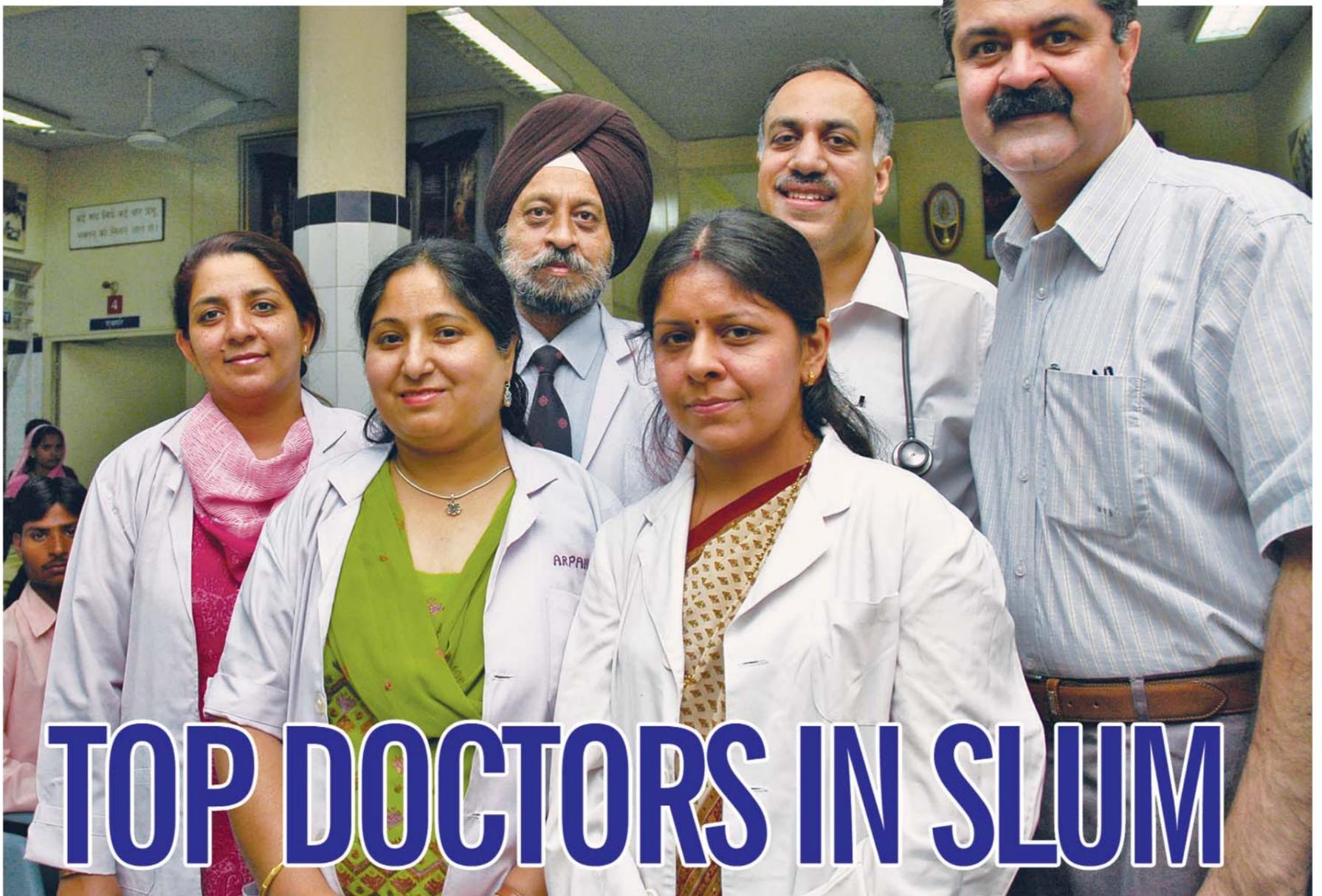


# Civil Society



## TOP DOCTORS IN SLUM

**GOOD  
LIVING**

Pages 24-25

**JHANGORA  
RECIPES  
PLUS  
AYURVEDA**

**URBAN PANCHAYATS FOR DELHI?**

Page 4-5

**SISTER CYRIL'S LORETO FOR EVERYONE**

Page 7

**ARVIND KEJRIWAL: RTI GETTING STUCK**

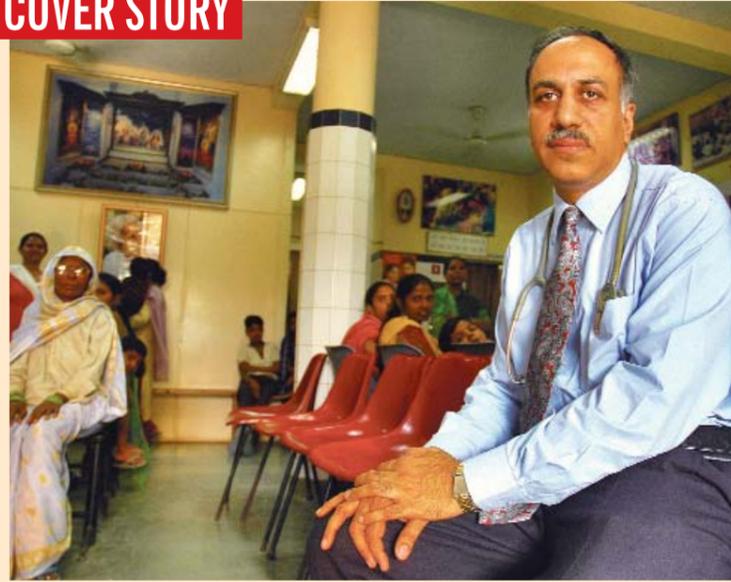
Page 23

**RIAZ QUADIR ON THE GLOBAL RAT RACE**

Page 10

# Jubliant AD

**COVER STORY**



**HEALTH CENTRE FOR MOLARBUND**

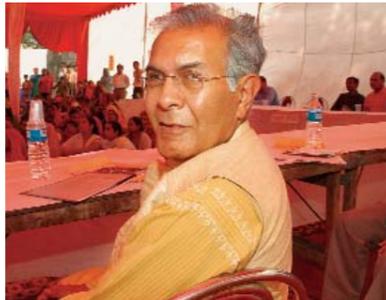
Some of Delhi's best doctors spare time from their private practices to help the Arpana Trust run a health centre at Molarbund, a resettlement colony in southeast Delhi

**11**

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY LAKSHMAN ANAND

**Exam paper review? But that's a threat to national security** ..... **4**

**Villagers in Uttaranchal blocked the highway to get a road** ..... **6**



**Govt. wants to evict community school near Jaipur** ..... **8**

**Kashmiris want a wildlife sanctuary for the chiru** ..... **9**

**From making films Magic Lantern goes to film distribution** ..... **15**

**Drik International's human interest pictures pay** ..... **18**



**Milindo Chakrabarti: How, why and when to charge** ..... **21**

**Review: Salaam Balak's children tell their story** ..... **26**

**Civil Society**

*Some doctors do care*

EVERYONE says that doctors do little to keep the noble goals of their profession alive. They are regarded as being commercial and coldhearted. Families go bankrupt seeing loved ones through illnesses. There is talk of unholy alliances between doctors and pharmaceutical companies. There are kickbacks from tests conducted at path labs. Never before has the reputation of doctors, both in the public and private sectors, been at such a low point.

So, it makes more than just an ordinary story when you find some of the best doctors in Delhi, all with flourishing private practices, working in the slums of Molarbund in the southwestern fringes of the capital. The Arpana Trust has made this possible by motivating the doctors and creating a system by which they can use their skills for the good of people who would not be able to afford their fees. More importantly, none of these doctors asked to be written on. They didn't seek the publicity. If we had greater access to them it was only because some of them are personal friends of ours. We, more than they, believed that their story should be told so as to inspire others.

At Molarbund, which is really a resettlement colony where people have been moved from posh parts of Delhi, these doctors have successfully revived a health centre. They have also worked to a pattern so that there have been improvements in infant mortality, family planning coverage, availability of clean drinking water and so on.

The lesson from Molarbund is that better health care is possible if only the government were to create the appropriate opportunities. The health centre at Molarbund lay in disuse until it was revived at the initiative of the Arpana Trust. There are many such moribund health centres waiting to be revived and millions of Indians could benefit from the talent of our doctors.

The key is to create structures within which skilled professionals can serve. This should be the goal of good governance so that huge backlogs in health, education and the justice system can be quickly bridged.

Molarbund is also a stern reminder of the way in which we are abusing our cities to serve the interests of a few powerful interests. We can continue fooling ourselves into believing that Delhi is going to be a world class city. The truth is that 30 percent of Delhi lives in slum-like conditions and this situation is going to get worse as migration from rural areas continues unabated.

Dumping people in resettlement colonies without any facilities and just 12 to 18 sq metres to live on is no solution. The diseases that breed in places like Molarbund will haunt that world class dream that a few short-sighted business interests are intent on peddling.

There has been much opposition to taking poorer children into elitist schools. But how easily this can be done is evident from our story on Sister Cyril in Kolkata. Running a school becomes simple if the purpose is to provide education. The problem begins when you want to make it only a business. Greed is the biggest enemy of our noble professions.

We also have a story about a community school near Jaipur facing eviction. While the government bends over backwards to provide land for commercial schools it takes it away from deserving institutions providing free education to poor children.

*Umesh Anand*

Printed and published by Umesh Anand on behalf of Rita Anand of A 53D, First Floor, Panchsheel Vihar, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-17. Printed at Kaizen Offset, 19 DSIDC Scheme 3, Phase-2, Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi-20.

Write to Civil Society at E-2144 Palam Vihar, Gurgaon, Haryana 122017 Ph: 9811787772, E-mail: civil\_society@rediffmail.com. Editor: Rita Anand

RNI No.: DELENG/03/11607

## Govt in a bind over Jamshedpur

Anuj Kumar Sinha  
Jamshedpur

THE Jharkhand government appears to be in a fix over bestowing the status of a municipality on Jamshedpur, which currently enjoys high civic standards under a Tata administration.

Having floated the idea, the government can neither disown it nor implement it without serious political implications.

The municipality proposal has created divisions within the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition too has been quick to take advantage of the situation.

The government has already beaten a retreat on one count. Stung by the criticism by tribals, it has said that it will exclude rural areas from the limits of the proposed municipality. The rural areas are governed by panchayats and they stand to lose control over funds that currently flow directly to them. Any government in Jharkhand will worry about upsetting the tribals.

Tribal leader and former MLA Salkhan Murmu says he considers this a victory. He had campaigned against the government's proposal and had also gone to the high court.

With the tribal areas counted out, the focus has shifted to Jamshedpur, Jugsalai and Mango, which will together constitute the new municipality.

Raghubar Das, urban development minister and MLA from Jamshedpur East, has been the chief proponent of the idea. He insists that the government will go ahead with bringing Jamshedpur, Jugsalai and Mango under a single municipal authority.

However, the BJP legislator from Jamshedpur West, Saryu Roy, is clear that he wants Jamshedpur to be declared an industrial township. Roy is of the view that the amenities that Jamshedpur enjoys are excellent. The attempt should be to take Mango and Jugsalai up to this level and not bring Jamshedpur down.

The government, says Roy, should first have effective civic governance in Mango and Jugsalai. If it shows that it can manage these areas it should then consider setting up a municipal corporation in Jamshedpur.

The government's proposal for a municipality is currently before the high court where it has been challenged by Jamshedpur's residents who worry about how civic amenities are likely to decline when the government takes over control from the Tatas.

Jamshedpur has been administered by the Tatas and is known for its wide open spaces, good roads and reliable water and power supply. It is perhaps the only Indian city where water can be drunk directly from a tap.

Jamshedpur's residents want it to be declared an industrial township with services provided by the Tatas through its new subsidiary, JUSCO or Jamshedpur Utilities Services Company.

The big fear is that a municipal administration under politicians will bring Jamshedpur to the level of neighbouring Jugsalai and Mango.

# Exam paper review?

## *The right to information law*

Civil Society News  
New Delhi

THE National Right to Information (RTI) Act was passed last year, but is it being implemented with the seriousness it deserves? Or are officials in the government continuing to run rings around ordinary citizens?

NGOs say review applications have been piling up at the offices of the central information commissioners. The Chief Information Commissioner, Wajahat Habibullah, has spent several months just settling into office, the NGOs complain.

A warm and easy going man, Habibullah has apparently shown no great urgency in getting on with his role. By holding just one hearing a day the backlog with the information commissioners could become unmanageable, the NGOs fear.

To get matters off the ground and give Habibullah some perspective, the Hazards Centre and the Sartak Nagrik Sangathan (SNS) held separate public meetings to which Habibullah was invited.

The Hazard Centre used its meeting to release a valuable handbook on how to use the right to information law. It is available both in Hindi and English.

At the SNS meeting there was a discussion and presentations by individuals who had failed to get relief under the law.

There were several interesting

cases, but perhaps none so bizarre as that of Divyajyoti Jaipuria, a law student of Delhi University. After failing in a subject in his 4th semester exams, he filed an application under the RTI Act to gain access to his answer sheet. His request was denied under article 8(1)a of the Act which stated that it was a threat to national security and thus could not be disclosed! "The reply left me flabbergasted and caused me to wonder how on earth my answer sheet could be a threat to the security of the country," said Jaipuria.

Pushpa Devi of Jagdamba Camp said she sought information on the number of teachers employed in her area under the anganwadi scheme and details of the money designated. However, the authorities refused to listen to her request. She was made to travel from one office to another. When she finally got to the cashier, she was forced to pay Rs10 as application fees although she had a BPL card. She got a receipt but not the information she sought.

*At the Hazards Centre meeting Habibullah, affable and sincere, readily took questions:*

**As far as the Delhi law on RTI is concerned the appeal will be done in the Public Grievance Commission and there is no State commissioner appointed. What is the role of the Chief Information Commissioner in this?**

All the States have a State commissioner and UTs are under the Central Commissioner. Delhi and Pondicherry are the two UTs

**NGOs say review applications have been piling up at the offices of the central information commissioners.**

## Enough of Bhagidari,

Civil Society News  
New Delhi

RESIDENT Welfare Associations (RWAs) in Delhi are tired of being mere sounding boards for the state government. At a meeting organised by Defence Colony residents and Parivartan at the Habitat Centre in March to discuss the concept of urban panchayats, RWAs demanded legal status and authority similar to rural panchayats in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala.

Under the Bhagidari system of the Sheila Dikshit Congress government, RWAs are supposed to be included in governance. But this stops at being superficially consulted during meetings at which officials make it a point to talk down to them.

The RWAs are now saying that they have had enough of Bhagidari as it is now being practised. They want the right to direct investments like panchayats because they know their local urban needs.

There is no unanimity as yet. At the Habitat meeting, the hall was full. But there are RWAs which think that it is more important to get the

municipal council system to work than to branch off into urban panchayats. There are others that are worried about having to handle funds as panchayats do. One big concern is that officials in the government will dump all responsibility on the urban panchayat and allow the system to collapse.

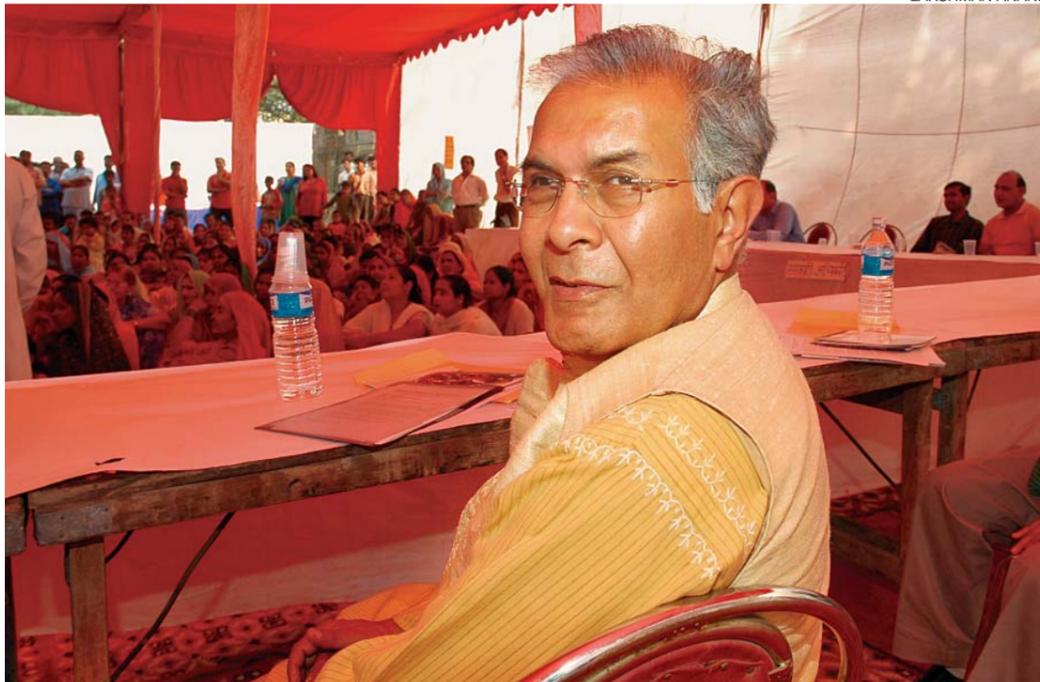
But a large number of voices are in favour of change and a genuine devolution of authority. "RWAs have responsibility but no authority," said Brigadier RD Dhawan, general secretary of the Defence Colony RWA. "We are sandwiched between the citizens and authority. We have direct links with consumers but we have no teeth, powers or functions to address their problems."

So money for public works is often siphoned off. Substandard material is used to construct roads, sewers and back lanes. Payments are made to contractors for shoddy or bogus works. RWAs are never asked what their priorities are before works are carried out in their area. Neither do government agencies find out whether they are satisfied with the work once it is done.

In Defence Colony, money was wasted rebuilding back lanes and walking tracks that were in

# But that's a security risk...

## *comes with many hiccups*



LAKSHMAN ANAND

**Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah**

which have their own Assemblies, so only PGC will be approached for the appeals against the defaulting officers, and the final appeal will be in the shape of a Writ. Chief Information Commissioner has no role in this.

**Has CIC penalised any official under Section 20 of the Act?**

Till date there is no penalty, but it will come. The law is new and the commission is only a few months old, so some time has to be given to the commission to get its act together. A person who

appeals or complaints should put the request to penalise the official specifically in their application. The commission will then look into the matter in that direction.

**Why is there the rule of depositing a draft of Rs 10 as fees instead of cash deposit? One has to pay more to get a Rs 10 draft made.**

The commission has taken up the matter with the government, as only the governments make the rules. We have taken up the matter so that there are easier forms of accepting fees. The provision of

a draft is defeating the purpose of the Act.

**Can government officials demand information from their departments?**

Yes. Any official working in government can apply for information, there is nothing binding on the official.

**Why do they ask for huge amounts for sample collection and testing?**

One can make provisions so that no money is asked for in such matters.

**Are the disposal of the appeals to the First Appellate Authority biased?**

If one person feels that there is a bias then one can appeal to the Commission.

**Where is the money collected from the fees for filing the applications going?**

Rs. 10 as fees seems to be nothing but many applications will make it a lot of money. Again the government has to decide how this money will be utilised.

**There is not much publicity of this Act. It is difficult for the common people to know about this law. Is there any provision for publicity?**

Under Section 25 of the Act the government should publicise the contents of the Act, but it is not happening the way it should be. There are training sessions of the PIOs happening in collaboration with State governments, departments and NGOs.

**Why do the officials refuse to give information?**

The departments mentioned under Schedule II are kept outside the Act. Apart from this all information including file notings should be furnished to the people asking for them. Any information which is subjudice or pending in any court of law shall not be given which may manipulate the case at large. Such information will not be provided on any request.

**Can one ask for commercial information?**

Yes, commercial information can be asked after the tender or the contract is finalised and not at the time when the tenders are received.

## RWAs want power to decide

perfectly good condition. Substandard flyash bricks were being laid in Block A of Defence Colony. The RWA, alerted by local residents, managed to stop payment. In Rajendra Nagar, a colony in west Delhi, a road was shown to be built thrice when it was actually made just once.

The situation is the same in poorer areas. In Sundernagari, a resettlement colony in east Delhi, Rs 60 lakhs was spent building fountains in rundown parks. The fountains didn't work for a single day. The people of this locality have been asking for a secondary school, sewer, sanitation and drinking water.

Although RWAs have been extensively using the Right to Information (RTI) Act to uncover corruption in public works, "nothing has been done about it on the ground," said Dhawan. "The RTI is a powerful Act. But citizens have discovered to their dismay that information given is sometimes doctored, incomplete or even erased."

The RWAs are therefore interested in becoming urban panchayats. They listened attentively to Arvind Kejriwal of Parivartan as he explained how urban panchayats would function. In rural areas, while the panchayat is an elected body that repre-

sents between 1000 to 3000 people in the area, the gram sabha comprises all adult people in a village and is like a general body.

The panchayat decides which development projects should be undertaken and how much money should be spent. In Kerala about 40 percent of the total state budget is routed to panchayats. In Madhya Pradesh after work is done the panchayat has the authority to certify it. In both states, officials, including teachers and engineers are responsible to the panchayat which can penalise them for corruption or recall them. Even their Annual Confidential Reports are written by panchayats.

A similar structure could be implemented in urban areas. Delhi can be divided into colonies of about 1000 families. Each colony could elect one or two representatives.

They would form the RWA which would have a fixed tenure of five years. The RWA secretariat would appoint one person to be its secretary. The RWAs would have the authority to recall their representative if they were unhappy with his performance. Elections could be held under the supervision of the State Election Commission.

Eight subjects including sanitation, sewerage, water, education, food and supply, local civil works, horticulture and identification of people for government schemes could be transferred to the RWAs. The RWA would decide which projects should be carried out and how much money should be spent. They would certify the work once it is completed. Only after certification would payments be made. Local officials would be answerable to the RWA which would have the authority to punish them.

