

Parzianā

Obstacles to a navjote

When the Mistrys wanted their children's navjotes performed in Bangalore, they found themselves in the midst of a bitter controversy.

Parinaz Toddywalla

"It was such a relief when Dasturji Minochehr-Homji landed in Bangalore... Till the last we did not know whether the navjotes would be performed. We were so panicky – the invitations had been sent, the acceptances confirmed." Ms Renu Sharukh Mistry, the non-Zoroastrian mother of the children whose navjotes were to be performed, seemed to be reliving the suspense which overshadowed the family's preparations for the joyous occasion last December.

The Mistrys had called upon the Bombay Fasli Atash Kadeh High Priest Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji to perform the navjote ceremony of their two children. This was the second time that Minochehr-Homji had gone to Bangalore to perform navjotes. In mid-1986, he performed the navjote ceremonies of the Soonavala children, offspring of an

inter-community marriage, as well as the navjotes of his own grandchildren, the Damaniyas.

At that time Ervad Nadirshah Unvalla, panthaky of Bangalore's sole

Dar-e-Meher since 1965, noted that Minochehr-Homji had flouted the *rivaj* (well-established tradition) of awaiting an invitation from the local panthaky or seeking his permission before performing a ceremony in the panthaky's diocese.

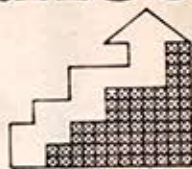
At Unvalla's behest, a special general body meeting of the Bangalore Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman (BPZA) was called on August 3 and it was resolved, by a thumping majority of 73 to 13, "that the time-tested and the well-established *rivaj* (protocol) that has been observed by the Zoroastrians since the last 50 years with regard to performing the navjote/wedding and any religious ceremony be strictly observed by every member of the community who desires to take advantage

Minochehr-Homji (right) and Bamji performing the navjotes of the Mistry children



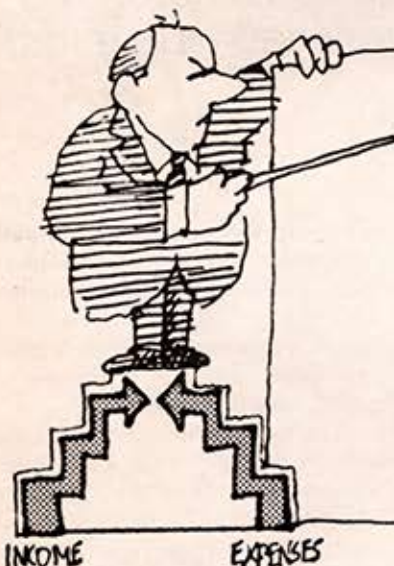
The funny face of finance:

(Brought to you by
the corporate-finance-beyond-leasing company)



PETER'S THEORY OF RECIPROCAL INHIBITION OF FISCAL RECALL:

*Lending money to friends
causes them
to lose their memories.*



PARKINSON'S SECOND LAW:

*Expenditures rise
to meet income.*

VITTA MAZDA
LIMITED



Registered Office: Park View, Lunsui Kui, Navsari 396 445, (Gujarat State).

Administrative Office: Elphinstone House, 17, Marzban Road, Fort, Bombay 400 001.

Tel: 235269/234968

of the facilities available at the Bangalore Dar-e-Meher through its elected panthaky." As to what is meant by "the time-tested *rivaj*," an explanatory note has been added: "According to the long-standing practice, a panthaky of a place or a city has a right to perform the navjote, marriage or any other religious ceremony at that place under his jurisdiction. If a Zoroastrian wishes to invite a Dastur or any other priest to perform the ceremony at that place, and if the panthaky is willing and agreeable, he (panthaky) would invite the Dastur to perform the ceremony, and extend all the necessary help in performing the said ceremony. If the panthaky is not agreeable, then the Dastur cannot perform the ceremony."

Correct procedure

Not wishing to upset Unvalla on any



"The only *rivaj* which this panthaky was interested in, was a letter from the Dastur seeking his permission."

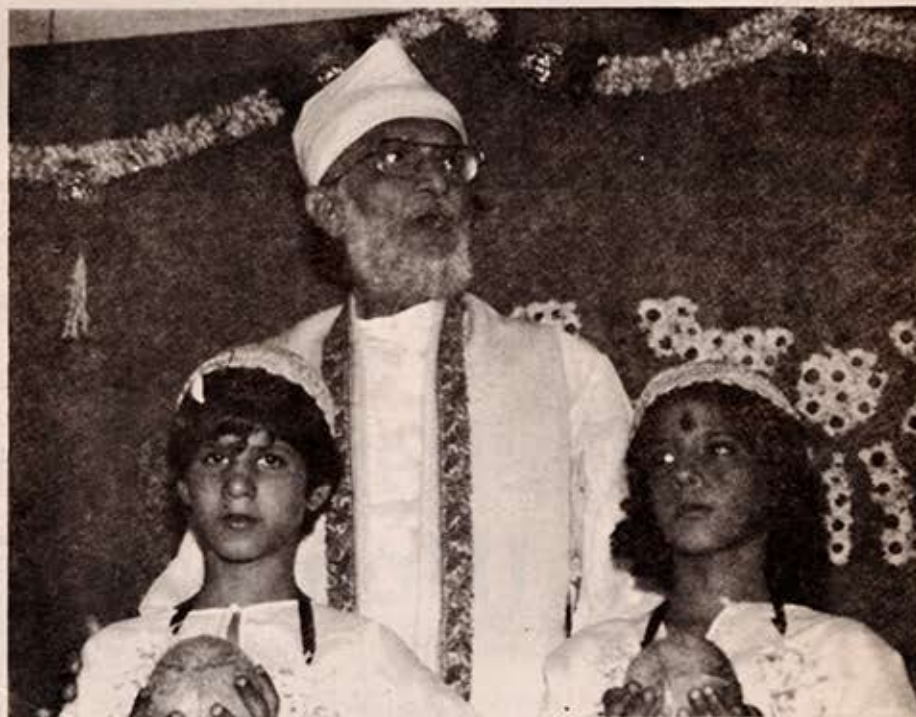
count, the Mistrs were determined to follow the correct procedure from the start. In August 1986, the Mistrs - Sharukh and Renu - approached Unvalla to perform the navjote of their children in December. Unvalla excused himself on the grounds that he is personally opposed to the idea of initiating children of mixed parentage into the fold. They then requested him to invite Minochehr-Homji to which the panthaky pleaded, "I cannot ask someone else to do a job which I consider improper." When asked if the



Left
Sharukh Mistry
with his mother,
wife Renu and
their newly
initiated children.

Below
Minochehr-Homji
with his grand-
children - the
Damianas.

Below left
Bamji, Unvalla and
Sidhwa



panthaky would object to the Mistrs sending a personal invitation to the Dastur, Unvalla replied that he had no power or authority to object so long as the navjotes were not performed within the Bangalore Anjuman premises (Kothari Hall, Dar-e-Meher Hall, Dharamshala, etc) and he was not expected to provide the nirang or the Dar-e-Meher vessels.

Interpreting his non-objection as indirect consent, the Mistrs invited Minochehr-Homji to perform the navjotes in December and the latter

accepted. A supporting invitation by Behram Sidhwa, president of the BPZA noted, "In this case no permission from Ervad Nadirshah Unvalla is at all necessary, and you are most welcome to perform the navjotes in Bangalore since it is legal."

An annoyed Unvalla reportedly complained to the presidents of the Bombay Jarthosti Jashan Committee and the Athornan Mandal. In a letter to Minochehr-Homji dated October 31, 1986, jointly signed by Cowasjee Dinshaw, president of the Bombay

With Best Compliments From

Mazda Foods & Drinks Private Limited

Makers of "FAVORA"

Flavouring Essences, Food Colours, Fruit Crushes, Syrup etc.

**A Venture of
Mazda Estates & Finance Pvt Ltd.,**

Regd. Office:
2, Girdhar Nivas,
15/17, Shahid Bhagatsingh Road,
Colaba, Bombay-400 005

Steamship agents — master stevedores
dubashes — lighterage contractors

Darabshaw B. Cursetjee's Sons (Bombay) Pvt. Ltd.

Darabshaw House, Ballard Road, Bombay - 400 038.

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

Also associates at

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

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

Jarthosti Jashan Committee and Jehangir Shroff, president of the Athornan Mandal, they appealed to Minochehr-Homji to "desist from performing such navjotes... Ervad Unvala has refused to perform this navjote as per his personal conviction and devotion and may we mildly suggest that (a) Dastur of our community must take this into consideration...In fact, no Dastur worth the name except your predecessor (Dastur Framroze Bode) has performed such navjotes. The letter continued, "You may have re-

"I cannot ask someone else to do a job which I consider improper."

ceived the invitation from very high sources but not from the panthaky as ought to have been done...(The) recent resolution (on the issue of *rivaj*, passed by the BPZA on August 3, 1986) is fresh in the memory (for the) action of all concerned."

Barely a few days before the navjote, the Mistris received a letter from Minochehr-Homji which took them unawares. In his letter of November 25, the Dastur wanted a confirmation from them as to whether he should proceed with his visit to Bangalore or await a letter from the panthaky. "Please consult him for reassuring his approval and oblige. It is our *rivaj*," he explained. Posthaste Sharukh replied, "We respect (Unvala's) conditions (of not utilizing the Anjuman property) and have taken pains to abide by them," and ended on the note, "We eagerly await your arrival."

Not content to just sit and hope for the best, Renu sent a copy of Sharukh's letter by hand delivery to Minochehr-Homji "just in case you have still not received the same." She further added, "After writing the above letter to you, we had a talk with Mr (Farokh) Bamji (of the BPZA), who has asked us to inform you that further to the resolution passed by the Anjuman, in the next meeting it has been minuted that if the panthaky saheb of Bangalore should refuse to perform a ceremony, as well as refuse to invite another priest to do the same, then the matter should be referred to

JOB ORIENTED TRADE COURSES IN

(1) LICENTIATE IN RADIO AND AUDIO SERVICING (LRAS)

Recognised by the Govt. of MAHARASHTRA

- (a) ELIGIBILITY : S.S.C. with English, Maths, General Science.
- (b) MEDIUM : English
- (c) DURATION : One Year (Monday to Friday)
- (d) AWARD : The Govt. of MAHARASHTRA awards CERTIFICATES to the Successful Candidates.

(2) LICENTIATE IN TELEVISION SERVICING (LTS)

Recognised by the Govt. of MAHARASHTRA

- (a) ELIGIBILITY : Pass the LRAS Examination (held by the Board of Technical Exams. Govt. of Maharashtra).
- (b) MEDIUM : English
- (c) DURATION : One Year (Monday to Friday)
- (d) AWARD : The Govt. of MAHARASHTRA awards CERTIFICATES to the Successful Candidates.

(3) FILING, FITTING AND TURNING TRADE COURSE

- (a) ELIGIBILITY : VIII Std.
- (b) MEDIUM : English, Hindi, Gujarati
- (c) THEORETICAL INSTRUCTIONS ALSO GIVEN IN:
Trade-Theory, Machine Drawing & Work-shop Calculations.
- (d) DURATION : 6 Months, 3 Hrs. per day (Monday to Friday)

(4) ELECTRIC WIRING & APPLIANCES SERVICING COURSE

(Both PRACTICE & THEORY)

- (a) ELIGIBILITY : VIII Std.
- (b) MEDIUM : English, Hindi, Gujarati
- (c) COVERS THE SYLLABUS OF P.W.D. II CLASS WIREMEN'S EXAMINATION COURSE ALSO
- (d) DURATION : 6 Months, 3 Hrs. per day (Monday to Friday)

(5) PART-TIME: AUDIO, RADIO, TELEVISION

& VIDEO SERVICING

- (a) ELIGIBILITY : S.S.C. or Equivalent
- (b) MEDIUM : English
- (c) DURATION : 4 Months, 2 Hrs. per day (Monday to Friday)

B.N. GAMADIA POLYTECHNIC
Gamadia Colony, Tardeo, BOMBAY 400007
Tel: 4944345; 4945362

the Anjuman who shall then decide what is to be done. Mr Bahadur Saher, the secretary of the Anjuman also confirms this decision that has been minuted." She concluded with a reminder, "Kindly bring with you the nirang, haoma sali and the sacred ash."

