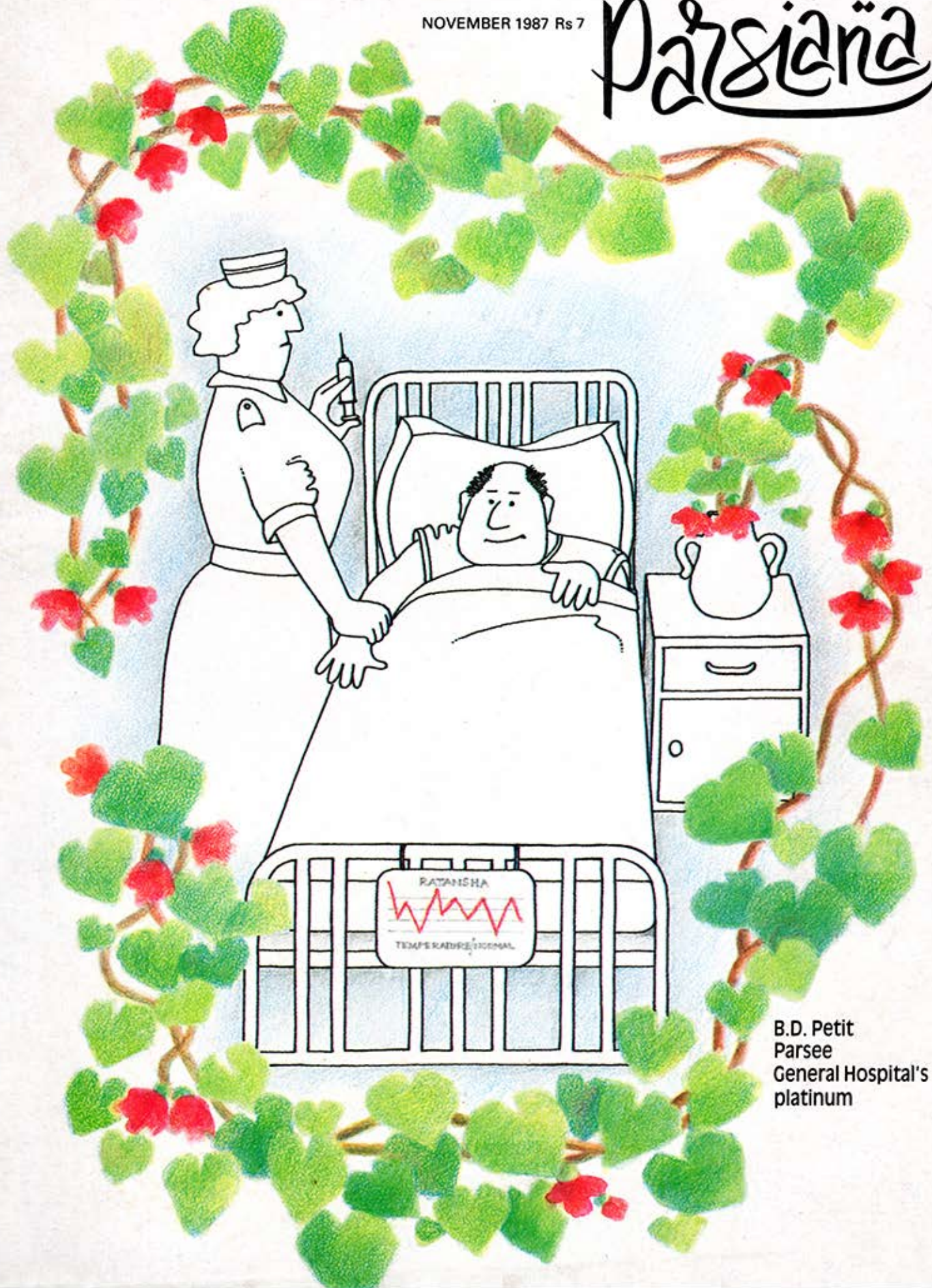


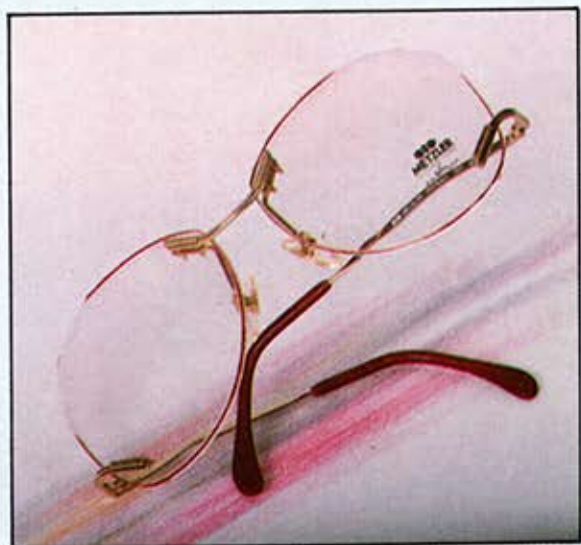
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November 1987
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DESIGN ASSISTANTS Kranti Shilotri,
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Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O.Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

"The Inner Light..."

I would like to congratulate Mr Dara Cama for his courage to expose, in such great detail in his publication *The Inner Light of Zoroastrianism*, various actions of the priests of India and Pakistan in the "name of religion."

The priests of the United Kingdom have and are rendering, free of charge, very honorable and faithful religious service to the Zoroastrians.

Dasturs and ervads should follow the advice given by our late Shams-ul-Ulema, Dastur Dr Maneckji Nusserwanjee Dhalla, the High Priest of Zoroastrians of Pakistan: "People must realize that the duty of a dastur is not the blind guardianship of ancient creeds and customs merely on the strength that 'old is gold,' nor is it to pamper popular sentiment. Such an

attitude may be simple – it may evoke applause, it may gain cheap renown – but does not behove the stature of a dastur who bears upon his shoulder the responsibility of being a true disciple of Zarathushtra."

NOSHIRWAN F. COWASJEE
London, UK

In my booklet *The Inner Light of Zoroastrianism*, I have highlighted the sorry plight of the community as our professional clergy is unable to guide it in its socio-religious life. Zoroaster in his ethical *Gathas* has given us such guidelines which our late Dasturji Khurshed Dabu had rightly termed "safal sansar ni chavi (key to worldly success)." These educative recitals of our prophet are simply babbled over the dead by our clergy as if it is some *jadoo-vani* (magical mantras) to reach all Parsis into paradise through their many Avestan personified gods (*yazatas*) whom they coax and cajole through the temple fire (*atah*).

Zoroaster's religion is iconoclastic; but fire has become a Zoroastrian icon which has usurped the place of Ahura Mazda, the only Zoroastrian reality. Zoroaster has not uttered any word such as *atah* or *agni* but he has desired that we keep our inner fire of conscience—*atar*—burning. The word *atar*, actually *antar* with a silent 'n,' means conscience.

My attack is not on the priests but on their priestcraft. As mentioned by Mr Rusi Pastakia ("Cama's new booklet," *Parsiana*, August '87), in my booklet I have tried 'to separate the essentials from non-essentials, the ethical from the non-ethical.' The essence of our prophet's religion is to live to do right; instead we are engrossed in living for rites and ceremonials. For this, about a hundred and odd agiaries and *atah bahrams* are being maintained in India and Pakistan. Can such be religion, when the living gain nothing except to believe that God's good graces can be bought by them, instead of being personally earned by them though *karni* (deeds)?

Instead of using temples to take care of our dead, if we could bring some of them into use for the welfare of the

living community, that would be religion.

For Dr Soonavala's information ("Cama's new booklet," *Parsiana*, August '87) the culture of the vulture costs the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) an average of Rs 1,500 per dead body consigned. Funeral ceremonies for one single death could cost a behdin five to six thousand rupees. The BPP spends over 20 lakhs on the maintenance of the Doongerwadi, besides tying down the adjoining expensive land to the dead. We thus have a religion, born in agiaries and ending at the Doongerwadi.

Customs are good if they serve a purpose in this progressive age. Just as nature wears a new look seasonally, Zoroastrianism does not forbid a progressive life but rather advocates reasoned change in all fields of life. Zoroastrianism is the living of life here, on this earth.

DARA CAMA

"Good seats reserved for..."

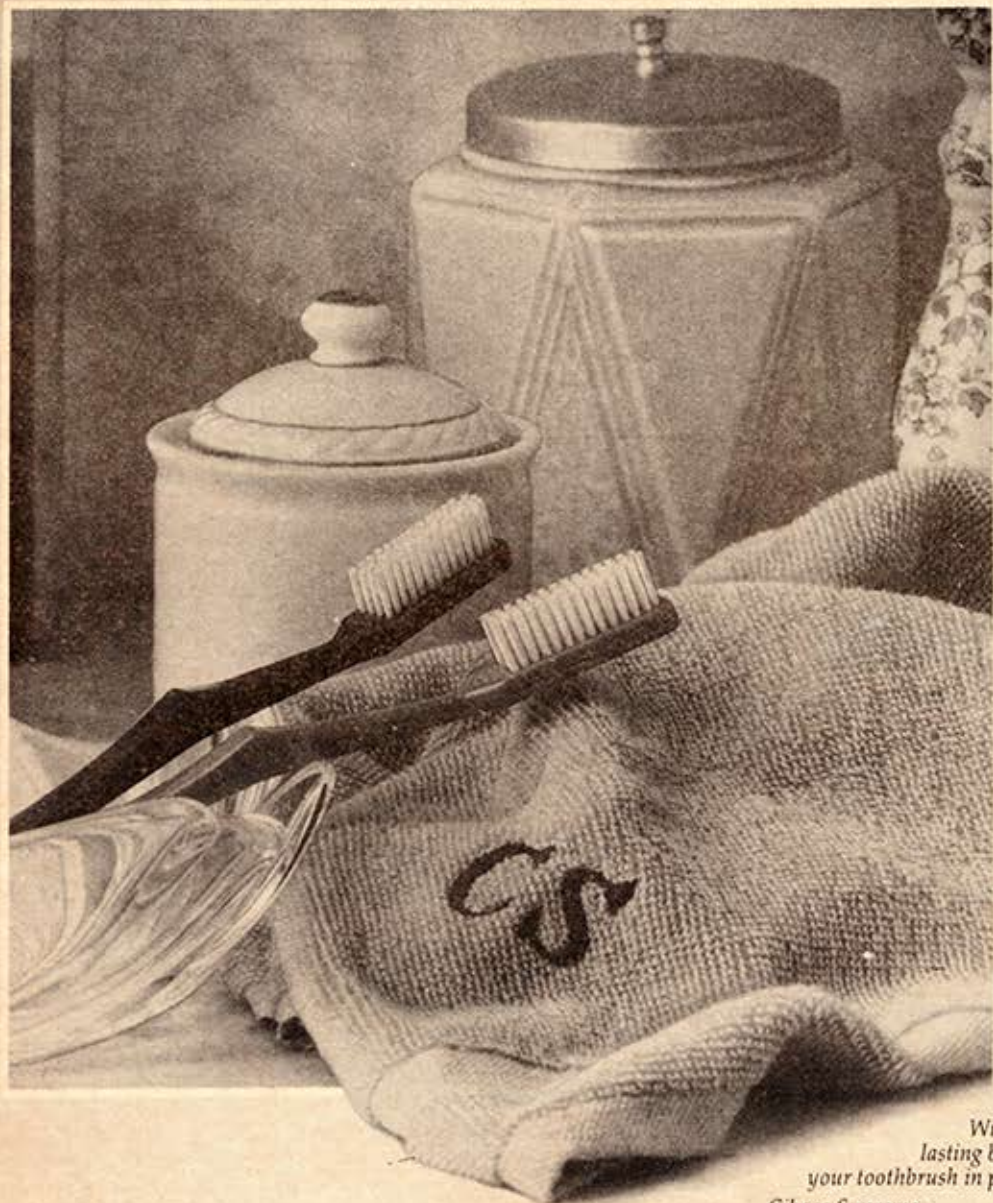
I would have closed the controversial issue regarding the sale of tickets for the Gujarati plays with the letter by the president of the Zoroastrian Stree Mandal, Secunderabad (*Parsiana*, June 1987), but for the second paragraph of the said letter which states: "However, the secretary-cum-treasurer would have preferred the complainant to come directly to him with his complaint instead of writing to *Parsiana*." This I had done.

The same paragraph goes on to say: "He would have straightaway clarified the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant." This he was not able to do.

The last sentence ends with: "... and thus avoided unnecessary correspondence regarding a trivial matter!" It depends on how one looks at the matter (trivial or otherwise) that forms the crux of the issue. In this case, the president seems to have been interested only in the collections and the percentage share in the profits, whereas my letter only projects the dissatisfaction of the public on the issue of distribution of ticket books and reservation of seats.

If, at a future date, any organizing

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committee gives a thought to the proper and judicious distribution of the advance reservation ticket books, the purpose of my earlier letter (*Parsiana*, June 1987) will be served. This is what I had asked for then, and this is what I am asking for now and for the future.

K.J. TARAPORE
Hyderabad

"The 11 days' controversy"

I was very saddened to read the two letters by Mr K. Vatcha and Mr A.P. Irani of UK, maligning the two Sethna brothers, Zal and Darius ("The 11 days' controversy," *Parsiana*, March '87). Mr Vatcha's letter in particular says, "some of our ervads refuse to sit and pray with (the Sethnas) and therefore do not come forward to serve the community." This is far from the truth.

My family and I, and hundreds of fellow Zoroastrians in London and other parts of UK, owe a great deal to both the Sethna brothers. They have helped Zoroastrians in times of distress and also in times of rejoicing. Both Zal and Darius are popular members of the Zoroastrian commun-

ity in London as they have gone out of their way to help their fellow Zoroastrians. Today they are being branded as orthodox and vilified for the views they hold. But they are only echoing the views of hundreds who had been very unhappy with the state of affairs in the past and the way in which our traditions and rituals were being gradually eroded in the name of so-called progress.

We, the majority of Zoroastrians here, want to keep our identity which we can only maintain by following our religious practices and social traditions dating back thousands of years and by making our younger generation aware of them. It is the Zoroastrians within our community who are trying their level best to undermine the whole concept of our religious doctrines and traditions to gain their selfish ends.

In spite of the various threats of injunctions and legal actions by the few so-called Zoroastrians, the muktad ceremonies this year were performed most successfully at the Zoroastrian House in London. During those 10 days, two Zoroastrian ladies gave their unstinting services to clean and pre-

pare the muktad hall for prayers, and to wash and replenish the flower vases, etc. Other Zoroastrian ladies prepared food themselves and brought various dishes for the prayers in the evenings. The prayers were conducted every day by the two Sethna brothers and their three sons Farhad, Sam and Marazban, along with other ervad sahibs.

During those 10 days of muktad prayers, there were at least 90 to 100 Zarthostis present during the weekdays, and at weekends the number exceeded 200. On the fourth Gatha day, which was a Sunday, we had 10 ervad sahibs performing the *afringan* and *farokhshi* ceremonies in the prayer hall where over 250 Zarthostis were present. What a spiritually beautiful and fulfilling experience it was!

On *Farvardian* day at Brookwood, 30 miles away from the center of London, at the prayer ceremony remembering the dear departed, performed by our ervad sahibs, there were more than 150 Zoroastrians present. The *bungli* at Brookwood cemetery was not large enough to hold everyone and people had to stand outside the hall in the rain and wind.



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The Sethna brothers have rendered religious service for over 15 years to the community of UK in their honorary capacity, latterly joined by their sons, for which we, the Zoroastrian Anjuman of London, are very grateful. We are also grateful to the following ervads - Burjor Magol, Russi Bhedvar, Eruch Daruwalla, Farokh Eruch Daruwalla, Marzban Dastur, Homi Desai, Rayomand Gazi, Jal Karkaria, Keki Kanga - who have voluntarily given their time and services and prayed, often together with the Sethna brothers and/or their sons.

Ms S.K. JASAVALA
Wimbledon, UK

Help the self-employed

During the course of the First All India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar held in Delhi last October, people pointed out that boys don't thrive and prosper as much as the girls. This is because boys tend to take up jobs at an early age and give up studying. They want to be financially independent so that they can dress well, eat in restaurants, see movies and take their girlfriends on their motorcycles.

Not so in the North, if I may discriminate, maybe because we are not exposed to such things. But in other parts, especially Bombay, I know of many Parsi boys whose sole aim in life is restricted to such petty things. Isn't it time that they change their views and develop their hidden talents so that we can have many more doctors, lawyers, scientists, etc today, rather than just talk of the ones we had in the past?

People work, earn and lose money - it is nothing new. But the following might be done to help the Parsi self-employed:

- make available commercial/factory sites at fair market values;
- agencies of well-known industrialists and organizations be given to deserving Parsi youth;
- form a committee which would represent the problems of Parsi businessmen to the banks, financial institutions and insurance companies;
- established Parsi businesses give their ancillary units to Zoroastrians as far as possible;
- provide an organization whereby boys and girls of different qualifica-

tions and desirous of setting up a unit can come together.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and other anjumans can start such projects in which they can become shareholders along with the others.

It is the tradition of Parsis to donate. But in this economy of high prices, a Parsi youth who is in service cannot afford to donate even if he wishes to.

Let me relate my own experiences. I was born and brought up in Agra, UP. Having done my graduation in commerce, I opted for the chartered accountants course, and landed up in Bombay to do my articleship with a reputed firm. Before I completed my studies I got myself an agency for the distribution of fertilizers in UP. The temptation of going home could not be overcome. I ran the agency without any assistance in a very successful and efficient manner, my sales being around 70 lakhs a year. Imagine a 22-year-old earning so much money and all by his own efforts! Suddenly one fine day Government policies changed. They wanted to eliminate all



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middlemen and there I was very much in the middle. My agency was disbanded overnight and I was without work.

