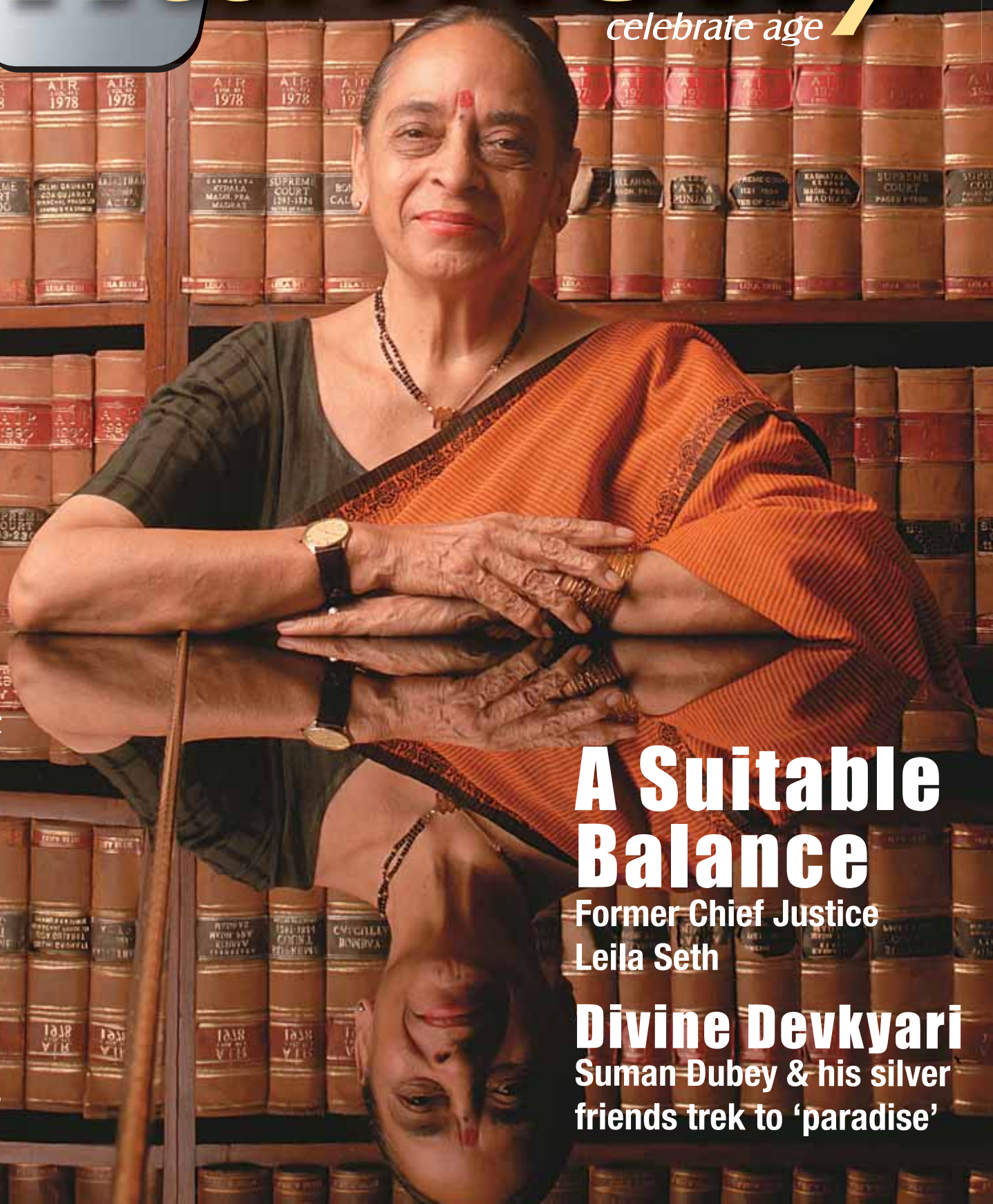


SEPTEMBER 2006 Rs 30

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CHEERS TO CHINA

I'VE STILL GOT CHINA ON MY mind.

Last month, I wrote about my trip to Shanghai to attend the International Symposium on Caring for the Elderly and the Expert Group Meeting held by UNESCAP. That established Harmony as a definitive representative of Indian silvers in the international arena. Personally, too, China and its people had a tremendous impact on me. And I learnt some valuable lessons on how government and society can work together to make life better for silvers.

China and India are so similar—a burgeoning silver population, a culture of respecting elders, yawning divide between rich and poor, and a modern-day surge towards development. The elderly population in China is the largest in the world, accounting for 20 per cent of the world's entire silver population. China will have more than 400 million silvers by 2050.

What's impressive is that, rather than just wishing the situation away, China has taken it as a

challenge, a commitment. Rather than putting the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the younger generation, it has spoken openly of the need to evolve viable support systems to take the pressure off families.

This is not just lip service. A host of initiatives show that Beijing is walking its talk. In December 2005, the government announced the process of improving pension and insurance systems. It has also encouraged private and foreign investment to build homes for the elderly. Other developments include a fund to offer legal aid to destitute seniors.

Things are happening at the provincial level too. In October 2004, the Chinese cabinet ordered local governments to ensure a better life for solitary seniors. Following this, east China's Zhejiang Province became the first to provide homes to 80 per cent of solitary elders. Now, other provinces like Guangdong and Shandong are following suit. And Jilin Province in northeast China has set up 1,420 communities housing over 1 million retired workers.



RITU NANDA

Meanwhile, in the cities, age is being celebrated as a badge of pride, not burden. Municipalities are taking a leading role in evolving programmes for silvers. In October 2005, Shanghai played host to the International Elderly Cultural Festival, welcoming over 100 silvers from across the world.

"There's so much that needs to be done for the elderly here," 68 year-old Rein Groen, leader of the Dutch delegation, told the press at the time. "But they are going about it one step at a time. And they're doing it with a positive attitude."

He is so right.

Tina Ambani

Tina Ambani

A Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Trust Initiative

Harmony—Celebrate Age—September 2006 Volume 3 Issue 4

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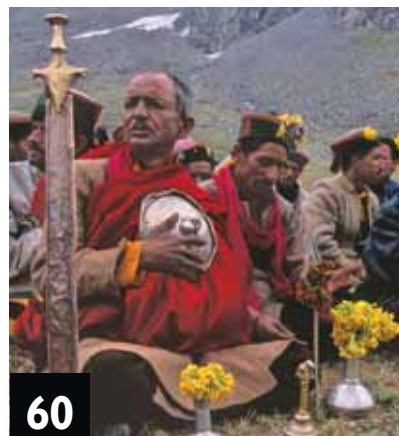
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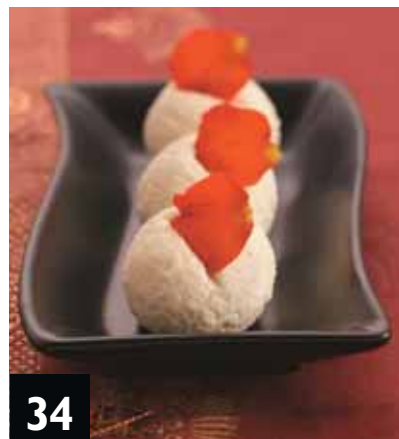
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Cover picture
of Leila Seth by

Pablo Bartholomew

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column one

This month, it's a 'never too late to learn' issue—one that will evoke the get-up-and-go sentiment in all of us. From former chief justice Leila Seth, who is on the cover, to environmental activist Darryl D'Monte, everyone featured in the magazine learns from yesterday, lives for today and hopes for tomorrow.

Leila Seth, in fact, is going back to school to find out what today's civics textbooks lack.

Commissioned to write one for 10 year-olds, Seth says she will demystify democracy for children and tell them how to be a good citizen. This apart, she is busy addressing people on educational rights of children, adoption law, old-age law and education reform. The transition from court to activism wasn't smooth, though. Seth honestly admits that she fell into depression six months after retirement—but she picked up the pieces and never looked back. Turn to "A Suitable Balance" for more.

Elsewhere, Gaur Moulick has fun with office scrap at advertising agency Lowe Lintas in Kolkata; Upendra Dixit, the owner of the oldest bookstore in Pune, plans to take up a course in journalism; Amita Malik urges us to banish boredom; Purshottam Deshmukh makes environment-friendly paper bags, something that he learnt as a young artisan at BHEL; and finally Darryl D'Monte tells us "there's no substitute in life for learning—by talking to people, travelling and, above all, reading".

The message: learn from anyone you can, anytime you can, age be damned. You will be happy you did.
—Meeta Bhatti



Life for senior citizens just got tougher. After our finance minister and tax officials came up with the idea of filing Form 2F for our income tax returns, where we

are required to say how we have spent our hard-earned money, they have now directed the bank and post offices to deduct tax on interest from the Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme. This effectively shatters the myth that the government cares for its elderly population.

As a senior citizen, I have experienced the following difficulties on tax deducted at source (TDS) for this scheme: my post office has deducted 11 per cent TDS for the current year despite my objection that it should be 10.2 per cent; and I have been asked to produce and give copies of my last two IT returns to the post office to prove that I have paid tax on my interest earning on this scheme.

This is highly objectionable from a safety point of view. Disclosing financial details to others could make us vulnerable to miscreants. When we opened our account, we gave our PAN number, which was duly verified by postal authorities. It is now the business of the tax authorities to find out whether we have filed our returns and paid tax on this income. They could ask for a simple declaration in the form of Form 15 G/15H but to subject us to such indignity as giving our financial details to a clerk in a post office is improper.

Instead, authorities should take trouble to enable us to get our dues from post offices smoothly unlike the present state of affairs where, more often than not, we are told, "Come tomorrow, we do not have funds to pay you today." They do not realise how troublesome, costly and risky it has become for senior citizens to travel in our cities owing to bad roads, pollution and occupation of pavements and roadside space by unauthorised people. With the help of *Harmony*, I would like to request the authorities to consider these issues and take remedial steps to make our lives hassle-free.

CAPTAIN (RETD) JOGINDAR SUD

Pune

The letter of the month wins Orthaheel footwear, from Orthofit, a Mumbai-based sports medicine and rehab clinic

With reference to Amita Malik's article "Death of Values" in your July 2006 issue, the natural order of things in India ensures that the elite have

the luxury of entering into corrupt practices yet boast of clean antecedents. Rahul Mahajan's bonhomie with 'drug culture' doesn't surprise us; after



all, such brazen acts in the world of these people are the gateway to so-called manhood. A frivolous temperament and scant respect for law and order have been the hallmark of these high-profile sons and daughters. That's probably why the death of commoners crushed under the wheels of a speeding BMW gives rise to a sense of *deja vu*. Indeed, it's an uphill task to prevent the erosion of values in society. As parents, we need to tackle this grave issue head-on with qualitative measures, which lead to refinement of children's perceptions, instead of acknowledging the downfall in values as part of society in transition. The harsh truth is that without taking a spiritual route, we cannot expect a miraculous change in the present scenario.

ARVIND K PANDEY

Allahabad

The contents of the July 2006 issue of *Harmony* were excellent. In fact, I feel every new issue of the magazine is superior in content and information to the previous one. I congratulate your editorial team for such a compassionate product.



Recently, Progressive Senior Citizens' Association, of which I am a member, published a booklet for senior citizens in Hindi. Through this booklet, we want to generate awareness about issues that concern the elderly. It is divided into three sections—life, health and government and non-government

services. We have printed the booklet in Hindi because the popularity of the language is increasing by the day as a result of television serials. It would be heartening to see *Harmony* in a bilingual avatar, with the magazine being partially printed in Hindi. I believe it will boost the magazine's circulation and popularity. I hope you give the idea some thought.

MANMOHAN BAGRI

Mumbai

The 'Speak' item on the last page of the July 2006 issue made for interesting reading. Narayan Desai's Gandhian ideology clearly shows that Gandhiji is honoured and remembered not only in the land of his birth but all over the world. His enormous influence continues to prevail. We are free today, but we have to preserve our hard-won freedom. For this, our political leaders, particularly in Gujarat, should keep alive the memory of the great leader.

VINOD C DIXIT

Ahmedabad

I am a retired reader in Hindi from Delhi University and am 75 years old. Currently, I am vice-president of K D Block Senior Citizens' Association in Ashok Vihar, Delhi. I have been reading *Harmony* since its inception two years ago. Every issue is inspirational and full of optimism. It helps me see old age in a new light. I especially enjoyed the June 2006 issue, with its cover story, "Two Lives", and M V Kamath's column "Coming Full Circle". This issue strengthened my faith in the Karma Theory of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. I would like *Harmony* to similarly touch the life of every senior. And I feel

CONTRIBUTORS

At 62, **Darryl D'Monte** keeps a busy schedule. He is chairperson of the Forum of Environmental Journalists of India and founder president of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists. Some of the established journalists in India today began their careers with him as the Resident Editor of *The Times of India* (1969-79 and 1988-94) and *The Indian Express* (1979-81) in Mumbai. Author of *Temples or Tombs? Industry Versus Environment*, D'Monte regularly writes on environment and development for several Indian newspapers and websites. In his column, he calls himself an enthusiastic learner, as he feels learning is a continuous process.



Ashok Koshy, 57, is known for his photographs of Kerala. His collection includes exotic visuals ranging from fishermen casting their nets in the backwaters of



Kerala to capturing of local homes in his lens. His first coffee table book in 1991 documented the Portuguese presence in Kerala. His first book *Houses of Goa* (1999), featured buildings as old as 400 to 500 years. Koshy has won many national and international awards, including the United Nations award for 'Focus on the Girl Child'. He lives in Poothota, 18 km from Cochin, with son Aastik and wife Tilottama in a wood and tile house.

Pablo Bartholomew's career in



photography began in his teens in 1983. He trained as a still photographer for films, working alongside director/

producers like Ismail Merchant, James Ivory and Richard Attenborough. The 47 year-old won his first World Press Photo award at the age of 19. He won the award in the category of Best Picture Story for a series of photographs of morphine addicts in India. Nine years later, he won the Picture of the Year award. His shots of the child victims of Bhopal gas tragedy, the Kashmir conflict and Mother Teresa's funeral remain benchmarks of excellence in the age of image saturation. Currently, Pablo uses both mediums, film as well as digital, often shooting on Canon equipment with minimal Photoshop enhancement.

Climbing the Everest is a relentless pursuit for

Suman Dubey, 63. Former Editor of *Indian Express* and chief representative in India for Dow Jones & Co, owner of



Wall Street Journal, Dubey is drawn to the Himalaya for its "bewitching charm and intangible lure". He is a member of Indian Mountaineering Federation and edited its in-house magazine *Indian Mountaineer* from 1990-91. Every peak for Dubey is a height of challenge and he believes mountaineering is not just a physical exercise, but a real exercise of the mind.

that would be possible only when the magazine is published in other Indian languages, especially Hindi. Please consider my suggestion.

RAM PRAKASH

Delhi

I am 70 years old and have been a subscriber of *Harmony* for the past 22 months. Unfortunately, your second anniversary issue in June 2006 failed to inspire. I start from Dr Chiranjit Parmar's letter (published in June 2006 issue) on the dividing line of 55 years that your magazine follows for senior citizens. Forget the legal and general perception about calling people aged between 60 and 65 seniors—today, even people over 70 lead active lives. If you wish to lower the age limit to reach a wider audience, it really is not necessary. In my family, everyone reads *Harmony* not because you lowered the age limit but for its inspiring content.

In "Two Lives", I think the focus was mostly on 51-53 year-olds. How can the achievements of 'young' seniors inspire silvers like me who are gracefully and actively living quality and multiple lives, forget just two lives? When I was in my 50s,

I used to participate in all sorts of adventures and social service in addition to taking charge of my professional and domestic responsibilities. If *Harmony* needed data on achievers aged over 70, it would be easy to get. Just ask your subscribers for their age, activity level and agility graph. For special issues, you should include contributions only from real silvers who are also achievers. That apart, the accounts of Mahasweta Devi and columnist Amita Malik's piece in the June 2006 issue were indeed inspiring. And my senior friend Raju Bharatan's cryptic mind games were useful too.

MOHAN SIROYA

Mumbai

I would like to point out an error in the May 2006 issue of your magazine. In "Food for the Brain" (page 37) in your 'Get Well Soon' section, you have defined Body Mass Index (BMI) as weight (kg)/height (inch) x height (inch). The height should be in metres, not inches.

AVINASH SAXENA

Dehradun

Thank you for your letter. We regret the error.

—Editors

AN INVITATION FROM HARMONY

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NEW STUDY



REMEMBER SLEEP

Want to **enhance your memory**? Sleep on it. In animals or humans, studies have shown that ‘sense memories’, like learning a certain sequence of dance steps, take root more solidly when paired with adequate rest. Now, new research shows that ‘declarative memories’, like a sequence of facts, also benefit from slumber. A team at Harvard Medical School led by Jeffrey Ellenbogen asked 60 silvers to memorise 20 pairs of random words, such as ‘blanket’ and ‘village’. Two groups began learning at 9 am and returned for testing at 9 pm that evening—with no naps allowed—while two groups began learning at 9 pm and returned for testing at 9 am the next morning after a night’s sleep. The sleepers narrowly outperformed their sleepless peers. The study was published in the July issue of journal *Current Biology*.

NEWSWORTHY

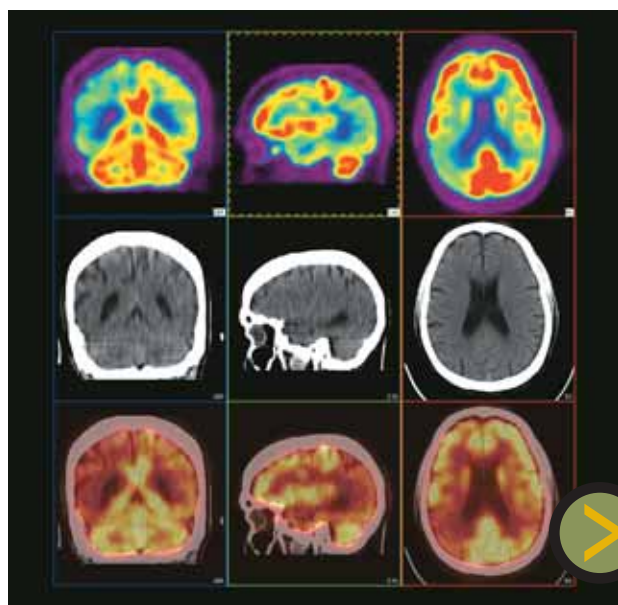
TO YOUR HEALTH

Addressing the second meeting of the National Council for Older Persons on 26 July in New Delhi, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Meira Kumar called **health concerns of the elderly** a priority area. "Nearly 30.4 per cent of senior citizens in India suffer from one ailment or another, like arthritis, sensory impairment, hypertension, diabetes, depression and mental illness," she said. "Healthy ageing will enable old people to take an active part in society and enjoy an independent life." According to Kumar, many healthcare measures have been proposed in the Parents & Senior Citizens (Protection and Maintenance) Bill, 2006. This includes training health personnel and creating more community participation. Kumar also appealed to state governments and NGOs to extend their support to make healthcare schemes for the



elderly a success. In conclusion, she promised to make quality healthcare for the elderly a "social reality". We want this promise kept.

ALZHEIMER'S ALARM



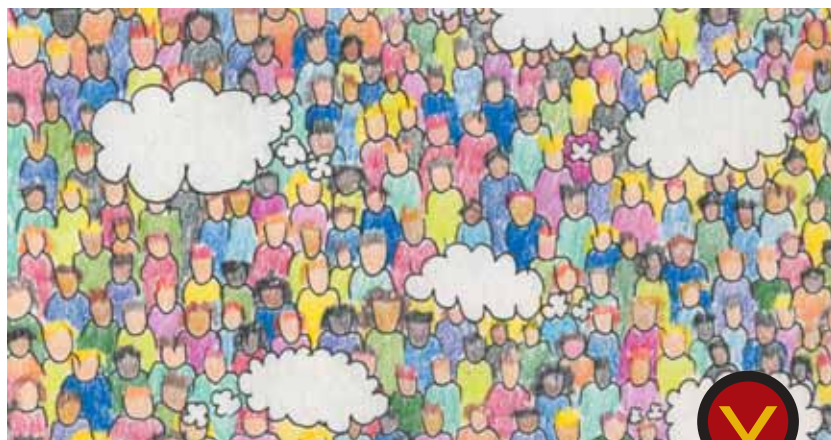
The estimated total worldwide cost of caring for people with **Alzheimer's disease** and dementia now tops \$ 248 billion (Rs 11,40,800 cr) annually. That estimate, based on a worldwide prevalence estimate of nearly 28 million people with Alzheimer's and dementia, includes informal care and direct care costs. Informal care refers to patient care provided at no cost, usually by family members and friends, while direct (or formal) care refers to paid professional health care services, such as treatment, ongoing daily care, and housing. Swedish researchers reported the findings at the annual International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders, held in Madrid in July. "We can fund Alzheimer's research for early detection, treatment and prevention now or wait for Alzheimer's to overwhelm health systems throughout the world," says researcher Dr Anders Wimo of the Stockholm Gerontology Research Centre.

On a trip: **'Grey travellers'** are one of the fastest-growing segments for the travel industry in Asia, according to Singapore-based Abacus International, a global distribution service that provides hardware and software to travel agencies. "They are **street-wise and have unprecedented spending power**," says Don Birch, President & CEO, Abacus.



ANALYSE THIS

STATUS SYMBOLS



It may not be politically correct to say it, but a new study reveals that **ageing is related to social status**. According to a research team led by Dr Tim Spector of St Thomas Hospital in London, people in lower social classes appear to be ageing faster than advantaged classes. The team found that the poor have shorter telomeres (the caps that protect chromosomes from fraying), which makes them biologically older than rich people of the same age. As people age, their telomeres become shorter, leaving cells more susceptible to damage and death.

