

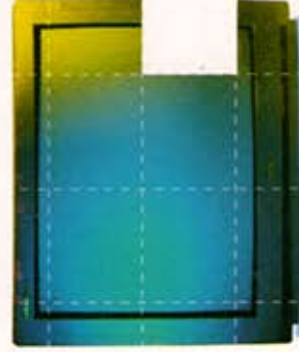
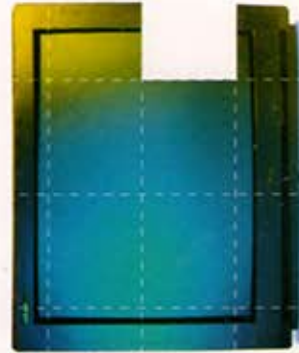
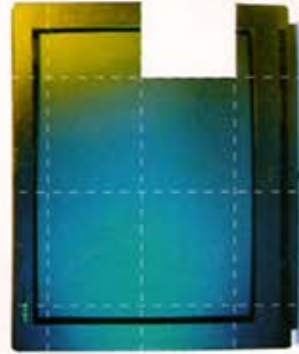


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Parsiana

April 2002
Volume 24 Number 9

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Photos: Varghese Fernandez

Parsiana is edited and published by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001 and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, A-191, Road No 16A, MIDC, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thana (W), 400604. All rights reserved. Processing Comart Lithographers. Editorial enquiries: 2078183. Advertising: 2078104, 2072915. Subscription: 2665661, 2662709. General: 2078730, 2072624. Fax: 2074541, 2075572. Press: 5804162. E-mail: parvo@giabm01.vsnl.net.in parsiana@yahoo.com parsiana@vsnl.net For subscription enquiries and payments: C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street (Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001. ISSN: 0971-3786.

Annual inland subscription for one year (12 issues) Rs 400; for two years (24 issues) Rs 750; for three years (36 issues) Rs 1,100. Foreign subscription rates: Seemil for one year Rs 675/ US \$ 15/UK £ 10/Euro 17; for two years Rs 1,250/US \$ 28/UK £ 19/Euro 32; for three years Rs 1,900/US \$ 41/UK £ 29/ Euro 48 (please allow six months or more for seemil delivery from the time of publication). Airmail for one year Rs 950/US \$ 21/ UK £ 14/ Euro 24; for two years Rs 1,800/US \$ 40/UK £ 27/Euro 45; for three years Rs 2,700/US \$ 60/ UK £ 40/Euro 68. For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 20 for bank charges; for US cheques add \$ 5; for UK cheques add £ 3; for Euro cheques add Euro 5. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana.



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"Be wary of 'worshippers'"

As prelates, our responsibility is to safeguard our religious institutions from untoward instances which are brought to our notice from time to time. With greater emphasis, we stand by what we have said in our earlier letter about the unfortunate Karani Agiary incident (see "Be wary of 'worshippers,'" Readers' Forum, Parsiana, March 2002).

Ardeshiri and many others like him have been visiting India to seek acceptance from the Parsi Zoroastrian community as they have not succeeded in gaining acceptance from any of the Zoroastrian anjumans in Iran. Does Ardeshiri have the right to enter our fire-temples without proving his Zoroastrian antecedents, which, one is entitled to know, if one suspects his Zoroastrian credentials? In fact, we have been given to understand that this person is not a Zoroastrian and has a political agenda which he wishes to promote

for his own ends, under the guise of claiming to be a Zoroastrian. Clearly, we have to safeguard our holy institutions from such untoward intrusions.

Prof Rustom Fuzaylov may be a distinguished academic in Tajikistan and we have nothing to say about his professional or personal interest in Zoroastrianism, as an academic wanting to transliterate the *Avesta* into the Cyrillic Tajik script.

Our objections are directed towards the fact that we have no incontrovertible proof of Fuzaylov being a Zoroastrian, having been properly initiated into the Zoroastrian faith by a priest who has the authority to do so from the Kankash-e-Mobedan in Iran. Moreover, if he is of Iranian origin, then he should carry some sort of *shanas nameh* (identity card) or a letter of admittance into the Zoroastrian fold duly given by the Kankash-e-Mobedan in Iran, accepting such a person.

We require to have clear proof that the Tajiks truly profess the Zoroastrian religion, as it is not good enough to state that due to the Communist rule over the last 80 years, they have been unable to practise Zoroastrianism. In fact, in our view, when there is religious persecution of any form, in any country of the world, the true followers of the faith practise the religion with greater zeal and determination. This does not seem to be the case with the Tajiks. Moreover, two respected Zoroastrians from London visited Tajikistan some years ago, with a questionnaire prepared by the University of London and they visited various places in order to find out, factually, as to whether the Tajiks who claim to be Zoroastrians hold any beliefs and practices which one could identify as being those of Zoroastrian Iran, either ancient or modern. The UK Zoroastrian gentlemen did not find any Zoroastrian traces in their travels in Tajikistan in terms of manuscripts, books, fire-temples, the living traditions, customs or ritual practices, etc. which clearly belie Master-Moos' claim of these people being flesh and blood Zoroastrians, practising their faith from ancient times. Clearly, if that was the case, then we should find solid evidence going back to the pre-Communist days, if it is a mere three generations back. But it does not so appear.

For us, as prelates, to accept the genuineness of the Tajiks being Zoroastrians, we require incontrovertible proof of living Zoroastrianism, albeit cloistered, to have existed before the Communist era. Until such evidence is presented to us we are unable to accept the claims of Master-Moos and her Tajik supporters and well-wishers.

In our opinion, the so-called Zoroastrian College run by Master-Moos does not conform to the rigorous requirements of a recognized institute of higher learning. The degrees so given by the Zoroastrian College should be recognized at accredited institutions which teach Iranian studies as part of their regular degree programs, like the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, or the University of Cambridge, UK or Harvard University, USA or the Universities of Gottingen and Heidelberg in Germany, to name but a few. These are some of the key centers of Zoroastrian studies which we are confident do not accept students passing out from the Zoroastrian College degree program run in Sanjan. Just because some institutions based abroad accept the bonafides of the so-called Zoroastrian College does not mean that we should lower our scholarship standards and accept the claims made by Master-Moos about her institution.

In our opinion, every Zoroastrian does not have an automatic right to enter our places of worship, as merely professing to be a Zoroastrian is not good enough. Tomorrow, anybody can claim to be Zoroastrian and so does it mean that they can walk into our agiaries and/or atash behrams? Moreover, admittance is open to someone who has to be a Parsi/Irani by lineal descent and is a duly initiated Zoroastrian by religion, in order for that person to enter the fire-temple, legally; and even then, the panthakies and/or the trustees of the fire-temples have the right to debar such a person wanting to enter our place of worship.

There is no question of violating the Constitution of India as has been alleged by Master-Moos in her letter to the Press; but common sense tells us that what we have stated is the normal custom and practice followed in India and therefore one's nationality plays no part in this matter. Indeed Parsi/Irani

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Zoroastrians who live in Canada and have Canadian citizenship will be permitted to enter the fire-temples in India by virtue of the fact that they are Parsis/Iranis as of race and they have been duly admitted as Zoroastrians, as of the religion. Clearly, Master-Moos' "friends" from Tajikistan do not fall into this category.

It would help if Master-Moos adhered to proper religious scholarship and sought to run courses based upon accredited academic standards, rather than seeking to give us advice which we believe to be erroneous and misleading, in the first instance. In our opinion, there is no shortcut one can take if one wants to be a true scholar of the religion, for which full-time studies at a proper university are required. Unfortunately, no amount of 'anointed titles' before one's name can give one credibility of true learning and scholarship.

It is unfortunate that at a time when the community is riddled with controversy another storm is being created by Master-Moos who has sought to promote her own agenda against the well-established practices and customs of the Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian communities in India. Incidentally, the word 'dastur' is derived from Pahlavi *dastwar* which means 'one who wields authority,' especially a Zoroastrian priest [in Avestan, *dastvaan* (Y.46.7)] and not as Master-Moos has wrongly interpreted 'to lead by the hand.'

We sincerely hope that in the future Master-Moos will desist from misleading our people about the customs and practices of the Zoroastrian faith preserved and followed by the Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian communities living in the traditionally known pockets of the world.

Dastur (Dr) KAIKHUSROO M. JAMASPASA
High Priest, Anjuman Atash Behram
Dastur (Dr) FIROZE M. KOTWAL
High Priest

"The need to nurture"

The article "The need to nurture" (Zoroastrians Abroad, *Parsiana*, September 2001) is a well researched, balanced and positive account of events as they occurred, and the current situation.

Unfortunately, one of the fallouts of the article is the (additional) furore that has been caused by the misrepresentation of facts reflected in the article by some members of the community.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify

the scope of the Secret Women's Business (SWB) conference, and the results of the survey completed at the SWB.

SWB was convened to:

- map a vision for the future of the community
- gather information through discussion and a survey on the community's concerns and requirements; to help set goals to achieve this vision
- foster goodwill, cooperation and understanding in the community.

The purpose of the SWB survey was to collect information on general social problems which have an impact on, or are of concern to the community.

The SWB report reflects the results (raw data and percentages) of the survey. Forty-three attendees completed the survey, out of a community of over 1,000. The survey does not reflect that 30 percent of the community are homosexual. It just highlights the survey respondents' level of concern on various issues, including homosexuality. (It seems that homophobia is rampant, as none of the other more pressing concerns are singled out with the same degree of fear and vitriol.)

It is sad to see Dinaz Mistry's efforts being denigrated by a small minority who are using this as a platform for self-aggrandizement at the expense of the welfare of the community.

We should be asserting our future identity in the wider Australian community by creating a reputation for being a well educated, broad-minded, generous, progressive and flexible community that embraces change. Instead we seem to be choosing to remain static, becoming increasingly phobic and insular.

VIRSTINE YASDANPARAST
Sydney, Australia

Move to Mhow

The recent unfortunate turmoil in Gujarat must have badly affected the lives and business of our coreligionists there. Many of them may wish to live away from the embittered atmosphere in their locality.

I have repeatedly stressed at meetings of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India that our Anjuman has accommodation available immediately at very moderate rates.

Mhow is a cantonment, about 2,000 feet above sea level with a salubrious climate, where the cost of living is comparatively low.

For those who want business and job

opportunities, the industrial estate at Pithampur is about six miles away, and that at Indore, a bare 15.

We have an adarian saheb and a dakhma for over 150 years. Those interested in relocating can contact the undersigned at 120 Simrole Road, Mhow, Madhya Pradesh 453441. B.M. MASANI
President, Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, Mhow

Why deny prayers?

"They said no to the prayers for my husband..." choked the staid, frail lady in her mid-80s when she was denied prayers for her pucca Parsi Zoroastrian husband who opted for cremation. What was being asked? Just prayers. Is it something to be bargained for? Will the Almighty not accept the prayers offered for a cremated soul? Will only a soul consigned to the dakhma find the gates of paradise wide open to him?

More and more people are opting for other forms of disposal instead of the age-old system of dakhmenashini. Certain choices are best left to the wishes of the people concerned because what was good at one time is not necessarily acceptable today in this age and time. All over the world and in many parts of India dakhmas are not there, so burials and cremations are done by the mobeds with full prayers and funeral rites. Then why this problem by the orthodox lobby?

Moreover the priests themselves have no common consensus as there are many mobeds who say the prayers for those cremated or buried and still continue to do their duties in the fire-temples. If this be the case then why should the punchayets and anjumans debar the priests from praying? Prayers are not a matter to quarrel over, so why harass an already harassed mobed with orthodox diktats? Let prayers be free for all, because denying the recitation of our four-day prayers is one of the worst options, specially when prayers should be a source of strength and solace to the bereaved family. It is also believed that the vibrations of our beautiful prayers guide the departed soul to its heavenly abode.

"*Paramparaa thi chaaltu aavélu chhè* (this has been the tradition for ages)" needs to be upgraded and logical solutions are the need of the day.

RODA D. HAKIM
Baroda

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Kaus Rustam Jalal I give below some gleanings from *Parsee Prakash* which may be of interest to your readers.

He was the first Vada Dastur of the Kadmi sect and head of the Mullafiroz family. He was originally a native of Bharuch. He was fluent in Persian and Arabic. In 1767, when the conflict over differences in *roz/mah* was at its peak in Surat, Seth Dhanjisha Manjisha found him to be capable in every respect and sent him to Iran to find out about the Kabeesa differences. He left for Iran along with his eight-year-old son Peshotan (who later became Dastur Mulla Firoz) on March 20, 1768. He traveled to Yazd, Kerman, Isafahan, Shiraz, Rum. He had an audience with Shah Mohammed Karim Khan, the Shah of Iran. He returned to Surat after 12 years on February 9, 1780. As Seth Dhanjisha Manjisha had gone to Bombay, Mulla Kaus came to Bombay and got to know Seth Dady Noshervanji Dadyseth who expressed his desire to consecrate an atash behram in Bombay, according to Kadmi tradition. All the consecration ceremonies were performed under his leadership. The sacred fire was enthroned on September 27, 1783. On that very day, he was appointed the Vada Dastur of the Kadmi Anjuman.

Later he entrusted the post of Vada Dastur to his son Mulla Firoz and left for Hyderabad in 1794. He got acquainted with the Nizam through the help of a Parsi official Seth Noshirwanji Raja. His influence at the Nizam's court increased. He spent the rest of his life trading at Hyderabad and passed away there. His grave is still in Hyderabad. He wrote two books, one on the Kabeesa conflict and another *Maqulaate Bahamani*. He passed away on *roz* Ram, *mah* Shahrevar (Kadmi) 1171 Yazdegirdi, February 26, 1802 at age 69.

On the subject of Parsis in business, *Parsee Prakash* reports:

A meeting of European and native traders was held on September 22, 1836 at Customs House to consider establishing a Chamber of Commerce in Bombay. A resolution was passed to establish such a Chamber. Thereafter, another meeting was held on September 24, 1836 to frame the rules and regulations of this body. A managing committee of three Englishmen and three Parsis was set up which included Seths Dadabhai Pestonji Wadia,

Dadybhai Kharshedji Ardeshir Dadyseth and Jehangirji Nusserwanji Wadia. The names of the following Parsi businessmen/enterprises figured in the list of members: Seth Kharshedji Ardeshir Dady and Company, Faramji Cowasjee Banaji, Mancherji Pestonji Wadia, Jehangirji Nusserwanji Wadia, Manekji Navrozji Faramji Cowasjee, Jejeebhoy Dadabhoy and Company, Faramji Pestonji Moos, Furdunji Limji Panday and Sons. According to a report in *The Bombay Courier* of October 22, 1836: "The committee of the above Chamber of Commerce wrote to the chief secretary of the government Mr Wathan on September 30, 1836 and requested that the government help it in matters pertaining to trade and commerce." In reply, the government in its letter dated October 15, 1836 wrote that the government is pleased to note that such a chamber has been established and that the government will extend it all kinds of assistance.

Several Parsi businessmen of Bombay started an insurance company by the name of Parsi Insurance Society on September 28, 1844. This company issued 102 shares each of Rs 1,500. The entire capital was in the name of Seth Jejeebhoy Dadabhoy and Nusserwanji Kharshedji Jussawalla as trustees. The names of Parsi businessmen are given in the *Bombay Times* of September 1844. These included Seth Jejeebhoy Dadabhoy, Jehangirji Nusserwanji Jussawalla, Faramji Nusserwanji Batliwalla, Jivanji Edulji Appu, Dinshaw Dadabhai Gandhi.

MARZBAN GIARA

The blessed well

The Sorabji Thoothi Agiary Trust has recently issued an appeal for donations for repairs and renovation of the 142-year-old Agiary, situated at Walkeshwar Road.

In the said appeal, there appears an "Untold story of spiritual beneficence," which I want to share with all members of our Zoroastrian faith.

According to the story, when consecrating the sacred well of the Agiary, it spewed salt water which many considered to be an inauspicious omen. Nevertheless, Cooverbai Thoothi, the founder of the Agiary, was undaunted. Despite her old age, she called upon the workers to lower her on a wooden platform into the well, which is nearly 85

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Events and Personalities

Unity in variety

"To perpetuate the memory of a great son of the soil it is our foremost duty and responsibility to strive to achieve the ideals that were dear to his heart," remarked M. M. Rajendran, governor of Orissa, in the course of his speech as chief guest at the meet organized by the Dadabhai Naoroji International Society (DNIS) on March 30, 2002 in memory of the political activist, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress and the first Asian Member of Parliament in the British Parliament. Describing Naoroji as "one of our tallest leaders of the freedom movement, tall not in physical stature but in his deep insight into Indian psyche, his integrity, undisputed qualities of leadership and his remarkable ability to anticipate the course of events," Rajendran added, "he became a legend in his own lifetime."

The function at the Indian Merchants' Chamber was honoring 12 awardees with the Dadabhai Naoroji Millennium Award-2002 in the presence of the Society's president and secretary-general Dr L. M. Singhvi and Dr S. S. Mohapatra respectively, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Jamshed Guzder, member of the Government of India's National Commission on Labour Arvind R. Doshi, economist Y. P. Trivedi and Samajwadi Party member Amar Singh.

Referring to the antecedents of DNIS, general secretary Homai Modi stated that it was set up 10 years ago to celebrate Dadabhai's parliamentary centenary when at a function in Bombay's Raj Bhavan, the then governor C. Subramaniam presided and J. R. D. Tata was the chief guest. The motivating force behind a corresponding celebration in London was Singhvi, then

the Indian consul in UK, noted Modi. Presently "the live wire of our International Society (with branches in Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Bangalore) is former Member of Parliament Mohapatra while the London branch is under



From left: Modi, Trivedi, Guzder, Singhvi, Rajendran, Ms Rajendran, Mohapatra, Singh and Doshi

the leadership of Lord Swaraj Paul," stated Modi.

Of the 12 awardees selected this year, three were Zoroastrians: Dr Aban Mistry, Jehangir Sabavala and Jehangir Nicholson. Tabla maestro, musicologist and scholar Mistry "has performed all over the world and is affiliated to over 15 universities as a visiting professor and examiner." Senior artist Sabavala has the distinction of holding 30 one-man exhibitions and participating in over 100 group shows. "He is a remarkable example of a cultural bridge that links the past with the present and the east with the west," introduced Modi. The posthumous award for former sheriff, art collector and rallyist Nicholson was accepted by his close friend Guzder.

The others who had come in person to receive their awards were cinestar Amitabh Bachchan, producer-director G. P. Sippy, managing director of Mukand Limited Niraj Bajaj, beauty therapist Minati Das, social activist Sampat Raj Jain and educationist R. P.

Kathuria. Film producer Dr B. R. Chopra, secretary-general of the Minorities Commission Sarita Das and Indian Administrative Service officer Ujjagar Singh received their awards in absentia.

For the awardees and the audience from different religious and social backgrounds, Rajendran's views on the subject of "National unity and secularism" were of significance in a communally torn India, especially his words, "Beneath all the manifold variety there is an underlying fundamental unity of the people...If we consciously preserve and promote this deeper unity in the lives of our people without emphasizing the differences born out of politics, there will be further growth in our understanding of the people's way of life and their values."

Lauding the League

Children who have displayed extraordinary courage and presence of mind in overcoming a dangerous situation will be rewarded with a trophy beginning next year, announced Cowasjee Dinshaw, vice president of the Iran League as he presided over the function at Cama Baug to celebrate the League's 80th anniversary on March 2, 2002. The award in memory of Arbab Maneckji Limji Hataria was gifted by his great-grandson Tehmtan Davar, acknowledged Dinshaw.

Chief guest Jamshed Guzder, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), referred to the problems facing the community and lauding the work of the Iran League promised a donation of Rs 50,000. Guest of honor, eminent solicitor Burjor Antia stressed the importance of hard work and whilst commending the League for regularly encouraging the community youth gave a



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At the Iran League function (from left): Cyrus Lalkaka, Guzder, Dinshaw, B. Antia, R. Antia, Dastur with madressa students

donation of Rs 10,001.

BPP trustees Dadi Engineer and Rustom Tirandaz too were appreciative of the League's services and Engineer announced a donation of Rs 10,000 to further the League's activities. Elaborating on the different activities of the League, convener Vispi Dastur remarked that the numerous competitions are held to ensure that the Zoroastrian religion and Parsi/Irani culture and traditions are not forgotten.

The evening function commenced with a jashan ceremony performed by Ervad Keki Raoji, panthaky of the Cama Baug agiary and his son Ervad Farzad. The young students of the Dadar Athornan Madressa and the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute then rendered a hambandagi.

As senior judge Silloo Shapoorjee announced the prize winners, 34 trophies, 21 silver medals (*Shahnameh* Proficiency Medals) presented by Dinshaw, 170 cash prizes and religious books donated by the F. H. Settna Legacy Trust and Ervad Yazdi Aibara were distributed by Guzder and Roshen Antia. Following monajats sung by Homai Bulsara and Marzban Mehta, the evening drew to a close with the customary singing of *Chhaiyé hamé Zarathoshti* and the national anthem, after which came a contributory dinner catered by Minoo Bharucha.

Campaigner and crusader

Described as "an epitome of courage under adverse circumstances and a relentless campaigner for the rights of women and the oppressed," Alice Garg was among the two recipients selected for the prestigious Neerja Bhanot Award 2000. The award which carries an inscribed silver salver and citation as also

a cash prize of Rs 1,50,000 was presented to her last month by Gen Jacob (Retd), lieutenant governor of Chandigarh, and governor, Punjab and Haryana, in memory of the brave airhostess who died trying to save the lives of other passengers on the Pan Am flight hijacked in Karachi in 1986.

Garg's spirited attempts in 1997-98 to book well-placed criminals involved in rape, gang rape and molestation whom the government was allegedly trying to shield resulted in "my co-workers, my family and I (undergoing) a very severe and sustained victimization campaign launched at the behest of the powers that be...It is only after going through the due process of the law...that we have recently succeeded in coming out unscathed and unblemished," explained Garg in response to *Parsiiana's* queries.

