

Parsiana

“In the event of nonavailability of full-fledged priests...”

Parsiana publishes contents of the letters written by four Bombay High Priests in reply to a query from the Ahmednagar anjuman.

With the decline in the number of practicing priests, Zoroastrians throughout India and the world have felt the need for trained behdins to officiate at certain ceremonies.

In response to a letter written by Merwan B. Mehta of the Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman to the High Priests of Bombay, seeking guidance on behdins performing religious ceremonies when mobeds are not available, Dastur Hormazdyar K. Mirza, Dastur Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa, Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal and Dastur Nowrooz D. Minochehr-Homji replied, consenting to behdin participation at certain ceremonies.



Most respected and revered Dasturji

I take this opportunity to write to you due to the constantly pressing need and an ever increasing shortage of Parsi priests, specially in mofussil areas like our town of Ahmednagar. We have an adaran in Ahmednagar and we have till

the moment fed the holy fire at the hands of our revered priests. As time passes, less and less of the children of priests are willing to become priests and hence this shortage has begun to



Clockwise from top left: JamaspAsa, Mirza, Minochehr-Homji, Kotwal

show its ugly head over the horizon. If this continues, we will be forced to convert our adaran into a dadgah.

At the meeting of the Federation (of Parsi Zoroastrian) Anjumans of India, a project has been suggested to (train) behdins, who are deeply interested in our religion, (to be) paramobeds, to assist the priests and help bridge the gap between demand and supply. This project can be devised and installed only with the sanction and support of your highness and hence we would like to know whether it is possible to train navars, who are not (fully) qualified (priests) or behdins who are interested in priesthood, to be paramobeds capable of performing ceremonies like *jashan*, *geh-sarna*, *uthamna*, *afiringan*, *farroxshi*, *stum*, etc. We would also like your opinion as to what course of study should be recommended for such persons and whether such courses can be started at our athornan (madressas) and how soon.

I hope you understand my sentiments in writing this letter and wish you take up the matter seriously and urgently to enable our holy fires in

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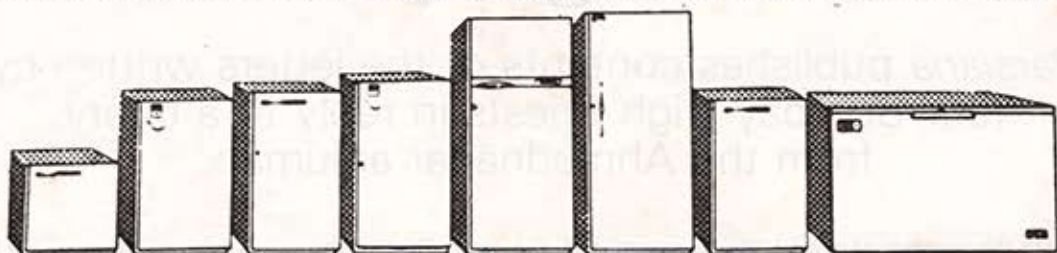
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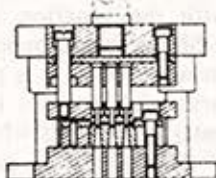
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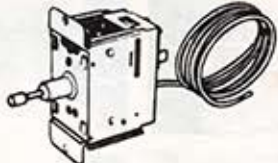
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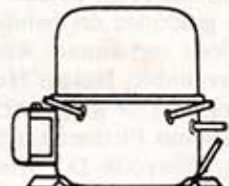
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MERWAN B. MEHTA
Vice-President, Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman
December 3, 1984

Dear Mr Mehta

We are sorry for the delay in replying to your letter of December 3, 1984.

We are keenly aware of the grave situation facing the community regarding the nonavailability of good and efficient priests, especially in towns and villages in India. In fact, this crisis will also be felt sooner or later in large cities.

In the event of nonavailability of full-fledged priests, we see nothing wrong in well-versed laymen (behbins) performing minor ceremonies mentioned in your letter.

Regarding the performance of rituals and prayers to be recited for different ceremonies, we are sure any priest, whether practicing or otherwise, will be able to guide your anjuman.

KAIKHUSROO M. JAMASPASA
HORMAZDYAR K. MIRZA
January 3, 1985

Dear Mr Mehta

Thank you for your letter of December 3, 1984. In the light of your letter I would like to make a few suggestions

which may be followed at the right time:

• One can save the fire by employing a trained behdin or osta after announcing publicly in the Parsi press for its exigency. One can first ask for a priest. If he is not available within a stipulated period, one can change the pattern

• The ceremonies listed in your letter can be performed by behdins. The course of studies was recommended by me a decade ago to the trustees, M.F. Cama Athornan Institute, Cama Road, Andheri (West), Bombay 400 058, when I was the principal. You may please write to the present principal, Mr K.S. Daruwalla, asking him to send you a copy. This will give you an idea about the future course to be taken by you and others who experience the same difficulty.

It is always better to discuss the problem personally than to enter into a long drawn-out correspondence.

F.M. KOTWAL
December 22, 1984

When *Parsiana* contacted K.S. Daruwalla, he regretted his inability to trace the earlier records. We then contacted Dastur Kotwal who explained that the recommendations made by him during his tenure as principal were considered to be the official property of the madressa and hence he did not have a copy of the recommendations. He however mentioned that behdins could participate in prayers like *geh*, *nyaish*, *afri-*

gan, *farroxshi*, *geh-sarna*, *uthamna* and praying before a corpse.

My dear Mr Merwan B. Mehta

Received your letter (December 3) and here are my brief replies:

• WZC meeting in Bombay—January 10-13 will be discussing your point of enquiry.

• This is becoming an acute Problem (with a capital P!) in old time *Dharm ni tekdi*—Navsari!—much less the mofussil places like yours.

• In the U.S., this question of creating lay-priests (*Dih Moobad* in Persian) (has arisen). They should learn *Khordeh Avesta* prayers—*gehs*, *nyaishes*, and important *Yashts* (I-III-XI-XIII-XIV—Refer to these numbers in Kangaji's *Yasht-baa-Maani*). Also *afri-gans*, *afri-stum*.

• These prayers should be recited (with proper) intonation i.e. pronunciation, by a well-informed priest, knowing *Avesta*.

• They should study the ritual and listen to the recitals (by) a good recitor; the trainees (should) keep the text book before them.

• At least two to four lay priests must be trained in each mofussil place.

• *Geh-sarna* is also necessary to be read with facility by such lay priests. Cassettes can be prepared.

N.D. MINOCHEHR-HOMJI
December 7, 1984

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Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

Funding the Federation

I would like to clarify certain remarks made by Peshotan Nargolwala at the Federation meeting in October 1984, and reported in 'Funding the Federation' (*Parsiana* December 1984).

