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Parsiana

October 1986
Volume 9 Number 4

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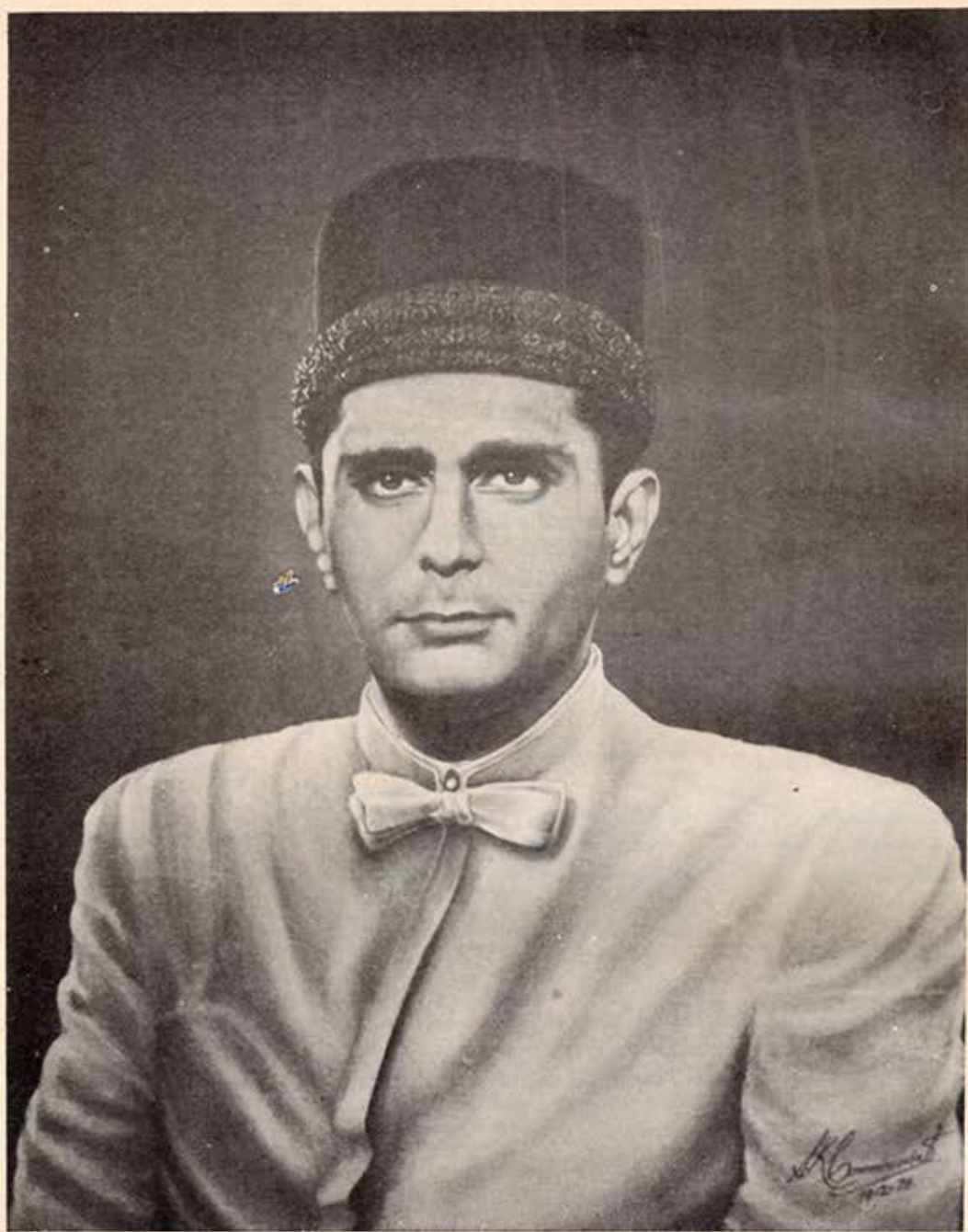
(Below) Second Parsi team to England in 1888.

Photos courtesy Tyeby Press.

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In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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

Forget controversies

I hope that future issues of *Parsiana* address subjects other than the perpetual controversy within the community.

Certainly our religion and its members afford the possibility of more constructive journalism. I share this view with several other Parsis here. For example, you may do a service to the community by independently researching and writing about the outstanding Zoroastrian philanthropists in Los Angeles.

Lastly, and this is probably a matter of aesthetics, please attempt to print your journal in the traditional King's English. I sense a tendency toward American English. Though Americans do many things very well, using the

English language is definitely not their forte.

ADI P. SHIROFF
California, USA

Iran League's appeal

The Iran League has, in the past, rendered yeoman service to the Parsi/Irani Zarthostis of India and Iran. It carried on its multifarious activities for a long period till the situation changed in Iran and it became difficult to continue to keep the link between the Zarthostis of Iran and the Parsi/Irani Zarthostis of India which was the main object for which the League was founded in 1922. Consequently, the role of the League in public life reached a low ebb.

We have decided to activate the League by arranging various cultural and social activities with the participation of Parsi/Irani Zarthostis. Accordingly, the League arranged pilgrim tours to mofussil agiaries. This year on May 9 and 10, we visited atash bahrams, the Goti Adarian at Surat and the Siganpore Agiary. A *Shahnameh* competition was held on July 27, the prize distribution of which is slated for October 19 at Albless Baug.

Moreover, we have decided to start Persian and Gujarati classes and would like to publish booklets such as *Ten Easy Lessons on Zarthrism*. To start with, we have decided to publish *Questions at the time of navjot*.

All these plans need funds. For the furtherance of our activities we appeal to your good selves and your trust for financial assistance. A cheque may please be drawn in favor of "Iran League" and forwarded to Ervad Fali S. Master, Honorary Secretary, Iran League, Navsari Building, 2nd floor, 240 Dr D. Naorji Road, Fort, Bombay 400001.

SIR JAMSETJEE JEJEEBHOOY, BART.
President, Iran League

Girton's centenary

With the Girton High School's centenary due in 1988, we invite ex-students and the community to help us celebrate the event. The School children expect to hold a concert, their parents will organize an Anand Mela and the

Old Girls' Association hopes to arrange interesting programs. The funds that these activities generate will help to equip the School with added equipment and audiovisual aids. Books, magazines, educational cassettes of plays and music will be most welcome for our new library. The community's help in cash and kind will go a long way to carry the institution on the course its visionary founder had conceived a hundred years ago.

In an era when cooking, needlework and a subservient manner were considered sufficient accomplishments for a young woman, Ms Bachoobai A.F. Moos had started the Girton School in a rented building near Grant Road Station with only 10 pupils. Until 1946, when she passed away peacefully after a full day's work, Ms Moos continued as the School's principal. The position then devolved on Ms Silla Ardeshir, Ms Moos' grand-niece, who continued as honorary principal for the next 39 years.

Ms Ardeshir gradually modernized the school, updated teaching methods and introduced extra-curricular activities. Red Cross work, elocution and dramatics, Indian dancing, choir singing, Girl Guides and Bulbuls, the Interact Club and swimming classes became common features. (The latest and very popular additions to these activities are karate, jazz ballet and a computer course.) The students began participating in inter-school competitions and acquitted themselves very creditably. But more important, the SSC results proved to be cent percent, year after year.

To replace the derelict old building, past pupils and the management joined together to form the Old Girtonians' Association Property Fund whose 25-year-long project culminated in 1984 when the new school building, construction of which was started in 1974, was officially opened by Mr Nani Palkhivala.

The School now has about 750 students on the rolls. The girls come from all communities and those who cannot afford even the nominal charges are given remission, while some are taught free. A midday meal is supplied free to

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the poor and the undernourished Parsi pupils, while others are given free books and clothes as required.

The School's trustees are always under pressure to accept more pupils, but their policy is not to overcrowd the classrooms but to offer a high standard of education with as much individual attention as possible. Nor do they accept "donations" to admit new pupils.

Sadly, only a few Parsi families now take advantage of the facilities offered by the School. Once there were over 90 percent Parsi pupils. Now the number has dwindled to about 30 percent.

Donations to help the School will qualify for tax concession under section 80G of the Income-tax Act, if sent in favor of the Old Girtonians' Association Property Fund, C/o Girton High School, Wimbridge Compound, Bombay 400007.

Ms N.D. SANJANA
Principal, Girton High School

"The Argument for ..."

Dr P.D. Sunavala's allegation that my booklet, *The Argument for Acceptance* carries "the implication that we in India should open the floodgates to non-Zoroastrians" (*Parsiana*, July '85) could not in any way be surmised from my conclusion (pages 43-44). If my booklet has any implication, he may have missed it: The Peterson navjote was not a farcical rite - "an insult, mockery and a cruel joke," as claimed by the three learned Dasturjis (Hormazdyar Mirza, Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Firoze Kotwal) one of whom surprisingly had already accepted the *Vaetha Nask's* recommendation of "conversion on one's own desire" as authentic and valid. I have simply stated what I know to be the real truth which will once again be lost to the community if a wrong inference is made. It is not for us here to tell the Parsis (of India) what to do, though they have told us enough on this subject which is not even in harmony with our scriptures and earlier history. That was the real purpose for writing the booklet and not for opening the floodgates to non-Zoroastrians as Sunavala alleges.

Contrary to what he says about my taking up the cudgels to convert others here, our attention at present is almost entirely directed towards our own progeny remaining and marrying



amongst Zoroastrians, and if a Peterson on his own happens to find our religion worthy of adoption, most of us will welcome him with open arms in the spirit of the *Vaetha Nask*. We invite Sunavala and others to visit us and gain a firsthand knowledge of what we are doing, to avoid unjust surmises.

Sunavala asserts, "a non-Parsi wife of a Parsi husband should be absorbed within the community but Antia thinks that restricting acceptance into the faith only through marriage is too restrictive... Such free-for-all measures as Antia suggests could spell our doomsday," a conclusion one cannot possibly arrive at from even a very casual perusal of pages 43-44. I do quote the views of Insler and others in this regard to bring out the real truth, but knowing the peculiar problems as well as mentality of the Parsis vis-a-vis Iranis, I have not advocated "free-for-all" measures for them, not only for their sake but for the sake of the converts as well. The possibility of Petersons studying and adopting Zoroastrianism entirely on their own in India is so slight because of various factors prevailing there, that one would hardly worry about the specter raised by Sunavala.

Nevertheless, I salute him for endorsing the acceptance of our non-Zoroastrian female spouses. However, his non-acceptance of our non-Zoroastrian male spouses and their progeny is not in consonance with our prophet's emphasis on the unprecedented and categorical equality of man and woman. Even the later Pahlavi literature, e.g. Pahlavi *Vendidad* 18, emphasizes this tradition by asserting that both man and woman are equal

sinner in the eyes of God, a concept unknown in those times. Such an acceptance will ensure the existence of the community.

It will be such a tragedy for us all if the Zoroastrians in North America dwindle away from the face of the earth despite their open mind, while those in India will follow suit despite their closed mind. I renew Dasturji Dhalla's call for a conference to resolve this crisis and not let a stray court order resolve the problem as in the first decade of our century.

Dr KERSEY ANTIA
Illinois, USA

Prosper or perish

Will the Parsis live on as a community or be wiped out in the next few years? Today, this is the biggest challenge in front of all of us whether old or young, the obvious reason being the declining population.

I understand that the Zoroastrian population in the world is around 1,20,000. A community whose religion is one of the most ancient is yet too microscopic. Even the Sikh community, which was founded hardly four centuries ago has a population around 15 times that of ours.

I very sincerely feel that we ourselves are responsible for this situation. A drastic change is required in our views and policies; we might have to mold our policies keeping the present situation in view.

History teaches us that no major goals can be achieved unless we are prepared to sacrifice. How was our Independence achieved in 1947? A sacrifice by thousands of patriots. How was the Sikh community formed? Hindu

families sacrificed one or more of their sons for this new community.

Parsi girls who are already married to non-Parsi boys should be given the option to admit their children into our religion. We have to convince people, inject an idea in them to have at least one more child than what they actually plan. Suppose we have around 15,000 to 20,000 couples between 30 and 40 years, they should sacrifice their comforts and get one extra child than what they plan for. For this additional child we should be prepared to give the following compensation:

- Give the lady financial assistance for all expenses incurred at the time of pregnancy and delivery.
- Give a fixed amount to the couple each month for every extra child reared by them. This is the pattern adopted in the Middle-East countries. The Government gives additional money per child, thus encouraging parents to have more children.
- In cases where the parents are very poor, we should be prepared even to take over the child and bring it up at our own cost. Such children can also be adopted by rich childless couples.

My next suggestion is to persuade unmarried Parsis to get married and beget children. Give the requisite facilities to such couples as employment, accommodation, etc.

Presently, our country's main problem is the increasing population and the consequent national philosophy of family planning. But the quantitative effect of the growth of Zoroastrians on India's population would be negligible. For example, an increase of 10,000 Parsis means about eight percent increase in the total Zoroastrian population, but this would affect the population of India only by .001 percent. The Government of India would surely pardon us for this as the contribution of Parsis towards the development of India is well-known.

VIRAF MIRZAN
Kuwait

Food therapy

It is observed from our considerable experience in the Free Food Service Charitable Trust that 90 percent of the ailing members of our community suffer from various illnesses originating from weakness caused by want of

wholesome food. Since wholesome food is becoming costly, we supplement their regular diet with nourishing food items through the medium of our Trust. This we have been doing for the last one decade.

To further develop our original scheme, we have decided to start a Clinic Centre on our feeding program day, when a qualified doctor will prescribe the type of vitamin food which may be required for a particular patient. The patient will then be given a nourishing food packet by us. A chart will be maintained to see the progress and the time taken to improve the patient's health. For this social work, we owe our thanks to Dr Inam Abdus Salam who has offered his honorary service to our Parsi community.

While we believe in administering the right medicine, we feel that what the poor, ailing and needy members of our community require today is not merely voluminous items to fill the belly, but really nutritious food to improve their health. The summary is: let the food act as medicine.

SAMY ENGINEER
Active Trustee, Free Food Service Charitable Trust

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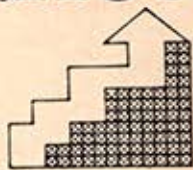
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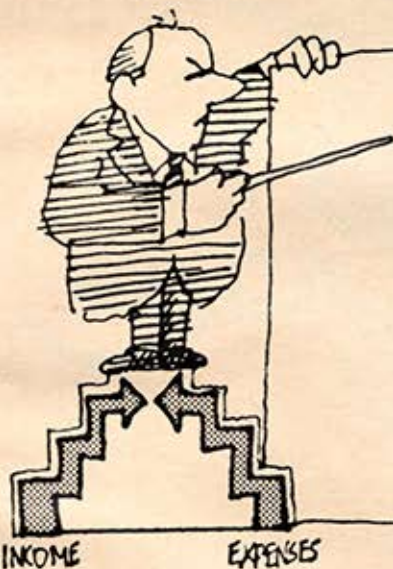
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Trikaya P.E. 2, 86

Events and Personalities

The unsung patriot

Advocating a chair for national integration in the University of Bombay and annual Bhikhaiji Cama memorial lectures, Minorities Commission member Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan paid stirring tribute to the "high priestess of Indian nationalism and Florence Nightingale of India."

Speaking at the combined function held by the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute and the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha at the Cama Library hall on September 24, 1986 to celebrate the one hundred and twenty-fifth birth anniversary of Bhikhaiji Cama, Taleyarkhan noted that Madame Cama, the first person to have a vision of complete independence for India, went from place to place propagating the idea, which is why not much is known within India of what she did. Quoting free India's first governor general C. Rajagopalachary, Taleyarkhan spoke of the "brave and tenacious part Cama played when patriotism was sedition and not a paying concern".