As honorary founder secretary of Bal Rashmi, an organization founded in Jaipur on Children's Day, 1972 which has for its motto—Save Children, Save Generation—Garg started out looking after the welfare of four children. Over the years the numbers have crossed 1,000. Their experience with these destitute children made them realize that until the welfare of the family as a unit, especially the empowerment of the girl child and women is pursued, children's welfare would remain a distant dream. They therefore have been implementing programs in 184 villages in the districts of Jaipur, Dausa, Tonk and Sawai Madhopur in Rajasthan, covering formal/non-formal education, awareness against injurious social practices, constitutional and human rights, micro-credit financing, plus community development programs like electrification of villages and hamlets, safe drinking water, harvesting of run-off rain water, rural health and economic development, according to an introduction to the organization.

"Zoroastrian women have not been well treated either by the Zoroastrian

society itself or by others," maintains Garg. While many studies attribute higher education and economic emancipation as the main reasons for late or non marriage of Zoroastrian women, Garg believes the prevailing dowry system is a contributing factor. "Most families just cannot afford such expenses and hence the girls in the Parsi families must remain unmarried..." She was also unhappy about "the rigidity of the community against recognizing a Parsi marrying out of his/her religion... The community must show more courage and not only (accept) the Parsi women and their children born of an interreligious marriage but also show magnanimity to recognize the non-Parsi spouses as Parsis if they so wish... The more the community mixes with others (it does not necessarily mean marriage) the more confidence it will develop in itself and the more interest others will show in the survival of this great culture."

Married to Krishna B. Garg who retired as professor of physics from the University of Rajasthan in 1995 but continues with his research projects, the couple have two daughters. Vatsala who is self-employed, markets ophthalmic equipment while her husband



Garg: empowering women

Anil Khurana runs a steel furniture factory. The younger daughter Vandana who obtained her masters degree in public health from the University of Carolina now assists the Rashmi Organization with her

program on the girl child and community development while her husband Tarun Mishra is a medical practitioner involved with Rashmi's rural health program.

Born in Nasirabad (Ajmer district) where her father Khan Bahadur Rustomji Kaka looked after the ancestral Framji family business and officiated as honorary magistrate until his untimely demise in a car accident at a very young age, Alice was educated and brought up by her mother and grandmother in Jaipur. To commemorate the father's memory the family has set up the Rustomji Foundation to which Garg donated her Bhanot Award money. The immediate aim of the Rustomji Foundation is the setting up of the first museum of seashells in India, collect-

ing seashells being a long-standing hobby of Alice who already has about 2,000 in her custody.

For eight years Alice was a teacher before she opted to become a voluntary social worker in which capacity she has worked on innumerable district and state level advisory committees on health and hospitals, women and children's welfare, literacy, education and research... Since 1994 when she was conferred the Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Award, she had been winning recognition almost every year, adds the bio data.

The Sholapurwala story

Seated beside the placid pool of the Taj Mahal Hotel, she received congratulations with composure. In her red and gold sari, she navigated, gently assisted by two granddaughters, the couple of steps to cut the cake whose contours read 100. Amidst family, friends, flowers and festivity, Tehmina K. Sholapurwala celebrated in style her 100th birthday, with the well-known Poonawalla brothers — Dr Cyrus and Zavaray

— and their Serum International Limited hosting a lavish party in her honor on March 9, 2002 in Bombay.

"I could not attend Tehmina's 95th birthday celebration. At that time I had promised that I would like to give her a big (centenary) celebration," said Cyrus, the dapper chairman of the Serum Institute of India (the country's largest exporter of vaccines and immunobiologicals, according to their brochure) and the Poonawalla Stud Farms (leaders in the racehorse breeding scene in India). Six months ago, when Tehmina fell ill, Cyrus was worried his desire would not be fulfilled. "I am very happy today to felicitate Tehmina and Pesi (her eldest son, who is a director of Serum International and the development adviser of Serum Institute)," he stated, presenting mother and son shawls and mementos. Long years ago when the Serum Institute was still finding its feet, narrated Cyrus, he would often drop in unannounced at the Sholapur-

walas' breakfast table and would receive help and guidance towards building the business from both mother and son.

Zavaray, winner of several awards for equine breeding and welfare activities, commended the Sholapurwala family's loyalty, declaring that Pesi's dedication to the Poonawalla Group often surpassed even his dedication to himself! "I am overwhelmed," replied the octogenarian Pesi, emotionally acknowledging the tributes.

As the guests feasted on the epicurean delights spread out under the canopy of stars and sky, relatives and friends wrote their recollections and experiences of the Sholapurwala family in a competition which attracted 13 on-the-spot entries! Shaking a leg enthusiastically amidst the other couples on the dance floor were Zavaray and his wife Behroze, celebrating their wedding anniversary.

The "matriarch with the three musketeers (Pesi, Firoz and Hector)" as Tehmina is sometimes referred to, was born in 1902 in Dohad, some miles away from the now-notorious and even then communally sensitive town of Godra in Gujarat. Her parents, Maneckji and Dinbai Contractor, lived in a big house in what was at that time virtually a tribal town with few facilities. Sent to a school in Baroda, Tehmina was soon recalled by her grandmother who believed girls should only be taught at home. At 17, she was married to Kaikhusharu, a police officer, and life for the couple thereafter involved a series of transfers. "My mother has lived in over 30 different houses," says Pesi. A large part of her life was spent in Baroda, at that time a town of beautiful gardens where Indian classical music would be played every Sunday and Western classical music every full moon night. "My grandmother loves embroidery and has made many beautiful *kors* and purses," Rukshana (Firoz's daughter) told *Parsiana*. She has written a book on embroidery and her handiwork was admired even by the Maharani of Baroda, adds Pesi.

Tehmina's talents encompass cooking and baking, particularly cakes. "It was she who encouraged me when I set up my catering venture in the mid-80s," asserts Rukshana, noting that the matriarch still retains her zest for life. "She must go out morning and evening even now and she comes regularly by car to Dadar to visit us (from Cuffe Parade

Centenarian Tehmina Sholapurwala (below) and (alongside) with son Pesi (third from left), Dr Cyrus (with mike) and Zavaray Poonawalla; the Sholapurwala family





Dr Homi Dhalla (far right) was invited by the World Chinese Buddhist Sangha Congress and the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China to attend the International Conference on Religious Cooperation at Taipei, Taiwan in November 2001. On the last day, one representative from each faith was invited by Chen Shui-bian, the President of the Republic of China, to the presidential palace, notes a press release



Five Zoroastrian retired police officers were felicitated with specially engraved medals on the occasion of the 12th anniversary of the Parvez Katrak Foundation on March 11, 2002. (From left): Pesi Doctor, Minoo Irani, Homi Irani, social worker Arnavaz Khan who presented the honors, Katrak, chief guest Vijay Chandanshive (presently assistant commissioner of police), Namdar Kermani and Sam Patel.

where she and Pesi, a bachelor, reside." She has to climb up two flights of stairs here, exclaims Firoz's wife Roshan adding that Tehmina has been, and still is, a pillar of strength to the whole family. "Though she forgets things sometimes, she has retained her wit and if there is a problem, she will surely come out with some remedy or other! She has been more than a mother to me," declares the daughter-in-law.

While Dara, one of Tehmina's sons, died in his early teens, a major crisis in her life developed in 1947 when Firoz was almost fatally injured (Kaikhusharu died a few months later). Pesi recounts the story: A police officer at that time in Godra, Firoz was on patrol duty on a cycle with a fellow officer in what was, even half a century ago, a volatile town when an assailant struck him violently on the head from behind with a wooden stick topped with a piece of iron. Though his hat provided some protection his skull cracked and he was rushed to the civil hospital. While he lay unconscious, the townspeople sang bhajans for several days for his recovery. The culprits were apprehended and even visited him in the hospital. But Godra had neither a brain surgeon nor facilities for such surgery. The railways provided a free coach and the patient was transported, at the risk of perishing during the journey, to well-known brain surgeon Dr S. R. Mulgaonkar's hospital at Gowalia Tank in Bombay. A total of 16 operations, five of them major, over two years succeeded in removing most of the pieces of embedded bone, but even today there

remains a channel in his head (covered mostly with a Parsi topi) and the brain membrane is visible. From being bedridden, Firoz became slowly mobile, though partial right leg and right arm paralysis remains. He then started a pharmaceutical business called Roc Pharmaceuticals, walking with the help of a stick and personally visiting doctors to promote his product, selling it off only recently.

"I have never seen my mother cry. She is a very strong person, though she has never used this strength in a wrong way," asserts Pesi, adding with a twinkle that he had a strong suspicion she used to make up her own proverbs! "Mariam né Minnie ni vaché ek sari, ek péré to beejughaari (Mariam and Minnie share a sari, when one is covered the other is bare)," he quotes, as an example of his mother's creativity!

Elaborating on Tehmina's connection with the Poonawallas, Pesi says he joined the company in 1970 and while the laboratory was being built and strengthened at Hadapsar in Poona, Pesi started and consolidated the marketing set-up in Bombay. When Interfarma Distribution was formed in the same year Tehmina was one of the partners, withdrawing only in the 1980s when the company's constitution was changed, though family bonds remained.

While Firoz has three daughters, Hector (who lives in Ahmedabad where he was an accountant with a bank and who could not attend the function because of the riots in Gujarat) has two sons based in Bangalore, one of whom, Zarir, runs a specialized laboratory un-

der the name Zeonics which is recognized by the Government of India and which makes custom built items for defence purposes, narrates uncle Pesi with pride. Tehmina has five great-grandchildren. "We are a very close-knit family. There is no kajio-kankas (friction)," says Pesi, taking a proverbial chip off the old block! Hilla P. Guzder

Honoring the humanist

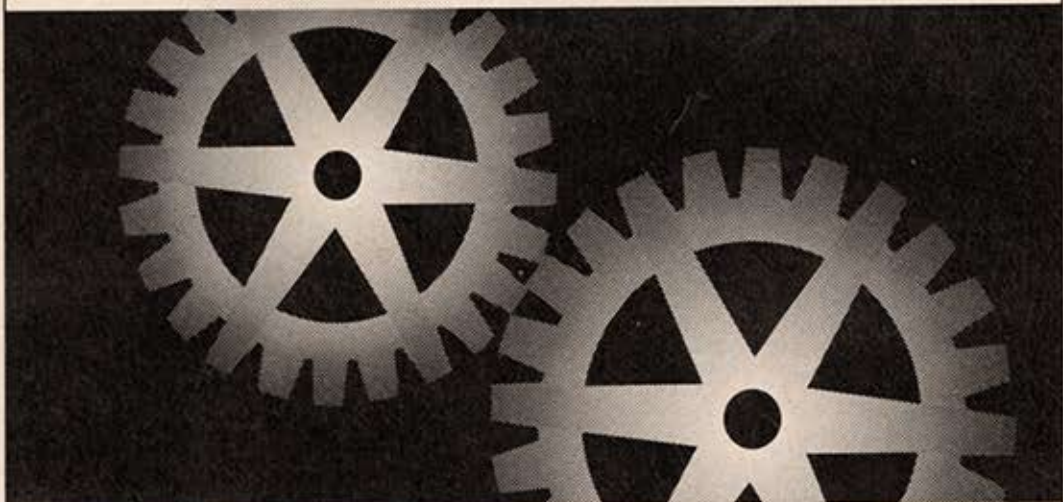
"Today we the assembly of his friends, admirers and well-wishers and those whose lives he has touched with the wand of compassion, care, concern and the human spirit, honor and salute him for what he and his life have stood for," read the citation presented to Bangalore's Dr Manchershya Disawalla on March 1, 2002. The congregation numbering over 200 had gathered at the Indiranagar Club to express "a spontaneous groundswell of gratitude" to Disawalla and his wife Dr Gool on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary.

Disawalla's "humanism has been the most outstanding and basic essence of his life," added the citation read by the evening's master of ceremonies Rashid Minocher. The citation scroll was presented to him by Vijaya Devi, sister of the last Maharaja of Mysore, the late Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar, and erstwhile head of the Bangalore Music Arts Society with which Disawalla too was involved. Eminent orthopedic surgeon Dr Hemant Kalyan then presented him the shawl as two doyennes of the community Tehmi Navroji and Pervez

continued on page 42

*“ In all things that are purely social
we can be as separate as the fingers,
yet one as the hand
in all things essential to mutual progress ”*

- Booker T. Washington



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Life in the Canadian tundra

Their professional commitments draw the Panthaky family to different parts of the world

Arnavaz S. Mama

Jai Panthaky's eyes twinkled a greeting from her hospital bed. The diminutive lady from Udvada who had spurred and supported her architect husband Noshir to accept an assignment in Zambia and then in the Canadian tundra saw her heart attack on the eve of her homeward flight to Toronto as a chance to meet up with the friends and relatives whom she had missed out during this visit to India after 23 years! In their own way the Panthakys demonstrate the fabled adventurousness of earlier generations of Parsis who pioneered their niche in various locales around the world.

When the eastern and central part of Canada's vast North West Territories (NWT) was ceded by the federal government to the original Inuit people ("Eskimo" is now considered a derogatory term) after 30+ years of negotiation, they renamed it Nunavut, meaning "our land," Noshir explained the genesis of his unique venture. Yellowknife had been and continues as the capital of the remaining NWT. From April 1, 1999 however Iqaluit further north became the capital of Nunavut whose area according to Noshir comprises one-fifth of Canada and includes the Baffin Islands, the fourth largest in the world. With permafrost or solid ice two feet below the ground and extending perhaps to 100 ft or more, houses and offices are constructed on stilts, not directly. There are no basements and the buildings are oil heated. With 10 months of winter when the sun rises around 8.30 a.m. and sets by 1.30 p.m. and two months of spring, summer (with 22 hours of daylight when tundra grass and flowers gladden the eye for two to three weeks) and autumn, "everything is white, covered in snow and ice; there are no trees, no grass; just mountains of ice and snow!" Noshir described his Arctic wonderland.

For six-and-a-half years Noshir and

Jai lived in a one-room apartment in Kuujuaq, the northernmost town of Quebec before the Hudson Bay, and in Iqaluit. There were no windows, only glass, the closed homes restricting cui-



The Panthakys (from left): Jai, Noshir and Ruby Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama

sine to oven cookery. While Noshir, as project officer for the Nunavut administration, was occupied in creating infrastructure like hospitals, schools, medical centers, trucking centers, etc, Jai busied herself with work at the daycare center and took up large cross-stitch embroidery, mind games and crossword puzzles to pass her time. Stamp and coin collecting, Indian and Western classical music were interests they shared.

Iqaluit had one main road, called Ring Road, two shops and no cinema until much later. "When we went the population was 3,700. And when we left (to return to Toronto) it was 5,500. It was a joke that the whole population of Iqaluit would fit in one Toronto highrise!" laughed Noshir. All consumer items including food are flown in from southern Canada, especially Quebec and "during blizzards everything is suspended. You can't go out. You'd be frozen to death."

The total Nunavut population of about 25,000, according to Noshir's

estimate, is comprised of small towns (called communities) of 100 to 1,000 people. There were four schools and one hospital in the entire territory. Stone cairns, in the shape of a man, called *inukshuks*, show direction in the bewildering terrain.

The Canadian federal government in Ottawa bears 90 percent of the cost of running the country's three native territories: Yukon, NWT and Nunavut, says Noshir. The Inuit, who speak Inuktitut and consume a lot of raw fish and caribou in their diet, lost the art of igloo making when the government moved them into houses. With Germans, Scandinavians and US Americans

spending thousands of tourist dollars to see "the last remaining unspoiled place on earth," tourism is the upcoming industry. The Panthakys describe the Inuit as "very nice people, always smiling." With a social background of joint families there was no beggary in evidence.

An alumnus of Bombay's St Xavier's School and Siddharth College, Noshir graduated with a five-year course from the Academy of Architecture. After 11 years in the profession in India, spent at Hindustan Construction, the engineering and contracting firm of the Walchand Group, Bharat Tiles and some independent experience, Noshir with Jai (née Patel) and their son Phiroze (currently a software engineer with IBM), agreed to do a seven-year stint in Zambia at the invitation of his brother. Their daughter Ruby was born there in 1972.

The couple, who have three brothers and a sister also settled in North America, applied for immigration to both USA and Canada and succeeded in getting both but opted for Canada, arriving in Windsor, the automotive capital of Canada, in 1978, where Noshir found a job with a private architectural firm. The acute recession of late 1980s-



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early 90s saw the firm disintegrate and the family moved to Toronto where Noshir, working on his own, opted for the Ontario government's course on facilities planning and Jai, a scion of Udvada's King's Hotel whom Noshir describes as a very modest but excellent cook ("her malido and batasa are well-known!"), kept the home fires burning with her culinary skills.

Noshir's was among the last of the 300 applications for the one or two positions advertised by the NWT. After a few weeks he was interviewed over the phone by four different people. Some weeks of silence thereafter a phone call summoned him for a personal interview. In the course of his four-hour flight via Montreal, he took photographs of the mountains of snow and ice to show Jai and learned that the average temperature in that part of the world hovered around -35°C. He returned and "told Jai, 'aaprēthi kai rehvai nahi (we can't possibly live there).' But Jai said, 'You knocked on the door and it's been opened!'" Noshir wanted to finish his facilities planning course but the people at NWT refused to wait. Packing his bags, equipped with sunglasses and heavy boots, Noshir says he set out for Kujjawaq where Jai joined him later.

By 1998 the economic scenario had improved and after a spell of violent diarrhoea which required him to be flown by mediplane to Ottawa for 11 days of intensive care, Noshir returned to private practice in Toronto in October 2000.

Parsiana's first contact with the intrepid Panthakys came as a chance encounter with the tall, fair Ruby in Delhi's Mengusi Dharamshala. A lawyer with a passionate dedication to human rights, she was enjoying her six-month tenure as junior professional consultant with the Delhi arm of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), interviewing refugees from Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran and Myanmar to determine how they fit into the UN Convention on Refugees. Depending on the reports of Ruby and her teammates, the officers would proceed to assess the cases. Once selected for refugee status, individuals are issued refugee certificates which grant them UNHCR protection, financial assistance for their children's education, the acquisition of new skills and legal protection if they fall foul of Indian law, Ruby informed us. This refugee certificate needs to be annu-ally renewed.

Sometimes, says Ruby, the refugees

let their certificates lapse. Such cases "need to be reinstated depending on their legal behavior. Sometimes they go back to the country of origin. If they could have stayed there, did they need to come back?" are some of the facets of refugee life examined by the UNHCR, notes Ruby. The solutions, she says, vary between voluntary repatriation, integration into local society or resettlement in a third country.

The varied languages of the refugees often require interpreters. While Africans generally speak English, refugees of Afghan, Burmese, Russian extraction are helped along by compatriots who have settled in India and speak Hindi. According to Ruby, the majority of refugees in India are urban and generally integrate well into the local society.

An LLB from the University of Windsor with a BSc in psychology, political science and criminology from the University of Toronto, Ruby was always keen to work with the UN in international law and specifically human rights law. Since Canada is "over represented in the UN at the beginner's level," Ruby's determined striving led the UN Association of Canada to find this six-month placement for her with

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Refurbishing the Parsee General Hospital

Arnavaz S. Mama

International Zarathushti philanthropists pour in their donations to help the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital meet its community obligations in the 21st century

"The special need of the hour is a corpus for the welfare of poor patients. (Let me) start with a humble beginning with a contribution of Rs 15 million towards a corpus for medicines supplied free to in-patients," declared Hongkong philanthropist Keki Jokhi. The surprise gift brought the audience, invited by president Homa Petit and the executive committee of the Bomanjee Dinshaw Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) to witness the inauguration of its refurbished Extension A (popularly referred to as the nursing home), to its feet in a standing ovation on January 3, 2002.

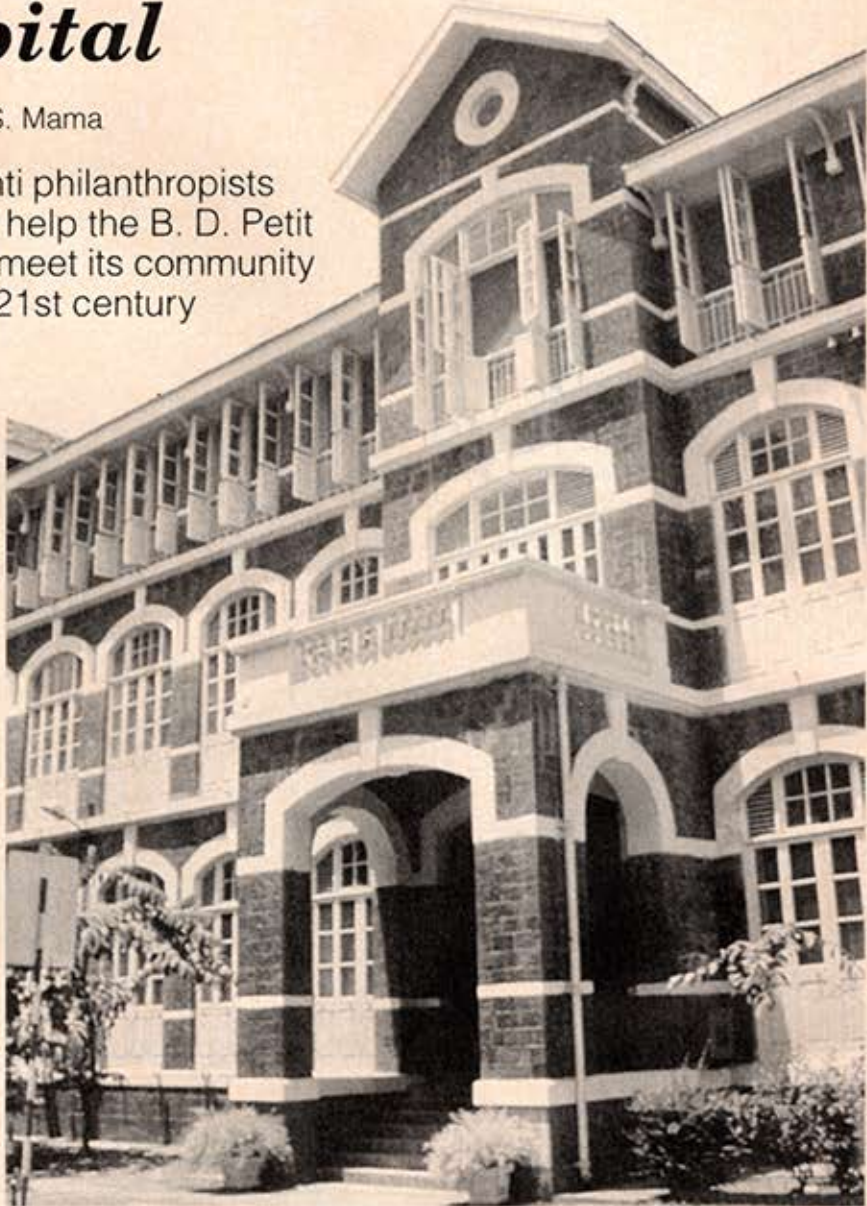
Jokhi's largesse capped his earlier Rs 2.7 crore donation which, together with two similar amounts from Mehraban and the late Faridoon Zartoshty of Iran and Canada, and the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macau, had enabled the PGH management to completely restructure the two-storied building endowed in 1910 as the Avabai Framji Petit Obstetric Hospital.

