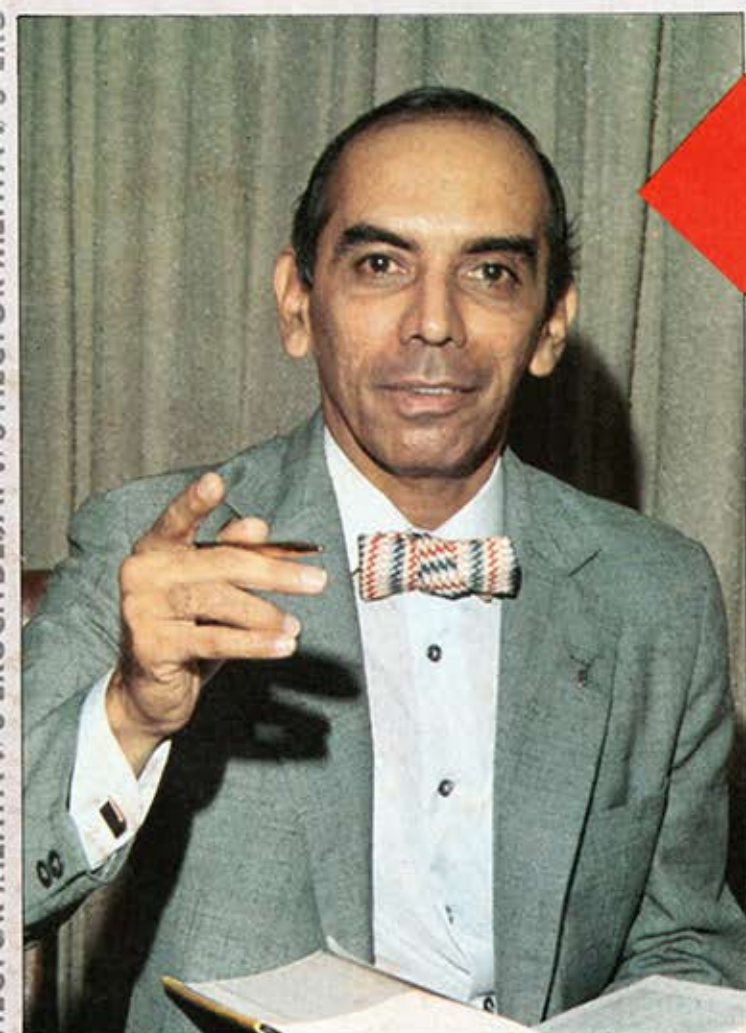


Bombay Parsi Punchayet Trusteeship Elections
Parsi Punchayet Trusteeship Elections Bombay
Trusteeship Elections Bombay Parsi Punchayet
Elections Bo
nchayet Tru
ions Bomba
steeship Parsi
Bombay Parsi Punchayet Trusteeship Elections

Parsiā

October 1985 Price Rs 6

mbay Parsi P
steeship Elec
Punchayet Tr
Elections Bom



ERUCH DESAI V/SHECTOR MEHTA V/SERUCH DESAI V/SHECTOR

Bombay Parsi Punchayet Trusteeship Elections
Punchayet Trusteeship Elections Bombay Parsi
Elections Bombay Parsi Punchayet Trusteeship
Trusteeship Elections Bombay Parsi Punchayet
Punchayet Trusteeship Elections



The Siddharth People
SO FRIENDLY !



SIDDHARTH GROUP OF HOTELS

Hotel Siddharth Continental, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. Ph. 678800 Telex: 031-5533 SICO IN Hotel Siddharth, Rajendra Place, New Delhi. Ph. 5712501 Telex: 031-5031 SIDH IN



KLM Golden Tulip World Wide Hotels b.v.

Add something special
to an ordinary day!



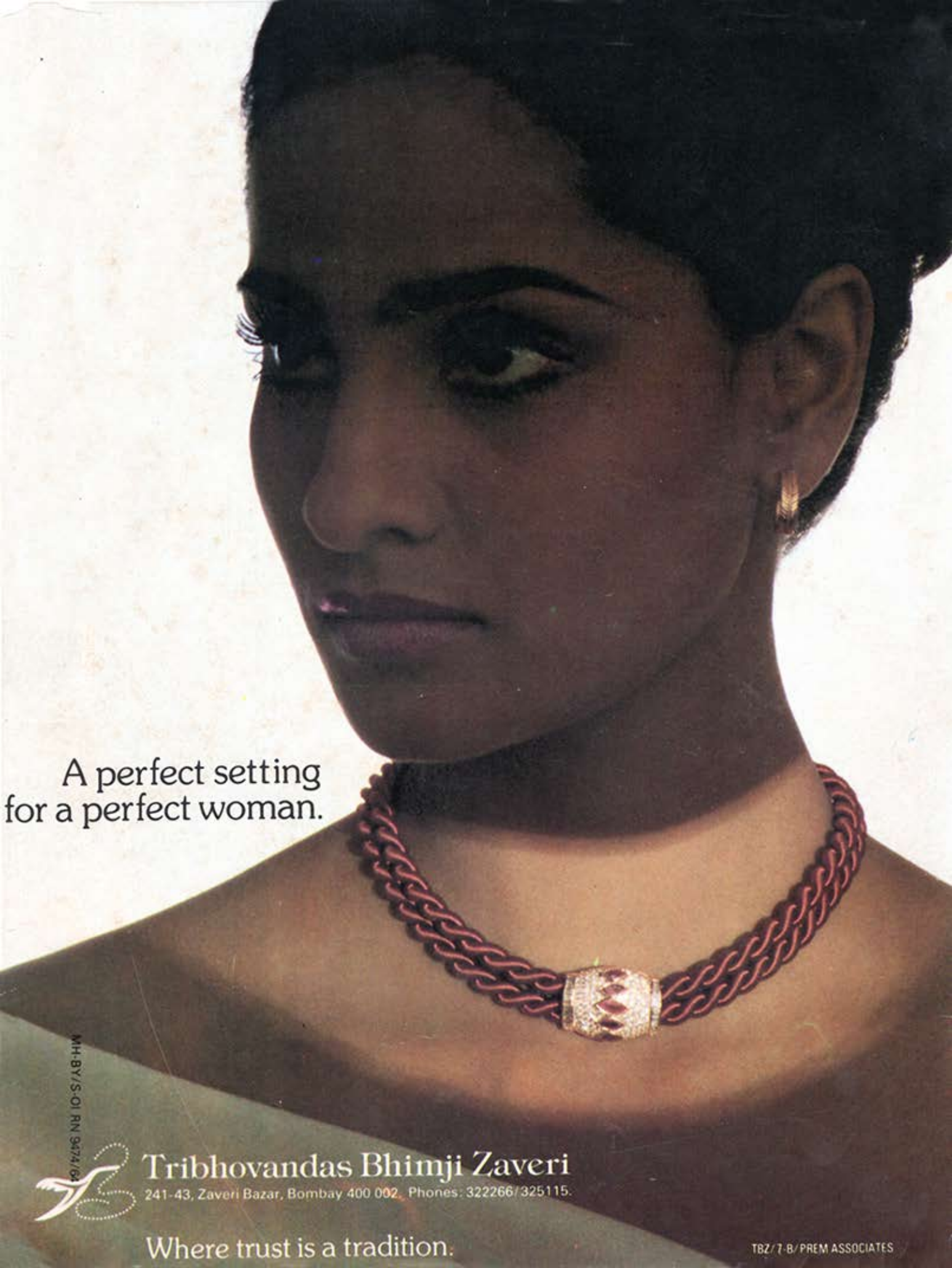
Tango

Making the most
of an orange



Naturally flavoured. Contains fruit-juice.

A **Duke's** product



A perfect setting
for a perfect woman.



Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri

241-43, Zaveri Bazar, Bombay 400 002. Phones: 322266/325115.

Where trust is a tradition.

TBZ/7-B/PREM ASSOCIATES

Parsiana

October 1985
Volume 8 Number 4

EDITOR Jehangir Patel
MANAGING EDITOR Arnavaz Mama
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Parinaz Toddywalla
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Niloofer Madon
DESIGN CONSULTANT Mini Boatwala
DESIGN ASSISTANTS Kranti Shilatri,
Varghese Fernandez
MARKETING DIRECTOR Veera Patel
ADVERTISING MANAGER Zarin Billimoria
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE
Cheryl D'Penha,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE Rustom Thanavala
FINANCE B.L. Arora
CIRCULATION Behram Umrigar
MANAGEMENT Mino Patel,
Jasmine Driver, Khurshid Daruwalla
DATA PROCESSING Rohinton Mistry
OFFICE Rajendra Nayak,
Madhuri Dabral

3 Readers' Forum

10 Events and Personalities

18 BPP elections by Arnavaz S. Mama

20 Learning to coexist by Porus Cooper

27 Mistree: grave imbalance

29 Dalal's duty

32 A gift turns platinum by Parinaz Toddywalla

38 Star reporting by Parinaz Toddywalla

Cover: Transparencies of Mehta and Desai by Homiyar Mistry

Parsiana is published by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications at C/o H.L. Rochat, Navsari Chambers, ground floor, 39 A.K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Bombay 400 001, and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind, 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400 001 and phototypeset at TRIACE, Bombay 400 005. All rights reserved. Address all editorial and business correspondence to Parsiana, GPO Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Phone: 2048730.

Annual inland subscription: Rs 40 for one year (12 issues); Rs 75 for two years (24 issues). Foreign subscription rates: Seamail Rs 80 for one year, Rs 150 for two years; Airmail Rs 160 for one year, Rs 290 for two years. For U.S. cheques add \$4 to cover bank charges.

For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 3 for bank charges. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favour of Parsiana and posted to GPO Box 892, Bombay 400 001 or C/o H.L. Rochat, Navsari Chambers, ground floor, 39 A.K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Bombay 400 001



In Memoriam

Mr. Fali Meherji Variava,

Director

BLAZE ADVERTISING PVT. LTD.
AND ASSOCIATE COMPANIES.



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.

"A link in the chain"

In the course of his interview (*Parsiana*, September 1985), Hector Mehta, one of the candidates for trusteeship at the election to be held on November 23, 1985, has categorically stated that "the F (donors) register must be frozen six months before the trusteeship election." However, when the CER moved an application before the Bombay High Court on October 1, 1985 (less than two months before the next election) to freeze the F register against further packing, Mehta, through his advocate D.H. Nanavati, intervened in court to oppose such a freezing of the F register.

Mehta had intervened and opposed the freezing of the F register even last year when the F register was being heavily packed.

In the same interview Mehta states

that the 'E' and 'F' registers (that is the registers of the elected members and donor members respectively), should be equal in number. It is pertinent to point out that whilst the number of elected members of the Anjuman Committee has remained static at 303 from 1981 to date, the number of the F register donor members swelled from 303 in 1981 to 619 during Homi Ranina's election in June 1984 and is at the incredible figure of 758 members today and yet Mehta opposes the move to freeze the F register.

It may be stated that while the trustees of the BPP have not on their own frozen the F register, at least they have not opposed such an application in court and have decided to abide by the decision of the court.

MINOO M. ANTIA

Hector Mehta replies:

I stand committed to my statement that the 'E' and 'F' registers, that is, the elected members and the donors should be equal in number. I repeat that the 'F' register should be frozen six months before each trusteeship election. To bring the scheme in tune with present values, I feel that the quantum of donation qualifying for 'F' register membership should be raised to about Rs 15,000 to 20,000.

I did not intervene in court on October 1, 1985 to oppose the freezing of the 'F' register. D.H. Nanavati, a counsel in the above case, was not representing me as has been wrongly printed in some of our daily papers.

Neither had I opposed the freezing of the 'F' register last year. In August 1984 when Ms Mani Dalal filed a petition against the chairman and trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet regarding amendments to the scheme for election of trustees, I had intervened on behalf of the 'F' register voters as the proposed amendment intended to do away with and/or alter the existing rights of the 'F' register voters.

I do not believe in taking away the existing rights of any class of voters, with retrospective effect.

...In human terms?

You have referred to the efforts made by the community to deal with the drug

problem (*Parsiana*, August 1985, page 20d). In particular you mentioned Prof Rooshikumar Pandya who had submitted a report that involved an "overly large sum of money." Reading this, I happened to meet Prof Pandya a few days later and mentioned this to him. He was amazed, saying that he had not even heard from the Punchayet after submitting the report.

Considering the problem, I wonder what an "overly large sum of money" means, in human terms?

V.M. CRISHNA

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet states they are considering the proposal and will reply later.

—Editor

Strife at Sodawaterwalla

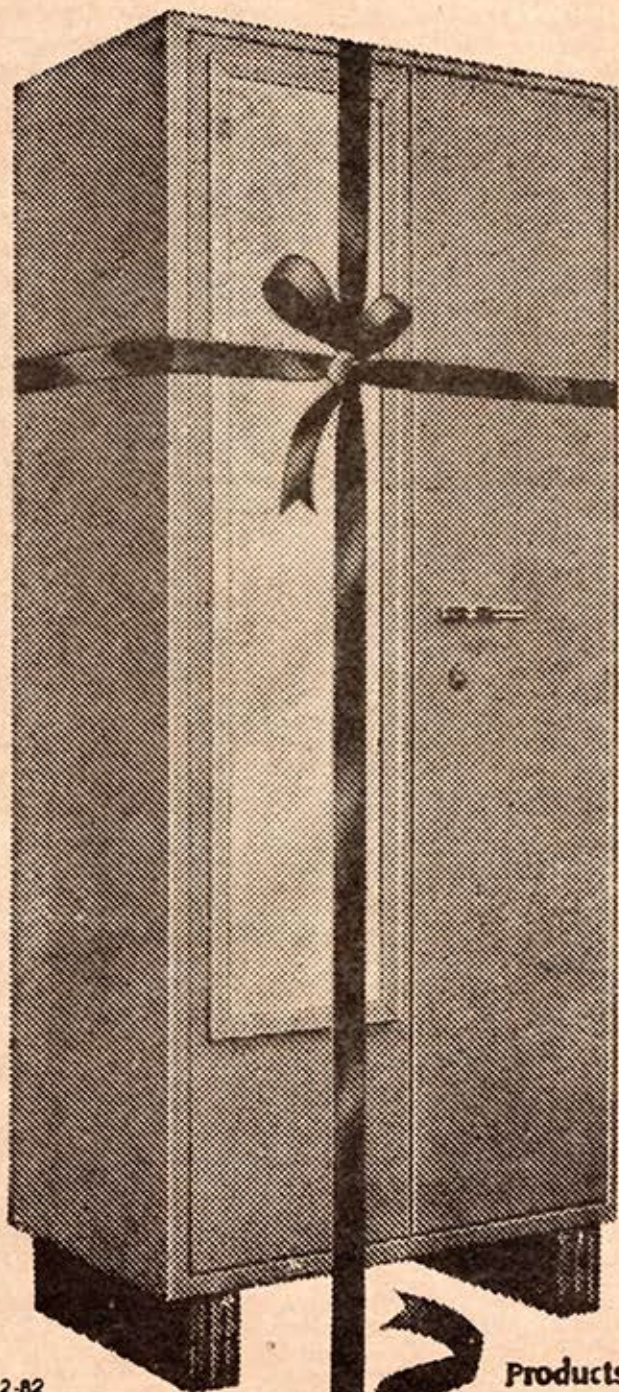
Apropos Arnavaz Mama's article "Strife at the Sodawaterwalla Agiary" (*Parsiana*, July '85) I would like to add:

I had accompanied Ervad Farokh Mobedji and my father Peshotan Peer to the first meeting with Kapadia at the Parsi Punchayet regarding Mobedji's appointment as panthaky of the Sodawaterwalla Agiary. Being associated with the chain of events since then, I am in a position to say how much harm is caused to a trust and its property, and harassment to innocent persons due to lethargy and unscrupulousness of some of the persons in charge of such trusts.

