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JULY 1988 Rs 7



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Parsiana

July 1988
Volume 11 Number 1

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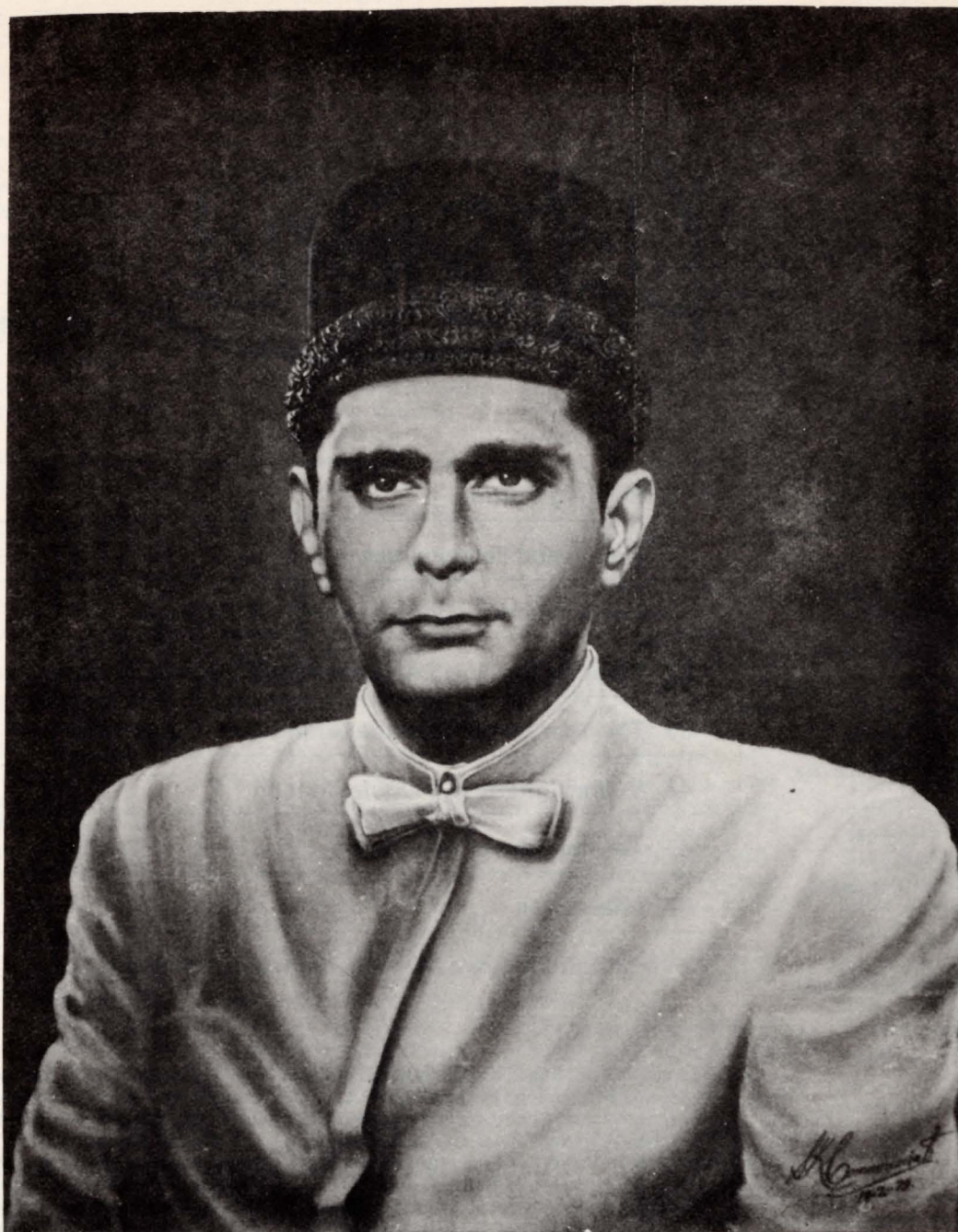
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Cover: Photo of Vyara Dar-e-Meher taken at twilight

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In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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

"The Federation and..."

I refer to "The Federation and the farmers" (*Parsiana*, May 1988) wherein it is stated that I suggested the use of the term "din-yaar" instead of the term paramobed. I have not done so. I have checked this with some of those present. I cannot make any suggestion unless it is discussed and approved by the paramobed committee. Nothing of that sort has happened.

PESHOTAN NARGOLWALA

Parinaz Toddywalla replies

I regret having attributed the word "din-yaar" to Peshotan Nargolwala as he states that he did not suggest it. It is possible that during the discussion on this subject, the term may have been used by him though it may not have originated from him. Mr Nargolwala, however, did suggest the use of the term "mobed-yaar."

"A cohesive calendar"

Dr (Ms) S.S. Sopariwala has made an admirable suggestion ("A cohesive calendar," *Parsiana*, April 1988) that from the year 1992, when the Fasli, Shehenshahi and Kadmi calendars will all observe Hormazd *roj* on March 21, it will be the most appropriate time for all Parsis to switch over to the Fasli calendar. Such an opportunity, to fall in line with the ancient Zoroastrian and Iranian calendar, will not come again for a long time.

It is commonly accepted by all that the present Shehenshahi and Kadmi calendars are quite inaccurate as they make no provision for the leap year day which occurs every fourth year. As a result, since our arrival in India around 785 AD, we have fallen back by about 300 days. Consequently, all our ghambars and religious days are completely out of gear. Prophet Zarathushtra's birthday, which is truly in March, we now celebrate in August. To achieve cohesiveness and oneness, this is the most opportune occasion.

Our high priests should give a bold lead in this and support the suggestion; so also the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, in order to achieve maximum unanimity. The printers of Parsi calendars should also be persuaded to give the Fasli calendar the pride of place from 1992 and add the dates of the other two calendars in a smaller type for those who wish to adhere to them.

The extra day, every fourth year, can be given a suitable name and made a day of special prayers. "Avarad Salgah" has been one of the names suggested in the past.

N.H. VAJIFDAR
Ootacamund

"The compassionate priest"

I was moved by some of the statements in Arnavaz Mama's article "The compassionate priest" (*Parsiana*, April 1988), particularly regarding the navjotes performed by the late Dastur saheb at Bangalore and the indignity heaped on him for the same. Reading the article along with a short but interesting clarification in the same issue from an orthodox scholar like Faribourz Nariman, I just fail to understand what some *dharmarakshaks* (protectors of our religion) are trying to achieve by creating needless controversies.

If a scholar like Nariman can cite with reference that Dastur Kookadaru had performed juddin navjotes over a century ago, on what grounds can one create a storm in connection with such navjotes today? Many Parsis aver that Kookadaru was a saint who could perform miracles. Then why penalize or impeach 'the compassionate priest' for doing what Kookadaru did in 1882? Will those involved in the character assassination of the departed high priest have the courage to answer this simple question squarely?

MS RATI D. MARFATIA

In the last paragraph of "The compassionate priest" (*Parsiana*, April 1988) it was rightly pointed out that Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji "made Zoroastrianism a religion to reckon with on the international platform."

Next to Dastur Framroze Bode, it was Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji who had spent much of his life in enlightening the whole world and especially England, Europe and America about our prophet Zarathushtra, his divine message and the great religion that he preached almost 8,000 years ago. It is entirely due to his sincere efforts that the whole world has now realized the importance and greatness of Zarathushtra and his gospel of truth, light and happiness.

Dr MINOCHER K. CONTRACTOR
Surat

"The Unworthy Israps"

I read with interest your interview with Rignahej Letap and "Plans for survival" by Homi B. Minocher-Homji (*Parsiana*, March 1988). The theme of both the articles is the same - will the Parsis learn from their mistakes and go forward or continue on the same road towards extinction.

The time has come for all right-thinking Zoroastrians to speak out strongly in favor of reforms. Zoroastrianism is a universal religion and cannot be shackled within our small community. It is our duty to spread the light of Ahura Mazda throughout the world.

R.J. DARUKHANAWALA

"No kidding"

I am grateful that the activity book and reader published recently by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman was reviewed by some-

Dear Zoroastrians
I wish you, your entire family,
relatives and friends (irrespective
of caste, creed or colour)
a very happy and prosperous

NAVROZE MUBARAK

and many more to come
with a very long, healthy and
successful life, full of joy and peace

With kind regards
Yours sincerely

Noshirwan F. Cowasjee



**ALL ZOROASTRIANS
&
ALL NON-ZOROASTRIANS
(married to Zoroastrians)
are cordially invited to
BROOKWOOD ZOROASTRIAN CEMETERY
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to attend our
FARVARDIAN PRAYERS**

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FREEDOM IS EXTINGUISHED,
IT NEVER LIGHTS AGAIN

21 Leonard Court, Edwardes Square, London W8 6NL
Wednesday, 29th June 1988

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Farvardian Jashan At Brookwood

With the blessings of the Almighty and the departed souls of our dear ones, the Farvardian Jashan will be held at the Zoroastrian Cemetery at Brookwood, in front of the grave of the late Jehangirji D. Moos, past president and trustee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Inc) London.

Prayers

Prayers will be recited by ladies and gentlemen as in the past.

Sandalwood and loban

Sufficient quantity of sandalwood and loban will be made available for this Jashan or the Prayers.

Attendance

Last year, despite very short notice of about 7 days and poor weather forecast, 59 ladies and gentlemen – Zoroastrians and Non-Zoroastrians (married to Zoroastrians) – attended the Farvardian Jashan at Brookwood.

Please inform all your relations/friends (both Zoroastrians and Non-Zoroastrians married to Zoroastrians) about our Farvardian Jashan.

Facilities

Please bring as many chairs as possible for the elders and those who are disabled.

Please offer space in your car(s) to those who are prevented from attending due to transport difficulties but are most eager to participate in our Farvardian Jashan.

Toilet facilities have been arranged.

Snacks and tea/coffee will be provided to all participants without any charge or obligation.

“Right of worship”

Freedom of Thoughts – Freedom of Words – Freedom of Deeds – allow all Zoroastrians and Non-Zoroastrians married to Zoroastrians – WORLDWIDE – to attend our Farvardian Jashan at the Zoroastrian Cemetery at Brookwood on Sunday the 11th September 1988 at noon.

With kind regards
Yours truly

Noshirwan F. Cowasjee

Request: Please confirm to reach me not later than 5th September 1988 (if possible) to provide adequate facilities for all attending our “Farvardian Jashan” – Many thanks.

one who knows something about work-books and children ("No kidding," *Parsiana*, March 1988). I am even more grateful to Mr Rogers for taking the trouble to interview my sister, Paireen Lalkaka, and then writing such an excellent critical review.

The reason why we did not introduce snakes and ladders in the activity book was because our religious texts lump cockroaches, snakes, lizards, crocodiles, alligators, etc as *krafts* – the destructive creations of Ahriman. It would not have done to introduce snakes in the little book.

As for having a page where children could join dots and make a word or an image, there was just no space for it. I wish we could have used more colors, plus that shiny art paper which takes on vivid colors so well. But alas, we had to do everything on a shoestring and keep the price low to cater for children in orphanages and those coming from poverty-stricken homes.

My greatest reward was a postcard written in pencil from a seven-year-old girl from the Petit orphanage stating, "Aunty, my bed number is ... Please be sure and come to see me when you come to Bombay. I sleep with your Zarathushtra under my pillow..."

Ms PILOO JUNGALWALLA
New Delhi

Next of kin?

The army authorities have approached me to help in tracing the next of kin of IC 1857 Late Capt D.D. Mistry, MVC, who is known to have served with an artillery regiment. He was killed in action on December 15, 1948 during the Jammu and Kashmir opera-

Mistry: died defending India



tions for which he was awarded the Mahavir Chakra.

The last known addresses of his relations are Mr E.D. Mistry (brother), 86/1, The Mall, Simla 171001 and Dr S.S. Master, K.E. Sanatorium, Simla Hills (Himachal Pradesh).

I have been informed by the army authorities that a letter addressed to Mr E.D. Mistry has been returned with the remark that the addressee had passed away. The date of demise has not been stated. There is no response from Dr Master.

If any of your readers, particularly senior retired service officers, have any information, I shall be grateful if they would contact me at the Tata Iron and Steel Co Ltd, Jamshedpur 831001.

Brig R.J. HEERJEE (Retd)
Jamshedpur

Pestonjee

I must say I expected Vijaya Mehta's *Pestonjee* to be a bit dreary and was pleasantly surprised, although it was a depressing movie.

Naseeruddin Shah, Anupam Kher and Shabana Azmi are consummate actors accurately projecting the Parsi personality. There was Naseeruddin, a fine, athletic type in real life, playing a staid, slow-moving, stolid Parsi, complete with nervous afflictions like twitching eyelids and always pulling at his trousers. Let's hope none of the community vigilantes decide to make a noise about the fact that he is shown praying, wearing a sudreh and kusti. And how well he mimics the disgruntled nature of the members of the community. (Remember, it was a Parsi – Dadabhai Naoroji – who first complained to the British, demanding swaraj!)

The Parsis got a chance to see their beloved late Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji performing the religious rites. The typical Parsi atmosphere is created not only by vision but by sound also. At one moment you can hear in the background the call of "*khara mora paneer* (a kind of cottage cheese, made in little baskets, once sold by street vendors)." The modern generation hasn't even heard of this mouth-watering item.

And what a relief to hear nice piano music in the background instead of that ever-present shehnai. The language is a bit of a hodgepodge though: Parsi Hindi, Bawaji Gujarati and the King's English so pure that probably even the English have forgotten it.

I also liked that bit where Naseerud-

din Shah is following his friend in a taxi and the driver is suspicious. Not a bit like today's taxi drivers who move the wheel so nonchalantly and don't bother about what is happening in their own backseat.

It goes to Ms Mehta's credit that she used a real Parsi house for her setting – none of those typical halls with two staircases, formica-covered stuff everywhere and elaborate, plaster-of-Paris molded ceilings. In *Pestonjee*, it is rosewood furniture, mosaic floors, jade and china vases...

And last but not the least, there is the movie location around the Cathedral School, which takes you back 50 years in time, when Bombay was really *sunder* (beautiful) with nice broad roads, washed twice a day, along which one walked without being pushed around by crowds.

All said and done, you even come out feeling a bit sad that such a nice, decent community may not be around to see the twenty-first century.

ZEND M. ZEND

Understand rituals

The navjote ceremony, today, is treated more as an occasion for eating and merrymaking rather than as a religious, holy ceremony. With great sorrow and disappointment I observed at one navjote ceremony that the parents of the child whose navjote was to be performed did not have a sudreh-kusti on them that very day! How then does one expect children to grow up to respect and wear the holy sudreh-kusti when they see their parents not following the path shown by our religion? Most children today do not even know what prayers to recite while performing the kusti ritual, either before or after the navjote. And the parents don't think it essential to teach them. In such a case, the very meaning of the navjote is lost.

Ours is the greatest religion on earth, and what our so-called orthodox Parsis follow today are not just "false beliefs." If only one tried to seek the hidden meaning in every custom rather than dismiss it as a meaningless ritual!

Today, what our community needs is not more Parsis, but Parsis who would understand and follow the basic principles of our religion.

Ms SANAEA ANTIA
Punjab

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Events and Personalities

Annexe near completion

"Except for the plumbing and the electricity work, everything else is complete," says Ervad Rustom Panthaki, principal of the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa on the construction of the Madressa annexe which is expected to be finished by September 1988. The painting is scheduled to start after the monsoons.

The Madressa, which faces the Five Gardens in Dadar, houses 55 youngsters ranging in age from six to 23, and gives them religious and secular education simultaneously. Realizing the shortage of space for the boys' physical and extracurricular activities, "there was no option but to erect an annexe" to the original two-storeyed structure, notes an appeal brochure. The annexe facilities will be extended to children, women and old people, and to non-Parsis too, informs Farrokh Sidhwa, trustee-in-charge and honorary secretary of the Madressa.

The water-proofing of the terrace is sound. "The monsoons will not affect anything," says Sidhwa.

The main attraction of this 12,731 square-foot building is the assembly hall on the first floor, to be named after Mancherji Joshi, the founder of the Dadar Parsi Colony. The 1,800 square-foot hall, designed to seat

around 250 people, will be used for activities such as music classes, drama rehearsals, aerobics, yoga, etc "without being a nuisance to the neighbors." The hall will also be available for the performance of family jashans, navjotes and marriages, but "no eating and drinking will be allowed."

Built in the backyard of the Madressa where originally stood the kitchen, the ground floor of the annexe has a kitchen, the servants' quarters, a storeroom, and a medicare room where doctors can examine the residents of the Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony. On the second floor will be lodged the library, with books mainly on religion and philosophy (to be obtained by way of donations), plus a five-room dormitory for the Madressa students. Teachers, along with their families, will stay on the third floor where two big rooms will each provide for a large family while the three small rooms will each house a couple or a bachelor. All the rooms have a kitchen and attached baths and toilets.

"The Madressa has no corpus. It is run purely on donations. So we need more funds to build a corpus," explains Panthaki. In addition to the estimated cost of construction of Rs 35 lakhs, approximately a corpus of Rs 15 lakhs is required to meet the institution's outgoings and overheads.

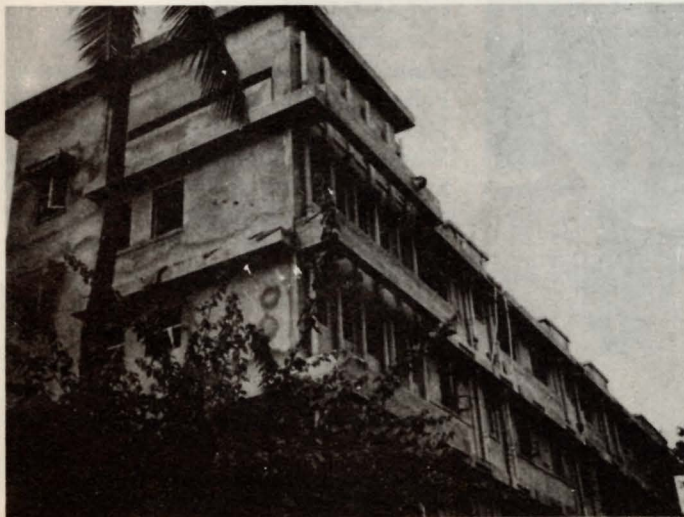
To date, the Madressa has collected nearly Rs 15 lakhs for the annexe. Those who have donated rupees one lakh and above are Fredoon and Meherban Zarhosti, Ms Roshan Punegar, Minocher Mistry, Seth Mancherji Edalji Joshi Memorial Trust Fund, Jamshed Byramjee together with friends, and Jerbanoo and Nariman Cursetji, notes a press release.

