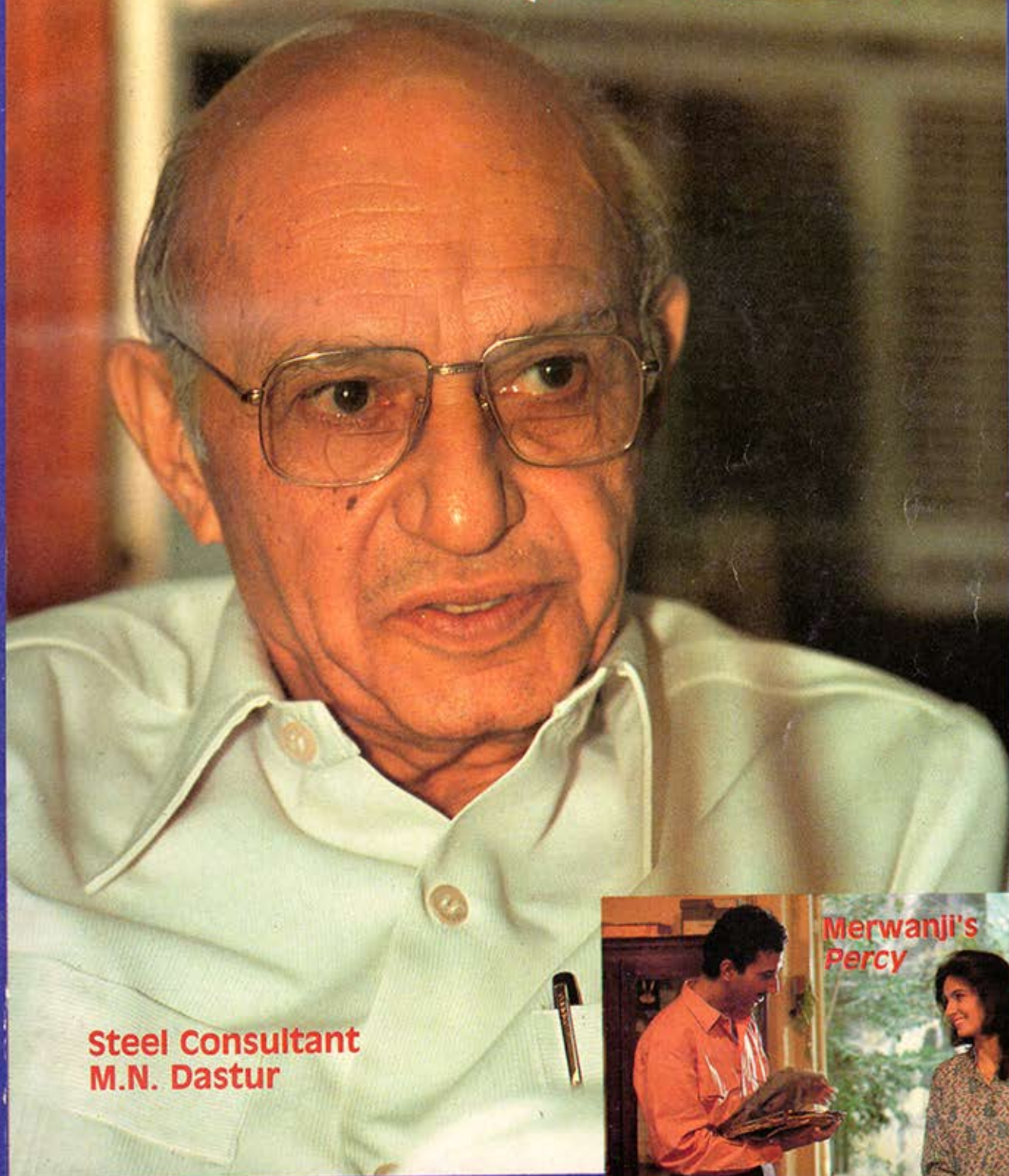


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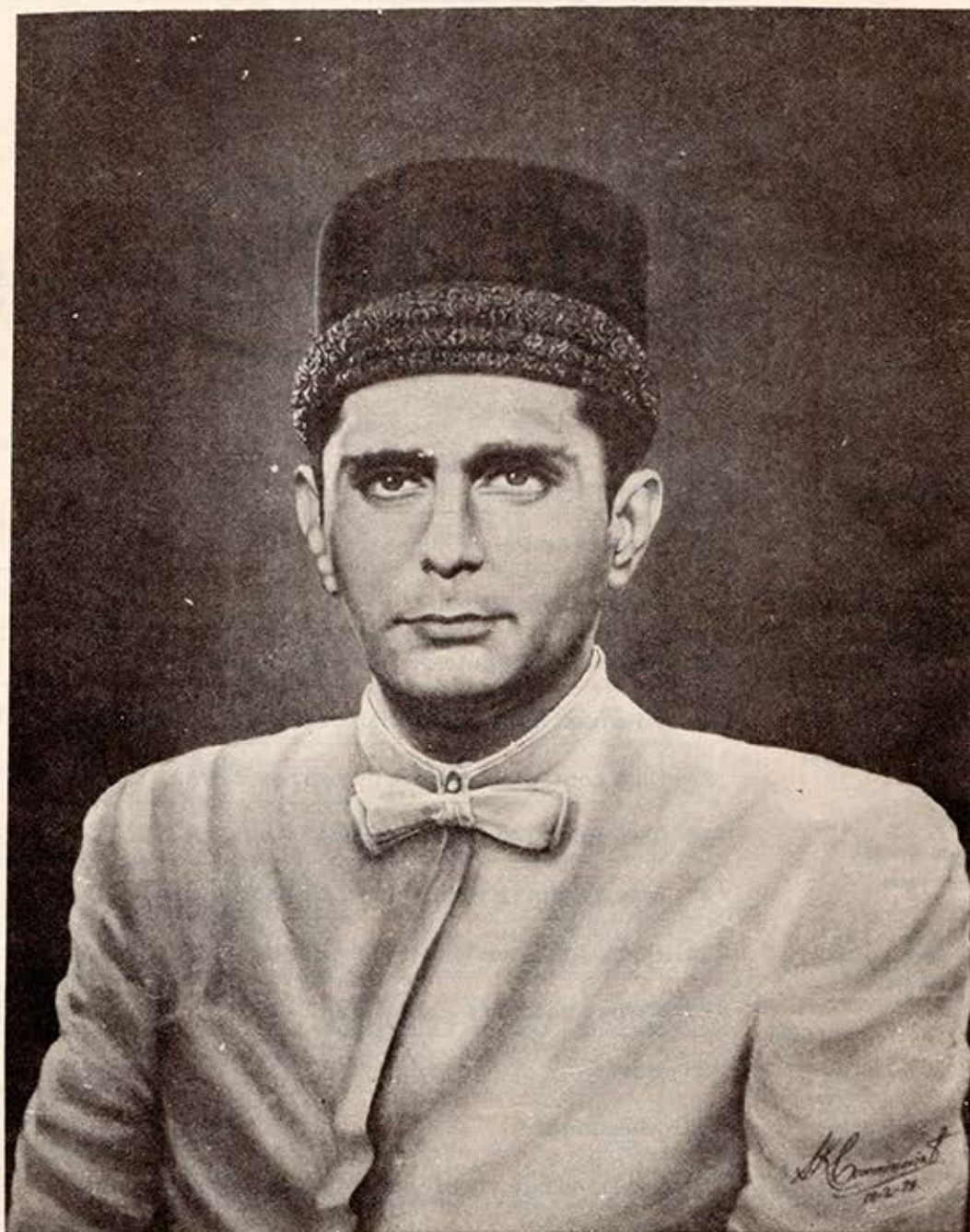
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In Memoriam

Mr Fali Meherji Variava

Director

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Dr Rustom Katrak

That was a fine article on Dr Rustom Katrak ("The father of Indian orthopedics," *Parsiana*, October 1988).

Dr Katrak was a unique person. He and his sister, Dosanmai, adopted a little servant girl, brought her up as a daughter in their household, got her married and even had the children educated - to graduate and post-graduate levels - at their own expense. They similarly brought up a servant lad as a 'son' in the household.

Despite differences with the management in later years, Katrak has left a handsome legacy of three lakh rupees to the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, Bombay, for the benefit of patients.

The Parsee General Hospital is doing

yeoman service and, indeed, it is unthinkable what would be the plight of poor and middle-class Parsi families, were it not for the existence of this hospital. The Hospital regularly receives donations from Parsis in India, on solemn and happy occasions.

Recently the Parsis of Dubai donated a handsome collection of Rs 20,000 to the Hospital. It would be very good if other well-established Parsis abroad were to take the cause of the Hospital to heart and contribute generously and collectively.

JAL M. KORKHAO

I was so happy to see the article on Rustomji Katrak ("The father of Indian orthopedics," *Parsiana*, October 1988). How I wish it had appeared in his lifetime! The dear old gentleman died neglected and uncared for, both by the profession and the community.

He was looked after by a faithful old driver, called Jetha, who adored him. There is not the slightest doubt that he pioneered orthopedics in this country. An inspiring teacher, he trained generations of orthopedic surgeons.

He was such a gentle individual, honest to a fault and with tremendous moral courage. I knew him as a child at the Jerbai Wadia Hospital and later became his house surgeon and registrar. We maintained a correspond-



Katrak: pioneered orthopedics in India

ence until about two months before he died. He loved books and was a voracious reader.

Dr H. S. ADENWALLA
Trichur

"The view in Iran"

In respect of Dr James R. Russell's letter "The view in Iran," (*Parsiana*, September 1988), I would like to state that:

- The view as expressed by Russell is damaging to the Zoroastrian community in Iran and not the article "The view in Iran."
- Zoroastrian and other recognized minorities like Jews and Christians have been given full religious freedom as per the present Iranian constitution.
- Many Zoroastrian functions like the birth and death anniversary of prophet Zarathushtra are being broadcast from Iran TV and radio.
- Those who have left the country after the revolution have done so due to reasons other than religious persecution.
- The actual number of Zoroastrians may be even more than what is figured in the present Iranian census. Many may have been temporarily travelling abroad. Among the Iranian Zoroastrians it is a sin if a person does not marry and does not produce children. The present Zoroastrian families in Iran have a minimum of two and a maximum of eight children.
- There was no census in the year 1979.

YAZDANYAR A. BONSHAHI

'Zoroastrian Orthodoxy'

Going through the article "The state of Zoroastrian orthodoxy" (*Parsiana*, August 1988) I am shocked at what Adi Doctor states and I quote, "Dr Bode, though belonging to the Shehen-shahi sect, became a Fasli Dastur." He also states, "wrongful consecration of the Fasli fire-temple."

People who have a sense of responsibility, would first find out facts before going to the Press, giving incorrect and harmful information to the readers. I am compelled to write the following to put the record straight.

Dastur Framroze Bode's father was a panthaki of an agiari at Badnera. At

age 17, Bode was initiated as a navar, and at 18 a maratub, both at Navsari; at 19, he started yozdathragori (officiating at high rituals) at the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay, then became a teacher and later principal of the Athornan Madressa at Dadar. He has performed more than one Hama Yasht and also supervised for 72 days and 12 nights. There is no need to mention the numerous such religious ceremonies etc performed by Framroze Bode. It is enough to say that Dastur Bode was born and belongs to the athornan sect and not shehenshahi, as stated by Doctor.

The work of the ceremonies of consecration of the Fasli Atash Kadeh was entrusted to Bode and these ceremonies went on for four months. Where and what does Doctor mean when he writes "wrongful consecration of the Fasli Atash Kadeh?"

I would like to know on what authority Doctor makes such sweeping statements. Unless he is qualified to criticize Zoroastrian religious rites, it is unethical to put his writings in print.

Ms HOMAI FRAMROZE BODE

"Feeding the fires"

To keep the fire burning 24 hours a day in our agiaries and atash bahrams ("Feeding the fires," *Parsiana*, August 1988) we require the kathi of the babul tree. The cost of kathi increases day by day, while the income from the kathi fund has remained the same. Some of our agiaries do not even have a kathi fund, so in these agiaries, the trustees or mobeds have to search for kathi donors.

Recently Mr Dara Deboo, industrialist and social worker of Navsari, has come up with a good project. Different small trusts of Navsari have joined in this common cause and are purchasing 250 acres of land near Navsari to grow babul trees for kathi at a projected cost of Rs 60 lakhs.

The Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) and other trusts under Daver Kavasji Modi have plenty of idle land. The SPP itself has 136 acres of land at the Umerwada dokhmas and also at Karanj, adjacent to the present site of the dokhmas. Besides, there is plenty of land at Vesu, Amroli, Bhesan and Sumari.

All this land today lies idle. On some of this land, unauthorized slums have come up. If, like in Navsari, babul trees are grown on this land, then the prob-

lem of kathi will be solved to a large extent. The project cost would also be very low as one does not have to purchase the land.

I hope that the SPP trustees will do the needful at the earliest.

ROHINTON B. BHATHENA
Surat

Prospects in New Zealand

In "Zoroastrians Abroad," (*Parsiana*, June 1988), you had excerpted a letter of mine informing readers of the job opportunities available in New Zealand.

Besides being overwhelmed by the response, it was heartening to note the spirit of our Zoroastrian youth.

Unfortunately the economy in New Zealand in the last few months has taken a downturn and one has to wait till conditions change again.

Through your columns I would request those who have responded to understand the above position as it is difficult for me to write individually to each one.

I thank all those who have written to me on this account, and as and when conditions improve, I will be glad to advise them.

FAROKH KOLAH
Auckland, New Zealand

"Zoroastrians in the UK"

Prof John Hinnells in "Zoroastrians in the UK" (*Parsiana*, April 1988) refers to four migrations of the Parsis, the aging of the Parsi population in India, and the shifting of power from Bombay to younger, highly educated and more vibrant Zoroastrians in England or North America. In a lecture in Vancouver in August/September 1987, the professor had said, "I am holding a mirror before you. The future of Zoroastrianism is in your hands."

Prof Hinnells' commitment to the study of the Zoroastrian religion and of the Zoroastrians is deeply appreciated. Like Prof Hinnells, there are some others who think that the future of Zoroastrianism is in North America and that the Darbe Mehrs (should be Dar-e-Mehers) created by Arbab Rustam Guiv are a part of this process. It is possible that Prof Hinnells' study and ultimate analysis may prove him right.

More people today speak of the *Gathas* as if they understand them and wish to discard everything else as something added in later times. Whilst only a handful came to India from

ancient Persia after the downfall of the Sassanian dynasty, several hundred thousands had gone to China. One city, Chang'an, alone had over 2,00,000 Zoroastrians and four Zoroastrian temples. Chang'an had boulevards 280 feet wide. Zoroastrians were said to have had a hand in the planning of Chang'an. Even Yezdegard's son Prince Phiruz was in Chang'an. There were other religious communities there as well. They survived until the ninth century when the emperor liquidated all the clergy. Every religion made a comeback except the Zoroastrian religion. There seems to be some weakness somewhere.

In *Gatha* 30.2, the Prophet speaks about the freedom of choice of every individual. It seems his followers have carried this freedom of choice to the other extreme with the result that the community finds itself in total disarray.

The same *Parsiana* issue features an interview with Mr Mehraban Kushesh of Tehran, Iran. It is heartening to note that an effort is being made to have an atash bahram in Tehran. And the same issue tells us of the Australian Zoroastrian Association holding an attitudinal survey which is very disappointing.

We do hope that power will not fall into the wrong hands. Intelligence and wisdom are two entirely different things. A highly educated individual is not necessarily a wise individual.

In America, every fifth child is being born with AIDS symptoms with a life expectancy of about two years. A widely spread microscopic community like ours will surely be affected.

JAMSHED K. PAVRI
Vancouver, USA

(Excerpted from a circular letter dated June 12, 1988)

Introducing ZCWA

We were most pleased to learn of the Zoroastrian Cultural Welfare Association (ZCWA) headed by Dr Syrus Darvish Irani, a medical practitioner of Mahim. This welfare association has hardworking, honest and dedicated youngsters, well placed in high positions. These youngsters came together and formed the Association in 1987 and, within a span of one year, they have helped not only Zoroastrians (as the name suggests), but many people in need of funds for medical purposes.

They had taken pains to organize a show in January 1988 and from the

meagre amount that they received, they arranged a free lunch for poor people in June 1988. Two poor patients, admitted for major heart operations in Breach Candy and K.E.M. hospitals from whom appeals had come on humanitarian grounds, also received aid.

Recently they have given help to the widows at Lalbaug. These youngsters should be encouraged with funds from different organizations so that they can expand their base of activities. It is heard that this organization is now readying itself to create more funds by organizing another show on a grand scale and we do hope that not only people from different walks of life but also the Press and government will encourage such activities.

We have also found that the ZCWA youths, although with their busy schedule, have taken pains to register themselves with the Commissioner of Charities, Public Trust as also the Income Tax under section 12A and 80G. These youngsters hold regular meetings every Sunday.

K.R. KOLAH, R.K. MERCHANT, Ms K.H. NEKOO, Ms PERVEEN FATAKIA, K.G. UDAWANT AND K.K. GUPTA

Spiritual tyranny

"More and more Parsis are marrying outside the community, though it is still frowned upon by a large number of Parsis. In fact, the Parsi priests of Ahmedabad refuse to perform the navjote ceremony of children of mixed marriages. Such families have to call priests from Bombay, if they still intend to bring up their children in the faith. Children of non-Parsi fathers are not accepted for the navjote ceremony as a rule all over" (Courtesy: *The Times of India*, Ahmedabad, September 21, 1988).

However, doors for the funds and institutions were open for the children of Parsi fathers by alien mothers who had been duly and properly admitted. (*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, June 15, 1980). Further, on the vexed question of quality rather than quantity, we have been informed by the Editor of *Kaiser-E-Hind*, that "out of this Bansa Group (Gujarat State) have arisen bright scholars and citizens" (*Kaiser-E-Hind*, July 13, 1980).

Why should bigotry demand that those people who choose an alternative method for the disposal of their

mortal remains be denied prayers for the first four days? The question is therefore asked, "For whose benefit?"

With all humility and malice towards none, I quote from the Bible: "Because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand" (*St Matthew*, Chapter 13, Verse 13). I can only say, there is no tyranny in the world greater than spiritual tyranny.

RUSI B. PASTAKIA
Ahmedabad

Jamva chalo

What do Parsis think and how do they feel about the rush and the queuing for dinner sittings at navjote and marriage receptions? Many believe that the present practice denies the marriage and navjote functions orderliness and dignity.

This can be avoided and decency and dignity restored. A suggestion is that with each invitation a slip can be attached on the following lines:

"The rush and queuing for dinner sittings rob marriage and navjote functions of elementary civility and dignity. To avoid this, you will find a table near the entrance where each guest, on entering the compound, can take

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the appropriate token for the first, second or third sitting. One token per guest please. You are requested to kindly cooperate and add grace to the occasion.'

It is for the host families and caterers to accept or reject the suggestion. It has always been the few pioneers with courage who put ideas into practice. Thereafter the favourable experience of the practice would soon earn almost universal following.