Nargolwala appears to have referred to my report as "highly pessimistic" and "Such a report, if it goes into circulation will hamper recruitment of young men into the cadre of full time mobeds." It needs to be brought to the attention of your readers that my detailed survey on the priestly class in Bombay was done under professional guidance.

For a Masters thesis in Social Work from the University of Bombay, I cannot be expected to 'window dress' and gloss over these findings purely because some individuals prefer to believe erroneously, that generous amelioration is being given by existing organizations involved in such work. Surely, the glaring fact is that young men are not joining the priesthood due to the lack of respect shown to them by the community, the nonavailability of good education, very low income and other meagre incentives presently offered to these young men.

Had Nargolwala attended a public talk at the Patkar Hall on January 16 1985 titled 'Mobeds — The Forgotten Few' to which he was invited, he would have been able to gain firsthand information on:

- *The personal opinions of a number of priests who spoke and highlighted their problems and conditions.
- *The methodology and different sampling techniques that I used to ascertain the income level of the priests based both upon a geographical as well as proportional representative basis.
- *He could have openly discussed the alleged shortcomings of my survey as well as heard my response, thereby allowing the public to decide about the accuracy of my findings.
- *He would have also heard the independent report of another research scholar, Hormazdyar S. Dalal from The Zoroastrian Community Development Institute, whose findings regarding the income level of mobeds corroborated the findings of my research.

Has Nargolwala done a professional survey to justify his findings by way of a published report, substantiated through proper techniques of data collection?

Furthermore, with regard to my proposal towards the cost of training 15 mobeds he concludes "...50 percent of which will be payment to Zoroastrian Studies."

There is no question of Zoroastrian Studies being a financial beneficiary from this autonomous project as Nargolwala has so wrongly stated.

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Symbol of aristocracy

You have reproduced an article under the heading "Symbol of Aristocracy" (*Parsiana* December 1984) in which a reference is made to the Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Baronetcy. In this connection your representative had sought our permission on phone for reproduction of the said article and she was definitely informed that the family did not approve of the suggestion. Notwithstanding that, the article has been reproduced which has some factual mistakes and glaring inaccuracies especially the statement in bold letters "The Baronetcy of Sir Cowasjee Jehangir stands abolished by an Act of the Maharashtra State Legislature." A similar statement when made in *Mid-Day* was duly corrected in a subsequent issue of that paper.

The Baronetcy of Sir Cowasjee Jehangir was conferred by his Majesty King Edward VII by Letters Patent and it still continues and the Act of Maharashtra Legislature referred to in the article has only dealt with the Baronetcy Trust which has nothing to do with the title of baronetcy.

I very much resent that the article has been reproduced in total disregard of the wishes of the family and that too with such inexcusable misstatements.

SIR HIRJI JEHangIR



Thank you for your letter of February 13. It is unfortunate that there was an error in the *Mid-Day* article which was reproduced in *Parsiana*. We had struck out the paragraph containing the error but unfortunately due to an oversight the blurb remained. The error is regretted.

Your statement that we sought your "permission on phone for reproduction of the said article" is incorrect. As you do not hold the copyright for the article, the question of seeking your permission does not arise.

EDITOR



Kharas: no window dressing

positional towards the cost of training 15 mobeds he concludes "...50 percent of which will be payment to Zoro-

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Save Udwada scheme

Because of its proximity to Bombay, its location by the sea in the Gujarati speaking belt and its unpolluted atmosphere, Udwada offers the Bombay Parsis an ideal retreat away from the noise and filth of a fast deteriorating city. There are Parsis in Bombay who feel more at home in Udwada than in the city of their birth and would gladly leave Bombay for good if Udwada could provide a means of livelihood and school education.

The Parsi population has dwindled considerably, as is the case in many towns and villages where Parsis have lived, and some of the houses and properties which once belonged to Parsis are gradually falling into the hands of non-Parsis, some even quite close to the fire temple. The reason for this trend is that many Bombay Parsis who would like to invest in a house in Udwada cannot pay as much as the non-Parsis can, whereas Parsis who are well off and can afford to pay are by and large not interested. This no doubt reflects the general tendency in our community, that affluence takes one away from one's religious traditions. But again one cannot generalize about non-Parsis making higher payments

than Parsis as can be seen from the following episode: A Hindu servant from Udwada working at the Delhi Parsi Anjuman Dharamshala informed me that he recently bought a house in Udwada belonging to a Parsi at a very nominal price, adding that the owners weren't really concerned about who lived in their house once they had moved out. This incident is not a rare one. It has been observed time and again that many Udwada Parsis tend to be indifferent towards this problem.

Many Parsis in Bombay are of the opinion that Udwada has to be revived and developed by the Parsis for the Parsis, the sooner the better. The topic has been under discussion before, by various people with varying views, yet one can do little in one's capacity as an individual as this is clearly a matter of concern for the entire community, which is why it is necessary to join together in a movement in order to generate public interest and awareness among the Parsis. The movement would have to be Bombay-based, firstly because of the number of Parsis here and secondly because the Udwada community does not show enough enthusiasm. The very first time this idea was put into words was during my conversation with Dr Jamshed Modi of the

Zoroastrian Community Development Institute, under whose umbrella this scheme would be developed, in cooperation with Noshir Homi Dadrawala.

Those interested may write to: Save Udwada Scheme, Zoroastrian Community Development Institute, Bisni Bldg, Top floor, Nanabhai Lane, Hutatma Chowk, Bombay 400 023.

ABAN BANA

Education in agriculture

I shall be grateful if persons interested in agricultural, dairy or home science education would contact the President-Trustee, Allahabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman at P.O. Agricultural Institute, Allahabad, 211 007.

R.H. SAGAR
Allahabad

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Events and Personalities

Human rights award

The 1984 People's Union for Civil Liberties—*India Today* "Journalism for Human Rights Award" has gone to Ms Shahnaz Anklesaria of *The Statesman*, notes the *Indian Express* of March 25, 1985. The prize, which consists of Rs 20,000 and a trophy, was awarded by the former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, M.M. Ismail, at a function in Madras on March 23, the report further states.

Presiding over the function, Justice Ismail said that investigation was a part of reporting and communicating with others. He complimented journalists for their excellent job in making people aware of the atrocities committed on people by depriving them of their rights, notes the report.



Anklesaria: making people aware

Right: Penaaz Masani being presented her first bhajan long playing record "Bansi Bajaiya" by the chairman of Music India Limited Shashi Patel. (Background) composer Jaidev.