HOME's foundation laid

With around 14 lakh rupees collected for the housing of mobeds at the Doongerwadi grounds in Bombay, a foundation stone was laid by Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla on May 28, 1988. A jashan ceremony was also performed at the site by Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Bahram.

Among those present at the function were BPP trustees Eruch Desai and Minoo Shroff, chairman of the CER-HOME (Committee for Economic Revival's House - Our - Mobeds-Endeavour) Kersi Limathwalla, joint honorary treasurer of CER-HOME Ms Silloo Kavarana, architect Kersi Kapadia and contractor Rusi Delvadewala.

The building comprising 16 flats of two rooms and a kitchen, each admeasuring around 550 square feet,



(Left) Newly built Madressa annexe. (Below) Laying the foundation for mobeds' quarters (from left in feta) Nariman Khursedji, Desai, Shroff, Limathwalla, Golwalla, Kapadia and the priests



will be ready for occupancy in one and a half years, "at subsidized rents," notes Kersi Gazdar, joint honorary secretary of CER-HOME.

"We forget that the people who tend to our spiritual needs have some simple basic physical needs that every human has - food, clothes and a need for a home. Our men of God (priests) cannot come forward to ask of the things they deserve. That is why we have," notes an appeal brochure for the project.

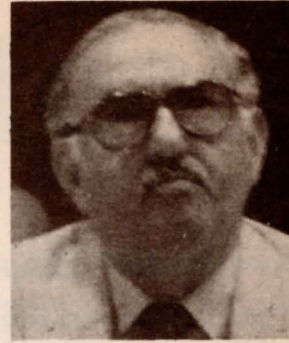
An idea conceived by the BPP and spearheaded by the CER, the cost of the project which was estimated at Rs 16 lakhs in 1984, has escalated to Rs 25 lakhs. The CER gave a commitment to raise at least 50 percent of the project cost, and has today raised Rs 14 lakhs, notes Gazdar.

Among those who have donated more than Rs 50,000 for this laudable project are Fredoon and Meherban Zarthosti (Rs 6,20,283), Cawasji P. Kavarana Trust (Rs 1,00,000) and the trustees of the will of the late Jamshedji P. Cama (Rs 60,000).

"Sanctuary for dance"

The Godrej Dance Academy Theatre, funded with a financial grant of Rs 20 lakhs from the Pirojsha Godrej Foundation and situated in the Experimental Theatre building of the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Bombay, was inaugurated on June 3, 1988, reports *The Indian Post* of June 6, 1988.

The Rs 35 lakh Theatre "is not for public performances as much as it is for dance rehearsals, workshops and master classes," says *The Post*. Jam-



(From left) Palkhivala, Wadia and Mistry: involved in the ACC issue

shed Bhabha, managing trustee of the NCPA, told the paper that with a Theatre for the master classes, "the teacher will be able to have up to 20 students on the stage." Chitra Visweswaran, the noted Bharata Natyam dancer who inaugurated the Theatre with a performance, told the paper that the small Theatre "is ideal encouragement for a young artiste."

Referring to his family's love for music and dance, Sohrab Godrej, chairman of the Godrej group of companies notes that "a city like Bombay needs a theater of this nature."

Described as "a small, unobtrusive and serious place," the underground 200-seat Theatre reportedly has a large stage and several modern facilities, including "luxurious green rooms (dressing rooms) with attached baths and audio monitoring facilities." The Theatre also possesses video equipment which, Bhabha says, will enable the performances of master artistes to be recorded "for future generations to see."

The *Mid-Day* of June 9 calls the Theatre a "new sanctuary for dance,"

where "gurus, students and research scholars, besides connoisseurs...can pursue their work in the field of dance seriously." The report commends the "intimate atmosphere of the Theatre and its perfect acoustics."

The architect of the Theatre was Rustom Patel and the consultant and acoustics expert was Burjor Mistry.

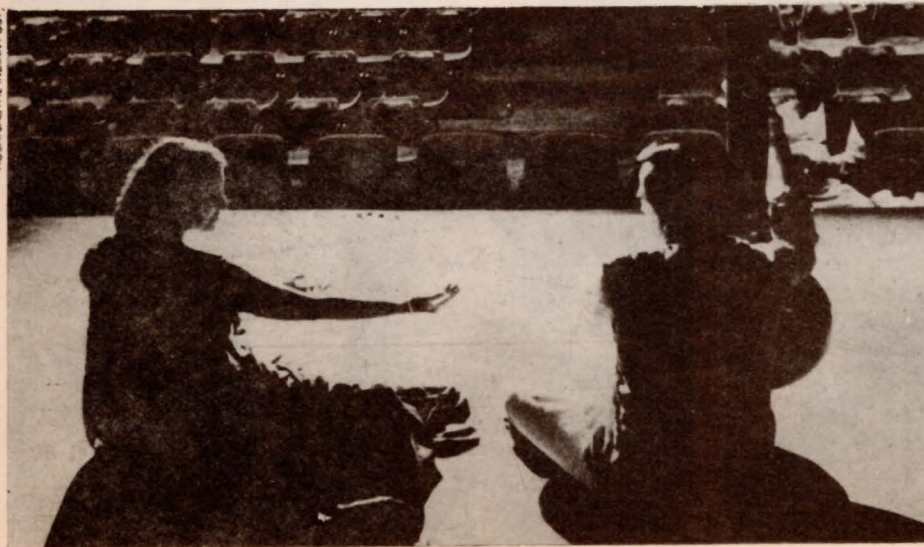
Nani vs Nusli

The media described it as one of Nani Palkhivala's toughest public appearances. The eminent jurist and chairman of the Associated Cement Companies, which has a turnover of Rs 805 crores found himself at the center of a controversy surrounding the company's debenture issue. The all-star cast included Bombay Dyeing's maverick president Nusli Wadia, construction king Pallon Mistry of Shapoorji Pallonji and the house of Tatas represented by Tata Chemicals' chairman Darbari Seth.

Palkhivala alleged that Wadia was bidding to take over ACC. According to the Wadia camp, Palkhivala had asked Wadia, amongst others, to subscribe to the debenture issue as the response from the public was poor.

Among those applying for the debentures were ACC vice-chairman Pallon Mistry who had earlier not availed of his rights to subscribe, Wadia, Tata Chemicals and Mahendra Swaroop of Paharpur Cooling of Calcutta. The ACC board of directors at its meeting of May 6 turned down all the offers except that of Swarup.

"The board's rather extreme decision is widely viewed among corporate circles as being rather arbitrary and as a desperate attempt to get Wadia out at any cost," states the Bombay fort-



Rehearsal in progress at the Godrej Dance Academy Theatre

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like the cat's whiskers
for a lifetime.



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your holiday for a lifetime.



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happy memories
should never fade.

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should never fade.

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nightly *Business India* (May 16-29, 1988). "Whether the board succeeds in stopping a determined Wadia is still to be seen. But there can be little doubt that the battle for ACC has really just begun... Wadia's legal position (Wadia's company - Kachaldara Trading - has filed a petition in the Bombay High Court) appears to be fairly strong," comments the magazine.

Though the case was posted for June 7, it was not heard, reported *The Times of India* on June 8. Wadia's camp has the option to press for allotment of ACC debentures worth Rs 7.5 crores or to seek damages from ACC for rejecting the application. The possibility of the case being settled out of court is not ruled out either, according to *The Times* report.

"The lurking suspicion (is) that at least one of the principal actors in the drama was a raider," as *India Today* of June 15 expressed it.

A particularly unsavory part of the controversy is the role supposedly played by Palkhivala himself. Did he or did he not contact J.M. Financial (the investment firm which managed the issue) with "an appeal to approach potential big investors when, days before the closure of the issue of April 11, it was found that the public response had been dismal? Palkhivala stoutly denies that he ever asked J.M. Financial 'to scout for investors.' But sources close to Kachaldara claim that he did make specific and repeated requests to J.M. Financial which in turn got in touch with, among others, Tatas, Wadia, Swarup and Vasant Seth (of Great Eastern Shipping). In his May 2 letter to Palkhivala in which he accuses the ACC chairman of unethical practices, Wadia has even claimed that the latter 'welcomed' his plans to apply for ACC debentures. Darbari Seth, chairman of the three Tata investment companies, is also reported to have said that Palkhivala welcomed Tatas' 'friendly and supportive offer.' Palkhivala however said at the ACC press conference (on May 26), 'I never knew, till many days after the closing date, that the Tatas and Wadia had applied,' " writes Sudheendra Kulkarni in *The Sunday Observer* of May 29. In a letter protesting the insinuation, among several other objections, published in *The Sunday Observer* of June 5, Palkhivala states, "I clearly said that I had never asked, directly or indirectly, Mr Wadia to

subscribe for the debentures."

In the meanwhile, *The Economic Times* of June 23 reported an added twist to the convoluted story: a Tata company - Sabras Investment Trading Co, a subsidiary of Tata Chemicals - has acquired Swarup's four lakh debenture-converted shares resulting in a profit of three crore rupees to Swarup.

The transfer was reportedly approved by the ACC's five-member committee of directors for share transfer - Palkhivala, H.T. Parekh, Shiavax Vakil, B.K. Banerjee and A.L. Kapur.

Tatas, one of the major promoters of the ACC some five decades ago, had sold their holding over a period of years. The present acquisition, amounting to 7.13 percent of ACC's equity, establishes them as the largest non-institutional shareholder of the company, notes *The Economic Times*.

A sidelight of the ACC issue has been speculation regarding Palkhivala's closeness to J.R.D. Tata and his position in the Tata empire, especially in light of his resignation as vice-chairman of TELCO. "As a high-powered Supreme Court lawyer, author, public speaker, political strategist and right wing ideologue who has articulated the cause of Indian business like no one else, he has long been thought of as one of the Tata empire's most useful assets," writes Michael Neri in *The Indian Post* (June 3).



"Nusli Wadia on the other hand, is reportedly personally very close to JRD - 'like a son to him,' according to one version."

A Palkhivala argument that Neri cites is that Wadia and Mistry have been sworn enemies ever since Mistry forced Wadia some years ago to pull out of a small trading company with which they were both associated. According to this argument, "Wadia has never forgotten the slight and is now seeking revenge," writes Neri.

Salaam Bombay gets award

At the Cannes Film Festival in France on May 23, 1988, the prestigious Camera D'Or award was won by *Salaam Bombay*, a film scripted by Sooni Taraporevala, according to a report in *The Times of India* of May 25, 1988. The award is given to the best first feature film by a young director.

The film, whose Hindi title is *Chal Bambai Chal*, was directed by Mira Nair and had Dinaz Stafford as coordinator. Calling it a "triumph for the city's streetkids who have played the main roles in it," the paper adds that 17 films from all over the world were competing for the award.

In an interview with the *Sunday Mid-Day* of June 12, 1988, Taraporevala said that the film also won the Prix Public, the city of Cannes' award for the most popular film at the Festival. The film, she says, is scheduled for commercial release in 24 theaters in France in August and in India by October.

A photographer by profession (she recently completed shooting pictures

A scene from *Salaam Bombay* (Photo: Sooni Taraporevala) Inset: *Taraporevala (left) with Nair* (Photo: Sandi Sissel)

for a book on the Parsis) with an MA in cinema studies from the US, it is the first time that 31-year-old Taraporevala has written a film script, notes the *Sunday Mid-Day*. The story line, clarifies Taraporevala, was worked on by both Mira Nair and herself, based on their observations. Researching for the script over a period of two months, she and Nair met "kids at the Arthur Road Jail, the court for minors and Asha Sadan, and had discussions with a psychiatrist."

Calling the theme a "non-commercial" one, Taraporevala hoped it would be a "landmark film." Involving characters with names like *Chai Pau* (tea-bread) and *Koyla* (coal), the film, in the words of Taraporevala, "has lots of emotion and characters, and moves fast." Explaining the challenge in her scripting, she told *Sunday Mid-Day*, "It was important to create a feel of Bombay's streets for the foreign audience, and yet not be exotic."

The film was financed by Channel Four (of the British Broadcasting Corporation), Cadrage (of France), the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and Mirabai Films.

Farrukh Dhondy of Channel Four commissioned the film and "encouraged and supported us right from the



beginning," Taraporevala said. He reportedly has a credit in the film that reads "To Farrukh Dhondy who believed."

Snakebite wins award

At a function in London, Sir Richard Attenborough, the world-famous filmmaker of *Gandhi*, presented the British Medical Association's Gold Award to Cyrus Poonawalla and his wife, directors of the Serum Institute of India (SII), Pune, for their film *Snakebite*, according to an announcement in *The Times of India* of June 11, 1988.

The film, which deals with the preventive and curative aspects of snakebites was adjudged the "Best production directed at a lay audience" in the field of health education in 1987.

Produced by SII, the film also won

the Golden Eagle and the Best Professional Film Award at the Ninth Annual International Wildlife Film Festival in 1986, notes an article in *The Indian Post* of June 22, 1988. Informing "the viewer on the importance of snakes to man," the 40-minute film's "gripping quality comes from the live shots that deliver the message point by point," says the paper. Quoting a line from the film, "The best weapon against snakebite is knowledge," the article adds that "the time has now come to correct (the) unwarranted hostility (towards snakes) if an ecological disaster is to be avoided."

SII director Cyrus Poonawalla believes that the film will achieve its aim of health education only if it is widely screened.

The other directors of the Institute, which is reportedly among the country's largest manufacturers of biologicals and the only producer of measles vaccine, are Zavaray Poonawalla and his wife, Fali Heerjee and Dr Jal Mehta, according to *The Times*.

Deboo's Disquietude

Disquietude, a dance recital choreographed and presented by renowned Indian modern choreographer Astad Deboo, was slated to be performed during the International Choreographers Competition of Bagnolet, France on June 9, notes *Mid-Day* of May 26, 1988.

Yasmine Stafford and Neesha Jhaveri accompanied Deboo in the performance. The music for the recital was composed by Abu Jani and L. Shankar.

Deboo is also due to stage *Disquietude* in July at the Dance Festival of Arles in France.

Deboo in Disquietude: entertaining French audiences (Photo:Hoshi Jal/The Indian Post)





PHOTO: THE DAILY



Winners of the Shiv Chhatrapati awards: Umrigar (left) and Damania (center). (Right) Desai: umpiring feats

Sports award winners

Among the recipients of the Maharashtra Government's Shiv Chhatrapati awards for the year 1986-87 are sports organizers Arnawaz Damania and Polly Umrigar for their respective contributions to hockey and cricket, reports *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of June 8, 1988. Five sports organizers and 29 sportspersons were thus honored on June 6. Kerman Framna won the award for his accomplishments in cycling, notes a report in *The Daily* of June 7, 1988.

Damania, says *The Daily* in an article dated June 6, "has been associated with women's hockey for the past many years." The women's hockey teams that took part in the World Cup of 1979, Olympics of 1980 and Asian Cup of 1981 were trained at her camp and managed by her.

"As a sports organizer," says *The Daily*, "Damania does not believe in the kid glove treatment where transgressions are concerned. She is known for her firm stand on matters..." At the recent sub-junior national hockey championship for girls at Pune, it was reportedly due to her insistence that "overage contenders" were debarred from taking part.

Well-known former Indian cricketer Umrigar had served as secretary of the Bombay Cricket Association's (BCA) managing committee and was one of the people responsible for the setting up of the Wankhede Cricket Stadium in Bombay. He has been involved in the administration of the Stadium's clubhouse as well. He also served on the BCA selection committee as member and later its chairman in 1973-74. He was manager of the Indian cricket team that toured New Zealand and West Indies in the late 1970s, and Australia soon thereafter. Umrigar con-

tinues to be a selector of the Bombay University team.

Framna, a national level rider and the Maharashtra Cycling Champion in 1987, has won several state and national level track and road championships. A member of the Poona District Cycling Club, he has also represented India at international meets overseas. For making his "presence felt at the national and Asian levels," he had been felicitated by the organizers of the All Parsis Athletic and Cycling Meet in April 1987.

Cash purse for umpire

"At the age of 74, Ardeshir Nowroji Desai is still umpiring. It is our duty to do something for him," said Sharad Kotnis, secretary of the A.N. Desai Felicitation Committee. For his record of umpiring in more than 3,300 matches, including 60 first class ones, over the past 46 years, the veteran umpire is

to be presented a cash purse of Rs 15,000 in October this year.

Besides cricket umpiring, Desai has also qualified as a first class hockey and football referee. He is also believed to have officiated in three different matches of cricket, hockey and football on a single day. Adjudged "The Best Umpire" for the year 1986 by the Association of Cricket Umpires, he continues to umpire in local matches, according to a letter from the Felicitation Committee. The letter says that his "record-breaking umpiring feats in various sports have been recommended by the Bombay Cricket Association for inclusion in the *Guinness Book of Sports Records*."

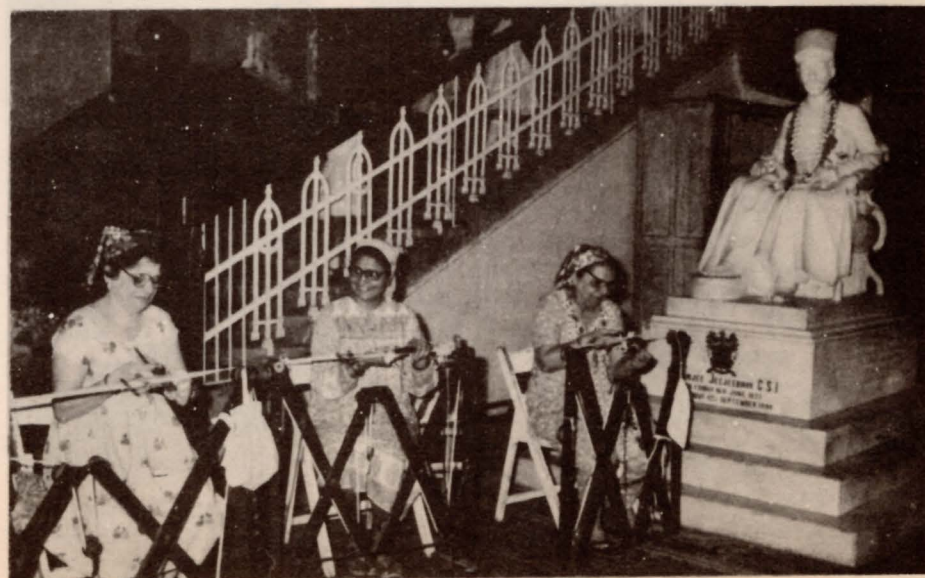
An all-round sportsman in his younger days, Desai played cricket, hockey, football and water polo, besides being a very good swimmer.