There would be a general body of all voters in each RWA's area. They would meet once in two months and decide what works should be carried out. If there wasn't enough money to carry out all the works, priorities would be set.

Kejriwal said such a system would remove corruption because the RWA representative would not be taking independent decisions but implementing the will of the general body. About 5 percent of voters in the RWA area could sign a petition and seek a special general body meeting through the State Election Commission and ask for their representative's removal, if they were unhappy with his work.

# Block the road to get your road

**Rakesh Agrawal**  
Chamoli

THE Kalpeshwar Valley, located on the way to the famous religious shrine of Badrinath, is a beautiful region. It has evergreen forests of oak and bright red rhododendrons. The foliage is so thick that even the sun does not seem to penetrate. The valley is dotted with lakes and meadows. Moreover, it is of deep religious significance.

But for 5000 people living in 20 villages in the Kalpeshwar Valley, district Chamoli, life was hell. For fifteen years they fought to get a road connecting their villages. They waged an uphill battle to get teachers for schools and a doctor for the only primary health centre (PHC) in the entire valley.

Finally, the most arduous fight, the 12 km long road, is under construction. It will be ready before the monsoon this year. "This is the result of a relentless struggle. Now, sick people can be treated in good hospitals in nearby towns and children can go to schools and colleges," says Laxman Singh Negi, the leading light of this peoples' movement.

Kalpeshwar Valley falls into the category of reserve forest. Therefore the Forest Act became a hindrance to road construction. On 21 October 1981, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) agreed in principle to divert 8,864 ha of forest-land for a 12 km long Helang-Urgam road. After that the project got mired in red tape.

To get their road made, the people of all 20 villages came together under the banner of the Kalp Kshetra Vikas Andolan (KKVA). They doggedly pursued the issue with the state and central government. They also launched an agitation.

"In 1989, soon after the KKVA was formed, we organised a 14-day dharna (sit-in) at the district headquarters in Chamoli," recalls Pushpa Devi, 42, president, Mahila Mangal Dal, Bansa village. Apart from the road, their demands included upgrading a school at Urgam to higher secondary level.

The administration conceded this demand. This acted as a catalyst. It inspired the people to start



**To get their road, all 20 villages came together under the Kalp Kshetra Vikas Andolan (KKVA). They doggedly pursued the issue with the state and Centre.**

agitating for the road. Men, women and children got together to make the administration listen. But they were not successful.

"The formation of Uttaranchal gave us a ray of hope, but it was crushed," says Mahavir Singh Panwar, 45, an ex-soldier and secretary of the Yuvak Mangal Dal, Pilakhi village.

Then, in 2002, the new government led by the Congress Party assumed office. People sent memorandum after memorandum to ND Tiwari, the chief minister, Narendra Singh Bhandari, the state's education minister, and BC Khanduri, MP and ex-minister of surface transport in the union government.

By May 2002, they realised their requests were falling on deaf ears. "An open village meeting was

organised on 14 May, 2002, in which 285 people attended and we decided to hold a dharna," says Surendra Lal, ex-member, gram panchayat, Talla Barginda village. Consequently, people sat on a 32-day dharna in front of the panchayat bhawan in Urgam village.

Nobody paid them any attention. "We realised holding a dharna in this remote area will not put enough pressure on policymakers," says Kanti Devi, Kshetra panchayat member, Urgam village. So they decided to block the National Highway at Chamoli.

This attracted the attention of officials and the media. The local MLA, the Block Development Officer (Joshimath) and Sub-divisional

Magistrate (Chamoli) assured the KKVA their demands would be conceded.

The administration agreed to the following: the high school at Urgam would be upgraded to an inter college and a new building constructed. Also approved was a project to promote religious tourism in Urgam Valley and Rs 22.21 lakh was sanctioned for it. An ANM and doctor were appointed at the PHC in Urgam. A mobile tower is being constructed in Urgam Valley, to enable mobile telephony.

The contract to build the road was given to Megatech, a private construction company. They began work but stopped after their files got stuck in government departments. Meanwhile, heavy rains washed away the unfinished road. The KKVA again approached politician, bureaucrats and the director of the Nanda Devi National Park. Nobody listened. So once again the KKVA blocked the road (chakka jam) this time at Helang on National Highway 58 between 22nd and 25th January, 2005.

Finally, officials visited the valley and a joint survey of the road was conducted. Work was approved and construction of the road started.

The most noteworthy feature of this struggle is that the people helped themselves. They raised about Rs 45,000 from donations which was spent mostly on travel and communications.

**TWO YEARS OLD AND GROWING MONTHLY**

Rs 500 for 1 year    Rs 850 for 2 years    Rs 1200 for 3 years

**Civil Society**

READ US. WE READ YOU.

## PAYMENT AND PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: Mr/Ms/Institution .....  
First Middle Last

Institution: ..... Department/Class: .....  
 Address:  Office  Residence .....  
 State: ..... Country: .....  
 Phone:  Office  Residence ..... Fax: .....  
 E-mail: .....

Designation: .....  
 Area of Interest: .....

City: .....  
 Pincode:

Tick (✓) appropriate:  1 year (Rs. 500)  2 years (Rs. 850)  3 years (Rs. 1,200)

I wish to pay by  Cash / MO  Cheque / Demand Draft (add Rs 65 for outstation / non-Delhi cheque)

Cheque / Demand Draft No.       Dated ..... Payable to CIVIL SOCIETY. Mail it to: E2144, Palam Vihar, Gurgaon, Haryana-122017.

Note: Order will be executed on realisation of your remittance. Please allow 4-6 weeks for us to process your order.



PRASANTA BISWAS

Sister Cyril with her school children

# Sister Cyril's Loreto has room for everyone

Rina Mukherji  
Kolkata

**I**N 1979, when Sister Cyril took over as principal of Loreto Day School, at Sealdah in central Kolkata, she noted that her school catered only to the elite. Outside her school gates there were thousands of children on crowded footpaths in desperate need of an education.

"I could see no justification for running a big English medium school for a relatively small number and leaving out so many in need," she says. Sister Cyril decided to start admitting children from underprivileged families into her privileged school. Today

50 percent of her students are either street children or come from slums. They have been integrated into the school system. Sister Cyril implemented the idea of inclusive education some 25 years ago.

In contrast, elitist schools in Delhi, which are supposed to admit 25 percent of students from economically deprived families, continue to debate the issue, despite a court order. They balk at the idea.

Loreto Day School, Sealdah, looks like any other school. Walk through its iron gates and you will see brightly coloured walls, children playing games and mothers waiting for their wards. Look again and you will spot barefoot children strolling around. Nobody shoos them away. They are a part of the school.

The parents of these children are often rickshaw pullers or domestic servants. Filling up an admission form is difficult for them so teachers sit with these parents and write out the form.

Richer students help enrol poorer children. Initially, the school targeted slum-dwellers. "We

would often walk up to slum-dwellers and tell them they ought to send their children to our school. It would ensure them a bright future," says Sangeeta Mondol, administrative assistant and an old student of the school. "It was a tough proposition, but finally, a small number started trickling in."

In 1985, the school authorities extended enrolment to street children. They launched the Rainbow Project. Under this, street children were initially admitted as day scholars. Students from the school would teach them mathematics and language for three hours.

But in 2002, a three-year-old girl was raped just outside the school gates. The incident jolted Sister Cyril. "It made me realise that street children needed much more than a night shelter. With both parents off to work, they were vulnerable to all kinds of anti-social elements on the streets"

So the school decided to provide boarding facilities for these children. Nearly 300 girls between the ages of two and 16 years live in the school. Older children are taught basics and then admitted to government-run Bengali medium schools or corporation schools. The younger ones are inducted into Loreto Day School. Currently, some 60 students from the Rainbow Project are studying as regular students.

The problems of integrating children from diverse backgrounds, parental opposition and financial hurdles are a faint memory here. Part of the credit goes to the school authorities and, of course, to Sister Cyril. "I made it clear to the parents that since the Constitution of India guarantees liberty and equality for all, why should they

have a problem?" she says bluntly.

Parents now accept the school's philosophy and programmes. "They often donate small amounts of Rs 500 and old clothes for the Rainbow Project. Even my students try saving out of their pocket money to contribute," says Sister Cyril. Certain rules have been laid down. The school has banned mobile phones, lavish birthday parties and generous pocket money. "I taught my children to laugh at these practices since these are substitutes for people who have no personality," says Sister Cyril. "I told them to stand out as people who do not need any of these trappings."

The school consistently teaches children to be sensitive to the less privileged. They have a Barefoot Teacher's programme under which

school dropouts from rural areas are identified and trained to become primary teachers. There is also a One-to-One Rural Outreach programme. Once a month, girls from Loreto Day School travel to rural areas adjoining Kolkata to teach children.

The school's time-table is designed so that girls from Classes V to X get two hours every week to teach the Rainbow children as part of their work education class.

There is an incentive in this for older girls. Class XII girls who find time to teach earn a 'Work Freeship' under which their tuitions and books are taken care of by the school. "We do not have scholarships beyond Class X. This enables junior college girls to earn and pay their way through," says Sister Cyril. In return, the girls get hands on experience in teaching.

There is also a value education course for students from Class I to Class X. This syllabus is designed so that every child realises the need to lead a disciplined lifestyle, share what she has, return the love she gets from parents, be neat and tidy, sensitive to the less fortunate and never take part in teasing. Children are also taught to question the injustice of caste and class and respect all religions. They are trained to be responsible and caring citizens.

The value education course also tries to build team spirit. Children learn in groups of four and five. Progress is measured for a group. The teacher introduces the topic to be discussed. The group then talks about the subject and each team comes up with a plan to tackle the problem. The entire class then debates the solutions and arrives at a conclusion.

In one value education class children discussed how education could be taken to the underprivileged. Alisha Fernandes, a student, suggested taking time off to collect unlettered children in her neighbourhood and teach them. Another student, Ankita Karmakar, recommended teaching child domestics every evening.

The school tries to arrange a livelihood for the parents of poor children by permitting their mothers to sell home-made food on the premises, and employing their fathers as electricians, plumbers etc for the school. "We cannot do that for everyone but we try to help as many as we can," says Sister Cyril.

# School in doldrums

**Vidya Viswanathan**  
New Delhi

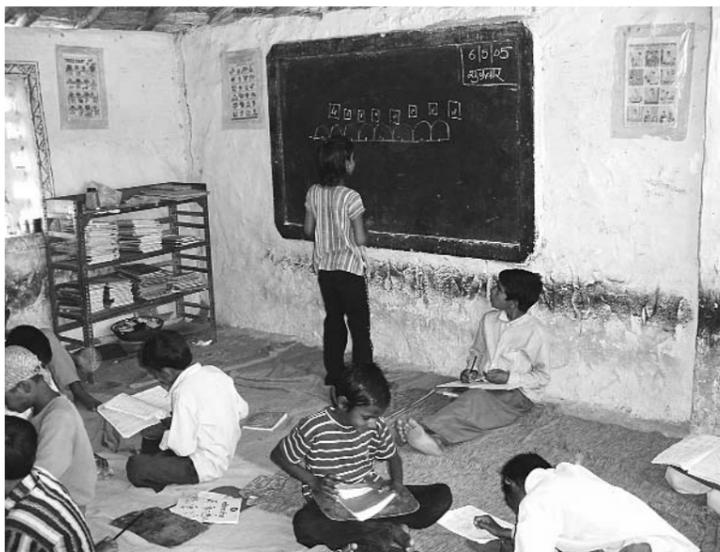
IN 1978, John and Faith Singh, who run the Anokhi textile stores, contacted David Horsburgh at Neelbagh, near Rishi Valley School, because they wanted an ideal education for their children. David told them to send a teacher whom he could train at his school in Neelbagh. The teacher would go back to Jaipur and start a school for 25 children instead of just one or two. The Singhs sent Rohit Dhankar.

Dhankar came back to Jaipur and started a school under the aegis of the Digantar Trust. Digantar now runs four schools and has become a well respected resource centre for education. It is funded by the social initiatives group of ICICI bank. One of the largest Digantar schools, with 350 children, is in Bandhyali on the outskirts of Jaipur. The Ministry of HRD supported it for its innovative pedagogy.

The school was started in 1992 on community land given by the villagers. It is located so that children from 20 hamlets can walk there. When the school was started, the land was under the panchayat headed by the sarpanch of Bhavgarh Bhandhya. The land has now come under the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) which wants to evict the school and give the land to a privately run technology college. *Civil Society spoke to Rohit Dhankar.*

## What have been the results of this school?

When we came and conducted a survey, female literacy was two per cent. Now most girls are enrolled. Our children take the state exams and more than 70 per cent passed with above 60 per cent marks. In 10



The school at Bandhyali, on the outskirts of Jaipur

years only seven children have failed.

## Why didn't you buy the land?

This land was gauchar bhoomi or grazing land. There is a problem with land records. These villages are 200 years old and the revenue records show the land as government land but they have always belonged to the community. When we started the school we went to the district collector and told him about the need for a school. We left an application with him and started the school. In 1997, we sent an application to the JDA.

They say we are encroaching. We have been informing the government about this land for 12 to 14 years. In 2003, JDA asked for information in a specific format - they wanted proof that it is a free school, they asked for our audited accounts, results of our students and several documents. We have documentary evidence.

## At what stage is the case now?

We went to the High Court. The court told us to go to the JDA tribunal. If we do not get redressal from there we will go back to the High Court. We will then take it to the Supreme Court. All the NGOs in Jaipur, including the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) are supporting us.

## Who is the land earmarked for?

The land is earmarked for the Mahima Shiksha Samiti which is a private university. They are disrupting children's education. That is a violation of fundamental rights. They are taking community resources and allocating it to a community that already has a lot of resources. We have applied first and this is discrimination against an organisation which provides free education. Digantar has never been in the good books of the government.

## Are you saying that this is politically motivated?

The local MLA Kalicharan Sharaf did tell me that he has been fighting elections for 25 years and though we have been here for 15 years we have never called

him. The youngest child in the school does our inaugurations. Our school functions are started by a girl. We are strictly secular and non-political. My colleagues tell me that in the present political climate we are political orphans.

## How much has been spent on the infrastructure of the school? Would you be willing to move to another location?

Any dislocation would first have to be discussed. The school has to be within walking distance for these children. The MHRD gave us Rs 50,000 and the villagers have spent Rs 36,000 to install a hand pump for water.

We have built toilets and a cycle stand for children. We have to change the thatch every three or four years. The villagers have designed the building and they contribute for its maintenance. It will be quite difficult to rebuild again.

# Recognition for Special Olympics

**Shailey Hingorani**  
New Delhi

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that India has 30 million people who are mentally challenged.

Special Olympics Bharat helps the mentally challenged become confident. Through games and physical activities it assists in building their personalities. Special Olympics Bharat is the national accredited programme of Special Olympics International and is recognised by the International Olympics Committee.

Recently, Special Olympics Bharat got recognition from the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and has now become the largest recognised sports federation for the mentally challenged. *Civil Society spoke to Atr Marshall (Retd.) Denzil Keelor, Chairman, Special Olympics Bharat, on what the organisation had in store for the mentally challenged.*

## What does recognition mean to the organisation?

The implications of this recognition are two-fold. First, we as an organisation will be subjected to the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs. Secondly, the organisation will get monetary and material support from the ministry which is so essential for us to further our mission

of inclusion and development through sports. We have also been moved from the Ministry of Social Justice to the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs.

## Where do you plan to spend the funds?

We have a long-term development plan in mind. We will be participating in the Special Olympics 2009. We will spend the money we get on training and selecting athletes from the pool of

people that we train under our various programmes. We will set up camps and train coaches. Initially we used to spend money on booking the stadium etc. but now the organisation will be given the stadium free of cost.

## What are the Special Olympics activities?

Special Olympics Bharat offers intellectually disabled children and adults year-round training and gives them an opportunity to compete in 14 areas. These include, aquatics, athletics, cycling and other games like cricket, basketball, football, tennis and volleyball. We take part in the special winter and summer Olympics.

## How successful have you been in your endeavour?

Special Olympics Bharat works in 25 states with over 206,406 athletes. The number of people that

'Special Olympics Bharat offers intellectually disabled children and adults year-round training and gives them opportunity to compete in 14 areas.'



we have been able to involve is a success in itself. But we don't wish to stop here and we want to take our programmes to every person who is intellectually disabled. We want society to accept them as they are and not as they want them to be. We want them to be fully integrated into society.

## What are your future plans?

Right now, we have been accorded a lower category in the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs. We want a priority status given. And we are not begging for this status. We rightfully deserve it. We have performed consistently at the international level, always coming back home with medals. For example in the Special Olympics 2003 held at Dublin, Ireland we won 110 medals including 34 gold medals.

# Wanted: A wildlife sanctuary for the chiru

Jehangir Rashid  
Srinagar

SINCE the past 500 years Kashmiris, especially women, earned money spinning shawls made from shahtoosh wool. But ever since the trade was banned they are in dire straits. Shahtoosh traders and weavers say the centre and the state government are apathetic to their plight.

After international pressure by wildlife activists India signed the CITES (Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species). The Tibetan antelope called the chiru, from whom the shahtoosh wool is derived, was included in the schedule of endangered species. But people associated with the trade say this was done without verification.

The Tibetan antelope is found in China. There is no case of it being killed in the Kashmir valley. It has

been reported that the chiru is found in the upper reaches of the Ladakh region. Again there is no proper proof. "The government should have put forward this fact but it failed to do so," says Mohammad Yousuf, a shahtoosh trader.

They say it is not necessary to kill the chiru to extract wool. According to them the Tibetan antelope sheds its wool, just like other animals. This wool is then collected and transformed into the finest fabric after passing through various stages.

"The trade is related to the moral, social and political values of Kashmiris," says Ghulam Rasool, a shahtoosh trader.

A revered saint, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani who came to Kashmir from Central Asia to disseminate the teachings of the Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammed introduced the people to the shahtoosh trade. Therefore, banning it has hurt the religious sentiments of Kashmiris.

Besides it used to supplement household incomes. Women would weave the yarn in their homes. It didn't require much labour and they could easily earn Rs 20-30 per day after finishing their daily chores.

Girls too contributed towards household incomes by spinning. This money would most often be kept aside for their marriage, says Kaleemullah Khan, a Pashmina trader.

"We are not denying that the animal is being killed, but it has to be seen what is the motive," says Kaleemullah Khan. "Maybe the meat of the

antelope is used as a delicacy or its bones are used to make certain medicines. Perhaps the skin of the antelope fetches a good price. These aspects needed to have been studied by the government but they failed to do so."

The government should have appointed a committee of environmentalists, biologists and scientists to find out whether the animal is really being killed for its wool, say the traders. A committee has been formed under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) have also got their representative on this com-

ABDUL QAYOUM



Woman spinning the shahtoosh

mittee and they are presenting the people's point of view.

"It is a myth that the animal is being killed for its wool. There are no authentic reports about the presence of the antelope in the Ladakh region.

When it is not found there how can it be killed? Further if the animal is killed, the wool also dies and then there is no use of it," said Rauf A Punjabi, president, KCCI.

The people involved in the trade question the concern shown by the state and centre in preserving the Tibetan antelope. They say by now the government should have set up a sanctuary for the chiru. Wool could have been collected under proper monitoring. Rules and regulations could have been framed to ensure the animal was not killed.

"We heard that in the early 1990s the government laid the foundation stone for a sanctuary for the chiru but nobody could authenticate this," said a group of worried traders.

The government has, on record, said that the ban on the shahtoosh trade has seriously dented the economic infrastructure of the Kashmir valley.

Nearly half a million people have been badly affected since the ban came into force.

"The central and state government should sit together and sort out the issue keeping the interests of the people in mind," said Kaleemullah Khan. "Only then can they claim to be real representatives of the people."

# Fighting stress inside the classroom

Shuktara Lal  
Kolkata

THE Students' Empowerment Rights and Vision through Education (SERVE) fights the tyrannical exam system in India. It describes itself as the "only NGO in India which is committed to the elimination of suffering from the classrooms of our country."

Every year students commit suicide because of exam related stress. According to a survey by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 24 percent of suicide cases are by students who failed their exams.

"There is simply no school without a pretty high level of stress. It is built into the very structure of our systems," says Brother Brendan MacCarthaigh, CEO of SERVE.

SERVE was founded in 1996 in Kolkata. "We are a totally secular organisation. SERVE was set up by a Hindu, a Muslim and a Christian," says Brother Brendan who started this NGO with Rajesh Arora and Abbas Bengal.

In February they launched a book entitled, "Where the Child Is Without Fear", drawing deliberately on Tagore's inspirational poem "Where the Mind is Without Fear." The book encapsulates SERVE's philosophy and its work.

They believe every country should design an educational system that is in tune with its social and cultural environment. "For Indians, izzat forms an integral part of individual and collective consciousness. The examination system attacks that very izzat," says Brother Brendan.

SERVE recommends replacing exams with quizzes. This, they believe, would foster a spirit of togetherness among students and promote group activity, essential to the Indian psyche. Brother Brendan suggests that the quizzes could be like Kaun Banega Crorepati, a popular TV quiz programme. Such a system of evaluation would encourage feelings of team spirit within a class.

If the entire class roots for their fellow-student who is being quizzed, it would do wonders to that student's self-confidence. The teacher must also be supportive. As Brother Brendan asserts: "Praising a student is a pivotal part of the teaching process."

The SERVE system of education underscores the need to connect subjects that children are taught to their daily activities. This will make it easier for students to understand theoretical concepts. It would also sensitise children to their surroundings.

A holistic education would help children realise they are members of a much larger society which extends beyond their school and family. The child would understand that society encompasses several religions, languages, cultural norms, economic disparities and marginalised communities. "Too often we project the child as a sort of future tense item, having no real significance till adulthood," says Brother Brendan. Ultimately, SERVE envisions a scenario where, in Brother Brendan's words, "the teacher becomes almost totally invisible."