Within the overall confines of the Hospital building's heritage status architect Rusi Khambatta has created a spanking new layout comprising 22 rooms on the second floor, 19 rooms plus a delivery suite on the first floor and 19 rooms plus one with four beds for daycare (i.e. for a day's admission for tests and diagnostic requirements or short surgical procedures) on the ground floor. Though the rooms are of varying sizes and orientations as the load bearing internal partition walls have not

been disturbed, every room now has an attached bath and toilet plus piped oxygen and suction facility. The sleek modern decor is offset by familiar pieces of antique furniture repaired and polished beyond recognition to reflect the graciousness of the precinct.

The building's advanced age had necessitated structural repairs which the managing committee saw as an opportunity to modernize, noted vice presi-

dent Aban Petit to *Parsiana*. Hence the sleek beige, brown and white decor and polished granite tiled corridors meticulously crafted by civil contractor Cyrus Unwalla reflect Aban's and committee member Dr Dina Hakim's eye for detail even as they attest to the management's desire to provide the community with a state of the art facility that can hold its own with other private hospitals in the city.



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Well appointed support areas like nursing stations, pantry, sluice rooms, staff rooms, storage areas, etc on each floor have cleared the passages of old eyesores like wayward wheelchairs, stretchers and mattresses. Central air conditioning with individual room thermostats, TV and telephone on the first and second floors, separate bells for nurses and lower staff, a plastic chair for the use of the patient in every shower bay, au courant menus and food trays are additional thoughtful comforts which the PGH hopes will lead affluent members of the community to patronize it substantially. The tariffs ranging from Rs 2,700 to Rs 3,300 for the air conditioned rooms on the first and second floors are said to be considerably lower as compared to equivalent facilities available in south Bombay. Moreover, these room rentals are aimed at subsidizing the cost of rooms in other parts of the Hospital available to less affluent co-religionists, notes the vice president. Tariffs for the non-air conditioned rooms on the ground floor range between Rs 1,500-1,600.

The ceremonial inauguration witnessed Keki Jokhi, social worker Homai Modi on behalf of the Zartoshty family and Rustom Jokhi representing the Hongkong anjuman at the request of its president Jal Shroff, simultaneously cutting the ceremonial ribbon at the garden gate (thereafter embellished with the Hospital's coat of arms). Then Javer Keki Jokhi, Modi and Roxy Rustom Jokhi cracked the auspicious coconuts ere the group proceeded to unveil the



Elegant lobbies, heritage stairwells, evening sitouts for patients over the gracious porches and a vignette of the well-appointed rooms

(Photos: Varghese Fernandez)

plaques on each floor.

Modi unveiled the plaque on the ground floor which the Zartoshtys have dedicated to the memory of Manekji Limji Hataria whom the Zoroastrians of Iran revere as their savior. The redoubtable agent was appointed by the Society for the Amelioration of Conditions of Zoroastrians in Persia in 1854. Hataria's original brief had been to investigate and report on the conditions of life of Zoroastrian Iranians. The appalling conditions Hataria saw had so moved him that with the Amelioration Society's support, he spent a lifetime in Iran engineering the international diplomatic pressure that led the Shah of Iran to ultimately (in 1882) rescind the jazia tax that had impoverished the Zoroastrian community, leading many to embrace Islam in self preservation. (It was Sir Dinshaw Petit, 1st Bart, in his capacity as president of the Amelioration Society who received the farman from the British ambassador in Persia). In the interim period the Amelioration Society had intervened through Hataria to pay the tax on behalf of the poorest section of the Iranian Zoroastrian community. Hataria's 36 years of labor in Iran had bequeathed the local communities with schools, agiaries and dakhmas financed by Indian Parsis (see

"Manekji Limji Hataria: Redeeming a community," *Parsiana*, May 1990). Now, with Zartoshty's benefaction, the wheel of community support had come full circle.

While the first floor plaque commemorating the donation of the Hongkong community was unveiled by Rustom Jokhi in his capacity as one of the Incorporated Trustees, the second floor plaque commemorating the late Shapoorji and Manijeh Jokhi, Fakirji and Avanbai Jokhi, Sorabji and Dhunjishaw Fakirji Jokhi was unveiled by Keki Jokhi in conjunction with his late brother Sorabji's wife, Coomi. The strong support to the PGH from the Jokhi family ever since the late Shapoorji's initial offer of rupees one-and-a-half crore in 1989 to the late Dinshaw H. Petit has been sustained by his youngest brother Keki in ever-increasing endowments. The Hospital's two-storied Shapoorji and Manijeh Jokhi Wing housing the new Intensive Care Unit, operation theaters, pathology and x-ray departments was completed in 1995 at a cost of over four-and-a-half crore rupees (see "The gift from Hongkong," *Parsiana*, February-March 1995).

After the inaugural ceremony and a tour of the new building which has also been equipped with an additional elevator, the guests congregated on the



*L to R (1st row)
Modi, R. and J.
Jokhi; H. Petit and
K. Jokhi, R. Jokhi
and Bhathena
(2nd row) K. Jokhi,
C. Jokhi, Bhathena,
H. and A. Petit,
Modi, R. J and R.
Jokhi; Gagrut
and Khambatta*



*(3rd row) Parekh and Watchmaker, the donors enter;
(alongside) Farokh and Vera Udwadia with Justice
Sam Variawa (center); (below) file photo of M. and F.
Zartoshty; Jagus and Unwalla; Petit, Modi and
Jamshed Guzder (Photos: Spectravision)*



plinth outside the cafeteria, which in former years had been the venue of rib-tickling Parsi burlesque productions directed and performed by Parsi doctors, led by radiologist Dr Jimmy Sidhva. The inauguration however witnessed the president welcoming and thanking the donors and recalling the vision of his forebears Bomanjee and his son Jehangir who established the institution and the devoted services of those who had passed over including the late presidents Maneckji Petit and Dinshaw Petit and the late honorary secretary Dr Homi Mehta who had all galvanized community support to keep the Hospital afloat through its perennial deficits.

Describing the just completed renovation as "part of a revitalization process," Homa Petit noted its importance in the prevailing scenario of hospital acquisitions and mergers and the setting up of corporate hospitals with professional marketing. This commercialization of medical care has increased patients' expectations of quality care at affordable rates, their demand for a variety of services under one roof and emphasis on high technology with its inbuilt obsolescence, said the president.

Detailing the magnitude of the

Hospital's charitable services, Homa noted that 71.5 percent of the total bed days were accounted for by free or highly subsidized patients. "Last year the Hospital spent a total of 10.16 crore rupees of which Rs 7.27 crore were spent on charity care," he added. The Hospital spends Rs 18 lakh per month on medicines for the poor which includes those treated in the outpatients department and an additional two lakh rupees per month on pathology and x-rays. PGH patients go to Jaslok Hospital for CT scans/MRI etc, the cost of poor patients being absorbed by the PGH, Homa informed *Parsiana*. In this context the current government emphasis on cheap money means a fall in the interest income of the Hospital's corpus. The only answer is to enlarge this corpus to generate the working capital that the Hospital so desperately needs, both for charity purposes as well as to replace depreciated or obsolete equipment. "If this cannot be done, the only other alternative would be to ration the volume of charity care to the extent that it can be supported by the funds available," declared Homa Petit, even as he appealed, to the gathering "with folded hands" to ensure that no such rationing

is ever imposed on those whose need for medical care outstrips their resources.

Each of the donors was presented a shawl, a silver salver and flowers. Also publicly honored were Khambatta, Unwalla and RCC specialist Cyrus Watchmaker.

A man of few words, Keki Jokhi acknowledged the great professionalism of the team that has recreated the nursing home, announced his unexpected gift and offered his good wishes to all the institution's future endeavors.

On behalf of Mehraban Zartoshty, Modi enlightened the audience on the immensity of Hataria's work: "But for him, it is believed that Zoroastrianism would have died in the country of its birth." She also noted that apart from Rs 30 million donated to the PGH over the years, the Zartoshty Brothers had helped to resuscitate the Parsee Ward at the J. J. Hospital, provided financial support to the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute enabling it to republish outstanding works on Zoroastrianism which have been out of print, contributed Rs 90 lakh to the University of Bombay to help establish the Pherozeshah Mehta Bhavan at its Kalina Campus and en-

continued on page 42

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The Tata drive

Come September and gearing up for speed on bumpy Indian roads will be the Tata Sedan, the mid-size new addition to car maker Tata Engineering's fledgling family. The Sedan will have to take head-on to the challenges posed in India by strong international competitors like Hyundai Accent, Ford Icon, the new version of the Fiat Siena (expected later this year), the Opel Corsa and the Maruti Esteem.

The yet-to-be-named Sedan, a three-box variant on the Indica platform, was unveiled in January 2002 at the Sixth Auto Expo 2002 in Delhi, reputed to be the largest auto exhibition in Asia.

Determined to expand its product portfolio, Tata Engineering sprang a surprise at the 72nd Geneva Motor Show in early March 2002 by debuting the Indiva, a seven-seater multi-purpose vehicle (MPV), reports *Overdrive* editor Adil Jal Darukhanawala in a cover story in the April 2002 issue. This "people mover" or mini-van, one of the shortest MPVs available in the market, is also designed by the Italian design house IDEa (which designed the Indica), has a car-like exterior and is very Euro-contemporary, he notes. The Indiva is slated to be launched by 2004 in Europe and India simultaneously, reports the Business Times section of *The Times of India (TOI)* of March 6, 2002.

Unveiling the car at the Geneva show, chairman Ratan Tata termed it a momentous day for India, "a living fact that an Indian product participated shoulder-to-shoulder with the international ones," adding "now history will tell whether the Tatas were courageous or foolish." Designed mainly for the European market, the Indiva has amongst its other features multiple airbags, internet connection, permanent sunroof, CD audio and passenger DVD entertainment, according to *Overdrive*.

In its cover story of February 2002, *Autocar India* describes the Tata Sedan: "We drove a couple of prototypes on

Tata Engineering's test track to get a feel of the Sedan and the first impression is that it is a huge jump ahead of the Indica... The most impressive aspect of the Sedan is in the way it rides, especially at high speeds. Tata engineers have worked wonders on the suspension to make the Sedan feel bigger than it actually is... Tata is still tweaking the engines to smoothen the power delivery and further reduce NVH (noise, vibration and harshness) levels."

The Sedan will come with both petrol and diesel options. "The 1.4 liter petrol engine has been modified to bump power up from 75 bhp (brake horse power) to 85 bhp," states *Autocar*. Though no official price has been fixed as yet, the Sedan is expected to roll into the market at a price tag of between five-and-a-half to seven lakh rupees, depending on the trim level. At least two trim levels for each engine option are expected, adds the magazine.

Though the passenger car market registered a minus two-and-a-half percent growth rate between April-December 2001 as compared to the corresponding period in 2000 (see *Business Today*, February 17, 2002), Tata Engi-



The Indiva, Tata's new MPV at the Geneva Motor Show (top); the mid-size Tata Sedan (alongside)



Godrej's brightly-hued modular unit for children

neering has been buoyed by the success of its Indica V2 and the fact that the Indica is now the largest selling car in India in the small car segment, with one-and-a-half lakh cars sold by December 2001, according to the *TOI* report. With the V2 picking up the award for the "most improved car of the year" at the Auto Awards India 2002 sponsored by *Autocar* and CNBC television, the magazine sees "a refreshing air of optimism within the company. The last three years have been a trial by fire for this fledgling car maker which has grown up fast to find its feet among strong global players."

The Indica Sport too could soon make the jump from show car to showroom probably by the end of the year, predicts *Autocar*. Coincidentally, the Indica Sport (displayed at both the motor shows) is finished in a similar shade of bright yellow as its main rival and ideo-

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logical sibling, the Fiat Palio S10 edition.

Also exhibited for the first time at the Delhi show was the nifty little Aria Coupe (a two-seater sports car). "Tata has been mulling over the development of a two-seater sports car with at least 140 bhp for the European market. With the Aria Tata hopes to change its image — of a producer of economy cars to more exciting ones," believes *Autocar*.

Under the Tata bonnet is also an Estate version of the Indica with a good export potential, particularly in the European market, though the launch was still some time away. A total of Rs 370 crore has been put into developing the Indica variants, which is a fraction of what it cost to develop the Indica. "We cannot survive with just one product and need an entire range to achieve the economies of scale," said Tata.

Quoting Chandra Kant Birla, chairman of Hindustan Motors, *Business Today* notes him as saying: "I give credit to Tata for what he has done. But car making is a difficult business. We have to compete with the world's best."

Study, sleep, store

Godrej i-space, a modular furniture unit jointly designed by Stanford University, USA and Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited, gives children their own independent space to study, sleep and store, notes a communiqué from Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited. Launched at Crossroads in Bombay in November 2001, the unit is compact enough to fit into a corner of a room in the smallest of modern flats, yet provides work surface, space for a PC and keyboard pull-out tray, shelves, a storage area for clothes and a comfortable bunk bed. With his/her personalized space, the child is encouraged to be organized and innovative.

I-space's modular nature ensures that it can be separated and reconfigured to suit changing needs. Made of metal, plastic and fabric, with rounded contours that conform to international standards of safety, the unit is available in three models — the brightly colored 'Junior,' the more subtly hued 'Senior' and the 'Twin Bed System' for families with two children. Godrej i-space is the latest addition to the Godrej Home Furniture range, note company sources.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder



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The Calcutta confluence

A five rupee coin with the impress of Dadabhai Naoroji and a steep rise in the Doongerwadi deficit to Rs 72 lakhs were some of the issues discussed at the Calcutta Federation meet

Arnavaz S. Mama

A forthcoming edition of the five-rupee coin will bear the impress of Dadabhai Naoroji. Lt Gen (retd) Adi Sethna's announcement to the executive council meet of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in Calcutta, December 1 and 2, 2001 was met with resounding applause. Sethna is president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA), vice president (north zone) of the Federation and the Zoroastrian member of the National Minorities Commission (NMC).

On the anvil is the Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress to be held in Bombay, probably in 2003. With Ahmedabad's Porus Karanjawalla, former president and prime mover of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations (FOZYA) having retired from that body, clear cut plans/agenda are now being formulated by his successor Sarosh Palkhiwala.

The annual loss to the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) on the Doongerwadi account has nearly tripled from the earlier Rs 25 lakhs to Rs 72 lakhs (now said to be Rs 90 lakhs) due to the increasing number of deaths in the community and the disappearance of the vultures, leading to the deployment of a variety of efforts to contain the resulting odors and hasten the disposal of the corpses. On the other hand the DPA representatives reported that the ashes of its members and next of kin who die in Delhi or elsewhere can now be taken for burial in the Delhi aramgah, according to a recent resolve of the Anjuman.

The lease of the popular Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary in Colaba, Bombay a choice venue for wedding and navjote celebrations, has run out and efforts are on to renew the lease. The Navy, reportedly, wants to recover its land.

With the necessary permissions in hand, the Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank is all set to open as a scheduled

bank in Udvarda. Another matter of financial import to the community is the proposed dovetailing of the facilities sought to be provided by the newly established Zoroastrian Venture Capital Fund with what is statutorily available under the state minority finance corporations.

The representatives of the member anjumans had the pleasure of sampling three different venues where they were hosted by the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds (CZCRCF).

In the absence of BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder who is ex-officio president of the Federation, the meet was chaired by the east zone vice president, Homi Bodhanwala of Jamshedpur on the first day, noting that this was the third time that the Federation had met in Calcutta since the revival of the splintered body in 1981. The next day Sethna took the chair.

The splendid Olpadvala Hall was bedecked with flowers in joyous welcome. The following day the venue shifted to the Royal Calcutta Turf Club as the Olpadvala Hall had been hired out for a function. The same evening the delegates met the Calcutta community at their beloved 'tambu' — the Calcutta Parsi Club's sports tent in the maidan which has not only spawned Zoroastrian sportsmen and athletes down the years but established an enduring niche in the community psyche.

That evening witnessed the presentation of the Surat Parsi Panchayat Award for adventure in 1997 to Nauzer Batlivala, President's scout and mountaineer. He and his teammates were the first humans to reach the top of a 6,005-meter unnamed peak in Tibet, as per the citation. Earlier expeditions had taken him to Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh and Chile. It was gratifying to Federation officials to honor young Batlivala, the grandson

of the late Ardeshir Batlivala, the Federation's founding vice president, in his home town.

The all-new team of trustees of the CZCRCF — Bahadur Postwalla, Cyrus Madan, Beji Bulsara, Rohinton Indorewalla led by senior trustee Noomi Mehta — was at pains to learn about Zoroastrian problems and achievements in other parts of India and to share its own expertise.

The proceedings began with Sethna paying tribute to the late Kershasp Satarawala, former governor of Goa and the Punjab and ambassador to Mexico. Having spent a lifetime in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Satarawala "did everything one could possibly expect of a government officer," noted Sethna. Satarawala's integrity and his humility were extolled by all who knew him, added Sethna.

Postwalla recalled veteran athlete Jehanbux Kapadia who "died at the relatively young age of 95," succumbing to malaria. "He was an inspiration to all of us at the Calcutta Parsi Club," said Postwalla of the father of six who arrived in Calcutta at the age of 50, played "an immaculate game of tennis" until his eyesight began failing at 75 years when he took to athletics. Surviving the loss of his wife and his only son, he was "an example to all of us to lead a good, healthy life," recalled Postwalla. Bodhanwala remembered that Kapadia "had taken a promise from me to join him at the next (veteran) olympics!" He had become hard of hearing so he often didn't hear the starting whistle "but he ran and he won!" laughed Bodhanwala.

Federation honorary secretary Keki Gandhi, company secretary of Machine Tools (India) Limited (MTI) seized the rare presence of the MTI president, the quiet, retiring Yezi Tata, to acknowledge the Federation's gratitude: "The Federation's office expenses are virtu-



(L to R) First row: Gandhi, Bodhanwala, Sethna, Bhacca, Postwalla, Madan and N. Mehta; Second row: Bhesania, Bulsara, Indorewalla, Kavarana, Tamboly and Dastur; Third row: Master, Colah, N. Paghiwalla, Heerjee, Mistry and M. Irani; Fourth row: Dandiwalla, S. Surti, M. Wadia, Debara, Dick, Bhagwagar and Antia; Fifth row: Medhora, Pithawala, Perin Dastur and Pansy Mehta

ally nil because we are using the facilities of MTL... I have been given the special privilege of serving the community because of his permission and consent." The delegates responded with a standing ovation to Tata and his wife Aloo.

Gandhi informed the gathering that the Panchgani Zoroastrian Anjuman had applied for membership. The delegates agreed to welcome the new member.

Despite the excellent arrangements made by the CZCRFC, the attendance was low. Noticeably absent were Fed-

eration stalwarts from Poona, Madras, Ahmedabad, Dahanu and Mhow who are generally regular attendees. Nor was there any FOZYA representative.

Nargol Anjuman president Hoshang Wania who had mooted the idea of group medical insurance to the Federation did not attend the Calcutta meet. He had earlier noted that group insurance schemes had to be approved by the GICI and the matter has been dormant since then.

Gandhi happily announced that the *Fed Newsletter* is now self-supporting.

He noted that the Federation's budget was to be submitted to the charity commissioner by March 31, 2002. It was required to spend up to 75 percent of the income to avoid income tax. Most of this money is spent on social projects co-sponsored by the Federation and the BPP like school and family counselling, day care, etc. The Federation also donates annually to the Athornan Boarding Madressa at Dadar.

At the end of the meet Mehta and Madan presented mementoes to the Federation's office-bearers on behalf of

the CZCRFC noting tongue in cheek, "We've had two days of discussions and meetings — no fights!"

The next meeting of the executive council is scheduled to be held in Bombay on June 15 and 16, 2002.

Individual anjumans

Bulsara, the Calcutta trustee who attended the prior Federation meet in Bombay in June 2001 introduced his fellow trustees: Mehta who, as managing director heads the all-India operations of Selvel Advertising is an excellent sportsman, Postwalla, managing director of McNally Bharat Engineering Company Limited and one of the community's senior chartered accountants, has "helped all associations, whenever required... most of us have looked up to him;" Madan, scion of one of Calcutta's oldest families whose forebears invited other Parsis to Calcutta after settling down so that the Zoroastrian population there began to rise, is associated with the Royal Calcutta Turf Club and is a well-known racing commentator on TV; Indorewalla, whose father had a pair of trucks plying between Calcutta and Jamshedpur, has successfully raised his fleet to 350, becoming one of the largest truckers in the area. He also has his own petrol pump. Indorewalla spoke of Bulsara's Adam's Garage, the largest Maruti facility in the area. Gandhi spoke of Bulsara's prowess in cricket as an all-rounder, adding that his son is currently captain of the Parsi team.

Welcoming the delegates on behalf of the CZCRFC Madan noted, "The community is dwindling, but we are better off today than before." He referred to the Rusi Gimi memorial bus which provides transport to senior citizens; to the visit by Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji and Zoroastrian Studies founder Khojeste Mistree with all of whom the trustees discussed their religious problems. A string of volunteers are so well organized that one phone call to the ravangah and everything pertaining to funerary requirements is taken care of, said Madan. At the Ervad D. B. Mehta Zoroastrian Anjuman Atash Adaran dedicated priests keep the atash burning bright.

