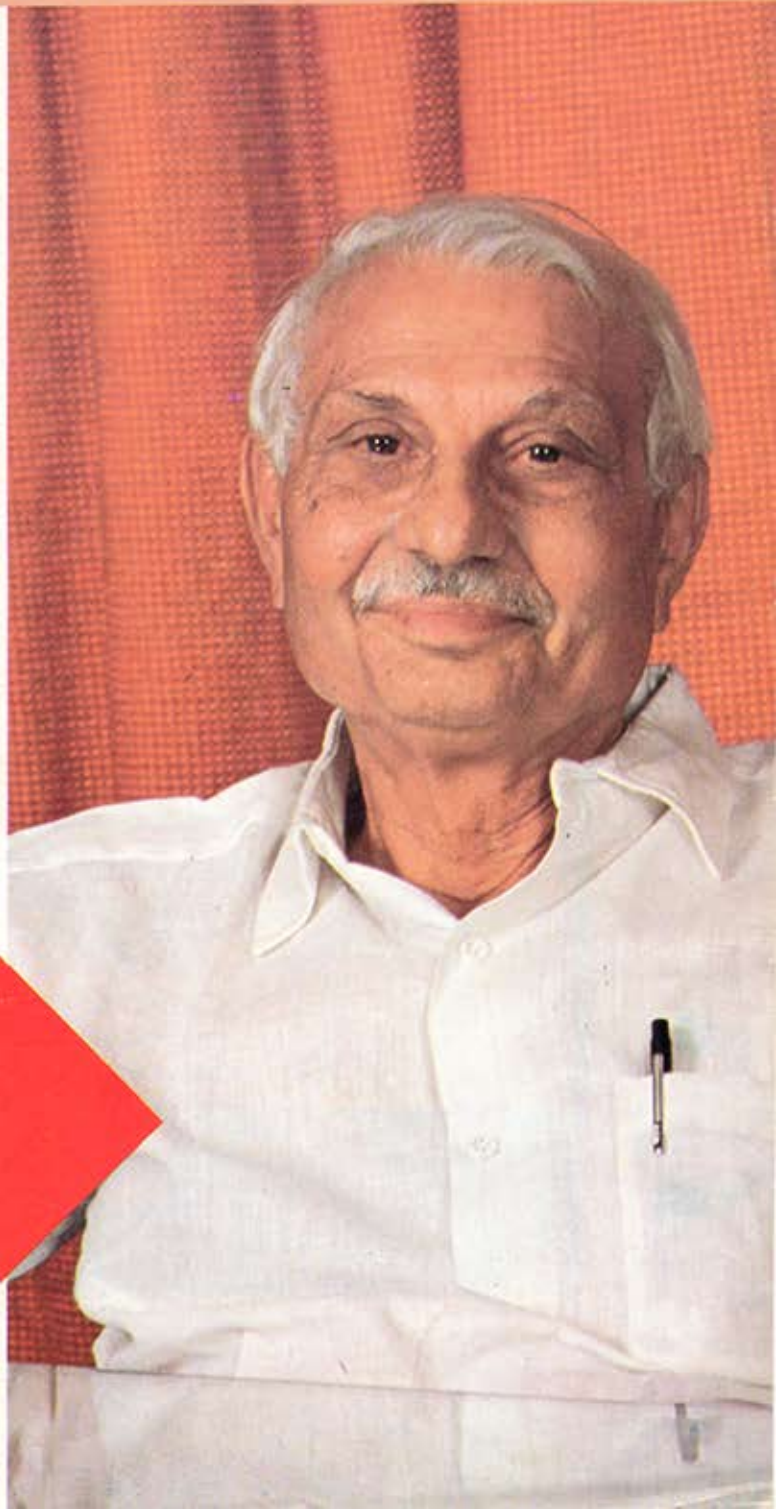


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# Parsiana

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# Events and Personalities

## Indira condolence meets

Anjumans and punchayets all over India held meetings to condole the assassination of the late Prime Minister Ms Indira Gandhi. At a function convened by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet at the Framji Cowasji Institute Hall, a resolution was passed which noted, "She had great respect for the Parsi community and the part which the community has played in the history of our country, and by her death the community has lost a true admirer and sincere well-wisher."

Speakers at the function included BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla, former sheriff of Bombay S.P. Godrej, Justice B. Lentin, former Mayor of Bombay B.K. Boman-Behram, cancer specialist Dr D.J. Jussawalla, president of the Family Planning Association of India Ms A.B. Wadia, Editor of *The Bombay Samachar* Jehan Daruwalla, president of the Youth Hostels' Association of India Ms P.F. Dotiwalla, social worker J.F. Shroff, advocate Eruch Desai, municipal administrator of Bombay Jamsheed Kanga and industrialist Jamshed Guzder.

In a letter to Ms Gandhi's son, Rajiv, the country's new Prime Minister, BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla referred to

the condolence meeting and added, "Prayers were also offered at the meeting for our beloved Ms Indiraji's soul to rest in peace."

A letter addressed to Rajiv Gandhi from the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India honorary secretary Keki Gandhi noted, "Although your mother was completely secular in her outlook, her interest in the welfare and happiness of the minority communities

was well-known. Her love for the Parsi community into which she had married, was expressed throughout her life in many touching ways."

The Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad at a special general body meeting on November 6, 1984 at Bai Pirojbai Chenoy Hall passed a resolution stating, "She always had a soft corner and great regard for our Parsi community and whenever



*Prayers for Ms Gandhi at Chikalwadi Zoroastrian Colony (above) BPP condolence meeting (left)*

possible, gave us a helping hand." The speakers included Sq/Ldr J.D. Italia, president of the Anjuman, Ms Maneez Kavooji, Dr Mehtab Bamji, Dr F.D. Vakil, B.K. Batliwalla, Phiroze Bapooji and Dr (Ms) Polly Chenoy.

At another function organized in Bombay at the Chikalwadi Zoroastrian Colony, Tardeo, 151 priests from Bombay participated in a mass prayer meeting led by Dastur Kekobad Dastoor from Udwarda. This meeting in honour of Ms Gandhi was held under the auspices of the trustees of the Zoroastrian Building Fund, Zoroastrian Colony Association and Medical Centre and Andheri Zoroastrian Association. Dinshaw Merchant, Ms Aloo Chhiber, S.P. Godrej, Dr Aspi Golwalla, Jehangir Shroff, Vispi Dastoor, Dr Sarosh Wadia, Ms Chandan Patel and Ms Rati Dastoor spoke on the occasion.

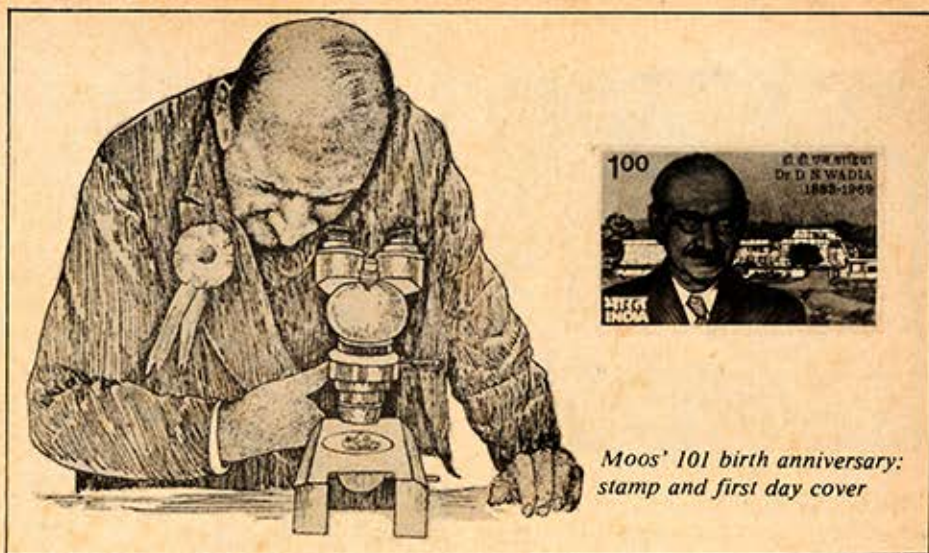
The holding of meetings and prayers for Ms Gandhi caused some people to remark that while the orthodox were willing to pray for a non-Parsi married to a Parsi if she happened to be the Prime Minister, prayers were refused for other non-Parsi spouses, children of mixed marriages and Parsis who wished to be cremated.

## The stamp of approval

A multicolour stamp in honour of the late Dr Darashaw Noshervan Wadia, a pioneer in Indian geology was issued by the Indian Posts and Telegraphs department on his 101 birth anniversary on October 23, 1984. The department "is privileged to issue a commemorative stamp in honour of this pioneer in Indian geology and development of geo-scientific research in the country," notes the department's information sheet.

"The rupee one denomination stamp designed by the India Security Press, Nasik, depicts a portrait of Wadia with the building of the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun in the background. The first day cover shows Wadia working at a microscope," states the hand-out.

Born in the family of shipbuilders, Wadia received his early education in Surat and Baroda and graduated from the Baroda College. Soon after, he set up the department of geology at the Prince of Wales College in Jammu and wrote a text book for Indian students of geology which earned him recognition both at home and abroad.



Moos' 101 birth anniversary: stamp and first day cover

After working with the geological departments of the Government of India and Ceylon, Wadia was appointed the geological advisor to the Indian Government to initiate and formulate a minerals policy for the country. He founded the Indian Bureau of Mines, Atomic Minerals Division, the National Geo-physical Research Institute, the National Institute of Oceanography and the Institute of Himalayan Geology. "The Institute of Himalayan Geology, established in 1968, was renamed the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology in his memory in 1971," states the information sheet.

Among the numerous national and international awards Wadia received were the Back Award of the Royal Geographical Society and Lyell Medal of the Geological Society of London. The Government of India bestowed on him the Padma Bhushan in 1963. In addition to being elected president of several scientific societies, Wadia was also elected president of the International Geological Congress in New Delhi in 1964. Wadia died in 1969 at the age of 86.

## Moos' magnetic life

Leading scientists and educationalists recalled Dr Nanabhai Ardesir Moos' contributions to the field of geomagnetism in India on his 125th birth anniversary celebrated in Bombay by the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG).

"Dr Moos set up the Alibag Observatory considered to be one of the leading magnetic observatories in the world," notes a report in *The Times of India* of October 30, 1984. "His monumental work entitled *Colaba Observatory Magnetic Data 1846-1905* contain-

ed many valuable and important contributions to geomagnetism. Moos spent his lifetime studying what are known as 'magnetic storms' which upset our radio reception.

"The road on which the Colaba Observatory is situated has been named after Dr Nanabhai Moos.

"Former municipal councillor B. K. Boman-Behram pointed out that Moos as a member of the then Bombay Engineering Service was closely associated with the construction of the Malabar Hill Reservoir."

Director of the IIG, Dr Rastogi, director of the Nehru Planetarium, Dr V. S. Venkatavaradan, Prof L.L. Cogger, professor of physics, University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and Prof Homai Jal Moos, educationist, whilst paying tributes to Moos proposed that annual lectures and scholarships in the name of Dr Moos be instituted and his biography be published.

Dr V. S. Venkatavaradan wrote in a Bombay daily, *Free Press Journal* of November 7, 1984, "In 1900 the Government decided to electrify the tram service in Bombay and this was painful for Dr Moos as the electrical traction would disturb his magnetic observations at Colaba. Earlier the trams used to be horse-drawn which, of course, did not affect the magnetic observations. Dr Moos says, 'I was convinced that electric traction would soon reduce all our observations to a farce and all that could be done was to stall its coming as long as I could. Meanwhile, an alternate site had to be found.' Dr Moos could indeed delay the commencement of electric traction and completed the Alibag Observatory in record time. Both the Colaba Observatory and the Alibag



Observatory functioned simultaneously for nearly two years to get correlated records. The magnetic work was discontinued at Colaba on March 31, 1906, and the first electric tram came on the streets of Bombay on May 7, 1907.

"Thanks to Dr Moos, today we have a continuous record of magnetic observations going back to more than 140 years... Moos died on March 13, 1936, leaving behind a wealth of data on geomagnetism that has been a source of inspiration for generations of scientists."

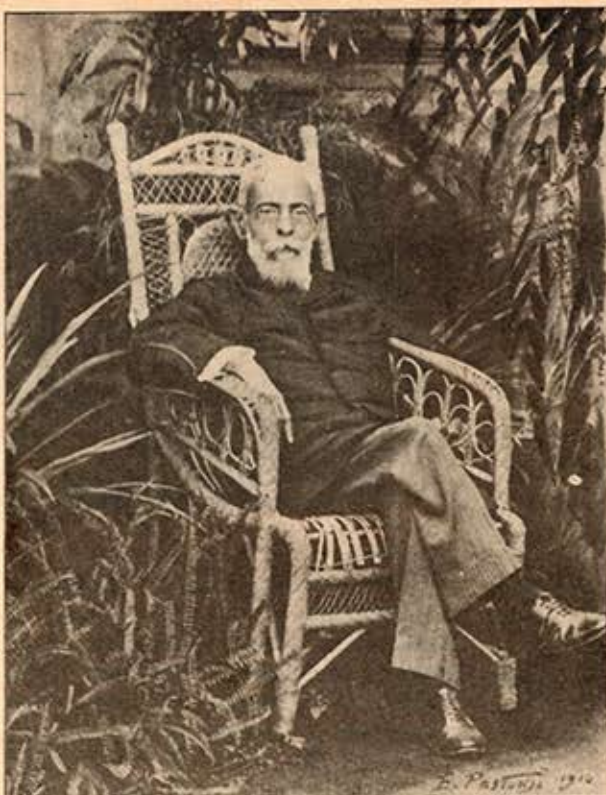
## Award for Mirza

Noted Bombay dental surgeon, Dr Firoze Dara Mirza was presented a bronze medallion, a gold ring and a citation making him a diplomate on the board of the International Congress on Oral Implantations at the body's VIIIth international meet held at Munich, West Germany in June 1984.

