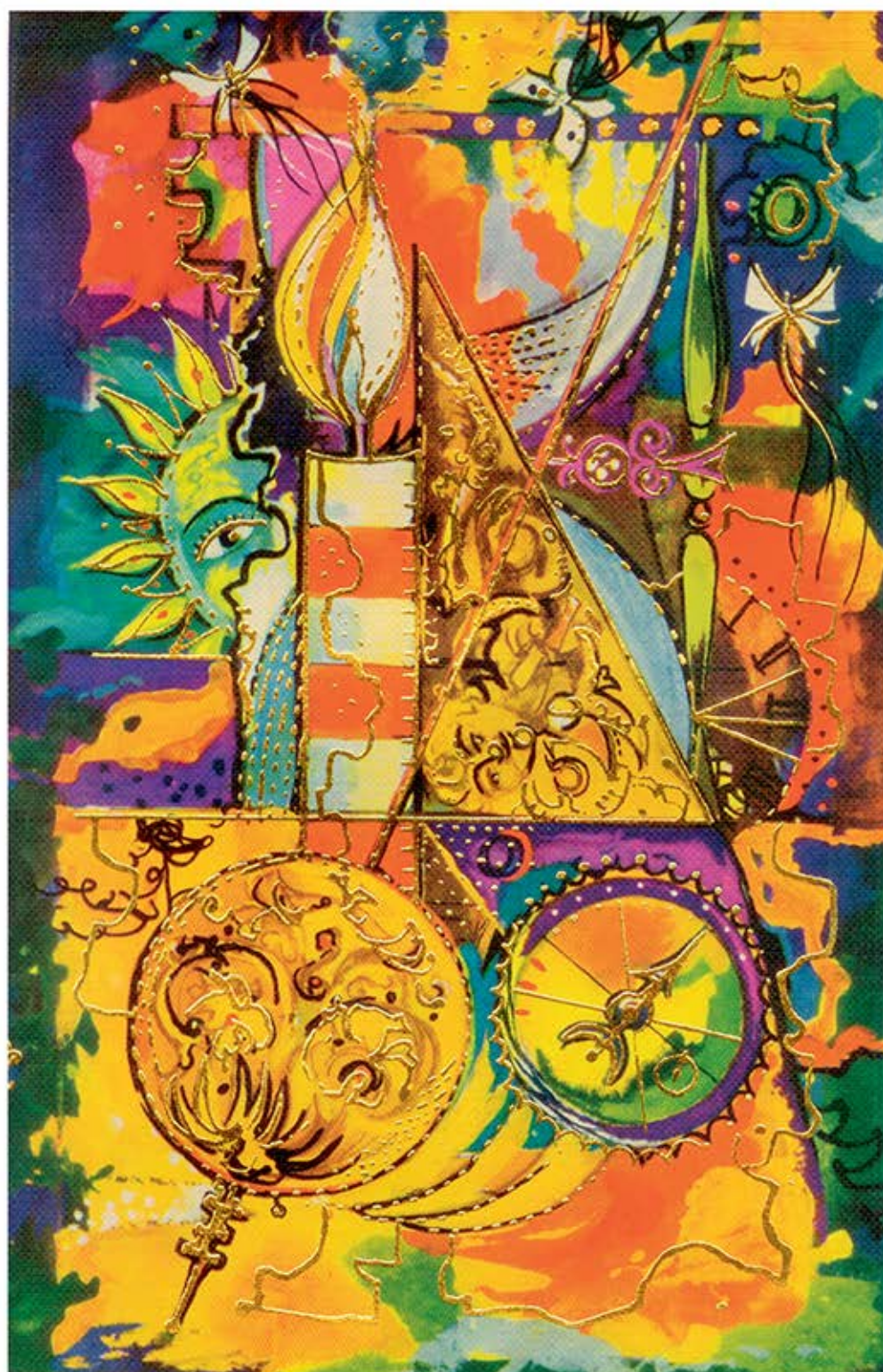


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The calendar of your choice

Come peak season and the baugs spruce up their image to meet the demands of the hosts and guests who want their function to be a cause for celebration. While some venues are more favored because of their location and parking convenience, others are preferred because of their proximity to the hosts' residence or for economic reasons.

In this "*dekha-dekhi nu khél* (race for one-upmanship)," where do the hosts draw the line? Encountering inflation and recession are Zoroastrians making an effort to curtail their expenditures on celebrations or do they believe that since such occasions will come but once in a lifetime, "*achkavanoo kai* (why hesitate)?" A survey by *Parsiana* (see "Budgeting for a bash") indicated that the community continues to place premium on 22 carat gold jewelry although those with limited resources may try to cut corners on food, clothes, flowers, photography and invites. Our "Celebrations guide" has attempted to list the gamut of services available under different heads. The Bombay based listing — mainly of Parsi establishments, although certain non-Parsis have also been included where we know they are patronized by the community — may not be exhaustive and we hope to be excused for any unintentional lapses. Those whom we may have overlooked can write in to us and we will accommodate them in the future. Also provided here are the contact numbers of the popular venues in south and central Bombay.

The accompanying 13 pages of the Gregorian calendar starting with January 2004 and ending with January 2005 will, of course, provide a ready reference for those who want to know the *mah* and *roz* of a select date according to the Shahenshahi, Kadmi and Fasli calendars.

Accommodated on each of the 13 calendar pages are the corresponding *mahs* and *rozs* of the Shahenshahi (Sha), Kadmi and Fasli calendars for the convenience of the different sects within the community. While the abbreviated version of the *mah* for each calendar is specified at the top of the page (please refer to the list of abbreviations at the end of this introduction in case of doubt),

in the case of the *rozs* (mentioned against each date) the first line bears the Shahenshahi and Kadmi *roz* and the second line, the Fasli *roz*. During the months of July and August when the Shahenshahi and Kadmi *rozs* do not tally beginning with the first Kadmi *Gatha* day (i.e. July 16) and ending with the last Shahenshahi *Gatha* day (i.e. August 19), the first line bears the Shahenshahi *roz*, the second line, the Kadmi *roz*, and the last line, the Fasli *roz*.