Nee Patel, Bhikhaiji Cama was born to wealth and position. The daughter-in-law of famous indologist K.R. Cama, her marriage to his son, Rustom, fell prey to their antithetical characters: he was conservative, she revolutionary. In 1902 she separated from him and "exiled herself in England so that her activities could be unfettered by any restrictions of the British government in India," observed retired judge and ex Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Jal Vimadlal who presided in the absence of BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwala and of Cama Institute's vice-president Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy who were called away to an official function organized by the University of Bombay.

Cama's political career was kindled by Dadabhoy Naoroji and she followed his teachings to a great extent.

Naoroji fought for Indian Independence within the British Parliament. Cama fought without. Hers was a time when repression was rife, jail terms and deportations the order of the day. She considered armed conflict as justified and had celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the 1857 war as the First War of Indian Independence. Thus she was said to be a forerunner of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Subash Chandra Bose.

A high point of Cama's career was the unfurling of the Indian national flag - her own creation - at the socialist meet in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1907 where, as noted Progressive Group president Ms Perviz Dotivala, she demanded - and got - "a standing ovation to the flag."

With the onset of World War I, Cama fled Britain to establish herself

Cowasji Jehangir and freedom fighter and social worker Burjorji Bharucha were responsible for enabling her to return, said noted homeopath Dr Sarosh Wadia. But from the ship she went straight to the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital where she died September 12, 1936 - unknown, unsung, a decade before India's Independence.

President of the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha Jal Vakil spoke of the warm humanist qualities that led her to work among plague victims in Bombay and to nurse the dying brother who had disapproved and spurned her. Industrialist Sohrab Godrej recalled that Cama had "never failed to speak of Hindu-Muslim unity" and added that Cama had wanted to be buried at the Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris. Wadia noted that Cama's famous flag now lies in Poona with Tilak's heirs and suggested that it be enshrined in the national archives.

The seven-member panel of speakers, which included Dastur Dr Hormazdyar Mirza and Ms Aban Minbattivala, spoke variously about Cama's contribution to the Indian freedom struggle, each one valiantly respecting the seven-minute time limit set by the organizers, thus contributing to an interesting, informative evening.



Cama: unfettered by British restrictions

in Paris, her circle of friends including Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini and Russian novelist Maxim Gorki. "There was not a single revolutionary in Europe (then a hotbed of revolution) who did not know her," noted Dotivala. The French government resisted British calls to extradite her, until, broken in health, she yearned to return to Bombay. Philanthropist Sir

Studio highlights

The new furniture gleams as photographed faces look down from the wall: Indira Gandhi in a *gara*, Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi, wedding photographs, babies, industrial plants and vintage motorcars highlight the work Homyar Mistry undertakes.

Called Homz Prints, the new Tardeo office of Parsiana friend and photographer Homyar Mistry makes good use of every available space to accommodate the front office, the dark room leading into the enlarger room ("the cockpit of the entire office," according to Homyar) and the

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cropping and drying machine room from where a narrow and steep staircase leads onto the mezzanine studio housing the JVC video cassette recorder and television as Mistry also undertakes video shooting. Homz Prints also holds the agency for the "1-hour colortronics film lab."

Having undertaken everything "from ocean to sky," Homyar talks of his 1982 Asian Games yachting assignment which gave him a lot of publicity. A keen mountaineer, he has also created an audiovisual tribute to his "first love," the mountains. With clients that include the India Tobacco Company, Herbertsons, Godrej, Dippy's and *Signature* magazine, Mistry says he is currently making a video documentary on Phiroze Dastur, the optometrists.

A qualified textile designer, Homyar took to photography on a trekking holiday, after which one of his frames was selected for a photography competition and later published on the back cover of an in-house magazine. This success ignited his interest in photography and he studied the subject under Rustom B. Behlhomji who is now a course coordinator for Pathfinders, the research division of Lintas. "Then for a short time I worked with Pankaj Shah, a professional photographer," but as Homyar notes with a grin, "I always wanted to be on my own, so I fled from there!" and started out on his own.

Operating from home was getting difficult for Homyar. "My first dark room was under the dining table." A long table cloth covering the table would be weighed down. But all this could only be done after 9 pm. Soon his father's godown (his father has a tinned provisions business) took the place of the dining table "the first step to being totally independent..."

"When business swells, it's always better to do it by proper channels...How long could I continue from my residence? I can't bring the clients home and it was taxing to my parents." Today, though he has two assistants, Anil Salvi and Kishore Tamble, who help at the new premises, Homyar is nevertheless grateful that, "support is still coming from the family."

Doctors in the dock

"Once you put on the doctor's dress, all the nonsense you talk becomes wisdom," noted French satirist Moliere in



Mistry with a video camera in his new studio

the 1660s in his play *The Imaginary Invalid*. Ironically presiding over an evening of mirth at the expense of the medicos were Dr Aspi Golwalla and Dr Darab Jussawalla, as veteran thespian Naseeruddin Shah led a versatile caste to stage a brilliant revival of the old classic in aid of the Rayomand Committee's fund raising drive on September 19, 1986 at the Birla Matushri Sabhagar.

Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla who presided, remarked that "people get nervous when a BPP trustee begins to speak." He complimented the ladies on the 12 lakh rupees that they had already collected and contributed to development at Godrej Baug and noted that the next building of 40 flats would be earmarked for those waiting to get married. Comprised of outstanding community socialites, the all-ladies Committee has been collecting funds for the BPP's housing construction activity since 1978.

The Committee's vice chairman Ms Naju Bhabha, introducing Jussawalla, the evening's chief guest, with just a few well-worded sentences, remarked, "He really belongs to that threatened species, the fast-dwindling breed we call 'the gentleman.'" Matching Bhabha's suave brevity Jussawalla noted, "The chief guest should be seen and not heard!"

Ms Homai Modi, the energetic chairperson of the Rayomand Committee's entertainment subcommittee, proposing a vote of thanks, announced that the gross collection that day was over two lakh rupees. The ladies had gathered substantial advertising sup-

port and presented several prizes for lucky programs. If only they could have included in the souvenir a little background information about the playwright and the sparkling English translation that was so ably put across!

SPOTLIGHT

The German Democratic Republic's Star of People's Friendship Award was presented to **Rusi K. Karanjia**, Editor of *The Daily* and *Blitz* publications, and the first person outside of the GDR to receive the country's highest honor, notes *The Free Press Journal* of September 17, 1986.

"To give prominence to professionals in laying down policies," noted industrialist **Ratan Tata** has been appointed chairman of Air-India's new management board, notes *The Times of India* report of September 20. **Rusi Modi** chairman of the Tata Iron and Steel Company has been included on the management board of Indian Airlines.

Rusi N. Engineer, managing director of Industrial Boilers Pvt Ltd has been elected vice chairman of the National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs, Maharashtra State Board, notes the *Business India* of August 25-September 5, 1986.

An honorary doctorate was conferred on noted nuclear scientist, **Dr Homi N. Sethna** by the Benaras Hindu University. Sethna has received similar honors from other Indian Universities including the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and the Bombay University, adds the report.

No segregation

"Read and try to comprehend your *Gathas*," advised Dr Rostam Sarfeh, president of the board of trustees of the Rustam Guiv Trust, in a letter dated August 26, 1986 to Sabar Balsara, Editor of the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). Sarfeh was protesting the "special request" published in the July issue of the ZSO newsletter, dissuading non-Zoroastrian spouses from attending the five-day muktad ceremonies at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr of Ontario in order to maintain "harmony and unity in the community" (see also *Parsiana*, November 1985).

Stating that this attitude has to be cured as one cures a disease like drug addiction, Sarfeh says, "In the 17 chapters of the Divine Messages you cannot find a single phrase or rhyme which would indicate partiality. Actually Zoroaster praises the persons who teach and promulgate his Divine Songs."

Sarfeh then goes on to cite concrete examples from the *Gathas* as when "in *Yasna* 46-13, Zarathushtra declares, 'Those amongst men who spread His teachings, Ahura Mazda will grant them spiritual life and benevolence of *vohu mananghai* (cosmic or super consciousness).' In 33-1, he declares, 'The *ratush* (spiritual leader) brings his messages to the righteous as well as the wicked.' So the messages are for all mankind, even the *dragvatae*," concludes Sarfeh.

Contrasting the example of the Christians who spend millions of dollars on propagating their dogmas throughout the world, Sarfeh notes, "Amongst billions of world population, we have dwindled to one hundred thousand, and we have chosen a route to annihilation... (But) enough is enough, we will not let that happen any more. We are the followers of Zarathushtra and our religious book is the *Gathas*. You can carry on with muktad the way you want it with your corroborators, at your homes, but not in community worshipping places."

Then, on behalf of the Rustam Guiv Foundation of Ontario and the trustees of the Mehraban Guiv Darbe

Mehr, Sarfeh apologised to non-Zoroastrian spouses everywhere "if the statement in the newsletter has offended any persons. I assure you that this statement is against the wishes of the donor Arbab Rustam Guiv," he added.

Copies of Sarfeh's letter have been mailed to various Zoroastrian associations in North America and UK with a request to present photocopies to all the non-Zoroastrian spouses.

Diploma in Zoroastrianism

"We intend starting a one-year diploma on Zoroastrianism, particularly geared for Zoroastrians," notes Professor John R. Hinnells of the Department of Comparative Religion, University of Manchester, UK, in a letter dated July 27, 1986. The course will include ancient and modern history, Pahlavi and Avestan.

"Life in our department is thriving," reports the professor. Dr (Ms) Shirinbanoo Kutar has endowed a research scholarship in the department, in memory of her husband, the late Dastur Sohrab Kutar. Dr Alan Williams of the University of Sussex has been transferred to the Department of Comparative Religion, University of Manchester, "thus doubling our strength on Zoroastrianism," adds Hinnells and notes that Manchester University has agreed to fund a full-time research assistant for his work on Zoroastrians in Britain as also a research visit to Zoroastrian communities in Singapore, Australia and parts of America.

Refugee fund

A Refugee and Immigrant Fund has been started by the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) to render assistance to refugees, especially those from Iran, notes ZAC's September newsletter.

Citing the example of Minu and Mehroo Patel of Chicago who extended warm hospitality to two young Zoroastrian refugees for a month, the newsletter invites sponsors - "an enabler, a friend, somebody who helps them settle down in this wonderful land of opportunity, and become self-sufficient as soon as possible," - or in-

dividual contributions towards the project, notes the newsletter.

On a three-day sponsored visit to Chicago, Dastur Meherji Meherjirana, High Priest of Navsari, gave a talk on the history and heritage of Zoroastrians at the Chicago Darbe Mehr on August 17, 1986, notes the newsletter. The visit gave the Dastur an opportunity to meet the Zoroastrians of Chicago and to participate in their other functions.

So that the congregation may participate and fully comprehend the jashan prayers, five booklets on the jashan prayers and one booklet on the *Atash Nyaish* have been compiled by Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna for ZAC, notes the newsletter. The small five-and-a-half by eight-and-a-half-inch booklets, contain prayer texts on one side with a translation on the opposite page. The texts and translations have been taken from *My Prayer Guide* published by Dastur Navrooz D. Minochehr-Homji, adds the report. Those who wish to purchase the booklets may write to ZAC, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521 or contact Rivetna on 325- 5383.

The revised second edition of the book on religious instruction, *The Message of Zarathushtra* published by the California Zoroastrian Center, is now available. The book briefly describes the basic principles of the Zoroastrian religion, Zarathushtra's teachings, Zoroastrian festivals, rituals and history, the influence of Zoroastrianism on other religions, and the Zoroastrian calendars. The book, which is also illustrated, is priced at five dollars plus postage and handling and is available from Bahram Shahzadi, 6527, N. Hoyne No 2N, Chicago, Illinois 60645 (Tel: 312-262-8923).

Room for improvement

In an attempt to increase participation at community functions, the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) of New South Wales, circulated questionnaires in April 1986 on how to improve community functions. However,

continued on page 33

The Godrej exit

Arnavaz S. Mama

Waves of surprise and disbelief rippled through the community at the news of Naoroji Godrej's sudden departure from the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) board of trustees on October 1, 1986. Lack of an official announcement from the BPP increased the fog surrounding the event.

Contacted on the phone, BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwala claimed to be "taken aback" while another trustee stated that the reason for Godrej's resignation stemmed from a remark made by BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder at a board meeting held three weeks earlier, pertaining to donations officially asked for and accepted by the Godrej Foundation from those to whom housing had been allotted by Godrej.

Godrej's arrival on the Parsi political scene in November 1984, to contest the seat due to be vacated by Jamshed Guzder in February 1985 at the end of his first 10-year tenure, had resulted in Guzder withdrawing from the contest, even though he had earlier announced his desire to continue on the board. Guzder returned unopposed to the board in January 1986 when BPP trustee Jal Vimadlal resigned a year and a half before his first term ended.

At Godrej Baug, the source of the feud, BPP land has been developed by donors such as Godrej, who then have the benefit of allotting 50 percent of the flats to beneficiaries of their choice.

Naoroji Godrej noted that whoever is allotted a flat is requested to donate in the region of Rs 40,000 to the Punchayet's building fund – not immediately, but as and when they feel able to do so – and most have responded willingly. "Where can you get such a place for Rs 40,000?" he queries and adds, "I have done this openly. I thought the whole world knew it. Whatever money comes in is given back to the BPP – where do they think the money comes from?" Not that everyone pays, says Godrej, citing the example of one allottee from the

Panday Sanatorium who was unable to do so.

Godrej noted that the BPP was writing to those students the Punchayet has helped with scholarships, asking them to make donations, in return, to the BPP's building fund. If recipients of Rs 5,000 or more were being asked to donate, then why should not beneficiaries of flats worth Rs 3.5 lakhs each similarly be so requested?

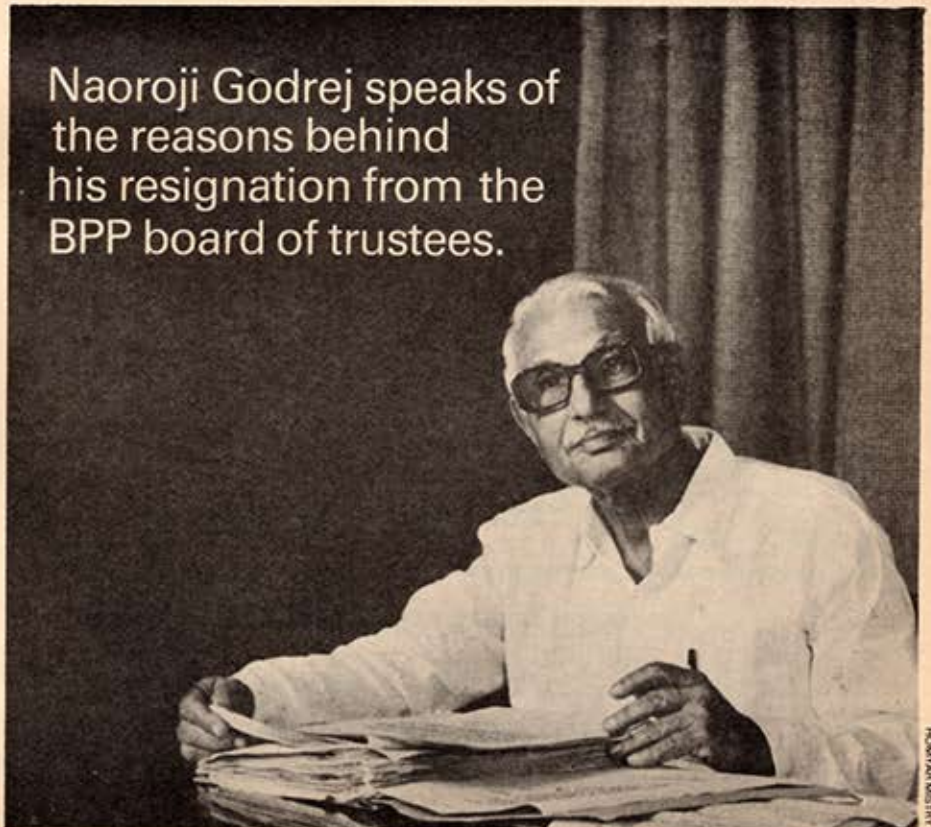
Godrej also says that while the Punchayet claims to be following the Committee for Economic Revival's merit rating system (whereby applications were supposed to be rated impartially, according to need, by a responsible non-Punchayet assessor) in reality a system of patronage survives, as certain trustees jack up points arbitrarily – for example one trustee notched up a particular application by 16 points, adds the silver-haired, cotton-clad ty-

coon. Godrej's contention is that the moment an application is handed in, its status according to the merit rating system should be established and the applicant informed, on the spot, how many points he gets and thus, where he stands vis-a-vis getting a flat. "Once he knows he has say 35 points, he can keep tabs and ask questions if another gets a flat with less than 35 points," says Godrej, "It will keep everyone on their toes."