According to the report, the editor of *India Today*, Aroon Purie, read the citation for the award. He said that the recipient of the award, Anklesaria, had devoted eight years to some of the most important matters in the realm of human rights, the condition of women, status of minorities and the environmental conditions.

Calcutta's Olpadvala Hall

The Calcutta anjuman's newly constructed Edulji Olpadvala Memorial Hall situated at 52, Chowringhee and which is expected to "generate a high income and make funds available for the community's prosperity" — according to the *Calcutta Gavashni* of October-December, 1984 — was inaugurated on January 20 this year.

"A sum of Rs 29,34,267.53 was spent on the construction of the memorial hall and office complex," said trustee Dali Bhesania at the annual general meeting of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds. He further stated that the assets of the Calcutta anjuman totalled Rs 51,33,322.54 and over the last year (1984) Rs 44,916 had been disbursed for sickness, rent and education fees to deserving applicants, notes the report.

After the customary jashan ceremony, Ardeshir Batlivala, former trustee of the Calcutta anjuman who served on the committee for 14 years, was felicitated, according to the announcement by the trustees Dali Bhesania, Russi Anklesaria and Adi Rabadi.



Adi Bapuji Rabadi was elected, un-animously and unopposed, trustee of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds on Sep-tember 5, 1984. He replaces Ardeshir Batlivala who did not seek reelection after completing 14 years as trustee, notes *Calcutta Gavashni* of July-Septem-ber, 1984.

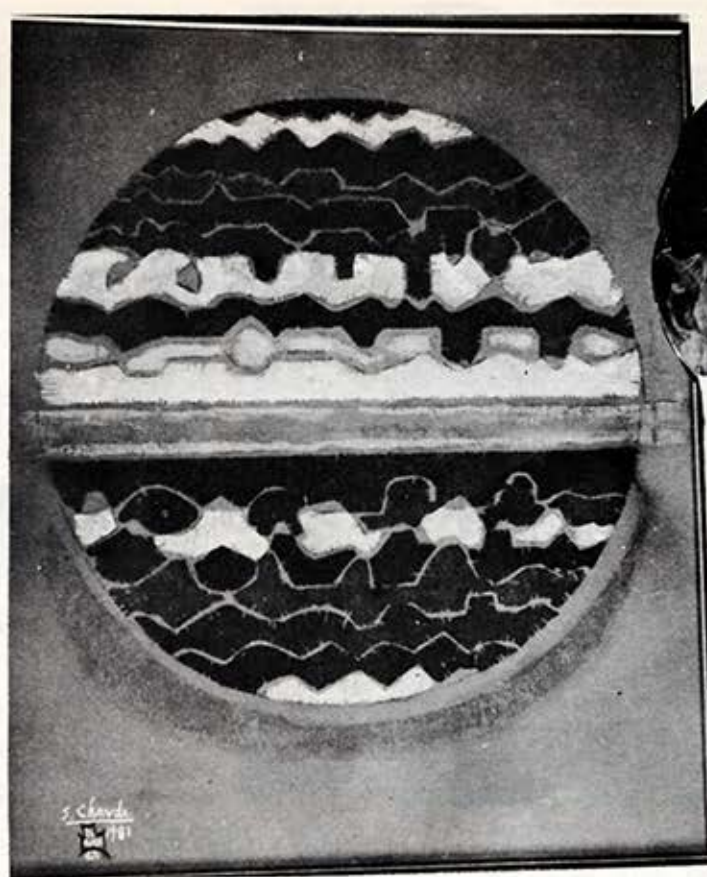
Batlivala was instrumental in reduc-ing the tenure of office of the trustees of the Calcutta anjuman. "Believing that the community would benefit from the infusion of new people at the head of its affairs, Batlivala suggested that trustees be elected for a seven-year term of office... (and)... initiated the proceedings to amend the Deed of Trust which originally stated that trust-ees were elected for life," states the *Calcutta Gavashni* report.

Fresh elections were due in February 1985 when Dr Russi Anklesaria com-pleted his second term of office. Ac-cording to the Deed of Trust, a Parsi, resident of Calcutta and at least 25 years of age is eligible for election as trustee. "The number of trustees shall be three but may be increased to a max-imum of five by a unanimous resolu-tion of all the trustees for the time be-ing in office," according to the Deed of Trust.

The Editorial Board of the *Calcutta Gavashni*, a quarterly publication, Rhoda Dastoor, Bachi Karkaria, Noshir Wadia, Persees Antia and Navaz Gherda appealed to the mem-bers of the Calcutta anjuman to air their views: "Gavashni is a community paper. It is not meant to be the ex-clusive effort of the editorial board. If you have anything to say, from com-menting on a controversy to telling us how to improve this quarterly, do... get in touch with (us)."

Burying pets of Parsi families in the gardens of the Dokhma at Beliaghata has been sanctioned by the trustees of the Calcutta anjuman, states a notice in *Gavashni*, July-September 1984. "There is no charge involved for this. However it is mandatory to put salt with the body so please carry approx-imately two to four kilos of it..." the notice clarifies.

The Calcutta Zoroastrian Stree Man-dal, having nearly 400 members on its roll, helps "the needy Zoroastrians residing in and around Calcutta" by



'Satellite' (above) was part of a collection of recent paintings by Shiavax Chavda (inset) exhibited at the Bombay's Taj Art Gallery from February 5 to 11, 1985.

giving medicare, rations, supplemen-tary diet, school and college education fees, clothes, etc, states a write-up on its activities in the July-September 1984 issue of the *Calcutta Gavashni*.

Founded in 1936, the Mandal gra-dually raised funds and constructed a three-storey building which presently houses nine needy Parsi families, ac-cording to the report.

The Mandal's monthly social pro-grams "provide an opportunity for members to get together and help aug-ment the Mandal's funds. It maintains a library of Gujarati and English books and magazines. The Mandal actively joins other women's organizations in extending help at the time of natural calamities like floods, droughts, epide-mics, etc."

The Calcutta Parsee Youth League, founded 45 years ago, "was formed with the intention of bringing the youth of the community together by organizing activities ranging from social and community service to func-tions which promote the inherent talents of our community" notes a box item in the *Calcutta Gavashni* of July-September 1984.

"From its inception in 1939, the

League has organized several interest-ing functions for its members and for the community as a whole. Variety entertainment programs, elocution contests, talent contests, television games, quiz sessions, scavenger hunts, picnics and excursions are within the orbit of this highly creative body," states the report on its activities. "The Calcutta Parsee Youth League gives donations to the needy, to charitable groups and also caters to the needs of the less fortunate members of our com-munity."