My main objective to pen these few lines is to highlight one of the important factors which has led to the downfall of the priestly class in our community. It assumes significance, more so, as the welfare of the priestly class is so vigorously discussed by the community at present. It is the constant harassment to mobeds working in the fire-temples, by persons in charge who totally exploit and degrade them without any compunction, which in turn shakes the confidence of the mobeds to the root.

A spate of public notices in the newspapers, false complaints to the police, sending police vans to the agiary, and threatening calls and letters are things which could easily lead to a nervous breakdown of any person. Will any

Godrej Storwel – the gift of a lifetime



The Godrej Storwel is the ideal gift for any occasion. A gift that will be appreciated for a lifetime. The most functional yet elegant steel cupboard, it offers distinct benefits like greater durability and more security as compared to conventional cupboards, steel or wood. And to add to its elegance it has a superior scratch resistant finish obtained by a painting process exclusive to Godrej.

Besides a full length 137 cm mirror of imported plate glass it has unpickable locks, coricealed hinges, a 3-way interlocking bolting device, and adjustable shelves. All this makes the Godrej Storwel a memorable and lasting gift.

Godrej®



Sodawaterwalla Agiary, Bombay.

one then argue why young mobeds do not take up this profession? Farokh Mobedji is a young person, fully proficient and qualified in the mobedi learnings, having received his training in the M.F. Cama Athornan Madressa at Andheri, and has performed nirangdin ceremonies also. We were both together at the madressa, and we intended to take up full-time mobedi which we put into practice; but for what? Instead of having any incentive or encouragement, do we have to face this type of treatment? Besides, as far as we have information, many of the panthaks in the recent past have been howled out and harassed beyond limit. Indeed, some year ago, one old and aged panthak of this agiary was dragged to court, and he subsequently died of shock. For this very reason, therefore, we have decided to fight for the cause of the mobeds even at our own cost and prestige, and therefore are desperately hanging on despite all odds, and with our back to the wall.

Ironically enough, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet who is a party to this episode, and who had literally thrust on the panthak in its time of despair, in spite of Mobedji's reluctance, has now shirked from its responsibility by not finding any way to get Mobedji paid for his outstanding dues since February '84. It is very strange that all the cheque books were handed over to Marfatia in spite of his antecedents being known. It is our fervent desire, therefore, that the well-meaning persons of the community would see through these events, and would prevail over the persons concerned to break this stranglehold which will have far-reaching consequences on the community in future, and the mobeds in particular.

ROOYINTAN P. PEER

Karanj fire extinguished

There has appeared a correspondence

from J.F. Pavri (*Parsiana*, July 1985) regarding the Goti Adarian fire reinstallation and the Karanj Agiary. I may make it clear that both these holy institutions are not managed by the Surat Parsi Punchayet, though it's a fact that several souls closely connected with the Surat Punchayet took a prominent part in the fire re-installation function. To make it clear, Surat Parsi Punchayet does not manage any atash bahram, agiary or dar-e-meher.

MANECK J.R. GHEYARA
Surat

Housing project

A committee called the Rayomand Committee was constituted in the year 1978 under the chairmanship of Ms Goolestan Billimoria, to voluntarily assist the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet raise funds for providing housing for the community.

The Committee consists of a group of 28 dedicated ladies, which has from its very inception striven hard to raise funds for housing the needy middle class of the community.

We have succeeded so far in collecting Rs 18 lakhs approximately, out of which a twin-building called Rayomand and Khoremand has come up at the Pirojsha Godrej Baug at Nepean Sea Road. The 20 flats in the twin-building, each having two rooms and a kitchen have been allotted to Parsis.

Land has been offered to us again at the Godrej Baug by the BPP trustees but we need your support to raise Rs 34 lakhs which is the estimated cost of construction on a no-profit, no-loss

basis for the next proposed building of 20 flats.

Efforts are being made to raise funds from within the community at the grass root levels mostly, since the flow of large donations from sethias has almost dried up due to economic reasons and other factors of complicated taxation, etc.

This appeal is directed to all Parsis of India, and especially of Bombay and its suburbs. As the Parsis residing in baus and colonies take advantage of economical rents — thereby making good savings and maintaining a standard of life — the appeal to them is to share and help others get a roof over their heads.

Our only request to all earning members of the Parsi community is to regularly contribute for 5 years a monthly sum of at least Rs 10. There are approximately 70,000 Parsis in the city of Bombay of which about 30,000 are earning members. Therefore, if each earning member contributes a minimum of Rs 10 per month, the total collection every month would be Rs 3 lakhs and in 5 years the amount would soar to one crore and 80 lakh rupees. We would appreciate if Parsi professionals comprising doctors, lawyers, accountants, consultants and architects support our cause.

We appeal to the trustees of various Zoroastrian trusts to support this effort of the Rayomand Committee by sending us the unused income from their corpus. We request our wealthy senior citizens to please include the Rayomand Committee in their will.

Godrej Baug with Rayomand-Khoremand building.



We also appeal to our Zoroastrian brothers and sisters settled abroad to donate generously every month. So far our Parsi friends from Hongkong, Canada and U.K., and Ahmedabad have helped us generously and have assured us of their continued support.

Contributions may be in cash or by cross and order, account payee cheques made out in favour of "Rayomand Committee" and sent to the undersigned at the following address: No 4 School Building, Cusrow Baug, Bombay 400 039.

PERIN TENGRA

Jt. Honorary Secretary The Rayomand Committee

Lucknow anjuman appeal

Lucknow metropolitan city has a total population of 89 Zoroastrians. The Lucknow Parsi Anjuman promotes the welfare and common interest of the 48 Parsi Zoroastrian families and safeguards their rights and common interests when it is warranted. The anjuman maintains the services of a mobed saheb so that Zoroastrians residing in the Lucknow metropolitan area may avail of the benefits of the mobed's services. Our anjuman also places his services at the disposal of other Parsi anjumans situated in Uttar Pradesh

(U.P.), and other fellow Zoroastrians residing in U.P., where anjumans do not exist.

We have for our congregation a prayer hall known as the Mazda Prayer Hall, which was constructed out of a donation given by 'A grateful Zarthosti' who once resided in Lucknow and who had desired that his munificent charity should ever remain in anonymity. The Mazda Prayer Hall was declared open by the late Sir H.P. Mody, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, in January 1950.

In Lucknow, thanks to the philanthropy of the Nawroji family, a dharamshala and an aramgah were being run, some decades ago, before the anjuman was formed. After our anjuman came into being, the responsibility of running the dharamshala was taken over by the anjuman. The dharamshala has four self-contained rooms with attached bath and toilet facilities. All Parsi Zoroastrians coming to Lucknow are most welcome to stay in our dharamshala where boarding arrangements exist and food is supplied by our mobed on payment of moderate charges.

We provide and maintain a club for enlightenment, recreation and enter-

tainment while religious talks and lectures are held in the prayer hall. A small library includes books on the Zoroastrian religion. Besides, the games and sports secretaries organize indoor and outdoor games. Weekly club days and a monthly social gathering are organized and community festivals are celebrated wherein all the members of the anjuman participate.

Our anjuman is a registered body under the Societies Registration Act. The president of the anjuman and its executive committee are elected by the general body every two years; and five members constituting an Estate Trust Committee are elected by the general body to hold office for an aggregate period of five years.

The Lucknow Parsi Anjuman is perhaps one of the few Parsi Zoroastrian anjumans in India which is providing and maintaining residential flats for Zoroastrian Parsis at reasonable rent. These flats have been fully occupied by permanent residents of Lucknow who are in need of residential accommodation. Further, these flats are also allotted to Zoroastrians who wish to settle down in Lucknow, and also to those who are posted at Lucknow. It is noteworthy that out of a total of 48 families

MATCH YOUR AMBITION TO A CAREER

To do so we offer you

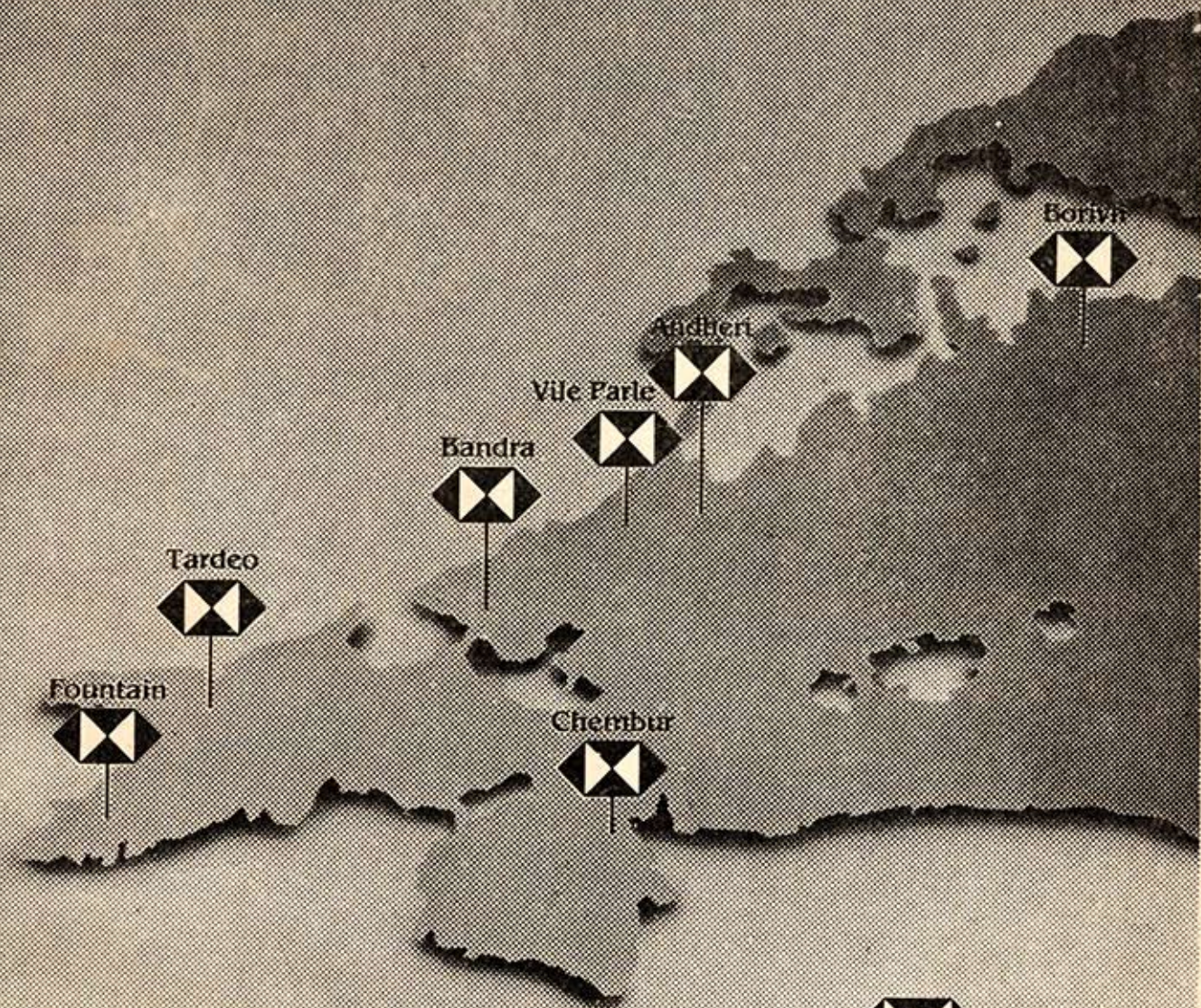
- ★ **Diploma Course in Business Management (Oral/Postal) IMC**
- ★ **Banking: C.A.I.I.B. Course (Postal)**
- ★ **Executive Secretarial Course ★ Private Secretarial Course**
- ★ **Steno Secretarial Course ★ Telephone Operating**
- ★ **Personal Assistants' Programme (working stenographers)**
- ★ **Telephone Operating-Cum-Receptionist Techniques**
- ★ **Shorthand & Typewriting ★ Punch Operating ★ Telex Operating**
- ★ **E.D.P. Concepts & Cobol Programming**
- ★ **Computer Exposure & Basic Programming**

Enquire at



Sir J. J. College of Commerce
14, Nanabhoy Lane, Hutatma Chowk
Bombay 400 001. Tel: 251185

Seven places where your money gets the respect it deserves.



At HongkongBank's seven branches spread across the city and suburbs, you can experience the pleasure of dealing with a bank that knows how to treat a customer. With a little respect. A little courtesy. And a little warmth. Drop in at your nearest branch and experience the pleasure of banking with us.



HongkongBank

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation

Bombay Calcutta New Delhi
Madras Visakhapatnam
Merchant Banking Division Bombay
The British Bank of the Middle East Bombay

**We deliver
the tallest
orders
coolly...
calmly...
efficiently!**

- International Cargo Booking
- Import Clearance
- Domestic Cargo Booking
- Break-Bulk Cell
- Cargo Handling
- Consolidation
- Consignee Sales Division
- Courier Services Division
(in association with DHL International).

AIRFREIGHT

**You can depend on us
to deliver the goods.**

Airfreight Private Limited

Bombay • Ahmedabad • Bangalore • Bhadohi • Calcutta • Chandigarh • Cochin • Coimbatore
• Delhi • Hyderabad • Kanpur • Madras • Pune • Srinagar • Trivandrum



residing at Lucknow, 16 families have been provided residential flats in the compound of Parakh Bagh, 6, R.F. Bahadurji Marg, Lucknow. A two storied building known as K.H. Katrak Block was completed in the year 1980, which has altogether six flats with one living room and two bedroom accommodation in each flat. The remaining 10 flats were built way back i.e. 1948 to 1960. The dharamshala was also built in the year 1950. All these premises having been built long ago, are in need of heavy and major repairs from time to time.

The boundary walls both at Parakh Bagh where residential flats, dharamshala and prayer hall are located as also the aramgah, which is known as Hormazd Bagh, have to be maintained properly in order to prevent encroachment.

The anjuman's moveable assets, have become old and decrepit and replacements thereof are very much overdue.

On account of paucity of funds, the anjuman has not been in a position to allocate sufficient funds for the proper upkeep and maintenance of the aramgah. The aramgah is more than 100 years old and has a green cover of fruit bearing trees and flower plants. On account of acute shortage of water, it has become difficult to maintain the orchards and flower plants, which have been a regular source of income for the anjuman. The proposal to augment water supply by re-boring the existing well cannot be implemented due to shortage of funds. The main building which also comprises the *bungli* of the aramgah needs major repairs.

Giving due respect to the institution of athornans and mobeds, the anjuman has substantially raised the emoluments and perquisites of our mobed, so that he gets adequate monthly income considering the very high cost of living these days. The anjuman has also taken steps to establish the Mobed's Benevolent Fund to make provision for his retirement benefits.

In our own humble manner, the Lucknow Parsi Anjuman is making every effort to mobilize maximum internal resources, including obtaining of donations from the local Zoroastrian Parsi philanthropists of Lucknow.

The Lucknow Parsi Anjuman therefore fervently appeals to all benevolent Parsi Zoroastrian trusts and philanthropic Parsis to come forward and

help our small anjuman by donating for these good causes.

The cheques/bank drafts may be drawn in favour of "Lucknow Parsi Anjuman" and may be forwarded to the president at the following address:

Freny Manor, 1st Floor, 6, Park Road Lucknow-226 001.

B.J. KHODAIJI

President Lucknow Parsi Anjuman

"After the death..."

Having read "After the death..." by Kristine Kumana (*Parsiana*, July 1985) allow me to say that when a person dies only his soul moves out of its physical self and the person is supposed to be lifeless i.e. soulless. The soul is the life spark in our bodies, the living element. On completion of its given life span, the soul, for its further progress and development towards perfection is given a new abode in the womb of its new mother according to its *karni*. There is rebirth of the soul again and again in this world until perfection is reached. The soul is thus said to be immortal.