SERVE conducts, what Brother Brendan calls, "Lunch Time Lectures" in schools where it elucidates its educational tenets. The NGO counsels teachers and students.

It organises stress management courses. In one of these sessions, students criticised their principal for being partial and indulging in favouritism.

# India, China join global rat race

THE tide has been gradually turning these last few years when we began to see the first wave of Indian owned enterprises (Wipro, Infosys, TCS, Computer Associates and many others) appearing on the Western horizon along with the dot.com phenomenon, opening the gate for other more traditional businesses. Today we rarely dwell more than a few seconds on news headlines of an Apeejay buying Typhoo Tea for over \$120 million. It would take real block busters like Mittal Steel to bid for Accelor (24 billion dollars) or Tata Tea buying Tetley (3 billion dollars) or NatSteel Asia (over 2 billion dollars) to catch our attention.

Even while cheering on Lakshmi Mittal (a brother Xaverian) for teaching those double-dealing, hypocritical "free-marketers" a thing or two about opening their markets to the biggest bidders (albeit foreign - as in brown-skinned foreign), I am sad that both India and China (China National Offshore Oil Corporation's (CNOOC) \$18.5 billion offer for Unocal in the USA) have ultimately joined the global economic rat race.

The Europeans have bequeathed humanity with the 'age of reason' and the industrial revolution, and the resultant economic model - the model of infinite consumption and infinite growth. This model was doomed from the day it was born, because it has been on a head-on collision course with the very finiteness of our planet, even though it took almost a century and a half for us to realise it. Today we stand on the brink of a monumental decision chasm: do we pay heed to the environmental warning signals that are screaming at us (and have been for a long while) to stop ravaging nature before it corrects our selfish modifications to our own detriment, perhaps our very survival; or do we give in to our lust for profit and continue ostrich-like merrily consuming our way to annihilation.

Said Gandhi: "true economics never militates against the highest ethical standard just as all true ethics, to be worth its name, must at the same time be also good economics ... True economics stands for social justice; it promotes the good of all equally, including the weakest and is indispensable for decent life" ( Harijan, 9 October 1937). That Gandhi also said that he did not "draw a sharp line or make any distinction between economics and ethics" (Young India, 13 October 1921) is not something modern man contemplates.

Like all the other sciences, we have caged the dismal science into its own individual box, separating it from the other boxes, extrapolating mathematical models in the ethereal voids of our projections, happily sequestering it like the businessman in Exupery's Little Prince, finally succeeding in creating a reality which is more topsy-turvy than Alice's wonderland; where you happily pay more money

## LETTER FROM EUROPE



Riaz Quadir in Versailles

to advertise a manufacturer's brand name on your apparel, where you deprive your community of labour by shipping half-finished goods halfway across the world to be completed by people who were uprooted from their communities to do to so for a pittance and then return them to you, where bottled wine is cheaper than water, where herbivores are fed animal protein and poultry never sees the light of day. Where men put life on hold so that they may earn "enough" money and retire early so that they can begin to really live - after having exhausted the real currency of life, time! Where men

live in 'acclimatised' boxes called apartments, suffering from SADness (actually an acronym for seasonally affected disorder)...Where social scientists after years of research discover that according to the Happiness Index countries such as Bangladesh and Brazil have the highest per capita happiness while the economically richest countries are at the bottom of the scale.

And like the lunatic in the asylum we really believe we are Napoleon and that we really live in an age of prosperity.

Gandhi, India's last prophet foresaw all this almost a century ago yet his theory of economics is not taught anywhere, not even in his native India. Indians and non-Indians alike, continue to pay lip service to him as the father of non-violence, all the while committing the greatest violence in their economic policies. It wasn't until after his death when Schumacher made Gandhian economics familiar to the world at large that we understood what 'village economy' meant. Perhaps not until the scrooge of rampant consumerism runs counter to the environmental disaster that is brewing, will we fully know how well he understood how misguided modern man is. How pitiful to see India completely abandoning the Gandhian path in its search for power through wealth.

And China! Providing enslavement to its masses in exchange for capital. Abandoning the wholeness gleaned by millenniums' of integration of knowledge. Now fragmenting it to achieve blind functional superiority for short-term power and wealth. The very strength that enables it to do so will be lost once it reaches parity with those with whom it now competes.

At this crossroad of history when post-industrial economics is sorely challenged, both India and China could have lived up to their legacy of Gandhian economics and what Schumacher called "Buddhist Economics" to show the world the way out of this frightening morass that threatens our very existence. It is with tremendous irony I witness the fear with which Europe is watching China and India rise to challenge their 'superiority' all parties blind to the real foe that lurks in their midst - their greed.



Lakshmi Mittal

WHERE  
ARE WE  
BEING  
READ?

## Civil Society is going places...

Delhi, Dhaka, Trivandrum, Tennerife, Nadia, Nagpur, Kolkata, Ghaziabad, Washington, Geneva,

Bhubaneshwar, Ladakh, Lahore, Bangalore, Mumbai, London, New York, Versailles, Dehradun,

Chandigarh, Belgaum, Dibang Valley, Shillong, Patna,

Shimla, Ahmedabad, Panjim, Hyderabad, Singapore, Porto

Alegre, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Lucknow, Surrey,

Srinagar, Manali, Pune, Peechi, Pondicherry...

**Civil Society**

READ US. WE READ YOU



Dr Rahul Gupta,  
gastroenterologist, at  
the Molarbund health  
centre

Photographs by LAKSHMAN ANAND

# HEALTH CENTRE FOR MOLARBUND

*The Arpana Trust takes top doctors to a resettlement colony in south-east Delhi*

**Civil Society News**  
New Delhi

**O**N an average day you may have to wait a couple of hours to see Dr Ashok Khurana at his Defence Colony clinic. So skilled is he with the use of ultrasound for diagnosis that he is the first choice of Delhi's rich and famous. Private practices hardly ever get bigger than his with money and fame and no end to the number of patients seeking appointments. Defence Colony is also one of the posh addresses in Delhi. You don't live here unless you are rich and you wouldn't even think of consulting Dr Khurana if you happened to be just one of Delhi's millions.

But once a month, Dr Khurana transits to a very different world. Unknown to most people in his circle, he spends several hours at the Arpana Health Centre in Molarbund, a festering resettlement colony in southwest Delhi. Patients wait in large numbers to be examined by him and news of his arrival sends them

scurrying to fall into a queue.

If the elite at Defence Colony do not know of Dr Khurana's altruistic trips to Molarbund, the poor who gather to be examined by him in Molarbund don't have any clue as to his upmarket avatar. But patients rich and poor know a good doctor when they find one and he works for both.

In the very basic examination room at the health centre Dr Khurana is much the same person he is in his Defence Colony clinic. He has his characteristic twinkle in his eye and he is engaging and attentive as he draws on all those insights that go to make an exceptional ultrasound specialist.

For Molarbund, with its open drains and cholera count, Dr Khurana is a godsend. But he is not the only one who takes time out of a busy schedule to do his bit for public health. Several other top physicians also visit the Arpana Health Centre and like him most of them seem to do so to without fanfare, as if to worship at forgotten altars of the medical profession.

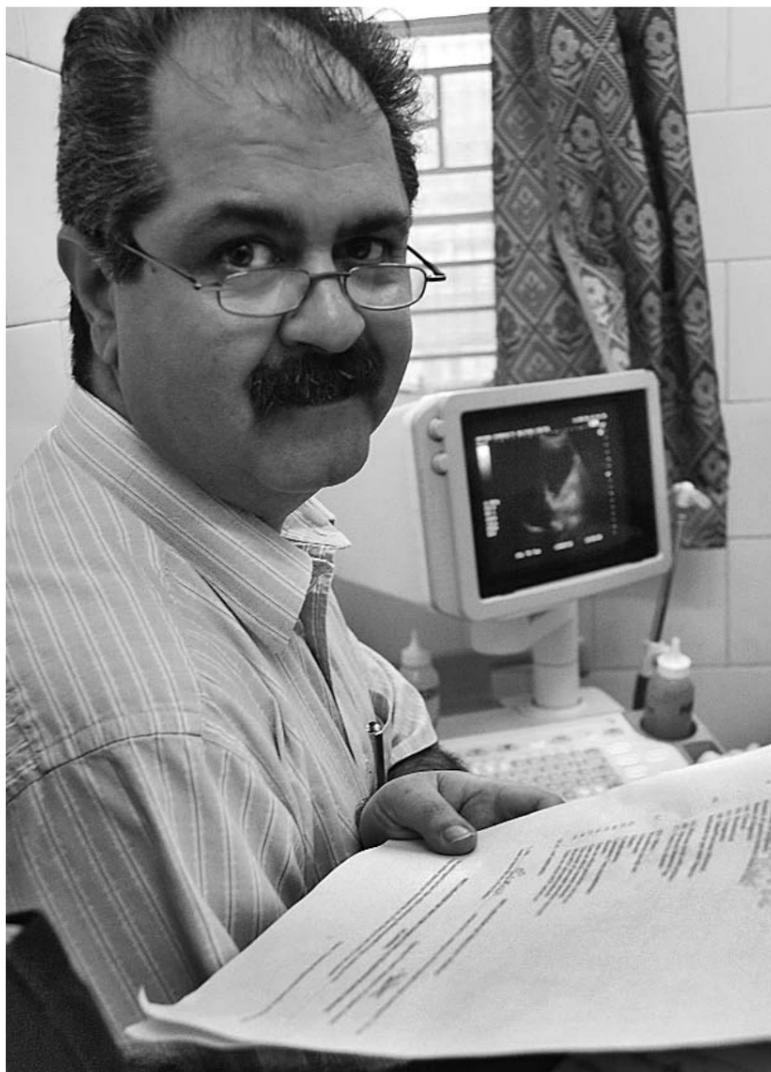
There is Dr Dilraj Gandhi, also an ultrasound specialist, with a flourishing

practice in east Delhi, who comes once a week in his Honda Accord. Dr Yuvakshi Juneja, a gynaecologist with Moolchand Hospital, serves in Molarband. Dr Sadia Zinzani, Dr Usha Mehta and Dr Rakesh Sachdeva – all paediatricians – are much in demand. Dr Vidya Gupta, a neo-natologist comes from Apollo Hospital and Dr Ashok Gupta, a vascular surgeon from Escorts. Dr Rastogi and Dr SM Govil, both chest specialists, make themselves available.

Then there are those who don't make regular visits to the centre but are available on tap. For instance, Dr J S Khurana and Dr Rajni Saxena provide all possible assistance for reporting of X Rays. Dr Mrs. Krishna Taneja, a senior paediatrician is always ready to fill in for missing doctors. She helps conduct the outreach clinic from Arpana's mobile van in Ali Gaon, adjacent to Molarbund.

Literally hijacking them all to Molarbund is Dr Rahul Gupta, a gastroenterologist. Rahul comes from a family of physicians. His mother, Dr Raj Gupta, is a respected gynaecologist. His father, Dr Indar S. Gupta, is an ENT specialist. Rahul's wife, Lena, is a gynaecologist.

The Gupta family is deeply influenced by the Arpana Trust and its head, Param Pujya Ma, who preaches the unity of faiths and a life of action in service



**Dr Ashok Khurana performs an ultrasound test at Molarbund**

to humanity.

The Arpana Trust works extensively in rural Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. It runs a hospital, provides extension medical facilities and works with women's self-help groups. It is this experience and spirit that the Arpana Trust brings to Molarbund in the creation of the health centre and a lot else.

People in Molarbund live beyond the pale of governance. They would never know how to gain access to an ultrasound machine, let alone a specialist capable of reading its images with reliability. If they went to any of Delhi's public hospitals run by the government, it could take them as long as a month, perhaps two, before they could get examined. Most private clinics would be too expensive for them to go to.

Women in Molarbund get pregnant six and seven times. Often, they don't even know they are carrying. The water supply in the area is dicey and together with the filth in the drains it is the reason for stomach disorders. There is also the Badarpur thermal power plant next door that spews flyash all day.

After people were evicted from slums in East of Kailash and other such neighbourhoods and dumped here by the Delhi government four years ago, there was no attempt to clean up and provide facilities. Molarbund has no urban infrastructure worth the name though it falls within the city of Delhi. The health centre, funded originally by WHO, was a part of the plan for the resettlement colony, but it was built and forgotten.

When Dr Rahul Gupta first saw the health centre in 2002, it was in a shambles. Its walls and woodwork had gone to pieces. On paper, it was meant to serve the health needs of the local people. But in reality it was no better than a deserted building used by marauding ruffians.

This was the structure that the Arpana Trust took over. The municipal authorities had to be activated. As the Arpana Trust reached out, it got assistance and guidance from Dr Karuna Singh and her entire team of spirited young doctors. Like so many well-meaning people they, too, were prisoners of a bad system. The Arpana Trust brought them out of their shell.

Now the health centre caters to 4000 households or perhaps 22,000 people. Another 18,000 live in Ali Gaon. X-Rays, ultrasounds, ECGs and pathology tests are done here. A dental clinic runs under Dr Kanupriya Saxena. A pharmacy doles out medicines, which the Arpana Trust buys directly from the market, or sources in dribs and drabs from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

Apart from the services of visiting specialists, there are three full time doctors on duty Dr R Sachdeva, Dr Anjali Soni and Dr Prabhjot Kaur. These are general physicians and they get a salary from the trust. An ambulance and three other vehicles are stationed at the health centre to take people to hospital in emergencies at any time of the day or night.

The health centre encourages women to have their babies in hospitals and helps to transport them there. Institutional deliveries have increased by 24 percent. There has been a drastic reduction in the infant mortality rate. There has been an increasing number of couples adopting family planning measures. Immunisation has also steadily increased.

Private hospitals that provide assistance are the Sama Nursing Home run by Dr SK Sama and the Ganga Ram Hospital, where Dr Rahul Gupta worked for nine years.

## **The health centre caters to 4000 households or perhaps 22,000 people. Another 18,000 live in Ali Gaon. X-Rays, ultrasounds, ECGs are done here. There is a dental clinic and a pharmacy doles out medicines**

The Ganga Ram Hospital provides free surgery. So, when it was found that a child who was crying all the time had a huge stone in the bladder, it was removed at the Ganga Ram Hospital. The health centre also sends women in its ambulance to the Ganga Ram Hospital for sterilisation.

"If you send them to a public hospital, they spend at least Rs. 60-70 on travel, have to wait 12 hours in a queue and lose all their motivation," says Dr Rahul Gupta. Similarly, X-rays, ultrasounds and blood tests at public hospitals take time and more than one visit. This invariably means losing several days wages.

Registering with the Arpana Health Centre involves payment of a one-time fee of Rs 15. Each patient is given a laminated registration card because many people try to misuse the facility by calling relatives from other areas.

The registration cards also help in tracking patients and diseases, especially when there are outbreaks.

Thereafter there are nominal charges for X-rays, pathology services and ultrasound tests. Pregnant mothers are treated free of cost. The bulk of health centre's monthly expenses come from donations. Companies come forward and the Arpana Trust has found big supporters in the Japanese government and Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal Abdul Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.

"The medicines we get here are genuine and the doctors are very good and serious about treating us," says Shabnam, one of the patients.

The popularity of the health centre, as indeed the need for it, can perhaps best be judged by the large numbers of women and children who turn up throughout the day.

"Once someone comes to the centre we ensure that the person does not leave without being examined and helped. No one is turned away when our gates are open and when the centre is closed and someone comes in an emergency, the instructions are to immediately provide the ambulance or one of the other vehicles," says Brigadier Ashok Sondhi, who is the trust's energetic administrator.

The health centre is an example of how infrastructure created by the government, even in the Indian capital, exists only in name. The Molarbund health centre became functional only when the Arpana Trust took it over and Dr Rahul Gupta and his family attracted some of Delhi's best physicians to it. Till then it existed merely on paper like so many other health facilities.

Clearly, government spending on health does not necessarily translate into better health for ordinary citizens. Molarbund is a huge and congested area with people either living in shanties covered with plastic sheets or in shaky brick houses. There are no sewers and the drains overflow. When people moved here after being evicted from elsewhere, they were given all of 12 sq m



**Dr Sadia Zinzani and Dr Usha Mehta, both paediatricians, have a large number of patients**

or 18 sq m to build shelter and resettle themselves!

The government does not even attempt to send doctors to such areas, though these are the conditions in which close to 30 per cent of Delhi's population lives. You will find Molarbund-type settlements all over the Indian capital, but the government abdicates all responsibility for them and lives in perpetual denial of migration to urban areas.

How difficult is it to get top doctors to spare a little time for the poor and needy? Especially when they hardly find time from their practices for their personal lives?

"Everyone wants to do good," says Dr Rahul Gupta, in his clinic on the seventh floor on Kasturba Gandhi Marg in Connaught Place. "The problem is that we get so caught up in our lives that we don't know how to reach out. That is why we have devised a system at Molarbund for doctors to come there for two or four hours in a month or perhaps a week, whatever each one is comfortable with."

The system works well. All the doctors, with the odd exception, who began visiting the health centre two years ago, have continued to go there.

Recently, postgraduate students in paediatrics at the Apollo Hospital have begun going to Molarbund every Thursday. Since Apollo is a private hospital, the students get more experience by seeing a larger number of cases at Molarbund and it is just down the road from the hospital.

"I think of all the professions, medicine is most suited to being pursued as a noble one. If you want to merely make money you don't have to become a doctor. You can always choose some business. It is important to earn a living and so on. But there is more to the profession," says Dr Rahul Gupta.

"In a sense we are all discovering ourselves. My father, for instance, is 81 and often has to skip his private practice because of his age, but will be dressed and ready to go to Molarbund. For him, the patients at the private clinic can always go somewhere else, but where will the Molarbund patients go?"

But charity is not enough. Health centres of the type the Arpana Trust has set up need institutional moorings. They need the support of larger governance structures. Finally, a health centre can achieve little if it is surrounded by a sea of filth.

The Arpana Trust has tried to help the area as a whole. To begin with the health centre has a record of people coming to it and from this it has been able to create disease profiles and seek long-term health benefits. It has Auxillary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), who go to homes, identify high risk pregnancies and bring them for ante natal check-ups. Community health workers inform women about nutrition, the importance of iron and weaning food. Flash cards are used to explain. There is a well-baby clinic which monitors the health of babies and tackles malnutrition.

**When Dr Rahul Gupta first saw the health centre in 2002, it was in a shambles. On paper it was meant to serve the health needs of the local people. But in reality it was no better than a deserted building.**



**Dr Raj Gupta, gynaecologist, sees a patient**





Computers and tuition classes at the Basti Vikas Kendra have brought new hope to the lives of many families of Molarbund

The trust seeks to address problems of AIDS, tuberculosis, child mortality and the health of mothers.

The trust has also worked at bringing about environmental changes. For instance, it has transformed a dump, which used to be piled high with waste plastic right opposite the health centre, into a verdant park. There are 10 such parks that have sprung up.

It has institutionalised garbage collection with households paying Rs 10 per month to have their waste removed instead of throwing it around. An NGO called Conserve helps remove plastic waste. The biodegradable waste is converted into compost.

A scheme is to be launched for providing safe drinking water at one rupee for a litre by using reverse osmosis. A water filter company has chipped in with the RO system.

The garbage removal carts are being motorised.

The Molarbund story began in East of Kailash when three ladies, Sushma Agarwal, Usha Seth and Krishna Shroff, started working with slum-dwellers there. The slum was one day removed and its residents, together with slum-dwellers in Gautam Nagar and Vasant Vihar, were dumped at Molarbund.

The three ladies had begun working with the slum-dwellers of East of Kailash in 1992, inspired by Ma Param Pujya of the Arpana Trust. "After retirement I was looking for some work to do. Usha Seth introduced Ma's teachings to us. We approached Ma and asked her what we could do. She told us to serve the poor and treat them as your own," says Sushma Agarwal.

So the three spirited ladies went to a slum called Indira Camp near their residential colony. They talked around and discovered that the main problem people faced was that their children would drop out of school. "They did not know how to study," says Agarwal. The three ladies collected 20 children and started a day care centre with one teacher. Demand swelled and the facility started expanding. They began introducing health services and sprucing up the slum. They invited the former MCD commissioner, Manjit Singh, to take a look. He was impressed and offered them two rooms of a rundown Bal Vikas Kendra building.

But in 2002, came a new turn of events and the forced shift to Molarbund. When the ladies followed the slum-dwellers there they found that the number of people they had to work with had increased exponentially. From looking after 1500 people they were suddenly expected to care for over 20,000 people. It looked like an impossible task.

"We went to Ma and asked her what to do. She told us don't worry. You begin working for the people of Molarbund. Everything will fall in place," says Agarwal. Unfortunately, the ladies lost Usha Seth. She succumbed to cancer.

So Ma gave them Aruna Dayal who had been instrumental in setting up the Arpana hospital at Karnal and organising extension work. In addition, the Vasant Vihar slum clinic moved to Molarbund.

At first Arpana had only a Bustee Vikas Kendra on a small plot of land

provided by the government. There was no electricity or water supply to speak of in the area. The people who had been shifted there were given land but the plots had not been demarcated. Children played on garbage dumps.

Arpana's members networked with the government to expedite the procedure for a final survey of plots. Next, the plots and the names of the owners had to be entered into the revenue records of the government.

Arpana then helped the legal plot owners to mortgage the plots to banks for loans to build proper structures, which could be used as homes, shops and so on. Geeta Mehta, an Indian architect from Tokyo, designed a house that could be built on a 12 or 18 square metre plot.

A sewage treatment plant existed but wasn't up and running. The lanes between the plots were just of mud.

Once again, advocacy by Arpana members brought funds from the government. The lanes were laid with bricks and some drainage channels were created. Individual houses are yet to be connected to the sewage plant.

Working with the government is a part of the Arpana philosophy. It, therefore, is the local hub for the Pulse Polio programme. To deal with life threatening seasonal diseases like diarrhoea, Arpana workers hold three cluster meetings a day for three days a week. Volunteers were identified on each street and ORS packets were distributed. There is also an ongoing family planning programme and 23 percent more couples were protected in the past six months.

