

seniors **TODAY**

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Life & Times



Too Many Pills, Too Little Health?

Dr Rajiva Gupta examines how multiple medications
can make ageing less safe

PLUS

Harsh Goenka: Can We Get Worldly Wise?

Vickram Sethi: What attracts (& repels) people

Deepa Gahlot: 10 Unforgettable TV Characters

Alimentary | Food | Mind Matters | Travel



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Rohit Pandya



November: A Season of Reflection & Renewal

November comes with its own quiet rhythm. The sparkle of Diwali has softened, the evenings carry a cooler breeze and suddenly there is space to pause, to think, to breathe, even if the air quality in various parts of the country is suspect. It is a month that invites reflection and quietly whispers of renewal.

We have all lived through extraordinary transformations. From handwritten letters to instant messages, from the reassuring ring of landlines to the intimacy of video calls, from film rolls to digital screens... The pace of change has been relentless. At times, it can feel overwhelming. Yet history reminds us that we have always adapted. We have learnt, adjusted and moved forward with resilience.

At Seniors Today, we hold a simple belief: the later years of life are not about slowing down but about opening up. Opening up to new friendships, new ideas and experiences that enrich the spirit. Learning, after all, is a lifelong companion. Whether it means picking up a hobby, exploring a new destination or finally mastering the quirks of a new app, each small step adds a quiet sparkle to everyday life.

As the year draws to a close, perhaps set yourself

one gentle goal. Call an old friend. Go for a morning or evening walk. Join a local group. Begin the hobby you have always intended to start. Small steps often carry the power to transform.

Change is not a shadow to fear, it is a light to welcome. Each day offers us a chance to learn, to laugh and to live more fully.

In this issue, we bring you a mix of travel, television and practical self-help features. Our Cover Story addresses the increasingly pressing concern of polypharmacy, a challenge that leaves many seniors juggling prescriptions when life should be about joy, not tablets.

A reminder, then: pause before you reach for that next pill.

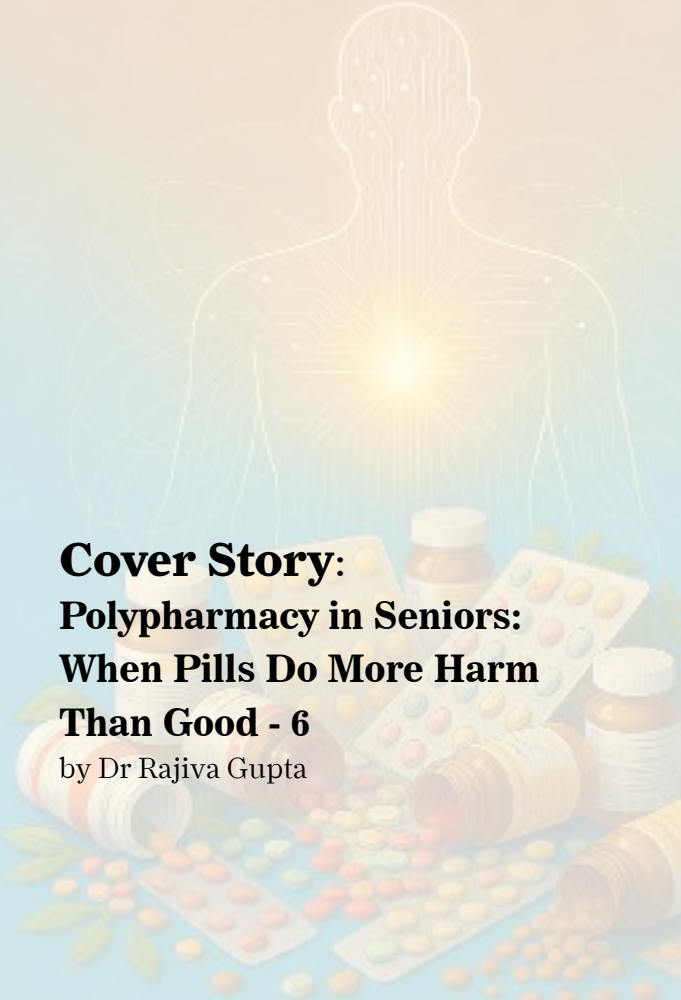
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vickram Sethi".

Vickram Sethi

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

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Polypharmacy in Seniors: When Pills Do More Harm Than Good

Longevity may be modern medicine's great triumph, but as *Dr Rajiva Gupta* reminds us, the real challenge lies in ensuring that the years we add are worth living.

"The person who takes medicine must recover twice — once from the disease and once from the medicine." — William Osler
For many older adults, mornings begin not just with a cup of tea, but with a handful of pills — for blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, digestion, or sleep, and so on. What starts as good care can gradually become a maze of medicines, leaving one tired, confused, and overwhelmed.

This daily handful of pills reflects a growing global concern called polypharmacy — the regular use of five or

more medicines. Doctors prescribe them with good intentions — to prevent strokes, ease pain, control sugar, or protect the heart — yet when combined, these medicines can bring new problems: confusion, side effects, poor balance, and harmful interactions that may do more harm than good.

How Common Is Polypharmacy?

Nearly one in three seniors takes five or more medicines daily — a figure that almost doubles by age 85. In India, a 2025 study across six cities found 33.7% of older adults affected, with regional rates as high as 57%. Experts call it a "hidden epidemic," linked to one-third of hospital admissions and among the top five preventable causes of death in older adults.

India's Unique Challenges

Polypharmacy in India has its own nuances:

- Fixed-dose combinations: Convenient but often confusing, with two or more drugs in one pill.
- Chemist culture: Easy over-the-counter access and add-on tablets mean doctors rarely see the complete medication list.
- Herbal remedies: Popular products such as ashwagandha may interact with prescription drugs.
- Auto-refills: E-pharmacies may keep delivering medicines even after they're discontinued.
- Affordability: Rationalising medicines enhances both safety and affordability



Why the Elderly Are Prone to Polypharmacy ?

As people age, health issues tend to multiply — and so do prescriptions. Managing diabetes, blood pressure, heart disease, joint pain, or sleep problems often means taking several medications at once. When different specialists are involved, each may add or change drugs without knowledge of what others have prescribed. The result? Overlapping medicines, drug interactions, or even duplicate treatments. Over-the-counter pills and herbal supplements further complicate the picture. Sometimes, a side effect from one drug is mistaken for a new illness — triggering yet another prescription. This chain reaction is called a “prescribing cascade.”

For example:

- A blood pressure pill causes leg swelling → a diuretic (water pill) is added → dehydration and dizziness follow.
 - A memory-enhancing drug increases urination → a bladder medicine is added → confusion worsens.
- Spotting and questioning such medication chains early can prevent unnecessary prescriptions, protect brain clarity, and maintain balance and well-being.

How Polypharmacy Silently Undermines Senior Health

The Ageing Body’s Changing Chemistry
As we age, the body handles medicines differently. A dose that worked at 50 can act unpredictably at 80. Slower organs, shifting body composition, and multiple illnesses increase the risk of side effects and drug interactions.

- Slower kidneys: By age 80, kidney function may drop by half, allowing some drugs to linger and cause toxicity.
- Reduced liver metabolism: Lower enzyme activity delays drug breakdown—sedatives, for example, can accumulate and confuse.
- Changed body composition: More fat and less muscle allow fat-soluble drugs to build up, while low protein levels amplify blood thinner effects.
- Greater sensitivity: The aging brain and nerves react more sharply—ordinary doses for blood pressure or anxiety can now



trigger dizziness or falls.

A pill that once felt perfect may no longer suit today's body.

Red Flags — When to Suspect a Drug Problem

- New confusion, agitation, or excessive sleepiness
- Frequent falls or imbalance
- Constipation, dry mouth, or trouble passing urine
- Dizziness on standing
- Unexplained bruises or bleeding
- Loss of appetite or persistent tiredness
- Low-sugar spells in diabetes

The Risk Rises with Every Pill

Taking five or more medicines sharply increases the risk of harm. For example, sedatives, sleeping pills, and some blood pressure drugs can cause dizziness or falls. These are called “fall-risk increasing drugs” (FRIDs).

In seniors, such medicines may cause bone fractures and loss of independence. Every additional pill raises the chance of side effects and confusion.