H-ETIQUETTE



YOU'RE ALL SET

Think BMW—bread, meal, water—when you look at your place setting. **Your dinner roll will be on the left, your meal in the middle, your beverage on the right.** With elaborate place settings, work from the outside in. If you skip the first course, skip the first fork, and so on. Used silverware should never touch the table.

WORK IT OUT



A new study by the US National Institute on Ageing says **any kind of exercise will help extend your life**. A team led by exercise physiologist Todd M Manini studied 302 people between 70 and 82 years of age and found that any sort of energy expenditure through physical activity is associated with a lower risk of death. They were then divided into three groups according to energy expended. Seniors in the highest third of daily energy expenditure—they burned an average of 600 calories more a day than those in the lowest third—had a 69 per cent lower risk of dying. "It didn't seem to matter if energy was expended in daily chores or a workout at the gym," says Manini. "Chores could include washing dishes, vacuuming and sweeping. Other ways to work your body include walking the dog, taking the stairs instead of the elevator and even standing rather than sitting while talking on the telephone." The study is published in the July issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

WILD SILVER

WHALE OF A TIME

How do you tell the age of a whale? Well, right now the only way is to count the layers of wax in its ears. Unfortunately, to do that the whale has to be dead. But researchers from the Southern Cross University Whale Research Centre in Lismore, Australia, claim in the August issue of *Nature* magazine that they are developing a new method: analysing bits of skin that whales shed, essentially dandruff. This could spell an end to the process of scientific whaling—where whales are killed for the purpose of so called ‘data collection’—which has been widely criticised by animal rights groups across the world. Bye bye ear wax, hello dandruff!



INNOVATION

FINE THREADS



Here's another new anti-ageing minimally invasive rejuvenation technique: ‘**contour threading**’. “It is similar to barbed thread made of non-absorbable material and is mainly used for fixing eyebrows,” Mumbai-based cosmetic surgeon Dr Satish Arolkar told media. The procedure is similar to a face lift and is done under local anaesthesia. Contour threads are designed with patented dimensional barbs that attach to the subdermal tissue, lifting, suspending and fixating contour of the brow. The cost: between Rs 70,000 and Rs 90,000. Whew!

BESPOKE BEAUTY

No more invasive measures like scalpels, lasers or injections. American geneticists say a simple DNA test can help banish those wrinkles forever. Scientists at Dermategenics, owned by GeneLink, a New Jersey-based genetic research company, say most facial creams are not suited to our genetic requirements. The answer: **personalised anti-ageing cream**. Here's how it works. The company sends you a kit with two cotton swabs. You rub these along your inner cheek ten to 12 times, leave it to dry and send it back for testing. From these skin cells, experts measure your propensity for collagen breakdown; wrinkling; skin ageing and overall skin health. Within two weeks, you receive a tailor-made night cream containing various minerals, enzymes, herbal extracts and acids specifically balanced to suit you. “Wrinkles decrease after just two weeks of treatment,” claims Dr Scott Wise, a scientific adviser on the board of GeneLink. The price: the initial DNA test costs \$ 250 (about Rs 11,500) and the cream costs \$230 (about Rs 10,700) for a bottle, which lasts six to eight weeks. To know more, visit www.dermagenetics.com.



In debt: Research by insurance company Prudential reveals that over 1 million pensioners in the UK face **debt in retirement**, averaging £15,500. And one in four retired adults—**2.7 million people**—say they have **insufficient income** to meet all their financial commitments.

LOVE THAT!

BEST FRIEND



A pet dog doesn't just ward away depression and keep intruders away—it could also save your life. In Ocoee town in Florida, Belle, the beagle, did just that. When her owner Kevin Weaver had a diabetic seizure, the dog triggered a call to an ambulance crew by biting on his mobile phone. Belle had been trained to detect

potential diabetic attacks by licking and sniffing Weaver's nose to check his blood sugar levels and pawing him. So when he fell unconscious, she used her teeth to press the number nine key, which the phone was programmed to interpret as a 911 call. Ambulance workers answered the phone and, hearing nothing but barking at the end of the line, rushed to Weaver's home. "I'm convinced that if Belle wasn't with me that morning, I wouldn't be alive today," Weaver told *Miami Herald*. "She is a life-saver and my best friend."

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Maybe this is what they call a leap of faith. In July, two Malaysian pensioners decided to celebrate their 37th wedding anniversary a little differently—they went skydiving. Bored of the traditional anniversary celebrations, 64 year-old Cheah Sum Beng and his wife Coo Kit Har, 61, jumped an incredible 2,700 m (8858.3 ft) from a helicopter while friends and family watched from below. Cheers!



OFFBEAT

E-FAREWELL

Here's one more thing you can do on the Internet: attend funerals. The Star of David Memorial Chapel, a new chapel in West Babylon in New York state, comes equipped with video cameras and Internet servers so that funeral services can be uploaded online. The 'webcast' accommodates people who are too old or too far away to make it to the funeral. Viewers get to see the funeral from two angles; a panoramic view from the back and a close-up of the first few rows. You can even order DVDs of the service. Donna Smith, 71, who works as a missionary in Scotland, was too ill to travel to the US to attend her 94 year-old mother's funeral in June 2006. But she didn't miss a single moment of it, thanks to the Internet. "It's just technology, but to me, it was a miracle," she told *The New York Times*.

Silver line: The Pune Railway division has announced that all reservation centres and railway stations in the city will have a separate queue for silvers.

TRENDS

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

Experience and expertise seem to be getting their due—finally! According to a study by UK-based EMA Partners, one of the world's top 10 executive search firms, **lack of talent is making the age barrier disappear in industries.** EMA Partners, which has a presence in 30 countries, studied 100 older executives in 25 companies in Indian metros. The results of the study were released in July 2006.

With the booming Indian economy pushing corporate houses into intense competition, experience—read silver—has become a sought-after commodity. Atul Takle, 48, chief of corporate communications for Pantaloon India, spells out the virtues of recruiting a silver boss. "First, they don't job-hop," he

says. "Then, they are aware of the hard realities of business, they know their limitations and are willing to listen to younger people's point of view."

The trend is more apparent in Information Technology companies and retail industries that need good mentors to lead their burgeoning teams. "As the CEO's job in these sectors is a complex one that involves managing a lot of people, older people are better equipped to handle it," says K Sudarshan, managing partner of EMA Partners.

There are plenty of examples: George Zachariah, who now heads Yahoo India, is in his late 40s; Devendra Shah, 53, is project manager of an apparel retail company The Loot; and Rollen Thomas, 55, was recently chosen by Go Air to be its vice president (flight operations). So what about



skills of a candidate? It's technology, speed and mindset. "They should be technologically sound, willing to travel often, and have no liability at home," says Shiv Agrawal, 32, CEO of Delhi-based ABC Consultants.

—Teena Baruah

TECH TALK WITH PUROHITS



For the past two years, we have travelled hand in hand with the Purohits into the world of technology. But it is time for the Purohits—and our readers—to move to the next stage. With this in mind, from this month we begin a technology column by **Tushar Kanwar**. Kanwar is a Bangalore-based technology writer and contributes to leading newspapers like *The Telegraph*. But the Purohits aren't going anywhere! They will now appear in *Harmony's* first cartoon strip, Tech Talk With Purohits, dishing out their inimitable take on life, and new ways to live it.

Netaholics are known to surf, blog, mail and chat, sitting back to back

MEDIA WATCH

SINGLE AND SILVER



The New York Times called it “one of the most truthful examinations ever filmed of desire, age and youth”. Indeed, *Heading South*, a film about single women in their 40s and 50s vacationing in Haiti and indulging in local fare—young beach boys—has been playing to packed theatres in the US. The film,

directed by 45 year-old French director Laurent Cantet, takes a hard look at the dearth of appropriate sexual partners for women like Ellen, a single 55 year-old professor of French literature, played by 60 year-old British beauty Charlotte Rampling. “If you’re over 40 and not as dumb as a fashion model,” Ellen says in the film, “the only guys who are interested are natural born losers or husbands whose wives are cheating on them.” So they rely on Haitian teenagers, who devote themselves to nourishing the women’s libidos in exchange for food, gifts and temporary refuge from the island’s repressive regime. According to reviewers, the movie has hit home with the audience because it affirms the physical reality of women of a certain age. But this film is no mere sexual romp—it goes on to become a layered exploration of class, race, romantic complexity and Haitian politics in the days of Jean-Claude Duvalier in the 1970s. Unfortunately, there’s no word on whether it will be released in India.

GADGET

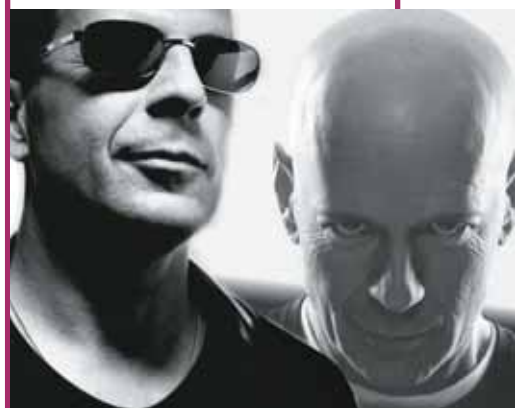
I-POT?



Have you heard of the i-pot? No, we’re not talking about the digital music player that got our own Mr and Mrs Purohit so excited last month (see August 2006 issue of *Harmony*). This is a **water pot** (really!) manufactured by Japanese company Zojirushi

Co, which is wired to an electronic network called the Mimamori Hotline—*mimamori* means ‘watching over’ in Japanese. Why? Well, Zojirushi Co discovered that almost all silvers in Japan brew and drink tea constantly. So whenever anyone turns on and off the i-pot, the information goes to the Mimamori server, which then sends an email to registered family members—this lets them know their elders are doing well. Family members can even login to the server and check the weekly usage chart. This way, if they see that grandma hasn’t brewed tea for a long time, they know something is wrong. The service costs 3,000 yen (about Rs 1,200) a month with a one-time subscription fee of 5,000 yen (about Rs 2,000).

OVERHEARD



“I don’t worry about anything, especially not getting or looking old. I think worry itself can age you. And I don’t worry about my hair any more. What’s the point? It’s gone. Bye.”

—American actor Bruce Willis, 51, in *People* magazine



Smooth ride: To mark the **45th** year of the foundation of the **Karnataka State Road Transport** Corporation (KSRTC), the state government has announced a **25% discount** for senior citizens travelling in KSRTC buses.

H RECOMMENDS

ACTION PLAN FOR SEPTEMBER

Green revolution. Teach your children and grandchildren the importance of preserving the environment. The Japan NGO Council on Ageing (JANCA), the nation's largest organisation for senior citizens, has launched a drive to turn silvers into environmentally aware role models. "It's as simple as spreading the word among families and friends to use rainwater effectively, set air-conditioning to 28° C in summer and to stop people from leaving their vehicle engines running while parked," says JANCA head Keiko Higuchi, who also feels that when the elderly talk, people do listen.

Have some F.U.N. Here's a great new activity to introduce at your senior citizens' centre—a spelling bee competition. You get to learn new words, and keep dementia at bay. The moderator gives each participant a tough word to spell; get it right and you're through to the next round. Eventually, a winner emerges. Pat Boster, 65, started a monthly spelling bee at the Lawrence County Senior Citizens' Centre at Sybene in Ohio last year and it's been a great hit. "It gives us a chance to work out our brains," she told *The Ironton Tribune*. "And we make new friends."

Make a connection. There's strength in numbers. So get together with your friends and help people less fortunate than you. In Troy, Michigan, 61 year-old Maria Rossetti founded Senior Connection, an organisation where a group of silver volunteers helps other silvers, in June 2005. "Lonely senior citizens just have to call our hotline," she tells *The Washington Post*. "We take people to the doctor when they are ill, take them grocery shopping, help them fill out their tax returns, pack for them when they need to move house, and lend a friendly ear when they just need to talk," Rossetti adds.



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

DEEPER VISION



Dwarka Anand with wife Kamal

In 1944, I was told my left eye was 'lazy' since birth and that it could never be corrected. I was shocked. With my right eye closed, I could not recognise even a human form just 8 ft away. Just before I was told about my infirmity, I had got admission in a Lahore college for my under-graduation.

From then, I carefully guarded my eyes, especially the right one, as my education, career and livelihood depended on it. With time, I began using

Doctors told me I may lose my eyesight so I memorised the *Gita*

spectacles. But there was no improvement in vision in my left eye. Periodic examination of

the left eye in India and abroad brought me no hope. After my studies, I joined Ballarpur Industries Ltd in 1951 as an apprentice. Years rolled by and I was posted in various cities in India. Forty years later, I retired from the company as senior executive

in 1989 at the age of 61. By then, my daughter Shikha, who was married and settled in the US, asked me, my wife and son Utkarsh to join her there. In a foreign land with a lot of time on hand, I became interested in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and my desire to study its original text in Sanskrit intensified. My knowledge with Sanskrit was only elementary—it was one of my subjects in school in the early 1940s. From India, I got a Sanskrit reader and a book translating each *shloka* and word in the *Gita*. My plan was to first understand the literal meaning of the entire text, interpret it according to my own understanding, and then study commentaries of people like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr S Radhakrishnan.

Then, in 1995, my life was shattered when I lost Shikha to cancer. She was only 35 years old and the mother of two sons. At that time, we were about to get US citizenship but saddened by his sister's death, my son Utkarsh wanted to return to India. We came back and, a year later, I was told I might lose my eyesight with advancing age. I was 71 at the time. As reading the *Gita* had endowed me with energy, solace and peace of mind, I decided to commit the entire text to memory so that even if I lost my sight, I would be able to recite it.

Over the next seven years, I memorised most of the *Gita*. Today, I can recite it with my eyes closed, my mind set on its meaning. Every morning, after my 40-minute fitness routine, I observe 70 minutes of *maun vrat* (total silence) while I go on a 7-km brisk walk. That's when I recite 12 chapters of the *Gita* in my mind—I recite the remaining chapters in mind in the evening. Of course, there are 40 chapters left, but I am confident I will master them in no time.

I no longer worry about losing my eyesight. No amount of walking or physical activity tires me and I am full of energy. Much of my time is spent in community service. Next year, I will be 80 and I plan to continue to live life in the same vein.

—Dwarka Anand
Faridabad

SOUND OF MUSIC

I am originally from Nashik but have made Mumbai my hometown now. After passing my BSc in first class from Fergusson College, Pune, in 1956 with physics, mathematics and statistics as my subjects, I joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research at Mumbai as a scientist. An opportunity to join the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) came soon after I was selected for physics stream in the third batch of BARC Training School. I took the offer and worked there till 1974. After 14 years in BARC, I quit to start my own business of manufacturing and selling science apparatus. Through it all, I had a passion for music. In 2001, after my son took over the business, I started devoting more time to music.

Once I attended a music programme on appreciation of the harmonium. The instrument is blamed for its style of tuning, which differs from the natural scale. In case of the harmonium, increasing popularity and ill-tuning are contradictory to each other but they also go hand-in-hand. It is a paradox. I started browsing through literature to find a 'not yet identified' third factor. My conclusion: The ear must play an important part. Physicists have studied frequency resolution of the ear, but only from a physics point of view. I decided to examine the problem thoroughly as a research project.

After five years of hard work—from 2001 to 2005—I derived and established the Musical Notes Quotient (MNQ). MNQ is an objectively defined parameter that indicates the preparedness of a person's ear for music at the time of testing. I developed a training method to improve MNQ in just a month. All you need is one-hour daily training of the vocal cords.

Here's how it works: Your ear, which records various changes in pitch, decides what is good or bad music. But how do we determine how much change of frequency of a given note is perceived by the ear? This property was studied with the help of a digital instrument that generates various pitch frequencies. The difference in frequency needed by an ear to perceive the change in sound at various pitch levels was recorded. These observations are the basis for calculating the value of the index MNQ. Observations were recorded on 522 participants and



G K Ketkar (third from left) on a trip to Delhi

statistical analysis was done before drawing the conclusion that the MNQ of musicians was far superior to that of non-musicians. Statistical analysis supported the preliminary conclusion that MNQ does indicate 'musical ability' of a person.

My training system was designed with 'music' in mind, not just therapy. I called it *Omkaradhishtit Swarsadhana* (Ketkar Paddhati). It involves chanting the word 'Omkar'. Accompanying the chanting is a recording of a tambora in the background and breathing exercises like *pranayama*. This not only improves MNQ but also increases breathing capacity and the range of a person's voice from one octave to one-and-a-half octaves. Other benefits are better concentration and a sense of well-being.

I have attended various seminars in India and abroad, including Australian Acous-

After 14 years of service and 27 years of business, I turned to music

tical Society's Busselton convention held in November 2005. In India, I attended Indian Acoustic Society's annual convention in Mysore in November 2004. In January 2006, I attended two seminars, Science and Music Seminar in Bangalore, and National Seminar on Interdisciplinary Applications of Electronics in Jalgaon. In May 2006, I was awarded a PhD by YCM Open University in Nashik.

Today, I conduct training classes on *Omkaradhishtit Swarsadhana* (Ketkar Paddhati) for music teachers. I am also writing a book on my research and training programme (in English, Marathi and Hindi) that will be accompanied by CDs. Anyone interested can write to me at govind.ketkar@rediffmail.com. At 73, I feel I am a man with a mission.

—G K Ketkar
Mumbai

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Equally Enabled

Educationist and teacher S S Jayalakshmi has dedicated herself to providing equal opportunities in education and training for special children in Coimbatore, writes **Hariharan Balakrishnan**

Big ideas often have small beginnings. Take Vidya Vikasini School in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, for instance. Starting in 1973 as a nursery class with five children in a rented room inside the premises of another school, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, it shifted to its own 2.7-acre plot of land in Tudiyalur, a small town in Coimbatore district, in 1981. Today, it is a secondary school with about 1,500 students. Adjoining it is V V Opportunity School, which, after a humble start in 1981 with two special students, now has 102 differently abled students who are taught vocational skills. Both schools form part

of Vidya Vikasini Institutions, which comprises nursery, secondary and vocational schools and a training centre.

Last year, Teacher's Day celebrations (5 September) at the V V Opportunity School were special. Jayalakshmi, founder-director of Vidya Vikasini Institutions, received the first state award from the Tamil Nadu government for the best institution for disabled welfare. It is the latest laurel recognising the 72 year-old's work in integrating differently abled children in mainstream education. This year, V V Opportunity School's silver jubilee in August coincided with

the start of a new project—the school will identify slow learners with specific learning disabilities in government schools.

It has been a long journey for Jayalakshmi, who was married at 17, armed with only a secondary school leaving certificate, to T S Venkateswaran, a railway executive. In 1961, she started teaching at a nearby playschool, run by Avinashilingam College to train undergraduate students in child development. Jayalakshmi taught there for 13 years.

Her big break came when a team from the US-based Ford Foundation (a not-for-profit body that



(From left) Opportunity School students attend a special class on motor skills; bubble therapy for sensory inputs



Courtesy: VIJAY COMMUNICATIONS

S S Jayalakshmi founded the V V Institutions in 1973

supports projects worldwide on community development) visited Coimbatore, scouting for students. They met Jayalakshmi and offered to sponsor a four-year course on child development and psychology in MS Baroda. After her four-year course, she started working at Home Science College in Coimbatore in 1968. She quit her job in 1973 and thought of starting a school. With the help of Visalakshi Rajagopal,

With the school growing, Jayalakshmi wanted to do something for special children. There were 15 to 20 special children already studying at the school but she wanted total integration—by providing a favourable environment, education and vocational training to enable them develop their skills. She began V V Opportunity with one student “who turned out to be a slow learner”, recalls Jayalakshmi. The child’s mother

Opportunity School began in V V School premises in Tudiyalur in 1981. At that time, the concept of having integrated schools, where regular students studied together with differently abled children, was alien. “We thought parents might object to the idea of special children studying with regular students but they did not,” says Jayalakshmi. In fact, a few students from Vidya Vikasini School who had siblings in special schools persuaded their parents to get them transferred to V V Opportunity School.

Soon students began to pour in, from Coimbatore and further away. Like 10 year-old Gopu, whose mother brought him here five years ago from Trichur in Kerala, 100 km away from Coimbatore. Moderately mentally challenged, Gopu today works in the vocational unit, earning a stipend of Rs 750 per month.

Currently, Opportunity School has 10 trained teachers and 102 students. The school facilities include identification of disabilities, counselling, education and training. Vocational training in screen printing, book binding, making paper bags and envelopes are offered. Special classes like physiotherapy, dance lessons, and occupational therapy are also held.

They can pursue their education through the state board, matriculation or the syllabus of government-sponsored National Institute of Open Schooling Examination (equivalent to school final). This allows special students to clear one or two subjects at a time. “A lot depends on the child and the attitude of the parents,” says Sudha

Jayalakshmi has helped integrate differently abled children in mainstream education

now 61, Jayalakshmi’s former colleague in the college, Vidya Vikasini School opened its doors in 1973.

refused to admit her in a special school. “She felt the child would never be accepted by society later in life. That set me thinking.”

Jayamani, 27, an occupational therapist at Opportunity, "We look out for general paediatric symptoms like Down's Syndrome, mental retardation and pervasive development disorders such as autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and other development problems," she adds.

Physical fitness also plays an important role in integration. The students of V V Opportunity participate in Special Olympics held all over the world for differently abled sportspersons and have bagged several medals at state, national and international levels. Says Visalakshi Rajagopal, retired principal of V V School, "The idea behind starting the school was to enable students to do things their way," she says.

The inspiration to build a training centre for the differently abled, came to Jayalakshmi from daughter Jayanti, 54, who has been working for a long time for the government-run National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, in Hyderabad. For teachers willing to teach special children but lacking in requisite qualifications, the training centre offers training courses for teachers and caregivers of special children. Senior teachers can opt for a 'bridge' course in order to work with the disabled. There are training modules for parents of special children too.