P.S. DAVER

Behavioral contrasts

The Parukh Dharamshalla and the Nariman Home for the aged in Surat are full of old and infirm people whose children, nieces and nephews are settled abroad in affluent Western countries doing well for themselves. These people have toiled hard, borrowed money, and sold off their properties and valuables to be able to send their children abroad for studies and subsequent migration. Some of them are now destitute.

One widow, living in a punchayet chawl, has toiled hard doing household chores like a maid servant, and

borrowed heavily from Parsi educational funds and charities to be able to send her son abroad. It is now eight years since he has settled down in the US. Today, she is still working in the same condition and sending cooked meals to support herself.

The general complaint is that no remittances are forthcoming from those settled abroad, even towards the trust loans that they have borrowed, leaving the old parents to pay off these loans and insurance policies. Some of the parents have not had a letter or phone call from them for years. Some of them do not even know in which part of the United States their children reside.

Contrast this to the situation among other Indian communities. Parents of young people in the Gujarati, Punjabi, Maharashtrian and Sindhi communities proudly display their monthly remittance cheques in dollars and pounds which they receive regularly from their children abroad. The young remain in touch with their parents regularly, send free tickets for the old people to visit them, and in many cases, send for them permanently. This is a direct result of

close family ties and upbringing.

We Parsis get what we deserve. We ingrain in our children an attitude that the Western philosophy and way of life is the best, that Western values are to be copied and imitated, shrugging off respect for elders and for religious rituals.

The sudden upswing of religious fervor among Parsis settled abroad is a mockery: While long and lengthy discourses are held on religion, their old and destitute family members are pinning and dying across the continents for want of a little warmth and attention. It reminds one of a quotation from the *Bible* which, with a slight change, may read: "He who loves not his father/mother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"

Ms ZARIN R. MEHTA

Edited by Arnavaz S. Mama

Addendum

The photograph of Mehlii Gobhai which accompanied the article "The color of Black" (*Parsiana*, November 1988) was shot by Burjor Banaji. The omission is regretted.

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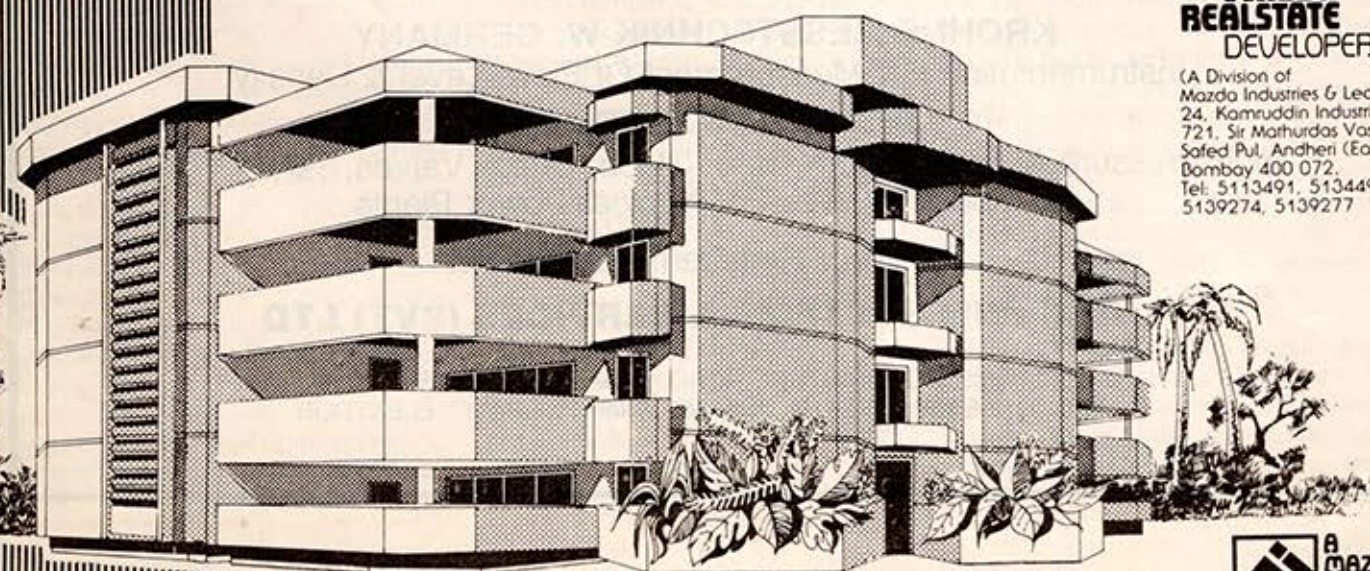
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Events and Personalities

New pavilion for Surat

At the inauguration of the newly built pavilion of the Zoroastrian Club run by the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP), the Governor of Himachal Pradesh and former vice-admiral Rustom K. S. Ghandhi was the chief guest.

According to a report of the function held on November 29, 1988, from Dr Ratan Marshall of Surat, Ghandhi "commended the attitude of our then leaders" in not asking for special privileges for the Parsis at the time of India's independence. To prove themselves in the years to come, the youngsters will have to toil and labor and give up softness in life, he stressed. In order to prosper they will have to look in various directions like army services instead of regular jobs, he added.

Exhorting the gathering to continue to tread the path of righteousness and prosperity as taught by prophet Zarathushtra, he felt that the qualities of straightforwardness and honesty, inherited by the Parsis, have made the community rich and popular throughout.

Dr Sam Sarosh Bhacca, the presi-

dent of the SPP, recounted the activities of the Panchayat. He, however, regretted the dwindling number of Parsis in this historic city where the community had abounded in earlier years.

Gandhi was given an official welcome by Dr Kadir Pirzada, the young mayor. The ailing former SPP president Maneck Gheyara's speech was read in his absence.

For their outstanding performances in the field of sports, Adil Palia, Dinki Bhujwala and Firoze Amaria were honored by the anjuman.

Davar Kavasji Modi and the honorary secretary of the Club, Dadi Elavia, conveyed a vote of thanks to Ghandhi. Shawls and a sandalwood casket were presented to Ghandhi by Ms Roshan Modi and Ms Mehroo Bhacca on behalf of the Panchayat and the Samast Parsi Anjuman of Surat.

Lonavala's first ghambar

On Saturday, November 19, 1988, the permanent residents of the hill stations of Khandala and Lonavala, numbering around 135, were invited for the first-ever ghambar at Lonavala, the bracing



Dastur: on lines of the great singers

hill resort, 100 kms south-east of Bombay.

Held in the sprawling courtyard of Seth Cowasjee Dinshawji Adenwala Agiary, the ghambar was organized by Rustom Bapuji Joshi, an ex-principal at Khandala's D. Cowasjee School (6 kms away), and a member of the Lonavala Parsi Anjuman's managing committee. The ghambar - catered by Maneck and Rashida Shroff of the bustling Hotel Plaza of Lonavala - was attended by 90 people, including many poor and middle-class Parsis. It was held in memory of Rustom Joshi's wife, Freny, following a jashan at the Agiary. The Agiary, incidentally, houses two fires: one, being the ancestral family fire of the Adenwalas which had been flown into India from Aden 12 years ago.

Homi Rogers

Tansen Sanman for Dastur

Noted Hindustani vocalist Firoz Dastur was conferred the national Tansen Sanman Award for the year 1988, notes *The Times of India* of December 17, 1988.

The award, constituted by the Madhya Pradesh Government, was

Below: Ghandhi receiving casket from Mehroo Bhacca while (from left) Sam Bhacca, Dastur Noshervan Manchershah and Elavia look on





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presented to Dastur by the State's chief minister Arjun Singh on December 16, at Gwalior. The award consisted of Rs 51,000 and a citation.

Pardit Dastur, who took his training under the late Sawai Gandharva and the late Khansaheb Abdul Karim Khan, the great exponents of the Kirana gharana, is also the 1986 recipient of the national award of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, add newspaper reports.

Topping the SSC board

Topping the October Bombay divisional Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination was J.B. Vachha Girls' High School student Ms Kashmira S. Karkaria, notes *The Daily* of December 22, 1988. Karkaria secured 80.14 percent in the examination, along with Ms Rakhi Tulsiani of St Joseph's Convent High School, Bandra. The exam was conducted by the Maharashtra State Board for Secondary and Higher Secondary Education.

According to a press release, Bombay divisional board chairman Mohan Awate said that only 20.76 percent of students passed the examination, the paper adds.

Karkaria says she would like to become a lawyer or a chartered accountant, notes *The Bombay Samachar* of December 25.

Doctorate in dance

Bharata Natyam danseuse Khurshid Irani's research thesis entitled *Devanganas - A Critical Study* won her a doctorate degree in dance last year from the University of Bombay, notes a press release. Choreographer, director, researcher and teacher, Irani has done her thesis under S.A. Upadhyaya, head of the postgraduate and research department of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

"The first Zoroastrian dancer" to acquire a PhD in dance from Bombay University, Irani has based her research work on rare Sanskrit manuscripts and on the expeditions she conducted to isolated temple sites to study the important poses of the *devanganas* (celestial dancers). Trying to put these postures into practical use to enrich contemporary Indian dance is what Irani hopes to achieve, notes the release.

Adhering to the guidelines of the

Natyashastras (proclaimed treatise on Indian dancing) yet not averse to "a whiff of fresh air as far as themes, choreography and presentation are concerned," Irani has performed Sanskrit ballets like *Pragnya*, *Prerana* and *Shiva Kautukam*. She has also presented *Manthra Spenta*, a classical dance ballet based on the *Shah Namah*. In 1983, Irani toured North America and Canada and was invited to perform and teach at the international exhibition *Man and His World* in Montreal.

For the future, Irani is ready with her "most ambitious and lifetime pro-



Katpitia (left) coping with tourist demand. Pestonjee: cross-cultural perspectives

ject" *Journey to Shiva*, a solo Bharata Natyam recital with English lyrics. She is looking for sponsors and hopes "more cultural organizations, philanthropic trusts (and) institutions ... (would) come forward to help her," adds the write-up.

Plans in collaboration

Freelance hotel consultant Minoo D. Katpitia and Alpha Consultants of New Delhi have joined hands to promote more properties to cope with increasing foreign and local tourist demand, notes a press release issued by Advertising and Publicity Media.

In the pipeline are four-star projects like the Vijaydeep Hotel at Santacruz, Hotel Executive at Andheri and Hotel Ramani at Juhu, details the press release, which also refers to plans for a 300-room, five-star project in Gujarat labelled Hotel Hazira.

Well-known as the general manager of Sun-n-Sand Hotel for over two decades, Katpitia's achievements included the renovation of Sun-n-Sand, and the commissioning of such five-star properties in Bombay as the Sea Princess Hotel, Ramada Inn Palm Grove and Hotel Horizon, notes the write-up. He has also helped in setting up the catering complex, Jewel of In-

dia and Jade Gardens, at Nehru Centre, Worli, mentions the release. Katpitia's past ventures reportedly also included the setting up of the Tandoor Restaurant at New York and the renovation of Goa's Hotel Zuari.

'Stressful' invitation

A professor of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Dinyar Minocher Pestonjee had been invited to attend the twenty-fourth International Congress of Psychology at Sydney, Australia, from August 28-September 2, 1988, as a special invitee, notes a press release. For the Congress he was to present a paper on the topic "Organizational Role Stress in Middle and Top Management," and was also scheduled to participate in a symposium on "Burn-out and Stress in Cross-Cultural Perspectives."

Pestonjee has, for the past nine years, held the rare honor of being the only Asian member to be elected on the International Social Sciences Council of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), informs the release. He has also been elected a member of the executive and program committees of the International Sociology Association from 1986 to 1990. At present he is the chairman of Internal Reorganization Committee of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, adds the release.

"Magic of the hand"

"I am glad I do not have my wife with me today. She would have left me bankrupt!" Maharashtra's deputy chief minister Ramrao Adik exclaimed after reviewing the Shilp Utsav at the Sunderbai Hall on October 28, 1988. The display of choice all-India handicrafts commemorated 25 years of Shilpi Kendra's service to the craftsmen of India.

Regal in purple and yellow, the Kendra's chairperson, Ms Thirty H. Taleyarkhan recounted how the Shilpi Kendra - a social welfare organization with a sales outlet at Hotel Majestic on Bombay's Colaba Causeway - was born in response to the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's suggestion of opening a chain of emporia. He was keen that voluntary organizations market the creations of India's master craftsmen who were struggling for survival. The fashion then weighed heavily in favor of foreign industrial products, she recalled.



Left: At the Shilp Utsav (from left) Homi Taleyarkhan, Thrity Taleyarkhan (in border sari) and Adik

Below: Irani injured but victorious



Providing a much needed sales outlet, Shilpi Kendra was also the first to give state awards to Maharashtra's craftsmen, Taleyarkhan informed. Its success over the years was manifest in the presence of the many state governments which were represented at the exhibition, noted Taleyarkhan with pride. "We want to focus attention on the man behind the craft; cherish the human spirit behind the magic of the hand," Taleyarkhan eulogized the tenacity and dedication of the craftsmen, many of whom still labor below the poverty line.

Presented with a bouquet of roses from the government of Maharashtra in appreciation of her social welfare work, Taleyarkhan shared her triumph with an emotional tribute to the late Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (who had arrived in Bombay to attend the Utsav inaugural but had to be hospitalized with a sudden illness to which she succumbed) as "truly the inspiration of Shilpi Kendra." She was equally warm in her praise of the colleagues who had helped shoulder the burden of the enterprise over a quarter century.

Many craftsmen, brought to Bombay by the Kendra, demonstrated their skills to fascinated onlookers, including Maharashtra Governor Brahmananda Reddy and Ms Reddy.

The exhibition cum sale which continued for four days, ranged from metal work and ivory to carpets, textiles, fashion garments, paintings, jewelry, earthenware, et al. The prices ranged from next to nothing to 25 and 30 thousand rupees for exquisite wall hangings with ivory inlay. Arnava Mama



Kirtankar and social worker Parvez Katrak receiving the award for human excellence from Nana Chudasma, world chairman of Giants International, at a function held by The Indian Centre for Encouraging Excellence

The pedal pusher

At a recently held race-track meet in October 1988 in Bombay, Harnoz Sarosh Irani excelled himself in the under-18 category, notes M.B. Nagarwalla in a letter to *Parsiana*. During the tenth lap of the 3,000-meter individual race, he collided with one of the 20 cyclists. "Despite bleeding profusely from the head injury, he went courageously over the remaining 11 laps and managed a third place. After the race he was rushed to Breach Candy Hospital where he received two stitches," adds the letter, quoting from *The Times of India* of October 16.

A schoolboy from Pune, Irani is training for the Bombay-Goa Cycle Race scheduled to take place from January 15 to 20, 1989, notes an article in *New Horizon*, the newsletter of the Ahmednagar Parsee Anjuman.

Irani had taken part in the Bombay-Pune Cycle Race in January last, and at 16 became the youngest competitor to complete the race, finishing fifteenth, according to the write-up. Of

the 60 contestants, "grown-ups" included, approximately 20 completed the race, notes *New Horizon*. "Due to his inexperience, Harnoz had not arranged for his own pilot - someone to accompany him on a scooter with fruits, water, etc - during the long race. So he was on his own with only a bottle of water," the article says.

Despite this handicap, he managed to keep up with the other cyclists for a good part of the way. Collapsing at the finish, an ambulance was about to be called for, when he recovered and "was taken home by his friends to his parents, Sarosh and Vera Irani," notes the article.

Irani had developed his skills by cycling frequently from Pune to Ahmednagar to visit his relatives. He had taken part in many races in and around Pune, finishing among the first 10. However, the Bombay-Pune Race was the first time that he had taken part in a long-distance race, says the article.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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Graphic A-181

New Zoroastrian Temple

A consensus has emerged that a new larger building was vital for "the survival of the Zoroastrian community in the Greater New York area," notes the profile of the proposed New Zoroastrian Temple and Cultural Center (NZTCC) compiled by NZTCC committee secretary Dr Farokh Tarapore. A target of \$ 2.5 million (later scaled down to \$ 1.3 million) was accepted as also the conception that the money should be gathered from every family within the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) and from wealthy Zoroastrians elsewhere, informs the release.

The first \$ 300,000 were pledged at a dinner hosted by the project's fundraising committee on December 3, 1988, writes Erach Munshi, ZAGNY president and the NZTCC's prime mover, in a letter to *Parsiana* dated December 23. The promises came from 35 of ZAGNY's 150 families, he adds.

The project is in response to the community's "need for a new, more efficient and larger premises to house our Association," states Tarapore's note. The present premises at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr are authorized to hold only 99 persons whereas 250 to 275 people get together for Navroze and new year celebrations, he writes. Apart from the protracted litigation with the Rustom Guiv Foundation on the ownership of the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr which currently houses ZAGNY, the building is dilapidated, notes the write-up. The third floor is beyond repair and sealed off, it informs. The Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA) which has split from ZAGNY, "to date has not contributed to the cost of the upkeep nor has the Rustom Guiv Foundation which abdicated its responsibility to contribute \$ 5,000 per annum," informs the release.

An informal committee formed in 1987 to study the proposal includes Dr Lovji Cama, Ms Freny Dalal, Farokh Deboo (treasurer), Jamshed Ghadially, Khushru Hakim, Hutoxi Kandawalla, Erach Munshi (chairman), Fredy Patel, Dr Farokh Tarapore (secretary),

Ms Kuku Bunshah, and Dinyar Wadia (architect), by invitation.

The new premises are expected to include a hall to accommodate 350 to 400 people (with a kitchen to match) plus a smaller prayer hall and separate atash room. The structure would also ideally have classrooms for religious and group discussions, an apartment for a resident caretaker, restrooms, indoor games and adequate parking facilities, notes the write-up.

Wadia, who builds houses worth up to five million dollars as notes Munshi, has accepted responsibility as architect and contractor for the project. (Wadia has announced he will forego his commission which would amount to nearly \$ 190,000: "What a Parsi Zoroastrian spirit!" acknowledges Munshi.) Wadia has recommended a five-acre plot as a minimum requirement for a project of this size.

The NZTCC committee has constituted subcommittees to cover fundraising, site selection, building and finance. To be located conveniently for the benefit of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut Zoroastrians, the

committee's first choice is New Rochelle, an area with which the community is familiar. The final decision will be made by the site approval subcommittee whose four members represent major areas of the tri-State region. The casting vote, if necessary, will be that of the chairperson of the NZTCC committee.

Two proposals have been made towards the Center's future maintenance: renting out the premises to generate income; and/or reserving a part of the initial funds to generate future income.