Tomatoes, although out of season, were thrown at the stage while the third act of the *naatak* was in progress on the evening of September 2, 1984, notes a letter of protest from the managing committee of The Calcutta Parsee Amateur Dramatic Club which was published in the *Calcutta Gavashni* of July-September 1984.

"This Club's efforts have been taken for granted and few people of this community realize and appreciate what this institute gives and has been giving for the past 77 years to our commu-nity," the committee members despair-ed.

"Every year for the past few years,



J.F. Daruwalla, motorman of the first electric suburban train which ran on February 3, 1925, between V.T. and Kurla, received a memento and a cash award of Rs 500 from N.C. Narasingham, chief electrical engineer of Central Railway, who visited the old couple at home to present the awards.

Left: Ranina (centre) receiving award from V.S. Deshpande, former chief justice of Maharashtra. Ramesh Rathi (right) Marine Lines Jaycees president for 1984.

the acting members of the club are quite used to paper darts made and thrown at the stage and a lot of unruly behaviour and noise by the younger 'gentlemen' of our community... Voices of protest from more responsible members of our community would in a way eliminate the bedlam that prevails at the *naataks* — and if 'the show must go on' — let it be done by the acting members of the club and not a few juveniles who attend the *naataks*."

Ranina 'outstanding'

For outstanding services in the field of taxation and law, Homi P. Ranina, "the youngest director on the board of more than 20 companies," was awarded the Outstanding Young Person national award by the Indian Jaycees, notes a press release.

The award which is presented to candidates under 40, was given to Ranina for having written several books on taxation and for contributing over 900 articles in various newspapers and magazines, notably the *Financial Express* and *Business World*, in addition to shouldering the responsibility of directorship of more than 20 well-known limited companies, notes the press release. The Indian Jaycees have also sent his nomination to the International Jaycees who will select the

Outstanding Young Person of the World in 1985, the write-up notes.

After being elected trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, Ranina is said to have resigned from three to four directorships to enable him to spare time for Punchayet work.

New contracts for Rustomji

One of Italy's biggest and most prestigious publishers Messrs La Spiga Edizioni have decided to bring out as many as 14 books coauthored by Bombay-based management consultant and author M.K. Rustomji, notes a press release. This order originated at the latest International Book Fair held in Frankfurt and is a world record as never before has a major foreign publisher undertaken to publish as many as 14 books on management at one time, according to the release.

Federal Publications of Singapore, who are the agents of Rustomji and his coauthor, the renowned management expert Dr C. Northcote Parkinson, have recently signed this agreement with the Italian publisher. Federal Publications have also signed contracts for a considerable number of books written by Rustomji and Northcote Parkinson for translation and publication in the Swedish, Dutch, Indonesian and Thai languages, the report notes.

Khabardar Chowk

The memory of noted poet 'Kavi' Ardeshir Khabardar who spent 18 years of his life in Dadar was honoured by a road junction being named after him. Kavi Ardeshir Khabardar Chowk which stands at the junction of Jam-e-Jamshed and Lady Jehangir Roads near the Muncherji Joshi Parsi Colony at Dadar, was formally inaugurated on January 20, 1985 before a distinguished gathering of Parsis noted a report in *Jam-e-Jamshed* of January 20, 1985.

"He had a store-house of poems in his heart and was also a religious scholar," said Bombay's municipal commissioner and administrator, Jamshed Kanga whilst naming the chowk after Kavi Khabardar.

B.K. Boman-Behram, former Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman said, "Khabardar was a great poet and his poems in English and Gujarati are included in the B.A. and M.A. syllabi even today." He also proposed the erection of Khabardar's statue near the Parsi Colony, according to the report.

Khabardar's fervent wish to complete before death his 750-page work titled *Avesta Pahlavi Gatha* was fulfilled when the book was published in his sixtieth year of life, recalled Hormazdar Dalal of the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute.

Sponsor sought

Junior national cycling champion, Porus D. Jassawalla, who has been invited to participate in the World Junior Cycling Championship to be held in July 1985 at Stuttgart, West Germany, needs a sponsor to help raise a minimum of Rs 53,000. "My immediate aim is to secure first place in the sprint event," says the 17-year-old cyclist who has been invited by the Arthur Road Club, London, to train and compete in their local and international events.

"Jassawalla is a sprinter blessed with speed," says noted sports writer John Castro in an article titled 'Soon you'll hear about him,' in *The Times Of India*, December 2, 1984. "Bombay sprouts top cyclists every now and then. Adi Havewalla was so great. The Malcolms, father and son were phenomenal. Rustom Havewalla was one rare sprinter. The youngster shaping in the mould is Porus D. Jassawalla. You'll soon hear about him. Maybe his sister, Khushi Jassawalla might do better."

Jassawalla's determination to succeed is borne out by the fact, that in



spite of major injuries incurred during the Inter-State Cycling Championships at Hyderabad in 1985 when he was hospitalized, within four days of his fall he took part in the Maharashtra State Annual Cycling Championship at the V.P. Stadium, Bombay, where he won five golds and four silvers.

Jassawalla's sister, 13-year-old Khushi's maiden triumph was the 16 km

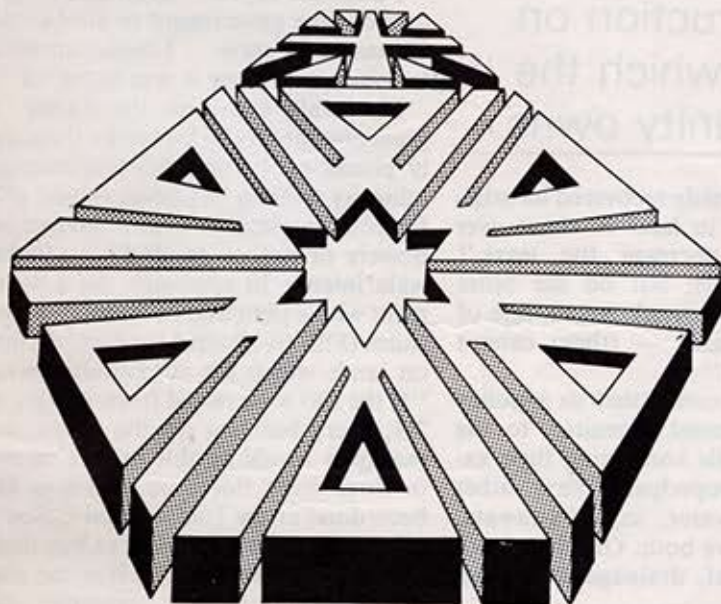


Jassawalla being helped by father Dinshaw. Jassawalla and Khushi: successful cyclists.