Acknowledging the help of former trustee Adi Rabadi whenever required, of Shirin Mody who teaches religious songs and the tremendous response from

volunteers "whether for clearing the dakhma or for serving at ghambars," Madan described the guidelines for welfare currently being followed by the CZCRFC as Postwalla's brainchild which were being faithfully implemented by CZCRFC chief executive officer (CEO) Sam Medhora.

Recalling how the CZCRFC was a

The lease of the popular Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary in Colaba, Bombay has run out and efforts are on to renew the lease with the Navy

deficit trust with a diminishing corpus until 1984/85, Postwalla said, "It was the foresight of trustees, especially Dr Rusy Anklesaria, to develop Olpadvala's benevolence. (The development of the property gifted by the late Edulji Shapurji Olpadvala to the community with commercial accommodation and the hall, regularly rented out, has been a substantial source of income.) In line with current trends, the trustees have divided the community into three categories. The 10 flats adjacent to the Agiary at Grant Lane, have been reserved for category A — four for the Agiary mobeds and six for families where the per capita income is less than Rs 4,000. The rest will get rent subsidies if needed, noted Postwalla. The trust also provides housing loans at nominal interest against security. Loans would also be given for self-employment. On the education front it subsidizes tuition fees up to 75 percent plus some measure of the cost of private tuitions "so that every child can get basic education at least." A very limited amount is also provided for higher education. While the CZCRFC stands guarantee for medicare expenses, entrepreneurs can avail of a loan up to three lakh rupees at three percent interest against securities. The trust grants a subsistence allowance to retired persons with small capital. Postwalla said that this social scheme will be enhanced or modified as per their experience and the advice that may be forthcoming.

The office bearers of several other community bodies in Calcutta also gave

a firsthand report of their activities:

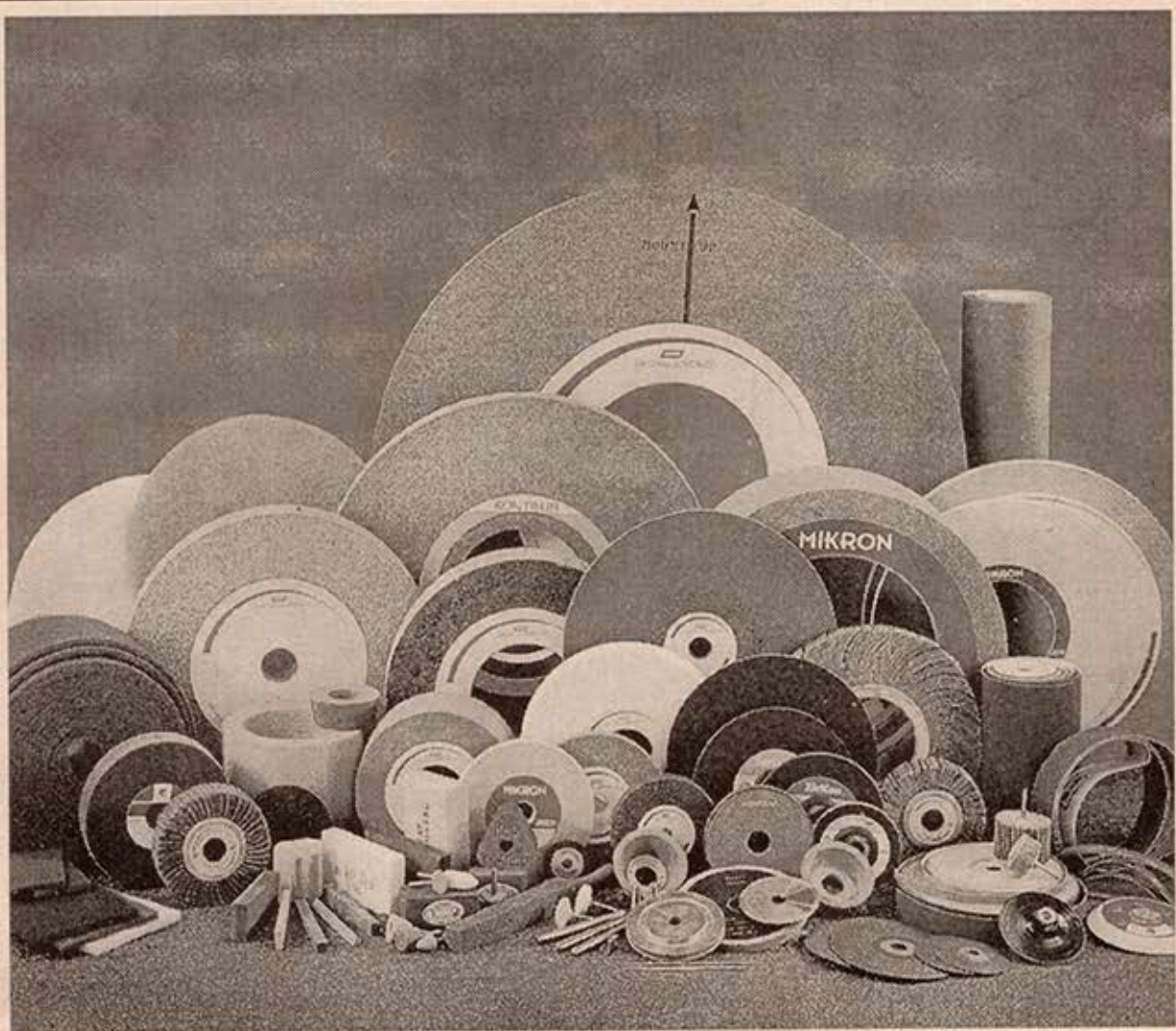
Pervin Nusserwanji, president of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Stree Mandal (CZSM) recalled how the body had germinated in 1936 with the objective of helping needy Zoroastrians. Any Zoroastrian female above the age of 18 is welcome to join the current 400 members on the CZSM rolls. Its main charity functions include the distribution of rations and defraying of hospital and medical expenses including attendants' wages for those who need the support. It provides for school and college fees where appropriate as also for uniforms, books and tuitions. The Mandal owns a building which houses nine indigent families. Originally affiliated to the West Bengal Council of Women, donations to the CZSM are exempt under section 80G of the Income Tax Act, noted Nusserwanji. Apart from its statutory obligations, the CZSM organizes picnics and outings, and programs for the physical and mental well-being of the community, and especially for senior citizens.

The BPP's CEO Behram Dastur asked Nusserwanji about the major causes of death in Calcutta but she was unable to provide the information. Dastur said he has been seeking data on births and deaths (including the four major causes of death) in each anjuman to be able to compile a demographic profile of the Indian Zoroastrian community.

Bachoo Parakh, president of the Calcutta Parsi Amateur Dramatic Club, spoke of their 94-year-old tradition of staging a Parsi Gujarati play at Pateti since 1907, though the rules and regulations of the Club were framed as late as 1950. For the first 47 years the Club was an all-male bastion with men enacting female roles; it was only in 1957 that lady members began to be accepted, noted Parakh. A unique characteristic of the Club was the absence of any membership fee. Initially "members were accepted only for their histrionic ability" and later for backstage handling, Parakh informed the gathering. The first show on Pateti is for the community; the second show is open to Gujarati speaking Calcuttans. The shows are staged, rain or riots notwithstanding, and have been graced by the presence of the West Bengal Governor and his wife, said Parakh. Lakhs of rupees thus collected are distributed in

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"The entrance had the first cantilevered portico in India — considered an architectural feat at that time... The hall and the gallery were designed to together accommodate over 1,700 people and the acoustics and lighting arrangement, both natural and artificial, were carefully considered. The plan of the Jehangir Art Gallery is a wonderful fusion of classical planning and space conception with the plasticity of modernism... The building itself, at the time of its conception, was the epitome of architectural innovation," notes a book by Rahul Mehrotra and Sharada Dwivedi published on the occasion of the Gallery's golden jubilee this year. It was exactly what the vibrant city, bursting with new artistic fervor, needed. Until the gaining of Independence, art in India seemed the prerogative of the Europeans; with the fortunate introduction of the Jehangir Art Gallery (JAG), it marched out of these exclusive confines into a public and more socially accessible domain. An indigenous contemporary art movement was an idea whose time had come. With a surging vitality it could now proudly claim its own. The transition was effective, exciting, inspiring.

At a function earlier in the year attended by painters, writers and art collectors, columnist Shobha De who ceremoniously switched on the new lights (sponsored by Hutchison Telecom, the building which ranks among Bombay's outstanding landmarks will be illuminated throughout 2002) remarked what set the JAG apart is that it has always stood for art as a cause rather than art as commerce. It ushers in the

The Gallery's golden glow

Meher Marfatia

Since its inception 50 years ago the Jehangir Art Gallery has continued to serve as an art haven for the common man

highest volume of pedestrian traffic, with more than 2,000 visitors strolling in daily paying no admission fee.

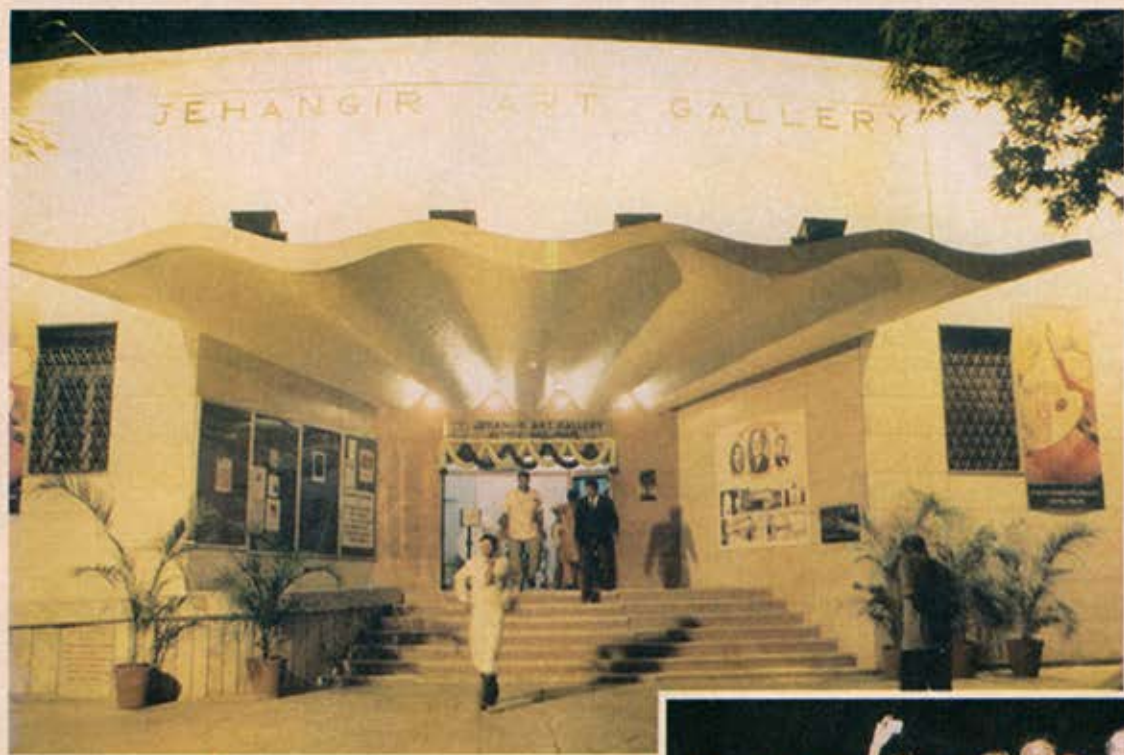
As current chairman of the Gallery Adi Jehangir stresses, "An industrialist can feel as much at home here as can his peon." Adding reassuringly that major renovation plans and upgradation of existing facilities are unlikely to result in stopping the common man from entering the familiar art haven which has a four-year waiting list for artists and already over a thousand applications from them for shows in 2006.

The Gallery owes its very existence to the sagacious vision of businessman, but above all philanthropist and art lover Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Second Baronet. Presenting the building to furrowed young artists of the post-1940s who yearned to paint a dynamic free India but lacked adequate space to hang their offerings, Sir Cowasji named the new gallery after his son Jehangir, tragically killed in a road accident in 1944 wartime London by a military truck

running out of control during a German air raid. Before discussing the interesting turn of events mid-century that led to the establishment of the Gallery, it is fitting to examine how both charity and an avid interest in art were integral to the illustrious ancestry Sir Cowasji so worthily took his place in.

Over 150 years ago, his grandfather Sir Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney, Knight (1812-1878) embarked on the family's abiding philanthropic journey with contributions towards a variety of public causes and institutions exceeding £ 150,000. In fact, the Readymoneys — among the pioneers of the Indo-China trade that brought prosperity to the then Bombay Presidency — are believed to have earned their last name from their consistent readiness to advance money. Nicknamed "The Peabody of the East" after the American philanthropist George Peabody, Sir Cowasji's notable projects funded in Bombay were the Convocation Hall in the Fort University complex, the





Top: The lit Gallery and Jehangir Jehangir Alongside: The founding family and the crowd cheering the lighting. Facing page: The Gallery before renovations (Photos courtesy: Jehangir Art Gallery)



Elphinstone College, the beautiful fountain seen at the west entrance of St Thomas' Cathedral and even the gift of a drinking fountain to Regent's Park, London, marking the gratitude of the Parsis in India for the protection they received under British rule. The last gesture made *Punch* humorously note: "Parsi money... better far than parsimony" on Princess Teck's opening the fountain!

Sir Cowasji's adopted son (grandson of his elder brother Hirji) — Sir Cowasji Jehangir, First Baronet (1853-1934) — founded the Bank of India, promoted and acted as one of the first directors of the Tata Iron and Steel Company as well as financed the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall (presently the National Gallery of Modern Art) adjacent to the Royal Institute of Science. It was his son and successor Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Second Baronet (1879-1962, October this year will mark his 40th death anniversary),



K. Gandhy (above); Alongside (from left): Adi, Dilip De, Jehangir, Asim Ghosh and Shobha

who was the benefactor of the Jehangir Art Gallery. While other Parsis of the day invariably collected European paintings or antiques, Sir Cowasji possessed a magnificent collection of rare Indian miniatures and Chola bronzes.

His grandsons, the present Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Fourth Baronet, along with his younger brother Adi, share a telling anecdote indicative of their grandfather's early affinity to art. When,

at little more than five years old in 1884, he was taken to a fair in England, all he wanted to buy with the single shilling his father had given him for shopping was a bust of Queen Victoria rather than any toy that a child would naturally be attracted to. Sir Jamsetji Tata, accompanying the boy with his father, added another shilling (the statue cost two shillings) and the piece was his! To his parents' surprise he played



(Far left) At the inauguration of Gallery Chemould (L to R): Rashna Gandhi, K. K. Hobbai, Lady Jehangir and Rusy Gandhi

(Alongside) At the formal inauguration of the Jehangir Art Gallery 50 years ago (L to R): Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Raja Maharaj Singh garlanded by V. V. Oak, honorary secretary of the Bombay Art Society

(Photos courtesy: Kekoo Gandhi)

with it for days on end, altogether unusual for a child of that age.

Born to such a heritage, then, it was the most natural thing for the aesthete in the Second Baronet to reconcile with the philanthropist in him. So that when, in the euphoria following Independence, he was approached as president of the Bombay Art Society to consider the crying need for a larger place for struggling talents to display their work in than what the Bombay Art Society could provide, he stepped in to the rescue. Among the personalities who mooted the idea were nuclear physicist and art collector Dr Homi Bhabha, with Walter Langhammer, the von Leyden brothers Rudy and Albert, and painter Krishna Hebbar.

A three-party agreement was drawn up between Sir Cowasji, chief minister of Bombay B. G. Kher and the then Prince of Wales Museum (POWM) chairman Dewan Bhadrur Krishnalal M. Jhaveri. An initial donation of Rs 2,50,000 was extended in 1946 from Sir Cowasji to the government on condition that a suitable plot of land would be provided to construct the gallery. The architects assigned to the project came to be Massachusetts Institute of Technology trained Durga Shankar Bajpai and G. M. Bhuta. Sir Cowasji who had personally supervised every detail concerning the building process ultimately contributed Rs 7,04,112 towards its cost and Kher formally declared open the Jehangir Art Gallery on the evening of January 21, 1952 in the historic Kala Ghoda district before a glittering gathering of distinguished scholars, lawyers, established artists, aesthetes, critics, connoisseurs and social thinkers. Ten days later the Governor of Bombay, Raja Maharaj Singh, presided over the inaugural show — the 61st annual exhibition of the Bombay Art Society.

Ten years later when Sir Cowasji

died, *The Times of India* carried a glowing editorial: "... As a patron of art he had few equals in the country... No man has done more to encourage art and artists, and his decades-long association with the Bombay Art Society will be remembered wherever Indian artists turn to an easel and whenever they open a one-man show at the Jehangir Art Gallery."

Bombay's only non-commercial gallery built on a pool graciously carved out of the POWM compound is a veritable Mecca of culture. As artist Jaideep Mehrotra observed, till today, every established artist considers it important to have had at least one show here. The JAG has always played a pivotal role both at the nerve centre of the city's art district and in artists' careers. Veteran painters look back nostalgically at landmark moments showcased at their "temple of art."

Etched happily in artist M. F. Husain's memory is the recollection of this being the venue of his first retrospective in 1969 when also on display besides his paintings, was his old Mercedes which he drove into the Gallery where it was shown surrounded by mannequins. "I didn't even know the (term) 'installation art' at the time," he quipped recently. Another key event in the '70s gave the JAG a taste of the world art scene. An exhibition of Calcutta artists drew some Rotarians from different parts of Europe who, enthused by the initiative the Gallery had taken, offered to sponsor a show of Indian artists in European capitals.

Gallery Chemould, one of the Gallery's major lessees (the other being the charming Samovar restaurant), came about as a result of art lover Kekoo Gandhi spearheading the movement seeking a "sponsor gallery." He explains, "While the need for exhibition space was fulfilled, that for sponsorship was still to be met." So art aficionados were invited

to start a sponsorship gallery charging a commission but taking care of budding artists' patronage. "After all, we were in a public building, it wasn't right for it to just be a private gallery. We owed people a responsibility, had to encourage young and upcoming artists." Chemould, accordingly, became the venue of a string of successful art festivals and retrospectives. The terrace of the building was extensively used, one remarkable occasion being the 1968 visit of the "Pope of the art world" Clement Greenberg from New York. "Everything was then done in the public spirit," Gandhi reminisces. "That must never be endangered. The future of the Bombay modern art fraternity lies in the way the Jehangir continues to grow. Really, the know-how of collaboration should be the science of the 21st century."

Artist K. M. Shenoy who runs the Art Plaza on the pavement stretch outside the Jehangir reiterates, "All other galleries are shops only looking for buyers. This is the only true gallery." It is also the least intimidating.

As it greets the rest of the golden jubilee year with a series of more exhibitions including group shows, art auctions, music concerts, dance performances and films, the Gallery lives on — remaining an appropriate memorial to Sir Cowasji's love for art and his munificence.

By far the most enduring of some over 80 art spaces the city boasts, the Jehangir Art Gallery has retained its visibility over the years. Of essence to the public is the location of the structure, built up to the street-line, which not just made for easy access but gave clear definition to the corner it hugged. Little wonder, then, that "Meet me on the steps of the Jehangir," continues to be an oft-repeated line when making plans to keep an appointment in this area!



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Hataria's formula

Lifting the JK Tyre National Racing Championship in the Formula Maruti class in India in December 2001, budding Formula 1 aspirant Sarosh Hataria's calendar of events for 2002 is fast and furious — the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea, China and Macao through the months April-November 2002. "Hopefully, if I can win the Formula Asia Championship this year, I intend to make my way through the British F-3 (Formula-3) series and



Hataria: Formula 1 ambitions

Formula Nippon to Formula 1, the pinnacle of world racing which has been my dream since I was 12 years old," says an e-mail from the 22-year-old who believes he is the first Parsi Zoroastrian to win any Formula event.

Noting that it will cost him about US \$ 150,000 to participate in the remaining 14 races (seven rounds) of the Formula Asia championship, Hataria bemoans the fact that motor racing in India is virtually devoid of financial support. "Our country does not have enough infrastructure to encourage sportspersons," he declares, adding that motor sport particularly is still lacking

in sponsors despite its high profile exposure in the print medium and high viewer rating on television.

Hataria took to the track in July 2000, entering in the only Formula event in India — the JK National Racing Championship at the Irungattukottai track near Sriperumbudur, outside Madras (the only one of its kind in India). With the financial and moral support of his parents Peerooze and Uma and grandparents Soli and Dhino Hataria, he finished his very first year of racing in overall second place! "So I decided to give myself one more year of racing the Formula Marutis (Formula

Indian single-seaters with Maruti 800 engines, better known as FISSMEs, ex-

Top row: Reddy releasing the souvenir as Antia (forefront), Nalladaru (standing, center), Yadav (seated, left) and others look on; Shahen Patel; second row (from left): Nalladaru and Contractor, Narayanan and Edulji, Kotwal and Mistry; third row: Surat's winning team, runners-up Secunderabad with invitees and officials



FISSMEs, explains *Auto Motor and Sport*, January 2002)." "Lap after lap, race after race, the challenge of pure precision driving saw me making mistakes and learning, honing my skills to perfection," describes the college student who is doing his final year of BA (History) at the Loyola College in Madras and who trains with Akbar Ebrahim of the Advanced Driving Academy.