These are impressive achievements and owe much to the work of Agarwal and Shroff. At a nodal level within the Arpana Trust, Aruna Dayal has helped them work to scale. In the initial stages, R.M Sabharwal, a former director of Burma Shell, proved to be a workhorse in getting permissions from the government. He was also

instrumental in raising money. Tragically, he died in a road accident along with other key Arpana Trust members, .Reva Bhandari and. Preeti Madan.

The Basti Vikas Kendra has gone from being a small shed into a beehive of activity. Several prefabricated rooms have been added. Children of all ages attended classes here so that they can catch up with their schoolwork. They get tuition in Hindi, English, Maths and Social Studies. The Kendra helps them access the open school system. Several computers are available. Vocational training is given. Girls can learn embroidery and sewing. "They get jobs in nearby garment factories," says Agarwal.

There is a free meal for children. Theatre, music and dance workshops are held. The Kendra has organised children into a Bal panchayat. One of their activities is to educate slum-dwellers on waste management and health. "They make banners and go round the colony," says Agarwal.

After all this, Molarbund is still a dump. Pushing people into the fringes of cities is no solution. The squalor and filth does not remain hidden for long. Nobody should have to live in such conditions. What the Arpana Trust has shown is that nobody should sit back and watch either.



Krishna Shroff and Sushma Agarwal

**'Usha Seth introduced Ma's teachings to us. We approached Ma and asked her what we could do. She told us to serve the poor and treat them as your own.'**

# Business

## BEYOND PROFIT

**Rethink money with us. What should the entrepreneur of the future be like? How can you get rich and still serve society? Do causes need bottom lines?**

### Magic Lantern spreads its glow



Gargi Sen (right) with Ranjan De

Photographs by LAKSHMAN ANAND

**Vidya Viswanathan**  
New Delhi

**G**ARGI Sen, a 44-year-old documentary filmmaker, is sitting in her basement office in Delhi's Chittaranjan Park, puffing away on her cigarette. Her eyes gleam and she chuckles as she describes where their initiative, Magic Lantern, will be in the next five years. A non-profit that started in the late eighties to take cinema to the grassroots is now expanding into film distribution as a business.

Sen and her partners, Ranjan De and Sujit Ghosh, plan to distribute independent documentary and feature films across India.

"We will stock films of 1000 filmmakers including independent feature films. We will be shipping DVDs but there will also be retail spaces where 10 to 20 people can watch a film and buy it. There will be at least 2000 screening spaces that will charge about Rs 30 per person. We will also have theatrical releases of documentaries," she says.

So, how much turnover does that add up to? "Well in India there are 500,000 registered non-profits," she says. "Even if five percent buy one film at Rs 500, it adds up to Rs 50 lakhs. And we are not even talking about universities, schools and individuals."

Ranjan De, a bearded man of few words, begins to laugh.

De's laughter prompts Gargi to explain. "I'm the yes-yes person and he is the

**Though Gargi Sen talks business she is extremely uncomfortable about calling their venture a business. Reaching films to the grassroots continues to be their objective. The idea is to have a local language version of all films. "It is important for us to run an ethical business," explains Sen.**

no-no person, but he steps in and makes things happen. In the late eighties, I suggested that we borrow Rs 70,000 to shoot a film on how forest-dwellers in Ghad, Saharanpur were fighting for their traditional rights to forest produce. He said 'no'. But we paid off the money in six months and made more to fund other projects".

Though Sen talks business she is extremely uncomfortable about calling their venture a business. Reaching films to the grassroots continues to be their

objective. The idea is to have a local language version of all films.

"We will have different prices, based on affordability. In retail spaces, students could show an identity card. It is important for us to run an ethical business," explains Sen.

She is also sure that an urban market exists for her kind of films. "Two years ago, when Cinefan was showing Asian films in the annual Osian festival in Delhi, there was no audience. Look at the crowds that came this year," she points out.

Sen, De and Ghosh, met in the late eighties at CENDIT (Centre for Development of Instructional Technology), a non-profit started in 1972 to provide communications support to non-profits and activists. It helped make films, rented equipment and held training courses in film-making. It also had a huge library of documentary films on developmental issues. De was working there and Gargi Sen, an NID trained graphic designer came looking for something meaningful to do.

The three worked with Vikalp, a non-profit fighting for the rights of forest-dwellers in Ghad, Saharanpur. The forest dwellers collected bhabhar grass to make ropes.

They were being prevented from entering the forest by the forest department. A movement was building against government policy, which favoured the processing industry and contractors. The trio held workshops in theatre and poster making, composed music and screened films to get group energies together. "We were trying to understand if communication could play a strategic role in the movement," says Sen.

They screened documentary films for villagers from sunset to dawn on a TV, which ran off car batteries. "Those days there were a few independent Indian documentary film makers like Tapan Bose, Anant Patwardhan and Challam Bennurkar. We would show films on people's movements from across the world. We even showed Spanish films on people's movements in Nicaragua and Chile," says De. Villagers empathised with these films because the issues touched a chord.

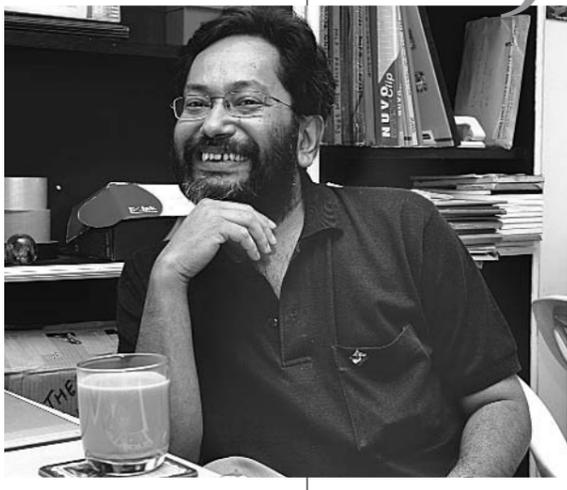
Magic Lantern rented equipment and made their own film on the people's movement in Saharanpur. They shot for 10 days travelling in Sen's father's Gypsy. They knew they would have to sell their film because they had to pay the studio. But luck was on their side. Just as they were finishing the film's first screening, Bunker Roy from Tilonia walked in and asked if they had a new film on forest issues. He saw their movie and paid them Rs 3000. The late Anil Agarwal, director of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) bought four copies and gave them a letter of recommendation. "Everybody helped us. We would come to Delhi for a few days, sell, collect money and go back. We paid off the studio in six months," recalls De.

The trio then decided they did not want to just show their own films but curate films and screen them in villages. They travelled with the help of networks like the Tamil Nadu Science Forum and KSSP (Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad). "The church too has a huge network. The question is, do your views match politically," says Sen. They differed with the church on abortion.

During this period they met a lot of filmmakers and made many friends. For example, they travelled with Alcom (Alternative Communications Forum) a venture started by film-maker KP Sasi. They showed his film, "In the Name of Medicine" along the coast of Kerala. C Saratchandran, a Kerala based filmmaker who made "The Bitter Drink" on the people's campaign against Coca-Cola in Plachimada was then working with Sasi.

He has now given his films to Magic Lantern to distribute. "They are friends. We believe that they will market the films. There are people who will buy - NGOs, schools, colleges, nature clubs, government bodies," says Saratchandran who used to sell 40 to 50 copies of his movies when he was making them on tape before DVDs became popular. The Bitter Drink has had 400 to 500 screenings in different festivals across the world but has not paid for itself.

*We were trying to understand if communication could play a role in the movement*



forgotten," says Sen.

A journal called Alternate Media Times followed. Magic Lantern was still a three-member team and they were helping other filmmakers raise funds, show their films and hold press conferences. "We became resentful and did not enjoy it any more," says De. They had been through ten documentary film festivals. Many more people did what they did. They felt they had outlived their usefulness and closed shop in 2001.

A relieved Sen went overseas and got a masters degree in mass communications. However, Sujit Ghosh, the group's conscience keeper, felt that the people needed them and they should get back into business. But they were now going to do things differently. They were not going to go around showing films but distribute them.

Sen also made two movies, this time on her chosen subjects. They re-worked their organisation's structure, positioning and aim. They got a Ford Foundation grant for Rs 10 lakhs a year for three years. They spent two years thinking through their plan. "I could not find a lawyer in India who could help us legally. They could not understand that we wanted to protect our filmmakers who

Currently, Saratchandran is making a one-hour documentary on the movement in Plachimada and hopes to market it internationally through Magic Lantern.

In 1995 Magic Lantern got funding to make films and undertake projects on teaching film-making in several districts. "We made a film called 'Goa Under Siege'. Some of our students are now award winning filmmakers," says De.

P Amudhan, a Madurai based filmmaker who trained with them, says: "I owe it to Magic Lantern for making my life meaningful. They showed us some great movies. There is no way I could have seen these otherwise. They taught us everything about film-making. I'm now a one-man filmmaker. I research, write, produce, direct, do the sound and edit," he says. Magic Lantern also taught business models so that these filmmakers could function at a low cost.

In 2000, Magic Lantern began wilting under the weight of its own success. In five years they had undertaken a lot of projects. The World Association of Christian Communication funded them to conduct six training workshops on "media advocacy". "We were teaching people about the dominant media and how they presented issues. For example, when people marched into the forest in Ghad, it was portrayed as a law and order issue. The negotiations that had happened over a year had been

often make movies with their own money. Now an American firm that deals with Hollywood is helping us. We had to convince film makers," explains Sen.

Since August 2005, Magic Lantern has signed 70 filmmakers exclusively. "Our initial 35 filmmakers are our babies. They gave us their films when we had nothing. We provide a lot of services to them like recommending them for festivals," says Sen.

"They are my virtual office. I don't have time for marketing even though I can continue to do so under the contract," says RV Ramani, a Chennai based filmmaker, one of the first thirty-five who has also shot for Sen's films.

Magic Lantern keeps 20 per cent of its revenue from sales and sends the remainder to filmmakers once every three months. They have just begun mailing out cheques. Ranjan Kamath, a Bangalore based filmmaker has signed up with Magic Lantern to distribute his films in India. He already has an overseas distributor. "The market for documentaries is in the villages. These are their issues. I often get an email from people who saw my film in some village somewhere screened by someone," says Kamath.

Magic Lantern is also distributing films by overseas filmmakers like David Kaplowitz's "In Whose Interest?" a critical look at US foreign policy.

"I need to build a market in Delhi," says Sen. "We curated a film festival for a conference on women's issues. We are contacting NGOs, universities, schools, including MCD schools in Delhi and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Once we have a plan for one city, it can be replicated."



*Our initial 35 filmmakers are our babies. They gave us their films when we had nothing.*

"I need to build a market in Delhi," says Sen. "We curated a film festival for a conference on women's issues. We are contacting NGOs, universities, schools, including MCD schools in Delhi and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Once we have a plan for one city, it can be replicated."

# Have tractor, need community PC

## *Intel's search for the Next 10 Percent continues*

**Vidya Viswanathan**  
New Delhi

If entrepreneurs respected the world's poor as customers, it would foster innovation and create a new price performance relationship. Incomes of the poor would rise too because such a model would increase the number of small local businesses.

This was the gist of a paper titled "Strategies for the bottom of the pyramid - Creating sustainable development," written in 1999 by CK Prahalad, professor of Strategy at the Michigan Business School and Stuart L Hart an associate professor at the University of North Carolina.

Today companies across the world are examining this model to see if it presents an opportunity and can sustain growth. It has not yet, of course, been proved that corporates can contribute to responsible development, using this strategy.

Intel was one company that began examining this model nearly six years ago. The company put together a team of two consisting of Tony Salvador, a PhD in experimental psychology and John Sherry, a computer science graduate who got himself a PhD in anthropology.

The duo used ethnography techniques to study how people used technology in their daily lives. They wrote a paper called, "The Next Ten Percent". Today the company is rolling out products for "The Next Ten Percent" and Salvador has moved from research to production. He spoke to Civil Society about the conclusion of his research and Intel's first product for the bottom of the pyramid.

### **How did you begin research?**

We approached it very skeptically. We questioned the assumption of governments and the United Nations about ICT being useful for development. In what ways was it useful? It may be useful in different ways.

We also examined the paper that CK Prahalad and Allen Hammond, director of Digital Dividend wrote titled: "What works: Serving the poor profitably".

Our conclusion was that it does work. We spent four years from 2001 to 2005 travelling across the world and looking at how the next 10 percent could become technology adopters. We examined how people were using computers in different communities. We saw that some people would invest in technology if there were an immediate economic return. People have limited returns and financial sustenance has a substantial value above everything else.

### **Like in the IIT Chennai born n-logue project?**

Yes, that project is successful because they have studied local culture and created an entrepreneurship network. If the Aravind Eye Hospital can diagnose your eye remotely using a video camera it is of substantial value. You are looking at two levels here. The person running the kiosk is making an economic return. He charges for the transaction. But it is of value to a larger population - most of whom cannot afford to invest in technology or even want to operate it. Learning English is another application that is seen as having economic benefits.

Hsain Ilahiane, a professor of anthropology at the Iowa University, studied the effect of mobile telephone on the informal labour sector with a grant from Intel. He found that it adds to the current social network, reduces risk and increases income by 60 percent. If a carpenter, for example, gets a call five miles away he does all his negotiations before he gets there.

### **What techniques did you use to conduct research?**

We were part of a research team - the People and Practices group. We used ethnographic techniques and interviewed people and smaller groups. We used participant observation techniques and investigated communities in nearly 10 countries

in Asia, Europe, Latin America and North Africa. We got involved in the daily lives of people to gain insights into how they used technology. Then we took this body of research and applied structured techniques from anthropology.

What we realised was that a shared mode of access was important. People shared houses, farming equipment, TVs and refrigerators and they would share computers too. We examined what sharing means and looked for best examples in Peru, Hungary, Chile and India. In Chile, the kiosk or the shared access point were foundation funded. In Hungary, it was funded by a government civic body. What we quickly realised was that usage was very local in each country. However, in each case, a human mediator acted as a go between. People did not walk up and use the computer themselves.

### **You are now part of the product group...**

We realised that the next four billion was not a homogenous market. We needed different local solutions. In 2005, Intel set up the platform definition group, headquartered in Shanghai with teams in Bangalore, Cairo and Sao Paulo.

In India, we looked at the information kiosks as an opportunity. We met with the CEOs and CTOs of companies that provide these services and asked them what products would be relevant to increase their business? The insight was that revenue generation for each kiosk had to be increased.

So we came up with this community PC. It runs off a car or a truck battery and allows a computer to be up for longer without downtimes. It has a dust and insect filter and can withstand very high temperatures. It uses chips used in laptops so that it consumes less power. The PC has wireless access so that it can be used in places where there is no telephone connection. It is a full-fledged PC and not a scaled-down version. But it costs less than a PC and UPS put together. There are thousands of engineers in India. They will soon develop voice and video applications. A scaled down PC is not a solution.

It is easy to maintain - a single button would take you to the prior state. I have seen people run TV sets off tractor batteries in India. These are put back into the tractor during the day and are used to run TVs at night.

### **What kind of trade-offs did you have to make for this product?**

Several. Our initial research told us that this machine should be portable. So it had an LCD screen. You could pack your machine into a tidy little box. But this increased the price. You get very reasonably priced monitors in India. So we took that off.

### **Aren't most kiosk projects just pilots? They have not really taken off.**

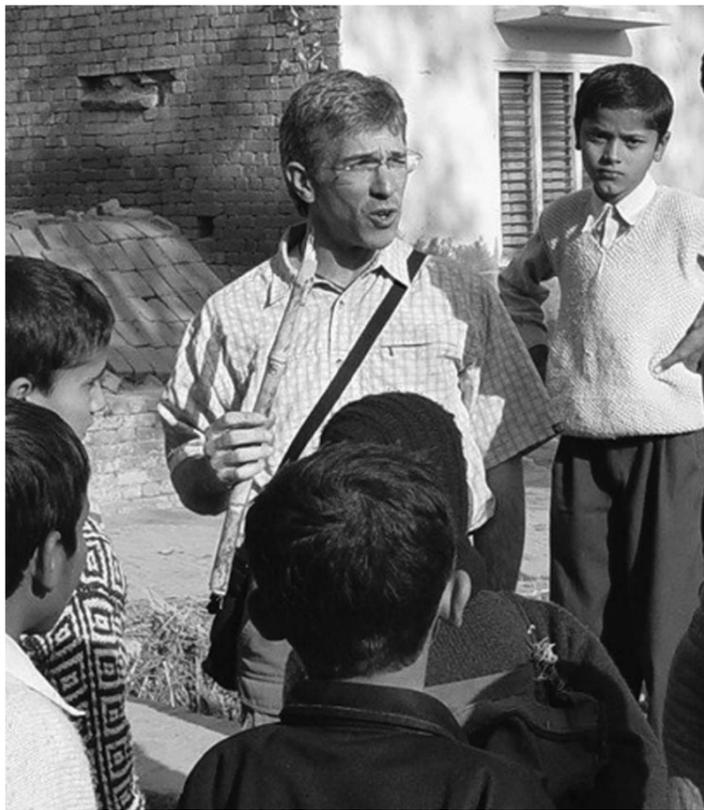
Well, there are 10,000 information kiosks in India today and I would not call that a pilot. I think the tipping point is here. It will take off. We are betting on it and we think we can work together and support growth.

### **Are you looking at other products that may not be a PC?**

The job gets to be fun now. We now have researchers, sociologists and designers in each of the four cities. The products are going to be local. We are looking at new utilities, new usages. There are all kinds of possibilities in urban and rural India. One example is reconstituting what technology means in education. I can't give much away.

**You are a design researcher and part of several subcultures like Doors of Perception and Worldchanging, that want to create a better world. But you work for a corporation that is designed to create greater value for shareholders through profits. How do you reconcile the two?**

We work slowly and steadily. We muster our arguments and change the corporation



Tony Salvador

# Drik's way is to make pictures pay



Students at Pathshala, Drik's school of photography.

Photographs courtesy Drik

**Rina Mukherji**  
Kolkata

AS an internationally renowned news photographer from Bangladesh, Shahidul Alam realised that there were certain anomalies in the way news pictures were circulated in the Third World. Countries in Asia and Africa never bought pictures from each other. Instead they bought these from Western news agencies who merely saw the Third World as a symbol of poverty.

This rankled Shahidul. There were so many human-interest stories, but Western news agencies were uninterested. He felt South Asia needed a photo agency that would challenge stereotypes and support local media professionals. He was certain there was a market for good photo features. If a media organisation could fill this gap, there was money to be made.

As an honorary fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and chairperson of the World Press Photo in 1993, Shahidul had met photographers from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. He renewed his contacts and started Drik International in 1998 from Dhaka as an independent photo agency for the developing world.

"We wanted Drik to be a professional media organisation, a platform for local media practitioners and an activist organisation that takes on mainstream media by questioning their methods," he says.

Starting with a first year turnover of US\$ 5000, the agency grosses over US \$ 500,000. For July 2004 – June 2005, the gross revenue amounted to US\$ 353,876, with the net revenue clocking over US\$ 5300. Drik India, its Indian arm was set up in 2002 with an initial investment of US \$ 200. In 2003-04 it grossed Rs 22 lakhs. In 2004-05 it grossed Rs 26 lakhs.

Today, Drik International is a respected media organisation in Asia, Africa and in the West. But when Shahidul began, many were sceptical. Bangladesh had very few professional photographers. Shahidul started Drik from his bedroom in Dhaka with a handful of like-minded friends. Writer-anthropologist Rahnuma Ahmed and printer Mohammad Anisur Rahman comprised the initial group. Cheryle Yin Lo, a Chinese Australian, became Drik's librarian. Local photographers Bijon Sorkar, Golam Mustafa, Manzoor Alam Beg and younger photographers also joined.

"We made an archive, a simple darkroom, and started building a database of media professionals and potential clients. We began publishing from day one,

and set up our own distribution network," says Shahidul.

The idea caught on. Newspapers and publications found it useful to pick up photographs from a South Asian organisation at prices lower than Western news agencies. Shahidul and his photographer friends never sought to compete with news agencies.

"We did not want to deliver news copy. Our photographs were meant to be photo-features, with accompanying copy describing the pictures. News was not our forte, and we never sought to be in the business of news. Neglected human-interest stories were to be our strong point," explains Drik India's director Suvendu Chatterjee.

To rope in the best photographers and market the best images, Shahidul and his team focused on training young photographers. "We spent a lot of time explaining how an agency worked and helping them select and submit images," says Shahidul. "Unlike western agencies,

if a photographer had one good picture which we could help publish, we would take on the work and try to promote the photographer. If we succeeded, we would try to ensure prompt payment so that the photographer could buy more film."

Shahidul and his friends tried to change the mindset of media professionals who saw a picture only as an appendage to a news story. Shahidul taught his photographers to click pictures that could tell stories. Every picture was delivered with accompanying copy.

Shahidul realised a training school was needed. He set up Pathshala, South Asia's first school of photography in Dhaka. Students at Pathshala get to learn the technique of photography and interact with the best professionals from Asia and Africa. Shahidul also wanted to expand Drik from Bangladesh to South Asia and the rest of the Third World. In 2000, Drik organised *Chhobi Mela*, an international photography exhibition in Dhaka. Its theme was *Differences Unframed*. The event was a huge success. Photographers from Europe, the Americas, Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia took part. Since then, *Chhobi Mela* is held every two years. In 2002 its theme was *Exclusion*, while in 2004 its theme was *Resistance*. The next *Chhobi Mela*, scheduled for 2006, will have *Borders* as its theme.

In 2002, Drik International set up its first international office in Kolkata. "It was a chat with Shahidul in a cab in Kolkata that saw the birth of Drik India here," says Suvendu Chatterjee. "Shahidul was on a trip to India, and the subject was on our minds since long. Drik India was set up with just \$200."