The truncated trusteeship term appears to have aborted many of Godrej's ideas for the Punchayet:

As a solution to the problem of disaffection in the community, rumors and smear campaigns, Godrej had suggested a system of "open house" on fixed days of the month where all seven trustees and the main office bearers of the Punchayet administra-

Naoroji Godrej speaks of the reasons behind his resignation from the BPP board of trustees.



tion could face and answer whatever charges and or requests the community chose to make. This would obviate the individual audiences the trustees grant and help to minimize the allegations made behind peoples' backs. Apparently, Godrej's idea reportedly did not receive much support.

Even before Godrej joined the BPP in 1985, trustee Homi Ranina had announced Godrej's willingness to put his Company's computers at the Punchayet's disposal. Hitherto, only the BPP's matrimonial bureau has availed of the offer. The bewildering profusion of Punchayet accounts have not yet been completed to the stage where they can be computerized. Though Godrej is no longer on the Punchayet, he says he will honor his offer though he can no longer "ask" for the accounts to be entrusted to him.

Regarding the maintenance of re-

sidential properties, Godrej felt that repairs on an ad hoc basis were hardly the answer, but required a systematic overhaul of a certain number of buildings as a continuing process in each baug, undertaken by its own permanent team under the supervision of the concerned tenants.

Though a loyal Athravan Educational Trust's (AET) trustee ("Tell me why is it wrong to educate young mobeds in English and comparative religion? Why is Huzan Kharas not fit to be managing trustee? Because she is young? Because she is a woman?") Godrej is conscious that the attack on two high priests, Dasturs Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Hormazdyar Mirza, by his fellow trustees at a public meeting in Dadar on August 10, 1985 was a grave error and he has tendered his personal apologies to the dasturs on their behalf. Noting that the priests

under the scheme now receive their AET instruction in Godrej Bhavan, Godrej was full of praise for the young Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) personnel, speaking of their dedication and hard work with no hope of financial returns, even in the face of community disapproval. To undermine those who do such good work does not bode well for the community, he says.

At a meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India at the Sir Mancherji Khareghat Hall, Bombay on August 30 and 31, 1986 Godrej had mentioned his intention of setting up a school for above average children of all communities - Parsis included. He now reiterated his intention to follow it through, once the land at Vikhroli is released from the Land Ceiling Act for the purpose. Though not quite decided on his stand vis-a-vis the Federation, now that he is no longer a BPP trustee, Godrej said that if he feels he is able to contribute to the welfare of the community, he may continue to serve upon the Federation if so requested.

For years, everyone had tried to induct the soft-spoken business magnate onto the BPP board. An acknowledged liberal, his work for the community generated enthusiastic support from all shades of opinion, though he himself refers to his assent as "a moment of weakness" under pressure from such community barons as Nani Palkhivala, Neville Wadia and Shrivastav Vakil. An aura of political design had however hovered over the event as Godrej had insisted on standing only for the seat due to be vacated by BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder whose term was drawing to a close, despite Guzder's known desire to continue for a second term. To accommodate both, BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga had offered to resign. Kanga's gesture had been turned down by Godrej who says he had publicly agreed to contest Guzder's seat and hence did not consider it worth withdrawing from that contest and entering the fray again at a later stage. But the occasion may perhaps have tinged later events.

Despite his wealth and position, the small-built, elfin figure has his feet firmly planted on the ground. Was it right for him to have thus walked off the BPP when the community needs leadership so badly? "What makes you think I'm going to live for ever?" he smiles deprecatingly.

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Vice-chancellor is new BPP trustee

Parinaz Toddywalla

"The trustees (of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet) should be like a team of experts with expertise in each of their portfolios. There should be distribution of portfolios so that everyone need not meddle with everything." Dr Mehroo Bengalee, vice-chancellor of the Bombay University and the only person offering to contest the BPP trusteeship seat vacated by Naoroji Godrej's sudden resignation, had a definite set of views to optimize the trustees' services to the community. According to her, the seven trustees should be like a "real assembly of knowledgeable people with loving care, concern and commitment to the community; not *naam ke vaaste* (in name only)."

Not feeling the need to attend all the board meetings, Bengalee adds, "I'll insist on one aspect (portfolio): providing the right perspective to the youth, beginning from an early age till they are about to settle down in life. Our children should be so thoroughly occupied that there is not one hour free in their routine. A schedule to work within the community is not provided for them."

Since she first showed a willingness to occupy the trusteeship seat, Bengalee says she has felt, "I should give more time for our own children. From this position I can be useful." Giving the background of what prompted her to contest, Bengalee noted, "When Dasturji Minochehr-Homji called one Sunday afternoon to say, 'We are

looking for a *banu* (lady) trustee, are you willing?' I replied, 'I've no objection.'" Shortly thereafter Dinshaw Merchant, a businessman active in community affairs, asked Bengalee to submit a paragraph detailing what she would like to focus on during her tenure as trustee. Warming to the subject closest to her heart, Bengalee said she would work for the youth, educational trusts and the problems they face, and help in the establishment of a medical-engineering institute. Bengalee agreed to put her signature to the above paragraph and "before I knew it the announcement had come in the Press. Prior to the announcement I had told (chairman) Aspi (Gollwalla), 'I hope it's okay' to which he said 'Good you've accepted.' After that I don't know whether it's right, or wrong (to have accepted)."

Not sure where her support lay, Bengalee noted, "I'm not really anxious to be elected. If there's going to be a contest, I may give a second thought (to my nomination). Unless Dasturji is very keen, I am not going to press for the seat. We'll see who's coming forward...If there are different pockets and vested interests, I'd be the last person to get involved."

In the Press announcement Bengalee had indicated that she would be able to spare 10 hours a week in the service of the Punchayet. Though Bengalee was unable to keep her first appointment with *Parsiiana* on October 15 (after keeping the magazine's



representatives waiting for an hour), and on the second occasion on October 18 made repeated pleas of "Please hurry up," Bengalee was confident that she could work "even more than 10 to 12 hours a week which is the minimum I had mentioned, because I am used to working from morn to night." Frequently glancing at the wrist watch kept on her table in the sparsely furnished office overlooking the flora on the University premises, the short, rotund, curly-haired, 55-year-old vice-chancellor in a simply cut colorful dress rushed through the hour-long interview with an apologetic smile. Whether dictating a commendation certificate to her secretary, discussing some organizational points with the registrar in Marathi, or chatting politely over the phone with the delegates who had come to participate in the Indian Congress of Social Science hosted by Bombay University, Bengalee seemed to know her moves.

Discussions on the disoriented youth and the educational institutions

Dr Mehroo Bengalee was the only one to announce her candidature for the Bombay Parsi Punchayet trusteeship seat vacated by Naoroji Godrej.

of the community brought an extra sparkle to Bengalee's eyes: "Parsis have established such wonderful educational trusts and institutions like the Dhunmai Cawasji School in Khandala and the Batha and Billimoria Schools in Panchgani. We should work towards a system where it would be considered an asset to be part of a Parsi

The system of "*baap ne paise, trust ne paise sikhvanu* should be clamped down."

establishment (instead of) enrolling our children in Christian missionary schools."

Up to SSC, the child's education is the parents' responsibility, she says. After that, financial aid for further education should be considered as a repayable loan. The system of "*baap ne paise, trust ne paise sikhvanu* (studying at the father's and trust's expense) should be clamped down. To expend from trust funds is a waste of money." The 16 to 20 age-group which "is totally neglected" should be taught that University education is futile for those not academically inclined, especially when it is not self-supporting. If sufficiently motivated, students should find employment in a chosen field where there is the possibility of gaining work experience and simultaneously raising the required money to support their higher education.

The problem of a brain drain arises because of less opportunity. If the youth are absorbed in our community establishments, there won't be this problem, says Bengalee. She then referred to the two leadership training programs conducted under her guidance for Parsi students who had passed the SSC and HSC examinations. The 10-day program started with two hours of religious instruction each day where students from elitist schools like Cathedral and John Connon and Campanion were taught the importance of the sudreh-kusti and certain basic prayers. They were made to feel that they were the future leaders of the community. A survey of Parsi establishments and entrepreneurs was done by those enrolled on the program. Outstanding

dignitaries like Nani Palkhivala, Naval Tata and S.R. Vakil were given the responsibility of two students each so that the youngsters could benefit from the advice and influence of those outstanding members of the community. "We used to maintain follow-up action in the case of both these groups." Later, this activity was taken over by the Committee for Economic Revival (CER) under the guidance of Ms Perin Cabinetmaker.

"We should build our boys. Some of our girls are working so hard and they find that the boys are not there to support them. With (married) girls moving out and giving importance to careers, (do they know) what they are losing? Talks and films on child psychology should be organized for parents at the baugs where 80 percent of the Parsi population resides. Subjects should range from child care and nutrition, to the results of giving undue importance to careers when you may end up spending more due to neglect at home. Besides, talks should be given to couples before marriage on what they're going in for, and after marriage on the traditions, customs and rituals of the community. There are not sufficient social meets within the community where the boys and girls could meet, where the youth and elders could interact..."

"Even if you concentrate on one group - the youth - the whole community will be taken care of as the problems of the aging community will be automatically lifted," she emphasized.

Today, parents often voice a complaint that it is difficult to wake up children in the morning, mentioned Bengalee. "But we, as children, never faced this problem. We were never woken up, but got up by ourselves with the fragrance of incense and the chanting of prayers. Such old customs should be revived," she added.

Describing herself as "*a choost* (staunch) Parsi" and a "conservative" rather than be mistaken for a reformist - a suggestion she promptly turned down with a "*chhi*" - Bengalee is not favorable to the presence of non-Parsis at the geh sarna. "*Hu to mad thai jau* (I would go mad)... Even in the case of the film (*On Wings of Fire*), *jem tem* TV *per joi* (it was an effort to see it through)." With a strict religious upbringing Bengalee, who observes the *tariqats* to this day, noted frankly, "If I

don't begin my day with prayer, something seems to be amiss. It's become an obsession. If you don't pray, you feel incomplete." She then cited a recent occurrence when she had to set off for Pune at 4 am in the morning along with another colleague. Planning to pray on the outward journey, Bengalee started showing signs of irritation when her companion seemed to be interested in holding some discussion with her. Finally excusing herself, she had to explain to him that she would rather pray first and continue with the discussion later. As vice-chancellor, her Diwali greeting cards this year carry the message of the Zoroastrian tenets of "good thoughts, good words and good deeds."

Bengalee was neither in favor of accepting non-Zoroastrian spouses into the fold, nor children of a non-Parsi spouse. But in the latter case she qualified, "It depends on the mother. I find Gujaratis more liberal than Christians who are very staunch."

A trustee of the Maneckji Cooper Education Trust and the Garib Zoroastrian Rehthan Fund, Bengalee also has "very close contact with the Panday School." She was closely affiliated with the BPP's vocational guidance scheme. Though in an administrative position, Bengalee's love for teaching has not languished and she

"There are more social workers among Parsis, than any other community. But the Parsi ego is also stronger."

continues to lecture MPhil students and coach PhD students at the Bombay University. Maintaining her Girl Guide ties, Bengalee admits, "I owe a lot to that - character training, independence, team spirit, feeling for outdoor ventures." She still retains her membership of the Rotary, East District and the Bombay Adult Education Association. Bengalee enjoys delivering public lectures, solving educational problems and counselling students. Though unable to find much time now,

continued on page 45

Poona polls scheduled

With the uncontested election of the 75-member Anjuman Committee, a new board of trustees is to be elected on November 27.

Niloofer J. Madon

The members of the Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) are gearing up for the election of the new seven-member board of trustees, to be held on November 27, 1986. The elections come in wake of a new 75-member Anjuman Committee, who occupied office without having to contest an election as the total number of candidates from the various registers equalled the number of seats available. The Anjuman Committee elections had been slated for October 26, but after some candidates were persuaded to withdraw their nominations, the PPP was spared the expense of hosting an election. However, now with nine nominations withdrawn there is, in fact, a vacancy of two in the A register, "but these can be filled later," assures the amiable Panchayat administrative officer, Ms Dhan Mehta.

Anjuman Committee elections are held every five years and comprise candidates from five registers, namely:

Alongside (from left) K. Irani, Marolia, Grant, M. Irani, Kaikobad, Kamdin and Dinshaw at the annual meet.

Below right: Mehta (second from right) getting members to register their names

Below: Honorary treasurer Rustom Dubash (left) with Avari.

the donor register (those who donate Rs 5,000 and above), register A (those who donate Rs 1,000 or more to the Panchayat), register B (those who give Rs 300 for life membership or Rs 100 and annual fees of Rs 8 for ordinary membership), register C (life members who give Rs 300 and ordinary members who pay annual fees of Rs 15) and register D (those who give Rs 150 for life membership or pay annual dues of Rs 5 for ordinary membership).

The outgoing board of trustees held their last annual general meeting at the

Pudumjee Hall on October 16. The meeting turned out to be a tame affair as predicted by trustee Marzban Kaikobad earlier, since this was the last meeting of the outgoing board.

The 45-minute evening meeting dealt largely with formalities with some discussions on housing allotments, availability of kustis and whether the language should be referred to as Gujarati *bhasha* or as Gujarati only. ("Gujarati *bhasha* bolvu correct *nathi lagtu*. Gujarateech bolvu *continued on page 38*")



Nine annual awards to recognize community excellence in educational, social, political and cultural fields have been instituted by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India at the instance of Federation vice-president and member of the Jamshedpur Anjuman Homi Bodhanwalla.

Expected to be financed by a one-time donation of Rs 10,000 each from anjumans and individuals, the awards will hopefully fill the void of community awareness of individual distinction, felt the executive council assembled at the Sir Mancherji Khareghat Hall, Bombay, on August 30 and 31, 1986.

Meeting in the shadow of vice-president and Federation architect Shiavax Nargolwala's sudden death in a road accident, the executive council also willingly agreed to accept a Nargolwala proposal it had vehemently opposed earlier: a managing committee of office-bearers to carry through the council's mandates.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees are expected to approach the chief minister of Maharashtra with a request for discretionary allotment of seats in medical and engineering colleges for Parsi youth on the basis of the community's history of service to the nation.

The women and children fund, now amounting to Rs 65,000 will be renamed the Shiavax D. Nargolwala fund for women and children.

Dr (Ms) Ketayun Madon, who has completed her PhD in career guidance, has been appointed director of the BPP's project to increase community participation in government and defense services by of way career guidance and free coaching for the open competitive entrance examinations.

An attractive booklet summarizing the deliberations of the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress has been published. Though no follow-up action has been instituted, the Congress surplus of Rs 1,25,000 has been accredited to the Federation by the BPP.