Malabar Hill Jaycees inter-school road race held in March 1984, in a record time of 22 minutes, 02 seconds, notes a write-up in *The Times Of India* of March 12, 1984.

By way of training, Porus and Khushi race on the Bombay roads, helped considerably by their father, Dinshaw Kaikhushroo Jassawalla, who sets the pace on a scooter.

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Marazban Patrawala MLA

What does it take to be a Congress(I) member of the Maharashtra Legislature?

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Patrawala residence in Cusrow Baug seemed to be in a state of siege. A babble of Hindi and Marathi interspersed with English wafted out through the open front door. A 15-member delegation cluttered the living room and overflowed onto the landing.

Marazban Patrawala, the newly elected young Congress(I) legislator from Colaba had been charged by the party with the initial formation of its list of candidates for the election to the Bombay Municipal Corporation scheduled for April 25. The delegation questioned Patrawala's rating of a particular ex-Councillor. All those who had worked for the party had been included, he said; those who had earlier been elected were included he repeated; those who had worked harder were given a higher billing, he noted.

The harangue repeatedly see-sawed on predictable lines. There were oblique references to the Congress High Command. Undaunted Patrawala noted he could see Rajiv whenever required and reminded his visitors that he had reached his present position as MLA on the basis of his own work within the organization — he was beholden to no one, he said. Pointing to a youngster in his early twenties, Patrawala said, "This boy has worked for me. I've given him precedence over the Chief Minister's nominee (who is not an active worker)." When the delegates dispersed after more than two hours of sparring, one of them referred to Patrawala as a "royal *aadmi*."

Tousled hair, unshaven face, pyjamas under the tartan robe testified to the relentless pressures of politicking. Patrawala's day starts early — sometimes as early as 5 am. as the day in question, March 26 — and ends late, maybe 2 or 3 am.

Patrawala spoke of his constituent's

special problems: "Colaba is a lopsided constituency," says Patrawala. "There are the very rich and the very poor" though the upper and lower middle class is also represented. For each section Patrawala has a program. For example, the upper class denizens of Cuffe Parade are concerned about the exorbitant lease rent that the Government charges there. "The Gov-

Patrawala intends to approach the government with a plan that extra FSI be allotted for construction on lands which the community owns.

ernment has already recovered its original investment in land 10 times over (and) should decrease the lease," Patrawala admits; but on the other hand notes that "people were aware of these (high) leases — (they) cannot backtrack now!"

Patrawala is committed to a policy of providing better amenities to the zopadpattis while containing their expansion. The zopadpattis have either electricity or water, says Patrawala, they do not have both. Or where both facilities co-exist, drainage is lacking, he notes.

For the lower middle class living in dilapidated houses in the old Fort area, Patrawala proposes that the Maharashtra State Housing Repair and Reconstruction Board should be geared to clear applications fast. Sometimes the

delays in clearance of applications result in those ancient structures crossing the thin line between repair and demolition, he says.

A scheme for converting old tenancies into ownership, with the consent of the landlord, is what he is working on for the benefit of the upper middle class, says Patrawala. About 100-200 months' rent could be the value fixed to effect the transfer, he notes, but the measure needs to be weighed for its impact on wealth and capital gains. "Corresponding legislation would be required in tax laws ere this proposal is accepted," notes Patrawala, mentioning also the need to set up citizens' committees and holding public hearings before such a measure can be considered.

Patrawala says he "promised people to move the government to abolish the TV tax in the state... I made representation... am happy it was accepted."

Patrawala considers the Parsis "a great community — one to be thoroughly proud of." For "this microscopic minority (which) has never sought preferential treatment — no privileges, or powers or grants or land" — Patrawala intends to approach the government with a plan that extra Floor Space Index (FSI) be allotted for construction on lands which the community owns. "If the FSI were raised from 1.3 to 2 or 2.3, every building (in the baugs, for example) would be able to take on two or three more floors on pillars, as has been done at the Dadar Parsi Colony.

"People who would like to buy these flats would themselves defray the cost of construction. For example, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) had built the U Block in Cusrow Baug on ownership. The rates which the trustees will apply will be reasonable rates. For this purpose we will write to many leading Parsis like Naval Tata, Neville



Photo: Haniyar Mistry

Wadia, the BPP trustees, Jehangir Shroff, Parsi architects, civil engineers, builders, chartered accountants, financial experts and lawyers... Form it into a very representative committee. Such a committee was set up by the BPP when the A.H. Wadia Trust donated land for the Wadia Baug at Parel. This is my specific task for the community... If the scheme comes through, I shall feel that I've done something in return for my entire foreign education (which was financed by) loan and gift scholarships from various Parsi trusts and foundations, notably the R.D. Sethna Trust, the A.H. Wadia Trust, the Sir Ness Wadia Foundation."

The other task Patrawala has set himself on behalf of the community is to "see that the adoption bill is not made applicable to Parsis because it would create chaos in the day-to-day working of the Parsi community. I don't want the existing legal setup to be made topsy-turvy by the introduction of this legislation because, basically, an adoption is in relation to bequeathing of one's family name and properties at a future date. This can still be done from a Zoroastrian to a non-Zoroastrian by means of a will. But the adoption bill will upset the social structure of the Parsis."

Patrawala does not believe the Parsis of today are in any way inferior to those of earlier generations. "The Par-

sis of the generation of 50 years ago (achieved) because of certain social events in India," a spin-off from British rule. "They were a preferred lot (because) they took to western education... they were a neutral community qua the British." Even today, Patrawala notes, "Parsis are universally known."

Notary public and a constitutional lawyer with an international practice that often takes him to Europe and routinely to the high courts of Bombay, Ahmedabad, Patna, Lucknow, Jabalpur, Srinagar, Cochin and Hyderabad as well as the Supreme Court, Patrawala is very largely an organizational man, weaned from university by the Congress (I). Even before he graduated with honours in politics from Wilson College, a meeting with the charismatic Indira Gandhi had fired his political ambition.

Patrawala was elected chairman of the Wilson College Students' Union Council in 1970 — "note down, the only chairman elected unanimously," said Patrawala. He was also chairman of the Bombay University Students' Council. Patrawala says for two years he "won the All India Inter-University debating trophy — write down, the only person to have won it twice."

(While *Parsianna* wrote, Patrawala called Indian Airlines to ascertain his number on the waiting list to Delhi. "Put MLA under my name. It helps,"

"The adoption bill should not be made applicable to Parsis because it would create chaos in the day to day working of the community."

he instructed the reservation clerk.)

