhi, Tolstoy, Martin Luther King Junior, and many lesser known courageous dissenters who raised their voice against tyranny and injustice. And if there is any real function of true art apart from mere entertainment, it is to keep the dissenting spirit alive in man. At a time when we are manufacturing conformists on an assembly line, I think it is my duty to enshrine that human spirit of revolt that is palpable in Muntadhar. He is one of those few men who had the courage to stare into the eyes of death when he hurled that shoe at Bush, whom the world has yet to put into the dock and probably never will. When Muntadhar lands in India he plans to go to Raj Ghat and offer his respects to the greatest dissenter of all time, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi; and pray to him to bring about peace in his colonised motherland.

Gandhiji allowed his own deconstruction. I wish Anna Hazare could do the same. In 1942, a temple for Mahatma Gandhi was erected in Chennai. When my friend U G Krishnamurti wrote to him and asked why he was party to such veneration, he closed the temple down. I say three cheers to Anna Hazare for dealing with corruption head on. But if his movement is all about the right to dissent against the power structures, why is he denying me my right to dissent? I was totally in support of him when he flagged off the movement at Jantar Mantar. Then he did something totally unacceptable—he claimed to be a Gandhian yet endorsed what had happened in Gujarat. The Gujarat government is using every trick in the book to cover up the massacre of 2,000 Indians, yet he endorsed Narendra Modi!

I am with Anna Hazare against corruption but is he with me in my fight against communalism? Communal bias is responsible for the most terrible corruption. Crores of Muslims have suffered in this bias. When I asked what we were doing about that, he said I am not interested in that right now. Anna's version of Lokpal is a fascist document that is dangerous as it revolves around a super construct that is equally vulnerable to corruption. Every fascist, whether it is Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin, said the

same thing: you give me all power and I, for your good, will set every wrong right. The architecture of our society's structures should be such that it distributes power to the people. When I point this out they shout slogans outside my house and terrorise the women in my family. Why does the voice of dissent of one man intimidate thousands of your supporters, Anna? Our freedom movement was fought by people with divergent opinions; Gandhiji did not agree with Netaji's philosophy. But that doesn't make Netaji less of a nationalist, does it? The entire discourse of the movement is in absolute terms: 'We the good, you the bad'. What you don't realise is that the line that divides good and evil runs through your own heart. The new-age fundamentalist believes that whatever he says is true and what you say is foolish. So you have to be very tough and say NO. This country belongs to everyone and each one of us has a rightful share. Wherever we see human dignity being trampled upon, we need to stand up and shout from the rooftop.

"The new-age fundamentalist believes that whatever he says is true and what you say is foolish. So you have to be very tough and say NO. This country belongs to everyone and each one of us has a rightful share"

Today, the world rests on the balance of terror. It's not in the adage 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', but in the realisation that if I hurt you, I too will be hurt. The peace between India and Pakistan is based on the realisation that both hold in their hands a nuclear arsenal that can destroy the other in minutes. It was Nixon who said, we keep talking about love but ultimately it's the butt end of the gun that controls man.

The popular religion of patriotism is being used as a tool. The quest to retain the sense of 'you', to be rooted to a region, is still very much there in the human heart. The yearning to stay in awe of some belief, to prostrate to some deity, some idea, continues. So you have this nation as the new deity whom you want to worship, but the emotions you display are no different than those of people you dismiss as fundamentalists. The guys who blew up the Twin Towers were vibrant, educated men, not savages. The point they drove home was the same: to die for a cause.

I wish India had not lost its empathy. We had large families earlier. We were used to caring about large groups of people. And suddenly we have moved into these nuclear set-ups. We may cocoon ourselves in high rises and palaces but have we succeeded in finding enduring peace? We have only numbed ourselves with pleasure. Through the cracks we can see doomsday awaiting us. I think India needs to rediscover with urgency that feeling of empathy.



I have not lost hope though. I was in Pakistan when the Sachar Committee report came out. The report clearly says that Muslims, the largest minority, have been pushed to the fringes. I was with Hameed Haroon, the CEO of *Dawn*, and Javed Iqbal, the son of Allama Iqbal, the man who conceived the idea of Pakistan. When the document from the Sachar Committee came out damning the Indian government for pushing Muslims to such pathetic conditions, Javed said, “Ah, the Qaid-e-Azam [Allama Iqbal] was indeed a man of vision. He knew this would happen to Muslims in free India. Thank god, we have a country of our own. Of course we are in a pathetic state, but at least we are not given lesser treatment than somebody else.” To which my friend Hameed Haroon said, “No Javed, it’s only India that can come out with a document like this. It has the power to look at its own hideous mistakes and lock horns with its insufficiencies. That’s what makes India and the Manmohan Singh government worthy of applause. Pakistan would never look in that direction.” I felt so happy. There was a Pakistani who slapped the Indian state and what it stood for and there was another Pakistani who defended it with such fervour.

I feel Gandhiji’s dream has not flowered. But is there anything other than that dream that can keep India glued together? Without that dream, we won’t even walk together towards the idea of India. There was a heartbreaking moment when I was at a peace seminar in Pakistan. The committee member asked me, “Why do you come here and talk about Indo-Pak peace?” I said, because I see this as a reality; my father was a Hindu-Brahmin and my mother was a Muslim and I am a by-product of that shared heritage. I added, “Either India and Pakistan live in a tight embrace or they are both doomed to be miserable.” And then one man in the audience said, “You are right Mr Bhatt. We salute the apostle of peace, Gandhi, because he died for us. He died for Pakistan.” And the greatness of Gandhi dawned on not only me that day but the people there.

In post-Partition India, my mother Shirin Mohammad felt it was better to give her children Hindu identities. She was not western but very modern—these are two very different things. She knew my father would not marry her because of their religious differences, yet she chose to be with him and have his children. And she did not make a



Posing for a friend's BlackBerry in Paris—Bhatt loves "that early hour when a city's streets are empty"

I was soaked with anguish when I made *Arth*. I made a disastrous start in cinema. I made terrible films in the beginning of my career; my marriage was on the rocks; and I was in an extramarital relationship with a woman who was fighting her own mental demons. So I wrote *Arth*. I discovered that when you speak of your own wounds it has the power to affect people. I continued in the autobiographical mode with *Janam* that stemmed from the legitimacy of my own existence. What is this concept of legitimate and illegitimate anyway? I am a 'bastard' because you chose to invent the word.

I accepted it when my detractors called me exploitative when *Woh Lamhe* was made. Mohit Suri asked me if he could make a film on my relationship with Parveen Babi. I had nothing to hide so I gave him the go-ahead. But I admit it doesn't have the innocence of *Arth*.

statement of her modernity. She never said marriage is an irrelevant institution; she only said it was her compulsion to lead a life like that. What's more, she kept her faith private. Our home was infested with gods [laughs]. There were pictures of Sai Baba and Shiva, and then my mother would close the door and the *Quran Sharif* would come out. And during the Ganapati festival, Ganesha would come home.

"The moment you give up hope and there is no help coming your way, you get up on your own two feet and walk. It's in the harshest winter of your life that you discover that there is an invincible summer in you"

My gods have died young. I always noticed that the more frightened my mom got, the more she prayed; her gods were born out of fear. As a child, I would pray for things to happen. When they didn't, I got angry with my god and threw him in the ocean. I discovered very young that there is no power outside you. When I gave up hope, I realised I was not hopeless. The moment you give up hope and there is no help coming your way, you get up on your own two feet and walk. No matter how shaky your feet are, they are your feet; you don't need crutches. We look up with such great reverence to the sun god. But when the sun sets, there is darkness. That is why Buddha said, *swayam pramanam, swayam prakasham*—light up your own inner fire. It's in the harshest winter of your life that you discover that there is an invincible summer in you.

People also ask me why I converted to Islam to marry Soni. It was an eyewash. When I got married the second time I chose to embrace my Islamic side. I wanted to give it some kind of legal garb because I didn't want to divorce my first wife. She and I were together since we were 15. Divorcing her would be tantamount to amputating a part of my life. So we found a loophole within my own cultural background. It's just like

you agree to the dictates of society at that moment because it brings comfort to a partner who is soliciting that. And to her it was very important that she stay with me as my wife.