The Damania navjotes

Minochehr-Homji, in his letter in Gujarati to *The Samachar*, merely noted that he had undertaken the Mistry's navjote after Sharukh and his brother Dadi had assured him of Unvalla's verbal sanction. It was his daughter and son-in-law – the Damania who took it upon themselves to clarify their point of view: On the insistence of their children to have their navjote ceremony performed by their maternal grandfather Dastur Minochehr-Homji, the parents approached panthaky Unvalla. He was informed "well in advance of our intention and deep joy to invite the children's grandfather to perform the navjotes. We had requested the panthaky's participation and this was accepted by him," they wrote.

According to *The Parsee Voice's* version of the incidents as reported in their issue of October 16-31, 1986, "At this stage it was made clear to (the

Damania) that Mr (sic) Minochehr-Homji should inform the panthaky that he was to perform the 'navjote.' The panthaky was told that the 'Dastur' would call on him after his arrival in Bangalore, which he never did!"

The Damania argue, "According to the so-called rivaj...he (the panthaky) should have sent a letter inviting Dastur Minochehr-Homji. At the time, the only rivaj which this panthaky was interested in, was a letter from the Dastur seeking his permission...to enter his territory. When this did not happen, he completely changed his commitment made earlier, became vindictive, boycotted the navjote and started spreading misinformation and distortion of facts." They further added in defence of Minochehr-Homji, "He has never spoken ill of other priests or run publicity campaigns the way others have recently done in the name of religion and rivaj."

The Parsee Voice also excused Unvalla for not parting with the haoma sali and pomegranate leaves required for the nahan (holy bath) of the Soonavala children whose navjotes were performed by Minochehr-Homji, a week prior to the Damania navjotes, stating that it was "rightly refused...on religious grounds." The Damania countered, "Are you aware that this panthaky has performed the wedding

ceremony of a man who was born of a non-Parsi mother? Do his orthodox views somehow get diluted when it comes to wealthy or influential people?"

Courageous saga

The Bombay Samachar, supporting Minochehr-Homji's cause, was the first to bring these events to the notice of the community. In Unvalla's favor *The Parsee Voice* explained "the events as they occurred" to report on "a courageous saga of an aged and respected Parsi priest who stood his ground against the pressures and politics of some elitist elements in Bangalore..."

On reviewing this whole episode, Renu Mistry, her enthusiasm unmarred, was still pleased with their decision to initiate their children into Zoroastrianism which she views as "such an intellectual faith." But the furore spurred her husband Sharukh to raise certain queries: The navjotes being legal and a time for rejoicing, why did they have to face so many obstacles? Every time a navjote has to be performed of children of mixed marriages, would the parents have to undergo such anxiety or would they be forced to leave Bangalore and perform it outside? Most important, what about the impression on young minds entering the religion?

Golden Opportunity

We buy old toys with keys and models of Mechanical Cars, Scooter, Ship, Marble Statue, Stamps, Coins, Currency Notes, Postal used Covers, Chinese Crockery, War medals, Picture Post Card, Cinema Star Books, Playing Cards, album collections, Gold and Silver Pocket Watches, Cigarette cards.

Please write:

B.K. Gohel
Plot No 225/2
Jawahar Nagar
Road No 14
Goregaon (West)
Bombay 400062

Gifts & Things

The Friendly Gift Shop
for handicrafts, festive gifts,
religious artefacts, executive desk
sets, exclusive shell items, designer
jewelry & specializing in wood
& copper-enamel gifts.

BOMBAY SWADESHI STORES LTD.
(Mezzanine Floor)
Sir P.M. Road, Bombay-400 001



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.

Not fire worshippers

I am sure many of you have read the report in local newspapers about Zoroastrians being called "fire worshippers." The news was spread by the reporter of the Associated Press (AP) and is estimated to have been published in 300 to 400 papers.

Representatives of 12 world religions gathered in Assisi, Italy on October 27, 1986, at the invitation of Pope John Paul II, for prayers for world peace. The report was reflected in *The Washington Post*, World News section on October 28: "In a day marked by separate prayers and common fellowship in this medieval, gray stone hill town, eagle-feathered Indians from Montana rubbed shoulders with fire worshipping Zoroastrians from

Bombay...At the seat of the Assisi Bishopric, Homi Dhalla, a white-clad Zoroastrian, sat in a tiny study under a painting of the *Madonna and Child*. He read and explained Zoroastrian prayers while seated in front of a flaming iron brazier. His mother and a few curious journalists watched."

We do not know in what manner Dr Homi Dhalla explained to the reporters the significance of fire and light in the Zoroastrian religion. We can guess for sure that he must have stated that it stands as a symbol of Ahura Mazda's creative principle and not an object of worship. However, it seems that his explanation has caused a great misunderstanding. If our guess is correct, then I think it is of utmost importance that he should promptly and strongly write to the AP, with a copy sent to the Vatican, and demand a correction.

A letter received from Dr Kaikhosrow Havaresf of Jacksonville, Florida says: "*Florida Times Union*, the local paper in Jacksonville, following a report received from the Associated Press, calls the Zoroastrians 'fire worshippers.' This remark has hurt all the Zoroastrians in this area. My brother, Hooshang Havaresf, called the reporter of the paper and expressed his objection on behalf of the community. After asking many questions on the subject, the reporter asked for the name of a community leader who could clarify the situation for him. Hooshang gave the name of Prof Erach Munshi, president of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, the only leader of the community he could name.

Following Hooshang's conversation with the reporter, I called Prof Munshi to inform him of the situation and strongly requested him to clear the false accusation. However, the result of Munshi's discussion does not seem to have convinced the reporter, because the following conclusion was published in *Florida Times Union* of November 9: "In an Associated Press story from Assisi, Italy on the October assemblage of religious leaders called by Pope John Paul II to spur global peace efforts, the opening paragraph referred to 'fire worshipping Zoroastrians.'

"Not so quickly responded Hooshang Havaresf of Jacksonville, a practitioner of that faith. Fire plays an essential role in the practice of this faith, he explained, but it is not worshipped. It is a symbol, he said, and plays the same role as the cross in Christianity or the Star of David in Judaism. 'We pray to God.'

"At his suggestion, the Associated Press foreign desk in New York contacted Prof Erach Munshi, president of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York. Nat Polowetsky, AP Foreign Editor, said Munshi told him that the presence of fire is essential in the prayer ritual, but is not worshipped. The 'fire worshipping' term itself is not offensive to him, Munshi said, but he would like to see its use done away with."

Dr Havaresf continues in his letter: "It could be understood from Prof Munshi's statement that he does not consider the term 'fire worshipper' an insult or offensive, which consequently could be interpreted that we are fire worshippers. I, Dr Havaresf, as a Zoroastrian, expect the leaders of our community to explain to the world the truth of our religion which is the 'worship of God' and *not* the 'worship of fire.' I would also like to suggest that the subject of fire worship be taken up promptly and discussed in the World Zoroastrian Congress and the result of the deliberation, which I am sure will be favorable, be declared to the world Press." Dr Havaresf ends his letter with the sentence: "I hope this letter of mine will not hurt the feelings of true Zoroastrians (Parsis or Iranians) and that instead it would be the cause of unity among our ranks."

Regarding Prof Munshi's remark, although regrettable, it may be attributed to his kind and tolerant nature. He does not like to hurt people's feelings, but deep in heart, he is with us.

I have received another letter from Dr K. Namdaran of Belmont, California. It expressed his grave concern over the report published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on the event in Assisi, in which the Zoroastrians are described as 'fire worshippers.'

To get to the depth of the matter, is the term 'fire worshippers' such an in-

Your property. And look what you can do with it.



Your idle land or property if left alone, will stay that way. No benefits. No appreciation. But you have a choice. Mazda Realstate Developers can convert your property into a prosperous, profit-earning proposition.

Our experts devise development plans tailor-made for your land. Plans that convert your once-idle property into a housing society or a shopping arcade; an office centre or an industrial complex. Even an amusement park.

We stick by you right through. Offering you professional tax planning and legal advice. Ensuring that everything goes right.

Call us today. And we'll tell you what else you can do with your property.

An opportunity to prosper with the MAZDALEASE Group.



(A division of Mazda Industries & Leasing Limited)
25 Kamruddin Industrial Estate,
Safed Pool, Andheri-Kurla Road, Bombay 400 072.
Tel: 5134496, 5113491.



sulting and damaging attribute to our religion to justify such a degree of anger and frustration on our part? The answer is yes. Possibly for some who live in a cultural environment in India which tolerates any dogma or belief under any name, it may not be so grave. But for the Zoroastrians of Iran, living in a strictly monotheistic culture, it is a damaging insult. Some of us still remember what degree of hardship and struggle we had to go through in Iran in order to convince the Iranian Moslems that we are worshippers of Ahura Mazda and not fire. This was finally achieved under the great leadership of the late Arbab Kaikhorow Shahrokh, who was a great favorite of Reza Shah.

Now, after one half of a century, we, the Zoroastrians of India, Pakistan and Iran, have come to this land of freedom, North America, which also happens to be monotheistic. Here too we find that due to misrepresentation of our religious rituals, we are being accused of fire worship, a practice considered to belong to polytheism and nature worship of the Stone Age.

This is a grave situation, and if we want the survival of Zoroastrianism, we must react swiftly and strongly. I

think that the religious and community leaders of each of the cities and the states in North America should write to the AP and demand the correction, and also send copies of the protest to the Vatican. We should explain to them that the "fire" mentioned in the holy *Gathas* (as beautifully described by the late Dr Iruch J.S. Taraporewala and other Zoroastrian scholars), refers to the "divine inner fire" in the hearts of all mankind and that Zarathushtra chose fire as the outward symbol of his faith—a sublime altar to turn to and concentrate on, when worshipping Ahura Mazda. We may add that the attention paid to the physical fire in later prayers and rituals are but a remnant of the old Aryan cult which reappeared centuries after the revelation of the Zoroastrian religion. Our Gathic prayers are all addressed to Ahura Mazda alone. We perceive Ahura Mazda and we praise and worship Ahura Mazda.

Dr ROSTAM SARFEH
California, USA

Homi Dhalla replies

Dr Rostam Sarfeh expresses justifiable chagrin at Zoroastrians being called "fire worshippers" in news reports on the Day of Prayer convened by Pope John Paul II at Assisi on October 27,

1986. From his quote from *The Washington Post*, "eagle-feathered Indians from Montana rubbed shoulders with fire worshipping Zoroastrians from Bombay," it obviously appears as if we are being treated as exotica. This by itself is objectionable. What is worse is the latent suggestion that Zoroastrianism is some ancient cult dedicated to the worship of fire.

While in Assisi, I was asked about the significance of fire in our religious tradition. I had explained that fire, to us, was the symbol of Divine Light. I had categorically mentioned, as I have always been doing, that Zoroastrians worship Ahura Mazda and not the fire. The symbol served to remind a Zoroastrian of his creator Ahura Mazda, whom alone he worshipped. In spite of this explanation, my remarks have been misrepresented.