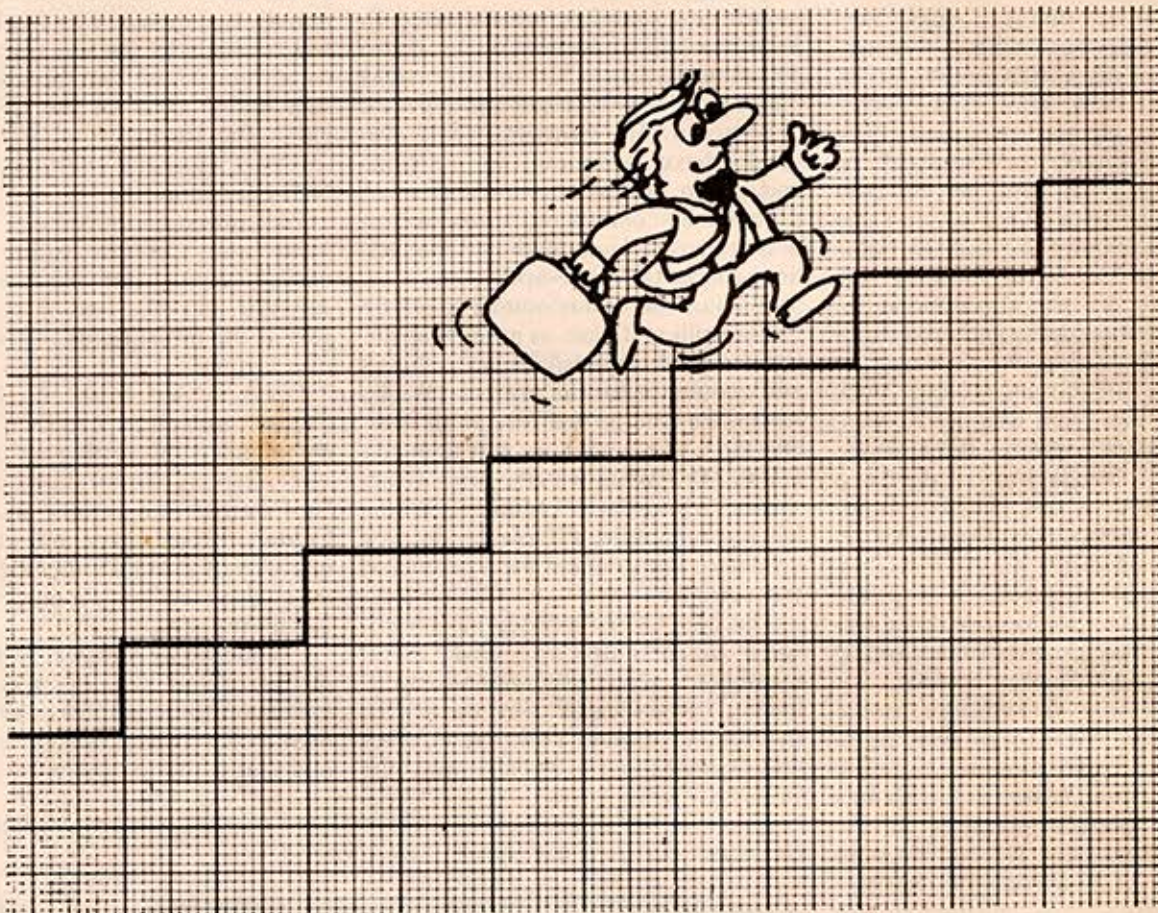
Legal advice from the NZTCC's counsel, as well as ZAGNY's, has recommended the setting up of a separate religious corporation, called the New Zoroastrian Temple and Cultural Center, to best serve and protect the interests of ZAGNY members as well as qualify for tax exemption, writes Tarapore.

"While we fully expect to succeed in this great and challenging community endeavor, this committee thinks it prudent to have a simple alternative plan and that is the feasibility of a smaller,

From left to right : Lancashire skipper David Hughes, newcomers Phil DeFreitas and Irani with coach Alan Ormrod



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VITTA MAZDA
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scaled-down project. If this too isn't possible, then the committee proposes that the remaining monies be returned proportionately to the respective donors," adds Tarapore's proposal.

The NZTCC committee has requested that, in the interests of continuity, its members remain with it until the end of the project, irrespective of changes in the ZAGNY board whose president remains an ex officio member of the NZTCC committee.

The Darbe Mehr tussle

The Supreme Court of Westchester County has ruled in favor of ZAGNY and dismissed the petition of the Rustom Guiv Foundation seeking to acquire the ownership of the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr at New Rochelle. The information is conveyed by the ZAGNY newsletter of October 1988, received by *Parsiana* on December 19.

The ownership of the Darbe Mehr currently vests with the Arbab Rustom Guiv Trust which includes three representatives each from the Foundation and ZAGNY, the president being always from the Foundation and empowered with a casting vote. Arbab Rustom Guiv had remained a trustee until his demise in 1980.

The first intimation of disaffection was contained in ZAGNY's April 1985 newsletter which noted that the Guiv family wished to change the name of the Darbe Mehr in New York from 'Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple' to 'Arbab Rustom Guiv Foundation of New York.' The announcement was made at the annual general meeting of ZAGNY held on March 23, 1985.

It has been the contention of Foundation president Dr Rostam Sarfeh that the Darbe Mehr's donor had only intended to donate the use of the property to the local community: "The ownership he (Guiv) would keep for the Foundation of Rustom Guiv which was under his personal direction while he lives and it will be under the supervision of the trustees of the Foundation after he is deceased," Sarfeh had noted in an undated letter received by *Parsiana* in 1987.

It has been claimed by the Foundation that the property was mistakenly titled in the name of the Trust in the rush of the purchase in 1976. This stand has been strongly contended by ZAGNY, vide its October 1985 news-

letter, explaining that individuals involved in the purchase of the property had noted that the property had been titled in the name of the Trust for tax and other reasons, on legal advice. ZAGNY had then countered with six conditions subject to which it would be prepared to accept the transfer of ownership.

At the present juncture the court had three options, notes the newsletter: It could have granted the petition; it could have dismissed the petition; it could have instituted a trial on merits.

The Foundation has filed an appeal with the Appellate Division, further informs the newsletter.

Farsi publication

"We are determined to maintain and expand our Zoroastrian culture today, in North America, especially. Although most of us have made this (our) home for more than 10 years, there is a lot of hard work we have to do to ensure we will not lose this invaluable heritage," writes Dr Mehroban Shahrini, publisher of *Pake E Mehr*, a publication in Farsi from Vancouver, Canada, in a letter to *Parsiana* dated December 1, 1988.

The majority of readers are Persian Zoroastrians all over the world. Only about six of the 48 mimeographed pages of the magazine are in English for the benefit of Parsi Zoroastrians in Vancouver, writes Shahrini.

The front cover of *Pake E Mehr* is a collage of the mastheads of some of the well-known newsletters of North American associations. The contents include references to the Second North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress, a story on the renowned Persian poet Hafiz-Shirazi, a short explanation of Mehrgan, news about the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America and, interestingly, an item in Farsi from (or about) the *Fed Newsletter*, the publication of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India.

Into the big league

Sixteen-year-old all-rounder Ronnie Irani, who has signed on to play for Lancashire County, is tipped for the top in English cricket, writes Peter Mensforth in *Evening News* of September 7, 1988.

Son of league cricketer Jimmy Irani and his wife Anne, "Ronnie is a local

lad who has always wanted to play for his county, and now he has the chance," noted Lancashire chairman Bob Bennett at a press conference at the Old Trafford to introduce the new members included in the team. The press conference was covered in several local newspapers.

Though Ronnie has played for Lancashire and England school boys at every level, his six-foot-three-inch frame had often raised doubts about his age, note the newspaper clippings forwarded to *Parsiana* by Anne: "We were so fed up with people checking Ronnie's age that Anne used to settle all arguments by producing his birth certificate," remarked his father Jimmy. "With Ronnie going into the record books as the youngest century maker, his age should not now come into question."

In her letter Anne notes that Ronnie is also a basketball and football player, has earned a swimming medal and that "his local tennis coach was upset as he packed in everything to concentrate on cricket when he was only 15."

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

MATRIMONIAL

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Thana land sale dispute

The Divecha Trust's decision to sell trust land in Thana to a builder has been opposed by the local Anjuman and others

Homi J. Rogers

Barely 30 kms from the heart of Bombay, lies Thana (or Thane, as its predominantly Maharashtrian residents now call it) which has come into its own during the past few years. The town (population: 3,10,000) has its own municipal council, a new sports stadium has been built, a convent school has the distinction of one of its teachers (a Parsi, incidentally) being honored by the Maharashtra government as one of the finest in the state. And since the past one year, Thane even boasts of having launched the country's first floating restaurant.

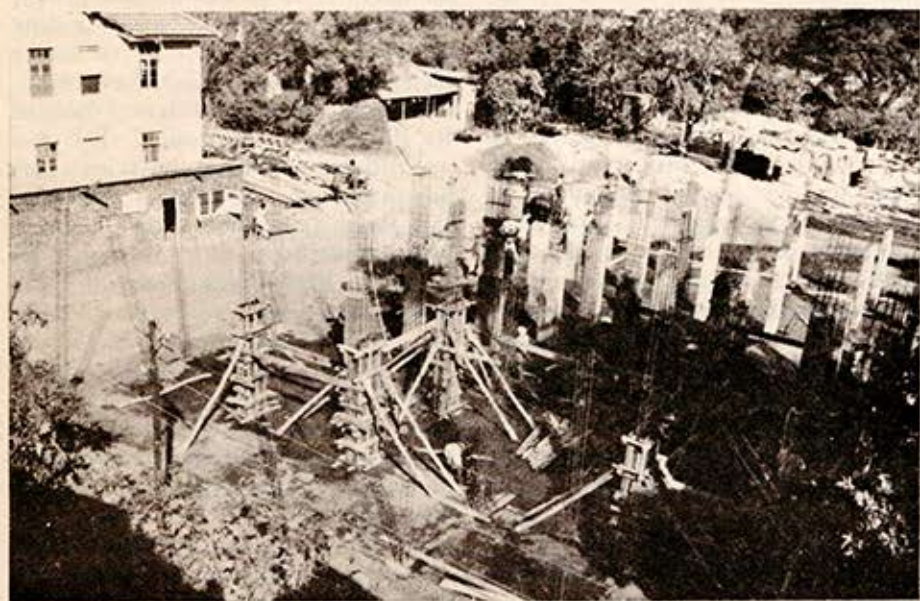
Despite the industrialization and growing commercialization which has resulted in an upsurge of building activity, Thane has retained the quintessence of a small Maharashtrian town. It yet has its share of narrow winding lanes, swaying palm fronds, rows of cottages and bumpy little maidans over sandy mounds where the ubiquitous bicycle is steered around and young Gavaskars-in-the-making enjoy a game of cricket.

One such piece of open land, that has currently kicked up a storm dustier than itself, is a plot admeasuring 8,583 sq meters (approximately 80,000 sq ft) on Eduljee Road at Chanrai, belonging to the Cowasji Behramji Divecha Trust. The Trust was set up in April 1930 during the lifetime of Cowasji, a

scion of the Divecha family who had contributed immensely to the growth of Thana. By the 1930s, however, the Divechas had shifted out from Thana. Keki Divecha, one of the present trustees, and a grandson of Cowasji's brother, recalls that they had moved into Malcolm Baug at Jogeshwari in 1928, and as a boy he would readily accompany his father for the traditional ghambar (feast) at Thana.

But, ghambars aside, the Divecha family's links with Thana were rather tenuous since then. With the passage of time, visits became even more infrequent, and as Parvez Bhesania, secretary of the Thana Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman charges, the present generation of the Divecha family (Keki's sons) would visit Thana, probably, just once in five years. Yet, the love for Thana and the betterment of its Zoroastrian residents, as outlined in the trust deed, remained. In the mid '50s to early '60s (around 1955 to '62), the trustees constructed four buildings of two storeys each, housing around 32 families at Chanrai, in a lane branching out from the Patel Adarian (fire-temple). That, today, only 10 Parsi families should be residing amidst the 32 tenements, is a reflection, as Bhesania himself admits, of the unwillingness of the community in the '60s to settle outside Bombay.

The situation has changed dramatically during the last two decades. Thana has matured into a town with its own identity. And the housing problem, especially amongst the Parsis in Bombay, has multiplied manifold, causing the Thana Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, to quote *The Bombay Samachar*, "to put up a gallant fight," against the Divecha Trust, to prevent the sale of land lying around the abovementioned four buildings. At the time of writing, the matter is being hotly debated in the Charity Commissioner's court, on whether the Trust is empowered to sell its land for purposes that allegedly may not serve the betterment of the community. The Anjuman charges the Trust with selling out on the community's interest, at a time when housing is its dire need, and has requested a stay order on the sale of the property. Simultaneously, as Rustom Cursetji, the soft-spoken president of the Thana Anjuman for the past 10 years, puts it, "an elementary plan, in embryonic form" has been drawn up by the Anjuman to meet the twin purposes of keeping the land within the community, and offering apartments constructed here to Parsis at the modest rate of Rs 450 per sq foot - practically, half the going rate in Thana today for a flat in a well-constructed building in that particular locality.



Divecha Trust land in Thana being developed by the builder

Cursetji, a research scientist at the Associated Cement Companies plant at Thana, came to know about the sale of land early this year, through a series of anonymous letters sent to him, Bhesania, and other committee members of the Anjuman, exhorting them to wear bangles, and sit at home, as they could not do anything to save a piece of land belonging to a Parsi trust from being sold to a non-Parsi for site development. "It was the first time I came to know about the sale," says Cursetji. Even Bhesania, who stays in the Trust buildings opposite the disputed plot, was ignorant about its sale, though, he admits, he always did have a hunch that the Divechas wished to sell this land, and at one time, had even helped Behram, Keki's son and now the managing trustee, in obtaining the Urban Land Ceiling (ULC) Certificate. While the move to procure the ULC is viewed by Bhesania, a local self-made businessman, as a precursor to the sale, Burjor Ratanji Bhagwagar, the manager of the Divecha Trust, explains that since the Trust had no finances to develop the land, it was important for them to obtain the ULC, failing which the Government could acquire any excess land being held by the Trust without so much as a by-your-leave. The Certificate was obtained on February 17, 1986, and by

a clause, work on development had to start within two years from the date of obtaining the Certificate, and end within five years.

The Divecha Trust, however, explains Bhagwagar, was not in a position to develop this land. The Trust had a corpus of only three and a half lakhs which, when invested in three percent conversion loans, would yield just Rs 10,000 per annum to be spent on the Trust's four-fold objectives among which, incidentally, "building chawls or other residential quarters for the poor of the Parsi Zoroastrian community at Thana" features last on the list. However, with the sale in November 1986 of an old building owned by the Trust, a sum of Rs 17,51,600 was added to the Trust's coffers. This building, Raj Mahal at Altamount Road, fetched for the Trust very low rents as against very high maintenance costs by way of taxes and repairs on its 90-year-old structure. The sale was permitted on the express proviso that the money so raised would be utilized for developing the Thana plot of land, the ULC for which was already one-year-old. However, when the Trust's architect, Pathekar and Pathekar, submitted an estimate in November 1987 for Rs 1.68 crores towards development of the land, the Divecha Trust holding only 21 lakhs (17.5 from Raj

Mahal sale plus 3.5 lakhs) had to abandon plans for developing the site themselves. The estimate for development of the land was invited on November 29, 1987 as per the Trust's records, a full year after the Raj Mahal property had been sold on November 26, 1986, according to Zarir Jehangirji, a young Parsi who is contesting the Divecha Trust's action. "It was a calculated step to sell off the Thana land. Otherwise," Jehangirji queries, with recourse to a simile, "which husband would sell his wife's jewelry to get into business, without having drawn up even a blueprint of the proposed enterprise?"

The Trust, estimate and ULC in hand, requested the Charity Commissioner for permission to offer the land for sale for development, as it was not in a position to undertake the task and the two-year deadline was fast approaching. The Commissioner's permission was obtained, and an advertisement was released, as per the stipulations, on December 18, 1987 in one English and one vernacular newspaper offering the land for development. Cursetji points out to the clause in the trust deed which makes it mandatory for the trustees to make announcements and declare the Trust's statements of accounts in Parsi papers, as against which the advertisement was released in the *Free Press Journal*, and its sister publication, the Marathi daily *Navshakti*. The circulation of neither paper is verified by the impartial ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation), and is reportedly very low.

"We preferred a Marathi paper in the vernacular press as the population in Thana of Maharashtra is more than that of the community," argues Bhagwagar. Bhesania is of the opinion that on this technical flaw, the Anjuman has a strong case, and the sale can be invalidated.

Moreover, according to the advertisement, tenders for development needed to be accompanied by cheques for Rs 10 lakhs. Remonstrates Cursetji: "The trustees did not want a con-

cerned individual or body like the Anjuman to bid and save the land from being sold; otherwise, they would not have demanded this ridiculous price."

On January 19, 1988 the land was sold - subject to approval by the Charity Commissioner - to Chaitanya Parekh of Radhika Properties Developments Pvt Ltd for a sum of Rs 1.30 crores. Even at this juncture the Anjuman state they knew nothing about the matter. Three months later, cajoled into action, the Anjuman wrote to the Divecha Trust seeking information on the sale. For want of a proper reply, the Anjuman moved a petition on June 20 to the Charity Commissioner challenging the sale and requesting a stay order.

In the meanwhile, bracing up to the challenge of developing the land if given an opportunity to do so, the Anjuman approached the Godrej Foundation, and received from its trustee, P.D.F. Lam, a written assurance that the Foundation would associate itself with the Anjuman on a no-profit no-loss basis for the housing of Parsis. The terms proposed were "practically on the same lines as Godrej Baug, built by them (Godrej) on Bombay Parsi Punchayet land (at Nepean Sea Road)," notes Cursetji. The assurance provided the Anjuman with the necessary boost: that with the support of like-minded bodies and individuals, it could match the builders' offer to enable the Trust to buy back the land, and construct apartments thereon only for Parsis. Cursetji estimates that providing for land costs at Rs 1.30 crores (i.e. Rs 160 per sq ft), with a first class construction, as guaranteed by Godrej, and provision for contingency, an apartment would cost Rs 450 per sq ft. Such a colony on Divecha Trust land could house around 150 Parsi families. When last contacted, the Anjuman was contemplating for itself the role of a catalyst in the formation of a cooperative society which could build the flats.

Behram Divecha, the managing trustee, had air-dashed from Muscat, where he is a management consultant to a host of companies, to discuss the matter with the Anjuman members. In a telephonic interview he disclosed to *Parsiana* that he had no objection to

the Anjuman building on his Trust land, but it was very wrong of the Anjuman to charge that the Trust should have used its funds to do so. "I did not have the money, even if I were to put my full corpus into just one scheme. And further, our trust deed clearly indicates that only the net income of the Trust property is to be used towards giving donation for building of other residential quarters."

Despite its recurrence in the trust deed, this clause, of donations being permissible only from the net income, is strongly contested by the Anjuman. Cursetji points out that the settlor (Cowasji Divecha), in all his foresight, has not made the trust deed as watertight as the managing trustee and his advocates interpret it. Quoting clause

"The land has been lying vacant for the past 50 years. Why did the Anjuman not approach us all these years?"