With the money I had saved and the support of my family members I ventured out again, but found myself against heavy odds. I had no capital to purchase a shop or to pay for the deposit which is needed when taking up an agency. No financial agency is of any help for this. Moreover, to enter the manufacturing line all sorts of assistance is available, though a bit difficult to obtain. The problem here was my background. Being basically a finance and marketing man the knowledge available was limited. Also, I had a set notion of starting an ancillary unit where there is some assurance of survival. It took me quite some time to reconcile myself to the fact that assistance is generally given to people who have access to both influence and finance.

Ultimately, I decided to go in for dairy farming, having a family background in agriculture. I took a secured

loan from a bank and after preparing the sheds and other infrastructure required, I went to Punjab to buy the animals. As was destined, Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister was assassinated. It became a virtual battle for life, to reach my home without mishap, but in the bargain I lost out on the health of my cows.

Cows which were giving 30 liters of milk gave only two to three liters. Not being disheartened I toiled away to make the project work. Maintaining the herd became a problem. I finished off my savings, sold jewellery but still it did not work. Ultimately, I had to part with the animals, which cost me more than a lakh, for a paltry sum of Rs 5,000.

I still hoped that either the bank or the insurance cover would help me, but it took more than a year for the claim to be settled and that too just 75 percent of it, during which period the interest kept on increasing. Not wanting to ruin my health (which was being affected by all these problems) I decided to clear out and paid off the

bank money, thereby incurring a loss of Rs 83,000.

Thanks to my education and experience, I managed to find myself a good job. I must mention that my wife has stood by me through all this and today she works in Bombay while I am in Delhi, trying to fill the kitty to start afresh.

YEZDI KHAMBATTA
New Delhi

Effects of intermarriage

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continued on page 44

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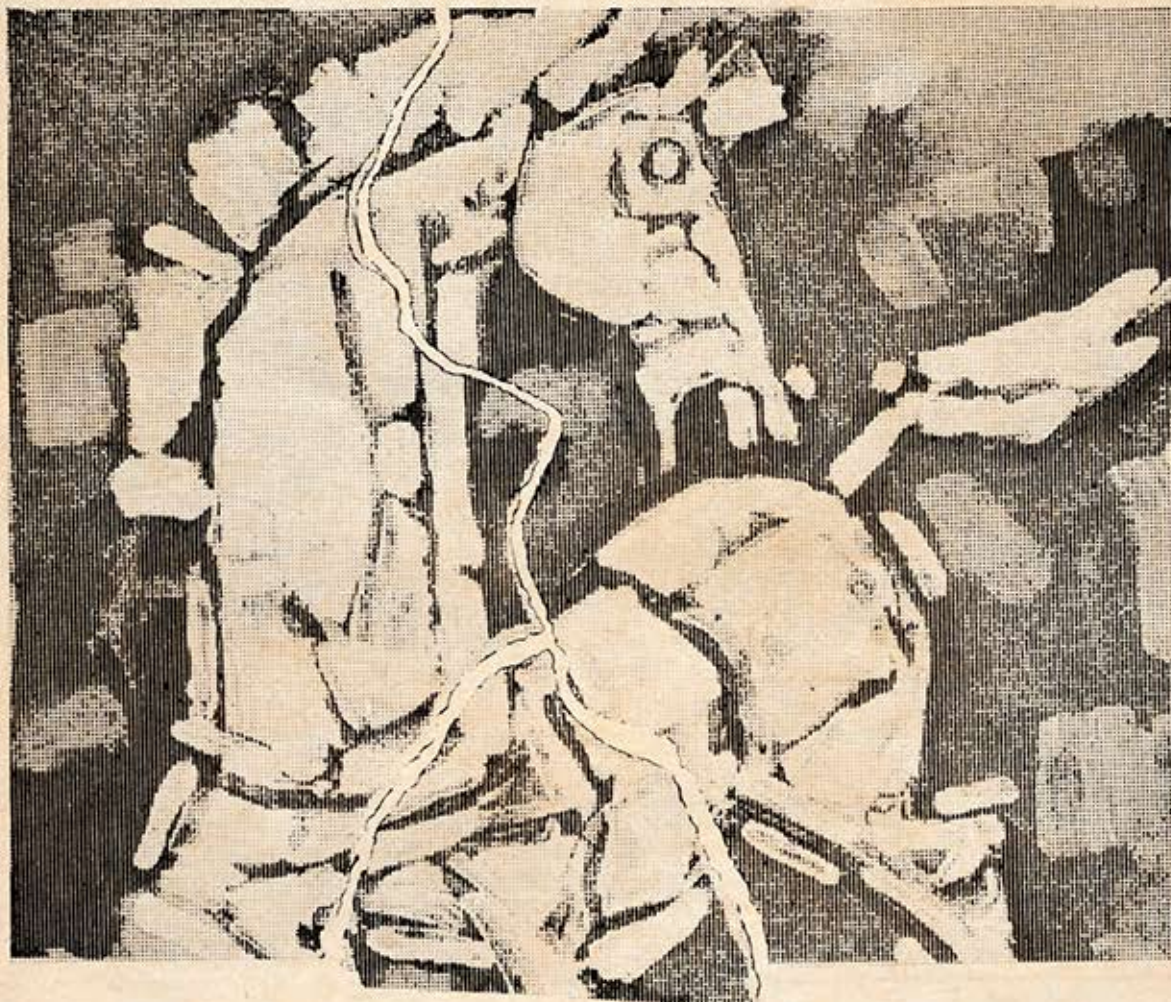
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Events and Personalities

The 'success' equation

Under the existing provisions of intestate succession, a Parsi daughter gets half the share of a son, the mother half that of a father, the paternal grandmother less than the paternal grandfather, and the maternal grandparents none.

There is also reversal of sexual discrimination in that there is differential treatment meted out to sons-in-law. While widowed daughters-in-law, grand daughters-in-law, etc are entitled to receive their deceased husband's share, widowed sons-in-law, grand sons-in-law, etc would not be entitled to a share in their deceased wife's property. In fact, even distant relatives get preference over widowed sons-in-law, notes a press release issued by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India which is seeking to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex.

Another amendment, sought to be introduced to the Indian Succession Act, 1925 as applicable to Parsis, concerns the "bequests to charity" clause under which donations to charitable causes are invalidated if certain formalities are not complied with. Acting on the suggestion (in 1984) of the then vice-president of the Federation, the late Shiavax Nargolwala, the Federation secretariat in consultation with leading Parsi luminaries Soli Sorabjee, Eruch Desai and Rohinton Nariaman, formulated the proposed amendments which were to be approved by the Federation before submission to the Government of India.

This issue once again came up for discussion at the last executive council meeting of the Federation on September 5 and 6, 1987. Rather than have the community make different representa-

tions to the Government, it was decided that anjumans, associations and individuals be given a chance to express their views on this subject before the November 15, 1987 deadline. To assist the community members in their decision making, it was agreed that the extracts of the correspondence exchanged last year between Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Eruch Desai who had some reservations about granting equal rights to a son-in-law, and Federation secretary Keki Gandhi who was in favor of sons-in-law being treated on par, be circulated.

Stating that prior to the 1939 amendment of the Act the widower did have a share in the estate of the deceased wife, Desai wrote in his letter of September 4, 1986: "By deleting this provision and giving the share to the widower, we are departing from the existing provision at law, possibly enacted after a great deal of thought and reasoning." Replied Gandhi in his letter of December 12: "But so were all the other provisions which are discriminatory against the feminine sex..." (Subsequently, Gandhi issued a clarificatory statement that never in the history of the Indian Succession Act had the widower been permitted to enjoy a share in the property of his deceased wife.)

Desai continued in his letter: "In Hindu Law also, the position is the same as the existing provision under the Parsi Law," to which Gandhi responded, "The justification for each community having its own separate and distinct personal laws is the difference in customs, ways of living and social outlook."

The daughter is given only half the share, according to Desai, "on the well-reasoned principle that once the daughter married she is well taken

care of in the husband's family, but the son would have to maintain the remaining members of the family." Countered Gandhi, "The situation which prevailed when the present law was enacted is now materially altered. These days it is the daughter, whether married or not, who looks after her parents and younger brothers and sisters, and not the son. Nowadays, parents are not welcome in the house of the son due to mother-in-law vs daughter-in-law problems. The existing pattern is that the daughter's parents reside with their married daughter and son-in-law. The son-in-law is as much a part of the family as a daughter-in-law and a married daughter continues to be as much a part of the family as a married son."

To allay Desai's apprehensions that with many Parsi girls marrying outside the community, there is a greater likelihood of the property being lost to the Parsi family and the community, Gandhi reasoned: "Under the existing laws, a Parsi mother's children by a non-Parsi father will be non-Parsis, hence the property whether given to a deceased daughter's children or son-in-law would go to non-Parsis." And the threat of losing the family wealth would also persist if the widowed daughter or daughter-in-law were to remarry outside the community after receiving her corresponding share of the property, he added.

The other provision in the Act which has displeased the community is the section nullifying any donation to a charitable cause unless the deceased is not survived by a nephew/niece/any nearer relative or unless the will is made 12 months prior to his death and registered within six months of its execution. States Gandhi in his explanatory note, "This provision is totally un-

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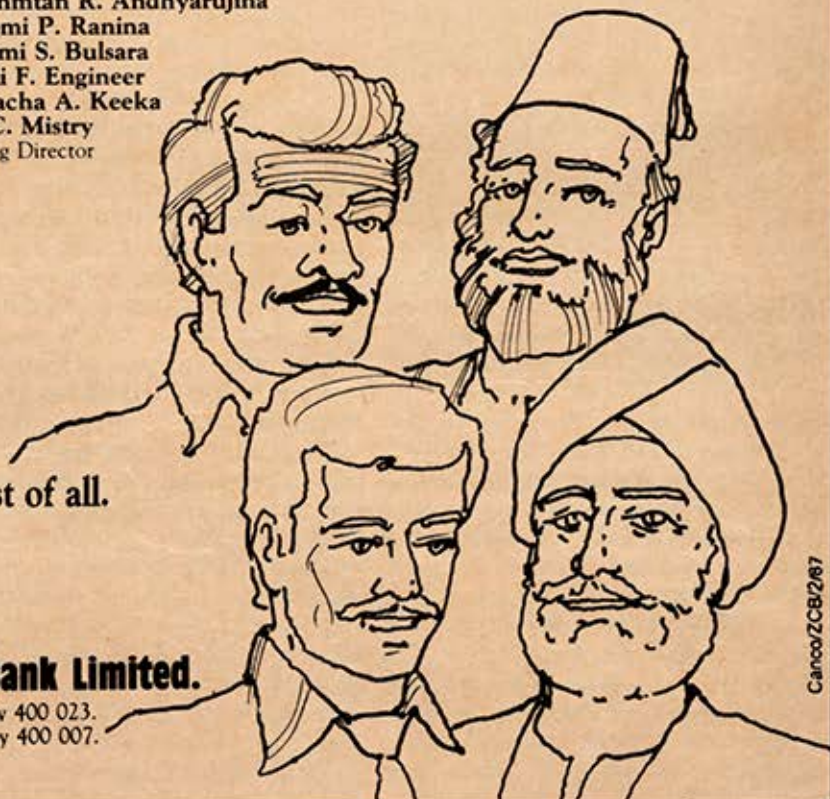
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necessary for the Parsi community which is not priest dominated and is not subject to any pressures from the clergy which would result in deathbed bequests to charity. Besides, this provision is also undesirable because valid bequests to charity made by philanthropic Parsis would be invalidated, contrary to the expressed wish of the testator, merely because of non-compliance with procedural formalities or because the testator has met an untimely or unexpected death."

Parsi bank's diamond

Started by a group of enterprising Parsis who in 1927 felt "the need of converging funds (which) could be used in the exclusive interest of Parsi Zoroastrians," the Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank is celebrating its diamond jubilee in 1987, notes *The Indian Post* of October 17, 1987. It was founded with the intention of encouraging self help, thrift and cooperation. As part of their sixtieth year celebrations, the Bank's board of directors wish to pay an annual dividend at 14 percent per annum, as against their regular 12 percent, being the maximum permissible under the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act, 1960. Accordingly, an application for permission has been made, notes the diamond jubilee year's annual report. The Bank also intends to introduce a Cash Certificate Scheme on the occasion, notes the *Financial Express* of October 17, 1987.

Formerly functioning as a bank in the exclusive service of the Parsi community, this year its doors have been opened to other communities, said Noshir Sorabji Pochkhanawala who succeeded Rustom Gagrut as the Bank's chairman. The Bank will strive to assist individuals to put up small-scale units, especially in the priority sectors, noted the Bank's chief executive, Limji C. Mistry. The Bank has already sought the Reserve Bank's permission to extend credit up to Rs 10 lakhs per individual for purchase of flats or homes, adds the newspaper report.

The Bank's first branch began operating at Gamadia Colony, Tardeo, on January 31 last year. In order to serve members of other communities effectively, the Bank's management is awaiting the Reserve Bank of India's permission to set up new branches at Colaba, Dadar, Bandra, Andheri, Wa-

dala and Sion, said Pochkhanawala.

The net profit of the Bank for the year ending June 1987 was Rs 5,71,386.71. The total number of shareholders increased from 4,042 to 4,074. The Bank's paid-up share capital stood at Rs 8,45,000 and its reserves at Rs 58,40,000, i.e. over six times the paid-up capital, adds the jubilee brochure.

Mazda's annual prospects

"The factory buildings are coming up and...waterjet looms have already been imported," said Dara K. Deboo, chairman of Vitta Mazda Limited, reporting on the progress made by Mazda Textile Industries Limited, one of the Company's diversification ventures. Deboo was speaking at the Company's second annual general meeting which was held in Navsari on September 19, 1987. The Company, said Deboo, has also sought permission to give its shareholders and fixed depositors preferential allotment of shares in the Mazda Textiles, forthcoming public issue worth Rs 105 lakhs.

The popularity of the magazine *Car and Bike - International* can be judged from the fact that its print order of 10,000 copies in June 1987 had to be increased to 40,000 copies for its September issue, said Deboo, talking about the Company's publications division. The magazine, he added, will also bring in net advertisement revenue estimated at rupees five lakhs for the current financial year.

Leasing, emphasized Deboo, "continues to be a lucrative business with quite bright prospects." He pointed out that with the disappearance of several small leasing companies, "the field has been left for the professionally well-managed leasing companies."

Supporting his claims with the figures of the past financial year, Deboo said that business worth Rs 290 lakhs had been transacted in '86-'87, and the Company anticipated "total additional...business worth Rs 300 lakhs" for the next financial year. Besides an additional net income of three lakh rupees from the Company's "management of leasing companies and lease counselling services," the Company's profits would also be augmented by their management of the public share issues of three limited companies, added Deboo.

Skill wins Mayor's award

Adjudged one of the most skilled ladies in needlework and craft, municipal school teacher Ms Hilla Firoz Bharucha received the Mayor's award for handicrafts this year, notes the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of September 23, 1987. A cash prize of Rs 1,000 was awarded to her by the Mayor of Bombay, Dr Ramesh Prabhu, at a function held at Birla Kreedha Kendra on September 4.

The Mayor's award is presented to two teachers in each language group, from every municipal ward of Bom-



Bharucha : craftsmanship recognised

bay. The selected teachers then have to make three copies of a summary on "what and how they teach," one each for the inspector of schools, the education department and the Mayor.

Fifty-five year old Bharucha teaches handicrafts in municipal schools in Bombay's F south ward which extends from Lalbaug to Dadar. "The students being quite poor cannot afford needles and threads," so she uses paper which "being less costly can be afforded by the students," she says. Teaching students of standards one to seven in Gujarati, Bharucha frequents two schools every day.

Having been "always interested in needlework and handicraft right from her school days at St Anne's," Bharucha acquired her teacher's diploma in 1955, from the Gujarati Hindu Stree Mandal, Bombay and later pursued a teacher's training course in puppetry and creative drama.

Gorwala honored

The Leslie Sawhny Programme (LSP), "one of the foremost organizations for
continued on page 44

Chicago Darbe Mehr stays

Realestate agents and developers wish to acquire the 53 acres of the Meadowbrook subdivision, within which the Chicago Darbe Mehr is located, with the intention of converting the land for commercial use by way of a shopping center and/or light industrial building, notes the October newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC).

To negotiate for a high rate of compensation, Meadowbrook homeowners, residents of the area, have formed an organization to deal directly with Inland Corporation, the interested realestate agents. A survey conducted amongst the residents revealed that the families would be willing to sell their properties at the rate of six dollars per square foot. However, "the ZAC board chose to inform the Homeowners Association that the former being a religious organization, its situation was unique, and quite different from that of an average homeowner. The replacement cost for our Center would be much higher than that of an average home...ZAC has chosen not to be represented by the Homeowners Association and have not participated in the survey," states the newsletter.

The ZAC board wishes to categorically state that they are not interested in either moving or relocating the Darbe Mehr property. Meanwhile, the board is in the process of obtaining an up-to-date appraisal of the property's value through an independent source, adds the report.

The Chicago Darbe Mehr has acquired a pewter plaque of Gopat Shah, a winged human-headed bull, thanks to Godrej Billimoria and family, notes the ZAC newsletter. Donated in memory of the late Navroji Dadabhoy Billimoria, the plaque has been installed in the Learning Center of the Darbe Mehr. "A representation of the Behman Ameshaspand...the winged human-headed bull guides the wicked energy or force towards humility and goodness. It thus protects its surroundings," explains the newsletter.