A sum of Rs 5,000 had been collected as of June 25, according to Kotnis. Donations towards the purse may be made by cheque drawn in the name of A.N. Desai Felicitation Committee and sent C/o 41, Patrakar Nagar, Bandra (East), Bombay 400051.

NAB award for Tarapore

Ms Banoo Sorab Tarapore is this year's recipient of the National Association for the Blind's (NAB) Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwalla Award which honors outstanding workers for the blind, both voluntary and professional, notes *The Afternoon Despatch and*

Participants at the kusti weaving competition organized by The Bombay Parsee Association, on December 19, 1987. Altogether eight ladies competed in this event held at the Byramjee Jejeebhoy Parsi Charitable Institution.



Courier of January 25, 1988. Also declared an award-winner was Romesh Chandra Nijhawan from Dehra Dun.

Tarapore, who is the honorary secretary of the NAB Mata Lachmi Nursery for the Blind, has pioneered programs for the education of pre-school blind children. Under the integrated child development service scheme, she is promoting programs of composite education in the rural areas of Maharashtra and has also coordinated education of blind children with sighted children at the kindergarten level.

ber 1987 by the Institute of International Container Lessors, adds the *Jamé*.

Another student of the Institute of Shipping, Porus Kersasp Rabadi is the recipient of the Vimla Kataria Prize for securing the highest aggregate marks in the first year examinations in the diploma of shipping.

Rohinton Minoo Mistry won the Kanhoji Angre Award, instituted by the Maharashtra government, for securing the highest marks in book-keeping and accountancy at the Institute's associateship examination,

press release issued by Kersi Gazdar, member of the program committee.

Addressing the gathering, the president of the chapter, Kersi Limathwalla, said that the irony of scientific innovations was that it had made the world a more unsafe place to live in. Paul Hughes, the United States vice consul in Bombay, who was the chief guest at the function, "complimented the people of India and the government for the technological and space programs undertaken and the general awareness of advancement that he experienced here," adds the release.

He was conferred the honorary membership of the Bombay chapter which is a branch of the international organization founded by the late US President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956 to advance the cause of world peace through international friendship.

Calcutta welcomes dentist

"Despite greener pastures elsewhere," Dr Kaizad Kermani has "returned to Calcutta to practise dentistry" after completing his Bachelor in Dental Surgery (BDS) from the Government Dental College, Bombay, notes *Calcutta Gavashni*, the newsletter of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Fund of March-April 1988.

"Not since Dr Jal Wadia who stopped practising around 1979-80, and Dr Dhunjishaw Anklesaria before him, has Calcutta boasted of a Zoroastrian dentist," adds the newsletter. The community's support has been solicited for Kermani, who is "brimming with ideas, determined to do much more (and) qualify in every way."

Offering the latest technology available to dentists in India, Kermani's patients can avail of treatments like ultrasonic scaling facilities for removal of stains, calculus and plaque, periodontitis and gingivitis treatment, and light cured composites for mutilated, carious, fractured or stained anterior teeth, adds *Gavashni*. Kermani also provides removable and complete dentures, regular silver amalgam fillings and fluoride therapy for children. He also has X-ray and surgical facilities at his clinic.

After completing his housestaff training and clinical assistantship, Kermani worked as a member of the junior staff at the College of Dental Surgery, Manipal, where he taught in the prosthodontics department. He



Limathwalla (in spectacles) honors Hughes with membership while from left Contractor and Edul Katrak look on.

Tarapore is also the authoress of a book, *Out of the Night*, which is a compilation of life sketches of outstanding blind men and women in India, adds the report.

Awards in shipping

The Karnataka Government Award for the highest aggregate marks in the final year diploma in shipping for the year 1987 has been awarded to Temson Rattan Pardiwalla, notes the *Jamé-Jamshed* of March 13, 1988.

A student of the Narottam Morarjee Institute of Shipping, Pardiwalla has also qualified to act as a container survey inspector in a test held in Novem-

states a press release. The Karnataka Government Prize winners for securing the highest marks in individual subjects included Pardiwalla for his proficiency in the law of sea transport and Rabadi, for excelling in commercial geography, history and development of shipping, and book-keeping and accountancy.

Peace through friendship

For his distinguished service rendered to the organization, the People To People (PTP) International, Bombay chapter, felicitated its trustee Zal Contractor, on the association's tenth anniversary on April 17, 1988, notes a

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An enlarged photograph of the Khordeh Avesta as compared to a 25-paisa coin. The length of this miniature scripture is 2.65 cm and the breadth 1.08 cm. The 702-page Avesta has 15 lines on each page. The book, printed in 1899, is owned by Ms Sheroo Edul Palamkote. (Photo: Homyar Mistry)



(Above right) For rendering more than 500 free kirtans in the last 15 years, Parvez Katrak was felicitated by trustee Cowasjee Dinshaw on the Cama Baug Agiary's one hundred and nineteenth anniversary on May 7, 1988. Co-trustee of the Baug, Burjor Antia, looks on.

has been recently appointed medical officer at the dental department of the Ramakrishna Seva Prathisthan, notes the newsletter.

Godrej plan turned down

A plan to develop a 330-acre plot belonging to the Godrej industrial family has been refused permission by the Maharashtra government, according to the *Financial Express* of May 29, 1988. This property, reportedly estimated to cost Rs 75 crores, is a part of the 2,500 acres of "prime urban land" owned by the Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation, a trust set up in 1973.

According to the paper, the trust has decided to develop the land "in order to avoid the acquisition of its vast properties," under a recent legislation setting a ceiling limit on urban land ownership.

The State government had earlier proposed a plan by which large land-owners could have their land exempted from acquisition if 65 percent of it was used to house the poor, and the remainder sold to the middle class and the well-to-do. The trust, according to a representative, reportedly

wishes to hand over 65 percent of the land to the government and sell the remainder in the free market. "(Instead) we are required to bear the costs of development for most of the land and sell 35 percent at a controlled price," he said.

The government alleges that the Godrej Foundation "has done almost no work since its inception," and therefore cannot qualify for the formula suggested by the trust.

A life-saving act

Hosi Eichaporia, an employee in a foreign bank, reportedly rescued a half-naked man from the rail tracks at Bombay's Victoria Terminus on May 11, 1988, notes *The Times of India* of May 16.

As the Mankhurd local approached the platform, a man carrying a bundle of clothes and a small *lota* (urn), believed to be insane, jumped onto the tracks of the oncoming train.

Members of the crowd gesticulated and shouted so that the man would budge, but to no avail. They even tried to get the train driver to stop the train. But it was Eichaporia, one of the spec-

tators, who jumped down from the platform and reportedly pulled the man off the tracks. The man tried to free himself from Eichaporia's grip, but with the help of another youth, the old man was overpowered, adds *The Times'* report.

SPOTLIGHT

Manek Goiporia's tenure as chairman and managing director of Central Bank of India has been extended for another four years to July 7, 1992, notes *The Daily* of May 7, 1988. He has served as chairman and managing director in a bank for over nine years.

Cyrus Heerjee won in the lightning class in the Bombay Sailing Championships held on April 30, 1988, notes *The Times of India* of May 2, 1988. Heerjee with his crew of J. S. Jehangir and M. Gandhi, finished first to be the recipient of the Tim Divecha Trophy. S. Bamboat with his crew of J. Choudhary and Ramesh Mulchandani were the runners-up in the lightning class. N.P. Godrej with his crew of J.N. Godrej, Jiji Unwalla and N. Naorji won the 'A' class.

Natalie Pedder of the Bombay Scottish School won the girls under 13 and the women's swimming championships at the Otters Club Open Swim Gala, notes *The Times of India* of March 21, 1988.

Pedder bettered the earlier meet records in freestyle, backstroke, butterfly stroke and breaststroke, adds the report.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

A Zoroastrian renaissance

The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America is launched at the Sixth Congress

Dr Jehan F. Bagli

It was the moment of rebirth. Many shades of opinion filtered through the North American spectrum. Nonetheless, the "Prospects of Zoroastrian renaissance in the New World" – the theme of the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Congress (NAZC) – seemed positive. And the assembly witnessed the first general body meeting of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA). Toronto, the city which had hosted the First North American Congress 13 years ago, made an appropriate and happy venue.

The overt and deliberate confrontation that had surfaced at the Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress, two and a half years ago, had disappeared. Though one had the feeling that there were points of discussion

that dragged with typical "Zoroastrian detractions," it never degenerated to the acrimonious level of the last Congress.

Young Zoroastrians between the ages of nine and 15 recited award-winning compositions on Zoroastrianism. This included, among several superb recitations, a most unusual and rather ingenious composition by Neville Panthaki recited in the "Rap" rhythm (a mode of singing of Caribbean origin). It was an experience for everyone present to hear the lyrics that unanimously echoed, "Zoroastrianism is alive and well."

At the suggestion of Dr Jamshed Mavalwala of the University of Toronto, the organizers of the Congress instituted a system of recognizing excellence within the North American

Zoroastrian community. The awards were presented in three categories and the entire protocol was fashioned after the Oscar Awards of Hollywood, including the trusting of the winners' names in a sealed envelope to a Price-Waterhouse representative, only to be delivered at the right moment – a masterful execution indeed.

The first day of the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Congress was devoted to the special interest group workshops. At the top of that list was the first general body meeting of FEZANA.

The FEZANA meeting comprised the official delegates of the Zoroastrian anjumans of North America. In the concluding remarks of his opening address, FEZANA founding president Rohinton Rivetna, the man whose diligence and dedication between September 1985 and May 1988 were responsible for the birth of the Federation, said, "Never before...in our living memory has there been a period when there has been so much interest in our affairs ... We are bursting with energy. Our greatest wealth is our people resources. It is like a dormant volcano. From time to time it rumbles, and you feel the vibrations...the energy is waiting to be unleashed." We hope and pray, that the energy will be



Yezdi Antia (standing) conducting the question session with the panel of speakers – Mistree, Hinnells, Bagli, Irani, JamaspAsa and Dastoor – and session moderator Treasurywala

fully utilized for the constructive purpose of building a strong organization.

While the FEZANA general body meeting was in progress, three other meetings – the Youth Committee (convener – Phil Sidhwa), the Religious Education in the New World Committee (conveners – Ms Putli Mirza and Ms Jaloo Cooper), and the Council of North American Practicing Priests (convener – Ervad Yezdi Antia) – were concomitantly in progress. The last seemed to suffer from lack of previous preparation. It did, however, collect various suggestions on how and what North American Zoroastrian priests should do to perpetuate the religion of Zarathosht. Among the suggestions was a proposal that a list of all the practicing mobeds be prepared and distributed to all the

anjumans of North America. Furthermore, a provision should be made in that list to indicate those who would perform debatable rituals such as the navjote of children of extra-communal marital unions and *ashirvad* (nuptial benediction) for interracial marriages. The meeting also discussed the need for a central registry of births, deaths, marriages and navjotes.

The Congress opened on Saturday, April 2, 1988 with Ervad Gustad Panthaki pronouncing the benediction for its success. A resolution from Prof Kaikhosrov Irani recorded with deep sympathy the passing away of the High Priest of the Fasli Atash Kadeh, Bombay, Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji, who had inaugurated the Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress in Los Angeles in 1985.

As the spotlight shifted towards continuity, Ms Dhunmai Dalal, the chairperson of the Ad-hoc Committee of the Fifth NAZC, read an account of the activities of that Congress. This was followed by a welcome address by Kobad Zarolia, president of the host organization, the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). Goodwill messages were read by Dr Dhun Noria. The striking polemics that had pervaded the messages at the last Congress were conspicuously absent. Part of the credit for this goes to Minoo Treasurywala, the able chairman of the Program Committee. The panel of speakers projected different viewpoints on the religion of Zarathosht, as well as topics of sociological interest to Zoroastrians.

Addressing the assembly on the subject "Zoroastrian Studies in the New World," Dastur Dr Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay, noted that the discoveries made by academicians had little effect on the laity. However, he felt that the momentum of religious studies was picking up in North America. The Zoroastrian way of life starts with Sunday School, he said, but elementary studies must be followed by thorough, technical studies of the religion. Simple daily rituals will assume greater significance if a child sees parents at home saying their prayers daily, the Dastur added.



Left: Mavalwala (center) watching McClure presenting award to Dastoor

Below (from left): Treasurywala, Mehr, Zarolia, Phillips



Parsis who migrated to India must have felt a cultural shock of the same severity as the community in this western milieu. Attempts must be made to learn about the religion and pass it on to the children. He suggested the institution of a well-equipped library and the judicious use of books; rituals performed and demonstrated to the children; the organization of a study prayer circle and acquaintance with Zoroastrian history. He urged the assembly to organize pilgrimage tours to India and other historical places of interest.

Prof John Hinnells who heads Manchester University's Department of Comparative Religion, lectured on "Contemporary Zoroastrian Life – specifically in Great Britain, USA and Canada." His data was based on the postal survey he had conducted for the in-depth Katrak Lectures he had delivered at Oxford University two years ago.

At the outset, he commented that in spite of the smallness of the community, Zoroastrians embody within them a great diversity of people. Zoroastrians born and educated in the West represent a group with distinctive characteristic features: They marry outside the community, consider English as their mother tongue, do not communicate with Zoroastrians in In-



dia or Iran, keep lesser contact with fellow Zoroastrians, pray less, wear sudreh-kusti less and attend Zoroastrian functions less frequently. Zoroastrians from Iran have a distinctive pattern of their own. Sudreh-kusti is not a prominent element of their religious activities. They are, however, a more tightly-knit community, with fewer marrying outside.

In the age-groups under 25 and above 65, more contrasts than similarities surfaced. The Zoroastrian activities across the board were fewer for the younger group than for the older. He was cautious however in the interpretation of these figures and questioned, "Would the older generation have answered the questions differently when they were younger?"

Canadian and American Zoroas-

trians in general represented the growing community and the number here would be expected to increase faster than in Bombay. The community in the United States has a higher rate of education than the Canadian, and is more successful professionally. In general, people with children, and those with some religious education in their childhood, display greater participation in religious matters. A higher level of religious practice was indicated by the Canadian as against the US based community. The greatest potential of loss to the community lay among the young educated groups who live in rural areas away from the urban Zoroastrian centers.

From the survey he concluded that in no other country is there such an emphasis on religious education as there is among the Zoroastrians on the North American continent. However, he added that the Sunday School type of education is not enough, and that, for a firm rooting of the religion, the great void of advanced religious education had to be filled. He suggested that the community should provide for more trained teachers with advanced knowledge of religious studies.

Khojeste Mistree's address – "Adopting Zoroastrian Tradition in the New World Environment" – chastised those who seek to change the tradition and followed up with a discussion of tradition, which, he indicated, should not be looked upon as dogmas; rather, tradition should be carefully examined before arriving at any decision for a change. The value of preserving the tradition lies in the continuity of the legacy that we have inherited. According to the speaker, a change of tradition constitutes the in-

FEZANA's profile

The first general body meeting of FEZANA elected an executive committee of five officers: president Rohinton Rivetna of Chicago, vice-president Homi Homji of Ontario, treasurer Freddy Patel of New Jersey, secretary Dolly Dastoor of Quebec and assistant secretary Sabar Balsara of Ontario.

The decision-making power at FEZANA rests, however, not with the governing body, but at the grass roots with the anjumans.

The major "working links" of FEZANA, which will be responsible for the real action, are its committees. These are nine in number, with their corresponding chairpersons: Coordination and Planning –

Homi Homji (Canada); Zoroastrian Unity and Welfare – Kaemarz Dotiwala (USA); Information Receiving and Dissemination/Journal – Dr Jehan Bagli (USA); Funds and Finance – Ms Kamal Tengra (USA); Census and Survey – Farrokh Dastur (USA); Youth – Darius Captain (USA); Education, Conference and Scholarship – Prof Kaikhosrov Irani (USA); North American Zoroastrian Congress – Sam Vesuna (Canada); Service to small groups of North American Zoroastrians – Firdosh Mehta (Canada). The chairpersons will select dedicated people to make up a working body from among the anjumans across North America. These committees will formulate their terms of reference within the framework of FEZANA.

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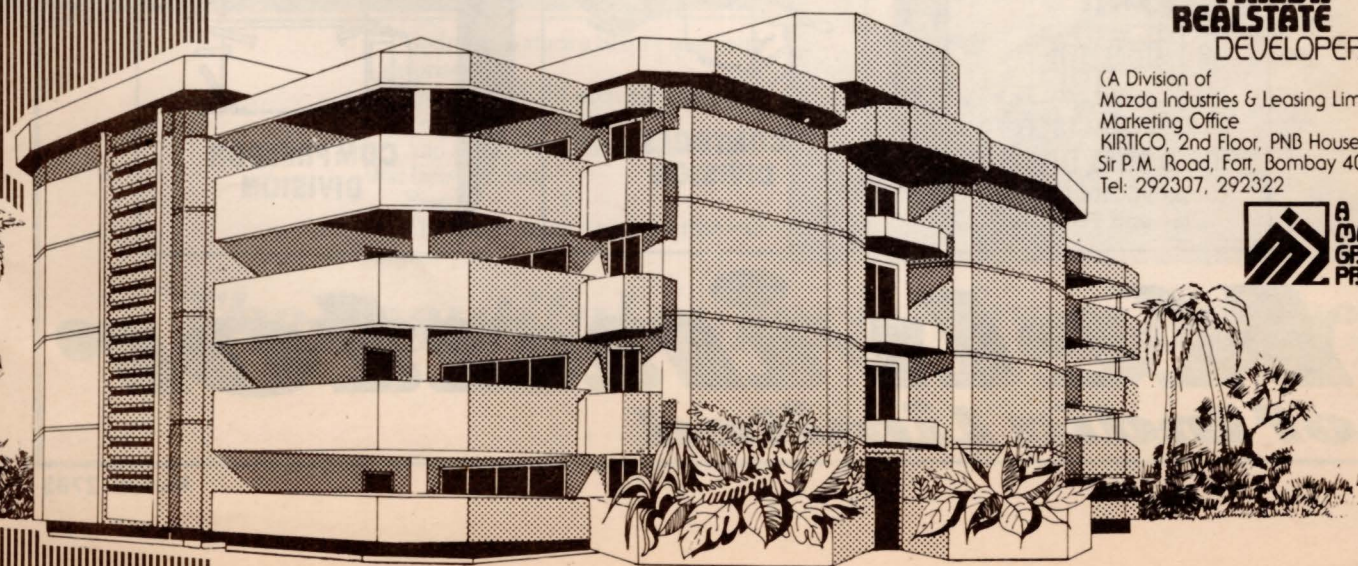
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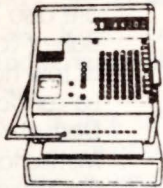
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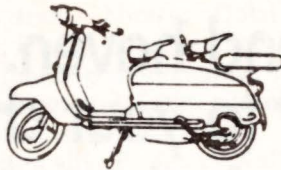
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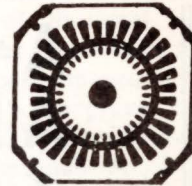
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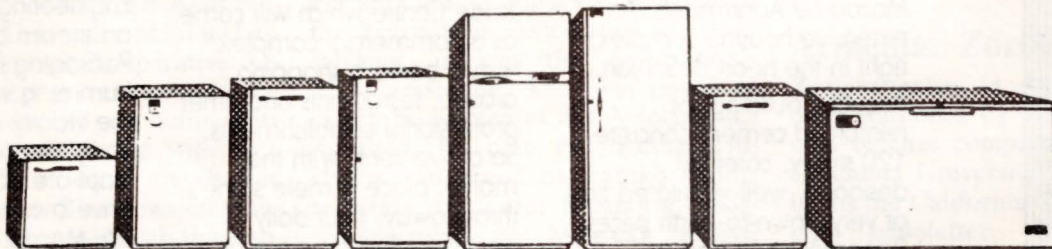
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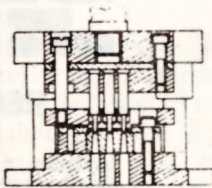
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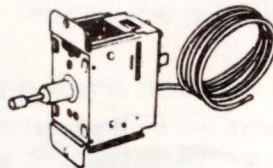
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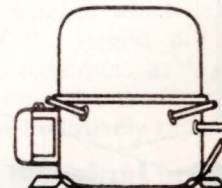
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ception of a new religious experience.