With the admission of the Bardoli Zarthosti Anjuman, total membership of the Federation rose to 53. The Bharuch Parsi Punchayet is now a full-fledged member, but is yet to attend an executive council meeting.

The meeting, which took a slightly delayed start as the council awaited onetime vice-president of the Federa-

tion and ex-president of the Surat Parsi Punchayet (SPP) Maneck Gheyara, "the only surviving founder member of the Federation," began on a somber note with silent and verbal tributes to the late Shiavax Nargolwala. Only one guest speaker - Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee, vice-chancellor of Bombay University - had been invited in deference to Lucknow's Boman Khodaiji's and others' comments in Poona and elsewhere that members did not have the opportunity to speak, as a large slice of available time was devoted to the

for the first time, according to Golwalla, the *Jam-e-Jamshed* had sent its representative.

The bonhomie that prevailed round the large rectangular table, covered with new striped sheets, occasionally tended to become somewhat noisy as delegates conversed among themselves, drowning the main debate.

Reservation

A meeting of the BPP trustees with Maharashtra chief minister S.B. Chavan, to urge the government to consid-

In pursuit of e

The Federation's newly instituted awards set the stage for community recognition of individual achievements.



guest speakers.

The BPP's five seats on the Federation's executive council being fully occupied, the Punchayet's newest trustee, Minoo Shroff, attended as a special invitee. As Federation president and BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla noted, "At one time there were only four members from the BPP on the council. Now Shroff is on the waiting list as all vacancies are filled!" Another special invitee attending and participating in the council's deliberations was Homi Taleyarkhan, member of the Minorities Commission. And,

er discretionary allotment of medical and engineering college seats to the community, is pending the preparation of a detailed note contrasting the community's high profile during the Free-

*Top left: Bodhanwalla
Above: Golwalla (left) and Gandhi*

*Facing page:
Top: meeting in progress
Right: Taleyarkhan with Kaikobad (bespectacled)*

Far right: Surat delegates (from left) Bhacca, Gheyara, Modi and Katpitia, with Tata in the foreground

dom Struggle, with its currently diminished role.

Community elders are trying to solve the problem of Parsi students who secure 75 to 90 percent marks and yet fail to secure entry into professional colleges.

Hitherto, the Federation has been fitfully considering the prospect of setting up a Parsi medical college and shying at the high costs and other problems envisaged. In light of vice-chancellor Mehroo Bengalee's enthusiastic support for the project, the

topic was revived for active consideration. Simultaneously, entry into high fee professional colleges, financed by community organizations and Parsi industrialists, is also being considered. In return, the students could sign a bond to serve for three to five years.

BPP trustee Naoroji Godrej suggested instead the institution of a school for above average children of Parsi and other communities to groom them into an elite who would have no problem getting into colleges of their choice.

South zone vice-president Bejan Dittia suggested that the Parsi point of view be impressed upon the public by letters in the Press, noting "in sorrow rather than in anger that (the government) is creating a new backward class."

With the logical emphasis on community sponsored education, the council reverted once again to the problem of providing loans and grants to Parsi students who go abroad for postgraduate studies, 60 percent of whom never return, half the number marrying outside the community. Thus both the money and the talent is lost to the community.

To dissuade youngsters, who thus benefit, from taking such a decision, the delegates suggested that a clause be incorporated whereby the money donated as grant be automatically converted into a repayable loan if the beneficiary decides to marry outside the community and settle abroad; but Federation joint honorary secretary Eruch Desai sought to provide the delegates a better perspective: "The BPP disburses (on an average) Rs 5,000 as grant and Rs 5,000 as loan to each student. If a person decides to stay abroad, is he going to change his decision on the basis of a condition for a paltry sum of Rs 5,000?...We should recommend only what is feasible."

xcellence

Arnavaz S. Mama



Awards

Introducing annual awards covering almost every aspect of human endeavor, Jamshedpur's Homi Bodhanwalla exclaimed, "We see pictures (of achievers) in *Parsiana*; the government has recognized them; but what have we done?" The awards are meant to honor performers of all-India standing (in sports, small-scale entrepreneurship, education and research,

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professional competence in engineering, medicine, etc, the performing and fine arts, social and community service and study of Zoroastrian history and culture) to be selected by a jury consisting of two BPP trustees, the vice-presidents of the east zone and of the west zones A and B. For each individual award the panel is expected to co-opt one or two eminent practitioners in the respective fields of endeavor.

The awards would be financed from the interest accruing on a capital of Rs 10,000 under each head, consisting of a trophy-cum-cash prize. The Federation itself will finance the S.D. Nargolwala Award for social and community service in memory of its foremost champion. Other awards are expected to be donated by various individuals and anjumans.

Nominations for the awards, to be invited from member anjumans as well as individuals, may even be made by the selecting jury to prevent deserving candidates from being bypassed by default.

Congratulating Bodhanwalla, Tehmi Grant of the Poona Parsee Pan-chayat (PPP) described how each year the PPP honors six to 10 individuals in Poona on the occasion of the *Avan roj jashan*. "It's just a wooden plaque with a farohar" costing around Rs 50, but "the recognition is much appreciated." At the other end of the spectrum BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder suggested a Rs 10,000 cash prize to each winner - "I'm sure we can find donors. After all, it goes out of tax and doesn't cost so much." But Bodhanwalla felt "something given to (the awardee) which he can display," carried more weight.

Managing committee

A committee of office-bearers, numbering 15 members, has been set up as the Federation's follow-up machinery with decision making power to cope with emergencies.

Shiavax Nargolwala's suggestion to set up a managing committee of office-bearers at the Poona meeting last February had been effectively stonewalled by the executive council which had envisaged the managing committee as usurping its functions. Now, missing Nargolwala's effective follow-up measures and finding the debate on reservation not breaking any

continued on page 46

Learn to earn

Niloofer J. Madon

"What I am pleading for is the necessity of making every boy or girl employable at the age of 18. What are we doing towards this respect?" Guest speaker at the meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India held in Bombay on August 30, 1986, Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee, first woman vice-chancellor of Bombay University, reiterated her stand taken at the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress in 1985.

Speaking on "strengthening educational and career facilities," Bengalee talked of today's youth as "self-disruptive, restless, fun loving and lacking maturity...They feel they can aspire to the better things in life...alone...They aspire always to have a four-figure salary rather than really working hard and coming up the ladder."

Partly blaming the parents for such a situation she added, "We Parsis do not really care for our children as much as we do for all children about us." Parents are constantly out of doors running after facilities for their children, amassing wealth, which in future they may bequeath to them. Parsis still consider a degree important, "and if the child wishes to go in for vocational courses, the parents are upset," noted Bengalee. But not every child is interested in acquiring a degree and this lack of interest leads to a disinterest in studies, she noted.

"What is being taught at the BA/BCom level is not much more than what they studied in high school...Today, students pick up all the information they need from cheap guides - 30 percent of the curriculum is picked up in two to three weeks...Between the ages of 16/18 and 21/22 we allow our children to drift and waste their time and effort in worthless activity. This is when they take up evils like smoking, drugs, etc. Only five to 10 percent of the students (attend lectures), others may be found in the wayside canteens and cafes.

Briefly outlining the new education policy, the Bombay University vice-chancellor Dr Mehroo Bengalee talked of reestablishing the old apprenticeship system of learning.



Bengalee: "child's time is precious"

Photo: Homiyar Mistry

And we have not done anything about this."

The Government of India is trying to solve the problem with the introduction of the new education policy which, as Bengalee explained, envisages general education from standard I to VIII after which 50 percent of the syllabus "will be work oriented, and tailor-made for early entry into the employment market."

By way of encouraging communication skills, a bi-lingual program - the medium of instruction and the regional language - is stressed instead of the three-language formula currently followed. Only at a later stage will a third language be introduced, which in the case of Maharashtra, would be Hindi if the medium of instruction is English. The general science courses will emphasize environmental, life and social sciences. The imagination and creativity of students will be developed through creative crafts and through an awareness of the Indian cultural ethos.

To aid national integration and increase sensitivity, the policy aims at developing love and compassion by involving students with children, the aged, the handicapped and the environment. One-third of the curriculum will be devoted to socially useful, productive work through crafts and skills from standard I onwards, thus inculcating work ethics and work values to help students "to be ready for the work situation in the twenty-first century." Awareness of nutritious food, sports and yoga will develop healthy minds and bodies.

Are Parsi families ready for this vocational training as opposed to the insistence on degrees? In a paper she distributed to the members of the Federation, Bengalee suggested that the community conduct coaching classes for gifted children as also for those who need remedial learning. Parental guidance programs in the form of films and discussions are equally important, noted the vice-chancellor who advocated the establishment of reading room facilities in each colony, well stocked with educational and career literature including the success stories of entrepreneurs. Cable TV, already an institution in the baugs, should also provide educational films for "every minute of the child's time is very precious."

Only five to 10 percent of the children should go in for higher education. The rest should be made apprentices where they can learn a trade firsthand. "After one or two years of vocational training, one can enter and grow with that field and become entrepreneurs," adds Bengalee. For those in vocational training who wish to study further,

Bengalee suggested earn-while-you-learn schemes and urged the Federation's executive council to publish a directory of Parsi establishments which would be willing to rope in the children as apprentices.

On the professional front, Bengalee suggests forming a chain of professionals who would also be willing to take on apprentices. Notes Bengalee, "If a child asks to be a surgeon, put him with a surgeon - an example of the elder taking care of the younger." It is important, according to Bengalee, to force children into the rigors of working for six to eight hours in a work situation. The vice-chancellor then added on an encouraging note, "We still have some basic characteristics by which we outshine other communities - resourcefulness, boldness, charity - if we can build on these, we can build our youth again."

In the question and answer session that followed, Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) trustee Jamsheed Kanga voiced a grave reservation: "Do you mean to say that children will be burdened with more work? As it is, little children carry these huge gunny

bags...(and) will it now be eight plus two plus two?"

Bengalee was quick to assure Kanga that the school curriculum would re-

The new education policy is work oriented and tailor-made for early entry into the employment market.

main 10 plus two but after the eighth standard, 50 percent of the curriculum would be work oriented. There would therefore be no extra work as such.

While Bejan Dittia of Secunderabad and Hyderabad cited the example of a boy who couldn't get admission into a medical college even though he secured 85 percent marks, BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder wanted to know if it was feasible to build a medical college attached to the Parsi General Hospital. Bengalee was enthusiastic: "Please do it within the three years of my te-

nure!" A long, table-thumping applause followed the quick agreement to help.

To indicate the intensity of the competition that children must face, Bengalee quoted statistics: "In Maharashtra, out of every hundred students who enter the first standard, eight come out of SSC...and yet you have two lakh students appearing for SSC examinations."

Complimenting the "pragmatic vice-chancellor" Homi Taleyarkhan, member of the Minorities Commission, spoke of the extent of poverty in the Parsi community and referred to another source of concern: "It is important that maximum attention be paid to technological literacy." He also cited the importance of a data bank which would indicate the total needs, strengths and weaknesses of the community.

Professor Noshir Kaikobad, convener of the BPP's school counselling program, cautioned that the problems and solutions needed careful planning and diagnosis, and suggested that a small study group be appointed under Bengalee.



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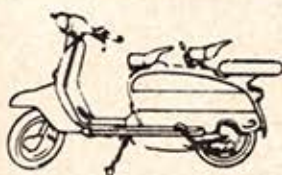
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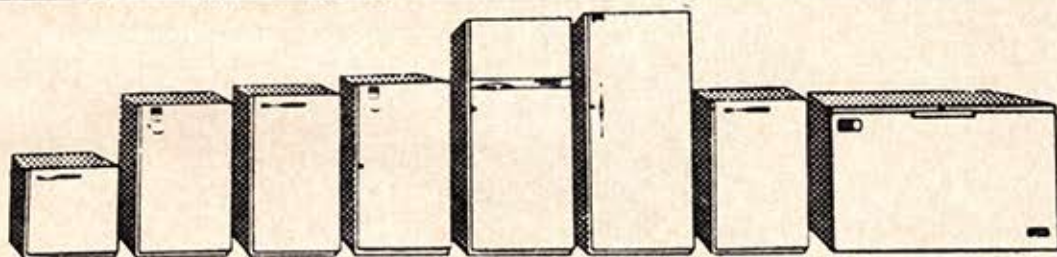
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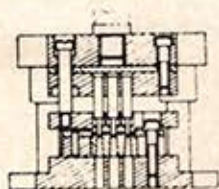
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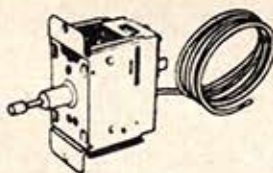
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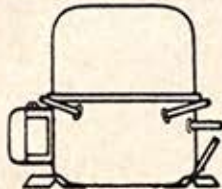
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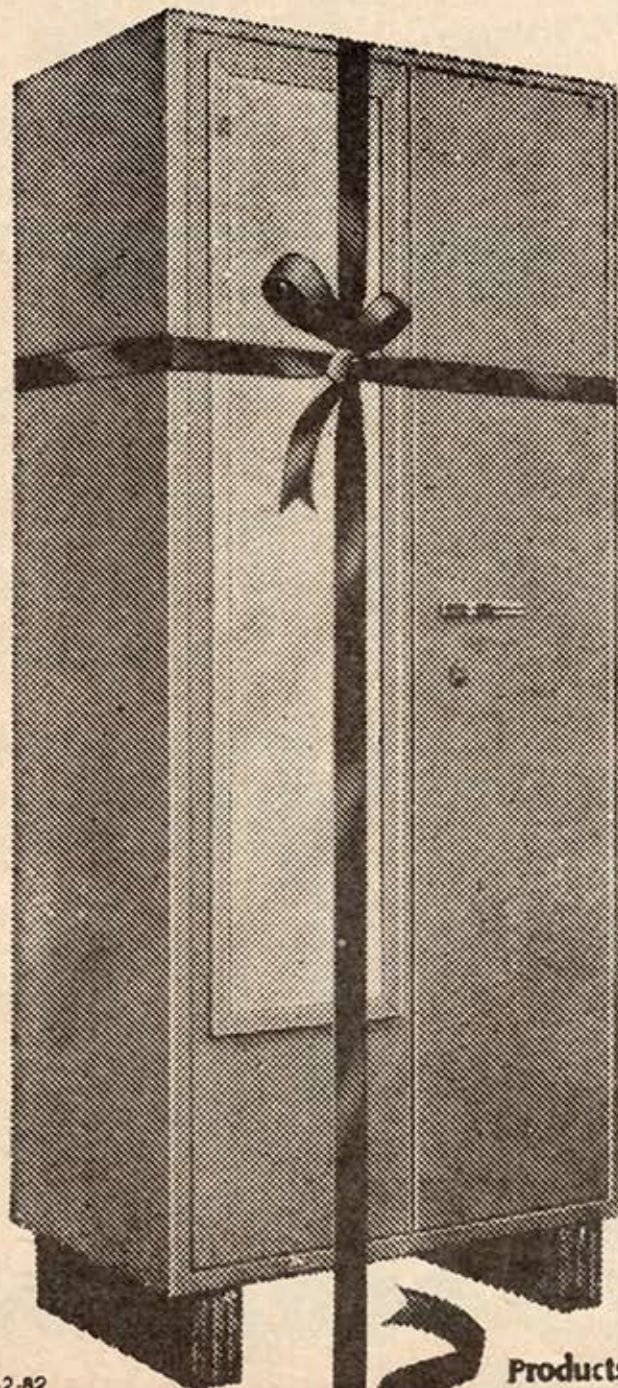
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Sizing up the Federation

While the smaller anjumans sometimes feel that their voice is not always heard at the Federation, they still look forward to attending the meetings.