I shall certainly write to the Associated Press and the Vatican about this. I thank Dr Sarfeh and all others who have protested at the use of this term in the American Press. Dr HOMI DHALLA

"Cama's commitments"

In "Cama's commitments" (*Parsiana*, December 1986) there is a reference to *The Bombay Samachar* trying to main-

With the Best Compliments of

 **INGERSOLL-RAND (INDIA) LIMITED**

Manufacturers of

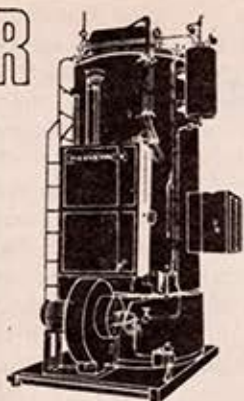
Air & Gas Compressors * Rock Drill Equipment

*** Vacuum Pumps**

Whatever your Energy problem

Thermax has the answer

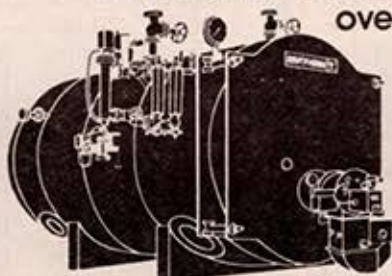
POWER CUT?



Get a **THERMOPAC**
Thermic fluid heater.
The economical
alternative to electrical
heating systems.

- Uses only 5% of the power consumed by an electrical heating system
- Thermal efficiency of 82% (GVC) on oil and 67% (GVC) on coal
- Fully automatic
- Gives temperatures up to 300°C at near atmospheric pressure
- No explosion hazard
- Virtually no maintenance
- Outside the purview of Indian Boiler Regulations
- Available in heat outputs ranging from 1,00,000 to 10,00,000 kcal/hr.

RISING FUEL COSTS?



REVOTHERM is the answer.
Its thermal efficiency is
over 82%.

- Its reverse flue design assures complete combustion saving fuel and minimising maintenance
- Compact design saves valuable floor space
- Quick start up from cold
- Specially tailored burner ensures trouble free operation
- Specially designed access door renders maintenance instantaneous
- Available in capacities from 1500 to 10,000 kg/hr F & A 100°C

UNCERTAIN FUEL SITUATION?

Install a **MULTITHERM**, the
multifuel boiler specially
designed to operate on
solid, liquid or gaseous
fuels.



- High thermal efficiencies on coal, lignite, bagasse, husk, woodchips, biomass, oil or gas.
- Rugged water-tube design for quick steaming
- Quick response to fluctuating loads—so no fuel wastage
- Mechanical stoker can be provided
- Available in capacities from 1000 to 6000 kg/hr F & A 100°C

Whatever your specific process heat problem, chances are THERMAX can solve it. With their know-how experience, expertise — and equipment that is backed by prompt after-sales-service anywhere in India. If you have a process heat problem, get in touch with THERMAX



THERMAX PRIVATE LIMITED

PROCESS HEAT DIVISION

4 BOMBAY-PUNE ROAD, SHIVAJINAGAR

PUNE 411005 TEL.(0212) 51125

TELEX: 0145-545TMXS IN CABLE: THERMAX HO

PROCESS HEAT & WASTE HEAT RECOVERY • INDUSTRIAL & CHEMICAL WASTE INCINERATION • AIR & EFFLUENT POLLUTION CONTROL
• ION EXCHANGE RESINS • WATER TREATMENT • SURFACE COATING • AGRICULTURE POST-HARVEST PROCESSING

tain a tradition of appointing Parsi Editors. It may interest the readers to learn that in *The Samachar's* long and illustrious history of about 165 years there were only two exceptions in this direction. After Cowasji Hormusji Mama, two Maratha Hindus were the fifth and the sixth Editors of *The Bombay Samachar*.

Mr R.P. Karkaria in his article in the *Calcutta Review* (April 1898) entitled "The oldest paper in India - *The Bombay Samachar*" writes: "Under these two Editors (Temulji Mirza and Cowasji Mama) as well as their two successors, the *Samachar* sustained its early reputation fairly well. These latter were two Hindus: Janardhan Wasudev and his brother Vinayak Wasudev, who both rose high in Government service later on, the former becoming acting judge of the Bombay Supreme Court, the first native to sit on that bench, and the latter rising to be the oriental translator to the Government. They were Maratha Hindus, and it was a unique thing for such Hindus to edit a Gujarati newspaper owned by Parsis. But the Maratha learned men in those days studied Gujarati well, an accomplishment which their

successors of today lack. Moreover, *The Samachar*, though always owned by Parsis and edited, with the above exception, by Parsi Editors, throughout the entire career has been always a cosmopolitan paper, appealing to all sections of the native community of Western India."

The above words of appreciation were written way back in 1898, but the same compliments may be given to this oldest living vernacular newspaper even after about nine decades.

A passing reference to the first vernacular papers will be found interesting. The first "native" vernacular weekly *Sungbad Cowmuddy* (or the moon of intelligence) was edited by Babu Tarachand Dutt and Babu Bhubani Charan Bundapadia, and started in December 1821, only seven months before *The Bombay Samachar*. Prior to that, *Samachar Darpan* was started by the Serampore missionaries and was edited by J. Marshman. According to Mr Karkaria it existed for 21 years. He adds, "strictly speaking, it cannot be called a 'native' paper as it was conducted by Europeans."

RATAN R. MARSHALL
Surat

"Why single out Antia?"

Mr Roudbari is puzzled as to why Kersey Antia should be singled out when there were others also who collaborated in the performance of the much debated l'affaire - the navjote of Joseph Peterson ("Why single out Antia?" *Parsiana*, December 1986). Obviously, Mr Roudbari is referring to the two recently published booklets, the first by Dasturs Hormazdyar Mirza, Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Firoze Kotwal, and the second by Zoroastrian Studies, and also their very interesting reviews penned by Homi Rogers and Faribourz Nariman respectively.

The point which Mr Roudbari has ignored is that everybody does something wrong sometimes, but everybody does not justify the wrong done. As he says, a few persons were involved with the wrong done, but only Antia tried to justify it in many ways. In spite of the fact that the wrong done was condemned by the highest ecclesiastical authority (the above mentioned Dasturjis), the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, other scholars, etc,
continued on page 26

With Best Compliments From:

MAZDA ESTATES & FINANCE PRIVATE LIMITED

For Land, Residential Flats, Shops & Commercial
Premises, Estate Advisory Services

Regd. Office:

2, Girdhar Nivas, 15/17, Shahid Bhagatsingh Road,
Colaba, Bombay-400 005
Tel: 234948/235269

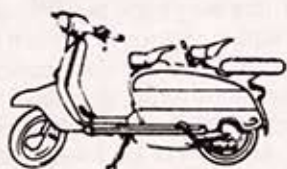
Branch Office:

Sir J.J. Shopping Centre,
Panch Hatdi, Navsari 396445
Tel: 3249

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



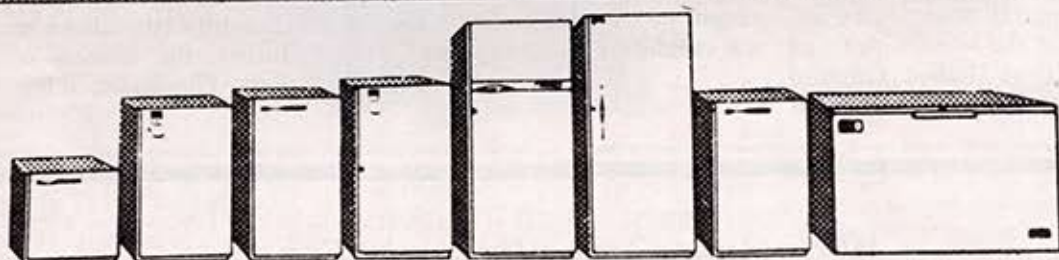
**CASH REGISTER
DIVISION**
(Electro-Mechanical &
Electronic)



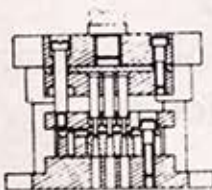
**AUTOMOTIVE
DIVISION**



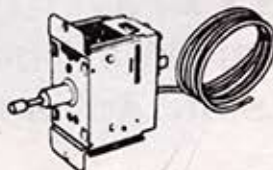
**LAMINATION
DIVISION**
(Electrical Motors &
Stampings)



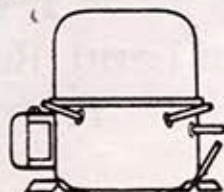
REFRIGERATION DIVISION
(Refrigerators & Deep Freezers)



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



**CONTROLS
DIVISION**



**COMPRESSOR
DIVISION**

Kelvinator
of India Limited

High Priests attend Federation meet

Training of paramobeds to begin with the aid of High Priests

Arnavaz S. Mama

For the first time in the history of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, two High Priests attended the executive council meeting held at the Bhiwandiwalla Hall, New Delhi on December 27 and 28, 1986 and participated in its deliberations. Dastur Meherji Kaikobad Meherjirana, High Priest of the orthodox citadel of Navsari and Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji of the Fasli Atash Kadeh in Bombay have, moreover, agreed to personally help in the training of paramobeds — a corps of behdins trained to perform certain permissible religious ceremonies.

The long discussed youth exchange project, whereby youngsters from Bombay would visit with Parsis in other parts of India and vice versa, came closer to being implemented with an offer by the Federation president and Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla volunteering, on behalf of the BPP, to pay travelling expenses.

With the increasing number of married working women and the growing need for day-care centers for children, the Federation has agreed to partially finance a pilot day-care project from the Federation's women and children's fund. A voluntary agency under BPP supervision will manage the center.

Differences of opinion between members of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman apparently resulted in the secretary of the Madras Parsi Anjuman, Rusi Ginwalla, questioning the Federation's practice of coopting five individual members on the body which is supposed to represent anjumans and punchayets. Currently Ms Mani Clubwala of Madras is the coopted member from the South Zone. The council, however, unanimously voted to continue the system of coopting individuals, citing the example of the Rajya Sabha.

The need for informing Parsi women of their legal rights through a series of public lectures in the various baugs and colonies has been proposed by Professor Noshir Kaikobad who is currently handling the Federation's school and family counselling services. Kaikobad noted that reports of injustice to and atrocities committed on Parsi women came to the fore in the course of family counselling sessions.

Of the nine awards instituted by the Federation to recognize excellence in various fields, donations have been received towards the corpus of three, informed Federation joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi.

The Federation has decided to accept foreign anjumans as associate members without the right to vote.

Mazda Industries and Leasing's managing director Homi Mehta offered a sum of Rs 30,000 per year for five years to enable the Delhi Parsi Anjuman's (DPA) Ms Piloo Jungalwalla to publish workbooks authored by Ms Perin Lalkaka. Jungalwalla had appealed for funds from the Federation and its member anjumans for the project in February '86. The announcement of the Mazda largesse was made, appropriately, just after Professor Kaikobad of New York, the day's guest speaker, had appealed for adequate educational material to train Zoroastrian children in North America.

With no other nominations forthcoming, the DPA's acting president Zal Nowsherwanji was confirmed as vice president of the North Zone. The presence of Ms Nergish Nargolwala, now a DPA trustee, at the council meeting, was of some solace to the delegates who sorely missed her late husband Shiavax, the Federation's architect and its founding vice president.

The usual horseshoe seating arran-



Minochehr-Homji and (top) Meherjirana



While the community in all parts of India demonstrated the same demographic characteristics, the socioeconomic aspects of each anjuman stand out distinctly

gement of the executive council sessions in the resplendent, floodlit Bhiwandiwalla Hall with charcoal braziers adding to the delegates' comfort in the chilly Delhi winter, led Professor Irani to liken the scene to the Sassanian court with Golwalla in the role of Noshervan the Just! However, the 'court' was crippled when all the BPP trustees departed at 4.00 pm on the second day, leaving a truncated council to continue with the issues at hand.