Nearly one in three hospitalisations in older adults is due to medication-related harm, and with eight or more drugs, the risk of severe reactions quadruples.

In the US, such preventable drug-related issues cost Medicare over \$50 billion a year.

Golden Rule: In older adults, any new or unexplained symptom — especially dizziness or confusion — should be considered drug-related until proven otherwise.



Long-term use of **multiple medications** increases the risk of **adverse health outcomes** (such as falls and hospitalization).

The estimated risks are:

2 medications → 13% risk

5 medications → 58% risk

7 or more medications → 82% risk

When Medicines Interact

Every pill affects the body—and sometimes each other. Some combinations can quietly turn harmful: blood thinners with painkillers can increase bleeding risk, antidepressants with heart drugs may trigger irregular heartbeats, and combining sleeping pills with anti-anxiety medications can lead to dangerous drowsiness, confusion, and falls.

Neurological Effects on Memory, Alertness, and Balance

With age, some medicines can dull memory, alertness, and balance. Confusion, drowsiness, or unsteady walking often appear together, increasing the risk of falls and injuries. Drugs that block key brain chemicals intensify the problem, especially when combined. Cold or allergy syrups, certain antidepressants, bladder control medicines, and sleep or anxiety pills are common culprits. Even a routine dose labelled “may cause drowsiness” can blur focus, slow reflexes, and sap energy. Over time, these effects can disturb sleep, appetite, and mood — quietly eroding overall well-being.

Adverse Effects on Sleep

Sleep problems often grow with age — and medicines can quietly make them worse. A decongestant taken late may keep you awake, while a sedative can leave you

foggy or unsteady the next morning. A few smart habits help: take stimulating medicines in the morning, calming ones in the evening, avoid caffeine after noon, and check if your insomnia began after starting a new drug.

Adverse Effects on Appetite and Energy

Loss of appetite or low energy isn't always due to aging — medicines are often the hidden cause. Painkillers, cholesterol-lowering drugs, beta-blockers, antidepressants, antidiabetic medicines, and even some antibiotics can dull taste or cause nausea. Reviewing prescriptions and cutting down on unnecessary medicines often restores appetite, strength, and vitality.

Polypharmacy and Dementia

People with dementia are especially vulnerable — more than half in long-term care take medicines that no longer help, like statins, vitamins, or memory boosters. Stopping such non-essential drugs often improves alertness, appetite, and mood. After any hospital stay or new diagnosis, every medicine deserves a fresh look.

The “More Is Better” Myth

Families often believe more medicines mean better care. In reality, reasonable care in later life is about comfort, independence, and quality of life — not the number of pills or perfect test results.

Diabetes and the Dangers of Over-Control

Tight sugar targets suited for younger people can harm seniors. Too many diabetes medicines or insulin may trigger low blood sugar, confusion, or falls.

Better goal: Stay safe and steady, not

perfect. Fewer medicines, moderate targets, and regular reviews often lead to better health and greater confidence.



Appropriate and Inappropriate Polypharmacy

Not all polypharmacy is harmful. When medicines are well-chosen, correctly dosed, and regularly reviewed, multiple drugs can be life-saving — this is appropriate polypharmacy. For instance, a person with diabetes, heart disease, and high cholesterol may need a statin, sugar-lowering drug, and blood-pressure tablets that work safely together under supervision. Problems arise with inappropriate polypharmacy — when drugs are duplicated or are unnecessary. Regular reviews ensure only what truly helps is continued.

Managing Polypharmacy: Practical Steps

Every few months, gather all your medicines — tablets, syrups, inhalers, vitamins, and herbal products— and review them with one doctor who knows your full history.

Simplify and Stay Safe

Avoid duplicate drugs, choose non-sedating or once-daily options, and stop acidity pills if not needed.

Never stop certain drugs suddenly — like

beta-blockers, clonidine, steroids, or high-dose antidepressants and sleeping pills; taper only under medical supervision.

Keep a record of changes, use reminders or pill boxes, and alert your chemist about discontinued drugs.

Seek medical help right away for confusion, fainting, black stools, breathlessness, chest pain, or very low blood sugar.



Ask Open, Honest Questions

- Do I still need this medicine?
- Could a lower dose work?
- Are there safer alternatives?
- What side effects should I watch for?

These simple questions help your doctor decide which medicines truly matter—and which can be reduced or stopped. In India, where families often help manage medicines, involving them in these talks keeps treatment safer and more effective.

The Art of Deprescribing

Deprescribing is the careful, supervised process of reducing or stopping medicines that no longer help or may harm. Done gradually and with follow-up, it can cut unnecessary drug use by up to 60%, reduce hospitalisations by over a third, and restore energy.

Not Every Symptom Needs a Pill

Simple lifestyle changes can work as well—or even better:

Regular exercise strengthens bones, lowers blood pressure, and lifts mood. Eating healthy—meals rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein—helps control sugar, cholesterol, and energy levels. Staying hydrated, sleeping well, and staying socially connected can sometimes replace the need for sedatives or painkillers.

Smart Use of Technology

Digital tools are reshaping medication safety. AI-based apps can scan medicine boxes, detect risky combinations, and flag errors before prescriptions are finalised.

Technology can't replace human judgment—but it makes prescribing safer, communication more clearer, and reviews smarter.

The Takeaway

Polypharmacy isn't about how many medicines you take—it's about balance.

When every prescription has a clear purpose, treatment becomes safer and simpler. What matters most is open communication among doctors, patients, and families, supported by regular reviews and coordinated care.

Checklist: Is your medicine list safe?

- Do you take five or more regular medicines?
- Has your doctor reviewed them in the past six months?
- Do you use over-the-counter or herbal remedies?
- Have you felt dizzy, drowsy, or exhausted lately?

“If you or your parents take more than five medicines, ask your doctor for a medication review—it may be the most caring check-up you do this year.”

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Can We Get Worldly Wise?

Harsh Goenka elucidates on why a global 'Made in India' brand on the lines of Apple or Prada remains elusive, and how to fix it

By creating global brands, we can move from being the world's back office and factory to being its cultural and consumer beacon.

From Japan, there's Toyota, Sony and Uniqlo. South Korea has Samsung, Hyundai and LG, while China has created Huawei, Xiaomi, TikTok and Shein. From Europe, there's Louis Vuitton, IKEA, BMW and Zara. And from the US, Apple, Uber, Google, Mc-Donald's and Nike. These are not just products or companies, they are cultural ambassadors. They represent their nations' values, aspirations and capabilities. Their brand equity translates into pricing

power, customer loyalty and sustained profitability.

We do have strong names within India — Amul in dairy, Haldiram's in snacks, Titan in watches, and Asian Paints in home interiors. But these are domestic champions, not global household names. There have been attempts: Taj and Oberoi hotels are admired, but remain niche and restricted to luxury travellers.

Despite our size, creativity and global reach, we have not birthed a single brand that commands universal recognition. The reasons are complex.

Miserly about R&D Our R&D spend is 0.66% of GDP compared to 2.7% in China and 3.5% in the US. A global brand requires intellectual property, cutting-edge design and constant innovation. India has historically prioritised cost optimisation over disruptive research. It is no surprise, then, that we are good

manufacturers, but rarely originators of breakthrough products.



Weak B2C branding

Our muslin was legendary, our spices priceless, but were almost always marketed under foreign labels. We have perfected B2B excellence, but faltered at B2C branding. Our greatest global successes — TCS, Infosys and Wipro — are invisible to the end user.

Domesticity

With 1.4 bn consumers, companies have found ample scale. Then why struggle with Europe's exacting standards, or the US' brutal competition, when India's tier-2 and tier-3 cities promise growth? Most Indian companies are content with 20-30% export revenue. Investors also tend to reward steady domestic growth over risky global bets.

Investment - erested Building global brand equity requires decades of investment in design, customer experience and developing identity, investments that yield little in the short run. Our promoters often prefer putting money into another factory over a brand campaign. Coca-Cola spends more on advertising annually than the turnover of some of India's largest FMCG players.

No style statement Our education system

has failed to nurture original design thinking and creative sensibility. Many Indian products of high quality are let down by clumsy packaging, mediocre interfaces and lacklustre design. To be truly global, brands must appeal to universal aesthetics.