Parinaz Toddywalla

Do the smaller anjumans have a voice on the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India or is it only the major anjumans such as Bombay and Delhi? To ascertain the views of the smaller anjumans, *Parsiana* spoke to 10 representatives at the recent executive council and general body meetings on August 30 and 31, 1986 at the Sir Mancherji Khareghat Hall in Bombay.

"The Federation is like an information and contact house," according to Merwan Mehta, vice-president of the Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman. "It's like working on a job, attending a special training course and then using the knowledge (to better your performance on that job). If the Bombay Parsi Punchayet takes up more time, it's okay because they do have more problems. But I've also suggested that a certain amount of time be reserved for the smaller anjumans to express their views," continued Mehta.

Supporting Mehta's stand, Shavak Patel of Baroda said, "All this information - on the amendments in the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, the Indian Succession Act as applicable to Parsis, and the laws regarding charitable trusts - we would not have got unless we had come here, as our anjuman is limited in scope." Grateful to the larger anjumans for their advice and funds, Patel was especially appreciative of the cooperation lent by the Federation's vice-president Maneck Gheyara at the time of their land being acquired by the government and the construction of their dharamshala. Credit was also given to Dr Aspi Gollwalla, president of the Federation, who used his good offices with the Parsi Medical Amateurs' Association and got them to stage a fund-raising play in Baroda which brought in Rs 2,50,000. Patel did not grudge the extra time

spent at the meetings to discuss the problems of the larger anjumans. "The small anjumans also face, or may face, the same problems as the big anjumans. Each time we discuss a problem, we may find a clue which could help solve our own problem," he said.

Hoshang Baldawala, vice-president of the Bardoli Zarhosti Anjuman, the latest arrival in the Federation family, was quite impressed with the Federa-

Left column: Baldawala, Marker and Dandiwalla

Right column: Taraporvala, Deboo and Bharucha



tion after seeing its functioning for the first time. "Though I had heard the complaint that small anjumans are ignored, I can't be sure. I do know that the Federation as an institution can do much to benefit the Parsi community, particularly in the mofussil areas."

"Progress is certainly there, but if we move in a planned manner we'll make better progress," opined Group Captain Dhunjishaw Marker, of the Mhow Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, who has been regularly attending the Federation meetings. "At the moment, the intentions are very sound, but there are considerable repetitions... If the smaller anjumans want to be heard, they must speak out. Somehow they are remaining quiet."

Supporting Marker in his complaint of repetitions, Captain Homi Dandiwalla, president of the Allahabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman noted, "Though the Federation is doing a very good job, progress is at a snail's pace. At the last three meetings, the agenda has practically been the same. We are wasting time on arguments which could be avoided. (Federation secretary Keki Gandhi had at one time summed up the attitude of the participating members: "We discuss, we debate, we forget.") This time, there were no concrete results. The Federation focusses on larger anjumans and people like (politician Homi) Taleyarkhan. The Federation should devote more time to us because it is the smaller anjumans which have more problems because of limited manpower. When the last session of the afternoon (on the second day of the two-day proceedings) was devoted to us, we were asked to hurry up."

Participating in the Federation meeting for the first time, Rustom Taraporvala, honorary secretary of the

Lucknow Parsee Anjuman suggested, "We should be more precise in our discussions. Specific problems should not be dwelt on at too much length. The chairman should be more firm. Yesterday (the first day of the meet), Bombay, Poona and Surat dominated the main show. Time permitting, smaller anjumans should get a chance to air their specific views."

Dara Deboo of Navsari explained the other point of view: "It's because no problems are brought forward by the smaller anjumans that the discussions tend to concentrate on the larger anjumans." While the question of the egg or the chicken coming first remained unanswered, Deboo touched another point, highlighting the fact that many anjumans, especially in Gujarat, are not comfortable in English usage. They are unable to follow the proceedings at the Federation meetings and the circulars sent to them, a factor which deters them from attending the meetings.

Representatives of smaller anjumans who are not well-off financially may have to stay away from Federation meetings when long distances are

to be covered, said Kety Mewawalla, vice-president and treasurer of the Nanded Parsi Anjuman. When Nanded was encountering internal dis-

Many anjumans especially in Gujarat are not comfortable in English usage, a factor which deters them from attending the meetings.

putes, the new set of office-bearers had the consolation that they could fall back on the Federation in times of crisis. Fortunately their differences were solved internally, rendering intervention by the Federation unnecessary, admitted Mewawalla.

"At the Federation meetings, there is no distinction between small and big anjumans," remarked Nariman Balsara, trustee of the Saronda Parsi

Jarthosti Anjuman. "The Federation is there to coordinate the activities of all the anjumans and to look into the interests of the community," he said.

"Federation get-togethers help solve problems in every field - defunct anjumans, jobs, student welfare, mobed problem. It gives equal importance to all," stated Minochaheer Bharucha, trustee of the Bhavnagar Parsi Anjuman who has been regular at all Federation meetings. "Bau first class" was the rating given to the Federation by Bharucha, a sentiment echoed in various degrees of intensity by the other anjumans.

Those who voiced their grouse on the time factor and the domination by the larger anjumans also had a solution to offer: Let the smaller anjumans, who wish to discuss their problems, give an intimation of the points they would like to cover, and accordingly time should be allotted to them. It was also suggested that the Federation help to alleviate poverty in the community, and extend the BPP's matrimonial bureau service to the remoter regions where there are known to be dwindling Parsi settlements.

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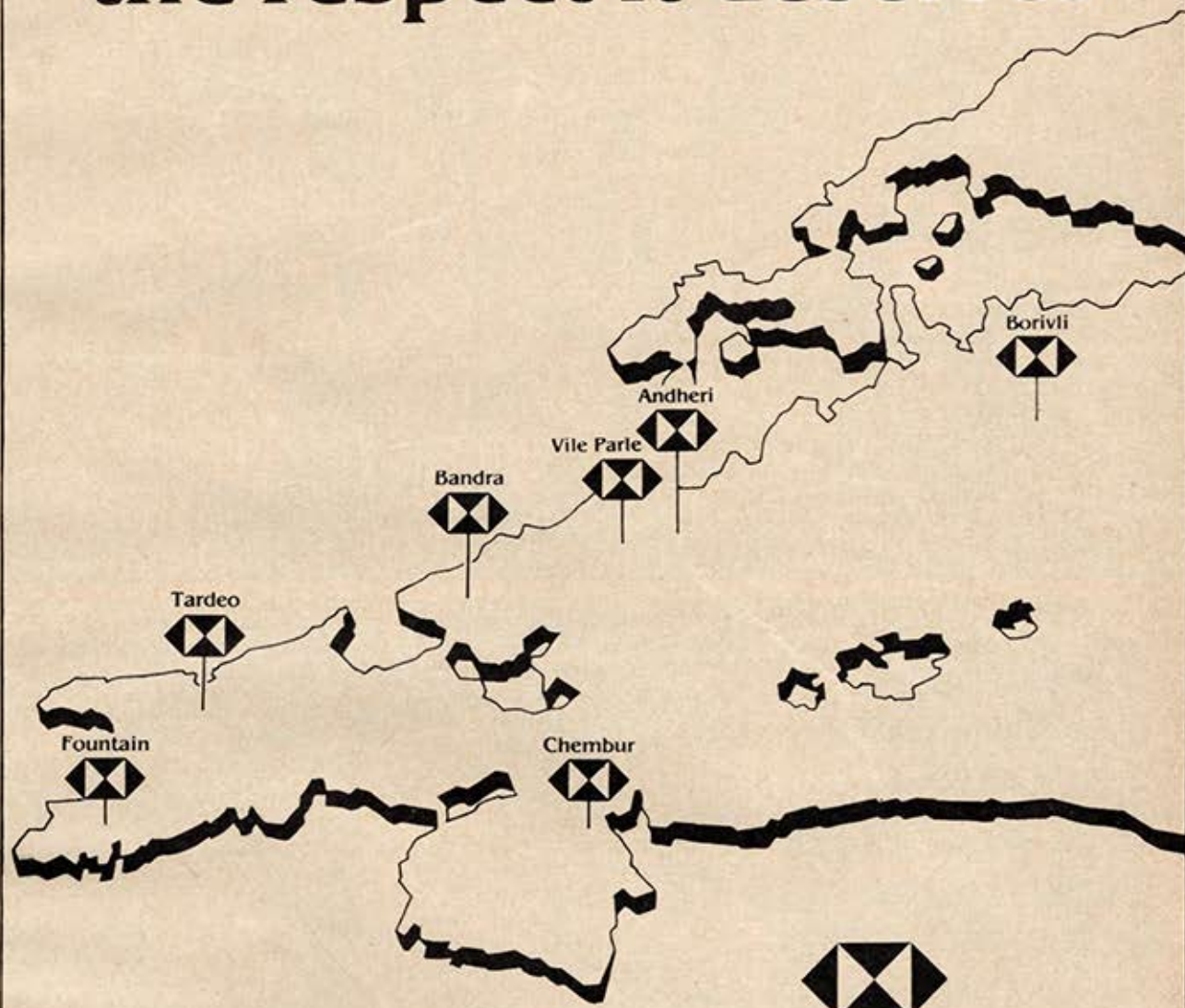
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The First Parsi Team In England 1886

Undeterred by the superior performance of the English cricket teams, the Parsi cricketers bravely battled with the ball.

Vasant Raiji

According to a reliable source Parsi schoolboys were receiving instructions in cricket as far back as 1839. When the boys grew up they formed the first Parsi club in Bombay in 1848 and called it the Oriental Cricket Club. In 1876, A.B. Patel, who was actively involved in Parsi cricket, started the Parsee Cricket Club and succeeded in arranging a match with the Bombay Gymkhana (then exclusively European) the following year. The Parsis

were defeated by 63 runs but that did not deter Patel from working on the idea of taking a Parsi team to England in 1878.

When the news about the attempts to bring a Parsi team to England became known in that country, *The London Graphic* of August 10, 1878 reported: "It is not everywhere, however, that John Bull finds any of the natives inclined to join in the sport; they are generally content to 'assist,' in the

French sense of the word, by simply looking on. There are, nevertheless, exceptions to the rule, and in the Bombay Presidency the Parsis, who have for long shown themselves superior to the prejudices with which other Indian races are more or less fettered, have come out quite strong as cricketers. Before long, it is rumored, a Parsi eleven will visit our shores for the purpose of contending with us on our native turf. We have already received



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several severe drubbings in the cricket field from our Australian cousins, perhaps next we are destined to be knocked (cricketically) into a cocked hat by the descendants of the fire worshippers of Persia."

Unfortunately, the project fell through because of a dispute between Patel and K.N. Kabraji leading to a libel suit. However, good sense prevailed and the dispute was amicably settled by the intervention of their mutual friends. Despite the initial setback and unpleasant experience, Patel would not abandon his dream of taking Parsi cricketers to the home of cricket. With perseverance and the support of B.B. Baria and Dr D.H. Patel arrangements were made for a Parsi team to visit England in 1886. C.W. Alcock, the secretary of the Surrey Cricket Club, was requested to be the agent of the team, a task which he performed very ably.

Before the team left for England, R. Henderson, a Surrey professional was engaged as a coach. It was not possible for Henderson to do much with the material placed at his disposal within the short period of three weeks allowed to him. He found it hard to make his older pupils unlearn the wrong technique which they had learnt in their younger days. One thing he taught the Parsis and that was forward play. Nevertheless, the future generation of Parsi cricketers derived benefit from his instructions.

The team which visited England in 1886 was by no means representative of the best Parsi talent available in the country. The team was not 'selected' but made up of cricket enthusiasts who were willing to pay for their own expenses of the tour. It must be said to the credit of these pioneering cricketers that the wealthier amongst them paid more than those not so fortunate who paid according to their mite. The composition of the team was as under: Dr D.H. Patel (captain), B.B. Baria, J.M. Morenas, A.R. Limboowalla, M. Framji, M.P. Banaji, S.N. Bhedwar, A.C. Major, P.C. Major, J. Pochkhanavala, S. Bejonji, S.H. Harvar, D.D. Khambatta, P.D. Dastur and B.P. Balla. The last three named were from Karachi (now in Pakistan), Morenas from Baroda and the rest were from Bombay.

On April 17, 1886, a few days before the team sailed for England, a dinner party was organized in honor of the

tourists. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, presiding at the function, extolled the pluck, courage and perseverance of the Parsi cricketers in his farewell address: "I, gentlemen, remember the time, about a quarter of a century ago, when our co-religionists first took to cricketing. Those days are quite fresh in my mind from the fact of my being one of the very first who was engaged in this game. This fact was unknown to fame, and I am particularly glad to make a public announcement this evening that it was in the *maidan* outside the ramparts that the pioneers of cricket, proud of their bats and stumps which were made by a native carpenter, had begun to play. Since then the game has flourished among us and here I may mention, it has received a very great impetus from one who was anxious to introduce physical training among the natives of the soil, the late Sir Alexander Grant. The days of my exploits on the cricket field have long since passed away, but to this day there is no more agreeable sight to me in Bombay, while passing down Esplanade Road, than that of the whole *maidan* overspread by a lot of enthusiastic Parsi and Hindu cricketers, keenly and eagerly engaged in this manly game.

"I may say that the object of the team in going to England is a very modest one. Cricket, as you know, is the national game of England. It has taken root among the Parsi community, and as artists go to Italy to do homage to the great masters, as pilgrims go to Jerusalem to worship at a shrine...so now the Parsis are going to England to do homage to the English cricketers, to learn something of that noble and manly pastime in the very country which is its chosen home.

"Parsi cricketers have gone over many parts of India and played a number of matches with representatives of other nationalities, but whether they are bowling or batting, gaining or losing, they have always distinguished themselves by their pluck, courage and perseverance."

The sea voyage took a little over three weeks and on May 24, 1886 the Parsis were at the Sheffield Park to play against Lord Sheffield's team. They were most cordially received by the noble host who entertained them to lunch. As no play was possible on the first day due to rain, one of the Parsi players drank nothing but cham-

pagne in honor of his first match. Alfred Shaw, who made cricket history by bowling the first ball ever bowled in Test cricket (Australia versus England 1876-77), played for Lord Sheffield's team but did not bowl out of kindness. The host team batted first and scored 142 to which the Parsis' reply was a meager 46. Following on, they fared better with 53 for 4. Framji's bowling created a favorable impression on Shaw and umpire Maycroft, and Limboovala's wicket-keeping attracted much of the spectators' attention.

The second fixture of the tour was against the M.C.C. at Lord's. At the request of the tourists, who were keen to meet the champion on the cricket field, W.G. Grace played in this match. Lord Harris was also invited to play but could not take part in the game because of his parliamentary engagements. Rain delayed the start until half-past three and by stumps the Englishmen had scored 200 runs for the loss of five wickets – an average of just 70 runs an hour. W.G. Grace opened the innings for the home team and scored 65 including two fours, 10 threes, one two and 25 singles. He was caught by Balla off Major's bowling. Major with 5 for 91 was the most successful Parsi bowler. Parsi batting failed miserably against the bowling of Grace, J. Robertson and Walker and they could score only 23 runs in the first innings and 66 in the second, losing the match by an innings and 224 runs. Between them the Parsi batsmen recorded nine ducks. Morenas was the top scorer in both the innings with 10 and 28 not out.

Most of the matches that followed were one-sided, Parsis getting the drubbing. Six times were Parsis dismissed under 50 in a completed innings, their lowest score of the tour being 19 against Werneth Cricket Club at Oldham. Their highest total for an innings was 212 against United Services at Portsmouth, in reply to the home team's score of 577. Altogether 12 centuries were scored by English players, whereas no Parsi batsman made a three-figure score.