Defunct anjumans

Though an offer of one rupee per square meter has been received from the encroachers on the dokhma land at Diu, BPP trustee and Federation joint honorary secretary Eruch Desai felt the community should try for a better price. The issue of the Diu lands has been discussed at Federation meetings for the last one year and thanks to the efforts of Minochaheer Bharucha of Bhavnagar and Sorab Katpitia of the Surat Parsi Punchayet (SPP), the abovementioned offer for the rocky land was made. While some delegates were in favor of the negotiations and of clinching the deal, Desai held back. The draft power of attorney, authorizing Bharucha and

Katpitia to complete the deal, is now lying with Desai's assistant, awaiting the lawyer's approval.

Two persons on salary or job work basis will be appointed to ferret out "tangible data" regarding defunct anjuman properties, announced the BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria. One individual will concentrate on Gujarat properties and the other will be free to take on all-India issues. The costs will be borne by the BPP and SPP which the Federation will reimburse when the properties are sold.

At Nizamabad, anjuman property land stands in the name of a non-Parsi agriculturist since 1972. Thus for over 13 years the anjuman's name is off the land records. At the Junagadh aramgah, land is

uncultivated land around tempts encroachers and the bungli is illegally occupied. He advised the council to dispose of the land once and for all.

"The mischief starts by an innocuous entry on the land records of the local patwari. It is necessary that neighboring anjumans keep tabs on revenue authorities and get the record of rights. If any new name is found, it is an advance warning of what is happening. But if for 13 years someone's name is on the records, it's too late. Maintain the pass-book regularly," advised BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga, an IAS officer with experience in matters of land revenue records. Khodaiji, an ex-IAS man himself, suggested that an alternative to court proceedings is to come to terms



being encroached and gravestones being sold, according to retired SPP president Maneck Gheyara.

At Neemach there is disaffection between the few Parsi families (30 to 50 people) left. According to BPP trustee and Federation joint honorary treasurer Jamsheed Guzder the vice president of the Neemach anjuman is a lady over 70 years old and her cousin, over 80 years old, is the president. The one energetic Parsi man, who runs a petrol pump and is capable of delivering the goods, resigned as trustee. Katpitia noted, however, that valuable anjuman property there was being usurped by a Parsi family. If the Federation becomes involved there, there are distinct chances of litigation. Golwalla meanwhile informed the delegates that the old ladies have volunteered to sell the land and give the proceeds to the BPP for housing. "I've written, accepting their offer," he declared.

The Saharanpur aramgah situated next to the Police Lines is very valuable land, said Boman Khodaiji of Lucknow. The old graves are protected, but the

Above: (from left) Nowsherwanji, Golwalla, Gandhi, Guzder, Kanga and Minoo Shroff

Top: Desai (left) and Clubwala

with reality and offer a consideration for vacant possession of disputed properties.

The DPA's Rusi Engineer, who on behalf of the DPA has taken on himself the onus of looking after the Simla aramgah, reported that there are iron rails and a gate on two sides but the 100-year-old cemetery is otherwise quite depleted and overgrown with weeds and no records are traceable. Situated deep down a valley with an inscription thanking the British government for giving the land to Parsis, the approach road to the aramgah is no longer motorable. The two rooms on each side of the gate are illegally occupied.

Paramobeds

Dasturs Meherjirana and Minochehr-Homji have not only supported the Federation's paramobed project, but agreed to help train those behdins willing to learn to perform certain priestly duties.

When Peshotan Nargolwala, the Federation's joint honorary treasurer, suggested that the BPP's committee in charge of mobed amelioration be entrusted with selecting individuals for paramobed training, Meherjirana responded immediately, "I visit Bombay very often and shall be most willing to be on the committee." Minochehr-Homji declared: "I am ready — it is high time!"

The Ahmednagar and Allahabad anjuman are in the forefront, with candidates ready for training. The Federation, the BPP and the local anjuman will share the cost of the training and if a local anjuman cannot afford it, the Federation and the BPP will absorb the costs, offered Golwalla.

Minochehr-Homji noted that the topic



Above: Federation session in progress

Alongside: (Left column) Peshotan Nargolwala, Dittia and Captain (Right column) Homi Mehta, Khullar and Sidhwa

undertake the higher liturgical ceremonies for which a mobed is necessary.]

The discussion on mobeds sparked an outburst by Godrej Sidhwa of Karachi. The lecturer-writer was a guest of the DPA and an invitee to the Federation meeting. He felt that the question of mobeds had been "wrongly interpreted in India. When six months ago the Karachi mobed resigned, we received eight applications from India. It appears they are not well paid. We offered Rs 2,500 per month plus perks. When I came to India on December 2, more mobeds enquired about coming to Pakistan." Sidhwa spoke about the "miserable" condition of priests and people in Surat's villages, particularly Suwali village where the fire-temple is a wreck with cobwebs abounding — unvisited, uncared for — and took the SPP and the BPP to task for the sad state of affairs.

On behalf of the Surat delegates who were upset by Sidhwa's remarks, Davar Kavasji Modi informed that the Suwali agiary and sanatorium were under the control of the Chowna family which resides in Bombay. Relating past events, Modi said he wanted to move the adaran, fire to Surat as the priest in Suwali was old and ailing, but the Chownas wanted a legal opinion. During the two or three years that went by, the priest died, and Modi himself was beleaguered with litigation on the basis that he had no right to interfere with the fire. By the end of it, the adaran fire had already lapsed into a dadgah and he lost interest.

Dr Sam Bhacca, president of the SPP, noted that Bhatha, Ichhapore and Adajan agiaries were all private trusts with low funds and managerial difficulties. While the SPP does not manage any agiary, Bhacca noted that Surat mobeds were able to finance family holidays to Europe.

Mehernosh Mehta of Ahmednagar voiced the misgivings of the smaller anjuman: "If we were to give the same amounts as Karachi, we couldn't do it!"

Welfare

A pitch has been made for children's day-care centers in Parsi colonies. Volunteers and paid workers would look after babies and school-going children while the parents are away at work. Originally postulated by Dr (Ms) Ketayun Madon who is currently manning the BPP's career guidance project, the idea has found general support.

As a pilot project, such a center has been promised some financial support from the Federation's women and children's fund once the modalities are worked out. The project will be handled by a suitable voluntary agency with the BPP acting as catalyst and general overseer.

In the process of school counselling many unmet needs of the community are coming to light. It is now accepted, for example, that there is something wrong at the foundation level in the teaching of maths and English in Parsi schools.

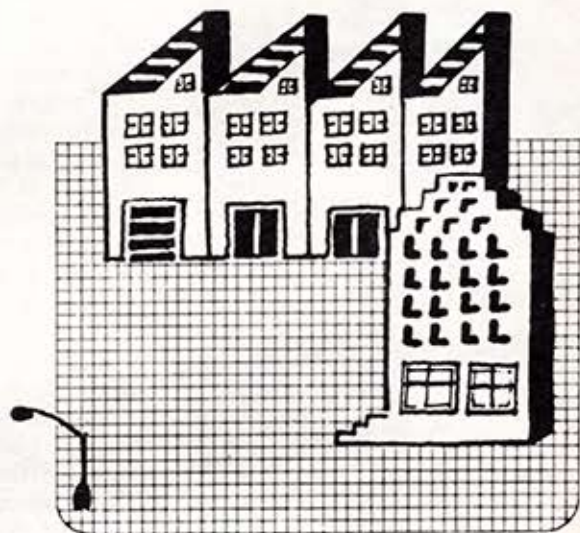
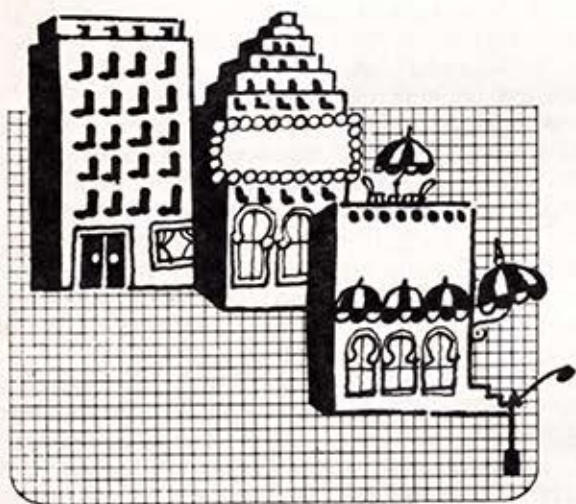
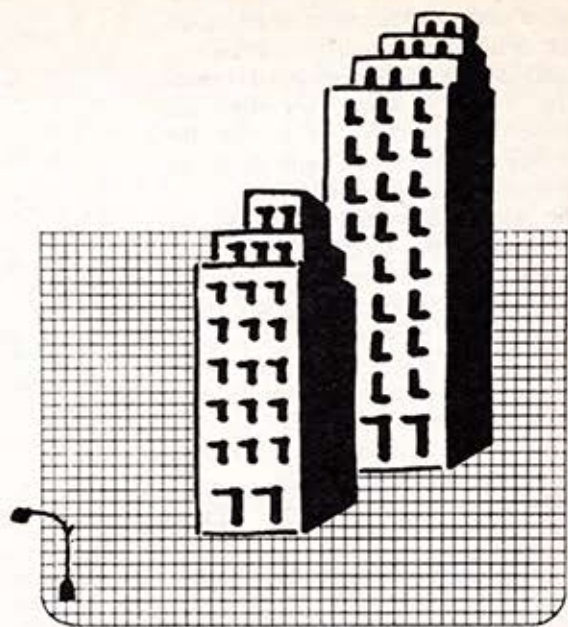
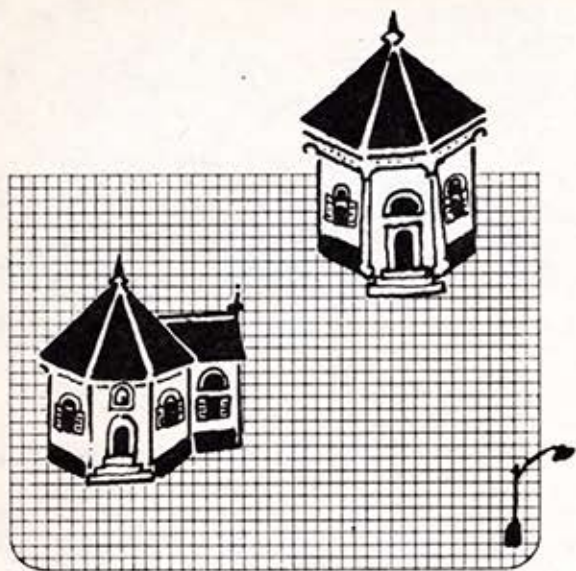
For the teacher training programs some cosmopolitan funds such as N.M. Wadia Charities, the Dorab Tata Foundation, the Aga Khan Foundation could be tapped as the benefits would be reaped by non-Parsi students also.

An offshoot of family counselling was the realization of the extent of legal illiteracy among Parsis. A lady, thrown



was also thrashed out in the USA and a mini course of 40 lessons evolved in Chicago. This includes the daily prayers, afringans and afrins but not farokhshi. By the end of the training the candidate is expected to read the long prayers with facility and recite the shorter ones from memory. "People with inner calling will do well," said Minochehr-Homji.

[A behdin or an uninitiated athornan (one who has not undergone the navarmartab ceremonies) may qualify as a paramobed after due training in the performance of certain rituals. As currently accepted, no paramobed could



**NOTHING SUCCEEDS IN
BUSINESS LIKE
A GOOD IDEA SHAPED BY
PEOPLE WITH SAVVY.**

Look at any successful business venture and you'll find behind it people who know what they're doing.

Why go far? Take the case of Mazda Leasing Limited. It was promoted and shaped by a group of professionals of Mazda Estates & Finance Private Limited who had made their mark in the construction and finance fields. So, they were able to sense exactly the right time to start a leasing company when the idea was just catching on in India.