I am only going to burn more fiercely with time. My heart is on fire and I am not going to put that out. I learnt a lot from my dear friend U G Krishnamurti. He is my heartbeat, part of who I am. I was with him in Italy during the last eight days of his life. Those days were almost wordless, yet it was his last discourse where he erased all the talks he had given me over a lifetime. What I loved about him was his courage to leave the world unsung, unwept. I know that till I leave, those ageless questions—Who am I? Where am I going?—will always gnaw at my insides. I am never going to be content with the answers. ✨



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TIME TRAVELLER

Masquerading as a modern metro, Thiruvananthapuram revels in its glorious past; the jewel in its crown is the ancient Padmanabhaswamy Temple. **Arun Bhat** goes in search of treasure—and returns with even more than he bargained for





But for the ubiquitous state-sponsored signs that welcome every visitor to 'God's Own Country', it would be hard to tell Thiruvananthapuram from any other metro, at first glance. Signs of a true God-given country, however, gradually unfold as you pull away from

the broad arterial roads and the city reveals a leafy and charming seaside town disguised as an urban expanse.

Thiruvananthapuram's large buildings and hooting traffic are limited to the main M G Road that runs through its commercial centre. Slip into the smaller streets leading out from here

and large homes with spacious gardens, tall coconut trees and shady roads replace the rush-hour crush.

Even M G Road, dominated by massive facades of glass and glitter, still has a touch of old that surfaces where a charming brick building defies the new order. The red walls of the



The Padmanabhapuram Palace, once the power centre of Travancore's kings; (opposite page) the Kuthiramalika Palace, now a museum

College of Fine Arts and the public library stand out distinctly amid a series of hotels and shopping centres. These buildings are among a handful of old structures dotting the urban landscape, sporting a mix of Victorian styles and ancient Kerala architecture. Their Gothic arches and tall windows provide a glimpse of Thiruvananthapuram's past, when it was nothing more than an idyllic coastal town.

The largest of all the historical structures in Thiruvananthapuram is the centrepiece around which the entire city expanded. Dating back to the pre-Christian era, this is the ancient Padmanabhaswamy Temple, one of the 108 great Vishnu temples (*Divya Desam*) referred to in Vaishnavite literature. It is flanked by the serene Padmatheertham Tank, whose water reflects the seven-storey tower at the temple's entrance. Tiled roofs sloping towards the tank surround the *gopura* and the enclosure of the temple.

The temple is known to date back many millennia, but the current structure was built in the 18th cen-

tury by Marthanda Varma, the renowned Travancore king. Ever since, the kings of Travancore have pledged to rule the kingdom as a representative of the Lord. Every donation and offering since made to the kings was duly submitted to the temple treasury, which is estimated to be the source of the recently rediscovered wealth in the basement of the temple sanctum.

The findings, of Rs 90,000 crore of precious materials, may have catapulted the Padmanabhaswamy Temple into the status of the richest place of worship in the country. But the simple, almost austere courtyard of the temple doesn't give any clues about the treasures it is hiding. A large, open space in a walled enclosure greets visitors when they enter through the tall *gopura*. Inside, a path runs the length of the enclosure and is punctuated at regular intervals with decorative granite pillars. Carved on the base of each pillar is statue of a lady holding an oil lamp, the top of the pillar adorned with a lion-like mythical animal roaring at the visitor.

The inner sanctum, however, gives the first glimpse of Padmanabhaswamy's treasures with its gilded pillars. The deity in the sanctum, located on a high platform, is a huge sculpture of Lord Vishnu reclining on a bed of serpent Adishesha, built using sacred *shaligram* stones. The *mantapa* and its platform are carved out of a single, huge stone, giving it the name Ottakkal Mantapam (one-stone pavilion). Next to the *mantapa* is a smaller pavilion with a platform whose roof is filled with fine carvings of the Hindu pantheon, perhaps presenting one of the finest examples of Kerala's sculpture work.

These carvings generously adorn many of Kerala's old buildings and are also seen in the nearby Kuthiramalika Palace. The palace, surrounded by a plantain orchard, gets its name from a row of 122 horses (Kuthiramalika translates to Mansion of Horses) carved into its façade. Built in the 1840s by the king of Travancore, His Highness Swathi Thirunal, the palace was closed for more than a century after the king's death. It was recently



converted into a museum hosting artefacts belonging to the royal family before being thrown open to visitors.

The palace hallways are decorated with drooping chandeliers made of Belgian crystal; on display are two huge thrones used by the king, one built using the tusks of 22 elephants and the other made entirely of crystal. The palace walls are decorated with portraits of the royalty of Travancore, painted by Raja Ravi Varma and Svetoslav Roerich. The upper floor makes generous use of teak to build airy galleries and boasts floral patterns carved on the roof panels.

A predecessor of the Kuthiramalika Palace, the palace at Padmanabhapuram is an hour's drive from Thiruvananthapuram at the border of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Built by King Marthanda Varma 400 years ago, it once served as the power centre of Travancore's kings. But its glory days lasted less than a century as his successor Dharma Raja shifted the capital to Thiruvananthapuram.

For one of the most powerful kingdoms that ruled the region, Padma-

nabhapuram Palace appears remarkably unimpressive. But that notion is quickly dismissed once you step inside. The *mantrasala* or discussion chamber of courtiers, one of the first halls seen on entering the palace, has a beautiful display of light and shade created by wooden window grills and glazed flooring. The colourful windows have placeholders to store perfume that fills the room with a gentle aroma when the wind blows in.

The simple, almost austere courtyard of the Padmanabhaswamy Temple doesn't give any clues about the treasures it is hiding

Today, the palace employs a small army of tour guides, whose services are included in the entry fee. A few years ago, a guide would escort each group of visitors through the palace and explain its architecture in detail. When there were a lot of visitors, tourists were rushed through the

palace so everyone could be attended to, leaving most visitors unhappy. The Kerala Archaeological Department worked out an ingenious solution to the problem: they have now placed two guides in every section of the palace who brief the tourists arriving in their respective sections. Each section has clearly marked directions, helping visitors find their way through the maze of halls and rooms.

Ahead of the *mantrasala*, the signs point to a long dining hall, where hundreds of Brahmins once dined, thanks to the benevolent king. Huge jars and cauldrons stored in a corner suggest that food was cooked by the tonne. The first storey of the dining hall offers an excellent view of sections of the palace, its towering maroon-tiled roof sloping steeply. Move on and you arrive at a *puja* hall called 'Mother Palace' that sports impressive ornate wood carvings, a smooth floor and airy windows with wooden bars. A pillar with intricate woodwork charms visitors with carvings of plantains and floral patterns.

Up ahead is Upparika Mahal, a four-storey tower that served as the king's



OTHER SIGHTS

PALACES

- **Koyikkal Palace:** Situated in Nedumangadu, 18 km from Thiruvananthapuram, this palace includes a Numismatics Museum that displays Rasi, the world's smallest coin!
- **Kanakakkunnu Palace:** Near the Napier Museum, this palace was built during the reign of King Sree Moolam Thirunal and modified by Chithira Tirunal, one of the most popular rulers of Travancore. After renovation by the state government, it has become a popular a venue for cultural events.
- **Puttan Malika Palace:** South-east of the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple, this palace was the seat of the Travancore kings at the end of the 19th century. Most of the palace is off limits but you can visit some of its impressive wings, which have been converted into a museum.

NAPIER MUSEUM

An art and natural history museum located in the city, it is named after Lord Napier, governor of Madras from 1866 to 1872. Built in Indo-Saracenic style, it boasts a beautiful Gothic roof and minarets. The museum houses the well-known Sri Chitra Art Gallery.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN

One of the first zoos in India,

this one is located in a beautiful botanical garden. Spread across 55 acre, it was set up as an annexe to the Napier Museum in 1857 by the then Maharaja of Travancore to attract more visitors.