Quality gaps While Made in Switzerland evokes precision, and Made in Germany connotes engineering excellence, Made in India does not carry aspirational pull. This perception problem is as much about the global mindset created over years of unreliability as it is about our deficient marketing. To change it, we must deliver products that are exceptional in quality and design, tailored to rigorous international standards and consistently reliable.



Here are some pathways to go global:

Get world-ly Zoho, Freshworks, Razorpay and Pine Labs show that digital- first companies can scale worldwide.

Domestically, homegrown brands in finance, food, retail, 2-wheelers and EVs often outpace MNCs, a strength that can be exported to other emerging markets. Rather than spreading too thin, Indian firms should enter international markets where their value proposition is the strongest. Strategic acquisitions can also provide global reach.

Change the story Global brands don't just sell products, they also sell experiences. Evocative storytelling of an Apple or a Patagonia brand generates immense economic value. Indian companies must shed their utilitarian advertising and underinvesting in branding. Rather, they must become adept at storytelling that connects across cultures.

Hardsell soft power Yoga, ayurveda, cuisine, cinema and spirituality are assets the world associates with India. But we have allowed Western intermediaries to monetise them. Why should an American brand like Lululemon be the global face of yoga?

Go India Inc Japan's erstwhile ministry of international trade and industry (MITI) — reformed and merged with other agencies to form ministry of economy, trade and industry (METI) in 2001 — and South Korea's state support for chaebols, show how policy can create global champions. India should launch a 'Global Indian Brands' initiative, offering fiscal incentives for international expansion, using diplomatic channels to open doors for consumer companies, and funding

'Design in India' programmes to uplift our aesthetic sensibility.

Brand belief Building a global brand is a marathon, not a sprint. It requires sustained commitment, deep continual investment and unyielding faith. Trust is the foundation of any great global brand, and it must be earned and retained consistently.

Creation of global brands is the final frontier of India's economic ascent. It is how we move from being the world's back office and factory to being its cultural and consumer beacon. We already have the ingredients — entrepreneurial zeal, vast domestic market to test ideas, and cultural heritage second to none. What we need now is a synthesis of ambition, vision, patience, storytelling, and the courage to see branding not as an expense but as an investment.

The day an Indian brand sits on the same shelf as Coca-Cola or Samsung, not as an ethnic curiosity but as a global choice, will be the day 'Made in India' truly comes of age.

This article first appeared in the Economic Times on October 2, 2025





The Turn-On, The Turn-Off & Everything In Between

Vickram Sethi on what attracts (and repels) people

Attraction is rarely logical. It's that indefinable pull—part-chemistry, part-charm, part-chance—that makes someone linger in your mind long after they've left the room. What one person finds irresistible might leave another completely cold, and sometimes, even a minor habit can make fascination evaporate in seconds.

Whether you're dating, rekindling an old spark or just curious about what makes people connect, knowing what tends to attract—or repel—can be oddly revealing. Here's a closer look at the big turn-ons and turn-offs that shape modern attraction, drawn from psychology, experience and, frankly, everyday observation.

What Really Turns People On

A turn-on isn't just about physical appeal.

It's the way someone carries themselves, the warmth they exude, the spark in a conversation. It might be a shared laugh, a thoughtful gesture or a confidence that feels steady rather than showy.

1. Confidence (Without the Ego Trip)

There's a fine line between confidence and arrogance, and everyone can spot it. Confidence has an ease about it—it's self-belief without the self-importance.

Turn-on: Someone comfortable in their own skin, not desperate for applause.

2. A Sense of Humour

Few things create connection faster than laughter. A shared sense of humour suggests intelligence, perspective, and the ability to roll with life's chaos.

Turn-on: Someone who can laugh with you, not at you—and doesn't take life too seriously.

3. Cleanliness and Care

It's not glamorous, but it's essential. Fresh

breath, clean nails, and tidy clothes show self-respect—and consideration for others.

Turn-on: The quiet confidence of good grooming.

4. Emotional Intelligence

The ability to read a room, sense when to speak and when to listen and handle emotions with maturity is far sexier than abs or a perfect smile.

Turn-on: Someone who can say, “I understand,” and mean it.

5. Passion and Drive

There’s something magnetic about people who are passionate about what they do—whether that’s work, art, activism or growing the best tomatoes in the neighbourhood.

Turn-on: Energy and purpose, whatever form they take.

6. Kindness and Compassion

Kindness never goes out of fashion. Genuine thoughtfulness—holding the door, remembering details, caring without calculation—signals emotional depth.

Turn-on: Kindness that doesn’t announce itself.

7. Curiosity and Intelligence

Brains matter, but curiosity matters more. An open, questioning mind is endlessly attractive.

Turn-on: Someone who reads, listens and asks “why?” instead of “whatever.”

8. A Warm Smile and Honest Eyes

No words needed. A genuine smile and steady eye contact say: “I’m here, I’m open, I see you.”

Turn-on: That easy spark when someone’s face lights up at the sight of you.

9. Good Conversation

The ability to talk—and listen—is the heartbeat of connection.

Turn-on: A chat that flows, full of laughter, insight and interest.

10. Playfulness

Spontaneity keeps things alive. The best relationships have moments of silliness and surprise.

Turn-on: A spontaneous adventure, a shared joke, an unexpected plan.



And What Puts People Off—Fast Just as attraction can sneak up on you, repulsion can strike like a cold shower. A turn-off is anything that quietly (or not so quietly) kills the vibe—whether it’s poor manners or emotional immaturity.

1. Poor Hygiene

It’s universal. Bad breath, unwashed clothes or general grubbiness are instant deal-breakers.

Turn-off: Forgetting that soap and water are basic social tools.

2. Arrogance

There’s confidence, and then there’s showing off. No one enjoys a walking monologue.

Turn-off: Constant self-congratulation or dismissing others.

3. Dishonesty

Trust is fragile, and deceit—big or small—shatters it.

Turn-off: Saying what you think they want to hear.

4. Lack of Ambition

It’s not about money or success; it’s about momentum. People who’ve stopped being

curious about life are rarely compelling.

Turn-off: No spark, no drive, no “what’s next?”

5. Insecurity and Clinginess

We all have doubts, but constant reassurance-seeking can be exhausting.

Turn-off: Over-texting, jealousy, or emotional neediness disguised as love.

6. Rudeness and Entitlement

Watch how someone treats waiters, drivers, or strangers. That’s who they really are.

Turn-off: Impatience, condescension or casual cruelty.

7. Pessimism

There’s realism—and then there’s gloom. Relentless negativity is draining.

Turn-off: Someone who always finds the cloud in every silver lining.

8. Self-Absorption

If every conversation loops back to them, run.

Turn-off: “Enough about you—let’s talk about me.”

9. Poor Listening

Half-listening while scrolling through your phone is modern rudeness at its worst.

Turn-off: Not paying attention, or pretending to.

10. Controlling Behaviour

Possessiveness is not affection. Control isn’t care.

Turn-off: “I just worry about you” as code for “I don’t trust you.”



It’s All About Compatibility

Here’s the thing: no two people have identical lists. One person’s “too quiet” is another’s “beautifully calm.” What matters is compatibility—shared values, humour, communication and emotional pace. The best connections happen when both people feel seen and safe to be themselves.

Understanding what attracts or repels us isn’t about turning dating into a checklist. It’s about awareness—of yourself and others. Attraction runs on authenticity: the way you move through the world, the energy you bring, and the respect you show.

In the end, it’s not the flash or the facade that draws people in. It’s kindness, confidence, curiosity and that unmistakable sense of being real. Because, truly, the biggest turn-on of all is being entirely, unapologetically yourself.



From Soulmates to Roommates: Rekindling Connection in a Silent Marriage

It's a quiet kind of sadness — to live beside someone you once couldn't imagine living without, writes *Tina Vora*

There was a time you laughed together. Talked late into the night. Shared dreams, stories, and secrets.

Now, the days pass quietly. Conversations are about bills, medicines, or what's for dinner. You share a home, but not always a life. And sometimes, you wonder when that invisible distance crept in.

It's a quiet kind of sadness — to live beside someone you once couldn't imagine living without.