Since then, Drik India has set up office in New Delhi and tied up with local organisations in Mumbai and Chennai. Drik International is part-

nering major media groups in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. They partner AINA photos Afghanistan's first photo agency set up in 2002 by internationally renowned photographer Reza Deghati.

Drik also has an exchange programme for photographers. They get to work in each other's countries to understand the local environment. This programme was started in 2003 initially between India and Bangladesh. It will soon include South Africa.

Drik's main business continues to be distribution of good photographs. But they have expanded their range of work. They now design websites, brochures and calendars. They are also into film production. Drik has pioneered use of the Internet in Bangladesh. In India, its clients include the West Bengal AIDS Prevention and Control Society.



Shahidul Alam (left) with Suvendu Chatterji, Drik India's director.

# Perspectives

## CATCHING TRENDS

**Have an idea? Perhaps a lost cause? Tell your story or just express an honest opinion in these pages.**

## The best don't want to be doctors

Dr DEVI SHETTY



### Public Health

**M**Y first son is about to graduate from an engineering college. Almost all his classmates have found jobs before their graduation. A good number of them have appointment letters with salaries of Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 per month. These young men and women, who are barely 22 years of age, have this kind of job opportunity soon after a course that takes just four years. On the other hand, we have young doctors who are graduating at a slightly older age followed by one year of internship during which time a good number of them have to depend on their parents for food and accommodation. After their internship there is total uncertainty about their future. Unlike engineers, they can't be sure of well-paid jobs.

Those young doctors who opt for employment earn not more than Rs 10,000 a month and are expected to work day and night in hospitals and nursing homes. The real struggle begins after graduation from a medical college. Unless chosen for specialty training, the chances of earning a decent living are not very bright. Unfortunately, there are very few avenues open for specialisation. In the USA and Europe specialty training programmes are designed in a manner that virtually anybody can get in as long as they put in an adequate number of hours. But, getting out as a specialist is tough and only the good ones come out. However, in India, we have great barriers to get in and once you get in invariably you will get out irrespective of your knowledge.

All these issues have finally resulted in one thing. That is the brilliant children from schools do not look at the medical profession as an exciting career option any more. They feel it is an extremely long, gruelling course without any certainties. And if they are left to be general practitioners without any postgraduate training they may not be able to fend for themselves. What will happen to this noble profession if brilliant children do not opt for it? Yes, eventually, if drastic measures are not taken, this profession can disintegrate. Average and below average people cannot hold the torch for a long time. The medical profession has to attract bright young men and women and, unfortunately, today's scenario is not encouraging young people to get into this noble profession. Today, if you go to any medical college and ask the profession of the student's parents you will be surprised to know that a large number of them come from the families of doctors. That means the medical profession is not attracting bright minds that are not related to this profession. That is not good news since it is not necessary that only the families of doctors pro-

duce brilliant doctors.

Why has the medical profession lost its shine all of a sudden? The answer is very simple and is to be found in economic realities. Unless a young MBBS doctor earns about Rs 50,000 a month as a starting salary, this profession will not attract brilliant people. Young doctors get disillusioned when they don't get an opportunity to specialise. Whether they qualify as specialists or not is another matter. But the opportunity should be there for them. What happens now is that young doctors spend years and years trying to pass the entrance exam for a postgraduate degree. They finally give up and become bitter general practitioners. Is it possible to address this problem? Yes, it is possible with remarkable ease.

This country with over a billion population requires over 3000 cardiologist training positions in a year. You will be surprised to know that less than 100 cardiologists are trained in our country annually. There are thousands of men and women suffering from chronic kidney failure living in small towns and villages. These unfortunate victims of kidney failure usually take the night bus and come to the city, spend five hours in the dialysis room and then catch the night bus to go back to their town and villages. On dialysis they live for about five years. Out of that two and half years are spent in a bus. Why? Because, this country trains perhaps less than 60 to 70 morphologists a year. When the number of these specialists is less, they invariably tend to live in major cities since they are in great demand. What this country really requires is an intermediate level specialist. These intermediate level specialists can have a degree called a diploma in cardiology, nephrology, neurology, diabetology, etc. Their only requirement is an MBBS degree and an internship and they can undergo a two-year training programme in recognised teaching institutions with a structured training programme to work like non-interventional specialists in the area of heart, kidney, etc.

Fortunately, now there is hope for the young doctors. This January the Honorable Health Minister of India, Dr Anbumani Ramdoss, launched a programme for a diploma in community cardiology through the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). This is a two-year resident training programme for MBBS graduates. About 15 leading heart hospitals of the country have been chosen to conduct this training programme. Course contents are provided by leading heart hospitals like Escorts Heart Institute, New Delhi, Care Heart Foundation, Hyderabad, Narayana Hrudayalaya, Bangalore, Kerala Institute of Medical Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram etc. During this training programme, these doctors are trained in echocardiography, colour Doppler, management of heart attacks and heart failure, and all problems related to the heart other than doing interventions. Interventions on heart like angiogram and angioplasties are required only for a small percentage of people and majority of heart patients require accurate diagnosis and medical treatment.

The aim of this course is to train thousands of intermediate level specialists in the area of heart care. Based

(Continued on page 21)



**The real struggle begins after graduation from a medical college. Unless chosen for specialty training, the chances of earning a decent living are not very bright.**

# Deepen democracy counter apathy

RAM GIDOOMAL



## Through NR Eyes

with a majority of 67 seats but with only 35 per cent of the votes cast and the support of just 22 per cent of the population eligible to vote, raised many questions: Do these numbers mean that democracy is facing a meltdown? Is the public effectively rejecting an outdated political system that is concentrating power into the hands of a select few? Why is voter turnout plummeting, why are so few joining political parties, and why are existing members of political parties leaving in droves?

Political pundits put forward a wide range of theories blaming apathy, general contentment (the "feel good" factor), too much pressure causing people to be too busy and, simply, not having any time or interest in politics. Others indulged in analysis about the end of the Cold War and the death of ideology. Yet others suggested that all that people would like to see are the most competent economic managers being given the reins of power.

The independently funded Power Commission was set up 18 months ago to explore ways of boosting political participation. It has just launched its findings with a view to stimulate national debate and to ensure that the issue of electoral reform is raised higher up each party's political agenda.

Baroness Kennedy, a Labour member of the House of Lords, who chaired the Commission, concluded that politicians have become complacent about the scale of voter disengagement. "This is a crisis far greater than one they think they are dealing with," she said. "It was the abstention party that won the last election - several million more people didn't vote than voted for the government."

The Power Commission held meetings around the country, conducted polls, took evidence from academics and politicians, and received more than 1500 public submissions.

Its report, entitled 'Power to the People' calls for fundamental reforms - not just bits of re-invention and tweaking at the edges. Three essential shifts are highlighted in the report: more power to the people, more power to parliament, and more choice.

It proposes the use of a far-reaching Citizen's Initiative, through which members of the public should be able to propose legislation and, if they can get two million signatures on a petition, compel the government to hold referendums, public enquiries and hearings.

The report calls for a transfer of authority downwards from central government to Parliament and from Whitehall to town halls. Local government should be given greater relevance and accountability by gaining the power to raise taxes locally.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, widely tipped to

THE subject of police reforms, highlighted in my column last month, continues to be debated by politicians in the UK. Alongside that, it is encouraging to see the more fundamental issue of electoral reform getting back on the Labour Party's agenda.

A cabinet minister, Peter Hain, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Wales, urged his party not to wait until the next general election - the outcome of which many are predicting will be a hung parliament. "Electoral reform rises and falls with the electoral cycle... The main parties have usually been interested in it when they have done badly. If you are going to do this, you ought to do it out of principle rather than whether it suits the party."

The results of the last general election in Britain in 2005, when the Labour Party retained power

succeed Tony Blair as Prime Minister, has publicly supported the report's findings. It is believed that several of the changes, such as encouraging local communities to be more active in local decision-making and greater local autonomy over spending, are likely to be at the core of his reform agenda and would feature in his manifesto, should he become Labour leader. One of his advisors went as far as to say "We must put this agenda at the heart of our plans for the next parliament."

The Power Commission's Inquiry warned that: "The executive in Britain is now more powerful than it probably has been since the time of Walpole." Amongst other things, it highlighted the inability of Parliament to demand an inquiry into the Iraq war, or to receive details from ministers of the cost of their proposals for national identity cards.

The authority of MPs should be bolstered, with select committees given more authority, Parliament given greater scope to initiate legislation and curbs placed on the power of party whips.

"Our system allows parties to maintain a monopolistic grip on political power," said Baroness Kennedy. "People will only re-engage with formal politics if they can see that their MPs and councillors are people who can really effect change... Politics and government are increasingly in the hands of privileged elites as if democracy has run out of steam. Too often citizens are being evicted from decision-making - rarely asked to get involved and rarely listened to. As a result they see no point in voting, joining a party or engaging with formal politics."

While no one would disagree with the overall conclusion of the 311-page report that politics must become cleaner and fairer, it was long on recommendations but short on practical ideas of how to restore trust in the political process.

For example, the report calls for a statutory duty for all public bodies to involve the public in order to achieve a 'culture of participation' - something that will take many years to achieve. In the meantime it is important not to miss opportunities for implementing quick-win ideas to begin the process of restoring trust in politics now.

In this context, the efforts of civil society groups and their supporters in India during the 2004 elections offer an excellent and practical example of what can be done voluntarily at grassroots level to begin the process of restoring trust in politics. Concerned citizens in 12 states of India organised themselves into Election Watch teams, that sought to build local awareness about the new disclosure regime and organised 'meet the candidate sessions'. The teams checked voter rolls with surveys by one group in Andhra Pradesh of around 40,000 voters, and found that as many as 20-to-30 percent of the names contained in the state's voter registration rolls had errors. The teams also monitored the election process closely to enforce the Election Commissions code of conduct.

The Election Watch teams were not entirely successful in their efforts. They found it difficult to create a level playing field as traditional factors like caste, religion and local issues continued to drive voter choice. They did not succeed in getting even one candidate disqualified in an environment where it is widely acknowledged that corruption, bribery of voters with offerings of alcohol, clothes and food, and misuse of government machinery by incumbent candidates to support their election bid, is common practice. But these teams of local citizens are to be commended for making a start, taking action and hopefully continuing to build on the lessons learned as they prepare for the next set of elections. A practical example indeed of the 'culture of participation' called for by the UK's Power Commission - except that they did not need to wait for a statutory instrument to do it!

Ram Gidoomal, CBE, Chairman, South Asian Development Partnership



**Politics and government are increasingly in the hands of privileged elites as if democracy has run out of steam. Citizens are being evicted from decision-making - rarely asked to get involved and rarely listened to.**

# How, why and when to charge

MILINDO CHAKRABARTI



## Reforms Report

THE country is involved in a fierce debate on the acceptability or otherwise of imposing user taxes on resources that were till the other day available freely. Statewide protests against proposals to levy taxes on domestic livestock by Gram Panchayats in West Bengal, the angry reactions to the decision to charge user fees for supply of clean drinking water in urban pockets, legal debates on charges to be paid for diversion of forest land to non-forest use etc, give us some idea about the nature of this debate. The debate raises two distinct but not independent questions:

- Is it necessary to charge user fees for natural resources?
- Why are all users not agreeable to paying such charges?

The present pattern of growth and development, argue some social scientists, is achieved at the cost of the rapid destruction of our natural resource base. Natural resources, available in almost unlimited quantities even a few decades ago, are getting scarce today. A free product gets priced as and when it becomes scarce. The higher the extent of scarcity, the higher the price one has to pay. This is the essence of economics.

Pure air or clean water are getting scarcer day by day as we pollute them with impunity to produce some other goods to improve our standard of living. Hence the need to pay a price for clean water and other natural resources. Scientists and technologists were, and some of them still are, confident that they would be able to develop technologies to produce natural resources artificially. Policy-makers and social scientists basked in such confidence and their development decisions were never influenced by possibilities of scarcity of natural resources in days to come.

Such technologies are often referred to as backstop technologies, a term coined by WD Nordhaus, a well-known economist from the US. Typically a backstop technology is a new or unproven technology which will be available in the future in an abundant quantity, with no natural resource constraint, hence providing a ceiling to the eventual movement of prices of existing resources, natural resources included. It appears that such backstop technologies are difficult to be actualised and confidence is being shaken as the rapid and steady decline in our natural resource base continues apace. The concerns are well reflected in the growing demand to follow a growth path that ensures sustainable development. Thus there is no doubt that we are entering a phase of human civilisation where there is 'no free lunch'. And we have to cope with this reality.

However, a question remains. Who should pay for the increasing scarcity of natural resource? Natural justice demands that the payment should be consistent with the gains derived from the use of natural resources. The global population is highly unequal in terms of standards of living. Those enjoying higher levels of living are, by definition, consuming more. Any goods or services require natural resources either directly or indirectly for their production or provision.

Milk and sugar are two main ingredients used to produce a cup of ice cream. Milk is obtained from a cow or buffalo that feeds on grass or other grain-based feed. Sugar is crushed from sugarcane. Lots of natural resources are required to produce the electricity that runs the machine to produce ice creams. The machines are produced out of minerals extracted for nature.

An Internet service is no different. The silicon chips, semiconductors and even the plastic cabinets are produced out of natural resources. The labour force derives its energy by consuming foods that are intensive of natural

resources – land, air, water, manure. Thus all material goods or services one consumes are nothing but 'frozen' natural resources.

Obviously, it is justice that the one who consumes more, pays more. By the same definition, one who consumes less and helps reduce the scarcity value of natural resources should be asked to pay less. In fact, since nature has the capacity to reproduce many of the natural resources we consume, those who can manage by consuming within nature's capacity to regenerate, should be rewarded for generating surplus for those who cannot. Carbon trading under the Kyoto Protocol is a welcome move in that direction. The problem still persists.

Natural services are not provided through markets. Ideally, a market not only decides an optimal allocation of a resource among users, but also the price to be paid by them. An ideal market assumes equal bargaining power among all its users – there exists no wealth effect, as Nobel Laureate Ronald Coase would put it – that is far from reality.

Creation of markets for nature's services is not insulated from this wealth effect. The USA's refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol is ample evidence of the



LAKSHMAN ANAND

**Pure air or clean water are getting scarcer day by day as we pollute them with impunity to produce some other goods to improve our standard of living. Hence the need to pay a price for clean water and other natural resources**

existence of such wealth effect. Any non-market regulatory mechanism that decides about the allocation principle of natural resources, unfortunately, is not free from such wealth effect either.

Thus powerful consumers can influence the decision of the regulatory authority to enjoy higher allocations at lower prices and those not so powerful end up paying disproportionately more. The mechanisms identified for achieving sustainable development – a concern to ensure inter-generational equity – may well be argued to be a tool to impose disproportionate burden of costs on those who, even by default, are conserving natural resources and maintaining a lower level of consumption to facilitate indiscriminate use by the rest of the society at take way prices.

The principle of 'polluter pays' is grossly violated and intra-generational inequity is being sustained in the name of achieving the elusive growth path of sustainable development. The protests, therefore, are quite logical.

The recent effort at operationalising the 'polluter pays' principle in respect of diversion of forest land for non-forest use in India is a unique example of how the wealth effect may distort the principle itself. Let us take up the issue in detail in the next issue.

*Milindo Chakrabarti is Director, Centre for Studies in Rural Economy, Appropriate Technology and Environment (CREATE)*

(Continued from page 19)

on the response to this course, IGNOU is planning to start similar courses in the field of diabetology, nephrology, neurology, etc. The ultimate aim of all these intermediate level training programs is to give extra skill to the doctors in the area of degenerative diseases so that high-tech healthcare will go down to the grassroots in small towns and villages and also increase the ability of the medical specialists to earn better living standards.

When somebody is in pain because of physical illness more than a machine he needs to see a doctor with the wisdom to look at him holistically. More than 90 per cent of the treatment decision is based on the wisdom of the specialist

who is going to see him and not on the results coming from the machine. Machines only aid the process of diagnosis. Healthcare cannot be delivered by machines. It is delivered by the physician. It is very important that the policy makers of our country start concentrating on issues of training medical specialists for the requirement of people living in villages, cities and remote parts of the country trying to use technology in bringing healthcare to the doorstep of a common man. This will only happen by proper planning.

Any doctors who would like to know about the diploma in community cardiology can log into [ignou@ac.in](mailto:ignou@ac.in).

*(Dr Devi Shetty is an eminent cardiologist who heads the Narayana Hrudalaya in Bangalore)*

# Amherst finds its Marx

ARUN MAIRA



## Let's Talk

**F**OLLOWING decades of 'affirmative action' in the USA, kids from the lowest socioeconomic quartile represent a mere three percent of students at the 146 most selective US universities, versus 74 percent from the top quartile. Affordability is not an issue because these institutions guarantee financial aid to any student admitted on merit. Newsweek reports in a recent article that Anthony Marx, the President of Amherst College, one of the top arts colleges in the USA, is on a crusade to address this persistent problem of exclusion. He has changed the admission process, which with its emphasis on 'merit' as determined by test scores, is stacked against kids from poor families, he finds.

Discrimination against these poor kids does not end with admission. It continues in various ways as they struggle through college, Newsweek explains. There is no quick-fix nor easy solution to such a deep-rooted, systemic problem. Yet, any society that subscribes to the principle of equal rights to opportunity, as do the great democracies of the USA and India, has to find a solution.

In India, a demand for reservations in private educational institutions and in private businesses has arisen again. I fear that the public debate will merely reiterate ideological positions for and against reservations without going deeper to acknowledge the persistent problem or admitting that neither side has a solution. I have a sense of déjà vu again. Two years back, I was pained to watch a 'Big Fight' on NDTV on this issue. The pugilists were a free-market economist, a former CEO of an MNC, the secretary of the Communist party, and a leader of the backward classes. The sixty-second bursts of scorn for each other's views couldn't lead to any conclusion. However all four concurred with a young man in the audience who, when he was finally allowed to get a word in, said it was a shame that discrimination against certain classes of people continued in practice even after fifty years of affirmative action in India. The young man, who was from Assam, recounted his personal experience at the entrance to a private company's office where he had been invited for an interview. The security guard had tried to shoo him away, saying, "Bahadur, what job have you come here for?"

Even though the debate could not settle anything, it threw up several issues. One was the expansion of the categories of people now considered underprivileged, which has gone beyond the scheduled castes that India's constitution framers had in mind. Another was a perverse outcome of affirmative action in practice whereby the 'creamy' layer amongst the underprivileged gains the benefits rather than the poorest. Third was the adverse effect reservation of jobs could have on the efficiency of private sector companies.

I wrote then in the Economic Times that India is not the only country struggling with such issues. So are Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, the USA, and others. Last year, the largest anti-discrimination suit ever in the US was filed by women against the largest private sector employer in the US-Walmart. The US Constitution says that all people are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. The affirmative action movement in the USA started in the sixties to remedy the position of a minority of the population viz. blacks. It has now expanded to include the rights of highly educated white women, and has become a protest by the majority of the population against discrimination by a historically established minority of white males! In India, also, affirmative action has extended well beyond the scheduled castes the constitution makers had in mind, and is no longer restricted to a minority of the population. In both countries, the issue is no longer about the rights of a minority but about unfair discrimination.

It is a fact that perceptions about communities lead to discrimination against individuals as the man from Assam had pointed out. Some communities are per-

ceived to be backward and incapable to do some types of work because they did not do such work in the past. They did not either because they were barred from doing so, or did not have opportunities to acquire the required capabilities. Such was the situation in Malaysia in the seventies, when the Malays were considered incapable of managerial and professional work. Change in perceptions begins with visible success of a few people from these communities. The first to succeed cannot be the poorest of the communities as the movements in the USA, Malaysia and India have shown. Invariably the first to break through are those who have the 'complementary capabilities' required to navigate selection processes which never are purely objective. These complementary capabilities come from prior wealth and social connections and therefore it is no surprise that the 'cream' rises and benefits from affirmative action before others. The success of the first brings new recognition and respect for their community, as did the success of the first Malays for the Malay community. Therefore to dismiss the process of affirmative action because it has not so far changed the lives of the poorest in the communities is short sighted. As Thomas Sewell says in his book, 'Affirmative Action Around The World: An Empirical Study', "A 'temporary' programme to eliminate a centuries-old condition is almost a contradiction of terms".

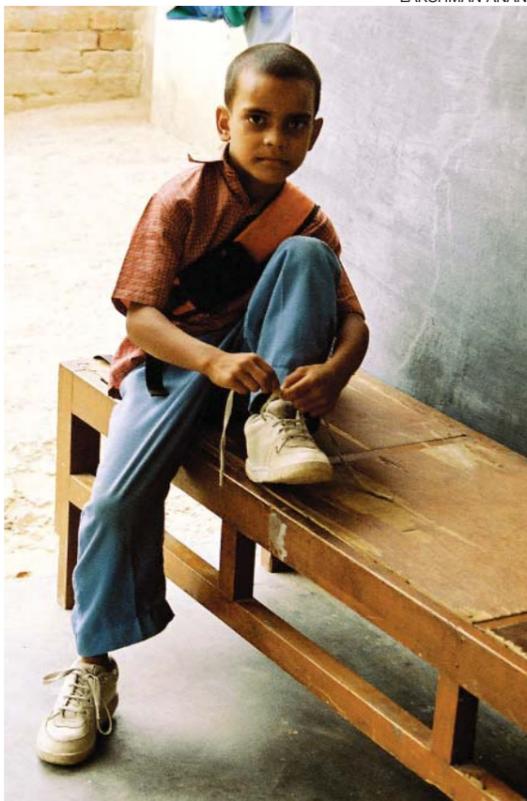
US laws do not impose quotas on any employer. Nevertheless, US society judges companies by the numbers of blacks and women they employ and promote: Are the proportions in the company similar to their numbers in the general population? Moreover, private sector employers evaluate the success of their own affirmative action programs by the numbers also. Therefore there are 'quotas' in effect in the US private sector, though not legally mandated. If some Indian companies have been successful in assisting backward classes to succeed within their ranks to reflect their numbers in the population at large, they should publicise their records. This may ease the political pressure for reservations in the private sector. And these companies' examples will give insights into what really works.