Founder convener of the National Students' Union of India in 1970, Patrawala became general secretary of the Bombay Pradesh Youth Congress (I) Committee and the Mazagaon District Congress Committee of the BPCC (I) simultaneously in 1971-73, notes his biodata. In the 1972 state assembly elections the Congress party offered him the legislative assembly ticket from Mazagaon which Patrawala says he refused because he was doing his final LL.B. and intended to proceed to the U.K. for postgraduate studies. While in the U.K. doing his LL.M. and Master of Management Studies, Patrawala chaired the U.K. Indians' Committee in support of Indira Gandhi's policies and programs 1974-77.

When the time was ripe, when Indira Gandhi returned from the wilderness, Patrawala ploughed steadily ahead from general secretary of the Bombay Regional Congress (I) Committee in 1980-81 to member of the MPCC (I) executive committee in 1983, with other organizational stints in between. Thus he could argue with his inquisitors who questioned the choice of certain individuals on Patrawala's list of Congress (I) candidates for the municipal elections in fluent Hindi: "They have worked for the party organization, therefore they get precedence even over friends and relatives of bigwigs who do not have such a record."

Says Patrawala, who celebrates the first anniversary of his marriage to Dinaz Mistry in April, "I got nine-tenths of Parsi votes in Cusrow Baug for which I am grateful... As legislator, I will help any Parsi. I do not want to dabble in religious matters because I have not read religious scriptures and I'm not well-versed in social matters to comment. These should be left to scholars of the Zoroastrian religion."

What makes Tirandaz tick?

Undaunted by five unsuccessful attempts at elective office, the candidate from Dadar will try again for a seat in the Bombay Municipal Corporation on April 25.

Arnavaz S. Mama

"My heart has always been in the Bombay Municipal Corporation," said Rustom Tirandaz as he prepared to fight the municipal elections due April 25, 1985. The recent defeat in the Legislative Assembly elections—his sixth attempt at elective office, five of them being unsuccessful—has not alloyed his good humour nor dimmed his optimism.

The lithe figure with steady brown eyes, the black beard ever so sparsely salted, a knitted skull cap fixed firmly atop, Tirandaz portrays a mixture of high idealism and colloquial humour who identifies himself as "a rank communalist..." When interviewed on March 20, he was busy aiding the late Darvish Irani's son and daughter-in-law—both blind—who run a stall at Kemp's Corner. The Iranis' stall was in danger of demolition by the municipality and Tirandaz was trying his best to help the blind couple save their business.

"The first thing I'd like to do (on being elected councillor) is to rationalize the objectives of the Bombay Municipal Corporation," says Tirandaz. Taking roads as an example, Tirandaz says there is no policy regarding their maintenance. Each of the utilities dig up roads at random, for, says Tirandaz, "How can there be coordination? They (the utilities and the municipality) don't even have an annual meeting." Indeed, notes Tirandaz, the maintenance of roads is an index to the rapport between individual councillors and the relevant municipal department.

"Not many people know how to disperse the funds of the Corporation (the Corporation's budget is currently about Rs 430 crores)" says Tirandaz. For example, the health budget is Rs 60 crores today, yet, the services have deteriorated as compared to what it offered in the early '70s when the health

budget was six crores of rupees, notes Tirandaz, who ascribes this sad state to lack of accountability. "Today, the medical facility has become impossible for the common man," he notes sadly.

When Tirandaz was chairman of the health committee in 1974, all municipal hospitals were made to incorporate leprosy and venereal disease (VD) treatment in their skin diseases wards. Before that the Ackworth Leprosy Home was the only place where leprosy could be diagnosed or treated. As for VD, one illkempt clinic at Bombay Central was the sole municipal centre for a disease which, according to Tirandaz, afflicts 25 percent of Bombay's citizenry.

A survey of children in municipal primary schools had then revealed a leprosy incidence of 9:1000, says Tirandaz. At the time the municipality was spending a meagre Rs 10,000 per year on leprosy. Tirandaz and his colleagues were responsible for pushing up the leprosy budget to Rs 10 lakhs. Simultaneously, TV and radio began to be utilized to disseminate information on leprosy, he notes.

Ignorance about venereal disease is country-wide says Tirandaz. Every Wednesday Dr B.A. Daruwalla, the oldest qualified venereologist in the country held classes at the Bombay Central clinic for doctors interested in knowing more about this dread disease. Though Tirandaz is no doctor, he asked permission to attend and was appalled by what he learnt about the long-term effects of VD when it is indifferently or inadequately treated. The knowledge gave him the resolve to fight in the Corporation for better facilities for its treatment.

Tuberculosis, another dread killer, had 4500 beds in Bombay city, of which 1500 were in the Sarvodaya Hospital at Ghatkopar says Tirandaz. The

man in charge was Kantilal Shah, a Gujarati. The Corporation was run by Maharashtrians. The Shiv Sena and Shah could not get along. "The Shiv Sena started a tirade against Shah to discontinue the beds at his hospital on the basis that in Bombay TB has gone down!" Refusing to sit by such folly, Tirandaz explained to the Municipal Commissioner that the 3000 people coming to the polluted atmosphere of Bombay everyday from a naturally clean and healthy environment were potential TB victims. The Commissioner saw the folly of the proposal and the axe was withheld—until after Tirandaz ceased to be councillor.

When Tirandaz was 25 years old, G.K. Malvi, a very good personal friend, offered to sponsor him as a Jan Sangh candidate. But Dr M.C. Bhilpodiwala was then the Congress candidate from the same ward and Tirandaz refused to fight a fellow Parsi. At a later date when Bhilpodiwala was refused the Congress ticket, Tirandaz was agreeable to run under the Jan Sangh banner. However, Tirandaz considers himself "a free thinker." Says he, "When it comes to main issues, party mandates and disciplines are meaningless to me." For example, the JS had promised its Muslim electorate to do away with the electric stunning of animals before they're slaughtered, a measure which reduces the animals' pain. Tirandaz noted, "I cannot afford to perpetuate cruelty to animals and live with myself. Until I was in the Corporation, I didn't allow them to pass that resolution. As soon as I ceased to be a councillor they passed the resolution. We—the SPCA, Salim Ali, Jussdanwala—went to court. We won."

In March 1978, at the end of his elected term, the Congress being unsure of victory, postponed elections by



Photo: Homiyar Mistry

six months. The Janata Party which was in opposition (of which the JS was a constituent under the prevailing alliance) resigned saying they'd outlived their term. Tirandaz refused to toe the line because he felt he could not "leave the Bombayman to the mercy of the Congress(I) and the Shiv Sena." There were 1300 items pending but with filibustering techniques, Tirandaz says he "let them pass only one item a day."