22, the last clause in the indenture, Cursetji argues that the Trust "declares it lawful for the settlor from time to time to vary and revoke all or any of the uses, estates and trusts." Moreover it empowers the trustees to "appoint the Trust property and premises to some other charity or charities for the exclusive benefit of the Parsi Zoroastrian community in India." Therefore Cursetji feels that the Divecha Trust would be well within its powers to hand over the land to the Anjuman for development.

Divecha regrets that the same may not now be possible, since he fears litigation from the builders, if he were to pull out of the sale. As Bhagwagar points out, "The land has been lying vacant for the past 50 years. Why did the Anjuman not approach us for its development all these years?"

The trustees feel that 'donating' the land to the Anjuman would impede the fresh spurt given to the Trust in meeting its other objectives. The Trust, Divecha informs, flushed with

the additional funds collected by way of advance payment received from the builders (25 percent of the sale price), has already "gifted a sterilizer costing around a lakh to the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, disbursed scholarships worth Rs 75,000, and doles of Rs 100 each to 77 people." This is a quantifiable leap from the Trust's earlier disbursements. With a corpus of just three and a half lakhs, it distributed towards its objectives only Rs 20,199 in 1984 (doles constituting the main expenditure worth Rs 14,632), Rs 19,233.90 (doles: Rs 17,152) in 1985, and Rs 19,100 (doles: Rs 16,120) in 1986. Cursetji, however, queries the disbursements stating that he has no evidence or reason to believe that anyone in Thana has benefited from the Divecha Trust.

In August, with no breakthrough in sight despite Behram Divecha's air-dash, the Anjuman, with the intention of creating an awareness amongst the community, spoke to Jehan Daruwalla, editor of *The Bombay Samachar*. Daruwalla, in an unsigned piece, put forth the Anjuman's case, and berated the trustees "for depriving the Parsis who are the real beneficiaries of the benefits of the Trust." In the process, *The Samachar* called upon itself proceedings for contempt of court, for its comments on a sub judice matter. At the time of going to press, the Charity Commissioner has quashed the Divecha Trust's appeal to issue show cause notice of contempt of court on Jehan Daruwalla for his write-up in *The Samachar*. The Commissioner's order has, however, decreed that should the trustees, as a result of the article, feel that they have been defamed, they are "at liberty to take any suitable action if so desired and advised" against Daruwalla.

To further support its plea for procuring the Divecha land for housing Parsis, the Anjuman has conducted a survey which has been placed before the Commissioner, confirming that 300 incumbents who are at present either staying or working in the Thana area, are ready to purchase flats here at Rs 450 per sq ft and have the capacity to pay likewise. Earlier, on July 20, at the behest of the Anjuman, its member, Edulji Jehangirji Kalwachia, the vice president (Management Ser-

vices) of Godrej and Boyce at Vikhroli, had addressed a letter to the Charity Commissioner, appended with over 160 signatures. Requesting that the sale of land be stayed, Kalwachia sought permission on behalf of the signatories to put forth a proposal wherein the Divecha Trust be requested to "lease the land for 90 years at the prevailing rate...which will benefit the Trust by a regular income," while providing accommodation for over 120 families.

Kalwachia's work pressures, which frequently kept him out of Bombay, forced him to drop his presentation, but the mantle was taken up by his younger colleague, Zarir Jehangirji, a personnel manager at Godrej, who on August 19, placed before the Commissioner an appeal to be made party to the proceedings. The move was strongly resented by the Divecha Trust, but Jehangirji, an affable young man, persisted. "As a Zoroastrian, and thus a beneficiary to the Trust, I should be entitled to have my say," Jehangirji asserts, and promises to put forth different points than those being

argued by the Anjuman. "Reams of verbiage later, Jehangirji's affidavit was admitted, and Jehangirji, determined to fight to the very end, is now a strong ally to Cursetji, to whom, incidentally, he is related. "Should the ruling come against us, I will appeal to

"The trustees did not want a concerned body like the Anjuman to bid and save the land from being sold"

the higher courts, and go right up to the Supreme Court if necessary," says Jehangirji with quiet determination. The best legal brains in the community, he claims, are prepared to fight the case for him.

A long drawn out legal battle is the last thing the Divecha Trust wants. They argue that if the permission

under the ULC lapses, or the legal wrangles continue, the developers may back out of the agreement, thus causing a setback to the Trust's working. A reasonable parallel had been enacted in 1978 in Thana when the Agiary Fund Trust chose to develop its unoccupied land by constructing a complex of three buildings, waiving aside control of two, on consideration of a donation from the builder. The Anjuman had, even at that time, opposed the move, and called a general meeting. Today, though the municipal plans are ready and the commencement certificate obtained, the project has not got off the ground, as the resentment voiced by the community led to differences between the Agiary's trustees and the builder. Homi Talati, a trustee of the Agiary Fund and the Thane Zoroastrian Charity Fund (established: 1873) which runs the 278-year-old Tower of Silence here, hints at the growing resentment between the Agiary Fund Trust and the Anjuman, which had stymied their earlier proposal.

Fuelled, probably, by old animosi-

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ties, and its ongoing concern for the community, the 270-member strong Thana Anjuman is determined to prevent the Divecha land from slipping away into the control of non-Parsis, for an annual income of just around Rs 10 lakhs, which, even if used solely for housing purposes, could provide shelter for just about two or three families every year at the present rates. Talati, a personnel manager at Fibreglass Pilkington's Thana plant, opines, "There is ample land in Thana with us for development." If the Divecha Trust gives the money, the Thane Zoroastrian Charity Fund and the Anjuman, could build residential quarters on a planned program on the land next to Doongerwadi. This land, Talati says, is currently rented out to TELCO for parking their vehicles at Rs 30,000 per month. Talati doubts the Anjuman's ability to develop the Divecha land as the members of the proposed cooperative society may not be able to pay the amount when the time actually comes. Jehangirji is however confident of raising up to six crore rupees, and hints at having many aces up his sleeve.

The scales seem evenly balanced between the Divecha trustees and the Anjuman. While the trustees stress the cosmopolitan nature of the Trust, the Anjuman is at pains to impress that the settlor wished to better the lot of his fellow community members. While the trustees wish to address themselves to all the different objectives outlined,

"I did not have the money even if I were to put my full corpus into just one scheme"

the Anjuman feels that as per clause 7(d), "the trustees... have regard to the wants, necessities and requests of the Parsi Zoroastrian community of Thana" and concentrate on housing.

In the next few months, accusations and counter-accusations could fly thick, and even get personal, as the fight for the land heats up. Should the Anjuman succeed in securing the land

for the community's needs, the 25-year-old body formed with the intention of bringing Parsis together socially, will present a most suitable silver jubilee gift to the community. On the other hand, should the builder take the matter to court, the dispute could continue for another 25 years. Any settlement therefore would have to get the consensus of all the three parties involved, namely the Divecha Trust, the Thana Anjuman and the Radhika Property Developers Pvt Ltd.

In 1774, Cowasji Patel, after whom C. P. Tank in Central Bombay, and C. P. Street are named, was entrusted the administration of Thana by the British who conquered it from the Marathas. The Patels were the first Parsi family to settle in Thana and build a fire-temple and doongerwadi for the Parsis who followed them. The return of the community in 1774 to a town where it had initially settled way back in the eighth century before fleeing to Kalyan to escape Portuguese persecution, could well be re-lived two centuries later. And the Agiary, with the Patels framed all over, could once again hum with the activity of yore.

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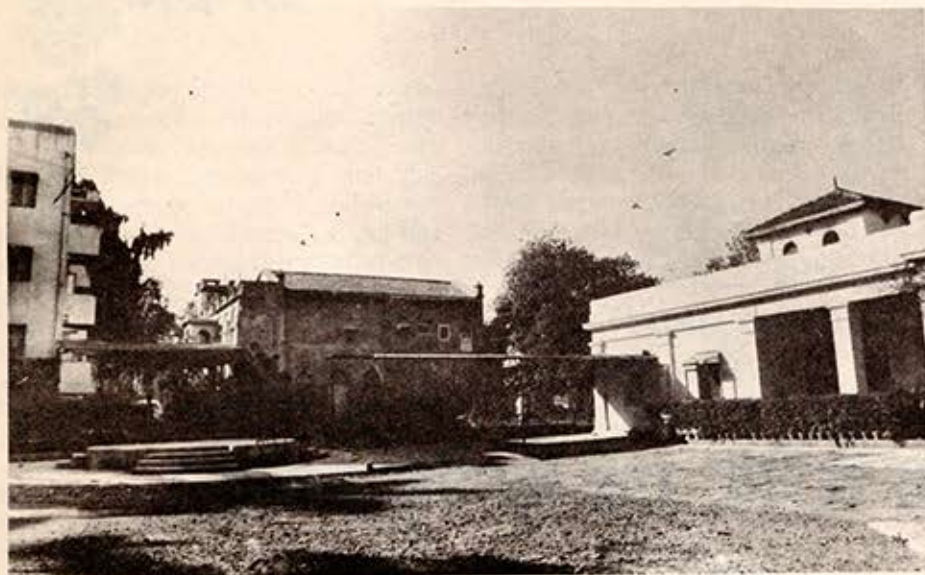
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TO WHOM DOES DASTUR HALL BELONG?



While Dastur Hormuzdiar claims it as family property, four Pune beneficiaries legally contend that the land belongs to the S. R. Patel Trust

Gustasp Irani

Whose land is it anyway? "Trust property," says Eruch M. Irani. "Private property. Mine," says Dastur Hormuzdiar N. K. Dastur. The joint charity commissioner, Pune, has confirmed an injunction against the disposal of the disputed land till the matter is resolved.

The dispute centers around the sale of the property known as Dastur Hall, located at Nana Peth, Pune. Irani and three other applicants, Burjor Sadri, Firdous Kayani and Farrok Irani, all from Pune, sought a stay order against the sale pleading that the land is the property of the Sardar Sorabjee Ratanjee Patel Charitable Trust (S. R. Patel Trust). Dastur Hormuzdiar, chief trustee of the same Trust and high priest of the Trust fire-temple which is located on the land adjacent to Dastur Hall, claims that the disputed land is private property, his own, and not part of the Trust estate.

The issue before the joint charity commissioner, Pune, is: What part belongs to the Trust and what part to Hormuzdiar? All the land is Trust land, says Irani in his application and

when interviewed at his office in Pune. Only 5332.66 sq yards is Trust land, the rest, family property, says Hormuzdiar and his daughter Mehernavaz Vakil in their submissions to the joint charity commissioner. Vakil filed her revision application after the order of injunction against sale of the land had been issued. Hormuzdiar, when contacted, refused to comment on the grounds that the matter was sub judice and he did not want to prejudice the case.

Irani claims that on June 10, 1986 his attention was drawn to an advertisement in the daily *Maharashtra Herald* in which Hormuzdiar's lawyer served public notice of his client's intention to sell and transfer 1178 sq meters of the disputed property. Since Irani feared that the land belonged to the S. R. Patel Trust, he checked out the city survey records which, according to him, proved that his suspicions were not unfounded.

Hormuzdiar, in his reply, states that Irani is pursuing a personal vendetta. He substantiates the charge by citing two instances: One, he denied Irani the use of certain properties he manages for staging a fun fair; and second, he denied a 'ward' of Irani admission,

"on merits," into an educational institute of which he is a trustee and chairperson. Irani, when contacted, insisted there were no ulterior motives as alleged by Hormuzdiar. "There is no financial or other gain in this for me," he states. He dismisses the charges as "frivolous and groundless." He points out that contrary to what the Dastur says, his child is indeed studying in the very institute that he was assumedly denied admission to. "I have had no prior or other fight with Dasturji. When the community's property and trusts are being threatened, someone has got to come forward and protect them," he adds.

The central issue, however, remains the title to the land. Historically, it may be traced back to 1824 when S. R. Patel, after whom the Trust was named, constructed a fire-temple or 'dar-e-meher' at Nana Peth. On his request, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet deputed Jamashpjee Eduljee Dastur to look after the fire and discharge the religious duties required. On August 29, 1843 Patel executed a document with regard to his properties which included the fire-temple at Nana Peth. Irani, in his application, refers to the document as the establishment of a re-

Adjacent properties: Dastur Hall (left) and the S. R. Patel Trust's fire-temple



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ligious trust. Hormuzdiar denies that the document of 1843 is the document creating the Trust. His daughter, in her application, refers to it as a deed of gift. The two submit that the Trust was established by a registered document of July 2, 1884, executed by Noshervanjee Jamashjee Dastur. Irani refers to the document of 1884 too. He, however, maintains that this latter document only restates the foundation of the trust made by S. R. Patel, after the building (housing the fire-temple) was reconstructed and reopened to the Zoroastrian community in 1877.

Hormuzdiar and his daughter Vakili contend that the document of 1884 should form the basis of establishing which part of the land belongs to the Trust and which does not. Accordingly, they submit that only 5332.66 sq yards of the land belongs to the Trust and the rest is part of their family estate. Hormuzdiar also refers to the will of his grandfather to establish that Dastur Hall is part of his family estate. The joint charity commissioner in his order, however, notes that "in the eye of the law, the effect of the probate confirms the proof of execution of the will but not the title."

Irani bases his case on the records of the Pune city survey. He points out that the properties, on which the Agiary and the Dastur Hall stand, were revenue free as they were used for charitable and religious purposes and to date continue to avail of the revenue-free status allotted to such institutions. He further points out that in 1950 when the Bombay Public Trust Act came into force, only the land on which Dastur Hall stood was shown as trust property, and not the adjacent plot on which stood the fire-temple. An application for amendment dated September 11, 1973 was filed by Dastur Hormuzdiar, in his capacity as the chief trustee of the S. R. Patel Trust, for correction of the typographical mistake whereby the survey numbers of the two adjacent plots were erroneously interchanged. It was no mistake, alleges Irani. The assistant charity commissioner allowed the application and the records were changed to show that only the land bearing the fire-temple was registered as trust property.

In his reply Hormuzdiar states that

the property under dispute is private property and hence does not concern the Trust. He argues that the Dastur Hall has been granted revenue-free status for reasons other than being part of the S. R. Patel Trust. He subsequently points out that both the properties are further divided into sub-plots.

Apart from the land dispute, Irani also alleges mismanagement of the S. R. Patel Trust. He seeks the dismissal of the present trustees and the framing of a new scheme for the Trust in addition to further inquiry into all the properties of the Trust.

Ms Vakili filed her application against the trustees of the S. R. Patel Trust (her father Hormuzdiar, Ms Tehmi K. Grant, Col S. K. Pudumjee, Darius M. Forbes, Shavak B. Patel, Dr Burjor M. Desai, all from Pune, and Shiavax R. Vakili of Bombay) on grounds that the Trust records were faulty and should be corrected to exclude land that belonged to her family. She filed the application after the joint charity commissioner's order confirmed the injunction against the sale of land on which Dastur Hall is located. She challenged the order of 1973 in which the entire plot on which the

fire-temple stands, is recorded as trust property when only 5332.66 yards should be so allowed. She also questions the order of injunction against the sale of the disputed land.

Grant and Pudumjee, two trustees of the S. R. Patel Trust, when contacted on the phone, refused to comment on the same ground that Hormuzdiar cited: the matter is sub judice and it could prejudice the case.

Advocate Kothadiya has been representing the applicants and Advocate Kalawala, the respondents, at the hearings at the joint charity commissioner's.

Kersasp Irani, chairman of the Poona Parsee Panchayat and brother of Eruch Irani, clarifies his position in the matter: "It does not fall under the constitution of the Panchayat to interfere in the affairs of other trusts."

Mercifully, the fights and disputes will be resolved in the court of law and the office of the charity commissioner. Meanwhile, tucked in the heart of the city, far from the turmoil of court battles, the S. R. Patel Agiary functions as though nothing has happened. The faithful feed the holy fire and the mobeds go about their task with quiet dignity.

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HIGH COURT STALLS KATRAK

Arnavaz S.Mama

Justice Jagirdar of the Bombay High Court admitted a writ petition filed by the seven trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) challenging the sanction given by the Maharashtra Revenue Tribunal to advocate Ardeshir Katrak to file a suit to oust the BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla. Justice Jagirdar also passed an order restraining Katrak and others from acting "in furtherance or in pursuance of the order dated October 31, 1988 passed by the Maharashtra Revenue Tribunal," notes a press release issued by the BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria.

The BPP contended that the Tribunal order was "based on extraneous circumstances, surmises and conjectures." The BPP's advocate further noted that Golwalla's term had expired on October 21, 1988 and that he had continued as chairman of the BPP because of the court order dated October 13, 1988 passed by Justice Sawant and Justice Sujata Manohar. That order was given in light of the dispute over the electoral scheme for election of the new Anjuman Committee and thereby the election of new trustees. The BPP's lawyer contended that the "order passed by the Maharashtra Revenue Tribunal granting permission to Ardeshir Katrak is wholly infructuous and the same also exhibits non application of mind in as much as the permission for removal of Dr Aspi Golwalla as a trustee has been granted after his term as a trustee has come to an end."

Katrak's advocate argued that the order of Justices Sawant and Manohar pertained to the proposed amendments to the electoral scheme and therefore had no bearing on the pro-

ceedings before the City Civil Court. He noted that the judge had not gone into Katrak's charges against Golwalla but had dealt only with the issue of whether the City Civil Court could try the suit in light of the High Court order instructing Golwalla to continue till the election scheme is finalized. Katrak states he intends to pursue the matter further.

Edul P. Bharucha, B. H. Anita and Homiar N. Vakil instructed by Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe appeared for the petitioners, Sorab J. Irani for Katrak and L.C. Chougale for the State of Maharashtra.

Tribunal order

The Maharashtra Revenue Tribunal has consented to advocate Ardeshir Katrak's plea to file a suit against Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairman, Dr Aspi Golwalla, in the City Civil Court on the charge of breach of trust and corruption. The charge has been made by Katrak and three other members of the Punchayet's Anjuman Committee which elects trustees. In the first round of the legal battle in the court of the charity commissioner, the assistant charity commissioner had exonerated Golwalla.

Ordering the appellants "to institute the proposed suit in the City Civil Court, Bombay," for the removal of Golwalla, V.S. Salvi, member of the Tribunal, noted, "I have no hesitation to hold that there is a prima facie case made out by the appellants."

Despite the fact that the rest of the BPP trustees did not file a written statement to support Golwalla's stand, as the Tribunal's order notes, they

have been considered parties to the suit as Golwalla's written statement specifically mentions that all the contested decisions were taken in consultation with the other trustees.

Golwalla has been accused of making a deal with Ms Vimla Sharma who was said to have inherited two flats in Ness Baug from the late Dara Khurshedji. In these premises she is alleged to have conducted a nursing agency of doubtful repute. The negotiations yielded one flat to the BPP which was then allocated to P.K. Amroliwalla and N.M. Nallaseth, allegedly in exchange for a donation of two lakh rupees. Golwalla had cited "long and costly litigation" as the reason justifying the negotiations with Sharma, simultaneously stating that steps are being taken to institute ejectment proceedings against her. He had denied that any donation had been received from Amroliwalla and noted that donations, received by the BPP in the normal course, were being incorrectly connected to the allocation of the flat.