According to true Zoroastrianism, heaven or hell is what a man makes of his life here and now — *vahista ahu*, *achista ahu*. Heaven and hell are not separate geographical locations. There are no souls in limbo. The Lord may be trusted to provide the soul with another body to live in while He takes it out of its former physical self.

Seance in Europe was a curse on the gullibles until the police put several pretenders and fakes behind bars under the Prevention of Witchcraft Act, and curbed the activities.

ROSHNI B. SETHNA

Surat dharamshala

I had the opportunity to visit Surat in recent months and I stayed at the Tamnani Parsi Dharamshala at Nanpura. Due to some internal politics and usual conflicts, the magnificent building of the dharamshala was very badly kept, the water tanks were leaking and the old pipes were choked. The main hall and the surrounding *otlas* were unkempt.

It is my earnest appeal to the honorable trustees to engage a needy Parsi gentleman to look after the maintenance of the dharamshala so that the premises could be used during get-togethers and other auspicious functions.

DR C. ANKLESARIA
Rawat Bhata

With Compliments of

JEENA & COMPANY

IATA Approved
Air Cargo,
Clearing, Forwarding
& Warehousing Agents

10, Veer Nariman Road,
Fort, Bombay 400 023.

Cable: "JUSTITIA"

Telex: 2313

Phone: 312032

BRANCHES:

E. Merc House,

19/B, Shakespeare Sarani,

Calcutta 700 071.

Phone: 444711

"Jeena House",

50, Hanuman Road,

Connaught Circus,

New Delhi 110 001.

Phone: 310821

Devtha Plaza,

C. 14, Residency Road,

Bangalore 560 025.

Phone: 26215

No. 26, 26, 24, 2nd floor,

Harbour Approach Road,

Vishakapatnam 530 001.

Phone: 65942

205, Gera Chambers,

Off Boat Club Road,

Pune 411 001.

Phone: 65942

No. 6, Jaffar Syrang Street,

Madras 600 001.

Phone: 26215

Events and Personalities

Mixing and matching

"The Two of Clubs...the lady with the Two of Clubs," vainly called Zenobia Bhesania, the evening's compere. In an effort to mix and match the boys and girls attending the BPP's matrimonial meet at the Framji Cawasji Hall on September 28, 1985, the boys had been distributed playing cards from the red suits and were expected to seek out girls with the corresponding black cards.

The lady with the Two of Clubs, however, sat primly next to her father, the playing card half-concealed on her lap, unmindful of Bhesania's calls. She had told *Parsiana* earlier that she found the boys "disappointing" and now it was obvious, she would not cooperate.

Ms Two of Clubs excepted, the girls who attended the inaugural meet seemed perfectly content with the evening's circumstances — boys outnumbering girls three to one! — as Bhesania urged them again and again to return to the floor with fresh partners. As one of them, a master of science in organic chemistry noted candidly, "I've thoroughly enjoyed it...come to know people in a better way."

The BPP's debut as an organizer of socials and dances is the result of fears generated by increasing outmarriages and growing numbers of single people — two tangible contributors to the community's declining birth rate.

Troubled by nightmares of the community expiring under its nose and falling prey to the usual alibi of *saujja chhokra/chhokri multa nuthi* (where are the eligible boys/girls), the BPP trustees decided in 1983 to set up the matrimonial bureau and have been maintaining files on the 349 people who have registered with them. The results hitherto, of 12 successful couplings, was modest even by the BPP's standards. So when playwright-editor Adi Marzban suggested the Punchayet create frequent and regular social occasions where the community's youth can

intermingle, the Punchayet warily decided to try out the idea on a restricted trial basis for the people registered on the matrimonial bureau.

Thus cast in the unlikely role of cupid were the Punchayet's chief executive Russi Anklesaria, joint secretary Gool Tata and assistant secretary Sheeroo Master, aided and goaded on by a committee consisting of social workers Homai Mody and Daisy Mehta, and Adi Marzban. Although the venue reflected the Punchayet's concern for scarce resources (apart from the air-conditioning which functioned well, the Framji Cawasji Hall is too austere a setting for the purpose), the evening had been planned with civil service precision (Both Mody and Tata are organizational stalwarts who were largely responsible for the functioning of the

World Zoroastrian Congress earlier in the year): the invitations had to be exchanged for passes, the passes for paper plates brimming with refreshments, the empty plates for a bottle of soft drink and two sheets of cyclostyled paper — an invitation to the next get-together and a suggestions slip. The music was peppy and Bhesania brightly urged the participants to put their best foot forward.

Mody, with her usual grace and flair, was in the hub of activity, straining to break the ice as quickly as possible. Initially she seemed to be fighting a losing battle. The number of girls present was woefully small and natural inhibition was strongly reinforced by the gallery of 34 chaperones — parents and relatives of the participants who attended as guests — who lent the occasion an overdose of propriety.

The refreshments break however produced a magical thaw and by the time the evening officially ended at 9 pm, 31 participants (of the 71 who attended) had replied to the invitation to the next get-together — 28 of them affirming — and 64 suggestions slips were duly filled and returned.

Breaking in on a few participants between their swinging and snacking, *Parsiana* discovered one bachelor of commerce, a master in organic chemis-



Compere Bhesania. Left above: Anklesaria, Marzban and Mody distributing prizes. Left: participants putting their best foot forward.

try, a clerk with an inter commerce background, a mechanical engineer who had returned after a few years in New York, a tailoring entrepreneur. As against one girl who found the function disappointing and said she would not like to come again, another "thoroughly enjoyed the evening;" while one boy found it slow moving, another had already made a couple of tentative selections and was looking forward to the next round! The biggest grouse was "too few girls!"

In the following week Tata and Master briskly sorted out the 64 suggestions slips in order of preference to reveal that 20 respondents had opted for a picnic, 11 for a pound party and games, 10 for a film show, seven each for housey and visits to interesting institutions and three each for whist drive and quiz. Disco and bhel / sail found only one and two votaries respectively.

The next function, scheduled for November 2, 1985 will feature another batch of invitees from among those registered with the bureau, together with those of the first batch who care to join.

Blackout at Sodawaterwalla

The only source of light now at the Sodawaterwalla Agiary, Bombay is the atash padshah. After several reminders and eight months of unpaid bills, the BEST cut off electric supply on September 25, 1985, notes the harassed panthaky, Farokh Mobedji.

"The next day I informed the trustees — Hormusji Kapadia, Nariman Vatcha, Hormuzdiar Choksey — and even the BPP Chairman Dr Aspi Gollwalla," notes Mobedji, the stock response being an impotent "Aapre soo karye (What can we do?)"

The rift on the board of trustees of the agiary with Kapadia, Vatcha and Choksey ranged on one side and Aloo and Jal Mody of the founder's family on the other, has led to the neglect of the agiary. All documents, cheque books etc are reportedly in Mody's custody.

The amount of the bill is over Rs 5,600 says Mobedji, whose own salary as panthaky has not been paid since February 1984. Even the kathi is not provided by the trustees but by Khodadad Irani of Sasani Restaurant, says Mobedji. Mobedji alleges that the trustees are waiting for some generous beh-

din to similarly take on the onus of paying the agiary's electricity bills.

Mobedji further says the bills are addressed to Mody at his residence at Chaman Chambers but someone throws them in at the agiary. Mobedji says he then again sends them to Chaman Chambers.

Life for the two Mobedji families who live in the quarters behind the agiary is understandably tough. The panthaky says he has had to invest in tubs to store water, hurricane lamps and candles.

Two votaries of the agiary, Eruchshah Ghevala who owns Alice Radio, a shop near the agiary and Dara N Shroff have signed a letter to the *Jam-e-Jamshed* in Gujarati, protesting the turn of events. Mobedji says he has now resigned himself to whatever the Almighty has in store.

Mazda's maiden dividend

Mazda Leasing, one of the few Parsi launched public companies in recent times, plans to set up a high technology manufacturing unit in Talasari, about two kilometers from Sanjan railway station.

Announcing the news at a press conference at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay on August 12, 1985 Mazda chairman (and Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee) Homi Ranina noted the project was in conjunction with a West German company, Deuspa Unternehmensberatungs-GmbH. The new concern would manufacture products such as fluid power systems, and equipment and components with analogue and digital controls which had "a wide range of applications in the engineering industry," said Ranina. Talasari being classified as a backward area in the state of Maharashtra, "a lot of money will come from government... Our capital investment is insignificant... most of our funds will be ploughed back into leasing."

The chairman also announced that Mazda Leasing, at the completion of its first full year of operations, was declaring an 18 percent dividend to shareholders. In order to raise further capital, the company will issue more share and secured redeemable convertible debentures to existing shareholders and the public.

Noting that Mazda was launched at a time when people felt there were too many leasing companies in the market

and doubted whether the company would succeed, Ranina stated, "we are pleased that we have" succeeded. On a gross income of Rs 73.29 lakhs, the net profit was Rs 46.71 lakhs. The average price of a 10-rupee share is around Rs 75.

The secret to success in leasing was to select the lessees well and avoid items where chances of default or obsolescence were high, said the chairman.

While the company did Rs 4.22 crores of leasing from July 1984 to June 1985, in the current financial year, the turnover was already Rs 3.37 crores with contracts worth around six crores under negotiation, said Ranina.

Ranina introduced to the Press, Hector Mehta, who recently joined the company's board of directors. (Mehta a well-to-do Bombay businessman is incidentally also a candidate for the BPP trusteeship elections in November).

The other directors of the company are: Burjor H. Antia, Dara K. Deboo, Yezdi J. Master, Kersi J. Limathwalla, Homi D. Mehta, Balkrishan M. Shukla and Sharu S. Ragnekar.

Zoroastrian Bank at Tardeo

The Zoroastrian Co-operative Credit Bank Ltd. has acquired premises at Tardeo "and arrangements are being made to open the branch as soon as possible," states the Bank's 58th annual report for 1984-85. The branch has been opened in view of the fact that the Reserve Bank of India has granted a licence for a new branch in February this year, stated the Bank's president Rustam A. Gagrati.

The bank also instituted safe deposit vault facilities for its members and customers, and lockers have been made available on hire since March 1985, notes Gagrati.

Registered in June 1927, the bank now has 3993 shareholders, an increase of 90 over the previous year; and a total share capital of Rs 7,63,000, registering an increase of Rs 40,825. Deposits of the bank have also registered a growth of Rs 22,37,000, notes the write-up.

All in all, "the bank continued to maintain steady progress during the year under review," said the president.

The Bank's managing committee comprises Rustam A. Gagrati, Noshir S. Pochkhanawala, Nanabhoy B. Jeebhoy, Cawasjee N. Dinshaw, Jehan-



The Old & the new

Many old landmarks in India draw appreciative remarks from visitors. Like the gracious Bombay Central Station; the Nasik Security Press; the stately old Reserve Bank building and many more – all built by Shapoorji Pallonji & Co. Pvt. Ltd., over the last 120 years.

Today, keeping pace with the times, Shapoorji Pallonji have changed the face of the sky-line with sky-scrapers like the new Taj Intercontinental and Cbaroi Towers Hotels; the new Reserve Bank Building, Malafal Centre; the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research; the Homi Bhabha Auditorium and the massive Telco Complex at Pimpri, Pune.

"Over 120 years of Experience
in Civil Projects & Construction."



SHAPOORJI PALLONJI & CO. (PVT.) LTD.

Engineers & Construction Contractors

New India Centre, 17 Cooperage Road, Bombay-400 039 India.

Telex: 011-2124; Tel.: 2026614, 2020228, 2020762

Two Cassettes Of Parsi Avasta Prayers

With

1. Translated Songs In English & Gujarati

2. Translated Songs In English Only.

Available At:

Gathani Music Centre, Opp.Vora Bros.

Purshotam Bldg, Opera House, Bombay. Phone: 362562

For V.P.P.Orders, Write To:

Vistasp Balsara,

16, Akrur Dutt Lane, Calcutta 700 012 Phone: 277010

**Price For VPP- Rs. 30/- For One & Rs. 50/- For Two Cassettes
Including Packing, Postage Etc. Anywhere In India.**



gir F. Shroff, Jehanbux J. Gandevia, Homa D. Petit, Mr Tehmtan R. Andhyarujina, Homi P. Ranina, Bomi S. Bulsara, and Soli F. Engineer. The secretary and chief executive is L.C. Mistry.

Merit for Soonawalla

The results of the last examination declared by the Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Pune, in June 1985, included Zahir Fardoon Soonawalla in the merit list, securing the twenty-first rank with an overall total of 91 percent marks, notes a press release. Soonawalla's academic excellence during his school life at Cathedral School and two years of junior college at Jai Hind College was recognized when his name was nominated from India for inclusion in *International Youth in Achievement*, "which is a biographical reference work publicizing the academic and professional successes of young people under 30 years of age from all over the world," published by the International Biographical Centre of Cambridge, England, notes the write-up.

Soonawalla was awarded the National Council of Educational Research Training (NCERT) scholarship of the Government of India for his performance at the Std XI, All-India National Search Examination of 1984. At the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education school leaving examination in 1983, Soonawalla stood first in his school and scored the highest marks among all the Zoroastrians who appeared at the examination, states the release.

He has represented his school at inter-school matches in swimming, badminton and cricket; and his college in inter-collegiate swimming, badminton, athletics and hockey.

With a familial background of doctors, Soonawalla intends to pursue a

medical career. Yet he also appeared for the Indian Institute of Technology examination of 1985 when he secured a 121 all-India rank.

Award for Engineer

In recognition of continued industrial progress, Jal Sorabjee Engineer, chairman of Universal Luggage Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of Aristocrat, Oscar and Champion luggage, was awarded the Udyog Vibhushan by the Vice-President of India, R. Venkataraman, at the eighth Economic Conference of the Institute of Trade and Industrial Development held at New Delhi, notes a press release.

Universal Luggage which was established in Bombay in 1975, has within a decade increased its sales turnover from Rs 50 lakhs to Rs 34 crores, and employs over 2,500 personnel, adds the release.

"What is needed, is the development of technological competence for innovation, not imitation," believes Engineer, who has three units in industrially backward areas of Maharashtra (Satara, Paithan and Waluj) which offer employment and training to the local unskilled farmers, notes the release.

Amongst the first seven self-made industrialists to receive this award which was instituted in 1985, Engineer had earlier been awarded the Udyog Patra in 1976, and the Plex Council Award for exports of plastic moulded luggage in 1977-78 and 1978-79, the release adds.

Architecture convention

"Our runaway urbanism, perennial housing shortage, unabated pollution, deteriorating environment, are the prime concern of our profession," noted Rusi Khambatta, president of the Indian Institute of Architects and

From left: Khambatta, Engineer and Soonawalla.

vice-chairman (alternate), Commonwealth Association of Architects, in a write-up in *The Times of India* dated February 22, 1985.

The write-up deals with the ethos and aim of the convention of The Indian Institute of Architects, held in Bangalore on February 22 and 23, 1985, titled *Architecture 2000 A.D. — Indian Context*, wherein Khambatta adds, "The establishment of a strong rural base would be the most efficacious step in arresting the erosion of our urban areas, and result in a balanced national development."

Holding a diploma from the School of Planning and Regional Reconstruction in London, Khambatta is an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Town Planning Institute, and the Institute of Town Planners, India. He is also vice-chairman of the Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA) and technical advisor in India to United Towns Organisation, Paris, notes his bio-data.

A practising architect and town planner and partner in the firm Bhonsule Khambatta since 1984, Khambatta is also a member of various government committees and is a lecturer, paper setter and examiner in various schools and colleges of architecture, adds his bio-data.

PZA's golden

Six hundred Zoroastrians assembled at the Olpadvala Memorial Hall on May 5, 1985 to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association (PZA) of Calcutta, notes a write-up in the May issue of *Navroze*.