The same promoting company with its dedicated professionals put experience and expertise to good use recently to make a success of Vitta Mazda Limited which extended the leasing method of financing to other areas of corporate operations, particularly immovable property acquisition.

And, now the time has come for this band of business people, well known for their savvy and integrity, to turn another good idea into a great and profitable success. Judging by the boom in business in India, they reckon with a spurt in the demand for working and living spaces from the corporate and government sector — which is currently met partly by private construction outfits.

The time is ripe for a more professional approach in this burgeoning field. This new venture, Mazda Properties Limited, is promoted and will be managed by the same successful group we've spoken about. The latest instance of their Midas Touch is the recently concluded multi-storeyed residential complex that is already a much lauded landmark in Navsari. Three of their property development projects will be launched soon in Gujarat and Bombay, apart from the ambitious Vitta Mazda Limited warehousing project in Gujarat.



Promoted by:
Mazda Estates & Finance Private Limited.

MAZDA PROPERTIES LIMITED

Administrative Office:
Elphinstone House, 17, Marzban Road, Fort, Bombay 400 001. Tel: 287 3729/287 3730.

Registered Office: Park View, Lurni Kuti, Navsari 396 445 (Gujarat). Tel: 3249/3053.

BUILDING BETTER PLACES TO WORK AND LIVE IN.

ATASH LEASING & INDUSTRIES LIMITED

Registered Office: 608 609, Raheja Chambers, Free Press Journal Marg,
Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021.

**Issue of 4,00,000 – 15% Secured
Redeemable
Convertible Debentures
of Rs. 125 each, for cash at par
aggregating Rs. 500 lakhs**

HIGHLIGHTS

Attractive Conversion: Market Price: Rs. 30/- per share. 5 shares for every Debenture at the end of six months from allotment.

Fully Secured: The debentures are fully secured.

Excellent Track Record: Dividend declared for the first year of operations – 20% pro-rata.

Easy Liquidity: Will be listed in Bombay, Delhi and Ahmedabad Stock Exchanges.

* Market price as on 26th January 1987

FROM A COMPANY

- Which is an established, profit making concern.
- Which is amongst the largest producers of Ammonium Nitrate in India.
- Which has the **DOUBLE STRENGTH** of **INDUSTRY AND LEASING**.
- Managed by a Board manned by highly successful, competent industrialists/professionals with proven track records.
- Which is diversifying into the consumer field with the manufacture of "Frooti" and "Appy" under franchise from Parles.

Managers to the Issue



CANARA BANK
Merchant Banking Division,
Atlanta, 11th Floor,
Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021.



**SYNERGY CONSULTANTS
PRIVATE LIMITED**
302, Dalamal Towers,
211, Free Press Journal Marg,
Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021.

Co-Managers to the Issue



**Bank of Credit & Commerce International
(Overseas) Limited**
Maker Chambers III, Nariman Point,
Bombay 400 021.



AMERICAN EXPRESS BANK
CAPITAL MARKETS
Hamilton House,
Connaught Place, New Delhi 110 001.



V.B. Desai Financial Services Limited
Cama Building, 24/26 Dalal Street,
Fort, Bombay 400 023.



Consultants to the Issue
Amritlal Bajaj & Co.
606, Kalash Building,
26, Kasturba Gandhi Road,
New Delhi 110 001.

**ISSUE OPENS ON
18TH MARCH 1987**

Beyond the boundaries of growth.

out of her marital home and forcibly separated from her six-month-old infant son, did not know that she could go to the police commissioner's office. When a message to the effect was conveyed to the in-laws, a compromise was reached.

Family counsellors should get more and more knowledge about law, felt Kaikobad and suggested that Parsi social workers take the SNDT University's para legal workers' course.

"Make people aware of Parsi marriage laws. Report injustice and atrocities on Parsi women," pleaded Kaikobad, suggesting a series of public lectures in the various bays and colonies.

Migration and housing

A youth exchange project, with the BPP contributing to travelling expenses, is on the anvil. The emphasis would be on getting Bombay Parsis to recognize happier living conditions in other parts of India and migrate away from the congestion of Bombay. At the same time mofussil Parsi youth would get to meet more of their counterparts in Bombay.

Golwalla mentioned a suggestion from Nergish Mistry of Delhi to divert some of the BPP's building funds to Delhi and elsewhere to get people to move there, a suggestion welcomed by Federation vice president Bejon Dittia on behalf of the Secunderabad-Hyderabad anjuman where the housing project for 32 flats is currently curtailed due to insufficient resources. Guzder wondered if older Parsi men and women would be prepared to move out of Bombay to make room for their children, as the BPP would be willing to provide them the required facilities elsewhere.

Stressing the rental basis of the new accommodation in Navsari which had induced many families from Bombay to migrate there, Rohinton Daviervala of Sanjan remarked that the BPP's ownership colony project in Sanjan was not getting off the ground because there were few takers for ownership flats. Daviervala emphasized that educational and job opportunities will be available in Sanjan and requested the BPP to construct rental flats from the profits of one or two ownership buildings there.

The BPP has planned 11 buildings in Sanjan, explained Golwalla, adding that the foundation of the first building is due to be laid shortly.

Homi Mehta recalled that since 1981 there was talk about a Parsi colony in Sanjan. The Mazda Leasing group therefore decided to start with an industrial complex with a polytechnic, school and

hospital coming up shortly. Though currently at a nascent stage, by the end of two years Mehta expected the center to be functioning normally and invited the Federation to hold its executive council meeting in Sanjan in 1988, to see the Mazda philosophy in action.

Informing the gathering regarding Vapi, said to be the largest industrial estate in Asia with 750 industries based there, Rusi Engineer, managing director of Industrial Boilers, noted that opportunities exist for "good mud workers — that is the only qualification necessary; unfortunately one that we lack." His

"Make people aware of Parsi marriage laws. Report injustice and atrocities on Parsi women."

company has been on the lookout for young Parsi engineers but cannot get them.

With four anjumans' socioeconomic surveys completed and three in hand, sociologist Ava Khullar informed the gathering that unless the data collected is both accurate and complete, analysis becomes meaningless. Some anjumans have provided data for only 30 to 50 percent of the questionnaire.

Interestingly, while the community in all parts of India demonstrated the same demographic characteristics, the socioeconomic aspects of each anjuman stand out distinctly. However, Khullar felt that the surveys did not seem to be yielding any particular information on mobeds, housing or educational facilities which would enable the Federation to plan and implement its own programs.

Careers

Sixteen junior college students aspiring for medical and engineering careers have been selected by the BPP on merit for special coaching in maths and science to improve their chances of admission to the professional colleges.

The Federation's concern about the dwindling Parsi representation in the national civil and defence services as well as the problems of seeking admission to medical and engineering colleges has led the BPP to formulate schemes for financial assistance to Parsi students to enable them to join special coaching classes.

Though salaries in government service were very low originally, the present rates were much better, said Kanga, with the maximum level in the Indian Administrative Service being Rs 9,000 per month. Simultaneously it was emphasized by Kanga, Anklesaria and S.F. Panthaky of Navsari that it was not essential for everyone to aim at the top. People could try for lower rungs of service like sales tax and deputy sales tax collectors, forestry officers, police sub inspectors and provincial constabulary which, noted Khodaiji, gives preference to minorities. At every level the officer wields appropriate authority.

Phiroze Karanjia of Karanj informed the delegates that at the Hazira gas and petrochemicals project and electricity board near Surat, even ordinary BA degrees are acceptable for employment and there is a dearth of computer operators.

Managing committee

The managing committee formed at the August Federation meeting in Bombay showed that while the smaller forum enabled more work to be accomplished, it highlighted the need for machinery to implement the decisions. Though the committee was expected to hold meetings between executive council meetings, the committee met only once under the chairmanship of Eruch Desai.

The meeting had dealt with the subject of establishing a Parsi medical college as also the problem of admission for Parsi students into existing institutions and had recommended a number of Parsi doctors whose opinions could be elicited, but the panel had not yet been invited.

The discussion regarding entry into engineering colleges similarly rests with a panel of engineers and educationists yet to be convened.

The managing committee had also discussed the implementation of the decision to institute nine Federation Awards at the instance of Jamshedpur's Homi Bodhanwalla, vice president of the Federation's east zone. The Federation, the BPP and the Godrej Foundation have paid up Rs 10,000 each towards the awards. The SPP, Jamshed Guzder, Maneck Gheyara and TISCO president Dr J. J. Irani have promised donations towards one award each. Two awards still remain to be financed.

The social and community service award has been booked by the Federation in memory of its most enthusiastic advocate, the late Shiavax Nargolwala. The Godrej Foundation has earmarked the entrepreneurship award and Irani's contri-

bution will be for sports. Rusi Engineer has instituted a second place entrepreneurship award.

Though some nominations have been received — the Malcolm Baug association of Bombay has sent in seven or eight names for the sports award — most of the other anjumans have not so far made any nominations.

WZO

Though no agreement was reached regarding the Federation joining the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), the talks between the two parties were more cordial than before with both sides attempting to accommodate the other. As Desai noted, we are "seeing the light at the end of the tunnel with goodwill on both sides."

The issues of who would be represented on the WZO managing committee and with what weightage still remained unresolved at the Delhi meeting. WZO has offered 50-50 representation on the WZO managing committee for individual and anjuman members, the chairmanship would alternate between the anjumans and individuals, with the BPP-Federation having the final word on certain politically touchy subjects to be listed jointly by WZO's India representative Dadi Engineer and Desai.

The Federation's objections as stated by Gandhi include the one vote per member formula that continues on the general body by which individual members could dictate policy to anjuman members. Gandhi also noted that the composition and method of functioning of the WZO's managing committee and its office-bearers was such that only those present in London would be in a position to participate effectively in its deliberations.

Noted Desai, "matters of administration, control, etc are routine and can be taken care of if we are able to control the world body in a certain way so that the deliberations are not conducive to trouble."

"Please remember that it is individuals who have changed the destiny of man," WZO president Shahpur Captain defended the Organisation's bias towards individual members. "We are not talking of country, power, politics. We are talking of doing something worthwhile for a Zoroastrian, wherever he may be... we can put in our constitution certain clauses by which nothing will be done that will jeopardize the interests of Zoroastrians in India..."

Accepting all the issues raised as being of considerable community importance,

Prof K.D. Irani set the case into a neat academic frame: Political issues must be discussed by anjuman representatives alone and individuals excluded. Certain matters, viz education, research, etc, where anjumans are deadweights, should be preserved for discussion by individuals. Money, expenses, etc should be discussed by both because individuals are the source of the funds.

Kustis

The worries and difficulties expressed by some delegates, notably Secunderabad's Naval Vakeel, regarding availability of kustis, was set at rest by Gheyara announcing that the SPP hands them out free to the indigent as well as posts them to the Lahore Anjuman of Pakistan.

**Middlemen in the
kusti trade
exact the high price of
Rs 50 per *gaj*
by cornering the supply.**

Desai, who is chairman of the BPP's kusti wool subcommittee, also assured the council of his and the BPP's cooperation if any anjuman felt distressed regarding shortage of either wool or kustis.

Dastur Meherjirana revealed that though there are currently enough weavers, as girls who had studied in Parsi schools had been taught the craft, the younger generation no longer goes to such schools and hence the future supply of weavers was dubious. Also, middlemen of other communities had entered the trade and exacted the high price of Rs 50 per *gaj* (a measure for kusti length — approximately 27 inches) from the consumers by cornering the supply from places like Navsari.

Uzbekistan

The belief that an ancient Zoroastrian fire-temple had been unearthed in Uzbekistan had led the late Shrivastava Nargolwala to propose that the Federation sponsor a delegation consisting of High Priests, scholars and archeologists to visit the site but the Russian authorities had refused permission on the basis that the find was not a fire-temple. While Homi Tale-yarkhan, member of the Minorities Commission, had offered to write to T.N. Kaul, the Indian ambassador to the USSR, the DPA's Dadi Mistry proposed

that the DPA liaise with the Russian ambassador in Delhi.