The order quotes from the rulings of the Bombay High Court and the Supreme Court to note that "tenancy rights cannot be bequeathed by will in favor of a person who is not a member of the tenant's family." The order further notes, "The respondent...who is the chairman of the Trust, should have taken steps to evict Ms Vimla Sharma, who was using the premises for immoral purposes, by instituting a suit after the death of Dara Khurshedji."

The Tribunal's reasoning on the issue of breach of trust reads, "It is significant to note that though (Gol-

The Bombay High Court has admitted the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's writ petition challenging the Maharashtra Revenue Tribunal's order permitting advocate Ardeshir Katrak to file a suit to oust BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla

walla) at various places in his written statement has stated that the committee of management dealt with the matter... (he) has nowhere pointed out who were the members of the so-called committee (or)... when (it) came into existence. It is nowhere stated as to what are the powers of the said committee of management. It appears that the respondent... in order to save his skin, held the committee of management responsible for the acts alleged by the appellants in their plaint... S.J. Irani (advocate for Katrak) pointed out that the respondent committed breach of trust by allowing the so-called committee of management to perform the duties of the trustees which amounts to delegation of powers... Irani pointed out that the so-called committee of management has no power to perform the duties of the trustee in the absence of any resolution in writing to that effect...

"Irani has rightly pointed out that the R.N. and N.N. Wadia Trust ceased to be the owners of the Ness Baug building in which flat numbers 6 and 8 are situated and, therefore, only the BPP trust, (which) is now the owner of the said building, can deal with the prop-

erty. Therefore the respondent has committed a breach of trust by allowing the so-called committee to perform the duties of the trustee which amounts to delegating powers to any authority."

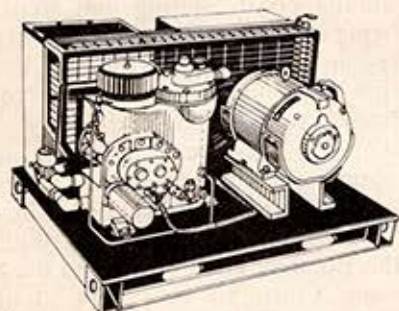
Referring to the alleged donation, the order again cites Irani who argued

"Tenancy rights cannot be bequeathed by will in favor of a person who is not a member of the tenant's family"

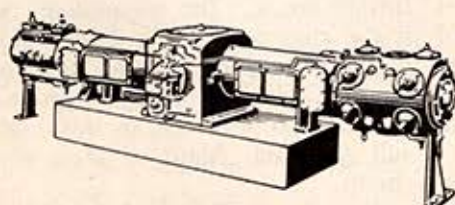
that Golwalla has not denied receiving the donation from Nallaseth. Though the respondent's advocate S.G. Mandrekar argued that the appellants had not furnished the date, month or year when the alleged two lakh rupees were received by Golwalla, the Tribunal preferred to accept the contention as Golwalla's written statement had

admitted the receipt of the donations by the trust. The Tribunal's order refers to the proceedings before the assistant charity commissioner where the respondent "did not produce the books of accounts" despite an appeal to do so. Instead, xerox copies of the accounts for 1981-82 and 83 were submitted by Golwalla's attorney, along with the written argument. "Shri Irani therefore argued that the respondent had no courage to produce the books of accounts before the learned assistant charity commissioner and, therefore, an adverse inference will have to be drawn against him," states the Tribunal's order.

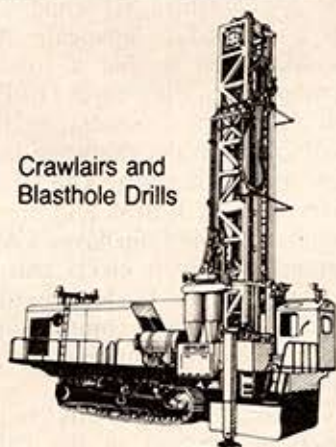
The petitioners had also faulted Golwalla on the BPP's approval of the transfer of the Jer Baug dispensary from Dr N.R. Zunwerkar, the original tenant, to Dr Rajan Bhonsale without regard to the needs of community professionals. This charge had not been pressed in the appeal before the Tribunal. Hence the Tribunal's order instructs the appellants to delete the paragraphs detailing this charge from their plaint before initiating proceedings at the City Civil Court, Bombay. There was no order as to costs.



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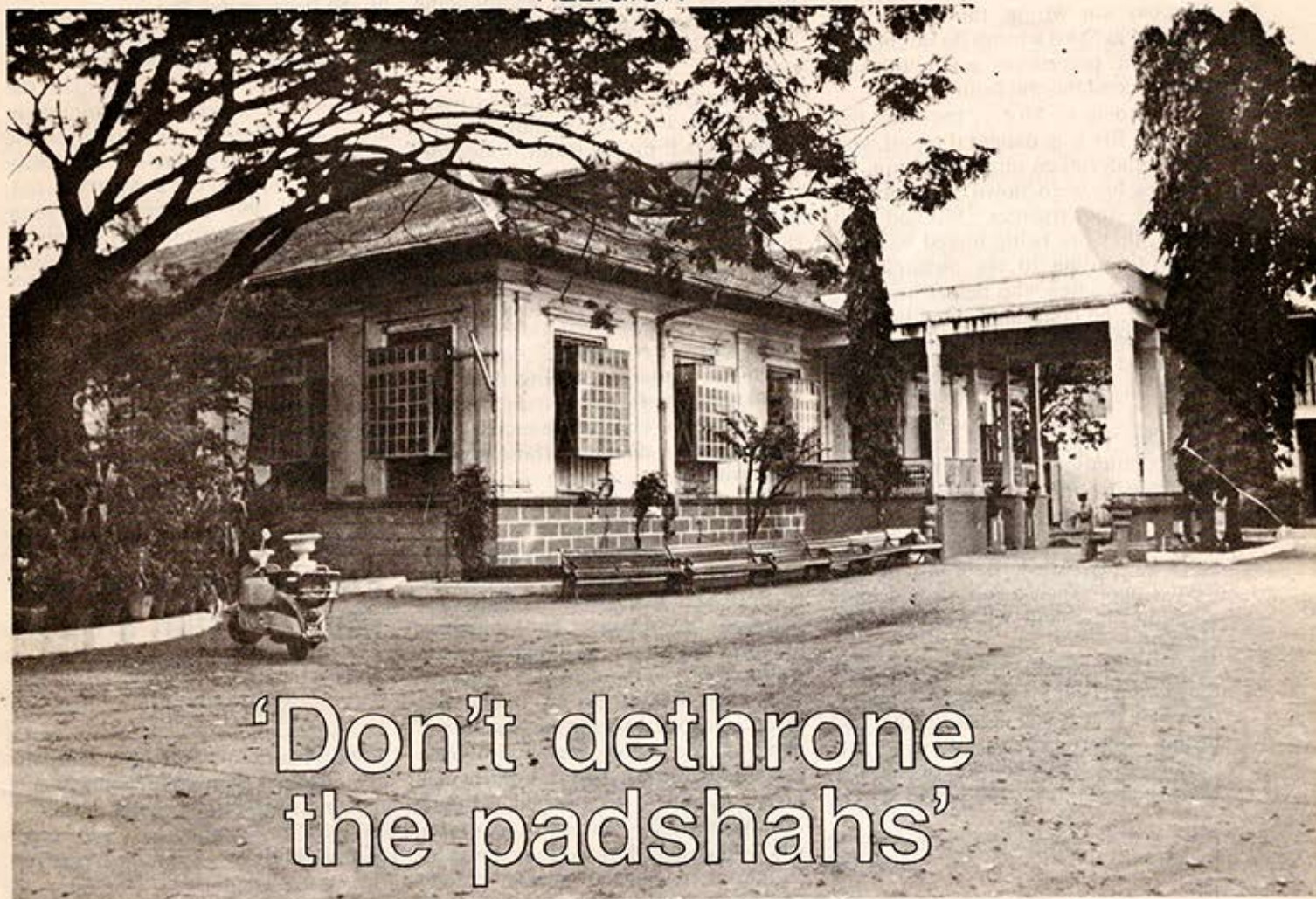
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'Don't dethrone the padshahs'

The proposal to shift the atash padshah (holy fire) of Bombay's Seth Cawasji Behramji Banaji Atash Bahram, from its sanctum sanctorum while repair work is carried out on the 143-year-old building housing the fire, has met with stiff opposition from a section of the community. The resistance is spearheaded by the Council of Vigilant Parsis (COVP) which, at the meeting called on October 28, 1988 at the Sir Jivanji Modi Hall of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, lay its case before a reasonably packed room. The holy fire can be shifted only under 'compelling' reasons, they insisted and threatened to seek the refuge of the court if the Banaji atash padshah was shifted by the trustees against the wishes of the community.

The issue of shifting the fire has provided fresh grist to the orthodox mill.

Seth Cawasji Behramji Banaji Atash Bahram Photo: Noshir Gobhai

**Repair to the
fire-temple structure
is not
sufficient ground
to shift the holy fire,
asserts the Council
of Vigilant Parsis**

Homi J. Rogers

The COVP addressed its first public meeting after a hiatus of three years, because "the organization does not suffer fools in silence," stated president B. K. Mistry who introduced himself as a "madcap." The move to shift the padshah, Mistry argues, is foolhardy, and is being undertaken by the trustees at the behest of society women who wish to glamorize the

Atash Bahram. "They will soon ask for stained glass to be installed, like in cathedrals," adds an agitated Adi Doctor, one of the founding spirits of COVP, and editor of the now defunct *The Parsee Voice* which, in its issues earlier, had campaigned against the shifting of the holy fires.

Doctor's views as put forth in several issues of *The Voice*, and *Parsiana* (May 1988 and October 1988) is that holy fires cannot be shifted, unless there are "compelling reasons" like the sudden demise of the priest while saying prayers, an attack by an enemy, a fire in the neighborhood, or a natural calamity. Under no circumstances, charged all the three speakers - Mistry, Doctor, and Ervad Kaikhushroo Dastoor - should the padshah be "dethroned" for painting and renovation work. "You refer to Him as the spiritual king, yet you shift Him around like a piece of furniture." The shifting of the Iranshah in the recent past and

the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram at Bombay was wrong, thundered Doctor, and as "two wrongs do not make a right, the precedents set in the past cannot condone the future."

According to Mistry, the issue that the holy fire is in danger if repair work is not undertaken immediately on the building has been blown out of proportion by the trustees. Flushed with funds, they are being forced to spend them according to the dictates of a covey of women who helped to amass the fund, he continued. One lady, informed Mistry had told him that when she stood in front of the fire, she felt afraid in the dark ("ketlu biyamnulagach"). Though Mistry did not mention the lady's name, his near-to-perfect imitation left few in the gathering guessing the lady's identity. The lady in question, the prime mover in collecting 18 lakh rupees for the repair work at the Atash Bahram, denied having made such a foolish and anti-religious statement when queried by Parsiana.

Mistry charges that it is a bogey that the gumbaz (dome) is in such a state of disrepair that it will crash, or that the beams supporting the roof are so rotten that they will give way, or that the chain hanging from the dome would

break. As Doctor added, an attending priest swung on the hook to prove that it was not loose, as claimed by the trustees.

It, however, remains a moot point whether the structure is really as sound as the COVP makes it out to be, for, even Doctor in his speech conceded that the two porticos did come crashing down. The repair fund was used for the porticos, and will be needed for tiling the roof. Neither job calls for shifting of the fire, Doctor insisted.

"We have no *rivaaj* (custom) for reinstating fire-temples," explained Doctor in Gujarati, adding that "we have never shifted fire-temples, and only since the last 100 years, has this *chetak* (fad) or *dhakhara* (false notion) been with us."

The resistance to shifting the fire, has been further buttressed by the *boiwallas* (attending priests) reticence to do so. In a letter to *Jamé*, the trustees have blamed the *boiwallas* for delaying the repairs. The solidarity amongst the priests who belong to the Kadmi *tola* (sect), of whom there are just a handful of priests today, has given religious backing to the proponents of the theory that a fire once sanctified and installed in a particular place cannot be shifted. Ervad Kaikhushroo N. Dastoor, an orator who would put Mark Antony and Atal Vajpayee together to shame, wound up the evening's discussion on these very lines. He stated that a fire which had been purified by the praying of 1,128 Yajashnes when consecrated, and on whom innumerable *Nyaishes* by the laity and *bois* (prayers said to usher in the *Gahs* - periods of the day) by the priests have been uttered, cannot be shifted "without knowledge of the mechanism." Dastoor argued that the fire is the spiritual strength of the community, and both the fire, and the building in which it is housed, are a composite unit, as the community's prayers echo through the building. Hence, shifting is irreligious, especially, when as at Thakurdwar's Banaji Atash Bahram it is being undertaken only to satisfy the ornamentation instinct of a few donors. "We could return such donations," challenged Dastoor amidst lusty cheering.

If repair work must be undertaken, the COVP speakers called upon the trustees to entrust it to Parsi workmen and artisans, thereby negating the need to shift the fire. The arguments

by the trustees that Parsis are not capable of handling such jobs, and that the community has no skilled labor of this sort, are baseless, charged the speakers. According to Doctor, there are at least three Parsis who, given the opportunity, can undertake the entire necessary repairs, but as Mistry noted, the ladies and trustees are "*mote khasre na manas* (from high society)," and thus not in favor of lesser-known names.

The meeting called upon the assembly to flood the office of the Atash Bahram's recently appointed managing trustee, solicitor Burjor Antia, with letters decrying the course of action proposed by him. "This will bring him to his senses," sneered Mistry, who called upon the gathering to do

"You refer to Him as the spiritual king, yet you shift Him around like a piece of furniture"

"just this little act for the atash padshah, who has done so much for you." Doctor similarly beseeched ("God will bless you") the audience to pass a resolution, later reworded on observing a lukewarm response.

Read out by Ervad Dastoor, the resolution in the form of a *Nivedan Patra* (application) stated that an atash bahram or an agiary belongs to the community, and not the trustees, and as the beneficiaries' feelings are being hurt by the trustees, their action could be challenged by the community in court. Dastoor informed that such a plea would be admitted under Article 25 whereby the Indian Constitution grants every citizen a right to freedom of religion and exhibition of his sentiments as he may think proper. The trustees, by undertaking to shift the fire, are hurting the sentiments of the beneficiaries, and can be hauled to court for committing this breach of trust, stated Dastoor. The 'resolution' was carried by a show of hands which, far from being unanimous, barely scraped a majority.

Will the trustees, however, kow-tow to the community's decision as conveyed by the COVP? Or, will they, if the crunch comes, fend off the COVP in a legal battle?

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M.N. DASTUR

A MAN OF STEEL

.....

"I had enough faith in the future of India and the country's development; so I decided to come back and start a consultancy firm in the field of iron and steel plant engineering." Dr Minu N. Dastur, the chairman and managing director of M. N. Dastur and Company gave his reasons for launching his firm in a newly independent developing country when he had established himself as consultant in the United States. Thirty-three years later, his Company today ranks among the largest consultancy firms in the world in steel plant engineering.

The enterprise's annual turnover is in the region of Rs 20 crores, according to Dastur. He makes sure that the figure has been accurately noted down. Simply attired in a safari suit, the self-effacing chairman, with his lean diminutive frame and perceptive eyes, conveyed his facts and views explicitly at his office in Bombay's Opera House locality on December 15, 1988. On his sparse desk, the most prominent item

was the red marker pencil. While Dastur's own base is in Calcutta, the Company's other principal offices in India are located at Madras, Bombay and Delhi. Its international operations are handled through Dastur Engineering International, based in Dusseldorf and New York. "About 20 to 30 percent of our income is from foreign projects," states Dastur.

Reporting on the progress of their large project in Libya which is nearing completion, Dastur announces, "It will cost US \$ 4,000 million and is the first integrated steel plant in the world

to be based on sponge iron and not the conventional blast furnace for the manufacture of steel. We are also working in Venezuela, Algeria and a number of other countries."

At present, their largest consultancy assignment is for the construction of India's first coast-based 3.4 million ton integrated steel plant in Visakhapatnam. Estimated to cost Rs 7,000 crores when completed, the project, once it becomes operative, "will have an easy access to imported raw materials as well as provide an excellent outlet for the steel products," says Dastur. He is happy that India too has taken a step forward, keeping in line with the trend towards coast-based steel plants that is being observed in many countries.

Dastur briefly outlined the scope of consultancy services: When appointed consultants on any project, a team of Dastur engineers first conducts the feasibility study to establish the financial and technical soundness of the project. If the client decides to go

**A chance meeting
with Nehru prompted
Dr Minu Dastur
to return to India
and start his
consultancy firm,
one of the world's
largest today
in steel plant
engineering**

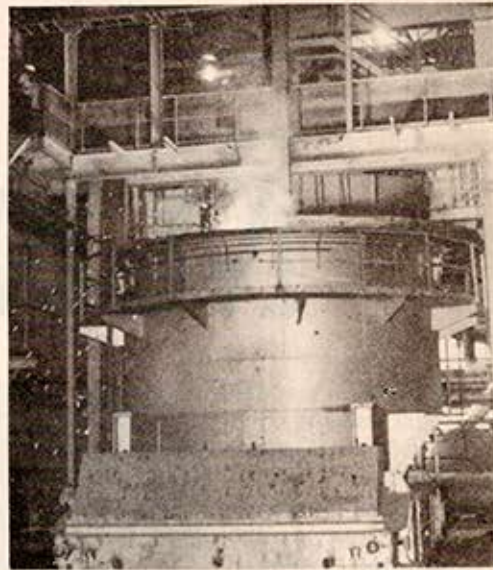
Parinaz Gandhi



ahead with the project, Dastur and Company prepares a detailed project report. Thereafter, the complete design and engineering are carried out for the implementation of the project, including the supervision of construction and erection of the entire plant and equipment. The consultants may also be required to inspect the equipment during and after manufacture. Finally, they assist the client during the commissioning of the plant. They witness the performance guarantee tests that are carried out by the supplier of plant and equipment, and provide technical support to the client in the trial operations of the plant.