Before the three calendars came into existence, the sole one used was in tune with the seasons, with the New Year being observed in spring. To ensure this harmony with nature and to synchronize it with the solar calendar of 365¼ days, the ancient Zoroastrians intercalated an extra month of 30 days, Spandarmad, every 120 years ($\frac{1}{4} \times 120 = 30$ days). As per the existing records, the last time a month was intercalated was somewhere between 1125 and 1131 AC. This correction in the religious calendar was apparently done by the community in India, without the knowledge of those in Iran. The difference of one month was realized some six centuries later when Mobed Jamasp Velayati visited Surat from Kerman.

Around the mid 18th century a group of priests from Surat decided to adopt the Iranian calendar and called themselves the Kadims — the ancient ones. The others chose to refer to themselves as the Shahenshahis — following the royal calendar. Both the groups were insistent that theirs was the right calendar. Thereafter neither group intercalated the additional Spandarmad month with the result that the Shahenshahi New Year is now in August, and the Kadmi New Year observed by the Iranis in India is in July.

The Iranians observe March 21, the spring equinox, as their New Year for it manifests a physical resurrection after the months of harsh winter and hibernation. The Zoroastrians in India who consider Jamshedi Navroz or March 21 as their New Year are the Faslis who have their roots in the Zarhosti Fasli Sal Mandal founded by Kharshedji Cama in 1906. Follow-

ing the leap year logic, they add a sixth *Gatha* day, Roz-e Wahizag, every four years to ensure that their New Year is permanently celebrated on March 21. 2004 will thus have six *Gatha* days as per the Fasli calendar. Besides the New Year, the devotional *gahambar* days too would then be appropriately observed in the correct seasons.

Yazdegirdi 1372/73/74 for the Fasli, Kadmi and Shahenshahi calendars, dates back to the coronation of the last Zoroastrian Sassanian King Yazdegird III in 632 AC. Next to the month line atop every page, readers will notice the year according to the Yazdegirdi era (AY 1372/1373/1374, where AY stands for Anno Yazdegirdi = in the year of Yazdegird).

Noted opticians Phiroze M. Dastoor and Company who specialize in contact lenses and laser vision correction deserve our special thanks for sponsoring the *Parsiana* calendar. Their largesse has enabled us to maintain the same cover price of the issue as last year.

Abbreviations of the *mahs*: Fravardin (Frav), Ardibehesht (Ardi), Khordad (Khor), Tir (Tir), Amardad (Amar), Shahrevar (Shah), Meher (Meh), Avan (Avan), Adar (Adar), Dae (Dae), Bahman (Bahm), Spandarmad (Span).

Celebrations guide

BAUG VENUES

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300/A, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Marg
Charni Rd, Bombay 400004
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Athornan Boarding Madressa Hall
651-652, Parsi Ciny, Opp Five Gardens
Dadar (E), Bombay 400014
Manager Tehamtan Dotiwalla available
between 9 a.m.-12.30 p.m. & 4 p.m.-7 p.m.
Tel: 24138086

Seth Cowasji Behramji Banaji Atash
Behram Hall
Thakurdwar Rd, Bombay 400004
Contact Sarosh Daruwalla
Mobile: 9821241006
or manager Minoo Behramkamin between

8 a.m.-12 noon & 4 p.m.-8 p.m.
Tel: 23828926

**Seth Pallonji Khurshedji Cama
Baug**
Raja Ram Mohan Roy Rd
Bombay 400004
Manager Nariman
Nagwaswalla available
between 8 a.m.-11.30 a.m.

**Seth Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy
Agiary**
Pilot Bunder Rd, Afghan
Church, Bombay 400005
Trust secretary Kersi Mistry
available between 11.30 a.m.-
3.30 p.m.
Tel: 22150891/22153624

**Dadar Parsi Colony Gymkhana
Grounds**
605/606, Dr Ambedkar Rd
Dadar (E), Bombay 400014
Manager Rohinton Patel
available between 10.30 a.m.-
12.30 p.m. & 6.30 p.m.-8.30
p.m.
Tel: 24118993

**Seth Dadibhai Noshervanji
Dadiset Atash Behram
(Fanaswadi)**
Trust office above Ardeshir
Dadibhai Dadiset Agiary, Dr
D. N. Rd, Fort, Bombay 400001
Trust secretaries Feroze Fitter
and Hoshi Kharas available
between 10.15 a.m.-4.30 p.m.
Tel: 22873672

Elphinstone Cricket Club
Elphinstone Hse, 17, Marzban
Rd, Fort, Bombay 400001
Contact executive secretary
Pervez Katki
Tel: 22047524/22071457

Malcolm Hall
Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd
Jogeshwari (W)
Bombay 400102
Manager available between
9 a.m.-12 noon
Tel: 26788725

Sohrab Palamkote Hall
636, Firdausi Rd, Parsi Clny
Dadar (E), Bombay 400014
Manager Filly Crawford
available between 9.30 a.m.-
12.30 p.m. & 5.30 p.m.-7 p.m.
Tel: 24128842

Ripon Club
N. M. Wadia Bldg, 123, M. G.
Rd, Bombay 400001
Club secretary Aspi Sarkari
available between 10 a.m.-
4.30 p.m.
Mobile: 9820481769
Tel: 22701456

**Seth Hormusji Dadabhoy Saher
Agiary**
51, Bhulabhai Desai Rd

Bombay 400026
Trust secretary Burjor Mehta
available between 10 a.m.-
2 p.m. on weekdays only
Tel: 23674210

**Mancherji Bahmanji Seth
(Sethna) Agiary Hall**
260, Tardeo Rd
Bombay 400007
Contact Ervad Pervez Dordi
Tel: 23841235

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Tel: 24464846

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Tel: 22085198

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Hosp, Bombay Central
Bombay 400008
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Agiary, 230, Tardeo Rd
Bombay 400007
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Tel: 24940355