Sewell claims that affirmative action movements in both India and the USA have been ineffective. He says that the condition of blacks in the USA improved much more in the half century preceding the civil rights movement when society was not doing anything consciously to uplift blacks, than it has in the half century since. Ironically, the evidence of success he cites is in numbers because numbers seem to be the most objective evidence. Which begs the question: why should not employers set their own goals in numbers so that there is concrete evidence of achievement?

Sewell misses the main point about affirmative action. The poet Robert Frost wrote, "When to the heart of man was it ever less than a treason to go with the drift of things, to bow with a grace to reason..." Once we admit that there has been discrimination against communities in the past, which affects their future prospects in the future, we must do something, and not merely hope the situation will improve by itself. If quotas are not a good solution, we must find another, bearing in mind that the solution has to be really fair and not merely efficient. Economists and managers know how to measure efficiency. We must also find acceptable measures of fairness. But we will not find these measures or a solution if we debate in the spirit of a 'Big Fight'. Systemic problems with deep roots deserve deeper dialogues that elicit and respect many perspectives.

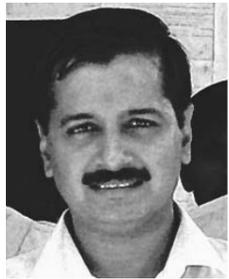
India is laying claim to be 'the world's fastest growing, large, free market democracy'. President Bush has declared that the world's oldest democracy, the USA, and the world's largest, India, must show the way of democracy to the world. Neither the USA nor India has solved the problem of inequality of voice and opportunity, which is the hallmark of democracy. So while we concentrate on finding ways to grow our GDP, let us also find ways to strengthen and improve the quality of democracy by addressing with open and creative minds, and not with ideologies of reservations or objective merits, the issues of discrimination in our country.

LAKSHMAN ANAND



# RTI getting stuck with bureaucrats

ARVIND KEJRIWAL



## The Right To Know

public authority, inspect any government documents, take copies thereof, inspect any government work and take samples of materials used in any government work.

If the information is not provided in 30 days, the applicant could appeal to the officer senior to the Public Information Officer (PIO), who was supposed to provide information in the first place. If the applicant is not satisfied with the order (or no order) of the senior officer, he/she could appeal to the CIC for Central government departments and the State Information Commission for the State departments. Information Commissions have to interpret the law and decide whether the information sought by the applicant should be provided or not. They have the powers to impose penalties up to Rs 25000, to be deducted from the salaries of guilty officials, for delay or malafide denial of information.

Since 1997, nine State governments passed respective RTI Acts before the Central Act was passed in 2005. The experience of the last nine years shows that only such Acts were effective which had a penalty clause and an independent and effective appellate body.

The tendency of the officials everywhere has been to either ignore applications or to simply deny information on some pretext. Therefore, the role of the appellate authority in getting information to the applicant and imposing penalties on guilty officials becomes critical.

The Central Information Commission has been riddled with problems right from its inception. Though the Act became effective on 13th October, most of the Information Commissioners took oath in the next one month. They also had to struggle to get appropriate resources, including office space, to start functioning.

But the malaise afflicting the CIC goes beyond a simple lack of resources. Till the end of January 2006, they received 216 complaints and appeals. With five functional Information Commissioners and a staff of 18, they could dispose of just 13 cases. In sharp contrast, the Chairperson of Public Grievances Commission in Delhi, who does the same job under the Delhi Right to Information Act, disposed of more than 500 cases in the last 10 months. She works alone with a staff of just six people.

With cases piling up at this rate, the effectiveness of the CIC is already under a cloud. Many of those who filed cases in December are yet to receive an acknowledgement. I personally know of four people whose appeals were lost at

**With five functional Information Commissioners and a staff of 18, the CIC could dispose of just 13 cases. In sharp contrast, the Chairperson of the Public Grievances Commission in Delhi, who does the same job under the Delhi Right to Information Act, disposed of 500 cases in the last 10 months.**

THE Central Information Commission (CIC), set up by the Central government under the Right to Information Act 2005, has been facing criticism for its maladministration and lack of professional competence to handle the job at hand.

The Right to Information Act 2005 became effective on 13th October 2005. It is rightly being touted as one of the most significant legislations, post independence. Globally, the Indian Act is one of the most progressive amongst all right to information laws. It empowers every citizen to seek any information from any



Women at a Right to Information meeting in Delhi

**The work of an Information Commissioner is of a quasi-judicial nature. The Information Commissioners, who are retired bureaucrats (barring one who is an academic), have displayed lack of knowledge of judicial processes in their functioning.**

the Commission. There could be many more such people. One is never sure whether one's case is safe and under process or not at the Commission.

The work of an Information Commissioner is of a quasi-judicial nature. The Information Commissioners, who are retired bureaucrats (barring one who is an academic), have displayed lack of knowledge of judicial processes in their functioning. Several cases have been disposed of by hearing only the government side without giving an opportunity of being heard to the complainant. This clearly violates principles of natural justice. In some cases, the Commission went overboard in defending denial of information. For instance, in one case, the public authority denied certain information on some ground. During appeal, the Commission did not fully agree with the ground taken by the public authority. Interestingly, the Commission acted as an advocate for the government, raised fresh grounds suo moto and denied the information. The worst was that it did not give any chance to the appellant to rebut fresh grounds. The Commission is seen to be over-sympathetic to the concerns of the bureaucracy.

The Commission is yet to come to terms with its role under the Act. They have consistently refused to impose any penalties. When some appellants insisted during the hearing, the Commission reprimanded them saying that the appellant should be satisfied by getting information.

It is like a judge telling a victim of theft that he should be satisfied getting his lost articles back and should not insist on any punishment against the thief. Penalty is supposed to act as a deterrent. If it were never used, then every case would reach the Commission. Almost all the officers would deny information in the first instance and would provide it only when the appellant approached the Commission and the Commission so ordered. This would not only clog the CIC but would also make the process of seeking information time consuming and cumbersome.

It would be a great opportunity lost for Indian democracy if these problems plaguing Information Commissions were not immediately addressed.

# Eat well to cure hyper acidity

Dr GG GANGADHARAN



**H**YPER acidity has become a common health concern among people in urban areas especially those who are undisciplined in their food habits.

Ayurveda says that a harmonised life depends on the proper application of

*ahara* (food), *swapna* (sleep) and *abrahma charya* (conjugal life). These are regarded as the tripod on which a healthy body and mind reside. Among them, *ahara* (food) is of prime importance in maintaining a person's health.

The type of food that is eaten, the time it is eaten, the quantity and the mind set in which food is eaten, the way food is ingested and chewed are also important factors. Even the environment in which food is consumed can influence body and mind.

Hyperacidity or *Amla Pitha*, according to Ayurveda, is a derangement of digestive juice governed by the '*Pitha Dosha*'. This is considered the functional unit that controls all changes in the body. So, the primary attempt in managing acidity is to correct or purify the *Pitha* which causes the deranged acidic production.

## Life Style

In hyper acidity, it is a good idea to undergo mild purgation once a month with harmless natural products like *Thriphaladi Choornam* (10 gms) or *Avipathi choornam* (15 gms) taken with hot milk in the morning on an empty stomach. This will give good purgation which will stop after six or seven motions.

## Food

Another important factor is to avoid tamarind, chillies, deep fried foods and fibreless food like *maida* (white flour).

All bitter tasting vegetables and fruits are good for acidity. One example is bitter gourd. People with acidity should consume warm ghee with their food. One table spoon of ghee with a hot lunch is ideal.

## Medicine

To correct the system internally, you can follow some simple preparations. If taken regularly, these will help to bring down the acidity instantaneously. Since acidity is an acute condition, both symptomatic relief and radical cure are essential.

You can try to use one or more of the following formulations. You can make these at home.

- Dry Ginger: 1 teaspoon.
- Black gingelli: 20 gms
- Jaggery: Enough to make the paste tasty and sweet.
- Milk: 150 ml
- Grind the dry ginger and black gingelli well and mix with 150 ml of milk. Add 150 ml of water and jaggery. Boil till it becomes 150 ml or half the quantity. Sip this while it is warm. Take it twice a day.

This is especially good for burning sensation in the stomach while food is being digested, that is, a few minutes after eating. This formulation can be taken in the morning after breakfast and in the evening after some light food.

- Take one teaspoon of charcoal powder made by burning the flesh of a well matured coconut. Mix this with lime juice and take whenever acidity is felt. This can be taken once or twice a day.

- Take 10 gms of dry black grapes mixed with the powder of a small variety of *Haritaki* (*Harad* in Hindi, or *Terminalia chebula*) with sugar. Take in the morning on an empty stomach and follow with a drink of warm water. This is good for neutralising acid secretion.

- Take three gms of powder extracted from the dry leaves of *Chirayita* (*Swertia chirata*). If not available, use *Andrographis paniculata*. Mix the powder with an equal quantity of powdered sugar and take it in the morning on an empty stomach. Follow with a drink of lukewarm water.

All these preparations give symptomatic relief on the spot. Used regularly they correct excess acid secretion. To enhance the effect of these preparations, mild purgation once a month for six months regularly is very essential.

Hyper acidity in the long term can damage the delicate mucous layer of the stomach and cause ulcers. So try to correct it without further delay.

([vaidya.ganga@frlht.org.in](mailto:vaidya.ganga@frlht.org.in))



Zingiber officinalis



Terminalia chebula



Swertia chirata



Andrographis paniculata

## Jhangora Phirni

### Ingredients:

- Jhangora - 500gm
- Boora - 200gm
- Milk - 2 litres
- Cashew nuts- 50gm
- Raisins - 50 gm
- Kesar - a pinch

### Method:

- Boil milk in a thick bottom pan.
- Clean jhangora thoroughly then add it to the boiling milk stirring continuously to avoid lumps.
- Add boora and cook for some more time till the sugar is fully dissolved.



- Then mix kesar in one teaspoon of warm milk and add to phirni.
- Garnish with chopped dry fruits and serve hot or cold.

## Jhangora Dhokla

### Ingredients:

- Jhangora - 1 Cup
- Fresh Curd - ¾ Cup
- Ginger green chilli paste - 1 tbsp
- Mustard seeds - ½ tbsp
- Oil - 1 tsp (for tempering)
- Salt - to taste
- Green coriander - for garnishing
- Oil - for greasing
- Curry leaves - a few

### Method:

- Wash and drain the jhangora. Add curd to the jhangora and mix well.
- Allow to soak for at least three hours
- Add the ginger green chilli paste, oil and salt and mix well.
- Pour the batter into a 200 gm (8") diameter greased pan
- Steam the mixture till done
- Temper with mustard seeds and curry leaves
- Cool slightly and cut into diamond shaped pieces
- Serve hot, garnished with coriander leaves



Recipes by:



## Recipes for diabetics

### Kaambalika

Spiced soup made of green gram and whey

**Ingredients:**

- Whey - 4 cups
- Green gram - ½ cup
- Souvarchala (Sochal salt) - to taste
- Cumin seeds - ¼ tsp
- Lemon juice - to taste
- Pepper powder - 2 pinches
- Clove powder - 1 pinch
- Ginger powder - 1 pinch

**Method:** Wash green gram properly. Add whey and cook on moderate flame. Cook until the gram becomes soft. Add salt, cumin seeds, lemon juice, pepper powder, clove powder and ginger powder.

Mix well. Remove from flame. **Important:** Proportion of whey. Appropriate cooking of gram

**Benefits:** Enhances appetite and digestion. Is good for people suffering from diabetes.

**Contraindications:** Not suitable for those having hyperacidity.

### Mushroom & peas

**Ingredients:**

- Mushrooms: 50 gms.
- Peas (Fresh): 50 gms.
- Mustard oil: 2 tsp.

- Chopped Onions: 2 tsp.
- Ground cumin: 1 tsp.
- Ground Black Pepper: 1 tsp.
- Spices: 3 tsp.
- Rock Salt: To taste

**Method:**

Slice mushrooms. Steam fresh peas. Heat the mustard oil in a pan. Saute onions until browned. Add ground cumin, pepper, and spices to browned onions with a little water. Then add sliced mushrooms and peas followed with salt. Stir until cooked. This may be garnished with coriander leaves. Serve with barley rice. Mushroom is optional.

## Delve into a delectable pahari spread

**Purba Kalita**  
Jodhpur

THE people of hilly and beautiful Uttaranchal, comprising Garhwalis and Kumaonis, are mostly vegetarians. Their food is very nourishing and includes a lot of lentils. This rich intake of protein helps people cope with the demands of a hilly terrain. Badis or dried balls of urad dal and mangodi made from moong daal are commonly made. Other popular lentils are the locally grown bhatt, a variety of soya bean and gahat, also called kulath. People here consume a lot of cereals including the high fibre munduva, a local millet. Uttaranchali cuisine is cooked best in mustard oil or clarified butter.

Though the state is a confluence of traditions owing to the influx of tourists and its geographical proximity to Nepal and Tibet, it has been able to retain its traditional flavour.

Greens are used generously. Linguda is one such plant which is relished as a vegetable. Singoda is a very popular sweet with locals. It is made of khoya and coconut and wrapped in a leaf from the local maalu plant. The essence from the leaf is supposed to make the singoda an irresistible dessert. Most sweet varieties take care of your sweet tooth and provide you with nutrition. One such sweet is khajure made by kneading flour with dissolved jaggery into a smooth

dough. Small balls of it are then deep fried in oil.

So, for all health conscious people, this pahari spread should be a must try.

### Thechwani

**Ingredients**

- Radish: 3 to 4
- Potato: 1
- Oil or ghee: 2 tbsp
- Garlic cloves: 4 to 5
- Ginger: 1 inch piece
- Onion: 1 medium, chopped
- Tomato: 1 medium, chopped
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Whole red chillies: 4 to 5
- Asafoetida: a pinch
- Coriander powder: 1/2 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/2 tsp
- Chilli powder: 1/2 tsp
- Water: 6 cups
- Coriander leaves: chopped
- Green chillies: Slit
- Salt to taste

**Method:** Peel radish and potato. Crush into small pieces. Crush ginger and garlic. Heat oil in pan. Stir-fry garlic and ginger. Add radish and potato. Fry for 2 to 3 minutes. Set aside. Add cumin seeds, red chillies, asafoetida to remaining oil. Add chopped onion and fry till light brown. Add turmeric, coriander and chilli powder. Fry for a few seconds. Add fried vegetable and chopped tomatoes. Add salt and little water. Boil for 2 to 3 minutes.

Add remaining water and cook on slow fire till radish is done. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves and green chillies.

### Roat

**Ingredients**

- Wheat flour: 2 cups
- Milk: 1/2 cup
- Ghee: 150 gram
- Green cardamom powder: 1/2 tsp
- Aniseed: 1 tsp
- Jaggery: 1 and a half cups
- Water: 1 cup

**Method:** Heat water and dissolve jaggery in it. Strain jaggery solution. Allow to cool. Knead wheat flour with milk and 2 tbsp ghee. Add aniseed and cardamom. Add jaggery solution and continuing kneading till it becomes a stiff dough. Make thick roti-like roats. Heat one tsp ghee on tawa. Place roat. Turn on both sides and add ghee if required. Check for brown colour. Serve when cool.

### Singhal

**Ingredients**

- Semolina: 2 cups
- Curd: 1 cups, beaten
- Ghee: 250 gram
- Sugar: 50 gram, powdered
- Banana: 1, mashed
- Cardamom powder

**Method:** Mix semolina, ghee and banana to a nice consistency. Take curd in another bowl and mix well. Add

semolina mix to curd mix. Keep aside for half an hour. Heat ghee in kadai. Add paste in either jalebi-like shape or dumpling form. Cook on moderate flame by continuously turning the paste till red brown in colour. Garnish with cardamom powder. Enjoyed hot.

### Phaanu

**Ingredients:**

- Gahat or Kulath: 1 cup
- Oil: 1/2 cup
- Garlic: 4 to 5 cloves
- Ginger: 1/2 inch piece
- Green chillies: 3 to 4
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Asafoetida: a pinch
- Coriander powder: 1/2 tsp
- Turmeric powder: 1/4 tsp
- Water: 3 cups
- Salt to taste

**Method:** Soak gahat overnight. Wash daal thoroughly to remove seed covering. Grind with green chillies, garlic and ginger to make a thick paste. Heat oil on tawa. Make small cutlets with half the daal paste. Add water to remaining paste. Heat oil in pan. Add cumin seeds and asafoetida. Add daal paste, turmeric, coriander and salt. Cover and cook for about 10 minutes on slow fire. Add cutlets to gravy and continue to simmer for another 10 minutes. The gravy should not be thick. Add more water if required. When done, add ghee and chopped coriander leaves.

## Prevent ulcers, eat jhangora

MILLETS are classified as 'coarse cereals'. They are called 'coarse' because thousands of grains are harvested from each grain sown. All millets are rich in iron and have a higher percentage of dietary fibre. It has been observed that the incidence of duodenal ulcers is practically nil among millet eaters.

Barnyard millet - known as *jhangora* in Garhwal, *sawank* in Uttar Pradesh and *kuthiravaali* in Tamil Nadu - occurs in a number of varieties. It continues to be cultivated as a food crop only in India, primarily in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Garhwal. This millet adapts itself to various soil moisture and topographical conditions and is very fast growing. It can be harvested in about four months.

According to the Hindu culinary system, *jhangora* is classified as a *phalahari*, which means food suitable for consumption during fasts. In appearance, *jhangora* is similar to South American *quinoa*, which is also an amazing grain. As far as its gastronomic properties are concerned, *jhangora* is very adaptable, despite its own strong flavor. In traditional Garhwali cuisine, it is cooked like rice and eaten with *dals* (lentils) and curds. It is also used for preparing *chencheda*, a soupy butter-milk preparation eaten with rice. It is easily digestible and rich in taste and texture. Barnyard millet can be used to make fluffy pulaos and South Indian upmas.

You can buy *jhangora* from Navdanya outlets at Stall No. 18, Dilli Haat and D-26, Hauz Khas Market, New Delhi.

**Nutrients per 100 gm of grain:**

- Protein - 6.2 gm
- Calcium - 20 mg
- Energy - 307 kcal
- Phosphorus - 280 mg
- Iron - 2.9 mg
- Fibre - 9.8 gm
- Carbohydrates - 65.5 gm

# Street kids tell their stories

**Shailey Hingorani**  
New Delhi

EVERY child who goes to school learns about the war of Kalinga. It transformed King Ashoka from a bloodthirsty warrior to a wise, saintly king. Children from Salaam Baalak Trust who enacted the War of Kalinga on March 11 at the India International Centre displayed their own transformation. They were street children but they were talented and confident.

It was the 16th anniversary of the trust. The chief guest was Dr Blake, Acting Ambassador, USA. The actors were 15 girls and boys from shelter homes run by Saalam Baalak Trust. The makeshift stage, choreography, costumes and lighting were imaginatively done.

King Ashoka was played by Avinash Yadav. He also choreographed the performance. Avinash



LAKSHMAN ANAND

danced brilliantly. He was easily the star attraction of the show. At one juncture, to show the magnificence of King Ashoka, he was propped on two bamboo sticks with the help of four other dancers. It looked dramatic.

Like other children in the Salaam Balak Trust, Avinash ran away from home at the age of 13. His parents would beat him constantly. He found shelter with the Trust.

The performance had its glitches. The young

actors tripped up their dance moves and sometimes forgot their lines. The audience enjoyed every bit of it. The spirit of the children, their talent and their will warmed the hearts of the audience who broke into applause ever so often. "The performance wasn't as good as it could have been," said Avinash modestly. "It was just that the weather was playing spoilsport. We set up the stage and removed it at least three times. The stage was slippery too." The audience begged to differ.

# Women from another era

**Shuktara Lal**  
Kolkata

KOLKATANS witnessed a powerful photography exhibition featuring the works of Shahidul Alam, founder of Drik International and Shadi Ghadirian, an Iranian photographer. Organised by Drik India, the exhibition called From Documentaries to Interpretation was held at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture.

Alam's images were of Bangladeshi women who were actively involved in the Naxalite movement but were overshadowed by their male counterparts. Ghadirian's stills projected Iranian women whose individuality has been consumed by a patriarchal society.

Alam affixes a caption to each of his pictures which quotes the photographed woman's recollections and her involvement in the Naxalite movement. The presence of this personal voice gives one a more holistic idea of the Bangladeshi Naxalite woman's experiences.

Alam's interview with Lotika - one of the women he photographed - is revealing: "Tears welled up in



SHADI GHADIRIAN

her eyes when I asked if I could photograph her. 'When I was young and beautiful, it was forbidden by the party to have photographs taken. So I've never been photographed. You ask me now whether you can take my photograph. Today, I need my husband's permission to say yes. Is that what we fought for?'

Aroja Begom, another woman Alam photographed, spoke about her initial difficulty in accepting that Naxalism entailed murdering others: "In 1971, when the party was directly killing people

SHAHIDUL ALAM



as class enemies, I would shudder... But after seeing the books, after listening to those books from China... after having sat for discussions with them, I was no longer afraid. I thought in my heart of hearts that they are really friends of the poor. I must follow."

Alam excels at capturing detail of expression. The pain and weariness in the eyes of Arifa Begom and Lotika are haunting. Similarly, in the photo titled "Shekhor's ma", Alam brings out the dilapidated nature of Shekhor's mother's room to heighten her physical and emotional fatigue and feeling of loss.

Shadi Ghadirian's work was divided into two segments. In "Returning the Gaze" she represented women in the Ghajar dynasty but added a contemporary touch by including recognisable modern gadgets and appliances in the photographed images. One woman is shown sitting on a bike and wearing a helmet, another carries a guitar and another wears a jacket that, with unmistakable irony, has "USA" emblazoned on it.