The function which began with a *khushalinu jashan*, was followed by a

Old Wrist Watches Wanted

Advertiser wishes to buy OLD wrist watches of Pre-1950 period of well known makes such as Rolex, Patek-Philippe, Cartier etc. Please send detailed list with expected prices to The Advertiser, (OLD)

C/o Parsiana,
H.L. Rochat & Co.,
Navsari Chambers,
39 A.K. Nayak Marg, Fort,
Bombay 400 001.

With the Best Compliments of

 INGERSOLL-RAND (INDIA) LIMITED

Manufacturers of

Air & Gas Compressors * Rock Drill Equipment
* Vacuum Pumps

SERSON

Electrolytic Capacitors
For
All Electronic Applications
From
12 VDC To 350 VDC

Manufacturers:

Serson Industries Pvt. Ltd.

Pimpri P.F.P.O., Poona-18.

Cable: Etchfoil Poona-18. Phone: 82379

humbandagi led by Ervad Bapuji Desai who has served the Parsis of Calcutta for over 50 years.

At the function chaired by PZA's vice-president Rusi B. Gimi, felicitations were offered to PZA's president Ervad Adi Rabadi, who was recently elected trustee of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community Religious and Charity Funds. Recalling the recent controversy over the building project, Gimi lauded Rabadi's efforts to convert the Olpadvala auditorium into an income-yielding multi-storeyed building, notes the *Navroze* report.

In his speech, Rabadi urged Calcutta's Zoroastrian community of 1,400 to boldly hold debates on problems which periodically arise, instead of shying away from them, states the report.

Ms Bapsy A. Rabadi then released the new directory of the Parsis of eastern India, a copy of which was gifted to every Parsi family of Calcutta.

Allahabad's new president

Homi Dandiwalwa was elected the new president-trustee of the Allahabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman (APZA) at its annual general meeting, notes a letter by Ratan H. Sagar, immediate past president of the Anjuman, whose tenure spanned a period of 16 years, from 1969 to 1985.

The soft-spoken Sagar represented Allahabad at the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India meetings throughout India and is one of its most regular members.

All future official correspondence should be addressed to: Homi Dandiwalwa, president-trustee, A.P.Z.A., Behind Palace Cinema, M.G. Marg, Allahabad, adds the letter.

Three golds for Sethna

Seventeen-year-old Zal Sethna "provided a rip-roaring finale to the glorious show by India" when he broke the standing Asian record in the 200 meters backstroke for boys under 18, at the recently concluded Second Asian age-group Aquatic Championships, held at the Tata Electric Swimming Pool from September 22 to September 26, 1985, notes the *Indian Ex-*

press (September 27).

In all Sethna won three gold medals for the 100 meters and the 200 meters backstroke and the 200 meters individual medley. Sethna, who is a science student at the St Xavier's College, Bombay, was captain of the boys team in the 85 strong Indian contingent, which won the overall championships with a medal tally of 22 gold, 45 silver, and 49 bronze, beating Japan which collected 21 gold, 11 silver and three bronze medals, note newspaper reports.

Irani at Wimbledon

Junior national tennis champion, Zubin Phiroze Irani, had "his first taste of Wimbledon grass" notes *The Times of India* of July 4, 1985. However after winning the first set he lost the next two, to Belgian Junior, Alan Meeus, in "a creditable performance," adds the report.

Seventeen-year-old Irani of Madras had been selected by the All-India Lawn Tennis Association to play both the Asian and the European Juniors Tennis Circuit Tournaments in February and in July respectively, notes his bio-data sent by Mani Clubwala of Madras.

Closer to home, the All-India number one, won the Karnataka State Championships and the All-India Hardcourt at Bangalore, both in the under 16 events, in November last year. He also won both the under 18 and the under 16 Maharashtra State Championships held at Nagpur in



December, 1984 as also the Rajasthan State under 18 championships at Kota. In the same month, Irani was the runner-up in the All-India National Junior Championships at Delhi, adds his bio-data.

Coached by Tom La Penna at the Village Glen Tennis and Fitness Club, Irani won the Junior Regional Tournament, New York state, soon after in July 1983, adds his bio-data.

Khurshid is junior champ

Winner of the junior girls singles title, Khurshid Vajifdar demonstrated speedy court coverage to beat Jyoti Sanghi, 8-11, 11-6, 12-9, at the Indian Gymkhana Open Badminton Tournament held on July 1, 1985, notes sports critic John Castro in a report featured in *The Evening News of India*, dated July 9, 1985. Castro attributes the win to a vacation spent training under coach Pramanik.

Notes Castro, "Khurshid's move-



Vajifdar (above): surprising speed. Irani (right): towards a Wimbledon win. Sethna (far right): glorious finale. (Photo courtesy Free Press Journal).



Forward march!

At Mazda Leasing there is no other way.

Mazda, an integrated finance company, is backed by a team of highly qualified professionals. Precise. Meticulous. Nothing is allowed to go out of step.

Mazda's multi-faceted financial activities include:
Lease Funding, Lease Management,
Accounting, Administration, Hire
Purchase, Venture Capital and
Vendor Plans. *The services extend to Equipment Selection, Counselling, Portfolio Investments, Operating Lease Plans and providing Investment Banking Services.*

With a full year of business operations under the belt, Mazda is now striding towards an exciting future. With the right foot forward.

So join the Mazda parade. There's a lot more to look forward to. Soon!



**MAZDA
LEASING LIMITED**

IN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION WITH
BRITISH EQUIPMENT (LEASING) LIMITED, (UK)

Registered Office: 317 Maker Chambers V,
221 Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021.
Tel: 243855
Telex: 011 6205 Grams: MAZDALEASE

ments at the Indian Gymkhana surprised all... she was all the time with a skipping rope — she does a thousand skips before taking the court. If she really becomes a fitness fad Khurshid can certainly beat our all-India women players because her wristy play makes her a distinctive stroke player...

"What Khurshid needs now is a lot of bending. She could do with better play at the net too" adds Castro in the write-up.

Vajifdar, who has participated at the district, zone and national levels, will now enter the senior ranks, this being her last year as a junior.

Two of a kind

A special prize was awarded to ten-year-old Tina Poonawalla, when she won the 50cc Ladies Moped Class race in the Racecrafters meet held in Poona, on June 9, 1985, "beating all the professional lady competitors," notes a press release.

Poonawalla, who was riding a "miniscale Honda QR50, which is a scaled-down replica of the very powerful Honda QR250 moto-cross machine," has been riding for the last two years, encouraged by her mother Thrity, notes the *Maharashtra Herald*, dated June 10, 1985.

Riding a similar machine, five-year-old Rustom Bharucha, "the youngest ever competitor in Indian motor cycle racing" took part in the dirt track race organized by the Racecrafters on June 9, 1985, adds the report.

Encouraged by his father, Darius, and taught by "the great Ashraf Shaikh," Bharucha "is shaping well for the rough and tumble of motor cycling," adds the write-up.

Gherda IIA director

Kersi M. Gherda, deputy managing director of Tata Electric Companies, Bombay, and president of the Bombay Management Association was elected to the board of directors of the Institute of Internal Auditors, at its forty-fourth international conference held in Sydney, notes a report in *The Daily* dated July 12, 1985.

The Association has 29,000 members and represents the international auditing profession in government, business, industry and education in more than 102 countries, adds the report.

Having joined the Institute's Bom-

RAKA:627:85

bay Chapter in the late 1960s, Gherda has already been chapter president and district director for India. He will now serve as regional director for India for a period of two years, notes the write-up.

1985 Tata scholars

Thirteen Parsi students were awarded the J.N. Tata scholarships for the year 1985, notes Dinshah K. Malegamvala, a director of the Trust.

The Tata scholars as listed in the Trust's press release include Ms Ismet Tehmasp Khambatta and Ms Jasmine Sorab Tata (architecture); Percy B. Chinoy and Jamshed N. Shroff (chemical engineering); Neville E. Nagarwalla (civil engineering); Nariman D. Batlivala (computer science); Dr Khushroo H. Suraliwalla (orthopaedic surgery); Cyrus D. Mehta (law); Ms Perveen K. Rustomfram (social work); and Ms Nina P. Bhote, Ms Jasmine P. Irani, Ms Farida J. Sohrabji and Ms Shiraz N. Piroshaw (psychology).

Residence for deaf-blind

The residential unit of The Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf and Deaf-Blind at Borivli was inaugurated by Ms Mitha Shroff in May 1985 to house the outstation children. "The security of this home will offer them a congenial domestic environment that complements the aims of the school and so accelerates the rehabilitation program. The children will be looked after by trained personnel who can communicate with them and try to fulfil their mental and emotional needs," notes a brochure issued by the Institute.

"This is a very new Institute as well as a pioneering one and so far the only one of its kind in our country which provides educational, health and medical facilities, and residential facilities to deaf-blind children in India," informs the principal Ms Beroz N. Vacha. They were the first in India to adopt the method of 'total communication' which calls for the teaching of language and speech through not only lip-reading but also speech and auditory training, gestures, sign language, fingerspelling, cued speech and miming.

When the Institute was initiated in 1977 under auspices of The Society for Special Education for the Deaf, there was one deaf child and two deaf-blind

children. In 1980 they shifted their premises to Byculia when the school was given its present name. Today they have 50 students on their roll.

There are two sections for the deaf and the deaf-blind. The students participate in extra curricular activities like art, craft, music, eurythmics, swimming, sports and yoga, in addition to their regular classroom curriculum. Their aim is to develop the deaf and deaf-blind children into self-sufficient human beings, and integrate them into society.

Bharuch anjuman definition

A difference of opinion in Bharuch over the accepted definition of "Bharuch Parsi Anjuman" has led certain Bharuch Parsis to seek a restraint order from the court against an ordinary meeting of the anjuman which was summoned by managing trustee Eruchsha Kapadia on February 24, 1985, states a public notice signed by the trustees of the Bharuch Anjuman, Noshir M. Anklesaria, Dinshaw J. Dastur and Jamshed M. Gandhi.

The arguments advanced by the signatories favor adhering to the definition adopted in the trust deed of 1982 wherein Bharuch Parsi Anjuman was interpreted as comprising Parsis staying in the Bharuch municipal area or within a radius of two miles beyond and includes those Parsis who have stayed in the above defined areas for a minimum continuous period of three years. According to the notice, on the basis of this definition, a voters list was published in 1982 and elections held on October 1, 1983 when the present trustees were declared elected.

At a subsequent meeting held on November 27, 1983, it was decided that the list of voters for 1982 be scrapped and the 1962 list be reinstated, which prompted the plaintiffs to move the court and seek a stay order against the resolution, the notice alleges. On February 22, 1985 a leaflet was published inviting registration to the voters' list which provoked the above trio to serve a notice to Kapadia asking him to withdraw his leaflet where the Bharuch Parsi Anjuman has been defined to include those who have stayed or are staying within the municipal limits of Bharuch or within a radius of two miles beyond.

The court has yet to give a final judgment in this case, states the notice.

BOYS' TOWN Public School Nasik 2

Recognised as a **Public School** by the Department of Education for Indian Merit Scholars. **Excellent Climate — All-round Education :**

All Academic Subjects—Technical Subjects: Workshop. Technology, Mechanical & Electrical Maintenance, Carpentry & Farming. Training in **Self-Government** through Elected Boys' Office bearers. **Games—Physical Training — Daily Assembly with Congregational Prayers — Weekly intensive Zoroastrian — Geeta-Koran classes — Excellent Modern Kitchen and Dining Room facilities — Airy Dormitories, Moderate Fees, Freeships and Concessions to Deserving Students.**

Apply to —

**THE MANAGING
TRUSTEE**

**P. N. MEHTA EDUCATION
TRUST**

Cooks Building, 324 Dr. D. N. Road
Bombay 400 001.

Courting votes and courts

The November 23 election outcome hinges on several factors

Arnavaz S. Mama

With both candidates having a similar political outlook, the November 23 Bombay Parsi Punchayet trusteeship elections between incumbent Eruch Desai and challenger Hector Mehta appears to hang on other issues: first is the question whether it is justifiable for any person to continue on the board for more than 10 years and the other is whether those who have recently purchased voting rights by paying Rs 5000 to the BPP should be allowed to vote.

The High Court has tentatively frozen the F (donors') register since October 1, 1985 (no donors after that date will be able to vote in the present election) following an appeal by the Committee for Economic Revival (CER). A petition asking for a freeze from February 22, 1985 was pending at the time of this issue of *Parsiana* going to press.

This is the third time in 16 months that the Bombay High Court has acquired star billing in the BPP electoral drama: The first was when the CER unsuccessfully sought an injunction to postpone the June 21, 1984 election of noted tax consultant Homi Ranina; and the second was before the election of the respected industrialist Naoroji Godrej, when the register was frozen from August '84 to February '85.

The CER's attempts to field their own candidate having come to naught, (the CER offered their support to former head of the country's atomic energy department, Homi Sethna, who declined) they have not officially supported any candidate but their sympathies are with Desai, a partner in the noted law firm of Mulla and Mulla.

One offshoot of the present petition before the High Court was a controversy between Mehta, a successful businessman, and the CER, over Mehta's stand on the voting rights of the donors.

"The CER are aware that before every election the interest of the people is aroused in community matters," noted Mehta in a letter to the conservative Gujarati daily *Jam-e-Jamshed*. "Why did the CER not file a petition

in March 1985 to freeze the F register? Having filed another petition in August 1985, why did they ask for adjournments and waste time till October 1985?"

For a few days the grapevine hummed with rumors that ex-BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder may enter the fray and Desai's sympathisers were apprehensive that such a development would split the CER camp and deliver the

This is the third time in 16 months that the Bombay High Court has acquired star billing in the BPP electoral drama.

trusteeship by default to Mehta. Desai confirmed that such a move had been afoot, but did not believe that Guzder would permit himself to be so exploited. Guzder himself described the two candidates, one as an old colleague and the other as a friend, and noted, "*Tehma hun kahn atvaao* (Why should I come between them)!" But Guzder noted that "some other time, if I'm required, of course I'll stand."

Chairmanship

When Desai joined the BPP board at the age of 44, the other six trustees (whose approximate average age must have been 66 years) embarrassingly referred to him as "baby trustee," Desai recalls. He noted at his interview that chairmanship of the BPP's committees — and thus a chance for effective leadership — came his way after nine years of serving as a trustee. Thus the current penchant for shorter, more effective terms, seems unfair. Desai notes he has preserved his independence even against the dictates of an autocrat like ex-chairman B.K. Boman-Behram who steam-rolled everyone else into submission as when

the BPP withdrew from the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in 1978 following the holding of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress.

Mehta, currently a brisk 49, has displayed greater community involvement at the grass roots level: Some of the matchmaking activities of the BPP's matrimonial bureau were held in his home; some mobeds swear by his good offices and expect a better liaison with the BPP if he is elected.

Mehta who is related to BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla, through the marriage of their children, is also reported to be close to BPP trustee Homi Ranina whose election last year threw the CER into a tizzy.

Ranina, currently the BPP's foremost activist, has been accused of trying to uproot all the senior trustees on the BPP board to ensure the chairmanship for himself when Golwalla retires in 1988. Ranina has countered the aspersion in a letter to the *Jame* (October 10, 1985) noting that even if "I would be the seniormost trustee, I would step aside and offer the chairmanship to Naoroji Godrej in deference to his age and public standing." Challenging Desai, Ranina adds, "I wonder whether Desai... would make such an offer; specially since he is only interested in seeking reelection to serve the community."

Desai who claims to be confident of functioning as the chairman of the board (and hence does not consider it necessary to relinquish the position to another) points out that Godrej has publicly stated his intention to resign from the board at the end of five years. Thus Ranina would lose only one year of BPP supremacy, he says.

Both Desai and Mehta are campaigning actively, with Desai restricting his meetings to the Anjuman Committee voters and Mehta spreading his message to both the voters and the community at large. How the Anjuman Committee will interpret the messages of both candidates will be known on election day, November 23.