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Central Kitchen 22011037/
22073840

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Tel: 22619313/22642180

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Mobile: 9821462426

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Tel: 24457252

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Tel: 23736136/23736194

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continued on page 39



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January 2004 1373 AY Amar/Shah (S) ◦ '73 Shah/Meh (K) ◦ '72 Dae/Bahm (F)

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



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Srosh

2
Dae-pa-Meher
Rashna

3
Meher
Fravardin

4

Srosh
Bahram

5

Rashna
Ram

6

Fravardin
Govad

7

Bahram
Dae-pa-Din

8

Ram
Din

9

Govad
Ashishvangh

10

Dae-pa-Din
Ashtad

11

Din
Asman

12

Ashishvangh
Zamyad

13

Ashtad
Mahraspand

14

Asman
Aneran

15

Zamyad
Hormazd

16

Mahraspand
Bahman

17

Aneran
Ardibehesht

18

Hormazd
Shahrevat

19

Bahman
Spandarmad

20

Ardibehesht
Khordad

21

Shahrevat
Amarad

22

Spandarmad
Dae-pa-Adar

23

Khordad
Adar

24

Amarad
Avan

25

Dae-pa-Adar
Khorshed

26

Adar
Mohor

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8 Govad Ashishvangh	9 Dae-pa-Din Ashtad	10 Din Asman	11 Ashishvangh Zamyad	12 Ashtad Mahraspand	13 Asman Aneran	14 Zamyad Hormazd
15 Mahraspand Bahman	16 Aneran Ardibehesht	17 Hormazd Shahrevar	18 Bahman Spandarmad	19 Ardibehesht Khordad	20 Shahrevar Amardad	21 Spandarmad Dae-pa-Adar
22 Khordad Adar	23 Amardad Avan	24 Dae-pa-Adar Khorshed	25 Adar Mohor	26 Avan Tir	27 Khorshed Gosh	28 Mohor Dae-pa-Meher

29

Tir
Meher



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March 2004 1373 AY Meh/Avan (S) ◦ '73 Avan/Adar (K) ◦ '72/73 Span/Frav (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
21st March Fasil New Year	1 Gosh Srosh	2 Dae-pa-Meher Rashna	3 Meher Fravardin	4 Srosh Bahram	5 Rashna Ram	6 Fravardin Govad
7 Bahram Dae-pa-Din	8 Ram Din	9 Govad Ashishvangh	10 Dae-pa-Din Ashtad	11 Din Asman	12 Ashishvangh Zamyad	13 Ashtad Mahraspand
14 Asman Aneran	15 Zamyad Ahunavad	16 Mahraspand Ushtavad	17 Aneran Spentomad	18 Hormazd Vohu-khshathra	19 Bahman Vahishtoisht	20 Ardibehesht Roz-e-Wahizag
21 Shahrevar Hormazd	22 Spandarmad Bahman	23 Khordad Ardibehesht	24 Amardad Shahrevar	25 Dae-pa-Adar Spandarmad	26 Adar Khordad	27 Avan Amardad
28 Khorshed Dae-pa-Adar	29 Mohor Adar	30 Tir Avan	31 Gosh Khorshed			

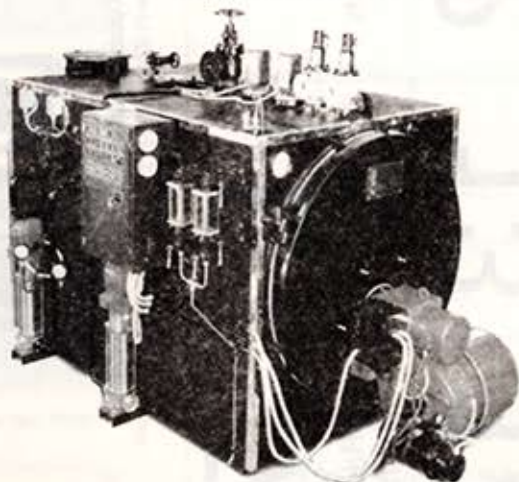


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April 2004 1373 AY Avan/Adar (S) ◦ '73 Adar/Dae (K) ◦ '73 Frav/Ardi (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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4 Rashna Dae-pa-Meher	5 Fravardin Meher	6 Bahram Srosh	7 Ram Rashna	8 Govad Fravardin	9 Dae-pa-Din Bahram	10 Din Ram
11 Ashishvangh Govad	12 Ashtad Dae-pa-Din	13 Asman Din	14 Zamyad Ashishvangh	15 Mahraspand Ashtad	16 Aneran Asman	17 Hormazd Zamyad
18 Bahman Mahraspand	19 Ardibehesht Aneran	20 Shahrevar Hormazd	21 Spandarmad Bahman	22 Khordad Ardibehesht	23 Amar dad Shahrevar	24 Dae-pa-Adar Spandarmad
25 Adar Khordad	26 Avan Amar dad	27 Khorshed Dae-pa-Adar	28 Mohor Adar	29 Tir Avan	30 Gosh Khorshed	

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May 2004 1373 AY Adar/Dae (S) ◦ '73 Dae/Bahm (K) ◦ '73 Ardi/Khor (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Gosh Khorshed	31 Dae-pa-Meher Mohor	 Phiroze M. Dastoor & Co. Trusted eyecare since 1904 • Opticians • Contact Lenses • Laser vision correction Hotline 91-22-2-4101234 ◦ Email: phirozedastoor@vsnl.com website: www.eyecareindia.com Rozs: Sha & Kadmi on 1st line, Fasil 2nd				1 Dae-pa-Meher Mohor
2 Meher Tir	3 Srosh Gosh	4 Rashna Dae-pa-Meher	5 Fravardin Meher	6 Bahram Srosh	7 Ram Rashna	8 Govad Fravardin
9 Dae-pa-Din Bahram	10 Din Ram	11 Ashishvangh Govad	12 Ashtad Dae-pa-Din	13 Asman Din	14 Zamyad Ashishvangh	15 Mahraspand Ashtad
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June 2004 1373 AY Dae/Bahm (S) ◦ '73 Bahm/Spandarmad (K) ◦ '73 Khor/Tir (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Rozs: Sha & Kadm/ on 1st line, Fasil 2nd</i> 1 Meher Tir	2 Srosh Gosh	3 Rashna Dae-pa-Meher	4 Fravardin Meher	5 Bahram Srosh		
6 Ram Rashna	7 Govad Fravardin	8 Dae-pa-Din Bahram	9 Din Ram	10 Ashishvangh Govad	11 Ashtad Dae-pa-Din	12 Asman Din
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27 Mohor Adar	28 Tir Avan	29 Gosh Khorshed	30 Dae-pa-Meher Mohor			