As for financial support, people come forward to sponsor the children, at Rs 5,000 per child. "We don't ask for money," says Jayalakshmi. "It simply comes."



Attendants are trained to take care of special students

"But the government needs to come forward with more aid and job opportunities," feels Jayalakshmi. "Special people, irrespective of their mental or physical abilities, have the right to equality," asserts Jayalakshmi, who knows that at 72, she has a long way to go—and many more students to teach. ■

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Accessories to make life easy

A suitable balance



After a legal career spanning 35 years, Leila Seth, 74, has settled down to a retired life. But inaction will never be part of her lexicon, as **Teena Baruah** discovers

Doing my income tax, darling. It makes me happy when work gets done; I enjoy the sense of achievement (pause). You should start making a things-to-do list like your father....

It is 10 am IST and Leila Seth is on the phone with author-son Vikram Seth, who lives in London. Wearing a cotton sari, her trademark double *bindi* adorning her forehead, hair in a tight chignon, Seth is ready for the day. It's not court, though. She is ready to spend time with her grandchildren—Nandini, 5, and Anamica, 2, daughters of her Zen Buddhism teacher-son Shantum. After years of disciplined living as the first woman to be appointed a judge of Delhi High Court and a chief justice of a state (Himachal Pradesh), Seth has retired to a life with her family.

It took her a while to get used to it. Just six months after she ended her formal legal career in 1992, retiring after a career spanning 35 years, she suffered from chronic depression. "I started getting up late, wandering aimlessly around the house, and being generally lethargic," she writes in her autobiography, *On Balance*, (Penguin, 2004). "Somehow, a minor staff misdemeanour seemed harder to resolve than a complicated labour case. I loved reading, but found it difficult to focus. I could have enjoyed my home and garden, but I only saw dirt..." Finally, anti-depressants and Vikram's gift, *The Collected Short Stories of Roald Dahl*, marked 'For Mama the mareez (patient)', boosted her spirits.

Seth with grandchildren Nandini, Anamica; Chandini (centre) is the cook's daughter



PABLO BARTHOLOMEW



Seth with husband Premo at their home in Noida

Seth has never allowed herself to slip into inaction again. At 62, she joined a diploma course on environmental law at the World Wide Fund for Nature in New Delhi. "Almost all the students were in their 20s and expected me to know all the answers," she says wryly. "But I made as many mistakes as they did." In the same spirit, Seth will soon share imaginary school benches with 10 year-olds when she decides what they should read in their civics books—a publishing house, which she refuses to name yet, has asked her to demystify democracy, the Indian constitution and our rights and duties for schoolchildren. "I find their civics texts really uninteresting," she says candidly. "My book will be about how to be a good citizen. And it will tell the truth in a simple and lucid

“My civics book for children will be about how to be a good citizen”

manner. The trick is not to impose things on children but to let them judge for themselves.”

At home, Seth renders life's little lessons to her grandchildren in unconventional ways. They know not to waste, not to lie and not to snoop on elders. "I narrate my own experiences to them to tell them what's right and what's not. To begin with, some lessons are as close as our garden," says Seth, recalling how Nandini could name almost every flower by the time she was three.

THE LAW ACCORDING TO LEILA

Q Do you feel the common man has faith in the Indian judicial system?

A Yes. If nothing works, he says, "Main court jaunga." It is still honest.

Q Do you think a woman in judiciary is good news?

A Yes. She brings a sense of compassion and a balanced perspective because she runs her home and deals with domestic justice every day. However, a woman lawyer is not necessarily better for women clients. Some men are very good as well, but generally they are better at corporate law and contracts.

Q You decided not to fight any cases after retirement. Why?

A Originally, there was a bar on people practicing after retirement. I thought it was a very good idea. Personally, I wanted time for myself. And thankfully I didn't need the money. I earn enough through arbitration. That's enough.

Q You never give sound bytes on TV....

A I enjoy watching arguments and discussions on TV but don't like being part of them. You can never get into any depth in TV. They ask you a question and expect an answer in two minutes. Nothing is 'yes' or 'no'. I like to weigh things. But they cut you short by saying we are running out of time. Also, it is nice to hear other voices, that of the youth. This country really is a country of youth; how can you ignore their voices?

Q How has age added value to your work?

A With age and retirement, I feel free to do a lot of things I couldn't earlier. I now have more confidence. I am not worried about how others will react to my stand. I think you are much more forthright when you are older. You have years of experience about how things should be. Of course, you need to hear out others as well.

Q Has being a judge made you intolerant about life's injustices?

A In Patna, you can see abject poverty staring you in the face right outside the court. I felt I should be

The garden in Seth's home in Noida runs along the long drawing room window, reaching up to the master bedroom. This is where she spends most of her mornings, reading newspapers. "Every plant you see from here means something to me," she says fondly. "Tulsi, because Vikram likes to think while chewing a *tulsi* leaf; Shantam loves the red-flowered Sita. Ashok as Buddha was born under such a tree; the yellow laburnum tree commemorates our daughter Aradhana's friend Dhiren Bhagat; and *Nandina domestica* that turns bright red in winter—that's what our Nandini thinks her name is!"

The proud grandmother turns to the two children for inspiration. "There's tremendous joy in grandparenting, more so as my husband Premo is equally

involved," says Seth. When she's not spending quality time with them, she works as an arbitrator, helping with out-of-court settlements in construction cases. Seth settled for arbitration after trying to reinvent herself as an activist. She taught a batch of slum children for a while, but finally gave up, as she was "impatient and expected too much from her students". Later, she decided to concentrate on her strengths, giving expert ideas for various human rights agencies, like Multiple Action Research Group which deals with legal literacy, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and publishing house Katha's child relief division.

Of late, Seth has been advising HelpAge India on the Parent Maintenance Bill. "After studying the existing model in Himachal

“The trick is to let children judge things for themselves”

Pradesh, Leila is trying to take away some of the unpleasantness and pungency out of the proposed legal provision," says M M Sabharwal, the 84 year-old president emeritus of HelpAge India. "She suggested that the family, instead of lawyers, should argue such cases as seniors will get quick results." Seth is also advising HelpAge on starting pay-and-stay homes for seniors.

In her capacity as member of the governing board of Lady Shriram College in New Delhi, Dr Bharat

out there working and helping these people. Premo told me to make up my mind—either earn and give, or go out there and work. Don't grumble about throwing lavish parties, he said.

Q Are you Justice Seth at home?

A I can't be unfair to anyone. I have to strike a balance between children and grandchildren. Sometimes my kids say, "Mamma has a judge-like tone, especially when scolding grandchildren." A firm answer from me means the end of the discussion. And yes, everyone must be within the law. Our driver once got a *challan* for speeding and wanted me to pay it. But I refused, even though he threatened to stop working for us.

Q What happens if your husband jumps a red light?

A I tick him off.

Q Is there any anti-establishment feeling in you?

A I am concerned that the spectrum of information that citizens can access from government files, under 'Right to Information', might shrink. Except



projects in the social and development sector, file notations relating to identifiable individuals, group of individuals, organisations, appointments, and matters relating to inquiries and departmental proceedings, will not be disclosed. I object to this. What they have given with one hand, they are taking away with the other. You cannot go on changing laws because they don't suit you. Even the way they are putting the Office of Profit Bill through is shocking. The government is placating one individual and letting another get away with it.



(Clockwise from top left) Seth when in school; at her wedding with Premo; Vikram, Aradhana and Shantam; Seth with baby Vikram; and with family now

“Every plant I see from my window means something to me”

corruption, refused to pay a bribe or involve a tout to get any work done. The rule is applicable to everyone at home.

From her life, Seth has gained enough experience to share with others. So if there’s an invitation to address an audience on universal civil code, educational rights of children and old age law, she doesn’t hesitate. As vice-president of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology, every year (since 2001) she attends the annual UNESCO meeting in Paris. It’s around this time that she plans her only annual holiday with son Vikram in London—thus saving on her travel expenses.

Despite all this work, Seth has consciously slowed down. In 2004, an open-heart surgery left her little choice. She has disciplined herself into a day that begins with almonds and honey—but no exercise, despite Premo’s gentle rebuke. The days she’s not out at work, Seth is happy keeping house. At her home in Noida, she occupies the ground floor. Built for an ageing couple, the house has no fancy elevations. “We spent cautiously, opting for mosaic, and kept it clutter-free so I can maintain it myself, with fewer servants, especially when I’m older,” explains Seth. “When we were building it, just before my

Ram, 92, chairman emeritus of SRF Ltd sees her as “a very even person, with no angularities”. “Since the time she joined the college’s governing board, she has been present at every meeting, and is very conscious of her role in the committee and society at large,” he elaborates. “I can’t say that for most of the

other board members who join the board just like that.” Seth brings the same commitment and integrity home too. “She never lets us forget the law,” says Premo, the 85 year-old former director of Bata, recounting a recent incident when Seth, soon after hearing social activist Aruna Roy speaking against bribery and



FOOD = LOVE

When Aradhana and Vikram lived with their parents, Sunday lunch was a family ritual. Once they left, everyone started eating separately. Realising that the family didn't see much of each other any longer, Seth decided to bond with food. Now, lunch is downstairs and mostly Indian, while dinner (Continental or Asian) is upstairs in Shantum's house. Mind you, Seth is no gourmet chef. "Her best cooking formula is to throw all the vegetables into the pan and hope for the best," says friend Sarla Mishra, 71, with a chuckle. "Luckily, she always had amazing cooks to rescue her at the dinner table." Undeterred, Seth says she enjoys cooking for her children. She loves fish, especially trout, and wrote this recipe for son Vikram, garnished with love:

SHORTCUT COOKING FOR 2

Get fresh fish from Chris Healy when he comes on Wednesday morning with his van full of

different types of fish. Buy two whole trout (approximate cost £6) and ask him to cut it cutlet style into about seven or eight pieces, including the tail and head. Wash all the pieces with cold water and sprinkle turmeric, salt and chilli powder on them, ensuring they are covered all over. Heat oil (mustard, olive, or sunflower oil) in a large non-stick frying pan. Lightly fry the fish, turning over once carefully so that the pieces don't break. Put the fish aside in a flat dish. Mix mustard paste (Coleman's or other English mustard)—two heaped teaspoons—with half a cup of Greek yoghurt and half a cup of Bio yoghurt and put into frying pan gently. Add turmeric, salt, and put two slit green chillies into the sauce. Place the fish tenderly in this sauce and let it cook slowly for a few minutes. Serve with boiled rice. Enjoy UK-style *sarson maachh*.

[Used one frying pan, one flat dish; Cooking time: 20 minutes]

“I believe religion is to love my family, and to fight for what is right”

she reads instead of counting sheep. Also, ever since Premo's minor stroke in 2001, she says she finds his snore comforting.

Evidently, the “rich social comedy”, as Vikram once called his parents' life in a poem, goes on. Seth and Premo occasionally call their friends over to play bridge. Seth continues her squirrel-like habit of locking everything in her Godrej almirah, including nuts and raisins. Premo draws up an elaborate checklist of things to do each morning and keeps ticking it off through the day—leading to the nickname, ‘Mr Tick-Off’!

It's been a good life, believes Seth. No regrets. She was unhappy when she didn't make it to the Supreme Court. And devastated when her fourth child Ira leapt from a balcony in Mumbai and died at 16. But she manages to laugh about the inherent irony of being a judge whose peacenik son (Shantum) went to jail in the UK for four days in 1985, for protesting against America's first-strike nuclear capabilities.

“When I was young I used to think there is a God. Then I thought there is no God. Now, I don't know. I believe religion is to love my family, to do justice, to have a conscience and to fight for what is right.” For Seth, the truth is a fine balance. ■

retirement, we only had furniture, like our grand Bangla *khat* and a crush strawberry carpet. So we built it around what we had.”

Over the past few years, Seth's priorities have changed from court to home. “Today, a stressful day is not a power-packed one

but when there is no electricity, the water pump doesn't work, and courier delivery boys keep popping up at our doorstep all day,” says Seth. Her day ends with passages from *Daily Strength for Daily Needs* by Mary W Tileston or the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the two books by her bedside that

Dance's



devotee

C Gopinathan Pillah, a senior Kathakali dancer, recounts his life as a struggling and an ageing performer. Given a choice, he would still want to be reborn as a performer.

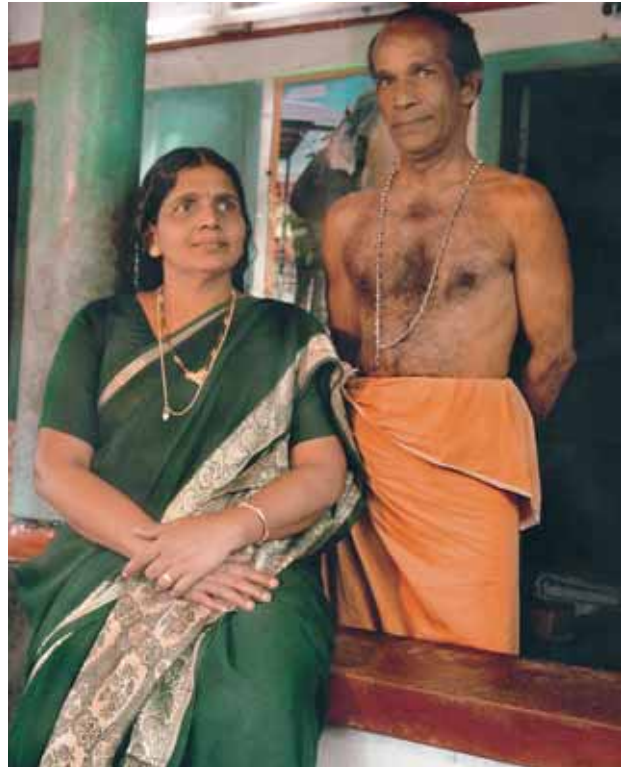
Photographs by **Ashok Koshy**

It's every man's dream to see his children follow his footsteps. So it may sound strange that I haven't encouraged mine—J Krishna, 23, and Jayalakshmi, 21—to pursue Kathakali. Although they have studied the art, as a profession it is not enough to support a family. Jayakrishna works as an accountant while Jayalakshmi is studying to be a nurse.

Today, at the age of 55, I perform as often as I can to support my family. From three coins and food for every performance, I have reached a stage where I get Rs 25,000, to be shared with about 15 artists and musicians. Even this is not enough to meet my needs. Most Kathakali Masters are paid depending on how famous they are, how many years of training they have put in and how they market themselves.

I became a Master at the age of 30. My first guru was my father Umayanellore Gopalapillai. I later trained with Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair, Kalamandalam Rajan, who is 75 today, Mangombu Sivashankara Pillah, 76, and my uncle Oyor Kochugovinna Pillah, 86. My father was the breadwinner of the family and our family relied entirely on his profession. According to tradition, when I was 8 my father presented me with *mezhu* (oil) and *kachcha* (waist support cloth)—the first step to learning Kathakali. I staged my first performance 'Sundari Swayamvaram Attakatha' after two years of training under my father and my uncle. A few years later, my father passed away. My three elder brothers and I were left alone to fend for ourselves. And we had nothing but Kathakali to support us. So I joined Radha Lakshmi Vilas, an arts school in Tripunitra, Kochi.

I spent six years learning and performing at the school. By the time my elder brothers and two sisters got married, I was 32. I married C G Ramani a year later. While she is also trained as a dancer, she keeps the house and I teach 16 students and



Gopinathan with wife Ramani

perform at temples and sponsored shows—some of them by good friend and neighbour, photographer Ashok Koshy, whose photographs you see in these pages. Sadly, I have no savings, no insurance, nothing to leave my children. Thankfully, I don't suffer from any medical problems although age will soon catch up with me.

In the green room, sometimes I look at myself in the mirror and see an ageing artist. I ask myself: how much longer can I perform? But that's rare. When I start performing, I forget myself in the story and role I am playing. My God has always looked after me and I am an optimist. I am happy with my family. And despite all the hardship I have suffered, I want to be a Kathakali artist in my next incarnation too.

—G Gopinathan Pillah



Apart from Kathakali, C Gopinathan Pillah trained in Mohiniyattam, Bharatnatyam and Chitrakala. Later, he committed himself to Kathakali for the love of its elaborate costumes, make-up and the flexibility the theatre form offers

Gopinathan takes four hours to dress up for a performance. The first time he performed, he played Brihanala, Arjuna's exiled avatar in Mahabharata. Till date, it remains his favourite for its make-believe qualities



Kathakali's make-up code is dictated by the roles men play. The faces of noble male characters are green and that of evil male characters are red. Gopinathan doesn't mind what colour his 'skin' is, or whether he plays a woman or a man. All he loves is the stage





An unusual Kathakali performance where several masters—instead of one or two—came together on stage. Here they perform a court scene from Mahabharata.

Gopinathan (far left) played the role of Arjuna. He treasures the memory of this performance as he got a chance to work with stalwarts from the Kalamandalam, a centre of excellence in performing arts



Colourful pageant
of Kathakali
sometimes add
glitter to boat race
ceremonies in
Kerala. Here,
Gopinathan (right)
strikes a pose for
Koshy's camera



Festive flavours



Dr Pushpesh Pant serves up healthy delights for the festive season

The festive season is here again with temptations of feasts. Fortunately, there is no reason to feel 'left out' even if you are on a restricted diet. The trick is to substitute the fats and sugars with healthy alternatives. So bake, roast, steam and grill your way to a festive spread and surprise your guests with healthy but delicious treats.

MOHAK MODAK

Preparation time: 45 minutes + 15 minutes.

Serves: 6-8

INGREDIENTS

- *Chhena* (obtained from skimmed milk, by curdling boiling milk using a little lime juice and draining the whey through muslin or very fine sieve): 400 gm
- Sugar-free sweetener: 1 tbsp
- Saffron: few strands, soaked in rosewater or lukewarm milk
- Green cardamoms: 3-4, crushed (seeds only)
- Rose petals to garnish

METHOD

Crumble the *chhena* and gently knead it to incorporate the sweetener and the moist saffron along with the crushed cardamom. Shape into *laddoo*, *peda* or the traditional *modak*. Gently press a rose petal on each helping.



BAIGAN BEMISAAL

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

- Eggplants (*baigan*): 4, medium
- Button mushrooms: 100 gm, chopped
- Sweet bell pepper: 1/2, cored and diced into very small pieces
- Onion: 1, finely chopped
- Garlic cloves: 3-4, crushed or cut
- Peppercorns (or sesame seeds): 1 tsp, freshly ground
- Cloves: 3-4
- Mixed herbs: a large pinch (or substitute with 1 tsp of *sambar* powder)
- Virgin olive oil (or mustard

oil): 1 tbsp

- Low sodium salt to taste
- Oil to glaze the baking dish

For tomato sauce:

- Tomatoes: 250 gm
- Bay leaf: 1
- Cinnamon: 1-inch stick

METHOD

Prepare the sauce by boiling the tomatoes with bay leaf, cinnamon and crushed garlic till desired thickness is obtained. Discard the bay leaf and the cinnamon.

Preheat oven to 180° C. Brush the inside of the eggplant shells with a little oil and bake for about 10 minutes. Halve the eggplants and scoop out the flesh with a spoon taking care to leave the shell intact with about 1/2 inch flesh. Chop the flesh. Lightly fry the onions and garlic on a non-stick pan lined with a thin film of olive

oil, add mushroom and the egg plant flesh, and cook, stirring constantly for about five minutes. Add the peppers. Stir in the herbs and salt.

Line the base of the eggplant shells with a tablespoon of sauce. Divide the filling of eggplant flesh and mushrooms in equal portions and place in the prepared shells. Cook for another four to five minutes in the oven. Drizzle with pepper (and a pinch of grated cheese if you insist on sinning!), and garnish with a sprig of mint or coriander. ■



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

Designing a recovery

Maya Anayarathan is back to work after overcoming her apprehensions about surgery and tackling her knee problem head on, says **Shyamola Khanna**



Maya Anayarathan's schedule at her design studio Sadyojata in Hyderabad keeps her on her toes. When the sprightly 66 year-old fabric painter is not busy translating motifs onto shimmering chiffons, silks and crepes, she is supervising her four "hardworking and dedicated artisans", who she has trained. Though her work doesn't require much physical labour, even this level of activity would have been impossible for her three years ago—that's when her knees stopped doing her bidding.

Anayarathan still remembers the day when her knees suddenly packed up after a long stint of standing at work. She had ignored the early symptoms—her knees used to swell up after a long day of work. To make matters worse, initially the doctors could not diagnose her condition and put her legs in casts, which aggravated the situation. "I used to take almost 15 minutes to negotiate the flight of stairs leading to my studio because of my aching knees," Anayarathan remembers.

Nearly a year later, Anayarathan's cousin Lakshmi Holmstroom, 65, came to visit her from



Maya Anayarathan (facing page) set up her design studio Sadyojata (above) in Hyderabad

Norwick, UK, during her annual trip to India. She was quite horrified to find that, contrary to her own declarations, she was not getting any better—in fact, her condition had deteriorated. After Maya got her casts removed, she could barely stand. She was finally diagnosed with synovitis in 2004 after Holmstroom convinced her to take a second opinion. Synovitis is the medical term for inflammation of a synovial (dense connective tissue) membrane, which lines those joints that possess cavities, namely synovial joints. The joint usually swells owing to fluid collection and becomes very painful.

A single woman, Anayarathan has been living alone in the city after her parents passed away. Her extended family, comprising relatives and friends, came to the rescue when Holmstroom rang up their cousin Dara and his wife Elizabeth in Bangalore and asked them for advice. He promptly called back and asked Anayarathan to come to Bangalore. There, she consulted Dr K Srinivasan, a senior orthopaedist at Northside Hospital in Malleswaram, who recommended surgery. Anayarathan, who was using a walker to move around, was afraid of post-surgical complications that may

follow. But after she met the doctor, she felt upbeat. “I told myself that once the surgery is done, I would not take so long to climb stairs or walk,” she remembers with a smile. She wanted to reclaim her routine, her life.