"Everyone
is a potential winner.

Some people
are disguised
as losers.

Don't let
their appearances
fool you"

- Kenneth Blanchard
Spencer Johnson

THERMAX PRIVATE LIMITED, THERMAX HOUSE,
4 BOMBAY-PUNE ROAD, SHIVAJINAGAR, PUNE 411 005



Learning to coexist

The Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress confirmed the emergence of the traditional and liberal groups.

Porus Cooper

Los Angeles, California — "Please be jovial, and please do not be fanatics," a young speaker implored the Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress about halfway through its often raucous deliberations. He was too late. His appeal elicited something akin to a sigh from the audience.

If the Congress, held at the Universal Sheraton Hotel here from August 30 to September 2, did not quite become a showcase for fanaticism — some of the antagonists broke bread together — it did confirm the emergence of two well-defined, well-organized and antithetical elements in the Zoroastrian community in North America.

The two still co-exist, but like thunderclouds: when they come together, they are liable to produce lightning flashes and thunderclaps, even in sunny California.

The theme of the Congress was, "Preservation of the Zoroastrian identity through adaptation to changing environments." The Fifth Congress, however, confirmed what has been apparent for a while — the community, made up here of many nationalities, is not even agreed on what the Zoroastrian identity is.

The Congress marked a further widening of the gap between those who want to take their religious cues from the core community in Bombay, and those, like Rostam Sarfeh of the Arbab Rustam Guiv Trust, who do not accept Bombay's primacy and "want to be free" to make their own rules.

In the middle, many observers say, lies the largest group of all, brooding and undecided on how much or how

little change is needed to preserve the community as they know it.

At best, the Congress became a battlefield for the hearts and minds of these undecided.

On one side was a decidedly reformist panel of speakers, at least one of whom unequivocally endorsed both acceptance and conversion. On the other were the forces of orthodoxy, marshalled on the Congress floor by Khojeste Mistree, the charismatic preacher from Bombay who attended as a representative of the Zoroastrian Association of California, one of two rival Los Angeles associations.

With Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal, High Priest of Bombay's Wadia Atash Bahram, and the American Iranist, Dr James Russell, flanking him, Mistree intervened repeatedly to counter suggestions from the officially invited speakers that the religion's rituals were open to amendment. While there were some questions about Russell's wearing a *dagli* and *topi* (see Khojeste Mistree's interview), both sides received generous applause.

At its worst, the Congress became a stage for acting out grudges indigenous to California and esoteric to outsiders. For instance, the unnamed target of one reformist's charges of bigotry turned out to be a member of his family, active in the orthodox camp. Throughout, too, there was palpable tension between the host Zoroastrian Center's Dr Ali Jafarey, who moderated some of the proceedings, and the rival Zoroastrian Association's Tahamtan Aresh, who sat in the audience.

In spite of so much contentiousness

— even the scheduled coffee breaks were sometimes challenged — the Fifth Congress reached agreement on several items.

- It set up a "task force on immigration" to help Zoroastrians in political peril and economic need find refuge in North America. About \$1,600 (of the \$50,000 goal) was raised for the purpose in the first flush of enthusiasm.

- It appeased those who felt the invited panel of speakers was comprised only of "liberals" by adopting a mechanism to ensure a better mix of viewpoints at future congresses (See Mistree's interview).

- And while it virtually buried UZANA (United Zoroastrian Associations of North America), a federal organization created in 1977 at the Chicago Congress and neglected since, it did decide to explore yet another idea for a federation.

It also adopted an ambitious agenda for future community action — too ambitious, even according to some who went along with it.

Among the items: a fund "to help needy Zoroastrians everywhere;" an international Zoroastrian youth exchange program; an effort to standardize rituals and ceremonies; formation of corporations to assist Zoroastrian small businesses; and seeking the United Nations' recognition of Zoroastrianism.

All of these decisions were made in the special sessions of the organization representatives and are vulnerable to the delegates' mutual suspicions. How fragile the support for the agenda was, became clear when the representatives of some of the largest groups, New York, Chicago and Washington among

them, entered a caveat in the minutes of the session, refusing to be bound by any of the decisions.

Pointedly, while everyone endorsed the immigration panel, though with varying degrees of enthusiasm, none of the largest groups volunteered to serve on it. Noshir Jesung, the man picked to head it, represented a small non-profit foundation. A representative from Washington with experience in immigration law said the project neglected legal realities. Others said it would have been wiser to set up one central organization to tackle the entire agenda.

Both in the open Congress and in the closed sessions, however, proposals for a central body drew strenuous opposition on the ground that such a body would become an instrument for unwanted liturgical changes.

Russell, his anger showing, disputed the very notion that a central body was needed. He termed such proposals a surrender to the assimilationist pressures of North America.

Speaking later to *Parsiana*, a member of the Zoroastrian Center, California, which hosted the Congress, characterized the immigration task force as a "bone" tossed out by the rival Zoroastrian Association of California to pick up allies. Some of those who responded represented phantom organizations, he said, echoing several of his colleagues.

He predicted that the task force would accomplish nothing. The Zoroastrian Center and the London-based World Zoroastrian Organization, he said, are more experienced in aiding refugees, and have already assisted a number of them in acquiring residency in the West.

Hijacking

The Congress opened on an ill-humored note. The program said, "Friday, August 30, 5 to 6.30 pm — first session of the representatives of North American Zoroastrian organizations meeting to discuss main issues taken up by previous four congresses and to write the agenda for the action to be taken on them."

Before any of this was taken up however, a number of delegates objected to the host organization's representative, Darius Irani assuming chairmanship of the proceedings. After much argument, a vote was taken among the representatives of the 17 organizations



present. Irani was duly elected chairman — by one vote.

In private, after the conclusion of the Congress, some members of the Zoroastrian Center claimed that among Irani's opponents were those who led non-existent groups. "The Congress was hijacked," said one of the hosts. "It became a charade," said another. Both said they did not challenge anyone's credentials because that could have disrupted the event.

Russell, however, suggested that the Congress was hijacked by its organizers even before it opened. In support of his contention he cited the refusal of the hosts to include him on the invited panel of speakers. Spokesmen for the Zoroastrian Center said Russell had failed to respond promptly to their inquiries, and in fact had said he was not sure he could attend the Congress.

The agenda proposed by the Zoroastrian Center was next to draw fire. First, it grew from nine items to 21 (23 by some counts). Then, as the scheduled closing hour of 6.30 went by, the representatives argued about how best to bring the items down again to a manageable number. The task, eventually, was assigned for homework.

In the wrangling over the agenda, a theme emerged that, with variations, was to be repeated several times in the days to come and that, in retrospect, constituted a clear warning of things to come in the open sessions of the Congress.

The argument went thus: The agenda was more relevant to the life of the community than the academic lectures slated for delivery in the public sessions of the Congress. "I've heard the same speakers many times," said Aresh of the Zoroastrian Association of California. "How many more congresses must we have, to solve problems?" Aresh and several others urged that the speeches be scrapped and the public sessions of the Congress be devoted to discussing matters on the agenda.

What lay behind their desire to alter the program became clear as the public sessions opened: This group, labeling itself "traditionalist," protested that the official panel of speakers represented only the "liberal" point of view on religious matters.

Clockwise from top left: Zemenszky, Antia, Bagli, Kotwal, Jesung, C. Irani, Dotiwala, a section of the audience, Aresh, Rivetna, H. Minocher-Homji, Russell and Pangborn.

Freedom was won long before 1947. By people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence; by men of foresight and determination, like Ardeshir and Pirojsha Godrej, who had confidence in the country's capabilities and shared the same ideals with Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi, Nehru.

In Godrej, self-reliance has been considered indispensable to progress, the aim being not just self-sufficiency for the organisation but for the whole country. Progress can only be achieved in a *milieu* of progress.

Based on our country's needs, and exploiting the country's own resources, Godrej have diversified.

Self-Reliance: the Keynote of our Independence

Made to international standards, their products range from security equipment, machine tools and forklift trucks to steel furniture, typewriters and refrigerators—besides soaps, toiletries, chemicals and animal feeds. The Godrej industrial garden township at Vikhroli-Pirojshanagar, is a superb example of self-reliance and progress. For their workers Godrej have provided—in a unique environment—many social benefits: extensive housing schemes, schools and adult education, recreation, medical and family planning benefits.

Self-reliance is both a means and an end. For Godrej it is the essence of independence.





The Youth Forum in session (All photos of the Congress by Porus Cooper).

The counter-argument carried the day, however. It went thus: if 34 representatives (two from each group) found it so difficult to agree on an agenda, on a chairman, on how to designate alternative delegates, and on how long to continue the agenda meeting, imagine what would happen if the forum was enlarged to include all of the estimated 500 people attending the Congress.

A Congress diary:

Saturday, August 31: The Congress officially opens. In his benediction, Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji, High Priest of the Fasli Atash Kadeh, Bombay, summons the aid of "the cosmic principle of truth" and "the redeeming power of good deeds," and tells the gathering: "I have full faith in the faith that keeps me from disruption."

The dastur is perhaps unaware that a few seats removed from his on the dais is a man who, in the delegates' preliminary meeting the evening before, had claimed to represent the association from Austin, Texas, but now claims to represent the group from San Francisco.

He had arrived early to occupy the seat, and no importunings will make him leave it. He explains that he belongs to both Texas and California. If this causes no overt "disruption" of the Congress, it is only because the two men who represented San Francisco the evening before refrain from protesting publicly.

Welcome addresses follow — by the host group's president Ms Farangis Shahrokh, and by Ms Dhunmai Dalal, chairperson of the ad hoc committee in charge of organizing the Congress. A

proclamation is read out. The mayor of Los Angeles has declared August 31 and September 1 "Zoroastrian Days."

Dolly Dastoor of the Quebec Association which had organized the Fourth Congress in Montreal more than two years ago, reports on its aftermath.

A poll of scholars had been taken on such subjects as conversion, she says. But, she adds, "The opinions of a few people are not enough to guide the actions of the community." She recommends a sample poll of the entire Zoroastrian population on the continent.

A sample poll of sorts follows. Each of the official representatives speaks briefly to the Congress. Some claim merely to bring greetings from their various cities. The Congress will come to know them as "liberals." Others reveal their orthodox sentiments right away. They will be known as "traditionalists." No clear majority emerges.

Firing the opening salvo for the traditionalists is Kaemarz Dotiwalla of

The mayor of Los Angeles declared August 31 and September 1 "Zoroastrian Days."

Houston. "We are for conversion," Dotiwalla says, laying a trap. Many fall for it and applaud. "Of those Zoroastrians who have strayed from the path of Asha," he adds. There is more applause, though doubtless not from the same people.

Copying the rhetoric of former U.S.

president John F. Kennedy, Dotiwalla says: "The torch in Houston has passed on to a new generation of Zoroastrians, tempered by a free but tough life, disciplined by our faith, proud of our ancient heritage and unwilling to see or support the slow unravelling of those essential values which have made this community great..."

Delegates from Montreal, Manitoba, Dallas and the Zoroastrian Association of California second Dotiwalla's sentiments. Each complains that "traditionalists" are not represented on the official panel of speakers. One of them warns that the Congress is "not authorized to tamper with our customs."

To those who share such suspicions, the first of the listed speakers, Dr Kersey H. Antia, is as a red cape to a bull. To both his friends and his foes. Antia, a psychologist by profession, is defined by one action: He was one of the mobeds who performed the 1983 navjote of American engineer Joseph Peterson. His paper is titled: "The need for a central socio-religious body for North America." To his opponents his title reads, "The need to make Kersey Antia pope."

Antia warns that the absence of such a central body threatens the community's survival on this continent. America is not India, he cautions. Children who are born Zoroastrian here will not necessarily remain Zoroastrian, he says.

"It is imperative that we reach some common understanding about what Zoroastrian ideology really is or ought to be and pass it on to our children in a way that will be appealing to them and not confusing to them," he urges. A central body could do that, and more, such as publishing books, putting community data in computers, and getting the youth together.

"Given our preference for robust individualism," he concedes, "it may not be...easy...to lay down the constitution of such a body." He invites the participation of the traditionalists in writing it.

Sweet reasonableness does not help him. The question session dissolves into pandemonium. Typical of the questioners is Russell. There is "no precedent for a central Zoroastrian organization and no reason why the world Zoroastrian community should accept it," the professor from New York's Columbia University declares.

PERFORMANCE PLUS

“

Uniform Purity

A leading Pharmaceuticals manufacturer.

“

We just can't do without Ahura quality. It is important to the character of our end products.

Products Manager of a popular National Brand.

“

We have diversified our product range inspite of which Ahura meets all our Process Chemicals specifications.

A Multi-National Chief



AHURA CHEMICAL PRODUCTS PRIVATE LIMITED

82, Mahakali Road, Andheri (East),
Bombay 400 093. Phones: 6328365/66/67
Gram: AHURACHEM. Telex: 011-71117

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.

Graphic A-181

As for laying down a Zoroastrian ideology, "How dare anyone presume to amend the Khordeh Avesta?" asks Russell.

The moderator, Jafarey, tries to curtail Russell's remarks and becomes the target of invective from some in the audience. Still others rush to Jafarey's defense. "We have to stay away from slogans," counsels one of them. Antia warns, perhaps fatefully: "This may be the last Congress where we meet as one if we do not behave." Comic relief arrives in the shape of a questioner who wants to know if the computerized data envisaged by Antia will be stored on mainframe computers or personal computers.

Overheard at lunch: "Call it the Fifth Zoroastrian Circus."

After lunch, the professorial, often jesting Dr Kaikhosrov Irani, head of the philosophy department at New York's City College, considerably lightens the air. He speaks of "the philosophy of Zoroastrianism and its relevance in the contemporary world."

"The fundamental religious act in Zoroastrianism is the acceptance of the (core) doctrine," he says. "Failure to understand this often leads to Zoroastrianism being construed as a set of magical or propitiatory practices." The rituals, he says, are "derivative" from the core doctrine of "one of the most profoundly reflective and philosophical prophets of humanity."

If Antia had said that rituals are "derivative," the traditionalists would have protested that he was plotting to do away with rituals. Irani receives only polite questions on such things as the nature of evil in Zoroastrianism. Irani has the disarming habit of telling his listeners that they don't have to agree with him.

Dr Cyrus Pangborn, author of *Zoroastrianism, a beleaguered faith*, is next, speaking with the outsider's diffidence. The retired professor of religion at New Jersey's Rutgers University offers "strategies" for revitalizing Zoroastrianism and gaining it more widespread recognition.

He wishes more Zoroastrians would take up Zoroastrian scholarship in the universities. He wishes Zoroastrian priests would be educated beyond the "linguistics" of the religion. "The first

Proposals for a central body drew strenuous opposition on the ground that such a body would become an instrument for unwanted liturgical changes.

need is that of redefining the vocation of the priesthood," he says. "The priests should be not only ritualists but exemplary teachers... of the lay community..." He hopes for the day when women and non-athravans will be permitted to become priests.

One man gets up to respond that he hopes to live long enough to see women in the Zoroastrian priesthood. Another, however, says that liberalization of traditions had caused the decline of Christianity and Judaism in recent decades with the youth of these two faiths seeking the certainties offered by cults.

Dr Jehan Bagli, editor of the newsletter *Gavashni* and former coordinator of UZANA, couples his appeal for the revival of that federation with a plea "to scratch the encrustations of the millennia and try to look at the kernel of the message of Zarathosht."

It is a tactical error. He is promptly accused by the traditionalists of trying to use UZANA as a tool to foist his reformist vision on the community.

Sunday, September 1: Dr Carl von Zemenszky, anthropologist at Philadelphia's St Joseph's University, speaks of "the everlasting actuality of Zarathushtra's message," but it is his explicit endorsement of both acceptance and conversion that creates a stir: "To my knowledge, the Zarathushtrian religion had to start somewhere. It had to be a missionary religion to become an imperial religion."