BEACHES

- **Kovalam Beach:** Known for its golden sands, Ayurvedic massages and fishing, the beach is just 13 km from Thiruvananthapuram.
- **Shanghumukham Beach:** This beach is only 8 km from the city.

EAST FORT

Named after the medieval East Fort, whose remains are still visible, and located in Thiruvananthapuram, this is a shoppers' delight.

DAMS

- **Aruvikkara Dam:** Located 16 km away, this dam is on the banks of the Karamana River. A Durga temple is located close by.
- **Neyyar Dam:** A scenic location with boating facilities, a lion safari park, crocodile farm and deer park.

OTHER TEMPLES

- **Mahadeva Temple:** At Kazhakkuttam, this 14th century temple is famous for its exquisite carvings and sculptures.
- **Mitramandapuram Temple:** This ancient temple is located on the city's outskirts.

quarters. A narrow staircase leads up to the king's bedroom on the second storey. On the top floor is a room with frescoes that is out of bounds to visitors, thanks to the fragile condition of its paintings. Copies of the paintings are on display at the palace museum but poor reproduction quality conceals the beauty of the originals.

From here, proceed to the airy women's quarters, and then to the long corridors flanked by guest rooms that host beautiful old paintings of the life and times of Marthanda Varma. The paintings—including depictions of the king's coronation, a plot to kill him and battle scenes—are well preserved. Ironically, the brand new wooden labels under the paintings are already falling off!

The signs directing visitors lead you to the Navarathri Mantapa and Saraswati Temple. The artefacts here are carved in stone, a drastic departure from the intricate wooden carvings in the rest of the palace. The Mantapa, a place for performances, is adorned with carved pillars and a floor whose polished sheen creates reflections. Lost in time and overawed by the craftsmanship across the palace premises, you realise it's time to leave only when the signs leading out of the Mantapa take you back to the main entrance.

Back in Thiruvananthapuram, you can escape the city's urban mayhem by heading north to the quiet Veli Lake skirting the sea. The tourist village adjacent to the lake is dotted with modern sculptures with abstract carvings and curved facets created by well-known artist Kunjuran.

End your city tour with a visit to the park, where you can reflect on four centuries of Thiruvananthapuram's architectural heritage. The tourist village seals past with present, offering you a glimpse of how the future of the city's art and architecture are shaping up. And urging you, perhaps, to return. ✨

Experience

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SIP OF TIMELESSNESS

The Indian Coffee House in Delhi remains calm despite all the noise around it. Mamta Nainy drops by for a cup and returns with memories and musings

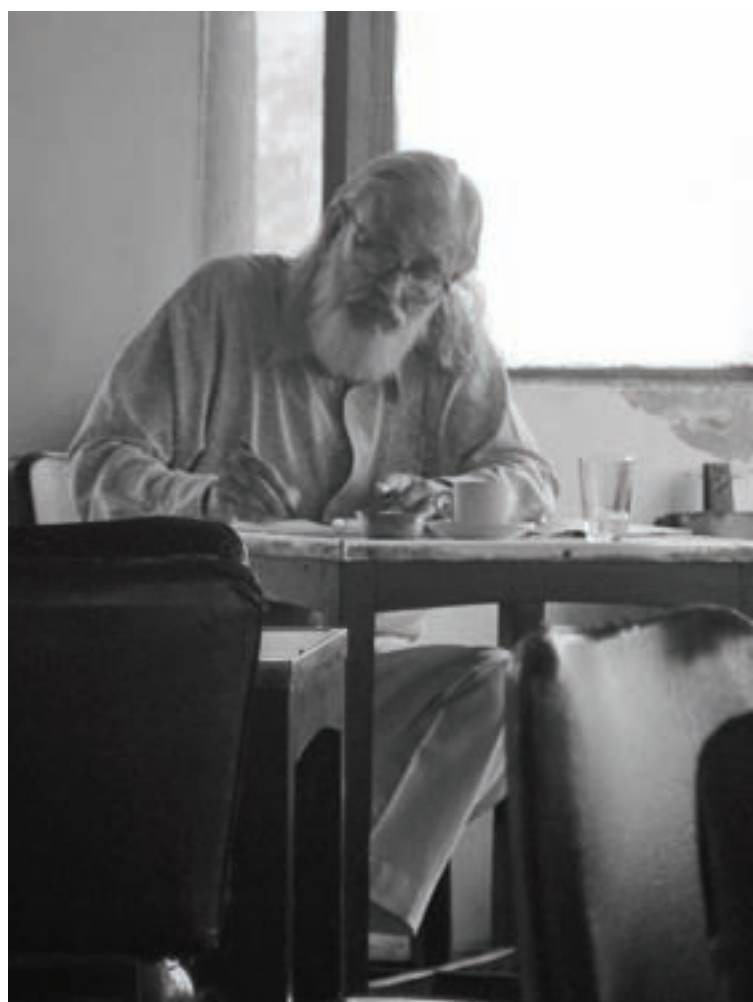
To many of us who have lived in Delhi, Connaught Place represents more than the cosmopolitan heart of the city; it's a colourful strand in the prism of variegated design of the years that shaped our identity. On one side, branching off like a vein is Baba Kharak Singh Marg with the rundown Mohan Singh Place complex—a weary shrine, caked with indolence.

Bordering the sprawling staircase of the complex are shops selling twill fabrics and stationery; travel agencies; and vendors of assorted goods from lighters to mobile phones. Between the stalls festooned with denims is a staircase soliciting the heed of passers by, its walls covered with coagulated betel juice.

Tracing its zigzag trajectory brings you to an imposing metal door with rusted hinges that swings open to a large terraced space. Cross the threshold and you are suddenly engulfed in a riot of sound, smell and colour.



Photographs by **Aniruddha Mukherjee**



Here, words throng the air; birds flurry; and monkeys do what they do best—monkey around meddling with half-filled glasses on Formica-topped tables as waiters lounge listlessly in corners. The Indian Coffee House provokes extreme reactions in almost everyone who has visited it. The 54 year-old structure first found its form in a tent pitched in Janpath, moved to what is now Palika Bazar—replacing Kitab Mahal, a bookstore that sold government publications and gazettes—and finally opened its doors in its present location.

The Indian Coffee House throbs with a life of its own, drawing people from all walks to engage with it and threading them together like beads in a necklace. People spontaneously develop ties of love and kinship with the place as it patiently warehouses all seen and heard, whiling away journeys with them. From M F Husain's artistic musings and early vignettes from Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit's life, to the political duels of I K Gujral and sagacious writings of Khushwant Singh...Coffee House has witnessed it all. Ironically, the distinguished set has celebrated their association with Coffee House with almost the same gusto as they have often despised it. For many of them, more than a place of recreation, it was home—though not devoid of a certain sense of displacement.

Once frequented by a fairly homogeneous set, today Coffee House is a melting pot of motley groups—one that fosters unusual osmosis. Osmosis of the casual and profound, the superfluous and essential, the pedagogical and poetic, the history and the future. Through rambling conversations, some write, some sketch, others talk, and possibilities bloom, ideas conceive and transactions happen—all wrapped in clouds of cigarette smoke and umpteen coffee cups.

The keynote of Coffee House is repose. There's a pliable slack, a desire to stretch a little. And just when you





gather the resolve to leave the place, coffee cups are replenished and crisp *pakora* and sandwiches make a tempting appearance. The only palpable difference over the decades, as most people say, is that the coffee that once cost 4 *anna* a cup now sets you back by ₹ 11.