It was certainly a life worth fighting for—chock-full of prestigious assignments and celebrity clients. After setting up her studio in Hyderabad in the late 1980s, Anayarathan had gone to Delhi scouting for assignments and addresses of top-drawer

physiotherapist, worked rigorously with her on her post-operative exercises and two months later, she was back home in Hyderabad.

Things are already looking up. “I am up and about, partying and working with renewed energy,” she says cheerfully. The surgery has also left her wiser. “I never had any major health problems and therefore neglected my knee problem when it all began,” she rues. It has taken three months for Anayarathan to get used to

“Work prevents me from worrying about things that are not under my control”

designers. Her break came when late designer Rohit Khosla gave her some of his own designs to work on. After Khosla’s death, she began to handle assignments from designers like Ritu Beri and Tarun Tahiliani that involved recreating their designs or concepts on fabric. Though her frequent trips to Delhi and Mumbai for assignments became less frequent, the deadlines were still piling up at her studio.

Anayarathan finally underwent surgery in June this year in Bangalore. Elizabeth, a trained

her new exercise regimen (to make her knees supple). She now eagerly goes for daily walks and ensures to take her calcium supplements. “Every seven years or so, the bones rejuvenate themselves but we need to consume the correct nutrients in order to keep such bone-related ailments at bay,” she says with a learned air, now completely up to speed on bone disorders and knee problems. “Work had always prevented me from mooning or worrying about things that are not under my control,” she adds, happy to be back on her feet. ■



Tooth truths

Dr P G Diwan answers queries on geriatric dentistry

Q Sometime back I was reading a health magazine where I came across the term 'geriatric dentistry'.

Can you tell me more about geriatric dentistry? I am 62 years old and have perfectly healthy teeth, barring a slight discolouration.

A Like other parts of the body, age also affects teeth, gums and other parts of the mouth. Dentistry that deals with the treatment of patients of 65 years and above is called 'geriatric dentistry'. With improved lifestyles and medical breakthroughs in medicine, the demand for better oral health is on the rise. Some common geriatric oral problems are sensitive teeth owing to excessive wear and tear, discolouration of teeth, receding gums, dryness of mouth and root surface cavities. While a general dental practitioner may be able to deal with some of these problems, you may need to see a specialist for others.

Q I am 67 years old. My gums are inflamed and they seem to have a reddish tinge. They often bleed painfully. I have repeatedly got my gums cleaned, but there is no relief. Please help.

A Red gums may occur due to lesions formed by local irritants. It may also occur in those suffering from periodontitis, commonly known as pyorrhea. As treatment would depend on the cause, go in for a thorough diagnosis to a dentist who is conversant with geriatric dental science. Ask your regular dentist to refer you to an oral pathologist who will give you a thorough gum examination. For some relief, try rinsing your mouth with warm saline water. Replace your old toothbrush with a new super soft bristle.

Q I am 65 years old. I have been regularly visiting a dentist every six months for a general check-up. Now that I have crossed the age of 60, should I switch to a 'geriatric dentist'?

A As of today, there is no dentist practicing geriatric dentistry as a specialty in India. However, attempts are being made to make all dental surgeons aware of geriatric dentistry. Continue your visits to your dentist. These days, doctors try to keep themselves updated with the latest developments by reading journals and attending conferences. But if you think your dentist is unable to find a solution to a particular problem, don't hesitate to ask him to refer you to someone else. ■

Dr P G Diwan is a dental surgeon with a clinic in Mumbai. He also heads the dental out-patient department at Bhabha Hospital, Mumbai. In 2003, he started a research project on geriatric dentistry, which deals with age-related changes in the oral cavity of senior citizens

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Stand tall

Shameem Akthar on improving posture with yoga

We wrongly assume that an ability to maintain a good posture is related to vanity. We also wrongly assume that increasing age

causes postural defects. Though age may impact posture obliquely, the main culprits are bad habits, lack of structured exercise, sedentary work and lifestyles, and inability to appreciate the direct link between our posture and our thoughts, thus allowing negative patterns to create misalignment.

Bad posture painfully collapses our major organ systems stacked in the torso, so individual cells suffer from chronic claustrophobia. Respiratory volume (lung capacity) is hit. The 'primary control' region (between head, neck and upper torso) becomes taut, which has a cascade effect on our autonomic nervous system, affecting our major systems. This is sometimes called the 'startle pattern'. The startle pattern keeps major parts of the body in a high nervous tension—the upper torso contracts, chest deflates, limbs become tense. The invisible part of our body also suffers as blood chemistry changes, blood pressure escalates and the circulatory system gets into a defensive mode while digestion enters a go-slow mode.

Most of us wrongly believe we are relaxed when we slump. On the contrary, this tires out our musculature, which is constantly trying to find a position in

which it can relax. Equally erroneously, those conscious of their posture end up keeping it upright in a tense manner, creating similar disturbances.

Posture affects state of mind too. Yoga uses posture-repairing balancers to set right depression, anger, anxiety and phobias. Yoga believes—and this is medically proven—that good balance and posture lead to mental equilibrium. The brain's cerebellum, medically referred to as 'the little brain' that governs posture and balance, is also involved with cognitive ability (problem-solving), ability to focus on a task, social grace and personal confidence. All worthy reasons to set right our posture, through yoga.

The most powerful posture rectifiers are standing *asana*. Among these, even more effective are the balancing ones such as tree (*tadasana*), one-legged prayer (*ekapada pranamasana*), eagle (*garuda*), Lord Shiva's poses (the *Natraj* series), and half crescent (*ardha chandrasana*). Supine poses such as leg raises (*pada uttanasana*) and abdominal twists (*udarakarshasana*) make the spine supple and flexible. Standing poses align the body, rectifying spinal problems and postural defects, while balancing poses prop the cerebellum's ability to balance. Both prevent age-related or habit-created postural defects that cause falls and chronic tiredness. The wobbly, shaky feeling you may experience initially disappears with regular practice. In fact, a sustained practice will soon bring the youth back into your spine! 🧘

For full text, go to www.harmonyindia.org

Yogic moves

Natraj asana

Stand up straight. Hold up your left hand. Bend the right leg backwards. Hold your right ankle with right hand. Inhale. Exhaling, lean forward. Lower your left hand to eye level, keeping it straight out in front of you, maintaining



MAMTA JADHAV

visual focus on it. Keep breathing normally, holding the pose as long as comfortable. If you feel wobbly, take some support, so that your left hand is on a table or wall in front. This will give you confidence. You can dispense with support once your pose becomes firm. Relax. Repeat for the other side.

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

HEALTH BYTES

BEAT THE BLUES

Here's a way to **kick depression out of your system**. Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health in Washington DC have discovered that an injectable anaesthetic drug called ketamine targets a neurotransmitter in the brain called glutamate, giving you a feeling of euphoria soon after. "It is almost like rebooting a computer, a chemical reboot, and the effect lasts for about a week," says Thomas Insel, director of the institute, sounding pretty euphoric himself. Insel's team is now studying possible repercussions of the long-term use of the drug. The study was reported in the August issue of journal *Archives of General Psychiatry*.



TOOTH TIME

Regular visits to the dentist not only protect your teeth, they can also save your carotid arteries, the main blood vessels leading to the brain. According to a recent study by the International Association for Dental Research, Australia, **untreated dental disease may cause clogged carotids, leading to an increased risk of stroke**. A separate study at the University of California also had similar results. A team there studied 18 silvers with varying degree of dental disease and found that people with carotid clogs usually had tooth decay, missing teeth or considerable amount of bone loss around the teeth.



MOVE TO TEST

Afraid of Alzheimer's? Bring home a **motion detector**. Researchers at the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Oregon, in the US, claim it does a better job of picking up early signs of dementia than conventional tests done by doctors. For one, it can be installed in the homes of senior citizens and can detect irregular patterns of movement in people with mild cognitive disorders in just about four weeks. At present, Alzheimer's detection tests are not very accurate and, as clinic visits are typically months or even years apart, it may take years to identify early stages of the disease. According to chief researcher Tamara L Hayes, detecting dementia early would be a boon for families of Alzheimer's patients as they can begin therapy early and make long-term care arrangements in case the problem gets worse.



VISION OF HOPE

Macular degeneration, a disorder that causes blood vessels behind the retina to leak blood and fluid, worsening vision, is a leading cause of blindness among silvers. In fact, an estimated 90 per cent of elders in India have lost their eyesight owing to this disorder. Now, US-based biotechnology company **Genetech has developed Lucentis, the first drug shown to significantly improve vision threatened by macular degeneration**, and it has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Lucentis inhibits the growth of blood vessels when injected into the eye. Other approved treatments can arrest progression of the disease, which can lead to blindness in just weeks or months, but none has been shown to significantly reverse deteriorating vision. The only glitch: the anticipated cost of Lucentis which, not surprisingly, is expected to be very high.



STUDY TABLE



WANTED: COMPANY

Are you lonesome tonight? If so, chances are you are less healthy too. Researchers from Aarhus Sygeus University in Denmark say **living alone can double your risk of severe heart disease compared to living with a partner**. The study appears in the July issue of *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* or log on to www.bmjournals.com. There is an accumulation of heart disease risk factors in people who live alone," says Dr Kirsten Nielsen, who led the research team. "They are less likely to have a social support network to draw on, and are likely to make fewer visits to the doctor. Habits such as smoking and a poor diet are more common among those who live alone."

IT'S IN YOUR EYES

According to Professor Tien Wong of the University of Melbourne, **retinal images may be a practical non-invasive method of assessing risk of heart disease**—the width of the veins and arteries in the eye are a good indicator of a person's chances of dying from coronary heart disease. Wong's team has just finished a nine year-long study of 3,654 men and women, aged 49 and over, as part of the university's Blue Mountains Eye Study. The study is published in the August issue of *Heart* journal.



HEALTH BYTES

PATCH UP



Good news for Alzheimer's patients. No more struggles to swallow Exelon pills, generally prescribed for the condition, which cause serious nausea and vomiting. Coming soon from pharma company Novartis is the **Exelon skin patch**, which is a much more effective alternative. It can't cure or prevent the disease, but it does temporarily treat symptoms. The drug inhibits the breakdown of a brain chemical called acetylcholine, which enables nerve cells to communicate with each other. Applied once a day, the new patch sends the drug straight into the bloodstream, bypassing the gastrointestinal tract. This results in fewer side effects and maintains a consistent daylong dose. The Exelon patch is expected to reach the market by the year-end. "It's a new treatment strategy that would be appreciated not only by patients, but caregivers," says Dr Bengt Winblad of Sweden's Karolinska Institute, who led the research team that developed the patch.

FIVE MUST-HAVES IN YOUR MEDICINE BOX

It's always advisable to have a handy first aid box in your home. Apart from the regular bandages and cotton swabs with disinfectant, here are five must-have medications for common ailments like body pain, fever, cold and gastric pains

1. Paracetamol (500 mg) for fever, body pain or headache
2. Antacid, like Ranitidine (150 mg), for gastric pain and indigestion
3. Cetirizine (10 mg) for cold, sneezing and allergy (not antibiotic)
4. Isosorbtrate (5 mg) for discomfort or tightness in the centre of the chest, breathlessness or discomfort in left arm
5. Calcium pills (5 mg) for strong bones

By Chennai-based geriatrician
Dr V S Natarajan, 66





On the edge

Discover the spiritual sustenance, says **Niles Elliot Goldstein**

Much of what passes for spirituality these days is approached from a perspective that is comforting and clean.

There are 12 steps for this, seven rules for that, and guardian angels to help us with all our problems along the way. A great many books on the topic, as well as the motivational speakers who go with them, seem to focus exclusively on the brighter side of spiritual issues. Sometimes these books and individuals go out of their way to accentuate the happier aspects of life, offering uplifting messages of boundless optimism and hope.

While such messages are important and speak to many people, they do not resonate with all of us. Reality can be messy, and it can force us to rein in our hopes. Not everyone can find spiritual fulfillment in a place that feels safe, like a self-help book or a house of worship. There is a long history of people discovering God in unexpected contexts. It can occur in a place of darkness, at the edge.

Judaism was born in the wilderness of the desert, at the foot of a mountain, as a people cringed in terror. Christianity traces its origins to a man dying on a cross, crying out in despair.

While American popular culture has approached spirituality from a lighter perspective, the world around us has fallen prey to decidedly darker forces. A thousand years ago, panic swept over Europe as people thought the end of history was at hand. Monks stopped copying manuscripts, and construction on religious buildings came to a halt. Today, similar apocalyptic impulses have surfaced. We have doom-day cults, survivalist groups, and religious fanaticism. We fear nuclear catastrophe, AIDS, overpopulation, global warming, even alien invasion.

Nietzsche warns us, "If you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you." But there can be darkness without doom. If we are careful, it is possible to accept, even grow from spirituality's borderlands without being consumed by them. I have never been drawn to the religious centre, but I am not alone. I am just one link in a very long chain of spiritual malcontents. Historically, when the mainstream has been stunted, many have looked to the fringes for their spiritual life. We have alternative medicine and alternative music. Why not alternative religious expression?

In the past, men and women found God—and their particular spiritual expressions—in bushes that burned, valleys of shadows, and dens of lions. Itinerant rabbis and explorer priests followed their callings to uncharted villages. Some found the fullest manifestation of their faith through solitude, hunger, or other forms of denial. In the modern world, our experiences with spirituality may take place not only in synagogues and through holy books, but in dogsleds, squad cars and cyberspace.

**It is possible to
accept spirituality's
borderlands without
being consumed
by them**

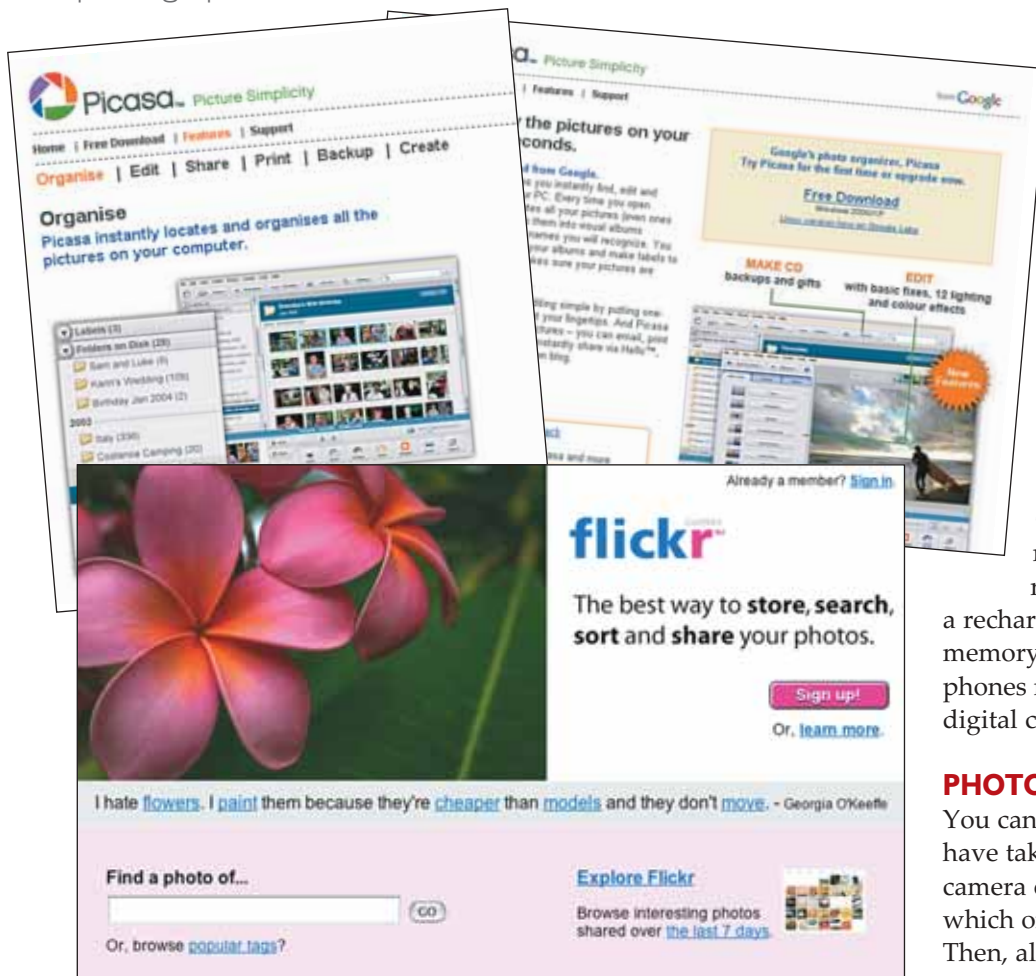
Authentic works on spirituality have never been afraid to journey to the frontiers of personal experience. Avoiding the darker dimension of the human soul (and its interactions with the world of the spirit) will lead only to scratching the outer crust of our inner worlds. We may feel good as a result. But with this approach we will never shake off our false sense

of security or encounter the full spectrum of spiritual experiences. Kierkegaard calls God the Absolute Frontier. It sometimes does take a journey to the edge, into territory that is not always comfortable, to discover the spiritual sustenance we so often crave. The dark forest of the inner spirit may be murky in places, but buried in its soil are the seeds of our salvation. ■

Excerpt from God at the Edge (2000; Bell Tower; 204 pages). Goldstein is the founding rabbi of The New Shul in New York City's Greenwich Village. He lectures widely on Jewish mysticism and spirituality

Click and share

New columnist **Tushar Kanwar** tells us how to make web albums and share photographs online



With a digital camera, holding on to those magical memories is easy. Thanks to the Internet, you can create 'web albums' that can be accessed by anyone, anywhere, on their computer.

CAMERA ABCS

In the October 2005 issue of *Harmony*, we discussed how a digital camera works. It's simple, really—it records images on a

sensor and stores them on a memory device. From this device, you can copy the pictures onto a computer or even print them directly—many photo studios now offer printing facilities for digital pictures too. Then, you reuse the memory chip or card to shoot more pictures.

You can choose a camera according to your needs. Picture quality or resolution is measured in a unit called mega pixel,

commonly called MP, equal to almost a million pixels. No need for film rolls, no developing hassles. The price is right too: entry-level models in Kodak's EasyShare series, are available for about Rs 5,300. Those with zoom lens start from Rs 9,000. Companies like Canon, Panasonic, Nikon and Olympus offer digital models in different price ranges. You pay extra for a rechargeable battery pack and memory cards. Most mobile phones now come with a built-in digital camera.

PHOTOS TO PC

You can see the photographs you have taken on the screen of the camera or phone and decide which ones to store and share. Then, all you do is transfer your photographs to your computer through a cable after you have installed the software provided with the phone or camera.

Alternatively, you can use Bluetooth, which is wireless transfer of pictures to a printer or computer with technology that enables computers, mobiles and personal digital assistants to connect with each other. You can also get a CD to copy your photos on it and then transfer them to your PC.

SORT YOUR SNAPS

For organising your pictures on your PC, before you create web albums, I recommend an application called Picasa, which is free and easy to use. Go to <http://picasa.google.com/> to download this 4.6 megabyte (MB) application—it should take about five to 15 minutes to download. Once installed, Picasa searches your PC for photographs you have taken in the past and creates a library for you, based on the folders on your PC. It has plenty of photo editing features that can enhance your photos or simply cover up errors, like fixing the lighting and contrast in your pictures. The 'I'm feeling lucky' button applies a host of fixes.

Picasa resizes your photos, to help you create web albums. Usually, digital cameras shooting at high resolutions (like 4 or 5 MP) tend to create bulky images, which are a pain to transfer to the Internet. In Picasa, open the folder in the library you want to transfer, and click the *File* menu, followed by the *Export Picture to Folder* option. Picasa then lets you specify where on your PC you would like to save the new folder (so your original images are left intact), and the size of the final images. Choose 800 pixels, and you should have images that are light in size to transfer.

FIND YOUR SPACE

Next, you need to *sign up* for one of many photo-sharing websites on the Internet to store and display your photos. There are several sites (see box) that offer free, and paid, photo hosting services with different features.

One of the most popular is Flickr—www.flickr.com—that aptly illustrates the special features of a web album. Flickr manages everything, from uploading to organising, within your Internet browser. No login is required for others to view your photos and basic user accounts are free, allowing you to upload up to 20 MB worth of photos every calendar month. Next month, you start right over. The free account also gives you three albums and a maximum of your 200 most recent images to be displayed in your personal photo gallery, or 'photostream'. The paid version, Flickr Professional, available at \$ 24.95 per year (a little over Rs 1,000).

START THE UPLOAD

If you have a Yahoo mail/messenger account, you can click directly on the Sign Up link after going to Flickr. You will be asked to enter your Yahoo ID and password. (Yahoo owns Flickr so it is safe.) You'll be asked for a username. Choose one and enter the site.

Next, you are presented with a page where you can upload photos. Flickr lets you upload six photos at a time through the browser. Click on the *Browse* button next to each empty slot and point to your photos on your hard drive one by one. When you have chosen them, click the *Upload* button. Soon, you will see the pictures you have uploaded. Notice that the photos have been labelled with titles like 'DSC00987.jpg'—these are filenames copied straight out of your camera. You can change the

Fast facts

Photo-sharing sites like Flickr, Yahoo Photos (photos.yahoo.com), Kodak Gallery (www.kodakgallery.com), Zoto (www.zoto.com) and Parazz (www.parazz.com) all offer both free and paid services. They offer space ranging from 20 MB to 2 GB to store your images for free. One option is to go to picasaweb.google.com and download the version of Picasa enabled for direct publishing to the Web. It lets you upload your pictures directly from Picasa. You don't need to open websites in your browser to upload pictures—Picasa uploads the pictures you want directly into your 250 MB Picasa account.

titles as you wish, add descriptors or sort your pictures into albums.