Too much is said of the morality of Zarathushtra's message, Zemenszky says after interpreting several of the yasnas; not enough is said of the prophet's "intellectual endeavor."

He calls "the teachings of Zarathushtra, as revealed in the Holy Gathas... the only organized body of religious tenets still in active existence today which by its very truth seeking essence and relentless determination to pursue this endeavor actually authorizes... freedom of thought and honest scientific inquiry."

Dastur Kotwal gets up to praise Zemenszky for "bringing out the beauty of the Gathas," but obliquely disputes his conversion theory by saying that the Almighty sent Zarathushtra to the Iranian people to instill spiritualism in their old Mazdayasni religion.

Another speaker from the floor is more blunt: However much beauty the professor sees in the Gathas, he has no right to force himself into someone



Left: C. Irani, Prof and Ms K. Irani with Dastur Minochehr-Homji in the rear. Right: Ms Morvarid Guiv.



WITH BEST
COMPLIMENTS

**M/s.M.Pallonji
& Co.
Pvt. Ltd.**

**Leading Painting,
Corrosion
&
Water Proofing
Contractor**

87, Abdul Rehman Street,
BOMBAY-400 003.

Tel. 324150/330306
Telegram: "PALLONJIM"
Telex: MPCL: 011-5771

else's house. To which Zemenszky replies: "I certainly won't knock the door of a person who won't admit me."

The buzz over conversion spills over into the next session, curtailing discussion of a proposal with practical implications for the future of the community in North America. Toronto's Homi Minocher-Homji, who served both the United Nations and the former government of Iran, offers a plan for the organization of the community — locally, regionally and continentally. His plan is replete with detail.

He recommends a study of the rea-

"This may be the
last Congress where
we meet as one, if
we do not behave."

sons for UZANA's failure but has come to some conclusions himself.

"We often make the mistake of building our institutional structures at the higher levels without first preparing supportive ground level structures for promoting public participation and democratic decision-making which are so essential to harmonize our thinking," he says. "Therefore, the upper structures tend to remain weak and unsupported and collapse under the strain of conflict or become redundant."

Familiar misgivings are expressed from the floor, but then by a show of hands the Congress rededicates itself to pursuing the idea of a federation. In the representatives' session the next morning, after more misgivings are expressed and allayed, the idea is slated for discussion at a mid-congress conference to be held in Chicago.

The highlight of the concluding session is the "youth forum." The results of an opinion survey of California Zoroastrian youth, undertaken by the youth committee of the Zoroastrian Center, are presented.

Sixty-three Zoroastrians, all aged between 18 and 35, were interviewed and categorized by "characteristics" such as "Familiar with true teachings of Zoroastrian religion;" "Enthusiastic and optimistic about Zoroastrian society;" and "Fanatic in religion..."

The categories strike many of the listeners as couched in terms too loaded

with emotion to permit dispassionate conclusions. Inevitably, the fewest number of respondents admitted to being fanatics.

On a lark, and entirely unscientifically, *Parsiana* categorizes the speakers in the youth forum as conservative (fanatic?) or liberal (radical?) or leaning either way. The result is a virtual tie — and virtually meaningless, agrees Bagli of *Gavashni*, who is sitting nearby, except perhaps to prove that the parents' imprint is still fresh on the children's minds.

Only some future survey will establish if the quarrels of the adults at the Congress have left a new imprint on impressionable minds. One youth finds cause for optimism in the outpouring of passions at the Congress. It simply proves, he says, that enough people care about the religion to ensure its survival on this continent.

The adults see it differently. To the Zoroastrian Center's Jafarey, the Congress marks a crushing victory for "the progressives." To Khojeste Mistree, it marks the revival of "the traditionalists." In India, he says, he has been credited with setting back reformism 20 years. Clearly, he would love to repeat that performance in North America.

At the banquet that follows, the keynote speaker, Cushrow Irani of *The Statesman*, a well-known Calcutta based newspaper, echoes many of the reformist themes. A short film and a children's pageant on Zarathushtra's teachings are presented.

Some in the banquet hall take one last look around. Living in isolated pockets on this vast continent, they are not accustomed to seeing so many fellow-Zoroastrians in one room. That sight alone makes the Congress worthwhile, one says.



Cooper: an award-winning editorial writer for *The Courier-Post* in New Jersey, who writes for *Parsiana* on important occasions, on an honorary basis.

Mistree: grave imbalance

Traditionalist Khojeste Mistree charges that the Congress was biased in favour of the liberalists.

Khojeste Mistree came to the Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress in Los Angeles as a delegate from the Zoroastrian Association of California, a group at odds with the organizers of the Congress, the Zoroastrian Center, California. Responding repeatedly to the formally invited speakers, Mistree quickly became the standard-bearer for the self-styled "traditionalists" at the Congress.

He articulated not only their religious conservatism but also their grievance that none of their number was represented on the official panel of speakers. He spoke to *Parsiana* as the Congress was drawing to a close.

What is your view of the Congress, especially with regard to the balancing of views you sought, now that it is nearly over?

The views are certainly not balanced. Speaker after speaker is being officially given 20 minutes to speak, and it's only from the floor that we traditionalists have voiced our comment, and that too in many cases it has been muscled.

One cannot answer in an intelligent, intellectual way something that these people in their talks come out with, and so, from that point of view, it's utterly unsatisfactory.

Did you anticipate this? Was there a siege mentality that you brought into this Congress?

No, I don't believe we brought in a siege mentality. Our mentality is one of absolute fairplay. But what has emerged is that the organizers have entertained one specific viewpoint. Whatever people might think — it might have been accidental, I don't know — but the net result is a very, very definite emphasis. Only one viewpoint is being talked about, and that has resulted in what you've seen over the past two days.

It's now felt by the delegates, who've been meeting in closed session, and this is one of the topics (representation of a variety of views)...adopted unani-

mously as far as I know (in their agenda meeting).

So you have not seen any recouping, from your point of view, as the Congress went on? You were indeed called



Mistree: exercising caution.

up to comment, as were others like Dr Firoze Kotwal and Prof James Russell. If one gives a few minutes, generally from three to five, from time to time, in a Congress that, say, has 20 hours of discussion — and we are given literally one hour in the 20, it doesn't strike me as being balanced.

Didn't the organizers increasingly accommodate the viewpoint you represent as the Congress went along?

I think that the organizers have realized that there has been a very grave imbalance. I would like to give them the benefit of the doubt that, perhaps, in view of the circumstances they are trying to reconcile two diametrically opposed viewpoints...

James Russell, of Columbia University — he has become a figure of some controversy here. He is an outsider, as he himself would put it; what business

does he have prescribing to the community?

It's a very unfair way of framing your question. He is not prescribing anything. We have to recognize Prof Russell as being one of the most brilliant young Iranists in North America today.

Here is a man who is conversant in probably 20 languages by now. He certainly deeply cares for the religion; is steeped in the doctrine of the faith; has read numerous texts; translated numerous texts on our faith — so I think he's in a very qualified position to voice his opinions.

Now, interestingly, if he had taken the view that the organizers would have liked him to take, he would have been the darling of the audience. But by virtue of the fact that he has taken the traditional viewpoint, which with great conviction he believes in...

I think one has to compliment him for taking a stand rather than just sitting on the fence.

What do you make of his wearing the dagli. I've heard comments that if he wants Jews to be Jews and Zoroastrians to be Zoroastrians, why is he wearing something that may mislead those who see him?

Dress doesn't convey that much. For example, you and I wear a shirt and trousers; that doesn't mean that we have become Anglo-Saxon.

But the dagli is more characteristic of a Parsi than shirt and trousers are of an Anglo-Saxon.

Yes, just as a person might enjoy Parsi food...doesn't make him a Parsi. It just happens that a dress is something that you can visibly see.

What statement, if any, do you think he's making by wearing the dagli and topi?

I think he probably finds it very comfortable.

Does he wear it on other occasions?

Yes, he's worn it in India...

I mean, when he is not with Zoroastrians.

Yes, he's worn it at Columbia University meetings. It's his formal attire as far as I know.

Will you be leaving the Congress disappointed?

I'll be leaving not disappointed as much as, once again, feeling somewhat pessimistic that the equation in America is not being balanced between the forces that advocate change and the forces that want to preserve tradition.

My regret, if you like, is that in this great, free society that you all live in, the least one would expect is the voicing of both viewpoints, and then let our fellow Zoroastrians decide for themselves. But we have not had a fair presentation of facts.

Judging superficially, from the crowd response...

Crowd response is six of one and half-dozen of the other... The liberal point of view is very well (presented) and through their (being a) well-organized group they've been able to maneuver congresses like this. What you've seen here is that there is a very big delegation from California, particularly from the Iranian Zoroastrian Center — which professes to follow the teachings of Asho Zarathushtra at the expense of all else as far as I can see — and their supporters are here in number.

In spite of that, I think on many

issues the moderates and traditionalists have got together and have been able to balance the situation much more than I anticipated when I got here. When I came here, looking at the list of spea-

"For the first time perhaps in years, the traditionalists have raised their voice, much more perhaps than (at) the Fourth Congress."

kers and the background of the organizers, (I thought) we would have a tough time.

In that sense, I am very happy that for the first time perhaps in years, the traditionalists have raised their voice much more perhaps than (at) the Fourth North American Zoroastrian Congress. I think for the sixth one, wherever it's held, I'm fairly confident that the organizers will definitely take into

account the other point of view.

I think it's worth noting that in the six or nine topics that (the organizers had) listed (on the proposed agenda) only one came, you know, the standardization of religious education. The so-called controversial issues didn't feature in the agenda list voted yesterday by the delegates (in one of the sessions closed to the public). In fact, the list that did emerge, I think, really speaks for the silent majority, and that list certainly doesn't include conversion, it certainly doesn't include the chopping and changing of rituals... To me, it's a very important indication that it is not a one-way scene of the liberals — when they choose to be democratic — taking over. They haven't. The delegate meeting proved that.

What I find very sad really is that among those who are leading the destiny of our community in this country, very few seem to be full-time experts on the religion. Are we to decide the religious fate of our community on the opinions of lay people, psychiatrists — quoting the last speaker, who didn't give a single textual reference, yet made sweeping statements wanting to change things?



For Pure Diamonds

K. WADIA

JEWELLERS

324, GRANT ROAD, BOMBAY 400 007. TELEPHONE: 371483
APPOINTED VALUERS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Are you a full-time scholar?

Yes, I am a full-time teacher of the religion. It's for others to judge whether I'm a scholar.

I've heard people say that your theories are racist?

People can say what they want to. I suppose that's the beauty of living in a free society. All I'm doing is asking people to exercise caution, particularly from an ethnic point of view, on matters which I believe can affect the very life of our community.

I feel that our community is a very precious one, and we need to preserve it, recognizing the fact that of course change does occur, but change for the sake of change is not something I advocate.

Is there any change you do advocate? Anything that needs to be changed?

A lot needs to be changed, and those measures we are already taking. For example the priority in our religion today is religious education. This is why we started Zoroastrian Studies seven years ago. Through education comes informed opinion, and through informed opinion I believe that one can be a better Zoroastrian.

Likewise, we have made a very big project, the Athraivan Educational Trust, which deals with the education and economic uplift of the priests. Now if that isn't a significant change, I'd like to know what is.

Some say here that you, Dr Kotwal and James Russell were actually brought in as a disruptive factor, that you are part of a plot.

Those who say that need (to have) their brains examined. Dasturji Kotwal has neither clapped nor uttered a single word during the proceedings and to say that he has been brought in as a disruptive influence is clearly in bad taste.

With regards to James (Russell) and myself, neither of us are here to be disruptive. We would like to believe that we have come here very much in the spirit of wanting to share and learn. On the other hand, if we are trampled upon, in terms of what others have to say, then one takes a stand, and even those stands have been extremely mild.

If it means that my views are views that some members of the audience don't accept, then that's their problem, not mine.

P.C. The members on the board of the Zo-

Dalal's duty

Everyone agreed the Congress was efficiently run.

As chairperson of the ad hoc committee of the Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress, Dhunmai Dalal, 47, and mother of two boys in their 20s, was the conductor of an orchestra of volunteers who organized the event. If the music that emerged from the con-



Dalal: orchestrating the Congress.

gress hall was often discordant, it wasn't her fault. She was not in charge of what people said or how they said it.

Naturally, her job started long before the Congress opened. Most of those attending the Congress, however, could only judge her effort by the few days they spent in Los Angeles. As they departed, both those who were tagged "liberals" and the self-styled "traditionalists" seemed to agree on one thing: The Congress was a very efficiently run event. The needs (and many of the wants) of the visitors were promptly attended to; things started and stopped more or less on time. Ms Dalal's reward was a standing ovation at the banquet which marked the end of the Congress. She spoke to *Parsiana* earlier that afternoon.

How did you happen to be assigned this task?

roastrian Center approached me on several occasions. I thought it over and decided (to accept). No matter what the factions happened to be in Los Angeles, I thought that the Congress would bring everyone together. I thought that if I was chosen, it was my duty to do it.

Why you?

I can't answer that fully. I think, perhaps, because I had the time to do it. I was willing, and perhaps the most important thing was that I would get all Zoroastrians involved in it.

There are two (groups) in Los Angeles (the Zoroastrian Center and the Zoroastrian Association). In recent months the two have not been working in great harmony. I had been on the committee of the Association. I was still a member of the Association, and maybe that could have helped.

What were the logistics of getting 500 people together?

Without the cooperation and help of both professionals and amateurs (naming several here) this would not have been possible. I had never even been to a congress before.

What's the first thing you had to do?

The first thing I had to do was to form a committee — the ad hoc committee, which I am chairperson of. I had to choose people who would be of real help. I could not look just to friends who were available. For example, I thought of Firoze Dordi. He's in the travel business; he was the one who introduced us to the Sheraton Hotel. When we first came here and had an interview with the manager, we were very fortunate to find that his secretary was Behroze Edulji, a Parsi from Bombay. She has been terrific. Through her we have just about got all our hotel arrangements done.

Most of the committee were recommended to me by Ms Farangis Shahrokh (president of the Zoroastrian Center)... Since the host of the Congress was the Zoroastrian Center, it was only fair to acknowledge and work

with the recommended people, and I think it worked out very well.

Dr (Ali) Jafarey (a trustee of the Center) consulted with me all the time on writing to speakers and representatives (of the various associations). He

"A congress is a forum for discussion and how could you control every single person? And how do you know what is controversial?"

was more knowledgeable on whom to approach in this field than I was.

How were the speakers for the Congress picked?

Between Ms Shahrokh and Dr Jafarey, and maybe other members of the Zoroastrian Center board, they chose most of the speakers. There was a little discussion over the keynote speaker because the keynote speaker was a little different. The Congress speakers are all North American; they are mainly academics.

Since I had not attended any congress before, unfortunately I was not capable of choosing the speakers, having not heard too many myself.

So the ad hoc committee had nothing to do with picking the speakers?

The speakers in the invitation were not picked by the ad hoc committee. They were picked by the board (of the Zoroastrian Center). (Ms Shahrokh and Dr Jafarey) consulted other academics; they have attended other congresses.

When did you start preparing for the Congress?

A year ago. I remember in September 1984, when Dastur Minochehr-Homji was in Los Angeles, and he had given a lecture, Tahamtan Aresh and the Vaghaiwallas (of the Zoroastrian Association of California) were there, and I had informed them that I had been asked to organize the Congress, that I had accepted and would they cooperate, and especially would they have their youth help us.

Within a week or so I sent out let-

ters. We went around looking for a site and we chose the Universal Sheraton.

As soon as we decided where to hold it, the dates had to be decided. The first thing we thought of was that it was very important that the youth attended the Congress. So we decided that we must hold it during school and college vacations.

What has it cost to host the Congress?