At the Delhi meet Prof Irani, the guest speaker who unfolded the saga of migrant Zoroastrians in the context of the North American experience, referred to a similar find at Tashkent where much archaeological research was under way. He admitted inability to get any information from the Russian embassy in New York and suggested that the Federation appeal to the Russian embassy in Delhi.

If scholars and archeologists could consolidate the material from such sites, the proto (prerecorded) and early history of the Zoroastrian people could be established. "It may take some investment, but the investment should be worth making," he added.

The executive council will meet next in Devka on March 28 and 29, 1987 at the invitation of the SPP.

Those attending the meeting were: Hosang Debara from Agra; Mehernosh Mehta, Nozar Ichhaporia and Erach Gai of Ahmednagar; Capt Homi Dandiwalla of Allahabad; Dr Aspi Golwala, Eruch Desai, Jamsheed Kanga, Jamshed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Peshotan Nargolwala, Rustom Anklesaria, Prof Noshir Kikobad and Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji of Bombay; Zal Nowsherwanji, Keki Gandhi, Rusi Engineer, Noshir Captain, Dadi Mistry, Ms Nergish Nargolwala, Ms Farida Variawa and Ms Ava Khullar of Delhi; Rustom Daroga coopted from North Zone; Aspi Irani of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Ronny Dick of Jhansi; Phiroze Karanjia of Karanj; Boman Khodaiji and K.F. Dordi of Lucknow; Gp Capt Dhunjishaw Marker of Mhow; Keki Bala of Nagpur and Kamptee; Bejoo Jilla of Nanded; Dastur Meherji Meherjirana and S.F. Panthaky of Navsari; Minoo Irani and Dinshaw Anklesaria of Poona; Rohinton Daviervala of Sanjan; Homi Palsetia and Nariman Balsara of Saronda; Bejon Dittia and Naval Vakeel of Secunderabad and Hyderabad; Ms Mani Clubwala coopted from South Zone; Zubin Irani and Mehernosh Kheshtwala of Shahabad; Dr Sam Bhacca, Davar Kavassji Modi, Savaksha Hilloowala, Dr Minocher Contractor, Maneck Gheyara and Sorab Katpitia of Surat; Homi Mehta of Zai Bordi; and Shahpur Captain and Dinyar Modi of the World Zoroastrian Organisation. The guest speakers were Dr Paul du Breuil and Prof Kaikhosrov Irani. The Press was represented by *Jam-e-Jamshed* and *Parsiana*.

Events and Personalities

The WZO's treasure hunt

Early in the morning of January 4, 1987 young Zoroastrians gathered at Cusrow Baug to begin a 'runathon' to the Sterling cinema. They were partaking in a World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) Youth Wing organized treasure hunt. The winning foursome received Rs 75 each but the real treasure and aim of the event was a meeting and mingling of young Zoroastrians. The runner-up team received a smaller monetary compensation and token surprise gifts awaited the first to reach Tata Palace and Central Bank. A contributory lunch, at the residence of Zal Contractor, WZO's Bombay secretary, followed.

The decision to hold the treasure hunt was reached barely a month before the scheduled date. Falling short of finance, the Youth Wing decided to contact Mazda Industries and Leasing or the Kavarana Trust or BPP trustee Homi Ranina to sponsor the event. Luckily, one of the committee members bumped into Ranina at the Karani Agiary and he agreed to sponsor the event on the spot, says committee member Ms Hutoxi Khan.

Even though the treasure hunt was advertised in *Mid-Day*, *The Daily* and *Jam-e-Jamshed* and non-Parsi friends were permitted to enter the game, the turnout in terms of numbers was disappointing, admits Khan.

Although the Youth Wing has about 45 members, largely in the 19 to 35 age-group, only a core group of less than 20 attend the functions organized, says Khan who is filing her solicitor's articles at Mulla and Mulla, Craigie, Blunt and Caroe.

Members' dues for the WZO Youth Wing are Rs 50 per annum for working members and entirely free for students. Other eye-openers organized by

the youthful committee, whose president is dental student Burzin Khan, included a trip to the J.J. Hospital's Parsi ward, and lectures in vocational guidance, religion and law. On the cards is a trip to the Bahrot Caves.

Madressa news

In June 1986 the number of students at the Athornan Boarding Madressa at Dadar reached a record 50, notes the fourth issue of *Knowledgegate*, the Madressa's biannual, bilingual publication. Listing new facilities such as new overhead tanks, a new pump to fill them, new water heaters, a TV, new dining room furniture, etc, the magazine notes: "Almost everything has changed in the past 20 years (since the Madressa reopened in 1966) except the building and the principal!" And, with the foundation stone for the building's new extension having been laid on December 9, *Knowledgegate's* editor, Cyrus Sidhva, a graduate in Avesta-Pahlavi from St Xavier's College, will have more new happenings to announce in the next issue.

Publishing the magazine is a lot of work as advertisements have to be sought and accommodated and editorial matter composed in English and Gujarati, and Sidhva acknowledges the help he receives from Ervads Ramiyar and Kersi Karanjia.

The 80-page, offset xerox magazine includes articles on recent events, the Madressa, sports, natural history, stamps, essays, poems, fiction, humor, riddles, cartoons and crossword puzzles.

In a message, published in the fourth issue of *Knowledgegate*, Jamshed Kanga, Bombay's ex municipal commissioner and Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee, says: "An institution of this sort which prepares young men for the honorable profession of the priest-

hood needs to impart such a broad spectrum of knowledge, so that these young men, when they leave the institution, become 'true counsellors to the members of the community. I would particularly commend the work of Ervad Rustomji Panthaki under whose dedicated leadership this institution is flourishing."

To relieve distress

To add to his immense contribution in terms of 25 years of service to the Surat Parsi Punchayet (SPP) and the Parsi community in Surat, Maneck Gheyara, the retiring chairman of its



Gheyara: generous aid

board of trustees has made a personal donation of one lakh rupees. The SPP's gratitude has been recorded by way of a press release from its chairman, Dr Sam Bhacca. Gheyara has requested the SPP board to use the interest accruing on the money to relieve the distress of the poor of the community in Surat.

The Gheyara family has consistently and generously aided the SPP. Not long ago, the family donated Rs 21,000

Seven places where your money gets the respect it deserves.



Hongkong Bank

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation

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

to the Surat Parsi General Hospital in memory of Bai Najamai Ratan Shah Gheyara, notes Bhacca.

Among Maneck Gheyara's other accomplishments is that of being a founding vice-president of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. His unstinting help has also been available to Parsis from other parts of India. Gheyara himself attributes his success to the friendship he enjoys with the other communities of Gujarat.

IAS coaching

A coaching scheme, for the benefit of students of minority communities appearing for the entrance examinations of the Indian Administrative Service and other allied services, has been sponsored by the Minorities' Training Sub-centre of Allahabad University, notes the November issue of the *Fed Newsletter*, the bulletin of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. The scheme is open to those whose guardian's annual income is below Rs 20,000. Further details may be obtained from Dr Ratan Sagar, P.O. Agricultural Institute, Allahabad 211007.

Sagar has also offered to provide vocational guidance in agriculture, especially in animal husbandry to those individuals who wish to start a small scale enterprise in rearing birds or animals, adds the write-up.

Laurels for Karanjavala

For his contributions to the field of urology, Dr Dara Kaikhushroo Karanjavala was presented the Dhanvantari Award by the Maharashtra Governor Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma at a function organized at the Taj Mahal Hotel on October 26, 1986, note newspaper reports.

Karanjavala is the fourteenth doctor to be presented with the award and citation which was instituted in 1973 by the Dhanvantari Foundation. The citation of the award reads: "You are an authority on uroscopy... In the detection of urinary calculus you have few equals. Urology has made great advances in this country in the past three decades or so. Your significant role in its development cannot be overstressed."

Awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1983, the 65-year-old doctor has a string of qualifications to his name, and is at present

honorary consultant to the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, the Tata Memorial Hospital, the J.J. Hospital and the INS Asvini Armed Forces Hospital; honorary visiting urologist to the Bombay Hospital; and honorary advisor to the Shere Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Srinagar and the Gujarmal Modi Hospital and Research Centre for Medical Sciences, Delhi, notes his bio data. He is also visiting professor to the Universities of Wisconsin, Denver and Detroit in the USA.

A member of a number of organizations for urology surgeons, Karanjavala has chaired many conferences both national and international and has several publications to his name.

World surgeons' president

The first Indian to be made president-elect of the International College of Surgeons, Washington, for 1987 and 1988 is Bombay's eminent surgeon Dr Tehemton E. Udwadia, notes *The Economic Times* of October 8, 1986. Considered the highest recognition conferred by the international surgical community, Udwadia, the youngest to

Karanjavala with the Dhanvantari Award.



Vajifdar (right) receiving the Freedom Fighter Award from Sinha

occupy the post, will assume office as president in 1989/1990, adds the report.

The College is affiliated to the World Health Organization and brings together 13,000 surgeons spread over 111 nations, states the write-up.

Dr Udwadia is honorary professor at the J. J. Hospital and Grant Medical College and consultant to several other hospitals, add newspaper reports.

Patriot recognized

One-time active Congress worker who later joined the Forward Bloc formed by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, 71-year-old Ms Shera Vajifdar was presented the Freedom Fighter Award by the Collector of Bombay A.P. Sinha on October 24, 1986, note news reports in Bombay's dailies.

A close associate of Bose, she claims to be among the last persons to have met him before he left India for good. A former municipal councillor of Bombay, Vajifdar continues with her social work activities and is presently president of the Bombay-based Navsari Parsi Association, vice-president of the All India Animal Welfare Association and joint honorary secretary of the Mayor's Fund Committee of Bombay, states a press release.

Gold at Stampex

For his Aden Victorian Era study collection, Vispi S. Dastur was awarded a gold medal at the recently concluded Stampex-86 Philatelic Exhibition in Australia, notes a press release. The collection consists of Indian stamps used in Aden during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837 to 1902). A spe-

cial prize from the Postal History Society of Australia, of old Australian pennies converted into silver-coated spoons, was also presented to Dastur for the same collection.

Honorary secretary of the Empire of India Philatelic Society, Dastur is also joint editor of *India's Stamp Journal* and regional representative of the India Study Circle based in UK.

At the same exhibition, Dr Jamshed Madan was awarded a silver medal for his stamp collection based on the Chinese Boxer Rebellion of 1900, adds the release.

Hansotia's delivery team

Bombay's second test-tube baby was brought into this world by a team of doctors headed by Dr Mehroo Hansotia and Dr Sadhana Desai on November 21, 1986. The 30-year-old mother, who was unable to conceive due to blocked fallopian tubes caused by genital tuberculosis, gave birth by an elective caesarean section to "a normal, healthy female child weighing 2,340 grams," notes the *Free Press Journal* of November 22.

In March last year, the team of doctors had been successful in getting three fertilizable mature eggs (oocytes) by laparoscopy from the mother, each of which were then fertilized by one lakh sperms from her husband. Two oocytes were successfully fertilized and transferred to the mother's uterus, 24 hours after recovery of the eggs and 18 hours after insemination, notes the report.

The venture cost Rs 20,000, part of which was to be borne by the parents and the rest by the Fertility Clinic where the artificial insemination was performed, adds the write-up.

Award for Master

"For her work in promoting the knowledge of the divine universal natural laws contained in the Mazdayasnie Zarathushtrian Daena, Ilm e Khshnoom," Dr Meher K. Master-Moos was awarded the Pax Mundi Organization's Dag Hammarskjöld award on September 20, 1986 at Colombo, Sri Lanka, notes a press release. Among the 12 individuals who received the 1986 awards were two Indians, the other being Mother Teresa for "her work for the upliftment of people in India," adds the report.