A questionnaire is to be drafted to glean the reaction of Zoroastrians in and around Chicago to the setting up of a seminary for the training of future Zoroastrian priests in the US. Responses will have to be backed by pledges. "The same survey will also assess the community's needs for improvement of facilities/services" at the Chicago Darbe Mehr, notes the ZAC newsletter.

Earlier at a special board meeting, "all agreed that the establishment of a seminary would produce a continuing line of Zoroastrian priests, trained in the United States and would be a linch-pin of the establishment of Zoroastrianism in North America," adds the report.

The questionnaire is in fact the second of the three phases outlined by the board towards the establishment of the seminary. Phase one involves the establishment of a Religion Perpetuation Fund (which has already been started) with a target of \$ 15,000 and an initial contribution of \$ 1,500 by the ZAC. Phase two involves the questionnaire, which will later be distributed to other Zoroastrian associations in North America to ascertain their reactions and to find out whether they would be willing to give financial assistance towards the seminary. In phase three, the Religion Perpetuation Fund would be used as a starting point for financing the establishment of the seminary, adds the write-up.

In the meanwhile, until the seminary is built, the ZAC board has decided to donate \$ 400 per year to sponsor a priest at the Dadar Athornan Madressa, Bombay, states the report.

Nominations are being invited for the posts of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, assistant secretary and assistant treasurer of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA). Each association is expected to nominate one person for each office, for which ZAC has invited applications from the Chicago area, notes the report.

Chicago donors can now support religious and charitable organizations out-

side the USA via the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, as per a new policy approved by its board. According to the scheme, donors should, at the time of donation, make a written request to ZAC specifying the name of the recipient charitable/religious organization. After deciding whether the remittance will help further the aims of the ZAC, the amount will be forwarded to the organization, notes the newsletter.

The Second North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress will be held in Chicago at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr at Hinsdale, Illinois in September 1988 over the Labor Day weekend, notes the Chicago newsletter. All inquiries should be sent to Ms Dinsoo D. Rivetna, C/o Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Hinsdale, Illinois 60541, USA.

A videotape on Zoroastrianism, part of a series on religion, has been prepared by Dr Henry Allen Jr, professor of humanities and philosophy at the Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Heights, Illinois, notes ZAC's October newsletter. The tape, to be broadcast on educational television, was to be shown to the Chicago Zoroastrians at their monthly meeting on October 11, states the write-up.

Comparative conference

A one-day conference on Western Religious Traditions - Judaism, Christianity, Islam - and their relationship to Zoroastrianism was slated for October 18, 1987 at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, New York, notes an annexure to the September/October issue of the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY).

The morning session was to include talks by Professors Erich Isaac (Judaism), Kaikhosrov Irani (Christianity) and A. Peter Martinez (Islam). Dr Jehan Bagli and Pallan Ichaporia were expected to comment on the interactions of the three religions with Zoroastrianism, in the afternoon. A panel discussion on various aspects in

the comparative study of the four Western religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism – was programmed to follow.

At the Gala Divali Festival organized by The Association of Indians in America on November 1, ZAGNY was expected to participate with a food stall selling all kinds of Parsi dishes and specialties, notes the ZAGNY newsletter. The proceeds from the stall would help maintain the projects and programs run by ZAGNY.

The Festival was to be celebrated with "a variety of events like arts and crafts, Indian music and dance, a fashion show and food stalls," adds the report.

A collection of audio cassettes on various topics pertaining to Zoroastrianism are available with Silloo and Phiroze Mehta of California, notes the ZAGNY newsletter. The lectures are in English and Gujarati and cost two dollars including packaging and postage. Those wishing to obtain these cassettes may write to the Mehtas at 26330 Friendly Valley Parkway, Newhall, California 91321, USA.

Observe rules

The Atash Dadgah Room at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) "is the only room in the Darbe Mehr set aside for silent prayer and worship, and to many, keeping the sanctity of the room means a great deal," writes Dinshaw Printer, chairman of the religious subcommittee of the ZSO in a stern letter carried in the ZSO's October newsletter.

Noting that persons have not been following the rules stipulated, Printer reiterates them in his letter: "The prayer room is to be used only for prayer and religious ceremony; eating, smoking and drinking (is) not permitted; it is customary to cover your head and remove your shoes before entering (caps are available); the gas lamp behind the afargan is kept burning permanently – please do not tamper with it; (and) persons of any race or religion may enter the room, provided they respect the above rules."

The annual Cooking Competition and Gourmet Evening, organized by the seniors of the ZSO was slated for

November 8, 1987, notes the October issue of the ZSO newsletter. The seniors were to be judged for their expertise in cooking *masala-ni-kitchri* (spicy yellow rice) with fish *patio*, *tarela bheenda ma gosh* (meat in fried okra), *kopra paak* and *doodh paak* (desserts made of coconut and milk respectively) and *puri*. The men in the seniors group were to be rated on their specialization in just one item – *khatto-mitho-kheemo* (sweet and sour mince).

The competition was to be followed by a gourmet evening of home-made food where persons of all ages could participate, adds the write-up.

A notice in the ZSO newsletter reads: "A 1974 Cadillac for sale to any Zoroastrian youth. Body and engine work required. Not certified. Sale price: one dollar!"

The modest witness

Medical examiner Dr Faruk Presswalla was one of the witnesses at the trial of Karen Diehl who was convicted for involuntary manslaughter of Dominick "Andrew" Diehl, who died of fatal brain damage, notes a write-up on the trial in *The Virginian-Pilot and the Ledger-Star* of September 6, 1987. The report describes Presswalla as a "Bombay-born state medical examiner for Hampton Roads, a soft-spoken

scholar who toils in near anonymity," while the second witness was Dr Cyril Wecht, a pathologist from Pittsburgh "whose history of forensic consultations reads like a who's who of celebrity death."

Presswalla, the prosecution witness, testified that brain damage was caused due to blows on the head while Wecht, supporting the defense, said that it was caused by a fall inside the Diehl family's school-bus home. The article however, compares the style of the two doctors. Notes writer Charles Giametta: "Interviews with people involved in the case, including jurors, showed that Wecht was generally perceived as verbose and slick, while Presswalla came across as modest and businesslike."

Even though defense attorney Thomas Shuttleworth "pounded away at Presswalla's foreign medical degrees and the fact that he had trained briefly at an unlikely sounding place called Coney Island Hospital," he admitted that "Presswalla was convincing in a way Wecht was not."

"Wecht was 'more a professional witness type,' Shuttleworth said. 'I wouldn't attack Presswalla head on – so I talked about the Coney Island thing,'" adds the report.

Compiled by Nilofer J. Madon

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Intensive care at 75

In its platinum jubilee year
the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital is thinking anew of ways
to meet the community's growing medical needs

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Bomanji Dinshaw Petit Parsee General Hospital is contemplating sweeping new changes that will not only catapult the 75-year-old institution into the medical technology of the 1990s and beyond but, hopefully, end its decades-long dependence on sentiment and charity.

On the anvil is a plan to rehouse and update the operation theaters and all the other medical infrastructure like the Intensive Cardiac Care Unit (ICCU), X ray, pathology, ENT, blood bank, physiotherapy departments, etc., as also to increase the number of beds. Reconstruction may begin once the permission is received and may take a couple of years to complete.

"This fairly phenomenal project will involve crores of rupees" anticipates soft-spoken Homa Petit, great-grand-nephew of the visionary Bomanji D. Petit and currently the Hospital's vice-president. "Some of these resources will come from donations - nearly 25 to 30 lakh rupees have already come in," says Petit, "but we may have to give up part of the land."

Immensely proud of the Petit heritage, Dinshaw Petit, the Hospital's president who has virtually grown up with the institution, was a toddler when its prospectus was published in

Bomanji Petit: the benefactor



1906. The father and son team - Dinshaw and Homa - is aware that only radical rethinking can help the Hospital serve the community as it was intended to do and that the aging Parsi community needs it now more than ever.

The plan envisaged by the managing committee of the Hospital involves using the Hospital's trump card - its land. "The power of sale is incorporated in the trust deed," says Homa Petit, but "the land is earmarked for hospital use (in the Bombay Municipal Corporation's plans)." The committee wants to use that to community advantage in two ways: "Maximum FSI (floor space index) for a hospital could go as high as 4.5 to 5.0," elucidates managing committee member and Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Homi Ranina, in contrast to the 1.33 normally allotted for residential construction. Simultaneously, Homa Petit envisages that if the FSI is leased to another hospital, the agreement will also incorporate a tie-up on the use of their costly equipment "on a per day



or per hour basis so that our free patients could get free treatment. We can thus give the community modern diagnostic facilities via this medium."

The FSI that will be offered to another institution by inviting tenders, will be restricted to the area on either side of the Hospital's Cumballa Hill entrance, currently occupied by the Out Patients Department (OPD) and the doctors' quarters. The Parsee General Hospital (PGH) needs a minimum corpus of 15 crore rupees to be viable, estimates Ranina. It is possible that the envisaged plan may generate more than that and Ranina anticipates that in "three to four years from now the picture may change." However, giving due weight to "the imponderables of the social and political milieu," Ranina says cautiously, "I am not sure we will be able to develop the land, even though we have it. We don't have the flexibility of private builders."

A constant deficit of 10 to 14 lakh rupees a year has been dogging the Hospital after taking into account all

payments from the patients in terms of the rates fixed and including donations, informs Phiroze Jhabvala, the actuary-printer-lawyer who has been the Hospital's joint honorary secretary

"If we had to go to government or municipal hospitals, we wouldn't be half as happy as we are over here"

since 1969. "The trust's income cannot match inflation and the community is not prepared to listen to economies that are possible, (rejecting them) on grounds of status. To the community the Parsee General Hospital seems to be a dharamshala," he avers.

According to Jhabvala, the management is in a pincer grip between the demands of the community and the ris-

ing expectations all around, including the non-Parsis who work for the Hospital. Roughly 1,000 non-Parsis occupy the lower staff quarters - largely the wardboys' children, many of whom are graduates and masters from the University of Bombay, he says.

"A Parsi earning a dearness allowance of more than Rs 1,000 will try to place his parent in a free bed and won't take him away even when the doctors discharge him because (the patient) gets meat and fish every day. Then there are fights: 'Aaj nu bhonu tau hopeless' (the food today was terrible) even though it is accepted that we feed quality which at home he can hardly afford. And its all under the oft-stated, entrenched belief, 'baap-daada paisa mooki gayachni' (our forefathers have left the money for us to use)!" recounts Jhabvala.

"People don't like their children to spend, but don't mind the Hospital spending!" exclaims Ranina, adding, "Though the Hospital has a social worker to find out the income of patients... we trust the community to

give the right figures of their income level on the basis of which we decide which ward or bed to allot...

"We are also an aging community. The patients are retired and their income is very low. Most don't like to be maintained by a son-in-law...The population at the Hospital is increasing, and 285 beds are not adequate. On certain days the Hospital goes light; but on other days it overflows."

The only beds that make a positive contribution to the Hospital accounts are those in Extension A (popularly, though incorrectly, referred to as the Nursing Home) and the patients there "run away in a week or two," while those in the concessional wards continue for months at a time, explains Jhabvala. Donations are not that worthwhile any more because a donation of Rs 5,000 for example, barely takes care of one patient for a month! Therefore, while a "number of people have approached the Hospital with the proposition that their wealth would revert to the Hospital if they're looked after to the end, the Hospital has rejected the offer," he adds. That is also the reason why, Jhabvala says, for years he has been advocating the profitable use of the land to augment the institution's finances - a suggestion that the committee has recently accepted.

The PGH recently inducted some young professionals into its administration, but young Parsi doctors, nurses or laboratory assistants are hard to come by and the Hospital must, of necessity, depend upon non-Parsis who have no emotional attachment to the institution.

"Everybody is commercial in their attitudes. Missionary zeal is no longer there, but that is the case all over the world. You pay five times the amount in the Jaslok (Hospital) and get the same type of treatment," notes Ranina.

Better nurses also like to go to other hospitals "because of the variety of patients and cases elsewhere" whereas the Parsis seem to suffer from certain typical diseases, says Homa Petit. There is also the hope of nursing some rich Arab and the ensuing possibility of landing a much better paid job abroad, he adds.

The unionization of the staff has cut deeper ridges into the Hospital's effec-



tiveness. At a press conference in July, Homa Petit had noted that the additional cost on labor according to the latest settlement added 14 lakh rupees to the annual bill. Ranina labelled labor as the biggest financial problem for the Hospital. The Supreme Court has ruled that a hospital is an industry and its "labor is entitled to all the wages and benefits applicable to an industrial establishment," says Ranina, contributing Rs 82 to the per bed cost of Rs 161.

In-house medical facilities are offered to the nursing staff. "Because of our affiliation with the medical council, we are bound to give indoor treatment to the nursing staff," says Homa Petit. The OPD is open to the rest of the staff as certified by the resident medical officer (RMO), but hospitalization facilities are provided elsewhere, though the PGH bears the cost.

Dinshaw Petit recalls a personal ordeal in the 1960s when the then Maharashtra Governor's wife had requested to see the Hospital. As the joint secretary he was happy to escort her through the Hospital until the lady expressed a strong desire to be hospitalized on the precincts. As Dinshaw recounts it, it required every bit of the Petit sense of humor and savior faire to preserve the Governor's goodwill without sacrificing any of the terms of Bomanji Petit's trust deed! "I am not

orthodox but I'm not a freethinker either," declares Dinshaw Petit. "If the Hospital is opened to non-Parsis, it will go the way of the J.J. Hospital," he notes with conviction and distaste.

The diagnoses

Ten well-known doctors whom *Parsiana* polled were unanimous in their opinion that the Hospital is a boon to the community today when medical treatment is so expensive that falling ill can be a financial calamity for middle-class people.

The quality of service at the PGH does not match the Breach Candy Hospital's (BCH) because the PGH does not have the Breach Candy's level of resources, say most doctors. Surgeon Kersi Dastur phrases it differently: The Breach Candy has to pull the weight of only 25 free beds in the Godrej wing, as against the PGH's more than 200 free and subsidized beds, though the quantum of resources may be similar, he explains.

"No other hospital in Bombay gives as much value for money as the Parsee General," opined surgeon Tehemton Udwadia, president designate of the International College of Surgeons.

"Today, in Bombay, in an emergency, you can't get a hospital bed or the bed may be beyond your means. Here, at the Parsee General, you will be admitted. Nor will you be forced into the Nursing Home if you can't afford it," comments surgeon Fardoon Soonawalla, adding, "This hospital has spirit behind it."

"*Parsiau ne khit khit karvani aadat ché* (Parsis are chronic complainers). We don't know what is lying on the other side of the fence. If we had to go to government or municipal hospitals, we wouldn't be half as happy as we are over here," says surgeon Adi Nazir.

The doctors were agreed that the PGH was adequately equipped for the normal run of Parsi patients and that it was uneconomic for the Hospital, considering its level of resources, to provide the special facilities required in rare cases. It is more efficient to move a patient requiring special heart surgery, for example, to another hospital, they say. New medical gadgetry like the C.T. Scan (Computer Tomography - "tomos" in Greek meaning to cut, "graphy" to see - which gives detailed sectional X rays



*Facing page: Jehangir Petit
Alongside (from left): Nalladaroo,
Noshir Dubash and Mehta
Part of the Hospital's infrastructure:
Pathology Department (below) and
Physiotherapy Department (bottom)*

Photos: Homiyar Mistry

as radiologist Dr Jimmy Sidhva explains) costs one crore 20 lakh rupees and wouldn't be used more than once or twice a day for Parsi patients, he reckons, while gynecologist Rusi Soonawalla estimates that about 10 C.T. scans a day would be required even to defray the interest on an investment of this magnitude. "The maintenance and upkeep (of such machines) would sponge up the money of the community," believes Sidhva. The doctors were all in favor of a tie-up arrangement with another institution where Parsi patients could avail of such facilities when necessary.

The medicos say that the high professional and moral caliber of the consultants is the Hospital's greatest strength, together with a few key members of the management like the medical superintendent and joint honorary secretary Dr Homi Mehta and the Petit family. "Dr Mehta has made the Hospital what it is," acknowledges F. Soonawalla even as he recalls the late Maneckji Petit's (president of the Hospital for over 25 years) devotion and nocturnal rounds of the hospital. The quality of patient care which includes the provision of medicine, nursing care, food and other infrastructure, was rated high. "We may not have the flashiest theater in Bombay," says Udwadia, "but we have one of the lowest - if not the lowest - sepsis rates in the city. Our nurses are as efficient as, if not more efficient than, any-



where else in Bombay."

But the doctors also note that the institution has not been modernizing itself adequately. "The management tends to be a bit conservative, largely because of paucity of funds," thinks F. Soonawalla.

High on their list of priorities is a more efficient ICCU. Last October, a patient with a heart attack who had been admitted to the Parsee General's ICCU was allegedly advised by the consultant the following day to shift to another hospital. "The ICCU is not ideally devised. There is too much noise," comments cardiologist Dr Aspi Golwalla, chairman of the BPP.



Comparing the PGH's ICCU with its system of curtains, as against the cubicles of the Breach Candy Hospital which ensure greater privacy, another eminent physician emphasized that the ICCU at the PGH often takes in more than its load, as against the standard number of patients at the Breach Candy ICCU. "When overloaded, the atmosphere gets disturbed. The problem could be modified if the ICCU is expanded and/or the privacy of the patients is better respected," he added. He also informed that while the BCH has an entirely separate, higher paid nursing staff for its ICCU, at the Parsee General only the sisters-in-charge belonged permanently to the ICCU, the rest of the staff being common to all sections of the Hospital.