The second time around he faced a scheduled caste opponent named N.K. Baria. A lot of Parsis assumed him to be a Parsi and the community vote was divided. On that occasion Tirandaz was also confined to running his election campaign from his bed as a bad scooter accident had left him with an injured liver. He lost by 199 votes.

Speaking of the last foray when he was the Progressive Democratic Front sponsored Bharatiya Janata Party candidate for the Legislature from Matunga assembly constituency and lost to Dr Subramanian, Tirandaz says he had "worked very hard getting the zopadpattis water and phone connections. In fact Congress(I) workers had complained to ward officers that there will be no water connections available to them to dole out. Ultimately, however the contest became a matter of

prestige for the Congress," he noted.

Although Tirandaz lost by 4492 votes (about 40,000 votes were cast in the constituency), he has noticed a clear pattern emerging in these electoral frays. Initially he says, he is always leading; then, as the day wears on, the tidings become bleaker and finally end in defeat. The first 70 booths cater to people living in buildings; the next 80 to people from the zopadpattis where, a day earlier, generally such goodies as stainless steel items are distributed by the Congress, notes Tirandaz. When the results from such areas come in, the tide turns.

Despite this combination of wealth and power arrayed against him, Tirandaz is undaunted. He does not complain about the system, being perfectly content to pit his Quixotic mite against it: "I believe that right is always might," he says.

Of Parsis, Tirandaz says stoutly, "We'll never be a schedule class, even if we are starving. The community has never been as glorious as it is today. We still have the best lawyers, the best doctors. Busybee is the finest humour writer among Indian journalists. It's all doomsday soothsayers talking this nonsense (about the decline in the quality of the community)..."

"There are 10,000 inhabitants in the Dadar Parsi colony. I've come across only three cases of drug addiction. In two cases I've helped them get off drugs...the glory of the community can never be dimmed by its weaknesses; its virtues are far in excess..." affirms Tirandaz and speaks of Shahrook Dhalla, Dinyar Panthaky and Mithoo Jessia who have revitalized the Dadar Parsi Colony.

While Tirandaz says he wears his cap most of the time, it has no religious

"When it comes to main issues, party mandates and disciplines are meaningless to me."

connotation for him. Once in 1973 having forgotten to remove his cap after a visit to a fire temple, he was assaulted by the Shiv Sena who stole it. Since then Tirandaz has worn his cap in a gesture of defiance.

Tirandaz has a small electroplating shop in Niagam to which his brother attends, while he concentrates on their exports agency. As a merchant exporter he deals in spices, soyabean meal, machine tools and components, carpets—exporting them to the UK, US and the Middle East.

A weightlifting champion of Bombay University (B.Sc. from Ruia College), Tirandaz confesses himself an MCP (Male Chauvinist Pig) who refuses to allow his wife Armaity to work professionally. However, she is "honorary physiotherapist to poor Parsis in need." Although his family has been stoutly behind him, Tirandaz banters, "We have a beautiful system. When I win the election, I'm happy. When I lose, my wife is happy." Of their three sons—Behram, Faredun and Darius are studying in standards X, VII and I respectively — Tirandaz says, "My children should not hold me in awe. They should think of me as a friend. If ever they're in need, I would want to help them."

With solid Zoroastrian virtues of hard work, thrift and honesty embedded in him, Tirandaz says, "All my wealth, that I'll accumulate to my last day, will be well begotten. I don't sell my soul to anybody."

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A social gathering of Parsi Elphinstonians was held on Saturday evening in the Nawab of Beyla's bungalow at Grant Road, which had been kindly lent to them for the occasion. There were about 200 Elphinstonians present to inaugurate the first of what is hoped to be a long series of annual gatherings to be held with the view of promoting mutual good feeling amongst ex-stu-

dents of the institution.

The idea of holding these assemblies originated with a few young Elphinstonians who have recently completed their college career, and who considered that re-unions of this kind would have a beneficial effect amongst the hundreds and thousands of those natives who have received their education at the Elphinston Institution. A committee consisting of Dadabhai Naoroji, Nowrozjee Furdoonjee, Sorabjee Shapoorjee Bengallee, P. M. Mehta

and others, was formed to give effect to the project. The younger members of the committee, communicated with some of the representative Elphinstonians of the Hindu and Mohamedan communities, but they did not appear to take to the movement. A circular was then sent round, requesting the Parsi Elphinstonians to join, and about 200 of them expressed their willingness to enroll themselves on the list...

*Reprinted From The Times of India,
October 27, 1984.*



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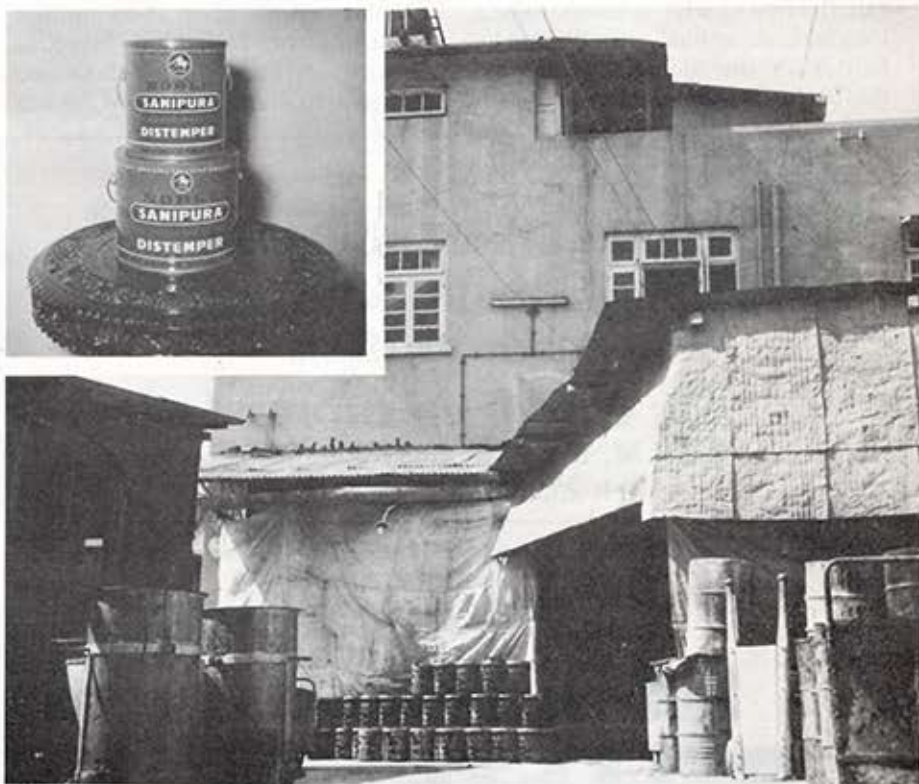
Noble Paints' 50 years are marked by a series of innovations.

