



THE INDIAN ACHIEVER'S CLUB



*she* **UNSTOPPABLE**



*"I don't know when I can see my baby again"*

Dr Nivedita Smit Solanki



*"Our patients always come first"*

Dr Vaishali Joshi

FROM MAYOR  
TO MOTHER OF  
MAXIMUM CITY

**A  
MOTHER'S  
TOUCH**

Kishori Pednekar  
Mumbai Mayor





There are difficult times. With the world rapidly changing around us, it's easy to lose sight of what once was, in anticipation of the uncertain road that lies ahead. At times like these, it becomes even more important to cherish the little things. To pause, every once in a while, and celebrate how far we've come. To give ourselves time to recoup our strength so we can face anew the lengths we have yet to go. This special issue of Unstoppable She is an ode to the indomitable human spirit. It celebrates resilience, the glimmer of silver that runs along every dark cloud. It speaks of great courage and great sacrifice. Of a mother's compassion and a doctor's devotion. Of ways in which we can make sense of the chaos around us.

We hope this Mother's Day special issue will inspire and educate. That you will find in its pages comfort in the familiar and encouragement to reimagine the new normal that has been imposed on us. Above all, we hope you will pause a while to reflect with us ways in which you can make best use of this all time that we did not ask for but were given anyway.

Onward, forward.

ANINDITA PAUL

EDITOR

UNSTOPPABLE  
*she*



**CONCEPT**  
HARSH VAIDYA  
*President*  
The Indian Achievers club

**DESIGN / GRAPHICS**  
nutsboldcreative.com



## Mother to one, mother to all

KISHORI PEDNEKAR  
MUMBAI MAYOR



# Call Of Duty

Around the world, healthcare workers are being acknowledged for their efforts as frontline warriors in the battle to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Their hours are long, the equipment limited and the challenges many – and yet, these masked heroes relentlessly work, often risking their personal safety and giving up all creature comforts. Their only motto is to serve, they say, pointing to the Hippocratic Oath that binds them irrevocably to ascertaining the wellbeing of their patients.

On Mother's Day, we speak to three such women about what it means to be a beacon of hope against COVID-19, during these uncertain and brutal times.

Serving others – whether as a healthcare worker or as a public servant – has always been my first passion. Ever since I was a little girl, I would do whatever I could to help those in need. After receiving training as a nurse, I worked at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust until my appointment as a Nagar Sevak in 2001. As the situation continued to become grave in Mumbai, as the First Citizen of the city, I knew I could no longer work from the side-lines. I put on my uniform and reported for duty to BYL Nair Hospital. However, at 58, I was older than the permitted government-mandated upper age limit for healthcare professionals assigned to COVID-19 cases. However, the Dean asked me to visit the hospital anyway, so that I could motivate and inspire the doctors and nurses who are working tirelessly in these difficult times.

I am currently dividing my time between the various hospitals treating COVID-19 patients, where I interact with the nurses and other staff, and understand and resolve their concerns. I take time to especially encourage the second and third-year nursing students working in these hospitals. I am very grateful for the support extended by the citizens; our collective efforts have ensured that the doubling rate is slower now. But there is still much more we can do.

On Mother's Day, I urge every mother in the city to extend the same care and concern that she would shower on her own family, to others in need. As a mother and a grandmother, I believe it is our duty to come together as one and support each other in the fight against this deadly disease – from taking the necessary precautions so that we do not unnecessarily put ourselves and those we love at risk, to helping the less fortunate in any way we can. Together, we shall prevail. *she*





## If we don't, who will?

DR NIVEDITA SMIT SOLANKI,  
MD ANAESTHESIA,  
NEW CIVIL HOSPITAL, SURAT



I work in the ICU at a COVID-19 hospital in Surat, while my husband is working as a gynaecologist in Ahmedabad. Our eight-month-old son lives with his grandparents in Bharuch. Working as a doctor during an ongoing pandemic is taxing in many ways – I must work 12-hour shifts wearing personal protective equipment, which is hot and very uncomfortable, and often with very little sleep. However, I know that more than ever before, I as a doctor cannot deny my duty. At work, I am in close contact with patients who have tested positive as well as those who come from Red Zones (COVID-19 hotspots).

The last time I saw my son in person was two months ago. The only contact my husband and I have with him is video calls. Yesterday, while travelling by car to work, I was thinking about when I might see my son and touch him again.