Addressing the alleged "reformers," he commented that they are more purist than the orthodox. Backtracking into history, he pointed out that this has happened before. In 1861, Rahnumai Mazdayasni Sabha – a body of reformers who wanted to do just that – declared the *Gathas* as the sole religious authority, and reduced the practice of rituals to a minimum. However, they were completely ineffective.

Rituals reinforce the doctrines and can be supported by textual references, Mistree noted. They must be reinterpreted and carefully understood. A well-performed ritual, he said, can bring forth both physical and spiritual harmony.

One way to overcome religious illiteracy, he concluded, was through proper scholarship, perhaps by having an endowed chair for religious studies at a university. Addressing the North American community, he concluded, "You should preserve the tradition that has come down to you for over 3,500 years."

"Action to achieve Zoroastrian renaissance in the New World" was the theme of Dr Farhang Mehr's address. The professor of International Relations at Boston University declared that renaissance is reawakening after

"Our greatest wealth
is our people
resources. It is like a
dormant volcano...the
energy is waiting to
be unleashed"

enlightenment, not reformation. It does not involve a detraction of the tradition, but consists in the re-explanation and reinterpretation of the Zoroastrian religion.

We are a people who are community centered, not community bound. Any tradition detrimental to our survival should be modified, after appropriate study, said Mehr. Customs over a

period of time become a source of law and thus, a part of our tradition. Basically, however, these are laws of a social nature, and are therefore subject to change with time. He exemplified his statement by the recent change in the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act in India. Renaissance, he said, does not imply any change in the fundamental, basic, theological aspects of the religion.

Mehr concluded by saying, we should speak with the learned dasturs of India and Iran, and seek wisdom from the western scholars. However, when it comes to charting the course for the future, the decision must be made by the community.

Addressing the issue of survival, Ms Dolly Dastoor, assistant professor of psychiatry at McGill University and associate editor of *Gavashni*, in her "Psychological profile of North American Zoroastrians" provided several pieces of evidence to prove that Zoroastrianism will survive on this continent.

"We, in North America, are still a very confused group of people. Collec-

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tively, we know we are apathetic about our religion, and...argumentative enough not to be able to do anything about it...Dynamic...and high achievers individually, but not as a team...We will go on living, perhaps in a form and shape not to the liking of some, but we will live rather than survive."

Prof Kaikhosrov Irani, chairman and professor of the Department of Philosophy at City College, New York, in his talk entitled "Understanding the tradition of Zoroastrianism," elaborated the idea of tradition. He focussed on the ambiguities and confusions, caused by the lack of complete comprehension, as reasons that often jeopardize the discussion on the subject of the Zoroastrian tradition.

The basic doctrines are contained in the *Gathas*, which were later mythologized and interpreted in terms of purification laws. The rituals are in a state of dynamic flux, some stable, some changing. The way of life is probably the most stable, with variable applications in different eras and the social practices are, inevitably, the most variable.

Irani recommended the widest possible range of discussions; agreement as far as possible on the fundamentals of the religion and the treatment of all disagreement with openness and respect. Appreciating diversity, the professor urged the gathering to be committed to the understanding, preservation and advancement of religion and to maintain a religious community with respect for all.

After appreciating the diligence of the non-Zoroastrian scholars who have brought to light the various aspects of the religion of Zarathosht, Dr Jehan Bagli – in his presentation "Role of non-Zoroastrians in the Zoroastrian community" – turned his attention towards non-Zoroastrians who, through their freewill, accept a Zoroastrian as a spouse and, thus, become an integral part of the community.

Discriminating between the racial and religious aspects of the controversy, Bagli asked, "What are we attempting to perpetuate on this continent – a race or a religion?" and added, "The convention that Zoroastrianism is a religion exclusively of the people of Iranian ancestry is a post-

Zoroastrian myth that cannot be supported by a shred of evidence on doctrinal basis."

Referring to the *ashirvad* prayers he commented that they make no demand on the individuals to become Zoroastrians and, hence, their performance for a mixed-marriage is in no way an infraction of the basic theological principles of the religion.

The navjote of the children of an extra-communal marital union, he reiterated, would be meaningless if we are aiming to perpetuate a "racial entity." In contrast, if the objective is to perpetuate a religion, then we have an obligation to fulfill by performing the navjote, if desired by both the parents.

The delinking of a race from a religion that has such a heavy burden of historical association with the Iranian nation is not an easy task. If done cautiously, it can bring an awareness of the impact that history has had on the religion, a closer affirmation of what Zarathushtra taught, and enable the community to face the reality on this continent.

Overall, the silver lining of maturity that appeared at the end of the Fifth NAZC had clearly widened (a bit). It can be said without reservation that the bond among Zoroastrians living far apart on this huge continent is one notch tighter and stronger at the end of the Sixth NAZC and, thereby, it has served a meaningful purpose.

Congress sidelights

"The message emanating from the two days of talks and deliberations was evident – the 'Prospects of Zoroastrian Renaissance in the New World' seemed very positive," commented the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario's (ZSO) May newsletter with quiet satisfaction while reporting on the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Congress.

Both the federal Canadian government and the provincial government of Ontario had sanctioned grants towards the cost of the Congress, thereby officially acknowledging the community's presence on the continent, informed the newsletter. At the banquet arranged by ZSO's Dr Dhun Noria, the Ontario government's minister for citizenship and culture Gerry Phillips and the United Church's former moderator Dr Robert McClure were the chief guests.

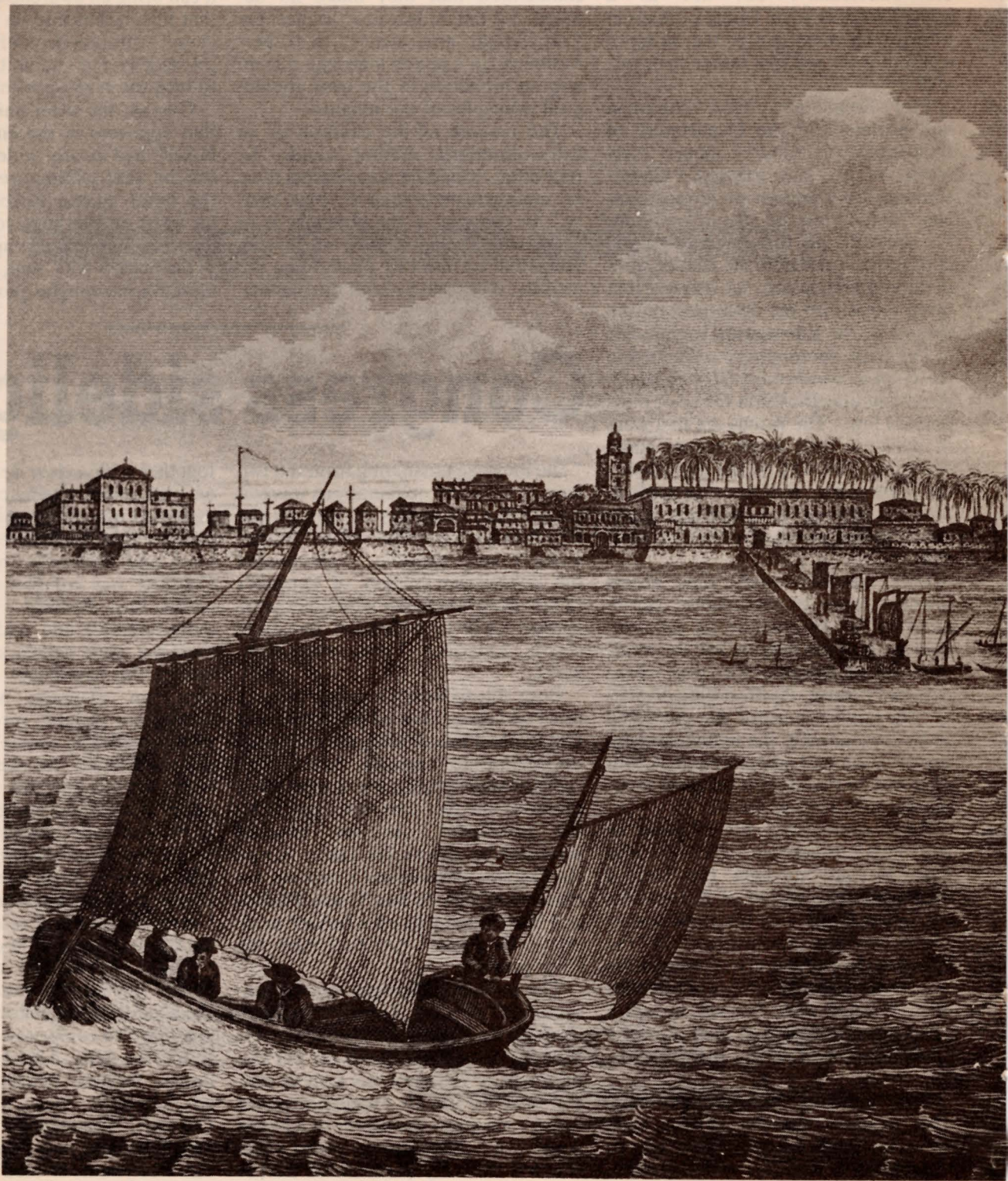
The evening's highlight was the presentation of the North American Zoroastrian awards for excellence. Dr Minoo Dastoor who heads the US Department of Energy's biocatalysis project received the life excellence award which recognizes the career of a North American Zoroastrian who has reached the very pinnacle of his/her chosen profession. Jamsheed Chokshy who is studying for his PhD at Harvard University received the scholar excellence award for academic brilliance

together with a clear demonstration of an all-round balanced life-style. Awarded the most prestigious scholarships that the Universities of Harvard and Columbia have to offer, Chokshy was complimented by Harvard's Prof Richard Frye: "He has more breadth and wider knowledge than the great scholars of the past," quotes the newsletter. Zubin Panthaky, an A-grade student since elementary school, received the student excellence award which recognizes brilliance at the high school level. With a long list of honors and prizes in academic and extra curricular fields, Panthaky, the first young navar to emerge from the North American community in 1980, is now in his first year in electrical engineering at McGill University and is a reserve officer in the Canadian armed forces.

The Congress was attended by a nearly 600-strong audience (115 of them being aged between 13 and 25 years) which comprised delegates from India, the UK, Alberta, British Columbia, Boston, Pennsylvania, Chicago, Houston, New York, Quebec, Ontario, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Northern California. The youth, divided into three age-groups (13-16, 17-20, 21-25) discussed attitudes towards prayer, the necessity of forming local youth groups, North

continued on page 46

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STEERING THE NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION

FEZANA aims to direct the course of Zoroastrian perpetuation in North America, says president Rohinton Rivetna

Arnavaz S. Mama

"We share an awesome responsibility. Each and every one of us here today shoulders the responsibility for the continuation of our faith. Each living Zoroastrian bears this burden... Let us stand united. Let us resolve to work in a spirit of cooperation, not confrontation. Let us resolve to proceed with mutual trust and respect. Let us resolve to make our decisions today based upon issues, not personalities."

In a few choice words, Rohinton Rivetna, elected uncontested president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) in March this year, had enunciated the basic problems that face the Zoroastrian community and the direction in which the solutions lie. The occasion, the first annual general meeting of FEZANA at Toronto on April 1, 1988, was another milestone for the respected middle-of-the-roader from Chicago.

Rivetna was mandated to create the new federal order for North American Zoroastrians at that contentious meeting, the Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress at Los Angeles (LA) in August-September 1985, remembered for its noisy and disruptive deliberations. The trust reposed in him by the two quarrelling factions – the traditionalists and the liberals – was justified when FEZANA's constitutional convention was held on schedule in Chicago in May 1986 "to draft a constitution with consensual agreement, and to lay the groundwork for a sound

organizational structure." The occasion, in contrast to the Congress, was marked by camaraderie, mutual respect and trust, the president noted with quiet pride, and added, "We pledge that this spirit will prevail in our interaction today."

Rivetna's concern for democratic norms is reflected in the FEZANA constitution which endows member associations with decision-making powers: the votes of the association-members vary according to the size of their membership and, moreover, may be split to correctly reflect the opinion at the grassroots. "The splitting of the vote is truly democratic...so that you can get the feeling of the people. We want unanimity or a large majority on very important issues. We'd be hesitant to do anything without a majority in favor," says Rivetna adding, "We won't be handling major issues yet (and) nobody is going to force anything down anybody's throat – that's for sure."

"Strictly religious issues will not be addressed," says Rivetna (perhaps in view of the traditionalists' misgivings at the LA Congress) although "opinions have been expressed (at the Sixth Congress in Toronto) that we should look into the possibility of establishing an agiary."

The proposed seminary project, mooted by Chicago, that Rivetna chairs, is based on the need to create a Zoroastrian priesthood capable of serving the needs of the North Amer-

ican Zoroastrian laity. The idea is to create spiritual leaders and guides by taking navar-maratabs and molding them "into what we perceive as priests." There are a handful of such young novitiates in North America but in the absence of anybody being available locally, the community "could look at outside sources such as India or Iran," bring the candidates to North America and give them further training. The well-educated, well-rounded individuals that the project aims to create would then be able to "provide adult education to the community at large on a routine basis...spiritual nourishment is the only way to keep the community together," says Rivetna.

FEZANA's specific activities are entrusted to nine committees working towards fulfilling the Federation's purposes while the five elected office-bearers make certain that "the committees are operating, ensure that the (FEZANA) journal (aimed at keeping member associations acquainted with developments) is sent out, that the organization is functioning in the manner it should."

The executive council will meet once a year at the minimum and everybody will meet every two years at the Congresses, says Rivetna. Once the individuals are assigned their tasks, "each one works individually and produces results...It is a challenge to coordinate activities with vast distances," says Rivetna, "but with a good telephone system and good mail, we



**"If we continue
not to coordinate our effort,
we lose out
on a tremendous resource
at our disposal"**

should be able to cope.

"We have to demonstrate that we can be effective, that we can do a job, prove our worth...At the (Sixth) Congress there was a lot of harmony, a lot of togetherness. (People) recognize that we've got to work together to achieve our goals as a community in North America. If we continue not to coordinate our effort, we lose out on a tremendous resource at our disposal – we won't be effective at anything we do."

A restraining factor is money. "The dues will not be sufficient for a lot of work we intend to do...We have to raise a lot of money before we can do anything – rely on the generosity of people, hope for contributions from individuals and associations."

Rivetna paid tribute to "our visionary colleagues Dr Jehan Bagli, Homi Minocher-Homji and Lovji Cama (coordinators of the erstwhile United Zoroastrian Associations of North America – UZANA – who had) laid the groundwork for such an umbrella organization," in his speech at the Sixth Congress at Toronto. Although the third, fourth and fifth congresses were held under UZANA auspices, the organization was finally buried at the Fifth Congress. "Nobody had written UZANA's constitution and nobody had spent time to get all these things together because the time wasn't ripe (for a federation) 10 years ago. Now it fell into place because there seems to be need for it," Rivetna explained.

The thoughtful, soft-spoken behdin had presided over the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) during the emotional turbulence that followed the navjote of American engineer Joseph Peterson in New York in 1983, held the community together and led the way to building its own Darbe Mehr. At the end of

a week-long sojourn in Bombay in May 1988 – an emergency trip necessitated by his father's illness – Rivetna assessed the quality of health care provided by the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital: "For what we pay – one-tenth of the comparable cost in the United States – we get good service. If people were willing to pay more, it could provide better service. In the US, medical costs are a problem. A person wouldn't get the care he needs without insurance," he added.

Referring to the survival crisis in Bombay, Rivetna estimates that the community may reach a low of 40,000 or 30,000 in one or two decades. His prognosis for the community in North America, however, is optimistic. "I see a great future...We have religious freedom that some other countries do not enjoy, a lot of opportunities. In years to come North America will be to Zoroastrians what India is today..."

"We will be able to maintain the Zoroastrian identity – the environment in such. We just have to mold things so that it all comes to pass ... there is no question in my mind that Zoroastrians in North America will survive and prosper," he states, adding, "I'd like more Zoroastrians to come to North America."

Loath to be labelled, Rivetna prefers to steer clear of such classifications as orthodox or liberal. "Take each issue on its own merits," he counsels. As for the acceptance of non-Zoroastrians, Rivetna believes that "a person such as Joseph Peterson, who is a practising Zoroastrian – even more so than most others – deserves the respect of the community, and complete acceptance. These are rare instances and unlikely to occur frequently. There is no waiting list. But what deserves our immediate attention is the acceptance of children, one of whose parents is a non-Zoroastrian, the accept-

ance of non-Zoroastrian spouses and adopted children.