He qualified for this diplomatic status after "500 hours of practice in implantology, 200 hours of implant courses and five publications on the subject of implantology attested by a notary public," states a press release.

"Dr Firoze Mirza is one of our senior active members of The Zoroastrian Dentists Organization and has been a practitioner of long standing in Bombay," notes a write-up by Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman, Dr Aspi Golwalla. Mirza "is currently also a professor and head of department of prosthetic and crown and bridge at The Nair Hospital Dental College which is a premier institution in our country," noted Golwalla.

Oral dental implantology for which Mirza was awarded the honour is a relatively new science, notes a press release.



Mirza (far left) receiving award from Awards Committee chairman, Dr Fagan

(Left) Dadabhai Naoroji (photo courtesy: S.R. Vakil collection)

(Below) At a function to release book on Naoroji: (from left) Minoo Masani, Adi Chinoy, Dr Aspi Golwalla, S.P. Godrej and Dr Sarosh Wadia.



## Book on Dadabhai Naoroji

A booklet entitled *Dadabhai Naoroji, a Model for Indian Youth Today* written by noted Bombay homeopath Dr Sarosh Wadia was released at a function on the 159th birth anniversary of the Grand Old Man under the auspices of the Rahanumae Mazdayasnane Sabha or Guide to the Mazdeyasani faith, an organization co-founded by Naoroji when he was 26 years old.

On the occasion, Dr Wadia presented some personal mementoes of Naoroji to Dr Aspi Golwalla, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, for preservation at the community's Alpawalla Museum. These included: a letter written by Naoroji when he contested as a candidate for the British Parliament in 1886, a purse which was presented to him at the Lahore meeting of the Indian National Congress in 1893, and a portrait of his which was in the possession of the Maharaja of Kutch. The 23-page

booklet was released on September 4, 1984 by former parliamentarian and ex-mayor of Bombay Minoo Masani who praised Naoroji as being a God-fearing and efficient man. He remarked, "In our public life today, we have good men who are ineffective and efficient men who are rarely good."

M.R. Pai, noted Bombay social crusader in a foreword to this book, states "I hope this booklet would have served its purpose if at least a few youngsters are inspired to study in depth the life of Dr Dadabhai Naoroji, and develop themselves into worthy citizens and public servants who can give leadership and vision to people..."

Wadia narrates several experiences from Naoroji's life and credits him for being the first Indian to ask for self-government for his country, the first Indian to be appointed on the Royal Commission, the first Indian to be a member of the British Parliament and the first Indian professor at the Elphinstone College.



Daruwalla: conducting rehearsal of Cantata Choir

tone College. "In the midst of all his literary and commercial pursuits, Dadabhai seldom missed an opportunity for voicing the grievances of Indians... 'India for Indians' was his slogan..."

At the age of 20, he was appointed professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at the Elphinstone Institute. One of the founders of the Student Literary and Scientific Society which laid the foundation for female education in Bombay in 1849, Naoroji was its first treasurer. The members of the Society went from "door to door to request parents and guardians to allow their daughters to learn the three 'Rs.' Some agreed but some were so annoyed that they threatened to throw them down the steps for making such a proposal." In a short time, 44 Parsi and 24 Hindu females were available for teaching.

Naoroji himself completed his schooling from the Native Education Society School. The responsibility of educating Naoroji fell on his mother since his father had died when he was only four years old. As a student at the Elphinstone Institute, he "read a great deal of literature of the world, mostly English but Firdousi's *Shahnama*, the great Iranian epic was his favorite," notes the author.

*Dharma Marg Darshak* and *Rasta Gofar* were the two magazines started by Naoroji to remove misunderstanding about Zoroastrianism.

In 1855, Naoroji left for England as manager of the first Indian mercantile firm in England, started by the Cama brothers. While there, Naoroji pleaded for the right of Indians to serve the administration of their own country through the Indian Civil Service. In 1861 he founded the London Zoroastrian Association (to guide Indian students to pursue various activities) and remained its president till 1907.

Naoroji decided to contest the election to the British Parliament so that he could get an opportunity to voice India's viewpoint. When he stood from the Holborn Constituency, he lost. Next time when he stood from the Central Finsbury Constituency, though described as a "black man" by Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister of England, he was elected by the White voters.

"When he was asked to take an oath on the Bible, he politely refused to do the same as he was not a Christian. The Parliament allowed him to take the oath in the name of God. Dadabhai had taken a small book on Avesta with him" for the ceremony.

The Indian National Congress, founded by Naoroji, was considered to be the "real institution which started the great task of the freedom of India." The grand old man of India, Naoroji, is known for his famous words, "I am a Hindu, a Muslim, a Parsi but above all an Indian first." He refused to be conferred with a knighthood and politely rejected the Shah of Iran's wish to honour him.

When acting as a Divan to the Maharaja of Baroda, at one time, Naoroji was pressed by the Maharaja to do something which would do more harm to the subjects. With his characteristic frankness he replied, "Your Highness, my surname is Dordi, you may burn a dordi (thread) but cannot take a twist out of it; so it is with me. When once I have decided, nothing can dislodge me."

In a foreword to a book by R.P. Masani, Mahatma Gandhi stated that Dadabhai had become a real Dada to him as he was his constant adviser and inspiration. It was in his 91st year that Bombay University conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D. Till his death at the age of 91, Naoroji was

active, receiving dignitaries from abroad, writing letters and reading newspapers.

## A baton in his hands

Making his debut as conductor with the Cantata Choir, 29-year-old Nauzer Daruwalla dedicated the concert to the memory of the late Prime Minister, Ms Indira Gandhi.

Referring to the November 10 concert, *The Times of India* critic noted, "Young as he is, he conducts firmly, cueing in the voices and soloists with confidence. The balanced and well-disciplined choir (except for one chaotic moment) rendered the two religious works featured...with good dynamics and expression..." The pianist Zenobia Vakil-Patel "carried the burden of the orchestral accompaniment with efficiency and musicality." There were also two chamber works where the conductor as violinist was joined by Freddy Dinshaw, violin and Shiv Mathur, guitar.

Daruwalla, a student of London's Royal College of Music, where he did a double specialization in piano and violin, studied piano under Alasdair Graham and violin under Bertha Stevens and later Max Rostal. He has also conducted the Brandenburg Consort, a chamber orchestra.

The Cantata Choir founded by a German, Joachim Buehler in 1973 has members from all walks of life. Most of them play an instrument or two, others are trained soloists, singers or music teachers. Regularly they meet at the Max Mueller Bhavan for rehearsals. According to Bombay's afternoon daily, *Mid-Day* of November 10, 1984, "Their concerts have been held in Bombay, Delhi and Pune. And while they have never been abroad, they have been broadcast to foreign audiences." Daruwalla, a sales executive at Poysha, Industrial Co. Ltd. is the choir's present director.

## Cama IENS vice-president

If there is one family in the media which has steered clear of controversy and yet managed to run a highly successful newspaper without even once crossing the bounds of ethics of the media, and by upholding the highest standards, it is the Camas of *The Bombay Samachar*, the city's largest selling Gujarati newspaper — who preside over their establishment with great benevolence.

And one of them, Rustom Cama, (known affectionately to his legion of

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friends as Rusi) has recently been elected vice-president of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society (IENS).

The 62-year-old Cama has been involved with printing in many other professional capacities. He was also past president of the All India Federation of Master Printers and the past chairman of the development panel of the printing industry.

Apart from being a director in *The Bombay Samachar*, the *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Bombay Associated Newspapers Pvt. Ltd.* he is also on the board of directors of the Press Trust of India.

The jovial Cama who is a keen swimmer and yachtsman, having been a commodore of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, carries on the tradition of forthrightness and charity set by his late father, the titan Muncherji Cama.

*Reprinted from The Daily October 10, 1984.*

## From economics to politics

Naval H. Tata chairman of the Tata Electric Company and Tata Textiles, today announced his decision to join the Congress(I) for strengthening the hand of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

In a statement Naval Tata said that since Independence Pandit Nehru followed by his daughter Indira Gandhi steered the country to earn international esteem and respect. Now Rajiv Gandhi has shouldered the responsibility of running the country, he added.

Naval Tata said that all those who believed that the Congress had made a great contribution after taking over the responsibility from the British, should come forward to lend a helping hand to the party.

He also appealed to all right-minded people to help the party at this crucial hour by joining the party, strengthening the hand of the Prime Minister and ensuring the success of the Congress(I) in the coming elections.

*Reprinted from The Daily, November 20, 1984.*

## Godrej Boating Station

The foundation stone of the Pirojsha Godrej Memorial Boating Station was laid by the Naval Chief of Staff Admiral Oscar Stanley Dawson, here today.

The Rs 25 lakh project, situated near the training ship Jawahar, Colaba, will have all infrastructural facilities for training the sea cadets.

Besides a multi-storeyed building,



*Tata: 'strengthening the hand'*

with accommodation for the outstation cadets, the station will have a boat shed for building and repairing small vessels.

Dawson thanked the Godrej Foundation for encouraging the activities of the corps and said the organization was finding patronage all over the country.

The Sea Cadet Corps was founded in 1938 to inculcate 'the spirit of adventure and love for the sea' in the younger generation. The voluntary organization, with its 13 centres in the country, is open to all school-going children in the age group of 11 to 17 years. The Bombay centre has trained nearly 12,000 cadets and at present 400 cadets are being trained in various sea disciplines.

*Reprinted from Free Press Journal, November 13, 1984.*

## Cheer the beer

"The response was so overwhelming that we were unable to cope with the demand for this brand, and we were reluctantly constrained to refuse enquiries from Delhi, Calcutta and Madras, restricting our sales only to Bombay," said N.M. Irani, managing partner, Associated Breweries and Distilleries at a function

organized to celebrate London Diet, the low calorie diet beer's winning of the gold medal at the World Selection of beer. The medal was presented at a special ceremony held in Madrid, Spain on October 3 and 4 by Monde Sélection Institut International pour la sélection de la qualite.

"We have had many export enquiries, and have been successfully exporting our beer under the brand name of Maharaja beer to the USA. Exporting for the first time is no achievement by itself, but it is the repeat orders that count, giving us encouragement that the beer has been well received," enthused Irani. "The salient features of our London Diet are, that this beer has a lower calorific equivalent as compared with the leading soft drinks in the market today..."

Irani added, "Several investigations over the last four years have yielded impressive evidence that moderate drinkers have a lower risk of heart attacks than teetotallers. Moderate drinking is confined to not more than three glasses of beer or wine a day; and the idea that this level of consumption could exert some protective effect on the cardiovascular system was reinforced by biochemical tests on animals and human beings.

"Laboratory experiments showed that the blood stream of moderate drinkers contained increased levels of high density lipoprotein (HDL), a substance which is also referred to as "good" cholesterol. The establishment of a clear correlation between the concentration of HDL and the intake of alcohol led to research into the effect of drink on HDL cholesterol in runners and inactive men.

"One report in the Journal of the American Medical Association last year even concluded that non-exercisers who drink three beers a day can maintain levels of HDL similar to those individuals who jog regularly."



*At London Diet celebration: (from left) Ms and Mr D. Murugesan, Ms and Mr N.M. Irani, Ms and Mr S.J. Lawyer*

## Dastor as Gandhi

Like Ben Kingsley, Sam Dastor is destined to become a known face and figure to millions of his countrymen. Once BBC's "Mountbatten: the last Viceroy," hits the screens here. The mini-series which was shot in Delhi last month has already generated the maximum interest and Sam, is being hailed as even more "Gandhian" than Kingsley.

Incidentally, Dastor's father was Homi Dastor, a noted optician whose shop, "Dinshaw M Dastor and Sons" still stands at Flora Fountain. He was educated briefly at Cathedral School and Walsingham and then he was off to Cambridge where he did his tripos in literature and later he joined the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts.

Recently in New Delhi, he told another well-known Bombayite, Meher Moos, that he had just missed being interviewed by Richard Attenborough for the role in *Gandhi*. He has bagged it now, laying to rest what he claims has been a great obsession in life.

So far he has acted in more than 100 television films, including *I Claudius*, *Yes Man* and as Inspector Ghote in Harry Keating's popular series on crime in Bombay.

In Delhi, as happened to Kingsley, Dastor was practically gheraoed wherever he went. People touched his feet and generally behaved as if he were Gandhi reincarnated.

*Reprinted from Sunday Mid-Day, October 14, 1984.*

## Zaiwalla represents Zail

The President of India, Zail Singh, was successfully represented in a case before the House of Lords by Sarosh Zaiwalla of M/s Zaiwalla and Co., noted a report in a Bombay evening daily, *Mid-Day* of August 21, 1984.

"The case itself was of considerable commercial importance, the Law Lords deciding that the common law did not award general damages for delay in payment of a debt beyond the date when it was contractually due," states the report.

Sarosh Zaiwalla, the 36-year-old proprietor of the law firm "is probably the first of a new class of professionals — attorneys-at-law — to make a mark on the English judicial scene," notes the newspaper. Zaiwalla's name also appears in two other cases reported in the 1984 *Lloyd's Law Reports*, the

world's leading law reporter for shipping banking, insurance and commercial cases. Before deciding to settle in England, Zaiwalla completed his graduation in law from Bombay's Government Law College.