Apart from ophthalmologist Dr Rustom Patel, who represents the honoraries on the Hospital's managing committee, there is no subcommittee of doctors to advise the administration on medical investment priorities, even though some of the honoraries enjoy an international professional status.

Only two of the doctors were coherently aware of the Hospital's modernization plans, though all of them welcomed the idea with varying degrees of enthusiasm. "It's a good scheme," says Dastur, "but I don't think we should lease our land to outsiders. It will spoil the image of the Hospital. If Hinduja's build, they will swallow the PGH."

"How it would work out, I don't know...It is easy to say (that hospitals) are profit making...In the Jaslok, beds are going empty," says a prominent physician. Golwalla however calls it "the best, the only way. You can't depend on the community (for funds). It's a very wise move, (though) perhaps late in the day. Hope it goes through."

Most doctors suggest a bigger, better chronic ward-cum-convalescent home, independently located, for the community's growing number of geriatric patients. "They need love and care, not medicine," says Sidhva. Such a shift would free the Hospital's resources for those actively in need of medical help, says R. Soonawalla. Golwalla notes that the BPP has a lakh of rupees for a chronic ward at the Hospital that hasn't come about so far, because the modernization plans were not finalized until recently.

Udwadia's dream is to have a separate block – a much smaller structure – only for Parsis and "have a separate (cosmopolitan) nursing home which could put the Breach Candy, Jaslok and Hinduja's to shame...If Parsis set their mind to anything, they can do it. I'm sure the community has the professional and the financial ability to deliver the goods. I have full confidence we can do it." In a separate interview, R. Soonawalla had expressed a similar view: "Lots of non-Parsis have tremendous faith in Parsi doctors and Parsi institutions. If one could keep a certain part of the Hospital open to non-Parsis, only the very expensive rooms..." the Hospital would be able to generate sizable income, he felt.

To make the Hospital a cosmopolitan institution would be one way out of its awkward financial situation, agree the doctors, but none of them is in favor of taking a step which they feel would deprive the community of a facility that it badly needs. Even those who expressed themselves in favor of

opening the service areas to increase the Hospital's efficiency and income were chary of legal repercussions that could eventually nullify the gains.

The PGH's most dismal record seems to belong to the obstetrics (maternity) and pediatrics (children's) departments. "Even those who can

**"We may not have
the flashiest theater
in Bombay, but we
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lowest – if not *the*
lowest – sepsis rates
in the city"**

afford a little bit, tend to go to Breach Candy or Jaslok," says R. Soonawalla who estimates that well over 50 percent of maternities avoid the PGH. Though Soonawalla admits that the BCH could be a status symbol, he says that the usual complaints relate to nursing and cleanliness, the patients being particularly averse to birds and cats invading their rooms. Soonawalla feels that the rooms need to be modernized and the general outlook of the Hospital livened up. Referring to the growth of many small maternity homes in the suburbs, Golwalla however observed, "Today commuting has become so expensive, and difficult, people prefer nearby hospitals."

All the doctors felt that the food that the Hospital serves is very good, though R. Soonawalla commented on how difficult it is to please everyone – "People are dissatisfied even with

five-star hotels."

"A hospital is much more than stone, concrete or instruments," says Udwadia. "The people in the Parsee General make it what it is." Sidhva adds a sterling compliment to Dr Marzban Nalladaroo, resident medical officer at the PGH for nearly two decades. Describing Nalladaroo as a father confessor to the patients, and a human buffer between the patient and the administration, the doctors and the Hospital staff, Sidhva refers to the RMO's position as a thankless job beautifully done, by the present incumbent and his predecessor, Dr Burjor Pardiwalla.

History

The need for a general hospital for Parsis was acutely felt during the plague epidemic of 1900 when people perished in hundreds with hospitals overcrowded and inefficient, recalls Dinshaw Petit. "Between 1900 and 1905 there were three attempts to have a hospital for Parsis, but they all failed," until Bomanji's son Jehangir Petit launched a prospectus in 1905 seeking donations for a hospital scheme with three categories of beds – fully paying, subsidized and free. According to the prospectus, the hospital would bear the name of the first person to make a donation of five lakh rupees or more. "In the first year after the prospectus was published, funds were very low – hardly one lakh 20 thousand rupees," says Dinshaw Petit. In early 1906 Bomanji gifted to the scheme his Cumballa Hotel property on Cumballa Hill whose 50,000 square yards were then valued at five lakh rupees, plus an additional Rs 50,000 in government promissory notes. The foundation stone was laid in 1907 and

A measure of philanthropy

Of the Hospital's 285 beds, only 21 are in Extension A, popularly though incorrectly known as the nursing home. According to the 1986 report, of the 88,450 total treatment days (the sum total of the number of patients treated each day), as many as 57,623 treatment days – 65.15 percent – were free or concessional. In other words, of the average 242 patients treated per day, 158 are free or concessional.

The daily food rations at the hospital include, on an average, 800 eggs, 40 to 50 kilograms of mutton or fish, 175 liters of milk, nearly three kilograms of butter, 200 loaves of bread, 32 kilograms of rice, 32 to 35 kilograms of sugar, five to six kilograms of tea, informs the dietitian Ms Ameeta Nanavati. These take care of all the patients and the staff including 165 nurses, 60 of them being student nurses.

the building inaugurated in 1912 (then nine-year old Dinshaw remembers seeing "lok, lok, lok" – a sea of people) by the Governor of Bombay, Lord Sydenham. Sydenham had predicted difficulties when he realized that the Hospital, which cost 12 lakh rupees, had an endowment fund of only Rs 22 lakhs, notes an article in the Hospital's diamond jubilee souvenir. At the time of the opening it had been believed that the fund would be augmented at uthamna ceremonies the way most Parsi charities had been launched. But the custom soon died out and Sydenham's prognosis became a way of life at the PGH.

According to the terms of the prospectus, the land and buildings of the Hospital are vested in the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and extra funds remain in their custody, though the executive committee of the Hospital is entitled to their use as required. Though the karobari mandli (the Hospital's general board) includes the seven trustees of the BPP, its working is entirely "independent of the Punchayet which has no controlling voice over it," notes the souvenir article.

Becoming the treasurer of the Hospital on the eve of World War II, Dinshaw Petit recalls the installation of the canon on the topmost point of the Hospital's grounds near the RMO's residence. The requisitioning of the Hospital by the government at a monthly rate of Rs 20,000 for three years during World War I and Rs 23,750 for three and a half years during World War II added somewhat to the Hospital's coffers; but a real windfall was the renting of the premises, immediately after it was derequisitioned by the government in 1946, by the Aga Khan Legion for a month, for one lakh twenty thousand rupees plus the cost of repair and rectification that was required before the PGH could function from its own premises again.

The nurses' quarters were built by Shapoorji Pallonji, recalls Dinshaw Petit. "We asked for a reasonable estimate and he quoted five and a half lakh rupees." When the Hospital received the bill after the completion of the structure, a special function was organized and Shapoorji Pallonji was presented the cheque and a shawl before the assembled audience. "Shapoorji Pallonji," remembers Dinshaw Petit, "then asked for a contra function and returned

the cheque as a donation!"

The community contributed towards the nutrition department named in memory of the late Dhunmai Mehta who for years had supervised the patients' diet on an entirely honorary basis; the doctors' quarters were however constructed from the Hospital's own funds, says Dinshaw Petit.

What Dinshaw Petit prides himself upon is the induction of Dr Homi Mehta, then police surgeon, as his co-secretary in January 1950. The period was one of extreme gloom in the Hospital's history. The endowment fund stood at less than 20 lakh rupees. The general fund was just 6.31 lakhs. "One wing of the Hospital had been closed and very few patients were attracted to the Hospital," notes an article surveying the institution's history in the souvenir. "It was the consensus that the Hospital be wound up and the buildings be utilized for educational and residential use as stated in the trust deed of 1906. It was almost the death knell and only a supreme effort could have lifted such dismal gloom."

Mehta's philosophy – "No institution depending on the charity of the community need fear starvation of funds if it can show useful and worthwhile results" – impelled him into such action that the Medical Superintendent is today an institution within the institution. Mehta recalls how appalled he was by "the apathy and hostility" with which the community faced him. Reminded of poor service in the past, many swore never to help the Hospital, he remembers.

The institution Mehta inherited as its joint secretary was "very poorly equipped, like a glorified dispensary. The entire ground floor was closed due to lack of funds with a threat of government acquisition hanging over it. Extension A which had been started in 1948, had barely six patients at a time. There were less than 80 patients in the whole Hospital, most of them chronic cases." The staff lacked inspiration and discipline and by way of monetary resources, Mehta had a total income of one lakh 10 thousand rupees including donations, wherewith to maintain and run the Hospital.

Mehta sought the aid of Adi Marzban, Editor of the *Jam-e-Jamshed* to acquaint the community with the grim picture, and of Dr Jehangir Wadia, humorist-playwright. Within a few

days, Wadia staged the first of his frothy comedies with amateur actors from among the Parsi doctors, a sum of Rs 50,000 was collected and the Hospital's closed wing reopened before it could be acquired by the government. Thus a new tradition of Parsi plays staged by The Parsi Medical Amateurs was established. (To date, the group has collected nearly 40 lakh rupees for the PGH, informs Sidhva.)

By 1971 the Hospital had acquired 21 new departments, testifying to Mehta's infectious zeal that shamed the community into a change of heart. The latest Mehta-inspired addition to the Hospital's services is the Fertility Clinic, a tribute to an ailing octogenarian's concern for the future of the community, at the end of 38 years of totally honorary service.

Today the institution is so firmly entrenched in the community's consciousness, that for most Parsis in Bombay – and outside – life would be unthinkable without it. Bomanji and Jehangir Petit would be proud of their brainchild; but, being the visionaries they were, be equally conscious of the need for growth...

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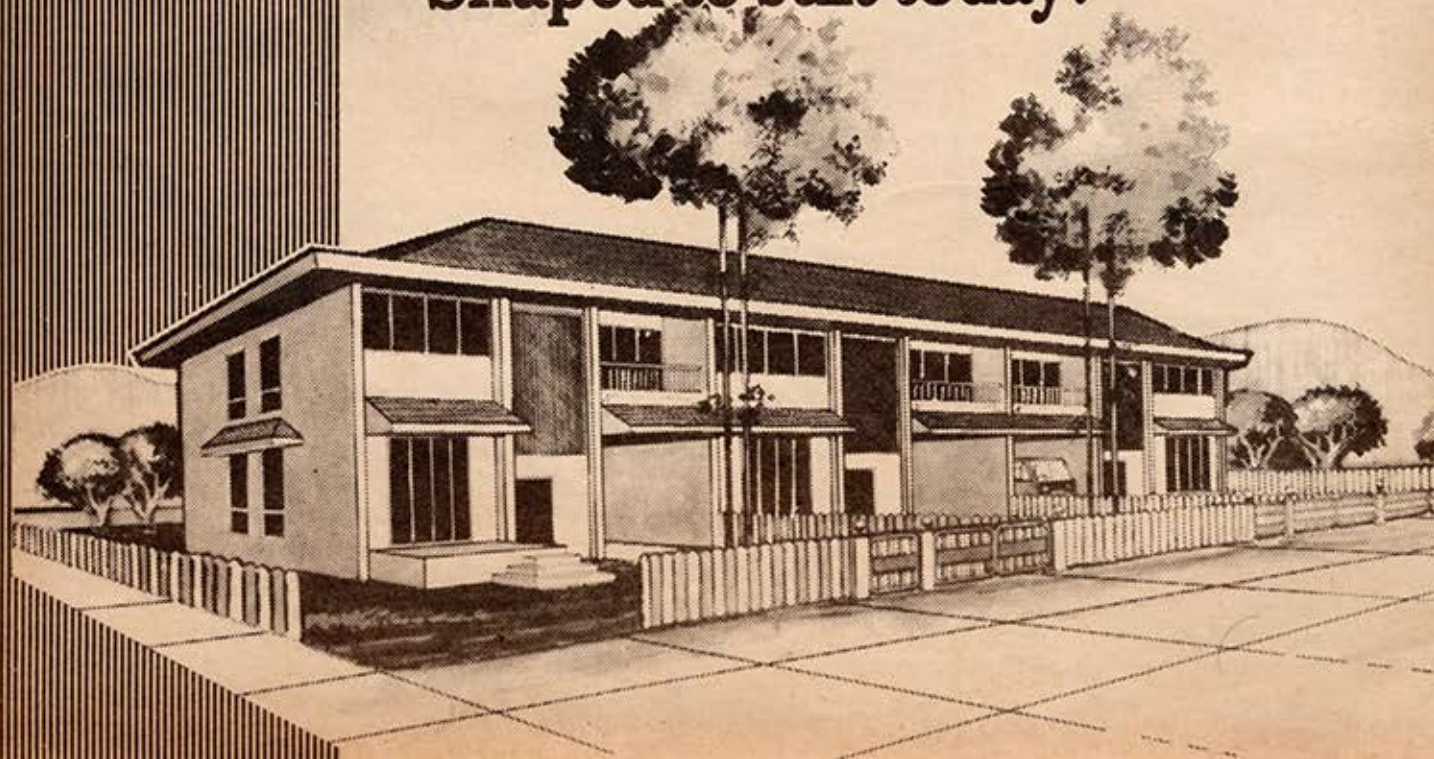
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THE FEDERATION

debates equal rights

Parinaz Toddywalla

All Parsi women, be they mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, are permitted only half the share of their male counterparts under the law of intestate succession. To gauge whether the community today favors granting equal rights to women, and on the same principle recognizes the rights of a widowed son-in-law which had hitherto been disregarded, members of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India were given one last chance to discuss the issue at their anjuman level and submit their views to the Federation secretariat by November 15, 1987. The leeway was granted by the Federation's executive council during its meeting at the Muncherji Khareghat Hall, Bombay, on September 5 and 6, 1987.

While recommending that on moral grounds "a decent salary should be offered to all mobeds subject to availability of resources," the Federation is against the classification of an agiary as an industry, as was declared by the Surat Labour Court in end 1985. This judgment, permitting a priest to claim overtime, leave encashment and other perquisites enjoyed by a workman, has been challenged in the High Court of Gujarat by the trustees of the Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Agiary.

To help mofussil anjumans which are unable to find priests to serve their agiary, the Federation's paramobed course, being conducted under the supervision of Dasturs Navrooz Minochehr-Homji and Meherji Meherjirana, at their centers in Bombay and Navsari respectively, offers hope. Of the four behdins who have come forward for training, two will be working for remuneration, and two in an honorary capacity.

On the ground that the Rent Control Act is preventing the trustees from utilizing the trust property for the economically weaker stratum of the com-

munity, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) will make a new application for exemption from the purview of the Act which does not allow eviction or increase of rents in old buildings. If governmental institutions can be exempted, so can trust properties, especially since certain states have permitted it, felt the delegates.

The fear of encroachment on the Parsi property in Diu on which stands a disused agiary, a *sagri* and two dokhmas has been removed with the Government's assurance that the buildings will be declared as public monuments and protected by the Archaeological Department of India. In the case of the Simla aramgah property, the threat, of encroachers claiming land rights, no longer looms over the territory as the title deeds are now secure in the hands of Parsis.

A panel of Parsi entrepreneurs from concerns like Godrej, Airfreight, J.N. Marshall, Thermax, Mazda, Buckau Wolf, etc is being formed to try and match the demand and supply of technical and professional manpower within the community.

The winners of the Federation awards, for excellence achieved in different fields in 1986 and 1987, will

be announced in 1988. Since the data had not been screened nor the adjudication committee finalized, it was decided to extend the April 30, 1987 deadline for receiving nominations. A tenth award for vocational or technical education hinges on the availability of a sponsor.

Mahuva's membership on the Federation rolls will be confirmed once the formalities are complied with.

Offers to host a Federation meeting are coming months and years in advance. After the next meeting to be hosted by the Jamshedpur Anjuman on December 26 and 27, 1987, the Vyara-Songadh Anjuman will host another in the first week of April '88. This will be followed by one in Bombay in August-September, and another in Calcutta in December. "Book December '89 for us at Sanjan," said Homi Palsetia of Saronda who was eager that Sanjan, Zai Bordi and Saronda jointly host a meeting.

Extending a "warm welcome to all the delegates from the heart and weather point of view," Federation and BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla announced that no guest speaker had been invited so that "more opportunities could be given to each one of you"



The anjumans' views were sought to ascertain whether women should be granted equal rights as men under the laws of intestate secession

to participate in the deliberations. The presence of the Federation's founder member Maneck Gheyara, co-opted east zone member Ardeshir Batlivala, Delhi Parsi Anjuman's (DPA) president Lt Gen Ardeshir Sethna and Homi Ranina, the last BPP trustee to associate himself with the Federation, was acknowledged.

When the newcomers were asked to express their views, Ranina said,



Clockwise from top left: Sethna, Ranina, Gheyara and Batlivala
Left: Gandhi (at the mike) and Desai

"There is lack of leadership in the community. The Federation would be an ideal vehicle for forging new leadership by which all the Parsis of India and abroad can come together." On the proceedings of the two-day meet, Sethna commented, "This democratic, articulate community conducts discussions in the best of spirits. We are living with reality as it exists which is different from aspirations..."

The fair heir recognized

Respecting the sentiments of Parsi women who until now have been entitled to only half the share as granted to men under the laws of intestate succession, Federation's joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi impressed upon the assembly the need to make amends in this matter on which no definite steps have yet been taken, despite being scheduled on the agenda at every meeting.