"We cannot be divisive...our small community already has perhaps four or five distinct groups...Resolve issues in an amicable manner, try and get unanimity. All want to preserve customs and traditions. We do not have the time, resources or knowledge to invent new ones. Let us preserve what we have, as best we know how. If we cannot stick to the prescribed form, we improvise, substitute, etc...I, for one, and most others in North America are not afraid of change; what nobody wants is change for the sake of change, without due or deliberate thought. In the new world we would of course like to practise all of our traditions. However there may be some practices which may be questioned or may be in direct conflict with the custom of the land of our adoption. In that case, the practice should not be discarded outright but examined to retain the essence and then perhaps the part that is in question be adapted...Some transformation will take place, as happened in India, from the Iranian way of doing things, because the environment was totally different."

"None of us has the knowledge, nor the right, nor the power to change anything. Rather, change is inevitable, and comes as a process of natural selection," Rivetna had noted at one of the earlier congresses. "Let us not fight it. Rather, with an illumined mind, let us give a gentle direction to the course we are taking. Let us adapt and bend a little with the wind and strive to find ways to mold our traditions to new environs without compromising the eternal and everlasting message of Zarathushtra."

New group in California

About 150 traditionally attired Zoroastrians attended the inaugural jashan and Navroze celebration of the Traditional Mazadayasni Zoroastrian Anjuman (TMZA) notes the organization's first newsletter of May 15. The non-profit organization has been incorporated in California to "practice, preserve and perpetuate our religion in its pristine form" in North America. The association aims to draw together traditional Zoroastrians across the country and has the ultimate goal of

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building and operating a consecrated agiary, as per an earlier press release received by *Parsiana* on April 5, 1988.

Located at 11 Crestwood Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660, the TMZA's first board of directors is headed by Tahamtan Aresh as per the newsletter. The other office-bearers are vice-president Noshir Jesung, treasurer Dinshaw Irani, secretary Burjor Santoke and program chairperson Ms Pervin Irani.

"We feel that it is lack of understanding and appreciation of our practices that cause people to discard what they do not understand. After all, one cannot preserve something unless one knows what it is that we are trying to preserve," notes the newsletter. Accordingly, Avesta-Pahlavi scholar Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, high priest of the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay – the first speaker under TMZA auspices – detailed the importance of rituals in the life of a Zoroastrian.

On a second occasion, Dr Alan Williams, of the University of Manchester's Department of Comparative Religion, reiterated the theme and described how members of a community lost the feeling of kinship with each other in religions where rituals had been swept away. The newsletter informs that Williams met with the association's youth again the following day "to offer guidance in dealing with their curious and inquisitive non-Zoroastrian friends." Thereafter, Bombay based Zoroastrian Studies' founder Khojeste Mistree held a two-day seminar on various aspects of the religion.

The TMZA holds religious classes cum pot luck every first Saturday of the month with the intention of covering Zoroastrian theory as well as practicals in sudreh making and ethnic cookery, informs the newsletter.

ZAGNY office-bearers

A recital from the *Gathas* by children of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York's (ZAGNY) senior religious class inaugurated Jamshedi Navroze festivities for 300 Zoroastrians at the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr, New York, notes ZAGNY's April newsletter. The annual general meeting which followed elected the new board of directors for 1988-90:

president Erach Munshi, vice-president Ms Piroja Irani, treasurer Edal Bamji, secretary Ms Teshtar Irani, joint secretary Pesi Bavaadam; members-at-large Khurshed Birdie, Ms Freny Dalal, Ms Kamal Davar and Ms Hutoxi Kandawalla. Later, they also assumed charge of ZAGNY's seven committees: Bamji, finance; Piroja Irani, library; Dalal, scholarship; Davar, housekeeping; Kandawalla, building/maintenance; Munshi, fund-raising; and Teshtar Irani, social and public relations.

Additionally, Professor Kaikhosrov Irani heads the committee on religion; Lovji Cama continues as dean of religious studies and Astad Clubwalla heads the legal committee. Bamji, who is also chairperson of the newly instituted youth committee, is shortly expected to outline the objectives and projects to meet the needs of the young.

Pennsylvania's board

Farhad Cama continues as president of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania, informs the Association's May newsletter. The new board of directors, elected at the Association's Jamshedi Navroze get-together, includes vice-president Farokh Sinor, secretary Ms Zarin Balaporia, assistant secretary Ms Mahrukh Morris, treasurer Daraius Jagus and assistant treasurer Hutoxi Contractor. The six directors at large are Dr Farhad Contractor, Dr Rusi Tarleyarkhan, Dr Adi Tamboli, Jamshed Jagus, Poras Bal-sara and Jehangir Mistry.

ZAPA kids regaled the audience with a Gujarati play after the elections.

Calling Parsi nurses

An opportunity for a two-year stint in the US is knocking at the door of nurses, states the April and May newsletters of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC). Candidates are required to pass the Certificate of Foreign Nursing Graduates exam administered by US embassies and consulates twice a year. Successful candidates would be employed by US hospitals under the H-I non-immigrant professional visa, valid for two years.

"Temporary registration to practice in the employing institution is granted

till such time the formal registration exam is taken and passed," informs the newsletter. Employing institutions will help with education and exam preparation and Dr (Ms) Mehroo Patel at 138 Le Moyne, Oak Park, IL 60302, USA, is ready to provide details.

"A collection of more than 40 books, a set of liturgical items for general prayer ceremonies and accessories for the performance of the baaj ceremony plus some prayer books" have been gifted by Ervad Jehangir Turel, of the Shahenshahi Atash Bahram of Surat, to ZAC, notes the newsletter. Ervad Neriosang Karanjia undertook the transportation of the precious cargo.

The General Electric Company's aircraft engine business group managerial award was conferred on Dr and Ms Aspi Wadia of Cincinnati, Ohio, in March 1988, informs the ZAC newsletter. The Wadias have donated a part of the cash award to ZAC charities.

Armenian Zoroastrians

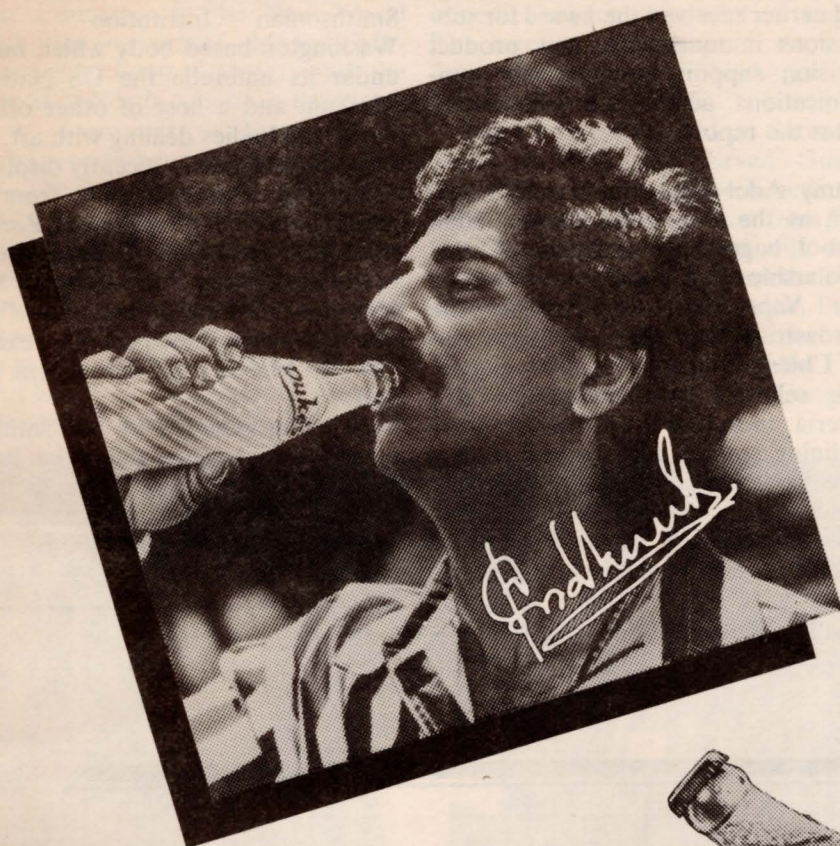
Zoroastrianism in Armenia is a new book authored by Dr James Russell who teaches comparative religion at Columbia University, New York, informs the California Zoroastrian Center's newsletter, *The Zoroastrian* (April and May 1988). Published by Harvard University's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in its Harvard Iranian Series and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the newsletter refers to the scholarly treatise in 578 pages, which deals with the history of the largest non-Iranian group of Zoroastrians, as "a good reply to those who claim the Zoroastrian religion as an exclusively racial circle."

Individual achievers

A 50-year retrospective of the photographic work of Sam Tata has been sponsored by the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photographs, informs *Gavashni* (June 1988), the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec. Starting at the Sadie Bronfman Centre, Montreal, the exhibits will travel to several important art centers across the country, including the University of Toronto's Hart House.

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Tata, whom *Gavashni's* associate editor Ms Dolly Dastoor describes as "this Zoroastrian genius with a camera," was one of the three runners-up for the life excellence award instituted by the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario at the Sixth North American Zoroastrian Congress.

Completing three intensive courses in French within 10 weeks, 15-year-old Natasha Dastoor obtained her national life guard, CPR and aquatic emergency care certificates in April 1988, notes *Gavashni*. Dastoor scored 97 percent in theory for the national certificate which she is said to have attempted in addition to her regular academic work.

For the fourth successive year, the Decision Sciences Institute has bequeathed its instructional innovation award upon Beheruz Sethna, reports *Mid-Day*, February 19, 1988. Sethna teaches management information systems to master of business administration students at Clarkson's School of Management, Columbia. "The course combines the computer specialist area

with finance, marketing and production," adds *Mid-Day*.

The instructional innovation award followed several rounds of a nationwide competition. Bombay-born Sethna, an Indian Institute of Technology graduate who completed his masters in philosophy at Clarkson University, had earlier received the award for submissions in marketing, new product decision support systems and communications across the curriculum, states the report.

Jimmy Adel Engineer, a senior student at the Naperville Central High School, bagged one of the two \$ 1,000 scholarships in journalism awarded by *The Naperville Sun*, informs the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago's (ZAC) June newsletter. The selection was based on five criteria including a 500-word essay outlining reasons for personal preference for print journalism and giving reasons for believing there is a future in the print medium. Engineer is now enrolled in the Northern Illinois University.

Neville Meherji Bilimoria was ad-

judged one of five Nehru Awardees by the *India Tribune*, states the ZAC newsletter. The presentation is annually made to young individuals who excel in their curriculum on a regular basis.

Sasanian silver

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution – the Washington-based body which nurses under its umbrella the US National Museum and a host of other official American bodies dealing with art, history, industry, etc – recently displayed a number of silver objects from the Sasanian period of Iran, notes *Zoroastrian News* (May 1988), the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. (ZAMWI). The artefacts formed part of an exhibition of "Metals from the ancient near east."

A leaflet released by the Smithsonian at the exhibition stated that "metal workers from that area had developed all of the basic techniques of working with metals by 2800 BC," informs the newsletter.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

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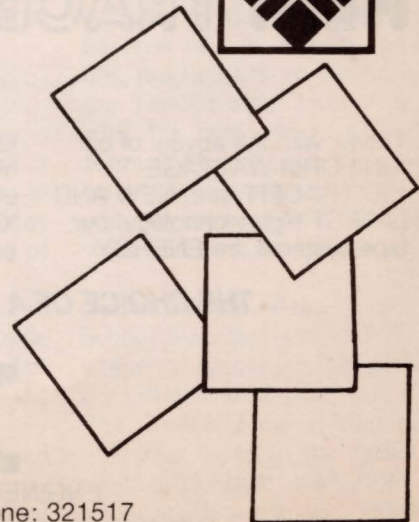
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The determination of the Doongajis

Despite opposition, the Doongaji family has resolved to bring their agiary fire from Bharuch to Godrej Baug in Bombay

Homi J. Rogers

For most Parsis, Bharuch conjures up three set images – the proverbially loquacious Lalloobhai who with his jabber missed the station; Behdin Homaji, its unjustly accused native whose saga of martyrdom is yet deified; and that delicious egg concoction, garnished with nuts and raisins, immortalized as *Bharuchi akuri* in Parsi cuisine – though, not necessarily in the given order.

Soon, for the Parsis in Bombay, there will be one more link with Bharuch, the ancient port city on the Narmada river in Gujarat: the atash kadeh at Godrej Baug on Nepean Sea Road that will house the 261-year-old fire from Bharuch's Pestonji Aslaji Doongaji Agiary. "The trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet were on the lookout for an atash padshah to be consecrated at their Godrej Baug," explains Rustom Doongaji, a third generation descendant of Pestonji, after whom the Agiary is named, "and we were in search of alternative premises to house our ancient fire (see 'A new home for an old fire' *Parsiana*, March 1988)." The 'marriage' is to result in Bombay getting a spanking new agiary by the end of 1989, harmonizing the old with the new.

The Doongajis were a leading stevedore family of Bharuch. "Pestonji used to put *patlas* (wooden planks) on the river to carry ashore the goods from ships," laughs Rustom Doongaji, recalling the business of his ancestors who flourished in Bharuch, one of the early Parsi settlements in India. "We

have a Tower of Silence here," informs Parvez Karanjia, panthaky at Bharuch's Shapurji Sorabji Narielwala Agiary, and the father of Ramiyar, the Bombay Parsi Panchayet gold medalist (profiled in *Parsiana*, May 1986), "which dates back to 1309."

Ironically, a city that can boast of having one of the earliest doongerwadis in India, is today a place where the community is fast dying. "Over 60 percent of the Parsi population here is above 60 years of age," says Eruchshaw Maneckshaw Kapadia, managing trustee of the Bharuch Parsi Panchayet. Homi Minocher Hamawala, the joint managing trustee, adds that he has not witnessed a marriage ceremony between two Bharuch Parsi residents for quite a few years now. According to Bejan Lakdawala who looks after the interests of the Doongaji Agiary at Bharuch, over 70 to 75 percent of people here are past retirement age. "*Janam nathi, maran chhè* (there are no Parsis being born, only dying)," he says with a fatalistic air. "*Aa vasti* (this population)," which Kapadia places at 250, "*ghati-né* 125 *thi* 150 *thay* jaay to navai nahi (could easily dwindle to around 150)."

Like most Parsis, the Doongajis, once the uncrowned kings of Bharuch, have now totally deserted the place. Today, a sprawling three-storeyed house belonging to the family lies forsaken amidst a maze of streets in Doongaji-wad – an area named after the family. There is no Doongaji in Bharuch, the "tribe," as Rustom's

brother Hoshang refers to the large family, having migrated around the turn of the last century to different corners of the country. "My father, Darabsha," reminisces Rustom Doongaji, tracing, for *Parsiana*, the history of the family and other developments on the Agiary, "left Bharuch in 1888 and started business in Kamptee, selling salt. Soon, he became the biggest exporter of hemp." Yet another grandson-of Pestonji set up distilleries in Madhya Pradesh. And Bharuch, once one of the five seats of the ecclesiastical division (panthaks) was soon to become a forgotten El Dorado.

Currently, there are six agiaries in Bharuch, three being managed by the Bharuch Parsi Panchayet. The sons of Pestonji, particularly Bomansha and Nasserwanji who rebuilt the Agiary in 1903 AD at a cost of Rs 15,000 [the earlier premises constructed by Seth Rustomji Maneckji Hirawala of Surat in 1096 YZ (1727 AD) was in a dilapidated condition] provided an equal amount (Rs 15,000) by way of corpus towards the maintenance of the Agiary, and appointed the Panchayet as trustees. The amount has grown over the years, the maintenance of the Agiary being undertaken by the Panchayet from the interest accruing from the corpus. Today, a sum of Rs 4.80 lakhs is held by the Bharuch Panchayet, and will remain with them, even after the fire is brought to Bombay, informs Doongaji. Moreover, the interest on this amount, roughly Rs 48,000 per annum, is to be used only

for performing religious ceremonies of the family's departed members, and will not be available to meet the construction costs of the new premises in Bombay as earlier announced.

While the Doongaji Agiary has been provided for by its far-sighted donors, the Panchayet, according to Kapadia, incurs an annual expenditure of Rs 15,000 to 17,000 on the other agiaries. Kapadia questions this expense to keep the fires burning when there is hardly any Parsi visiting the agiaries.



The Doongaji Agiary at Bharuch with its octagonal tower (above)

Model of Godrej Baug's new agiary

Even the Doongaji Agiary has, by the admission of its own panthaky, Ervad Dara Sidhwa, only five people visiting it daily; a figure that stands corrected to three, by two of its daily visitors, Bejan Lakdawala, and Feroze Lakdawala, a Mangalore tiles merchant and building contractor whose shop stands directly below the Agiary, on a parallel low-lying road.

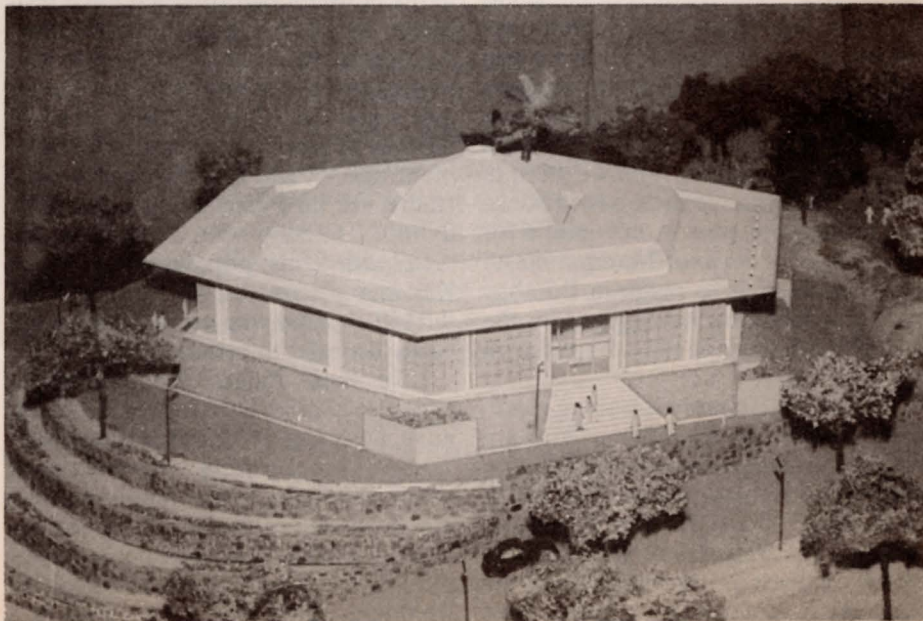
The Agiary stays closed most of the day, the panthaky who lives across the street opening the padlock, as this writer was to witness, only at the time of changing of the gahs to say the *boi* prayers. Sidhwa, however, denies this charge, stating that he keeps the Agiary open all day, except when he goes

out for some work, and attributes this charge as a canard being spread by the Doongaji family to justify the shifting of the fire. Sidhwa is piqued that he has not been consulted either regarding the future of the Agiary, or his own future. "The Doongajis did not have the courtesy to ask me whether I would like to continue as their panthaky at Bombay," says an aggrieved Sidhwa. But, as the Doongajis clarify, the appointment of the panthaky once the fire is shifted to Bombay, lies not in their hands, but of the Bombay Panchayet's which will manage the Agiary. The Panchayet, it is gathered, wishes to appoint a learned priest (of the likes of the late Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji) as the panthaky here: one who would conduct religious classes for the Baug children, and impart knowledge of the religion. At the recommendation of the Doongajis, the Panchayet has even agreed to give the panthaky a flat at Godrej Baug though the tenancy would be subject to his service contract at the Agiary.