What separates the Indian Coffee House from today's ubiquitous 'coffee bars' is its defiance in the face of change. It stands apart from the scurrying, scrambling chaos of the city, lives within itself, gasping for life, yet separate and scornful. Within it, however, beats a natural rhythm, a pulse that holds its aficionados together. For them, it remains a place that spins out timeless hours. 🌸



1947: PART 2

As the years roll past, our collective recollections of the freedom movement are aired only as a brief outburst of patriotism in the week leading to 15 August. Though our history books cover many heroes, there were many other nameless men and women who faded away into insignificance—some who had a role to play in the revolution and others who had been privileged observers of historic moments. Arise Free India (AFI), a non-profit trust, is now ensuring that the countless unheeded sacrifices and stories of courage and defiance are kept alive for future generations. Based in the US with a branch in India, AFI aims to prepare an oral archive by documenting, archiving and disseminating personal stories and experiences of people involved with the Indian freedom movement how never had a chance to express their story. The idea took shape when Deepak Parekh, a Detroit-based engineer, visited an elderly relative in Pennsylvania who shared her childhood memories of Mahatma Gandhi. Intrigued by her narrative, Parekh decided to build an archive to draw similar voices from different parts of India. Taking voluntary retirement from his job, he set up AFI.

Many of the freedom fighters who have been interviewed were political prisoners, and many others who bravely followed in the wake of the Mahatma's call for action.



NOSTALGIA

The project, managed by volunteers, includes both video and audio-based interviews. The team has interviewed over 91 freedom fighters so far, based in India, the US, Canada and Britain. The voices are a diverse mix of Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati and English. Intrigued by the multiple interpretations of every event from different silvers, Parekh plans to weave the stories into a documentary film. However, funds for the project have been hard to come by. Parekh and his team have also had a tough time locating freedom fighters. The list yielded under the RTI statute from the Home Ministry has no addresses or phone numbers. Parekh finally put together a list by following up with various NGOs across India. If you wish to contribute your story, know a freedom fighter who has a story to share, or wish to make a donation to the project, write to smita.rys@gmail.com or call Smita Shah on (0)9920349177. In the meanwhile, you can view the interviews on www.arisefreeindia.org

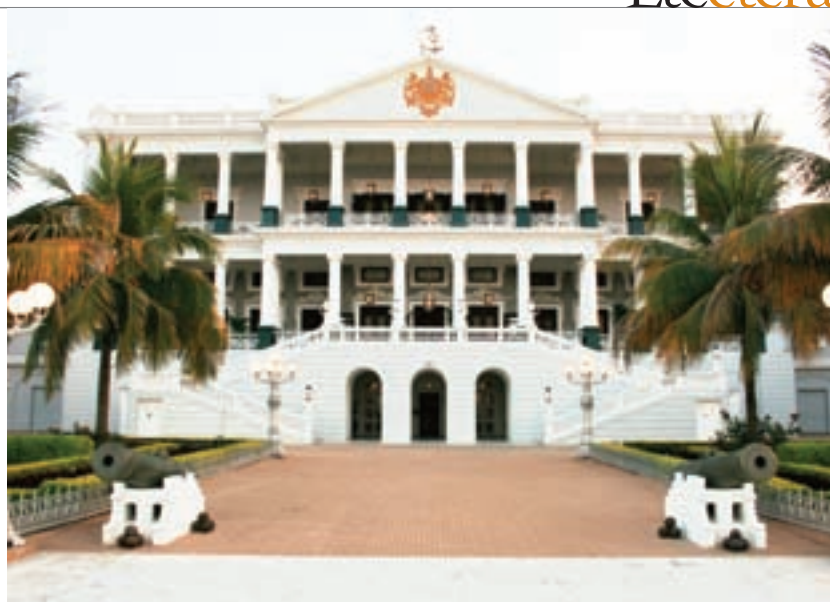
—Rajashree Balaram



Return of the ROYALS

Princess Esra headed one of the longest and largest palace conservation projects in India when she renovated Hyderabad's Falaknuma, Chowmahalla and King Kothi. The admittedly reticent princess opens up to **Shyamola Khanna** about the joys of restoring her heritage and the burden of royalty

One cannot imagine Hyderabad without its palaces. Yet a decade ago, some of the proudest edifices of the Nizams—Falaknuma, Chowmahalla and King Kothi—were on the brink of dilapidation, crumbling quietly behind padlocked gates. Then in 2001, Princess Esra, the estranged wife of the last Nizam Mukarram Jah, based in London, decided to restore Hyderabad's treasured royal past. Armed with the General Power of Attorney (GPA), the septuagenarian confronted and triumphed over



Photographs by Anand K Soma

Life lived kingsize: (above) the imposing exterior of Falaknuma Palace; the opulent interiors of Falaknuma; (opposite page) inside Chowmahalla Palace

immense debts and innumerable court cases to reintroduce Hyderabad to their shared heritage.

Locked up for nearly four decades, the palaces were among the toughest restoration projects ever undertaken. Termites and white ants gnawed at the furniture. Floors and ceilings rotted with damp. Nothing had been painted or maintained for over 30 years. Today, 10 years later, the Chowmahalla greets more than 1,000 visitors every day—and Princess Esra is happy to

see her dream come true. Excerpts from an exclusive interview:

What motivated you to restore Chowmahalla Palace? Do you regret not having started earlier?

I was away from India for over 25 years. I had separated from Mukarram Jah. However, when he asked me to return to Hyderabad and help out with the problem, most things in the palaces were already in ruin. I genuinely wanted to give something back to Hyderabad. But I was clear I did not

want any funds from outside as I felt that external interference could lead to differences and delays. The entire project has been executed with Mukarram Jah's funds. All the money that comes into the Chowmahalla Trust from gate tickets, events and exhibitions is used for the continuous restoration and upkeep of the various palaces. The palace complex was built in 1751. We couldn't use regular oil paint as the walls were originally coated with lime or *chuna*. We had to use a special paint; we need to use it afresh after every monsoon.

HERITAGE



You have helped resolve a problem that could not be solved for nearly half a century....

I was assisted by renowned lawyer Vijay Shankardass; Marthand Singh, the head of INTACH; conservation architect Rahul Mehrotra; and Deepa Kaur and Rizwan Ali Khan who designed the interiors. Rahul and his team took more than four years to sort through everything and renovate the place. Shankardass solved the legal problems over a period of two years. And a wonderful gem of a person, Kishan Rao, looks after the place.

For Falaknuma, we had discussions with ITC for many years. But they had put it on the backburner as they felt they could not fill it up with enough visitors. Finally Krishna Kumar, the then CEO of the Taj Hotels, helped me take the project off its feet. He gave me the authority to do the restoration the way it needed to be done. The Taj team of conservationists did a wonderful job. The lighting and air-conditioning were difficult but everything was impeccably copied, repaired, replaced and redone. Within the year the Taj Falaknuma was



Princess Esra; the stunning Chowmahalla Palace

identified as the 7th best hotel in the world by *Conde Nast Traveller*.

What's next?

These two restorations have taken a lot out of me. Now my children and I are concerned with turning Chowmahalla into a viable study centre. Besides a wonderful library, we have thousand of books and manuscripts that are being archived. Chowmahalla is now a living museum and also hosts many events such as Sufi concerts, *qawwali*, poetry reading and theatre.

Is there any chance of you or your children returning to public life?

Public life makes you too visible—I don't like that. Even my children share the same sentiment. I have never given any interviews about my per-

sonal life. Some newspaper said I was promoting myself; all I want to say is the work of my team speaks for itself. I don't want to return to public life; it is the most thankless profession. You can do some wonderful work but people do not remember it for very long.

According to me, Hyderabad was beautiful when Chandrababu Naidu was the CM. Now I have no help or support from the local MLAs; there have been open encroachments into the palace and no one is willing to help me stop it. Our politicians have to understand that they work for the people who elect them.

Any great memories attached with Chowmahalla and Falaknuma?

I have no fond memories of Falaknuma because we never entertained there—it was only used for the guests by the seventh Nizam, although we did have a nice New Year's Eve party once. The *Gaddi Nashini*, when my husband was crowned the Nizam, will always remain my favourite moment at Chowmahalla.