If this feels familiar, you're not alone. Many couples, especially after decades of marriage, find themselves caught in routine. The spark of companionship gives way to comfort, then silence. Yet, love doesn't always disappear — it just hides

under layers of habit, hurt, and unspoken words.

Reconnecting is possible. Not through dramatic change, but through small steps, honesty, and patience.

Acknowledge What's Really Happening
It's easy to say, "This is just how life is now." But behind that acceptance, there may be loneliness neither of you has voiced.

You may notice:

- Conversations feel short and functional
- Affection is rare or awkward
- You spend time together, but not with



each other

- Bringing up feelings leads to irritation or silence

Simply recognising — “We seem to have grown apart” — is the first step towards change.

Don't Mistake Silence for Peace

Many couples avoid emotional conversations because they fear argument or rejection. But silence doesn't always mean peace — sometimes it's just distance in disguise.

When issues stay buried, resentment quietly takes root. The relationship may look calm from the outside, but inside, it can feel lonely.

It's important to remember: wanting to talk, to be heard, to be close again — is not weakness. It's human.

Try to Understand Each Other's Reactions

If your husband or wife becomes defensive, angry, or withdrawn when you raise the topic, it can hurt deeply. But often, that reaction hides something else — fear of failure, shame, or not knowing how to respond.

Many of us grew up in a time when emotions weren't discussed openly. Expressing vulnerability didn't come naturally. So when one person reaches out emotionally, the other might feel exposed, even threatened.

Understanding this doesn't mean accepting hurtful behaviour — but empathy often opens doors that arguments close.

Change How You Start the Conversation

Tone matters more than words. Instead of saying:

“You never talk to me anymore.”

try saying:

“I miss how we used to talk. I miss us.”

Gentle words work better than

accusations. Speak calmly, at a time when neither of you is tired or distracted. Sometimes, all it takes is a softer tone to bring down years of defensiveness.



Small Gestures, Big Difference

Rekindling connection doesn't require grand plans. It starts with small acts of warmth, done consistently:

- Sitting together for morning tea
- Sharing a compliment or a memory
- Watching a favourite show together without distractions
- Placing a hand on the other's shoulder — a silent reassurance
- Asking, “How are you feeling today?” and truly listening

Such gestures may seem ordinary, but they carry quiet magic. Over time, they melt walls that words alone cannot.

Rediscover Shared Moments

Couples often lose connection when they stop doing enjoyable things together. Try to find moments that remind you of the friendship beneath the marriage.

You could:

- Take a walk together
- Cook a meal or try a new recipe
- Visit a place you both love
- Attend a music concert or a local event
- Dust off an old hobby you once enjoyed as a team

Shared laughter and experiences create new memories — and with them, new warmth.

Seek Help, If Needed

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, the distance remains. In such times, talking to a counsellor — even once or twice — can help you see things from a fresh perspective.

If your spouse is hesitant, you can still go alone. It isn't a sign of giving up; it's a way of learning how to express yourself better and rebuild peace at home.

The goal isn't to blame, but to heal.

Remember to Care for Yourself Too

Many people, especially in long marriages, lose themselves while keeping the relationship going. You might have spent years prioritising everyone else — children, family, responsibilities — and forgotten what makes you happy.

Ask yourself:

- What brings me joy now?
- Which friends or interests have I let go of?
- What do I need to feel at peace within myself?

When you nurture yourself, you bring new energy into the relationship. A fulfilled person loves better — and lives better.

Accept What You Can — and What You Cannot

Not every relationship becomes what it once was. Sometimes, the love remains, but in a quieter form — expressed through care, companionship, or shared history.

And sometimes, despite every effort, emotional closeness doesn't return. When that happens, acceptance — not bitterness — is what brings peace.

You deserve warmth, respect, and connection. But it's also possible to find those qualities within yourself, and in the world around you.

Final Thoughts: It's Never Too Late

Feeling like strangers after a lifetime together can be painful — but it's not uncommon, nor is it final.

Many couples rediscover closeness in the later years, once they acknowledge what's missing and take small, sincere steps to change it.

It begins when one person says, "I miss us."

Whether your husband or wife is ready or not, that spark of honesty can begin the healing — of your marriage, or of your heart.

Because you are not just sharing a roof.

You are sharing a life.

And it deserves warmth, kindness, and love — in whatever form it can still grow.



The Willing and The Unwilling

A deeper understanding of the ‘prana’ will go a long way in being comfortable with the concept of death as of life itself, contemplates Nagesh Alai

Smita Sathe, who just turned 80, has been enduring the inexorable cancer, without knowing the cause for her ailment. Right or wrong, her care-giving stoic elder daughter had decided that as a practical approach, given the terminal nature of the disease. Besides, the daughter had decided not to subject her to invasive chemotherapy or radiation therapies, except at the initial stages to stem it. Smita was stable till recently when the ailment aggressed and manifested. The oncologist was complimentary of the daughter for having taken a practical approach to manage her mother’s ailment and keeping her largely pain free and letting her live in relative

peace thus far. The fact that she was not aware of the cause of the ailment had also psychologically helped in avoiding despair and living a modicum of productive life. The recent virulence was a concern and indicative of the terminal stage. Clearly, at her age and stage, Smita cannot endure or sustain any invasive procedures. It will only prolong the agony. Smita’s daughter, a recent retiree with modest resources, was tossed between the high costs of treatment with no definitive positive outcome and letting her mother continue with a bearable living with some palliative care. She was torn and drained emotionally, but remained resolute in not subjecting her mother to any painful interventions, staring as she was at the inevitable end. Her pragmatic belief was that nature will take its course and give her mother the span of life that she can handle.

I recall the case of a relative’s mother, in

her mid-seventies, ailing for some time, having a bad fall in the bathroom leading to a broken thigh bone and requiring surgery. Post operation, she developed some complications and had to be moved to the ICU. Within a few days, the relative's mother expressed a wish to be taken home. In deference to her wishes, she was taken home to be in her comforting surroundings. A day later, she breathed her last, coincidentally on her 75th birthday. Perhaps, a cosmic serendipity or fortuity, whichever way one may see it. She must have had a premonition of her impending final moments and was preparing herself. More importantly, her kin were willing to abide by her willingness to be brought home.

More recently, there was a case of an ex-industry colleague who was in the ICU for over a month and a half, never to get out of it alive. Humans that we all are, driven more by the heart than the brain, the family clearly wished the treatment to continue with nothing but hope to guide them. But then nature can be quite decisive in matters of life and death.

Most would know about a living will which is essentially a formal document executed by a person expressing her/his wish or desire on how her/his illness should be approached or treated when she/he has lost her faculties and/or in no position to take a decision by herself/himself. It is an advance medical directive in a way and a way of ensuring that the expressed preference is followed when one cannot decide. Essentially, it is executed in favour of a trusted and emotionally strong close kith or kin, who will abide by the living will. Akin to the normally understood will which bequeath property and assets to specified heirs, a living will

should be witnessed by two persons and it would be good to have it notarised too, to validate that it has been genuinely executed out of a free will. Important that life is, and given the potential for mischief and misuse, safeguards are sine qua non.



In some countries euthanasia has been legalised, with adequate guard rails, while in most, it is not permitted. Euthanasia is essentially a method of killing someone, under supervision, without pain, who wishes to die when suffering from a disease that cannot be cured. India permits passive euthanasia involving withdrawal of life support under strict SC guidelines (till such time as the parliament enacts a law), legalising the right to die with dignity and allowing living wills. As a safety measure, the approval of the high court and a panel of medical experts is required before withdrawing any life-sustaining treatment of a patient in terminal stage or having extreme permanent incapacitation. It is to be noted that active euthanasia, that is intentionally causing a person's death through a direct act such as administering poison or injecting a lethal injection, is not allowed and is a crime.

Given the tremendous advances in medical sciences which enable curative treatments in many cases, transplants

of various types and the availability of medical aids and equipment for innumerable infirmities and ailments, the possibility of living well and productively has enhanced longevity in general. In this age of techno-medical advances, the applicability of living will and euthanasia should be restricted to the rarest of rare cases and approached judiciously and with circumspection.