With the addition of a computer division, much of the firm's design and engineering work as well as routine

scene at a very opportune time, when India was on the threshold of a large steel development program and there were people like (the then Prime Minister) Pundit Nehru around with that foresight and faith in the ability of India to accomplish things. This went a long way in giving us the necessary support and encouragement to develop from scratch." Dastur remembers his chance meeting with Nehru during a visit to India as steel consultant to advise the Indian government on behalf of a U.S. consultancy engineering firm with which he was then working. It was Nehru who briefed him on the country's steel development potential and suggested that it would be an ideal opportunity for a consultancy firm to be involved in that

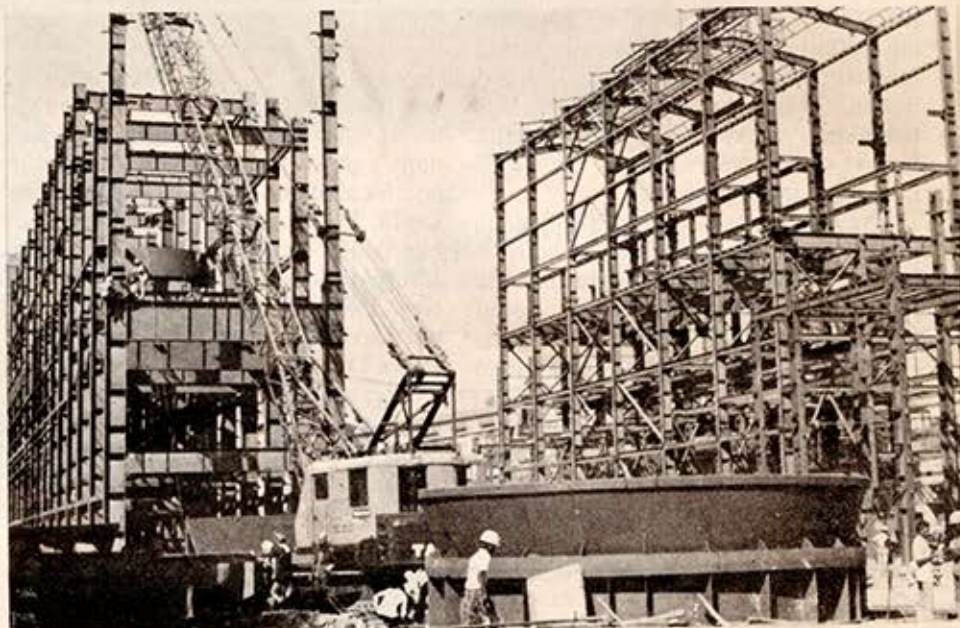


"We came on the scene at a very opportune time, when India was on the threshold of a large steel development program"

office work has been computerized, keeping abreast of the latest technological developments. Dastur elaborated on the introduction of sophisticated steel plant technology into the country.

A 3,000-strong multi-disciplinary organization today provides the sinews to the Company's leadership in the consultancy field. Dastur remembers the time when he had made "a small beginning" with a workforce of two — he and his secretary. Playing down his efforts and role in the success of the Company, Dastur attributes it to the management ethos: "In our company, we all work as a team so we don't emphasize the role played by any single individual including myself. Team work and fair play — that has been the secret of our success."

When asked to enumerate on the qualities and work ethics which had brought the Company to the fore, he was more inclined to attribute his success to "favorable time and circumstances." In his words, "We came on the



program. "He did not promise anything; but he gave me the idea to return home," Dastur acknowledges.

His earlier experience in the States and the contacts and associations that he had built up worldwide in South America, Europe and other countries helped very considerably the work of the present firm, Dastur points out. "I must not forget the Tatas," he adds. "Our very first job was from Tatas which we won on a global tender basis and which in fact laid the foundation of our Company in the early stages. Since then we have been involved in all the recent modernization and expansion programs of TISCO (Tata Iron and Steel Company) at Jamshedpur."

Projects for Tata Steel (top and above) designed and engineered by M.N. Dastur's consultants

Dastur had other links with Tatas. His father was one of the earliest employees of TISCO, and his own schooling was at the steel township of Jamshedpur. After graduating in electrical and mechanical engineering from the Banaras Hindu University, he too worked with TISCO in the steelmelting shop. He later proceeded to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) from where he obtained his ScD in steelmaking. And after a useful and long stint abroad, he returned to India confidently looking forward to a future in his homeland. "I am not sorry for

having done that," he says.

His sons Nariman and Rustam have recently joined him on the directoral board of M. N. Dastur and Company. His wife Mehroo, a medical doctor and virologist by training, is now more involved in activating Zoroastrian youth, spread thinly over the world, to take an interest in understanding and preserving their distinctive identity. His eldest daughter Jeroo is a computer expert.

"Our community seems to be losing

ground in the country because that old entrepreneurial spirit doesn't seem to be there. In my view, we have false notions of our superiority. We are handicapped because of our small numbers," was Dastur's analysis. "Our younger generation doesn't show the determination to make good; to really work hard and go after it, even if it may mean giving up immediate returns. They expect things to come their way," Dastur noted before conceding, "In some respects the dice seem to be loaded against them because of preferences and quotas that are set up for other communities. This has caused a great deal of frustration among our Parsi youth with a considerable amount of migration out of the country."

The community abroad "is doing fairly well," observes Dastur. "They are trying to organize themselves which is a good sign." But he feels strongly about the segmentation of the community into Parsi and Irani because "of a superiority complex which the Parsis unfortunately seem to suffer from. I don't agree with this distinction. We are all Zoroastrians by religion, whatever be our nationality. Our forefathers came from Iran. In the interest of preserving our religion and faith, it is much better that we don't make this artificial differentiation. We are too small a community to allow this."

On the issue of conversion, Dastur feels, "If someone wants to follow the Zoroastrian faith, I don't see why he should be prevented. After all, we are all converts," he states before proceeding to clarify, "I am not a reformer."

The community is not just losing out in numbers but in financial resources too, in Dastur's opinion. "We haven't been able to manage our charities and use the funds available in the right manner. A lot more could have been done." He does not believe in doling out; the main priority should be education, he stresses. Dastur admits, however, that he has not been able to get involved in this type of community work. "Right now I don't have enough time for my own work." He does not rule out the possibility of serving the community causes at a later date.

Until then does he have any suggestions for improvement? "If I had tips, I'd follow them myself," was the prompt reply. "Otherwise tips are not worth anything."

(Below) Steelwork erection at Visakhapatnam

(Bottom) Dastur: steely guts

(Bottom right) Dastur (suited) entering into a contract with Libyan officials



Percy – the movie

Said to be the first film to be made in Parsi-Gujarati,
Percy boasts of an all-Parsi star-cast

Prochi Badshah



Three years ago – in March 1985, to be precise – documentaries producer Pervez Merwanji did the most unusual thing. He bought a copy of *Bombay*, a city magazine. "I am not very hot on magazines and I rarely ever buy them," he explained. "But it was the cover headline which prompted me to pick this one up. It was a special issue on short fiction." He brought it home, skipped through the pages, reading a line here, a paragraph there, when he suddenly got engrossed in a story penned by Cyrus Mistry, titled *Percy*. Words took the form of visuals in Merwanji's mind and he wanted to put it on celluloid.

A Film and Television Institute of



dia (FTII) graduate, Merwanji has cinematographed the controversial and award-winning documentary, *Hamara Shaher*, made by Anand Patwardhan (the same film which inspired actress, Shabana Azmi, some time ago, to go on a fast unto death and compel the Chief Minister to look into the slum-dwellers of the Sanjay Gandhi Nagar). Merwanji has also photographed *Rakshak*, a serial on wildlife, and has also made a half hour docu-drama on Auroville and a documentary on *Kalari Payat*, a form of martial art in Kerala. And now *Percy* was

Above (from left): Mahava, Roshan Tirandaz and Patel Photo: Jaggi Gupta
(Inset) Deboo



the first feature film that he wanted to try his hand at.

He tried to find out who Cyrus Mistry was and where he could be contacted. Mistry, who was the former literary editor of *Debonair* magazine, was far from excited and thrilled when he heard what Merwanji wanted him to do — write a screenplay. “I wasn’t too sure I was interested in the proposal,” he revealed. “More so, when I heard that Pervez wanted to make the film in Parsi Gujarati.” By then, an excited Merwanji who was not going to take ‘no’ for an answer, rubbed off more than just a little bit of his enthusiasm on Mistry, who allowed himself to be persuaded into accepting this offer. He roped in his wife, Jill Miskuita, and the couple got down to working out the screenplay. Both Mistry and his wife got so involved in the project that Cyrus even decided to work on the dialogues of the film himself.

Neither Merwanji nor Mistry are *pucca bawas* (100 percent Parsis). Both the men have *phoren* (non Parsi) wives and as for Merwanji, he neither wears a *sudreh-kusti* nor has he performed the navjote ceremony of his teenage son. “That does not mean I

Irani plays Percy as a child



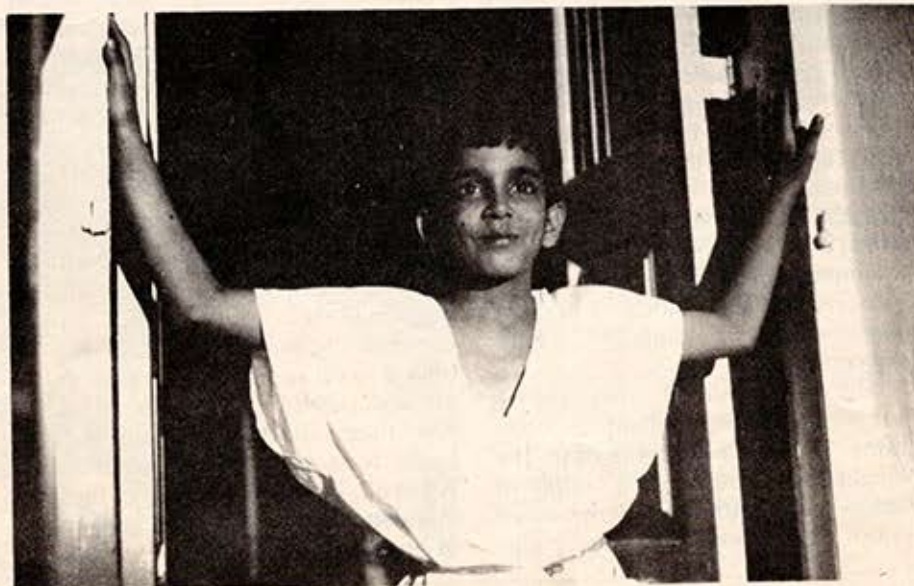
Far left: Merwanji (in specs) with Contractor Photo: Jaggi Gupta
Left: Merwanji instructing Deboo

am not religious,” he argued. “I have my own beliefs and am perhaps more religious than all those who go through all the *reet-reevaj* (traditional rituals). I am certainly very proud to be a Parsi.”

However, he explained that he was making a film on people and it just so happened that they were Parsis. “And that’s when I thought why not make it in Parsi Gujarati?” he said. But how many people would understand the language? “Tell me,” reasoned Merwanji, “would a Maharashtrian make a film in Assamese? And yet there are films being made in these languages. We can sub-title it, can’t we?” Authenticity was obviously Merwanji’s first priority and he wasn’t ready to make any compromises to sacrifice even a little bit of it. Apart from insisting on a Parsi star-cast (we’ll talk about that later), Merwanji is even shooting the major portion of the film in the Kharegat Colony at Hughes Road.

Fortunately for the filmmaker, the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) now headed by Burjor Karanjia, was extremely impressed with his script and has agreed to finance his project. Which gets us to *Pestonjee*, the recent film on Parsis made in Hindi by Vijaya Mehta, and also financed by the NFDC. Is there

Authenticity was Merwanji’s first priority and he wasn’t ready to make any compromises



any similarity between *Pestonjee* and *Percy* (both revolve round lonely Parsi men)? "Not at all," Merwanji snapped, not liking the comparison. "*Percy* does not only have a totally different story line, but even the taking is going to be very different. For example, I do not have any of those typical flashbacks in my film. I have dealt with it in a very different way, which I would not like to disclose at this stage."

Merwanji, the film's producer-director, agreed to give a vague idea as to what it was all about. "It revolves

Percy loses his mother and is left all alone. Can Percy cope? Is this the end? Or perhaps a new beginning?

The Moorat

I was 15 minutes late. By the film industry standards, I was before time (when the invitation card states 9.30 a.m. sharp, it normally is taken for granted that the function wouldn't start before 11 a.m.). But this was not a Hindi film *moorat* (ceremonial inauguration). It was the beginning of the first Parsi film and Parsis and punctuality are synonymous. I ran into the Khareghat Colony and realized that I was absolutely wrong. Not only was I extremely early (they didn't break the coconut till noon) but I was also disappointed.

Percy is the first film on Parsis to be made in Parsi-Gujarati. An original idea indeed and somehow I thought that producer-director Pervez Merwanji would have an *ekdum joodi jaatnu* (totally different type of) function. I expected the day to start with a proper jashan (normally film-wallas call a pandit and perform a pooja) and instead of the usual pedas and Thums-up, I thought they would distribute *sev-dahi* or *rawo* (Parsi delicacies served on auspicious occasions) or at least *sooterfeni* (traditional sweetmeat) and Rogers *na* drinks (Rogers is the oldest soft-drink manufacturer in Bombay - a Parsi concern).

Merwanji grinned from ear-to-ear when he heard of my expectations. "I didn't even think of it," he laughed, as I observed a couple of ladies busy with the *chowk-toran* (floor decorations and flower gar-

lands mandatory on auspicious occasions) ritual. "*Ai bus sagan na chowk ché* (this takes care of the traditional rituals)," he said.

The guest list was a mixture of family, friends, theatrewallas and presswallas. The main star of the film however, was missing. "Ruby Patel couldn't make it because of a jashan ceremony at her place," I was informed by one of the unitwallas.

Municipal corporator Rustom Tirandaz gave the clap. After clowning around a bit, Tirandaz did a couple of rehearsals with the clapper board before sounding the final clap. In fact, he had more rehearsals than the actor facing the camera!

Most of the onlookers (which included most of the press as well), were new to filmmaking and much to the amusement of us *philumi* scribes (professional film reporters), were totally uncontrollable when it came to clapping. Not only did they clap in appreciation after each of Tirandaz's rehearsals with the clapper board, but they also *raali maroed* (interrupted) in-between the *moorat* shot and continued to do so till the horrified unitwallas rushed towards them and had them literally holding their hands to stop them from clapping. All in all, though it was one of those mundane *moorats*, it was a morning of *mazaa* (fun)!

round this 35-year-old man called Percy, who lives with his extremely religious mother, and works in a Unani Pharmacy." Merwanji narrated and continued, "His life is a boring routine; his only interest in life is classical music; and his childhood has been filled with fights that his father had with his mother. He loses his father and later realizes how much he is like him. He falls in love with his *bajuni chhokri* (girl next door), cannot convey his feelings to her and is helpless when she marries another man. Life for Percy goes on, in spite of that. He then loses his mother and is left all alone. Can Percy cope? Is this the end? Or perhaps a new beginning in his life?"

Well-known stage artistes Ruby Patel and Hosi Vasunia play Percy's parents in the film and 25-year-old Kurush Deboo, who's come all the way from Navsari in search of stardom, plays the title role. Kurush, who has done a one year acting course from Roshan Tarneja's classes, is of course very thrilled to have bagged the role. "I have selected my artistes with great care," insisted Merwanji. "Each one fits the role. They're exactly what I had in mind." The cast also includes Sharad Smant, Rajan Bane, Sam Kerawalla, Marzban Bhesania, Hormuzd Chesani, Aban Sheikh, Firdausi Jussawalla, Pervez Mehta, Dinyar Tirandaz, Silloo Mahava, Roshan Tirandaz, Ratan Batliwalla and others with Porus Irani playing the young Percy.

On the technical front, Navroze Contractor is director of photography, Roshan Kalapesi is in charge of art direction and costumes, Vanraj Bhatia provides the music and A.M. Padmanabhan looks after the sound effects. Priya Krishnaswamy is the film's editor with Farhad Ostavari as chief assistant director.

With a combination of such authenticity, perfection, technical expertise and talent, *Percy* is a film that will definitely be worth waiting for - at least by the Parsi community.

Prochi Badshah, ex-editor of Stardust, a monthly magazine, is currently editor-producer (along with Surender Bhatia) of Starbuzz, a new video cassette providing similar fare.

"WHY I BECAME A ZOROASTRIAN"—2

An American defends his right to choose to be a Zoroastrian

William H. Brawner



In his first comment evaluating comparative theologies, published in Parsiana (December, '88) the author detailed the physical, emotional and mental circumstances

under which he chose to follow the religion of Zarathushtra.

During the navjote and in their daily prayers, all faithful Mazdayasnis everywhere recite the *Fravarane*: the ancient confession of faith in the good religion. But how often do we stop to think just what the words of the *Fravarane* mean or, indeed, what the very word 'fravarane' itself means?

'Fravarane' simply means "I choose for myself." Thus several times each day we say, "I choose for myself, with appreciation and conviction, to be a worshipper of Ahura Mazda and a disciple of Zarathushtra."

"I choose for myself." Not "my parents chose for me," nor "I was born to be." It is not given to me nor forced upon me. I choose it for myself, by myself and I alone am responsible for this decision, this commitment to the good Mazdayasni religion.

Not only do I choose it but I choose it "with appreciation and conviction." I appreciate the uniqueness of the Mazdayasni religion which "of the religions which have been and that shall be...is the greatest, the best and the most sublime."

Because I truly recognize and appreciate the unique status of the Good Religion, I am convinced of its unique divine origin. Thus I must also recognize its special status among the world religions. I cannot be a true believer and yet be of the opinion that all religions are of equal value. The disciple of Asho Zarathushtra is called

upon to make an unqualified commitment to the Good Religion: to believe in its supreme, unparalleled excellence and divine origin. Thus the *Din-no Kalmo*, which is central to the navjote, states: "The true, correct, good religion, sent by God for humanity, is the one brought by Zarathushtra."

In the *Fravarane* and the *Din-no Kalmo* some essential truths can be found which should be clearly understood by all who call themselves Mazdayasnis. As the prophet said: "Let each man choose his creed, with that freedom of choice which each must have at great events."

No one can make this choice for another. Thus, if one goes through the navjote without having chosen the Mazdayasni faith freely after mature consideration and without firm commitment to its teachings, then that navjote is invalid and not even an army of priests can change this fact.

Similarly, if one freely embraces the Mazdayasni faith with sincere commitment and honest conviction as to the truth of its principles, then one is a Mazdayasni and no one has the power to alter this reality.

Thus, a true Mazdayasni is one who chooses the Good Religion and not merely someone who has been born to Mazdayasni parents. A hundred million navjotes could not make an atheist a Mazdayasni. The navjote is of no value to one who does not sincerely believe in the Good Religion for it is the act of choice which makes one a Mazdayasni: not the navjote itself. The navjote is but a public announcement of an already existing commitment.

The Mazdayasni faith is the true, universal religion given to all mankind and not just to one race of people. Ahura Mazda is the Lord of Creation; not a mere tribal deity.

For whom was the Mazdayasni reli-

gion revealed to Zarathushtra by Ahura Mazda? For the Iranis? For the Parsis? No, it was revealed for humanity. The religion given through Asho Zarathushtra is the one, true religion which has been divinely revealed for the benefit of all mankind. Any attempt to limit the Good Religion to the Iranis and the Parsis belittles God and is an act of theft: stealing from mankind that which was meant to be shared among all men without regard to race.

A true disciple of Asho Zarathushtra does not hog the religion to himself, but actively seeks to spread knowledge of the Good Religion throughout the seven *keshtvars* of the world so that "the Good Religion of Mazda-worship" may "be victorious."