With a series of good drives in the earlier rounds, Sarosh revved up at the final round on December 9, 2001 at the top of the pack, with a total of 63 points, an 11-point lead over his nearest rival, J. D. Madan at 52 points, and Gaurav Dalal at 49 points. "Every single driver was trying his utmost and since tyres, engines and gearboxes are controlled, it was really down to the driver's skill," observes *Auto Motor and Sport*. "Sarosh, who had been a model of consistency coupled with good pace and even better race craft all year long, was determined to carry off the title," reports *Overdrive* (January 2002). In the 10-lap race, Sarosh took an early start, but Dalal "soon made up for this by hounding Sarosh for the next three laps before finally going through on lap four at the hairpin bend, one of the few overtaking points on the track. He led there onwards, probably aided by the fact that Sarosh was not going to try anything brave and spoil his title hopes," describes *Autocar India* (January 2002). Just four-tenths of a second separated them at the chequered flag. Piling on the pressure was Rayomand Banajee in fourth position. "The 15-lap event saw Sarosh once again making a brilliant start only to be reeled in by Gaurav. The duo passed and repassed each other before Sarosh got hit from behind, enabling Madan and Gurunath Meiyappan to pass him," notes *Overdrive*. Jostling with Dalal for the lead, Madan in the heat of battle inadvertently flicked the engine kill switch and his engine cut out momentarily. Meiyappan and Sarosh were past him in a flash, eventually taking second and third place behind the winner Dalal. "Only after it was all over did one come to know that Sarosh had put the pain of a hairline fracture in his foot behind him all weekend long and raced nevertheless — exactly the stuff champions are made of," opines editor Adil Jal Darukhanawala in *Overdrive*.

"The Championship means so much to me as I want to step up the motor

sport ladder and emulate the likes of Narain Karthikeyan," Sarosh is reported to have told Darukhanawala after the podium ceremony.

Aware that turning his dream into a reality is going to be a long road uphill, "I am quite unafraid of this and ready to travel it and hopefully achieve success in the next three to four years, with His blessings, and if I am able to summon the financial support I require," says Sarosh in his e-mail to *Parsiana*.

Sarosh can be contacted at 20, Pettukola Apartments, 190-B Poona-mallee High Road, Madras 600010. Telefax: 044-8234311, tel: 8264362, 98410-70770 or on e-mail: sarosh_hataria@hotmail.com or hataria@vsnl.com. All sponsorships big or small can be sent by cheque or demand draft in favor of "Sarosh Hataria A/c Racing for India."

On the merit list

Her series of sterling achievements in the field of women's cricket were honored with the award of Padma Shri, presented to Diana Edulji by President K. R. Narayanan at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on March 23, 2002. The award had been announced earlier as part of the Republic Day honors list on January 26, which coincidentally happens to be Edulji's birthday! "It's a great feeling to be recognized. I was overjoyed to be the first woman cricketer to get this award," remarks Edulji, laughingly adding that in her observation the Padma Shris are usually given to individuals on the wrong side of 50 and she was still four years away from that landmark! "This is the right time," she declares, her satisfaction a refreshing change from attitudes in recent times, when awards to sportspersons have been engulfed in a quagmire of controversy, with some of the recipients themselves refusing to accept the awards!

Holding the world record for her 119 wickets in 34 Tests in women's cricket, Edulji sees this as her most significant accomplishment, which she achieved against New Zealand in Cuttack. Batting right-handed and bowling left arm spin, the all-rounder comments: "Oh, I definitely enjoy bowling better!" A member of the first women's Indian Test team, Edulji took the first wicket and the first catch for India as well and was in the first Indian women's team to tour abroad.

The stalwart's classy career has

spanned donning India colors from 1975-95 without a break and playing on the domestic field from 1973-2000. She made history two years ago by being the first woman cricketer to be on the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) selection panel, being a member of the Railways' selection committee for the men's Ranji Trophy team. For the first time ever, Indian Railways were crowned Ranji Trophy champions this year. Edulji is also a national selector for the women's cricket team.

Sports officer with Western Railway, which she joined way back in 1976, Edulji terms her job a time-consuming one. She is also the coach of the Indian Railways' women's cricket team which won the national title in 2001, Edulji's very first year as coach! As a player, she led the Railways' women's XI from 1985-2000, winning on numerous occasions.

First appointed Indian captain in 1978 (she was captain on and off upto '93), Edulji's sporting encounters have spanned Tests and one-dayers and three Women's World Cups (1978, '82 and '93 — the first and the third as skipper), playing against Australia, England, West Indies, New Zealand, Holland, Denmark and Ireland, both at home and abroad. She is also the only woman cricketer in the world to have been awarded a benefit match in 1997, states her bio data.

Commentating for Doordarshan in the last one-dayer in Poona in November 2001 in the India-England (women's) series, Diana's co-commentator was her eldest sister Behroze — a rare occasion, she believes, when sisters have been commentators together! Behroze also played for the Indian team between 1976-'81, bowling left arm medium pace — sisters on the team being a rarity as well! Starting with commentating in the 1997 World Cup in India, Diana adds that her busy schedule does not permit her to take to the microphone on a more regular basis.

Diana's long innings has won her a slew of awards — the Arjuna Award (1983) from the Government of India, the Shiv Chhatrapati Award (1978) and the Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar (1991) from the Government of Maharashtra. On her visit to Delhi, the Delhi Parsi Anjuman felicitated her on March 21, along with two other Zoroastrians — Attorney General Soli Sorabjee (Padma Vibhushan) and Air Vice Marshal Fali

Major (Ati Vishisht Seva Medal) — who are among this year's Republic Day awardees.

Cricket in the community

Wielding the willow and spinning the ball spiritedly, the sportsmen of Surat won the XVI Jiji Irani Challenge Cup 2002, their third successive victory at the annual cricket tournament played between the Zoroastrian Clubs of Calcutta, Jamshedpur, Nagpur, Surat and Secunderabad/Hyderabad from January 11-15, 2002, according to Kerfegar Antia, honorary secretary of the Zoroastrian Club of Secunderabad which hosted the event this year.

Surat registered a nine-run win over Secunderabad in the final league match at the Gymkhana grounds in Hyderabad, reports *The Times of India*, Hyderabad. A 114-run first wicket partnership between Homy Dumasia (55) and Rustom Sethna (59) enabled Surat to post a total of 204 in the allotted 30 overs, with Zarayus Sethna and Eric Dittia contributing 37 and 22 respectively. For Secunderabad, Manek Hormusjee took three for 35, while captain Minoo Siganporia, Shahen Patel (who has represented Hyderabad in inter-state tournaments in the under-19 and under-22 category) and Kushal Jilla (vice captain of the under-14 team) bagged two wickets each.

Chasing 204, the hosts made 195 in the allotted overs, despite a valiant 71 by Varzavand Debara and 24 not out by Noshir Mehta, who played for India A and for Hyderabad in the Ranji Trophy for 10 years up to 1977, reports *The Hindu* of January 17. Sethna has been selected for the Gujarat Ranji Trophy team, adds the paper.

For the first time in the Jiji Irani tournament only Zoroastrian umpires officiated, with Dara Dotiwala, Jehangir Umrigar, Keki Doodhwala and Adil Palia standing in at the matches. The tournament this year was dedicated to the memory of two eminent Zoroastrian cricketers of Hyderabad — batsman Eddie Aibara (who played for that city in the Ranji Trophy for over two decades and who coached numerous budding cricketers including Mohammed Azharuddin) and spin bowler Soli Mehta (who captained the Hyderabad team in the 1940s and was the secretary of the Hyderabad Cricket Association for 11 years), according to Press reports. "The Parsi community has pro-

duced several prominent cricket personalities over the years," noted Petarasp A. Nalladaru, president of the Zoroastrian Club of Secunderabad.

The Jiji Irani Challenge Cup was introduced in 1975 in memory of Jijibhoy Dhunjibhoy Irani, fondly known as Jiji, who had represented the Parsis in quadrangular matches and who was instrumental in starting the Gazdar League in Nagpur in 1938, now in its 65th year. Irani had also played against the legendary Douglas Jardine and his team, notes Antia. While the first Jiji Irani tournament was between Nagpur and Jamshedpur, the twin cities of Hyderabad/Secunderabad joined four years later, followed by Calcutta in 1985 and Surat in 1991. The tournament is hosted each year in rotation by these five centers.

With around 80 players, officials and guests expected to participate, the entire Parsi Dharamshala in Secunderabad had been booked for a week, writes Antia. The prize distribution on January 15, held on the premises of the Club and presided over by Nalladaru, witnessed a turnout of over 600 Zoroastrians: Shivalal Yadav, former Test cricketer and currently national selector and secretary of the Hyderabad Cricket Association was the chief guest, while Nari Contractor, India's captain whose career was brought to a premature end in the early 1960s by a near-fatal head injury in the West Indies, was the guest of honor along with former Member of Parliament Dr T. Subbaram Reddy who had earlier inaugurated the tournament. While eulogizing the Parsi community for its achievements, Reddy offered one of his theaters free of cost to the Zoroastrian Club for a fund-raising premiere show, and was ready to shoulder the burden of entertainment tax as well!

Thanking K. V. Krishna Murthy, chairman and managing director of the Bank of India for his support, Antia also commended Minoo Siganporia, the Club's vice president, Pestonji Baria, treasurer, and committee members Nazneen Baria, Khorshed Mehta, Shapoor Bhatena, Zarir Vasaigara, Rohinton Debara, Dhunji Mistry, Dinshaw Parakh and Bomi Patell, for their organizational skills. While the dinner each day was hosted by various Club members, the cost of the dinner that followed the closing function was borne by Capt Kayarmin Pestonji who donated to the Club the entire sale pro-

ceeds of the dinner coupons for the promotion of cricket among Zoroastrian youth.

Right arm off spinner Shahen K. Patel of Secunderabad trained at the MAC Sports Foundation in Madras from 1997-99 where the selection process is highly competitive, notes an individual profile of the promising cricketer forwarded to *Parsiana* by Keki Dadabhoy of Secunderabad. Having played for Hyderabad at the inter state level in the under-19 age group in 1999 and the under-22 last year, Patel has been a member of the A division in the Hyderabad Cricket Association league tournaments and the highest wicket taker in many matches in the twin cities. His 27-wicket haul in seven matches for Khalsa College, where he is currently a third year BCom student, was the highest for the year 2001 for his College, states his bio data. Among Patel's coaches is Hyderabad's Noshir Mehta.

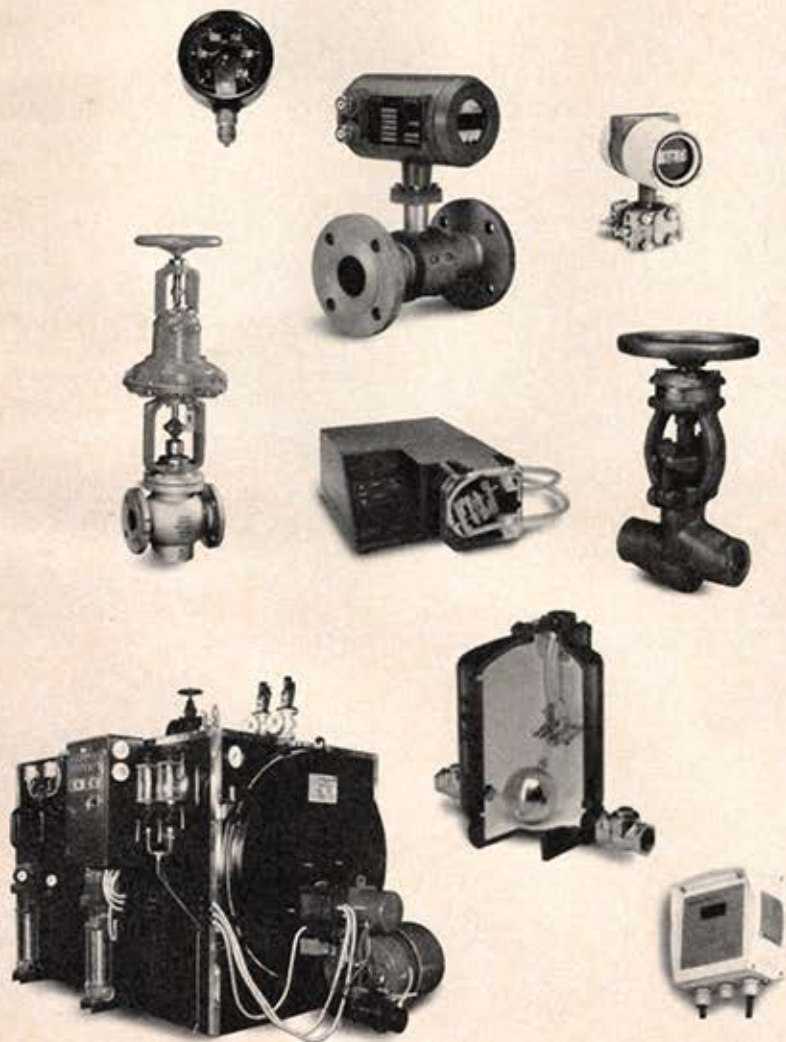
In the Ninth All Parsi Double Wicket Cricket Tournament held at the Parsi Gymkhana at Marine Drive in Bombay on February 24, 2002, Behram Kotwal and Shahen Mistry (representing Parsi Gymkhana) scripted victory from among the 18 pairs selected by the organizers, Young Zoroastrian Cricket Club. The duo defeated Zubin Minocherhomji and Zubin Shroff (C. J. Colony) in the final to lift the Jamshed Guzder Trophy, the tournament being sponsored by AFL (Airfreight) for the ninth year in succession. Teams from Bombay, Umargaon, Surat and Navsari participated in the event, according to Rusi Bhungara of the Parsi Gymkhana.

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READERS' FORUM

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feet deep. There she remained and offered prayers and invocations for more than three hours until the sun had set. Then she asked to be brought back up and forbade anyone to go near the well until she returned the next morning.

She once again asked to be lowered into the well next morning and offered prayers for three more hours. Thereafter, the well was covered up and everybody went home. The following day she ordered the well to be uncovered and with her own hands she drew out the water. By a divine miracle, the well delivered water of greatest purity and sweetness which continues till today.

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BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

Freedom from bondage

Those who are depressed, fearful, anxious, possessive, jealous, prone to preju-

dice, tempted by violence cannot enjoy the true quality of life. They are in a real sense "imprisoned," restricted by an emotional or spiritual bondage which closes the door to healthy living.

To loosen restrictions, remove obstructions, take away internal "blocks" and open up the possibility of positive living is the essential work of all called to the ministry of reconciliation and healing. It is a satisfaction and a joy to help someone find that sense of freedom.

With reactive depression (depression brought on by particular events or circumstances) an individual feels desperately restricted and, indeed, imprisoned. He/she does not want to get out of bed, cannot face another day, finds the thought of some normal undertaking a huge, threatening task. Life becomes a struggle to get anything done. That is a form of bondage from which it is desperately difficult to free oneself.

Guilt is another imprisoning factor. Guilt is a proper reaction to personal error, fault or sin, but, once dealt with internally, through a consciousness of divine forgiveness, it has fulfilled its purpose. To continue to feel overwhelming guilt when it does not relate to anything that is happening and when it is wholly out of proportion becomes a form of bondage that blights present and future living as well as denies the forgiveness received. Zoroaster came to give freedom to those who are broken by life and in doing so laid down the pattern for all who seek to follow him. It is of the very essence in Zoroastrianism to offer real freedom to all who are in emotional and spiritual chains, to offer the grace that loosens bonds, to proclaim the truth that sets someone free.

FURHOK K. TANGREE
La Roche-sur-Foron, France

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

continued from page 16

the UNHCR in India which was looking for a junior lawyer. Remarking that she was the only Parsi there Ruby broke into a dimpled smile as she noted, "It was like applying for law school all over again!"

The six-month stint in Delhi had Ruby deeply enthused with the job but unhappy with the way "autorickshaws try to cheat you" and she didn't like "the way men leer at

you" on the street. But her colleagues have been "great" and Indian hospitality has lived up to her best expectations though she finds "the contrasts between wealth and poverty shocking because they are so blatant." Nonetheless Ruby feels she has gained something: "I thought I was always tolerant but... I've become more tolerant, widened my perspectives." As for the Delhi dharamshala, once she had got used to the idea of bucket baths and calling for hot water in the morning, she enjoyed the safety, economy and central location of the site vis-à-vis her place of work. "It's the best place for a single woman in Delhi," she believes.

Enjoying her hobbies of drawing, sketching and painting, Ruby had at one stage wanted to go into architecture but the thought of "too much maths" put her off and she decided to stick with social sciences at which she was "always better."

Her parents had joined her in Delhi so that they could tour India together. Ending their India visit in Bombay, the Panthakys hope to go back to Toronto next month. Then, says Ruby, she will resume her search for a job in an international human rights organization.

Errata

The write-up on the Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir Health Unit at Gamadia Colony ("Health Unit," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, March 2002) inadvertently omitted the mention of an important and long-standing facility: The pathology laboratory under Dr Ruzbeh Mowdawal functions from 8 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. every day. The technicians are also available on call when required and routine tests are provided free of charge where the circumstances warrant it. *Parsiana* regrets the omission.

...

In the double spread color advertisement of Western Court in *Parsiana*, March 2002 issue a line was left out from the text. The sentence should have read "Situated in the quiet wooded surroundings of Dadar Parsi Colony, a Mumbai Heritage Precinct, 'Western Court' offers luxuriously finished 2 & 3 bedroom apartments with quality amenities and services."

The telephone number for North America for Jehangir is 713 789 1645.

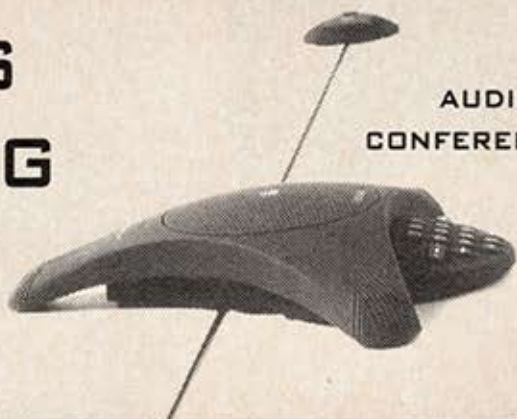
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Beacons Manchershah (left) and Gool Disawalla

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 12

Dhanboora offered the couple a pure silver handcrafted photo frame bearing their photograph.

Responding to the toast raised by Air Marshal Sarosh Dastur, Disawalla, his voice choked with emotion, thanked all those present for honoring them thus. To Disawalla, this felicitation from "almost half of Bangalore's adult Parsi population," according to Minocher's report, became all the more meaningful because just a few months back his life membership had been terminated by the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman on the ground that he did not "believe only in dakhmenashini as a mode of final disposal of dead Parsis (see "Disawalla's dismissal," *Parsiana*, November 2001)."

Bombay born Disawalla who specialized in gynecology and obstetrics was associated with the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation as its chief medical officer for 21 years. His retirement took him to Bangalore where he served the P. D. Hinduja Sindhi Hospital as its medical superintendent and the Bhagwan Mahaveer Jain Hospital as medical director. Gool, also a qualified medical practitioner, has been a dedicated social worker, associated with several nongovernmental organizations working for the uplift of the downtrodden, mentions the press release.

Not content to rest with good thoughts and good words, to Disawalla, "the shining beacon has been his good work," noted the citation. "There is not a single one among us present today... whose life has not been blessed by Manchi, the caring angel who rushes to help regardless of color, caste, creed or social status. He...truly reflects the truth that God is love."

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

REFURBISHING THE PARSEE...

continued from page 22

abled the Bel Air TB Sanatorium at Panchgani, which was on its way to closing down, to be revived and revitalized to extend its services to include HIV patients. Modi noted that Zartoshty in his message and throughout his own life, had practiced and stressed the importance of unity in the family and the community. Alluding to site visits while the work was underway, Modi recalled Aban Petit's insistence that the shade of color, the alignment of tiles was just so. "These minute details have resulted in the beautiful building that has been redone," she added.

Rustom Jokhi, wearing "two hats" as Hongkong trustee and Keki Jokhi's son, registered his joy on the occasion. "It is no secret that Hongkong has a soft spot for this Hospital. This relationship will continue to develop," he assured the Petits and their band of coworkers including joint secretaries Hector Mehta and Zarir Bhathena, treasurer Ardesir Vazifdar and committee members Sir Dinshaw Petit, 4th Bart, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Bomi Bulsara, Khushroo Byramjee, Aderbad Deboo, Maneck Gagrati, Jehangir Gagrati, Hakim, Pesi Jagus, Khambatta, Yezdi Malegam, Noshir Parekh, Homi Ranina, Noshir Kasad, Dr Framroze Shroff and Dr K. P. Bulsara.

Aban Petit and Hector Mehta told *Parsiana* how "spontaneous and generous" had been the response from the donors when the PGH committee broached the need to refurbish the old building. Their biggest hurdle was to design and engineer the welcoming infrastructure without jeopardizing the heritage character of the building.

Next on the committee's agenda is the relocation of the Blood Bank on the first floor above the outpatients department and the refurbishing of the main building comprising 24,000 sq feet, an area twice as large as the nursing home building. Thinking on the major restoration venture has begun. Hopefully, by the time the 90+ Hospital reaches its centenary, the magnificent edifice, whose floors are now sagging, will have been shored up for a new generation. In the meanwhile, the beautiful garden, Aban Petit's first love, will reclaim her attention.

As Bhathena had assured the audience in his vote of thanks "We live for those who love us."

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THE CALCUTTA CONFLUENCE

continued from page 30

charity and in annual scholarships, she added.

The Saklat Physical Culture Institute, founded by Prof D. N. Wadia in 1933 to develop the character and physical conditioning of the youths through gymnasium, swimming and scouting, was augmented in 1936 with a cub pack, a bulbul flock and a girl guide company, its president Noshir Wadia informed the gathering. To all of them the late Ardeshir Batlivala was the "skipper." Though the Institute's gymnasium and swimming activities are now at a standstill, with its motto 'service before self,' the scouts and guides flourish and the Institute participates in gate duties and flag day activities, winning awards at unit and state levels, said Wadia. Since 1970 it has been publishing the periodical *Our Venture*.

Gandhi provided a further vignette on Batlivala who he said "never missed a single Federation meet, travelling by ordinary second class at his personal expense. "At a crucial meet in Bombay in 1980 the DPA was to be thrown out of the Federation for its liberal policies. Batlivala chaired the meet and helped defeat the move to oust the DPA. Hence the Federation owes its continued existence to Batlivala," noted Gandhi.