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July 2004 1373 AY Bahm/Span (S) ◦ '73/74 Span/Frav (K) ◦ '73 Tir/Amar (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
21st July Kadmi New Year Roz: Sha on 1st line, Kadmi 2nd, Fasil 3rd Phiroze M. Dastoor & Co. • Opticians • Contact Lenses • Laser vision correction Hotline 91-22-2-4101234 • Email: phirozedastoor@vsnl.com website: www.eyecareindia.com						
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				8	9	10
				Dae-pa-Din Bahram	Din Ram	Ashishvangh Govad
11 Ashtad Dae-pa-Din	12 Asman Din	13 Zamyad Ashishvangh	14 Mahraspand Ashtad	15 Aneran Asman	16 Hormazd Ahunavad Zamyad	17 Bahman Ushavard Mahraspand
18 Ardibehesht Spentomad Aneran	19 Shahrevar Vohu-khshathra Hormazd	20 Spandarmad Vahishtoish Bahman	21 Khordad Hormazd Ardibehesht	22 Amaradad Bahman Shahrevar	23 Dae-pa-Adar Ardibehesht Spandarmad	24 Adar Shahrevar Khordad
25 Avan Spandarmad Amaradad	26 Khorshed Khordad Dae-pa-Adar	27 Mohor Amaradad Adar	28 Tir Dae-pa-Adar Avan	29 Gosh Adar Khorshed	30 Dae-pa-Meher Avan Mohor	31 Meher Khorshed Tir

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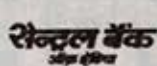
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August 2004 1373/74 AY Span/Frav (S) ◦ '74 Frav/Ardi (K) ◦ '73 Amar/Shah (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Srosh Mohor Gosh	2 Rashna Tir Dae-pa-Meher	3 Fravardin Gosh Meher	4 Bahram Dae-pa-Meher Srosh	5 Ram Meher Rashna	6 Govad Srosh Fravardin	7 Dae-pa-Din Rashna Bahram
8 Din Fravardin Ram	9 Ashishvanh Bahram Govad	10 Ashtad Ram Dae-pa-Din	11 Asman Govad Din	12 Zamyad Dae-pa-Din Ashishvanh	13 Mahraspand Din Ashtad	14 Aneran Ashishvanh Asman
15 Ahunavad Ashtad Zamyad	16 Ushlavad Asman Mahraspand	17 Spentomad Zamyad Aneran	18 Vohu-khshathra Mahraspand Hormazd	19 Vahishtoishht Aneran Bahman	20 Hormazd Ardibehesht	21 Bahman Shahrevan
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29 Avan Mohor	30 Khorsheed Tir	31 Mohor Gosh	20th August Shahenshahi New Year Rozs: Sha on 1st line, Kadmi 2nd, Fasil 3rd • Opticians • Contact Lenses • Laser vision correction Hotline 91-22-2-4101234 ◦ Email: phiroze@phirozeindia.com website: www.eyecareindia.com			



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September 2004 1374 AY Frav/Ardi (S) ° '74 Ardi/Khor (K) ° '73 Shah/Meh (F)

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12 Din Ashtad	13 Ashishvangh Asman	14 Ashtad Zamyad	15 Asman Mahraspand	16 Zamyad Aneran	17 Mahraspand Hormazd	18 Aneran Bahman
19 Hormazd Ardibehesht	20 Bahman Shahrevar	21 Ardibehesht Spandarmad	22 Shahrevar Khordad	23 Spandarmad Amardad	24 Khordad Dae-pa-Adar	25 Amardad Adar
26 Dae-pa-Adar Avan	27 Adar Khorshed	28 Avan Mohor	29 Khorshed Tir	30 Mohor Gosh		

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October 2004 1374 AY Ard/Khor (S) ° '74 Khor/Tir (K) ° '73 Meh/Avan (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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3 Dae-pa-Meher Srosh	4 Meher Rashna	5 Srosh Fravardin	6 Rashna Bahram	7 Fravardin Ram	8 Bahram Govad	9 Ram Dae-pa-Din
10 Govad Din	11 Dae-pa-Din Ashishvangh	12 Din Ashtad	13 Ashishvangh Asman	14 Ashtad Zamyad	15 Asman Mahraspand	16 Zamyad Aneran
17 Mahraspand Hormazd	18 Aneran Bahman	19 Hormazd Ardibehesht	20 Bahman Shahrevar	21 Ardibehesht Spandarmad	22 Shahrevar Khordad	23 Spandarmad Amardad
24 Khordad Dae-pa-Adar	25 Amardad Adar	26 Dae-pa-Adar Avan	27 Adar Khorshed	28 Avan Mohor	29 Khorshed Tir	30 Mohor Gosh



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The Iranian names of boys and girls along with their meanings which originally appeared in Parsiana have now been reprinted in an attractive 24-page booklet. The book, which is priced at Rs 40, is available on sale at:

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November 2004 1374 AY Khor/Tir (S) ◦ '74 Tir/Amar (K) ◦ '73 Avan/Adar (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Gosh Meher	2 Dae-pa-Meher Srosh	3 Meher Rashna	4 Srosh Fravardin	5 Rashna Bahram	6 Fravardin Ram
7 Bahram Govad	8 Ram Dae-pa-Din	9 Govad Din	10 Dae-pa-Din Ashishvangh	11 Din Ashtad	12 Ashishvangh Asman	13 Ashtad Zamyad
14 Asman Mahraspand	15 Zamyad Aneran	16 Mahraspand Hormazd	17 Aneran Bahman	18 Hormazd Ardibehešt	19 Bahman Shahrevar	20 Ardibehešt Spandarmad
21 Shahrevar Khordad	22 Spandarmad Amarad	23 Khordad Dae-pa-Adar	24 Amarad Adar	25 Dae-pa-Adar Avan	26 Adar Khorshed	27 Avan Mohor
28 Khorshed Tir	29 Mohor Gosh	30 Tir Dae-pa-Meher				



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Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



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1

Gosh
Meher

2

Dae-pa-Meher
Srosh

3

Meher
Rashna

4

Srosh
Fravardin

5

Rashna
Bahram

6

Fravardin
Ram

7

Bahram
Govad

8

Ram
Dae-pa-Din

9

Govad
Din

10

Dae-pa-Din
Ashishvangh

11

Din
Ashtad

12

Ashishvangh
Asman

13

Ashtad
Zamyad

14

Asman
Mahraspand

15

Zamyad
Aneran

16

Mahraspand
Hormazd

17

Aneran
Bahman

18

Hormazd
Ardibehesht

19

Bahman
Shahrevar

20

Ardibehesht
Spandarmad

21

Shahrevar
Khordad

22

Spandarmad
Amaradad

23

Khordad
Dae-pa-Adar

24

Amaradad
Adar

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Dae-pa-Adar
Avan

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Adar
Khorshed

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Avan
Mohor

28

Khorshed
Tir

29

Mohor
Gosh

30

Tir
Dae-pa-Meher

31

Gosh
Meher

Rozs: Sha & Kadm
on 1st line, Fasil 2nd

DECTRON HELPS AQUATIC CIRCUS AVOID "STICKY" SITUATION



What's an aquatic theater? No, it's not some troupe that only stages productions of "Moby Dick" and "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea". In Las Vegas, it's a \$70 million investment as part of the 35-story Bellagio Hotel, where the world-renowned Cirque du Soleil combines death-defying high-divers and acrobats with skilled swimmers. To mechanical systems engineers, however, it's a 68,500-sq-ft humidity headache.

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With 10,000 sq. ft of pool surface area, the designers of the Bellagio Hotel's (Las Vegas) aquatic circus facility had to make sure that dehumidification made audience members feel like they were near the pool, not in it.

In a project of such magnitude, several relative humidity challenges awaited the designers. They responded with an innovative HVAC (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning) design considered unlike anything else in North America.

Properly sizing the HVAC system was critical because of the humidity variances presented not only by 10,000 sq. ft of pool water surface, but also from the many water jets that shoot streams up to 60-ft, plus a giant mist curtain used to project laser light shows. Especially critical was keeping

a 112 by 65-ft decorative glass dome atop the 82-ft high room free of condensation.

In addition to controlling rh (relative humidity), another design goal was to maintain air and water temperatures at a constant 82° and 84°F, respectively. Those goals were met with help from a series of DRY-O-TRON® DS-242 dehumidifiers by Dectron Inc. Four such models took care of dehumidification needs for the primary space, with each sized to remove up to 1,050 lb. of moisture per hour. A smaller, additional DRY-O-TRON® model was used to dehumidify the performers' 8 by 25-ft practice and warm-up pool in a separate room backstage.

Given that spectator comfort was also a major design consideration, the units were sized to maintain optimum 50% rh. The units also contributed to that

end by helping to air condition or heat the space when needed.

A secondary and environment-friendly benefit gained by using the DRY-O-TRON® dehumidifiers is that the condensation that drains from the units' coils can be reclaimed and returned to the pool. The amount of reclaimed water is sufficient for one entire pool fill per year.

The result is a complex system, with built-in water and energy conservation attributes, that helps provide a comfortable environment that probably won't attract much notice from the audience watching the grandest aquatic circus in the world.

Roxanne Lakdawala,
Vice President Marketing



January 2005 1374 AY Amar/Shah (S) ◦ '74 Shah/Meh (K) ◦ '73 Dae/Bahm (F)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Gosh Meher	31 Dae-pa-Meher Srosh	 Phiroze M. Dastoor & Co. Trusted eyecare since 1904 • Opticians • Contact Lenses • Laser vision correction Hotline 91-22-2-4101234 ◦ Email: phirozedastoor@vsnl.com Website: www.eyecareindia.com				1 Dae-pa-Meher Srosh
2 Meher Rashna	3 Srosh Fravardin	4 Rashna Bahram	5 Fravardin Ram	6 Bahram Govad	7 Ram Dae-pa-Din	8 Govad Din
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16 Aneran Bahman	17 Hormazd Ardibehešt	18 Bahman Shahrevar	19 Ardibehešt Spandarmad	20 Shahrevar Khordad	21 Spandarmad Amaradad	22 Khordad Dae-pa-Adar
23 Amaradad Adar	24 Dae-pa-Adar Avan	25 Adar Khorshed	26 Avan Mohor	27 Khorshed Tir	28 Mohor Gosh	29 Tir Dae-pa-Meher

Budgeting for a bash

Parsiana talks to the trade to find out how much a wedding or a navjote reception could cost

Parinaz M. Gandhi

The number of guests who come to a wedding/navjote to give their blessings, or rather to enjoy a hearty repast, in a baug has declined, opine the trade. The traditional *ses* flaunts fewer jewelry items for the bride and groom. And while there are some Zoroastrians who are making conscious efforts to cut costs there are others more than willing to splurge on festivities on the rationale that "such occasions come but once in a lifetime."