A non-governmental organization with its head office in Belgium, the

Pax Mundi Organization was formed to commemorate the late Dag Hammarskjöld, the activist secretary general of the United Nations Organization to whom the Nobel Peace Prize was posthumously awarded in 1961. The Pax Mundi governing body consists of eminent international philanthropists and aims at promoting peace within troubled nations and between nations in the spirit of the late Dag Hammarskjöld. To encourage individuals working for peace, the Organization instituted the annual Dag Hammarskjöld awards from the Nobel Prize money. 1986 being the Organization's silver jubilee year, an unprecedented 12 individuals were thus honored, adds the report.

The well attended, international conference was jointly organized by the Pax Mundi Organization and the Medicina Alternativa International, whose silver jubilee was also being celebrated.

Commerce chief

The newly elected president of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the year 1987-88 is Jehangir S. Khambatta, president and managing director of Glaxo Laboratories (India), notes *The Times of India* of January 2.

An advocate by profession, Khambatta is a fellow of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and has been a member of the senior executive program of the London Business School. Recently, he was elected companion of the British Institute of Management. Director in three companies, he is also associated with hospital and health trusts, adds the report.

Daruvala's fourth

Meherwan Daruvala won the National Squash title for the fourth time in succession when he defeated Lt Col Raj Manchanda, 9-4, 9-4, 9-3 at the glass-backed courts of the Cricket Club of India, on January 23, 1987, notes the *Indian Express* of January 24.

In the final that lasted for 65 minutes, "quick-footed" Daruvala "avoided any fancy shots and kept the ball in play, knowing that he had the advantage of age and fitness" over the 43-year-old Manchanda, adds the report.

In the meanwhile, Farokh Pandole won the juniors title when he defeated Arjun Singh 9-2, 9-2, 9-1.

SPOTLIGHT

Bombay-based physician **Dr Farokh Erach Udawadia** has been awarded the Padma Bhushan this year while social worker **Capt Hormazdiar Jamshedji Muncherji Desai** and **J.P. Birdi** have been awarded the Padma Shri (*The Times of India*, January 26, 1987).

One of the eight new judges of the Bombay High Court, sworn in on November 21, 1986, is 46-year-old **Sam N. Variava**, specializing in company and commercial law (*The Times of India*, January 22, 1987).

For the third successive year, **Darab C. Pader** of Veera Tanneries Pvt Ltd received the award for "outstanding export performance" for the year 1984-85. The silver plaque was presented by Maharashtra's minister for finance and industries, Sushilkumar Shinde.

Management consultant and BPP trustee **Minoo Shroff** has been elected president of the Indo-Japanese Association, (*Financial Express* of September 14, 1986).

Beharam Dastoor has been appointed the Air Canada sales manager for the Indian subcontinent and will be responsible for marketing the Airline throughout India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh (*Jam-e-Jamshed*, January 30, 1987).

Jimmy H. Havewala, deputy public relations manager of Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Limited, has been appointed chairman of the Association of Business Communicators of India, Gujarat Chapter.

Tehmurasp R. Doongaji, manager (planning and coordination) TISCO has taken over as chief executive of the metals division of the Ahmedabad Advance Mills Limited, at Navsari (*The Economic Times*, January 24, 1987).

Dara Contractor was installed as the right worshipful master of Lodge Tara, a lodge for past masters, in Bombay on August 30, 1986. This achievement is considered rare in Freemasonry as he is among the "very few members" who merit a presidentship in all three — the Scottish, the English and the Irish constitutions, notes a press release.

Nonacceptance dilemma

"Intermarriage is a very real problem our community has to face," notes a letter written by a 26-year-old Zoroastrian woman to the Editor of *Gavashni*, the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec.

Relating her experience, the woman notes, that being brought up in an orthodox household in the USA, it was expected of her to marry a Zoroastrian. She had every intention of doing so to the extent that when she received her degree from her college in USA, she moved to a city in Canada to meet others of her own religion. She met and went out with, for the first time, a Zoroastrian, who later left her for another woman. Calling this "the turning point of my life," the lady notes that "through that relationship I realized that although it is very important to have a common religion, it is not the answer to a happy relationship."

Soon after, she met a Canadian and for the first time, she says, "I decided to give a non-Parsi a fair chance with me," and the two decided to get married. "It was very painful and traumatic to tell my parents about this relationship. They tried to discourage it the best they could; but as much as I love them, I had to stand by my decision," she recalls. Before they decided to get married, the couple agreed to raise their children as Zoroastrians – a decision which was "very important" to the lady.

"I feel it a great loss to the Zoroastrian community to turn away young women who marry outside (the community). Especially the North American community will have to come to grips with this dilemma. Has the Quebec Zoroastrian Association done any further research in this area?" she asks.

In his reply, *Gavashni's* Editor, Dr Jehan Bagli, while stating that "there exists no doctrinal evidence to prevent a Zoroastrian woman, married to a non-Zoroastrian man, to bring her child up as a Zoroastrian," notes, "I believe your approach is ideally exemplary in fashion, and of course has yielded results, to this point satisfactory ... I fully agree with you that it is a tragic loss to the Zoroastrian community,

to turn the Zoroastrian women and their children away by not accepting them. We just cannot accept such losses here."

Bagli talks of the report compiled by the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec on the opinions of learned Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians on the subject. Referring to the report, he says that most Zoroastrian traditions "forged over several millennia can be traced back to show a continuity in the teachings of the prophet, in one form or another." But, he adds, the tradition of nonacceptance finds nowhere such a continuation.

Baha'i converts in Iran

Zoroastrian conversions to the Baha'i faith in Yazd, Iran may be due to the fact that religious reform failed to keep pace with social change. This conclusion was arrived at via a study undertaken by Susan Stiles of the University of Arizona, the scope of which encompasses the period extending from the early 1880s to the beginning of the twentieth century, notes the December *Gavashni*, the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, quoting from the *Bulletin* of the Center for Zoroastrian Research.

Part of a thesis completed in 1983 for her MA examination, Stiles details the cause of this conversion. When the Parsis of India sent emissaries to their co-religionists in Iran, who were despised and oppressed by the Muslims, they brought about a series of social and economic reforms, which led to the formation of a new mercantile elite in the Zoroastrian community of Iran, notes the report. However, when religious reform failed to keep pace with social change, an ideational vacuum was created amongst this educated class, and, the Baha'i faith with its tolerance and rationality amongst other things, succeeded in filling this vacuum, adds the write-up.

Yet, even after conversion, the Zoroastrian Baha'is continued to associate themselves with the Zoroastrian community. It was only after the Zoroastrian community ceased to recognize the converts as Zoroastrians that they developed a distinctive identity and the conversion process was slowed considerably.

Stiles further plans to make a comparative study of the Zoroastrians of Iran and those of India – to explain "the differences in responses to modernization on the part of the Zoroastrian community of India whose westernized elite maintained a larger degree of religiosity, to that of Iran where educated Zoroastrians tended either toward complete secularization or, in some cases, to conversion to the Baha'i faith." The study will also explore the immigration patterns of Iranian Zoroastrians to Bombay and their impact, integration and economic relationship with the Parsi community there, notes the report.

Australia's state champion

The new under-13 New South Wales state champion in athletics, for the 100 meters and 200 meters run, is 11-year-old Cherag Kalapesi of Sydney, Australia, notes the November-December issue of *Manashni*, the newsletter of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales.

Part of the athletic squad which represented his school, St Pius X College



Kalapesi: 11 records in athletics

at the New South Wales Pulsar Games (an inter-school athletic meet) held on October 16 and 17, 1986, Kalapesi also took part in the shot put event where he finished second.

This year, Cherag has won two school-awards. The first was for breaking 11 records in athletics and the second for academic achievement.

Having migrated from India to Australia in 1980, Kalapesi's family first settled in the Northern Territory, where Cherag took part in the Territory Championships and won five silver and two bronze medals. Four years later they moved once more to Sydney where he joined the athletic club, Manly-Warringah Little Athletics, adds the write-up.

A keen sportsman, Kalapesi is also a competitive swimmer and plays rugby and tennis.

Films for peace

The Film Festival of World Religions, organized by the World Conference on Religion for Peace, Canada, on November 16, 1986, included "a look at the Zoroastrian religion with slides and video on 'rites of passage' in family life," notes the December newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario.

The slides were followed by a discussion on the spiritual values held and cultural customs practiced by Zoroastrians in Toronto. The other two religions discussed were Islam and Buddhism, adds the write-up.

READERS' FORUM... continued from page 11

Antia not only refused to apologize but tried to rub salt into the wound by publishing *The Argument for Acceptance*. This is why he has been singled out and reprimanded.

RODABEH J. HAMAVANDI

Parsis akin to Jews?

In 1972 I had the opportunity to live and work in Bombay in the area of Byculla. I noticed a number of the neighbors reminded me of Jewish people. My host who was, as I am, of the Jewish faith told me that these lovely industrious people were Zoroastrians. As an American I had never met any of this faith and so I began to read up on their religion. I was impressed by the Zoroastrian emphasis on ethics and ritual, and a sense of daily piety in both thought and deed. I was also impressed how such a small minority had overcome religious persecution and emerged to be an example of economic and cultural leadership. The struggle to preserve identity and to make the religious heritage relevant in this age also was a familiar story which

reminds me of my Judaic heritage.

So I am a "Parsephile" and through your magazine I keep up with the events and interests of the community. I only wish that there was a mail order service where one could order books on Zoroastrianism in English.

Dr STEPHEN M. MALLINGER
Pennsylvania, USA

Problem of sudrehs

Mr Naval B. Vakeel's letter published under the heading "Problem of kustis" (*Parsiana*, December '86) bemoans the shortage of kustis and its high price. What about sudrehs? Fine *mal-mal* is costly and beyond the reach of most Parsis who can just about afford the coarser variety which too is not cheap.

Sudrehs do not absorb sweat – they are not sweatshirts – and are therefore smelly and unhygienic. A daily change of the garment, after bath, is essential. The hot and humid months necessitate change twice daily. This problem of sudrehs calls for a more urgent solution than that of kustis.

T.C. KATRAK
Calcutta



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

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

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



SHAPOORJI PALLONJI & CO. (PVT.) LTD.

Engineers & Construction Contractors

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

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

A palatable transformation

The Parsi Amelioration Committee's confectionary store on Forjett Street is undergoing a change in decor and menu.

Parinaz Toddywalla

The ladies were busy taking stock of the day's sales of dar ni poris, bhakras, murabbas, gharis, jam tarts, patrel and tarapori patio – the items most in demand at the Parsi Amelioration Committee (PAC) Cooking and Confectionary Store. Accommodated on the ground floor of a building at the junction of Forjett Street and Gowalia Tank, the shop, whose good odor has so far been confined to this locality, will soon cater to the tastes of a more varied clientele.

"Parsis being a limited market, we will venture into the sale of fast-food preparations and tandoori dishes to attract customers from other communities also," informed Keki Khan who has been authorized by the trustees of the PAC to manage their center and enhance its financial returns. A hotelman with 15 years of experience in establishments like The Taj, Fariyas and Sahil, Khan, along with three others formed his own enterprise last year, Midas Hotels Pvt Ltd. His partners Rajiv Nayan, Rakesh Bhatnagar and Merzi Chinoy also share his workload at the PAC and participate in the renovation activities.

New cooking gadgets and modern stoves will soon replace the earlier worn-out equipment. The day's delicacies will soon be displayed in newly designed showcases, and to tempt passersby, windows which are normally found shut will be converted into off-

the-road sales counters from where items can be selected, orders booked, payments made and deliveries collected. This new approach will definitely be a breakthrough from the present mode of reaching the salesroom by walking past an unwelcoming entrance to the building and a gloomy desolate passage before reaching the main entrance to the shop.