To keep the Good Religion of Mazda-worship confined to the Iranis and the Parsis is a betrayal of the faith; it is akin to putting a knife in the back of the prophet and then trying to lock God in a box. It is the sort of thing which must make Ahriman laugh with joy. Indeed, the recent history of the Good Religion must be a comfort to that Foul One.

When the Christian missionaries arrived in India, they stirred up a hornet's nest among the Parsis. They cleverly made use of the lack of scholars among the priests and laity to attack the central strong-point of the Good Religion: its dualism (which recognizes good and evil as opposing forces). To this day, most Parsis are careful to defend Zoroastrianism as a monotheistic faith which is regrettable since dualism is vastly superior to monotheism.

When the Christians began their attack on the Good Religion, many of the orthodox took refuge in their rituals, while the more scholarly among them turned to an ancient heresy for aid in fighting the Christ-

ians. Anxious to defend themselves against the Christian charge of dualism, they abandoned the faith and resurrected Zurvanism by placing Ahura Mazda in the place of Zurvan, and making Ahriman, and Spenta Mainyu – which, in truth, is but another name for Ahura Mazda – the sons of God. This allies Ahriman to Ahura Mazda and thus makes God the father of evil who is therefore morally responsible for the existent evil. This gross heresy causes the Good Religion to share the shortcomings of Christianity and Islam.

What the orthodox, who embrace this heresy, have failed to see is that monotheism has a weakness: Monotheism cannot explain the existence of evil in the world without denying that God is good or without either saying that he is not all-powerful or else that he is not the creator of all things. Since monotheism strongly affirms that God is good, all-powerful, and the creator of all things, it is locked in a hopeless and self-defeating contradiction which dualism easily overcomes.

A similar process took place in Iran in an attempt to protect Mazdayasnis from Muslim persecution. To take advantage of the relative tolerance which Islam shows to those who are "peoples of the Book," the Muslims had to be convinced that the Good Religion is monotheistic. While it is admirable to attempt to spare people from suffering, this distortion of the basic teachings of the faith has extracted a high price by perverting the good Mazda-worshipping religion into a travesty of its true self.

The orthodox among the Parsis and the protectors of the faithful in Iran were not alone in their rush to abandon the faith. This tendency was far more pronounced within the reform movement which quickly adopted monotheism, without reservation, in a slavish imitation of its Western mentors and now finds itself in the unenviable position of having to explain what makes the Good Religion unique. Once dualism is taken away from the Good Religion, its internal structure falls apart until there is nothing left but pious truisms and ethical precepts common to all the world religions.

If the Good Religion is not unique, why follow it? Why not be more honest and convert to one of the more recent world religions such as Islam? The Good Religion is the unique God-

given true religion intended for all mankind. Dualism, which the prophet repeatedly affirmed, is central to its joyous message of hope. This is the reason why we affirm each day, in the *Fravarane*, that we "attribute all good to Ahura Mazda," rather than to Ahriman or the *daivas*. And this is why the prayer *Ahuramazda Khodae* calls for the defeat of the evil one.

It is not necessary to repeatedly remind others of what they already know or to ask them to affirm that which is common knowledge. In the age of the prophet, life was harsh and often unjust. Infant mortality was rampant and life expectancy extremely low. The people of Asho Zarathushtra's time did not need to be told about suffer-

Ahura Mazda is the Lord of Creation; not a mere tribal deity

ing, injustice or evil deities. These were everyday realities which were easily perceived and which no one would have thought to deny.

Thus the prophet did not ask his followers to affirm the existence of evil, of Ahriman. Instead, he asked us to make a truly revolutionary affirmation: one which retains its revolutionary impact even today for much of mankind. He asked us to ascribe all good to one supreme God who is totally good, just and righteous. In one stroke, he laid the only justifiable foundation for the hope that mankind can ultimately triumph over wickedness and injustice; indeed, over all manifestations of evil.

The Good Religion is unique. Among all the religions of the world, it alone affirms the existence of a truly good God. No other religion has a God who is untainted by evil. Monotheism cannot honestly claim belief in a truly good God since monotheism cannot explain the existence of evil. Evil is an enigma and an embarrassment to monotheists since they cannot explain it without implicating their God as being responsible for evil's existence.

Thus, only the Good Religion affirms belief in a good God and only the Good Religion has reasonable grounds for the hope that evil will one day be defeated.

Zarathushtra told us about the twin spirits which were revealed to him "in a vision." Through divine revelation, the prophet learned of the existence of an adversary who is totally unlike Ahura Mazda and so he said: "He who fights evil, either by his thought or word, or with the might of his two hands, he who instructs people to their good, makes a worthy offering of faith in his love of You, O Ahura Mazda."

For too long the Good Religion of Mazda-worship has been hidden from men. For too long Mazdayasnis have been apologizing for their beliefs rather than actively affirming them and teaching them to others as Asho Zarathushtra did. For too long Mazdayasnis have been buried under bigotry and ignorance, trying to keep the faith exclusive to themselves. Few among the Parsis and Iranis truly knew much about the teachings of the religion. All these things were in direct contradiction to, and even defiance of, the teachings of the Good Religion.

In the ancient traditions of the faith which are often ignored, we are told of the coming of the Soshyants. The first of these is Ukhshyat-Ereta: He who makes righteousness grow. He is to renew the preaching of the prophet's message in the world.

Now, as the dark, mushroom cloud of nuclear destruction hangs overhead and mankind teeters on the edge of oblivion, the good, ethical, Mazda-worshipping religion of Zarathushtra is desperately needed by humanity. Centuries have passed while Ahura Mazda preserved the Good Religion for this day's arrival. Now, the message must go forth to all mankind with all haste or we shall have failed in our mission and betrayed mankind, our faith and our God.

How joyous a tune Ahriman must be humming as he beholds the inactivity of Mazdayasnis and our petty arguments. Let those who will agree, argue; but let those who believe, take action now and no longer delay. The mission field is open and calling now. For those who will hear, the era of Ukhshyat-Ereta has come. When we respond, as we should, then Ahriman will be singing another, not so happy, song and the final victory over evil will have begun.

The author (an American of Judeo-Christian origin) welcomes correspondence at Box 16024, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401, USA.

The Memory of Elephants by Boman Desai. Published by Andre Deutsch Ltd, London. Pp:328. Price £ 11.95 (available in Bombay for Rs 251).

"I am *bawaji*...but as my *Bapaiji* (paternal grandmother)...said to me: You do not know what it means to be a *bawaji*. You should be ashamed," are the opening lines of Boman Desai's first novel, *The Memory of Elephants*. A Parsi family saga, featuring three generations of the Seervai family, the book is also an exploration into the community's ethos. The author uses his polio-stricken hero Homi's odyssey into history to discover what it means to be a *bawaji*. It is a journey in which the reader is tempted to join.

A labor of love, the hardcover publication details the eccentricities and customs of the community, conjuring endearing portraits which nag you with their familiarity. The characters remind you of relatives, friends and neighbors you knew, or had forgotten. There is an element of community narcissism, a kind of looking into a mirror and smiling back at the images reflected there.

Desai tells his tale with a blend of sympathy and humor, though not the kind of humor that caricatures Parsis in *nataks* (dramas) and Hindi movies. His humor is balanced by moments of tender anguish. And the author resists the temptation to convert the book into a swan song of a dying community.

The canvas is wide, probably because *Elephants* is amongst the first few novels on the Parsis published abroad. It is necessary, therefore, to define who the Parsis are and what they stand for. Future generations of Parsi writers may be spared this task (perhaps pleasure), but not Desai. At times, however, explanations spill over into trivialities: like for instance, clarifying what French beans are to the Americans – green beans. To be fair to the author, these trivialities do not detract from the richness of the story.

The prologue of his book is devoted to ancient Iranian history; the fall of the last Zoroastrian empire and the landing of the Parsis on the shores of India – the Sanjan milk and sugar episode included.

Yet, all this is not mere drab history;

A BAWA SAGA

Gustasp Irani



Desai interweaves the account of ancient Zoroastrian history in Iran with the story of two brothers, the warrior-like Bahman and the shy and retiring Xerxes. This is not without its symbolism, as the new community of Iranians in India – the Parsis of the future – will have to survive, not by Bahman's sword, which he brandished in the face of Muslim invaders, but by the strength of Xerxes' religious faith.

The thrust of the main story is Homi Seervai's journey into his past. The young Parsi genius from India has invented a memory machine while studying at an American University

and he wires himself to it, hoping to relive his only sexual escapade with an American girl who has lost interest in him. The machine trips. While his body lies like an empty shell on a hospital bed, his mind is plugged into the past – his family's past where he meets his dead relatives, *Bapaiji*, the maternal grandmother whom he refers to as Granny and his father. They guide and chaperone him as they relive their lives once again. (Homi finds himself hiding under the bed on the first night *Bapaiji* and her husband make love, a full year after they were married.) It is not only the dead that Homi meets; he encounters other family members in their youth (his mother, his brother Rusi); and also looks back into his own childhood.

The main characters of Desai's story define the boundaries of the larger story he tells – the story of the Parsis. He starts with his two grandmothers: *Bapaiji* in semi-rural Navsari in Gujarat and Granny, in Bombay. The latter marries into a rich industrial family, the Camas, who are progressive and comfortable with the ways of the West and yet remain fiercely Parsi. Then there is Homi's father, Adi, who studied in Edinburgh and Homi's *Soli maama* (maternal uncle) who studied at Cambridge, chaperoned by Granny. Both father and uncle return to India to marry and settle here.

But the attachment their generation had for Britain is strong. In the heaven of sorts where the dead can be what they want, Granny has recreated her familiar world of Bombay in the heart of Cambridge while Adi, in top hat, tails and cane tucked under his arm has set up home in Edinburgh. *Bapaiji*, of course, loves her Navsari, but...ah, ah... she is wearing the pants she could not wear while on earth. *Parjat* (intercommunity) marriages and de-Indianization is a problem of the next generation – comprising Rusi, Homi's guitar-slinging, long-haired brother, and Homi himself.

Desai's direct speech reflects the times and settings of the story. In Navsari, when *Bapaiji* speaks, the flavor of colloquial Gujarati as spoken by Parsis is strong, considerably different from the language spoken by Granny in Bombay, and Homi's parents. Homi's

and Rusi's speech is afflicted by *arré*, *yaar* and *man* – the lingo of urban Bombay youth which eventually makes way for American slang.

As the manner of speech changes, so also does the role of the Parsi community in the lives of the individuals; its influence wanes with each successive generation. The two grandmothers are products and victims of a vibrantly potent community with cousin marriages, genetic deformities and illegitimate children (who were often drowned in buckets of milk or, to phrase it less brutally, 'made to drink milk'), class and economic prejudices, and in-law problems (Granny's miscarriage was the handiwork of her sister-in-law whose inheritance would be considerably reduced if her brother got a son).

The role of the community recedes into the background in the second half of the book when the courtship and near-perfect love affair of Homi's parents are described. The focus then

shifts to the children and their attempts to adjust to the American way of life. The characters of each successive generation gradually lose depth and fullness. Rusi is almost reduced to a stereotype of an urban Parsi who encounters a series of promiscuous American women.

Probably, there is an element of autobiographical writing and Desai is too close to events and his parents to see them in a wider perspective. The other face of the problem lies in the era that Desai portrays: the slow erosion of the influence of the community and its traditions and the advance of science and urbanization. Parsis settled abroad would probably sympathize with the problem that the characters later face: trying to adjust to, and assimilate, the American way of life.

Desai's style is fluid and he uses the technique of narration within narration and, in the process, weaves together a tapestry of Parsi history, re-

ligion, science and social change quite masterfully. His eye for detail, his graphic, elephantine memory (which accounts for the title) and his sympathetic and humorous treatment make for very enjoyable reading.

To a non-Parsi the book will be a source of information and insight into the community; to a Parsi it will place the familiar in perspective. The Parsi settled abroad might like to slip this book to his children, rather than a scholarly treatise which peers at the community as though at a dying microbe under a microscope.

Boman Desai, 38, studied at Campion and Cathedral schools in Bombay. He studied architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology and received a degree in psychology from the University of Chicago. He resides in Chicago and is currently at work on his second novel.

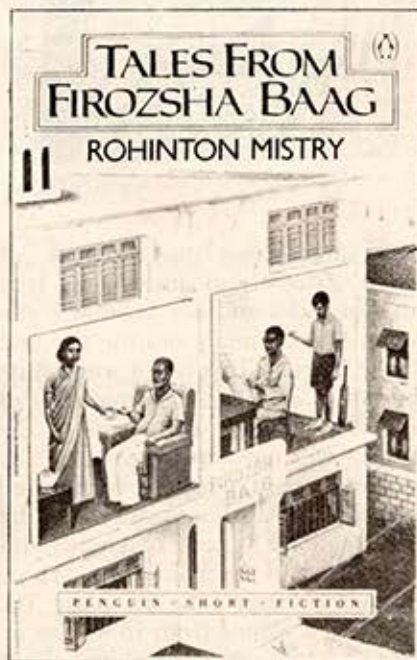


HOME IS WHERE THE 'BAAG' IS

Tales from Firozsha Baag by Rohinton Mistry. Published by Penguin Books Canada Ltd. Pp:250. Price: Canadian \$ 9.95 (approximately Rs 120).

Welcome! Welcome! Meet the residents of Firozsha Baag. This is Mr Rustomji, a lawyer, who lives in A block. Just the other day he had a horrifying experience: a ghati (derogatory reference to local Maharashtrians) spat paan (betel juice) on his dugli. He'll tell you all about it later. I'm sure he will also tell you about his raging feud with the trustees of Firozsha Baag. Come now, let me introduce you to the other tenants and (whisper) remind me to tell you about Rustomji's sexy ganga (maid).

Here we have three ladies from Block C. This is Tehmina whose cataract never seems to ripen. This is Ms Boyce. Her younger son Kersi is a writer in Canada and her older son Percy is a social worker. (Whisper) Villages ma ghati sathé kai gellu gandoo karéch



(fooling around in the villages with the locals). And this of course is Najamai. (Whisper) She is the busybody of the Baag. Najamai will tell you all there is to know about the Baag and do remind her to tell you the story about that chor (thief) Francis. But first let me introduce you to the others.

Tell you what? Why don't I make a general introduction? Attention everyone! This is our guest who has come to spend some time at Firozsha Baag. Please make him feel at home. Now, if you will excuse me, I'll check out on Rohinton Mistry who has arranged this meeting.

Rohinton Mistry's first book, *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, is a collection of 11 short stories. The book takes the reader on a voyage of mixed emotions and sentiments through a middle-class baag located somewhere opposite Chowpatty in Bombay. Mistry's tales are a blend of humor, tragedy, pathos and a touch of the absurd. There are no heroes or heroic deeds; just simple people coping with the everyday situations of life. Firozsha Baag Parsis are not the Tatas, the Homi Bhabhas, the Dadabhai Naorojis or the Zubin Mehtas of the community. They are not caricatures either. Mistry portrays them with an honest, sympathetic and

sensitive pen. And if in the process they come off as communal, petty-minded bigots, they are all the more credible and real.

Not all the stories are uniformly interesting: some are gripping, some enchanting and others sociologically relevant as they gently uncover the blemishes and warts of a small community. *Auspicious Occasion*, the lead story, is undoubtedly the most striking. The grouchy, Rustomji, and his religious wife Mehrroo are lovingly etched and the image of Rustomji at the bus stop, cowering from an angry crowd which he has incited with taunts and abuses, is vivid long after the reader has put down the book. He has removed his dentures, and with cheeks collapsing into his toothless mouth, is pleading for mercy. The scene is funny. No, not for Rustomji; no, not for anyone whose relatives or close acquaintances might have had the misfortune of finding themselves in a similar situation.

In *One Sunday*, we witness once again the interaction between the Parsis in the Baag and the people of the world outside. "Parsi bawaji... Parsi bawaji! What will you hit, boundary or sixer?" The residents of Tar Gully taunt Kersi and Percy who venture out with cricket bats to catch the servant Francis who has stolen a "handsome" sum of Rs 80 from Najamai. When Francis is finally apprehended, the scene turns sadistic and violent as people take law into their own hands.

The Ghost of Firozsha Baag takes a look at the community through the eyes of a Goan Christian cook Jacqueline whose name has been vandalized to Jaakaylee by her mistress. But there is little suspense here; the chills and goose bumps are packed in *The Paying Guests*. Khorshedbai's dead parrot visits her in her dreams and advises her on how to deal with the couple who have let out a room to her and now want her to vacate.

Like *The Paying Guests*, *Condo-lence Visit*, is a sensitive piece. It is about Daulat coming to terms with the loss of her husband and the right social gestures that are expected of her.

Squatter, Lend Me Your Light and *Swimming Lessons* leave the shores of the country for that "great country, Canada." But they are nevertheless a

part of Firozsha Baag, for every Parsi family has someone or the other settled abroad.

Mistry takes care to see that when the residents of Firozsha Baag pop up repeatedly in the different sections of the book, they maintain a consistency of character and behavior. For instance, by piecing together references to Pesi padmaroo, who is always away at boarding school and never physically present at the Baag, the image of a wild, untamed boy is finely chiselled.

What will the parjats think about the community if he goes around washing dirty linen in public?

At the end of the book he makes you feel that you have read not only a collection of short stories, but a novel on Firozsha Baag and its residents.

Often, the reader feels like a voyeur, peering through the rear window into people's bedrooms and living rooms and recognizing characters he has encountered in his own life. The setting could have been Cusrow Baug or Nowroz Baug, or anywhere where Parsis reside in clusters. Mistry avoids the pitfalls of depicting the Baag as an idyllic ghetto or a self-sufficient city of eccentrics; he writes with the penetrating insight of one who has grown up in a baug. However, like most Parsis writing for an international audience, Mistry could not resist the temptation of explaining who and what the Parsis are; their contribution to the country; the social status they enjoy; their Iranian origins. But for this single paragraph in the final story *Swimming Lessons*, Mistry explains the community through subtle character sketches.

But it is more than a book about Parsis; it is also a book about Bombay and its people - its dirty Tar Gully, its bus routes, its cricket grounds and Hanging Gardens, its Bhagwan babus

and St Xavier's School, and its ghats and ghatis. It is also about Canada, seen through the eyes of a migrant Parsi, of Sarosh or Sid, as he called himself in Canada, who declares: "In Toronto there lived a Parsi boy as best he could...for some it was good, but for some it was bad, but for me life in the land of milk and honey was just a pain in the posterior." (The poor man suffered from chronic constipation.) It is also the story of Mistry himself. The suspicion, that one of the characters, Kersi Boyce, is the author, grows stronger when one reads the last story *Swimming Lessons*.

Ah, there you are. Tell me, how was your visit to Firozsha Baag?

Who does Rohinton think he is, prying into people's lives? Just because he is a writer does not mean he has a divine right to mess about with private lives. Doesn't he have any sense? What will people, the parjats (non-Parsis), think about the community if he goes around washing dirty linen in public?