## Irani's gallantry

Sub-inspector Homi S. Irani who was responsible for the arrest of an escaped and notorious dacoit, Riyazkhan Dawoodkhan, has been awarded the President's police medal for gallantry. Subsequently he has also been promoted to the rank of police inspector.

As reported in the Bombay-based *Mid-Day* of August 21, 1984, "On June



*Irani: daring arrest*

29 last year, after a tip-off, a trap was laid (for Dawoodkhan). On seeing the police, Dawoodkhan raced away in a taxi, promptly chased by sub-inspector Irani and staff. The police intercepted the taxi and Dawoodkhan pointed a pistol at Irani. Luckily when he was about to fire, Irani swiftly fired his pistol, injuring Dawoodkhan who was then overpowered and disarmed."

On completion of a police sub-inspector's course in 1969, Irani was awarded the prize of 'Best Turnout.' After that he was posted at various police stations in Bombay. Since 1981, Irani has been with the Detection of Crime Branch, CID, Bombay. Irani has also been the recipient of 18 commendatory notes, 16 good entries and a cash award of Rs 2750 for the good services that he has rendered, states his bio-data.

## Music critic Mody

Sorab Modi may not be as well-known a name as Zubin Mehta but Bombay

has a corner of his heart too, and his Indian passport is as dear to him as the maestro's is to him. When he came to Bombay on a short visit from his adoptive home in Washington, Sorab Modi reviewed for *Mid-Day* his compatriot's triumphal return to the local podium at that unlikely concert hall, the Shanmukhananda.

A local boy, Modi's youth is firmly rooted in Bombay. St. Xavier's School led to St. Xavier's College where he read economics for his B.A. degree. A lover of music, he was secretary of the college's music society. "I don't know why I chose economics," said Mody, "my love has always been music and my earliest memories bring back the sounds of regiment bands marching to Afghan Church, not far from where I lived. The bells of the church stimulated me as much as bandstand concerts of those bygone days."

It wasn't just an outside stimulus that attracted him to music however; his mother also played the violin and the piano. "That was in the twenties," recalled Modi, "and her teacher was the Italian musician Savini. He eventually moved to Poona where, many years later, Zubin Mehta would travel once a week for his music lesson."

Modi himself studied the violin from Dominic Pereira and from Homi Kanga who was himself known as Mehli Mehta's (Zubin's musician father's) best pupil. "I learned counterpoint and harmony from Hal Green who played with Ken Mac's dance band, but was also a very good teacher."

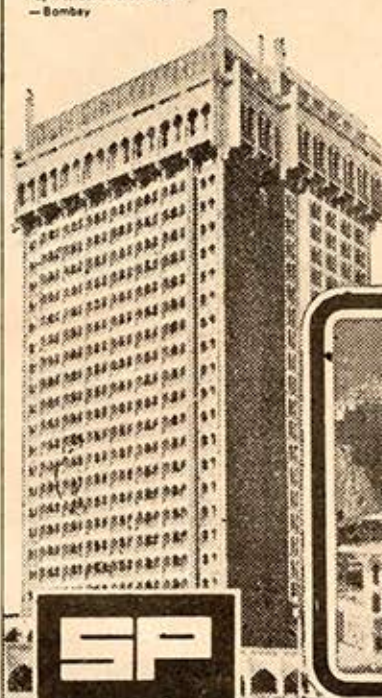
Having graduated from university, Modi then joined Air India which gave him the opportunity to travel and listen to the best music everywhere. With his kind of knowledge and experience, he soon became the music critic of *The Times of India* and although he didn't get a by-line, he soon became well-known as "Our Music Critic!"

Though his major preoccupation, music was never his sole interest; theatre also took up much of his time and Adi Marzban's comedies, both Gujarati and English, generally featured him. "In between all those farces," Modi reminisced, "I also played Godbole in *A Passage to India*, and I also did some broadcasting."

In 1963 he was invited to report on the Edinburgh Festival and one thing led to another and soon he was at the Holland and Berlin Festivals too. And, of course, being with Air India helped

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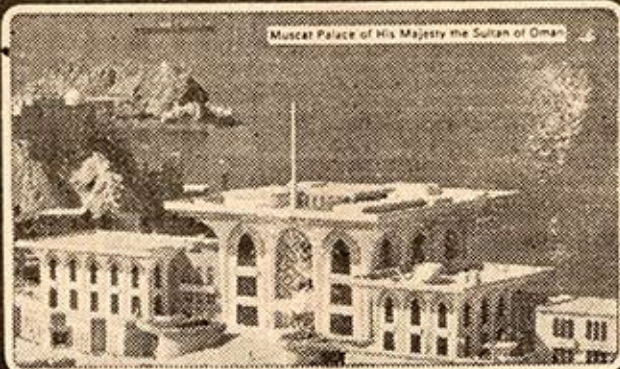
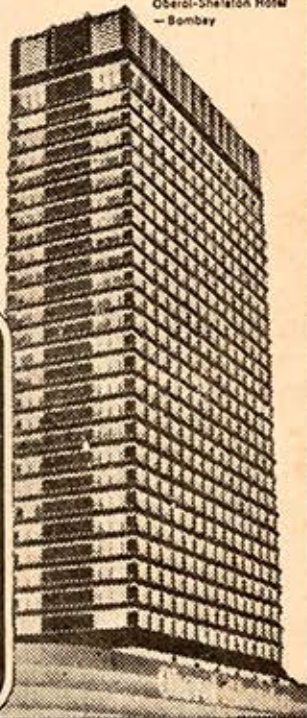
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make travel easy. Then, having married an American in 1972, he left India on a posting the next year and ended up, sans Air India, in Washington where he has been since 1980.

Modi keeps himself busy there writing for *Ovation* which is a classical music magazine and also for *Musical America* for which, incidentally, he is reporting, though not reviewing, the Zubin Mehta visit. "I shall be writing about the Bombay scene," he explained, "the return of the favourite son; the rush for tickets, the adulation...human interest, you know...I used to know Zubin when he lived in Bombay; we're both Colaba youngsters, after all!"

Diminutive and chirpy, ever ready with a joke or a slightly off-colour story to tease the ladies, Sorab Modi misses Bombay and takes every opportunity to return to home ground. He hasn't missed a jazz yatra yet, and while taking time off to greet old friends, he writes up the festival for the *Jazz Times* in Washington.

He's a busy person, our man in Washington, and he has interviewed musicians of the calibre of Isaac Stern, Yehudi Menuhin and Eugene Ormandy for American publications. He even writes for such far-flung magazines as the *Strad* in London and the *Super Stereo* in Milan.

*Reprinted from Mid-Day, September 14, 1984.*

## Balsaras best

The Best Exporter state award for 1981-82 was presented to Aspi Balsara, chairman and managing director of Balsara Hygiene Products Ltd on October 1, by Sukhkarao Naik, minister of industries, Maharashtra.

Well-known manufacturers of a range of household hygiene products such as the Puritas water filter, Odonil air purifier, Odomos mosquito repellent, Odopic cleaning powder and Promise toothpaste and toothpowder, Balsaras won this award in the basic chemicals, pharmaceuticals and cosmetic products category.

Balsaras were also awarded the prestigious A.R. Bhat Entrepreneurship Award for outstanding performance in the toothpaste industry. Organized by the All India Federation of Small Scale Industries, the A.R. Bhat Entrepreneurship Award is given for achievement in the small scale sector and was presented to Balsara by R. Venkata-



Aspi Balsara (right) receiving the A.R. Bhat Entrepreneurship Award from R. Venkataraman, Vice-President of India.

raman, Vice-President of India.

Promise (toothpaste and toothpowder) "has found extraordinary popularity in the Indian market and is being exported to over 35 countries in the world," notes the Company's press release. "The Company has successfully completed a record breaking order worth rupees eight crores for Promise toothpaste and Odopic cleaning powder to Russia," the release added.

As part of their diversification plan, Balsaras are offering technology transfer for the manufacture of household consumer products to third world countries in Asia and Africa, states the write-up.

## Shavaksha's time and talent

Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic have come and gone after galvanising Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay. They had on us the effect of a double cocktail on a life-long abstainer — with this difference that instead of being knocked out we were pitched up to a unique experience.

Now that we are coming out of this euphoric exercise, it is only fitting that, in gratitude, we turn our thoughts back to a grand old lady who, in a big way, not only initiated and was responsible for many such cultural events but also made them a continuing reality in the city of Bombay.

Her name of course is Gool Shavaksha. She along with her mother, Lady Mulla and a few others founded The Time and Talents Club, 50 years ago, and Gool remained its backbone till she closed her eyes to the world on April 12, 1977. She was the daughter of

Sir Dinshaw Mulla whose statue graces the High Court compound in Bombay and whose book on Hindu law is an acknowledged classic. Her talent, to my mind, was a genetic handdown, and she consolidated her gifts with energy, giving them direction, drive and purpose.

Time has flown, as the wit says, but the talent remains, and this year the Club celebrates its golden jubilee. It draws its inspiration and strength from one priceless, intangible asset Gool left behind to its members — a spirit of selfless dedication and effort, at once to provide the city with cultural events and to channel the profits from them for various charitable causes. A masterful combination this.

Small wonder the city over the years has been enriched with concerts by world-renowned artists like Menuhin, Isaac Stern, Serkin, Arrau, Moiseiwitch, Lily Kraus, Rosalyn Tureck, not to forget our great sitar player Vilayat Khan. It has also sponsored singers like the world's best contralto Marian Anderson, orchestras like the Minneapolis, the Cincinnati and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, a host of Chamber Music Ensembles, ballet groups, plays and shows like mime by the world's best mime Marcel Marceau. The list is unending.

Gool was first and last a humanitarian. Her reverence for human life meant an irreverence for human indifference, and to uphold the one she often had to fight the other. This made her appear authoritarian to some — an enlightened authoritarian who brought about the highest possible good with the greatest degree of freedom.

She was very sensitive but she would not let her sensitivity stand between her aim and its fulfilment. If she sought help from some "who had enough money to choke a yawning hippo" and was denied it, she would not despair, or take amiss, or halt her march. She would try elsewhere and would not scoff at minor contributions even.

All was grist that came to her mill, for her "mill" was suffering humanity and her assignment to alleviate its suffering. A fund in her memory called "The Gool Shavaksha Memorial Fund" is a fitting tribute to her memory and deserves wide support.

Buji Chinoy

*Excerpts from The Daily September 30, 1984.*

## Keeping time

Most of us find, I am sure, that repairing and restoring watches and clocks in Bombay is not at all systematized. It is largely a hit-or-miss affair — and very costly. Valuable time-pieces have to be put away in mothballs and anxious visits made to Chor Bazar to find the odd fuse chain or a rusty hair-spring to replace worn-out parts. If lucky, one could sometimes persuade friends with a watch-repairing hobby to tackle defunct pieces.

It will be a relief, therefore, when Rado's training centre puts the whole thing on a professional basis. There is a dearth of well-trained watch-repairers. Rado Watch Co Ltd, the third largest watch manufacturer of Switzerland, has recently introduced a scheme for conducting training courses for watch-repair technicians who will eventually man service centres of the numerous Rado agents all over the world. Such a scheme is the first of its kind in India and meets a long-standing need. As Rado makes nearly one million watches annually, of which half are quartz-made, trainees will be instructed in both mechanical and electronic time technology. Initially, a batch of 10 will be trained, and the centre will be run under the expert guidance and over-all control of Dhun Randeria, proprietor of Marcks and Co, agents for Rado.

Dhun Randeria is a horology engineer (the science of accurately measuring the hours), one of the very, very few Indians to hold such a specialized degree. He has rescued many priceless heirloom time-pieces which would otherwise have ended up

with the 'jari.' Although he is a man of few words and calls a spade a spade, his advice is much sought after by the legion of watch-repairing hobbyists in Bombay.

Before becoming its proprietor, Randeria had worked with Marcks and Co. for nearly 10 years. The 160-year-old shop was, in the hey-days of the Raj, a very elegant store on the fringe of the fashionable Esplanade, the social rendezvous of the British gentry. In those days, it occupied the whole block around today's smart little shop opposite the Rajabai Clock Tower. It sold items of gold, silver and precious stones; watches, clocks and chronometers; spectacles, eyeglasses, marine and field glasses; pianofortes and other musical instruments. Its reputation for quality goods was sufficiently high to warrant an interesting entry in *The Times of India* of May 2, 1884, under its column 'A Hundred Years Ago' (Friday, May 2, 1884).

The introduction of quartz crystals in 1942, and later, of Integrated Circuits, has revolutionized the time-keeping industry. While they have made watches

accessible to the common man, they have also brought to an end some colourful chapters in the fascinating history of horology. According to B.B. Gandhi, chief administrator of Marcks and Co, quartz time-pieces will never totally replace mechanical and antique time-devices because "a watch is not just a time piece but an ornament as well." Amen!