But since most anjuman representatives had not discussed this subject at their own board meetings and hence were not voicing the official viewpoint of their respective anjumans, they were given a November 15 deadline to submit their written views to the Federation secretariat. The issues on which a consensus was sought were whether a Parsi woman should be treated on par with the man, and extending the same principle, whether the spouse of a deceased daughter (son-in-law) could be granted the same rights that were permitted to the spouse of a deceased son (daughter-in-law).

Against raising a hornet's nest, member of the Minorities Commission Homi Taleyarkhan said, "At this rate the Federation will never be able to arrive at decisions if we set the precedent of taking the referendum of the community each time." But BPP trustee and joint honorary secretary of the Federation Eruch Desai was convinced, "There must have been some mature consideration by our forefathers" in not granting equal rights to a son-in-law.

According to Gandhi's reasoning, when the Indian Succession Act was formulated, "the dice was loaded in favor of men. In all respects a man got more than the woman, hence it is not surprising that while the spouse of a son is rewarded, the spouse of a daughter is punished." He further ex-

plained that the fear, that with many Parsi girls marrying non-Parsis, the wealth would be lost to the family and the community, was unfounded. "If the non-Parsi spouse does not get it, the non-Parsi children will get it," he added.

When Batlivala pointed out, "It is not a layman's job to decide," it was suggested that the consensus decision reached by the BPP trustees be circulated to help the other anjumans form their opinion. Quipped Golwalla, "There are wise people in the Panchayet, and by that I was not including myself."

Priests with parallels

To help cater to the religious needs of anjumans in mofussil areas where regular priests cannot be found, paramobeds will be deputed there on completion of their year-long training. To be coached as paramobeds at either Bombay or Navsari, under the respective supervision of Dasturs Minochehr-Homji or Meherjirana, the first batch of two paid and two voluntary behdins will be taught the *farajiat* (obligatory) prayers and the performance of ceremonies like *afrikan*, *farokhshi*, *satum*, *geh-sarna*, *bhoi bhanvanu*, *jashan*, *uthamna*, etc. The training costs will be shared by the Federation, the BPP and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA) which, during the period of training, will provide the paramobeds-to-be with free accommodation plus an allowance of Rs 600 per month.

Depending on their financial position, mofussil anjumans, which employ the trained paramobed in areas outside Bombay, Poona, Surat, Navsari and Udwada, will be expected to contribute towards his salary - between Rs 800 to 1,500 per month. Additionally, paramobeds have been assured free accommodation, leave

travel, medical and other benefits, noted BPP trustee and Federation's joint honorary treasurer Jamshed Guzder, chairman of the paramobeds subcommittee constituted by the Federation. Others on the subcommittee include Peshotan Nargolwala, west zone co-opted member, Dasturs-Meherjirana and Minochehr-Homji, Zal Irani of the IZA, Dr Homi Dhalla, scholar, Farrokh Sidhwa who is trustee-in-charge of the Dadar Athor-man Madressa and Prof Khurshed Sheriar, retired vice principal of Jai Hind College, Bombay.

Since the cost of the training works out to Rs 7,000 per paramobed, Gandhi recommended that the prospective paramobeds be made to sign an undertaking that they will serve an outside anjuman, otherwise it is not worth the cost.

Sixty-three mobeds requiring monetary assistance were the recipients of Rs 75,600 expended by the BPP's Mobed Amelioration Scheme this year. Said Rustom Anklesaria, chief executive of the BPP, "Any trust which can augment our funds like the N.M. Wadia Trust, which donated Rs 25,000 last year, would be of help." Supplemented BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga, "The issue is not only helping mobeds but generating the feeling that a mobed is essential to the community and all should contribute to his amelioration." Instead of wasting money on "dekha-dekhi (outdoing the Joneses)" at weddings and navjotes, Kanga suggested that the money be utilized for the priests' betterment. If there is a noble purpose, "no one will feel *ke naak kapai jase* (humiliated). Let the Press give recognition to such parties."

Lt Gen Sethna struck a different note saying, "When you (the Federation) are doing such a good job, I trust the emphasis will be given to Zoroastrian ethics. We need not only prayers but religious leadership."

Rent reins

Make an application to the government with a fresh perspective, telling them that the Rent Control Act is preventing the trustees from fulfilling the objects of the trust (housing the needy and the poor), Gandhi motivated the BPP trustees. The government should be given an option: "If you cannot permit large scale eviction due to fear of

rendering people homeless, allow us to increase rents." He recommended making a representation to the Minorities Commission that trust properties be exempted from the Rent Control Act in all states.

If the government can exempt its own undertakings by permitting rents as high as 10 percent of an employee's income, they can similarly allow the BPP to charge higher rents for flats which are meant for the economically weaker section but where the affluent now reside, Gandhi reasoned. "We told them that we don't want to evict them but we want to increase the existing rents, but the government did not accept that proposal either," reported Kanga who pleaded helplessness at the government's logic that if exemption is granted to Parsi trusts, others would also start demanding it. Said Desai, "But now if there are special cases brought to the government's attention we might possibly see a ray of hope."

Monumental protection

The Parsi property in Diu on which once stood an agiary, a *sagri* and two dokhmas will be preserved as a national monument by the Government of India, assured Taleyarkhan. The monuments will be protected by the Archaeological Department, but in the meanwhile, for the surrounding dokhma land, the Federation is trying to negotiate with the encroachers to obtain the highest price.

Fearing that some trespassers might usurp the aramgah property in Simla, the Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Vice Admiral Rustom Gandhi, was asked to intervene in the matter. With his assistance, "the legal documents are now in our possession and a full-time watchman has been appointed to look after the cemetery," informed DPA trustee Rusi Engineer.

To assist the last Parsi family in Srinagar, the Pestonjees, to look after their property, on the Federation's recommendation Lt Gen Sethna was appointed trustee of the Kashmir Parsee Zoroastrian Aramgah Fund. The aramgah, located in the cantonment area, is "the best among the ones I have seen," according to Sethna, but in need of funds for its maintenance and upkeep. Since land in Kashmir can only be owned by a Kashmiri subject, the Federation is trying to stave off the possibility of the property being lost to



*Clockwise from left: Kanga, Kaikobad, Guzder, Anklesaria and Mistry
Right: Taleyarkhan (at the mike) and Golwalla*

the community. As per Sethna's advice, "Thoughts for anything other than an aramgah should be put aside...Swapping for another piece of land is just not feasible." Respecting the sentiments of the Pestonjees, Sethna cautioned, "Let us gradually proceed with long-term plans."

Setting a precedent, Gp Capt Dhunjishaw Marker entrusted a set of duplicates of the records of the Mhow Anjuman to the safekeeping of the Federation's central storage system. Keki Gandhi especially appreciated Marker's initiative realizing the difficulties encountered by the Federation in tracing records and getting new trustees appointed for defunct anjumans like Cambay, Nanded and Junagarh. Kanga was more specific, "Keeping records is not sufficient. They may only dump old papers on us," and suggested the records be screened before storage.

He suggested making a representation to the chief ministers of the concerned state that where rights to the Parsi property have been lost due to the absence of Zoroastrians from the

site, such lapses should be condoned by the government.

Seats for students

Most Parsi-founded colleges, when approached by BPP trustee and vice-chancellor of the Bombay University Dr Mehroo Bengalee, reportedly claimed to have no knowledge of any Parsi settlor laying down a stipulation for admission to Parsis. But Gandhi felt that Bengalee's letter must have been construed as "whether donations were received with a view to seeking reservation" and suggested instead that members personally dig out such information like in the case of one Par-

membership on the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO)] doesn't come up again. Before the next meeting (of the Federation) at Jamshedpur, everything should be settled," assured Dadi Mistry, DPA trustee and vice-president of the WZO. His confidence suggested that there might be a breakthrough in the stalemate on the negotiations between the Federation which was demanding two-thirds weightage to anjumans-associations in the WZO's general body and managing committee, and the WZO which was insisting on a fifty-fifty parity between anjumans-associations and individuals.



si who had sent him a photograph of a plaque at the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute which bears a Parsi donor's name.

Golwalla, a medical practitioner, was of the view: "I don't think any institution in retrospect is going to consider reserving seats for Parsis." He recommended instead that the coaching fees of some select intelligent students, who stood a greater chance of getting admission in professional colleges on their own merit, be financed, as is presently being done by the BPP and the Godrej Foundation.

Optimism flowed in from Taleyarkhan who was confident that chief ministers of some states would allocate seats to one or two Zoroastrian students, who have secured high marks, from the chief minister's discretionary quota. When it was pointed out that this verbal assurance could be only temporary, he stated, "A change of policy is not correlated to a change of chief minister..."

World body weighted

"I hope the topic [the Federation's

"The only bone of contention is the two-third - one-third representation. On all other points we are agreeable," noted Mistry. Kanga enquired of Mistry, "Are you authorized to make this statement?"

Mistry: Yes I am the vice-president and I have every reason to hope that things will improve.

Kanga: This one step forward and two steps backward is going on.

Desai: So what?

Ranina: Dadi takes the responsibility.

Golwalla: Before I retire I'd like to see this issue settled.

Mistry: I hope so, otherwise I will resign (from the WZO).

Gandhi was keen that the verbal assurances be supplemented by written commitments. Pursuant to a managing committee decision, along with the minutes of the last meeting, he had circulated a note detailing the areas in which the WZO should be more explicit if it wishes to become a "truly representative world body of Zoroastrians" and have the Federation's membership on it. He proposed that a letter based on these points be sent to

WZO president Shahpur Captain in Golwalla's name.

There was a plea that two-thirds of the managing committee members and two-thirds of the office-bearers will be elected only by the associations, and the balance one-third by the individual members. Further, the Federation is to nominate the anjumans' representatives and office-bearers from India, with the chairman of the BPP enjoying 50 percent of these allocation rights.

The venue of the managing committee and general body meetings, circulation of documents concerning the meetings, the rights of the members to vote by post were also detailed.

The autonomy of every anjuman-association to conduct its internal affairs free from the intervention of the WZO was emphasized. That the WZO's work in India be henceforth carried on through the Federation and not its India committee which should cease to function, was also demanded, as was also the need for the WZO to comply with the provisions of the laws in India. The WZO was also expected to be more forthcoming in its information on the strength of the membership in the different categories in different countries, and to utilize the available funds solely for "the promotion and fulfillment of its objects" and not to sponsor air passage and hotel costs of the members of the managing committee.

Springboard for youths

"To keep children off the streets during vacations and to give them something to think about," the BPP conducted a holiday program for students who had appeared for their school leaving examinations. The convener, Dr Ketayun Madon noted, "We did not want them to be just second class graduates." But Gandhi insisted that mere performance at the graduation examination need not be the deciding factor to judge a student's ability: "I myself am third class graduation material but have done well as a CA..."

When Kanga enquired about the success rate of the program, Anklesaria replied: "In social transformation programs, results are very slow." But the organizers took pride in singling out Khushroo Merchant, one of the responsible students of the batch who was invited to the Federation deliberations on the second day to give his impressions of the program and the Fed-

eration's style of functioning from the eyes of a youth. In future, the BPP is planning to organize a program geared for graduate-level students.

Since the youths "don't like to be lectured at," an across-the-table discussion was to be the mode of functioning at the three-day First All-India Zoroastrian Youth Seminar hosted by the DPA from October 22-24, 1987. "This will be a sounding board for youths in the 19 to 35 age-group to give them a chance to be involved in community activities...to go through such aspects as discussed today (at the Federation meeting)," emphasized Sethna. His invitation to different anjumans to sponsor youths was accepted almost instantaneously with 35 commitments coming in from Bombay, Agra, Ajmer, Calcutta, Jhansi, Hyderabad, Ahmednagar, Pune, Baroda, Mhow, Bharuch, Saronda, Surat, Navsari and IZA. Asked Anklesaria, in mock earnestness "What is the matrimonial target?"

The cost of circulation

The registration for the Gujarati edition of the *Fed Newsletter* was cancelled because of irregularity of publication, informed Gandhi. But when Anklesaria shouldered the responsibility of translating and posting the Gujarati version, commitments to sponsor monthly issues came readily: BPP offered to finance six, Baroda two, Saronda and Zai Bordi jointly two, Thana one, Dastur and Co of Calcutta two.

The response to the English edition is "good and regular" in the words of Gandhi who was happy with the feedback. The overseas circulation has reportedly crossed the 800-mark. Nearly nine-tenths of the total expenditure incurred by the Federation in the last five months was on publication and circulation of the *Fed Newsletter*. Sponsorship advertisements at Rs 2,500 per issue do not cover even the postage costs, but Gandhi was hopeful that voluntary contributions would help cover the monthly deficit of Rs 1,000.

Parental decree on university degree

Whether it is fear of venturing into technical fields which may not have job security, or whether it is parental aspirations that prompt Parsi students to opt for graduation courses even though they may not have the apti-

tude, should be studied and a solution sought, advised Prof Noshir Kaikobad, convener of the BPP's counselling projects. Kanga pointed out, "With a university degree, at least the marriage prospects are brighter."

To solve this problem, a panel of Parsi entrepreneurs will detail the areas where there would be openings for Parsi boys in their firms so that training in those specific fields could be encouraged. Though Gandhi related the earlier experiences of the subcommittee on job opportunities when either "there would be no interview letter (sent to the candidate), or if there was one, there would be no interview turn-up," he was willing to make a renewed attempt to match the demand and supply of manpower by forming a new subcommittee. Noted

(Above)
Khareghat
Building:
venue of the
Federation
meet

(Right)
Commissariat
and Dittia
(Far right)
Representatives
from
Thana

businessmen, industrialists, hoteliers and financiers like Guzder, Engineer, Sethna, Minoo Shroff, Homi Mehta, Dara Deboo, Minoo Belgamvala and Aspi Irani have confirmed that they will serve on the panel, while others like Naoroji Godrej, Dhunjishaw Netarwala, Darius Forbes, Dara Damania and Rohinton Aga are yet to be approached.

When Guzder announced opportunities for management trainees with preference to those having a post-graduate degree in law, Desai, a senior partner at Mulla and Mulla and Craigie, Blunt and Caroe, volunteered, "I have passed my law!" Guzder in a similar light vein responded, "I must come to you for employment." Golwalla voiced his misgivings about whether all these job opportunities in Bombay would imply that outstation applicants would approach the



BPP for accommodation.

Seeing the general preference among Parsis for travel and tourism jobs, Sethna revealed, "It is a fast growing industry but you have to compete to get into it. It won't drop from heaven like manna."

Tuition fees of candidates enrolling for coaching courses for entry into civil and defence services are being offered by the BPP but unfortunately there are not many takers. If attendance at these courses is over 90 percent, full reimbursement is promised. As explained by Anklesaria, "When the coaching is free, (there is a tendency) not to take it seriously," so they have made reimbursement contingent on the attendance at the coaching class.

Confide, advice and guide

Couples should be encouraged to make one final attempt at reconcilia-

tion, utilizing the services of a part-time counsellor, before the divorce case comes up in the Parsi Matrimonial Court, it was suggested. The views of the counsellor should also carry weight with the jury which decides the case.

The environmental study approach and the use of creative devices in teaching the subject syllabus will be imparted to 16 teachers selected from schools covered by the BPP's school counselling service. Fifty percent of the training costs of this project, Rs 3,000, will be borne by the Federation.

Students facing problems of scholastic backwardness, behavioral and adjustment difficulties, continue to receive individual and group therapy/counselling. While career guidance was offered to some students, those



with leadership potential were deputed to attend a leadership camp at Deolali organized by the Leslie Sawhny Programme for Training in Democracy.

Resurrect addicts

"Let Parsis know at regular intervals that there are (drug treatment) programs available to the community," advised Kaikobad. Undeterred by the high failure rate, the BPP has financed the cost of treatment of seven drug addicts at Bhatia Hospital and at Seva Dhan, in Bombay and Goa.

Gratifying feedback was received from one ex-addict who was treated at Goa. "Very proud of being the first Parsi" to have overcome his problem of addiction at the rehabilitation center through the BPP, he expressed his thanks in a letter: "The program is so tightly created that you cannot but

help lead a disciplined life...The one thing that is common throughout all the sessions is the fact that they are structured to build up our mental and spiritual resources...Now I know what is and was wrong with my thoughts and feelings, and why and where all my complexes sprang from... (I believe) that the Parsi Punchayet has set up a special fund to help Parsi addicts vide Russell Pinto's organization and I write to assure you that do not ever doubt that there may be something lacking in the Rehab..."

Extending the shade of the BPP umbrella to Parsis scattered throughout the world including "anjumans like Bangalore and Ahmedabad which are not members but whom we are willing to help," Golwalla said in Gujarati, "Jyan jyan vase ek Zarthoshti, tyan tyan BPP (No matter where Parsis reside, the Parsi Punchayet, Bombay, is ready to lend succor)."

Gandhi reiterated his plea to anjuman to come forward and implement such projects to the benefit of their own and neighboring anjumans. "Is it constraint of finance or organizing capacity?" he asked. Dittia sought to reassure him: "The effects may not be palpable but sooner or later, by the process of osmosis, the thinking touches others...The BPP trustees, during the course of their duties, should find time for other anjumans."

Computers, compilations, child care

To encourage interest in computers among Zoroastrian students, the Federation approved "in principle" the mode of working of the computer course outlined by Ms Silloo Commissariat, principal of the Panday Girls' High School, who was invited to the Federation meeting. The five-month course costs Rs 300 per student if a batch of 60-70 students can be ensured. Gandhi suggested altering the duration and timing of the classes such that maximum student-teacher involvement can be generated.