I don't see any reason for getting all worked up. You've got to appreciate what Rohinton is doing for the community. Tell me, how many people know who or what Parsis are? I am not talking about Bombay, Poona, Gujarat or the few other places where we Parsis live. I mean, when the race finally dies out, as everyone says it will, there will be one honest record of our everyday lives for future historians.

But come, we'll discuss it later. For now Ms Karani has invited us for lunch. Her Goan cook has made some of her famous curry. And please, indulge Ms Karani and her ghost talk and make no comments when her husband cleans the curry dish with swathes of bread!

Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay in 1952. He emigrated to Canada in 1975 and began working in a bank. He started writing stories in 1983. While at the University of Toronto, he won two Hart House literary prizes (for *One Sunday* and *Auspicious Occasion*) and in 1985 he won a Canadian Fiction Contributors' Prize. The same year he left the bank to devote himself full-time to his writing.



Gustasp Irani

MILESTONES

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information provided by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. It must be pointed out that this information is not always complete or consistent.

Of the 84 Parsis who died in the city of Bombay, heart disease claimed 26, while 12 fell prey to old age. The other killers were lung disease (nine), kidney failure (seven), pneumonia and cancer (six each) and brain disease (three). Diabetes, Parkinson's disease and blood disease claimed two victims each. Isolated cases of hypertension, suf-

focation, nervous disorder, gastro enteritis, liver disease, dehydration and asthma were also registered. Two youths, aged 19 and 22 years, and two infants were also 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 girl to *Jeroo* and *Ness Buhariwala* on November 24, 1988

A girl, *Benaaz*, to *Ava* and *Farokh Ghadiali*; November 24

A boy, *Hector*, to *Goolshun* and *Freddie Nadirshaw*; November 28

A boy to *Armity* and *Farokh Mistry*; November 30

A boy to *Firoza* and *Percy Bhathena*; December 1

A boy to *Kianooshi* and *Shahrokh Meher Shahi*; December 1

A boy to *Annahita* and *Pesi Sidhwa*; December 1

A girl to *Meher* and *Jeffrey Davis*; December 2

A boy to *Mani* and *Yezdi Irani*; December 3

A boy to *Anshera* and *Aspi Contractor*; December 7

A girl to *Shernaz* and *Behram Engineer*; December 7

A boy to *Sandra* and *Darius Kavarana*; December 7

A girl to *Neena* and *Homeyar Tavaria*; December 7

A girl to *Prochie* and *Sanat Mukherji*; December 8

A boy to *Nilofer* and *Sarosh Shroff*; December 8

A girl to *Meher* and *Tehmul Patel*; December 9

A girl to *Parizad* and *Gev Irani*; December 10

A boy to *Kashmira* and *Ramesh Kashyap*; December 10

A boy to *Pervin* and *Hosang Antalia*; December 11

A girl to *Navaz* and *Rumi Umrigar*; December 11

A girl to *Roshan* and *Kaizad Bhathena*; December 12

A boy to *Hetal* (*Daisy*) and *Ajay Chokshi*; December 13

A boy to *Pia* and *Soli Dastur*; December 13

A boy to *Khushnuma* and *Jal Waghchippawalla*; December 13

A girl to *Dhun* and *Yezdi Patel*; December 14

A boy to *Hutoxi* and *Farokh Patel*; December 14

A girl to *Ruby* and *Sunil Nayyar*; December 15

A boy to *Khurshid* and *Dhunjishaw Vakil*; December 15

A girl to *Zarin* and *Hormez Khambatta*; December 16

A girl to *Shernaz* and *Rohinton Sanjana*; December 16

A girl to *Nilufer* and *Aspi Unwalla*; December 16

A boy to *Banu* and *Jamshed Gandhi*; December 18

A girl to *Ketayan* and *Porus Chinoy*; December 19

A girl to *Maharukh* and *Percy Panthanki*; December 21

A boy to *Kashmira* and *Rumy Merchant*; December 22

A girl to *Rashna* and *Dicky Contractor*; December 23

A boy to *Nilofer* and *Jim Lakadia*; December 24

A boy to *Rukshana* and *Mehernosh Bharucha*; December 27

A boy to *Roshan* and *Kerman Katrak*; December 28

A boy to *Pearl* and *Kerssie Wadia*; December 28

A boy to *Roshni* and *Jimmy Kelawala*; December 29

Married

Roshan Burjor Doctor and *Dara Pesi Gandhi*; November 18

Jasmine Ratansha Vajifdar and *Yezdi Meherwanji Bharucha*; November 22

Shanaaz Jal Haradhvala and *Jehangir Rutton Mehta*; November 22

Nilufer Beji Dumasia of Surat and *Neville Burjor Patel*; November 22

Ruby Dinshaw Kamdin of Broach and *Tehmtan Sam Nanavati*; November 23

Coomi Kekhushru Elavia of Ahmedabad and *Dinshaw Bamanji Variava*; December 1

Bakhtawar Keki Sumariwalla and *Farokh Fali Panthaky*; December 2

Ketayun Nariman Mehta and *Khorezad Firoze Taraporewalla* of Thana; December 2

Kamal Rusi Soonawala and *Neville Pesi Tata*; December 2

Silloo Keki Sethna and *Yezdi Keki Jasoomoney*; December 3

Firoza Khurshed Sheriar and *Phiroze Rustom Wankadia*; December 3

Nilufer Keki Sukheswalla of Valsad and *Yezdi Jal Gandevia*; December 4

Binaifer Savak Doctor and *Rusi Manek Ratnagar*; December 4

Lily Sorabji Siganporia and *Percy Nariman Elavia*; December 5

Zarin Minoo Press and *Homi Edulji Mody* of Ahmedabad; December 5

Tina Soli Madan and *Neville Ardeshtir Mehta*; December 10

Meher Hormasji Panthaki and *Naushir Keki Mistry*; December 11

Thirity Erach Engineer and *Gaiv Homi Mistry*; December 12

Tanaz Pesi Shroff and *Behram Jamshedji Panthaki*; December 13

Dolly Minoo Dastoor of Navsari and *Rusi Minoo Bajina*; December 15

Phiroza Khurshed Tangree of Calcutta and *Mehernosh Mirzban Surti*; December 15

Daulat Behram Zorabi and *Aspandiar Faroud Shahlori*; December 16

Arnaz Homi Colombowalla and *Cawsi Marzban Dhanbhoora*; December 17

Pervin Jal Pooniwalla and *Cyrus Sohrab Banaji*; December 18

Benaifer Pervez Wankadia of Thana and *Adil Faramroze Bhesania* of Thana; December 18

Pervin Jehangir Ranikhetwala of Kuwait and *Keki Minocher Billimoria*; December 18

Dinoo Feroze Katrak and *Cyrus Minocher Shroff*; December 18

Rashna Dadiba Sanjana of Valsad and *Rohinton Bejanji Mehta*; December 19

Kashmira Jimmy Merchant and *Yezdi Minu Daver*; December 20

Jeroo Minu Dastur and *Shiroo Hoshang Ranji* of Poona; December 20

Rupi Firoze Patel of Dahanu and *Viraf Kaikhushroo Chinoy*; December 22

Maharukh Eruchshaw Katrak and *Percy Pesi Dalal*; December 22

Roshni Shavaksha Fitter of Pavai and *Jamshed Burjor Sidhwa*; December 25

Died

Khurshed Ardeshtir Dotiwala (93), residing at 24/A, Usha Sadan, Next to Colaba Post Office, 400005; November 30

Baman Cursoji Kalapesi (91), Hormaz Baug Bldg, Kasinath St, Tardeo,

400034; December 1
Bomi Manchershaw Davar
 (60), 4, C. D. Sethna Bldg,
 Golanji Hill, Parel, 400012;
 December 2
Dinshaw Bomanji Irani (84),
 D.B. Irani Wadi, Mazagaon,
 400010; December 2
Nusserwanji Jijibhoy Nazir
 (82), U-1/3, Cusrow Baug,
 S.B. Rd, 400039;
 December 2
Tehmina Phirozsha Kharas
 (80), 49, Turner Rd, Bandra,
 400050; December 3
Ardeshir Dinshaw Shekari
 (67), E-19, Cusrow Baug,
 S.B. Rd, 400039;
 December 3
Homi Jehangir Siganporia
 (63), Homi Villa, 778, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 December 3
Pershid Kersey Luth (19), 32,
 Karelwadi, Thakurdwar,
 400002; December 4
Homi Pestonji Rustomji (80),
 12/5, Wadia Block, Malcolm
 Baug, Jogeshwari (W),
 400102; December 4
Nergish Adi BomanBehram

(57), 6, Old Khareghat Clny,
 Hughes Rd, 400007;
 December 5
Sheroo Shohrab Davar (73),
 Boyce Bldg, Chikalwadi,
 Tardeo, 400007; December 5
Shirinbai Kaikhushroo Davur
 (94), A/7, Ness Baug, Nana
 Chowk, 400007; December 5
Tehmina Phirozshaw Lalla
 (93), Bhagat Manor, 787,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 December 5
Tehmuras Bomanji Shroff
 (65), F/12/A, Shapur Baug,
 V.P. Rd, 400004;
 December 6
Rusi Boman Aria (76), 'B,'
 Satya Bhama Niwas, 3-A,
 Kasinath St, Tardeo, 400034;
 December 7
Shapur Merwanji Batiwalla
 (71), Baccha Mans, Opp
 Bhatia Gen Hosp; 400007;
 December 7
Ardeshir Dorabji Godiwalla
 (79), 'A,' Shirin Manzil, Petit
 St, Grant Rd; 400007;
 December 7
Nusserwanji Rustomji Rana
 (87), P-31, Nowroz Baug,

Lalbag, 400012;
 December 7
Keki Ardeshir Vania (65), 25,
 Godrej Bldg, Contractor
 Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim;
 400016; December 7
Shera Kersasp Antia (80),
 M-52, Cusrow Baug, S.B.
 Rd, 400039; December 8
Pilan Framroze Davar (78),
 A/12, Jer Baug, Byculla,
 400027; December 8
Mehroo Meherji Vajifdar
 (76), B-20, Rustom Baug,
 Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027;
 December 8
Bapsy Rustomji Sarkari (50),
 13/3, Malcolm Baug,
 Jogeshwari (W), 400102;
 December 8
Homai Bezonji Deboo (86),
 B/7, Shapur Baug, V.P. Rd,
 400004; December 10
Nanu Jal Heerjee (70),
 Sea-View Guest Hse, Colaba,
 400005; December 10
Meherwanji D. Patel (80),
 R-37, Panday Sanatorium,
 Wodehouse Rd, Colaba,
 400005; December 10
Burjor Sorabji Kanga (95),

Ocean View, Warden Rd,
 400026; December 11
Homi Ratanshaw Meherji
 (67), Botawalla Bldg, Master
 Rd, Dhobi Talao, 400002;
 December 11
Rustomji Fardunji Patel (82),
 5/11, Hirabai Petit Bldg, Opp
 Grant Rd Stn, 400007;
 December 11
Thrity Navroji Suntoke (83),
 A/3, Shirin Manzil, Dinbai
 Petit St, 400007;
 December 11
Pillan Faramroze
Taraporewalla (82), 1/2, Sir
 Dorab Tata Bldg, Tata
 Blocks, S.V. Rd, Bandra,
 400050; December 11
Burjorji Nusserwanji Balsara
 (82), Crasto Bldg, Near
 Marine Lines, 400002;
 December 12
Tehmulji Jamshedji
Neterwalla (90), F. S. Parukh
 Dharmashalla, 34, Hughes
 Rd, 400007; December 12
Dinshaw Kaikhushroo Sadri
 (62), P-12, Cusrow Baug,
 S.B. Rd, 400039;
 December 12

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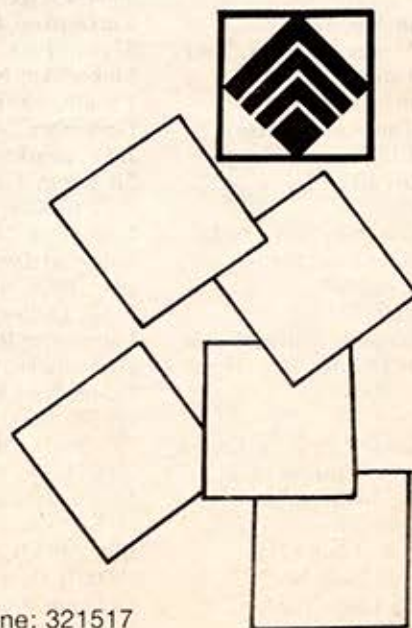
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SPARTEK

FLOOR TILES



Jehangir Pirojshaw

Suraliwalla (68), 1-A/8, Tata Hsg Soc, Parel, 400012; December 12
Aloo Ardeshir Damkevala (82), 2, Lam Bldg, 173, Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, 400013; December 13
Keki Ardeshir Shroff (61), 598/B, Wadia Bldg, Girgaum Rd, 400002; December 13
Doll Firoze Bharucha (83), B-24, Cusrow Baug, S.B. Rd, Colaba, 400039; December 14
Jamshedji Dhanjishaw Bharucha (90), Daruwalla Bldg, 115, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; December 14
Minoo Navroji Driver (70), K-3/14, Merwanji Cama Park, Andheri (W), 400058; December 14
Shapurji Eruchshaw Thanawalla (84), 13, Fairly Manor, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; December 14
Jehangir Gora; son of Banoo and Homi, brother of Mehroo Kersi Irani and Rita Gora and husband of Shahidaparween; December 15 (interred)
Ratanbai Sorabji Kaka (90), E/6, Jinwalla Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; December 16
Najamai Minocher ReadyMoney (88), 9/9, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; December 16
Jerbai Darabshaw Mistry (83), E/15, Shapur Baug, V.P. Rd, 400004; December 17
Darabsha Rustomsha Dalal (57), 'A,' Shirin Mans, Tardeo, 400007; December 18
Dina Nariman Bhivandiwala (77), Dr Dosibai Home, Byculla, 400007; December 20
Kaikhushroo Merwanji Katrak (81), C-10, Cusrow Baug, S.B. Rd, 400039; December 20
Bahdur R. Khan (77), Khareghat Bldg No 2, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 20
Pirojbai Behramshaw Patel (78), Fair-Heaven Central

Bank Soc, Lallubhai Park, Andheri (W), 400058; December 20
Alamai Hormusji Turner (80), Soona Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; December 20
Homi Sorabji Bhura (69), Sneh Sadan, Opp Colaba Post Office, 400005; December 21
Tehmi Nadarsha Commisariat (62), 15, Mistry Bldg, Dadar, 400014; December 21
Hormusji Sohrabji Mogrelia (83), 41/43, Police Court Lane, Fort, 400001; December 21
Baby of Ms Yasmin M. Udawadia (1 day), B-402, Giriraj Apts, Evershine Nagar, Malad (W), 400064; December 21
Aloo Framroze Unwalla (65), 12-A, Gold Coin, Tardeo, 400034; December 21
Minochaheer Cawasji Damania (74), Mody Hse, 9, Pawwalla St, Girgaum, 400004; December 22
Soonabai Nadershah Mistry (98), 4 Bglws, 3rd Bglw, Chunabathi, Sion, 400022; December 22
Cawas A. Velaty (76), Cama Bldg, Kasinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; December 22
Kaikhushroo Muncherji Masani (86), 242/A, Jolly Maker Apt No 1, Cuffe Parade, 400005; December 24
Jal Eruchshaw Mody (77), 1, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg No 2, Tata Blocks, Bandra, 400050; December 24
Shirinbai Darabshaw Wadia (80), 18/A, Sar-Avsar Bldg No 1, Gilder Lane, Lamington Rd, 400008; December 24
Darabshaw Byramshaw Carnac (83), Katpitia Bldg, 733, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 25
Sheroo Jehangirji Master (78), Room 11, Pawwalla Bldg, 382-B, Grant Rd, 400007; December 25
Gulestan Burjor Seervai (91), 603, Coste Belle, Perry Cross Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 25

Edulji Sorabji Vesuvala (89), 305, Dr Cawasji Hormusji St, 400002; December 25
Kaikhushroo Cawasji Dastoor (86), Kaka Bldg, 649, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 26
Tehmina Rustomji Fitter (80), C-12, Malbari Bldg, New Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; December 26
Noshir Dhunjibhoy Irani (78), 674, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 26
Phiroze Ardeshir Irani (88), 410, Bavla Bldg, Chinchpokly, Parel, 400012; December 26
Manijeh Minocher Kapadia (84), B-10, Satya Bhama Niwas, 3-A, Kasinath Rd, 400034; December 26
Ardeshir Rustomji Wadia (70), 326, Currim Bldg, M. Shaukatally Rd, 400007; December 26
Phirojshaw Jalejar Patrawala (68), 19, Gola Lane, Fort, 400001; December 27
Allamai Faramroze Tavadia (72), 3/14, Panthaki Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; December 28
Dhunmai Framroz Bagli (85), Dr Dossibai and J.R.D. Charity Trust Home, Byculla, 400027; December 29
Ratanbai Dhunjishah Cama (80), 204, Silver Cascade, Mt Mary Hill, Bandra, 400050; December 29
Zarin Zarksis Khandharia (41), 304, Shriniketan, Sainagar Vasai Rd (W), Thana, 401202; December 29
Baby of Ms Hutoxi Darayus Mistry (1 hour), Room 9, Gandhi Mans, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 29
Sharnaz Neriosang Tata (67), Karai Est, 248, Javji Dadaji Rd, Tardeo, 400007; December 29
Coomi Sohrabji Bharoocha (90), 63, Pedder Rd, 400026; December 30
Sheroo Tehmurasp Kavarana (78), 5, Iris, Cuffe Parade, 400005; December 31
Banoo Rustomji Machliwalla (60), 1, Baria Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 31

Pirosha Ardeshir Mody (84), West Coast Apts, St Joseph Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 31

CALCUTTA**Married**

Sharmila Satyen Sen and Sohrab Italia; December 28

INDORE**Died**

Jehangir Chothia (22), of Poona, son of Khurshid and Rohinton, brother of Shahvir; December 8

JAMSHEDPUR**Married**

Marina Patel and Yezdi Engineer; October 23

KARACHI**Died**

Mehervan Rustomji Khairabadi (70); October 18
Dhunjishaw Sohrabji Pastakia (94); October 19
Jamshed Burjorji Sidhwa (74); October 19
Jalejar Burjorji Sidhwa (80); October 24
Meherbai Sohrabji Shahookar (94); October 25
Dara Burjor Mana (67); November 1
Dhunmai Hoshang Shaikhdar (82); November 26

OOTACAMUND**Died**

Freny Noshir Vajifdar; October 3

SURAT**Married**

Havovi Sorabji Katpitia and Afroze Jimmy Patalwala; October 23

TORONTO**Born**

A girl, *Anita*, to *Parviz* and *Farkhondeh Rashidi*; July 30
 A boy, *Noshir*, to *Behroze* and *Dinyar Panthakee*; brother to *Shireen*; August 16

Died

Shahrugh Dadnam, husband of *Sandra*; August 21

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