Track record

A centenarian and still going places! The Punjab Mail enthusiastically chugged into its 100th year in September. Though it was originally flagged off from Mumbai to Peshawar, after Independence it has been breezing through a distance of 1,930 km from Mumbai to Ferozepur city in Punjab—all in 34 hours. The 24-coach beauty was once a popular mode of travel for British officers and their families who disembarked in Mumbai after a two-week steamer voyage from Southampton in England. Back then, the train had six cars; three for passengers—with a total carrying capacity of 96—and three for postal goods and mail. In 1914, the train's flag-off point was shifted from Ballard Pier in Colaba to Victoria Terminus (now Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus). The train is the first on the Indian Railways' broad gauge network to score this achievement.



Jazz, Lahore-style

A unique project by Pakistani poet Mushtaq Soofi now places Pakistan's unrecognised yet brilliantly talented musicians on the world stage. Soofi, owner of the Sachal Studio in Lahore, has brought together forgotten artists who used to make music before the Zia era—many of them had given up their dwindling careers and were pursuing other vocations. Their orchestra was recently released as an album, *Sachal*

MUSIC

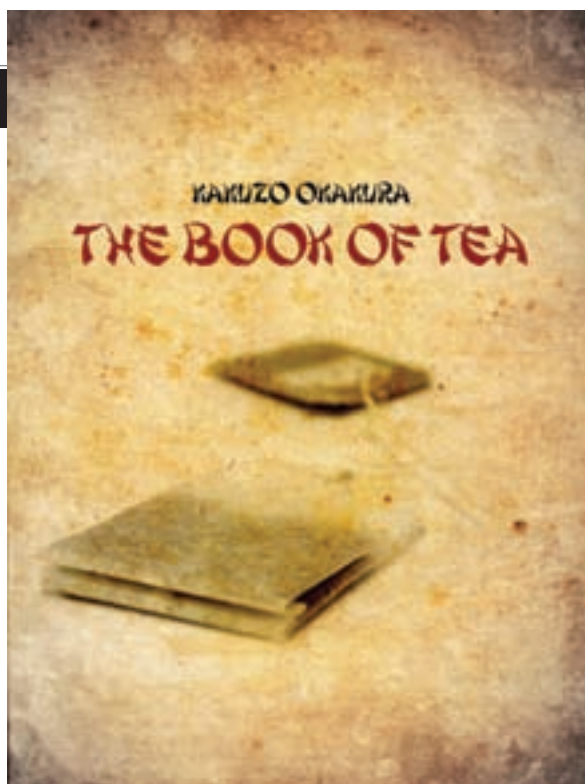
Jazz: Interpretations of Jazz Standards and Bossa Nova. The album's mainstay, a folk rendition of David Brubeck's classic hit, *Take-5*, has suddenly made it to the top of jazz album charts in Britain and the US. The silver musicians are now getting offers to perform in the US and other countries. American filmmaker Sam Pollard is even planning to make a film on Sachal Studio and the revival of Pakistan's Western music scene.

From Tea to Tao

The Book of Tea (1906) is regarded as one of the greatest English classics written on tea. Written by Japanese scholar Okakura Kakuzo (1862-1913), the essay reveals with profound poetic delicacy the influence of the amber beverage on Japan's worldview, ideals and culture. An excerpt...

The absence of symmetry in Japanese art objects has been often commented on by Western critics. This, also, is a result of a working out through Zennism of Taoist ideals. Confucianism, with its deep-seated idea of dualism, and Northern Buddhism with its worship of a trinity were in no way opposed to the expression of symmetry. As a matter of fact, if we study the ancient bronzes of China or the religious arts of the Tang dynasty and the Nara period, we shall recognise a constant striving after symmetry. The decoration of our classical interiors was decidedly regular in its arrangement. The Taoist and Zen conception of perfection, however, was different. The dynamic nature of their philosophy laid more stress upon the process through which perfection was sought than upon perfection itself. True beauty could be discovered only by one who mentally completed the incomplete. The virility of life and art lay in its possibilities for growth. In the tea-room it is left for each guest in imagination to complete the total effect in relation to himself. Since Zennism has become the prevailing mode of thought, the art of the extreme Orient has purposefully avoided the symmetrical as expressing not only completion, but repetition. Uniformity of design was considered fatal to the freshness of imagination. Thus, landscapes, birds, and flowers became the favourite subjects for depiction rather than the human figure, the latter being present in the person of the beholder himself. We are often too much in evidence as it is, and in spite of our vanity even self-regard is apt to become monotonous.

In the tea-room the fear of repetition is a constant presence. The various objects for the decoration of a room should be so selected that no colour or design shall be repeated. If you have a living flower, a painting of flowers is not allowable. If you are using a round kettle, the water pitcher should be angular. A cup with a black glaze should not be associated with a tea-caddy of black lacquer. In placing a vase of an incense burner on the *tokonoma*, care should be taken not to put it in the exact centre, lest it di-



vide the space into equal halves. The pillar of the *tokonoma* should be of a different kind of wood from the other pillars, in order to break any suggestion of monotony in the room.

Here again the Japanese method of interior decoration differs from that of the Occident, where we see objects arrayed symmetrically on mantelpieces and elsewhere. In Western houses we are often confronted with what appears to us useless reiteration. We find it trying to talk to a man while his full-length portrait stares at us from behind his back. We wonder which is real, he of the picture or he who talks, and feel a curious conviction that one of them must be fraud. Many a time have we sat at a festive board contemplating, with a secret shock to our digestion, the representation of abundance on the dining-room walls. Why these pictured victims of chase and sport, the elaborate carvings of fishes and fruit? Why the display of family plates, reminding us of those who have dined and are dead?

The simplicity of the tea-room and its freedom from vulgarity make it truly a sanctuary from the vexations of the outer world. There and there alone can one consecrate himself to undisturbed adoration of the beautiful. In the sixteenth century the tea-room afforded a welcome respite from labour to the fierce warriors and statesmen engaged in the unification and reconstruction of Japan. In the seventeenth century, after the strict formalism of the Tokugawa rule had been developed, it offered the only opportunity possible for the free communion of artistic spirits. Before a great work of art there was no distinction between daimyo, samurai, and commoner. Nowadays industrialism is making true refinement more and more difficult all the world over. Do we not need the tea-room more than ever?

Pink satin and murder

So much pink satin in the village could only bring disaster," Janak was convinced. A ladies' tailor by profession and therefore the most enviable person in town, Janak wondered why women from Giripul—a picturesque village in the foothills of Shimla—and around opened their hearts to him. It made him hum, until the headman's third wife admitted to murderous instincts towards her husband. Did she know the headman had a Chinese she-barber for a mistress, for whom he wanted a suit stitched in pink satin? Janak's life turns like his sewing machine trying



to crack the code in **THE TAILOR OF GIRIPUL** (HarperCollins; ₹ 299; 320 pages). Author of the famous *My Sainted Aunts* and *Anger of Aubergines*, **Bulbul Sharma** makes this book a good excuse to do what she

does best—paint a sometimes real and sometimes surreal picture of life in the hills. The only bus stand that thrives on the passengers that a bus brings by the clock; the trek to the temple uphill; the *sadhu* who absolves domestic and social malaise; Leela, the madam from Shimla and her English ghosts; the leucoderma-stricken child mistaken for a ghost; Janak's love and longing (he'll be the butt of the villagers' jokes if anyone knew) for a now-devi-now-devil wife; the days with his childhood friends Shankar and Raja; and his shop of stylish ladies' suits and quirky happenings at the dusk-to-dawn bus stand. Life in Giripul churns lively stories by the page. So what if the murder happens only on page 200!