Sidhwa, the Agiary's panthaky for the last 15 years, sulks at his lot, and breaks his self-imposed silence to lament over the panthak offers at various places he let go at the behest of the aged Nariman Khurshedji Cama, the Bharuch-based trustee of the Agiary, and a relation of the Doongajis. According to Rustom Doongaji however, the family proposes to offer Sidhwa an alternate panthak in a village agiary, besides giving him a golden handshake by honoring him with a

shawl and 15 years gratuity. "Why does he fear so much if he can get job offers elsewhere as he himself states?" questions Bejan Lakdawala.

But while personal differences can be ironed out, and the sentiments of a few assuaged, can the religious feelings of a community be allayed on the sensitive question of moving a fire across water and over a distance of more than 300 kms? "We are aware of the problem," counters Doongaji, "and have sought the advice of our learned high priests on this matter." The opinions diverge. A section of the orthodox, swearing by the Bombay-based Gujarati author Dr Cawas Gotlaseth, aver that it is sacrilegious to move the fire under electric cables or over sewers. Although Dastur Dr Hormazdyar Mirza declined to discuss the issue with *Parsiana*, he had already conveyed his views to the Doongajis: a sacred fire can be brought within a few hours by being transported in a car or a truck. However, Dastur Dr Feroze Kotwal, High Priest at the Wadia Atash Bahram, Bombay, who has closely co-ordinated in this matter with Ervad Jehangir Turel of Surat, is of the opinion that just as the ancient Zoroastrians brought the *aalat* (ingredients) for the Iranshah by the land route from Khorasan, the adarian fire should be taken from Bharuch by foot, with due prayers, *paavis* (furrows) being dug across the fields. "All Parsi pockets along the way will welcome the padshah, and *jagriti* (awareness) will be created in these places," enth-



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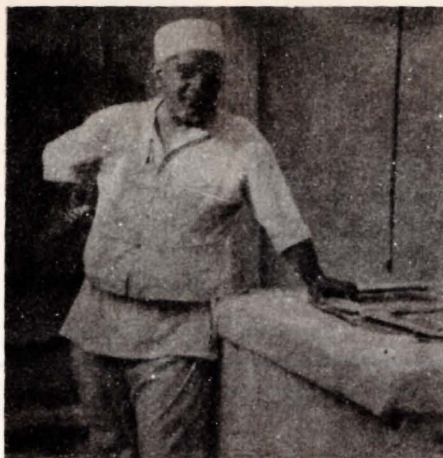


uses Kotwal. Dastur Dr Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Bahram in Bombay, on the other hand, is not so enthusiastic, stating that it is not possible in today's time to bring a holy fire across such a long distance without risking its defilement, and hence, possible lowering of its *oddha* (status). This view is shared by the Agiary's present panthaky, who feels that the Doongajis in their misguided zeal are endangering the powers of their ancient fire.

Yet, what is of importance is that the residents of Godrej Baug, the immediate beneficiaries, do not view the fire-temple as an adarian or dadgah, but as a place of God amidst them. Homyar Nasirabadwalla, a Parsi Panchayet allottee at Godrej Baug, and son of Gustadji, the panthaky at Jamshedpur Agiary, recalls that the flame was flown from Bombay to Jamshedpur, and yet is revered there in its original form as an adarian. "We were advised, though, not to charter a plane," says Doongaji, who had thought of this approach, "as our high priests asserted that the fire must touch the earth."

While the priests and the orthodox elements continue to express their doubts, Baug residents look forward to having the Doongaji Agiary in their midst. Nariman Sarkari promises to go to the Agiary in all the five gahs, a thought that should gladden the hearts of the Doongajis who are investing, at the instance of the Panchayet, a sum of Rs 10 lakhs towards the cost of the construction of the Agiary, and a further approximated Rs 50,000 towards its transfer.

The Doongajis are confident of raising this sum amongst themselves, and have already collected Rs 8,10,000, the maximum contribution of Rs 2,75,000 coming from Keki Hormusji Doongaji. "There was a kind of appeal for funds," says Bhesadia, a Godrej Baug resident, "during the foundation stone laying ceremony" held earlier this year. (The appeal was made by Dr Aspi Golwalla, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet at the function.) But Doongaji disclaims the need for any such donation. Homi Mehta, the president of the Godrej Baug Welfare Association, a body formed by the re-



The Doongaji Agiary has, by the admission of its own panthaky, only five people visiting it daily

sidents to foster friendships and hold sporting games, says that while the Association has not applied itself to any fund-raising drive, it may plan to do so in the future, if the need arises. The Doongajis however may not call for any monies from the community, being already within close proximity of the amount insisted on by the Panchayet. The balance amount can even be raised by them, "by selling the Agiary plot in Bharuch, and the row of houses flanking it in the *wad*, if need be," states Doongaji. Land prices at Baharkot, the area outside the Bharuch Fort, where the Agiary is sited, have fallen very low, though, informs Feroze Lakdawala, as the area is fraught with riots; even on a quiet evening, it is not uncommon to see security personnel patrolling the streets here. "But, we shall pull through," asserts a confident Rustom Doongaji for whom the transfer of the Agiary will be a fulfillment of a dream nurtured by his uncle Edulji and grand uncle Khurshedji. The latter's wife Shirinbai, now 91, is the widely respected matriarch of the Doongaji tribe.

"It was in 1960," narrates Doongaji, "that Edulji, grandson of Jamshed Pestonji Doongaji, visited Delhi, and observed that while the capital city of

India had a dadgah, there was no adarian there. Edulji," continues Doongaji, "conceived of transferring the Agiary fire to Delhi." As per Kapadia, though there were around 2,000 Parsis then in Bharuch, the premonition of dwindling numbers, combined with a desire to move the fire to a city which had no adarian (as against Bharuch which had six others) led Edulji to move a proposal to shift the ancestral family Agiary from Bharuch. "Although the Agiary is totally financed by us, the Bharuch Panchayet manages it for us," says Doongaji, "so we put the proposal of shifting the Agiary before the anjuman (local community)." Recounts Kapadia: "The proposal to permit the shifting of the atash was then unanimously accepted by the 77 people present at the meeting, including all the seven mobeds of Bharuch's agiaries." Today, however, the only living mobed, of the seven who voted, says he never agreed to having the Agiary shifted. This reflects a solidarity with the panthaky who, while considering the decision a fait accompli, yet nurses doubts on how the Panchayet can let a fire leave its limits on the basis of a consensus passed over 25 years ago.

Even if a fresh mandate were to be called upon now, the Parsi population in Bharuch would agree to the padshah being moved. Lakdawala's *fui* (father's sister) envisages better days for the Agiary in Bombay, with more behdins (laity) than just her nephew and two others. Soonamai Daruwala, looking up from her kusti-weaving spindle, expresses the feelings of a mother who is saddened by the marriage of her daughter into a distant family, yet happy that the daughter would be settled in conditions much superior to her *mahiru's* (mother's place). Kapadia, articulating the same feeling, says that all Parsis should be gladdened by the padshah's migration for, with the lodging of the fire in a bigger city, "*lamba varso sudhi padshah jalvayla rahsé, puri parvarish thasé...* (the fire will be cared for well, and burn bright and long)." Dinshaw Pajnigara is however saddened because he feels that the present panthaky will, for no fault of his, lose his job: the curdling drop of lemon in a bowl of milk.

Yet another dissenting note, and a stronger voice does it command, is

from the Agiary's third behdin : Sam Sethna, the owner of an ice factory and a couple of cinema houses in Bharuch. Sethna, one of the regular devotees at the Agiary and reportedly sympathetic to the plight of the panthaky, was not initially in favor of the shift. Matters were further complicated when Bejan Lakdawala, fearing that Sethna would move a stay order to the shifting of the Agiary, and throw a spanner in the works, filed a caveat in court that if anything is done towards the same, he should be informed first. Sethna was served a

notice, and matters could have reached a flash point, but as Kapadia put it, "*samjhu varg ni samjhauti ne abhinandan chhē* (we praise the understanding displayed)." Later, Sethna changed his opposition. Though not responding to *Parsiana*, nor meeting with the Doongajis in Bombay to express his dissent on any point, Sethna's silence seems to express consent. Doongaji argues that if it was a fire he wished to protect, there are five others in Bharuch to care for. The mighty Wakharia family's Agiary, for example, is in shambles : the fire has been

desecrated, and the building stands in ruined surroundings. Lessons from the past, and portents for the future, have guided the Parsis in Bharuch into bidding a fond farewell to one of their oldest fire-temples.

Despite its 80-odd years, the present Agiary edifice stands fortress-like upon a raised embankment close to the now gently flowing, yet sometimes ravagingly destructive Narmada river. One enters the Agiary courtyard from a street, running parallel to the river. The little boats bobbing on the waters can be seen clearly from the Agiary's pillared portico. Opened to public on a befitting hamkara: *Ava mah, Ava roj* in 1903, the Doongaji Agiary with its two wells, storerooms, a prayer room, may soon be converted into a dharamshala (inn), or used for any other charitable purpose, as the Doongajis are loath to sell it unless pecuniary restraints force them to do so. The intention to devote the place to community welfare has partially aided in softening Sethna's stand, though how many Parsis would take advantage of the inn (or, if it is made into a school, of the institution), is a matter of conjecture. The Jijibhai Dadabhai Zarthosti Nishal (school) lies closed and crumbling just a few furlongs away, in mute testimony to the passing away of the Parsi population, and the irregularly shaped octagonal watch-tower of the Agiary may soon provide it secluded company.

While the Doongaji Agiary eluded the Delhi populace due to differences within the Doongaji family, despite the unanimous approval of the Bharuch Anjuman, its coming to Bombay is a certainty. "Burjorji, the eldest Doongaji amidst us today – at 91, a month older than Shirinbai – and his branch of the family were opposed to the shifting of the padshah to Delhi," states Rustom Doongaji. "But this time, we have obtained a 100 percent approval from our tribe," he smiles. All the Doongajis, even those in places as far-flung as Raigad in Madhya Pradesh, have welcomed the shifting to Bombay, and Rustom, who has written to each and every living Doongaji the world over, has received their approval in writing, accompanied in most cases by donations towards assuring the fructification of the project. The magic word which has mater-

Gleanings on Godrej Baug

On a scarp of a hill off Nepean Sea Road, overlooking the sea, is Bombay's newest Punchayet-allotted colony for Parsis, the Godrej Baug. Built over a vast plot of land that the Punchayet sethias had purchased with rare foresight years ago, the Godrej Baug houses in its four constructed buildings, 110 Parsi families. The first allotments on three buildings were made here around 1984, on a 50:50 basis by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the Godrej Foundation which built all the blocks at its expense on Punchayet land. Allotments in the fourth block were made by the Punchayet, on recommendations from the Rayomand Committee which contributed to the construction of this 20-apartment block.

Approachable by a tarred motorable road from behind the Hyderabad Estate, the colony can also be reached by descending a *pag-dandi* (dust track) from a little below Pherozechah Mehta (Hanging) Gardens, under its Sunset View-point. This route is generally favored by the younger residents who get an empty bus from Hanging Gardens to the city's business districts and back.

Despite the inconvenience in approach, most residents – even the aged – find it a pleasure staying amidst terraced gardens and well-kept Parsi surroundings. "The climb is over within 10 minutes or so; it would take you longer to reach home if you were staying in

the suburbs," argues Nariman Sarkari. There is also a taxi stand at Simla Estate, a few furlongs away.

All flats are on rental basis. Though construction costs on virgin land must have been high, and the locality commands sky-high prices, most residents, many of whom are retired Godrej personnel, feel that the rent charged is very modest – Rs 400 and Rs 550 for one and two-room flats respectively.

However, being a Punchayet-managed Baug, ostensibly with the intention of housing the less affluent, Parsi residents here are not allowed to install air-conditioners. Recently, a proposal for cable television in the Baug was shot down by the trustees on the same grounds. As one resident quipped: "Most people here are poor; they can only afford to have one car."

An agiary, within an already thriving Baug is the natural culmination for "all things good and Parsi," to twist a proverb. As Ms Dhun Chhore, wife of Nariman, a Baug athornan who had joined in at the foundation stone-laying jashan ceremony, says, "We will get a *chokhi jagah* (pure place) to sit and pray – away from the *gargas* (domestic help) and *paowallas* (bread-men)." And, her daughter, Aban, chopping vegetables, adds: "The youngsters here will find their spiritual bearings. If not daily, at least during exam times they will get religious solace."

ialized matriarch Shirinbai's dream has been 'Bombay.' Her ancient family fire, brought to the city most teeming of Parsis, will have its future preservation assured, even if it be at the altar of orthodoxy, or at the expense of the Doongajis having no further say in matters regarding the administration of the Agiary which would house their atash. (The Agiary will be solely managed by the Bombay Punchayet which has turned down the Doongajis' representation for a seat on the management of the Agiary.)

The Doongajis now have to file their papers with the Charity Commissioner at Baroda for moving the fire, though there is some debate on whether this must be done, or can be dispensed with, as only the fire is being shifted, not the Agiary. While the application has not yet been made, Doongaji calculates that the trek from Bharuch as worked out by Sorab Katpitia, the chief executive of the Surat Parsi Panchayet, with Ervad Turel and Dastur Kotwal, will begin in the winter of 1988. Every night, for at least 20 nights, the caravan of mobeds and behdins from the villages will move, dispelling the darkness of December nights with the radiance of light from the holy fire. "The Punchayet is keen we bring the fire here soon, lest we change our minds," jokes Doongaji,

adding that in case the Agiary premises are not ready by then, the fire will be lodged in a Punchayet-managed agiary in Bombay.

In the meanwhile, work at Godrej Baug is on in full swing. Naoroji Godrej, the founding figure of the Baug, visits it unfailingly every Saturday. And construction work proceeds not only on the Agiary building, but on a complex of residential flats too which are fast nearing completion. Strange are the ways of God, indeed. An Agiary which had been witness to the gradual dispersion of its behdins, will now witness a fresh influx of them. Within a few years, the Godrej Baug, currently housing 110 families in four buildings, is expected to grow to be one of the largest Parsi colonies, with over 15 buildings soaring over the Bombay skyline. It is equally strange, an anachronism, that Bombay's newest Agiary should house, second to Fountain's Banaji Limji Agiary, the city's oldest flame.

This year, probably, will be the last time that the muktad prayers for the Doongaji family will be said at Bharuch. "Thirteen tables are laid out," informs Sidhwa, and the Doongajis had even advertised for a second priest to assist during the Gatha days. Next year, as per family requirements, the prayers will be intoned in the new Agi-

ary premises, atop the crest of a hill overlooking the blue waters of the Arabian Sea, instead of the rain-fed torrents of the Narmada. And Pestonji, along with his eight sons - Jamshedji, Mancherji, Dhanjisha, Navroji, Khurshedji, Bomansha, Nusserwanji and Dinshaw - could well lay out the *patlas* once again (this time over a vaster expanse of water, though), and the family transport their portly selves over a steep hill face, puffing and panting, to reach their ancestral fire's new residence.

"Yes, the climb uphill is steep,"

An Agiary which had been witness to the gradual dispersion of its behdins, will now witness a fresh influx of them

agrees Nasirabadwalla, a resident and one of the four priests from the Baug to perform the jashan ceremony when the Agiary's foundation stone was laid earlier this year. The approach could daunt many a city Parsi from regularly visiting the Agiary, particularly since there are two other agiaries (Thoothi Agiary at Walkeshwar and Saher Agiary at Breach Candy) already in the vicinity, though at least one of them is equally inaccessible. So, is Baharkot's 110-population Agiary going to be a restricted affair for just 110 families and the Doongaji tribe? Or will it, with the envisaged growth at Godrej Baug, and the possible laying out of better roads, including a pathway from Doongerwadi, which lies just behind the Baug, become the new center for Zoroastrianism in Bombay, with its proposed community hall, library and religious instruction classes?

The Doongaji Agiary stands at the crossroads of time, looking back on a glorious past, a stagnant present and a rosy future. Till such a time, there is an assurance in Sarkari's assertion backed by that of most other residents: "*Hamé Agiary né nibhavshu*" (We will look after the Agiary)." And the ring of confidence in their voices assures us, in the words of Nasirabadwalla, that "every Parsi has yet a little of religion left in him."