LET EVERYBODY KNOW

Surprise your friends and family by shooting off an email to them with your new Flickr address. This would look like <http://www.flickr.com/photos/YourUsername/>, where you need to replace *YourUserName* with the Flickr username you picked earlier. Visitors can surf through your online photo albums, view your photos, even save them onto their own computers. What's more, they can leave comments on each picture. And if you want to limit access to your photos, the site offers a privacy option that lets you determine who can access them.

Whether you pick Flickr or any other photo-sharing website, once you get started, just go ahead, share your memories! ■

Tushar Kanwar is a Bangalore-based technology writer. He writes a weekly column in Graphiti, the Sunday magazine of The Telegraph, Kolkata. Mail your questions to Tushar at harmony@kanwar.net



Illustrations: MAMTA JADHAV

Happy holidays!

Get insurance for worry-free travel

Whether you are inhaling the cold alpine air of Switzerland, shopping on Oxford Street in London, cruising on a houseboat along the backwaters of Kerala or exploring the wonders of Sunderbans, every holiday is special. Most of us spend hours diligently planning every little detail of our holidays, from air or train bookings and hotels to day-to-day itineraries. But an unforeseen event like a sudden illness or accident or even an unexpected

delay or cancellation of your journey owing to bad weather can throw a spanner in the works of the most meticulously planned holiday—this may prove not only to be disappointing, but also expensive. This is where travel insurance comes in.

Travel insurance can cover a wide range of contingencies, from medical emergencies to loss of money and important documents, trip delays and cancellations, and even burglary of your assets back home when you are travelling.

A sudden **medical emergency** is not only worrying but also brings with it financial burden. And if you are travelling overseas, the high costs of medical treatment in a foreign country just makes matters worse. Travel insurance takes care of such a situation, allowing you to concentrate on taking care of yourself, or your family member who is unwell. The answer is **cashless treatment services**. That means you get optimal treatment available at your destination, without any down payment of cash, thanks to your travel policy. You just need to contact the designated 'emergency assistance service provider' abroad (as indicated in your plan) and they facilitate cashless treatment in a hospital at your destination. In case you are unable to get the necessary treatment at or near your destination, a travel insurance policy also provides for **emergency medical evacuation** back home in order for you to avail treatment and takes care of the transportation costs. And in case of death, costs towards **transporting the remains** back home or burial expenses abroad are reimbursed.

Apart from medical emergencies, there are other problems that may befall you on a holiday. What if your **baggage doesn't reach your destination**? It might get delayed or even lost. In such situations, travel insurance helps you breathe easy. Imagine the complications that can arise from **losing important documents** like your passport. Again, travel insurance comes to your rescue by providing the cost of getting a duplicate or fresh copy. What's more, if you find yourself in a **financial emergency** as a result of being robbed, your travel insurance policy will help you get some emergency cash.

Here's another situation: you might be on the receiving end of a delay or cancellation. In such a case, your travel insurance plan will take care of even the non-refundable expenses.

Most general insurance companies in India offer such coverage. Some companies, like Bajaj Allianz, ICICI Lombard and Reliance General Insurance, take it a step further by offering a host of added compensations—such as **hijack distress allowance** (compensation payable in case of hijack of air or sea common carrier), **compassionate visit** (two-way ticket for a relative or friend to visit you if you are hospitalised overseas), **daily allowance in case of hospitalisation**, **personal liability**, **personal accident**, and **missed connection**. Another great value-add is the benefit of **protecting your assets against burglary back home in India**, while you are away travelling.

To sign up for travel insurance, you can go through your travel agent (ensure you are dealing with a reputed company) or directly contact an insurance

For the age group of 70 and above, the user must provide a medical report

company. Insurance companies allow travellers to choose a plan based on their individual requirements. There are also tailor-made plans available for different segments. For instance, companies like Reliance General Insurance offer customised plans for **students**, which include benefits like **study interruption** (payment of school fee for the current study semester if education abroad is interrupted because of health problems; **sponsor protection** (reimbursement of tuition fees in case of death of the insured student's sponsor overseas who pays the fees); and even the arrangement of a **bail bond** for a student who inadvertently finds himself on the wrong side of the law. Another segment is **corporate travellers**. These frequent flyers have the option of an **annual plan**, which covers them under a travel insurance policy for a whole year irrespective of the number of trips they go on.

Now, let's get to the bottom line, literally. Travel insurance is not as expensive as you imagine (*see box*). As most plans are flexible, you can work out a scheme that suits you—and your pocket. So the next time you go on a trip, don't forget to strap on your insurance safety belt.

—Karthika Kalyan



Bajaj Allianz (For a Week's Travel)

Travel Care (41-60 years); Annual premium for destinations excluding US and Canada, Rs 515; and Rs 800 for destinations including US, Canada

Travel Secure (41-60 years); Annual premium for destinations excluding US and Canada, Rs 720; and Rs 1,020 for all destinations

Travel Age (61-70 years); Annual premium for destinations excluding US and Canada, Rs 820; and Rs 1,100 for destinations including US and Canada

ICICI Lombard (Long-term Travel)

Silver (Rs 1 lakh plan for 41-60 years); Annual premium for destinations including US and Canada, Rs 688; and Rs 493 excluding US and Canada. This covers cost of dental treatment, medical cost due to illness or accident, including diagnostic tests.

Gold (Rs 1 lakh plan for 41-60 years); Annual premium for destinations including US and Canada, Rs 1,030; and Rs 798 excluding US and Canada. Apart from cost for dental treatment, medical expenses and diagnostic tests, this plan includes compensation for checked-in baggage loss, checked-in baggage delay and financial emergency assistance.

Platinum (Rs 1 lakh plan for 41-60 years); Annual premium for destinations including US and Canada, Rs 1,268; and Rs 1,010 excluding US and Canada. Apart from all the features included in the Gold plan, this plan includes daily allowance of \$ 25 per day for five days of hospitalisation in case of medical emergency

Reliance General Insurance (Long-term Travel)

Different countries have different rates

Standard cover for two weeks travel; (41-60 years): \$ 50,000; Annual premium Rs 656

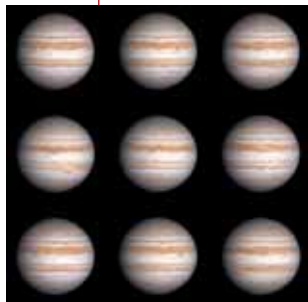
Silver \$ 100,000 cover; Annual premium, Rs 721

Gold \$ 25,00,000; Annual premium, Rs 907

Platinum \$ 50,00,000; Annual premium, \$ 1,330

QUICK BYTES

SCHEME OF THINGS



%

Minister of State for Finance Pawan Kumar Bansal has clarified that although the interest payable under the Senior Citizens Savings' Scheme (with a **9 per cent interest rate**) is taxable, with tax deducted at source according to the

provisions of Section 194A of the Income Tax Act, senior citizens aged 65 years and above whose estimated tax on total income for a financial year is nil, may furnish a declaration in Form 15H for no deduction of tax at source. Other depositors fulfilling the same condition are eligible for claiming no deduction of tax at source on furnishing a declaration in Form 15G. Moreover, any senior depositor may obtain a certificate for no deduction or lower deduction of tax at source under Section 197(1) of the Income Tax Act from his assessing officer.

PENSION UP

The Centre has increased the pension amount under the National Old Age Pension Scheme from Rs 75 to Rs 200 per beneficiary per month for people over 65. A sum of Rs 1,430 crore has been provided in the Union Budget 2006-07 as additional allocation. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi announced that the increase will be effective from 1 April, 2006, adding, "The proposed increase will extend much needed financial support to old and destitute persons to manage their livelihood."

MONEY ON THE WAY



Want to receive money from overseas or send money abroad? Here are some of the options:

PERSONAL CHEQUES

These are usual cheques against a checking or saving account with any overseas bank, which can be posted by mail. This is by far the most convenient method for the sender, and most inexpensive too. But for the receiver in India, it is the worst. First, the cheques need to arrive safely. Then, personal cheques drawn on an overseas bank are treated as a collection item here. They normally take 45-90 days for realisation and come with a collection fee—the amount depends on how many banks were involved in the collection process.

WIRE TRANSFERS

A wire transfer is an electronic transfer of your funds. It is the fastest and safest way to send money. You can remit money from your local bank to anywhere in the world by giving wire transfer instructions. It normally takes 24-48 banking hours for the funds to reach the country of destination. Some smaller banks in countries like India, however, can hold transfer money for a few weeks,

so be sure to ask about the timeframe when placing your transfer. For this mode of transfer, you'll need to know the person's name, account number, bank name and where the receiver's bank is located. In some circumstances, you would be able to send a transfer as a demand draft to someone who does not have a bank account. Different countries and banks have varying regulations on this. This mode also offers a tracking option to know the exact status of your transfer. Almost all banks in India accept wired funds for abroad. Some banking institutions that accept wire transfers include ICICI Bank's Money2India, Times of Money: Remit2India, MoneyBookers and Cash2India.

BANK DRAFTS

As a sender from India or abroad, the money for a draft can either be paid up front, or can be drafted directly out of your account. The bank asks you for the receiver's name and address. Drafts are mailed, so the amount of time it takes depends on the mail system and country of destination. For the receiver in India or anywhere else, a draft is quite simple. With proper identification, he also has the option to cash the draft at any bank (the receiver does not need a bank account to cash the draft).

CREDIT CARD

It can work both ways. You can get an extra card for your grandchildren overseas or your children can offer one to you for use in India. The recipient can take a cash advance and the sender can cover the charges. The cash advance provides favourable exchange rates and the cards are recognised worldwide. The disadvantages: there are limitations on daily withdrawals from ATM and you don't have control over withdrawal.

TRY A MONEY BUSINESS SERVICE (MSB) COMPANY

MSBs are companies that send international money transfers. You pay up front via cash or credit card, give the receiver's name and country of destination, and the transfer is sent in the local foreign currency. Your options include sending the transfer at an actual storefront. You can also conduct wire transfers through MSBs like ICICI Bank's Money2India; Times of Money: Remit2India; Western Union Money Transfer (by credit card, telephone, money order); MoneyGram International Money Transfer; iKobo ATM VISA card transfer (it takes only 30 seconds); MoneyBookers; and Cash2India. 📌



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Lawful ways

Legalpundits answer queries from readers on their legal rights

Q I am a senior citizen living in Mumbai. I have stopped paying bills issued by our cooperative housing society for the past 10 years as they included disputed arrears and the society refused to explain payment details. I was told that, according to a recent judgement, no cooperative society can claim dues from members for longer than three years. Is this true?

—R Mirchandani, Mumbai

A It depends on what exactly you mean by 'disputed arrears' and how your society plans to address them. Under Section 101 of the Maharashtra State Cooperative Housing Society Act, 1960, in accordance with the latest model bylaws, a society can claim arrears only for a period of three years from its members. This limitation for three years is contained in the bylaw itself. This proceeding can be initiated by the society, and can be addressed to the Registrar. However, under Section 91, the society can initiate proceedings of recovery of dues for a period longer than three years against a defaulting member. So it is best you sit with your society members and resolve the dispute.

Q I am 66 years old and live in a residential apartment in Mumbai. To supplement our income, my wife gives tuitions to students. Is it illegal to conduct tutorials from home?

—K S Mehta, Mumbai

A Taking tuitions is a secondary use to residential occupation. The predominant purpose is still residential. Under Regulation 51 (i) of the Development Control Regulation for Greater Bombay, 1991, 'customary home occupations' are permitted in the residential area. Taking tuitions at home could come

under the term 'customary home occupations'. Under this clause, you can work out of home like lawyers or business consultants and can even have your own office in the flat. However, if you convert the entire flat into a full-time school or educational institution, that would be 'non-residential'. Please ensure you do not contravene any of the rules or decorum of your Cooperative Housing Society (CHS) by disturbing other members.



Q I am a 66 year-old widower living in Faridabad. I have a garment export business and a three-bedroom flat in my name. I have two sons.

The eldest takes no interest in the business and lives with his family in my flat.

He does not contribute much towards family expenses. My youngest son actively assists me in running the home and business. I want to make a will leaving my business in the name of my youngest son and make provisions for selling the flat after my demise, dividing the amount equally among the two. Can my eldest son contest the will?

—Name withheld, Faridabad

A Are your assets ancestral property or are you the sole owner/proprietor? If your business is a family venture, running for generations, each of your sons would be entitled to his equal share, as in the case of the three-bedroom family flat. But if they are solely your property and registered in your own name, you can decide how you wish to distribute them. To avoid any future quarrels, it is best to make a registered will and get two witnesses to attest the will. With the help of your lawyer or advocate, make sure you comply with all the conditions that go into making a valid will. ■

Legalpundits International Services Pvt. Ltd. For advice from Legalpundits, mail us or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org or fax at (022)22852217. Harmony takes no responsibility for advice offered

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I am a 56 year-old chartered accountant from Ahmedabad. I would like to make pen and phone friends with broadminded women.

Contact Mansuri Yunus Mohamed Husen at (079) 25502523; mobile: 09227201306

I am a 69 year-old veterinary doctor from Hyderabad. I am looking for like-minded people interested in nature study, photography, yoga, naturopathy, health counselling and meditation.

Contact Dr K Ramana Reddy at (040) 27121576; mobile: 09849739699

I am a 71 year-old retired person from Warangal. I pursue hobbies like cricket and reading. I have also written a book *Truth About Realities of Life*, which can be purchased for Rs 10

Contact Dr G Vidya Sagar at (0870) 2457436

I am a 66 year-old resident from Gwalior. I would like to interact with people about hobbies, interests and human services.

Contact Harish Chandra Gupta at (0751) 2423626

I am a 71 year-old retired UN official and management consultant living in Lonavla. I have a holiday home in Lonavla, Live Link. If you are looking for a place to stay, get in touch with me.

Contact G L Gagneja at (02114) 276406, 275176 mobile: 09850501455; email: apex1@vsnl.net

I am a 66 year-old from Karnal. I surf the Net extensively and would like to supply information on varied subjects to those who are interested.

Contact Sudhir Gupta on (0184) 2285278/4035278; email: sudhirjee@yahoo.com; mobile: 09896159009

Explore new horizons

Experts at www.monster.com answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement



Q I am a retired lecturer in Hindi based in Mumbai. I currently freelance as a journalist for various publications but I need a steady job. What are my options?

You have two options: to continue freelancing or go back to teaching. Being in Mumbai, you can explore various avenues in terms of freelancing for publications. The more you write, the more offers you will get to write. You can also approach editors and try and strike a part-time deal with them. But for this you need to do some legwork. As for teaching, you can either get in touch with private tutorial institutes for a job or reconnect with retired colleagues and open your own tutorial institute. This may take a bit of effort, and capital, but it's an option worth exploring. There is a lot of demand for private tutorials these days as, increasingly, students from Class VIII onwards are joining tutorial classes to prepare for X and XII standard examinations.

Q I am a retired professor of English from Delhi. After more than 25 years of teaching, I find the lack of interaction with people disturbing. At the age of 60, can I take up another job that would involve social interaction?

Having been a lecturer in English, you have several options. With the online market flourishing, you can enroll yourself as an online instructor. Before that, you can take an online test to determine if online teaching is for you by going to URL <http://www.onlinelearning.net/InstructorCommunity/selfevaluation.html?s=622.1060o165a.0989513y60>. But if you are not Internet-savvy, consider starting your own tutorial institute for spoken English. Here, you can teach English to students or people aspiring to go abroad. Here are a couple of websites that can help you further: <http://www.learningenterprises.org/> and <http://www.21stcenturyteacher.com/>

Q I retired as construction engineer a couple of years ago. I was working with a reputed builder. Is it possible for me to now start a consultancy in my field of expertise? If so, how?

Opening a consultancy is a good idea now that there is a boom in the real-estate market. Start by getting in touch with previous clients or contacts to get some business. Also keep a lookout in the classified columns of newspapers for similar business offers. To gain some expertise in consultancy, it is a good idea to work with an established consultant initially. That way you would upgrade your skills and learn some new tricks of the trade.

Q I am a 62 year-old retired bank clerk. From issuing cheque books to handling NRI accounts, I have practically worked in every department of the bank. I also have an in-depth knowledge of stocks and shares. Owing to personal reasons, I am forced to look for a job after retirement. Kindly tell me my options.

As a retired bank employee, you should use your talents in a related field. As you have knowledge of finance, you can advise people on investment in shares and mutual funds. For this, you can either work from home or rent a small office for your consultancy. You can also work for online companies involved in shares or financial consultancy like www.indiabulls.com, www.sharekhan.com, www.icicidirect.com. Another option is to change direction a little and become an agent for insurance companies like Max New York, MetLife, Bajaj Allianz or Life Insurance Company. To become an agent, you need to appear for the pre-recruitment test conducted by Insurance Institute, India. This is preceded by a 100-hour training over a period of three weeks or more, if you plan to do it part-time.

Paper tiger

Making paper bags has enabled **Purshottam Deshmukh** to become more self-sufficient



Deshmukh makes bags out of newspapers and cardboards

Purshottam Deshmukh's paper bags may not be the most beautiful or refined products in the market, but they are his way of generating his own environment—healthy land, air and water. Made out of waste cardboard, old clothes, jute and thread ropes, these bags are Deshmukh's source of inspiration, and income.

A resident of Arera Colony in New Bhopal, Deshmukh retired in 2000 from Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited as senior technician with a pension and a

significant innovation to his credit—Deshmukh invented a spring-loaded rivet hammer. Earlier, workers would manually hammer rivets in metallic sheets and often hurt themselves; Deshmukh improvised this to a mechanical process.

Some months after retirement, Deshmukh, now 66, thought of making the best of his time by using his training as a skilled artisan. The government's anti-polythene campaign was picking up at the time so he decided to make handmade bags. All he needed was an investment of Rs

125 for tools like punches, hammer and scissors, and raw material. For guidance, he contacted local non-government organisations. Over the years, his work has gained publicity through word of mouth. He hasn't earned too many clients but has enough to keep him going.

Now, Deshmukh has expanded his range to include file covers and disposable tiffin boxes made from cardboard and newspaper, sometimes using wax coating to make the products waterproof. At present, the entire process is manual. Each plain paper bag costs about Rs 3.50, while cloth-lined bag comes at about Rs 5.50.

The disposable Tiffin boxes, and a healthier option than plastic boxes, cost just Re 1 each. After expenses, he earns about Rs 1,500 per month, a modest but welcome addition to his pension.

Deshmukh plans to further refine his work but needs more helping hands. He wants to use a mechanised or electrical sheet rolling plant (which he plans to buy from the scrap market and repair) to make paper rolling faster. For Deshmukh, the returns are added self-sufficiency. He doesn't need to depend on son Prafull for his needs or those of

Each environment friendly paper bag costs Rs 3.50, those lined with clothes Rs 5.50

wife Poornima or ailing mother Prabhavati. "And if I feel like buying something for my granddaughter [daughter Pranita's child], I can do it without any second thoughts," he adds.

"This trade does not require much skill or physical labour," he says. "Anyone between the age of 17 and 70 can do it!"

— S Vani

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New tie-ups

Harmony Interactive Centre plans to network with other organisations

After celebrating their second anniversary (29 July) with music and fun, Harmony Interactive Centre has rolled out its future agenda. What's taking centrestage is networking activities.

"We are going all out to tie up with like-minded associations and organise talks, seminars, concerts, medical camps...anything that will help silvers," says Hiren Mehta, in charge of the Centre. The idea is to spread the word and get others to do what Harmony Initiative has done for two years.

The Centre is looking forward to hearing from silver associations, clubs and even old-age homes. A talk was held recently at J J Dharamshala, Nagpada,



ASHESH SHAH

The second anniversary celebration at the Centre

Mumbai on 'Understanding superstitions' and the response was promising. About 15-20 members went for a half-day visit to Manav Seva Sangh, in Mumbai's central Sion, and interacted with silvers there. Soon, Senior Citizens' Associations of Ghatkopar, Andheri-J B Nagar and Mira Road would be joining hands with Centre to come up with specialised events.