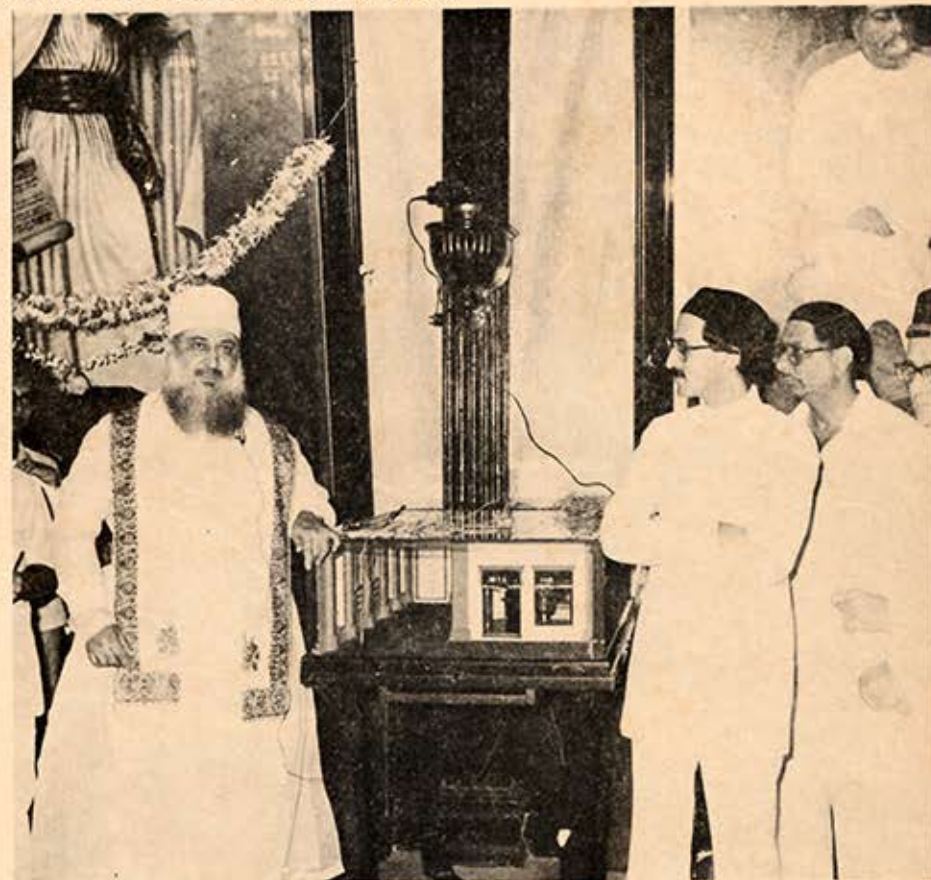
*Reprinted from Free Press Journal, October 16, 1984.*

## Working on vision

A third generation eye specialist, Dr Cyrus Minoo Shroff plans to "expand and modernize the retina services" at the Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital at Delhi. The hospital which was founded by his paternal grandfather in 1914, "has a bed strength of 177, and clinical work there is recognized by the University of London for their D.O. (Diploma in Ophthalmology) Examination," notes a press release.

After completing his junior residency in ophthalmology at Dr Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, New Delhi, in 1982, Cyrus did a fellow-

*At a humbandgi organized by the CER-Youth Wing on Parsi New Year day at Wadia Atash Bahram: Dastur Firoze Kotwal, Kersi Limathwalla (centre) and BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla (extreme right)*



ship in vitreo-retinal surgery at Sankara Netralaya, Madras under the renowned specialist, Dr S. S. Badrinath. On completion of his tenure there, he was awarded the Dr V. T. Doshi Gold Medal for the best fellow in vitreo-retinal surgery for the year 1983.

Cyrus completed his schooling from the Modern School, New Delhi and his MBBS from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. Throughout his school and college career, he has been interested in debating, dramatics and creative writing and has won many awards, notes his bio-data.

Dr Minoo Shroff, Cyrus' father, is presently the chief medical officer and managing trustee of Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital. Cyrus' grandfather Dr S.P. Shroff, was one of the founders of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman and its president for almost 30 years, states the press release.

## Breaking ice

Recently in a public audio-visual demonstration by the Go Ju Kensha Karate — do at the Bhaidas Hall, a spectacular feat of strength was staged by sensei Viraf Majra, who is the chief instructor and Director. Reportedly for the first time in the country, five blocks of ice, each weighing around 250 kilos, were shattered one after another by Majra with deftly placed blows.

This finale was preceded by the usual exercises, or Katas in Karate parlance, smashing of roof tiles over a blazing fire, repelling attacks by armed men by unarmed women and breaking of sticks on naked backs and forearms. All this



Shroff (left): retina services, Patel (centre): research in tuberculosis and leprosy, Irani (right): 'proud to be an Indian'

was lapped up by an audience with a sprinkling of film stars.

Behind this gimmickry is rigid physical training and mental conditioning. Majra now has under his tutelage over a thousand students and conducts regular classes at the suburb's prestigious Vile Parle Kelavani Mandal.

*Reprinted from The Daily, November 20, 1984.*

## Ph.D. for Patel

Ms Rubina Jamshed Patel is Pakistan's first Zoroastrian to be awarded a Ph.D. in microbiology and genetic engineering from the department of immunology and infectious diseases, School of Hygiene and Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, USA, according to a write up.

Presently Patel is on a post-doctorate assignment at the Harvard University, department of tropical public health, Harvard School Of Public Health to do research in tuberculosis and leprosy under Dr John David.

## Moos in Maoriland

Ms Meher Moos, the perennial traveller is in New Zealand right now, in the heart of Maoriland.

In a letter, written during a flight from Wellington to Christchurch, she mentions the local Maori food that she has been trying out. Most of the cooking is done underground, in the natural steam of geysers and hot springs. And a menu includes steamed or smoked eel, wild boar with local berry sauce, raw fish marinated in lemon juice, and the meat of the Shearwater bird. Plus Maori bread and dried fruits in port wine as a salad.

Next stop: Mt. Cook, then crossing the mountain ranges for seven days, then on to Tahiti and the South Pacific.

As the man said: Some people go to all the exciting places, others go to New York.

*Reprinted from Mid-Day November 10, 1984.*

## Queen of Nations

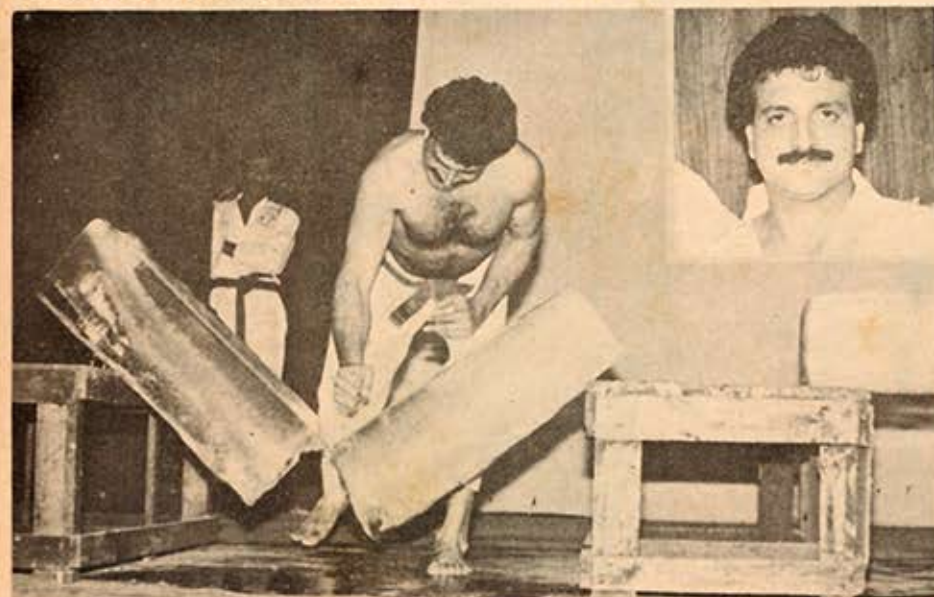
Hilla Irani looked stunned when crowned the Queen of Nations in a glittering ceremony in Sydney this week.

A 21-year-old hotel management student from Bombay, Hilla had to compete with beauties from Australia, Italy, Germany, Wales, South Africa, Netherlands, Hungary, Malta and Lithuania.

"I was so happy and thrilled and proud to be an Indian and so surprised that I won. The honour I share with Indians here and at home," she said. It was the first time India was represented in the 10-year history of the Quest of Nations in New South Wales.

The Quest aims at raising money

*Majra: 'feat of strength'*



for the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association, making the public more aware of these unfortunate sufferers and of how they can be helped by better equipment, rehabilitation programmes and surgery. The Quest also allows the many ethnic groups in New South Wales to share their culture and heritage.

Hilla, a petite attractive brunette, was asked searching questions on the culture of India (from saris to the British in India) as well as on Indo-Aussie relationships. As part of her money-raising activities, she, with the help of the Indo-Australian Cultural Society, organized a spectacular tableau to bring alive the rich heritage of India and her people. The crowning ceremony took place in the presence of Air-Marshall Sir James Rowland, the governor of New South Wales and Lady Rowland. The consul general of India, A.K. Bannerjee, was also present.

Hilla is grateful to her parents for their support during the entire year of her Quest. Her father, Noshir Irani, is the live-wire president of the Indo-Australian Zoroastrian Association in Sydney.

Among the many prizes Hilla received was a return trip for two to San Francisco by Qantas, \$1,200 spending money, a course in modelling and an expensive fur coat.

Hilla's ambition is to complete her course in hotel management, start her own restaurant and continue helping the paraplegics and the quadriplegics.

Kersi Meher-Homji

Reprinted from Sunday Mid-Day, November 19, 1984.

## Thus spake Modi

Since 1983 when Pesi Modi started competing in speech competitions, he has won several prizes. For the best oratory at the UNI-FESTA, organized by the students of YMCA in Bombay in September 1984, Modi was awarded the V. K. Krishna Menon Memorial Trophy which was donated by the Blitz Group of Publications. Modi spoke on "Life is a dream, death an awakening."

Studying for his IInd LL.B. at the Government Law College, Bombay, Modi has participated in inter-collegiate debate, impromptu speech and elocution competitions organized by the colleges of Bombay and the Rotoract Club. He is presently working with the noted law firm of Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe.

Modi completed his schooling from the Cathedral and John Cannon School



A shawl and a scroll being presented to Dr Aspi Golwalla, BPP and Federation chairman at function hosted by Karachi Parsi Anjuman Trust Fund in December 1983 at the Hormusjee Katrak Hall, Karachi: (from left) Ms Goshpi B. Avari, Godrej Sidhwa, Dr Aspi Golwalla and Dinshaw Avari



Modi: 'best oratory'

and his graduation in commerce from the H. R. College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay. In aquatic events Modi used to regularly win prizes in inter-collegiate competitions organized by associations like the YMCA, the Cricket Club of India and the Road Safety Patrol. "Though my past devotion was to swimming," says Modi. "I am presently fond of squash and badminton." Modi is also fond of playing the guitar and singing.

## Preserve for posterity

Apart from the fact that Parsis the world over are known for their altruism and charity, there is another trait, apart from querulousness, which distinguishes them from the rest. This is their

characteristic of acquiring things and maintaining them as well as the crown jewels. That is why a Parsi owner-driven car fetches more premium.

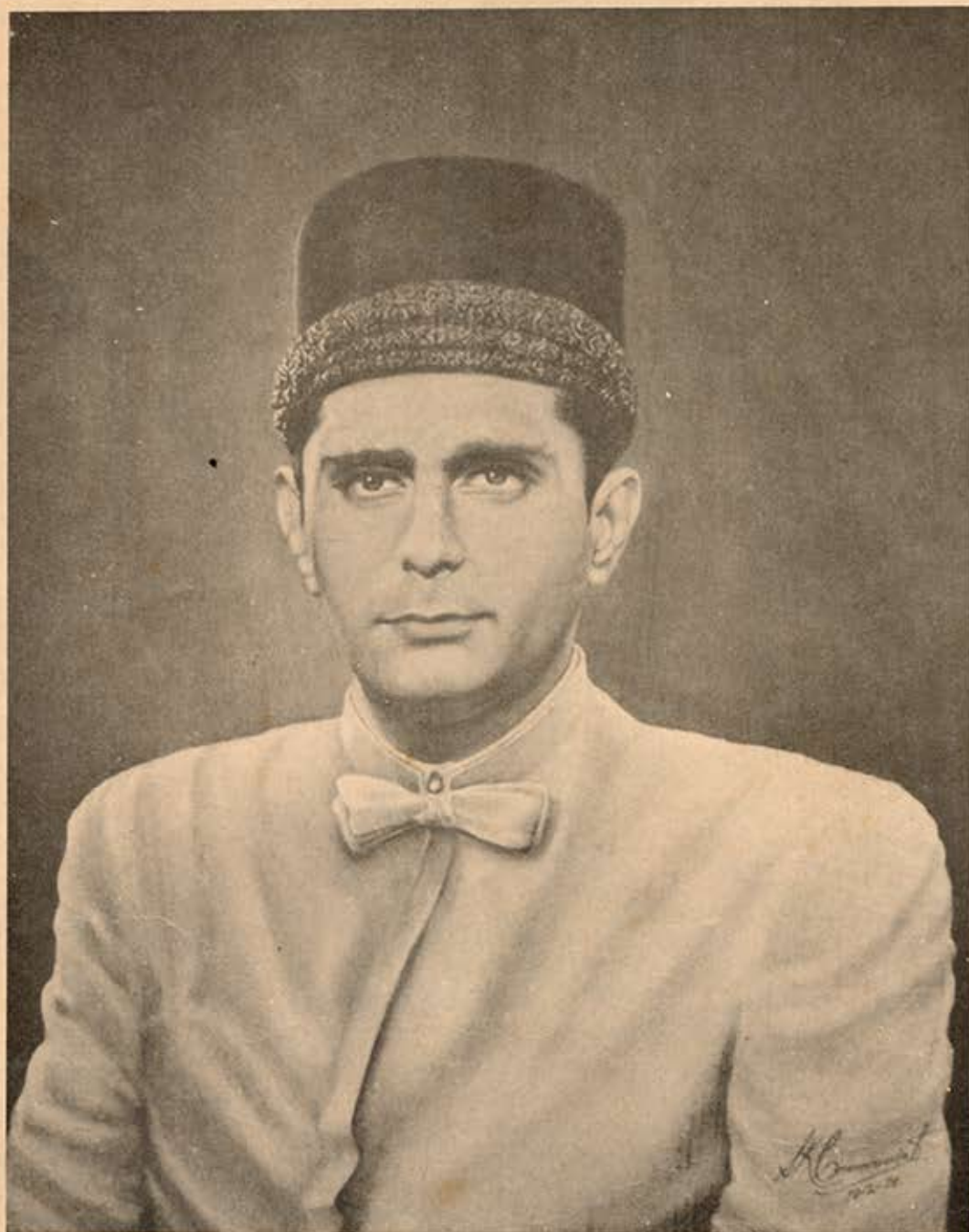
A typical example was provided by an ageing, soft-spoken, Parsi gentleman attired in black coat and topi and a shy smile underneath his silver grey moustache, who came to our office carrying an ivory paper cutter with a calendar of the year 1901 inscribed on it and a rail ticket from Churchgate to Dadar bought on July 30, 1954, costing three annas then.