Even if one were to try and reduce the guest list to 100, and opt for the most economical products and services on such occasions, a wedding in the community would probably not cost less than Rs 1,00,000 today. An approximate analysis undertaken by *Parsiana* revealed that the major items of expenditure would involve: Rs 40,000 on jewelry (a set comprising a necklace, earrings, bangle/bracelet and ring), Rs 28,500 on the caterer and drinks, Rs 12,000 on the trousseau, Rs 5,000 for video shooting and photographs, Rs 3,000 on the baug/hall and lights (at Cama Baug small otla), Rs 3,000 for flowers, Rs 2,000 for music and Rs 1,350 for the invitations. The cash gifts and presentation of shawls to the priests would easily total Rs 5,000 and there is no knowing how much is to be reserved for the exchange of cash gifts within the family.

Amongst all the heads on which money seems to disappear on such occasions, the single largest item is jewelry. But more than an expenditure, it is considered an investment for the family, expecting its value to appreciate for the future generations (though if the design and stones are not selected well, the expected appreciation may not materialize). Presenting a wedding set to the bride is considered basic even among the less affluent, explains Khurshid Vakil of Framji Rustamji Choksey. With the prices of gold rocketing, sets are

available for nothing less than Rs 40,000. "Whilst a couple of years ago families came with a budget of Rs 60,000 today (to purchase the same kind of pieces they need to) come with a budget of Rs 90,000," reveals Khushroo Press of B. Jamshedji Jivanji who has presently noticed a five fold increase in Parsis wanting to sell their jewelry. With the escalation in gold prices some families are divesting their gold and using the money to buy luxuries and gadgets they have long denied themselves.

With their insistence on 22 carat quality gold Parsis patronize certain select shops. Press claims that 100 percent of their clients are Parsis; Vakil notes that 97 percent are Parsis. She has noticed that Parsis prefer certain set designs "with the leaf/flower/naal (horse shoe), *chheras* (thick chains) being the all-time favorites." The real guineas too are available mainly at Parsi shops, states Press, adding, "Parsi tastes are very conservative... The Pedder Road residents may find Hughes Road shops more convenient and those staying in the suburbs may like to go to Bandra but labor wise Zaveri Bazar (where the two Parsi shops are located) is 30-40 percent cheaper. A few Parsis may venture out but after burning their fingers with (jewelers) who sell 19 or 20 carat gold as 22 carat they realize their mistake and come back to us."

The jewelry worn by the bride and relatives may or may not earn comments from the guests but the food on offer is of prime concern to everybody. A few hosts are known to schedule their functions depending on the availability of the caterer of their choice. The cost of the simplest three-dish *patra* (chicken, fish and mutton *pulao dal*) would start at Rs 210 (Rs 175 without fish) and may rise to Rs 350 and more per *patra* depending on the frills and items on the menu! Few even bother to enquire about the cost of a vegetarian *patra*. As con-

veys Tanaz Godiwalla, the caterer most in demand, "*paatraa ni machhi* is a favorite among non-Parsis because of which hosts like to include this dish in their menu." "*Pulao dal* is another dish which is almost always in demand," mentions Ketayun Khambata of Khambata Caterers. Complimentary starters have become a routine at Parsi functions too, cutting into the profit margins of the smaller caterers who are struggling to offer competitive services. "I started the practice of offering complimentary starters and complimentary custard on some of our package deals," claims Tehmtan Dumasia of K Caterers. Ending the meal with a fortune cookie is a trend that is catching on just as assigning a catering job to non-Parsis like Mini Punjab.

While some associate a Parsi meal with a traditional sit-down affair served on *patras* there are other caterers like Katy Dalal who only offer tastefully served buffets to enable the guests to eat at their own convenience and leisure without the jostling that usually follows when one *paat* (sitting) is finished. "Everybody is on the tandoori bandwagon," observes Dalal who takes pride in making and grinding her own masala and buying the choicest ingredients. "Except for a few discerning people who care and are willing to spend on quality, everybody seems to be feeling the crunch and wants to settle for a *sastu* (cheap *patru*)," declares Dalal who prefers not to cater to the typical "*pavri* (*pulao dal* et al) taste" offering instead such novelties as *kesari dahi murghi*, fish fillet in different sauces, fish florentine, chicken Hawaiian salad. Although her main source of income is not wedding meals Dalal gets upset when competitors spread rumors saying she has stopped accepting wedding contracts or that she is particular about the numbers she caters to.

The waste of food on the *patras* is

often rationalized by patrons stating that it would help to feed some poor person. But, in fact, the caterers have contracts with certain people who regularly go to the baug venues to purchase the leftover *patras*. They are sold at Rs 20-30 per row (where on an average 20 diners are seated) depending on the number of dishes offered in the original *patra*, relates one caterer. These leftover *patras* are then resold near roadside liquor dens.

The love for good food accompanies the need for alcoholic and aerated drinks at Parsi functions. But whilst originally the host went and procured the brands and labels that fell within his/her range they now have to obtain the mandatory permit at a cost of Rs 5,050 before drinks can be served. "As per the excise law we are not permitted home deliveries," states Perzon Zend of Peekay Wines, known for supplying quality products at competitive rates. "Not only do we advise our clients on how much to spend on which brands, we also help them get permits and take back the excess alcohol after the function," adds Zend. Director's Special Whiskey is always in demand. While Royal Stag and McDowell are in the lower range, Signature and Blender's Pride fall in the middle lot and the expensive scotches are offered at but one or two weddings in a year, conveys Zend. In fact the incentives in the form of glasses and bags offered by companies to traders are passed down to the clients too. This is their way of ensuring customer loyalty.