Till then, the Centre's roster of monthly events are full with medical camps, talk on ayurveda, joke sessions, *rangoli* making, aerobics and many more silver-oriented events. ■

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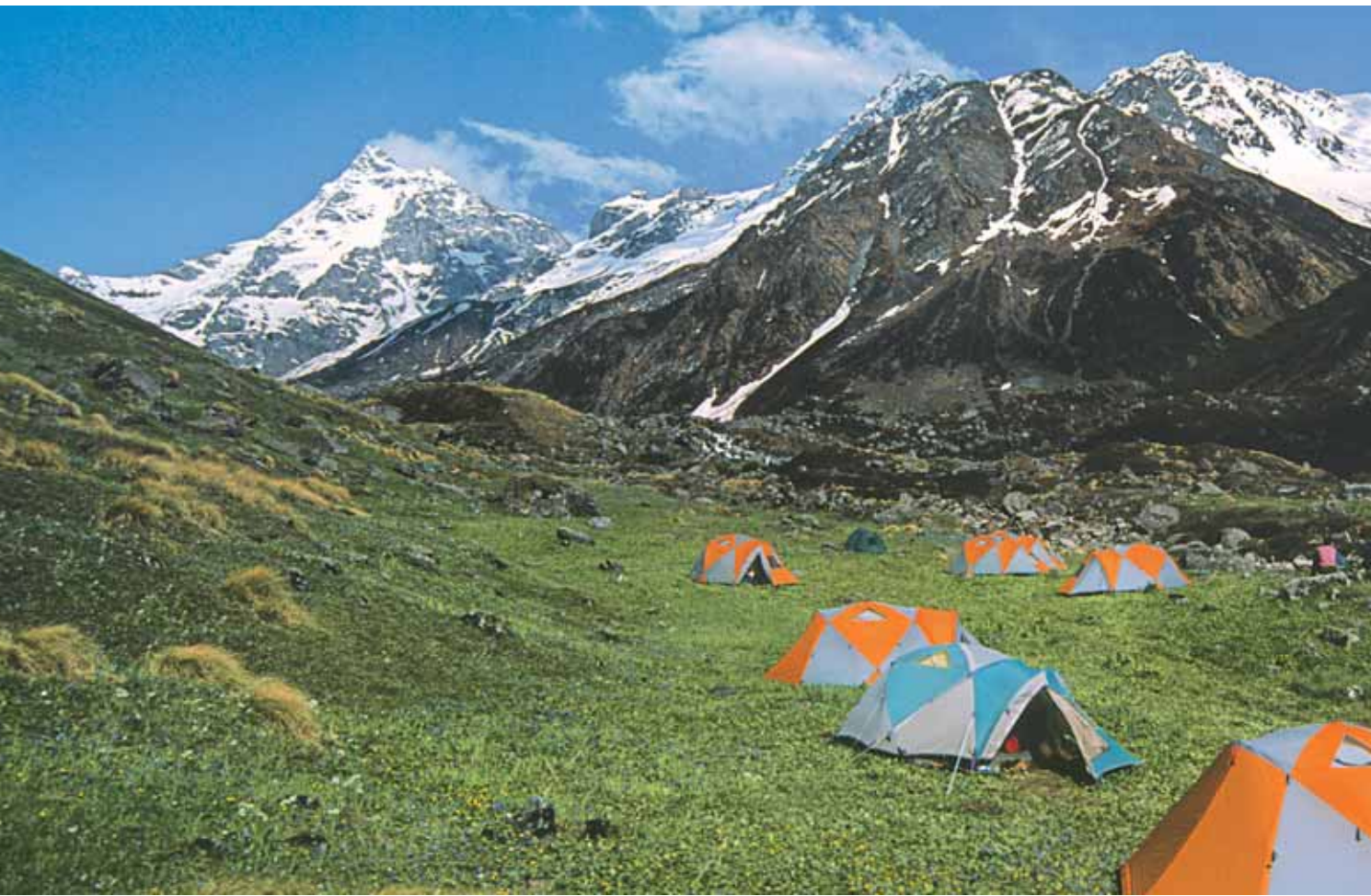
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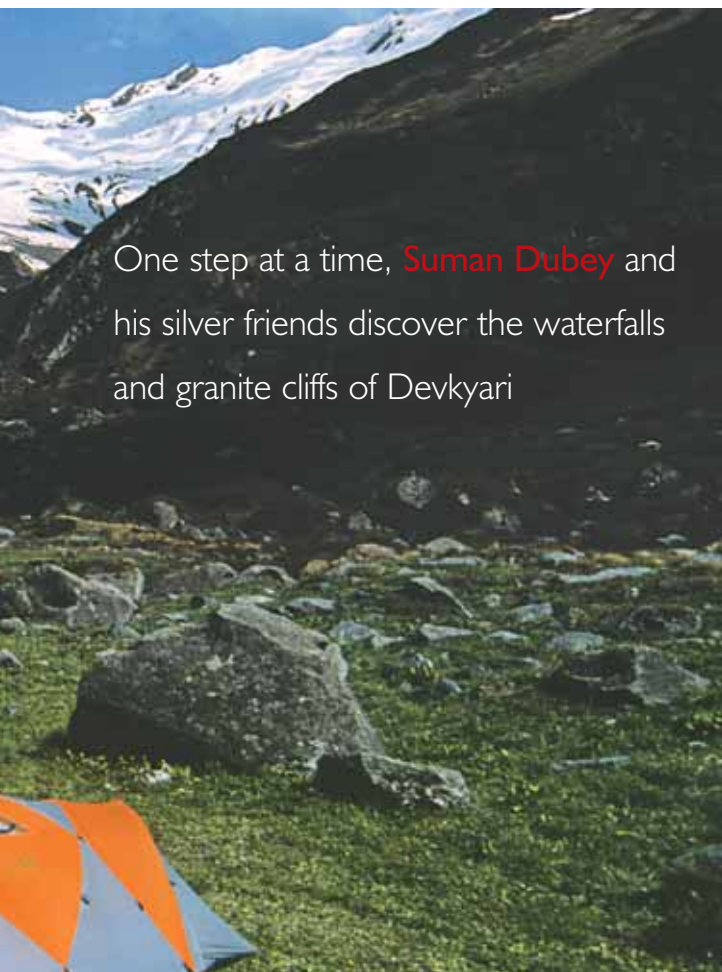
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Paradise



Devkyari, at 4,000 m above sea level and encircled with mountains

Found!



One step at a time, **Suman Dubey** and his silver friends discover the waterfalls and granite cliffs of Devkyari

Courtesy: SUMAN DUBEY



Imagine a long flat plain, about 3 km long, carpeted with brown grass and yellow marsh marigolds, with tiny purple primulas lining rippling streams. Elevate it to 4,000 m above sea level, and encircle it with lofty mountains of blue-white snow, precipitous rock and hanging glaciers, rising to almost 6,000 m. Place at one end a moraine and at the other, a tumbling river.

Welcome to Devkyari, a vast grazing ground long enough to land a large airplane, which lies at the head of Obra River as it emerges from the glaciers that separate Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh. Few have heard of it, fewer still have been there save seasonal migratory shepherds who herd their flocks of mountain goats and sheep for summer grazing.

On the last day of May this year, Devkyari proved to be a busy place. Not only did it host a motley group of mountain enthusiasts spanning two generations, but it was also, briefly, home to the idol of Someshwara Mahadev, the presiding deity of the temple of Jakhol, the nearest village down valley. This unusual coming together of seekers of pleasure and faith was for us the climax of a fascinating trek in this remote part of the Himalaya.

Like many endeavours, trekking expeditions can be more stimulating if they bring together oddly assorted people. Ours encompassed climbers and walkers, men and women, Indians and foreigners, quiet ones along with the talkative, the fast as well as the slow—and some who were more than twice the age of others. The result was an uncommon group that, despite the first suggestion of incongruity, managed to have a glorious three weeks in the mountains together.

Perhaps it wasn't as peculiar as it sounds. Many of us had at times in the past been up several high valleys together. If differences manifested

(Clockwise from top) Base camp in Obra Valley with the Ranglana peak in the background is at a height of 3,600 metres; The Obra River; Chulai (*amaranthus*) field in Jakhol in September; Pilgrims meditate at Devkyari, which is at a height of 4,100 metres. The yellow flowers (*primula stuarti*) are plucked from Obra Valley

of snow, is a vast grazing ground large enough to land a big airplane]



themselves, they did so only to create a synergy that kept the whole group active and well-integrated. The younger members were swifter, more energetic, and sought more ambitious goals. The older ones, while not always lagging behind, managed to pack in almost as much adventure and a lot more leisure activity at camp.

We started walking from the fine forest rest house at Jakhol. It sits at 2,300 m at the edge of thick deodar forest, above the Supin River just upstream of where it joins the Tons. The village is a long day's drive from Dehradun. The most popular trekking destination in northern Garhwal, Harki Dun, is just three days away; Yamunotri lies in a neighbouring valley and Tibet is not far off.

(Left) Suman Dubey, Louise Wilson, Gerald Wilson and Harish Kapadia at Devkyari; (below) Pilgrims dance around the image of Someshwar Mahadev, the presiding deity of the temple of Jakhol, at Devkyari



[We valley explorers watched enthralled as climbers—just dots on the



Leisure time in the dining tent meant reading, playing scrabble or just chilling out

As a concession to us elders, the group apportioned four days to climb to 3,600 m and set up our base camp in a picture-perfect pasture a few hours walk short of Devkyari. We spent a week there at the foot of waterfalls and granite cliffs, with the peak of Ranglana (5,554 m) looming above. The seniors, Gerald and Louise Wilson, 67 and 65 respectively, Harish Kapadia, 61, and I, just past 63, divided our time between day walks, reading and Scrabble. (For the record, I won.)

More often than not we were also joined by Sukeshi Sheth, Ashish Shah and Radha Upadhyaya, none of them beyond their 30s. The remaining, more energetic members of the group—Rajal Upadhyaya, Vinay Hegde and Rajesh Gadgil, all climbers in their 30s and 40s—ventured high up on the surrounding ridges, food and gear loaded onto their backs.

On one memorable morning, we valley explorers watched enthralled as the climbers—just dots on the snow—inched their way up to the summit of Goncha, a 5,200 m peak nearby. They returned to tell of wonderful views of Banderpunch and Swargarohini, the dominant peaks in the area, as we sipped whiskey and hot water in celebration.

Our four days at Devkyari culminated in what the people of Jakhol said was Someshwara Mahadev's first-ever visit to his birthplace, a natural cave formed by a gigantic rock on the meadow. During his 24-hour sojourn, called the Someshwar Mahadev Teerath Padyatra, the devta was ritually bathed in a glacial pool high above Devkyari, as some 200 pilgrims offered prayers. The day-long ceremonies



FACT FILE

When to go

Pre-monsoon—May-June—is best, the valley gets a lot of rain and the grasses grow taller than human beings, making walking difficult. The weather is, however, better in September and October.

How to get there

It takes a long day to drive from Dehra Dun to Jakhol, halt at Netwar. The drive is pleasant, through Mussoorie (transit early to avoid the traffic at Kempty falls), up the Yamuna, and then along the Tons river to Netwar, where the Jakhol route diverts along the Supin river.

Preparations

This is an easy trek, but carry food (buy from Dehra Dun, though some fresh foods are available in Jakhol) and equipment, including sturdy walking boots, tents, kitchen stuff, medicines, rain gear and warm clothes. Our arrangements were made by Rimo Expeditions, based in Gurgaon and Leh: Phone 0124-280-6027/8/90; fax 280-6030; email at info@rimoexpeditions.com, website www.rimoexpeditons.com

ended with traditional dances on the vast Devkyari plain through the afternoon and evening, before the procession returned home the next morning.

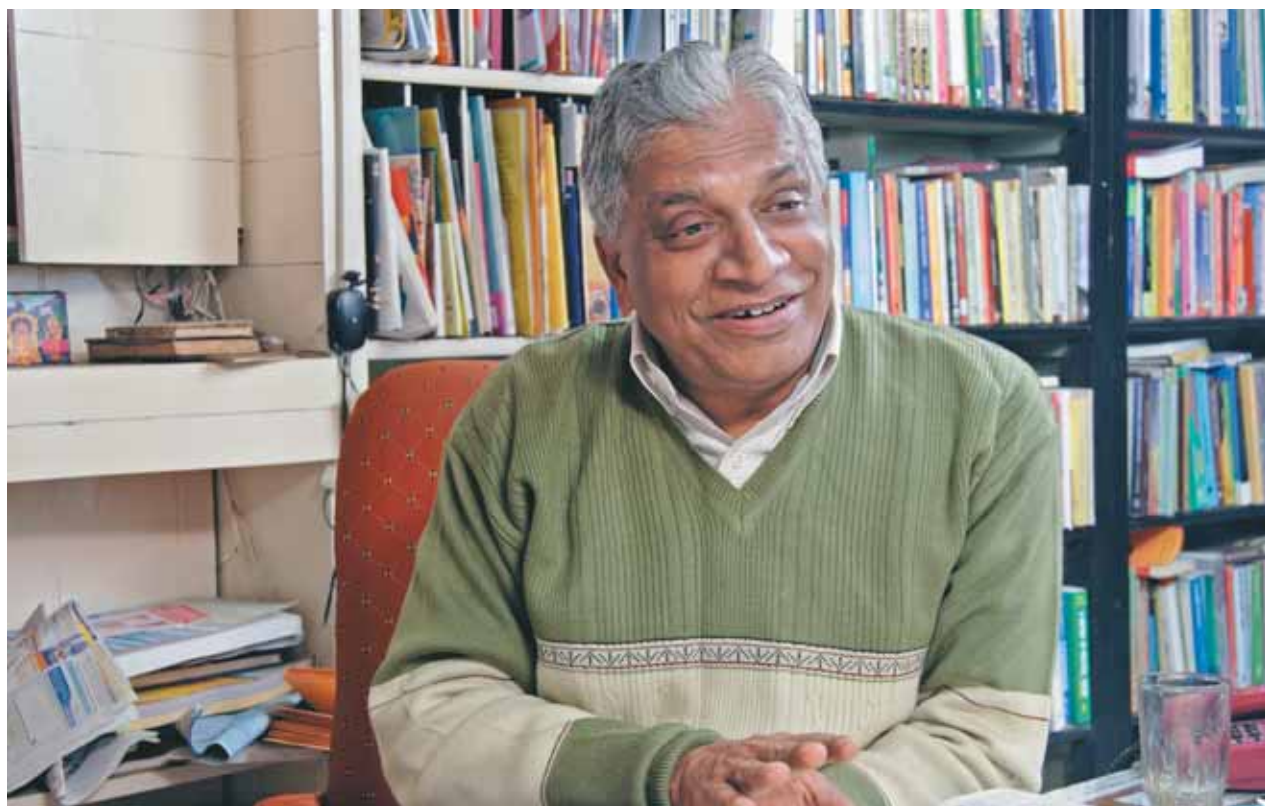
The *devta's* visit brought us some much-needed good weather, after almost two weeks of intermittent rain, hail and lightening storms. On our last morning in the mountains, we were treated, finally, to memorable views of high snows bathed in crisp morning sun. On the whole, however, the bad weather was a mere nuisance—more than compensated for by the high mountain flowers that lined the side-streams, the rolling green and brown pastures awaiting the arrival of herders, the shining snows, and the rejuvenating mountain air that so effortlessly dissolves the cares of urban living and peels away years from ageing minds and bodies. ■

Mountaineer Suman Dubey, 63, is former editor of Indian Express and chief representative in India for Dow Jones & Co, owner of Wall Street Journal

snow—inched their way up to Goncha summit, a 5,200 m peak

Words' worth

Upendra Dixit, 65, owner of the oldest bookstore in Pune, tells **Kanchan Maslekar** about the pleasures of being surrounded by books



MY WORLD

A home without books is a body without soul. Though I went to a Marathi school, I mostly read books in English. I loved Ernst Hemmingway and the tales of Robin Hood. Over the years, I developed an interest in non-fiction, autobiographies and books based on experiences. I enjoy authors like Pavan Verma, who write on economic, social and political matters. Now, ironically, though I am surrounded by thousands of books for 10 hours every day, I can't find time

to read. Most of my time is spent interacting with customers at my bookstore, International Book Store. It is the oldest bookstore in Pune and I have spent the past 40 years working here.

CHAPTER I

My father, V N Dixit, started International Book Store on 1 January 1931. Then, it was the only bookstore in Pune and imported books on education, social science, literature and philosophy directly from publishers in the US and UK. We stocked mostly

English books and soon became a popular haunt for leaders, writers and academicians. I grew up watching people like S Radhakrishnan, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru spend hours in our store.

My father was a voracious reader and was obsessed with books. He started the store to be among books all day. He was also keen to cultivate good reading habits among the masses. So he started the open shelf system, where people could walk in and pick up

any book to read. He encouraged those who couldn't afford to buy books to sit in the bookshop and read. He loved discussing books with customers. Marathi writer P L Deshpande called him "International Dixit" in one of his books and the name stuck.

FINDING MY WAY

The topics of discussion at home were often centred on books. In school, I scored zeros in my math tests but I loved literature. This led me to opt for a Bachelor of Arts course in Ferguson College.

After graduation, I did my Masters in Political Science and Economics in 1968 and was offered a lectureship in Ferguson. Within two days, I realised I preferred to spend my time with books than students. After a brief stint in writing—I wrote for *Pune Herald* and *Tarun Bharat*—I started coming to the store regularly. As the only child, the store became a part of my future plans.

GUIDED BY LOGIC

I learnt everything on the job. When five people asked about the same book, it was obvious the book was 'special'. I always read these books. Some visitors even recommend passages from their favourite books for me to read. There are times when I get a little upset by constant interruption, but on days when I don't talk to anyone, I feel I haven't done anything! And if I don't visit the store, I feel restless.

What started as a store with about 25,000 books now has over 1 lakh books. We stock encyclopaedias and at least a dozen types of dictionaries, and have added new sections like management and computers. We intro-



Dixit (left) and his International Book Store (above) in Pune

duced concepts like book launches and book signing events in Pune. In 1978, we launched *Greig on Cricket*, a book by Tony Greig, former English cricket captain. We were also the first to launch Nobel laureate William Golding's 1954 classic *Lord of the Flies* in India in 1980, and more recently Kiran Nagarkar's *God's Little Soldier* in April 2006.

LOST WORDS

In 1991, India faced an acute foreign exchange crisis and the

lovers. I spend more time at the store now than I used to as manpower is limited and we don't find people who love books to work for us.

Unfortunately we have given up reading. Television and movies take all our time. I hope it's only a phase. Computers, online referencing and the increasing number of magazines flooding the market have also affected reading habits. People would rather pick up a magazine

"Increase in number of bookstores doesn't mean increase in number of book lovers"

Ministry of Finance declared that importers of books had to deposit 200 per cent of the amount of their book order with the Reserve Bank of India before actually placing the order. With this change, it became difficult for small booksellers like us to import books directly. Now we have to depend on agents to buy books.

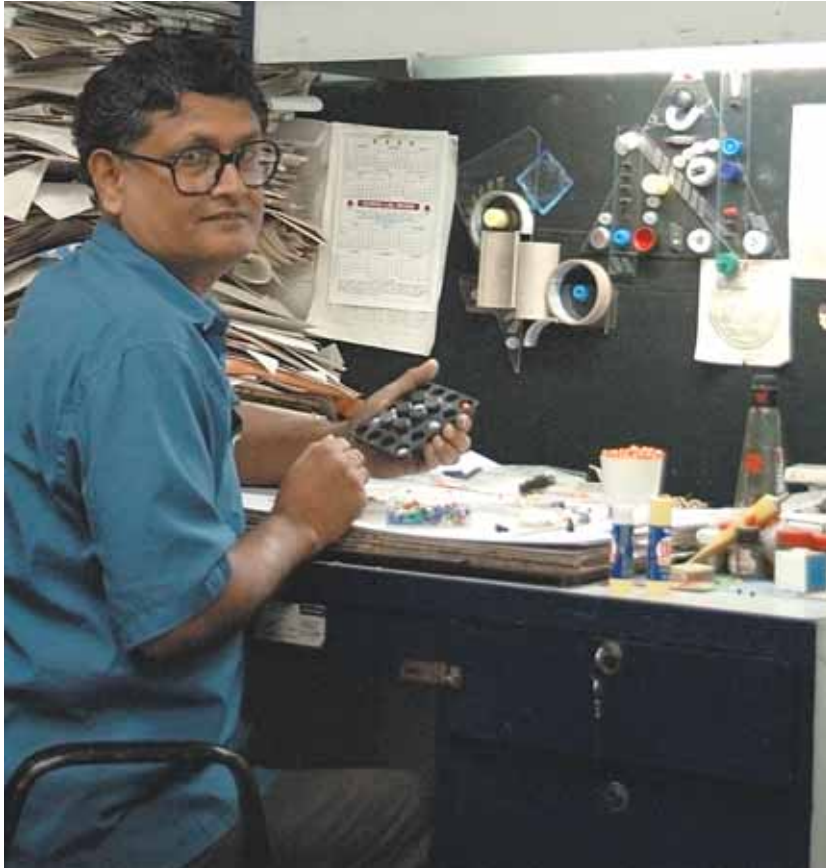
It's a struggle for survival. There is a stiff competition from huge bookstores in plush malls now. I believe that the increase in the number of stores is not an indication of increasing number of book

lovers. Even I like to read magazines like *Newsweek*, *Time* and *India Today* to keep pace with scientific and technological developments.

TURN IN THE ROAD

My son Hrishikesh, 35, is a software engineer and has settled in the US. He is not interested in the store. I don't know what the future holds. However, after I retire from here, I will pursue another dream of mine. I want to be a journalist and have made up my mind to take a course in journalism. ■

Best of waste



SHILBHADRA DATTA

Gaur Moulick creates rangoli at his work table

Gaur Moulick loves making *rangoli*—but with set squares, rulers, glue stick caps and anything else that strikes his fancy. The 53 year-old says he finds his inspiration in the supplies that surround him in the Kolkata office of advertising agency Lowe Lintas.

"This is stuff that would have been thrown away in any case," he says. "The glue stick is used without even a trace of the sticky base remaining." He twists one up to demonstrate and pulls out the blue bit inside. "Look at them together; they make a graphic

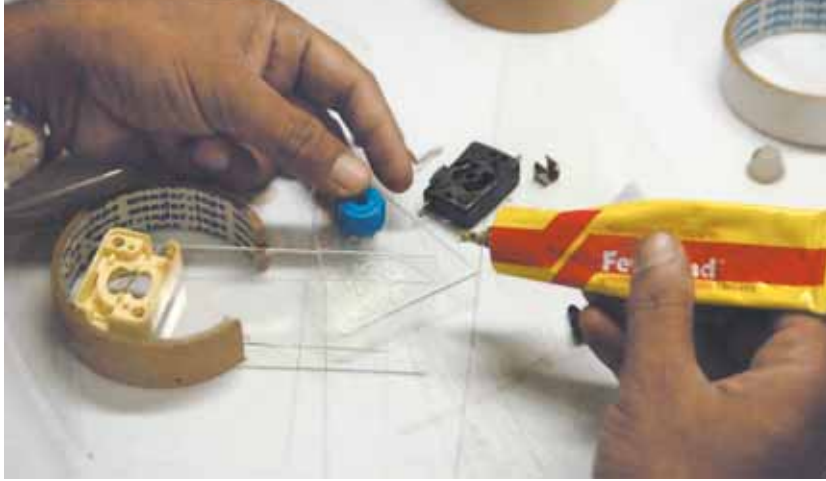
design!" he exclaims. And indeed, the blue bit of plastic looks like a flower bud alongside the yellow cap. Combine it with bits of shining metal from the broken blades of a cutter, use transparent plastic as a base and cardboard to hold it all together so that you can put it up on the wall, and *voila*, you have a recycled *rangoli*. Moulick insists artistic training isn't necessary. You just need to imagine a shape or a form, "even *Ma Kali's* face with her red tongue". Then, you collect bits and pieces you find all around you, and arrange them until they fall into place.