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Vyara vignette

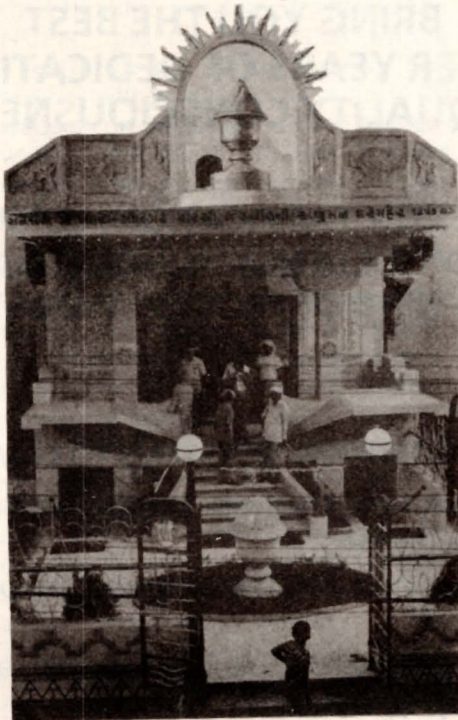
The Vyara Songadh Anjuman shows the community that even 100 families can take the initiative in rebuilding an agiary and hosting a national meet

Niloofer J. Madon

It's a long journey from Bombay to Vyara, and a tiring one, if you happen to be driving under the relentless, scorching sun. Prior to the monsoons, everything is dry and fallow. Women walking with water pots and men herding tired, ill-fed cattle are familiar sights amidst the browns and listless greens. That is, until you come upon Vyara village where a positive burst of color greets you. People are everywhere; both sides of the bazaar streets are lined with narrow shops, and hawkers have no compunction in occupying a substantial portion of the unbelievably narrow lanes, making it even more difficult for the incessantly honking cars to squeeze past. Make a couple of turns here and there, until you reach the main bazaar road where you will find the newly rebuilt Nusserwanji Petit Vyara Songadh Parsi Jarthosti Anjuman Dar-e-Meher, originally established on November 2, 1895.

The new facade is impressive. A cement replica of a fire in an afarganyu meets the eye as you enter the gate. Past a flight of steps, across the veranda, you reach a circular porch where you may remove your footwear before stepping onto the marble-floored inner agiary, spacious and gleaming.

The 92-year-old agiary had been repaired four times in the past 10 years, reports Dr Bahadur P. Jokhi, president of the Vyara Songadh Parsi Jarthosti Anjuman in the souvenir in Gujarati released at the inauguration of the rebuilt agiary on March 21, 1988. Nearly 100 families make use of the agiary, says Jokhi. Though in the other villages of Gujarat the population is



declining due to migration to the cities, Vyara's youth population is substantial, believes Jokhi.

"For our small Anjuman, rebuilding the agiary was a herculean task," admits Jokhi. Despite the periodic repairs the building could not be saved "and after much debate, we decided to undertake this project. We did not lack the workers. Our young friends were very eager but the chief obstacle was funds. The members of our Anjuman are middle-class people — there are no rich industrialists. So we appealed to Zoroastrians in this country and abroad to come to our help. I'm glad to note that some Zoroastrians who had not even seen Vyara, or heard the name, came forward with their donations because it was a religious cause. Donations were received from far off Calcutta and Madras on

the strength of our written appeals. The members of our Anjuman too gave their mite from their small savings. Seeing the ease with which we collected the funds, we feel that we were helped by a heavenly hand," remarks Jokhi who has been the president of the anjuman for the last 25 years.

When approximately four and a half lakh rupees were collected, work on the agiary building and the adjoining mobed quarters began in 1987. To collect the remaining amount needed, the trustees approached Hong Kong philanthropist Shahpurji Fakirji Jokhi whose family has its roots in Vyara. Jokhi donated three lakh rupees which more than covered the deficit in the estimated construction cost of the agiary building. (Jokhi has also built the Ava Baug and Sohrab Baug in Navsari.) The donation will be utilized towards building a new hall behind the agiary for community get-togethers on festive occasions like marriages, etc. Though work on the hall has not begun yet, it will be named the Bai Manijeh Jokhi Hall in memory of Shahpurji's mother. In addition, they are planning to build a shopping center in place of the old mobed quarters, with the top floors housing some members of the Anjuman.

"We have done this work very economically," says the Anjuman president: "My co-trustees and other Zoroastrians provided tractor trolleys and other vehicles to transport materials like cement, wood, metal, etc to the site of the building. We have also succeeded in getting cement at a lower

rate and the government forest department has provided us wood at an economical rate. Jehanbux T. Billimoria, who made frequent trips from Bombay to Vyara, designed the agiary free of cost. The expenditure on the electrical fittings of the agiary building and the mobed quarters were borne by Shiavaxsha Dotiwalla who donated almost 50,000 rupees."

On March 21, 1988 a crowd of around 2,000 persons had gathered to witness the inauguration of the rebuilt Dar-e-Meher at the hands of Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Jamshed Guzder. The High Priest of the Navsari Atash Bahram, Dastur Meherji Meherjirana, presided over the func-

compliment brings a nod and a smile to his tired face. Panthaky says that the agiary serves Vyara and its surrounding villages. The attendance at the agiary itself is not high with a maximum of two persons a day, unless it is an auspicious day or a festive occasion. His job involves regular travel to the neighboring villages to perform ceremonies for families residing there. His religious duties are shared by his wife Dina who prepares the *daran* (unleavened bread) and *malido* (a traditional sweet), and in the absence of the chasniwalla, personally delivers the *chasni* (consecrated food) to the families concerned. She says that the people here are very orthodox and will not

has not had a single holiday in three years – not even to Surat which is his hometown. The 57-year-old Panthaky who had formerly worked at agiaries in Surat, Bombay, Poona and Secunderabad acknowledges that the Dar-e-Meher is a "24 hours *nu bandhan* (bondage)." Though the fire is only a *dadgah* he is loathe to leave it unattended because it has been kept burning for 93 years and if he does not look after it, who will? When he tendered his resignation some years ago, it was not accepted. Panthaky's two navar-maratab sons, studying outside Vyara, assist their father in the agiary when they are home on holiday. Their sister is employed in Vyara. The family is nonetheless happy with the new Dar-e-Meher and the mobed quarters, and grateful that at the inauguration celebrations each member was presented Rs 1,100 as a token of the Anjuman's appreciation.

Anjuman of agriculturists

Three hundred Zoroastrians from 100 families scattered in Vyara, Songadh, Bajipura, Kapura, Chapawadi and Rani-Amba are affiliated to the Vyara Songadh Parsee Jarthosti Anjuman. Almost all the members are agriculturists, 40 percent of whom own irrigated lands, a very important consideration in drought afflicted Gujarat. Since 1985, when the government formed sugar cooperatives in the area, most farms grow sugarcane which is cut by government workers and even processed at government factories. The other crops cultivated are paddy, groundnut, vegetables and fruits. While some persons are employed in the nearby industrial areas, many are engaged in family businesses which include poultry farming, petrol pumps, transport, ice factory, etc. The only Parsi doctor in the area is the Anjuman's president Dr Bahadur Jokhi. Women and girls, if not looking after the home, are either typists or teach in the various schools in the towns and villages. Though there are numerous schools in the vicinity as also the R. P. Chauhan Arts and Commerce College, a student keen to learn science must go to a college either in Bardoli or Surat, while those wishing to study agriculture need to go to Navsari. Social functions and youth get-togethers are not



(Above)
Bahadur Jokhi
(Right)
Firozeshah
Panthaky
(Far right)
The abode of
the fire
while the agiary
was being
reconstructed



tion. Many speeches were read and shawls, gifts and other tokens of appreciation presented, all carefully recorded on a more than two-hour-long video cassette.

The person who is naturally proud and happy about the whole event is the panthaky of the Dar-e-Meher, Ervad Firozeshah Dadabhoy Panthaky, who has been with the agiary for 20 years. Pointing to the agiary complex he asks, "*Sachhu bolo, kevi lagech* (Tell me truthfully, how does it look?)" A

carry home their *chasni* after the prayers, as happens in Bombay from where she comes.

Rumi, one of Panthaky's sons, is angry that his father has to perform all the work single-handedly. His responsibilities include the cleaning of the entire Dar-e-Meher. During the muktads he is the only priest officiating as outside help from Surat would prove costly – Rs 50 per day with food and transport to be paid by Panthaky to the assisting mobed. Rumi says his father

frequently convened by the Anjuman though the families do meet each other informally on many occasions. Many are active members of the Lions Club and the Rotary Club of Vyara and Songadh. Apart from that, there is always the television for entertainment.

The Anjuman's cash assets are worth two lakh rupees. The immovable properties comprise the agiary and the mobed quarters, the dokhma with its six acres of surrounding land, a nassakhana and eight residential houses. Looking after these properties is the main aim of the 11 trustees of the Anjuman, three of whom must compulsorily resign every three years when fresh elections take place. Trustees are eligible for reelection and usually the elections are uncontested. The present trustees of the Anjuman are: president Dr Bahadur P. Jokhi, vice-president Rusi H. Parabia, secretary Faramroze M. Jokhi, and committee members Dadabhai B. Dordi, Pirojshaw S. Dordi, Farokh B. Kasad, Percy B. Buhariwalla, Khushroo J. Jokhi, Jal S. Kasad, Dinyar H. Jokhi and Parvez B. Amaria. (It must be mentioned here that Jokhi and Dordi seem to be the standard surnames for people in Vyara – a result of the numerous intermarriages between these families.)

Though most of the Anjuman's history is unfortunately lost to the community, it can be gleaned from old reports in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* and the *Rast Gofar* that the Vyara Songadh Anjuman has been in existence for about 125 years, notes Rusi Bhesania in his editorial in the Dar-e-Meher souvenir. In a report in Gujarati in the *Rast Gofar* dated February 15, 1863 it is stated: "We are pleased to announce that the Vyara Songadh *ughrat* (community financed) dokhma has been built in Vyara under the leadership of Seth Khurshedji Noshirwan Cama. It was inaugurated according to Zoroastrian rites on February 5, 1863 and 2,000 Parsis from the surrounding villages gathered to witness the occasion..."

The members of the Anjuman presented a *manpatra* (citation) to Cama which was reprinted in the *Rast Gofar*: "Although there is a substantial Zoroastrian population in Vyara-Songadh and the surrounding villages, there was no provision for a dokhma. Whenever there was a death, the body

had to be taken over a long distance where a dokhma was available. This caused double sorrow to the bereaved family. By building this dokhma you, and the others who have helped you in this good cause, have alleviated much of their sorrow."

Furthermore a letter dated February 8, 1863 written by Surat resident Dosabhai Pallonji Joshi and reprinted in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of February 16, 1863 states: "On our way to the inau-

"Some Zoroastrians
who had not even
seen Vyara, or heard
the name, came
forward with
donations towards
this religious cause"

guration ceremony of the Vyara-Songadh dokhma we passed through a village called Bajipura where there is a 35-year-old Parsi *pithu* (liquor den). It is run by 20-year-old Meherwanji Navroji Bajipura who lives in Mallesar, near Navsari. Meherwanji, like his father, welcomes any Zoroastrian passing through Bajipura. The travellers may not only rest in his house but are also offered meals, and if the traveller is a mobed he also gets ashodad. Such is the largeheartedness of Meherwanji. Some 800 or more Zoroastrians passed through this village on the day of the dokhma inauguration and this generous Parsi welcomed each one of them. This made a great impression on everyone."

Thirtytwo years later, the inauguration of the Petit Dar-e-Meher was given coverage in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of November 23, 1895: "This agiary was built by the philanthropic Bai Dinbai Nusserwanji Petit in memory of her late husband Nusserwanji Manekji Petit. On November 17, the religious ceremonies to mark the inauguration of the agiary were completed and it was declared open. The rest of the agiary building is divided into two parts. One part is exclusively for the use of the yozdathregars. Two rooms on the first floor comprise a dharmashala for Parsis coming from other villages and cities. The building is approximately

70 by 30 feet with a rear compound admeasuring 88 by 48 feet. In the compound are the mobed quarters and a well. Besides the priests (who performed the inauguration ceremonies) there were 300 Parsis present at the inaugural. The agiary was named the Seth Nusserwanji Manekji Petit Vyara Dar-e-Meher. One person pointed out to the Anjuman that there was a condition laid down by Bai Dinbai that only mobeds and those bringing dead bodies from neighboring villages could use the agiary rooms. He suggested that there should be a correction, and all Zoroastrians coming from other places should be allowed to use them... It was later decided that all except women could make use of the dharmashala."

Hosting Federation meet

The story of this small but enterprising Vyara Songadh Anjuman does not end with the rebuilding of their Dar-e-Meher. In April this year they also undertook to host about 100 delegates and guests attending the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India. The decision to accept this responsibility, says president Jokhi, was taken at the Federation meeting in Devka (in March 1987) when member anjumans were requested to come forth to host the Federation meetings of 1988. Almost all the trustees insisted that they did not have to undertake much work for the meeting. Rusi Parabia, well-known businessman of the area and the vice-president of the Anjuman, made sure his Kell's Hotel at Ukai (25 kms from Vyara) was available for the members and invitees of the Federation. The Federation meeting was held under a shamiana on the lawns of the Hotel itself. While the food arrangements were entrusted to a Navsari caterer, the Anjuman trustees and helpers looked after the comfort of their guests. The result was a very well organized meeting, enjoyed by one and all despite the oppressive April heat.

Having inaugurated a new Dar-e-Meher and held a Federation meeting, the Vyara Songadh Anjuman is not content to rest on its laurels. Come November 17, 1995, it will be celebrating, with renewed vigor, the centenary of the Petit Dar-e-Meher...

The Parabias of Rani-Amba



Starting out as a transporter, Rusi Parabia diversified into chemicals, and now he and his family run Ukai's largest hotel

Niloofer J. Madon

At Ukai town in Gujarat, there stands a two-storeyed crescent-shaped structure known as the Kell's Hotel. The Hotel boasts 18 rooms, a dormitory-cum-conference room and a restaurant. Yet, for its owner Rusi Hiraji Parabia, the running of the Hotel – the latest addition to a string of 11 companies he already owns – is merely a “hobby.”

“This business is due to practical knowledge; anybody can do it. No training is required. I am only a matriculate!” says the well-built, bespectacled proprietor seated in the lobby of his Hotel, which was the venue of the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in April this year. Parabia is soft-spoken and calm despite the numerous interruptions that come his way – guests wanting to wish him farewell [“*Koi takleef thai hoi tau maaf*

karjo (forgive the inconvenience),” he says], an important telephone call from Surat, a tired guest wanting to order a special vegetarian meal for the night (Parabia takes it upon himself to order the dishes), his little grandson Arzan wanting his undivided attention (which he gets for a few loving moments).

A former salesman for Noble Paints, Parabia's vast readings and interest in the manufacture of chemicals took him to the Wiscose Paper Mills in Dandeli, in North Karnataka, where he learnt about lime manufacture. Later, after accumulating the necessary finance from relatives, friends and banks, Parabia started the Dadar Lime Manufacturing Company in 1976 and the Ahura Chemical Industries in 1980. Before venturing into chemicals, Parabia already had a business in transportation and materials handling.

As for the Hotel, Parabia was merely the financier of the project, but when the original owner could not complete it, Parabia took it over. Today, the Hotel is run by his son Kerman after whom the Kell's Hotel is named (Kellu is Kerman's pet name). Kerman's pretty wife Jasmine also helps.

The list of his companies is impressive: Rusi Hiraji, the forest contractors, cut trees on government land and auction the wood; Ahura Chemicals and the Dadar Lime Manufacturing Company make chemicals, especially calcium oxide for paper mills; Ahura Traders, supply writing and printing paper to wholesalers and traders; Rani-Amba Enterprises, the labor contractors, get the coal unloaded

On the lawns of Hotel Kell's (from left) Jasmine, Rusi, Aban and Kerman Parabia

from the railway wagons, stacked and crushed; Coal Handling Associates, transport the coal to the mill sites; N.K. Mogul, a softwood business, provides the raw material for the paper industry and as an alternative to coal for industrial boilers; and Kelly Enterprises, hires out its two loaders and operators for raw materials like coal, sand and grit.

Apart from these businesses and the Hotel, Parabia also continues the traditional business of the area – farming – and has cultivated 2,000 mango trees, 1,200 coconut trees and 38 varieties of fruits and vegetables on his farm at Rani-Amba where he resides. Parabia's wife Aban is mainly interested in the farming business, but she also takes care of the customers and salesmen who frequent their residence. All the companies are housed in a single office building in Rani-Amba with branch offices in Surat and Bombay. With a total work force of 237, the companies together record a turnover of Rs 1.5 crores. The Hotel, by itself has a turnover of Rs 30 to 35 lakhs.

Musing over the growth of his companies, Parabia notes philosophically: "*Manas né ék lakh rupiyo kamava ghan ni mehnat karvi paréch; Ék na paanch banava ghanu careful rehvü paréch; panté paanch na pachaas, né pachaas na sittér lakh karé thaich té potané nathi maalam partu* (A man needs to work very hard to earn his first lakh;

he has to be very careful in order to increase the one lakh into five; but how his five become 50 and the 50, 70, he himself doesn't know!)"

Nonetheless, steering companies is hard work and Parabia has carved out a daily routine which he follows rigorously: "Everyday I get up at 5 o'clock and start for my walk at 5.30. I come back at 6.20 and by 7.30 I am ready to go to the farm. At 9.30 I go to the office. At noon I break for lunch and rest till 3 o'clock." Then, it is back to the office till six, to the Hotel from 7 to 9, dinner at 9 and to bed at 10. Never mind this 17-hour day, says Parabia simply, "If there is no work, I will go mad!"

In this tight schedule, Parabia nevertheless makes time for his numerous social activities. Apart from being the vice-president of the Vyara-Songadh Jarthosti Anjuman, Parabia has been the sarpanch of the Rani-Amba village for the past 15 years, is the Lions Club deputy district governor for district 323-F, the vice-president of the Nutan Vidya Mandir, the English-medium school in Songadh, and a delegate to the Parsi Zoroastrian Matrimonial Court in Surat.

Unhappy that youngsters do not start their own businesses, Parabia thinks that maybe it is due to their not wanting to take risks in an unstable and fluctuating market, but adds that "Man can do anything, anywhere, if he is interested."