The paper-cutter issued by the Bombay Fire and Marine Insurance Co. Ltd. (advertising wasn't as much in its infancy then), has an interesting story behind it. According to our friend, newspapers were not automatically slit 40-50 years ago and they had to be cut open with fingers or paper-cutters like the one's issued by the insurance firm.

Even more trivial is the train ticket, probably the oldest local ticket in existence. The Parsi gent remembers that the ticket examiner was not present and the stub remained with him.

Obviously both these items are of no importance or value but it provides a glimpse of the character of the person especially as both are so well-preserved with not a chip on the paper-cutter and not a twist on the ticket. As for our friend's name — well, he very definitely does not want it mentioned as he does not consider this preservation any special feat. And who are we to break an old man's confidence?

Reprinted from The Daily August 20, 1984.



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# The election that never was

Intense behind the scenes maneuvering marked the unfought contest for BPP trusteeship.

Till the last day of registering nominations for the Bombay Parsi Punchayet trusteeship election scheduled for February 2, no one knew if retiring trustee Jamshed N. Guzder would seek reelection for his seat against noted industrialist Naoroji P. Godrej.

When contacted over the phone on Sunday, January 20, at his weekend Marve resort, Guzder said he was still not certain. On Monday, the penultimate day for filing registration, inquiries at the BPP showed his nomination had not been received. On Tuesday, Guzder issued a press release stating he would not contest against Godrej but should another vacancy arise, he might opt for it. The next vacancy is expected to be that of Jamsheed Kanga, the founder president of the Committee for Electoral Rights (now renamed Council for Economic Revival).

Kanga, who has still another seven years of his trusteeship term to complete, has been contemplating resigning because of his duties as Municipal Administrator of Bombay. He is both pressured for time and conscious that holding trusteeship may conflict with professional duties. Kanga's exit would also permit both Guzder and Godrej to serve on the board.

Thus ends some of the most hectic behind the scenes maneuvering for trusteeship in recent times. The compromise also avoided a showdown between two powerful and influential people in the community. Had they taken to campaigning, the fallout from the charges and counter charges would have been damaging.

Godrej's entry into the race came as a surprise to the community. A publicity-shy individual who has basically involved himself with the working of his large industrial concern and related social welfare schemes, Godrej had repeatedly, over the years, spurned offers to stand for trusteeship. In October 1984, at the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, Federation and BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla

remarked that he was certain Guzder would return to the Punchayet unopposed. On November 20, a small news item in the Bombay based newspaper, *The Daily*, noted that Godrej was to stand for election against Guzder. A few days later Godrej wrote a letter to the Press that appeared in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* stating he was a candidate for the election.

Why did the introverted businessman change his mind and decide to run? The answer was an intense lobby

Efforts were made to get another sitting trustee to resign to make way for both Godrej and Guzder.

led by BPP trustee Homi Ranina, Neville and Nusli Wadia of the Bombay Dyeing group of companies and others such as industrialist Naval Tata. The Wadias and Guzder were business associates of many years standing but had fallen out in recent times. Differences over the sale of the Jyoti Studio premises next to Ness Baug, built by the Wadias, added to the feud.

Ranina had reason to oppose Guzder as Guzder is a CER sympathizer and had lent his support to the CER candidate Fali Poncha who stood unsuccessfully against Ranina in the BPP trusteeship election of June, 1984. Kanga, Poncha and the CER leadership's sympathy also lay with Guzder as Godrej had assisted Ranina in that election by enrolling voters on the F (donors') register (an amount of Rs 5,000 or over has to be donated to qualify for membership on the register).

Despite his differences with the CER, Ranina is said to have offered his total backing to the CER if they agreed to field a candidate against Guzder such as Minoo Shroff (management expert and vice-president of the CER),

Dadi Engineer (noted lawyer and current CER president) or anyone else with comparable credentials; but the CER is said to have declined to make any such "political adjustments."

Selecting and then getting Godrej to stand was a tactical stroke of genius for Ranina. There are few people in the community who could stand against Guzder and hope to win. Guzder is well-versed in community politics having fought a bitterly contested election in 1975 against lawyer Jimmy Shroff who was supported by one of the king-makers of those days, former BPP trustee Dr Nelie Noble. Guzder also helped the CER rout the orthodox alliance backed by former BPP chairman B.K. Boman-Behram in the 1981 Anjuman Committee elections. But Godrej was one candidate who could defeat Guzder.

Guzder's greatest drawback was that he was seeking a second term. Even the CER, which Guzder had helped to found, could not publicly support him as they were on record as being in favour of shorter terms of office for trusteeship. Guzder had promised the CER that should the courts eventually decide on a shorter term of office he would agree to serve only those number of years even though the reform would not legally be applicable to him. The new CER leader Dadi Engineer made this statement at the anjuman committee meeting held by the CER at the Indian Merchants' Chamber on December 8, 1984.

When Guzder's chances of reelection appeared dim, efforts were made to get another sitting trustee to resign to make way for both Godrej and Guzder. But aside from Kanga it hardly seemed likely anybody else would oblige. The CER leadership privately voiced concern at the power a person like Godrej would assert in the Punchayet and someone even jokingly claimed the BPP would be renamed the Godrej and Boyce Private Punchayet.

Guzder's camp also prepared to mount an offensive to show that God-

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rej's largesses in building houses at Godrej Baug on lands adjacent to Doongerwadi and elsewhere was only to house his own employees at the community's expense.

Godrej demonstrated his standing was in earnest by issuing his manifesto a few days after announcing his candidature. When the two seat option was put to him he insisted that he would only contest Guzder's seat; if Guzder wished he could occupy Kanga or anyone else's seat. Godrej was adamant on contesting Guzder's seat so as to reportedly deny him the opportunity to be chairman of the BPP, a position which traditionally has been filled by seniority. BPP chairman Dr Aspi Gollwalla's term expires in October 1988 and Guzder, at present, is next in seniority. If Guzder contests on Kanga's seat he may be considered the junior-most trustee as that may involve a break in his trusteeship term.

Even if Kanga does step down, there is no guarantee that Ranina or some other group does not put up a candidate for that seat. But Guzder is confident on beating other

candidates.

The Guzder camp also noted that the people conducting Godrej's campaign were not of his stature and basically consisted of the old CUZ (Committee of United Zoroastrians) alliance that lost the 1981 elections.

While Guzder did not issue any manifesto, Godrej's campaigning was also low key. Voters were called in batches to Godrej's downtown office and addressed briefly by Godrej and then by his supporters. At one meeting Godrej dutifully met all the approximately 70-80 people assembled on his terrace where, after the refreshments had been partaken, Ranina introduced Godrej as the largest employer of Parsis — "one-eighth of the community residing in Bombay." Brief though the introduction had been, Godrej's speech was briefer. Hoping this would be his last meeting with voters, Godrej noted that there was little to talk about since all he had to say had already been spelt out in the manifesto. Then, introducing what he described as "a healthy practice," he added, "Although I'm told I can hold the office for 10 years, I'll step

down after five years and thereafter, if I feel so inclined, I'll stand again." Anjuman Committee members Burjor Paymaster and Dickie Spencer, extolling the virtues of the Godrej family and of Naoroji, the man of action, noted how Indian political and community affairs suffered from a surfeit of words. Ranina concluded the evening with the words, "His family has done a lot for the community. The least you can do is cast a vote in his favour."

How Godrej will adjust to the hurly-burly of Punchayet politics is still to be seen. Guzder had once light-heartedly said that Godrej, whom he has known personally for many years, will probably tire of the manner in which the Punchayet functions and resign in disgust within five years. Aside from the Punchayet, there is also the Federation and the issues confronting the community scattered all over the country and abroad. But, having survived the intense maneuvering that surrounded his candidature, Godrej has demonstrated that once he sets his mind to a goal, he pursues it to the end.

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# Guzder opts out

BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder gives his reasons for not contesting the election.



My term as a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties will soon be over — to be exact on February 25, 1985 — and it seems to have become a cause for a great deal of concern within our community.

Doubts have been expressed whether I will be standing for reelection. Mr Naoroji Godrej has even gone on record to declare — unwittingly, I am sure — that he has decided to fill the vacancy that I shall be creating.

Even during the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress, innumerable people, who met me, expressed the hope that I would stand for reelection and continue to serve the community, and they very kindly assured me of their support.

Although I have completed 10 years as a trustee, it was my intention to offer myself for reelection, not because I

have any personal ambition to continue as a trustee indefinitely but because I was persuaded to stand by a large number of people and friends. Their contention is that since I was the chairman of the Economic Sub-Committee, which initiated the scheme for the housing project for the construction of 1,000 flats, it would be in the interests of the community, and the Parsi Punchayet, if I devoted further of my time to see this project through.

Therefore, I had agreed to stand — not for the full term of 10 years but only for the shorter period as may be fixed by the court under the new scheme to be introduced after March 1985.

Because of the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress, of which I had been appointed the chairman and the success of which was so important, not only to the Parsi Zoroastrians in India

but also to our fellow-Zoroastrians around the world I had given the highest priority to the organization of this event. I was so engrossed in this that I had given hardly any thought to the matter of my election. I had not issued any manifesto, I had not publicly declared my intention to stand and, in fact, I had taken no effective steps at all in connection with the election.

In the meantime, a short while ago,

---

I had agreed to stand — not for the full term of 10 years but only for the shorter period as may be fixed by the court.

---

Mr Naoroji Godrej announced his candidature to offer himself as a trustee to fill the vacancy created on my retirement.

It so happened that a few weeks ago one of the trustees expressed a desire to resign as a trustee of the Punchayet owing to new preoccupations. He felt that it was not possible for him to spare the time or do justice to the work of the Punchayet.

Therefore, when Mr Godrej declared his candidature, this trustee felt that as Mr Godrej had consented to serve the community and offered himself as a trustee, this opportunity should not be lost and Mr Godrej should be elected. With this I was fully in agreement.

Therefore, he approached Mr Godrej and informed him that since some time ago he had decided to resign, in any case, this was the most opportune moment for him to do so, in which case Mr Godrej could fill his vacancy.

At the same time, this trustee felt that it was in the interests of the community that I, also, should continue as a trustee, because, having worked very closely with me on the Economic Sub-

Mr Godrej suggested that I should offer myself for reelection in the vacancy that may be caused by the trustee who wished to resign.

Committee and the housing project, he was very keen that as he was not in a position to continue as a trustee, I, at least, should be on the Board of Trustees for the successful and quick implementation of the housing project.

Mr Godrej, however, was of the opinion that as he had already made a public announcement that he desired to stand for the vacancy to be created on my retirement, he would like to do so, and he suggested instead that I should offer myself for reelection in the vacancy that may be caused by the trustee who wished to resign.

As far as I am concerned, I am not fully in favour of my trustee colleague resigning. My feeling is that he has made a good contribution and he should continue in the service of the community, especially since he has not yet completed one full term.

I am firmly of the belief that the election of a trustee, which need not be uncontested, should be an event marked by dignity and good behaviour. Unfortunately, at times, the election has degenerated into political squabbles and it seems unfortunate that the methods employed by politicians are now slowly being introduced into the elections of the Parsi Punchayet. Rumours and accusations of padding of the electoral roll, attempts to win voters by giving receptions and parties, canvassing being done by proxy by a large number of agents going round singing the praises of one candidate and denigrating the other, is something that is totally distasteful to me.

I feel that no one should have any vested interest in the Parsi Punchayet and it should not be the private preserve of anybody. Therefore, an offer to serve as a trustee should be motivated by the thought of serving the community and not himself.

I have reflected long and hard on these recent developments and I have been particularly guided by the spirit and the sentiments that were so strongly expressed by so many members of the community during the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress, just completed, and highlighted by its theme *Ham-*

*Band Paivaste*, meaning *Bound Together Unitedly — Forever*. At this Congress, there were pleas from young and old alike that the elders of the community should set an example in terms of unity, harmony and leadership.

I have already served one term of 10 years as a trustee and, at the risk of sounding immodest, I believe I have served the interests of the Parsi Punchayet with honesty and competence, and have also been of service to very large numbers of my community who have approached me with a variety of problems. Considering also that Mr Godrej has expressed such keenness to stand in my place, I believe it is for me to set an example, which I hope will guide the way in which future elections will be carried out, by allowing Mr Godrej to stand as a candidate for my vacancy, unopposed. Therefore, I have taken a decision not to stand for my vacancy.