"As a child, Jal Jamshedji was fascinated with nature's colors...and aspired to be a color chemist combining the aesthetics of color with science," so notes an introduction to the story of Noble Paints issued on the occasion of the completion of fifty years since the founding of the firm by Jal Jamshedji.

When import of paints was stopped at the time of Independence, Noble Paint and Varnish Company Private Limited, one of the few paint factories then in existence, received a boost to their production, notes the write-up. But Jalbhai the son of Jamshedji Hormusji who worked in a solicitor's firm stated, that while the market should be expanded, the quality of the products should not suffer.

In recognition of their high-grade products, in 1952, the first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad appointed Noble Paints "as suppliers of paints and distempers to him." Thereafter the two succeeding Presidents, Dr S. Radhakrishnan in 1963 and Dr Zakir Hussain in 1967, also issued them warrants of appointment.

Among Noble's most successful innovations is their paint Fyretard which was commissioned for the Naval frigates *Udaygiri*, *Himgiri* and *Nilgiri*, notes an article in the company's house magazine, *Noble's Tidings* of 1975 which though presently irregular, they plan to revitalize during the coming years. After witnessing a demonstration arranged by Noble Paints when an attempt was made to set fire to a wooden hut painted with Fyretard, the chief fire officer of Bombay Fire Brigade, A.B. Kulkarni, remarked in his letter of April 19, 1976, "They have convinced us that the quality of fire retarding paint manufactured by them is of high quality and is favourably comparable to the British standards... The credit goes to Noble Paints for putting a lot of research and development efforts to produce such a paint."



Noble moves

When Noble Paints was set up in 1934 as a small paint factory at Reay Road with five machines and 12 workers to make stiff paints, as stated in the company hand-out it started as a partnership between two brothers. When Jalbhai bought over his brother's share in the firm, he alone had to supervise all functions including marketing. The aerated drinks factory, Plumol Waters, owned by the Jamshedjis was closed

down when Jalbhai concentrated on paints, stated a spokesman of the company. In 1939 they shifted to a new factory at Lower Parel on a one acre plot of land and by 1950 Noble had become a private limited company, the write-up adds.

Jalbhai's son Dinyar who joined the Company as trainee in 1963 when he was barely 20, is credited with the "diversification of the industry," notes the release. Heading a work force

Noble Paints was set up in 1934 as a small paint factory at Reay Road with five machines and 12 workers.

of 90 employees, Dinyar was made managing director in February this year. To meet the growing demand of its products from all quarters, in 1975 Noble shifted to their new premises, occupying around 10 acres of land at New Bombay, briefed Dinyar's wife, Nilouffer who takes a keen interest in the running of the company. To strengthen their market, depots were set up at Madras, Bangalore and Cochin, states *Noble's Tidings* of 1975. With steady expansion, Noble's started exporting their paints to the Middle East.

Noble products

Amongst their products, Polycote special synthetic paint enamel deserves mention for it earned the appreciation of Dr. H.N. Sethna, then director of the Engineering Group of the Atomic Energy Establishment. "Only (Noble) ... has satisfied the exacting demands of our rigid specifications," Sethna said.

Universal Basic Stainer (UBS), a concept introduced in India for the first time by Noble Paints, enables the user to obtain the precise shade or color by mixing tints miscible to any paint, the company write-up indicates.

Noble Paints was commissioned to paint Bombay's Nehru Planetarium with Nobstucco, and Mantralaya with Nobcolite according to the 1977 issues of *Noble's Tidings*. Dinlite was chosen for use by Maharashtra State Road Transport, Bombay; Uttar Pradesh

Road Transport; Andhra Pradesh Road Transport; Tamil Nadu Road Transport and Karnataka State Road Transport.

"Noble is there helping spread sweetness" stated *Noble's Tidings* of March 1976 while priding over the fact that at least 19 sugar mills in Maharashtra had started using their Chlorcote, a synthetic rubber paint, which provides a protective coating to the sugar industry. A similar use of Chlorcote was found in the rayon industry to increase the lifespan of its machines, as mentioned in the 1975 issue of *Noble's Tidings*.

The anti-corrosive, rust preventive and sound absorbing compound, Noble's Rustseel is said to "give the car complete under-body protection and is used by well-known service stations in Bombay, notes the October 1977 issue of *Noble's Tidings*.

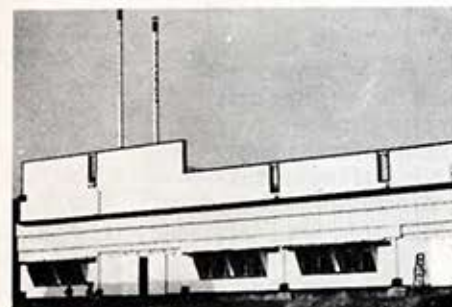
The main strength of Noble's products is known to be its washability. Presently they are working on a new development — a paint which will give a pearly finish and which will appear brighter after each wash, explains Nilouffer.

Noble men

Harmonious employer-employee relations ensure that an employee "once a Noble man, (will remain) always a Noble man" notes *Noble's Tidings* of March 1976. With 80 percent of their machinery being imported, usually the employees find no difficulty in handling the equipment. In certain departments like the synthetic resin department where there is a risk factor to health, it was Jalbhai who insisted that workers wear their masks when on duty, explains Nilouffer. As a preventive measure, workers in such departments are also given extra dosage of milk, she adds.

Referring to the informal social structure at Noble Paints, the write-up notes that in the early days there used to be regular staging of plays, musical programs, etc to increase worker participation. With Dinyar, a Rotarian, being more inclined towards sports, the recent trend has been for Noble Paints to sponsor cycle meets, karate competitions, Road Safety Patrol projects, etc.

In their pursuit of technological innovations and with their emphasis on diversification, the aim of Noble Paints "has always been to add colour and gaiety to Indian life" says Jalbhai.



Clockwise from bottom left: Jal Jamshedji (right) presenting prize to Noble's chemist.

Noble factory at Lower Parel before shifting to New Bombay.

Dinyar Jamshedji, familiarizing Sir Richard Myyres, managing director of Coates' Brothers with their New Bombay factory.

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To begin at the beginning, Ahura is 47 years young. All along a force to reckon with in the process chemicals field. With leading end products manufacturers patronising Ahura, the range of process chemicals have been so widened as to fit the specifications to the special character of the end product manufactured.

Ahura believes Performance is the only plus factor that can distinguish one process chemical manufacturer from another. Ahura believes it is just about the best in the field.

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