Office supplies and waste are inspirations for Gaur Moulick's fantastic *rangoli*, discovers

Anjana Basu

Moulick, however, is a trained artist. He graduated from Government Art College in Kolkata in 1977 and turned to advertising as a career. He went through six agencies between 1977 and 1979 before joining Lintas as a finishing artist in 1979. Twenty-seven years later, he is still there, tucked away in a backroom studio. The red-lined room is full of knickknacks made by his colleagues and himself. Paper sculptures, collages, installations. Moulick says they came about as a means of "filling the empty patches" that crop up in every working day.

Experimenting with textures and different materials keep his fingers busy. "Art," he says, "is my first wife and advertising my second." Where does that leave 'real' wife Smriti? Well, she says she was quite alarmed by it all at first, but now she is proud of her husband, who has begun to acquire quite a reputation in their United Club neighbourhood, in the by-lanes of Talbagan in Kolkata. She has learnt to dust his creations with coconut twig brooms and even contributes empty detergent packs and soft drink caps to his collection. "There are few husbands who



The process of making *rangoli* is sticking waste material together to create artistic forms; (right) a finished *rangoli*

have such unusual hobbies," she says. In their three-storied house, there's space for traditional *rangoli* only in the *puja* room. All the bright mustard yellow walls are covered by Kalighat paintings and Moulick's watercolours and creations. Ask her about Moulick's latest *rangoli*—tissue paper rolls halved and arranged in flower patterns—and Smriti laughs. He's even made a butterfly out of an old pink clothes peg hovering above neatly sliced brown cardboard circles.

Moulick attributes the inspiration for his unusual *rangoli* to his mother Baidyarani. As a little boy, he used to follow

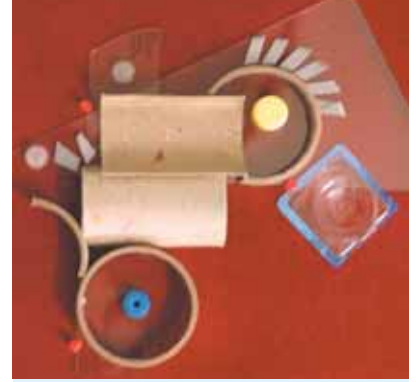
Moulick has his own scholarly pursuits. Nights, he works on his thesis, *History of Dum Dum: From Past to Present*, for which he has a scholarship from the West Bengal Centre for Archaeological Research and a fellowship from the State Archive. Why Dum Dum? He says he started on the thesis because his neighbourhood has a history going back to 200 BC and coins and terracotta images dating from prehistoric times are being excavated from the ruins of old British houses since 1965.

His colleagues laugh whenever Moulick starts talking about his thesis and insist there is a cannon

Moulick insists artistic training isn't needed to create *rangoli*, just imagination is enough

her around the house when she drew *rangoli* patterns for *puja* and shaped little votive images out of flour and water paste. Another inspiration is Indra Dugar, his teacher from Government Art College—Dugar's photograph is pinned up on Moulick's soft board at work. His 22 year-old son Ashish shows no signs of following in his father's footsteps, though. With just a hint of disappointment, he says, "Ashish plays the flute and is studying for his Masters in History."

hidden in his house. Moulick agrees there is a cannon in Dum Dum. It dates back to the days when the British set up an ordinance factory in Dum Dum and manufactured the bullets that gave the place its name. "There is more to Dum Dum than meets the eye," says Moulick. "The place has its own unique character." In some ways, this interest fits very neatly with his plastic *rangoli*—finding new beauty in something most people would have discarded. ■



MAKING PLASTIC RANGOLI IS EASY

Start with an idea of the form you want to make. Study it for a while. Flower shapes are the easiest to start with. Then, look for something that will form the base and the petals.

You will need a base of coloured cardboard to hold the design together; it could be red, blue or black. If you want the *rangoli* to be permanent, you will need strong adhesive to glue the whole thing into place. Otherwise, you can arrange it on a flat surface and leave it to be admired until you feel like shifting the pieces around again and changing the design. There's no end to the things you can use—a bright blue and yellow glue stick is just the starting point. Some pieces should be larger than the rest so the design can be layered. Look around your home for things that you might have discarded. A dried-up highlighter in pink or neon green, an odd bead that just happened to be lying around or a bent, out-of-shape paperclip—it doesn't matter whether it's plastic, metallic or coloured.

If it's a flower, what are you planning to make the petals from? A broken ruler, or set square pieces from a child's geometry set? Perhaps pieces of torn fabric lying around. Even a snapped plastic strap of a watch has its uses. This kind of art doesn't cost you anything.

Birth pangs

Train to Pakistan – 1956-2006:

50th Anniversary Edition

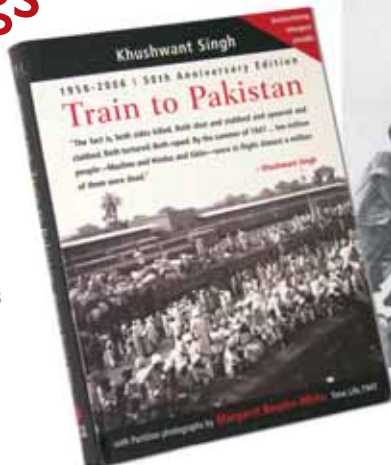
By Khushwant Singh; with

Partition photographs by

Margaret Bourke-White,

Time Life, 1947

Roli Books; Rs 495; 267 pages



Margaret Bourke-White's photograph of the people crossing the border during the Partition

Here's another chance to revisit one of the most talked about novels on Partition. *Train to Pakistan* celebrates its 50th anniversary in a new narrative-visual edition. The original text by Khushwant Singh is interspersed with about 60 photographs by celebrated *Life* magazine photographer Margaret Bourke-White. Singh's tale of the agonising birth of two nations in the subcontinent is accompanied by searing images of the violent repercussion on innocent people fleeing across freshly slashed borders in search of promised lands. According to publisher Pramod Kapoor, *Life* magazine carried less than a hundred of these pictures in their issues and he managed to find the rest that were "unused, but not necessarily rejects".

Read it and the book still retains a raw feel, with its part-historical, part-social account of the splitting of two countries. "For millions of people living in the Indian subcontinent, it [world history] is divided into...BP (Before Partition) and PP (Post-Partition)," writes Singh in his foreword. He traces the lives of villagers living in Mano Majra, one of the little villages that are "lost in the remote reaches of the frontier", while lands and population were being divided and exchanged with surgical precision.

Some people are clueless about what's happening around them, like Imam Baksh, the blind *mullah* of the village mosque; some could not care less, like ruffian Juggut Singh, who is more concerned with seducing Nooran, the daughter of the *mullah*. There are others who understand or care after a fashion, like district magistrate Hukum Chand or clean-shaven Sikh intellectual 'Comrade' Iqbal Singh. But they are too caught up in their dilemma of action and inaction that has plenty—or nothing—to do

with ethics. What remains to be done is done by unscrupulous looters and rapists or executed by mindless doers like Juggut Singh, who can only think of a safe passage for his woman in the ominous train rumbling on to Pakistan. The geckos fight, bangles shatter and the novel ends a tad too fast.

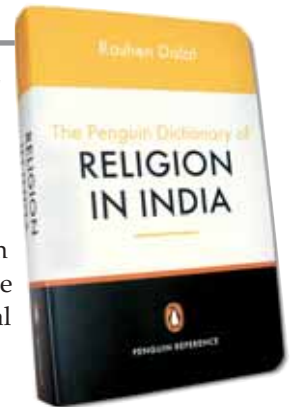
Reality is instead driven home in black-and-white or greys, through Bourke-White's unflinching frames of mindless horror and faceless corpses without name or religion. Bourke-White (1904-1971) was born in the Bronx, New York and had a flamboyant career as a roaming photographer. Having worked for well-known magazines like *Fortune* and *Life*, she was feted for her photo-essays covering American and Soviet industry, the depression-ridden American South, the Korean war, World War II, including shots of the victims of Buchenwald concentration camp, and the Partition of India. She also shot the last portrait of Mahatma Gandhi in India, a few hours before his assassination, and the official portrait of Mohammed Ali Jinnah in Pakistan.

The images are unwavering and, at times, posed for—in fact, her co-workers found her imperious or insensitively professional at times. A *Life* reporter had once recalled that Bourke-White "brutally" forced starving Sikh refugees to pose during her Indian Partition assignment, commanding them "to go back again and again for the right moment". You flinch at the end result—half-burned fingers of the dead; animal and human bones lying cheek to jowl; old Sikh and Muslim men, women and even children left to die. They merely recap Singh's reminder: "Such things must never happen again."

—Trina Mukherjee

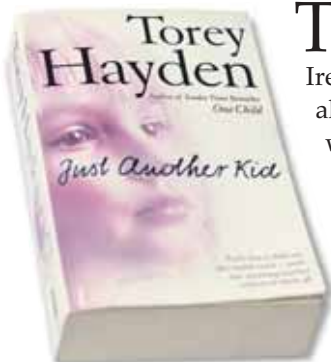
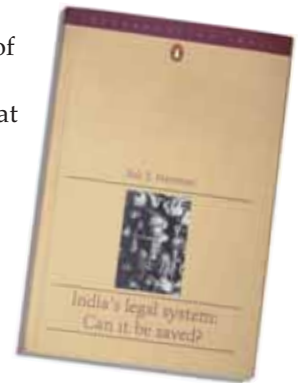
BRIEFLY

After her bestselling *Puffin History of India for Children*, **Roshen Dalal** presents another meticulously researched work of reference: **THE PENGUIN DICTIONARY OF RELIGION IN INDIA**. In India, nine major religions—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Judaism, Bahai and Zoroastrianism—along with several other beliefs, coexist with the most complex philosophies. This dictionary covers them all—from *Adi Granth* and *Old Testament* to Angkor Wat and the Five Pillars of Islam; from *Rig Veda* and *Buddha Charita* to Navjote and the Art of Living; from Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama to Babri Masjid and Golden Temple. Tracing the evolution of each faith, Dalal covers philosophy, ethics, deities, rituals, beliefs, myths and legends, and examines the expression of religion in material form as images, and in temples, mosques and other religious monuments. Not just a purely academic study, this book looks at religion from every perspective—historical, social and spiritual. (Penguin; Rs 350; 538 pages)



A scientist with the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies in New Delhi, **Anuradha Singh** has studied Ayurveda for many years. The result is **HEALTHY LIVING WITH AYURVEDA**, which reveals how the science of Ayurveda views an individual's *prakriti* (constitution) and describes the body's requirements and responses to the environment according to different seasonal cycles. Ayurveda advocates a healthy diet to keep the body in perfect shape—to that end, Singh offers a detailed, tabular analysis of various foods, their nutritive values and effects on the body. The book also includes stress-alleviating massage techniques, preventive measures and therapies and non-allopathic curative regimes for various ailments. Perfect for those in search of a holistic, healthy lifestyle—and the excellent photographs and glossy finish make it good enough for your coffee table too. (Lustre Press/Roli Books; 160 pages)

When constitutional expert, practising lawyer and president of the Bar Association of India **Fali S Nariman** addresses "some home truths" about our legal system, it's wise to listen. In **INDIA'S LEGAL SYSTEM: CAN IT BE SAVED?** Nariman points out that proliferation of appeals, judicial interference in administrative actions and lack of consistency at the highest level of judiciary are some of the problem areas of India law that need to be remedied. India has the second largest legal community in the world (after the US) with over 8 lakh practising lawyers. Nariman offers them a roadmap for the future in order to reinstate the common man's faith in the legal system. The best part: given the complexity of Indian law, it's a relief to read Nariman's simple, direct prose. (Penguin; Rs 195, 184 pages)



Torey Hayden's **JUST ANOTHER KID** is a remarkable narrative of an extraordinary teacher's determination to heal her students of the traumas of war in Northern Ireland. Though each page reveals a new dimension of emotional disturbance—sex, alcoholism, violence and every type of crime—the reader emerges convinced that the world can be loving, caring, warm, and orderly. The book revolves around six children who suffer from elective mutism, schizophrenia, autism and mental retardation; they don't talk, but hoot in class and masturbate on chair legs. All the characters in this book are real, including the 11-year-old boy who only knew life inside an institution; an excitable girl, aggressive and sexually precocious at the age of eight; and seven-year-old Leslie, seemingly the most hopeless of all, unresponsive and unable to speak. But Hayden's most daunting challenge turns out to be Leslie's mother, a stunning young doctor who soon discovers she needs Hayden's love and help just as much as her child. This is an unapologetic tearjerker—and it reminds us that there's no profession more demanding, and rewarding, than teaching. (HarperElement; Rs 405, 502 pages)



On the job

Learning is a continuous process, says **Darryl D'Monte**

Everyone tries to ignore, if not defeat, ageing: like death, it is supposed to happen to everyone else, not to you.

As a matter of fact, I was

somewhat taken aback when asked to contribute this column, rather like doing a double take when a young person calls you 'uncle'. I am often described as a 'veteran' journalist these days; I wonder if that is meant to signify years of experience or wisdom. The two can often be mutually exclusive, but if they fuse, that is a gift.

When I began as a trainee journalist in the late 1960s, I wondered if people would ever read what I wrote. A friend of mine, Farrukh Dhondy, now a well-known writer based in Britain, fantasised about becoming a columnist in a newspaper, which I thought was wildly ambitious. He has achieved that long ago, while I have edited two newspapers.

When I joined *The Times of India* in Mumbai, editors were held in great awe. They seldom interacted with junior staff. Sham Lal (former editor-in-chief of the *Times*) was by far the most cerebral of them all, as his "Life and Letters" column made abundantly clear. There was probably an apocryphal story told about one of his predecessors—and I daresay about editors in around the globe. N J Nanporia once went to a cocktail party where he chatted with a young man for several minutes. "Well, it's nice to have met you," the editor said. "We must meet again." "But sir," came the anxious reply, "I am your chief reporter!"

After being trained as a cub reporter in Britain, where I covered such momentous events as dog and chrysanthemum shows—I once had to interview a 'rodent operative' (rat catcher!)—I joined the *Times* as

assistant editor and was soon pitch forked into editing the Sunday magazine, which I did for 10 long years. I didn't write much for that period, but edited (and sometimes rewrote) millions of words that others, many still in college (like current *Indian Express* editor Shekhar Gupta) provided.

It was only after I resigned as resident editor of the *Express* in Mumbai in the early 1980s that I was forced to write, rather than rewrite. I landed a fellowship to write a book, which is often the last refuge of many editors, and that began a long career as an environmental journalist. Once again, with the passage of time, you wonder how you had the temerity to write a book, which was much more hallowed than columns of print which yellow all too quickly.

Without sounding condescending, I learned there is no substitute in life for learning—by talking to people, travelling and, above all, reading. Within a decade, I found myself being sought as an expert. Unlike many journalists of my time and today, I specialised in one field, which is why I am often described as an environmental activist. If your commitment and career go hand in hand, that is a blessing.

If there is one thing that 40 years as a journalist has taught me, it is to keep learning

I do fear that the media today, for the most part, is too obsessed with urban issues and even more with celebrities. With the increasing proliferation of information technology, there may well be an increasing tendency to rely on

material that is regurgitated on the Net, rather than learned first-hand. If we turn our backs on the rural reality—as intrepid journalist P Sainath constantly reminds us—we will be making a fatal mistake. If there is one thing that nearly 40 years as a journalist has taught me, it is that you have to keep learning, which is the only way to keep your finger on the pulse. ■

Darryl D'Monte, 62, writes on environment and development for several newspapers and websites. He is chairperson of the Forum of Environmental Journalists in India

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SOMEONE ABOVE
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Banish boredom

Amita Malik suggests activities to keep yourself busy at home

Some time ago, in this column I suggested different ways that you can keep working and earn some money from home. "But how do you stop being bored at home if you are unable to work for some reason?" is a question people have asked me. Their children, who cannot look after their elders all day, ask me the same question.

If it is just a question of keeping yourself occupied, with no necessity to earn money, there are several things you can do. How many books have you acquired down the years and never had time to read? Well, it is time to dust them and start reading. When I have had spare time, which is seldom, I have even taken out a book I had read long ago that does not date, such as my favourite P G Wodehouse, and re-read it before going to sleep and woken up happy. In fact, I have a habit of keeping old letters that seemed too precious to throw away, and derived nostalgic pleasure from reading them again.

For instance, my elder brother had once written me a most affectionate as well as amusing letter about the commotion when I was born. When my mother felt I was on the way, father sent one of his students on a motorcycle to call the lady doctor. My grandmother got worried after a few minutes and sent another man on a bicycle. Then, someone sent someone on foot to chase the others. Finally, father got his car started and not only brought the lady doctor but got her in time. I sometimes take out that letter to read and remember my late brother as well as chuckle over all the fuss. A simple family event described with great charm.

If you have a collection of recorded music, video cassettes or DVDs, the time to listen or watch them undisturbed is when everyone else has gone out of

the house. Not the sort of cursory listening you do to Vividh Bharati from a distance but sitting down quietly for hours of listening to Beethoven or Ali Akbar Khan or Subbalakshmi. .

The other day I received a letter, after years, from a long-lost nephew in New York who had traced me on the Internet. He sent me a 12-page handwritten letter remembering a visit with his parents to Delhi when he was six years old. It brought back to me the joys of handwritten letters, which email has almost killed. I also replied to him. Can you imagine what pleasure it will give someone you love, if he suddenly received a long handwritten letter from you?

Then, there is always television. It is tempting to keep the set switched on regardless of what is on, and make it a bad habit. It's better if you read previews in the daily paper, choose worthwhile items and watch them with gaps. This will save eyestrain and also make you realise that there are programmes beyond *saas bahu* serials. Apart from National Geographic and Animal Planet, reporter Swathi Thyagarajan does a wonderful programme called *Born Wild* on weekends on NDTV. She takes us to remote jungles, dark forests and famous reserves like Kaziranga or Manas and shows us wildlife in fascinating detail. One week, she featured just *langur*, monkeys that are friendly with humans—she sat among them to prove it.

Derive pleasure from reading old letters that are too precious to throw away

Finally, what about getting together all those family photos lying around in a mess and putting them chronologically in an album? It not only makes a record of your family for future generations but will also give you great pleasure. Well, I can go on. And don't tell me that as there is nothing to do at home, you are bored. If you are, you have no one but yourself to blame. ■

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

H PEOPLE

HI-TECH PHILANTHROPY



Owner of Hyderabad-based outsourcing company Satyam Computer Services, **B Ramalinga Raju** is the 36th richest man in India, according to *Forbes* magazine, with a net worth of \$ 670 million. And the 50 year-old is putting the money to good use through his Byrraju Foundation, formed in honour of his father who died in 2001. The foundation has

established 'GramIT', rural data centres, which aim to provide jobs to rural youth. The work involves filling databases with information from tax receipts, financial ledgers and resumés for Satyam and the Andhra Pradesh government and the pay is Rs 2,500 a month. So far, Raju and his team have set up two centres, one in Jallikakinada, a remote village in East Godavari district, and the other in Ethakota, about 100 km away from Jallikakinada. More are on the anvil. The foundation has also provided computers to 54 rural primary schools and introduced English and Maths classes via satellite links to over 200 government-run schools in Andhra Pradesh.

QUEEN OF THE BLOG



Think blogs (web logs) are for teenagers? Meet **Millie Garfield**, an 80 year-old from Swampscott, Massachusetts in the US, who has been

declared the Internet's oldest blogger by *The Ageless Project*, a directory of bloggers organised by year of birth. Garfield started her blog, *My Mom's Blog*, four years ago after she read an article in the *Boston Globe* about bloggers. In it, she shares with the world her musings on anything and everything—sightseeing at the Grand Canyon, a 1940s Cole Porter musical, her recipe for apple crisp. According to a recent study by web survey firm Perseus, only 0.3 per cent of the Internet's estimated 53.4 million bloggers (about 160,000 people) are 50 years or older—but the number is fast growing.

GREY MATTERS



American actor **Meryl Streep**, 57, likes her hair grey—and she flaunts it in her latest film *The Devil Wears Prada*. Streep, who started greying in her late 30s, was delighted to be able to wear her natural colour in the role of “boss-from-hell” Miranda Priestly. “For women like me, who wear their premature grey proudly, this represents progress,” she tells website *www.slate.com*. “I should know. I’ve been an involuntary participant in my own little field experiment for years now.” She says strangers, especially women, often stop her on the street, in department stores, at restaurants and even at church to remark on her hair. From “you have inspired us” and “wow, is that yours?” to an edgy “you’re so brave”, she’s heard it all. Although Streep goes through bouts of wanting to colour her hair, she sees it as a badge of pride. “After going through the death of my father, divorce and remarriage, my mom’s two major surgeries, and the long illness and death of a best friend, I feel I’ve earned it.”

BIRTHDAYS



Mary Armstrong, of East Molesley, Surrey, celebrated her 90th birthday on 7 August by taking a 12,000 ft parachute jump, a day later, at Kent's Headcorn Airfield with instructor Clem Quinn. Bad weather delayed her jump by a day. For Armstrong, a great grandmother, this was her fourth jump. Her first was at the age of 87—she was inspired after seeing a video of her granddaughter doing it in Australia. The jump was in aid of the Brooke charity, which cares for “working” animals. She raised \$1,900 (approx Rs 88,000) in charity.