The human body, as in the case of any other living being, is nature's engineering marvel par excellence and researches and studies over eons have not yet fully unravelled our body's complexities or what makes it tick or not tick. How does one explain, except in accidents or mishaps or wars or other externalities, why someone dies at 10 or 30 or 50 and why someone lives to 80 or 90 or 100 or more. Take the fine example of Krishen Khanna, a progressive art group founding artist, who recently turned 100 and is having his retrospective at the NGMA. He continues to live his passion and paint with relish.

On the other side, over the eons we have heard of people taking sanyas and voluntarily giving up life when they feel it is time to exit the worldly living. They just stop imbibing any water or any food and get into a meditative trance with the life forces gradually depleting.

All of us have an innate 'prana' or energy which drives our life from birth to death. Everyone's prana is different and distinctive and when one dies or how long does one live is perhaps nature's algorithm which is well-nigh impossible to decode. A friend collapsed recently whilst having his morning cup of tea. Another never woke up in the morning. In my lexicon, by far the best way to go; other than the shock of sudden exit, no one was burdened. A deeper understanding of the 'prana' will go a long way in being comfortable with the concept of death as of life itself. Impractically though, in cases of terminal illnesses, vegetative states and comatose patients, humans tend to be less rational and more emotional in deciding to continue medical interventions and unwittingly prolong the misery of the patients. Many of us don't have the courage of conviction to pull the plug, when it matters the most. We owe it to our loved ones to pull the plug when their suffering is illimitable.



We tend to 'other' death, as we live, unwilling to accept that it may be round the corner for us too. I quite often joke that one may not see me the next day; but then it may be an expression of my subconscious willingness to let go when my time is right, instead of being an unwilling burden on anyone. Live easy, leave easy, let be, I would say!



Not Displacement but Renewal

How redevelopment gives communities a second chance, writes *Prabhakar Mundkur*

When I first began contemplating the redevelopment of our 52-year-old society, I was well aware of the challenges. About 70% of our members were senior citizens, many over the age of 70. I knew this would be the toughest group to convince on why we need redevelopment. Also they would be the most inconvenienced. Fortunately, being in my seventies myself, I could truly empathise with their hesitation and their deep attachment to the place we had all called home for so long.

But what stared me in the face was an undeniable truth; our old building was in a constant state of disrepair. Leaking walls and terraces, shifting tiles that created uneven floors I often stumbled on, and 50-year-old lifts that broke down regularly.

Like most buildings of that vintage, we had reached a stage where repairs were merely cosmetic - temporary fixes for much deeper problems.

The Hidden Problems Beneath the Surface While some external issues can be managed with repairs, the real trouble lies inside the structure — in the places we can't easily see or reach.

- Galvanised Iron (GI) pipes, used in the 1970s for their supposed durability, have long since corroded. These pipes, embedded in walls and slabs, rust from the inside, reducing water flow and discolouring the water. Replacing them means breaking through walls — an expensive and messy affair.
- Reinforced concrete (RCC) deterioration is another serious concern. Moisture seeps through cracks and corrodes the steel reinforcement bars. Once corrosion begins, it expands, cracks the concrete further,

and weakens the structure. You can patch cracks, but you can't reverse corrosion.

- Column and beam fatigue sets in after decades of load stress, heat, and moisture, making the concrete brittle.
- Foundation settlement can also occur difficult and prohibitively expensive to correct. At least one of our buildings seemed to be sinking into the soil purely from visual markers.

Many tend to over-rely on structural audits. But no structural engineer is really willing to stick his neck out. At the most he will give you the mandatory C3 rating which means the building is in need of repair but there is no need to evacuate. But if you ask him to give you a formal report saying your building is good for another 20 years, he will refuse because he wouldn't like to put his professional reputation at risk. Any engineer's prime concern would be that should anything untoward happen to the building during the 'Certified to be Safe Period' he would be held guilty of 'professional misconduct' and be liable to be prosecuted. At the most he may give you an informal 'the building should last another ten years' verbally but he will never put it down in writing. This is no consolation for society members. Our society faced a tough choice: spend enormous sums on repairs that might not last a decade, or rebuild and secure the next 50 years. For most members, repairs of that magnitude were simply unaffordable.

When Property Value Starts to Fall
Another reality that could not be ignored was the falling value of our flats. A home that once sold for ₹3.5 crore a decade ago was now fetching barely ₹2.8–3 crore. Flats that were earlier being rented at Rs 80,000 a month had now dropped to

Rs 60,000 per month. This is inevitable — as a building ages, both its rent and resale value decline rapidly over time..

In effect, all our members were sitting on depreciating assets. Redevelopment was not just about better living it was also about protecting the economic value of our homes, which for most of us represented a lifetime's savings.



The Senior Citizens' Dilemma

Much has been written about the displacement of senior citizens during redevelopment. My friend Nagesh Alai made that point eloquently in last month's issue of Seniors Today. And yes, it's true. Moving house as you grow older is never easy.

But it's also important to recognize that not all seniors are equally affected.

There are two broad groups:

- Parents who live with their children or have them in the same city. They can absorb the transition better, thanks to family support.
- And parents like me, whose children live overseas. For us, moving homes and managing independently for 4–5 years is harder — but it is not impossible.

Technology has softened this blow immensely. My wife initially missed her favourite grocer in Prabhadevi but soon, Instamart, Blinkit, Amazon Fresh, and

others filled the gap. My old Prabhadevi chemist still sends my medicines via WeFast to Parel where I now live and he absorbs the cost. In time, you learn to rebuild your routines just like you will eventually rebuild your home.

Any change is difficult because it forces us to step out of the familiar and into the unknown. What we know, our routines, habits, and environment gives us comfort and control, even when they're imperfect. Change disrupts that balance. It challenges our sense of stability, exposes uncertainties, and demands that we adapt often before we feel ready. Whether it's a new way of living, working, or thinking, every change involves a small letting go of what was, and that process can feel unsettling. Yet, it is through this discomfort that growth, renewal, and progress quietly take root.



The Upside of Redevelopment

Now let's look at what redevelopment truly offers, the renewal it brings.

Firstly, your apartment's value is likely to double or triple once the building is redeveloped. You're not just rebuilding a home; you're leaving your children a stronger, more valuable legacy, an asset they'll be proud to own, not an old flat with damp walls and fading plaster which they are not really interested in and are likely to see as a burden.



Then comes the transformation in lifestyle. Modern buildings come with amenities we never imagined ; swimming pools, gyms, jogging tracks, gardens, community halls, security systems, and proper parking.

If having an oven, a dryer, or a dishwasher once seemed like a distant dream, redevelopment makes it all possible along with a home that's spacious, safe, and future-ready.

The hardship allowance and the rent which typically is large enough for you to live in the same area but in another flat while your new building is constructed, are mitigating factors that help you resettle.

In the End, Renewal Is Not Loss

Redevelopment is not about erasing the past. It's about carrying it forward, in a stronger form. It's about ensuring that our memories have a safe, beautiful space to live in, and that our community continues to thrive, not just survive.

Old buildings, like old families, have stories in their walls. Redevelopment doesn't destroy those stories. It simply gives them new walls to live in.

Many people ask me about the risk involved in redevelopment. My reply to them is that there is a risk involved in everything we do, including crossing the road!

A woman with long, wavy grey hair is sitting at a wooden table outdoors, painting on a canvas mounted on a wooden easel. She is wearing a light-colored sleeveless top and a grey cardigan. She is holding a paintbrush and looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a lush green garden with purple flowers.

Watercolour Art Therapy

Dr Monika M Dass writes on finding magic in letting go, by using watercolor to help one cope with anxiety

One of my favourite things about watercolor is the lack of control! When painting, it is wonderful to see how the colours mix and blend in ways one cannot control – this is where the magic happens. So why, in life, does surrendering control feel so overwhelming? Why can't we see the magic, or at least be open to the possibility of it?

In art, there is room for experimentation, for unexpected beauty to emerge from the chaos. In life, where our sense of security or identity might be on the line, it can feel riskier to let go. We are wired to crave stability, especially when anxiety is present - it is the brain's way of trying to protect us from what it perceives as threats.