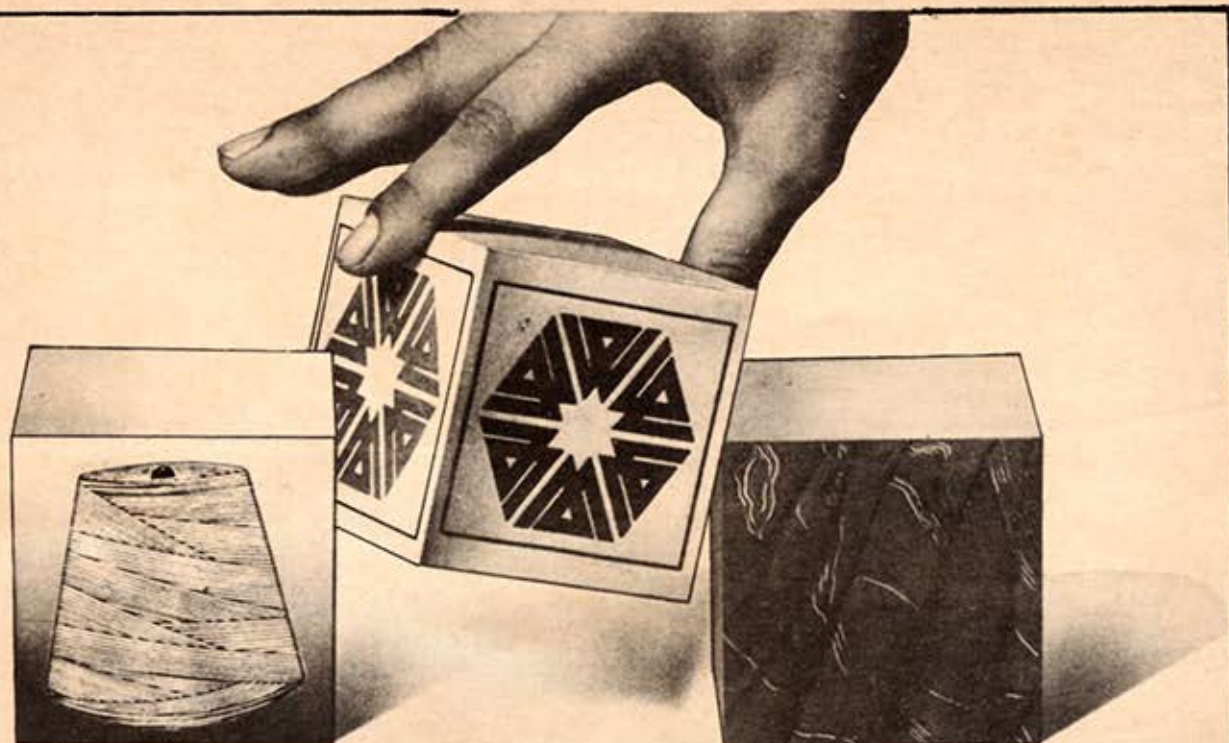
Guzder was wondering if it would be feasible to conduct a class exclusively for Zoroastrian students at the Khareghat Hall, but Commissariat ruled out that possibility seeing the half-hearted interest of Parsi students in any extracurricular activity.

For compilation of data on the historical background of the Parsis, it was proposed that the Federation appoint

a historian who could then update the material annually. The time span and the slant of the work - whether from the viewpoint of community growth or individual accomplishment - was not finalized.

Two flats in Dadar, intended for use as a day-care center where couples could leave their children under the care of competent personnel while they are at work, will be needed to provide transit shelter to families who vacate their top floor flats while the BPP builds an additional storey on their building to maximize on the floor space index available. "The ideal choice for an alternative site would be a ground floor flat as it would be more convenient from the point of view of the children," said Anklesaria.

Those attending the meeting were Mehernosh Mehta and Eruch Gai of Ahmednagar; Capt Homi Dandiwalla of Allahabad; Hoshang Baldawala of Bardoli; Baman Cama and Shavak Patel of Baroda; Minochaheer Bharcha of Bhavnagar; Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Jamsheed Kanga, Jamsheed Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Homi Ranina, Ms Gool Tata, Noshir Kaikobad and Dr Ketayun Madon of Bombay; Erach Kapadia of Broach; Adi Rabadi of Calcutta; Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Keki Gandhi, Dadi Mistry, Rusi Engineer, Farokh Rustomji and Homi Taleyarkhan of Delhi; Ardeshtir Batliwala co-opted from east zone; Aspi Irani of Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Ronny Dick of Jhansi; Minoo Belgamwala of Madras; Gp Capt Dhunjishaw Marker of Mhow; Dara Deboo of Navsari; Rustom Daroga co-opted from north zone; Dinshaw Anklesaria and Pervez Avari of Poona; Tehmtan Anklesaria of Ratlam; Nariman Balsara of Sanjan; Homi Palsetia of Saronda; Bezun Dittia, Noshir Nagarwala and Cyrus Irani of Secunderabad; Dr Sam Bhacca, Maneck Gheyara and Sorab Katpitia of Surat; Kersi Daruwala, Darayas Vevaina, Zarsis Udhawala, Pervez Bhesania and Rustom Cursetji of Thane; Soonoo Vesuna of Vesu; Dr Bahadur Jokhi, Pervez Amaria and Persi Buhariwala of Vyara-Songadh; Peshotan Nargolwala co-opted from west zone A; Rustom Anklesaria co-opted from west zone B; and Homi Mehta, Firoze Patel and Navel Mulla from Zai Bordi. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.



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The Tatory trio

Father Rumi and sons Farokh and Dinyar Tatory perform daredevil feats of strength

Roxana H. Kaka

Lying prostrate on his back, a rock-like stone weighing between 100 to 150 pounds is placed on 19-year-old Farokh Tatory's chest. His father, Rumi, then deals three consecutive blows with a hammer on the stone, breaking it.

Performing at a function held at the Cowasjee Jehangir High School, to celebrate the Kappawalla Agiary's one hundred and thirty-first birthday on October 10, 1987, Farokh, who comes from a family of performers, went on to lift a 60-pound weight above his head on his index finger. Next, one end of a thin metal rod is placed in Farokh's eye socket while Rumi holds the other end. A slight distraction in the crowd makes Farokh falter, but as he proceeds to bend it the crowd goes wild. Another steel bar is bent at an acute angle by hitting it on his biceps. But the best and most dangerous item is kept for the last. Farokh once again lies on his back and tightens his stomach muscles. Three sharp, pointed knives (which would otherwise stick into a piece of wood as demonstrated before the act) are dropped from the height of eight to 10 feet. The crowd waits with bated breath. A small boy tugs at his mother's skirt saying, "Mummy, *avé* uncle *mari jasé*? (Mummy, will uncle die now?) The knives bounce off with ease leaving a slight smear of blood as evidence.

When *Parsiana* had interviewed the Tatory family the same morning, 44-year-old Rumi Tatory, himself a TV and stage artiste, better known as Rumzi, said, "It requires sheer willpower and determination that this thing has to be done."

Muscular, as one would call him, Farokh is an ex-student of the Cowasjee Jehangir School and was "never interested in studies." He wanted to lead a rough and tough life and so this daredevilry came to him "naturally."

Naturally, because Farokh's father Rumi used to perform the same feats of strength and was even more credible than Farokh. He used to break tiles on his forearms, beer bottles on his head and lift 800 pounds on his thighs!

Rumi was introduced to his audiences by the well-known stage and television personality, the late Adi Marzban, in the program *Avo Mari Sathe* in September 1975. Sitting in the cool interior of the bedroom, Rumi reminisces, "I was — and still am — a great fan of Bruce Lee and used to read a lot of his books. I wanted to do the things that Bruce Lee did (to do pushups on one hand) and I succeeded, but with a difference. I did pushups on just one thumb!" But, when he could not get a "green signal" from his father to perform such shows, Rumi performed without his father's knowledge.

Farokh in turn got his inspiration from watching his father's shows. Quips

Mehroo, Farokh's petite, gentle mother, pointing to the Bruce Lee posters adorning a part of the wall, "If it weren't for these pictures, Farokh wouldn't have got the idea."

Sitting together in the same room is 20-year-old Dinyar Tatory. Not being interested in what "my brother and father are doing," Dinyar specializes in a different feat, spinning a *thali* (platter) with ease on each of his fingers, including his thumb. Balancing a lighted candle on the spinning *thali* he turns a full circle on his back, slithering between the legs of a person standing astride.

A second year intermediate student at the Raheja School of Arts, Bandra, Dinyar also underwent a course in typing at the Central Shorthand and Typing Institute at Tardeo and composes graphic designs on the typewriter. But how did Dinyar get the idea of the spinning *thali*? Says Dinyar with a shy grin, "First I used



Rumi breaking a stone slab on Farokh's chest Photo courtesy: Studio Suder

to spin a book. During one of the inter-house competitions in school, my house did not have any item. So they put me in and my house won. Ever since then..." he trails off.

Dinyar and Farokh have performed many shows together, since their first invitation from the club of Peico Electronics and Electricals Ltd to participate in a show at the K. C. College hall on June 7, 1986. Farokh had also performed for the Press Club, Bombay, when the chief minister of Maharashtra, S. B. Chavan was the chief guest.

The frequency of the shows varies. They may get an invitation once in two months or even twice a month. Individuals or companies may request them for an item lasting 15 to 20 minutes.

Rumi personally supervises the preparations. Special training before a show involves urine therapy "...the best tonic... A fortnight before a show, Farokh and myself, consume two to three glasses of urine daily. That gives a lot of vitality to

Above: Farokh using his eye to bend an iron rod held by Rumi

Photo courtesy: Studio Suder

Below: Dinyar spinning a thali



the body," informs Rumi.

Having met with no accidents on stage so far, they don't take any safety precautions or keep any medical aid nearby. "Only during the knife act, there are small cuts, (if the knife does not fall straight on the stomach) but I just apply spirit," says Farokh matter-of-factly.

And does Farokh have any side effects after a particular item? Only "after the act where I bend the iron rod with my eye, there is a second or two of blindness where I have to hold on to someone for support. Cuts and bruises are all part of the game but otherwise there are no serious side effects," he notes.

Mehroo disclaims all sense of fear while her son is performing, adding that if it weren't for her constant encouragement, Rumi and Farokh wouldn't have been able to do these feats. "During one of Farokh's performances, an old lady walked up to me and said, 'Tame kéva mai chhao, tamuné kai thatu nathi? (What kind of a mother are you! Don't you feel anything?)' " chuckles Mehroo.

Being present at all the shows "at any cost," Mehroo says, "In fact when my father died in 1974, we attended the *paidust* (funeral) in the evening, picked up the props and went to the show later on."

To ward off disturbance from the audience, "before I start daddy announces that only those who can bear to watch such a performance may remain seated because if there is even a single sound I get distracted. Many pregnant ladies get up and leave the auditorium," says Farokh seriously. Farokh practices at the gym for an hour every morning. He is, besides, a student of judo expert Sensei Pervez Mistry.

Thus far, nobody has challenged either Rumi's or Farokh's strength. "The audience is too stunned," says Rumi jokingly.

Besides being a Bruce Lee fan, Rumi's second love, "after my wife, is carrom. My father, Sorabji Tatary was a very good carrom player." Rumi has represented his company (Bombay Dyeing) and colony (Avabai Kashinath Colony, Tardeo) at many carrom tournaments and won many trophies. He also writes poetry in his spare time.

On the other hand, Farokh, who is an overseer at R. Bharatkumar and Co, a diamond cutting and sorting factory, likes to watch Hindi movies and is very adept at learning dialogues. Says the proud mother, "Farokh sings very well, specially qawali and sad songs." Besides this, Farokh is a good wrestler and was the runner-up at the Maharashtra state level in the 56 and 62 kilogram category. He had also won many wrestling bouts in school.

Rumi, who stepped down from the limelight ("My last show was on March 22, 1985") to make way for Farokh, is seriously thinking of making a comeback. Expressing a desire to do a show where both father and son will perform the same feats of strength side-by-side, Rumi wants to prove to the audience that what a son can do at the age of 19, a father can do at 45.

For future shows, Rumi wants to introduce two new acts amongst others for Farokh — stopping two Fiat cars with his hands (done in the open) and allowing a stone slab weighing 100 pounds, to be broken on the head. "I know it's dangerous," admits Farokh, "but I want to do it and if I'm confident, why not?"



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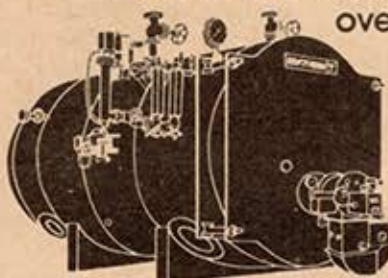
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Niloofer J. Madon

A KICK

After a lapse of three years, two all-Parsi football tournaments were held in August and September this year. The first was organized by the Sir Ness Wadia Club of Rustom Baug in which the Wadia Sports Club of Chira Bazar pipped Rustom Baug in a tie-breaker. Cusrow Baug lost in the semifinals. It was this disappointment of defeat that made footballer Hoshi Deboo of Cusrow Baug organize another All-Parsees Football Tournament over two consecutive weekends starting September 5. Deboo asked the Cusrow Baug United Sports and Welfare League for permission to hold a football meet and went about organizing the event along with friend, Homiyar Madon.

Teething troubles were, however, not noticeable at least on the day of the semifinals, played on the lush main lawn of Cusrow Baug (as were all other games in the Tournament) in front of the Karani Agiary. Unfortunately, barely 30 spectators turned out to watch the game. Most preferred to squat on the cool grass under the sweltering afternoon sun, while others, mindful of ants, opted to stand throughout the game. The lucky ones, residing in buildings surrounding the field, were able to get a panoramic view of the proceedings.

The audience made up for its small number by being overly vocal, enthusiastically applauding or passing loud remarks (mainly for the amusement of the viewers) as and when the occasion arose. A huge, brown dog who, oblivious to the intricacies of the game, barked loudly as he thought fit proved to be an added attraction on the day.

The players themselves were far too busy trying to get possession of the ball to worry about the advice, orders and remarks thrown out to them by the spectators, though at one stage they

joined in the laughter when a particularly strong kick sent the ball hurling through the air and into the inviting branches of a banyan tree in a corner of the field.

Football is usually played by two teams of 11 members each. Each team aims to score the maximum number of goals while preventing their opponents from doing so. (Owing to the small dimensions of the Cusrow Baug lawn, however, teams were restricted to nine members with three reserves.)

Though Cusrow Baug entered the finals, it was the Wadia Sports Club which again lifted the rotating trophy and was awarded a prize of Rs 501 donated by Cusrow Baug resident, Ushi Peshotan. The best player of the Tournament, Khushroo Vaid of Wadia Baug, who is also the captain of the cricket team of the Parsee Gymkhana, received Rs 101 donated by the Cusrow Baug League. Moreover, all 18 finalists received a silver plated medal at the hands of Dr Dinyar Gamadia, president of the Cusrow Baug League, and chief guest at the prize distribution. The Tournament was followed by a jam session on the last evening, attended by around 100 people.

The organization of the meet "was a headache," notes Deboo with a wry smile. "We went to all the baugs and met the presidents," to familiarize them with the event. Twelve teams filled the entry forms and "as soon as we received the forms, we made the draws," says Deboo. The 12 teams were divided into two groups - A and B - comprising six teams each. Each team had to play every other team in the group at least once. The winners in the two groups would then play each other.

Because the organizers did not want the Tournament to drag over many

weekends, each half of the game consisted of only 25 minutes for the preliminary matches and 35 minutes for the semi-finals and finals (as against the usual 45). Thus, the organizers were able to accommodate 15 games on each day of the first weekend. (The second weekend was reserved for the semifinals and finals.)

To defray the costs of holding such a tournament, an entrance fee of Rs 100 per team was charged, which took care



of three new balls, the cost of the *chuna* (lime) which is used to mark the boundaries of the playing field, and the cost of the silver-coated medals for the finalists. The nets were borrowed from Rustom Baug as was the referee, Rumie Gazdar, who oversaw the semi-finals and finals. Earlier matches were refereed by the Cusrow Baug players themselves. A disused trophy "lying with the League" was polished and constituted the prize for the winning team.

"The competition is not all that



A three-year lull in the all-Parsi football tournaments ended with Rustom Baug and Cusrow Baug holding two such events this year

in the right direction

keen. The standard of sports (in the baugs) has gone down," says Rumie Gazdar, former joint honorary secretary of the Sir Ness Wadia Club of Rustom Baug. "Though the response is good, boys are not taking that much interest."

Deboo, however, begs to differ: "It is not amateur playing. There is real fighting in the finals," but adds sadly, "People don't play with the right spirit."

Most Parsi baugs hold some sports event every year, the main aim for most being, as Deboo puts it, "ramiye — majha kariyé (let's play and have some fun)." Earlier, the Parsi Cyclists Sports Club had been organizing annually, three football tournaments at their grounds at Azad Maidan "for donkey's years," says Gazdar. The tournaments were played for three prestigious trophies — The Bapava Zaveri Football Shield, The

Wadia Cup (contended originally by only the Wadia colonies) and the Robin Shroff Trophy (the most prestigious of all).