I must make it clear that in doing so, I shall give Mr Godrej my sincere cooperation, without any strings attached or without insisting on any quid pro quo, because I believe that a person of his standing, representing the family that he does, should also be given an opportunity to serve the community as I have done by giving of himself in terms of personal involvement, time and energy. To insist upon a contest at this time, apart from involving the Parsi Punchayet in needless expenditure, would undoubtedly give an opportunity to all sorts of persons to create all types of disunity and disharmony in the community, as we have regrettably seen in the past.

However, as I have stated above, my desire to serve the community remains unchanged. If an opportunity should arise and a vacancy occurs in the future, and if it is the wish of my friends and supporters that I should contest such a vacancy for a trustee, I shall certainly give due consideration to such a proposal. However, I have resolved that I will not stand for election to fill the vacancy caused by my own retirement.

January 22, 1985

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# The Godrej campaign

Industrialist Naoroji Godrej believes the Panchayet's resources should produce better results.

Arnavaz S. Mama

"They disburse Rs 80 lakhs or so, I understand. With 80 lakhs, one can do quite a lot." Naoroji P. Godrej, managing director of Godrej and Boyce Mfg Co Pvt Ltd was referring to the activities of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, seated in his downtown office overlooking Bombay's Azad Maidan on December 11, 1984.

The muted tones and modest size of the cabin have their own tale to tell of the pleasant greying man of medium build dressed in workaday whites who governs an industrial organization which is amongst the largest of India's closely held companies. The quietly efficient Godrej, whose manifesto was published on his sixty-eighth birthday, is contesting a seat on the BPP's board of trustees against Jamshed Guzder who is seeking reelection. Guzder's 10-year term of trusteeship expires end February.

The keenly contested poll scheduled to be held on February 2, 1985, has evinced some fresh peculiarities as Godrej, who confesses himself a liberal, emerges as the doyen of the conservative lobby.

"There is no reason why we cannot work with all people, orthodox or liberal. There would be no problem if everybody had the same aim of uplifting the community," smiles Godrej, adding matter of factly, "I don't expect everybody to agree with me every time."

Despite his paternalistic reputation within the family, the company and among associates, Godrej professes strong democratic leanings: "The trustee should be accountable to the community," he feels, "otherwise the needs and aspirations of the community are not satisfied." He also believes that the Press should be correctly treated as a conduit between the trustees and the community: "Parsis must know what's happening" and if certain

views prevail in the community and are reported by the Press, "the trustees must give weightage to those views... It is always possible that all trustees cannot share the same views. If a trustee, however, feels strongly on any important issue and is making no headway in its implementation, he is always free to step down as there is no useful

**"Why shouldn't the whole community vote? Every adult Parsi should have the right to vote."**

purpose served in being a trustee if you cannot achieve what you have set out to do for the community."

Godrej's priorities are housing, education and the upliftment of the mobeds. He feels that he has enough experience in the field of housing and education as the Godrejs have constructed vast housing colonies for their employees and have also three schools plus a technical institution, where more than 3,000 students are today being educated. "As far as the first two priorities are concerned," Godrej quipped, "practically everything I have been doing in my own company. It is the same thing — nothing new, nothing different."

Godrej, who hitherto had turned down the plea of well-wishers to stand for trusteeship of the Panchayet, has an explanation to offer for his decision to enter the fray at this juncture. "Now that my son Jamshyd is with us, I am comparatively free; formerly, it would have been impossible" he notes, referring to the time factor. He also feels

that "the Panchayet whose funds are so vast, can do much more than it has hitherto been doing..."

"The community has gradually become poorer than before. With the funds and lands at the disposal of the Panchayet, they can probably provide substantial housing to cater to the community's needs... housing can also be self-generating if tenements are built on ownership basis."

On the subject of a dharamshala in Bombay, Godrej concedes, "There's a need for it also but if we have a large housing program, this could be accommodated within that scheme. More than anything else, Parsis need housing..." Godrej spoke about Gilder Baug in Andheri administered by a private trust where they had land which is being developed jointly by the Kuka Trust, the Gilder Trust and the Godrej Foundation. "I am sure there may be other such lands available. There is land in Thane, which is not very far now. After exhausting all available land, we must buy some more land, if needed. Parsis' housing problem can be solved, that's my feeling — if we go about it the right way..."

"Secondly, there is more unemployment than before — beggary as you can see, which was never the case in the early days... people who cannot go through academic education should get technical education. That should be strengthened... Over the years our young people have been going abroad... Opportunities can be created so that poor people are not a burden on the community... with Rs 80 lakhs available for so many years past, much could have been done." While Godrej concedes that the funds may be earmarked for specific causes, it may be possible to alter the same by making representations to the courts, he says. He is optimistic, "If the right approach is made, the courts may accept it and

the community will not reject it."

Nor does Godrej see any problem in working with six colleagues on the BPP Board. "I don't see why they would not accept a good suggestion. In my own company also, I don't take all the decisions... it is a bad organization if it runs on only one person. Thirty years ago when we were on a shoe-string budget, yes; not any more!" he laughs.

"Five years is long enough for any trustee to prove his mettle," says Godrej. "Then, if you are not able to contribute anything, you will be accountable to the electorate and thrown out automatically... only then will trustees be truly effective." The current indirect system of voting does not appeal to Godrej either. "Why shouldn't the whole community vote? Every adult Parsi should have the right to vote," he says.

"If you are going to help, help." Godrej's words typify his approach to the community's problems whether on the individual or the institutional level. Speaking of Zoroastrians outside India, the problem of forming a world body and the *raison d'être* of the Congress, Godrej stressed the economic angle: "Zoroastrians outside India are better off than those here. They have got the money. They can help the Zoroastrians in India. Financial help is required here, not there. In return, what we should do is send people on lecture tours so they can impart religious knowledge to those far away from home. Out there people are overworked. They would welcome competent and knowledgeable people to lecture on religious issues."

Despite his generally liberal views, Godrej says he adheres strictly to the canons of the Zoroastrian religion. "You cannot physically stop someone from embracing Zoroastrianism," remarks Godrej in reference to Joseph Peterson, the American engineer who



converted to Zoroastrianism two years ago. Godrej is, however, categorical: "We do not and should not convert people; so doing this sort of thing does not help. It only creates problems, creates controversies... we can ill afford controversies."

Referring to the obverse of the conversion coin — Parsis marrying outside the fold, worshipping at other religious shrines — Godrej reckons that "the fault lies with all of us as we have failed to impart sufficient knowledge about our own religion, which is our duty. If we had inculcated our children with sufficient knowledge to feel for their religion, there would be no need for them to look elsewhere."

Amplifying his statement in the manifesto regarding a body of experts to deal with religious matters, Godrej says that "a body of dasturs and knowledgeable people should work out what is good for us. If we select the right people, it would be accepted. Some will not agree, but in a democracy everybody won't agree. But if the majority agrees, it would be workable."

Godrej, who has hitherto steered clear of community politics, is not familiar with the work of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India or with the policies of the Committee for Electoral Rights (now renamed: the Committee for Economic Revival) but credits the CER with initially awakening the community to its problems and privileges.

Godrej is credited with the expansion of his company as well as its increasing participation in the amelioration of community problems. The nep-

*(The interview was conducted before Jamshed Guzder's decision to withdraw from the election)*

hew of Ardeshir Godrej who founded Godrej and Boyce Mfg Co Pvt Ltd in 1897 and the son of Pirojsha Godrej who consolidated the pioneering visions of his brother, Naoroji joined the family concern in 1933 at the age of 17 and has worked his way up from the shop floor. The Godrej township in the Bombay suburb of Vikhroli where 14,000 people (1,100 Parsis among them) who work in Godrej factories and their families enjoy such infrastructural facilities as schools, medical welfare and sports, was carved out of a dense and marshy jungle by Pirojsha Godrej in the forties. More than 30 percent of the profits of the company go towards the various charities founded by the Godrej family, notes Godrej's manifesto. The Pirojsha Godrej Foundation disburses scholarships to deserving students, gives grants for setting up educational institutions, provides medical assistance, constructs housing for the needy. The Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation, a cosmopolitan trust, is constructing thousands of tenements for the lower and middle income groups. The Godrejs have donated land to the Sir Ratan Tata Trust for the construction of a home for infirm and aged Parsis and to the B.N. Gamadia Parsi Hunnarshala for constructing dwelling units for the weaker sections of the Parsi community. The Godrej Memorial Trust in Delhi gives free medical aid to the poor and a technical institution is being set up in Golvad to give technical education to school dropouts.

A man of few words with little time or inclination for the limelight, Godrej's perspective includes a relaxed nonchalance about the outcome of the election: "It's for the community to decide who should win. I won't feel bad. In any case, in a democracy somebody has to lose and somebody has to win."

# Running the gauntlet

Sitting trustee Jamshed Guzder is undaunted by efforts made to ease him out of the trusteeship.

Arnavaz S. Mama

The energetic figure, the fair face crinkling into a smile, has been a familiar feature on the community's eco-political landscape. With sunny optimism undimmed by a decade of Panchayet trusteeship, Jamshed Guzder has chosen to brave another poll. This time, however, he faces a contest, not against a woolly Pundolite, but an industrial magnate known and respected within the community and beyond: Naoroji P. Godrej.

In his Neville House office — endowed with the gracious proportions of an earlier era — on December 3 and 5, 1984, Guzder disparaged the need for a manifesto: "If I issue a manifesto, what would I say? What little I have done? Even then people might say I'm blowing my own trumpet. Rather than my proclaiming what I may have done, by and large... the community has a fairly good idea of what I did as a trustee and I'm sure this includes in very large measure the members of the Anjuman Committee, both the E and F registers, in whose hands it is finally to elect one or the other..."

Words come easily to 68-year-old Guzder and he is perfectly willing to participate in a public debate with his opponent, Naoroji (Naval) P. Godrej, of whom he says, "I'm given to understand he is a very shy person. He says he's agreed to stand only because (BPP trustee) Homi Ranina and others have assured him that they'll do all the canvassing and appearing in public and ensure him victory on a platter. I repeat that this is hearsay... He'd all along mentioned that he'd not like to be a trustee of the Panchayet... I think he's been influenced by outsiders. I'd have expected that if he had certain reservations he might have checked them out with me, but he didn't. After he announced his decision we had a long

chat together about various matters but I did not question him why he'd changed his mind, because it was none of my business..."

"There is a general feeling that the two of us together in the Panchayet would make a solid contribution rather than one displacing the other. I would also feel from what I've heard that he really did not stand against me because one or two trustees have expressed their feeling that if Naval Godrej

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"It goes against my belief in good behaviour to tell the electorate that they should elect me because I'm a better man."

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wishes to come in, one or the other would be very happy to step down..."

"Having been associated with the Godrej family and Naval Godrej for the past many years, I cannot bring myself to campaign like a politician and run down my opponent. Therefore it makes it rather difficult for me and it goes against my grain and my belief in good behaviour to tell the electorate that they should elect me because I'm a better man. That is not right. Therefore I can only see two alternatives: one is that Naval Godrej would also feel the same way as I do, in which case if an offer should be made or if an immediate occasion should arise for another vacancy on the board of trustees, then he may decide to fill that vacancy, so that both of us can be trustees for

the common good of the community..."

"The unfortunate part of this or any election is that while both of us may exercise restraint, others will take advantage and start attacking one or the other. From what I have heard, there are certain people with vested interests who feel that my reelection as trustee will not serve their purpose and that by hook or by crook an atmosphere be created so that Jamshed Guzder is not elected. How far they will succeed remains to be seen."

Guzder assesses his winning chances as being "very good indeed" — great with the F register and good with the E, adding "I certainly expect to win; otherwise I would not stand." Guzder notes that he sacrificed a great many business interests and passed them on to his sons who were not very happy about it for quite some time. "In the event of not coming in, I shall immerse myself back in my business activities," says Guzder.

Referring to the opposition to the current Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress in a section of the community, Guzder noted: "I also played a part in the Third World Zoroastrian Congress (then, as now, Guzder was chairman of the organizing committee) and people ask what good did this Congress do? But they don't realize that this Congress was directly responsible for the awakening in the community. At the concluding session, when I was in the chair, I gave an assurance that we will involve outsiders in committees to be set up, consisting of the best brains in the community from different disciplines, so that the trustees may get the benefit of their advice and wisdom. That is how the first Committee for the Economic Uplift of the community was formed — I insisted that only one



*(The interview was conducted before Jamshed Guzder's decision to withdraw from the election)*

girls are dissatisfied with our boys. The average girl is more intelligent and go-getting than the average boy. She expects something from life which she feels she would not be able to have by marrying the average Parsi boy. So she opts for boys of other communities... (So we should) help our young men and women to make a good start in life and most important, provide much needed housing to engaged couples to reverse the trend of diminishing numbers and increase our population...

or two trustees should be on the Committee and the majority outsiders in order to involve the public — out of which has evolved the program for housing and utilization of the vacant land lying unused with the Punchayet."

The Gibbs Road project, the proceeds of which are expected to fund the housing construction scheme of the Punchayet, has been the source of considerable controversy as the original offer of Rs 800 per sq ft — in an area where the free market price ranges between Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 — seemed to a section of the community to be an outright subsidization of the rich. There was also fear that earnings from the project would be considered business income liable to be taxed, said Guzder. Accordingly, on the advice of experts, the Punchayet switched the original plan of building and offering flats there, into offering the land on long lease to a builder or society. On further consultation, however, Guzder said, "It was switched to building ourselves on condition that it would be a part of the whole scheme, including Godrej Baug, Andheri, etc, and not in isolation..."