Through such pictures, Ghadirian raises a very relevant question: If in spite of manifold technological innovations, women are still deemed subservient to men and are denied human rights, how can these scientific advances be of any value?

Ghadirian's second piece, "Like Every Day" presented burqa-clad women whose faces were replaced by domestic appliances like cups, cooking utensils, irons and brooms, once again highlighting stereotypical perceptions of a woman's duties.

Both Alam and Ghadirian's work served Drik's purpose of using photography to spread social awareness. The exhibition was inaugurated by Bangladeshi writer and activist, Taslima Nasreen.

# As time runs out, save, spend wisely

Dr MRITUNJAY CHAUBEY

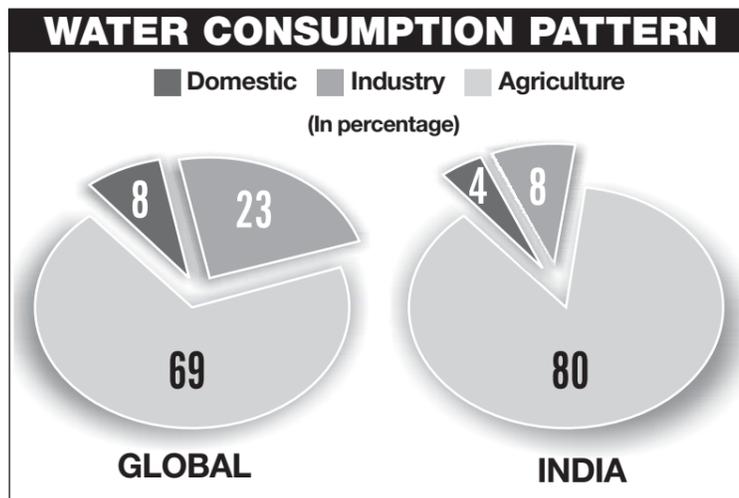
## Know Your Water

**T**HE United Nations has declared 2006-15 as the Water For Life Decade. This underlines the need for optimum utilisation of available water and the quest for alternative measures for its conservation. If one were to focus on the global water scenario, 97 percent of all available water is seawater. Of the

balance 3 percent, only 22 percent is in underground aquifers and a further 1 percent is available as accessible surface water.

India is the second largest consumer of water in the world after China. India's water consumption is approximately a staggering 20.1 percent of the total world consumption. Per capita water consumption in India, at 297.7 cubic metres, is more than the world average per capita consumption of 287.3 cubic metres. Agriculture is the major consumer of water resources in India and accounts for 90 percent in India whereas the world average water consumption in the agricultural sector is only 69 percent.

According to a forecast by the World Water



Institute, Washington, India will be a highly water stressed country from 2020 onwards. Water stressed implies an availability of less than 1000 cubic meters of water per person per annum. With this impending scenario, the industry must become alive to the increasing pressure on scarce water resources and adopt new technologies for water reclamation, reuse and recycling. The government must make rain

water harvesting and effluent recycling mandatory across the country. Proactive measures must be taken to introduce concepts like water audits.

It has been established that nearly 45 percent of the energy requirements of a large city is used for movement of water and it is also a well known fact that due to wrong pricing of municipal water supply, water is being wasted, which results in power wastage. For example in Delhi, the cost of water production is more than Rs 5 per cubic metre, whereas the Delhi Jal Board is charging Rs 0.40 per cubic metre, which does not even cover the operating cost. Therefore the need of the hour is to first make people aware of the value of water and thereafter come up with innovative policy measures to encourage its conservation.

E mail: [mchaubey@pentairwater.com](mailto:mchaubey@pentairwater.com)

# Work on your head, body will follow

*" While I can run, I will run  
While I can walk I will walk  
When I can only crawl, I will crawl  
But I will always move forward "*

— Covett Robert

**M**OVEMENT is life. To stop is death. Look around. Everything moves- water, air the earth and the universe. The more we move the more energy we have. So lets start our day by running and building energy for the whole day.

Although running is natural it's possible to do it wrong. Many people fail by trying to do too much too soon. A beginner has to clear two obstacles: the actual running and developing the discipline to follow a routine. The easiest way to start is to tackle the second problem first. It's like this: we make our habits first and then our habits make us.

### HOW TO START AND KEEP GOING

- Pick four days. Choose one weekend day and three weekdays. Select a time to step out of your front door and walk for 20 minutes. Don't worry about buying shoes, nifty clothes or sweatbands. The first week is for your mind more than your body. You need to convince yourself that you can find time to exercise. So work on your head. The body will follow.

- Buy some running shoes and shorts after the first week. Shoes should feel good as soon as you put them on and jog or walk a few yards in them. If shoes don't feel right in the store, leave them there. They won't 'break in' and don't let a salesperson persuade you otherwise.

- When you hit week two, strap on a watch. Walk for nine minutes and jog - don't run, just jog - for one minute. Repeat. Increase your jogging intervals by a minute a week. After four weeks, you can start going for 30 minutes rather than 20. You should start

## RUN WITH ME

DEEPAK MALIK

increasing your weekend outing by five minutes until you are at 45 minutes.

Within three months, you should be able to run four miles without stopping.

### OTHER TIPS:

- If you get out of breath (not if you are breathing heavily - that's normal - but if you are gasping or your lungs hurt), you are trying to run too fast. Slow down to a level at which you can talk comfortably.

- Three words about headphones and music: no, no, no. This is like driving with a cell phone to your ear. You deprive yourself of the mental benefits of running by drowning out your thoughts.

- As soon as you are comfortable, plan to exercise with a friend once or twice a week. But teach yourself to go it alone, too, so you won't talk yourself out of your exercise routine if your friend backs out.

- Low-carbohydrate diets and running don't match very well. Carbs convert to glycogen, the fuel muscles burn, so running can be harder - and downright

**Increase your jogging intervals by a minute a week. After four weeks, you can start going for 30 minutes rather than 20.**

uncomfortable - without some fruit, cereal, breads, rice, pasta, yogurt or baked potatoes in your diet.

- Hydration becomes a lifestyle for runners. Grab a glass of water in the morning before you run. Carry a water bottle in your car and keep one at your workstation. You can build your blood volume over a long period of time, which makes running more comfortable. More fluid in the bloodstream means a greater capacity to carry oxygen and blood sugar, the fuel that you run on.

- Don't let travel and vacations disrupt your running routine. You will get to see towns or resorts you visit much more closely and quietly during an early morning run.

- On holidays, schedule exercise before the big meal.

- When you finish a run, walk slowly for a few minutes before you come to a complete halt. This, along with stretching, helps avoid sore legs. It's most important to stretch your hamstrings, quads, calves and back

- As you settle into a routine, round off your fitness programme with weight training on the days you don't run. It complements running by stabilising your body core and improves your appearance as you lose weight.

- Let yourself be a child when you run. Remember nothing is more natural for humans. Enjoy the outdoors, the air, and the trees.

Running is not only a physical phenomenon but also a mental challenge. Running disciplines the body and the mind. Discipline increases consciousness in life and helps us lead life more fully.

I will be very happy if I can be of any help to you in cultivating the running habit. You can contact me at [deepakmalik1@yahoo.com](mailto:deepakmalik1@yahoo.com)

## INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

## 1 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
Kathak Recital  
By Gunjan Khare from Lucknow, disciple of Pt. Arjun Mishra

## 1 March

**Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm**  
Discussion: Sri Lanka on the edge  
Speakers: MR Narayanswamy, author and journalist and MK Tikku, journalist  
Chair: Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Ashok Mehta

## 2nd March

**Lecture room (Annexe) at 6:30 pm**  
Meet Marija Sreš  
Introduction: Myron J. Pereira SJ  
Welcome address by H.E. M. Borštnik, Chargé d'Affaires of Slovenia  
Followed by: In Conversation Marija Sreš writer and development worker in conversation with Sonalben Shukla, Director, Vacha Women's Resource Centre, Mumbai  
Screening of a 20 minute film The Adivasi Cultural Festival Film on Marija Sreš' heritage work in Sabarkantha  
Marija Sreš has worked with rural women in Gujarat for over 30 years. A development worker with the Dugri Garasiya Adivasis in Sabarkantha district in North Gujarat, she holds a degree in Gujarati literature and her experiences over the years have found expression through her writing. Her first book in Gujarati *Girasma ek Dugri* (To Survive and to Prevail) was awarded the second prize by Gujarat Sahitya Akademi in 1974 and a special edition of the book was republished in 2005 by the Gujarat Sahitya Parishad as part of the "hundred most significant books in Gujarati literature"

## 2-4 March

**Auditorium**  
Hybrid Forms  
New Trends in the Documentary Film  
A Festival: 2 - 4 March

## 3 March

**CONFERENCE ROOM - I at 6:30 pm**  
Budget 2006 - Analysis  
Speaker: Bishwajit Bhattacharyya, Advocate, Supreme Court of India

## 4-6 March

**Art Gallery (Annexe) 11:00 am - 7 pm**  
Artists of India  
An exhibition of studio and traditional pottery, and paintings by renowned artists. On view will be works by Jatin Das, Satish Gujral, Serjeet Singh, Arpana Caur, Kalicharan, Yuriko Lochan etc. and upcoming studio potters like Keshari Nandan Prasad, Rajesh Kumar Srivastava, Prithviraj Singhdeo and others. Traditional potters from Khurja and stoneware from Agra Inauguration by Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan MP on Friday, 3rd March at 6:30 pm

## 4 March

**Conference Room- I at 6:30 pm**  
Panel discussion on: Corruption in Public life - Ways and Means of Eradication  
Keynote address by Justice JS Verma, former Chief

Justice of India and Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission  
Panelists: P Shankar, Central Vigilance Commissioner, N Gopalaswamy, Election Commissioner, Ved Marwah, former Governor, Nirmala Deshpande, Gandhian; Shekhar Singh, Convenor, NCPRI, Kuldip Nayyar, senior journalist; and Prashant Bhushan, Advocate

## 5 March

**Auditorium at 10:00 am**  
Carnatic Classical Music - Vocal Recital  
By Vasantha Krishnan and Lalita Anand from Delhi who will present a concert of compositions by composers from Karnataka and others  
Accompanied by RS Krishnan (violin) and KN Padmanabhan (*mridangam*)

## 6 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
Film: Naina Jogin - The Ascetic Eye (59 min; dvcam; 2005; English sub-titles)  
Directed by Praveen Kumar who will introduce the film  
The vitality of the Madhubani style of paintings has enchanted people across the world. The international market for this art form is as much a fact as the enigmatic beliefs and cultural practices of the artists. The film travels through the region of Madhubani, looking at the lives of these artists who struggle against trying circumstances, juxtaposing the frugality of their means with the richness of their work  
Screening will be followed by a discussion

## 6 March

**Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm**  
Independent India  
The Environment Debate  
Speaker: Dr Mahesh Rangarajan, well-known historian of ecological change, commentator on Indian politics and author and editor of several books

## 7-8 March

**Auditorium**  
Women, Media and Society Transformations - Asian Women's Festival  
(Organised by IIC-Asia Project in collaboration with the International Association of Women in Radio and Television)

## 7 March

**Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm**  
Book Discussion Group  
Sona Khan, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India; Shahid Mehdi, former Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia; and Dr Zafrul Islam, will discuss. *Islam: Maker of the Muslim Mind* by Sheshrao More (Pune: Rajhans Prakashan, 2004)

## 8 March

**Lecture Room (Annexe) at 6:30 pm**  
To Serve: Responding to the Inner Calling - Taking Education to the Oppressed People  
Speaker: Amit from Adharshila Shikshana Kendra Adharshila Shikshana Kendra is an alternative school for Adivasi children in Madhya Pradesh. Founders Amit and Jayashree who have been working with the Adivasis for more than 20 years have titled it a "learning centre" to get away from the rigid, didactic stereotype of mainstream

schools with a curriculum that combines academics, world issues, practical skills and cultural heritage with a lot of fun.

## 8 March

**Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm**  
Babur Nama (Journal of Babur): Its Relevance to Contemporary India and Pakistan  
Speaker: Dilip Hiro, writer, journalist and commentator who has recently translated Babur's 16th century classic

## 9 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
10th Barsi of Pt. Amarnath Inauguration  
By Ashok Vajpeyi  
Followed by Hindustani Vocal Recital  
By Mahendra Toke  
Hindustani Vocal Recital  
By Gajendra Baxi

## 10 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
Lecture Series on Governance Politicians, Civil Servants and Governance  
Speaker: Prof. Rajni Kothari, eminent Social Scientist  
First in an annual series of lectures on governance that will address current issues on governance by some of the most distinguished minds in India and abroad

## 10 March

**Fountain Lawns at 6:30 pm**  
Concert: By the Hohenlohe Brass Quintet from Germany - Joachim Spieth (trumpet); Martin Jacob (trumpet); Nadja Heble (horn); Christof Schmidt (trombone); and Tobias Ragle (tuba & brass trombone)  
The Quintet will present a programme of baroque dance suites, classical pieces as well as jazz, spirituals and film music

## 11 March

**Fountain Lawns at 7:00 pm**  
War of Kalinga - A Story of Ashoka (45 min)  
Dance presented by girls and boys from the shelter homes of Salaam Balaak Trust  
Choreography: Avinash Yadav  
Music composed by Indraneel Hariharan  
The dance incorporates

chhau, modern and traditional dance forms to delineate the transformation of Ashoka from a great warrior to an ambassador of peace.

## 13 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
In memory of Ustad Vilayat Khan  
In Conversation: Uma Vasudev in conversation with Ustad R Fahimuddin Dagar, who will share his thoughts and memories about the life and times of musicians of the 20th century  
Followed by: Dhrupad Recital by Ustad R. Fahimuddin Dagar  
Accompanied by Dal Chand Sharma on the *pakhawaj*

## 14 March

**Gandhi - King Plaza at 7:30 pm**  
Basant Ritu - Songs of Holi  
Presented by Madhup Mudgal  
Accompanied by the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Choir

## 16 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
To Remember Bela Bartok (1881-1945)  
Concert - Vocal and Instrumental Folk Music  
Presented by members of the Hungarian Folk Ensemble - Istvan Pal (violin & head of orchestra); Gyula Karacs (viola); Robert Door (double bass); Attila Gera (wind instruments); and Agnes Herczku (vocal)  
The artists will present a concert adapted from authentic and original Hungarian folk music collected by Bela Bartok

## 17 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
Carnatic Classical Music - Vocal Recital  
By Gopal Arvind from Chennai, disciple of O.S. Thiagarajan

## 18-24 March

**Art Gallery (Annexe) 11:00 am - 7:00 pm**  
An exhibition of graphics presenting works by outstanding Hungarian artists who have been influenced by the music of Bela Bartok. Some of the works on display are illustrations to particular Bartok compositions, others, abstract reflections of the musical universe of the

composer. Artists whose works will be exhibited include Victor Vasarely, Imre Szemethi, Gabor Pasztor, Karoly Raszler, Huba Balvanyos and Zoltan Lenkey  
Opening on Friday, 17 March at 6:30 pm

## 18 March

**Conference Room-I at 6:30 pm**  
Films on Wildlife and Environment

## 18-20 March

**Auditorium and Fountain Lawns at 6:30 pm**  
A Festival of Sufi Music  
Details of the programme to be announced later  
Organised on the occasion of the 'International Conference on Sufism: Sufi Traditions, Philosophy and Poetry'

## 20 March

**Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm**  
Ethiopia, Africa's India  
An illustrated lecture by Come Carpentier, Editor  
Mr Carpentier will make a presentation on the history and culture of Ethiopia with special reference to her relations with India over the centuries. For the ancient Greeks and medieval geographers and mythologists, Ethiopia was a part of India and the two countries were often regarded as indistinguishable

## 21 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
Independent India  
Urban Crisis in Contemporary Bombay Cinema  
Speaker: Dr Ranjani Mazumdar, School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University

## 23 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
Women and Her Womanhood  
Presented by artists of Bhoomika Creative Dance Centre  
Direction and choreography: Narendra Sharma

## 24 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
Concert  
By Laura Goldberg of Arts Ahimsa on the violin and Stephen Masi on the piano  
The artists will present a concert that will include Beethoven's Spring Sonata and variations on "Abide with Me" amongst others

## 25 March

**Auditorium at 7 pm**  
Film: Dance with Hands Held Tight (62 min; 2005; dvd; English sub-titles)  
Directed by Krishnendu Bose who will introduce the film  
A film on women's livelihoods and natural resources. Eighty percent of rural women are engaged in livelihoods dependant on natural resources in India. This intense relationship, throws up a range of issues and questions. The film tries to explore these through four focused engagements - the fishermen off the coast of Karnataka, the fish paddy agriculturists - Apatani women of Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh; the hillbroom collecting Adivasi & Dalit women of Kashipur, Orissa; and the women of Sone-bhadra, Uttar Pradesh who are fighting for their lost lands.

## 29 March

**Auditorium at 6:30 pm**  
Is the United States a Southern Nation?  
Speaker: Prof. Ira Katznelson, Ruggles Professor of Political Science & History, President, Columbia University, New York and American Political Science Association  
Prof. Katznelson will discuss the impact on race, regionalism and poverty on American politics, putting the Bush presidency in that larger context.

## 30 March

**Auditorium at 6 pm**  
Chameli Devi Jain Award 2006.  
Presentation of awards to outstanding women journalist.  
Followed by a panel discussion on: Six months into the Right to Information Act  
Lead presentation by Wajahat Habibullah, Govt. of India's Chief Information Commissioner under the Right to Information Act

## MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

## 2-4th March

Hybrid Forms  
New Trends in Documentary Film

## 6th March at 9 pm

EU-Film Festival  
Kebab Connection at Siri Fort Auditorium  
Kebab Connection is a comedy of two fast food stands (one Turkish, the other Greek), a frustrated filmmaker, the coolest commercial of all time, intercultural love, forbidden romance and centuries-old Aegean rivalry. And we mustn't forget the local mafia, either!

## 9 March at 6pm

Lecture: Civil society - historical and comparative perspectives

## KRITI

This talk will embed the concept of civil society in its cultural and historical moorings and show how it aimed not only at developing a form of social interaction, but also at excluding certain groups from participation. By Margrit Pernau

## 10 March at 6 pm

**Lecture: Civilising Subjects in Europe**  
The beginning of European Modernity is closely linked with the development of specific notions of civility, encompassing new norms of self-control and self-restraint as well as a new concept of the body. The talk will discuss some theories developed to understand this growth. By Alois Hahn

## 9-11 March

**Workshop:** Historical and comparative perspectives on civil society

## 16-17 March

**Seminar "SPIRIT-2006": Sustainable & Participative Initiative for Rural Infrastructure Technologies**

## 24-26 March at 6.30 pm

Exploring Media Art  
Series of artists' presentations, talks and discussions  
Performance by Maya Rao  
**17 March at 5.30 pm**  
Documentary screening  
Crossing the Lines: Kashmir, India, Pakistan by Eqlab Ahmad Foundation.

All events are subject to change. Ph: India International Centre: 24619431

Letters and listings can be sent to:  
shailey@civilsocietyonline.com  
shaileyhingorani@gmail.com

## WEBWATCH

**www.dignityfoundation.com**  
Fight stress, hostility, rejection, loneliness and learn to live with dignity. Click [www.dignityfoundation.com](http://www.dignityfoundation.com) and you will realise life can be beautiful, irrespective of age and circumstances. The Dignity Foundation aims at helping people overcome age-related problems and give them a sense of security.

**www.rhinocampaign.net**  
Save the Rhino International has been working since 1991 to save the rhinos of Africa and Asia. This charity spreads awareness about the dwindling numbers of rhinoceros species in the world. It helps raise funds for NGOs and communities working on projects to save the rhino. The EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) Rhino Campaign has joined hands with the charity to mobilise efforts, funds and inspire people to help in the animal's

## INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

## 2 March

**7:00pm.** Book reading- visual presentation and book reading from 'India in Focus: Camera Chronicles of Homai Vyarawalla' Pub:Mapin/Parzor Foundation, 2006) on the work and life of India's first woman photo-journalist by its author Sabeena Gadihoke. Homai Vyarawalla will be present to answer questions.

## 4 March

**7:00pm.** Theatre: Mitr Cultural Society present 'Jis Lahore Nahin Dekhya Oh Janmya Hi Nahin' Writer: Dr. Asghar Wajahat. Dir. Anil Sharma. Tickets at Rs 250, Rs 150 & Rs 100 available at the Programme Desk.

**7:00pm.** Documentary film: Filmmaker and writer Saagari Chhabra premieres 'The World and the World', a documentary that features writings by Mahatma Gandhi, Manto and contemporary writers such as Mahasweta Devi, Anita Desai and Keki Daruwalla. The screening will be followed by poetry readings.

## 5 March

**7:45am.** IHC Walk: Author and illustrator, Nimret Handa leads us on a tree walk in Nehru Park. We meet at the main car park. Walkers are requested to please call/e-mail and register for the walk at the Programmes Desk.

## 6 March

**6:30pm.** Talk: Senior Tax Consultant RN Lakhotia speaks on 'Budget 2006'

## 7 March

**6:30pm.** Theatre: To mark International Women's Day, students present street plays on issues concerning women. Moderator: Dr Mala Kapur Shankardass. Collab: Development, Welfare & Research Foundation

**7:00pm.** Health talk: Dr Navin Taneja, Director, CosmaDerma Surgical Centre at Asian Roots Medi Spa, New Delhi talks about skin care and age management. Know more about latest treatments in skin management.

## 8 March

**4:00pm.** Talk: To celebrate International Women's Day, panel discussion on 'Are Women Effective Leaders' Panelists : Shabana Azmi, Smriti Irani, TV Actor, Sapna Gupta, Founder, Air Hostess Academy, Usha Aggarwala, President, FLO and Dr Farooq Abdullah, former Chief Minister, J&K Moderator: Dr. Suman Khanna Aggarwal, President, Shanti Sahyog Collab: Shanti Sahyog & FICCI Ladies Organisation.