The public sentiment about doctors isn't always healthy or supportive – there has been a lot of violence and abuse meted out to medical professionals. Today, even when I call someone for an appointment, they ask me about how safe it is to come to the hospital. I have been living in a paying guest accommodation close to the hospital. The other residents of our society are uncomfortable about my working at a COVID-19 facility.

Yes, it is a challenging time. But I must cast these thoughts aside and stay committed to my duty as a doctor. Because, if we don't, who will? *she*

## For us, the patient always comes first

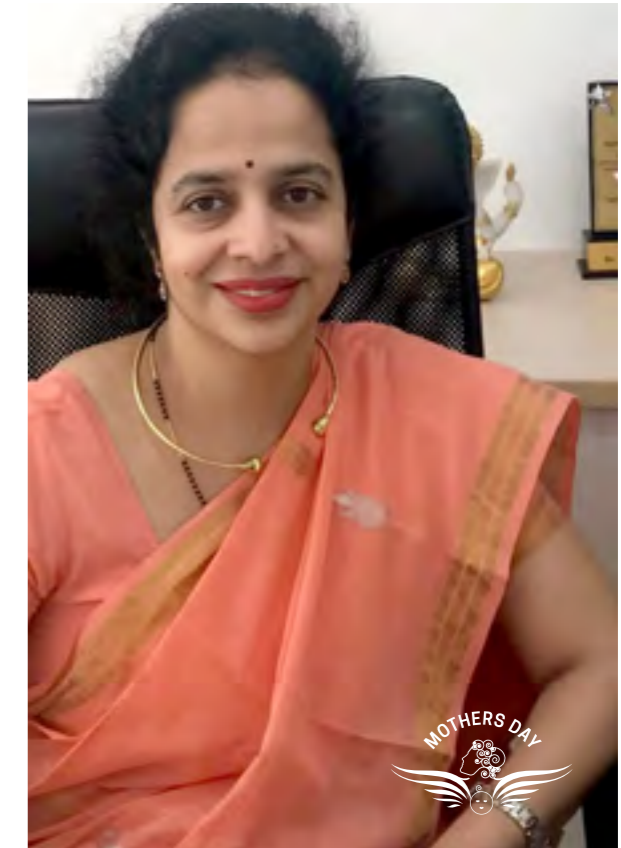
DR VAISHALI JOSHI,  
SENIOR OBSTETRICIAN AND GYNAECOLOGIST,  
KOKILABEN HOSPITAL, MUMBAI

Now, more than ever, doctors are honouring the Hippocratic Oath to truly help patients often at the cost of their own wellbeing. For us, what matters the most at this time is how we can perform our duty to the best of our abilities without inadvertently exposing other patients and our families to the risk of infection.

My husband and I are both doctors. Recently, one of the residents in our building tested positive while we were both tending to cases at the hospital. As fate would have it, one of my patients went into labour as our building was getting sealed. My son was alone at home and by noon, he was repeatedly trying to call me to make sense of the situation. He was worried if he would have to spend the next fortnight by himself. I could only call him back after I had tended to the delivery.

Even that day, before I left for home, I made alternative arrangements for my patients who were due for delivery over the next few days. I voluntarily self-quarantined for a week, during which period I continued to work via tele-consultations.

Each time I leave home to visit the hospital, I do worry about the possible impact on my family. My son recently asked me if there was a chance that I was an asymptomatic carrier. However, as doctors, we understand the importance of taking responsibility for our wellbeing and going the extra mile to minimise risk, both for our patients and our family members.



I often say that babies don't come by appointment – only recently, I spent 12 hours at hospital with a patient who had gone into labour. I did not go home as I did not want to increase the risk of exposure. At the same time, my focus was doing what is best for the patient.

As doctors, women and mothers, the pandemic has called on us to don multiple hats and assume multiple roles. *she*



# It begins with you

**Fatima Agarkar**

Educationist and founder of ACE, discusses the evolving role of mothers during the ongoing pandemic

Mothers are the unsung heroes in every household, and even more so during the ongoing lockdown. They are the pillars that support the physical and emotional wellbeing of their families, and a voice of reason when all else veers too close to chaos. On Mother's Day, therefore, I'd like to remind every mother about the importance of prioritising her own wellbeing.

You are not being selfish or unreasonable in paying attention to your own needs and it is essential for you to do so to be able to give your children and your family the best of you. You must be willing to nourish yourself with the right nutrition, enough sleep, some downtime to relax and recuperate, and the right mindset to be able to adapt to the new normal that the existing circumstances have forced upon us.