Of the 28 matches, Parsis lost 19, drew 8 and won one, their solitary victory being against Normanhurst in a one-day game. "It was a great pity and general disappointment that the Parsis could not succeed in finding any single eleven, weak enough to play a proper



Lord's Pavilion: Parsi batting "failed miserably" in 1886

game with them," observed a British journal in its comments on the tour.

Before concluding the account of the tour, a special mention must be made of the last match played at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park against Prince Christian Victor's XII. The match was arranged at the

One of the Parsi players drank nothing but champagne in honor of his first match.

express desire of Queen Victoria. Dr Patel and his men were highly pleased with the hospitable welcome accorded to them. Carriages were received by His Royal Highness Prince Christian as well as the Princess, to whom they were introduced. Prince Christian and his brother Prince Albert took part in the game and at lunch Prince Christian proposed "the health of the Parsi cricketers" and praised their pluck in undertaking such an arduous trip in order to acquire a better knowledge of the English national game. In reply Dr Patel expressed, on behalf of his team, their appreciation of the warm welcome they had received from every quarter throughout the tour. In the royal game Prince Christian scored 24 and Prince Albert 11 (not out) and C.I. Thornton, the famous hitter, was bowled for a duck by Framji. In the second innings Thornton scored an un-

beaten 61, hitting all round the wicket shots for which he had acquired the reputation as "the longest hitter of them all." At the end of the match the visitors were entertained at a garden party arranged in their honor.

In a feature on the tour *Cricket Chat* observed: "The Parsi fraternity is the most intelligent as well as the most loyal of the races scattered over our Indian possessions. For some years past the Parsis have given substantial proof of their affection for our national game, and striven hard, in spite of great climatic disadvantages to themselves with great credit on the cricket field."

"Their visit to England was avowedly undertaken with an educational object. The difficulties necessarily to be surmounted before such a trip could have been carried out must have been immense, and Englishmen cannot fail thoroughly to appreciate the motives which induced Dr Patel and his comrades to attempt such a heavy as well as costly tour. Though not successful on the cricket field, as they hardly expected to be, the Parsi team have the satisfaction of knowing that they have the respect of English cricketers of every class, by the pluck they displayed in the face of continuous reverses, as well as the esteem of all with whom they came into contact by their modesty of demeanor as well as their social qualities generally. It is no exaggeration to say that the visit of the Parsi team will stand out conspicuously as one of the most pleasant memories of English cricketers of the present generation."

Dr Patel expressed the feelings of his team about the tour in a letter to the Press in which he said: "The Parsi cricket team, who left England by the mail of the August 12, have desired me as their captain, to acknowledge the many kindnesses and friendly encouragements they have received at the hands of the people of this country. We are grateful for our welcome and the manner in which the British nobility and public have wished us success. It is invidious to particularize any of the clubs with whom we have played; all have studied our comfort and convenience, but we cannot help expressing ourselves as highly flattered at the reception we received at Cumberland Lodge at the hands of their Royal Highness Prince and Princess Christian, and also at Sheffield Park by the Earl of Sheffield, the dinner given us at Lord's by the M.C.C., and many similar honors as we proceeded on our tour. The hearty and sympathetic welcome we have met with, we are not likely to forget for many years.

"The coming over of a Parsi cricket team to England at the expense of time and considerable outlay is a remarkable feature in the history of this country, and marks a new era in the annals of this noble game. We have taken to it but recently, and any skill in it we can boast we have acquired from seeing Englishmen play cricket in India. But in order to obtain a thorough insight into the game, coupled with a desire to see this great country, especially at the time of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, we determined on our trip over here. It was not with any object of gaining victories that we made the voyage to England, but we desired to pay homage to the center and home of a noble game, and we desired to learn some useful lessons in its play. We have never aspired to pass as good cricketers here; all our defeats were expected and in every case we succeeded in getting the opposing team out, though in Bombay we feared that sometimes we should not be able to accomplish even this modest measure of success. We have had our difficulties, mainly owing to our ignorance and inexperience of this country, and also to our coming over rather late, but we wish the British public to know that we leave their hospitable shores with a profoundly favorable impression.

"In once more saying farewell we cannot resist expressing our sincere thanks for the flattering honors that have been simply showered down on us by all classes... Our best thanks are also due to Mr Alcock for his kind advice and valuable services all along our tour. The Press, again, has been very good to us. In short, we are leaving the shores of England with strong feelings of affection for the country and its people."

The team failed to impress W.G.

Grace. "During this season a team of Parsi cricketers paid us a visit, but met with very little success, even against second and third-rate clubs," observes Grace in his book *W.G.: Cricketing Reminiscences*.

It is matter of regret that *Wisden*, the most authentic book on cricket records, devoted just one paragraph in describing such an important event in the history of Indian cricket.

Concluding instalment to appear in December. Reprinted with permission from *India's Hambledon Men*.

Cricket Chat's thumbnail sketches

Pestonji Dinshaw Dastur (Karachi): Proved himself to be the best batsman of the team. His highest score was 89 against the North Riding of Yorkshire, at Middlesbrough. A keen and hardworking cricketer.

Ardeshir Cursetjee Major (Bombay): A very useful medium pace bowler, though he proved expensive. A neat bat, but was rather unlucky in India. His 97 against the United Services at Portsmouth was the highest score of the tour.

Dhanjishaw H. Patel (Bombay): The captain of the team, vice-president of the Elphinstone Cricket Club of Bombay. Very successful in India, having won prizes in all the prize matches, with one exception, in which he took part. His 110 in one of these fixtures is the highest score made by a Parsi cricketer in any important match. A useful fast underhand bowler and good fielder.

Jamsetji M. Morenas (Baroda): A very neat bat, plays in good style, and cuts and drives well. Opened well with two capital innings at Lord's and the Oval, but was unable afterwards to do himself justice owing to an injured finger. Considered to be the best bat in the team.

Burjorji P. Balla (Karachi): Batted in good form and could hit too, though not able to show his real abilities in England.

Shapurjee N. Bhedwar (Bombay): A prominent member of the Elphinstone Cricket Club of Bombay. An underhand bowler with a peculiar delivery. Was at times very successful, the best bowler in the team. A sharp point.

Dinshaw D. Khambatta (Karachi): An effective left underhand bowler

with a puzzling delivery, and was at times very effective. Batted well at times, but somewhat impatient and at times rash.

Sorabji Bejonji (Bombay): Formerly the captain of Mars Cricket Club, Bombay, and once the champion Parsi cricketer. Used to score heavily in important matches, and could take any place in the field with credit. Is now out of form and practice.

Bamanji B. Baria (Bombay): Of the Elphinstone Cricket Club, formerly captain and treasurer, Zoroastrian Cricket Club of Bombay. Had at one time few, if any, superiors among Parsis as an all-round cricketer. A neat bat in his day and used to bowl with judgment. Now out of practice.

Ardeshir R. Limboowalla (Bombay): Of the Parsee Cricket Club, Bombay, used to bat and bowl well. His wicket-keeping here, though not up to the best English standard, was on the whole creditable.

Mancherjee P. Banaji (Bombay): Of the Elphinstone Club of Bombay. A very useful wicket-keeper, a good bat, but somewhat impatient. Fields well and a safe catch.

Sorabji Harvar (Bombay): Of the Zoroastrian Cricket Club, Bombay. An excellent fielder, and a fair bat, but a bad judge of a run.

Jamasji Pochkhanavala (Bombay): A good fielder, too impatient as a bat.

Perozshaw C. Major (Bombay): A good bat, but very nervous.

Muncherji Framji (Bombay): An excellent fielder, used to bat well in Bombay, and a useful fast over-arm bowler.

continued from page 12

"only 14 individuals bothered to return the questionnaire... A majority, when asked at private meetings, said the committee was doing a good job on the whole," notes Kersi Meher-Homji, Editor of the AZA newsletter, *Manashni*, in a report.

From the alternatives offered, most respondents chose a pot luck, where food was to be brought by participants and a barbeque at their community center, as ways of improving community involvement. Only one respondent wanted games at functions. Other suggestions recommended were: Have different themes for different functions, have several food stalls so that members are given the choice to either cook or buy the food, invest money to buy a marquee and a portable stage because the "natak is a must," music by talented juniors, have a baby-sitter and leave all kids in one room, etc. Members also suggested having guest speakers, bingo nights and cooking competitions or demonstrations.

Though the membership of the AZA is now 427, only 140 attended AZA's last function, notes Meher-Homji and respondent Noshir Irani adds: "This survey will help identify members' preferences but I do not believe that it will guarantee a better turnout at the functions. Sure, some have complaints about the entertainment, or the food and some complain about everything."

Irani suggests more concrete ideas. He notes that some members of the managing committee should have discussions with a cross section of the members of the community to identify their reasons for not attending. It should be recognized, he adds, that entertainment and food should cater to all members who come from culturally different backgrounds. An entertainment subcommittee could be formed to inject new ideas into functions, and duplication or overlapping of functions should be avoided.

Consultation on rituals

The seventy-seventh annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, to be held from November 22 to 25, 1986, will include a consultation on Zoroastrianism, the theme of which is 'Ritual in Zoroastrian tradition.' Slated for November 24, 1986, the consultation, to be chaired by H. Michael Simmons of the Center for

Zoroastrian Research (CZR), will be held at the Marriot Marquis Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, notes a press release issued by the CZR.

The five papers to be read at the session are: *Yasna* as ritual process by Michael M.J. Fischer of Rice University; Relationship of liturgy to ritual actions in *Yasna* 11 by David Strophlet Flattery of Emeryville, California; Keeping the waters dry: The semiotics of fire and water in the *Yasna* by William R. Darrow of Williams College; The Zoroastrian ritual and cosmology by Gernot L. Windfuhr of the University of Michigan; and The concept of priesthood in Zoroastrianism by Willard G. Oxtoby of the University of Toronto. The respondent will be Dastur Firoze Kotwal of the Wadiaji Atash Bahram, Bombay, whose talk will be followed by a panel discussion.

Readers who wish to have the papers in advance or who need more information may write to H. Michael Simmons, Center for Zoroastrian Research, 801 East Tenth Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47401 or call him on (812)332-3228.

Award winning mural

The second place in the Design Contest '86 organized by the art committee of the Virginia Tech Union (VTU),



Rustomjee: interaction of squares

was claimed by Naval B. Rustomjee, a first year student of architecture at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA, notes a write-up in the *Collegiate Times*, the student

newspaper of the University. The entry by Geoffrey Gainer, a fifth year architecture major, was adjudged the best.

Rustomjee's colored-pencil-on-vellum mural, employing a wide range of vivid and contrasting colors, took him more than one-and-a-half months to execute, adds the report.

Along with the mural, Rustomjee submitted a four-page essay to explain the thought behind his design in which he noted that "since the Tech draws its students from all over the country and the world, it can be seen as a community within a community with a status quo of peaceful coexistence." The design therefore has squares interacting with each other, each square having its own color. The four dominant squares merge into one as the colors unite in the center, getting more dense, describes the report.

Twenty-three contestants aimed at brightening a hall and calling attention to the VTU office. There were no restrictions on the theme, but the artwork had to be five by 11 inches, easily transferable, colorful and not too complicated, adds the write-up.

A certificate of merit and an oil paint set were presented to Rustomjee as award, "for his visually aesthetic design," noted Ann Bakula, chairperson of the VTU Art Committee.

Twenty-one-year-old Rustomjee lists music, trekking and sports amongst his hobbies. As part of the Bombay Gymkhana seniors rugby football team he had played in the Bombay Cup, Poona Cup and the All-India and South Asia Rugby Tournaments from 1981 to 1984, notes his bio-data.

UK Scrabble champ

Britain's national champion at Scrabble, the popular word game, is 27-year-old Viraf Mehta, who reads dictionaries just for fun, notes the *Fed Newsletter* quoting a Reuter report in London's daily newspaper, *The Statesman* of June 24, 1986.

A personnel manager by profession, Mehta fended off 100 other competitors to win the nineteenth National Scrabble Championship with 1,843 points. Says the champ in the *The Statesman* report, "I am fascinated by words and find that reading and re-reading the dictionary is a great way to improve my vocabulary and knowledge."

The transforming knife

Jerroo Irani



Dr Noshir Antia will preside over the ninth international plastic surgeons' congress to be held in New Delhi in March '87.

Like the Indian film star who undergoes an elaborate facelift, the men and women of Central Africa and Polynesia tattoo their faces and bodies, enlarge their lips artificially and lengthen their necks with special rings to improve their physical appearance. The ancient search for physical perfection knows no geographical barriers and around 1,500 to 2,000 plastic surgeons from all over the world will continue the quest when they converge in New Delhi in March 1987 for the IX International Congress.

"This is the first time that the Congress will be held in an Asian country," says 64-year-old Dr Noshir Antia, the recently elected president of the International Confederation of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery who is also president of the Congress. "Amongst the questions that we will raise at the Congress is 'Can a plastic surgeon prevent deformities (which are the result of poverty and disease) instead of merely correcting them?' Poverty is produced by our Indian and international elite - two exploiters sitting on the shoulders of our poor. Should not a plastic surgeon question the economics of producing deformities?"

The venue of the Congress is moreover appropriate. For the oldest discovered record of skin grafts dates back 2,500 years to India. The *Vedas* talk of nasal plastic surgery, for cutting off the nose was a common form of punishment in those times, explains the surgeon. Naturally, the victims then sought the aid of so-called surgeons. In fact, the Indian method for reconstruction of deformed or missing noses - cutting off a strip of skin from the forehead to reconstruct a new nose - is still in use today.

The soft-spoken, bespectacled Parsi surgeon wears his formidable reputation lightly as almost reluctantly he proffers his bio-data running into four pages. Honorary surgeon to the President of India and the Governor of Maharashtra, he is also an honorary consultant to the Tata Department of Plastic Surgery and the J.J. Group of Hospitals, honorary fellow of the American College of Surgeons, member and past president of the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India, member of the British Association of Plas-

tic Surgeons, and has under his belt a seemingly unending string of appointments and awards.

Sitting in his sparse consulting rooms at Bombay's Warden Road, where patients with various maladies file in and out, demanding routine, unusual, and often time-consuming surgery, he waves his "magic wand" over the diseased and the deformed; eradicating as far as possible the ravages of leprosy and cancer, setting right congenital defects where nature has gone grievously wrong.

Floppy ears and long noses

"If medicine is practiced in a market economy, one must understand the market forces," says the surgeon, referring to the lucrative field of aesthetic or cosmetic surgery, which comes under the general purview of plastic surgery. Including facelifts, reshaping of noses, shaping floppy ears and flabby thighs, lifting a pendent bosom or enlarging a small one, cosmetic surgery involves any part of the face or body which can be coaxed gently back to perfection. Hence, not only does cosmetic surgery bring in money, it also involves considerable skill. For nature can no longer have it all her own way and the skillful plastic surgeon can probably improve on Mother Nature herself.

In the US, 80 percent of plastic surgery is cosmetic surgery, says Dr Antia, "for there, disfiguring diseases have been eliminated to a considerable extent. Cancer too is detected in the early stages, so there is no major deformity. Many a patient undergoes surgery because he or she wishes to look younger. In the West, they feel that after 40 they will be out of the running," he adds.

The proverbial older woman who wants to look young and beautiful to hold her lover's affections is as common as the formerly lovely one who cannot grow old gracefully. "I think age and wisdom go together in our culture and to possess a wrinkled face is hence sometimes considered an advantage," feels Dr Antia, though many of his patients would not agree. Also there are those who feel a sense of inferiority because of a real or imaginary defect. "My nose is too long," they say. In such cases, the complex is too

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deep-rooted so that even after the operation they are not satisfied."