**7:00 pm.** Music: To celebrate Holi, Raagranjini presents vocal recital by Swapna Chatterjee, disciple of Smt Savita Devi, Sitar by Sanjeeb Sircar, disciple of Ustad Shujat Khan and vocal recital by Shikha Ganguly, disciple of Pt. Mani Prasad. Accompanists: Soumitra Pal and Sumanta Sil.

## 9 March

**6:30pm.** Book launch and reading : Postmodern Gandhi And Other Essays:Gandhi In The World And At Home' by Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Hoerber Rudolph, Profs. Emeriti, University of Chicago. Pub: Oxford University Press.

## 10 March

**6:45pm.** Talk: To celebrate the

Festival of Holi, Rajasthan Academy presents 'Kaviyatri Sammelan'

**7:00pm.** Theatre: 'Jail Birds' An emotionally gripping drama of a woman in jail for killing her husband and her daughter who visits her after 14yrs to ask her why she did it. Writer Smita Bharti. Direction: Sohaila Kapur. A Hungry Heart Festival Society presentation. Entry by invitation.

**7:00pm.** Music: Violin recital by mother- daughter duo, Minoti Khaund & Sunita Bhuyan, disciples of late Pt. VJ Jog HCL Concert Series.

## 11 March

**7:00pm.** Dance: The 8th National Festival of New Choreography *Sitaayanam* (The journey of Sita) Mohiniattam By Dr Neena Prasad and disciples. *Pancha Deva Stuti* (Worshipping the five Deities) Odissi by Guru Durga Charan Ranbir and disciples. Collab: Impresario India

**7:00pm.** Music: Sargam presents Holi bandishes by Lovleena Kumar and Jawad Ali Khan and Mazhar Ali Khan of the Patiala Gharana.

## 12 March

**9:30am.** IHC Walk: Suresh Kumar, horticulturist at the Rashtrapati Bhawan leads us on walk in the Moghul Garden, at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. We meet at Gate no. 35, North Avenue. Walkers are please requested to call/e-mail and register for the walk at the Programme Desk.

**7:00pm.** Dance: The 8th National Festival of New Choreography *Stabdha (Mauna)*- Kuchipudi by Vyjayanti Kashi and group.

*Nahal Nong* (Once upon a time) Manipuri dance by Priti Patel and group. Collab: Impresario India

**7:00pm.** Music: 'Kesar Ki Udhat Phuhaar' Shaila Hattangadi and Shobhana Rao present a concert that features traditional light classical 'Horis' and popular folk forms of Mathura and Brindavan and the rarely heard 'Bundelkhandi Phag, Ram Awadh ki Holi and Nazeer Akbarbadi's Urdu Holi'

## 13 March

**7:00pm.** Dance: The 8th National Festival of New Choreography *Angikam Bhuvanam* (The Cosmic Self) Bharatanatyam by Rama Vaidyanathan and group.

*Vivitri* (An Interpretation) Kathak By Prerana Shrimali and group. Collab: Impresario India

**7:00pm.** Music: 'Spirit To Soul' - A tribute commemorating the life and music of legendary Sitar maestro - Ustad Vilayat Khan. Zila Khan his daughter presents an evening of classical bandishes composed by Ustad Vilayat Khan which were taught only to Zila Khan. A short film on his music and life will be screened.

**7:00pm.** Book Launch and Panel Discussion: 'Tomorrow's India: Another Tryst with Destiny' edited by B G Verghese. Collab : Penguin Books India

## 14 March

Celebrate the Festival of Holi with Rashmi Agarwal & artistes of the North Zone Centre Cultural Centre. Please check panel for details.

## 15 March

## Holi

## 16 March

**6:30 pm.** Film Club discussion: 'Medea' (Danish/1988/76mins) Dir. Lars von Trier. film scholar Ira Bhaskar will introduce the film and facilitate the discussion

**7:00pm.** Talk: 'What Is Evolutionary Enlightenment?' Explore the teachings of Andrew Cohen, spiritual teacher with Gail Margulis, Director of EnlightenNext, Rishikesh.

**7:00pm.** Dance: Cansupport presents 'Radiance' a performance about healing and the heart by international artiste Zuleikha Khan, renowned for her use of dance and storytelling for healing. Entry by invitation.

## 17 March

**7:00pm.** Vidvatva: Fulbright Fellow Claudia Chang speaks on 'The Anthropological Study of Gender Roles: Some Indian and American Examples of Kinship, Family, and Gender' in the 18th lecture in the Fulbright Lecture series. Chair: Dr.Rama, Indian Fulbright Scholar in Residence and noted gender specialist. Collab: USEFI & Kri Foundation

**7:00pm.** Theatre: Preksha presents an experimental production of Girish Karnad's 'Nagmandala'. Dir. NSD Alumni, Shyam Kishore. The play is based on two folklores that are relevant in contemporary life. Entry free.

## 18 March

**7:00pm.** Music: Swar Rang Sangeet Sammelan - Vocal recital - Acharya Abhimanyu, disciple of Pt. Surinder Singh, Harmonium solo - Ustad Mehmoood Dholpuri, and Kathak by Shikha Khare, disciple of Pt. Birju Maharaj.

**6:30pm.** Panel Discussion: 'Water : Meeting the Biggest Challenge'

Panelists: Dr RK Pachauri, DG TERI, Ramaswamy R Iyer, Professor CPR and PR Chari, Research Prof. IPCS. Chair: DR Kaarthikeyan. Umesh Aggarwal's film 'The Whistle Blowers' will be screened. Collab: Foundation for Peace Harmony & Good Governance and Life Positive Foundation

**7:00pm.** Film Club Screening: 'Mexican Film Festival' *La Perdicion De Los Hombres'* Dir. Arturo Ripstein (2000/106mins)

**7:00pm.** Poetry Club of India presents: 'Indian Poetry 2006' featuring poetry in Indian languages and Indian English.

## 19 March

**7:00pm.** Film Club screening: 'Mexican Film Festival' *Principio Y Fin'* Dir. Arturo Ripstein (1994/183mins)

## 20 March

**7:00pm.** Book Release: 'Essays On Macroeconomic Policy And Growth In India' by Dr Shankar Acharya, Hon. Prof. ICRIER and former Economic Advisor to the Govt. of India. The book is a ringside perspective on macroeconomic policies and economic reforms in the 90's. Release by Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission. Collab: ICRIER. Pub: Oxford University Press.

**7:00pm.** Film Club screening : 'Mexican Film Festival' *El Colonel No Tiene Quien Le Escriba'* Dir. Arturo Ripstein (1999/118mins)

## 21 March

**6:30pm.** Actionline: Panel discussion on 'Summer Nightmares - Will The Power Situation Let Us Sleep Or Make Us Sweat?' An IHC - Indian Express Group initiative.

**6:30pm.** Talk: Captain MS Kohli, Chairman, Himalayan Environment Trust, presents an illustrated talk on 'Vibrant India Through Adventure'

**7:00pm.** Film Club screening: Mexican Film Festival ' *Asi Es La Vida'* Dir. Arturo Ripstein (2000/98mins)

## 22 March

**6:30pm.** Talk: We start a new series 'Bhasha - The Word And The Voice' that focuses on new writings in Indian languages. Eminent writers, Mridula Garg and Uday

Experience thrilling, heart pounding adventure and never seen before footage brought alive on screen.

**7:00pm.** Dance: Renowned dancer and choreographer Urmila Sathyanarayanan presents 'Women: Past, Present, Future' in the bharatanatyam idiom. HCL Concert Series

## 25 March

**6:30pm.** Documentary film: Public Service Broadcasting Trust & The British Council present a series of monthly screenings of PSBT and Grierson Award winning documentaries. 'The Fragile Web' by Mike H Pandey and 'Magnetic Storm' Dir: Duncan Copp\Prod. David Sington (Best Doc., Grierson Award 2004)

## 27 March

**6:30pm.** Talk: The Little Magazine Awards for South Asian Literature and New Writing. Moderated by Girish Karnad

**7:00pm.** Theatre: Dastangoi- The Lost Art of Storytelling in Urdu: Talk and Performance by Mahmood Farooqui in our series, 'The Art Of Storytelling In India'

## 28 March

**7:00pm.** Talk: Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen speaks on the occasion of the launch of his book 'Identity And Violence: The Illusion Of Destiny' Pub: Penguin Books India. Entry by invitation.

## 29 March

## KOLKATA THEATRE

## Thriller on stage

KOLKATA theatre group Theatron's latest production, *Shey*, is a classic thriller, adapted in Bengali from Susan Hill's story, *The Woman in Black*, which was dramatised by Stephen Mallatrat.

In an old, isolated house situated somewhere in the eerie marshes of England, lived a woman, Mrs. Alice Drablow, who stayed and died there, all by herself. Into this mysterious world arrives Arthur Kripps, a London-based lawyer sent by his firm to look into her legal affairs. Kripps is the archetypal young urban man who does not believe in the supernatural. But Mrs.

Drablow's house and its environs make even a cynic like him ill at ease. To add to his sense of discomfort, he sees a young woman with a distorted face, dressed entirely in black at Mrs. Drablow's funeral. He asks people who she is, but nobody wants to talk about her. So Kripps must wait till he sees her again, and as she gradually discloses herself to him, she also reveals her terrifying mission.

**Date:** 18 March 2006.

**Venue:** Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata.

**Time:** 6.30 pm.

**Director:** Saswati Biswas.

## Couples and relationships

STAGE Addict are all set to stage their second play, "Swap". Written and directed by an undergraduate student of English, Adwaita Das, this original play follows the lives of four couples at different stages of

their relationships. Says Adwaita: "I want to examine how lack of communication between partners causes the breakdown of a relationship.

**Venue:** Padatik, Kolkata.

**Time:** 6.30 pm.

Prakash read from their new writings. Collab: Yatra Books

**7:00pm.** Film club screening: Mexican Film Festival 'La Reina Da La Noche' Dir. Arturo Ripstein (2000/117mins)

## 23 March

**6:30pm.** IHC Management Talk: Practices 20:20 brings to us a talk on 'Creating Inspired Workplaces' by B.M. Rangan, Vice President, Consulting Services, Grow Talent Co. Ltd. Supported by Institute of Quality Ltd.

**7:00pm.** Music: Meenaxi Mukherji, disciple of Pt. L K Pandit of Gwalior gharana and Pt. Ramesh Nadkarni of Bhandi Bazaar gharana presents *khayal and tappa* in the HCL Concert series

## 24 March

**7:00pm.** Documentary film: Premiere of National Geographic's 'Most Amazing Moments'. The series features spectacular imagery and first-hand accounts from scientists, journalists and filmmakers on the scene.

**7:00pm.** Theatre: Sparsh Natya Rang present '*Pati Gaye Ree Kathiawar'* Hindi Adaptation: Sudhir Kulkarni. Dir. Ajit Chowdhury. Entry by invitation.

**7:00pm.** Dance: A journey through various facets of Kathak by young disciples of Sushmita Ghosh, a sharing of their creative experience in dance.

**6:30pm.** Talk: Nashist Baithak. In our series of literary evenings, we feature celebrated Urdu scholar and chronicler Anand Mohan Zutshi (Gulzar Dehvi) followed by an interactive session with him. Collab: Impresario Asia

**7:00pm.** Music: Pt.Mithanlal Sangeet Samiti presents a Vocal recital by Pt.Mani Prasad and Sitar & Sarod Jugalbandi by the Kedia Brothers

**7:00pm.** Ruchika Theatre Group presents 'People Like Us' Dir. Feisal Alkazi. Prod.Gauri Nilekanthan. Tkts at Rs 200, Rs 150, Rs 100 and Rs 50 available at the Programme Desk from March 20.

**7:00pm.** Talk: 'Rebuilding Cities after Natural or Man Made Disasters: Specific areas of Post-Katrina Planning for New Orleans' by Frederick Schwartz, Professor of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Collab: Rai Foundation

**7:00pm.** Documentary film: Jagori & Sangat present a three day documentary festival on '*Masculinity, Women, Peace And Conflict'*. On the first day we screen films on '*Masculinity'*.

## 30 March

**7:00pm.** Dance: Odissi danseuse Raminder Khurana, disciple of late Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra presents a traditional repertoire. HCL Concert Series.

**7:00pm.** Documentary film: Jagori & Sangat screen films on 'Women,Peace And Conflict'.

## 31 March

**7:00pm.** Documentary film: Jagori & Sangat conclude

## Promote palliative care

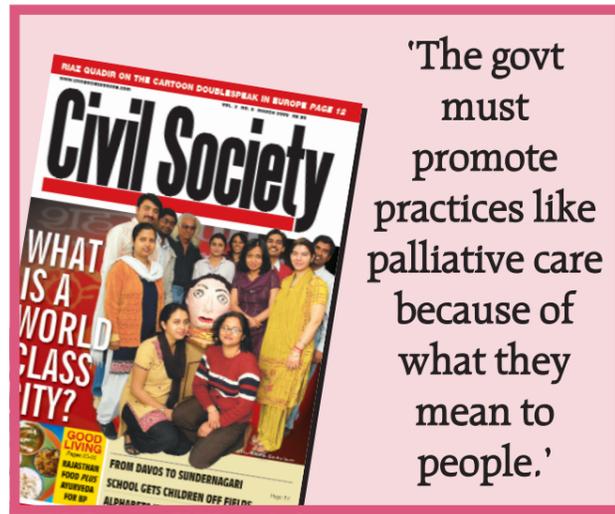
I liked your story on Harmala and palliative cancer care. We must ask ourselves why so little ever appears in the media on patient friendly approaches to medicine. It is also the responsibility of the government to promote such practices in palliative care because of what they mean to ordinary people. There is too much emphasis on medicine as a business when it should really be a service.

Karan Chandra

## The net is fun

Internet has indeed come to play a very significant role in our lives. We turn to it for all kinds of information and amusement. It is here, I think, lies the relevance of a column like 'Webwatch'. On one of my wild expeditions on the net, I logged onto www.BookCrossing.com, and stumbled on the most amusing and superlatively funny books. Reading these books made me lose my inhibitions of sharing a short story that I had written in the past but wasn't able to reveal to anybody for fear of ridicule. Now, I have embarked on a new journey of discovery and I am enjoying it immensely.

R Kumar



'The govt must promote practices like palliative care because of what they mean to people.'

## Indo-Pak friendship

This is in relation to the story entitled 'Friendship at Wagah'. The India-Pakistan debate has been done to death. I understand that for the peace process to have far-reaching consequences it has to be covered on a sustained basis. But to make it interesting some freshness has to be infused into it. A straightforward story like this makes very dull reading. I wonder whether the space devoted to the story could have been put to better use.

M.K.Upadhyaya

## Theatre's mass appeal

Our country has a very rich tradition of folk culture. Street theatre and folk dances

have been used for ages to sensitise the public about a host of issues. This form of sensitisation is particularly useful because it is very close to the people and respects the sensibilities of the communities it comes into contact with. The work that banglanatak.com seeks to do, as illustrated in the story, 'Theatre with a mass message' deserves all the support they can get. But is the state listening?

Ravi Ranjan

## Be more hard hitting

I am quite disappointed with the kind of stories that got mention and space in this month's edition of *Civil Society*. What we really need are hard-hitting stories. Any

medical journal, any newspaper can tell me how fatal a disease cancer is. But nobody else will tell me how NGOs really work, or whether there is a direct correlation between globalisation and the rise of the NGO sector in this country. We need such stories to be able to successfully wean away the tabloid junkie from page 3 news and arouse his/her interest in serious development issues.

Ankita Kherra

## More stories please

There is a serious dearth of reportage in your magazine. Perspectives are all right. But we need good, serious reporting to really know our 'Bharat' well. The two Indias are de-linked. Stories of change are often overlooked by mainstream newspapers and we rely on *Civil Society* for our monthly quota. So please include more reportage.

Sunita Kumari

## Water woes

Lado Sarai, DDA flats, consists of 320 Janata flats. It was allotted by DDA to Economic Weaker Sections (EWS) in 1988. This colony has more than 2,500 residents.

Each small flat consists of one room, a bath, toilet, kitchen and balcony. The flats were allotted in 1988. But we are still not supplied clean drinking water. Residents depend totally on groundwater that is not of good quality. In fact, groundwater in the entire Mehrauli area, where we are located, is not fit for drinking.

After many representations and protests, the area councillor, Satbir Singh sanctioned and provided us with one half inch DJB pipeline which is installed near a park close to the DJB booster pump house.

Residents now get five to 10 litres every day after much fighting and pushing. Women, senior citizens and aged widows are the worst sufferers.

Do we not have the basic right to clear and clean drinking water in this 21st century and that too in the capital city? Recently the Supreme Court gave a verdict that says every citizen of India has the basic right to clean drinking water. Can some action be taken to give relief to the residents of Lado Sarai DDA flats?

K Vijaya Raghaven  
President - Resident Welfare Association  
Ladosarai

## WHERE TO VOLUNTEER

### CanSupport India

Kanak Durga Basti Vikas Kendra, Sector 12 R.K. Puram Near DPS School New Delhi-110022  
Tel: 26102851, 26102859, 26102869  
E-mail: cansup\_india@hotmail.com

### Rahi

Rahi is a support centre for urban middle class women suffering from the trauma of incest. It provides information, individual support, group support and referrals. Through workshops and peer educators they help survivors and spread awareness.  
Contact: H-49 A, Second floor, Kalkaji, New Delhi-3  
Phone: 26227647

### Association for India's Development(AID) – Delhi Chapter

AID works for the environment, children, women's issues, education, and health. They also undertake fund raising.  
Contact: Anuj Grover  
B-121, MIG Flats, Phase-IV, Ashok Vihar  
Delhi- 110052  
Phone: 9818248459  
E-mail: anuj.grover@gmail.com

### Youthreach

A volunteer team at Youthreach helps to match your skills and interests with the needs of their partner organisations. This exchange is monitored and

facilitated from beginning to end by the volunteer team. The team also partners other non-profit organisations that are working with children, women and the environment.  
Contact: Anubha or Ria  
11 Community Centre, Saket, New Delhi - 110 017  
Phone/Fax: (011) 2653 3520/25/30  
Email: yrd@youthreachindia.org

### Deepalaya

They work with economically, socially deprived, physically and mentally challenged children. They believe in helping children become self reliant and lead a healthy life. Deepalaya works on education, health, skill training and income enhancement.  
Contact: Deepalaya  
46, Institutional Area, D Block Janakpuri  
New Delhi - 110 058  
Phone: 25548263, 25590347  
Website: www.deepalaya.org

### Mobile Crèches

Mobile Crèches pioneered intervention into the lives of migrant construction workers by introducing the mobile crèche where working parents can leave their children. They work in the following areas: health, education, community outreach, networking and advocacy, resource mobilisation and communication. You can volunteer by filling out a simple form online.  
Contact: DIZ Area, Raja Bazaar, Sector IV New Delhi - 110 001

Phone: 91-11-23347635 / 23363271  
Website: www.mobilecreches.org

### The Arpana Trust

Arpana is a charitable, religious and spiritual organisation headquartered in Karnal, Haryana. They work with rural communities in Himachal Pradesh and with slum dwellers in Delhi. Arpana is well known for its work on health. They have helped organise women into self-help groups. These SHGs make beautiful and intricate items which are marketed by Arpana.  
For more details:  
Arpana Community Centre, NS-5, Munirka Marg Street F/9, Next to MTNL, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057.  
Phone: (Office) 26151136 and (Res) 26154964

### HelpAge India

HelpAge India needs volunteers from doctors to lay people in all our locations. Older people love to talk to younger people and need emotional support. We require volunteers in Delhi and Chennai to survey older people staying alone in homes, who could use our Helpline for senior citizens. If you wish to volunteer please email Pawan Solanki, manager at pawan.s@helpageindia.org or write to Vikas, volunteer coordinator, HelpAge India.

## WHERE TO DONATE

### Indian Red Cross Society

The society provides relief, hospital services, maternity and child welfare, family welfare, nursing and community services.

Contact: Red Cross Bhavan  
Golf Links  
New Delhi-110003  
Phone: 24618915, 24617531

### Child Relief and You (CRY)

CRY, a premier child rights organisation, believes that every child is entitled to survival, protection, development and participation. You can sponsor a child's education, healthcare, or a health worker and a teacher.  
Website: www.cry.org

### Community Aid and Sponsorship Program (CASP)

CASP enhances the capacities of children, families and communities through participation and advocacy leading to sustainable development and empowerment. You can help by sponsoring underprivileged child/children from any work area where CASP implements its programmes. These include building old-age homes, projects relating to AIDS etc.  
Website: www.caspindia.org

### ActionAid

ActionAid is an international development organisation which works with poor and marginalised women, men, girls and boys to eradicate poverty, injustice and inequity. You can become a part of their Karma Mitra loyalty program, which is based on the concept

'When you do good things you should get good things in return.' As a member of this program you can avail various tangible benefits.

Contact: ActionAid India  
C-88, South Extension - II  
New Delhi-110 049  
Website: www.actionaidindia.org

### CanSupport India

Kanak Durga Basti Vikas Kendra, Sector 12 R.K. Puram Near DPS School New Delhi-110022  
Tel: 26102851, 26102859, 26102869  
E-mail: cansup\_india@hotmail.com

### HelpAge India

HelpAge India is involved in the care of the poor and disadvantaged elderly in 55 locations across the country. They organise primary health care at village and slum level through 53 mobile medical vans, care of the destitute elderly through Adopt a Grand programme with 222 voluntary agencies, Helplines and income generation for the elderly. Their recent programmes are in the tsunami affected regions and in Kashmir for the rehabilitation of the elderly affected by the earthquake disaster. HelpAge serve more than a million elderly in India. If you wish to donate or adopt a granny, please donate online on our site www.helpageindia.org or send an email to helpage@nde.vsnl.net.in  
Address: HelpAge India  
C-14 Qutub Institutional Area  
New Delhi- 110016  
Chief Executive: Mathew Cherian - mathew.cherian@helpageindia.org

HOUSE AD