*Involve the other members of your family in decision-making, be willing to share responsibilities and assign roles*





*Understand that your children are constantly looking to you for inspiration and will model the behaviour you exhibit*

**A TEAM EFFORT**

In difficult times, understand that in addition to a mother, you are being called upon as a leader. You will have to rally your team – including your spouse, children and in-laws – together. To do this, you must be able to communicate effectively. Involve the other members of your family in decision-making, be willing to share responsibilities and assign roles. Don't be afraid to lay down a schedule for the entire family so that you are able to spend quality time (such as meals) together.

**ME AND WE**

Understand that your children are constantly looking to you for inspiration and will model the behaviour you exhibit. The impact of your every word and action becomes amplified, therefore, with often unintended consequences. You have the foresight to know when a situation could potentially escalate and be willing to walk away. It's also important to give yourself some down-time to decompress and destress. I've found that simply laughing more can have a marked impact on your outlook and that funny sit-coms are a great stress-buster. Have a support system – a friend or a family member you can vent to, when the going gets tough.

**PERFECTION IS A MYTH**

As a working mother who is quite active on social media, I've found that we're constantly bombarded with visuals of women who are seemingly doing it all so

effortlessly – they cook the perfect meals and are being remarkably productive and high-achieving at work, while also lavishing their families with attention. All around us, people seem to be taking up and excelling at new hobbies, vocations or activities. There's almost too much pressure on the rest of us to keep up. It's great to celebrate women who can do so much; it's also important to not feel guilty about not being able to meet these standards. You must give yourself credit for being able to get through each day to the best of your ability. I often say that in a seven-day week, expect only four days when things go as planned. Accept that you will have the occasional not-so-perfect day. This strategy will let have seven good days.

**UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY**

In these unusual circumstances, it's unrealistic to lay down the same rules that you did on a regular day. This includes the amount of screen time you allow your children and yourself. Thanks to recent technological evolutions, screens have become quite safe in terms of their impact on eyesight and the brain. What you must focus on, however, is the content your family is exposed to on the screens – listening to alarming news and escalating death rates will invariably cause stress and anxiety. On the other hand, online exercise classes and friendly catch-ups with friends are excellent to fill the void caused by social distancing norms. *she*



# Mummy's magic hands

Celebrity chef **Amrita Raichand** on infusing lockdown meals with her signature touch

If there's one important lesson that the lockdown has taught us, it is to never take things that were a part of our everyday lives for granted again. While most people have access to regular pantry items, we are all being a little cautious about how we use these ingredients because we're worried we may not have access to them in the future. However, being cautious or even frugal doesn't have to mean that you're compromising on taste – the one mantra I firmly believe in is to never waste calories on food that doesn't taste good. If you are indulging in even a piece of chocolate cake, it must be worth your while.

What most people don't realise is that this taste doesn't necessarily involve exotic ingredients. It's important to keep this in mind during the lockdown since for most of us, eating out at restaurants was a mainstay of our social schedules. We looked forward to how special it made us feel to just be able to take a break from the regular routine and ghar-ka-khaana. Children, especially, miss this. The good news is that it is easy to recreate restaurant-style meals with even the most

*One mantra I firmly believe in is to never waste calories on food that doesn't taste good. If you are indulging in even a piece of chocolate cake, it must be worth your while*





# Mummy ka nuskha



From my mother, I've learned that you only get better at cooking by regularly cooking and by cooking with love. You may have been trained at the best culinary schools but if you don't practice your art, you will never be able to create magic in your kitchen. I have been watching my mother cook from a very early age. She was a single parent (my father had died when I was only three-and-a-half years old). I would sit in the kitchen and talk to her as she cooked. I made my first meal – a rather elaborate one – at eight to surprise her. Later, I began to cook daily and found myself getting better every day. To this day, I keep learning new things in the kitchen. I believe that cooking with your family, especially your children, is one of the best activities you can engage them in, during the lockdown. It is a tradition that future generations will cherish.

basic ingredients (or even leftovers, for that matter), with a little imaginative thinking:

- Shred leftover rotis into roti noodles. Add leftover vegetables such as shredded cabbage and carrots, sliced ginger and garlic, and add any sauces you have at home.
- Use rotis as lasagne sheets. Layer these with mixed vegetables and white sauce, and top with a little cheese. You can bake this in an oven or an OTG, or simply heat it on a pan.
- Tear up stale bread slices, add some milk and eggs / custard powder. Whisk these together with some sugar or jaggery, and vanilla essence. You can either bake or cook this mixture in a pan to create a simple bread pudding.
- Turn rice into cutlets by adding some vegetables. Coat the cutlets with cornflakes or a slurry of cornflour and shallow fry them. You could also add some cheese and shape these into cheese cornballs, which you can deep fry.
- Mix daal from last night's dinner with whole-wheat flour and add some spices and chopped coriander leaves to make a delicious daal paratha. Go a step further by chopping up some cabbage and olives, adding some mayonnaise to make a quick coleslaw. Spread this on the parathas to create quick but delicious wraps.