Giving nature a hand

Improving on what nature has bestowed is determined to a large extent by society, says the surgeon. For the concept of beauty has changed greatly with the times and varies with the different races. For example, amongst certain primitive people, deformity came to be regarded as a sign of beauty and a scarred face was considered an asset. "For the Mongoloid race, a flat nose is considered normal, but often it is the dominant culture that imposes its view. For instance, after the war, the Japanese started altering their features to look like Americans," says the surgeon.

Who are Dr Antia's patients? Some are drawn from the country's elite who undergo a substantial amount of cosmetic surgery by way of facelifts, etc. But they form only a small percentage and only a third of Dr Antia's work is devoted to cosmetic surgery. What happens to be a major problem in India is leprosy which has, in its vice-like grip, four million sufferers. "Out of this, 10 percent are disfigured," says Dr Antia who is deeply involved with the Foundation for Medical Research, a laboratory for leprosy research.

Translating his commitment into action, Dr Antia has worked in a small institute outside Poona in near primitive conditions, "without any assistants, autoclaves or anaesthetists. We would just boil the instruments in a *handi* and get another patient to assist. Unlike neuro or thoracic surgery for example, the vast majority of plastic surgery cases can be performed most adequately in a basic general surgery theater with the addition of 15 fine instruments and without atraumatic sutures and disposable syringes. This shows that one can do enormous things with very little if there is the drive, whereas where there are facilities, very often little is done." Disfigurement due to filariasis and burns is another problem, he says, while the hazards of modern living provide the surgeon with ample material to work on by way of industrial and road accidents.

The plastic surgeon has to be more than a skillful surgeon. He has also to be an understanding man with a desire



to help and a shrewd psychologist. For his patient might be a two-year-old with a congenital defect such as a hare-lip, cleft palate, webbed fingers or clubfeet who has suffered the murmured jibes and asides of other children. Or he or she may be a newborn with say an umbilical hernia, in which case he passes immediately from the hands of the obstetrician to the plastic surgeon.

Talking about his love and commitment to research, Dr Antia expands on the role of the specialist. "He must go out to the frontiers, research and find out problems and simplify new knowledge and technology and pass it on to his general surgical colleagues. He should resist the temptation to mystify things." For instance, during China's Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao wrought a health revolution, says Dr Antia. Doctors were made to fan out to the villages and teach people how to look after themselves. "If our medical men did that, they would know more about conditions here. In India, we feel it is not convenient to live in the villages. Our villages need water, food, electricity, and basic health services. Can we sit here and say 'Nutrition is not my speciality and plastic surgery is my field?'"

Describing himself as a citizen of the world, Dr Antia nevertheless feels strongly about certain community issues. He does not feel a separate medical college for Parsis is necessary when there are already far too many medical colleges in the country. "A Parsi should compete with others, and stand on merit without crutches. As it is, in my uncle's time 80 percent of the students at the Grant Medical College were Parsis. In my time, the figure had come down to 20 percent. Today, you will hardly find one or two Parsis. I

personally would help a bright young man of any community, including a Parsi, if he wished to enter the medical profession."

Though Parsis dominate the medical profession, particularly in Bombay, and there are several Parsi plastic surgeons, not many are in training. However, he has a fair amount of Parsi patients. "There are no problems that are peculiar to the community except perhaps the large nose," he laughs. "The pattern of disease in our community is similar to that of the West," he says. "We have a low infant mortality rate and virtually no TB, though I have treated a few Parsi leprosy patients at Breach Candy Hospital," he adds.

When not mending faces and waging a ceaseless battle to alleviate human suffering, Dr Antia is a family man. He travels a great deal and captures it all on film which is then meticulously preserved. His wife Arnie is honorary secretary of the Society for the Education of the Crippled. His son Rustom, doing his PhD in cellular and molecular biology, and his daughter Avan, her MS in marine biology, are both studying in the USA.

The word "plastic" is derived from the Greek word, "to mold," says Dr Antia, hence plastic surgeons have often been described as sculptors. What qualities must a plastic surgeon possess? "Commonsense," he answers swiftly. "A plastic surgeon is a general surgeon with a special technique and plastic surgery is a part of general surgery. General surgery is a part of medicine and medicine is a part of the social system," he says. "If I have contributed anything to medicine, it is because I have viewed things in a wider perspective than taught in our medical colleges."

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bas che.") Members also objected to elections being held on a Sunday as 40 to 60 percent of the Parsis in Poona are employed in industry, where the weekly holiday is Thursday. But president Minoo Irani noted that one could easily take leave for "this important duty."

The brevity of the annual meeting seemed to catch some members by surprise, until Kaikobad noted jocularly, "And now that there is no dinner, people can go!"

After the meeting, members chatted amongst themselves with one lady suggesting a monthly contribution of two rupees, by every Parsi in Poona, towards the Panchayat funds. Another opined that even for this paltry sum the Parsis will make a fuss, especially if they have to donate it to the Panchayat. "They must first earn the respect of the people" by doing something constructive, she added.

Annual report

The annual report for '85 was recently circulated wherein mention is made of two resolutions passed on May 16, '85.

"In order to provide residential accommodation to the poor and the needy middle-class Parsi and Irani Zoroastrians," it was resolved that any

Panchayat property – either donated, gifted or acquired – was to be developed by constructing "houses, tenements, apartments, residential colonies with shopping and other essential amenities including consulting rooms, dispensaries for medical practitioners, etc...and to sell, let out and otherwise deal with such properties as the trustees may deem fit from time to time."

It was also resolved at the same meeting that at least two months prior to the date of expiry of the Anjuman Committee, a list of voters along with the addresses of those enrolled on the donor as well as the A,B,C and D registers "will have to be prominently displayed on the Panchayat office notice boards. A member, to be eligible to vote, must have paid all arrears of subscription fees up to date...at least six months prior to the date of the Anjuman Committee elections." (Because of this new resolution, 135 members of the Panchayat, out of a total of 932, would not have been eligible to vote at the Anjuman Committee elections this year.)

The year also saw three trustees – Erach Chindy, Noshir Kamdin and Ms Homai Pudumjee – resign from the board of trustees, and three new members – Kersasp Irani, Minoo F. Din-

shaw and Dr Rustom N. Marolia – elected in their place. The other trustees include Minoo Irani, Marzban Kaikobad, Ms Tehmi Grant and Dinshaw Anklesaria.

The groups contesting the trusteeship elections in November had still to put forth their candidates at the time of going to press (October 22). Of the present trustees, both Irani and Kaikobad were noncommittal as to whether they would stand, while Pervaz Avari, an industrial engineer at Telco and active in community affairs, intends to contest.

Avari's campaign will focus on evolving a new managerial strategy for coping with community requirements. Avari and his group also intend to involve the Anjuman Committee in the various Panchayat projects. The problems faced by the Parsis in Poona are not just the job of the seven trustees, says Avari, "They also have to attend to their own jobs."

According to Avari it is difficult to get people to stand for trusteeship elections but even if "good" people stand, there should be a mix of professionals who have a knowledge of economics, law, etc, and two "from well-to-do families or well-known personalities with pull and influence and money to go around."

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got a bad name. But contrary to what most people seem to think, scientific leasing is a good way of raising finance. You must be choosy about your clients," he said. Their clients include Sony Orson, Hindustan Lever, Kelvinator, McDowell and Lohia Machine Tools. "Most of our customers are blue chip companies giving us business at good rates," noted Engineer.

The Atash Group has created an

crystal form, is ideal for use in the manufacture of nitroglycerine based explosives, in the chemical and textile industries. "The market response is excellent," he continued. Their buyers include Tamil Nadu Explosives, Noble Exploschem, national ordnance factories, cement factories and coal mines.

"We are now considering entry into consumer products. But the possibility here itself is so vast that we shouldn't think of over extending ourselves in too many fields. We are on the tip of the iceberg," Engineer sounds caution. He then refers to the franchise agreement signed with Parle, whereby Atash will exercise exclusive manufacturing rights for the fruit drinks Frooti and 'appy in Delhi, UP and Rajasthan. "We're proudest of our Frooti project," admits Engineer while sipping from the Frooti tetrapack. "It's excellent, there's quick generation, and the gestation period for this project is extremely small. The highly mechanized, aseptic packaging (contributes to its success). We will be in the market by January. We've got a strong team of dedicated, motivated personnel pushing themselves," he informs.

"Presently Atash is a baby which needs to be nurtured. Yet one day it will grow into a giant. We have our goals and dreams to be a 100-crore company. I hope we can create some kind of legacy for Atash in terms of a good name and reputation. For us it's a mission," reiterates the Company's chairman.

"Our shareholders should feel that with closed eyes they can invest with us," says Engineer. Atash Leasing and Industries Ltd went public in December '85 offering 23,71,500 equity shares of Rs 10 each. Engineer believes, "Your shareholders are your guns and ammunition. The general investing public does have confidence in us. The value of our shares is steady between Rs 40 and 45, though we've never supported our shares. On the public issue and share market side, our vice-chairman Nusli Davar has put in a lot of work. His respect in the share market is second to none. Much of the work has been his brainchild."

According to Engineer, "There are different reasons for going public... We thought that if we wanted Atash to be

Tending Atash

Parinaz Toddywalla

With a flame for their logo and "Kindling the flame of enterprise" as their motto, Atash seemed to be the right choice of name for their Company. Says Cyrus Engineer, the chairman of Atash Leasing and Industries, "We were looking for a name which would symbolize what Zoroastrianism stands for. Atash is meant to remind us that we are Zoroastrians first. Our obligations will be stronger...to live up to the name and ideals of hard work and honesty which characterize the Parsi community. When values are crumbling, shareholders have faith in Parsi companies and it's our hope that we won't let them down."

In his mid-40's and greying at the temples, the well-built Engineer, attired in a beige suit, was at work by 9.30 am on September 8, 1986 in his office at Jehangir Villa on Wodehouse Road, in Bombay.

"Atash is more than a leasing company," reminded Engineer. (The Atash Group of Industries undertakes leasing operations, manufactures ammonium nitrate chemicals and is considering entry into consumer products especially since their franchise agreement with Parle has been finalized.) "The term 'leasing' does not make people happy. It's unjustifiably

Atash chairman
Cyrus Engineer
talks of the group's
business plans.

ammonium nitrate complex on 18 acres of prime industrial land at Patalganga in Raigad District. The two plants manufacturing prills, granules and crystals have a total production capacity of 25,000 tonnes per annum with storage facilities for 1,000 tonnes of finished product, notes their attractively designed brochure. Says Engineer, "There was no quality prilled material manufactured by anyone in the country. There were two producers who were very inadequate. It's a new field and a new explosive for India." The Atash prill is a unique form of ammonium nitrate, by itself a fertilizer, but when mixed with fuel oil and subject to high initiation temperatures, attains explosive properties and serves as a blasting agent. Atash 99, the superfine ammonium granules introduced by them, is used for blasting in hydel works, foundations of dams and buildings and certain mining operations. Atash 88 ('NG') in superfine

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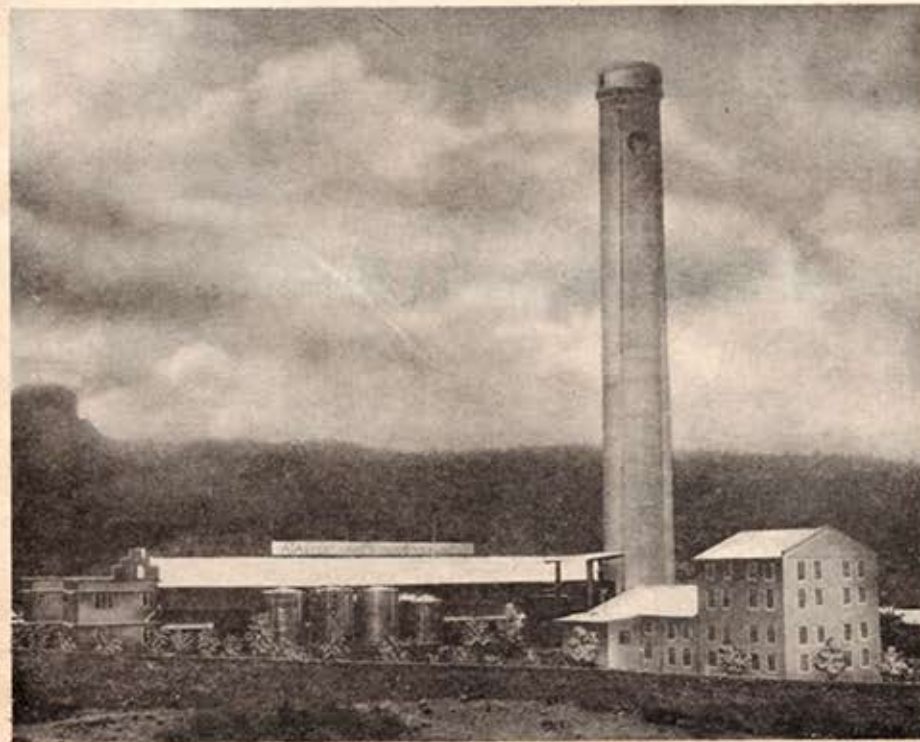
a vehicle of growth, we would have to go public. In addition, avenues of finance and professionalization, not available to a private company were open before us. It's not a one-man show though even a public company usually has one person propelling it forward. It is important to realize that the ownership no longer vests with you. The directors can't afford to be autocratic, as professionals don't want their freedom to be tampered with. There should be a willingness to change the ethos and discipline — lean more on others like your staff and shareholders and less on yourself. But

you have to pay a price for these advantages....," something Engineer is not willing to do in the case of his maiden venture, Bombay Carbon Dioxide, which will remain closely held.

In their first year of functioning Atash claims to have done well and are offering their shareholders "at least 17 percent dividend. We are very hopeful for next year too." On the leasing side, Atash has signed nine-and-a-half crore worth of business, with five-and-a-half crores of rupees already disbursed. Their ammonium nitrate plants have manufactured granules and crystals to

the tune of two crores. Our problem is not selling but producing," acknowledges Engineer.

"I have always been a manufacturing man. I enjoy setting up plants. I am happiest when I am in the factory and with men," says Engineer matter-of-factly. When he started manufacture of carbon dioxide in Thana in 1962, it was "not by choice but threads of destiny..." Son of Air Marshal Aspy Engineer, Cyrus respected his mother's fears when she was forewarned by an astrologer that flying was not the right career for her son. Engineer's entire education was at De-



Engineer: "willingness to change"
Left: Atash plant at Patalganga
Far left: bore holes being filled
with Atash prills.

lhi. An ex-student of St Columbus School from where he completed his Cambridge education with a thirty-seventh all-India ranking, he later studied at St Stephen's College where he graduated with honors in physics. Though his admission at the Imperial College of Engineering in England was confirmed, due to several factors Engineer preferred not to study abroad.

"In 1962, before the Indo-China War, the Government was trying to encourage entry into business. I thought I could go into the manufacture of polyurethane. But since that project was not financially feasible, I picked up knowledge of manufacture of carbon dioxide from one of my father's cousins, and borrowing Rs 50,000 from my father's provident fund, I started business."

As chairman of the Bombay Carbon Dioxide Gas Corporation, Engineer enjoys his exclusive ownership rights in his Company which is today India's largest carbon dioxide gas manufacturer. With units in Chembur and Rasayani, the Company is the major supplier of carbon dioxide gas and dry ice to Air-India, Telco, Parle, Mukand Iron, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, etc, notes a report in the *Mid-Day* of September 20, 1985. With the introduction of India's first cryogenic carbon dioxide tankers, manufactured by Bombay Carbon Dioxide, there is believed to be substantial foreign exchange saving for the country. To explain the Company's unique position, an example has been cited of Brown and Root International Inc, engineers for the South Bassein Hazira pipeline, which used to send its ships to Singapore for refuelling carbon dioxide gas. Since the innovation of Bombay Carbon Dioxide's tankers, the refilling work is now undertaken by them.