A team winning all the three trophies would win the "triple crown." Today these tournaments are not played, as the Parsi Cyclists ground is in a sorry state. Yet most baugs hold their own all-Parsi tournaments. Ever since Rohinton Iranpur, one of the regular and respected organizers of Cusrow Baug, emigrated, there had unfortunately been a lull in the football scene, broken only when Rustom Baug held its meet under the presidency of



Facing page
(clockwise from top left) Deboo, Madon, Shroff and Gazdar

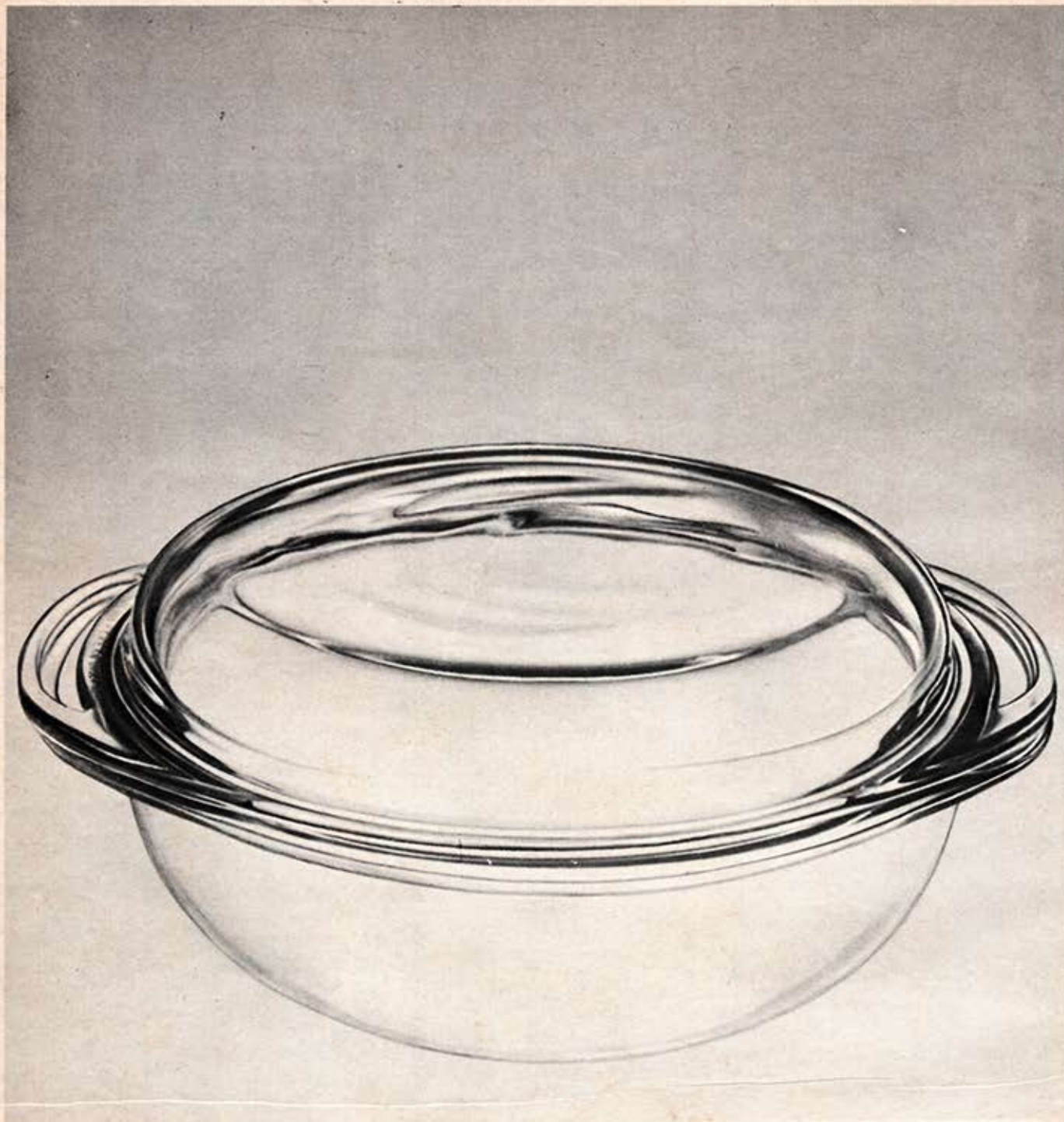
The finalists vying with each other for the ball, with the Wadia Sports Club (above) emerging as victors

Tournament photos:
Homiyar Mistry



Homiyar Shroff. Other tournaments are held regularly and may number three to four in a single year for the same event. Such tournaments increase the camaraderie between the baugs and are relatively cheaper to hold, says Gazdar.

The Cusrow Baug League now wishes to hold a floodlit football tournament which, according to Deboo, will attract a sizable crowd (since people in the Baug are always "walking around from 6 to 9 pm") and would be "fun in the evening."



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One hundred years ago, a young Parsi girl passed the final year Bachelor of Arts examination and became the first female graduate in Western India. She was Cornelia Sorabji, says Kusoom Vadgama in her book, *India in Britain*, (published in London by Robert Royce in 1984) which traces the influence and activities of Indians in Britain during the Raj.

When Sorabji entered the Deccan College at Poona in 1884, she made history, being the first and only lady to do so. College life, however, was not easy, for she had to contend with the prejudices of the other students. In an age when even secondary education for females was not universal, her aspiring to a college education attracted much criticism. "She felt keenly her isolated position among upwards of 300 men, who, with the exception of two Englishmen and a few Parsis, were all Hindus, and who naturally looked with no kindly eye upon this *rara avis* (rare person)," reported *The Graphic* of March 10, 1888.

Though subjected to annoyances, Sorabji persevered, "winning golden opinions from principals and professors alike." She was an outstanding student, received no concessions on account of her sex - she studied Latin, a notoriously difficult language - and held a scholarship each year of her course.

Taking honors each time, Sorabji was 'Hugblings scholar' in 1885, having topped the University in English, and 'Havelock prizeman' at the end of the same year, having stood first in the Deccan College in English.

Sorabji's brilliant academic achievements roused the aspirations of other young women. "Among her own sex, her example has already borne fruit," reported *The Graphic*, "two Parsi ladies and one Jewess having sought admission into the colleges at Bombay and Poona." Her influence, claimed *The Graphic*, was not restricted to



November 1887 saw Sorabji justify her professors' confidence in her by emerging as the only student from her college who succeeded in winning first class honors. She was one of only four in the entire Bombay Presidency who did so.

A Parsi Christian and the daughter of Rev Sorabji Khurshedji, honorary missionary of the Church Missionary Society of Poona, Sorabji had been encouraged by her parents throughout her academic career. Her mother, in fact, felt so strongly about female education in India that she visited England in 1886 to plead its cause.

Cornelia taught English for a year at a Gujarat University, and then in 1889, she entered Somerville College at Oxford to read law.

With her entrance into this field, Sorabji's attention was drawn to the legal needs of women. In 1904 she proposed a scheme "for providing purdah ladies with qualified legal assistance in the administration of their estates." The India Office considered her suggestion, and her appointment by the Bengal Government as "legal advisor to the purdahnashin, or women kept in zenanas (quarters reserved for the women of the household) of the Court of Wards" was reported by *The Graphic* of August 6, 1904.

By virtue of her womanhood, Sorabji was able to visit the zenanas where no male lawyer would ever have been admitted. Thus, for the first time, women living in purdah had access to legal advice which their seclusion from male visitors had hitherto made impossible.

Unfortunately, Vadgama's book traces Sorabji's career no further than 1904, and we can learn nothing about her subsequent activities. Her achievements, however, were already considerable - besides her professional attempts to better the lot of women living in purdah, her academic career had forced the public to acknowledge that women were capable of brilliant and sustained scholastic effort.

The first lady bachelor

Battling prejudice and criticism, Cornelia Sorabji became western India's first female graduate

Joy Fernandes

young women alone: "Her brave, high-souled, gentle behavior and influence cannot fail to raise the character and ability of women in the estimation of the Parsi and Hindu young men with whom she daily comes into contact."

• The final B.A. examination of

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information provided by various anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. The list of Parsi marriages was made available to us by the Bombay High Court. This first listing included the marriages registered with the High Court between July 1 and October 31. Hereafter, the marriages will be listed on a regular monthly basis.

The information gathered is not always uniform. For example, the list of Bombay deaths pertains overwhelmingly to those who were consigned to the dokhmas, and there too, though the addresses were known, the names of the family members were not. From other anjumans we have gathered names of family members but no addresses. The information largely pertains to the preceding month, yet in case of outstation anjumans we have incorporated news of happenings which may be considered dated.

Marriages of inter-community couples as well as children born of such unions are listed.

The data is being presented city-wise, the events being listed in the city where they occurred, in chronological and

alphabetical order.

Heart disease claimed 30 of the 75 Parsis who died in Bombay in October '87. The next most important killers were old age and debility (claiming 10), pneumonia (seven), cancer (five), bronchitis (four), diabetes (four) and kidney failure (three). Septicemia, arthritis, tuberculosis and hypertension claimed isolated victims. A three-month-old baby, a 25-year-old, and a 39-year-old were also lost to the community.

This breakdown of the causes of death is limited to Bombay as Parsiana has received no information on the subject from other anjumans.

In order to ensure the authenticity of the data, Parsiana only accepts information for publication if it is received from an anjuman, renowned Parsi institution, court or government authority.

When a deceased is cremated, Parsiana would appreciate if the family members could approach us directly with the information.

If readers have any information they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers will appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BOMBAY

Born

A girl to Mani and Homiyar Gowadia on October 1, 1987
A boy to Benaifer and Keki Amroli; October 2
A boy to Parizad and Sharukh Calcuttawalla; October 4
A boy to Kerbanoo and Rayomand Hira; October 5
A boy to Thrity and Yezdi Shroff; October 5
A boy to Arnavaz and Shyam Wadia; October 5
A girl to Parvin and Jawahar Havewala; October 6
A girl to Hira and Zabir Todiwalla; October 10
A boy to Sanobar and Kelly Surty; October 11
A girl to Meher and Vinod Mody; October 12
A girl to Havovi and Kersi

Sethna; October 13

A girl to Armaity and Homi Antia; October 14
A girl to Armaity and Zersis Irani; October 14
A boy to Purnoor and Burzis Taraporewalla; October 15
A girl to Pervin and Fershid Achhadwala; October 16
A girl to Roshan and Noshir Balsara; October 16
A boy to Roxana and Farookh Mehta; October 20
A girl to Frany and Eddie Palia; October 20
A boy to Aarti and Baukam Vakil; October 20
A girl to Meher and Khushru Patel; October 21
A boy to Diana and Darayus Vazifdar; October 22
A boy, Yazad, to Tanaz and Dinyar Engineer; October 24

A boy to Combin and Percy Khambatta; October 24
A girl to Zenobia and Kersi Lakdawalla; October 25
A boy, Yohan, to Zarin and Viraf Godrej; October 26
A girl to Khurshid and Minoo Sarkari; October 27
A boy to Banoo and Cyrus Khambatta; October 28
A boy, Farzad, to Jeroo and Homi Medhora; October 28
A girl, Shara, to Shirin and Meherwanji Batliboi; October 29
A girl to Niloffer and Farhid Palia; October 29
A boy to Yasmine and Daraius Sidhwa; October 31

Married

Kashmira Soli Mistry and Fersos Sohrab Daruwala of Madras; May 7
Meher Kersasp Wadia and Tehmul Sorab Patel; May 12
Gulshan Rustomji Chivellwalla and Homi Dinshaw Gae; May 14
Amy Manchershaw Chaina and Jimmy Jehangir Banker; May 28
Amy Pestonji Mistry and Homi Ratansha Boga; May 29
Armiti Tahmuras Aryanfar and Shahzad Rustom Amuyan; June 30
Jasmine Soli Patel and Shapoor Rusi Nargolwalla; July 6
Nergish Faredun Irani (Shokrekhdoda) and Kaiomarz Gustad Kermani; July 9
Havovi Dady Mistry and Burjis Nariman Shroff; July 10
Freny Dara Mevawalla and Shapur Darius Balsara; July 12
Aban Homi Dubash and Rusi Pestonji Karanjia; July 18
Khurshid Kaikhushru Madan of Nagpur and Dhan Neriosang Tata; July 26
Farida Soli Karbhari and Shyamak Ramyar Tata; August 6
Mani Vicaji Meherhomji and Pervez Nusserwanji Surkari; August 9
Mahnaz Sohrab Kadhodayan and Keyomars Sahbehram Yazdani; August 12
Rashna Fakirji Gandhi and Adil Kershasp Ghadiali; August 13
Firozi Eruch Elavia and Fali

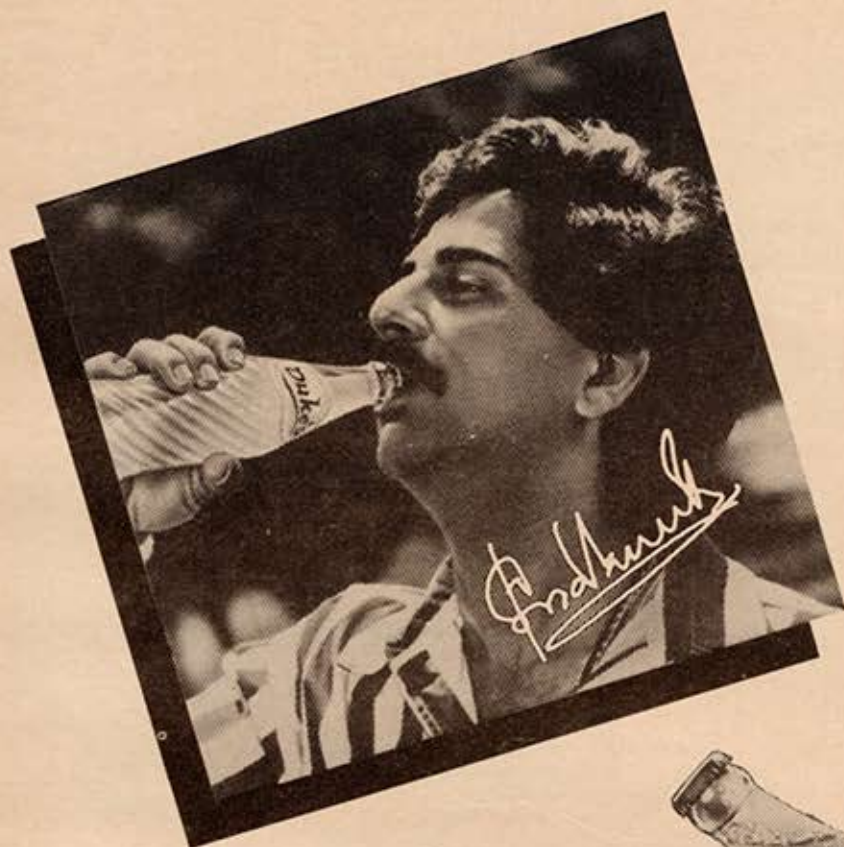
Darabshaw Mistry; August 16
Farida Faramroz Dhanidaduna and Percy Rohinton Daruwala of Jaipur; August 25
Mahrukh Rusi Kaikobad and Sarosh Godrej Rustom of Canada; September 14
Veera Maneck Bharda of Hubli and Sharukh Bahadur Engineer; September 21
Khurshid Parvez Fitter and Khodaram Faredoon Zandbaf; September 22
Farida Homi Avari and Rohinton Limji Bhathena; September 27
Katty Ratanshaw Bhathena and Homi Rustomji Wadia; September 29
Hufresh Rohinton Munshi and Vispi Homi Balaporia; October 3
Tinaz Firoz Shroff and Farrokh Homi Balaporia; October 3
Kashmira Bomi Sholapurwalla and Sarosh Tehemtian Dubash; October 3
Kashmira Faredoon Chithiwalla and Cyrus Khurshedji Anklesaria; October 4
Anahita Nariman Irani and Aspi Merwan Jarrah; October 6
Roxana Jal Bhathena and Mehernosh Homi Khushrushai; October 11
Parin Khodayar Farhadi and Shahzad Hooshang Bakht; October 26

Died

Bachamai Jehangirji Contractor (86), residing at 326 Karim Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; on September 30
Aloo Nariman Davier (79), 31 Tulips, 71 Napean Sea Rd, 400006; September 30
Shirinbai Nawroji Driver (99), Pradyu Sadan, Ambedkar Rd, 400019; September 30
Pochaji Nuserwanji Ganjia (82), Dubash Bldg, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; October 1
Pervez Phirojshah Mehta (72), C/o Shanti Lobo, Vir Sambhaji Ngr, L.B.S. Marg, Mulund, 400080; October 1
Tehmina Kharsnedji Driver (80), Dr Daji Bldg, 25-A Station Rd, Mahim, 400016; October 2

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Lemonade**



Artificially flavoured. Contains no fruit juice or pulp. 300 ml.