Postwalla spoke of the Calcutta Parsi Club which was established in 1908 ("Calcuttans of 1900-1912 were hyper-active. Six institutions were formed during that period," he noted). The second largest club tent in Calcutta (the largest being Mohun Bagan's), it promoted hockey, cricket, football, tennis, table-tennis and badminton for the 2,500 strong community of the early years. The 800 Zoroastrians of Calcutta today are represented by the Club which plays in the first division in the Calcutta Hockey League, in the second division in cricket and the fifth division in football. "Most maidan clubs are professional. We are the only truly amateur club contributing to state and national level sports," remarked Postwalla.

Added Medhora, "Every Parsi boy or girl can play any sport every day (for a payment of) Rs 5 per month." Noting how Calcuttans who go elsewhere remember the Calcutta Parsi Club which is never short of donations or respect, Medhora said currently 20-50 youngsters and a larger number of adults participate in a string of functions there

from November to March.

Dastur had informed the delegates that the BPP is to republish a few out of print books and is considering the production

"Every Parsi boy or girl can play any sport every day (at the Calcutta Parsi Club for a payment of) Rs 5 per month"

of a TV serial on ancient, medieval and modern Persian emigrants patterned on the *Ramayana*. According to Dastur the episodes, which will run for about a year, expect to receive funding from the BBC and Doordarshan.

DPA vice president Dadi Mistry recalled the late DPA president Shrivast Nargolwala's yearning for an agiary. The 40th anniversary of the event has since been celebrated in Delhi, December 21-23, 2001. Their Mengusi Dharamshala which has an average occupancy rate of 80 percent finds holiday groups sleeping in the hall. The need has since been met with six rooms constructed from a donation by the Neterwala Foundation.

The professionwise breakup of the community and percentage figures of fatal diseases sought by the BPP to provide a profile of the community's physical and financial health has found few givers. President Noshir Paghdwalla of the Borivli anjuman dismissed the request as "impossible." With over 1,000 Parsis settled in the outlying suburb and a regular influx from South Bombay, Paghdwalla could only say that the overriding majority were not entrepreneurs or industrialists but belonged to the professional/salaried class, with only three or four percent in the community being below the graduate level. He believed the great majority were in the 30-50 year age-group.

Though the anjuman's finances are "not very healthy," Paghdwalla spoke of silver jubilee celebrations apart from their 14 or 15 well-attended annual events which included slide shows, picnics, religious talks and a lecture-demonstration of the jashan ceremony,

antakshari and dumb charades, etc. Boman Irani of the Ideal Java group has set up a Parsi school in Borivli, hence there is no problem of school admissions, said Paghdwalla, adding that Irani is also intending to set up a polytechnic and management school. Gandhi advised Paghdwalla to monitor the project and ensure that it retains Parsi management.

Davies, which has been seeking funds for the repair and refurbishing of its agiary has received a donation of Rs 15,000 from the Kuwait Anjuman, said Marzban Wadia. The collection has now reached about rupees three-and-a-half lakhs as against their target of eight-10 lakh rupees.

PZASH's (Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad) case vis-à-vis the endowment commissioner has still not been resolved. Its representative Omin Debara told the delegates that the commissioner wanted Zoroastrian scholars to discuss with him, so Mistree was called at considerable expense. The respondent summoned columnist Noshir Dadrawala who also spoke in favor of the Anjuman, noted Debara, hoping that "the decision will come in favor of the Anjuman because of its all-India ramifications."

With two dakhmas, one of them managed by the Anjuman, PZASH has built a bungli in the anjuman agiary premises for the use of those opting for dakhmenashini. A recent social highlight was the filming of an episode of Frohar Films cosponsored by the Bank of India, PZASH and the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal which provides groceries and medical and educational aid to poor families. The scenes depicting Zarathustra in the court of Vishtaspa were enacted by 10 to 12-year-old Zarathushti kids, the event being covered by the Hyderabad edition of *The Times of India*. Debara noted in passing that their Parsi school enjoys a 92 percent success rate at SSC examinations.

While the Jiji Irani Cup (cricket) matches were scheduled to be hosted by The Zoroastrian Club in January when Parsi teams from other parts of India were expected to participate, the Club was short of funds for its normal activities as it had recently invested 14 lakh rupees to purchase the land on which it stands.

At the agiary in Saronda donations help maintain the fire. The resident mobed gets a salary of Rs 7,000 per month from interest on the anjuman's funds maintained by the BPP, noted Ervad Yezdi Panthaki. Zoroastrians from all the surrounding villages joined Saronda's six families for an annual celebration in May 2001 to which Guzder and BPP trustee Dinshaw Mehta had contributed Rs 50,000 each. Some donations were also received from Kuwait, noted Panthaki.

BPP trustee and World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) trust funds chairman Dinshaw Tamboly noted that quotations for the construction of a wall to surround the Stambh property in Sanjan had been called for. He had anticipated that construction would start in a month's time.

The only problem at Jhansi according to the anjuman president Ronnie Dick was the encroachment of the dharamshala land which matter they had taken up with the collector.

Mehrwan Irani of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman had nothing new to report about his anjuman but sought a letter from the Federation expressing the community's interest in the Tithal land. The case against the sale of the land had been reverted to the charity commissioner by the Supreme Court so that the community could frame an adequate proposal/project for its use.

The lack of job opportunities in and around Nagpur has spawned more Parsi entrepreneurs, noted the anjuman president Edul Bhagwagar. Speaking of 5,200 Parsis in the Nagpur-Kamtee belt Bhagwagar emphasized the all-India fame of the liquor house of the Bapunas and Dinshaw Icecream. Steel and wood factories, mining, interior designing were some of the other outlets for Parsi talent. The anjuman is on the lookout for a priest for their huge agiary which is currently being served by a temporary priest sent from Bombay by Dadachanji. With the aging community's increasing dependence on medical help, Bhagwagar emphasized the need for a scheme of group medical insurance for the community.

The over 100-year-old bungli of the Indore Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman has

developed huge cracks, reported its president Bomi Heerjee. The question according to him was whether to repair, rebuild or relocate. "An outmarried Parsi lady who continues to profess Zoroastrianism, would be entitled to (the use of) the agiary," he noted, adding that a few community members are restive and a signature campaign is afoot to prevent her from attending. Heerjee also pressed the point made at an intercity meet of Madhya Pradesh (MP) seeking a separate central zone representation on the Federation's executive council. He sought a response from the Federation which he could report at their next meet.

The MP government is to declare Jains as a minority community with representation on its state minorities commission. There is no Zoroastrian representation on the commission and no response to letters from the anjuman, noted Heerjee. He also urged Sethna to produce a pamphlet indicating all the facilities available to the minorities in various states. Sethna replied that he had been "fighting for nine months" for a Parsi on the MP state minorities commission. He sought the number of Parsis and their location in the state to enable him to argue more cogently.

Allahabad Parsi Zarthosty Anjuman president Capt Homi Dandiwalla reported one marriage and one death in 2001 and one death in 2000.

Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) president Dr Sam Bhacca noted that Rajiv Gandhi's uncle (Keki Gandhi) had left the SPP a legacy of 90 lakh rupees which was likely to materialize soon. In the meanwhile the SPP's largest expense is feeding about 300 individuals including the residents in the boys' and girls' orphanages and the 25 to 30 inmates of the Nariman Home for the Aged.

Sethna applauded the Nariman Home as "the oldest old-people's home in the country." He then remarked, "These people are not totally destitute. They are thrust away from their families. (There is) an architect who has lost his mind, a polylingual lady, other 40-year-olds... 23.5 percent of our community is over the age of 65. A whole host of services could be provided for them." Sethna noted that when Delhi's young Farohars (four to 14-year age-group under religious and cultural training)

visited the Home during a tour of Gujarat, they were too distressed to sleep. His advice to the community at large was "somp raakho (be united). (Even) the government can't do anything for a community that raises problems for itself." Sethna's remark was a veiled reference to the infighting in Surat which culminated in a member of the Panchayat board writing to the central vigilance commissioner who has, in turn, set the charity commissioner to investigate the affairs of the SPP.

Jamshedpur's Silloo Surti noted that old people prefer to remain in their own surroundings. She advocated the employment of a professional who could visit the elderly to keep an eye on their welfare.

Youth affairs

Noting that the annual FOZYA youth seminar was scheduled for December 7, 2001 in Jaipur, Sethna condoned the absence of the FOZYA representatives from this executive council meet.

The BPP has been occupied in detailed costing of the proposed third world Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Bombay. The exercise in which senior executives Sheroo Master, Mehli Colah and Dastur and Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) coordinator Diana Marfatia are involved is to work out a self-funding mode for the event, with any shortfalls being met by the BPP and other trusts, said Dastur.

The BPP CEO expressed his personal conviction that the community needs to invest much more in its next generation and informed the delegates that the BPP/WZO had provided capitation fees for bright students opting for medicine or engineering. With the combined resources of the WZO, the BPP, the R. D. Sethna Trust and the Tata Endowment 58 boys and girls had succeeded in gaining admissions for higher education abroad.

Sethna sounded a note of dissent: "72 of every 75 children going abroad will not come back." Acknowledging that his thinking was a bit parochial, Sethna's contention was that 15 to 20 years later the same bright people may find obstacles in their progress as other sub-continental people are now finding in Europe and North America.

While Khurshed Bhesania of Jamshedpur maintained that "it doesn't matter where they are... (We are) investing in them as Parsis," Postwalla

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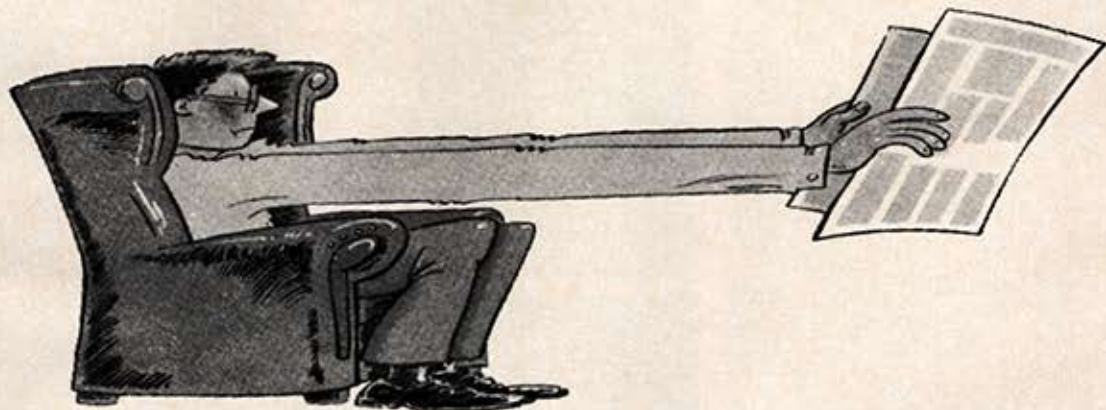


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contended that community support is not required by the bright sparks as much as poor and mediocre students. Sethna agreed, "For over 100 years education (has been) our cutting edge... yet we don't seem to be doing so well. We don't see Parsi names among the alumni coming and putting money in IITs. How many Parsis were there in Clinton's or Vajpayee's delegations?" Sethna believes that as parents and grandparents we have not seized the initiative in guiding our children and grandchildren.

Referring to the coaching classes, school fees and other perquisites offered by the BPP, Tamboly noted that 250 youths within the Indian educational system were aided, apart from the foreign goers. He quoted a figure of over 43 lakh rupees spent by the BPP on education for the community. Noting that the BPP has not denied any child's right to education, Master spoke about the rise in school fees by 66 percent which is a difficult burden to bear even when both parents are earning. Hence the BPP provides assistance to those who apply. "We go out of our way to help even those who have failed so that they don't drop out," added Master.

Surti noted, "Many children have come back (after completing their studies abroad) with great expectations but become greatly disappointed."

One of the youths from Jamshedpur asked what provisions there were for extracurricular activities, for sportspeople who need help and was assured by Master that the BPP aids participation in events all over India and abroad. Another youth asked for reservation, a third for moral and financial support for average students "because the cream can do well anywhere." Others spoke of the "moral duty of the youth to repay when they are settled;" "once people know you are a Parsi they put faith in you." Coming out strongly against reservation was Nauzer Batlivala who felt that a 100 percent literate community should be able to find jobs without government support. When the pro-reservation lobby complained that others not as good get admissions/jobs because of reservation, Batlivala shrugged, "Accept it as a part of life!" While the DPA uses its contacts with the central government to help the Parsis all over India, Sethna asked, "Why are we not known outside (Bombay)?" He urged the BPP to "make your good

work better known... You should be receiving bouquets, not brickbats!" Dividing the community between "achievers and whiners," Sethna said he was "proud to hear people say 'we can do it!'" Noting that even "on the fringes of medicine and science (there are) hundreds of new things to be done at various strata," Sethna urged a change of attitude, "Let us get out of our argumentation, talk of what we are doing today, not what we did a hundred years ago."

Various suggestions and directions percolated through the ensuing debate which echoed what has been repeated over the years: that reserved seats were lost when there were no takers; that government seeks the opinion of prominent Parsis who, never having had the experience of rejected applications, continue to believe that Parsis do not need reservation; the fact that reservation is only for scheduled castes and tribes and other backward communities; that domicile is a factor that often works against the community; that Parsis can avail of seats as a Gujarati speaking community in institutions like the Narsee Monjee College in Bombay. Sethna emphasized the need to plan a child's career and work towards it from standard VIII onward.

Jennifer Paghdwalla of Borivli described how the youths there had taken over the responsibility of organizing the anjuman's activities, visit the needy to provide support.

Yazneen Rana and Parzan Gandhi of Jamshedpur spoke of the navjote of 10 children undertaken by the youths with the encouragement of the Jamshedpur Parsi Association and the Stree Mandal. Their normal activities like prayer/elocation/debate competitions, talent contests, sports meets and youth camps continue on an ongoing basis.

The 16th edition of the BPP's HPY will be held in May 2002. The Youth Club, composed of HPY alumni meets every other month and the BPP had financed five students to participate in the FOZYA meet in Jaipur, noted Master.

While there are no youths in Jhansi, Aloo Tata, who has recently returned to India after her marriage, spoke of seven children born into the community in Boston.

Bhagwagar spoke of the "vibrant" youths of Nagpur who work in tandem with the anjuman. While the Parsi Gymkhana and the Youth Club have merged, the couple of weddings that resulted from the last youth association meet to encourage entrepreneurship were a source of joy.

Though there is no youth organization as such in Indore, the youths are well motivated and participated in the Heart Meet organized in Baroda in April '01 but "the results were not up to expectations," noted Heerjee.

In Delhi the Farohar Club of the four to 14-year olds meets every alternate Saturday at the Bhiwandiwalla Hall to learn about the Zoroastrian religion and Parsi culture, to play together and maintain peer contact within the community, related Yezdi Pithawala of the DPA.

Open forum

In the words of Sethna, "Unlike 13-14 years ago when we had a full range of problems, (these have now been) replaced by achievements." Those who now require aid are the aged who need greater medical help. The youth, he noted, are doing well but are "contemptuous of things we consider important." He referred to the "discord among the apex bodies of the community," as in Hyderabad and Surat. A small minority community whose very existence is known to few outside Gujarat and Maharashtra, this discord "affects our functioning and our future," he maintained.

While a five-rupee coin stamped with the bust of Naoroji is likely to roll off the mint in the near future, Sethna felt that a posthumous Bharat Ratna for Naoroji was not as relevant as one for Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw and urged the community bigwigs to lobby for it.

Sethna noted that at the last meet in Bombay the Save Udwada Committee had urged him to intercede for central government help for the project but he was yet to receive the concrete points he needed before he could move the relevant authorities.

"More and more childless families are adopting by the back door. Do we want to make it legal?" asked Sethna adding that he was seeking legal opin-

ions because demography is a major problem.

Dastur was of the opinion that we should do what is juridically valid, not by the back door. Should the adopted child be deprived of religious rights? he asked. In the absence of any enforcement machinery, he termed the position a "sham." Quoting the *Haptan Yasht* and the *Ahunavar* he was convinced that "choice is embedded in our religion."

Mehta who was averse to the idea of disregarding the needs of childless Parsi couples wondered "What would happen to the children of adopted children? Would they be considered proper Parsis or blemished?"

There were suggestions that the anachronism of a jury system which persists in India only under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act should be eliminated. Heerjee noted that a Parsi jury would be difficult to constitute in MP as per the law. Sethna referred to suggestions from a section of the community to effect changes in the interpretation of Parsi personal laws via public interest litigation (PIL) but the idea had not found favor with outstanding community lawyers who feared the ensuing schism in the community. As for the government, Sethna noted that it would be "happy to let the matters roll along because one community's change bounces off on another."

The dakhmenashini issue — its relevance under changed conditions and the steps being taken in Bombay to shore up the system in the absence of vultures — was discussed threadbare. Mehta emphasized that the referendum on the issue held in Calcutta had produced the largest number of votes for dakhmenashini but if those who voted for cremation and those who voted for burial were added together it would demonstrate that the majority's thinking in Calcutta was away from the traditionalist attitude on the matter of disposal of the dead.

Tamboly reiterated what the BPP is doing. The effectiveness of the solar concentrators has been a source of relief for BPP trustees. Even Poona and Navsari have opted for solar panels, he noted. The proposed aviary will cost two-and-a-half crore rupees, noted Tamboly adding, "We've made it clear that costs above one crore rupees must be raised from the community."

"Why is Bombay so intent on wash-

ing dirty linen in public?" queried Mehta, suggesting that scholars should debate in camera and come to a conclusion to avoid this "game of finding facts to establish one's cause." But Gandhi pointed out the difficulty of ascertaining levels of scholarship, expertise and intellectual integrity. He noted that at international congresses organized by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute both Indian and international scholars steer clear of contentious community issues. That is why "in the Federation we accept all views, whatever be the views of the local community."

Postwalla's query about the availability of priests for those who opt for other modes of disposal of the body reminded Sethna of the time, more than 20 years ago, when the first DPA president died with his desire for cremation expressed in his will. When resident priest Ervad Darius Bagli refused to pray, then DPA president Shiavax Nargolwala told him to flag the prayers and depart. "Any Parsi can say the prayers," noted Sethna, adding "Since then (in Delhi) prayers are said for everybody irrespective of the mode of disposal."

With Afghanistan so much in the news then, Sethna was reminded of the soldiers of the ancient Zoroastrian empires, many of whom died in battle. "The greatest honor a warrior received was to be carried away on the shields of his comrades. Many were Zoroastrians, many were not. How they were disposed of, we can only guess, (but) a lot of research is being done by non-Zoroastrian Iranians. (Our) so-called educated elite could look there for answers," added the general with asperity.

Mehta spoke about *jinde ravan* prayers (funerary rites performed in one's lifetime) as having been the custom with soldiers in the old days and reiterated his suggestion of providing "a mandate to scholars to debate (the issue)" and decide. Responded Gandhi cryptically, "If you go to the wrong doctor, you've had it! Ditto with a wrong lawyer (and, by implication, the wrong scholar)." Referring to marriage, adoption and disposal of the body as an individual's personal choice, Gandhi noted, "Trustees cannot abdicate their responsibility... to give individuals freedom to decide."

Madan pointed out that unconventional options are adopted when conve-

nient as in the case of the atash from Aden that was flown in by air (the priests are normally adamant that the fire's contact with land cannot be broken). "If certain individuals can exercise options at certain times, why can't others?" asked Madan.

Citing the inconsistent stand of the high priests who permitted the navjote of Neville and Nusli Wadia, both of whom are the children of mixed marriages, both of whom had been raised in other faiths, Gandhi noted that even the orthodox objected on the basis of "one law for the rich, another law for the poor." The very mobeds who object to the performance of funerary prayers for those who are disposed of without dakhmenashini "have no objection to doing the subsequent prayers (because) that's where the money is," he added.

"I'm a strong supporter of dakhmenashini but do dasturs have the scriptural right to deprive others of religious prayers? Is the ostracism of priests fair?" asked Master. Panthaki noted that priests as a group work under the jurisdiction of the high priests. ("There are) unwritten laws, strictures. I was ostracized by (the late) Dastur Daboo for not wearing a cap."

Sethna reasoned that by denying a free-thinking Zarathushti of funerary prayers the priests make it difficult for others to follow him/her. He was dismayed by the acrimony pulling the community apart.

Unlike the broadly accepting atmosphere in Delhi, Heerjee spoke of the difficulty of anjuman trustees in mofussil towns when, as in Indore, a Parsi woman who had contracted a civil marriage outside the community under the Special Marriage Act attended prayers for a deceased family member in the agiary. At the subsequent general body meet "the die-hards said this can't be allowed. (But) under the Special Marriage Act, out-married women have the right to do so. We have to maintain that position," he argued.

Heerjee also contended that rituals have a place in Zoroastrian life provided they can be observed. For example there is no hearse in Indore. The body is transported in an ambulance and ambulance drivers are not Parsis. Also, there are no dogs at the dharamshala or agiary. "We said, leave it to the relatives. If they can't find it, forget it," Heerjee related his experiences. He suggested that athornan

madressas should inject a bit of liberalization, teach how the tenets fit into present day lives. Unless the institutions ensure that the doctrine and rituals are understood, they will produce people with fundamentalist ideas, he noted.

Dastur acquainted the council with the current scenario at the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary at Colaba whose 99-year lease has expired and the defense ministry is trying to regain possession. The situation demands public relations and legal ground-work, noted Dastur.

Bulsara noted that the Olpadvala Hall is rented out between 80-120 days in the year. Other communities pay Rs 75,000 per day for weddings and Rs 30,000 for birthday parties. The rates for the community are lower and depend also on whether the airconditioning is required. Bulsara's family had owned two liquor shops in India but his own interest lay in automobiles and he was keen to start his own workshop. He said he built his own car from scratch on advice from Boman Phezeshaw, a racing car enthusiast of Calcutta who has since settled in Jamshedpur. "It gave me the courage to go into business," he added.

"(This) shows how traditional concepts of Parsis in India is changing," commented Sethna. Gandhi noted that families are often unwilling to hazard money on business and queried, "What prevents anjumans from doing business?... Have a subsidiary trust, pay tax, earn money and use it for the benefit of the community."