"I have come up the hard way. Until 1970 I used to type my own letters. In the early days, my wife Ketayun did her bit to keep us going. An ex-model,

she used to run a beauty and health care center but now she is fully dedicated to the house." Their 22-year-old son Shahroukh has joined the father on the Frooti project after completing

"Presently Atash is a baby wick needs to be nurtured. Yet...we have our goals and dreams to be a 100-crore company."

his business administration course in the States. Daughter Tayunaz, studying at St Xavier's College, helps the father at the Bombay Carbon Dioxide office but is keen on doing a project on the stock market. Youngest son Rohnish, a five-year-old "keeps us very active," Engineer adds with a smile. Though Engineer has not had "much spare time in the last two years," he lists among his recreational

activities: collecting stamps on classical India and the colonial British period, and hobby farming "when I get time with my family."

"There are adversities and setbacks in business all the time. The real test of a businessman is to prove how quickly he can adapt himself to changed circumstances. While the business community is not behaving itself, (the Government crackdown has caused businessmen to lose their confidence). I think the Government missed its chance last year to propel us forward. In November 1985 it did a 180 degree (change in) thinking. The investment climate which was booming last year has dropped this year. Yet, an average Indian continues to be very enterprising. For a small project, you will see 50 people rushing in to volunteer to do the job.

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she loves writing books and reading.

Newsletters carrying information on Zoroastrian pockets and their activities in different parts of the world comprise her reading material on journeys to and from Vidyanagari, the University campus at Kalina. She regularly receives *Parsiana* and *Jam-e-Jamshed* but "It's only on Sundays that I read through the whole *Jame* and enjoy the few controversies (therein)," she states.

Though unfamiliar with the working of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) and the BPP's electoral reform scheme, Bengalee had a brief acquaintance with the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India when she was invited as the guest speaker at the last executive council meeting in Bombay on August 30, 1986 (see "Learn to earn," page 21).

"As a community we are breaking and breaking so fast... Social service should be geared toward the entire community. There are more social workers among Parsis, than in any other community. But the Parsi ego (is also stronger). Some are committed to service; others do it for *naam* (name) and yet others for the additional income it can generate. With interaction we'll be able to solve the problem... There's a distinction between social workers and counsellors: social workers may do a lot of good work but when a problem is to be solved, social workers can't help. Now the community is suffering from problems beyond our comprehension. We need help from counsellors who are professionals. We should open guidance cells and vocational centers at Parsi hospitals and trust buildings."

In a survey done jointly by Dr J. Marfatia and Bengalee when the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital completed its 50 years, they identified certain causes for the high incidence of mental illness within the community: late marriage, problems peculiar to the community and marriage among relatives.

"Social change *aavvu joaye* (should come about). There's a likelihood that we'll start producing more children when housing is improved and when girls prefer staying at home (because of better performance by the boys). If we had (opted for) minority status we would have been at the top. We would have multiplied..."

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new ground, Federation honorary secretary Keki Gandhi demanded a small task force as follow-up machinery.

BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga suggested a subcommittee of the executive council comparable to the Wadia committee of management (a subcommittee of the BPP managing the various Wadia baugs) with executive powers, its decisions being subject to ratification by the executive council. Delhi's Dadi Mistry, Bodhanwalla, Dittia and BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria spoke up in favor of a subcommittee with emergency decision making power, thus reversing the original executive council stand.

Defunct anjumans

Nineteen thousand square meters of rocky land in Diu, occupied by local people since the last four generations, may be sold.

The Diu property records have eluded the Federation despite devoted and consistent action by Minochaheb Bharucha of Bhavnagar who has chased them from Diu to Goa to Daman without avail. The encroachers claim that the land was given to their

forefathers for cultivation by old Parsi residents and that they have filed a claim for registering the land in their favor. Bharucha had conveyed to the executive council at the Poona meeting that the enquiry officer had advised him to compromise and sell the land to the occupiers.

While Gandhi had advocated moving the collector or the court for redress, Gheyara and the SPP chief executive Sorab Katpitia had felt that the effort was doomed in the absence of documentary evidence.

It was now noted that the encroachers had offered to pay at the rate of one rupee per meter. The offer would be accepted in light of the absence of documents. The execution of a power of attorney to enable Katpitia and Bharucha to complete the deal now awaited Desai's legal approval.

Vacating encroached property is one side of the problem. The other is to prevent the process from becoming repetitive. The encroachers "will throw a fence out in 24 hours," noted Gheyara, and Kanga suggested that Parsi industrial organizations, like Mazda Industries and Leasing should be involved in using and protecting the vacated land.

Taleyarkhan suggested that the Federation advise the Minorities Commission about defunct anjuman properties and asked for statistics. He was aghast to learn their figure - "about forty." It was agreed that the Federation would bear the cost of employing a person with some knowledge of "esoteric revenue lore," to follow up on reports of defunct anjuman properties.

WZO

The World Zoroastrian Organisation's (WZO) India representative Dadi Mistry has assured the executive council that the WZO will present a new proposal in writing by mid October detailing the concessions its managing committee is willing to make to facilitate the Federation's membership of the WZO.

Mistry was placating the members who were increasingly apprehensive and critical of the WZO not giving adequate weightage to the views of anjumans on its managing committee and general body. As matters stand, individuals and anjumans each have a single vote apiece. By Mistry's reckoning there are 2000 individual members (versus a handful of associations) and

the WZO will continue to enrol new ones.

The Federation had opened its negotiations with the London-based body by demanding 90 percent weightage for association members but diluted it in subsequent stages to 66.6 percent. The WZO has stuck to its offer of 50-50 representation on the managing committee with the chairmanship fluctuating between the two groups in turn. On the general body the one vote per member formula remained constant. Thus there has been no essential change in their offer since January 1985.

Federation members feel that the WZO should ideally send in a comprehensive package of proposals in advance of their negotiating team. The Federation is unhappy that WZO office-bearers comprise only UK-based Zoroastrians and that the managing committee meetings are so conducted that all its members cannot participate in its functioning. A point of discord is the Federation's request for information regarding the status of individual members which has been consistently parried by the WZO.

Although the consensus of the Federation delegates is to "save the existing body because it's a fait accompli" as noted Desai, he added that he had received no pertinent response from the WZO to the point he had raised in February.

Appealing for "a little more patience," Mistry stated that the WZO's annual general meeting was scheduled to be held on September 7, 1986 when new people were expected to take office. "In December '86 they'll be here."

Iranian visas

The presence of politician-diplomat Homi Taleyarkhan who has replaced Noshir Santook on the Minorities Commission, inspired Kanga to view the problem of Zoroastrian refugees from Iran in a new light: "If we present it as a problem of the Zoroastrian community, that there are very few Zoroastrians left in Iran, then we might be able to bring it within the fold of the Minorities Commission." Kanga added that cases of older Pakistani Zoroastrians who wish to migrate to India, the youth having left to settle elsewhere, are viewed sympathetically by the Indian government.

Increasing numbers of Irani Zoroas-

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"Our assurance that we're never going to form another body is luring the WZO into a false sense of security."



Above: Mistry (left) with Guzder
Left: Dittia and Kanga
(at the mike)

trians are said to be interested in accepting Indian citizenship. But their main thrust is to send the children here for study and thus enable the girls to grow up in a Zoroastrian milieu with a better chance of finding Zoroastrian spouses and of the boys to continue their education without being interrupted by military duties.

UNESCO

The argument for joining the United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has gained fresh ground since the stalling of the long negotiations with the WZO. The strongest votary of the Federation seeking an affiliate membership of the cultural wing of UNESCO had been Shiyav Nargolwala who was keen that Federation representatives attend such of the world body's meetings at which "problems of ethnic communities or of refugees are discussed." Nargolwala had also anticipated that the Federation might be able to benefit from UNESCO's funds for its research projects.

However, in deference to a reservation voiced by Adi Rabadi of Calcutta regarding the impact of such an ap-

plication on the Government of India's perception of the community, Nargolwala had agreed to sound out the concerned authorities.

Accordingly, a 10-page annexure to the Federation minutes contained, along with categories, etc of UNESCO membership, the copy of a letter from Nargolwala delineating the gist of his meeting with joint secretary Dalit Lahiri of the ministry of external affairs in which he noted that Lahiri had assured him that "the Government of India would have no objection to such an application being made." But Taleyarkhan continued to oppose the move on the ground that it would "bring our community into disrepute as being sectarian." In the absence of a balance sheet of advantages and disadvantages of joining UNESCO, the matter was shelved until the next meeting.

Counselling

With two more schools – the Lady Engineer and the Panday School joining the school counselling service and a request for inclusion from a third – the Girton Girls' High School – the project is beginning to generate demand

from the community, noted its convenor Professor Noshir Kaikobad.

Remedial education at a cost of Rs 200 per head per month is being extended to seven children with superior IQ but low achievement. Although it has achieved positive results with only two participants, Kaikobad advocated that the project be regularized.

On the vocational/career guidance front, Kaikobad informed the delegates that vocational guidance tests had revealed substantial student interest in paramedical careers and attendance had been 100 percent whenever held. Students of certain colleges get extra weightage for admission into the IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology), informed Kanga who suggested that the vocational guidance bureau liaise with college professors to ascertain this point in the interest of Parsi youth. He also noted that there was a sudden shortage of pilots in the civil aviation industry – "a rare opportunity for Parsi boys with a fairly good scholastic background, good health and good personality. The opportunity may not last long."

Although 20 cases are in hand for family counselling, Kaikobad underlined the need for creating confidence among those who need help: "When you marry, you marry a personality. But in a marriage you have to live with a character... *Hum, tum aur voh* (the menage a trois) goes down to the nas-sessalar level," and requires much tact on the part of the counsellor to cement the fissures, noted Kaikobad.

The new building of Seva Dhan, the

institution for the amelioration of drug addicts founded by ex addict Russell Pinto, will be pledged with the BPP up to the extent of its loan of one lakh rupees. A Punchayet nominee will also be invited to attend the institute's management committee meetings. Moreover, as Anklesaria informed the council, until two years after relocating at its new complex in Goa where it has acquired larger accommodation at less cost, free treatment will be available to deserving Parsi youth if forwarded by the BPP.

Individual anjumans

The Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) has decided to carry through the project of celebration of their Dar-e-Meher's twenty-fifth anniversary in December and simultaneously host the next executive council meeting as Nargolwala had desired. With three full-time mobeds already on its payroll, Delhi is currently engaged in constructing four residential quarters for them.

The BPP had intended to donate Rs 40,000 towards this cost of construction, said Golwalla, adding that the BPP trustees had now agreed to contribute Rs 1,30,000 instead, as originally requested by Nargolwala, out of respect for his memory.

●Ahmednagar's mobed, a very satisfactory priest, needs to go on a month's leave and no one is available to take over during the time.

●While the Bhavnagar Anjuman, numbering 110 persons including children, report no pressing problems except for the Parsi club's land which is encroached, Thana's Parsi population is slowly increasing. Now numbering 260, the Anjuman has an adaran and a doongerwadi which is operational, and holds six to eight functions a year. Anjuman land measuring 24,000 square feet, which was once on the outskirts of the town, is now part of it. "Thana has the highest potential for increasing population," noted Rustom Cursetji with 40,000 square feet of land attached to the agiary available for building.

●Referring to his anjuman as a "small one trying to be self-sufficient," Rustom Taraporvala noted that Lucknow has the only full-time mobed in all Uttar Pradesh. The Anjuman is seeking to generate a corpus of four to five lakh rupees through donations "as desperately needed repairs, costing nearly Rs 1,50,000 will leave no funds with

us now," noted Taraporvala.

●Shavak Patel of Baroda thanked BPP trustees Golwalla and Godrej for earmarking two lakh rupees for the construction of a community hall in the dharamshala compound there. The large, well located site will thus be rented out to other communities to generate funds for future projects. The Anjuman has itself collected Rs 4,30,000.

●In Navsari the 300 new flats in Avan Baug have attracted middle and lower middle-class families and now, the demand is for admission to educational institutions. Most of the new families are from Bombay, and many commute daily to the metropolis, highlighting problems of local employment. Deboo requested the big industrial houses to set up enterprises in Navsari.

●In Jamshedpur, where the Anjuman is "now faced with wealth tax problems," there is a dwindling population as no young people are coming in and the children all go abroad, noted Homi Bodhanwalla. Currently numbering 650 members, the Anjuman has an agiary, an aramgah, residential blocks and a hostel building.

Miscellaneous news

●The three-year period during which the Federation's total income has been exempt from tax is drawing to a close, notified Gandhi. At the end of the period the organization benefitting under the clause must submit a report on its activities and make a new application but according to current thinking in the Income Tax department the section may be scrapped altogether, informed Gandhi.

●With the demise of Shiavax Nargolwala, Zal Nowsherwanji, the acting president of the DPA has been nominated vice-president of the Federation's north zone. The north zone anjumans need to ratify the federal vice-presidency.

●For the first time at a Federation meet, *Parsiana* was requested by the BPP to restrict its representatives to two. Due to the length of the meeting and the talks by the guest speakers, the journalists take turns in covering the proceedings. Also photographs and other related stories are undertaken such as the articles on the Madras and Poona anjumans and in this issue, the piece on the views of the smaller anjumans.

Subsequently *Parsiana* was permit-

ted to let two more correspondents attend. (However at the next BPP Press Conference held on October 11, 1986, the invitation again specified only two representatives could attend.) The cost of travel to the various destinations where the Federation meets are held is borne by *Parsiana*. The host anjuman provides board and lodging for all outstation delegates including the Press.

●Invitations and tentative dates for the next four meetings of the executive council have already been set. After the next meeting, due to be held in Delhi on December 27 and 28 immediately following the Delhi Dar-e-Meher's silver jubilee celebrations on December 25 and 26, 1986 the council will reconvene in Devka on March 28 and 29, 1987 at the invitation of the Surat Parsi Punchayet and in Jamshedpur in the winter of 1987. Bombay will host the second meeting of 1987.

Those attending the meeting were: Merwan Mehta of Ahmednagar; Homi Dandiwalla and Ms Shireen Dandiwalla of Allahabad; Hoshang Baldawala of Bardoli; Shavak Patel of Baroda; Minochaheer Bharucha and Ms Banoo Bharucha of Bhavnagar; Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Jamsheed Kanga, Naoroji Godrej, Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Peshotan Nargolwala, Rustom Anklesaria, Ms Gool Tata, Noshir Kaikobad and Dr (Ms) Ketayun Madon of Bombay; Zarhost Moharakai of Dahanu; Zal Nowsherwanji, Keki Gandhi, Rustom Daroga, Dadi Mistry, Noshir Captain, Ms Farida Variava, Rusi Engineer, F. Rustomji, Homi Taleyarkhan and Ms K.Z. Nowsherwanji of Delhi; Homi Bodhanwalla of Jamshedpur; Pheroze Karanjia of Karanj; Dr Sarosh Wadia of Kutch; Rustom Taraporvala of Lucknow; Dhunjishaw Marker of Mhow; Kety Mevawalla of Nanded; Dara Deboo of Navsari; Ms Tehmi Grant of Poona; Nariman Balsara and Homi Palsetia of Saronda; Bejon Dittia, Noshir Nagarwala and Cyrus Irani of Secunderabad and Hyderabad; Dr Sam Bhacca, Maneck Gheyara, Soli Katpitia and Davar Kavasji Modi of Surat; Rustom Cursetji and Pervez Bhesania of Thana; Soonu Vesuna of Vesu; and Firoze Patel and Navel Mulla of Zai Bordi. The Press was represented by *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *The Bombay Samachar*, *Mahila Weekly* and *Parsiana*.

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