During the lockdown, I've been sharing simple recipes such as these on my YouTube channel and Instagram feed as well. To deal with fussy eaters of all ages, combine what they like with what they don't. For instance, you can easily camouflage zucchini in chocolate cake, or broccoli in a baked vegetable dish. *she*

## A journey of rediscovery

IELTS trainer **Hemprabha B** discusses how motherhood helped her to turn her passion into her vocation

SPOTLIGHT



For as long as I can remember, I have enjoyed teaching. As a qualified IT engineer, I took up employment with TCS, where I worked for more than five years. However, I realised that my true passion lay in teaching when I found myself eagerly explaining projects and processes to freshers and conducting training sessions for them. Although I subsequently transitioned to a home-based clothing business that was quite successful, after the birth of my son, I was eager to follow a new career track. I wanted to take up a vocation that would give me enough time to care for my son, while also not being so tedious that it would exhaust me at the end of each day. I decided to revisit my passion for teaching. I took an online course and became a certified IELTS trainer. I am grateful for having made this switch at a time when practically every business has been compelled to explore an online model. I continue to teach students via Zoom classes.

Women are being increasingly encouraged to pursue their vocations after marriage and motherhood. However, it can be a struggle to concurrently meet the demands imposed by both. I believe that the lockdown has given us valuable pause, to introspect and examine our strengths and interests. It is easier today to convert your passion into your vocation than ever before. Women can look for easy ways to monetise their interests, whether in the form of coaching, writing books or even starting their own social media channels to showcase their talents. Although my son is barely two years old, and I must conduct all my coaching while he is asleep, my career choice continues to invigorate and energise me. *she*



# Build relationships to build businesses

**Roopanshi Bhatt**, founder and co-owner of Tea Villa Café discusses her entrepreneurship mantras

The F&B sector has undeniably been the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many dining establishments downing their shutters permanently with many others exploring deliveries in a bid to keep their businesses afloat. With its vast and unusual assortment of teas, fresh-from-the-kitchen food and quirky décor, Tea Villa Cafe was at the crest of its popularity wave when news of the nation-wide lockdown was announced in March. All at once, business across the pan-India chain came to a grinding halt and Roopanshi Bhatt was faced with the difficult task of explaining to her 300+ employees what the pandemic meant in terms of her business's future.

*The pandemic is a true test of our tenacity and our will to overcome adversities*



"I believe its very important to be transparent with your staff. We had an honest discussion with our team and tried to determine which of our employees needed funds most urgently. Accordingly, we made every effort to pay them first. Many of our senior staff, who command high salaries, have been with us since we founded our first outlet five years ago. They understood our plight and had faith that we would always keep their best interests at heart – accordingly, they offered to give up on their salaries until the situation improved on the condition that they would approach us if the situation should change. When the government made provisions to allow migrant workers to return to their homes, we helped our kitchen staff (many of whom hail from West Bengal) to avail of the same. Of course, partner and I had to take pains to assure them that this temporary setback does not mean the end for our business and that we will be ready to bounce back when the restrictions are lifted," she says, adding that her landlords have been very understanding and supportive, agreeing to defer rent until business resumes.

Unlike many other restaurateurs, Bhatt has decided to avoid deliveries for the duration of the lockdown. "We did not want to jeopardise the health and safety of our staff or our customers. We decided to use this time to re-strategize so that we are well prepared to recoup lost time and business when things go back to normal," she explains. As a woman in business, Bhatt believes that it is vital for entrepreneurs to not lose hope during these trying times. She says, "The best minds around the world are working hard to bring an end to the pandemic. We must do our bit to support them, in every capacity. This is, in many ways, a true test of our tenacity and our will to overcome adversities."

"When things go back to normal (as I'm sure they will), we will need our teams and our people to rebuild what has been lost. We must be fair and sincere in all our dealings with them," she signs off. *she*



THE INDIAN ACHIEVER'S CLUB

---

[www.indianachieversclub.org](http://www.indianachieversclub.org)

[editor@indianachieversclub.org](mailto:editor@indianachieversclub.org)





THE INDIAN ACHIEVER'S CLUB