Yet, just like in watercolor, the magic in life often appears when we loosen our grip and allow things to unfold. Maybe the challenge is learning to treat life more like art, trusting that even if things do not go exactly as planned, there is beauty in the unexpected. Starting with small steps, perhaps we can slowly open up to that same wonder in life, giving ourselves space to experience the magic - even if it looks different than we imagined.

Water-colour art therapy uses the fluid, intuitive nature of water-colour painting for stress relief, emotional expression, and relaxation, with benefits including reduced anxiety, enhanced mindfulness, and a sense of accomplishment. It involves creating art without the pressure of perfection, focusing on the process of colour blending, shape creation, and physical sensations like tension in the body. This practice helps in self-discovery and can be a way to release emotions and find calm.



Key aspects of Watercolour Art Therapy:

1. Stress and anxiety reduction:

The rhythmic and flowing motions of watercolour painting can induce a meditative state, which lowers stress hormones and helps shift focus away from worries.

2. Mindfulness and relaxation: Focusing on the present moment through color, shape, and movement helps ground you in the here and now. The act of painting can be soothing, and intentionally pausing to stretch or breathe can help release physical tension held in the body.

3. Emotional release and self-expression:

The process allows for the subconscious to guide the creative process. Colours and shapes can emerge based on your inner state, providing a non-verbal way to express and process emotions.

4. Letting go of control: Water-colour is particularly effective for learning to let go of the need for perfection. The process itself, with its blending and unpredictable nature, encourages accepting imperfections and finding beauty in the unexpected.

5. Sense of accomplishment: Completing any painting, no matter how simple, can provide a boost in self-esteem and a sense of satisfaction, which can reduce feelings of inadequacy that often accompany stress and anxiety.

How to get started

1. Set the mood: Create a comfortable space for yourself, free from distractions and the pressure of a final outcome.

2. Focus on the process, not the product: Don't worry about creating a masterpiece. Allow yourself to simply play with colours and water.

3. Intuitive creation: Let your hand choose the colours and shapes. You can even close your eyes to let the process be guided by your intuition.

4. Mindful movement: Pay attention to your body. Notice any tension and take breaks to stretch or breathe deeply.

5. Explore techniques: Experiment with techniques like wet-on-wet painting to see how the colours blend and spread on their own. You can also try adding other elements like salt to create unique textures.

6. Reflect (if you choose): After painting, you can reflect on the finished piece to see what it might reveal about your current state of mind.

Making art feels like a safe space to practice letting go, to take risks without the pressure of control. This is where so much joy in the process comes from – there is no perfection to chase, just the freedom to create.

What I love about water-colour is that a lot of happy accidents occur! Water-colour is life!!





Evergreen Club Events Through The Week

seniors EVERGREEN CLUB

AAO KHELEN

(Host) Maninder Aheja

@seniorstoday.in | @evergreenclubdelhi

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ANTAKSHARI

(Host) Archhanda Athawale

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ARTS & CRAFTS

(Host) Sunita Verma

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SUNHERA SAFAR

WITH DEAL DHAMAKA

(Host) Firoz Shaikh

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DECODING THE MYSTERIES OF ANCIENT WORLD

(Host) Archhanda Athawale

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FINE TUNE YOUR SINGING SKILLS

(Host) Mohan Krishnan

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FUN TAKSHARI

(Host) Ravi Bala




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MEHFIL - E - GHAZAL

(Host) Archanaa Athawale




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POETRY & PROSE

(Host) Dr. Sajni Vaidya




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READ & REVEAL

(Host) Archanaa Athawale




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SPIN THE WHEEL

(Host) Firoz Shaikh




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TAMBOLA

(Host) Firoz Shaikh




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THE VOCAL CRAFT

(Host) Firoz Shaikh




seniors 

WHAT'S COOKING

(Host) Archanaa Athawale




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YOGA & MEDITATION

(Host) Poonam Arora





Mesmerising Bhutan

All pictures by Malti Gaekwad

Lush green meadows, pine covered mountains and gushing rivers topped with fluffy white clouds and a deep blue sky. All of it dotted with white painted monasteries, makes for an ideal holiday for seniors, writes Malti Gaekwad

Bhutan also known as the Dragon Kingdom is purely Buddhist Himalayan region, with unsurpassed scenic beauty, majestic mountains and a vibrant culture. The Kingdom is still regarded as one of the last Shangri-La and is a living heritage of Buddhism. Sandwiched between India, Nepal and Tibet region of China, Bhutan has majestic Dzongs, temples and houses with architecture found no where else in the world.

Lush green meadows, pine covered mountains and gushing rivers topped with fluffy white clouds and a deep blue

sky. All of it dotted with white painted monasteries, sum up for a breath-taking view of the countryside.

Bhutan is the ideal place for retired seniors or super seniors to go and have a relaxed holiday. It has the old world charm deeply rooted in Buddhist culture and there are modern hotels and good roads. There is only one airport in Bhutan, it is at Paro. Even that is so small within a valley that it is believed only expert pilots are appointed to fly to Paro as it is really a precision landing!

Bhutan is full of monasteries and Dzongs. Most Dzongs are fortified and well situated to function as defence fortresses. Some are high up on the mountains or on a hilltop within a valley or surrounded by rivers. If a Dzong is built on the side of a valley a smaller Dzong or watch tower is built directly uphill with the purpose of keeping an eye on any attackers or invaders. The

one at Punakha is a must see. The Punakha Dzong was built in 1637 it is called the Palace of Great Happiness or Bliss. It is the second oldest and the second largest Dzong and one of its most majestic with 45 structures within. The Monastery houses relics for which many wars were also fought. It is located at the confluence of the Pho Chhu (father) and Mo Chhu (mother) rivers in Wangdue Valley. Later it becomes Puna Tsang Chu. The monastery itself is surrounded by flowering trees, which make for a pleasant site during spring. The massive architecture with towering exterior walls surrounding a complex of courtyard includes temples, monk's accommodation and administrative offices. To visit one has to be prepared to climb up and down steep staircases without any railing which can be a daunting task.



Entrance to punakha monastery

The monasteries are probably the only things apart from their culture that are centuries old or antique. Since 1974 many new things have been built and created by the Royal family, majorly by their fourth King H H Jigme Singye Wangchuck. Currently, the fifth king is ruling and he has three children. They have a custom where the ruling King retires from public life after attaining the age of 60 to make way and guide his heir. The Bhutanese people have great respect for their monarchy. Public places and gardens are adorned by large pictures of the King and his family.



Royal Family

One of the places we visited is Buddha Point, also known as Kuensel Phodrang. On a raised high platform is built a gigantic golden statue of a sitting Sakiya Muni, high up on the mountainside overlooking the town of Thimpu. It is called the 'Great Buddha Dordenma'. It was built to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 4th king. The statue houses over 100,000 smaller one gilded in bronze. The main statue is at 177 feet. It is one of the largest Buddha stupas in the world. There are other beautiful and delicately designed statues, which are placed all around the massive platform.



Fine figures

Two very interesting places we visited in Thimphu were The School of Art and Craft and a touristy place called 'Simply Bhutan'. The school was quite impressive. While classes were going on, we could peep in. Interestingly, the students were being given vocational training in various traditional crafts, which today have great commercial demand.



Art craft

The second one, Simply Bhutan had an entrance fee of Nu.1000/- . Here we were first given a swig of local wine and told a bit about Bhutan's history. Then we were shown how they built their houses. Worth a mention here - they have fixed designs and formats and rules for all construction. No one breaks these rules. The exteriors of all buildings are similar to each other and highly decorated with traditional motifs and sacred symbols. There was a small café, where guests were treated to taste some local food. While guests savour these delicacies, folk music is playing and small groups perform various dances. Guests are

encouraged to join, learn and enjoy.

Outside in the compound was the archery section. Archery is Bhutan's National Sport so they give it a lot of importance. Here, a guest is given a chance to try their aim. Most people are unable to make a mark... however, if you do, the attendants, come centre stage and break into an impromptu dance....and the successful guest archer is expected to join the celebration. This was good fun!