CONGRESS SIDELIGHTS

continued from page 23

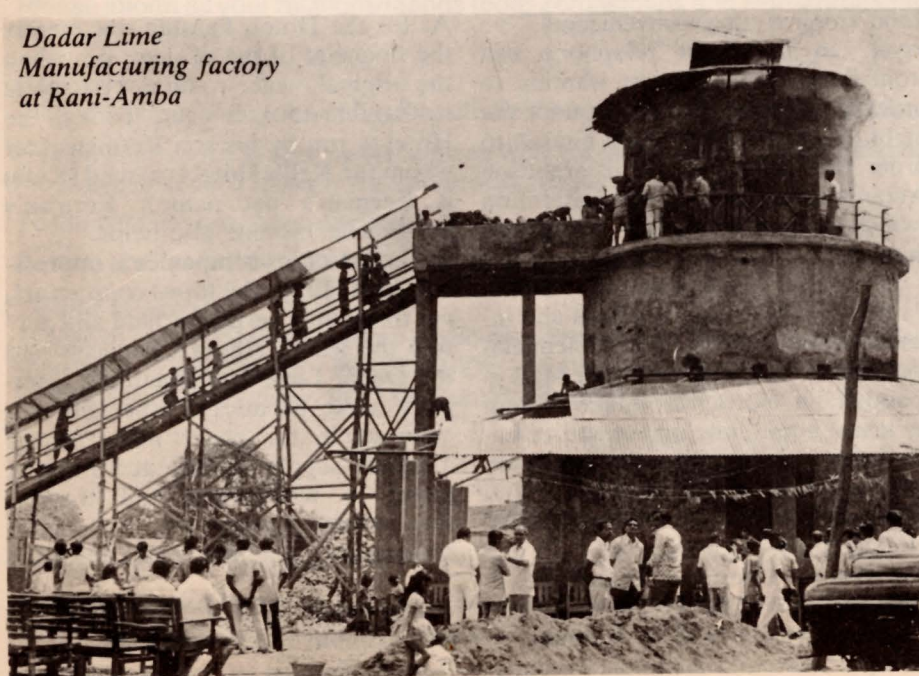
American cultural stresses, coping with the religion and traditions, the issue of conversion, factors influencing the priesthood, values and ethics, the identity crisis, etc. They had Manchester University's Dr Alan Williams and Zoroastrian Studies' Khojeste Mistree as resource scholars and at the end of the workshop a representative of each group summarized the group's discussions to the whole gathering. New friendships sparked and old ones rekindled as the young savored the Jasavala-catered dinner and danced away the night at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr, adds the newsletter.

Instructors of religious education from Alberta, California, Ontario, Houston, Pittsburgh, New York, Montreal and Vancouver discussed teaching methods. Lesson plans were exchanged and suggestions recorded. It was generally felt that the teachers needed to update their own religious knowledge and, even more strongly, that parental involvement and education was necessary for the successful religious education of the children.

Dr Keki Bhote of Chicago provided a summation based upon questionnaires distributed to the audience at the end of each session. In this he was assisted by Parvez Pavri who had drawn up the questionnaires and coordinated the responses.

The newsletter distributed the credits for the success of the Congress: Minoo Treasurywala who headed the programs committee; Dr Dhun Norja who had liaised with the Constellation Hotel – the site of the conference where many of the out-of-town delegates were housed; Jamshed Mavalwala, whose brain-child was the institution of the excellence awards; Meher and Jal Panthaky who collected data for the North American directory; Dinshaw Kanga who designed the banner and the cover pages of the program, the directory and the Congress announcements; Merwan Dubash who monitored the finance; Dinaz Dotiwala who did all the art work and Yasmine Bhaya who "created a most unusual banner" with the Ashofarohar decked with silk flowers, felt and beads; Patricia Mavalwala who handled the registration procedures; and Putli Mirza who billeted out-of-town delegates with local Zoroastrians.

*Dadar Lime
Manufacturing factory
at Rani-Amba*



The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals.

Of the 99 Parsis who died in Bombay, 33 were victims of heart disease while lung disease claimed 15. The other killers were old age (14), brain disease and septicemia (five each), cancer (four) and diabetes (three). Accidents, asthma, kidney failure, blood disease and liver failure claimed two each. Isolated cases of burns, bronchitis, hypertension, tuberculosis, typhoid and ulcers were recorded. Three infants (one stillborn) were lost to the community. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, it must be noted that in some cases, especially in those of the very old, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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 would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BOMBAY

Born

A boy to *Rashna* and *Cyrus Patel*; June 1, 1988
A boy to *Delna* and *Rusi Shroff*; June 3
A boy to *Jasmine* and *Aspi Mistry*; June 4
A boy to *Perin* and *Kelly Mehta*; June 5
A boy to *Shehnaz* and *Bomi Shroff*; June 5
A girl to *Pervin* and *Behram Irani*; June 7
A girl to *Zarine* and *Cawas Irani*; June 11
A girl to *Zenobia* and *Hormazd Jehangir*; June 11
A girl to *Kashmira* and *Rumy Hansotia*; June 13
A girl to *Mahanaz* and *Khurshed Irani*; June 13
A boy to *Farida* and *Sharookh Raghina*; June 13
A girl to *Roshni* and *Mehernosh Sidwa*; June 15

A girl to *Shireen* and *Rustom Joshi*; June 16
A boy to *Amy* and *Homi Bogha*; June 17
A boy to *Shirin* and *Normaz Mehta*; June 18
A boy to *Shenaz* and *Dara Elavia*; June 23
A boy to *Veera* and *Piloo Wadia*; June 23
A boy, *Rushad*, to *Nancy* and *Fareedoon Kuka*; June 25
A boy to *Farida* and *Manek Modi*; June 25
A boy to *Yasmine* and *Yezdi Katgara*; June 27
A boy to *Yasmine* and *Viraf Panthakey*; June 27
A girl to *Pervin* and *Khurshed Irani*; June 28
A girl to *Navaz* and *Vistasp Irani*; June 29
A girl to *Silloo* and *Darius Patel*; June 29

Married

Khushnum Dadiba Panthaki and *Shahbehram Kaikhusrro Zaq*; February 19
Niloofer Godrej Karkaria and *Bomi Dinshaw Vazifdar*; April 28
Farida Fali Udwarda and *Jimmy Fali Pardiwala*; April 29
Behroze Tehmurasp Mistry and *Rohinton Homi Sanga*; May 5
Kripa Framroze Jalnawalla of *Jalna* and *Prixhosp Jamshed Contractor* of *Madhya Pradesh*; May 19
Bakhtawar Dhunjishaw Dinshaw and *Nozer Minoo Bhamgara*; May 20
Khurshid Dinshaw Bhada and *Percy Rusi Katila*; May 21
Jasmine Burjor Randelia and *Farhad Eruch Kolah*; May 22
Maharuck Tamuras Marfatia of *Indore* and *Bejoo Rattanshaw Jilla* of *Nanded*; May 23
Farida Nariman Kotwal and *Jehangir Pervez Gilder*; May 28
Rukshana Nariman Panthaky and *Jimmy Noshir Colabewalla*; May 29
Dilber Cawas Gara and *Hoshi Homi Daruwalla*; May 31
Kesmira Bomi Khambatta of *Bulsar* and *Jehangir Soli Doctor*; June 6

Pooran Merwan Ebtadai and *Parviz Jehangir Niroo*; June 6
Ferzana Khudamurad Namiryan and *Goodarz Jamshid Bastani*; June 9
Sama Morad Rahmani and *Kamran Allahyar Kavianpour*; June 18
Diana Pirojshaw Gandhi and *Aspi Darabsha Patel*; June 18
Kumi Dali Sanjana and *Rusi Bahadur Mistry*; June 27

Died

Tehmurasp Ratanshaw Patel (55) residing at 501 Shangrila, Seven Bungalows, J.P. Rd, Andheri (W), 400061; May 31, 1988
Rustom Ardeshtir Irani (76), *Borgaonkar Wadi*, Stn Rd, *Kalyan*; June 1
Barjor Manchershaw Master (77), 7-D Dadisheth Bldg, *Wadia St*, *Tardeo*, 400034; June 1
Cooverbai Bomanshaw Ichhaporia (84), *Kassinath Bldg*, *Cadell Rd*, *Mahim*, 400016; June 2
Ratanbai Pirojsha Kheshwala (87), 628 Parsi Clny, *Dadar*, 400014; June 2
Darabsha Bomanji Dalal (88), *Motibai Bhuvan*, *Proctor St*, *Grant Rd*, 400007; June 3
Jerbai Rustomji Kolah (89), *Bldg No 28*, *Hughes Rd*, 400007; June 3
Coomi Khurshed Pakka (52), *E 8/12 Godrej Hill Qrs*, *Vikhroli*, 400079; June 3
Cawas Jehangir Bamboat (74), *54 Jam-e-Jamshed Bldg*, *Dadar*, 400014; June 4
Jerbai B. Bhathena (77), *Nowroze Baug*, *Lalbag*, 400012; June 4
Homai Phiroze Kotwal (72), *Mulla Manzil*, *Balaram St*, *Grant Rd*, 400007; June 4
Kaikhushru Sorabji Chinoy (90), *Rustom-Villa*, *Dr Ghanti Rd*, *Parsi Clny*, *Dadar*, 400014; June 5
Dhun Bejanji Dalal (70), *66 Worli Estate*, 400018; June 5
Darabshaw Cawasji Farasman (84), *Ketty Ter*, *No 14*, *Sleater Rd*, 400007; June 5
Khodayar Tirandas Irani (58), *B.J. Mistry Bldg*, *Khetwadi*, *12th Lane*, 400004; June 5
Beheram Khodaram Pollard (68), *Parsee Anjuman Bldg*, *Parsee Gally*, *Kalyan*; June 5
Jaiji Hormusji Ghadiali (87), *4/1 Rustom Baug*, *Victoria Rd*, *Byculla*, 400027; June 6
Shiavax M. Kandawalla (59), *Lady Navajbai Tata Bldg*, *S.V. Rd*, *Bandra*, 400050; June 6
Nadir Hiraji Kapadia (71), *31-B Sarita Apts*, *Bandra*, 400050; June 6
Jerbanoo Erachshaw Aria (78), *Block 1*, *Malcolm Baug*, *Jogeshwari*, 400102; June 7
Darabsha Shavaksha Baxter (89), *604-D Lady Jehangir Rd*, *Dadar*, 400014; June 7
Aemai Jehangirji Sethna (80), *20-E Shapur Baug*, *V.P. Rd*, 400004; June 7
Khoshedbanoo Pirojshaw Shroff (88), *9 Apna Ghar*, *Colaba*, 400005; June 7
Savak Byramji Tachakra (87), *7 Jehangir Mans*, *71 Patkar Rd*, 400007; June 7
Dossibai Maneksha Driver (80), *296, Palkhiwala Bldg*, *Fort*, 400001; June 8
N.B. Lalkaka (71), *6/A Readymoney Blocks*, *Parsi Clny*, *Dadar*, 400014; June 9
Sunabai Lam (95), *Empire Ter*, *C*, *Grant Rd*, 400007; June 9
Minu K. Lawyer (77), *505, Vindhychal Bldg*, *Bandra*, 400050; June 9
Piroja Darabshaw Medhora (76), *G-8 Cusrow Baug*, *Colaba*, 400039; June 9
Jeroo Rusi Bejwalla (56), *Hill View*, *J.P. Rd*, *Andheri (W)*, 400058; June 10
Dina Bejonji Hodiwala (75), *Kwality Hse*, *5 Patkar Marg*, 400036; June 10
Percy Rustomji Toot (36), *Boman Hse No 2*, *Homji St*, *Fort*, 400001; June 10
Manek Feroz Bhathena (50), *Manek Apts*, *S.V. Rd*, *Santa-cruz (W)*, 400054; June 11
Hormusji Jamshedji Kapadia (78), *20-D Sagar Sangeet*, *Colaba*, 400005; June 11
Framji M. Mehta (79), *239, Botawalla Bldg*, *Tardeo*, 400007; June 11
Dolly Burjor Vania (53), *16/A, Sagar Sangeet*, *Colaba*, 400005; June 11
Manekbai Bhikaji Bhathena

- (93), G Block, Bhivandiwalla Ter, 400002; June 12
Gool Dossabhai Deboo (65), Ginwalla Bldg, B Block, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; June 12
Behram J. Doneshwar (Irani) (62), 2/5 Zubeda Mans, Prabhat Clny, Santacruz, 400055; June 12
Perinbanoo Rustomji Jamasji (82), F.S. Parakh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 12
Farrok Noshirwan Kaka (57), Avabai Mans, 15 Henry Rd, Colaba, 400039; June 12
Rustom H. Katrak (70), G-27 Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; June 14
Allamai Sorabji Shroff (80), C-12 Jer Baug, Byculla, 400027; June 14
Najamai Jehangirshaw Bhagat (80), Wadia Bldg, 764-D Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 15
Nadirshaw Nassarwanji Dumasia (80), 681 B, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 15
Persis Shapur Irani (45 days), 24 Momin Manzil, Agripada Chawl St, 400011; June 15
Dinshaji Jamshedji Kabha (91), 296 Enterprise Apt, Forjett Hill, 400036; June 15
Ratan Manchershaw Menty (73), 6/5 Amy Villa, Rd 4, Parsi Clny, Wadala Market, 400014; June 15
Cawasji Ratanji Daruwala (89), E-40 Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; June 16
Rutty Jal Dubash (64), 38 Sai Asish, Bandra, 400050; June 16
Rustomji Hiraji Patel (68), Burjor Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; June 16
Nazamai Darabshaw Adajania (90), 30 Kashinath Bldg, Khetwadi, 400004; June 17
Allamai N. Cooper (92), Flat 604, Raj Tilak Yari Rd, Versova, 400061; June 17
Putlibai Cawasji Pavri (94), 690 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 17
Khurshed Noshirwan Tata (64), Press Bldg, 36 Adi Marzban Path, 400038; June 17
Phiroze Bhicaji Wadia (75), Abdealy Chmbs, Lamington Rd; June 17
Fakirji Ardeshtir Gandhi (87), Crown Bldg, Uranwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 19
Rustomji Pestanji Jaffrabadwala (89), 1104 Bridge View, Byculla, 400027; June 19
Jehangir Kaikushroo Jasoomoney (78), 790 Krishna Nivas, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 19
Aloo Firoji Mistry (60), 40 Pipewalla Bldg, 4th Pasta Lane, Colaba, 400005; June 19
Dhunmai Jehangirji Patel (87), Gustad Mans, 224, Tardeo Rd, 400007; June 19
Putlibai Dara Gotla (84), E-4 Corinthian, Colaba, 400005; June 20
Pirojshaw Manekji Khan (89), 2/4 Rustom Baug, Byculla, 400027; June 20
Ratanbai Hormasji Bharda (70), F.S. Parakh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 21
Tehmina Manek Ameria (81), Servai Bldg, 20 Sleater Rd, 400007; June 22
Manekbai J. Daruvala (75), 44-E Sleater Rd, 400007; June 22
Nari Nanabhoy Patel (71), c/o K.E. Khambata, Jamshed Mans, Tardeo, 400007; June 22
Meharbai Godrej Cooper (76), 4/26 Tata Mills Coop Hsg Soc, Parel 400012; June 23
Shirinbai D. Icwella (86), A/5 Sterling Apts, Pedder Rd, 400026; June 23
Shirinbai Sorabji Kapadia (75), C/2 Nowroze Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 23
Male baby of Dhun and Rohinton Kotwal (stillborn), R/B/7/6 Railway Qrs, J.J. Rd, Byculla; June 23
Minoo Rustomji Mistry (72), Daruwalla Bldg, 145 Lamington Cross Rd, 400007; June 23
Baimai Dadiba Amroliwala (80), 759 Parsi Clny, Rd 7, Dadar, 400014; June 24
Shirinbai Eruchshaw Antia (94), Bachan Manor, 600 Jam-e-Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; June 24
Khurshed Burjorji Khasimai (67), Khush Villa, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 24
Shirin Hormasji Madon (75), Nariyalwalla Agiary Comp, Dadar, 400014; June 24
Jehangir Jamshedji Cama (76), Sea-shells, 13 Darabsha Rd, 400036; June 25
Homai Navroji Daboo (78), Stardust, 23 Rajan, Off Carter Rd, 400050; June 25
Dhunjisha N. Daroga (79), 8 Daroga Hse, Mazagaon, 400010; June 25
Bachooabai Sorabji Engineer (80), 'P' Dalal Estate, Bombay Central, 400008; June 25
Rosi Jamshed Gandevia (70), 3/11 Tata Hsg Clny, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; June 25
Najoo Jamshed Mistry (74), Villa Tehmina, 49 Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, 400102; June 25
Dhunmai Bomansha Nargolia (83), F.S. Parakh Dharamshalla, 34 Hughes Rd, 400007; June 25
Jer Sam Siganporia (80), 648 Kaka Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 25
Baby of Shenaz and Dara Engineer (6 days), Contractor Bldg, Kasinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; June 26
Gaimai Rustomji Mistry (85), 4/10 Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 26
Homi Nadirshah Vesuvala (62), Diaman Court, 40 Nepean Sea Rd; June 26
Kersasp Fakirji Dastur (79), Orient Hse, 666 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 27
Dadiba Manchershaw Desai (79), Bhagat Manor, Jam-e-Jamshed Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 27
Noshir J. Dumasia (59), 39 Tata Clny, Parel Tank Rd, 400012; June 28
Bachan Burjor Gandevia (61), 12 Modi Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 28
Keki Jal Godiwalla (70), B/2 Scindia Coop Hsg Soc, Andheri (E), 400069; June 28
Jer Behram Popat (84), G/17 Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; June 28
Bamanshaw Shapurji Rupa (72), E/5 Shapur Baug, V.P. Rd, 400004; June 28
Freny Gustad Dastur (53), Gool Rukh Soc, TPS IV, Bandra, 400050; June 29
Nasserwanji Manekji Ghadiali (86), B-6-A, United Chmbs, Grant Rd, 400007; June 29
Aimai Savaksha Mehta (92), 219 Amroliwala Hse, Lower Parel, 400013; June 29
Putlamai Jahangirji Pajnigar (85), 731 Polson Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 29
Freny Keki Arsiwalla (76), C/6 Cusrow Baug, Colaba, 400039; June 30

POONA

Died

- Sarvar Khodaram Irani* (65), 30 Sholapur Rd, 411001; April 20
Jerbai Cawasji Havevala (84), 358 Bhavani Peth, 411002; April 23
Armin Sorab Marolia (20), Central Apts, Convent St, 411001; May 11
Jal Aspandiar Irani (42), 486 Rasta Peth, 411017; May 12
Dinshaw Tirandaz Irani (67), 1978 Convent St, 411001; May 28

TORONTO

Died

- Jamshed Byramjee*, father of Marzban; February 28

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

MORE ZOROASTRIANS IN IRAN THAN INDIA

There are 90,891 Zoroastrians in Iran according to the census department of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The findings of the 1986 Iranian census were conveyed to *Parsiana* by the Anjuman Zartoshtian Tehran vide a letter addressed to the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman of India dated June 30, 1988 and received by *Parsiana* at the time of this issue going to press. The comparable statistic for Zoroastrians in India, as established by the Government of India census of 1981, is 71,630.

Though the largest minority community in Iran, Zoroastrians account for only 0.18 percent of the 49,445,010 total population of Iran.

The male-female ratio (total male population 43,479 and female 47,412) is tilted in favor of women from the age of 25 years onwards. Only 8.43 percent of the Zoroastrians, however, are over the age of 60 years, in contrast to more than 20 percent in India.

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