Dastur pointed out that the BPP had taken the first step and established a polyclinic. Citing the example of people who originally earned Rs 700-800 per month now grossing Rs 5,000-6,000 thanks to entrepreneurial capital provided by the WZO Trust and hardly any bad debts, Dastur recommended that anjumans provide the community the edge of higher education, funds for entrepreneurship and medicare. "For a community to be productive, it should be healthy," he noted.

Gandhi wondered if there is any training facility available for would-be entrepreneurs and if not, could the subject be introduced in Parsi funded schools? People have been trying to establish compact courses, answered Sethna, adding that autorickshaws and taxis with Zoroastrian logos, a status symbol in Navsari, have been made

possible by the WZO. The land of the Tithal Sanatorium, other areas in its vicinity and in Surat still remain in Parsi hands. The conversion of old Parsi homes into havelis catering to the tourist traffic is a coming trend, he remarked.

Paghdwalla, an officer in the Zoroastrian Cooperative Bank, spoke of "the mental block (in the community) that one should do business only with one's own money. (Parsis) are averse to bank loans. *Étlo karaj nahi joiyé* (mustn't go into debt)." Almost 38 percent of limits sanctioned remain unused. "Underhand deals are a part of business today (but Parsis) are not willing to give under the table... Only 10 percent of the Zoroastrian Bank's borrowers are Parsis though 80 percent of its depositors are Parsis," he commented.

Venture capital

Businessman Khushroo Byramjee is chairman of the board of the Venture Capital (VC) Fund floated by the BPP with an initial outlay of Rs 20 lakhs. It will give another Rs 50 lakhs shortly to the Fund which visualized an initial capital of five crore rupees, informed Dastur. People who opt for voluntary retirement are seen as lenders and borrowers from the Fund.

Sethna urged the new body to interact with state minority financial and development corporations. He had learnt that only three Parsis had applied in Gujarat and their applications had been accepted. He had heard that the community was not applying in greater numbers because of lack of knowledge of the facility or because they believed it would be too difficult to apply. "At the national level banks have been told to make funds available to minorities. We should tap these funds," counseled Sethna.

Tamboly added that apart from providing loans the VC Fund could participate in equity capital of the new ventures. "We are looking at projects over Rs 50 lakhs," he noted. Guidelines on the VC Fund's working — whether it would provide seed capital only or also working capital — are being decided by Zarir Cama (CEO of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) and others, he informed the delegates.

Bhesania suggested a letter from the Federation should seek donor participation from all the member anjumans in the VC Fund.

Noting that an Indore lad's application for a three-and-a-half lakh rupee loan had been returned by the BPP without explanation Heerjee asked, "If (the VC Fund) gives only large loans, where do small entrepreneurs go?" Speaking for people who needed a lakh or two or even a few thousand rupees, Heerjee told the gathering that state minority finance corporations do not exist in all states. He urged Sethna, as a member of the NMC to get the central body to publish such information in a pamphlet.

Tamboly said the WZO has schemes for the small entrepreneur, its repayment schedule incorporating a moratorium of three to six months. Seemingly aware of the Indore case Tamboly said the matter was pending because "there was no response from Indore."

Noting that banks now work with "very liberal lines of credit," Paghdwalla said, "Only the right approach is required. The paper work should be properly done."

Gandhi noted that experts from financial institutions are guiding the VC project and added that there are "many schemes but no takers... If a man is not capable of preparing an application, is he worth helping?"

Those present at the Federation meeting were: Capt Homi and Shirin Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Tamboly, Behram Dastur, Sheroo Master, Mehli Colah and Gool Kias from Bombay; Noshir Paghdwalla, Jennifer Paghdwalla, Kaizad Motiwala and M. A. Khan from Borivli; Noomi Mehta, Bahadur Postwalla, Cyrus Madan, Beji Bulsara, Rohinton Indorewalla and Sam Medhora from Calcutta; Marzban Wadia from Davier; Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Dadi Mistry, Keki Gandhi and Yezdi Pithawala from Delhi; Mehrwan Irani from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Bomi Heerjee from Indore; Homi Bodhanwala, Khurshed Bhesania, Silloo Surti, Banoo Billimoria, Yazneen Rana and Parzan Gandhi, from Jamshedpur; Ronny Dick from Jhansi; Edul Bhagwagar and Yezdi Bhagwagar from Nagpur; Dinsha Mehta, Sarosh and Yezdi Panthaki from Saronda; Omin Debara and K. B. Antia from Secunderabad and Hyderabad; Dr Sam Bhacca from Surat and Eruch Surti from the East Zone. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.

Feedback On Fiction

Firdaus Gandavia

Parsi Fiction Volumes 1 and 2 edited by Novy Kapadia, Jaydipsinh Dodiya and R. K. Dhawan. Published in 2001 by Prestige Books, 3/28 East Patel Nagar, New Delhi 110006. Pp: Vol 1-268, Vol 2-270. Price: Rs 1,000.

Parsi Fiction edited by Novy Kapadia, Jaydipsinh Dodiya and R. K. Dhawan is a collection of critical essays in two volumes dealing with the contribution of Parsis to literature. The essays fall into three sections: the first provides the reader with valuable information about the community and the Zoroastrian faith; the second, with the broader aspects of Parsi fiction; and the third, which constitutes the largest section of the book is devoted to individual critical essays on different Parsi novelists. The main novelists discussed at great length are Firdaus Kanga, Rohinton Mistry, Bapsi Sidhwa and Dina Mehta; Boman Desai, Ardeshir Vakil, Meher Pestonji and Keki Daruwalla are given somewhat summary treatment.

Parsi writers have been a constant feature in the landscape of Indian-English literature. The poet Behram Malbari's *The Indian Muse in English Garb* was published as early as 1877 and Cornelia Sorabji's collection of short stories, *Sun Babies*, in 1904. Whereas these writers expressed themselves in a conscious manner and were generally interested in home-spun ideas and Indian characters, the second generation of Parsi novelists who have started writing in the last two decades of the 20th century are more concerned with the Parsi sense of identity; they use the language with a verve and vitality and occasionally with a great deal of linguistic experiment. In the Foreword,

Lt Gen Adi M. Sethna speaks about the "technical craftsmanship and facility of prose which have caught the modern reader's fancy." Though most of the novels have been very competently written and the literary craftsmanship is sometimes innovative as in Desai's *The Memory of Elephants*, one has to unwillingly admit that the main interest of the reader more often lies in the idiosyncrasies and the touch of exoticism

associated with the community. Most writers have exploited this in their work with varying degrees of success.

The first section of critical essays deals with the Parsis and their religion. Kapadia's "The Parsis: An Introduction" gives the reader who is unfamiliar with the community a basic background of its beginnings in Fars, an ancient province now in southern Iran. He dwells at great length on the life and teachings of Zoroaster and the arrival of the Parsis in India. The religious belief and the historical perspective are cogently examined. However, much of the religious background covered by Kapadia in the introduction is repeated in succeeding essays with minor variations or in greater detail. A chapter entitled "Getting to Know Parsi Zoroastrians" is very comprehensive, but while reading it one feels that the same ground has already been covered in the previous essays and that much of the information is needlessly repeated.

A much-needed change of focus is provided by Amalendu Guha in his essay "The Role of Parsi Entrepreneurs: 1750-1850," which describes how the Parsis congregated in Bombay, initially as a means of trade and commerce and later for industry and the role they played in the flourishing opium trade.

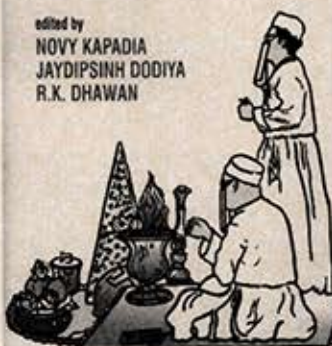
He attributes their rapid success in business not only to the absence of the caste factor but also to their phenomenal ability to adjust to changing political scenarios free from social constraints. As a result family businesses blossomed into partnerships with Europeans, Hindus and Muslims.

No information on the Parsi community would be complete without an essay on its dwindling numbers and Rustom Gae examines this in "Causes and Effects of Decline in Parsi Population." The statistics are used selectively and alarmingly: the population which in 1930 was 110,000, is less than 70,000 in the year 2000 and by 2025 there will be only 25,000 Parsis accounting for 0.02 percent of the expected population of India. The problem of interfaith marriages, the status of children of Parsi women married outside the community, marriage at a late age have all been cited as causes for the decline in the population. It is not merely the causes and the effects of the population problem which are thoroughly discussed, but a serious effort has been made to suggest steps which have to be taken to improve the situation. Drawing attention to the problems the community is facing, Gae makes a fervent plea for reform and particularly for abandoning old customs and traditions, especially those which have become redundant over a period of time.

In "The Theme of Marriage in Parsi Fiction," the same problem is discussed with reference to novels written by Parsis. The theme of interfaith marriages is examined in different novels from Perin Bharucha's *The Fire Worshippers* (1968) to Sidhwa's *An American Brat* (1994). In an early novel like *The Fire Worshippers* mixed marriages are objected to, as these were the harbingers of the total disintegration of the community. Kapadia shows how Ava Khullar's view that among the Parsis there is a complete lack of societal censure or shock at the unmarried state is prevalent in a character like Sera, in

PARSI FICTION

edited by
NOVY KAPADIA
JAYDIPSINH DODIYA
R.K. DHAWAN



1
VOL.



L to R (1st row): Kanga, Mistry, Sidhwa and Mehta
(2nd row): Desai, Vakil, Pestonji and Daruwalla

Kanga's *Trying to Grow*. Sera is not bothered by the fact that she has a working daughter who is old enough to be a bride and is yet unmarried. In an analysis of "Exercises" (*Tales from Firozsha Baug*) by Mistry, he shows that very often parents themselves push their children into interfaith marriages by not being supportive of the choices they have made within their own community. Coupled with this is a morbid and predominant fear of sex as in the case of Jeroo who is so protective of her daughter in *Trying to Grow* that she unwittingly pushes her into the arms of a Hindu boy, Rohit.

In his essay on "Power, Politics and Politicians in the Parsi Novels" R. S. Pathak attempts to evaluate the Parsi response to great national events and political movements and their attitude to some well-known politicians. The essay, based on a close study of selected novels, comes to the conclusion that on account of their minority status and the fact that they were so outnumbered by the Hindus and the Muslims, the Parsis were by and large non-political. However, A. K. Tripathy divides post-Midnight's Children authors into two groups: one concerned with fictional technique and another with historical and social realities. Though he places Kanga in the first group, Kanga does not really fit into either as he neither experiments with form nor does his vision encompass any political point of

view. After a lengthy analysis of the characteristics of the two groups, Tripathy sensitively depicts the political background in Mehta's *And Some Take a Lover*, where he poignantly presents Roshni's struggle, tracing her development from a romantic girl to a woman who after the loss of her lover prepares to face life with the challenge of having nothing, not even hopes.

Most of the essays on individual authors examine the writers from a postcolonial point of view. These essays examine the cultural displacement of the community from Persia to India in the 1300s and then the second dispersion from India to foreign countries. Both these contributed to a sense of angst and an identity crisis which the novelists explore and this is an area which has been examined very thoroughly in many of the essays in this book. Latha Rengachari examines *An American Brat* from the complexities of being a Parsi, being a Pakistani and then migrating to the West burdened by both these identities. The confusion between the land of birth and the land of habitation has been examined in the fiction of Mistry as well. Of the short stories, the one most prominently studied is "Lend Me Your Light" (*Tales from Firozsha Baug*) and the position of the immigrant writer portrayed as Tiresias "throbbing between two lives" is used as a classic case of postcolonial angst in "The Mystery of Mistry as Tiresias" by S. Ramaswamy. Savita Goel studies the theme of displacement and the need to forge a sense of identity in "Lend Me Your

Light," "Swimming Lessons" and "Squatter" (*Tales from Firozsha Baug*) where characters try, often unsuccessfully, to achieve a new sense of identity in their adopted countries. Goel also draws our attention to the same theme of displacement and the need to belong in Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, reflected in the plight of the two cobblers who have been forced to leave their villages and migrate to the city, and to abandon their profession of cobblers to become tailors. Goel analyzes the character of Dina Dalal who chooses to be displaced from her home to assert her individuality and sense of self and of Maneck Kolah who is displaced from his quiet home in the hills and has to make a new life in the urban and bustling metropolis of Bombay. The postcolonial and diasporic element in Mistry's fiction is once again carefully examined in essays by Charu Chandra Mishra and by Sumita Pal, and in essays by Suman Bala, Dodiya and Indira Bhatt in Sidhwa's novels.

Rahul Sapra examines Sidhwa's novel from a postcolonial perspective particularly from the point of view of Parsis and their involvement with the politics of Pakistan. He also discusses the question of a postcolonial writer using the language of the colonizers and quotes the Kenyan novelist, Ngugi wa Thiongo who believed that an author should enrich his own language. Like the Nigerian Achebe, Sidhwa alters English by the introduction of local words and expressions, thus subverting the language for her purpose.

N. S. Dharan sees ethnic atrophy as a predominant theme in the novels of Mistry, an atrophy expressed in the depiction of the dwellings, the crumbling ceilings, the leaking toilets, peeling plaster and the cultivated insularity of the community. Mishra sees a pattern of resistance in the work of Mistry, particularly in the efforts of the main characters in *Such A Long Journey* to subvert the workings of the powerful, which is likened to Edward Said's second stage of anti-colonial resistance.

However, not all the essays are filled with postcolonial diasporic dilemmas and literary jargon. Many essays discuss broad themes and por-

trayal of character and eccentricities in the novels. K. V. Surendran sees *Trying to Grow* as a vibrant depiction of Parsi life and traditions with their eccentricities, passion for food, innocence in matters of sex, custom of celebrating two birthdays and love marriages. Purvi Upadhyay concentrates on the entertaining aspects of Sidhwa's *The Crow Eaters* and stresses the serious crisis of identity at the same time. V. L. V. N. Narendra Kumar examines Vakil's *Beach Boy* as a bildungsroman, a rites of passage tale where the protagonist grows up from childhood to maturity, finally achieving a recognition of his identity. The novel ends on a note of optimism and affirmation with Cyrus ready to face life after the death of his father. Alka Saxena studies the structure of *And Some Take a Lover* and examines the growth of the protagonist Roshni who, at the end of the novel, no longer subjugated by lust, is finally free from passion and romantic obsession.

Chelva Kanaganayakam draws attention to the two titles *The Ice Candy Man* and *Cracking India* by Sidhwa and

interprets the story from two angles: the character-oriented narrative as well as the postmodernist political angle. He also draws attention to the various personal strands in the novel and Sidhwa's skilful use of the story of Ranna to achieve a sense of distance. G. D. Barche interestingly applies a couplet from the *Chhandogya Upanishad* to show how the experiences of Feroza in Sidhwa's *An American Brat* lead to expansion and ultimate maturity whereas Olivia in Ruth Prawar Jhabwala's *Heat and Dust* suffers from a narrowness and contraction resulting in ultimate death.

What most of these writers are dealing with today are contemporary issues and the struggle of what it means to be a Parsi. Kapadia discusses a little known novel *Discovering Ashavan* written by a Karachi based author Farishta Murzban Dinshaw and published by the Zarhosti Banu Mandal in Karachi in 2000. The novel deals with the friendship between Ashavan, a deformed, outcaste stable boy and Zarathushtra and is set in pre-Zoroastrian times in Persia. Zarathushtra is shown in his adolescent and questioning phase and Dinshaw makes clever use of history

and legend and deconstructs truths and legends and presents a fascinating fictional account of the early life of Zarathushtra.

There are a few mis-statements: Farokh and Tehemton Udwadia have wrongly been mentioned as famous jurists instead of doctors, Ruth Prawar Jhabwala does not belong to the Parsi community, Chowpatty Beach has acquired the strange name of Charles Beach, while a sentence about Mistry's use of opposition and contrasts has been repeated on pg 123 and 124 of Vol. 2. Despite this, the editors have certainly made a serious and laudable effort to put together significant criticism of Parsi fiction in two volumes. Since the thrust of the essays has been in keeping with the current fashions of literary theory and criticism towards postcolonialism and the diaspora, the volumes will be of greater use to students than to general readers interested in reading about Parsi fiction. What is interesting to note is that most of the essays have been contributed by non-Parsis. Is this, one wonders, yet another indication of the disappearing and diasporic community?

With Best Wishes From

Mr Rusy M. Shroff, M.B.E.

and

Mrs Purviz R. Shroff

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 20 and 38 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 27 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 24 and 42 years, averaging at 30 years.

As versus 11 births in Bombay in February (as per the data supplied by two hospitals) there were 76 deaths. Heart disease claimed 30 lives, 15 of whom were 80 years and above. The other killers were pneumonia/lung disease (eight), old age/general debility, septicemia and cancer (five each), brain disease, diabetes and hypertension (three each) and head injury (two). Parkinson's disease, cerebral malaria, kidney failure, hepatorenal syndrome, motor neuron disease, fracture, multiple sclerosis, hyperkalemia (excessive potassium in the blood), mediastinal (empty space between the lungs) tumor, nervous disorder and malignant Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma were the isolated cases registered in February. A stillborn baby girl was also lost to the community. The age range fluctuated between 25 and 96 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for February, in Bombay, was 76 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by two hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BARODA

BORN

A boy, *Jersis*, to *Diana* and *Delzin Wadia* on November 21, 2001
A boy, *Rehan*, to *Dinaz* and *Nevil Kolah*; December 12

MARRIED

Armin Jehanbux Tavadia and *Yazad Pervez Engineer*, January 21, 2002

DIED

Perinbanoo Rustumji Patel (78); January 9
Dosamai Dinshawji Bhagwagar (79); January 11
Ardeshtir Hiraji Kerawalla; January 23
Phiroze Nadirshaw Katpitia; January 27
Freny Jalejar Kalyaniwalla (58); February 13
Rusi Cawasji Dorabji (85); February 25
Limji Darashaw Gandhi (82); February 25
Noshir Hormasji Gai (40); February 27

BHARUCH

DIED

Dinshaw Jinwalla (83), husband of *Aloo* and father of *Sarosh* and *Shera Udwadia*; November 4, 2001

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy, *Burges*, to *Meher* and *Farrokh Mirza*, brother to *Rushad*; December 28
A girl to *Havovi* and *Viraf Bhagwagar*; January 3, 2002
A girl to *Percis* and *Zubin Limboowala*; January 20

A boy to *Meher* and *Jehangir Katrak*; February 2
A boy to *Scheherazade* and *Darayus Sarkari*; February 5
A girl to *Kaenaz* and *Navroze Dhamodiwalla*; February 9
A girl to *Farida* and *Adil Baja*; February 10
A girl, *Jeffrina*, to *Benaifer* and *Nozer Patel*; February 10
A girl to *Freny* and *Kaizad Karanjawalla*; February 11
Twins (boy and girl), *Shayan* and *Shyna*, to *Kainaz* and *Rusi Gandhi*; February 14
A girl, *Zanetta*, to *Nazneen* and *Zubin Karkaria*, sister to *Farzan*; February 16
A girl to *Hufrish* and *Ruzbeh Mistry*; February 18
A girl to *Parizad* and *Rohinton Bandorawalla*; February 23

MARRIED

Feringez Godrej Pestonji and *Neville Ronny Dick*; December 23, 2001
Delnaz Gustad Sadri and *Viraf Nadir Sodawaterwalla*; February 1, 2002
Benaz Rohinton Deolaliwalla of *Deolali* and *Mehernosh Boman Irani*; February 4
Kavina Diniar Sahiar and *Kaizad Hoshi Karkaria*; February 4
Mani Kali Wadia and *Zubin Fredy Vazifdar*; February 4
Faranak Hoshang Nanavati and *Raiomand Zavare Irani* of *Satara*; February 7
Nazneen Shapur Khandhadia and *Zubin Soli Kutar*; February 10
Farida Cyrus Patel and *Zubin Parvez Garda*; February 11

Yasmin Neville Bhajiwalla and *Jamshed Neville Engineer*; February 14
Pervin Firoze Kandawalla and *Neville Rusi Irani*; February 14
Dina Yazdi Chichgur and *Mashya Phiroze Amroliwalla*; February 15
Behroze Bomi Umrigar and *Ardeshtir Homi Daruwalla*; February 15
Yasmin Cavas Tamboli of *New Delhi* and *Neville Mehli Poncha*; February 15
Khushnuma Noshir Lawyer and *Farhad Parvez Vankadia*; February 15
Gulshad Rusi Dadachanji and *Framroze Dadi Vatcha*; February 15
Delnaz Munchershaw Choksey and *Hormuz Jal Dastur*; February 16
Khurshid Rusi Writer and *Rohinton Nariman Patel*; February 19
Shiraz Aspi Nirumwalla and *Zubin Maneck Kanga*; February 21
Aban Dinyar Bulsara and *Zaver Noshir Kamdin*; February 24
Shanaz Aspi Jassawalla and *Cyrus Adi Dalal*; February 25
Farzana Ardeshtir Patel and *Mehli Maneck Golvala*; February 25

DIED

Katie Eruchshaw Adenwalla (85), residing at 41, Automobile Co Bldg, M. Karve Rd, 400002; February 1
Behram Gustad Irani (85), 5, Malegamwala Bldg, 4th Mohalla, Gilder Lane,

400008; February 1
Piloo Jamshed Mistry (82), C/28, Malbari Bldg, New Khareghat Clny, 400007; February 1
Freny Dhunjishaw Paymaster (92), Jimmy Chmbs, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; February 1
Katy Kaikhushroo Damania (80), 133, Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; February 2
Piloo Homi Bulsara (75), G/51, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 2
Dinamai Burjorji Mahuwalla (82), 347/C, United Chmbs, M. S. A. Rd, Grant Rd (E), 400007; February 2
Darabshaw Framroze Bharucha (95), 9, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 3
Keki Burjorji Dumasia (77), 9, Manek Mans, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 3
Dinshaw Sorabji Nagporewalla (81), Royal Ter, 58, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; February 3
Shavak Gustadji Billimoria (87), 602/B, Captain Hse, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Matunga, 400019; February 4
Baby girl of *Kaizeen Nainshad Daruwalla* (still-born), 7/A, Meherbai Wadia Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; February 4
Nergiz Noshir Mehta (81), Aziz Bldg, 135, Tardeo Rd, 400034; February 4
Eddie Hormusji Pavri (70), 30, India Hse no 2, Kemp's Corner, 400036; February 4

Murzban Burjorji Unwala (84), Irani Hse, Dr Cawasjee Hormusjee St, 400002; February 4

Mehroo Dinshaw Vakharia (80), Gulshan Hill Top Co-op Hsg Soc, 1st Gautam Lane, Andheri (W), 400058; February 4

Eruch Hormusji Vesuna (79), Sherevar Bldg, 672, Rd no 14, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 4

Khorshed Khodabux Irani (82), F/19, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 5

Fali Sorab Jilla (73), 46/B, Gowalia Tank Bldg, Gowalia Tank, 400036; February 5

Persis Dinshawji Kerawalla (70), Dolat Manzil, 607/A, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 5

Navalshah Hormusji Patel (62), B/20, Mahesh Apts, B. M. Bhargava Rd, Off S. V. Rd, Santacruz (W), 400054; February 5

Shavakshaw Darabshaw Patel (82), A/5, Dr Kerawalla Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 6

Dara Kaikhushroo Harda (52), 7/A, Old Wadia Bldg, Chandanwadi, 400002; February 7

Dali Jal Powwalla (64), Yusuf Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; February 7

Meheroo Behram Mahalaxmi-vala (93), Firuz-Ara, 160, Karve Rd, 400021; February 8

Khorshed Pirojsha Mory (72), Sunita, Cuffe Parade, 400005; February 8

Jerroo Bomanshaw Panthaky (91), 4/59, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; February 8

Behram Godrej Gandhi (71), 9, Malegaumwala Bldg no 2, Stn Rd, Mahim, 400016; February 9

Meher Jehanbux Bhandara (80), 104/B, Achal Kalyan Complex, Yari Rd, Versova, Andheri (W), 400061; February 10

Katy Framroze Edulji (69), 5, Scheherazade, Colaba, 400005; February 10

Freny Dhunjishaw Gazder (80), 24, Palkhiwalla Bldg, 1st Dhobitalao Lane, 400002; February 10

Kersasp Meherjibhoy Mistry (70), Bakhtavar, 901, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 10

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*									
	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	2001*	2002○	This issue	2001*	2002○	This issue	2001*	2002○
BIRTHS									
Boys	4	97	11	2	10	—	5	36	2
Girls	10	98	21	—	7	—	5	34	4
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	21	252	57	1	16	1	2	11	2
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	—	18	—	—	1	—	5	6	—
Females married out	—	14	—	—	1	—	1	5	—
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	32	432	75	10	66	12	9	48	5
Females	44	454	87	4	39	10	5	34	3
CREMATED									
Males	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2001 (January 2001-April 2002 issues)

○Running totals for 2002 (January 2002-April 2002 issues)

Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as Parsiana does not have a breakup of those cremated.