The change in trousseau is discernible at the baugs. "Aapra bachchao sari pèherta nathi (our children are not keen

to wear saris)," is the statement often heard at Parsi owned sari shops which once did brisk business during the wedding season. Where previously five-seven saris were bought by one family, now it has come down to one or two and some customers are so fussy that they may not buy any. Those with money prefer to go in for designer saris which

cost upwards of Rs 50,000. The ones who are budget conscious would opt for sequence work or embroidery. Zardosi and *tili kors* are equally popular. And the perennially popular are the traditional *garas* and *kor* saris. For those with a budget of Rs 15,000-20,000 "I always advise them to buy the traditional ones which would serve as heirlooms," says



Top: Renovated Banaji Atash Behram Hall (Photo: Mazda Audio Video Lab)

Alongside: Colaba Agiary

Below (left): Sethna Agiary dining hall and Saher Agiary grounds (right)

(Photos: Hornyar Mistry, Hornz Prints)



Naju Daver. While two years ago beige and grey were the popular colors it's not so any more. Even though traditional saris look best in red, burgandy or purple, some clients want newer colors, observes Daver. If she finds that a particular color does not suit a client, she will express her opinion, says Daver who would like to ensure that a customer derives 100 percent satisfaction from draping her creations.

Extending her range of products from puggies to saris to navjote dresses, Gulshan Kolah has been catering to an exclusive clientele over the years. She notices that customers now are more cost conscious.

Yet another cost that has become mandatory at celebration time is photography and video shooting. Whilst video shooting means a cost of Rs 4,000 to 7,000 depending on whose service one selects, photographers charge Rs 10-25 per print, depending on the size specified. Clients sometimes specify "don't go beyond a certain limit." A navjote may require the shooting of two or three rolls; at wedding time it can be three or five rolls. "In fact we encourage the presence of a family photographer who can shoot the usual run-of-the-mill pictures reserving the professional services for selective shots," states Homyar Mistry of Homz Prints. He adds, "The clients' expectations should improve but they do not. They are satisfied with what they get... The layman just compares the per print price of Rs 2 advertised on hoardings with our rates but he does not realize that the quality is missing there."

Whilst caterers include their cartage charges depending on the venue, photographers do not keep varied rates. As states Nazneen Vajifdar of Spectravision Labs, "The first person who books me, gets me. My rates are fixed whether it is Cama Baug or the Turf Club." She has noticed that clients are budgeting but it is not at the expense of quality. Functions are not as formal as they used to be, she observes. "You will find fewer people dressed in saris and suits and more in western clothes and designer outfits."

"People now tend to spend more wisely," remarks Sarosh Daruwalla of Mazda Audio Video Lab adding that "consideration for the *moghu patru*" is the prime factor in extending and accepting invitations. After 20 years in the business he notes that those whose weddings he had shot invite him at the time

of their children's navjotes too. "We are almost like family photographers." Until the time of the wedding vows he chooses to shoot at his discretion and during the reception he acts on the client's instructions. To ensure that money rotates within the community he would like to generate employment among the community youngsters. Young college boys should be willing to earn by working as wiremen or holding lights at the time of shoots. Even caterers can use Parsis for serving food. "If youngsters can serve at McDonalds, why not at Parsi baugs too?" he muses. Allow different youngsters to offer recorded music at functions instead of certain baugs encouraging monopoly in certain areas, he recommends.

Live Parsi bands are but a handful today. More often than not recorded music entertains the guests because it comes as part of a package deal along with the photography or with the floral arrangements. But as one discerning organizer points out, the client cannot then expect high grade services in all the sectors because what the person is effectively doing is sub-contracting his business. Parsi bands come for Rs 5,000-6,000, almost the same price as recorded music, but the sound effects of a professional stereo system being better, some clients favor that since it is less jarring to the ears. Also there is the mistaken notion that all the 10 members of the band have to be treated to a free dinner. That is no longer the case. A non-Parsi band will charge three times the amount taken by a Parsi band, plus the members may sit down for a free meal without being invited, but those costs the hosts will bear, pointed out Daruwalla. Often those who offer recorded music have no knowledge of music themselves and are just interested in making fast money, regrets Mehernosh Tantra of Hijackers who is happy that people have now started coming back to bands.

While some customers give business to non-Parsis expecting better quality services, there are others who expect them to be cheaper. Among the Parsis who offer floral services, two complained about a non-Parsi florist who approaches Parsi customers claiming he is a sub-contractor for some Parsi florist. He then gives them a quote for the decorations which he assures will be a couple of thousands lower than that given by the Parsi florist who anyway will assign him the work. Customers who ask Parsi

florists for their estimates, realize that this florist in fact demands more than the competitors do.

Floral decorations for the bare essentials comes to nothing less than Rs 3,000 these days. It can go up to a couple of lakhs for clients with exotic tastes. Many Parsis are cutting down on floral arrangements on the rationale that it is a waste of money for the four hours they will be seen, states Sarosh Dumasia of Khushnuma Florist who has been in the business for 21 years. The demand for cutouts of Zarathushtra and a farohar as stage backdrops which were in vogue have now reduced by 30-40 percent, points out Dumasia. "This is because people are turning more religious and do not like the idea of scraping out flowers or throwing them away saying '*kachraa maa jaai to dil dookhai*' (sentiments are hurt if they are thrown away)."

Armaity Bamanbehram of Adil Florist explained that the stage backdrop is their main concern. Clients are offered a choice of 100 varieties from which they make their final selection. Along with the flowers there is a lot of cloth and net in use too now, says Tehmtan Dumasia of Shernaaz Florist. It's not just the stage and the aisles, even the tables and the rearside of chairs are important to those who have the resources to impress the guests.

Invitation cards are usually an indicator of the lavish expenditures that follow. "While many think that we should not waste money on *chithis* there are others who view this as an important expenditure, being the first impression they will create," points out Meher Chinoy of Union Press. An average, no frills card can cost Rs 3.50 a piece, not counting the Rs 4 postal stamp on the envelope, and the Rs 6 for the reply card. Some cards can cost as much as Rs 14 or 15 and there are the expensive ones which come upwards of Rs 35. While red ink is cheaper than gold or silver, fancy fonts come at a higher price. This season, in vogue are the three-fold invites printed on foreign machine-made paper or tissue paper or hand-made paper, reveals Chinoy who has nearly 200 designs on offer each season. For wedding invites the Christian designs (like the one showing a couple in a horse carriage) are gaining in popularity. For navjotes, the one with the traditional *ses* motif is most in demand, especially by those settled abroad. Liaising with their overseas clients on the e-mail, Union

Press now also offers them the facility of proofing and scanning their invites on the computer.