Dance performance

From Thimpu, we travelled to Punakha. Dochula Pass, the highest point, is on the way. It is a long drive on winding roads. Situated at the height of 3080 mts, it gives a fascinating view of the snow-capped mountains on a clear day. A small hill invites you to go around the 108 sacred chortens. These are known as the Druk Wangyal Chortens. Commissioned by the Queen Mother and built in the memory of Bhutanese soldiers who were killed during the Military operation in 2003. The place offers a blend of natural beauty, historical significance and spiritual tranquillity.

Two things the Bhutanese take great pride in, are the Black Neck Crane Conservation Centre and the Takin Park. Black Neck Cranes are migratory birds which come to Bhutan's wetlands in the Phobjikha Valley in an area call Gangtey. Two black neck cranes were rescued by the locals and



View from dochula

are now housed in the aviary. At the Centre you can know more about the birds as well as see a short informative film.

To see a rare animal, go to The Royal Takin Park. Established in 1974, it serves as a sanctuary for Takins. Takin is Bhutan's national animal. Locally known as Drong Gimtse. Popular in Bhutanese myths and folklore it is believed to have been miraculously created by a Lama long ago, around 15th century, by fixing the head of a goat to the body of a cow giving it a unique appearance. This Park has elevated walkways, so visitors can observe the Takins from above, while the animals move around grazing undisturbed. They are important prey for tigers and the Asiatic wild dogs.



Takin family

During our last leg we went around the picturesque town of Paro. Most adventurous people head to the Tiger's Nest Monastery which is an arduous climb of 3 hours, instead we went to see

the National Museum - Ta Dong, another Monastery - Rinpung Dzong and do some shopping. The Museum overlooks the Dzong and was a crucial watch tower at one time. Now it's a seven storey circular museum...four of them are underground. The circular corridors with countless windows provide light, ventilation and all round view. The inner portion houses interesting antiques and ancient priceless items and religious sculptures.



National museum



Common site



Prayer wheels

Cheese Salads for Every Mood



Each cheese tells a story that spans centuries and continents, writes *Udai Mathur*

From the mildest mozzarella to the boldest blue, cheese has a magical way of transforming a simple salad into something elegant and memorable. Whether it's the creamy burrata melting into ripe tomatoes, or a crumbly chèvre bringing zing to your greens, each cheese tells a story that spans centuries and continents.

Here's a curated collection of six cheese-based salads — light, fresh, and bursting with character — that showcase the world's most beloved curds in all their glory.

Cherry Mozzarella – Caprese Salad

Mozzarella traces its roots to southern Italy, traditionally made from water buffalo milk. The cherry-sized version, bocconcini or ciliegine, brings all the creamy freshness of classic mozzarella in a bite-sized form.



It became a global favourite for its delicate texture and mild, milky taste — perfect for the timeless Caprese salad, a tribute to the colours of the Italian flag.

How to use cheese:

Cherry mozzarella balls are soft and mild — perfect to add a creamy texture to Caprese salad.

Ingredients:

- Cherry mozzarella balls – 150 g
- Ripe cherry tomatoes – 200 g
- Fresh basil leaves – 10–12 leaves

- Extra virgin olive oil – 2–3 tbsp
- Balsamic glaze – 1–2 tbsp
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper – to taste

Process:

Wash cherry tomatoes and basil leaves. Cut cherry tomatoes in half. Drain mozzarella balls.

In a bowl or platter, arrange tomatoes, mozzarella balls, and basil leaves alternately.

Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic glaze. Season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately as a fresh appetiser.

Burrata – Tomato Basil Salad



Burrata, meaning “battered” in Italian, was first crafted in Puglia in the early 20th century as a clever way to use leftover mozzarella scraps. Its outer shell of mozzarella encases a luscious interior of cream and curds, creating a luxurious contrast of textures. Today, it’s prized worldwide as the jewel of Italian fresh cheeses.

How to use:

Burrata is rich and creamy. Use it as a centrepiece, letting its soft texture mix with the tomatoes and dressing.

Ingredients:

- Burrata cheese – 1 ball (about 125 g)
- Heirloom or ripe tomatoes – 3–4 medium
- Fresh basil leaves – handful
- Extra virgin olive oil – 2 tbsp

- Balsamic reduction – 1 tbsp
- Salt & pepper – to taste

Process:

Slice tomatoes into thick rounds. Arrange tomato slices on a plate. Place burrata in the centre. Scatter basil leaves on top. Drizzle olive oil and balsamic reduction over.

Season with salt and pepper. Tear burrata to let cream blend with tomatoes before eating.

Medallion – Goat Milk Feta – Watermelon Feta Salad



Feta, Greece’s iconic cheese, dates back over 6,000 years and was once stored in wooden barrels for months to develop its sharp, briny flavour. The goat’s milk variation, such as these tangy medallions, is milder and creamier than its sheep’s milk cousin – an ideal foil for juicy, sweet watermelon in a refreshing summer salad.

How to use:

Medallion goat feta adds tangy creaminess to balance sweet watermelon.

Ingredients:

- Goat milk feta medallions – 100 g
- Watermelon – 2 cups cubed
- Fresh mint leaves – handful
- Arugula or baby spinach – 2 cups
- Extra virgin olive oil – 1–2 tbsp
- Lemon juice – 1 tbsp
- Salt & pepper – to taste

Process:

Cube watermelon and feta medallions.
 Arrange arugula or spinach on a plate.
 Add watermelon and feta cubes on top.
 Scatter mint leaves.
 Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice.
 Lightly season with salt and pepper.

**Chèvre – Plain Goat Cheese – Goat
 Cheese Green Salad**


Chèvre (pronounced shev) simply means “goat” in French, but it also refers to France’s long tradition of crafting delicate, tangy cheeses from goat’s milk. Soft and spreadable when young, it becomes more complex and crumbly as it ages. Its bright acidity makes it a natural match for crisp greens and nuts.

How to use:

Crumble chèvre for a tangy flavour and creamy texture throughout the salad.

Ingredients:

- Plain goat cheese (chèvre) – 100 g
- Mixed greens – 3 cups
- Cucumber – 1 sliced
- Cherry tomatoes – 1 cup halved
- Red onion – thin slices
- Walnuts – ¼ cup toasted
- Extra virgin olive oil – 2 tbsp
- Lemon juice or balsamic vinegar – 1 tbsp
- Salt & pepper – to taste

Process:

Wash greens and vegetables.
 Toss greens, cucumber, tomatoes, and red onion in a bowl.
 Crumble chèvre over salad.
 Add walnuts.
 Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice/balsamic vinegar.
 Season with salt and pepper.
 Serve fresh.

Halloumi – Mediterranean Salad


Originating in Cyprus, halloumi is a semi-hard cheese celebrated for its high melting point — meaning it can be grilled or fried without losing its shape. Historically made from a mix of goat’s and sheep’s milk, it has been a Mediterranean staple for centuries. Its squeaky bite and savoury flavour pair beautifully with bright, fresh vegetables.

How to use:

Halloumi is best grilled or pan-fried until golden, adding texture and flavour.

Ingredients:

- Halloumi cheese – 200 g
- Mixed salad greens – 3 cups
- Cherry tomatoes – 1 cup halved
- Cucumber – 1 sliced
- Kalamata olives – ½ cup
- Red onion – thin slices
- Extra virgin olive oil – 2 tbsp
- Lemon juice – 1 tbsp

- Oregano – pinch
- Salt & pepper – to taste

Process:

Slice halloumi into 1 cm thick pieces.
 Grill or pan-fry until golden.
 Arrange greens, tomatoes, cucumber, olives, and onion on a plate.
 Place halloumi slices on top.
 Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice.
 Sprinkle oregano, salt, and pepper.
 Serve warm or at room temperature.

Nilah – Blue Cheese – Pear & Walnut Blue Cheese Salad



Blue cheese owes its striking veins to the noble *Penicillium* mould, a discovery said to have originated by accident in the caves of Roquefort, France. Over centuries, this style evolved into countless regional varieties — from Stilton to Gorgonzola. Nilah, a modern Indian expression of this tradition, brings the same creamy texture

and assertive tang, balanced perfectly with fruit and nuts.

How to use:

Crumble blue cheese to give a bold tangy flavour that pairs beautifully with sweet pears and crunchy walnuts.