*These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by Parsiana. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.

Maneck Rustomji Tata (84), 30, United Chmbs, 347/A, Grant Rd, 400007; February 10

Fali Nariman Bhesania (73), S. M. Banaji Bldg, Forjett St, 400036; February 11

Perin Edi Wadia (82), 5, Mohamedbhai Mans, 7, Hughes Rd, 400007; February 11

Baimai Ferdoonji Bode (81), 275, Princess Bldg, Princess St, 400002; February 12

Goolbai Bomanshaw Ghadially (83), Kaka Bldg, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 12

Bomi Kaikhushru Tavaria (69), Minerva Mans, Near Super Cinema, Grant Rd (E), 400007; February 12

Minoo Faramroze Solaina (76), Adenwalla Bldg, Pavwalla St, Charni Rd Jn, 400004; February 13

Soli Jalejer Godiwalla (67), Saidunnissa Hse, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 14

Tehmi Rustom Roointon (Irani) (60), RSC 41, Gorai, Sector 2, Plot no 201, Borivli (W), 400092; February 14

Ratamai Savaksha Bhatena (94), Sonawalla Bldg, 12th Cross Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; February 15

Freny Rustom Joshi (89), Society Bldg, 642, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 15

Jer Framroze Vazifdar (86), 21, Saguna, St Francis Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400056; February 15

Shavak Navalshah Italia (68), A/104, Sheetal Apts, Baman Wada Rd, Andheri (E), 400099; February 16

Daisy Parvez Khambatta (67), 6/D, Salsette Parsi Clny, 306, Pump Hse, Andheri (W), 400093; February 16

Aloo Jahangir Banatwala (81), 681/B, Firdosi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 17

Edward Sorab Mody (64), 2/A, Gool Villa, Opp St Michael Church, Mahim, 400016; February 17

Minocher Cawasji Pavri (74), 692, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 17

Mehran Keki Vazifdar (96), A/15, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; February 17

Bomanshaw Cooverji Bhagalia (84), Malbari Bldg, New Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; February 18

Freny Nariman Daruwala (79), 8/15, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; February 18

Fali Jivanji Jada (90), Cama Bldg, Gilder Lane, 400008; February 18

Hira Homi Mistry (72), 4, Patel Chmbs, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; February 18

Darayus Dadiha Bharucha (49), 12/6, Dr Lentin Bldg, Gamadia Colony, Tardeo, 400007; February 19

Putlan Minocher Mody (90), Jilloo Wadia Bldg, 584, Lady Jehangir Rd, Matunga, 400014; February 19

Khorshed Dossabhoj Bamji (81), M-4, Palm Springs, Cuffe Parade, 400005; February 20

Freny Bahadur Bharucha (77), Jewellers Apts No 1, 56, Peddar Rd, 400026; February 20

Jer Hormusji Andhyarujina (86), 51, Jamaspji Apts, 32, Sleater Rd, 400007; February 21

Mani Rustomji Jalnawala (89), P. M. Bglw, Jalna, Dist Jalna, 431203; February 21

Roshan Jehangirji Jilla (83), J. D. Alves Soc, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; February 21

Rati Jehanbux Maneckshaw (82), 18, Gamadia Bldg, 226, Tardeo Rd, 400007; February 22

Tehmina Meherji Bharucha (80), 8, Mehta Bldg, Mahim, 400016; February 23

Minoo Rustomji Billimoria (73), 9, Shirish Co-op Soc, Hazuri Darga Rd, Thane, 400601; February 23

Darab Bomanji Contractor (74), 12/5, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; February 23

Tozar Feroz Chhoga (25), 502, A1/51, Adarsh Soc, Yashodham, Goregaon (E), 400063; February 24

Roda Sorabji Shikari (81), Tehmi Villa, 798, Jame-Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; February 24

Perin Sorab Todywalla (72), B/34, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; February 24

Beli Merwan Irani (69), 7/B, Old Wadia Bldg, Chandanwadi, 400002; February 25

Aloo Fakirji Randelia (75), Lilian Lodge, Kumbharwada, Agshi, Virar, 401303; February 25

Banoos Noshir Mistry (80), Cama Bldg, Gilder Lane, 400008; February 26

Minoo Hormusji Dhalla (79), 6/B-347, United Chmbs, Grant Rd, 400007; February 27

Nergish Ardeshtir Billimoria (73), B, Daruwala Bldg, South Frere Bridge, Grant Rd, 400007; February 27

Silloo Pirojshaw Daruwala (68), F-12, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; February 28

Dara Hormusji Mehta (80), F-24, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400036; February 28

Tehmina Jamshedji Udawadia (78), B/402, Giriraj, Modern Usha Clny, Evershine Ngr, Malad (W), 400064; February 28

POONA

DIED
Sohrab (Soli) Ardeshtir Cursetjee, brother of Mehroo Keki Bhole; December 9, 2001

SURAT

DIED
Kawas Dhanjishaw Paghd-wala (70), Swagat, Vanki Bordi, 395003; February 11, 2002

Jamshedji Hormasji Bhagat (80), Parsiwad, Village Adajan; February 18

Sam Kaikhushroo Aibada (72), Rani Talao, Bibi-ni-wadi, 395003; February 21

Baby of Percy Firoze Mistry (six mths), Savasadi Sadan, Bhavnagri St, 395003; February 21

CANADA British Columbia

BORN
A girl, **Vista**, to **Louisa** and **Bahram Khosravi**; October 27, 2001

DIED
Shirin Kavouspour (72), wife of Mondegarg and mother of Dinyar and Daryush in Vancouver; January 25, 2002

Nova Scotia
MARRIED
Nicole Gallant and **Zubin Talavia** of Boston; August 29, 2001

Ontario
MARRIED
Marie-Claude Martin, daughter of Hilhne and late Girard, and **Rohinton Medhora**, son of Khorshed and Phiroze in Ottawa; November 3

DIED
Khushroo Lakdawalla (61), husband of Dinaz and father of Sam in Ottawa; January 10, 2002

Dhanji Byromshaw, brother of Goolbai Homi Patel, Mani Soli Divecha, Mary Mullins, Arnavaaz Nanavutty, Jal and Homi in Toronto; February 16

Quebec
BORN
A boy, **Ryan Cyrus**, to **Tinaz** and **Glen Washer**, brother to Kai, in Montreal; June 29, 2001

DIED
Mahabanoos Rivetna (91), wife of Nariman and mother of Mini Khushroo Mirza and Gool Farokh Kapadia in Montreal; January 8, 2002

IRAN
DIED
Khodadad Bonshahi (76), father of Mehraban, Homa and Manijeh Fariborz Rahnamoon in Yazd; January 14

Khodaram Falahati (75), husband of Fardows and father of Parvin, Parisa, Darioush, Parviz and Rostam in Tehran; January 21

NEW ZEALAND

BORN
A boy, **Shiavux**, to **Zenobia** and **Pervez Mistry**, brother to Kerfeghar in Auckland; February 13

PAKISTAN Karachi

MARRIED
Serena Vania and **Kaiwan Bharucha**; January 7

DIED
Framroze B. Anklesaria, father of Gaive; December 16, 2001

UK Hertfordshire

BORN
A boy, **Behram**, to **Meher** and **Malcolm Printer** in Hatfield; February 18, 2002

London
BORN
A girl, **Zara**, to **Fanella** and **Ardi Kolah** in Wimbledon; December 24, 2001

DIED
Mehru Erach Khan (92), 10, Bailey Court, Vespan Rd, W12 9QP; October 9

Surrey
DIED
Sohrab R. Elavia (70), 26, Bloomfield Rd, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2SE; November 4

Khurshed Shapurji Mehta (80), 5, Inglewood Avenue, Heatherside, Camberley, GU15 1RJ; January 3, 2002

Tayside, Scotland
DIED
Erach Manek Manekshaw (80), 488, Strathmartine Rd, Downfield, Dundee DD3 9BB; October 28

USA
Illinois
MARRIED
Maria Mastronardi and **Noshir Contractor** in Chicago; June 6, 2001

Shiva Mondegarian, daughter of Shahla and Hooshmand,

and **Pedram Kadhodaian**, son of Farima and Niroo-mand in Chicago; February 17, 2002

DIED
Naju Khariwalla, mother of Rumi in Chicago; November 15, 2001

Massachusetts

BORN
A girl, **Nikta Shireen**, to **Mahshad** and **Iraj Mozghai** in Boston; August 15

New York

MARRIED
Janice Peterson and **Kershaw Mehta** in Poughkeepsie; September 29

Oklahoma

BORN
A boy, **Evan Grant**, to **Sheila** and **Nevilla Aga** in Moore; August 6

Pennsylvania

BORN
A girl, **Aimee**, to **Anahita** and **Aziz Lookman**; September 4

Rhode Island

MARRIED
Lisa Fernald and **Jamshed Vakharia** in Warwick; July 1

Texas

BORN
A boy, **Jehan**, to **Zarina** and **Rohinton Bhandari**, brother to Cyrus and Zubin; November 11

DIED
Khorshed Sorabji, mother of Nilufer Kasnavia in Houston; November 8

Virginia

BORN
A girl, **Zara Isabelle**, to **Rashne** and **Garrett Green**; December 5

MARRIED
Binaifer Davar, daughter of Pervin and Adi, and **Randy Glantz**; September 22

Washington

DIED
Shapour Demehry, husband of Shahnaz and father of Orang and Negin; November 4

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

Savior for the scourge

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Dr Jal Minocher Mehta, 74, honorary president of the Poona District Leprosy Committee (PDLC) which ran the Dr Bandorawalla Leprosy Hospital, Kondhwa, on October 13, 2001, two days after he collapsed in the bathroom and slipped into a coma. He was rushed to the K.E.M. Hospital in Poona but was declared brain dead by the neurosurgeons.

"He lived for them and died for them," summed up an editorial by Farida Master in the *Pune Times of India* of October 15, 2001,

referring to Mehta's commitment to the cause of leprosy patients, thousands of whom he must have nursed and nurtured at the Hospital until the socially ostracized victims became self-supporting individuals. When the government aid to the Hospital gradually stopped, the crusader continued with his mission by using his contacts in Germany, Switzerland and other places as also with industrialists and businessmen in India to fund this institution. But when the inmates too pressed for demands, the disillusioned Mehta had resolved to submit his resignation on October 15, a decision those close to him felt was taking its toll on his mental and physical well-being. Mehta himself never sought any remuneration when working for those afflicted with leprosy and in fact even when rehabilitating them he would often spend from his own pocket, reported the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of September 21, 1987.

Although the government had discontinued its aid to the Leprosy Hospital, it had in 1982 honored Mehta with the Padma Bhushan, and in 1993 bestowed upon PDLC the National Award for the Welfare of the Handicapped "in public recognition of outstanding performance in the field of handicapped welfare." The following year he was conferred the Manav Mitra Award but



Mehta: relentless crusader

more than these honors "Jal's biggest achievement was that he removed the taboo associated with leprosy. Jal worked hard to break down all the misconceptions surrounding this disease," his wife Dr Mehru, a cancer surgeon, was quoted in the *Pune Times*. "Today... a woman afflicted with leprosy gets married to a normal man... that's the highest form of acceptance that Jal helped achieve," Mehru stated.

Having served on the National Leprosy Advisory Committee as also the Maharashtra State Leprosy Advisory Board and the leprosy working group of the Planning Commission, Mehta had also shared his experience with the rehabilitation committee of the 10th international leprosy congress at Bergen. In coordination with the cured patients he was instrumental in establishing viable cooperative industrial units to produce items for the automobile and hospital sectors. According to his Mehta Co-operative Rehabilitation Model a sizable amount of the earnings from these societies would be recycled to the PDLC so that other leprosy patients could be treated, cured and given a new meaning to life. When the Mehtas' only son Dr Minoo died in an avalanche in the Himalayas in 1986 as a lasting tribute to his memory was established the Dr Minoo Mehta Apangodhar Sahakari Udyogik Utpadak Sanstha Maryadit, the first cooperative society managed by cured leprosy patients (see "Lightening the load of leprosy," *Parsiana*, July 1993).

To Dr Jal Mehta too goes the credit of establishing a unit for the fabrication of lower limbs not only for leprosy amputees but also other handicapped patients. "Science still reigns supreme in my mental make-up and it was this scientific enquiry that led me to the study of leprosy in later life," Mehta had acknowledged in his interview with *Parsiana*. After completing his schooling from St Mary's and his MBBS from Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas Medical College in Bombay, Mehta specialized

in surgery. He was then involved in the science and technology of sera and vaccine preparation, working at the Serum Institute of India as vice chairperson and director.

His association with the PDLC began in 1956 when it took over the running of the Kondhwa Leprosy Hospital (which was subsequently renamed the Dr Bandorawalla Leprosy Hospital in memory of its founder president and Mehta's father-in-law Dr Nowroji J. Bandorawalla). Along with Dr Noshir Antia and other surgeons he had established the reconstructive and plastic surgery unit at the Hospital which previously was functioning from a barrack structure in Kondhwa where the inmates were given a measured quota of rice and vegetables, along with some firewood to cook their own meals. Even while a policeman stood guard at the entrance some of the inmates would escape and beg on the streets. With Mehta's arrival the scenario changed drastically and instead of the barracks came a sprawling hospital and rehabilitation center that became a home to leprosy victims until they were cured. It had a capacity to treat around 350 resident patients in addition to 1,000 patients each month. The humble doctor believed that the credit for the good work should go to his father-in-law who took over the neglected home from the State Government in 1956, socialist Aruna Asaf Ali who inspired him to take on this responsibility, renowned leprologist Dr Robert Cochrane and to his wife Mehru.

As reported by his wife, Jal had no time for the luxury of hobbies. "He was always on the telephone about things connected with either the Leprosy Hospital or the Serum Institute...but he loved having pets — a terrier Echo and the parrot Tappy... Lately he would talk about Buddha's Middle Path. But he wasn't overtly religious. His work was his religion."

The dedicated samaritan is survived by his wife Dr Mehru.

Lord of the hill

Died: Jamshed (Jimmy) Shiavax Lord, 73, proprietor of Lord's Central Hotel who earned the epithet of the grand old man of Matheran, on September 4, 2001 after succumbing to brain hemorrhage. The stroke was precipitated by a mishap en route to his favorite hill station when his car skidded on a patch of oil on the Bombay-Poona Road. To treat his fractured arm they brought him to the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital in Bombay where he suffered a massive stroke and was subsequently shifted to the Jaslok Hospital.



Lord: hospitable hotelier

"The hospitality industry in western India has indeed been orphaned and the hotel fraternity of Matheran will indeed miss the fatherly figure," noted the condolence message from Vivek Nair, president of the Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) who commended Lord for always keeping the "interest of the industry ahead of self."

When he was president of the hill station in 1974 and Matheran was cut off from the rest of the world during a rail strike, Lord inspired the local residents to voluntarily undertake *shram-dhan* (hard work without seeking monetary rewards) so that the dirt track between Neral and Matheran was converted into a motorable road, mentions a family source. Whilst thus ensuring that essential supplies and medicines were not denied to the locals, Lord had the foresight to build steps at Dasturi Naka (the entry point to Matheran) such that automobiles would never disturb the tranquility of the resort.

And yet, the environment and ecology conscious hotelier was instrumental in getting a donation through Pallonji Mistry for an ambulance for emergency use in the hill station, and even maintaining and running it there for four years when the local municipality refused to shoulder the responsibility. Medical camps for the local people and admission of the ailing into Bombay hospitals was another service for which Lord came to be relied upon. He has also been credited for soliciting a donation from Tatas to repair and resurface the three-kilometer stretch of road from the bazar to Sunset Point without any

environmental repercussions.

He was first elected to the Matheran Municipal Council in 1961 and continued to serve on it for many terms. For seven years, from 1967-74, he was president of the Council. His involvement in the town planning and politics never abated and he was latterly serving as its nominated councilor. On the day of the ill-fated accident he was proceeding to Matheran to attend a Council meeting, it was reported.

"Matheran will not be the same without him," commented K. M. Sheth, executive chairman of The Great Eastern Shipping Company Limited, remembering him for "the warmth extended whenever we came holidaying to (his) Hotel. He always was full of anecdotes and one of the most caring persons one has had the good fortune to know."

A respected father figure for most of Matheran, affectionately addressed as "Jimmy baba," his interest in Matheran's preservation and progress extended to maintaining its ecological balance through active tree planting, providing free milk every morning to the poor children of the town by introducing the Matheran milk scheme, arranging for donations of computers to the Saraswati Vidya Mandir and the St Francis Xavier's High School so that the children there could get basic training in computers, and instituting cash scholarships for top ranking students in each school. As a game warden he was sometimes called upon to hunt down man-eaters and leopards terrorizing local villagers.

"Jimmy Lord's contribution to Matheran is unparalleled in the history of the hill station," wrote Ram Gandhi, member of the Matheran Bachao Samiti in his condolence message. "He has personally been responsible for so many good holidays and memories people have had of Matheran," he added. As noted Meher Heroyce Moos in her obituary in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (ADC) of September 7, 2001, "Jimmy was often the *raison d'être* for most visitors to his unique resort." Having enjoyed her annual holidays at Lords since 1952, for Jerroo Irani, managing editor of *Voyage* magazine, "Jimmy had this unique gift — he made every guest feel like family. Despite competition from newer luxury hotels, Lords retained its Raj-style ambience, its unmatched cuisine and impeccable hospi-

talities."

Although he never wanted to be a hotelier, his father's illness immediately after he graduated in 1948 compelled him to involve himself in the running of the Hotel. And when his father died four years later, he took up the challenge. He did his postgraduation in hospitality management from Blackpool, England. His earlier education was at Bahadurji School in Lonavla, followed by Masters Tutorial School in Bombay from where he passed his SSC before proceeding to Sydenham College whence he graduated in commerce. Whilst constantly striving to upgrade the facilities and amenities at his resort, he ensured that they were eco-friendly. The garbage at Lords was recycled such that manure was created for the gardens he so dearly loved and a successful vermiculture system was operational. The solar panels at Lords were specially installed to supply hot water to the Hotel and to cook staff meals.

A respected mentor to those in the travel trade and the hotel and hospitality industry, Lord took an active interest in the Catering College in Bombay in its nascent stage and was for many years a paper setter and examiner at that institution.

His remarkable persistence and application made his friend Rumi Framjee comment, "I knew him as a person who would never accept defeat and if he wanted to have something to happen for the good of anyone, he would work on it till he was victorious." Fond of traveling and making new acquaintances Lord's stories could keep friends entertained for hours on end. ADC reader Huzan Engineer referred to Lord's "charismatic presence and his ever ready wit. A scintillating conversationalist, his knowledge on every subject under the sun was formidable."

As trustee of the Parsi aramgah Lord was substantially involved in raising funds for its renovation on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. But since he died in Bombay his mortal remains were taken to the Chandanwadi crematorium as per his wish. In the words of Sheth, "I am sure that wherever he is, Jimmy's heart would always be in the red soil of Matheran."

The affable hotelier is survived by his wife Zenobia, daughter Yasmeen Daruwalla, sons Yazed, Shiavax and Zal, and brothers Homi and Fali. P. M. G.

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