—Meeta Bhatti

Lost and found

There is nothing in the **THE VALLEY OF MASKS** (HarperCollins; ₹ 500; 330 pages) that will remind you of anything that you have read before. Journalist **Tarun Tejpal** who gave us the sensual *The Alchemy of Desire* and the riveting *The Story of My Assassins* introduces us all over again to the delicious power of words in his third offering, which may well go down as the most original piece of writing to emerge out of India in recent times. Tejpal creates a parallel universe in a valley with no specified geographical coordinates or cultural codes we are familiar with. One wants to believe that it is set near the Himalaya, a breathtaking but unforgiving terrain peopled by a clan that pushes and punishes its members to chisel and test their character with every breath. Children are wrenched away from their mothers and never informed about their parents' identities. Women are treated as equals but also receptacles of men's seed. Men are judged by the readiness and strength with which

they are able to detach themselves from—and rise above—ego, love, lust and envy. And everyone surrenders their face to a Mausoleum of Egos and wears the same mask, an act that buries the individual and elevates the collective. Everyone has a role defined not by their skill but strength of their



character: the Wafadars, the Yodhas, the Bandhus, the Commanders, and the Mentors. Every heart in the valley beats to the pulse of a sacred way of life dictated by a council of elders presided by an ever-knowing Aum. The story comes to us through the reminiscences of Karna, a Wafadar, who is on the run for having broken a sacred code. In the last few hours preceding his imminent killing, Karna describes his initiation into the secret cult and his rise through its ranks: "The pure are schooled to know neither tears nor laughter; both are cheap excesses that distract the spirit. The pure forever live in a state of unlaughing joy: blessed in who they are, rapt in the exertions of their extraordinary destiny." As Karna lays bare his journey, we witness acts—mundane, splendid, ruthless—imbued with a surreal beauty that makes one want to inhabit that moment. It's only when we close the book that we realise that the valley and everything that it represents is inside us—waiting to be found.

—Rajashree Balaram

Mission Kashmir

The Kashmir Valley has the highest concentration of soldiers in the world—more than Afghanistan, Iraq or Myanmar. Over 600,000 army, police and paramilitary personnel are trying to silence the rebellion for autonomy that first started in 1989. More than 70,000 Kashmiris have been killed in this confrontation and countless others often wish they were—after having endured mutilation of body and spirit. A huge corpus of literature already exists on the insurgency, its cause and consequences. **Rajashree Balaram** came across three recent releases that challenge us all with one naked question: Do we have any right to claim the paradise when we care so little for its people and their peace?

It's tough to come across a book on Kashmir that steers clear of bias. **THE TANGLED WEB: JAMMU AND KASHMIR** (HarperCollins; Rs 699; 282 pages) compiled by **Ira Pande** comes close. The essays do not merely focus on issues lacerating the Valley of Srinagar, but carefully encompass all the other strife-torn areas of the state of Jammu and Kashmir that are often ignored—Jammu, Ladakh, Poonch and Rajori. Each essay is

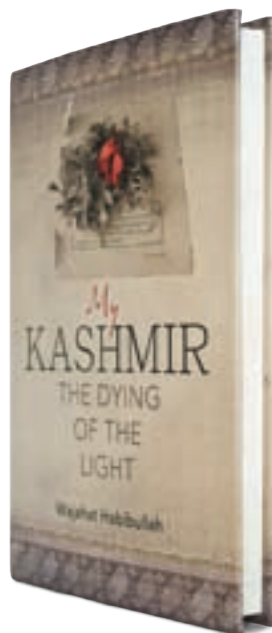
a uniquely different strand of view. Balraj Puri's "Unfolding History" is riveting because of the breathless information it packs on Kashmir's journey from a stronghold of Naga tribes to a centre of Buddhism, Shaivism and Islam. Jagmohan's "The Politics of Maximum Autonomy" might have the pro-autonomy faction bristling but raises pertinent questions nevertheless: "How would a common Kashmiri benefit by changing the nomenclature of chief minister to prime minister or of governor to Sadr-e-Riyasat?... If the Union Government accepts divisive ideas under the cover of 'maximum autonomy' or 'self governance', it would add another blunder to the series of past blunders that have so far cost the nation over 50,000 lives, besides a colossal

amount of tax payers' money," he thunders. Sonia Jabbar's "Friends and Foes" is a tender tale told by a pacifist who sees no difference between the anguish of a Hindu and a Muslim. The frown that settles on one's face through the book breaks into a smile towards the end where the essays take us to—among other obscured images—the men and women weaving *pashmina* over salted *nun chai* and merry banter; a theatre exponent striving to keep traditional musical narratives alive in the valley; and the cultural and geographical influences that play a role in the widely varied dietary habits across the region. It's a book that does justice to both: the sound of bullets and piercing wails, and the scent of saffron and apples that stubbornly lingers on.



While writers and academicians outside Kashmir analyse and speculate on the divisive forces and coercive politics of Kashmir, **Wajahat Habibullah's MY KASHMIR: THE DYING OF THE LIGHT** (Penguin; Rs 499; 223) arrives with

the sensitivity of an insider. A former civil servant from the Indian Administrative Services who spent much of his career in Jammu and Kashmir, Habibullah slips into a narrative that is part history, part memoir. Much of the book is extensive research laid out on the politics that went into the making of the state. The author also offers equal space to both Pakistani and Indian perspectives. There is also some enlightening text on the impact



of political decisions taken by successive prime ministers from Nehru to Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao, as well as the role of US mediation in Kashmir from the Kennedy years to the Clinton administration. Peppered through it all are the author's own experiences with the people and the security forces. The book may not ignite the fires of idealism in your heart but will certainly plant a seed of reason in your mind.



India has deployed more than half of its army in securing Kashmir. Yet the summer of 2010 is one that almost threatened to upend the might of the huge force, when a few hundred young men unleashed their mutiny against the Indian government armed with nothing but stones. The revolution was called the *intifada*, the 'shaking off' of the chains of military occupation. For an India that is readying itself to secure a place in the clique of superpowers, the incident became a well-publicised embarrassment that needed to be shoved under the Kashmiri carpet with urgency. **UNTIL MY FREEDOM HAS COME: THE NEW INTIFADA IN KASHMIR** (Penguin; Rs 299; 302 pages) edited by **Sanjay Kak** seethes with the same rage that can't be easily doused into docility. Essays, fiction, interviews, cartoon strips—each word in this book inflicts the same injury that the stones of *intifada* did. In Tim Sullivan's "Kashmir's Anonymous Graves Summon Darkest

Days" we are led to unmarked graves, where thousands of anonymous Kashmiris, who have supposedly gone missing, lie buried unknown to their families. In the "Wounds of Kashmir's Never Ending War" by Ravi Nessman, we meet a man who tried to commit suicide 13 times, his mind brought back from comatose limbo repeatedly. (Yes, we will still sleep well tonight knowing that in a 2006 Doctors Without Borders' survey, of the Kashmiris who were questioned, one-third admitted they had thought

of killing themselves.) In "Languages of a Security State", Nawaz Gul Qanungo screams at the Indian media for its insensitive coverage of the pain of his people. In "Kashmir: A Place of Blood and Memory", Nitasha Kaul looks us in the eye and dares us to look away when she says: "Kashmir is not India. Kashmir is not Pakistan. Kashmir is not China. ...the history of the Kashmir people is being stolen from them. Wherever in Kashmir they are, their options boil down to bullets or ballots—bullets if they protest to being co-opted into the big country which is not their own homeland, and ballots if they agree to being co-opted into the big country which is not their homeland. How can a Kashmiri live under this perpetual erasure of his or her identity?" The other 24 chapters have more burning questions that the rest of India neither has the courage nor compassion to answer. Be prepared to be shamed into introspection if you pick this one up.

I PROTEST by M C Kash

They Say When You Run From Darkness
All You Seek Is Light..
But When The Blood Spills Over You'll Stand And Fight!!
Threads Of Deceit Woven Around A Word Of Plebiscite,
By Treacherous Puppet Politicians
Who Have No Soul Inside.
My Paradise Is Burnin' With Troops Left Loose With Ammo,
Who Murder And Rape
Then Hide Behind A Political Shadow..
Like A Casino Human Life Is Thrown Like A Dice..
I'll Summarize Atrocities Till The Resurrection Of Christ!!!
Can You Hear The Screams Now See The Revolution!!
The Bullets Our Stones, Don't Talk Restitution..
'Cuz The Only Solution Is The Resolution Of Freedom,
Even Khusrow Will Go Back
An' Doubt His Untimely Wisdom!!
These Killings Ain't Random Its An Organized Genocide..
Sponsored Media Who Hide This Homicide.
No More Injustice We Wont Go Down When We Bleed,
Alive In The Struggle Even The Graves Will Speak!