Banoobai Faramroz Karbari (78), Cawasji Dhanjishah Bg, S.V. Rd, Goregaon, 400062; October 2
Cooverbai Dinshawji Tachakara (88), Albless Widows' Chawl, Room 8, Marzban Clny, 400008; October 2
Dinamai Hormusji Mistry (Rudina) (78), Burjor Bldg, Wadia St, 400034; October 3
Khorshed Phirozshah Kharas (90), Pitruhhaya, U.K.Narrange Marg, New Gamdevi, 400007; October 4
Piloo Shavak Vesuna (65), 781 Readymoney Bldg, Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 4
Nariman D. Bharucha (72), M-9 Bharucha Bg, S.V. Rd, Andheri, 400058; October 5
Ratanshaw Navroji Contractor (73), 125 Cumballa Hill, 400036; October 5
Navroji Burjorji Kadodwala (84), F.S. Parukh Dharamshala, 34 Hughes Rd, 400007; October 5
Rustom Merwanji Kateli (70), Palamkot Hall, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 5
Tehmina Rattanshah Langrana (85), P-14 Nowroze Bg, Lalbaug, 400012; October 5
Piroja Framroze Pastakia (86), 102 Pushpanjali, S.V. Rd, Santacruz (W), 400054; October 5
Mervan Sohrabji Doctor (83), Batliwala Villa, 44-C Sleater

Rd, 400007; October 6
Jamshed Rustomji Patel (75), 43 Trinity St, Machliwala Chwl, Dhobitalao, 400002; October 6
Pheroze Dinshaw Bamboat (65), Asha Sadan, A-301 Anand Ngr, Vasai (W); October 7
Dhunmai Jijibhoy Khan (63), C-8 Godrej Bg, Napean Sea Rd, 400026; October 7
Pilamai A. Mevawalla (80), 2-4 Lady Ratan Tata Block, Turner Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; October 7
Ratansha Rustomji Mistry (63), P-26 Nowroze Bg, Lalbaug, 400012; October 7
Dadiba Sorabji Baria (64), C-19 New Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; October 8
Mani Sorabji Khambatta (83), 33 Altamount Rd, 400026; October 8
Tehmi Tehmuras Contractor, sister of late Mani Feroze Surveyor, Nergish Sarosh Rustomji and Noshir Romer; October 8 (cremated)
Navaraji Bomanji Variava (75), 9-6 Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; October 10
Darabsha Dosabhai Contractor (82), Alamai Mistry Bldg, Parel, 400012; October 11
Homi Dinshawji Debara (65), 4 Burjor Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; October 11
Mehernosh Minoo Pochkhanawalla (39), Saker

Apts, Sir Pochkhanawalla Rd, Worli, 400018; October 11
Nariman Kaikhushru Kotwal (65), 682-A Kapadia Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 12
Mani Dadabhai Satarawalla (59), 727-A Wadia Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 12
Tehmina Merwanjee Bhungara (82), 6 H.P. Apts, 45 Napean Sea Rd, 400026; October 13
Dinbai Phirozshaw Barsiwalla (91), Harganga Mhl, A Block, Khodadad Circle, Dadar, 400014; October 14
Rati Devitre (68), Bhaskar Mans, Sitladevi Te hple Rd, Mahim, 400016; October 14
Dhunmai Homi Doctor (92), 16 Dubash Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; October 14
Aloo Soli Karanjia (60), Namdar Hse, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; October 14
Pestonji Dhanjibhai Kodla (80), 20 Chhatrawalla Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; October 14
Khorshed Ardeshir Pardiwala (64), Silver Gul, Opp Kirti College, Prabhadevi, 400028; October 14
Jerbai Nusserwanji Sethna (84), Petit Block No 3, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; October 14
Mota Pestonji Bharucha (74), Hormazd Mans, Opp Bhatia

Hosp, Tardeo, 400007; October 15
Phiroz Khodadad Irani (52), Vithal Niwas, Room 14, Jacob Circle, 400011; October 15
Allamai Pirozshah Masani (80), 11 Ali Manzil, N. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; October 15
Sorabji Rustomji Mirza (92), 14 Lovedale, Colaba, 400005; October 15
Meherbai Faramroze Nava (88), Vera Hse, Dhobitalao, 400002; October 15
Nargesh Rustomji Birdy (82), 611 Pateti Blocks, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; October 16
Shirin Armin Dubash (three months), 51 Forjett St, 400036; October 16
Minocher Jamshed Homawalla (67), Rothfield St, Parsiawad Fort, Broach; October 16
Rustom Shorab Kotwal (86), 40 Strand Hse, Colaba, 400005; October 16
Tehmul Dinshawji Mandroina (86), 8 Rajmahal, Veer Nariman Rd, 400020; October 16
Minocher Jamshedji Palkhiwala (73), 5 Cawas Turner Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; October 16
Faramroze Edulji Kakalia (79), 2-6 Uranwala Mans, Parel, 400012; October 17
Adil Eruch Bokdawala (25), 668 Desai Bldg, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; October 18
Pestonji Bujorji Bapuji Driver (72), 43 Dhobilala Hse, Trinity St, 400002; October 18

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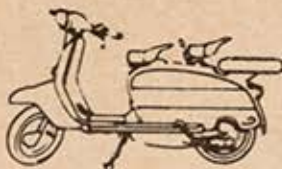
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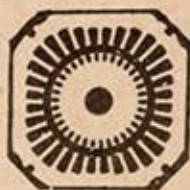
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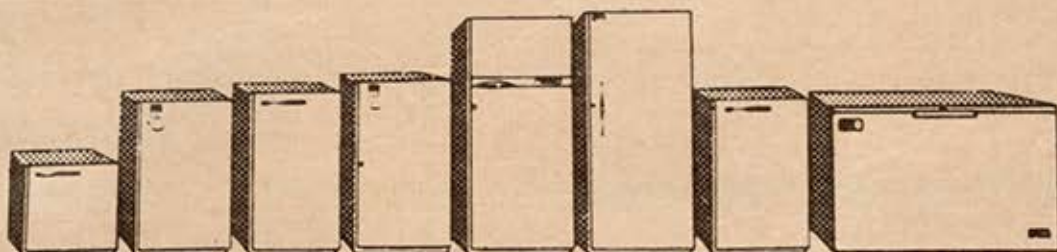
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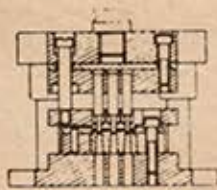
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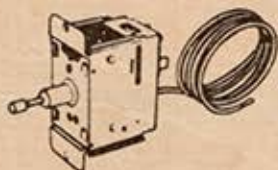
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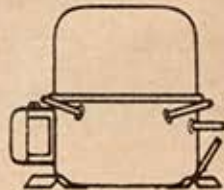
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Rustom Boman Sandalian (60), Khosavari Est, 44 S.K. Bole Rd, Dadar, 400028; October 18
Sirin Sorab Boyce (76), Boyce Hse, 15 Vatcha Ghandhy Rd, 400007; October 19
Nariman Fardunji Balsara (71), 3/9 Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; October 20
Aimai Hormasji Bamboat (96), Bolingkar's Hse, Turner Rd, Bandra, 400050; October 20
Sunabai Dosabhai Dhabhar (89), Patel Bldg, Room 12, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; October 20
Dosabhoy Jalbhoy Dubash (87), 25 Station Ter, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; October 20
Daulat Homi Bodhanwalla (74), 10-10 Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; October 21
Tehmuras Bapuji Todiwalla (72), 9-1 Rustom Bg, Byculia, 400027; October 21
Homi Gayomard Bilimoria (58), 6 Cooper Bldg, Marzban Clny, Dr Nayar Rd, 400011; October 22
Maneckbai Pirojsha Shroff (75), Chothia Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007;

October 22
Dinshaw Pirojshaw
Dady Burjor (81), Sorab Manor, 6 Walton Rd, Electric Hse, Colaba, 400039; October 25
Jamshed Dinshaw Irani (70), Ketty Ngr, Bldg 1, Dahanu Rd, Dist Thane; October 25
Khorshed Bahadur Umrigar (68), 64-A Meherzin, Colaba, 400005; October 25
Tehmtan Rustomji Daruvala (80), C/o Amy P. Ghista, Ashley Hse, Colaba, 400005; October 26
Khorshed Meherwanji Aga (83), 512 R.P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; October 27
Jehangirji Fakirji Golwalla (83), Vasaigera Hse, 146 Modi St, Fort, 400001; October 27
Jerbanoo Naswanji Wadia (80), Sneha Sadan, 10 N. Gamadia Rd, 400026; October 27
Freny Jimmy Malegamwala (58), Malegamwala Bldg, No 1/23, M.M. Chhotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; October 28
Darashah Kuverji Bejonji Sethna (82), Utopia, 56 St Andrews Rd, Bandra, 400050; October 28
Dossabhoy Dinshaw Bamji (76), M-4 Palm Springs, Cuffe

Parade, Colaba, 400005; October 29
Ketayun Shapoor Fitter (39), X-31/10, Godrej Clny, Vikhroli (E), 400079; October 30
Behramji Kavasji Shekari (88), Rajni Mhl, Room 608, 91-95 Tardeo, 400034; October 31

CALCUTTA

Born

A boy, Zubin, to *Daulat and Ivan Michael*; September 23
 A boy, Zubin, to *Phiroza and Burjor Medhora*; September 30

Died

Piroja Savaksha Postwala (78), mother of Dolly, Mani, Bahadur and Jal; October 7
Sheran Pheroze Dalal (84), mother of Dr Hoshang, Eruch, Dr Zarin Dadina and late Dadi; October 12
Banubai Barjorji Deboo, mother of Dhunmai, Kersasp, Maneck and Viroo Medhora; October 16

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Married

Mandana Mobedshahi, daughter of Houshang and

Manijeh and Homayoun Dowlatzadeh, son of Cyrus and Rouhangiz; August 22

JAMSHEDPUR

Died

Ardeshir Khodayar Irani (69), husband of Freni, father of Vistasp and Shahrukh; August 8
Dinshaw Cawasji Wadia (65), husband of late Ketty, father of Perin and Yasmin; August 22

LONDON

Married

Dhun Tata and Jonathan Ward; September 26

MADRAS

Born

A boy to *Farzana and Dr Behram Irani*; October 21

Married

Shaheen Irani of Poona and *Noshir Mehli Irani*; October 3

RUPERT, IDAHO

Born

A girl, *Natasha*, to *Dr and Ms Homi Vania*; September 3

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READERS' FORUM

continued from page 9

the dilemma to choose between cultures and religions.

In the entire creation of nature, except among humans, there is hardly any evidence of interbreeding however physically compatible the species may be. Even different flowers growing in close proximity rarely pollinate each other naturally, if of a different kind. Thus a rose remains a rose.

The argument that all human beings are the same is not only false but an insult to the creation of nature, and worse, the Creator. Not even a single fingerprint in the universe is the same. The genius of creation lies in its multi-fold differences in shape, color, texture, thinking, views, religious beliefs, culture, traditions, etc.

At a seminar held in Holborn a few years ago by the Zoroastrian community of UK where speakers and scholars from all over the world were invited, a lady demographer from America, Dr Chatterji, stated that five percent of Zoroastrian men and 11 percent of the women marry outside the community. I do not know the current percentages,

but what was made quite clear by the lady who has dedicated her entire life to the study of the Zoroastrian people is that the only single factor that can destroy and diminish them is intermarriage.

The danger to the Zoroastrian community today is not just the phenomenon of intermarriage but the imposition on the majority of the community to change the rules and doctrines of our culture and religion in order to accommodate the selfish needs of some parents and champions of intermarriage. If we disturb, alter or eradicate a part or any of our doctrines, traditions, religious beliefs or practices, we will destroy the entire infrastructure of our very existence and suffer total loss of heritage. If our forefathers had pursued or indulged in intermarriages, perhaps we would not have existed as Zoroastrians at all.

The Jews who suffered a similar dilemma many years ago were wise. They directed the reformists to form their own club with their own rules so that these adverse elements would not destroy the original base of the Jewish culture, tradition or religion.

Has the time come for us to separate the reformer, who may accept intermarriage, from the preserver who would not, so that both may survive in peace and harmony?

ERVAD DARIUS N. SETHNA
Middlesex, UK

Iran League appeal

The Iran League has decided to start Persian and Gujarati classes and will publish booklets such as *Ten Easy Lessons on Zoroastrianism*. A booklet on the salient features of the navjote ceremony will also be published. Many more elocution, *Shah Namah*, essay writing and musical competitions will be conducted.

All these plans need funds. We therefore appeal to Zoroastrian individuals, trusts and organizations for financial help by way of donations.

Cheques may be drawn in favor of "Iran League" and forwarded to Navsari Building, second floor, 240, Dr Dadabhoy Naoroji Road, Fort, Bombay 400001.

Sir JAMSETJEE JEJEEBHAY
President, Iran League

Edited by Niloofer J. Madon

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 13

training in democracy," has honored Astad D. Gorwala with the John Dalvi Award at the annual function held on May 15, 1987, at the Taj Mahal Hotel, notes the 1987 issue of *Pulse*, the newsletter of the LSP.

"Though he is too eminent a person to be given any award, (the) LSP would like to cite him as a patriot-citizen par excellence, worthy of emulation, deep respect and gratitude, one who truly symbolizes, in flesh and spirit, the basic tenets of his faith - good thoughts, good words, good deeds," noted the scroll presented to him at the award giving ceremony on May 15, 1987 when LSP chairman, Nani Palkhivala announced the winners. The other recipients of the award were Girdhar Vaswani and Prabhakar Lale, notes the newsletter.

The citation to Gorwala further amplified, "Named after the Zoroastrian angel of righteousness...(Astad) has gone through life as a kind of happy warrior - fighting for honesty, integrity and common sense...He was one of

the most outstanding members of the Indian Civil Service...

"Gorwala's innings as editor and publicist began immediately after his retirement from the Civil Service. His devotion to public good and writing did not allow him to retire till recently, when his age and physical disability took (their) toll. Through his highly regarded journal, *Opinion*, he upheld values and norms in public life and criticized the high and mighty without fear or favor. This was evident in the way he fought censorship during the dark days of the Emergency.

"Yet everyone who knows him would testify to his innate humility, charm, chivalry, grace and sense of humor..."

Consultation on crowns

Leading Hong Kong hair stylist Ms Nergish Wadia was in Bombay from November 8-30, "to discuss professional hints to help hairdressers bring out the best in people (and to) help interested customers to choose proper style, color or perm," notes *The Indian Post* of October 11, 1987.

She was to offer free consultation to both men and women on hair care - on how to find and keep one's ideal hairdresser and on the role one can play in preventing disasters - at Nalini and Yasmin, a hair saloon at Pali Hill, Bandra, notes the *Mid-Day* of November 12, 1987.

Wadia has studied hairdressing at the Vidal Sassoon Academy and the Elysee Ecole D'Esthetique Institute De Beaute Ltd. At present, she is the manageress of Andre Norman, one of the top saloons in Hong Kong, adds the *Mid-Day* report.

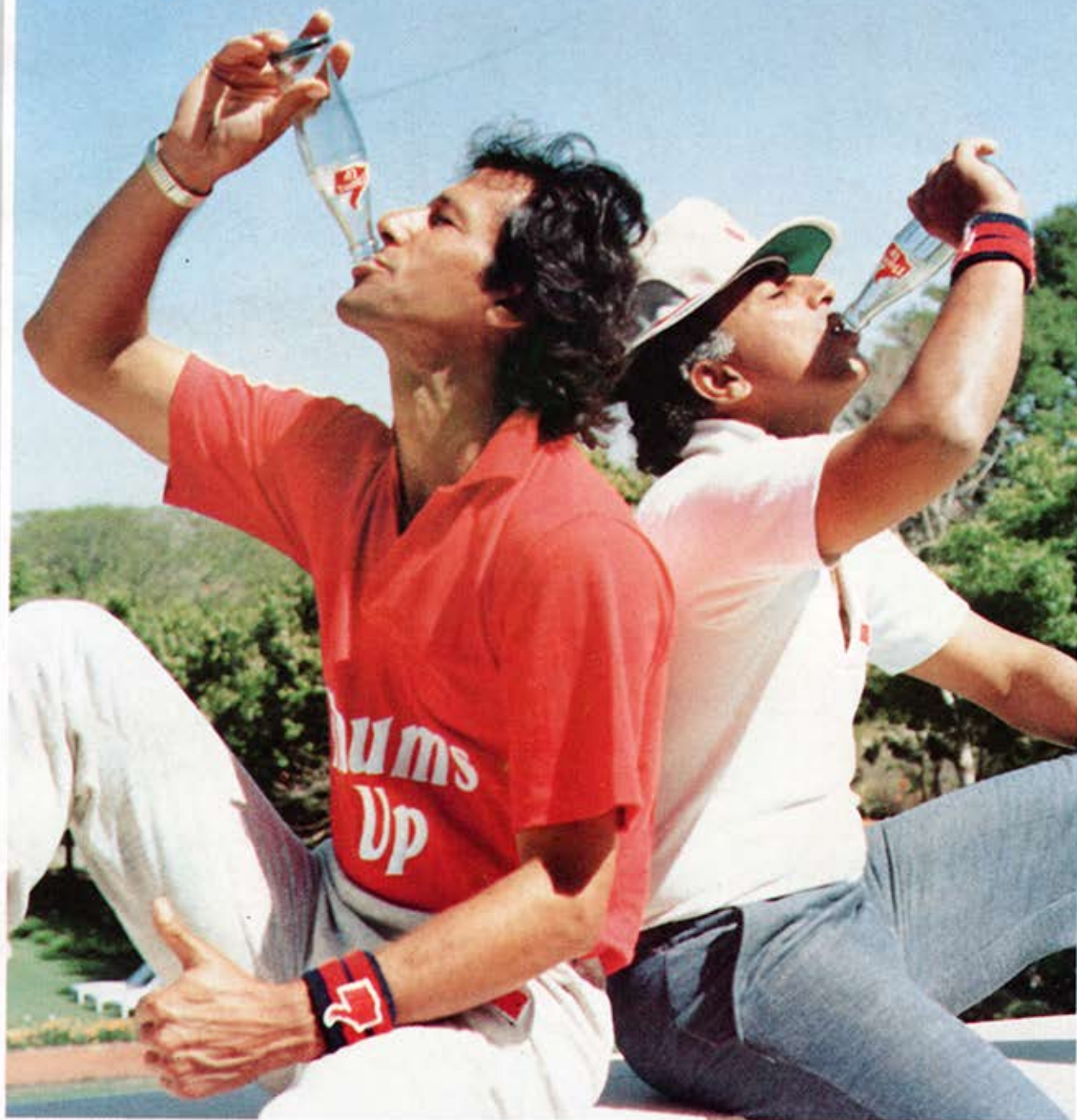
SPOTLIGHT

Lieutenant General Faridoon Noshir Bilimoria has taken over command of a corps in the western sector, notes the *Indian Express* of October 22, 1987.

Minoo Fardoonji Devlaliwalla has been appointed director of special services, Home Guards, Maharashtra State, notes the *Indian Express* of October 13, 1987.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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