"The Punchayet has received an offer of four and a half to five crores of

rupees for the (Gibbs Road) land. (There are two options) We can take the maximum amount and build all we can or accept less money and keep the land (within the community). But then another 100 families, without resources, would be left out."

Speaking on the role of the Punchayet, Guzder laments, "It's a common fallacy at the present moment that the Punchayet is only the custodian of the funds and properties which they hold on behalf of the community. While that may be so in some sense, my idea of the role of the Punchayet is that we should be pacesetters for improving the condition of members of our community. We should intervene very actively and, if necessary, very aggressively when any of the interests of the community is in any manner threatened or jeopardized. The part we should play is also one of maintaining harmony and unity in the community, maintaining a proper balance between the extreme orthodox and the extreme radicals. In the context of present circumstances and way of life, the Punchayet must give leadership to the younger generation, revive the spirit of entrepreneurship, bring about conditions which would prevent mixed marriages... if you analyze mixed marriages you find that our

"We should get the maximum amount of money from the Gibbs Road scheme to buy more land on the mainland for in the next 20 years communications will be such that the city which grows on the mainland will be a second Bombay. When our grandfathers stood on Napean Hill and looked at Colaba or around them they did not visualize the forest of skyscrapers at Nariman Point or that the whole of Malabar Hill would be a concrete forest. Therefore we must think ahead and invest in land across the harbour where it is still cheap. What is Godrej Baug today but the fulfilment of the dream of our grandfathers in 1877?"

It is Guzder's opinion that "the Punchayet feels that the Press is against them. (There is a) lacuna because the trustees are not bothered to take the Press into confidence. (There should be) an exchange of views." However, while there should be "more ongoing rapport with the Press," Guzder says, "I also feel that the Press, in order to sell, should not create controversy and run the Punchayet down." Personally, Guzder claims, he's "very happy with the Press. They've treated me fairly gently and I've always gone out of my way, whenever possible, to be frank with them and inform them of the va-

rious activities."

Guzder recounted the history of the Federation from the time when even BPP trustees were foggy about its existence and workings, to the clash of personalities between Shiavax Nargolwala and B.K. Boman-Behram so that eventually the BPP resigned in a huff and pied piperishly induced other anjumans to follow suit, to the eventual rapprochement under the chairmanship of Dr Aspi Golwala and said, "The Federation today, in my opinion, has really become the focal point, a centre of the community for the large and small anjumans scattered around India. It has started some very useful schemes like employment, assistance in self-employment, giving advice to the small anjumans of India, establishing a counselling service for Parsi boys and girls and for the first time the small anjumans of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh etc are beginning to look to the Federation for help and guidance. Unfortunately, even though it is held by some of the trustees of the BPP that the BPP trustees are akabars and there should not be another body superceding the Punchayet it must be admitted, that the BPP because of its

particular role and preoccupations, was never able to reach out to the four corners of India. Even the adjoining anjumans of Gujarat would approach the Surat Parsi Punchayet. That is why today and in the years to come, I firmly believe that with the help and assis-

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"My idea of the role of the Punchayet is that we should be pacesetters for improving the condition of our community."

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tance of the BPP and the major anjumans of India, the Federation will serve a most useful role in keeping the Parsi community, (that is) scattered around India, together and make the big and small anjumans feel that at last their voice will be heard."

On the subject of the Jyoti Studio property deal, Guzder says his role was merely one of conveying to the Punchayet, at the request of Neville Wadia, the initial offer of Rs 55 lakhs from Shapoor Irani. According to Guzder, the deal had been struck by Neville Wadia who wished Guzder, as a friend and a trustee, to convey the offer to the Punchayet and get their okay, which Guzder did. When the matter was first criticized publicly at a CER jashan, everyone sat up and took notice that the price was too low, said Guzder. By this time Neville Wadia was out of India and Guzder says that relations between him and the Wadias began to sour when he tried to convince Neville Wadia regarding the price. Subsequently, says Guzder, the Irani deal was rescinded and a new deal was struck with N.L. Mehta — also by Neville Wadia — for Rs 72 lakhs. In fact, Guzder says he had never met or seen N.L. Mehta before.

Reflecting on community happenings of the past 10 years Guzder says, "When I became a trustee, the Board of Trustees was a closed shop. The theory or principle of accountability of trustees was non-existent. I believe that I am the first trustee in the history of the Punchayet to call a meeting of the Anjuman Committee so that I could

appear before them and hold myself accountable for the period I had been trustee (about mid-term). I believed, and I still believe, that the trustees are accountable to the community and the precedent that had been set for the past 300 years, of the trustees not being answerable to anybody because they can't do any wrong, was not desirable in the present context. This was not very acceptable to some of my co-trustees. However, by persuasion I was able to convince my co-trustees that instead of an individual trustee appearing before the Anjuman Committee, all the trustees should appear collectively and this was done in '82 when a meeting was called of the Anjuman Committee when four trustees were present. This practice has now been accepted by the trustees. A similar meeting was to be called in November but was postponed due to the demise of the Prime Minister. Therefore I have set a trend.

"Secondly, we believe charity begins at home. Yet our own people, our own employees, are so grossly underpaid. When I took this up and suggested we do something about it, I was rebuked: 'Where can we get the money from?' So I persuaded my trustees to amend the pattern of investment of our funds and in the last five years our average yield has gone up by 25 to 30 percent, bringing in comparatively higher income. As a result, the effective salaries and wages paid today are much higher than those paid five years ago. This process of paying higher wages and salaries is continuing and, before my term ends, it is my intention to persuade my trustees to give another substantial increase, a part of which was given only last month. However, it must be kept in mind that the BPP is not an industrial institution and therefore, this ongoing process of increasing costs must not reach that stage where, because of the limited pattern of investment that we have, our income is not able to meet the extra burden..."

Referring to the issue that is closest to peoples' hearts, the allotment of flats, Guzder noted, "In the past there used to be a committee for allotment of flats when a vacancy occurred or a limited number of flats were built. This committee did not have full representation of trustees — just four out of the seven. I insisted and the other trustees agreed, that this being a very important function and any wrong allotment could be misunderstood, all the

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trustees must participate in the decision. As a result all the trustees are now collectively responsible for this function. Again, because of outsiders on our committee (Committee for Economic Uplift), we were able to obtain from them several good ideas of how the assessment of each applicant should be made, and out of this was introduced the system of categorization of applicants, giving of points and marks and arriving at a merit rating of each individual applicant. This was the first time in the history of the Panchayet that there is a certain rationale

in the manner of allotment (of flats) which previously was done on the basis of which applicant had the greatest influence with a trustee or trustees."

"I grew up in an environment where I'd never come face to face with poverty," reminisced Guzder, who is director of 16 companies with a turnover of a thousand crores of rupees, trustee of 18 charitable institutions and committee member of several business organizations. "I never knew how the poor and needy existed. My eyes were first opened to their plight during my election 10 years ago when I went round

and saw abject poverty: People who'd retired on a small stipend half starving because of inflation. Then I realized that one's purpose in life, especially towards the tail end, is a certain obligation to one's fellow man. Giving money to charity does not serve the purpose... giving of oneself is, in my opinion, far more important, far more soul satisfying and makes one feel that one's existence in this life has not been in vain."

*All photographs of Messers Godrej and Guzder in this issue by Homiyar Mistry.*

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# In search of the Go

A report on the Zoroastrian immigrants settled in Chicago.

Ruzbeh Antia

The 1960s and early 70s were the peak period of Zoroastrians' immigration to the United States. A project examining in some detail the Zoroastrian community in Chicago was presented by Ms Ruzbeh Antia in partial requirement for her degree in journalism from the Marquette University.

The first instalment of Antia's thesis "Keeping the fire of faith alive: Zoroastrians in Chicago" described the social and economic condition of the Zoroastrians, the reasons why they emigrated, their assimilation into the American mainstream, and their views on Zoroastrian traditions, rituals and acceptance of converts. The second instalment focussed on outmarriage among the Zoroastrians, the possibility of second generation Zoroastrians identifying themselves with Zoroastrian culture and religion and the chances of the community surviving in North America.

## The Americanization of Zoroastrians: Problems of identity

"Zoroastrianism is a religion, not a social group," said Noshir Hormazdiyar, a practicing Zoroastrian priest. "The Parsis, on the other hand, are an ethnic group."

It is legitimate for Zoroastrians to feel that this is what their group identity *should* be. Though the historical evidence is unclear, it is likely that this is what their group identity was in the early days of their religion. However, the fact remains that for much of their recorded history the Zoroastrians have projected themselves as an ethnic group, held together by the bond of religion and everything that goes with it.

"We have chosen by our actions so far to become identified as an ethnic group," said Dr Jamshed Mavalwala

at the First North American Zoroastrian Congress held in Toronto in 1976. "I don't think (this has happened) by design; I think external forces have made the Zoroastrians an ethnic community."

Through the years, the essentially ethnic identity of the Zoroastrians, both in India and Iran and, later, in other parts of the world, has been preserved by many exclusionary rules. These dictate, for example, that only those born of Zoroastrian fathers can be initiated into the religion, that no one can be converted into the religion and that Zoroastrians should not marry outside the community.

As Nathan Glazer has written about the Jews, "There comes a time when religion is given by social inheritance, is associated with a cluster of culture, and then it fulfils the definition... of an ethnic group, a group which is seen as different, thinks of itself as different and whose difference descends from inheritance rather than by adult choice or other forms of choice."

Glazer's words and the analogy with the Jews can be useful in countering another often made objection. This asserts that Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrians are really two different ethnic groups.

"Iranis (Zoroastrians) and Parsis have a different language, many different customs and many other social and cultural differences," said Rohinton Rivetna. "This is often painfully clear in Association functions. They sit separately and don't mix much."

Historically, the Jews have been scattered in many parts of the world and different communities have evolved in different ways. However, they still share enough in common to be considered an ethnic group: a religion

and associated values, beliefs and observances and the myth of common ancestral origin. Most important, they identify themselves as Jewish.

These are three of the most important characteristics of the working definition of an ethnic group established by a 1973 symposium of the Social Science Research Council. Zoroastrians, too, possess all of these characteristics.

"There is no real difference between Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians," claims Royenton Farhadieh, who comes from Iran. "They have the same ethnic background and should be proud of it. Like the Jews, they should stand behind one another," he said.

In North America, moreover, many of the cultural differences between Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrians are becoming blurred. English has replaced Farsi or Gujarati as the predominant language, adoption of western dress and social habits is widespread and many customs are being modified in the direction of uniformity.

Since there is no practicing Iranian priest in the Chicago Zoroastrian community, for instance, Parsi priests perform all ceremonies in the Parsi fashion, according to Farhadieh.

Interestingly, the very process that blurs distinctions between Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrians in North America, will perhaps increase cultural differences between North American Zoroastrians and those in India or Iran. Some Zoroastrians believe that this may lead to the forging of a distinctive North American Zoroastrian identity.

"We are in the process of internalizing our identity. We are trying to find out for ourselves what we are," said Dr Jamshed Mavalwala, who teaches anthropology at the University of Toronto. "Are we here together because



"My sons say that they are proud to be Zoroastrian. But they do not want to associate with other Zoroastrians."



# od Life-III

we follow a religion together or are we an ethnic community?" he asked at the First North American Zoroastrian Congress.

While the community agonizes about its future identity, the Chicago survey shows that many Zoroastrians have managed to retain a strong, traditional identity composed of both religious and ethnic elements.

Forty-six percent of those responding to the survey had a high level of ethnic identification while 36 percent had a moderate level of identification. Only 18 percent had low levels of identification.

In the survey, those married to non-Zoroastrians showed generally lower levels of ethnic identification. Only one-fifth of those married outside the community had high levels of identification on the scale. A third had moderate levels of identification and nearly half had low levels of identification. These figures suggest that outmarriage is affecting ethnic identity for Zoroastrians and could pose a possible threat in the future.

The survey also reveals that many more Zoroastrians are intellectually aware of their religion and heritage, although fewer are actually performing the practices associated with them or interacting with other Zoroastrians. Ten percent of those responding said they were very aware and very knowledgeable about their religion while an overwhelming 90 percent said they were somewhat aware.

This raises some crucial questions. Is it sufficient just to feel Zoroastrian or to be merely intellectually aware of Zoroastrianism? Or must such feeling and such awareness be accompanied by a set of appropriate identifying behaviors?

For example, the wearing of the *sudreh* and *kusti* as a symbol of the faith is being abandoned by many Zoroastrians because of its "inconvenience."

"Most teenagers wouldn't be caught dead wearing a *sudreh* and *kusti* in gym class," says Dhun Batlivala of Chicago. Is the wearing of these garments an essential element of the faith or are they expendable? Is there a core of behaviors, values and customs absolutely central to the existence of the group?

These are not easy questions to answer but the community will have to ask them and examine the answers with great care. For, although the overall results of the survey indicate that many Zoroastrians have retained their identity, the responses to individual questions are mixed.

The simple, 'personal,' religious acts, such as praying at least once a day or wearing the *sudreh* and *kusti* are still practised by the majority of those who responded to the Chicago survey. However, more elaborate religious ceremonies requiring the services of priests, such as *jashans*, have been abandoned by most.

Secular observances, such as the

celebration of festivals like Pateti and Navroze and the cooking of ethnic food appear to be most tenacious in their hold on the community.

This seems to contradict a view popular among some sections of the community that Zoroastrians as a cultural and ethnic group will not survive in North America, but that the religion will continue to thrive.

"The culture is bound to die out. The religion is indestructible and it will flourish on this continent," said Noshir Hormazdiyar, one of the most outspoken proponents of this view.