Would there be takers for certain products like puggies, if offered as a rental service, wonders Tehmtan Dumasia who is toying with the idea depending on the 'pugree bank' he is able to build. Instead of spending Rs 3,000 on a pugree which may be worn on just one or two occasions why not hire it for Rs 300? he questions. And if the rental scheme for puggies is successful, why not other products as well?

"We don't take any advance. We trust Parsis," is the sentiment echoed by all those who proffer different services on joyous occasions. As the shrewd business person realizes, it is not just profit margins which make them accept assignments; some are considered an exercise in image building. Ultimately everyone is concerned that the months of preparation result in a memorable celebration.

Baug rates

Gone are the days when people threw dice or picked lots to determine their chance of booking a baug on an auspicious day. Families may now book the baug, caterer, florist, videographer more than a year in advance to ensure that they get the services they require at a price they are willing to pay. The prices quoted should be verified with the baugs before booking. The rates may vary from those stated here.

The popular Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary at Colaba can be booked for Rs 30,000, not counting the lights which are arranged by Framroze Hormusji Pavri and Sons for Rs 15,000.

Another favorite venue is the Dadar Parsi Colony Gymkhana grounds which members can book for Rs 15,000 and non-members for Rs 80,000.

Allbless Baug costs Rs 12,000 per day with the lights provided by The Eastern Electric Light and Power Company Private Limited costing Rs 6,500 to Rs 17,000 (for jashans the lights cost Rs 3,300 and for a single otlā the cost is Rs 2,600).

The Banaji Atash Behram Hall can be booked from 4 p.m. to 12 midnight for Rs 12,000 with A/c or Rs 6,000 without A/c. This includes the cost of tables, chairs, electricity and compound lighting.

Saher Agiary can be had on a minimum donation of Rs 10,000 with a vari-

able extra payment for lights.

Elphinstone Cricket Club charges Rs 8,000 for a booking (done through a member) plus Rs 1,000 for lights and Rs 500-700 for music. If an outside caterer is to be brought they levy an additional Rs 3,000 plus Rs 1,000 as a refundable deposit after the place is cleaned up.

The Ripon Club in south Bombay also has to be booked through a member. The Club charges a per head rate of Rs 15 for a guest. Rs 350 has to be paid extra as lift charges. Catering can be done through the Club's caterer Rattan Elavia. Music has to be provided by the host himself.

Sohrab Palamkote Hall at Dadar can be booked for Rs 7,650 which includes the cost of lights, music and chairs.

The Athornan Boarding Madressa Hall at Dadar charges Rs 6,900 for a full day (8.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m.) booking (that includes the use of electricity, chairs and passage for cooking) of which Rs 1,000 is a refundable deposit. For a half day (2.30-8.30 p.m.) they charge Rs 4,700 of which Rs 1,000 is refundable.

Malcolm Baug permits the use of its compound from December to February on payment of Rs 6,000 plus Rs 480 being eight percent Government Service Tax. Off season rates from March

to November are Rs 4,000 plus Rs 320. Lights for the full compound cost Rs 14,500 and for the half compound, Rs 7,500. An optional water fountain with lights costs Rs 800. For recorded music from 6 to 10 p.m. the charges are Rs 4,500. If a live band is to be brought the cost is borne by the host. The use of the Hall during monsoons is permitted on payment of Rs 1,000 inclusive of lights.

The Cama Baug (big otlā) charges Rs 3,000 for the premises (of which Rs 1,000 is refundable), and Rs 5,000 for the lights. The manager arranges for recorded music at an additional cost of Rs 2,000.

The Dadysett Atash Behram at Fanaswadi charges Rs 1,000 for the use of the otlā and compound. Lights on extra payment are arranged by Eastern Electric.

The Sethna Agiary Hall can be booked for around Rs 800 with extra payment for lights and music.

For use of the Cama Baug (small otlā) ground floor premises the rates are Rs 500.

Chairs and tables too at different venues have to be arranged at extra cost and the rate per piece of furniture would vary as per the venue.

The Banaji Atash Behram Hall

For first birthdays, engagement ceremonies, anniversary functions, meetings... the cool confines of the renovated Seth Cowasji Behramji Banaji Atash Behram Hall opposite Charni Road railway station would be ideal, recommends Sarosh Daruwalla, the prime mover behind the refurbished project. With a comfortable seating capacity of 200 for a buffet meal and 300 for an auditorium style lecture/seminar, the barely 70-80 bookings in its first year of operations has disappointed Daruwalla.

The fact that several Parsis host certain exclusive functions in two-three star hotels convinced Daruwalla that there is a demand for such a facility. And instead of the money going to business groups outside the community why not encourage entrepreneurship within the community? was his rationale. There would be no monopoly of any services, be it catering, music, floral decorations or photography, he was determined. The initial costs of sprucing up the premises were shared jointly by him and Tanaz Godiwalla.

The Hall can be booked for Rs 12,000

if utilizing the airconditioning facility or for Rs 6,000 if the airconditioning is not required. These rates permit the use of the Hall from 4 p.m. to 12 midnight and include the cost of electricity and compound lights, 25 tables and 225 chairs. To change the ambience of the Hall, recently all the lights were changed from white to yellow. "The effect was fantastic," says Daruwalla who is now the sole promoter of the project after Godiwalla chose to withdraw her investment.

Considering that cooking is not permitted on the premises and a caterer has necessarily to start with partially cooked food, this deters many. Music too is permitted only until 9.30 p.m. if airconditioning is not used. If the airconditioning is utilized, the 10 p.m. deadline applies. Hall bookings are permitted only to Parsis in the expectation that the sanctity of the Atash Behram will be maintained. When one party chose to burst a stream of cacophonous firecrackers in the compound, the family was strongly reprimanded lest the incident set a precedent.



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