Not as much as people may imagine. For instance, we hosted the dinner for the representatives (of various Zoroastrian groups). We always wanted to give one dinner to the representatives, so we knew that that was an outright cost. Then we had to consider costs like air fare and hotel stay of the invited speakers.

I'm a bit vague on the figures but we sort of budgeted about \$10,000 for the whole Congress.

Will all of the cost be recovered?

I think so. We had to book 150 nights or 74 rooms to get all these rooms (the large banquet halls in which the main congress and the delegates' sessions were held) free of charge. (Otherwise) we would have had to pay \$3,000 to \$4,000 a day for them.

So we booked a guaranteed number of rooms, which later on were paid for by the guests. We even offered a cheaper alternative in a motel down the street.

What would you change if you had to do it again?

I was very nervous when it started, but it has been so successful. Now I'm relaxed, and I see everyone here, and they are all participating. Some are critical of the organizers, but I don't think they are more critical than they were a year ago. I think some people

were more critical about the Zoroastrian Center holding the Congress a year ago than they are today.

Today, they might say that, oh well, all the speakers are liberals, but before they knew who the speakers were they were critical as to whether the Center was valid enough to hold the Congress or whether UZANA (United Zoroastrian Associations of North America — a federal body set up at an earlier congress) was legal.

Technically, who asked the Zoroastrian Center to hold the Congress?
UZANA.

And UZANA probably died at this Congress...

Well, we don't know, but it's the body that has been holding the congresses. It started at a congress, at the first or second one, I think.

(UZANA sent) a letter to the president of the Zoroastrian Center. I sent a copy of it to the secretaries of the Zoroastrian Association. They questioned certain things (about UZANA's authority) and they also asked that they would like a congress where there would be no controversy.

I said, well, we'd love that, but that it was not up to us, because a congress is a forum for discussion and how could you control every single person? And how do you know what is controversial?

Well — maybe I shouldn't say it — well, I did not want the Association to feel in any way that suddenly the Center was getting the limelight, and therefore, I incorporated several people from the Association onto the youth committee. Then we got a lot of friends who are not on the ad hoc committee but helped in their own capacity.

P.C.



**The Friendly Gift Shop for
handicrafts, festive gifts and
Zoroastrian artefacts**

Bombay Swadeshi Stores Ltd

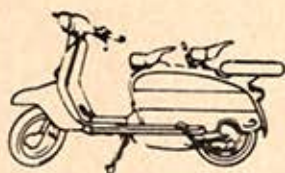
Sir P.M. Road, Bombay 400 001

Tel: 253443 & 252730

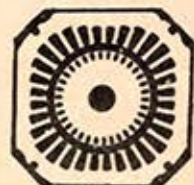
**Working to fulfil the demands of today.
Driving hard to meet the challenges of
tomorrow.**



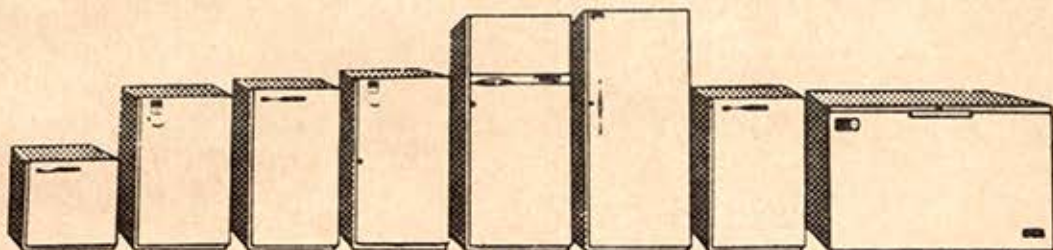
**CASH REGISTER
DIVISION**
(Electro-Mechanical &
Electronic)



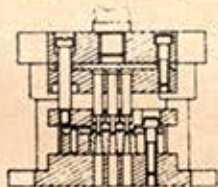
**AUTOMOTIVE
DIVISION**



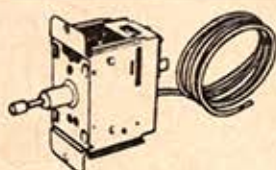
**LAMINATION
DIVISION**
(Electrical Motors &
Stampings)



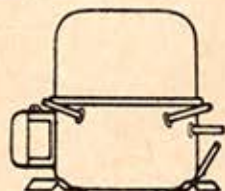
REFRIGERATION DIVISION
(Refrigerators & Deep Freezers)



**CENTRALISED
TOOL ROOM DIVISION**
(Sophisticated Tools,
Dies and Fixtures)

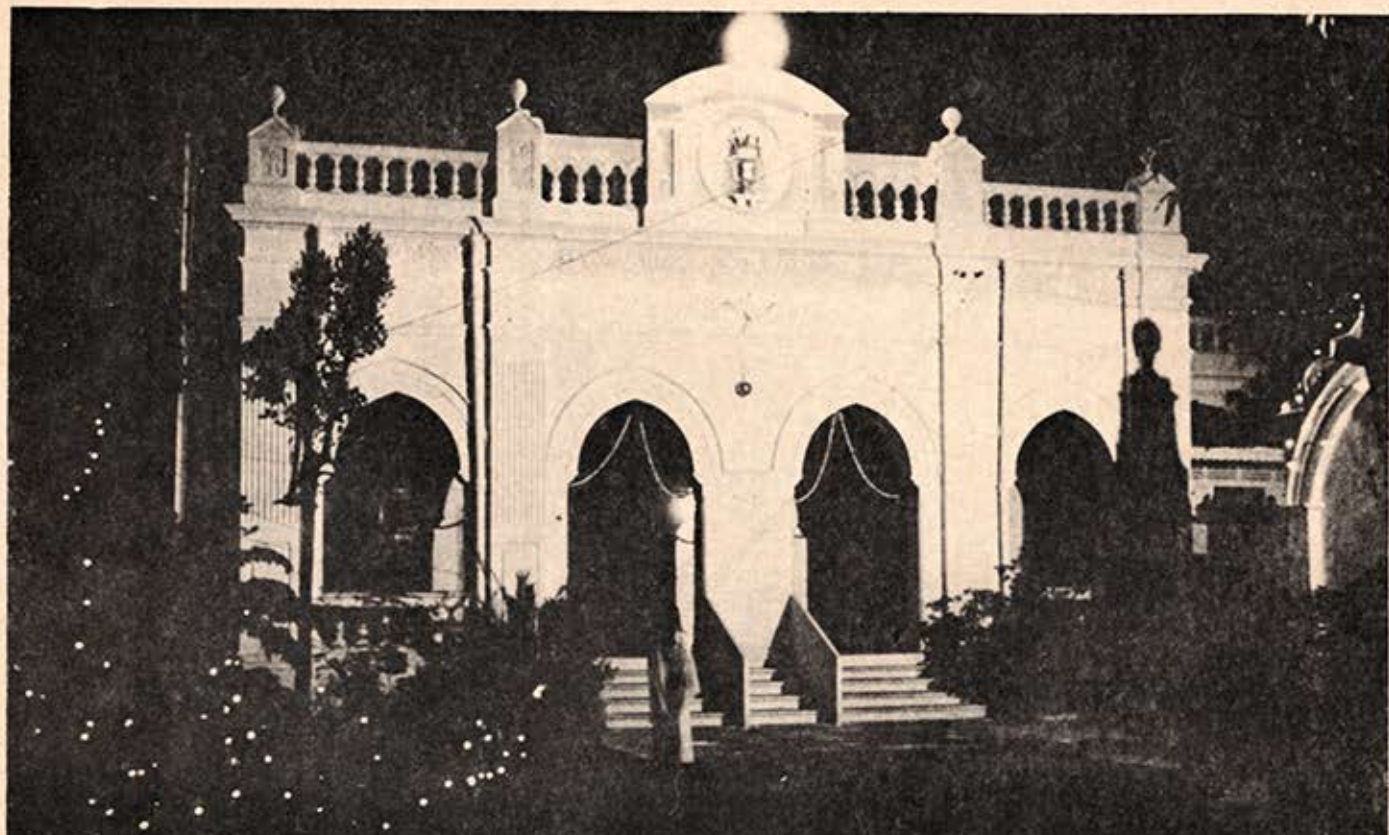


**CONTROLS
DIVISION**



**COMPRESSOR
DIVISION**

Kelvinator
of India Limited



A gift turns platinum

A review of the Madras Anjuman's activities on the occasion of the Dar-e-Meher's seventy-fifth year.

Parinaz Toddywalla

It was on the death of a 13-year-old son that Phiroj Muncherji Clubwala built a memorial in the form of a Dar-e-Meher and gifted it to the Parsis of Madras in 1910. Seventy-five years later, Parsis from Madras, Bangalore, Secunderabad, Shahabad, Vizag, Bombay, Poona, Bhavnagar, Allahabad, Delhi, Jamshedpur and Calcutta assembled to participate in the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher.

While the celebrations were in progress at the Phiroj Clubwala Memorial Hall on July 19, 20 and 21, 1985, the object of the celebrations, standing isolated a few blocks away on West Mada Church Street, looked resplendent with the turquoise blue illumination outlining its structure against the overcast sky. Situated in the Parsi locality of Royapuram, the agiary evokes religi-

ous fervour from the pious-minded Zoroastrians of the Madras Anjuman.

"The sacred building was designed by and constructed under the personal supervision of Hormusji Nowroji... president of the Madras Parsi Anjuman who laid the foundation stone on February 6, 1909" reads the inscription on the foundation stone of the Dar-e-Meher.

At the consecration of the Dar-e-Meher on *roj* Marespand, *mah* Bahram in the year 1910, Dastur Kaikobad Adarbad Noshervan, then High Priest of Poona, officiated the ceremonies by virtue of the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher falling under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the High Priest of Poona. Ms Freany Grant, who was among the four to enjoy the rare distinction of being present at the consecration and the platinum jubilee cele-

brations, vaguely remembered the consecration: the *taro* being brought by road from Poona and enjoying a community dinner when 150 to 200 Zoroastrians were present.

Though it was the loss of his young son Jal, and the consequent inability to have the death rites performed in Madras that inspired the establishment of the Dar-e-Meher, the Parsis of Madras were relieved that their dream had finally materialized. Until then the efforts of the Madras Parsi Panchayat had proved inconsequential despite their starting a Mobed Fund in 1887, receiving generous donations from Sir D.M. Petit and the then president Sorabji Framji, and purchasing a plot of land (which was later realized to be too close to the aramgah), notes a write-up in the platinum jubilee brochure.

Phiroj Clubwala offered to con-

struct the Dar-e-Meher building, on condition that the Anjuman collect a minimum of Rs 30,000 for its maintenance, notes the write-up. The ownership of the Dar-e-Meher is vested with the Madras Anjuman and according to the trust deed, the control of the Dar-e-Meher is entrusted to a Trust Board comprising five trustees. The present board of trustees include: chairman Minoo Belgamvala who is also president of the Madras Anjuman, honorary secretary Erachshaw Driver, hereditary trustee of the Dar-e-Meher, Jehangir Clubwala, Arjasp Taraporewala and Russi Dastur. Since 1983 the atash adarian is being tended by panthaki Jehangir Dastur with the assistance of mobed Jehangir Bharda.

There also stands in the compound of the agiary, a residential block for the attending priests, gifted by Phiroj Clubwala. On the retirement of Ervad Dosabhai Pavri after four years of service as mobed, Ervad Hormasji Adarji Gai became the first panthaki of the Dar-e-Meher in 1910. He was followed by three generations of the Daji family, Ervad Rustomji Pestonji, his son Tehmuras and grandson Peshotan.

Among those who have a tremendous attachment to the adarian is Peshotan Daji who after serving the agiary for 60 years, retired as panthaki in 1983. After basking in the atash adarian's aura, he was reluctant to resign when he couldn't find an assistant panthaki. "I have been present at the silver, golden, diamond and platinum jubilees of the Dar-e-Meher... given my life-long service. I still love the place. I think of it."

"I have performed about a 100 weddings and many more navjotes... made a comparative study of religions and delivered lectures in English and Gujarati on auspicious occasions. I have got modern ideas, and believe that we have to move with the times."

Festivities

The first day's program was almost a warm-up session which started with a group photograph, followed by a jashan led by Dastur Hormazdiar Noshirwan Dastur, High Priest of Poona, who later addressed the gathering. For almost an hour Dr S.R. Wadia lectured the audience on Firdousi Toosi and his *Shahnama* and showed slides of his visit to Iran during the late Shah's regime. The members then settled down to a simple vegetarian dinner

Only rarely do they
feel that they are
missing out on
something as when
one Parsi
complained, "You
know, *makhmal ni
sapaat* is not
available here."

catered by the Guild of Service, an organization for destitute women started by Ms Mary Clubwala Jadhav, noted social worker of Madras.

The largest attendance was at the second day's program which was considered to be the most important, due to the significance of the *roj* and *mah* and the presence of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, S.L. Khurana who was all praise for the Parsis. "I hope the community will plunge anew to further their involvement in the affairs of the country," were his parting words of encouragement. Earlier, Minoo Belgamvala, president of the Anjuman since 1967, who accorded a welcome to the distinguished gathering, explained the purpose of the celebrations: "It has presented us with an opportunity to take stock of ourselves."

After the Governor was made to present shawls and/or plaques to the 16 dignitaries on the dais, the stage was

cleared for a welcome change in the scene — the staging of a tableau on *The Parsis — In India's life and part of it* depicting the advent of Parsis in India and their adaptability over the centuries. Scripted by the Madras Parsi Association's secretary Ms Mani Clubwala and directed by Noshir Ratnagar the production was a joint effort by the members of the Madras Anjuman. The tableau ended with the community's universal favourite song *Chhaiye hame Zarthosti*.

The third day of the celebrations was under the auspices of the Madras Parsi Association when the chief guest for the evening was BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwala who regaled the audience with his various experiences while conducting the viva voce examinations of medical students. Ending on a serious note after detailing the work of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, he advised, "We must try and minimize our differences and be a cohesive community if we are to make any impact." Golwala's address was followed by an elocution competition when 20 youngsters from Madras spoke on subjects connected with the life and teachings of Zarathushtra.

All the three dinners were planned in the open air grounds adjacent to the Phiroj Clubwala Memorial Hall leaving the final arrangements to the mercy of the Madras monsoons. Though fortunately it did not rain, the indoor badminton court was spruced for the occasion, just in case...

From Panchayat to Anjuman
The Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman

Mani Clubwala with Zavera Shahuna at the venue of the celebrations.



REMEMBER

J.N.MARSHALL PVT.LTD.

for your needs in
PROCESS CONTROL INSTRUMENTATION

We Offer Instruments For Indicating/Controlling & Recording Parameters Like Pressure, Temperature, Flow & Level For Almost Every Known Process Industry—Paper, Textiles, Chemicals, Sugar, Cement, Hotels.

We Design, Fabricate, Commission, Install And Give Consultancy Services For Industrial Instrumentation And Also For Steam Engineering.



**YOU CAN MEASURE OUR CONTRIBUTION
BY YOUR BENEFITS.**



got its name in 1900, being previously known as the Madras Parsi Panchayat. As recorded in the brochure:

It was in 1876 that the Parsi residents of Madras formed themselves into an association known as the Madras Parsi Panchayat. The advent of the first Parsi in Madras dates back to 1795 when Heerjibhai M. Kharas came on a mission from the Raja of Coorg. He was accompanied by Framji Rudibaina, Mobed Ruttondaroo, Mobed Jamshedji Aderbadan, Sohrab Mehta, Bhiccaji Botu and Jamasji. They purchased a plot of land in the Royapuram locality of Madras and settled there. The subsequent year, Jamasji died and was buried near their residence. Soon after, Kharas bought an adjoining plot of land and built a dokhma. As per ancient custom, the first body to be placed in a dokhma should be either of a very young child or an aged person, but since there was neither such death, the bodies of subsequent Parsis were also buried and the dokhma dismantled.