"We shouldn't underestimate this place...it has got so much potential and not even 10 percent is being utilized. Even I had never heard of this place until last year..." stated Khan. On hearing of the difficulties faced by the trustees of the PAC in managing this place after the demise of their supervisor Ms Roda Ichhaporia, Khan put in an application urging them to allow him to manage this outlet on their behalf. The application was submitted in April 1986 and a few months later was given a clearance by the trustees.

"Though we are still getting our footing in it, we have already started getting a good response from our customers," said a satisfied Khan on December 16, 1986. "When people come back with good comments we feel happy that our efforts are appreciated. At first, there was no question of profit but already it is showing healthier signs." Khan's optimism was infectious.

The shop is open from 9.30 am to 6

in the evening. By 9.45 in the morning, the fresh items as listed in the day's menu are ready to be sold. There is a good demand for their moderately priced badampak, eedapak and vasanu – seasonal favorites among the Parsis. The PAC even sends home tiffins – the special *bhonu* which includes a non-vegetarian dish at both meals costs Rs 660 and the ordinary *bhonu* which includes a non-vegetarian dish at only one meal costs Rs 540. Not having received any enquiries for a vegetarian meal, no rates have been quoted so far.

The cooking is compartmentalized among the staff, with the ladies being entrusted with the work of preparing sweet concoctions in one room and the men busying themselves with the general dishes in another. One of the helpers, labelled "patrel specialist," is exclusively in charge of patrels. Presently on the staff are eight Parsi ladies and nine non-Parsi helpers. "You will be surprised at how we get work out of our staff," said Khan who is committed to the PAC's main objective of employing as many deserving Parsis as possible. "We have advertised, put forth our resources, but it is very difficult to find Parsi staff," he briefed.

Over the years, the PAC has been functioning on a "hand-to-mouth existence," informs one of the active members of the Committee. The organization's trust deed of 1963 shows

continued on page 31

The only way to tell...
the unique from the usual,
the distinctive from the common,
one Mazda from another,
...is
the symbol.

This is
our symbol.

And behind this symbol
are our 10 vibrant ventures:

- Mazda Leasing
- Mazda Merbanco
- Mazda Deuspa Hydronics
- Mazda Marketing
- Mazda Project Consultancy
- Mazda Realstate Developers
- Mazda Polyurethanes
- Mazda Eastland
- Mazda Packaging
- AviQUIPO of India

So the next time you come across the Mazda
name, check the symbol. This symbol tells you
you're in the progressive hands of the
MAZDALEASE Group.

 **MAZDA**
INDUSTRIES & LEASING LIMITED

317 Maker Chambers V, 221 Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021.



Jockeying to victory

With 56 wins to his credit in a single season, jockey Pesi Shroff has broken the record of 54 wins held by the late jockey Karl Umrigar.

Niloofer J. Madon



NOMAN MESTIN

The stall gates swung open as the starting shot was fired and a stream of horses surged forward onto the tracks, ending the tension-filled minutes before the start of the race. Excited shouts from the milling spectators filled the racecourse, keeping pace with the reverberating hooves of the equines, as they thundered past the cheering crowd on April 13, 1986 – the day turf history was made.

Jockey Pesi Shroff, riding the horse Side by Side, galloped to his fifty-sixth victory in a single season, breaking the record of 54 wins held by the late jockey Karl Umrigar – a feat not likely to be repeated in the next hundred years, as notes turf critic Timur of *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier*. However, Shroff says matter-of-factly: "It's not a question of breaking records, just riding. It's not easy to know you are going to break a record."

Walking in a trifle late from his usual morning exercise at the racecourse, dressed in brown breeches and riding boots, the jockey announced that he had completely forgotten about the appointment with *Parsiana* set for November 24, 1986 at his home on Warden Road. Apologizing briefly, he immediately settled down to being interviewed.

The 21-year-old, five foot seven inch jockey, whose face is transformed into a mass of laugh lines when he smiles, has a simple explanation for taking up horse riding as a profession: "I loved horses and I loved riding them, so I became a jockey. I was riding since I was five years old when I had a pony of my own. I was good at sport, never good in studying – never used to study," he adds nonchalantly. His first pony, he informs, was called Proxy and the second Munni, and Pesi is quick to add that the pony came with that name!

However, a mere interest in riding doesn't necessarily make one a jockey. "My mom was the main person behind me," says Pesi, "She knew I wouldn't be able to sit behind a desk, and so she encouraged me," but adds, "My dad wasn't too keen but he's not too sorry now!" Mom is Tehmi Shroff, honorary secretary and administrative director of the Research Society for the Care, Treatment and Training of Children in Need of Special Care, at Sewri and Dad, Dadi, owns a foundry of pressure dye-casting machines. His three elder sisters, Zarina, Zia and Roxanna, all previous Maharashtra state swimming champions, also used to ride, making horse riding a family affair. So, when

Pesi "really decided to become a jockey" no one was too surprised. His mother took him to Pune where he trained as an apprentice jockey "for a month or two" under the trainer Mr Marable and the senior stipendiary steward, Dr S.R. Captain.

After the training, Pesi started riding as a professional, winning his first race on the horse My Squaw, in September 1981 in Pune. Since then Pesi has never looked back, if his riding statistics are anything to go by. Out of a total of 1,278 rides, Pesi has won 427 (approximately 33.41 percent) while he has been placed either first, second or third 842 times (approximately 65.88 percent) – statistics which have been laboriously processed through a calculator by Pesi who keeps a neatly written, comprehensive register wherein all his ups and downs are carefully recorded. Keeping a register, is Pesi's mother's idea, in whose absence keeping track of the wheres and whyofs of his racing career falls on the thin shoulders of his girlfriend, Tina Umrigar, sister of the late jockey Karl Umrigar and Pesi's first cousin. At periodic intervals, therefore, cries of "Tina!" rent the air as Pesi has yet another question to ask her on one of his own races!



J. N. Marshall Pvt. Ltd.
JNM Systems & Services Pvt. Ltd.
Spirax Marshall Pvt. Ltd.
Cambridge Instruments (I) Pvt. Ltd.
Krohne-Marshall Pvt. Ltd.

Specialists for products & systems in:-

- ★ Steam generation, distribution, utilisation and condensate recovery systems.
- ★ Steam Pressure Reducing and De-superheating Station.
- ★ Industrial Process Control Instrumentation covering parameters of pressure, temperature, flow, level, density, pH, conductivity and gas analysis.
- ★ Sophisticated Scientific Instruments for materials research and analysis, data acquisition systems and teaching aids.
- ★ Electro-Medical instruments for heart, lung and kidney-care.



**You can measure our contribution by
your benefits.**

P.O. Box No. 1 Bombay-Poona Road
Kasarwadi, Poona-411018

At the major racing centers in India - Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Madras - there is racing every day and every center has its own particular races apart from the classics like the Indian Oaks, the Indian Derby, the Indian St Leger, the Indian 1,000 Guineas, the Indian 2,000 Guineas and the Invitation Cup. However, racing in Bombay, according to Pesi, is considered the best as it attracts the best horses and the best competition.

Risks involved in horse racing are many and Pesi has admittedly had many a fall. "Just a few months back I was riding in a race, when the horse broke his leg and had to be shot," notes Pesi adding, "Many times I fall with the horse itself. It's like a tyre coming off."

Perforce the salary for a good jockey is substantial. Usually, a jockey is paid Rs 200 just to ride a horse, whether he wins or not. If he wins however, he gets seven-and-a-half percent of the stakes or prize money, part of which is comprised of the money put up by the owners of the horses as entrance fees. Initially riding for particular trainers and owners, notable among them being trainer Bezan Chinnoy, Pesi has recently started freelancing.

Very interested in training, Pesi outlines in simple terms the various processes involved. Race horses are specially bred at various stud farms all over the country, attention being paid to the lineage of the stud as well as the filly. After the foals are two years old they are sold privately to interested buyers or auctioned at the annual horse sales at the major racing centers of India.

It is after the sale, that the actual training of the horse begins. Says the jockey, "You first start teaching the horse to accept the rider, the saddle and the bit in the mouth, like teaching a baby in nursery school and slowly taking him onto college ... that sort of thing."

Explaining his own daily routine Pesi notes that mornings are spent at the stables (at the Mahalaxmi Race Course) to exercise about eight to 16 horses and to see if they are eating well and are in health. The afternoons he spends at his father's foundry and the evenings once again see him at the stables, planning out the next day's program for each horse. Though Pesi

"doesn't really have any spare time," he plays squash, runs, and swims "a little, sometimes."

Asked about the monumental stakes involved in horse racing and the politics that has entered the field, the jockey notes, "Anything that involves a lot of money is going to attract attention. It is not a sport any more, it's a business. A two-year-old horse costs three to four lakhs and people are going to be business-like for that sort of money."

However, racing in India has not developed as it has in England, USA and the Middle East countries ("We are still in the Stone Age of racing," says Pesi). Nonetheless, he has represented India in many Asian competitions, chief among them being the Asian Racing Conference and the International Jockeys Series for which Pesi had been selected this year, but which has since been cancelled.

Shroff's six-year career has not been without its ups and downs. Recently while in Pune, on October 4, Pesi was riding the odds on favorite, Emulation, but during the course of the race pulled her out of it, causing a great commotion in the stands and among the stewards. After the race, however, when Emulation was examined by the vet, she was proclaimed sound and fit. The stewards after hearing Shroff's explanation severely cautioned the jockey and officially put down the cause as

Racing in Bombay, is considered the best as it attracts the best horses and the best competition.

"misjudgment." Pesi nevertheless explains, "I felt something went wrong with my filly and I pulled her up because I was scared she'd collapse. So I brought her back."

Planning to keep on riding as long as he can (till about the age of 50, he says), Pesi's dream is to be a trainer and have his own stables. But while a jockey he intends to follow his own advice: "By the time you are really there (at the top) you are on your way down, and so before you crack, you'd better get down!"

continued from page 27

their total assets as worth Rs 48,000. With this limited corpus, the PAC, founded by Lady Jerbai Engineer almost 25 years prior to the registration of the trust deed, manages different philanthropic activities. In addition to their PAC Store where Parsi ladies are trained, employed and encouraged to earn their own livelihood, they also run two institutions at Tardeo: a hostel for Parsi girls which is now under repair, and the Lady En-

"When people come back with good comments we feel happy that our efforts are appreciated."

gineer High School which was founded to educate poor Parsis. The Committee assists flood victims and other charities listed in the deed, when funds permit.

On the present trust board are eight ladies: president Freany Paymaster, Pinny Pochkhanawala, Makki Patel, Mehroo Cooper, Mehroo Contractor, Jaloo Wadia, Jerbanoo Vatcha and Mehra Shroff. The trustees have now entrusted the day-to-day management of the PAC to Khan who is assisted by a full-time supervisor, Ms Pilloo Driver.

Undeterred by the present constrictions, Khan is all set to meet the future: He is planning to accept catering assignments for Parsi functions in 1987 "but with a difference from the present Parsi caterers," and is also negotiating for contracts to supply office lunches to certain companies. All this will be in addition to the restaurants and hotels which come under the banner of Midas Group like Channel Nine at Versova and Food Affair at Juhu.

To the epicure who is familiar with the PAC confectioners, the change in their style of functioning may make little difference. But to many others who have yet to be acquainted with the Store, the pangs of hollow hunger on their next visit to the area may be satiated on trying out the refreshments available at this easily accessible center.

Remember your thirst flight?

Remember the banshee scream of the jets? The wild drumming of your heart as the plane took off? Remember the first Limca you had after you landed? You can still taste the exciting **lime 'n' lemoni** effervescence each time you have a Limca. The feeling is fizzical. Just like the thirst time.



Limca. Each time is the thirst time!

Limca
is veri veri lime 'n' lemoni
SERVE CHILLED