Chorus:

I Protest, Against The Things You Done!
I Protest, For A Mother Who Lost Her Son!

I Protest, I'll Throw Stones And Neva Run!
I Protest, Until My Freedom Has Come!
I Protest, For My Brother Who's Dead!
I Protest, Against The Bullet In His Head!
I Protest, I'll Throw Stones And Neva Run!
I Protest, Until My Freedom Has Come!

Democratically Held Elections
Now That's Completely Absurd,
I'll Tell You Some Stuff That You Obviously Neva Heard!!
A Ten Year Old Kid Voted With All His Fingers..
A Whole Village Gang Raped, A Cry Still Lingers...
These Are The Tales From The Dark Side
Of A Murderous Regime,
An Endless Occupation Of Our Land An' Our Dreams.
Democratic Politics Will Cut Our Throats Before We Speak,
How They Talk About Peace When There's Blood In Our
Streets? (Huh?)
When Freedom Of Speech Is Subjected To Strangulation!!
Flames Of Revolution Engulfs The Population.
They Rise Through Suppresion An' March To Be Free,
Face Covered In A Rag Labeled A Revolutionary.
Through This Fight Fo' Survival I Want The World To See,
A Murderous Oppression Written Down In Police Brutality.
Stones In My Hand Its Time You Pay The Price,
For Plunderin' An' Rapin' A Beautiful Paradise!!

EXCERPT

To your health!

As a person is to the world, so is a leaf to a tree—that's how the front cover of the book **BEST OF HEALTH** (Penguin Enterprise; ₹ 350; 260 pages) symbolises varying individuals in the world with the help of different shaped leaves on a tree. Each human body and brain has its own, sometimes baffling, way of acting or reacting. This book is a collection of 25 stories on living, healing and hope by writers—including **Jisha Krishnan, Mini Thomas, Gunjan Sharma** and **Maithreyi M R**—published in the health supplement of *The Week* over the past three years. While some stories are about coping with familiar deadly diseases, others speak of the struggle to come to terms with rare conditions. There is also some fresh research on phobias (did you know that 'thaasophobia' is the study of boredom?) and stress-related health issues,



which are rising at an alarming speed, as well as the strides made in new medical advancements like stem cell technology and cryopreservation. The clinical aspects of healthcare aside, first-person accounts—such as model-actor **Lisa Ray's** battle with cancer and surgeon **Ramakant Panda's** experience of operating on PM Manmohan Singh—offer rare insights into the very human aspects of grappling with illness and crafting a recovery.

—Radhika Raje

World buzz

The World According to Joan (Constable; 288 pages): British actor-diva **Joan Collins**, 78, has much to say on fame, glamour, ageing and travel. For instance, on her body: "No, I am not a stick thing. I have bosoms." On overweight people: "They are digging their graves with their own teeth." And on her husband Percy Gibson: "Of course, we're not doing it 18 times a week. But one is not living a celibate life when married to a 45 year-old."

The Sense of an Ending (Jonathon Cape; 160 pages): This short novel by 65 year-old English writer **Julian Barnes** tells the tale of an ageing arts administrator forced to reconsider a painful period in his youth. Part mystery, part motivational treatise, the book reminds us that though the sins of the past may come back to haunt us, we retain the power to absolve ourselves and rise above our yesterdays.



The head table

An original Indian 'Masterchef' (years before we became addicted to the Australian variety), **Karen Anand** has been writing on good food and better wine for over 25 years. In **GOOD FOOD, GOOD LIVING** (Collins; ₹ 250; 188 pages) the gourmet specialist, chef and food critic helps you navigate the seas of haute cuisine—all foods exotic and exclusive. From caviar to sushi, tapas to foie gras, Anand goes in search of the most

delectable foods across the world and brings them mouth-wateringly alive for the reader. The takeaway: some surprisingly simple recipes that'll instantly up your gourmet quotient the next time you have friends over. Like this one:

Figs Poached with Red Wine and Tea (Serves 6)

Ingredients: 300 gm dried figs; ¾ cup brandy; ¾ cup dry red wine; ½ cup honey; 2 tbsp chunky orange marmalade; juice and zest of 2 limes; ½ tsp grated ginger; two cloves; 2-inch piece of cinnamon; a few drops of vanilla essence; 1 cup of strong black tea, unsweetened

Method: Wash the figs in warm water, drain and place in a bowl. Pour in the brandy, cover and leave overnight. Next morning, pour the brandy and figs into a saucepan. Add all the other ingredients and let it simmer for 30 minutes to an hour until the fruit is soft. The syrup should be like a thick sauce. Serve the figs with a little syrup and some whipped yoghurt or cream on the side.

Dig in!

—Arati Rajan Menon

Farewell to arms

Mahatma Gandhi's words on non-violence are more valuable today than ever before

It has been suggested by my American friends that the atom bomb will bring in *ahimsa* (non-violence) as nothing else can. It will, if it is meant that its destructive power will so disgust the world that it will turn it away from violence for the time being. This is very like a man glutting himself with dainties to the point of nausea and turning away from them only to return with redoubled zeal after the effect of nausea is well over. Precisely in the same manner will the world return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out.

Often does good come out of evil. But that is God's, not man's plan. Man knows that only evil can come out of evil, as good out of good. That atomic energy though harnessed by American scientists and army men for destructive purposes may be utilised by other scientists for humanitarian purposes is undoubtedly within the realm of possibility. But that is not what was meant by my American friends. They were not so simple as to put a question which connoted an obvious truth. An incendiary uses fire for his destructive and nefarious purpose; a housewife makes daily use of it preparing flourishing food for mankind.

So far as I can see, the atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might. The atom bomb brought an empty victory to the allied arms but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see. Forces of nature act in a myste-



Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred

rious manner. We can but solve the mystery by deducing the unknown result from the known results of similar events. A slaveholder cannot hold a slave without putting himself or his deputy in the cage holding the slave. Let no one run away with the idea that I wish to put in a defence of Japanese misdeeds in pursuance of Japan's more unworthy ambition. The difference was only one of degree. I assume that Japan's greed was more unworthy. But the greater unworthiness conferred no right on the less unworthy of destroying without mercy men, women and children of Japan in a particular area.

The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs even as violence cannot be

by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred. I am aware that I am repeating what I have many times stated before and practised to the best of my ability and capacity. What I first stated was itself nothing new. It was as old as the hills. Only I recited no copybook maxim but definitely announced what I believed in every fibre of my being. Sixty years of practice in various walks of life have only enriched the belief which experience of friends has fortified. It is however the central truth by which one can stand alone without flinching. I believe in what Max Muller said years ago, namely that truth needed to be repeated as long as there were men who disbelieved it.

The above essay first appeared in Hanju (Pune) on 7 July 1946

The first day at school
The first time you rode the bicycle.
The first crush you had at thirteen
The first drama you got a part in
The first day at college
The first date you went on
The first kiss
The first time you proposed
The first job interview
The first board meeting you addressed
The first day after retirement

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Heads & tales



In a world that's increasingly obsessed with good looks and grooming, it's not enough to have a head full of hair—you need to ensure it's free of dandruff. While there are dozens of anti-dandruff shampoos that claim to zap the flakes produced by overactive sebaceous glands, Head & Shoulders was one of the first to offer to fight the menace. Launched in 1961 by Procter and Gamble, the shampoo took its own time coming to the market—researchers at the P&G Lab in Cincinnati spent 10 years perfecting the right formula before they latched on to pyrrhione zinc, an anti-fungal, anti-bacterial agent that was found to magically dispel dandruff from the scalp.

Today Head & Shoulders is the best-selling shampoo in the United States and is endorsed by beefy champions Troy Polamalu and Joe Mauer of the US National Football League. In India, actor Kareena Kapoor and beau Saif Ali Khan—when they are not declaring they can't do without each other—insist their hair cannot do without Head & Shoulders.