As the Parsi settlers in Madras kept increasing, they kept purchasing more land on lease and by 1814 they owned about 32 plots of land. The present assets of the Anjuman include the burial ground, a block for after death ceremonies, a dharamshala, manager's quarters and a building for Parsi resi-

dents. The Anjuman owns 15 flats and three cottages which are rented to Zoroastrians on rents varying from Rs 10 to Rs 400 per month. The dharamshala which was in a state of disrepair, has only recently been renovated thanks to the efforts of Rusi Ginwalla, the Anjuman's secretary, whose co-operation at all odd hours is counted upon due to the proximity of his residence to the Anjuman properties. The dharamshala now comprises four furnished rooms with attached baths.

Many of the upcountry visitors who had come to attend the platinum jubilee celebrations were housed at the dharamshala, presently under the management of Mr and Ms Amroliya who were also in charge of the catering at the second day's dinner which was hosted by the Anjuman.

Madras Association

The Madras Parsi Association, an off-



shoot of the parent anjuman was formed in 1930 to promote sports and social activities among the members of the Madras Anjuman. Before World War II, members used to meet daily at the Phiroj Clubwala Memorial Hall, a building purchased specially for this purpose in memory of the Madras Anjuman's greatest philanthropist, Phiroj Clubwala. This memorial, it was hoped would "provide a rendezvous for recreation purposes." Presently the activities of the Association are restricted to meetings thrice a week at the Hall where members get together for a game of their choice — badminton, tennis, billiards or cards. The original structure having deteriorated, it was demolished and built anew in 1980. The platinum jubilee celebrations of the Dar-e-Meher were held at the new Phiroj Clubwala Memorial Hall.

The first secretary of the Madras Parsi Association was the "enthusias-



(Top left) Tableau scene depicting arrival of Parsis in India

(Top right) Daji: served agiary for 60 years

Governor Khurana presenting plaque to Taraporewala as (from left) J. Tarapore, Dastur Hormuzdiar, Belgamwala, Jehangir Dastur and Grant look on



GRINDWELL NORTON LTD.

*Regd. Office: Army & Navy Building
Mahatma Gandhi Road
Bombay 400 023
Phone: 244727 • Grams: GRINDWELL
Telex: 011-2840 GNO-IN*

tic and sporting-minded" Nogi Clubwala, son of Phiroj Clubwala, whose activities came to an abrupt halt on his death in 1935 at the age of 31 years. His wife Mary who succeeded him as secretary, later became the president of the Association from 1939-1956.

Personalities

Mary Clubwala Jadhav has become a household name not only to the Parsis of Madras but to a cross section of Indians by virtue of her social service activities. Her marriage to Nogi Phiroj Clubwala and her subsequent involvement with the activities of the Madras Anjuman, as its president and vice-president despite the untimely death of her husband and son Phil, helped in earning her respect and promoting the Clubwala family image among the Madras Parsis.

Though one branch of the Clubwala family tree ended with the death of Phil, among the survivors of another branch is Jehangir Clubwala who is presently the hereditary trustee of the Clubwala Dar-e-Meher and the backbone of the Madras Anjuman. His wife, Mani, who became the "popular secretary of the Madras Parsi Association" soon after her arrival in Madras and worked as secretary of the fund-raising committee when they planned to rebuild the Association building, was also instrumental in spearheading the fund drive at the platinum jubilee of the Dar-e-Meher which succeeded in collecting Rs 2.5 lakhs.

Another figure respected for his commitment to the Madras Parsi Association is Arjasp F. Taraporewala who has been president of the Association since 1967. "I was founder treasurer of the Madras Parsi Association when it was founded in 1930. I've also been president and vice-president of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman and trustee of the Dar-e-Meher," he informed. Taraporewala has also labored to bring out a Hindi transliteration of the *Avesta*. The third edition of this book was gifted with the author's compliments to all the delegates attending the Federation meeting in Madras as was Noshir Vazifdar's book, *Let us pray to Ahura Mazda*. Taraporewala and his sister Dilla Nalladaru were also instrumental in compiling the history of the Anjuman which has been carried in the souvenirs brought out on the golden, diamond and platinum jubilee occasions of the Dar-e-Meher. Tara-



A section of the aramgah
(Below) Dharamshala: recently renovated

porewala, as also the Tarapore brothers, Jehanbux and Dara, were present at the consecration though they all have faint recollection of the event.

"I am not orthodox. I don't go to the Agiary," was the frank reply of 85-year-old Jehanbux Tarapore when asked about his religious leanings. An engineer by profession, he offered, "I can provide employment to a dozen engineers if they are willing to go to any part of India... Since I can't devote time to the Anjuman I help by cash. We have formed a non communal charity trust of J.H. Tarapore Foundation for education in medicine, engineering, etc." He also runs a school at Inavaram where the total strength of girl students is 3200. Though reluctant to enumerate on his achievements, he informed in a matter-of-fact way that he was appointed sheriff of Madras in 1962, thereby becoming the third Parsi sheriff of Madras, the earlier two being Cawasji Edulji Panday in 1893 and Mary Clubwala Jadhav in 1956.

Dara Tarapore, director of Tarapore and Co, who is more at Bangalore than

at Madras due to vocational preoccupation, referred to the orthodoxy of the Bangalore Parsis. "I do not believe in dokhmenashini. I prefer the crematorium. We have a parallel organization of 20-25 members in Bangalore called the Gathic Society where we permit cremation; but the mobed does not perform the four-day after death ceremonies..."

Though Madras has aligned itself with the more conservative BPP line in the Federation, the Madras Parsi Anjuman permits non-Parsis to pay their last respects at the time of a Parsi death.

The present strength of the Parsis in Madras is about 275 including nearly 20 children and 30 aged members, informed Ginwalla. Of the 275, 250 are permanent residents of Madras, conversant in Tamil and assimilated in the Madras mainstream. Only rarely do they feel that they are missing out on something as when one Parsi complained, "You know, *makhmal ni sapaat* is not available here," or another lamented, "The camaraderie we had shared as young Parsis on the Marina Beach is no more to be experienced." An Iranian member of the Anjuman vociferously questioned, "When will most Parsis learn to use the terms Zoroastrians and Parsis in the correct context?"

To the passerby on the West Mada Church Street, the unexpected appearance of so many Zoroastrians was worth only a casual glance but to the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher it meant the completion of yet another landmark, when despite differences of opinion they were successfully able to demonstrate the strengths of the Madras Anjuman.



Star reporting

Prochi Badshah, Editor of *Stardust*, talks of her combined role as journalist, wife and mother.

Parinaz Toddywalla

"It is so irritating when people ask 'How can you be a film journalist all your life?' But come on *yaar*, they're not all that bad. When you come to the journalistic part, it's the same as what you would have in a political magazine, only the personalities involved are different." Ms Prochi Badshah, Editor of *Stardust*, which claims to be the most well-read fan magazine in the world, (circulation:1,60,000) chatted while sitting curled on an armchair in the visitors' room on September 11, 1985 at the magazine's new office premises at Esperanca at Colaba. Dressed in her workaday salwar kameez with not a trace of make-up nor any suggestion of painted nails, Badshah admitted that she doesn't conform to the image of "a true editor's editor." She narrated how actor Kumar Gaurav teases her that she should have been Editor of *Chandamama* (a children's magazine) instead of a glossy like *Stardust*.

Stardust was "the first of its kind which started the trend of gossip journalism in India. We got our inspiration from *Photoplay*, a Hollywood fan magazine, which was subsequently discontinued. Before *Stardust* there were *Film Fare* and *Star & Style* on the newsstands which had maintained the image of film stars as demigods. We showed them to have feet of clay," Badshah briefed.

In her seventh year at *Stardust* and second year as Editor, Badshah says, "In *Stardust* it's the format and style which are important. The people are not important. The Editor is always behind the scene. Rather than the editorial board, the readers, comprising the Indian cinema viewers, will associate more with the columns, articles and

bylines—like Neeta's Natter or Court Martial. Even though I may write five articles for a particular issue, I won't carry a byline on all the five articles."

Honestly admitting that she's "not introduced many changes, only taken a more human angle, put ourselves in the star's shoes," Badshah clarified, "We're a fan magazine, not serious. We are not trying to change the industry or improve the quality of the films, and we make no bones about the fact." She views *Showtime*, a sister publication from the Lana Group, as focussing on more serious issues concerning the film industry.

"We at *Stardust* pay no attention to the factor of designation. Ours is a very democratic outlook." Badshah then added, "I'm Editor, printer and publisher" and seemed to savor the sound of these unfamiliar words which were obviously not used too often in her context.

"I prefer being a journalist than an Editor," she confessed. "I like being on the field. But that means I have to combine my editorial responsibilities with writing which is my main inte-

Kumar Gaurav teases her that she should be the Editor of *Chandamama* (a children's magazine) instead of a glossy magazine like *Stardust*.

rest." Easily accessible to all, her colleagues apparently keep her abreast of the latest developments in the office—the arrival of a parcel from wherever, the final stage of an artwork for which she had some suggestions to offer, the latest *masala* on some film star...

It was her interest in writing and boredom at a clerical job at Godrej and Boyce that prompted her to take up journalism. "My job was very boring. But after all, what else can a B.Com. do? I used to attend law lectures in the morning and wanted to do something in the evenings so I started with a journalism course at the Xavier Institute of Communications." Having left the course half-way after being accepted by *Stardust* as trainee, she says, "The only thing Xavier's did was to give me a chance to meet Busybee (Behram Contractor). I thought this (job at *Stardust*) was more of a training ground than any journalism course. Prior to working with *Stardust*, while I was at Podar College I used to interview *chotta-motta* film stars for a magazine called *Cinelink*, a Mayapuri Group publication, to earn some extra pocket money. Hence people like Amjad Khan, Amitabh Bachchan and Rakesh Khanna I used to know since those days.

"I can deal with stars better... My film stars are much better people compared to the general public... Most stars speak very good English. The tantrums and traumas of stars are overplayed, so when you come face-to-face with them, it's not all that bad," reveals Badshah. A familiar figure, known to almost all the celebrities in the film industry, there are some with whom she is particularly friendly like

Shammi Aunty and Mani Aunty (the middle-aged Rabadi sisters) the former being a character actress and playing side roles, and the latter being a dress designer who is respected for her fashion creations. Other Parsis who are connected with the film world in various capacities are: Sarosh Mody who specializes in make-up (being associated with noted actor Satjeev Kumar since his theatre days), actress Aruna Irani and film journalist Farida Balsara whom Badshah almost considers her ward. "If you're going to ask me whether I accepted her because she is a Parsi, then the answer is 'no.' She came in on her own merit."

Feeling relatively relaxed after the 200-page *Stardust* annual had been sent to press, Badshah explained how her working hours sometimes stretch from 7 am to 2 am. She considers herself very fortunate in having an understanding husband, Taiyeb, who is a professional photographer. "In fact we met at *Stardust*. He understands. If I'm home late, I'll get sympathy. At times I have to work even on Sundays. But there are occasions when it can be very traumatic when he complains that I'm neglecting our daughter Nazneen and then I feel I'm in a worse dilemma because I'm already aware of the fact and feeling guilty about it." Like most young working mothers, Badshah's daily routine includes leaving Nazneen at her mother's place every morning and picking her up every evening.

She's happy that her parents reconciled themselves (after a week of sulking) to the fact that though Taiyeb is a Muslim, he's the right man for her. "The day they accepted him, they accepted him totally. I could not have gone ahead with the marriage and disappointed them. We are a very close-knit family. To me their permission was very important. Remember I was 25 then, in 1980. I'll never forget the day my father said 'yes', but on the condition that I didn't become a Muslim. For me, the question never arose. My dad had said, 'I want you to be there when I die.' Though at that time I thought he was just being melodramatic, today, when I am a mother I realize his 'no' was not a matter of being stubborn but being logical and practical. My father thought it was like a slap on his face. Subsequently when my sister wanted to marry outside the

community, he had to grant her permission also. I don't think my father has forgiven me..."

"I was told that after my marriage I wouldn't be allowed into the fire-temple or the Towers of Silence. But I go to both these places and no one has ever stopped me. After my daughter was born, the priests came and performed my *nahan* ceremony. It was only when my sister brought it to my notice that I realized that some of the Parsis had stopped saying 'hello' to us but it didn't matter to me.

"All along I thought, I'm still myself, I've not changed in any way. Between my husband and my religion, my religion comes first; it is something

you've grown with all your life. It's a belief. How can you say that once you become a wife you cease to be true to your religion?" Badshah explained her point of view.

"To a great extent, a woman's convictions at the time of her marriage (to a non-Parsi) depends on how a person has been introduced to the religion. I stayed at a Parsi colony (Tata Colony at Bandra) and would go to the Panthaki Agiary every day. I came from a Parsi school (J.B. Vachcha), and thanks to my parents I had a strong religious inclination in me.

"I'm not a religious fanatic. I'm loyal to myself. I've taught my daughter our prayers because I believe that a



Badshah with daughter Nazneen.

child should have a religion and if the priests refuse to perform her navjote, it's going to be just too bad. Having her navjote performed means a lot to me.

"My daughter goes around telling everyone, 'My mummy is a Parsi, my daddy is a Muslim and I'm a Parsi,'" Badshah related.

"Today if my child can pray, it's thanks to me. Taiyeb has more time with her than I do. He could have taught her about his religion but he hasn't. He's forgotten to say *namaaz*. he's very blase. That's what all men are. They have got their compartmentalized lifestyle: 'This is a father's job' but there is no limit to what a mother has to do.

"It's not that I'm advocating total conversion. It's nice to feel exclusive. But I feel that a (Parsi) mother's child should be allowed into the fold otherwise it means looking down on the mother as if to suggest that a father has superior genes. If there are no hangups from the father's side, why not allow the child to enter the community?

"It's time people started taking interest in our religion. It's not only a

matter of wearing the *sudreh-kusti*. It's a lot, lot more," Badshah emphasized.

Referring to her initial adjustment problems Badshah recalled, "When my in-laws realized that I wouldn't

"We are not trying to change the industry or improve the quality of the films and we make no bones about the fact."

undergo the *nikah* ceremony, (wedding ceremony according to Muslim rites), they felt that my name should be changed to Parveen because to them Prochi suggested connotations of *pochchi* (soft—and not the abbreviated version of Pouruchisti, meaning full of wisdom). I explained to Taiyeb that after being known by a particular name for 25 years, if someone from his fami-

ly were to address me as Parveen and not get a response, they should not feel offended. Taiyeb thought my argument made sense."

At the time of her pregnancy Badshah remembers the insistent pressures from her in-laws to bless the child with the blood of a slaughtered goat. "I was adamant. No way was I going to slaughter an animal to bless my child. I am too fond of animals for that kind of sacrifice. My husband knows that when I'm adamant it's better to give in at those times. I don't like anyone's imposing views." Since their first arrival was a girl they did not have to experience any clash of interests. "I don't intend having another baby," Badshah disclosed and after some thought qualified, "at least not for some time."

Very happy in her job as journalist-Editor of *Stardust*, Badshah has no intentions of taking over any other magazine. "When I feel too tied down and want a break, I write for *Society* or *Savvy* (other publications from the Lana Group)." Despite her busy writing schedule she volunteered to write for *Parsiana* so long as she didn't have to interview "boring old *bawas*."

Steamship agents — master stevedores dubashes — lighterage contractors **Darabshaw B. Cursetjee's Sons (Bombay) Pvt. Ltd.**

Darabshaw House, Ballard Road, Bombay - 400 038.

Grams: 'DEADWEIGHT' Telex: 5824 DBCB IN
Phone: 260021 (4 Lines) (Dock Office: 262230)

Also associates at

Calcutta, Vishakhapatnam, Kakinada, Mangalore,
Bhavnagar, Bedi-port, Navlakhi, Veraval, Porbunder & Kandla.

Also sole Government Landing contractors at
Jamnagar, (Bedi) Bhavnagar.