Ingredients:

- Nilah blue cheese – 100 g
- Ripe pears – 2 sliced
- Mixed greens – 3 cups
- Walnuts – ½ cup toasted
- Honey – 1 tbsp
- Extra virgin olive oil – 2 tbsp
- Balsamic vinegar – 1 tbsp
- Salt & pepper – to taste

Process:

Wash greens and arrange on a platter.
 Add pear slices and walnuts.
 Crumble blue cheese over salad.
 Drizzle honey, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar.
 Season with salt and pepper.
 Serve immediately.

From the cool freshness of mozzarella to the smoky warmth of grilled halloumi, and the bold, complex depth of blue, each of these salads offers a glimpse into the world’s diverse cheese traditions. Simple to prepare yet sophisticated in flavour, they’re proof that with the right cheese, even a humble salad can feel like a celebration.



CIRCUS

10 Unforgettable TV Characters

Deepa Gahlot revisits popular characters from TV shows of the past

The passing of Satish Shah recently, reminded people of the glory days of Doordarshan, and the sheer variety of shows that were telecast. They were allotted in 13-episode parcels, and still, some of the shows and their popular characters have remained in memory, often nudged by YouTube, where a few of the shows could be found for those who go looking. There were the ensembles of Hum Log, Buniyaad, Dekh Bhai Dekh, Nukkad, Circus and the epics, and then there were shows that were led by a character that became a TV icon, before the glamour of satellite television and daily programming, or the binge watching of OTT shows took over.

A pick of 10 Unforgettable TV characters:

Rajni (1985):

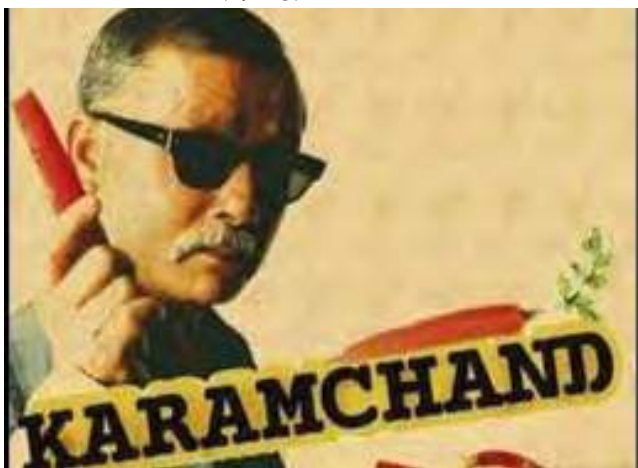


Priya Tendulkar's strident tone would have been meme-worthy today

Basu Chatterjee's sitcom, inspired by Here's Lucy took on a life of its own, when instead of the ditzy housewife his Rajni became a neighbourhood crusader, who fought the bureaucratic incompetence as well as the small injustices inflicted by postmen, telephone wiremen, electricians,

recalcitrant cabbies, noise polluters. Played by Priya Tendulkar, her slightly strident tone as she berated offenders would have been meme-worthy today. Back then, it was imitated, parodied and picked by advertisers to sell products – like the ‘Surf ki kharidari mein hi samajdari hai’ commercial. It ran for just 26 episodes, but created an indelible impact.

Karamchand (1985):



“Sir, you are a genius”

Pankaj Parashar directed Pankaj Kapur in one of India’s first detective series, in which the carrot-munching lead, helped the cops solve complicated cases with ease. He was accompanied by his starry-eyed assistant, Kitty (Sushmita Mukherjee), who would adoringly gush, “Sir you are a genius” when the boss cracked a case, to which his unvarying response was “Shut up, Kitty.” The first season ran on Doordarshan, but its enduring popularity prompted Sony Entertainment Television to commission a second season, in which Kapur reprised the role, while Kitty was played by Sucheta Khanna. Karamchand, written by Sudhir Mishra inspired by the American series Columbo, was so popular that the character’s name sold carrot halwa and dark glasses like the one he wore in the show.

Malgudi Days (1986):



Young Swami is a memorable hero

Master Manjunath played Swami in the delightful adaptation of RK Narayan’s stories, based in the fictional town of Malgudi. Directed by Kannada actor and director Shankar Nag, the series had music composed by L.Vaidyanathan and had sketches by the writer’s brother, the great cartoonist RK Laxman. The series was revived in 2006 with 15 new episodes directed by Kavitha Lankesh, but the original still retains its charm and young Swami is a memorable hero.

Wagle Ki Duniya (1988):



Wagle, the relatable common man

The sitcom, directed by Kundan Shah was based on the ‘common man’ created by famous cartoonist R.K. Laxman, who also narrated it. Anjan Shrivastav played an ordinary middle-class man, and Bharati Achrekar played his wife, as they struggled through the normal life of ordinary folk, laced with gentle humour. Audiences

found the show so relatable, that a sequel series *Wagle Ki Nayi Duniya* was aired on Star Plus in 1999. *Wagle Ki Duniya*—*Nayi Peedhi, Naye Kisse*, a sequel started airing on Sony SAB in 2021 focussing on the family’s younger son Rajesh Wagle, his family and his neighbors. Both Anjan Srivastav and Bharti Achrekar reprised their roles.

Mungerilal Ke Haseen Sapne (1989):



Mungerilal, the tragic-comic dreamer

Prakash Jha directed this show, based on the famous fictional character Walter Mitty created by James Thurber. Mungerilal, played by Raghubir Yadav, is a mousy man bullied in real life by his wife, boss and father-in-law, but in his rich imaginary existence, he puts them all in his place. The incorrigible day dreamer was a tragi-comic character, but turned out to be hugely popular, with the actor still being identified by that role.

Fauji (1989):



Fauji gave India SRK

Just 13 episodes of 24 minutes each, directed by Colonel Raj Kumar Kapoor, and gave India Shah Rukh Khan. He played Abhimany Rai, a commando in training at an army camp. He wasn’t supposed to be the lead, but as Kapoor said later, the camera “loved him so much” that they had to change the script to move him up from second lead. The series followed a new set of recruits their troubles during the tough training, their pranks and the punishments they get from their officers.

Byomkesh Bakshi (1993-1997):



Simple, tasteful, entertaining

Basu Chatterjee directed this series based on the fictional detective created by Bengali writer Sharadindu Bandopadhyay. The Sherlock Holmes-like character, who calls himself a truth seeker, solves cases with his powers of observation and unerring sense of justice. He is accompanied by his Watson like friend, Ajit Kumar Banerjee (KK Raina). Simple, tasteful and entertaining, the acclaimed show was re-telecast on DD National in 2020 during the lockdown.

Shanti (1994):

Billed as the first daily soap on DD, the show directed by Adi Pocha, introduced Mandira Bedi as the titular character. The high-powered family drama. *Shanti* poses as a journalist to write the biographies of



Mandira Bedi is still identified as Shanti

two rich men, whose lives and families have a lot of secrets. She is actually in search of her own biological father, who is one of the two men. DD shows were not meant to be scandalous, but this one broke the mould and opened the doors for other complicated soap operas, and Mandira Bedi is still identified as Shanti.

Chandrakanta (1994):



Irfan Khan's performance as a shape-shifting 'aiyar' was unforgettable

Based on the 1888 fantasy novel by Devaki Nandan Khatri, this series, directed by Nirja Guleri, was once the most popular show on DD. The costume drama full of romance, sorcery, espionage and grand battles, had at its centre the beautiful Princess Chandrakanta played by Shikha Swaroop. She is part of a complicated plot

of romantic rivalry, warring princes and wily courtiers. Reruns of the show also aired on Star Plus and Sony Entertainment Television. It is also remembered now, for Irfan Khan's performance as a shape-shifting 'aiyar' (spy).

Shaktimaan (1997-2006):



So loved by kids

By today's sophisticated standards, DD's superhero series, starring Mukesh Khanna looks gauche, but the long-running series was so loved by kids, that warnings had to be issued for them to refrain from imitating the stunts. Created by Khanna and directed by Dinkar Jani, the show, inspired by Superman, had the nerdy, buck-toothed Gangadhar Shastri, a photographer for Aaj Ki Awaaz, acquires superpowers through meditation and the five elements infused into him by mystical forces. In his superhero costume, he fights evil and the villain Tamraj Kilvish (Surendra Pal). There were animated spinoffs and even a film based on the character.



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