His theory, however, is borne out by the answers given by those married outside the community. These Zoroastrians perform religious acts more frequently than the cultural and social customs.

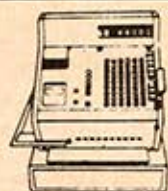
Participation in community institutions follows similar patterns. Zoroastrians married outside the community tend to participate less than those married to other Zoroastrians. Overall, social and cultural events organized by the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago (ZAC), the only institution the community has developed so far, are better attended than more religious events.

Pateti and Navroze celebrations and special events, which range from hikes and picnics to the Second North American Zoroastrian Symposium held in Chicago in 1977 or the fund-raising banquet in honor of Zubin Mehta in 1981, are most popular among the

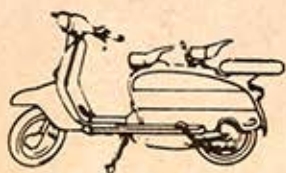
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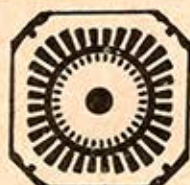
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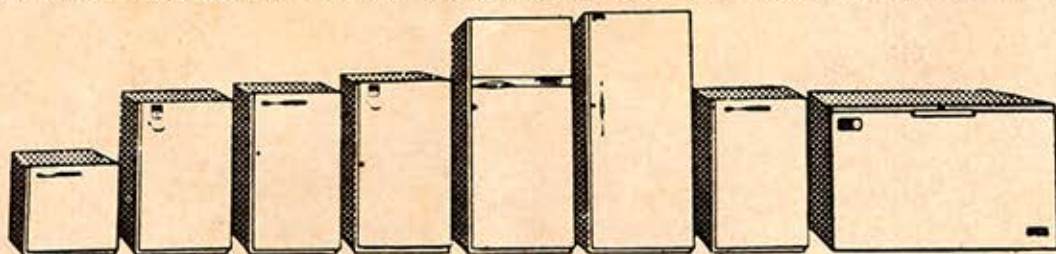
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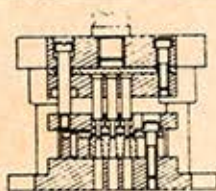
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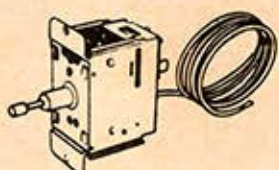
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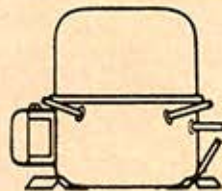
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Chicago Zoroastrians responding to the survey. On the other hand, the monthly meetings of the ZAC, which revolve around religious discussions or lectures by guest speakers, are not very well attended.

The widely-read newsletter published by the Association is also largely social in nature, containing notices of meetings and activities and lists of donations, births, deaths, marriages and new arrivals to Chicago.

"We have three kinds of responses from the community," said Rohinton Rivetna, president of the ZAC. "The very enthusiastic, the lukewarm and the totally apathetic. There are people who work very hard on the executive board and then there are people who ask us not to send them any more junk mail."

Since Zoroastrians are not concentrated in any one area of the city, it is not surprising that the most popular reason for not attending ZAC activities was distance.

"For working couples like us, Sundays are to relax. It is too much to expect us to drive 50 miles each way for a meeting," one woman wrote.

"I didn't get involved (with ZAC activities) partly because of laziness and partly because the meetings are too far away and at night," explains Dhun Batliwala, who lives alone and hates driving.

To outsiders, it may come as a surprise that even in a small and apparently cohesive community, 30 percent of those who answered this question cited "too much infighting" as their chief reason for staying away.

Those more familiar with the community, however, recognize that this is a persistent shortcoming. "It is so hard to get the community to agree on anything," said Shenaya Bhote. "I believe there is an old saying, put two Parsis together and you get three opinions," she quipped.

What do members of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago fight about? First, there are the controversial issues of conversion and the changing of rituals and traditions to suit the new environment. Next, there are the more practical issues such as plans for the Zoroastrian Center building, the inviting of guest speakers, the organization of fund-raising events and so on. Finally, there are ego problems and personality clashes.

"There is so much bickering and

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petty jealousy that many of us who have worked very hard for the community and the Association in the past have completely distanced ourselves from the Association now," said Keki Bhote.

The two chief reasons why Zoroastrians in Chicago participate in activities organized by the ZAC are to meet and communicate with other community members and to discuss religious and community matters.

It is significant that only 18 percent said that their main reason for participation was to teach their children something about the religion and culture. Forty percent found this reason was not at all important to them. This, coupled with the fact that two thirds also said that they rarely attended any of the ZAC's children's activities, suggests that the ZAC has a problem reaching the crucial second generation.

While we cannot rule out the possibi-

lity that ZAC children may be taught about their heritage by other means, their opportunities for interaction with

"Most teenagers wouldn't be caught dead wearing a *sudreh* and *kusti* in gym class."

a Zoroastrian peer group appear rather limited. This could prove a major hurdle in the efforts of the community to socialize its children into a Zoroastrian way of life.

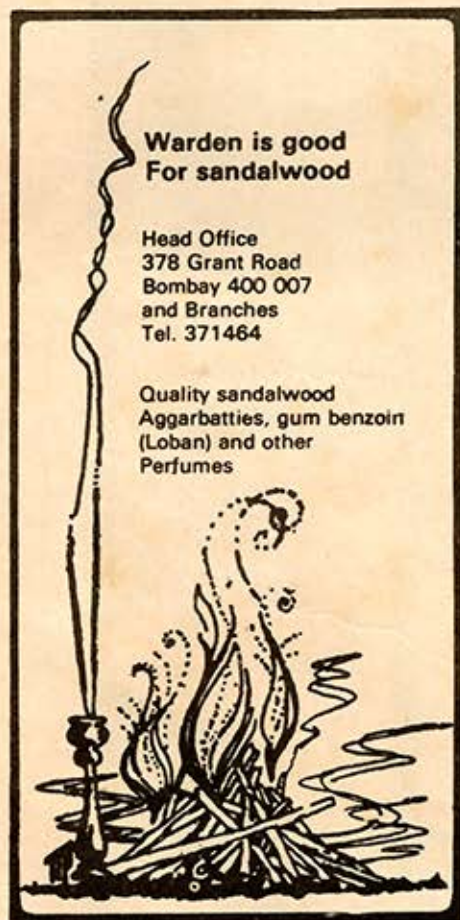
"My sons know a lot about the religion and say that they are proud to be Zoroastrian. But they do not want to associate with other Zoroastrians," complains Rohinton Rivetna.

Among adult Zoroastrians in Chi-

cago, interpersonal communication is very strong. "We're always meeting, having parties and doing things together," said Bachi Damkevala. "Even a lot of people who don't get involved with the Association, do socialize with Zoroastrians."

In the survey, two thirds said that most of their close friends were Zoroastrians. About a quarter said that their close friends were mostly Americans, while the remaining 10 percent had close friends belonging to other ethnic communities.

In sharp contrast, however, only about 10 percent of those married to non-Zoroastrians said most of their close friends were Zoroastrians. In this group, more than three quarters said that their close friends were mainly American. In keeping with some of the earlier findings of the survey, it appears that Zoroastrians who marry outside the community tend not to associate with the group.



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When it comes to communication with friends and relatives in the former home country, the survey reveals that all communicated with some degree of frequency. Eighty-four percent said they communicated regularly, while the rest said they communicated sometimes.

Such high levels of communication are not unusual for first generation immigrants. Many have immediate family members still living in the former home countries. The communication probably reflects the strength of personal ties rather than ethnic ties, for when asked whether they subscribed to ethnic publications from the home country, only 25 percent said yes.

To predict future trends from present levels of knowledge and research about the North American Zoroastrian community would be largely an exercise in crystal ball gazing. In the past, Zoroastrians in other countries have been remarkably tenacious in preserving their identity.

The present survey also shows that the community in Chicago has succeeded in maintaining moderate to high levels of identification. But great caution must be exercised in applying these facts to the future.

First, many of the techniques of survival that Zoroastrians used in the

**"There are people who work very hard and then there are people who ask us not to send them any more junk mail."**

past may be impossible to transplant to the North American environment. For instance, given the lack of significant numbers and resources, it is unlikely that a tradition of non-state institu-

tions will grow up among Zoroastrians in any North American city.

Next, all those who responded to the survey were in a unique position that is unlikely to be repeated. They are first generation immigrants brought up in a Zoroastrian environment in their home countries.

"I grew up in a Zoroastrian atmosphere and took much of it for granted," said Royenton Farhadieh of his upbringing in Iran. "It was just ingrained in me that I was to marry a Zoroastrian and bring up my children as Zoroastrians."

Future generations of Zoroastrians growing up in North America will probably take none of this for granted. They will not imbibe their Zoroastrian identities by osmosis from the atmosphere. They will, instead, have to acquire them by a conscious process of learning and reconcile them with other, perhaps more attractive, identities also open to them.

*The final instalment will appear in the March issue.*

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A linguistics career offers immense opportunities, opines Wadia.

## Speaking another language

Indra Gidwani

"With Indo-French relations improving continuously, there are more French delegations coming into the country; more collaborations; the trade commission and Indo-French chambers of commerce are more active in organizing seminars, conferences, exhibitions and trade fairs; and with the French company Compagnie-Francaise de Petrole collaborating with the Oil & Natural Gas Commission in offshore drilling operations, job opportunities for translators and interpreters in the French language have increased," says Dr. Perveen Wadia (29), one of the privileged few in the country to have acquired a doctorate in French literature from Paul Valery University in southern France.

Wadia, who has her hands full doing translations, interpreting and giving private tuitions in French, did not exactly drift into a career in languages. But, it was the French consul general in Bombay who however shaped her career and gave her a peep into the world of opportunities awaiting her in a linguistics career.

"While I was studying for my masters degree in French at Bombay University, the French vice consul for cultural affairs, M.M. Couturier, who used to conduct our lectures once a week, approached me with the offer of a part-time job at the consulate from 9 am to 1 pm. This offer changed my

whole life," recalls Wadia.

A merit scholar throughout her scholastic career, Wadia secured a first class first in the bachelor of arts (French) degree examination when graduating from Bombay's Elphinstone College in 1974. Thereafter she acquired a first class first in her master's degree course (majoring in French) in 1976 and also obtained a diploma *de langue* (1974), a diploma *superieur* (1975), and a diploma *francaise commercial* (1976) certificates from the Alliance Francaise de Bombay.

### Two-year stint

With this kind of scholastic record, plenty of interpreting and translating assignments came her way during a two-year stint at the consulate. "I always wanted to be different from my friends, who were either married or had traditional careers. I loved the French language and wanted to build my career around it and so I took up the challenge and did all kinds of interpreting and translating jobs that came my way," recalls Wadia.

Some of the important assignments that came her way during the mid-seventies were as official interpreter for press conferences during the International Film Festival in January 1976; interpreting for French scientists who had invented a system for artificial

insemination of dairy cattle and had come to India to transfer their technology to the National Dairy Development Board in Gujarat in 1977; and interpreting for two famous French writers, Robert Sabatier and Michel Tournier, who were hosted by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).

• Like all outstanding French language students, after obtaining her master's degree in French in 1976, Wadia applied for a French Government scholarship to do her doctorate in France. "You need a master's degree with a first class to be eligible and it is the French Embassy in New Delhi and the University Grants Commission which jointly decide on the grant of scholarships. The term starts in September-October and you apply one year in advance," explains Wadia, for the benefit of other hopefuls who may wish to follow in her footsteps.

Wadia duly received the scholarship in October 1977 for doing a doctorate in French literature from the Paul Valery University in Montpellier. "Most students opt for Paris but I chose Montpellier in southern France on the Mediterranean coast, which is a student university town specially known for its medical faculty, with a young population of 30,000 students, out of which 10,000 are foreigners learning science and languages. The course is very well-organized," observes Wadia.

The subject of her thesis was: "The image of India in French literature after 1947." Wadia selected contemporary India and was guided in her choice by the French consulate in Bombay. She extensively read several French scholars such as Alain Danilou, who had a modern approach to Indian culture.

Wadia completed her master of philosophy examination in November 1979, which was an introduction to the

doctorate, and submitted her thesis in 1982. And hardly surprising, ever since her return to India in September 1982, Wadia has been one of the most sought after French language interpreters and translators in the country. She has worked for industries ranging from leather to optics and has interpreted for seminars and exhibitions organized by the French Trade Commission and leading firms. She has also sub-titled several films for Indian film festivals held in France, including *Simhasan*, *Nagarik*, *Manthan* and *Bhavni Bhavai* for the Smita Patil retrospective.

#### Film synopses

Wadia particularly enjoys film sub-titling work. "I translated quite a few synopses of Indian films for the last Cannes Film Festival. Since it is literary work, it gives me great pleasure. These synopses are printed and circulated among foreign distributors and other visitors to the festival. This assignment also taught me a lot about non-Hindi films," explains Wadia.

There is considerable demand for private tuitions in French and Wadia has a long list of students, including people like Malati Tambe-Vaidya, ma-

naging director of the National Film Development Corporation, businessmen, engineers, etc., and she charges Rs 35-45 per hour. "Work keeps increasing and the translations are mainly technical or commercial and they are always urgent. I would like to go more

I loved the French  
language and  
wanted to build my  
career around it.

into interpreting which is very interesting. But then all the work is varied and interesting. I love my work and am always learning something new," says Wadia.

For those with an aptitude for foreign languages, linguistics is a rewarding career and even more so if learning a language is combined with some other professional course, points out Wadia who has established herself as a professional in less than two years and feels that newcomers entering this field have a bright future.

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