Former US president **Bill Clinton** turned 60 on 17 August. The celebrations, dubbed ‘42 at 60’, will go on for two months with a series of events planned in Toronto and New York. The New York events will coincide with his wife Senator Hillary Clinton's 59th birthday on 26 October, and will include a gala dinner at the American Museum of Natural History and a golf outing in Westchester. A private *Rolling Stones* concert at the Beacon Theatre in New York on 29 October will mark the culmination of the two-month long festivities.



Celebration plans were underway a month before Cuban President **Fidel Castro's** 80th birthday on 13 August with capital Havana sporting signs and banners saying, ‘Long Live Fidel, 80 More’. But just days before his birthday, Castro had to undergo an intestinal surgery, forcing him to temporarily hand over power to younger brother Raul. Meanwhile, Museum of Modern Art, Paris, will receive 100 paintings of Castro's close friend Oswaldo Guayasamin, who documented the Cuban revolution in his art before he passed away in 1999.

VISITORS

4-8 AUGUST

Who: **Richard Boucher**, 60, US assistant secretary of state

Agenda: To discuss the Indo-US nuclear deal and strengthen bilateral strategic partnership and counter-terrorism initiatives

Extracurricular activities: Spent time with street children at the Salaam Balak Trust in New Delhi. He also visited New Delhi railway station's platform No.1 to see the life of street children living on the platforms.



H PEOPLE

DRAMA KING

Mumbai-based cost accountant and management consultant 73 year-old **K K Rajendran** is not just conversant with numbers and figures. He is also an exponent of Chakyarkoothu, a 2,000 year-old classical theatre form from Kerala—he has just completed 1,500 shows. Chakyarkoothu is basically a 90-minute mono-act, where Rajendran dons the mantle of *vidhushak* or jester, and relates mythological tales with a social message in Sanskrit. Laced with humour, the act is accompanied by *mizhavu*, a percussion instrument. So how did a cost accountant end up doing this? Accidentally. In 1955, after artists failed to show up at an event organised by a local Malayali club in Mumbai, Rajendran saved the day by performing the act himself, without any formal training. He had read about it in books as a child and watched it in his hometown, Trichur, which he left when he was 17. “I would skip classes to watch a performance in a temple,” he recalls with a laugh. Today, Rajendran not only performs for audiences in Mumbai temples but has also taken his show to the UK, the Gulf region and Israel. When he’s abroad, he translates his dialogues into English, Hindi or Tamil and only uses Sanskrit while reciting *shloka*. “My only worry is that Chakyarkoothu is a dying form,” he says. “I hope it gets some attention.”



IN PASSING



Don Malarkey picked up his first golf club at the age of 10. At 18, he turned professional and went on to become a top-ranked player. He’s also known to have ‘shot his age’ 627 times, beginning with a 68 in 1974 when he was 69 years old. In 1998, at the age of 93, he posted a 91 at his home course, Signal Mountain Golf & Country Club, Tennessee. He passed away at the age of 101 on 28 July in Pittsburgh, following complications from pneumonia.



Shiv Dayal Batish, who sang famous songs like *Yeh ishq ishq* and *Poochon na kaise maine rain bitaaye*, was known as the ‘young Saigal’ in the Hindi film industry in the late 1930s and 1940s. Before his entry into the industry as a 12 year-old, he sang for Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir. Batish migrated to the US in 1970. He passed away of heart failure in Santa Cruz, California, on 29 July at the age of 91.



Duygo Asena was the first writer to explore the issue of women’s rights in Turkey. She began her crusade by writing for women’s pages in newspapers in the early 1970s and then authored a book, *Woman Has No Name*. “I figured out that writing about butterflies and cooking every day was not for me,” she told Associated Press in 1994. “I had to give a message.” Asena died in Istanbul on 1 August after a two-year battle with a brain tumour. She was 60.

Former Orissa chief minister and veteran Congress leader **Nandini Satpathy**, 75, was a close associate of Indira Gandhi. Besides being a member of the Union Cabinet from 1966-69 and being elected to the Assembly seven times in a row between 1972 and 2000, she was also a well-known Oriya writer. She passed away in Bhubaneswar on 4 August.



Arthur Lee, 61, was the founding member of 1960s band *Love*, which released three albums mixing folk rock, blues and psychedelic experimental music. *Love*’s final album before the split was *Forever Changes*. He died of leukaemia on 4 August.



SAY IT OUT LOUD



Advertising is the modern substitute for argument; its function is to make the worse appear the better.

—Spanish philosopher and writer *George Santayana* (1863-1952)

What is the difference between unethical and ethical advertising? Unethical advertising uses falsehoods to deceive the public; ethical advertising uses truth to deceive the public.

—Canadian anthropologist and explorer *Vilhjalmur Stefansson* (1879-1962)

You can tell the ideals of a nation by its advertisements.

—British author *Norman Douglas* (1868-1952)

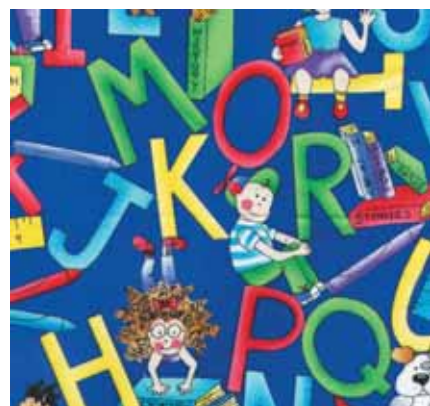
The very first law in advertising is to avoid the concrete promise and cultivate the delightfully vague.

—American comedian *Bill Cosby*

BRAIN GYM

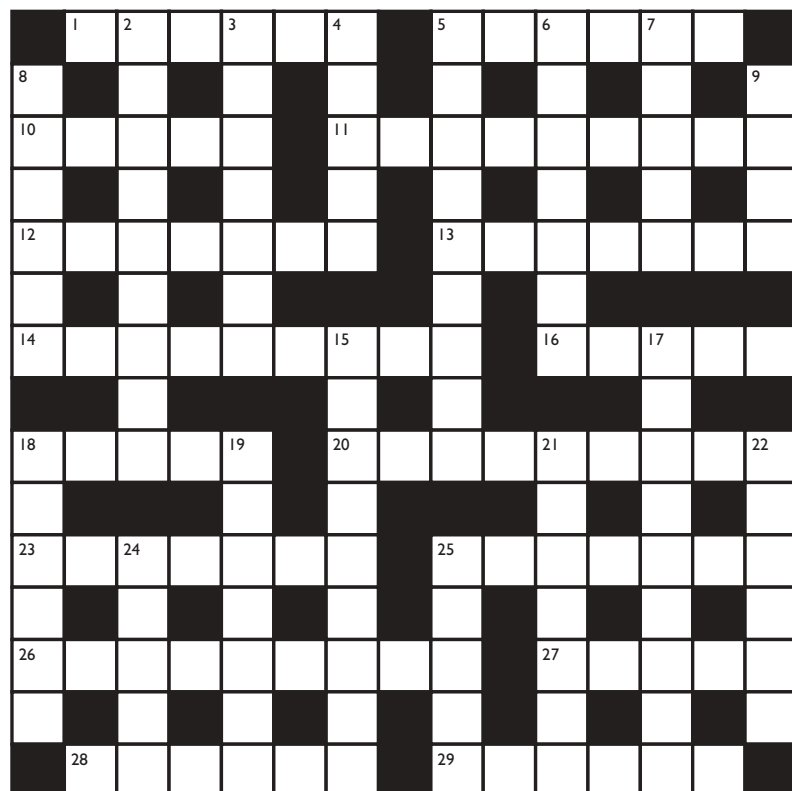
CRACK THE CODE

A cryptogram is a code made by substituting a different letter for each letter of the alphabet. In a particular code, for example, the 'l's might be replaced by 'j's, and the 'j's might be replaced by 'b's. Every letter is usually changed and a different code is used for each problem. Some of the puzzles may take a while to solve, so don't get frustrated!



- 1 Ko jvamlkve kd djizwb mlw lyxjv utba kd djizwb.
- 2 Cohhoq hi qojzmb fbomh zmr hnitlnh hi co z piix, hnzmi idom gitq jithn zmr qojiwo zxx ritc.
- 3 Bes tswb kvqu vkk qfapqgbgfa, yegks bes yfcwb vcs lgkksj ygbe mvwwgfvabs gabsawgbh.
- 4 G raadkjt oazjkjpnzol kj ptn tacyadkz ar jugdd ukzbi.
- 5 Yx't zex xqp tyvp eu xqp les yz xqp uysqx, yx't xqp tyvp eu xqp uysqx yz xqp les.
- 6 Tjmei qynjniq lehm edxezq ami hnfdmvi fyyfqninfv ujfa amcnfrjm anvqc.
- 7 Opd wkokxd gdblysi ol oplid jpl gbadud ay opd gdqkor lw opdax mxdqti.
- 8 Lkp kptml kta sla mptacoa, fksdk mptaco zcpa ocl gofc.
- 9 W zewm rg w qnhwi srkc w qhwqmrh.
- 10 O nojj gqkoi vs khv is vhlsl hvt tqplhtq kx ascj yx khfovp kq bhiq bok.

Courtesy www.puzz.com



EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 24

By Raju Bharatan

ACROSS

- 1 Originator of the *Chashm-e-bad* door punchline envisioning hat as covering A S Raman (6)
- 5 Bottoms up, presto! (6)
- 10 Dhobi mark, may be (5)
- 11 If Noorjehan didn't want her in Pakistan, Lata M needed her even less here in India! (4 5)
- 12 Play-fee in a twinkling? (3-4)
- 13 The 16th letter of the alphabet on the 20th in the 7th striking personality? (7)
- 14 How tellingly did Swaran Singh, as India's ever-soft-spoken Foreign Minister, neutralise such

an implied September 1965 UN reference to us, in that world forum, by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (4 2 3)

- 16 No chance of Tiger's having emerged as one had he, like his father, opted to play for England (5)
- 18 Fearless before, all action follows! (5)
- 20 Flavour-sensitive Tax Deducted at Source accommodating bets reversed between capitals of Australia and Uganda (5-4)
- 23 Walter Scott's 'I Love Haven' (7)
- 25 Railway junction portraying a Hira turning into House of Representatives (7)
- 26 UN jab I got in pat point of pride

with Kuldip Nayar? (9)

- 27 Arena reversing an entire age (2 3)
- 28 British settlement peg in which you view Nan (6)
- 29 Categorical order for TTK aid (6)

DOWN

- 2 The style of deity Ganpati is and yet isn't (1 5-3)
- 3 Another name for Portugal (7)
- 4 Slate part elevated to carry nothing (2 3)
- 5 Sanjay sympathetic to Sachin only on screen? (3 6)
- 6 Apeland name (7)
- 7 Not a cricket historian with a grip on Aishwarya's vital statistics? (5)
- 8 Dances rise in pitch (6)
- 9 *Kabhii aar kabhii paar laaga teer-e-nazar* does, resonantly, represent this audience of Shamshad Begum (6)
- 15 Heights scaled in 1939 by Thespian Laurence Olivier, novel courtesy, Emily Bronte (9)
- 17 'The Lata Of The South' who rendered each one of the Mangeshkar Diva's Naushad song-hits in the Tamil edition of *Mughal-e-Azam*, carrying the same title (1 8)
- 18 Models of good behaviour Anil Kumble and Rahul Dravid presumably were even as kids? (2 4)
- 19 The retreat to which 'The Rai Girl' plans to retire with her own he-manly *Kanneswara*? (7)
- 21 The champion boxer did his challenger for the knockout punch (7)
- 22 Film from which you hardly warm to the idea, fantasised, of Jaya Prada and Amar Singh dancing out *Daphlee waale daphlee bajaa*? (6)
- 24 Could be inane, this nickname by which your compiler referred to Qurratulain (*Aag Ka Darya*) Hyder while she was on the editorial staff of Khushwant's *Weekly* (5)
- 25 Welcome, Heath, detestable though you may be! (5)

For answer, see Page 81

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

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

HEADSTART

THE WORD IS OUT

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

Manilow method *n.* The discouragement of loitering in public places by broadcasting music that is offensive to young people, particularly the songs of singer Barry Manilow.

Example: Officials in Australia and Britain are implementing the **Manilow method** in their psychological warfare against juvenile delinquency. City councillors in Rockdale, Australia, just passed legislation that allows them to pump the music of Barry Manilow through speakers in their town to keep hooligan kids from loitering and revving their car engines in neighbourhood parking lots.

—Jeffrey Hawkins, “He writes the songs that hooligans are said to hate”,
National Post, 15 June 2006

vacation deprivation *n.* Foregoing vacation days because of busyness at work.

—vacation deprived *adj.*

Example: Workers are expected to give back 574 million vacation days in 2006, depriving themselves of much-needed breaks, according to *expedia.com*’s annual **vacation deprivation** survey. The number of vacation days employees are skipping this year increased by one over last year. On average, Americans leave at least four days unclaimed annually.

—Amy Joyce, “Vacation deprivation”,
Washington Post, 25 June 2006

retro running *pp.* Running backwards as a form of exercise. Also: retro-running, retrorunning.

—retro run *v*; retro runner *n.*

Example: Backward walking and running dates back to the 1970s, when forward-looking runners practised it while injured. Doctors later recommended it as part of physical therapy, and it’s often used by baseball pitchers or track runners in preliminary warm-ups. Also called **retro-running**, it’s been popular for years in Europe, where races vary from sprints to the 42-km marathon.

—Daniel Yee, “Some runners look forward to going backward”, *Associated Press*, 25 May 2006

Courtesy: www.wordspy.com

SUDOKU FOR YOU

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

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

KOFFEE WITH KAKURO

				7	3		
			3				
		9				29	
		11					13
		30					
	18				15		
4							
8					13		
			23	17			
12			23				
			8				
	30						
		10					

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

CRACK THE CODE

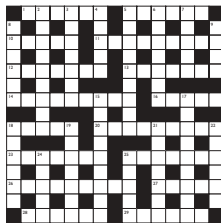
78



1. If anything is sacred the human body is sacred.
2. Better to remain silent and thought to be a fool, than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.
3. The best lack all conviction, while the worst are filled with passionate intensity.
4. A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds.
5. It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog.
6. Great spirits have always met violent opposition from mediocre minds.
7. The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.
8. The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know.
9. A goal is a dream with a deadline.
10. I will permit no man to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate him.

EXCLUSIVE HARMONY CROSSWORD 24

79



ACROSS:

1 Hasrat (Jaipuri): ASR is A S Raman; 5 toppers (*presto* its 6 letters rearrange into); 10 stain; 11 Runa Laila; 12 eye-flap (*play-fee* its 7 letters rearrange into); 13 PONTING: P/on/T/in/G (P, the 16th letter of the alphabet, on T (the 20th), in G (the 7th letter of the alphabet); 14 dogs of war (Sadly, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had referred to us, in the UN anteroom, as "The Indian dogs"; 16 expat (ex-Pat); 18 (Fearless) Nadia; 20 TASTE-BUDS: T[A(steb)U]JDS: TDS, Tax Deducted at Source accommodating *steb* (bets reversed) between capitals of Australia and Uganda); 23 *Ivanhoe* ('I Love Haven' do the 7 letters of this Walter Scott classic rearrange into, Love in 'I Love Haven' standing for 0; 25 Harihar (H/arih a/r), reverse arih and you get hira: thus Railway Junction H/ariha/R is a Hira turning into HR (House of Representatives); 26 PUNJABIAT (UN/jab I got in Pat), Kuldip Nayar has often written, with becoming pride, about Punjabiat; 27 An era (reads arena reversed); 28 Penang (pe/Nan/g): Nan viewed in peg); 29 diktat (TTK aid is its 6 letters rearranged)

DOWN:

2 a water-god; 3 Ronaldo; 4 To rap: *t(o)rap*: part elevated as holding *nothing* (0); 5 TEN Sports (TEN standing for Sachin); 6 Palande (*Apeland* its 7 letters rearrange into); 7 (Vasant) Raiji: *Rail/ji* (Rai standing for Aishwarya); 8 Ascend (*dances* its 6 letters rearrange into); 9 target (audience); 15 *Wuthering* (reference to Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, made into the 1939 classic starring Laurence Olivier); 17 P Susheela (that is how 'The Lata Of The South' would spell out her autograph); 18 no imps; 19 ASHRAMA (Ash/Rama), a play on (*Kanneswara*) Rama, role played by Anant Nag opposite Shabana Azmi; 21 earmark; 22 *Sargam* (the 1979 K Vishwanath dance-musical, a snide reference to the Jaya Prada-Amar Singh connection); 24 Annie (What Qurratulain Hyder was to *The Weekly* staff, Annie rearranges into *inane*); 25 Hated (Ha/Ted): reference to Ted Heath

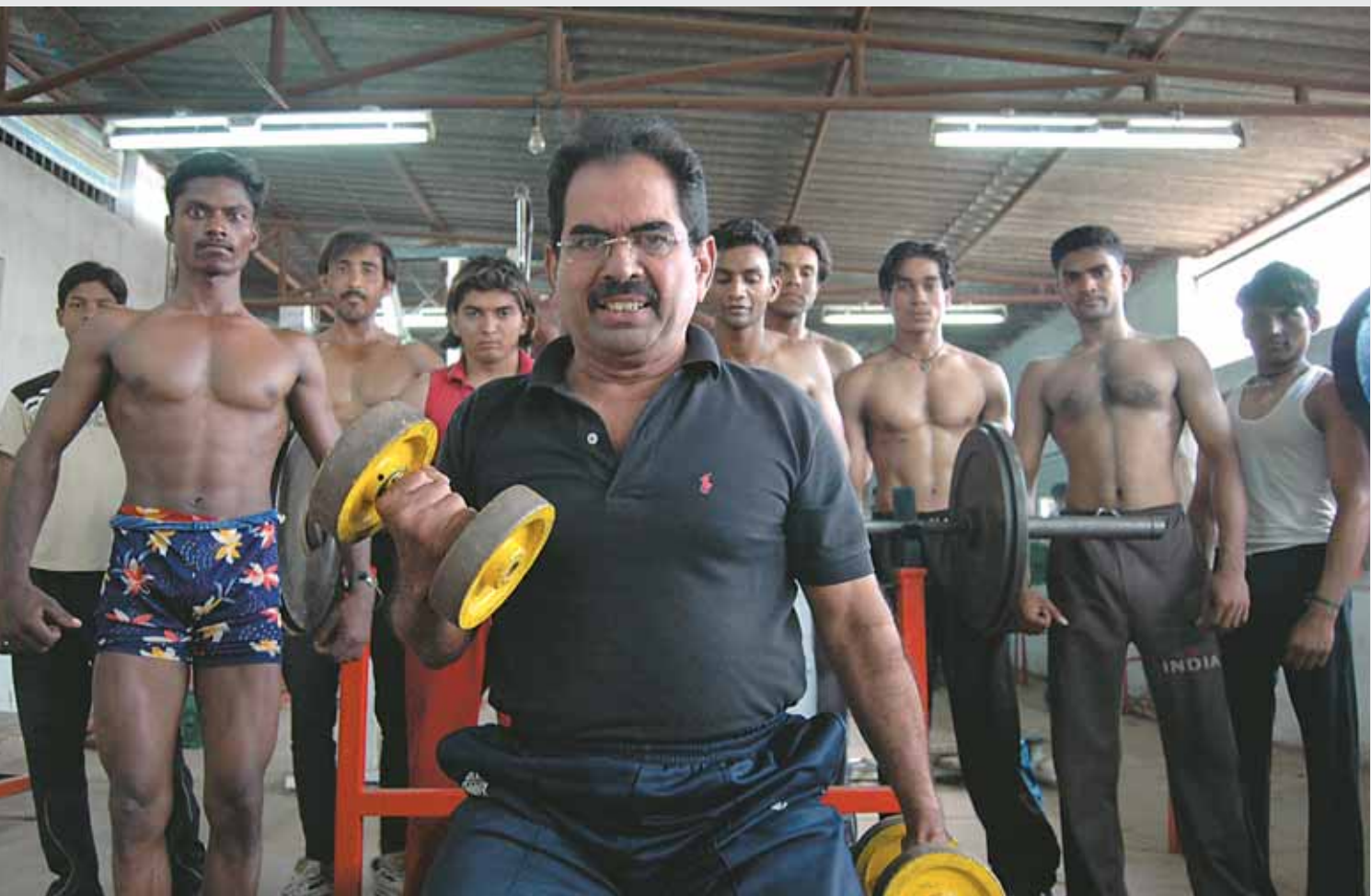
SOLUTIONS TO SUDOKU

80

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

SOLUTIONS TO KAKURO

					7	3		
			3		1	2		
		9					29	
		11	3	2	1	5		13
		30						
	18	8	6	4	15	8	7	
4								
8	1	7			13	7	6	
12	3	9	23	6	8	9		
		8						
	30	6	7	8	9			
		10	1	9				



TEXT: TRINA MUKHERJEE; PHOTO: A M FARUQUI

“A little encouragement can go a long way. When I could not afford expensive gym equipment, I scraped junkyards for something that could help. I collected and bought scrap iron at throwaway prices and built apparatus like a bench press, power racks and back squat stands for my students.”

Razi Ali Beig, 59, was introduced to power lifting in the old-world akhada tradition by his father Nawab Ali Beig. Training with weights, Beig's eagerness led him to build a small gym in his house in Old Bhopal in 1960. Within a decade, he established Bhopal's first proper gym near Chola Road in the old city, equipped with apparatus he had built himself. Beig modernised the gym with help from the state government in 1994. In the interim, he won the title of 'Mr Bhopal' in 1973 and, a year later, became Mr Madhya Pradesh. In 2002, Beig opened his second gym in the BHEL Township on the outskirts of Bhopal. About 50 boys train at his gyms for a modest monthly fee of Rs 30, which is usually waived for poor students. Working as a Grade I clerk in the Madhya Pradesh Electricity Board, Beig is also a national-level referee who adjudicates at body building, power lifting and arm wrestling competitions in the state and remains on the lookout for future champions.

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