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: OCTOBER 1961

- On 2 October, The Shipping Corporation of India was established by the amalgamation of Eastern Shipping Corporation and Western Shipping Corporation.
- On 12 October, the death penalty was abolished in New Zealand.
- On 17 October, the French police attacked a procession of 30,000 Algerians who sought the liberation of Algeria from France.
- On 25 October, the first edition of *Private Eye*, a British satirical magazine, was launched.

Beehacker

n. A beekeeper that uses digital tools and technology to help monitor and manage a collection of hives.

Example: Ordinary beekeepers may need high-tech help, but it's not clear how they can afford it. Tom Rearick, an electrical engineer, and some fellow **beehackers** are trying to change all that.

—Paul Wallich, “Beehackers”, IEEE Spectrum, 1 May 2011

Smishing

n. An attempt to fool a person into submitting personal, financial, or password data by sending a text message with a link to a scammer-controlled website.

Example: Grant said tax season can be a time of phishing or **smishing** where identity thieves contact consumers by email or text messages, pretending to be from the IRS and telling them they need to confirm some personal information, such as their Social Security number.

—Susan Tompor, “Guard your tax info from thieves”, Detroit Free Press, 17 April 2011

FAST ROPE

v. To descend from a flying helicopter by sliding down a thick rope.

Example: He and the 11 other SEALs on ‘helo one’, who were wearing gloves and had on night-vision goggles, were preparing to **fast rope** into Bin Laden’s yard.

—Nicholas Schmidle, ‘Getting Bin Laden’, newyorker.com, 8 August 2011

Inflatocracy

n. A form of government that deliberately debases its paper money for social engineering, mind manipulation, wealth redistribution, secret taxation, and seizing more power.

Example: The **Inflatocracy** uses inflation, and the always-growing welfare state it makes possible, to redistribute wealth from those who work hard and save to others who spend beyond their productivity and serve the collectivist government.

—Craig R Smith and Lowell Ponte, “The inflation deception: Six ways government tricks us...and seven ways to stop it”, 1 July 2011

“Two things are infinite:
the universe and human
stupidity—and I'm not sure
about the universe.

—Albert Einstein

Microwaiting

n. A short period of waiting esp. for a specific action to be completed.

Example: Football games and baseball games are largely waiting games—waiting between snaps, between pitches, between endless commercial breaks. These are examples of **microwaiting**.

—Steve Rushin, “As Super Bowl XLV proves, sports are simply one big waiting game”, SI.com, 26 January 2011

Butler lie

n. A lie used to politely avoid or end an email, instant messaging, or telephone conversation.

Example: Yet technology is already laying siege to the **butler lie**. Services like BlackBerry Messenger enable mutual users to track when their texts are read, effectively torpedoing the ‘sorry, phone died last night’ excuse. ‘Friend tracking’ applications like Google Latitude allow people to geographically pinpoint their friends’ mobile phones. So much for ‘stuck in traffic’ when you really overslept.

—Austin Considine, “New technology, but the same old lies”, The New York Times, 10 July 2011

“Everybody knows how to raise children, except the people who have them.

—P J O'Rourke

LUV recovery

n. A global economic recovery characterised by a mixture of slow, moderate, and rapid growth rates.

Example: Famed New York-based economic bear Nouriel Roubini called it a **LUV recovery**. The euro-zone economies, tipped by the IMF to grow a tepid 1.5 per cent this year, were in an L-shaped path out of the crisis. The US is in a U-shaped recovery, tipped to expand a sub-par 3 per cent this year. America's big corporates are in good shape, having pared back their costs and built up massive cash reserves. Yet the emerging markets—led by 9 per cent-plus China and 8 per cent India—are the V.

—Michael Stutchbury, “Welcome to the new world order”, *The Australian*, 29 January 2011

Vanity card

n. A logo (such as an image or statement) that identifies the production company of a television show and that usually appears at the end of the show's closing credits.

Example: While *Lorre's* **vanity cards** are only readable during the broadcast if paused, he has posted an extensive archive of his musings, viewable at chucklorre.com.

—Meaghan Murphy, “Who is Chuck Lorre, the mysterious producer who enraged Charlie Sheen?”, www.foxnews.com, 2 March 2011

Hacktivist

n. A person who engages in hacktivism: a person who uses computer hacking for activist purposes.

Example: Turkey's state-run news agency claimed Turkish police had detained 32 alleged **hacktivists** associated with the notorious international Internet hacktivist collective known as Anonymous.

—Michael Stone, “Turkey detains 32 alleged Anonymous hacktivists”, *National*, 13 June 2011

Juvenioia

n. The baseless and exaggerated fear that the Internet as well as current social trends are having negative effects on children. [*Blend of Juvenile and paranoia*]

Example: Is the Internet really an amplifier for youth deviance, bad behavior, and risk? Or is it just the opposite? Are we simply applying age-old paranoia about youth (**juvenioia**) to the newest technology and coming to all the wrong conclusions?

—Sylvia Martinez, “The Internet, youth deviance and the problem of juvenioia”, *Generation YES Blog*, 3 December 2010

Silent Soccer

n. A form of soccer in which spectators are not allowed to yell, cheer, or coach from the sidelines.

Example: No yell, screams or even cheers are to be heard from the sidelines and benches at house-league soccer games in Aurora, Ont., this week. Instead, only clapping is allowed. So-called **silent soccer** has been embraced by the Aurora Youth Soccer house league and has taken hold with a handful of clubs and leagues in Canada and other countries.

—Carys Mills, “Silent running: Soccer league tells parents to pipe down”, *The Globe and Mail*, 27 July 2011

“I cannot sit back and keep quiet if I see an act of cruelty against an animal”

Sudnya Patkar, 64, Mumbai, for her animal rights crusade



Utkarsh Sanjanwala

As a child, **Sudnya Patkar** loved her four pets—two dogs and two cats—dearly. Her motivation to campaign for animals rights was not inspired by her pets though. “Once I saw municipal authorities shepherding a stray dog into a van,” Patkar tells us of the incident that left a deep impact on her. “The attendants were really cruel in their handling of the dog. When I enquired, I found out that the stray dogs would eventually be electrocuted to death.” Patkar shudders at the memory even now. “Our country doesn’t even treat its most dangerous criminals that way. I was numbed for a few days after that.” Seeing her deep concern, her husband and children coaxed her to start an initiative to create awareness among people for animal rights.

Charged by the thought, Patkar registered In Defense of Animals (IDA) as a non-profit grassroots animal protection organisation in 1997. Today, IDA has a rescue van, nine ambulances, two large shelters, and 58 employees including helpers, animal welfare officers and veterinarians. She hasn’t forgotten her shaky start though. “When I registered the organisation, I hardly got any support,” she recollects. Patkar noticed a change in people’s attitude towards animals when they started showing up for her awareness camps. With the help of a few more animal lovers, she began to sterilise dogs and treat them for minor and major injuries. In fact, the sexagenarian now holds camps in Karjat, Alibaug, Lonavla and all over Mumbai to sterilise dogs, and runs two mobile clinics to treat other suffering animals.

Indeed, Patkar’s feelings for her four-legged friends run deep; she grieves the death of every animal for a long time. And, although she acknowledges that people’s approach towards animals is gradually changing, she believes we need to develop more compassion. “Most people see a *tonga* driver hitting a horse on the road and walk away. Only a true animal lover will look at such a scene and want to do something to stop the atrocity.”

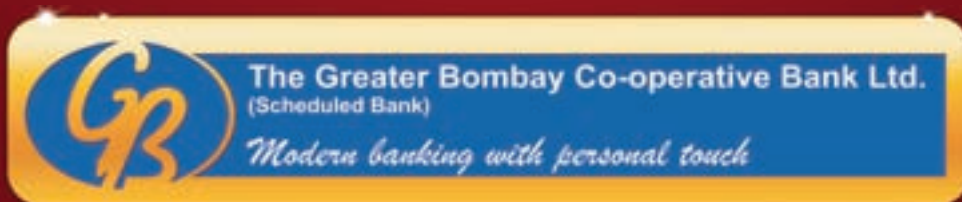
—Radhika Raje



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